

OPINION 6

TAKING ON THE  
DRAGON-1

WORLD 9

JAN 6 PANEL PUSHES TRUMP'S  
PROSECUTION IN FORCEFUL FINISH

MONEY 10

RBI IMPOSES ₹2.66 CR PENALTY ON  
BANK OF BAHRAIN

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY DECEMBER 20, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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12 SPORT

## Jaishankar hammers Rahul over 'pitai' quip for jawans

Soldiers stood firm in Tawang clash, says Min in retort to Gandhi's remark

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday slammed former Congress president Rahul Gandhi for using the term "pitai" (beating) while referring to the India-China clash in Tawang, and asserted that Indian soldiers have stood their ground in Yangtse in Arunachal Pradesh and should be "appreciated and honoured."

"The word 'pitai' should not be used for our jawans. When our jawans are standing in Yangtse at 13,000 feet, defending our borders, they do not deserve the word 'pitai'. They should be respected, they should be honoured, and they should be appreciated. This is not something that is appropriate," he said. "There is no problem with political criticism of the Government's actions", Jaishankar said, but there should not be any "direct or indirect" criticism of the soldiers guarding the country's frontiers.

The Minister made these remarks during the debate on



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar speaks in the Lok Sabha during the ongoing Winter Session of Parliament, in New Delhi, Monday. PTI

the Anti Maritime Piracy Bill in the Lok Sabha. He was clearly responding to Gandhi's allegations in Jaipur last week that China had taken away 2,000 square kilometres of Indian territory, killed 20 Indian soldiers, and was "beating our jawans in Arunachal Pradesh."

Taking a dig at Rahul, Jaishankar said he has heard that he needed to deepen his understanding of global developments. "I have heard that my own understanding needs to be deepened. When I see who is giving the advice I can only bow and respect," the External Affairs Minister said.

Rahul had also hit out at Jaishankar, saying he keeps making remarks but needs to "deepen his understanding."

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Opposition MPs walk out from the Rajya Sabha during the ongoing Winter Session of Parliament, in New Delhi, Monday. PTI

## Denied debate on China issue, Opp walks out of RS

Cong wanted to know if border spats figured in Modi-Xi talks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress-led Opposition on Monday continued with its protest in the Rajya Sabha demanding a discussion on the Chinese incursion bid in Arunachal Pradesh

and staged a walk out after Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar once again turned down demand for a debate on the issue in the morning hours.

In the post-lunch session, the Congress members and the Treasury Benches engaged in a verbal spat after former Finance Minister P Chidambaram sought to know if the border situation figured during the brief exchange Prime Minister Narendra Modi had with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Bali.

This happened when the Upper House reconvened to consider the Appropriation (No.5) Bill, 2022, and the Appropriation (No.4) Bill, 2022, when it had to be adjourned for 15 minutes as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was not present.

In his observation Dhankar said disruptions of the proceedings for the last few days were not sending a good signal, adding he had asked certain MPs to meet him in his chamber.

*Continued on Page 2*

## China positions fighter aircraft close to LAC

Indian security establishment is on full alert after Beijing's aggressive move

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The situation may be called stable at the border in Arunachal Pradesh after the recent clash between Indian and Chinese troops there, but China has scaled up its military presence by positioning front-line fighter jets close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on its side opposite Tawang. Taking note of this clear aggressive intent by China, the Indian security establishment is taking measures and maintaining full alert.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) last week conducted a major exercise in the eastern part, including Arunachal to hone its operational readiness. More than 40 aircraft took part in the intense drill, though Defence officials said it was scheduled much in advance and was not linked to the Tawang clash.

Satellite pictures as recent as December 14 show China has brought forward its fighter jets and advanced drones to nearly all the air bases in the Tibetan plateau opposite Arunachal Pradesh.

An image from China's Bangda Airbase, which lies just 150 km northeast of Arunachal Pradesh, shows the presence of a state-of-the-art WZ-7 'Soaring Dragon' drone.



The IAF recently held a major exercise in the northern frontier near Arunachal.

Officially unveiled for the first time in 2021, the 'Soaring Dragon', which can fly non-stop for up to 10 hours, is designed for Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions. It could transmit data to enable cruise missiles to strike targets on the ground.

High resolution photographs also show Flanker-type fighter jets deployed there. These are made-in-China variants of the Russian-designed Su-30MKI fighter operated by the IAF. The latest Chinese deployment has significantly improved its air combat capabilities in the region, sources said here on Monday.

The images of Bangda coincide with major IAF exercises over Arunachal last week and indicate an effort by the Chinese to monitor the wargames, assess IAF tactics, and detect Indian radar and electronic emissions, valuable data that can be used to counter the IAF in the event of an actual conflict. In fact, China ramped up its infrastructure development and upgraded its air assets in the region after stand-offs erupted between the two armies in Eastern Ladakh.

Besides improving its air field and heli-bases close to the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh, China has also massively improved its rail and road connectivity in the region, sources said. The images show the rapid development of three key air bases — Bangda (150 kms from the Arunachal boundary), Lhasa (260 kms from the boundary), and Shigatse (150 kms from the Sikkim border). At Lhasa, there is clear evidence of ongoing expansion activity, including the construction of a second runway.

India operates major air bases in the plains of Assam and Bengal including Tezpur, Missamari, Jorhat, Hashimara and Bagdogra. It has also deployed its recently-inducted Rafale fighter jets along with SU-30MKIs to counter any threat from China.

Moreover, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has constructed 664.099 kms of roads in Arunachal in the last five years to provide logistical backup to the frontline troops guarding the LAC there. BRO has also built 760.331 kms of roads in the Ladakh region.

## Visa fraud: 64 files missing from French Embassy

Files pertained to people with high risk of migration to Schengen countries

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A preliminary CBI probe into the visa fraud by two former employees at the French Embassy here has revealed that files related to the Schengen Visas of 64 people having a high risk of migration have "disappeared" from the French Mission.

Former Embassy officials Shubham Shokeen and Aarti Mandal allegedly collected ₹32 lakh, by charging ₹50,000 per visa by clearing files of questionable candidates, officials said.

Shokeen and Mandal allegedly handled 484 visa files between January 1 and May 6, of which 64 files pertained to

individuals having a "high risk" of migration, like young farmers or unemployed persons from Punjab who had never travelled before and lacked the profile to hold a Schengen Visa.

The agency suspects that Mandal and Shokeen allegedly destroyed the documents and files from the visa department in their bid to erase traces of this illicit activity, they said.

On Friday, the CBI conducted searches in Delhi, Patiala, Gurdaspur and Jammu and recovered documents and electronic evidence like laptops, mobile phones and suspicious passports.

The agency has alleged that Shokeen and Mandal, both former workers at the Visa Department of the Embassy of France in New Delhi, committed visa fraud from January to May this year.

The CBI has alleged that three other accused booked in the FIR — Navjot Singh from Jammu and Kashmir and Chetan Sharma and Satwinder Singh Purewal, both from

Punjab had allegedly submitted fake and forged letters purportedly written by Maersk Fleet Management and Technology India Private Limited, Bengaluru to the Consulate-General of France, Bengaluru, for issuing entry visas for their joining at Emma Maersk, Edith Maersk, and Munkbe Maersk, respectively at Port-Le-Havre, France.

"It was further alleged that in pursuance to the said criminal conspiracy, applicants from Punjab and Jammu submitted fake and forged letters purportedly written by a private company based at Bengaluru to the Consulate General of France, Bengaluru, for issuing entry visas for their joining private companies in Port-Le-Havre, France," the CBI had said in a statement.

Shokeen and Mandal facilitated visas for ₹50,000 each without the knowledge and approval of the visa department Head at the Embassy and displace the records, the CBI has alleged in the FIR.

## Season's first fog engulfs Delhi, neighbouring UP, Haryana

8 killed, 20 hurt in UP, over a dozen vehicles damaged due to dense fog

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The season's first dense fog engulfed the national Capital and nearby States of Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Haryana on Monday morning as the cold wave hit parts of north India. According to reports, at least eight people were killed and over 20 were injured in UP while more than a dozen vehicles were damaged and several Delhi-bound trains were delayed due to dense fog.

The fog brought the national Capital's air quality to the "very poor" category as the city's minimum temperature settled at 6 degrees Celsius, two notches below the season's average. Dense to very dense fog is predicted over the plains in



Commuters ply on the road amid low visibility due to dense smog on a cold winter morning, in New Delhi, Monday. PTI

northwest India during the next five days. The IMD also issued an advisory, saying difficult driving conditions on highways, some collisions and tripping of power lines are also possible.

According to the India

Meteorological Department (IMD) satellite images showed a thick layer of fog extending from Punjab to east Uttar Pradesh across Haryana and Delhi. The IMD said the Indo-Gangetic plains are likely to see "dense to very dense" fog over

the next five days due to moisture and light winds, which may result in cancellation and diversion of trains and flights. The visibility dropped to 150-200 metres at the Palam Airport between 3.30 AM and 6 AM.

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## CAPSULE

### KULDEEP SENGAR SEEKS BAIL IN UNNAO RAPE CASE

**New Delhi:** Delhi High Court judge Justice Talwant Singh on Monday recused himself from hearing the interim bail plea of expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar in a case in which he is serving life imprisonment for raping a minor girl in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao in 2017.

### AMBER SETTLES SUIT AGAINST JOHNNY DEPP

**New York:** Amber Heard has settled her defamation case against ex-husband Johnny Depp, she announced in an Instagram post on Monday. Heard, 36, called the decision to settle with Depp, 59, "very difficult" adding that it followed "a great deal of deliberation."

## Now, AI to decipher your doctor's illegible scrawl

Tech major to roll out new feature on Google Lens

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Soon you may not have to scratch your head to decipher the terrible handwritten prescription given by your doctor. Coming to your rescue is tech-giant Google which is developing an Artificial Intelligence (AI) model that can decipher difficult-to-read handwriting, with a focus on



notes and prescriptions written by medical practitioners. The feature will be rolled out on the Google Lens app, yet another AI tool used to detect objects and translate languages.

The search giant announced this during its annual conference here on Monday that it was working with pharmacists to create a tool in Google Lens that can

decode messily written medical notes. Google showcased the feature during the event, demonstrating its capability to specifically detect medicines in a handwritten prescription. There's no detail yet on when the new text deciphering feature is expected to launch, only that "much work still remains to be done before this system is ready for the real world." This will act as an assistive technology for digitising handwritten medical documents by augmenting the humans in the loop such as pharmacists," the company said in a statement.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Elon voted out as Twitter boss in poll he launched

Musk had asked Twitterati to vote if they wanted him to stay or quit

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Twitter users voted on Monday for Elon Musk to quit as head of the social media giant in a poll the technology tycoon ran on his future and promised to abide by its results. A total of 57.5 per cent voted "yes" after the 51-year-old billionaire asked his 122 million followers whether he should stand down.

Over 17 million votes were



cast in the poll that began on Sunday evening and ended early Monday morning with most respondents voting in the affirmative, CNN reported.

Musk did not immediately react to the outcome of the vote.

He had tweeted on Sunday: "Should I step down as head of

Twitter? I will abide by the results of this poll."

"As the saying goes, be careful what you wish, as you might get it," Musk added in a later tweet.

In the past, Musk has obeyed Twitter polls. He's fond of quoting the phrase "vox populi, vox dei", a Latin phrase

that roughly means "the voice of the people is the voice of God". Since buying Twitter for \$44 billion and taking over as the CEO in late October, Musk, who also runs Tesla and SpaceX, has journeyed from one controversy to the next.

Musk also announced on Twitter that major policy changes would be voted on moving forward. The poll comes as Twitter says it will shut down accounts solely designed to promote other social media platforms.

The measure would also affect accounts that link off to or contain usernames from platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Mastodon, Truth Social, Tribel, Nostr and Post, the company said in a tweet.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Row over Savarkar portrait in K'taka Assembly, Cong calls move unilateral

PTI ■ BELAGAVI

Hindutva ideologue VK Savarkar's portrait was unveiled inside the Assembly chamber at the 'Suvarna Vidhana Soudha' here, drawing criticism from the Opposition Congress, which alleged that it was a unilateral decision, keeping them in the dark.

The portraits of Swami Vivekananda, Subhas Chandra Bose, BR Ambedkar, Basaveshwara, Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and Savarkar were unveiled by Assembly Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri and Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, inside the Assembly chamber, just before the commencement of the 10-day Winter Session of the State Legislature in this border district.

Earlier, Congress led by Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Siddaramaiah and party's State president DK Shivakumar staged a demonstration outside the Assembly.

*Continued on Page 2*



# CM failed to control Delhi air pollution: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Lashing out at the Kejriwal Government, Delhi BJP on Monday said that they only made tall claims instead of taking any concrete steps to control air pollution in the national capital.

"The air quality index in most areas of Delhi crossed 450 at 9 am, which is an emergency-like situation. The Delhi Government only made announcements and did not take a single concrete step to control pollution at the ground level," alleged Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri.

Bidhuri has also demanded the Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena should intervene in the matter and save Delhi from the respiratory crisis.

"Kejriwal Government publicized the installation of smoke guns and cleaning the roads with machines was also a big step to control pollution. The smoke guns installed at Connaught Place have stopped working and the sweeping machines have not proved effective," he said.

"The main roads are lying broken all over Delhi, but far from being made new, they are not even being repaired. It is the result of the dust of the bro-



ken roads that PM 2.5 and PM 10 have the maximum share in the city's pollution," Bidhuri said.

However, Delhi BJP Spokesperson Harish Khurana accused Kejriwal Government

of doing scam in name of pollution control.

Khurana said that the AAP Government itself believes that vehicle pollution is the biggest reason for air pollution in Delhi during winters. Today 1 crore 34 lakh vehicles are plying on the roads.

"Kejriwal Government, talking about setting up 10 smoke towers, has set up one smoke tower and spent ₹22 crore 91 lakhs in it. While the cost of its maintenance is ₹2 crore 58 lakh 387 only in March, April and May, but in spite of that it is not running," Khurana claimed.

## Domestic passenger traffic rose by 11% to 116L, says DGCA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's domestic passenger traffic rose 11.06 per cent to 116 lakh in November during the past year, according to the latest data from aviation regulator DGCA.

In November 2021, the air passenger traffic stood at 105.16 lakh.

The data showed that domestic aircrafts carried 116.79 lakh passengers in November, higher than 114.07 lakh recorded in October.

After being severely hit by the coronavirus pandemic, the country's civil aviation sector is on the recovery path and in recent days, daily domestic air traffic on an average is more than 4 lakh. In November, no-frills carrier IndiGo carried more than half (55.7 per cent) of the total domestic traffic at 65.01 lakh passengers, followed by Vistara at 9.3 per cent. The latter carried 10.87 lakh passengers.

Air India's market share in November touched 9.1 per cent, followed by AirAsia India (7.6 per cent), Go First and SpiceJet (both at 7.5 per cent).

Air India along with Vistara and AirAsia, which are now part of the same group, flew a total of 30.35 lakh passengers in November with a combined market share of 26 per cent, as per the data. Budget carrier SpiceJet recorded the highest load factor at 92 per cent in November while IndiGo regained back the top position in on-time performance with an average 92% of its flights departing or arriving on time from four key airports — Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Hyderabad, according to data.

# RERA asks real estate firm to pay delayed possession charges

PARVESH SHARMA ■ G'GRAM

The Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA), Gurugram, has asked Pareena Laxmi infrastructure Pvt (Ltd) to pay delayed possession charges (DPC) to its allottees at the prescribed interest rate well within the time specified.

The court's order will bring relief to as many as 51 allottees of Pareena Laxmi affordable group housing society located at Sector 99, Gurugram.

The developer failed to deliver possessions of units within the time specified in the builder-buyer agreement

(BBA). It has defaulted its commitment and is liable to pay delayed possession charges to allottee cum bonafide complainants as per the provisions of the RERA Act 2016.

"The authority hereby passes this order and issues the following directions under section 37 of the Act to ensure compliance with obligations cast upon the promoter. The respondent promoter is directed to pay interest at the prescribed rate for every month of a delay from the due date of possession till the date of the offer of possession to the complainant," said the Act.

# Now, AI to decipher your...

From Page 1

However no decision will be made solely based on the output provided by this technology," the company said in a statement.

Google Lens is an AI-powered multipurpose object recognition tool that can be used to detect objects (such as products, plants, or animal species) and translate languages. The Google Lens app can already be used to digitally transcribe handwritten notes, though in our own tests the feature was dependent on how legible said handwriting is. Harried doctors are known for having terrible handwriting.

The need to develop such an AI seems to have been on the wish list of many patients and their family members. A large number of doctors write medicine prescriptions in haste, making it nearly impossible for their patients to understand what they scribbled. This problem has been around for decades and many tech firms have attempted to solve it with little to no success.

In fact, concerned at the illegible handwriting of the doctors, the then Medical Council of India in 2018 had

insisted on decipherable handwriting from the medicos, in a bid to reduce the number of potential medical errors that occurred due to illegible writing and spelling mistakes.

According to statistics, in Britain, medical errors were estimated to cause deaths of up to 30,000 people per year, and in the USA up to 1,00,000 per year.

"How many such errors happen in India, where English is not the primary language of doctors, is anybody's guess. How many such medical errors were due to illegible or wrongly spelled prescriptions is also not known," wrote Santosh Chaturvedi, former Dean of Behavioural Sciences and Department of Psychiatry, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) in the National Medical Journal of India.

Manish Gupta, research director, Google Research India, in his blog called the humble prescription a "ubiquitous building block upon which much of public and private healthcare rests."

In the blog post, Gupta said that while these often tend to be handwritten and are hard to read, the information is important for both patients and their healthcare providers, for early diagnosis or self-management.

Gupta in the blog post also said that Google has had the technology to interpret text from images for decades now but prescriptions were different. "Ironically, what makes prescriptions hard for computers to digitise is the same thing that makes them hard for you and me to read — they're unstructured, in shorthand, and full of clues for pharmacists to decipher"

# Eatery owner, friend die of suffocation while asleep

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a shocking incident, owner of an eatery and his female friend died reportedly due to suffocation after sleeping with a coal heater inside their room while two other women were found in an unconscious condition in the DLF Phase-3 area of Gurugram on Monday.

According to the police, the deceased has been identified as Sanjeev Joshi (47), the owner of the 'Knite Rider' eatery while three of his female friends were based in Uttar Pradesh and Odisha.

# Season's first fog engulfs Delhi, neighbouring...

From Page 1

It improved to 350 metres by 7 am. Satellite images showed a thick layer of fog extending from Punjab to east Uttar Pradesh across Haryana and Delhi, the IMD said.

The IMD also issued an advisory, saying difficult driving conditions on highways, some collisions and tripping of power lines are also possible. "Likely train delays, diversions and cancellations. Airport operations are likely to be affected with flight delays and cancellations," it said. The weather department said long exposures to fog can cause wheezing, coughing and shortness of breath in people having asthma bronchitis. It could also lead to eye irritation or infection. The IMD suggested that travellers carry essential items like water and medicine on long journeys.

According to Noida police, an unidentified vehicle being driven on the wrong side allegedly hit two cars on the Eastern Peripheral Expressway in Greater Noida amid dense fog on Monday morning. While the

## IN-BRIEF

### PROBE GIRL'S DOMESTIC ABUSE PLAINT: DCW TO POLICE

**New Delhi:** The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) on Monday issued a notice to the city police in connection with a 15-year-old Muslim girl's allegation that she was married off and subjected to domestic abuse. In a statement, the panel said it has received a complaint from the girl, a resident of Delhi, who said she was married off in February at the age of 15 in Badaun, Uttar Pradesh.

### 3 SHARPSHOOTERS OF BISHNOI, KALA GANGS HELD

**Noida:** Three inter-State sharpshooters of Lawrence Bishnoi and Kala Jatheri gangs were arrested here, police said on Monday. Six pistols, 16 cartridges and a car were seized from their possession, they said. Preet Pal Singh Sangwan, Assistant Commissioner of Police (Crime), said the three men were wanted in about two dozen cases registered in Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi-NCR.

