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HOW TO STEP CLEAR
OF THE IAS QUAGMIRE

WORLD 8
RUSSIA BUILDUP BIGGEST
IN 30 YEARS: NATO

MONEY 9
INDIA'S SERVICES SECTOR
ACTIVITY SLIPS FURTHER IN JAN

BHUBANESWAR, FRIDAY FEBRUARY 4, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹4



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SKIPPER DHULL
LEADS INDIA TO
U-19 WORLD
CUP FINAL
12 SPORT

China lost 42 soldiers, not 4, in Galwan

China had nine times more casualties than it acknowledged, says Australian newspaper
PNS ■ NEW DELHI



darkness.

Of the four soldiers China confirmed had died, only one - Junior Sergeant Wang Zhuoran - reportedly drowned, the investigative newspaper said, citing the report titled "Galwan Decoded".

The report cited "several Weibo users" and said, "At least 38 PLA (People's Liberation Army) troops along with Wang were washed away and drowned that night...of which only Wang was declared among the four officially dead soldiers".

"Comrades in arms kept slipping and being rushed downstream," the report said, adding, "After the incident, the bodies of the soldiers were first taken to Shiquanhe Martyr Cemetery, followed by local ceremonies at the local towns of the killed soldiers".

It quoted a Weibo user (Qiang) as claiming to have served in the area. The user claimed that the Chinese army was creating infrastructure in the buffer zone, violating the mutual agreement and had

been trying to expand its patrolling limits within the buffer zone since April 2020.

"PLA did not adhere to its promise...and instead of dismantling its own infrastructure as agreed upon, secretly dismantled the river crossing bridge constructed by the Indian army," said the report.

Beijing went to "extreme lengths to silence discussion about the battle" and in particular, any "discussion about the true number of Chinese casualties".

The Klaxon cites the report as saying a division of the Xinjiang Military Region "organized officers and soldiers to go to the Shiquanhe Martyr Cemetery to lay flowers to the revolutionary martyrs, organize party members to take an oath and sweep the tombs for heroes".

The investigation involved "discussions with mainland Chinese bloggers, information obtained from mainland-based Chinese citizens and media reports that have since been deleted by Chinese authorities".

India to skip Olympic ceremonies as China honours Galwan attacker

Galwan clash PLA officer appointed games torchbearer
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taking strong exception to China's decision to honour its army officer involved in the Galwan valley clash with India in 2020, India on Thursday decided not to send its diplomats for the opening and closing ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Beijing. The Chinese officer has been appointed as the torchbearer for the forthcoming event.

Identified as Qi Fabio, the officer was reportedly injured and captured by the Indian forces during the clash in which 20 Indian personnel, including the commanding officer, were killed on June 15, 2020.

The Chinese officer was captured when he tried to mount an attack along with his troops on the Indian forces in the Galwan Valley. His photograph carrying the Olympic torch was put up by the State-owned media *The Global Times*.

Reacting to the develop-



ment, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi described the Chinese action of honouring the commander as "regrettable".

India's chargé d'affaires in the Beijing embassy will not be attending the opening or closing ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, he said. However, India will participate in the Games with a lone athlete.

Some other countries, including the US, too have decided not to send their envoys for the Games. Their sportspersons, however, will represent their countries in the mega event.

Meanwhile, India has decided not to broadcast the opening and closing cere-

monies of the Winter Olympics being held in Beijing. Prasar Bharati CEO Shashi Shekhar Vempati said on Thursday DD Sports channel will not telecast live the opening and closing ceremonies of the Winter Olympics being held in Beijing. The opening ceremony will be held on February 4 (Friday), and the closing ceremony on February 20.

The announcement came shortly after the Indian Government decided that its envoy will not attend the opening or closing ceremony of the 2022 Winter Olympics as China has chosen a military commander involved in the Galwan Valley clashes as its torchbearer for the mega sporting event.

Schools can open in dists with less than 5% +vity

Centre leaves it to State Govts to take final call
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of growing demand from various stakeholders and educationists, the Centre on Thursday said districts having less than five per cent Covid positivity rate can move in the direction of reopening schools. But it is up to the State Governments to take a call in this regard.

The Education Ministry said schools are to be fully open in eleven States, partially opened mainly for higher classes in 16 States and continue to remain closed in nine States.

Noting that the pandemic situation has improved and there has been a consistent decline in new Covid-19 cases, Niti Ayog Member (Health) V K Paul said, "We have more confidence now to go in the direction of reopening schools".

Noting that the nation is concerned that there has been a significant learning loss, Paul said schools should be open at the "earliest opportunity but also appropriate time".



Many international organisations, including the WHO and the UNICEF, advised it is not good to keep the schools closed for so long as it is hampering the secondary education system, he said.

The Union Health Ministry, the Education Ministry, and other stakeholders held several discussions in this regard last week. Sources said they are framing a model for staggered opening of schools for physical classes following all Covid-19 related protocols.

The decision regarding the reopening of the schools for Delhi is likely to be taken by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Friday. Schools in the city were briefly reopened before being closed again on December 28 last year in view of the third wave of Covid-19 driven by the Omicron variant.

Contraction in spread of Covid, says Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Thursday, for first time, said pandemic situation has improved and there is a contraction in spread of Covid infection. The peak of third Covid-19 wave driven by highly transmissible coronavirus variant Omicron is slightly lower than that of second wave which proved deadly to many.

Daily Covid cases crossed four lakh when India reached second wave's peak, Health Ministry's Joint Secretary Lav Agarwal told reporters here. In contrast, the country on Thursday reported 1.72 lakh fresh cases, half cases recorded on January 21, which was peak, according to Government.

Cases have been falling since then. "We are seeing a decline in (Covid) cases. We don't want to use words like wave and peak. There are still some areas where cases are increasing. Covid management strategies still need to be imple-



A woman walks past a graffiti painted on a wall to create awareness about coronavirus disease in Mumbai on Thursday

mented because overall we are still seeing a high number of cases," Agarwal said, on whether third wave peak has been reached. He said a decline in Covid fatality rate has been noted with an increase in vaccine doses.

Daily Covid cases in two weeks between January 21 and February 3 have fallen by 50 per cent from 3,47,254 to 1,72,433. During same period, positivity rate or number of infections per

100 tests fell by 39 per cent from 17.94 per cent to 10.99 per cent, which shows a clear decline in daily positivity rate indicating decreased spread of Covid infection.

Although number of districts with a positivity rate of over 10 per cent has fallen from over 400 a week ago to less than 300 now, two States - Kerala and Mizoram - are reporting an increase in positivity rate and cases.

Only 2 submitted phones: Pegasus panel extends date

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court-appointed Pegasus probe panel on Thursday said only two persons have submitted mobile phones and decided to extend the submission date up to February 8. In an advertisement, the panel said persons can sit along with the technical committee while copying the phone. This is the second advertisement by the Justice RV Raveendran committee.

"In response to it, only two persons have produced their mobile instruments for taking digital images. Therefore, the Technical Committee once again requests those who have reasonable cause to believe their mobile instrument is infected with Pegasus spyware to come forward and contact the Technical Committee with reasons as to why they believe that their mobile instrument may have been infected with Pegasus malware, on or before February 8, 2022, by an email to inquiry@pegasus-india-investigation.in," it said.

State reports 18 more Covid deaths

3,629 new infections
515 children among infected
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State reported 18 more Covid-19 deaths on Thursday, mounting the total toll to 8,666. Three deaths each were reported from Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Jatsinghpur, Khordha and Sundargarh districts and one each from Baleswar, Deogarh and Nayagarh.

Meanwhile, 3,629 more Covid-19 positive cases in the 30 districts and the State pool, with which the total tally increased to 12,59,405. Among the newly-infected were 515 children in the age group of 0 to 18 years. In the last 24 hours, 66,702 samples were tested and the test positivity rate (TPR) was 5.44 per cent. The

active cases stood at 35,306. Notably, the State had recorded 3,450 Covid cases on Wednesday. Out of the new cases, 2,115 were from quarantine and 1,514 Local contacts.

Khordha district registered the highest 716 cases followed by Sundargarh with 346, Cuttack 329, Kendrapada 149, Mayurbhanj 142, Jajpur 137, Nayagarh 118, Baleswar 111, Rayagada and Sambalpur 101 each, Balangir 91, Nabarangpur 90, Angul and Jagatsinghpur 89 each, Kalahandi 85, Boudh 80, Bargarh 71, Nuapada 70, Deogarh 68, Gajapati 66, Dhenkanal 56, Puri 53, Ganjam 46, Keonjhar 44, Subarnapur 35, Koraput 31 and Malkangiri 23 Besides, 160 cases were reported from the State pool. So far, 12,15,380 persons have recovered from the disease in the State.

Schools, colleges to open in State from Feb 7

KG up to Class-VII from February 14
Covid protocols to be followed
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government on Thursday announced to reopen educational institutions in the State for students of Class-VIII onwards from February 7. Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra said the decision to reopen schools, colleges and other educational institutions has been taken considering the larger interest of students. He said physical classes for students of KG up to Class-VII would resume from February 14. Short-term training and skill development training centres would reopen from February 7. Hostels associated

with the educational institutions and training centres would also reopen from February 7, he said. Mahapatra said the class promotion of students from KG up to Class-IX would be done on the basis of classroom assessment marks. Promotion of students from Standard-XI to Standard-XII would be done through class assessment as well. Students of Classes-X and XII would appear at the examinations conducted by the concerned board and council as per their guidelines, he added. The decision was taken after reviewing the Covid-19 situation. The daily infections and the positivity rate are declining. Meanwhile, many children in the age group of 15 to 18 years have been vaccinated. However, the reopened schools and colleges would have to adhere strictly to the Covid-19 protocols.

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Panchayat polls

Cong brings 22 charges against State Govt

Says BJD, BJP two sides of a coin

SUDARSHAN CHHOTORAY ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Congress on Thursday brought out a 22-point charge-sheet of 22 years' rule against the State BJD Government and also posed five questions to the Central Government and sought answer from both ahead of the panchayat elections.

The Congress said the BJD and the BJP as two sides of a coin and there has been an unwritten alliance between them to hoodwink the people of Odisha. While both are pitted against each other, they



are working in coordination in Parliament. While on major issues the BJD is agitating over Central neg-

ligence in the State, its MPs are not questioning the Modi Government at the Centre and the BJP which is

demanding CBI inquiry on every issue against the State Government, its MPs remain mum in Parliament, the charge-sheet said. Releasing the charge-sheet, Congress State media in-charge for panchayat elections Manoj Mohapatra asked that if Odisha is progressing so much, why 20 lakh people from the Chief Minister's home district Ganjam are migrating to other States. If the CM is clean, why he is covering up crimes of his Ministers and bureaucrats?

He questioned the Modi Government on the spiralling price rise and why it closed the CBI inquiry into the chit fund scam and why there is no CBI probe into the Paradip iron ore smuggling

and Black Rose issues. The Congress also questioned the Modi Government why it is not announcing MSP Rs 2,930 for paddy and why the Neelachal Ispat Nigam is being handed over to a private company. The charge-sheet against the BJD Government included the State's debt burden increase to Rs 1.30 lakh crore and the per-capita loan rise to Rs 30,000. Besides, the State has become number-1 in crimes against women and children.

The Congress also questioned why even 35% land has not been irrigated in the State in last 22 years, why 10,000 schools are going to be closed and 63 lakh youths are jobless.

MCC breaches by BJD

BJP questions SEC silence despite 'proof'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The BJP on Wednesday accused the BJD of violating the election code of conduct and adopting violent practice to silence the opposition.

Party leader Bishnu Sethi alleged that as people at the grassroots are not buying BJD campaign, the party has adopted a violent path and was misutilising the position of power for electrical gain. "On violation of model code of conduct, Covid guidelines and SEC order by BJD candidates and leaders, we had submitted facts, figures and proof but no ex-

emplary action has been taken till date; rather the SEC is silent on the issue," he said. Sethi alleged that quite unfortunately Subhashis Giri, a BJP worker of Brahmapur village under Zone 28 of Bhadrak block, was brutally killed by BJD workers. He claimed that the assailants were supporters of a BJD MLA.

A delegation of party workers, including Opposition Chief Whip Mohan Majhi, general secretary Lekhashree Samantsinhar, Mahila Morcha president Smruti Patanik submitted a memorandum to SEC and demanded stern action against the perpetrators of the crime.

Man given lift, looted of cash, valuables

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A man, who returned from Bengaluru, was sedated and looted while travelling in a car to his village in Kendrapada district from Bhubaneswar on February 1. The two miscreants who looted him had given him lift in the vehicle.

The matter came to light when victim Biren Kumar Parida of Olavar village under Ranjkanika

block of Kendrapada district lodged an FIR at the Saheed Nagar police station here on Thursday. As per the complainant, when he reached the bus-stop near Satsang Vihar here at around 6.15 pm on February 1, he learnt that he had missed the bus to his village. When he was waiting at the bus-stand, two persons came in a car and offered him a lift. One of them said he was travelling to Guali village in Kendrapada district

and he could drop Biren at his village, for which he could pay only Rs 200 as fare. Near the Mahanadi Bridge in Cuttack, they stopped the car and offered him a drink which was yellow in colour. Initially, he refused but when they insisted, he drank it.

After consuming the drink, which was actually spiked with some drug, Biren became unconscious. The miscreants thrashed him and took Rs 75,000 and other belongings from him. Later, they dumped him near Chhatia in Cuttack district. After he gained consciousness, he somehow managed to reach his home at Olavar on Wednesday.

Students demand no +2 Board exams

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A large number of students held a demonstration at Master Canteen Square here on Thursday demanding cancellation of the Class-XII Board examinations.

Led by the NSUI, they then took out a rally to the residence of School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash. They questioned the decision to hold the exam when the course is yet to be covered. They said the physical classes could not be conducted owing to the Covid-19 situation. Although



online classes were held, the entire syllabus could not be covered. They demanded that the Council of Higher Secondary Education declare results of examination on the basis of the marks scored by them in three quarterly exams.

"Our classes were held only for one and a half months instead of 12 months. How can the Board conduct the examination," asked a student. Notably, similar protests were earlier reported from Jagatsinghpur, Bhadrak, Nabarangpur and other parts of the State.

'Open PMAY portal for Odisha'

BJD raises issue in Rajya Sabha

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

BJD Rajya Sabha members Dr Sasmit Patra, Dr Amar Patnaik and Sujeet Kumar raised the issue of opening of PMAY(G) Awas Plus Portal for the addition of six lakh houses of Odisha which comprise tribal beneficiaries from the western, southern and KBK districts.

They asked how the Centre ignored repeated requests of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to open the Awas

Portal whereas within no time it opened for Karnataka to add 25 lakh houses on January 13. The BJD MPs demanded the Awas Plus Portal of the PMAY(G) be opened immediately.

Dr Patra while speaking on the Motion of Thanks on President's Address raised critical issues of Odisha's interest relating to need for urgent procurement of par-boiled rice by FCI, opening of Awas Portal for inclusion of six lakh houses for tribals under PMAY and strongly urged the Centre to take action respecting the federal spirit of the nation.

In Cuttack Youth held trying to extort Rs 50L from doc

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Commissionerate police have arrested a youth from Jharkhand on the charge of demanding Rs 50 lakh from a Cuttack-based doctor by issuing threats.

The accused Emroz Ansari alias Imran (29) belongs to Chaibasa district. Imran had

allegedly tried to extort the amount from Dr Shami Salim by claiming to be a Maoist. He had even threatened to kill the doctor and kidnap his family members if he failed to pay up the money. ACP Tapas Pradhan said, "After the threat call was received by the Cuttack doctor and Rs 50 lakh was demanded on the pretext of Maoist

protection money, we started a probe. We found that the accused had used a SIM which was procured and activated in Dhenkanal using forged documents." Pradhan said special teams were formed after a SIM card's locations showed different parts of Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj in Odisha and neighbouring Jharkhand.

"After mounting protracted technical surveillance and on basis of ground intelligence, we finally managed to nab the accused on February 1. A mobile phone and two SIM cards were seized from his possession. Further investigation is underway to ascertain if he has links with Leftwing extremists," Pradhan added.

SOCIAL CANVAS

Budget on capex must include backward States

In true federal spirit



MANAS JENA

The focus of the Union Budget 2022-23 on capital expenditure aims to boost the economic growth but this scope of investment in infrastructure must be inclusive of backward regions and States for a balanced national growth. It is good that the ratio of capital expenditure to overall spending has been consistently increased for last two years and in the current Budget, it is 35.4% higher than previous Budget as the Finance Minister has proposed to make it one-fifth of the total spending.

The trend of capital expenditure from 2014-15 to 2022-23 shows an increase from about Rs 2,00,000 crore to Rs 10,00,000 crore in form of budgetary support and grant in aid to States for creation of capital assets. The capital expenditure in the Budget is estimated at Rs 10.68 lakh crore in 2022-23

which is more than 4 per cent of the GDP. This move of the Union Government is well appreciated from many quarters including industry and service sector but it must reach to more deserving areas of the country where infrastructure development has been neglected since long. It is also expected that with change of various provisions for creation of capital assets by States through grant in aid and the change in SEZ Act will have more scopes for investment. On the other side the relatively lower allocation on health, education, rural and urban development, agriculture and allied activities and social welfare sector will have pressure over the poor States having a sizeable vulnerable population. So to compensate the poor States, the capital expenditure must cover such regions and States in priority for overall growth of the national economy.

The spending on capital expenditure covers primarily infrastructure-intensive sectors like roads, highways, railways, housing, real estate and urban development. It is expected that this will boost the economy in the long run and create job opportunities to counter the growing imbalances in the demand and supply in employment market. There are huge unemployment and distress migration problems from poor regions and backward States to industrially developed and urbanised areas having good infrastructure and connectivity. Many

States and regions remain historically backward because of inadequate public infrastructure as well as basic amenities. Today connectivity infrastructure has become a lifeline of contemporary development and non-connectivity perpetuates socio-economic backwardness. In fact, there has been uneven infrastructure development in our country. Since independence India has witnessed disparity and discrimination against backward States such as Odisha. The allocations of funds to States are made mostly on politically motivated line and not based on principles of equity. The States having urban areas, cities and metropolis have been getting more allocations for communication and connectivity whereas some States are being deprived of allocations at par with the others.

In terms of length of State highways, Odisha is not among top ten States. Maharashtra is on the top so far as road networks that include NH, State highway and district roads are concerned. The States which feature in the toppers list are Karnataka, UP, TN, Gujarat, MP, and Rajasthan. Road networks are the lifeline of public transport and delay in building the primary infrastructure has a bearing on public life and livelihood. Odisha is one of the major revenue earning zones of the Railways but it has been consistently getting insufficient allocations to complete its ongoing

projects and there has been no plan for any new project. Even many of the projects such as Khordha and Balangiri railway line planned during British time have not yet been completed in spite of full support of the State Government. The East Coast Railways having its headquarters in Bhubaneswar since 2003 has covered almost all parts of Odisha and this zone has been contributing sizeable revenue but the Railways Ministry does not reciprocate in the same way to the railway expansion work in Odisha. The inordinate delay in completion of many ongoing projects and initiation of new projects has been a matter of huge public discontent. The fact is that even a few districts in Odisha have no railway line. This deficiency has contributed to economic backwardness and regional imbalance in economic growth. The Indian Railways is one of the largest employers in the world which has provided employment to crores of families directly and indirectly. So States having less railway line have lower level of employment and economic activities. The States of UP, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, AP and Gujarat have largest railway network. The State of UP has the largest 8,763 km route. Odisha has just 2,461 km route which is less than Bihar and WB.

The other major public infrastructure is the 480 km coastline in Odisha which has not been explored fully for the development

of the people of the State. But in spite of popular demand for a coastal highway and the promise by the Central Government in 2015, very little progress has been achieved in the project so far. There are tremendous potentials of port based high value economic activities in the coastal areas and opportunities of eco-tourism by developing road, rail and air connectivity. There are about 15 locations from Baleswar to Ganjam district which can be developed into small ports and corridors of export and import linking two major developed port areas of neighbouring States. Almost all the coastal States of India are becoming urbanized and industrially developed with costal highway and railway lines but from Digha in WB to Vizag in AP the region is an exception to the national trend. The coastline is lengthwise higher than Karnataka, WB and Goa; it is having one major port and 14 small ports. But it has not been fully used for the cohesive development of Odisha.

Gujarat, TN, AP, Maharashtra and Kerala have higher length of coastline than Odisha but many of their small ports have been developed recently due to political will of the State Government with timely support of the Central Government. Odisha must explore the scope in the Budget for its infrastructure development. (manasbbsr15@gmail.com)

City bizmans son's abduction

Victim's schoolmate prepared blueprint

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Commissionerate police probing the kidnapping case of a businessman's son, Ishan Agarwal, here on Thursday revealed that the crime's plot was hatched by the victim's schoolmate.

Dhaneswar Patra prepared the blueprint along with his three friends for money. City DCP Umashankar Dash said, "Dhaneswar provided all information to other accused about the victim which helped them abduct him. Dhaneswar maintained distance from the victim during the kidnapping and covered his face to hide his identity. After the youth was rescued, he recognised him." "The accused moved to different places and changed locations frequently. They kept the victim at one place

and placed his cell phone elsewhere to mislead police," Dash said. Ishan had been abducted by the miscreants when he stepped out of his house at Laxmisagar to have tea on January 31 evening. "Two men initially called out my name. As they were wearing masks and hoodies, I could not recognise them. When I went near the vehicle, they grabbed and bundled me into the vehicle. They then tied up my hands and blindfolded me," Ishan said after being rescued.

As many as 19 teams of police were involved in the operation and all the four accused involved have been arrested. Meanwhile, police recreated the crime scene with the help of the four accused to get information about the sequence of events. The cops are on the lookout for the other involved in the incident.

SP demands caste census

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Samajwadi Party (SP) on Wednesday urged the State Election Commission (SEC) to conduct a caste census first before going for elections in 107 municipal bodies. The polls need to be deferred for the purpose, it stated. In a letter to the SEC, party State

president Rabi Behera said that because of lack of data, 52% OBCs of the State couldn't participate in the ongoing panchayat elections. Again, the community is going to be deprived in municipal elections. So, the commission should direct the State Government to conduct a caste census for the OBCs.

