

**CAPITAL 3**  
DESPITE OMICRON RISK, 14%  
TO GO TO CINEMAS: SURVEY

**WORLD 8**  
OMICRON SPREADS GLOBAL  
GLOOM OVER NY'S CELEBRATIONS

**MONEY 9**  
AI HANDOVER TO TATA  
GROUP DELAYED FURTHER

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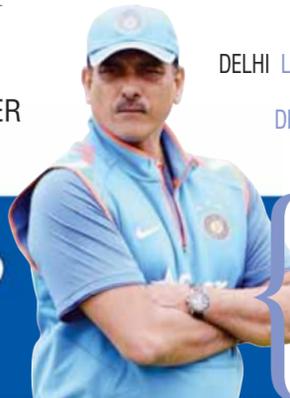
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## India sees highest daily Omicron rise

Total 578 with 156 fresh cases; 'need-based' curbs advised

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India saw the highest single-day rise of Omicron infections with 156 fresh cases on Monday, taking the case tally to 578 as infection spread to 19 States. The Union Home Ministry has now directed all Chief Secretaries in the States and UTs to impose "need-based" restrictions on public movement during the festive season and implement the advisory issued recently by the Union Health Ministry to contain the pandemic.

Delhi accounts for the highest number of Omicron cases (148), followed by Maharashtra (141), Kerala (57), Gujarat (49), Rajasthan (43), Telangana (41), Tamil Nadu (34), Karnataka (31), Madhya Pradesh (9), and Andhra Pradesh (6). The other States that have reported Omicron infections include West Bengal (6 cases), Haryana (4), Odisha (4), Chandigarh (3), Jammu & Kashmir (3), Uttar Pradesh (2), Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh and Uttarakhand one each. The Home Ministry has stressed "the need for greater foresight, data analysis, dynam-



Government Civil hospital staff throw flower petals on Pratulbhai Dave (48) following his discharge after recovering from Omicron variant, in Ahmedabad on Monday

ic decision making, and strict and prompt containment actions at the local and district levels" to deal with the crisis. It has also issued statutory orders under the Disaster Management Act for the implementation of directions issued by the Health Ministry.

"The country has witnessed an overall decline in active cases. However, the new variant, Omicron, is reported to be at least 3 times more transmissible than the Delta VoC (variant of concern), and is posing a new challenge for the Covid containment measures.

Continued on Page 2

## 7-month high Covid cases in Delhi, positivity 0.68%



Crowded Sadar market street amid rising cases of Omicron variant in New Delhi on Monday

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi reported 331 new cases of Covid-19 and one death on Monday. This is the highest single-day spike in the past seven months. According to the Delhi Covid-19 health bulletin, the positivity rate was recorded at 0.68 per cent. The death toll due to the coronavirus infection in Delhi rose to 25,106. The number of cumulative cases on Monday stood at 14,43,683. Over 14.17 lakh patients have recovered from the infection.

Seven Covid-19 deaths were reported here in November this year, according to official data. Delhi had recorded four Covid deaths in October and five in September. A total of 48,589 tests, 46,549 RT-PCR tests and 2,040 rapid antigen tests were conducted a day ago, a bulletin released by the health department said.

In view of the night curfew, hotels, restaurants, and bars allowed to function at their 50 per cent capacity will have to wind up before the curfew

hours begin.

As per the DDMA order, District Magistrates, Deputy Commissioners of Police and all the other authorities concerned will ensure strict compliance of the night curfew. Violators will be punished as per the law.

The DDMA order said patients, pregnant women, people out to buy essential items and those travelling to or from railway stations, bus stops and airports would be exempted from the curfew. Government employees carrying out emergency services, judges and judicial officers, medical personnel and media persons too are exempted.

People going on foot for purchasing essential items like vegetables, milk and other household products from neighbourhood shops will be exempted from the curfew restrictions. Delivery persons carrying food or medical products, shops selling vegetables, dairy products, meat and other edible products, pharmacy and drug stores too are exempted.

Continued on Page 2

## 15-18 kids can register on CoWin app from Jan 1, vax from Jan 3

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Come January 1, 2022, and teenagers in the age group of 15-18 years will be able to register on the CoWIN app, two days before the Covid-19 vaccination programme is set to be unveiled across the country to include them. Top sources said Bharat Biotech's Covaxin is likely to be the only Covid-19 vaccine available for children in the age group of 15-18 years, who will be inoculated from January 3.

This means Cadila Healthcare-developed deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) vaccine ZyCoV-D, approved by the drug regulator for use in children aged 12 and above, will not be used right away to vaccinate youngsters aged 15 and above, the sources added.

They indicated the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation in India has not recommended the use of ZyCoV-D for the time being for kids below 18.

On Saturday, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) had approved the use of Covaxin for children aged 12 and above. On October 12, the subject expert commit-

tee (SEC) advising the DCGI had approved Covaxin for use in children as young as 2 years and beyond. The DCGI, however, has approved its use for 12 years and above.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the nation on December 25 said "precaution dose" will be given to the elderly (60 years and above) with comorbidities upon furnishing a doctor's certificate. There are around 20 major comorbid conditions listed by the Union Health Ministry.

The comorbid conditions included cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, kidney ailments, cirrhosis, cancer, sickle cell anemia, organ transplants, prolonged use of steroids or other immunosuppressant drugs.

The same set of comorbidities will be considered when evaluating if someone is eligible for an additional shot or a third shot. "Someone may have diabetes, but at what level the disease qualifies as a comorbid condition is something a doctor will decide upon and certify accordingly," said a government source.

Continued on Page 2

## EC reviews Covid situation in five poll-bound States

Poll panel talks with Health Secy, bosses of paramilitaries amid call to put off elections

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the rising cases of Omicron and the Allahabad High Court observation to postpone the polls, the Election Commission (EC) on Monday held wide-ranging discussions with Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan and top brass of the Narcotics Control Bureau, paramilitaries. Top sources said the final decision about election schedule will be taken next month. "Both the poll body and the Health Ministry will hold another meeting in January to take a final call," sources said.

Earlier, top officials of the Election Commission met the Union Health Secretary to review the Covid-19 situation in the wake of the spread of highly infectious Omicron variant ahead of Assembly polls in five States early next year. Bhushan briefed the EC about the Covid-19 situation and the rising cases of Omicron in the country.

"The Health Secretary has given a detailed presentation to the poll body for nearly an hour, especially the poll-bound



Uttarakhand, Manipur, Goa, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh," the sources said.

The Health Secretary also briefed the EC about the Covid protocol and Home Ministry guidelines issued in the recent past to check the spread of the virus. Another source said it was a session meant to get information. The EC assessed the situation based on statistics provided by the health secretary.

The EC also met with the top brass of the Narcotics Control Bureau, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and the Border Security Force (BSF) and pressed for maintaining strict vigil on international borders in poll-bound States to ensure drugs do not influence the upcoming Assembly polls in five States.

The commission in particular referred to Punjab and Goa with regard to drug smuggling, the sources said.

Continued on Page 2

## Debutant AAP sweeps Chandigarh civic polls

MANOJ KUMAR ■ CHANDIGARH

The results of Municipal Corporation Chandigarh (MCC) elections which were declared on Monday threw up a hung verdict even as the new entrant Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) made a major impact in Chandigarh politics.

The AAP, which contested the MC poll for the first time, emerged as the leading party, winning an impressive 14 of the 35 wards. Despite taking back the three farm laws, the BJP, which enjoyed a majority in the previous MC House, could win only 12 wards while the Congress was relegated to the third position bagging eight seats. The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) won only one seat. Anti-incumbency seems to have gone in favour of the AAP instead of the Congress

which was eyeing a comeback in the MC House.

Among the prominent losers were sitting Mayor Ravi Kant Sharma, and former Mayors Davesh Moudgil and Rajesh Kalia.

All three BJP candidates were Mayors in the current term of the party. Former Congress Mayor Kamlesh too was defeated. Chandigarh Congress president Subhash Chawla's son Sumit Chawla also lost.

In Ward No. 25, BJP Yuva Morcha leader Vijay Kaushal Rana was defeated by Yogesh Dhingra of AAP by a margin of 315 votes. The ward was earlier represented by Chandigarh BJP president Arun Sood. BJP's senior leader Heera Negi lost from Ward No.22 to AAP's Anju Katyal by a narrow margin of 76 votes.

Continued on Page 2

## Kerala best on health parameters; UP worst, but tops incremental growth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Kerala has yet again emerged as the best State in terms of overall health performance while poll-bound Uttar Pradesh is the worst, according to the fourth Health Index released by Niti Aayog.

The fourth round of the Health Index took into account the period 2019-20 as the reference year. The report, titled "The Healthy States, Progressive India", ranks States and Union Territories on their year-on-year incremental performance in health outcomes as well as their overall status.

This is for the fourth consecutive round that Kerala emerged as the best performer in terms of overall performance. Tamil Nadu and Telangana have emerged as the second and third best performers on health parameters among larger States.

While UP is the worst performer overall, it has made the maximum incremental gains over the period of one year followed by Assam and Telangana. Bihar and Madhya



Pradesh were the second and third-worst performers on health parameters. Rajasthan was the weakest performer both in terms of overall performance and incremental performance.

Among the smaller States, Mizoram emerged as the best performer in overall performance as well as incremental performance. Mizoram and Tripura too showed improvement in incremental performance. Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur are the worst-performing States in terms of both overall and incremental performance. Among UTs, Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir ranked among the bottom UTs in

terms of overall performance but emerged as the leading performer in terms of incremental performance, as per the Niti Aayog report.

The health index by the Government think-tank is a weighted composite score incorporating 24 indicators covering key aspects of health performance. The report, prepared in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with technical assistance from the World Bank, said that the health index comprises select indicators in three domains — health outcomes, governance and information, and key inputs and processes.

## CAPSULE

**6 NAXALS KILLED IN ENCOUNTER**  
Hyderabad/Raipur: At least six Naxals were killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh-Telangana border area on Monday morning, police said.

**BJP ANNOUNCES POLL ALLIANCE FOR PUNJAB**  
New Delhi: The BJP will contest the Assembly polls in Punjab in alliance with Amarinder Singh's Punjab Lok Congress and Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa's SAD (Sanyukt), Union Minister Gajendra Shekhawat said on Monday.

**DELHI'S AIR QUALITY IMPROVES TO 'POOR'**  
New Delhi: After staying in the 'severe' category for six days, Delhi's air quality improved to the 'poor' category on Monday following rain a day before, while the maximum temperature settled at 22.6 degrees Celsius.

**REMAINS OF CHOPPER BROUGHT TO SULUR**  
Coimbatore: Mangled remains of the helicopter, which crashed near Coonoor killing 14, including the country's first Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat, have been collected from the site.

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# PM inaugurates ₹11,581 crore developmental projects in HP

PNS ■ MANDI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said it has benefited the people of Himachal Pradesh to have a double-engine government in the State as well as at the Centre, as the speed of development projects and the implementation of different schemes have got momentum.

Addressing a rally at the Paddal ground to mark four years of the Jai Ram Thakur-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in the State, he underscored the advantages of a double-engine government.

With less than a year to go for the 2022 Himachal Pradesh Assembly polls, Modi said the people of the hill State have benefitted a lot over the last four years as various welfare schemes launched by the Centre were implemented in a more efficient manner by the Thakur government.

He inaugurated and laid foundation stones of developmental projects worth about ₹11,581 crore for the State

which included 111 MW Sawara Kuddu HydroElectric Project virtually from Mandi constructed by the HP Power Corporation Ltd (HPPCL) at a cost of ₹2082 crore. He also laid foundation stones of ₹7000 crore Renuka ji Dam on Giri river in Sirmour district and 66 MW Dhaulasidh Hydro Electric Project, a joint venture between the Government of India and the State Government located on the Beas river in Hamirpur and Kangra districts.

In addition to this, he laid the foundation stone of 210 MW Luhri Stage-I hydro-electric project to be constructed by spending an amount of ₹1811 crore on Satluji river in Shimla and Kullu districts of the State.

The Prime Minister said that he also shares an emotional bonding with Himachal Pradesh and congratulated the State Government for completing four years of its eventful tenure. He said that this double engine Government has ensured that the pace of development goes uninter-

rupted during the pandemic.

He also appreciated the efforts made by the State Government for effectively controlling the Covid-19 pandemic, adding that the vaccine coverage of cent percent eligible population in the State was the result of dedicated and committed efforts of the State Government.

He said that the State got AIIMS, Atal Tunnel and four Medical Colleges during the tenure of the present Government. Modi said that 'ease of living' of the people of the country is one of the foremost priorities and electricity plays a huge role in this. Hydro-power projects launched today reflect India's commitment to eco-friendly development.

"When the Shree Renukaji Dam project on the Giri river is completed, a large area will be directly benefited by it. Whatever income will be generated from this project, a large part of it will also be spent on development here", the Prime Minister remarked.

He talked about the speed



with which India is meeting its environment related goals and mentioned that "In 2016, India had set a target to meet 40 per cent of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil energy sources by 2030. Today every Indian will be proud that India has achieved this goal in November this year itself."

The Prime Minister continued "the whole world is praising India, for how our country is accelerating development while saving the envi-

ronment. From solar power to hydro power, from wind power to green hydrogen, the country is working continuously to make full use of every resource of renewable energy", he said.

The Prime Minister talked about elimination of single use plastic, saying that the government is alert about the damage caused to the mountains due to plastic. Along with the nationwide campaign against single use plastic, the government is also working on plastic waste man-

agement. Touching upon the need for behaviour change. He said "tourists also have a huge responsibility in keeping Himachal clean, free of plastic and other waste. Plastic has spread everywhere, plastic going into rivers, we have to make efforts together to stop the damage it is causing to Himachal."

Modi praised the growth of the pharmaceutical sector in Himachal Pradesh and said, "If India is called the pharmacy of the world today, then Himachal is the force behind it. Himachal Pradesh has helped not only other states but also other countries during the Corona global pandemic."

## 2ND GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY OF 287 INVESTIBLE PROJECTS WORTH RS 28,197

The Prime Minister also presided over the second Ground Breaking Ceremony of the Himachal Pradesh Global Investors' Meet at Mandi. In the event, 287 Investible Projects were grounded. These grounded projects are expected to

provide impetus to economic development in the region as well as generate around one lakh job opportunities.

He also unveiled the 'Swaran Jayanti Energy Policy' of the State on the occasion and also released Coffee Table Book, 'Seva aur Siddhi Ke, 4 Saal Samridhi Ke, highlighting the four years achievements of the present State Government, brought out by the Information and Public Relations Department. A documentary film based on various achievements of the present State Government brought out by the Department was also screened on the occasion.

The Prime Minister was also felicitated by the Chief Minister by presenting him with a shawl, Himachali Cap and Trident. Earlier, the Prime Minister was accorded a rousing welcome by the Governor, Chief Minister and his Cabinet colleagues on arrival at Kangdihar Halipad, Mandi.

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said that it was a record in the history of Himachal

Pradesh that the Prime Minister inaugurated and laid foundation stones of development projects worth ₹11,581 crore in a single day. He said that Renuka ji National Project, foundation stone of which was laid by the Prime Minister today would not only generate 200 million unit of energy in a surface power house with 40 MW installed capacity, but would also meet the 40 per cent drinking water requirement of Delhi by supplying 23 cubic meter water per second to National Capital Territory of Delhi.

Thakur said the State Government would strive hard to break the trend of changing of guards after every five years in the State with hard work, dedication and serving the people in a befitting manner.

He said that it was due to the double engine government at the Centre and the State that today the State has six medical colleges in Government sector and one in private sector, Atal Tunnel, Satellite Centre PGI at Una, apart from AIIMS at Bilaspur.

## Maha Cabinet pushes for increasing vax pace to curb rising Covid cases

Mumbai: The Maharashtra cabinet on Monday expressed concern over the rising Covid-19 cases in the State and stressed on the need to expedite the pace of vaccination and effective steps to curb the spread of coronavirus, whose new variant Omicron is causing much worries.

The number of active cases has increased by nearly 50 per cent in the last 20 days, the Cabinet was told at its meeting here. As on December 26, the state had 9,813 active cases of the infectious disease.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, who virtually joined the meeting held in Vidhan Bhavan in south Mumbai, asked for a meeting of state Covid-19 task force in a day or

two to review the prevailing coronavirus situation.

A statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said Thackeray suggested strict vigilance and effective steps to curb the spread of the virus. The statement said the Cabinet expressed concern over the rise in Covid-19 cases in the last few days.

Health secretary Pradeep Vyas made a presentation before the Cabinet in which he said a further rise in the number of active cases is expected in January, according to the statement. The need of the hour is to expedite the pace of vaccination, the senior bureaucrat said, adding a few days ago, eight lakh vaccine doses were being administered to people in

a day in the state, but that number has now come down to 5 lakh shots.

The health secretary said on December 8, there were 6,200 active cases of coronavirus in Maharashtra and currently, their count has shot up to around 10,000. "In the last 20 days, the number of active cases has risen by nearly 50 per cent.

Also, in the last six days, the number of daily cases has seen a three-fold rise," he said. The state's COVID-19 positivity rate is 1.06 per cent, Vyas said. On December 26, the state reported 1,648 new cases. The statement said the Chief Minister at the meeting directed all guardian ministers to expedite vaccination in their respective districts.

## Kerala CM accuses IUML of communal stand on issues; league denies charges

Malappuram: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday accused the Indian Union Muslim League of adopting a communal stand on various issues, but the IUML leadership countered the charges, saying nobody could ignore their contributions in retaining the 'beauty' of the secular face of the southern state like this.

When Vijayan alleged that IUML was nowadays taking up the slogans of the Jamaat-e-Islami and Popular Front, Member of Parliament and IUML strongman P K Kunhalikutty made it clear that his party has never compromised its long-drawn secular stand on any issue.

Lashing out at the opposition Congress-led UDF, in which IUML is a key partner, and the BJP, Vijayan said the

right wing forces were yet to cope up with the fact that the Marxist party government has come to power in the state for the second consecutive time.

So they were unleashing a false propaganda campaign against the Left government and trying to communalise even small issues, he charged while inaugurating a party conference here.

The UDF, BJP, Jamaat-e-Islami and all such groups were together in that move against the government, he alleged.

Alleging that a deliberate attempt to communalise issues was being witnessed in the state, Vijayan said a 'politicised communalisation' was seen in the recent 'love Jihad' and 'halal' controversies.

"The IUML earlier had an

understanding with the Jamaat-e-Islami and Popular Front. But that has changed and they are seen taking up the slogans of these two organisations nowadays. Those who want peace in that party should come out against this stand," he said. However, Kunhalikutty rubbished the charges and said that the credit of all the achievements and developments, which Kerala boasts of now, goes to IUML also.

Saying that IUML was not a party which cultivates separatism, he also claimed that it even used to carry out campaigns to promote secularism along with its political activities. "The presence of IUML is one of the reasons for retaining the beauty of the secular face of Kerala like this among other states in the country. PTI

## EC reviews Covid situation in five poll-bound States...

From Page 1  
A high-level team comprising Chief Election Commission Sushil Chandra, election commissioners Rajiv Kumar and Anup Chandra Pandey, will visit Uttar Pradesh on December 28 to take stock of the upcoming polls preparations and Covid-19 situation.

The chorus to postpone the upcoming Assembly polls got louder after the Allahabad High Court requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the EC to immediately ban rallies and public meetings of political parties, and consider postponing the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly election owing to rising cases of the Omicron variant of Covid-19.

"The poll body has the experience of conducting last year's Bihar and this summer's five-State Assembly elections amid the Covid pandemic. But this also came with flak from courts over failure to enforce its own social distancing norms at election rallies," said the sources.

Reacting on the conflicting reports, the Congress said, "It is with the Centre to decide as all the systems, data and necessary instruments are with their control, its with their wisdom to deal with the situation."

Earlier, in a tweet on Friday, BJP Rajya Sabha member Subramaniam Swamy wrote, "Don't be surprised by a Lockdown on Omicron and postponement of UP elections to September under President Rule in UP. What could not directly be done earlier this year can be then done indirectly early next year."

Apart from Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, the other election-bound States are Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur. In 2017, the last time Assembly elections were held in these States, UP had a seven-phase poll, while Manipur had a two-phase election. All other States had a single-phase poll.

## India sees highest daily Omicron...

From page 1  
In the countries with Omicron-driven surge, the growth trajectory of cases has been very steep. In our country, 578 Omicron cases have already been reported in 19 States/UTs," Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla wrote in a letter sent to chief secretaries of all States.

Alarmed at the rise in hyper-mutated Omicron, States like Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Haryana have curtailed the night movement of the public.

Bhalla in the letter also noted that Omicron cases have been detected in 116 countries and a surge has been reported in places such as the US, the UK, Europe (France, Italy, Spain), Russia, South Africa, Vietnam, Australia, etc.

The letter reminded the States about the Union Health Ministry December 21 advisory detailing a normative framework for containment of Covid-19.

It said with the emergence of Omicron, there is a need for "greater foresight, data analysis, dynamic decision making, and strict and prompt containment actions at the local and district levels."

"State Governments should

ensure that the health systems in the States are strengthened to meet any challenge posed by the new variant. Further, the State Governments/UT administrations should ensure that oxygen supply equipment are installed and are fully functional and the buffer stock of essential drugs should also be maintained," the letter said.

"I would like to reiterate that all the States/UTs must observe all precautions, and not let the guard down. Local/district administration, based on the normative framework and assessment of the situation, should promptly take appropriate containment measures.

States may consider imposing need-based, local curbs/restrictions, to control the crowd during the festive season," Bhalla wrote in the letter.

The letter further stressed on continued focus on the five-fold strategy of test-track-treat-vaccination and adherence to Covid-appropriate Behaviour.

"The State enforcement machinery should strictly enforce the norms of Covid-appropriate behaviour, i.e., wearing of face masks and maintaining safe social distancing in all public areas/gatherings," it said.

## 15-18 kids can register on...

From Page 1  
While registering on CoWIN, one needs to either upload the certificate of comorbidity signed by a registered doctor or carry a print-out version of it to the vaccination centre. Children will, however, have a simple process of registration - anyone eligible (15 years and above) will register for getting their shots.

Moreover, the gap between the third dose and the last received dose (second dose) will be seven to nine months. The Government will soon issue guidelines addressing these issues. The Ministry is already in the process of framing guidelines on gaps between doses, which vaccine can be taken as a precaution dose, etc. These will be based on scientific advisory, said an official from the Ministry.

The Centre is of the opinion that booster shots are population- and frequency-specific interventions. "When we say we are giving 'boosters' to 60 years and above, it implies that the door is open to other age groups. When we say it is a precaution dose or additional dose, that door is not open," said the official.

Decisions on allowing "precaution shots" or additional shots for other age groups will be taken eventually if the need arises. There have been demands from various quarters for booster doses to health-care workers besides other vulnerable populations to give them a safety net against the Covid virus.

## Debutant AAP sweeps Chandigarh civic polls...

From Page 1  
Though the AAP won the maximum seats, its election campaign committee chairman Chandermukhi Sharma lost his seat. The richest candidate in the fray, BJP's Anup Gupta, won from his seat. He along with his wife had declared Rs 45 crore assets during the nominations filed for the polls.

From the Congress, Devinder Singh Babla, Leader of Opposition in the MC House, showed his dominance. His wife Harpreet Kaur Babla contesting from a woman reserved seat won by the highest margin of 3,103 votes.

Traditionally, the municipal elections held every five years sees a locking of horns between the BJP and the Congress, but the AAP's entry made the contest this time triangular.

The AAP had promised freebies like free 20,000 litre water per month per house, free public parking lots, free door-to-door waste collection, free primary education and mohalla clinics. Clearing the waste dumping ground was also its promise. People voted against the ruling BJP over the issues of increased water, sewerage and parking rates. Covid cess and cow cess were also the issues which the Opposition raised. National issues like price rise and inflation also seemed to have affected the BJP in the city.

