



sunday pioneer

NEW DELHI, SUNDAY DECEMBER 25, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹4

www.dailypioneer.com



PATANJALI®

Switch over to research and evidence-based medicines of Patanjali Ayurveda and Divya Pharmacy

to beat Corona and all types of infectious diseases and eradicating various lifestyle, chronic and genetic diseases to lead a completely natural and healthy life.

Those suffering from chronic lifestyle diseases and those with a compromised immunity face the highest risk of infectious diseases. However, with the help of natural medicines and yoga, you will be able not only to fight these diseases, but eradicating them.

Those who were administered antibiotics and steroids etc. for the management of Corona are increasingly facing problems like diabetes, and diseases of liver, kidney, heart, eye, ear etc. We have managed to resolve these problems with Ayurveda.

Madhugrit and Madhunashini Vati – Pharma companies have fabricated a widespread confusion that diabetics cannot ever become non-diabetic. But with the use of Madhunashini and Madhugrit along with regular yoga practice and Panchkarma, Shatkarma procedures at the **Patanjali Wellness**, we have turned lakhs of type 1 and type 2 diabetic patients into non-diabetics. We have succeeded in bringing down their diabetes (HbA1c levels) to 5.5. This is the biggest achievement in the history of medical science.

BPGrit and Mukta Vati – Another misconception in the medical field is that a patient of high blood pressure can never be completely free from it. After corona, this problem has increased even more among the infected people. We have completely cured crores of high blood pressure patients by making little sattvic changes in their lifestyle, yoga practice and administration of Mukta Vati, BPGrit and gourd juice etc.

Livingrit and Livamrit – Allopathy has no cure for chronic liver diseases such as fatty liver, liver cirrhosis and hepatitis (A, B, C, D). Liver-related problems have increased in patients after corona. We have completely cured lakhs of patients suffering from fatty liver, liver cirrhosis, hepatitis with regular yoga practice and vasti procedure supplemented by medicines Sarvakalp Kwath, Punarnava Ras, Livingrit and Livamrit. We have data of lakhs of such people. For best results, these medicines are taken with Godhan Ark.

Immunogrit Vati, Gold and Powder – Poor immunity and complications arising after corona are cause of many diseases. These medicines are useful in treatment of infections, problems of skin, heart and digestive system as well as fever, allergy, asthma, arthritis and weakness etc.

Thyrogrit and Corighan Vati – Patients taking allopathic medicines for Thyroid related problems become overweight or underweight and suffer from dizziness and depression etc. We have freed people from thyroid and its complications with administration of Kapaibhati, Ujjayi etc. pranayams and yoga exercises supplemented with Thyrogrit and Corighan Vati and coriander water.

Hridayamrit Vati and Cardiogrit – Provides cardiac protection and prevent cardiovascular diseases and complications like heart attack, stroke, pulmonary embolism etc. Taking Arjuna bark and Arjunarishta is best to deal with these diseases.

Renogrit and Trighan Vati – This is a great achievement of the 30 years of research. It is the first research based medicine to cure kidney failure, renal disorders, chronic kidney disease and making the kidney healthy by supporting the renal system. Practicing yoga regularly and taking it with Gokharu completely cures these problems.

Medha Vati, Memory Grit and Neurogri – To get rid of insomnia, stress, depression, migraine and increasing memory power, take research and evidence based Patanjali Medha Vati, Memory Grit and Neurogri tablets.

Eyegrit and Eargrit – There is no cure for vision impairment, glaucoma, macular degeneration etc. in allopathic system of medicines. Also, there is no medicine for problems related to hearing and tinnitus. We have cured such patients with yoga practice and medicines Eyegrit, Akshi Tarpan, Eargrit and Kamapuran.

Nutrela Nutrition – The chemical and animal based synthetic nutritional supplements and vitamins available in the market often harm the body instead of providing nutrition because they are not suited to the human nature. Scientists at Patanjali, after many years of research on natural herbs for your natural health, have prepared a complete range of 100% natural and organic plants-based Nutrela Natural vitamins and nutraceuticals

All Patanjali medicines and products are available in Patanjali stores, leading medical stores, Ayurvedic stores and open market. Medical stores not having Patanjali medicines should contact our distribution channel immediately.

Time to take on hate mongers, says Rahul

It's not Modi Govt, but Adani-Ambani Govt, says Gandhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sea of humanity

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with party leaders and workers during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in New Delhi on Saturday

Thousands thronged the Bharat Jodo Yatra as it entered Delhi on Saturday. Led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who was clad in his usual white half-sleeves T-shirt despite the winter chill at 5.4 degrees, the numbers only swelled with people, Congress workers and leaders joining it as the day progressed and the foot march straddled through the charted-out routes of Delhi. Rahul's mother and former Congress president Sonia Gandhi, sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and her husband Robert Vadra joined the Yatra just before it reached Ashram.

Continued on Page 2

Mathura court orders survey of Idgah mosque, report by Jan 20

Mathura (UP): A district court here has directed a revenue department official to submit a survey report of the Shahi Idgah mosque complex on January 20, according to the counsel for petitioners who have sought its shifting claiming it was built at the birthplace of Lord Krishna.

The order by Civil Judge Senior Division (III) Sonika Verma came in the suit Bal Krishna and others Vs Intezamia committee and others, petitioners' counsel Shailesh Dubey said on Saturday.

Continued on Page 2

RT-PCR must for flyers from China, S Korea, Japan, Thailand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With China grappling with its first-ever national Covid-19 wave, the Centre on Saturday made RT-PCR test mandatory for international arrivals from China, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Thailand.

Also, it urged States and Union Territories to ensure the availability of Liquid Medical Oxygen, adequate inventory of cylinders and functional life support equipment such as ventilators at hospitals to face any challenge.

Continued on Page 2



CAPSULE

TV ACTOR TUNISHA KILLS SELF ON SET

Palghar: Television actor Tunisha Sharma (21) on Saturday allegedly committed suicide on the set of a serial in Vasai in Maharashtra's Palghar district, a police official said. P2

PAPER LEAK: TEACHER JOB EXAM CANCELLED

Jaipur: The general knowledge test for teachers recruitment in Rajasthan was cancelled after the question paper leak. P2

Sabse Pehle Life Insurance

Also Available Online

Invest once, enjoy guaranteed maturity with life cover



Plan No.: 866

UIN: 512N349V01

A Non-Linked, Non-Participating, Individual, Savings, Life Insurance Plan



A SINGLE PREMIUM PLAN

Take one step towards your family's security & prosperity



Option to choose Policy Term (10 years / 15 years)



Guaranteed Additions* upto ₹ 75/- per Thousand



Options to choose the Sum Assured (1.25 times or 10 times of Tabular Premium)

*Guaranteed Additions shall vary as per the chosen option, policy term and basic sum assured

Download

LIC Mobile App 'LIC Customer'



Visit: licindia.in



Call Centre Services (022) 6827 6827

For details, contact your Agent/Nearest LIC Branch/visit www.licindia.in or SMS YOUR CITY NAME TO 56767474

Follow us:



भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम

LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA

Har Pal Aapke Saath

BEWARE OF SPURIOUS PHONE CALLS AND FICTITIOUS / FRAUDULENT OFFERS. IRDAI is not involved in activities like selling insurance policies, announcing bonus or investment of premiums. Public receiving such phone calls are requested to lodge a police complaint. For more details on risk factors, terms and conditions, please read sales brochure carefully before concluding a sale.

Badal asks Punjab Guv to probe AAP’s ‘ad scam’

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Saturday urged the Punjab Governor to order a probe into the AAP’s alleged use of Rs 300 crore of public funds on advertisements to fulfil its “political goals.”

In a letter to Governor Banwarilal Purohit, the Shiromani Akali Dal chief said the Aam Aadmi Party had earmarked Rs 750 crore for government advertisements in the current financial year and has already spent a majority of this amount.

“Instead of spending this money to create awareness about government schemes in Punjab, the government had used the advertisements to promote AAP as well as its convener Arvind Kejriwal across the country,” Badal alleged in a party statement.

“The government has thus



not only violated the guidelines of the Supreme Court on usage of public funds for government advertisements but has also betrayed the trust of Punjabis,” he said.

Badal said that since the Delhi Lieutenant Governor had already taken notice of similar “wrongdoing” in Delhi and ordered a recovery of Rs 97 crore, the Punjab governor too should order a probe into the entire advertising spend of the state government on political campaigns so that this money could be recovered.

He also alleged that the government had used public funds for political advertisements in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat during the recent assembly elections in both states.

He said the entire process was “shrouded in secrecy” with the government refusing to even respond to an RTI query on its advertisement spend.

Paper leak: Teacher job exam cancelled

PTI ■ JAIPUR

The general knowledge test for teachers recruitment in Rajasthan was cancelled on Saturday after the question paper was allegedly leaked just hours before the commencement of the exam, and 44 people have been arrested.

The paper leak gang had allegedly taken Rs 10 lakh from each candidate for illegally providing them the questionnaire for the teachers’ recruitment test conducted by the Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC), police said, adding the arrested included the alleged mastermind of the scam and 37 students.

The examination will be reconducted on January 29, officials said.

“Today, on December 24, from 9 to 11 am, the general knowledge test for teacher



recruitment has been cancelled as a precaution so that no injustice is done to the hardworking youths,” Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot tweeted.

The chief minister asserted the government had enacted a strict law for transparency in recruitment examinations even as the opposition BJP attacked the Congress government, claiming it was the ninth incident of paper leak, and demanded strict action against the culprits.

Police said 37 students and seven ‘experts’ were held in Udaipur district. The alleged ‘mastermind’ of the paper leak, Suresh Vishnoi, a resident of Jodhpur, was among those arrested.

Azad adopting dictatorial attitude: Chand on being expelled from party

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Former Deputy Chief Minister Tara Chand, who along with two others was expelled by the Chairman of the Democratic Azad Party, has started washing dirty linen in the public by claiming Azad had adopted a ‘dictatorial’ attitude while handling the affairs of the newly launched party.

“We were working for the party at the ground level when we were informed about our expulsion. No notice was served to us. It is ‘undemocratic,’” Tara Chand told reporters while he along with his colleagues tendered mass resignations from the Democratic Azad party on Saturday.

A total number of 126 office bearers and party



supporters exited the newly launched party.

Though Tara Chand remained a close confidante of Azad throughout his political career in the Congress party, on Saturday he was unsparing.

“We devoted time to him. When he (Azad) resigned from the Congress party we stood behind him and joined him.

We were working hard day and night to strengthen the party at the grass roots but in return he rewarded us by expelling us from the party”.

Actor Tunisha found hanging on set of TV serial, suicide suspected

PTI ■ PALGHAR (MAHA)

Television actor Tunisha Sharma (21) on Saturday allegedly committed suicide on the set of a serial in Vasai in Maharashtra’s Palghar district, a police official said.

Sharma went to the washroom on the set and did not return for a long time. When the door was broken down, she was found hanging inside, he said.

A police team was at the spot, said senior inspector Kailash Barve of Valiv police station. Sharma had acted in several television serials.

Another police officer said that the police have detained a co-actor for questioning following a complaint filed by Tunisha’s mother. The body has been sent for post-mortem and further probe is on, he added.

Free food festival bringing religions together

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ MALAPPURAM

Even as whole of Kerala is echoing with “Swami Saranam and Ayyapa Saranam” from devotees undertaking their annual pilgrimage to the holy shrine atop the Western Ghats during the November-January season, a unique event which has been going uninterrupted for the last five decades remain unnoticed.

Along with the 41-day long Sabarimala festival, Unnikrishnan Panikker,

renowned Sanskrit and Vedic scholar based at Parappanangadi in Malappuram district, conducts Anna Daanam (free food festival) to the local population cutting across religion, caste and creed.

The venue, Nedumparambu Devi Temple, hosts the entire population of the town with six-course Kerala meals served on fresh plantain leaves with sweets.

What makes the Anna Daanam distinct is the demography of the district.

Malappuram is a Muslim majority district and all of them follow puritanical Islam. “So what? Our own religion says serving the poor will keep the dangers off. Panikker Ji follows the same path by feeding thousands of poor and needy during the entire festival season. He asks those who could afford to serve the poor to replicate the same and most of them are obliging him,” said Abdul Azeez, a businessman in Parappanangadi who is a close friend of Panikker.

Whatever Panikker earns

through his discourses, writings etc he spends on Anna Danam. The only time he had to call off the offering was in 2020 and 2021 due to the lock down enforced by the Covid-19 pandemic. A big majority of the people who take part in the feast are followers of Islam. “I get a sense of satisfaction when I see the smiling faces of school students, youngsters and the infirmed people who make it to the temple to join the Anna Danam. Their religions and beliefs are not my issues,” Panikker told The Pioneer.

The last one week of the event stands out because of the performances by traditional artists who stage Ottamthullal, folk dances, chakyar koothu which are the ancient art forms of Kerala. “If ten or fifteen persons come forward to emulate Panikker, Kerala would turn out to be the real God’s Own Country,” said Althaf Mohammed, a regular visitor to the Anna Daanam event. Many friends and associates of Panikker have started sending commodities for the feast. “This is one of the reasons behind

Malappuram’s uniqueness. We stand by the dictum Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and serving the poor is akin to serving God. What we feel in the company of Panikker is a sense of oneness,” said Mohammed.

Panikker’s contributions to society are unparalleled. During the Sabarimala stand off on the entry of women to the shrine, he urged restraint and consensus to surmount the issues. “Whatever I am blessed with God , I give it back to society. I am happy to note that many persons have come



forward to do the same,” said Panikker who has authored books on Indian philosophy and astrology.

This is the same Malappuram which has been classified by politicians as mini-Pakistan!

Sea of humanity

From Page 1

Rahul’s sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and her husband Robert Vadra joined the Yatra just before it reached Ashram. This was the second time that Sonia joined the Yatra that began in September from Kanyakumari. She had first taken part in the march in October when it was in Karnataka. Also, this was the first time the entire Gandhi family walked together in the Yatra.

The atmosphere attained a festive hue as slogans cheering Rahul and the Yatra rented through the air even as drums and patriotic songs played along and the enthusiasm of the Congress yatris was at its peak. The road from Badapur to Ashram was decked up with tricolours, balloons and banners of Rahul as the Yatra entered Delhi from the Faridabad side in Haryana. Party workers had lined up along the route and showered

flower petals on the yatris. A large number of workers from Delhi Congress, led by Delhi unit chief Anil Chaudhary, welcomed Rahul and the Yatris at the Delhi border in Badapur.

A group of visually-impaired students from South Delhi’s Lajpat Nagar area set up a camp on one of the routes of Yatra. Around 15-20 blind students gathered on the route of Apollo hospital holding banners and chanting slogans “Nafrat Chodo, Bharat Jodo” (forget hatred, unite India). Saransh, a visually-impaired student, said they participated in the Yatra to “protest against rising unemployment” in the country. He said there are several blind students who have excelled in education but remained unemployed for years. Gulshan Kumar, another 12-year-old blind student, said he participated in the Yatra aiming to “eliminate hatred between communities” and raise his “voice against

inflation.”

Apart from several senior Congress leaders like Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Kumari Selja, Randeep Surjewala, Shaktisinh Gohil, Bahujan Samaj Party MP Shyam Singh Yadav and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) leader T Sumathi also took part in the padyatra with Rahul. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh joined Rahul at Nizamuddin dargah where Rahul offered chadar. The yatra reached Ashram Chowk in South Delhi around 10 am where Rahul and all other Bharat Yatris rested for a while at Jairam Ashram. Rahul visited the Siyaram Darbar here. At around 1 in the afternoon, the yatra started again

Actor-turned-politician Kamal Hasan joined the Yatra at ITO. Commuters in Delhi faced a torrid time on Saturday morning as traffic was severely affected in parts of the capital as the Congress’ Bharat Jodo

Yatra, led by party leader Rahul, entered the city. Busy road stretches, such as the National Highway 24 at Ghazipur, Delhi Meerut expressway, the ITO intersection, Red Fort, India Gate and the Ashram chowk witnessed massive traffic snarls due to security arrangements and road diversions.

Rahul stopped his Yatra near Apollo hospital to give way to an ambulance in the morning and also asked fellow Yatris to give way to the ambulance.

Congress workers set up camps at various places on the route of the Yatra, where song and dance programmes were organised. Party supporters were seen chanting slogans like “Nafrat Chodo, Bharat Jodo” (quit hatred, unite India). A large number of youth supporters, who claimed to be protesting against “unemployment” by showing solidarity with the Yatra, were also seen.

seen lining up to have a glimpse of the procession. Security from Badapur to Red Fort was beefed up, with barricades erected and teams of police personnel deployed at multiple points. Heavy security arrangements and crowds at the Yatra led to massive traffic jams in major roads in Delhi.

A large number of people eager to catch a glimpse of the Congress leader thronged the roads, tried to occupy pavements and dividers or wherever they got space. “We reached Nizamuddin area in one-and-a-half hours from Ashram. There is so much traffic,” said Hemant, an autorickshaw driver who was ferrying passengers to drop them at the New Delhi railway station. The distance takes roughly about 25 minutes.

Another commuter, Amit, might miss his train to Ahmedabad. “You want to take out yatra, do it but think of the traffic and the problems people

face,” he said. On reaching near Nizamuddin dargah, many passengers were seen carrying their luggage and walking. One of the commuters, Suman, said no auto is ready to come on this route. “What we get to hear from auto rickshaw drivers is that since Bharat Jodo Yatra is going on, there is traffic jam, so they don’t wish to go through that route and so we have not been getting any vehicle,” he said.

Rajkumar, who left home to drop his sister to her work, got stuck and she got late for office. “We took almost two hours to reach Jungpura from Badapur due to this yatra. There is no proper traffic management,” he said.

Supriya was out to visit the dargah but decided to go back upon seeing the traffic and the crowd. “It is like madness here. No management. Why is traffic allowed on the road where people are walking,” she questioned.

Mathura court orders survey of Idgah....

From Page 1

“The learned judge had ordered Amin (term used to refer to a revenue department official) on December 8 to inform both the parties and submit a survey report on the next hearing,” the counsel said. The hearing in the case could not take place on December 22 as the judge was on leave on that day. The court has now fixed January 20, 2023 as the next date of hearing, when the survey report is to be filed.