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No docs applying for Baleswar AIIMS unit

OPD services yet to resume

UBACHAK MOHANTY ■ BALESWAR
Strong resentment is growing among the denizens of Baleswar due to inordinate delay in resumption of OPD services at the newly-constructed AIIMS unit here in the district. Reports said although the construction works for the OPD building and staff quarters have been completed, yet it couldn't begin its OPD services due to non-availability of doctors. Although the AIIMS authorities had sought ap-

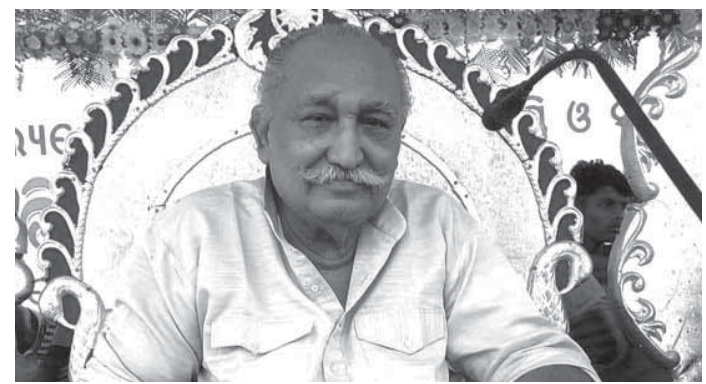
plications for doctors and specialists yet none has applied for the posts, reports said, adding further although applications were invited from the retired doctors for the AIIMS satellite centre yet only few have applied for the posts. Sources said although advertisement for 26 regular doctor and specialist posts was made yet none evinced interest which has become a cause of concern for the authorities. The non-fulfillment of doctor posts has been the reason for the delay in inauguration and beginning of the OPD services. In 2013, the Government had declared the

establishment of an AIIMS satellite centre at Baleswar. The project remained in cold storage for years for some reason or the other and rumours flew thick and fast that the project would be shifted to another district. However, due to vehement protests of the residents, the project was again taken up and the district administration, accordingly, handed over about 25 acres of land under Remuna block near NH-16 of village Samalpur for it. The Central Government sanctioned Rs 35 crore for the first phase works and out of the fund with Rs 5 crore the building for OPD and staff was

constructed. A target was set to open OPD service by April 2020. However, due to Covid, the construction works while got delayed again, the target was again fixed for March 2021. However, when the construction works are completed the non-availability of doctors has become a bottleneck. However, other reports said the satellite centre would be inaugurated by the new AIIMS Director of Bhubaneswar AIIMS and the authorities are mooting plans that the doctors from Bhubaneswar would be providing OPD services till the time the vacancies are filled.

Ex-MLA, ornithologist Dev dies

PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI
Three-time MLA from Mohana in Gajapati district, Ganjam's Sanakhemundi royal scion and noted ornithologist Udaya Narayan Dev passed away in a private hospital in Bhubaneswar on Thursday. He was 87. He was elected for consecutive terms from 1974, 1977 and 1980. Dev was well-known for his research on birds in the South Asian region, especially Chilika lake, for five decades. Dev authored 12 books. On January 21, his book 'Bihanga Sanhita' was released by Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal. The



book carries details of 2,085 birds. Many students were trained under his organisation 'Project Bihanga'. A founding member of the Project 'Tiger' in Government of India, Dev was the recipient of Biju Patnaik award for excellence in conservation. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed deep condolences over his death.

Knee striker in Guinness record



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Sachin Behera, a well-known knee striker, broke the record of former Pakistani boxer Muhammad Rashid and entered into the Guinness Book of Records. Acknowledgments and congratulations were sent to Sachin from all over Odisha while Sports Minister Tusharkant Behera met Sachin and congratulated him on his achievements. Minister Behera lauded him for bringing glory to Odisha in the field of sports and advised him to continue. Emboldened, Sachin said he would bring more success to Odisha. Sachin of Larka village in Boden block of Nuapada district had been involved in sports since he was a child. He was first known as the 100-meter runner.

Denied basic amenities for yrs S'garh hilltop villagers bar leaders from campaigning

MALAY RAY ■ SUNDARGARH
The villagers of Juniani village in Rajbahal panchayat in Sundargarh district have decided not to allow the politicians or leaders of political parties to enter their village for panchayat poll because they have not yet been provided basic facilities in their village for long years. And those who are coming to the village for votes, the villagers are first also asking them for basic facilities and thereafter, allowing them to talk about vote. According to sources, Juniani village is situated on top of a hill and the road condition to the village has been worst for years. Other amenities like drinking water, electricity and school are also a daydream for them for last many years. Sources said the total population of the village is about 200



and all are tribal. Since there is no school, all are uneducated. Crores of rupees are being spent for construction of road in Sundargarh district, from the fund of District Mineral Foundation but for this village, politicians are little concerned. The villagers are depending on a small well for drinking water. The children are going to Anganwadi centre by walking 4 km through forest

to Bileibahal village. Since elephant menace has always been in this village, villagers have been spending sleepless night in their home. Land mafia, after being hand in glove with the Revenue Department, have allegedly grabbed about 43 acres of land of some villagers. The landlosers have been running to the Tehsil office to get justice but in vain. "In our village, we have no facility like road,

drinking water, electricity and school, etc," said Niharu Kerketta, a villager. "These politicians come to our village only at the time of election to appeal for vote but thereafter they forget about their promise. We have been suffering a lot because of non availability of basic facilities at our villages. We have therefore decided not to allow anybody to campaign in our village," Niharu added.

NH-16 turns accident-prone in Baleswar

UBACHAK MOHANTY ■ BALESWAR
The commuters using National Highway-16 in the Baleswar district jurisdiction are facing a tough time due to the

snail's pace of work of widening the road from four lane to six. The works have been going on for months and are causing serious inconveniences to the passengers. Due to the construction works, one side of the road lays closed. As a result, hundreds of passenger buses, trucks and lorries are plying on the two lane



which is not only consuming travel time but also causing accidents near the diversions. The NH -16 from Chennai to Kolkata (over 1,700 km) is undertaken for six laning and the works are under progress at different patches. From Soro to Baleswar, in about 35 km at least five diversions have been made, allowing use of only one side of the road. These diversions are causing serious inconveniences for the vehicles mainly to the large containers. Due to one side plying, the passengers are encountering jams and at times accidents.

INBRIEF

NEWBORN GIRL FOUND IN PURI DHH TOILET
Puri : A newborn girl with an umbilical cord and placenta attached was found in the OPD toilet of the District Headquarters Hospital here on Thursday morning. The baby was rescued by hospital staffs in a critical condition and admitted to the Special Newborn Care Unit (SNCU) of the hospital for treatment. A complaint in this regard was lodged at the local Kumbharpada police station for necessary action. According to the hospital's Obstetrics and Gynaecology (O&G) Specialist, the baby was prematurely born and found in a drainage pipe of the toilet. The baby's mother was yet to be identified and located.

MULTI-CROREPATI NUAPADA ACSO ARRESTED
Bhubaneswar : The Vigilance police on Thursday arrested Nuapada Additional Civil Supplies Officer (ACSO) Ratnakar Sethy after he was found in possession of assets worth Rs 6.73 crore during raids on Wednesday. He was arrested on the charge of possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

NURSING OFFICERS' DHARNA AT MKCG
Brahmapur : More than 50 Nursing Officers have been staging a dharna in front of the office of Superintendent of the MKCG Medical College Hospital here since Monday protesting against the non-issue of NOCs to them for pursue of higher studies.

JSW COVID AWARENESS VAN FLAGGED OFF
Paradip : A JSW Covid awareness mobile van was flagged off here on Wednesday to promote mass vaccination against Covid-19. The vehicle will increase awareness about inoculation and motivate people to take the vaccine. Youth club volunteers and Asha Workers will move across Paradip, Paradipgarh and Atharabanki gram panchayat for a week to mobilise people for vaccination. "The Covid Awareness Chariot" was flagged off by Paradip Port Trust Hospital CMO Dr Prahlad Chandra Panda. JSW unit head Manish Gupta was present.

No amenities, land patta Jajpur tribals threaten to boycott polls

AKSHAY ROUT ■ JAJPUR
Large numbers of tribal people of Chingudipal gram panchayat under Sukinda block of the district have threatened poll boycott over non-issuance of land patta to the locals and non-supply of drinking water in the villages. Non-availability of drinking water, bad roads and non-issuance of land pattas have become an election issue for people of the surrounding seven villages, who have now demanded that the authorities fulfil their demands or be prepared for a poll boycott. "The rampant pol-

lution from some illegal stone quarries is also one of the reasons for us to boycott the poll," said Abhi Munda of Chingudipal. "The district administration assured us umpteen times to grant land pattas in respect of our land. But the officials have yet to fulfil our demands.

Five years back, the officials dug three tube-wells in the village Natara. But three years back all the three tube-wells turned defunct for which we are depending on a nearby river and a well to collect water. This is the reason why we decided to boycott the coming ru-

ral poll," said Sabhu Munda of village Kendupada. "Under the Forest Rights Act, we are entitled to get pattas in respect of our land, but the officials and ruling party leaders betrayed us by not granting pattas. As a result, we vowed to boycott the poll," said Abhiram Jaraka of village Podaghar. The officials are hand-in-glove with illegal stone quarry mafia who have been denuding stones from the hillocks by doing air and water pollution in the villages for which voters have decided to boycott the poll, said Nandini Munda of Kendupada.

XIM varsity holds 'Communique'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The XIM University (New Campus), Odisha, and IlluminatiX: The Media and PR cell of XIM University, organised annual media conclave, Communique, on January 29. The theme for the Communique was "Needs vs. Want: A Media Dilemma". The event started with the inaugural address of Registrar, XIM University, Prof Fr S Antony Raj S.J. A panel discussion was moderated by Assistant Professor of School of Communications, XIM University (New Campus), Prof Arpita Saha. The eminent speakers of the conclave were Gurbir Singh, Nikhil Chandwani, Arushi Sana and BV Rao. An article writing competition - Critique - was also organised where students from across colleges participated. The results of the competition were declared. The conclave concluded with a vote of thanks by coordinator, IlluminatiX, XIM University, Utkarsh Srivastava.

Dalmia Cement expands solar plant

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
As part of its commitment towards renewable energy transition, the Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Limited (DCBL) has expanded its ground-mounted solar power plant capacity to 17.1 MW from 2.4 MW in Cuttack. Spread over 49 acres of land, the plant is set to generate 25.52 MU/PA, for the requirements of its Kapilas Cement Manufacturing Works (KCMW). DCBL national manufacturing head Ganesh Jirkuntwar said, "We see

the solar power plant expansion as the right impetus for our endeavours to continually adopt the cleanest and most economical fuel." DCBL KCMW plant head Bhavesh Wala, Plant Head at Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Limited, (Cuttack), said, "We are progressively reducing our overall carbon footprint."

'Establish Naval flotilla, shipbuilding yard in Odisha'

Veterans Club writes to PM
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Veterans Club Odisha (VCO) has urged PM Modi for building a ship building yard and commissioning of a Naval flotilla in the State. VCO president Bidyadhar Nayak while writing a letter to Modi said Odisha has a rich maritime history and its ancient ruler like King Mukunda Deva had his

invariable be an asset and security force of ITR at Abdul Kalam Island off Baleswar. The present foreign infiltration from West Bengal coast and Bangladesh to Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapada district would be given a body blow by the presence of a flotilla in these areas. Already the Coast Guard ships stationed at Paradip shall be strengthened by the cover patrolling of armed ships of Indian Navy, he said. Besides, Odisha is blessed with abundant reserves of high-grade

iron ore, bauxite and other minerals. These minerals can be used for setting up a ship building yard in the State. Availability of raw materials in the State would drastically reduce the production cost in ship building industries, Nayak told. Establishment of ship building industries in the State would invariably generate revenues both for the State as well as the Central Government. It would open up doors for many potential job seekers of various categories starting from plumbers to engineers and

managers. Presence of ship building industries would help mushrooming of associated factories, industries and professional hubs around the area including spearheading logistics chain in Odisha as well as in the connecting States. With best talents around, the ship building industries here can build warships indigenously and it would strengthen the Indian Naval Arms, he told. He urged the PM to consider establishing the ship building yard, preferably in the vicinity of Dhamra port.

We are witnessing trailers of future wars: Naravane

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Without directly naming China and Pakistan, Army Chief General MM Naravane on Thursday said the disputed borders with the nuclear-armed neighbours have stretched India's resources. Making this point, he said India is witnessing trailers of future conflicts and its adversaries will continue with efforts to achieve their strategic aims. The Army chief said India is facing "unique, substantial and multi-domain" security challenges and that developments on the northern borders have adequately underscored the requirement of ready and capable forces with an optimal component of boots on the ground backed by modern



technology to preserve the country's sovereignty and integrity. Naravane said the disputed borders with nuclear-capable neighbours coupled with state-sponsored proxy war were stretching the security apparatus and the resources.

In order to meet the new challenge, he said the Army is focusing on "restructuring, rebalancing and reorienting" its forces and the process has already been initiated and that the force is committed to the theatreisation initiative to ensure tri-services integration.

"We are witnessing trailers of future conflicts. These are being enacted daily on the information battlefield, in the networks and in cyberspace. They are also being played along unsettled and active borders," Naravane said. Highlighting these efforts in a seminar organised by Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), he said, "It is for us now to visualise the battlefield contours of tomorrow based on these trailers. If you look around, you will realise the reality of today." The seminar was attended by Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari, Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar and defence attaches of several countries. Naravane said the developments in Afghanistan have

again brought to focus the use of proxies and non-state actors to decisive effect. "These actors thrive on local conditions, innovatively exploit low-cost options to devastating impact and create conditions that limit the full use of sophisticated capabilities which are available to state," he said. The Army Chief said India's adversaries will continue to make efforts to achieve their goals against the country. "The events of 2020 have been testimony to the diversity of security threats in all domains and this has brought the spotlight towards non-contact and grey zone warfare. We need to augment capabilities in both non-contact and contact modes of warfare," the Army Chief said referring to the east-

ern Ladakh face-off. Underlining the changing nature of conflicts, Naravane said the ancient Indian wisdom on statecraft and application of force propounded many centuries ago remained "timeless and pertinent" even today. He said the armed forces have initiated an exploratory project of examining the ancient Indian wisdom and knowledge for contemporary security challenges. In an oblique reference to China, he also said some nations are challenging the globally accepted norms and the rules-based order. This has manifested in various forms that included aggression and opportunistic actions to change the "status quo" keeping the threshold below all-out war, he said.

Rahul lays foundation stone of Gandhi Sevagram at Raipur

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/ RAIPUR

From Gandhi Sevagram to implementing the Rajiv Gandhi Nyay scheme to building a new Amar Jawan Jyoti, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel is not only out to revive the Gandhian legacy and project the "safest" Congress Government as a model as envisaged by party leader Rahul Gandhi but also take on the Modi dispensation over sensitive issues. Amidst his preoccupations with poll campaign in five States and the ongoing Parliament session, Rahul on Thursday visited Raipur where he along with Baghel laid the foundation stone for the Mahatma Gandhi Sevagram which is to be built to "Keep Alive, Nurture, Adapt and Implement Core Tenets of Gandhism for the 21st Century".



Sevagram and construction of Amar Jawan Jyoti. The NYAY scheme aims at providing relief to over 12 lakh landless labourers, with the provision of Rs 200 crore from the state's budget. As announced in the party's manifesto, it aims to achieve 'Aarthik Nyay' (Economic Justice) by financially supporting the families of more than 12 lakh landless labourers, living with financial hardship, who do not own even a small piece of land, yet are dependent on agricultural labour for their income, sources said. "While the scheme is focused on covering MGNREGA and contract workers, assistance will also be provided to beneficiaries such as barbers, blacksmiths, dhobis (washer-men and washerwomen) and priests across Chhattisgarh, ensuring their welfare and social security. The aim is to support them with minimum wages so that they can access basic amenities and live a respectable life, gaining freedom from poverty," the Chhattisgarh government said in a Press release. "We are glad to be able to build this Sevagram in Raipur as Gandhiji's key principles are at the heart of Chhattisgarh's vision for development. In keeping with Gandhiji's tenets, our policies and programmes aim to make every citizen of Chhattisgarh a beneficiary and stakeholder of development in the state, with a focus on last mile delivery for the state's most underprivileged populations. That's why the first cheque for the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Bhumihin Krishi Majdur Nyay Yojana was given today. We wish to follow Gandhiji not just in principle, but also in practice," Baghel said on the occasion.

Concerned about freedom of speech: Govt in RS after action against TV channels

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday said it was concerned about the freedom of speech and expression, and the country was not in the times of 1975 or the Emergency. Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L Murugan told the Rajya Sabha that the Government has initiated action against 160 TV channels and blocked 60 channels on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter pages as their content was against the integrity and safety of the nation. "Our Government is concerned about the freedom of speech and expression... We are not in 1975. We are not in Emergency..." he said in the House during the Question Hour. Murugan was responding to a question by an opposition member who alleged that the government was misusing general provisions to curb the freedom of speech and expression. Replying to supplementaries on action against news channels for anti-national content, he said the Press Council of India and a three-tier mechanism is place to check the con-

tent. This, he said, includes self-regulatory mechanism and self-regulatory bodies and if the grievances are not sorted out, only then does the inter-departmental committee takes up and sorts out the issues. "We wish to inform you that we have initiated 160 cases against TV channels," the minister told the House. Asked about the action against MediaOne channel, he said, "We are not doing anything on MediaOne. Whatever permissions to channels are being given (are) after the Home Ministry gives security clearance. MediaOne matter is sub-judice also." In a written reply, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said all programmes telecast on private satellite TV channels are required to adhere to the programme code laid down in Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994. The rules inter-alia provide that no programme should be carried in the cable service which is likely to encourage or incite violence or contains anything against maintenance of law and order or which promote anti-national attitudes.

Shake off Cong hangover 'Indira is India & India is Indira': Naqvi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi lashed out against the Modi Government in the Lok Sabha, Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Thursday urged the Congress to shake off the "hangover of Indira is India and India is Indira." Asserting this point in the Rajya Sabha, Naqvi refrained from naming Rahul and said the present regime restored the credibility of the Prime Minister. He claimed during the UPA dispensation, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) was run from somewhere else. Moreover, any decision by the government was termed as "nonsense and nuisance," Naqvi said while participating in the debate on motion of thanks on President's address. The Opposition slammed the government for stoking social unrest and not able to reduce poverty besides failing to provide jobs. The government was also charged with using the investigation agencies for political vendetta. Slamming the Congress, Naqvi said they have to get out of "Indira is India" belief to understand that there are no



sanatani or thinking and the other of samanti or feudal. Listing 28 changes by the PM Modi government, Naqvi spoke on how the situation has changed since 2014 and the Modi government ended the red beacon culture and the politics of power, he said, adding "We also destroyed political appeasement." After becoming Prime Minister, Narendra Modi made laws that were needed and removed those in which rules were not framed and these were lying for years without any use, he added. The Minister said a total of 1,500 such unused laws were repealed. Naqvi further said "week of riots" and "months of terrorist blasts" have come to an end, and "we replied to the neighbouring country by doing surgical strikes against its terrorist activities". Noting that there was a time when decisions of the Supreme Court were rendered ineffectual, Naqvi said, "The government took steps to make Supreme Court's decision on Triple Talaq effective and brought forth a law to protect the rights of Muslim women." By passing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, Naqvi said, "Modi government pro-

vided citizenship rights to people persecuted on the basis of religion and allowed citizenship to six undocumented non-Muslim communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who entered India on or before December 31, 2014." The Minister also added that the CAA helped in bringing the minorities from Afghanistan after the Taliban took over the country. Criticising the present government's policies, the Opposition said the idea of India was under threat and the gap between the rich and poor had widened. Morever, nearly 20 crore people slipped below the poverty line in the last few years even as the UPA regime had pulled out more than 20 crore people from poverty, the Opposition said. The disinvestment policy also came under sharp attack with Jawhar Sircar (TMC) saying the government was selling family silver. He also claimed the country was now witnessing "naked capitalism." Senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh and Ripun Bora, K Keshava Rao (TRS) and Abdul Wahab also criticised the policies of the government.

Rahul, TN CM Stalin exchange 'bonhomie' on social media

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/CHENNAI

A day after several references to southern Indian States, particularly Tamil Nadu and Kerala, during his speech in Parliament, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi and Tamil Nadu CM M K Salin exchanged some "bonhomie" on social media. Stalin took the platform to thank Rahul Gandhi for voicing concerns for the Tamils. Rahul responded saying together their "shared belief" in the pluralistic, federal and cooperative idea of India will triumph. "I have no doubt that our shared belief in the pluralistic, federal and cooperative idea of India will triumph," said Rahul, who received an applause from his party, alliance partners and others for what Stalin termed a "rousing" speech in the Lok Sabha. Rahul thanked Stalin for his kind words about him after his speech during the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the president's address on Wednesday. "Dear Rahul Gandhi, I thank you on behalf of all Tamils for your rousing speech in the Parliament, expressing the idea of Indian Constitution in an emphatic manner. You have voiced the arguments of Tamils in the Parliament, which rest on the unique cultural and political roots that value self respect," the DMK president said.

ISRO set to launch Chandrayaan-3 in Aug

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over two years after its second Moon mission had a fatal end on the lunar surface, the Indian Space & Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to launch Chandrayaan-3 in August this year. According to the Department of Space, the number of missions planned during 2022 (January to December 2022) are 19 — 08 Launch Vehicle Missions, 07 Spacecraft Missions and 04 Technology Demonstrator Missions. "Based on the learnings from Chandrayaan-2 and suggestions made by the national level experts, the realisation of Chandrayaan-3 is in progress. Many related hardware and their special tests are successfully completed, and the launch is scheduled for August 2022," Union Minister for Space Dr Jitendra Singh said in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha. The orbiter part of the Chandrayaan-2 mission was successfully inserted into the orbit in August 2019 but the soft-landing of the Vikram lander carrying the Pragyan rover failed. The orbiter is still hovering above the lunar surface and Isro plans to use it with Chandrayaan-3 as

well. The third moon mission will make another attempt to land Vikram on the lunar surface. A soft-landing will make India the fourth country to do so and the first country to do near the lunar South Pole. Dr. Singh also informed that the Department of Space has planned 19 missions to be launched in 2022 as it picks up pace following successive delays. "With the unlocking space sector reforms, the Department of Space is in the process of reviewing the future requirements of satellites based on the demand-driven model. Discussions with the ministries and probable customers are underway," the minister said. Responding to questions over the reason behind the continuous delay of the mission, the Minister said that several ongoing missions were impacted due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The list of satellites launched in the last three years' time include EOS-03 launched on August 12, 2021; Amazonia-1 launched on February 28, 2021; Satish Dhawan SAT (SDSAT) on February 28, 2021, and UNITYsat on February 28, 2021.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached assets worth Rs 268.66 crore of Agnite Education Limited (earlier Teledata Informatics Limited) and others under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), in a bank fraud case. The ED had initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of FIR registered by CBI's Bank Securities and Fraud Cell, Bangalore against Agnite Education Limited and its Directors K Balasubramaniam and K Padmanabhan, and another FIR registered by CBI, Economic Offences Branch, Chennai against JTeledata Marine Solutions Limited, and its two Directors also embroiled in the CBI case. Investigation by ED revealed that Agnite Education Limited and Teledata Marine Solutions Limited availed various credit facilities from State Bank of India and defrauded the bank to the tune of Rs 479 crore, the ED said in a statement. "Agnite Education Limited, Teledata Marine Solutions Limited and its subsidiaries fraudulently acquired movable properties in the form of five LPG Carrier Ships, one Oil Tanker and bank balances abroad by making sham investments, related party transactions to inflate balance sheets for availing bank loans and expenses for siphoning and diverting funds for promoters' benefit," it said. Most of such associate companies, according to the agency, have been found to be untraceable on verification. Further, they have parked the funds availed through bank loans in the form of assets in Austria, Thailand and Bangladesh, using this modus operandi.

