

**OPINION 6**  
ENGLISH BHASHA, DRESS  
BECOMING WORLD STYLE**WORLD 8**  
FRENCH VIRUS INFECTIONS  
SPIKE OVER HOLIDAYS**SPORT 12**  
NGIDI STRIKES TWICE BUT  
INDIA REMAIN IN CONTROL

NEW DELHI, MONDAY DECEMBER 27, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



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# AFSPA withdrawal from Nagaland: Panel named

Nagaland CS, DGP in committee chaired by MHA's Additional Secretary for NE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has agreed to set up a committee to look into a growing demand by protesters in Nagaland to withdraw the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from the State. The decision was taken at a meeting between Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Nagaland Deputy CM Y Patton, and NPFLP leader TR Zeliang were present in the meeting held in Delhi on December 23.

The new committee will be chaired by the Union Home Ministry's Additional Secretary for North East and include the Chief Secretary and the DGP of Nagaland. "The Committee will submit its report within 45 days and withdrawal of Disturbed Area and AFSPA from Nagaland will be based on the recommendations of the



committee," said a statement released by the Nagaland Government on Sunday. The representative of the CRPF will also be in the committee.

On November 20, the Nagaland Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution demanding that the Government of India repeal the AFSPA from the region. Moving the resolution, Rio said for the last 20 years the State Government has been recommending that the controversial Act be removed and Nagaland taken off the list of

areas declared "disturbed areas."

A court of inquiry will initiate disciplinary proceedings against Army personnel who were directly involved in the killing of 14 civilians in a botched anti-terrorist operation earlier this month. The State Government will provide jobs to the next of kin of the deceased. The Nagaland delegation impressed on the Union Home Minister to replace the Assam Rifles unit in Mon with immediate effect, said the statement.

During the last weeks, Nagaland saw massive protests to protest against the AFSPA after the killing of civilians by security forces in Mon district on December 4-5.

Normal life has remained affected in many parts of Nagaland as tribal bodies and student organisations observed bandh and protest to press for repeal of the AFSPA.

The AFSPA, which was enacted in 1958 by Parliament, grants special powers to the armed forces to maintain public order in "disturbed areas".

# India braces for 3rd wave; Mumbai, Delhi see surge

Mumbai records 922 Covid-19 cases, Delhi 290

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mumbai and Delhi, the two cities which bore the brunt of the second Covid-19 wave, are once again seeing sharp spike in the number of cases as India braces up for Omicron-driven third wave.

Mumbai on Sunday registered 922 fresh cases of Covid-19, a rise of about 200 infections in 24 hours. The Maharashtra capital also reported two related deaths, pushing the total fatality count to 16,370. A day ago, Mumbai reported 731 cases but no death due to the virus.

Mumbai also recorded 27 of the 31 new cases of the highly contagious Omicron variant of the virus registered across the State. Maharashtra is currently the top contributor of the new strain with 141 cases.

According to data made available by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the country's financial capital has 4,295 active coronavirus cases at the moment. Also, 326 patients recovered from the viral disease taking the cumulative recoveries to



7,47,864.

Mumbai recorded 27 of the 31 new cases of the highly contagious Omicron variant registered across the State.

Meanwhile, Delhi on Sunday reported 290 new Covid-19 cases and one fatality, while the positivity rate rose to 0.55 per cent, according to data shared by the Delhi

Government's health department. With this, the cumulative tally rose to 14,43,352 while the death toll rose to 25,105. The number of active cases stands at 1,103, of which 583 patients are in home isolation. There has been an uptick in the number of cases in the last few days, amid a threat of the Omicron variant of the virus.

Night curfew in Delhi as +vity 0.5%

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government announced on Sunday that night curfew will be imposed in the national Capital from December 27 (Monday). As the positivity rate has crossed 0.5 mark, according to the Delhi Health Covid -19 bulletin.

The night curfew will start from 11 pm and end at 5 am. The Covid -19 caseload is increasing in Delhi with 290 fresh Covid -19 cases and one death reported on Sunday.

"It was decided in a high-level meeting today that a night curfew needs to be reinstated in the city to stop the spread of Covid. This will come into force on Monday night between 11 pm and 5 am," a Delhi Government official said.

According to the Graded Response Action Plan, which the Government finalised in July and August this year, a slew of measures is supposed to come in if the positivity rate remains above 0.5 per cent for two consecutive days.

Continued on Page 2

# Govt won't bring back farm laws, says Tomar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after his comments on farm laws triggered a political storm, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Sunday clarified that the Government was not planning to bring back the farm laws that were recently repealed, adding that the Congress is spreading rumours to cover up its own failures.

In a tweet on Sunday, Tomar said the Government had no plans to bring back the laws. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had decided to withdraw the agricultural reform laws to "keep the honour of the farmers".

The Minister also mentioned that his statements on this issue made during his address (at an agri event at Nagpur, Maharashtra) has been misinterpreted and said his intention was not that is being shown.

"I had said (at that event) we have taken a step back on the farm laws but the Government will always move ahead to work towards the welfare of the farmers.

Cong trying to spread canards, slams Union Agri Minister



Therefore there should not be any misunderstanding on this issue and the Government has no intention to bring back the farm laws again," Tomar said.

He said the Congress is sowing confusion "to cover up its failures" and "farmers should beware of this".

He also said the Swaminathan Committee report that came in 2006 was not implemented by the Congress Government.

While speaking at an event on Friday in Nagpur, Tomar hinted that the farm reforms could be reintroduced drawing sharp criticism from the Opposition. The Congress has accused the Centre of hatching a conspiracy to bring back the three repealed farm laws after the next round of Assembly

polls. Reacting sharply, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the country's Agriculture Minister has "insulted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's apology to farmers," adding that protests will start again if the Modi Government takes any anti-farmer step.

Congress media incharge R S Surjewala said the party had always suspected the intent of the PM.

On November 19, while apologising to the country, Modi announced his Government will withdraw the three laws, against which farmers were protesting at the borders of the national Capital and other parts of the country for over a year. On November 29, both houses of Parliament passed the farm laws repeal Bill.

# SC: Family members of husband often harassed in matrimonial disputes

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has quashed criminal proceedings against a man and a woman in a dowry harassment case noting that time and again, the family members of the husband are being made accused in matrimonial disputes by making casual reference to them in the FIR.

A bench of justices R Subhash Reddy and Hrishikesh Roy set aside an order of the Allahabad High Court which directed the victim's brother-in-law and mother-in-law, accused in a dowry death case, to surrender and apply for a grant of bail.

"It is held that a large number of family members are shown in the FIR by casually mentioning their names and the contents do not disclose their active involvement, as such, taking cognisance of the matter against them was not justified. It is further held that taking cognisance in such type of cases results in abuse of judicial process," the bench said.

The top court said that a perusal of the complaint filed



by the father of the deceased, pursuant to which a crime was registered, does not indicate any specific allegations by disclosing the involvement of the accused.

"Even in the statement of 2nd respondent (father) recorded by the police and also in the final report, except omnibus and vague allegations, there is no specific allegation against the appellants to show their involvement for the offences alleged.

"This Court, time and again, has noticed making the family members of the husband as accused by making casual reference to them in matrimonial disputes," the bench said in a recent order.

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# Gap between 2nd Covid vaccine shot and booster likely to be 9-12 months

Govt's move to vaccinate kids termed unscientific

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The gap between the second dose of Covid-19 vaccine and the third, which is being called a "precaution dose", is likely to be nine to 12 months.

According to officials, the nitty-gritty of the gap for the vaccines currently being used in India's inoculation programme Covishield and Covaxin is being worked out, and a final decision over this will be taken soon.

"The gap between the second and the precautionary dose of Covid vaccine is likely to be nine to 12 months with the immunisation division and the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) discussing on these lines," officials said.

Meanwhile, a senior epi-



demiologist at AIIMS who is the principal investigator of Covaxin trials for adults and children at the institute on Sunday termed the Centre's decision to vaccinate children against Covid "unscientific" and said it will not yield any additional benefit.

Dr Sanjay K Rai, a senior epidemiologist at AIIMS, who is also the president of the Indian Public Health Association, said before implementing the decision, data from countries that have already started vaccinating children should be analysed.

"I am a great fan of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his selfless service to the nation and taking right decisions at right time. But I am completely disappointed with his unsci-

entific decision on children vaccination," Rai said in a tweet tagging the Prime Minister's Office.

In a televised address to the nation on Saturday night, Modi announced that vaccination against Covid-19 for children between 15-18 years will start from January 3, while "precaution dose" for healthcare and frontline workers would be administered from January 10. The decisions came amid rising Covid cases linked to the Omicron variant of the virus. Modi said the precaution dose will also be available for citizens above 60 years of age and with comorbidities on the advice of their doctor from 10 January next year as well.

Elaborating his viewpoint, Rai said there should be a clear-cut objective of any intervention. The objective is to either prevent coronavirus infection or severity or death.

"But according to whatever knowledge we have about vaccines, they are unable to make a significant dent in the infection. In some countries, people are getting infected even after taking booster shots.

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## CAPSULE

### KATHUA RAPE-MURDER: 2 CONVICTS GET BAIL

Jammu/New Delhi: The parents of an eight-year-old nomad girl, who was brutally raped and murdered in Kathua district of Jammu, are anguished that while their appeal for enhancement of sentence against six people remains unheard, two convicts were released on bail in the case.

### JESUS CHRIST STATUE RUINED IN AMBALA

Ambala: A statue of Jesus Christ at the entrance gate of a church in Ambala was allegedly vandalised by some unidentified people, police said on Sunday.

### 'I AM 24 'CARAT' CONGRESSMAN'

Jammu: Ghulam Nabi Azad Sunday ended speculation about his possible exit from the party, calling himself a "24 Carat Congressman".

# Women join Priyanka in Ladki hoon, lad sakti hoon campaign

PREETAM SRIVASTAVA ■ LUCKNOW

In a major boost to Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's women-centred "Ladki hoon, lad sakti hoon (I'm a girl and can fight)" campaign in the poll-bound Uttar Pradesh, thousands of women defied the district administration order and turned up for the marathon organised by the party here on Sunday.

The Congress which shared videos on Twitter and other social media platforms showed large gatherings in Lucknow and Jhansi despite the district authorities denying permission for the marathon citing the rising cases of Omicron strain. In Jhansi, the girls refused to return and the police did not allow them to



move ahead.

"The State Government did not have a problem when lakh of students flouted Covid protocols during a Government programme where laptops were distributed, then why now," a woman is heard saying in a video posted by the Congress on Twitter. The party leaders also attacked Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath on the issue and even staged a demonstration outside Lucknow police commissioners' residence on Saturday night demanding permission for the marathon.

However, local administration used force and even arrested several Congress leaders, including district president Ved Prakash Singh and others. According to Singh, the marathon will now be held at Ekana Stadium on Tuesday.

To be noted, the Congress has announced a scooty for the first three winners in both the marathons, and those coming fourth to 25th will be presented with a smart phone. The next 100 were to be given fitness bands, while the next 1,000 women were to get medals, the party said.

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# Desmond Tutu, anti-apartheid icon of S Africa passes away



Johannesburg: Desmond Tutu, South Africa's Nobel Peace Prize-winning icon, an uncompromising foe of the country's past racist policy of apartheid and a modern-day activist for racial justice and LGBT rights, died Sunday at 90. South Africans, world leaders and people around the globe mourned the death of the man viewed as the country's moral conscience.

Detailed report on P8

# Drop obscene dance in madhuban mein..., MP Min warns filmmaker

Saregama agrees to change lyrics

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Objecting to the "obscene" dance by Bollywood star Sunny Leone in a music video in a song "madhuban mein Radhika naache" from the 1960 film Kohinoor, Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra has given the star and music composer Saqib Toshi three days to remove the music video.

Mishra — who added Leone to a growing list of brands and artistic content he deems objectionable and has



threatened with legal action — has claimed the video that accompanies the song hurts Hindu sentiments.

While talking to the media here on Sunday, he said, "Some people continuously hurt Hindu sentiments... there are temples for Radha... we pray to her. Toshi can make songs concerning his religion, but such songs offend us. I will take legal advice and action will be taken if the video is not taken down in three days."

The song in question was released by Saregama Music on Wednesday and features Leone dancing to the song — viewed by some as describing the love between Krishna and Radha — that has been sung by Kanika Kapoor and Arindam Chakraborty.

Later in the day, following Mishra's warning to Leone and the singers of the recently released music video Madhuban, music label Saregama said on Sunday the company will change the lyrics.

"In light of the recent feedback and respecting the sentiments of our fellow countrymen, we will be changing the lyrics and the name of the song Madhuban," it said, adding that the new song will replace the old one across all platforms over the next three days.



# Nagaland civilians’ killing: Shah lied in Houses: Cong

## Cong demands his resignation, setting up of enquiry commission

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Presenting its report on the killing of 14 civilians at Oting village, Mon District of Nagaland, Congress on Sunday accused Home Minister Amit Shah of lying in Parliament as the incident recounted by Shah was vastly different from the truth.

The Congress demanded his immediate resignation and setting up an inquiry commission under a judge of the Gauhati High Court.

Presenting a fact-finding report, party's in-charge for Nagaland Ajoy Kumar said not a single Cabinet Minister of the Narendra Modi

Government visited the site of the dreadful incident. “The Home Minister, instead of visiting the spot and conveying his condolences to the people of Nagaland, went to Jaipur to address political rallies and try his hand at destabilising the Ashok Gehlot government.

When he was supposed to go to the east, he went west just to serve his political purpose,” Kumar said.

Congress had sent a four-member team comprising Kumar, Jitendra Singh, Gaurav Gogoi and Anto Antony. He said the government behaviour in response to the December 4 killings is just another example of the step-motherly treatment meted out to the northeastern States.