He said Bal Krishna and others had filed the suit in the court of civil judge senior division (3rd) on December 8 for shifting of Shahi Masjid Idgah constructed on a part of 13.37 acre land of Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi trust allegedly after the demolition of Katra Keshav Dev temple by Mughal

emperor Aurangzeb. The “compromise” between Sri Krishna Janmasthan Seva Sansthan and Shahi Masjid Idgah made in 1968 was also challenged in the suit, according to lawyers. The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), meanwhile, said compliance of the court direction will help bring the truth out.

In a video message, the VHP working president Alok Kumar also hoped that the court’s order for the survey of the site will not be opposed. “We welcome the order and we look forward to it being presented to the court for a just decision,” Kumar said.

“We hope this survey will be conducted. Anyone, who has courage to face the truth and has nothing to hide, cannot oppose the survey,” he added.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT SOUTH CIVIL LINE, JABALPUR							
PHONE No. 0761-2678279 E-mail:- eepwdbrijbp@mp.nic.in							
NIT No 05./2022/CENTRALISED TENDERING/2022							
Online bids for the following works are invited from registered contractors and firms of repute fulfilling registration.							
S. No.	Tender Portal No.	District	Nature of Work	Name of Work	Call No	Probable Amount Contract (Rs. in lakh)	Physical Submission (Original EMD & other document) at the office of as mentioned.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	2022_PWDRB_238423_1	Mandla District	Bridge Wovk	CONSTRUCTION OF HIGH LEVEL BRIDGE I/C APPROACH ROAD ACROSS BITYADHAR NALLA ON SALHEDANDA NICHALI ROAD IN DISTT MANDLA	First	Rs 418.77 lacks	Chief Engineer PWD Bridge Zone Bhopal
2	2022_PWDRB_238427_1	Mandla District	Bridge Work	CONSTRUCTION OF SUBMERSIBLE BRIDGE I/C APPROACH ROAD ACROSS MATIYARI RIVER ON HIRDENAGAR DEVGAON ROAD IN DISTT MANDLA	First	Rs 1072.67 lacks	
3	2022_PWDRB_238430_1	Seoni District	Bridge Work	CONSTRUCTION OF SUBMERSIBLE BRIDGE ACROSS WAINGANGA RIVER NEAR SUNWARA ON BARBUSPUR SUNWARA AMANALA ROAD DISTT SEONI	First	Rs 822.70 lacks	
4	2022_PWDRB_238429_1	Seoni District	Bridge Work	CONSTRUCTION OF SUBMERSIBLE BRIDGE ACROSS BAWANTHADI RIVER ON PINDRAI TO KHANDASA ROAD. DISTT SEONI	First	Rs 441.52 lacks	
5	2022_PWDRB_238477	Katni District	Bridge Work	CONSTRUCTION OF SUBMMERSIBLE BRIDGE ACROSS KATNI RIVER ON AADARSH COLONY- MUKATIDHAM ROAD IN OF CITY. KATNI	First	Rs 635.22 lacks	
6	2022_PWDRB_238478_1	Balaghat District	Bridge Work	CONSTRUCTION OF H L BRIDGE ACROSS CHANDAN RIVER ON RAMPAYLI BITHLI ROAD IN BALAGHAT DISTT	First	Rs 1046.56 lacks	
7	2022_PWDRB_238973_1	Chhindwara District	Bridge Work	CONSTRUCTION OF SUBMERSIBLE BRIDGE ACROSS KULBEHRA RIVER IN DHIMERMETA KUIHYA ROAD DISTT. CHHINDWARA	Second	Rs 448.25 lacks	
8	2022_PWDRB_238979_1	Chhindwara District	Bridge Work	CONSTRUCTION OF SUBMERSIBLE BRIDGE ACROSS KULBEHRA RIVER IN NISHAN JANOJI UMARHAR ROAD DISTT CHHINDWARA	Second	Rs 431.02 lacks	
The document can only be purchased online from the above website after making online payment. The last date & time for purchase of Document online is Dated 02.01.2023 upto (18:00) Detailed NIT and other details can be viewed on the above mentioned portal. Amendments to NIT, if any, would be published on web-site only, and not in newspaper.							
The Original FDR & other document will be received online mentioned.							
Executive Engineer P.W.D. Bridge Construction Division, Jabalpur							
G-20784/22							

Time to take on hate...

From Page 1

After doing Hindu-Muslim 24 hours, they will hand over your money and sell all your ports, airports, roads and other assets to their crony friends.

“They try to divert your attention all the time.”

He said, “When I came to politics in 2004, our Government came to power and the media used to praise me throughout the day. Then what I did I went to Bhatta Parsaul (in UP) and raised the issue of farmers’ land. As soon as I raised it, the media turned against me. Thereafter, the media turned against me full time, 24 hours, when the Congress Government brought the Land Acquisition Bill.”

He alleged that Modi and the ruling BJP spent thousands of crores of rupees to destroy his image, but he has shown the truth to the country in just a month.

Thanking people for the love and support showered on him so far during the Yatra, the former Congress chief said after his request made in Rajasthan, people have opened lakhs of shops to spread love across the country. He pointed out that the Yatra aims at uniting India and will spread awareness against price rise,

unemployment, communal hatred and violence. “Dog, cow, pig, buffalo also came in the yatra but none harmed them,” he said. Senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad countered the Congress leader saying, “Rahul is talking about spreading love. But he is being accompanied by people who try to divide India. People belonging to ‘tukde tukde’ gang walked with him at different places during Bharat Jodo yatra. How can he spread love by walking with them?”

BJP MP Sudhanshu Trivedi took a dig at the Yatra’s winter break as he said, “The dedication of the Bharat Jodo Yatra can be gauged from the fact that it wasn’t postponed for the elections as well as for Parliament Session, but now when Christmas festival and New Year is coming, it appears that it will be postponed.”

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, who along with his predecessor Sonia Gandhi and actor-turned-politician Kamal Hassan, too was present at the rally in his address accused the BJP Government of trying to break the Yatra on the pretext of the renewed fear of Covid.

“The BJP is in fear due to Bharat Jodo Yatra and is taking excuse of Covid. There is no

Covid anywhere. Nothing happened to anyone. Modi himself doesn’t wear a mask. All this is being done to create fear among people and break this Yatra,” Kharge said. Earlier, addressing a gathering at the Delhi border as his Yatra entered Delhi, Rahul accused the RSS/BJP of spreading fear in the country and said they convert this fear into hatred but the Congress will not allow that to happen. “They spreadhatred, we spread love and embrace all Indians.”

“There is Hindustan and ‘Mohabbat’ (love) in this Bharat Jodo yatra, which does not see any caste, creed, religion, rich or poor and all embrace each other,” he said.

“RSS/BJP’s all policies are to spread fear. They want that everyone should have fear in them and they convert this ‘dar’ into ‘nafrat’ (fear into hatred). If there is no ‘dar’, it will not be converted into ‘nafrat’. We say ‘daro mat’. We spread Mohabbat. We embrace all Indians,” he said.

“As I had said a few days ago that in this market of hatred, we will open up a shop to spread love in society, every Indian should open a small shop to spread love. You would have seen there is no hatred in this yatra,” he said.

RT-PCR must for flyers from China, S Korea...

From Page 1

On arrival, if any passenger from these countries is found symptomatic or tests positive for Covid19, then s/he will be put under quarantine, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said. Talking to reporters in Gandhinagar, Mandaviya said filling up of the ‘Air Suvidha’ form to declare the health status will be made mandatory for passengers coming from these countries. “In view of the Covid-19 pandemic situation, passengers from China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Bangkok (Thailand) are required to upload their RT-PCR reports in advance (for travel to India). After landing in India, they will undergo thermal screening and we have issued an order for them to be quarantined if found positive or with fever on their arrival in the country,” the Minister said.

Mandaviya was in Gujarat capital to deliver a convocation address of the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER). “Yesterday, a Covid-19 advisory was issued. Through newspaper advertisements, people are being made aware.

In Parliament, I made a statement in which I urged people to mandatorily use masks, maintain social distancing and follow Covid-appropriate behaviour so that in future, India can be saved from the new BE.7 variant of the virus,” he said.

The Government has also advised all States and Union Territories to ensure a functional and regular supply of medical oxygen. In the letter, the Union Health Ministry urged States and Union Territories to hold a weekly review meeting to ensure the proper functioning of medical equipment. It also said that easy availability of life support equipment, liquid medical oxygen and oxygen cylinders should be ensured.

“Though the Covid cases in the country are low and not surging as of now, but to face any challenges arising in future, the operationalisation and maintenance of these medical infrastructures are of utmost importance,” the letter read. “With timely preparation and responsiveness, we will be able to meet the challenges associated with Covid-19, if any, that arise in future.”

Maa Tujhe Salaam: Rahul to Sonia

The love that I got from her, I am sharing same with country, Gandhi tweets



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with his mother and party leader Sonia Gandhi and his sister and general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during the Bharat Jodo Yatra, in New Delhi on Saturday

As former Congress president Sonia Gandhi joined the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Delhi on Saturday and walked with him for a short distance, Rahul Gandhi shared an emotional picture of their meeting.

In an emotional picture shared by Rahul on his Twitter handle showing the emotional bond between the mother and son captured during the yatra.

In the picture, Rahul can be seen putting a protective arm around her, holding her hand, as Sonia smiles. Sharing the post, Rahul said, "The love that I got from her, I am sharing the same with the country." Rahul's tweet, showing his emotional bond with his mother, went viral on social media.

This is the second time the former Congress president has joined the yatra that began in September from Kanyakumari. She had earlier taken part in the march in October when it was in Karnataka. Sonia was, wearing a face mask, walked with her son Rahul and daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for

a few minutes before the yatra reached the Ashram Chowk here for the morning halt.

This is the first time the entire family has walked in the Yatra together. Priyanka, Robert Vadra and her grandchildren were also seen waving to the public waiting along the roads to see the family.

In another photo, the mother and son can be seen sharing a hug as the camera captured the emotional

moment between the two. Official handle of Bharat Jodo Yatra tweeted picture of Rahul hugging his mother Sonia with the caption "Maa Tujhe Salaam! Vande Mataram."

Another post was shared by the party, which after loose translation from Hindi, reads, "These moments were created as the son — who was out to unite the country met his mother. Bharat Jodo Yatra reaches Delhi.

Rahul braves Delhi's cold without warm clothes

NEW DELHI: The national Capital on Saturday recorded the minimum temperature at 5.4 degrees Celsius, three notches below the season's normal, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

However, many senior leaders of the Congress party, including Sonia Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, and party chief Mallikarjun Kharge were seen wearing gloves, muf-



flers, and jackets while walking beside Rahul Gandhi in the yatra. Even in this severe winter, Rahul was not seen wearing any warm clothes like jumper, jacket, sweater or muffler. SR

Kamal... don't help break India, help unite: Haasan's inner voice

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Actor-turned-politician Kamal Haasan joined the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra in the afternoon near ITO on Saturday.

In one of the photos, Kamal is also seen holding the Congress leader's hands with others in support. While Kamal wore a grey sweater with black trousers and a black coat, Rahul opted for a grey polo t-shirt with black pants.

During the walk, Kamal said upon reaching the Red Fort, "Many people ask me why I am here. I am here as an Indian. My father was a Congressman. I had various ideologies and started my own political party but when it comes to the country, all political party lines have to blur. I blurred that line and came here."

"I stood in front of the mirror and said to myself — this is the time when the country needs me the most. Then a voice came from inside me 'Kamal... don't help break India, help unite'," he also said.

On social media handle, Hassan wrote, "Walking to



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with famous actor Kamal Haasan during the Bharat Jodo Yatra, near Red Fort in New Delhi on Saturday

RANJAN DIMRI | PIONEER

connect the legacy of our glorious past with our bright future @RahulGandhi @maimofficial #BharatJodoYatra #MakkalNeedhiMaam." On the other hand, Rahul also dropped a photo of himself and Kamal from the event.

He captioned it, "We walk for an India where no one lives in fear, and everyone finds a better

#BharatJodoYatra." Veteran actor Amol Palekar, writer — filmmaker Sandha Gokhale, Actress Pooja Bhatt, Riya Sen, Swara Bhaskar, Rashmi Desai, Akansha Puri, were among the Bollywood celebrities who were seen walking beside Rahul in his 108 das Bharat Jodo yatra.

It has been 107 days since the Bharat Jodo Yatra started from Kanyakumari.

Yatris flout Covid protocol

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid calls by the Health Ministry to follow Covid protocol following the BF.7 variant entry in India, thousands of Congress workers were seen joining the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Delhi on Saturday without wearing mask and walking shoulder-to-shoulder with the party leaders. Sonia Gandhi, only person wearing a face mask.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Robert Vadra and several other Congress leaders including Jairam Ramesh, Randeep Surjewala, Bhupinder Singh



Hooda, Pawan Khera, Anil Kumar and several others seen without mask during the yatra. Actor-turned-politician Kamal Haasan joined the yatra in the afternoon near ITO, also seen without a mask.

When asked, a Delhi Congress leader said Covid protocol is a BJP conspiracy to halt Rahul's yatra in Delhi. "I will not wear a mask as my leader Rahul was not wearing mask," he said.

Bharat Jodo clogs Capital's traffic

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Commuters in Delhi faced a horrid time on Saturday morning as traffic was severely affected in parts of the Capital as the Congress' Bharat Jodo Yatra, led by Rahul Gandhi, entered the city.

Busy road stretches, such as the National Highway 24 at Ghazipur, Delhi Meerut expressway, the ITO intersection, Red Fort, India Gate and the Ashram Chowk witnessed massive traffic snarls due to security arrangements and road diversions. Vehicular movement was affected in southeast



Traffic chaos at ITO during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in New Delhi on Saturday

RANJAN DIMRI | PIONEER

Delhi in the morning hours as the yatris marched into the city, and subsequently, near the India Gate as they resumed their walk after a break in the afternoon. The yatra made its morning halt in the national capital at Ashram Chowk at 11 am and later resumed at 1 PM.

The traffic police had issued an advisory on Friday cautioning commuters about the routes that were likely to be affected by the yatra. Police have put up sign boards requesting the yatris to march on the left side of the road. Cars and other vehicles were seen moving at a slow pace due the

congestion during the morning phase of the yatra. A large number of people eager to catch a glimpse of Congress leader thronged the roads, tried to occupy pavements and dividers or wherever they got space. Near the Nizamuddin dargah, many passengers were seen carrying their luggage and walking.

One of commuters, Suman, said no autorickshaw was ready to take route along which the yatra was proceeding. "What they tell us is that there are traffic snarls because of Bharat Jodo Yatra and they will not take that route," he said.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR INDIAN STUDENTS IN RUSSIA

There is an opportunity for Indian students to study in Russia on scholarships provided by the Russian government. Under the program, the Russian Government would allow 200 Indian students to pursue their higher education in Russian Institutions. The 200 scholarships include 150 scholarships granted on a general basis and 50 by a special quota.

This scholarship covers all the costs for the study itself and students do not have to pay any admission and tuition fees. They have a 50% discount on accommodation in the student house/hostel as well. However, the scholarship does not include travel and food expenses.

The students can apply for these scholarships online through the website <https://www.education-in-russia.com>. The above-mentioned website is a centralized platform. The Russian House in Delhi is one of the operators in the selection for the Russian Government's scholarships and no one else is authorized to do the same. All applications must be submitted by February 20, 2023.

The interested candidate has to take the following steps to apply:

1. The students must register on the website "Education in the Russian Federation for foreigners" (<https://www.education-in-russia.com>);

Thereafter the candidate must, among other things, choose the field of study or specialty as well as the level of education (bachelor's degree or master's degree or PhD program) and then choose six educational institutions in which he/she would like to study (in priority order: 1st - high priority; 2nd - less priority; 3rd - less priority etc.).

2. The candidate would have to attach scanned copies of the following original documents along with the application:

- passport;
- certificate and mark sheets of the 10th and 12th classes (for candidates who apply for bachelor's and specialist's degrees); degree and a full transcript of marks - if they apply for master's or PhD programs;
- consent to the processing of personal data (to be printed from the website, signed and



- uploaded back);
- application form (to be printed from the website, signed, and uploaded back);
- The students who would finish their school in 2023 must provide 10th and 11th class results and a letter from the school confirming that they are currently undergoing a 12th class program and will attend the final exams this year.
- Students who finish their educational programs (bachelor's and master's degrees) in 2023 must provide all semester-wise mark sheets available at the moment and a letter from university confirming that they are



a final-year student and will graduate in 2023 upon successful completion of their final exams;

All candidates applying for Ph.D. programs must additionally provide a copy of their research paper, a list of scientific publications, and a recommendation letter from the Russian university, where they want to undergo their studies.

3. After completing the application, the students must send it for consideration, transferring it to the appropriate status on the website till February 20, 2022. Applications that have not been transferred from the "Draft" status till this time will not be accepted for consideration. The candidates can choose only one field of study/specialty within the same level of education.

The selection of candidates will be held in the following forms:

- Competition of documents on education and qualifications;
- Portfolio competition;
- Creative test (for applicants applying for specialties and fields of study that require applicants to have certain cre-



ative abilities, physical and psychological qualities). The preliminary results of the selection will be announced between February 21 and 28. The persons who pass successfully the admission campaign will be obliged to add the document package with:

- medical certificate;

- certificate of the absence of AIDS/HIV;
- certificate of the absence of all types of hepatitis and tuberculosis;
- Translations of all documents into Russian duly certified by the Russian consulate and upload them to the website (<https://www.education-in-russia.com>) till March 15, 2023.

The admission campaign on a special quota is carried out separately from the general one. If you are interested in that, please inform the Russian House about it by sending an email to v.gorelykh@ind.rs.gov.ru. For any additional information the interested candidate can contact by e-mail v.gorelykh@ind.rs.gov.ru or by WhatsApp number + 7 985 638 38 30.

Maldives condemns threat to Indian High Commission, orders probe

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/MALE, MALDIVES

Taking strong exception to the threat issued to the Indian High Commission in its capital Male, the Maldives Government on Saturday condemned the “incident of arson and terrorism.”

It also said the Government is investigating this threat “very seriously and all necessary precautionary measures have been taken by the authorities.”