ED attaches assets worth ₹268.66 crore of Agnite Education under PMLA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to postpone the Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering Exam (GATE), scheduled to be held on February 5 amidst COVID-19 restrictions in many parts of the country. A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, Surya Kant and Vikram Nath dismissed a batch of pleas, saying that postponing GATE just 48 hours before the scheduled examination will result in "chaos and uncertainty" and it cannot play with careers of students, who have prepared for it. "The plea for postponement of GATE examination barely 48 hours before the scheduled date February 5, 2022, is replete with a potential for chaos and uncertainty, in the lives of students who have registered for the examination. There is no overarching reason

SC refuses to put off GATE exam to be held tomorrow

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

why this court in exercise of jurisdiction under Article 32 of the constitution should supplant the duties and functions of the regulatory authorities, who have taken a decision to hold the examination," the bench said. "On a considered perspective of the position and consistent with the circumspect which must be exercised by this court in interfering with academic matters, we are not inclined to entertain a petition under Article 32 of the constitution. These petitions are accordingly dismissed," it added. The bench said, "We cannot start postponing exams like this, everything is opening up now. We cannot play with the careers of the students like this. One of the petitioners before us is a coaching centre". The apex court said that it is a matter of academic policy as to when examination should be held and court cannot enter this arena.

flow tests (LFTs) are a reassuringly reliable indicator of whether infectious virus is present (that is, whether they are likely to be able to transmit virus to other people). However, the LFT tests were less effective in picking up lower levels of virus at the very start and end of the infection.

Covid symptoms appear 2 days after virus exposure: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Symptoms of Covid-19 infection appear in 42 hours after being exposed to SARS-CoV-2 virus, much earlier than previously thought, finds a study led by Imperial College London researchers and published on a pre-print server but not yet peer-reviewed. It also underlined the importance of masks in checking spread of Covid-19, as exposure to a single nasal droplet was found to be sufficient to cause the infection. The World Health Organisation (WHO) says that Covid symptoms take around five to six days to appear after infection. However, UK researchers showed that symptoms start to develop very fast,

on average about two days after contact with the virus. The infection first appears in the throat; infectious virus peaks about five days into the infection and at that stage is significantly more abundant in the nose than the throat. The findings also showed that the virus was detected first in the throat, significantly earlier than in the nose (40 hours in the throat compared to 58 hours in the nose). The levels were lower and peaked sooner in the throat. Peak levels of virus were significantly higher in the nose than in the throat, indicating a potentially greater risk of virus being shed from the nose than the mouth. This highlights the importance of proper face mask use to cover both the mouth and nose, the researchers said. The team also found that lateral

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Mechanism revealed behind loss of smell with Covid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

If you have been wondering why many Covid-19 infected people reported loss of smell, then US researchers probably have discovered the answer. They found that infection with the SARS-CoV-2 indirectly dials down the action of olfactory receptors, proteins on the surfaces of nerve cells in the nose that detect the molecules associated with odors. Published online in the journal

Cell, the study led by researchers from NYU Grossman School of Medicine and Columbia University, also shed light on the effects of COVID-19 on other types of brain cells and other lingering neurological effects of COVID-19 such as "brain fog", headaches, and depression. Experiments showed that the presence of the virus near nerve cells (neurons) in olfactory tissue brought an influx of immune cells, microglia, and T cells that sense and counter infec-

tion. Such cells release proteins called cytokines that change the genetic activity of olfactory nerve cells, even though the virus cannot infect them, say the study authors. Where immune cell activity would dissipate quickly in other scenarios, in the brain, according to the team's theory, immune signaling persists in a way that reduces the activity of genes needed for the building of olfactory receptors. "Our findings provide the first mechanistic explanation of smell loss

in COVID-19 and how this may underlie long COVID-19 biology," said co-corresponding author Benjamin tenOever, professor in the Departments of Medicine and Microbiology at NYU Langone Health. "The work, in addition to another study from the tenOever group, also suggests how the pandemic virus, which infects less than 1 percent of cells in the human body, can cause such severe damage in so many organs."

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Guv returns TN Govt Bill seeking NEET exemption

Bill was passed for admission in medical courses in TN

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi has returned the Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly negating the National Eligibility and Entrance Examination (NEET) for admission to undergraduate medical and dental science courses in the State. A release issued by Raj Bhavan on Thursday said the Governor after a perusal of the Bill found it not in tune with the interests of the students and was sending it back to the Government of Tamil Nadu for reconsideration.

The announcement came within hours of RS Bharati, the DMK MP lambasted the Governor in Rajya Sabha. "Our former chief minister C N Annadurai has pointed out the irrelevance of the post of the Governor stating that a goat does not need beard and similarly there was no need of Governors," said Bharati taunting the Governor for sitting over the Bill for months. Though Tamil Nadu has been demanding that the State be exempted from NEET, Nalini Chidambaram, (wife of senior Congress leader P Chidambaram), who is representing the students in a case in the apex court had told the media that there was no question of exempting Tamil Nadu from the purview of the legislation. "While all other States in the country are for NEET, how Tamil Nadu alone can claim exception from the same," Nalini Chidambaram asked reporters.

The release further said that the Supreme Court in Christian Medical College, Vellore Association Vs. Union of India (2020) also has comprehensively examined the issue specially from the Social Justice perspective and upheld NEET as it prevents economic exploitation of poor students and was in furtherance of social justice.

'Centre didn't clear Kerala rail project'

Union Railway Min Ashwini Vaishnaw says in reply to question

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Government of India has not given any approval to the 530.6 km long Semi High Speed Rail Project linking Thiruvananthapuram and Kasaragod, according to member of Lok Sabha N K Premachandran. Premachandran was reacting to the claims made by Kerala's Finance Minister K N Balagopalan and Rajya Sabha member Elamaram Kareem (CPI-M) that the project has been approved by the Union Government.

MP NK Premachandran reacted to claims made by Kerala's Finance Minister KN Balagopalan and Rajya Sabha member E Kareem (CPI-M) that the project has been approved by the Union Government

He submitted a detailed project report of the proposed semi speed rail line, the same was incomplete in many respects and no approval has been given. "Consideration of the Project depends upon techno-economic viability of the project. Sufficient details for technical feasibility are not available in the DPR. Therefore Kerala Government has been advised to provide detailed technical documents such as alignment plan, particulars of railway land and private land, crossings over existing railway network, duly dedicated affected railway asset through Zonal Railway for detailed examination of the project and to arrive at conclusion about feasibility of project," Vaishnaw said in reply to the question by Premachandran.

The minister also disclosed that the Centre was aware of the protests and agitations going on in Kerala against the project. "Government of Kerala has issued 4(1) notification for conducting social impact assessment study. The SIA study report will bring out the extent of impact on public in general. Project is not yet sanctioned. Consideration of the Project will depend upon techno-economic viability of the project," said the Minister. The Ministry of Railways has 49 per cent stake in the joint venture project while Government of Kerala would hold the remaining 51 per cent. The land acquisition for the project is in limbo following widespread agitation and resistance from people whose lands are to be acquired for the semi high speed rail line. Many people facing displacement from their houses have threatened self immolation along with family members if the government forcefully tries to take over their

land. A group of BJP leaders from Kerala are camping in New Delhi to request the Union Railway Minister not to give approval to the project which would bring down the travel time between Kasaragod and Thiruvananthapuram to four hours from the present 12 hours. The project requires 1,383 hectare land for completion of the rail route. C R Neelakantan, engineer-turned-environmentalist said that out of the total land required, 1,200 hectare land was with private people. "The land acquisition would displace 25,000 to 35,000 people from their land. Where will they go? Does the government have alternative arrangements to rehabilitate and resettle these people in this land starved State?" asked Neelakantan. E Sreedharan, former boss of Delhi Metro, has come put against the proposed rail line terming it would lead to environmental and ecological disaster. Many environmentalists, nature conservationists and farmers unions too have expressed solidarity with those who oppose the project.

Polls for 108 municipal boards on Feb 27 in Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The much awaited elections to 108 municipal boards of Bengal will take place on February 27. A notification to this effect was issued by the State Election Commission on Thursday. The date of counting will however be declared at a later date, SEC Saurav Das said. "We will issue a separate notification to announce the date of counting. The entire polling process has to be completed by March 8. Starting today, the Model Code of Conduct comes into force. The last date of filing nomination is February 9," Das said. With the SEC notification model code of conduct comes into force from Thursday in all the 21 districts where the elections would take place. Polls to other four corporations including Siliguri in North Bengal and Asansol, Chandernagore and Bidhannagar in South Bengal had already been scheduled for February 12. The counting will be held on February 14. The Trinamool Congress recorded a thumping victory in the Kolkata Municipal Corporation which was held in December last year. The Left Front came second leaving the BJP in the third position. The February 27, civic elections will take place about nine months after the Trinamool Congress roared back to power in State Assembly polls winning 212 seats last April-May. Even as the SEC announced poll dates Opposition Left and BJP demanded simultaneous holding of all the elections including the ones scheduled to take place on February 12 saying the SEC was acting under the influence of the ruling Trinamool Congress which wanted the results of one election to influence the other. "It is clear that the SEC is taking instructions from the State Government which wants the February 12 elections to influence the results of February 27 elections which is not acceptable," CPI(M) central committee member Sujana Chakrabarty said. The civic polls were likely to indicate whether the BJP had still been able to hold its number two position. For the CPI(M)-led Left Front, battle is to retain its main opposition status in most civic boards.

BMC presents ₹45,949 crore budget

Focuses on infrastructure, health, carbon neutrality in sectors, transportation

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Presenting a whopping ₹45,949.21 crore budget 2022-2023, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Thursday laid emphasis on infrastructure, health, carbon neutrality in various sectors, transportation and "ease" and "quality" of living for Mumbaikars, while delivering on the ruling Shiv Sena's promise of waiving property tax for 16.14 lakh citizens living in flats of the carpet area of 500 square foot or less. Unveiling the ₹45,949.21 crore BMC budget for 2022-23 - which is larger in terms of outlay than that of many smaller States in the country-- at the civic standing committee, Mumbai Municipal Commissioner I S Chahal announced an allocation of a staggering ₹22646.73 crore for the year which would facilitate speedy completion of major projects like the ambitious Coastal Road Project, Ghatkopar-Mankhurd Link Road (GMLR), STP, major Pipeline works, Mithi River Projects, Rejuvenation of Rivers,

Ashray Yojana and development works of various hospitals. The BMC budget presented by Chahal shows a 17.70 per cent increase in the annual outlay - from ₹39,039.83 during 2021-22 to ₹45,949.21 crore during 2022-2023. "The share of Capital Expenditure is consistently increasing year by year. The Expenditure on infrastructure projects has increased two-fold recently, for providing better infrastructural facilities and modernized services," the BMC chief said. In line with the promise made by the then ruling Shiv Sena-BJP alliance ahead of the 2017 BMC polls in 2017 and the reiteration made by the Sena-led MVA government, the BMC chief announced waiver of property tax for flats measuring up to 500 sq feet in the metropolis. "Around 16.14 lakh citizens get 100 per cent relief from all components of Property Tax payment permanently. The benefit to the citizens is about ₹462 crore per annum," Chahal said. Chahal said that the BMC had made 50 per cent progress in the execution of the 29.2 km

Mumbai Coastal Road Project - which will connect Marine Lines in south Mumbai with Kandivli in north Mumbai. "We are determined to complete 90 per cent of the project work by the end of 2022-23 and completion of the 100 per cent project will be achieved by 2024. This project will help a very large number of citizens to save time and fuel. Similarly we expect to complete the GMLR project in 2022." Chahal announced that the BMC planned to set up 100 health outlets across the metropolis under the Hinduhridaysamrat Balasaheb Thackeray Health Centre which aims to provide preventive and primary treatment facilities to citizens close to their residence. "At these health outlets, citizens can get various types of tests and diagnostic tests at nominal rate. These outlets will also facilitate consultation by specialists and super specialists. We have allocated ₹400 crore during 2022-2023 for the first phase of the project. In addition, We have set aside ₹303.95 crore for upgradation of dispensaries, maternity homes, standardization of 13

dispensaries. We intend to commission two maternity homes at Rawalpada Shivaji Nagar," Chahal said. Chahal said that with the help of Nair Hospital and its Alumni, a Genome Sequencing Lab had recently been established in Kasturba Hospital with a capacity to investigate about 350 viral samples at a time. In another major announced made in the pre-BMC poll budget, Chahal said that the civic body would undertake major flood-control measures using an allocation of ₹1539.79 crore made in the current budget for the revival of the 18-kms long Mithi River and its other branches in the suburbs at Dahisar, Poisar, Oshiwara and their major drainage nullahs, plus 386 chronic flood spots that result in submerging many parts of the city during the monsoons. "Ninety five percent of the widening and deepening work, 80 per cent of retaining wall construction of Mithi River are completed which has doubled the holding capacity and carrying capacity by 3 times, while the plan for development and

pollution control is ready and shall be implemented in four packages," Chahal said. Chahal said that ass part of the initiatives being taken to ensure "ease" and "quality" of living for Mumbaikars, the BMC had started the process of empanelment of Urban Space Designers who would study and rework on the roads, foot paths and community spaces to increase the "Ease of Walking?". He said that a significant 219 kms of roads in the city will be improved during the year, electronic vehicle (EV) charging stations in all the 30 major public parking lots, EVs shall be deployed for garbage collection-segregation, ₹1 crore specifically for 'electric and electronic waste' recovery centre in each BMC Ward, more electric crematoria and eco-friendly funeral pyres. Chahal said that the BMC - which on January 4, 2022 became only the 3rd civic body in the world after Dubai and Singapore, to offer public services via a ChatBot, would provide easy access to about 80 of its services to Mumbaikars through a WhatsApp Chatbot.

Didi scolds IPS officer for taking order from Guv

Kolkata: The Raj Bhavan-Nabanna (State secretariat) conflict hit a new low with Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday publicly admonishing an Indian Police Services Officer for allegedly taking orders from State Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar.

The Chief Minister who was addressing an administrative meeting publicly told the East Midnapore Superintendent of Police not to work at the instructions of "other people" before asking him "do you get phone calls from the Governor ... even if anyone calls up work according to law and do not let people foment riots." Before the SP could explain his conduct saying he had not received any call from the Raj Bhavan she again chided him saying she had all the information regarding how some people were influencing his conduct. "I have information how

some people are giving you instructions ... but you should act according to law ... these people are trying to fan some riots here and there which you should not allow to take place ... you should not take instructions from such people and act according to law," Banerjee said. East Midnapore is the district from where State Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari hails and the Chief Minister fought and lost against Adhikari in the State elections from the Nandigram Assembly seat which again is in the same district. Reacting to the Chief Minister's public admonishing of the SP, State BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said "her Thursday's remarks only proves that the State is passing through a constitutional crisis." CPI(M) leader and former MP Samik Lahiri said, "the Chief Minister is trying to threaten the upright IPS officers into submission ahead of the civic elections." PNS



Children play during a light snowfall, on the outskirts of Srinagar on Thursday. Most parts of Kashmir Valley received fresh snowfall while rain and sleet lashed Srinagar city

BJP, Cong protest Telangana CM's 'separate Constitution' remark

Hyderabad: Opposition parties including the Congress in Telangana on Thursday held protests against Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's comments favouring a new Constitution in the country. State BJP president Bandi Sanjay Kumar and other party MPs held a 'Bheem Deeksha' protest near the Amedbedkar's statue at Telangana Bhavan in New Delhi. Speaking on the occasion, Sanjay Kumar said Prime Minister Narendra Modi drew inspiration from B R Amedbedkar, the principal architect of the Constitution. It was BJP which showed due respect to Amedbedkar by

awarding Bharat Ratna to him, Kumar said. Rao, who is rejecting the Constitution drafted by Amedbedkar, prefers to have his own Constitution where he and his ministers would not go to the Secretariat, he alleged. The CM has not fulfilled promises like distribution of three acres of land to Dalits, jobs for youth and installation of a giant statue of Amedbedkar, the BJP leader charged. BJP OBC Morcha National President K Laxman, party MLA Raja Singh and other leaders held the 'Bheem Deeksha' protest at the BJP office in the city, while party leaders and activists held

demonstrations across the State. Congress leaders also staged protests condemning Rao's comments seeking a new Constitution. Former MLA Sampath Kumar, who held a demonstration in Jogulamba Gadwal district, demanded that Rao apologize for his remarks. Finding fault with the criticism against Rao's remarks, TRS MLA G Balaraju said his party always worked with the spirit of Amedbedkar and it was BJP which indulged in communal politics and emotional blackmail for 'political mileage.'

Tribal girl gang-raped in Gujarat; six held

Ahmedabad: A 16-year-old tribal girl was allegedly gang-raped by six persons, one of them a minor, in Dediapada town of Gujarat's Narmada district, police said on Thursday. While the incident took place on January 31, the victim lodged a complaint with the police on Wednesday, following which all the accused were apprehended, Narmada district Superintendent of Police Himkar Singh said. As per the complaint, the accused took the victim, who is a Class 11 student, to a secluded place near Dediapada bus stop and raped her on Monday evening, the official said.

We registered an FIR after the girl, along with her parents, approached the Dediapada police station on Wednesday," he said. The six accused have been booked on the charges of gang-rape under relevant provisions of the IPC and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, Singh said. Five men were arrested and a minor detained for the attack, he said. Some of the accused who are non-tribals have also been booked under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, the official added.

Gap between rich and poor has widened under Modi Govt, says Digvijaya Singh

New Delhi: The gap between the rich and the poor has increased under the current government at the Centre, Congress MP Digvijaya Singh said in Rajya Sabha on Thursday, while asking it to impose a "super rich tax" on those whose income has grown even during the Covid pandemic. Taking part in a debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address, he also alleged that the social fabric and unity in diversity of the country has been disturbed with fanaticism being encouraged. Singh said when the BJP came to power in 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised that black money would be brought back, price rise would be curtailed and employment would be

improved, but nothing has happened. Claiming that in seven years of this government the gap between the rich and the poor has widened, he said the rich has become richer and the poor has become poorer. Citing tax collection data, Singh said under the UPA regime, the rich were taxed more and the common people less. However, he said after the "suit-boot" government came, in 2021-22, the direct tax collected from individuals has fallen as a proportion to the total tax collected, while the contribution of indirect tax collected from common people has risen. This, Singh said, implied that the BJP-led government has collected less tax from rich people and more from poor people. PTI

Maha daily Covid cases drop to 15K; infections in Mumbai dip to 827

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after Maharashtra witnessed a moderate increase in the number of Covid-19 infections, the daily pandemic cases dropped to 15,252 on Thursday, even as the daily cases in Mumbai once again went down below 1000 to touch a tally of 827 cases. On a day when no fresh omicron case was reported in Maharashtra, the daily infections in the state dropped by 2815 - from 18067 cases on Wednesday to 15,252 on Thursday. With the fresh infections, the total number of Covid-19 cases in the state rose from 77,53,548 to 77,68,800. With 75 fresh deaths, the total number of deaths registered in the state since the outbreak of Covid-19 in the state

in March 2020 went up from 1,42,784 to 1,42,859. Mumbai, where the daily infections have been dropping steadily for more than two weeks now, witnessed a drop in the number of cases from 1,128 to 827. With the latest cases, the total number of cases in Mumbai mounted from 10,94,521 to 10,49,348. As 30,235 Covid-19 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March 2020 increased from 74,33,633 to 74,83,868. The recovery rate in the state rose from 95.87 per cent to 96.07 per cent. The number of "active cases" in the state dropped from 1,73,221 to 1,58,151. The fatality rate in the state dropped

from 1.84 per cent to 1.83 per cent. The active cases in Pune dropped from 52265 on Wednesday to 46710 on Thursday. The active cases in Mumbai dropped from 8158 to 7601, while the active cases in the neighbouring Thane rose from 11676 on Wednesday to 10,636 on Thursday. Nagpur accounted for 18,154 active cases, followed by Nashik (12142), Ahmednagar (8357), Aurangabad (5056) and Satara (4165). Of the 7,50,99,654 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 77,68,800 have tested positive (10.34 per cent) for COVID-19 until Thursday. Currently, 9,05,696 people are in home quarantine while 2,610 people are in institutional quarantine.



A student goes to his classroom after authorities allowed schools to reopen classes for 8-12 standard students, in Kolkata, on Thursday



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Praiseworthy

The Supreme Court's plan to prevent child harassment in the name of deposition is a welcome move

The Supreme Court on Tuesday called for the setting up of videoconferencing facilities across the country to record the testimony of child witnesses in criminal cases. This is part of the court's bid to make optimal use of communication technology to ease judicial processes and help children overcome the trauma of physically deposing in courts. The court plans to extend the use of internet and videoconferencing facilities which helped courts conduct business during the COVID-19 pandemic. The court wanted a protocol in place to avoid children travelling long distances from home to give their testimony. The protocol will enable a child to testify at the 'court point', where the trial is taking place, or the 'remote point', where the child lives. The court's suggestion comes in the context of dealing with sensitive child trafficking cases. It also wants the use of technology made a permanent feature in all criminal cases involving child witnesses. It is a welcome step that throws light on the trauma children face when giving testimony in courts as witnesses or victims. Child trafficking, that the court cited, is one instance where the accused might target the young witnesses. Children appear in courts as witnesses in many domestic disputes and crimes, including murder, and they have to relive the crime in court and possibly even take sides between their parents. But the worst case is of children who are witness to crimes on themselves. These mostly relate to sexual abuse. And the accused in most cases are known to them.

They are forced to recall the horror when questioned by the police, the doctors, the lawyers, their families and friends. In the case of girl victims, the line of questioning of the defendant's lawyer can be intimidating, insinuating, and even insulting. Child victims often say facing the accused is a frightening

part of the criminal justice process. The experience of testifying is harrowing and may re-victimise the already-traumatised child. The least that can be done for all these children is to reduce their trauma and fear as much as possible. Distance testimony, through videoconferencing or one-way or two-way closed-circuit testimony, can come to their aid. The children do not have to come to court. They are spared the anguish of facing the accused. They can be in a separate room and give their testimony. The testimony can be live, in a two-way communication or recorded in a one-way exercise. Care needs to be taken that the interrogators are trained to adopt a neutral but sensitive approach when questioning the children. The criticism of this approach can be its relative lack of impact when compared to in-court testimony. Its advantages, however, outweigh the negatives. The best thing about a recorded testimony is that once the court admits it, the children do not have to undergo the process again. This technology will also be of help to other vulnerable people, especially rape victims, the elderly and whistleblowers.