### ED TO FILE SUPP CHARGESHEET IN DELHI EXCISE SCAM

**New Delhi:** The Enforcement Directorate on Monday told a Delhi court that it will file a supplementary charge sheet by January 6 against all the accused arrested in a money laundering case related to the Delhi excise policy scam case in which Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia is also an accused. The ED made the submission before Special Judge M K Nagpal during the brief hearing on the bail application of AAP's communications in-charge Vijay Nair and businessmen Abhishek Boinpally and Binoy Babu.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is known to all men that Mr. Rishubh Garg, S/o Shri Pawan Kumar Garg presently residing at 3795/Sc II, Abraham St. Fremont CA 94536, U.S.A., is the Joint owner/allottee of Flat No.G-1201 12th Floor, Elite Homz, Sector-77, Noida, that he is transferring the above said flat, through GPA holder Mr. Puneet Kumar S/o Shri Brij Bhushan Singla R/o H.No.110, Sector-46A, Chandigarh-160047, in favour of Mrs. Sangeeta Ganatay W/o Mr. Jiban Jyoti Pattinayak and Mr. Jiban Jyoti Pattinayak S/o Mr. Bijaya Kumar both R/o 1st line Brahmapur Sadar Engineering School, Ganjam, Odisha-760010, and Agreement to Sell was not registered. If anyone has/have any objection, he/she may submit his/her objection with documentary evidence in the Group Housing Department of Noida Authority, Sector-6, Noida.

(Puneet Kumar)  
S/o Shri Brij Bhushan Singla  
R/o H. No.110, Sector-46A,  
Chandigarh-160047

## M.P. HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Online percentage rate bids for the following works are invited from Registered Contractors and Reputed firm full filling registration criteria :-

S. No.	System Tender No.	Work	PAC (Rs. In Lakh)	EMD (in Rs.)	Cost of Bid Document Including GST (in Rs.)	Completion Period
1.	2022_MPHID_238287 (Fourth Call)	Construction of Community Hall at Satna Distt. Satna.	696.62	696700.00	23600.00	09 (Nine) Month I/C rainy Season

- Full details of the above tenders can be seen on <http://www.mptenders.gov.in>. Amendments to NIT, if any, would be published on website only.
- Cost of Tender form will be paid online Tender portal.
- Tender will be purchase from 20.12.2022, 4.00 PM and last date of Purchase & Submission 04.01.2023, 05.00 Hrs.
- Tender will be Open at 05.01.2023, 05.00 Hrs.

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## OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL PROJECT DIRECTOR PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, PIU NIRAMAN BHAWAN, Plot No. 27-28, Arera Hills, BHOPAL

PHONE No. 0755-2559571 E-mail:- [apdpiubhopal@gmail.com](mailto:apdpiubhopal@gmail.com)

NIT No. 23/2022/Tender/GIAPD/ BHOPAL DATE 12/12/2022

Online bids for the following works are invited from registered contractors and firms of repute fulfilling registration criteria:

S. NO.	Tender Portal No.	Name of Work	District	Probable Amount Contract (Rs. in lakh)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (in Rs.)	Cost of Bid Document (in Rs.)	Period of completion (in months i/c Rainy Season)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	2022_PWPIU_237762_1	Consultancy for supervision and Quality control Services for Construction of Various Building of various department at BETUL	BETUL	8166.00	163320	12500	24 months i/c Rainy season
2	2022_PWPIU_237943_1	Providing Electrification/Renovation Work in Residential/Non Residential Buiding/ Deposit /SRI/AR/MISC Work under PWD PIU-2 Bhopal	BHOPAL-2	107.26	107260	12500	12 months i/c Rainy season
3	2022_PWPIU_238112_1	Supplying and installation of Additional Godrej Furniture for newly constructed hospital Block-1 & 2 under 1498 bed project at Gandhi Medical Collage Campus Bhopal.	BHOPAL-2	360.00	360000	15000	02 months i/c Rainy season
4	2022_PWPIU_237517_1	Construction of Rest House at Itarsi Distt Narmadapuram	NARMADAPURAM	128.74	128740	12500	12 months i/c Rainy season
5	2022_PWPIU_237519_1	Constrction of Rest House at Babai (Makhannagar) Distt Narmadapuram	NARMADAPURAM	150.29	150290	12500	12 months i/c Rainy season
6	2022_PWPIU_237475_1	CONSTRUCTION OF ONE COURT ROOM AT TEHSIL BARELI DIST. RAISEN	RAISEN	62.47	62470	10000	08 months i/c Rainy season
7	2022_PWPIU_214357_1	ZONAL TENDER FOR SMALL CONSTRUCTION WORK, BALANCE WORK AND P.G. REPAIRING WORK UNDER DISTRICT-VIDISHA	VIDISHA	112.12	112120	12500	12 months i/c Rainy season

- All details relating to the Bid Document (s) can be viewed and downloaded free of cost from the website. <http://mptenders.gov.in>
- Bid Document (s) can be purchased after making online payment of portal fees through Credit/Debit/Cash Card/Internet Banking.
- The Bid Document (s) can be purchased only online from 10:30 (time) 12.12.2022 (date) to 17:30 (time) 27.12.2022 (date). Other key dates may be seen in Bid Data Sheet.
- Amendment (s) to NIT, if any, shall be published on website only, and not in newspaper.

ADDITIONAL PROJECT DIRECTOR PWD PIU, BHOPAL  
G-20635/22

# Row over Savarkar portrait in K'taka Assembly...

From Page 1

They protested while holding pictures of several national and state icons like Kuvempu, Narayana Guru, Shishunala Sharif, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Babu Jagjivan Ram among others.

Stating that it is his party's demand that portraits of national leaders and social reformers should be installed in

the Assembly and they are not protesting against any one portrait, Siddaramaiah said, without any discussions or consultation unilaterally decisions have been taken to install certain portraits inside the House.

"If any portrait has to be put inside the Assembly, the House has to be taken into confidence as they become the property of the Assembly, though the Speaker is the custodian. It has not been done, it was not even discussed in the Business Advisory Committee," he said. Noting that he neither had invitation nor any information regarding the unveiling

of the portraits including that of Savarkar, and only got to know about it through the media, Siddaramaiah said, "We are not opposed to installing any portraits, but Assembly had to be taken into confidence."

Suggesting that portraits of Nehru, Patel, Jagjivan Ram, and social reformers have to be installed and it is their demand, he said, "they (BJP government) are now doing it because we (Congress) will raise several issues like corruption, voter ID card scam, farmers issues, law and order, also several scams. In order to divert the attention of the people they are doing this unilaterally. We

# Jaishankar hammers Rahul..

From Page 1

Jaishankar also disapproved of the Congress' criticism of the Government's celebrations over India's G-20 Presidency. "This is a moment when the world is looking for Indian leadership. When the world values India's leadership, just because something is rotational does not mean you are not valued," he said.

Participating in the debate, Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said that India's Presidency of the G-20 was being "propagated in a manner to glamourise an individual and a Government."

"I don't know the significance of this kind of propaganda because .. As a system of rotation we have been entrusted to host G-20," Chowdhury said.

Jaishankar also appeared to be surprised by Chowdhury's remarks that the government was indifferent towards China.

"If we were indifferent to China then who sent the Indian Army to defend our posts? If we were indifferent to China then why are we pressurising China for de-escalation and disengagement? Why are we saying publicly that our relations are not normal," Jaishankar said.

Earlier during the day, at India Today Conclave, Jaishankar rejected Rahul Gandhi's criticism of the Government's handling of the border row.

He said the deployment of the Army was made on the orders of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Army did not go to the frontier region because Gandhi asked them for it. "Today we have a deployment of the Indian Army on the China border that we have never had. It is done in order to counter Chinese deployment which has been scaled up massively since 2020," Jaishankar said.

# Denied debate...

From Page 1

The Chairman made these observations when Congress MPs including Leader of Opposition M Malliarjun Kharge insisted suspension of business of the day to take up the issue of the Chinese incursion in Tawang on December 9.

Rejecting the demand, Dhankhar said notices seeking a discussion on the issue were not drafted in accordance with the rules. "I painfully report to you that loss of more than 100 minutes of disruption on December 13, 15 and 16 has sent not a good signal," Dhankhar said.

When Kharge claimed China has encroached on Indian land and is building bridges and this issue was of national importance and hence should be discussed, Leader of the House and Union Minister Piyush Goyal countered him saying Deputy Chairman Harivansh had last week indicated past instances when sensitive issues were not discussed.

Later during the day when Chidambaram referred to a video of Modi's brief chat with Jinping in Bali during the G20 summit last month, the treasury benches raised a protest, alleging he was deviating from the discussion on supplemen-

oppose this."

Reacting to the Congress' protest, Chief Minister Bommai said, "Whatever happens inside the Assembly is left to the Speaker and the Legislature Department, I'm yet to meet the Speaker, I will talk to him."

Calling 'BJP's Hinduism a drama,' Karnataka Congress unit president D K Shivakumar on Monday asserted that the Hinduism practised by him and others in the party was better than that practised by the ruling party.

The KPCC chief, however, said what Congress propagates is the Constitution.

# Elon voted out as Twitter...

From Page 1

But cross-content posting from other sites will still be allowed.

Twitter had already blocked users from sharing some links to Mastodon, the platform many Twitter users moved to after Musk's takeover.

But in a series of tweets on Sunday Twitter said: "We recognize that many of our users are active on other social media platforms. However, we will no longer allow free promotion of certain social media platforms on Twitter."

"Specifically, we will remove accounts created solely for the purpose of promoting other social platforms and content that contains links or usernames for the following platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Mastodon, Truth Social, Tribel, Nostr and Post."

Examples of possible violations could include tweets such as "follow me @username on Instagram" or "check out my profile on Facebook - facebook.Com/username", it said in a blog setting out the details.

Any attempts to bypass the restrictions would also be a breach.

Musk's announcement was the latest in a series of decisions by Twitter to generate blow-back, after the suspension last week of more than half a dozen journalists who report on Musk.

Musk immediately fired several top executives, including its Indian-American CEO Parag Agrawal, and laid off about half of Twitter's staff after he took over as head of the social media platform in October.

He then gave an ultimatum to the remaining staff that they need to do "extremely hardcore" work or leave, resulting in another thousand or so employees quitting the company.



# Thousands of farmers throng Ramlila Maidan

## Seek rollback of GST on agri goods

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a seeming reprise of the months-long farm agitation against the three controversial agricultural laws, as thousands of farmers gathered for a 'Kisan Garjana' rally at the Ramlila Maidan under the banner of Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) to press for a rollback of GST on agricultural goods and other demands and warned that the States and the BJP-led Central Government will face trouble if their

demands are not met in time.

After the BKS rally, other farmers organisations are also planning to hold a mega farmers rally to press their demand for legal guarantee to the minimum support prices for the crops.

The BKS leaders said braving cold conditions, the farmers travelled to Delhi from several states, including Punjab, Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, on tractors, motorcycles and private buses and participated in the 'Kisan Garjana' rally in the national capital.

The protesters were demanding a rollback of GST on farming activities, an increase in the income support provided under the PM-Kisan scheme, revocation of the permission for commercial pro-

duction of genetically modified (GM) crops and remunerative prices for their produce based on the input cost, they said. Launched in December 2018, income support of Rs 6,000 per year in three equal installments is provided to all land-holding farmer families under the PM-Kisan scheme.

The BKS, in a statement, said "state and central governments will face trouble if they do not heed the farmers' demand in time". National General Secretary, BKS, Mohini Mohan said: "The promises made by the prime minister regarding the rights of farmers have proved to be empty." Mohan also criticized the Modi government for not fulfilling their promises to farmers despite tall claims.

"The government promised an increase in the



income of farmers, but this could not happen. Farmers are not beggars, they have the right to remunerative prices for their crops," he said. Mohan

said the world's largest farmers' organisation "will roar and be vocal" if the government does not wake up in time. Narendra Patidar from

Madhya Pradesh's Indore said GST on farm machinery and pesticides should be removed. "With the rising input cost and inflation, we don't make any profit. The government should pay attention to our problems. GST shouldn't be imposed on dairy farming either. How can someone run a family on Rs 6,000 or Rs 12,000 in the current situation?" he said. The farmers said they will intensify the protest if the government does not meet their demands within three months.

"GST on farm machinery, pesticides and fertilisers should be removed. They have even imposed a five percent tax on dairy farming for no reason. The Rs 6,000 under Kisan Samman Nidhi are nothing but disrespect to farmers. It should be at least Rs 15,000," said Dilip Kumar, another

farmer from Madhya Pradesh. Pramod from Maharashtra's Raigad said the government imposes GST on farmers and provides subsidies to companies.

"They even charge GST on seeds. Something should be done about it. The pension they provide is a joke. How can one sustain their family with just Rs 6,000? (Union Agriculture Minister) Narendra Tomar said it will be increased to Rs 12,000, even that is not enough," he said.

"Until and unless we are provided research details until we get some proof that it is reliable, we are not ready to use GM seeds at all. Farmers have been opposing GM crops for a very long time but the government doesn't pay attention to us," said Ajay Bondre who had come from Nagpur.

Kanchan Roy who came from West Bengal's Uttar Dinajpur said many have quit farming because they cannot bear the rising input costs. "Many people have left farming and migrated from West Bengal to Delhi, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh. Does the government realise the inflation situation across the country and they want us to settle with Rs 6,000 or Rs 12,000," she said.

Kishor Patel from Gujarat's Aravalli said some of the demands have been met. "But the primary demands have not been considered despite assurances before the state elections." The BKS said it ran a public awareness programme in over 60,000 villages in 560 districts across the country for four months before coming to Delhi.

# BJP slams Cong over Tytler's presence in party meeting for Bharat Jodo Yatra

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A fresh controversy erupted on Monday as former Union Minister Jagdish Tytler was seen attended a party meeting at Pradesh headquarters regarding the preparations for the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

After the meeting Tytler said he will join Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra in the national capital on December 24. This has sparked the controversy as the BJP slammed the Congress over the presence of Tytler in a party meeting saying it is indulging in the Bharat Todo Abhiyan.

In the last few years, Congress distanced itself from Tytler as he landed in legal trouble related to 1984 Sikh riots cases. Tytler was first elected to the Lok Sabha in 1980. He also won in 1991 and 2004. But in 2009, he was not given a ticket by the party. Tytler had once held key party posts and was minister in central government under the Congress, with Minister of State for Overseas Indian

Affairs, being the last post from which he resigned after his name was figured in a report of the Nanavati Commission which probed into the anti-Sikh riots.

When asked, Tytler said that there was no FIR (in 1984 anti Sikh riots) against him. "CBI has also given me clearance. Some are only doing politics... Yes, I will join the (Bharat Jodo Yatra), and I will be with the party until my last breath," Tytler told reporters on Monday. Tytler was also part of the state election committee for the MCD polls. He was earlier in the list of star campaigners for Punjab Congress during the assembly polls this year.

AICC general secretary KC Venugopal has held a meeting with Delhi Congress leaders at the Pradesh's headquarters which was attended by Tytler, Ajay Maken, and Shakti Singh Gohil and other senior leaders for preparations for Rahul Gandhi's yatra entering the national capital on December 24. The yatra will enter Delhi on December 24, and after a



break of about eight days, it will move on to Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and finally, Jammu and Kashmir.

Tagging a media report on Tytler's presence in the meeting, BJP's national spokesperson Shehaz Poonawalla said this has revealed the true face of Congress.

"This is not Bharat Jodo but Congress ka Nafrat Jodo. Congress ka Haath hamesha Sikh Narsanghar ke saath. From Bada Ped girta hai comment to patronising Jagdish Tytler. The true face of Congress (sic)," tweeted Poonawalla. (This is not a walk

to connect India but Congress' way to increase hatred. Congress is with those who are involved in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots). With regard to the 'Bada Ped girta' hai comment, Poonawalla was referring to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's remark when Indira Gandhi was assassinated in 1984.

BJP leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa, lambasted the Congress saying that Rahul is doing 'Bharat Todo Yatra' and for executing such a yatra you will need criminals like Jagdish Tytler. Hence he is present for the Congress meeting."

# After L-G invokes Rule 19(5), Govt clears files of pending major Central projects

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has cleared the files of the major projects of the Government of India and other agencies which were pending for years and months following the Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena invoked the Rule 19(5) of the under Transaction of Business of the The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, (GNCTD) Rules (ToBR), 1993.

The L-G has also approved the proposals after finally receiving the same.

The Rule 19(5) of the ToBR, empowers the L-G to recall files pending inordinately with Ministers/CM, in public interest and even would have forced the Government to send files to Saxena, irrespective of whether they approved it or not.

According to the sources, extremely important projects of the Govt. of India / other



agencies, aimed at transforming the city's skyline and augmenting infrastructure, like the redevelopment of GPRA Colony at Srinivasपुरi pending since 2019, GPRA Sarojini Nagar pending since August 2021 and the Urban Extension Road (UER-II) by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), pending since September, 2021, etc, will finally start getting executed in the right earnest.

"It took Saxena, invoking his powers to recall files in terms of Rule 19(5) of ToBR, 1993, for the Kejriwal Government to finally send 11 files of critical infrastructural importance to the Capital, to the LG for approval," they

said.

"Once the LG Secretariat invoked the said Rule, files that had been pending for years and months without any reason, were duly approved and signed by the Minister of Environment and the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal within days and sent to the Saxena for approval," they alleged.

Informing about the duration of pendency of files, sources said that these files pertaining to clearances for translocation or afforestation of trees had been pending with the Delhi Government, for more than three to one year, the least pendency being that of six months.

"Even as the L-G had consistently raised this issue of undue delay with the CM in many of their meetings, he had also written twice to Kejriwal on August 17, 2022 and September 30, 2022 flagging the inordinate and unexplained delay in granting permissions by the Environment Department, and asked the

CM to ensure speedy disposal," they said.

"Apart from this, while clearing the file for construction in IIT Delhi, which had been pending approval for more than an year and half, the L-G had noted on file that clearance for such projects of national importance be expedited," they claimed.

"Other projects that were pending for the approval are construction of CISF Residential Quarters at Saket, construction of Road Over Bridge and Road Under Bridge at Sultanpuri, Nangloi, Group Housing Residential Project at Roshanara Road, road construction on stretch between Parmanand Chowk to Kingsway Camp and the widening of Burari Road," sources said.

They said that despite the several communications, the lackadaisical approach of the Kejriwal Government remained unchanged and it finally took the L-G Secretariat to invoke Rule 19(5) of ToBR, 1993, for them to move.

# AAP Govt developed roads, drainage systems of 1,100 unauthorised colonies in Delhi: Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Arvind Kejriwal government on Monday claimed that the AAP led Delhi government has developed roads and drainage systems of 1100 unauthorised colonies in 60 assembly constituencies in just four year. Reviewing the development works in the unauthorized colonies, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said that the Delhi government has constructed 3767 kms of roads and 5203 kms of drains in unauthorised colonies of the national capital.

As per the statement released by the Delhi Government, "Deputy CM directed the officials to complete the pending work in the next three months. These development works include the construction of roads, streets and drains, to install sewer and water pipelines in these colonies."

While reviewing the works



of I&FC and DSIIDC, Sisodia instructed the officials to complete the developmental work of the remaining colonies on priority, which will be reviewed by him every 15 days. So far, the Kejriwal government has constructed 3767 kms of streets and 5203 kms of drains in these unauthorised colonies, it said.

Criticizing the opposition, Sisodia said that the previous governments considered the unauthorised colonies as vote banks only and never paid attention to development in these residential areas after

elections. "Unlike other leaders who visit unauthorised colonies only during elections, the Delhi government is determined to fulfil its guarantees to develop quality civic infrastructure in these colonies," he said.

"The situation in these unauthorised colonies was miserable. There were no proper drainage systems in these colonies which led to stagnation of sewage water and outbreak of diseases. Despite being in the capital of the country, these colonies either did not have roads or had unpaved roads," Sisodia said.

# GRAP sub-committee decides not to invoke Stage III curbs of action plan

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre's air quality panel on Monday decided not to invoke curbs under Stage III of the anti-air pollution action plan despite the situation in the national capital worsening to the 'severe' category. A dense layer of smog hung over Delhi with the 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) at 4 pm recorded at 410.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor' and 401 and 500 'severe'.

The sub-committee of the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) mandated to enforce anti-pollution measures under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) said the sudden spike in air pollution levels was temporary.

"Since the forecast does



not predict any deterioration and the overall AQI of Delhi is predicted to further improve from tonight/ tomorrow, the GRAP sub-committee has unanimously decided not to invoke restrictions under Stage-III," the panel said in an order.

The decreasing trend is clearly visible as Delhi's overall AQI dipped from 411 at 3 pm to 406 at 6 pm, it said.

