

WORLD 7
UK CONFIRMS FIRST
2 CASES OF OMICRON**MONEY 8**
OVER 390 RCS-UDAN AIR
ROUTES OPERATIONAL NOW**SPORT 10**
NEW ZEALAND ALL OUT
FOR 296 ON DAY THREE

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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 on Saturday urged farmer groups to end their agitation as the Government has listed the farm laws' repeal Bill on 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 "...the farm laws are proposed to be repealed.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both Houses of Parliament pass the bill, it will be ratified by the President of India and the previous Act would be withdrawn.

Continued on Page 4

Modi: Maintain intensive containment, surveillance

PM briefs about global trends on Covid, Omicron

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the 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.

Continued on Page 4



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

PTI

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



quarantine. 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.

Continued on Page 4

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

PTI

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.

Continued on Page 4

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, 2021, 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.

Continued on Page 4



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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.



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 Dakku'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 have many hats, 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.



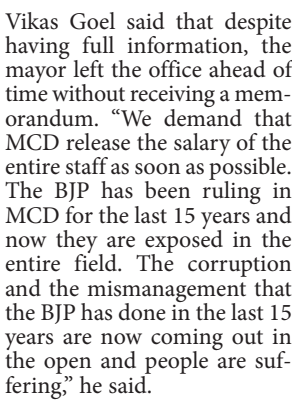
According to SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research), values of harmful pollutants – Particulate Matters (PM) 10 and 2.5 were record-

are likely to increase moderately on 29th and 30th that increases dispersion of pollutants leading to slight improvement but AQI remains in 'very poor' category. Low mixing

The ban on construction and demolition activities was lifted on Monday in view of an improvement in the air quality and inconvenience caused to workers.

AAP demands MCD to release pending salaries of health workers, protests

Leader of Opposition
(LoP) in north Corporation



Construction
ban: 2.95 L
workers get
₹5,000 each

Am Aadmi Amid the ongoing ban on construction and demolition activities in Delhi due to air pollution, the city Government on Saturday announced assistance to all seven lakh registered workers as ₹350 crore has been sanctioned for this. According to the Delhi Government, ₹5000 has been transferred in the account of each worker. The assistance amount was deposited in the accounts of 2.95 lakh construction workers on Saturday. In the accounts of the other workers, the assistance amount will be sent in the next two days. Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said that the Delhi Government is standing with construction workers at every step. Workers are the spinal cord of the country, which strengthens the country.

Delhi Police
Inspector (Anti
Terrorist Operations)
redesignated

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana has issued a standing order according to which the Inspector (Anti-Terrorist Operations) has been re-designated as "Inspector (Law and Order)" while Inspector (Investigation) remains as Inspector (Investigation)". The CP has instructed that the issued order shall be strictly complied with in order to ensure segregation of investigation duties from law and order. Anil Mittal, the Additional Public Relation Officer (APRO) of Delhi Police said that the standing order exemplifies the need for focussed approach to crime investigation and law and order and is an indicative categorisation of the professional character of the S.H.O., Inspector (Investigation) and Inspector (Law and order) with the overall aim of enhancing specialisation and professionalism.

Super specialised laboratory inaugurated at Preet Vihar

Speaking on the occasion Ravinder Deep Singh Sethi, Chief Operating Officer, Onquest Laboratories Ltd said "Onquest has a highly skilled and globally reputed team of qualified doctors whose reports are highly trusted by the medical fraternity. I am sure this lab will be as successful as other branches and we will be able to fulfil our motive with sincerity". We dedicate our expert testing solutions to the people of Delhi-NCR. We will provide a single stop solution for all national and international tests," he said. Customers can get any tests done for free sugar, cholesterol, creatinine on every Saturday and Sunday, a senior lab official said.

DDC to organise 'Raahgiri Day' in Najafgarh today

Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot said, "Delhi roads belong to all, and we want to

the right awareness is created, residents of Najafgarh will be active stakeholders in this fight against pollution," he added.

Five times Congress councillor joins AAP

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister and senior leader of the AAP Manish Sisodia welcomed them into the party with a cap and patka. He said that the politics of the country is evolving. "Those who want to do something for the public and the country are joining the AAP, noticing the party's work in the interests of the public," he said. On this occasion, Mukesh

Goyal said "The model of development developed by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in Delhi is being discussed today not only in Delhi but across India. He said that whatever the AAP is doing in Delhi is commendable and the public is receiving its benefits." Along with Mukesh Goyal, more than a dozen office-bearers joined the party. Meanwhile, Congress senior spokesperson Dr Naresh Kumar said "Delhi is suffering from acute pollution, the education system is in doldrums, health facilities in Delhi are crumbling, doctors are being appointed on contractual basis, not a single day passes by when doctors or nurses are not resorting to strike.

L-G instructs officers to ensure Covid norms at public places

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), in its meeting on Monday, is likely to take a call on RT-PCR testing of passengers deboarding from international flights, and quarantining of passengers from South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Hong kong and other

Earlier, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to stop flights coming to India from those countries which are affected by the new variant of the coronavirus. In a tweet, he emphasised that the country had “recovered” from the Covid-19 pandemic with “great difficulty”.

Ex-Cong MLA of Okhla held for caning, abusing SDMC staff

The Delhi Police has arrested Former Congress MLA Asif Mohammad Khan for allegedly abusing and assaulting on-duty staff of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) and obstructing Government work. The arrest comes after a video surfaced purportedly showing Khan abusing SDMC staff for allegedly removing hoardings and posters put up by him. According to Esha Pandey, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southeast district, a case was registered against the former Okhla MLA.

on Friday based on a complaint by Ram Kishore, Inspector, MCD Lajpat Nagar Zone. The complainant accused Khan of abusing and assaulting on-duty MCD staff and obstructing Government work. The case was registered under sections 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 332 (voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) of Indian Penal Code at the Shaheen Bagh police station.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय गीता महोत्सव

2-19 दिसम्बर, 2021
मार्गशीर्ष शुक्लपक्ष
ब्रह्म सरोवर, कुरुक्षेत्र, हरियाणा

“गीता की पावन स्थली कर्मभूमि हरियाणा में आपका स्वागत है।
आइए, गीता के इस महोत्सव से जुड़कर अपना और
सम्पूर्ण मानव जाति के कल्याण का मार्ग प्रशस्त करें। ”
- मनोहर लाल

“गीता के विश्वरूप ने महाभारत से लेकर आज़ादी की लड़ाई तक,
हर कालखंड में हमारे राष्ट्र का पथप्रदर्शन किया है।
किसी के लिए गीता ज्ञान का ग्रंथ है, किसी के लिए सांख्य का शास्त्र है,
किसी के लिए योग सूत्र है, तो किसी के लिए कर्म का पाठ है।
गीता एक ऐसा ग्रंथ है जो पूरे विश्व के लिए है, जीव मात्र के लिए है।”
- नरेन्द्र मोदी

मुख्य आकर्षण

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय गीता संगोष्ठी ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता का सम्पूर्ण पाठ ॥ सांस्कृतिक संध्या - आज़ादी का अमृत महोत्सव
क्राफ्ट मेला ॥ गीता महाआरती, दीप दान एवं दीपोत्सव इत्यादि

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UP wants baba, not bua or babua: Rajnath

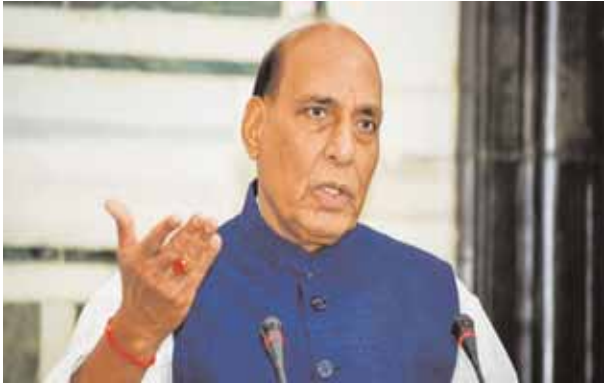
Jaunpur (UP): Defense Minister Rajnath Singh here on Saturday said Uttar Pradesh does not want "bua or babua", apparently referring to BSP supremo Mayawati and Samajwadi Pary chief Akhilesh Yadav.

The state wants only "baba", he added referring to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at a convention of BJP booth presidents here, just months ahead of the UP Assembly polls.

On the occasion, Rajnath also slammed the Congress, accusing it of not taking any strict measure to check terrorism after the Mumbai attack on November 26 in 2008.

"The state does not want 'bua' and 'babua'. It only wants 'baba'," he said addressing BJP workers.

About the Congress, he said its senior leader Manish Tewari has written in his book that his party's government did not take the required action



after the Mumbai attack.