Kumar said the Home Minister had told Parliament that when the para-commandos of the Army signalled the vehicle they suspected was carrying the insurgents to stop, it tried to flee. In the ensuing encounter, six of the eight occupants of the vehicle were

killed.

A Minister in the Nagaland government and State BJP chief have contradicted his statement, he said. “The vehicle carrying the miners did not try to flee. In fact, there was no warning from the para-commandos,” Kumar said. The incident, he said, shows the heavy-handed approach of the Minister who only a few days back was making tall claims of the northeast having returned to peace under the Modi government.

“The Naga peace process is in shambles and people are suffering from the extortion tax imposed by various militant outfits,” Kumar said the State government has announced a compensation of Rs 5 lakh to the families of the deceased.

The Centre has not announced or promised any compensation, he said. The Congress has demanded that the families of all deceased should be given Rs 1 crore and those who were injured Rs 10 lakh.

# TMC, AAP damaging non-BJP votes in Goa: Cong

New Delhi: The TMC and the AAP are "fracturing" the non-BJP vote in Goa, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram said on Sunday and asserted that only his party has the capacity to defeat the BJP.

Chidambaram, who is the Congress' senior election observer for the Goa Assembly polls, also said that loyalty to the party and the electorate is the first criterion for selecting candidates for the elections and expressed confidence that when elected, they will remain loyal to both the party as well as the electorate.

His remarks come days after the party's state working president, Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco, resigned as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, reducing the party's strength to two in the 40-member House. Lourenco has joined the TMC.

Earlier this month, former Goa chief minister Ravi Naik resigned as Congress MLA. A few months back, ex-CM Luizinho Faleiro had also quit the Congress and joined the Trinamool Congress (TMC).

In an interview with PTI,

Chidambaram said the only party that has deep roots in all the 40 constituencies of Goa is the Congress and the people know that it is only the Congress that has the capacity to defeat the BJP despite the latter's "money power and misuse of state power".

Asked about the recent resignations from the Congress with some quitting to join the TMC, including Lourenco, and the Mamata Banerjee-led outfit adopting an aggressive pitch in the state, Chidambaram said it is not for him to comment on the motive or strategy of any party, and stressed that only two Congress MLAs have joined the TMC.

"Ninety nine per cent of Congress workers remain with the Congress. I am not unhappy that Mr Reginaldo Lourenco defected to the TMC. The TMC has taken a losing candidate from our hands and, if it fields him in the election, he will remain a losing candidate," the former Union minister said.

The Congress workers and the voters of Curtorim constituency are determined to defeat Lourenco,

Chidambaram said.

Asked whether he believes that the TMC is helping the BJP and the Mamata Banerjee-led party along with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) were acting as the BJP's B-teams, Chidambaram said, "I do not comment on the motives of any party. In a straight fight between the BJP and the Congress in 2022, the Congress will emerge as a clear winner."

"The TMC and AAP are fracturing the non-BJP vote. Whether that will benefit the BJP, I cannot say," he said. On whether the Congress would announce a chief ministerial face ahead of polls, Chidambaram pointed out that he has said that after all the Congress candidates are announced, in consultation with them, "we will take a call whether it is desirable to announce a CM candidate before the election". That option is open, he added.

Talking about the poll preparations and the Congress' standing in Goa, he said the Congress' slide took place in 2017 and 2019 when its elected MLAs defected to the BJP. The BJP government in

Goa is a government "of defectors, by defectors and for defectors", Chidambaram alleged.

The BJP has ruled for 10 years and ruined Goa, especially its economy, environment and ethos, he said.

"There is an overwhelming desire for change. The only party that has deep roots in all the 40 constituencies of Goa is the Congress.

The people know that it is only the Congress that has the capacity to defeat the BJP despite the latter's money power and misuse of state power. We hope to do well in the 2022 elections," Chidambaram said.

Asked about the possibility of an exodus of party's elected leaders following the elections, he said, "Nothing of that sort will happen.

We have placed the responsibility of suggesting names of potential candidates on the Block Congress Committees and the Block workers. We have asked them to recommend names based on loyalty, integrity, acceptability to the Congress workers and winnability among the electorate."

Loyalty to the party and the

electorate is the first criterion, Chidambaram asserted.

"We will pick a candidate from among the names suggested by the Block Congress Committee of the constituency. We are confident that our candidates, when elected, will remain loyal to the party and the electorate," he said.

On the possibility of alliances, Chidambaram said, "I have found that, in Goa, it is a practice among political parties to talk to each other right up to the elections — and even after the elections!"

"Our Goa PCC leaders have responded to suggestions for talks from other parties including the Goa Forward Party. There are opportunities, risks and bumps. The AICC leadership will take the final decisions," he said.

The Congress had released its first list of eight candidates for the upcoming assembly elections in Goa last week, fielding former chief minister Digamber Kamat from the Margao constituency.

The Congress this week also named Pratapsingh Rane, 82, as the party's candidate from Goa's Poriem assembly seat.

# Need to bring back Covid curbs in Kolkata: Experts

Kolkata: A day after the city saw huge crowds of mid-night revellers thronging the eastern metropolis's busy Park Street to celebrate Christmas, health experts and doctors cautioned the state government against allowing more such gatherings especially during the New Year festivities, pointing to the rising number of Covid cases in the country and emergent threat from a more virulent Omicron strain.

Experts pointed out that the state authorities which had earned kudos for managing crowds during Durga Puja two months back, should not have relaxed their guard during the Christmas festival which is also a popular festive occasion given the fact that people are

suffering from "Covid fatigue" and were likely to dispel with safety norms.

Virologists and public health experts felt an urgent clampdown is needed to avoid a repeat of such mass gatherings with Covid inappropriate behaviour during the New Year celebrations.

"It seems the administration failed last night. There has to be a strict approach given that there are expectations of a surge in COVID cases especially with the advent of the Omicron variant. We expected the government as well as common people to be more responsible," Dr Sanjib Bandyopadhyay, Associate Professor of Burdwan Medical College, who has been handling

COVID cases told PTI.

Such revelry, throwing Covid safety protocols to the winds, would give a big push to the number of daily Covid-19 infections, he believed. India reported some 6,987 fresh Covid cases on Saturday with West Bengal accounting for 552 cases.

Beliaghata ID hospital Principal Dr Anima Halder also held the government and the police administration responsible for letting people gather in such large number on Christmas night in Park Street.

"The government must should have adopted a stricter attitude. The Delhi state government has successfully done so, we could have easily replicated that," Dr Halder said.

The state government has

relaxed night curfew restrictions for nine days during the Christmas and New Year festive season. Not only did large crowds surge through the central business district of Park Street, most clubs and hotels had full houses during Christmas lunches and evening entertainments.

Observers said the state government's move to relax curfew norms which had forbidden travel after 11 pm was "good for business" but "bad for public health" as the number of gatherings were bound to go up given the fact that people living through two years of strictly enforced Covid norms were suffering from "Covid fatigue" and wished to socialise again.

"The euphoria witnessed at Park Street by gathering of crowd during Christmas night can have far flung repercussion. We all know gatherings with Covid19 inappropriate behavior causes surge of cases," Dr Subhrojyoti Bhowmick MD (Pharmacology) of Peerless Hospital said.

One of Kolkata's top rheumatologist Dr Syamasis Bandyopadhyay, however, blamed people who seemed to believe the danger from the pandemic has ended.

"Celebration should be coupled with wisdom ... You cannot expect everything from the government. If such a large number of people start gathering what the police administration can do, he said. PTI

# Women...

From page 1

Congress' campaign this year has seen growing prominence for women-centric efforts as the assembly elections approach in Uttar Pradesh.

The Congress, which has been reduced to a virtual non-player in the past few elections in the state, has been focusing on gender equality in the state where multiple crimes against women have been reported in the last few years.

Some of these cases -- including the gangrape of a Dalit woman in Hathras, and the case in Unnao -- made headlines and provoked outrage across the country. The BJP has also launched a number of schemes for women in the politically crucial state,

while Samajwadi Party has also tried to highlight its initiatives for women during the regimes of both Akhilesh Yadav and his father and party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav.

Meanwhile, a group of girls that were attending a marathon-cum-rally of Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi at Jhansi shocked Party leaders and chanted Modi-Modi and Yogi-Yogi. Several videos of the girls raising slogans favouring Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at Congress's rally went viral on social media platforms. Sources said that Congress workers misbehaved with the girls that led to the chants of Modi-Yogi at the rally.

"These pictures are of Priyanka Gandhi's Marathon in Jhansi! When Congressmen misbehaved with them, the girls told them 'Ladki hain lad

sakti hain' and protested against Congress by raising slogans Modi-Modi, Yogi-Yogi." Notably, "Ladki hun lad sakti hun (I am a girl, I can fight)" is a political slogan Priyanka Gandhi is using in her UP campaign. It is noteworthy that a BJP leader shared a video where the girls were seen being trashed. She wrote, "On one hand, @priyankagandhi ji, you raise slogans of women empowerment, and on the other hand, your workers beat up girls in your program!! Very shameful incident!!" A man could be seen snatching some bands from the girls in the video. Apparently, tens of thousands of girls were called to participate in the 'Ladki Hoon Lad Sakti Hoon' marathon where Congress workers reportedly misbehaved with the participants who chanted Modi and Yogi slogans.



**Department of MSME, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh**  
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(पंकज दुबे)

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**सिंचाई एवं जल संसाधन विभाग, उ०प्र०, विक्टोरिया पार्क, मेरठ**

**अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या-०७/एस.ई./२०२१-२२**

महामहाराष्ट्रराज्यपाल, उत्तर प्रदेश की ओर से निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु ऑनलाईन निविदा (<https://etender.up.nic.in>)सिंचाई एवं जल संसाधन विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश में वर्गीकृत श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से दिनांक 06.01.2022 को अपरान्ह 3:00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा की प्री-क्वालिफिकेशन/टेक्निकल बिड अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, ड्रेनेज मण्डल गाजियाबाद के कार्यालय में मुख्य अभियन्ता (यमुना) ओखला द्वारा गठित समिति के सदस्यों द्वारा दिनांक 06.01.2022 को अपरान्ह 3:30 बजे खोली जाएगी, इसके अगले कार्यदिवस में, यदि इस सम्बन्ध में कोई आपत्ति हो तो, इस कार्यालय में आपत्ति प्राप्त की जायेगी। प्री-क्वालिफिकेशन/टेक्निकल बिड में क्वालिफाईड पाये गये ठेकेदारों की ही फाईनलियल बिड खोली जायेगी। कार्यालय बन्द होने अथवा अवकाश होने की दशा में यह निविदा अगले कार्यदिवस में उसी समय खोली जायेगी। अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा दिनांक 31.12.2021 को पूर्वान्ह 11:00 बजे से दिनांक 06.01.2022 को अपरान्ह 3:00 बजे तक डाउनलोड/अपलोड की जा सकती है। कार्य का विवरण निम्नवत् है :-

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विस्तृत अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना का विवरण एवं नियम व शर्तें उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार की वेबसाइट (<http://upgovt.up.nic.in/infotech>) तथा सिंचाई विभाग की वेबसाइट की(<http://www.idup.gov.in>) पर उपलब्ध है। ये निविदा सूचना परियोजना की स्वीकृति एवं बनावटन की प्रत्यक्षा में की जा रही है। इसे बिना किसी पूर्व सूचना के निरस्त किया जा सकता है, इसके लिए किसी प्रकार का कोई दावा मान्य नहीं होगा।

दिनांक

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People ride boats in the Yamuna river as seagulls fly near them at Yamuna Ghat in New Delhi on Sunday

PTI

**GOVERNMENT OF NCT OF DELHI**  
**DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT**  
**CHILD PROTECTION UNIT**  
**1st FLOOR, ISBT BUILDING, KASHMERE GATE**  
**DELHI-110006**

**INVITATION FOR APPLICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT AS CHAIRPERSONS AND MEMBERS OF CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEES AND MEMBERS SOCIAL WORKER OF JUVENILE JUSTICE BOARDS IN NCT OF DELHI.**

Department of Women and Child Development published an advertisement on dated 27.07.2021 to fill up vacancies in Child Welfare Committees and Juvenile Justice Boards, against which applications were received. In due course of time more vacancies have arisen. The Department is also in the process of constituting new Child Welfare Committee and new Juvenile Justice Boards

Thus, Online Applications are invited for the Honorary posts of 03 Chairpersons and 17 Members of Child Welfare Committee as per Section 27 of Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and Rules 15 (3) and 10 Member Social Workers of Juvenile Justice Boards as per Section 4 of Juvenile Justice Act and Rule 4, 5 & Rule 88 of Juvenile Justice Model Rules, 2016 in NCT of Delhi, to fill up existing vacancies and those arising in near future

The applications shall be accepted w.e.f 27.12.2021 to 10.01.2022 After scrutiny the list of shortlisted candidates with relevant experience suited for the said positions shall be displayed on the website of the Department with schedule of interview Applicants are advised to refer to the Department's website [www.wcdel.in](http://www.wcdel.in) for detailed terms of reference/eligibility criteria and refer to link as given in Department's website for applying online. Candidates are also advised to see the Department's Website/ Notice Board on regular basis for any other update in this regard while the process is on.

**Note: No other mode of applications except online shall be entertained by the Department. The Department also reserves the right to increase or decrease the number of vacancies at any point of time.**

**The applicants who have applied for the post of Chairperson/Members of Child Welfare Committees and Member Social Workers of Juvenile Justice Boards against previous advertisement of Department dated 27.07.2021 need not apply again. Any change in update in status may be communicated through separate mail sent to [scpsdelhi@gmail.com](mailto:scpsdelhi@gmail.com).**

Sd/-

**Special Secretary cum Director (WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT)**

DIP/Shabdarth/0522/21-22

# SC: Family members of husband...

From Page 1

The apex court said though there is an allegation of causing injuries, there are no other external injuries noticed in the postmortem certificate, except the single ante-mortem injury i.E. Ligature mark around the neck, and the cause of death is shown as asphyxia.