The CAQM said preventive actions under stages I and II would continue.

If the AQI is projected to reach the severe category, restrictive actions under Stage III are to be invoked at least three days in advance, according to GRAP.

# 250 dengue cases reported in Dec, infection tally crosses 4K this year

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

More than 250 dengue cases have been reported in the national Capital in December, taking the infection tally of the vector-borne disease past the 4,000 mark so far this year.

According to the reports released by Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), the In November, 1,420 cases were logged, while 1,238 cases were recorded in October.

"The dengue infection tally stood at 3,857 till December 9, and 257 more cases have been recorded since then till December 16," he said.

The city has also recorded 251 cases of malaria and 45 cases of chikungunya this year, according to the report released by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

Of the total of 4,114 reported cases, 693 were logged in September.

In 2017, the city logged 4,711 cases in the January 1-



December 16 period, the report stated.

In 2021, dengue claimed 23 lives, the report said.

In 2015, the city witnessed a massive dengue outbreak, with the number of cases crossing 10,600 in October. It was Delhi's worst dengue outbreak since 1996.

According to the MCD report issued on Monday, the city recorded 23 dengue cases in January, 16 in February, 22 in March, 20 in April, 30 in May, 32 in June, 26 in July, and 75 in August.

Cases of vector-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria are usually reported between July and November, sometimes stretching till mid-December.

According to the officials of the MCD's health department, symptoms of vector-borne diseases include high fever, headache, rash, muscle, and joint pain, which are quite similar to that of COVID-19 which also includes fever or chills, muscle or body aches, fatigue and headache among others.

# JNU students protest outside UGC office, seek extension of terminal PhD & MPhil batches

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Dozens of students of Jawaharlal Nehru University on Monday demonstrated outside the University Grants Commission office, demanding an extension for the terminal MPhil and PhD batches. Students have claimed that the terminal batches of MPhil, PhD have been "unjustly asked" to submit their research by December 30 without considering the time lost due to Covid.

The stir was called by the student union of JNU asserting that adequate compensation for the time lost due to the closure of academic spaces because of Covid19 should be provided to students.

Students raised slogans and held placards mentioning their

demands.

Some of the placards read: 'UGC jawab do (UGC give answers)', 'UGC, don't play with the future of students of MPhil and PhD batches.'

Speaking to PTI, JNUSU counsellor Madhurima highlighted that quality research must be ensured by providing adequate compensation for the time lost due to the closure of academic spaces.

"The 2018 PhD batch lost more than one and half years to COVID lockdown and are unjustly asked to submit before December 30 2022 without adequate compensation for the time lost," Madhurima said.

"Moreover, the 2020 MPhil batch started coursework in February 2021, and is being asked to submit before completing 2 years of the programme," she added.

# Retired police SI conned of ₹8.50L by cyber thug posing as Govt Treasury officer

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A retired police sub-inspector has been conned of over Rs 8.50 lakh by a cyber thug who posed as the Government's treasury officer to help him with his pension, an official said on Monday.

An FIR has been lodged at the Cyber Crime police station in Noida's Sector 36 and police have launched an investigation into the case, the official said. "On November 21, I got a call from an unknown number. The person on the other side identified himself as a treasury officer from Saharanpur. He said you have applied for transferring your pension to Saharanpur and shared a lot of details about my professional documents, con-

vincing me that he indeed is a government officer," According to complainant Bijendra Singh Malik, who retired from the police service on July 31.

Malik currently resides in the police lines of Gautam Buddh Nagar but is a native of the Saharanpur district.

"This person then told me that he was preparing the file of my pension and that in order to proceed further he would send me an OTP on my phone number which I must share with him. I obliged with the OTP and some other details as sought by him over the phone. A little later, I got notifications that a sum of Rs 8.62 lakh has been withdrawn from my account in two instalments," the retired police official said.

# Not court's duty to monitor citizens to see whether they indulge in public urination, spitting, littering: HC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

It is not the duty of a constitutional court to regulate and monitor the movement of every citizen to see whether one indulges in public urination, spitting and littering, the Delhi High Court said on Monday while dismissing a plea seeking to prohibit the practice of putting up images of deities on walls to prevent people from urinating in public places.

The High Court, which said the concern raised by the petitioner would be better addressed by civic bodies, held the petition was nothing but sheer abuse of the process of law and a fit case to be crushed at the threshold itself.

"The present case is not a fit case for this court to exercise its extraordinary jurisdiction



under Article 226 and the prayers sought for by the petitioner cannot be granted by this court. "It is certainly not the duty of a constitutional court to regulate and monitor the movement of each citizen to see whether one indulges in public urination, spitting and littering. The concern raised by the petitioner would be better addressed by civic bodies and not by this court," a bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad said in its 10-page judgement.

The judgement came while

deciding a PIL seeking to prohibit the practice of putting up images of deities on walls to prevent people from urinating, spitting or littering in public places. Petitioner advocate Gorang Gupta said in his plea the common practice of affixing images of deities on walls to prevent urination, spitting and throwing garbage in public places had created a serious menace in society as these pictures did not guarantee prevention of such acts. Instead, people publicly urinate or spit on the "sacred images", the petition said.

"This seriously denigrates and disparages the sanctity of the sacred images... Fear is used as an element to stop people from urinating or spitting and littering. These things cannot be permitted over the ele-

ment of pure devotion borne out of faith and freedom to practise and profess one's religion," it said.

While referring to an earlier order of the high court on the issue of public urination, the bench said the previous decision had in clear terms stated the solution to the menace of public urination lay elsewhere and not before the court. "The present PIL is nothing but a sheer abuse of the doctrine of PIL developed by the judiciary as a tool to espouse the cause of the oppressed and marginalised sections of the society," the bench said. It said the petitioner being aware of the March 2014 order chose to file a fresh PIL, espousing it as a fresh cause, and it is certainly a frivolous PIL which has resulted in wasting valuable judicial time.



# Terror incidents in J&K down by 168% under Modi Govt: Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Anurag Thakur on Monday said "terror incidents in Jammu and Kashmir decreased by 168 per cent" since the Modi government came to power and "Left Wing Extremism incidents were down by over 265 per cent" since 2015.

Underscoring the "zero tolerance policy towards terrorism" of the Modi Government, Thakur said, "The Government undertook decisive actions which yielded definitive results."

"Surgical strikes in 2016 were in response to the Uri attack. Balakot Air strikes in 2019 were in response to the Pulwama bombing, so all these decisive actions yielded definitive results," Thakur told reporters here.

Since 2014, violence due to insurgency has come down by 80 per cent, civilian deaths decreased by 89 per cent and 6,000 militants have surren-



dered, the minister said.

"Terror incidents in Jammu and Kashmir have reduced by 168 per cent under the Modi government and the conviction rate in terror financing cases is over 94 per cent," he said.

While the Left Wing Extremism (Naxal) incidents have reduced by more than double to over 265 per cent from 2015 to June 2022 this year, he further said.

He said, 'An era of peace has started in the northeastern region under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi.'

The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) has been completely withdrawn from Tripura and Meghalaya and from 60 percent of Assam, he

said.

Thakur said multiple peace treaties, including Bodo Accord in 2020, Karbi Anglong Agreement in 2021 and Assam-Meghalaya Inter-State Boundary Agreement in 2022 have been signed to ensure peace in the Northeastern region.

However, Thakur made no reference to the actual numbers.

India conducted the surgical strike on September 29, 2016, across the Line of Control (LoC) as a response to a terrorist attack on an Army base in the Uri sector of Jammu and Kashmir.

On February 26, 2019, Indian Air Force fighter jets crossed the Line of Control and destroyed terror launch pads in Balakot in Pakistan.

The strikes were undertaken days after 40 Central Reserve Police Force personnel were killed in a terror attack in Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir on February 14.

## Cong seeks debate in LS on situation in Valley

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of the Congress on Monday demanded in Lok Sabha a debate on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir following the removal of Article 370 saying "innocent citizens were losing their lives in the valley and it is not stopping".

For his part, Shiv Sena member of the Uddhav faction raised the Karnataka-Maharashtra border dispute, condemned the ban on party MP's entry to Karnataka's Belagavi district and sought the intervention of Home Minister Amit Shah.

They took up the matters when "issues of urgent public importance" came up for the discussion in the lower house. "At times by the terrorists' bullet, and at times due to the mistakes of the forces, innocent

people are losing their lives. They had said in the House that after abrogation of Article 370, we will capture PoK, and Aksai Chin. But today, Pandits are being forced out of the valley, lists are being made by terrorists to eliminate Pandits," Chowdhury said.

"We want a detailed discussion in Lok Sabha on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir," the Congress leader said and mentioned a recent incident from Jammu's Rajouri town, where two civilians were shot dead and a third was injured on Friday morning near the gate of an Army facility.

"Innocent people have lost their lives in Rajouri due to the Army's mistake, the government should at least give a statement," Chowdhury added.

Raising the issue of Karnataka-Maharashtra border dispute, Shiv Sena Uddhav

Thackeray faction member Arvind Sawant condemned the "ban" on the entry of party MP Dhairyasheel Mane into Karnataka's Belagavi district and called it an attack on the Constitution.

The South Mumbai MP also called for Shah's intervention in the matter and demanded protection to Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti's leaders following Karnataka Police's action against some of them during a protest in Belagavi.

Sawant described the Belagavi district administration's move as an "insult" to the Home minister, saying it came close on the heels of Shah advising Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and his Maharashtra counterpart Eknath Shinde on resolving the boundary dispute between the two states.

"The ban on the entry of



leaders from Maharashtra is an attack on the Constitution. The worst is that our Home Minister is being insulted by non-compliance with the advice that he gave to the chief ministers of Karnataka and Maharashtra for maintaining peace," Sawant said.

Mane was recently appointed as the chief of an expert committee formed by

the Maharashtra government regarding a writ petition in the Supreme Court on the border dispute with Karnataka.

He had requested the Belagavi administration to make arrangements for his visit to the city. However, the district authorities banned his entry, saying a "possible inflammatory speech" by him might create law and order problems.

## '2 Judges can't decide': BJP MP opposes same-sex marriages

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As the Supreme Court is expected to take up the contentious issue of same-sex marriage in the coming days, the matter echoed in the Rajya Sabha on Monday with Sushil Kumar Modi (BJP) opposing it saying two judges cannot sit and decide on such a socially significant subject. He said a legal sanctity will play havoc with the social fabric of the country.

Registering his protest, the BJP MP also called for a debate on the issue in Parliament. His opposition came in the backdrop of the apex court asking the government until January 6 to submit its responses.

The Supreme Court, in a landmark verdict in 2018,

scrapped a colonial-era ban on gay sex and decriminalised homosexuality. LGBT activists say they are still deprived of legal sanctity for same-sex marriages, which is a basic right enjoyed by heterosexual couples.

The centre had opposed same-sex marriages in the past and had said courts should stay away from the law-making process and leave it to parliament.

The BJP MP, meanwhile, also claimed certain Left-liberal people as well as activists are making efforts to get legal sanctity for same-sex marriage and urged the government to strongly oppose any such attempt.

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour, the BJP leader also urged the judiciary not to give any order which is against

the cultural ethos of the country. He highlighted the importance of the institution of marriage in the country.

"In India, same-sex marriage is neither recognised nor accepted in any uncoded personal law like the Muslim Personal Law or any codified statutory laws. Same sex marriage would cause complete havoc with a delicate balance of personal laws in the country," the MP observed.

The BJP leader said two judges cannot decide on such an important social issue and demanded a debate in Parliament as well as society at large. He urged the government to strongly argue against same-sex marriage in court.

Issues including setting up a drone technology institute in Visakhapatnam and poor connectivity also figured promi-



nently in the Rajya Sabha.

Vijay Sai Reddy (YSRCP) demanded setting up of a drone research institute in Visakhapatnam. He noted that drones are very useful, especially for agriculture, defence and logistics sectors.

Reddy said about 65 per cent of people in Andhra Pradesh are engaged in agriculture.

Raghav Chadha (AAP) said people from Punjab are living in many countries, but air connectivity from Punjab to those countries was not adequate.

Harnath Singh Yadav (BJP) highlighted that five crore cases are pending in various courts and urged the government to take steps to ensure timely justice to people.

## Expectations from Pakistanis never high, says Jaishankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Days after Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's offensive remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the United Nations, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said here on Monday, "Our expectation levels with the Pakistanis are never very high."

In his sharp retort in an interaction with a private television channel, Jaishankar also said the external affairs ministry has said "whatever we have to say" regarding Bhutto's remark.

On Thursday last week, Bhutto had said, "Osama bin Laden is dead, but the butcher of Gujarat lives." He was reacting to Jaishankar calling Pakistan the "epicentre of terrorism" and also criticized the



Rashtriya Swayam Sevak (RSS).

Protests had erupted all over India on Saturday against the remarks. BJP workers took to the streets and burnt his effigies and the Pakistan flag. The party workers also staged a massive protest against Pakistan near the country's embassy in Delhi.

Taking exception to Zardari's personal attack against Modi, India on Friday termed the remarks as "new low even for Pakistan."

Making this observation, MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi had said, "The Foreign Minister of Pakistan has obviously forgotten this day in 1971, which was a direct result of the genocide unleashed by Pakistani rulers against ethnic Bengalis and Hindus. Unfortunately, Pakistan does not seem to have changed much in the treatment of its minorities. It certainly lacks credentials to cast aspersions at India.

## Google CEO meets Prez, PM, pledges support for India's G-20 presidency

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CEO of Google and Alphabet Sundar Pichai on Monday called on President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi and pledged support to India's G20 presidency to advance an open, connected internet that works for all.

After her meeting with Pichai at Rashtrapati Bhavan here, President Murmu described him as a symbol of Indian talent and wisdom, and asked him to work for universal digital literacy in India.

"CEO of Google and Alphabet Sundar Pichai called on President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan. The President described Pichai, a recipient of Padma Bhushan, as a symbol of Indian talent and wisdom and urged him to work for universal digital literacy in



India," the President's secretariat tweeted along with the pictures of the meeting.

Pichai, who also met Modi, later took to Twitter to say: "Thank you for a great meeting today PM @narendramodi. Inspiring to see the rapid pace of technological change under your leadership. Look forward to continuing our strong partnership and supporting India's G20 presidency to advance an open, connected internet that works for all."

Prime Minister Modi's Digital India vision has helped to accelerate the progress we're seeing across India, and I'm excited for India to share its experience with the world as it takes over the G20 presidency in 2023, he said.

Earlier, while speaking at Google for India event, Pichai said, India will be a big export economy and it needs to create a balance between safeguarding citizens and enabling companies to innovate with its framework.

## Agri Min to host 'millet only' lunch for MPs to mark 'Millet Year'

ANI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar will be hosting a special 'Millet only' lunch for members of Parliament of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on Tuesday afternoon to mark the "Millet Year" a special initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

PM Narendra Modi will be participating in this lunch on the parliament premises on Tuesday.

Special Chefs have been brought in from Karnataka to make ragi specialties like Idli and ragi Dosa, said sources close to ANI.

Rotis will be made out of ragi and Jawar and will be served to the members of Parliament to promote Millet eating Culture, added the sources. Other food items include Bajra and Jowar Khichdi and Bajra Kheer.

On the initiative of PM Modi, the United Nations has declared the year 2023 as the International Year of Millet (IYOM).

The government of India notified Millet as a nutritious -cereal in April 2018 and millet has also been included in the

Poshan Mission campaign.

Under the National Food Security Mission (NFSM), a nutritious cereal component for Millet is being implemented in 212 districts of 14 States.

Asia and Africa are the primary production and consumption centres of Millet crops. India, Niger, Sudan and Nigeria are the primary producer of millet.

Jowar and Proso Millets (Common Millet) are the most cultivated millets in the 112 and 35 countries respectively. Sorghum and pearl millet cover more than 90 per cent area and production. The remaining production comes from Ragi (Finger Millets), Cheena (Proso Millets), Foxtail Millets (Kangni) and other non-segregated millets.

India is the major production country of Millet in which Kangni, Kutki or small millet, Kodon, Gangora or Barnyard, china and Brown top are included with Jowar, Bajra, Ragi and small millets. Most of the states in India grow one or more millet crop species. During the last 5 years, our country produced more than 13.71 to 18 million tonnes of millet with the highest production in 2020-21.

## BSF veteran of 1971 Indo-Pak war dies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BSF veteran of the 1971 India-Pakistan war Bhairon Singh Rathore, whose bravery at Rajasthan's Longewala post was portrayed by actor Suniel Shetty in the Bollywood movie 'Border', died in a Jodhpur hospital on Monday. The war hero was 81. During the 1971 war, Rathore was deployed at the Longewala post in the Thar desert of Jaisalmer, commanding a small BSF unit of six to seven personnel that was accompanied by a 120 men company of the Army's 23 Punjab regiment. It was the bravery of these men that decimated an assaulting Pakistani brigade and tank regiment at this location on December 5, 1971.

He received the Sena Medal in 1972 for his gallant action. Posted with the 14th BSF battalion during the war, Rathore retired from service as a Naik in 1987.



BSF records about the Longewala battle state, "When one of the 23 Punjab boys was killed, Lance Naik Bhairon Singh took his light machine gun and inflicted heavy casualties on the advancing enemy."

"It was only their courage and determination to do or die that won the day and Lance Naik Bhairon Singh became a great inspiration to his other comrades on the post," according to the official records.

"The braveheart took his last breath at AIIMS, Jodhpur, today. DG BSF and all ranks condole the passing of Naik (retd) Bhairon Singh, Sena Medal, the hero of the

Longewala battle during the 1971 war. BSF salutes his intrepid bravery, courage and dedication towards his duty," the BSF said in a tweet.

A BSF spokesperson said Bhairon Singh Rathore's body has been taken to a training centre of the force in Jodhpur where a wreath laying ceremony will be held on Tuesday after which the cremation will be conducted in his village with full military honours.

The Rathore family lives in Solankiatla village, about 100 km from Jodhpur.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his ministerial colleagues expressed grief over the war hero's demise.

In his tweet, Modi said, "Naik (retd) Bhairon Singh Ji will be remembered for his service to our nation. He showed great courage at a crucial point in our nation's history. Saddened by his passing away. My thoughts are with his family in this hour of sadness. Om Shanti,"

## Loans worth ₹10.09 lakh cr written off in 5 years: FM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Scheduled commercial banks have written off loans amounting to over Rs 10.09 lakh crore in the last five financial years and the process of recovery of dues from the borrowers continues, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman informed the Lok Sabha on Monday. Sitharaman said recovery in NPA (non performing asset) accounts, including written-off loans, was an on-going process.

According to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, public sector banks have recovered Rs 4,80,111 crore, including Rs 1,03,045 crore from written-off loans, during the last five financial years, she said. "As per inputs received from the RBI, scheduled commercial banks have written off an amount of Rs 10,09,511 crore during the last five financial years," Sitharaman said during Question Hour.

### IN-BRIEF

**GOVT GIVES NOD TO 163 PROPOSALS FOR ARMED FORCES**  
New Delhi: The government on Monday said in the Rajya Sabha it has accorded approval to 163 proposals worth Rs 2,46,989 crore under various categories of capital procurement for the armed forces in the last three years. On India's defence exports, MoS Defence Ajay Bhatt said it was Rs 12,815 crore in 2021-22, Rs 8,435 crore in 2020-21, Rs 9,116 crore in 2019-20 and Rs 10,746 crore in 2018-19. Defence exports this year, till date, has been estimated at Rs 6,058 crore, he added.

**CBI ARRESTS GST SUPERINTENDENT FOR DEMANDING BRIBE**  
New Delhi: The CBI has arrested a superintendent of GST in Mumbai for allegedly demanding a bribe of Rs 10 lakh from a businessman, officials said Monday. The agency acted on a complaint from scrap trader Zakir Hussain Shah in Mumbai who had alleged that GST Superintendent B Someshwar Rao had demanded Rs 20 lakh from him to settle a liability of Rs 1.25 crore, they said.

**LS PASSES BILL FOR REPRESSION OF PIRACY IN HIGH SEAS**  
New Delhi: The Lok Sabha on Monday passed a Bill to make special provisions for the repression of piracy on high seas with the government adding life imprisonment along with the provision of death penalty for those convicted of the crime. Various amendments moved by opposition members were negated and the bill was passed by a voice vote.