"After our government was formed, terrorism is completely under control. Terrorists are being killed on the border," Rajnath claimed. "We will not disturb anyone, but if someone disturbs us, we will also not leave them," he said speaking on the country's security.

He also praised the tenure of Yogi Adityanath for development, employment genera-

tion, social harmony and crime-free environment.

On this occasion, Adityanath said people should not forget the elements responsible for the Partition of the country.

"These are the same people who attacked the faith through riots when they were in power before 2017.

They had hindered the development of the state by spreading corruption," he alleged. **PTI**

UP witnessed riots under SP rule, seeing 'dangal' now: Anurag

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Targeting Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, Union minister and BJP leader Anurag Thakur on Saturday said there were "dange" (riots) in Uttar Pradesh under the SP rule whereas "dangal" (wrestling matches) are being organised now.

The minister attended the 'Sansad Khel Mahakumbh' organised in Baraut in Baghpat district of the poll-bound state. Addressing the event, he said, "If we are giving the youth a chance to progress in sports, then what is the harm. Akhilesh Yadav complaining that these MPs organise 'Khel Mahakumbh'. Brother Akhilesh, you orchestrate riots and we organise 'dangal', so what is wrong in it."

"I know that the people of Baghpat do not know about riots, they believe in 'dangal' only. If a politician promotes sports, what can be better than this," he said.

Thakur is the BJP's co-incharge for the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections slated for early next year.

In a tweet later, the minister said, "Akhilesh Yadav, the difference is that under SP rule there used to be riots in UP and now 'dangal' are being held."

Talking to reporters at the sporting event, Thakur said BJP MPs have carried forward the idea of Prime Minister Narendra Modi because since the Olympics, the country now wants to promote sports and sportspersons.

Azad: Govt should conclude J&K delimitation process by Feb, hold polls right after winter

Srinagar: The Centre should conclude the delimitation process in Jammu & Kashmir by February and hold Assembly polls immediately after the winter, Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad said on Saturday.

Addressing a workers' meeting in Devsar area of south Kashmir's Kulgam, about 75 kms from here, Azad also said it was not feasible to conduct polls during the next four months of winter.

"The next four months are not feasible for elections and even if they (Centre) wanted, we would have said no. We all had said in the all-party meet (called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June) that the statehood be restored first and then the delimitation be taken up.

"But, the government did not accept that. So, they should conclude the delimitation process till February and once the winter gets over, conduct the elections in April," he told reporters. The senior Congress leader said the priority was not who becomes the chief minister but how to restore the August 4, 2019 position in J-K.

"The priority is not about the chief minister, it is not the issue. The priority is how to restore the August 4, 2019 position... Which will happen by restoring the statehood and then having the assembly elections," he said.

Azad said the demand for the restoration of the statehood was not Kashmir-centric. "There is no fight on the statehood. Hindu brothers in Jammu, Sikhs, Muslims in Kashmir and even Pandits want statehood.

No one should presume that only Kashmiris want the statehood, I have said it continuously and even in the all-party meet that even BJP leaders want statehood," he said.

About the questions being raised over encounters conducted by the security forces, the Congress leader said the forces should take precautions in the civilian areas so that there are no civilian casualties.

He also appealed the politicians to visit the militancy-infested areas of the valley to encourage the people.

"There is militancy in three districts of Kulgam, Shopian and Pulwama. They have witnessed militancy earlier also. This meeting was organised here after three years to encourage them, to boost their morale and so that they do not think they have no one.

"It is important that leaders should visit the areas where there is militancy. Whichever party they are, I will not go into it because the atmosphere in the state is not such that we talk against any party. I request all the political parties that rather than pointing fingers at other parties, they should try to create such an atmosphere in J-K so that people are assured that politics or elections can happen here," he said.

Azad said there is a need to create an atmosphere in the militancy-infested areas as people in such areas were "worried and have become disappointed".

"There is one type of disappointment here where as there is another type in Jammu, Katra or Udhampur," he said without elaborating further. **PTI**

Pak using drones to drop explosives, Indian drones meant to serve humanity: Min

Jammu: Unlike Pakistan which uses drones to drop weapons and further terrorism in Indian territory, India uses its drones to serve humanity, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Saturday at the launch of operations of an unmanned aerial vehicle to deliver COVID-19 vaccines to areas along the international border in Jammu and Kashmir.

The indigenously built medium-class multicopter unmanned ariel vehicle (UAV) took off from the CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine Complex here and successfully delivered 50 vials of COVID-19 vaccines along with syringes to a public health centre in Jammu's Marh area near the India-Pakistan border.

"Pakistan is using drones to drop explosives to cause harm to human life and further terrorism, but our drone will act as a carrier of 'Sanjeevani Boti' for the betterment of humanity and is going with a message of peace," Singh, who is Union minister of state in the Prime Minister's office,

said.

He said health workers engaged in COVID-19 vaccination are facing problems in reaching families in remote and mountainous regions, and difficult terrains of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and elsewhere.

The use of this type of drones will be of great help and also aid in fulfilling the government's resolve of 100 per cent vaccination, Singh said.

The GPS-guided beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) Octacopter UAV has been developed by the National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL), a constituent of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and has a range of 55 kilometres, an official said, adding that it can carry a payload of 20 kilograms.

The UAV is integrated with a powerful on board embedded computer and latest generation sensors for versatile applications like agricultural pesticide spraying, crop monitoring, mining survey and mag-

netic geo-survey mapping, he said.

On restrictions on use of drones in Jammu and Kashmir, the minister said there is no need to be concerned as all necessary security measures have been taken and permissions sought from authorities concerned.

The civil aviation ministry had granted conditional permission to CSIR-NAL for conducting BVLOS flight trials on September 13.

Jammu and Kashmir witnessed a spurt in drone activities from Pakistan over the past one year with terrorists using the technology to drop bombs at an Indian Air Force (IAF) station in Jammu in June.

Following the bombing, authorities ordered ban on storage, sale or possession, use and transport of the flying machines in various districts. Singh, who is also the vice president of CSIR, said it is a proud moment for the country as the Mangalore-born drone will be used as a new "Covid-warrior" in the fight against the pandemic.

demic.

"After the country reached the successful milestone of 100 crore vaccinations under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he came out with the 'Har Ghar Dastak' Covid-19 inoculation campaign. This device will prove very beneficial in this direction as we will be successful in reaching families which are living in the remotest region and mountainous areas," the Union minister said.

He said some days back, a trial of the BVLOS UAV was conducted in Bhaderwah valley of the hilly Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir, and 'vaccines were dropped successfully within half an hour which otherwise would have taken three hours'.

The UAV is made out of light weight carbon fiber and is a foldable structure that allows ease of transportation. It has unique features like autonomous guidance with advanced flight instrumentation systems, the official said. **PTI**



Young men sit in a tub as another man pushes them on a waterlogged street following heavy rain in Chennai on Saturday

PTI

Woman raped, murdered in Mumbai's Kurla; 2 held

Mumbai: Two people have been taken into custody for the rape and murder of a young woman whose body was found on the terrace of a vacant residential building in Kurla in Mumbai, a senior police official said on Saturday.

The decomposed body was found on the top of the 13-storey building on Thursday evening by some boys who had arrived there to shoot a video, Vinoba Bhav Nagar police had said earlier in the day.

A case of rape and murder had been registered on the basis of the post mortem report and special teams with personnel from neighbouring police stations as well had been formed to identify the woman and crack the case. Late Saturday evening, Joint Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Vishwas Nangre Patil said the rape and murder case had been solved and both the accused were in custody. **PTI**

MP Min regrets statement about 'upper caste' women but Karni Sena demands his resignation

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh minister Bisahul Singh on Saturday expressed regret over his statement about 'upper caste' women, but it did not mollify the Shree Rashtriya Rajput Karni Sena which staged a protest and demanded his resignation.

The minister, a tribal leader, claimed his statement had been misconstrued and he did not mean to offend anyone.

Hours later, activists of the Karni Sena showed black flags to him by laying siege to his car outside the state BJP office here and demanded his resignation.

The protest continued for nearly half an hour following heated arguments between BJP

and Karni Sena activists. Congress MLA Jaivardhan Singh, who belongs to the Thakur community, lashed out at the BJP leader. "You are talking about pulling out women from homes, the history stands witness that we have not forgiven those who had raised their eyes at us," he said. Notably, Bisahul Singh was once known as a loyalist of Congress veteran and Jaivardhan's father Digvijaya Singh before he crossed over to the BJP last year.

At a function to felicitate some women in Anuppur district on Wednesday, the tribal leader had said, "Big people like Thakur, Thakur and some other big people keep their women confined to

homes and don't let them go out," while "women (from the lower strata of society) in our villages work in the fields and also do household chores". "Pull out the women of big people - Thakur from their homes. Will this not make them march ahead?" he had said.