Hitting out at the BJP and the Congress, AAP leader Raghav Chadha said people were fed up with them as they failed to deliver despite being given a chance repeatedly. People were looking for an "honest, viable alternative" He called his party's performance a "trailer" before next year's Punjab Assembly polls. "These two traditional parties failed to undertake development and bring about a change in the system, which people wanted. People saw how an ordinary councillor, who used to roam on bicycle and scooter, has big farmhouses and accumulated properties," said Chadha.

BJP state president Arun Sood said the party accepts the mandate given by the residents of the city and is committed for its development and betterment. Sood said the BJP has the highest vote share while the vote share of Aam Aadmi Party is at number three, adding that the BJP will play an important role in forming a stable Government in the city.

As the result comes weeks before Punjab goes to Assembly polls, AAP chief and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said this shows that Punjab is ready for change. Taking to Twitter, Kejriwal said, "Victory of Aam Aadmi Party in Chandigarh Municipal Corporation is a sign of the coming change in Punjab. People of Chandigarh today have chosen honest politics of AAP, rejecting corrupt politics. Many congratulations to all the winning candidates and workers of AAP. This time Punjab is ready for change."

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, in a tweet, hailed the victory of the party saying, "This victory is a sign that people want to give a chance to 'honesty and politics that works' if there is an alternative."

## 7-month high Covid cases in...

From Page 1  
Those going out for anti-Covid-19 vaccination will also be exempted on production of a valid identity card and a proof of appointment.

Students and others appearing in recruitment examinations will be allowed to reach their destination but only on production of valid identity and admit cards.

According to the DDMA order, people on their way to or returning from railway stations, bus stops and airports will be given exemptions from the curfew but only after producing valid tickets.

The exempted categories will face no restriction on inter-State and intra-State movement, the DDMA order said.

## BJP to record bigger win this time in UP Assembly polls, says Keshav P Maurya

Budaun: Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Monday claimed that the BJP will post a bigger win this time in the Assembly elections, bettering its previous tally by bagging two-third of the votes polled.

The BJP had won 312 seats with almost 40 per cent vote share in the 2017 elections.

"The BJP is going to register a bigger victory this time than 2017. In 2022, it will win over 300 seats with more than 60 per cent votes," he said during his party's 'Jan Vishwas Yatra' here.

The BJP leader also claimed his party will hit a 'sixer' in Budaun this time, indicating that all six seats in the district will be bagged by it.

In the previous elections, the BJP had won five seats. PTI

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Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of ICICI Bank Ltd. that Mrs. Smita Khurana is owner of Flat No. 202, Sector 14, Block - C2, situated at Janakpuri, New Delhi, for purchase of the said portion, if any person has any objection upon the ownership of above owner's sale Mortgage/loan, and any kind of objections kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 10 days of the present.  
Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)  
206, 1st Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, N. Delhi-15  
Ph : 011-41112572/28 kumarandassociates.advocates@gmail.com

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
To be known to all that my clients, Dharmo Devi, Kamla Devi, Ramesh Devi, Savitri Devi, All Daughter in Law of Lt. Sh. Bodan R/o WZ 705, Palam Village, New Delhi 110045, Alottee/mutatee Of DDA Plot No. 70 Block C, Sector 8, Dwaraka, New Delhi 110075, Situated At Dwaraka, Delhi Area Admeasuring 205 Sq Meter. The original documents i.e. ALLOTMENT LETTER of the above said plot has been lost. An F.I.R./NCR/LR No.1104601/2021 dated 26/12/2021 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 9818330033 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to WZ 705, Palam Village, New Delhi 110045 OR write to Dy. Director (LAB)/r Director(H), D-Block, 3rd Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

**THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS**  
**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, Akbari Rashid, W/o. Mohammad Rashid Hashmi, R/o. 676/12, 3rd floor, Zakir Nagar, Jamia Nagar, Okhla, New Delhi-110025 have changed my name to Akbari Khatoun for all future purposes.  
PD(2125)A

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, XVIIth CIRCLE, U.P. JAL NIGAM (URBAN), R-1, RAJ NAGAR, GHAZIABAD E-TENDER NOTICE**  
Letter No.: 1171/विनि-13/54  
Dated: 23.12.2021  
U.P. Jal Nigam, E-tenders are invited on two bid system for "Operation and Maintenance of Raw Water Conveyance Main and Clear Water Conveyance Main, Distribution Points at Noida & Indrapuram, Ghaziabad including O&M of Gate Valve, Discharge Measurement, Silt Cleaning and Appurtenant Works at Primary Treatment Works, Dasna under 100 Cusec Ganga Jal Water Supply Project, Ghaziabad" from the independent contractors/contracting firms having requisite work experience and financial capability. Tender document shall be available at e-procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in> latest by 27.12.2021 at 18:00 Hrs. Interested contractors may view & download tender document and upload their tender, duly filled, online latest by 10.01.2022 upto 15:00 Hrs. Technical/Pre-Qualification part of which shall be opened on 10.01.2022 at 15:30 Hrs. onwards.

# Gurugram issues advisory for New Year, bans large gathering for worship, fairs

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Ahead of the New Year, the Gurugram district health department on Monday issued an advisory for New Year celebrations amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The advisory also barred gatherings of large numbers of people for worship, fairs and advised people to avoid visiting crowded places during the celebrations and the people have been asked to follow the Covid protocol seriously.

According to the orders, the health department has strictly prohibited "fair or any event" in areas that fall under containment zones.

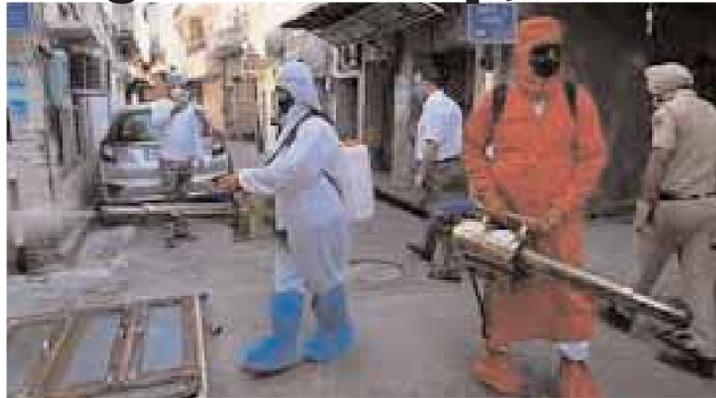
The advisory also directed people in the containment zones to "not come outside of homes unnecessarily".

The department also suggested that people above 60 years of age with co-morbidities, pregnant women and children below the age of 10 must stay at home.

In the last few days, the city has witnessed a rise in corona cases. According to data while the number of corona patients in the district was 206 in October, till now this number has increased been to 448 in December and the figure coming out during the last three days is a matter of concern.

In such a situation, the people of the district need to be more careful and alert for the next 15 days. At present, more than 4,500 suspected corona patients are being tested daily in the district, a health official said.

Deputy Commissioner Dr Yash Garg said that the risk of



respiratory diseases, flu and other pollution-related health problems is relatively high in December month.

Garg directed that there

will be a complete ban on any event in the Containment Zone.

According to the guidelines "In case of any fair, exhibition, staggered timings and restricted entries should be considered. Also, volunteers should be appropriately stationed to ensure thermal scanning, physical distancing and wearing of face masks. Close-circuit cameras should be considered to

monitor compliance of physical distance norms and wearing of masks in crowded places."

"People have to follow Covid-19 guidelines in anyhow. If they didn't take precautions they can be infected. We appealed to the public to just follow norms of social distancing and take extra cautions," Garg said.

# Sisodia lays foundation for East Delhi's veterinary hosp renovation

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Monday said that it will rebuild a veterinary hospital for pets in East Delhi's Patparganj.

The multistory building will include a mohalla clinic, an OPD, a lab, a surgical room, and a hall and library on the top floor.

The total sanctioned amount for this building is Rs 2 crores. The hospital will be ready in the next seven months.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia who laid the foundation stone of this veterinary hospital said, along with Patparganj, pet owners from Laxmi Nagar, Pandav Nagar, Trilokpuri and Kondli can also avail the facilities for their pets at this renovated veterinary hospital.

The library on the hospital's top floor will provide a comfortable space for students to study and the hall will be opened to senior citizens for recreation purposes," he added. "The government is short of space, so we want to utilize the space available to its maximum



capacity. The renovated veterinary hospital building will also have a 'mohalla clinic' for the treatment of residents in nearby areas, and so residents living nearby this hospital will not have to go to the farther hospitals for their treatment. They can also avail the facility of 212 free health checkups or tests at this clinic. Along with this hospital will provide a comfortable space for students to study and the hall will be

opened to the senior citizens for recreation purposes," Sisodia said, who also holds the portfolio of education minister in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) cabinet.

According to Delhi government officials, the renovated veterinary hospital will be a four-storeyed semi-permanent building. It will have a doctor's room, a surgical room, an OPD and a space for treatment of large and small animals on the first floor.

# Despite Omicron risk, 14% likely to go to cinemas in next 60 days: Survey



New Delhi: Increasing risk of Omicron is not dissuading 14 per cent of the citizens from venturing to a cinema hall in the next 60-days, a survey report by LocalCircles said on Monday.

The survey, which received close to 17,000 responses from citizens residing in 314 districts of India, also stated that 14 per cent citizens have already visited cinema halls or multiplexes to watch a movie in the last 60 days.

The figure is 40 per cent higher than the number of citizens who are likely to watch a movie at cinema halls or multiplexes in the next 60 days in comparison to a similar survey conducted in July this year.

Extrapolation of the data shows a grim picture.

According to LocalCircles, if 14 per cent citizens are planning to go to the theatre or multiplex to watch a movie in the next 60 days, and it is assumed that India has a population of 138 crore, it translates to about 19 crore citizens going to the theatre or multiplex to watch a movie in the next 60 days.

"Given the level of awareness and the very high risk, the Central and state governments and district administrations must watch the situation closely and the moment there is a visible trend of rising TPR day over day, cinema halls must be closed to prevent further spread," said Sachin Taparia, founder of LocalCircles.

"Though most cinema halls and multiplexes claim that masks are mandatory, once the crowd is seated there

is zero enforcement. Non-compliance has been reported by citizens on LocalCircles from across the country, stating that it is only for entry that some cinemas require people to be masked."

Lately, with the release of 'Sooryavanshi', 'Spiderman No way Home' and last week's '83', people have started going to the theatres once again.

Upcoming movies like 'Jersey', 'Deep Water' and 'The King's Man' are scheduled to release within the next two weeks and are likely to attract large crowds.

However, as this momentum builds, India has recorded nearly 600 cases of Omicron in the last four weeks and the daily Covid caseload in many parts of the country is once again rising.

IAN S

# Man held for duping Retd Colonel of ₹6L in Noida

Noida: The IT Cell of Noida Police has arrested a man who allegedly duped people by hacking their phones and transferring money from their bank accounts.

Additional DCP Noida Ranvijay Singh informed that a complaint was received on August 10, at Sector 20 police station by a Retd Colonel stating that he was duped of Rs 6 lakh by a fraudster.

The complainant stated that he got a weblink on his mobile phone to which he inadvertently clicked and his phone was subsequently hacked by the fraudsters. "Soon after some time Rs 6 lakh was debited from his account," the police said.

Based on the complaint, an FIR was registered under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and an investigation was initiated by the IT Cell of the Noida Police. "We started developing digital evidence after which it was found that the crime was done from Rajasthan's Bikaner district and the amount was transferred to a person from the same district," the ADCP said.

After getting all the relevant details, the police swung into action and froze the specified account. On Saturday, the accused, identified as Chetan Prakash Upadhyay, a resident of Bikaner in Rajasthan, was arrested by the cops near Sector 18, Noida, however, a close aide of Upadhyay is still absconding and efforts are on to nab him.

IAN S

# Woman convicted, fined for power theft

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A woman, who was indulged in the power theft in the National Capital, was convicted by a Delhi Court on Monday. Arul Verma, the Special Judge, Tis Hazari Court convicted the accused identified as Geeta Devi, a resident of Aruna Nagar near Majnu Ka Tila with three months of imprisonment post finding her guilty for indulging in power theft for domestic usage.

She was convicted under Section 135 of the Electricity Act 2003. A civil liability of Rs 90,532 was also approved by the court for the electricity theft that Tata Power-DDL would recover from the convicted consumer.

Commenting on the judgment, Ganesh Srinivasan, CEO, Tata Power-DDL said that Tata

Power DDL has been working consistently towards providing our consumers and essential services with 24x7 power supply, even during the ongoing pandemic.

"Electricity theft not only results in commercial losses for us but is also creates a very serious safety hazard. We laud the judgment of the court and appeal to all consumers to take legitimate electricity connections and pay their bills on time to avail uninterrupted power supply," he said.

"Tata Power-DDL is working on methods to curb the AT&C (Aggregate Technical and Commercial) losses in power theft prone areas and control the menace with strict measures. The company is also keeping a close watch on the violators," said the spokesperson.



Doctors stage a protest outside Maulana Azad Medical College over postponement of National Eligibility Entrance Test postgraduate (NEET PG) counselling 2021, in New Delhi on Monday

# Doctors protesting delay in NEET PG stopped from marching to SC



Police stop doctors protesting outside Maulana Azad Medical College over postponement of National Eligibility Entrance Test postgraduate (NEET PG) counselling 2021, in New Delhi on Monday

New Delhi: The Delhi Police on Monday stopped agitating doctors from heading towards the Supreme Court in a bid to highlight the delay in NEET PG Counselling 2021.

The doctors were marching

from Maulana Azad Medical College to the Supreme Court on Monday to intensify their ongoing protest against the repeated delay in the NEET exam. However, the police stopped them on their way to

the apex court after which they put their lab coats on the road to register their protest.

General Secretary, Resident Doctors Association of Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, Dr Survrsh Pandey, told IANS:

"We have been boycotting the regular and emergency medical services in Delhi's hospitals since December 17. As our protest outside Nirman Bhawan resulted in nothing, we decided to protest outside the Supreme Court and to surrender our lab coats to the apex court but we have been stopped midway."

"We request the court to take Suo Moto in the case as the third wave (of Covid) is knocking on the door and we are overburdened due to the delay in the NEET PG counselling."

The resident doctors across the nation have been protesting since November 27 against the multiple postponement of the NEET PG Counselling 2021 exam and the subsequent admission of the fresh batch of resident doctors in the medical colleges.

On December 6, the RDAs had boycotted the emergency and the routine services in hospitals. However, the federation suspended their agitation for one week after getting a positive assurance from the health ministry on December 9.

IAN S

# Tihar inmate stabbed, hospitalised

New Delhi: A prisoner was allegedly stabbed by his fellow inmates at the high-security Tihar Prison in the national capital, an official said here on Monday.

According to the official, the incident took place at Jail No. 3 of the prison on Saturday. "The inmate identified as Prakash, alias Chinu, was attacked by three to four inmates of his ward with a hand-made knife," Director General (Prisons) Sandeep Goyal informed.



During the attack, the 26-year-old inmate sustained stab injuries on his thigh and back. The scuffle was stopped by the jail staff, who immediately intervened after which, the injured inmate Prakash was rushed to Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital.

As per latest information, Prakash is currently under treatment at the said hospital. Notably, the incident comes on the same day when IANS learnt that five prisoners at the Tihar Jail have died in the past eight days. Goyal has said that the deaths of the prisoners took place in different jails and "none was related to any kind of violence".

"In all these, the circumstances indicate natural causes like old disease or other unknown reasons," Goyal said, adding that as per rules, inquest proceedings are being conducted by Metropolitan Magistrate in each case. IAN S

# Delhi's air quality improves to 'poor' after rain

New Delhi: After staying in the 'severe' category for six days, Delhi's air quality improved to the 'poor' category on Monday following rains a day before, while the maximum temperature settled at 22.6 degrees Celsius, two notches above the season's average.

The 24-hour air quality index (AQI) of Delhi read 283 at 4 pm. The AQIs of its neighbouring cities -- Faridabad (260), Ghaziabad (212), Gurugram (250), Greater Noida (242) and Noida (226) - were also recorded in the 'poor' category.

The government's air quality forecast agency SAFAR said

that the AQI improved on Monday "due to last night rain that scavenged particulate mat-

ter through wet deposition". On Tuesday, winds are likely to be low, reducing ventilation of

pollutants, with the AQI expected to be 'very poor', the System of Air Quality and

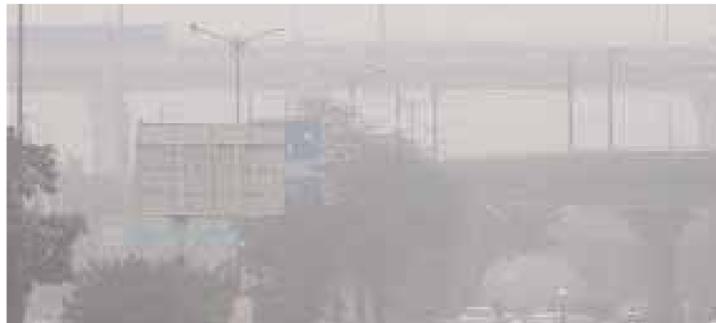
Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) said.

"On 29th (Wednesday) improvement is expected due to high easterly winds that enhances ventilation of pollutants. Mixing layer height continues to be low (less than 1.0 km) and minimum temperature tends to drop gradually. The net effect is that AQI remains to be within 'very poor' till 31st (December) and from 1st (January) onwards it is likely to improve to 'poor'," it said.

The AQI was recorded in the 'severe' category on Sunday evening at 459, according to Central Pollution Control

Board (CPCB) data. On Monday morning, it was 373. The city's 24-hour average AQI read 431 at 4 pm on Saturday. It was 415 on Friday, 423 on Thursday, 407 on Wednesday and 402 on Tuesday. An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'.

The city has recorded 23 'severe' air quality days in this year so far. In November, it recorded 11 such days, the highest in the month since the CPCB started maintaining air quality data in 2015. PTI



# MoC's account frozen on adverse inputs: MHA | Top-level bureaucratic reshuffle by Centre

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Hours after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee claimed the Centre had frozen all bank accounts of the Missionaries of Charity (MoC), the organisation founded by Mother Teresa, the Ministry of Home Affairs on Monday refuted her assertions.

The MHA said the MoC's application for renewal of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) registration was refused on December 25 for not meeting eligibility conditions as some adverse inputs were received. In a statement, the MHA also said it did not freeze any account of the MoC but State Bank of India has informed that the organisation itself sent a request to the bank to freeze its accounts.

"Shocked to hear that on Christmas, Union Ministry FROZE ALL BANK ACCOUNTS of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity in India! Their 22,000 patients & employees have been left without food & medicines. While the law is paramount, humanitarian efforts must not be compromised," Banerjee tweeted.

The MHA said the application for the renewal of FCRA registration of MoC was refused on December 25 for not meeting the eligibility conditions under the FCRA 2010 and the Foreign Contribution Regulation Rules (FCRR) 2011. "No request or revision application has been received from the MoC but State Bank of India has informed that the organisation itself sent a request to the bank to freeze its accounts."

The MHA said the application for the renewal of FCRA registration of MoC was refused on December 25 for not meeting the eligibility conditions under the FCRA 2010 and the Foreign Contribution Regulation Rules (FCRR) 2011. "No request or revision application has been received from the MoC but State Bank of India has informed that the organisation itself sent a request to the bank to freeze its accounts."



valid up to October 31, 2021. The MHA said the validity was subsequently extended up to December 31, 2021, along with other FCRA associations whose renewal application were pending renewal. "However, while considering the MoC's renewal appli-

cation, some adverse inputs were noticed. In consideration of these inputs on record, the renewal application of MoC was not approved," the statement said. The FCRA registration of MoC was valid up to December 31, 2021 and the MHA did not freeze any

account of the MoC. "The State Bank of India has informed that MoC itself sent a request to SBI to freeze its accounts," the statement said. The Missionaries of Charity is a Catholic religious congregation established in 1950 by Mother Teresa.

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Senior bureaucrat Sanjay Kumar Singh has been appointed as Steel Secretary as part of a major top-level bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the Centre on Monday.

Singh, a 1987 batch IAS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre, is currently Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) and Department of Pensions & Pensioners Welfare (DoPPW).

V Srinivas, a 1989 batch IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre, will be Secretary, DARPG and DoPPW in place of Singh. He is currently Special Secretary in the DARPG.

Manoj Joshi, Special Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries has been appointed as Officer on Special Duty (OSD), Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

He will take over as Secretary, Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs upon superannuation of Durga Shanker Mishra this month-end, a DoPT order said.

Bharat Lal, a 1988 batch Indian Forest Service officer of Gujarat cadre, has been appointed as the Secretary to the Lokpal.

Lal is Additional Secretary, Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Pankaj Jain, Additional Secretary, Department of Financial Services has been appointed as Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.

Vini Mahajan has been appointed as Secretary, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Mahajan, a 1987 batch IAS officer, is presently working in her cadre State Punjab.

Leena Nandan, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, has been named as Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change vice Rameshwar Prasad Gupta, upon his superannuation on December 31, 2021.

Rohit Kumar Singh, Special Secretary, Ministry of Culture will be Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, in place of Nandan.

Rajeev Ranjan, Special Secretary, Department of Expenditure has been appointed as Secretary, National Commission for Backward Classes.

## Rahul slams remarks made against Mahatma Gandhi

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Slamming the remarks made against Mahatma Gandhi at a function in Raipur, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday quoted the Father of the Nation that his thoughts cannot be imprisoned.

His remarks came after a section of Hindu religious leaders sang paens to Nathuram Godse, the assassin of Mahatma Gandhi, at a religious congregation in Raipur on Sunday.

"You can chain me, torture me, you can destroy this body, but you cannot imprison my thoughts," the former Congress President said quoting the Mahatma.



During the conclusion of the two-day 'dharma sansad' at Ravan Bhata ground in Raipur, Hindu religious leader Kalicharan Maharaj had used an "abusive" word against the Father of the Nation and asked people to elect a staunch Hindu leader as the head of the government in order to protect the religion. Earlier, Yati Narsinghananda Giri had praised Godse as the symbol of truth and religion.

## Army probe team to visit firing site in Nagaland on Dec 29

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Given the seriousness of the incident, an Army probe team will visit the firing site in Nagaland on December 29. A Major General is heading the court of inquiry into the incident in which 13 civilians and a soldier were killed on December 4 leading to mass unrest in the state.

The State Government immediately constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate into the incident. The centre on Sunday decided to constitute a five-member committee to look into the withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).

The committee is headed

by Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India Vivek Joshi and additional secretary in the home ministry Piyush Goyal will be the member secretary. The panel will submit its report in 45 days.

The Army enquiry team will visit the site in Mon district, Nagaland where civilians returning from work in a mini bus were fired upon by the Army on the fateful day. It led to irate village folks clashing with the troops in which a soldier was killed and the troops reportedly had to open fire.

As regards the army team's forthcoming visit in Oting in Mon district on Wednesday, officials said on Monday here and Kohima the "Indian Army Enquiry Team solicits from the

public at large any primary information (not forwarded or not from secondary source) pertaining to the incident. Any person having such information and desirous of depositing before the Enquiry is requested to do so at Tizit Police Station."

This statement came a day after the Indian army in a communique on Sunday said "We once again deeply regret the loss of lives during the December four incident in Mon District. Loss of lives is indeed sad and unfortunate.

The enquiry ordered by Army is progressing expeditiously and all efforts are being made to conclude it at the earliest. We have taken out notices for people to come forward and assist us in the enquiry by pro-



viding any information including videos, photos or any other material from original sources and will be grateful for the same. This can be conveyed on

fully cooperating with the Special Investigation Team (SIT) enquiry ordered by the State Government and required details are being shared in timely manner.