**LAW SHOULDN'T BE USED TO HARASS ACCUSED: SC**  
New Delhi: The law must not be used as a tool to harass the accused and courts must always ensure that frivolous cases do not "pervert" its sacrosanct nature, the Supreme Court has said. The apex court, which quashed the criminal proceedings pending at a Chennai court against two people, said law is meant to exist as a shield to protect the innocent rather than being used as a sword to threaten them.

**SC DIRECTS CENTER TO FOLLOW RESERVATION POLICY**  
New Delhi: The Supreme Court has directed the Centre to follow the reservation policy for admission in research degree programmes and recruitment of faculty members at IITs as provided under the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019.





# Opening shop of love in market of hate via Bharat Jodo Yatra: Rahul

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday said he was “opening a shop of love in the market of hate” through the Bharat Jodo Yatra and urged BJP leaders questioning his pan India foot march to do the same.

Addressing a rally at Alwar in Rajasthan amidst his ongoing padyatra, Rahul also asked each minister in the Rajasthan Cabinet to undertake a yatra once a month across the desert state to reach out to the common people and redress their grievances. He accused the BJP leaders of abusing him and spreading hatred.

He hit out at BJP leaders for criticising the use of English in schools, saying that children of Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP chief ministers, MPs and MLAs study in English medium schools while they talk against the use of English language. “The Yatra has been



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with party president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot at a public meeting during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Alwar on Monday

going on for over 100 days, I find friends on the road, some of them standing atop BJP offices. First I wave but they don't respond as they are not allowed to do so. They want to respond but it is not allowed, then some of them wave back when I do it again.

“And then I do this,” Rahul Gandhi said and gestures blow-

ing kisses while addressing a major rally in the presence of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Sachin Pilot and other state leaders.

“I don't hate them (BJP leaders), I fight against their ideology but I like them, I like all beings. Some of them (BJP) gesture and ask me what I am

doing, my answer is: ‘Nafrat ke bazaar mein mohabbat ki dukaan khol raha hoon (Opening a shop of love in the market of hate),’ he said.

Rahul Gandhi said the BJP leaders can hate him or abuse him as they wish but he does not mind it. “Your ‘bazaar is of nafrat’ (the market is of hatred), but my shop is of love,” he stressed.

He said this was not just his thinking but that of the entire Congress organisation and great leaders of the country such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, BR Ambedkar, and Abul Kalam Azad. “All of them had opened a shop of love in the market of hatred,” he added.

“This is what we do. So this is my answer to the people of the BJP. Come, you also start opening a shop of love in the market of hatred. You will have to do it because our religion, our country is one of love and not of hate,” he added.

# ‘Modi Govt has brought peace, political stability in North-East’

## Investors now ready to come to neglected N-E States, says GK Reddy

**PNS ■** NEW DELHI

Stating that the Modi Government has brought peace and political stability in the North-East and people are ready to invest in the region Union Minister G Kishan Reddy on Monday said in Lok Sabha that Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself has visited the region 50 times which he said was neglected by the previous regimes .

DMK's T R Baalu alleged that ministers are not giving proper replies on policies and making political statements while another opposition member said the Government was only giving lip sympathy to the North East development.

In response to supplementaries during the Question Hour in the Lok Sabha, the minister for development of north eastern region also said “it is not lip sympathy and we are practically doing development and now, telling the House about it”. He said the Prime Minister himself has visited the region for 50 times and alleged that previous regimes had neglected the region.



Reddy said in the eight years since the Modi Government came to power, there is peace and political stability in the northeast, and people are ready to make investments there. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman also briefly intervened to say that the initiatives taken up by her ministry in response to certain remarks by an Opposition member.

“Obviously, some words can raise a bit of worry. Certainly no lip service.... I want to give one example which pertains to the finance ministry.

“Before the last budget, I held consultations with all the northeast chief ministers and finance ministers. Based on their

suggestions...For livelihoods, a special programme (was launched) from the 2022 budget.... A separate allocation has been made and (that is) going through the North Eastern Council,” she said.

To another query, Reddy said with respect to employment, the migration of youngsters from the northeast is less compared to states such as Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

In response to a question seeking details of the “large-scale” migration of youngsters from the northeastern states over the last three years in search of jobs and the states to which such migration is high, the minister said the government has no data in this regard for the said period.

“As per the Census 2011, there are 1,52,05,214 migrants in the North East Region (NER) states. Of these, 93.8 per cent (1,42,62,490) are intra-state migrants and only 6.2 per cent (9,44,050) are inter-state migrants.

“The all-India figure for inter-state migration is 11.9 per cent and it is 88.1 per cent for intra-state migration. The top three states to which inter-state migration from the NER states occurs are West Bengal (39.56 per cent), Delhi (7.66 per cent) and Maharashtra (7.4 per cent),” he said.

# ED gets court nod to bring Mondal to Delhi for questioning

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■**  
KOLKATA

In a big blow to the ruling Trinamool Congress, ahead of next year's panchayat elections, a Delhi court on Monday granted the Enforcement Directorate permission to take senior Trinamool Congress leader and strongman Anubrata Mondal to Delhi for interrogations.

The order with a production warrant was passed by

Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court which rejected the defendant's plea that the Delhi court had no jurisdiction over the matter.

The court which had earlier granted a similar order against SaigalHussein a former personal security officer of Mondal who has sincebeen lodged in Tihar Jail relied on the earlier order and allowed theED petition.

The transfer of Mondal -- considered the uncrowned king of Birbhumand neighbouring districts of Burdwan

and Murshidabad --- to Delhicould be a big blow to the ruling Trinamool Congress ahead of the nextyear's panchayat elections.

The Central Bureau of Investigation had arrested Mondal on August 11for his alleged involvement in trans-border cow smuggling. Subsequentlythe ED entered the scene and interrogated him in Asansol penitentiarywhere he has currently been lodged.

Later the ED petitioned the Delhi Court seeking a

transfer of Mondalto a Delhi prison on grounds that the accused was not cooperating during interrogation. Soon after the Delhi court's order senior Bengal minister Firhad Haksaid that his party had all the faith in judiciary.

“I had said that Anubrata Mondal is a tiger who has been caged for now... I still am of the same opinion that he is indeed a tiger and will bereleased one day as we have full faith in judiciary ... there is God inthe heavens and there

is judiciary on earth on whom we have fullfaith,” Hakim said.

The minister had earlier in a meeting said that “as the tiger was inthe cage the foxes have started howling ... but when he comes out theywill once again run away in fright.”A controversial leader known for his notoriety Mondal has beencredited with TMC's rise in more than one districts including Birbhumfrom where he hails.

In fact the Birbhum leader who is also the TMC's nation-

al executivemember is known to have been controlling the party affairs from insidethe Asansol jail, sources say.

“He has been operating like a don from inside the jail in controllingthe affairs of the party ... opposition workers were still beingthreatened and the police were still being manipulated ... But now afterhe is taken to Delhi all the goons of TMC in Birbhum will becomefatherless before the panchayat elections,” BJP State president Sukanta Majumdar said.

# Fountain pen banned in Maha House after ink attack on Min

**T N RAGHUNATHA ■** MUMBAI

As a precautionary measure undertaken on the heels of an ink attack on State Higher and Technical Education Minister Chandrakant Patil near Pune, the Maharashtra Legislature secretariat on Monday banned the legislators, journalists and others from carrying “fountain ink pens” inside the Vidhan Bhavan premises in Nagpur.

On the first day of the winter session of the State Legislature, the security personnel checked the legislators and other visitors at the entrance if they were carrying “fountain ink pens” to ensure that such writing tools were not taken inside the Vidhan Bhavan premises. Informed official sources confirmed that the Legislature secretariat had imposed a ban on the people carrying “fountain ink pens” inside the Vidhan Bhavan premises to prevent a possible fresh “ink attack” on Chandrakant Patil or any other minister during the ongoing winter session of the State Legislature.

It may be recalled that on December 10, Patil faced a backlash over his controversial statements on Dr Balasaheb Ambedkar and Mahatma Phule, as a protester hurled ink on his face in Pune's satellite town

of Chinchwad.

A day after the minister stirred up a hornet's nest through his remark that late Ambedkar and Phule “begged” money from people to set up schools, scores of students owing allegiance to the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) tried to block the convoy of his cars and staged a black flag demonstration while he was on his way to attend a community function.

The ink attack on Patil came little later when he came out of a party worker's residence from where he headed for a community function organised in memory of Swami Mahasadhu Morya.

Soon after he hurled ink on the minister's face, the police detained him. The identity of the person who indulged in the ink attack on the minister was not immediately known.

The incident had led to suspension of several police personnel, while the police had registered an offence against two persons, including a local journalist for his news coverage of the episode. The two persons had been detained and were released later.

Patil had triggered a controversy for his controversial remark made at a university programme, where he had said: “Those who set up schools like Ambedkar, Phule did not depend on government aid.



Workers prepare a Santa Claus statue ahead of the Christmas celebrations in Kolkata

## Fire & Emergency Services Act, 2022 enforced in UP

**PNS ■** LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Fire and Emergency Services Act, 2022 has been enforced by the State Government as per the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

This Act will help in strengthening the measures of fire and emergency services.

Giving this information here on Monday evening, Principal Secretary (Home) Sanjay Prasad said the state government had accepted the implementation of the provisions of the Model Fire and Emergency Service Bill, 2019 circulated by the Government of India in Uttar Pradesh, under the ‘Uttar Pradesh Fire and Emergency Services Act, 2022.’

It is known that in order to bring uniformity in the Fire Service Act across India, the Model Fire Service Bill, 1958 and the amended Model Fire and Emergency Service Bill, 2019 have been circulated by the Government of India for adoption by the State Governments.

**BSES**

**BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi**

**TENDER NOTICE**

Date: 19.12.2022

Sealed tenders are invited for following jobs from all the bidders.

NIT No.	Brief Item Description	Due Date & Time of Submission
CMC/BR/22-23/ RB/CR/ AS/1082	REGISTRATION/ REVALIDATION OF INSURANCE BROKER FOR PROVIDING SERVICES RELATED TO INSURANCE IN BRPL	09.01.2023 12:00 HRS

Cost of each Tender Document : Rs 1180/- (Inclusive GST )

For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submition of tender documents etc. please visit our website [www.bsesdelhi.com](http://www.bsesdelhi.com).

Head (Contracts & Materials)

Regd. Off. : BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019 | Corporate Identification No.: U40109DL2001PLC111527  
Telephone No. : +91 11 4920 7235 | Website : [www.bsesdelhi.com](http://www.bsesdelhi.com)

**ICICI Bank**

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh. Delhi-110005

**PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET**

[See proviso to rule 8(6)]

**Notice for sale of immovable assets**

This E-auction Sale notice for sale of Immovable assets is being issued by ICICI Bank Ltd. (on underlying pool assigned to ICICI Bank by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd.) in relation to the enforcement of security in respect of a housing loan facility granted pursuant to a loan agreement entered into between DHFL and the following borrower(s) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price/ Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of E-Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Mr. Durga Prasad Tiwari (Borrower), Mrs. Shobha Devi (Co-borrower) QZND00005016405	Property No. C-8A, 2nd Floor Rear Side Without Roof Right, Block- C, Khasra No. 333, Village Bindapur, Subhash Park, Uttam Nagar, Delhi- 110059. Area: 360 Sq.Ft.	Rs. 19,22,414/- as on December 16, 2022	Rs. 13,12,000/- Rs.1,31,200/-	December 30, 2022, From 12:00 Noon to 02:00 PM	January 11, 2023, From 11:00 AM Onwards

The online auction will take place on the website of e-auction agency **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited (URL Link-<https://disposalhub.com>)**. The Mortgagors/ noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **January 10, 2023 before 5:00 pm** failing which, this secured asset will be sold as per schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) to **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005** on or before **January 10, 2023 before 5:00 pm** and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before **January 10, 2023 before 5:00 pm** along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005** on or before **January 10, 2023 before 5:00 pm**, Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank in favour of "**ICICI Bank Limited**" payable at **Delhi**.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the **E-auction** or submission of tenders, kindly contact **ICICI Bank Limited on 8126013708/7304914763**. Please note that Marketing agencies **1. M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited., 2. Augeo Assets Management Private Limited**, have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property. The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit [www.icicibank.com/n4p4s](http://www.icicibank.com/n4p4s)

**Date : December 20, 2022**  
**Place : Delhi/ NCR**

**Authorized Officer**  
**ICICI Bank Limited**

## Parl panel questions delay in compensation for sewer cleaning deaths

**ARCHANA JYOTI ■** NEW DELHI

A Parliamentary panel has wrapped the Centre for failing to ensure compensation to the families of 104 persons who died while cleaning sewer/septic tanks way in the past few years ago across the States. It also expressed its dismay that despite the invention of mechanized cleaning deaths of persons, while cleaning of sewer and septic tanks, continues even today.

“The family of a bread-earner needs to be instantly compensated in case of death. However, there appears to be non-seriousness on the part of the Union Ministry of Social

Justice and Empowerment's Department of Social Justice and Empowerment Department as well as State Governments.

“The Committee desires that the Department should take suitable measures so that the family of the deceased does not have to suffer and they are compensated as per the norms. The Committee would also like that pending 104 cases for compensation are immediately settled,” the panel said in its report tabled in Parliament recently.

The panel led by Lok Sabha MP Rama Devi also said that it was agast to know that some of the States such as

Maharashtra has declined to pay compensation due to scarcity of funds.

It also recommended establishing a system to examine the cause of death so that the persons engaging them are also held responsible and penalty fixed on them for violating the laid down norms.

In its reply, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment said, “It has been regularly pursuing with the concerned State Governments the matter of early payment of compensation in remaining cases. The details of such cases have also been shared with the National Commission for Safai

Karamcharis to take up each such pending case with the concerned State/District Magistrate/Commissioner of Municipality for payment of full amount of compensation to the dependents.”

In the case of Maharashtra, the panel said that it has taken up the matter with the Principal Secretary, Urban Development Department, Maharashtra Government as well as the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Citing reports from various State Governments and municipalities, the panel noted that the FIRs have been lodged in 537 cases out of 973 death cases

against “the persons prima facie responsible for employing persons for hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks and violating the norms.”

The panel said that intervention for promotion of mechanized cleaning is to be done through the ongoing Scheme ‘Swachta Udyami Yojana’ implemented by National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation. Also, there are various schemes such as skill development programmes, loans at concessional rates, credit linked upfront Capital subsidy, implemented by the Department. In order to stop manual scavenging.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Beautiful game

World Cup final appeared to be an ordinary match but ended as a rollercoaster keeping the viewers on edge

For the first 80 minutes, the 2022 FIFA World Cup final looked almost like a one-sided match. Only Argentina showed the combative spirit, while the defending champions, France, showed few sparks. Argentina was attacking, while France was mostly defending the goal post—not very successfully, as the Argentinians were able to score two goals. The two-goal difference seemed insurmountable in 10 more minutes. In a short while, the South American nation would lift the cup after 36 years. Only a miracle could bring France back in the game. But then in football, as in life and politics, miracles do happen. France was awarded a penalty kick, which their star campaigner Kylian Mbappé made no mistake in converting into a goal. There was a ray of hope. Within a couple of minutes, it grew into a beam of light when Mbappé struck again, shooting an equaliser. The beam almost blinded the South Americans for some time, as the game went into the extra time. The Messi magic worked in the extra time, as Argentina captain scored another goal; again, it looked like the winning feat, but Mbappé had other ideas; he scored another equaliser. In the penalty shootouts, Mbappé began successfully. A commentator said that it was his day of no errors. However, two other French players failed to score. By any reckoning, the World Cup final was a thriller, a rollercoaster affair that kept the spectators and millions of TV viewers on edge. What looked like an ordinary football match for most part of it ended up as an unforgettable contest, not just for the players but also the rest of the world.

Football is often called the beautiful game, perhaps because it resembles life so much. Perhaps this is the reason that the French literary giant and Nobel Laureate Albert Camus said, “Everything I know about morality and the obligations of men, I owe it to football.” In life, there are times when everything seems settled—and then something happens, for better or worse, and everything changes. In India, where cricket reigns, football becomes popular every four years when the world cup is held. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also shown interest in the game. He congratulated Lionel Messi and his team for the victory. Earlier in the day, at a gathering in Meghalaya, promised an event like the FIFA World Cup in India. That will be very good, not just for the game which is neglected in the country but also for the economy, for sports is a big business which creates wealth, generates employment, spreads prosperity, and contributes to the public exchequer. The Indian Premier League for cricket and other sporting tournaments are prime examples of this. However, there are certain preconditions, the most important of them being the sprightliness of sports bodies. The All India Football Federation is known for its laidback attitude, though it has been reported that it is being revamped with a roadmap for the next 25 years. Hopefully, India will play in the world cup sooner than that.

### PICTALK



Artists give final touches to Mural to mark the 75 years of friendship between India and Netherlands, in New Delhi

PTI

## All time classics

The great fiction come from life learnings and writer’s honesty and that makes them transcend time

“Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” This is how Leo Tolstoy began his novel Anna Karenina, an all-time masterpiece. Nearly 150 years after the book hit the shelves, this opening sentence and characters like Anna Karenina, the heroine and Count Vronsky, her lover and other protagonists remain fresh in the minds of readers like a newly bloomed flower. The same is the case with novels like Gone With the Wind (authored by Margaret Mitchell in 1956), And Quiet Flows the Don (Mikhail Sholokhov, 1942), Doctor Zhivago authored by Boris Pasternak, the list is endless. How come these works got the aura of eternal classics and connoisseurs of literature rate them as benchmarks? Each of these books stand out for their uniqueness and distinct style of presentation. Reading these books took us to the era and world in which these stories were set. The authors, all known for their silent verbosity endeared themselves to the readers because of their simplicity and intellectual honesty. India, too had great writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (Ananda Math and Vishabriksha) which earned encomiums from the famous Punch magazine, Bibhuthubhushan Bandopadhyaya, whose Ichamathi alone is capable of setting Ganga on flames and Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, author of Devadas, a work which does not require any introduction.

They were all titans who lived and wrote in a period of renaissance sans satellite television channels or glossy magazines which take pleasure in promoting mediocre writers. Reading “Nights of Plague”, a novel authored by Orhan Pamuk, a Nobel laureate, took one back to the golden days of literature. The work tells the early 20th century story of a small island by name Mingheria, the 29th state of the ailing Ottoman Empire, and how a catastrophe in the form of plague hit the island. Pamukh has resorted to writing either a historical novel or history written in the form of a novel. No one will question the authenticity of Murad V, the 33rd sultan and his daughter Hatice Sultan as they were real life characters. Keshav Dev, the Malayalam literary giant and a rebel had said that an author should learn from life’s experiences to write a novel or story. Pamukh learnt a lot from the 2019-2021 Covid pandemic and here is his magnum opus. Last heard, travel agencies were getting queries about flights to Mingheria. If one has not read “Nights of Plague”, no need to tell who is the loser!

# Taking on the dragon-1

The clashes of Indian and Chinese soldiers in Tawang should set off alarm bells. The Chinese seem to be working a plan which could have geopolitical ramifications

The incident of December 9 clash between Indian and Chinese troops in the disputed section of the Line of Control ( LAC) at Yangste 35 Km NorthEast of Tawang in the Western part of Arunachal Pradesh has once again brought to the fore the tense lull between the armies of the two countries. More than 300 soldiers of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) confronted the Indian troops who contested the movement “in a firm and resolute manner” close to the LAC in the Tawang sector leading to minor injuries to few personnel from both sides. The silver lining is that after the incident both sides, immediately, disengaged from the area and area commanders of both the armies held a flag meeting to discuss the issue in accordance with the protocol of the army restoring peace and tranquility. Earlier, in 2021, India witnessed another major face-off in the same Yangste area of Tawang when the Chinese attempted to gain access to the 17,000- foot high peak that provides a commanding view of both sides of the LAC, but the Indian troops confronted them. India is in firm control of the top and its access routes from its side. Tawang is one of the most important districts of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh having geostrategic significance to India. It is considered India’s Achilles’ heel. China claims it as South Tibet. Hence, this dispute of territorial demarcation has sparked off geopolitical ramifications for India and China. However, in India, the Monpas, the original inhabitants explicitly state that they share the border with Tibet, not China.

