

**OPINION 6**  
 CHINESE ECONOMY IS  
 CAUGHT IN A CLEFT STICK

**WORLD 8**  
 VIRAL PNEUMONIA CAUSES  
 CHAOS IN WUHAN

**MONEY 9**  
 GST COUNCIL MEET ON DEC  
 31 TO DISCUSS RATE

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**DJOKOVIC  
 WITHDRAWS  
 FROM ATP CUP  
 12 SPORT**



## 70% Covid surge in Mumbai, 50% in Delhi in 1 day

Mumbai logs  
 2,510 new cases,  
 Delhi 923 in  
 massive spike

PNS ■ MUMBAI/DELHI

In an alarming development, Maharashtra and Delhi on Wednesday recorded massive spike in Covid-19 cases driven by a surge in Omicron infection. While Mumbai logged 2,510 cases on Wednesday, Delhi recorded 923 cases. The two cities saw a 70 per cent and 50 per cent jump respectively over a 24-hour period.

Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said it was alarming that in Mumbai 2,200 people out of 51,000 tested positive. The positivity rate stood at 4 per cent. "Positivity rate is rising at an alarming rate. If the positivity rate goes to 5 per cent then there will have to be more restrictions like Delhi. People have to understand the concern with rising cases and crowding at wedding functions may not be a good idea," Tope said.

Mumbai also saw an all-time high of 85 cases of Omicron, taking the total number of new Covid-19 variant cases to 252.

Of the 85 Omicron cases recorded, Mumbai accounted for the maximum of 34 cases, while Nagpur and Pimpri-Chinchwad recorded three



Most people flout with impunity mask and social distancing rules against the Covid-19 at a crowded weekly market in New Delhi on Wednesday

cases. The break-up of cases in other parts of the State is as follows: Navi Mumbai and Pune Municipal Corporation (PPMC) two each, while Panvel, Kolhapur and Buldhana one case each.

Meanwhile, Delhi registered a massive spike in daily Covid-19 cases with 923 fresh cases on Wednesday, highest since May 30 while the positivity rate rose to 1.29 per cent from 0.89 per cent on Tuesday.

According to Covid-19 bulletin of the Delhi Government, 344 people recovered in the past 24 hours. Total 64,233 tests were conducted in the past 24 hours, out of which 7,463 were rapid antigen tests, the health official said.

In a sign of worry, it has emerged that about 38 per cent of the total samples analysed at various genome sequencing laboratories in Delhi in the past one week have been detected with Omicron variant of Covid.

Sources said that of the 468 samples analysed during December 21-28, the Delta variant of coronavirus was detected in 31 per cent of these samples, and the rest constituted other variants including Omicron.

Cumulative cases in Delhi stand at 14,45,102 while the positivity rate at 4.44 per cent. Total 14,17,804 patients recovered, total deaths 25,107 and the case fatality rate is 1.74.

Delhi has 2191 active cases. Of these, 1,068 patients are in home isolation. On May 30, Delhi had recorded 946 Covid-19 cases and 78 deaths with a positivity rate of 1.25 per cent.

On Tuesday, the city saw 496 Covid-19 cases and one fatality due to the disease. A total of 71,696 Covid-19 tests were conducted the previous day, the bulletin said.

"We are disheartened when we see crowding at markets and malls. We will have to shut down markets if this continues," said Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal. "I know you all are tired of restrictions, but it is important and there is nothing we can do about it," he added.

Continued on Page 2

## Omicron risk remains 'very high', may disrupt health systems: WHO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The overall risk associated with the Omicron variant remains "very high" which could cause widespread disruption to health systems and other critical services, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has said. In India, the Omicron infection tally climbed to 781 from 578 cases on December 27, while it was 23 cases on December 7. The national Capital has the highest cases of the variant at 238, followed by Maharashtra at 167 cases so far.

The WHO warning comes a day after Paul Kattuman, professor at the Judge Business School at the University of Cambridge which has developed a Covid-19 India tracker, wrote that "India may see a spurt in the Covid-19 growth rate within days and head into an intense but short-lived virus wave as the highly-infectious Omicron variant moves through the crowded nation of almost 1.4 billion."

"It is likely that India will see a period of explosive growth in daily cases and that the intense growth phase will be relatively short," he said.

In fact, in the last 24 hours, India registered 9,195 fresh



Employees from Vermont Agency of Transportation District 2, in Dummerston, Vt., prepare to put up the "Out of tests" sign just 45 minutes after opening the site up on Wednesday

Covid-19 cases, a significant spike from the previous day's figure of 6,358, and 302 deaths, as per the data available from the Union Health Ministry.

In its weekly epidemiological update, the WHO said that "the overall risk related to the new variant of concern Omicron remains very high".

"Consistent evidence shows that the Omicron variant has a growth advantage over the Delta variant with a doubling time of two to three days," read the update.

The Omicron variant, first

identified in late November in southern Africa, has sent infections soaring to levels not seen

since last winter, bringing the total number of US coronavirus cases to more than 52.9 million, with more than 819,000 deaths.

States in India have already started imposing restrictions to check the spread of Covid-19 in the wake of New Year celebrations amid a spike in infections with Delhi already issuing "yellow alerts" while Maharashtra has declared a ban on night movement and limits on gathering.

Kerala Government has imposed a night curfew from December 30 to January 2 and restricted New Year celebrations. Only essential services will be allowed during the curfew. The State has barred celebrations after 10 pm on December 31.

Continued on Page 2

## Omicron shows very high immune escape potential: INSACOG

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) on Wednesday said there is clear experimental and clinical data supporting the very high immune escape potential of Omicron.

In its latest bulletin, INSACOG has cited global data to claim on the basis of initial estimates that the severity of illness is lower than what has seen in previous outbreaks.

"There is now clear experimental and clinical data supporting very high immune escape potential of Omicron, which appears to be the major component of its growth advantage over Delta, the

genomic consortium said.

In India, appropriate public health measures and investigations are being conducted for surveillance of Omicron, INSACOG said while noting that globally there appears to be significantly reduced ability of vaccines or prior infection to protect against symptomatic infection by the Omicron variant.

"While Delta continues to be the most prevalent VOC (variant of concern) globally, the Omicron variant has completely displaced it in southern Africa and is on track to become the dominant variant in the UK and elsewhere," INSACOG said in its bulletin released on Wednesday.

## Severe cold wave to ring in New Year in N India

Min temperature  
 could fall by 4°C  
 in next two days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ushered in by unseasonal rain, the cold wave may ring in the New Year on a hostile note in many parts of north India. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has said a cold wave will sweep over the northwestern plains, particularly Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh from December 31 to January 2. Similar conditions are also possible over north Rajasthan this weekend, January 1-2.

The minimum temperature could fall by 2 to 4°C over most parts of northwest India during the next two days. Dense fog could settle over several pockets of north India during the next three days.

The IMD has placed



A man rides a tri-cycle in a cold winter morning in New Delhi on Wednesday

Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and Rajasthan under a yellow watch until January 2. This level of advisory urges residents to "be aware" of their local weather situation.

Meanwhile, some parts of the country will witness rain and hailstorm for the next couple of days, the weather agency said.

Even as the sun shone bright in large parts of the region on Wednesday, biting

cold swept most places in Punjab and parts of Haryana, with minimum temperatures hovering below normal limits.

Moga in Punjab was the coldest place, recording a low of one degree celsius. Amritsar, Bathinda, Faridkot and Ferozepur recorded identical minimum temperatures of 2.4 degrees celsius each, according to the meteorological department here.

Continued on Page 2

## Nagaland SIT to quiz jawans for Dec 4 killing of civilians

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Nagaland police will question the Army jawans involved in the December 4 killing of 13 civilians. One soldier was also killed in clashes with the locals. The soldiers may be questioned on Thursday.

The Army has agreed to allow Nagaland's Special Investigation Team (SIT) to examine and record the statements of officers and jawans who were involved in the killing.

The killing of a group of civilians returning from work in a minibus on that day reportedly by the soldiers in a case of mistaken identity led to irate village folks clashing with the troops. They had to open fire leading to some more deaths. It led to mass unrest in the State.

The Nagaland SIT is likely to complete recording the statements of the 21 Para



Special Forces soldiers this week, top police sources said. It's not yet clear if the soldiers will be interrogated by the SIT or they will only submit prepared statements.

The State Government immediately instituted an SIT which will question the soldiers of the elite commando unit allegedly involved in the incident. So far, they have not been questioned by the SIT, sources said here on Wednesday. They are likely to depose before the SIT in Jorhat, sources said.

A Major General is heading the court of inquiry to probe all angles of the incident and an Army team is now in Oting, Mon district for probe. Home Minister Amit Shah had expressed regret over the incident in Parliament.

The incident led to the renewal of demand to remove the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from Nagaland. The Centre earlier this week set up a five-member committee to look into the issue of repealing the Act.

Continued on Page 2

## Jharkhand to give ₹25/l cashback on petrol for ration card holders

But one can avail  
 maximum 10 litres;  
 ₹17,222 schemes  
 unveiled on Govt's  
 second anniversary

PRANAV PRATYUSH ■ RANCHI



Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren waves to people in the presence of Governor Ramesh Bais and former Union Minister RPN Singh during the second anniversary programme of the State Government in Ranchi on Wednesday

The CM made the announcement during the second anniversary programme of the Government where he laid foundation and inaugurated development projects worth ₹17,222.02 crores.

"Today the prices of petrol

and diesel are touching the sky. This has had a bad effect on the poor and middle class families. A poor person, having a motorcycle in the house, is unable to ride it due to lack of money. He is unable to go to the market to sell his crop. Therefore, I have

Continued on Page 2

## Insurer can't refuse claim by citing existing medical condition, says SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

An insurer cannot repudiate a claim by citing an existing medical condition that was disclosed by the insured in the proposal form, once the policy has been issued, the Supreme Court has said. A bench of justices DY Chandrachud and BV Nagarathna also said a proposer is under a duty to disclose to the insurer all material facts within his knowledge. The proposer is presumed to know all the facts and circumstances concerning the proposed insurance, it added.

While the proposer can only disclose what is known to him, the proposer's duty of disclosure is not confined to his actual knowledge, it also extends to those material facts which, in the ordinary course of business, he ought to know, the court said.

"Once the policy has been issued after assessing the med-



ical condition of the insured, the insurer cannot repudiate the claim by citing an existing medical condition, which was disclosed by the insured in the proposal form and which condition has led to a particular risk in respect of which the claim has been made by the insured," the bench said in a recent judgment.

The top court was hearing an appeal filed by Manmohan Nanda against an order of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), rejecting his plea seeking a claim for medical expenses incurred in the United States.

Nanda had bought an Overseas Mediclaim Business and Holiday Policy as he intended to travel to the US. On reaching the San Francisco airport, he suffered a heart attack and was admitted to a hospital, where angioplasty was performed on him and three stents were inserted to remove the blockage from the heart vessels.

Subsequently, the appellant claimed the treatment expenses from the insurer, which was repudiated by the latter stating that the appellant had a history of hyperlipidaemia and diabetes, which was not disclosed while buying the insurance policy.

The NCDRC had concluded that since the complainant had been under statin medication, which was not disclosed while buying the mediclaim policy, he failed to comply with his duty to make a complete disclosure of his health conditions.

## CAPSULE

**AP BJP: BOOZE AT ₹50 IF VOTED TO POWER**  
 Amaravati: The BJP in Andhra Pradesh has promised to offer liquor at ₹ 50 per bottle, besides several other initiatives, if the party is voted to power in 2024 Assembly polls.

**E-COMMERCE FIRMS ISSUED NOTICE**  
 New Delhi: As many as 15 notices have been issued by the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) against e-commerce companies and sellers for selling pressure cookers online that are non-compliant with Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) norms. These notices have been issued by the CCPA as part of its suo moto action.

**K'TAKA CM: LAW TO FREE HINDU TEMPLES**  
 Hubballi: The Karnataka Government will bring in a law aimed at freeing Hindu temples from laws and rules that control them at present, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said here on Wednesday.

# Akhilesh expels 4 SP workers for vandalising car with PM's poster

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav expelled four workers following their arrest for vandalising a car with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's poster and a Bharatiya Janata Party flag on it in Kanpur.

The Kanpur police have charged the SP workers of plotting to create violence and rioting on the day the prime minister visited Kanpur.

Modi was in Kanpur Nagar to inaugurate the completed section of the Metro Rail and the Bina-Panki multi-product pipeline project on Tuesday. He also addressed the 54th convocation function of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur.

The four arrested were identified as Mulayam Singh

Youth Brigade spokesperson Sukant Sharma, secretary of SP students' body Sachin Kesharwani, city secretary of SP youth brigade Abhishek Rawat and Nitesh Kumar.

An FIR was registered against 8-10 persons after Samajwadi Party workers allegedly went on a rampage, following the departure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's convoy in Kanpur Nagar on Tuesday. They allegedly vandalised a car with the prime minister's poster on it.

Soon after the incident, the BJP alleged that Samajwadi Party workers vandalised the car and even tried to torch it.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi had warned that SP's 'red cap' means danger and red alert and it is coming true," a BJP spokesman said.

# 'Cong framed BJP-RSS, in Malegaon blast case'

UP CM seeks apology from grand old party for 'mischief'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched a scathing attack at the Congress over the Malegaon blast case on Wednesday and accused the party of "encouraging" and "nurturing" terrorists, and falsely implicating members of Bharatiya Janata Party-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and other Hindu outfits in the blast case during its regime.

He also demanded an apology from Congress for this 'mischief' against the nation.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating and laying the foundation stones of development projects worth Rs 196.22 crore in Farrukhabad on Wednesday, Yogi said, "The Congress has ruled the nation for maximum time. In a recent

statement by Maharashtra Anti-Terrorists Squad, it was revealed that BJP and RSS members were framed in false cases in the Malegaon blast. The Congress should apologise to the entire nation for this misdeed ("Congress ko desh ke khilaf is sharrat ke liye maafi maangni chahiye). During Congress rule, the party played with the security of the nation."

Taking a dig at the opposition parties over the recovery of unaccounted cash in a raid by tax agencies, the chief minister said that the previous governments looted the money of the poor.

"Bundles of currency notes are coming out from the walls. Now you must have understood why 'Babu' had been opposing demonetisation. The money for development work was used for corruption during the earlier regime while now funds are being spent on welfare schemes. All characters of Mahabharat -- chacha, bhatija -- fanned out for extortion in job recruitments during the previous government's tenure. It never worked for the poor, youth or farmers. Not a single

poor person got housing in the SP government and now the BJP has provided accommodation to the people," he said.

Over free vaccines and free ration that is being provided by the state government, Yogi maintained, "The double engine government is providing double benefits of free ration to the people. This is what happens when there is a good government. Had it been a Samajwadi Party or Bahujan Samaj Party government, then all the money meant for people's welfare would have gone into their personal accounts."

"The BJP government helped the poor during the lockdowns when the pandemic was at its peak but leaders and workers of other parties were in 'home quarantine'. As soon as our government was formed, the loans of farmers were waived. Ask 'Bua-Babu' where those people were in the COVID-19 crisis," the chief minister told the gathering.

Yogi also announced to connect Farrukhabad with Ganga Expressway through a link expressway.

# Sikh body demands 4 seats in J&K Assembly

Srinagar: The All Parties Sikh Coordination Committee on Wednesday demanded reservation of four seats for the community in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly.

"Despite our meeting with the Delimitation Commission headed by Justice (retired) Ranjana Desai, no reservation whatsoever has been earmarked for the Sikhs even though we demanded for the same in the meeting, and it was also mentioned in the memorandum submitted to the Commission," APSCC chairman Jagmohan Singh Raina told reporters here.

Raina said the "cold-shouldered attitude" of the commission means that basic rights in Jammu and Kashmir will not be extended to the Sikh minority in the forthcoming delimitation of assembly segments.

"We demand reservation of four seats for Sikhs in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly," he said.

The APSCC chairman said all governments of Jammu and Kashmir in the past have "deliberately ignored" the basic issues of the community. **PTI**

# PM should admit demonetisation a failure, says Owaisi on cash seizure in UP

Hyderabad: AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Wednesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brainchild initiative of demonetisation has become a "failure" as evident in seizure of a huge pile of cash from a businessman's residence in Uttar Pradesh.

"You should ask the Prime Minister as to how so much of cash was found despite the demonetisation (of bigger notes in 2016). Pradhan Mantri, demonetization has become a failure," he told reporters here when his attention was drawn towards the cash seizure in UP.

In multiple raids by the Income Tax department and the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs recently, around Rs 257 crore in cash, 25 kg of gold and 250 kg of silver were seized from perfume trader Piyush Jain's house in Kanpur, as well as from his house and factory in Kannauj in UP.

Owaisi demanded that

the government clearly state as to who the money belongs to.

"The fragrance (of cash seizure) is spreading across the world," he added.

He demanded that the Prime Minister accept that demonetization was a failure as only poor people and small scale industries have suffered.

"I am appealing to the Prime Minister that you should accept on record that demonetisation is a failure" he said. **PTI**

# Severe cold...

From page 1

Among other places in Punjab, Barnala, Jalandhar, Gurdaspur and Pathankot reeled under intense cold recording respective minimum temperatures of 2.7 degrees Celsius, 3.9 degrees Celsius, 3.3 degrees Celsius and 4.6 degrees Celsius. Ludhiana recorded a low of 7.1 degrees Celsius.

Patiala's minimum temperature settled at 6.5 degrees Celsius. Chandigarh, the common capital of the two states, recorded a low of 5.8 degrees Celsius.

In Haryana, Hisar, Sirsa and Narnaul experienced a cold night recording respective minimums of 5 degrees, 4.6 degrees and 6 degrees Celsius. Ambala recorded a low of 6.9 degrees Celsius while Karnal's minimum temperature settled at 7.7 degrees Celsius. Gurugram recorded a minimum temperature of 8.2 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, the cold wave conditions intensified across Kashmir as Gulmarg skiing resort witnessed the season's record low with mercury plunging more than 10 degrees below the freezing point, officials said on Wednesday.

Kashmir valley is currently under the grip of the 40-day harshest winter period known as 'Chilla-i-Kalan' which began on Tuesday.

Gulmarg, the famous skiing resort in north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 10.4 degrees Celsius. It was down one degree from minus 9.4 degrees compared to the previous night, the officials said.

# Maha Police issues notice to Union Min Rane over case against his son

Min's MLA son has been named in attempt to murder case

Mumbai: Sindhudurg police on Wednesday issued a notice to Union Minister Narayan Rane to present his MLA son Nitesh Rane before them in connection with an attempt to murder case in which the latter and others have been named as accused.

Narayan Rane was also asked to be present at Kankavli police station in Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra at 3 pm to record his statement in connection with the case, but he did not appear at the given time, following which police pasted the notice at his residence there, police sources said.

According to the notice, issued under section 160 (1) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), the minister has been

asked to share information related to the case with police after getting the notice.

His son has been named in the FIR, which was registered under Indian Penal Code Sections 307 (attempt to murder), 120 (B) (criminal conspiracy) and 34 (common intention) and he was not traceable after various attempts made by police, the notice mentioned.

In the notice to the Union minister, the police also referred to a statement made by him in a press conference on Tuesday where he had said that "was he a fool" to reveal the whereabouts of his son.

Reports about the statement have been published in various newspapers and considering that, it seems the Union minister is aware of Nitesh Rane's whereabouts, the notice mentioned.

The police asked Narayan Rane to present his son before them after receiving the notice. They also asked the Union

minister to record his statement in connection with case, the notice stated.

Nitesh Rane, who is the BJP MLA from Kankavli, had filed an anticipatory bail application in the attempt to murder case to seek relief from any coercive action against him. The complaint is linked to the alleged attack on a person, Santosh Parab (44).

Amid speculation about Nitesh Rane's possible arrest in the case, Narayan Rane had on Tuesday claimed his son was being falsely implicated in the case and the MVA government in Maharashtra was misusing its power.

He had questioned why top police officials were camping in Sindhudurg district.

Notably, leaders of the ruling Shiv Sena in Maharashtra recently demanded that MLA Nitesh Rane be suspended over his alleged inappropriate behaviour towards state Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray. **PTI**

# 70% Covid surge in...

From Page 1

Meanwhile, of the 85 cases of Omicron variant infections reported on Wednesday in Mumbai, 47 patients have been reported by the National Institute of Virology (NIV), while 38 have been reported by the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER).

Of the 47 patients reported by NIV, 43 are international travellers and 4 are close contacts. The 38 cases reported by IISER are from community surveillance. The district-wise details are as follows: Mumbai-19, Kalyan Dombivli-5, Navi Mumbai and Pimpri-Chinchwad-3 each, Pune rural, Bhijwandi-Nizampur, Panvel and Thane Municipal Corporation -1 each.

The following is the breakup of a total 252 Omicron cases recorded in the State so far, Mumbai-- 137, Pimpri-Chinchwad--25, Pune rural--18, Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC)-11, Thane MC--8, Navi Mumbai, Panvel

and Kalyan Dombivli-7 each, Satara, Osmanabad - 5 each, Vasai-Virar--3, Aurangabad, Nanded, Buldhana, Bhiwandi-Nizampur-2 each, and Latur, Ahmednagar, Akola, Mira-Bhayandar and Kolahpur-1 each.

Of the total cases, 99 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. Meanwhile, the authorities said the total number of passengers who arrived at Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur airports since December 1 was 1,94,361 (27,107 from at-risk countries and rest 1,66,254 are from other countries), while passengers whose RT-PCR tests have been done are 37,847 (28,107 are from high-risk countries and 9,470 are from other countries). Similarly, RT-PCR positive and samples sent for genomic sequencing was 286 (204 are from at-risk countries and 82 are from other countries).

# Omicron risk remains 'very high', may disrupt health...

From Page 1

Crowds will be controlled at tourist destinations and beaches. Night curfew from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. was reimposed in Uttar Pradesh from December 25 while gatherings of over 200 people were banned.

While Karnataka announced a 10-day night curfew on Monday as New Year parties and public gatherings were banned, ordered patrolling and surveillance in districts adjoining Maharashtra and Kerala to prevent the spread of the virus, Assam has reintroduced night curfew from 11.30 p.m. to 6 a.m., which will not be applicable on New Year's Eve. The State Government has urged people to maintain Covid-appropriate behaviour and warned of legal action against those who do not comply.

The Gujarat Government has imposed a night curfew in Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Gandhinagar, and Junagadh to check the pandemic spread. Ditto with Haryana where public gatherings of over 200 people and events have been barred till further notice.

Odisha has imposed restrictions till January 2. Christmas celebrations were limited to churches, where a maximum of 50 people were allowed as per Covid-19 protocols. Night celebrations on New Year have also been banned across the State. All events except weddings have been barred in the State.

**OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION BHOPAL**  
**Water Works Department**  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
 Bhopal Dated: 23.12.2021  
 No. 34/stor/W.W.D/BMC/2021-22  
 Online digitally sealed tenders in 2 envelope system (A & C) are hereby invited from Reputed Firm on behalf of Municipal Corporation Bhopal for the following works on Form 'A' percentage rate tender and same will be received online at <https://www.mptenders.gov.in> as per key dates.  
 Corrigendum for this NIT shall not be issued separately in newspapers. Corrigendum regarding correction can be seen on the website. Detailed NIT and other information can be seen on the website <https://www.mptenders.gov.in>

| S. NO. | System NIT No.    | Details of Work  | Estimated Cost In Rupees |
|--------|-------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1.     | 2021_UAD_174855_1 | Empanelment for Repairing of Submersible motor Pump sets 1 HP to 50 HP and spare parts on ARC Basis under store WWD. | Rs. 1,36,59,390.00       |

City Engineer (H)  
 Municipal Corporation, Bhopal  
 T.N.996/021/022

**DELHI JAL BOARD**  
**OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER(M)-7**  
 NANGLOI PH-III, NEAR BARAT GHAR  
 NEW DELHI-110041  
 NIT No-64/EE(M)10/ACE(M)7(2021-22)  
**Press Notice Tender**

| S. No. | Name of work   | Amount Put to tender (Rs.) | EMD Tender Fee's | Dt. of release of tender procurement solution/I.D. No. | Last dt./Time of receipt of tender through E-procurement solution |
|--------|--|----------------------------|------------------|--|---|
| 1.     | Desilting of 900 / 1000 / 1100 mm dia Trunk Sewer from SPS camp no. 3 to Arvind Enclave X-ting at Rohatk road in Mundka AC-08 under ACE(M)7 (Re-invited) | Rs. 33,64,097/-            | 67,300/-         | 28/12/2021<br>2021_DJB_213676_1                        | 12.01.2022 at 3.00 P.M.   |

Further details in this regard can be seen at (<https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>)  
 Sd/- (Himanshu Agarwal)  
 ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 917 (2021-22) "Stop Corona : Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hygiene" EX. ENGINEER (M)10

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No-23, Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005.  
 The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

| Sr. No. | Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address   | Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced   | Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice | NPA Date   |
|---------|---|---|---|------------|
| 1.      | Shri Shyam Overseas Lip, Manoj Lohiya, Durga Ram, Sonam Lohiya, Unit No. 406, 4th Floor Plot No B-5, KJ Tower, District Center, Netaji Subhash Place Wazirpur Delhi. A/c No:- 629851001090 & 629855009125 | House No- 4, First Floor, Harsh Vihar, Pitampura, North West, New Delhi- 110034 & Unit No.406, 4th Floor, Plot No B-5, KJ Tower, District Center, Netaji Subhash Place, Wazirpur, New Delhi | Rs. 3,36,18,235.08/- & Rs. 83,41,346.04/-             | 02/04/2021 |

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.  
 Date : December 30, 2021  
 Place: Delhi/ NCR  
 Authorized Officer  
 ICICI Bank Limited

# Nagaland SIT to...

From Page 1

The committee is headed by Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India Vivek Joshi and Additional Secretary in the Union Home Ministry Piyush Goyal is the Member-Secretary. The Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police (DGP) of Nagaland and the DGP of Assam Rifles will be the other members. It is expected to file its report within 45 days.

As regards the Army team's visit in Oting in Mon district on Wednesday, officials had said on Monday here and Kohima the "Indian Army Inquiry 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 Inquiry is requested to do so at the Tizit Police Station," it said.

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 inquiry ordered by the 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 inquiry by providing any information including videos, photos or any other material from original sources and will be grateful for the same. This can be conveyed on WhatsApp Messenger at +916026930283 or Army Exchange Helpline +913742388456.

# Jharkhand...

From Page 1

The CM on the occasion also launched Integrated Birs Village Development Scheme cum Kisan Pathshala. 1,000 days special summer campaign was launched against malnutrition and anemia. An MoU was signed for Placement Linked Training Programme and another MoU to promote and provide market for forest produce was signed. Journalist health insurance scheme was launched along with several other schemes.

The CM said that the State marred by multiple ailments needs long-term plans so that the people of Jharkhand could reap benefits of the policies that the Government has initiated in the long run. He said that one has to look beyond mines and minerals in order to make Jharkhand a developed State. "We have launched around 28-30 schemes during the Covid period and several schemes among the lot will show positive results in the long run," he said.

# File report on steps for release of Indian fishermen in Lanka: HC to Centre

From Page 1

Madurai: The Madras High Court on Wednesday directed the Centre to file a report on the steps taken to ensure the release of 68 Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu who are under the custody of Sri Lanka for allegedly violating the international maritime boundary.

Justices C V Karthikeyan and S Srimathy asked the government to file a status report on December 31.

The Tamil Nadu Government told the court

# Nitish flies into temper over disruption during speech

From Page 1

Muzaffarpur: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Wednesday flew a fuse when the flow of his speech was interrupted by some people at a public event where he was holding forth on evils of consuming liquor.

Kumar was in this north Bihar district to carry forward his "social reform campaign" as part of which he has been touring the state and holding public meetings against liquor consumption, dowry and child marriage.

"What mischief are you indulging in? Do you have no regard for social reforms? If it is so, leave this place," snapped the septuagenarian leader, the longest serving chief minister

of the state, when a scuffle between some people in the crowd and security personnel caught his attention.

According to the police, some local level elected representatives had come to submit a memorandum to the chief minister and picked up a quarrel when they were stopped at a distance from the dais.

The matter was resolved after the district police chief had a word with the agitated people, though not before they had received a tongue lashing from the chief minister.

"This meeting has been primarily organised for women. You people have been allowed to watch. Do you think social awakening is required

# only for them and not for you men?" said a visibly upset Kumar.

"If you have any grievances, meet me when I am through with the function," he added.

Kumar resumed his speech, holding forth on the evils of drinking, marrying off girls at an early age and demanding dowry. It was, however, not known whether the chastised members of the crowd got an audience with him.

The chief minister launched his "Samaj Sudhar Abhiyaan" on December 22 and he has, so far, toured East Champaran, Gopalganj and Rohtas districts. **PTI**

# No new curbs, yellow alert to continue: DDMA

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Wednesday decided that it will not impose any fresh restrictions in view of the rising Covid-19 and Omicron cases in the national Capital.

In a high-level meeting chaired by Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal, it was decided that Amber or level two restriction will be imposed only if hospital bed occupancy in the city starts increasing.

The decision was taken to avoid triggering panic among migrant workers.

As per the minutes of the meeting, experts at DDMA reviewed the Covid-19 situation and Omicron. It was learnt that the latest variant - Omicron is not lethal as Delta, therefore the authority decided not to impose new restrictions while yellow alert will continue.

Informing it on microblogging website - Twitter, the LG office tweeted, "The Health Department was advised to enhance the health preparedness to deal effectively with the emerging situation and to closely monitor bed occupancy besides strengthening the home iso-

lation strategy."

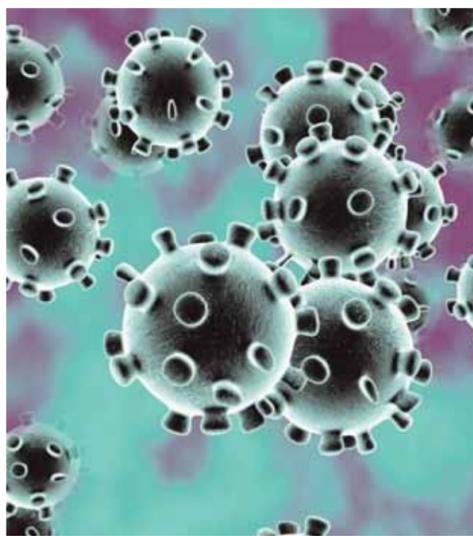
"Called upon all stakeholders for collective & concerted efforts to deal with the pandemic without lowering guard." Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal, Transport Minister, Kailash Gahlot and other senior officials of health department attended the meeting.

It is pivotal to mention here that Delhi on Wednesday recorded 238 Omicron cases while on Tuesday registered a massive spike in daily Covid-19 with 496 fresh cases, the highest since June 4, while the positivity rate also rose to 0.89 per cent along with one fatality.

Health minister Satyendar Jain said many international travellers, who have tested negative at the airport, are testing positive after a few days and infecting their family members during the period.

In wake of the rise in coronavirus cases, the Delhi government on Tuesday imposed a yellow alert under which schools, colleges, cinemas and gyms will remain closed. Shops dealing in non-essential items will open on an odd-even basis, and metro trains and buses will run with 50 per cent of seating capacity in the city.

## City records 923 Covid cases, highest since May 30



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi registered a massive spike in daily Covid-19 cases with 923 fresh cases on Wednesday, highest since May 30 while the positivity rate also rose to 1.29 percent from 0.89 percent on Tuesday.

According to Covid-19 bulletin of the Delhi Government, 344 people also recovered in the past 24 hours.

Total 64,233 tests were conducted in the past 24 hours, out of which 7,463 were Rapid antigen tests, the health official said. Cumulative cases in Delhi now 14,45,102 while the posi-

itivity rate 4.44 percent reported. Total 14,17,804 patients recovered, total deaths 25,107 and the case fatality rate 1.74. Delhi has 2,191 active cases. Of these, 1,068 patients are in home isolation.

On May 30, Delhi had recorded 946 Covid-19 cases and 78 deaths with a positivity rate of 1.25 per cent. Delhi has 502 containment zones so far.

On Tuesday, the city saw 496 Covid-19 cases and one fatality due to the disease. A total of 71,696 Covid-19 tests were conducted the previous day, the bulletin said.

## Delhi Metro deploys 15 flying squads to ensure strict compliance of Covid norms



Passengers lined up outside Patel Chowk metro station in New Delhi on Wednesday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer



Passengers travel by a Metro in New Delhi on Wednesday

strictly adhered by the passengers inside trains and premises.

The frequency of checking drives is also being increased to ensure strict adherence to the guidelines and offenders are also being penalized on the spot, a senior DMRC official said.

According to the new guidelines, announcement are being made inside trains and at station premises on frequent basis.

"Due to the strict reinforcement of the social distancing norms, the passengers are advised to plan their journey in advance and allow for some additional time for their commute. They should travel by the Metro only if absolutely essential," he said.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Covid-19 spread, Delhi Metro has deployed 15 flying squads across the Delhi Metro network to ensure safety protocol is

As part of the intensified measures for containing



Shopkeepers wait for customers at Janpath Market in New Delhi on Wednesday. Non-essential shops open between 10 am and 8 pm on an odd-even system

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

## Govt prepared to tackle pandemic: Health Min

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the number of Covid-19 cases continue to rise in the national Capital, Delhi Health Minister assured the people, saying that the Government is prepared at every level to deal with the pandemic.

Jain said that there is an adequate supply of oxygen, medications, and beds and the situation is constantly being monitored. "The majority of Omicron cases have been found in international travellers. So far, 238 cases of Omicron have been reported in Delhi. After recovering, 57 of these people have returned home," he said.

The Health Minister also said "We have increased our

vaccination capacity and can now perform up to three lakh vaccinations per day. Preparations for administering vaccines to children and booster doses to the elderly beginning in the first week of January have been completed."

Jain further stated that if the number of corona cases increases, the Delhi Government may impose additional restrictions. "If the infection rate (positivity rate) remains above one for two days in a row, Delhi government will issue with a level two amber alert. On the issuance of the Amber Alert, all schools, colleges, parks, restaurants (except home delivery), and so on will remain closed in Delhi; only essential services will be exempted. The curfew at

night will be tightened even more," he added.

"The Delhi Government is prepared to use all available resources to combat Corona. There is an adequate supply of oxygen, medications, and beds in hospitals. Preparations for the vaccination of children and booster doses for the elderly in the first week of January have been completed. The vaccines will be administered at the centres that have been already established," he said.

The Health Minister has urged residents to strictly adhere to Covid appropriate behaviour.

He also urged people to wear masks and practise social distancing in public places to ensure their safety.

## Woman held in honey-trap case

**Gurugram:** The Gurugram police have busted a honey trap ring, and arrested a 25-year-old woman on Tuesday. Two of her associates are still at large, the police said.

According to police, the woman had befriended Sanyam, the victim, a native of Karnal and forced him to make her call and after a few days of conversation, the woman had allegedly asked the victim to marry her else she will file a fake rape case against him.

Thereafter, the victim informed his elder brother Kush about the woman who later called the woman's mother but her mother told Kush to talk to Narender Yadav their relative in connection with the matter, the police said.

"We told the woman's family that for marriage purpose they need to meet and on 24 October we met at Leisure Vally park in sector-29, Gurugram where the woman her mother and Narender Yadav allegedly threaten to implicate Sanyam in a fake case if we did not settle the matter as the accused woman has already 8 such cases in different police stations in Gurugram. Later she filed a case against Sanyam in New Colony police station on the same day," the victim's brother told the police.

Thereafter the victim's mother reported the matter on December 23 at New Colony police station in Gurugram where a case under various sections of the IPC was registered against the accused woman and her associates, the police said.

"Following a complaint, the woman has been arrested from Inderpuri area in Gurugram on Tuesday and search are on to nab her associates. The arrested woman had filed eight cases of similar nature in different police stations of Gurugram in which four cases have been cancelled by the woman and four are still under investigation," Subhash Boken, spokesperson of the Gurugram police said.

## 'On demand' collection of C&D waste kicks off in East Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) has launched on demand collection of Construction and Demolition waste C&D waste in association with Indo Enviro Integrated Solution.

Commissioner of EDMC, Vikas Anand informed that in its endeavour to serve people living in EDMC area better by reducing air pollution. "The move is taken to provide better facilities to the citizens of East Delhi and reduce air pollution as well.

The service is available on payment of nominal charges," he said. The EDMC Commissioner further said that residents of the area can call on the 9205059982/9821488633 and inform the detail such as location, quantity of malba etc to avail the facility. "The site will be verified by the Supervisor and intimate the citizen about the charges. The charges of lifting the C&D waste is ₹440.65 per ton for the month of December-2021 and ₹ 452.78 per ton from January-2022 onwards," he added.

While awarding the sentence, the Special Court Tees Hazari ASJ/ Special Judge Electricity Arul Varma referred to a verdict of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, which unequivocally advances the proposition that case of theft of electricity are to be dealt with an iron hand.

While pronouncing the judgment, the Special Court order says "...it is of utmost importance to underscore that it is not a mere theft, but it is one which not only causes stupendous economic loss but also jeopardises lives".

## 4 get jail in power theft cases

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The special courts of electricity have sentenced four thieves in three separate cases of power theft, including owners of a 30-room guest house to jail and imposed heavy penalties.

In the first case, the two guest house owners were awarded three-year rigorous imprisonment and penalised ₹33 lakhs (fine ₹20.14 lakhs along with civil liability of ₹13 lakhs), a senior BSES official said.

son was penalised ₹23.70 lakhs (fine ₹14.2 lakhs + Civil Liability of ₹9.49 lakhs). Moreover, in both the cases, in case of default of the fines, they will have to undergo simple imprisonment of six months and three months respectively. In both cases, the accused had pleaded not guilty and claimed trial, he said.

While in the third case, a Special Court of Electricity, Dwarka, let off a person convicted of power-theft, only after he paid a penalty of over ₹ 73,000 and spending couple of days in jail, he added.

**dpcc** **DELHI POLLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE**  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, (GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI)  
5th FLOOR, ISBT BUILDING, KASHMERE GATE, DELHI 110006

Visit us at <https://www.dpcc.delhigovt.nic.in>

PUBLIC NOTICE

Citizens of Delhi are advised to initiate the following steps in different categories of air quality. The air quality and category in which it falls i.e. Good, Moderate, Poor, Very Poor, Severe and Severe + is available at [www.cpcb.nic.in](http://www.cpcb.nic.in).

(1) MODERATE TO POOR CATEGORY Ambient PM2.5 values between 61-120 ug/m3 or ambient PM10 values between 101- 350 ug/m3

- a) Keep engines of your cars/bikes/scooters properly tuned.
- b) Maintain proper air pressure in tires of cars/bikes/scooters.
- c) Keep your PUC certificate up to date.
- d) When you are out for a drive, do not idle your vehicle, turn off the engine.
- e) Do not dispose of waste / garbage in the open spaces.
- f) Report air pollution activities through SAMEER App/Green Delhi App.

(2) VERY POOR CATEGORY Ambient PM2.5 values between 121-250 ug/m3 or ambient Pm10 values between 351-430ug/m3

- a) People to minimize the use of personal vehicles and use public transport.
- b) Be sure to replace air filters at recommended intervals in your automobiles regularly.
- c) Avoid dust-generating construction activities during the months of October to January, if possible.

(3) SEVERE CATEGORY Ambient PM2.5 values > 250 ug/m3 or ambient PM10 values >430 ug/m3

- a. Choose a cleaner commute - share a ride to work or use public transportation or walk or cycle.
- b. People whose positions allow them to work from home should work from home.
- c. Do not use coal and wood for heating purposes.
- d. Individual house owners may provide electric heaters (during winters) to security staff to avoid open burning.
- e. Combine errands and reduce trips. Walk to errand when possible.
- f. Do not burn garbage, plastics and other discarded items.

(4) SEVERE + CATEGORY When ambient PM2.5 values > 300 ug/m3 or ambient PM10 values >500 ug/m3

- a) Children, the elderly and those with respiratory, cardiovascular, cerebrovascular or other chronic diseases stay indoors as much as possible, and to avoid outdoor activities.

**Sd/-**  
**Member Secretary (DPCC)**

# Centre to give ₹20K cr to 10 cr kisan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As a new year gift to farmers' families, the Modi Government is scheduled to transfer over Rs 20,000 crore to bank accounts of more than 10 crore farmers of the country under the flagship Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme on January 1.

This would be the 10th installment to farmer's families since the start of the scheme and over Rs. 1.6 lakh crore has been transferred to farmer

families so far. Besides, about Rs 14 crore will be given to over 351 farmer producers organisations (FPOs) as part of government equity which will benefit more than 1.24 lakh farmers.

In a statement, the Prime Minister's Office said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi will release the 10th installment of financial benefit under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme on January 1, 2022 at 12:30 PM via video conferencing." "An amount of more than



Rs 20,000 crore will be transferred to more than 10 crore beneficiary farmer families.

This is in line with the continued commitment and resolve to empower grassroot level

farmers", the statement said.

The last installment was released on August 9, 2021 for the August-November 2021 period.

Under this installment, the money was transferred to over 9.75 farmers families.

Under this, a financial benefit of Rs. 6000/- per year is provided to the eligible beneficiary farmer families, payable in three equal 4-monthly installments of Rs.2000/- each. The fund is transferred directly to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries.

# Defence Ministry puts curbs on import of 351 items under staggered timeline

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Persisting with its objective to make India a hub for manufacturing world class defence equipment, the Government on Wednesday announced a fresh list of 351 sub-systems and components that will not be allowed to be imported under a staggered timeline beginning December next year.

The government in the last one and half years has released three lists including the latest one curbing import of weapon systems and related components. The armed forces will now procure the weapon systems from Indian manufacturers. The new initiative will save foreign exchange equivalent to around Rs 3,000 crore annually.

On Wednesday, the defence ministry also released a list of 2,500 items that it said have already been "indigenised". Officials said "A positive indigenisation list of sub-systems, assemblies, sub-assemblies and components has been notified by the department of defence production as part of the efforts to achieve self-reliance in defence manufacturing and minimise

imports by defence public sector undertakings."

The ministry said in a statement "351 imported items" will be "indigenised" in the next three years. The notification on the new list was issued on Monday.

The ministry said the items mentioned in the list will only be procured from Indian industries as per the timelines indicated. According to the notification, import restrictions on the first set of 172 items will come into force by December next year while the same provisions will be applicable on another batch of 89 components by December 2023.

Import restrictions on another set of 90 items will come into effect by December 2024. The items included laser warning sensor, high-pressure check valve, high-pressure globe valve, drainage intrusion detection systems, various types of cables, sockets and voltage control oscillator.

In August last year, the ministry announced that India will stop the import of 101 weapons and military platforms like transport aircraft, light combat helicopters, con-

ventional submarines, cruise missiles and sonar systems by 2024.

A second list, putting import restrictions on 108 military weapons and systems such as next-generation corvettes, airborne early warning systems, tank engines and radars, was issued in May.

In an effort to attract in the defence manufacturing sector, the government in May last year announced increasing the FDI limit from 49 per cent to 74 per cent under the automatic route in the defence sector.

India is one of the largest importers of arms globally. According to estimates, the Indian armed forces are projected to spend around USD 130 billion (one billion is equal to 100 crores) in capital procurement in the next five years.

Determined to reduce dependence on imported military platforms, the defence ministry has set a goal of a turnover of USD 25 billion (Rs 1.75 lakh crore) in defence manufacturing in the next five years. It includes an export target of USD 5 billion (Rs 35,000 crore) worth of military hardware.

## ATAL INNOVATION RANKINGS

### Seven IITs, IISc Bengaluru among top 10; IIT Madras bags first rank

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru are among the top 10 central institutions in promotion and support of innovation and entrepreneurship development, according to Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) announced by the Centre on Wednesday.

The top rank has been bagged by IIT Madras followed by IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Kanpur and IIT Roorkee. IISc Bengaluru has bagged the sixth rank in the ranking followed by IIT Hyderabad, IIT Kharagpur, National Institute of Technology (NIT), Calicut and Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology, Uttar Pradesh.

Launching the ARIIA, Minister of State for Education Subhas Sarkar emphasised on promoting innovation to achieve the target of a USD 5



trillion economy by 2025, the minister said more than quantity, the institutes should focus on the quality of innovation and research.

"This will help us achieve the Aatmanirbhar Bharat dream in true sense. 'Emphasis on Innovation' was amongst the three vows taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his recent Kashi visit. The other two vows were for Swachh Bharat and Aatmanirbhar Bharat. Considering all these three vows, innovation is the only path for their fulfilment. Hence, we need to give a huge push to innovation and entrepreneurship within our educational institutions," he said.

Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) is an initiative of Ministry of

Education (MoE) to systematically rank all major higher educational institutions in India on indicators related to innovation, start-up and entrepreneurship development amongst students and faculties.

According to MoE officials, this year the participation has almost doubled to 1438 Institutes and have quadrupled over the first edition.

Among the government and government aided institutions, the top rank has been bagged by Panjab University followed by Delhi Technological University, Netaji Subhas University of Technology, Delhi; Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University; Avinashilingam Institute For Home Science And Higher Education For Women, Tamil Nadu; Institute of Chemical Technology, Maharashtra; Gujarat Technological University; Savitribai Phule Pune University, Maharashtra; Gujarat University and Periyar University, Tamil Nadu.

## NPP leader Letpao joins BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National People's Party (NPP) leader and youth affairs and Sports Minister Letpao Haokip in the N Biren Singh Government here on Wednesday joined the BJP.

BJP is expected not to have a pre-poll alliance with the NPP ahead of the Manipur legislative assembly election early next year.

BJP hopes that Haokip's popularity as an international football player would attract youngsters to the party.

The development may bring NPP and the BJP on the path of political conflict in Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh too.

Presently BJP is running the government in Manipur with the backing of the National People's Party.

## Vacancies ranging from 5-36% in faculty positions in 7 IITs: CAG

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Comptroller and Auditor General has said in a report that efforts put in by the Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) have led to a steady increase in the number of faculty members recruited every year, yet vacancies ranging from five to 36 per cent in faculty positions have been observed at seven IITs.

The eight institutes covered in the audit were IIT Bhubaneswar, IIT Gandhinagar,

IIT Hyderabad, IIT Indore, IIT Jodhpur, IIT Mandi, IIT Patna and IIT Roorkee. "In PG and PhD programmes, vacancies were observed across all eight IITs, indicating a need for a realistic assessment of the student intake as well as evaluation of these programmes with an objective of attracting required suitable students," the report on "Performance Audit of Setting up of new IITs" for the 2014-2019 highlighted.

