

WORLD 6UK CONFIRMS FIRST
2 CASES OF OMICRON**MONEY 7**OVER 390 RCS-UDAN AIR
ROUTES OPERATIONAL NOW**SPORT 8**NEW ZEALAND ALL OUT
FOR 296 ON DAY THREE

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DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL
BHUBANESWAR RANCHI
RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD
VIJAYWADA

DEHRADUN, SUNDAY NOVEMBER 28, 2021; PAGES 8+4 ₹3



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Now, stubble burning to be decriminalised

Centre agrees to farmers' demand even as stubble burning remains a big cause of pollution in Delhi

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After agreeing to repeal three farm laws, the Modi Government has agreed to meet the protesting farmers' demand to decriminalise stubble burning, a major source of air pollution in the national Capital.

Announcing this, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said this is in the very first day of the Winter Session of Parliament on November 29.

On withdrawal of cases against farmers during the agitation, Tomar said this is in the domain of the State Governments and they can consider withdrawal of cases.

In the note on the farm law repeal Bill, sent to Parliament members, Tomar has defended



the three contentious farm laws and wrote "the Government has tried hard to sensitise the farmers on the importance of the farm laws and explain the merits through several meetings and other forums. Without taking away the existing mechanisms available to farmers, new avenues were provided for trade of their produce. Besides, farmers were free to select the avenues of their choice where they can get more prices for their pro-

duce without any compulsion". "...the farm laws are proposed to be repealed. It is also proposed to omit sub section (1A) of section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act 1955 which was inserted vide the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020," the Bill said.

"As we celebrate the 75th year of Independence — Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav — the need of the hour is to take everyone together on the path of inclusive growth and devel-

opment," reads the note written by the Agriculture Minister.

To repeal a law, a new law has to be enacted and a specific repealing clause is added to it. Therefore, the amendment bill for the three farm laws would have to be tabled in Parliament the same way as any other bill. Once both Houses of Parliament pass the bill, it will be ratified by the President of India and the previous Act would be withdrawn.

Modi: Maintain intensive containment, surveillance

PM briefs about global trends on Covid, Omicron

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In wake of the new variant Omicron, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday convened a high-level meeting to review the situation relating to Covid-19 and vaccination.

Modi urged the officials to be proactive and maintain intensive containment and active surveillance and make people cautious. He also said States should be sensitised on the need to ensure that all those who have got the first dose are given the second dose timely. The Prime Minister also asked officials to review plans for easing international travel restrictions in the light of the emerging new evidence.

"The PM was briefed about the global trends on Covid-19 infections and cases. Officials highlighted that countries across the world have experienced multiple Covid-19 surges since the onset of the pandemic. The PM also reviewed the national situation relating to Covid-19 cases and test positivity rates.

"The PM was apprised of the progress in vaccination

and the efforts being made under the 'Har Ghar Dastak' campaign. The PM directed that there is a need to increase the second dose coverage and that States need to be sensitised on the need to ensure that all those who have got the first dose are given the second dose timely. The PM was also given details about the seropositivity in the country from time to time and its implications in public health response," said the PMO in a statement about the two-hour-long review meeting chaired by the PM.



PM Narendra Modi chairs a meeting on the situation relating to Covid-19 with top officials, through video conferencing in New Delhi on Saturday

Maha makes quarantine must for fliers from Omicron-hit nations

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Hours after the Maharashtra Government decided to screen air passengers arriving from at least 10 countries where a deadly new coronavirus variant has been detected, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Saturday announced that all the passengers arriving here from the Omicron "high-risk nations" would undergo compulsory institutional quar-



antine. Making an announcement

about the civic body's plans to quarantine all those passengers from the ten Omicron-hit countries, Additional Municipal Commissioner Suresh Kakani said that the BMC — in consultation with the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport — would make available a list of all the passengers who have arrived from abroad in the past 14 days to the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

CAPSULE

DEAD MAN WINS PANCHAYAT POLL!

Jamui (Bihar): A dead man has won a panchayat poll held on Wednesday riding on a "sympathy wave" generated by his own death. The real-life tragicomedy was detected in this impoverished district, situated about 200 kms from the State capital, when officials were handing over certificates to candidates who won the polls held on November 24. Sohan Murmu, who won ward no. 2 of Deepakhar village, falling under Khaira block, was nowhere to be found. "On enquiry, we learnt that Murmu had died on November 6, more than a fortnight before voting took place," Khaira BDO Raghavendra Tripathi said with a sense of bewilderment.

TWO VESSELS COLLIDE NEAR GULF OF KUTCH

Ahmedabad: Two merchant vessels (MVs) with at least 44 crew members from India and the Philippines on their boards collided in the Gulf of Kutch in the Arabian sea off the Gujarat coast but no casualty or oil slick has been reported in the incident.

Farmers defer their march to Parliament tomorrow

Ask PM to fulfil all demands, to meet on Dec 4 to decide their next course

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two days before the tabling of the farm Bill in Parliament to repeal the three legislations, protesting farmer groups on Saturday deferred their November 29 march to Parliament and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fulfil their six demands.

The march to Parliament on November 29 was announced by Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait.

The demands include written assurance about giving legal guarantee to procurement of crops at minimum



Farm leader Darshan Pal with others addresses a Press conference at Singhu border in New Delhi on Saturday

support price (MSP) by December 4, sacking and arrest of Union Minister Ajay Mishra, and compensations to the family members of farmers who lost their lives during the protests.

Now, the farmer groups will wait for the Government's formal response to their demands and then meet again

on December 4 to decide the further course of action.

The decision of the farmers to defer the march to Parliament has come as big relief to the Government, which is trying to buy peace with the farmers ahead of the crucial Assembly elections of UP, Uttarakhand, and Punjab.

All schools in Delhi to reopen from Monday

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Saturday announced that schools for all classes in the city will reopen from November 29. Sisodia, who also holds the portfolio of Education Minister, shared an official order on micro-blogging site Twitter and wrote, "All the schools in Delhi will reopen from November 29, 2011, for all classes."

The City Government has closed all schools and colleges in view of increased air pollution. Environment Minister Gopal Rai on November 24 gave orders to reopen schools mentioning Capital's air is improving.

On November 13, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced to close all schools and colleges till November 20 in view of the severe air pollution while allowing schools to conduct the classes in virtual



mode from November 15. Again, the City Government had shut down schools earlier from November 21, as no improvement in air quality was observed in the national Capital. However, the online classes will continue, the Directorate of Education (DoE) had said then.

Meanwhile, Delhi's air recorded at the higher end of the very poor category with overall air quality index (AQI) settling at 372 on the National Ambient Air Quality Index (NAAQI), due to unfavorable weather conditions.

Uphaar cinema blaze: Court reserves order on 7-yr jail for Ansals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi court on Saturday reserved for December 3 its order on whether to suspend the seven-year jail terms awarded to real estate barons Sushil and Gopal Ansal for tampering with evidence in the 1997 case of Uphaar cinema fire, which had claimed 59 lives.

Additional Sessions Judge Anil Antil reserved the order on appeals filed by the Ansals against their conviction and jail terms by a magisterial court. Besides challenging their conviction and punishment, the Ansals had urged the sessions court to suspend their jail terms till the appeal is decided.

The court heard the arguments of the accused as well as the victim and police and reserved the order.

Senior advocate Vikas Pahwa, appearing for the



Association of Victims of Uphaar Tragedy (AVUT), had opposed the appeals and told the court that the offence of tampering with evidence is extremely serious in nature as it affects the entire criminal justice system.

The Delhi Police had also opposed the appeals filed by the Ansals and told the court that suspending the jail terms of the convicts would trigger the mental trauma and agony of the victims.



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‘More than tough, it was very exciting and fun’

MADHUR MITTAL, who plays Raju in MX Player's Matsya Kaand, speaks with SUPRIYA RAMESH about his role, his experience of doing a thriller-con and how acting happened

■What is Matsya Kaand about?

It's basically a cat and mouse game between two equally intelligent and genius people. That's Matsya played by Ravii Dubey and Ravi Krishan ji is playing Tej Raj, the guy is trying to catch Matsya. It's just a brilliant back and forth, trying to out wit each other. Which I think is fabulous. It's more like brains over brawn, which is more interesting to watch and along with that you have an incredible ensemble of cast playing all of these characters that make the show come to life.

■What is your role?

I play Raju, who I think in some ways the heart of the show. In the sense that he is very *jugaadu*. The trait that leads him to meet Matsya and become a part of his team. The three people team where Raju is the glue that holds the team together. He is a little clumsy, he is very disarming, full of heart, warmth and very loyal. That's what attracted me to this character. A sweet boy that I don't think people have had the chance to see this character before. That's the main reason why I wanted to do this.

■How did you land this project?

Mr Gautam Talwar, who is the chief content

officer of MX player was very kind enough to set up a meeting with me and Ajay sir. That's because he thought I was right for the character. We met and instantly clicked. I love Ajay sir's energy, the way he is so calm and incredibly supportive. With him, it felt free. We had a couple of meetings and he thought I was right for the part and I obviously loved it because I haven't done something like this before. The show was great and fantastic people in it from the creators to the cast.

■How tough was this role?

More than tough, I would like to say it was very exciting and fun. I mean every job is tough in its own way but for me, because I love acting so much, they seem like opportunities rather than obstacles.

This was a team effort. You can make paintings alone, songs alone, most of the arts alone but you can't make a show alone. You need a great team around you and luckily we found amazing people that all just fit like a Legos together. It was like clockwork and we were working. It was just a fantastic experience.

■How has your experience been with your co-stars?

Ravi *bhaiya* and Zoya are so fun to be with. All three of us bonded a lot after work. Zoya's mom was with us as well.

All of us would go out to so many dinners and lunches as much as we could during COVID with the places that were open. We had a tremendous time gorging on all sorts of food.

I always made everyone jealous of my samosas because I would eat everything while Ravi *bhaiya* and Zoya would watch what they eat. That was my favourite thing to do. We had an incredible time. The whole show has been fantastic.

■You have been on screen from a very young age. How did acting happen?

Acting happened a little late. I started my career as a dancer. I won Boogie Woogie back in 1997. After that me and my father, we all came to Bombay so that I could have a career. Through dancing a lot of people suggested that because I was very expressive in dance and I should try acting. I started giving a few auditions and then my first film was *One Two Ka Four*. I got another one with Salman called *Kahi Pyaar Na Hojaye*. So then the acting journey started and somewhere down the line I felt that I was a better actor than a dancer. So around the age of 14 I focused all my energy into acting and the universe has been kind. At the age of 18 I was at the Oscars with *Slumdog Millionaire*.

■You are known for *Slumdog Millionaire* and your role and acting is highly appreciated. How tough was it to get into that character of Salim?

For Salim, the main thing was, before that I had never played a grey character. Even now, people associate to that sort of characters. Before that I was this very timid sort of nice guy. I was a kid so I played a kid, all of the things that I had done before, there is nothing grey about that. So to get someone like Salim who was more complicated under the surface. It's not just a guy who is doing bad things to get money. There are layers there and obviously you get to see them as the film progresses.

It was super intense and luckily Danny Boyle was a director who sat down with me because I was a young actor. We had workshops with him for couple of months. Almost two and a half to three months before the film began. It was very guided, that time I wasn't even evolved enough as an actor to bring a lot of myself to the character.

I did my fair share of research like I went out with some guys who had a similar vibe like Salim and I realised that people who do bad things aren't that bad inherently. Things have happened to them which doesn't really justify what they do but you can understand it in a way. That's how I started approaching that character.

■What has been the most challenging role till now?

I think the most challenging role that I have done was in this Disney film called *Million Dollar Arm*. That was difficult because I had done a sports film before *Slumdog Millionaire*. This was about baseball and I had no clue about it. I had never picked up a baseball in my life before, which was great in a way because the character also goes through the same journey. But physically, it was very enduring because for three months, we had coaches and rigorous training programme. I had to put up some muscle so, it was very physically demanding and that was one of the first times I had to do that.

I would say that because of the physicality of it and the second one would be this film called *Matr* which was after this life-ending car crash that I had been through. In which I had almost completely lost my face. I had to get multiple surgeries done to look like myself again. Because of the accident, I thought I would never act again. The film was super exciting but also very scary. That character took a lot out of me as well.

■What genre do you prefer?

I will always say yes to a genre that I haven't had the chance to do yet. Funny but yeah science- fiction is the one. A film like *Sunshine* by Danny Boyle or like the *Arrival*. I love films like that. I almost did get a show like that but I missed out on it due to date issues. Something in that realm, I would absolutely jump up.

Why I Killed Gandhi



Director: Ashok Tyagi
Producer: Kalyani Singh
Starring: Amol Kolhe (Nathuram Godse)
Presenter: Maann Singh
Release date: January 30, 2022

It is not often that you get to see films that are taken from real life, especially when it comes to life stories on people who gave up everything to get India free. Maann Singh's *Why I Killed Gandhi* is the picturisation of the legal statement that was submitted by Nathuram Godse to the honourable Court during Gandhiji's murder trial. With the permission of Justice Atma Charan, the statement was read out by Nathuram Godse before the Court. It took almost four-and-a-half hours for the entire statement to be read out. It was later published as a book by the same title. This book is freely available at all popular e-commerce sites.

Everybody knows that Gandhiji was killed by Nathuram Godse. But the burning question – what prompted him to take such an extreme step – was never answered. However, a perception has been created that Godse was a terrorist or a mentally disbalanced Hindu extremist. However, when you read his statement, you realise that he was a freedom fighter and social activist from Pune and edited a newspaper *Agrani*.

In 1964, the Government instituted a one-man commission under the jurisdiction of Justice J.L. Kapoor, a retired justice of the Supreme Court to investigate into the causes that led to the murder of Gandhiji. Justice J.L. Kapoor submitted his report in 1970 and the 10-minute commentary in the beginning of the film is the reproduction of the selected passages from the Chapter 12 of that report. The remaining 35 minutes of the film, the edited version, is the legal statement submitted by Godse to the Court of law. Every word spoken in the film is the translation of words taken from this legal document. What the film reveals has been systematically suppressed since Nathuram Godse was hanged and it gives a radically alternative perspective to look at the history of 20th Century India.

TELLYTALE

‘I WAS A LITTLE SCEPTICAL ABOUT TAKING IT’



Actor Sharad Malhotra says that he was a little sceptical about taking his latest show *Vidrohi*, which is historical.

"Frankly speaking, when I was offered the show, I was a little sceptical about taking it, but not in a negative way. I had neither heard about my character Bakshi Jagabandhu nor much was written about him in history. But when I researched about him, I found out that he was the first man in history to have started a people's revolt in the country. I have not done too many shows, I am very choosy about the ones I do. It's been less but it has been good work. I have done just a handful of shows in the last 15 years but most of them did pretty well and were etched in people's memories," he said.

According to him, earlier actors had a demarcation between a TV actor and a film actor, which is not there anymore.

"The line has blurred and a TV actor is

working in web shows and films and vice versa. As far as shelf life is concerned, it is a very subjective matter. When I started acting, I wanted to just give it a shot, I didn't plan on continuing for so long. I was taking each day as it came," he said.

"I have been extremely blessed to be getting lead roles even after 15 years. But that didn't happen overnight, I had to work towards it. It took a lot of blood, sweat, and hard work to be where I am today," he added.

The Bharat Ka Veer Putra – Maharana Pratap actor calls himself a very greedy actor.

"A lot of male actors on TV complain of the screen space as the industry is still governed by women. TV is said to be a medium ruled by the women, for the women, and of the women. But a few men have been lucky enough to not fall into that category," he said.

HARSHALI ZINE ON TROLLS

It goes without saying that social media has redefined our lives. Things have become easier and good for us in more ways than one. However, many feel that the world of social media is fake, yet, at the same time, everyone wants that attention. Actor Harshali Zine decodes the whole thing.

"One has to understand that social media isn't free, it costs you your focus. These free apps ask for permission to read your emails, text messages, listen to your phone calls, etc. The less apps you are on is better. Privacy is a myth in the age of smartphones and social media," says the actor known for TV shows, CID, Diya Aur Baati Hum, web series, BOSS: Baap of Special Services, and Marathi film, Paach Naar Ek Bezaar, among others.

Social media has become an ego massage tool and it disrupts the regular life of actors as they are expected to put new content on a daily basis.

What's your opinion on trolls and how do you deal with trolling? "I don't think anything about them. They should not be given importance to. Nobody has that kind of power over me to affect my peace of mind. It's them reflecting their diseased mentality. Why should I take it personally? It has nothing to do with me. I send them healing," she replies.



LOMOTIF LAUNCHES IN INDIA

The Punjabi heartthrob and singing sensation Guru Randhawa rocked the stage at the launch of US-based Short-Format Video-Sharing App- *Lomotif* - Singer Shirley Setia, Big Boss Fame Asim Riaz, Popular actors Adaa Khan, Anushka Sen and Bhojpuri superstars Ravi Kishan & Akshara Singh were also a part of the launch.

Lomotif has made its official entry into India. Ted Farnsworth, Chairman and Co-founder of ZASH Global Media and

Entertainment Corporation, spearheaded the launch in New Delhi. On this occasion, the app also unveiled Lomotif India, a brand-new channel. Users can also participate in Lomotif India's weekly challenges by posting their videos to win amazing prizes. Founded by Singapore-based Paul Yang, Lomotif was acquired by ZASH earlier this year.

Its patent technology allows users to immerse themselves in a super-engaging reel format of content.

SOS! ATHARVA GETS KIDNAPPED

Sony SAB's *Wagle Ki Duniya* – *Nayi Peedhi Naye Kissey* continues to garner a massive fan following with its lighthearted and relatable content. The current series of episodes brings the biggest twist of all time in the story as the Wagle family goes through harrowingly trying times with Atharva's (Sheehan Kapahi) kidnapping.

