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WORLD 5
UKRAINE TENSIONS: RUSSIA TOUGHENS ITS POSTURE

MONEY 6
TAAI SEEKS 'ONE INDIA ONE TOURISM' APPROACH IN BUDGET

SPORT 7
SINDHU ENTERS FINAL OF SYED MODI

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EC extends poll rallies ban till Jan 31

Public meetings with 500 people for Ph 1 allowed from January 28

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the third wave of Covid-19 in the country, the Election Commission (EC) on Saturday extended the ban on physical political rallies, roadshows, pad-yatras, cycle and bike rallies and processions till January 31 in five poll-bound States — Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Manipur, Punjab and Uttarakhand.

This is the second time the commission has extended the ban after the first one was announced on January 15 and the second on January 22. The poll panel also increased the five-person limit for door-to-door campaigning to 10 and allowed video vans for publicity at designated open spaces with coronavirus restrictions.

"No roadshow, padyatra, cycle/bike/vehicle rally and procession shall be allowed till January 31, 2022," the EC said. The decision was taken following a virtual meeting to take stock of the Covid-19 situation with all stakeholders, including the Union Health Secretary, Chief Electoral Officers, Chief Secretaries, and State Health Secretaries of the five poll-bound States.

"Since contesting candidates for Phase 1 elections will be finalised on January 28, 2022, the commission has decided to allow physical public meetings of political parties or contesting candidates in designated open spaces with a maximum of 500 people or 50 per cent of the capacity of the ground or the prescribed limit set by State Disaster Management Authorities, whichever number is lesser, from January 28, 2022, till February 8, 2022 (excluding the silence period)," it added.

The EC said that limit of five persons for door to door campaign has been enhanced to 10 people, excluding security personnel and video vans for publicity permitted at designated open spaces with Covid restrictions.

Cong 'new avatar'! 70% fresh faces in UP polls

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Making a conscious effort to shun the old baggage and present her party in a "new avatar" in Uttar Pradesh, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has hand-picked over 70 per cent new faces among the total 166 candidates for the high-stakes State Assembly election.

Besides sticking to her promise of 40 per cent women candidates, Priyanka has overwhelmingly given a chance to debutants with an aim to build a new leadership in the Hindi heartland, which had slipped from the party hands in recent years.

Of the total 166 names declared so far by the Congress, 119 candidates will be making their electoral debut, party spokesman Anshu Awasthi told PTI. With the candidature of Sangeeta Tyagi, wife of party leader late Rajiv Tyagi, from Sahibabad seat, Priyanka has made an earnest effort to break the mould and create new leadership in the century-old party which has faded into political oblivion.

Akhilesh to fight from home turf

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party on Saturday confirmed that party chief Akhilesh Yadav will contest the Assembly poll, his first, from Karhal constituency in Mainpuri district, which is in his family's home turf.

Karhal has voted for Samajwadi Party candidates in every election since 1993, except in 2002, when the BJP wrested it. It returned to the SP in 2007 and is currently held by Sobaran Yadav.

By contesting from Karhal, the current and long-time Lok Sabha seat of his father Mulayam Singh Yadav, Akhilesh is trying to secure his party's fortress of the Yadav belt where the BJP has made inroads.

Buoyed by the success of the huge turnout in Vijay Rath Yatra, Akhilesh had decided not to contest the Assembly election and concentrate on campaigning. Two events, however, forced him to change the strategy — ban of campaigning by the EC (now extended till January 30) due to the third wave of Covid-19 pandemics, and BJP deciding to field Yogi Adityanath from Gorakhpur.

In a loud and clear message to the electorate that the BJP is leading the battle from the front, the saffron party announced Yogi's name in the very first list of its candidates even when the polling in Gorakhpur will be held in the sixth phase of election on March 3.

Karhal constituency has a high population of Yadavs. The SP won it in 2017 with a margin of more than 38,000 votes despite the BJP wave in the State. Karhal town is just a 15-minute drive from the Yadav family's native village, Saifai, in the Etawah district. With Akhilesh taking the plunge into Assembly elections, the SP is trying to send a larger message in the entire Yadav belt from Firozabad to Kannauj to rally behind the party in these elections.

Shivpal to contest polls on SP ticket

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Akhilesh Yadav's uncle Shivpal Yadav on Saturday announced that he will be contesting the upcoming assembly elections from his old seat Jaswantnagar. Shivpal said he will be contesting on SP's ticket instead of his own party Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party.

Omicron not last variant: WHO

3,37,704 Covid-19 cases, 488 deaths in 24 hrs in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From one case on December 2 last year, the Omicron tally in the country has crossed the 10,000-mark! India recorded a total of 3,37,704 Covid-19 new cases of the novel coronavirus, along with 488 deaths due to the infection in the past 24 hours. India's daily Covid cases have remained over 3 lakh for the 3rd day in a row.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that "to suggest that Omicron will be the last variant is unwise…this virus is circulating at a very intense level around the Earth globe and it's still evolving… Absolutely critical we continue to track, monitor & assess variants".

"We're hearing a lot of people suggest that #Omicron is the last variant & that it's over after this and that is not the case... This virus is circulating at a very intense level around the world," said Maria Van Kerkhove, infectious disease epidemiologist; Covid-19 Technical Lead of the WHO.

"We must keep working to reduce Covid-19 transmission," she added.

According to the data shared by the Union Health Ministry, the country saw a total of 2,42,676 discharges in the last 24 hours, taking the total recovery rate at around 93.50 per cent, and total recoveries data reached to 3,63,01 482.

The total active cases of Covid-19 in India have risen to 21,13,365, the Ministry data showed today. The total death toll in the country is now at 4,88,884. In India, the first death due to the Covid pandemic was reported in March 2020.

Additionally, the tally of Omicron cases reached 10,050 on Saturday with an increase of 3.69 per cent since yesterday. The daily positivity rate is at 17.22 per cent today.

Workers pack Covid-19 home isolation kits at Victory playground in Hyderabad on Saturday. Nearly 1 crore kits will be packed and sent across Telangana PTI

60% Goa MLAs disloyal: ADR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Goa's MLAs who were elected in the 2017 Assembly polls do not seem to have any allegiances to the party which fielded them in the elections. As many as 24 MLAs in Goa, which is 60 per cent of the 40-member Assembly, shifted their loyalties in the last five years, the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) said in a report.

Goa has set a unique record, which is "unparalleled" in the history of Indian democracy. Assembly polls in Goa will be held on February 14.

"In the five-year tenure of the current Assembly (2017-2022), as many as 24 MLAs have changed their parties, which is 60 per cent of the total strength of the House. It has never happened anywhere else in India. A clear reflection of utter disrespect to the mandate of voters. A callous approach to ethics and discipline overborne by uncontrolled greed at its worst," the report stated.

It said the list of 24 MLAs did not include the names of Vishwajit Rane, Subhash Shirodkar, and Dayanand Sopte, who had resigned as Congress MLAs in 2017, and joined the ruling BJP, before contesting polls on its tickets.

At least 10 Congress legislators had crossed over to the BJP in 2019. They included the then leader of opposition Chandrakant Kavlekar (Quepem constituency).

Goa ex-CM Laxmikant Parsekar to quit BJP

New Delhi: Former Goa CM Laxmikant Parsekar to quit the BJP. He said, "I was a member of BJP for years but the party took me for granted. I have prepared to dissociate myself from the BJP and have decided to contest independently. I will come out with this declaration in a couple of days."

COVID IN MADHYA PRADESH

Cities	Fresh Cases	Total cases
Bhopal	2107	140959
Indore	3169	180179
Gwalior	586	51026

Gandhi's favourite 'Abide with Me' left off Beating Retreat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mahatma Gandhi's favourite tune "Abide With Me" will not figure in this year's Beating the Retreat Ceremony on Rajpath on January 29.

This hymn played at the annual ceremony since 1950 was omitted in 2020 but was included later following criticism from various quarters.

Incidentally, this development on Saturday came a day after a political slugfest over the shifting of the Amar Jawan Jyoti from the India Gate to the newly constructed National War Memorial (NWM).

Veterans and Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi said the extinguishing of the Amar Jawan Jyoti was an insult to the fallen soldiers. However, the Government refuted the charge and said the flame was not extinguished and instead merged into the eternal flame at the NWM.

"Abide With Me" is a hymn that was written by Scottish Anglican Henry Francis Lyte in 1847 while battling tuberculosis. It is a prayer urging God to remain with the speaker through life and in death.

A favourite of Gandhiji, this tune is played at the end of the Beating the Retreat ceremony at Vijay Chowk every year. The Retreat, an ancient military tradition, signals the end of fighting for the day, with soldiers sheathing arms and withdrawing from the battlefield. The hymn is set to the tune of Eventide by William Henry Monk.

This year's ceremony will begin with "Fanfare" by Buglers, followed by "Veer Sainik" by the Massed Bands and six tunes by the Pipes and Drums band. Bands of the Central Armed Police Forces will play three tunes, followed by four tunes by the Air Force Band, which will include a special "Ladakoo" tune, by Flight Lt L S Rupachandra.

CAPSULE

60% DEATHS IN 3RD WAVE AMONG UNVACCINATED

New Delhi: A study by a private hospital has said that 60 per cent of the patients who died during the current wave of Covid-19 pandemic were either partially or fully unvaccinated. The study by Max Healthcare said the deaths reported were largely among those aged over 70 and those suffering from multiple co-morbidities such as kidney diseases, heart diseases, diabetes, cancers, etc.

RAPE ACCUSED SHOT DEAD OUTSIDE COURT

Gorakhpur: A rape accused was shot dead in front of the district courts here on Friday. The deceased has been identified as Dilshad Hussain, a resident of Muzaffarpur (Bihar). Two security guards and the vehicle stand manager nabbed attacker.

Light to heavy rainfall witnessed in parts of MP

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Several areas witnessed rainfall on Saturday; cloud cover which prevailed from morning poured late in the afternoon in the state capital. Bhopal would witness partial cloudy condition and thundery activities in the next 24 hours.

According to warning issued by Met department thundery activities and lightening would be witnessed in Bhopal, Sehore, Rajgarh, Hoshangabad, Neemuch, Mandsaur, Agar, Shajapur, Umaria, Katni and Jabalpur districts.

For the past two days, day temperatures soared providing relief from harsh weather conditions and abrupt rainfall was witnessed on Saturday. The Met department issued rain alert in the state. Light rain was witnessed in Gwalior and Ratlam.

Light to heavy rain may occur at isolated places in 17 districts of the state till evening. The wind speed could be witnessed around 40 km per hour in some parts of the state making weather conditions cold. Light rain and drizzle may occur at some places in the state for the next 24 hours.

The coldest day on Friday was in Bhind, Gwalior, Chattarpur and Shivpuri. The day temperature remained below 21 degree Celsius. In Bhopal and Indore the day temperature dipped below 26 degrees Celsius.

A cyclonic circulation is active over North Bangladesh. The winds over North Pakistan are in the form of a cyclonic activity. A trough is passing over Central Rajasthan and a trough is passing over Bay of Bengal. The effect of the arrival of winds from Pakistan will remain in the next 24 hours also.

COVID-19

Kerala logs over 45K new cases in 24 hrs

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

There was no respite in Kerala during the last 24 hours that ended 6 pm Saturday as 45,136 persons were diagnosed with Covid-19 out of 1,00, 735 samples tested, said Veena George, health minister of the State. The death doll till date reached 51,739. The minister also disclosed that there has been a hike of 201 per cent in the number of patients afflicted with the pandemic compared to last week. Test Positivity Rate in the State was 44.8 per cent as on Saturday evening,

Though the situation in the State remained grave and critical, the health minister said that Kerala continued to be performing well in controlling the transmission of the pandemic. "Ours is the number one State in the country with the highest rate of vaccination per million. The Government has administered 1.41 million vaccinations for every million population," said George.

But medical doctors are of the view that the number of persons diagnosed with Covid-19 each day could be five times than that of the official figures. "You find out the number of Home Covid Detection Kits sold in the State. That will give you a true figure," said Dr Rajiv Pillai, senior physician, keeping track of the transmission of the pandemic in his personal capacity.

A Government doctor said the delay in declaring the State out of bounds for people from other States is due to the fear of the Government losing out tourists to other States. "Most of the resorts and hotel bookings have been canceled due to the spurt in the number of Covid-19 cases. The traders are exerting pressure on the government from tightening the rules," said a tourism executive.

Though there has been fear about the surge in spread of the pandemic in the State, life continues to be normal except for the ambulances transporting patients to the hospitals.

Maha witnesses further 3K drop, reports 46,393 cases

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a drop in the number of daily infections, Maharashtra on Saturday recorded 46,393 Covid-19 cases as against 48,270 cases on Friday, even as the pandemic infections went down further to 3,568 cases as against 5,008 and 5,708 registered respectively on Friday and Thursday.

Maharashtra recorded as many as 416 Omicron cases on Saturday, taking the total number of the new Covid-19 variant cases in the state to 2,759. Of the cases recorded on Friday, Mumbai accounted for a maximum 321 cases, followed by Nagpur (62), Pune Municipal Corporation (13), Wardha (12) and Amravati (6). Bhandara and Nashik recorded one Omicron case each.

A day after Maharashtra recorded 48,270 cases, the number of daily infections in the state dropped by 1,877 cases to touch a daily tally of 46,393 cases. With fresh infections, the total number of Covid-19 cases in the state went up from 73,71,757 cases to 74,66,420.

The Covid-19 claimed 48 lives in the state on Friday, as against 52 deaths recorded on Friday. With the latest deaths, the total number of deaths recorded in the state went up from 1,42,023 to 1,42,071.

Mumbai, where the Covid-190 situation has been improving for the past one week, witnessed a further drop in the fresh Covid-19 cases from 5,008 cases recorded on Friday. With the fresh recorded on Friday, the total Covid-19 cases rose from 10,28,715 cases to 10,32.283.

As 30,795 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 70,09,823 cases to 70,40,618. The recovery rate in the state dropped from 94.47 per cent to 94.30 per cent.

The number of "active cases" in the state increased from 2,79,930 cases. The fatality rate in the state dropped from 1.91 per cent to 1.91 per cent.

In a disturbing development, the active cases in Pune shot up further to 83,507 cases against 78,846 cases recorded on Thursday.

Slight progress seen in Lata didi's health, still in ICU in Mumbai hosp

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

There was a 'slight' improvement in the health of legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, who has been undergoing treatment for Covid-19 and pneumonia at the Breach Candy Hospital for the past 14 days.

Dr Pratit Samdhani, who is attending to her at the hospital, said: " Lata Mangeshkar is still in the ICU ward but there has been a slight improvement in her health today".

"Lata Didi is showing signs of improvement from before and is under treatment in the ICU from the amazing team of doctors spearheaded by Dr Pratit Samdani. We are looking forward to and praying for her speedy recovery and return to her home, "close family friend Anusha Srinivasan Iyer said.

Lata Mangesh was admitted to the Breach and Candy Hospital on January 8.

Operation Snow Leopard is not over: Lt Gen Joshi

PNS ■ JAMMU

Sending out a stern message to China, Lt Gen Y K Joshi Saturday affirmed that 'Operation Snow Leopard' is not over and that it was still on. The General Officer-Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), was speaking at the northern command's investiture ceremony at its headquarters in Udhampur.

Speaking on the occasion, the Army Commander also maintained that 2021 was a watershed year for the Armed Forces wherein they displayed boldness in standing up to the aggressive designs on the LC and LAC. He further added that there has been a reduction in terrorist related incidents, stone pelting activities and protests as a result of tireless efforts of the security forces and the people of J&K.

On the occasion he presented GOC-in-C's appreciation to 40 units and GOC-in-C's 'Certificates of Appreciation' to 26 units for their 'outstanding' and 'distinguished' performance in the command theatre.

The GOC-in-C's Appreciation was given to units for their performance in Operation Meghdoot, Operation Rakshak, Operation Northern Borders, and other operations.

The GOC-in-C's Certificates of Appreciation were given to units involved in Operation Snow Leopard, which was launched after China refused to move back and restore the status quo ante in eastern Ladakh.

"The importance of both the union territories of J&K and Ladakh is well known and we have played our role as far as the security of this region is concerned with full dedication and devotion and are maintaining our complete dominance, whether it is Line of Control, Line of Actual Control (LAC), Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) and International Border (IB)," the army commander said in his address.

He said the brave soldiers of the northern command foiled the aggressive designs of the enemy.

Referring to the developments in Ladakh in the wake of Chinese aggression, he said disengagement with People's Liberation Army (PLA) was completed from various areas in a peaceful manner and effortsare on through dialogue for disengagement from other areas. However, the troops are maintaining alertness on the snow-bound peaks, he said. On counter-insurgency campaign undertaken under Operation Rakshak, he said the people of Kashmir have rejected terrorism, separatism, and gun culture, and after many years, the number of terrorists has gone below 200 in the valley which is a "big achievement". "The ceasefire along the LoC has provided relief to the border residents. But the attempts of infiltration of terrorists is goingon, which are being foiled by our alert security personnel," he said.

He congratulated local police, the CRPF, and other agencies for their role in counter-insurgency operations. Joshi said technology is being used to assist the troops in keepingvigil and maintaining security. "We are fully inducting state-of-the-art technology in ourarmy," he said.

Haryana to showcase its sporting prowess on Jan 26

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

On the Republic Day this year, the tableau of Haryana will showcase the sporting prowess of the state on the theme of 'Haryana-Number One in Sports', in which several international level sports persons will be present.

Officials said that it is a matter of great privilege and honour that sportspersons from Haryana, a state with only 1.3 percent geographical area and 2.09 percent population of the country, have participated in many national and international sports competitions, including the prestigious Olympic Games and brought laurels to the country.

"Out of a total of 7 medals won by India in Tokyo Olympics-2020, Haryana sports persons won medals, including the lone gold medal in individual category. As a token of honour, the Haryana Government honoured the sportspersons of the state who participated in the Tokyo Olympics with a cash prize of Rs 25.40 crore. Similarly, the sportspersons of Haryana, who brought laurels to the country in Tokyo Paralympics 2020, were also honoured with cash prizes of Rs 28.15 crore," the government statement said.

Besides Tokyo Olympics and Tokyo Paralympics -2020, the sportspersons of Haryana won 4 medals out of a total of 6 medals won by India in Olympic- 2012 and one medal out of India's two medals in Olympic- 2016. Likewise, in Asiad- 2018, Haryana sports persons won 17 medals out of India's total medal tally of 69 medals and won 21 medals out of a total of 57 medals won by India in Asiad- 2012.

Haryana sports persons performed extremely well and won 20 and 22 medals in CommonWealth Games of 2014 and 2018 respectively.

The Haryana Tableau is divided in two parts, the front part consists of horses and a conch. The horses pulling the chariot symbolize 'Vijay Rath' from the Mahabharata. The conch placed here is a symbol of Lord Krishna's conch shell. The second part of the tableau is divided into four parts.

Haryana reports 8753 Covid-19 cases, 11 deaths

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Eleven more Covid-19 related deaths were reported in Haryana on Saturday as 8753 fresh cases surfaced, pushing the state's infection count to 901,303, according to a Health Department bulletin. So far, 10,165 people have died from the infection in the state. The worst-hit Gurugram district reported 2595 fresh cases. Faridabad (1030), Sonepat (604), Panchkula (546), Ambala (492), Hisar (398) were among other districts affected by the surge in cases. While three fatalities were reported from Yamunanagar, two were reported from Kurukshetra, Gurugram, Faridabad and one each from Hisar, Ambala , as per the bulletin. The total active cases in the state were 57,932.

3 DEATHS, 1149 CASES IN CHANDIGARH

Chandigarh on Saturday reported three Covid-19 deaths and 1149 new cases at a positivity rate of 20.10 per cent.

Haryana Government has done Commendable work in Aspirational District Programme: Modi

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while praising the Institutional Delivery System in Mewat (Nuh) district of Haryana, said that when this district was included in the list of Aspirational Districts in 2018, the rate of Institutional Delivery was 50.61 percent and through the continuous efforts of the State government, it has increased to 92.2 percent which is a matter of pride for the state government and the administration.

Modi, on Saturday, took the review meeting of the Aspirational District Programme in which Chief Ministers of various states, Lieutenant Governors, Secretaries of various Ministries, State Ministers and District Commissioners directly interacted with the Prime Minister through video conferencing.

The Prime Minister took detailed information about the successful implementation of the Aspirational District Programme.

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Chief Secretary Sanjeev Kaushal, Chief Principal Secretary to Chief Minister DS Dhesi, Additional Chief Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department, Rajeev Arora, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance and Planning Department, TVSN Prasad, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, V. Umashankar and many senior officers were present during the meeting.

Aspirational District Programme was implemented to develop better health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion, skill development and other basic facilities for the citizens so that all round development of selected districts can be achieved.

The Prime Minister also praised the government for working to give global identity to the district Nuh of the State and vision of promoting One District-One Product scheme based on the speciality of each district.

A scene from the play 'Birsa Munda' staged during Janyodha drama festival at Shaheed Bhawan in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

V K Sasikala AIADMK chief without party office

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

A 'battle royale' is being fought in Tamil Nadu for the legacy of a political outfit which is observing its 50th anniversary this year. A lady who claims to be head of the AIADMK is taking on a group of local satraps but what stands out is that she does not have a party office to boast.

V K Sasikala, close aide of late J Jayalalithaa, former Chief Minister and supremo of the AIADMK till she breathed her last on 5th December 2016, issues daily media releases commenting on various issues in Tamil Nadu. What makes her statements distinct is that the media releases do not have the address or telephone number of the party office despite the fact that the AIADMK has an imposing office in the heart of Chennai city. Though the letter pad says it is issued from Sasikala's camp office, it does not feature any telephone number or e-mail address.

No known faces from the AIADMK have emerged as her camp followers. Though there are one or two Rajya Sabha members (which include a senior lawyer) from the AIADMK who maintain secret liaison with Puratchithai Chinnamma (as Sasikala is addressed by her acolytes and is the Tamil for Revolutionary Mother cum Young Mother), none of them have come out in the open extending support to her.