"Having regard to the case of the appellants and the material placed on record, we are of the considered view that except vague and bald allegations against the appellants, there are no specific allegations disclosing the involvement of the appellants to pro-

ecute them for the offences alleged," the bench said.

The father of the deceased had lodged a complaint on July 25, 2018 at police station Kotwali in Gorakhpur that husband, brother-in-law, sister-in-law and mother-in-law of her younger daughter continuously used to demand a four-wheeler vehicle and Rs 10 lakh in cash as dowry.

It is alleged that as the said demands were not met, they used to beat his daughter and threatened to kill her.

It is, further, alleged that ten days prior to the date of the incident, all the accused with a common intention had severely beaten up his daughter and threatened to kill, if the demands of the dowry of cash and car were not met.

On July 24, 2018 at about 8 PM, the accused with a common intention beat his daughter, killed her by putting a noose around her neck and hanged her. PTI

# Gap between 2nd Covid...

From Page 1

"Also, 50,000 breakthrough infections are being reported per day in the UK. So this proves that vaccination is not preventing coronavirus infection but vaccines are effective in preventing severity and death," Rai said.

He said mortality due to Covid-19 in susceptible populations is around 1.5 per cent, which means 15,000 deaths per million population. "Through vaccination, we can prevent 80-90 per cent of these deaths, which means that 13,000 to 14,000 deaths per million (population) can be prevented," he added.

Serious adverse events following immunisation are between 10 to 15 per million population, Rai said.

"So, if you do the risk and benefit analysis in adults, it is a huge benefit," he said. In the case of children, he said, the severity of infection is very low and according to data available in the public domain, only two deaths per million population have been reported.

"In this section (children), 15,000 (people) are not dying and keeping in mind the adverse effects also, if you do the risk and benefit analysis, then the risk is more than the benefits based on the available data," Rai explained.

# Night curfew in Delhi as +vity...

From Page 1

Apprehensions are also that if Monday's positivity rate also remains above 0.5 per cent, measures under yellow alert can be implemented aiming to contain spread of the virus.

Under this, shops in markets and malls dealing with non-essential goods and services will be allowed to open as per the odd-even formula from 10 am to 8 pm, while one weekly market will be allowed per municipal zone at half the vendor capacity.

Restaurants can operate at 50 per cent capacity from 8 am to 10 pm, bars from 12-10 pm, also at 50 per cent capacity. Delhi Metro and buses will be allowed to operate at 50 per cent capacity. Delhi Government offices can call 100 per cent grade I officers, while private firms will be allowed to call 50 per cent of staff between 9 am and 5 pm.

Besides this, cinemas, banquet halls, auditoriums, spas, gyms and entertainment parks, gyms and yoga centres will also be shut. There will be a complete ban on social/entertainment/religious/political/festival-related gatherings. Sports complexes, stadiums (except national/international sports events), entertainment parks will be shut.

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# DU to charge more from students as grants dry

**New Delhi:** The Delhi University has decided to increase the annual university development fee charged from students in view of reduction in capital grants by the UGC, according to official documents.

This move will lead to a steep hike in fee of students, a section of teachers said.

The university development fee (UDF) is a component of the annual fees charged from students.

The varsity had constituted a university development fund committee to consider allocation of funds for various activities like construction of new buildings and procurement of laboratory equipment.

"At present, the university is receiving only ₹ 600 per student per year as UDF contribution which was implemented from the academic year 2012-13," the panel said.

"Keeping in view the fund requirement as well as government mandate for self sufficiency and reduction of capital grants by UGC (University Grants Commission) as well as for creation of ICT (information and communications) enabled infrastructure, the UDF amount should be revised to ₹900 per



student per year," it said.

The committee's recommendations were accepted in the varsity's Executive Council meeting held on December 17 despite dissent by a few members. The committee, comprising former pro-vice chancellor PC Joshi and registrar Vikas Gupta, said that the UGC is not releasing sufficient capital grant to the university for laboratory equipment and other equipment for the last three to four years, and in the current financial year allocated ₹1.25 crore.

"With this very small amount, the university is not able to purchase even a single laboratory equipment for departments. The departments are regularly pursuing for providing funds for replacement/purchase of laboratory equipment for academic and other research activities," the panel noted.

"The committee after extensive deliberations approved for allocation of an amount of ₹ 52 crore for purchase/replacement of laboratory equipment of different departments, after exhausting all available resources. The vice chancellor may be requested to constitute a committee for allocation of funds," it said.

Executive Council member Seema Das said, "Earlier this development fund as collected by students, was treated by the university as emergency fund. As in every household, some amount of money is never touched and kept for difficult times, this UDF has been like this."

Now, "forcing" the university to draw from UDF for infrastructure and development will make the things difficult for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes, economically weaker section students, Das said. "This will force steep hike in students fees," executive council member said.

Rajesh Jha, a political science professor, and former Executive Council member, said this move is like the university is "testing waters" for implementing a fee hike. **PTI**

## Teenager jumps to death in East Delhi



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 15-year-old boy allegedly committed suicide by jumping off sixth floor of the building in east Delhi. Police said that no suicide note was found from the spot and police teams are investigating the incident to ascertain the reason.

Police said that the deceased is a resident of Delhi's CWG village area. According to Priyanka Kashyap, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), East district, the incident took place around 8.30 PM on Saturday when his parents were at Mayur Vihar market.

"The boy was alone at home and he allegedly jumped off from the sixth floor of the building. He was taken to Max Hospital by the neighbours where after treatment he was declared dead," said the DCP.

"The spot was inspected by the Crime Team and experts from Forensic Science Laboratory team. So far no foul play is suspected and further enquiry is on," the DCP added.

## Over 21,900 doses of Covid vaccine administered to inmates of 3 jails

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Prison authority on Sunday said that more than 21,900 doses of Covid-19 vaccine have been administered to the inmates of three jails, Mandoli, Tihar and Rohini jails, in the national capital so far.

According to data shared by the prison official, 21,970 doses -- 15,152 first dose and 6818 second dose -- have been administered by Saturday.

"As on Saturday, 10,707 Tihar jail inmates were given the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine and 4,352 were given the second dose. In Rohini jail, 1,793 inmates -- 1,381 first dose and 412 second dose -- were administered the vaccine, while in Mandoli jail, 3,064 inmates got their first, and 2,054 second dose," the data stated.

The prisons department launched a Covid vaccination drive for inmates over 45 years of age on March 18, while the inoculation of inmates in the 18-44-age group began on May 18. The prison officials had said that over 4,000 inmates were released from the three jails this year.

"The officials had started the process of releasing inmates from the second week of May. Around 3,800 under-trial prisoners were released on interim bail and around 840 convicts were released on emergency parole from the prisons," they had said.



Last year, around 5,500 under-trial prisoners and 1,184 convicts were released on interim bail and emergency parole from these jails during the virus-induced lockdown.

Amid escalating concerns over the Omicron variant, Delhi prisons authorities had said they are ramping up anti-coronavirus measures and have decided to raise awareness about vaccines among inmates and isolate those showing symptoms of an Influenza-like illness.

According to the latest official order, all staff of the three Delhi prisons -- Tihar, Mandoli and Rohini -- have been directed to emphasise to inmates the need to get vaccinated and to do so as quickly as possible.

Prisons in Delhi are often very crowded, making them a potential hotspot for the spread of the virus. During the previous wave of coronavirus, the Supreme Court had allowed jails authorities across the country to take steps to decongest prisons including by releasing inmates on parole.

## City Govt to ask aggregators to completely switch to electric vehicles

**New Delhi:** The Delhi Government is going to ask e-commerce companies, food delivery services and cab aggregators to completely switch to electric vehicles, and petrol pumps to not give fuel to vehicles without a pollution-under-check (PUC) certificate, officials said.

Vehicle emissions account for around 38 per cent of the city's air pollution.

"The government is going to take two majors steps to check vehicular pollution - we will ask all aggregators including Zomato, Swiggy, Ola, Uber etc. To completely switch to electric vehicles. These services account for 30 per cent of the registered vehicles in Delhi," an official told PTI.

"We are also considering directing dealers and petrol pumps not to supply fuel to vehicles without PUC certificate," he said.

Directions under the Environment (Protection) Act in this regard are expected to be issued this week. Asked if a deadline will be given to aggregators to switch to EVs, a senior official in the trans-

port department said, "It will be done in phased manner. We will soon publish the draft guidelines."

The Delhi Electric Vehicles policy -- introduced in August 2020 -- aims at increasing the EV share in total vehicle sales to 25 percent by 2024.

On 1 y Flipkart (by 2030) and Fedex (by 2040) have established worldwide targets for converting their last-mile delivery fleets to electric vehicles, while DHL has set a 60 per cent electrification target for its fleet.

In October, the city government launched a massive drive to check PUC certificates and deployed around 500 teams at petrol pumps for this purpose.

Under the Section 190(2) of the Motor Vehicle Act, 1993, vehicle owners not having a valid PUC can be fined up to ₹10,000, or imprisoned for up to six months or both. The owners are required to get test their vehicles tested to ascertain if they meet emission standards for pollutants such as carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides, carbon dioxide.

## Cong raps AAP over toxic air, Omicron spread

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar expressed shock over the "apathy" of the AAP ruled Delhi Government for being ignorant in dealing with the possible Covid-19 outbreak. The Congress Delhi unit president said that with the National Capital choking in toxic air, Delhi Chief Minister has been keeping quiet, without taking emergency steps to tackle the issue.

Kumar said that an air emergency, coupled with the fast spread of the Omicron variant of Covid, make a deadly cocktail for the health of children, asthmatic and heart patients in particular, but Kejriwal who has run out of excuses like stubble-burning, cracker-bursting etc for Delhi becoming a gas chamber, has now gone into hiding.

Kumar said that despite strictures by the Supreme Court, the National Green Tribunal and experts, Kejriwal has not addressed the pollution problem, though he makes tall promises in other States, for political gains.

He further accused Kejriwal of squandering hundreds of crores in his "pointless" 'Yudh' against air pollution without bothering to tackle vehicular and dust pollutants generated within Delhi. He asked what purpose the smog towers at Connaught Place and Anand Vihar served if air pollution hovers at severe levels in Delhi?

Meanwhile, attacking on the AAP ruled Delhi Government for "ignoring" the possible third wave of Covid-19 pandemic, Delhi Congress vice-president Jai Kishan on Sunday said that the apathy of the Kejriwal government in dealing with the approaching disaster may again create havoc in the city if corrective measures are not taken to contain it in time.

At the time, the city is grappling with the surge in Covid-19 cases, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is touring election bound states and promising anything to seek support, Jai Kishan said.

Addressing the people at a function, Jaikishan said that if Kejriwal has done nothing to develop the city but he keeps making tall claims while visiting other states for electoral benefits.

## 20th year of ops: Delhi Metro exhibition shows rare pics of first piling work

**New Delhi:** Rare images of the very first piling work done in the national Capital for building Delhi Metro and old newspaper clippings are among the archival documents put up on display as part of a permanent exhibition at the Kashmere Gate station of the network.

The exhibition -- "Tracing Delhi Metro's Journey" -- has been launched to mark the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation entering into the 20th year of its operations, officials said.

The DMRC had begun its commercial operations on December 25, 2002, a day after then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had inaugurated its first stretch spanning 8.2 kilometre from Shahdara to Tis Hazari, with just six stations, on the

Red Line.

The DMRC network's current span is nearly 392 km with 286 stations (including the Noida-Greater Noida Metro Corridor and Rapid Metro, Gurgaon).

A day after the inauguration of the first-ever corridor, the rush was so "massive" that authorities had to issue "paper tickets" to handle the flow of passengers, officials had told PTI earlier.

The introduction of the state-of-the-art rapid transit system was such a novel mode of transport in the city then that many people believed it was only there temporarily and the DMRC had to issue newspapers advertisements that it was "here to stay", they had said.

This journey of nearly two decades of operations has been captured in an exhibition, mounted at the very location from where the then prime minister had inaugurated the Delhi's first ever metro corridor back in December 2002, a senior official said.

The Red Line itself has now extended on both sides, to Rithala in Delhi and New Bus Stand (Shaheed Sthal) in Ghaziabad.

"The plaque unveiled during the Delhi Metro's first inauguration event is placed right there (at the exhibition venue). The DMRC is promoting the location as a selfie-point too where people can come and become a part of the urban history of the city," a spokesperson of DMRC said. **PTI**



हरियाणा सरकार



50  
आज़ादी का अमृत महोत्सव



75  
आज़ादी का अमृत महोत्सव

# हरियाणा कौशल रोज़गार निगम (रोज़गार का नया मंच)



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# Vax milestone shows trust of every Indian in system, scientists: PM

SELF-AWARENESS, SELF-DISCIPLINE ARE COUNTRY’S STRENGTHS IN FIGHTING AGAINST THIS VARIANT OF CORONAVIRUS, SAYS MODI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the fear of the spread of the Omicron variant of coronavirus, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the vaccination milestone shows trust of every Indian in the system and scientists and that “awareness and self-discipline” are the country’s strengths in fighting against the novel variant.

Addressing the nation on the 84th episode and the last of this year of his monthly radio programme “Mann Ki Baat”, the Prime Minister said the country is well-prepared for the new variant of the virus and Indian scientists are working on the mutating virus.

“We also have to keep in mind that a new variant of coronavirus has already knocked at the door. Our scientists are continuously study-



ing this new Omicron variant. They are getting new data every day; their suggestions are being worked upon,” Modi said.

In a situation like this, Modi said, “Self-awareness and self-discipline are the country’s strengths in fighting against this

variant of coronavirus. It is this very collective strength of ours that will defeat Covid; with this very sense of responsibili-



ty, we have to enter into 2022.”