"MoE permitted increase in sanction of faculty positions

linked with the increase in students, meaning sanction of faculty posts to be increased by one for every increase of students by 10 (1:10 ratio). Despite the efforts put in by the IITs and increase in faculty recruitment from year-to-year, vacancies ranging from 5 to 36 per cent in faculty positions were observed in seven IITs. This inhibited speedy expansion of student intake. In the long run, the vacancies will have an impact on the quality of education as vacancies increase the workload

on existing faculty in these premier institutions," it added.

The audit panel recommended that the IITs may periodically review the availability of faculty members and the means of attracting suitable candidates to fill the vacancies. It noted that there was a shortfall in enrolment in the post-graduate (PG) programmes in all the eight IITs.

"Five IITs did not fix an intake for the PhD courses, while the rest had shortfalls in admissions in these courses. IITs

had vacancies in faculty positions, which would adversely affect the ability of IITs to provide quality education. Further, the representation of reserved categories in students' enrolment in most IITs was very low.

"It was also seen that all the IITs received very low levels of funding for research projects, sponsored from non-government sources. Thus, they remained dependent on the government for funding of their research activities," the report said.

## Sex ratio at birth improved by 19 points at Nat'l level

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the past seven years, India's Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) improved by 19 Points at National level: From 918 In 2014-15 to 937 in 2020-21. The Ministry of Women and Child Development said that 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' movement has stirred up collective consciousness towards changing the mindset of the Nation towards valuing the girl child, reflecting improvement in sex ratio of birth.

"Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme is being implemented across India and covering 640 districts (as per Census 2011) across the country. Out of 640 districts, 405 districts are covered under multi-sectoral intervention along with Media Advocacy under direct supervision of DMs/DCs and all 640 districts are covered through advocacy and media campaign," said WCD Ministry headed Smriti Irani in a statement on Wednesday.

Releasing year end review of 2021, the Ministry said that



to promote the nutritional status of women and children, a transparent and enabling environment is being created that nurtures health, wellness and immunity.

"Poshan Tracker application has been built on latest technology for ensuring real-time monitoring of supplementary nutrition and providing information for prompt supervision and management of services," said the Ministry, adding that over two crore women benefitted under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana scheme for pregnant women and lactating mothers

## Cong attacks Modi, alleges PM rides '₹20 cr car'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Wednesday slammed the Government over the purchase of a luxury car for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cavalcade at a time when the economy has taken a hit due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Recalling the prime minister's description of himself as 'fakir' (ascetic), Congress spokesperson Gourav Vallabh said "every person in the country desires to be a fakir like Modi who flies in an ₹8,000

crore aircraft, rides in ₹20 crore car and spends ₹2,000 crore on building a home".

At same time Congress accused Modi government of "compromising the country's strategic interests by selling a 'profitable' PSU Central Electronics Limited (CEL) to a private firm with no domain experience.

Vallabh claimed that the valuation of the CEL using different methods was between ₹957 crore and ₹1,600 crore and said the government had sold the Ghaziabad-based PSU

to Nandal Finance and Leasing Pvt Ltd for ₹210 crore.

On PM's new cavalcade, Vallabh alleged that the prime minister had changed five cars in seven years.

"In the last two years, people have lost jobs, seen their salaries decline, businesses have witnessed a downturn, but there is no change in the prime minister's pace of changing cars. ... Why are you buying cars," he said.

A Mercedes-Maybach S650 Guard was added to the Prime Minister's cavalcade by the

Special Protection Group. Government sources said that the new car was a replacement of the BMW used by the prime minister as the German car-maker stopped production of the vehicle.

Official sources also said the SPG security detail has a six-year norm to replace vehicles used for the protectee and that Prime Minister Modi has not given any preference on which cars to use. They also said that the car costs about one-third of the price quoted in the media.

The Congress spokesperson said India had seen prime ministers who cared for the people and not who changed cars every alternate year.

"It was Mahindra Scorpio in 2014, BMW 7 Series in 2015, Toyota Land Cruiser in 2017, Jaguar Range Rover Vogue in 2019 and Mercedes Maybach in 2021," Vallabh stated.

Taking a dig at the Prime Minister's pitch for Make in India, Congress said Prime Minister Modi has not boarded an India-made car since

2014 when he used Mahindra Scorpio for his travels.

"Vocal for Local, Aatmanirbhar Bharat have remained mere slogans... there is no India-made car. It started with Scorpio, but the prime minister has never turned to an Indian car after that," he said.

"Our buying capacity has been hit due to the pandemic. We have to think twice before buying a pair of clothes. The RBI also says consumer sentiment is depressed," Vallabh said.

## Doctors' protest enters 13th day; more RDAs join stir

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The resident doctors continued their protest which entered into the 13th day on Wednesday, in support of their demands, including seeking early NEET-PG 2021 counselling and the withdrawal of the FIRs filed against them. The meet between a delegation of the protesting doctors and the Union Health Minister on Tuesday had failed to make any headway.

In a statement, the Federation of Resident Doctors Association of India (FORDA),

which is leading the protest nationwide, said that the FIR has been filed by the police against the protesting resident doctors.

"After discussion with the RDA representatives, it has been decided to continue the agitation till our demands are met," said the doctors' association. On Wednesday, the protesting doctors got support from Satyendra Jain, Delhi Health Minister who demanded that the Center expedite NEET-PG Counseling in order to prevent a medical staff short-

age at hospitals due to Covid surges.

The junior Indian Medical Association (IMA) has already written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to resolve the NEET-PG counselling crisis and augment manpower to face a possible third wave of COVID-19 infections.

As the protest, including the withdrawal of all medical and emergency services, entered into the 13th day, patient care has largely been affected across the hospitals in Delhi.

Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi, which has emerged as the main centre of protest, is running with only senior doctors in the OPD and Emergency services. However, doctors are planning to take the protest forward with Covid norms as Delhi has been placed under yellow alert after the Covid spike.

The twitter is flooded with the comments from the protesting doctors and their supporters. Dr Pankaj Solanki, Surgeon with Dharamveer Solanki Hospital tweeted that

"Dear Citizens, these young doctors are not protesting for pay hike or perks but for more number of doctors (45k) for you only. With the 3rd wave looming, the politicians will not treat you, it's the doctors." Dr Rahul Bharhava, Director-Bone Marrow Transplant Program, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurgaon minced no words as he commented that "election can take place on time but counselling for NEET can take time or be postponed indefinitely wow what a country we are in!"

## NIA conducts searches in arms supply to CPI(M) cadre case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday conducted searches at multiple locations in Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal in the case of pilferage and supply of arms and ammunition to the CPI (Maoist) in Jharkhand.

The NIA conducted searches at 12 locations pertaining to the accused persons and suspects in Dhanbad, Saraikeela Kharsawan and Ranchi districts of Jharkhand, Patna, Chapra and Gaya districts of Bihar, Chandauli district of Uttar Pradesh and Bardhaman district of West Bengal, the agency said in a statement.

The case relates to pilferage of arms and ammunition from armouries of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) by accused persons and supply of same to the senior leaders of CPI (Maoists) and other terrorist gangs in Jharkhand.

The case was originally registered as FIR No. 01/2021 at Police Station Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS), Ranchi, Jharkhand on November 14, 2021. The NIA had re-registered the case on December 9, 2021 and took over the investigation.

"During the searches, unaccounted cash of Rs 1,46,000, digital devices including laptop, cell phones, computer and digital storage devices, incriminating documents, pilfered ammunition boxes and other incriminating materials have been seized," it added.

## Rapid antigen tests have reduced sensitivity against Omicron: US FDA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Although rapid antigen tests can detect the Omicron variant, they may be less sensitive, according to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The findings are based on a study conducted by the FDA in collaboration with the US National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The preliminary studies evaluated the performance of some antigen tests using patient samples containing a live virus, which represents the best way to assess actual test performance in the short term. "Early data suggest that antigen tests do detect the Omicron variant but may have reduced sensitivity," the FDA said in a statement.

Before completing these live virus tests, the experts also conducted initial laboratory tests using heat-inactivated samples for some of the currently available antigen tests,

which could detect the Omicron variant, with similar performance when detecting other variants.

Heat-inactivated samples are patient samples with Omicron variants that have been heat-treated so that the virus is no longer alive. Heat-inactivated samples are the best available option when patient samples with the live virus are not available.

"It is important to note that these laboratory data are not a replacement for clinical study evaluations using patient samples with live virus, which are ongoing," the FDA said, adding that it is continuing to evaluate further the performance of antigen tests using patient samples with live virus.

The soaring Covid-19 cases across the US promote a high demand for at-home rapid testing. Antigen tests can be done at home, with results in minutes, while PCR tests are processed in labs and have



longer turnaround times.

However, antigen tests are generally less sensitive and less likely to pick up very early infections than molecular tests.

Thus the FDA had long recommended, "if a person tests negative with an antigen test but is suspected of having Covid-19, such as experiencing symptoms or have a high likelihood of infection due to exposure, follow-up molecular testing is important for determining a Covid-19 infection".

However, "if a person tests positive with an antigen test, they should self-isolate and

seek follow-up care with a health care provider to determine the next steps."

On the other hand, the lateral flow test used in the UK is more effective compared to the antigen test in detecting Covid-19 variants. It also provides an alternative to the PCR test.

While the PCR tests involve amplification of the nucleic acid sample, lateral flow tests rely on the detection of a viral antigen in the patient's sample. They are therefore deemed to be of lower sensitivity.

## Death toll due to Kala Azar climbed to 33 till Nov

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

As the Government focuses its attention on containing Covid-19, the death toll due to neglected disease visceral leishmaniasis, commonly known as Kala Azar has climbed to 33 till November 2021, highest in the past seven years.

As per the data from the website of the National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control Programme (NVBDCP), Bihar tops the list with 24 mortalities followed by Jharkhand which reported 7 deaths. Both the States had not reported any death due to Kala Azar last year. (see box)

The deaths suggest that the infections are not being treated on time, taking a toll on the patients. Health experts say that if left untreated, visceral leishmaniasis which is otherwise a curable disease can be fatal in over 95% of cases. It is caused by the protozoan parasite of the genus Leishmania. Its

clinical manifestations include irregular bouts of fever, weight loss and anemia.

Post-Kala-azar Dermal Leishmaniasis (PKDL) cases too have increased from 617 in 2020 to 653 till November 2021. Kala-azar is the second deadliest parasitic killer in the world after malaria. The WHO estimates that 50,000 to 90,000 people globally are infected each year. India accounts for about two-thirds of the total global cases, and Kala-azar is endemic to Bihar, Jharkhand, Kerala, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Though its incidence in India has declined over decades, the country has missed several deadlines - 2010, 2015 and 2017 - for its 'elimination'.

This year till November, 1163 cases have been reported against over 1900 reported last calendar year.

According to the WHO, poverty is an increased risk factor as is poor housing and

domestic sanitary conditions (such as a lack of waste management or open sewerage). Other factors include malnutrition, population mobility and environmental and climate changes.

The only drug available against leishmaniasis, miltefosine, is rapidly losing its effectiveness because of emerging resistance to this drug due to a decrease in its accumulation inside the parasite, which is necessary for the drug to kill the parasite, say the experts.

The National Kala-Azar Elimination Programme has made it mandatory for all states to report diseases, including zero cases. To compensate for loss of wages by Kala Azar and PKDL cases, the Government provides Rs 4000 per PKDL case and Rs 500 per treated KA case. Bihar and Jharkhand, in which most Kala Azar and PKDL cases occur, provide an additional Rs 6600 in compensation for wage losses.

# ED files chargesheet against Deshmukh

## Maha ex-Min's two sons named in supplementary chargesheet in PMLA case

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Nearly two months after it arrested him in an alleged money laundering and corruption case, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday filed a comprehensive supplementary charge sheet before a Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court against Maharashtra's former Home Minister Anil Deshmukh and named his two sons Hrishikesh and Salil in the case.

In a 7,000-page charge sheet filed before the PMLA court, the ED charged that Deshmukh and his family members controlled 27 dummy companies based in Delhi and used that money to donate Rs 4.18 crore to the former State Home Minister's Sai Shikshan Sanstha.

Among other things, the ED alleged in its supplementary charge-sheet that Deshmukh was the prime beneficiary of the laundering of the bribes monies allegedly collected by

dismissed policeman Sachin Vaze, who is also an accused in the same case.

Among other things, the supplementary charge sheet comprises statements of Deshmukh, Mumbai's former police commissioner Parambir Singh, ex-Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte, certain IPS officers, police officials and other witnesses in the case. It also contains various documents and other evidence that surfaced during the investigations.

In the first charge-sheet filed on August 23, 2021, the ED had named 14 accused, including Deshmukh's private secretary Sanjeev Palande and personal assistant Kundan Shinde, a trust run by Deshmukh family in Nagpur, and others. It contained Mr. Palande's statement admitting that Deshmukh had a role in transfer posting of police officers, especially the posting of IPS officers.

It may be recalled that Deshmukh was arrested

November 2 in the alleged money laundering case linked to the charges of extortion made against him by Mumbai's former Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh.

An IPS officer of the 1988 batch, Singh had on March 20 made a sensational allegation of corruption against Deshmukh that he had asked arrested and suspended police officer Sachin Vaze to "collect" a staggering Rs 100 crore per month from bars, restaurants and other sources.

Following the allegations made by Singh, Deshmukh had resigned from his post as the State Home Minister on April 5, within hours after the Bombay High Court ordered a "Preliminary Enquiry" (PE) by the CBI into the serious charges of corruption made against him by Mumbai's former Police Commissioner.

Deshmukh is being investigated by the CBI in connection with a First Information Report (FIR) registered by it on

April 24 section 7 of the amended Prevention of Corruption Act and section 120-b (conspiracy) of IPC for an "attempt to obtain undue advantage for important and dishonest performance of the public duty".

Having prima facie found "cognisance offences" of corruption and conspiracy against him during a Preliminary Enquiry (PE) conducted by it into the allegations made against him by Mumbai's former Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh, the CBI on April 21 registered a regular case against him and other unknown people.

The ED probe began after the CBI filed an FIR against Deshmukh on April 21 accusing him of graft and misusing his official position as minister. On his part, Deshmukh has consistently denied the allegations of corruption and money laundering against him.

Having established a trail for Rs 4.7 crore allegedly paid by the 10 bar owners in

Mumbai over a period of three months December 2020 and February 2021, the ED had conducted raids on the three residences and one property of Deshmukh on June 25.

The ED has alleged that of the total amount, Rs 4.18 crore was then deposited in cash with four Delhi-based shell companies - Reliable Finance Corporation Pvt. Ltd., VA Realcon Pvt. Ltd., Utsav Securities Pvt. Ltd. and Sital Leasing and finance Pvt. Ltd.

These firms subsequently donated the entire money to Shri Sai Shikshan Sansthan Trust, a charitable trust headed by Anil Deshmukh and his family.

Among other things, the ED had told the court on June 26 that Rs. 40 lakh was paid by 60 bar owners to the now dismissed and incarcerated API Sachin Vaze in December last year. The bar owners have told the ED that the amount was paid for 'smooth functioning' of their establishments.

# 180 terrorists gunned down this year in J&K

## Srinagar witnesses highest number of deaths in terrorist violence in 2021

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Srinagar, the summer Capital of Jammu & Kashmir, witnessed highest number of deaths in incidents of terrorist violence in 2021. Compared to the previous year the local recruitment witnessed a marginal decline while large number of "Hybrid" terrorists were inducted in the ranks of new terror outfits to target the security personnel in 'cold blood'.

Overall, around 20 Pakistani and approximately 160 local terrorists were gunned down by the joint team of security forces since January 1 in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. Pakistan based Lashkar-e-Taiba followed by Jaish-e-Mohammad and pro Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist outfits suffered maximum damages during anti terrorist operations.

During these operations around 35 security personnel

and 40 civilians also sacrificed their lives.

Majority of local terrorists killed in the anti terrorist operations were aged between 20-25 and had a shelf life ranging between three days to 1 year. The security forces also broke down the backbone of the terrorist outfits by arresting around 600 over ground workers during crackdown.

During the year Srinagar figured in the list of UNESCO's Network of creative cities and 'peacefully' hosted numerous events which were attended by Parliamentarians, Union Ministers and foreign dignitaries but during the last quarter the capital city witnessed sudden surge in incidents of terrorist violence. In most of the incidents the terrorist handlers deployed 'hybrid' terrorists to target the security personnel and civilians.

According to police records, around 11 policemen, nine civilians and 20 terrorists were killed in a series of gun-fights and targeted killings during the year. It included killing the son of a local dhaba owner, a jeweler, two school teachers from minority communities, Kashmiri pandit pharmacist and outsiders from

Bihar.

Out of 128 local terrorists recruited this year, as per police records, as many as 73 were killed, 16 were arrested and 39 were still active.

Security assessment made by the various agencies claimed around 200 terrorists were still active in the region. Out of these around 110 are local and around 90 are foreign terrorists.

Majority of these anti terrorist operations were conducted across South Kashmir districts of Pulwama, Kulgam, Shopian and Anantnag. The highest number of 51 terrorists were eliminated in the last three months following sudden surge in incidents of terrorist violence and targeted killings of civilians and others.

Last year, a total number of 203 terrorists including 166 local and 37 foreign terrorists were gunned down by the security forces while 43 civilians were killed and 92 others injured in the union territory.

In 2019, 152 terrorists, including 120 locals and 32 of Pakistan-origin were killed by the security forces in J&K. In 2018, 215 terrorists were neutralized by security forces.

# Church in Kerala upset over Centre's refusal to renew FCRA of Missionary of Charities

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The new found camaraderie between the Sangh Parivar and the Church is likely to come to end, as the observations and apprehensions of the Kerala Catholic Bishop Council indicated.

The Union Home Ministry's decision not to renew the permission given to Calcutta based Missionaries of Charity for receiving donations under Foreigners Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) has upset the Catholic community in the State. Deepika, the mouthpiece of the community, in its editorial on Wednesday has made a scathing attack on the BJP-led Government at the Centre and termed the decision as a violation of privileges enjoyed by the minorities under the Constitution.

"Though the Missionaries of Charity has played down the

impact of the Home Ministry's decision, the community members have genuine concerns over the move by the Government of India. There is a concerted move by certain Hindutwa forces to derail the operations of the Missionaries of Charity lajched by Mother Teresa. The Government should allow the nuns of the congregation to go ahead with their mission of helping the poor and needy," said the editorial.

The daily has also lambasted the Karnataka Government's Religious Conversion Bill as yet another proof that the minorities were not safe in the country. "This is a Bill with hidden agenda as it would encourage the zealots in the Hindu religion. There is strong possibilities of the misuse of this Act against the minorities.

The editorial pointed out that citizens in the country are

free to believe and propagate the religion of their choice. "This is a Bill which would certainly be misused against the Christians in the country. The role played by the Church in bringing education and health to the poor sections of society could never be ignored. We should get the freedom and liberty assured by the Constitution," the editorial opined.

The Sangh Parivar had tried to strengthen a rapport with the Church following the declaration made by Bishop Kallarangattu of Pala that the Jihadists were using narcotics to woo Christian girls and this has given rise to a new term in the State's narrative-Narcotics Jihad.

The Kerala Catholic Bishops Council too issued a statement by Wednesday evening demanding the Centre to initiate immediate action to prevent the "widespread attacks" on Christians by Hindu extremists.

# Bengal BJP urges SEC to reconsider date for civic polls

**Kolkata:** West Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar on Wednesday urged the State Election Commission to reconsider the date for the upcoming poll to four municipal corporations on January 22 next year given the rising number of Covid-19 cases in the state and a threat of a possible third wave of the pandemic looming large. This drew a sharp retort from the ruling TMC, which wondered whether the BJP-led government at the Centre will also postpone the assembly election due in five states.

On Monday, the West Bengal SEC had announced that polls to Siliguri, Chandannagar, Bidhannagar and Asansol municipal corporations will be held on January 22.

"The SEC has announced dates for civic polls to four municipal corporations. But

presently, Covid-19 cases are rising in the state. So we request the SEC to reconsider the dates of the civic polls. It can discuss the matter with health experts and then decide on the dates. We fail to understand what is the hurry in holding the poll and that too when there is a threat of a third wave," Majumdar told reporters here.

Asked about the party's readiness for the coming civic poll given its dismal performance in the December 19 Kolkata Municipal Corporation election, he said, "BJP is ready for the polls. We are just asking the SEC to at least reconsider its decision once".

Reacting to Majumdar's comment, the TMC wondered why the party pressed for eight-phase assembly poll in West Bengal during the second wave of COVID-19 in April-May. **PTI**



Workers unload 'hogla' from boat for making makeshift huts for the pilgrims, ahead of the Gangasagar Mela 2022, at Gangasagar in South 24 Parganas district, on Wednesday **PTI**

# Police stop PDP's march to Raj Bhavan against 39 real estate MoUs in J&K

**Jammu:** Two days after the Jammu and Kashmir administration signed 39 MoUs with the country's real estate investors, PDP's youth wing on Wednesday tried to march to the Raj Bhawan here against what it called "brazen sale of resources" to corporate houses.

However, they said the police stopped them from marching ahead.

The Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday opened the Union Territory to the country's real estate investors by signing Memorandum of Understanding for projects pertaining to housing, hotel and other commercial activities worth nearly Rs 19,000 crore.

Raising slogans against the BJP and lieutenant governor administration, protesters from the Peoples Democratic Party alleged that the Centre, under the garb of bringing investment, was selling resources of the erstwhile state to corporate houses.

"On the one hand, the BJP government has assured to secure the culture identity and

jobs of people of Ladakh region while on the other, Jammu and Kashmir is being thrown open for non-locals endangering its unique culture and ethnic identity," a party leader said.

He alleged that the BJP government lacked vision for Jammu and Kashmir and that the biggest issue in the Union Territory was unemployment, which according to him has shot up to 18 per cent.

"Those in Delhi are using Jammu as a laboratory. BJP's vision is only to divide and rule, to make people fight against each other and to sell our resources to outsiders," the leader said.

He said the PDP will not be a mute spectator to the "brazen loot" by the administration which has no stake in the society.

The PDP members accused the officers of making policies without understanding the ground realities.

"The only duty of administration is discharging it to blindly follow and implement dictates from Delhi and Nagpur," the leader said. **PTI**

# Priest sentenced to life for sexually assaulting minor boy in Mumbai

**Mumbai:** A special court on Wednesday sentenced a priest to imprisonment for life for sexually assaulting a 13-year-old boy at a church in suburban Dadar here in 2015.

Special judge Seema Jadhav found the accused Father Johnson Lawrence guilty of offences under relevant provisions of the Protection of Child from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

According to the prosecution, the minor victim had been assaulted twice by the priest between August and November 2015. The victim, in his statement to police, had said that he had gone to the church in Shivaji Nagar area of Dadar with his brother on November 27, 2015.

After the prayer, the accused called the boy inside to keep a box and then closed the door from inside and sexually assaulted him, the victim informed the police.

The boy also alleged that the priest had committed a similar act a few months earlier. The victim had given a similar statement before a magistrate as well. **PTI**

# Maha records 85 Omicron cases, tally crosses 250 mark

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In an alarming development, Maharashtra on Wednesday recorded an all-time of 85 cases of Omicron, taking the total number of new Covid-19 variant cases to 252.