PICTALK



A tourist parasailing at Kovalam, in Thiruvananthapuram

PTI

Now or never

It may put up a brave face but the truth is that no party can afford to be complacent

With less than a week to go for the first phase of elections in Uttar Pradesh, the political temperature in the electorally significant State is soaring. Barely hours after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had praised to the skies the BJP's "double-engine Government" and listed his achievements, with special emphasis on the "improved" law and order situation, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen chief Asaduddin Owaisi alleged that his car was fired upon while he was returning to Delhi from Hapur district in the poll-bound State. To add to the ruling dispensation's troubles, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha has appealed to UP farmers to "punish" the BJP in the elections for "betraying" them by



not fulfilling their demands. Fifty-seven farmers' organisations have backed the call, though the Morcha claimed that it had nothing to do with seeking votes for any particular party and remained apolitical. The Government had made promises but no committee has yet been formed for the MSP, nor the cases registered against farmers were withdrawn, it pointed out. Meanwhile, Yogi claimed that his Government in the past five years had set many milestones: The successful fight against COVID, saving life and livelihood, boosting economy, setting up industries, police reforms, better law and order and boost to infrastructure projects.

To convince and appeal to voters to vote for the BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to address another digital rally (the first one was on January 31) on Friday, covering nearly 20 Assembly constituencies of western UP. The Election Commission had earlier this week extended the ban on road shows, *padayatras*, vehicle rallies and other processions till February 11 but allowed more people to participate in door-to-door campaigning and physical public meetings. But the moot point remains whether, in spite of the catchy "*chai waala, gai waala*" slogans, the voters of Uttar Pradesh remain on the same page as the saffron party. Despite its proclaimed "success", the campaign against COVID failed to inspire or enthuse people and remained more or less ineffective in saving several lives for want of essentials, such as medical oxygen. Then the loss of employment opportunities and shutting down of industries also added to the burden of people, especially the middle and lower classes. In the short period that it still has, the BJP will do well to convince voters that only it remains a viable governance option.

How to step clear of the IAS quagmire

The Govt should begin by replacing those who are in non-bureaucratic assignments, with people of appropriate professional qualifications



PRAFULL GORADIA

The first step the Governments, both the Centre and States, can take to relieve the shortage of IAS and other senior bureaucrats is obvious. They should forthwith begin by replacing those, who are in non-bureaucratic assignments, with appropriate professional qualifications as well as experience. For example, there would be any number of IAS officers heading public sector projects, particularly in States. They have no business managing business or industries when they applied for and were appointed for governmental administrative work.

When Sardar Patel thought of replacing the Indian Civil Service and the Imperial Police with the IAS and IPS, he had only administration and policing in mind. Business or industrial management was farthest from his mind. Having been a lawyer in Ahmedabad, he understood enough to realise that to do business and managing industries are a different kettle of fish from administering a sub-division, district or division. By the time in the 1950s, the public sector was founded and began growing; he was no more on the scene. He had passed away in December 1950.

I have professionally grown up in business and/or industry and not at all in Government service. But through observation, I have realised the difference early enough. That the Government has confused the two hit me when I went on a course in 1972 to the Administrative Staff College in Hyderabad. The institution was coaching working business executives in commercial subjects only. Yet the college was called 'Administrative'. Why? Merely because there was a widespread impression that the two subject areas were the same, or at least similar. Even prominent universities and prestigious business management schools call their courses "business administration". Graduates came out as Bachelors of Business Administration or later, as MBAs. I do blame the Government; if academicians can err, so can the Governments.

Management Science began



as a result of the German army headquarters starting to analyse certain aspects of deploying troops and weapons during World War I. For example, they discovered that for each of their soldiers fighting on the front, they had four persons supporting, supplying or nursing him. On the other hand, the corresponding figures for the British army were 1:10; which meant that it cost about two and a half times per fighting soldier more than the German trooper.

The point I am trying to emphasise is that administration and management are separate subjects, demanding different training and skills. At certain points they do need similar treatment. As a possible example, physics and mathematics may crisscross. But at the end of the day, they are distinct and different challenges. Administration requires, first of all, a socio-economic understanding of the area under the administrator being dealt with. The officer must be impartial at all times, following the 'hot stove' principle with the people he administers. He should know elementary law, both civil and criminal. He has to be very careful to keep away from making mistakes while taking decisions because a mistake becomes a precedent.

WHEN SARDAR PATEL THOUGHT OF REPLACING THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE AND THE IMPERIAL POLICE WITH THE IAS AND IPS, HE HAD ONLY ADMINISTRATION AND POLICING IN MIND. BUSINESS OR INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT WAS FARTHEST FROM HIS MIND

A business-cum-industrial manager should be aware of these virtues but there are others that are more important for being successful in the conduct of his work. He has to be ideally a quick decision maker and a judge of individuals whom he deals with. He also has to be more often positive and certainly less negative than the administrator who first analyses why a certain decision should not be taken. If a manager resorts to such a habit, he may find he has little business to do!

India would have earned money through its PSUs or none at all; hopefully some units might have made profits. What should now be done?

Before answering this question, let us be clear that the country has millions of traders but comparatively few industrialists. It would be difficult to develop the economy rapidly with what we have. When I say industrialists, I mean men and women with capital enough and more importantly also business integrity. One way or the other, the Government will have to participate when it comes to large investments. But before the State again plunges into business activity, the administrator/capital conflict must be resolved.

Today, a 24-year-old IAS officer walks into an office as sub-divisional magistrate and is no less than a chief executive (CEO) of a company. From the word go, he has 200 people working under him. He is virtually a modern-day *maharaja* whose word is the law of the local land. When we consider the fact that this new appointee's only qualification to preside over the fate of multi-billion rupee enterprises is successfully clearing an IAS entrance examination, we can understand the real problem.

The State must not directly invest its money, but advance funds to its financial institutions like insurance and banking. They, in turn, can consider proposals as the IPOs come up, whether by Indian or foreign entrepreneurs. Let these corporations appoint their own managers, directors *et al*. The institutions may be represented on the Board of Directors and attend meetings as they are held. No administrator should be in charge of any corporation hitherto; most of them are wedded to procedure and not to profit.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE BUDGET IGNORED THE POOR

Sir — Yet again, optimism reigned on the eve of the Budget as it was expected to confront the current situation head-on. An Oxfam report, titled '*Inequality Kills: India Supplement 2022*', stated that 84 per cent of Indian households saw their incomes fall and 4.6 crore people slipped into extreme poverty during the pandemic. India has 5.3 crore unemployed people as of now, according to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy. In the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, an international measure of acute multidimensional poverty, India's rank is 66th among 109 countries. This is in sharp contrast to Forbes magazine's findings that the combined wealth of India's 10 richest jumped to a record high of \$775 billion after adding \$257 billion in 2021.

However, the Budget figures belie the pretensions of concern, particularly about the poor. In percentage terms, Union Excise duties and GST in the Gross Total Revenue increased from 31.79 in 2015-16 (Actuals) to 40.43 in 2022-23 (BE), while Corporation Tax fell from 31.15 to 26.11. Subsidies for fertilisers, food and petroleum products decreased from 16.61 to 11.53. The allocations under the MGNREGA saw sharp cuts year after year during the pandemic years. It seems the rich have been absolved of their obligation to be the primary source of revenue.

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

GOVT MUST PUSH NATURAL FARMING

Sir — This refers to the editorial, '*Healthier Plate*' (February 3). The Finance Minister's commitment to boost natural farming methods, escape the increasing cost of fertilisers is a welcome initiative. If we go back to our traditional roots, we definitely oppose the excessive use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. However poor farmers used them to increase yield and their income. But now, there exists a vast difference between the prices of organic agro products and non-organic food items. If the elite do switch over to these organ-

Care for the wetlands



Beginning this year, the World Wetlands Day (February 2) will be celebrated as the United Nations Wetlands Day to raise awareness about its role for people and our planet. On this day, the Convention on Wetlands was adopted in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. It is also an appeal to invest in financial, human and political capital to save the world's wetlands from disappearing and to restore those we have degraded. There cannot be two opinions that the recent floods in Chennai, Mumbai and several other parts have become a regular feature in the last few years.

Unplanned urbanisation, wetland destruction and their unauthorised encroachment, dumping waste in and around such areas and increasing commercialisation are primarily responsible for this grim situation.

In this context, wetlands play a pivotal role in keeping intact both the volume and water level in lakes, rivers and ponds, thereby recharging and purifying the water. They also serve as a breeding ground for several species of flora and fauna. As India is a signatory to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, we are duty-bound to conserve, preserve and maintain these through local and international cooperation. The wetlands must be protected not only for the sake of preservation but also because these are crucial for our sustenance. Unplanned construction in and around wetlands can harm our health and the ecosystem. So we must comply with the Convention's rules.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

ic items, it still won't be beneficial for the Indian economy, considering the overall population size.

Most of the population is still dependent on farming items grown using chemical fertilisers. This simply indicates that if the Government really wants to cut its steep fertiliser subsidy cost while maintaining the quantity of agri yield, it must put in more efforts to boost natural farming. Although this idea is absolutely eco, farmer and consumer friendly, its practical benefits need the ground efforts of investment, training, facility and coordination with a robust mechanism to turn this natural farming idea into practical success.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

HE NEEDS TO FOCUS MORE

Sir — The wording of this question may mean it's biased but the way Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was looking during the Budget, it's certain he wasn't registering. Look, this is the time when winter is going away and summers are approach-

ing. Everyone wants to go to a beach and have a dip to enjoy the new season. In simple words, he is thinking maybe of Thailand or Bali. If he really cared, he would have raised some important issues in Parliament. Did he ask about jobs? Yes, the Budget had various shortcomings but he offered no opposition.

Apart from writing on Twitter and giving *gyaan*, it seems he doesn't understand politics or doesn't care. Now that there are several elections in 2022, you will suddenly find him on leave. The Congress should make a policy barring him from saying things like "Gujarat has got milk from women" or "farming on the Moon". I feel jealous of him; while we struggle in the real world, he is enjoying elsewhere. Do you think Rahul even knows exactly what a Budget actually means? Why doesn't he spell out a few points about this year's Budget?

Gundu K Maniam | Mumbai

SOUNDBITE

This Budget will prove to be a budget to change the scale of India's economy.

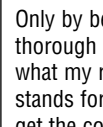


Union Home Minister — Amit Shah



We are now starting to see a very worrying increase in deaths in most regions of the world.

WHO director-general — Tedros Adhanom



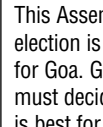
Only by becoming thorough with what my role stands for, did I get the confidence to pull it off.

Actor — Richa Chadha



Comparing Babar Azam with the likes of Steve Smith, Joe Root or Virat Kohli will be unfair to him.

Indian pacer — Mohammed Shami



This Assembly election is crucial for Goa. Goans must decide what is best for them.

Delhi Chief Minister — Arvind Kejriwal

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

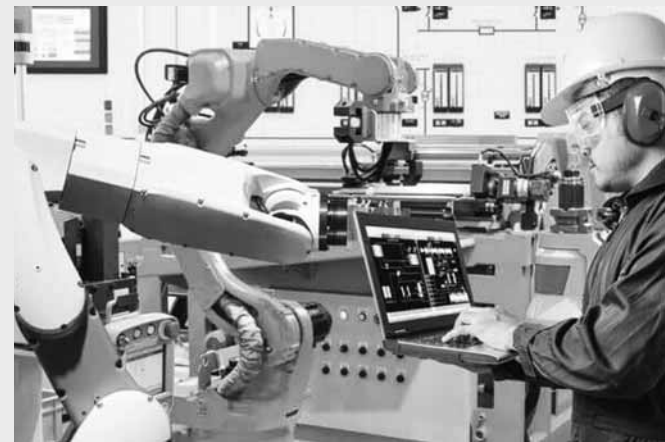
FIRST COLUMN
AGILE POLICY MAKING FOR NEW INDIA

The challenge is to get private enterprises excited about the nation's growth story



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The secret key to a good book lie is generally found in the carefully worded preface, where the author summarizes the basic context for the reader to go through the upcoming content. The context to Budget 2022-23 is found in the first two paragraphs of the preface written in the Economic Survey of the past year. It mentions a "waterfall approach" of policy making which is like a giant repository (or cloud storage if you like) of all the possible scenarios and outcomes, pitfalls, benefits etc., of the stated policy and therefore is like a prefilled context setting, for an ever-changing reality, impacted by sudden pandemics, and other such variables. The alternate solution as suggested in the Economic Survey, is an "agile" policy making which depends heavily on the "feedback loops, "monitoring" and course correcting during the journey. Simply put, the premise being put forward is that it is always better to rely on real time data analy-



sis and on the spot, number crunching to assess the impact of a policy and offer alternate course correction measures if needed, depending on external conditions, for more citizens to benefit from a stated policy. The Budget does just that, and more, by sticking to a bunch of announcements and broad context setting, which left many puzzled about the outcomes. Welcome to a tech-heavy, minimalistic Budget for an OTT content-friendly new India. The finance minister chose to restrict the speech to nearly 90 minutes, after having raised the bar to a record setting 160 minutes earlier. The budget itself instead of a hard copy was carried in a traditional and symbolic 'bahikhata' on a tablet, and the finance minister did not provide any populist sops for the thousands glued to television sets, closely following her announcements word to word. What she did was to provide a canvass of growth and future Bharat with her emphasis on the words "tech and digital" nearly 100 times and expanded the scope of technology-enabled services for a swathe of sectors ranging from agriculture to banking.

The underlying principle being a quicker, efficient delivery of government or private enterprise services with a thoughtful use of technology, which can be indigenously developed or imported and adapted to provide maximum benefits of governance. Supporting it is a huge amount of real-time feedback loops or data sets which tell you about the actual impact on ground or any need for course correction. That, to me, is the real star of the show which is studiously following the "agile policy making" principle. Possibly, the bureaucracy has woken up to the value of technology in policy making and is not shy of engaging private sector specialists to help them with tricky situations. The Economic Survey highlighted the value of agility by using data from large and varied private sources such as Map my India and Google. The learning has perhaps come from quickly developing a digital platform called CoWin for the gargantuan Covid vaccination program. This also saved huge amounts of research and development money that the government would have otherwise have to spend to develop such an application service. The budget talks about the potential for a huge private sector participation in the next 25 years of India's growth also termed the "Amrit Kaal". The challenge would be to get the private enterprises excited about the growth story and remove roadblocks in their journey. This will again take the bureaucrats, specifically those who are interacting with the small and medium sector business to really shed their waterfall approach and adopt an agile course.

(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

India needs to check population growth

It is imperative to make national population control laws for the unity and integrity of the entire country and implement these equally



RAJENDRA PRASAD GUPTA

India's uncontrolled population growth has become the central topic of discussion among common people these days. It is true that the discussion began before independence but due to a lack of determination in the Government, nothing positive came out of the debates.

In 1940, the National Planning Committee created a subcommittee, the objective of which was to engage in resolution-centric discussion about the growing population. In 1946, the Health Survey and Development Committee submitted a report, in which the 11th chapter titled "The Population Problem", expressed concern about the unchecked problem of overpopulation and mentioned several facts regarding it. Hence, when an interim government was formed in 1946, the policymakers agreed that such unchecked population growth could become a problem for the future.

However, even after all these years, some selfish powers want to change the demography of India in a well-planned manner by looking at the population-control debate with a communal lens. Due to this type of thinking a lobby is against population control and opposes it to serve their bigoted political masters.

The family-planning program started in India in 1952. At the time, India became the first country in the world to launch such a program. Starting by allocating ₹15 lakh to the program in the first five-year plan, about ₹300 crore was spent on it in the fourth five-year plan. Further, between 1947 and 2014, the Indian Government spent ₹2 lakh crore to control the population, however, due to the Government's sectarian views, we did not get any meaningful or suitable results. In fact, due to this there has been shortage of effort, motive, policy and seriousness.

The national commission (NCRWC) formed by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2000 also appealed in its report to constitute population-regulation laws. Apart from this, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, along with many other states in India have made efforts regarding population-regulation at their own level and have also made laws regarding it. However, all the states in totality have not yet made any favourable effort at the national level.

The demand for population control measures has been raised from time-to-time in the Indian Parliament as well. In 2018, parliamentarians appealed to the Prime Minister to strictly implement the two-child policy in India. Apart from this, many parliamentarians from both the Houses and from different parties have, till now, proposed 35 private bills; 15 parliamentarians are also from Congress. Now, when it is being discussed once again both in and outside the Parliament, a handful of alleged secular politicians, and columnists and writers inspired by leftist ideologies and historians, are using 'Saffron Demography' glossary for it. Their motive



A SECTION OF PEOPLE IN OUR COUNTRY POINTS TOWARDS THE RAPIDLY DECREASING POPULATION IN AMERICA AND EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO REASON THAT THE GROWING POPULATION IN INDIA IS NOT A PROBLEM, BUT A RESOURCE. AND THAT PEOPLE FROM OUR COUNTRY CAN MAKE A PROFIT IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES BY WORKING AS LABOURERS

(The author is the Vice-President of BJP in Bihar and Member, Bihar Legislative Council. The views expressed are personal.)



is to plan and throw the meaningful discussion and steps regarding population-regulation off the table.

The statement of the Sarsanghchalak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Mohan Bhagwat, on the occasion of this Vijaydashmi, on this topic is a crisp answer to the proponents of false secularism. These elements also falsely contend that such debate is done with the motive to create a Hindu nation by instilling the fear of being a minority within the mind of Hindus. This in itself is humorous.

In the pre-independence era when the census report came in 1901, Bengal's Census Commissioner H.H. Risley said in his report, "It seems like Muslims and Christians are rapidly increasing in the society. It raises a question as to whether the Hindu community will be able to save their position?"

Therefore, this initiative is not a 'Saffron Demography' but it is 'Civilizational Demography', which will prevent the changing character of India's cultural nationalism, Indianism, culture and civilization.

In 1980, 57 per cent of the people in the world were unable to obtain necessary resources; the number increased to 72 per cent in 2017. In 1992, when the population of the world crossed 300 crore, 1700 scholars, economists and scientists, representing the world, signed a petition to declare that population had become a huge problem for the world.

The whole world is going through an ecological crisis currently. If everyone in the world started

matching the standard of living of an average American, five more planets like the Earth would be needed to fill the stomachs of the world. Likewise, if everyone in the world starts to live like Europeans, three more planets would be needed. It can be understood by this how important it is to save the Earth. To save the Earth also means to save the living beings residing on the planet, so that the environmental balance can be maintained. This task can be done by human beings. Population-regulation laws prove to be crucial for this because every fifth person of this world lives in India.

A section of the people in our country points towards the rapidly decreasing population in America and European countries to reason that the growing population in India is not a problem, but a resource. And that people from our country can make a profit in foreign countries by working as labourers. Afghanistan, Bahrain, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan and Kuwait are among the 18 Emigration Check Required countries where maximum people go to work as labourers with the motive to earn money. Does it not wound the pride and self-respect of India, the country that was famous for its leadership in the whole world, to say that its people will work as labourers for someone else?

By looking at the figures of census in India, we can understand the increased pace at which this growth took place. The fact to pay attention to is that from 1951 to 2011, the Muslim population has grown from 9.8 per cent in 1951 to 14.23

per cent in 2011. Meanwhile, a sharp decline has been reported in the Hindu population. The population of Hindus was 84.1 per cent in 1951, and it fell to 79.80 per cent in 2011. If we look at the growing population of Muslims district wise, then out of India's total 748 districts, the Muslim population exceeds by 20p per cent in 116 districts, which includes the 32 districts within 8 states where their population exceeds 50 per cent. Despite this, why have they been given the benefits of a minority in these districts?

We should recall that in 1947, population was the main reason for the partition of India. At present also there is an anti-Indian or 'tukde-tukde gang' inside the country, who are plotting to divide the country. During such times, it is imperative to make national population-control laws for the unity and integrity of the country.

India always talks about Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, therefore, to say that the making of population-control laws would harm or benefit a particular religion is not legitimate. Our country is worried about the decreasing population of Parsis. It is the speciality of Indian culture that we are putting efforts via social and cultural methods to ensure that the population of Parsis does not further diminish. Keeping in mind the available resources, future necessities and the problem of population imbalance, it is the need of the hour that population-control laws be created for national benefit, and be implemented equally for every religion and community.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

MODI GOVERNMENT'S ZERO SUM BUDGET HAS NOTHING FOR SALARIED CLASS, MIDDLE CLASS, THE POOR AND DEPRIVED, YOUTH, FARMERS, MSMEs.

— CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI



WHATEVER RAHUL GANDHI IS PREACHING TO US, HE SHOULD GO AND IMPLEMENT IN THE CONGRESS-RULED STATES.

— UNION FINANCE MINISTER NIRMALA SITHARAMAN

World Cancer Day: Closing the Care Gap

People should also eat a balanced diet, practice yoga and exercise, eschew tobacco and alcohol to reduce chances of getting cancer

This year, the theme of 'World Cancer Day' on February 4, is 'Close the Care Gap'. The mere mention of the word 'cancer' sends a shiver down the spine. In such a situation, the state of minds of people suffering from cancer and those taking care of cancer patients is indescribable. If there are 'gaps' in the various stages of cancer care, such as in diagnosis, surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and palliative care, then the enhanced despair becomes unimaginable. In this context, this year's theme is relevant, as it will take a long time for any health system to completely live up to the ideal standards of care.



MANOHAR AGNANI

There may be a dearth of medical facilities at times or treatment may be too expensive. At times, cancer risk factors in

(The writer is Additional Secretary, Union Health Ministry. The views expressed are personal.)

people's lifestyles and environments may be excessive, and the general public's "health-seeking behavior" may be a challenge also. There is also a great need for provision of palliative care for cancer patients in the terminal stage. In effect, there are gaps in expectations and real situations at every stage of cancer care. At times more, at times less.

In this context, it is relevant to mention the National Health Policy (2017), Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWC), Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) and the special efforts being made in the field of cancer. AB-HWC is a well thought out strategy by the Government of India to ensure comprehensive primary healthcare.



The Prime Minister has given an ambitious target of converting all the Sub-Health Centres and Primary Health Centres in the country to Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs). Today, there are more than 89,000 HWCs in the country through which preventive, promotive and comprehensive primary healthcare is being provided. ASHAs and ANMs visit door-to-door to identify early symptoms in people above 30

years of age for five major diseases namely hypertension, diabetes and oral, breast and cervical cancer and share information on lifestyle changes to prevent cancer. In effect, it can be said that a tremendous effort is being made to close the gaps at the initial stage of cancer care, which is also showing positive results.

Efforts are also being made in the country to prevent and control the major causes of cancer through the National

Program for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardio-vascular diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS). The objective of this program is to spread public awareness about cancer, encourage people to improve their lifestyle and set-up Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) clinics in Community Health Centres and District Hospitals. By expanding the services of CT-Scan, MRI, Mammography and Histopathology in district hospitals, the gap in early detection of cancer is also being bridged.