Atharva and Vandana's (Pariva Pranati) day begins with a dispute as Vandana mistakenly blames Atharva for printing Daku's (Deepak Pareek) picture with 'Wanted - Dead or Alive' written on it. Going about their usual day, the Wagle family is completely oblivious of the misfortune which looms over them. On his way to school, Atharva gets kidnapped by two goons. What has happened to Atharva is of complete mystery to the entire Wagle family as their simple lifestyle could not land them in trouble with goons.



WALT DISNEY ANIMATION STUDIOS CELEBRATE'S 60TH FILM — ENCANTO

Disney movies are special and have a surprise element in them that they transport the audience to the world of magic and laughter. With a legacy spanning more than 90 years, Walt Disney Animation Studios have created phenomenal movies which have received much love and appreciation from people of all ages from all over the world. To celebrate this love and joy, Disney has come up with its 60th animated musical — *Encanto*, releasing in your nearest theaters. This movie is about a family who has special powers of magic to make this world a better place. Here's a look back at some iconic movies by Walt Disney Animation Studios.

The *Lion King* (2019), If you are looking to watch a movie which is filled with love, adventure and motivation, then *Lion King* is your destination. Directed by Jon Favreau, this 2019 film was a mega hit globally. The gripping storyline, amazing music, astonishing animation kept the viewers hooked right from the start till the very end.

Raya and The Last Dragon (2021), Filled with a whole lot of intense drama and action, this movie will make the wildest and unimaginable of scenarios come true. The story is about a place where dragons and humans live together in harmony until one day when a sinister monster, returns after 500 years and threatens this land. Raya is given the responsibility to track down the last dragon to save the humans. Will Raya be able to give hope to all and return with a dragon?

Tangled (2010), Walt Disney Animation Studios is known to think out of the box. We all



know the story of Rapunzel but could we have ever imagined her to kidnap the most eligible bachelor, aka Flynn Rider, in town? Directed by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard, the movie is a treat to the viewer's eyes with a gripping storyline and amazing music.

Tarzan This movie has to be in this list. The famous and iconic - Disney's *Tarzan* is what the people who are in their 20's and early 30's watched and grew up with. This magnificent adaptation of Edgar Rice Burroughs's story of

the ape man begins deep within the jungle when Tarzan, a baby who's lost his parents to a leopard, is adopted by a family of gorillas. The phenomenal animation, great music and wonderful voiceover made this movie a blockbuster globally with people from all ages loving this movie and never getting bored even after watching it multiple times. It was the movie which raised the bar for Walt Disney Animation Studios and made a mark on people's hearts and minds forever.

Frozen, *Frozen* was inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale 'The Snow Queen'. Directed by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee, this movie depicts a princess who sets off on a journey along with an iceman, his reindeer and a snowman to find her sister whose magical power acted as a curse on their kingdom in eternal winter. With a story and soundtrack that struck the right chord, the film took absolutely no time to shatter all box office records worldwide. It won multiple prestigious awards because of how magnificent it was and the love that was showered by the fans and viewers.

Walt Disney Animation Studio is all geared up for yet another theatrical release of *Encanto*. Directed by Byron Howard and Jared Bush, while the beautiful songs featured in it are by Emmy, Grammy and Tony Award winner Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Produced by Yvett Merino, this movie is geared up to give you a gala time in a lala-land which is filled with great songs and captivating sequences.

SAY NO TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

In an actor's career, we don't manyhats, but rarely do we come across characters that leave us shaken to the core. Not because it lets you explore more as an artist, but it wakes you up to a reality, you knew little about. This is exactly what hit me when I got to portray Koel in *Ziddi Dil Maane Na*, a character subjected to domestic violence and an agonizing past that continues to haunt her and her little son. Reprising Koel, I realized how home has a completely different meaning for many women across the globe and how big a menace is domestic abuse.

I wasn't oblivious to this peril before. The alarming number of cases for domestic abuse in our country startled and shocked me as well. But what my character made me aware of, is the intensity of the problem, its relevance

amongst majority of women and how as a society, we all have our bit to do to cause change. You, me, and everyone!

So, today, on International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women, I choose courage to talk about the grave issue of domestic abuse and appeal everyone out there to Say NO to violence and Stand-up against this social evil. I would also want to appreciate Sony SAB for raising this issue and spreading awareness around this serious subject.

I shudder in fear to think of the abuse, a lot of women in this country live through and endure till the time they can't anymore. Yet, this is just the tip of the iceberg.



As much as we read such cases, there are many more lurking in the dark waiting to be heard. It's hard to imagine the trauma, the pain and the stigma surrounding this vicious practice that causes women to stay silent.

As I navigate the journey of my character Koel in the show *Ziddi Dil Maane Na*, the reality of domestic abuse is enveloping me tight. My heart goes out to the women who endure through it all, either out of helplessness, or lack of awareness or both. The sleepless nights, the fear of survival, the fear of your kid's survival is something I cannot even begin to

measure. And not to forget, even if you happen to tide over this crisis, the shame and stigma that trails a woman is hard to put in words.

But dear women, just like Koel, that shouldn't deter you from battling this menace. The bruises that you carry on your skin, heart and mind are worth fighting for. Because we all deserve a world full of love, compassion and respect.

I understand the responsibility of portraying your side of the story as authentically as I can. I need you to know that you're not alone, today and always. You're a queen, you just need to awaken and take your stride as the world awaits you with open arms.

I hope like Koel, you also find the strength to speak up and fight for your rights. Because if she can, so can you.

Covid scare: CM Dhami cautions admin, people

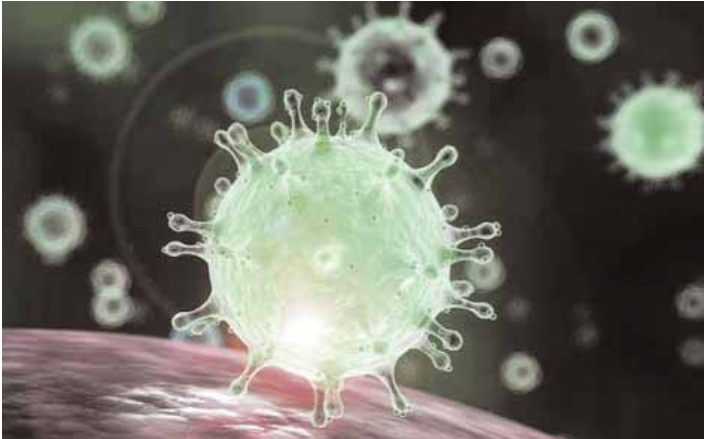
PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In view of the increase in cases of Covid-19 in many parts of the world and reports of arrival of a new highly contagious variant of the virus, the Uttarakhand government has adopted a cautious approach. On Saturday the chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami directed the chief secretary, Director General of Police (DGP) and the secretary of Health services to ensure that Covid appropriate behaviour is followed by everyone.

He also said that all arrangements for preventing the spread of the disease should be made. CM Dhami directed Health secretary Amit Singh Negi to ensure that all the hospitals have arrangements for effective control on the disease.

The CM has also appealed to the people of the state not to drop guard against the disease and follow all safety protocols. He said that the people who have not received the second dose of vaccine should do it on time. Dhami emphasised that everyone should wear masks and maintain necessary physical distance.

Meanwhile the state health department reported 14 new cases of



the novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) and eight recoveries from the disease in Uttarakhand on Saturday. No death from the disease was reported in the state on the day.

The cumulative count of Covid-19 patients in the state is now at 3,44,183 while a total of 3,30,466 patients have recovered from the disease so far. In the state, 7407 people have lost their lives to Covid -19 virus till date. The recovery percentage from the disease is at 96.01 per cent while the sample positivity rate on Saturday was 0.15 per cent.

The state health department

reported ten new patients from Dehradun, two from Nainital and one each from Chamoli and Udham Singh Nagar on Saturday. No new case of Covid-19 was reported from the remaining nine districts on the day.

The state now has 150 active cases of Covid-19. Dehradun with 98 cases is at the top of the table of active cases while Rudrapur and Bageshwar have no active cases of the disease now. In the ongoing vaccination drive 60,159 people were administered doses in 977 sessions held on Saturday.

FRI campus closed to visitors till Dec 5



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Forest Research Institute (FRI) campus will remain closed to tourists and visitors till December 5 as a result of the old hostel of Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA) being declared a micro containment zone by the Dehradun district magistrate on Thursday. The decision to close the institute to visitors has been taken as a precautionary measure against the spread of Covid-19.

It is pertinent to mention that the IGNFA old hostel was turned into a micro containment zone after 11 Indian Forest Service (IFS) officers from the academy tested positive for Covid. About 48 IFS officers had gone to Lucknow for a mid-career training programme and 11 of them had tested positive for Covid after their return to Dehradun. They have been kept under isolation in the hostel which is situated in the FRI campus.

It should be mentioned here that apart from a number of walkers, the FRI campus also attracts a regular stream of visitors to its museums along with sightseers.

District admin penalises violators of Covid norms in Niranjanpur Mandi

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Dehradun district administration has ordered the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) to ensure the compliance of covid norms in Niranjanpur Mandi to minimise the contagion risk after the recent hike in Covid-19 cases. Hundreds of people visit the Mandi premises on a daily basis including suppliers from other cities to local vendors and customers which makes it more vulnerable for Covid spread. However, most of the people on the premises do not follow Covid guidelines, especially during the peak hours in the morning when suppliers and vendors arrive in the Mandi.

The sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) Manish Kumar conducted a surprise inspection of Niranjanpur Mandi on Saturday along with the police. The officials imposed penalties on 17 people for not following Covid guidelines. On the direction of the authorities, the APMC secretary Vijay Thapliyal has also formed teams to ensure compliance with Covid rules. He said that nobody will be allowed to enter the premises without masks. Besides this, the



SDM and the assistant superintendent of police, Himanshu Verma also held a surprise inspection in Paltan Bazaar and penalised 20 people for Covid violations.

The DM R Rajesh Kumar said the administration will continue to conduct surprise inspections across the city, especially at the malls, marketplaces and Mandis to restrict Covid contagion. Authorities have been directed to take strict actions for any violation of Covid protocols under the relevant acts, stated Kumar.

Transfer of RTOs: Dandariyal reaches CEC with complaint

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Questioning the undue favour being bestowed on an officer of the transport department in Uttarakhand, activist and president of city bus services association Vijay Vardhan Dandariyal has requested the chief election commissioner (CEC) of India to intervene in the issue. He said that in the recent list of the transfers of the Regional Transport Officers (RTO), the name of Dehradun RTO Dinesh Chandra Pathoi is missing.

Dandariyal said that transfer of Pathoi was due and to be done from Sugam (Accessible area) to Durgam (hard to access). He said that the said officer has completed three years and six months in Dehradun and most of his service has been either in Pauri division or Dehradun.

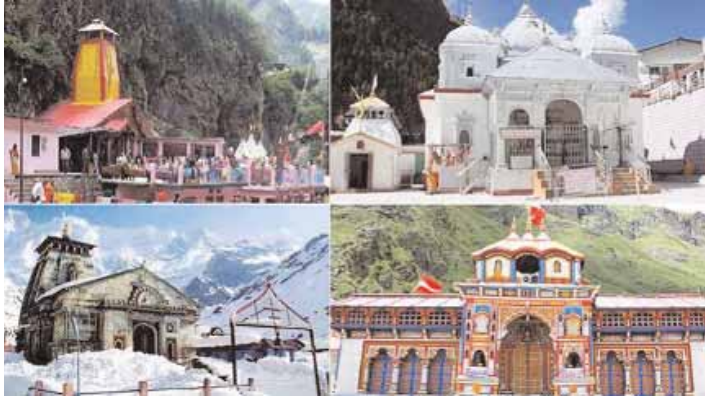
Alleging that the officer has a questionable past, Dandariyal requested that the election commission should intervene in the matter so that the officers of the transport department discharge their duties properly during the upcoming assembly elections.

Cabinet committee set up on Devasthanam Board

High-powered committee has submitted its report on the issue

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In what is being viewed as the BJP government's plan of action to take back the contentious Char Dham Devasthanam Management Board, the chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has said that a cabinet sub-committee has been set up on the issue. Talking to the media persons on Saturday the CM said that the state government has received the final report of the high power committee set up on the issue. He said that a cabinet committee would study the report for two days and based on its recommendations the state government would take a decision on the Devasthanam board.



The Devasthanam board bill was tabled by the BJP government during the tenure of then chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat during the winter session of Uttarakhand assembly in the year 2019.

The Teerth Purohits and stakeholders of the char dhams are opposing the board vehemently. Immediately after assuming charge

as CM Pushkar Singh Dhami had indicated his soft sand on the issue and had set up a high powered committee under the chairmanship of senior BJP leader Manohar Kant Dhyani on the issue. It is being speculated that the Dhami government could repeal the bill during the upcoming winter session of assembly.

Pritam: Govt's intentions malafide on Devasthanam Board



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The leader of opposition in state assembly Pritam Singh has said that there is malice in the intention of the state government on the issue of Char Dham Devasthanam Management Board. Addressing the Teerth Purohits who were staging a Dharna after being stopped by police on Saturday, Singh said that the state government is giving false assurances to the Teerth Purohits and is trying to complicate the issue by forming committees.

Accusing the state government of foisting Devasthanam Board on Purohits, the LoP said that the ages old traditions set up by Adi Shankaracharya are being destroyed. He said that the interests of Teerth Purohits and stake holders are being attacked due to which there is resentment among them.

Singh assured that when the Congress party will come to the power it will repeal the Devasthanam board act.

The secretary of Uttarakhand Congress Mahesh Joshi said that BJP government is hell bent on destroying centuries old traditions. He said that the government should leave the stubborn attitude and suspend the board.

Devasthanam Board: Teerth Purohits hold protest in Doon

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In protest against the Char Dham Devasthanam Management Board the Teerth Purohits and the state holders held a march towards the state's secretariat on Saturday. On the day a large number of Teerth Purohits and their sympathisers assembled at Gandhi Park.

They then started a protest march towards the state secretariat however a contingent of policemen stopped them at Subhash Road. On being stopped the agitated Teerth Purohits shouted slogans against the government and demanded immediate repeal of the Devasthanam board.

Minor scuffle between the police and the agitators occurred when some of them tried to scale over the barricades and push the police personnel.

The spokesperson of Teerth Purohit and stakeholders Maha Panchayat Brijesh Sati said that the Devasthanam board has completed two years on 27 November and to express their anger on it the Mahapanchayat has organised a black day. He said that the state government should take back the Devasthanam board and added that the protest of the Teerth Purohits would continue till the government accepts their demands. The march was led by the president of Kedar Sabha and vice president of Mahapanchayat Vinod Shukla.

'Awareness needed to boost organ donation'

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Himalayan Hospital at Jolly Grant organised a programme to mark the national organ donation day on Saturday. The hospital management felicitated all those who had donated their kidney for kidney transplant operations carried out in the hospital.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the Swami Rama Himalayan University pro vice chancellor Vijendra

Chauhan said that India has been celebrating November 27 as national organ donation day for the past 10 years. The main aim of this day is to raise public awareness on organ donation to make them realise that there is no alternative to organ donation. The liver, heart, cornea, pancreas and lungs of a brain dead person can give life to a number of people, he added.

Chief medical superintendent of Himalayan Hospital Dr SK Jethani said that donation

of organ and body enables a person even after death to save someone else's life. He informed that in Uttarakhand, only the Himalayan Hospital has the permission to perform kidney transplantation operations which are conducted successfully here. Efforts are also being undertaken to provide liver transplant facility in the hospital in the near future, he added.

Himalayan Institute of Medical Sciences dean Dr Mushtaq Ahmed said that lack of awareness is the main reason behind lack of organ donation. Despite awareness efforts by various organisations, a large proportion of the population remains unaware. He exhorted those who had undergone transplants at the Himalayan Hospital to raise awareness among people in their respective areas.

Families with members who had undergone kidney transplant also shared their experiences with the gathering on the occasion.

CBI organises outreach camp



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

A credit outreach camp was organised by Central Bank of India on Saturday at DAV PG College premises as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. The principal of the DAV PG College Ajay Saxena was the chief guest in the programme. The Regional Manager Arun Kumar Pathak presided over the programme.

In the programme, the customers were made aware about the various schemes of the Central Bank of India. Chief guest Saxena shared his experiences with the bank and described the services of DAV College branch as excellent. Sharing his personal experiences Saxena informed about a fraud he was subjected to and said that due to the prompt action taken by the bank, he was able to get his money back. The Chief Manager Sushil Chaturvedi informed about various schemes by a power point presentation. The customers and employees of different branches of Dehradun and Haridwar district and others attended the programme

Bageshwar's wait for sewerage system continues

The issue crops up before every elections and then conveniently forgotten by the political parties

PNS ■ BAGESHWAR

The residents of Bageshwar town which has a population of more than 50,000 have been waiting for a sewerage facility for more than 15 years.

In every election after the creation of a separate state of Uttarakhand, the sewerage is one of the most significant issues and leaders of every party promise the voters that once elected they would ensure that the facility is available. However, the matter is sent to cold storage once the elections are over.

The people of the town situated on the banks of Saryu and Gomti have been demanding the sewer facility for years.

In absence of a sewerage plan, people of the town have to build sewer pits at their homes due to which not only the groundwater is getting polluted but the water of rivers is also getting contaminated. People open sewer pits in the rainy season and the sewage sludge flows into the city's drains. Votes have been sought on the issue of sewer line construction since the 2007 assembly elections. Construction of the Sewer lines is a major issue in every election.

In the year 2017, the then Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat had announced a sewerage scheme for Bageshwar. Despite this, the sewerage plan did not come off the



ground. Recently the district administration has allotted land to the municipality for the

sewerage system but more land is required for the sewerage system.

The Peyjal Nigam, the

agency selected for the purpose, has sent a proposal of Rs 1.19 crore to the government to buy additional land for the project. It is estimated that a sum of Rs 6.5 crore will be required for the sewerage scheme.

When contacted the Executive Engineer of Peyal Nigam, CPS Gangwar said, "Rs 1.19 crore is needed to buy land. A 62 km long sewer line is to be laid in the city.