The recent incident brought back to me the pleasant memories of my last month visit to Tawang after a gap of 12 years. My last visit to Tawang in 2012 was an arduous journey of about 15-hour from Tezpur. Most of the road was loose tarmac and gravel giving way to mud in many places. This time, it was an enjoyable, scenic 12-hour jour-



ney on a well maintained metalled road, crossing Bomdilla Pass 2,438 meters (8,000 feet), peaking at Sela Pass 4,176 metres (13,700 feet), Jaswant Garh, Jang and, finally, Tawang. The beautiful town of Tawang is situated 448 Km North-West of state capital Itanagar at an elevation of 3,048 meters (10,000 ft.). It lies to the North of the Tawang Chu river valley, roughly 16 km south of the Line of Actual Control with China. Once upon a time, the town served as the district headquarters of West Kameng district. In 1989, the present day Tawang district to the North of Sela Pass was split off as a separate district and is inhabited by Monpa people. It is famous for the world famous Tawang monastery which was founded by the Merak Lama Lodre Gyasto way back in 1681 in accordance with the wishes of the 5th Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso. It has an interesting legend surrounding its name. ‘TA’ means ‘Horse’ and ‘Wang’ means ‘Chosen’. So, the word ‘Tawang’ means ‘Chosen by Horse’. As popular legend goes, the Monastery is



CONSIDERING ITS CULTURAL AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE, CHINA LAYS ITS CLAIM ON TAWANG. TRACING THE HISTORY OF TAWANG, IT WAS HISTORICALLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF TIBET

believed to have been chosen by a horse owned by Mera Lama Lodre Gyatso. The sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso, was born in Tawang.

Considering its cultural and political significance, China lays its claim on Tawang. Tracing the history of Tawang, it was historically under the control of Tibet and the Tawang region is referred to as ‘Monyul’ inhabited by the ‘Monpa Tribe’ who migrated from Central and South Eastern parts of Tibet many centuries ago. The source of literature reviews on Monyul is rich in the Tibetan historical catalogues and Tibetan Buddhist texts. Monyul is known as the land of the moon, the ‘Lower Land’ in Tibetan terminology. It was also referred to as Lho Mon in many Tibetan literature. Lho means South in Tibetan and Mon refers to the inhabitants of the region. Before emerging as separate geopolitical entities such as the kingdom of Sikkim and Bhutan, Tibet referred to the entire South landmass as Lho Mon. The physical geography of Monyul was outlined by Bom-La in the North which delimited Tsona and the

Indian plains of Assam as the Southern border. It is believed that it took around 15 days of horse riding to cover the length of the region and two or three days to ride over the breadth. In the mid- 16th century, Tibetans measured the distance of physical geography by horse ride because there was no scientific technology to survey the geographical location of the region’s size and shape. Monyul was very rich in natural resources such as minerals, forests and water. There are five major rivers – Ni Shang Chu, Pang Ma Chu, Tawang Chu, Pang Nang Chu and Rong Nang Chu which still serve as a line for millions of people in the Assam plains. It was rich in flora and fauna and its inhabitants settled along with river banks for cultivation and other means of livelihood.

(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman, Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. The views expressed are personal. This is the first part of two part series on Indo Chinese tussle; to be continued)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### PAK SPITTING VENOM

Sir — Pakistan Foreign Minister’s uncivilised outburst seems to be a result of Pakistan’s increasing inability to use terrorists and their proxies. Pakistan failed to satisfy its people with a positive approach and not turn into action abusing India. This approach failed to get a nod from the International arena but won many hearts for the Indian Prime Minister with vociferous support. Moreover, Pakistan Foreign Minister’s uncivilised outburst seems to be a result of Pakistan’s increasing inability to use terrorists and their proxies.

India lashed out at Pakistan for what it termed as an “uncivilised outburst” by Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stating that cities across the world “bear the scars” of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism and Bilwal is trying to stitch such wounds and scars with his hatred comments on India. But the world know Pakistan paves way for terrorism at all levels and never care for the development of their country and the people. World know that the country Pakistan is the epi-centre of terrorism and trying to hide from the eyes of the world leaders won’t be so easy.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

### BIHAR LIQUOR TRAGEDY

Sir — Liquor ban has been in force in Bihar for six and a half years. Here making, selling and drinking alcohol comes under the category of crime. Warnings are also written on liquor bottles that it is injurious to health. Despite this, a large number of people are not desisting from producing liquor. At the same time, many people bring it from outside and sell it. So far more than 70 people have died in Saran. Those who take alcohol from such people and drink, they do not know what will happen to the family after their death. There are about 274 such families in 15 districts, whose heads lost their lives due to drinking alcohol and their families became

### Messi bids adieu in style



In a pulsating suspense filled final match, Lionel Messi’s Argentina maintained steely nerves to win its 3rd FIFA World cup (at Doha, Qatar) roaring in the penalty shootout (4-2) versus France. First half belonged to Argentina when it scored 2 goals in a hurry

(as Urgent-ina). The match became alive when 2-0 was turned to 2-2 by France, with a comeback in the second half. Then it became 3-3, thanks to (French) Mbape’s hatrick. That went in vain, as the penalty session went in Argentina’s favour (4-2).

So, Messi bids adieu to the FIFA World Cup in style and victory celebration. However, French champ Mbappe won the golden boot with 8 goals in this tournament ( FIFA World Cup-2022). Messi has 7 goals. Earlier, only one to have scored a hatrick in the final of FIFA World Cup was Geoff Hurst (of Great Britain, versus Germany in 1966). Mbape’s is the second hat trick of this FIFA tournament of 2022, after Ramos’ (of Portugal).

Madhu Nivriti PS | Secunderabad

orphans. In many families, the education of the children has been missed, while some have also faced the crisis of livelihood.

Poisonous liquor has destroyed the lives of people and many people are living in a financial crisis. The way the Nitish Kumar government seems adamant about its policy of prohibition, it is clear that it is not ready to understand these basic things. Deaths due to spurious liquor in Chhapra cannot be brushed aside by saying that the one who drinks liquor will surely die. This kind of statement is like sprinkling salt on the wounds of the victims. It would happen that the Bihar govt should reconsider prohibition.

Sadan Jee | Patna

### POLITICAL TURMOIL IN BANGLADESH

Sir — Mankind’s quest for clean and sustainable energy reached yet another milestone when the U.S National Ignition Facility in California in a recent experiment was able to generate more energy from a nuclear fusion reactor than that was put into it. Fusion is clean with zero emissions and does not produce radioactive products, it can be put to good use. The

scientists and advocates of nuclear fusion are looking forward to creating a working fusion reactor akin to our own sun with limitless energy that can meet the demand for energy for millions of years. While this ambitious plan will take some extraordinary research, innovations and tremendous hard work for years to materialise in the future, this successful experiment can serve as a beginning in this direction. Encouraging results at the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) in France where Indian stakes are also involved is sure to attract more investments in fusion research and development. Its commercialization would require bigger advances in laser efficiency, scaling up the gold pellets in size meaningfully. But its commercial usage still looks to be in the distant future. However, stellar advances by N.I.F. And the encouraging work at I.T.E.R will surely spark more research.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

## SOUND BITE

The sentiments of the Muslim community have been hurt by this film. We will not allow this film to be released, not just in Madhya Pradesh but across the country.

**Madhya Pradesh Ulema Board’s president**  
— Syed Anas Ali

Russia has enough missiles to carry out yet more heavy strikes against Ukraine.

**Ukraine President**  
— Volodymyr Zelensky

Sharks are somehow mad at me for the feeding frenzy of crazy sport fishermen which happened after 1975, which I truly, and to this day, regret.

**Filmmaker**  
— Steven Spielberg

I think what he (David warner) should be doing is being as realistic and looking to the future as he can.

Like I said before, he deserves the chance to finish the way he wants to finish.

**Australian coach**  
— Ricky Ponting

Centre, state governments should focus on efforts to widen GST base.

**Finance Minister**  
— Nirmala Sitharaman


Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)



FIRST COLUMN

INDIAN HEALTHCARE COMES OF AGE

Our healthcare is evolving with improved accessibility to modern technology



RAJIB BANERJEE

Digital influence and technological intervention are breaking barriers in the Indian healthcare industry, leading to a dynamic transformation. While the telemedicine sector witnessed a 30 per cent spike during the pandemic, the online consultation market is projected to grow at 72 per cent CAGR to reach over 800 million dollars by FY2024, as per the report by Praxis Global Alliance.

Artificial intelligence is geared up to dominate the Indian healthcare industry by increasing the market value from \$1.1 billion to \$5 billion at a 39 per cent CAGR. Tech trends like nanomedicine, virtual and augmented reality and robot-assisted surgery are also acquiring large space in the Indian healthcare industry.

While adopting disruptive technologies, the Indian healthcare industry is evolving from improved accessibility and affordability to quality of life in the rural areas, as well, through technological advancements. In India, the doctor-patient ratio is 1:1456 compared to the standard ratio of 1:1000 as per the WHO. Since the doctor-patient ratio in India lacks the standard WHO ratio, digital healthcare becomes more imperative in remote rural areas where doctors can reach via technology.

Artificial intelligence is the game changer in the global healthcare industry. Currently, the global market of AI stands at \$15 billion and is estimated to expand at a CAGR of 37 per cent by 2030. The high-focus areas of AI in Indian healthcare are triaging, detection and diagnostics. AI plays a vital role in identifying the underlying causes of diseases and managing their treatment plans. The government of India is also proactively boosting several initiatives, policies and schemes like National eHealth Authority (2015), the Biotechnology Ignition Grant Scheme (2012, Health Data Privacy & Security Act (2016).



A few decades back, consulting doctors via video conference must have looked like a far-off dream. Virtual healthcare has become the potential tech health segment in India and is targeting to reach \$5.4 billion at a CAGR of 31 per cent.

Nanomedicine is another emerging tech-enabled trend that uses nanotechnology for highly-specific medical interventions for the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of diseases effectively. The global nanomedicine market size is expected to grow at a CAGR of 9.2 per cent by 2030.

Nanomedicines refer to a more diminutive and accurate delivery system that allows doctors to deliver chemotherapy directly to targeted tumours instead of poisoning an entire body. They slowly release medicine from a single nanoparticle, reducing the frequency of drug injections. Robot-assisted surgeries are the new-edge technology enabling doctors and specialists to perform delicate procedures and complex surgeries more accurately. The surgical tools consist of a camera and mechanical arms, controlled by a surgeon through a computer system, giving them a high-definition (HD) and magnified view of the surgical site. The advantages of this most commonly used system include enhanced precision, flexibility and control, less pain and blood loss and quicker recovery. Since it is minimally invasive, it results in fewer scars and complications than conventional surgeries. Virtual reality in healthcare caters to a broad spectrum of healthcare services. VR technology provides simulators that help healthcare professionals to practice surgeries and procedures in virtual reality, enhancing the quality of operations in real situations. It is also instrumental in physical and mental health treatments. While immersing in the virtual world lowers pain and anxiety, it also helps tackle traumatic experiences by recreating the situation.

Technology facilitates real-time diagnosis, improves the chances of successful treatments, lowers healthcare costs and reduces hospital stays. The growing potential of technology in healthcare indicates that Indian health infrastructure will be fortified.

*(The author is Founder & CEO MasMedi)*

# Child marriages still plague Marathwada

The social and economic structures are the root cause of vicious cycle that leads to child marriages



Sangeeta from Jeevachi Vaadi village in Beed district in Maharashtra was studying in the eighth standard when her father withdrew her name from the school due to economic constraints. A few years later, just as she was reaching 16, she was married off. Her husband, all of 19, was a seventh-standard dropout, who now lent a helping hand to his parents.

He helped his parents in cutting sugarcanes. Post-marriage, his family had transitioned from two working hands to four. Slowly, they set up their married life. Their parents set up a separate house for them, both inheriting the responsibilities of adult married life at 26 years. To add to their responsibilities, they had a child – this only aggravated their already strained financial responsibilities. On top of it, her husband developed an addiction to alcohol.

For the next six months, their married life carried on, facing new challenges at every turn. When the couple returned to their village from the sugarcane fields, they had exhausted all resources for survival. Sangeeta's husband would then pick up debts – either on interest-basis or as a pre-emptive payment from the contractor for next year's sugarcane cutting season. Most of this debt went into nurturing his alcoholism.

As their collective life dragged on, they had two more children. At the tender age of 20 years, Sangeeta was responsible for three children. She started falling ill quite frequently, as early pregnancies and a hard labouring life took a toll on her health.

While Usha from Vanjarwadi village in the same district had a different story. Her parents had arranged her wedding with a landed farmer when she was in the ninth standard.

Going against her parents' wishes, she complained to her school. Paying heed to her complaint, her teachers complained to the police on her behalf. Her parents were taken into custody, and were left on the condition that they will not get their daughter married.

As a consequence, her parents started harassing her. They starved her for two days. Yet, she was unfazed. She left home and started living in her school. Her teachers agreed to be her guardians, and provided for her financially. They counselled her parents. Finally, her parents agreed to let her continue her education. She scored 74 per cent in 10th and 80 per cent in 12th standard.

She secured an admission for a Diploma in Education and later, a job in a Primary School. Then, she chose to marry a fellow educator. Today, she is 25 years old and is a mother to a child. "Because I was educated, I could stop my child marriage. Today, I can work," she shared.

One can find several such Sangeeta's,



AT THE TENDER AGE OF 20 YEARS, SANGEETA WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THREE CHILDREN. SHE STARTED FALLING ILL QUITE FREQUENTLY, AS EARLY PREGNANCIES AND A HARD LABOURING LIFE TOOK A TOLL ON HER HEALTH

*(The author is a PhD scholar. The article was translated by Rucha Satoor: Charkha Features)*



but finding an Usha is rare. Because securing an education by defying your parents' wishes and getting married out of choice is not a choice for most girls in rural India.

Sangeeta's parents, fighting chronic economic hardships, had to get their daughter married early. To get one's daughter educated and married to a well-off family is an expensive affair. Hence, they married her into a family of sugarcane cutters.

Sangeeta's parents couldn't take into consideration their child's development, when they married her off. Marrying a daughter off rides oneself of her responsibilities – this is a fairly common belief in rural India. But instead of finding freedom, Sangeeta was trapped in captivity – economically, emotionally, physically and socially, and there was no escape.

Even if she worked hard, re-crafting her life was tough. Until she resolved to educate her children, the conditions of her family wouldn't improve, trapping her in an intergenerational cycle of child marriage.

Sangeeta's condition cannot simply be linked with poverty – Marathwada's social constitution and caste norms are also responsible for it. Parents fear their daughters would 'lose their character' by losing virginity before marriage or worse, eloping after falling in love, leading to ostracizing of the family. On the contrary, it's quite acceptable for boys to be married even when they're 30 or 35 years old.

Another reason for early marriage amongst girls in Marathwada

is arid lands. Acute water shortage hinders agricultural and economic growth. If water is made available and seepage lakes are constructed, and families in poverty are provided with economic means, they will be able to educate their children. The children themselves will then be able to make informed decisions about their marriage. This will truly be an end to child marriages.

In addition, social instability, economic scarcity, lack of education, regressive mindsets, the traditional constraints of religion and caste, the socio-economic and physical oppression of sugarcane cutting workers by sugarcane factories and their owners, deficiency of natural resources, drought-prone lands, insufficient rainfall, inaction by political leaders and the shortcomings of state policies are all responsible for child marriage in Marathwada.

On further thought, one might also notice that 54 per cent of the working classes in Marathwada are illiterate, they migrate to western Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat for sugarcane cutting. Children, therefore, spend six months a year in school, and the rest of the six months on sugarcane fields. Consequently, their education is hindered. The cycle of ignorance continues, and so do child marriages.

In the post-COVID world, the emerging data on the number of child marriages in Marathwada throw light on an alarmingly increasing trend. If we want to end child marriage, we have to commit to a few solutions. The larger social canvas needs to discuss and bring

about an awareness of this community's issues consistently. Schools, colleges and other organizations need to implement programmes to end child marriage. For this, it is imperative that the State commits to programmes that can end child marriage.

Media needs to consistently and sensitively report on these issues and the community's development. Implement policies around skill-based education such as agro-businesses, milk businesses, poultry and goat rearing, repairing of electronic instruments, fashion designing, mechanic training and so on that can ensure employment of the youth. The white-collar class needs to oppose and take a stand on this issue. Most importantly, moving beyond just viewing the sugarcane cutter labourers as vote banks, the ruling party needs to make ending child marriage a part of their political agenda during elections, and when in power, needs to implement policies that will end child marriage.

The social and economic structures are the root cause of the vicious cycle that embroils families like Sangeeta's generation after generation. To unravel this circle, we need to work with commitment and assist the government to end child marriage. Several Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in collaboration with the government are working towards addressing this issue. However, there is a need of collective action from all the sectors and assisting the government in formulating comprehensive policies to bring an end to child marriage.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

SCHEDULED CASTE PEOPLE IN BANASKANTHA DISTRICT HAVE 'BETRAYED THE COUNTRY' BY NOT VOTING FOR THE BJP. — GUJARAT BJP LEADER JAGDISH VISHWAKARMA



THE QUESTION TO BE ASKED TO THE TOP LEADERSHIP OF THE BJP IS WHETHER VOTING AGAINST THE BJP IS BETRAYING THE NATION? — CONGRESS MLA JIGNESH MEWANI

# India has to make non-PSU economy responsive

Debts of some large houses have spiraled and RBI refuses to name them though smaller borrowers are named and shamed

The government having fallen short of funds presents fresh demand for Rs 4.4 lakh crore, involving a fresh outgo of a little under Rs 3.3 lakh crore to defray high subsidy costs of fertiliser, food and fuel (FFF). Though prices slump, demand remains low, capex is led by PSUs and private remains laggards.

The Union Budget was for expenditure of Rs 3,944,909 in 2022-23, an increase of 4.6 per cent over the previous year. The total expenditure for 2021-22 has been 8.2 per cent over the budget estimates. The government is apologetic on the fiscal deficit and insists it would remain within the projected limit, 6.4 per cent of GDP.

The Centre has raised rev-



SHIVAJI SARKAR

*(The author is a senior journalist)*

enues of Rs 32,000 crore from dividends from PSUs and Rs 30,000 crore is acquired from disinvestments. Fertiliser gets the biggest chunk of Rs 1.09 lakh crore – Rs 23,000 crore for P&K – phosphatic and potassic and over Rs 8,600 crore for urea. Free Food dole gets additional Rs 60,000 crore for PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana until December but may be extended as 2023 holds elections to nine states. The programme is politically sensitive and may continue longer.

Another sensitive area, rural development gets Rs 45,000 crore with an additional Rs 28,775 crore for MGN-REGA, though Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman says fewer coming for it and Rs 28,775 crore for other

heads.

The petroleum oil marketing companies (OMC) get Rs 25,000 crore for LPG subsidy for the poor, the Ujjwala scheme. Various infra, particularly road and rail, projects get Rs 39.4 lakh crore, largely through debts. The World Bank has cautioned on debt financing of the infrastructure in difficult times, if it does not boost effective demand. The GDP growth has repeatedly been cut to 6.3 per cent by the RBI and 6.8 per cent by the IMF.

In such a situation, increasing the capital expenditure may become elusive. Rightly, Chief Economic Advisor Anantha Nageswaran has called upon the private sector to play a greater role, and ensure that capital cost is

not driven up too much. It is a difficult proposition.

The central PSUs with annual target of Rs 6.62 trillion remains the major spender. It has achieved 43 per cent of the target so far. The RBI in its study on capital expenditure says a total of 361 companies, which did not avail of any financing from the banks/FIs for capex projects, raised an amount of Rs 47,824 crore through ECBs/FCCBs/RDBs and 27 other companies raised Rs 3,410 crore for their capex needs through domestic equity issues under the IPO route.

Overall, investment plans of 791 projects were made during 2021-22 aggregating to Rs 194,548 crore as against 576 projects in 2020-21 with investment intentions of Rs 116,603 crore, which remained comparatively lower than the levels seen since 2016-17.

The investment climate in terms of number of new project announcements remained weak during 2019-20 and deteriorated further in 2020-21 due to covid-19. Subsequently, with resumption of business activities and improved demand sentiments, the new capex project announcements showed some signs of revival.

A Crisil study finds that a full-fledged revival in capital expenditure in the coming fiscal will push overall credit growth to over 15 per cent in 2024. This is not commensurate with demand and buoyant full-fledged capex revival. RBI data shows that as on

October 21, bank credit grew 17.9 per cent year-on-year. Private investments will pick if there are profit possibilities.