Through 'Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana', cashless health services are being provided to a large section of the population in selected government and private hospitals. The Prime Minister's vision of setting up new medical colleges in the country and

upgradation of district hospitals into medical colleges is also helping strengthen secondary care. Similarly, 22 AIIMS are being set up in the country in a phased manner to expand tertiary care. Grants are also given for setting up State Cancer Institutes and Tertiary Cancer Care Centres under the "Tertiary Cancer Care Centres Scheme", which can be used towards diagnosis and treatment of cancer, conducting tests, research, providing palliative care and for participation in cancer registry programs. A 700-bed National Cancer Institute at Jhajjar, Haryana and a 460-bed Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute in Kolkata have also been started.

All these initiatives are proving useful in closing the gap in the areas of surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy,

etc., in cancer care.

I think the actions being taken in the country to control cancer are historic. While there will always be scope for improvement in these initiatives, a huge responsibility also lies with the people of the country, especially the youth, to adopt lifestyles in a manner that the possibility of getting cancer is reduced to the minimum. Lifestyle changes like eating a balanced diet, practicing yoga and exercise, eschewing consumption of tobacco and alcohol will go a long way in achieving this objective. Such efforts will not only save them from chances of cancer, but will also help preserve quality and timely services for needy cancer patients and in turn help in truly realizing this year's theme of 'Close the Care Gap'.

Russia buildup biggest in 30 years: NATO

AP ■ BRUSSELS

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg expressed concern on Thursday that Russia is continuing its military buildup around Ukraine, and that it has now deployed more troops and military equipment to Belarus that at any time in the last 30 years.

More high-level diplomacy was expected in Moscow and Kyiv amid deep uncertainty of Russia's intentions. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is hosting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for talks in the Ukrainian capital. Russian President Vladimir Putin meets with his Argentine counterpart Alberto Fernandez in Moscow.

Russia now has more than 100,000 troops stationed near Ukraine's northern and eastern borders, raising concern that Moscow might invade again, as it did in 2014, and destabilize the Ukrainian economy. Russian officials deny that an invasion is planned.

"Over the last days, we have seen a significant movement of Russian military forces into Belarus. This is the biggest Russian deployment there since the Cold War," Stoltenberg told reporters at NATO headquarters in Brussels. He said that Russian troop numbers in Belarus are likely to climb to 30,000, with the backing of special forces, high-end fighter jets, Iskander short-range ballistic missiles, and S-400 ground-to-air missile defense systems.

"So, we speak about a wide range of modern military capabilities. All this will be combined with Russia's annual nuclear forces exercise, expected to take place this month," Stoltenberg said. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu



In this photo taken from video and released by the Russian Defense Ministry Press Service on Wednesday, Russian soldiers attend a military training at the Yurginsky training ground in the Kemerovo region, Russia. The Russian military has launched a series of drills across the country amid the tensions with the West over Ukraine (Russian Defense Ministry Press Service via AP)

arrived in Minsk on Thursday to check on preparations for major Russia-Belarus war games scheduled for Feb. 10-20. Shoigu met with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. Speaking about the drills, Lukashenko said the goal was "to reinforce the border with Ukraine."

Stoltenberg called on Russia to "de-escalate," and repeated warnings from the West that "any further Russian aggression would have severe consequences and carry a heavy price."

NATO has no intention of deploying troops to Ukraine should Russia invade, but it has begun to reinforce the defenses of nearby member countries — notably Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The 30-nation military alliance also plans to beef up its defenses in the Black Sea region near Bulgaria and Romania.

Stoltenberg also welcomed President Joe Biden's decision on Wednesday to send 2,000 U.S.-based troops to Poland and Germany and shifting 1,000 more from Germany to Romania, demonstrating to

both allies and foes Washington's commitment to NATO's eastern flank.

"We are committed to finding a political solution to the crisis, but we have to be prepared for the worst," Stoltenberg said, and he welcomed other recent offers of troops and equipment from several allies. Russia objects to the troop move and has described it as "destructive."

Erdogan, a prominent NATO ally in the Black Sea region, is positioning himself as a possible mediator.

Speaking before departing for Kyiv, he reiterated Turkey's support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and said Ankara was ready to do what it can to reduce tensions. "We are closely following the challenges that Ukraine is faced with as well as the tension in the region," he said. "We express on every platform that we support the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our strategic partner and neighbor, Ukraine." "As a Black Sea nation, we invite all sides to exercise restraint and dialogue in order to bring peace to region," Erdogan said.

Putin heads to China to bolster ties amid Ukraine tensions

AP ■ MOSCOW

American and European officials may be staying away from the Beijing Winter Olympics because of human rights concerns, but Russian President Vladimir Putin will be on hand even as tensions soar over his buildup of troops along his country's border with Ukraine.

Putin's talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday will mark their first in-person meeting since 2019 and are intended to help strengthen Moscow's ties with China and coordinate their policies in the face of Western pressure. After, the two will attend the Games' opening ceremony.

In an article published Thursday by the Chinese news agency Xinhua, Putin wrote that Moscow and Beijing play an "important stabilizing role" in global affairs and help make international affairs "more equitable and inclusive."

The Russian president criticized "attempts by some countries to politicize sports to the benefit of their ambitions," an apparent reference to a diplomatic boycott of the Olympics by the U.S. and some of its allies.

EU spokeswoman Nabila Massrali reacted to that by stating that "we are, of course, fully committed to contribute to promoting and protecting sports integrity and to strengthening universal respect for human rights." "Big sports events such as the Olympic

Games often have a universal audience," Massrali said. "They can be instrumental for spreading positive values and promoting freedom and human rights at the global level. However, such platforms should not be used for political propaganda."

Many Western officials are skipping the Beijing Games in protest of China's detention of more than 1 million Uyghur Muslims in the northwestern region of Xinjiang. But leaders of the ex-Soviet Central Asian nations, which have close ties with both Russia and China, all followed Putin's lead and attending.

In an interview with China Media Group also released Thursday, Putin emphasized that "we oppose the attempts to politicize sport or use it as a tool of coercion, unfair competition and discrimination."

Putin's meeting with Xi and attendance at the opening ceremony "announces the further promotion of the China-Russia relationship," said Li Xin, director of the Institute of European and Asian Studies at Shanghai's University of Political Science and Law.

China and Russia have increasingly found common cause over what they believe is a U.S. disregard for their territorial and security concerns, Li said. Both their governments have also taken to mocking U.S. over its domestic travails, from last year's Capitol riot to its struggle to control COVID-19.

Ex-cop who killed Black teen leaving prison: Was it justice?

AP ■ CHICAGO

Ex-Chicago police Officer Jason Van Dyke was set leaving prison on Thursday after being locked up less than four years, and in the city that witnessed the historic murder conviction of the first officer for an on-duty shooting in a half century, that release is seen as another chapter in a troubling history of race and policing.

Among many there was hope that Van Dyke's 2018 conviction of second-degree murder and 16 counts of aggravated battery signaled a willingness to hold officers accountable. But they say word that he's being set free after serving about three years and four months of his sentence of six years and nine months has turned Black teenager Laquan McDonald, and them, into victims again.

"This is the ultimate illustration that Black lives don't matter as much as other lives," said the Rev. Marshall Hatch, a prominent minister on the city's West Side. "To get that short amount of time for a murder sends a bad message to the community." Early Thursday, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot made a similar point.

"I understand why this continues to feel like a miscarriage of justice, especially when many Black and brown men get sentenced to so much more prison time for having committed far lesser crimes," she said in a statement. To give the teen and the community the justice it hoped it had with Van Dyke's conviction, the NAACP this week asked U.S. Attorney

General Merrick Garland to bring federal civil rights charges against Van Dyke, who is white. McDonald's grandmother, Tracie Hunter, has asked for the same thing.

Whether those charges are coming is unknown. But what's clear is that Van Dyke's release comes at a perilous time for the city and its police force. Chicago is experiencing a surge in violent crime and had more homicides last year than in any of in the last quarter century.

The city continues to pay multi-million settlements to victims of police abuse. And just this week, prosecutors said they would vacate the convictions of nearly 50 more people who were framed or falsely accused by police of drug crimes.

To be sure, the 2014 shooting eventually led to a court-ordered consent decree that resulted in several reforms, including the creation of a civilian-led police oversight board and new rules governing investigations into police shootings. And after the city refused to release the police video of McDonald's killing for more than a year and only did so after a judge ordered it to do so, it now must release such videos within 60 days.

But, while Lightfoot in her statement pointed to "historic reforms" the city has made, changes have come slower than expected and the city has struggled to meet some of the consent decree's deadlines. Not only that, but just as then-Mayor Rahm Emanuel fought in court the release of the McDonald video.

Biden says US forces killed ISIS leader during raid in Syria

AP ■ ATMEH, SYRIA

The leader of the violent Islamic State group was killed during an overnight raid carried out by U.S. special forces in Syria's northwestern Idlib province, President Joe Biden said Thursday.

The raid targeted Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, who took over as head of the militant group on Oct. 31, 2019, just days after leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi died during a U.S. raid in the same area.

A U.S. official said al-Qurayshi died as al-Baghdadi did, by exploding a bomb that killed himself and members of his family, including women and children, as U.S. forces approached.

The operation came as IS has been trying for a resurgence, with a series of attacks in the region, including a 10-day assault late last month to seize a prison.

U.S. special forces landed in helicopters and assaulted a house in a rebel-held corner of Syria, clashing for two hours with gunmen, witnesses said. Residents described continuous gunfire and explosions that jolted the town of Atme near the Turkish border, an area dotted with camps for internally displaced people from Syria's civil war.

First responders reported that 13 people had been killed, including six children and four women. Biden said in a statement that he ordered the raid to "protect the American people and our allies, and make the world a safer place." He planned to address the American public later Thursday morning.

ORIENTAL NAGPUR BETUL HIGHWAY LIMITED

Regd. Off: OSE Commercial Block, Asset 5B, Aerocity, Hospitality, District, IGI Airport, New Delhi-110037, Tel: 91-11-46044604, Email: spv.osel@gmail.com CIN: U45400DL2010PLC203649 (UN-AUDITED QUARTERLY FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2021) (Amount in Lakhs)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended 31.12.2021 (Unaudited)	Quarter Ended 31.12.2020 (Unaudited)	Year Ended 31.03.2021 (Audited)
1	Total income from operations (net)	13,232.66	13,877.35	56,600.53
2	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax and Exceptional Items)	6,018.75	6,430.40	24,860.21
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional Items)	6,018.75	6,430.40	24,860.21
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional Items)	5,933.71	6,299.45	21,608.65
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	5,933.71	6,299.45	21,608.65
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital	1,813.45	1,813.45	1,813.45
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	85,715.77	81,303.65	86,830.03
8	Securities Premium	34,436.55	34,436.55	34,436.55
9	Net Worth	121,965.77	117,553.65	123,080.03
10	Paid up Debt Capital/Outstanding Debt	242,424.23	262,056.89	251,872.64
11	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares	0.00	0.00	0.00
12	Debt Equity Ratio	1.99:1	2.23:1	2.05:1
13	Earnings Per Share (of Rs 10/- each)			
	1. Basic:	32.72	34.74	119.16
	2. Diluted:	32.72	34.74	119.16
14	Capital Redemption Reserve	0.00	0.00	0.00
15	Debtenture Redemption Reserve	20,235.10	0.00	0.00
16	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	1.32:1	1.38:1	1.38:1
17	Interest Service Coverage Ratio	2.02:1	2.01:1	1.98:1
18	Asset Coverage Ratio:	1.81:1	1.72:1	1.80:1
19	Current Ratio	3.96:1	4.72:1	5.47:1
20	Debtor Turnover Ratio	0.12:1	0.12:1	0.17:1
21	Inventory Turnover Ratio	NA	NA	NA
22	Long Term Debt to Working Capital	2.75:1	2.41:1	2.17:1
23	Bad Debts to Accounts Receivable	NA	NA	NA
24	Current Liabilities Ratio	0.11:1	0.10:1	0.09:1
25	Total Debts to Total Assets	0.65:1	0.68:1	0.66:1
26	Operating Margin	1.04:1	1.07:1	1.06:1
27	Net Profit Margin	0.52:1	0.53:1	0.45:1

Notes:
a) The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly un-audited financial results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulations 52 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations 2015. The full format of the quarterly un-audited financial results are available on the websites of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and the listed entity (<http://www.nagpurbetulhighway.in>).
b) For the other line items referred to in Regulation 52(4) of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations 2015, pertinent disclosures have been made to the Stock Exchange and are available on the websites of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and the listed entity (<http://www.nagpurbetulhighway.in>).
c) These quarterly un-audited financial results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors of the Company at their meeting held on February 03, 2022. The Statutory Auditors have carried out limited review of the aforesaid results.

For and on behalf of Board of Directors of Oriental Nagpur Betul Highway Limited
Sd/-
Nikhil Dhingra
Director
DIN - 07835556
Place: New Delhi
Date: 03.02.2022

15 terrorists, 4 soldiers killed in attacks on security posts in Pakistan

PTI ■ KARACHI

Armed assailants attacked two security forces' camps in Pakistan's restive southwestern Balochistan province, triggering an intense exchange of fire in which at least 15 terrorists and four soldiers were killed, a senior minister said on Thursday, terming it a "great success" against terrorism.

The attacks, claimed later by the banned Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), took place in Panjgur and Noshki districts on Wednesday. In Panjgur, the terrorists tried to enter a security forces' camp from two locations while in Noshki they attempted to get into a Frontier Corps (FC) post which was "promptly responded".

Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed said in a video message that nine terrorists and four soldiers were killed in Noshki while six terrorists were shot dead in Panjgur. "The terrorists were repulsed from both places by the Pakistan Army. A few — four to five people — are surrounded by the army in Panjgur and will be defeated," he said, terming it a "great success" against terrorism.

Prime Minister Imran Khan took to Twitter on Thursday to congratulate the security forces for foiling the terror attacks on their camps in Balochistan. "We salute our brave security forces who repulsed terrorist attacks against security forces' camps in Panjgur & Naushki, Balochistan. The nation stands united behind our security forces who continue to give great sacrifices to protect us," he wrote.

Earlier in a statement, the military's media wing Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said: "both attacks were successfully repulsed, inflicting heavy casualties on terrorists".

A Frontier Corps spokesman also confirmed that two blasts had taken place near the camps in Panjgur and Noshki which were followed by intense firing.

The BLA claimed responsibility for the attacks in a statement. The separatist outfit has recently stepped up attacks on security forces and installations. The attacks on Wednesday were the latest in a string of such assaults in Balochistan and come a week after ten soldiers were killed in a terrorist attack on a security forces' checkpoint in the province's Kech district.

President Xi Jinping, China's 'chairman of everything'

AP ■ BEIJING

The last time the Olympics came to China, he oversaw the whole endeavor. Now the Games are back, and this time Xi Jinping is running the entire nation.

The Chinese president, hosting a Winter Olympics beleaguered by complaints about human rights abuses, has upended tradition to restore strongman rule in China and tighten Communist Party control over the economy and society.

Xi was in charge of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing that served as a "coming-out party" for China as an economic and political force.

A second-generation member of the party elite, Xi became general secretary of the party in 2012. He took the ceremonial title of president the next year. Xi spent his first five-year term atop the party mak-

ing himself China's strongest leader at least since Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s. Xi was dubbed "chairman of everything" after he put himself in charge of economic, propaganda and other major functions.

That reversed a consensus for the ruling inner circle to avoid power struggles by sharing decision-making. The party is crushing pro-democracy and other activism and tightening control over business and society. It has expanded surveillance of China's 1.4 billion people and control of business, culture, education and religion.

A "social credit" system tracks every person and company and punishes infractions from pollution to littering. Xi's rise coincides with increased assertiveness abroad following three decades of China keeping its head down to focus on economic development. Xi

wants China to be "the greatest country on Earth, widely admired and therefore followed," said Steve Tsang, a Chinese politics specialist at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. "The world where China is top dog is a world where authoritarianism is safe," Tsang said.

Democracies will "need to know their place." Born in Beijing in 1953, Xi enjoyed a privileged youth as the second son of Xi Zhongxun, a former vice premier and guerrilla commander in the civil war that brought Mao Zedong's communist rebels to power in 1949.

At 15, Xi Jinping was sent to rural Shaanxi province in 1969 as part of Mao's campaign to have educated urban young people learn from peasants. Xi was caught trying to sneak back to the Chinese capital and returned to Shaanxi to dig irrigation ditches.

Turkey: 19 migrants now found dead at border with Greece

ISTANBUL

Turkish authorities on Thursday found seven more dead bodies near Turkey's border with Greece, raising to 19 number of migrants who have frozen to death at frontier. Turkey has blamed Greece for deaths, accusing Greek border guards of illegally pushing migrants back over frontier. Greece has strongly rejected accusation. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed on Thursday to expose what he said was Greece's illegal push-back of migrants at every occa-

sion. Turkey's interior minister said Wednesday that 12 migrants had died after allegedly being pushed back into Turkey. He said they were found near border, "without shoes and stripped of their clothes." One of migrants was found alive but later died in a hospital. There was no information about migrants' nationalities. A statement from governor's office for border province of Edirne said seven more bodies were found on Thursday.

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY



General Public is hereby informed that one person **Namely: Suraj, S/O: Unknown, Address: Unknown**, was found dead near Footpath of Gate No. 6, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi on **27.01.2022** in the area of P.S. Sabzi Mandi, Delhi. In this regard a case has been lodged vide

DD No. 10 PP/THC U/s 174 Cr.P.C. dated 27.01.2022 at P.S. Sabzi Mandi, Delhi. The description of the dead person is as under:- **Age:** About 45 years, **Sex:** Male, **Height:** 5'6", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Strong, **Wearing:** Black colour jacket, grey colour pant and barefeet. If any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned. **SHO P.S. Sabzi Mandi, Delhi Ph.: 011-23823161, 8750870126**

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that this person **Name:** Unknown, **S/O:** Unknown, **R/O:** Unknown, **Age:** Approx 55 years, **Sex:** Male, **Height:** 5'8", **Built:** Thin, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Long, **Wearing:** Green Colour Sweater & Grey Colour Pant & Bare Footed, was found Dead at Metro Foot Over Bridge, Near St. Stephen Hospital, Tis Hazari, Delhi on 31.01.2022.

In this regard a DD No.66-A, Dated 31.01.2022 has been lodged at P.S. Subzi Mandi, Delhi. The Dead Body has been preserved in HRH Mortuary for 72 hours for identification. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following. **SHO P.S. Subzi Mandi, Delhi Ph.: 011-23823161, 8750870126**

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Guarantor / Loan Account Number (DHFL Old LAN & ICICI New LAN) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Gulab Singh, Kanchan Singh, RZH-206, Second Floor, Back Side Gali No 7, Raj Nagar-2, Near Palam Colony, Delhi. A/c No:- 9600001932 & QZDEL00005039346	RZ-H-206, 1st Floor (Back Side), KH No-62/20/2, Vill-Palam Gali No- 7, Raj Nagar-2, New Delhi	06-Jan-2022, Rs. 12,77,225/-	12/07/2021
2.	Parmod Kumar Patro, Namita Patro, Plot No F-107-108, Flat No 6, 1st Floor,Rhs Mohan Garden, Uttam Nagar, Delhi. A/c No:- 2660000908 & QZDEL00005019398	F 107 & 108, 1st Flr, Back Side Rhs Pvt No-6, KH No 604, 605,606, Block-F Vill-Nawada, Mohan Garden Extn, Uttam Nagar, Delhi	06-Jan-2022, Rs. 10,62,191/-	31/08/2021
3.	Puran Rawat, Vandana Rawat, RZ-686, F/16E, Gali No 6, Kailash Mansarovar Ashram Marg, Raj Nagar Part 1, Palam Cty, Delhi. A/c no:- 27300000362 & QZDWA00005008502	RZ 1/ 16, Plot No 16, KH No 59/ 16 /1, 3rd Floor With Roof Right, Village- Palaam, Raj Nagar, New Delhi	06-Jan-2022, Rs. 10,35,236/-	23/09/2021

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. **Date: February 04, 2022** **Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited** **Place: Delhi/NCR**

Digital warfare tech at sea helping US foes evade sanctions

AP ■ MIAMI

Technology to hide a ship's location previously available only to the world's militaries is spreading fast through the global maritime industry as governments from Iran to Venezuela — and rogue shipping companies they depend on to move their petroleum products — look for stealthier ways to circumvent U.S. sanctions. Windward, a maritime intelligence company whose data is used by U.S. government to investigate sanctions violations, said that since January 2020 it has detected more than 200 vessels involved in over 350 incidents in which they appear to have electronically manipulat-

ed their GPS location. "This is out of hand right now," Matan Peled, co-founder of Windward and a former Israeli naval officer, said in an interview. "It's not driven by countries or superpowers. It's ordinary companies using this technique."

The scale is astonishing. Peled said U.S. authorities have been slow to catch on to spread of technology that has been part of electronic warfare arsenal for decades but is only now cropping up in commercial shipping, with serious national security, environmental and maritime safety implications. Windward was able to identify suspect ships using technology that detects digital tracks that don't correspond to

actual movements, such as hairpin turns at breakneck speed or drifting in form of perfect crop circles. William Fallon, a retired four-star admiral and former head of the U.S. Pacific Command, said U.S. authorities have been aware for some time of threat from electronic manipulation, one of a growing number of so-called "gray zone" national security challenges that cut across traditional military, commercial and economic lines.

"Any time you can deceive somebody into believing you're somewhere where you're not is concerning," said Fallon, who is now a board member of American Security Project, a Washington think tank.

India's services sector activity slips further in Jan

New Delhi: India's services sector activity moderated further in January as new business rose at a noticeably slower rate amid the escalation of the pandemic, reintroduction of restrictions and inflationary pressures, a monthly survey said on Thursday.

The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index fell to 51.5 in January, down from 55.5 in December, pointing to the slowest rate of expansion in the current six-

month sequence of growth. For the sixth straight month, the services sector witnessed an expansion in output. In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

According to survey participants, demand was restricted by the fast spread of the Omicron variant and the reinstatement of curfews in parts of the country.

"The escalation of the pandemic and reintroduction of curfews had a detrimental impact on growth across the service sector. Both new business and output rose at slight rates that were the weakest in six months," Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at IHS Markit, said.

Companies became increasingly worried that growth would be harmed by the intensification of the pandemic, reintroduction of

restrictions and inflationary pressures. Business sentiment remained positive but slipped to a six-month low.

"Concerns about how long the current wave of COVID-19 will last dampened business confidence and caused job shedding. Firms were also alarmed about price pressures," Lima noted.

Service sector jobs declined for the second month running during January, owing to reduced output requirements

among some businesses and future uncertainty.