We request all brothers and sisters of Nagaland to be patient and wait for the findings of the Army enquiry. We assure you that action will be taken in accordance with the law to secure justice for all.

The people of Nagaland have always cooperated and assisted the Security Forces in maintaining peace and tranquility over the last many decades. We share a deep bond of brotherhood, trust and friendship with you. Let us work together for a brighter and better future," it said.

## Pak Army-ISI's new outfit Al Qisas to target forces through grenades, IEDs

**RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI**

Pakistan Army-ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) combine has floated yet another outfit that is styled as Al Qisas Movement Jammu & Kashmir to target the forces through grenades and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

The outfit on Sunday claimed responsibility for the grenade attack in Pulwama in which two constables were injured.

Two policemen were injured after the terrorists of the outfit lobbed a grenade at a police party near the post office in south Kashmir's Pulwama district on Sunday afternoon, Intelligence sources said.

In the last few months, attacks against the security forces, including Jammu & Kashmir Police have witnessed a surge, especially in capital Srinagar.

In the last few months, attacks against the security forces, including Jammu & Kashmir Police have witnessed a surge, especially in capital Srinagar.

Sangbaz means stone pelters and the Tehreek-e-Sangbaz is essentially recruiting stone-pelters in its fold for targeting the security forces.

The activities of the Tahreek-e-Sangbaz have been noticed by the agencies soon after The Resistance Front (TRF) suffered a major blow with the liquidation of its top commander Abbas Sheikh who was driving the terrorist violence in Jammu and Kashmir capital Srinagar.

Sheikh was the key terrorist maintaining a large network of over ground workers (OGWs) as also terror cadres and his killing by the Forces dealt a major blow to the Jaish project, officials from Srinagar said.

New terror entities like Kashmir Tigers and Islamic State Wilayat

Hind are also part of the latest Pakistani strategy to put in place new outfits to carry out terrorist hits in the Valley.

The Kashmir Tigers is also a Jaish Front recently noticed by the security agencies. It had claimed responsibility for the Kakapora police station grenade attack in Pulwama.

Likewise, the ISWH had claimed responsibility for carrying out a lone wolf hit and wounding a traffic policeman in Rajouri Kadal area of Srinagar. The pistol used to target a non-local Hindu street food vendor in Srinagar in October was also used in the lone wolf attack in Rajouri Kadal.

ISWH is also a Pakistani project to keep the low intensity conflict alive in the Valley. In a similar manner, the United Liberation Front (ULF) is a new outfit floated earlier this year. It had claimed responsibility for the attack on migrant workers in south Kashmir's Anantnag in October.

## ED attaches 47 properties in money laundering probe

**New Delhi:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached around 47 properties, including 230 acres of land, 20 plots, gold, vehicle and bank deposits, worth Rs 5.74 crore in connection with a money laundering probe linked to the Term Deposit Fraud pertaining to Chennai Port Trust (CPT).

During the course of investigation it was found that the suspected persons had submitted fake Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDRs) in Chennai Port Trust. By retaining the original Fixed Deposits Receipts, they had fraudulent-

ly liquidated the fixed deposits within a couple of days after the opening of the Fixed Deposits.

It was found that an amount of Rs 45.40 crore was fraudulently transferred to a fake current account in the name of Chennai Port Trust. Around Rs 15.25 crore was withdrawn by cash from the said current account by impersonating as Deputy Director, Finance of Chennai Port Trust.

Remaining amount of around Rs 31.65 crore was transferred to several bank accounts through more than 49 transactions and subsequently withdrawn as cash from those

accounts upon luring the account holders in lieu of small commission.

During the course of investigation, the suspected persons were examined and it was revealed that the proceeds of crime or the money obtained out of liquidation of the fixed deposits pertaining to Chennai Port Trust were invested in purchase of movable and immovable assets and the same were attached on Friday.

The ED had searched more than 15 premises across Tamil Nadu in June in connection with the money laundering probe.



A Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) health worker collects swab sample of an outstation passenger for Covid-19 test, at CSMT railway station, in Mumbai, on Monday

## Amit Shah chairs meeting on narcotics

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday chaired a meeting of the national coordination centre on narcotics and directed the creation of a pan-India portal, a canine unit, free call centre and specialised task forces in States to curb the menace of drugs, according to an official statement.

The Minister reviewed the drugs abuse scenario and the mechanism to counter it in the country during the third apex-level meeting of the narcotics coordination mechanism NCORD, which has a theme of eradicating drugs from the country with the objective of "nasha-mukt Bharat abhiyan"

or drugs-free India movement.

The meeting was organised by the federal anti-narcotics agency, Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), and it was attended by the secretaries and police chiefs of various states and the Centre. "As per survey reports, the number of drug abusers has increased approximately seven-fold in the last two decades, which is alarming.

"To protect, especially our children and youth, the home minister emphasised that there is a need to create awareness against drugs and its ill-effects from a young age by incorporating it in academic curriculum," the statement said. Shah "reviewed the prevailing drug trafficking and abuse scenario

in the country and expressed his concerns over its emergence as national threat."

"He stressed upon the need for close coordination between the States and Central Government agencies to tackle this problem that transcends boundaries. The minister underscored the importance of organising NCORD meetings regularly at all the levels with participation of senior officers," the statement said.

For strengthening the coordination mechanism, the Minister asked all states to anti and notify a dedicated anti-narcotics task force (ANTF) which can also function as the NCORD secretariat at the state level, the state-

ment said. The Minister also directed the agencies "to take some important measures such as creation of a national NCORD portal, constitution of inter-ministerial standing committees (IMCs) to devise effective policies with regard to dual use prescription drugs and precursors, raising of a national narco canine pool, and establishment of drug de-addiction centres in all prisons of 272 most affected districts, etc."

The Home Minister said the Union Government will also create a 24x7 toll free national narcotics call centre where the public can share inputs and information on drug matters. Shah directed

the NCB to build capacity of various drug law enforcement agencies like the police, paramilitary forces, public prosecutors and employees of civil departments "at national-level on various areas of narcotics control."

The minister also "expressed concern over increasing drug trafficking through maritime route which has become an emerging challenge on coastal front of the country and emphasised on involvement of all stakeholders in the state NCORD meetings especially of coastal states and suggested extending the mandate of existing joint coordination committee under the NCB."

## Cong attacks Centre for confusion over booster dose, Govt hits back

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Congress and the Centre were at loggerheads on Monday over Covid-19 vaccination targets, with former Union Minister P Chidambaram alleging confusion over the booster dose of the vaccines and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan hitting back at the grand old party for "spreading disinformation".

Chidambaram lashed out at the Government over the alleged sluggish pace of inoculation against the viral disease and claimed that the country will not achieve 100 per cent first-dose vaccination by December 31.

"Let's face the truth even if the Government is unwilling to do so. Not all 94 crore adults will receive the first dose of vaccination before December 31. We will not achieve 100 per cent coverage. A very, very large number will not receive the second dose of vaccination," he said in a tweet.

Pradhan described Congress leaders as "compulsive naysayers" who are out to "seed panic, creating fear and spreading disinformation". Chidambaram also alleged that the booster dose proposal is "shrouded in confusion". "Which is the booster dose vaccine for Covishield? Not another dose of Covishield, I hope.

"The chicken have come home to roost. We are paying the price for delayed orders, delayed payment, non-licensing of Pfizer & Moderna, and insufficient production and supply," he tweeted.

Hitting out at Chidambaram, Pradhan said, "The sadist attitude of Congress and its coterie on every progressive step India takes never fails to surprise!" "First, they misled people over safety of our homemade vaccines, stoked vaccine hesitancy and created panic by doubting the collective capability of our country.

"And, now when India is yet again taking proactive steps to effec-

tively manage the Omicron variant, flower-pot-farmers and compulsive naysayers are doing what they are best at — seeding panic, creating fear and spreading disinformation," he tweeted. The Minister noted that many developed countries are facing the brunt of Omicron despite depending upon the said vaccines.

"Also, Chidambaram ji, let me remind you it was the Congress government that sold vaccines for profit. Your intent to deceive will not derail India's fight against the pandemic," he wrote on Twitter.

The country had launched the Covid vaccination drive on January 16 and set a target to achieve 100 per cent vaccination for the first dose by December 31.

As on Monday afternoon, the country had administered 142.31 crore doses of Covid vaccines, with nearly 84 crore beneficiaries receiving the first dose and over 58 crore receiving both the jabs.

## Omicron can evade immune protection, new vax needed: Study

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

A new study from Columbia researchers, in collaboration with scientists at the University of Hong Kong, has added more evidence that the Omicron variant can evade the immune protection conferred by vaccines and natural infection and suggests the need for new vaccines and treatments that anticipate how the virus may soon evolve.

The findings have been published in the journal Nature. David Ho, MD, director of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center and the Clyde'56 and Helen Wu Professor of Medicine at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons tested the ability of antibodies generated by vaccination to neutralize the omicron variant in laboratory assays that pitted antibodies against live viruses and against pseudoviruses constructed in the lab to mimic Omicron.

A striking feature of the omicron variant is the alarming number of changes in the virus's spike

protein that could pose a threat to the effectiveness of current vaccines and therapeutic antibodies.

Large drop in Omicron neutralisation by antibodies from vaccines. Antibodies from people double-vaccinated with any of the four most widely used vaccines — Moderna, Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson — were significantly less effective at neutralising the Omicron variant compared to the ancestral virus. Antibodies from previously infected individuals were even less likely to neutralise omicron.

Individuals who received a booster shot of either of the two mRNA vaccines are likely to be better protected, although even their antibodies exhibited diminished neutralising activity against Omicron.

"The new results suggest that previously infected individuals and fully vaccinated individuals are at risk for infection with the omicron variant," said Ho. "Even a third booster shot may not adequately

protect against omicron infection, but of course it is advisable to get one, as you'll still benefit from some immunity."

The results are consistent with other neutralisation studies, as well as early epidemiological data from South Africa and the UK, which show efficacy of two doses of the vaccines against symptomatic disease is significantly reduced against the omicron variant.

Most monoclonal antibodies are unable to neutralise Omicron.



When administered early in the course of infection, monoclonal antibodies can prevent many individuals from developing severe Covid. But the new study suggests that all of the therapies currently in use and most in development are much less effective against omicron, if they work at all.

In neutralisation studies with monoclonal antibodies, only one (Brii198 approved in China) maintained notable activity against Omicron. A minor form of omicron is completely resistant to all antibodies in clinical use today. The authors note that omicron is now the most complete "escapee" from neutralisation that scientists have seen.

In this study, Ho's lab also identified four new spike mutations in omicrons that help the virus evade antibodies. This information should inform the design of new approaches to combat the new variant. Ho suggested that scientists will need to develop vaccines and treatments that can better anticipate how the virus is evolving.

# J&K to get over ₹60K crore real estate investments: L-T Guv

39 MoUs inked between NAREDCO, J&K Govt

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, on Monday said that the Union Territory is likely to receive ₹60,000 crore of investment in the real estate sector in near future as the present Govt's top priority is to transform this sector in order to have multiplier effects on the UT's economy.

Addressing Jammu and Kashmir Real Estate Summit 2021, jointly organised by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir and NAREDCO Sinha indicated that investment proposals worth ₹44 thousand crores with their detailed project reports have already been submitted to the concerned departments of the Govt. A total number of 39 MoU's

worth ₹18,300 crores were inked between the NAREDCO Developers and Government of Jammu and Kashmir on the sidelines of Real Estate Summit held at Jammu Convention Centre.

Out of 39 MoU's in different sectors, 19 were signed in the residential, 8 Commercial, 4 Hospitality, 3 Infrastructure, 2 Finance, and 3 Film and Entertainment sectors.

The Lieutenant Governor also announced that given the success of the real estate summit 2021 at Jammu, the Govt is so encouraged to see the response of investors that it would host a similar conference on 21st and 22nd May 2022 at Srinagar and make it even larger in scale.

Sinha pointed out that despite inheriting a bad economy from the previous regime, the present Govt has taken host of initiatives to rationalize the then prevailing administrative weaknesses and made multiple corrections on them which includes drastically reducing aviation fuel rate from 26% to 1% and setting up a rationalized stamp duty structure among others.

National and NAREDCO Jammu & Kashmir NAREDCO and LEAD and National Association of Realtors



He informed that multiple projects relating to infrastructure of around Rs. 1 lakh crores of investments are at various stages of implementation in the entire Jammu and Kashmir region and added that shortly with the help of the central government the Union Territory will be able to launch the metro projects in both major cities 'Jammu & in Srinagar'.

The Lt. Governor also informed "the present gov. is building a central secretariat and dwelling units for state employees including those that work for the police force. It is also moving very fast to creating infrastructure such as hotels, parks, IT hubs, and more".

During the occasion a coffee table book was also launched which contained information relating to the Union Territory and MoU's were signed for over Rs. 18 thousand crores of projects in various areas of economy. Launch of Auction Portal and Auction of Assets portal were also done during the occasion, besides a RERA portal was also launched in the presence of Union Minister of State at PMO Dr. Jitendra Singh and Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs and Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri.

Speaking on the occasion more? The comments came after the Jammu and Kashmir administration signed 39 MoUs worth Rs 18,300 crore with the country's real investors for the development of housing and commercial projects in the union territory. "Once again the true intentions of the government are brought to the fore. While offering to secure the land, jobs, domicile laws & identity of the people of Ladakh, J&K is being put up for sale. People of Jammu should beware, investors will buy up land in Jammu long before Kashmir," Abdullah wrote on Twitter. Mehbooba tweeted, "J&K's special status was illegally revoked to dehumanise, dispossess & disempower the only Muslim majority state in India. GOIs brazen loot & sale of our resources shows that the sole motive is to annihilate our identity & change the demography." PTT

## Omar, Mehbooba slam admin for opening UT to real estate investors

Srinagar: Former Jammu & Kashmir chief ministers Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti on Monday hit out at the administration for opening the Union Territory to real estate investors, alleging that it is being done to change the demography of the region.

The comments came after the Jammu and Kashmir administration signed 39 MoUs worth Rs 18,300 crore with the country's real investors for the development of housing and commercial projects in the union territory.

"Once again the true intentions of the government are

Hardeep Singh Puri thanked the Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for taking up developmental projects for its people in such a short span of time and created an atmosphere of friendly industry related poli-

cy on multiple fronts. The Union Minister particularly emphasized on drastically reeducation on the rates of civil aviation fuel including massive rationalization in stamp duty structure for the real estate. Puri also urged the Lt.

Governor Mr. Manoj Sinha to create DAVOS type a platform within the Union Territory, be it at Jammu and Srinagar so that conferences of very high scale are organised in this beautiful landscape in which investors worldwide could assemble and deliberate and debate issues and policy framework for betterment of the entire world.

Union Minister of State for PMO Dr. Jitendra Singh who also participated in the conference informed that ever since Modi gov. has come to power from 2014 onwards, the development and its pace was accelerated in the entire Jammu and Kashmir, the development of which was neglected by the earlier regimes.

Speaking on the occasion President NAREDCO India Rajan Narayan Bandelkar urged that his association would do its best to make the proposed May 2022 Real Estate Summit in Srinagar as the very best in all parameters and ensure larger participation for it. He also emphasized that the Central Govt. should come out with the policy measure so that the issue of Input TAX Credit related to real estate is

sorted out in the sense that those developers who wish to go through this route may go or else who choose to deviate from it.

Vice Chairman, NAREDCO India, Dr. Niranjan Hiranandani in his address sought that the Jammu and Kashmir administration should focus on mixed use township development as its top priority, and sought participation from industry stakeholders.

This will enable Union Territory to move up on the path of growth in an equitable manner with a win-win situation for each participant.

Among others who were present on the occasion and demanded industry participation to building real estate in Jammu and Kashmir included Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department Govt. of J&K Dheeraj Gupta, IAS, Chief Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir Arun Kumar Mehta, Secretary MoHUA, Mr. Durga Shanker Mishra, Mayor Jammu Municipal Corporation Chander Mohan Gupta and Mayor Srinagar Municipal Corporation Junaid Mattoo.

## Polls in 4 more civic bodies in Bengal on January 22

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Days after the ruling Trinamool Congress swept the Kolkata municipal polls the West Bengal State Election Commission on Monday announced elections for four other municipal corporations of Bidhannagar, Siliguri, Asansol and Chandannagar.

The elections to these four municipal boards will be held on January 22. The SEC Saurav Das said adding "the model code of conduct will start right from today."

The election to the four corporations was announced moments after all the opposition parties including BJP, Left and the Congress walked out of the all-party meeting --- called by the SEC --- after their demand to include first time voters (whose names were to be published on January 1) in the

poll process was rejected by the poll panel. The SEC said that the commission has adopted electoral rolls updated up to November 1, 2021.

Das told reporters that "The last date for submitting nomination is January 3. The papers will be scrutinised the day after. January 6 has been fixed as the last date for withdrawing the nominations." Repoll, if any, will be conducted on January 24, the SEC said. Counting of votes will be held on January 25, 2022.

While Asansol has the most number of 106 wards has 47. Chandannagar and Bidhannagar have 33 and 41 wards each.

Election for Howrah Municipal Corporation was not announced by the Commission amid the ongoing battle between the Trinamool Congress Government and

Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar over a pending bill earlier-brought the State Government seeking its bifurcation.

The State Government had earlier brought a Bill bifurcating the proposed Bally municipality from Howrah Corporation. Curiously while the State Advocate general recently told the Calcutta High Court the Bill had been passed by the Governor the latter subsequently said that he hadn't leading the opposition parties to reveal the status of the Bill.

The SEC and the West Bengal government had earlier told the Calcutta High Court that it had planned to hold the civic elections in two phases. While polls to five municipal corporations (including Howrah) in the state would be held on January 22 those to the remaining municipalities, would be conducted on February 27.

## CPM to launch house-to-house awareness campaign for Sky Line Rail project in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Taken aback by the massive opposition to the Sky Line Semi High Speed Rail Project, (the 529.45 km long rail route that will connect Kasaragod and Thiruvananthapuram), the ruling CPI(M) would undertake a house-to-house campaign programme to create an awareness among the people of the State.

This was announced by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday while addressing the Malappuram District Committee Conclave of the CPI(M).

The chief minister said that the opposition to the Rs 63,490 crore project was being spread by the Congress-Sangh Parivar-extremist axis which always resisted all development projects in the State. "There is no question of us going back in this project and we will implement it come whatever may be," said Vijayan.

Aanavoor Nagappan, the CPI(M) boss in Thiruvananthapuram told media on Monday that Chief Minister Vijayan would hold series of meetings with the State's intelligentsia and intellectuals to clear the apprehension in the mind of the people about the Sky Line project.

K Sudhakaran, president, KPCC, issued a stern warning to Sasi Tharoor MP, who is following a separate line from that of the party in the issue. Tharoor has been supporting the project from day one and did not sign in the memorandum against the Sky Line project submitted by the party MPs to the union railway minister.

Meanwhile, the engineer-turned environmental activist C R Neelakantan on Monday questioned the stance of Tharoor and asked him to come out with clarity and transparency in the project. "The Detailed Project Report or the Environmental

Impact Analysis of the project has not been made. It is certain that the project cost would exceed Rs 1,00,000 crore once it is executed. If that is the case, a trip from Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram would cost more than Rs 5,000/-," said Neelakantan.

John Peruvanthanam, environmental activist, said the Government is yet to come out with the rehabilitation and resettlement plans for the people to be displaced by the land acquisition. "What about the farm lands which would be taken over for laying the tracks? Out of the 1383 hectare land required for the project, 1,200 hectare is farm land owned by mini, small and medium farmers. What will happen to them?" asked John.

The land acquisition that began last week saw many family members declaring that they would set themselves ablaze if the Government forcefully takes over the land.

## Tata-Seimens to develop Hinjewadi-Shivajinagar 23.3 km metro line

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A special purpose company set up by a Joint Venture (JV) between the Tata and Siemens groups will develop a 23.3 kilometre elevated metro line between from Hinjewadi to Shivajinagar Public Private Partnership (PPP) route.

A joint announcement made on Monday said that the Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority had awarded the contract to Tata-Siemens JV to develop the Metro Rail Line 3 corridor from Hinjewadi to Shivajinagar.

Pune IT City Metro Rail Limited, the special purpose company Tata-Siemens JV, will develop the elevated metro line that connects Hinjewadi Rajiv Gandhi Infotech Park to Shivajinagar via Balewadi in Pune. The metro corridor with 23 stations will be the first metro project in India under the New Metro Rail Policy.

The JV comprises TRIL Urban Transport Private Limited (a Tata Group Company) and Siemens Project Ventures GmbH (subsidiary of Siemens Financial Services)

According to a statement issued by the Siemens group, a consortium between Siemens AG, Siemens Mobility GmbH, Siemens Limited and Alstom Transport India Limited has been awarded the contract for

the electrical and mechanical system works of the project by Pune IT City Metro Rail Limited.

The project is to be completed in 39 months. Siemens Limited being a part of the Consortium will provide project management, turnkey electrification, signaling, communications and depot works (equipment) for this prestigious project. The order size of Siemens Limited is to the extent of Rs. 900 crore (approximately).

"We would like to thank the Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority for awarding this project to us. Siemens is a leader in providing state-of-the-art metrorail solutions globally. Pune Metro is a prestigious project, and Siemens is glad to be partnering with the Tatas to jointly develop this project. We are confident that the new metro line will play a key role in positively impacting the quality of life of Pune's citizens to transform their everyday life," Sunil Mathur, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Siemens Limited, said.

Siemens Financial Services (SFS) invests in infrastructure projects around the world. Through PPPs, SFS is able to help cities meet their goals of obtaining intelligent infrastructure solutions and enable smarter, more sustainable transportation networks.

## Mumbai accounts for 11 of total 26 Omicron cases in Maharashtra

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

With no let up in the spread of Omicron infections, Maharashtra on Monday recorded 26 fresh cases of the new Covid-19 variant, taking the total number of cases in the state to 167.

Of the 26 Omicron cases recorded, Mumbai accounted for a maximum of 11 cases, followed by Thane—4, Raigad (Panvel Municipal Corporation)—5 and Nanded-2.

The following is the breakdown of a total 141 Omicron cases recorded in the state so far, Mumbai: 84, Pimpri-Chinchwad: 19, Pune rural -- 16, Pune and Thane Municipal Corporation (PMC)—7 each, Satara, Osmanabad and Panvel 3 each, Kalyan-Dombivali, Nagpur -- 3, Aurangabad and Nanded -- 2 each, Buldhana, Latur, Ahmednagar, Akola, Vasai-Virar, Navi Mumbai, Mira-Bhayandar, Palghar and Bhiwandi-Nizampur -- 01 each.

Of the total cases, 72 patients have been discharged after a negative RT-PCR test.

Of the 26 cases reported on Monday, four are aged below 18 years, while two are above 60 years. Of the infected persons, 14 are male, while 12 are female

Of the infected, all except two patients have a history of international travel, while the remaining two persons are high-risk contacts of an international traveller.

Barring 3 minors and 3 others, all 19 others are fully vaccinated. Of the 26 infected, 21 are asymptomatic while five are having mild symptoms.

Meanwhile, the authorities said the total number of passengers who arrived at Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur airports since December 1 was 1,84,072 (26,887 from At-risk countries and rest 1,57,185 are from other countries), while passengers whose RT-PCR tests have been done are 35,468 (26,887 are from high-risk countries and 8581 are from other countries). Similarly, RT-PCR positive and samples sent for genomic sequencing was 231 (165 are from at-risk countries and 66 are from other countries).

Additionally, field surveillance of all international passengers who have arrived since 1st November is underway. "Through airport and field surveillance, 743 samples have been sent for genomic sequencing. The results of 98 are awaited so far," the daily health bulletin said.