R Thampi Durai, MP, former deputy speaker of the Lok Sabha (2014 to 2019) and the AIADMK leader who had openly demanded Sasikala's elevation as party general secretary after the demise of Jayalalithaa and later wanted the party to appoint her as chief minister has fallen silent since Chinnamma was ousted from the AIADMK in 2017 as part of the patch up between the then chief minister Edappadi Palaniswai and his deputy O Panneerselvam.

The crowd which followed her cavalcade from Bangalore to Chennai on her release from the Parappana Agrahara Central jail in 2021 on the completion of her four-year imprisonment in connection with the disproportionate asset case is now missing . "Chinnamma is engaged in rebuilding the party from the scratch and the day is not far when she would emerge the real King Maker," said one of her aides. For the time being she spends her days issuing releases and attending family functions of those who were her loyalists. The Tamil Nadu media has not asked her till date what happened to the declaration issued by her in April 2012 declaring her lifelong loyalty and service to Akka (as she addresses Jayalalithaa) and renouncing her family members. It was after this declaration that she was readmitted to Veda Nilayam, the personal bungalow of her Akka.

As on date, chances of Sasikala staging a coup and walking away with the AIADMK look remote. Jayalalithaa was blessed with a golden tongue while Sasikala is yet to prove her mettle as a public speaker or as a charismatic leader. But there are many who counter this with another argument: "If Stalin could emerge as a leader despite many shortcomings, why not Chinnamma?" One may have to wait till the 2024 Lok Sabha election to know which way the wind is blowing in the AIADMK.

Majithia alleges Channi involved in illegal sand mining, Channi hits back at Majithia

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Senior Akali leader Bikram Singh Majithia on Saturday attacked Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi and the Congress, days after the recovery of a huge amount of cash from the premises of his nephew during ED raids. He also accused him of being involved in illegal sand mining in his constituency Chamkaur Sahib in Rupnagar district and demanded a CBI probe into it.

Taking on the Congress for filing a complaint with the Election Commission of India against the recent ED raids, Majithia asked the ruling party that it should have rather questioned the recovery of crores of rupees from the premises of Channi's nephew. "Instead of complaining to the ECI over the misuse of central agencies, the Congress should have explained how a huge sum of money was seized from the premises of Channi's nephew," Majithia said in a press conference.

Meanwhile, All India Congress Committee (AICC) media incharge for Punjab elections Alka Lamba trashed Majithia's allegations as "baseless". Majithia sought to show Honey's proximity to Channi through various purported photographs, and said Honey had even been provided security. The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader said that with the chief minister also holding charge of the mining and environment departments, this was a case of conflict of interest and "Channi did not have any moral right to continue in office".

FRIVOLOUS, SAYS CHANNI

Reacting strongly to the "baseless and frivolous" allegations leveled against him by SAD leader Bikram Majithia, Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi on Saturday dared him to present even a single proof that indicates his involvement in sand mining across Punjab. "I have never denied my relationship with my nephew Bhupinder Singh Honey and being a relative he might be present at some of my functions.

PUNJAB POLL BUZZ

AMARINDER ANNOUNCES DECISION TO CONTEST FROM PATIALA

Former Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh on Saturday said he will contest once again from his home constituency of Patiala and ruled out any challenge from the Congress or any of the other parties in the fray, saying none of the CM faces or prospective CM candidates had the mental acumen to think Punjab's future. The Punjab Lok Congress (PLC) leader, in an interview to a TV channel, lambasted chief minister Charanjeet Singh Channi and PCC President Navjot Sidhu wondering what Congress leadership saw in them . As for AAP's CM nominee Bhagwant Mann, the PLC chief labeled him an out-and-out comedian, which Punjab, with its 600 kms long border with Pakistan, definitely did not need. Amarinder further said the Badals and their Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), who were responsible for the 2015 sacrilege cases as well as Punjab's drug and mafia menace, were also not suitable for the state. It was he, as chief minister, who had successfully brought the sacrilege cases to the courts despite the hurdles and delays in getting them back from the CBI, he added. The former CM ruled out any post-poll tie-up with either Congress or AAP, saying the PLC had a clear alliance with BJP and SAD (Sanyukt), which will definitely win the elections. The three parties were working on a common minimum programme for the state, which will secure Punjab's and its people's future, he said, adding that the CM face of the alliance was yet to be decided. Hoping that the Election Commission would soon relax the Covid restrictions, he said he will go to each of the 117 constituencies to take his message to the people and seek votes on the basis of his own achievements as chief minister as well as the Modi government's accomplishments at the national level.

BHAGWANT MANN CHALLENGES CHANNI TO CONTEST ELECTIONS FROM DHURI

Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Punjab President and chief ministerial candidate Bhagwant Mann hit back at Chief Minister Channi's challenge to AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal to contest from Chamkaur Sahib and challenged Channi to contest against him from Dhuri. Addressing the media in Amritsar on Saturday, Mann said that perhaps Chief Minister Channi does not know that Chamkaur Sahib Assembly seat is a reserved seat. Neither I nor our national convener Arvind Kejriwal can contest from there. If Chief Minister Channi has confidence, then he should come to Dhuri and contest against me. Mann said that he (Channi) is welcomed there. The people of Dhuri will have the final say.

ECI LAUNCHES 'KNOW YOUR CANDIDATE' APP TO PROVIDE PARTICULARS AND CRIMINAL ANTECEDENTS OF ALL CANDIDATES FOR ELECTORS

After making it mandatory for political parties to publish why candidates with criminal record were selected for election, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has launched a mobile application 'Know Your Candidate' for electors to know the particulars and criminal antecedents of any candidate, S Karuna Raju, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Punjab, said on Saturday. Urging the voters of the state to download the app, the CEO said that the app has been developed to provide wide publicity and greater awareness regarding criminal antecedents of contesting candidates to ensure transparent election. This app can be downloaded from Google play store and Apple App store and the link is also available on the Commission's website. Directing the Returning Officers to ensure that the right document is uploaded on the app, the CEO asked them to select the checkbox 'Yes' or 'No' for Candidate Criminal Antecedent and upload the scanned document submitted by candidate in Encore offline nomination. Criminal antecedents as the same gets public visibility through KYC (Know Your Candidate) App. Returning Officer also needs to re-verify and ensure that the checkbox is marked appropriately as "Yes" or "No" as per the details submitted by the candidate.

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Will give wings to dreams of daughters: Chief Minister

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that it is the responsibility of all of us to fulfill the dreams of our daughters so that they can move ahead. Central government, state government and citizens together will give wings to the dreams of daughters. Today Madhya Pradesh has made an achievement by opening about 23 lakh accounts under Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana. It is developing the tendency of saving among the girls. Efforts for their empowerment will continue.

Chouhan said that today Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi with the aim of empowering daughters and securing their future has successfully completed 7 years. The successful completion of 7 years of a meaningful scheme is also a matter of satisfaction for all of us. All cooperating citizens and families must be congratulated for the success of the scheme.

The Chief Minister said that according to the report of the implementation of Sukanya Samridhi Yojana that has come out recently, more than 22 lakh 94 thousand accounts have been opened in the state so far in this scheme for economic empowerment of daughters and making them self-dependent. Chief Minister Chouhan said that it is very important for women to be empowered in order to strengthen the society. Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, run by the Government of India, has proved to be a milestone for the daughter born today so that she can play her role in empowering the society, state and nation tomorrow. Today daughters are progressing in every field.

They are achieving every milestone. If all of us together will continue to encourage them to move forward, then there will definitely be empowerment of daughters in real sense.

Senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijay Singh takes part in a discussion programme on 'Challenges in Journalism' organised by Central India Press Club, in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

State govt finalizes outline for R-Day Programmes

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Republic Day will be celebrated in a dignified manner on January 26 in all the districts including the capital Bhopal. This year the state government has outlined the programmes in view of the novel corona virus (Covid-19) infection. In this regard, instructions have been issued by the General Administration Department to all the Head of Departments, Divisional Commissioners, Collectors and Chief Executive Officers of Zila Panchayats.

On Republic Day, the national flag will be hoisted at all the important government buildings and historical places of the state. The Republic Day celebrations will be organised in the capital at Lal Parade Ground, Bhopal. The programme will start at 9 am, in which the chief guest will take the salute of the parade and address the public meeting. The parade will be conducted like last year in which contingents of Police, Home Guards, Special Armed Forces, Jail Warden, CISF, RAF and senior NCC students will take part. NSS, Scout-Guide and Shaurya Dal will not participate in the parade. After the parade, there will be a horse riding demonstration. After that the tableaux will be taken out.

On Republic Day, the flag hoisting and reading of the message of Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan will be done by the chief guest in the district headquarters as per last year. The parade will be organised only at the district headquarters. Flag hoisting, national anthem will be organised by the head of the office in educational institutions, in which children from class 1st to 10th will not participate.

In District Panchayat, Janpad Panchayat and Gram Panchayat offices, the national flag will be hoisted by the head of the administrative committee and the national anthem will be recited. In such District Panchayat, Janpad Panchayat and Gram Panchayat where the head of the administrative committee is not available, the flag will be hoisted by the head of the office.

New pilgrimage in Madhya Pradesh on the lines of Andaman in memory of martyrs

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's announcement regarding development of museum in the memory of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in Central Jail Jabalpur and opening of Netaji's barracks for public viewing will be implemented on Sunday, on his 125th birth anniversary. For this, necessary preparations have been completed in Jabalpur. On two days a week, the general public will be able to see the chamber of Subhash Chandra Bose, where he was imprisoned.

It may be mentioned that in the year 2007, Chief Minister Chouhan had named Jabalpur Jail after Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. Along with this, the initiative of construction and development of the monument was also started here.

Just as the Cellular Jail in Andaman and Nicobar has been developed as Veer Savarkar Memorial, similarly many works have been done under a concrete initiative to develop Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Jail of Jabalpur as a Prerak Sthal. Among these, items such as Netaji's clothes, shackles worn by him, his handwritten letters and inscriptions related to his jail visit have been given the form of a museum.

A passage has been constructed to reach the barracks of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The facility to access this room has been developed by making a new route other than the main gate in the prison. In this passage, colorful flowers have been planted on both sides.

In this regard, with the initiative of the Madhya Pradesh government, this will be the first Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose museum in the state and the second in the country. Citizens will not have to pay any charges to visit the museum and the prison cell of Netaji. A museum has been established in New Delhi in the memory of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose since 2019.

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's statue has been installed near the newly constructed Subhash Nagar Railway Over Bridge in Bhopal. Along with this, the play 'I am Subhash' is also being staged in Shaheed Bhawan in collaboration with the Department of Culture in Bhopal.

Police drive against hooliganism in Ratlam

Ratlam: Police administration's campaign against goonda elements is going on in Ratlam. The team of police administration arrived to take action on the illegal construction of history sheeter Ajju Sherani in Pratap Nagar where the illegal house being built in about 10,000 square feet was razed. The administration has prepared a list of more than 30 goonda elements. On which continuous action will continue. A large number of police forces were deployed for the action.

After the incident of shooting by gamblers in Manak Chowk police station area on Friday evening lead to intensifying of campaign.

The police and administration started this campaign overnight and broke more than 1 dozen illegal houses of history-sheeter goons and bookies.

After this, the administration has started Operation Clean on Saturday morning by identifying the illegal properties of more than 30 goons.

Police detain spiritual leader Mirchi Baba while marching towards Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's residence on the issue of cow slaughter in the State, demanding proper rehabilitation of cows, in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

Mhow tehsil land records being updated by Revenue deptt

PNS ■ MHOW

On the ongoing 75 anniversary of independence which is being celebrated as Ajadi ka Amrit Mahotsava across the nation. Mhow SDM Akshat Jain initiated the Jai Jawan Jai kisan campaign in which the revenue records of the army personnel serving and retired who have land in Mhow tehsil area is being corrected and updated by the Mhow revenue department in a fast-track mode.

The tehsildars,R I and patwari are reaching on the spot of the land'sholder army personnel and the 5 important thing that is transfer of land, diversion, correction in khasara, rin pustika sudhaar and update and demarcation of the land is being done. Till date in this Jai Jawan Jai kisan campaign total 75 army personnel were got the benefit of this scheme.

SDM Akshat Jain told The Pioneer that generally the army personnel's are posted at the borders and they get a very fewer holidays and when they come to Mhow they don't get enough time to come to tehsil office so we decided to put their revenue problems case in fast track and hence we have corrected the revenue records of 75 army personnel's and we will give them the correctedlaminatedKhasra copy in next few days by organizing the program in which minister Usha Thakur, collector Indore Manish Singh, station commander Mhow Brigadier Joy Biswas and the 75 beneficiary will be called on stage and will be given the corrected Kahsra records.

MSW induction program held at Tribal University

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Department of Social Work, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU), Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh organized the Induction Program for its 6th Batch of MSW Students from 17-22 January 2022. The week long program was inaugurated by Prof. Ranju Hasini Sahoo the Head of the department Social Work and Dean Social Sciences. It is a unique attempt by the Department of Social Work to familiarize the students with the course and has been organized since inception of the Department. Resources Persons from various prestigious institutions and development sector were invited for the week long program to give a theoretical and practical training to the students. Dr. Anju Sosan George from Kerala, Dr. Ram Shepherd Bheenaveni from Texas University, USA, Dr. Mridusmita Duara, KKHSOU Assam, Swathi Murali from Haqdarshak Empowerment Solutions Pvt. Ltd. Bangalore, Dalton, Film Critic Delhi, Dr. V. Sayee Kumar, Counseling therapist, Chennai, Dr. Sreeni KR Payagri Innovation Solutions , IIT Madras, Dr. Jitendra Singh NCC Officer, IGNTU and Guddo, IGNTU were the speakers in the program. The speakers covered various topics in the program includes, soft skills, research, field work, social work methods, NCC, NSS etc.

The students acquired various skills includes, soft skills, research methods, role of social work in community development and community sensitization, role of professional social workers. The senior shared their experiences with the junior students.

While inaugurating the session the Head of the department Prof. Ranju Hasini Sahoo, stressed that this is an important event where the newly admitted students trained in many aspects which they are going to learn in coming two years, further Prof. Sahoo applauded the efforts of the Department and its activities in the campus. Participants expressed their happiness as they gained exposures on various themes.

Bank of Maharashtra Q3 results: Net profit over doubles to Rs.325 Cr

PNS ■ JABALPUR

State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) on Thursday reported an over two-fold increase in net profit at Rs 325 crore for the third quarter ended December 2021, helped by a decline in bad loans. The Pune-based lender had posted a net profit of Rs 154 crore in the same quarter a year ago. The total income of the bank rose to Rs 3,893 crore in the latest December quarter from Rs 3,582 crore in the year-ago period, BoM said in a statement. The Net Interest Income (NII) grew 17 per cent to Rs 1,527 crore during the quarter under review. The same was at Rs 1,306 crore for the third quarter of the previous fiscal. On the asset quality front, the bank recorded an improvement with gross NPAs (Non-Performing Assets) declining to 4.73 per cent or Rs 6,104.65 crore in the 2021 December quarter from 7.69 per cent or Rs 8,072.43 crore in the year-ago period. Similarly, net NPAs eased to 1.24 per cent or Rs 1,545 crore as against 2.59 per cent or Rs 2,579 crore in the same period a year ago. However, the total provision other than tax rose to Rs 752 crore as against Rs 502 crore at the end of the third quarter previous fiscal. The provision coverage ratio improved to 94 per cent as of December 31, 2021, against 90 per cent at the end of the third quarter previous fiscal, the lender said. Net Interest Margin (NIM) improved to 3.11 per cent at the end of the third quarter of the current fiscal. The capital adequacy ratio increased to 14.85 per cent in the latest December quarter as against 13.65 per cent.

कार्यालय कार्यपालन यंत्री लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड होशंगाबाद

दूरभाष क्रमांक 07574-252571 (फैक्स) 07574-253119

Email Address- eephedhos@mp.nic.in

:: निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना ::

निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु निविदा ऑनलाईन वेबसाईट https://mptenders.gov.in पर आमंत्रित की गई हैं। निविदा प्रपत्र ऑनलाईन क्रय एवं ऑनलाईन प्रस्तुत किये जावेंगे। ऑनलाईन वित्तीय ऑफर दिनांक **31.01.2022 शाम 17.00** बजे तक प्रस्तुत किये जा सकते हैं। निविदा में संशोधन की स्थिति में वेबसाईट पर ही संशोधन देखा जा सकेगा। विस्तृत निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना व अन्य जानकारी वेबसाईट पर देखी जा सकती है।

निविदा सूचना क्रमांक	ई-टेण्डर क्रमांक	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (PAC) (रू. में)	धरोहर राशि (e-MED) (रू. में)	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य (रू. में)	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	रिमार्क
101/21-22 Date 14-01-2022	2022_ PHED_ _179610_1	Survey, Investigation, Design and Construction of piped water supply schemes (Retrofitting schemes) of 02 villages namely **1 Dhandiwada, 2 Chhitapura,** including all habitations of Block-Kesla Distt. Hoshagabad based on tube wells/ Dugwells including construction of dugwells installation of electric submersible motor pumps, construction of R.C.C. Over head tanks of Capacity 100 KL with 15 mtr staging height and 75 KL with 12 mtr staging height (At village **Dhandiwada and Chhitapura),** consturciton of pump houses, providing laying & jointing of rising main and distribution pipe line system, Household tap connections and electric power connections at tube wells including cost of all materials and labour with testing & commissioning and 90 Days successful Trial Run period of entire schemes.	19432700/-	194327/-	12500/-	180 दिन वर्षा काल सहित	

G-21715/21 अफवाहों पर न दें ध्यान, टीका लगवाकर बचायें जान।

कार्यपालन यंत्री
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड
होशंगाबाद

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank

भारत सरकार का उपक्रम — A Govt. of India Undertaking — सिंडिकेट Syndicate

Regional Office -1 Paryawas Bhawan, Bhopal

E-AUCTION (SALE NOTICE)

Appendix-IV-A [See provisio to rule 8(6)]

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE / IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-auction Sale Notice For Sale of movable/ Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rules 8(6) of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the borrower(s) & guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged / charged to the secured creditor, the constructive / physical possession of which has been taken by the authorised officer the **Canara Bank (secured creditor)** will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS, AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" & WHAT EVER THERE IS" on **07-02-2022** for recovery of bank dues to the **Canara Bank (secured creditor)**

Name and address of the Borrower & Guarantors	Outstanding Amount	Description of Properties & Name of Property Owner	Reserve Price / EMD Amt. / Bid Increment Amt.
RAH Branch : Bhopal Mob.: 8989989176			
Borrower : **Prakash Gupta S/o Shri N.B. Gupta**	as on 29-11-2018 ₹ 1966809 + intt and other charges & recoveries, if any	Residential Flat no S-2, 2nd floor, at plot no 149, "Sujay State Green Park Colony" Sector – b, Situated at Village-Jamalpura Berasia Road, ward no. 12, Tehsil – Huzur, Dist.- Bhopal owned by Shri Prakash Gupta, Area-1107.74 sqft Boundaries: East-flat no S-3, West - Service line, North - Plot 148 other Home, South - Flat No. S-1	₹ 2260000/- / ₹ 226000/- / ₹ 10000/-
Borrowers : **Ravi Prakash Ojha S/o Avdesh Ojha, Meena Ojha W/o Avdhesh Ojha**	as on 30-08-2017 ₹ 2551109/- + intt and other charges & recoveries, if any	Flat no 136, "Alankar Heights", Block no 1 situated at Fifth Floor, ward no 78, Karond area,Bhopal (MP) Area-62.26 sq.mtr. Boundaries: North: Road at GF, South : Liftthen Flat no 135 of Mr.Rakesh, East: Common Passage then flat no 140, West : Road at GF then colony park	₹ 1800000/- / ₹ 180000/- / ₹ 10000/-
Borrowers : **Bharat Bhushan Bajoria s/o M P Bajoria Rajeev Bajoria s/o Bharat Bhushan Bajoria, Amit Bajoria s/o Bharat Bhushan Bajoria, Miss Shivani d/o Bharat Bhushan Bajoria**	as on 09-01-2020 ₹ 3774784/- + intt and other charges & recoveries, if any	Residential Flat no S-1, 2nd floor, at plot no 149, "Sujay Estate Green Park Colony" Sector – b, Situated at Village – Jamalpura, Berasia Road, ward no. 12, Tehsil – Huzur, Dist. – Bhopal (1107.74 Sqft) Boundaries: North: Flat no S-2, South : stair & Plot No 150, East : Flat no S-4, West : Service Lane	₹ 2275000/- / ₹ 227500/- / ₹ 10000/-
Koh-e-fiza Branch Bhopal Mob.: 8989989122			
Borrowers : **Akhtar Ali S/o Ishar Ali** Guarantor : **Mohammad Ali**	₹ 1770374/- + intt and other charges from 31.01.2018 recoveries, if any	Semi Constructed house on Residential Plot no. 35, "Royal Park" situated at Village – Neelbad, Patwari Halka No. 35, R N Mandal–04, Vikas Khand Funda, Tehsil – Huzur, Dist - Bhopal Area- 984 sq.ft. Boundaries: North : Plot no 34, East : Colony Road, South : Plot no 36, West : Plot no 48	₹1040000/- / ₹ 104000/- / ₹ 10000/-
Borrowers : **Madhav Ram S/o Shatruhan Lal** Proprietor: **Shri Mahadeo Oraon s/o Jatru Oraon**	₹ 854175/- + intt and other charges from 24.09.2016 recoveries, if any	Partially constructed House at Plot no 166, Royal Park, Neelbad, Teh. Huzur, Distt. Bhopal, area - 1123 sq.ft, Boundaries: East: Other land, West: Plot no 165, North: Colony Road, South:Other land	₹ 675000/- / ₹ 67500/- / ₹ 10000/-
Borrower : **Mahadeo Oraon s/o Jatru Oraon Guarantor : Shri Jatru Oraon S/o Late Champa Oraon**	₹ 854175/- + intt and other charges from 23.09.2016 recoveries, if any	Residential plot no 06, "Royal Park", Situated at Village – Neelbad, Ph No. 35, Tehsil – Huzur, Dist - Bhopal (Area: 981.00 Sq Ft.)Boundaries: East - Plot no. 05, West - Plot no. 07, North - Other property, South - Road	₹ 750000/- / ₹ 75000/- / ₹ 10000/-
Kolar Road Branch, Bhopal Tel.: 0755 - 2493711, 8989989124			
Borrowers : **Mahesh Ahilya** Guarantor : **Shri Rajkumar Parashar**	as on 19-02-2020 ₹ 1157027/- + intt and other charges & recoveries, if any	Residential flat no 401, forth floor, Krishna Apartment situated at Priyanka nagar, village gehunkheda, ward no 83, Teh- Huzur, Dist- bhopal, Area- 657.54 sqft Property owner -Shri Mahesh Ahilya Boundaries: North- Stairs, South- Open, East- Open, West- Flat No. 402	₹ 1420000/- / ₹ 142000/- / ₹ 10000/-
M.P. NAGAR-II Branch : Bhopal M.P. NAGAR, Bhopal Tel.: 9425400352			
Borrowers : **M/s Manish Agency Prop. Mr.Manish Gupta, Guarantor: Mr. Mahesh Kumar Gupta S/o Late Kundan Lal Gupta**	as on 13-11-2006 ₹ 3344830/- + intt and other charges & recoveries, if any	House no.2, Ward No.46, Arjun Nagar, Raisen Road, Bhopal measuring area 6000 Sqr Ft belonging to Mr. Mahesh Kumar Gupta Boundaries: North- Raisen Road, South- Street / Road, East- Property of Rehman bhai, West- Property of Kunji Lal	₹ 8350000/- / ₹ 835000/- / ₹ 10000/-