The final proposal will be prepared after getting the money for the land". The local MLA of Bageshwar Chandan Ram Das told The Pioneer that funds will be released soon to buy land for the sewerage scheme. He added that Rs 6.5 Crore are needed for the construction of a sewerage scheme which would be released after the purchase of land.

CM Dhami said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a vision of 2025 for Uttarakhand and the state government is doing everything to make it a success. He said that Uttarakhand is bestowed with natural resources and special emphasis is being made for proper utilisation of resources. CM said that since Uttarakhand is a Himalayan state, the geographical conditions here are different and the state is very sensitive for natural disasters. He said that the union government is providing every possible support to the state government. Dhami said that the journey of development of the state is a collective one and all the suggestions received would be pondered upon.

The principal scientific advisor of union government K Vijayraghavan said that the state should have a scientific development plan. He said that Uttarakhand has a major asset in the form of Himalayas which affects the country and the world.

Anil Joshi said that the Himalayan states should do constant brainstorming. He said that the state should have a fresh analysis of its strengths and weaknesses.

ACS, Anand Bardhan said that the state has got many achievements in infrastructure despite

Will prepare a blueprint for U'khand: Rajiv Kumar

Dehradun: The vice chairman of the Niti Aayog Rajiv Kumar has said that soon a new blue print for development of Uttarakhand would be given. He said that a new thought process should be initiated for the development of Uttarakhand. Kumar was addressing the 'Atmanirbhar Uttarakhand @25 summit' at the Chief Minister's residence here on Saturday.

Kumar opined that the state should become a hub of higher education and it can also exploit potential in the field of renewable energy. He said that the state needs to focus on power and environment conservation, high value agriculture, aromatic and medicinal plants, floriculture, and horticulture and women empowerment. Kumar suggested that all the scientific institutions of the state should work in tandem in different fields and should strive to ensure that the per capita income of the state increases by three to four times.

Kerala Govt’s move to reopen schools upsets medical fraternity

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Friday’s decision by the Government of Kerala to fully reopen schools and do away with online classes have shocked the medical fraternity in the State. Kerala is yet to come out of Covid-19 as doctors diagnose 6,000 new persons on an average every day inflicted with the pandemic. On Friday itself, 4,677 persons were tested positive despite the Health Department bringing down the number of samples to be tested to 56,558.

Neighboring Tamil Nadu where the daily cases have come down below the 800 mark is yet to fully open the schools. Parents are free not to send their wards to schools and the Government is continuing with the online classes.

According to officials in Department of School of Education, online courses would be in place till the end of academic year 2021-22.

22 November 2021 marked the reopening of the professional colleges in Kerala after the pandemic induced lock down for more than a year. Campuses all over the State came alive with vari-

ous student unions staging demonstrations and rallies in colleges to impress the new comers about their money and muscle power.

A union owing allegiance to the ruling party in the State made the best of opportunities by organizing a massive demonstration in Government Law College, Thrissur, with a demand to open college canteen which they claimed was of paramount importance in academic life. College Principals in the State have made it known in parent-teacher’s association (PTA) meetings that they were under tremendous pressure from student union leaders and politicians to resume physical classes though the Covid-19 situation in the State was not conducive for the same. Students have the college union election and university youth festivals in their mind as they were the ideal arenas to exhibit their influence and power to the newly enrolled students.

Interestingly students admit privately that they prefer on-line classes to direct classes. “You save on time, money and energy,” said Mohan, a second year law student in Thrissur. He said it is time the authorities switched overt profes-

sional courses like law and post graduate programmes in literature, economics and humanities to the online mode.

“Teachers can address the students online without any hassles. Talks about such courses preventing the development of personality is nothing but nonsense. The syllabus we have to learn is heavy and there is no space for extra curricular activities in professional courses,” said Mohan hailing from Palakkad.

One of the senior government doctors in Ernakulam told The Pioneer on condition of anonymity that he was against the re-opening of schools and colleges at this stage. “It is almost December and there are just three more months for the academic year to get over.

The ideal choice would have been to wait till June 2022 and make arrangements for implementing Covid-19 protocol effectively,” said the doctor who also disclosed that there were many cases of memory fog among those who were infected with the pandemic. “We should not take risk with the future of our children to claim everything is fine in the State,” said the doctor.

Dead man wins panchayat poll in Bihar!

Jamui (Bihar): A dead man has won a Panchayat poll held on Wednesday riding on a “sympathy wave” generated by his own death. The real-life tragicomedy was detected in this impoverished district, situated about 200 kms from the state capital, when officials were handing over certificates to candidates who won the polls held on November 24. Sohan Murmu, who won ward no. 2 of Deepakarhar village, falling under Khaira block, was nowhere to be found.

“On enquiry, we learnt that Murmu had died on November 6, more than a fortnight before voting took place”, Khaira BDO Raghavendra Tripathi said with a sense of bewilderment. Deepakarhar happens to be a remote hamlet situated along the state’s border with Jharkhand, which perhaps explains the demography of the village which has a predominantly tribal population.

Old residents also recall that it was this village which was first hit by Naxal activity, in the 1990s, in the district that later became one of the worst infested by ultra-Left insurgency, according to a list published by the Union Home Ministry a few years ago. Nonetheless, Tripathi’s account of what has happened suggests that the village and its residents retain an amazing simplicity, bordering on downright sentimentality.

“Family members of Murmu, who defeated his rival by 28 votes, said it was the last wish of the deceased, who had been ailing, to win the election. So they kept quiet. No resident of the village informed us either. It appears that they all voted in his favour to honour his last wish”, said the BDO. The naivete of the bereaved family members and fellow villagers, nonetheless, has meant more work for the officials.

“The winner’s certificate cannot be issued to anybody. We are going to write to the state election with the request that election for the ward concerned be nullified and fresh polls held”, said Tripathi in a matter of fact way. **PTI**

MSRTC suspends another 3,010 striking employees, over 18,000 report to work

Stone-pelting on MSRTC buses was also reported at 13 places

Solapur and other districts. Windshields and window panes were damaged in some cases while a driver sustained a minor hand injury in Nashik, officials said, adding police cases have been filed.

As many as 937 buses including 728 ordinary ones were operated as of 5 pm. The strike of employees who want the cash-strapped corporation to be merged with the Maharashtra government continued on the 31st day. So far, the corporation has suspended 6,277 employees and terminated services of 1,496 daily wage workers for remaining absent from work. Ten bus depots in Sangli division and five each in Ratnagiri and Raigad divisions remained functional.

Stone-pelting on MSRTC buses was also reported at 13 places in Nashik, Dhule, Jalgaon, **PTI**

KILLING OF DALIT FAMILY IN UP Mayawati, Akhilesh attack Yogi Govt

Lucknow : Opposition BSP and SP on Saturday condemned the recent murder of four members of a Dalit family in Allahabad and termed it “shameful” and “a blot on anti-dalit” BJP government in Uttar Pradesh.



In a series of tweets in Hindi, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) president Mayawati said, “Very sad and shameful murder of four people of a Dalit family in Prayagraj, UP recently. This incident also shows the poor law and order of the government. It seems that the BJP is also following in the footsteps of the Yogi government in this matter.”

“After this incident, a BSP delegation led by Babulal Bhanwra that had reached there said ‘dabangs’ (musclemen) in Prayagraj are terrorising the people due to which the murder happened,” she said in another tweet.

The BSP demands that the government should take strict legal action against all the strongmen who are guilty of this crime, the former Uttar Pradesh

chief minister said.

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav also took to Twitter to condemn the killings.

“The killings of 4 Dalits by ‘dabang’ in Allahabad’s Phaphamau is another blot on the anti-Dalit BJP government. Highly condemnable! Hope these criminals can be seen even without glasses,” Yadav said in a tweet in Hindi.

Four members of a Dalit family were brutally killed in Gohri village under Phaphamau police station area of Allahabad district on Wednesday night.

The head of the family, an approximately 50-year-old man, his 45-year-old wife, 16-year-old daughter and 10-year-old son were sleeping in the house when the incident took place. **PTI**

AAP slams Yogi Govt, to stage protests across UP today

New Delhi: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday slammed the Uttar Pradesh government over the recent killing of four members of a Dalit family in Allahabad, and demanded a speedy trial into the case and capital punishment to the culprits.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters, AAP MP Sanjay Singh announced that his party will hold protests across all districts of Uttar Pradesh on Sunday demanding justice for the victims.

He alleged that the horrific incident, in which a minor girl of the family was allegedly gangraped and killed, was the outcome of the Yogi Adityanath administration’s “negligence and a police-criminals nexus in the state”.

Four members of a Dalit family were brutally killed in Gohri village under Phaphamau police station area of Allahabad district Wednesday night.

The head of the family, an approximately 50-year-old man, his 45-year-old wife, 16-year-old daughter and 10-year-old son were sleeping in the

house when the incident took place.

“This is bigger than the Hathras case. Hooliganism and savagery against the poor and deprived sections have got a free run in the state under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath,” Singh said.

He said the victims had been beaten up by the accused in September, however, the police lodged an FIR only after a week following pressure from the locals and the media.

“The family had been begging for justice since they were beaten up but the police did not take any action and finally they were brutally murdered,” Singh claimed.

He said the police did not move until the entire family was “eliminated” as the Yogi Adityanath government’s action is driven by “casteist hatred”.

“We demand that the trial be completed in a fast-track court in six months and the culprits be handed down death sentence,” he said.

Singh said he has written to President Ram Nath Kovind asking for an appointment to seek his intervention in the matter. **PTI**

Maha lifts all lockdown restrictions to restore pre-pandemic situation

Covid appropriate behaviour, other conditions remain

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Twenty months after it imposed a slew of Covid-19-induced protocols in line with the directives from the Centre, the Maharashtra Government on Saturday lifted all the lockdown restrictions, thus paving way for normal economic, social, cultural, sports and entertainment activities that prevailed in the state prior to the pandemic days, subject to Covid Appropriate Behaviour (CAB) and other conditions.

“All economic cultural, sports and entertainment activities will now be allowed as per the normal timings decided by various local or other competent authorities before the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic,” Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte stated in a 5-page order issued here.

Apart from adherence to CAB, the other conditions that will continue are: requirement of full vaccination, entry norms for passengers arriving in the state from international destinations and compliance to protocols relating to attendance in any programme or event held in closed places like cinema halls, theatres, marriage halls and convention halls where utilisation of 50 per cent of the capacity is allowed.

The CAB norms include wearing face-masks, maintaining at least 6 feet physical distance, ensuring hygiene, sanitising/washing hands frequently and greeting people without physical contact.

The CAB applies to all citizens, including the service providers, owners of premises, organisers, visitors, service takers, guests etc. As part of the order, the state government notified CAB guidelines, under

which the violators shall be fined Rs 500 for each instance of default. “If an organisation or establishment fails to follow CAB or SOP itself, it will be liable for a fine of Rs 10,000 for each instance,” the government order stated.

The CAB defaulters in public transport like buses or taxis shall be fined Rs.500 along with the driver, conductor, etc, while the operators will be slapped with Rs.10,000 penalty, or withdrawal of licence till the disaster norms remain in force.

In case the total number of people attending events or programmes exceeds 1,000, then the organisers must inform the District Disaster Management Authority which will send its officials to ensure compliance of CAB, and if the same are violated may order closure of part or full venue.

As part of the vaccination requirement, the state government has decided to allow only fully vaccinated people to use public transport, while all shops, establishments, malls, event and gathering venues where people frequent shall be fully vaccinated and it is necessary for all visitors to such places to have been administered two doses of vaccines.

Similarly, it is mandatory for all those visiting/ performing at various programmes, events or shows to have been vaccinated fully.

The Universal Pass created by the Maharashtra government shall be valid proof for status of full vaccination. Alternatively, the people can carry Cowin certificate with a valid ID photo proof. For those below 18 years, they can carrying ID proofs issued by their schools.

All those arriving in Maharashtra from any international destination shall be governed by the Government of India rules, but all domestic passengers must be fully vaccinated or carry a RTPCR test report with 72 hours validity.

BSF, BGB agree to enhance cooperation to check transborder crimes

Kolkata: Border guarding forces of India and Bangladesh have decided to enhance cooperation to check transboundary crimes and better management of the international boundary, according to a BSF statement.

The decision was taken in a conference of IGs of the Border Security Force and Region Commanders of the Border Guard Bangladesh, it said. “Both the border guarding forces decided further to enhance sharing of information and cooperation in all fields to ensure an effective border management system to fight the menace of transborder crimes, smuggling of drugs etc,” the BSF said in the statement.

The four-day border coordination programme of the BSF and the BGB concluded here on Friday. “While appreciating efforts made by each other that resulted in a decline in trans-border crimes, both sides agreed to pursue the construction of developmental projects in the respective border areas. They also agreed that the confidence-building measures had improved the understanding between the two forces,” the statement said. The 16th Border Coordination Conference of IG BSF and BGB Region Commanders was held days after two Bangladeshis were killed along the Indo-Bangla border in West Bengal’s Cooch Behar district during an operation by the BSF to thwart an alleged cattle smuggling bid.

A ten-member Border Security Force delegation led by its South Bengal frontier inspector general Anurag Garg held talks with a team of BGB personnel.

‘PM files in ₹8K-cr aircraft to address rally but can't waive farmers’ debt’

Mahoba (UP): Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday attacked PM Narendra Modi, saying he flies in an aircraft worth Rs 8,000 crore to address a rally but can’t waive debt of farmers.

Addressing her party’s “Pratigya Rally” in this Bundelkhand district, she also promised debt waiver for farmers and free gas cylinders to women if the Congress comes to power in next year’s Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls.

Targeting the PM, she accused him of doing nothing for farmers.

“Do you know the income of PM’s big industrialist friends? They earn Rs 10,000 crore daily and you are earning Rs 27 a day, and this government is doing nothing for you, she alleged.

“Do you know the cost of the aircraft used by him? It is Rs 8,000 crore. He comes here to give a speech but your income is not raised. He comes in that aircraft but cannot waive debt of farmers,” Priyanka said apparently referring to the PM’s recent visit to Mahoba.

If they have money to buy aircrafts, then why not for you, she asked.

“If the Congress government is formed in Uttar Pradesh, then the entire loan of farmers will be waived and



women will be given three domestic gas cylinders free of cost in a year,” she added.

On promises made by the Congress if it comes to power in the state, she said a Bundelkhand development board having its own budget will be set up while promising a policy for mandis, industry and tourism.

Priyanka, who recently visited the region to meet families of the farmers who died in queues for fertilisers, said

the coronavirus outbreak, saying when her party arranged buses for people, the government did not take help.

“Now, when they have meetings, they bring crowd in buses. When your brothers and sisters were walking back home, where was this government? Where were the buses,” she asked.

She further accused UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and PM Modi of indulging in false publicity.

During the foundation laying ceremony of an airport in Noida’s Jewar, its advertisement carried a picture of a Chinese airport without caring for truth, she said.

Stressing that the people of Bundelkhand have the right over the resources in the region, she accused the PM and Adityanath of betraying them, alleging that the government has no plan for the development of the area.

Priyanka also cited various works done by her party’s governments in the past, stressing that the Congress is answerable to people and its intention is honest.

“You have seen the BJP, they made false promises, SP looted and the BSP did nothing. Their intention has not been clear,” she added. **PTI**

She also recalled the migration after

Army personnel booked for drugging, raping Mathura girl

Mathura: An Army personnel has been booked on charges of drugging and raping a 21-year-old woman, police here said on Saturday.

The accused, Tejveer, was arrested on Wednesday and was booked for raping a woman he befriended through social media.

On Saturday, he was slapped with a few more charges, including section 376 D (rape by more than one person) and 328 (drugging a person) of the Indian Penal Code, Superintendent of Police (SP) rural Srish Chandra said.

He said a process to book them under Gangster Act has also been started.

The officer said that since the initial FIR was registered by the brother of the woman, it had

a few shortcomings.

However, on the basis of the woman’s statement the accused was charged with section 161, 164, 376D, and 328 of the IPC, he said. The incident took place on November 23, when the victim was accompanied by Tejveer and another man named Digamber, to Agra for a Sub Inspector exam.

According to her testimony, she was drugged and raped by Tejveer, and molested by Digambar, during their return journey to Mathura in the moving car. After the act, the accused abandoned the woman in outskirts of Kosi Kalan area.

Digambar was arrested by police on Friday from Kotban that comes under Kosi Kalan Police Station of Mathura, officials said, adding that he has

been sent for judicial custody.

Both accused are residents of Manpur village in Palwal, Haryana. Police is scouring Facebook and other social media accounts of both the accused.

District Magistrate Naveen Chahal said the family of the woman - who lost her father recently in an accident - is being provided every possible help.

He said the woman’s family will receive Rs 12 lakh in assistance - Rs 700,000 under UP Rani Laxmibai Mahila Evam Bal Kalyan Kosh and Rs 500,000 under Mukhyamantri Krashak Durghatna Kalyan Yojna.

In addition, the woman will receive Rs 3000 per month under several other schemes, Chahal, who met the family along with SSP Dr Gaurav Grover, said. **PTI**

40-year-old woman raped in UP’s Bhadohi

Bhadohi (UP): A 40-year-old woman was allegedly raped by a man in a village here in Suriyawan area, police said on Saturday.

The incident had taken place in the first week of September when the victim was alone in her house and one Bhagwan Das Bind (50) allegedly raped her, Suriyawan SHO Bhuvneshwar Pandey said.

When the local police allegedly refused to file an FIR, the victim’s family approached the court, which directed instructions in the matter.

Bind was arrested on Saturday and was sent to judicial custody, police said, adding the matter is being investigated. **PTI**



Tourists visit the historic Taj Mahal in Agra on Saturday

PTI

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Delhi HC nixes CRPF DG's plea on ₹20K fine waiver

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has rejected CRPF DG Kuldiep Singh's plea for waiver of the ₹20,000 fine imposed on him in a contempt plea.

Earlier this week, Justice Najmi Waziri in an order said, "This application seeks waiver of the cost imposed vide order dated 29.10.2021. Since no ground is made out, the application is dismissed."