Modi touched a range of issues and praised a number of inspiring people working hard to make the society and the country better “away from glare of media” and publicity.

Modi said it is the strength of the people; it is because of “everyone’s effort” that India could fight “the biggest pan-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi touched a range of issues and praised a number of inspiring people working hard to make the society and the country better “away from glare of media” and publicity

Modi said it is the strength of the people; it is because of “everyone’s effort” that India could fight “the biggest pandemic in a 100 years”

Modi paid tribute to Indian Air Force pilot Varun Singh, who succumbed to his injuries earlier this month

demic in a 100 years.”

“Crossing the 140 million vaccine dose mark is an achievement of each and every Indian. This shows the trust of every Indian in the system; shows trust in science and in scientists; and is also a testament to the willpower of we Indians who are fulfilling our responsibilities towards the society,” he said.

“Our experience of the last two years is that our own effort as a citizen is very important to defeat this global pandemic. Our scientists are continuous-

ly studying this new Omicron variant. They are getting new data everyday their suggestions are being worked upon.”

Modi paid tribute to Indian Air Force pilot Varun Singh, who succumbed to his injuries earlier this month.

“In the battle of Mahabharata, Bhagwan Shri Krishna expressed to Arjuna — ‘Nabhabh Sprisham Deeptam’ i.e. touch the sky with pride. This is also the motto of the Indian Air Force. Many lives engaged in the service of Maa

Bharati soar over these heights of the sky with pride every day; they teach us a lot. Such was the life of Group Captain Varun Singh who was flying the helicopter that fell prey to a mishap this month in Tamil Nadu,” the Prime Minister said and quoted his letter to the children where he asked them to never be daunted by failures.

“Varun did not boast of his valour; instead he referred to his failures. He talked about how he converted his shortcomings into abilities. At one place in this letter he has written “You may be mediocre in school but it is by no means a measure of things to come in life. Find your calling — it could be art, music, graphic design, literature, etc. Whatever you work towards, be dedicated, do your best. Never go to bed, thinking, I could have put-in more efforts.”

## Report: More than half of Parl Sessions in 20 yrs adjourned before scheduled date

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than half of Parliament Sessions in the past 20 years were adjourned before the scheduled date of closure, with the Rajya Sabha losing 108 sittings, research by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat has shown.

Since the Budget Session of 2020, all the five Parliament Sessions were cut short due to Covid-19 pandemic and one due to elections in some states though not specifically stated.

The Rajya Sabha Secretariat undertook a study of the Sessions after Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu wanted a fact-sheet on the trend of early adjournments.

The recently concluded Winter Session of Parliament was adjourned sine die, a day before the schedule with the Government citing that it has completed the legislative business.

Sources said the study revealed that 32 of the 63 sessions, since the Monsoon Session of 2001 (193rd Session), were adjourned before schedule. While 25 ses-



sions (40 per cent) ran a full course, six sessions (9 per cent) concluded beyond the scheduled duration.

Over the 63 Sessions, Rajya Sabha has lost a total of 108 sittings — 7.42 per cent of the total scheduled sittings — over the last 20 years due to early adjournments.

With the House meeting beyond the schedule for a total of 23 sittings in six sessions, the net loss in sittings was 85 or 6 per cent of the total scheduled sittings of 1,455 over 20 years.

In the last seven years since 2014, when Narendra Modi assumed power, 25 sessions were held and 14 of them fell short of the schedule account-

ing for 56 per cent of the total.

Three of them were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Of the total scheduled sittings of 507 during this period, the House lost a total of 39 sittings or 7.69 per cent of total scheduled sittings.

Rajya Sabha sat for an extra eight sittings during the 249th session.

Since 2014, sources said the analysis suggested that Rajya Sabha loses a net of about 7 per cent of the total sittings due to premature adjournments of the House and the reasons included disruptions, agreement among parties, government’s proposals, elections and the pandemic.

## Modi must follow clear vax policy, says Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Accusing the Centre of being “ignorant” to the threat posed by the Omicron variant of coronavirus, the Congress on Sunday demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi must follow a clear vaccination policy, provide jabs for children between 5 and 15 years and spell out the roadmap to combat the pandemic.

The Congress also took a swipe at Prime Minister Modi over political rallies, saying while in Uttar Pradesh gatherings at weddings are being limited to 200, the PM is holding rallies wherein lakhs participate.

The Opposition’s attack at the Centre over its handling of the pandemic came a day after the PM announced that vaccination against Covid-19 for children between 15 and 18 years will start from January 3, while “precaution dose” for healthcare and frontline workers would be administered from January 10.

Reacting to the announcement, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the Centre has “accepted my suggestion” to allow the administration of booster doses of Covid-19 vac-



cine and asserted that the protection of vaccines and booster shots has to be provided to every citizen of the country.

At the AICC Press conference, Congress’ chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala alleged that the Modi Government has “failed India” during the pandemic.

“Modi ji failed the migrant workers during the first and second corona wave, Modi ji failed the poor during the first and second wave when he failed to put a single paisa in the hands of the poor when the whole world was doing it, Modi ji failed the small and medium businesses when he virtually left them to fend for themselves,” he charged.

Citing surveys, Surjewala said “mismanagement” of the coronavirus pandemic led to death of nearly 40 lakh Indians.



“The tepid response on Omicron virus bordering on the directionless drift is even more alarming now. The entire policy paralysis of the Modi Government in dealing with coronavirus, including Omicron is marred by failure of leadership, rudderless response and planless preparation,” Surjewala charged.

He also accused the Prime Minister of shifting the buck on to the states while shouldering “zero responsibility”. Attacking the PM over his address to the nation on Saturday, the Congress leader said despite the “lofty announcement and the accolades that he was trying to earn yesterday,” the harsh reality is otherwise. “The harsh reality is — 47.95 crore adults over 18 years of age are yet to be administered 59.40 crore doses,” Surjewala said.

## Judges appointing judges a myth: CJI

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

The notion that “judges are themselves appointing judges” is a myth as the judiciary is just one of the many players involved in the process of selecting judicial officers, Chief Justice of India NV Ramana said on Sunday.

He was delivering the fifth Sri Lavu Venkateswarlu Endowment Lecture on “Indian Judiciary — Challenges of future” at Siddhartha Law College, Vijayawada.

He also said in recent times, physical attacks on judicial officers are on the rise and at times, there are concerted campaigns in the print and social media against judges if parties do not get a favourable order while these attacks appear to be “sponsored and synchronised.” There is a need to liberate the institution of public prosecutors. Total independence must be granted to them and to make them answerable only to the Courts, he further said.

“It is nowadays fashionable to reiterate phrases such as ‘judges are themselves appointing judges.’ I consider this to be one of the widely propagated myths. The fact is the Judiciary is merely one of the many players involved in the process,” Justice Ramana said.

Recently, Kerala MP John Brittas had reportedly said during a debate in Parliament on The High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021 that Judges appointing judges is unheard of anywhere.

“Many authorities are involved, including the Union Law Ministry, State Governments, Governor, High Court Collegia, Intelligence Bureau, and lastly, the topmost executive, who all are designated to examine the suitability of a candidate. I am sad to note that the well-informed also propagate the aforesaid notion. After



all, this narrative suits certain sections,” Justice Ramana said.

Appreciating the Centre for its efforts on appointing more judges, he said, some recommendations made by High Courts are yet to be transmitted to the Supreme Court by the Union Law Ministry. It is expected that the Government needs to strictly adhere to the timelines laid down in the Malik Mazhar Case.

The law enforcing agencies, particularly the specialised agencies, need to deal with malicious attacks on judiciary effectively, the CJI said, adding that it was unfortunate that unless the Court interfered and passed orders, the authorities generally do not proceed with the investigation.

“The Governments are expected and duty bound to create a secure environment so that the judges and judicial officers can function fearlessly,” he said.

New media tools have enormous amplifying ability, but appear to be incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong, good and bad and the real and fake. Media trials cannot be a guiding factor in deciding cases, he further said.

He said historically, prosecutors in India have been under the control of the Government. “Hence it is not a surprise that they do not act independently. They do nothing to prevent frivolous and non-deserving cases from reaching the courts. Public Prosecutors automatically oppose bail applications without independently applying their mind. They attempt to suppress evidence during trial which could benefit the accused,” Justice Ramana said.

## Ram Setu not false: Heavy Industries Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Heavy Industries Minister Mahendra Nath Pandey on Sunday said Ram Setu is not false, it was the apt work of the engineers of that era. He lamented it was unfortunate as some people question this logic and refuse to accept. He was addressing at the 36th Indian Engineering Congress-Centenary celebrations organised by Institution of Engineers (India).

Speaking at the 36th Indian Engineering Congress-Centenary Celebrations organised by Institution of Engineers (India), an organisation of India’s top engineers, the minister said this was confirmed by the apex organisation of the engineers themselves. “Some people submit affidavits in the court to prove Ram Setu did not exist, whereas Ram Setu has been in existence since ancient times,” Pandey said adding engineers have also played an important



role in the construction of the ancient city of Dwarka.

The theme of the convention is “Engineers for Viable Technology and \$ 5 Trillion Economy”, with engineers from across the country participating. The event will end on December 28, 2021. Indian Army’s Engineer-in-Chief Lieutenant General Harpal Singh was conferred with the ‘Eminent Engineering Personality Award’ by the Institution of Engineers (India) for his contributions in the field of engineering in the Defence Forces and Border Roads Organisation on the occasion.

“India’s engineers have a very proud history. Glad that the engineers are proudly talk-

ing about their ancient culture and history. Otherwise, earlier people were hesitant to even talk about their history,” he said.

Pandey added engineers have played an important role in the corona period. “Amidst all the difficulties, due to the efforts of the engineers, the country has today reached the second place in the world in the export of PPE kits. Whereas earlier PPE kits were imported. Similarly, there was a crisis of oxygen in the second wave of Corona, the situation was handled within 9-10 days due to the tireless hard work of the engineers,” he added.

Calling upon the engineers, the minister asked them to work towards making the country

self-reliant. He said that making the country a five trillion dollar economy is not just a dream, it is a determined thought that everyone has to realise.

Speaking on the occasion, Lt Gen Harpal Singh said that the environment and ecosystem for engineers to perform & excel at this time couldn’t have been better as we strive to be a 5 trillion dollar economy. “All infra sectors be it highways, railways, digital, aviation, gas power transmission & renewable energy are PM’s focus under a single unified vision. Robust infrastructure is bedrock for economic growth. Engineers have crucial role in success of this initiative,” he said.

On this occasion, President of the Institution of Engineers (India) Narendra Singh said that the history of engineers is very old. Engineers have contributed to India’s glorious ancient history from Ramayana, Mahabharata to Harappan culture and Mohenjodaro.

## Mission SAGAR: Indian ship Kesari enters Mozambique Port

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to promote maritime diplomacy robustly, an Indian warship is now in Maputo, Mozambique to strengthen bilateral ties between the two countries. The ship’s deployment is part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of Security and Growth for all in the Region (SAGAR).

Giving details of the present engagement, navy officials said here on Sunday as part of yet another deployment undertaken by the Navy since May 2020 under Mission SAGAR, Indian ship Kesari entered Port of Maputo, Mozambique on Saturday. This is the eighth such deployment in consonance with the Prime Ministers vision of SAGAR and is being conducted in close coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs, and other agencies of the Government of India.

These deployments were conducted in solidarity with India’s extended Maritime



Neighbourhood and highlight the importance accorded by India to these special relationships. More than 500 tons of food aid has been shipped by INS Kesari to support the efforts of Mozambique to cope with ongoing drought and concurrent challenges of pandemic.

India also remains committed to supporting the capacity building efforts of the Armed Forces of Mozambique. To this end, INS Kesari is carrying two Fast Interceptor Craft and self defence equipment to be handed over to the Armed Forces of Mozambique.



INS Kesari, a Landing Ship Tank (Large) had undertaken similar mission in May-June 2020 to provide humanitarian and medical assistance to Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros, including deployment of Medical Assistance Teams of the Indian Navy in multiple locations.

Since May 2020, the Indian Navy has deployed ships to 15 Friendly Foreign Countries under SAGAR missions. These deployments spanned over 215 days at sea have delivered a cumulative assistance of more than 3,000 MT of food aid, over

300 MT LMO, 900 Oxygen Concentrators and 20 ISO containers.

Whilst undertaking, these missions Indian ships have traversed a cumulative distance of close to 40,000 nautical miles which is nearly twice the circumference of earth. With a steadfast intent of making such high quantum of humanitarian assistance reach its destination in time, personnel from ships and shore organisations of Indian Navy have invested close to a million man-hours to deliver succour to our friends overseas, officials said.












FIRST COLUMN


MORE TAXES TO CHECK HIGH DEFICIT?



SHIVAJI SARKAR

The highest wholesale price inflation in decades at 14.23 per cent may result in high deficit leading to levying of more taxes. The government expenses are certain to rise even if it wants keep the deficit low at least on paper, at around six per cent. The next budget would be interesting to watch as the consultations with agriculture, industry, kisans and financial institutions begins.

Everybody wants to check inflation but the struggle for getting better prices is what contributes to an inflationary trend. The government has also started the process of domestic production of semi-conductors and batteries for the car industry. This is the contrived solution to counter international rise in prices. But it is not sure that steps taken to acquire lithium mines or increase semi-conductor manufacturing or edible oil production would be a solution.



The price rise is heightened by muted factory output at 3.2 per cent. This has led the Asian Development Bank to scale down India's growth estimate to 9.7 per cent, almost close to RBI's 9.5 per cent. It is the highest since 2005 and surpasses the recent October figure of 12.54 per cent. This is spiked by high prices of petroleum products and gas. The manufacturing prices are also high at 11.92 per cent causing a crisis-like situation in the textile sector.