## Cong 'Women's Marathon' at Ekana today

Lucknow: After receiving a shot in the arm with huge turnout of girls who defied administration order to join the 'Marathon' in Lucknow and Jhansi, the Congress is all set to now hold the function at Ekana Stadium here on Tuesday morning.

The Yogi Adityanath government on December 25 denied permission for Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's 'Women's Marathon' as part of the 'Ladki Hoon, Lad Sakti Hoon (I'm a girl and I can fight)' campaign in Lucknow, citing Covid protocols and imposition of prohibitory order under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code in the capital.



Kashmiri children push a handcart loaded with firewood on a cold day on the outskirts of Srinagar on Monday AP

## EC team to arrive in Lucknow today

Lucknow: An Election Commission of India (ECI) team headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra comprising two Election Commissioners Rajiv Kumar and Anup Chandra, Secretary General Umesh Sinha and ten other officials will arrive on a three-day visit to Lucknow on Tuesday and take stock of the preparations for the Assembly elections due in early 2022.

The term of the present

17th UP Vidhan Sabha is ending on May 14 next year.

The visit of the Election Commission is significant in view of apprehensions expressed by opposition parties that fearing electoral setback, the Bharatiya Janata party was contemplating the postponement of the assembly elections on the premise of a possible third wave of COVID-19.

In the first quarter of 2022, five states -- Goa, Manipur,

Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab -- are scheduled to go to the polls. Amid a surge in COVID-19 cases and the threat posed by the Omicron variant of novel coronavirus, concerns have been raised over conducting elections and rallies in the five poll-bound States.

On the first day of its visit, The Election Commission will meet representatives of national and regional political parties.

It will also hold meetings with top officials of the administration and UP Police and various enforcement agencies.

On December 29, the Election Commission will meet district magistrates, who are also district election officers, divisional commissioners, district police chiefs, commissioners of Police and Zonal IGS. It will later hold a final meeting with the chief secretary and director general of police. PNS

## PM to flag off Kanpur metro rail, attend IIT-K convocation today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate a section of Kanpur Metro Rail Project in the metropolis on Tuesday and will also inaugurate development projects and attend the convocation of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur.

Accompanied by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the prime minister will travel by

the new Kanpur Metro train to inspect the 9 km-long stretch from IIT Kanpur to Motijheel. The entire length of the metro rail project in Kanpur is 32 km and it is being built at a cost of over Rs 11,000 crore.

"This Metro Rail project will give impetus to the development of Kanpur Nagar. People of the city will get the facility of accessible, pollution-free travel. Industrial activities will also increase

rapidly," a government spokesman said in Lucknow on Monday.

During his Kanpur visit, the prime minister will also inaugurate Bina-Panki multi-product pipeline laid at a cost of over Rs 1,500 crore. The 356 km-long project has a capacity of about 3.45 million metric tons per annum.

Spread from Bina Refinery in Madhya Pradesh to Panki in Kanpur Nagar, the project will

help transport petroleum products from Bina refinery in the region.

Later, Modi will attend the 54th convocation of IIT Kanpur as the chief guest and award all students digital degrees through the National Blockchain Project developed at the institute, for the first time.

The specialty of these digital degrees is that the can be verified globally.

## 28 students, 3 staffers of Ahmednagar school test Covid +ve

Pune: Twenty-eight more students and three staff members of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district have tested positive for Covid-19, taking the number of such cases at the institute to 82 in the last one week, a health department official said.

According to the official, a majority of the infected students are "asymptomatic" and currently admitted to hospital, where their health condition is

stable. "We had sent repeat swab samples of some students, who had earlier tested negative, for analysis as they showed some symptoms (of coronavirus). Last night, the samples of 19 students returned positive and today 12 more samples tested positive (three of them of staff members and bringing total new cases to 31)," said Dr Prakash Lalle, health officer of Parner tehsil in the adjoining district. Of the total

82 patients, 6 are staff members of the school.

Ahmednagar district collector Rajendra Bhosale on Sunday evening said the school campus has been declared a 'containment zone' after detection of cases among students and staff members. "As a precautionary measure, we have deployed a medical team comprising a doctor and two nurses to monitor other students in the campus," he had said.

The administration had said the samples of all the students who tested positive were sent for genome sequencing to ascertain if any of them had been infected by the new variant of coronavirus Omicron.

The school, part of the Navodaya Vidyalaya network that comes under the Union education ministry, is located at Takali Dhokeshwar village. PTT



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Nonchalant

### The Taliban seem to consider humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan their birthright

The international community and the interim Taliban regime in Afghanistan appear to go about their duties in the country mutually exclusive of each other. Global organisations and several countries are busy sending aid to Afghanistan so that 23-odd million men, women and children do not starve in the winter months. The Taliban, seemingly unmindful of the previous aid coming in, are going ahead with an agenda that is on collision course with that of the international community. At the best of times, international development aid fed the Afghan economy. That has stopped since the Americans withdrew their troops, and it has since been replaced by humanitarian aid. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA) calculates that aid worth \$1.6 billion has already reached Afghanistan this year. The European Union has pledged a separate aid of \$1 billion. The United States issued licences to the United Nations and other agencies to offer humanitarian aid despite American sanctions. India is providing crucial food and medical supplies through aid agencies. In the last eight weeks alone, eight million people received food assistance, water trucks reached 200,000 people,



children were treated for malnutrition and medical supplies kept a million more alive. UNOCHA estimates that the country needs \$4.5 billion to tide over 2022. The world, however, is quite aware that the Taliban's IOUs are piling up. They seek international recognition and promise to meet the preconditions the world has set for them but none has materialised to date. The Taliban's confidence appears to stem from the fact that the world community will not allow the Afghan humanitarian crisis to go out of hand, irrespective of whether the Taliban honour their commitments. The question is how long can the Afghan situation hang in such a fragile balance? The Taliban are systematically going about the plan to rob Afghan women of their rights. They are out of their public sector jobs. They cannot freely move outside their homes. Girls are out of classes till colleges implement gender segregation plans. Women face abuse from vigilante Taliban fighters if they leave even their hands uncovered. And now, the Taliban's Vice-Prevention Ministry will not allow women to travel long distances unescorted. And yes, both women and men can no longer play music in their vehicles. And yet the Taliban tell the world they are not hardcore Islamists but moderates. It is time to call the Taliban bluff because they are methodically edging out democratic principles from their belief system. They have dissolved the election commission and the electoral complaints commission as they are "unnecessary". That means their interim Government is now permanent. They have already dissolved the Ministries for Peace and Parliamentary Affairs, saying these are superfluous. The Ministry for Women's Affairs, one can recall, was the first to go. When the Taliban approach the UN for aid next year, they must be made to realise the aid is not a blank cheque for dishonouring their international commitments.

### PICTALK



A view of the snow-capped Dhauladhar Range following fresh snowfall, in Palampur

PTI

## Pole position

### What the Chandigarh municipal election win means for the AAP's Punjab prospects

The Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) burgeoning campaign for the upcoming Punjab Assembly election has seemingly started paying off, beginning with Chandigarh. In what senior party leader Raghav Chadha called a "trailer", the AAP has emerged as the leading party in the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation polls, winning 14 of the 35 wards, followed by the BJP (12), Congress (eight) and the Shiromani Akali Dal (one). Delhi Chief Minister and AAP's national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Monday said the party's victory is a sign of the ensuing change in Punjab, which will go to Assembly polls early next year. The victory becomes sweeter for the AAP as it had contested the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation polls for the first time, and it still got the better of the BJP which had won 20 seats in the last Chandigarh Municipal Corporation elections; putting the AAP at pole position. Is it Kejriwal's freebie effect that did the job in Chandigarh, or is it that the voters see his party as a viable alternative to the cloak-and-dagger activities of its principal rivals? And does that mean for the Delhi Chief Minister that Punjab *ab door nahi*? Well, the voters needed someone to trust, to rely upon and the AAP seems to have ticked all the right boxes. It would, however, still be too early to predict a clean sweep in the State election.

The situation seems similar to 2014 when the nation's voters, who wanted "change", latched on to Narendra Modi's "*acche din ayenge*" (good days would come) slogan; whether good days really came is a different topic altogether. The people of Punjab, and Chandigarh too, apparently want change. Besides, who actually doesn't like freebies, especially when such promises strike the right chord and are fueled by the incumbent Government's never-ending "internal bickerings"? For the Congress, that is the biggest challenge at the moment. It's not fighting the BJP, AAP or the Trinamool, but itself. Instability and bickerings in the party have made the Congress yield considerable ground to the AAP in Punjab, which was its stronghold. Only time will tell the repercussions of the AAP's victory in Chandigarh — though four short of a majority win — and whether the people of Punjab will bite the goodie-bag bait. However, the takeaway for the rival parties is that Kejriwal means business and can seriously dent their poll prospects in not just Punjab, but Goa and Uttarakhand, too.

# As PM dibs for votes, quiet flows the Ganga

## We have indeed come a long way; a full circle from Jawaharlal Nehru who ran away from temples, to Narendra Modi who runs to temples



GYANESHWAR DAYAL

Mahatma Gandhi once said: "The Ganga flows in man's heart, yet man is unable to bathe in it and remains unaffected." Of course, he wasn't talking about Prime Minister Narendra Modi who would do the dip in the holy river much later. And the Prime Minister knew exactly what he was doing.

Within a matter of 10 days, Modi has visited Varanasi twice: First to inaugurate the Kashi Corridor and then to launch several development schemes. As is customary, the national media televised and broadcast every nuance of Modi's trip. The well-publicised and televised event was worth watching. It was a visual treat, well covered by the State-owned Doordarshan and Government-owned private channels. Doordarshan's 55 cameras did not miss a shot as the Prime Minister emerged from the Ganga after his dip at Lalita Ghat.

A fitting start for the man on whose charisma the BJP would go to the hustings in UP. The Prime Minister, for his part, did his job well. He gave enough masala to the media to air and talk about. He showered petals on workers, prayed under the full glare of TV cameras, sat on stairs with children and, of course, took a dip. It was a well-orchestrated and executed event.

We have indeed come a long way; a full circle from Jawaharlal Nehru who ran away from temples, to Narendra Modi who runs to temples. In 1951, Nehru wrote to the then President and asked him to reconsider his decision of inaugurating the Somnath temple. Times have changed, and how! In 2021, the Prime Minister's temple run is a media event for everyone to savour. Modi's penchant for events is well known. There are "Howdy Modi", "Namaste Trump", the Chinese Premier's grand tour of Gujarat and Shinzo Abe's Benaras trip two years back, to name a few. This time, though, Modi himself was the star attraction.

The Prime Minister's choice of timing and the place is interesting, yet a bit perplexing. The ₹900-crore Kashi Vishwanath Dham (KVD) or the Kashi



Corridor project is still in the works. It would be a new entrant in the election. Moving away from Ayodhya only distracts attention from the Ram temple. Yogi Adityanath has so painstakingly nurtured lord Rama — millions lit lamps, a Ram statue on the drawing board and construction of a *bhavya* temple is underway. If that is not enough, what is?

Despite Modi's best efforts, and let us give him a long rope, the economy hasn't looked up. Financially drained, frustration is writ large on the faces of people protesting on the streets of UP. Let's assume he believed in right earnest that demonetisation would work and black money would pour out. He sincerely believed that GST would fill up the State coffers. A zero-balance account for the poor would trigger financial inclusion. And, of course, scrapping the Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs) would give farmers a choice. It would help double their income. Unfortunately, the great Gujarat model didn't work on the national scale. All marks for trying, but he miserably failed on the economic front. India's GDP has contract-



THE NATIONAL MEDIA BROADCAST EVERY NUANCE OF MODI'S TRIP. THE WELL-PUBLICISED EVENT WAS WORTH WATCHING. IT WAS A VISUAL TREAT, WELL COVERED BY THE STATE-OWNED DOORDARSHAN AND GOVT-OWNED PRIVATE CHANNELS

ed by 7.3 per cent over the past year as per the NSO's provisional estimates. It's been four decades since the last time the GDP was in the red. India's GDP for 2020-21 has taken the biggest hit in the nation's history. Double-digit wholesale inflation, almost double-digit unemployment rate (9.3 per cent) and low investor confidence are too much to handle without God's intervention. The business sentiment is abysmally low. In such a situation, only the blessings of 'Maa Ganga' can offer salvation.

One dilemma that Modi faces is to win UP while having a CM of his choice. He has to win it to look good in the next general elections. Yogi sometimes scores more points on Hindutva than Modi himself, much to his consternation. The friendly stroll notwithstanding, the underlying tension between the leaders is visible. Anti-incumbency caused by gross mismanagement of the pandemic is a riding sentiment in UP right now. The State still suffers from Yogi's policy blight. With a sizeable voter ensemble — Brahmins, OBCs and Dalits, in particular — look-

ing despondent, there has to be a unifying factor that transcends the caste predicament. Even after repealing the three farm laws, western UP remains dicey for the BJP.

No doubt it was a great choice of timing, place and God for appropriation. Yogi has firmly positioned himself in Ayodhya while the PM took three years to even visit the place. Modi had to go someplace other than Ayodhya. Kashi also has an Aurangzeb link and is thus convenient for polarisation. Moreover, it also takes care of archrival Rahul Gandhi's *shiv bhakti*. The timing is perfect as it happens days before the notification of UP elections.

Modi's Ganga dip has set the agenda for UP elections. It would be fought on emotive religious issues rather than on core existential crises. The Prime Minister knows well the road to 7, Lok Kalyan Marg, goes through UP's dusty lanes. Would the dip in the Ganga redeem the BJP is something only time can tell. Till then, quiet flows the Ganga....

(The writer is a columnist and documentary filmmaker. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### RELIVING AN OLD GLORY IN 83

Sir — Reviews in print media heap a lot of praise on the film 83, directed by ace Hindi film director Kabir Khan. The film is said to have captured India's historic 1983 World Cup win in the most beautiful manner with Ranveer Singh in the lead role, enacting Kapil Dev admirably well and holding the team together. The film became a buzz in town ever since its trailer was launched.

Apparently, the movie depicts well the emotion, excitement and euphoria that gripped the nation on June 25, 1983, when Kapil Dev held aloft the World Cup in the balcony of the iconic Lord's cricket ground the image of which framed in our memory and still finds a place in sports publications and television documentaries around the world. No doubt, the biopic will take the audience back to the era of India's greatest cricketing triumph, the thought of which still gives us goosebumps. Indian cinema has not produced many sports movies and, therefore, movies like 83 help us relive the moments that once created history.

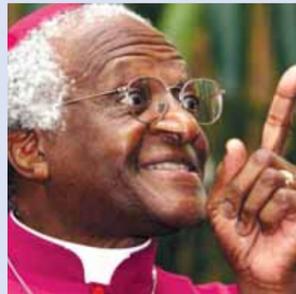
Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

### NOT THE TIME TO LET THE GUARD DOWN

Sir — The decision of the Government of India to vaccinate children in the 15 to 18 age group and give booster shots to frontline workers and people above 60 with comorbidities is welcome. These measures should act as a deterrent to the spread of the pandemic amongst the vulnerable population but may not be adequate if the third wave is as virulent as the previous one. The efficacy of vaccines should be clinically tested and details published and only the best of Indian vaccines should be encouraged.

Further, crores of people have dropped out after taking their first dose of the vaccine and, therefore, all of them should follow up with a second dose. It should be undertaken as a drive and both the doses should be made compulsory by creating as many checkpoints as possible. Protocols, especial-

## An era lives on



Emeritus Desmond Mpilo Tutu (90), the cleric who used his pulpit and spirited oratory to help bring down apartheid in South Africa and then became the leading advocate of peaceful reconciliation under Black Majority Rule, has passed away in Cape Town. The Apartheid struggle gave us two of the greatest men of the twentieth century: Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela; one in the religious

sphere, the other in the political one. Let us not forget Tutu's struggle for equality and justice everywhere. Tutu did not cover in the face of Israeli injustice, naming Israel a supporting member of the apartheid Government in South Africa and its promotion of those same policies within its recognised borders and within the occupied territories.

Nobel Peace prize winner Desmond Tutu cried in public, and alone, because he felt people's pain. And he laughed — not just laughed, he cackled with delight — when he shared their joy. His heart was full of love for the oppressed of all nations, not just his own. As a lifetime friend and co-writer of *The Book of Joy* with the Dalai Lama, Tutu's support towards Tibet's cause is just like Tutu's longstanding opposition to Israel's policies with regard to Palestine. With the demise of Tutu, we have lost a great, selfless man and an advocate for all the down-trodden. Rest in Peace, Desmond. You have made a difference in this world.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

ly wearing face masks, should be enforced by imposing strict penalties and these can be administered through wardens and volunteers. To handle emergencies, oxygen banks should be created in hospitals to cater to the vicinity. This is the time to remain vigilant. If we let our guard down at the moment then we could be looking at another horrific COVID-19 wave, or maybe worse.

M Raghuraman | Mumbai

### CONGRESS IS ITS BIGGEST NEMESIS

Sir — Congress's woes are far from over given that no sooner the party high command addresses one problem stemming from the internecine bickering, the other is in the offing, staring it in the face. This time, it is the ongoing standoff between its senior leader and former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Harish Rawat and the State in-charge Ranjeet Rawat as both the leaders seem

embroiled in a show of having an upper hand in the poll-bound State.

Interestingly, it was none other than Rawat who helped the grand old party tide over the Punjab crisis recently. Ticket distribution in this Himalayan State is, on the face of it, the issue as both the leaders want to field their respective favourites in the election, which is right around the corner. On the face of it, the Congress leadership has yet again prevailed over both the warring leaders to stay calm for the time being notwithstanding, such an issue will not crop up again, stands no guarantee — to the BJP's glee. This is high time the Congress leadership took this recurring phenomenon seriously and found a pragmatic solution to it before it is too late and beyond repair.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUND BITE

The people of Chandigarh have given a chance to Kejriwal; the people of Punjab will, too.



AAP leader —Raghav Chadha



Desmond Tutu was a mentor, a friend and a moral compass for me and so many others.

Former US President —Barack Obama

When I lifted that cup, I was tripping. I felt some kind of...that moment was unforgettable.



Actor —Ranveer Singh



If your leaders aren't going to do it, then you can't expect the younger guys to get the job done.

Former Australia skipper —Ricky Ponting

If any decision would be taken, it would not be done without the consent of farmers.



BKU leader —Rakesh Tikait



## FIRST COLUMN

### NFTs COULD BE A PROMISING ROUTE

With sea changes in digital domains, the NFT is predicted to be the order of the day



MICHAEL CHANDA    UTTAM CHAKRABORTY

Non-fungible tokens (NFTs) are the craze today. They are unique and non-interchangeable units of data stored on a blockchain. A blockchain is a digital ledger. NFTs are part of the Ethereum blockchain. Ethereum is a type of cryptocurrency, like bitcoin or dogecoin. NFTs are associated with a specific digital or physical asset and a license to use the asset for a definite purpose. The importance of NFTs is increasingly apparent. They are completely digitized in the form of video art or music and can be sold out at NFT marketplaces, quite similar to trading cards. Basing on its value in the NFT domain, one can select to keep it as a collectible or trade it for generating profit. As NFTs are the new way of creative articulation, artists, brands and companies are coming together to create their best. With the sea changes in digital domains, NFT is predicted to be the order of the day. Creative amalgamation of art and digital inputs have become the talking points. Creativity is being



transformed with the advent of newer digital platforms. Actor-politician Kamal Haasan publicized his NFTs recently. Cricketer Sunil Gavaskar launched NFTs which attempt to showcase his career performances via digital domains. Amitabh Bachchan, Sunny Leone and Salman Khan have started endorsing NFTs. However, the proof of ownership remains questionable. Salman Khan-backed BollyCoin has a proposal to launch its NFT collection with Salman - Dabangg NFT collection. NFTs will go live in the market on December 30. Moreover, BollyCoin has its own cryptocurrency, which is now listed on decentralised exchanges UniSwap and QuickSwap. BollyCoin commenced in October, aiming at a marketplace that would float a selection of NFTs created from Bollywood. However, BollyCoin is yet to announce the names of the films it would create NFTs. Brand communication has a lot to do with NFTs. Art sales now account for the majority of the NFT ecosystem. NFTs, like all of the technology's possible uses, are just getting started in 2021. NFTs are being auctioned off at charity events, to sell art, to promote brands, and to give access to exclusive NFT restaurants, and with commercial and institutional interests are growing rapidly.

NFT technology amply provides businesses and organizations with some unique communication options to experiment with and capitalize on. It is more of a collaboration with your clients, a tool for businesses to generate happiness rather than just making profit. A branded NFT should moderate consumer concerns and demonstrate its trustworthiness. Other companies have accomplished this by donating their NFT profits. Coca-Cola, for example, gave all of its profits to Special Olympics International. Pringles said that the earnings from its CryptoCrisp NFTs would be donated to the artist it partnered with. NFT is slowly getting into news media. CNN established the so-called 'Vault by CNN' in June 2021 to make historic moments of its news coverage available as NFTs. Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post has lately begun converting some of its news archives into NFTs. NFTs are mostly purchased by millennials and those with higher discretionary expenditures. NFTs could be a promising route in for the brands which are looking to connect with these sought-after demographics. A poll reveals that the majority of NFT purchasers are interested in songs, digital artwork, and movies, so these could be an excellent place to start. However, NFTs are attracting legal issues in India. The legal pitfalls are broad talking points in the domain of copyright act in India. Interface of NFTs and copyright law is a new legal area which demands due deliberations across numerous stakeholders pertinent to NFTs. Wider perspectives will enrich the road ahead of NFTs.

(Chanda is advocate, Calcutta High Court, an author and activist. Chakraborty is an assistant professor at Jaipuria Institute of Management, Lucknow. The views expressed are personal.)

# Shun accommodative stance policy, now



UTTAM GUPTA

Reduction in the repo rate or pumping of more liquidity is ill-advised as without any guarantee of propelling growth, it will yield negative outcomes

In its bi-monthly Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) review announced by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on December 8, the policy repo rate or RR has remained unchanged at 4 percent. The reverse repo rate or RRR is also unchanged at 3.35 percent. Besides, it has retained an 'accommodative' policy stance for as long as necessary.

This is the ninth consecutive time since last August that both policy rates have remained unchanged. Das justified saying, "given the slack in the economy and the ongoing catching-up of activity, especially of private consumption, which is still below its pre-pandemic levels, continued policy support is warranted for a durable and broad-based recovery".

Pertinently, in the review announced in August 2020, he had justified maintaining low rates (then also, both RR and RRR were kept unchanged at 4 per cent and 3.35 per cent respectively) along with "accommodative" stance - as long as necessary - in terms of the need to revive growth and mitigate the impact of Covid-19, while ensuring that inflation remains within the target.

On both the occasions, low interest rate and accommodative stance (a euphemism for enough availability of credit or liquidity in short and low cost of credit) has been posited as instruments of supporting growth, during 2020-21, for reviving it and now for ensuring durable and broad-based recovery.

Is this really so? Did this strategy help in 2020-21 or even earlier? Is it working during the current year?

In the backdrop of the slide in the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth that had commenced in the third quarter of the financial year 2018-19, during 2019, RBI had delivered a cumulative cut in RR of 1.35 per cent in five instalments, the last one being under the policy review on October 4, 2019. This resulted in lowering of RR from 6.5 per cent at the start of the year to 5.15 per cent. The apex bank also pumped liquidity using instruments such as Open Market Operations (OMO). Yet, FY 2019-20 ended with growth of a mere 4.2 per cent (during the last quarter, this was 3 percent).

Following the onslaught of COVID - 19, on March 27, 2020, the apex bank reduced RR by 0.75 per cent and a further 0.4 per cent on May 22. It also injected aggregate liquidity close to ₹5,00,000 crore through measures such as reduction in the cash reserve ratio (CRR), auction of Targeted Long-Term Repo Operations (TLTRO), hike in accommodation under the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) and so on.