"An order is stated to have been passed on the petitioner's representation and the same has been communicated to him. However, costs of ₹20,000 has not been paid in terms of the previous order. Let the same be paid within two weeks. List for compliance on 21.12.2021," reads the latest order.

The contempt plea was filed by a serving deputy commandant for non-compliance of the court order dated June 9 on a writ petition filed by a group serving CRPF officers aggrieved by the discriminatory provisions and differential policy for promotion for medical officers and combatant officers.

Through an order on October 29, the Delhi High Court had slapped a fine of Rs 20,000 on CRPF Director General Kuldiep Singh in response to a contempt petition.

Through its order in June, the court had directed the CRPF chief to address the grievances of the combatant officers within 12 weeks.

The petitioners were aggrieved with the anomalies in the promotional entitlement of the medical cadre officers of the paramilitary who were getting a faster promotion than the combatant officers.



"Since the petitioner had to approach this court on account of non-compliance of the aforesaid order, costs of ₹20,000 is imposed upon the respondent (CRPF DG) to be paid to the petitioner on or before the next date," the court had said in its October order.

The petitioner Ranjeet Kumar Singh, a combatant in the rank of Deputy Commandant, and other serving officers had filed a contempt petition against CRPF Chief and had sought exemplary costs to be imposed on him on account of non-compliance of the court order.

The court posted the matter of the contempt petition after four weeks on November 24 and sought a compliance affidavit to be submitted by CRPF, Director General. However, the fine was not deposited as ordered by the court.

A division bench of the court had on June 9 directed the petitioner's representation dated March 28, 2020 to be disposed-off by the respondent (CRPF DG) within 12 weeks and failure of compliance led to the contempt plea..

"However, there is not even a whisper of compliance of the said order, thereby constraining the petitioner to

approach this court by way of instant contempt petition for which he has expended monies," the court had noted in its order while slapping the fine on the CRPF, DG.

Through the writ petition filed last year, the petitioner had sought quashing of a CRPF order dated June 10, 2010 and signal (internal message) dated February 21, 2019 relating to assignment of rank and badge to Medical Officers of CRPF in accordance with CRPF (Medical Officers Cadre) Rules.

But the CRPF, through its order in June 2010 and a Signal (internal communication platform of CRPF) message in February 2019 diluted the position postulated by the Ministry and made provisions to grant promotion to the medical officers without any link to the cadre officers getting a promotion.

After being slapped a fine of ₹20,000 by the Delhi High Court for failing to pass a reasoned order on discriminatory promotion policy of medical and cadre officers, CRPF DG Kuldiep Singh had subsequently trashed the petitioner's February 2020 plea to remedy the differential promotion of the two cadres in grant of badge and uniform.

Factionalism led to HP poll debacle: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reviewing the Himachal Pradesh bypoll debacle where it lost one Lok Sabha and three Assembly seats, the BJP has blamed wrong choice of candidates selection and "internal resentment" as the main causes for the Congress making a stunning comeback in the State.

The State BJP that reviewed the reasons of poll defeats this week from November 24 to November 26 also listed factionalism for the party's defeats in all four byelections held on October 30.

BJP president J P Nadra who hails from the State also addressed the BJP unit after the latter carried-out an extensive postmortem of the poll reverses.

The BJP lost the four Himachal seats that held bypolls — the Mandi parliamentary seat, and the Assembly constituencies of Arki, Fatehpur and Jubbals-Kotkhair.

The reports prepared by the State BJP said the party failed to gauge the sympathy for Pratibha Singh, the Congress candidate for the Mandi seat and widow of former Chief Minister Virbhadr Singh. Selection of candidates for assembly bypoll "without ascertaining their local base" and internal resentment were assessed to be the factors weakening BJP's challenge to the Congress.

Besides pocketing the prestigious Mandi Lok Sabha seat, the Congress also bagged assembly seats of Arki, Jubbals-Kotkhair and Fatehpur in the state and managed to resurrect itself where the BJP held its sway for over one decade.

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, BJP state president Suresh Kashyap, former chief minister Prem Kumar Dhumal, and state-in-charge Avinash Rai Khanna participated in the review meeting.

BJP is also in the process of reviewing party's performance in the byelections in the states like West Bengal and Rajasthan where it did not perform to the expectations and is likely to affect major changes in these state units in coming month.

The BJP lost the two bypolls in Rajasthan and ran third and fourth in the Dhariawad and Vallabh Nagar seats in Rajasthan.

The feud of former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje's differences with state unit president Satish Punia seem to have played a negative factor in the bypoll debacle that went on to strengthen hands of a 'shaky' Congress Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot facing 'dissidence' from within his own party.

In West Bengal it Lost all four assembly seats including the one it held in the North Bengal

The remarkable comeback of the Congress in Himachal Pradesh had put question mark on the leadership of the Chief Minister Thakur who put blame on the "price rise" for the defeat instead of 'owning-up' the bypoll reverses in the state.

According to sources, Thakur would be allowed to make suitable changes in the party structure in the state and "continues" to enjoy the confidence of the central leadership.

Assembly polls are due in Himachal Pradesh in November, next year.



Chief Minister of Nagaland Neiphiu Rio, Minister of State for Tourism & Defence, Ajay Bhatt and MLA & Advisor Tourism, Government of Nagaland H Khehovi Yeputhomi jointly inaugurated the three-day long 9th International Tourism Mart for the North East Region at Kohima, Nagaland on Saturday. Union Secretary, Tourism, Arvind Singh, ADG Tourism, Rupinder Brar and other dignitaries of Central Government and North Eastern States were also present on the occasion

Pioneer photo

CBI arrests ASI for accepting ₹20K bribe



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested an Assistant Sub Inspector, Police Station Bishnah, Jammu (Jammu and Kashmir) for demanding and accepting a bribe of ₹20,000 from the complainant who had approached the SHO for registering a case against certain persons who were trying to encroach and sell his land, the CBI said in a statement.

A case was registered on a complaint against the accused ASI Sham Lal on the allegations

of demanding a bribe.

It was alleged that in September, 2020, the complainant had submitted a complaint to SHO, Bishnah for registration of an FIR against certain persons who were trying to encroach and sell his land, the CBI said in a statement.

It was further alleged that the said ASI initially threatened and pressured the complainant to compromise with the encroachers and later, demanded a bribe of ₹50,000 for taking action on the complaint and for

clearing all disputes related to the complainant's land, it said.

Later, the bribe amount was allegedly negotiated at ₹20,000.

The CBI laid a trap and caught the accused red-handed while demanding and accepting negotiated bribe money of ₹20,000 from the complainant.

Searches were conducted at the premises of the accused at Jammu.

The accused is being produced before the Court of Special Judge, CBI Cases, Jammu.

Rahul terms new Covid-19 variant as 'serious threat'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Saturday termed the new Covid-19 variant as a "serious threat" and said bad vaccination figures can't be hidden for long.

"New variant is a serious threat. High time the Government of India gets serious about providing vaccine security to our countrymen. Bad vaccination figures can't be hidden for long behind one man's photo," the Congress leader said in a tweet.

Rahul had on both the occasion, first wave and pre second wave claimed to have alerted the government to take preventive and precautionary measures against the covid. His party also on several occasions remarked that Rahul was the first one to have alerted the government on the pandemic.

According to the Ministry of Health and Family welfare, till now, 121.06 crore vaccine doses have been administered so far under Nationwide Vaccination Drive.



Amid rising concern about a new COVID-19 variant 'Omicron' first detected in South Africa, India has also added several countries to the list from where travellers would need to follow additional measures on arrival in India, including post-arrival testing for infection.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare adds Hong Kong and Israel to the list of countries from where travellers would need to follow additional measures on arrival in India, including post-arrival testing considering the detection of the new COVID-19 variant 'Omicron' in South Africa.

This variant is reported to have a significantly high number of mutations, and thus, has serious public health implications for the country, in view of recently relaxed visa restrictions and opening up of international travel.

Robust regulatory mechanism and draft 'agreement for sale' prescribed under provisions of RERA: Centre to SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has told the Supreme Court that there is a robust regulatory mechanism and draft 'agreement for sale' has already been prescribed under the provisions of RERA, which seeks to balance the rights and interest of home buyers and promoters in an accountable and transparent manner.

The Centre has filed an affidavit in the top court on a plea seeking direction to to frame model pacts for builders and agent buyers to protect customers and bring in transparency in the realty sector in line with the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) Act, 2016.

"There is a robust regulatory mechanism and a draft 'agreement for sale' has already been prescribed under the provisions of RERA, which seeks to balance the rights and interest of home buyers and promoters in an accountable and transparent manner," it said.

It said that according to section 84 of RERA, the appropriate government that is state government save in the instances involving its application in the territory of union territories has to notify rules for carrying out the provisions of this Act. The union government said that it has shared the



draft 'agreement for sale' in 2016 itself after the enactment of RERA with all the states and union territories and currently, all the states and union territories have notified rules under RERA except Nagaland with which the Centre is in discussion.

"It must be brought before the consideration of this court that prior to 2014 Real Estate Sector was largely unregulated. Under the regulatory regime of RERA, the ongoing projects which have not received the completion certificate; need to get registered under RERA," it said, adding that RERA ensures transparency, accountability, and financial discipline in the real estate sector.

The affidavit said that RERA mandates for registration of projects before adver-

tising, marketing, booking, selling and the law ensures the timely delivery of real estate projects and the entire fund flow is also subject to strict monitoring by the regulator to avoid diversion of funds, which will also secure the interest of home buyers.

"The RERA seeks to address vital issues of fair transactions, timely delivery, and quality construction through speedy adjudication of disputes, thus empowering the home buyers," it said.

The Centre said that under the provision of RERA, if the developer fails to complete the project as per terms of agreement for sale, a home buyer can either seek a refund of paid amount along with interest or ask for interest for every month of delay, till the handing over of the possession.

Kharge blames Centre for surrendering Indian territory to China

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge accused the Government on Saturday of surrendering Indian territory to China and said the BJP has transformed itself into the "Beijing Janata Party".

In Arunachal Pradesh, BJP government lets China to build villages. In Uttar Pradesh, BJP government showcases Chinese airport as its own. In Ladakh, government surrenders and cedes our territory to Chinese. BJP has transformed into Beijing

Janata Party," Kharge said. The Congress has been criticising the government over Chinese incursions in Ladakh and Uttarakhand and now in Arunachal Pradesh.

The opposition party has also been demanding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi take action against China and reclaim Indian territory.

A meeting of parliamentary party group chaired by Party president Sonia Gandhi also decided to corner the government on this Chinese loopholes during the Winter Session beginning Monday.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Modi Government constituted a five-member committee to ensure timely completion of various projects executed under the Central Vista Redevelopment Plan. The five-member committee will be headed by former finance secretary Ratan P Watal. Other members of the panel are Deputy CAG P.K. Tiwari, former director of L&T Shailendar Roy and IIT Delhi professor Mausam and the ministry's joint secretary.

The terms of reference of committee stated that the

panel will ensure continuous monitoring of the pace of execution of various projects of Central Vista with respect to targeted milestones to ensure their timely completion. The committee has been formed for next two years or next order (whatever is earlier) by the government.

The redevelopment of the Central Vista, the nation's power corridor, envisages a new parliament building, a common central secretariat, revamping of the 3-km-long Rajpath from the Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate, new office and resi-

dence of the prime minister, and a new vice-president enclave. The ministry said that the five-member committee will meet regularly and undertake site inspections for an independent review.

It will submit its reports and recommendations to the HUA ministry on a regular basis. Apart from this, it will also ensure that project is executed according to the approved scope of work and prescribed standards and specifications.

Earlier this month, infrastructure firm Kamladitya



Construction Pvt Ltd was awarded the contract for constructing the vice-president enclave

In October, Larsen & Toubro Limited had won the tender work for the con-

struction and maintenance of the first three buildings of the Common Central Secretariat under the Central Vista redevelopment project. Tata Projects Limited is constructing a new parlia-

ment building while Shapoorji Pallonji and Company Limited is executing the redevelopment work of the Central Vista Avenue from the Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate.

South Africa: Punished for detecting Omicron variant

AFP ■ JOHANNESBURG

South Africa complained on Saturday that it is being “punished” for detecting a new Covid-19 variant Omicron which the World Health Organization has termed a “variant of concern” and is more transmissible than the dominant Delta strain.

The decision by a number of countries around the world to ban flights from southern Africa following the discovery of the variant “is akin to punishing South Africa for its advanced genomic sequencing and the ability to detect new variants quicker,” the foreign affairs ministry said in a statement.

“Excellent science should be applauded and not punished,” it said.

The ministry pointed out that new variants had been discovered in other parts of the world.

“Each of those cases have had no recent links with Southern Africa, but the reaction to those countries is starkly different to cases in Southern Africa,” it said.

Israel and Belgium announced after South Africa that they also had detected cases of Omicron.

Government insisted that South Africa’s “capacity to test and its ramped-up vaccination



A woman wearing a face mask to curb the spread of Covid-19 holds a child on her back on a crowded sidewalk in Pretoria, South Africa on Saturday. As the world grapples with the emergence of the new variant of COVID-19, scientists in South Africa — where omicron was first identified — are scrambling to combat its spread across the country

The decision by a number of countries around the world to ban flights from southern Africa following the discovery of the variant ‘is akin to punishing South Africa for its advanced genomic sequencing

programme, backed up by a world-class scientific community should give our global partners the comfort that we

are doing as well as they are in managing the pandemic”.

With more than 2.95 mil-

lion cases and 89,783 deaths, South Africa is the worst-hit country in Africa by the pandemic.

GLOBE TROTTER

2 DEAD AS POWERFUL STORM BATTERS UK
London: Two people were killed, thousands of homes cut off from power and drivers stuck on freezing roads overnight as a powerful storm hit the northern UK, authorities said Saturday. One woman tweeted a video of her flight from Paris struggling to land in Manchester, northwest England, in high winds late Friday. Passengers’ nervous laughter gave way to screams and sobs before the pilot aborted the landing, succeeding on a second attempt.

DUTCH GOVT APOLOGIZES FOR TRANSGENDER LAW
The Hague: The Dutch Government made a public apology on Saturday for a now discredited and scrapped law that required transgender people to undergo surgery and sterilisation if they wanted to change their gender on their birth certificate. “Nobody should have experienced what you have experienced. I am truly sorry that it happened,” said Dutch Minister for Education, Culture and Science Ingrid van Engelshoven in an emotional speech at a ceremony in the historic Knights Hall in the Dutch parliamentary complex.

MUSICAL THEATRE MASTER STEPHEN DIES
New York: Stephen Sondheim, the songwriter who reshaped the American musical theatre in the second half of the 20th century with his intelligent, intricately rhymed lyrics, his use of evocative melodies and his willingness to tackle unusual subjects, has died. He was 91. Sondheim’s death was announced by Rick Miramontez, president of DKC/O&M. Sondheim’s Texas-based attorney, Rick Pappas, told *The New York Times* the composer died Friday at his home in Roxbury, Connecticut.

ALGERIANS HOLD LOCAL ELECTIONS AMID ANGER
Algiers: Algerians are voting Saturday to elect mayors and regional leaders amid widespread worry and frustration over rising prices for basic goods, housing and health care. The Government is hoping the election confirms support for President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, who won election after his predecessor was ousted in 2019 by protests backed by the army chief.

MACAO DETAINS SUNCITY BOSS OVER GAMBLING
Beijing: Macao police on Saturday detained the head of Macao’s biggest junket organiser and others after Chinese authorities issued an arrest warrant for them over accusations that they ran an illegal cross-border gambling syndicate. The arrests in the gambling enclave came after prosecutors in Wenzhou, in the eastern province of Zhejiang,

SA President advances crucial Covid meeting

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has advanced an urgent meeting with the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC) to Saturday, amid growing global concern about the potentially more contagious new Omicron variant, which was first detected in the country.

The meeting was originally scheduled for Sunday.

The meeting comes as a growing number of European countries are following UK’s lead in banning travel to and from South Africa and neighbouring countries of Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana, as well as Lesotho and Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), both of which are landlocked within South Africa.

The latest to impose the ban are Mauritius, the US, Israel, Sri Lanka and the Netherlands.

Speculation is rife that Ramaphosa will announce a stricter lockdown and other measures to curb the spread of the new variant.

The new Covid-19 variant B.1.1.529, first detected in South Africa this week, was on Friday designated as a “Variant of Concern” by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which named it “Omicron”.

A “variant of concern” is the WHO’s top category of worrying Covid-19 variants.

UK confirms first 2 cases of Omicron

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK on Saturday detected two cases of the new Covid-19 variant, Omicron, according to health secretary Sajid Javid as he added four more African countries to Britain’s travel red list.

The patients were detected in Chelmsford and Nottingham, Javid was quoted as saying by the BBC.

He said that the cases are linked and the two people are self-isolating alongside their households while further tests and contact tracing takes place.

“We have been made aware by @UKHSA of two UK cases of the Omicron variant. The two cases are linked and there is a connection with travel to southern Africa. These individuals are self-isolating with their households while further testing and contact tracing is underway,” Javid said on Twitter.

“As a precaution we are rolling out additional targeted testing in the affected areas - Nottingham and Chelmsford - and sequencing all positive cases. This is a fast-moving situation and we are taking decisive steps to protect public health,” he said in another tweet.

The new variant has also been identified in South Africa, Botswana, Belgium, Hong Kong and Israel.

On Friday, the UK placed



South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini on the list.

In his announcement on Saturday, health secretary Javid said Angola, Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia would be added to that list.

“We’ve always been very

clear that we won’t hesitate to take further action if that is what is required.

“Today I can announce one thing that we are doing immediately is carrying out targeted testing and sequencing of positive cases in the two areas that are affected,” he said.

“We are also adding Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Angola to the travel red list — effective from 4am Sunday. If you have returned from there in the last 10 days you must isolate and get PCR tests. And if you are eligible for your booster jab — now is the time to get it,” Javid tweeted.