Domestic edible oils have spurred at a fast rate to over 50 per cent in the last one year. Even commonly used mustard oil shot up to ₹214 a litre from around ₹85-90 a litre.

The RBI is concerned about the impact of high toll fees, excise and other charges for the rise in commodity prices. Loss of jobs or cut in wages have also contributed. Food grain prices rose by 4.88 per cent, but were moderated by free food grain doles through the public distribution system. Sustaining the free dole for long is not practically possible but withdrawal also has political implications.

Interestingly, high prices make GDP look brighter. Inflation-engineered high expenses show the growth in "positive" light though in reality it depresses purchasing power and adds to many other woes including contraction of wages a normal for many industries. Inflation naturally adds to the problem. It becomes difficult to afford high prices at low wages.

The high fuel prices are being countered by encouraging battery-powered cars and being self-sufficient in producing lithium batteries. It aims at saving about ₹2.5 lakh crore in import of crude. But the new effort is capital intensive, expensive and has high prospecting cost. It plans to buy 12 lithium and cobalt mines abroad. The National Aluminium Co Ltd will hold a 40 percent stake in the joint venture called Khanij Bidesh India Ltd, with Hindustan Copper Ltd and Mineral Exploration Corp Ltd controlling 30 per cent each. Apparently, it is a wise move but lithium is not widely available. Its mining and processing costs are very high.

Chinese companies control most such mines in Australia, Chile and Argentina. Australian Prime Minister Scot Morrison had discussed about Indian participation in critical metallic sectors. The progress is slow. Lithium production cost is also high and with rising shipping costs, the overall cost becomes oppressive. It would not be easy to produce lithium and lithium-batteries at affordable cost or save on foreign exchange. Secondly, battery-powered cars may not be an economic solution as petroleum, despite its complexities, remains the most versatile fuel.

Lessons must be drawn from the semi-conductor crisis. The problem is about getting the chip essential for manufacturing semi-conductors. Production of scooters, mobikes and three-wheelers are affected because of the chip scarcity.

*(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)*

# Another migration Bill in the making

## The Government must bring in a Comprehensive Migration Management Bill in consultation with the real stakeholders — the Indian migrants

The need for a Comprehensive Migration Management Act revamping the existing Migration Act 1983 was a long-standing demand of the Indian migrants. However, the draft Migration Bill 2021 is totally disappointing and contrary to the aspirations of the Indian Diaspora. It is appalling to note that the draft is cold-hearted in its outlook towards "Comprehensive Migration Management" and it is regressive than the Migration Act 1983.

Indian Diaspora was aspiring for an Act understanding the changing geopolitical, economic, socio-cultural, and strategic requirements of the present-day migration. The incumbent Act was basically envisaged to control or regulate only one aspect of migration -- the recruitments to the Gulf and the Middle East. Even though this inadequacy of the Act was pointed out at the very inception of the Act, no action was taken to rectify it by the successive governments.

Some patchworks in the form of amendments failed to provide for fair or ethical recruitment from India. The net result was large-scale illegal recruitments, visa trading, human trafficking, economic drainage, and untold miseries especially to the blue collar, manual, menial, and domestic workers - they all comprise the largest section of Indian migrants. A migrant having to pay a recruitment fee is unethical and leads to forced labor, human trafficking, bonded labor, and slavery. The need for a comprehensive migration management Act fervently started at the time of UPA-I, but their approach was indifference and they never exhibited the needed political will to get it enacted.

India is the highest remittance beneficiary from its world's largest migrant population. World Bank estimated that India received the world's highest remittance last year worth \$88 billion and it is expected to grow this year in spite of the Coronavirus pandemic. The major portion of Indian remittances was received from Indian emigrants from Gulf and Middle East migration corridors.

xThe draft does not reflect or contain any of the ideals of global Sustainable Development Goals 2030 which recognized migration as one of the major elements of the global development agenda. To achieve the UN SDG 2030 goals, the Global Compact on Migration was passed and the gamut of future migration will be shaped and revolve around that. Now the Global Compact on Migration is the international guideline or directive principle of global migration accepted by most nations.

The draft migration bill makes a very passing reference in three places of the tag line of GCM "safe, orderly and regular migration" instead of making it the core guideline for making our emigration bill and policy. India being a signatory to GCM, and as the world has already accepted these principles as the guidelines of their migration policy, we must be at the

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AT THE STATE AND UNION TERRITORY LEVEL, THERE COULD BE NODAL MIGRATION MANAGEMENT MINISTRIES THAT WILL COORDINATE WITH THE CENTRAL MINISTRY ON ALL ASPECTS OF MIGRATION AND RETURNEES. UNDER THE STATE AND UNION TERRITORIES, THEY MUST HAVE DISTRICT-LEVEL OFFICES ATTACHED TO DISTRICT COLLECTOR OFFICES FOR THE COORDINATION OF THE MIGRATION-RELATED ACTIVITIES

*(The writer is Member, Loka Kerala Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)*



forefront of the implementation of these guidelines to get the best benefit for its large migrant population. Bringing in the 23 directive principles into the GCM will definitely widen the definitions, scope, and objectives and a total restructuring of the present Draft.

The very basic element of the new Comprehensive Migration Management Act should focus on implementing all the UN and ILO conventions, treaties, multilateral commitments to migrants' human rights and labor rights. Those that are not yet ratified should be ratified, should be made binding, and be made applicable to the Indian Diaspora across the board which will ensure to a great extent the safety and dignity of Indian migrants abroad. Otherwise, it will be a futile exercise by the Indian parliament and yet another yoke on the Indian migrants.

The Protector of Emigration is a colonial institution and an anti-migrant institution that needs to be scrapped altogether as it proved time and again to be a breeding place of institutionalized corruption. In the bill it appears as Bureau of Emigration Administration and all the powers exercised by POE are vested in it with additional powers to penalize, like ordering fines, impounding assets, and suspending passports, etc.

A comprehensive migration management Act is the need of the hour and total restructuring of the institutions, reframing the objectives, mission, and policies hitherto followed by India with a separate ministry (like the scrapped Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs) for looking after the safety, security, and welfare of the migrant Indians abroad. At the base, Pravasi

Ministries work as nodal authorities in states and union territories and they will coordinate and manage aspirants and returnees. In short, the draft is totally silent on the role of state governments in migration affairs.

At the State and Union Territory level, there could be nodal migration management ministries that will coordinate with the Central ministry on all aspects of migration and returnees. Under the state and union territories, they must have district-level offices attached to District Collector Offices for the coordination of the migration-related activities, and the base level units should be Taluk or Panchayat level Pravasi Coordination Offices (for states with high concentration of migrants). This structure will bring decentralized democratic and transparent governance of migration. These kinds of structural reform only promote and manage "safe, orderly and regular migration"

A Pravasi Commission with quasi-judicial authority at the Center and in the States and union territories is needed to look into the various issues related to migration pathways. In addition to labor attaches or labour secretaries, welfare attaches, provisions for legal attaches or legal secretaries must also be made in the embassies and missions of 18 ECR countries. Access to justice is a major problem the Indian migrants are facing as the rule of law is inadequate to protect their rights.

For the inclusion of the Migrants in the inclusive democratic developmental process and for the development of policies and management of migration gover-

nance, a quasi-legislative body needs to be constituted under this Act at the Center and State.


It should be comprehensive in dealing with the issues and challenges of temporary economic migrants, blue-collar and white-collar, students, women, and migrant families. The act should speak about and tackle the unfair recruitments placements and employment, human trafficking, student mobility, women security and welfare, migration governance, remittances, return and reintegration, migration data, etc. A Comprehensive Migration Management Act, (CMMA) only could end the stark exploitation in the migration cycles mainly the recruitment process, at work, return, rehabilitation, and reintegration of the migrants.

The proposed bill is conspicuously silent on migrant women, their protection, and welfare. The only clause which talks about women migrants in the draft is clause 8(iv) in chapter three which reads: "Facilitate gender-sensitive programs and activities to assist particular needs of women migrant workers". Detailed and compulsory provisions for ensuring safe migration for women should be included as women constitute more than 40 per cent of our emigrants and are the most vulnerable section among Indian emigrants.


We have waited for a comprehensive migration legislation for the last 35 years; we can wait for some more months. Our prayers are for a Comprehensive Migration Management Bill and hope the Government will revamp the draft with a new one in consultation with the real stakeholders — the Indian Migrants.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

SOME PEOPLE DID NOT LIKE THE FARM LAWS WE BROUGHT. WE MOVED A STEP BACK BUT WILL MOVE FORWARD AGAIN. —UNION AGRICULTURE MINISTER NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR



TOMAR'S STATEMENT HAS ONCE AGAIN EXPOSED THE CENTRE'S CONSPIRACY TO BRING BACK THE THREE ANTI-FARMER LAWS AFTER THE POLLS. —CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY RANDEEP SURJEWALA




# Choose your friends, and enemies, wisely

## Joe Biden's advisers are praying that Donald Trump stays alive and out of jail long enough to win the Republican presidential nomination in 2024

The right enemy can be a major asset in politics, as Chilean voters have just demonstrated once again. All the opinion polls had the two presidential candidates neck and neck before Sunday's election, but a few days before the vote it came out that the father of far-right candidate José Antonio Kast was a Nazi.

Everybody knew that the elder Kast had fought in Hitler's army as a teenager, but new documents surfaced last week showing that he actually joined the Nazi Party in 1944. People will forgive a lot of things in the young, but a Nazi teenager? And everybody already knew that Kast idolised his father as much as he revered Chile's former dictator, Gustavo Pinochet.



GWYNNE DYER

*(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'The Shortest History of War'. The views expressed are personal.)*

So, the left-wing candidate, Gabriel Boric, won the election with a 12% lead. Or more precisely, Kast lost it, because the electorate was reminded exactly where Kast's ideas (and Pinochet's) came from. He was, in fact, the perfect candidate for Boric to beat.

In the same spirit, Joe Biden's advisers are praying that Donald Trump stays alive and out of jail long enough to win the Republican presidential nomination in 2024. President Emmanuel Macron hopes that racist TV pundit Eric Zemmour is his main rival in France's April election. And Britain's Labour Party wants Boris Johnson to remain prime minister.

That may be tricky,

because Johnson is a car-crash of a human being.

In the past month and a bit, he has: lost a Conservative member of parliament guilty of lobbying for cash whom he tried and failed to get out of trouble by changing the rules; suffered a landslide defeat in the subsequent by-election to replace that MP in a 'safe' seat that has voted Conservative for 200 years; had to rely on Labour Party votes to get his latest anti-Covid measures through parliament in a vote where 99 members of his own party voted against him.

Johnson was known as 'the greased piglet' by a former employer, and a big part of his appeal to the voters was the way he could wriggle out of every scrape he got himself into. His brazen lies and shambolic manner were just part of his charm; he was a lovable 'scamp', not really a cheat and a liar.

His own party never liked or trusted him; it made him leader because he could win elections. But Conservatives are historically ruthless with failed leaders, and now they are having doubts about Johnson's electoral value.

As a former Conservative cabinet minister told "The Guardian": "The old Boris

brand, the old Boris shtick, doesn't work any more. And the consequence of that is a better-than-50% chance he'll be dead [politically speaking] by the end of next year." Cue panic in the Labour Party, which was counting on having Johnson as the enemy in the next election.

Democratic Party strategists in the United States are similarly anxious about Donald Trump's political health. They know that Trump's base will vote for him no matter what he does, but they calculate that the 'floating' voters who were seduced by his shtick last time will have serious reservations after his claims of a stolen election and his role in the assault on the Capitol.

Any other Republican candidate could also count on the votes of Trump's 'base' (except Mike Pence), but they could also expect to draw a lot more of the floating voters. That could deliver a Republican presidential win in 2024, so Donald is definitely the Democrats' preferred Republican candidate (though they must never say so in public).

As for Emmanuel Macron, his preferred opponent in the decisive second round of next April's election is Éric Zemmour, who is so far right that he scares the horses, or, failing that, the perennial neo-fascist-lite candidate Marine Le Pen. Macron's nightmare is having to face Valérie Pécresse, the new leader of Les Républicains.

She is reasonable enough to compete with Macron for the centre-right vote, but conservative enough to win the Catholic vote and good enough with the 'immigration' dog-whistle to draw some of the racist vote. In one opinion poll this month, she actually beat Macron in the hypothetical second round.

The question is whether she can beat both Le Pen and Zemmour in the first round, and Macron will be praying that she can't. But the assumption in every case, French, American and British, is that populist demagogues are now easier to beat than traditional right-wing politicians.

Maybe that's true, but all three countries are a long way from Chile.







Dated: 27th December 2021



## TEAM VIVA curates an array of ensembles to boost your fashion mood for the New Year's Eve

2021 was a party pooper, thanks to the uninvited guest Covid-19. Though 2022 seems like a breath of fresh air, it's important that we party responsibly. And to ensure you are party ready, we have curated an array of ensembles to boost your fashion mood for New Year's Eve. So, party responsibly but do it in style!



**High on drama**  
Want to make a dramatic entry? Shake it off in a Zabella marine printed layered high low tulle gown with a corset yoke. Accessorise the dress with the MNSH Mini Audrey classic 22kt gold plated brass ball bracelet and Eurumme gold knot

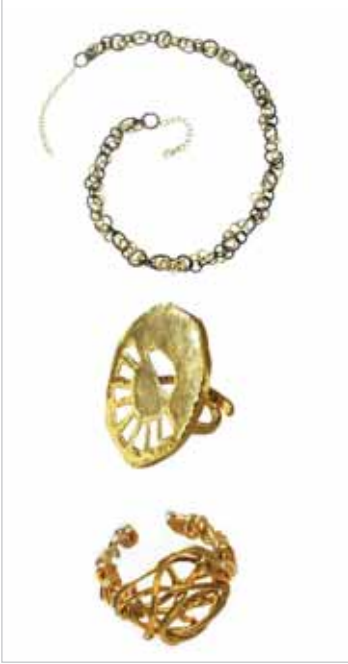
brass hoops. If you love dancing, then opt for a comfy pair of Junipero two strap Kiara heels embellished with crystals. Keep it chic and complete the look with Aanchal Sayal veil mini bag with crystal tassels.