Taking offense, the Karni Sena on Friday staged a protest and torched the minister's effigy. On Saturday, Bisahul Singh issued a statement saying he had no intention to hurt the Rajputs or any other community and claimed that some of his sentences were misinterpreted as he speaks in a mix of Hindi and a local dialect to his constituents. **PTI**

Farmers defer their ...

From Page 1

The Government could not have taken the risk of using force to stop the farmers, and this could have created an unpredictable situation in the national Capital.

The farmers decided to defer the march to Parliament after a meeting with unions on Saturday. "The farmer groups have decided to put their proposed Parliament march on November 29 on hold as of now, but the ongoing protest will continue. We had written to the Prime Minister for withdrawal of cases against farmers, allotment of land for building a memorial for farmers who lost their lives (during the protest), suspension of Ajay Mishra 'Teni' from the Union Cabinet over the Lakhimpur Khuri violence, along with other issues," farmer leader Darshan Pal Singh said after a meeting of farmer groups.

He said that a reply is awaited and farmer groups will hold another meeting on December 4. The farmers also demanded that the Government should initiate a dialogue with them in a respectful way. Another farmer leader said, "PM Modi should direct State Governments and Railways to withdraw the cases registered against farmers during the protest".

Now, stubble burning...

From Page 1

Farmers believe that the three agriculture laws passed in September 2020 would benefit large corporations and immensely hurt their livelihood. The Government wanted to implement the laws to loosen rules around sale, pricing and storage of farm produce.

Observing that there is no point in continuing the farmers' protest after the announcement of the repeal of three farm laws, Tomar urged the protestors to end their agitation and return to their homes.

The Minister also informed that the Centre has agreed to the farmers' demands to decriminalise stubble burning. He said another demand of the farmers was to have a discussion on the minimum support price (MSP) and crop diversification. This demand will also be fulfilled with the setting up of a panel as announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 19 on the day of Gurupurab.

"The farmers' demand was to decriminalise stubble burning. The Government of India has agreed to this demand," the Minister said.

Modi: Maintain intensive containment, surveillance

From Page 1

Officials briefed Modi about the new variant of concern "Omicron" along with its characteristics and the impact seen in various countries. Its implications for India were also discussed. Modi spoke about the need to be proactive in light of the new variant. He said in light of the new threat, people need to be more cautious and the need to take proper precautions like masking and social distancing. The PM highlighted the need for monitoring all international arrivals, their testing as per guidelines, with a specific focus on countries identified "at risk".

"The PM was given an overview of the sequencing efforts in the country and the variants circulating in the country. The PM directed that genome sequencing samples be collected from international travellers and community as per norms, tested through the network of labs already established under INSACOG and early warning signal identified for Covid-19 management. PM spoke about the need to increase the sequencing efforts and make it more broad-based," said PMO.

Modi also directed officials to work closely with State Governments to ensure that there is proper awareness at the State and district level.

He directed that intensive containment and active surveillance should continue in clusters reporting higher cases and required technical support be provided to states which are reporting higher cases presently. The PM also asked that awareness needs to be created about ventilation and the air-borne behaviour of the virus.

The meeting was attended by Rajiv Gauba, Cabinet Secretary, Dr VK Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog, AK Bhalla, Home Secretary, Rajesh Bhushan, Health Secretary Dr Rajesh Gokhale, Secretary (Biotechnology), Dr Balram Bhargava, DG ICMR; Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary (AYUSH), Durga Shankar Mishra, Secretary (Urban Development), RS Sharma CEO NHA; Prof K Vijay Raghavan (Principal Scientific Advisor to Govt. of India) along with other senior officials.

Maha makes quarantine must for fliers...

From Page 1

From the list, the officials will segregate the passengers arriving here from at least 10 "high risk countries" South Africa, Botswana, Brazil, China, Israel, Belgium, Hong Kong, Mauritius, New Zealand and others where the new and more dangerous Omicron had been detected.

Kakani said the BMC had taken all precautions to deal with Omicron. "Institutional segregation would be made compulsory for passengers who landed at the airport and they would not be segregated at home under any circumstances.

"If any patient of Omicron is found in any building of the city, the entire building will be sealed as a precaution," Kakani said.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Urban Development Minister Eknath Shinde directed all hospitals and their Intensive Care Units (ICUs) "to inspect and ensure that all treatment infrastructure is working well", with sufficient number of beds, stocks of liquid medical oxygen and ventilators to tackle any eventuality.

An emergency meeting, called by Shinde, was attended by several top officials including Principal Secretary UD Bhushan Gagrani, Kakani, Collectors of Thane, Raigad, Palghar and other districts, all municipal commissioners and civic heads in the State.

Coming as it does on the heels of recession of a severe Covid-19 wave, the new Omicron variant has triggered a global scare with many countries clamping fresh air travel restrictions, world stock markets crashing and several nations imposing fresh curbs on passengers coming from these countries.

Uphaar cinema blaze: Court...

From Page 1

The police had told the court that the punishment provided a solace to the victims of the tragedy and reinforced their faith in the justice delivery system, that too after 24 years.

If the jail terms awarded to the convicts are suspended within a month of incrimination, it will further erode the faith of the country's common citizens in the criminal justice system, Additional Public Prosecutor A T Ansari had told the court.

The case is related to tampering with evidence in the main fire tragedy case, in which the Ansaals were convicted and sentenced to a two-year jail term by the Supreme Court.

The apex court had, however, released the Ansaals, taking into account the prison time they had done, on the condition that they pay a fine of ₹30 crore each, to be used for building a trauma centre in the national Capital.

The magisterial court had also sentenced former court staff Dinesh Chand Sharma and two others — P P Batra and Anoop Singh — to seven years in jail and slapped a fine of ₹3 lakh each on them. It had imposed a fine of ₹2.25 crore each on the Ansaals.

The tampering was detected for the first time on July 20, 2002 and a departmental enquiry was initiated against Sharma, who was suspended subsequently.

Later, he was terminated from services on June 25, 2004. The prosecution said after the termination of his services, the Ansal brothers helped Sharma get employment on a monthly salary of ₹15,000.

When the case was registered, the documents of the company where Sharma was employed were further tampered with by its chairperson Anoop Singh.

According to the chargesheet, the documents alleged to have been tampered with included a police memorandum giving details of recoveries immediately after the incident, Delhi Fire Services records pertaining to the repair of a transformer installed inside the Uphaar cinema hall, minutes of the managing director's meetings and four cheques. Of the six sets of documents, a cheque for Rs 50 lakh, issued by

Sushil Ansal to himself, and minutes of the MD's meetings, proved beyond doubt that the two brothers were handling the day-to-day affairs of the theatre at the relevant time, the chargesheet had said.

The fire had broken out at the Uphaar cinema hall during the screening of Hindi film "Border" on June 13, 1997, claiming 59 lives.

The case was lodged on the direction of the Delhi High Court, which was hearing a petition filed by AVUT chairperson Neelam Krishnamoorthy.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

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PD(9113)A

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F-3, Manish Metro, Plot-4, Pocket-5, Sector-12, Dwarka, New Delhi

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.

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 Kamladityya



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.

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 contract.

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 transborder 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. Both sides discussed various issues related to border management and adoption of more non-lethal methods, a senior BSF official said.

"During the conference, several issues of mutual interest were discussed for effective border management, including joint efforts against transborder crimes, measures to check illegal cross border movement and better management of the international boundary," he added. **PTI**

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.

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

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 outsize 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**

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.

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

■ 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

■ 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

■ 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

■ 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

■ 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"

**UJVN LIMITED**
(An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprise)
H. O. "UJJAWAL" MAHARANI BAGH, GMS ROAD, DEHRADUN - 248006, CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866
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 (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

■ 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 shepherded 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

■ 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

■ 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

■ 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 movable 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: 9278993021

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, Naranya Country, Sector 50, Gurgaon, Haryana.
subash.bhat@trinitylegalpartners.com



FIT FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Reduce, reuse, recylce and sustainability are no longer the buzz words. They are our present need and hold key to a better future. One company is trying to ensure that we live in a world that is cleaner by recycling plastic and making carpets out of it. SHALINI SAKSENA brings you a report

An alarming research came to light a couple of weeks back. Plastic waste from the COVID-19 weighing 25,900 tonnes, equivalent to more than 2,000 double decker buses, has leaked into the ocean. But what is even worse is that it doesn't end here. At the COP26, there were six facts linking the plastic lifecycle to climate change that must be taken into account. The most immediate being that South Asia is one of the largest generators of plastic waste; the region discards more than 26 million tons of plastics every day!

This means that there is immediate need for action and reduce, reuse and recycle is the only way forward. Hence, the under the present situation, the success of any business is dependent on its sustainable development factor. In other words resource conservation protecting the environment is the need of the hour. Manufacturers and producers have to give importance to the sustainability factor while supplying products and services.