Despite this massive booster - on top of the boost already given during 2019-20 - there was de-growth of 7.3 percent during 2020-21 (in fact, during the first quarter it was minus 24 per cent).

During the current year, even as the



A CRUCIAL DETERMINANT OF GROWTH IS DEMAND (INCLUDING INVESTMENT DEMAND) WHICH WAS SLACK DURING 2019-20 AND ANNIHILATED PARTICULARLY DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 2020-21, DUE TO THE COVID PANDEMIC. AS A RESULT, DESPITE THE POLICY RATE ON A DOWNWARD TRAJECTORY REACHING A RECORD LOW OF 4 PER CENT IN MAY 2020, AND THE RBI PUMPING TONNES OF MONEY, THERE WAS DECELERATION IN GROWTH IN BOTH THE YEARS

(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)



low RR continues and there is plenty of liquidity (currently, excess cash in the banking system is around ₹920,000 crore), GDP growth during the first quarter recorded 20.1 per cent and 8.4 per cent during the second quarter. However, to see a connection between the two is untenable. Had a loose monetary policy been a potent factor, then we would have seen good growth even during the previous two years.

The most crucial determinant of growth is demand (including investment demand) which was slack during 2019-20 and annihilated particularly during the first half of 2020-21, courtesy Covid pandemic. As a result, despite the policy rate on a downward trajectory reaching a record low of 4 per cent in May 2020 and RBI pumping tons of money, there was deceleration in growth in both the years. The rebound during the current year has to do primarily with substantially diminished effect of the pandemic and revival of demand, though fragile.

Another factor impeding growth during 2019-20 and 2020-21 was lack of full transmission of the rate cut announced by the RBI. For instance, during 2019-20, of the 1.35 percent reduction in RR, only about 0.6 percent was transmitted by banks by way of corresponding reduction in the lending rate. This has a lot to do with their non-performing assets (NPAs) apart from the fact that a bank can't ignore the interest rate it pays on deposits which is downward sticky; cour-

tesy, much higher rates on small savings schemes.

The growth of credit too has been slack despite RBI arming banks with tons of liquidity. During 2019-20, bank credit grew by 6.1 percent, less than half of the 13.4 per cent growth registered during 2018-19. During 2020-21 also, it continued to be sluggish at 5.6 percent. That apart, a big chunk was cornered by big corporate even as most of the small businesses had their shutters down; even those who operated didn't get access due to the reluctance of banks to lend.

During the current year also (when GDP is in recovery phase), credit growth has not picked up pace, this being 5.8 percent during the first quarter. The micros, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) continue to be prime laggards. They have still not fully utilized the money available under Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) sanctioned last year under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan. Against the limit of Rs 450,000 crore, as on September 24, 2021, the amount availed is ₹286,000 crore.

Without doubt, the efficacy of monetary policy in addressing the problem of slack growth is in doubt. The RBI/MPC may have applied a pause button on the policy rate but it continues with its 'accommodative' policy stance which does not rule out the possibility of either a further reduction in RR or pumping more liquidity or both. Any of these actions is strongly ill-advised as without any guarantee of pro-

PELLING growth, it will result in two big negative outcomes.

One, by signaling reduction in lending rates, this will force banks to further reduce deposit rates. This will erode the income of millions of depositors who have already suffered due to reduction of at least 2 percent thanks to RR cuts in the past. For those, whose sole income source is interest earning from deposits, this will be suicidal.

Two, this will run the risk of stoking inflation. Inflation - as measured by consumer price index (CPI) - is expected to stay elevated around 5.5-6 percent through 2021-22. Already, this is at the higher end of the medium-term target of 4 percent (+/- 2 percent). If RBI were to continue with its generosity (read accommodative stance), this could result in inflation getting out of control.

In this backdrop, it is encouraging to see RBI making some moves to suck out excess liquidity in the system by raising the amount of cash it absorbs through the 14-day VRRR (Variable Rate Reverse Repo) auction. This process should continue till all of the excess is erased. It should also consider restoring RR to 5.15 percent - the level that prevailed prior to the onslaught of pandemic.

While these measures will bring cheer to depositors and public at large by reining in inflation, for sustaining high growth, the Government should rely on rationalizing/trimming taxes and replacing subsidies by direct income support to boost demand.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

ONE WICKET AFTER ANOTHER IS FALLING IN THE BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY. FIVE MORE ARE GONE TODAY. —TRINAMOOL CONGRESS LEADER BABUL SUPRIYO



NONE OF THE FIVE MLAs WILL BE LEFT OUT. WE WILL ACCOMMODATE THEM IN NEW COMMITTEES. —BJP BENGAL PRESIDENT SUKANTA MAJUMDAR



# Paying obeisance to scientists for nation-building

One problem we find in our society, especially in scientific and academic circles, is that once people retire from service, we neglect them totally

Whatever progress we have achieved in our country whether it is in the agriculture sector, healthcare sector or transportation are all because of years of breath-taking research undertaken by our scientific community. Be it the green revolution undertaken by Prof MS Swaminathan or the white revolution by Dr. Verghese Kurien or the metro rail revolution of E Sreedharan, in every sphere of life, our scientific community has delivered a lot. But many a time, most of our scientists turn out to be unsung heroes.

India has emerged as a leading economy of the world mainly due to the work done by our scientists. Economic growth and scientific growth are interrelated. Our visionary



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

(The writer is a popular science writer. The views expressed are personal.)

leaders and scientists have given the trust to science since we got independence.

We as a nation stand on the pillars of scientific strength built by our scientists. On the occasion of the 75th year of independence under the umbrella of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Vigyan Prasara, an autonomous organization of the Department of Science & Technology, has initiated year-long celebrations of birth centenaries of inspirational scientists like Prof. H.G.Khorana, Prof. Rajeshwari Chatterjee, Prof. G S Laddha, Dr. Y Nayudamma, Prof. G.N. Ramachandran and Prof. B. Ramamurthi. They have also identified 75 scientists, as representative members from hundreds of scientists, who played a major role in nation-



building. This is indeed a welcome step that would bring the scientific community to the public limelight. With each passing generation, our people forget the contributions of great scientists. It will be good if our present generation at least goes through the history behind each discovery our scientists have made, with minimum infrastructure available during the time. Even though few have settled abroad due to professional compulsions, many have settled in

India and participated in nation-building. The ingenuity of their work is something that has to be appreciated. Most of these scientists come from a rural background, studied in government institutions, and rose to the stature of greatness without any godfathers. This will instil confidence in our youngsters to take up science as a career.

One problem we find in our society especially in scientific and academic circles is that once a person retires from service, we neglect them totally. We often forget that a person carries 60 years of experience and that utilising them properly can move us 60 years ahead. In most institutions, once a person leaves, nobody knows how a particular work has been carried out

or how to solve the problems one encounters during an experiment, etc. In some cases, costly instruments purchased by the scientists remain unutilized once the concerned person leaves the institution. This may be either due to a lack of experienced manpower or sheer negligence. The link between the young and old generations should be maintained as far as possible, for if that loop is broken the continuity of research work will be affected.

We have to develop a culture where every scientist in the country is provided a working space in their host institute for as long as they are active. There are many octogenarian scientists working in many international centers, the same culture is not visible in our

institutions. The moment a person sits idle at home his productivity decreases. If the same person is made active, we can extract a lot of information from his experience. Even the sight of senior persons and their interactions will enhance the scientific output of youngsters.

Presently, many private academic and research organizations recruit scientists retired from public sector institutions offering them good salaries and positions. They know how to extract knowledge from our great scientists and make money out of it. The same practice can be utilized by our public sector institutions. Most of our responsible scientists shall be happy to work for the government if they get a chance. Even though there are

emeritus scientists or professor schemes, very few get a chance to serve post-retirement.

In science, most of the time we focus on scientists who are in limelight, that may be very few, but there are hundreds who are relentlessly working in our institutions and universities, they need to be recognized. There should be a National Scientists Day to commemorate their contributions. Many youngsters who are fleeing from science fear unemployment. Celebrating the contributions of scientists will create a new atmosphere in promoting science among the youngsters. Without good scientists' nation cannot progress. We need to preserve our scientific community and prevent brain drain for the welfare of our country.

# Omicron spreads global gloom over New Year's celebrations

AP ■ BRUSSELS

After struggling with the coronavirus for far too long, the world understands all too well Belgium's word of the year, "knaldrang!" - the urge to party, the need to let loose. Yet as New Year celebrations approach, the omicron variant is casting more gloom.

Monday was a case in point, with several governments considering more restrictions to add to a patchwork of measures and lockdowns already in place around Europe.

The French government and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson were assessing the latest data and the need to counter the record numbers of COVID-19 infections with more measures to keep people apart at a time when they so dearly want to be together.

But with indications that omicron might be a milder variant despite its massive transmissibility, politicians were caught in a bind whether to further spoil yet another party or play safe to make sure health care systems don't collapse. Further complicating matters was lack of full data over Christmas weekend, making chronicling of rise of omicron more difficult. In Belgium, people faced their first real test with several new measures on Monday. Shopping was reduced to maximum two adults, pos-

sibly with kids in tow, and movie theatres and concert halls closed at a time when countless families are on vacation together. The calls to close theatres and arts centres came in for especially heavy criticism. "We need it also for our mental health. It is the only way for people to live experiences, to tell stories."

It is of paramount importance for us to be open in these complicated and complex times," said Michael De Kok, the artistic director of the Flemish Royal Theatre. Even communal celebrations like New Year's fireworks, that would usually see thousands thronging Brussels for the best views, are off.

Nightclubs are already closed and restaurants and bars need to shut doors at 11 pm. In the United Kingdom, there are similar creeping moves. Scotland will close its nightclubs Monday after Northern Ireland and Wales already did so on Sunday, though they remain open in England.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who has resisted ordering new restrictions but hasn't ruled them out, is expected to be briefed Monday on the latest data on spread of omicron. Even that staple of British holiday celebrations, the steady stream of English Premier League games, is under threat. The league has already called off 15 soccer

matches in 2 1/2 weeks and more could well be upcoming. UK daily infection numbers reached a new high of 122,186 on Friday, but there were no figures over the long Christmas weekend. France has recorded more than 100,000 virus infections in a single day for the first time in the pandemic and COVID-19 hospitalizations have doubled over the past month. President Emmanuel Macron's government is holding emergency meetings Monday to discuss the next steps in tackling the virus. It is hoping that stepped-up vaccinations will be enough.

The government is pushing a draft law that would require vaccination to enter all restaurants and many public venues, instead of the current health pass system which allows people to produce a negative test or proof of recovery if they're not vaccinated. This piecemeal, often hesitant approach is visible through much

of Europe. In Poland, a nation of 38 million where the daily death toll now often breaks through the threshold of 500 cases, nightclubs may be closed, but they will be allowed to reopen on New Year's Eve, with the government unwilling to go against the many voters opposed to restrictions and mandatory vaccinations. In Italy, the government has not mandated any rules for private gatherings, but it has

set its sights on New Year's Eve, banning outdoor events and closing discotheques until end of January. The Netherlands is currently the exception to the rule of disjointed decision-making. The government there has gone farther than most European countries and shut down all nonessential stores, restaurants and bars and extended the school holidays in a partial new lockdown.

## South Korea says it has granted an emergency authorisation to Pfizer's Covid-19 treatment pill

**Seoul:** The Ministry of Food and Drug Safety said Monday it expects the introduction of Paxlovid to help diversify options for COVID-19 treatments and prevent patients' conditions from becoming serious amid surging infections and critical cases in South Korea. The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency says the government has signed contracts to procure Paxlovid pills enough to cover 362,000 patients. It says the Paxlovid pills will be delivered to South Korea as early as mid-January. It says South Korea has also signed contracts to procure Merck's COVID-19 pills to treat 242,000 people. The drug safety agency says it's still reviewing whether to approve Merck's molnupiravir. AP

## Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine behind lower Covid deaths in UK, says expert

PTI ■ LONDON

Britain's early deployment of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine to protect against COVID-19 may be responsible for the country's lower death rates compared to other European countries, a UK vaccines expert has said.

Dr Clive Dix, former chairman of UK's Vaccine Task Force, told 'Daily Telegraph' that Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine - manufactured and administered in India as Covidshield - may offer stronger long-term protection against severe COVID-19 and death. "If you look across Europe, with rise in cases, there's also a corresponding lagged rise in deaths, but not in UK, and we have to understand that," said Dr Dix. "I personally believe that's because most of our vulnerable people were given AstraZeneca vaccine," he said. According to Our World in Data, a website run by University of Oxford, the UK has 1.7 daily deaths from COVID per million people. In comparison, the European Union (EU) as a whole has almost four. The key, Dix

believes, is that although RNA jabssuch as Pfizer/BioNTech produce a more obvious and rapid jump in antibody levels in lab tests, other vaccines may be better at priming another part of immune system called cellular immunity. This includes various forms of T cells, including those that destroy infected cells, and also memory cells, ensuring a person can fight off an infection several years after they are first exposed to it.

They are slower to react than antibodies and do not prevent infection, but do halt pathogen in its tracks, making it harder for virus to cause damage. "We've seen early data that Oxford jab produces a very durable cellular response and if you've got a durable cellular immunity response then you can last for a long time. It can last for life in some cases," Dix told newspaper.

The only notable difference, according to scientist, between UK and Europe's vaccine rollout was approach Oxford/AstraZeneca jab. European regulators approved use of vaccine long after UK had rolled it out among its older age groups at end of last year.

## Germany say eight people held after violent protestors restrict corona vaccination drive

AP ■ BERLIN

Police in southern Germany say eight people were arrested after violence during a protest by opponents of coronavirus restrictions and vaccinations.

Eight officers were punched or kicked as groups of people tried to break through police chains set up to prevent the protesters marching in the Bavarian town of Schweinfurt on Sunday evening, police said.

Officers used batons and pepper spray. Police said a 4-year-old child whose mother was among those trying to break through the barricades briefly had to be given medical attention after coming into contact with pepper spray.

Demonstrations against restrictions and a planned universal vaccine mandate have flared up in Germany at times in recent weeks. Authorities are in the process of implementing restrictions agreed last week to slow the spread of the new omicron variant. Four more states were introducing curbs Monday that include capping the number of people at private gatherings at 10, excluding children under 14.

## Israel trials 4th dose of COVID-19 vaccine

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel has begun trials of a fourth dose of coronavirus vaccine in what is believed to be first study of its kind. The trial began at Sheba Medical Center, outside Tel Aviv, with 150 medical personnel who received a booster dose in August receiving a fourth shot of Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. The staff receiving additional dose were tested and found to have low antibody levels.

The trial came as Israeli officials have considered rolling out a second tranche of booster shots to its population as country grapples with rising infections with new omicron variant. Prof Jacob Lavee, former director of heart transplant unit at Sheba, said "hopefully, we'll be able to show here... that this fourth booster really provides protection against omicron, which is highly needed." Israel rolled out a world-leading vaccination campaign early this year. Just over 4.2 million of Israel's 9.3 million people have received a third dose of Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.

## Taliban banning transport for solo woman travellers is retrogressive: Pak

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry on Monday lashed out at Taliban regime in Afghanistan for its latest "retrogressive" move of banning women from travelling alone in public spaces. The Taliban on Sunday said women seeking to make long distance journeys should not be offered transport service, if they are not accompanied by a close male relative. Chaudhry decried step. "Women can't travel alone or go to schools and colleges (alone)-this kind of retrogressive thinking is a danger for

Pakistan," minister said. Afghanistan has been under Taliban rule since August 15 when Afghan hardline militant group ousted elected government of President Ashraf Ghani and forced him to flee country and take refuge in UAE. Girls are out of schools in several provinces and educated females face a grim future. Chaudhry said Pakistan should chart its own course of progressiveness. He paid tribute to Mohammad Ali Jinnah, saying Pakistan was created for "preserving (a) minority rights and safeguarding them". He

also said that Jinnah clarified role of minorities in Pakistan by envisioning a state having no business with religious matters. He also said that Jinnah never wanted Pakistan to become a religious state, and his entire lifestyle was at variance from people who used his name even today to make Pakistan a backward country. Chaudhry said current Pakistan was different from what Jinnah and poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal had in mind as it was a product of retrogressive thinking that came to prevail later and led to decline of Pakistan. PTI

## Scotland Yard probes video showing Indian Sikh declaring to assassinate Queen to avenge Jallianwala Bagh massacre

**London:** 27 A video has surfaced on social media in which a fully masked man, identifying himself as an Indian Sikh, is seen declaring to "assassinate" Queen Elizabeth II to avenge the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre, prompting Scotland Yard to launch a probe, days after an intruder was arrested at monarch's Windsor Castle.

The video, shared on Snapchat, is that of a fully masked man who identifies himself as Indian Sikh Jaswant Singh Chail and declares that he wants to "assassinate" monarch in revenge for 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre, according to The Sun newspaper which obtained the video.

Meanwhile, the 19-year-old intruder, who has not yet been named by Metropolitan Police, is now being held over mental health issues. Scotland Yard officers were investigating video reportedly linked to intruder armed with a crossbow arrested at Windsor Castle on Christmas Day.

The Metropolitan Police said that arrested suspect has been sectioned under UK's Mental Health Act after a mental health assessment and remains "in care of medical professionals". "I'm sorry, I'm sorry for what I've done and what I will do. I will attempt to assassinate Elizabeth, Queen of the Royal Family," the masked man is seen saying in the video.

"This is revenge for those who have died in 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre. It is also revenge for those who have been killed, humiliated and discriminated on because of their race. I'm an Indian Sikh, a Sikh. My name was Jaswant Singh Chail, my name is Darrh Jones," he says. The massacre took place at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar during Baisakhi festival in April 1919 when British Indian Army under command of Colonel Reginald Dyer opened fire at a crowd staging a pro-independence demonstration, leaving scores dead. PTI

## Iran insists on crude exports as Vienna nuclear talks resume

**Tehran:** Iran insisted on Monday that the United States and its allies promise to allow Tehran to export its crude as negotiations on restoring the tattered nuclear deal were to resume in Vienna. The remarks by Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian signal that Iran is pressing its position ahead of the negotiations over reviving the landmark 2015 nuclear deal. The talks were adjourned earlier this month after a round marked by tensions over new demands from Tehran. Speaking to reporters in Tehran, Amirabdollahian said Iran wants the upcoming round of

talks to focus on achieving the "point where Iranian oil is being sold easily and without any barriers and its money arrives in Iran's bank accounts". Tehran's landmark accord with world powers granted the nation sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program. But in 2018, then-President Donald Trump withdrew America from the deal and imposed sweeping sanctions on Iran, including against its oil sector - the life-line of its economy. Iran's crude exports plummeted and international oil companies scrapped deals with Tehran, weakening its economy. As the

parties to the 2015 atomic deal prepared to convene in Vienna, Amirabdollahian said Iran wanted to "be able to enjoy full economic concessions under nuclear deal". "Guarantee and verification (of the removal of sanctions) are among topics that we have focused on," he said. The new, conservative administration of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has repeatedly demanded removal of all economic sanctions before Iran re-ins in its nuclear advances. Iran has steadily abandoned all of accord's limits since American withdrawal and is now enriching uranium to 60% purity - a short,

technical step from weapons-grade levels. It spins ever-more advanced centrifuges also barred by deal. Iran insists that its nuclear program is peaceful. But country's significant nuclear steps have alarmed regional rivals and world powers. Diplomats have warned that time is running out to restore deal as Iran maintains a hard line in putting the onus on the US to lift sanctions. The talks involve all parties to original nuclear deal - Iran, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China. Iran refuses to talk directly to American envoy, who is engaging through other signatories. AP

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of all concerned that railways have decided to revised the timings of the following express trains :-

Train No. & Name	With Effect From
12926 Amritsar Jn. - Bandra Terminus Paschim Express	with immediate effect.
19020 Haridwar Jn. - Bandra Terminus Express	with immediate effect.
22654 H. Nizamuddin - Thiruvananthapuram Central Weekly Superfast Express	with immediate effect.
12474 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Gandhidham BG Sarvodaya Express	30.12.2021
12476 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Hapa Sarvodaya Express	with immediate effect.
12478 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Jamnagar Express	with immediate effect.
04383 Prayagraj Sangam-Jaunpur Jn. Unreserved Mail/Exp. Spl.	01.01.2022

Passengers are therefore requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App to know the revised Time-Table of the above trains.

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

Visit RailMadad website:- [www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in)  
Download RailMadad app.  
RailMadad Helpline No.: 139  
Please join us on "SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE!"

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Visit us at : [www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in)  
3060/2021

## DELHI ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Viniyamak Bhawan, C-Block, Shivalik, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017  
Website: [www.derc.gov.in](http://www.derc.gov.in), Telefax: 26673608

## PUBLIC NOTICE

To provide comments/ suggestions/objections on Draft Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (Forum for Redressal of Grievances of the Consumers and Ombudsman) (First Amendment) Regulations, 2021

The Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by sub-section (2) (r) and sub-section (2) (s) of Section 181 read with sub-section (5) and sub-section (6) of Section 42 of the Electricity Act 2003, and all other powers enabling it in this behalf, hereby proposes to amend the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (Forum for Redressal of Grievances of the Consumers and the Consumers and Ombudsman) Regulations, 2018.

The Draft Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (Forum for Redressal of Grievances of the Consumers and Ombudsman) (First Amendment) Regulations, 2021 is available on the website of the Commission i.e. [www.derc.gov.in](http://www.derc.gov.in).

Stakeholders are requested to forward their suggestions/comments/objections on the Draft Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (Forum for Redressal of Grievances of the Consumers and Ombudsman) (First Amendment) Regulations, 2021 to the Commission, latest by 12.01.2022. The comments/suggestions/objections may be forwarded to Secretary, DERC either by post or through email to [secyderc@nic.in](mailto:secyderc@nic.in).

Sd/-  
DIP/Shabdarth/0524/21-22  
Secretary, DERC

**BSES**  
BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi  
NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR SHORT TERM PURCHASE OF POWER FOR THE PERIOD 01st April 2022 To 30th September 2022  
Tender No. Head (PMG)BRPL/Tender/2021-22/1158  
In accordance with the guidelines for short term procurement of power notified by the Ministry of Power and directions issued by Hon'ble DERC, BRPL has floated power procurement tender for up to 350 MW along with the General Terms and Conditions for purchase of power and same is available on e-Bidding portal [www.mstcecommerce.com](http://www.mstcecommerce.com).  
Bidders are requested to kindly visit above website and submit the competitive purchase offers on [www.mstcecommerce.com](http://www.mstcecommerce.com).  
Last date of bid submission is 05th Jan'2022 up to 15:00 hrs and Opening of non financial technical Bids is 06th Jan'2022 at 11:00 hrs  
Address: Head PMG, BSES Rajdhani power Ltd., BSES Bhawan, 2nd Floor, D-Block, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019 (Tel: 49209037, Fax: 011-49209454)  
Regd. Off.: BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019  
Corporate Identification No.: U40190DL2001PLC111627  
Telephone No.: +91 11 39997233 Fax No.: +91 11 39995680  
Website : [www.bsesdelhi.com](http://www.bsesdelhi.com)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This Notice is given hereby to public at large that my client is in process of purchasing the Flat bearing No. 1807A (PENTHOUSE) BEVERLY PARKS-II, DLF CITY PHASE-II, GURUGRAM HARYANA-122022. Measuring 458.9 Sq. Meters along with two covered Car Parkings no. 2093 & 2095 in the basement. From its recorded and registered owner namely M/s. M/s. Agaru Real Estate Pvt. Ltd. C/o Lisha Martin Intotech Ltd. No.63, Udyog Vihar, Phase-IV, Gurgaon, Haryana, Through its Director, Mr. Anurag Khanna.  
Whereas it has been portrayed to my client that the above mentioned Penthouse/Apartment is exclusively and absolutely owned by the above named seller Company and same is free from all kind of charges, lien, mortgage, litigation, insolvency proceedings etc. on the basis of representation & assurances of the above named seller, my client has agreed to purchase the above captioned Penthouse/Apartment. Whereas, the above mentioned recorded owner has further portrayed that the original Allotment letter/possession letter and apartments buyer agreement dated 24.04.2000 is missing and in process of lodge NCR with the competent Authority. However, as a matter of abundant caution, my client hereby issues the present public notice to public at large to invite objections/claims qua the above mentioned Penthouse/Apartment.  
Whereas all persons including the individuals, companies, banks, financial institutions (banking and non banking), firms, creditors, claimants family members etc. having any right, interest, claim, objection in respect of above mentioned Penthouse/Apartment, are requested to submit the same in writing by registered post, supported by the original documents, to the undersigned at the address mentioned below within the period of 10 days from the publication of the instant notice, failing which the right of my client to purchase the person/body company etc. shall be considered to have been waived off and/or abandoned.  
**ABHILASH VASHISTH (ADVOCATE)**  
B317, MODEL TOWN, DELHI-110009  
(M): 9873700067

## Jean-Marc Vallee, director of Big Little Lies and 'Dallas Buyers Club', dies at 58

PTI ■ LOS ANGELES

Jean-Marc Vallee, best known for directing films such as "Dallas Buyers Club" and "Wild", along with the HBO series "Big Little Lies", has passed away at the age of 58. Vallee's longtime producing partner Nathan Ross confirmed his passing in a statement with The Hollywood Reporter.