Giving this assurance, the Maldives Government said “such threats of malicious intent aimed at undermining the security of the diplomatic corps and disrupting public safety will not be tolerated.”

This stern message came after a member of the opposition Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) Abbas Adil Riza called for an arson attack on the mission in a tweet.

In Dhivehi, he tweeted, “The 8th February arson attacks in Addu were carried



out on India's order. We haven't retaliated to that yet. I propose we start from the Indian High Commission.”

Abbas was the Commissioner General of Customs during former President Abdul Yameen's administration. Relations with India suffered during his regime.

Besides the government there assuring strong action, political parties, including the ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), condemned the threat. Two other political parties also condemned it.

The ruling MDP, which has over 60 seats in Parliament,



part of the ruling coalition, denounced the comments made by Abbas Riza and “ongoing efforts to promote hatred and violence against friendly nations”.

The development comes even as the opposition in the country has been spearheading an anti-India campaign “India Out”.

Earlier this year saw major disruption at the Yoga Day celebration organised by the Indian High Commission in Maldives, along with the country's Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment and UN Maldives.

urged the authorities to investigate the matter and criticised the “opposition's continuous effort to incite violence and hatred towards friendly nations”.

The Maldives Third-Way Democrats, which was the first political party to condemn the call for the attack, highlighted that “India is our closest neighbour and they are always there for the Maldives in every time we needed.”

Maldives Reform Movement asked, “authorities to investigate and take strong action against” the remarks, terming it as “hate speech”.

Jumhooree Party, which is

NEP futuristic educational system, says Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday regretted the neglect of education by previous regimes and maintained that by way of new National Education Policy (NEP), “a forward-looking and futuristic education system” was being created in the country for the first time.

The Prime Minister, who was addressing the 75th ‘Amrit Mahotsav’ of Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul at Rajkot , said the number of premier educational institutions like IITs, IIITs, IIMs and AIIMS is increasing substantially in the country.

“After 2014, the number

of medical colleges has seen more than 65 per cent rise”, said Modi.

“Through the new education policy, the country is for the first time preparing an education system which is forward-looking and futuristic,” he added.

When the country became independent, it was our responsibility to revive India's ancient glory and our great pride in the field of education, he said.

“But under the pressure of the slave mentality, the governments did not move in that direction. And in some matters they went in the reverse direction. In these circumstances, once again our saints and acharyas took

up the task of fulfilling this duty towards the country. Swaminarayan Gurukul is a living example of this opportunity,” he said.

He said it is a duty to revive the glory of the ancient Indian education system in the immediate aftermath of independence. Where earlier governments faltered ,said the Prime Minister.

Complaining Swaminarayan Gurukul, Modi also urged the students of Gurukul to travel to Northeast India for a minimum of 15 days and connect with the people to further strengthen the nation.

Hailing India's ancient ‘gurukul’ (residential schooling) system of education, the



Prime Minister said knowledge has been the highest purpose of life in the country, and added that saints and spiritual leaders helped revive the country's lost glory in the field of education.

“You know very well that for India's bright future, our

Bodies of 16 Army men killed in Sikkim accident sent home

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Bodies of 16 Army personnel, including three Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO), killed in a road accident in Sikkim on Friday, were airlifted to their native places in the country on Saturday. Governor of Sikkim Ganga Prasad, Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang and Army and Air Force officials paid their last respects to the jawans after a gun salute.

The deceased were identified as Naib Subedar Chandan Kumar Mishra and Naib Subedar Omkar Singh of 285 Medical regiment, Lance Havildar Gopinath Makur, Sepoy Sukha Ram, Havildar Charan Singh and Naik Ravinder Singh Thapa of 26 Mechanised Infantry, the Army said.

Mishra hailed from Khagaria in Bihar, while Omkar Singh was from Pathankot in Punjab, Makur from Bankura in West Bengal, Ram from Jodhpur in Rajasthan, Charan Singh from Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh and

Thapa from Pantnagar in Uttarakhand.

From the 221 Field Regiment, Naik Vaisakh S and Naik Pramod Singh were among the deceased, while from the 25 Grenadiers, four soldiers who perished in the accident are Lance Naik Bhupendra Singh, Naik Shyam Singh Yadav, Naik Lokesh Kumar and Grenadier Vikas Kumar.

Vaisakh was from Palakkad in Kerala, Pramod Singh hailed from Ara in Bihar, Bhupendra Singh was from Eta, Yadav from Unnao, Lokesh Kumar from Muzaffarnagar, all three places in Uttar Pradesh, while Vikas Kumar was a resident of Fatehabad, Haryana.

Subedar Guman Singh and L/Havildar Arvind Singh from 8 Rajasthan Rifles, L/Naik Somvir Singh of 113 Engineer Regiment and L/Naik Manoj Kumar of 1871 Field Regiment were also among the soldiers who died in the accident, the Army said.

Guman Singh was a resident of Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, while Arvind Singh was from



Bhiwani, Haryana, Somvir Singh hailed from Hissar Haryana and Manoj Kumar from Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan.

Wreaths were laid at a solemn ceremony held in Sikkim on Saturday for the 16 Army personnel. They died when the Army truck they were travelling in skidded down a steep slope at Zema in North Sikkim on Friday morning.

The ill-fated Army truck was part of a three-vehicle convoy that was travelling from Chatten to Thangu. A rescue operation was immediately launched and four injured soldiers were air evacuated to

Siliguri and now undergoing treatment at a military hospital.

The bodies of the deceased were airlifted from Libing helipad in East Sikkim to Bagdogra airport near Siliguri city in northern West Bengal. The bodies were then sent to the jawans' homes in different parts of the country, he said.

The mortal remains were earlier brought to Sochethang near Gangtok in army vehicles and post-mortem examination was conducted. Senior civil and police officials were present at the hospital to pay their last respects to the departed souls.

NIA searches 14 places in Punjab, J&K, Delhi in case linked to Khalistani ultras

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday conducted searches at 14 different locations in Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi in connection with a terror case relating to the Khalistani terrorists.

The case relates to terror activities of chiefs/members of proscribed terrorist organizations, such as Khalistan Liberation Force, Babbar Khalsa International and International Sikh Youth Federation among others.

“Such activities include smuggling of terrorist hard-



ware, such as arms, ammunition, explosive and IEDs across international borders, for use by operatives/members of terror outfits and organized criminal gangs operating in various parts of the country for carrying out terrorist acts like bomb explosions, targeted killings,” the NIA said in a statement.

This case was registered suo-moto by the NIA on August 20.

During the searches, incriminating materials, including digital devices and documents have been seized and further investigations in the case are in progress, it said.

Meanwhile, NIA Special Court, Assam has pronounced judgment/sentence in Hizbul-Mujahideen recruitment case.

On Friday, NIA Special Court, Guwahati convicted Md. Shahnowaj Alom alias Shahnawaj Alam of Baliram Pathar under Hojai district and Md. Omar Faruque alias Omar Faruk, of Solmari from the same district.

Govt’s move to revise OROP result of Rahul’s Bharat Jodo: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Government's decision to revise the pension of ex-servicemen under the ‘one rank, one pension’ scheme, the Congress on Saturday welcomed it and asserted it is the result of the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra which raised the issue.

Congress general secretary communications Jairam Ramesh said one should “understand the chronology” of the issue as ex-servicemen had only two days ago met Rahul Gandhi during the Yatra and highlighted the issue.

“We are happy that pension arrears of ex-servicemen will be given. This is the direct effect of the Bharat Jodo Yatra... Rahul ji's meeting yielded the decision of the union cabinet two days later. We welcome this decision,” Ramesh told reporters at a press conference during the

morning halt of the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

“Understand the chronology of OROP. This is the impact of the Bharat Jodo Yatra,” he later said adding “All ex-servicemen feel that the OROP has not been implemented in letter and spirit what the UPA had decided.”

The government on Friday approved the revision of the pension of armed forces personnel under the ‘One Rank One Pension’ (OROP) scheme with retrospective effect from July 1, 2019 – a decision that will benefit around 25 lakh pensioners.

The announcement was made after a meeting of the Union Cabinet presided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Ramesh recalled that in September the central government had filed an affidavit before the Supreme Court asking the apex court to allow it time to resolve this matter till March 2023.

Rahul during the Bharat Jodo Yatra on December 21 in Firozpur Jhirka in Haryana met 30 ex-servicemen who had raised two issues on arrears of pension and the OROP not being implemented fully, he said.

The second issue, he said, was from JCOs saying that OROP is beneficial to senior officers and not to junior officers who retire earlier.

Ramesh said since March 2022, the Modi government sought an extension in the Supreme Court four times to implement the revision of the pension of ex-servicemen and clear their pension arrears.

“As recently as on 14th December 2022... when the extension to implement revision was finishing on December 15, 2022, the government filed a Miscellaneous Application to skirt the issue and to buy more time till 15th March 2023.

“Rahul Gandhi meets ex-



servicemen on December 21st, 2022 at Ferozepur-Jhirka in Haryana as part of the Bharat Jodo Yatra. They raise this issue and give him a memorandum and he supports their demands, which is given wide publicity,” he said in a statement.

“Defence Minister announces the clearance of arrears after Cabinet meeting on the evening of December 23rd before Bharat Jodo Yatra

enters New Delhi,” he said.

The Congress leader said the ‘One Rank One Pension’ as announced by the UPA government on February 26, 2014 is far from implemented, both in letter and spirit.

“The Bharat Jodo Yatra will continue to successfully raise the voice of our ex-servicemen. We are committed to the implementation of OROP as per the UPA's government's orders,” he said.

2 NHAI officials booked in DA case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has booked two officials of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) in two separate cases of disproportionate assets.

In the first case, Deputy General Manager and Project Director of NHAI in Patna Prabhanshu Shekhar is alleged to have acquired disproportionate assets to the tune of Rs 1,69,24, 244 crore during the check period of January 1, 2016 to September 23 this year.

During the check period, he had a net income of Rs 73,53,224 from his salary. His expenditure was calculated to be Rs 52,62,735 and the likely saving was Rs 20,90,489.

During the period, he acquired and possessed assets in the form of vehicles, land and houses at various places in his name and in the name of his family members. Besides these properties, he also possessed huge quantities of gold, diamond and silver orna-



ments. The assets and jewellery were worth Rs 1,90, 14, 733.

The disproportionate asset during the check period has been computed at Rs 1,90, 14,733 of which Rs 20,90,489 was the likely saving. The net disproportionate asset was calculated to be Rs 1,69,24, 244 which is 230.16 percent of his net income during the period.

Likewise, Chief General Manager of NHAI, Patna, Sadre Alam acquired assets worth Rs 71,01,250 against his net income of Rs 25,52,056 and likely savings of Rs 10,44,355 during the check period from July 2021 to September 2022.

Treatment fees waived for UDID card holders at NIs from Jan 1

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

There's a new year gift to persons with disabilities holding the UDID cards!

At all national institutes (NIs) (autonomous bodies under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) and Composite Regional Centers (CRCs) (extended arms of NIs), registration/diagnostics/ treatment fees have been waived off for UDID card holders, as well as for those who have disability certificate and are enrolled on UDID portal, irrespective of percentage of disability from January, 1 next year.

In addition, full course fee will be waived off for those students of various courses at NIs/CRCs, who are UDID card holders, as well as for those who have disability certificate and are enrolled on UDID portal, irrespective of percentage of disability. This will be effective for 2022-23



batch students onwards (including those who are doing two years or more duration courses and are in their 2nd/3rd/4th year), said a statement from the Ministry here.

Further, each NI and CRC have been instructed to have a dedicated counter to help PwDs in filing UDID applications and to provide treatment facilities to all persons on Saturday and Sunday also.

Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment Dr. Virendra Kumar while appreciating the move stated that such an initiative will pave the way for other government organizations to link the UDID card with the benefits to persons with disabilities.

Students from 19 States come together at ‘BEEP student camp’



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

About 50 young students from architecture and engineering backgrounds from 19 States came together at a BEEP Student Camp - at CRDE, CEPT University, Ahmedabad resolving that there is a need to alter the way we now design and build our buildings in light of the problems posed by climate change. The 5th edition of the eight-day BEEP Students residential programme also discussed the critical role of training young minds & creating mass awareness to achieve India's Net-Zero commitment to curb climate change impact.



Gajraj Corps Commander Lt Gen DS Rana was in Yangtse, Tawang sector at 16,000 feet during a forward area visit on Saturday. He inaugurated the bust of Maj Bob Khathing. Lt Gen Rana appreciated the high morale of troops



Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath meets PM Narendra Modi in Delhi on Saturday

Packed ICUs, crowded crematoriums in China

Covid's new wave wreaks havoc in Chinese towns

AP ■ BAZHOU (CHINA)

Yao Ruyan paced frantically outside the fever clinic of a county hospital in China's industrial Hebei province, 70 kilometres (43 miles) southwest of Beijing.

Her mother-in-law had COVID-19 and needed urgent medical care, but all hospitals nearby were full. "They say there's no beds here," she barked into her phone.

As China grapples with its first-ever national COVID-19 wave, emergency wards in small cities and towns southwest of Beijing are overwhelmed.

Intensive care units are turning away ambulances, relatives of sick people are searching for open beds, and patients are slumped on benches in hospital corridors and lying on floors for a lack of beds. Yao's elderly mother-in-law had fallen ill a week ago. They went first to a local hospital, where lung scans showed signs of

pneumonia. But the hospital couldn't handle COVID-19 cases, Yao was told. She was told to go to hospitals in adjacent counties. As Yao and her husband drove from hospital to hospital, they found all the wards were full. Zhuozhou Hospital, an hour's drive from Yao's hometown, was the latest disappointment.

"I'm furious," Yao said, tearing up, as she clutched the lung scans from the local hospital. "I don't have much hope. We've been out for a long time and I'm terrified because she's having difficulty breathing."

Over two days, AP journalists visited five hospitals and two crematoriums in towns and small cities in Baoding and Langfang prefectures, in central Hebei province. The area was the epicentre of one of China's first outbreaks after the state loosened Covid-19 controls in November and December. For weeks, the region went quiet, as people fell ill and stayed home.



Relatives attend to a sick patient in a wheelchair at the emergency department of the Langfang No. 4 People's Hospital in Bazhou city in northern China's Hebei province. As China grapples with its first-ever wave of Covid mass infections, emergency wards in the towns and cities to Beijing's southwest are overwhelmed. Intensive care units are turning away ambulances, residents are driving sick relatives from hospital to hospital, and patients are lying on floors for a lack of space

AP Photo

Many have now recovered. Today, markets are bustling, diners pack restaurants and cars are honking in snarling traffic, even as the virus is spreading in other parts of

China. In recent days, headlines in state media said the area is "starting to resume normal life." But life in central Hebei's emergency wards and crematoriums is anything but normal.

Even as the young go back to work and lines at fever clinics shrink, many of Hebei's elderly are falling into critical condition. It could be a harbinger of what's to come for the rest

of China. The Chinese government has reported only seven Covid-19 deaths since restrictions were loosened dramatically on December 7, bringing the country's total toll to 5,241. On Tuesday, a Chinese health official said that China only counts deaths from pneumonia or respiratory failure in its official Covid-19 death toll. Experts have forecast between a million and 2 million deaths in China next year, and the World Health Organisation warned that Beijing's way of counting would "underestimate the true death toll." At Baoding No. 2 Hospital, in Zhuozhou, on Wednesday, patients thronged the hallway of the emergency ward. Patients were breathing with the help of respirators. One woman wailed after doctors told her that a loved one had died.

At the Zhuozhou crematorium, furnaces are burning overtime as workers struggle to cope with a spike in deaths in the past week, according to one employee.

A funeral shop worker estimated it is burning 20 to 30 bodies a day, up from three to four before Covid-19 measures were loosened. "There's been so many people dying," said

Zhao Yongsheng, a worker at a funeral goods shop near a local hospital. "They work day and night, but they can't burn them all."

Over two hours at the Gaobeidian crematorium on Thursday, AP journalists observed three ambulances and two vans unload bodies. "There's been a lot!" a worker said when asked about the number of Covid-19 deaths, before funeral director Ma Xiaowei stepped in and brought the journalists to meet a local government official. As the official listened in, Ma confirmed there were more cremations, but said he didn't know if Covid-19 was involved. He blamed the extra deaths on the arrival of winter.

But even as anecdotal evidence and modelling suggests large numbers of people are getting infected and dying, some Hebei officials deny the virus has had much impact.

"There's no so-called explosion in cases, it's all under control," said Wang Ping, the administrative manager of Gaobeidian Hospital, speaking by the hospital's main gate.

Wang said only a sixth of the hospital's 600 beds were occupied, but refused to allow

AP journalists to enter. Two ambulances came to the hospital during the half hour AP journalists were present, and a patient's relative told the AP they were turned away from Gaobeidian's emergency ward because it was full.

In Bazhou, a city 100 kilometres (60 miles) east of Gaobeidian, a hundred or more people packed emergency ward of Langfang No. 4 People's Hospital on Thursday night.

Guards worked to corral the crowds as people jostled for positions. With no space in the ward, patients spilled into corridors and hallways. Sick people sprawled on blankets on the floor as staff frantically wheeled gurneys and ventilators. In a hallway, half a dozen patients wheezed on metal benches as oxygen tanks pumped air into their noses.

Over two hours, AP journalists witnessed half a dozen or more ambulances pull up to the hospital's ICU and load critical patients to sprint to other hospitals, even as cars pulled up with dozens of new patients.

A beige van pulled up to the ICU and honked frantically at a waiting ambulance. "Move!" the driver shouted.

7 dead, 58 injured as Russia shells Kherson



A Ukrainian soldier fires towards Russian positions at a frontline near Maryinka, Donetsk region, Ukraine on Friday

AP Photo

AP ■ Kyiv

Russian shells pummeled the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson on Saturday, killing seven people and injuring 58 more in the city that Moscow's forces were forced to abandon last month. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, just back from his quick trip to Washington, posted photos of the wreckage on his social media accounts. He noted the destruction came as Ukrainians were beginning Christmas celebrations that for many Orthodox Christians will culminate in the traditional celebration Jan. 7.

"This is not sensitive content — it's the real life of Kherson," Zelenskyy tweeted.

The images showed cars on fire, bodies on the street and building windows blown out.