Of the 85 Omicron cases recorded, Mumbai accounted for a maximum of 34 cases, while Nagpur and Pimpri-Chinchwad recorded three cases. The break-up of cases in other parts of the state is as follows: Navi Mumbai and Pune Municipal Corporation (PPMC) - two each, Panvel, Kolhapur and Buldhana - one case each

Of the 85 cases of Omicron variant infections reported on Wednesday, 47 patients have been reported by the National Institute of Virology (NIV), while 38 have been reported by the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER).

Of the 47 patients reported by NIV, 43 are international travellers and 4 are close contacts. Of the 38 cases reported by IISER are from community surveillance. The district-wise details are as follows: Mumbai

19, Kalyan Dombivli-5, Navi Mumbai and Pimpri-Chinchwad-3 each, Pune rural, Bhiwandi-Nizampur, Panvel and Thane Municipal Corporation-1 each.

The following is the break-up of a total 252 Omicron cases recorded in the state so far, Mumbai: 137, Pimpri-Chinchwad: 25, Pune rural-18, Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC)-11, Thane MC-8, Navi Mumbai, Panvel and Kalyan Dombivli-7 each, Satara, Osmanabad - 5 each, Vasai-Virar-3, Aurangabad, Nanded, Buldhana, Bhiwandi-Nizampur-2 each and Latur, Ahmednagar, Akola, Miraj-Bhayandar and Kolhapur-1 each.

Of the total cases, 99 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.

# NCP leader Supriya Sule, husband test +ve

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Several Maharashtra leaders, including two Ministers and NCP MP Supriya Sule and her husband Sadanand Sule, have tested positive for Covid-19.

Announcing that she and her husband had tested positive for Covid-19, Supriya tweeted: "Sadanand and I, both of us have tested positive for COVID-19. We do not have any symptoms. Requesting everyone who has come in contact with us to get themselves tested. Take Care".

Simultaneously, Congress ministers - School Education Minister Prof. Varsha Gaikwad has tested positive for Covid-19 for the second time, while Tribal Development Minister K. C. Padvi has also tested positive for the pandemic.

Opposition BJP legislator from Nagpur Sameer D Meghe has gone into isolation, after he tested positive for Covid-19.

# Priyanka slams Yogi Govt for Dalit girl assault in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra attacked the Yogi Adityanath Government over the assault and molestation of a Dalit girl in Amethi, and warned that her party would launch a state-wide agitation if the accused were not arrested soon. Priyanka's remarks came after a video showing a 16-year-old Dalit girl being beaten up and molested in Amethi went viral on social media on Tuesday.

Attaching the video of the incident, the Congress leader tweeted, "If the criminals who committed this inhuman act are not nabbed within 24 hours, then the Congress will work to wake you up by vigorous agitation."

"This incident of ruthless thrashing of a Dalit girl in Amethi is condemnable. @MYOGIADITYANATH Sir on an average 34 crime incidents against Dalits take place every day under your rule and 135 against women, yet your law and order is sleeping," she further tweeted.

Meanwhile, Deputy Superintendent of Police in

Amethi, Arpit Kapoor, said that one of the accused had been arrested while police teams had been formed to arrest the others.

Police had contacted the girl and based on her father's complaint, a case under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was registered against accused Suraj Soni, Shivam and Sakal.

The police officer said that the survivor is a resident of a village in Sangrampur police station area of Amethi and the incident took place in Raipur Phulwari town.

Meanwhile, continuing her campaign to attract female voters for the revival of the Congress in the coming assembly polls, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday interacted with women and girls in her 'Ladki Hoon-Lad Sakti Hoon' program held at Girdhari Inter College in Sirsaganj, Firozabad.

To make a better rapport with the females in the area also known as 'Suhag Nagri' Priyanka visited the house of female labourers and interacted with them to share their sorrows and problems.



Locals at the seashore during sunset at Beyopore in Kozhikode on Wednesday **PTI**

# Goons attack police team in UP, snatch INSAS rifle

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Cocking a snook at the Uttar Pradesh Government claim of 'society free of fear', unidentified goons attacked a police party and snatched an INSAS rifle assigned to one of the cops at Bhootpuri trisection in Afzalgarh police station area of Bijnor on Tuesday night.

The criminals also hit constable Lalit with the butt of a country-made revolver before fleeing the scene. The injured cop was admitted to a local hospital with a head injury.

Soon after the incident, a video of the cops being attacked and robbed went viral, causing considerable panic among the people and embarrassment to the police brass. The police have now launched an investigation but have so far failed to identify the accused.

As per reports, a truck carrying sugarcane waste dropped some garbage on the road near Bhootpuri trisection in Bijnor on Tuesday night and soon a JCB machine was called to remove the waste. In the meantime, two men came and started abusing the truck

driver for dropping the waste. As a constable and a home-guard tried to intervene, the two started a fight with them and snatched an INSAS rifle from one of them.

They also mugged the policeman in the head with the butt of a country-made revolver before fleeing the spot with the rifle.

While the scuffle was on, some passersby shot a video of the incident and posted it on the net. Later, the police brass alerted border districts in search of the two accused and a case was registered in this regard.

# Durga Shankar Mishra to be new UP Chief Secy

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Presently posted as Secretary at the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Development Affairs and Chairman of Delhi Metro Rail, Durga Shankar Mishra, a 1984 batch IAS officer of UP cadre, will replace RK Tewari as the 54th chief secretary of Uttar Pradesh.

The Cabinet Committee of Appointment of the Union government has cleared the proposal of the state government to appoint Mishra as the new chief secretary of UP. Mishra, who is to superannuate on December 31 this year, is likely to be given exten-

sion in service. He is scheduled to arrive in Lucknow on Thursday and is likely to take over as chief secretary after the orders are issued by the state government.

Incumbent Chief Secretary RK Tiwari, retiring at the end of 2023, was appointed to this post on September 1, 2019, after the retirement of then Chief Secretary Anup Chandra Pandey on August 31, 2019.

Pandey has since been appointed as Election Commissioner of India. Tiwari is likely to move to the Centre as he has already been empanelled for appointment as secretary in the Government of India.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Happy tidings?

The gender ratio may now be skewed in favour of women but sceptics blame small sample size

The year passing us by took the biggest toll on one segment of Indians — women. The Coronavirus pandemic affected us all, women the most. Perhaps the defining picture of the social impact of COVID-19 is of the employed urban woman at home not feeling at home at all, having to juggle between working from home, managing the daily chores, running errands, helping children adjust to a new world within the four walls, all the while hoping the husband shares the burden with her. The misery is untold for women where couples lost their jobs, saddling them with more responsibilities. The pall of gloom lifted briefly when the National Family Health Survey-5 told us the sex ratio is, for the first time, skewed in favour of women at 1,020 women for every 1000 men. That should have sparked celebrations of a new gender reality but it did not. A swift analysis of the data revealed that the survey sample was not large enough to justify the sex ratio figure. Only the national census data can be credible. It did not stop the optimists from insisting there are no longer any "missing women" in India, a phrase used by Amartya Sen referring to the millions of girls not allowed to be born or killed at birth. Reality eventually struck home. The census data for 2001 and 2011 tells us a sordid tale that sample surveys like NFHS would know nothing about. They revealed shocking levels of female foeticide.



Against a global average of 952 girls per 1,000 boys at birth, it was 915 in 2001 that fell to 910 in 2011. This is the grim reality. We have strong laws to prevent sex selection but doctors and quacks conduct such procedures secretly. We went in for reforms in inheritance laws thinking that might help gender equality but many parents were found averse to girls inheriting their share of assets because they believed that under the Hindu system, the property would go to the girls' in-laws. The Government introduced measures to empower women in terms of education and employment. In most patriarchal settings, even today, families prefer the patrilineal system under which the son, unlike the daughter, remains in the family home after marriage and generally ends up inheriting the parents' property after their death. There was a growing belief that a robust public-pension scheme can help parents remain independent after retirement and that might encourage them to divide their property equally between the children, unmindful of son preference. Hardly a third of the elderly segment has pension cover at present. Some States have two-child laws to encourage family planning but these are affecting the sex ratio, too. Where the first child is a girl, the chances are high of sex selection being resorted to the second time around. We are not going to solve the problem in a day but we can use the International Women's Day theme for 2022 — #BreakTheBias — to make a beginning.

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### PICTALK



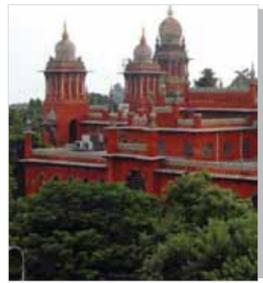
People flout COVID-19 norms amid the concern over rising cases of Omicron, in Amritsar

PTI

## Courting controversy

The Madras High Court is in the headlines again, and again for the wrong reasons

Those familiar with the goings-on in the Madras High Court will not be surprised at the recent behaviour of a lawyer during an online hearing. The advocate, engaged in an erotic act with a woman, was caught live much to the shock of the judges and others. The pictures have since gone viral. This is the peak of absurdity and shamelessness, which has sent the noble profession of law reeling. But, going by past instances, Tamil Nadu is made of sterner stuff. This kind of an act was waiting to happen, thanks to the misdeeds of a section of lawyers and judges whose roots are in the High Court. In 2014, the then chief of Tamil Nadu Police had told the court in an affidavit that 1,200 State lawyers had criminal backgrounds with 1,424 pending cases. The charges ranged from murder, theft, harassment, SC/ST Act, dowry and holding kangaroo courts. Justice Kirubakaran, hearing a public interest litigation seeking a ban on advocates holding the law degree from private colleges in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, had come down heavily on the Bar Council of India for its alleged indifference to the need of raising the standards of legal education in the country.



The Madras High Court gained notoriety when lawyers clashed with the police on the court's campus on flimsy grounds. Hundreds of instances of kangaroo courts have been brought to light by vernacular media and some of these lawyers have emerged literally as dons who summon the 'appellants' and 'respondents' for settling cases, of course for a 'fee'. The court has the dubious distinction of seeing a sitting judge gatecrashing into a courtroom presided over by a brother judge. A former Chief Justice had to seek police protection in his chambers to ward off marauding lawyers who were not impressed by the judge's colour and complexion. Then there is the instance of unruly behaviour from lawyers who were brazen enough to throw rotten eggs at Subramanian Swamy, who had appeared in the court in connection with a case. We do not waste any opportunity to recite psalms that judiciary is the only avenue that sustains our country as a democracy. When the fence set up to protect the crop itself starts eating the crop, we must become cautious and look for immediate remedial measures. Let truth alone win!

# Chinese economy is caught in a cleft stick



PRAFULL GORADIA

Chinese modernisation began with limited capital. In a twist of irony, it has large foreign exchange reserves abroad and banking crises at home

Since Deng Xiaoping's reforms, it was clear that the class profile of Chinese society would change. A new bourgeoisie would emerge, and the petit bourgeoisie would enlarge itself with more money in its pockets. The proletariat would become prosperous. Perhaps the only class of people who could get left out of this economic revolution was the peasantry. When I asked my Marxist acquaintances as to how the ruling party would remain communist and yet cope with the changing expectations of people, their bland reply was that they will "manage". After all, many of the national assets are owned by the party; even the armed forces and the armaments are party-owned. So are the shares of newly created corporations.

To someone like me who has grown up in India, it seemed a wonder as to how an ideologically dyed-in-the-wool party can manage all classes of society. Evidently by force, was the answer. The communists reckoned there would be no problem since the Communist Party of China (CPC) practices politics which a typical Marxist does not recognise. A European professor had once explained to me the reason for this. The communist obsession is with the proletariat; the other classes matter little. The bourgeoisie and the landlords were marked out for extermination at the beginning of the revolution. The petit bourgeois should be watched and selectively also be exterminated. The farmers, other than the landlords, were the kulaks, peasants with limited land and had to be collectivised. The landless peasants willy-nilly must join the communist movement. Inner-party democracy is all that is possible; this is at best collective leadership as distinct from the Fuhrerprinzip practised by the Nazis. At most, the entire communist party Politburo might be consulted on policy.

Under democratic circumstances, a communist party cannot survive in power. Imagine Josef Stalin as a democrat; or Mao Zedong surviving in a democracy following the famine of 1962, when 30 million poor Chinese starved to death. Or the Cultural



Revolution when Mao stepped on and crushed thousands of toes? Leader versus leader is another level of struggle. Even Vladimir Lenin was shot at and wounded, apparently by a colleague or on his behalf. China was not free of such power play. The dozens of leaders and followers of Stalin exterminated through the 1920s and 1930s are legend. Leon Trotsky, Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev were only the top three. Stalin is reputed to have taken a toll of three million bureaucrats, army officers, farmers and commoners. That was the way he lasted until 1953 when his over 30-year innings ended naturally. Karl Marx appropriately chose the colour red for his cult!

Violence had to be adopted by the communists as a method of action. One reason was the lack of aversion to violence, the virtual opposite of Gandhism which was a mass movement comprising also women, children and the old. The Marxist support base was a minority, namely the proletariat. Other classes did not exactly adore Marxists. A minority ruling over the majority had necessarily to do so with an iron hand. Western Europe,

IF ENTERPRISES WERE PROMOTED, THEIR OWNERSHIP WAS CONTROLLED WITH PART OWNERSHIP OF THE PARTY AND NOT THE STATE. THE ARMED FORCES ARE ALSO OWNED BY THE PARTY. THE LEADERSHIP'S INSECURITY HAS SO FAR BEEN ASSUAGED BY SUCH OWNERSHIP

especially Germany, Italy and Spain had to evolve a new ideology, called Fascism, to counter communism. Originally centred around class collaboration, Fascism became a synonym for violent despotism. A red bullet had to be countered with at least a swastika and gun.

An autocracy, especially a dictatorship that traverses all aspects of life, has necessarily a short life. The Soviet Union lasted 74 years. With its demise, it took along with it nearly all communist States, except North Korea and China. The CPC reacted with a novel experiment of continuing with the form but mostly abandoning its Marxist substance. If enterprises were promoted, their ownership was controlled with part ownership of the Party and not the State. The armed forces are also owned by the Party. The leadership's insecurity has so far been assuaged by such ownership. True, the soldiers and sailors, as employees, would fight for the Party and against its enemies. I wonder how well they would fight for the country against national enemies. Perhaps the reason is that the nation has been looked upon as an adversary of

the proletariat. Therefore, the Party general secretary was more important in Soviet Russia than its Prime Minister. Stalin remained the CPSU (Party) general secretary until he died.

Chinese modernisation after Mao Zedong's death began with limited capital. It insisted on foreign entrepreneurs investing everything, including his working capital overdraft bank facility. The local enterprise was financed by cheap leased land and term loans to build the factory. When required, this money was printed by the State. If the loans were not returned on time, it was tolerated but the production had to be exported and earn up to 75-80 per cent hard foreign currency. That explains China's large foreign exchange reserves abroad and banking crises at home. How to replace the printed money?

It would be interesting to see whether the Yellow Giant flourishes or perishes in the coming years.

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### THE BRITISH RAJ WASN'T BAD?

Sir — Despite being a small country with a scanty population in comparison to India, the British could conquer a lot of the world's countries for many centuries. It is totally unbelievable. The British vanquished the Mughals and reigned the country for around 200 years. Consequently, English has become the sole medium for communication between countries with different languages. In the long run, the British could enforce their language, attire and other cultural peculiarities with global people without much distress.

Had the British not arrived and dominated India, we would be at least a hundred years behind the major countries. One of the prime advantages is that we could emerge as a strong democratic country. The British built India's basic infrastructure foreseeing, they had their own interests, of course. The very controversial Mullaperiyar Dam in Kerala was built by the British around 125 years ago. Similarly, Asia's first concrete bridge — Muvattupuzha Bridge in Kerala — was built by the English in 1914 and can still survive for years. Though the infrastructure was built on the backdrop of their vested interests, it was one of the few perks of British rule in India.

Thomas K M | Muvattupuzha

### DO WE PUT A THOUGHT INTO GIFTING?

Sir — We all love gifts, especially when they are from our relatives and loved ones. A few decades back, gifts from loved ones used to be fresh fruits or things which nourish our body. I still remember my relatives when they used to visit us and bring along oranges, apples or fruits which were available in that season. Gradually, the gifts started changing as chocolates and potato chips took the form of gifts.

The change in gifting pattern was largely due to advertisements of chocolates, candies, chips, etc which were telecasted during TV shows and cricket matches. People were so into these commercials that taglines like "Kuch meetha ho jaye", "Tedha hai par mera hai"

## Poll rallies as super-spreaders



The election campaign is in full swing and so is the violation of COVID protocols in the poll-bound States, including Uttar Pradesh, where the rallies of the BJP, Congress and other political parties are encouraging people to neglect all the necessary precautions and, as a result, the cases of COVID-19 are rising with steep growth across the country. The five poll-bound States

are witnessing huge political rallies almost every day, and that is going to trigger or add to the threat of a terrible next wave.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has adequately imposed timely restrictions under 'yellow alert' in view of the impending health crisis in the city. However, other State Governments are still taking the situation lightly and putting political mileage above the health of citizens. The orders to impose night curfews are practically useless. Instead, the crowds gathering in political rallies should be sent home along with the politicians. If needed, the upcoming Assembly elections may be postponed for the time being; perhaps the only way to contain our dear leaders. Political parties must not play with the safety of people and themselves, too. They must switch to virtual rally and electronic addressing to mass over social media and television and avoid physical rallies for now. Ultimately, it'll be the country that would suffer, even if some politicians win.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

were on the lips of every Indian. But now we can see that this tradition of gift giving is slowly drifting away from our society. Relatives and loved ones have started giving money for treats. Earlier, they used to put some thought into gifting but there is no time for it now. The world is at its usual pace; it seems it is us who want to run with time.

Noopur Baruah | Tezpur

### LOVING PETS ON SELFISH TERMS

Sir — A survey conducted by an advisory board of experts of Mars Pet Care and Animal Welfare revealed that during the lockdown, when people were forced to stay indoors away from all kinds of activities, the trend of adopting pets was high. For most people, this seemed to be an easy way to overcome their loneliness. It was successful to a large extent as well. In those times of loneliness, these innocent animals were proving to be good friends. But as the

world unlocked and life started returning to normalcy, these companions of loneliness began to become a burden.

Therefore, there is a tendency to return them or leave them unannounced on the market place or in the unknown streets. This trend was visible across the world, but India was at the forefront. Of the nine countries in which this survey was conducted, India was found to have the worst position in terms of pet homelessness. Interestingly, even when the trend of adopting pets was increasing during the lockdown, incidents of pet abandonment were happening on a large scale in the country. However, whether it is intentional or not, these instances of playing with the lives of innocent animals raises a big question on our sensitivity.

Abhijit Roy | Jamshedpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUND BITE

Over the decades, the party has confronted several challenges and has always demonstrated its resilience.



Congress interim president — Sonia Gandhi



The people of Russia — and the memory of the millions who suffered from Soviet-era repression — deserve better.

US Secretary of State — Antony Blinken

A snake had entered my farmhouse and bit me thrice. I was hospitalised for six hours...I am fine now.



Actor — Salman Khan



We still haven't beaten India in India. That would be nice to do.

Australia batsman — David Warner

We strongly condemn the police brutality inflicted on doctors. The Prime Minister must accept their demands soon.



Delhi Chief Minister — Arvind Kejriwal



## FIRST COLUMN TOWARDS A LOGIC BEYOND CONSUMERISM

The purpose here is to ask if there is a selective approach in regulating denominational efforts



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

India is a land of festivals. By the Gregorian calendar, each of the twelve months has some major festival celebrated in some part of the country. It has to do with anything, from a collective memory to the harvesting season. It is a welcome sign because it feeds the spirit of joy and merry making. It also breaks the feeling of drudgery and boredom from the routine. If Holi was to be celebrated in a particular way, that is the way it had to be celebrated. The same was true of Eid or Christmas or for that matter any festivity. It is only in the last decade or so that the governance regulatory framework started entering the method of festive celebration. A classic example would be how some agencies have put a frame on the bursting of crackers during Diwali or the way colour is to be applied and with what 'intensity' during Holi. The purpose of referring to these instances is not to pronounce judgement (which may be valid in its own right) but to flag the essence of an approach to how fes-



activities are to roll out. Clearly, governance processes have not been bashful about venturing into certain expressions of 'festivities'. Another analogy, at an operational level, can be cited. Any number of Hindu places of worship, from Kerala to J&K, have been taken over by the government. The revenues which are primarily from donation of Hindu worshippers are used as per government's preferences. Interestingly, no such intensity of attempt seems to have been made to regulate the management of income of the places of worship of other denominations, which could involve, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism Christianity or whatever else.

The purpose here is not to enter into that debate but to ask if there is a selective approach in regulating denominational efforts? The argument is simple: if the approach of managing the 'governance' of certain types of festivities and places of worship is 'beneficial' then the benefits of that approach should be made available to improving the festive spirit and efficiency of all denominations. If the approach that is being followed is not so sound, then it should be improved; applied even-handedly in every similar case. Consistency is a virtue in public dealings. The entire situation, reference festivity styles and governance, is quite complex. Commerce rides many waves of the festivities. And if volumes are significant, consumerism wins. Illustratively, consider the way Christmas is celebrated. By an estimate, in US alone, the retail industry during Christmas is worth around \$3 trillion. The cutting of the pine trees in Europe is a business of \$60million. In the UK, the slaughter of Turkeys during the festive season is worth \$10 million. Obviously, consumerism is at the driving wheel. This means there is intense lobbying, advertising and whatever else goes with it to keep the business rolling. There is a close linkage between popular sentiments and consumerism which if 'commercially' tapped can be, operationally, a very 'enriching' and profitable process. One cannot handle these issues just by moralising. The response in the name of 'sustainable development' is not proving adequate in causing effective rethink, let alone reversing the depleting impact of consumerism. The time has come to fall back upon the eternal postulates of fair play, even handedness and sound judgement, to rethink how the human race can manage its material pursuits. This is the need of the times. This needs to be done before the current trends of selectiveness and 'consumerism' become too devastating to tackle in a sensible way.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal.)

# Global economic forebodings in 2022

As fiscal space gets limited in poor countries, governmental transfers must target the worst affected sections that cannot take the battering anymore



GOVIND BHATTACHARJEE

In October 2021, the IMF published three regular reports: The World Economic Outlook, The Financial Stability Report and the Fiscal Monitor. Omicron was as yet unborn, and economies were showing early signs of revival in those countries where a majority of the population were vaccinated and life was slowly picking up its lost threads. Yet the reports predicted an uncertain year ahead, noting that the near-term disruptions caused by the pandemic will leave lasting imprints on the medium-term performance of the global economy, making policy choices difficult with multiple challenges to be faced from "subdued employment growth, rising inflation, food insecurity, setback to human capital accumulation, and climate change-with limited room to manoeuvre", as The World Economic Outlook notes.

It projected the global economy to grow 5.9 percent in 2021 and 4.9 percent in 2022, then hovering around a moderate 3.3 percent over the medium term. Supply disruptions which have already caused consumer price inflation in many countries, rich and poor alike, is expected to remain a cause of concern leading to shortage of key inputs for manufacturing in many countries, but Central banks mostly have avoided any tightening of interest rates so far, adopting a wait and watch policy instead. But the risk remains that waiting for too long without acting may cause inflation to become self-propelling in a spiral, creating more uncertainty. If not addressed timely, it could hold back private investment and recovery from the loss of employment cause by the pandemic. Low-income countries have already seen the highest rises in food prices hitting the poor hard.