One such company that is trying its best to follow eco-friendly model is Carpets Inter. The company that originally started doing business in the 1950s is today recycling plastic to make carpets. From manufacturing all kinds of carpets in 1974 to relocating to Thailand in 2004 and getting acquired in 2017, the company is known for its customisation and innovation.

Richard Morris, global business director, Carpets Inter tells you that since their factory in the green field zone, they have had to be very environmentally conscious from the very beginning.

"Back in the 1990s also, we had adopted measures that were environment friendly. By the 2000s we

had started suing recycled material to manufacture our carpets. Over the years, recycling and sustainability has been a necessity because of the land where we are which has today become a residential area. This means that the factory has to be self-contained and that no waste goes into the landfill. We recycle our water through catchment area. All the wastage is also treated," Morris says.

The shift to sustainable manufacturing has not been as easy task. To run initiative one has to run for long period of time and learn along the way, Morris tells you.

"When it comes to conformity, there is a lot of investment. We are in a commodity-driven market. This means that we have had to keep the prices low. What has happened over the years is that several leading brands have raised their benchmark when it comes to conformity. Ten years back carbon foot print was not a term that was being used. It was all about recycle and reuse. This means that one has to look for recycling material and make a product.

As we started recycling plastic bottles to make carpets, the question staring at us was what happens to the carpets once they are past their shelf life? There is a challenge here. Thailand doesn't allow entry of refuse from another country. We have therefore had to look for ways to repurpose and recycle the product in the countries where we export. The good part is that within the country, we have been able to take back not only our product but our competitors and recycle it to make clean energy," Morris explains.

To manufacture one square metre of carpet, the company uses 55 reused 500 ml plastic bottles. These are either sources from within Thailand or China. To make plas-



tic carpets, the used plastic bottles are melted in a machine. It is then reverted into the pellet form. From the pellets, thin strands like a fishing line is made which is then cut up. This is then needle-punched into a fine felt. This is then lamented onto the carpets forming the base. The recycle plastic is the entire packing system that forms the entire layer under the modular carpet.

"What we using to manufacture the carpet itself are carbon-neutral nylons. We don't manufacture this nylon but source it from very large companies that are themselves recycling plastic like fishing nets. They use the similar process that we do and make filament and spin it into carbon-neutral fibres," Morris tells you.

There are several benefits of

using such carpets. First, they increase the life of the product. Usually, modular carpets come with hard packing because it is cheaper to use it. Today, the idea is to look for packing made from recycled material. The tile is going to be impacted by the foot fall and whatever is placed on top of the modular carpet. But if there is a cushioning, the underfoot impact is

absorbed by what is underneath increasing the longevity. The cushion packing has other advantages as well. There is cost-saving benefits — from the installation firm to the investor to the manufacturer. There is benefit at the users' end too.

Second, the felt acts as a thermal barrier. It can withstand very high to low temperatures. In other words, if you live in a hot region it

will help to keep the room cooler reducing depending on the air conditioning. In cold climate, it prevents the heat from escaping keeping the room warm. Not only does it reduce the electricity bill but one is also reducing carbon foot print.

The felt also takes care of the acoustics. There are several organisations that are looking to reduce noise pollution. The eco-soft material acts as an accoutic barrier. It will increase the noise reduction by 150 per cent.

"A typical tile is 50x50 cm or 25cmx1m tiles. But we can customise it and manufacture up to 2 metre sq tiles that are 20 cm long. They are rolls of modular tiles. Hence there are several benfits of using ourproduct," Morris says.

In India, the company has its presence in Gurugram. The focus here is to cater to the hotel and hospitality industry and MNCs. The good part is that the prices are competitive since there are several companies already in the industry.

"While we are aware that our product is expensive, the advantages that our modular carpet has outweigh the slight increase in the price. Our carpets are also aesthetically pleasing and colourful which gives us an edge. Till now we have sold carpets that would fit 25-30 buildings from top to bottom and we are growing steadily in the market," Morris says.

For now, the company is concentrating only on the commercial side of business in India. "Unfortunately, there is no demand at the retail level in the country. This is because of the saturation and hand-knotted carpets have been in the country for centuring. In the retail sector, the company is working through distributors in countries like Australia.

‘WE ARE DOING A LOT BUT UNFORTUNATELY NOT ENOUGH’

SUPRIYA RAMESH speaks with STEFANO FUNARI, an upcycling entrepreneur about climate change, how much we are doing about it and his project where women from Mumbai slums are employed to make products

What exactly is climate change? What is causing it? How is it affecting the planet right now? Climate change refers to all the long-term changes in our climate, including Earth's rising surface temperature, sea level rise, extreme weather, and ocean acidification. The cause of current climate change is largely human activity like burning fossil fuels, natural gas, oil, and coal. Burning these materials releases greenhouse gases into Earth's atmosphere.

Global warming and climate change are two terms used interchangeably in colloquial language but global warming, which refers to the Earth's rising surface temperature, is just one of the manifestations of climate change.

Climate change is posing a serious threat to human health and putting our lives at risk. The effects of climate change cause less predictable weather patterns and increase the number of natural disasters that occur worldwide, such as hurricanes and wildfires. And it goes beyond that by altering where species live, how they interact, and the timing of biological events, which could fundamentally transform current ecosystems.

While everyone around the world feels the effects of climate change, the most vulnerable are people living in the poorest conditions. "We see this every day in Mumbai, a city which is becoming warmer and facing extreme and unpredictable rainfall," Stefano Funari, an upcycling entrepreneur tells us.

What are we doing about it? "My opinion is that we are doing a lot but unfortunately not enough. This is a challenge of epochal proportions that calls for extraordinary measures from all the major stakeholders, Governments and large corporations in the first place. The long term risk of climate change is bigger than the one posed by COVID-19 but the resources invested are by far not at the same level. Financial interests are still absolutely dictating the agenda and we are running out of time," he adds.

10 years ago, Funari left his job in Europe and moved across the world to the slums of Mumbai. Because he needed purpose. Working in technology was just not cutting it for him. He never looked back and understood from the very beginning that the



only way not to be constantly lost in translation was to rely on a trusted group of local people. "The cultural gap is big and I need a constant dialogue with friends, partners and colleagues to read the situations and make my decisions. My biggest challenge has probably been to create this trusted group," says Funari.

Funari is an upcycling entrepreneur. His 'I was a Sari' project is a Mumbai-meets-Milan fashion label, making bold accessories and ready to wear from pre-loved Indian saris. They works with women from marginalised communities so that they can carve out a better future for themselves. Women and men all over the world are now dressed in saris. Saris in different avatars-re-imagined as loungewear, shoes and bags. "Inspired by the work of Bangladeshi Nobel Laureate and the founder of Grameen Bank, Prof. Yunus, I was a Sari, is implementing a sustainable, eco-friendly model which focuses on a 'triple bottom line' - constantly analysing its social, environmental and financial impact and viability, and understanding the relationship each has with the others," Funari explains.

Upcycling, also known as creative reuse, is the process of transforming by-products, waste materials, useless, or unwanted products into new materials or products perceived to be of greater quality, such as artistic value or environmental value.

"Upcycling can be compared to the Japanese technique of Wabi Sabi - turning something discarded into something valuable and desirable," says Funari. He says that through such a process their goal is to reduce the impact on our planet. But in their case they have a second important goal too. In fact, they employ women from Mumbai slums to make products. And what's beautiful is that these women get upcycled themselves as they transform their lives in so many ways. They start off as unskilled and unemployed and become talented artisans, the designers of their own future.

Talking about the environmental benefits of upcycling, Funari tells us, "In the textile field upcycling replaces the need to produce new fabric by using textile products that already exist. So we save the water and land used for growing materials like cotton. And

we save oil and water used for making synthetic fibres like polyester. All this means a huge reduction in our carbon emissions."

To create desirable and soulful products that empower people and respect our planet, and a platform for sustainable fashion brands that share social and environmental values, Funari set up a social business called 2nd Innings Handicrafts. "The very reason we exist is to empower women from not so privileged backgrounds to become the architects of their future. Business becomes more beautiful when women start thriving," says Funari.

He says that there is a beautiful transformation that takes place — from beneficiaries, these women become artisans as they learn the skill and start transforming saris into contemporary fashion pieces. They work with pre-loved or post-consumer waste and not virgin materials, which helps us reduce our carbon footprint and save gallons of water. Their aim is to work with more women so that they can make a considerable social impact, while they continue to create beautiful products that minimise waste.

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.

Southee 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



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

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.

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
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.
RAJASTHAN ROYALS	KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS
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.

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS
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.

PUNJAB KINGS
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.

DELHI CAPITALS
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.
SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

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.