The deputy head of the presidential office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, said seven people were killed in the shelling of Kherson on Saturday and 58 were injured, at least 16 of them seriously. Saturday marks 10 months since the start of the Russian invasion.

Ukraine has faced a blistering onslaught of Russian artillery fire, missiles, shelling and drone attacks since early October, much of it targeting the energy infrastructure in a bid to cut electricity and heating services as the freezing winter advances. The shelling has been especially intense in

Kherson since Russian forces withdrew and Ukraine's army reclaimed the southern city in November. Earlier Saturday, the Donetsk regional governor, Pavlo Kyrylenko, said two people were killed and five wounded in shelling there over the past day. The deaths were in Kurakhove, a town of about 20,000 that is 30 kilometers west of Russian-controlled Donetsk city.

About 60 shells in total hit three communities during the night in the area of Nikopol, said the Dnipropetrovsk regional governor, Valentyn Reznichenko.

Steppe, a settlement on the outskirts of Zaporizhzhia, was also hit by shelling but there were no details on casualties, according to the governor, Oleksander Starukh, Zelenskyy has returned to Kyiv following his trip to Washington, in which he secured a nother USD 1.8 billion military aid package. On Friday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the war would end at the negotiating table once the "special military operation" achieves Russia's goals.

He said no reported Ukrainian peace plan can succeed without taking into account "the realities of today that can't be ignored" — a reference to Moscow's demand that Ukraine recognize Russia's sovereignty over the Crimean Peninsula, which was annexed in 2014, as well as other territorial gains.

China blasts US defence bill while Taiwan welcomes



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, fighter jets of the Eastern Theater Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) conduct a joint combat training exercises around the Taiwan Island on Aug. 7, 2022

AP file photo

AP ■ BEIJING

China blasted an annual US defence spending bill for hyping up the "China threat" while Taiwan welcomed the legislation, saying it demonstrated US support for the self-governing island that China says must come under its rule.

"China deplores and firmly opposes this US move," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement posted online Saturday, calling the new law a serious political provocation that blatantly interferes in China's internal affairs.

President Joe Biden signed the USD 858 billion defense bill into law in Washington on Friday. It includes about USD 45 billion more than Biden had requested as lawmakers look to offset inflation and boost the nation's military competitiveness with China and Russia.

The bill also repealed a COVID-19 vaccination

requirement for US troops.

In the Indo-Pacific region, the legislation authorises increased security cooperation with Taiwan and requires expanded cooperation with India on emerging defence technologies, readiness and logistics.

A Taiwan Foreign Ministry statement thanked the US Congress "for showing the great importance it attaches to Taiwan-US relations and strengthening Taiwan's security." China objects to US support for Taiwan, an island of 23 million people off its east coast. The two split during the civil war that brought the communists to power in China in 1949. The Chinese Foreign Ministry statement said the US defence bill "severely affects peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait."

China staged major military exercises around Taiwan in August after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited the island.

SA mall's bustles with shoppers despite nationwide power outage on Christmas

AP ■ JOHANNESBURG

Christmas lights twinkle, holiday music plays and Johannesburg's popular Rosebank mall bustles with shoppers.

Then the lights go out. The shops are pitch dark. "Hold on to your wallets," calls out a customer to rueful chuckles.

A long minute later the distant hum of a generator can be heard. The lights and music flicker back on and clerks resume ringing up purchases.

South Africa's Christmas 2022 is a start/stop affair, with the country's nationwide power cuts hitting just about every aspect of the holiday. Businesses and families are coping with rolling outages of electricity totaling seven to 10 hours per day.

The chugging of diesel generators can be heard at stores and restaurants from posh areas to townships. Patrons know to walk far around them to avoid the noxious fumes.

The festive calendar of celebrations with family and friends is now a meticulous dance around the daily schedule of power cuts. Holiday baking and video streaming are planned for when there will be power.

Most South African households now have a ready supply of solar lights, kerosene lamps and candles to keep



from being in total darkness. South Africa's state utility, Eskom, has battled to meet the demand for electricity in the continent's most industrialized economy for more than 10 years but the problem has become acute this year.

A major problem is that the power company relies on an array of older coal-fired power plants that experience frequent breakdowns. Adding to the woes is a shortage of skilled technicians and corruption.

Eskom said this week that it has been forced to enforce its highest level of power cuts so far — Stage 6 — over the holiday period because of breakdowns at eight generating units. This is particularly surprising because there is reduced demand for electricity over the Christmas and New Year period as many factories and mines close during the holidays.

The power company's failure to supply adequate electricity has put a damper on economic growth for years. Amid worsening power cuts, the chief of Eskom announced his resignation this month. President Cyril Ramaphosa's failure to solve the country's power problems was one of the most pointed criticisms of him last week at the national conference of his ruling party, the African National Congress.

At the busy Sandton City mall in Johannesburg, many shoppers watched the time so that they could be home in time to cook while they still had power.

"We have to look at the schedule ... and then we can do everything that needs to be cooked. Or we use a gas stove. And we can lay the table outside, do the candlelights and it's going to be beautiful," said an optimistic Molalo Mishapo.

Winter storm engulfs US, halting Christmas travels

AP ■ MISSION, KAN

A wild winter storm continued to envelop much of the United States on Saturday, bringing blinding blizzards, freezing rain, flooding and life-threatening cold that created mayhem for those traveling for the Christmas holiday.

The storm that arrived earlier in the week downed power lines, littered highways with piles of cars in deadly accidents and led to mass flight cancellations.

The storm was nearly unprecedented in its scope, stretching from the Great Lakes near Canada to the Rio Grande along the border with Mexico.

About 60 per cent of the U.S. population faced some sort of winter weather advisory or warning, and temperatures plummeted drastically below normal from east of the Rocky Mountains to the Appalachians, the National Weather Service said.

Freezing rain coated much of the Pacific Northwest in a layer of ice, while people in the



A wave slams into the rocks at Portland Head Light, Maine, during a powerful winter storm in Cape Elizabeth, Maine

AP photo

Northeast faced the threat of coastal and inland flooding. The frigid temperatures and gusty winds were expected to produce "dangerously cold wind chills across much of the central and eastern U.S. this holiday weekend," the weather service said, adding that the conditions "will create a potentially life-threatening hazard for travelers that become stranded." "In some areas, being outdoors could lead to frostbite in

minutes," it said. Adding to the woes were power outages that by late Friday were still affecting more than a million homes and businesses, according to the website PowerOutage, which tracks utility reports.

As millions of Americans were traveling ahead of Christmas, more than 5,700 flights within, into or out of the U.S. were canceled Friday, according to the tracking site FlightAware. Multiple high-

ways were closed and crashes claimed at least six lives, officials said. Four people died in a massive pileup involving some 50 vehicles on the Ohio Turnpike. A Kansas City, Missouri, driver was killed Thursday after skidding into a creek, and three others died Wednesday in separate crashes on icy northern Kansas roads.

In Canada, WestJet canceled all flights Friday at Toronto Pearson International Airport, as meteorologists there warned of a potential once-in-a-decade weather event.

While in Mexico, migrants camped near the U.S. border in unusually cold temperatures as they awaited a U.S. Supreme Court decision on pandemic-era restrictions that prevent many from seeking asylum.

Forecasters said a bomb cyclone — when atmospheric pressure drops very quickly in a strong storm — had developed near the Great Lakes, stirring up blizzard conditions, including heavy winds and snow. Even people in Florida

were braced for unusually chilly weather as rare freeze warnings were issued for large parts of the state over the holiday weekend.

Activists were rushing to get homeless people out of the cold. Nearly 170 adults and children were keeping warm early Friday in Detroit at a shelter and a warming center that are designed to hold 100 people.

"This is a lot of extra people" but it wasn't an option to turn anyone away, said Faith Fowler, the executive director of Cass Community Social Services, which runs both facilities.

Emergency weather shelters in Portland, Oregon, called for volunteers amid high demand and staffing issues as snow, freezing rain, ice and frigid temperatures descended upon the area.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem said she was deploying the National Guard to haul timber to the Oglala Sioux and Rosebud Sioux tribes and help with snow removal.

Taliban use water cannon on women protesting university ban in Afghan

AP ■ KABUL

Taliban security forces used a water cannon to disperse women protesting the ban on university education for women on Saturday, eyewitnesses said, as the decision from the Taliban-led government continues to cause outrage and opposition in Afghanistan and beyond.

The development came after Afghanistan's Taliban rulers on Tuesday banned female students from attending universities effective immediately. Afghan women have since demonstrated in major cities against the ban, a rare sign of domestic protest since the Taliban seized power last year.

According to eyewitnesses in the western city of Herat, about two dozen women on Saturday were heading to the provincial governor's house to protest the ban, chanting: "Education is our right," when they were pushed back by security forces firing the water



cannon. Video shared with The Associated Press shows the women screaming and hiding in a side street to escape the water cannon. They then resume their protest, with chants of "Disgraceful!"

One of the protest organizers, Maryam, said between 100 and 150 women took part in the protest, moving in small groups from different parts of the city toward a central meeting point. She did not give her last name for fear of reprisals.

"There was security on every street, every square, armored vehicles and armed men," she said. "When we started our protest, in Tariqi Park, the Taliban took branches from the trees and beat us. But we continued our protest.

Hong Kong leader aims to reopen border with China next month

Hong Kong: Hong Kong's leader said Saturday that China has agreed to a reopening of the city's border with the mainland, which has been largely closed by pandemic restrictions, and that he is aiming for a mid-January start.

Chief Executive John Lee, returning from a trip to Beijing where he met President Xi Jinping and other officials, told reporters at the Hong Kong airport that the two sides would develop a plan to reopen the border in a gradual and orderly manner.

The announcement came as China is easing a "zero-COVID" policy that has restricted entry to the country, isolated infected people and locked down areas with outbreaks.

Hong Kong is a semi-autonomous Chinese territory that borders Guangdong province in southeast China. People must pass through immigration to cross between the two, and most land and sea entry points have been closed and controls tightened because of the pandemic. AP

Calibrated monetary policy warranted: RBI

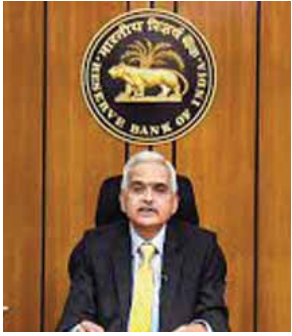
IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Saying that inflation remains above the upper tolerance level, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das stated that calibrated monetary policy action is warranted to contain build-up in underlying inflationary pressures.

“Our successive rate actions since May 2022 are working through the system. Considering the elevated inflation levels, especially the stickiness in core inflation, further calibrated monetary policy action is warranted to contain build-up in underlying inflationary pressures, keep inflation expectations anchored, and bring inflation closer to the target rate of 4 per cent over the medium term. This would strengthen the medium-term growth prospects of the Indian economy,” said Das according to the minutes of the latest monetary policy committee (MPC) meeting published recently.

The RBI Governor said that a premature pause in monetary policy action would be a costly policy error at this juncture.

“I am, therefore, of the view that a premature pause in monetary policy action would



be a costly policy error at this juncture. Given the uncertain outlook, it may engender a situation where we may find ourselves striving to do a catch-up through stronger policy actions in the subsequent meetings to ward-off accentuated inflationary pressures,” he added.

Das said that in a tightening cycle, especially in a world of high uncertainty, giving out explicit forward guidance on the future path of monetary policy would be counterproductive and this may result in the market and its participants overshooting the actual play out of real conditions.

“In such circumstances, it would be prudent to keep Arjuna’s eye on the evolving inflation dynamics and be ready to act as may be necessary. Monetary policy has to be nimble to address any emerg-

ing risk to the price stability, while keeping in mind the objective of growth,” he added.

Shashanka Bhide, Senior Advisor, National Council of Applied Economic Research, said that with overall domestic growth showing signs of resilience, the adverse global macroeconomic conditions require that domestic inflation rate is at moderate levels, within the tolerance band of the inflation target on a sustained basis.

“The persistence of core inflation at the upper limit of the tolerance band of the inflation target is of particular concern. Slippage on both growth and inflation objectives together would be a poor outcome. Keeping in view the need to achieve moderation in the inflationary pressures in a sustained manner, continuing with the monetary policy tightening measures is necessary at this stage,” he added.

Michael Debabrata Patra, Deputy Governor in charge of monetary policy, said that the longer inflation stays at current levels, the greater is the danger of expectations getting unhinged, frittering away the moderation reported in the most recent surveys of households, businesses and professional forecasters.

National Consumer Helpline centre to open in Delhi soon

Goyal launches premises for NCH centre in national capital

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday launched a host of new initiatives, including the right to repair portal and an NTH mobile app and opened new premises of National Consumer Helpline centre in the national capital.

A memorandum of understanding was also signed between the Consumer Affairs Department and IIT (BHU), Varanasi as well launched a capacity building programme of consumer commissions.

These initiatives were launched on the occasion of the National Consumer Day. Minister of State for Food and Consumer Affairs Sadhvi Niranjana Jyothi, Consumer Affairs Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh, National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) President R K Agrawal were also present at the event.

On the ‘right to repair’

portal, manufacturers will share the manual of product details with customers so that they can either repair by self, by third parties, rather than depend on original manufacturers. Initially, mobile phones, electronic, consumer durables, automobile and farming equipments will be covered.

“I think action speaks more than words. The Department of Consumer Affairs was not so much in limelightAnd suddenly it has found life in their workings,” Goyal said.

Speaking on the theme “Effective disposal of cases in consumer commission” on the occasion of National Consumer Day, the minister lauded the consumer courts for disposing of higher number of pending cases in last six months and expressed confidence of eliminating the backlog of cases across the country.

“In a short span of six months, we have doubled disposal of pending cases. About 90,000 pending cases were disposed (between July and November this year),” he said. About 38,000 pending cases were disposed of by consumer courts in the year ago period.

Goyal said there will be ramp up in the disposal of pending cases and elimination of the backlog in the days to come.

More initiatives on anvil to boost steel sector in 2023

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With increasing steel production in the country, the focus in 2023 will be on boosting raw material supplies and producing more special grade steel, according to Union minister Fagga Singh Kulaste.

India produced 113.43 million tonne of crude steel in January-November 2022, which is 10 per cent higher compared to the year-ago period. The government aims to double the country’s annual crude steel making capacity to 300 MT from 150 MT at present.

In an interview to PTI, Kulaste, the Minister of State for Steel, said more initiatives for the sector will be taken in 2023.

Last year, the government introduced the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for specialty steel to enhance the production of the high-end alloy. Special grade steel is used in various sectors, including power, shipping, railways and auto. The demand for this steel is being met through imports.

“Our focus will also be on taking measures to support industry besides finding new markets as the production of steel continues to grow in the country,” he said.

Ensuring the raw materi-



al security for steel production will be a key focus area for the government as the country is mostly dependent on import of raw materials like coking coal.

While other minerals are available in sufficient amounts, Kulaste said India is dependent on imports for coking coal.

The country imported 57 MT of coking coal in FY22 to produce 120 MT crude steel.

New reserves of coking coal are being identified. The country has around 34 billion tonne of coking coal, of which about 18 billion tonne have already been proven, the minister said.

“The development of technology for mining and washing can make the country self-reliant besides ushering in huge employment opportunities and accelerating the process of

development of urban, semi-urban and rural areas,” Kulaste said.

In 2022, the government took various measures to support the steel industry by removing the export duty on steel items and extending export benefits under the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme to products of iron and steel for a specified period. These measures will help the domestic steel industry increase its share in the global markets, Kulaste said.

Indian Steel Association (ISA) Secretary General Alok Sahay said exports of steel, which fell around 55 per cent in April-October 2022 compared to the year-ago period, is expected to resume at a slower pace initially.

Telecom Min ousts 10 senior DoT officers with doubtful integrity

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Continuing his perform or perisher drive and zero tolerance for corruption, telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has approved force retirement for 10 senior DoT officials, including a joint secretary, an official source said on Saturday.

This is the first time employees in the Department of Telecom have been given forced retirement under section 56 (I) under Pension Rule 48 of CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972. “Telecom Minister has approved forced retirement for 10 senior DoT officials for doubtful integrity and the government’s zero tolerance for corruption. Out of 10, nine officials were working at director level and one official is of joint secretary rank,” the source said.

The move from the ministry comes a day before the eve of “Good Governance Day” celebrated by the government



every year.

In September, a senior BSNL official, who was caught napping in Vaishnaw’s meeting after the cabinet cleared a ₹1.64 lakh-crore package for the public sector enterprise, was given voluntary retirement from the service.

Vaishnaw, who also holds Railway portfolio, has cleared forced retirement for about 40 officials in the railways department for their non-performance and doubtful integrity which includes a secretary level officer and two special secretary level officers.

Winni plans to add 150 retail outlets in next three months

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Online gifting platform Winni plans to add over 150 retail outlets of ‘Winni Cakes and More’ in the next three months, taking its total franchisees to about 400 by the end of the current fiscal, the company said on Saturday.

The bootstrapped start-up announced the opening of its 250th retail outlet in Patna which is the 67th franchise in Bihar.

“We are really proud that we have achieved this milestone within a record period of 3 years where now we have 250 operational bakery retail outlets in India.

“We have already sold 315 franchisees at pan India level and are confident of opening over 400 stores by the end of the current financial year,” Winni co-founder and CEO Sujeet Kumar Mishra said in a

statement.

The company has an ambitious plan to open 5,000 stores globally by 2025 to expand its business.

“With opening stores in 23 states and 5 union territories, Winni Cakes & More has emerged as the only bakery retail brand that has a truly pan-India geographical presence and a direct reach to five crore population,” Mishra added.

He said that the company’s retail network is equally distributed with presence in tier-1, tier-2, and tier-3 cities.

The company claims to have crossed ₹100 crore revenue mark in 2021-22.

“We are excited to share that our 40 per cent retail revenue comes from 87 stores that are in small towns in tier-3 and the rest of the 60 per cent from tier-1 and 2 cities,” Mishra said.

PAN not linked with Aadhaar by end of March 2023 to be rendered inoperative: I-T Dept

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Income Tax department Saturday issued an advisory that those permanent account numbers (PAN) which are not linked with Aadhaar by the end of March next year will be rendered “inoperative”.