Top UK scientist says Omicron ‘not a disaster’, vax likely to protect

PTI ■ LONDON

The new potentially highly-transmissible variant of Covid-19, named Omicron by the WHO, is not a disaster as vaccines are still likely to protect against the serious disease from it, a UK scientist, who advises the government, said on Saturday.

Professor Calum Semple, a microbiologist from the UK government’s Scientific Advisory Group for

Emergencies (SAGE), struck a note of caution on the worldwide headlines around the new B.1.1.529 variant detected in South Africa.

The UK imposed travel restrictions on six southern African countries — South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Zimbabwe and Namibia — as health authorities said that they are investigating the “most significant variant” which could be potentially more infectious and vaccine-resistant.

Travel bans imposed on SA ‘draconian’, ‘misdirected’: Min

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

The travel bans imposed on South Africa by a growing number of countries due to the new potentially highly-transmissible variant of Covid-19 in this country is “draconian” and “misdirected”, Health Minister Joe Phaahla has said.

The new Covid-19 variant B.1.1.529, first detected in South Africa this week, was on Friday designated as a “Variant of Concern” by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which named it “Omicron”.

“We feel that it’s a wrong

approach. It is misdirected and it goes against the norms as advised by the WHO. We just feel that some of the leaderships of (these) countries are finding scapegoats to deal with what is a worldwide problem,” Phaahla said at a news briefing late Friday evening.

A “variant of concern” is the WHO’s top category of worrying Covid-19 variants. It was first reported to the WHO from South Africa on November 24, and has also been identified in Botswana, Belgium, Hong Kong and Israel.

High alert: World scurries to contain new Covid variant

AP ■ THE HAGUE

With each passing hour, new restrictions were being slapped on travel from countries in southern Africa as the world scurried on Saturday to contain a new variant of the coronavirus that has the potential to be more resistant to the protection offered by vaccines.

A host of countries, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Iran, Japan, Thailand and the United States, joined others, including the European Union and the U.K. In impose restrictions on southern African countries in response to warnings over the transmissibility of the new variant — against the advice of the World Health Organisation.

Despite the shutdown of flights, there was increasing



Travellers queue at a check-in counter at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg after several countries banned flights from South Africa

evidence that the variant is already spreading. Cases have been reported in travellers in Belgium, Israel and Hong Kong, and Germany also has a

probable case. Dutch authorities are checking for the new variant after 61 passengers on two flights from South Africa tested positive for Covid-19.

Japan PM to step up defence amid China, N Korea threats

AP ■ TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, at his first troop review Saturday, renewed his pledge to consider “all options,” including acquiring enemy base strike capability, and vowed to create a stronger Self-Defence Force to protect the country amid growing threats from China and North Korea.

Kishida said the security situation around Japan is rapidly changing and that “the reality is severer than ever,” with North Korea continuing to test-fire ballistic missiles while advancing its capability, and China pursuing a military buildup and increasingly assertive activity in the region.

“I will consider all options, including possessing so-called enemy base strike capability, to



Japanese PM Fumio Kishida

pursue strengthening of defense power that is necessary,” Kishida said in an address to hundreds of Ground Self-Defense Force members in olive-colored helmets and uniforms.

Kishida, who took office in October, served as top com-

mander for the first time at Saturday’s Self-Defense Force troop review held at the main army base Camp Asaka, north of Tokyo. About 800 troops gathered for the inspection, according to the Defense Ministry.

“The security environment surrounding Japan has been rapidly changing at an unprecedented speed. Things that used to happen only in science-fiction novels are today’s reality,” Kishida said. He said his government will lead “calm and realistic” discussions to determine what is needed to protect people’s lives and gain their understanding.

The possibility of possessing so-called enemy base strike capability has been a divisive issue because opponents say it violates Japan’s war-renouncing Constitution.

Afghanistan's key Taliban leaders studied at Pak madrassa: Report

Peshawar: Darul Uloom Haqqania madrassa, one of Pakistan’s largest and oldest seminaries and dubbed as a ‘university of jihad’ by its critics for helping sow violence across the region for decades, has educated more Taliban leaders than any school in the world and its alumni now hold key positions in Afghanistan, according to a media report.

The seminary in Pakistan’s restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has had an outsized effect in Afghanistan. The seminary’s alumni founded the Taliban movement and ruled Afghanistan in the 1990s.

The school has argued that the Taliban should be given the chance to show they have moved beyond their bloody ways since they first ruled Afghanistan two decades ago, *The New York Times* reported on Friday. **PTI**

Doctor killed by Taliban for not stopping at checkpoint

Kabul: Taliban have killed a young physician in Afghanistan’s Herat province, local media reported citing sources on Friday.

According to Khaama Press, the doctor, identified as 33-year-old Amruddin Noori was killed in Herat city after he did not stop at a police security checkpoint, the victim’s family members claimed while speaking to media.

According to sources, Noori used to have a small private medical clinic had newly got married. The Taliban came to power in Afghanistan after the seizure of the capital, Kabul, on August 15, which led to the collapse of the previous government and triggered mass evacuations of foreign workers and Afghan collaborators. **ANI**

Cash-strapped Pak to get \$3 bn from Saudi

To park money in central bank

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Cash-strapped Pakistan will soon get USD 3 billion as loan from Saudi Arabia as the Cabinet led by Prime Minister Imran Khan has approved an agreement to keep the amount in the country’s central bank, media reports said on Saturday.

The Saudi government had promised to maintain a reserve of \$3 billion at the State Bank of Pakistan, *Geo News* reported.

According to the agreement, the aid will remain in the SBP’s deposit account for a year.

“The SBP has finalised all arrangements and now everything is in place and the amount of the agreed deposit will be received within the next couple of days,” official sources told *The News*.

The federal Cabinet approved the agreement to keep the USD 3 billion aid from Saudi Arabia in the SBP, the reports quoted an official document as saying. The Cabinet approved the State Bank’s retention of \$3 billion from the Saudi Development Fund.

Solomon Islands police find 3 bodies after violent protests

AP ■ CANBERRA

Solomon Islands police found three bodies in a burned-out building and arrested more than 100 people in this week’s violence sparked by concerns about the Pacific nation’s increasing links with China.

Australian media reported the bodies were recovered late Friday after riots and protests subsided. No other details were given. Authorities imposed a curfew in the capital Honiara, after a 36-hour lockdown ordered by the embattled Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare ended Friday.



This photo shows aftermath of a looted street in Honiara’s Chinatown, Solomon Islands on Saturday

Sogavare blamed outside interference for stirring up the protests calling for his resignation, with a thinly veiled reference to Taiwan and the United States.

nation, with a thinly veiled reference to Taiwan and the United States.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY KANKE, RANCHI-834006, JHARKHAND	
ADMISSION TO THE POSTGRADUATE COURSES – 2022 SESSION	
Applications are invited from eligible candidates for admission to the following postgraduate degree/diploma courses of Ranchi University commencing from May, 2022. An All India Entrance Examination will be conducted through ONLINE mode at the following cities of this Country (Mumbai, New Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Bangalore & Ranchi).	
GROUP A	
1. Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology	: 4 seats- (NO RESERVATION)
Duration	: 2 years
Qualification	: M.Phil. (Medical & Social Psychology/ Clinical Psychology) from a University recognized by the UGC
2. M.Phil. in Clinical Psychology	: 21 seats (UR-09, EWS-02, OBC-05, SC-03, ST-02) (PH-01)
Duration	: 2 years
Qualification	: M.A./M.Sc. in Psychology course from a University recognized by the UGC With minimum 55% marks for UR & EWS and 50% marks for SC, ST & OBC in aggregate.
GROUP B	
3. M.Phil. in Psychiatric Social Work	: 12 seats (UR-07, EWS-01, OBC-02, SC-01, ST-01)
Duration	: 2 years
Qualification	: Masters in Social Work course from University recognized by the UGC with minimum 55% Marks for UR & EWS and 50% marks for SC, ST and OBC in aggregate.
GROUP C	
4. Diploma in Psychiatric Nursing	: 17 seats (UR-07, EWS-02, OBC-05, SC-02, ST-01) (PH-02)
Duration	: One year
Qualification	: 'A' Grade Certificate or Diploma in General Nursing and Midwifery.
Group A & B: Selected candidates will get scholarship of Rs. 25,000/- per month. Group C: Selected candidates will get scholarship of Rs. 2500/- per month. The application form is to be submitted electronically ONLY on internet through CIP website: www.cipranchi.nic.in on or before December 31, 2021. Hard copy of the application form will not be entertained. Online Payment fee of Rs.1000/-** for Unreserved, EWS and Rs. 500/-** for OBC, PwD, SC and ST candidates. (**Transactional charges will be extra from the above-said fee structure via Debit Card, Credit Card, UPI Payment, Net Banking & Mobile Wallets.)Please note that the examination fee is non-refundable. Online form will be available on our website (www.cipranchi.nic.in) from 01.12.2021. Online Examination will be held on 20.02.2022 and interview/practical would be held in person at CIP between 8 th to 12 th March, 2022. Last date for joining the courses is May 31 st , 2022. Please visit www.cipranchi.nic.in for downloading the prospectus with requisite details before filling the ONLINE application form.	
Director Central Institute of Psychiatry	

Over 390 RCS-Udan air routes operational now

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

India has till date operationalised 395 air routes under the Regional Connectivity Scheme ‘Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik’ or RCS-Udan.

Under the scheme, which was launched in 2016, airlines are provided with a ‘Viability Gap Funding’ to keep fares affordable and accessible.

“Till date, 395 routes and 63 airports, including six heliports and two water aerodromes, have been operationalised under the UDAN scheme,” the Ministry of Civil Aviation said in a statement on Saturday.

The statement came a day after domestic flight operations at the newly-inaugurated Kushinagar Airport in Uttar Pradesh commenced with the first flight operating between Delhi and Kushinagar under RCS-UDAN.

“The commencement of the flight operations on this route is in line with the commitment and perseverance of



the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to enable the country with better air connectivity under the UDAN scheme,” the statement said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had inaugurated the Kushinagar International Airport on October 20, 2021.

Kushinagar is an international Buddhist pilgrimage centre.

“The operationalisation of the Kushinagar airport will connect this region directly to

national and global visitors and pilgrims,” the statement said.

The Airports Authority of India has developed the Kushinagar Airport with a new terminal building at an estimated cost of Rs 260 crore in association with the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

The new terminal is equipped to handle 300 passengers during peak hours. SpiceJet was awarded the Kushinagar-Delhi route under the RCS-UDAN 4.0.

Strong demand to improve textile sector’s YoY sales volumes in FY22

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Strong domestic as well as export demand will improve year-on-year (YoY) sales volumes of overall textile sector in FY22, said India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra).

According to the agency, domestic as well as export demand will sustain during the rest of FY22.

Besides, it has maintained the rating outlook of the sector at ‘Stable’ for the reminder of FY22, expecting a sustained improvement in the sector players’ profitability and the continued deleveraging of their balance sheets.

“The strong operating cash flows will lead to an improvement in their credit metrics, despite the likely increase in the working capital requirement on the back of the higher sales volumes and increased capital expenditure.”

“The benefits of integrated business operations, healthy balance sheet liquidity and operating efficiencies over FY22 have already been factored into the ratings.”

As per the agency, the domestic demand improved



over ‘2HFY21’ before declining marginally during ‘1QFY22’, due to the closure of malls and retail spaces in cities.

“The demand is likely to improve from ‘2HFY22’ with the easing of restrictions but remain vulnerable to any further restriction.

Also, the demand from spinning mills seems to be recovering ahead of festivities in India.”

“During ‘1QFY22’, players witnessed a rise in volumes YoY, although it declined marginally QoQ.”

Accordingly, segments such as cotton yarn and fabrics witnessed a higher YoY demand from downstream

players during ‘1HFY22’.

“The domestic demand for home textile has sustained, whereas that for woven fabric and apparels is likely to improve with the opening up of retail shops and malls from ‘2HFY22’.”

Furthermore, the agency expects the export demand to improve moderately in 2HFY22 on the back of accelerated vaccination and ‘China Plus One’ sourcing strategy.

“The demand is likely to improve further FY23 onwards. Furthermore, the ongoing impact of the sourcing restriction of China (Xinjiang) cotton, could play an important role in boosting the demand.”

India shown as preferred destination partner for textiles at Dubai Expo

PTI ■ DUBAI

An Indian delegation at the Expo 2020 Dubai on Saturday described India as the preferred destination partner for textiles and clothing, and emphasised on the need for exporters to use the UAE as the gateway to Africa and Europe.

The delegation from India’s textile industry gathered here for a networking session - Deepening Engagement with UAE and the World - to highlight the opportunities in the sector.

It described India as the preferred destination partner for textiles and clothing and also emphasised on the need for Indian exporters to use the UAE as the gateway of exports to Africa and Europe.

The Ministry of Textiles officials also highlighted the Government’s Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for textiles, which aims to boost the production of Man-Made Fibre (MMF) fabric, MMF apparel and technical textiles. Several export promotion council officials were

present on the occasion.

Chandrasekhar Bhatia, Chairman of the Global Business Federation, said the textile industry can help India achieve its target of becoming a 5 trillion economy.

“I request all stakeholders in India’s textile industry here in the UAE and back home to play their role. With collaborations such as these, the target can definitely be achieved,” Bhatia said.

India’s Consul General in Dubai Dr Aman Puri said that India has traditional strengths in the textile sector and there are huge opportunities for it to grow.

“Since Expo 2020 is a six-month event, we would like to see over its remaining four months is more entrepreneurs, innovators, start-ups and women entrepreneurs in this sector to come and showcase their work,” he said.

Dr Puri also said that Indian textile sector entrepreneurs should look at Dubai as a gateway for their expansion in the Middle East and North Africa region and beyond.

EDMC proposes hike in property tax

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) in its budget on Friday proposed to increase property tax on residential and commercial prop-

erties and suggested dropping taxation on cycle rickshaws, milch animals and those which pull vehicles.

EDMC Commissioner Vikas Anand presented the revised budget estimates for the

financial year 2021-22 and budget estimates for 2022-23 fiscal at the corporation headquarters in Patparganj.

The decision to not levy taxes on owners of milch animals like cows, buffaloes, and those which pull vehicles like horses, has been taken as, “it is not appropriate with changing times,” a senior official said.

These taxes were imposed during the British rule, he said.

Also, a professional tax, education cess and betterment

tax have been proposed in the budget, the official said.

Residential, commercial and non-residential plots are currently divided into multiple categories in the city, there are no residential properties in the A-B category, officials said.

The EDMC budget has proposed an increase in property tax for the residential category with 13 per cent for the C-E category and 10 per cent for the F-H category.



Shippers prepare for another pandemic crush of holiday gifts

AP ■ PORTLAND

The last holiday season was far from the most wonderful time of the year for the U.S. Postal Service: Sick and quarantined workers, a flood of packages from shoppers loathe to set foot in stores and a last-minute dump of packages from overwhelmed private shippers.

Postal workers who recall packages and letters piled up in distribution hubs are better prepared this time as they gear up for another pandemic crunch. But low product inventories, and port and supply chain disruptions are creating new uncertainty about getting gifts delivered.

Already, workers are seeing a surge in holiday packages that began several weeks ago.

“A lot of the workers are saying, Oh no. Here we go again,” said



Scott Adams, local president of the American Postal Workers Union in Portland.

The U.S. Postal Service and private shippers UPS and FedEx are bolstering their hiring — bringing in about 230,000 temporary workers — and taking other steps to ensure they don’t become overwhelmed by packages.

Nearly 3.4 billion parcels

are expected to crisscross the country this holiday season, representing an estimated increase of about 400 million compared to last year, said Satish Jindel, from Pennsylvania-based

ShipMatrix, which analyzes shipping package data.

When cards and letters are included, the U.S. Postal Service said it’ll be delivering

more than 12 billion items.

“The pandemic is still here. The supply chain is a challenge that’s going to impact how people shop and how products move,” said Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, which represents more than 200,000 postal workers.

Despite the precarious situation, the Postal Service, UPS and FedEx are in better shape to handle the peak volume, and several trends could work in their favor, Jindel said.

More people are shopping in stores compared to last year, and people have been placing online orders earlier because they’re keenly aware of supply chain problems, Jindel said. Also, with workers returning to offices, there are fewer office supply shipments being made to homes, he said.



UJVN LTD.
(An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprise)
H.O. "UJJAWAL" Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road Dehradun 248006
Telephone: 0135 – 2763808, Fax 0135-2763508
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 Website: www.ujvnl.com

RO.No. 904 Tender Notice Dated-27.11.2021

The office of Executive Engineer (Maintenance), Maneri Bhali Stage-II, Chinyalisaur (Uttarkashi) invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tenders is given below:
Tender No: NIT- 67/EE(M)/MB-II/21-22
Name of work: Aluminium painting work at Dharasu power House.
Estimated cost: Rs. 782048/- Only (Taxes extra)
Date of availability of bid document on website: - 29.11.2021
Last date for submission of tender:- 20.12.2021 up to 11:00 Hrs.
For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website"
www.ujvnl.com"

Executive Engineer
(Maintenance)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"



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(An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprise)
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Tele.: 0135-2763508, 2763808, Fax: 0135-2763507, website: www.ujvnl.com

No. 907 e-Tender Notice Date : 27.11.2021

Office of the Executive Engineer (E&M) SHP, UJVN Ltd., Guptkashi, invites online bids on from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:
Tender No. NIT.No.02/EE(E&M-SHP)/Kalganga-I/2021-22
Name of Work- Design, Supply, Installation and Commissioning for modification of existing cooling water system to close loop cooling water system for Kalganga-I SHP (2x2 MW+15% COL),located in Tehsil Ukhimath, District- Rudraprayag, Uttarakhand
Estimated Cost- ₹ 23,57,876.00 (Including GST)
Date of availability of bid document on web site- 25.11.2021 at 16:00 Hrs
Last date for submission of bids on website- 20.12.2021 up to 17.00 Hrs.
For full & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal "**https://uktenders.gov.in"**

Executive Engineer (E&M)(SHP)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male Namely Unknown S/o Unknown, R/o Unknown Age: 40 years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Built: Normal, Wearing: Blue coloured Printed T-shirt, Blue coloured jeans and Black coloured coat, was found under Ring Road Flyover, New Delhi and was admitted in Hospital, during the treatment Doctors declared him brought dead on 23.11.2021 at about 05:30 PM Vide MLC No.362819/21. In this regard a DD No.42A, dated 23.11.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi. If any one having any clue about deceased male may kindly inform the undersigned and contact on following numbers.