Among the emerging market economies, the report projected that China which had registered a positive growth rate of 2.3 percent in 2020 will grow by 8 percent in 2021 and 5.6 percent in 2022, while India, which had registered negative growth of 7.3 percent in 2020 will grow by 9.5 percent in 2021 and 8.5 percent in 2022. Most advanced economies and emerging market and developing economies will reach or surpass their pre-pandemic output levels only by the end of 2022, but the recovery in employment is expected to lag behind output in many countries. Vaccinating the entire world population as fast as possible must remain the top policy priority to prevent the emergence of new variants and to hasten global economic recovery; the Report laid down a \$50 billion plan to vaccinate at least 40 percent of the population in every country by the end of 2021 and 70 percent by mid-2022 through proactive vaccination programmes and access to improved healthcare facilities. As long as the existing enormous vaccine inequalities persist between countries, the risk of emergence of newer mutants will only be heightened. As fiscal space gets limited in poor coun-



**MOST ADVANCED ECONOMIES AND EMERGING MARKETS AND DEVELOPING ECONOMIES WILL REACH OR SURPASS THEIR PRE-PANDEMIC OUTPUT LEVELS ONLY BY THE END OF 2022, BUT THE RECOVERY IN EMPLOYMENT IS EXPECTED TO LAG BEHIND THE OUTPUT IN MANY COUNTRIES. VACCINATING THE ENTIRE WORLD POPULATION AS FAST AS POSSIBLE MUST REMAIN THE TOP POLICY PRIORITY**

(The writer is a former Director General, Comptroller & Auditor General of India, and currently a professor at the Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Administration. The views expressed are personal.)



tries, governmental transfers must increasingly target the worst affected sections that cannot take the battering any more. The year 2021 has already seen between 65 and 75 million people slipping into poverty in low-income countries; unless addressed by a slew of measures including fiscal transfers and international aid, the resulting social discontent may become a contagion of unrest spilling across borders.

The report also noted that climate will pose another serious challenge to policymakers, as the current actions are grossly inadequate to prevent a dangerous overheating of the planet. Noting the array of extreme weather-related events, like the heat domes and intense wildfires in the USA and Canada, high precipitation and flooding in Europe, drought in Brazil, and floods in eastern and south Asia, combined with evidence from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the world is experiencing the warmest period in over 100,000 years, the report notes that "these events have further raised fears that the highly adverse consequences of climate change may arise sooner rather than later, increasing the urgency of actions to reduce these risks and improve resilience." That was before the November COP26 summit in Glasgow, and we have again seen the usual charade of unmet targets, half-hearted actions and lip-service to climatic pledges by the developed countries reflecting a yawning gap between expectation and reality.

As regards fiscal policy, though deficits have declined by an aver-

age of two percent of GDP in 2021, they still remain well above pre-pandemic levels, and are projected to return to their pre-pandemic levels not before 2026. In emerging markets and low-income countries, output and tax revenues may not regain their pre-crisis trajectory and the reduction in deficits, if any, will have to occur largely through lower spending, impacting the poor again. The massive policy stimuli given to battle the pandemic have also increased the financial vulnerabilities in many sectors, leading to unintended consequences like stretched asset valuations, which if left unchecked, may cause lasting damage to the global financial system. Global government debt is again reaching record peaks — close to 100 percent of GDP in many countries. In India, the general Government debt, i.e., the combined debt of the Centre and the states, is expected to reach an unprecedented 90.6 percent of GDP during the current fiscal, before moderating to 88.8 percent during FY23, but still will remain over 85 percent at least till 2026-27. Though now there is consensus that debt can be stabilised even at that level by maintaining healthy interest growth rate differentials (IGRD), such high debt level increases the vulnerability to another economic shock like a protracted lockdown due to new emerging variants like the omicron that has since taken the world by the storm, increasing the vulnerabilities and the uncertainties manifolds. Though its impacts are as yet conjectured to be milder than that of

the deadly delta variant, it has already clouded the economic outlooks almost everywhere and replaced the optimism seen earlier with a dark pessimism, as seen by the stock markets going into turmoil the world over. Governments are weary of imposing another protracted and costly lockdown, and are bracing for the worst.

As far as India is concerned, despite Omicron, most including the RBI agree that the IMF prediction of 9.5 percent growth in FY22 is achievable. Everyone is waiting for the budget with bated breath, hoping against hope that consumption will return to normal with healthy increases in tax revenues from direct taxes and the GST, driving higher capex and capacity expansion. For the time being, growth seems to be the priority over inflation. But interest rates will have to be raised sooner or later, as indicated by the US Federal Reserve's decision to end the easy money policy by March 2021 and to raise the interest rates significantly in the next fiscal. This may lead to flight of capital from India weakening the rupee, making imports costlier, especially fuel prices that will hit us hard. Also, whether or not we develop a quick vaccine against Omicron, it is certainly not the last of mutants, and there will be others. Only through increasing our reliance on cutting-edge technology and faith in science to combat the virus should we expect to survive the pandemic and the economic gloom that is staring at us as another new year rings its bells.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

**THE POLICE IN UP ARE SLEEPING WHILE 34 INCIDENTS OF CASTEIST CRIMES AND 135 CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN ARE REPORTED IN THE STATE DAILY.**

—CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

PRIYANKA GANDHI



**PRIYANKA GANDHI BELIEVES IN DOING SELECTIVE POLITICS AND REMAINS SILENT ON CRIMES AGAINST DALITS AND WOMEN IN RAJASTHAN.**

—BJP NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON

SAMBIT PATRA

# Vagaries of inflation: Time to tame it?

The double-digit inflation is due to the rise in prices of mineral oils, basic metals, crude petroleum and natural gas, chemicals, food products etc

Recently, the office of the Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade released the index numbers of wholesale price index for the month of September and November 2021 (final and provisional, respectively). The WPI based inflation rate (Y-o-Y) was reported as 14.23 per cent (provisional) over 2.29 per cent in November 2020. The rise in the rate of inflation is said to be due to rise in prices of mineral oils, basic metals, crude petroleum and natural gas, chemicals, food products etc. The rate has steadily risen over few months as November 2021 was the 8th straight month when the wholesale inflation has grown by double digits.



MEENAL SHARMA JAGTAP

(The writer is Joint Director, National Institute of Labour Economics Research & Development (NILERD), Niti Aayog. The views expressed are personal.)

The other indicator of inflation, which Reserve Bank of India tracks under its mandate of keeping the rate at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side till March 2026 is the retail inflation or CPI. The data on CPI-based inflation is compiled by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. The overall measure of CPI, including food and energy, commonly referred to as headline CPI has edged upto 4.5 per cent in October 2021 from 4.3 per cent in September, mainly due to spike in vegetable prices owing to crop damage because of heavy rainfalls in several states and fuel inflation which spiked due to rising international prices of liquefied petroleum gas and



kerosene. Core inflation, which excludes volatile items such as food and fuel and is considered to be the indicator of underlying long-term inflation, has risen to 6.1 per cent in November 2021 increasing from 5.9 per cent in the previous month. The Monthly Review Report of the Indian economy for November 2021 released by the Department of Economic Affairs recognised the fact that the core CPI "has remained sticky throughout the first seven months of FY

22". A possible explanation is the stickiness of prices in categories which are the key components of core inflation like housing, education, transport and communication, household goods and services, etc.

WPI and CPI also differ in their composition. WPI assigns maximum weight to manufactured goods (64.23 per cent) while CPI is dominated by the prices of food articles as the maximum weight is assigned to food and beverages (45.86 per cent). Since the two inflation rates are calculated based on two different indices, there is a variance between them, as is also evident in the present times. As mentioned earlier, RBI targets retail inflation or CPI instead of the wholesale

inflation rate (WPI) as was recommended by an expert committee of the RBI on strengthening monetary policy framework in India.

With an aim of nurturing the ongoing domestic recovery in the economy through the monetary policy channel RBI in its recent monetary policy meeting in October 2021, chose to keep the repo rate unchanged at 4 per cent and reverse repo rate at 3.35 per cent while maintaining the 'accommodative' stance of the Monetary policy.

The Bank has projected CPI inflation at 5.2 per cent for Q1 2022-23 taking into consideration the factors like vegetable prices which are likely to remain soft with the arrival of Kharif harvest and supply side interventions from

the government in case of pulses and edible oils, upward pressures from crude oil prices, acute shortage of key industrial components, rising metals and energy prices etc. RBI tried to ease the worry of rising prices by assuring it will shall keep a close watch on inflation and take measures as deemed necessary, pointing out that inflation was not a major worry for the Bank at this time.

However, many economists expressed concerns about how inflation would start pinching consumers hard in 2022. Goldman Sachs also forecast a rise in core inflation in India as the manufacturers pass rising input costs to consumers, with a recovery in demand. It expects CPI inflation to rise to

5.8 per cent in 2022. RBI's sudden announcement of carrying out the three-day variable rate reverse repo (VRRR) was interesting.

The VRRR is an alternate window for banks to lend to RBI through auctions. The decision has hinted at the Bank's intent of absorbing excess liquidity with underlying inflation worries. As per the Governor of RBI, the VRRR auctions would be complemented by longer term VRRRs. Along with this, the Bank would undertake 'Operation Twists' and regular 'Open Market Operations' to suck excess liquidity. This is enough evidence for market participants to expect heavy liquidity withdrawal from the system and interest rates rising gradually.

# Viral pneumonia causes chaos in Wuhan

REUTERS ■ SYDNEY/ROME

Daily COVID-19 infections have hit record highs in the United States, swathes of Europe and Australia as the new Omicron variant of the virus races out of control, keeping workers at home and overwhelming testing centres.

Almost two years after China first reported a cluster of "viral pneumonia" cases in the city of Wuhan, the regularly mutating coronavirus is wreaking havoc in many parts of the world, forcing governments to rethink quarantine and test rules.

Although some studies have suggested the Omicron variant is less deadly than some of its predecessors, the huge numbers of people testing positive mean that hospitals in some countries might soon be overwhelmed, while businesses might struggle to carry on operating because of workers having to quarantine.

France, Britain, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Malta all registered a record number of new cases on Tuesday.

The average number of daily COVID-19 cases in the United States has also hit a record high over the past seven days, according to a Reuters tally. The previous peak was in January of this year.

New daily infections in Australia spiked to nearly 18,300, on Wednesday eclipsing the previous pandemic high of around 11,300 hit a day earlier. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said his country needed "a gear change" to manage overburdened laboratories, with long walk-in and drive-in queues

reported in a number of areas. Testing bottlenecks have also built in European nations, including Spain where demand for free COVID-19 testing kits provided by Madrid's regional government far outstripped supply on Tuesday, with long queues forming outside pharmacies.

## "I JUST WANT TO GO HOME"

A number of governments were also increasingly worried by the huge numbers of people being forced into self-isolation because they had been in contact with a coronavirus sufferer.

"We just can't have everybody just being taken out of circulation because they just happen to be at a particular place at a particular time," Australia's Morrison told reporters.

Italy was expected to relax some of its quarantine rules on Wednesday over fears the country will soon grind to a halt given how many people are having to self-isolate protectively, with cases doubling on Tuesday from a day earlier to 78,313.

However, China showed no let up in its policy of zero tolerance to outbreaks, keeping 13 million people in the city of Xian under rigid lockdown for a seventh day as new COVID-19 infections persisted, with 151 cases reported on Tuesday. "I just want to go home," said a 32-year-old mechanic, who was in Xian last week for a business trip when the city was effectively shut off from the outside world. No cases of Omicron have been announced in Xian so far.

## Amid record infections, France ups pressure on unvaccinated

PARIS: France's government is forging ahead with efforts to increase pressure on unvaccinated people to get coronavirus jabs, as omicron variant fuels a record surge in infections. At a parliamentary hearing on Wednesday afternoon, the health minister will defend a government plan to allow only fully vaccinated to enjoy continued access to places such as restaurants, cinemas, theaters, museums, and sports arenas. The speeded-up introduction of so-called "vaccine pass" forms part of a government strategy to use vaccinations, rather than new lockdowns, to try to soften impact of fast-spreading omicron variant on already overburdened hospitals. France reported nearly 180,000 new cases of COVID-19 infection on Tuesday, a record, and is bracing for that number to keep increasing, with forecasts warning of more than 250,000 daily infections likely by January. France has vaccinated more than 75% of its population and is rushing out booster shots, again to combat omicron. But more than 4 million adults remain unvaccinated. The government wants vaccine pass to be in place by mid-January. If approved by parliament, its introduction will mean that unvaccinated people will no longer be able to use negative test results to access places where vaccine pass is required. AP

## Asia keeps Omicron at bay, but a surge may be inevitable

TAIPEI, Taiwan: Much of Asia has largely managed to keep omicron at bay even as variant rages in other parts of world, but region that is home to most of the globe's population is bracing for what may be an inevitable surge.

Strict quarantine rules for arrivals and widespread mask wearing have helped slow spread of the highly contagious variant in Asia. Countries such as Japan, South Korea and Thailand quickly reinstated entry and quarantine restrictions in recent weeks after relaxing them in fall.

But cases are mounting, and experts say next few months will be critical. Those fears have been amplified by doubts about effectiveness of Chinese-made vaccines used in China and much of developing world. "Once pace picks up, its upsurge would be extremely fast," said Dr. Shigeru Omi, a top medical adviser to Japan's government.

In India, which has been getting back to normal after a devastating COVID-19 outbreak earlier this year, omicron is once again raising fears, with more than 700 cases reported in country of nearly 1.4 billion people. The capital, New Delhi, banned large gatherings for Christmas and New Year's, and many other states have announced new restrictions, including curfews and vaccination requirements at stores and

restaurants. At crowded Chandni Chowk market in New Delhi, many people were shopping without masks this week. Cycle rickshaw driver Mahesh Kumar said he is afraid of passengers who don't wear masks. "There are many people who don't believe in this disease. They think it doesn't exist. But I am very scared. I have children and a family," he said. "If something happens to me, who will take care of them?"

Australia is already dealing with multiple COVID-19 surges, with a state leader saying Wednesday that "omicron is moving too quickly." Elsewhere, Thailand has topped 700 cases, South Korea has more than 500 and Japan, over 300. China, which has some of strictest virus controls in world, has reported at least eight.

Only four cases have been reported in Philippines, where people flocked to shopping malls ahead of Christmas and to Mass in biggest Roman Catholic nation in Asia.

Some hospitals have even begun dismantling COVID-19 wards in a move experts say could prove to be premature. Japan managed to delay spread of new variant for about a month largely thanks to its reimposition of entry restrictions, mandatory COVID-19 tests for all arrivals and the isolation of all passengers on a flight if anyone tested positive for omicron. AP

## Pro-democracy news website in Hong Kong closes after raid, arrests

AP ■ HONG KONG

A vocal pro-democracy website in Hong Kong shut down Wednesday after police raided its office and arrested six current and former editors and board members in a continuing crackdown on dissent in the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

Stand News said in a statement that its website and social media are no longer being updated and will be taken down. It said all employees have been dismissed.

The outlet was one of the last remaining openly critical voices in Hong Kong following the shuttering of the Apple Daily newspaper, which closed after its publisher, Jimmy Lai, and top editors were arrested and its assets frozen.

Police raided Stand News' office earlier in the day after arresting the six, including popular singer and activist Denise Ho, a former board member, on charges of conspiracy to publish a seditious publication.

More than 200 officers were involved in the search, police said. They had a warrant to seize relevant journalistic materials under a national security law enacted last year.

The six were arrested under a crime ordinance that dates from Hong Kong's days as a British colony before 1997, when it was returned to China. Those convicted could face up to two years in prison and a fine of up to 5,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$640). Police did not

identify who was arrested, but Hong Kong's South China Morning Post newspaper reported they were one current and one former editor of Stand News, and four former board members including Ho and former lawmaker Margaret Ng.

A Facebook post early Wednesday morning on Ho's account confirmed that she was being arrested. A subsequent message posted on her behalf said she was OK and urged friends and supporters not to worry about her.

That post drew nearly 40,000 likes and 2,700 comments, mostly from supporters.

Early Wednesday, Stand News posted a video on Facebook of police officers at the home of a deputy editor, Ronson Chan. Chan, who is also chair of the Hong Kong Journalists Association, was taken away for questioning, the organization confirmed in a statement.

Chan, who was later released, told media the police seized his electronic devices, bank cards and press card. The arrests come as authorities crack down on dissent in the semi-autonomous Chinese city. Hong Kong police previously raided the offices of the now-defunct Apple Daily newspaper, seizing boxes of materials and computer hard drives to assist in their investigation and freezing millions in assets that later forced the newspaper to cease operations. Police charged the Apple Daily's Lai, who is already jailed on other charges, with sedition on Tuesday.

## Taiwan issue will be more complex next year: China's drastic warning

Beijing: China will take "drastic measures" if Taiwan makes moves towards independence, a Beijing official warned on Wednesday, adding that Taiwan's provocations and outside meddling could intensify next year.

China claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory and in past two years has stepped up military and diplomatic pressure to assert its sovereignty claim, fuelling anger in Taipei and concern in Washington.

China was willing to try its utmost to seek peaceful reunification with Taiwan but would act if any red lines on independence were crossed, Ma Xiaoguang, spokesman of Taiwan Affairs Office, told a media briefing.

"If separatist forces in Taiwan seeking independence provoke, exert force or even break through any red line, we will have to take drastic measures," Ma said. Taiwan has emerged as a key factor in strained relations between Taiwan and United States, the

island's most important international backer and arms supplier despite absence of formal diplomatic ties. China regularly describes the island as most sensitive issue in its ties with United States. Ma said provocation by pro-independence forces and "external intervention" could grow "sharper and more intense" in coming months.

"Next year, the Taiwan Strait situation will become more complex and severe," he said. Beijing has sent repeated air missions over Taiwan Strait in recent months to pressure Taiwan. It has said it will not give in to threats.

While United States recognises only one China, it is required by law to provide Taiwan with means to defend itself and has long followed a policy of "strategic ambiguity" on whether it would intervene militarily to protect Taiwan in event of a Chinese attack. The defeated Republic of China government fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing a civil war with Communists, who established the People's Republic of China.

## Pak police detain 85 prime suspects after determining their role in Sri Lankan man's lynching

PTI ■ LAHORE

Authorities in Pakistan's Punjab province on Wednesday said they have detained 85 main suspects after determining their role in brutal lynching of a Sri Lankan national in Sialkot city earlier this month.

In a shocking incident, a mob of 800 men, including supporters of radical Islamist party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), attacked a garment factory in Sialkot on December 3 and lynched its 49-year-old general manager - Priyantha Kumara Diyawadana - before setting his body on fire over allegations of blasphemy.

"Currently 85 main suspects whose role has been identified through video footages and investigation in brutal lynching of Priyantha Kumara are detained on physical remand," an official of Punjab police told PTI on Wednesday.

The official said over 100 other suspects were also included in investigation but no evidence of their involvement in case was detected, thus they were not named in the FIR and some of them who were detained were released.

"We want to present a strong case against prime suspects in court and investigation teams are working hard on it," he said, adding police will submit investigation report against 85 detained suspects in anti-terrorism court likely at end of next month.

On Tuesday, Lahore High Court Chief Justice Muhammad Ameer Bhatti directed Sialkot District Police Officer (DPO) Omar Saeed Malik to complete investigation of suspects and submit the report to the court at the earliest so that the trial in the case could begin.

DPO Malik gave a detailed briefing to the chief justice on the progress made so far in the lynching case of the Sri Lankan citizen. The Sialkot District Bar Association has already announced not to represent the suspects. "No lawyer will pursue the case on behalf of the suspects," the bar said in a statement.

The business community has collected USD 100,000 for the family of Kumara. The factory management has also decided to send the monthly salary of the deceased to his family.

The federal or the provincial government has yet to announce any compensation package for the victim's family so far. Kumara was working as general manager in the Rajko industries (dealing in garments - sportswear) in Sialkot district for over seven years. The incident sparked outrage across Pakistan with all sections of society condemning it and calling for the culprits to be punished. Pakistan's Senate on Friday passed an unanimous resolution condemning the lynching.

## Indonesia allows boat with 120 Rohingya refugees to land

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia: Indonesian authorities decided Wednesday to allow a boat carrying 120 Rohingya Muslims to land after drifting for days off the country's northernmost province of Aceh.

The decision was made because of the severe conditions experienced by the passengers, who are overwhelmingly women and children, said Armed Wijaya, who heads a refugee task force at the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Law and Security.

"The Indonesian government has decided, in the name of humanity, to accommodate the Rohingya refugees currently adrift at sea near Bireuen district," Wijaya said in a statement.

Local authorities had earlier said they would push boat back to international waters despite calls from United Nations refugee agency and human rights groups that it be allowed to land. The vessel is reportedly leaking and has a damaged engine, and is floating in open sea in harsh weather and may be at risk of capsizing, the UNHCR said Tuesday.

The boat was first sighted by local fishermen on Sunday about 60 miles (96 kilometers) off coast of Bireuen, said Badruddin Yunus, the leader of local tribal fishing community. He said fishermen were unable to tow broken-down wooden boat but provided food, water and clothes to passengers.

## Malaysia to spend nearly \$335 Million for flood relief: PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia will provide 1.4 billion ringgit (\$334.93 million) in cash aid and other forms of relief for those devastated by severe floods this month, Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob said on Wednesday.

Since December 17, nearly 70,000 people have been displaced while at least 48 were killed, after unusually high rainfall caused severe flooding in eight Malaysian states.

Ismail Sabri said in a statement that government relief measures would include direct cash aid for at least 30,000 affected households, death benefits, relief on utility bills and vehicle repairs.

It will also include funds for post-flood cleaning and reconstruction, particularly in the worst-hit states of Selangor and Pahang.