Date and Time of e-auction : 07/02/2022, 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. (With unlimited extension of 5 minutes duration each)

Other terms and conditions:
a) Auction/bidding shall be only through "Online Electronic Bidding" through the website www.bankeauctions.com. Bidders are advised to go through the website for detailed terms before taking part in the e-auction sale proceedings. b) The property can be inspected, with Prior Appointment with Authorized Officer, on any working day c) The property will be sold for the price which is more than the Reserve Price and the participating bidders may improve their offer further during auction process. d) EMD amount of 10% of the Reserve Price is to be deposited by way of Demand draft in favour of Authorized Officer, Canara Bank, Bhopal Concerned Branch OR shall be deposited through RTGS/NEFT/Fund Transfer to credit of account of Canara Bank, Concerned Branch, **A/c No 7971295000001 IFSC Code: CNRB0007971** on or before **05.02.2022 up to 5:30 pm.** e) Intending bidders shall hold a valid digital signature certificate and e-mail address. For details with regard to digital signature please contact the service provider M/s C1 India Pvt Ltd. Helpline no. 0120-4888888, Mr. Danish – 8305675610, 9630014580, helpline E-mail ID support@bankeauctions.coml, Danish.khan@c1india.com. f) After payment of the EMD amount, the intending bidders should submit a copy of the following documents/details on or before **05.02.2022 at 5.30 PM,** to Canara Bank, Concern Branch by hand or by email. i) Demand Draft/Pay order towards EMD amount. If paid through RTGS/NEFT, acknowledgement receipt thereof with UTR No. ii) Photocopies of PAN Card, ID Proof and Address proof. However, successful bidder would have to produce these documents in original to the Bank at the time of making payment of balance amount of 25% of bid amount. iii) Bidders Name. Contact No. Address, E Mail Id. iv) Bidder's A/c details for online refund of EMD. g) The intending bidders should register their names at portal www.bankeauctions.com and get their User ID and password free of cost. Prospective bidder may avail online training on E- auction from the service provider M/s C1 India Pvt Ltd. h) EMD deposited by the unsuccessful bidder shall be refunded to them. The EMD shall not carry any interest. i) Auction would commence at Reserve Price, as mentioned above. Bidders shall improve their offers in multiplies of Rs. 10000. The bidder who submits the highest bid (above the Reserve price) on closure of 'Online' auction shall be declared as successful bidder. Sale shall be confirmed in favour of the successful bidder, subject to confirmation of the same by the secured creditor. j) The successful bidder shall deposit 25% of the sale price (inclusive of EMD already paid), immediately on declaring him/her as the successful bidder and the balance within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale by the secured creditor. If the successful bidder fails to pay the sale price, the deposit made by him shall be forfeited by the Authorized Officer without any notice and property shall forthwith be put up for sale again. k) For sale proceeds of Rs. 50 (Rupees Fifty) lacs and above, the successful bidder will have to deduct TDS at the rate 1% on the Sale proceeds and submit the original receipt of TDS certificate to the Bank. l) All charges for conveyance, stamp duty/GST registration charges etc., as applicable shall be borne by the successful bidder only. m) Authorized Officer reserves the right to postpone/cancel or vary the terms and conditions of the e-auction without assigning any reason thereof. n) In case there are bidders who do not have access to the internet but interested in participating the e-auction, they can approach Regional office or respective branch who, as a facilitating centre, shall make necessary arrangements. o) For further details contact Canara Bank, concerned branch OR **Canara Bank RO-1, Recovery Section Tel.: 9958286416** OR the service provider, M/s C1 India Pvt Ltd, Udyog Vihar, Phase 2, | Gulf Petrochem building , | Building No. 301 Gurgaon Haryana Pin: 122015,Support Landline no+91-124-4302020 /2021/2022/2023| Support Mobile Nos.: +91-7291981124 /25 /26 Mr. Danish – 9826804343,9111444797, mpcg@c1india.com; helpline E-mail ID support@bankeauctions.com;

SPECIAL INSTRUCTION/CAUTION
Bidding in the last minutes/seconds should be avoided by the bidders in their own interest. Neither Canara Bank nor the Service Provider will be responsible for any lapses/failure (Internet failure, Power failure, etc.) on the part of the bidder or vendor in such cases. In order to ward off such contingent situation, bidders are requested to make all the necessary arrangements/alternatives such as back –up, power supply and whatever else required so that they are able to circumvent such situation and are able to participate in the auction successfully.

Place: Bhopal, Date: 18-01-2022 — **AUTHORISED OFFICER, CANARA BANK**

PM: Backward dists now catalyst for development

Govt backing such districts, Modi tells DMs via video address

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with the DMs of various districts via video conferencing on Saturday PTI

Stating that the districts which were earlier 'tagged' as backward districts have now become a 'catalyst' for the nation's development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that "hand holding" of these "aspirational districts" is in the sharp focus of his Government.

Modi, who was interacting with District Magistrates (DMs) of various districts via video conferencing, said the "success of aspirational districts which in the last 75 years were tagged as backward and left behind have now become a catalyst to nation's development and progress".

He said "even Chief Ministers would accept the remarkable role and achievements of the aspirational districts" which also "reflected increasing federal cooperation between states and the Centre".

He hailed "direct connect between people in aspirational districts and the government " as also use of "technology and innovation" in these areas.

Modi cited examples of Assam, Bihar and Telangana where, he said, "many success stories have emerged" ending "malnutrition".

The Prime Minister was addressing top officials along with the state Chief Ministers regarding the implementation of the key Government schemes. He complimented Chief Ministers for appointing "young and sharp" officials in the aspirational districts and also "ensuring their full tenure" in the regions.

Modi said "handholding of these districts is in focus" of his government.

While admirimg inspired leadership in aspirational districts, the Prime Minister also called for "recognizing strength of aspirational districts and combining people's desire to progress with that of government's efforts".

"District administrations have an important role in good governance. It helps govt to implement the schemes in a better way. Detail guidelines should be made for field visits and inspections," said the Prime Minister.

Modi further stated that every district needs to learn from the success of others and also evaluate their challenges.

The Prime Minister also called for a direct, emotional connection between administration and public to ensure 'top to bottom' as well as 'bottom to top' governance flow.

During the interaction, Prime Minister took direct feedback about the progress and present the status of the implementation of government schemes and programmes in the districts.

"The interaction will help review the performance and ascertain the challenges that are being faced," the PMO had earlier said in an official statement.

The meeting comes ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections in five states. The five states that are going to the polls are Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Goa, and Manipur.

Forces all set to enthrall audience

16 marching contingents, 17 military bands to take part in R-Day parade

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Army will field 16 marching contingents while 17 military bands comprising the three Services will enthrall the audience at this year's Republic Day parade. The annual event will also see 25 tableaux of various States, departments and armed forces.

The Army will be represented by a mounted column of cavalry, 14 mechanised columns, six marching contingents and a fly past by advanced light helicopters of its aviation wing.The mechanised columns of the Army will show one PT-76 tank, one

Centurion tank, two MBT Arjun MK-I tanks, one APC TOPAS armoured personnel carriers, one BMP-I infantry fighting vehicle and two BMP-II infantry fighting vehicles, officials said here on Saturday.

One 75/24 Pack howitzer, two Dhanush howitzers, one PMS bridge-laying system, two Sarvatra bridge-laying systems, one HT-16 electronic warfare system, two Taran Shakti electronic warfare systems, one Tiger Cat missile system and two Akash missile systems will also be part of the mechanised columns. The six marching contingents include Rajput Regiment, Assam Regiment, Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry, Sikh Light Infantry, Army Ordnance Corps Regiment and Parachute Regiment. One marching contingent each of the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy will also participate in the parade.

Five marching contingents of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Industrial Police Force (CISF), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), Indian Coast Guard (ICG)and Border Security Force (BSF) will also participate.

Overall, there will be 16 marching contingents from the armed forces, central paramilitary forces, Delhi Police, National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS) along with 17 military bands, pipes and drum bands at the parade. Two Param Vir Chakra and one Ashok Chakra awardees will also participate in this year's parade.

Before the commencement of the parade, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the nation in paying homage to the soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial, the official statement by the army said. The parade will begin at 10.30 am and end at 12 noon, it said.Two teams -- one male team of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and one female team of Border Security Officer (BSF) -- will perform daring motorcycle display.

Lieutenant General Vijay Kumar Mishra, General Officer Commanding Delhi Area, will be the parade commander and Major General Alok Kacker, Chief of Staff Delhi Area, will be the second-in-command of the parade. The parade will start from Vijay Chowk and end at the National Stadium through the traditional route of Rajpath, it said.

The Indian Navy's tableau will depict the 1946 naval uprising, which contributed in the country's independence movement, and its marching contingent will be led by a woman officer Lt Commander Aanchal Sharma. The tableau will also show the navy's theme of 'Combat Ready, Credible and Cohesive'.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation tableau is showcasing its "Udan" scheme (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) this year. In the aircraft shaped tableau, the front part showcases women pilots depicting women power in India's aviation, as India tops in women commercial pilots, globally.

The rear portion of the tableau shows symbol of Buddhism and motto of UDAN- Sab Uden, Sab Juden.

The middle portion showcases Buddha circuit, featuring, Buddha Statue at Gaya where He attained enlightenment, Dhamekh Stupa, Sarnath where He delivered his first sermon (Dharmachakra Parivartan) and the Mahaparinirvana Stupa, Kushinagar where He attained Mahaparinirvana.

Both sides of the middle portion of the tableau depict heritage sites- Humayun tomb from North, Konark sun temple in East, Hampi temple chariot in South and Ajanta caves in West, connected with air services.

Full dress rehearsal parade to be held at Central Vista

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

People witnessing the Republic Day parade this year will get to see major changes along the stretch in terms of the new look of Rajpath and facilities created under the Government's ambitious Central Vista redevelopment project.

Red granite walkways spreading 1.10 lakh square metre with greenery all around, 133 light poles along the Rajpath, 4,087 trees, 114 modern signages and stepped gardens will be part of the redeveloped Central Vista in the national capital.

Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, who visited the Central Vista Avenue, said that a full dress rehearsal parade will be held here on Sunday.

According to the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, there will be a total of 915 light poles, including those in gardens and along the Rajpath between the Rashtrapati Bhavan and the India gate, a move aimed at making the Central Vista more pedestrian-friendly round the clock.

"In spite of (recent) rains, etc., all the work is complete," Puri told reporters, adding that only 25 trees have been relocated and of them, 22 trees have been shifted to another location and three are here. Although temporary bridges on water bodies along the Rajpath have been set up as part of the Republic Day parade arrangements, a total of 16 permanent ones will come up.

According to an official document, eight amenity blocks are being constructed while four pedestrian underpasses will come up in the entire stretch. It shows that on the developed stretch, 'Tree Avenue' has 4,087 trees, but the earlier number was 3,890. The stretch also sports 422 red granite benches.

Along the Rajpath, the new red granite walkways spreading 1,10,457 sqm have been created, replacing bajri sand that lined the ground earlier. As many as 987 concrete bollards have been installed on the Rajpath. A total of 1,490 modern-look manholes have replaced the earlier ones.

On January 11, Puri had said the recent record rainfall had delayed the Central Vista Avenue redevelopment project by "a day or two, but not more". Shapoorji Pallonji and Company Limited is executing the redevelopment work of the Central Vista Avenue. The redevelopment project of the Central Vista -- the nation's power corridor -- envisages a new triangular Parliament building, a common central secretariat, revamping of the three-km Rajpath, a new prime minister's residence and prime minister's office, and a new vice president's enclave.

2K ultras who signed ceasefire pact to cast vote in Manipur polls

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Around 2,000 cadre of various militant groups living in designated camps after signing a tripartite Suspension of Operation (SoO), a ceasefire pact, with the State and Central Governments in 2008, will now cast their votes in the forthcoming Assembly polls in Manipur. Although they will not go to the polling stations to cast their vote, they have been allowed to vote through Postal Ballots.

The Election Commission (EC) has allowed members of Manipur militant groups that signed ceasefire agreements with the government, whose names are listed in the electoral rolls and who are currently residing at various designated camps to vote in the forthcoming assembly polls by postal ballot. The state polls are scheduled to be held in two phases on February 27 and March 3.

According to the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Manipur, the EC has allowed the cadres of the protalks militant outfits which are under ceasefire agreements with the government and those who are currently residing at various designated camps in the state to cast their votes.

The decision was made considering that a number of persons belonging to the SoO and MoU groups living in the 14 designated camps in Manipur have been enrolled in the electoral rolls of various assembly constituencies of the state. The poll panel has taken the decision in exercise of powers conferred by clause (c) of Section 60 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and in consultation with the central government and state government.

According to officials, over 20 Kuki militant groups operating in the state under two conglomerate groups — United People's Front (UPF) and Kuki National Organisation (KNO) — had signed a tripartite Suspension of Operation (SoO), a ceasefire pact with the state and central governments in 2008.

The EC has directed that these electors shall be allowed to vote by postal ballot, taking into account the right of franchise of such electors as they cannot move out of the said designated camps, the statement said.

The notification further mentioned that a survey shall be made for appropriate location of Postal Ballot Facilitation Centers (PBFC) for distribution, recording, collection of PB in different camps of SoO and MoU groups.

Manipur has a total of 60 Assembly constituencies. In the first phase, elections will be held for as many as 38 constituencies and the remaining 22 constituencies will vote in the second phase.

Security personnel examine Rajpath on the eve of full dress rehearsal of the Republic Day parade in New Delhi on Saturday PTI

Govt ropes in Ayush doctors for consultation on eSanjeevini portal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To ease the burden and meet scarcity of allopathic medical professionals, the Government has roped in AYUSH doctors for providing consultation on the eSanjeevini OPD platform, a free health service portal launched by the Union Health Ministry with an aim to provide better healthcare services to patients in their homes.

It has been observed that there has been a resurgence in the demand of Ayush healthcare system, which has increased exponentially in the current period. Accordingly the Centre has decided to rope in AYUSH doctors from Ayush institutes of the country for free consultation on this portal, said Dr Anupam Srivastava, Director of Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth (RAV).

An autonomous organization under the Ministry of Ayush, has been assigned with the responsibility as a nodal agency to coordinate the programme which includes induction training of doctors too on the portal.

Dr Srivastava said, "We are witnessing an increase in the number of Covid-19 cases and this rise has also affected the doctors and other frontline health workers in a big way. AYUSH doctors are helping in easing the burden and meeting the demands of scarcity in a big way.

We all know that Ayurveda and other AYUSH systems of medicines have played a very crucial role during the Covid-19 pandemic for the last two years and a larger section of the society got benefitted through it, he added.

In fact, the AYUSH Ministry has also operationalised a dedicated community support pan-India helpline to provide AYUSH-based approaches and solutions for the people grappling with Covid-19. Encouraged by the positive results of alternate traditional medicines in fight against Covid-19, the Centre has asked the Union Health Ministry to integrate the Ministry of AYUSH to multiply resources in the fight against the pandemic, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal had also recently informed.

The AYUSH department has also launched an ayurvedic kit - "Ayuraksha Kit' - comprising Chyavanprash, Sanshmani Vati, Anu Tail and Ayush kadha - to improve the immunity of people and keep them healthy.

The Minister said that the time tested AYUSH systems have many evidence-based interventions for the management and treatment of Covid-19. India's AYUSH has reported tremendous growth in the last few years because of growing global and domestic demand, enabled by research and development in the sector. According to a report from the Ministry, with a turnover of $18.1 billion, the market size of the Indian AYUSH industry, as a whole, has grown by 17 per cent during 2014-2020.

Rahul: Govt trying hard to snatch public rights

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Saturday hit out at the Modi Government accusing it of trying to destroy public rights.

Rahul said that the world's largest democracy is nothing without public rights and asked people whether they can imagine India without fundamental and public rights.

"What's the point of the world's largest democracy without public rights? The Modi government has been trying to destroy the rights of the public from the beginning. Can you even imagine India without these rights including the fundamental rights?" he said in a social media post.

Rahul further listed out the basic rights. "Right to food – so that no one has to face hunger. Right to Education- Today every child goes to school, makes a better tomorrow for himself and for the country. Right to Employment- Despite the BJPs staunch opposition, the UPA gave employment security. Right to Information- Transparency is another name of democracy. People have the right to question and get answers. RTI was also given by UPA. Which of these rights does the PM object to? And why?" he asked.

The Congress leader also recalled a desperation by a section of UPSC aspirants demanding extra opportunities. "A delegation of UPSC aspirants met me recently and shared their serious concerns. The Centre must find a viable solution in dialogue with all stakeholders so that time and opportunities lost during the two years of pandemic don't cost our youth their future," Rahul said on Twitter with a special mention Justice for Students.

Addressing the media while launching the party's youth manifesto for Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections a day earlier, Rahul had criticised the BJP government for depriving the youth of opportunities.

"Youth is the biggest strength of India. They are called demographic dividend; Narendra Modi and the BJP has converted it into a demographic disaster….India needs a new vision and only the Congress party can give that vision to the country…The BJP's vision is not of the country's vision," he said .

He had also accused the BJP government of taking the unemployment rate to a record high in the last 40 years.

Long Covid affecting human nervous system, says expert

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Long Covid is affecting human brains and nervous systems at a deeper level and there is an urgent need for significant research into identifying the full extent of its complications and underlying causes, according to researchers.

The viewpoint of Avindra Nath, an Indian-American scientist who specialises in neuroimmunology, has been published in the prestigious Science journal.

Nath, who is clinical director of the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke(NINDS), along with Serena Spudich from Yale School of Medicine, Connecticut, said that the medical community needs to carefully study individuals with Long Covid categorized by their specific symptoms.

"It is crucial to the development of diagnostic and therapeutic tools to identify and treat what is becoming an ever-increasing public health concern," emphasized Nath.

Neurological symptoms that have been reported with acute Covid-19 include loss of taste and smell, headaches,stroke, delirium and brain inflammation. "There does not seem to be extensive infection of brain cells by the virus, but the neurological effects may be caused by immune activation, neuro-inflammation and damage to brain blood vessels," they wrote.

Long Covid can include a wide variety of symptoms in the brain and nervous system that range from a loss of taste and smell, impaired concentration, fatigue, pain, sleep disorders, autonomic disorders and/or headache to psychological effects such as depression or psychosis. Nath and Spudich have outlined the currentscientific understanding of the potential body responses to acute Covid-19infection and how those responses could lead to Long Covid symptoms.

They also drew parallels between the symptoms experienced by individuals with Long Covid to those living with myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) or post-Lyme Disease, which suggests there could be common risk factors involved.

"Owing to the significant variability in symptoms from person to person and the fact that many individuals with LongCovid were healthy prior to a relatively mild Covid-19 infection", the scientists have highlighted the urgent need for global research efforts.

NIA raids places in Punjab in Jalalabad IED blast case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has conducted searches at multiple locations in Punjab in the 2021 bike IED blast case of Jalalabad.

The agency conducted searches at five locations in Taran Tarn, Fazilka and Ferozepur districts of Punjab, the NIA said in a statement.

During the searches that continued till late on Friday, electronic gadgets, ammunition, documents and other incriminating materials have been seized. Further investigation in the case is continuing, it said.

The case relates to an explosion in a Bajaj Platina bike near Punjab National Bank, Jalalabad City, police station Jalalabad, Fazilka in which one person namely Binder Singh died on the spot.

"Initial investigation revealed that accused were in touch with Pakistan-based terrorists/smugglers and were recruited for carrying out terrorist attacks in crowded areas by triggering explosive devices," it said.

The case was first registered as FIR No 205/2021 dated September 16, 2021 under various sections of the Explosive Act at the police station City Jalalabad, Fazilka, Punjab. The NIA had re-registered the case on October 1 last year.Till now five accused persons have been arrested in the case, it added.

Ukraine tensions: Russia toughens its posture

Moscow: With tens of thousands of Russian troops positioned near Ukraine, the Kremlin has kept the US and its allies guessing about its next moves in the worst security crisis to emerge between Moscow and the West since the Cold War.

Amid fears of an imminent attack on Ukraine, Russia has further upped the ante by announcing more military drills in the region. It also has refused to rule out the possibility of military deployments to the Caribbean, and President Vladimir Putin has reached out to leaders opposed to the West.

The military muscle-flexing reflects a bold attempt by the Kremlin to halt decades of NATO expansion after the end of the Cold War. In talks with the United States, Russia demands legally binding guarantees that the alliance will not embrace Ukraine and other former Soviet nations, or place weapons there.

It also wants NATO to pull back its forces from countries in Central and Eastern Europe that joined the alliance since the 1990s.Putin has described NATO membership for Ukraine and the others as well as the alliance's weapons deployments there as a red line for Moscow, warning that he would order unspecified "military-technical measures" if the demands aren't met.