ICC calls off Women’s WC Qualifier after new COVID-19 variant emerges

PTI ■ DUBAI

The ICC on Saturday called off an ongoing qualifier for next year’s Women’s ODI World Cup in Harare following the emergence of a new COVID-19 variant in the African region, paving the way for Pakistan, West Indies and Bangladesh to make the cut on the basis of rankings.

Travel restrictions have been introduced from a number of African countries after detection of the new variant in South Africa stoked fears around the world.

The ICC said the decision to stop the event was based on its concerns about how the participating teams would head back in the wake of Omicron variant’s rise.

The decision was taken during the preliminary league phase of the nine-team tournament, that was to decide the final three qualifiers for the World Cup 2022, to be played in New Zealand, as well as two additional teams for the next cycle of the ICC Women’s Championship.

“The qualifiers will now be decided according to the



team rankings as detailed in the tournament playing conditions.

Therefore, Bangladesh, Pakistan and the West Indies will now progress to the event

in New Zealand,” said the ICC in a statement.

Play in two of the three matches scheduled for Saturday – Zimbabwe v Pakistan and USA v Thailand

– started as scheduled but the third fixture of the day, between the West Indies and Sri Lanka, could not be staged as a member of the Sri Lanka team support staff tested positive for COVID-19.

“We are incredibly disappointed to have to cancel the remainder of this event but with travel restrictions from a number of African countries being imposed at such short notice there was a serious risk that teams would be unable to return home,” ICC Head of Events Chris Tetley said.

“We have explored a number of options to allow us to complete the event but it isn’t feasible and we will fly the teams out of Zimbabwe as soon as possible.

The teams who have qualified for the World Cup are Australia, England, India, South Africa, New Zealand (hosts), Pakistan, West Indies and Bangladesh.

The mega event will be held in New Zealand from March 4 to April 3.

“The number of teams in the third cycle of the ICC Women’s Championship (from 2022-2025) has been increased from eight to ten, and these teams will be Australia, England, India, South Africa, New Zealand, Pakistan, West Indies, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Ireland,” the statement added.

Italy, Portugal drawn in same WC playoff bracket



AP ■ GENEVA

The World Cup in Qatar is sure to be without either Italy or Cristiano Ronaldo. Italy and Portugal, the current and previous European champions, were drawn into the same qualifying playoff bracket on Friday, meaning at least one will fail to qualify for next year’s tournament.

Italy will first face North Macedonia at home in a playoff semifinal next March, and the winner will play away at either Portugal or Turkey for a spot at the World Cup.

Four-time champion Italy failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, missing the tournament for the first time since 1958 after losing in the playoffs to Sweden. Now, after winning Euro 2020 in July, it may have to beat Euro 2016 champion Portugal to avoid a second straight failure.

“It’s not a great draw and it could have gone better,” Italy coach Roberto Mancini acknowledged.

“Just like we wanted to avoid Portugal, they would have wanted to avoid Italy.”

Ronaldo has led Portugal to every World Cup since 2006 and this could be his last attempt

at winning international soccer’s biggest trophy. He will turn 37 before next year’s tournament starts.

Ronaldo helped Portugal get through the playoffs for the 2014 World Cup, scoring a hat trick in a 3-2 win over Sweden that featured an epic duel between superstars, with Zlatan Ibrahimovic netting twice for the Swedes.

“It’s not worth thinking about (Italy),” Portugal coach Fernando Santos said.

“It’s important that we concentrate on beating Turkey.”

Also in the 12-team draw, Scotland will face Ukraine at home, and the winner will play at Wales or Austria in the final of their bracket.

Russia will host Poland for the right to face Sweden or the Czech Republic in their bracket final. Russia or Poland will host the final.

Scotland looks to end a 24-year wait to play at the World Cup while Wales’ only appearance was in 1958.

“At the moment, the way the team is playing, the confidence the boys have got, we would be happy to play anyone, anywhere,” said Scotland coach Steve Clarke, whose team has won six straight since September.

However, Ukraine won at Hampden Park in June, in the Euro 2020 round of 16 against Sweden, and went unbeaten through a World Cup qualifying group won by France.

Sweden will not have Ibrahimovic for its semifinal against the Czechs. The 40-year-old forward has a one-game ban for getting yellow cards in the qualifying group.

“We already did it last time (in 2018) and we of course (know) that we can do it again,” said Sweden coach Janne Andersson.

The six playoff semifinals will be played as single-leg games March 24. The three finals are played five days later.

Pakistan in charge, 145 for no loss v Bangladesh in 1st test

AP ■ CHATTOGRAM

Pakistan made a strong reply and reached 145 for no loss after fast bowler Hasan Ali claimed 5-51 to dismiss Bangladesh for 330 on day two of the opening test on Saturday.

Openers Abid Ali and debutant Abdullah Shafique played out the second and third sessions comfortably in a good batting track to cut the deficit to 185 runs.

Abid, who reached the 1,000-run mark in his 15th test, closed in on his fourth century, remaining unbeaten on 93 at stumps, owing to bad light. Shafique overcame a nervy start to finish the day on 52 not out.

“We are in good position now and will try to take it session by session,” Ali said.

“Our first target is to go past Bangladesh’s 330 and then we will try to take a big lead to give our bowlers an advantage.”

Abid struck the first three boundaries when Shafique struggled to get off the mark. Shafique flicked through midwicket for



four off pacer Abu Jayed and grew with confidence.

Abid was fluent in his approach and glanced offspinner Mehidy Hasan for a couple to reach his third half-century off 84 balls.

Shafique brought up his half-century in style, clubbing occasional bowler Mominul Haque for the maximum.

Bangladesh’s hope of racking up a substantial total was dashed by fast bowler Hasan Ali earlier.

Ali broke Bangladesh’s resistance in the first session as the home side resumed on 253-4.

He alone took four wickets on day two with Bangladesh adding just 77 runs for the rest of the six wickets.

Ali’s sixth five-for was well-complemented by his new ball partner Shaheen Shah Afridi who returned figures of 2-70 and medium pacer Faheem Ashraf, 2-54.

For Bangladesh, Liton Das top-scored with 114 after hitting his maiden century and Mushfiqur Rahim added 91. Mehidy Hasan was not out on 38.

Liton, starting the day with 113, added just one run before Ali had him leg-before, which the umpire disagreed, only for the decision to be overturned on review.

“At this moment, Pakistan is dominating the game but we still have the chance to hit back,” Liton said. “We need to take some wickets quickly tomorrow and only then we can keep pressure on them.”

Debutant Yasir Ali spent some nervy

moments in the crease and survived a leg-before review by Pakistan.

However, he got off the mark in international cricket with a cover-drive four off Afridi on the 14th ball he faced.

But Ali tested him with short balls and finally rattled him stump with a delivery that jagged in sharply.

Bangladesh relied on overnight unbeaten Mushfiqur to take the side to safety and he grew with confidence, hitting Afridi for a boundary through backward point.

Medium pacer Ashraf moved the ball nicely to coax an edge from him as Mushfiqur, who reviewed the decision in vain, fell nine runs short of his eighth century.

After losing three wickets for just 23 runs, the much-needed resistance came from Mehidy Hasan who guided lower order amid the well directed short ball barrage of Afridi and Ali.

Hasan Ali cleaned up the tail to bring an end to the innings.

India in quarters of women’s doubles, mixed doubles at World Championships



PTI ■ HOUSTON

Manika Batra has reached the quarterfinals in the mixed and women’s doubles events at the World Table Tennis Championships, putting India just one win away from a historic medal.

Manika and Archana Kamath defeated Hungary’s Dora Madarasz

and Georgina Pota 11-4 11-9 6-11 11-7 in the women’s doubles round of 16 here on Friday.

They face Luxembourg’s Sarah de Nutte and Xia Lian Ni for a place in the semifinals. Bronze medals will be awarded to all the losing semifinalists in the competition.

In the mixed doubles, Manika and G Sathiyan scripted a valiant comeback against USA-China combine of Kanak Jha and Wang Manyu after losing the first two games to reach the quarterfinals.

The Indian pair won 15-17 10-12 12-10 11-6 11-7. They will meet Japan’s Harimoto Tomokazu and Hayata Hina in the quarterfinals.

However, the mixed doubles pairing of Sharath Kamal and Archana lost their round of 16 match to France’s Jia Nan Yuan and Emmanuel Lebesson.

Sindhu, Satwik-Chirag lose in semifinals of Indonesia Open

PTI ■ BALI

Ace Indian shuttler P Sindhu’s impressive campaign at the Indonesia Open came to an end after she lost her hard-fought semifinal to former world champion Ratchanok Intanon, here on Saturday.