Malaysia typically has flooding on its eastern coasts that are exposed to the northeast monsoon between October and March. But authorities were caught off-guard by the floods in highly-populated urban areas in its western and central regions this month, prompting criticism of the government's slow response. Malaysia's national disaster management agency on Wednesday warned of more floods in coming days, issuing a continuous rainfall alert for five eastern states. Reuters

## कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता, लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खंड बिलासपुर (छ.ग.) :: ऑन लाईन निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना ::

जिला जल एवं स्वच्छता मिशन बिलासपुर की ओर कार्यपालन अभियंता एवं सदस्य सचिव, जिला जल एवं स्वच्छता मिशन द्वारा एकीकृत पंचायत व्यवस्था के अंतर्गत उपयुक्त श्रेणी में पंजीकृत टेकेंडरों से निम्नांकित कार्य हेतु प्रपत्र "अ" (प्रतिशत दर) ऑन लाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

| क्रमांक | नियंत्रण निविदा क्र. दिनांक | कार्य का नाम  | अनुमानित लागत (₹. लाख में) | सरोहर राशि |
|---------|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------|------------|
| 89478   | 220/24.12.2021              | बिलासपुर जिले के विकासखण्ड कोटा के ग्राम मन्दासरा (सुरकुण्ड), पंडरामसरा (बाघवाण/पंडरामसरा-2, सड़कपार) करणीखुर्द (ओरीपारा) में | 108.13                     | 81500/-    |
| 89483   | 221/24.12.2021              | बिलासपुर जिले के विकासखण्ड कोटा के ग्राम अमने (आवासपारा, बंदासरा), बंदासरा (सुरकुण्ड), खिगटपुर ( मंजीपारा), टिकरीपारा में     | 121.26                     | 91000/-    |

अन्य विवरण एवं विस्तृत निविदा छ.ग. शासन के ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेबसाइट <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> पर दिनांक 31.12.2021 सुबह 10.30 बजे से उपलब्ध है तथा दिनांक 20.01.2022 समय 17.30 तक बीड डाले जा सकते हैं एवं अन्य विवरण कार्यालयीन समय पर लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खंड बिलासपुर (छ.ग.) में देखे जा सकते हैं।

हस्ता/-  
कार्यपालन अभियंता,  
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी, खंड  
बिलासपुर (छ.ग.)  
R.o. No - 66248/4  
R.o. Date - 28/12/2021

**UJVN Limited**  
(An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprises)  
H.O. "UJJWAL" Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun - 248006  
Telephone-0135-2763808 Fax 0135-2763508  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 Website: www.ujvn.com

RO. No. 1043 **Date Extension Notice- 14** Date: 28.12.2021  
Due to unavoidable reasons the Date of Submission & opening of the e-NIT No. NCB/01/EE/PCM-DKP/TN/2021-22 & NCB/02/EE/PCM-DKP/TN/2021-22 invited by the office of the Executive Engineer Project Civil Maintenance-Dakpathar is being extended as below:  
Last Date & Time for submission of bids on the portal Upto 17:00 hrs of 03.01.2022  
Date & Time of Opening of bids on the portal at 11:00 hrs of 04.01.2022  
Information regarding Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation etc. of tender may be obtained from the website.  
Full & Further Details of tender can be seen from the e-procurement portal "https://uktenders.gov.in". **Executive Engineer**  
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

"APPENDIX- IV-A  
(See proviso to rule 8 (6))  
Sale notice for sale of immovable properties  
E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of immovable asset(s) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.  
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property(ies) mortgaged/charged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is", "whatever there is" and "without any recourse" basis on 31.01.2022 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M. (with unlimited automatic extensions of 5 minutes each in terms of the Tender Document), for recovery of Rs. 1,93,18,748/- (Rupees One Crore Ninety Three Lakh Eighteen Thousand Seven Hundred Forty Eight only) pending towards Loan Account No. HLABR000271272, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 27.12.2021 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 28.12.2021 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from DAMAKGOLD GEMS & JEWELS PVT. LTD., TAJINDER KUMAR, SHALU, YOG RAJ CONSULTANTS PVT. LTD., KAILASH CHANDER, POONAM, YOG RAJ, NEERU, GAURAV VERMA, MEGHA BATHLA, NEW LIGHT SWEET (THROUGH ITS PARTNERS), NEELAM AND DINESH KUMAR.  
The Reserve Price of the immovable Property(ies) will be Rs. 2,65,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crore Sixty Five Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 26,50,000/- (Rupees Twenty Six Lakh Fifty Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price. The EMD shall be paid by DD/RTGS/NEFT or through any other proper banking channels to the credit and in favour of INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LTD., Account No. 3218056427 with State Bank of India (IFSC: SBIN0009995), having its branch at CAG Branch, Mumbai (Maharashtra) before submitting the tender in order to participate in the online public auction. The successful bidder shall pay 25% amount of the sale price (less 10% of the Reserve Price paid before submitting the tender) immediately i.e. either on the same day or not later than the next working day and the remaining balance of the Sale Price shall be paid within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale.  
DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY(IES)  
PROPERTY LOCATED AT SHOP No. 494 & 495, WARD No. 11, PURANI SABZI MANDI, KILLA ROAD, ROHTAK ADMEASURING 105 SQ. YRDS. AND BOUNDED AS:  
EAST : ROAD  
WEST : POLICE CHOWKI  
NORTH : PROPERTY OF NATHURAM  
SOUTH : PROPERTY OF SHUKH DAVAL.  
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com and www.auctionfocus.in  
Sd/-  
Date : 27.12.2021 Authorized officer  
Place : ROHTAK Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

**SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE**  
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005  
Whereas  
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) R/w Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, (on underlying pool assigned to ICICI Bank by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd.) in relation to the enforcement of security in respect of a housing loan facility granted pursuant to a loan agreement entered into between DHFL and the borrower, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.  
As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.  
Sr. Name of the Borrower/ Number (Loan Account Number (DHFL Old LAN & ICICI New LAN) Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.) Name of Branch  
1. Shalu Sharma/ Neeta Sharma (19800041551 & QZPTU0005029442) Property No. RZ-F- 2/124 A, 1st Floor (Front Side) Without Roof Rights, Khasra No-447/2, Village Nasirpur, Gali No.5, Mahavir Enclave, New Delhi, Delhi/ NCR December 27, 2021 July 08, 2021 Rs. 19,54,975/-  
2. Sushil Arora/ Poonam Arora (9200001919 & QZZR000005007249) Property Bearing No. WZ- 36- C, Third Floor With Roof Rights, Block-V, Plot No. Ja-39, Gali No.9, Khasra No-1825, Village Tihar, Hari Nagar, Beri Wala Bagh, New Delhi/ December 27, 2021 July 08, 2021 Rs. 11,86,028/-  
The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.  
Date : December 30, 2021  
Place : Delhi/ NCR Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

**Office of the Superintending Engineer**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Circle, Public Works Department, Almora**  
Phone/Fax: 05962-230295 Email: sepwdalm@rediffmail.com  
**NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (E-Tendering)**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
The Superintending Engineer, 1<sup>st</sup> Circle, PWD Almora Public Works Department, Almora invites tender through E-Tendering (Two Bid System) on behalf of Honourable Governor of Uttarakhand for following works. All other information will be available from dated 30/12/2021 & onwards on website <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>

| S. No. | Name of work  | Cost of Tender Form | Earnest Money (Rupee In lakh) | Validity of Tender | Time of Completion | Contractor's Category of Registration for tendering |
|--------|---|---------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|
| 1      | <b>Executive Engineer PD PWD Almora</b><br>Construction of 18Mt. Span Single Lane Motor bridge at Km. 2 in Basgaon Darman Motor Road from Jyoli Basar Khunt Motor Road Distt- Almora  | Rs.5000 +18% GST    | 3.22 Lakh                     | 60 Days            | 15 Months          | Category "B" & Above (Bridge Works)                 |
| 2      | <b>Executive Engineer PD PWD Almora</b><br>Widening & Improvement work of Motor Road from km.73 of NH-109 to Vikas Bhawan. New Collectorate and Medical Collage, Almora in District Almora and Assembly Constituency Almora under C.M. Announcement No. 771/2021. Anticipation of Sanction) | Rs.5000 +18% GST    | 9.60 Lakh                     | 120 Days           | 18 Months          | Category "A" & Above (Road Works)                   |
| 3      | <b>Executive Engineer PD PWD Bageshwar</b><br>Improvement and PC Work in km. 23, 24 and 25 of Dagoli Sainani Dadimkhet Jakh-Hadbad- Pandrapali- Balighat Dofar Dharmghar- Kotmaniya-Pakhu- Satsiling Motor Road SH-60) in block Garur in district bageshwar under state sector.             | Rs.5000 +18% GST    | 3.60 Lakh                     | 120 Days           | 15 Months          | Category "B" & Above (Road Works)                   |

पत्रांक- 8820/निविदा-01/2021 दिनांक- 29.12.2021

SUB-STANDARD PRESSURE COOKERS

# CCPA issues 15 notices to etailers, sellers

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

As many as 15 notices have been issued by the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) against e-commerce companies and sellers for selling pressure cookers online that are non-compliant with Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) norms. These notices have been issued by the CCPA as part of its suo moto action. The BIS has also issued three notices for violation of quality control order of domestic pressure cookers and two notices for helmets. Previously, CCPA had also issued Safety Notice to alert consumers against buying helmets, pressure cookers and cooking gas cylinders which violate compulsory standards. Goods which violate compulsory standards are liable to be held 'defective' under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

held 'defective' under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

The ministry said the CCPA has decided to take up cases involving sale or offering for sale goods that violate compulsory standards as a matter of preventing unfair trade practice and to protect, promote and enforce the rights of consumers as a class.

Any person found selling 11 household items like helmets, pressure cooker, electric iron, microwave oven, aluminium foil for food packaging, water heaters and sewing machines -- without conforming to compulsory standards and holding valid licence as prescribed by BIS is liable for violation of consumer rights and unfair trade practices and face action under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

As part of celebrations of 75 years of India's independence 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the CCPA has already initiated a country-wide campaign to prevent sale of spurious and counterfeit goods that violate QCOs and raise awareness among consumers to purchase goods that conform to BIS Standards.

In this regard, the CCPA has written to District Collectors across the country to investigate unfair trade practice and violation of consumer rights concerning manufacture or sale of helmets, domestic pressure cooker and cooking gas cylinders. The government said that violation of standards mandated by the QCOs cannot only endanger public safety, it can make consumers vulnerable to severe injuries.

"This is a critical cause for concern especially in the case of household goods, since such goods are present in most homes and are in the immediate vicinity of family members," it said. To protect consumers from risk of suffering injury and harm and ensure required safety and technical standards are followed, the central government is empowered to direct conformity to standard and compulsory use of standard mark under Section 16 of BIS Act. These directions are generally published in the form of Quality Control Orders (QCO).

# GST Council meet on Dec 31, to discuss rate rationalisation

**New Delhi:** The GST Council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, will meet on December 31 and discuss, among other things, report of the panel of State Ministers on rate rationalisation.

This will be a physical meeting, which will also discuss correction in duty inversion in certain goods.

The 46th GST Council meeting will be held on December 31 in Delhi, an official said, adding that it will be an extension to the pre-budget meeting with state finance ministers on December 30.

The Group of Ministers (GoM) on rate rationalisation will submit report to the Council. The panel has reviewed items under an inverted duty structure to help minimise refund payout.

Besides, the Fitment committee, comprising tax officers from states and the Centre, has made many "sweeping" recommendations to the GoM regarding slab and rate changes and taking items out of the exemption list.

Currently, GST is a four-tier slab structure of 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent. Essential items are either exempted or taxed at the lowest slab, while luxury and demerit items attract the highest slab. On the top of the highest slab, a cess is levied on luxury and demerit goods.

There have been demands for merging the 12 and 18 per cent slabs as also taking out certain items from the exempt category to balance the impact of slab rationalisation on revenue.

West Bengal's former Finance Minister Amit Mitra has urged the Union finance minister to roll back a proposed hike in textile from 5 per cent to 12 per cent saying this would lead to closure of around one lakh textile units and 15 lakh job losses.

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# Sensex, Nifty edge down on profit-booking in banking, metal stocks

**Mumbai:** Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty retreated from over one-week highs to close lower on Wednesday due to profit booking in banking, IT and metal stocks amid weak global trends.

After a two-day rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex dropped by 90.99 points or 0.16 per cent to settle at 57,806.49 in volatile trade. As many as 19 of its constituents declined while 11 advanced.

The broader Nifty slipped by 19.65 points or 0.11 per cent to close at 17,213.60 with 31 of its stocks ending in the red.

SBI was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding over 1 per cent. ITC, NTPC, Tech Mahindra, Tata Steel, Kotak Bank and M&M were among major losers.

On the other hand, gains in Sun Pharma, IndusInd Bank, Dr Reddy's, Bajaj Finserv and Reliance Industries

restricted Sensex losses. Markets were choppy throughout the session ahead of the F&O expiry and a weak trend in global markets, experts said.

**Rupee breaks 9-day winning streak, slips 1 paisa against US dollar**

**Mumbai:** The rupee snapped its nine-day winning streak to settle just one paisa lower at 74.71 against the US dollar on Wednesday, as muted domestic equities and a strong greenback overseas weighed on the market sentiment. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee started on a tepid note at 74.69 against the dollar. During the day, it witnessed a high of 74.68 and a low of 74.86. The domestic unit finally ended at 74.71, a decline of just one paisa over the last close. In the previous session, the rupee registered its ninth straight gain and surged 30 paise to close at a one-month high of 74.70 against the greenback.

**Gold declines ₹216; silver tanks ₹179**

**New Delhi:** Gold price in the national capital on Wednesday declined by ₹216 to ₹47,010 per 10 gram in tandem with decline in international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal settled at ₹47,226 per 10 gram. Silver also tanked ₹179 to ₹61,348 per kg from ₹ 61,527 per kg in the previous trade. In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,804 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 23.07 per ounce.

# RBI: NRIs, OCIs do not need its prior nod to buy immovable property in India except in select cases

**Mumbai:** Reserve Bank on Wednesday said that NRIs and OCIs do not require its prior approval for acquisition and transfer of immovable property in India, other than agricultural land, farm house and plantation property.

The clarification has been issued by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) following queries received at its various offices with regard to acquisition of immovable properties by Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs) in the wake of a Supreme Court judgment relating to Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA).

"It is hereby clarified that the concerned Supreme Court Judgment dated February 26, 2021 in Civil Appeal 9546 of 2010 was related to provisions of FERA, 1973, which has been repealed under Section 49 of FEMA, 1999," RBI said in a release.

At present, the central bank said "NRIs/OCIs are governed by provisions of FEMA 1999 and do not require prior approval of RBI for acquisition and transfer of immovable property in India, other than agricultural land/ farm house/ plantation property..."

NRIs are Non-Resident Indians.

Further, the central bank said that a large number of queries have been received at its various offices based on newspaper reports on the Supreme Court judgement.

# Sebi specifies fine, action to be taken in case of non-compliance by non-convertible securities issuers

**New Delhi:** Markets regulator Sebi on Wednesday came out with guidelines for levying fines and taking action for non-compliance with continuous disclosure requirements by the issuers of listed non-convertible securities and commercial papers.

The circular will come into force for the due dates of compliances falling on or after February 01, 2022.

The fines realised need to be credited to the Investor Protection Fund of the concerned stock exchange.

The fines will continue to accrue till the time of rectification of the non-compliance and to the satisfaction of the concerned recognised stock exchange.

"Such accrual shall be irrespective of any other action(s) initiated by recognised stock exchange(s)/SEBI," it said.

Sebi has specified the fine amounts to be levied in case of violation of different provisions of Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements norms and the actions to be taken in case of non-compliance.

Stock exchanges can deviate, if necessary, but only after recording reasons in writing. In case the non-compliant entity is listed on more than one stock exchange, the concerned exchanges shall take uniform action in consultation with each other.

The regulator said that every stock exchange will review the compliance status of the entities having listed their non-convertible securities and commercial paper and issue notices to the non-compliant entities within 30 days from the due date of the prescribed timeline.

Non-compliant entities have to ensure compliance with the requirements and pay fines within 15 days from the date of such notice.

In case entities fail to do so, exchanges will have to issue reminder notices and at the same time, send intimation to other exchanges where the non-convertible securities or commercial paper of the non-compliant entity are listed.

# E-commerce hiring up 28 pc in 2021; 2022 likely to be even more promising: TeamLease

**New Delhi:** Employment opportunities in the e-commerce and allied industries witnessed a 28 per cent surge in 2021, and recruitment activities in this segment will gain further momentum driven by economic recovery and aggressive vaccination drive, according to TeamLease Services.

The e-commerce sector grew by 8 per cent in 2020 and 30 per cent in 2021. It is now poised to reach USD 111 billion by 2024 and USD 200 billion by 2026. The stellar growth in this sector has provided the much-needed impetus to the economy and created a multitude of employment opportunities.

Looking at the employment ecosystem, there was a 28 per cent surge in employment opportunities in e-commerce and allied industries (e-commerce, social commerce, online grocery/ essentials) in 2021, according to TeamLease Services.

"With the aggressive vaccination drive pan India and economic activities gaining normalcy, next year is going to be very optimistic. Hiring activities have resumed in most of the industries, even the ones which faced maximum impact last year," said Ajay Thomas, VP & Business Head (Retail, E-Commerce, Logistics & Transportation), TeamLease Services.

For e-commerce and startups, which have been rewarding throughout, many new job opportunities will be added in 2022, and hiring will further go up by 32 per cent, Thomas added.

Over the year, the demand was high for roles like supply chain management, warehouse roles, support services, and customer service management.

The report further noted that not only Tier I locations, but even Tier II to Tier IV regions witnessed a surge in hiring, especially as e-commerce has now gone deeper into the interiors of the country.

"Appraisals in these industries were at an average of 20 to 30 per cent. Many companies also introduced unique benefits and compensation like relaxing their attendance policies, providing flexibility in schedule changes, implementing additional sick leave and exploring back-up childcare options for employees," it said.

ing will further go up by 32 per cent, Thomas added.

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"Appraisals in these industries were at an average of 20 to 30 per cent. Many companies also introduced unique benefits and compensation like relaxing their attendance policies, providing flexibility in schedule changes, implementing additional sick leave and exploring back-up childcare options for employees," it said.

**SEARCH FOR KIDNAPPED GIRL**

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Aysa D/o Abdul Razak R/o H.No. 1374, Gali No. 48/2, Jafrabad, Delhi.** Age about 2 years, Height 2", Complexion Shallow, Round Face, Medium Built, Wearing Blue colour sweater, blue colour pajami and coffee colour chappal in feet has been kidnapped since 18.12.2021 from her house. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out this girl but no clue has come to light so far. In this regard a case FIR No. 653/21 dated 19.12.2021 U/S 363 IPC has been registered at PS Jafrabad, Delhi.

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

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>  
Email: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Ph: 011-23011334  
Fax: 011-23014046, 23015218  
DPI/1247/NE/2021

SHO  
PS: Jafrabad, Delhi  
Ph.: 011-22560191, 22560192

**SEARCH FOR KIDNAPPED GIRL**

General Public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Sabreen Khatoun, D/o: Mohd Faiyaz, R/o: H. No. 566-A, Kumra Mohalla, Ghonda has been reported kidnapped since 27.10.2014 from her home. In this regard FIR No. 701/14, u/s 363 IPC dated 28.10.2014 has been registered at P.S. Jafrabad, Delhi.** The description of kidnapped girl is as under:

**Name: Sabreen Khatoun, Age: About 16 Years, Height: 5'2", Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Built: Normal, ID Mark: Old Injury Mark at Forehead, Wearing: Mehandi Colour Printed Suit-Salwar and Plastic Chappal in Feet.**

If anyone have any information about this kidnapped girl please inform P.S. Jafrabad, Delhi.

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639  
Police Station Jafrabad, Delhi  
Ph: 011-22560191, 8750870732

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

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

Notice U/s. 13(2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 is being issued by ICICI Bank Ltd. (on underlying pool assigned to ICICI Bank by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd.) in relation to the enforcement of security in respect of a housing loan facility granted pursuant to a loan agreement entered into between DHFL and the following borrower(s) who have defaulted in repayment of principal and interest of loans facility obtained by them from secured creditor and loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them on their last known addresses, however, it has returned un-served and hence, they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

| Sr. No. | Name of the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Guarantor / Loan Account Number (DHFL Old LAN & ICICI New LAN) & Address                                  | Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset Value Enforced   | Date of Notice Sent Outstanding as on Date of Notice | NPA Date   |
|---------|--|--|--|------------|
| 1.      | Nandan Singh Bisht, Kiran Bisht, Rzf 773/9, Gali No.14, Rajnagar 2, Palamcolony, South West Delhi Delhi No.2830000807, A/ No. QZROH00005042850 | RZ- F- 772/11-A, Second Floor, Khalsa No- 44/1/19/2, Vill- Palam, Raj Nagar 2, Palam Colony, New Delhi | 23/07/2021<br>Rs. 18,23,498/-                        | 31/03/2021 |

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

Date : December 29, 2021  
Place : Delhi NCR  
Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

**SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE**

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

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

| Sr. No. | Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number   | Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession  | Date of Demand/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.) | Name of Branch                  |
|---------|---|---|---|---------------------------------|
| 1.      | Nitin Prakash/ Mahan Rani/ Prakash Consulting and Solutions Pvt Ltd/ LBNOD00003954652/ LBNOD00003956506 | Unit No.703, Plot No- 14, Sector- 17th Floor, Tower Kamalath, Navi Mumbai- 400705, Maharashtra/ December 23, 2021 | March 25, 2021<br>Rs. 35,51,283/-             | Delhi NCR & Mumbai, Maharashtra |

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/ guarantor(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : December 30, 2021  
Place: Delhi/ NCR  
Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

**KALINDI COLLEGE (University of Delhi)**

East Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008  
Phone: 011-25787604; Fax No.: 011-25782505  
E-mail : [kalindisampark@kalindi.du.ac.in](mailto:kalindisampark@kalindi.du.ac.in); Website : [www.kalindi.du.ac.in](http://www.kalindi.du.ac.in)

**NAAC ACCREDITED 'A' GRADE COLLEGE**

**KC/Recruitment 2021/ 29.12.2021**

Kalindi College invites applications for the Non-Teaching Post, to be filled on permanent basis, in the pay scale mentioned against the post and usual allowance as per rules of University of Delhi/UGC from time to time. The post to be filled is hereunder:

| Sl. No. | Name of the Post            | Pay Level | Age | No. of Posts | Category of the Post  |
|---------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1.      | Administrative Officer      | 10        | 35  | 01           | UR OBC SC ST EWS PwBD |
| 2.      | Senior Personal Assistant   | 07        | 35  | 01           | UR OBC SC ST EWS PwBD |
| 3.      | Jr. Assistant               | 02        | 27  | 02           | UR OBC SC ST EWS PwBD |
| 4.      | Tabla Accompanist           | 04        | 45  | 01           | UR OBC SC ST EWS PwBD |
| 5.      | Semi Professional Assistant | 05        | 30  | 01           | UR OBC SC ST EWS PwBD |
| 6.      | Library Assistant           | 04        | 30  | 02           | UR OBC SC ST EWS PwBD |
| 7.      | Laboratory Attendant        | 01        | 30  | 08           | 04 01 01 01 HI        |
| 8.      | Laboratory Attendant        | 01        | 30  | 11           | 06 02 01 01 01 ----   |

UR- Unreserved, OBC-Other Backward Classes, SC-Schedule Caste, ST - Schedule Tribe, PwBD- Persons with Benchmark Disability(LD- Loco motor Disability, HI- Hearing Impaired) (\*Pay Scale as per 7th Pay Commission)

Candidates fulfilling the eligibility criteria may fill Application Form available on the college website [www.kalindi.du.ac.in](http://www.kalindi.du.ac.in). For qualifications and other details, please visit the college website [www.kalindi.du.ac.in](http://www.kalindi.du.ac.in). Any addendum / corrigendum shall be posted only on the college website.

Sd/-  
Actg. Principal

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Flat Unit No. 7042, Floor 4TH, Tower-7, Pious Hideaway, Sec-150, Noida was booked in the name of Mrs. SUNITA MITTAL W/o A.K. MITTAL. Mrs. SUNITA MITTAL expired on 26/04/2021. Regarding mentioned property, the name of Mr. NITIN MITTAL who is son of allottee of this property is to be noted as Primary allottee in Mis Homekraft Infra Pvt Ltd records in respect of captioned unit. If anybody has any objection to this, he or she may approach M/s Homekraft Infra Pvt. Ltd. within 21 days of publication of this notice with all the relevant documents at address: ATS Tower, Plot No. 16, 2nd Floor, Sector-135, Noida-201305, Ph.91-120-7111500

**SEARCH FOR KIDNAPPED GIRL**

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Aysa D/o Abdul Razak R/o H.No. 1374, Gali No. 48/2, Jafrabad, Delhi.** Age about 2 years, Height 2", Complexion Shallow, Round Face, Medium Built, Wearing Blue colour sweater, blue colour pajami and coffee colour chappal in feet has been kidnapped since 18.12.2021 from her house. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out this girl but no clue has come to light so far. In this regard a case FIR No. 653/21 dated 19.12.2021 U/S 363 IPC has been registered at PS Jafrabad, Delhi.