“What is mandatory, is necessary. Don’t delay, link it today!” the department said in a public advisory.

“As per Income-tax Act, 1961, it is mandatory for all PAN holders, who do not fall under the exempt category, to link their PAN with Aadhaar before 31.3.2023. From 1.04.2023, the unlinked PAN shall become inoperative,” it said.

The ‘exempt category’, according to a notification issued by the Union Finance Ministry in May 2017, are those individuals residing in the states of Assam, Jammu and Kashmir and Meghalaya; a non-resident as per the Income-tax Act, 1961; of the



age of 80 years or more at any time during the previous year and a person not a citizen of India.

A circular issued by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) on March 30 said once a PAN becomes inoperative, an individual shall be liable to all the consequences under the I-T Act and will have to suffer a number of implications.

The person shall not be able to file I-T return using the inoperative PAN; pending returns will not be processed; pending refunds cannot be issued to inoperative PANs; pending proceedings as in the case of defective returns cannot be completed once the PAN is inoperative and tax will be required to be deducted at

a higher rate.

“In addition to the above, the taxpayer might face difficulty at various other fora like banks and other financial portals as PAN is one of the important KYC (know your customer) criterion for all kinds of financial transaction,” the circular said.

The CBDT frames policy for the Income Tax department.

While Aadhaar is issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India to a resident of India, PAN is a 10-digit alphanumeric number allotted by the IT Department to a person, firm or entity.

Samsung opens \$220 mn R&D centre in Vietnam

IAN S ■ SEOUL

Samsung Electronics has held San opening ceremony for a research and development centre in Vietnam, in what the tech giant said is the largest such facility in the Southeast Asian country set up by a foreign firm.

“I expect the R&D centre to contribute to Vietnam’s industrial competitiveness and to the relationship between South Korea and Vietnam,” Samsung Electronics Executive Chairman Lee Jae-yong said at the opening ceremony in Hanoi, reports Yonhap news agency. The ceremony was attended by Vietnamese Prime



Minister Pham Minh Chinh, Science and Technology Minister Huynh Thanh Dat and senior Samsung executives, including Roh Tae-moon, president and head of mobile business at Samsung Electronics, and Choi Joo-sun, president and CEO of Samsung

Display.

A total of 2,200 employees will work at the US\$220 million, 16-story R&D centre to research and develop software and technologies for mobile phones and other smart and network devices, the company said, adding it will make the centre become Samsung’s global technology foothold for wireless devices.

Samsung made inroads into Vietnam in 1989, when Samsung C&T Corp., the construction unit of Samsung Group, set up a trade office there. Samsung Electronics officially established its Vietnam office in Ho Chi Minh City in 1995.

FBI ‘obviously overreached’ with regard to online censorship, says Elon Musk

IAN S ■ SAN FRANCISCO

Elon Musk on Saturday said the supports the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for their work towards protecting the public, some people from the organisation did contact Twitter employees to censor content and suppress voices.

The ‘Twitter Files’ earlier alleged that top Twitter executives, including former top FBI lawyer Jim Baker, suppressed and censored former US President Donald Trump in the days before the 2020 election, finally deplatforming him on January 8, 2021 — two days after the storming of the Capitol Hill that left five dead.



When a user asked Musk if conservative Twitter accounts are apparently being suspended for speaking out against Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s speech in the US and is the FBI still working at Twitter, he replied: “To be clear, I am overall very much pro FBI. The agency does a great deal of important work protecting the public.”

“That said, no organisation is perfect and part of the FBI obviously overreached with

respect to online censorship,” Musk added.

The latest Twitter Files claimed that the platform’s executives “were clearly liaising with federal enforcement and intelligence agencies about moderation of election-related content”.

The FBI came under scrutiny from some who allege the law enforcement agency ordered Twitter to suppress the Hunter Biden laptop story and censor other content.

The FBI said in a response that “it is unfortunate that conspiracy theorists and others are feeding the public misinformation with the sole purpose of attempting to discredit the agency”.

Air India launches ‘FogCare’ initiative to minimise disruption

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Air India on Saturday launched the new “FogCare” initiative which will take care of unforeseen circumstances, such as delays and cancellations of flights, due to thick fog during the winter season.

This initiative will initially be launched for flights departing from and arriving at Delhi’s IGI Airport.

Under FogCare, Air India will take proactive steps to isolate the impact of fog on flight

operations, which usually takes place in the early mornings and late evenings, but often also cascades throughout the day.

The carrier will reach out to customers and give them easy options to reschedule or cancel their impacted flights at no extra cost.

Passengers of impacted flights can make the decision to not travel to the airport and avoid the inconvenience of long waits.

This will also serve to ease congestion at the airports. E-mails, calls and SMS

with flight-specific advisories will be sent to passengers on impacted flights, giving them easy options to minimise inconvenience due to fog-related disruptions.

Commenting on the initiative, Rajesh Dogra, Chief Customer Experience Officer and Global Head of Airport Operations, Air India, said: “We are pleased to launch the FogCare initiative, a customer centric measure to ensure the best possible experience for our customers. This is one more step in our journey to become



ing a world-class airline and will significantly improve the passenger experience during fog affected days.

“We will strive to give our customers up to date information on whether their flight has been impacted by fog and help

them make the best choice given the circumstances. By proactively tackling the issue, we will be able to maintain the overall network schedule integrity as best as possible, and offer a better experience to all passengers, particularly those on flights unaffected by fog in Delhi, who would otherwise have been subjected to the cascading effects of rolling fog delays.”

An Air India spokesperson said that the airline is also ensuring adequate availability of aircraft, pilots, maintenance,

and cabin crew to be able to deal with fog-related exigencies.

With a fully trained cockpit crew, that is equipped with the capability to operate in low visibility conditions through the CAT-III Instrument Landing System (ILS), Air India has geared up to minimise disruption due to fog.

Additionally, a campaign to create awareness around the initiative will be launched, along with a dedicated FogCare web page that is being created on www.airindia.com.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles. **VEHICLES FOR SALE**

1) TATAMOTORS T1518FBGD
REG. NO.HR38Z2646-YOM-2018
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 6,42,590.01
UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS “AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION” INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS (ONLINE/OFFLINE) WITHIN 15 DAYS FROM THIS PAPER PUBLICATION I.E. ON OR BEFORE 09.01.2023 (PLEASE NOTE THAT CLOSING AUCTION DATE WOULD NOT BE A WEEKLY OFF / HOLIDAY).
BRANCH ADDRESS: KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD., PLOT NO.7 INSTITUTIONAL AREA, SECTOR-125 NOIDA NEAR DELL CAMPUS NOIDA (U.P) UP-201313
OR CONTACT : JAGDISH SINGH KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT / 919582795967 EMAIL-jagdish.singh@kotak.com

**MAHARISHI MARKANDESHWAR**
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
Mullana-Ambala, Haryana
(Established under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)
(Accredited by NAAC with Grade 'A++')

ADMISSION NOTICE-MBBS (2022-23)
Applications are invited for admission to Stray Vacancy Round for vacant MBBS seats (NRI & M.Q.) for the session 2022-23 in MM Institute of Medical Sciences & Research, constituent Institute of Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to be University, NAAC Grade-A++), Mullana-Ambala, out of the list of candidates as per DGHS, Govt. of India. Application Form for NRI and Management Quota Seats can be downloaded from University website (www.mmmullana.org).
Last date of receiving duly filled up application with processing fees of Rs. 2000/- through Cheque in favour of M.M. Deemed to be University payable at Ambala is 26.12.2022 upto 09:30 A.M. positively in the University office. Physical counselling shall be held for NRI and Management seats on 26.12.2022 from 10:00 A.M. onwards in the University Campus.

REGISTRAR
Ph.: 01731-274475-78 | Fax: 274375
Website: www.mmmullana.org | Email: info@mmumullana.org

**OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM**
E-32, JUDGE FARM, HALDWANI, DISTT.- NAINITAL (PIN 263139)
Letter No.: 2742 /Nivida-Anubandh/Lohaghat/64 Date : 24-12-2022

E-Tender Notice
1. **Name of the work:-** Construction of building for Forest chowki at Kakrali first beet compartment No- A Under Sharda Raji, Tanakpur, District -Champawat
2. **Estimated Cost:-** Rs. 79.91 Lakh
3. **Period of Completion:-** 12 Month
4. **Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:-** 24-12-2022 (17.00hrs)
5. **Online Bid submission: End date :-** 09-01-2023 (17.00 hrs)
6. **Date & Time of Technical bid Opening :-** 11-01-2023 (11.00 hrs)
7. **Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid:-** General Manager (Kumaon), Nirman Wing, Uttarakhand Pey Jal Nigam, Haldwani.
8. **Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place:-** 29-12-2022 (11.00 hrs) Project Manager Construction Unit, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Lohaghat (Champawat).
9. For further details, details of subsequent Amendment / correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal 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.: 2741 /Nivida-Anubandh/Lohaghat/63 Date : 24-12-2022

E-Tender Notice
1. **Name of the work:-** Construction of Parking at Nagar Palika Parishad, Lohaghat, District - Champawat
2. **Estimated Cost:-** Rs. 87.24 Lakh
3. **Period of Completion:-** 12 Month
4. **Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:-** 24-12-2022 (17.00hrs)
5. **Online Bid submission: End date :-** 09-01-2023 (17.00 hrs)
6. **Date & Time of Technical bid Opening :-** 11-01-2023 (11.00 hrs)
7. **Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid:-** General Manager (Kumaon), Nirman Wing, Uttarakhand Pey Jal Nigam, Haldwani.
8. **Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place:-** 29-12-2022 (11.00 hrs) Project Manager Construction Unit, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Lohaghat (Champawat).
9. For further details, details of subsequent Amendment / correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal www.uktenders.gov.in
GENERAL MANAGER

Seniors struggle a bit but Greco Roman, junior wrestlers shine in 2022

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

They were expected to dominate the field at the Commonwealth Games and they did but the tougher World Championships served a reality check for the established Indian stars even as the rise of Greco Roman wrestlers and exceptional show by the juniors made it an eventful 2022 for Indian wrestling.

India won 12 medals at Birmingham CWG, where Sakshi Malik tried to resurrect her career by winning a gold but only Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat returned with medals from the World Championships in Belgrade.

The Greco Roman style, a poor cousin of free style wrestling in India, had a lot cheer with historic three-medal performance at the U-23 World Championships through Sajan Bhanwala, Nitesh and Vikas.

The juniors, both boys and girls, emerged serious medal contenders in age group competitions across globe, something which Indian wrestling witnessed for the first time.

The rise of Antim Panghal, who became U-20 world champion in Sofia, is very heartening as she could be India's best bet in 53kg when Vinesh Phogat would not be around.

Ravi Dahiya became an overnight star after his Olympic silver in 2021 but he remained a bit subdued this year, though he began by winning a gold and a silver on the circuit and later added a gold to his kitty at the Asian Championships.

At the start of the season, he competed in the 61kg as he preferred not to go through the energy-sapping and painful process of weight cut.

After an expected gold at CWG, crashing out of the Worlds was a big shock not for Ravi himself but his legion of fans, given his tremendous grip in the 57kg competition.

Despite possessing exceptional strength, stamina, technique which combines well with his big heart for fight, Ravi could not win a medal at the big stage.

Interestingly, this year, he trained with Indian coaches at Chhatrasal stadium and also



during the national camp in Sonepat after WFI decided not to have foreign coaches for the country's elite wrestlers.

While Ravi struggled, Aman Sehrawat made a steady progress in Ravi's 57kg category in 2022. He became U-23

world champion after winning a gold at the Bolat Turlykhanov Cup in Almaty.

Ravi will have to be at his

best in 2023 in which berth for 2024 Paris Olympics will be at stake.

Aman, who also trains at

Chhatrasal stadium, will pose a serious threat to Ravi in 57kg. Interesting battle days are ahead for many established names with many options coming up across weight categories.

Sarita Mor, who won a Worlds bronze in 2021 in women's 57kg, has already decided that she will compete in this Olympic weight category as she will try to qualify for the Paris Games.

It means that Anshu Malik, who rose through the junior ranks and also competed at the Tokyo Games, will not have an easy season ahead. Elbow and knee issues kept her silent in 2022 but the woman from Nidani is a true fighter and should be ready for next season in a better way.

Bajrang Punia remains India's best in 65kg category till now as no wrestler has come close to pose a serious threat to his place in this weight class. He struggled with a mental block this year but overcame it before closing the season with a bronze at the Worlds.

His defence has got slight-

ly better but his attacking game still requires a lot of improvement.

Since her shock medal-less show in Tokyo, Vinesh Phogat has looked a pale shadow of her usual dominating self. One of the most talented and powerful woman wrestlers India has seen, it was heart-breaking to see her struggle.

Her run-in with the establishment in 2021 and the absence of desired results in the follow up has left her with a lot of question marks. It was good that she won a gold at the CWG where competition was weak and she took that confidence to win a bronze at the Worlds.

She too is a true fighter and hopefully, with right people around her, she can make a turnaround in 2023 which will be crucial for her, keeping in mind the Paris Games.

She is too good a wrestler to lose for trivial issues. Every possible help should be extended to her so that she regains confidence since if there is one woman wrestler who can bring that elusive Olympic gold, it is Vinesh.

Canada hosts hockey world juniors in shadow of scandal

AP ■ HALIFAX

The world junior hockey championship will be held in Canada the next two weeks, shadowed by Hockey Canada's handling of explosive sexual assault allegations.

The national hockey governing body has been mired in controversy for months after it was revealed in May that it settled a lawsuit with a woman who says she was sexually assaulted by several members of the 2018 world junior team. In July, Halifax Regional Police began investigating allegations that members of the 2003 team sexually assaulted a woman and filmed the attack during that tournament.

No charges have been filed. Within the past week, police in London, Ontario, said they have grounds to believe a woman was sexually assaulted by five players on that Canadian 2018 team.

Hockey Canada executives in July also revealed that they paid out \$8.9 million in sexual abuse settlements since 1989, excluding the 2018 deal. The organization elected a new board of directors Dec. 17 and is still searching for a new chief executive officer. The previous board resigned and president and CEO Scott Smith was ousted as a result of the controversies.

Kyle Wagner of Halifax said the scandals have sparked discussions in the dressing room of his eight-year-old son's team ahead of this year's world junior tournament hosted joint-



ly by Halifax and Moncton, New Brunswick. The event begins Monday.

"An eight-year-old is smart, because my son knows that there's controversy this year in hockey, and while he doesn't know a whole lot of the details, he knows that some things were done that were wrong and horrible," Wagner said.

The revelation that Hockey Canada maintained a fund drawing on minor hockey membership fees to pay for uninsured liabilities, including sexual abuse claims, fueled an uproar earlier this year. Sponsors withdrew, the national sports minister stripped Hockey Canada of federal funding and the governing body's leaders were sharply questioned

by parliament.

Hockey Canada's new board chairman, retired judge Hugh L. Fraser, felt it was his duty to step up and help heal the sport with eight freshly minted directors.

"Very dispiriting, very discouraging," Fraser said of his reaction to Hockey Canada's disastrous 2022 in a recent interview with The Canadian Press. "I had the same question everyone asked: How could this happen?"

The backlash from the public and politicians was swift.

"It's hard for anyone in Canada to have faith or trust in anyone at Hockey Canada," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said July 19. He also said there needed to be a "real reckoning"

at the organization.

Now it falls to Fraser, who has nearly three decades of experience at the Ontario court of justice in Ottawa, and the board to pick a new CEO and chart Hockey Canada's future during a special one-year term.

"When I look at some of the things that happened — the allegations of abuse and even racism, misogyny — you really feel that if you have an opportunity to get involved, to do something, to help make a change, that it's one you shouldn't let pass," he told CP.

Fraser, whose son Mark played seven seasons in the NHL and is now the Toronto Maple Leafs' manager of culture and inclusion, experienced some painful moments as a Black man with Black children in minor hockey. He wants to leave the game a better place.

"You hear things," Fraser said. "There were a couple of times when other players came over and said, Somebody called your son the N-word." We had some fans, occasionally, that really misbehaved and created a very uncomfortable atmosphere. As much as we've seen the positives — many, many positives — as a person of color you didn't see many people that look like you in your sport.

"There were some rough times."

But why would Fraser, who competed for Canada at the 1976 Olympics in track, want to add this daunting task to a plate in the twilight of a career that still includes various roles, including the Court of Arbitration for Sport?



5-member Indian team for Davis Cup World Group 1 play-off named

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The All India Tennis Association (AITA) on Saturday announced a five-member team for the Davis Cup World Group 1 play-off away tie against Denmark to be played at Royal Stage Stadium in Hillerod on February 3 and 4. Sasikumar Mukund, Prajnesh Gunneswaran, Ramkumar Ramanathan, Rohan Bopanna and Yuki Bhambri were picked for the tie while Sumit Nagal was named as the reserve.

Rohit Rajpal will be the non-playing captain.

The AITA said the players were selected on the basis of their availability and performance.

The team was named after a virtual selection committee meeting under the chairmanship of Nandan Bal.

India had defeated Denmark 4-0 in the Davis Cup 2022 World Group I play-off tie at the Delhi Gymkhana Club here in March. Later, the Indian team lost to Norway 1-3 in the away tie of World Group I in Lillehammer.

Ukraine's Shakhtar tackles FIFA on \$42M transfer market case

AP ■ GENEVA

A \$42 million claim for compensation from FIFA will be tough for Shakhtar Donetsk to win, the Ukrainian club's chief executive acknowledged, though a clear message had been sent by taking the case to sport's highest court.

Shakhtar is determined not to be a pushover in the January transfer window.

Not after the club believed it lost control of too many players who left Ukraine this year as other teams gained from FIFA's emergency transfer rules during the Russian invasion.

"We will not accept that our players should be sold at discounts," Shakhtar CEO Sergei Palkin told The Associated Press, one day after helping to present the club's case against FIFA at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Shakhtar values its most prized asset at 100 million euros (\$106 million) with Premier League leader Arsenal most strongly linked to winger Mykhailo Mudryk.

"I don't want European clubs to use our situation to devalue our players," Palkin said in a telephone interview. "That is the worst scenario."