The new Indian economy may have patches of problematic developments and the private sector may not rev up the economy. The hurried approach at privatisation hopefully would not become a critical block for the government. Still a large chunk of the public sector remains, the flagbearer of the Indian economy. As their role shrinks, the country could slip into myriad problems. The private sector depends more on public financing and debt mechanisms. It simply means bank loans and huge write offs. Since around 2012, the banks have written off about Rs 20 lakh crore bad corporate

debts. Meanwhile, debts of some large houses have spiraled and RBI refuses to name them though smaller borrowers are named and shamed.

The private players owe NHAI between Rs 31,000 crore and Rs 50,000 crore for highway constructions. Similar defaults in other areas are not unknown. The NHAI also says that not more than one-third of the toll collections reach it. Toll collections are at Rs 40,000 crore, says Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari. It had to cancel a long stretch of road construction owing to failure of high monetisation plans. The country is on an uneven patch and has to ensure how a non-PSU economy remains responsive.







# Jan 6 panel pushes Trump's prosecution in forceful finish

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The House Jan 6 committee is wrapping up its investigation of the violent 2021 US Capitol insurrection, with lawmakers expected to cap one of the most exhaustive and aggressive congressional probes in memory with an extraordinary recommendation: The Justice Department should consider criminal charges against former President Donald Trump.

At a final meeting on Monday, the panel's seven Democrats and two Republicans are poised to recommend criminal charges against Trump and potentially against associates and staff who helped him launch a multifaceted pressure campaign to try to overturn the 2020 election.

While a criminal referral is mostly symbolic, with the Justice Department ultimately deciding whether to prosecute Trump or others, it is a decisive end to a probe that had an almost singular focus from the start.

"I think the president has violated multiple criminal laws and I think you have to be treated like any other American who breaks the law, and that is you have to be prosecuted," Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., a member of the panel, said Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union."

The panel, which will dissolve on Jan. 3 with the new Republican-led House, has conducted more than 1,000 interviews, held 10 well-watched public hearings and collected more than a million documents since it launched in July 2021. As it has gathered the massive trove of evidence, the members have become emboldened in declaring that Trump is to blame for the violent attack on the Capitol by his supporters almost two years ago.



After beating their way past police, injuring many of them, the Jan. 6 rioters stormed the Capitol and interrupted the certification of President Joe Biden's win, echoing Trump's lies about widespread election fraud and sending lawmakers and others running for their lives.

The attack came after weeks of Trump's efforts to overturn his defeat — a campaign that was extensively detailed by the committee in its multiple public hearings. Many of Trump's former aides testified about his unprecedented pressure on states, federal officials and on Vice President Mike Pence to find a way to thwart the popular will.

"This is someone who in multiple ways tried to pressure state officials to find votes that didn't exist, this is someone who tried to interfere with a joint session, even inciting a mob to attack the Capitol," Schiff said. "If that's not criminal, then I don't know what it is."

Members of the committee have said that the referrals for other individuals may also include ethics violations, legal misconduct and campaign finance violations. Lawmakers have suggested in particular that their recommended charges against Trump could include conspiracy to defraud the United States, obstruction of an official proceeding of Congress and insurrection.

On insurrection, Schiff said Sunday that "if you look at Donald Trump's acts and you match them up against the statute, it's a pretty good match." He said that the committee will focus on those individuals — presumably Trump — for whom they believe there is the strongest evidence.

While a so-called criminal referral has no real legal standing, it is a forceful statement by the committee and adds to political pressure already on Attorney General Merrick Garland and special counsel Jack Smith, who is conducting an investigation into Jan. 6 and Trump's actions.

The committee is also expected at the hearing to preview its massive final report, which will include findings, interview transcripts and legislative recommendations. Lawmaker have said that report will be released Monday.

"We obviously want to complete the story for the American people," said Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., another member of the committee. "Everybody has come on a journey with us and we want a satisfactory conclusion, such that people feel that Congress has done its job."

The panel was formed in the summer of 2021 after Senate Republicans blocked the formation of what would have been a bipartisan, independent commission to investigate the insurrection. That opposition spurred the Democratic-controlled House to form a committee of its own.

Biden is expected to discuss the prospect of another campaign with those closest to him when he departs Washington for a Christmas vacation. If he opts for an announcement next year, he would launch a campaign during a time when his approval ratings remain low and inflation is high.

## Biden's bullish 2024 talk does little to tamp down chatter

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden toasted a reelection campaign with his French counterpart. He and the Rev. Al Sharpton talked about the prospect during a photo-op. And, for someone who often meanders through his thoughts, Biden has been notably explicit about his political plans.

"Our intention is to run again," the president told reporters after the November midterms, noting that his family supports another campaign. He said his wife, first lady Jill Biden, has already counselled him not to "walk away" from the "very important" things he's doing on the job.

None of that, however, has silenced a Washington parlour game about whether Biden will follow through with a second presidential campaign. The speculation reflects a persistent, though often privately expressed, scepticism among even some of Biden's allies that the 80-year-old president will ask voters to keep him in the White House until he's 86.

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# N Korea says latest launches tested first spy satellite

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea said Monday it fired a test satellite in an important final-stage test for the development of its first spy satellite, a key military capability coveted by its leader Kim Jong Un along with other high-tech weapons systems.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency also released low-resolution, black-and-white photos showing a space view of the South Korean capital of Incheon, a city just west of Seoul, in an apparent attempt to show the North is pushing to acquire a surveillance tool to monitor its rival.

The rocket carrying the test satellite was launched Sunday to assess the satellite's photography and data transmission systems, KCNA said.

The country's National Aerospace Development Administration called the test results "an important success which has gone through the final gateway process of the launch of reconnaissance satellite." It said it would complete the preparations for its first military reconnaissance satellite by April next year, according to KCNA.

"From the images released, the resolution does not appear to be so impressive for military reconnaissance," Soo Kim, a security analyst at the California-based RAND Corporation, said. "I'd note, however, that this is probably an ongoing development, so we may see more improvements to North Korea's military reconnaissance capabilities over time."



South Korea, Japan and US authorities said Sunday they had detected a pair of ballistic missile launches by North Korea from its northwestern Tongchang-ri area, where the North's satellite launch pad is located. They said the two missiles flew about 500 kilometers (310 miles) at a maximum altitude of 550 kilometers (340 miles) before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

This meant North Korea likely fired two missiles with different types of cameras — one for black-and-white imagery and video and the other for color, given the North's state media said that Sunday's test involved both types of cameras, said Lee Choon Geun, an honorary research fellow at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute.

An analysis of a photo of the launch also showed the missiles were likely a new type of a liquid-fueled weapon that can be used for a military purpose as well as sending a satellite into orbit, Lee said. Geon Ha Gyu, a spokesperson for South Korea's Defense Ministry, told reporters Monday that the South Korean and U.S. Assessments that North Korea fired the two medium-range ballistic missiles remain unchanged. He said South Korean and US intelligence authorities were analyzing further details of the launches but declined to elaborate.

A spy satellite was on a wish list of sophisticated military assets Kim announced during a ruling party meeting early last year, together with multi-warhead missiles, solid-fuelled long-range missiles, underwater-launched nuclear missiles and nuclear-powered submarines. Kim has called for such modern weapons systems and an expanded nuclear arsenal to pressure the United States to abandon its hostile policies on North Korea, an apparent reference to U.S.-led sanctions and the US-South Korean military drills that North Korea views as an invasion rehearsal.

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# Lankan Parliament calls for participation of youth in oversight committees

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan parliament on Monday invited the youth, who are university graduates, to serve in its sectoral oversight committees, amidst growing demand to meet the aspirations of the youth in the crisis-hit island nation.

In newspaper notices published here on Monday, the parliament asked for youth between 18 and 35 years to serve in 17 oversight committees in parliament.

"The chair of a committee may summon five youth representatives each to assist the committees in relation to the inquiries conducted by the committees," the report said.

The Parliament had amended its standing orders to facilitate youth participation in the country's affairs, the notice in the newspapers said.

Since the street protests that



happened in the country earlier this year amidst the ongoing economic crisis, the government vowed to introduce many reforms to meet the aspirations of the youth.

Youth representation at public protests heightened as they clamoured for "system change" meaning a wide range of reforms.

The popular protest movement forced the resignation of

the then president Gotabaya Rajapaksa in July this year.

His successor Ranil Wickremesinghe has brought in several reforms, including the 21st amendment to the Constitution.

Since early February, the country has been plunged into a severe economic crisis, leading to a shortage of essential commodities and culminating in the first-ever sovereign default by the government in mid-April.

epicentre for anti-government protests sweeping Iran in past months.

# Myanmar military accuses opponents of bombing ferry boat

AP ■ BANGKOK

Myanmar's army on Monday accused opponents of the military-imposed government of responsibility for an explosion that injured 17 people on a ferry boat in the country's largest city, Yangon.

A statement by the army's information office blamed the People's Defence Force, the armed wing of Myanmar's banned main pro-democracy movement, for the blast on Sunday, but presented no evidence. No one has claimed responsibility for the explosion.

Myanmar has been engulfed in what some UN experts have characterised as a civil war since the military seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021.

The army is engaged in brutal large-scale counter-insurgency operations in the countryside, while authorities also contend with urban guerrillas in the cities who target people and institutions associated with the ruling military with assassinations and bombings.

An urban guerrilla group named the Yangon District People's Brigade expressed sadness about Sunday's explosion on its Facebook page and said that fighters for democracy would never harm civilians. Such groups have at least a loose affiliation with the People's Defence Force.

The statement issued by the army's Tatmadaw True News Information Team said a homemade bomb exploded at 6.40 pm on Sunday on the state-owned ferry travelling across the Yangon River from Yangon to the suburban township of Dala.

The injured people were taken to Yangon General Hospital. A volunteer rescue worker who helped the victims said they were injured in the lower parts of their bodies and five were in critical condition. He spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of being arrested by the authorities.



The worker and the army both said the explosion took place on the bottom deck of the boat. Photos that were circulated on social media showed bloodstains on the floor of the boat and some mangled bicycles. Photos said to be of victims showed them with leg wounds.

The ferry service is a major mode of public transport linking Yangon with four townships to the south.

The army's 2021 takeover was met with massive resistance which security forces quashed with deadly force, driving the

opponents of military rule to take up arms.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a rights monitoring organisation, says security forces have killed at least 2,604 civilians and arrested 16,557 others since the military takeover.

The military government has denounced the People's Defence Force as "terrorists" and said in the statement on Monday that it has been "arresting and killing monks, government employees and civilians and committing bomb attacks using handmade bombs on public roads, bridges and passenger buses and ferry boats". In May, a civilian was killed and nine others were injured when a bomb exploded at a bus stop in Yangon. The military government and its opponents traded accusations over the blast.



# Singapore Prez wants convicted rapists above 50 to be caned for sexually assaulting daughters

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore's President Halimah Yacob on Monday called for convicted rapists aged 50 years or older not to be spared caning and has expressed dismay at recent cases of girls being raped in their own homes by fathers.

Under Singapore's Penal Code, a convicted rapist can be jailed for up to 20 years and fined or caned. Those above 50 years of age and above cannot be sentenced to caning but can be imprisoned longer in lieu of corporal punishment. Last week, a 54-year-old man was sentenced to jail in the country for molesting his daughter repeatedly from when she was 10 years old, Channel News Asia reported.

In a Facebook post, President Yacob wrote, "Rapists should not be spared the cane just because they are fifty years old. It's ironic that they could escape from the pain caused by caning despite the lifetime of severe trauma and irreparable damage that they cruelly inflicted on their victims which will last a lifetime."

"In some cases, the rapes were committed earlier but reported only after the perpe-

trator reached fifty years old. It's time that we review this law," the post said. "It's our duty to protect our young and we must not fail them," it added.

In September last year, Members of Parliament suggested that the age limit for caning be raised. Parliamentarian Murali Pillai said, "I don't see why Parliament should presume in favour of a repeat sex offender that he is not fit to be caned when he is clearly fit enough to commit such heinous acts."

Law and Home Affairs Minister K Shanmugam said: "There was no reason" to increase the age limit for caning, noting the "significantly lower" number of men over age 50 and arrested for serious offences that attract caning.

In November, a man admitted to trying to rape his four-year-old daughter twice, while another father went on trial for allegedly grooming his daughter over eight years before raping her when she was 12. "I find the recent spate of cases involving rapes of children in their own homes by their male relatives highly disturbing and sickening," the president wrote.

## Ultra attack kills 4 force men in Iran

Cairo: A militant attack killed 4 members of Iran's paramilitary force on Monday in its restive southeast province bordering Pakistan, state media said.

Iran's Sistan and Baluchistan province is home to separatist forces that have long opposed the country's clerical rulers. The region has also turned into an

epicentre for anti-government protests sweeping Iran in past months.

According to IRNA, Iran's Revolutionary Guard led a manhunt for the attackers in the Sistan and Baluchistan province. The militants escaped across the border into Pakistan, it claimed.

**OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM**  
E-32, JUDGE FARM, HALDWANI, DISTT.- NAINITAL (PIN 263139)  
Letter No.: 2690 /Nivida-Anubandh/Ranikhet/412 Date : 17-12-2022

**E-Tender Notice**

- Name of the work:-** Construction of proposed Civil & Pharmacy Blocks At Gen. Vipin Chandra Joshi Government Polytechnic Takula, District-Almora.
- Estimated Cost:-** Rs. 1448.94 Lakh (excluding G.S.T.)
- Period of Completion:-** 12 Months
- Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:-** 20-12-2022 (13.00 hrs)
- Online Bid submission: End date :-** 04-01-2023 (17.00 hrs)
- Date & Time of Technical bid Opening :-** 06-01-2023 (11.00 hrs)
- Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid :-** General Manager (Kumaon), Nirman Wing, Uttarakhand Pey Jal Nigam, Haldwani.
- Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place:-** 26-12-2022 (11.00 hrs) Project Manager Construction Unit, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Ranikhet.
- For further details, details of subsequent Amendment / correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in)

**GENERAL MANAGER**

**OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM**  
E-32, JUDGE FARM, HALDWANI, DISTT.- NAINITAL (PIN 263139)  
Letter No.: 2692 /Nivida-Anubandh/Ranikhet/413 Date : 17-12-2022

**E-Tender Notice**

- Name of the work:-** Construction of proposed for Government Polytechnic Kanda, District-Bageshwar.
- Estimated Cost:-** Rs. 808.04 Lakh (excluding G.S.T.)
- Period of Completion:-** 12 Months
- Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:-** 20-12-2022 (13.00 hrs)
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**GENERAL MANAGER**

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
Sr. DEE-TRS-GZB acting for and on behalf of President of India Invites E-Tender against Tender No. 230-TRS-GZB-2022-23-29. The details are as under:

1. Name of the work:	Repair, Rectification, wiring and Re commissioning of CNC vertical turning lathe of M/s Premiere make and repair of surface wheel lathe of M/s HVT make including re discing of 4 no. axles of WAP7/WAP5 locomotives using above two machines and wheel press of M/s Isgec make
2. Approx. cost of work:	Rs.49,55,853.68
3. Earnest Money to be deposited:	Rs.99,100.00
4. Last Date & Time of Submission of tender bid of tender:	10.01.2023 (11:00 Hrs.)
5. Date & Time of opening of tender document:	10.01.2023 (After 11:00 Hrs.)
6. Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen:	<a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>

Note: (i) The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement System (IREPS) site i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for participating in e-tender system.  
(ii) For all terms and conditions please refer tender document.  
(iii) No manual offers are acceptable.  
(iv) Cost of Tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.

No. 230-TRS-GZB-2022-23-29 Dated: 19.12.2022.

**G20** **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav** 3370/2022

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**  
The Chief Medical Superintendent on behalf of the President of India invites Expression of interest for JHI, ROK & MTC from reputed Labs for undertaking the Pathological & radiological investigations etc. for the Railway beneficiaries at JHI, ROK & MTC Health Units under Divl. Hospital, N. Rly, Delhi from NABL/Non NABL Labs at CGHS rates or in case CGHS rates for a particular investigation is not available then AIMS rate or any other government hospital rate shall be applicable. In case no government rate is available then reasonable rate as per mutual agreement between railway and the center shall be applicable for a period of two years from the date of award of work on monthly payment basis. Centre should mention percentage of discount of rate, if any, on application form. The interested labs should be fully equipped with modern machines. The institute should have valid license from X-ray regulatory authorities & should be registered under PNDD Act. The institute /Labs should also have qualified Radiologist & Pathologist working. The application form terms & conditions may be obtained from the office of the Chief Medical Superintendent, S.P. Mukherjee Marg near Novelty Cinema, Delhi-110006 from 20.12.2022 to 21.01.2023 up to 15:00 Hrs on any working day. The last date of submission of the application is 21.01.2023 up to 17:00 hrs, in the office of the Chief Medical Superintendent, S.P. Mukherjee Marg near Novelty Cinema, Delhi-110006. The EO and the details of the investigation are also available on the Northern Railway website: [www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in) which can be downloaded.

**Chief Medical Superintendent**  
**N. Rly, Divisional Hospital Delhi**  
No.: 63-Med-Lab Invest-DLI-2022 Dated: 19.12.2022 3372/2022

**Serving Customers with a Smile**

**UJVN Limited**  
(An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprises)  
H.O. "UJJWAL" Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun.-248006  
Phone No. 0135-2763808, Fax No. 0135-2763508  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: [www.ujvnl.com](http://www.ujvnl.com)

**RO. No. 931 TENDER NOTICE** Date: 19.12.2022

Office of the Executive Engineer, (M&G) Pathri Power House, Bahadrad, Haridwar invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tenders are given below:-

- Tender No.: 34/EE(Pathri)/2022-23 – Removal of Debris from Intake of Power House.
- Tender No.: 35/EE(Pathri)/2022-23 – Operation & Maintenance works of Trash Rack Cleaning Machine of Power House.

**Estimated Cost:** Rs. 9,88,050/- (GST extra) & Rs. 10,45,826/- (GST extra) respectively.

**Date of availability of bid document on website:** 20.12.2022

**Last date for submission of tender:** 11.01.2023, up to 16:00 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 (M&G)**

**"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"**

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**OPEN-E-TENDER NOTICE**  
The Sr. Divisional Engineer-III, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work.

1	Name of work	Stone pitching of river bed around the piers of Bridge No. 249 (old Yamuna bridge), strengthening of river bank at DLI end, UP stream and other allied works of Bridge No. - 249 (Old Yamuna Bridge) in the section of SSEW/DLI/Line under ADEN/DLI.
2	Approx cost of work	Rs. 2,16,93,690.56/- (Rupees Two Crore Sixteen Lakh Ninety Three Thousand Six Hundred Ninety & Fifty Six Paise Only)
3	Earnest Money to be deposited	Rs. 2,58,500/- (Rupees Two Lakh Fifty Eight Thousand Five Hundred Only)
4	Cost of tender document	Rs. 0.00/-
5	Date & Time of submission of tender bid and opening of tender	10.01.2023 @ 15:00 Hrs.
6	Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	<a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>
7	Allocation	20324103

• The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for participating in the e-tender system. • For all terms and conditions please refer tender document. • No manual offers are acceptable. • Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.

**No. No. 128-W/280/e Tender Notice/NIT/ 96/2022-23/W-3 Dated :- 16.12.2022**

**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav** 3363/2022

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**



# Sugar output up 5% during Oct 1-Dec 15, 2022 period

Mills contract for 45-50 lakh tonnes exports so far

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sugar production has increased 5 per cent to 82.1 lakh tonnes between October 1 and December 15 period of this marketing year, while mills have contracted to export 45-50 lakh tonnes of sweetener, industry body ISMA said on Monday.

Sugar marketing year runs from October to September.

The production of sugar stood at 77.9 lakh tonnes in the corresponding period of the 2021-22 marketing year.

"As per port information and market reports, about 45-50 lakh tonnes of contracts for export of sugar have already been entered into so far. Out of that, about 6 lakh tonnes of sugar have been physically exported out of the country up to 30th November," Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) said in a statement.

Market reports suggest that another 8-9 lakh tonnes of sugar is in pipeline to be exported in December, thereby total exports by the end of this month could be around 15 lakh tonnes.

India exported a record 111 lakh tonnes of sugar in



2021-22 marketing year.

In November, the government allowed export of 60 lakh tonnes of sugar in the current (2022-23) marketing year.