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

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>  
Email: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Ph: 011-23011334  
Fax: 011-23014046, 23015218  
DPI/1247/NE/2021

SHO  
PS: Jafrabad, Delhi  
Ph.: 011-22560191, 22560192

**New Okhla Industrial Development Authority**

Administrative Building, Sector-6, NOIDA-201301 (U.P.)  
Website : [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com)

**E-TENDER NOTICE**

E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website : [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com) & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes / amendments & corrigendum etc.

| S. No. | Job No./Work Name  | Amount              |
|--------|--|---------------------|
| 1.     | 18/D(H)/DD(H)-I/2021-22, M/o Park/Green Belt with two year Maintenance Sector-14 and 14A all Parks and Green Belt, Noida.      | Cost Rs. 56.05 Lacs |
| 2.     | 39/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2021-22, D/o Green Belt in Sector-75 & 117 with five year maintenance.  | Cost Rs. 56.01 Lacs |
| 3.     | 21/D(H)/DD(H)-III/2021-22, M/o Park (sub head Plantation) with three month maintenance in Sector-80, 82, 83, 87, 106, 90, 137. | Cost Rs. 76.42 Lacs |

Which can be uploaded by date 06.01.2022 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 07.01.2022 at 11.00 AM.

Director (Hort.)  
Noida  
Office : Sector - 39, Noida  
Noida

**CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA**

**JAIPUR METRO RAIL CORPORATION LIMITED**

(A Govt. of Rajasthan undertaking), Directorate of Operations & Systems  
4th Floor, Administration Building, Metro Depot, Brijraj Park, Mansarovar, Jaipur-302002  
Tel. No. 0141-2822101, Email: [doaj@jaipurmetro.co.in](mailto:doaj@jaipurmetro.co.in); CIN: U05122RJ2005GO000630

**NOTICE INVITING BID** Date: 22.12.2021

JMRC invites bids from the eligible contractors for the NIB's as mentioned below:

- No. JMRC/O&S/OP/CF/2021-22/NIB/02 "Bid for Selection of Agency for Providing Customer Facilitation Services for Mansarovar to Ram Nagar and other designated places of Jaipur Metro Rail Corporation Ltd." Last Date of Submission & Opening of Bid: 28.01.2022. (UJN:JMRC2122S0B000056)
- No. JMRC/O&S/OP/CF/2021-22/NIB/03 "Bid for Selection of Agency for Providing Customer Facilitation Services for Civil Lines to Badi Chaurap and other designated places of Jaipur Metro Rail Corporation Ltd." Last Date of Submission & Opening of Bid: 28.01.2022. (UJN:JMRC2122S0B000057)

Bid documents may be downloaded from [www.sppp.rajabhawan.gov.in](http://www.sppp.rajabhawan.gov.in) or [www.transport.rajabhawan.gov.in/jmrc/](http://www.transport.rajabhawan.gov.in/jmrc/) or [www.eproc.rajabhawan.gov.in](http://www.eproc.rajabhawan.gov.in).

Raj.Samwad/C/21/10033 जायक सारक की जानकारी जायक सारक

**SEARCH FOR KIDNAPPED**

General Public is hereby informed that a girl (depicted in the photo), **Namely: Sonam D/o Ranjeet Kashyap R/o H.No. 4973, Fatak Badal Bagh, Hauz Qazi, Delhi** has been kidnapped since 16.12.2021 from the area of P.S. Hauz Qazi, Delhi. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 317/21 U/s 363 IPC has been registered at Police Station Hauz Qazi, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-

**Age: 16 Years, Height: 5', Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Built: Thin, Hair: Long and Black, Wearing: Unknown.**

Any person having any information/ Clue about this kidnapped girl may inform to the following:- E-mail [ld-cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:ld-cic@cbi.gov.in) or website: [cbi.nic.in](http://cbi.nic.in)

Phone: SHO  
011-24368638, 24368641 P.S. Hauz Qazi, Delhi  
Fax No. 011-24368639 Central Distt., Delhi  
DP/1166/C/21/10033 Ph. No. 011-23210414, 23212482

**SEARCH FOR KIDNAPPED**

General public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Sabreen Khatoun, D/o: Mohd Faiyaz, R/o: H. No. 566-A, Kumra Mohalla, Ghonda has been reported kidnapped since 27.10.2014 from her home. In this regard FIR No. 701/14, u/s 363 IPC dated 28.10.2014 has been registered at P.S. Jafrabad, Delhi.** The description of kidnapped girl is as under:

**Name: Sabreen Khatoun, Age: About 16 Years, Height: 5'2", Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Built: Normal, ID Mark: Old Injury Mark at Forehead, Wearing: Mehandi Colour Printed Suit-Salwar and Plastic Chappal in Feet.**

If anyone have any information about this kidnapped girl please inform P.S. Jafrabad, Delhi.

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639  
Police Station Jafrabad, Delhi  
Ph: 011-22560191, 8750870732

**THE RAJASTHAN SMALL INDUSTRIES CORPORATION LTD.**

(A Government of Rajasthan Undertaking)  
Udyog Bhawan, Tilak Marg, C Scheme, Jaipur-302 005  
Phone: 0141-2227079 Fax: 0141-2227257  
Website: <http://indus.stres.rajabhawan.gov.in> E-mail: [rajisico@rajasthan.gov.in](mailto:rajisico@rajasthan.gov.in)  
CIN: U05110RJ1961SG0001118

**ई-निविदा सूचना 9-10/2021-22**

राजस्थानी विद्युत, राजस्थानी जलपुर 24 माह तथा राजस्थानी, ओबेरॉय होटल मुम्बई में 36 माह के लिए गुणवत्ता बिक्री लक्ष्य काउण्टर बालिटी सेल्स टारगेट काउण्टर में आधार पर निम्न राजस्थानी इस्तेमाल उत्पादों की बिक्री हेतु इच्छुक निविदादाताओं से ई-निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं-

(A)  
UJN:RS2122S0B000005

राजस्थानी विद्युत - राजस्थानी हेल्थ क्लिनिक्स टाई एंड आई के तिले सिलारे परत्र राजस्थानी टैल्सटॉल कलेक्शन (मिना सिले सिलारे परत्र / कम्पन) राजस्थानी पेंटिंग, मात्र सिलक कपडा व कागज पर राजस्थानी ब्रास एंव नेटल आईस्कैम राजस्थानी फनीकर (सोफासेट, मट्टन, ब्राईनिंग सैट,स्टेडी टेबल, आभारती, ब्रॉयल,डीवीएच, पार्टीडान, सन्दुक,कोरेंड आदि राजस्थानी ग्री, पोटरी, टेककोटा, पोस्टरकी इत्यादि। राजस्थानी रजाईयें राजस्थानी जरी, मोटा एंव पौर जडाज ब्राईडल सारी राजस्थानी मोजकी एंव कान्हे के इस्तेमाल उत्पाद व राजस्थानी फोल्डर, डेल एंव हॉमिअर मीड फूड - राजस्थानी, लामे के आईस्कैम जैसे पायज, मुजिया, अचार, ब्राई सैजीटेबल, एंव मेहंदी - राजस्थानी गलीचा, दरी व दरी उत्पाद।

राजस्थानी जलपुर - राजस्थानी परम्परागत पेंटिंग काउण्टर (मात्र सिलक कपडा व कागज पर)-राजस्थानी हेल्थ क्लिनिक्स टाई एंड आई के तिले सिलारे परत्र - राजस्थानी गलीचा, दरी व दरी उत्पाद राजस्थानी मुल्कवान, ब्राईडल्लुवान रज व रज जडित आभूषण -राजस्थानी ब्यू पोर्टरी - राजस्थानी थोवा जैस्ली।

(B)  
UJN:RS2122S0B000010

राजस्थानी मुम्बई - गुणवत्ता बिक्री लक्ष्य काउण्टर (बालिटी सेल्स टारगेट काउण्टर ) (समस्त हस्त निर्मित राजस्थानी उत्पाद)

ई-निविदा की तिथि 06.01.2022 को मध्यह्न 3.00 बजे राजस्थानी के बोर्ड रूम में आयोजित की जायेगी। आवेदन की अन्तिम तिथि 17.1.2022 को 1.00 बजे व खोलने की तिथि 17.1.2022 को मध्यह्न 3.00 बजे। पूर्ण जानकारी एवं विविधा के नियम एवं शर्तों हेतु बैंक साइट <http://eproc.rajabhawan.gov.in>; <http://sppp.rajabhawan.gov.in> एंव [www.rajisico.gov.in](http://www.rajisico.gov.in) देखें।

राज.सं.वार./सी./21/9960 प्रत्यक्ष निदेशक



**Bollywood**  
 'Oh My Ghost is scary in some parts and funny in others. I think that's a clever combination.'  
 —Sunny Leone

# PARADIGM SHIFT

Quack Quack shares a yearly round-up report of everything in online dating in 2021.

By RAVI MITTAL

If the year 2020 seemed grim for this planet, 2021 took it upon itself to be the chilling reminder that it wasn't so much about the year but the general times we have come to live in. Every domain and every sector has gone through seismic changes, both for the better and the worse. However, very few realms have observed an entire paradigm shift across 2021 as significantly as that of online dating.

Chronicling and charting out the key observations in the year 2021's dating trends becomes of paramount importance to assess where online dating stood and where it is headed. This is where a survey conducted by an Indian dating app, QuackQuack, assumes importance.

The pandemic has indeed thrown a few curveballs towards individuals wanting to date. Males and females alike are rapidly coming to terms with a new universe of online dating every single day and embracing more self-paced and healthier ways of dating, an evolving process that shall be the norm soon.

The key takeaways from the survey can be best summarised as below:



## VACCINATION IS A MUST

With the world changing ever so slightly every millisecond, we are coming to terms with the notion that a new normal is not just beckoning but is very much here. The survey corroborates this very trend whereby a distinct eight out of every 10 people, who were part of the sample size of the survey, voiced their opinion in favour of compulsory vaccination as a precursor to a date.

A fairly significant 65 per cent and 75 per cent of people belonging to the age groups of 18-20 and 21-30 respectively agreed upon the same. The importance of a double jab was uniformly highlighted across both the top cities as well as the tier two cities of the country as 75 per cent and 70 per cent of the sample size belonging to each felt that the first step towards a safe date would have to be complete vaccination of the other. It was also observed that 80 per cent of the women and 70 per cent of the men who were part of the survey sample felt the necessity of inoculation prior to dates.

## DATING WITH A PURPOSE

The survey outlined the notion that, owing to the protocols surrounding Covid in place, people have had very little reason to venture outdoors, thereby leading them to reflect on the nature of the dates they have found on the dating app as against plunging for matches with a sense of desperation. 47 per cent of the

women and 35 per cent of the men, who were part of the survey, vouched for this behavioural change and also commented that the process of reflection and introspection led them towards healthier relationships than before. The difference in the trend of intentional dating between individuals residing in urban areas and those belonging to rural or semi-urban areas was comparatively

similar. While nearly 37 per cent of urban teenagers found that their dating process had taken a purposeful turn, 39 per cent of those from rural or semi-urban areas felt likewise.

## HAILING FROM THE SAME LOCATION IS PIVOTAL

The survey found that a staggering 58 per cent and 56 per cent of individuals ranging between the age groups of 18 to 20 and 21 and 30 respectively preferred pairing up with those belonging to a different location as it would help expand their radius of search for a prospective partner. This trend seemed to be more prominent within women as 58 per cent of them were comfortable dating partners from other locations as against a relatively lower 50 per cent among men. Further investigation into a demographic analysis of the sampled data revealed that 46 per cent of those residing in major metro cities preferred dating beyond the confines of their home location whereas a comparatively higher 57 per cent chose the same in the case of smaller cities as well as towns. The numbers indicate that a significant number of individuals do

not find location to be a major barrier when it comes to dating and are flexible with having partners from a place other than their own.

## VIDEO CALLING VERSUS MEETING IN PERSON

The survey revealed that a major percentage of 56 per cent in the age group of 18 to 20 preferred having their first date on a virtual medium and were risk-averse owing to the ongoing Covid situation across the country. However, in contrast, 43 per cent people in the age bracket of 30 and above, belonging to a more old school approach, chose to meet in person whilst following all the necessary safety precautions.

In conclusion, this survey should be seen, more than anything, as a stepping stone towards more such insightful study aiming to explore the contemporary trends in the dating arena along with the ebb and flow of user habits and behaviors that is bound to accompany the vast expanse i.e. online dating.

(The author is the founder and CEO of QuackQuack.)



## NEW PARTY ANTHEM

The video of A R RAHMAN and DALER MEHNDI's song, *Saala Garda Uda Diya*, from *Atrangi Re*, goes viral. By TEAM VIVA

*Saala Garda Uda Diya* is the new slang that is trending. The internet went gaga over the music video which crossed two million views in the first few hours of its video release. The love for Daler Mehndi's voice with AR Rahman's music and Irshad Kamil's lyrics can be seen in the comment section of the song on YouTube. One person commented, "A R Rahman plus Daler Mehndi gave us *Rang de Basanti* way back in 2006 and the same magic is seen in 2021".

Mehndi shares his experience of working with Rahman and for the first time with Kamil. He expressed, "I remember getting a call from Rahman *saab* and I was extremely happy to be his only choice for this song. My excitement doubled when I heard that Kamil is the lyricist".

He added, "Whenever Rahman *saab* and I come together, there's some magic. Receiving such a warm response from the audience in the first few hours proves that our magic works".

Even after 25 years in the music industry, Mehndi never disappoints his audience. There is something new and exclusive in every song and every work he does. He is the powerhouse of the Bollywood music industry and his songs are a full power-pack deal. There is no doubt that *Garda* is the new party anthem of the year.

*Zindagi* ropes in Fawad Khan and Sanam Saeed for their forthcoming original which will stream on ZEE5. The yet-to-be-titled series is helmed by critically acclaimed director Asim Abbasi who also directed *Zindagi's* first original *Churails*.

The show blends together magical realism and supernatural fantasy within a family reunion setting, and deals with themes of love, loss and reconciliation. In this series, Khan plays a single parent — charming but ridden with guilt for what he has lost. With his son, he tries to be every bit the father his own father was and wasn't. Saeed plays the central female character in the series. Harboured otherworldly secrets, she takes it upon herself to heal, and make whole, everyone who surrounds her.

The series has gone on floors and a large part of it has been shot in the picturesque Hunza valley.

Speaking on the announcement of the new series, Shailja Kejriwal, from Zee Entertainment Enterprises said, "We've had a very rewarding association with Fawad, Sanam and Asim individually with their past projects and are thrilled to bring them together on this one. This time we've experimented with the genre as well as the storyline. While audiences have often seen shows on family dynamics this one is infused with realms of mystique

## Blend of mystique and fantasy

Actors FAWAD KHAN and SANAM SAEED roped in as *Zindagi's* yet-to-be-titled show. By TEAM VIVA



and fantasy, making it a fascinating watch."

"I think *Zindagi* is taking bold and brave decisions when it comes to storytelling. It's nat-

urally evolving into a platform that encourages diversity of opinion and inclusiveness for all filmmakers and material ranging from everyday mainstream

to avant-garde and noir. I feel there's a place for everyone in this artistic landscape," shared Khan.

Saeed expressed, "I'm

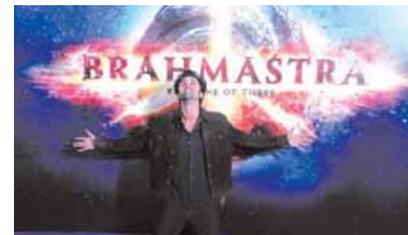
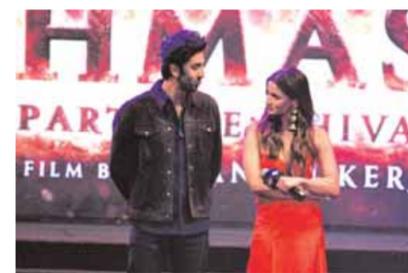
thrilled to be collaborating with one of my favourite directors Asim Abbasi again, this time for *Zindagi*. This new project embarks on a fantastical journey with some stunning performances by a very meticulously picked cast. I can't wait for everyone to see the magic that's been created in this beautiful limbo land."

"*Zindagi* has become a pioneer, not only for India-Pakistan OTT collaborations, but also for encouraging artists to push boundaries of narrative storytelling. I experienced that with *Churails*, and I am experiencing that again with this project. Under Shailja's support and guidance, *Zindagi* has truly become a home for many filmmakers like me, where we can see our craziest, wildest ideas come to fruition. I am feeling blessed, and very hopeful that this new project will have a very strong emotional resonance not only with the South Asian viewers, but a global audience," said Abbasi.

One of the greatest and most loved contemporary actors, Khan and Saeed have been known for their superlative work in the popular television series *Zindagi Gulzar Hai*.



Bollywood actors Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt and director Ayan Mukherji during their forthcoming film *Brahmastra's* promotion at Thyagraj Stadium in New Delhi



—Photos by Pankaj Kumar

## TRENDBLAZER

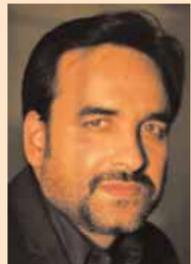
### RANBIR KAPOOR MISSES HIS FATHER

Actor **RANBIR KAPOOR** is all set to return to the big screen with his superhero saga *Brahmastra*, helmed by Ayan Mukherji. He revealed that Rishi Kapoor used to bombard him with a lot of questions about the film.

"I miss my father terribly today. I remember during the making of this film, during these last how many ever years, he kept fighting with Ayan and me and kept questioning us, 'What are you doing?' 'Who takes so long to make a film?' 'Who spends so much money? Ranbir, you're not making one penny on this film. India mein koi VFX film nahi dekhta.'" the *Barfi* star confessed.

### fairtalk

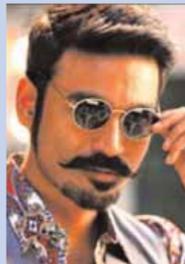
PANKAJ TRIPATHI



"Being a village boy, I never thought of becoming an actor when I was young, so meeting my favourite cricketer was out of question. Now, when 83's offer came to me and as part of the workshop I met Sunil sir and Kapil sir, it was emotional. It was a pinch-me moment for me. The young boy from the village has come this far — I am emotional about it."

### dailytalk

DHANUSH



"Somehow, Anand L Rai found me. He saw one song of mine from a film called *Aadukalam*. He wanted somebody like that to play Kundan (the character in *Raanjhanaa*). And then he was crazy enough to fly to Kolkata the same day he spoke to me, because I was there performing for an event. Then he spoke to me for ten minutes about impossible achievements. I was amazed by the conviction he had."

### BEN AFFLECK ON HIS PAST

Hollywood star **BEN AFFLECK** says that if he and his former wife Jennifer Garner had not divorced in 2018, he would feel trapped.

Affleck shared, "We probably would've ended up at each other's throats. I'd probably still be drinking. It's part of why I started... because I was trapped. I was like 'I can't leave 'cause of my kids, but I'm not happy, what do I do?' I would drink a bottle of scotch and fall asleep on the couch, which turned out not to be the solution."



# THE DOER AND CHANGE-MAKER

PRAVIR KRISHNA, MD of TRIFED, launches his book, *Tryst with the Tribes*, which is the story of a young IAS officer who fell in love with India's tribal heartland and how this experience changed him forever

Pravir Krishna (IAS MP 1987), has held various posts from being an assistant collector to secretary GOMP and GOI in which he earned the image of a 'doer and change maker'. He charted a stellar career course over the past 34 years, setting new paradigms of empathetic service in all the roles that he assayed. These years also helped him curate his vision for serving people in a manner he knows best - with a blend of thought and action.

Krishna came face-to-face with the stark realities of the exploitation of tribal people in Sarguja, Madhya Pradesh. It affected him so deeply that he embarked on a journey towards

bettering the lives of tribal people. Ever since, he has helped create an atmosphere where tribal people traded freely and earned more. In fact, his market reforms were listed by the UNO-FAO as among 32 global best practices. Krishna's close association with the tribes continued in Bastar, and now as MD of TRIFED, it has become even more important with the pan India roll out of the Van Dhan Program. He earned the title 'Imli Krishna', when he conceptualised and spearheaded the Imli Andolan of Bastar, helping 30 lakh tribals to get fair deal for their trade and become masters of their destinies.

It is important that we



them. This is what Krishna has been consistently striving through his stint in the tribal areas and now, with great success.

Revolving around the aforementioned theme and drawing from his experiences, Krishna has written a book, *Tryst with the Tribes*.

### About the book

*Tryst with the Tribes* is an inspirational story about how a sensitive, committed and intelligent civil servant can transform an entire ecosystem of livelihoods from survival and abject exploitation to one of mutual help, entrepreneurship, and holistic empowerment.

The book encapsulates his tryst with the tribes of India that he has adopted as his own.

His witty writing style and strong emotional quotient place him in the genre of thoughtful writers who make facts seem more interesting than fiction.

The story of how a young IAS officer fell in love with India's tribal heartland, and how this experience changed him forever.

"I am sure that this book will be very well received as a window to a creative blend of tradition and modernity that the author has brought to the field of tribal development," commented M Venkaiah

Naidu, the Vice President of India.

"He is now applying all these learnings to making tribes of India the 'ethical-ecological' brands of our times," expresses Sanjeev Chopra, former director of Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie.

The book is a labour of love and sweat, hard work and persistence, telling the story of how he led the Imli Andolan to a nation-wide platform, which he fondly calls the 'Tribal AMUL Transformation'. It is the remarkable story of a bureaucrat whose destiny is forever entwined with that of many of India's tribal communities.



Tamil Nadu Water Resources and Minerals Minister, Duraimurugan inaugurates the Neurosurgical Robot, and State Handlooms and Textiles Minister, R Gandhi launches the Epilepsy Monitoring Unit at Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore on Tuesday by unveiling plaques, as the hospital's chairman Dr G V Sampath is present. The Vellore Lok Sabha MP, D M Kathir Anand, MLAs, AP Nandakumar, P Karthikeyan and J L Easwarappan, are also seen in the picture.



Chandra Prakash Goyal, 1986 batch officer of UP Cadre of Indian Forest Service, has been appointed as Director General of Forests & Special Secretary in the MoEFCC. He is an alumni of Lucknow University, FRI and University of Edinburgh and has an experience of almost 20 years in field forestry. He has served as Joint Secretary in Government of India for six years.



## Sustainable engineering

RITES gets IEI Industry Excellence Award 2021

RITES Ltd, a Miniratna (Category-1) Schedule 'RA' Public Sector Enterprise, has been conferred 'IEI Industry Excellence Award 2021' by the Institution of Engineers (India) in the Engineering Services and Consultancy (ESC) category.

The award, presented by Minister of Heavy Industries, Government of India, Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey during the 36<sup>th</sup> Indian Engineering Congress - Centenary Celebrations in New Delhi, recognises RITES' efforts towards innovation and excellence in engineering operations and consultancy services, thereby building capacity to sustain excellence in competitive manner.

On the occasion, RITES Ltd said, "RITES is delighted with this honour. It is a testimony to its contribution towards the advancement and application of 'sustainable' engineering."