The filmmaker died suddenly over the weekend in his cabin near Quebec City, Canada, and the cause of death was not immediately disclosed. "Jean-Marc stood for creativity, authenticity and trying things differently. He was a true artist and a generous, loving guy. Everyone who worked

with him couldn't help but see the talent and vision he possessed. He was a friend, creative partner and an older brother to me.

The maestro will sorely be missed but it comforts knowing his beautiful style and impactful work he shared with the world will live on," Ross said in the statement.

Vallee was born in Montreal, Quebec and forayed into showbiz directing through music videos. He made his feature directorial debut with 1995 thriller "Black List", which earned nine nominations for Canada's Genie Awards, while his 2005 coming-of-age movie "C.R.A.Z.Y." won 11 Genies. His 2009 film "The Young Victoria", starring

Emily Blunt as British monarch Queen Victoria, earned three Academy Award nominations including a win for best costume design. But it was the 2013 film "Dallas Buyers Club" that shot Vallee to prominence; it picked up six Oscar nods, including best picture and won Matthew McConaughey and Jared Leto trophies in best actor and best supporting actor categories.

The film was a fact-based story of Ron Woodroof, who sold experimental drugs to AIDS patients. He followed with "Wild", which starred Reese Witherspoon and Laura Dern. The film, an adaptation of Cheryl Strayed's memoir, was nominated for three Oscars.

# Air India handover to Tata Group delayed further

**New Delhi:** Tata Group's takeover of loss-making national carrier Air India is most likely delayed by a month till January as the completion of procedures taking longer than expected, an official said on Monday.

In October, the government accepted the highest bid made by a Tata Sons company for 100 per cent equity shares of Air India and Air India Express along with its 50 per cent stake in ground-handling company AISATS -- the first privatisation in 20 years.

At that time, the government had stated that it wanted to complete the transactions, which included Tatas paying Rs 2,700 crore in cash, by December end.

As per the conditions in SPA, all formalities of handover would have to be completed within 8 weeks, but this date can be mutually extended by the buyer and seller and is being done in this case.

However, some regulatory approvals are yet to come in for

the handover, and certain formalities are yet to be completed, the official, who wished not to be named, told PTI.

"The process would be completed by January," he said without giving a specific date.

On October 25, the government had signed the share purchase agreement with Tata Sons for the sale of national carrier Air India for Rs 15,000 crore. Tata's would pay Rs 2,700 crore cash and takeover Rs 15,300 crore of the airline's debt.

The cash component would come once the handover process is completed, another official explained.

Tatas beat the Rs 15,100-crore offer by a consortium led by SpiceJet promoter Ajay Singh and the reserve price of Rs 12,906 crore set by the government for the sale of its 100 per cent stake in the loss-making carrier.

As of August 31, Air India had a total debt of Rs 61,562 crore. 75 per cent of this debt or Rs 46,262 crore will be

transferred to a special purpose vehicle AIAHL before handing over the loss-making airline to Tata Group.

Tatas will not get to retain non-core assets, such as the Vasant Vihar Housing colony of Air India, Air India Building at Nariman Point, Mumbai, and Air India Building in New Delhi.

Of the 141 Air India aircraft that Tatas will get, 42 are leased planes, while the remaining 99 are owned.

While this will be the first privatisation since 2003-04, Air India will be the third airline brand in the Tatas' stable - it holds a majority interest in AirAsia India and Vistara, a joint venture with Singapore Airlines Ltd.

Tata's acquisition of Air India will give it access to a fleet of 117 wide-body and narrow-body aircraft, and Air India Express Ltd another 24 narrow-body aircraft besides control of 4,400 domestic and 1,800 international landing, and parking slots at domestic airports. **PTI**

# Sensex advances 296 pts as banking, IT stocks gain

**Mumbai:** Equity benchmark Sensex rose by nearly 296 points on Monday following gains in IT, financials and pharma stocks amid a largely positive trend in global markets.

After rebounding over 960 points from the day's low during the session, the 30-share index settled 295.93 points or 0.52 per cent higher at 57,420.24. As many as 24 Sensex stocks closed in the green while six declined.

The broad-based Nifty of the National Stock Exchange recovered 82.50 points or 0.49 per cent to close at 17,086.25 with 40 of its constituents advancing. Tech Mahindra was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising by over 3 per cent. Dr Reddy's rose by 1.95 per cent, Kotak Bank by 1.56 per cent and Sun Pharma by 1.16 per cent.

Gains in ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, HDFC, M&M,

Axis Bank and Bajaj Finance helped the Sensex recover from the day's low levels.

On the other hand, IndusInd Bank, Asian Paints, Maruti and Bharti Airtel were among the laggards.

RBL Bank tanked to its 52-week low before closing down by more than 18 per cent at Rs 140.90 on BSE. The RBI on Monday said that RBL Bank is well capitalised and its financial position remains "satisfactory", amid speculations relating to the private sector lender.

The statement came after RBL Bank's MD & CEO Vishawvir Ahuja stepped down and the RBI appointed its chief general manager as an additional director on the bank's board. "Indian markets opened in red tracking mixed Asian market cues as investors tracked the impact of Omicron variant amid holiday-thinned trade," said Narendra Solanki, Head- Equity Research, Anand Rathi. **PTI**

# Rupee hits nearly 4-week high of 75 against US dollar

**Mumbai:** Rising for the eighth straight session, the rupee on Monday appreciated 3 paise to nearly four-week high of 75 against the US dollar amid a firm trend in domestic equities and rising appetite for riskier assets.

However, a strong US dollar overseas and firm crude oil prices restricted the rupee's rise.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 75.15 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.95 and a low of 75.16.

It finally settled at 75, showing a gain of 3 paise against the previous close.

Over the last eight sessions, the domestic currency has gained 132 paise against the greenback.

Trading is likely to remain range-bound this week ahead of the year-end holidays, forex traders said.

According to Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities rupee further moved north following strong risk

appetite and lacklustre dollar demand ahead of year-end.

Trading volume remains thin as many European markets remain shut and foreign investors are in a holiday mood ahead of the new year.

"The Indian Rupee ended the session marginally stronger against the US Dollar in a choppy trading session as foreign banks' dollar sales on behalf of exporters offset earlier greenback purchases by state-run banks," said Sriram Iyer, Senior Research Analyst at Reliance Securities.

Positive moves in Indian equity indices and stronger Asian currencies also aided sentiments.

However, FPI's continued to withdraw capital from Indian equities and bonds and fears of a rapid spread of Omicron variant of coronavirus kept the appreciating bias limited.

"Rupee traded muted as the market was range-bound on the back of flat range in the dollar and crude prices due to holiday season," Jateen Trivedi,

Senior Research Analyst at LKP Securities, said.

Crude prices can define the trend for the rupee as market sentiments were spooked due to nervousness on lockdowns due to the rise in cases in many parts of the EU.

"OPEC+ updates in the first week of the new year can push prices higher in the rupee if Crude witnesses sell-off in case of weak demand outlook by OPEC. Going ahead rupee can be seen in the range of 74.75-75.25," Trivedi said.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 295.93 points or 0.52 per cent higher at 57,420.24, while the broader NSE

Nifty advanced 82.50 points or 0.49 per cent to 17,086.25.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against the basket of six currencies, rose 0.21 per cent to 96.21.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.01 per cent to USD 76.13 per barrel. **PTI**

## LIVE STREAMERS' EARNINGS DOUBLE

**New Delhi:** Uplive, a live video streaming app that gives influencers opportunity to build communities around their interest, on Monday announced its users have grown their earnings by up to 100 per cent, making between \$200 and \$1800 every month.

"Each person has its own creativity and providing a platform where everyone has an equal chance to grow and to showcase their talent has been the aim of Uplive," said Mukhtiyar Ahmad, Uplive's India Marketing Manager.

## Major edible oil brands cut MRP by 10-15% to give relief to consumers: SEA

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Major edible oil companies, including Adani Wilmar and Ruchi Soya, have reduced the maximum retail price (MRP) of their products by 10-15 per cent to provide relief to consumers, industry

body SEA said on Monday.

The prices have been reduced by Adani Wilmar (on Fortune brands), Ruchi Soya (Mahakosh, Sunrich, Ruchi Gold and Nutrella brands), Emami (Healthy & Tasty brands), Bunge (Dalda, Gagan, Chambal brands) and Gemini (Freedom sunflower oil brands), it said.

COFCO (Nutrilive brands), Frigorifico Allana (Sunny brands), Gokul Agro (Vitalife, Mahek and Zaika brands) and others have also reduced prices, it added.

"We are happy to share that our leading members have responded proactively and reduced MRP on edible oils marketed by them, across the board by 10-15 per cent to provide relief to consumers during the festive season," Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEA) said in a statement.

## Realtors on firm ground after tackling pandemic gloom; hope for sunny 2022 with better sales

**New Delhi:** India's real estate industry staged a rebound from 2020's downturn, with housing sales seen rising by over 50 per cent. The performance, though short of pre-COVID levels, has property developers hoping for stronger gains in the New Year and the beginning of a long upcycle.

A strong foundation has been laid this year for revival in the Indian real estate sector, which is projected to reach USD 1 trillion mark by 2030 from USD 200 billion in the pre-pandemic year.

Demand consolidation towards reputed developers, disciplined new homes supply, changing attitudes of consumers towards home ownership with preference for bigger better flats and faster adoption of digital technologies by builders were some of the trends witnessed during the year that augured well for the overall growth of the Indian real estate sector.

The year started on a positive note for the residential market as sales were strong during January-March period, aided by pent up demand, historical low interest rates on home loans, lower stamp duty offered by some states and discounts from cash-starved developers.

Just when builders started to think that the 'worst is over', the country witnessed a much stronger second COVID wave during April-June that adversely impacted demand in almost every sector of the economy, including real estate.

Housing sales remained muted in the second quarter of this calendar year but bounced back strongly in the second half of 2021. The demand for residential properties further consolidated towards reputed and trusted developers having impeccable track record of delivering projects. **PTI**

## Investment via P-notes drop to ₹94,826 cr in Nov

**New Delhi:** Investments in Indian capital market through participatory notes (P-notes) dropped to Rs 94,826 crore till November-end after hitting 43-month high in the preceding month.

P-notes are issued by registered foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to overseas investors who wish to be a part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly. They, however, need to go through a due diligence process.

According to Securities and Exchange Board of India data, the value of P-note investments in Indian markets -- equity, debt and hybrid securities -- was at Rs 94,826 crore by November end as compared to Rs 1,02,553 crore by October end.

The month of October saw the highest level since March 2018, when P-notes had invested to the tune of Rs 1,06,403 crore. **PTI**

## India's growth as textile mfg hub to rely on attractiveness of domestic market

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

India's growth as a manufacturing hub for textiles will depend on the attractiveness of its domestic market and on investments in high-end textile machinery, products in emerging areas like technical textiles and man made fiber (MMF), the government said on Monday.

In its year-end review of the textile sector, the Ministry of Textiles outlined various initiatives taken during 2021 including approving the setting up of 7 Pradhan Mantri Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (MITRA) Parks with a total outlay of Rs 4,445 crore.

"The government has notified uniform goods and services tax rate at 12 per cent on MMF, MMF yarn, MMF fabrics and apparel that has addressed the inverted tax

structure in the MMF textile value chain.

The changed rates will come into effect from 1 January, 2022," the Ministry stated.

This will help the MMF segment grow and emerge as a big job provider in the country, it added.

Under PM MITRA Parks, world-class industrial infrastructure would attract cutting edge technology/scale and FDI / local investment in the sector, the textile ministry stated.

PM MITRA Parks will generate around 1 lakh direct and 2 lakh indirect employment per park, it added.

The ministry also highlighted that the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for textiles is specially focused at high value and expanding MMF and technical textiles segments of textiles value chain.

## 'Exports rise 36 pc during Dec 1-21'

**New Delhi:** The country's exports rose by 36.2 per cent to USD 23.82 billion during December 1-21 this year, according to preliminary data of the commerce ministry.

Exports, excluding petroleum, have increased by 28.08 per cent during the period under review. **PTI**

**उत्तराखण्ड लोक सेवा आयोग**  
हरिद्वार  
फोन नं.- 249404

संख्या: 149/04/डीओआर(अधी)/सेवा-2/2021-22  
दिनांक : 27 दिसम्बर, 2021

**विज्ञापित**

एतद्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि उत्तराखण्ड महिला सशक्तिकरण एवं बाल विकास विभाग के अन्तर्गत महिला कल्याण विभाग में उत्तराखण्ड अन्य पिछड़ा वर्ग महिला के लिए आरक्षित 01 पद पर चयन हेतु पात्र अभ्यर्थियों से दिनांक 28 दिसम्बर, 2021 से दिनांक 17 जनवरी, 2022 तक ऑनलाइन आवेदन आमंत्रित किये गये हैं। ऑनलाइन आवेदन के क्रम में अभ्यर्थियों को ऑनलाइन आवेदन की प्रिंटआउट प्रति सहित समस्त शैक्षणिक अर्हता, आरक्षण से सम्बन्धित प्रमाण पत्र एवं अन्य प्रमाण पत्रों की स्वहस्ताक्षरित छायाप्रतियां दिनांक 25 जनवरी, 2022 तक किसी भी माध्यम से आयोग कार्यालय में (कार्य दिवस सोमवार से शुक्रवार) सायं 06:00 बजे तक जमा कराना आवश्यक है। इस सम्बन्ध में विस्तृत विज्ञापन आयोग की वेबसाइट [www.ukpsc.gov.in](http://www.ukpsc.gov.in) पर प्रसारित किया जा रहा है। इच्छुक अभ्यर्थी ऑनलाइन आवेदन करने से पूर्व विज्ञापन की शर्तों का मनी-माँति अवलोकन अवश्य कर लें।  
(कर्मन्त्र सिंह) सचिव।

## SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that this boy (depicted in the photo) namely: **Ankit Baghel S/o Vijay Singh R/o H.No. 5530, Gali No. 26, Near PSM World School, Prem Nagar-II, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped from the area of PS Prem Nagar, Delhi since 06.12.2021. In this regard DD No. 26A dated 08.12.2021 has been registered at PS. Prem Nagar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the boy but no clue has come to light so far.

His physical description is as under:-  
**Sex:** Male, **Age:** 20 years, **Height:** 5'7" ft., **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** Cream Colour Jacket, Blue Pant & Red Shoes.

Any person is having information or clue about this missing/kidnapped boy may kindly inform to the following:-  
**SHO**  
**Website:** <http://cbi.nic.in>  
**E-mail:** [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) **P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi**  
**Tel. No.:** 011-24368638/24368641 **Mob. No.-8750870322**  
**Fax No.:** 011-24368639 **DP/1220/RD/2021**

## E TENDER NOTICE

**YEAR 2021/22**

**Gandhinagar Smart City Development Ltd.**  
**GANDHANAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
Multi Storied Building, B-Block, First Floor Sector-11, Gandhinagar

Gandhinagar Smart City Development Ltd., is inviting tenders for the work given below. Bids are invited for the e-tendering rates from the reputable agencies.

Tender No.	Name of Work	Tender Fee	E.M.D.
GSCDL-ICT-09-2021	"Selection of advertising and marketing aggregator agency for the monetization of the variable messaging displays (VMD) Hoards in Gandhinagar City"	10,000/-	21,00,000/-

The short notice tender form can be filled online by downloading from website [www.nprocure.com](http://www.nprocure.com) from Dt.28/12/2023 to Dt. 27/01/2022 up to 17:00 hours.

Any documents for the necessary support of tender bid must be scanned in the electronic format and submitted online on [www.nprocure.com](http://www.nprocure.com). The technical bids and the amount of tender fees and the Demand Draft of EMD shall be submitted in hard copy in name of **CEO, Gandhinagar Smart City Development Ltd.** upto Dt.07/02/2022 by registered post or speed post till 17.00 hours. Only those offers will be opened.

Online Technical Bid Opening Dt.08/02/2022 at 15.00 hrs.

**Place:- Gandhinagar SD/-**  
**Dt.28/12/2021 Chairman**  
**No/NF/VP/2021/G/1804 Gandhinagar Smart City Development Ltd.**

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**

**See Section 82 Cr.P.C.**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused persons **Wasim Ansari, S/o Mohd. Asim, R/o D-59, Pravesh Nagar, Mubarkpur, Delhi & Mohd. Khurshid, S/o Mohd. Shanur, R/o: D-94, Meer Vihar, Delhi** have committed the offences (or are suspected to have committed) in case **FIR No. 34/2016 have been registered at P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Wasim Ansari & Mohd. Khurshid**, cannot be found and whereas it have been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Wasim Ansari & Mohd. Khurshid**, have absconded (or are concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Wasim Ansari & Mohd. Khurshid**, accused of **FIR No. 34/2016 have been registered at P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **31.03.2022**.

By Order  
**Metropolitan Magistrate**  
**Delhi**  
**DP/1189/RD/2021**

**Bank of India**  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor Jeevan Tara Building,  
Parliament Street New Delhi - 110001

OA NO 17/2021 DATE: 22.12.2021  
BANK OF INDIA APPLICANT  
M/S BONS MART INTERNATIONAL LTD. ORS. RESPONDENT

**TO, DEFENDANTS**

- M/S BONMART INTERNATIONAL LTD. THROUGH ITS DIRECTOR 9/34 SHYAM BLOCK MAIN PUSHTA ROAD KAILASH NAGAR DELHI-31
- ALSO AT: A-47, NEW FRIENDS COLONY NEW DELHI- 65
- RAKESH NANSAL (GUARANTOR) S/O LATE SH. R.L. BASAL R/O A-47, NEW FRIENDS COLONY NEW DELHI- 65
- SNEH PARKASH BANSAL (GUARANTOR) S/O LATE SH. R.L. BASAL R/O A-47, NEW FRIENDS COLONY NEW DELHI- 65
- TUSHAR NANSAL (GUARANTOR) S/O SH. S.P. BASAL R/O A-47, NEW FRIENDS COLONY NEW DELHI- 65

Whereas the above named applicant (s) has / have instituted as case for recovery of **Rs. 8,99,92,878.14/- (RUPEE EIGHT CRORE NINETY NINE LAKH NINETY TWO THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED SEVENTY EIGHT AND FOURTEEN PAISE ONLY)** against you and where as is has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on **06.04.2022 At 10.30 A.M.**

Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.

**Due to ongoing Pandemic situation, all the matters will be taken up through video Conferencing and for that purpose:-**

- All to Advocates/Litigants shall download the "Cisco Webex" application/software;
- "Meeting ID" and Password for the date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Registrar/Recovery Officer-I/and Recovery Officer-II shall be displayed in the daily case flow list either at DRT Official Portal i.e. [drt.gov.in](http://drt.gov.in)
- In any exigency qua that the Advocate/Litigants can contact the concerned official at **Ph. No. 23748478**.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal this the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of Dec., 2021.

**BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL,**  
**ASSISTANT REGISTRAR**  
**DRT-II, DELHI.**

**FORM G**  
**INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**  
(Under Regulation 36A (1) of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016)

Relevant particulars	
1. Name of the corporate debtor	TRANS GLOBE TEXTILES LIMITED
2. Date of Incorporation of Corporate Debtor	24.01.1995
3. Authority under which Corporate Debtor is incorporated / registered	ROC-Delhi
4. Corporate identity number / limited liability identification number of corporate debtor	L51990DL1995PLC064680
5. Address of the registered office and principal office (if any) of the Corporate Debtor	16/121-122, JAIN BHAWAN, FIRST FLOOR, FAIZ ROAD, WE AKAROL BAGH, NEW DELHI-110005
6. Insolvency commencement date in respect of Corporate Debtor	25.10.2021. The undersigned was appointed as IRP by order of Hon'ble NCLT dated 25.10.2021 received on 26.10.2021
7. Date of invitation of expression of interest	28.12.2021
8. Eligibility for resolution applicants under section 25(2)(n) of the Code is available at:	Eligibility Norms: a) Minimum Net worth of INR 10,00,000 (Ten Lakh) as per the latest Audited Financial Statements for the FY 2020-2021 or thereafter; b) In case of Assets Reconstruction Company, Minimum Assets under Management of INR 100,00,00,000/- (Rupees One Hundred Crore Only) as per the latest Audited Financial Statements for the FY 2020-21 or thereafter; c) If any company's including holding company, subsidiary company or group company is having their amount as NPA in less than 12 months, the said company including holding company, subsidiary company or group company will be ineligible to submit the Resolution plan; d) There is no default on the part of the Company in filing the latest Audited Financial Statements and for the income tax return and / or GST Returns (if applicable) for the FY2020-2021 or thereafter Further detail can be sought by emailing- <a href="mailto:nazim@mknassociates.com">nazim@mknassociates.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:cirp.transglobe@gmail.com">cirp.transglobe@gmail.com</a>
9. Norms of ineligibility applicable under section 29A are available at:	<a href="https://ibbi.gov.in/uploads/legalframework/ebc-ca214d2c3508f3c823f070429b8.pdf">https://ibbi.gov.in/uploads/legalframework/ebc-ca214d2c3508f3c823f070429b8.pdf</a> (Official website of IBBI-Legal Framework-Updated Code) Also details can be sought by emailing- <a href="mailto:nazim@mknassociates.com">nazim@mknassociates.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:cirp.transglobe@gmail.com">cirp.transglobe@gmail.com</a>
10. Last date for receipt of expression of interest	12.01.2022
11. Date of issue of provisional list of prospective resolution applicants	14.01.2022
12. Last date for submission of objections to provisional list	19.01.2022
13. Date of issue of final list of prospective resolution applicants	21.01.2022
14. Date of issue of information memorandum, evaluation matrix and request for resolution plans to prospective resolution applicants	19.01.2022
15. Manner of obtaining request for resolution plan, evaluation matrix, information memorandum and further information	Details can be obtained by e-mailing at <a href="mailto:nazim@mknassociates.com">nazim@mknassociates.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:cirp.transglobe@gmail.com">cirp.transglobe@gmail.com</a>
16. Last date for submission of resolution plans	18.02.2022
17. Manner of submitting resolution plans to resolution professional	By electronic mode through email <a href="mailto:nazim@mknassociates.com">nazim@mknassociates.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:cirp.transglobe@gmail.com">cirp.transglobe@gmail.com</a>
18. Estimated date for submission of resolution plan to the Adjudicating Authority for approval	20.03.2022
19. Name and registration number of the resolution professional	Name: Mohd Nazim Khan Reg No: IBBI/PA-02/IP-NC0076/2017-18/10207
20. Name, Address and e-mail of the resolution professional, as registered with the Board	Name: Mohd Nazim Khan Reg No: IBBI/PA-02/IP-NC0076/2017-18/10207 Address: C-41, Ground Floor, West Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008 Email: <a href="mailto:nazim@mknassociates.com">nazim@mknassociates.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:cirp.transglobe@gmail.com">cirp.transglobe@gmail.com</a>
21. Address and email to be used for correspondence with the resolution professional	Address: C-41, Ground Floor, West Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008 Email: <a href="mailto:nazim@mknassociates.com">nazim@mknassociates.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:cirp.transglobe@gmail.com">cirp.transglobe@gmail.com</a>
22. Further Details are available at or with	Detail can be obtained by emailing at <a href="mailto:nazim@mknassociates.com">nazim@mknassociates.com</a>
23. Date of publication of Form G	28.12.2021

Date: 27.12.2021  
Place: New Delhi  
IBBI Reg No. IBBI/PA-02/IP-NC0076/2017-18/10207

**Aro granite industries Ltd.**  
CIN: L74899DL1988PLC031510  
Registered Office: 1001, 10th Floor, DLF Tower A, Jaspal, New Delhi 110025  
Phone : 011-41686169; Fax: 011-26941984  
Email: [investorgrievance@arogite.com](mailto:investorgrievance@arogite.com); Website: [www.arogite.com](http://www.arogite.com)

**NOTICE TO SHAREHOLDERS OF THE COMPANY**  
Transfer of Equity Shares of the Company to Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPPA)

This notice is published pursuant to the provisions of the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (Accounting, Audit, Transfer and Refund) Rules, 2016, as amended ("the Rules"). The Rules, amongst other matters, contain provisions for transfer of all shares in respect of which dividend has not been paid or claimed for seven consecutive years or more in the name of the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPPA) Authority. The Company has updated full details of such shareholders and shares due for transfer to IEPPA Authority on its website at [www.arogite.com/Investor\\_Relations](http://www.arogite.com/Investor_Relations). Shareholders are requested to refer to our website [www.arogite.com/Investor\\_Relations](http://www.arogite.com/Investor_Relations) to verify the details of the shares liable to be transferred to IEPPA Authority.