SHO
P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi
Ph.: 011-24106345, 24106346
DP/933/SW/2021 Mob. 7065036231

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a man namely Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown was found dead on 04.11.2021 at Gagan Cinema Hall Park Bus Stop, Nand Nagri, Near SDM Court, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 20-A dated 04.11.2021 has been lodged at Police Station, Nand Nagri, Delhi. Identification of unidentified dead body of male is as under:



Name: Unknown, Age: About 50 Years, Height: 5', Built: Normal, Face: Round, Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: Shirt & Pant.
If anyone have any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.

SHO
Police Station Nand Nagri, Delhi
Ph.: 011-22137761, 8750870733
DP/1201/NE/2021

Democratic countries need to think about creating safe, accountable internet: MoS IT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Democratic countries need to join hands to think about creating safety, trust and accountability on the internet which has no boundaries, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said on Saturday.

Speaking at the first ever India Internet Governance Forum (IIGF) organised by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI), he said India is becoming one of the largest connected nations with 800 million people online.

With the world's largest rural broadband programme,

India would soon have more than 1 billion people on the internet, he noted.

“Given the size of the internet and cyberspace, which does not have boundaries, it needs cooperation. The world needs to think about it, especially democratic countries and societies,” Chandrasekhar said.

He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Digital India Mission with 3 major objectives -- to transform lives of Indians, expand economic opportunities with digital entrepreneurship, and enhance strategic capabilities in certain technologies including the internet so that the future of internet is shepherd by countries that are open soci-

eties and share the same set of democratic values and respect citizen rights.

“IIGF in a lot of ways was about talking and having more stakeholders around the big roundtable i.e. India about how do we keep the internet open? How do we make sure that the internet is safe and trusted by all those people who use it, and safety and trust being extremely important attributes because there are whole new demographics that were not foreseen many years ago which are children, women and the elderly,” Chandrasekhar said.

He said the government is committed to connecting all Indians to the internet.

Specialised groups to address exporters' banking challenges: Minister Karad

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Centre's specialised groups will address banking challenges faced by exporters, said Union Minister of State for Finance, Dr Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad.

Speaking at the 'Banking Conclave on Exports' organised by FIEO in Mumbai on Friday, the minister announced formation of various groups to address the problems raised by exporters and other stakeholders consisting of FIEO, leading banks, IBA, Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Finance including one on challenges of e-commerce retail exports.

He highlighted the importance of banking sector in promoting and facilitating exports.

He informed that several reforms related to the banking sector have taken place in the recent past, and all the banks have implemented it in a successful manner.

Paytm posts Q2 results, revenue from ops up by 64% to ₹10.9 bn

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

India's leading digital ecosystem for consumers and merchants, Paytm announced its second quarter earnings report. The digital payments and financial services platform saw its revenue from operations grow by 64 per cent Y-o-Y to ₹10.9 billion in Q2 FY 2022, driven by 52 per cent growth in non-UPI payment volumes (GMV) and more than 3 times growth in financial services and other revenue.

The company's contribution profit grew to ₹2.6 billion in Q2 FY 2022, year-on-year increase of 592 per cent. The contribution margin jumped to 24.0 per cent of revenue from 5.7 per cent the previous year.

Paytm posted an improved Adjusted EBITDA margin to (39 per cent) of revenues in Q2 FY 2022 (₹4,255 million), from (64 per cent) of revenues Q2 FY 2021 (₹ 4,267 million), along with increased investments in technology and merchant base expansion.

“The growth of non-UPI



GMV has driven continued payments revenue growth, and our UPI-led payment volume growth is translating to a significant ramp up of our financial services offerings. We are driving digital payments and financial services penetration and widespread adoption across India.

Paytm has seen a strong second quarter of FY22, which is a testimony to the strong two-sided ecosystem of consumers and merchants that we have built.

We have maintained the growth momentum in our payments services business, expanded our financial services business aggressively and are on our way to pre-Covid volumes for Commerce and Cloud services,” said the com-

pany's management on the second quarter earnings.

Paytm's Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) growth was driven by active user engagement & adoption across businesses. The company's GMV for Q2FY2022 was ₹1,956 billion, up by 107 per cent Y-o-Y and the growth momentum continued in October 2021, where the GMV at ₹832 billion was up 131 per cent Y-o-Y.

The company's average Monthly Transacting Users (MTU) in Q2FY2022 is up by 33 per cent Y-o-Y to 57.4 million and the trajectory has continued in October 2021 with 63 million MTUs, growth of 35 per cent Y-o-Y compared to 47 million MTUs in October 2020.

US dollar falls amid rising risk aversion

IAN S ■ NEW YORK

The US dollar recorded a deep decrease in late trading on Friday as demand for a safe haven shot up.

The dollar index, which measures the greenback against six major peers, decreased 0.75 per cent at 96.0468 in late trading. The discovery of a new Covid-19 variant in South Africa sent jitters across global markets on Friday, Xinhua news agency reported. Surging demand for a safe haven drove 10-year Treasury bond yield to 1.479 per cent on Friday, down 16.2 basis points from the previous trading session. Commodity-based currencies were in a free fall on Friday morning as the price of commodities plunged with global equities, said a note by foreign exchange and international payment solutions provider Tempus, Inc.

PUBLIC NOTICE
The general Public is hereby informed that my client Pawan Kumar S/o Matu Ram R/o C-112, Yadav Nagar, Samai Pur, Delhi-42, have disowned/debarred his son namely Nitish Aggarwal (age 30 years) from all their moveable and immovable properties due to their quarrel/some character and bad behaviour towards my client. My client shall not be at all responsible of any act done by them in what so manner in future.
NAZIA PARVEEN(Advocate)
13, Hargovind Enclave,
Bhartendu Harish Chandra Marg, ND-110092
Mobile: 9278993921

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform to all concerned that Smt. Usha Kapoor W/o Shri Anil Kumar Kapoor R/o 121, Chander Nagar, Block-A, Janak Pur, New Delhi, owner of property No. F-17, Sector-56, Noida had executed a general power of attorney in favour of Mrs. Lata Jain W/o Shri Sushil Kumar Jain on 07-12-1987 regd. with S.R. Noida Dt. 07-12-1987 as document No. 2178, and the agreement to sell is not registered because an agreement to sell is not registered so it is publicly notified that the transfer application of the said property is going to apply for transfer through G.P.A. holder in favor of Smt. Suman Lata W/o Shri Shankar Pal Singh R/o F-17, Sector-56, Noida if someone has any objection he should move her/his/their objection with proof within 30 days from this notice in Residential Plot Department of Noida Authority. Lata Jain

PUBLIC NOTICE
Subject: Plot bearing No. K-14, admeasuring around 502 Sq. Mt., situated in the area of Village Basai Darapur, New Delhi
WHEREAS Mr. Anand Swarup Gosain was the owner of Plot bearing No. K-14, admeasuring around 502 Sq. Mt., situated in the area of Village Basai Darapur, New Delhi.
WHEREAS the said Mr. Anand Swarup Gosain has died on 31.10.1984.
WHEREAS Mr. Krishan Kumar and Mr. Narender Kumar sons of the said Late Mr. Anand Swarup Gosain are the only legal heirs of the said Late Mr. Anand Swarup Gosain.
WHEREAS Mr. Krishan Kumar and Mr. Narender Kumar sons of the said Late Mr. Anand Swarup Gosain intend to apply for the transfer of the said property in their favour being the only legal heirs of the said Late Mr. Anand Swarup Gosain.
If any person is having any objection against the transfer of Plot bearing No. K-14, admeasuring around 502 Sq. Mt., situated in the area of Village Basai Darapur, New Delhi in favour of Mr. Krishan Kumar and Mr. Narender Kumar sons of the said Late Mr. Anand Swarup Gosain, he/she/they can submit objection in writing to the office of the undersigned, along with supporting documents within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which the concerned Authority may sanction the mutation of the property as per the records & may not entertain subsequent claim, thereupon.
Mr. Subash Bhat (Advocate)
Add: Trinity Legal Partners, C-401, The Courtyard, Nirvana Country, Sector 50, Gurgaon, Haryana. subash.bhat@trinitylegalpartners.com

AXAR's high 5! NZ out for 296 on Day 3



PTI ■ KANPUR

Axar Patel continued his golden run in favourable home conditions, grabbing another five-wicket haul to put India in the driver's seat after New Zealand were bowled out for 296 despite an opening stand of 151 on the third day of the first Test here on Saturday.

The left-arm spinner had a couple of dream sessions when he finally found the ideal pace and turn off the surface to completely derail New Zealand's steady first innings. His final figures read 34-6-62-5 as India got a crucial 49-run first innings lead, which increased to 63 at stumps.

Ravichandran Ashwin was also on the money

as he bowled 42.3 overs to finish on 3 for 82, inching closer to becoming the third highest Indian wicket-taker in Test cricket.

Gujarat man Axar has been terrific since he donned the India whites at the start of the year and now has as many as 32 wickets in just three and half Tests.

The five-for was his fifth having already got four in the three Tests against England.

However, he will cherish this one a bit more considering that the track was not as diabolical as the ones in the England series (second Test in Chennai and the Pink Test in Ahmedabad).

At stumps, the hosts were 14 for 1 after losing Shubman Gill (1) for the second time to Kyle Jamieson, who again found a gaping hole between his bat and pad.

With the deliveries keeping wickedly low, New Zealand's chances of fighting it out in the fourth innings will be pretty low unless skipper Kane Williamson produces one of his steady knocks.

On the day, however, he managed just 18 and when Umesh Yadav's in-cutter brought about his downfall at the stroke of lunch, the wheels of fortune turned in favour of India.

This was after openers Will Young (89 off 214 balls) and Tom Latham (95 off 282 balls) added 151 for the opening stand but both, despite their dogged display, missed out on hundreds.

It was the second new ball that did the trick just before lunch as Umesh (1/50 in 18 overs) pitched one on off-stump, which cut back

enough to find Williamson's pads.

The next two sessions belonged to India as they got eight wickets for just 99 runs.

Axar's perseverance paid off as he changed his line from leg-middle to off-middle and the release was at a greater speed when compared to what he did on the second evening.

He removed Ross Taylor (11), Henry Nicholls (2) and Latham within a space of 13 runs to completely upset Black Caps' rhythm.

It was in the post-lunch session that Axar finally sent down a classical left-arm spinner's delivery.

There was a delivery that had a bit of air and pitched on length drawing Taylor forward and then turned enough to take an outside edge which went to substitute keeper K S Bharat. Bharat came in after regular



stumper Wriddhiman Saha complained of a stiff neck.

Nicholls also tried sweeping a much fuller delivery which turned back in and he was found leg before.

Having understood that on a slower track like this one, the pace off the pitch needed to increase, Axar gave it a tweak at decent clip which saw Latham beaten all ends up. Bharat fumbled before he could effect the stumping.

Prior to that, Latham hardly had any lapse of concentration as he played 47 overs of the New Zealand innings.

Later on, Axar got Tom Bundell (13 off 94 balls), who looked to merely survive and finally got a 'shooter' that cleaned his defence.

Southie became his fifth victim trying to play inside an arm ball which turned enough to hit the off-stump.

The pitch on the third day didn't change its character as it stayed low and slow but the Indian spinners did better as the time progressed by varying the pace of their deliveries.

During the session, Ashwin was seen involved in an animated discussion with umpire Nitin Menon after he decided to come round the wicket against Williamson and cautioned for walking on the dangerous area on his follow-through, which also obstructed the umpire's view.

The intention was to create a few roughs with his bowling spikes in the region.

Menon, having understood the motive, had a word with Ashwin and skipper Ajinkya Rahane and after some discussions, normalcy prevailed.

Later at the fog end of the of day, Ashwin cleaned up the visiting team's tail.

Scoreboard

INDIA 1st INNINGS: 345	
NEW ZEALAND 1st INNINGS: (OVERNIGHT 129/0)	
Tom Latham st sub (KS Bharat) b Patel	95
Will Young c sub (KS Bharat) b Ashwin	89
Kane Williamson lbw b Yadav	18
Ross Taylor c sub (KS Bharat) b Patel	11
Henry Nicholls lbw b Patel	2
Tom Blundell b Patel	13
Rachin Ravindra b Jadeja	13
Kyle Jamieson c Patel b Ashwin	23
Tim Southee b Patel	5
William Somerville b Ashwin	6
Ajaz Patel	5*
Extras: (B-6, LB-4, NB-5, W-1) 16	
Total: (all out in 142.3 overs) 296	
Fall of wickets: 1-151, 2-197, 3-214, 4-218, 5-227, 6-241, 7-258, 8-270, 9-284	
Bowling (India):	
Ishant Sharma	15-5-35-0
Umesh Yadav	18-3-50-1
R Ashwin	42.3-10-82-3
R Jadeja	33-10-57-1
Axar Patel	34-6-62-5
INDIA 2ND INNINGS: 14-1	
Mayank Agarwal	4*
Shubman Gill b Jamieson	1
Cheteshwar Pujara	9*
Extras: 0	
Total: (1 wkts, 5 Overs) 14	
Fall of Wickets: 2-1	
Bowler (New Zealand):	
Tim Southee	2-1-2-0
Kyle Jamieson	2-0-8-1
Ajaz Patel	1-0-4-0

WHEN WICKETS WEREN'T COMING

Patel is happy that stand-in captain Ajinkya Rahane and head coach Rahul Dravid helped in keeping a calm dressing room when the team did not get any wicket for 67 overs.

"Obviously, if you don't get wicket for 67 overs, it's

tough but the dressing room was calm as Ajju bhai and Rahul sir kept a calm environment. They said we have to keep patience because if we get one, we will get a few more and then we can make inroads," he said. "We got the reward for our persistence in the first and second session," he signed off.



PTI ■ KANPUR

Thirty two wickets in only seven Tests innings is no mean feat and Axar Patel says the secret of his success lies in enjoying his craft and believing that he can't be 'pigeon-holed' as a T20 specialist.

The left-arm spinner took 5 wickets for 62 runs to bring India back in

the first Test against New Zealand.

It was his fifth fifer in just seven completed Test innings, an incredible feat in its own way even if he bowled in spin-friendly conditions.

"Whenever I have played first-class or India A, I have done well. I have never seen myself as a white ball specialist," Patel made it clear that he doesn't like being bracketed.

For the left-arm orthodox from Gujarat, it's all in the mind. "It's all in mind-set as to what you perceive yourself as - a white ball specialist or red ball specialist. I always had the belief that whenever I get a chance I will do well. "Obviously, I give credit to team members for having faith in me and I have been able to stand up to their expectations."

But does he feel extra pressure that two world class spinners in Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja are also in the same eleven?

"Whenever I go to the ground, I try and enjoy and not think about whether Ashwin bhai and Jaddu are there," he made his thought-process clear.

"When I have ball in my hand, I just try and see to it that I am enjoying my bowling, trying to read the wicket and understand what's happening, how it's behaving and plan accordingly," he elaborated.

He is not at all bothered whether he has a lead role or a supporting one. "I don't think about whether my role is a lead one or whether there are senior bowlers around me, I only think about my bowling and what is required

to be done in that particular spell," he added.

USING THE CREASE

Axar made subtle changes while bowling on Saturday compared to his first spell on the second day and the key was to play with varied angles, mixing the pace of his deliveries. "I used the crease much more today and I didn't use the crease a lot in the 10 overs that I bowled yesterday. "I was using the crease by going wide and coming near the stumps, creating various angles, and that helped me get a lot of purchase," he said when asked about what kind of changes he brought about on Saturday.

CRACKS HAVEN'T OPENED MUCH

Patel assessed that the

pitch isn't as difficult as it may seem as only the odd ball is turning or keeping low but at the same time reminded that patience will be the key.

"Our batters were present at the ground and they also have a fair idea. We were discussing that cracks haven't opened much and only the odd ball is doing a bit, if you play the ball on its merit, there won't be much trouble," he said.

"There isn't any uneven bounce as such. An odd ball is either turning or keeping low. If they start bowling a disciplined line and keep patience then only our batters can face some trouble. I will advise our batters to keep patience and put the bad balls away," he said.

RAHUL SIR, AJJU BHAI WERE CALM

Star players, new teams and Auction!

From the 2022 season onwards, the IPL is going to be a 10-team affair after the inclusion of two new teams from Lucknow and Ahmedabad. But before the action begins on the cricket field, the ten teams will battle against each other on the auction table to get the star players in their ranks. And the process of it has started, with the existing eight franchises having the option to retain as many as four players from the previous squad. While the two new teams will have the right to pick three players before the mega auction. The Pioneer's DRITI ATRI tells about the players that can be retained by their sides.