## CELEBRATING GOOD GOVERNANCE DAY

CCS (Pension) Rules Book 2021 was released by Home Minister, Amit Shah

On the occasion of Good Governance Day, *CCS (Pension) Rules Book 2021* was released by Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State, Personnel, PG and pensions, and Sanjay Singh, secretary, department of pension & pensioners' welfare.

Department of pension & pensioners' welfare has reviewed and rationalised the pension rules of the Central Civil Government servants and has notified the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules 2021 superseding the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 1972. The Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules cover the Central Civil Government servants appointed before January 1, 2004. The employees appointed on or after the said date are covered by the National Pension System. The rules encompass provisions

for regulating pension and retirement gratuity on retirement of a Government servant and family pension and death gratuity on death of a government servant/pensioner.

The government decided to rationalise these rules and to bring out a revised and updated version of the rules. The revised rules do not make any changes in regard to entitlement of amount of pension, family pension or gratuity. However, while incorporating the amendments and instructions issued during the last 50 years, the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 2021 bring about several new policy and procedural improvements over the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 1972.

*(Pension Rule Book 2021 is available on DOPPW website viz pensionersporttal.gov.in)*

Vejendra Srinivasa Chakravarty has taken charge as director (commercial) of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL). A chemical engineer from Laxminarayan Institute of Technology, Nagpur University, Shri Chakravarty joined SAIL in 1987 in the company's Central Marketing Organization.

Rising through the ranks, Chakravarty became the Executive Director, Marketing in

## Rising through the ranks

VS Chakravarty assumes charge as SAIL's director of commercial

SAIL before taking over as the Director (Commercial) of the company. He is known for his commercial and marketing acumen. Chakravarty has worked on various important projects including formulation of the company's Annual

Business Plan for Marketing and contributed to production planning which has guided the company's long term marketing strategy. As ED, he has contributed to formulation and implementation of various products and price strategy.



Satish Kumar Kashyup, general manager/CLW inaugurated the Logistics Hub in Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) near Times Office Gate on Tuesday. Senior officers were present during the programme. The hub has been developed with the aim to offer parking benefits and other basic conveniences to truck/lorry drivers. It will provide various facilities like proper parking space with high mast light, waiting room for night stay, et al. It will help to avert traffic congestion and reduce loading/unloading time. It is located near a medical and market facility.

## Producing green power

NTPC signs MoU with GNIDA to supply RDF for 10 years

NTPC Ltd, India's largest integrated energy company in an endeavour towards a sustainable development, signs an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) for supply of 'Refused Derived Fuel' (combustible fraction

of the municipal solid waste).

As per the MoU, GNIDA will be supplying 20 Tonnes per Day (TPD) of Refused Derived Fuel (RDF) to NTPC for period of ten years.

This initiative will help NTPC to demonstrate an environment-friendly technology to produce green power and chemical from RDF and is planned under the theme of 'NETRA Green Campus' where the campus will have 24\*7 Green Power from Solar PV, Battery Storage, H2 and RDF.



Satish Kumar Kashyup, general manager/CLW also inspected the Steel Foundry shop on Tuesday. Steel foundry-made modified ballast block was seen, which will save space in the loco as compared to conventional type design. He also interacted with officers, supervisors and staff of respective shops.

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

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

The District North Goa team received an ₹11,000/- cash prize, certificate and trophy, ₹5,500 cash prize was given to the runner up team. Participation certificates were given to the players of both the teams.

Kunal, IAS, while distributing the prizes, congratulated both the teams for showing sportsmen spirit.

## Creating awareness

The North Goa team beat South Goa during the Blind Cricket Tournament at the GCA ground Porvorim



it. He pointed out that sportsmen spirit and participation in elections are interrelated. The election is a festival of democracy and in election, we need sportsmen spirit, commitment and participation for the success of democracy, he remarked.

He also said that Election Commission has set up a helpline number

(1950) for all assistance. Urging the voter to participate ethically, he explained that people can call for any inquiry/complaint, if they find anyone influencing the voter by distributing freebies, using muscle power or are threatened in any manner. He further stated that absentee voter facilities have been set up for PwD electors and senior citizens

above 80 years of age and they have the choice to either come to polling station or to opt for absentee voting system by casting a postal ballot at home. He also appealed PwD Electors to use PwD App of Election Commission of India.

Many people acquainted themselves with EVM and VVPAT demonstrations. There was livestreaming of the match on Facebook and YouTube channel of CEO Goa. Person with Disabilities from various categories participated to see the match as well as EVM/VVPAT demonstration. Divyang Lokshahichho Rath was also made available at the venue with all accessible material related to Election including the Assured minimum facilities folder in braille for Person with Visual Impairment. Person with visual impairment also expressed their interest in creating awareness among other persons with disabilities on ethical voting and participation across Goa.



## Development of the power sector

PFC conferred with IEI Industry Excellence Award 2021

In yet another recognition for excellence in operations, Power Finance Corporation, a Maharatna CPSE and India's leading power sector focussed non-banking financial company has been conferred with the prestigious 'IEI Industry Excellence Award 2021'.

The award was presented by Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey, Minister of Heavy Industries, Government of

India. R Rahman, Executive Director (PR & CSR) and PK Sinha, Executive Director (Projects) received the award on behalf of PFC during the 36<sup>th</sup> Indian Engineering Congress. The ceremony was held at Vignyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The award recognises PFC's dedication to nation building and its major role in the development of the power sector.



The VC of IP University, Padma Shri Professor Dr Mahesh Verma, was conferred with Samraj Ratan Award by Kishore Kumar Memorial Club at its 19<sup>th</sup> Kishore Kumar Awards Function organised at India Islamic Cultural Centre. The award was given for his outstanding contribution to the society. A book written by the founder general secretary, Kamal Dhiman, of the organisation - *Madhubala - The Venus of Indian Cinema* - was also released on the occasion.

Ashutosh Gangal, general manager of Northern Railway conducted an inspection of the Saharanpur-Moradabad section of the Moradabad Division on Monday. The GM was accompanied by Ajay Nandan, Divisional Railway Manager, Moradabad Division, Principal Heads of Department, Northern Railway and senior officers of the division.

The GM initiated his inspection from Balia Khedi. He inspected the station area, yard and the railway colony and also inaugurated the newly renovated RPF Barrak. Moving by a special train, the entourage stopped at level crossing gate number 521 between Chidiyala and Ikbalpur and Bridge number 1282 Dn before reaching Roorkee.

At Roorkee, the GM inspected the station, and the staff colony. On reaching Najibabad, he inspected the station, washing pit for train cleaning, running room for drivers, health center, yard and a level crossing near the station. He also inspected a newly upgraded first AC coach in which several passenger conducive features have been introduced.

The GM reached Dhampur inspecting the track and other rail structures enroute. Here, he visited the station and witnessed a demonstration on the working of the bio-vacuum toilet. An exhibition was put up by different departments. A Nukkad Natak was also staged on the occasion. Cash awards for exemplary perfor-



## New initiatives

GM of Northern Railway inspects Saharanpur-Moradabad section of the Moradabad Division

mance were given to Bindu Singh, gateman, Roorkee, Md Yunus, mate/gang Ikbalpur, S K Verma, station superintendent, Roorkee and Mohan Singh, senior section engi-

neer/works, Roorkee. Addressing a press meet, the GM assured them that Railways is committed to complete these projects on time so that all can benefit from them.



Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Ashok Gehlot, said that the state government is working with dedication to promote the tourism industry of the state. For this, many important decisions have been taken. In order to take Rajasthan to new heights in the field of tourism, the government has taken the decision to create a tourism development fund of ₹500 crores. With this fund, works like development of infrastructure facilities at tourist places, their conservation and strong branding at national and international level will be done.

Gehlot addressed the inauguration ceremony of the light and sound shows at five major tourist places of the state on Monday. In this programme organised through video conference, the CM visited Jai Niwas Udyan locat-

## Promoting tourism

CM Ashok Gehlot inaugurates light and sound shows in five major tourist spots of Rajasthan

ed in Govind Dev Ji Temple Complex, the main religious place of Jaipur, Mirabai Memorial in Merta, world famous fort of Chittorgarh, attractive light and sound show at Machkund in Dholpur and the historical Gadsisar of Jaisalmer. He inaugurated the laser water show in the lake.

Rajasthan has a unique identity in the field of tourism in the country and the world. A large number of domestic and foreign tourists come here to see the pleasing culture, forts, palaces, stepwells

and attractive places related to wildlife, desert etc. The tourism industry plays an important role in employment. The livelihood of lakhs of people is linked to it. The economy of many countries of the world depends on the tourism industry.

The tourism minister said that domestic tourism can be taken to new heights by promoting air connectivity in the state and the tourism department will work in this direction with a positive attitude. Out of eight approved projects

in the state under the Swadesh Darshan scheme of the Ministry of Tourism, five light and sound shows and laser water shows were inaugurated. The shows will start soon at the remaining 3 locations as well. Due to the efforts of the state government, Rajasthan has received the Best Iconic Landscape Destination Award in India Today Tourism Award-2021, Best Festival Destination Award, Best State in Travel and Leisure India's Best Awards-2021 and Best Wedding Destination in the field of tourism among many others.

# India sniff at big win as SA depend on Elgar, rain

PTI ■ CENTURION

Jasprit Bumrah produced a couple of magic deliveries at the fag end of the fourth day as India remained on course for an emphatic victory against a rattled South Africa in the first Test here on Wednesday.

The home side would be praying for their captain Dean Elgar's dogged defiance and some rain on the final day on Thursday.

Chasing a never achieved victory target of 305 at the Supersport Park, South Africa finished the day at 94 for 4 with Elgar unbeaten on 52 after Indian batters caved in on a track with uneven bounce, getting all-out for 174 in just 50.3 overs.

It was another failure for the seasoned trio of skipper Virat Kohli, Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane but the pacers again swung the match in India's favour.

With 211 runs required and six wickets in hand, an intriguing battle could be on the cards on the final day but the Indian team would pray that forecast of a steady afternoon shower on Thursday doesn't come true.

Elgar and Rassie van der Dussen (11 off 65 balls) added 40 runs but more importantly batted for more than 22 overs as the pitch looked like easing down a bit.

Just when the game looked like meandering, Bumrah (2/22) went wide off the crease and got the ball to cut back late just when



Van der Dussen decided to shoulder arms thinking that it would go straight.

And then at the stroke of stumps, a lethal delivery knocked the stuffing out of night watchman Keshav Maharaj (8) to leave the Proteas

in complete tatters.

Even Mohammed Siraj (1/25) bowled one that was angled in and moved away late taking Keegan Peterson's (17) outside edge. Aiden Markram was the first to be dismissed as he failed to take his bat away

from a Mohammed Shami (1/29) delivery that bounced a tad extra after landing on the perfect upright seam.

The Indian bowlers would be aware that there had been instances when they have failed to get the tail knocked off the

final day, latest one being the Kanpur Test and here with rain set to be a factor, they will be running against time.

However, it must be mentioned that the cracks had widened and helped the South African pacers in the morning

session with some deliveries taking off from back of length.

The use of heavy roller and the Kookaburra getting old by the 15th over did work to South Africa's advantage but only for a limited period of time before the quality and skill-set of Indian

pacers found the opposition wanting.

If there is one worry, it's Pujara (16), Kohli (18) and Rahane (20) playing some indiscreet shots while the others were done-in by widening cracks that led to deliveries rearing up awkwardly from short of length.

KL Rahul (23), Rishabh Pant (34) and Ravichandran Ashwin (14) got snorters that grew big on them as Kagiso Rabada (4/42), debutant Marco Jansen (4/55) and Lungi Ngidi (2/31) looked menacing during the one and half sessions that the Indians batted.

South Africa have more than 140 overs to score 305 but on this Supersport Park track, it will be a herculean task to make a match of the target with highest successful chase here being 251 by England back in 2000-01.

For South Africa's batting line-up that distinctly lacks class of bygone era, facing Bumrah, Shami and Siraj remains a tall order. The Indian team certainly owes it to openers on Day one and the ever-consistent fast bowling unit that has helped them gain control of proceedings. Otherwise, the middle-order has cut a sorry picture and more so skipper Kohli, who is promising a lot with some selectable boundaries but the propensity to drive anything pitched fuller outside the off-stump is bringing about his downfall.

Young Jansen, who had impressed the India skipper as a net bowler during their last

tour of 2018, would certainly remember his debut as he angled one across at fuller length enticing the skipper to go for a drive.

Pujara once again played a lot of dot deliveries and then tickled one down the leg-side to Quinton de Kock off Ngidi.

The most embarrassing of the dismissals was Rahane's after he had hooked and cover drove Jansen for a six and a four. The first hook shot was off a bouncer above his left shoulder and the second one was over his right shoulder at a slightly lower height. He couldn't check his pull-shot and holed out at deep square leg. Had it not been for Pant's counter-attacking run-a-ball 34, India wouldn't have gained the psychological advantage of a target of 300 plus.

## Day 4 Scoreboard

South Africa 2nd Innings: Aiden Markram b Shami 1

Dean Elgar batting 52

Keegan Petersen c Pant b Siraj 17

Rassie van der Dussen b Bumrah 11

Keshav Maharaj b Bumrah 8

Extras: (LB-1 NB-4) 5

Total: (For four wickets in 40.5 overs) 94

Fall of wickets: 1/1 2/34 3/74 4/94

Bowling: Jasprit Bumrah 11.5-2-22-2, Mohammed Shami 9-2-29-1, Mohammed Siraj 11-4-25-1, Shardul Thakur 5-0-11-0, Ravichandran Ashwin 4-1-6-0.

# Warner eyes 2023 Ashes, win in India before quitting Test cricket

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

An Ashes series win in England in 2023 and defeating India in their own backyard are the two important milestones

Australia opener David Warner is eyeing before calling it quits from Test cricket.

After retaining the Ashes with an unassailable 3-0 lead inside 12 days, Warner, who turned 35 in October this year during the T20 World Cup, where he won the player-of-the-tournament award in Australia's title triumph, admitted that there are still a few goals he'd like to achieve before quitting the longest format of the game.

"We still haven't beaten India in India. That would be nice to do. And obviously, England away, we had a drawn series (in 2019), but hopefully, if I managed to get that chance and opportuni-



ty, I might think about going back," Warner was quoted as saying by 'ESPNcricinfo'.

Warner has played 13 and eight Tests across three series in England and two in India, respectively. But he has a poor record in both the countries, averaging 26 and 24 respectively without a century.

Warner would turn 37 by the next Ashes trip to England, but for the left-handed opener age is just a number.

"I think James Anderson sets the benchmark for older guys these days," he said.

"We look up to him as we're getting on in our days. But for me, it's about performing to the best of my ability and putting runs on the board.

"I feel in good touch. As I said, I was out of runs not out of form, so hopefully, I can put some more numbers on the board leading into this new year."

# Cricket for Visually Challenged: India beat Bangladesh 3-0

PTI ■ BHOPAL

Indian Blind Cricket team completed a 3-0 rout of Bangladesh on Wednesday by winning the final 'ODI' by 177 runs in a bilateral series organised by the Cricket Association of Blind in India (CABI).

The series was sponsored by IndusInd Bank.

Electing to bat first, opener Durga Rao's 173 runs off 113 balls and skipper Sunil Ramesh's 177 off 76 balls ensured a mammoth total of 466 for India in 40 overs.

In reply, Bangladesh were restricted to 289 with Mohammad Abdul Malek contributing 138 runs off 129 deliveries.

Durga Rao was adjudged Player of the Match.

# Prithvi to lead Mumbai in Ranji Trophy



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Flamboyant opener Prithvi Shaw was on Wednesday named captain of Mumbai for the first two matches of the upcoming Ranji Trophy season.

The 41-time Ranji champions Mumbai are placed in Elite nine-team Group C and will open their campaign against Maharashtra on January 13. They will clash against Delhi from January 20 in Kolkata.

"Prithvi is a brilliant captain and fantabulous opening batsman, what else you need,"

Mumbai chief selector Salil Ankola told PTI.

Young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, middle-order batters Sarfaraz Khan, Arman Jaffer and Aakarshit Gomel have made it to the 20-member squad along with experienced stumper-batter Aditya Tare.

All-rounder Shivam Dube, who has played one ODI and 13 T20Is, has been also picked by the selection committee that has Gulam Parkar, Sunil More, Prasad Desai and Anand Yalvigi.

The bowling attack will be led by experienced pacer Dhaval Kulkarni. Medium pacer Mohit Awasthi, left-arm spinner Shams Mulani, off-spinner Shashank Attarde and left-arm medium pacer Roystan Dias form the attack.

Pace all-rounder Arjun Tendulkar is also part of the squad.

Squad: Prithvi Shaw (Captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Aakarshit Gomel, Arman Jaffer, Sarfaraz Khan, Sachin Yadav, Aditya Tare (wicket-keeper), Hardik Tamore (wicket-keeper), Shivam Dube, Aman Khan, Shams Mulani, Tanush Kotian, Prashant Solanki, Shashank Attarde, Dhaval Kulkarni, Mohit Awasthi, Prince Badiani, Siddharth Raut, Roystan Dias and Arjun Tendulkar.

# Novak Djokovic withdraws from ATP Cup in Australia



AP ■ SYDNEY

Novak Djokovic has withdrawn from the ATP Cup in Australia ahead of the first Grand Slam tournament of the season, organizers said Wednesday.

No reason was given but the top-ranked Serb has declined to comment on his vaccination status in recent months and Australia's strict

regulations require all players, officials and fans to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

ATP Cup organizers disclosed Djokovic's withdrawal in a roster update that included France replacing Austria in the 16-country event following the withdrawals of Dominic Thiem and Dennis Novak. Dusan Lajovic will replace Djokovic for Serbia.

Fifth-ranked Andrey Rublev of Russia also pulled out, as did teammates Aslan Karatsev and Evgeny Donskoy.

The ATP Cup begins Saturday in Sydney. The Australian Open men's entry list announced in early December had the 34-year-old Djokovic at No. 1 in what was seen as a further indication that he'll be playing at Melbourne Park beginning Jan. 17 despite Australia's tight regulations.

The nine-time Australian Open champion is tied with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal for the men's record of 20 Grand Slam singles titles.

# Humpy takes 6th place in women's chess event

PTI ■ WARSAW (POLAND)

Defending champion Koneru Humpy failed to live up to her billing, finishing sixth with 7.5 points in the women's section of the FIDE World Rapid Chess Championship 2021 here.

In the open event, young Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh scored nine points to finish a creditable ninth, just half a point behind champion Nodirbek Abdusattorov (9.5) of Uzbekistan.

Gukesh pulled off a superb win against veteran Israeli player Boris Gelfand in the 10th round and followed it up with a victory over Jobava Baadur of Georgia in the next round late on Tuesday.

He drew his last two games against eventual winner Abdusattorov and Alexander Grischuk.

Humpy, who began the final day of the Rapid event with a draw against Alexandra Kosteniuk, also split points in her subsequent matches against Antoaneta Stefanova of Bulgaria and Gulnar



Mamadova of Azerbaijan.

R Vaishali was the next best Indian performer in the women's section, finishing in the 14th spot with seven points followed by Vantika Agrawal (6 points, 38th place), and Padmini Rout (5.5,

49th). Kosteniuk did not lose a single game, scoring seven victories (6 in a row in the first six rounds) and settling for four draws in 11 rounds to finish with nine points.

In the open section, Mitrabha Guha, who recently became a Grandmaster, logged 8.5 points to finish an impressive 15th. Vidit S Gujrathi (7.5 points) took the 45th spot while Harish Bharathakoti, who had a good start, settled for 60th place with 7 points.

The experienced P Harikrishna, the highest ranked Indian player here, ended 99th with 6.5 points.

The triumph for 17-year old Abdusattorov ended world champion and no.1 player Magnus Carlsen's reign. He edged out Ian Nepomniachtchi in a tie-break.

Four players — Abdusattorov, Nepomniachtchi, Carlsen and Fabiano Caruana of USA had finished with 9.5 points each and the first two went on to play the tie-break.

# Chennaiyin aim to heap more misery on struggling Bengaluru FC

PTI ■ VASCO

Former champions Chennaiyin FC would look to recover from a heavy defeat and get back to winning ways when they take on struggling Bengaluru FC in an Indian Super League match here on Thursday.

Chennaiyin defence was put to the sword by high-flying Kerala Blasters who ran out 3-0 winners, leaving Bozidar Bandovic's wards sixth in the table with 11 points from seven matches.

In Bengaluru FC, Chennaiyin will know they have an opponent who are not very high on confidence after remaining winless in their last seven games.

Languishing at 10th place, the Blues got off to a winning start this season but since then haven't managed to muster a single victory, pocketing just six points from eight outings. They played out a dull 0-0 draw in their last game, showing the lack of creativity in the final third.

The Marco Pezzaouli-coached team kept a clean sheet in the last game but in general lacked spark, which has been their bane for quite some time now. Skipper Sunil Chhetri hasn't been at his best, forcing the coach to relegate him on the bench.

"Sunil is very professional, he works very hard and I see the luck is coming back in training, and it's only a matter of time before it comes back in the games as well," Pezzaouli said on the eve of Thursday's game.

"It's not difficult for me to tell Sunil that he isn't starting. He's a professional who assesses himself, and he knows very well how to deal with these situations. He is an option for tomorrow because he has been training well."

# I-League hit by Covid outbreak, at least 7 players test positive

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The continuation of I League was on Wednesday thrown into doubt after multiple COVID-19 cases were reported among participating teams, staying and competing inside bio-bubbles.

It has been learnt that more than 10 people, including at least seven players, have tested positive for the virus after tests conducted on Tuesday.

Five players from Real Kashmir FC and at least one each from Mohammedan Sporting and debutants Sreenidi Deccan FC were among those who returned positive results.

"Five players and three officials from Real Kashmir and at least one player each from Mohammedan Sporting and Sreenidi Deccan FC are

among those positive cases," a top league source told PTI.

The outbreak happened at the Novotel Hotel, one of the three bio-bubbles, set up by the organisers for the football League that began on Sunday.

Besides RKFC, Sreenidi Deccan and Mohammedan Sporting, the three other teams staying at the Novotel Hotel are Rajasthan United, Aizawl FC and NEROCA.

An emergency meeting of the League Committee has been called to take a decision on continuation or suspension of the league.

"We are having an emergency meeting of the League committee at 4pm to decide on future course of action. The safety of players and officials is paramount," I-League CEO Sunando Dhar said.

Dhar did not divulge the



exact number of positive cases.

"There have some positive cases reported among certain #HeroILeague teams. The League is keeping a close tab on it and have already spoken to the clubs. In addition, an emergency meeting of the League Committee has also been summoned in the afternoon. Further details soon," tweeted the official handle of league.

Thirteen teams are competing in this year's I-League across three venues -- the Mohun Bagan Ground in Kolkata, the Kalyani Stadium at Kalyani and the Naihati Stadium at Naihati.

RKFC owner Sandeep Chattoo admitted some of his team's players have tested positive, though he did not share how many and who.

"Yes, RKFC has also some positive cases, players from all

(six) teams are suspected (of COVID-19). But we have not yet been told officially by the league organisers or the AIFF," he said.

"There was one round of tests on December 21 and all my players were negative. This latest tests were done yesterday."

He said the next few matches may be postponed but hoping that the I-League continues.

There are no matches scheduled for Wednesday. Sreenidi, Mohammedan Sporting, NEROCA and Aizawl FC have matches on Thursday while RKFC have a game on Friday.

All the players and officials were required to remain in quarantine for six days in their respective hotels after arrival from these bases. They were to be tested twice during those six days.