**Suit up in style**  
Office party and have no time to change? Label Prints by Radhika has just the perfect outfit for you. Keeping powerful yet fun, the Rococo pantsuit makes for a classy party outfit. Glam it up with a pair of monogram hoops and an XO XO pendant by AMARIS by Perna Rajpal. While the gold adds the necessary bling, the beige crystal box bag encrusted with shimmering crystals and the see-through strap block heels by Aanchal Sayal will complement your stylish avatar.



**Bling it on**  
Speaking of bling, gold plays an integral part when it comes to New Year Eve parties. Be it accessories or

# PARTY READY



ensembles, gold does add the element of glamour to one's look. So, if you are a guy who loves to experiment with gold, then give your party wardrobe a bling-over! Menswear label Kunal Anil Tanna's blue bomber jacket with gold melange rib detailing and gold buttons goes well with a blue polo neck and trousers. Have some fun with layering a charcoal and gold dual interlinked long chain and complete

the look with a gold round ring and Yugen ring from Eurumme.

**Black magic?**  
Nothing can go wrong when you sport an LBD. Giving its own twist to the classic black dress is label Devina Juneja. The Ellis midi tulle dress by Devina Juneja features laser cut flowers with leather applique. Accessorise



the outfit with a pair of hoop earrings and charcoal ring from Eurumme. Complete the look with a classic pair of Lana heels from Junipero and circle handle bubbling black satchel by Devina Juneja.

**Wrap it up for an after party**  
If you are headed to another

party and the weather seems a bit chilly? Then, why not be winter ready in style. House of Fett's Wembley Wool Coat, crafted in a beautiful shade of blue, has a lapel collar and is adorned with classic vintage buttons in front. A chic ensemble to throw on as is, you can up your glam quotient and team the attire with a pair of pearl studded slider in block heels from Aanchal Sayal, a champagne wave double circle clutch by Devina Juneja and last but not the least a Cuban link chain and Oro hoops by MNSH.



## In Indian colours

Wearing the Indian jersey helped RANVEER SINGH deliver 83 to the audience as he felt duty-bound to the nation. By TEAM VIVA

Actor Ranveer Singh feels wearing the 1983 Indian cricket team jersey propelled him to deliver the knockout 83 to audiences, which is being highly appreciated. He feels proud that he had the honour to wear the Indian colours and is delighted that the film is entertaining audiences. Singh shares, "I felt deep sense of responsibility to do my best, contribute and

anchor a film that is very important for our nation. It is a glorious chapter in our history, an achievement that we want the coming generations to know of and feel proud of their country. So, I felt duty-bound to my nation, to creatively propel and empower a film that's so important for us as a people." The actor, who is the undisputed superstar of his



generation, is on a massive high right now as 83 has become one of the best reviewed films of all time in the history of Indian cinema. There is growing chatter about how Singh should be winning the coveted National Award for his brilliant performance as the captain of the 1983 Indian

cricket team that beat the mighty West Indies at Lord's. People are mesmerised as he has again dissolved himself on screen to transform himself into Kapil Dev.

The *Gully Boy* actor also felt a sense of duty to the original cricketers of the 1983 cricket team, who made India proud on the global stage, when he wore the national outfit for the Kabir Khan directorial.

He says, "I felt duty-bound to the players of the 1983 World Cup winning squad to re-create, represent and portray their great achievement and justify the cinematic rendition of the story befittingly and also duty-bound to Indian cinema after the struggles that the entertainment business has been through and to deliver a film that brings people back into theatres, that's so important for our movies; a film that unites the diverse cultures of our nation into the bond of cricket and of movies."

The actor is a shape shifter who can play any character on screen right from films like *Band Baaja Baarat*, *Ram Leela*, *Bajirao Mastani*, *Padmaavat*, *Simmba*, *Gully Boy*, 83. He has played characters without any reference point whatsoever and has delivered the best performances. Very few actors India have this unprecedented range as an artiste as monumental challenges inspire him. Singh will be next seen in YRF's *Jayeshbhai Jordaar*, Shankar's remake of his blockbuster *Anniyan* and Rohit Shetty's *Cirkus*.



Actor Ranveer Singh, along with director Kabir Khan, cricketer Kapil Dev and his wife Romi Bhatia spotted at Inox Nehru Place, New Delhi, during the promotions of their recent film, 83.



—Photos by Panikaj Kumar



## Festive films

A thrilling *Merry Christmas* from VIJAY SETHUPATHI and KATRINA KAIF with director SRIRAM RAGHAVAN

Tips Industries announce their new project *Merry Christmas* in association with Matchbox Pictures Pvt Ltd, set to release on December 23, 2022. The festive thriller, helmed by Sriram Raghavan, will have the South Indian superstar, Vijay Sethupathi, and Bollywood star Katrina Kaif in lead roles. The film went on floors this week and the first schedule is being extensively shot in Mumbai.

## EPITOME OF GRACE AND STYLE

REGINA CASSANDRA put in a lot of research to step into the skin of the character of Mrinalini Sarabhai in SonyLIV's *Rocket Boys*

Mrinalini Sarabhai was the epitome of grace, elegance, and creativity. And now bringing her beauty and style on-screen is the beautiful and charming Regina Cassandra who will be playing the role of this danseuse in SonyLIV's much-awaited show *Rocket Boys*. Cassandra is unrecognisable as she steps into the character of legendary dancer.

Regina brings the character to life with her poise and sophistication, reminiscent of the late dancer. Completing her look is Sarabhai's big bindi, *gajra*, and understated jewelry that emphasised her beauty and grace.

Speaking about her look, Cassandra expressed, "As an actor, to get a chance to play such an iconic character on screen for the first ever Hindi OTT release is like a dream come true. But there is also a great responsibility when you're portraying somebody who is an iconic figure like her. Dancers have a certain body language, and it was a challenge to get it right. Mrinaliniji was a very dignified lady who was not prone to any dramatics, no matter what storm she was facing in her private life. So, it was important to portray her in that form. There was a lot of research and homework that went behind it. However, this is an opportunity of a lifetime, and



I am thankful for it. My heart is full of gratitude."

*Rocket Boys* also features Jim Sarbh (as Homi J Bhabha) and Ishwak Singh (as Vikram Sarabhai) in lead roles. Created by Nikkhil Advani, Roy Kapur Films & Emmay Entertainment, *Rocket Boys* is directed by Abhay Pannu and produced by Siddharth Roy Kapur, Monisha Advani, Madhu Bhojwani, Nikkhil Advani. The show will be streaming soon on SonyLIV.

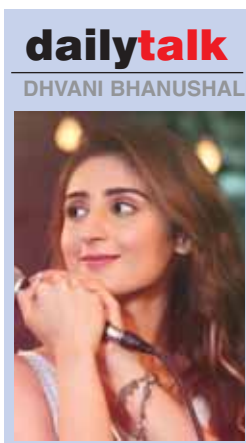


## AKSHAY WANTS TO KEEP IT SIMPLE

Actor AKSHAY KUMAR recently responded to whether it gets pressurising to take up the game higher every time he comes on screen. He said, "No, I don't have any burden. I don't think about it. There is no pressure. I just want to think about what kind of films I am doing in the future, tomorrow what shooting I have to go for, what role I'm doing. I just want to think that. I want to do films with simplicity and not in complications." "I feel good I have around five-six films next year but I don't know how I would do it," Kumar added.



'As we all can see that one common factor in both of us is our bald look. When I met Kiri bhai (Syed Kirmani) the first time, he said, 'Arey! Kiri bhai!'. I said to him, 'No sir, you are Kiri bhai.' Both of us started laughing and he hugged me. It was a delightful meeting followed by a conversation that offered me insights into the kind of personality he is. The more I got to know him, the more I realised the responsibility I have taken up to portray him on-screen. I'm grateful.'



'Vaaste has given me so much love from across the spectrum. I have seen youngsters and even older people come up and hum the song for me, which is the biggest compliment. To be able to connect with the people who have made me what I am, my audience, is everything. From the reels that were made around it to all the covers and the phenomenon it created, it's been a part of my very identity.'

## BEATRIZ RELATES TO MIRABEL

For actor STEPHANIE BEATRIZ, who has lent her voice to Mirabel Madrigal — the lead character of *Encanto* — the portrayal came naturally as she could relate to Mirabel's experiences. The *B99* star shares, "Mirabel reminds me of myself at her age — headstrong yet unsure, full of wonder and imagination but sometimes held back by self-doubt. She's funny, awkward and brave. She's also very much a classic Disney heroine, and yet she's a new iteration of that classic. Plus the glasses!"



## TRENDBLAZER



# LABOUR-ROOM VIOLENCE

GURPRIYA SINGH looks at the issues of healthcare facilities for women and the difficulties that they face on a day-to-day basis while accessing the same

For Ramrati, a 29-year-old woman from Patna, narrating her experience of institutional delivery of her first child was quite painful. She got pregnant two months into her marriage. She took good care of herself, and took all the prenatal medications and tests on time. But Ramrati distinctly remembers the four nights she spent in the hospital. “For four days, I kept screaming in pain. The nurse would sometimes abuse or make demeaning remarks, she’d say, ‘when you were being intimate with your husband, you didn’t feel the pain, you’re coming here and shouting.’ They would sometimes go on to make caste/religion based remarks, or ask us to give money for an operation. The doctor and interns did a finger test, I would feel as if I am not there for delivery but for them to observe and learn from my body,” Ramrati explained.

A report by the YP Foundation, a youth-led and youth-run organisation based in New Delhi, notes a similar experience of a finger test that a young person experienced while conducting a mystery audit at a community health centre in Lucknow. There are multiple such instances recounted by women, where options of detecting pregnancy are not given, and practitioners without taking informed consent routinely conduct bimanual (internal) pelvic examinations to assess the womb.

Even if the act was committed in good faith — in the interest of the patient’s well-being and time at hand — the practitioner had not thought it necessary to clarify or take informed consent of the patient, whether she would be comfortable with such an invasive procedure being carried out on her body.

This is just one example of indignity that women routinely experience in the labour room. Labour room violence is not unknown — it ranges from physical and verbal abuse, neglect of quality infrastructure, lack of informed consent or choice and financial abuse.

As part of Khud Se Pooche campaign, a women-led movement in Bihar, supported by multiple organisations in Patna, including Sakhi, Bihar Youth for Child Rights, Gaurav Gramen Mahila



Vikas Manch, Population Foundation of India and Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion, to build recognition about dignified healthcare in women, many women reflected on diverse experiences in healthcare.

As part of the campaign, a number of women spoke about the extreme judgement and shaming that they had to experience, when accessing a health-care facility due to delayed/ missed/ painful period cycles. Instead of medical diagnosis and treatment, women were asked personal, out of context and uncomfortable questions such as if they had boyfriends, or if they were having intimate affairs or relationships. In an assertive manner, before being heard, some women were told that they must be pregnant. All these responses have made women feel violated. The ones who experienced pain were told to learn to be resilient or that it will get better after marriage or after the first child. Their pain was dismissed and personal comments were made. In all these experiences, there is a gaze of suspicion and shame that women felt, further traumatising and silencing women patients. The hesitation and barriers, that sometimes young, unmarried women overcome to visit health services, interrupt women’s access to services.

Because of the stigma associated with sexual health and reproductive health, from adolescence, women are unable to express or share concerns, and there is hesitation to discuss breast

asymmetry, breast cancer related issues, vaginal discharge, menstrual hygiene related queries or general curiosity about body and psychological changes. Lack of proper and dignified access to sexual and reproductive health services, that are often layered with hesitation, stigma and shame impacts mental health of women.

According to the latest National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), Quality of Care is measured by whether users were told about the side effects of the current method of family planning. For instance, in Patna, only 46.4 per cent women were made aware of this, and only 18.6 per cent of women who do not access family planning services were counselled about the same. With less than half of the women who were not made aware about the side effects, even fewer were given any counselling, while myths and misconceptions around family planning remain common. With only a two per cent decrease in unmet need among women, at 15 per cent unmet need is high, where women wish to use contraceptives to postpone next birth. All three factors are linked to lack of proper counselling, that leads to discontinuation and dissatisfaction among women.

The other big aspect of indignity that women have also experienced is discrimination, differential treatment and bias in treatment due to age, caste, class, religion, abilities, sexuality, gender, employment, education, appearances and flu-



ency in communication.

A lot of women felt violated or discomforted by the way the doctor, compounder or nurse touched them — some of them felt that they were touched inappropriately but they didn’t know who to tell or whom to report to. They all resorted to silence.

In most cases women didn’t know who to reach out to, how or whom to explain these experiences, there is always a fear of being told, at home or at a healthcare clinic, that they are seeking attention, they are overreacting, or being frivolous. In a report by CEHAT on the mistreatment of women in the labour rooms, in similar situations, doctors, nurses and hospital orderlies mentioned that it was the women who misunderstood the situation, and that there was nothing of sexual in nature involved in the doctor’s actions.

Many women didn’t think that they could share these experiences with their families, from the fear of being told to dress properly, behave in a clinic or denied to visit a clinic in the future. There is significant power in the hands of the medical fraternity, where agency, bodily autonomy and integrity is compromised for treatment and care.

Health practitioners and experts note that doctors and medical staff members are part of the same society that normalises these practices every day and simply these go on to reflect in the healthcare, due to non-training/ sensitisation of health care professionals.

During the Khud Se Pooche workshops, women suggest setting up feedback boxes, gender sensitisation and sensitivity training, ethics training, helplines, mental health counseling sessions or committees that can take note of these experiences, and help navigate the situation.