Players who were under Shakhtar's control when Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24 — one day before the national league was to resume after a winter break — are now with clubs in Brazil, England, France and Italy.

Those clubs could avoid paying a transfer fee to Shakhtar, whose 2021-22 season was aban-



doned along with the rest of domestic soccer in Ukraine.

Instead, FIFA allowed the players to suspend their contracts in Ukraine — initially until the end of last season in June, then for all of this season — and seek more playing and contractual stability in another country not at war.

FIFA believed its interim rules better protected clubs than simply terminating all contracts, as the FIFPRO players' union suggested, or having players seek to void deals that might require them to stay in Ukraine.

FIFA's emergency rules ended up costing Shakhtar tens of millions of euros (dollars), the club argues, because it had no leverage in the transfer market.

Palkin said Shakhtar is up against "the biggest, most influential organization" in soccer at CAS, where it suggested FIFA could have helped by creating a reparations fund for Ukraine.

"It will be difficult to get a positive decision," he said. "But it's important that our views

should be heard. From my point of view the hearing was good."

A verdict from the CAS judges could come by mid-January though without the full written reasons to explain why. Those could take several months to publish.

In a separate but similar case at CAS, a group of Russian clubs have also challenged the FIFA transfer rules. Players and coaches could suspend their contracts at Russian clubs which were banned this season from UEFA-organized European competitions.

The Russian case was heard by a different panel of CAS judges on Nov. 21. No date has been set for a verdict.

The legal picture should be clearer when Shakhtar returns to competitive action on Feb. 16 in the Europa League knockout playoffs. Shakhtar hosts Rennes in the first leg in the Polish capital Warsaw, where the team played its three "home" games in the Champions League group stage.

Ex-Navy SEAL makes big impression on Buffalo football team



AP ■ AMHERST, NY

Buffalo defensive end Damian Jackson has no expectation of growing emotional as he prepares for the final game of his college career next week.

At 30, and having had a healthy share of real-life experiences during two tours of duty with the Navy SEALs, Jackson isn't built that way. Unlike many of his younger teammates, Jackson is independent, unsentimental and self-aware enough to appreci-

ate where football fits into his world. "I'm a terrible person to ask because, quite frankly, I don't care," Jackson said with a chuckle, looking ahead to the Bulls (6-6) facing Georgia Southern (6-6) in the Camellia Bowl on Tuesday.

"It's not like, 'Oh, I'm nervous,' or I've got to ball out or I got to do this or do that. I'm just going to be the same person I was," he added. "There's no butterflies or anything going in, or regret of, 'I can't believe this is my last game.' It's just one more game, keep going and

then on to the next step."

Jackson never played organized football until walking on at Nebraska in 2017. He eventually decided on football as a career path after finishing his service with the SEALs by joking that, at 6-foot-2 and 263 pounds, he was "too big and fat" to pursue baseball or soccer.

He got a chance to start and play in a defensive role after transferring to Buffalo in June as a graduate senior. But Jackson is grounded enough to know his best chance at an NFL career is on special teams, and specifically long-snapping.

While he's never snapped in a college game, Jackson spends time before and after practice honing his craft, and plans to return to Nebraska to work with the Cornhuskers staff before attending Buffalo's pre-draft pro day.

With his muscular arms, long hair and unruly beard, Jackson has already attracted the attention of Buffalo alum and former NFL assistant coach Jim McNally, who works as a consultant for the Cincinnati Bengals.

AP ■ HOUSTON

Luka Doncic scored a season-high 50 points, including 17 in the fourth quarter, and the Dallas Mavericks held on to beat the Houston Rockets 112-106 on Friday night.

Doncic, who also had 10 assists and eight rebounds, was 17 of 30 from the field, including 6 of 12 on 3-pointers. It was Doncic's second career 50-point game.

"Sometimes you know you're going to make more shots than usual," Doncic said. "When you feel hot, you feel like everything will go in."

He scored a career-high 51 against the Clippers on Feb. 10, 2022.

Dallas coach Jason Kidd called Doncic's 50 points "a great Christmas gift on a long road trip."

"Luka is Luka," Kidd said. "He's the best player in the world. He showed that tonight, carrying the load offensively. ... I don't know what else to say about him. He was incredible tonight."

Spencer Dinwiddie and Davis Bertans each scored 11 points for Dallas, which shot 45% and made 16 of 44 3s.

Jabari Smith Jr. finished with 24 points and 10 rebounds, Jalen Green added

Doncic scores 50, Mavericks edge Rockets 112-106

23 points and eight rebounds, and Alperen Sengun had 19 points and eight rebounds for Houston, which lost its fifth straight.

"Just coming in and trying to get back on track, get back to playing well," Smith said. "Our record's not well, but we know when we play good and we know when we play bad. These last couple games we feel like we haven't played like us, so the focus was getting back to us and playing how we play."

Kevin Porter Jr. scored 14 points, and Kenyon Martin Jr. had 10 for the Rockets, who shot 46%.

Houston coach Stephen Silas said Houston's defensive game plan was good, but there was "just too much Luka."

"I'm not sure that he made an easy shot," Silas said. "We made every shot hard, and that's the greatness of a great player. ... That's what Luka does."

Tied at 94 with 7 1/2 minutes remaining, the Mavs used an 11-3 run to open up an



eight-point lead on a 3-pointer by Doncic, who blew a kiss to the crowd. The Rockets responded with seven straight points to cut the lead to 105-104 on Sengun's layup with 3:13 left.

After Bertans hit a 3 to up the lead to four, Smith cut the lead to two with a jumper with a 1 1/2 minutes remaining. The two teams traded turnovers and missed shots before Doncic nailed a 3-point-

er with 18 seconds left to give the Mavs a five-point lead.

"We swing the ball, and Tim (Hardaway Jr.) redrives it from the corner and finds Luka wide open," Kidd said of Doncic's 3 to seal the win. "Luka does the rest. When you're hot like that, sometimes you don't have to move the ball. Someone else did all the work for him, and the ball found him."

Houston erased a 16-point,

second-quarter deficit, outscoring the Mavs 33-15 over a nine-minute span of the second and third quarters to take a 69-67 lead on a 3-pointer by Smith with 6:15 remaining in the third.

TIP-INS

Mavericks: Dorian Finney-Smith missed his second straight game with a right adductor strain. ... Kemba Walker was out of the lineup Friday night due to left knee injury recovery. ... Reggie Bullock left the game in the third quarter with a neck strain.

Rockets: Garrison Mathews (illness) returned to the lineup on Friday after missing the last three games. He was scoreless in 12 minutes. ... Jae'Sean Tate (ankle) could return soon, Silas said. "I don't have a timetable, days or whatever, but it looks like it's getting closer to days than weeks," Silas said. ... Eric Gordon was out of the lineup Friday with a bruised left thumb.

India need 100 runs to win against Bangladesh

On third day's play, India tottering at 45 for 4 in second Test

PTI ■ MIRPUR

Bangladesh spinners, led by their talismanic skipper Shakib Al Hasan and young Mehidy Hasan Miraz, forced Indian batters to press the panic button in a tricky chase of 145 as the visitors ended an engaging third day's play, tottering at 45 for 4 in the second Test here on Saturday.

Having dominated for the better part of two and half days, Bangladesh's lower middle-order, led by Litton Das (73 off 98 balls) and supported by Nurul Hasan Sohan (31 off 29 balls) and Taskin Ahmed (31 off 46 balls), counter-attacked to take their second innings score to 231, giving their bowlers something to defend.

If India happen to lose this game, the 118 runs scored by the last four Bangladeshi pairs would haunt them as much as not using a third spinner in Kuldeep Yadav on a track that became increasingly venomous as the match progressed.

If they overhaul 145, it will be third highest successful fourth innings chase at this ground as the top three winning scores are 209, 205 and 103.

KL Rahul (2), who had a horrendous game as a skipper as well as batter, would like to forget this game in a hurry while the stodgy Cheteshwar Pujara (6) suffered his downfall because of his anxiousness to negate any turn on offer.

Shubman Gill (7) had his worse day on the tour, increasing India's worry.

In case of Rahul, he tentatively poked a Shakib (1/21 in 6 overs) delivery that turned enough to kiss the outside edge of his bat into the keeper's gloves.

Pujara, for the second time, came out to play the delivery from Mehidy Hasan Miraz (3/12 in 8 overs) before it could turn. The ball hit his bat and pad before a crawling Nurul effected a smart stumping. However, the pitch was showing its true colours and there was turn and bounce with the ball skidding occa-



sionally as well as keeping low, making batting that much more difficult.

In fact, India's head coach Rahul Dravid, with his tactic of sending night watchman Axar Patel (26 batting) with

more than 15 overs left, made it clear that there was a certain sense of nervousness as to what happens if Virat Kohli (1 off 22 balls) would get dismissed in the third evening itself.

While Gill was stumped off a doosra, becoming Miraz's second victim, Kohli had no choice but to come out late in the evening as the pitch, at times, was starting to resemble a snake pit with

Scoreboard of 2nd Test: India vs Bangladesh, Day 3 India 2nd Innings:

Shubman Gill st Nurul Hasan b Mehidy Hasan Miraz	7
KL Rahul c Nurul Hasan b Shakib	2
Cheteshwar Pujara st Nurul Hasan b Mehidy Hasan Miraz	6
Axar Patel not out	26
Virat Kohli c Mominul b Mehidy Hasan Miraz	1
Jaydev Unadkat not out	3
Extras: 0	
Total: (4 wkts, 23 Overs)45	
Fall of Wickets: 3-1, 12-2, 29-3, 37-4	
Bowler: Shakib Al Hasan 6-0-21-1, Taijul Islam 8-4-8-0, Mehidy Hasan Miraz 8-3-12-3, Taskin Ahmed 1-0-4-0.	

deliveries hissing past the willow. Just like it happens on turners, the close-in fielders started applying more pressure on batters as well as umpires with Kohli needing a DRS to save himself from getting adjudged leg before to Taijul Islam.

But he was just a delivery away from getting dismissed as Miraz bowled a lovely flighted delivery drawing Kohli forward and got a classical bat-pad dismissal for

Mominul Haque standing at forward short-leg.

With Kohli not inspiring highest level of confidence, Rishabh Pant, who has shown how to bat on this track, could again play the decisive role and help India manage to log home full points and prevent Bangladesh from winning their first game against India in 22 years of bilateral Test cricket.

At stumps, Axar and night watchman Jaydev

Unadkat (3 batting) were at the crease.

But in the first two sessions, it was Axar Patel (3/58) along with Mohammed Siraj (2/41) and Ravichandran Ashwin (2/66) who had Bangladesh on the mat at 113 for 6 before Nurul came out and attacked the spinners in his little cameo.

At the other end, Litton was celebrating his maiden IPL contract with some lusty blows and the 60-odd run stand with Taskin during which India also dropped a few catches which proved costly.

While the Indian team management can claim that the bowlers did their job getting Bangladesh out for 227 and 231 in the two innings but they would be the first to admit that any score in excess of 120 odd on this track would always be a tricky game.

Jaydev Unadkat (1/17), the third seamer India used as they were "confused" looking at the greenish tinge, was used for only nine overs out of the 70.2 that they bowled.

Happy that Mayank went to Sunrisers: Kumble after IPL 2023 Mini Auction

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

In the IPL 2023 mini player auction held in Kochi, opener Mayank Agarwal became the most expensive Indian player when 2016 champions Sunrisers Hyderabad acquired his services for INR 8.25 crores.

Agarwal's promotion to captaining his former team Punjab Kings in IPL 2022 didn't lead to a truckload of runs as he scored just 196 runs in 13 matches at an average of 16.33, with the side ending at sixth place in the ten-team points table.

In November, ahead of the mini auction, Agarwal was released by the side after having joined them in 2018, with Shikhar Dhawan announced as new Punjab Kings captain. Now with Hyderabad having Agarwal, they now have a player in their ranks who's featured in 113 IPL games and has leadership experience too.

Former India captain Anil Kumble, who was Punjab Kings' head coach till 2022 season, backed Agarwal's move to Hyderabad, saying the new destination for the Bangalore-based player will help him grow as a cricketer.

"Mayank has been the captain for Punjab and he was let go. I am really happy that he went to a team like Sunrisers. I think a new environment will certainly help Mayank and he is wonderful to have around the team," said Kumble on Mastercard Match Centre Live show on JioCinema.

India need just one set batter to win 2nd Test against Bangladesh: Siraj



PTI ■ MIRPUR

India might have been four wickets down in a tricky chase in the second Test against Bangladesh but pacer Mohammed Siraj said there is nothing to worry about as one set batter can take the team to victory on Sunday.

India on Saturday found themselves in a spot of bother after an engaging third day's play as they were reduced to 45 for four in a tricky chase of 145.

"I feel, we shouldn't think too much now because we have lost just four wickets. We need around 80 (100) or so. We need just one batter to get set, Axar is showing right intent," Siraj said during the press conference.

At stumps, Axar Patel (26)

and Jaydev Unadkat (3) were at the crease with India still needing another 100 runs.

"Yes, we lost two wickets extra but Axar is set, he is showing good intent. We also have Rishabh (Pant) and Shreyas (Iyer) after that, so we shouldn't think too much."

If India overhaul 145, it will be third highest successful fourth innings chase at this ground as the top three winning scores are 209, 205 and 103. After India lost KL Rahul (2) and Cheteshwar Pujara (6), head coach Rahul Dravid decided to send night watchman Axar with more than 15 overs left.

"Sending Axar is management's call. I feel if there is a lefty and righty batter, then it will be difficult for the bowlers to

adjust. So, I think because of that this call was taken," Siraj said.

The 28-year-old from Hyderabad scalped two wickets -- Mominul Haque (5) and Litton Das (73) -- on day three as India dismissed Bangladesh for 231.

"In this wicket, there is extra bounce for fast bowlers, so I was trying to hit the area as hard as possible as we were getting extra bounce, so our plan was to hit that area hard and as you can see we got wickets."

India wasted both their DRS within a span of five deliveries. The first one was in the eighth over when Ravichandran Ashwin seemed to have trapped Najmul Hossain Shanto and skipper KL Rahul referred it to the third umpire.

In the next over, Siraj was convinced that he had got Zakir Hasan after hitting him on the pads. Once again Rahul went upstairs, only to find that the ball had pitched outside leg.

"Whenever the ball hits the pad as a bowler you feel it is out. But it is important for the bowler and keeper to have a conversation before going for review," said Siraj. "Since the batter was in front of me, I had convinced for the review but it didn't happen as I thought."

While Litton Das led Bangladesh's fightback with a 98-ball 73, Siraj felt Nurul Hasan's counter-attacking 29-ball 31 knock changed the momentum.

"The wicketkeeper came and started attacking and it changed the momentum and we conceded extra 30 runs but it is not something that we should be too worried," he said.

Nortje targets 'sticking to basics' approach for Proteas' Boxing Day Test against Australia

IANs ■ MELBOURNE

Anrich Nortje expects the South African bowling to continue from where they left off in Brisbane and wants them to stay focused on their job as they build up to the Boxing Day Test, starting here on Monday.

South Africa lost the opening game of the three-match series in a two-day affair at The Gabba in Brisbane and are now trailing 1-0. Ahead of the second game in the series, in what is a big game at the iconic MCG, the visitors' will be hoping to do much better after losing tamely on a bowler-friendly wicket at The Gabba.

But Nortje believes the match was closer than it

appears as a contest, saying that things could have easily gone the way of the tourists in a match where only two players hit half-centuries -- Kyle Verreyne from South Africa and Travis Head for Australia.

"When we look back at the last game, it was just a matter of probably half a session, not even a session, and the game could have been different and we could have been in a winning position...that's how quick things were happening," Nortje told reporters on Saturday.

"So you can't look at losing by six wickets and say it's a big margin on that wicket, it might have been a very small margin. So it's hard to say we're not really focused on the last game, we're focused on what's going



to come up now, trying to prepare again."

Everyone's in a really good space mentally and physically, so we're just looking forward to getting on and starting the game now," he added.

The pitch in Brisbane was under the spotlight for its part

in the outcome, and received a below-average from the ICC match referee Richie Richardson, as well as one demerit point. The spotlight is now on Melbourne where a lot of focus is on the surface at the MCG that has been prepared by the groundsman.

"We'll have to wait and see. You can't really go into history too much, but it seems like a good wicket in terms of pace and bounce. As a bowling unit I don't think there are going to be massive demons in the wicket. I've never played here, so I can't speak from experience, but we think it will be a good contest," replied Nortje when asked about the nature of the pitch at Melbourne.

Afridi named Pak men's interim chief selector

PTI ■ KARACHI

Former captain Shahid Afridi was on Saturday named the interim chief selector of the Pakistan men's national team.

Afridi will head an interim committee of selectors that includes former players Abdul Razzaq, Rao Iftikhar Ahmed, and Haroon Rasheed. For now, the committee will only select the team for the home series against New Zealand, that includes two Tests and three ODIs and starts Monday. Both Afridi and Haroon are members of the cricket management committee, headed by Najam Sethi.

Look forward to playing under Hardik, says Little

PTI ■ DUBLIN

Pacer Josh Little, who has become the first cricketer from Ireland to land an IPL deal, termed it as an "incredible opportunity" to play in the lucrative league where he will get to work with India all-rounder Hardik Pandya and head coach Ashish Nehra.

Defending champions Gujarat Titans availed the services of the 23-year-old for Rs 4.4 crore at the IPL auction in Kochi on Friday.

The Titans, led by Hardik and coached by former India pacer Nehra, won the league in their debut season.

"I'm delighted to have

been signed by the defending champions, the Gujarat Titans, and look forward to playing under Hardik Pandya within such a high quality squad," Little said in Cricket Ireland statement.

"I am also looking forward to working with coach Ashish Nehra and would like to thank the management team at the Titans for believing in me," he added.

The left-arm seamer made his international debut in 2016 and has since played 22 ODIs and 53 T20Is.

"I have loved playing international cricket for Ireland - and that will always remain my priority, but to be able to learn

and play in the IPL will be an incredible opportunity and thanks to Cricket Ireland for supporting me in this."

Little had served as a net bowler for Chennai Super Kings last year.

He had claimed a memorable hat-trick against New Zealand in Ireland's T20 World Cup loss in Adelaide earlier this year. He had dismissed skipper Kane Williamson, James Neesham and Mitchell Santner in the 19th over.