Third seed Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, lost 21-15 9-21 14-21 to world number eight and second seeded Ratchanok in 54 minutes for her third semifinal finish on the trot. The 26-year-old Sindhu had made it to the last four in Indonesia

Masters last week and also at the French Open in October.

World number 11 men’s doubles



pair of

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, seeded sixth, lost exited the Super 1000 tournament after a 16-21 18-21 defeat to top seeded Indonesian combination of Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo in the semifinals.

It was 10th straight defeat for the Indian pair against the world number one pair, a two-time former All England Open champions and reigning Asian Games gold medalist.

It was thus curtains for India at the

USD 850,000 tournament.

Sindhu, ranked seven in the world, came into the match with a 4-6 head-to-head count, having lost to the Thai player in the last two meetings.

The Indian made a good start, slowly moving to a 8-3 lead early on. Ratchanok narrowed it down to 9-10 before Sindhu entered the break with a slender one-point advantage.

Sindhu grabbed three straight points to march ahead and didn’t look back as she pocketed the opening game.

Ratchanok got her bearings back and came back roaring into the match as she built up a lead of 11-7 at the interval in the second game.

The Thai shuttler grabbed nine of the next 10 points from 12-8 to leave Sindhu gasping.

It was Sindhu who hand-

ed 11 game points to Ratchanok after going to the net and the Thai shuttler sealed it with a smash on her opponent’s forehand.

The Thai player continued her impressive run in the decider as she ran to a healthy 11-6 lead with Sindhu committing too many errors.

Sindhu resumed with a cross court drop but a misjudgement at the backline and then an error at the net meant Ratchanok continued to move ahead.

The Indian had a good run of four points as she reached 13-16 but Ratchanok once again snapped the run of points and moved to seven match points.

A net error delayed the inevitable as Ratchanok sealed the contest with a precise return at the forecourt. Sindhu, the reigning world champion, last reached the finals at the Swiss Open.

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

A pep talk from Olympic bronze medal-winning captain Manpreet Singh and star dragflicker Harmanpreet Singh helped defending champions India to turn the tables after a disappointing outing against France in their opening match of the FIH Men’s Junior Hockey World Cup here.

Tournament favourites India were stunned by underdogs France 4-5 in their opening match of the premier junior tournament before the title holders bounced back in style to thrash Canada 13-1.

India will play Poland in their must-win last Pool B match here on Saturday to qualify for the quarterfinals.

“I just told them to believe in themselves and play as a team.”

They have a lot of fighting spirit. I just said to focus on their own game. We have been speaking continuously with them,” Manpreet said during a virtual media interaction on



Harmanpreet Singh helped India colts after France disappointment

Saturday.

“I spoke to (skipper) Vivek (Sagar Prasad) after the first match and told him to lead from the front in the ground. I advised him to improve communication between the players which was lacking against France. Important is to enjoy win or loss as a team.”

Manpreet’s deputy Harmanpreet also passed on his experience to the dragflickers and India’s backline after the France match.

“I have been talking to them about positioning and

basics. The positioning of free-man is very important and I discussed that with the junior players in detail,” he said. Harmanpreet said he also had elaborate discussion with vice-captain of the junior team and dragflicker Sanjay Kumar, who scored two consecutive hat-tricks in the tournament so far.

“He (Sanjay) is doing very well. I just told him to stay focussed on the chances he gets. He plays as a freeman so I advised him about his positioning,” he said.

Sarabjot wins 10m air pistol gold



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Haryana’s Sarabjot Singh was crowned the National Champion for the first time in his short career after winning the men’s 10m air pistol event while young sensation Saurabh Chaudhary finished fourth, here on Saturday.

Going into the final two aims of the 24-shot final, Sarabjot trailed his state-mate Shiva Narwal by 0.5 points.

The youngster then hit 10 and 10.5 to Shiva’s 10.1 and 9.3 to emerge victorious with 242.3 points at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range.

Shiva settled for silver with 241.7, 0.6 points behind Sarabjot. Delhi’s Harsh Gupta was third with 221.2, while top-ranked Indian and Asian Games champion Saurabh Chaudhary ended fourth with 200.9.

Shiva, however, picked up the junior men’s title pipping Saurabh Chaudhary by a wafer thin margin of 0.2 points in the final.

His score of 246.7 was also a national finals record, ironically previously held by Uttar Pradesh’s Saurabh at 245.30. Saurabh too went past his record, winning silver with 246.5. Sarabjot settled for bronze in this one with 225.4.

Shiva then also went on to win the Youth Men’s title in the discipline, prevailing over Haryana’s Sagar Bhargava 243.1 to 239.4. Arif Malik of U.P won bronze with 216.2.

Over 4500 athletes are participating in the 64th National Shooting Championship in Pistol events scheduled to run till December 6.

Djokovic helps Serbia past Austria at Davis Cup Finals

AP ■ INNSBRUCK (AUSTRIA)

Top-ranked Novak Djokovic secured a victory for Serbia, 40-year-old Feliciano Lopez got defending champion Spain off to a solid start, and a young Italian team rolled past the 32-time champion United States in the Davis Cup Finals here.

Djokovic beat Dennis Novak 6-3 6-2 to give Serbia a 2-0 lead over host Austria after Dusan Lajovic had defeated Gerald Melzer in three sets to open the best-of-three series in Group F on Friday.

The victory extended Djokovic’s winning streak in Davis Cup singles matches to 15.

“It feels great to play for Serbia again,” said Djokovic, who helped his country win the Davis Cup in 2010 but more recently failed to win a medal in either singles or mixed doubles at the Tokyo Olympics.

“It’s been a long year but you always find motivation playing for your country.”

Djokovic won seven consecutive games from 3-3 in the first set to take control.

“I’m really pleased with the way I ended the match today,” he said.



but then was replaced by Nikola Patic after winning his singles match.

Lopez gave Spain an early lead over Ecuador in Group A with a 6-3 6-3 win over Roberto Quiroz at home in Madrid. Then

Pablo Carreno Busta edged Emilio Gomez 5-7 6-3 7-6 (5).

Lopez was thrust into singles action when Carlos Alcaraz had to be dropped from the team after testing positive for the coro-

navirus on Thursday, as Spain was already without injured Rafael Nadal and Roberto Bautista Agut.

The United States, meanwhile, got off to a rough start against host Italy in Turin. Lorenzo Sonego beat Reilly Opelka 6-3 7-6 (4) in his home city in Group E and then Jannik Sinner dominated against John Isner 6-2, 6-0.

Rajeev Ram and Jack Sock beat Fabio Fognini and Lorenzo Musetti in doubles 7-6 (5) 6-2 to make the final score 2-1.

Still, for an Italian team missing its top player, Matteo Berrettini — who is injured — it was quite a start.

“There were a lot of firsts today: Sonego and Sinner made their Davis Cup debuts, I made my debut as captain, Musetti also made his debut and played with Fognini for the first time,” said Italy captain Filippo Volandri. “But this is only the first step.”

Each matchup on indoor hard courts is a best-of-three series featuring two singles and one doubles match. The six group winners plus the two second-place teams with the best records based on sets and games will advance to the quarterfinals.

The semifinals and final will be played in Madrid.

Lopez, who was once ranked as high as No. 12, has fallen outside the top 100 in both singles and doubles. His career has gone on for so long that he has already started his post-playing career, having been named the Madrid Open tournament director.

“I still have the passion for the game. This is obvious,” Lopez said.

“I’ve been waiting for an opportunity like this. I didn’t expect to be playing but many things happened this week. ... I ended up playing a great match.”

The big-serving Opelka double-faulted to hand Sonego the only break of their match and then made a few more errors in the tiebreaker as the Italian closed it out with a volley winner on his first match point.

Isner, who is also one of the biggest servers on tour, held serve only twice against the 20-year-old Sinner, a new top-10 entrant.

“I can’t remember a match that I lost that easily,” Isner said.

“Maybe this is the first time. ... I wasn’t getting any free points.

It made it very tough for me. He was locked in. He’s hitting the ball extremely well and has a lot of confidence. ... Even if I played at my absolute best, I don’t know if I could have beaten him today.”

YAMI GAUTAM

The actor, who made her debut in Vicky Donor, speaks with Shalini Saksena about her what the latest film Bhoot Police is about, the challenges that came with it and that she loves to be part of inspiring stories



'I WANT TO
BE PART OF
CINEMA & NOT
JUST PROJECT
MAKING



It is not easy, and it takes a little time. Unfortunately, the way the pandemic hit us, it did change the narrative of work style. Because we had to be cautious, we

I WOULD LOVE TO DO A COSTUME DRAMA, PLAY A WARRIOR PRINCESS OR ESSAY A STRONG POLITICAL FIGURE. I DON'T KNOW IF IT IS EVEN POSSIBLE, BUT I WOULD LOVE TO ESSAY MADHUBALA ON SCREEN. THERE ARE SO MANY INSPIRING STORIES EXPERIENCES. I WOULD LOVE TO DO COMEDY AGAIN



That's really sweet if someone thinks that. I want to keep working in the right direction and hopefully get more interesting projects. That's the only reason why anyone would like to know about me or write about me. This relationship is based on the good work that I do. And that's only possible when I do a project that I like rather than something that is working.