Meanwhile, the Composite PMI Output Index -- which measures combined services and manufacturing output -- fell from 56.4 in December to 53.0 in January, signalling the slowest rate of expansion in the current six-month period of growth. Services activity and manufacturing production increased at weaker rates.

The January data pointed to a second successive month-

ly drop in private sector employment. Despite being modest, the rate of job shedding accelerated from December, the survey said.

On the price front, the January data pointed to a stronger increase in expenses among service providers, with the overall rate of inflation climbing to its highest since December 2011. Survey members said there were higher food, fuel, material, staff and transportation costs.

"The latest PMI results brought worrying news as input prices increased at the sharpest rate in over a decade. Charges rose at a faster pace as some firms continued to transfer additional cost burdens to consumers, but the rate of inflation here was moderate as the vast majority of monitored companies left their fees unchanged since December," Lima said. Meanwhile, the monetary policy committee of the Reserve Bank of India

(RBI) is slated to announce its policy on February 9.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during her Budget speech on February 1, announced that the government will borrow about Rs 11.6 lakh crore from the market in 2022-23 to meet its expenditure requirement.

The country's fiscal deficit is projected to be higher at 6.9 per cent this fiscal as against 6.8 per cent estimated earlier, Sitharaman said. **PTI**

Markets snap 3-day rally as profit-booking hammers IT, finance stocks

Mumbai: The Sensex and Nifty buckled under heavy selling pressure on Thursday as investors pocketed gains in IT, finance and bank stocks after three sessions of robust gains.

Nervousness in European markets ahead of central bank meetings coupled with lacklustre macroeconomic data back home also sapped risk appetite, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex plunged 770.31 points or 1.29 per cent to finish at 58,788.02. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty lost 219.80 points or 1.24 per cent to close at 17,560.20.

HDFC was the top laggard among the Sensex constituents, tumbling 3.23 per cent, followed by Infosys, L&T, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, Tech Mahindra and Kotak Bank.

Only five counters closed in the green -- ITC, Maruti, Titan, SBI, and Asian Paints, advancing up to 1.14 per cent.

On the macroeconomic front, India's services sector activity moderated further in January as new business rose at a noticeably slower rate amid the escalation of the pandem-

ic, reintroduction of restrictions and inflationary pressures, a monthly survey showed.

The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index fell to 51.5 in January, from 55.5 in December, pointing to the slowest rate of expansion in the current six-month sequence of growth.

"The domestic market extended its losses following broad-based selling as global cues turned in favour of bears. All major sectors succumbed to selling while Auto stocks showed some resistance on the back of sequential growth in auto sales numbers during January.

"US futures were under pressure following weak earnings numbers reported by Meta (Facebook) while European markets fretted about monetary policy tightening ahead of the central bank policy announcement," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking, said, "Markets have been experiencing volatile swings despite

the positive bias and we expect this trend to continue... (amid) choppy global markets and prevailing earnings season."

Barring auto and consumer durables, all BSE sectoral indices closed with losses, led by IT, teck, realty, finance, power and energy.

The BSE mid-cap and small-cap gauges shed up to 0.90 per cent.

Global markets slipped ahead of policy meetings of the European Central Bank (ECB) and the Bank of England (BoE) amid fears of rate hikes to control inflation.

In other Asian markets, Tokyo closed in the red, while Seoul was positive.

Several Asian markets, including China and Hong Kong, were shut for the Lunar New Year holidays.

Stock exchanges in Europe were mostly trading in the negative zone in the afternoon session.

International oil benchmark Brent crude slipped 0.65 per cent to USD 88.89 per barrel. **PTI**

No coal shortage at power plants; supply rises 25 pc in Apr-Dec '21: RK Singh

New Delhi: Power projects in the country do not have any coal shortage currently and these plants have got 25 per cent higher coal supply of 430.6 million tonnes in April-December 2021 compared to a year ago, Parliament was informed on Thursday.

"Presently, there is no shortage of coal for power plants in the country," Union Power Minister R K Singh on Thursday said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

According to the reply, the total quantity of coal despatched to the power sector by Coal India Ltd (CIL) and Singareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCCL) during April-December 2021 stood at about 430.6 million tonnes (MT), against about 344.2 MT in the year-ago period. It was about 375.2 MT during the corresponding period of 2019-20.

The despatch showed a growth of about 25 per cent with respect to the preceding year and by about 15 per cent with respect to 2019-20, it added.

Further, Singh told the House that the coal import has

reduced to 21.4 MT during 2021-22 (April-December) as against 35.1 MT during the same period of 2020-21 and 52.5 MT during the same period of 2019-20.

The shortfall in imported coal has been compensated by supply from domestic coal, he stated.

He also informed the House that as a result of the above measures, the coal stock available at the power plants has increased from 7.2 MT as on October 8, 2021, to about 25 MT as on January 26, 2022.

The Government of India has taken the following measures to increase the coal supply to power plants.

To address the issues of coal supplies to the power sector, an inter-ministerial sub-group meet regularly to take various operational decisions to enhance the supply of coal to thermal power plants (TPPs) as well as for meeting any contingent situations related to the power sector, including to alleviate critical coal stock position in power plants. **PTI**

Rupee falls for 3rd day, slips 5 paise to 74.88 against USD

Mumbai: The rupee edged lower by 5 paise to log its third straight session of loss against the US dollar on Thursday as stronger greenback against key rivals and muted domestic equities weighed on forex market sentiment.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 74.84 against the American dollar, and later witnessed an intra-day high of 74.75 and a low of 74.92 against the greenback.

The local unit finally ended the day at 74.88, down 5 paise from the previous close of 74.83.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.22 per cent higher at 96.14.

Jateen Trivedi, Senior Research Analyst at LKP Securities, said, "Rupee traded in a muted range around 74.85 as the dollar index and crude prices traded in small range... Rupee has seen resistance at 74.70 and support near 75.00 hence the range between this needs a break for direction of rupee trend."

Gaurang Somaiyaa, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said, "Rupee traded in a narrow range and volatility remained low ahead of the important ECB and BoE policy statement that will be released today. **PTI**

RBI may hike reverse repo rate by 0.25 pc in next week's policy: Report

Mumbai: The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) may go for a hike of up to 0.25 per cent in the reverse repo rate at which the RBI absorbs excess liquidity and leave the repo rate at which it lends, to narrow the policy rate corridor, a British brokerage said on Thursday.

"Growth concerns amid spread of the Omicron variant and relatively benign inflation out-turns provide the RBI with enough room to maintain its growth-supportive monetary policies," analysts at Barclays said, ahead of the resolution announcement next week.

The RBI will hike the reverse repo rate by 0.20-0.25 per cent, given its liquidity management actions, it said.

The brokerage joins a growing list of watchers expecting a reverse repo hike. Other analysts also blame the surprising hike in the government borrowing announced in the budget for the RBI's likely call for policy normalisation.

Barclays said the budget's focus on capital expenditure is expected to provide a back-

loaded fiscal impulse to the economy and does not change the macro backdrop, which includes concerns on inflation.

On the surging global oil prices, which generally play into domestic inflation through corresponding price hikes of fuels locally, the brokerage said the inflationary pressures are unlikely to rise before the state elections finish by March, hinting of no pass-through.

Even though the inflation is benign lately, the RBI needs to be vigilant, it said, pointing to its own forecasts suggesting the headline number staying in the upper end of the 2-6 per cent band and also the crude prices moving higher.

It said till now, the liquidity signals from the RBI have been mixed, which have included shelving of the bond purchasing programme GSAP, an increase in both the quantum and cut-offs for voluntary reverse repo rate auctions and some bond sales in the secondary market last month. **PTI**

Khadi's exponential growth is result of KVIC's Charkha Kranti

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Khadi's exponential growth, as mentioned by President in his address to the Parliament ahead of the Budget Session, is a recognition of the "Charkha Kranti" initiated by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) in the last seven years, says KVIC chairman VK Saxena.

Expressing gratitude to the President for taking note of the good work done by the KVIC, Saxena said the Commission built several monumental Charkhas to propagate Gandhian thoughts and symbolism of Charkha in India and abroad which further popularized Khadi.

Khadi's success was acknowledged by the President in his address to the Parliament on January 31, and by Home Minister Amit Shah, a day before at Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad, while unveiling Mahatma Gandhi's 100 sq meter wall mural on his 74th Martyr's Day.

"Khadi and Gandhi were only used for political gains. It was only after the year 2014, that concrete efforts were made by the Narendra Modi government to popularize Khadi and spread the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi and the symbolism of Charkha across the globe. Be it the birth anniversary or the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi, KVIC organized unique programs to celebrate Gandhian thoughts," he said, adding "The PM himself is the biggest source of inspiration behind the success of KVIC."

During the last 7 years, KVIC built monuments like world's biggest wooden and steel charkhas, world's smallest charkha on wrist watches, Gandhi ji's world's largest wall mural made of clay Kuhlads, world's largest national flag made of Khadi fabric, heritage Charkha museum and many more. Charkha, which was

Gandhi ji's tool in the fight against the British Rule, made its way to a foreign country, for the first time in 2017. Since then, Babu's Charkha has reached 60 countries of the world, he said.

1956 to 2014 - No significant activity/event

July 5, 2016 - World's largest wooden Charkha installed at IGI Airport, New Delhi, by Shri Amit Shah, the then BJP President and Hon'ble Member of Parliament.

October 2, 2017 - A big wooden Charkha unveiled in Uganda, for the first time on foreign soil.

April 15, 2018 - Stainless Steel Charkha unveiled by former Agriculture Minister Shri Radha Mohan Singh at Motihari in Bihar to commemorate Champaran Satyagrah centenary celebrations.

installed at Connaught Place, New Delhi by Shri Amit Shah, the then BJP President and Hon'ble Member of Parliament.

May 21, 2017 - Heritage Charkha Museum Inaugurated at Connaught Place, New Delhi, by Shri Amit Shah, the then BJP President and Hon'ble Member of Parliament.

October 2, 2017 - A big wooden Charkha unveiled in Uganda, for the first time on foreign soil.

April 15, 2018 - Stainless Steel Charkha unveiled by former Agriculture Minister Shri Radha Mohan Singh at Motihari in Bihar to commemorate Champaran Satyagrah centenary celebrations.

Former oil secy Tarun Kapoor to be new oil regulator

New Delhi: Former oil secretary Tarun Kapoor was on Thursday selected to head India's oil and gas regulator PNGRB, sources said.

Kapoor, who superannuated as secretary of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on November 30, 2021, was selected to be chairman of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) after interviews of

over a dozen candidates. **PTI**

Central Coalfields Limited
"A Miniratna Company"
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

NOTICE

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of Coal India Ltd. www.coalindia.in/ respective Subsidiary Company (CCL, www.centralcoalfields.in/). CIL e-procurement portal <https://coalindiatenders.nic.in/> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in/> in addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in/>

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male **Age: About 70 years, Complexion: Wheatish, Height: 5'4", Built: Thin, Face: Long, was wearing Black colour Jacket only, was found dead at Footpath, in front of Bankhani Mandir Chandni Chowk, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 30A U/S 174 CrPc, dated 30.01.2022, has been lodged at P.S. Kotwali, Delhi.**

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

SHO P.S. Kotwali, Delhi
Ph.: 011-23977100, 23921740
DP/1951/N/2022

FORM NO. 5 DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL 600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow-226007

(Ares of Jurisdiction-Part of Uttar Pradesh)

Summons for filing & Appearance by Publication

O.A. No. 861/2021
Date: 31/01/2022

(Summons to defendant under section 19(3) of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993)

Original Application No.861 of 2021

ICICI BANK LTD. ...Applicant
Versus
KANCHAN VERMA & ORS ...Defendant

To,
1. KANCHAN VERMA,
702-X 728, 1st Floor, Near Gurudwara Sarojini Nagar, South Delhi, Delhi 110027

Also at:
Flat No. 1703, 17th Floor, Plot No. Gh-02, Sector-16 Tower-J, Ajnara Le garden, greater Noida West, Uttar Pradesh, Noida-201306.

Also At:
H No.-2097, Lodhi Road Complex, South Delhi, Delhi-110003

2. MUKESH VERMA
H No.-2097, Lodhi Road Complex, South Delhi, Delhi-110003.

Also at:
X 728, 1st Floor, Near Gurudwara Sarojini Nagar, South Delhi, Delhi 110027.

Also At:
Flat No. 1703, 17th Floor, Plot No. Gh-02, Sector-16 Tower-J, Ajnara Le garden, greater Noida West, Uttar Pradesh, Noida-201306.

3. AJNARA REALTECH LTD
Registered Office at:
502, Sachdeva Corporate Tower, Karkardooma Community Centre, Delhi 110092.

Corporate Office at:
D-247/26, Sector-63, Noida, U.P.

"In the above noted application, you are required to file in Paper Book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 11/05/2022 at 10.30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decide in your absence."

Registrar
Debts Recovery
Tribunal Lucknow

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is publically notified that the Flat No V-99, Sector-12, Noida, has been allotted in the name of Meera Joshi D/o K.N. Joshi R/o V-99, Sector-12, Noida presently at 1088, Laxmi Bai Nagar, New Delhi, had sold the said flat, on the basis of SPA to the following persons: A SPA was executed in favour of Vijay Kumar S/o Late Shri Kirpal Singh R/o C-1/179, Lalpat Nagar, New Delhi at SR Delhi Vide Book No. IV Volume No. 2037 on pages 46-47, at Document No. 4520 dated 15.09.1993 and the Agreement to Sell was not registered. So with the help of the notice it is informed the transfer of the above flat goes in favour of Anuj Virendra Singh Kadyan S/o Shri Virendra Singh R/o E-001, Stellar M.I. Citi Homes Omicron-III, Greater Noida if any one has have any objection he/she may submit his/her, objection in the Housing Department of Noida Authority alongwith sufficient proofs within 15 days of the publication this notice. **Vijay Kumar**

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE FOR ENGINEERING WORKS

Sr. No. (1) E-Tender No.: **DRM-ENGG-BSP-T-139-21-22**. Date: **31.01.2022**. Work: Jacketing of Piers and Abutments for rehabilitation of Br. No. 06 UP and 54 UP in JSG - BSP section under the jurisdiction of Assistant Divisional Engineer/Central/Bilaspur. Tender Value: ₹ 91,15,675.18. EMD: ₹ 1,82,300/-. Completion Period: 06 Months.

Start Date of Submission of Tender: From 11.00 hours on 08.02.2022. Last Date of Submission of Tender: Upto 11.00 hours on 22.02.2022.

The complete information of above e-Tender Notice is available over websites: <http://www.ireps.gov.in> Bids other than e-bids shall not be accepted against above Tender.

Divisional Railway Manager(Engg) CPR/10/330 S.E.C.Rly., Bilaspur.

f South East Central Railway @secrail

SUSPECT/WANTED

General public is hereby informed that on 21.11.2021 one **Unknown Person** (depicted in the photo) **age about 20-25 years hit the complainant with his Scooty & absconded from the spot but complainant clicked his photo. The person is wanted in the above mentioned case. In this regard, FIR No. 444/2021, dated 21.11.2021, U/s 279/337 IPC has been registered at P.S. Darya Ganj, Delhi.**

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the suspect, but no clue has come to light so far. Any persons having any information or clue about these suspect may kindly inform to the following.

SHO P.S. Daryaganj, Delhi
Ph. No.: 011-23279331, 23274683
Mob. No.: 8750870421
DP/1224/CD/2022

SEARCH OF MISSING

General public is hereby informed that his girl (depicted in the photo), **Namely: Charu, D/o: Bhajnam, R/o: Village Begusarai, Bihar Aged: 17 years, has been missing from Shelter Home, Karol Bagh, Delhi since 24.12.2016 from the Jurisdiction of P.S. Prasad Nagar, Delhi. In this regard a case FIR No. 545/16, u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Prasad Nagar, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:**

Complexion: Fair, Height: 4'5" feet, Face: Round, Built: Normal, Clothing: Blue Colour Coat and foot slippers.

Any person is having any information/clue about this missing girl, may inform SHO, Prasad Nagar, Delhi at **E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in> Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641**

S.H.O P.S. Prasad Nagar, Delhi
Ph.: 011-25751048, 25725652
DP/1218/CD/2022

PUBLIC NOTICE: LOST ID CARD

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, Sec-8, Rohini, Delhi-110085

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that one ID Card of **Mr. MANNU SHARMA** issued by ICICI Bank Ltd. having ID card no. **2137414** has been found missing and/or lost on 2nd Feb 2022. Anyone, who finds the said ID Card, is requested to return the said ID card to the Manager Debt Services & Management Group, ICICI Bank Limited, SD Tower, Rohini Sector-8 Delhi-85.

Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorised person holding the said ID card no. **2137414**.

Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID card shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and peril and ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment.

Date: **February 04, 2020**
Place: **Delhi**
For ICICI Bank Ltd.

CUBICAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED
Regd. Office-456, Aggarwal Metro Height, Netaji Subhash Place, Pitam Pura, Delhi-110034
CIN:L65993DL1990PLC040101
website: www.cubicalfinancial.com E-mail: cubfinser@yahoo.com

Extract of the statement of Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter ended December 31, 2021 (Rs. in Lacs)

Sl.	Particulars	QTR ENDED	QTR ENDED	YEAR ENDED
		12/31/2021	12/31/2020	31-03-2021
		(Un-audited)	(Un-audited)	(Audited)
1	Total Income from operations	19.73	45.04	131.19
2	Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax	-1.19	18.12	27.99
3	Net Profit / Loss for the period after tax	-3.52	16.27	20.52
4	Equity Share Capital	1303.40	1303.40	1303.40
5	Reserves excluding Revaluation Reserve	-	-	14.99
6	Earnings Per Share (EPS) (of Rs. 2/- each)	-	-	-
	Basic	-0.01	0.02	0.03
	Diluted	-0.01	0.02	0.03

Note:- The above is an Extract of the Detailed Format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The Full Format of the Quarterly Financial Results is available on the Website of Bombay Stock Exchange at www.bseindia.com & on Company website at www.cubicalfinancial.com.

By Order of the Board of Directors
for **CUBICAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED**

Sd/-
DATED: 3RD FEBRUARY, 2022
PLACE: DELHI. **MANJU GOYAL (DIRECTOR)**
DIN-07143651

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I DELHI
4th FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001

O.A.No. 148/2020 Bank of India (Applicant) Versus M/s Saini Flour Mills & Ors. (Defendants)

To, (1) M/S Saini Flour Mills, Through it's prop. Sh. Mukesh Kumar, 629, Dev Nagar Colony, 2 KM Stone, Hajar Road, Bahadurgarh, Haryana - 124507

(2) Mr. Mukesh Kumar s/o Sh. Vijay Singh R/o 22/632, Dev Nagar, Near I.T.I., Hajar Road, Bahadurgarh, Haryana - 124507

also at : R/o 22/629, Dev Nagar, Near I.T.I., Hajar Road, Bahadurgarh, Haryana - 124507

(3) Mrs. Indra Devi w/o Sh. Mukesh Kumar R/o 22/632, Dev Nagar, Near I.T.I., Hajar Road, Bahadurgarh, Haryana - 124507

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of **Rs. 96,79,928.61 (Rupees Ninty six lakh seventy seven thousand nine hundred twenty eight and sixty one paise only)** against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Ld. Registrar on 24.03.2022 at 10:30 A.M. (for further details kindly visit DRT website www.tribunal.gov.in Phone Number: 011-23748473)

Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Due to ongoing **pandemic situation**, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose :- (1) All the advocates/ litigants shall download the **Cisco Webex** application/software; (2) **Meeting ID and password** for the next date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Registrar/Recovery Officer-1 and recovery officer-2 shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT official portal i.e. drt.gov.in under the public notice head. (3) In any exigency qua that, the advocates/litigants can contact the concerned official at **Ph. No. 011-23748473**. Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this 21st day of January, 2022.

By order of the Tribunal Asst. Registrar, DRT-1, New Delhi
Respondent may contact under mention phone number for further enquiry : Mr. Amit K. Dar, Ld. Registrar, DRT-1, New Delhi Phone No. 011-23748473 E-mail : drt1delhi-df@nic.in

BSES BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi

TENDER NOTICE Date: 04.02.2022

Sealed tenders under two parts (Un priced & priced) are invite for the supply of following materials from all bidders:-

NIT No.	Brief Item Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Cost of EMD (₹)	Due Date & Time of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
CMC/BR/22-23/RB/PR/RJ/0978	RATE CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF VARIOUS RATINGS OF ACB IN BRPL	15.00 Crores	15,00,000/-	25.02.2022 15:30 HRS	25.02.2022 16:00 HRS
CMC/BR/22-23/RB/PR/RJ/0979	SUPPLY OF 630 KVA DRY TYPE DT IN BRPL	7.30 Crores	7,30,000/-	25.02.2022 15:30 HRS	25.02.2022 16:00 HRS

Cost of each Tender Document: ₹ 1180/-
For any query call on 011-49107235 or e-mail on Brpl.Eauction@relanceada.com
For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submission of tender documents etc, please visit our website www.bsesdelhi.com

Head (Contracts & Materials)
Regd. Off.: BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Plaza, New Delhi-110019 | Corporate Identification No.: U40109DL2001PLC11527
Telephone No. : +91 11 4920 7235 | Website : www.bsesdelhi.com

TO MEAT OR NOT TO...

Veganism is rising on the popularity charts of food choices for a variety of reasons

Swear off meat? was a popular New Year's resolution among millennials and Generation Z. They are more aware of the consequences of excessive meat consumption and are voluntarily attempting to reduce it. Today, mock meat, a sustainable lifestyle, and empathy for all are driving veganism forward.

Veganism, a seemingly innocent word has become an important tool in the fight against degrading environmental conditions, and it has done so in style. It is more than just a diet. It is about choosing a way of life that excludes animal-based products, particularly food. It is a philosophy that vehemently opposes the use of animals as commodities. Perhaps this is why celebrities like Lewis Hamilton and Tom Ford are so adamantly in favour of a plant-based, eco-friendly diet.

But the question remains, why is the world suddenly blitzed by veganism?

VEGANISM IS THE KEY TO PROMOTING GOOD HEALTH

Many people believe that the only reason they eat meat is for its nutritional value. It's high in protein, essential nutrients like iodine, iron and zinc, as well as vitamins like B12 and essential fatty acids. What if you could get all of these nutrients from a plant-based diet? Processed meats, such as bacon and sausages, are high in cholesterol, making them extremely dangerous in terms of causing cardiovascular disease and cancer.