Members of Ukraine's Territorial Defense Forces, volunteer military units of the Armed Forces, train in a city park in Kyiv, Ukraine, Saturday. Dozens of civilians have been joining Ukraine's army reserves in recent weeks amid fears about Russian invasion AP

Putin pointed to NATO drills with the Ukrainian military, increasingly frequent visits of the alliance warships in the Black Sea and the flights of US bombers near Crimea to emphasize the urgency of Russia's security demands. He argued that by creating training centres in Ukraine, Western powers can establish a military foothold there even without its joining NATO.

"We have nowhere to retreat," Putin said. "They have taken it to the point where we simply must tell them: Stop!'" Russia, which annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014, has denied it intends to attack its neighbour. Last year, however, Putin issued a stark warning that an attempt by Ukraine to reclaim control of the areas in the east controlled by Russia-backed separatists would have "grave consequences for Ukrainian statehood". ***AP***

Baltic nations to ship Washington-endorsed arms to Ukraine

AP ■ HELSINKI

The Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will send US-made anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles to Ukraine in a move that Washington says it is fully endorsing amid Kyiv's escalating tensions with Russia.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a tweet posted on Saturday that Washington saluted the three NATO nations and former Soviet republics "for their long-standing support to Ukraine".

"I expedited and authorized and we fully endorse transfers of defensive equipment @NATO Allies Estonia Latvia Lithuania are providing to Ukraine to strengthen its ability to defend itself against Russia's unprovoked and irresponsible aggression," Blinken said in another tweet.

Dmitry Peskov, spokesperson for Russian President Vladimir Putin, earlier this week described western arms supplies to Ukraine as extremely dangerous and said they "do nothing to reduce tensions."

Moscow has massed tens of thousands of troops at the border with Ukraine, leading to fears of an invasion.

The West has rejected Moscow's main demands - promises from NATO that Ukraine will never be added as a member, that no alliance weapons will be deployed near Russian borders, and that it will pull back its forces from Central and Eastern Europe.

A meeting Friday between Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov ended with no breakthrough.

In a joint statement published late Friday, the defense ministers of the three Baltic states said they "stand united in our commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in face of continued Russian aggression."

They said Estonia would provide Ukraine with Javelin anti-tank weapons while Latvia and Lithuania were sending Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and other related equipment to bolster Kyiv's defensive military capabilities.

Biden, Kishida agree to 'push back' China's attempts to change status quo in East China Sea, SCS

Washington: US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida have agreed to "push back" against China's attempts to change the status quo in the East China Sea and the South China Sea, and highlighted the importance of the Quad grouping as a critical forum for promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

During the 80-minute virtual meeting on Friday, their first formal summit meeting, Biden said the age-old alliance between the US and Japan is the cornerstone of peace and security in the strategic Indo-Pacific region and across the world.

"It was an honour to meet with Prime Minister Kishida to further strengthen the US-Japan alliance - the cornerstone of peace and security in the Indo-Pacific and around the world," Biden said in a tweet after the meeting.

"As Indo-Pacific powers, the United States and Japan are united in a shared purpose to sustain and enhance our commitment to the region," the White House said in a readout of the meeting.

"The two leaders resolved to push back against the People's Republic of China (PRC)'s attempts to change the status quo in the East China Sea and South China Sea," it said.

The US, India and several other world powers have been talking about the need to ensure a free, open and thriving Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China's aggressive military manoeuvring in the region.

The Chinese military is actively eying the strategic Indian Ocean region to step up Beijing's influence. China claims nearly all of the disputed South China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it.

Beijing has built artificial islands and military installations in the South China Sea. China also has territorial disputes with Japan in the East China Sea. The US maintains it will support its regional allies in the defence of a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

The Japanese government said in a statement that "the two leaders shared the intention to coordinate closely under the strong Japan-US alliance and to deepen cooperation with like-minded countries such as Australia, India, ASEAN, and Europe, toward realising a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific'".

Biden and Kishida said they remain committed to working closely with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

The two leaders highlighted the importance of the Quad - Australia, Japan, India, and the United States - as a critical forum for promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific region, according to the White House readout.

They also decided to ensure that the Quad delivers practical results in areas such as COVID-19 response, climate and clean energy, and infrastructure.

In 2017, India, Australia, Japan and the US gave shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the "Quad" or the Quadrilateral coalition to counter China's aggressive behaviour in the strategically-vital Indo-Pacific region. ***PTI***

2 prominent activists sentences to death by Myanmar court

Bangkok: Two prominent political activists in military-ruled Myanmar have been sentenced to death for alleged involvement in terrorist activities, an army television station has reported.

Myawaddy TV said on its evening news broadcast on Friday that Kyaw Min Yu, better known as Ko Jimmy, and Phyo Zeyar Thaw, also known as Maung Kyaw, were convicted under the country's counter-terrorism law.

They were found guilty of offenses involving explosives, bombings and financing terrorism.

Both have been detained since their arrests, unable to comment on the allegations, and no lawyer ever emerged to comment on their behalf. Min Yu's wife, Nilar Thein, in October denied the allegations lodged against her husband.

Details of their trials were unavailable because the proceedings were carried out in a closed military court. It was unclear if their two cases were linked.

Modern-day Myanmar has a record of rarely carrying out death sentences.

The two are among the most prominent activists to be given death sentences since the military in February last year seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Its takeover sparked wide-scale popular protests, which have since turned into a low-level insurgency after nonviolent demonstrations were met with deadly force by the security forces.

Almost 1,500 civilians are estimated to have been killed, and more than 11,000 arrest carried out for political offenses.

Some resistance factions have engaged in assassinations, drive-by shootings and bombings in urban areas, The mainstream opposition organizations generally disavow such activities, while supporting armed resistance in rural areas, which are more often subject to brutal military attacks. ***AP***

IS-K bigger threat than TTP in Pak's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: province police chief

Peshawar: The Islamic State's Afghanistan affiliate, dubbed Islamic State Khorasan or IS-K, posed a bigger threat to peace and integrity of Pakistan's restive province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa than the outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the provincial police said on Saturday.

The IS-K, which has stepped up attacks in several cities in Afghanistan after the Taliban seized power in Kabul in August last year, was also responsible for carrying out a spate of terror attacks against Pakistan's security officials in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

"I see IS-K as a bigger threat to peace and security in the province compared to the TTP in near future," Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police chief Moazzam Jah Ansari said.

In October last year, IS-K had also claimed responsibility for the killing of a well-known Sikh hakeem named Sardar Satnam Singh (Khalsa), who practised Unani medicine here in the provincial capital.

At least three police personnel were killed in different parts of the province in the months of October and November.

Ansari said following these sustained attacks, police had

busted a cell of the IS-K in Peshawar on December 20 last year.

While both TTP and IS-K were responsible for attacks on security forces in Pakistan, Ansari believed that the latter posed a great threat because when one of its cells became dysfunctional, another cell began operations.

"These [militant] outfits are operating in small groups and the neutralisation of one cell does not end the possibility of another cell resorting to similar acts," Ansari explained.

He said that there had been security issues in North and South Waziristan tribal districts, but the security officials had acted swiftly to enforce the writ of the state.

Ansari said the provincial and federal governments were focusing on development of tribal areas and creating employment opportunities for the youth.

"These efforts will motivate the people to support government efforts for peace," he opined.

The police chief said his force had completed the training of 17,000 out of 27,000 Levies and Khasadar Force personnel in the tribal districts.

The police force was working in tandem with Pakistan's armed forces for bringing peace back in the region, Ansari added.

According to a US State Department's report, IS-K received funding from its parent organisation, the militant Islamic State group (IS), with additional funding coming from "illicit criminal commerce, taxes and extortion activities." ***PTI***

US-backed fighters chase IS gunmen near prison in Syria

Beirut: Kurdish-led fighters advanced slowly Saturday under the cover of US-led coalition air power in Syria's northeast. Intense clashes with Islamic State militants took place around a prison where thousands of extremists were held, officials said.

Fighting broke out Thursday night when IS unleashed its biggest attack in Syria since the fall of its "caliphate" three years ago. More than 100 militants assaulted the main prison holding suspected extremists in the northeastern city of Hassakeh, sparking a battle with US-backed Kurdish fighters that has so far left dozens dead.

Despite their defeat in Syria nearly three years ago, IS sleeper cells have carried out deadly attacks against US-backed fighters of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces as well as government forces on the west bank of the Tigris River in eastern Syria.

The group's territorial control in Syria and Iraq, where they once declared their "caliphate" was crushed by a years-long US-backed campaign. But its fighters continued with sleeper cells that have increasingly killed scores of Iraqis and Syrians in past months.

The US-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces brought more reinforcements into Hassakeh in an attempt to regain control of areas taken by IS, residents said. More civilians fled the areas of fighting as sounds of explosions echoed in the city and black smoke billowed from the Gweiran Prison area on the southern edge of Hassakeh.

Hassakeh Governor Ghassan Khalil told Syrian state media that some 4,000 civilians have fled to areas controlled by Syrian government forces in the city and its suburbs.

The IS attack targeted Gweiran Prison, the largest of around a dozen facilities run by US-backed Syrian Kurdish forces holding suspected IS fighters. Gweiran holds some 5,000, including IS commanders and figures considered among the most dangerous.

"The battles are taking place on the edge of the prison," SDF spokesman Siamand Ali told The Associated Press, adding that most of the prison is under their control apart from a small part that is held by rioting prisoners. He added that fighting is also ongoing in the nearby Zuhour neighbourhood, where IS fighters were holed up.

Ali said SDF fighters and US-led coalition aircraft targeted a technical academy building where dozens of "Daesh terrorists took positions". Ali, who used an Arabic acronym to refer to IS, said SDF fighters are advancing slowly in order to protect the lives of civilians as IS gunmen are holed up in alleys and in residential homes.

Ali said some 45 IS gunmen were killed in the fighting, adding that a statement will be issued later about the casualties among SDF fighters.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said that since Thursday night, 78 people have been killed, including 45 IS gunmen, 28 Kurdish fighters and five civilians. The Observatory added that SDF fighters were using loud speakers to call on IS fighters to surrender but the extremists refused.

On Friday, the SDF's top military commander, Mazloum Abadi, said IS mobilised "most of its sleeper cells" to organise the prison break. ***AP***

Stray bullet kills English astrophysicist visiting Atlanta

Brookhaven (US):A stray bullet struck and killed and English astrophysicist while he was inside an Atlanta-area apartment, and police say the death was the result of "reckless" gunfire by random individuals.

Matthew Willson, 31, of Chertsey, Surrey, England, was shot once in the head while laying in bed, Brookhaven police announced Thursday. The shooting happened early Sunday morning.

Willson was in Brookhaven visiting his girlfriend, Katherine Shepard. She told WSB-TV that the bullet came through the wall of her apartment, from a neighbouring apartment complex. She called 911.

"I held him for another 20 minutes while we waited for the ambulance," she said. "And while we were waiting, there were more gunshots fired."

Willson was taken to a hospital and later pronounced dead. **AP**

NYC police officer killed, 2nd critical in Harlem shooting

New York: A New York City police officer lay in a hospital Saturday after being critically wounded in a shooting in a Harlem apartment that left a fellow officer dead, authorities said.

The man who shot them with a stolen gun was also in critical condition, wounded by a third officer who fired at him as he tried to flee, officials said.

The two officers were shot Friday night while answering a call about an argument between a woman and her adult son.

Officer Jason Rivera, 22, was killed, and Officer Wilbert Mora, 27, was critically wounded, authorities said.

Police had no update on Mora's condition Saturday morning but said he remained hospitalised.

The man police say shot them, 47-year-old Lashawn J. McNeil, also was critically wounded and hospitalized, authorities said.

Authorities said the three officers went to the apartment after a call came in from a woman needing help with McNeil, her son. Officers spoke with the woman and another son, but there was no mention of a weapon.

Rivera and Mora walked from the front of the apartment down a hallway, and McNeil swung open a bedroom door and opened fire, Chief of Detectives James Essig said.

As McNeil tried to flee, a third officer who had stayed with McNeil's mother in the front of the apartment shot at McNeil and wounded him in the head and arm, Essig said.

They were among the four officers shot in the city in as many days, prompting an emotional response from Mayor Eric Adams.

"This was just not an attack on these brave officers," Adams said Friday night. "This was an attack on the city of New York." Rivera joined the force in November 2020. Mora has been with the NYPD for four years.

Adams, three weeks into his job, called for federal authorities to do more to round up stolen guns like the one used in Friday's shooting.

Police said the gun used in Friday night's shooting, a .45-caliber Glock with a high-capacity magazine capable of holding up to 40 extra rounds, had been stolen in Baltimore in 2017.

McNeil was on probation for a 2003 drug conviction in New York City. He also had several out-of-state arrests.

In 1998, he was arrested in South Carolina on suspicion of unlawfully carrying a pistol, but records show the matter was later dismissed. **AP**

Pak YouTuber gets just 1 year jail term for justifying lynching of Sri Lankan citizen

PTI ■ LAHORE

A Pakistani anti-terrorism court has sentenced a 27-year-old man to one year of imprisonment and imposed a fine for justifying the lynching of a Sri Lankan citizen in a video, which went viral on his YouTube channel.

On December 3 last year, a mob of over 800 men, including supporters of hardline Islamist party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), attacked a garment factory in Sialkot district, some 100 km from Lahore, and lynched its general manager Priyantha Kumara, 47, and burned his body over allegations of blasphemy.

Indian-origin scientist among UBC researchers unveil world's 1st molecular-level analysis of Omicron

Toronto:A team of researchers, including an Indian-origin scientist at the prestigious University of British Columbia, has become the first in the world to conduct a molecular-level structural analysis of the Omicron spike protein, which could help accelerate the development of more effective treatments against the variant.

Spike protein helps the virus enter and infect cells.Dr Sriram Subramaniam, professor in UBC faculty of medicine's department of biochemistry and molecular biology, said that Omicron has greater binding affinity than the original SARS-CoV-2 virus, with levels more comparable to what seen with the Delta variant. ***PTI***

JASCH INDUSTRIES LIMITED

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Extract of Reviewed Ind AS Financial Results for the Quarter & Nine Months Ended 31st December, 2021.
(Standalone And Consolidated Financial Results under Regulation 47(1)(B) Of Listing Regulations)

(₹in Lakh)

Sl No	Particulars	Standalone						Consolidated	
		Quarter Ended			Nine Months Ended		Year Ended	Nine Month Ended	Year Ended
		31.12.21	30.09.21	31.12.20	31.12.21	31.12.20	31.03.21	31.12.21	31.03.21
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited	
1	Total Income from Operations.	6351.96	5285.32	4449.16	15341.49	8583.05	13567.63	15341.49	NOT APPLICABLE
2	Profit before Interest, Depreciation & Taxes (EBITDA)	984.53	621.48	642.62	2118.71	1155.10	1909.27	2118.71	
3	Net Profit for the period (before Tax & Exceptional Items)	894.45	535.88	561.14	1860.70	892.04	1561.97	1860.70	
4	Net Profit for the period before Tax (after Exceptional Items)	894.45	535.88	559.61	1860.70	890.51	1561.97	1860.70	
5	Net Profit for the period after Tax (after Exceptional Items)	664.37	415.88	394.22	1382.10	641.83	1135.20	1382.10	
6	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [(Comprising Profit) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	664.37	415.88	394.22	1382.10	641.83	1135.20	1382.10	
7	Equity Share Capital	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	
8	Reserves	7200.94	6536.57	5298.40	7200.94	5298.40	5818.84	7200.94	
9	Earnings Per Share (of ₹10/- each) Basic & Diluted:	5.86	3.67	3.48	12.20	5.66	10.02	12.20	

Notes :

1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosures Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the website of Stock Exchange at www.bseindia.com and also on Company's website at www.jaschindustries.com.
2. The financial results of the Company have been prepared in accordance with Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS).
3. Figures for the previous periods have been regrouped, wherever necessary, to conform to the current period's classification.

Sonipat, 22nd January 2022 **sd/- (J. K. GARG) *MANAGING DIRECTOR***

TAAI seeks 'One India One Tourism' approach in Budget

Mumbai: The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) has sought 'One India One Tourism' approach, which is inclusive of 'One Tax Structure,' in the forthcoming Union Budget to revive the pandemic-hit domestic travel, tourism and hospitality industry.

Besides, the Association has sought bringing Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) under the ambit of GST to make air travel "more viable" for all stakeholders as well as extension of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS).

There are several aspects which can be expected in the upcoming Budget to support the entire sector of 'travel tourism and hospitality,' which will help in making this sector revive and survive, TAAI, which is headed by Jyoti Mayal, said in a statement on Saturday.

"For this, it is extremely important for both the central and state governments to work in tandem to facilitate this sector and support it to be included in the concurrent list to get Industry status to make it more structured," the Association said.

TAAI said the Government should strive to increase the disposable income of the middle classes to spur that discretionary spending.

According to the travel agents body, concrete steps should be taken to improve cash flows and reduce the working capital burden on startups, existing

MSMEs and SMEs along with access to easy credit, reducing income tax rate and GST rate, abolishment of tax collected at source (TCS) and wage support with ease of business.

Besides, strengthening MSMEs, creating a fund of funds scheme for technology adoption for use in industry 4.0, reviving the Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (CLCSS) for technology upgradation are the other steps TAAI is expecting in the forthcoming Union Budget, it said.

To revive this struggling sector, "we need 'One India One Tourism' approach inclusive of 'One Tax Structure," TAAI said in the statement, adding that, important points to be considered are e-visa fees waiver for all tourist visas for 2022-2023, to support inbound revival export status for tourism export earnings.

It has also sought double expenditure allocation for the tourism ministry to enable intensive global reach-out to support the inbound revival as well as domestic income tax travel credit for Indian citizens and Indian companies to support domestic retail and domestic MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions)pick-up.

The Association is also looking at a global bidding fund in the Union Budget 2022-23 to enable bidding support to Indian MICE companies to bring global MICE events to India, as per TAAI. Lastly and most vital is a structured mechanism to secure travel agents' payments to ensure security for travel agents and operators' survival, it said.

TAAI added that travel agents' payments to principals are unsecured credit and there is need to ensure that some form of mechanisms, whether escrow or guarantee or underwriting based mechanisms, are in place for securing travel agents money. ***PTI***

Industry Speaks: Make travel expenses deductible under IT returns in Budget FY23

New Delhi: India's hotel and restaurant industry has urged the Centre to make travel expenses deductible under IT returns in Budget FY23.

Notably, the sector has been heavily battered due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent restrictions imposed to check the infections' spread.

According to Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India, since foreign travel is at least 12-15 months away from returning to the pre-pandemic levels, Centre should give impetus on domestic travel.

"We have requested Finance Minister to allow domestic travel for individuals and corporates to be a deductible expense in their IT returns. This tax incentive could be offered for a fixed number of years until hospitality comes back to pre-pandemic conditions," Kohli told IANS.

"The move will encourage the 28 million-plus people who otherwise travel out of the country, to holiday in India. We also ask for a review of the decision to introduce LTC cash vouchers in lieu of LTC fare to the Central Government employees."

Besides, the hospitality industry has asked the Centre to be granted the infrastructure status.

Public wifi hotspots have potential to generate 2-3 cr jobs this year: Telecom Secretary

New Delhi: Setting up of 1 crore public wifi hotspots across the country by this year as envisaged under the present telecom policy has the potential to create 2-3 crore job opportunities, a senior government official said on Saturday.

Telecom Secretary K Rajaraman while speaking at Broadband India Forum (BIF) event called upon wifi equipment makers to lower the cost of their products for the expansion of Prime Minister's Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) scheme which aims to set up wifi hotspots across the country.

"Given by conservative estimate of each hotspot enabling 2-3 direct and indirect employment opportunities, the creation of 10 million hotspots as per the NDCP (National Digital Communications Policy) target by 2022 would potentially generate 20-30 million job opportunity in the small and medium scale sectors," Rajaraman said.

Public wifi hotspots have immense potential to act as catalysts for rural economy and as a means of rural livelihood besides propelling socio-economic growth by providing employment opportunities for millions of small local and village entrepreneurs. "Sprawling manufacturing units will be needed to produce millions of access points for PM WANI which is the core of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission and would lead to therefore more job creation," Rajaraman said.

According to the PM-WANI portal, over 56,000 wifi hotspots have been deployed across the country till date. Rajaraman said that he wants more entrepreneurs to join PM-WANI programme facilitated by C-DoT.

"We also want local communities to join PM-WANI scheme wholeheartedly. We will be happy to facilitate existing entrepreneurs in local neighborhoods especially local cable operators, internet service providers, tourism operators etc to come forward and help proliferate WANI access points across the country," he said.

BIF announced the launch of BIF Connectivity Accelerator Programme in partnership with Meta (formerly Facebook) to enable entrepreneurs and startups build innovative connectivity solutions and support the public wifi ecosystem.

"This (BIF Connectivity Accelerator) virtual programme will give startups the opportunity to partner with BIF to help develop relevant use cases and help scale their businesses. We appeal to all stakeholders to come together and join hands with us to expeditiously and effectively implement this national mission," BIF president TV Ramachandran said. ***PTI***

FabIndia plans ₹4,000 cr IPO; promoters to gift over 7 lakh shares to artisans, farmers

New Delhi: Lifestyle retail brand FabIndia plans to raise up to ₹4,000 crore through an initial public offer and in a novel approach, the company's promoters also plan to gift more than 7 lakh shares to artisans and farmers.

On Saturday, the company filed the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) with markets watchdog Sebi for the offer that will include fresh issue of shares worth up to ₹ 500 crore. Besides, there will be an Offer For Sale (OFS) of up to 2,50,50,543 shares. Market sources said the Initial Public Offer (IPO) is expected to be worth around Rs 4,000 crore.

In order to "reward and express gratitude to certain artisans and farmers engaged with the company or its subsidiaries", FabIndia's two promoters -- Bimla Nanda Bissell and Madhukar Khera -- intend to transfer 4,00,000 shares and 3,75,080 shares, respectively, to them, subsequent to the filing of the DRHP.

"Our promoters, namely, Bimla Nanda Bissell and Madhukar Khera have opened their respective demat accounts and have transferred 4,00,000 equity shares and 3,75,080 equity shares, respectively, that are proposed to be transferred by way of gift to the artisans and farmers," the DRHP said.

Proceeds from the fresh issue of shares will be utilised for voluntary redemption of the company's NCDs (Non Convertible Debentures), pre-payment or scheduled re-payment of a portion of certain outstanding borrowings and general corporate purposes.