"We are delighted for Josh and wish him well in the IPL next year. Josh is a hard-working and dedicated athlete who has come up through the Irish system,"

Police investigate crowd trouble at Man City-Liverpool game



AP ■ MANCHESTER

Police are investigating crowd trouble that left a teenage girl injured at Manchester City's 3-2 win over Liverpool in the English League Cup at Etihad Stadium.

The 15-year-old girl required treatment for a head injury, one fan was arrested for a racially aggravated public order offense, and some disabled fans were racially abused at Thursday night's match.

Greater Manchester Police said Friday that two men were arrested on suspicion of trying to take a pyrotechnic into the grounds and a 53-year-old man was hospitalized after being

assaulted outside the stadium after the game.

Police were reviewing CCTV footage, Supt. Gareth Parkin said. "We are aware of a number of objects, including coins and a smoke bomb, that were thrown during the match," Parkin said.

The girl was treated at the stadium. "Clearly, throwing objects in a confined area can be dangerous, and have serious and sometimes devastating consequences," Parkin said. "GMP sends its thoughts and wishes to the girl who was injured and wish her a speedy recovery."

The unrest occurred despite attempts by both clubs to improve fan behavior when they

play each other.

They said in a joint statement that it is "hugely disappointing that there were a number of incidents during last night's match that are wholly unacceptable."

The clubs said they'll work with police to hold people accountable.

"Liverpool FC and Manchester City FC are fully committed to working together to eradicate these issues from our fixtures. They have no place in football" (AP) Manchester, Dec 24 (AP) Police are investigating crowd trouble that left a teenage girl injured at Manchester City's 3-2 win over Liverpool in the English League Cup at Etihad Stadium.

The 15-year-old girl required treatment for a head injury, one fan was arrested for a racially aggravated public order offense, and some disabled fans were racially abused at Thursday night's match.

Greater Manchester Police said Friday that two men were arrested on suspicion of trying to take a pyrotechnic into the grounds and a 53-year-old man was hospitalized after being assaulted outside the stadium after the game.



From CA's point of view, I didn't really have any support: Warner on leadership ban

PTI ■ BMELBOURNE

David Warner on Saturday slammed Cricket Australia (CA) for their lack of support during his leadership ban appeal, adding that the issue affected his mental health ahead of the first Test against South Africa.

Warner had been handed a lifetime leadership ban because of his role in the 2018 ball tempering scandal.

The 36-year-old had launched an appeal against the ban earlier this year and both Warner and CA wanted a closed-door hearing.

However, the board-

appointed independent commissioners insisted on it being public, forcing Warner to withdraw his appeal earlier this month. "Leading into the Perth Test, my mental health probably wasn't where I needed it to be at to be 100 per cent. And that was challenging at the time," Warner said ahead of his 100th Test.

"If I had it my way we would have had it all sorted. From the CA point of view, I didn't really have any support."

"My teammates and the staff in our team were absolutely amazing, and my family and friends - they really got me through that period," he added.

Theertha to captain UAE in inaugural U19 Women's T20 World Cup

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Emirates Cricket Board on Saturday announced that left-handed batter and wicket-keeper Theertha Satish will be captaining the UAE team in the inaugural edition of the ICC U19 Womens T20 World Cup, to be played in South Africa from January 14 to 29, next year.

The 18-year old Theertha had played 33 T20Is for the UAE senior women's team since 2021. Apart from her, the UAE U19 has eight more capped senior women's international cricketers in Vaishnav Mahesh, Samaira Dharnidharka, Lavanya Keny, Sanchin Singh, Rinitha Rajith, Indhuja Nandakumar, Siya Gokhale and Mahika Gaur.

"The UAE Women's team has continued to demonstrate an admirable approach to team cohesiveness where all players complement each other and deliver consistent match-winning performance."

They have taken advantage of every opportunity to showcase their positive attitude with increasing confidence. As they now take their well-earned place to compete in the ICC's inaugural U19 Women's T20 World Cup, we wish the team a very successful South African tour,"



said Dr. Tayeb Kamali, Selection Committee Chairman, Emirates Cricket, in an official statement.

UAE secured their place in the inaugural edition of U19 Women's T20 World Cup through a dominating, five-match clean-sweep in the Asia Qualifiers, played in Malaysia this year. They are drawn in Group D alongside India, Scotland and South Africa U19 teams. UAE will open their campaign against Scotland on January 14, followed by matches against India and South Africa on January 16 and 18.

"UAE Women have enjoyed a very successful 2022, and through these successes we are now part of history by competing in the inaugural ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup - our collective reward for all the hard

work each individual has invested. However, we have no intent on resting on these successes," said Najeeb Amar, women's head coach.

The top three teams from each of the four groups will progress to the Super Six round, where teams will be pooled into two groups of six. The top two teams from each group will then progress to the semi-finals, which will be played on January 27 at JB Marks Oval in Potchefstroom. The final will take place at the same venue on January 29.

"Our coaching and high-performance teams continue to invest in developing each player, and we will approach each match with a firm winning-mindset. Our goal is to compete to the best of our abilities, to push those abilities and finish our Group matches in the top three (and) proceed to the Super Sixes," added Amar.

UAE squad: Theertha Satish (C), Vaishnav Mahesh, Samaira Dharnidharka, Lavanya Keny, Sanchin Singh, Rinitha Rajith, Indhuja Nandakumar, Siya Gokhale, Mahika Gaur, Avaneesunil Patil, Archana Supriya, Rishitha Rajith, Geethika Jyothis, Sanjana Ramesh, and Ishitha Zehra.

I never thought being famous would be wonderful, but my limited exposure to celebrity has shown me the dark side big-time
— Marianne Williamson



THE RETURN OF THE ENEMY

India will watch with bated breath the trajectory of the return of Covid-19. The virus has always derailed mankind’s best calculations. Hope the enemy is wrong this time, writes NAVIN UPADHYAY

The return of the Covid-19 pandemic in several countries and the fear that India may not remain immune to its spread could seriously challenge the country’s health infrastructure and the state of its fragile economy.

The resurfacing of Covid was widely expected during the winter. Two months ago, White House chief medical adviser, Dr. Anthony Fauci, who is one of the most respected voices on the threat of Covid-19, said that the world should not be surprised if a new Covid variant drives another winter surge in cases.

“We should anticipate that we very well may get another variant that would emerge that would elude the immune response that we’ve gotten from infection and/or from vaccination,” Dr. Fauci said.

But even those who revered Fauci would not have dreamt of such vicious resurfacing of Covid-19 as has been the case in China. For decades, China has been the growth engine of the world, as such its current Covid explosion situation has sent alarm bells ringing across the world already reeling under the economic impact of the Russia-Ukraine war and an overall slowdown in the economy.

Because of large-scale vaccinations, this time around India may be better placed to deal with the threat of Covid as far as health challenges are concerned. But in a globalized world, India could not remain immune to the shockwaves economies are feeling across the world from the return of the pandemic. The memories of the lockdown and fears are back. Amid the grim forecast that the world is headed for a major recession, consumption may take a big heat. Even in the best-case scenario—where there is no lockdown to deal with Covid—tours and travel, as well as transport sectors, could be badly affected and manufacturing and consumption sectors could also face a slowdown. The combined effect of all these could impact the nascent recovery in the economy.

A world bank report on the economic impact of the pandemic says that the COVID-19 pandemic triggered the largest global economic crisis in more than a century.” The crisis led to a dramatic increase in inequality within and across countries. Preliminary evidence suggests that the recovery from the crisis will be as uneven as its initial economic

THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-RELATED LOCKDOWN ON THE INDIAN ECONOMY STILL LINGERS ON EVEN AFTER TWO YEARS OF THE LOCKDOWN. ACCORDING TO A CRISIL REPORT, THE ECONOMY CONTRACTED 6.6% IN FISCAL 2021 ON ACCOUNT OF THE PANDEMIC AND THEN STAGED A MILD RECOVERY IN FISCAL 2022, WHEN IT GREW 8.7%. HOWEVER, THE IMPACT VARIED ACROSS STATES, WHILE SOME STATES WERE LAID LOW BY THE VIRUS, OTHER STATES WERE ABLE TO WITHSTAND THE SHOCK TO A GREAT EXTENT. BIHAR AT ONE END OF THE SPECTRUM LOGGED THE FASTEST POSITIVE GROWTH (2.5%); KERALA WAS AT THE OTHER END, SHRINKING 9.2%, THE REPORT SAID



despite the government’s decision to extend the free ration scheme by another year. After all, the extension of the scheme has a price tag of Rs 2 lakh crore, which is bound to put pressure on inflation and compel the Reserve Bank of India either to further tighten the monetary policy or keep the interest rate at this enhanced level. In both cases, millions of people have to bear extra burden in payment of installments on car and housing loans.

Any disruption in the economy could directly hit the job market. The unemployment rate in India increased to 8 percent in November from 7.80 percent in October of 2022. Free ration may be a good social and political move, but it is unlikely to solve the country’s problem of unemployment and growth. Economists have consistently argued that in the country where nearly 80 cr people are getting free food, productively is going to be badly hit- and in the long run, this could have serious consequences for the country’s growth.

India will watch with bated breath the trajectory of the return of Covid-19. The virus has always derailed mankind’s best calculations. Hope the enemy is wrong this time.

(The writer is Executive Editor of The Pioneer)

A World Bank report on the economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic sent shock waves through the world economy and triggered the largest global economic crisis in more than a century. The crisis led to a dramatic increase in inequality within and across countries. Preliminary evidence suggests that the recovery from the crisis will be as uneven as its initial economic impacts, with emerging economies and economically disadvantaged groups needing much more time to recover pandemic-induced losses of income and livelihoods.

In contrast to many earlier crises, the onset of the pandemic was met with a large, decisive economic policy response that was generally successful in mitigating its worst human costs in the short run. However, the emergency response also created new risks—such as dramatically increased levels of private and public debt in the world economy—that may threaten an equitable recovery from the crisis if they are not addressed decisively.

Worsening inequality within and across countries

The economic impacts of the pandemic were especially severe in emerging economies where income losses caused by the pandemic revealed and worsened some preexisting economic fragilities. As the pandemic unfolded in 2020, it became clear that many households and firms were ill-prepared to withstand an income shock of that scale and duration. Studies based on precrisis data suggest, for example, that more than 50 percent of households in emerging and advanced economies were not able to sustain basic consumption for more than three months in the event of income losses. Similarly, the average business could cover fewer than 55 days of expenses with cash reserves. Many households and firms in emerging economies were already burdened with unsustainable debt levels prior to the crisis and struggled to service this debt once the pandemic and associated public health measures led to a sharp decline in income and business revenue.

The crisis had a dramatic impact on global poverty and inequality. Global poverty increased for the first time in a generation, and disproportionate income losses among disadvantaged populations led to a dramatic rise in inequality within and across countries. According to survey data, in 2020 temporary unemployment was higher in 70 percent of all countries for workers who had completed only a primary education. Income losses were also larger among youth, women, the self-employed, and casual workers with lower levels of formal education. Women, in particular, were affected by income and employment losses because they were likelier to be employed in sectors more affected by lockdown and social distancing measures.

Similar patterns emerge among businesses. Smaller firms, informal businesses, and enterprises with limited access to formal credit were hit more severely by income losses stemming from the pandemic. Larger firms entered the crisis with the ability to cover expenses for up to 65 days, compared with 59 days for medium-size firms and 53 and 50 days for small and microenterprises, respectively. Moreover, micro-, small, and medium enterprises are overrepresented in the sectors most severely affected by the crisis, such as accommodation and food services, retail, and personal services.

The short-term government responses to the crisis

The short-term government responses to the pandemic were extraordinarily swift and encompassing. Governments embraced many policy tools that were either entirely unprecedented or had never been used on this scale in emerging economies. Examples are large direct income support measures, debt moratoria, and asset purchase programs by central banks. These programs varied widely in size and scope (figure 1.1), in part because many low-income countries were struggling to mobilize resources given limited access to credit markets and high precrisis levels of government debt. As a result, the size of the fiscal response to the crisis as a share of the gross domestic product (GDP) was almost uniformly large in high-income countries and uniformly small or nonexistent in low-income countries. In middle-income countries, the fiscal response varied substantially, reflecting marked differences in the ability and willingness of governments to spend on support programs.

AYURVEDA SILVER BULLET FOR KIDNEY FAILURE

In India, the number of people suffering from Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)--a condition when the kidney fails to filter waste as it typically does in a healthy body—is on increase due to unhealthy lifestyle. Rising cases of diabetes and hypertension have added to the woes. Currently, available conventional treatments for CKD like dialysis have their own limitations such as lack of accessibility and high cost, thus impacting quality of life as well as finances. Ayurveda experts tell The HEALTH PIONEER that there is a light at the end of the tunnel for such patients if they walk through the Ayurveda path encompassing simple diet, lifestyle modification and interventions based on time-tested herbal formulations.



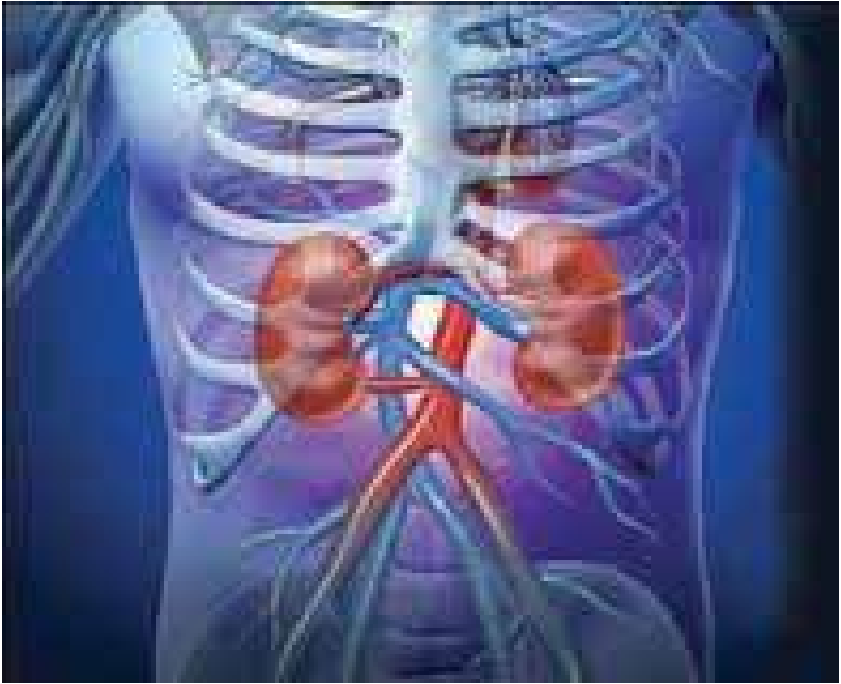
DR RAMA KANT YADAV
Associate Professor, Department of Kayachikitsa (Ayurvedic medicine) at All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) Delhi

Says Dr Rama Kant Yadav, Associate Professor, Department of Kayachikitsa (Ayurvedic medicine) at All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) at Sarita Vihar, Delhi, “We had conducted a pilot study recently on 40 patients reporting grade 4 and grade 5 CKD stage irrespective of any cause whether due to diabetes or hypertension. The patients continued with allopathy medicine but add-on therapy such as combination of formulations based on Punarnava, Guduchi was given to them.

“Interim results of the study have been encouraging. We found that the quality of life of the patients got improved ie they were not showing sign of tiredness unlike a kidney patient exclusively on dialysis. All biochemical parameters at the required levels were constant while a few patients even reported comparatively taking less number of dialysis. We are assessing the data and will publish the results soon.”

In fact, encouraged by the results, the AIIA, the autonomous body under the Union Ayush Ministry started a Nephrology Clinic at the institute in March this year and has already diagnosed over 1000 patients with renal diseases and failure so far.

“Most of the patients that we are seeing are already on dialysis. We don’t advise them to stop taking allopathy medicines or dialysis because diabetes and hypertension cannot be managed with ayurveda at one go. But ayurveda formulations based on herbs like Giloy, Varun, Punarnava, Kaasni, Gokshur, Shigeru, help in detoxifying kidney



cells apart from reducing high levels of uric acid and electrolytes,” says Dr Yadav.

Patients with Chronic Renal Failure (CRF) or CKD have damaged kidneys that become incapable of filtering waste products like salt, excess water, urea etc, out of the circulatory system resulting in metabolic toxicity. This leaves them struggling with fatigue, dizziness and sleeping issues all the time particularly when on dialysis.

Experts say that CKD is often left unnoticed at the early stages and generally diagnosed at later stages as the patient remains asymptomatic for long time or have nonspecific signs and symptoms such as lethargy, loss of appetite, and itching etc.

Even though Ayurvedic doctors have traditionally used herbs like Varuna and Gokshura to treat kidney failure, it is only recently that these practices have been validated scientifically.

Dr Sanchit Sharma, Executive Director of AIMIL Pharma which manufactures NEERI KFT, an ayurvedic formulation for the kidney ailments agrees, “Ayurveda blends our modern lifestyle and health-oriented habits with the ancient knowledge of using natural resources to help us live a healthy, stress-free and disease-free life.

“In the same way, Ayurveda texts have mentioned



DR SANCHIT SHARMA
Executive director of AIMIL Pharma Delhi

various herbs which are proven to improve kidney functioning like- Cichorium intybus, also known as ‘Kasni’ regulates sodium-potassium ATPase activity and protects ion-homeostasis, Crateva religiosa, also known as ‘Varuna’ which is an excellent diuretic and blood purifier that helps to maintain homeostasis. Also, ‘Gokhru’ is beneficial in rejuvenating nephrons .

But since many times it is very difficult to collect all these herbs and to use them with accuracy, we have been working to develop these products scientifically, he added.