Shareholders may note that both the unclaimed dividend and the shares transferred to IEPPA Authority including all benefits accruing on such shares, if any, can be claimed back by them from IEPPA Authority after following the procedure prescribed under the Rules. The Company has also sent individual letters to the shareholders in this regard.

In case the shares which are required to be transferred to IEPPA are held in physical form, the Company would be issuing duplicate shares certificate(s) in lieu of the original share certificate(s) held by them for the purpose of transfer of shares to IEPPA Authority as per the Rules and upon such issue, the original certificate(s) which stands registered in their name will stand automatically cancelled and be deemed non-negotiable. In case of the shares are held in demat form, the Company shall inform the depository by way of Corporate Action, where the shareholders have their demat accounts, for transfer of shares to IEPPA. The shareholders may further note that the details uploaded by the Company on its website should be regarded as and shall be deemed to be adequate notice in respect of issue of duplicate certificate(s) by the Company for the purpose of transfer of shares to IEPPA Authority pursuant to the Rules.

In case the Company does not receive any communication from the concerned shareholders by 27th January 2022, the Company shall, with a view to complying with the requirements set out in the Rules, dematerialise and transfer the shares to IEPPA Authority by way of corporate action by the due date as per the procedure stipulated in the Rules.

For any clarification in this regard, the shareholders may write to the Company and its Registrar & Transfer Agent Alankit Assignments Limited, Unit: ARO GRANITE INDUSTRIES LIMITED, Alankit Assignments Ltd, Alankit Heights, 1E/13, Jhandewalan Extension, New Delhi - 110 055, Phone: 011-42541955, 42541960. Email: [rita@alankit.com](mailto:rita@alankit.com)

For **Aro granite industries Ltd.**  
**Sabyasachi Panigrahi**  
Company Secretary

**Place: New Delhi**  
**Date: 27.12.2021**

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**TENDER NOTICE**

The Dy. Chief Engineer/Const-II, Northern Railway, Chandigarh, for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tender under **Single Packet System** for the under noted work:-

No.	Name of work and location	Supplying and fixing land demarcation boundary pillars in connection with construction of Chandigarh-Baddi new BG rail link via Chandimandir under Dy. Chief Engineer Construction-II, Chandigarh
1.	Name of work and location	Supplying and fixing land demarcation boundary pillars in connection with construction of Chandigarh-Baddi new BG rail link via Chandimandir under Dy. Chief Engineer Construction-II, Chandigarh
2.	Completion period of the work	04 (Four) Months
3.	Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 28.20 lacs
4.	Earnest Money amount (to be deposited Online)	Rs. Nil
5.	Date & Time for submission of e-tender and opening of tender	Tenders may be uploaded upto 11.30 hrs. on 30.12.2021 date on IREPS website i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> . The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11.30 hrs. on 21.01.2022
6.	Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document	The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway website i.e. <a href="http://www.nr.indianrail.gov.in">www.nr.indianrail.gov.in</a> and tender documents is available on website i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> . Above tenders document will be available on IREPS website i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 07.01.2022 to 21.01.2022. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

No.: 352-W/Const-II/CDG/08/2020-21 Dated: 23.12.2021 3056/2021  
Serving Customers with a Smile



GetVaccinated

CoWin chief Dr Ram Sewak Sharma on December 27, 2021, said that children between the ages of 15-18 will be able to register on the app from January 1. Children will be able to register on the app using their student identity cards for the 10th grade



Inside is not safe either



As per WHO, indoor air pollution may be responsible for up to four million premature deaths

annually. DAVID LEWIS shares misconceptions surrounding it and a few tips to improve air quality

The COVID-19 crisis has confined us to our homes. While the lockdowns meant less traffic and reduced carbon emissions, the forced confinement has brought to light a major health risk that's often overlooked — Indoor air pollution. India has grappled with deteriorating air quality for years now. According to the World Air Quality Report 2020, six of the world's 10 most polluted cities are in India.

As per WHO, indoor air pollution may be responsible for up to four million premature deaths annually. The recent finding from WHO also states that about seven million people die every year due to the harmful impact of air pollution.

When we think of air pollution, what often comes to mind are car emissions, smog, dust, and smoke. The truth is there is a lot more in the air than we had previously imagined.

A recent study indicated that the air within our homes and other buildings can be more polluted than outdoor air. Some common sources of indoor air pollution are vents, fibrous furnishings, and vents.

It is a common misconception that staying indoors can effectively help evade air pollution. The health impact of indoor air pollution is not very well known even now, but studies have shown that it is as big a killer as outdoor air pollution. Bad indoor air quality can lead to the development of various allergic and respiratory illnesses. Outdoor air pollution cannot be improved overnight, but we can still take steps to make the air inside our homes cleaner and safer.

Since most of us spend around 90 per cent of our time indoors these days, it is essential to understand the hazardous effects of poor indoor air quality on our health. A new study also cited that poor indoor air quality is associated with subtle impairments in a number of cognitive functions, including our ability to concentrate and process information.

Tips to improve it:

Ensure your premises are adequately ventilated. Ventilation and recirculation of air helps keep harmful airborne contaminants at bay

Installing air purifiers in various high risk areas that have a combination of carbon filter, HEPA filter and UVC technology can help to clean and decontaminate indoor air from all pollutants as well as eliminate deadly viruses and bacteria. Check building materials and furnishings for small levels of toxins that can linger in the air for an extended period of time

Clean and sanitize your HVAC air ducts regularly

Regularly maintaining air hygiene units ensures good efficiency. Replace air filters when required to prevent pollutants from being reissued into the air

A comprehensive pest management program along with good indoor air quality can further help you prevent harmful pathogens from entering your institutions. The writer is MD- Rentokil PCL



Guide to sleep right & tight

During winter, there is a substantial increase in Obstructive Sleep Apnea patients and many of them are diagnosed for the first time, despite having undiagnosed mild to moderate OSA for many years, says DR AKSHAY BUDHRAJA

Winter alters the physiology of the body in ways that are difficult to adjust to. Whether you like it or not, winters will have an effect on your respiratory system, especially if you suffer from sleep apnea. It is a severe sleep disorder that occurs when your breathing stops and starts while you are sleeping. If left untreated, it can lead to loud snoring, daytime fatigue, or more serious issues such as heart disease or high blood pressure.

Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) is a condition that occurs when airways become completely or partially blocked during sleep, usually due to the collapse of soft tissue in the back of your throat. During the winter, there is a substantial increase in OSA patients, and many of them are diagnosed for the first time, despite having undiagnosed mild to moderate OSA for many years. This winter, the number of OSA patients is rising by around 15-20 per cent on average.

OSA rises during winters Because of the decrease in humidity, sleep apnea becomes more difficult to manage in the winter. A 2012 study found this to be the case after studying sleep patients for a decade. It is believed that this is due to the dry air and increased use of fireplaces in the home, both of which bring in smoke.

The symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea worsen in the winter due to a variety of factors. The most important factor is lower humidity during the winter, and the use of heaters tends to make the air even dryer by sucking moisture out of it. The respiratory passage dries out quickly due to the cold air. The second factor is poor air quality, both outside and inside, particularly in cities, as well as the use of fireplaces and wood-burning. The third most common reason is that many people suffer from recurrent upper respiratory infections or allergies such as rhinitis, nasal blockage, and runny nose during the winter, which exacerbates their already severe sleep apnea.

Treat OSA

In short, OSA will worsen in the winter, but there are strategies you can use to allow this season to melt away negative health effects. When going outside, always keep your mouth covered. Breathing in cold air can cause the airway and lungs to dry out. Dress in weather-appropriate attire. It is preferable to add more layers to your clothing. Breathe in through your nose and exhale through your mouth. Your nose aids in the filtering of cold air.

According to a new study, maintaining an active lifestyle can lower the risk of obstructive sleep apnea, prompting doctors to propose exercise-based therapies for people at risk. The study's findings



Dr Akshay Budhraja Consultant, Respiratory and Sleep Medicine, Aakash Healthcare, Dwarka

Maintaining an active lifestyle can lower the risk of OSA. Higher levels of physical activity and lower levels of sedentary behaviour reduces the risk. It is therefore advised to maintain your exercise regimen even during winters

were published in the 'European Respiratory Journal.' The new study by Brigham and Women's Hospital researchers looked at the link between active lifestyles and the risk of OSA.

Over a 10-to-18-year period, the study followed approximately 130,000 men and women in the United States and discovered that higher levels of physical activity and lower levels of sedentary behaviour were associated with a lower risk of OSA. It is therefore advised to maintain your exercise regimen even during the winters

Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) Machine

A CPAP machine delivers a constant stream of oxygen to your nose and mouth while you sleep. This helps you breathe correctly by keeping your airways open. The winter season brings an increase in cold and flu cases, which can interfere with CPAP compliance and a restful night's sleep.

When using and cleaning the device in the winter, extra caution should be exercised. We recommend using cleaning devices designed specifically for CPAPs to make daily cleaning easier. Most CPAPs have a humidification setting, but you should also have a humidifier in your sleeping area.

If you are having trouble sleeping or breathing at night, it can be a sign of OSA. It is, therefore, recommended that you see a doctor as soon as possible.

Community engagement for a TB-free nation

Despite advancement in medicine and a cure, the disease is still most prevalent. To eliminate it, community intervention is must, says SHALINI SAKSENA

Tuberculosis (TB) is one of India's major public health problems that kills an estimated 4.8 lakh people every year. Despite being curable, it still remains one of the most prevalent diseases in the country due to lack of awareness, stigma, discrimination, fear of being diagnosed with the disease, and misconceptions.

The TB patients in rural areas live a life of poverty, severely limiting their options for diagnosis and treatment due to lack of resources. For achieving the aim to eliminate TB by 2025 under India's National Strategic Plan for Tuberculosis Elimination, it becomes crucial to reach the grassroots level to address issues related to TB care, and reduce the treatment gap.

This is where Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) play an important role. PRIs are based upon the belief that development can be complemented by a robust local

democracy, which holds responsibility for the community and authority over local resources.

People with TB in rural areas face challenges in accessing healthcare facilities, continuing and bearing the cost of treatment. Many of them are not aware of the free-treatment facilities provided by the government. Women in rural areas face the most challenges due to social and economic constraints and the stigma attached to the disease.

To tackle this, an active community engagement becomes important with the involvement of the PRIs. This can improve and accelerate the diagnosis and treatment process, as early detection and timely access to medication increases the chances of a successful treatment. Engaging with PRIs will also ensure that the stigma and discrimination associated with TB is also



addressed, which will lead to more people seeking care.

The goal of elimination of TB cannot be met if people are not made aware of the challenges and opportunities to ensure TB control at local levels, and diagnosis as well as treatment options become more accessible to all.

It is also essential to understand the role of social factors that determine occurrence of TB, like poverty, alcoholism, tobacco smoking, malnutrition- and how these affect one's TB diagnosis and treatment. All of this

can be made possible through active engagement and under the leadership of PRIs.

The Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) has been working to empower PRIs and encouraging their involvement in TB control and ultimately, TB elimination. For example, the KHPT team reached out to the Karpura Gram Panchayat President on being involved in TB free panchayat activities, in alignment with the State's vision. The panchayat is also committed to ensur-

ing awareness around TB prevention, cure and treatment, by informing the community about TB in Gram Panchayat Review meetings.

The members along with the local religious leaders advocated TB awareness activities in places of worship. The public address systems continue to play various TB awareness jingles curated by KHPT's Breaking the Barriers (BTB) intervention. Over a period two months, the panchayat members covered a population of 9920 through multiple activities. Of these, 4475 were screened, 28 were referred for further testing, with patients getting initiated on treatment.

There is a need for an effective delivery system which can fill the gap between healthcare schemes and people's access to them, and PRIs can play an instrumental role in making this possible.

IN BRIEF

Designed to regulate vegetarian food and lifestyle industry

Taking its inspiration from the Vedas and Puranas, the Sattvik Council of India was launched in 2010 as a revolutionary project in the Indian food sector. A non-profit organisation and a pioneering vegetarian food & lifestyle standard development organisation, Sattvik Council was accepted to promote the certification of vegetarian food.

It is a type of indigenous certification that was developed and designed in India to regulate the vegetarian food and lifestyle industry.

The main aim of the company is to create a better environment for vegetarians all around the globe. With the requirement for the new SOP's and standards in the food supply chain, the Sattvik mark guarantees that a vegan or vegetarian product can be trusted completely, without a second thought.

The Sattvik mark assures the consumer that the product is safe and will protect them from any food-borne illnesses. The company ensures that the quality and quantity of the commodities conform to the internationally recognised vegetarian standards in scope.

Starting from researching the ingredient list well to investigating the supply chain, carrying out surveillance sampling, on-site inspections, lab testing, and follow-ups; the company makes sure that they prioritise the consumer's health.

DOCYARD

DR AMIR FEILY

Dermatologist and Researcher

SKIN AND STEM CELL RESEARCH CENTER



All about hair transplant surgery



In today's digital era, everyone's health is suffering from numerous diseases. A major cause for these is the high-stress levels we incubate during our work. This disrupts the work-life balance and leads to many underlying conditions. One of the major drawbacks of the hi-tech world is baldness. High-stress environments cause receding hairline and eventually, one ends up being bald. To avoid such embarrassing situations hair transplant seems to be an effective and long-lasting procedure for baldness.

Hair transplant surgery treats hair loss that is caused by various factors. Some of the factors include male pattern baldness (androgenic alopecia), scalp inflammation or scalp surgery. This causes baldness. But during the start of the transplant, one should have realistic expectations such as if you haven't had full hair or you have a thin hairline, you won't get the head full of hairs. Various factors including genetics are involved in the hair loss process.

There are many techniques for hair loss that consist of grafting hairs from the hair-bearing parts of the scalp. After this, the hairs are grafted to the less hairy or bald patches of the scalp. Although hair restoration and bald patch removal is a prudent procedure, most of the complications are avoided by effective procedures and knowledgeable surgeons who have years of experience.

Hair transplant is considered the most relevant option for people with thin hairlines and bald patches. Evidence says that clinical transplants have an 85 per cent to 90 per cent success rate as the transplanted area grafts regrow easily

There are two types of hair transplant techniques that are popular, one is follicular unit transplantation (FUT) and another is Follicular Unit Extraction Techniques (FUET).

Benefits of hair transplant

It is considered the most relevant option for people with thin hairlines and bald patches. Evidence through the studies says that Clinical transplants have an 85 per cent to 90 per cent success rate as the transplanted area grafts easily regrow. A high percentage of hair transplants proves that this is an extremely beneficial procedure for receding hairlines. If we look at the brighter side of the hair, transplants include covering up the balding area and making one youthful in appearance. This also helps in improving the self-confidence and self-esteem of the person.

Dr Feily proficiently conducted a study that causes necrosis, caused by the lack of blood and oxygen levels in the particular area. It is triggered by various agents like chemicals or radiation, post hair transplant. He described this zone as the dense hair zone and suggested engraftment in the dense slitting and conducted it in the horse pattern. With this innovation, he performed many dense hair transplants without any post-surgery complications including varicose complications. He has also treated complications post hair transplants like Post Trauma Stress Disorder.

He is renowned in non-surgical procedures such as lasers, injectables and fillers. According to him, taking patient's each detail in account like age, head size, head shape and lifestyle is very important and needs to be considered before any non-surgical procedure takes place.

In this, he customises hair conditions that suit the need of the individual according to one's hair colour and also the hairstyle. Non-surgical procedures are renewed to give instant and dynamic results with painless processes.

WARMFOOD

FENUGREEK: It has been used in alternative and Chinese medicine for thousands of years to cure skin issues and a variety of other ailments. It has recently gained popularity as a spice and thickening agent. It can also be found in items like soap and shampoo. For their nutritional profile and somewhat sweet, nutty flavour, fenugreek seeds and powder

are also utilised in many Indian cuisines. 35 calories and various nutrients are found in one tablespoon (11.1 grammes) of whole fenugreek seeds. Fenugreek has been shown to improve breast-feeding supply and weight gain in newborns in studies. Fenugreek's role in blood sugar regulation and the treatment of type 1 and 2 diabetes is supported by evidence.



# REINVENTING CRAFT

JUNED and SUFIYAN KHATRI point out that, during the lockdown, traditional handicrafts, which account for the country's second-largest source of employment after agriculture, suffered severely

The pandemic of COVID-19 has had a mixed impact across all industries. Fashion retail, traditional crafts, and the creative manufacturing and handmade (CMH) sector, as well as their businesses, come to a halt at this period. Lockdowns and travel restrictions that have lasted months have brought all social and commercial endeavours to a standstill overnight. During this period, traditional and handcrafted craftsmen and craft businesses, which account for the country's second-largest source of employment after agriculture, suffered severely. The artists that make up a large portion of the crafts and artworks industry are among the most vulnerable workers on the planet. Inventory backlogs, cancelled orders, and supply chain disruption has sped up the art and their companies.

The crafts and artworks industry, like many other consumer goods market categories heavily damaged by the epidemic, has a very strong long-term development forecast. According to a recent research, the worldwide CMH sector generated more than \$500 billion in yearly sales last year and is expected to rise by 20 per cent each year to \$ one trillion by 2024. Many local retail purchasers still buy handcrafted items from assembly-line companies, even though the industry is dominated by a scattered workforce of women, youth, and rural residents. Handmade and traditional craft is already the world's second-largest job, but it has long been underserved due to a lack of investment, digitalisation, business finance, and access to global markets.

As we emerge from the pandemic, it's time to rethink handmade and traditional craft business models so that supply chains are more robust, growth is more inclusive, and the artists who create these traditional, handcrafted, and often sustainable items are better compensated. Many local artists and employees took advantage of the lockdown time to redefine themselves online, enlisting the support of their families' younger generations to sell their wares on social media sites. Much contemporary



technology and social media channels can be crucial in helping these traditional artisan companies in the post-pandemic environment. Local artists could make use of these platforms to tap into previously unexplored potential, such as strong connection and smartphone usage, as well as growing demand from a more conscious customer.

After the epidemic, after the quarantine has been removed, a growing number of retail customers are turning to virtual trade exhibitions and a plethora of online wholesale channels to get largely handcrafted items. A direct, egalitarian, and transparent value chain between buyer and maker is supported by several B2B platforms providing traditional crafts and handmade items with fascinating

provenance tales. Many internet platforms committed to bringing small-batch manufacturers into the mainstream solve current consumption concerns by allowing purchasers to pick from a greater range of unique items from ethical, environmentally conscious firms.

Social effects and new direct-to-consumer models, which are frequently facilitated by technology and improved digital connection, are driving the massive expansion in the number of businesses. When there is a demand for new handcrafted traditional crafts items, producers will require novel financing options to bridge the gap between upfront material and labour costs and typical customer payment periods.

Many platforms that specialise in providing financing to tradition-

al crafts artists can assist in overcoming these obstacles. All of these industries have previously benefited from mixed financing strategies that employ private, public, and charitable loans to preserve cash flow while boosting impact and sustainability after the lockdown is removed. Traditional handcrafted items, unlike the commodities that dominate the agro-food industry, have received little attention from financial institutions, who are still ill-equipped to service this massive sector with its fluctuating demand cycles and irregular capital expenditures.

In the post-pandemic era, our government has also taken attempts to resurrect this transitional craft industry. Many coordinated emergency efforts, as well as donations from businesses in the form of loans and grants, assist the creative sector workers and artists in reinventing themselves. Funding for these craftsmen, as well as micro-grants to gig workers and artisans, may be extremely beneficial in helping these professionals stay afloat in the short run. Establishing creative economy networks of artists, craftspeople, and culture organisations for peer-to-peer learning and resource sharing might be effective in narrowing the skills gap, especially in terms of digital innovation, to give grant-based financial aid. State and federal governments, as well as private companies, are collaborating to establish digital skills training for shared learning across India's many languages, creative sectors, and art forms. These kind of training programs aid in the development of a resilient sector that is technologically literate, well-connected, and capable of advocating for one another in times of distress.

Traditional art and craft economies account for 88 per cent of MSME in India, and they are the lifeblood of enterprise, wealth generation, and livelihoods. To survive beyond the pandemic's emergency, institutional assistance must be provided regularly to safeguard the livelihoods of many millions of artists, craftspeople, gig workers, and freelancers. Many creative organisations and artists have demonstrated resiliency when the lockdown was removed by experimenting

with new means of producing, distributing, and selling in the digital domain. Digital literacy among craftsmen within the industry is still low, and many industries' income losses from in-person events have yet to be compensated by digital sales. It has heightened the need for collaborative action, peer networks, digital technology adoption, and long-term institutional support for India's creative economy.

Establishing digital skills training models for artists and arts organisations is crucial for the creative economy's short and long-term sustainability. These old crafts, as well as their future, will be found in new hybrid live and digital arts and culture models. In the post-pandemic environment, the expansion of partnerships within the art world must be hastened, and global art industry coordination must be improved. Virtual partnerships and assisting one business to another on a national and worldwide scale are the way to go if you want to grow and preserve your roots. Because physical travel is restricted during a pandemic, virtual cooperation will go a long way toward keeping people linked. When it comes to online shopping, huge and significant changes in purchasing patterns have been made as a result of the pandemic. In 2019, there were \$80 million of online sales of traditional crafts. In 2020 that jumped to \$575 million, with 80 per cent of all bids placed online.