In the DRHP, the company has mentioned about its ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) initiatives, saying it believes that "enabling and uplifting the people we work with, taking care of the environment, and being ethical in our conduct with have a long and lasting positive impact".

"We have aimed to create social impact and foster well being for our artisans, communities, employees and investors, using environmentally responsible and ethical means," it added. ***PTI***

Jio completes 5G coverage plans for top 1,000 cities in country

New Delhi: Jio has completed 5G network coverage planning for top 1,000 cities in the country and is augmenting its fibre capacity as well as running pilot across sites, a senior company official said during a presentation.

The company has created teams to focus on dedicated solutions for 5G deployment in India, Reliance Jio Infocomm President Kiran Thomas said on Friday evening.

"5G coverage planning has been completed for 1,000 top cities across the country. Jio has been doing trials on advanced use cases across healthcare and industrial automation on its 5G network," Jio said in a statement.

Thomas during the presentation said that the company is running a 5G pilot in multiple cities and network planning for the roll out of 5G using 3D maps and ray tracing technology is going on. "We are using the most modern approaches towards network planning, especially 3D maps and ray tracing technology because 5G is pretty unique technology, which requires very advanced network planning techniques, and we are undertaking that for all of India, so that as and when the approvals are received for us to roll out this network, we will be well geared-up to prioritise our rollout, where we can make the maximum contribution," Thomas said.

Auction for 5G spectrum is expected to be held in the first quarter of the next financial year.

Reliance Jio reported to close the third quarter which ended December 31 with net addition of 1.02 crore customers year-on-year (YoY) at 42.1 crore. The subscriber base, however, declined on a quarter-on-quarter basis. "We closed the quarter at 421 million subscribers. That was a reduction of 8.4 million, but the gross addition continued to be very strong 34.6 million. And the reduction was really on account of SIM consolidation and some of the less active customers, now with tariff increases, etc, looking at consolidating uses in a single SIM," Reliance Jio head of strategy Anshuman Thakur said.

On a reported number basis, Jio's ARPU remained almost flat but the company's average revenue per user (ARPU) increased by 8.4 per cent to ₹ 151.6 on a year-on-year after making adjustments interconnection usage charges (IUC) which it had to pay to other operators. The IUC charges have become nil from January 1, 2021. Jio Platforms posted an 8.8 per cent increase in net profit at ₹3,795 crore for the third quarter ended December 2021.

It had posted a net profit of ₹3,486 crore in the same period a year ago. Gross revenue from operations increased by 5.76 per cent to ₹24,176 crore from ₹ 22,858 crore in the October-December 2020 period.

Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd (RJIL), the telecom services arm of Jio Platforms, posted a 9.8 per cent rise in net profit at ₹3,615 crore for the quarter, compared to ₹3,291 crore in the year-ago period.

RJIL's revenue from operations increased 4.62 per cent to ₹19,347 crore from ₹ 18,492 crore earlier. ***PTI***

ICICI Bank Q3 consolidated profit jumps nearly 19% on NII growth, lower provisions

Mumbai: Private sector lender ICICI Bank on Saturday reported a nearly 19 per cent jump in its consolidated profit to ₹6,536 crore for the quarter ended in December 2021, helped by higher net interest income (NII) and lower provisions.

The bank had posted a profit after tax of ₹ 5,498 crore in the year-ago period.

"It was an all-round growth. We had an NII growth of 23 per cent and core operating profit also grew by 25 per cent. Our provisions declined by 27 per cent," the lender's Executive Director Sandeep Batra told reporters here.

However, total income was lower at ₹39,865.80 crore in the third quarter this fiscal compared to ₹ 40,419.08 crore in the same quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing. On a standalone basis, the profit after tax jumped by 25 per cent to ₹ 6,194 crore in the third quarter of FY2022 compared to ₹4,940 crore in the same quarter of FY2021. Total income increased to ₹ 27,069.67 crore from ₹24,416 crore in the year-ago period.

Net interest income (NII) jumped by 23 per cent year-on-year to ₹12,236 crore compared to ₹9,912 crore. Net interest margin (NIM) stood at 3.96 per cent compared to 3.67 per cent in the year-ago quarter.

Fee income grew by 19 per cent year-on-year to ₹4,291 crore from ₹ 3,601 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal.

Treasury income declined to ₹88 crore during the reporting quarter compared to ₹ 766 crore in Q3 FY2021. The treasury income in Q3 FY2021 included a gain of ₹329 crore from sale of shares of ICICI Securities, the lender said in a release.

Gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio was at 4.13 per cent in the third quarter as against 4.38 per cent in the year-ago quarter. Net NPA stood at 0.85 per cent from 0.63 per cent in the year-ago period.

Speaking of the impact of the third wave of Covid-19, Batra said, "As things stand today, the third wave may have created local disruptions. We do not anticipate, at this point of time, any significant economic disruptions to the portfolio that we have."

The lender has a Covid provision of ₹6,425 crore, which it did not release during the December quarter, he said. Provisions (excluding provision for tax) declined by 27 per cent to ₹2,007 crore from ₹ 2,742 crore. The gross addition to NPAs during the quarter was about ₹4,018 crore compared to around₹ 5,500 crore in the September quarter. Of that, retail was about ₹ 3,853 crore and corporate and SME was about ₹ 165 crore.

Recoveries and upgrades of NPAs, excluding write-offs and sale, were ₹ 4,209 crore. The gross NPAs written-off in the quarter were ₹ 4,088 crore. Its restructured book stood at ₹ 9,684 crore or 1.2 per cent of total advances as of December 31, 2021. The bank's total capital adequacy as of December 31, 2021 was 19.79 per cent.

Total advances increased by 16 per cent year-on-year to ₹ 8,13,992 as of December 31, 2021. The domestic advances grew by 18 per cent y-o-y. Its retail loan portfolio grew by 19 per cent.

Total deposits rose by 16 per cent year-on-year to ₹10,17,467 crore as of December end.

Batra said the value of credit card spends in Q3 FY2022 was 2.2 times the value of credit card spends in the year-ago period.

Meanwhile, the bank on Saturday informed exchanges that Vibha Paul Rishi has been appointed as its Additional (Independent) Director for a period of five years with effect from January 23, 2022. ***PTI***

Yes Bank Q3 profit zooms 80 pc as provisions decline

Mumbai: Yes Bank on Saturday reported 80 per cent jump in consolidated net profit at ₹265.76 crore for December quarter 2021-22, helped by a fall in the provisions for bad loans.

The bank's core net interest income declined 31 per cent to ₹1,764 crore, despite a 0.25 per cent expansion in net interest margin to 2.4 per cent but limited by the loan growth being suppressed at 4 per cent.

On a standalone basis, the profit jumped 77 per cent to ₹ 266.43 crore in the quarter under review.

Given the de-bulking exercise where it has reduced high value loans and also de-leveraging exercises by corporates, the bank has reduced its FY22 loan growth guidance to 10 per cent from the earlier 15 per cent, Managing Director and CEO Prashant Kumar said.

The provisions declined 82 per cent to ₹ 375 crore from the year-ago period's ₹ 2,089 crore, helping the bottom line.

The share of gross non performing assets (NPAs) in the overall loan portfolio declined to 14.65 per cent from 15.36 per cent in the year-ago period and quarter ago's 14.97 per cent, as the fresh slippages got contained at ₹978 crore.

The bank management said ₹435 crore came from corporate loans, ₹388 crore from retail and ₹123 crore from small businesses.

The quantum of restructured loans increased to ₹6,878 crore from the quarter ago's ₹6,184 crore, which Kumar attributed to some projects facing a delay in date of commencement of commercial operations and also the COVID-2 restructuring.

Kumar said the bank's plans for floating an asset reconstruction company (ARC) to house the entire quantum of its ₹50,000 crore in stressed advances seem to be getting delayed by a quarter due to the fresh outbreak of COVID cases. ***PTI***

E-mobility start-up, VAAN Electric Moto, launches e-bikes in India

Kochi: Indian lifestyle e-mobility startup VAAN Electric Moto Pvt Ltd has launched its electric bicycle-Urbansport in the country.

Union Minister of State for Skill Development, Entrepreneurship, Electronics and IT, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, launched the Van Electric Moto brand in India in a virtually held event in Kochi on Friday The e-bike is available in two variants- Urbansport and Urbansport Pro, priced at ₹59,999 and ₹69,999 respectively and will initially go on sale in Kochi, before being launched in other high-potential markets like Goa, Bangalore, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Delhi in the future.

According to VAAN, the vehicles offer a maximum assistance (top speed) of 25 km/h, and a pedal assisted range of 60 kilometres. VAAN claims that a full charge would require just half a unit of electricity, costing around ₹4-5. The removable battery pack, with a net weight of 2.5 kg, would offer added convenience and would require 4 hours for a full charge.

Leader of the Opposition in Kerala Assembly V D Satheesan and the Chairman and Managing Director of OilMax Energy Pvt. Ltd, Kapil Garg jointly launched the VAAN e-bikes in the Indian market. Ernakulam MP Hibi Eden unveiled the VAAN brand logo in the event in which former MP Chandran Pillai was also present. Both the electric bikes get, compact 6061 aluminium unisex frames, saddle, rims and handlebar designed by Benelli Biciclette, the e-bike vertical of the Italian brand.

"VAAN has tied with them for engineering and supply chain and has worked closely with the Benelli team for the development of the Urbansport duo," the group said in a release. VAAN claims that its removable battery is a first in this segment, adding that the bicycles come with Shimano Tourney 7 speed derailleur gear system, front and rear disc brakes and Spinner USA front shocks.

"The electric pedal assist system consists of a 250W hub mounted electric motor, a 48 Volt, 7.5 Ah removable Lithium-ion battery, and a total of 5 electric 'gear levels," it said.

VAAN Urbansport e-bikes get a Smart LCD display serving all necessary information, that can also be used to control front and rear lights. "The Urbansport is the most practical of the two and gets 20 inch spoke wheels, a carrier that can carry up to 15 kilograms and an exposed electric motor. Urbansport Pro is a more stylish and premium e-bike that offers alloy wheels and an electric motor that is neatly integrated into the rear hub," the release said.

The company's plant at Ernakulam has a capacity to assemble 2,000 cycles a month, and are initially targeting sales of 8,000 to 10,000 cycles a year. "We targeted a young crowd earlier but are now looking at even those in the age group of 40-55 years who need not be cycling enthusiasts, considering the advantages of our product that comes with three modes," Jithu Sukumaran Nair, Chief Executive Officer and founder of VAAN Electric Mobility said. He said the e-cycle has a power-assisted mode with five electric gears and a full-throttle mode ratcheting up a speed of up to 25 km per hour.

VAAN says the lithium-based removable battery weighing around 2.50 kg with a two-year warranty can be fully charged in around four hours and lasts for 50 km to 60 km depending on the mode in which the cycle is used. KTM-owned KISKA GMBH, Austria handles branding for VAAN an Indian lifestyle e-mobility start-up. It was globally launched at the EICMA motorcycle show in Italy. Vaan has technology partnership with the well-known motorcycle producer brand Benelli. ***PTI***

Asia's first-ever Email Excellence Awards

New Delhi: Asia is going to witness its first-ever email excellence award show "For the Love of Emails - Awards 2022" on February 25, 2022. The FTLOEA 2022, being organised by Asia Inc.500 and martech solution giant Netcore Cloud, offers a unique opportunity to recognise and celebrate the email marketing industry. "The event will virtually bring together the new-age email marketing communities, said Anshika Purwar, global head, strategic alliances & partnerships, Asia Inc.500.

PFS could not hold board meeting in absence of independent directors

New Delhi: Power solution provider PTC India arm PTC India Financial Services (PFS) board could not hold its scheduled board meeting on Saturday in the absence of all independent directors, a source said.

On Wednesday, the three independent directors -- Kamlesh Shivji Vikamsey, Santosh B Nayar and Thomas Mathew -- resigned enmasse from the board of PFS citing corporate governance issues. The source told PTI that the PFS cannot hold board meeting in the absence of all three independent directors as per the norms of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). The source also stated that now the company will have to seek SEBI permission or exemption for holding its board meeting. The queries sent to PFS remained unanswered. Earlier on Friday, PTC India CMD Rajib Kumar Mishra had told in a virtual press conference that PFS board will be meeting on Saturday. However, he had not divulged the details about agenda of the meeting saying it was confidential.

At present, there are three members on board of the PFC, Rajib Kumar Mishra (CMD of PTC India), Pankaj Goel (CFO PTC India) and PFS MD and CE Pawan Singh. Earlier this week, independent director of the PTC India, Rakesh Kacker, in his resignation letter, had said that despite best efforts, the "independent directors could not convince the management of PTC and PFS to take proper action to run the company in accordance with what we considered the correct course of action". ***PTI***

Confirm willingness to fund debt owned to lenders: FRL independent directors to Amazon

New Delhi: Future Retail's independent directors have asked e-commerce giant Amazon if it is willing to fund Rs 3,500 crore to repay the retail company's lenders.

Notably, the question to Amazon was posted after the e-commerce giant in an earlier letter to independent directors objected to the sale of Future Retail Ltd (FRL)'s small-format stores.

"FRL is in need for cash infusion urgently in order to repay its lenders. FRL is required to pay its lenders ₹3,500 crore by January 29, failing which it will be classified as an NPA," said the letter dated January 21.

"Since you are objecting to the sale of small-format sales, the proceeds of which were to be used to repay lenders and thereby avoid NPA classification, please confirm that you are willing to fund this amount by Monday through an unsecured, long-term loan, subordinated to FRL's existing lenders or any other mutually suitable and legally acceptable structure."

Besides, the letter to e-commerce giant said, "If you do so, FRL will use such funds in order to repay FRL's existing lenders. Alternatively, you are also free to engage with the lenders so that we do not fall foul of our OTR process or obligations." Accordingly, the independent directors asked the e-commerce giant to provide the confirmations for such funds by January 22, 2022.

"Once you have provided these confirmations in writing and agree to infuse ₹ 3,500 crore in order to repay FRL's lenders by January 29, 2022, we would be happy to assess a detailed proposal and meet Amazon India Head Abhijeet Muzumdar."

Furthermore, the letter asked Amazon, "Coming to the specific aspects of your proposal -- we note that your letter refers to a potential transaction between Samara Capital and FRL as a 'solution'."

India may try different options to avoid humiliation

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

Indian team's strategy is expected to undergo paradigm shift with some players getting a subtle yet stern message to lift their games as they face an embarrassing possibility of a clean sweep against South Africa in the third ODI, here on Sunday.

India's strategy looked completely out of sync with modern day white ball game as the batters failed to keep the momentum in the middle overs and more importantly the bowlers, save Jasprit Bumrah, looked club class and without ideas of getting breakthroughs.

In two matches, India have been only able to pick up seven wickets -- four in the first game when Proteas batted first and only three in the second. Ravichandran Ashwin and especially Bhuvneshwar Kumar, the two senior-most bowlers looked far from threatening and the young Proteas batters like Rassie van der Dussen, Janneman Malan along with seniors like Quinton de Kock have feasted on the pedestrian stuff dished out by them.

With the two having flopped completely, it needs to be seen whether Rahul Dravid, the man who is currently calling all the shots as far as tactics is concerned, takes a dim view and at least try out Jayant Yadav and Deepak Chahar in the next game which would lend some freshness to the attack.

Worse, the first two games were played on a Boland Park strip that didn't have a lot of pace and bounce and even skipper KL Rahul admitted that conditions were more familiar with what they get back home, compared to what they are used to getting in South Africa.

However at Newlands, there will be more pace and bounce on the track and the Indian team that has been perennially struggling would want to avoid the ignominy of a 0-3 loss.

For skipper Rahul, the whole tour, save his match-winning hundred in the first Test, has been a nightmare. Although he is being seen as a long-term future leader, there hasn't been any spark whatsoever in his leadership that would make anyone sit up and feel that he is the one cut out for the job. There hasn't been any tactical improvisations in the two games so far which would inspire confidence in his leadership abilities.

Add to that, his own style of batting at the top of the order is outdated in modern ODIs and his inability to rotate the strike for the better part is also creating pressure on the later batters, who aren't as adept at maneuvering the strike.

It is a foregone conclusion that once Rohit Shara is back in action, Rahul will lose his spot at the top of the order with Shikhar Dhawan scoring runs and at a better clip compared to his younger partner.

Virat Kohli may have scored 51 in the first game but what is visible is his lack of energy on the field having been sacked from ODI captaincy.

Sindhu enters final of Syed Modi

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Two-time Olympic medallist P V Sindhu reached the women's singles final of the Syed Modi International badminton tournament after her fifth seeded Russian opponent Evgeniya Kosetskaya retired hurt midway into their semifinal here on Saturday.

Sindhu, the top seed, easily pocketed the first game 21-11 before Kosetskaya conceded the second women's singles semifinal match. Former world champion Sindhu will face compatriot Malvika Bansod in the summit clash on Sunday.

Malvika defeated another Indian, Anupama Upadhyaya, 19-21 21-19 21-7 in a tough three-game contest.

It was expected to be an easy outing for Sindhu going by form, world ranking as well as head-to-head record.

Ranked seventh in the BWF rankings, Sindhu had defeated world number 28 Kosetskaya twice before Saturday's tie, and the Indian ace once again came out on top to extend her dominant record against the Russian.

IPL will start in last week of March

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BCCI is set to conduct the 2022 IPL from last week of March to end of May and efforts would be made to host the lucrative event in India as per the wishes of team owners, Board secretary Jay Shah said on Saturday.

If sources are to be believed, the tentative start date is March 27.

"I am delighted to confirm that the 15th season of the IPL will start in the last week of March and will run until May end. A majority of the team owners expressed their wish that the tournament be held in India," Shah was quoted as saying in a press note issued by the BCCI.

He also made it clear that the board's first preference is to hold the event in India.

"The BCCI was always keen on staging the 2022 edition that will see two new teams – Ahmedabad and Lucknow – in India. I can tell you that we will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that IPL stays in India," Shah said.

While the UAE and South Africa are back-up options as per sources who attended the meeting, Shah stressed that the health safety of all stakeholders including players, match officials is paramount for the board.

"The BCCI has not compromised on the health and safety of its stakeholders in the past and will concurrently work on Plan B since the COVID-19 situation with new variants remains fluid.

"The mega IPL Auction will take place on February 12-13th and we will lock in venues before that," Shah further added.

The BCCI was initially mulling two start dates for the next IPL with some preferring a March 27 kickoff and few other influential people wanting the mega event to begin on April 2, which conforms to the Lodha Committee ruling.

"Some of the owners prefer March 27 start but India play their last international game against Sri Lanka, a T20I at Lucknow on March 18, and then you need a 14-day gap as per Lodha rule which is why April 2 is also an option for start date," a senior BCCI official told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

It is understood that the India players will also be exhausted after staying in three back-to-back bubbles in South Africa (away) and at home against West Indies and Sri Lanka.

"The BCCI must take bubble fatigue of players into account if they start IPL in less than 10 days of completion of Sri Lanka tour," a BCCI source said.

However, after Shah's statement, it looks like March 27 will be locked in.

It is also learnt that all the 10 IPL owners, including the two new teams from Lucknow and Ahmedabad, want India as the host country for the 2022 IPL, with Mumbai and Pune being the two preferred cities.

Their second choice is the United Arab Emirates where the IPL has been organised thrice while the final option is South Africa where the mega event was held back in 2009.

However, the UAE and South Africa will only come into the picture if the COVID-19 situation in India worsens.

Sri Lanka and South Africa secure Super League quarterfinal spots

PTI ■ BASSETERRE (ST KITTS)

Sri Lanka sealed their qualification for the last eight stage with a dramatic three-wicket victory over West Indies while South Africa defeated Ireland by 153-runs to also book their place in the quarterfinals of the ICC U-19 World Cup.

Dunith Wellalage took three wickets as Sri Lanka restricted the hosts to 250 before Sadisha Rajapaksa (76) Anjala Bandara (40) and Ranuda Somarathna's unbeaten 28 guided the Group D winners to a three-wicket success on Friday.

WI openers Shaqkere Parris and Matthew Nandu ensured they made a steady start, reaching the end of the fifth over for 20 without loss before Treveen Mathew removed the latter for seven.

Parris was then bowled by Wellalage for 16 before Teddy Bishop and Kevin Wickham combined for a fruitful partnership, taking the West Indies to 102 for two after 26 overs.

Bishop was eventually removed on 45 but Jordan Johnson picked up where his teammate left off as he raced to 26.

Wickham reached his half-century before falling for 56.

Two wickets in three balls in the 45th over stunted the hosts' momentum, though, with Wellalage accounting for Johnson as he fell three runs short of his fifty before Giovonte Depeiza was run out moments later by Anjala Bandara without scoring.

In response, Sri Lanka lost opener Chamindu Wickramasinghe in the first over. Sadisha Rajapaksa and Shevon Daniel got their side back on track before Daniel was removed for 34.

Rajapaksa powered on regardless as he reached his fifty. Anjala Bandara contributed 40 before his wicket fell with Rajapaksa (76) also falling the same bowler in the 40th over.

With 51 needed off 60 balls for victory, Shiva Sankar removed Wellalage (15) to set up a tense finale.

Mckenny Clarke bowled Raveen De Silva (13) but a nerveless 28 from 27 balls from Ranuda Somarathna saw Sri Lanka home. In the day's other game, a blockbuster century from captain George Van Heerden propelled his side towards the Super League quarterfinals as South Africa defeated Ireland by 153 runs in Tarouba.

Van Heerden made 111 from 93 balls while Dewald Brevis better known as 'Baby AB' contributed 96 to take South Africa's total of 315 for seven from their rain-reduced 47 overs before bowling out Ireland for 158.

There has been discussions on how I need to play shots: Pant

PTI ■ PAARL

Rishabh Pant understands the value of his wicket and the reason why the team management often asks him to use his discretion in shot selection during important phases of various matches.

Pant was out to an atrocious shot during the second Test in Wanderers, which led to lot of criticism from all quarters and former skipper Virat Kohli stating that they have had a word with the talented southpaw.