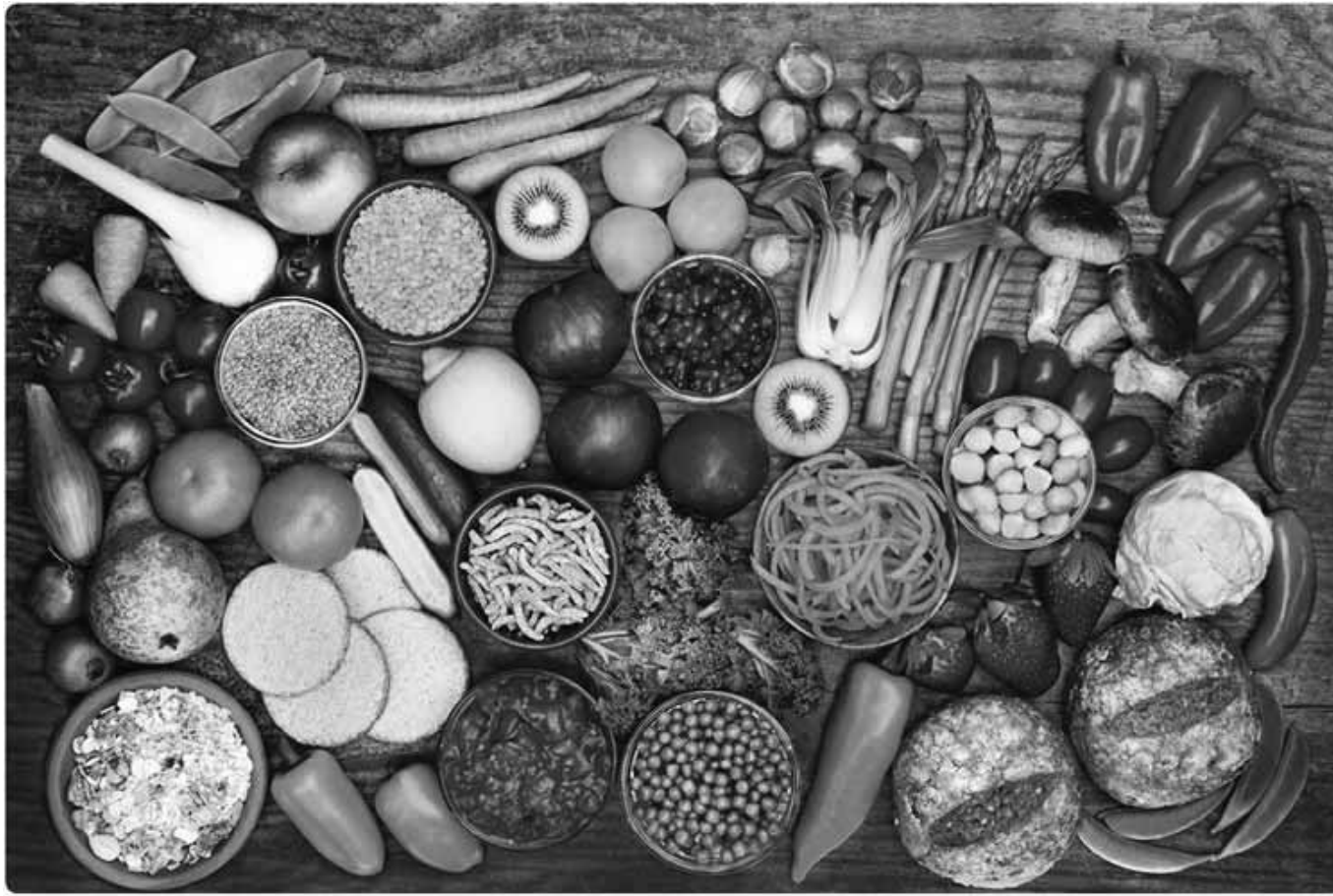
According to research, eating animal flesh, milk and eggs may be as harmful as smoking. Another study found that strict vegans have the lowest cancer rates, followed by vegetarians who don't eat meat but do consume animal-based products like eggs or milk. Concluding that, while a high BMI and smoking habits are important factors, dietary choices play a significant role in determining health.

GOOD ENOUGH REASONS TO SWITCH TO A VEGAN DIET?

But are your taste buds preventing you from committing to veganism? Don't be concerned. A plant-based diet has it all covered, from vegan milk, ice cream, and pasta sauce to eco-friendly chicken, mutton, tuna, eggs and all kinds of meat that look, taste and even cook like traditional meat items.

VEGANISM HELPS ENVIRONMENTAL REJUVENATION

Leading organisations have



repeatedly stated that the meat industry is a major source of pollution, food scarcity and ocean depletion. According to a recent paper published in Nature Food, global greenhouse gas emissions from animal-based foods are twice as high as those from plant-based foods.

Having said that, one can effectively reduce their carbon footprint by reducing their consumption of animal-based products such as meat, dairy and eggs and adopting a vegan lifestyle. Indeed, the United Nations has stated unequivocally that a global shift toward plant-based foods and veganism are critical components in combating the worst effects of climate change. Do you need any more reasons to go vegan?

VEGANISM IS EQUAL TO TASTE PLUS THE SUSTAINABILITY

Do you think it's dramatic that animal agriculture is being described as 'dark and horrifying'? It is, in fact, and you don't have to travel far to witness people's heinous actions. Snatching infant male calves from their mothers, sending innocent animals to slaughterhouses or worse, and treating animals like machines to produce milk, eggs and a variety of meat, the stench of industrial



farming will never leave humankind.

We won't be able to wash our hands of the blood of innocent animals, but we can put a stop to these atrocities. Consider for a moment that in order for you to have a tasty snack, a happy and pure soul must be sacrificed.

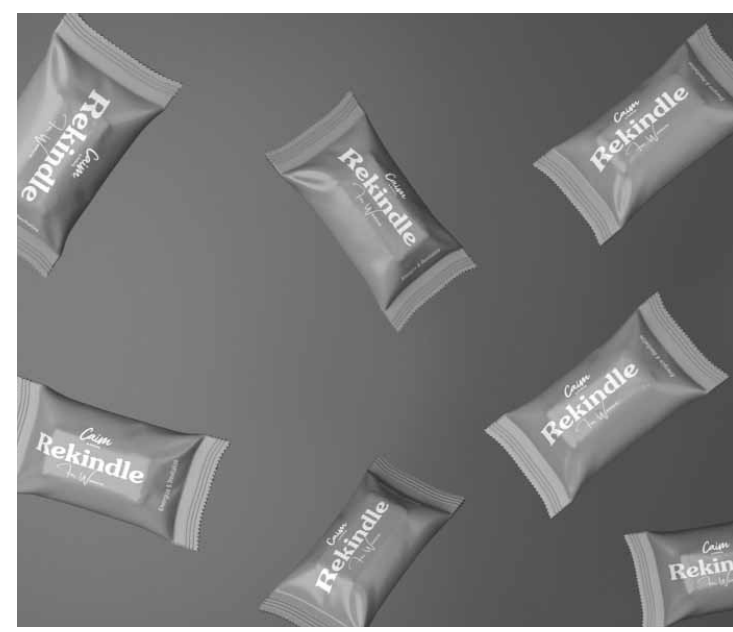
People today can easily adopt veganism without compromising their palate, thanks to the introduction of vegetarian meat

and healthy advances in plant-based food recipes. You can still eat your favourite chicken wings or pork sausages with a plant-based meat twist. These environmentally friendly meat alternatives taste, feel and even cook like traditional meats and can be added to a regular diet as a sustainable alternative.

VEGANUARY: STEPS TOWARDS A BETTER TOMORROW

While veganism has its roots in environmental concerns and animal welfare, its numerous health benefits have also drawn a large number of followers. And, given that most people begin the new year with food-related resolutions, the term 'Veganuary' has gained popularity in recent years. Following the 21-day rule is said to turn any personal or professional goal into a habit.

—IANS



The nutrients we need, in the candies we love

Candyceuticals are the new way to tank up on your body's nutritional requirements, says NIKITA WATERWALLA

A healthy mix of nutrients and vitamins leading to a healthy body is greatly desirable but we are barely able to manage that. Is it solely our fault? Not really. Modern-day lifestyle, stress, and time constraints almost always mean we do not pay enough attention to the food we put into our bodies. Fruits and vegetables are no longer the powerhouses that they once used to be. Add to it genetic modification, insecticides, and pesticides on that list. Rich in nutrients, our ancestors had the best products available that are in stark contrast with what we get today.

That means our bodies are deprived of essentials that would otherwise help them thrive. This, in turn, leads us to consume supplements and pills that sooner or later cease to be a part of our daily routine. At some point in our lives, all of us have taken pills that claim to give us everything we need, hated them, and just accepted our fates.

Humankind has a very specific deficiency that only specific nutrients digested in exact quantities can resolve — not more, not less. Synthetic vitamins and minerals in amounts that are not ideal can never be absorbed correctly by your body. They end up doing more harm than good in addition to putting stress on your liver. It is also important to mention here that the body absorbs nutrients better when you feed it what you enjoy and love eating. If you are one of those nutrition martyrs who eat foods that you do not relish, just because they are 'healthy' for your body, most likely, you are not absorbing as much of the nutrients from those foods. The brain is a powerful thing, and your body is a work of art. A big part of the digestion mechanism is in response to the neurotransmitters or the signals sent by the brain to the rest of your body to ready it for the food it is about to receive. When

you like how your food tastes, your brain is more eager to send messages to the organs to secrete the right proportions of digestive juices to process and absorb it. Think about it, how often do you need to pick up that glass of water to chase down the food that you enjoy eating?

Now that you know that your body absorbs essentials from foods that it enjoys the most, can you imagine what happens when you eat pills? They get washed down with water, diluting your stomach enzymes and thereby diluting their bioavailability. What if we could reimagine daily supplements? What if we could take all these supplements and add them to something that we love to eat?

This is exactly where candyceuticals come into the picture. A revolutionary way to feed your body not only what you enjoy eating, but also what your body can absorb effectively. If we have to put nutritional supplements into the body for absorption, then it should be in the form of something enjoyable. And is there anything more soul-satisfying than confectionery? We think not. Imagine eating a piece of mouth-melting chocolate while getting all those micro and macronutrients that you otherwise would not get. Absolute guilt-free pleasure and stress-free health. Right?

With gummies, chocolate bars, and such, it is easier to give your body all the love that it needs. Being happy and healthy all at the same time is a possibility with these yummy inventions. Although there are a plethora of supplements available in the market, it is important to opt for those that give you your daily dose of vitamins and minerals in monitored and well-researched quantities, in formulations that your body will love eating, so you can truly enjoy the process of making your body whole again.

(The author is the founder, *Caim by ñrelang*.)

R E C I P E S

KESARI MEETHA RICE

WHAT YOU NEED

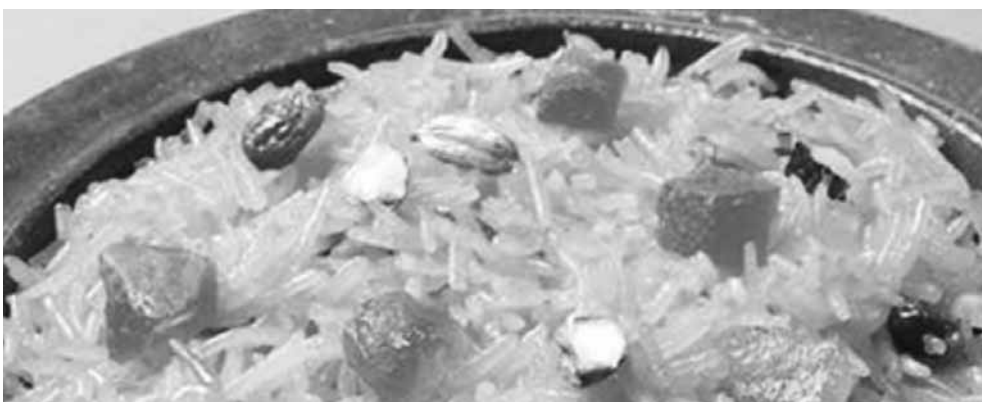
- Cashew nut whole: 50 gm
- Almond: 50 gm
- Raisins: 50 gm
- Cardamom powder: 10 gm
- Saffron: 1 gm
- Basmati rice: 1 kg
- Sugar: 300 gm
- Desi ghee: 200 gm

METHOD

- In a *lagan* heat ghee and roast the cashew, almond, raisins.
- Roast to golden brown on low flame and keep aside. In the remaining ghee, add cardamom powder and saffron water.
- Further, add soaked basmati rice and water, cover and cook on medium flame.

- Mix gently, when the rice is half cooked, add sugar, ghee and roasted dry fruits.
- Mix gently, cover and simmer.
- Stir in between to prevent it from burning, cook until the rice is cooked completely, and do not overcook as rice turns mushy.
- Serve hot

Courtesy: Chef Vivek Rana at The Claridges, New Delhi



INDIAN CONSOMME

WHAT YOU NEED

- Vegetable stock: 500 ml
- Ginger: 20 gm
- Garlic: 15 gm
- Cloves: 2 gm
- Cinnamon stick: 2 gm
- Lemon: 1
- Black pepper: 5 gm
- Basil (*tulasi*): 5 gm
- Salt to taste
- Coriander seeds: 2 gm
- Caraway seeds (*ajwain*): 2 gm
- Cumin seeds: 2 gm

METHOD

- Take a soup pot, put it on the stove and keep it on medium flame. First add vegetable stock to it followed by adding chopped ginger, roasted garlic, cloves and cinnamon.
- After 30 seconds, add cinnamon, black pepper, *ajwain* and cumin seeds to the pot. Let all the spices boil on low flame for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Add basil and let it boil for five more minutes. Later, add salt as per your taste preference.
- Strain the liquid and serve hot.

KOBARI KORALU PAYASAM

WHAT YOU NEED

- Koralu (fox tail millets): 125 gm
- Fresh coconut milk: 300 ml
- Jaggery: 125 gm
- Pistachio: 20 gm
- Almond: 20 gm
- Cinnamon stick: 5 gm
- Ghee: 30 ml

METHOD

- Take a bowl. Add the foxtail millets to



- it and soak for one hour.
- Strain the millets, take a pot and add

MILLETS STEW (CHIRU DHANYALU JAVA)

WHAT YOU NEED

- Ragi (finger millet): 50 gm
- *Jonnalu* (great millet): 50 gm
- Koralu (browntop millet): 50 gm
- *Gantlu* (pearl millet): 50 gm
- Lemon: 1
- Ghee: 50 ml
- Cashew nuts: 30 gm
- Salt to taste

METHOD

- Take a pan. Add all millets to it and roast them on low heat for 10 to 15



- minutes.
- Once the millets are roasted transfer them to a bowl for cooling.

ghee to it. Cook the ghee on medium flame.

- Add cinnamon stick and millets to it. Cook it for another 10 minutes.
- Add water and cook it on low flame for 30 minutes
- Add jaggery to it and cook it until the mixture becomes thick.
- Add pistachio and almond to the mixture.
- Add coconut milk and cook the mixture for five minutes and serve hot.

- When the roasted mixture has reached room temperature, grind and make a fine powder
- Now, take a pot and add water and salt.
- Once the water has reached the boiling point, add the powder to it and mix well to avoid any lumps on a low flame.
- Take another pan, add ghee and cashews. Roast and mix until the mixture turns golden brown.
- Cook all together for 10 more minutes and serve hot with lemon.

Courtesy: G. Ravi Kiran, sous chef at The Bheemili Resort managed by Accor

ABOUT TOWN

SUNDAY BRUNCH AT 1911

The Sunday brunch at 1911 Restaurant is back, featuring a bouquet of global flavours at The Imperial New Delhi. As family eating-out tradition slowly sees revival, the brunch features classic international cuisines in a historic setting, overlooking verdant gardens. Lazy Sunday afternoons filled with some heartwarming conversations with loved ones over a delicious spread is what the brunch offers to the guests. The Sunday Brunch at 1911 restaurant includes individually done starters and salads in small dainty portions and specially crafted healthy delights. There are home-cured and preserved cold meats, home-smoked duck, hand-made pasta made live and filled with the goodness of whole wheat, sugar-free desserts, dainty French pastry — eclairs, mille-feuille and more. It also features a selection of antipasti, Mediterranean mezze selection/shawarma, live Sunday roast carvery, live grills, barbecue (seasonal), international cheese selection, international breads including gluten-free options, international selection of hot delicacies including French and Italian classics and a selection of hot Indian dishes from pan India. **Price:** ₹3,499/- All inclusive per person without alcohol **Date and Timings:** Every Sunday, 12 pm-3 pm **Venue:** 1911 Restaurant, The Imperial New Delhi



New-look Barcelona attack takes on Atlético's shaky defense

Struggling to score since the exits of Lionel Messi and Antoine Griezmann last summer, Barcelona went shopping during the January transfer window and brought in three forwards from the English Premier League

Torres has already played three matches for Barcelona, while Aubameyang and Traoré could make their debut against Atlético.

"I hope on Sunday I can show all my talent on the field," said Traoré, who came up through Barcelona's youth academy.

"I have grown physically, I have more experience, and I have played in another league that is more physical and faster. But I have never lost the essence of Barça."

Now it falls on coach Xavi Hernández to figure out how to fit his new players into an already large squad that earlier in the season featured Memphis Depay and Ansu Fati in attack before they were injured.

Barcelona is used to dueling with Real Madrid for the league's most potent attack but ranks seventh for scoring this season.

Xavi has had to be creative in forming his front lines.

Depay, who leads Barcelona with eight goals, and the 19-year-old Fati, the player the club is hoping can be a future star, are both out with nagging muscle injuries. In their place have been a mix of youths from Barcelona's reserve team including Ferran Jutglà, Abde Ezzalzouli and Ilias Akhomach and



the scarcely used Luuk de Jong. De Jong took full advantage of finally getting a chance to play, scoring three goals in four appearances.

Even so, the club wanted to give Xavi more weapons up front, especially after contract renewal negotiations broke

down with star signing Ousmane Dembélé.

Xavi hoped to rely heavily on Dembélé until the winger and club fell out over his refusal to accept its offer of a new contract before his current deal expires in June. The club told Dembélé

to seek a transfer during January but he declined all offers. Now Xavi has to decide whether to play a player who looks certain to leave come summer.

The arrivals of Torres and Traoré, who can both play on the right wing, could mean Dembélé's days as a Barcelona player are effectively over.

When Barcelona and Atlético met late last season at Camp Nou it was a key clash in the title fight that was won by the visitor.

This time, the top prize appears to be simply qualifying for next season's Champions League. Atlético is in fourth place, the last qualifying berth, while Barcelona is just one point back in fifth.

Atlético acquired versatile midfielder Daniel Wass from Valencia and left back Reinildo Mandava from Lille in the winter window.

They will try to help Atlético reinforce a defense that normally ranks as the best in Spain but has proven brittle lately. Atlético has only the 11th-best defense of the 20-team league in goals allowed.

Real Madrid has opened up a 14-point gap over defending champion Atlético and the only rival in striking distance is Sevilla, which is four points back in second place.

Madrid hosts Granada on Sunday, a day after Sevilla is at Osasuna.



AP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona's revamped attack will host an Atlético Madrid side seeking to restore its once vaunted defense on Sunday in the Spanish league at Camp Nou.

Struggling to score since the exits of Lionel Messi and Antoine Griezmann last summer, Barcelona went shopping during the January transfer window and brought in three forwards from the English Premier League.

In came former Arsenal striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang as a free agent. Adama Traoré came back to his boyhood club on loan from Wolverhampton, and Ferran Torres was secured on a transfer from Manchester City.

Sania, Bopanna included in TOPS core group till Asiad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian tennis stars Sania Mirza, Rohan Bopanna, Ankita Raina and Ramkumar Ramanathan were on Thursday included in the core group of athletes under the Sports Ministry's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) till the Hangzhou Asian Games later this year.

The decision to include quartet for support under TOPS was taken at a meeting of the Sports Ministry's Mission Olympic Cell after receiving a request from the All India Tennis Association (AITA).

Besides, the MOC also approved Rs 3.62 lakh to teenage archer Manjiri Alone for pur-



chase of a recurve bow set. She won bronze in the 2021 World Archery Youth Championships in Wroclaw, Poland in August

last year. The MOC also sanctioned a proposal worth Rs 4.31 lakh for para pistol shooter Singhraj Adhana, who won a sil-

ver and a bronze in the Paralympic Games in Tokyo, to stay and train at the Karni Singh Shooting Ranges from February 10 to March 25.

The cost includes Rs 2.26 lakh for ammunition for the 25m and 50m events.

According to a statement issued by SAI, coach JP Nautiyal, who is already with Manish Narwal in the Tughlakabad range, will extend his stay by 10 days to assist Singhraj Adhana.

Skeet shooter Gurjot Singh's proposal for ammunition and clay targets worth Rs 2.68 lakh was approved as also teenage air rifle shooter Rudranksh Patil's proposal for equipment worth Rs 1.03 lakh.

Sports Ministry releases financial help of ₹2.54 crore



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Sports Ministry has released financial assistance to the tune of Rs 2.54 crore (2,54,03,910) for athletes and coaches during the period April 2020 till January 2022 under the 'Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund for Sportspersons' (PDUNWFS).

The scheme provides for grant of suitable financial assistance to outstanding sportspersons now living in indigent condition, medical treatment, procurement of

sports equipments, participation in national and international events etc. In a written reply in Rajya Sabha on Thursday, Sports Minister Anurag Thakur said the financial assistance has been provided to 78 athletes, former athletes and coaches, which also includes sportspersons, who have been facing financial difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Assistance under this fund is demand driven and financial help is provided to eligible players based on applications.



India's Winter Olympic contingent COVID-free after manager found negative in retests

PTI ■ BEIJING

A day after testing positive for COVID-19, the manager of India's Winter Olympics contingent, Mohammad Abbas Wani, has returned negative results in two retests conducted in the last 24 hours, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) said on Thursday.

Wani was found COVID-19 positive upon his arrival at the Beijing Airport here on Wednesday. IOA president Narinder Batra said the official has now returned negative in the last two tests.

"The manager of Indian team Mr Abbas Wani tested negative in the 2 tests done on him in last 24 hours. Hence, the entire Indian contingent in Beijing is Covid free," Batra said.

"Thank you Mr Harjinder Singh (Chef de Mission), the Indian Embassy in China and Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for taking care of everyone." Wani is a part of the six-member Indian delegation at the Winter Olympics where Jammu and Kashmir skier Arif Khan is the only athlete from the country to have qualified this time.

Arif will be competing in Slalom and Giant Slalom events during the Games to be held from February 4 to 20. The contingent also includes alpine coach Ludar Chand Thakur, technician Purnan Chand and team official Roop Chand Negi.

An asymptomatic Wani stayed in quarantine in his hotel room before the retests confirmed that he is not infected.

Singh expressed surprise over Wani testing positive after landing as he had taken two vaccine doses besides a booster and obtained a green QR Code to travel to Beijing after clearing the tests before boarding the flight.

Now that the entire contingent has been cleared, the team will take part in Friday's opening ceremony to be held at the Bird's Nest stadium here and focus on the main event, he said.