CookSmart



A lot of people don't eat mushrooms because they find it tedious to clean. Take a rough cloth and the mushrooms clean with the cloth. An alternative is to take some wheat flour and clean mushrooms with it. Gently rub the mushrooms with the flour. Lo and behold you will have clean mushrooms within a couple of minutes. Try and avoid washing them since they absorb water and you will be left with lots of water when you cook them.

HomeSweetHome

A bedroom interior featuring a vibrant blue wall. A wooden bed frame with a slatted headboard is positioned against the wall. A large, adjustable floor lamp with a white shade and a wooden base stands to the left of the bed. A small wooden side table is placed to the right of the bed. The bed is dressed in a patterned duvet and several pillows, including one with a green and white geometric pattern. A white throw blanket is draped over the foot of the bed. Two framed artworks hang on the wall above the bed: a white frame with a green plant illustration and a gold frame with a textured, abstract design. A round, woven ottoman sits on the floor in the foreground.

Use a comforter or duvet in a solid colour or subtle pattern; put coordinated pillow shams on the bed pillows and add another decorative pillow or two for an updated look that will make you feel like you just stepped into a bedroom that is worth finding its way into a creative magazine. It will also help you earn brownie points with your spouse. Entering a beautiful bedroom after a long and tiring day can be relaxing.

MasterStroke



Fashion jewellery is ladies most important companion to complete any look. When it comes to travel, jewellery is an essential accessory. Klissaa Accessories has launched its collection of Travel Accessories to add that golden touch to your look. Layering necklaces are always a trend setter like Fifi Gold Plated layered necklace set which is a fashion staple and ideal for all travel looks. Austrian Crystal Studded Hoop Earrings can be teamed up with maxi dresses to add an element of style. Charms Necklace. Klissaa's Accessories in your wardrobe as they are classy can be adorned from dawn to dusk. The plects and charm bracelets are perfect for AM to PM look with elegant Zenith Multi ring with flattering Gold Evil Eye Coin. Klissaa's minimal travel accessories for

NatureTalk

A photograph of a potted plant, likely a cycad, sitting on a small wooden table. The plant has a thick, brown, textured trunk and several large, green, feathery fronds. It is in a white, cylindrical pot. The background shows a light-colored wall and a portion of a brown sofa.

It is a popular houseplant known for its feathery foliage and ease of care. In fact, this is a great plant for beginners and makes an interesting addition to nearly any room. It can even be grown outdoors.

It needs moderate light and not dark spots. Water once a week in summer and once every two or three weeks in winter. As for fertilizing, do it once or twice a year.

Peacemaker with a pacemaker

She is a beauty activist and a strong advocator of mental health. SUPRIYA RAMESH speaks with SHREE SAINI, who is a resilient fighter with indomitable spirit

People in small towns do have big dreams but it doesn't come easy for them, adversities take over. It is important that you reach out and

It is a charity-based pageant where more than 125 countries compete. "I was fascinated by the work done by contestants all over the world. I wanted to be a part of Miss World since I was six, I have

Marathi film *One Way Ticket* producer KOMAL UNAWNAY speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about making her acting debut with a song among other things

❖ **What are the challenges you**

The concept thrilled me. It was the first that a Marathi film

'I like to focus on positive side of life'



There was never any plan as such. It just happened. Mohit Chauhan song director Lucky Hansraj were looking for fresh face. I was lucky that they asked

want to do is deliver a good product where audience will appreciate the hard work that you have put in. As long as the viewers are happy with the kind of work you do, you are good to go.

Sound of. music

Music is the best medicine. Here are the top 10 songs of the week that will lift up your weekend mood

SugarCrash! (Liyollo)
Hold On (Justin Bieber)

Hold On (Justin Bieber)



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.

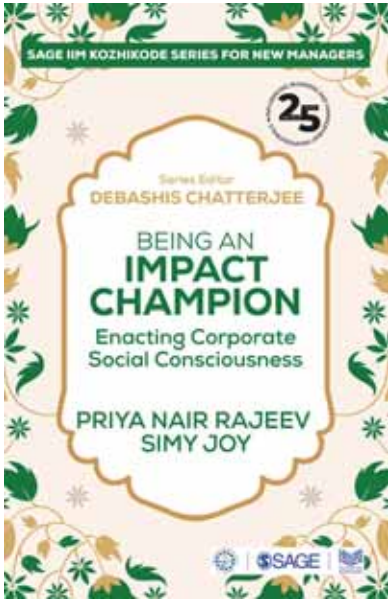
Indian corporates are slowly beginning to catch up with this global trend. However, they are in dire need of managers who can champion this transition.

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



EXQUISITE PROSE POETRY

In her prose poems, *What’s wrong with us Kali women?* Anita Nahal probes with the tenacity of a philosopher, existential questions of being and nothingness and of identity and subjectivity, writes SWATI PAL

You open the book to the title piece and you are hooked. In the first short passage, Anita Nahal puts together the oppositions that we live with, that we have internalised, that we resist, that we surrender to, that we challenge and in our hearts, rebel against. Be it the colour of the dark skin that is abhorred though ironically people try to tan theirs, the rapaciousness of men from which there is no reprieve, the double speak of worshipping women as goddesses and then tearing them down, all this and much more does Anita forcefully, poignantly and poetically put to the reader. And the haunting line that she repeats, ‘Don’t think she’s not watching’, stays with you as you turn the page.

And when you turn the page, she paints in words the picture of who really a goddess is. Fiercely alone whether among strangers or with those she knows, fending for her children herself, taking on a world that would judge a divorcee, that is the human and Hindu goddess that Anita would want us to see. And to be.

The next piece on ‘How easy it is for a Black life to be taken’ is a slice of real life. Real, living beings, non whites whose life was extinguished. Just like that. Snuffed out. As a reader your hair will stand on end and your eyes will prick with unshed tears even as your heart will smoulder with rage. Anita makes you think of the dead. And with them. In this piece of writing as well as the next when she wonders what happens to the clothes of those who died. Especially now, of Covid. How quickly they are bundled away while their clothes hang in the cupboards, mute testimony to the existence of their wearers.

Watching, seeing, observing, gazing — the whole idea of looking, of voyeurism, takes on a new meaning as Anita focuses on the jungle in Smooth operators and questions, who is looking at whom? As a reader, I have often wondered too. We create wild life sanctuaries and zoological parks, what do animals, caged or free, think of us humans. Do they see us as caged or free? Do they know we are humans or do they see us, in our herds, as two legged animals? Anita prompts you to think along these lines. Her writing about the animals makes them so much more human than us humans. The beautiful story about consideration rather than sex, which the male sloth understands is touching indeed.

Anita probes with the tenacity of a philosopher, existential questions of being and nothingness and of identity and sub-



jectivity. Her words reveal a quest to really go into the heart of our ‘self’, almost particle by particle as we see in ‘Hard: Us, animals and the aliens’ or in ‘Greatest warrior is metamorphic Mother Earth’. She has a knack of self analysis so keenly felt in some of the poems such as ‘A sip of wine’. There is also a sense of being pummeled by the world, of being trapped in a space that is claustrophobic which one comes across in many images including the one just mentioned and the next entitled ‘Chase away demons left behind’. A characteristic poetic device that she uses so effectively is personification as we see in the way she personifies the concept of patriarchy.

While most of the prose poems are dark and somber, there is a playful yet serious look at the way women deal with ageing in

the frothy piece ‘A woman’s age is kicking and alive’.

Another poem that looks at the body, at age, in a brief recall is ‘Mom’s shoulders’. Anita can see the flip side of things and so her look at the Corona struck situation where nature blooms even as some foolish people continue to be callous about safety measures, is an honest review of a contemporary issue. While her engagement with the pandemic can be seen in several of her pieces, she is also clear that the concern for this abnormal time can make one lose sight of the eternal wheel of time with its larger questions as we see in ‘Know your wheel, Homosapiens’ or in a different sense, in ‘Breathe’ or ‘Covid 19’s inverted triangle’ or ‘Reclaim your space’.

Anita’s selfhood is clearly shaped by her

location as an Indian Immigrant and she acknowledges that in many of her pieces such as ‘Spilt milk in native and foreign lands’ and ‘Fallacy of a single, immigrant mom’. While she is alive, as immigrants are, to the traumas of being one, and to repeat, we see that so starkly in ‘How easy it is for a Black life to be taken’, one does not get any nuance of self pity or even of being forlorn. In fact, one of her prose poems is ‘Pity, go take a hike’ — she shuns pity entirely.