"There are always positive talks that as an individual what I can do. All the strokes are there but how can I play with patience and according to the situation. So a lot of discussions happen," Pant, who since then had scored a hundred in the third Test at Cape Town and followed it with career-best 85 in the second ODI, told reporters during a virtual interaction.

"And whatever we discuss, we practise and after that try to implement in the match," he added. According to Pant, who made a career-best 85, the team management has entrusted him with responsibility of batting at four, to ensure right-left combination

"The reason to bat at number four was if a left-hander gets a chance to bat in the middle, then it becomes easy to rotate strike, with the left-right combination, especially in the middle overs when leg-spinners or left-arm spinners bowl.

".....So that is why the team management felt that a left-handed batter should bat and that is why that role was given to me," he said.

Pant also said that the team is learning from the mistakes in its endeavour to get better.

"I think as (from) a batting point of view, we are fine, we are going fine. We are learning from our mistakes and every day as the Indian cricket team we strive to improve our cricket and that is the only thing we are looking forward (to)." Pant beloeves that Shardul Thakur's batting in both games (50no and 40 no) has been one of the biggest positives in the series so far.

"One more positive was the way Shardul (Thakur) batted down the order, in both the matches, that was also a positive. The way Venky (Venkatesh Iyer) bowled, he conceded more runs in one or two overs, but still it felt that he could bowl (at this level). So, there are a lot of positives, which we can take as a team."

Pant admitted that Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram and Tabraiz Shamsi bowled better than Ravichandran Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal in the two games.

"I think they (SA spinners) were more consistent in their lines and lengths and they are used to playing in these conditions," he said.

RIP Subhas Bhowmick

PTI ■ KOLKATA

A fearless competitor who used brain and brawn in equal measure, Subhas Bhowmick was one of the most fascinating characters in Indian football through the 1970's with his muscular built and equally expressive carefree opinions.

On Saturday morning, Bhowmick, who was undergoing dialysis for a long time breathed his last at the age of 72, survived by his wife, son and daughter and the legions of fans, who loved and lived the moments left by him both on and off the field.

"He had to undergo dialysis regularly for about three and half months. He also underwent bypass surgery about 23 years ago. Recently, he was admitted to a private hospital in Ekbalpur with a chest infection," a family member said.

While India had some of the finest international footballers in 1960's which include Pradeep Banerjee, Chuni Goswami, Tulsidas Balaram, Jarnail Singh, Arun Ghosh, Peter Thangaraj to name a few, the numbers quote dwindled in the 70's save two Bengalis, who were thought of international standard. They were pint-sized right back Sudhir Karmakar and 'bulldozer' winger Bhowmick, who were both part of the 1970 Asian Games bronze winning Indian football team. Bhowmick, in fact, scored in the tournament and in his ,24 games for India had nine goals including a hattrick in the Merdeka Cup (Indian teams were regular feature in 60's and 70's) along with goals in the Asian Games in Bangkok.

Medvedev wins over Aussie crowd in win over Dutch opponent

AP ■ MELBOURNE

As Daniil Medvedev sat courtside trying to rehydrate during a changeover, an image of nine-time Australian Open champion Novak Djokovic flashed up in the stadium behind him.

It was in the third set Saturday, and it was like the absent No. 1 was looking over the shoulder of the player who is effectively the No. 1 seed at the year's first Grand Slam tournament. Medvedev, who lost last year's Australian Open final to Djokovic but avenged that with a victory over the Serb for the U.S. Open title, reached the fourth round for the fourth straight year at Melbourne Park with a 6-4, 6-4, 6-2 win over Botic van de Zandschulp.

The 25-year-old Russian was a conspicuous fan favorite on Margaret Court Arena, too, two days after being unsettled by the boos and jeers of a parochial crowd on Rod Laver Arena when he ended the run of mercurial Aussie Nick Kyrgios.

He was critical of a lack of respect in that match — mostly about the noise between first and second serves — and this time offered some relationship advice to the crowd.

"Every good relationship must have its ups and downs," he said in his on-court TV interview, explaining that he planned to be back on court quite often in the future.

"I hope it's going to be more good times than bad times, otherwise it doesn't work."

Medvedev later clarified he didn't have a problem with the Australian crowds and had been fully expecting to have them against him when he played Kyrgios — just not while he was in his service motion.

"The other night I was playing against an Australian player, very electric Australian player," he said.

"After the match, I think it was, yeah, straightaway pretty actually fun for everybody.

"That's how I felt, and I didn't see actually a lot of let's say negative reactions." Medvedev avoided a showdown with Djokovic after the world's top-ranked player had his visa canceled and was deported on the eve of the tournament.

Villa rub salt into Toffees' wounds

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Everton's change of management did not result in a change of fortunes as Aston Villa manager Steven Gerrard enjoyed a winning return to Merseyside with a 1-0 victory at Goodison Park.

Emiliano Buendia's header in first half stoppage time separated the sides to leave the Toffees still just five points above the relegation zone in 16th.

Duncan Ferguson took temporary charge of Everton following the sacking of Rafael Benitez last weekend after a run of just one win in 13 league games.

Ferguson was unbeaten in three matches as caretaker boss against Chelsea, Manchester United and Arsenal before Carlo Ancelotti took charge just over two years ago.

But he could not replicate that success as former Liverpool captain Gerrard got one over on his old rivals.

Ferguson bought a round of drinks for fans in a pub next to the stadium before kick-off and got the raucous atmosphere he was looking for.

Both sides flew into tackles, but there were few clear-cut chances in the first half. Ollie Watkins should have done better when he prodded wide with just Jordan Pickford to beat.

Another former Liverpool midfielder Philippe Coutinho was quiet on his first Villa start since joining on loan from Barcelona, but had a part to play in the only goal.

The Brazilian's header was tipped over by Pickford.

From the resulting corner, Lucas Digne came back to haunt his former club just weeks after leaving Everton as his corner was flicked in by Buendia.

Digne and Matty Cash were hit by a bottle thrown by the home fans as they celebrated the goal.

Everton should have salvaged at least a point after the break in their battle to beat the drop.

Dominic Calvert-Lewin and Richarlison started together up front for the first time since August and both the Toffees star men were guilty of missing big chances to equalise.

Richarlison headed over before Calvert-Lewin failed to make a good connection to Anthony Gordon's teasing low cross.

India eye goals in must-win game against Chinese Taipei

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

Hosts India will need to be more clinical with their finishing when they face a struggling Chinese Taipei in a must-win group match of the women's Asian Cup here on Sunday.

India were held to a goalless draw by lower-ranked Iran in their tournament opener, while Chinese Taipei were blanked 4-0 by eight-time champions China.

A FIFA World Cup play-offs spot within their grasp, India are seeking to meet their head coach Thomas Dennerby's "realistic target" of making the quarterfinals, for which they will need to win the next match at all costs, as the home team is scheduled to play Group A heavyweights China in its last league fixture.

A win for India, which is hosting the continental showpiece for the second time after 1979, will virtually send the country into the quarterfinals of the 12-nation tournament.

Besides the two top teams, two third-placed sides across the three groups will also qualify for quarterfinals.

All the semi-finalists of the ongoing tournament will directly qualify for the 2023 FIFA World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

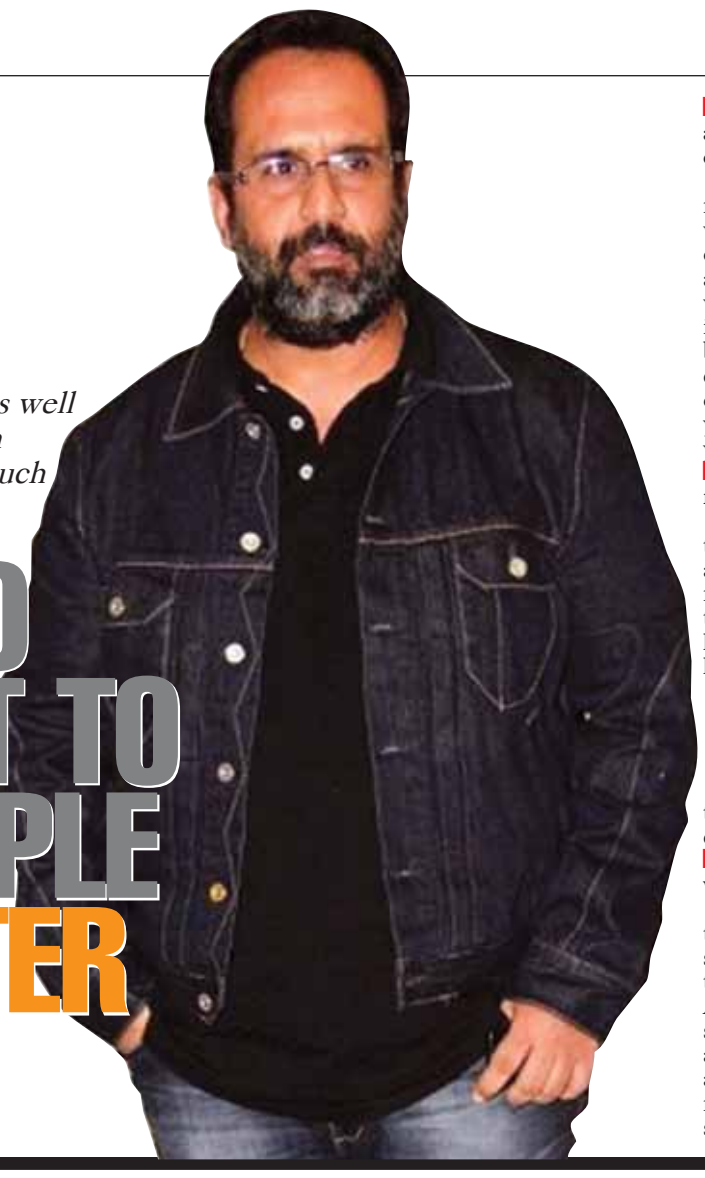
Two more teams from the remaining four quarterfinalists will also get direct berths to the World Cup if Australia make it to the semi-finals of this tournament, which is highly probable.

talktime

ANAND L RAI

The director known for films like Nil Battey Sannata *and* Shubh Mangal Savdhan *latest venture* Atrangi Re *was well received on the OTT. He speaks with* Shalini Saksena *about why he chose such an unconvetional subject this time*

'I WANT TO REACH OUT TO MORE PEOPLE WITH BETTER STORIES'



It's an unconventional film and a brave attempt. What made you choose such a subject?

Thank you so much first of all for liking the film. It's more to do with my audience — the strength comes from them. For me, it's to be able to come up with the story which is gutsy. After so many years, it becomes my responsibility to bring something new for the audience. It's not just about being successful. It's more to do with how you contribute to the newness of your cinema.

How important is it to be original with every subject you choose?

It is very important for a director to be original with the story and am very thankful to the audience for accepting it and loving it. When they have not liked something, it has been an unusual experience. It has given strength be it films like *Tanu Weds Manu Returns* and *Zero,* they have helped me to bring something new *Atrangi Re*. May be I am a good student who is learning with every film. I want to reach out to more people with better stories everytime.

Were you sceptical if the story will connect with the audience?

I always knew I am walking on thin ice. But I wanted to tell this story. I wanted to bring out something which is as centrical to *Atrangi Re*. May be subconsciously a story like this was not happening around us. Nobody was working on a script like this. I wanted to tell a father-daughter story with a perspective in this film. I am happy that people accepted it.

How did AR Rehman get on board for the film?

The only credit I take for this is that I was very sure that the movie had to have AR Rehman music. The minute we (Himanshu Sharma and I) finalised the story, the first name that came up was Rehman sir. This is a sensitive story. He was a pillar of strength for us. He is so good with the emotions. We were sure that we needed him for this movie. There was never a doubt in my mind. We would not have done the project if he had not come on board.

> I WAS VERY SURE THAT THE MOVIE HAD TO HAVE AR REHMAN MUSIC. THE MINUTE THE STORY WAS FINALISED, THE FIRST NAME THAT CAME UP WAS HIS. THIS IS A SENSITIVE STORY. HE IS SO GOOD WITH EMOTIONS. WE WOULD NOT HAVE DONE THE PROJECT IF HE HAD NOT COME ON BOARD

What was the reason to choose a small town as your backdrop?

With characters like Rinku and Vishu it is always interesting to explore with characterisation. It has more to do with the flavour rather than the location. It's to do with the character they bring to life. It's not about the place it's about the character. A small town adds culture to the characters. It goes so well. Every film teaches me so much.

Can you tell us something about your future projects Good luck Jerry, Raksha Bandhan?

Now that this film is over, I will be taking a break for a few days. In fact, I am on my break at present. Once I am back, I will officially start working on the post-production for *Raksha Bandhan* since the shoot is complete. The same is for *Good Luck Jerry.* The shoot is complete. Final edit changes are being done. *Action Hero* will go on floor in the next few days. I am working on different stories. I am really looking forward to 2022. My production house Colour Yellow Productions has so much to offer.

CookSmart

While eating out is fun, sometimes you want to stay at home and yet make a dish that tastes like it came stright from the best restaurant kitchen. One such dish that most people balk at making is the risotto. Follow these tips to make a lip-smacking risotto.

Don't use cold stock. Keep the stock on simmer. Stirring the rice constantly will add air into the risotto. slowly adding stock, you allow the rice to bump up against each other, creating that creamy starch. Like pasta, the rice should be al dente — just cooked, with a little bite to it.

If your pot is too wide, the rice will cook in a thin layer and won't be able to bump and grind enough to generate starch. The rice should be at a medium simmer throughout cooking. Save things like mascarpone and parmesan for the end.

Chopped onions and garlic add a classic flavour base to risotto. They add a hint of sweetness to the dish.

HomeSweetHome

When you begin o redo your home, people will tell you that you must have a theme and stick to a pattern. But experts tell you that doesn't have to be the case.

You don't need to stick to one pattern. You can mix two or three prints.A word of caution — pay attention to the patterns — smaller, busier prints look best on compact surfaces like cushions. Bold, large patterns usually work well with white space around them.

If you don't want to spend big bucks on a corner that is empty, just add a plant. They add depth and character to a room. They also add much-needed colour to the roomand bring freshness. You can place plants in earthen pots, cups, mason jars or terrariums.

Several smal objects are visually appealing than a single piece. You could arrange clusters of earthen pots in different sizes and even two pairs of cushions in different patterns.

Masterstroke

After the huge success in North America, OnetapHELLO recently launched their innovative tech product in the Indian market to change the way people connect, share information and network. This start-up lets people share their information like contact details, social media profiles, business profiles, websites, option to make payments and much more, all with just a tap of a phone or scan of a QR code. They have introduced multiple NFC based physical products like digital business cards and trendy tags that allow short-distance wireless data transmission between two devices, or between one device and an unpowered tag, all by just one tap on the devices. Jayesh Narani, Entrepreneur and Data Governance expert is the Founder and CEO of OnetapHELLO. His vision is to make sustainable networking tools that have a lower environmental impact.

NatureTalk

With a border of green and pink centre, the Coleus (Pink) is a pretty plant. While it doesn't thrive in very cold temperatures, this perinnial plant can do well, if taken care of. It thrives in cool, even moist, well-drained soil. Consistent moisture is good, but soggy conditions cause root disease.

Keep them out of the wind to avoid breakage. Coleus will not survive a frost, so either treat your plant as an annual or move it inside when temperatures begin to drop.

Most coleus plants require about 6 hours of sunlight in the morning hours with shade being preferred all afternoon.

Grand musical journey

The present pandemic has once again thrown a curve ball. Music is the purest form of medium that resonates with everyone. Swarna Swar Bharat, a reality show on Zee TV, is a step in this direction, says SHALINI SAKSENA

The COVID-19 has once again thrown a curve ball making us pray for the good health and safety of our family and friends. We are looking for ways that can help us connect with him. Music, one is told is one of the purest forms of medium that connects our soul with God. Our scriptures talk about how *sadhus* and saints took to devotional songs to find a connection with divinity.

Keeping this in mind as the basic concept, Zee TV is all set to introduce the first-of-its-kind devotional singing reality show — *Swarna Swar Bharat.* One is told that the show will celebrate the country's values and take us back to our roots through a unique blend of insightful and relatable stories narrated in verse and soulful devotional music.

Aparna Bhosle, Zee TV's business head, tells you that music is the most organic and powerful medium for man to communicate with the powers above, irrespective of faith. "It is through devotional music; be it in the form of the flute, the *shankh naad* or chanting that most of us feel connected with divinity. Offering our audiences a few moments of solace while reconnecting them to their roots through devotional music and stories of Indian culture narrated in verse, we are happy to present *Swarna Swar Bharat*. This first-of-its-kind devotional singing reality show is a grand celebration of Indian culture," Bhosle says.

What is even more interesting is that through fictional narrative being portrayed through magical realism, this show will bring us the stories of some of our immortal Gods and Goddesses like Lord Vishnu, Goddess Laxmi, Narad Muni, Ganapathi and Hanuman from the vedic texts and scriptures that are relevant even today.

Produced by Fathom Pictures and Kailasa Entertainment Pvt Ltd, this reality show is also humble contribution to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav* that celebrates India's rich cultural heritage on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of our Independence.

The show will have renowned poet Dr Kumar Vishwas, Padmashri Kailash Kher and Padmashri Suresh Wadkar as judges. Each of them have felt a strong connect with divinity through countless devotional songs that they have sung over the years. The show will present a talented bunch of singers from different parts of the country. Actor Ravi Kishan who was recently seen in MX Player's *Matsya Kaand*, playing a cop, has ben roped in as the host.

Kher tells you that there a couple of reason how and why he came on board as a judge. First, this show is unique. "There is no other show like this one. The concept is new. I am thrilled that I was chosen not only as judge but am the co-producer too (Kailasa Entertainment Pvt Ltd)," Kher says.

> THIS SHOW IS VERY UNIQUE. THERE IS NO OTHER SHOW LIKE THIS ONE. THE CONCEPT IS NEW. I AM THRILLED THAT I WAS CHOSEN NOT ONLY AS JUDGE BUT I AM THE CO-PRODUCER TOO
> — PADMASHRI KAILASH KHER

He tells you that the concept of the show is such that it was not easy to execute. "The idea of the show was a brilliant one. But it was tough to put things in reality. It was necessary to give the team a boost that what they are doing is fantastic. Hence, we stepped in as co-producers," Kher tells you.

Second, this is the first time in the history of television, music and film industry that entertainment and enlightment have come together. "We have avoided doing this in the past. But not now. The idea is to tell people that if your body, mind and soul aren't healthy however much you may have risen professionally, there is no point in running after things blindly. People, through this show, besides being entertained will also be able to enrich their lives. The last two years have proved how helpless we have been in the face of COVID-19. It is time that we lived our lives that is aligned with nature," Kher opines.

The show will be judged on the basis of *sur, saar* and *bhaav*. "*Sur* will be judged by Suresh Wadkar *ji*, *saar* by Kumar Vishwas *ji* (how important are the words, the lyrical value) and I will judge the *bhaav* (with how much devotion it has been sung). This time, we are not calling ourselves judges; we are *guruvars*," Kher tells us.

For Dr Kumar Vishwas, the reason for coming on board is simple. Though he used to get many offers, he was looking for a show where what he had learnt could be used for a wider good. "I wanted to be part of a show where I could share tales of people who were proud to be called Indians; that I could share ancedotes on what these kids were singing. When I was approached by Zee TV, I saw no reason to turn it down. I am grateful to the makers of this show who explained the concept so beautifully," Vishwas tells you.

He was very happy to learn that there are people who can come with such an interesting concept. "It is very nice that there are people who want to create humanity of the soul, thought and heart in the society. Big nations are not built of brick and mortar, it is the thoughts that count. Our culture is thousands of year old. If cracks appeared because we were slaves and there are people who are making a show to mend this tear, it is a beautiful gesture," Vishwas says.

Swarna Swar Bharat premiered on January 22, 2022; it will air every Sat-Sun at 8 pm

SAMIR SONI, who made his debut with the Hindi serial Samandar, speaks with SUPRIYA RAMESH about his book *My Experiments with Silence: The Diary Of An Introvert*

'We need to redefine success'

Could you tell us more about your book?

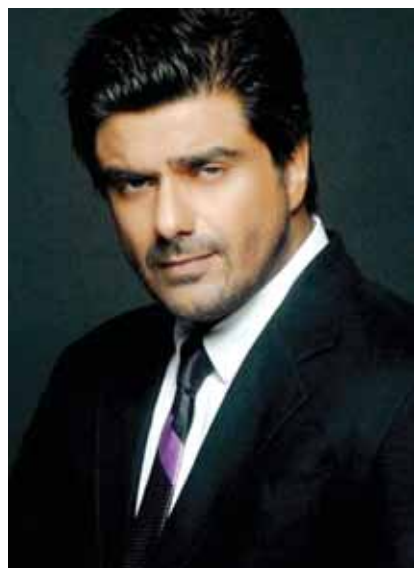
It has got prose and poetry. There is a part about self-discovery, finding out what's your place in society and in your mind. Because we live in an extroverted world and if you find yourself not being represented or relate to them, you feel like an outsider no matter where you go. Hopefully, anyone and everyone who has dealt with issues of not belonging, will relate to it because my book is dedicated to all the misfits in the world.

How can this book help a reader?

I have shared my journey and how I dealt with it. Hopefully, some might relate and get inspired by dwelling into their own journey. Another issue that I raise is that, what exactly is success because our generation is plagued by being successful without knowing what that really means. In the 21st century, we need to redefine success and what does it mean to be successful.

Why do you think introverts need constant validation?

I am not saying that introverts need constant validation. It's me who needs constant validation. It's not constant but driven by validation. Introverts have their own battles to fit in. Just like in an extroverted world, most introverts don't fit. For example, I remember going to go see an IPL match. And there were like 30-40 thousand people shouting Sachin and going crazy over him. I loved it but after a while I just wanted to go home and watch the same match on TV without 30 thousand people screaming into my ears. Introverts find that overwhelming and if you don't know better you will think that there is something wrong with you. I don't want to make a valid judgement like experts on how they lead their lives. What is happening is that inherently the world is dominated and driven by extroverted value systems. A lot of introverts feel undervalued and they might feel the need to do something or there is something missing in them.



What is mental well-being according to you?