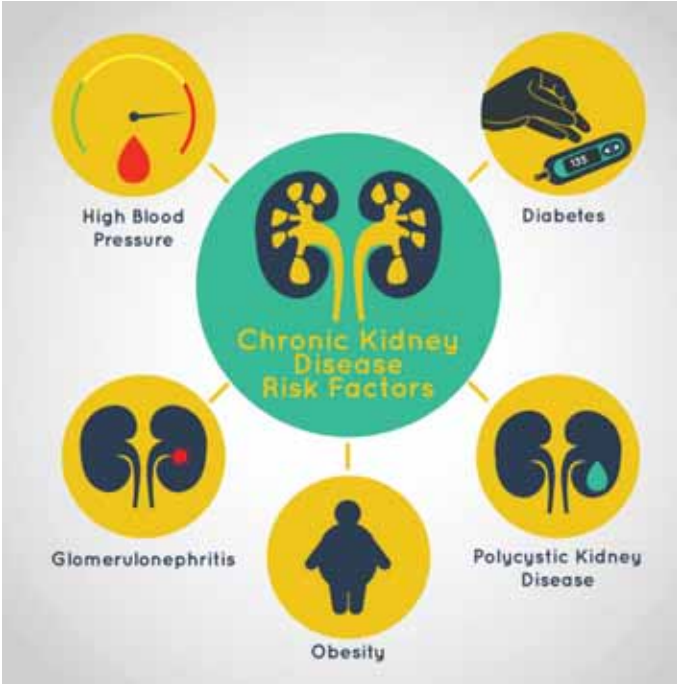
There are several studies that have shown a statistically significant improvement in Blood Urea and Creatinine levels of Chronic Renal Failure patients treated with Ayurvedic drugs for one month.



DR PUNEET
Ayurveda expert and founder of Karma Ayurveda, Delhi

A few ayurveda experts assert that with the help of customized ayurveda kits they have freed many patients from dialysis dependency. Dr Puneet, a fifth generation ayurveda expert and founder of Karma Ayurveda, a wellness clinic in the national capital, says that the “The Kidney Failure Treatment” and herbal medicines provided by them have successfully treated thousands of kidney patients in India and around the world.

Sharing a string of testimonials of the patients who were successfully treated and made dialysis free, he says that all types of kidney problems including CKD can be treated completely with natural techniques that help rejuvenate cells of the ailing organ by cutting down reactive oxygen species which is associated with its pathological dam-



What is chronic kidney disease in Ayurveda?

According to Ayurveda urine formation starts in intestine itself although filtration takes place in kidneys. Imbalance of agni (fire element) disturbs the process of formation and filtration of urine, Malformed urine leads to accumulation of wastes in the body.This unwanted accumulation is known as ‘ama sanchaya’ (toxin accumulation) in Ayurveda.

This ‘ama’ accumulation manifests as –

- loss of appetite
- tiredness
- heaviness
- puffiness around the eyes
- excess water (in the later stages)
- abnormal values of Creatinine, Urea ,GFR etc.

On the basis of different factors, damage at different levels of filtration apparatus can take place.

Diet and lifestyle:

The main aim is to increase the agni while keeping the medicines as soft on the body as possible, as kidney is an organ derived from the mother according to Ayurvedic shastras.

Avoid:

- Dals
- Milk and milk products like dahi (yogurt)
- Seeds and nuts
- Non veg items like meat, fish and eggs
- Hot spices’ pepper, chillies etc.
- Less of wheat/ brown bread (as it is heavy to digest)
- Junk foods,white sugar, refined foods like maida etc.

Consume:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Rice after removing starch
- Diluted lassi (butter-milk) is the only allowed milk product
- Water processed with berberis/cumin seeds

Lifestyle

- Do not forcibly hold the urge to pass urine or stools (vegadharana)
- Avoid daytime sleep except when very sick
- Avoid heavy meals after dark
- Hot water fomentation over the kidney area is advised.
- Vajrasana (thunderbolt pose)after food

Source: Himveda



DR SANJAY KUMAR SINHA
Senior Consultant at Kamlesh Ayurveda Hospital and Panchakarma Centre, Lucknow

age. “The entire treatment process is herbal and has no side effects. We have successfully treated thousands of cured patients from all around the world,” Dr Puneet asserts.

Dr Sanjay Kumar Sinha, Senior Consultant at Kamlesh Ayurveda Hospital and Panchakarma Centre Lucknow lamented that CKD is draining on not only patients but also caregiver. “Ayurveda is a ray of hope for the world. Unlike allopathic treatment, which does not have the option to reverse the condition of kidney dialysis, there are medicines and treatments in Ayurveda that help rejuvenate the vital organ at a cellular level and improve its functioning. It can help a patient live a healthy life without dialysis.”

He points out that results also depend on the patient’s will power. “To get desired results, the patient must first rectify his/her lifestyle. Herbal medicines can help patients to stop dialysis if they follow the basic principles of Ayurvedic medicine for their kidney damage. Reduced number of dialysis also means less burden on caretakers also,” he adds.

Dr Sinha, however, laments that most patients resort to Ayurveda only at advanced stages of the disease after the other options of treatment have failed to give them the desired results, therefore posing a greater challenge to experts treating them.

“Changing lifestyle of people, sedentary work, eating fast foods, junk food, tinned food, incompatible food, constant stress and strain, overindulgence of alcoholic drinks, chewing tobacco contributes substantially to Agnimandya—a condition when the food is not digested properly due to diminished



DR SARITA GAIKWAD
Director of Sarita's Punarnava Trimarma Chikitsalay and Research Centre, Nanded

power of digestive fire in the body”, added Dr Sarita Gaikwad, Director of Sarita's Punarnava Trimarma Chikitsalay and Research Centre, Nanded.

Echoing similar views, Dr Vinay Walenkar, Head of Office, Ayurved Vyaspeeth advises that “Many diseases, particularly the ones related to kidneys can be avoided by adopting a healthy lifestyle. One should make it a habit to not eat after sunset, as this habit of eating late at night is the mother of many diseases. Our role as Ayurvedic practitioners should not be limited to giving medicines, but we also have to educate the people about these habits for a healthy life.”



DR SN GUPTA
Vice Chancellor of Maganbhai Adenwala Mahagujarat University, Nadiad

Professor SN Gupta, Vice Chancellor of Maganbhai Adenwala Mahagujarat University, Nadiad, also agrees with his colleagues from the fraternity that “Ayurvedic treatments can help patients in many ways. In certain cases, Ayurveda has been able to provide 100% recovery to patients, thereby preventing them from a condition of dialysis and kidney transplant. Ayurvedic therapies and treatments have also helped patients on the verge of dialysis and renal transplant to postpone the procedures.”

Hearing Loss In Elders: There’s More to Hearing Than The Ear

Scientists have long linked inevitable age-related hearing loss to hair cells in the inner ear that become damaged or destroyed over time. However, a new study has said that when elderly can’t hear words at a noisy holiday gathering, too many brain cells may be firing at once. The Health Pioneer sheds light on the new finding.

Looking for answers about how the brain works amid age-related hearing loss, Johns Hopkins Medicine researchers say they found that old mice were less capable than young mice of “turning off” certain actively firing brain cells in the midst of ambient noise. The result, they say, creates a “fuzzy” sound stage that makes it difficult for the brain to focus on one type of sound — such as spoken words — and filter out surrounding “noise.”

But the Johns Hopkins researchers say their new studies, in The Journal of Neuroscience, indicate that the brain has much to do with the condition, and it may be possible to treat such hearing

loss by re-training the brain to tamp down the wildly firing neurons.

“There’s more to hearing than the ear,” says Patrick Kanold, Ph.D., professor of biomedical engineering at The Johns Hopkins University and School of Medicine. Kanold notes that most people will experience some kind of hearing loss after age 65, like the inability to pick out individual conversations in a bar or restaurant.

Kanold and his team recorded the activity of 8,078 brain cells, or neurons, in the auditory cortex brain region of 12 old mice (16–24 months old) and 10 young mice (2–6 months old).



First, the researchers conditioned the mice to lick a water spout when they heard a tone. Then, the same exercise was performed while playing “white noise” in the background.

Without the ambient noise, the old mice licked the water spout just as well as the young mice when they heard the tone. When the researchers introduced the white noise, overall, the old mice were worse at detecting the tone and licking the spout than the young mice.

Also, the young mice tended to lick the spout at the onset or the end of the tone. Older mice licked it at the start of the tone cue but also showed licking before the

tone was presented, indicating that they thought a tone was present when there wasn’t one.

Next, to see how auditory neurons performed directly during such hearing tests, the researchers used a technique called two-photon imaging to peer into the auditory cortex in the mice. The technique uses fluorescence to identify and measure the activity of hundreds of neurons at the same time.

In addition, the researchers found that just before the tone cue, there was up to twice as much neuron activity in old mice than young mice, especially among males, causing the animals to

lick the spout before the tone started.

A possible reason for that result, Kanold says, is that “in the old mice, the brain may be ‘firing’ or behaving as if a tone is present, when it’s not.”

The experiments with ambient noise also revealed that young mice experienced shifts in the ratio of active to inactive neurons, while older mice had more consistently active neurons overall. Thus, young mice could suppress the effects of ambient noise on neural activity while old mice could not, say the researchers.

On the upside, Kanold believes that because of the mammalian brain’s flexible learning potential, it can be

“taught” to address the fuzziness in older animals, including humans. “There may be ways to train the brain to focus on individual sound amid a cacophony of noise,” he says.

Kanold notes that more research is needed to precisely map the connection between the inability to shut off certain neurons and hearing loss amid ambient sound, including the brain circuits involved and how they change with age, as well as the potential differences between male and female animals.

Other contributors to the research are Kelson Shilling-Scrivo and Jonah Mittelstadt from the University of Maryland.

Scope for Opposition in Hasina's Bangladesh

Bangladesh is in a political crisis. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Government is facing a daunting task to manage the Opposition upsurge. But she and her ruling Awami League are not new to such political upheavals. Hasina has been in power since 2009 and is leaving no stone unturned to retain the voters' ardour for her.

However, the double whammy of the Covid-19 and the impact of the Russian attack on Ukraine on the Bangladeshi economy has become a new headache for the Hasina Government. Though she has been marshalling support from both neighbours India and China, it is getting difficult for her to survive the unrelenting political challenge brought by the Opposition.

All political opponents are pitching against Hasina and her party Awami League as the next general election is just a year away. The main Opposition party — Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) — under the new leadership of Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir is pulling out all stops to dethrone Hasina.

The BNP has roped in the largest Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami to whip up anger against the Awami League. However, the arrest of Jamaat leader Shafiqur Rahman and his son Rafat Sadik Salfullah last week, just before the beginning of the huge Opposition rally planned by the BNP and other Opposition parties, came as the biggest setback for the grand political alliance against Hasina and her party. Moreover, BNP's new leader Alamgir has been put behind bars to break the momentum the main Opposition party plans to keep. Hasina grabs every opportunity to hit back at the BNP as the main Opposition party lost mass base long ago when their Government failed to deliver services to the Bangla people. Also, Alamgir has inherited a party weakened by it earlier leader Khalida.

So what do the Bangladeshis want? For now, it seems they are not weary of Hasina and her Government,



the primary reason being no viable political alternative as the Opposition unity, if any, is at its nascent stage. Even if the rag-tag alliance of Opposition parties tries to mobilise public support, there is no single credible leader in the Opposition who can outsmart Hasina. Election analysts in Bangladesh claim that there is deep political uncertainty in that country.

At the moment, regional powers like India and China are giving full support to the Hasina Government as Bangladesh's growing manufacturing is providing bilateral benefits. To her credit, Hasina is smart enough to

manage two big political rivals on both sides of her country. Though the Opposition parties' endeavour to topple Hasina is a formidable challenge, her die-hard supporters are all set to back her to power again.

But Hasina needs to take lessons from national political history and her bête noire Khalida if she wants to retain the trust of the Bangladeshis. Khalida came to power for the first time in 1991 when the autocratic Government of HM Ershad fell in 1990 after massive political protests across the country. Since then the two powerful ladies --- Hasina and Khalida have been ruling

Bangladesh. In fact, it has been an alternate rule between the two political giants of the country till 2014, when Khalida and her party did not take part in the general election. The BNP boycotted the election accusing the Awami League of rigging the election. Then the BNP supporters were accused of violent political outburst and the League Government was accused of repressing the political opponents. However, political observers in the region say the BNP made a tactical mistake by not participating in the 2014 poll. The blunder left its supporters and sympathisers in the lurch, and in a chain reac-

tion the top leadership of the party lost touch with grassroots leaders in years to come.

Then came all the accusations and charges against the BNP followed by the jailing of Khalida, which was the last nail in the BNP's coffin. The absence of the veteran leader in the political scene, accompanied by the narrative weaved by the Hasina Government, literally left the BNP supporters disenchanted.

Even during the last parliamentary election in 2019, Hasina and her political alliance had faced an uphill task. But she managed to come back to power for the fourth

consecutive term. It seems she is going to make one more term in power. Political Opposition is weak and they do not have solid funding. To fight Hasina, the Opposition needs to organise itself from the grassroots level. Else, the Hasina Government with her men in uniform will fail any attempt of the Opposition to get back to power.

Four years back in 2018, a German think tank called Bertelsmann Foundation had rated Bangladesh as an autocracy along with Lebanon, Uganda, Nicaragua and Mozambique. Its report said: "Due to the worsened quality

of elections, the formerly fifth largest democracy is classified as an autocracy again. These developments are worrying for citizens because corruption, social exclusion and barriers to fair economic competition continue to be more prevalent in autocracies."

Hasina is ruling the country with an iron fist. The Bangladesh PM needs to realise the right to protest is not a crime, but an ingredient of a healthy democracy.

(The writer is the Head of the Department of Arts and Humanities at Geeta University, Panipat)

The ragtag coalition of Opposition parties in Bangladesh is not suitably poised to take on the might of Hasina and her party Awami League as the narrative her party and her Government have woven is too strong to be broken by feeble rallies. However, if Hasina wants to retain the ardour of the voters who believe in plurality of politics, she needs to give space to Opposition parties for protests



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Energy conservation: What's way forward

The collective action and the push for behavioural economics principles would pave the way for a brighter future



PRATAP C MOHANTY



PRIYANDU M BAJPAYEE

India celebrated its 32nd National Energy Conservation Day on December 14. The day established in 1991 highlights India's role in energy conservation and the country's efforts to become an energy-efficient country while successfully dealing with climate disasters. Over the period, some important policy initiatives were taken like Ujala scheme, which was a LED lamp distribution project. Ujjwala scheme aimed to protect the health of women and children by access to clean cooking fuel.

These initiatives were part of a larger shift towards renewable and green energy resources that aimed to produce 450 GW of capacity in renewable energy by 2030 and reduce global emission intensity by 45 per cent from 2005 levels. However, achieving these targets is full of impediments and seems more arduous if the change does not occur at the fundamental levels.

One can say, based on statistics, that India is still quite far from going green. Even the fifth National Family Health Survey (NFHS) report 2022 states that 41 per cent of the population and more than half of the rural population still rely on solid or unclean fuel combustions, which results in health risks. Although, our analyses using the unit-level data of all five NFHS rounds (1992-2021) showed that there had been a significant decline in households using unclean fuel, with the last five years registering the largest decrease in terms of percentage, which was in line with the International Energy Agency-



2021 (IEA) report that claims "biomass, primarily fuelwood, makes up a declining share of the energy mix but is still widely used as a cooking fuel. Despite recent success in expanding coverage of LPG in rural areas, 660 million Indians have not fully switched to modern, clean cooking fuels or technologies".

Another research using ACCESS survey data (2016 and 2018) published similar

results (Nature Energy, 2020). The findings of our paper seems to show that even the current level of unclean fuel use can have significant health hazards for under-five children living in the house along with women and the elderly (The Lancet Global Health, 2020).

Even at the macro level, according to the IEA report of 2021, in the last two decades, India's energy consumption has more than doubled due to

its rapidly growing population which may soon surpass that of the rest of the world and almost all inclusive access to household electricity, that was accomplished in 2019, i.e., in less than 20 years, over 900 million people now have access to electricity.

Additionally, the report's analysis of overall energy consumption revealed that three fuels i.e., solid biomass, oil, and coal, provide more than 80 per

cent of India's energy needs. Mainly because industry growth and power production have been supported by coal, which continues to be the dominant fuel in the energy mix. Also, as the number of vehicles on the road has increased, so have oil usage and imports. These numbers will indeed get reflected in the form of harmful impacts of climate change. The four primary climate change indicators

marine acidification, rising sea levels greenhouse gas emissions, and ocean heat, were at all-time highs in 2021, according to the State of the Global Climate report (World Meteorological Organisation), which shows that anthropogenic activities are generating profound and long-lasting changes in the land, the water, and the atmosphere on a global scale.

The Government has already initiated the process on different fronts. One front is seen through various small initiatives undertaken innumerable programmes, such as the Swachh Bharat campaign or Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao (with specific behavioural approaches), which was also mentioned in the report of the 2019 Economic Survey. The other front is through celebrating such essential days and acknowledging the ones giving their share of contribution to the public welfare. The one that was seen on December 14 where the current President of India, along with Union Ministers, felicitated the winners with awards on National Energy Efficiency Innovation and National Energy Conservation. These awards are given across 56 sub-sectors of the country to recognise their achievements in energy efficiency as a part of its awareness campaign.

So, to observe real and impactful change, it is essential to transform the social norms that are ingrained within the individuals and within communities with the help of behavioural economics along with some stringent policies like-1) a policy of a compulso-

ry minimum of three riders on private four-wheelers (except in emergency), 2) compulsory messages of energy conservation awareness on political billboards and hoardings, 3) cashable credit points in e-wallets of individuals using public transport including the approach of even-odd formula.

Understanding this, the Government also launched mission LiFE in 2021 (of NITI Aayog and MoFECC), which is being called an international mass movement led by India that will encourage both individual and group efforts to save and preserve the environment. The outcome of this flagship project would entail representation of India in the COP 28, UNFCCC to be held from November 30 to December 12, 2023.

This seems right as the collective action and nudging using behavioural economics principles would pave the way for a brighter future. However, the fruits of the planted behavioural interventions are yet to be harvested.

Yet, its full potential can only be realised when the policies are more focussed on the demand side perspective rather than the supply side of the economy as it will target to alter and nudge the individual, social and cultural norms through behavioural approaches which further depends on the future of research that will be carried out.

(Pratap C Mohanty is Associate Professor, IIT Roorkee; Priyandu M Bajpayee is Research Scholar, IIT Roorkee. Views are personal and derived from study)