While the experiences of indignity in healthcare are universally understood, the individual’s personal circumstances impact their health and well-being. This was starkly visible in the campaign to which most of the above anecdotes are attributed, that factors such as quality of housing, family structure, violence or conflict, working conditions, education, daily lifestyle, gender or sexuality, caste, religion or class, played a huge role on how women navigated access to healthcare.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) notes that addressing social determinants of health appropriately is fundamental in improving health and well being. These include early childhood and development, education, income and employment, housing, work-life balance and conditions, violence, among others to ensure that women health-seekers are not seen as a homogenous group and root and underlying causes are considered, in the treatment process.

*(The author is the campaign lead at Khud Se Pooche, a women-led movement in Bihar.)*

Butterflies conjure up several emotions in us — of love, elegance and splendour. The unique patterns they carry on their wings are not just mesmerising but therapeutic in many ways. No wonder the twenty-year-old Swarali Gogate, from Devgad taluka in Sindhudurga District of Maharashtra, found her calling in these colourful flies.

Swarali is perusing BSc in Zoology from Abasaheb Garware College, Pune. After the Covid-19 outbreak in the country in March 2020, her college, following the national lockdown, announced a closure for indefinite period. Swarali had to return home and after a few days of rest, she felt the urge to tread the mangroves around her village. She sought guidance from her college professor, Dr Anand Padhye, who encouraged her to study butterflies.

“Our approach to development has trampled our biodiversity. Covid-19 pandemic came as a boon to the flora and fauna but with uplifting of the lockdown, the harmful impacts are once again visible,” explains Swarali.

After noticing the downfall of the butterflies due to cutting down of trees and shrubs for road and building construction, Swarali got into action. When she notices caterpillar larvae on a branch of a tree, she brings the branch home to nurture it. She has conserved hundreds of caterpillars since the first lockdown. She also documented the journey of these flies from rearing of the larva to its transformation into a butterfly. So far, she has

## Reimaging the ecosystem

ALKA GADGIL looks at ways of conserving mangroves and preserving butterflies



conserved the flies belonging to Common Mormon, Lime butterfly, Tailed Jay and Common Jay species.

During the pandemic, her butterfly project generated curiosity in the youth in and around her community. Everyone who watched her butterfly conservation was amazed at the stages of a butterfly’s life cycle. “How can such a big butterfly fit in such a tiny cell?” they wondered. Inspired by her work, they promised that they would

not remove the larvae from the trees and would refrain from spraying pesticides.

Swarali, even as a child, had immense curiosity and interest in the flora and fauna. While most of the children in her village were interested in watching cartoons, she would watch Animal Planet. As a child, she used to wonder when would she be able to see these animals? How did they live? How did they behave? What is their relationship with the surrounding?



“To help find answers to my childhood curiosity, I joined a course run by the Institute of Natural History Education and Research at Pune, which helped me a lot. There are tiny micro-organisms in water, and they too have diversity. I got acquainted to Taxonomy which is a science of classification, identification and nomenclature of species,” said Swarali.

There were mangroves and wetland around the creek near her house in Devgad. A few vil-

lages from the area had no direct access to the mainland. The cooking gas cylinder supply was a grave issue because it was difficult to ferry a cylinder to remote places. As a result, people depended on firewood and were cutting down trees. To resolve the issue, a bridge across the creek was built. This disrupted the ecosystems of the mangroves. The water currents of the creek got separated because of the heavy pillars impacting the shrimps and prawns. These fish

procreate in the wetlands and the destruction impacted the entire ecosystem.

Swarali focused her research in this area. Along with the study of flora and fauna, she also studied the insect and bird diversity around the mangroves of Devgad. She also conducted a study of three-legged insects and the animals and recorded around 125 types of birds along with insects and flies.

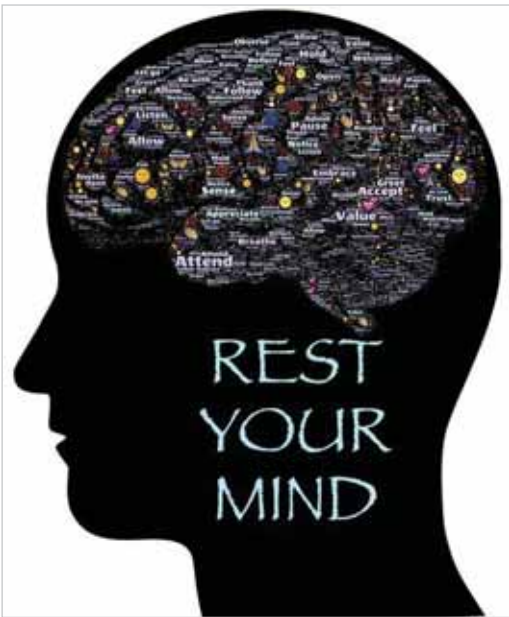
For conserving mangroves, efforts are being made at the state level. For example, mangroves are being recreated near water bodies by planting the seeds of mangrove plants. In many parts of the world, recreated mangroves have shown positive impact on biodiversity, increased productivity, improvement of water quality as well as reduction of the total organic carbon. Although development does have an impact on the eco systems and livelihoods of the people, there are ways to mitigate the loss. The Self-Help Groups from Devgad block have started a nursery of the mangrove plants in partnership with the Mangrove Cell of Maharashtra Government.

The local youth, inspired by Swarali’s efforts, has started taking an interest in reimaging a lost eco system and have started participating in the conservation work of the wetlands. Swarali’s passion inspires, and it reminds us of a line from Robert Frost’s poem, ‘Butterflies...flowers that fly and all but sing’.

—Charkha Features

## Take a break

RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI discusses the vital role that rest has in preserving health and lists the four kinds of rest



Sleep is the best form of relaxation, close to meditation, that’s why those who sleep well always keep well and feel well. Hence, not too many people need to be convinced that the body must have proper sleep in order to function properly. However, not many people are aware of the vital role of rest in preserving health. That’s because many people feel that the words — rest and sleep — are synonymous. But actually they are not so. Even though both are vitally important, they definitely are not the same. Because, the condition of sleep exists only when consciousness has ceased, whereas, in case of rest, it is not so.

So, what exactly is rest? In simple words, it is a period of inactivity during which the body can restore expended energy. We’ve all experienced this. When we are tired and fatigued, and when we take a short nap or some rest, we feel refreshed and invigorated. According to psychiatrists and behavioural scientists,

to refresh the human mind and body, four kinds of rest are necessary. First is physical rest, that may be obtained by discontinuing physical activities — sitting or lying down and relaxing. Second is sensory rest which is secured by remaining quiet and by refraining from using the eyes, which curtails a great drain of energy. Third is emotional rest, which is

achieved by non-involvement in the ups and downs caused by personal interaction and last is mental rest which is obtained by positive thinking, meditation, and so on. In short, rest is the curtailment of energy expenditure, which permits the body to redirect energies to restoration. It can be used very effectively to rejuvenate ourselves and improve our outlook. For various reasons, our sleep may be inadequate or we may have to be more active physically or mentally during some part of the day. In such situations, we become drowsy, sleepy, restless or down. And to come out of it, we need good rest.

Today’s success at any cost culture has some people thinking they would rather be caught stealing than caught taking rest. As a result of which they push themselves, though feeling in need of rest, and resort to stimulants like coffee, tea, soft drinks, et al, to jolt themselves up. This practise takes its toll on their physical and mental health and the problem is aggravated rather than solved. Nervous energy is further drained by it, even though the drain may not be evident at that time.

In today’s hustle and bustle atmosphere of workaholic and efforts to succeed and get ahead, the body’s biological needs are often sacrificed. Under such a scenario, it is far better to take some time to rest quietly, with eyes closed and the body still, so as to perform more efficiently thereafter, than to forget the needed rest and drag through and perform at a greatly reduced productivity level.

Nowadays, many top multinationals, especially abroad, have made separate restrooms for their staff so that they can just go there for a while and just relax to come back and work with more energy. Many medical professionals have also said that napping improves body functions, including digestion. Also, resting at regular intervals prevents excessive fatigue and promotes better and more efficient work. It sharpens the mind and also allows you to fall asleep more quickly and sleep more soundly. Resting and napping are not signs of laziness, they are intelligent and productive uses of your time.

Resting the mind is even more important than resting the body. Because a tired mind will not allow the body to take proper sleep. Studies have revealed that regular practise of meditation for even a few minutes in the morning, at bedtime and at convenient intervals during the day would keep the mind constantly relaxed and considerably reduce the quantum and frequency of rest that would be required. So it’s better to be wise for our own health and make a habit to rest a bit daily.

“

This moment is all there is.

—Rumi

”

### CANCER TREATMENT WITHOUT CHEMO POSSIBLE

A team of 11 scientists from the Cleveland Clinic of America and Allahabad University have devised a way in which chemotherapy and radiation therapy will not be required to kill cancer cells. The research of the group, led by Professor of Cancer Biology at the Cleveland Clinic, Dr Yang Li, and supported by Munish Pandey, of the department of Biochemistry, AU, has been published in *Oncogene by Nature*. The report is significant because it implies a strategy by which cancer patients will be shielded from the side effects of chemo and radiation therapy. Following the success of the rat experiment, plans to implement it on the human body are now being extended.

The team had previously designed knockout mice for miR-21. Since then, the tumour that had formed in the rat’s body gradually reduced. Some tumours have completely disappeared.

### RESEARCH SHOWS PAIN CAN BE SILENCED

A new study shows that a toxin from the microbe that causes anthrax can silence multiple types of pain in mice. Researchers found the toxin targets pain-sensing cells to alter signaling and block pain. Building on that finding, researchers engineered an anthrax protein vehicle to deliver different types of treatments into pain receptors and modulate nerve-cell function. The findings can inform the design of therapies that selectively target pain-sensing fibers without the widespread systemic effects of opioids and other pain killers.

The research reveals that this specific anthrax toxin works to alter signaling in pain-sensing neurons and, when delivered in a targeted manner into neurons of the central and peripheral nervous system, can offer relief to animals in distress.

The work, led by investigators at Harvard Medical School in collaboration with industry scientists and researchers from other institutions, is published in *Nature Neuroscience*.

### 10 MINUTES OF RUNNING HELPS MENTAL HEALTH

Researchers found that as little as ten minutes of moderate-intensity running could benefit mental health. In study participants, both mood and cognitive functions improved, and the activation of bilateral prefrontal subregions associated with cognitive function and mood also increased. These results demonstrate the potential advantages of exercise prescriptions for various conditions including mental health treatment.

There’s clear evidence that physical activity has many benefits, such as the ability to improve mood, but in previous studies, cycling was often the form of exercise studied. Running, however, has always played an important role in the well-being of humans. The unique form and efficiency of human running, which includes the ability to sustain this form of exertion (that is, by jogging as opposed to sprinting), and the evolutionary success of humans are closely linked.

These findings may contribute to the development of a wider range of treatment recommendations to benefit mental health.

### SHARK PROTEINS TO NEUTRALISE COVID-19

Small, unique antibody-like proteins known as VNARs — derived from the immune systems of sharks — can prevent the virus that causes COVID-19, its variants, and related corona viruses from infecting human cells, according to a new study.

The new VNARs will not be immediately available as a treatment in people, but they can help prepare for future coronavirus outbreaks. The shark VNARs were able to neutralise

WIV1-CoV, a coronavirus that is capable of infecting human cells but currently circulates only in bats, where SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, likely originated.

Developing treatments for such animal-borne viruses ahead of time can prove useful if those viruses make the jump to people.

Researchers are preparing an arsenal of shark VNAR therapeutics that could be used for future SARS outbreaks.

### GET READY FOR A DOG-ALLERGY VACCINE

There have been many research efforts describing the nature and progression of dog allergies, but there have been very few applied studies that use this information to try to cure people of dog allergies entirely by artificially inducing immune tolerance. But researchers have now identified candidates for those parts of the molecules that make up dog allergens that could give us precisely that: a dog allergy vaccine.

Their findings were published in the *Federation of European Biochemical Societies journal*.

Being allergic to dogs is a common malady and one that is growing worldwide. Over the years, scientists have been able to identify seven different dog allergens — molecules or molecular structures that bind to an antibody and produce an unusually strong immune response that would normally be harmless.





# NGIDI STRIKES TWICE BUT INDIA REMAIN IN CONTROL

PTI ■ CENTURION

South Africa fought back with a couple of wickets in the afternoon session via Lungi Ngidi but India still controlled the proceedings by reaching 157 for two at tea on day one of the first Test here on Sunday.

India scored 74 runs in the second session while Ngidi removed Mayank Agarwal (60 off 123) and Cheteshwar Pujara (0) off successive balls to provide the hosts much needed breakthroughs.

K L Rahul grew in confidence and was batting on 68 off 166 balls at the break alongside skipper Virat Kohli (19 batting off 54).

After struggling to hit the fuller lengths in the morning, South African pacers bowled with more consistency and attacked the stumps.

Agarwal, who got to his half century after lunch, was dismissed against the run of play.

The ball appeared to bounce over the wicket apart from missing the leg stump but the on-field decision was reversed when DRS revealed that it was hitting the wickets, leaving Agarwal in disbelief.

His fall also ended a memorable 117-run partnership, making Rahul and Agarwal only the third Indian opening pair to stitch a century stand in 21 games in South Africa.

With sun coming out, Pujara walked in and was dismissed first ball, inside edging a defensive shot to Keegan Petersen at short leg.

Soon after, Rahul brought up his fifty with a delightful cover drive off Ngidi.

Kohli, who has not scored a hundred in more than two years, began with an unconvincing drive off Marco Jansen before clipping spinner Keshav Maharaj wide of mid-on for his second boundary.

Rahul survived a close LBW call



off medium pacer Wiaan Mulder late into the session before flicking a half-volley in his following over for his 11th boundary.