I think you need to figure out what is conditioning, what is true for you and what false value systems you might be carrying with you. You might have a belief system which won't have any basic reality. It is what you are told, it is what you are fed and it's what the society told you. So, mental well-being is a way of self extraction. It's like climbing Mount Everest just because others say that it's a great thing to climb Mount Everest.

What is that one thing you would like to tell the readers?

If you are happy, God bless you. May you always be happy. But if you are not happy or you are struggling with something, get to the bottom of it and discover yourself. Maybe, you are a diamond and are embarrassed of the fact that you shine so much.

Sound of music

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

Bollywood vibes

Fillhaal 2 (BPraak, Jaani)
Galat (Asees Kaur)
Jaane De (Atif Aslam)
Aaj Bhi (Vishal Mishra)
Kaise Hua (Vishal Mishra)

English Vinglish

Goosebumps (HVME)
Blinding Lights (The Weeknd)
Dynamite (BTS)
SugarCrash! (Elyotto)
Hold On (Justin Bieber)

sunday magazine
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the pioneer
agenda

I like to be in the spotlight once in a while, and then I like to be in the shadows. It's really regenerating
— Monica Bellucci

FROM THE INSIDE

Dynamics of Karma & Destiny 2
As we create the world along with our cravings and attachments, these are apparently writing our destiny, through us

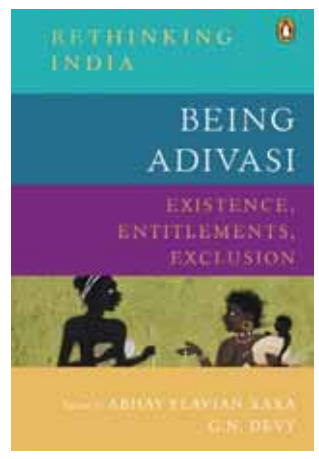
Life: Harmony of opposites 4
Creation is a result of convergence of the opposites. So, reconciling dualities of life is called for

BEING ADIVASI

As G.N. DEVY, the editor of *Being Adivasi* with the late Abhay Xaxa, shares in his introduction: 'I would like to hope that it is received not just as a publication or academic exercise but as a prelude to change that is now overdue, a change that will bring to the Denotified & Nomadic communities at least some measure of justice and human rights that they expect to get as citizens of a democratic country & to Adivasis the understanding of their distinct identity. We, the people of India, owe it to them as the indigenous people of India'. An edited excerpt:

If the awareness of Adivasis and their concerns is scant among the non-Adivasi population of India, knowledge about communities described as 'Denotified Tribes' is almost absent. Lest the term be misunderstood as 'some kind of Adivasis' or 'officially non-recognised Adivasis' — which is not unusual among even those who know something about Adivasis — I would like to offer the following brief description of the Denotified Tribes. During the nineteenth century, after the British had more or less secured authority over all princely states in India, they found it necessary to disarm the disbanded soldiers of the vanquished armies of Indian princes. The British also wanted to ensure safe travels in Indian states for commercial purposes. In order to accomplish the two objectives, they appointed William Henry Sleeman to detect the use of arms by unauthorised individuals. Sleeman made copious notes and listed instances of armed clashes on highways in central India. In the process, he gave rise to the idea of 'thuggee'. The idea attracted readers of his books back in England. The list of persons and their communities came to be associated with the idea of thuggee or communities that make looting and crime their profession. The1871 Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) was based on this notion. It listed communities as 'criminal communities', implying that being born in any of those communities made one automatically criminal intendency. The CTA provided for 'reformatory settlement', which were soft prisons. The listed communities were interned in these settlements, with severe restrictions placed on their free movement. Sleeman's list had many flaws in it. Most of the communities had been traditionally nomadic in habit, an age-old social phenomenon in India. Members of the interned communities were put to hard labour, in most instances unpaid labour.

It is difficult to estimate as to how many perished due to the stress of labour. The members of these communities continued to live in the settlements for several generations spread over eight decades. In1952, two years after India adopted the Constitution, the 'notified' communities were 'denotified'. They continued to be described as Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DNT), while very few of them found a place in the official lists of *jan-jatis*, the 'indigenous peoples' or Adivasis. The stigma of criminality continued to stick to them despite the slight change in the label. Not being included in the lists of STs and SCs, with a few exceptions, they continued to languish without land, livelihood or access to schools and healthcare. Not having fixed addresses, their minimum rights as citizens too were not safeguarded. The stigma around their name often causes harassment from villagers and the urban population even to this day. There have been widespread incidences of mob lynching of members of the DNT communities. Governments have been generally indifferent to the plight of the DNTs as they do not form even a substantial minority, though their total population in the country is by no means insignificant. When Dr Manmohan Singh's United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government appointed me as chairman of the Technical Advisory Group for the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Communities, I found that the population of the DNTs could be close to seven-eight crore.That was in 2008. At present, the number may have gone up and may be close to ten crore. The Census of India has never carried out any clear counting of the DNTs. And since the numbers are not officially ascertained, the locations of these communities are not properly documented and no systematic thought has been given to their livelihood requirements and their human rights; they continue to remain in India's imagination as the invisible nowhere people. The present volume includes an introductory essay on the DNTs. For several decades following Independence, 'Adivasi' was an anthropomorphic 'type' cast in sentiment and piety, or else dismissed as historical baggage worth leaving behind in India's march to modernity and nationhood. Though the complexities of Adivasi society received attention in scholarships related to the theme, the popular attitude to Adivasis was severely restricted by the acronym 'ST'. Excessive pity and excessive contempt are both equally potent instruments of 'othering' people. It is therefore that Archana Prasad's analysis of the class-currents within Adivasi communities becomes important as an antidote to the 'othering' processes. She concludes, after presenting a nuanced analysis of the tensions and textures in Adivasi contemporary identity discourse: ". . . the multifarious manifestations of neoliberal policies have also created diverse forms of Adivasi politics with different social basis. It is therefore important to distinguish between identity based struggles which have been led by those who are situated within the working class and those whose motive has been to get incorporated within the current power structure. Further, the culturally exclusive character of Adivasi politics is also hegemonic and camouflages the inequalities within the Adivasi society. On the other hand, non-culturally exclusive class politics has had to come to terms with the persistence of identity-based politics by adopting a more nuanced approach towards it. This collaboration has been facilitated by the intensifying communal polarisation and economic crisis, leading to the transformation of Adivasi politics, both class and identity based. Such a development is not only positive, but also essential to take on an authoritarian and neo-liberal government and the challenges that it poses to all progressive forces within the country."



> FOR SEVERAL DECADES FOLLOWING INDEPENDENCE, 'ADIVASI' WAS AN ANTHROPOMORPHIC 'TYPE' CAST IN SENTIMENT AND PIETY, OR ELSE DISMISSED AS HISTORICAL BAGGAGE WORTH LEAVING BEHIND IN INDIA'S MARCH TO MODERNITY AND NATIONHOOD

It needs to be mentioned that the facts of Adivasi political expression, cultural production and major social struggles over the last half century, all go to show that the general perception of Adivasis and their participation in modern India's process of becoming falls woefully short of reality. The new-generation Adivasis are keen to create a more realistic view, one that is from the perspective of Adivasis. Abhay Xaxa states in clear words: "Apart from development issues, there was also a demand for a stringent anti-conversion law which has been used as a tool to divide the Adivasi communities on the lines of religion.The communal agenda of these organisations has gradually created a fear among people who don't subscribe to the dominant discourse of assimilating the Adivasis in the Hindu fold. As a result, the harmonious relationship between various Adivasi and forest dependent communities have been broken and communal violence is also increasingly experienced in Adivasi areas."

In order to obtain this view, the UPA-II government appointed the Committee headed by Virginius Xaxa. Abhay Xaxa refers to the Xaxa Committee report and points out that: "The panel recommended radical changes to the laws, regulations and rules to protect Adivasi communities from land alienation and to ensure their rights over resources are handed back and protected. The report also laid out an overhauled, expansive and detailed framework for providing better education, health and opportunities to tribal communities across the country. If the recommendations of the Xaxa committee are implemented, it will surely have an empowering effect on Adivasi communities."

On the other hand, N.C. Saxena's essay presents a deeply sympathetic but somewhat predictably simplified view. Dr Saxena's historically important contribution to Adivasi development and the role he played inside government bureaucracy in favour of Adivasis are of a legendary proportion. Yet, seen from an Adivasi perspective, his overview is likely to be read as slightly less than a full view of what is happening today inside the minds of Adivasi communities in India. Saxena states: "The oppressed tribals, unlike other disadvantaged groups, generally suffer and endure their exploitation silently. In some areas, however, they have taken to armed insurgency. The middle path of agitational politics by organising bundhs, taking out processions, and putting pressure on the politicians, so successfully adopted by other groups in India to articulate their grievances, is alien to the tribals and has historically been unknown to them. Civil society needs to play a big role here, and government too should not brand all tribal activists as Maoists."

These comments need to be read together with fictional works by Mahasweta Devi in order to understand that the silence of Adivasis is not the absence of voice but rather a powerful statement which we have not yet begun grasping. The 'silence' is extremely powerfully articulated by Vikrant B.: ". . . stunted reading of social, economic and political realities created a host of mythologies and prejudices with respect to Adivasis and tribes in India. They were perceived to be isolated, self-sufficient, animist, under-developed and backward. Seemingly harmless, these mythologies have had serious policy and political implications. For example, tribes are seen as inter-linked with castes in India, by policymakers, academics, and even in popular perception. At one level, it is perhaps necessary to denote common subalternity, so as to emphasise the State's obligation to their upliftment and empowerment. However, this manufactured equivalence glosses over the fact that while the Dalit question is relatively centre stage in the nation's consciousness, the Adivasi question is not."

The last clause of this paragraph sums up the purpose of this volume. It is, in the simplest words, to present 'the Adivasi question.' It includes the question of Adivasis in the context of modern India, the questioning of the nation's ideas of development by Adivasis and also the manner in which Adivasis pose their questions within the much-misunderstood framework of their understanding of what democracy means. Or, in other words, the Adivasi is the question handled by this volume, the Adivasi manner of questioning too is its concern and the questions raised by Adivasis before the Indian nation too are its paramount concern.

Extracted from Being Adivasi: Existence, Entitlements, Exclusion *by Abhay Xaxa (Editor), Ganesh N. Devy (Editor) & run with due permissions from Samruddha Bharat Foundation and publishers Penguin Random House India*

DESTINY HAS TWO WAYS OF CRUSHING US — BY REFUSING OUR WISHES AND BY FULFILLING THEM
— HENRI FREDERIC AMIEL

DYNAMICS OF KARMA & DESTINY

As we create the world along with our cravings and attachments, these are apparently writing our destiny, through us, shares HINGORI

Karma and Destiny — these words are quite familiar and a part of our everyday conversation. However, when we dig deeper into the true meaning of these, we come to realise what appears simple isn't so if we view it from the lens of duality.

So, what are Karma and Destiny? It would not be very wrong, if we were to say that memory and latent tendencies (conditioning of the mind) is 'Destiny' and 'perceived action' as a result of the circumstances created by this combination of memory and latent tendencies, is Karma.

Let's examine what this memory is, and why the action is described as 'perceived'. When deeds get stored in the perceived subconscious, the tendencies and memory come together to create a situation where the action needs to come to fruition. The stored deeds awaiting fruition are destiny and the fruition itself is karma. When we view it from a lens of duality, we perceive all of this within the mind.

Our scriptures say, all that has been created is from and in the infinite consciousness or the consciousness supreme. Like when we dream, we create form, experiences, consequences and feelings, but when we wake up from the dream, we realise it was all unreal. Those who are in an enlightened or in an awakened state see themselves as no different from this consciousness supreme, and the actions, and all else that exists, are a part of the dream and therefore, unreal that we view as real, only in our perception.

As we create the world along with our cravings and attachments, these are apparently writing our Destiny, through us. However, rather than being truly written, its being imagined. Since the past, past present and future too, are measures of the mind and for the sake of simplicity, may be viewed as stacked in a layered manner as opposed to linear progression, the fruition is not awaiting a subsequent date, but is also happening in the moment. This is quite like watching a movie at home, one has the ability to forward, rewind, skip and imagine what is likely to happen in the movie. Now imagine the director of the movie conceiving it in his mind — all the parts, wardrobes, the sets, the visual cues and each scene being shot independent of the other to be strung together later as he deems fit. As you start to see how this plays out, so do our lives in terms of Karma and Destiny.

When we identify ourselves as distinct from the infinite consciousness, we create duality as a result of the mind and egotism, however in reality there is only one perpetual truth - simplistically stated as us being the creations of the thought or imagination of the consciousness supreme. Therefore,all that exists, all beings, their minds, their fruition, exists in the infinite consciousness.

Some like Sage Bhrigu and Nostradamus have seen this movie called destiny because they see the infinite consciousness, and all the memories, tendencies, characters and the actions are ultimately just a part of this consciousness. To explain it in simple terms — if we can wake up, recount and document each detail of the dream we have witnessed, we will be able to write a perceived prophecy, since in each dream there are beings, environments, elements actions and consequences. Like in a dream, in an enlightened state we transcend time since we are capable of viewing all that is on at the same time. In any event, from the place we are viewing it, time is a measure of epochs and not years.

So, what about free will? Is that too an illusion? How can there be free will when it is being conceived of something that in itself is unreal? The action too exists in our mind and has been determined by our memory and tendencies — it is also being created like in a dream where we are imagining new things as we deal with the existing. Our individualised consciousness is the recipient of the memories pending fruition, and we then live part of these out, and create another set of memories for further fruition.This is why it is said that the scenarios repeat till we learn our lessons.If the perceived action plays out in a way that we perceive as wrong, we create a different script from this, for fruition at another time. However, when our embedded memories believe that the action has fructified, the memory is discarded as it creates no further actions and leads us on the path to freedom from *samsara*. All of this too is unreal, much like a simulation or as in a movie like the Matrix or Inception. However, unlike the movies you don't need 'software codes' or 'spinning tops' to second guess the truth.

> WHEN WE IDENTIFY OURSELVES AS DISTINCT FROM THE INFINITE CONSCIOUSNESS, WE CREATE DUALITY AS A RESULT OF THE MIND AND EGOTISM

Once you realise it, you see the movie as the director as opposed to actor impacted and immersed in the role so deeply that he is unable to see the difference between what is 'real' and what is 'reel'.

Can destiny be changed? Only a *Siddh Guru* can change destiny. Being enlightened, he knows the true nature of reality as he is 'one' with the reality. It is easy for him to distinguish between what is real and the unreal. He can alter the unreal through a simple thought. A *Siddh Guru* is the guide who can take you through the journey of self-enquiry and help you overcome the inner turmoil that arises from cravings of the mind.

While the above explanations are perhaps those at a 'school level' in the spiritual journey, you will need a *Siddh Guru* to accelerate your 'Spiritual PHD'. It's a journey of experiencing and realisation through the experiences. And as you go through it, you will know that there are not timelines that can be set in the world we are familiar with in order to help you get there. So be patient and aware of your experiences.

The writer is the author of Hingori Sutras series of spiritual books

HIDDENSOULS
PRAMOD PATHAK

Disease of the century

If we ask somebody what is the disease of the present century the answer we are likely to get would be Covid-19. How ironical and sad because the disease of the previous century also was something similar though it was called by a different name — Spanish flu. Two conclusions can be drawn. First, that we have hardly achieved anything significant to prove that humanity has grown in strength when it comes to being a match for nature's power and intrigues. True, we have spent billions on so called research and technology to make human beings less vulnerable. But neither the research nor the technology came to our rescue in the battle against this pandemic. Yes, the research and technology has made a few richer and many poorer. The second conclusion that we can draw is that our predicament will be no better hundred years from now when it comes to man versus nature. But this reality notwithstanding, let's come back to the initial question regarding the disease of the century. But is Covid-19 really the disease of the century? Not exactly. And the reasons are not far to seek. Of course, the recent coronavirus pandemic was in some way responsible for killing a large number of people around the world. But so are many other diseases. Then there are many other reasons why people die. Accidents, suicides and what not. Further, in many cases deaths cannot be attributed to one single reason because of the fact that multiple causation cannot be ruled out. Moreover, statistical data is hardly reliable, given the problems in their recording, accuracy, and, of course, ability and desirability of the enumerators. For the same reasons there are many who say that deaths due to Covid-19 were not correctly reported. Not just in India, even in more advanced countries like the US, deaths are usually recorded by the precipitating cause. Incidentally, even this is not very accurately diagnosed. Thus, in many cases it is difficult to pinpoint exact cause of death. These days, to further confound the confusion a new term co-morbidity has found its way into the popular discourse. So it is difficult to be sure whether corona aggravated co-morbid conditions or co-morbid conditions worsened corona. However, in reporting deaths, corona finds a place more often, given the excessive noise around the pathogen that leads to availability bias. This is a psychological phenomenon, a mental shortcut that people tend to resort to while evaluating, due to excessive information about the subject. These days we found that everything veered around corona increasing the possibility of availability bias. And there were other interests,too. In fact, those other interest played a major role in precipitating the crisis. No marks for guessing what were those interests. We may come to that a little later, but see what these interests led to. Hundreds of so called scientific research papers being published and circulated everyday worldwide, and without any clinching evidence or conclusion. It seemed as if confusion was helping the cause of some interested quarters. We are into strange times that is wrongly called knowledge era. It is a purely business era. Everything is business, business is everything. Health is business. Education is business. Religion is business. Even relationship is also business. It is the commerce age. Naturally, in this age greed is the biggest disease.

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Meditate on colours

Colour meditation requires you to focus on chakras and their colours to maintain an ideal balance, writes AARRTI ZAVERI

Colours are an integral and essential part of our daily lives. Their role in our lives is at times dramatic and at others subtle. They can be used to express, impress and more. There are numerous ancient cultures around the world that believe in the healing powers of colours. Chromo therapy also known as light therapy is a popular holistic healing and meditating treatment. Psychologists and medical researchers, have for years, conducted several studies on the effect of colours on the psyche. Advertisements incorporate conscious use of colour to emanate certain feelings about products and places. For the same reason, we believe that focusing on colours during your daily meditation will prove to have a significant impact on your daily meditation.

Before we delve into this, let's understand the relationship between colours and *chakras*. The sanskrit word for wheel, '*chakra*' is known to be located in a straight line with your spine. The seven *chakras* in the body run down the centre, right from the top of your head to the base of your spine. Each *chakra* is an individual energy centre and has a unique colour representing it. Colour meditation requires you to focus on each of your *chakras* and their respective colours to maintain an ideal balance between body and mind. This balance will thereby promote healing and peace of mind. The *chakras* can be related to the elements of the Earth — air, fire, water, ether, spiritual awakening and enlightenment. The seven *chakras* and the colours associated with them are:

- **Red:** The colour represents the *chakra* located at the root of your spine. It is known as your life force and represents stability. While meditating focusing on the colour red will help you assuage gnawing feelings of frustration and anger. Red is the colour that stimulates your body and mind thereby increasing your stimulation.
- **Orange:** It represents the *chakra* located in the naval area, also known as the sacral *chakra*. Focusing on the colour orange will help you mitigate issues with sensuality, relationships, physical pressure, emotional self expression and creativity. Orange is known to kick start your nervous system and activate stimulation.
- **Yellow:** Just below your breastbone, is located your solar plexus chakra. Yellow focuses on your solar plexus *chakra* and has an impact on your optimism, happiness and thought processes. Yellow is the colour that affects your physical vitality, mental awareness and ability to think and process analytically.
- **Green:** The heart *chakra* is located in the centre of your chest. Green focuses on your heart *chakra* and instills emotions of peace, love and nurturing. It initiates physical healing. This is why most hospitals are painted green.
- **Blue:** Located at the base of your larynx is the throat *chakra* and blue focuses on it. While meditating, focusing on your throat *chakra* will help you with your confidence and self expression. Physically blue controls your thyroid gland and lymphatic system.
- **Indigo:** This represents the third eye *chakra*, i.e. located in the middle of your forehead. Focusing on the colour while meditation will help with your intuition and peace of mind.
- **Violet:** Located at the top of your skull the crown *chakra* is represented by the violet colour. Meditating on the colour will help you align with universal consciousness and make your more self aware and at peace with your self.

The writer is a visual artist

Are you secure?

Taking shelter of God is tough, because one has to give up *ahankar*, an intrinsic part of us, writes AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

My honest answer is no; I don't except, occasionally. As I am a thinking person, I am always looking for ways to feel secure. There are not so many ways; there is just one. I have to take shelter of God, period. As you may have guessed, I have tried every way, but nothing else could make me feel secure. Taking shelter of God is tough, very tough, because one has to give up '*ahankar*' (ego) — an intrinsic part of us. This is the cosmic design.

The same cosmic design lets us know that we live in two worlds. Yes, there are two, not just one world. One is the material world, about which we are all aware of, and the other is the spiritual world. This world consists of God and those who have realised their identities as souls, i.e. '*aham brahma asmi*'. Both these worlds are governed by the '*karmaphala*' principle, which in short means 'what we sow we reap.' All our acts, whether done by our minds, words or the rest of our bodies result in fruits, both good and bad, depending on whether they were good acts or bad acts.

Fortunately, in the spiritual world there are only good acts, i.e. spiritual acts, beginning from a silent prayer of a child asking for the well-being of his parents. Each such act is duly recorded for rewards in future. Lord Krishna states in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "Neither there is waste of effort here nor there is opposite effect. Even a little of this activity protects one from great fear." (2.40) This goes on throughout one's life. All acts add up and continue to be recorded. The question is: Have we totaled enough spiritual acts, especially by the time we reach old age, when we need them the most? Because knowingly or unknowingly we have also been accumulating bad material acts in the past, including in previous lives, which come to fruition at their appointed times. Why else are we here?

If we have been doing spiritual acts also, God gets involved, He is pleased. He manifests *vis-à-vis* the person/devotee concerned. He begins to take charge of that fortunate soul's life. Guidance and help start arriving. God, being omniscient, is in perfect position to do so. Surprising as it may seem to some, God guides about everything material and spiritual. He even helps in changing people's hearts in our favour, if God becomes so inclined. God also gives us strength to tolerate the inevitable miseries of this material world. Our present activities, i.e. '*kriyamana*' become highly productive and efficient. Our ego begins to shrink. One becomes more and more dutiful both materially and spiritually.