As per the data, sugar production in Uttar Pradesh between October 1 and december 15 of the current marketing year rose to 20.3 lakh tonnes from 19.8 lakh tonnes in the year-ago period. In Maharashtra, sugar output has increased so far to 33 lakh tonnes from 31.9 lakh tonnes, while the production in

Karnataka has risen to 18.9 lakh tonnes from 18.4 lakh tonnes.

India's total sugar production is expected to be the highest ever at 410 lakh tonnes (before diversion for ethanol) in the 2022-23 marketing year. Sugar diversion towards production of ethanol is estimated to be at 45 lakh tonnes in the current marketing year.

Hence, the net sugar production after factoring in the diversion is expected to be at 365 lakh tonnes in the 2022-23 marketing year.

# Sensex, Nifty climb nearly 1%; end 2-session losing streak

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex and Nifty closed higher by nearly 1 per cent on Monday, ending their two-session losing streak following heavy buying in banking, oil and FMCG shares.

The 30-share BSE barometer jumped 468.38 points or 0.76 per cent to settle at 61,806.19 as 24 of its stocks advanced. During the day, it advanced 507.11 points or 0.82 per cent to a high of 61,844.92.

The broader NSE Nifty climbed 151.45 points or 0.83 per cent to end at 18,420.45.

The indices had declined by more than 2 per cent in the last two sessions.

"Stabilizing after the previous session, domestic indices edged towards gains owing to optimistic cues from western markets," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

From the Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra, Power Grid, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finserv, HDFC, Hindustan Unilever, Maruti, ITC, Titan, Nestle, Bajaj Finance and Reliance Industries were the major winners.

Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Tata Motors and IndusInd Bank were among the laggards. The IT sector stood out as an exception to the rally, as the growth guidance of



the US IT sector signalled downgrades, Vinod Nair said adding that fears of a worldwide recession and mounting local Covid cases weighed heavily on Asian stocks.

"Optimism in European markets and short covering helped local benchmarks stage a smart bounce back even as other Asian market peers languished in negative territory. Despite the recovery, investors are lacking confidence after the recent US Federal Reserve's indication of more rate hikes in the coming year," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

While markets may stay volatile in the coming sessions, selective buying will continue to be the mantra of investors till the worries of interest rates subside, he said.

# Flexi staffing added 78K jobs in July-September

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian flexi staffing industry added 78,000 jobs in July-September 2022, up 6 per cent as compared to the previous quarter, on account of rise in demand across all sectors, a report said.

"Buoyed by a strong festive season and rising demand across sectors, the Indian Staffing Federation (ISF) members added 78,000 new jobs in July-September quarter, a 6 per cent rise in new jobs over previous April-June quarter," said ISF's Flexi Staffing Employment Growth report.

The new jobs in July-September are combination of new jobs in general staffing and IT staffing, it stated.

ISF is the apex industry body representing formal staffing, facility management and security services companies. New jobs in general staffing – which excludes IT staffing – grew 7.3 per cent in July-September, driven by rise in demand in FMCG, e-commerce, manufacturing, retail, logistics, banking, hospitality, tourism, insurance, infrastructure, it stated.

On the other hand, new jobs in IT staffing remained under pressure, growing a modest 2.2 per cent in September quarter.



While IT staffing industry continues to address market demands in niche skills, there is a visible impact of the slowdown in global markets even as big Indian IT players curtail new hiring, it stated.

Cumulatively, ISF's over 110 member companies added 2.32 lakh jobs in the past four quarters, i.e. During the period from October 2022 to September 2023, which includes the 78,000 new jobs in July-September, it stated.

As on September 30, 2022, ISF member companies represented 14 lakh flexi staffing workers.

Lohit Bhatia, President, ISF said the Indian staffing industry anticipated a steep rise

in demand during the first lockdown-free festive season, and provided the formal workforce the different industries required.

"Overall industry shows a resilient growth with new employment mobilized in July-September (2022) at 20 per cent year-on-year...To give a further break up, general staffing witnessed 24.6 per cent year-on-year growth, while new jobs in IT staffing sustained at 15.8 per cent year-on-year," Bhatia added.

Over 110 members of the federation have generated employment for 90 lakh employees in the last 10 years and currently employs 14 lakh flexi staff annually.

# India will be big export economy; to benefit from open and connected internet: Sundar Pichai

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will be a big export economy and it needs to create a balance between safeguarding citizens and enabling companies to innovate with its framework, Google CEO Sundar Pichai said on Monday.

While speaking at Google for India event, Pichai said that the company is focussing on startups from India and out of its \$300 million for the startups, around one-fourth will be invested in entities that are led by women.

He said that the technology is working at a big scale and touching lives of people around the world, which calls for framing responsible and balanced regulation.

"Given the scale and technology leadership it (India) will have, it's important to make sure you are balancing, putting in safeguards for people. You're creating an innovative framework, so that com-



Union Minister for Electronics & Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw with Google CEO Sundar Pichai during the Google for India Summit 2022, at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi on Monday

PTI

panies can innovate on top of a certainty in the legal framework. I think it is an important moment in time. India will also be a big export economy. It will benefit from an open and connected internet and getting that balance right will be important," Pichai said.

He said sophistication of the Indian startup ecosystem is measurably improving and Indian startups like Glance are getting noticed worldwide.

# Digital Personal Data Protection, Telecom Bills to be passed in Monsoon Session: Vaishnaw

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is expecting to get Digital Personal Data Protection Bill and Telecommunication Bill passed in Monsoon session of Parliament, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Monday.

While speaking at Google For India event, the IT and telecom minister said another bill on Digital India Act will be also floated in a month for public consultation.

The minister said Digital Data Protection Bill and Telecommunication Bill would be passed in Parliament in July-August.

He said under Telecommunication Bill, the government will be coming up with light touch regulation with focus on user's protection.

# NTH to offer EV battery testing at Mumbai & Kolkata centres from next fiscal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Anticipating a rise in demand for electric vehicles (EV), the government's National Testing House (NTH) on Monday said it will offer testing services for EV batteries and charging systems at its Mumbai and Kolkata centres from the next fiscal.

The Manesar-based International Centre for Automotive Technology and the Pune-based Automatic Research Association of India are the two agencies in the country providing testing services for EVs and batteries.

"Electronic vehicles are going to add to our daily lives. In order to have sufficient testing facilities, we are making our labs future-ready as the demand is going to increase," said Nidhi Khare, Additional Secretary in the Consumer Affairs Ministry.

The National Testing

House (NTH) is preparing to offer testing services for EV batteries and charging systems at its Kolkata headquarters and Mumbai regional centre from the next fiscal, she told reporters.

The NTH Mumbai and Kolkata centres were chosen because the maximum number of EV makers are located in Pune/Mumbai, while the maximum number of manufacturers of EV batteries are present in Kolkata, NTH DG Alok Kumar Srivastava said.

Testing begins at the manufacturing level, Srivastava said and added good quality products can be made if testing labs are located near the manufacturing units. Imported equipment used in EV making can also be tested at NTH centres.

Already, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has come out with performance standards for EV batteries in order to ensure the safety.



PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee gained 6 paise to settle at 82.69 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday as robust buying in the domestic equities and a weak American currency against key crosses overseas boosted investor sentiments.

However, fresh foreign capital outflows and rising crude prices restricted the rupee's rise, forex dealers said.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened weak at 82.80 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 82.57 and a low of 82.80.

It finally ended at 82.69

# Wipro acquires packaged food & spices brand Nirapara

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Wipro Consumer Care on Monday announced its entry into the packaged food and spice segment by acquiring Nirapara, one of the largest-selling traditional food brands in Kerala.

The deal size was not disclosed by the company. The Wipro group arm has signed a definitive agreement with Nirapara, a company statement said.

With this acquisition, Wipro Consumer Care joins FMCG firms such as Dabur, Emami, Tata Consumer Products Ltd and ITC, which are already present in the spices market.

Launched in 1976,



Nirapara is known for its blended spices. The brand leads in producing a large variety of spice mixes, and rice powder used in making 'appam', 'idiyappam', etc.

"Nirapara is our 13th acquisition and gives us a clear foothold in the spices and read-to-cook segment," Wipro Consumer Care and Lighting and Executive Director - Wipro

Enterprises Vineet Agarwal said.

Presently, Nirapara's 63 per cent business comes from Kerala, 8 per cent from rest of India and the remaining 29 per cent from international markets, largely Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Wipro Consumer Care and Lighting and Executive Director - Wipro Enterprises Anil Chugh said there is a huge opportunity in this space for shifting consumers from unorganized to organized market by offering authentic, pure and trusted spice mixes.

Wipro Consumer Care and Lighting, a part of Wipro Enterprises, is among the fastest growing FMCG businesses in India.

# RBI imposes ₹2.66 cr penalty on Bank of Bahrain & Kuwait BSC

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Monday said it has imposed a penalty of ₹2.66 crore on Bank of Bahrain & Kuwait BSC, India operations for non-compliance with directions on cyber security framework.

In a statement, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said the bank failed to implement systems to detect unusual and unauthorised, internal or external activities in its database.

It also failed to implement security operations centre for obtaining real-time/ near-real time information and insight into the security posture of the bank, and enable audit logs for database and operating system of servers, among others, as per the statement.

A notice was issued to the



bank asking it to show cause as to why penalty should not be imposed on it for failure to comply with the directions issued by RBI.

"After considering the bank's reply to the notice, oral submissions made during personal hearing and additional submissions made by it, RBI came to the conclusion that the charge of non-compliance with the aforesaid RBI direction

was substantiated and warranted imposition of monetary penalty, to the extent of non-compliance with such directions," it said.

RBI also said the penalty is based on the deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers.

# KFin Tech IPO subscribed 55% on Day 1 of offer

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The initial public offer of KFin Technologies was subscribed 55 per cent on the first day of subscription on Monday.

The initial share-sale received bids for 1,29,84,840 shares against 2,37,75,215 shares on offer, according to NSE data.

The category meant for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) got 91 per cent subscription, while Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) portion was subscribed 26 per cent and non-institutional investors 1 per cent. The ₹1,500-crore Initial Public Offer (IPO) has a price range of ₹347-366 a share. The company's IPO is a pure Offer For Sale (OFS).

# Ducati India to hike prices of its motorcycle range from Jan

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Italian superbike maker Ducati on Monday said it will hike the prices of its entire range of motorcycles in India from January 1.

The company, however, did not disclose the quantum of the hike.

Ducati India announces an increase in price on its entire motorcycle range to be effective on ex-showroom price



from January 1, 2023, the luxury bike maker said in a statement.

The company has been

absorbing costs for some time but will now have to pass on the increase through a revision in prices due to a substantial increment in costs related to raw material, production and logistics, it added.

The revised prices will be applicable for all models and variants of the bikes irrespective of dealerships across New Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kochi, Hyderabad and Kolkata.

# DTDC Express signs pact with Aramex India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Express logistics firm DTDC Express on Monday said it has signed a non-binding initial pact with UAE-based Aramex India to leverage synergies and enhance collaboration across multiple avenues.

The move aims at offering reliable and service responsive

international solutions to India-based Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business to Consumer (B2C) customers, DTDC said in a statement.

"We believe that our vast network combined with our technological capabilities and the new collaboration with Aramex will facilitate the growing distribution and logistics

requirements of India in the global economy," DTDC Express Chairman and Managing Director Subhashish Chakraborty said.

In addition to this, DTDC Express aims to cross-sell Aramex's flagship product through the company's network of around 14,000 customer access points, it added.

## BUSINESS BRIEF

### SAFA GOLD 2020-21 CONFERRED ON PFC

**New Delhi:** Power Finance Corporation Ltd. (PFC), a Maharatna CPSE and the country's leading NBFC in the power sector, has won the prestigious "South Asian Federation of Accountants" (SAFA) Gold Award in the 'Best Presented Accounts / Annual Report Awards' (BPA) for the Financial Year 2020-21 in 'Public Sector Entities' category. PFC was bestowed with this coveted award for its highest level of transparency in accounting practices and for achieving excellence in the presentation and disclosure of high-quality, relevant, reliable and objective financial statements in accordance with the international framework. The SAFA BPA Award is considered the most prestigious accolade for financial reporting in the entire South Asian region. This is the first time since the inception of these awards in 1997 that any Indian Company has won a 'Gold' in the category of "Public Sector Entities". It is worth mentioning here that PFC had earlier won the ICAI (Institute of Chartered Accountants of India) award for excellence in financial reporting in the 'Public Sector Entities' category for the Financial Year 2020-21. Based upon the quality of financial reporting, ICAI every year selects a few entries out of the awardees of excellence in financial reporting for sending to SAFA, which this year included PFC. The financials of PFC competed against entries from entire South Asian Companies and was ultimately declared the winner by the jury.





# MESSI PLANS TO PLAY ON FOR ARGENTINA

AP ■ DOHA

Lionel Messi is not ready to walk away from Argentina yet, despite lending his pursuit of a World Cup winner's medal.

The soccer great secured the one major trophy that has eluded him in his storied career as Argentina beat France 4-2 on penalties in the final at Lusail Stadium on Sunday.

The match finished 3-3 through extra time with Messi scoring twice and converting his penalty in the shootout.

At 35, this is likely his last appearance in football's biggest tournament, but he confirmed after the match that he intends to play on.

"Obviously, I wanted to complete my career with this, (I) can't ask for more," Messi said.

"Finishing my career this way is impressive. After this, what else? I have a Copa América, a World Cup. Almost at the very end.

"I love soccer, what I do. I enjoy being part of the national team, the group. I want to enjoy a couple of more matches being a world champion."

Messi has won the Ballon d'Or award for the best player in the world on seven occasions.

He has also won the Champions League four times with former club Barcelona, but the World Cup is the biggest prize in the sport.

"If he wants to keep playing, he can be with us, he is more than entitled to decide if he wants to stay with us," Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said. "It's a huge pleasure to coach him, everything that he transmits to his team is unparalleled. It's something I've never seen before."

Messi put Argentina ahead from the penalty spot and played a part in Angel Di Maria's goal that made it 2-0 after 36 minutes.

Mbappé scored two goals in a 97-second span to take the game to extra time.

Messi put Argentina back in front in the 108th minute, but Mbappe's penalty in the 118th saw the Paris Saint-Germain star complete the first hat trick in a World Cup final in 56 years.

"It's just crazy that it became a reality this way. I craved for this so much. I knew God would bring this gift to me, I had the feeling that this (World Cup) was the one," Messi said.



## BENZEMA BIDS GOODBYE TO FRANCE

AP ■ DOHA

Ballon D'Or winner Karim Benzema announced he was ending his international career on Monday, the day after France lost in the World Cup final to Argentina.

"I made the effort and the mistakes it took to be where I am today and I'm proud of it! I wrote my story and ours ends," Benzema, 35, wrote on Twitter.

Benzema, who scored 37 goals for France in 97 appearances, had to withdraw from France's World Cup squad before their first match due to a left thigh injury.

The Real Madrid player, who won the Ballon d'Or award in October, had been desperate to feature in Qatar

having not been selected when France won the World Cup in Russia four years ago.

He was frozen out of the France team for five and a half years because of his involvement in a blackmail scandal over a sextape involving his former teammate Mathieu Valbuena.

In a trial last year he was handed a one-year suspended prison sentence and fined 75,000 euros (\$79,500).

For the Qatar World Cup, coach Didier Deschamps opted not to call up a replacement and France still had depth in their squad, particularly in an attack led by 23-year-old Kylian Mbappe.

Paris Saint-Germain forward Mbappe won the World Cup Golden

Boot award with eight goals, including a hat-trick in Sunday's penalty shootout defeat by Argentina following a 3-3 draw at the end of extra time.

Didier Deschamps said he would wait before deciding whether to remain as coach of France in the wake of their World Cup final defeat, but the future prospects remain bright for a side brimming with young talent and led by Kylian Mbappe.

Deschamps was hoping to lead the 2018 world champions to back-to-back titles in Qatar, and they came agonisingly close, losing the final to Argentina on penalties following a thrilling 3-3 draw after extra time.

The shoot-out defeat prevented Deschamps — who captained Les

Bleus to glory in 1998 — from becoming the first coach to win the World Cup twice since Vittorio Pozzo in the 1930s.

The 54-year-old, in charge since 2012, is now out of contract but French Football Federation President Noel Le Graet had said Deschamps would be offered new terms if he reached the semi-finals.

Asked whether the result of the final would influence a decision on his future, Deschamps said: "Even with a different result I would not have given an answer today."

"Obviously I am very sad. I will have a meeting with the president at the start of the new year and you will know after that," he added.



## FIFA readies 48-team World Cup as eyes turn to 2026

AP ■ DOHA

Forty-eight teams, three host countries, and potentially more than 100 games.

After successfully staging the most compact World Cup in history, FIFA is now preparing to organise the biggest.

The dust had barely settled on Sunday's World Cup final before attention turned to the gargantuan figure of 2026 looming on the horizon.

For the first time, football's greatest tournament will be held across three host nations — the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The tournament will notably see an expansion to 48 teams, up from the current 32-team format that has been in place since 1998, and double the number of teams that took part in the last World Cup held on US or Mexican soil.

The enlarged competition represents a triumph for FIFA president Gianni Infantino, who made expanding the World Cup a priority after taking over as world football's supremo in 2016.

The 16-team increase marks the biggest expansion in the World Cup's evolution.

From 13 teams at the inaugural tournament in 1930, the finals remained a 16-team event from 1934 to 1978, before increasing to 24 in 1982. The biggest beneficiaries of the expansion to 48 teams will be Africa and Asia.

Under the new format, Africa will receive nine qualifying slots for the finals (compared to five previously) while Asia will nearly double to eight (from 4.5 slots). Oceania, traditionally forced to compete for a World Cup place via a playoff, will receive an automatic qualifying berth.

"For us Africans, it's heaven sent," said former Nigeria international Sunday Oliseh.

"I have always thought (Africa) should send more representatives — the more time you play, the more your chances are.

"It's a continent of over a billion people. My country is 200 million people.

"For us it's fascinating to see a bigger, larger World Cup."

The expanded African contingent is welcome news for some of the region's powerhouses. Egypt, Algeria and Nigeria were all squeezed out of the Qatar finals during

qualifiers.

Europe's representation will also be boosted, up to 16 teams from 13, while South America increases from 4.5 qualifying places to six.

With Canada, United States and Mexico qualifying as hosts, CONCACAF will have a further three spots, for a total of six teams from the region.

Two additional places will be decided by playoff.

What this expansion means for the tournament format remains to be seen.

FIFA initially indicated that it favoured 16 groups of three teams, with the top two in each group advancing to a 32-team knockout stage.

But the success of the four-team group first phase in Qatar — where several groups went down to the wire -- has prompted a rethink.

Infantino told reporters on Friday that FIFA now plans to "revisit" the three-team group format.

The likeliest 2026 scenario is 12 groups of four, with the top two teams advancing to the knockout rounds along with the eight best third-place finishers.

That format however would mean 104 matches — up from the 64 in Qatar — while a team reaching the final would be required to play eight games.

The number of venues for the finals will double, from eight stadiums in Qatar to 16.

Eleven venues will be in the US, with three in Mexico and two in Canada.

All of the US games are taking place in venues used by NFL teams, with stadiums such as the \$5 billion SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles and the New York Giants' 82,000-seater MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford tipped to host the final.

The bulk of the games — including all matches from the knockout rounds onwards — will be held in the United States.

Given the geographical spread of the tournament, FIFA is studying basing the teams in regional clusters to minimise travel.

"When you're dealing with such a large region as North America we need to care about the fans and make sure that teams are playing in clusters, that fans and teams don't have to travel crazy distances," Infantino said earlier this year.

## World media hail Messi, Mbappé after 'most exciting final'

AP ■ DOHA

In the wake of Argentina's World Cup victory, world media praised the "heroic" efforts of French star Mbappé and ran out of superlatives for Lionel Messi, crowned as the "god of football".

The thrilling penalty-shootout win over France gave La Albiceleste their first World Cup since national hero Diego Maradona guided them to the 1986 title.

And it sparked an explosion of joy in Argentina, where the media saluted the nation's latest generation of World Cup heroes and their talisman Messi.

Images of him holding the trophy aloft and the team's celebrations adorned news websites and social media feeds in Argentina.

Messi's Argentina had won "the greatest final in history", said the daily La Nacion, while Clarin described it as an "unforgettable" match.