Anita is alive to the choices she has made and in her writing we see a kind of acculturation; she is aware of the multicultural, pluralistic world she inhabits and is absolutely unapologetic about any aspect that shapes her multidimensional self.

In fact she points out quite assertively that we are all in a sense immigrants in her

piece, ‘You are an immigrant too’. There is a sense of a kind of acceptance of cultures and thus her calm assertion that her son would cremate her in America and scatter a few ashes in the Ganges, as her repayment of debt to the two lands, America and India that she has been a part of. This we see in ‘Paying my debt to two lands’. She is critical of both, especially of the way women are treated in both countries, either seen as easily available if found in miniskirts and dancing or outraging society for doing so which we see in ‘Babylon, my sinful dance music’.

Nothing escapes Anita’s eagle eye and pen including the discomfort faced by women during their menstrual cramps as we see in ‘Feeling down, being down’. The woman reader will find every word resonat-



ing. Betrayal looms in a lot of her writing, the betrayal of democracy, the betrayal by blood relations, and the betrayal in relationships. While it is the underlying motif in many of the poems, ‘Family Blood’, ‘Democracy in decline’ and ‘Koala and judases’ echo the theme more sharply. It is interesting to point out as with ‘Koala and judases’ that some of Anita’s writing is inspired from Australian art and culture. Undoubtedly then, her writing is bound to strike a chord in the hearts of people across the world.

The *Kalis*, the *Durgas*, the *Sitas*, indeed all the Hindu Goddesses whom Anita invokes in her writing are none other than Anita, you and me — the modern Indian woman, an immigrant or a persona in a multicultural world. She questions, she mocks, she laughs at, she rages, she refuses to ‘fit the bill’, she speaks out and will not be silenced or choked, she breathes, dances, sings, makes love, drinks and even while falling into depths of despair, never gives up on hope. And as we read Anita, we agree. There’s nothing wrong with us Kali women.

The book is here to stay. You will find it unputdownable. It is powerful, poignant and of course, exquisite prose poetry.

The reviewer, Professor and Principal, Janki Devi Memorial College (DU), has been an educator since the last twenty seven years

NEW ARRIVALS

THE GREATEST TAMIL STORIES EVER TOLD

selected and edited by Sujatha Vijayaraghavan and Mini Krishnan

Aleph, ₹699

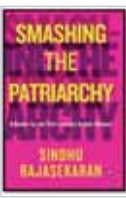
The Greatest Tamil Stories Ever Told showcases some of the best short fiction to emerge out of Tamil Nadu, dating from the last century to the present day. Two of the earliest stories included here are Subramania Bharati’s ‘The Story of a Crow Learning Prosody’, a satirical tale about the exaltation of language, and ‘Kalki’ Krishnamurthy’s ‘The Governor’s Visit’, about how bigwigs in little places pandered to the British rulers during the time of the Raj. While some stories in this volume wrestle with the idea of public justice, as in Father Mark Stephen’s ‘Penance’, others, such as Ambai’s ‘Journey 4’, hide secrets that could destroy lives and relationships if they are ever revealed. Featuring memorable works by, among others, Bama, Perumal Murugan, and Poomani, the 30 stories in this collection come together to paint a striking picture of the Tamil people.

SMASHING THE PATRIARCHY: A GUIDE FOR THE 21ST-CENTURY INDIAN WOMAN

Sindhu Rajasekaran

Aleph, ₹699

From beauty, body politics, and sexuality, to caste, power, and the paradox of choice, the book explores a wide range of women’s issues and draws important connections between these. Taking its inspiration from multi-disciplinary theories, grounded and deepened by interviews with a variety of experts and numerous women, Smashing the Patriarchy is an astonishingly insightful exploration of the collective psyche of modern Indian women.



From uncertainty to probabilities

God or No God: Awareness Enriches Life is a ratified statement claimed by many but understood by very few & Bharat Bhushan Padmadeo is among a few who dares to demystify the basic system of enquiry, writes PRADEEP

Someone asked Swami Vivekanand: “Can we become Godlike?” “First become a man,” he answered. It literally implies that if full human potential (mind-power) is unfolded, one would know no limits. And it is very much achievable through conscious efforts, as did Ancient India’s learned masters, to have captured subtle realities of life operative at even intangible level. So, raising human capital is more important than exploring and seeking God. That remains the real human calling, is how the book concludes, which makes the book an interesting read.

God or No God: Awareness Enriches Life is a ratified statement claimed by many but understood by very few. Bharat Bhushan Padmadeo is amongst those few who dared to accept the challenge and demystify the basic system of enquiry.

In modern times or precisely in this industrial age, every idea or belief demands an objective explanation. In this new framework of understanding, the concept of GOD is a most vulnerable idea. Leaning to some particular idea or school to rationalise existence is a matter of abandoned schools. Science sets up new logic and premises of rationals to support or reject conceptual realities. Whole discussion of existence is evolving around uncertainty, probability and unpredictable circumstances and tools to gauge them perfectly.

This book is remarkable because it changes the very basis of argument about existence from uncertainty to probabilities. It states that the process of understanding is far more important than the modes of happening or object itself. Writer argues that perception itself lies within the realm of being and awareness about it.

Significant character of twentieth century philosophy was departure from any faith unexplained or underexplained. It was rated as blind faith or fundamentalism to a large extent. Renowned philosopher J Krishnamurti argues, if you are free from sorrow and hate you don’t require God. Whereas Gandhi’s whole philosophy of non-violence is centered



around God. So the space of argument is divided between the two premises: “God or No God”. Many more fell in line either rejecting or accepting the existence of a super controller as GOD.

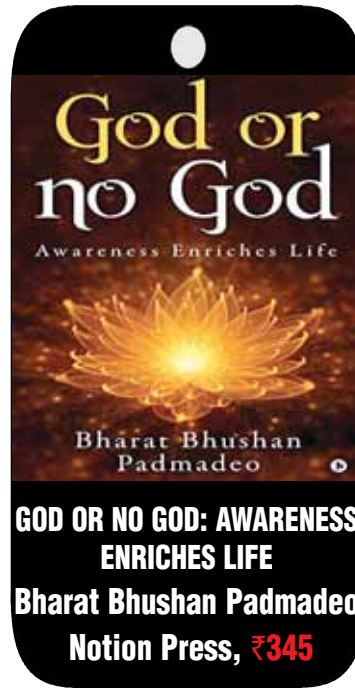
Padmadeo in this book argues that precursor to both is the same. The bearer of belief is consciousness, and understanding its existence is awareness. So, it is not important whether you believe or not, important is that you are aware or not. He wrote: “Consciousness, in fact, rightly deserves to be marked as fourth

dimension, vital to creation. It should not be seen as being in conflict with the perception of modern science, which assigns the fourth dimension to space and time. This particular fundamental element has been named as consciousness because it grants us with the power of knowing, besides granting necessary intelligence to other functional aspects of our individual and collective organism.”

While frequently quoting scientists like Max Plank and excerpts from Kashmiri Shaivism, he kept on building

necessary bridges between science and theology. In other words, instead of dividing the argument into science or believing, he is indicating the science of awakening.

Explaining uncertainty and unpredictability, the book postulates that mind which itself is an area of study by itself creates most paradoxical results. It explains explicitly that consciousness is the prime mover. While exploring the construct of mind and body-mind connect, writer explains its extra cerebral



existence as an interactive phenomenon which comprehends undiscovered psycho-landscapes. Dr. Karan Singh writes precisely in the foreword of the book that writer has reinterpreted our ancient spiritual verities in the light of contemporary intellectual scene, paying attention to the infinite potentialities of human mind, which if unfolded in full would know no limits The basic take home message of the book may be comprised as raising level of consciousness leads to the fact that “Existence is God”. This process may be called as enriched awareness.

As conclusive remark this extremely engaging book demands an independent and fearless conviction to internalize the source and negating the fundamentalism of believes and faiths. It sets a new mode of enquiry within. This book is an invitation to quite undulating and challenging experience like awakening itself might be.

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 Ukhnaaгийн 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

New Delhi, November 28, 2021

tarot 4



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.

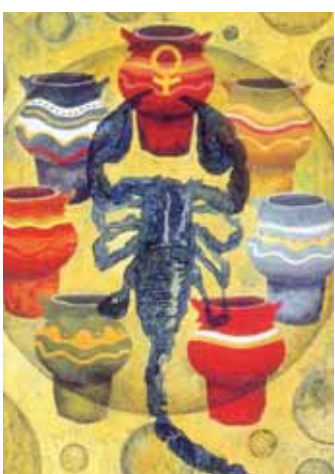
Lucky number 18
Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Saturday



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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