The epidemic has presented a chance to reconsider what we buy and how much we consume, as well as to reward purpose-driven companies. The value of a dispersed, linked workforce has been demonstrated. Even well-intentioned retail customers, on the other hand, frequently neglect traditional crafts and businesses. In the post-pandemic era, bridging the gap between purpose and action will necessitate a new model of consumption that reframes historical purchase procedures, traditional compliance requirements, and mind-sets.

*(The authors are co-founders of Kutchi Bazaar, an e-commerce platform for exclusive craft products by local artisans of the Kutch Region.)*



## Return to Hogwarts

Entropik Study determines the moments in the 20th anniversary reunion teaser of *Harry Potter* and reveals that the attention level of the respondents remained stable at 67.67 per cent throughout the video, which is greater than the benchmark numbers of most trailers released during the year. By TEAM VIVA

As the countdown to one of the most anticipated reunions of the year continues, HBO Max revealed the official teaser for the forthcoming *Harry Potter 20th Anniversary: Return to Hogwarts*. In the HBO Max special, the series' iconic characters and filmmakers reunite and reminisce about their adventures in the eight movies.

Around 4.9 million people watched the video around the world, but which moments truly captured the emotions of the people? Entropik's Affect Lab platform to analyse the teaser and bring forth the emotional highs and lows of it. Facial coding and eye tracking technologies along with survey techniques were employed to decipher the expressions of the participants across genders and age groups while they watched the most awaited video this month.

**Selective revelation and emotional words ensured great attention and engagement levels**

The interesting thing to note here is that the attention level of the respondents remained stable at 67.67 per cent throughout the video. It is greater than the benchmark numbers and fares than most of the trailers launched in 2021. The engagement rate stood at 12.88 with dips and peaks in various places. The reason for the stability in attention and engagement levels can be a result of showcasing iconic things and places associated with *Harry Potter*, the selective reveal that intrigued the audience and the clear messaging of the cast, date and other key details.

The Affect Lab score for this teaser managed to garner a score of 37.17. The report also indicates that the intensity of negative emotions was higher than the intensity of positive emotions that is a result of the sadness captured since the audience was nostalgic throughout.

**70 per cent of the audience rated the HP reunion teaser 5 out of 5**

The teaser received a massive thumbs up from the audience with 70 per cent of them rating the teaser five out of five. Around 18 per cent and 12 per cent of the people gave ratings of four and three respectively. It is one of the highest rated teasers in the recent times.

**The first reaction to the teaser was 'Can't wait to watch'**

The first reaction to the teaser for 42 per cent of the people was — 'Wow! Can't wait to watch the reunion! More than 34 per cent of the audience felt 'Nostalgic' and were in the mood to revisit their school or college days when they spent a lot of time discussing *Harry Potter* with their friends. 12 per cent of them said they were speechless while another 12 per cent of them asked 'Why recreate magic moments?'

**Hermione's entry was the most emotionally engaging point**

Hermione or Emma Watson's entry was the most emotionally engaging point. The attention and engagement levels peaked in the 18<sup>th</sup> second as the audience were curious to find if the mysterious woman walking on the 9 ¾ platform was Watson. The chance at getting a peak at one of the



most loved characters in the *Harry Potter* series increased the curiosity, happiness as well as the nostalgic quotient among the respondents.

**Neville Longbottom and Arthur Weasley's scenes captured the happiest of emotions**

Neville Longbottom and Arthur Weasley's scenes captured the happiest of emotions. At 11 seconds where Longbottom is seen holding the legendary Hogwarts letter was one of the happiest moments of the teaser. The reason could be that he was the only student whose face is shown in the video. Another smile-inducing moment came in 15 seconds when Weasley can be seen on the Hogwarts Express. The sense of familiarity in seeing well known characters along with the trademark *Harry Potter* elements like the invitation and Hogwarts Express made people smile.

**Words evoked more nostalgia and sadness than characters**

The scenes that showcased text including the likes of 'The invitation you have been waiting for', *Harry Potter* logo and the cast names brought out the most negative expressions in people. But these negative emotions that are associated with nostalgia and sadness of seeing their favourite characters for one last time together after a long gap. Since *Harry Potter* movies are based on the books, the way the text was portrayed on screen triggered evocativeness.

**Surprisingly, Hufflepuff was named the most favourite Hogwarts House**

In an unexpected twist, 51 per cent of the respondents voted Hufflepuff as the house they wanted to belong to. Around 27 per cent of the audience said they would want to belong to Gryffindor. 16 per cent and six per cent of the people voted in favour of Ravenclaw and Slytherin, respectively.

**Most popular characters were Harry, Hermione and Ron**

There were no guesses in who the favourite characters were in this special reunion. Harry was voted the most popular character by a whopping 65 per cent of the respondents. Hermione and Ron came second and third, respectively. Apart from the trio, Lord Voldemort and Severus Snape also found a place in this list.

**67 per cent of them said they will rebinge watch the series**

The reunion teaser has rekindled the interest among *Harry Potter* fans who said they will binge watch the entire series again after watching the reunion. This proves that reunions are a good way to resell the original movies to the fans as well as a newer set of audience.

By now, it is well established that the digital revolution has probably done more good than bad for the performing arts, but the biggest casualty has been live performance. The sheer amount of content out there is proof that the internet has democratised content creation. People from all walks of life can now tell their stories without censorship and that is quite revolutionary in itself. During the lockdown, when we couldn't step out, we had Netflix and YouTube to give us company. Everybody now, from the security guard to an IT professional has a membership of an OTT platform of choice. One can even say that the consumer is spoiled for choice. Which brings us back to an old question — quantity or quality?

The question is not even whether the quantity is better than quality, we are way beyond that. The real question is, how much is enough? And clearly, we have a voracious appetite for online content. An economist might look at this and give a classic 'supply follows demand' example. And they would not be wrong, but there is a difference between created demand and an organic one. McDonald's started in 1940 as a simple restaurant but in 1948 they decided to revamp their model and make it more accessible to cater to a bigger crowd. Now almost 75 years later, through perfecting their recipes in the food labs of the world and getting the perfect measure of sugar and salt, it's the biggest restaurant chain in the world.

There is little difference between burgers created in the lab and the algorithms of online platforms. They both have a common purpose — to get the consumer or the user 'hooked'. Once the consumer is hooked, the dopamine system wants more and more of the same content.

So how much is enough? Nobody knows. It's a black hole and this is not changing any-

## End of the road?

SUNNY SHARMA says only time will tell if dramatic theatre will thrive or merely survive under the onslaught of digital revolution in performing arts



time soon. When quality starts losing, everybody suffers, not just the creators but also the end-users. Art is digitised today, one can buy NFTs and apparently make millions. The headlines are no more about the art piece, but how much money it made and how teenagers turned into multi-millionaires. The digital revolution whipped out the book industry, not because people preferred to read on tablets,

but because one couldn't sell ads in physical books as effectively.

Much like physical books, the 'live performance' is on the brink of extinction, the reasons are similar. In the last two years of working from home, it today feels inconvenient to drive 40 minutes to a venue and be on time for a live gig. Also with the pandemic which has further tightened rules around perfor-



mances and gatherings, theatres have started to suffer financially, some have even closed down. It all sounds a bit bleak. To think of it, it's during times like these when an artist truly goes to work. Live performance, as we know it, will persist for millennia but in a much smaller capacity, unless a way is found to reinvent it. Sometimes it simply means just going back to the roots of dramatic performance itself. Aristotle once said mimesis is mirroring nature, art as an imitation of life. But due to Instagram, we are constantly striving and struggling to imitate fantasy. We can only hope that theatre finds its roots again and puts out honest-to-life content to draw in audiences that crave much more than just fantasy and escapism.

An actor, today, is often asked if and when they are going to appear on a Netflix or an Amazon Prime show, but nobody asks them when they are doing a play next. While it is understandable for the viewer to watch a great new series, an actor's heart longs for true meaningful connections made during a live performance where the audience and the performer are partners in crime and are all in on the act. Both artists and audience have a role to play here, but only time will tell if dramatic theatre will thrive or merely survive.

*(The author is a playwright and actor, CHAFED.)*

**AAINA**  
 Art is a mirror of society. Since times immemorial, art has served as a testimony to the prevalent society, norms, events and culture.



Erum Khan's platform Aura Planet Group Arts, known for its thought-provoking and topical exhibitions, is all set to pay tribute to this power of art to represent the truth of society or environment and a gateway to the soul of artists, with her upcoming exhibition *Aaina*.

Featuring artists like Suraj Shukla, Jyoti Singh, Archanaa Panda, Anjali Prabhakar, Priyanka Awasthi, Vartika Baranwal, Neha Vadehra, Nancy Aggarwal, Sawaranjeett Gill, Manzoor Ahmad, Shalini Gupta, Rakesh Tiwari, Mayank Kapoor, Bodh Baldotra, Shalini Singh, Gaurav Dagar, Shatakshi Sharma, Priyanka Singh, Lakshya Gora, Rupali Pallwal, Payal Agarwal, Saakshi Brahmni, Shikha Gupta, Puja, Kaustav Mukherjee.

**When:** Till December 30, 2021  
**Where:** Open Palm Court Art Gallery, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi

**BANGLADESH'S WAR OF LIBERATION 1971**

An exhibition of photographic panels is being organised to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bangladesh's war of liberation.

The photographs trace the history of the Liberation War starting with the peoples' movement against the military regime that culminated in the transformation of East Pakistan to Bangladesh.

**When:** Till December 30  
**Where:** Quadrangle Garden, India International Centre



**SOLACE**

*Solace* is an upcoming solo exhibition of sculptures by N S Rana, at Gallery Pioneer. *Solace* is also an idea of celebrating 50 years of Rana's work as a sculptor.

With his recent works made up bronze have aspects of deity and nature which reaffirm his interest in figuration. The deity aspect represents lord Krishna, and nature directs towards livelihood including tree, bird and women. The exhibition has been well designed by Siddhant P Upadhye with the support of his father Praveen D Upadhye who has an experience of more than 30 years in the field of art.

**When:** Till December 31, 11 am-7 pm  
**Where:** Gallery Pioneer F-322, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Old MB Road, Lado Sarai, New Delhi 110030



**THE MEETING POINT**

The exhibition is a multi-dimensional convergence of memories, duality, reality, and moments of simple pleasures expressed through the lens of Hasnain Soomar.

Hasnain who finds himself inspired by Raghu Rai's coffee table books rediscovers India from his highly personal and individualistic approach.

He envisions mystical beauty and brings us these evocative images that resonate with the true essence of our diverse beliefs along with the human coexistence of love and compassion. A curious explorer of time and space, he travels often to a few ashrams, ghats, mosques, and Mughal monuments, in search of a connection between the human spirit and inner peace.

**When:** Till February 10, 2022  
**Where:** Dhoomimal Gallery 8-A, block A, Connaught Place, New Delhi-11000





# 1ST TEST: 2ND DAY'S PLAY WASHED OUT

India will look to realign targets

PTI ■ CENTURION

The Indian team will look to reset its first innings target after the second day's play in the opening Test against South Africa had to be called off without a ball being bowled due to heavy

and persistent rain since morning here on Monday. What started as a drizzle this morning became a steady downpour in the afternoon and with 90 overs lost in the game, Virat Kohli's men, sitting pretty at 272 for 3 after day one, will now have to quicken up the

proceedings in the remaining three days with a high probability of winning the match. Twice, the rain stopped and umpires decided on inspection but on both occasions just before they were to step out, heavens opened up once again. "Unfortunately, due to the

large volume of rain today at Centurion, play has been called off for the day," BCCI stated on its twitter handle with a picture of the ground completely soaked. There was too much water on the covers and with literally no sunshine, there was very

little chance for the ground to dry up and some overs of play to be possible.

At the end of the opening day's play, India were strongly placed at 272 for three in 90 overs.

KL Rahul was going strong at 122 not out off 248 balls, during which he hit 17 boundaries and one six. Giving him company at the other end was Ajinkya Rahane, on 40 off 81 balls, with the help of eight hits to the fence.

Opener Mayank Agarwal made 60 off 123 deliveries before being dismissed by Lungi Ngidi.

Skipper Virat Kohli made 35 off 94 balls.

Ngidi (3/45) picked up all the three Indian wickets to fall on the first day of the match.

However, if India would have thought of batting for nearly two days, they would perhaps look for a solid first innings score of 400 to 450 and put the pressure right back on the Proteas, who only have three quality players -- skipper Dean Elgar, senior keeper-batter Quinton de Kock and the seasoned Temba Bavuma in their ranks.

These three are the only ones with proven record to take the attack back to the opposition camp which boasts of a world class seam attack, comprising Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj.

However, to get 20 wickets, India would expect 270 overs of play in the next three days. The third and fourth day's forecasts predict sunny weather with partly cloudy sky but on the final day, there is forecast of thundershowers.

## India beat Afghanistan by four wickets to enter semi-final

PTI ■ DUBAI

A match-winning 65-run seventh wicket stand between Raj Bawa and Kaushal Tambe ensured a fighting four-wicket victory for India over a gritty Afghanistan as they entered the semi-final of the U-19 Asia Cup tournament here on Monday.

Bawa (43 not out) and Tambe (35 not out) joined forces when India were in trouble at 197 for six but they kept calm to take the 'Boys in Blue' to their required 260-run target with 10 balls to spare.

This was after in-form opener Harnoor Pannu (65) and his partner Angkrish Raghuvanshi (35) added 104 for the opening stand. However, the middle order caved in with skipper Yash Dull (26) and Nishant Sindhu (19) failing to convert starts. It was left to Bawa and Tambe to take the team home.

With this win, India were placed second in the group behind Pakistan team, which won all its matches.

India will face the winners between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, who are pitted against each other in the last group league encounter. With India finishing second, they would meet the topper of the other group.

It was a game where India returned to winning ways.

Put into bat at the ICC Academy - Oval 2 here,



Afghanistan skipper Suliman Safi's patient 73 coupled with a blistering unbeaten 86 off 68 balls by Ijaz Ahmad Ahmadzai propelled Afghanistan to respectable 259/4.

Chasing 260, Harnoor, who hit nine boundaries and Angkrish were off to a flyer as India raced to 44 for no loss in six overs.

It was raining boundaries at the ground, with the two openers hammering the Afghan attack with utmost ease.

India was cruising at 74/0 after 12 overs. However, Raghuvanshi was trapped in the front by left-arm unorthodox spinner Noor Ahmad (4/43) as he broke the 104-run opening stand.

## Paralympic champion Krishna Nagar wins 3 gold at Nationals



PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Paralympic champion Krishna Nagar continued his good form as he won three gold medals at the 4th National Para Badminton Championship here

on Sunday. Nagar repeated his 2019 Nationals' feat of winning three gold as he emerged champion in all the categories he participated in -- singles, men's doubles and mixed doubles. Krishna easily beat Sudharshan 21-12-21-

12 in the men's singles SH6 category in a game that lasted just 20 minutes.

In mixed doubles, Nagar and Nithya Sre breezed past Dhinakaran and Latatai Umrekar in 17 minutes.

In the men's double, he and Raja Magotra defeated the duo of Dhinakaran and Sivarajan 21-15, 21-15 in 35 minutes. Nagar's disability classification if for players of short stature.

"I am delighted with my performance, winning all 3 gold in consecutive Nationals is a great feeling. My focus right now is on the upcoming international tournaments. This win will surely boost my confidence and help me prepare better," Nagar said.

## Right way to go: Shastri backs split captaincy in times of pandemic

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former India coach Ravi Shastri has supported the recent splitting of national Test and limited-overs captaincy, saying it could well be a blessing for red-ball skipper Virat Kohli and his white-ball counterpart Rohit Sharma as they negotiate busy schedules confined in bio-bubbles.

Kohli was replaced as white-ball captain by star opener Rohit earlier this month.

"I think it's the right way to go. This could be a blessing in disguise for Virat, and for Rohit, because I don't think in this era if the bubble life exists for another year or so, one guy can handle all, that is not easy at all," Shastri, himself a former India all-rounder, said on Star Sports show 'BOLD & BRAVE: THE SHASTRI WAY'.



Kohli, during his pre-departure press conference ahead of the tour of South Africa, said that he was never

asked to stay on as T20 skipper when he made his intent clear on relinquishing the post.

He also said that the communication of him being

removed as ODI captain also came just 90 minutes before selection committee meeting.

Shastri, who has served Indian cricket in various

capacities, said he wanted to establish Rohit as an opener.

"It was very clear in my mind that I wanted to do it. I thought if I can't get the best out of him as a batsman then I am a failure as a coach because there is too much talent there," said Shastri.

Meanwhile, the 59-year-old, who has played 80 Tests, also spoke about his relationship with Kohli, who was also the ODI and T20 skipper when Shastri was the head coach for a considerable amount of time.

"We're both pretty aggressive, we want to play to win. We realized very quickly that to win you need to take 20 wickets, deciding to play aggressive and fearless cricket."

"It meant at times you would lose games but once you got one across the line, then it's infectious," said Shastri.

## France forward Martial tells Man United he wants to leave



AP ■ MANCHESTER

Anthony Martial has told Manchester United he wants to leave, manager Ralf Rangnick said.

The France forward has dropped down the pecking order at Old Trafford, making just two Premier League starts this season and only four in all competitions. Rangnick said he

"spoke at length" with the 26-year-old Martial last week. "He explained to me he's been at Manchester United now for the last seven years and he feels it's the right time for a change, to go somewhere else," Rangnick said Sunday.

"I think, in a way, this is understandable. I could follow his thoughts but on the other hand, it's also important to see the situation of the club."

Martial became the world's most expensive teenage player when United signed him from Monaco in September 2015 for a fee of 36 million pounds (then USD 55.1 million) that could potentially rise to 58 million pounds.

Martial made a memorable debut, coming off the bench to score a superb solo goal against Liverpool, and has gone on to score 79 goals in 268 appearances.

## Senior women's hockey camp starts with 60 players, list to be pruned down to 33

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 60 players have joined the senior women's national hockey camp which began at the Sports Authority of India south centre in Bengaluru on Monday.

The players have been selected on the basis of their performance at the recently-held 11th senior women's national championship, the inter-department national championship and other Hockey India sanctioned domestic events.

The 60-member list also includes players, who have been retained from the senior women's core group based on their performance in international tournaments, a Hockey India release stated.

Players who have done well for the junior women's team have also been selected in this group which will be pruned down to 33 players ahead of their preparations for next



year's women's Asia Cup.

"This list of players has been selected keeping in mind their inter-

national performances in both senior and junior women's tournaments as well as the Senior Women National

Championship 2021, 1st Senior Women Inter-Department National Championship 2021 and other Hockey India sanctioned domestic events.

"While most of the players from the previous 33 senior women's core probable group have made it to this list, they are aware that they need to establish their potential during the trials to ensure they are picked in the final list of 33 players," said women's team chief coach Janneke Schopman.

"The next few weeks will surely be exciting as I will get to watch some of the fresh talent who are expected to add depth to the existing pool of players."

"With several top tournaments next year including the Asia Cup 2022, FIH Hockey Pro League and then the FIH Women's World Cup and the all-important Asian Games, it will be critical for us to have a strong pool of 33," she added.

## Greater Noida to soon get wrestling court with two rings

PTI ■ NOIDA

Tender to develop a wrestling court with two rings has been finalised with an estimated expenditure of Rs 60 lakh, the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) said on Monday.

The facility would come up in Sector 37 of Greater Noida where a sports complex is also proposed, the GNIDA said.

"The company (M/s Pankaj Jain) which will be developing the wrestling court has been finalised through the tender process. About Rs 60 lakh will be spent on the project," it said in a statement.

GNIDA CEO Narendra Bhooshan said a lot of emphasis is being laid on increasing sports facilities in Greater Noida, especially for the villages, since the launch of Centre's 'Khelo India' initiative.

According to officials, about four hectares of space has been earmarked for a sports complex in Sector 37.

The wrestling court will be built in a 50 by 15 metres area, with two rings, both measuring 12 by 12 metres, in it. Apart from this, there will also be facilities for changing rooms and toilets. There will also be a spectator gallery, the officials said.

Bhooshan has instructed the developer to start the wrestling court soon and complete it on time, according to the officials.

PTI ■ KOLKATA

A sensational hat-trick on debut from Spanish striker Sergio Mendiguchia powered Neroca FC to a 3-2 victory over I-League newcomers Sreenidi Deccan at the Naihati Stadium here on Monday.

Girik Khosla and David Castenada Munoz got on the score sheet for Sreenidi Deccan, but the odd goal fell Neroca FC's way to give the side from Manipur all three points in this clash.

After a scrappy start to the proceedings, Neroca FC were the first side to make headway in the contest as they broke the deadlock in the 15th minute through new signing Mendi.

As his fellow new Spanish recruit Juan Mera chipped in a free kick from a central position, Mendi came alive in the box as he brought down the ball with his chest and bundled it home from close range after Sreenidi goalkeeper Ubaid CK made the save at the first time of asking.



Sergio Mendi hat-trick leads Neroca to 3-2 win over Sreenidi Deccan

## I-League Window

The Spanish duo of Mendi and Mera combined again from a set piece to devastating effect in the 22nd minute.

Standing over a free kick from a wider position this time, set piece specialist Mera

whipped in a fantastically shaped flat delivery into the box which was promptly nodded home by striker Mendi for his second goal of the game.

Tiago Adan's brace propels Real Kashmir to 3-2 win over Aizawl FC

Tiago Adan and Mason Robertson found themselves on target as a determined Real Kashmir eked out a thrilling 3-2 win over Aizawl FC in their first game of the I-League

2021/22 season here on Monday.

While Tiago scored a brace in the match, Robertson scored the crucial third goal for the Snow Leopards in the second half. Aizawl FC did well to lead in possession stats, and remained in contest till the final whistle.

Ayush Chhetri got the first shot of the match away in the 7th minute of play after he received a pass from a corner. But his long-range hit went wide off the target.

Two minutes later, Real Kashmir received a corner of their own and Surchandra Singh sent the ball straight into the box, which was headed in to the back of the net by striker Tiago Adan to give the Snow Leopards a 1-0 lead in the 9th minute.

Aizawl FC continued to enjoy the possession as the first half progressed but could create very little chances.

Aizawl FC received their second corner in the 29th minute, but the long-range

shot from skipper R Malsawmtluanga went awry and the opportunity was missed.

Nearly 10 minutes later, Aizawl FC received their third corner, and this time, Lalthakima Ralte latched on to the cross with a direct header and scored the equaliser in the 38th minute to make it 1-1.

Unfortunately for Aizawl FC, Real Kashmir's Tiago restored the lead in the additional minutes of the first half. A corner from Surchandra reached Mason, but his shot was parried away by the goalkeeper Lalmuansanga to Tiago, who latched on the rebound and struck it in to make it 2-1 as the first half came to a close.

Defending champions Gokulam Kerala begin I-League campaign with win

Defending champions Gokulam Kerala began their I-League title defence with a 1-0 win over last season's runners-up Churchill Brothers here on Sunday.

Gokulam Kerala skipper Sharif Mohammad scored the solitary goal of the match from the penalty spot early in the first half.

Both teams made a nervy start to the game as they employed direct attacking football by way of long balls at opponents' citadel.

The Malabarians found the breakthrough after being awarded a penalty in the 16th minute. As the pacy Ngangom Ronald Singh skilfully surged with the ball into the Churchill Brothers box, he was brought down by Lebanese Shadi Skaf.

Skipper Sharif Mohammad stepped up to take the resultant spot kick and calmly slotted the ball into the bottom left corner to give Gokulam the advantage.

Churchill Brothers' first big chance of the game fell in the way of Bryce Miranda in the 21st minute, when Brazilian Guilherme Dos Santos sent Miranda in the clear. Miranda's shot was, however, saved brilliantly by Gokulam goalkeeper Rakshit Dagar.