The sports daily Ole's homepage was splashed with: "We are world champions!"

The final was billed as a titanic showdown between Messi and French superstar Kylian Mbappé, and it did not disappoint.

While Messi scored twice to put

Argentina in the lead, Mbappé inspired the French fightback with a hat-trick to take the final to penalties.

"Head held high," read the headline on the front page of French sports daily L'Equipe, the text imposed on an image of Mbappé holding his Golden Boot prize as he walked past the World Cup trophy.

"Legendary," said the front page of the daily Libération, with photos of both Messi and Mbappé, while Le Figaro described the French star's efforts as "heroic".

### 'IN THE HAND OF GOD'

Messi had cemented his place long ago among the greatest of all time, but the football world was abuzz ahead of the final with the prospect of the fleet-footed magician crowning his glittering career with the World Cup — the one major trophy he had never won.

And with Argentina's win on Sunday, the debate about his stature in the history of the sport was settled for most.

In Britain, The Times said on its front page that Messi had won the "battle of modern maestros in greatest final". On the front page of its sports section, it described him as, simply, "The Greatest".



The Mirror called him the GOAT — "greatest of all time" — while The Sun said the World Cup was "In the Hand of God", a cheeky reference to Maradona's infamous goal against England in the 1986 tournament.

In Germany, the Sueddeutsche Zeitung also played on that reference with the headline "The foot of God" for Messi.

It called the Argentina-France showdown "the most exciting final" in World Cup history, while the daily Tagesspiegel said it showcased "two exceptional talents".

Even in Brazil — an intense rival — the O Globo newspaper paid tribute to Messi, saying football had "paid its debt" to its biggest star.

In the United States, which will host the next World Cup with Canada and Mexico, a report in The Washington Post said Messi was finally rewarded in an "immortal" final.

Spain's El Pais newspaper said Messi had been "crowned in the final of finals".

And in Asia, where Messi has legions of fans, Indian newspaper The Hindu said his Argentina team had kept their "date with destiny", while South Korean daily Hankook Ilbo called him a "god of football".

## Argentina fans celebrate team's WC triumph with 'Messi, Messi' chants

PTI ■ KOLKATA/ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Argentina's world cup victory in Doha after a long wait of 36 years and the memorable swan song for Lionel Messi on football's biggest stage on Sunday night were celebrated in various parts of India, with supporters of the Albiceleste taking to the streets in blue-and-white shirts, hailing their favourite team's achievement.

Jubilant scenes were witnessed in Kolkata, Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram, Panaji, Imphal and various other cities and towns after 35-year-old Messi lifted the most coveted trophy of his career following Argentina's 4-2 victory over France in the penalty shootout. The game was tied at 2-2 after the 90-minute regulation period and at 3-3 after 30 minutes of extra-time.

However, things went awry in Manipur when a 50-year-old woman was killed in East Imphal district after being hit by a stray bullet fired by unidentified revellers celebrating Argentina's world cup win.

The fans in Kolkata and other parts of West Bengal burst crackers and made rounds of their localities in their favourite team's blue-and-white colours with Argentina's national flag fluttering from their hands.

Large screens were put up at community halls and clubs where people turned up in good numbers to watch the FIFA World Cup 2022 final.

Several areas of the state were awash in blue-and-white flags as the South American nation won the cliffhanger.

"I only wish (Diego) Maradona was alive to see this wonderful victory," said Sujan Dutta, one of the numerous Argentina fans in Kolkata.

Maradona, the late Argentine great with whom Messi has so often been compared, helped the South American country become the world champions in 1986.

Messi achieved what Maradona did 36 years ago.

The streets of Kerala resembled those of Argentina after the South American nation brought curtains down on their memorable month-long journey in the tournament.

Old and young, children and women -- the football-crazy people of the southern state were out screaming with joy, bursting fire-crackers, shouting the name of Messi and blowing trumpets and horns.

The East Fort area and Vanchiyoar in Thiruvananthapuram, the state capital, were crowded at midnight with fans wearing Argentina's



jersey.

Various parts of Kochi city also witnessed huge celebrations.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Leader of Opposition V D Satheesan, Assembly Speaker M B Rajesh, various ministers, MLAs, filmstars, including Mammooty and Mohanlal, shared their excitement over

Lionel Scaloni's side's victory.

In a Facebook post, Vijayan congratulated Argentina on the achievement.

"Congratulations to Argentina who won the football World Cup. Lionel Messi led Argentina to victory — the most precious achievement of his career," he said.

Mammooty and Mohanlal, the two big stars of the Malayalam film industry, were at Lusail Stadium in Qatar to witness the title clash.

"What a Night !!! What a Game !! Absolute Goosebumps !! Thrilled to have witnessed probably one of the greatest ever football match. Congrats Argentina and magical

Messi on conquering the world. Well Played #France and Kylian Mbappe," Mammooty wrote on Facebook.

Mohanlal, who also posted a picture of himself at the stadium, said it was a glorious final in which two worthy opponents played their hearts out and gave millions of football fans a "nerve-racking match". However, at some places, the celebrations led to incidents of violence, injuring many people, including police personnel.

In Kannur district, a few people, including a police officer, were injured in multiple incidents of scuffles.

In Kochi, a case was registered against five people for allegedly attacking a civil police officer during celebrations at the Kaloor junction.

In the Pozhiyoor area of Thiruvananthapuram district, a police officer was injured when a man in an inebriated condition attacked him during a big screen telecast of the world cup final.

In Goa, makeshift mini projectors were put up at a number of places for the fans to watch the final.

After the match ended, a number of Argentina supporters were seen celebrating on the streets in various parts of the coastal state till late at night.

Politicians, including former

deputy chief minister Vijai Sardesai and Congress MLA Altonne D'Costa, were seen supporting Scaloni's side as they watched the final along with their fans, wearing the jersey of their favourite team.

After the match, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant tweeted: "Congratulations Argentina! Goan football fans witnessed one of the most thrilling #FIFAWorldCup Final!"

In an unfortunate turn of events, a 50-year-old woman was killed at the Singjamei Wangma Bheigapati locality in Manipur's Imphal East district after a stray bullet fired by unidentified revellers hit her, police said.

The incident took place around 11.30 pm on Sunday.

The family members of the deceased said sounds of loud fire-crackers and gunshots reverberated as frenzied celebrations broke out after the match.

Two bullet holes were found on the first floor of the woman's residence, which is built with galvanised iron sheets, a senior police officer said.

"While one bullet struck her on the back, another went through the GI sheets," he added.

The family members have said they would not perform the last rites unless the culprits are identified and arrested.



# INDIA AIM TO SIGN OFF WITH WIN

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Having stretched the mighty Australia in every game of the series, India will be looking to learn from their mistakes and seize the crucial moments in the fifth and final women's T20 here on Tuesday.

India have pushed Australia to the limit but, barring the sensational super over win, have failed to land the killer blow, be it with the bat or ball.

The champion outfit that Australia are, they have found a way to bounce back after being put under pressure by the Indians.

Australia's top-order did the job in the first two games but India managed to get rid of them cheaply in the next couple of matches only for the Ellyse Perry-led middle order to take the game away from them.

Ahead of the T20 World Cup in South Africa in February, the Australia series has served India well in their preparations for the ICC event.

The reigning champions have exposed the areas that India must improve on, whether it is the high dot ball ratio, their fielding or the lack of firepower in the bowling department.

Shafali Verma, who will lead India in the inaugural U-19 World Cup next month, needs to complement her explosive game with strike rotation. Jemimah Rodrigues once again finds herself in a situation where she would be playing to save her place in the XI after four failures.

India have found a much-needed finisher in the young Richa Ghosh but skipper Harmanpreet Kaur could do with more support in the middle order.

On the bowling front, spinner Deepti Sharma is the only one who has taken wickets regularly, five in total.



Renuka Singh, the team's go to bowler in the last six months and rookie left-arm pacer Anjali Sarvani, have only delivered in patches.

To be fair to the bowlers, the high-scoring wickets in the series have only made their task tougher.

Chasing 189 in the previous game, India fell only seven runs short but with their gallant effort, they displayed the ability to gun down any total on their day.

Australia, on the other hand, will be aiming to end the series on a winning note.

Vice-captain Tahlia McGrath confirmed on the eve of the game that skipper Alyssa Healy will not be fit in time for the final. Healy retired hurt on 30 in the fourth T20 with a leg injury.

While opener Beth Mooney remains the leading run-scorer in the series, Perry has shown menacing form and could well surpass the fellow Australian following two consecutive 70 plus scores. McGrath will continue to lead the side.

Spinner Ashleigh Gardner, who also made a match-winning contribution with the bat in the previous game, has been the team's leading wicket-taker with five scalps at a frugal economy rate of 7.71 runs per over.

## SQUADS

**Australia:** Alyssa Healy (c), Tahlia McGrath (vc), Darcie Brown, Nicola Carey, Ashleigh Gardner, Kim Garth, Heather Graham, Grace Harris, Jess Jonassen, Alana King, Phoebe Litchfield, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Megan Schutt and Annabel Sutherland.

**India:** Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Shafali Verma, Yastika Bhatia, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, Radha Yadav, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Renuka Singh Thakur, Meghna Singh, Anjali Sarvani, Devika Vaidya, S Meghana, Richa Ghosh and Harleen Deol.



## Rohit likely to miss second Test vs Bangladesh

PTI ■ DHAKA

India skipper Rohit Sharma is unlikely to feature in the second and final Test against Bangladesh, beginning here on Thursday, as he has not yet fully recovered from a thumb injury he suffered in the preceding ODI series.

Rohit had hurt his left thumb while fielding in the second ODI against Bangladesh on December 7. India had lost the ODI series 1-2.

India won the first Test by 188 runs in Chattogram with K L Rahul leading the team in Rohit's absence.

Rohit had travelled back to Mumbai to see a specialist following his injury.

He is yet to travel to Dhaka for the second Test. His webbing

is sore and there is still some pain," a BCCI source told PTI.

India will be pressing for another win as they aim to reach their second straight World Test Championship final.

After the win on Sunday, Rahul had said that it would take a day or two to get the final word on Rohit's fitness and availability.

"About Rohit, we may be able to know (his status) in the next day or two, even I am not aware of it," Rahul had said at the post-match press conference.

India have a busy home season lined up with Sri Lanka and New Zealand touring for a limited overs series next month.

The all important four Test series against Australia takes place in February and March.

## Indian duo helped Rahman get his 'Fizz' back: Donald



PTI ■ CHATTOGRAM

Bangladesh's fast-bowling coach Allan Donald has credited Sridharan Sriram and Shrinivas Chandrasekaran for helping their struggling pacer Mustafizur Rahman get back his lost sting and play a key role in their ODI series win over India.

The Indian duo of Sriram and Shrinivas, currently serving as the Bangladesh T20 coach and performance analyst respectively, worked with the pacer to identify his mistakes.

"Sriram and Shrinivas spotted that in the release point of his slower ball, his palm was facing the batter," Donald told ESPNcricinfo on the sidelines of the opening Test that India won by 188 runs.

"It needed to be more side-on so that the palm was facing the off side on his point of release. He bowled a lot of overs to get that ball to come out softer and with a bit more bite. He worked really hard on nailing yorkers.

The 27-year-old, who is the most experienced among the Bangladesh pace battery, has been under pressure to deliver.

"He is a class act. When we needed a guy to step up against a world-class player in Rohit Sharma, Fizz came to the party and produced a great yorker to win the series for us. I love working with him. Mustafiz has been around the world. You write him off at your own peril. I know how hard he is working right now."

Having joined the side in March, Donald has overseen a rise in Bangladesh's pace bowling, after they relied on spinners for years. They started to turn it around with Courtney Walsh at helm, followed by Ottis Gibson.

The South African great took it from there as the Bangladesh bowlers reached the mark of 167 wickets for the year, their best across formats in a calendar year in over two decades of playing international cricket.

Ebadot Hossain's six-wicket haul paved the way for their historic Test win in Mount Maunganui, while they won an ODI series in South Africa where Taskin Ahmed was adjudged the Player of the Series.

"I coach mindset. I can be technical if I want to, but at this level, you can have the best plans in the world, but you must have the desire and the mongrel in your belly, you won't get past anyone."

"I think slowly but surely we are starting to see this growing in this group. This excites me," the 56-year-old said.

Termining the growth as significant, Donald said: "I have taken out the fear factor of making mistakes... I say it almost every day: don't worry about what I think sitting in the stands."

"I have been there. I have experienced your heartaches and mistakes. It is absolutely okay to make mistakes, as long as we give it a 100% crack out there. It doesn't matter if you go for six."

Changing the "conservative approach" has been the key, he said. The second and final Test against India begins at Mirpur on Thursday.

## Ahmed puts England on brink of memorable 3-0 win

AP ■ KARACHI

Legspinner Rehan Ahmed became the youngest men's Test cricketer to claim a five-wicket haul on his debut and put England on the brink of a historic 3-0 sweep in its first Test tour to Pakistan in 17 years.

Pakistan's batters crumbled for 216 in the second innings of the third and final Test as the 18-year-old Ahmed grabbed 5-48 and Jack Leach (3-72) claimed all three of his wickets in the space of six deliveries on Day 3 to leave England a modest target of 167 runs.

Ben Duckett (50 not out) and Zak Crawley (41) motored England to 112-2 by stumps with their aggressive "Bazball" brand of batting — named after their coach Brendon McCullum.

England needs a further 55 runs to register its second successive win inside four days following its thrilling 26-run victory at Multan last week. England won the first Test by 74 runs in dimming light on the last day on a flat wicket in Rawalpindi.

Crawley and Duckett plundered 87 runs off 69 balls before mystery spinner Abrar Ahmed grabbed two late wickets. Crawley was adjudged leg before wicket while attempting a sweep and Rehan Ahmed (10), promoted up the order, smacked two boundaries before he swiped and got clean bowled.

Harry Brook's third successive century had given England a 50-run first innings lead when it replied with 354 after dismissal



ing Pakistan for 304, with Ahmed and Leach sharing six wickets between them.

Pakistan, staring at its first ever 3-0 whitewash at home, lost the last seven wickets for 52 runs in the second innings as Ahmed stifled the middle-order with his sharp googlies and legspin.

Captain Babar Azam (54) hit his third half century in the last four innings and Saud Shakeel (53) made his fourth fifty in his debut series before Ahmed left the lower order clueless on a wicket which has a variable bounce and slow turn from Day 1.

Babar and Shakeel had

rebuilt Pakistan's hopes with a 110-run stand before both fell late in the second session to Ahmed.

Babar became the fourth Test player to complete 1,000 runs this year, but played an overambitious pull against Ahmed's short ball soon after completing his half century and Ollie Pope held a sharp catch at short mid-wicket.

Ahmed, who also became the youngest England Test debutant at the age of 18 years, 126 days, then picked up the wickets of Mohammad Rizwan (7) and Shakeel in successive overs to seize complete control as Pakistan reached 177-6 at tea.

## Intrusive security measures irk Babar

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan captain Babar Azam stayed off the field in the first hour of the second day of the third Test against England, apparently to protest against intrusive security measures for the players and their families.

According to media reports Babar was angry when he was stopped from going out with some other members of the team and their families for dinner on Saturday night from the team hotel.

Babar had planned to go out to dinner with Sarfaraz Ahmed, Azhar Ali, Shan Masood, and Imam-ul-Haq with their families at a local restaurant.

But when he came down from his hotel room, the security personnel stopped him from going outside making it clear that he and other players had to seek prior clearance about their movements as the two teams are being provided President level security for the series against England.

The captain was not happy with the security measures and termed them as intrusive after a heated argument with a senior official and went back to his room in a

huff.

Reports say that he, on Sunday, didn't come out to lead the team for one hour and remained in the dressing room to protest the behaviour of the security personnel.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for its part has largely remained silent on the incident but the official version given out is that Babar had a severe headache when he came to the ground which is why he couldn't come onto the field in the first hour.

Pakistan and England are both being provided President level security for the series as the PCB is not willing to take any chances, given that England is touring Pakistan for a Test series after 17 years.

But insiders say the players have now become fed-up with the round-the-clock security around them which does not allow them to go out of the team hotel without prior permission and clearance.

"It is for their own good and Pakistan cricket," one PCB source.

Sources close to the players say that while security for the visiting side is understandable why should the Pakistani players be subjected to such strict measures.

## Warner should consider Test retirement: O'Donnell



PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former Australian all-rounder Simon O'Donnell feels opening batter David Warner isn't the Test player he used to be till about two years back and the 36-year-old should consider retirement from the game's longest format.

Warner was out for duck and scored just three runs in the first Test against South Africa at Brisbane, which the hosts won by six wickets inside two days.

Warner last scored a Test century in January 2020 and prior to the first Test against the Proteas he had scores of 5, 48, 21,

28 in the four innings this summer. "I think he'd (Warner) be contemplating and possibly should (retire) at the end of the Sydney Test (third game against the Proteas from Jan 4-8, 2023)," O'Donnell was quoted as saying by SEN on Monday.

"We're not talking about David Warner in the last few innings, we're talking about David Warner in the last two years, he hasn't been the same player he was prior to then. That indicates to me that if David found form again, it's not going to be for long."

"We actually have a sample area over a long period of time where things haven't been up to standard."

The 59-year-old O'Donnell, however, felt Warner still has plenty of white-ball cricket left in him. "It's time for him to clearly consider (retirement from Test cricket). He'll still play white-ball cricket for a period of time in my opinion."

## Warne to be honoured during Boxing Day Test

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia and South Africa players will wear wide-brim floppy hats during the national anthems at the Boxing Day Test to honour spin legend Shane Warne. The Boxing Day contest at the MCG will be the first Test match at Warne's home ground, which saw him claim his 700th Test wicket in his final appearance at the venue during the 2006 Ashes, since his death in March.

Cricketer Australia (CA) has planned a range of tributes during the second Test, including a pre-match ceremony that will acknowledge the significance of the MCG in Warne's life and career.

## Williamson, head coach Stead to miss NZ tour of India

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson and head coach Gary Stead will miss the white-ball tour of India, starting next month, as part of their workload management.

New Zealand Cricket (NZC) have named split ODI squads for the away series against Pakistan, which begins on January 10, and India, scheduled to start on January 18.

Newly-appointed Test captain Tim Southee will also return home after the Pakistan tour to prepare for the home Test series against England in February.

In Williamson and Stead's absence, Tom Latham will lead the Kiwis while batting coach Luke Ronchi will serve as the head coach in the three-match ODI series against India.

Ronchi will also be in charge as the head coach for the T20 series in India, the squad for which will be announced on January 9. He will be assisted by former New Zealand women coach Bob Carter and former spinner Paul Wiseman.

All-rounder Mark Chapman and pacer Jacob Duffy will replace Williamson and Southee in the squad for the India tour.



In-form pace bowling all-rounder Henry Shipley has been handed a maiden call-up after impressing in the domestic circuit. He has been named in both squads.

The tall (1.96m) right-arm pacer and middle order power batter was the leading wicket-taker in last season's Super Smash.

"Henry's an exciting talent who we've had our eye on for a while," New Zealand selector Gavin Larsen said.

"He's taken his game to another level in the past 12 months, and we're delighted to see his progression given how valuable genuine all-rounders are in any cricket team," he added.

Legspinner Ish Sodhi and batter Henry Nicholls, who had been omitted for the squad for the home ODI series against India, have also been named in the both squads.

Meanwhile, pacer Kyle Jamieson still remains unavailable for selection as

he recovers from a back injury. He last played for New Zealand in June.

Larsen said the two ODI series will help prepare for the 50-over World Cup in India next year.

"This is a great opportunity to take on two quality white-ball sides in sub-continental conditions. It's going to be tough cricket against world-class opposition which should prove a real test of a player's skill and temperament."

"With the one-day World Cup less than a year away in India, it's the perfect time to be playing these sides at home as we look to nail down our game-plans, and understand the different situations and conditions we may encounter."

## SQUADS

**For India:** Tom Latham (c), Finn Allen, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Jacob Duffy, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Adam Milne, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Glenn Phillips, Mitchell Santner, Henry Shipley and Ish Sodhi.

**For Pakistan:** Kane Williamson (c), Tom Latham, Finn Allen, Michael Bracewell, Devon Conway, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Adam Milne, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Glenn Phillips, Mitchell Santner, Henry Shipley, Ish Sodhi and Tim Southee.