Djokovic describes his Australia visa ordeal as unfortunate

AP ■ BELGRADE

Novak Djokovic described his detention and deportation from Australia that prevented him from defending his Australian Open title as an "unfortunate event" and thanked the Serbian president for his support.

An 11-day saga over Djokovic's entry visa ended with the Serb being deported for failing to meet Australia's strict COVID-19 vaccination requirements.

The top-ranked tennis star met with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic on Thursday and described the events in Australia as "unexpected, to say the least."

"I wanted to meet with you today because, primarily as a citizen of Serbia, I felt a great need to thank you for great support that you, as the president of Serbia, gave me, as well as all state institutions during the unfortunate events in Australia," Djokovic said.

"Although I was alone in detention, and faced with many problems and challenges, I wasn't feeling lonely. I had huge



support primarily from my family, all of the close people in my life, entire Serbian nation, many people with good intentions from the region and the world."

He did not speak about details of the events in Australia, promising to give his

"version" later. Djokovic's meeting with the increasingly autocratic Vucic drew criticism from some of his fans in the Balkan country, where he is generally considered an icon and a hero.

The critics say Vucic used the event

"I WANTED TO MEET WITH YOU TODAY BECAUSE, PRIMARILY AS A CITIZEN OF SERBIA, I FELT A GREAT NEED TO THANK YOU FOR GREAT SUPPORT THAT YOU, AS THE PRESIDENT OF SERBIA, GAVE ME, AS WELL AS ALL STATE INSTITUTIONS DURING THE UNFORTUNATE EVENTS IN AUSTRALIA," DJOKOVIC SAID.

to boost his popularity ahead of general elections scheduled for April.

The meeting happened a day after Serbia's state prosecutors rejected suggestions voiced by some Western media that Djokovic used a fake positive test for COVID-19 to try to enter Australia.

To enter Australia, Djokovic submitted a positive test issued in Serbia on Dec. 16 for a visa exemption on the grounds that he had recently recovered from the virus.

He is not vaccinated, and the Australian government later decided to cancel his visa and deport Djokovic, saying his presence in Australia could stir anti-vaccination sentiments.

Djokovic's rival, Rafael Nadal, won the Australian Open for a record 21st men's Grand Slam singles title. Djokovic and Roger Federer have 20 major titles.

Vucic praised Djokovic and said he was certain he will beat Nadal and Federer at the coming French Open and Wimbledon — the Grand Slams where Djokovic could also face restrictions if he doesn't get vaccinated

McKennie goal gets US going in frigid 3-0 win

PTI ■ ST PAUL

Weston McKennie and Walker Zimmerman had first-half goals to give the U.S. An early spark on a frigid night and a fresh Christian Pulisic scored after entering in the second half to lead the Americans over Honduras 3-0 in a World Cup qualifying match.

Goalkeeper Matt Turner didn't have to make a single save for the Americans, who emerged from the pandemic-prompted winter session in second place with three matches remaining.

The kickoff temperature was 3 degrees (minus-16 Celsius) with a minus-14 wind chill at a site picked by the U.S. Soccer Federation along with Columbus, Ohio, for optimal home-field advantage over opponents from tropical countries.

The Americans beat El Salvador 1-0 on Thursday, when it was 29 degrees in Ohio and lost 2-0 to host Canada on Sunday in Hamilton, Ontario, when it was 22. The weather in Minnesota was another

Canada leads North and Central America and the Caribbean with 22 points, followed by the U.S. (21), Mexico (18), Panama (17) and Costa Rica (16), with Canada at El Salvador later Wednesday and Mexico hosting Panama.



level of cold, the coldest in U.S. Team history and violating USSF guidelines for safe outdoor play and ending with a 1-degree temperature. "It was freezing out here. I'm

looking forward to getting into the locker room," Pulisic said.

Still, the match was a sellout — an announced crowd of 19,202 — with red-white-and-blue-clad fans

clutching their complimentary hand warmers and however many layers they could find in their closets.

Players wore skin-tight thermal tops and black gloves, but most of

them had bare skin exposed on their knees as they jogged and jumped around on the grass at 3-year-old Allianz Field.

McKennie had on two sets of gloves, peeling off one pair as he came to the bench after being replaced in the 84th minute. The star midfielder scored on a header in the eighth minute, fittingly after joking on a video interview the day before that his big head ought to minimize any discomfort from a frozen ball in the February chill.

That was McKennie's ninth international goal, his second in World Cup qualifying, and it would prove to be enough.

Canada leads North and Central America and the Caribbean with 22 points, followed by the U.S. (21), Mexico (18), Panama (17) and Costa Rica (16), with Canada at El Salvador later Wednesday and Mexico hosting Panama. The top three nations qualify for this year's tournament in Qatar and fourth place advances to a playoff against the Oceania champion, likely New Zealand.

If Panama failed to win at Mexico later, the U.S. Would be in position to clinch with a win over Panama at Orlando, Florida, on March 27 as long as Costa Rica doesn't win its final three games. The Americans also have road games at Mexico on March 24 at Costa Rica on March 30, two places where the U.S. Has never won a qualifier.

After scoring no goals off set pieces in the first 10 qualifiers, the U.S. Scored three.

The second goal developed from a free kick by Kellyn Acosta, who started in the defensive midfield for the first time since the October loss at Panama, whizzed past the head of a leaping Jordan Morris, Zimmerman pivoted around defender Denil Maldonado in the 37th minute.

The ball glanced off Zimmerman's left leg, and he kicked it in with his right from 5 yards for his third international goal. Zimmerman wore the captain's armband for the night.

Skipper Dhull leads India to U-19 World Cup final

PTI ■ OSBOURN

Skipper Yash Dhull gave a glimpse of his rare talent with a well-paced hundred as powerhouse India reached their fourth consecutive U-19 World Cup final with an emphatic 96-run win over Australia here on Wednesday.

Dhull struck a sublime 110 in as many balls and shared a game-changing 204-run stand with his deputy Shaik Rasheed (94 off 108 balls) to fire India to a formidable 290 for five after opting to bat.

Indian bowlers then performed their roles to perfection to bowl Australia out for 194 in 41.5 overs. Lachlan Shaw's fine 51 came too late in the day for Australia.

Pacers Rajvardhan Hangargekar (0/26) and Ravi Kumar (2/37) were impressive in the first powerplay before spinners Nishant Sindhu (2/25), Vicky Ostwal (3/42) and Kaushal Tambe (1/32) dominated the opposition in the middle overs.

The professional bowling performance came after a remarkably

mature knocks from Dhull and Rasheed who was unfortunate to miss out on a hundred.

Record four-time champions India face England in the final on Saturday and will be aiming to extend their dominance in the competition.

Dhull became the third Indian captain to hit a hundred in the tournament history after the illustrious Virat Kohli (2008) and the prodigious Unmukt Chand (2012), who also hail from Delhi.

India, the most successful team in tournament history, were hit by COVID-19 at the start of the competition, losing the likes of Dhull and Rasheed for two games but the depth in the squad ensured that they sailed to the knock-outs.

Chasing a record target, Australia lost their in-form opener Teague Wyllie cheaply with Ravi Kumar trapping him in front off his first legitimate ball with a late inswinger into the right-hander.

Campbell Kellaway (30) and Corey Miller (38) forged a fluent

68-run stand before perishing in a space of six balls, leaving Australia at 73 for three.

Left-arm spinner Ostwal took a return catch for his second wicket to make it 119 for six in 30 overs, shutting the door on the opposition.

Dhull was not just impressive with the bat but also his captaincy.

He introduced part-time offie Raghuvanshi ahead of left-arm spinners.

Raghuvanshi delivered the breakthrough by trapping Miller.

Earlier, India opted to put runs on the board after winning the toss, knowing it wasn't the easiest of pitches to bat on.

Australian pacers bowled well in the opening powerplay and the fact that Indian openers Angkrish Raghuvanshi (6 off 30) and Harnoor Singh (16 off 30) were also overtly cautious, helped them build pressure.

William Salzmann rocked Raghuvanshi's off-stump with a beauty that straightened after

pitching.

Harnoor, who has not met the high expectations he set for himself, tried to pull a rising ball on leg stump from Tobias Snell only to glove it back to the wicketkeeper, leaving India at 37 for two in the 13th over.

India's two best batters, Dhull and Rasheed, then got together to lift the team out of a spot of bother. Playing only their third game of the tournament after missing two due to COVID-19, Rasheed and Dhull showed maturity beyond their age to build the innings.

Dhull got a lot of runs square and behind the square with deft late-cuts off spinners being one of his pet shots.

Rasheed, whose first boundary was an aerial straight drive, ended up with eight fours and a six.

The straight six he hit late in his innings off Jack Nisbet took him into the 90s. His punch shot through the cover off Salzmann was the most attractive shot he played.

The highly rated Dhull played

another sublime knock. The pitch was on the slower side but he rotated the strike at ease before accelerating to pick boundaries at will, collecting 10 fours and a six in total.

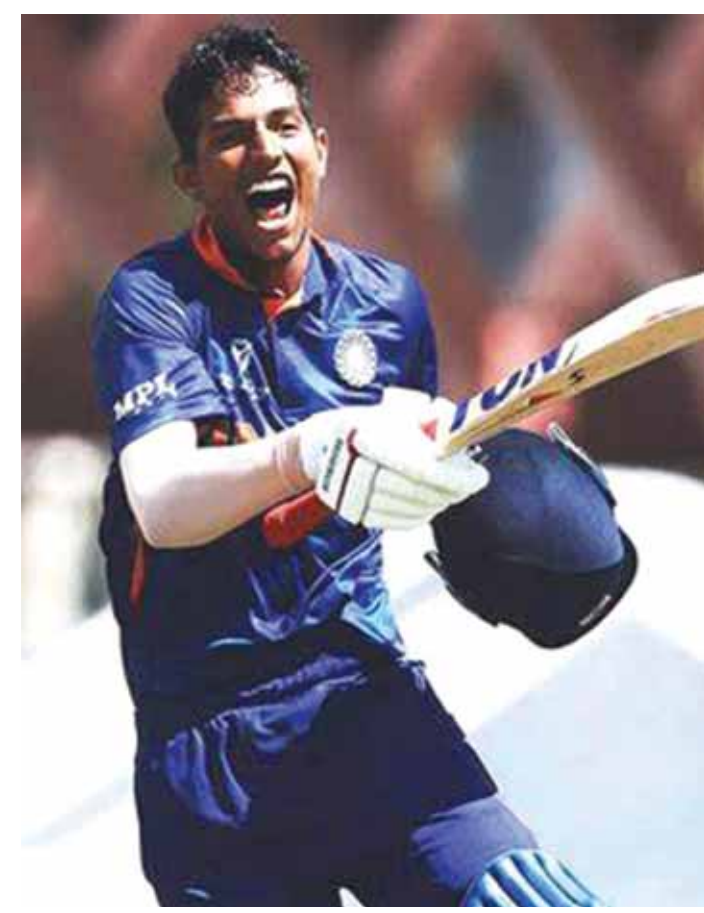
He got to three figures with a two in the 45th over and next ball was a pull shot off Tom Whitney for the second six of the innings.

After Dhull's departure, Rasheed could not get to a deserving hundred after being caught at backward point off Nisbet.

Australia were sloppy in the field through the innings. Rasheed was dropped on 24 and missed an easy run out chance of Dhull who was batting on 74.

With two set batters gone in quick succession, the flow of the innings was slightly disrupted before Nishant Sindhu (12 not out off 10), Dinesh Bana (20 not out off 4 balls) and Rajvardhan Hangargekar (13 off 10) came up with the big shots in the death overs.

Australia leaked as many as 108 runs in the last 10 overs with the 50th over bowled by Tom Whitney going for 27.



Team India starts training, Mayank in mandatory three-day quarantine

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The Indian team's playing squad save the trio of Shikhar Dhawan, Rituraj Gaikwad and Shreyas Iyer started training at the Narendra Modi Stadium after their RT-PCR tests came negative on Thursday.

While Mayank Agarwal has joined the squad, he will only be available on the match day as his mandatory three-day quarantine has started, the team management has kept Ishan Kishan in scheme of things for the ODIs.

India is set to play a three-match ODI series against West Indies here, beginning February 6.

"Today is a light session where the players have been accompanied by trainers," a veteran official in know of things told PTI.

It is also learnt that wicket-keeper batsman Ishan Kishan, who is a specialist opener, has been added to the ODI squad.

A COVID-19 outbreak had hit the Indian cricket team on Wednesday as three main players -- senior opener



Dhawan, reserve opener Gaikwad and middle-order batter Shreyas had tested positive for the virus during their mandatory isolation period before the start of West Indies series.

Four other persons, including net bowler Navdeep Saini, have also tested positive for COVID-19. Saini is also on the standby list.

The remaining three who tested positive for the virus are non-playing members -- fielding coach T Dilip, security liaison officer B Lokesh and masseur Rajeev Kumar.

The Indian team assembled in Ahmedabad on January 31 for the upcoming white-ball series against the West Indies and were going through a three-day isolation period post their break from the South Africa series.

The series starts in Ahmedabad on February 6 with India's 1000th ODI match but it is now a foregone conclusion that the trio -- Dhawan, Rituraj and Shreyas -- will be missing the series as they will have to undergo a week-long isolation and then return with two negative RT-PCR tests.

India women cricketers happy to get 'breathing space' in quarantine

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Members of the Indian women's cricket team are able to exercise and "breathe" during the mandatory Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) in New Zealand.

The team members, who had to undergo a punishing 14-day hard quarantine in Australia back in September-October, are finding the MIQ in Christchurch much more comfortable.

The quarantine facility has rooms big enough to accommodate fitness equipment and some of them also have balconies.

The players were put up in tiny rooms of a quarantine hotel in Australia. The team had undergone a week of hard quarantine in Mumbai before its departure for New Zealand on January 24.

"The players are comfortable in MIQ. The team will start training in the nets after the completion of quarantine on Saturday.



The fact there are balconies attached with the rooms make a huge difference," said a BCCI official.

"The food served in rooms is also good but the players are not allowed to meet each other," the official added.

To reduce the COVID-19 risk, one off T20 and five ODIs between India and New Zealand have been moved to Queenstown.

The series begins February 9 with the T20 and has been scheduled ahead of the ODI World Cup in March-April.

The series against New Zealand before the World Cup will give India valuable time to get used to the "windy conditions".

India, who finished runners-up in the last edition five years ago, are expected to go all way this time.



Australia retains women's Ashes with 2 ODIs to spare

AP ■ CANBERRA

Australia retained the women's Ashes after beating England in the first one-day international of the multi-format series on Thursday.

England required victories in all three ODIs to win the Ashes but lost by 27 runs in Canberra after getting dismissed for 178, needing 206 to win.

Australia took an 8-4 points lead in the series and cannot be beaten, with each of the remaining two ODIs earning two points for the winner.

The Australians have held the Ashes since the 2013-14 winter.

Australia won the only match to be completed of the scheduled three Twenty20s. The one-off test was drawn.

England can still draw the series with two wins in the remaining ODIs.

Australia also won the men's Ashes last month.

Pujara-Rahane set to get Ranji Trophy lifeline

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The February 10 start for Ranji Trophy has offered a lifeline to veterans Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane to get their Test career back on track.

With Test series against Sri Lanka set to be played from first week of March after the T20s starting February 25, a big hundred in the Ranji Trophy will provide the confidence that they need and probably ensure that they retain their place in the Indian team.

The Elite group games will start from February 16 after the Plate group matches begin from February 10 and both under-fire seniors will get two matches at least to convince the selectors.

Both seasoned batters have already started training with the Mumbai and Saurashtra squad respectively and are determined to score the big runs that are expected of them.

In fact, both will be in opposite teams if they are part of the crucial Saurashtra-Mumbai fixture in Ahmedabad.

"Ajinkya is definitely looking forward to it. We have met a few times now, he has been practising with the Mumbai team. He has had about couple of sessions already. Looked



absolutely in fine touch," Mumbai coach Amol Mjumdar told PTI.

"We don't have to look too much into the future but what is lying ahead of us is Ranji Trophy. They both are due for a big one. I feel it is just a question of confidence. Sometimes batting is nothing but confidence.

"If you can regain that confidence somehow. It will come only if you score a big hundred," added Mjumdar.

BCCI president Sourav Ganguly also expects Pujara and Rahane to pile on the runs

in the premier domestic competition.

Their prolonged inconsistent run has divided opinions with many saying it is time for the younger lot to replace them in the middle-order.

The calls have only gotten louder following the loss in South Africa.

While Rahane has been working hard in the Mumbai nets, Pujara on Thursday had his first session with defending champions Saurashtra at the SCA Stadium in Rajkot.

Pujara batted for 90 min-

Giles steps down from England role after Ashes series

AP ■ LONDON

One of the leaders of English cricket has stepped down following the humiliating Ashes series in Australia.

Ashley Giles, managing director of the England men's team, is leaving after three years in the role. Former test captain Andrew Strauss will take over on an interim basis.

England lost 4-0 in the Ashes series.

"Off the back of a disappointing men's Ashes this winter, we must ensure we put in place the conditions across our game to enable our test team to succeed," said Tom Harrison, the England and Wales Cricket Board's chief executive.

Under Giles, England won the 50-over Cricket World Cup



for the first time but has had a turbulent time in the test format, with the ECB's focus seemingly having been on white-ball cricket. "The past couple of years have been incredibly challenging and

I'm proud of what we've been able to deliver in the toughest of circumstances," said Giles, a former England test spinner.

"This has undoubtedly protected the future of the game in England and Wales."

Ranji Trophy first phase from Feb 10, knockouts from May 30

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The first phase of the much-anticipated Ranji Trophy will take place from February 10 to March 15 before the premier domestic event takes a break during the IPL and resumes from May 30 to June 26 for the knockouts, BCCI secretary Jay Shah informed state units on Thursday.

Shah's letter made it clear that it is set to be one of the shortest first-class seasons with most teams getting to play only three matches which effectively means that increased match fees will not have an impact on most of the teams that will be ousted at the group league stage.

As PTI reported earlier, four teams each have been divided into eight elite groups while the remaining six form the plate division.



The new pay slabs offer those who have played 40-plus games Rs 60,000 per day, a significant hike from the previous Rs 35,000 per day scale.

Those with experience of 21 to 40 matches will get Rs 50,000 per day.

The tournament will have 64 games in 62 days with the first phase comprising 57 matches and the second

stage having seven knock-out games, including four quarter-finals, two semi-finals and the final.

The elite group matches will be played in Rajkot, Cuttack, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Trivandrum, Delhi, Haryana and Guwahati. Plate league matches will be held in Kolkata, requiring nine bio-secure bubbles for nine

venues.

Each team from elite group, barring one, will qualify for the quarter-finals.

The lowest ranked qualified team from elite group will play the plate toppers in the sole pre-quarterfinal.

The tournament was cancelled for the first time ever last season and this year, the third wave of COVID-19 forced the BCCI to postpone the scheduled start of January 13.

The last red ball game in the country took place in March 2020.

In his letter to state units, Shah wrote: "I am pleased to share that we are now truly set to resume both international and domestic cricket with full thrust. We have waited patiently for the grip of the pandemic to loosen and the time has come for our cricketers to take centre stage all over again.

ORISSA SPONGE IRON & STEEL LIMITED
(Formerly Orissa Sponge Iron Limited)
(An ISO 9001 & 14001 Certified Company)
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Notice of Extra-Ordinary General Meeting, Book Closure and E-Voting Information
Notice is hereby given that the Extra-Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the Company is scheduled to be held on Saturday, 26th February, 2022 at 3.00 P.M. through Video Conference ("VC")/Other Audio Visual Means ("OAVM") to transact the business mentioned in the Notice convening the EGM.

The EGM will be held only through VC/OAVM in compliance with the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 and circulars dated April 08, 2020, April 13, 2020, May 05, 2020, June 15, 2020, September 28, 2020, December 31, 2020, January 13, 2021 and June 23, 2021, issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and SEBI Circular dated May 12, 2020 and January 15, 2021. Facility for appointment of proxy will not be available for the EGM. The instructions for joining the EGM electronically are provided in the Notice of the EGM.

In compliance with the relevant circulars, Notice of the EGM along with Explanatory Statement has been sent only through electronic mode on 3rd February, 2022 to those Members whose e-mail addresses are registered with the Company or CDSL/NSDL ("Depositories"). The said Notice are also available on the Company's website www.orissaspange.com.

Members who have not registered their email addresses and in consequence the Notice of EGM and e-voting instructions could not be serviced, may get their email address and mobile number registered with the Company's Registrar and Share Transfer Agent, Skyline Financial Services Private Limited (RTA) by sending an e-mail request to RTA at the email at: info@skylinert.com along with scanned copy of the signed request letter providing the email address, mobile number, self-attested PAN copy and Client Master copy in case of electronic folio and copy of share certificate in case of physical folio for obtaining the Notice of EGM and the e-voting instructions.

National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) has authorized for conducting of the EGM electronically and for providing e-voting facility. The remote e-voting period will commence from 23rd February, 2022 (9:00 a.m. IST) and ends on 25th February, 2022 (5:00 p.m. IST). During this period the eligible shareholders of the Company, holding shares either in physical form or in dematerialized form, may cast their vote electronically. The e-voting module will be disabled for voting thereafter i.e. voting shall not be allowed beyond 5:00 p.m. on 25th February, 2022. The Members who have casted their vote by remote e-voting prior to the EGM may also attend/participate in the EGM through VC/OAVM but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again.

The cut-off date for determining the eligibility of members for voting through remote e-voting and e-voting at the EGM is 18th February, 2022. Any person, who becomes a member of the Company after the dispatch of Notice and holding shares as on cut-off date, may obtain the login ID and password by sending a request to RTA at info@skylinert.com to cast his/her vote. The detailed procedure for obtaining the login ID and password and exercising e-voting is provided in the Notice of EGM.

In case of any queries, you may refer the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Shareholders and e-voting user manual for Shareholders available at the download section of www.evoting.nsdl.com or call on toll free no.: 1800-222-990 or send a request to Ms. Pallavi Mhatre, Manager, NSDL at evoting@nsdl.co.in or pallavi@nsdl.co.in or at telephone nos. +91 22 24994545 or Registrar and Transfer Agents viz., Skyline Financial Services Private Limited, New Delhi (Tel. No. +91 11 40450193-97).

The results of voting on the resolutions set out in the Notice of the EGM shall be declared within 48 hours of conclusion of the EGM. The results declared along with the report of the Scrutinizer shall be placed on the website of the Company www.orissaspange.com and on the website of NSDL immediately after the declaration of result by the Chairman or a Director authorized by him.

Notice is further given pursuant to Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 10 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rule, 2014 and Regulation 42 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the Register of Members and the Share Transfer Books of the Company will remain closed from Friday, 18th February, 2022 to Saturday, 26th February, 2022, (both days inclusive) for the purpose of EGM.

For Orissa Sponge Iron and Steel Limited
Sd/
Darpan Sharma
Company Secretary

Place: Orissa
Date: 3rd February, 2022