In the morning session, Agarwal and Rahul played with the required discipline in testing conditions to take India to 83 for no loss.

Kohli made a brave call to bat first on a greenish surface which is expected to get quicker as the game progresses.

Both Rahul and Agarwal, who are close friends and play for the same domestic team, left the ball well against a pace attack which did not bowl well enough in favourable conditions.

Agarwal carried his good from the home series against New Zealand to SuperSport Park while

Rahul stuck to the approach that brought him a lot of success in England earlier this year when he opened the batting alongside the now injured Rohit Sharma.

Rahul was more watchful to start with, showing absolute clarity in leaving the ball while Agarwal was quick to cash in on freebies offered by the opposition pacers.

Agarwal drove Ngidi through point for the first four of the innings.

Rahul, who took 21 balls to get off the mark, played an exquisite straight drive off Kagiso Rabada to get going.

Debutant left-arm pacer Jansen made a nervy start to his career with Agarwal dispatching him for three fours in his opening over.

The 6 feet 8 inch bowler's first

ball in Test cricket was a gentle full toss which Agarwal duly dispatched through cover point. Then the lanky pacer bowled a couple into the pads which were crisply flicked away.

The South African pacers bowled a tad too short in the first hour of play. The Dean Elgar-led side also wasted a review early in the session.

The only chance that came South Africa's way went begging with a diving Quinton de Kock dropping Agarwal off Jansen. He was batting on 36 at that time.

South Africa decided to leave out in-form pacer Duanne Oliver from the playing eleven while India picked the struggling Ajinkya Rahane ahead of Hanuma Vihari and Shreyas Iyer.

# HP stun mighty TN In Vijay Hazare Trophy final for maiden title

PTI ■ JAIPUR

The hill state of Himachal Pradesh on Sunday reached its zenith in cricket, with a stunning 11-run victory over mighty Tamil Nadu in the final of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here.

Youngster Shubham Arora came out all guns blazing with his maiden List A century as Himachal downed five-time champions Tamil Nadu under the VJD method to win their first ever domestic one-day championship.

Chasing a stiff 315, Himachal Pradesh, who were playing their maiden Vijay Hazare final, responded in style with the 24-year-old wicketkeeper-batter making a fine 136 not out with 13 fours and one six.

With Himachal 299/4 in 47.3 overs, and needing 16 off 15 balls, bad light suspended play at 5pm, before Himachal were declared winners under the VJD Method.

Tamil Nadu have been the best domestic side in the country in white-ball cricket since the 2019-20 season.

After losing the finals of the one-day and T20 competitions in 2019, the team has won back-to-back titles in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20s (2020-21 and 2021-22), but underdogs Himachal outplayed the favourites on this occasion.

On a day when veteran wicket-keeper-batter and former captain Dinesh Karthik smashed an entertaining 103-ball 116, the young Himachal glovesman outshone the seasoned pro with his well-calculated, unbeaten century under pressure.

After opting to field on a flat Sawai Mansingh Stadium, Rishi Dhawan took another fine call in sending Amit Kumar ahead of him, as the skipper chose to play the role of a finisher.

The move paid dividends as the left-right combination of Arora



and Amit (74 from 79 balls; 6x4) added 148 for the fourth wicket in a match-winning partnership.

After Baba Aparajith gave TN the much-needed breakthrough by dismissing Amit, Himachal needed 71 from 54 deliveries, but Rishi played his role to perfection, hammering the rival bowling attack to make it look easy in the end.

Eying a record sixth title in the tournament and a limited-overs double this season, Tamil Nadu, who recently won the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20, were lacklustre on the field.

Skipper Vijay Shankar made a blunder as he fumbled when he was presented a crucial run-out opportunity when Arora was on 113.Arora was also grassed by Jagdishan when he was on 135, with Himachal needing 18 in as many balls.

“The team has backed me throughout the tournament. I just wanted to play my natural game and built on my innings after I got set,” said Man of the Match Arora.

An elated Dhawan said: “Finally

we have won a title, it's the result of our hard work over the years. We knew the conditions well here and so we just to stay on there.”

Eying a maiden Vijay Hazare Trophy title, Himachal started strongly with a 60-run opening stand between Arora and Prashant Chopra (21 off 26 balls).

But Tamil Nadu effected a double blow, dismissing Chopra, Digvijay Rangi (0) in a space of five balls to leave them at 61/2 in 9.3 overs.

HP were then reduced to 96/3 in 16.1 overs with Murugan Ashwin dismissing Nikhil Gangta off his very first delivery.

But the left-handed Arora remained calm, while Amit Kumar, coming ahead of skipper Rishi, played a perfect second fiddle.

The left-right combination kept rotating the strike and snatched quick singles.

Arora and Kumar slowly pulled the game out of Tamil Nadu's hands as they struggled to break the partnership.

# 3rd Ashes: Aus dominant on day 1

AP ■ MELBOURNE

England's earnest dressing-room discussions about improving shot selection failed to bear fruit on Sunday's opening day of the third Ashes cricket Test, as shambolic batting delivered a Boxing Day feast of wickets for Australia at Melbourne Cricket Ground.

England was bowled out for 185, before Australia reached 61-1 at stumps.

Admittedly England, humiliated in a 275-run defeat in Adelaide, faced a tough task to bounce back on Sunday. Australia captain Pat Cummins won the toss and invited under-siege England to bat first on a green-tinged, seaming MCG pitch.

England was 61-3 at lunch. By tea, the tourists were in serious trouble at 128-6, having lost the key wicket of skipper Joe Root for 50.

England's resistance with the bat lasted just 65.1 overs. World No.1-ranked bowler Cummins (3-36), spinner Nathan Lyon (3-36) and left-arm quick Mitchell Starc (2-54) combined to keep the pressure on England's batters.

A loose shot outside off stump by Root, a questionable cut by Ben Stokes, and a wild heave by Jos Buttler will attract heavy attention from England's press after another difficult day for the tourists, who trail two-nil in the five-match series.

Cummins ripped through England's top order. The skipper took three wickets in the opening session after winning the toss and bowling.

Rain delayed the start of



play for 30 minutes before Cummins removed Haseeb Hameed without scoring and Zak Crawley for 12.

Dawid Malan added 48 for third wicket with Root, before Cummins was rewarded in the final over before lunch, as Malan was caught at first slip for 14.

Australia claimed another three wickets in the middle session, dismissing the dangerous duo of Root and Stokes (25). The departure of Buttler for three, after aiming a wild slog to deep mid-wicket off the bowling of Lyon in the last over before tea, summed up England's struggles against Australia's disciplined bowling.

World No.2-ranked bats-

man Root added to his side's woes outside off stump by offering a catch to wicketkeeper Alex Carey off the bowling of Mitchell Starc at 82-4.

Root needs a second-innings score of 109 to claim a new record for most test runs in a calendar year, passing the tally of 1788 recorded by Pakistan's Mohammad Yousuf in 2006.

Stokes tried to lift England's scoring rate by launching into an aggressive cut shot off the bowling of Cameron Green, but the left-hander was caught at gully at 115-5.

Dubutant Scott Boland, playing at his home state ground, got his first test wicket by trapping Mark Wood leg before to the delight of the

majority 57,,100 fans at the MCG.

Jonny Bairstow hit 35 before falling over as he edged a bouncer from Starc to gully at 159-8. Lyon removed tailenders Jack Leach (13) and Ollie Robinson (22).

David Warner and Marcus Harris (20 not out) shared an opening stand of 57 for Australia. Warner was caught at gully off the bowling of Jimmy Anderson for 38.

Harris required medical attention during the following over after being struck on the hand by a bouncer from Stokes, but survived to the end of play with nightwatchman Nathan Lyon to leave the hosts in the ascendancy again this series.

## Rangana Herath joins B'desh team after quarantine

**Tauranga:** Bangladesh spin bowling consultant Rangana Herath has completed his 14-day quarantine and has been allowed to join the team ahead of the two-Test series against New Zealand.

The 43-year old Herath tested positive for Covid-19 after arriving in New Zealand. Apart from him, the eight other members of the Test squad comprising players and support staff were asked to undergo extended quarantine as they were in close contact with a Covid-positive patient who was flying with them from Malaysia to New Zealand.

“MIQ (Managed Isolation and Quarantine) facilities released me today and now I am so happy to be back with the team. At the same time, I had a kind of difficult two weeks with that (quarantine) but I am so glad to be back and looking forward to the tour,” Herath was quoted as saying by Cricbuzz on Sunday. “At the same time I must thank BCB and New Zealand healthcare as they looked after me very well,” he added.

There were doubts over the series going ahead after players were sent into quarantine. However, the players were allowed to resume practice after all the members of the touring party returned negative tests on December 21.

The Bangladesh team is currently in Tauranga for their last phase of preparation and will play a two-day game against the New Zealand XI on December 28-29. **IANS**

## CEO holds blind cricket tournament

PNS ■ PANAJI

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer has organised a Blind Cricket tournament between both the team to create awareness among the voters about the inclusive election initiatives of Election Commission of India for the forthcoming Goa Assembly Election.

North Goa Blind Team won a massive victory over South Goa Blind Team today at a match played at GCA ground Porvorim.After winning the toss, South Goa Blind Team asked North Goa to bat first.

North Goa opening player Yeshwant Gosavi (65 runs) and Prajyot Jha (70 runs) scored 160 without loss, setting a big target for South Goa team to win in 12 overs. However, South Goa could not chase the target and scored just 125 losing 5 wickets in 12 overs.

The District North Goa team received an 11,000/- cash prize, certificate and trophy. Rs.5500 cash prize was given to the runner up team. Participation Certificates were given to the Players of both TeamGoa Chief Electoral Officer Kunal, distributed the prizes congratulated both the teams for showing sportsmen spirit. He said sportsmen spirit and participation in elections are interrelated.

The election is a festival of democracy and in election, we need sportsmen spirit, commitment and participation for the success of democracy, he remarked.

## ICC expresses sadness at Illingworth's death



PTI ■ DUBAI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Sunday expressed grief at the death of former England captain Ray Illingworth at the age of 89.

He had been undergoing radiotherapy for esophageal cancer. Yorkshire, the English county Illingworth played for, announced his death on Saturday.

Born in Pudsey, Yorkshire, the off-spinning all-rounder, started his first-class career in 1951 at the age of 19.

He represented England from 1958 to 1973, playing 61 Tests, scoring 1836 runs and picking 122 wickets. He captained England to a famous 2-0 Ashes victory in 1970-71.

He had a tremendous first-class career, accumulat-

ing 24,134 runs and taking 2072 wickets. He also led Yorkshire to three consecutive County Championship wins from 1966 to 1968.

ICC Chief Executive Geoff Allardice said: “Ray Illingworth was a giant of English cricket and was one of England's finest captains.

He made an enormous contribution to the game, not just as England's captain, but also as coach and chairman of selectors. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this difficult time.”

After retirement, Illingworth turned to broadcast and was a part of BBC's television coverage.

He also served as England coach in 1995-96 and was the chairman of selectors between 1994 and 1996.

## SHASTRI: ONE OF GREAT INSPIRATIONAL STORIES

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former India coach Ravi Shastri on Sunday heaped praise on Himachal Pradesh after they won their maiden Vijay Hazare Trophy, saying “it is one of the great inspirational stories.”

“...You know for a team like Himachal, like I said no super-stars, but going on to win the tournament, just goes to show that if your work ethics are good, you are grounded, you are humble and you want to play the game in the true spirit of the game as a team, you can achieve great heights.

“So, hats off to them for



the prize distribution of 74th Police Shield tournament at the picturesque Mumbai Police Gymkhana here.

Himachal Pradesh on Sunday stunned the mighty Tamil Nadu in the final of the Vijay Hazare Trophy.

India player Suryakumar Yadav, part of the winning Parsee Gymkhana team, slammed 249 in the final of the Police Shield and played a key part in the team's victory.

PTI ■ KALYANI (WB)

In a bizarre development, debutants Rajasthan United were left to play their maiden I-League match against Punjab Football Club on Sunday with just nine players, instead of 11, due to the confusion over the registration of amateurs.

The Jaipur-based side, which had made it to the I-League after winning the qualifying tournament in October, acknowledged that the situation arose due to “errant decision making” by the club.

Rajasthan United said the All India Football Federation refused its request to postpone the match to January when they can have enough players with new signings. It also took a dig at their opponents -- Punjab FC -- for refusing to play the match later. The AIFF, on its part, said it had

acted as per rules which were approved by the world governing body FIFA.

“We retained minimal players from the qualifiers and sought to get better players for the higher league - seeing as the competition is undoubtedly higher,” Rajasthan United said in a statement.

“The AIFF issued a statement to all clubs on 14th Dec 2021 stating that these teams could field amateur players who are allowed to play as such till December 31, 2021. Respecting the statement, RUFC registered a significant number of amateurs.

“A second statement released on 21st Dec said that amateur players signed on or before August 31 would be allowed to play in the league.”

The club had no way to sign professional players after winning the I-League Qualifiers as the June-August



transfer window (for professional players) had already ended by then. The second transfer window begins only on January 1.

The club said it respects the decision of both the AIFF and their

opponents to not postpone the fixture.

“We acknowledged the errant decision making and communication that has led to this situation. It is a deep humiliation and learning experience for a club as new as us.”

It, however, expressed its bitterness at the development, saying “sportsman spirit is only left to be discussed on social media and books, but when it comes to the field it is a totally different ball game.”

“Our opponents could have the willingness to play this match on a later date.”

The club further said a simple option would have been to forfeit the match and play from game 2 on January 5 onwards (which occurs after the winter transfer window opens) but decided to take the field with only nine players.

“It (forfeiting the match) is something our philosophy will not allow. Offering our opponents the respect they deserve, we will put forth our best face in the circumstances and strives to display the sportsmanship that defines the sport.”