MUMBAI INDIANS	ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE	CHENNAI SUPER KINGS	DELHI CAPITALS
The Mumbai Indians are the most successful IPL team, having won five trophies and two back-to-back titles in 2019 and 2020. They will have to let go many star players like Quinton de Kock, Trent Boult, Suryakumar Yadav, or even Hardik and Krunal Pandya from that winning squad. But they will retain skipper Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Kieron Pollard and, most likely, Ishan Kishan. Rohit and Bumrah are irreplaceable players in the MI line-up and have played a big role in the Mumbai Indians' success over the years. Pollard has represented MI for 12 years now and is one of the most experienced 3D players in T20 history. As for Ishan, he is a young, explosive batsman who can serve the franchise for many more years to come.	Virat has represented RCB since the inaugural season of the IPL and, despite his decision to step down from the captaincy, he is the most important player for Bangalore. With Ab de Villiers' retirement from cricket, Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell, on the back of his strong IPL 2021 performance, could be retained by the franchise. Apart from the duo, Yuzvendra Chahal, Devdutt Padikkal, Mohammed Siraj, and 2021 edition purple cap winner Harshal Patel could be retained.	Despite struggling for form in the previous two seasons, the Chennai Super Kings have all but confirmed that MS Dhoni will play for the four-time IPL champions again in the upcoming season. Another player who Chennai would like to keep is Ravindra Jadeja. The ace all-rounder is one of the best finishers in world cricket at the moment and is also an exceptional fielder. Also, the 2021 season's leading run getter, Ruturaj Gaikwad, and his opening partner, Faf du Plessis, could be retained by the yellow army. Sam Curran and Moeen Ali's names are also in the fray, but Suresh Raina is likely to part ways with CSK now after more than a decade of bonding.	DC, in all likelihood, will retain local lad Rishabh Pant ahead of Shreyas Iyer, who is likely to go in the auction pool, as he is looking for an opportunity to lead an IPL team and he will not be short of suitors as well, particularly after his impressive stint as DC captain in the 2019 and 2020 seasons. According to reports, DC will retain young opener Prithvi Shaw, all-rounder Axar Patel and South African pacer Anrich Nortje ahead of the mega auctions, which means Shikhar Dhawan, Ravichandran Ashwin and Kagiso Rabada will go to the auction pool. Shaw and Axar are young and have made a name for themselves in the IPL circuit and can serve DC for many more years to come.
RAJASTHAN ROYALS	KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS	PUNJAB KINGS	SUNRISERS HYDERABAD
Sanju Samson is the first player the inaugural champions would like to keep for the upcoming season, and they can only choose two from the English trio of Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler, and Jofra Archer. All three are among the best players in T20	Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, Varun Chakravarthy, Shubman Gill, and Venkatesh Iyer. KKR will have to choose between the five, and the rest of the previous season's squad is likely to go to auction. Shubman is a young, talented Indian batsman who is one for the future and could also be the next captain for the Kolkata side. While Venkatesh Iyer has impressed everyone in the second phase of the IPL 2021, he has also been selected to represent India in the New Zealand T20s. While Sunil Narine and Andre Russell are KKR legends and have served the franchise for almost a decade now, they have played a major role in two title wins.	KL Rahul is the most in-form batsman in the IPL since he joined the Punjab Kings in 2018. He scored 659 runs in 2018, 593 in 2019, 670 in 2020 and 626 in 2021 for the Mohali-based side. But despite that, the team has failed to make any major impact in the tournament and is still struggling for its maiden IPL title. If KL Rahul decides to leave Punjab, it will be a huge blow for the team. In the event that KL leaves, Punjab can retain Mayank Agarwal and Mohammed Shami. Apart from being Indian players, the duo have performed well in the last few seasons and are the key players in the PBKS setup.	Sunrisers Hyderabad finished last in the 2021 IPL and are likely to undergo major changes in their team combination ahead of the new season. With the BCCI stating that only two overseas players can be retained, one of David Warner, Kane Williamson, or Rashid Khan must depart, and it is most likely that David Warner will be the one to go, especially after being dropped from the squad during the second phase of the 2021 IPL. Even though he redeemed his pride by being the Man of the Tournament in the 2021 T20 World Cup, SRH is unlikely to retain him.





the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

Exquisite prose poetry

Anita Nahal probes with the tenacity of a philosopher, existential questions of being & nothingness & of identity & subjectivity

2



4

Choice sets premise of destiny

Once choice option is there, the probability of its use and misuse becomes equal. One has to will upon to make a particular choice

Learning is the most important thing, no matter how you do it, or where you do it, or who you do it with
— Saoirse Ronan



The starting point of being an impact champion who sets the organisation on a socially oriented path is your own social consciousness and willingness to drive transformative innovations’ write
PRIYA NAIR RAJEEV & SIMY JOY

TIME TO AWAKEN CORPORATE SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS?



The 2019 Global Wealth Databook from Credit Suisse reports that 73 percent of Indians have a net worth of less than \$10,000 (compared to just 19 percent in China), while 2.3 percent have a net worth of over \$1 million. India ranks fourth in the world in ultra-high-net-worth individuals (4,593), making us one of the fastest-growing yet unequal nations.

Private sector corporates often do not see addressing developmental inequities as their problem. Access to food, water, healthcare, and education is commonly understood as ‘poor people’s problems that the government and social sector organisations must solve. No doubt that the poor are the first to be hit, that too very hard, as we saw in a mass exodus of the migrant workers during the first wave of the pandemic. The middle class and above believe that they can access basic necessities by private means and from the private sector. The second wave of the pandemic showed us how false that sense of security is! With the relatively well-off scrambling for medical care, medicines, oxygen, and ventilators, it was apparent that none of us would be spared from the ill effects of our developmental shortcomings.

IMPACT CHAMPIONS: THE FLAGBEARERS OF CHANGE

If we were to survive together, the corporate sector organisations must enact social consciousness. This mindset understands and accepts the interconnectedness of the economic, social, and natural worlds. Socially conscious organisations do not come into existence without socially-conscious managers. We see such managers as ‘Impact Champions’ having the intent and capabilities to help their organisations positively impact the economy and society, and the environment.

Enamored by the glitz of the corporate careers in the liberalized Indian economy, MBA aspirants in the 1990s readily bought into the mantra of ‘profit maximisation. But many Gen Z and Millennial MBA aspirants are a little more skeptical about whether that is the best way forward, as it has become apparent that their generation would bear the consequences of the social and environmental damage left by the unbridled pursuit of profits. Many of them harbor pro-social inclinations during their student days; however, they are unsure how to take it forward once they start a corporate career. In the ‘big, bad world of corporates’, beating competition and exceeding performance expectations are the basis for career advancement. Hence, they feel that there is little room for social ideals.

Time has never been more right for aspiring Impact Champions in the corporate sector to get into action. The UN has been driving Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs) to tackle the development challenges and climate change. SDGs urge the private sector to collaborate with the civic society and governments, to which influential corporates world over have

responded positively. In the global business circles, ‘Triple Bottom Line’, with its focus on 3Ps — People, Planet and Profit, is widely discussed as a replacement for the traditional ‘bottomline,’ focusing singularly on ‘profits.’ With avid support from the likes of Klaus Schwab (Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum) and Jack Welch (ex-CEO, GE), ‘shareholder capitalism’ has begun to make way for ‘stakeholder capitalism,’ which gives equal priority to the employees, customers, suppliers, and the community.

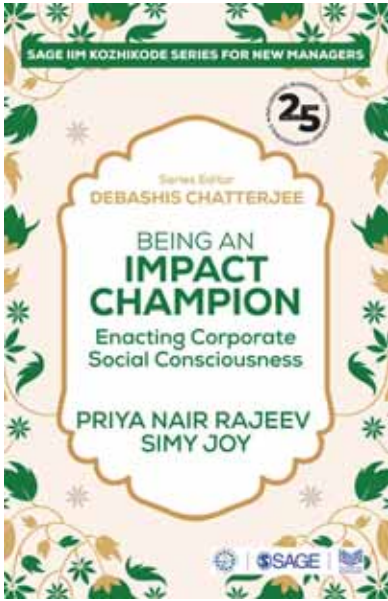
Indian corporates are slowly beginning to catch up with this global trend. However, they are in dire need of managers who can champion this transition.

HOW TO BE AN IMPACT CHAMPION?

● **Self-appoint yourself as an ‘Impact Champion’:** Most corporate jobs would demand you to mind only the impact on profit, not people or the planet. To be an impact champion, you have to self-appoint yourself as one and be sure that you do not leave your social consciousness at home while coming to work. When you operate with a ‘corporate mindset’ in a regular day’s work, you would accept and get on with decisions that look perfectly sensible and acceptable from the corporate and legal standpoints. It takes social consciousness to recognize when stakeholders or environmental interests are being compromised among what looks like business as usual. An impact champion not only recognises issues but also takes personal responsibility for action. New managers aspiring to impact champions may be unsure how to navigate organisational processes and culture in enacting social consciousness. They can find support in like-minded managers and mentors at the Impact Champions Forum, a seedbed for individuals who intend to transform organisations into socially conscious ones at CESI, Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode.

P P Sukumaran (ex-HR Head, Murugappa group) had to retrench 200 plant workers post-TQM implementation. A perfectly legal decision, arrived at in consultation with the Union, still left him worried about the ‘social debris’ that this decision would leave — what were the chances that 200 middle-workers in a northern Kerala village find alternate jobs; even with the severance money will their families have financial security in a social setting where alcoholism was rampant. P P Sukumaran was determined to do something about it. However, he was not required either by law or by his organisational mandate to address this.

● **Get partners:** You have to do it yourself, but you cannot do it alone. Irrespective of where you are in the organisational hierarchy, you would need partners. Partners are people inside (sometimes even outside) of the organisation committed to addressing societal or environmental problems that you seek to solve through organisational means. In addition to moral and emotional support (which you will need aplen-



“ALTHOUGH THE AMOUNT OF MONEY AND ENERGY INVESTED IN CSR AND CORPORATE SOCIAL INNOVATION IS GOING UP EACH YEAR, ENSURING THAT THEY DELIVER ACTUAL SOCIAL IMPACT SOMEHOW HAS TAKEN A BACKSEAT



ty), partners bring in legitimacy to the cause (especially if they are higher in the hierarchy or hold formal or informal positions of influence), knowledge and skills resources to develop a deeper understanding of the issue from multiple perspectives as well as potential solutions, access to networks and organisational resources, and political backing to elicit favorable decisions.

In the example, P P Sukumaran engaged in active discussions with his contacts within and outside his organisation. One of them directed him to Dr.Nalini Gangadharan, Livelihood Advancement Business School (LABS) of Dr. Reddy’s Foundation. LABS had a skilling model that Sukumaran found appropriate for retraining their redundant workers to suitably place them in alternate jobs or start their ventures. The model was later replicated in Chennai in partnership with other corporates for skilling at-risk urban youth, creating a corporate consortium model for financing such initiatives.

● **Explore Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Most corporates support CSR activities which are perhaps the easiest way to initiate action. If your company already has CSR departments and programs, you can get involved in that. If current CSR activities do not address pressing social issues close to your heart, you can always pioneer new activities. Given that CSR has been mandated by law since 2013 and many companies are struggling to identify worthwhile projects, you may not find it too hard to get buy-in for your ideas.

You can implement them through any of these four different formats:(a) as a foundation, otherwise known as a Section 8 company(e.g., Infosys Foundation); (b) in partnership with NGOs, trusts, or registered societies with a proven track record (e.g., ITC and Pratham working together in the Reach India Plus initiative; (c) in partnership with other companies (e.g., Mphasis and Uber launched Uber Assist and Uber Access that retro-fitted vehicles to help Persons with Disabilities as their joint CSR initiative); and (d) following an employee volunteer model (e.g., Calpine Technologies runs Engage — their CSR program that builds leadership skills in school children through football with the help of employee volunteers).

● **Pursue Corporate Social Innovation (CSI):** Business models can generate societal benefits by changing their perspective (e.g., including marginalized groups in the supply chain, new products for the old and disabled). As an impact champion, you can tweak the current models in innovative ways that generate social and/or environmental impact while serving corporate interests.

For example, ITC launched ‘e-Choupal,’ one of the most extensive Internet-based interventions in rural India, enhancing earnings and transforming the livelihoods of over 4 million farmers in over 35000 villages through 6100 kiosks across ten states. e-Choupal deploys information technology to virtually cluster all the value chain participants and vertically integrate various actors in the agriculture supply

chain. Village internet kiosks set up to access information are managed by farmers, who get information on the weather, market prices, scientific farm practices, and risk management in their mother tongue. They can use the kiosks to purchase farm inputs and get them at their doorstep. Real-time information has made it possible for farmers to make better decisions aligned with market demand, significantly reducing transaction costs.

● **Track ‘Impact’:** Although the amount of money and energy invested in CSR and Corporate Social Innovation is going up each year, ensuring that they deliver actual social impact somehow has taken a backseat. Even after introducing mandatory reporting of impact, most companies focus on the inputs (e.g., amounts spent) or outputs (e.g., the number of rooms built in a rural hospital, pieces of equipment they bought). Some try to pass on the number of beneficiaries that they have been able to reach as impact. But this is not the same as tracking if and how the initiatives have created tangible differences in the lives of the beneficiaries. Without a robust impact tracking mechanism, attempts to make an impact may not be as effective as you would have imagined.

We conducted an impact assessment for the Vidhyadhan Scholarship program, run by the Sarojini Damodaran Foundation (SDF). Since 1995, SDF Foundation has provided scholarships to academically bright children, primarily from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families who completed high school (class 10 in India) to pursue higher education. Thus far, the program has provided 13,500 scholarships, with over 10,000 beneficiaries currently pursuing their higher studies across ten states. The basic premise of any scholarship program is that the monetary support would enable them to build human capital in academic qualifications, which will help them find employment and thus lift them out of poverty. We found that this undeniably was the case for those who were able to find jobs. However, we also found that finding a job and future career progression depended on social capital in terms of networks. It was hard for those who were low on social capital to get jobs. This led to the realisation that in addition to monetary support, the students from disadvantaged backgrounds also would need support to build their social capital through mentoring and networking.

The starting point of being an impact champion who sets the organisation on a socially oriented path is your own social consciousness and willingness to drive transformative innovations. If you ever feel shaken by the scale of what you have to achieve, take a cue from a climber scaling a peak: You need to focus on where to place your next step. Then, step by step, you would reach there.

The writers have recently published Being an Impact Champion: Enacting Corporate Social Consciousness, with SAGE Publications India, under the SAGE IIM-Kozhikode Series for New Managers

Mangolia: Hard choice between China and Russia

Mongolia is all set to build its nuclear energy. With the ascendance of the Mongolian People's Party (MPP) and the rise of Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh as the leader of this hermit nation, the nuclear future of Ulaanbaatar has become more pronounced. Khurelsukh, a former Prime Minister, is currently the sixth democratically elected President of this East Asian nation. His longstanding interest in generating nuclear power, backed by the country's abundant uranium deposits, is gaining more political and economic currency in recent times.

Barely a month of his victory in July 2021, Khurelsukh had an agreement with Chinese President Xi Jinping to continue the already existing strategic relations between the two nations, especially in critical sectors like the mining.

Known as the "Land of the Horse and the Land of the Eternal Blue Sky", this East Asian nation has a rich reserve of uranium. The country is large and sparsely populated. It is the world's second largest land-locked country just behind the Central Asian republic of Kazakhstan. Mongolia has proven uranium reserves of about 80,000 tons which ranks the country among top ten in the world. This is also making the nation one of the top mining giants in the world, and it has been attracted by others for having world-class deposits like the huge Oyu Tolgoi copper gold project. In fact, way back in 2011, Mongolia was planning to have its first nuclear power plant by 2020. The State-owned MonAtom LLC had the aim to build nuclear fuel production capacity by tapping the country's own uranium deposits. However, it could not materialise. Even the Mongolian Government had the plan to supply nuclear power plants across the countries of Northeast Asia with nuclear fuel. Ulaanbaator was expecting huge investments from top global giants such as the US, Russia, France and China.

As per the Vision 2050 of Mongolia, the country is committed to shift to cleaner technologies. But leveraging its uranium reserves to produce nuclear energy and lessening

the continued reliance on traditional sources of energy to cut back emission levels, Ulaanbaatar has arrived at a catch-22 situation. That is to choose between Moscow and Beijing.

The chilling new nuclear arms race has already begun in Asia. China is quietly building nearly 250 nuclear silos along the border of Mongolia mostly in Xinjiang, Gansu and Inner Mongolia Province. Independent analysts reveal that these silos are in close proximity to some of the richest uranium deposits on the other side of the Mongolian border. This seems to be one of the biggest nuclear expansions of Beijing in recent years under Xi Jinping, the man who is known for his gargantuan agenda. This nuclear build up revives the rivalry between Soviet Russia and the People's Republic of China under Mao Zedong when the latter deployed about 60,000 to 70,000 troops near the border of Mongolia. Then China on one hand was apprehensive about Soviet social imperialism and on the other, from the brutal Japanese militarism.

However, today China is different from Cold War days. Primarily China's economic might accompanied by continued decline of the Western powers, particularly the might and engagement of the US, has largely emboldened the country to surge ahead.

Way back in September 1992, Mongolia unilaterally declared herself as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ). Then Mongolia's decision was hailed both by the nuclear weapon and non-nuclear weapon states alike. Subsequently, in 1993 and 1994, the five nuclear weapon states made unilateral statements in support of this announcement by Ulaanbaatar. Ironically, this support was not a clear recognition of its single-state nuclear weapon free status, nor did it provide the legally binding security assurances that are normally provided to traditional nuclear-free zones. This has forced Mongolia to consistently pursue its goal to institutionalise itself as a single state nuclear weapons free zone since then. Again, non-nuclear weapon



states at the UN expressed full support not only for Mongolia's policy in general but also for its efforts to institutionalise that status. It was believed that unless the five nuclear weapon states accepted the concept of a single state nuclear weapon free zone, Mongolia could well be considered as a state with a unique nuclear weapon free status. Thus, it was agreed to use the word "status" instead of zone. And the content of the status could be defined by the states concerned.

Now what role China can play in Mongolia going nuclear power? Being its closest neighbour, China is in full force to influence Mongolia to grab the opportunity to develop its nuclear industry. With Xi, China is fast building its capabilities as an economic and military juggernaut. Hence, Ulaanbaatar would certainly fall into the clutch of Xi and his Communist cronies in no time.

China has been consistently increasing its nuclear capabilities. This entire nuclear build-up must be estimated in

the context of the Chinese Communist Party's ambition to have, in Xi's own words, "a world class military". And Beijing is harbouring a wild dream of achieving global domination, especially to torpedo US leadership from the global governance system. Further, several recent reports indicate that China is constructing 120 missile silos for Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) near Yumen in Gansu, up to 110 silos near Hami in the eastern part of the restive and Uighur-Muslim dominated Xinjiang province, and up to 40 silos in Ordos in Inner Mongolia. This rightly shows that China is pushing its nuclear agenda right up to the border of its quiet neighbour Mongolia.

How reliable Russia would be in developing Mongolia's nuclear future? Putin while whipping up nationalist frenzy within Russia and its neighbours is simply undermining the power of the declining global liberal order. He absolutely misjudged the West's

resolve in imposing effective financial sanctions on the Russian corporate sector and NATO's strategic plans in Europe. Hence, moving closer to Putin and allowing the state owned Russian Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom to develop Mongolia's nuclear apparatus would be a dangerous game for the latter.

Who would be more reliable — Xi or Putin? It seems, both Putin and Xi are equally risky. Both are equally greedy, and they are just waiting for a power grab in Mongolian nuclear development industry. Lurching between opportunity and crisis, Mongolia is forced to anchor a clear policy about the engagement of its only two power-hungry neighbours — Russia and China — in the development of its nuclear power capability.

Chinese offensive is looming large. Its outreach in the form of subtle economic diplomacy supported by adventurous military is on the top agenda of the Communist Party of China under Xi. His

approach is to reach out to the critical geopolitical points within a very short span of time. His intention is ever clear: simply fend off the US primacy in global corridors of power. Therefore, it is quite clear why Beijing wants to grab the opportunity of developing nuclear projects in its neighbourhood.

Further, Xi is also wary of Russia's traditional influence over Ulaanbaatar for long. Moscow's old linkages with Ulaanbaatar are on the wane. But the Communists in China do no way want to take any chance. With China's massive nuclear build-up supported by wolf warrior diplomacy, one can easily make out that this is nothing but the display of dysfunction, naivete and dogmatism of Xi who is already thinking about the great decline of the global firepower of the US.

Consequently, Mongolia is walking a tightrope. Khurelsukh's nuclear ambitions may push this East Asian nation into the arms of age-old

rivalry of big and competing powers. Already, Khurelsukh has been accused of turning the nation into heavy militarisation fully funded by the Communists in Beijing. Considering the recent pledges made at COP-26 at Glasgow in the UK, the global trend is to stay away from using more fossil fuels so as to reduce carbon emissions. So, the road ahead for Khurelsukh is to go nuclear to reduce the choking environment in its Capital city Ulaanbaatar. But then, Mongolia will have a hard choice between two anti-West big powers — aggressive China and a resurgent Russia.

(Dr Makhan Saikia has taught political science and international relations for over a decade in institutions of national and international repute after specialisation in globalisation and governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He is the chief editor of the Journal of Global Studies, an international research journal)

Mongolia is walking a tightrope. President Khurelsukh's nuclear ambitions may push this East Asian nation into the arms of age-old rivalry of big and competing powers. Already, Khurelsukh has been accused of turning the nation into heavy militarisation fully funded by the Communists in Beijing. Considering the recent pledges made at COP-26 at Glasgow in the UK, the global trend is to stay away from using more fossil fuels so as to reduce carbon emissions. So, the road ahead for Khurelsukh is to go nuclear to reduce the choking environment in its Capital city Ulaanbaatar. But then, Mongolia will have a hard choice between two anti-West big powers — aggressive China and a resurgent Russia



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

AI powered drone new tool of warfare

Command, control, communications and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) are becoming a most essential element in modern military operations. Countries with artificial intelligence powered drone have baffled their enemies in the war zone. AI powered drone swarms are the new tool of warfare and as of now are unregulated by weapons control regulations.

Though Israel and Turkey have successfully used them, India too is not far behind. On November 17, 2021, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) demonstrated offensive capabilities of its drone swarms at a three-day "RashtraRakshaSamarpanParv" in Jhansi. It was impressive.

The country that makes advances quickly joins an elite club that might evade future restrictions. "The DRDO demonstrated fully operational decentralised UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) swarm comprising 25 drones flying coherently with minimal human intervention, during Rashtriya Raksha Samarpan Parv during Jhansi Jalsa," reported PTI.

In mid-May 2021, the latest developments on these weapons systems occurred when the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), during the recent clashes in Gaza, used a swarm of AI drones for the first time to geolocate, target, and strike Hamas members.

Israel is making major advances in AI-driven technology.

The IDF did debut "drone swarms to seek and attack hidden targets" in the May war in Gaza. The

Ghost Unit, which is part of the Paratroopers Brigade, has been using "packs of drones". The IDF used a swarm of AI-guided drones and supercomputing to comb through data and identify new targets within the Gaza Strip. It is thought this is the first time a swarm of AI drones has been used in combat."

The drones used so far are navigated in two ways — either remotely piloted or autonomously piloted with GPS and inertial navigation systems.

Autonomous drones have terrain matching capability. They use information from the cameras along with AI for navigation without being dependent on GPS, which is vulnerable to cyber-attacks.

A drone swarm can be modelled as a flying wireless grid, where each drone is capable of using and sending information to the others in the swarm. Converting data into actionable real-time information is done using AI. The reaction time in a battlefield must be less than the reaction time of the enemy elements. Therefore, swarm drones assess the threat to the swarm and at the same time identify the target to manoeuvre to achieve the desired strike, adjusting according to any losses they suffer.

There can be some sort of task sharing, where some of the drones would undertake target detection, others to counter the enemy air defence, some more counter the interference of enemy radars and electronic signals, and others will carry out the attack by bombing. In



a dynamic environment, this autonomous coordination is done with the help of AI technologies.

Some inferences:

1. Drone warfare is asymmetric and is almost mainstream. A bit like guerrilla warfare as it is low cost. Drones are dispensable, off the shelf commercial technology can be used.
2. Autonomous drone systems separate the big boys from the rest. A study in the USAF found that remote drone piloting for long hours induces fatigue. Fatigue leads to suboptimal performance. Fire and forget autonomous drone systems are therefore huge force multipliers.
3. Real-time systems using AI for navigation and guidance, coordina-

tion, self-healing, target identification and acquisition & munition delivery systems are therefore a strategic asset.

Jyoti Sinha, CTO at Omnipresent Robot Technologies Pvt. Ltd, explains how DRDO's demonstration is significant. Omnipresent leverages and augments its experience of working on DARPA LAndroid programme to develop palm size ground swarm robots while working in the US.

"I congratulate DRDO for developing the first fully functional swarm drone network for tactical and real time support to our armed forces. We would be happy to collaborate with DRDO and leverage our experience of swarm robotics where we have

extensively tried to provide solutions to the swarm formation, ad hoc network and drone autonomy piece."

She adds, "In tactical warfare, AI powered swarm drones can carry out simultaneous destruction and dismantling of multiple targets using precise swarm configurations and hover localisation even when less sophistication is available with guided defence equipment. In other situations, it can even be an 'omni-directional attack' where the swarm drones can target one attack from numerous angles. While targeting enemy frontlines, even if some of the drones are attacked, the cognitive AI algorithms kick in and reconfigure the drone network positioning to

maintain situational awareness and aid in completion of mission. Using AI, any individual drones in a swarm network can be trained to operate in offensive or defensive mode by switching roles such as decoy, sensor, attacker or just communicator depending upon its positioning and remaining resources."

(Bhargav is an ex-IAF officer from the Aeronautical Engineering (Electronics) branch, and is now an M&A adviser for tech companies. Aavek Sen is an independent journalist working on cyber security and the geopolitics of India's neighbourhood, focussing on Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Bangladesh.

Real-time systems using AI for navigation and guidance, coordination, self-healing, target identification and acquisition & munition delivery systems are a strategic asset. Drone warfare is asymmetric and is almost mainstream. A bit like guerrilla warfare as it is low cost. Drones are dispensable; off the shelf commercial technology can be used, say

BHARGAV AND AVEEK SEN



LOVE IS OUR TRUE DESTINY. WE
DO NOT FIND THE MEANING OF
LIFE BY OURSELVES ALONE —
WE FIND IT WITH ANOTHER
— THOMAS MERTON



YOUR
WEEK
AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week your card foresees healing and rejuvenation. Those suffering from an injury will recover. There are times when we must accept inevitable change and allow things to come to a natural end. Every negative note has its positive end. On the career front, a good message is predicted. A comeback of your old and trusted employee who was supposed to be the backbone of your profession is indicated. Venues are open for those too who want to expand their business or start a new venture. Time spent on academic pursuits will pay good results now. On the relationship front, love is difficult and confusing this week. Sticking to old beliefs may spoil your relations. Avoid intervention of a third party.

Lucky number 19
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Friday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

Those putting on weight need to get health-conscious. You have your plans to be in harmony with nature to maintain good health. Walking, breathing and prayers for mental and physical healing are on the card. On the career front, some other issues than career will take priority this week. You either have little time or feel lethargic in your profession. Hard work and efforts put in the last week are not so rewarding. This is a temporary phase. On the personal front, something special is likely to be celebrated this week. You feel emotionally contended and find a healthy relationship. You have full faith in your partner. Strengthening of relationship is indicated.

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Blue
Lucky day Thursday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

You are filled with enthusiasm and jest for life. You will feel healthy and experience a change of perspective. Negativity replaces optimism. New possibilities are foreseen. You get to know the importance of solving your problems with rational and thorough thinking. This is also a time to utilise your creative energies. Professionally, you feel successful in your career. Promotion or hike is likely. You are self-disciplined and energetic. Those in business, your ideas and views are being respected and followed. This is the time when your intelligence, wisdom and experience will pay you rich dividends. On the personal front, your relationship area is good too. You are romantic and love is in the air. Other relationships too are nurturing.

Lucky number 9
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Friday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week your inner and outer conflicts may bring negative effects on your healthy lifestyle and routine. You have different opinions on how you should approach your current circumstances. Career seems challenging this week. This is a perfect time to clear away the fog. This is also a good time to set your goals and work in the system. The win will come after a struggle. Your great insight may work in your favour. A breakthrough is predicted. In relationship, you will follow tradition instead of your heart. The conventions and traditions are overpowering you and you seek the answer from a *guru* or senior person. This week you may be spiritually more inclined and worldly pleasures, love and emotions take a back seat.

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Tuesday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week there is a balance between mind, body and soul. You are very energetic, enthusiastic and full of life. Your far-sightedness will pay you rich dividends. This is the time to enjoy good food and live a healthy life, both mentally and physically. On the career front, new job offers and opportunities in business will broaden your horizon. If expansion in the business is the plan, this is the right time. Good finances, income and gains through the ancestral property are indicated. On the relationship front, those contemplating marriage may start browsing the market for a suitable bride or groom. Be guard of your temptations and addiction. A step to spiritualism may prove to be the saviour.

Lucky number 3
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Wednesday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week you may enjoy nature's bounty and blessings of the Almighty. A cure of a very old or prolonged illness is on the cards. Those in urgent need of motivation and inspiration to lead a healthy and meaningful life will find a mentor this week. You feel empowered and embark on a new journey that is progressive and make you feel comfortable. On the work front, this is the time to keep counting the blessings. You may be busy organising an auspicious ceremony at home/office. The career will boom and so will be your interaction with the world. On the personal front, confusion, misunderstanding with the partner is likely. Guard yourself against selfish motives, aggression and hasty decisions. Patience is the key. Midweek the situation is in control.

Lucky number 4
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Wednesday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week you will possess a new-found power and energy to create a fresh lifecycle for yourself. You have control over your desires like excess food, drinks and any other addiction which is harmful to health. You realise the importance of balancing factors in life and your body is in tune with the five elements of nature. On the career front, you may have experienced setbacks that now you feel suspicious of others. The turning point will come when you can leave the past behind you and develop a more open mind about the future. This is the time to think positive and move ahead. On the personal front, confrontation is likely between love couples. Do not let emotion get in the way, rather, use fact and logic to make your decisions.

Lucky number 6
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Friday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week excessive fear, phobia, and worrying about a situation. Mental tension may reflect on your health. Headache, insomnia, and sleeplessness might be experienced. Be careful of seasonal ailments. This is the time to meditate, practice yoga and take a break from the hectic schedule. On the career front, a little indiscretion may put your reputation in the firing line, so be careful. In the work area, you may feel unnoticed and neglected. This may cause tension and hamper your growth. Do not run away from responsibilities and commitments. Don't disclose your working plans till you accomplish them. On the personal front, your partner will be filled with an abundance of energy and enthusiasm and you feel demoralized, or with low self-esteem.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Golden
Lucky day Sunday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week your satisfaction and contentment will play an important role to be in good health. You will spend time enjoying worldly pleasures and relaxing as well. All is well feeling gives you cool mind, positive aura and a glow on the face. On the work front, there is generosity in your temperament and ability to convince others with your communication. You care for the emotional well-being of others and respect your colleagues and juniors. They follow you, admire you, and respect your generosity. On the relationship front, there is love, fun and entertainment. You spend time together and present an expensive gift to your beloved and partner. Time is right to bring your romantic relationships out in the open, the family will accept your choice.

Lucky number 18
Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Saturday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week you might take a moderated approach to life, and stay true to your commitments. You have understood that you need a routine and a careful regime if you want to achieve your goals. It may not necessarily be a very exciting period. You are not hesitant in spending money to be in good health and fitness. Your efforts will pay you well. At work, you will feel stability in your profession. Experience and skills will be the forte to achieve your desired goals. Advice from a senior person in a job/business will be very helpful. On the personal front, you may get too emotional and possessive in your relationship that may be the cause of irritation and separation. Care and compassion for near and are indicated.

Lucky number 21
Lucky colour Magenta
Lucky day Wednesday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

Self-knowledge and mastery are the keys to success. You have inner light and consciousness, sheer faith and experience of the past making you a self-reliant person who is ready to teach others. Through meditation, you are on the path of a high level of spiritual attainment, and to share this light with others. On the professional front, with your wisdom and leadership, you can establish a niche for yourself. People will admire you and follow you. Your plans are now well underway and you are starting to consider even more opportunities to expand your current plans. On the personal front, you will find your relationships are growing and developing to a satisfactory level. There is faith, understanding with each other.

Lucky number 2
Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Tuesday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

Weakness may take a toll this week. Issues of domestic or professional are haunting you and you feel disturbed. Restlessness or BP problem may trigger you. You may require proper sleep and the support of near and dear ones. A positive approach will serve the purpose and put life into you. On the career front, there is nothing much new, the things are moving as usual. Though the fear of stagnating your career or profession will trouble you, this is a temporary phase as the week progresses you will find positive results. With your wisdom and experience, you keep on moving ahead and achieve the desired results. On the relationship front, you will enjoy the quiet powers inherent in you. You will be able to influence your partner through diplomatic conversation.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Monday

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ASTROTURF

BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Choice sets premise of destiny

All species, but for humans, are bound by their predetermined nature, with no scope for making any exception. Instinctively they act upon to serve their safety and food concerns. There no wilful intent involved in their actions. So, they are not subject to any Karmic carryover. Varying environmental conditions do impact their life. But, by and large, they end up the way they are born. Human beings, on the contrary, enjoy the exclusive privilege of guiding their action by choice. Once choice option is there, the probability of its use and misuse becomes equal. One has to will upon to make a particular choice, which evidently involves a desire oriented intent. And there is nothing like free lunch for them. You have to own up the consequences of choices made. That binds you into a cause effect chain, which runs in succession, stretching on to even the next birth.

Going by the ancient Indian Philosophic perception, human beings are structured in three layers — gross, astral and causal bodies. With death, it is only the gross body made out of agglomeration of different forms of matter that becomes dysfunctional and then disinte-

grates. The astral and causal planes being pure energy formations, remain intact, as would the law of conservation of energy imply. Astral plane carries on all mind functions, which includes our memory. Causal plane has in store Karmic footprint carried over from the past. Following death, the causal and astral planes, guided by the fundamental element of consciousness, move on towards their next reincarnation with a fresh gross body. Freshly reincarnated body carries as thought seeds, memory imprints from the past. The doings and undoing, the learning and unlearning had, the skillsets acquired, the habit tendencies developed during the life time, sets the premise on which the next life takes off. Given a congenial exposure, those thought seeds successively come into play. That sets the probable path on which the future course of life would move. Evidently, the content and intent of the choices made lead to the quality of life one becomes due for. This is the premise on which one's destiny stands. Destiny, therefore, does have a role to play in life. But then it is subject to many unforeseen variables, as discussed in the previous issue, having the potential to modify the course of Karma. It implies



that destiny cannot be defined in finite terms, but it indicates a probable trajectory that one is expected to tread.

To overcome the above vulnerabilities, humans enjoy another exclusive privilege — Buddhi (the faculty of discriminate intelligence). This grants us the privilege to weigh the options in hand, discriminate between 'what one wants' and 'what is right'. Accordingly, one could arrive at right judgment and make most appropriate choices. This prerogative would also enjoin upon us with the capability to make conscientious choices to even modify callings of destiny indicators. It means that present Karma can modify Karmic carryover from the past. It is easier said than done. For, one's discriminatory ability doesn't play out involuntarily. It has to be consciously invoked, which requires being on full mental alert. The paradox, however, is that by construct, human beings are born with 6 constitutional limitations: 1. Limited creativity 2. Limited knowledge 3. An inherent sense of want, which breeds in sense of desires, leading to other related obsessions such as craving, possessiveness and the like 4. Limitation of time, whereby we look at develop-

ments in terms of past, present and future 5. Limitation of space, which tempts us being self-centric and 6. Bound by cause-effect chain. Plus, we are subject to self-created limitations of mind, coming as they may with different sets of experiences one goes through. Mind continuously keeps breeding random thoughts, many of them negative and inconsequential. Consequently, mind gets so cluttered that it hardly allows the space necessary to objectively pursue your thoughts, and with obvious consequences.

If that would not be enough, our sense of ego further plays spoil sport with our thought process. It is tempted to identify itself with inherent desire trends, and pursue them passionately as if that would be its end game. Also, it gets caught up by tempting influences of the seeming world, and sets them as its dream destination. In both cases, ego takes the above influences on their face value, not leaving any scope for the discriminatory faculty playing its part. The result is obvious.

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