Personally, I am much gratified when God bails me out of some punishment, which was due to me for bad acts done earlier God manages to do so without infringing on the '*karmaphala*' principle. He takes into consideration the bad act done earlier, which is due for punishment. He also considers what spiritual acts have been accumulated, which could be used to mitigate the suffering. God has to ensure that His devotees never perishes, as promised by Him in the Gita verse #9.31. This means that the resultant suffering must be tolerable.

Having understood what the Lord does for us devotees, I am absolutely amazed. Not only do I feel more secure now than ever before, I am able to control my mind and senses better

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Blot on American rights claims: Gitmo turns 20

In this February 6, 2002, file photo a detainee is led by military police to be interrogated by military officials at Camp X-Ray at the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. At the time the image was taken there were 158 al-Qaida and Taliban prisoners being held at Camp X-Ray AP

The infamous Guantanamo Bay military prison completed two decades of its operations this January 11, 2022. Many say that this secret jail is truly an ethical failure of the American justice system. Besides, the last twenty years in Guantanamo have been a catastrophic legal misstep that is bringing home more problems and disgrace than credible solutions. It is increasingly becoming a symbol of torture. The military prison in Cuba is now left with only 39 inmates. During its peak time, it housed nearly 800 prisoners. Indeed, some media reports say that it is symptomatic of CIA-sanctioned torture cells carried out in stealth. Today another critical question looms large over the Biden Administration: Is it worth guarding 39 prisoners with one of the most sophisticated ring of 1,500 commandos? It is felt that the taxpayers' dollars must be spent judiciously at a time of global pandemic like the Covid-19.

The Guantanamo detention camp, also called Guantanamo Bay, Guantanamo or Gitmo, is in the Southeastern part of Cuba. The horrible prison is located at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base of America. It was created by then US President George W Bush in the year 2002 after September 11 terror attacks on the country. And the prison was especially designed to host the inmates who were caught as a part of the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Though the prison was first used in 2002, the American Government has been maintaining a military naval base there since 1903. Interestingly, the original prison was named Camp X-Ray. In fact, after the terror attack on September 11, the prison facility was made ready for immediate use in just 96 hours. Shortly after the Bush administration dethroned the Taliban Government headed by Mullah Omar in Afghanistan, the facility came into being as the most secure prison. The first batch of detainees was brought to the prison on January 11 the very next year and they were classified as "enemy combatants".

Most of the inmates of Guantanamo Bay were from those nations who were either a part of the GWOT or those who had helped harbouring terrorists. Precisely, the majority of them belonged to the countries of West Asia. The worst part of the Guantanamo saga was that these prisoners were captured on foreign soil but were not charged on any particular crime. Further, they were detained in this secluded prison for an indefinite period and were denied access to any legal counsel. Another important point to be noted here is that the GWOT is not an official war as there was no declaration of war by the US Congress. On November 13, 2001, barely two months after the terror attack, President Bush announced a military order, officially permitting these actions: it authorised the detention and trial by the Military Commission of any current or former member of the al-Qaeda and anyone who aids or abets its work or harbors its members. Thus, the GWOT has no scheduled end date, and it has handed down an indefinite mandate to the powerful armed forces to carry out the operation as long as the real culprits are not held. And when Osama bin Laden, the brains behind 9/11, was killed by American forces in 2011 during the Obama administration, in a way, the biggest milestone of the operation was already achieved.

Now, America's withdrawal from Afghanistan was completed last year by handing over the reign to the same Taliban, the butchers against whom America and other liberal nations fought for nearly two decades. Now, there is no point of maintaining the Guantanamo Bay. In fact, the terror has come home all the way. It is ubiquitous now.

Now, the most pertinent questions are: Why Guantanamo was chosen and why is it still open? First of all, the US strategic experts and security agents wanted to keep the global terror suspects outside the purview of public and, most importantly, the constant media glaze. Also, when they are housed far away from the US mainland, these detainees will not be able both to demand and enjoy the protection of rights under the country's justice system. Another critical point to note here is that the 117-square kilometre base had enough space and facilities to hold the prisoners for a long time. Many human rights advocates say that this Bay is not technically a part of the US territory, but rather an "island outside law". Second, it is still open as there are tough Congressional roadblocks to close the jail.

Global experts condemn unrelenting human rights violations at Guantanamo Bay. The detention centre is internationally known for its human right violations committed there. The saddest part is that the international community has failed to discharge their responsibilities to get the prison shut by using pressure on the successive US Government since 2002 or by enforcing international human rights obligations. Rights advocates say that the American actions at the prison violate its obligations under the Third Geneva Convention, the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention Against Torture (CAT) and the customary international law. It is widely recognised that violations at Guantanamo Bay include illegal and indefinite detention, inhuman conditions, torture, unfair trials (military commissions), etc.

Today, the prison has become a symbol of American injustice and torture. In a nutshell, Gitmo was prepared just to torture the detainees, mostly belonging to the al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Today, this island prison bears the testimony of what many call the first war of the 21st century. This war was a different kind of a war against a different kind of enemy. The GWOT highlights the fact that the enemy is not a nation, but the enemy is massive global terror network that threatens the way of life of all peaceful people.

Frankly speaking, it is clear now that there had been and also continues to have flagrant violations of international human rights of the detainees inside the prison complex. As the prison has been kept completely out of global media glaze, a very few of the tragic incidents that took place inside were brought to the notice of the outside world.

The maintenance of Guantanamo Bay prison is an insult to American democracy and the liberal ethos that Washington has been preaching for decades. President Biden can finally put an end to the extra-judicial and abhorrent system that has existed in Guantanamo for the last twenty years. If one flashes back and observes, they can single out how different US Presidents attempted to deal with the Guantanamo crisis differently after the exit of Bush in 2009. Barack Obama, a Democrat, who took over the reign from the Republican Bush, indeed pledged to shut it down during his first campaign for office. During his electoral march, he once said: "In the dark halls of Abu Gharib and the detention cells of Guantanamo, we have compromised our most precious values." An eloquent speaker as he used to be, but he found it too difficult to put an end to the tragedies of the prison. Even though he signed an executive order to close the prison within a year, he failed to do so. Sadly, the Congress maintained such restrictions that barred Obama from closing the prison in the first two years of his time in office. And these two years have recorded a Congress, largely controlled by the Democrats. Interestingly, liberal veterans like Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren voted against easing Congressional restrictions in the Senate in the year 2013. But Obama reduced the number of inmates from 242 to 41 during his tenure, by transferring some of them to the United Arab Emirates. When Donald Trump came to office, he maintained the status quo.

Is there any hope that Biden will be able to close down the prison? At present, the Democrats have a razor-thin majority in the Congress. And this is the only golden chance to bring an end to Gitmo, which Obama miserably failed despite his tall promises. If Biden wants to do something on the issue, first he must repeal long-held restrictions on shutting down the prison as the US Congress brings two legislations each year, namely, an annual defence authorisation bill and a Government spending bill. These are legal hurdles that Biden needs to overcome at the moment.

On record, Biden has also pledged to close Guantanamo. But the irony is that those Congressional impediments that prevented Obama are still in the books. However, Biden should give a final push. He must not postpone. This collective scar on American democracy should be buried with full presidential might and by taking all legal nuances. Hope, Biden, a matured and a patient listener to the woes of the world, would be able to fix the rights problem.

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It's high time US President Joe Biden closed the books on the Guantanamo Bay prison which is infamous for its unrelenting human rights violations. The continuation of the Guantanamo prison is an insult to American democracy and the liberal ethos that Washington has been preaching to the world for decades

MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

India should use cash crops to its strategic advantage

Tobacco farming is suffering due to the actions of vested groups advocating high taxes on FCV tobacco to achieve tobacco control goals by making cigarettes unaffordable

JAVARE GOWDA

World Bank has held its growth outlook for the Indian economy at 8.3 per cent despite a global pandemic. To support growth, there would be greater demand on natural sources where agriculture holds a pivotal role. Today, we are expecting agriculture to provide alternative fuel and sustainable energy sources. In India, agriculture remains the largest source of employment. It is imperative for India to actualise the PM's vision for farmer welfare at the core of agri development.

Farm production must be aligned with good market infrastructure to enable farmers to sell their produce at reasonable prices and improve the flow of much-needed private investments in the sector for crop development and farm practices.

Many government initiatives in this regard are laudable such as National Agriculture Market (eNAM) to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities, National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) for enhancing agricultural productivity in rainfed areas, and digitisation.

Cash crops like tea, coffee, tobacco, cotton have a strategic role in India's international agriculture play. Take for example tobacco crops which are one of the largest foreign exchange earners with exports of ₹6,500 crore in 2021. Indian FCV tobacco has a new opportunity in the global market due to new-found usage in medicines for several autoimmune and inflammatory diseases, including diabetes. But for this to happen, we must invest in R&D to produce value-added tobacco products that capture growing buyer interest and thus improve the country's position as the 2nd largest exporter of tobacco.

Challenges faced by FCV farmers

Unfortunately, tobacco farming is suffering due to the actions of vested groups advocating high taxes on FCV tobacco to achieve tobacco control goals by making cigarettes unaffordable. This has resulted in reduced crop size with a decline in the acreage of land under tobacco cultivation. According to industry sources, tobacco use in legal cigarettes registered a sharp decline in the last few decades when illicit cigarettes gained market share. This contributed to shrinkage in FCV crop size by sharp 39 per cent from 316 million kg per annum to 218 million kg per annum between 2013-14 and 2021-22. Our country has also witnessed a big decline of 1 lakh hectares in FCV tobacco acreage between 2013-14 and 2020-21 which led to 35 million man-days of employment loss.

Also, FCV tobacco exports from Indian have become uncompetitive globally losing share to countries like Zimbabwe, which is catering to the international tobacco market despite its small size.

Today, legal cigarettes have become unaffordable in India. Cigarette in India cost amongst the highest in the world as a percentage of per capita GDP at 7.70 per cent in comparison to 0.46 per cent for the USA and 1.14 per cent for China (WHO Report). This is even though cigarettes are only 8 per cent of tobacco consumed in the country while 92 per cent is other forms of tobacco. This is in stark contrast to the rest of the world where tobacco is synonymous with cigarettes representing 90 per cent of tobacco consumption.

The World Health Organization (WHO) in a report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2021 has acknowledged that the affordability of legal cigarettes in India reduced sharply from 11.10 per cent in 2010 to 13.78 per cent in 2020. These findings were further corroborated with the results of the American Cancer Society study which observed that India has one of the lowest per capita cigarette consumptions in the world.

The above situation is stressing the farm community as consumers shift to smuggled cigarettes that do not use domestic tobacco. This is besides revenue loss to the exchequer which further limits the government's ability to invest in R&D which means farmers are not able to refine their products to meet international standards or come up with other farm innovations which can increase demand for Indian tobacco.

As per FICCI CASCADE's study, the total loss to the economy because of cigarette smuggling has been ₹16,138 crore while the total employment opportunity lost in the sector is about 3.34 lakh.

Vested groups and flawed research reports

The problem lies in misleading data, which the policymakers are bombarded with, which limits their capacity to make informed and prudent decisions. Take for instance two separate studies conducted in 2018 and 2020 and cited in certain media articles which claim that the illicit cigarette sales figures are exaggerated.

The first study uses empty packs picked from retailers to compare legal and illegal cigarette sales, in total disregard of the fact that retailers would be hesitant to disclose that they are selling illegal cigarettes. No retailer in his right mind would save the empty pack as there is a deep fear because of coercive laws against them. Our custom laws put the onus on retailers to prove that the product being sold is a legal product. So, the researchers using this technique to understand illegal cigarette sales will only get a lopsided view.

The second study, on tax gaps, confirms a steady increase in consumption of illegal cigarettes between two time periods. Also, the proportion of illegal cigarettes as a percentage of legal ones in the two studies has a difference exceeding 100 per cent, raising doubts as to which of the figures are accurate.

It is unquestionable that smuggled cigarettes are a raging phenomenon not only in India but all international markets. It has been established through studies by reputed research firms that India is the fourth largest and fastest-growing illegal cigarette market in the world.

As per Euromonitor International, Illicit cigarette volumes in India registered a whopping 44 per cent in a decade from 19.5 billion sticks in 2011 to 28.1 billion sticks in 2020. This takes the market share of illicit cigarettes in the country from 21.3 per cent in 2015 to 27.6 per cent in 2020.

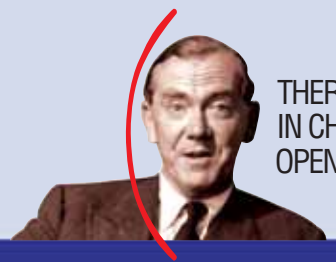
It is noteworthy to know that a recently released report by Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) states that one of the largest global cigarettes MNC as part of its market expansion strategy has been using smuggling as one of the distribution channels to increase their market penetration. Unfortunately, vested groups do not share such market developments with the policy makers.

Despite this, the move to project in studies low penetration levels of illicit cigarettes below international markets (which are better regulated) is an obvious mis-projection.

Such grossly unreliable studies should be looked at with caution as they give a skewed picture of the illegal cigarette trade in the country and downplay the severity of the illegal cigarette trade in the country.

India has the option to use cash crops like FCV tobacco to its strategic advantage given the huge potential of tobacco in newer applications. We should not let this opportunity slip and extend all necessary policy support to the FCV tobacco farmers in earnest to capture the growing tobacco market.

(The writer is president of Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA), a non-profit federation whose mission is to support the farming community in India and create a sustainable future for farmers)



THERE IS ALWAYS ONE MOMENT IN CHILDHOOD WHEN THE DOOR OPENS AND LETS THE FUTURE IN
— GRAHAM GREENE

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA

ARIES March 21-April 19

When it comes to health, patience is the key. The expensive tests and diagnosis system may cause a big hole in the pocket, if your health has been out of balance, then you need to act with greater foresight and wisdom. If you are awaiting test results, don't jump to conclusions and panic. Wait it out with courage. On the career front, a raise in your pay or a better position may come to you at this time. Some of you also feel a sense of accomplishment as you have been able to attain your goals after setbacks. You may find that others look up to you for guidance even before you are called upon to head a project or oversee a particular activity. If you are committed, you will move to the next level.

Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Mauve
Lucky day Monday

TAURUS April 20-May 20

If you feel that something is amiss with your body, then you need to pay attention to your concerns. This is not the time to panic and to feel that you can't do anything about it. Trust your intuition and look for ways for help. Take care of yourself with proper diet, rest, and exercise. On the career front, the end of one thing to begin with new is indicated. Things may not be going as per your expectations at the moment. Some of you may have faced or are facing challenges with something related to your work. You need to take a breather from the chaos around you because challenges will return as soon as you are ready to face them. This is a phase where you have an opportunity to improve your relationship with your partner.

Lucky number 18
Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Wednesday

GEMINI May 21-June 20

The period has negatives in store for you on the health front. Those suffering from heart ailments & BP may experience a major upheaval on the health front. This has the potential to affect you spiritually, mentally, and physically. So, pay attention to what you are doing for your body. Stay positive and calm about the situation. Stress and anxiety with something relating to work are likely to affect you now. You tend to fear the outcome of your career in the future. Crisis of employment, finances could be faced by some of you. Stay as adaptable and flexible to deal with it. This may be an emotional time in your relationship. Things are not what they appear to be. Take a break if you need it. Treat your partner as your friend.

Lucky number 17
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Saturday

CANCER June 21-July 22

On the health front, you need to pay close attention to your emotions. There are chances that you are not at best when dealing with challenges. If you have found out that you have an ailment or are awaiting test results then, instead of becoming negative get help by talking to someone. There may be information that you don't know about. On the work front, some of you have accomplished a lot of your goals and have attained great material wealth. You may be financially stable now. Some of you may have a tough time at your workplace. This may be due to your inflexible attitude. In your relationships, you should be clear about what you want and what your hopes and dreams are.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Tuesday

LEO July 23-Aug 22

Your vitality is strong. This is an excellent time to make changes in your fitness plan as you will make more progress than imagined. You need to take care of channelising this energy in the right manner. Acting on an impulse of any sort may create health problems for you. Professionally, you are filled with analytical energies, how you speak your mind and conduct yourself is important at your workplace. You may find yourself in conflict and disagreeing with others. Choose your battles wisely rather than picking upon every disagreement. Don't let any emotional hurt of the past affect your relationship with your beloved. Know that there is a lot of love in your life, and you must appreciate it otherwise it will slip away.

Lucky number 3
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Sunday

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

On the health front, your efforts are likely to bear fruit. You can control what happens around you. You take a long-term view of things and investigate the future. This will not only help you to improve your present health situation but also lay foundation for it to be robust in the future as well. What you do at your workplace has consequences. You might be faced with a dilemma and a decision to make. Try to behave as reasonable as you can and consider what others want before you make a choice. It's a time of change on the relationship front. Those committed but experiencing problems with their partner, can have an honest discussion so that each of you can work on changing certain aspects to keep it going.

Lucky number 14
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Thursday

LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week your stamina and energy metre will remain good. However, if you do face health challenges then, try to follow a naturopathic or a homeopathic approach in your health regime. Childbirth for those who are due is on the cards too. Things may not be going as per your expectation at the work front. If you are not happy with your current job or are facing a problematic situation at work, know that there is a lot you can do to improve your current environment. Try to adopt the right mindset before making any decision. Others may also oppose you, but that shouldn't deter you from moving forward as you have a lot of choices available. It's a loving time for you in your relationship. You and your partner can connect well.

Lucky number 6
Lucky colour Purple
Lucky day Friday

SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

You will be required to balance your health efforts with your personal and professional responsibilities. You are moving into a phase wherein you need to be patient and alert. Be sure you take time out for your healing and relaxation. This is a very promising time for you in your career. Your mental abilities and intelligence are your great strength. You will finally be acknowledged for your efforts by others and have been successful in achieving your goals. The success will instill immense confidence in your abilities. Ensure that you don't become arrogant due to this. A wonderful time of love and solidarity is on the cards this week. Your relationship will strengthen more and some of you are likely to get to a stage of future commitment.

Lucky number 15
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Thursday

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

Concerning your health, the news is going to be good. You are in a stronger position now and can control what happens around you. Any efforts that you put right now towards the improvement of your health will bear fruit. The only thing that you need to be careful about is to attempt to try alternative ways to treat and deal with health challenges if any. You need to pull up your sleeves on the career front. Some of you are going to experience a new beginning. Those looking for employment will get a new position which will test yours. Be on your toes and keep working hard. This can be a period of chaos and uncertainty in terms of a relationship. Believe in making a solid foundation, whether it is love or marital life.

Lucky number 19
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Tuesday

CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

You need to keep your balance in every way, even in mundane things like eating right and getting rest. Those facing health challenges, know that things will get better. Mentally you are in a strong and stable frame of mind, wherein you know what you should do. You may be faced with a dilemma or situation at your workplace which requires immediate action or decision. It may be of importance and many options are available to you. Analyse all the available information first before you finally come to a conclusion. Emotional as you are but you are filled with forceful energy which some people find abrasive. Beware the impulse to be too forceful. Your mother or a mother-like figure may interfere in your relationship, whether she means to or not.

Lucky number 8
Lucky colour Magenta
Lucky day Friday

AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

You might face health challenges at this time. Worrying unnecessarily is not going to help. Even in the face of serious problems, you need to hold your ground. A cheerful outlook will give you the motivation to do the right thing for your health. If the situation requires you to take medical tests, then go out and get them done by a trusted practitioner. Money is likely to come your way. Some of you may get surprised with an increase in your current pay or getting a promotion. This may be due to all the challenging work you have put in, winning over all the challenges faced and accomplishing your goals. It's love for you this week. Positive emotional energy will be created between you and your partner, which will leave you feeling good about yourself and life in general.

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Saturday

PISCES Feb 19-March 20

An upward increase in your health and vitality is seen. For those dealing with a serious illness, a new and improved healing modality or healer will come your way. You are generous and have concern for others, but don't compromise on the health front. Nourish your body and mind. Challenges and opposition might be faced this week, especially on the financial front. If you are not keeping track of your finances, and expenditures, it is likely that your budget crosses the limit. This is a time when you will feel that your long-term committed relationship has come a full circle. As a result, there is a sense of closure and fulfillment of what you desired. More love and gratitude will keep your good fortune going.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Beige
Lucky day Sunday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Life: harmony of opposites

"Sir, what is in store of my daughter's destiny? Does it indicate marital break? My son-in-law has serious anger issues, difficult for my daughter to bear with." Worried parents of a married daughter came asking the other day.

The above questions made me recall Lord Buddha's saying: "In a transitory world, ever changing from within and beyond, there is no scope for having a perfect situation in life. Life is paradoxical — full of contradictions. Even creation is a result of convergence of the opposites. So, reconciling dualities of life is called for. Life, in fact, is an expression of harmony of the opposites." Those who realise this profound truth, will relate well to the self and those around with relative ease and comfort.

The irony, however, is that every being is born unique, each manifesting varying desire and mind-trends, often in conflict with others, coming as they may as Karmic carryover from the past. So, invariably we are all born with a preconditioned mind, which allows a narrow window frame to look at the issues in hand. More often that doesn't let you look beyond with an open mind for a reality check or better alternatives if any. So, we fail to look at subject matter under consideration in the right perspective due. Consequently, we are neither able to articulate our thoughts and moves rightfully, nor able to respond and react intelligently to external promptings. If that would not be enough, one's ego makes you conduct in a demanding mode — expecting life to move on one's own exclusive terms. That is at the root of all conflicts in life, be it marital, familial or societal. What gets lost sight of in the process is that we don't exist just by oneself and therefore life won't move necessarily to our asking. We can't service even our existential needs by oneself. We, therefore, need to learn to relate well with those around, overriding each other's limitations. It needs to be appreciated here that if one has a few weaknesses, the positives would be much more. The usual human tendency, however, is that we get stuck to few negatives of others, and all the more particularly in a conflicting situation. In the process, their positives elude our attention. So, we are not able to perceive the other side rightfully, and evidently to our detriment.

Before answering the questions raised above, let me make it clear that perception drives a being, which is dependent on one's inherent mind-trends. So, whether any couple is to enjoy a happy marital life or it would be subject to twists and turns, will depend on personality traits of the two. That makes a look into their mind-traits imperative. Your son-in-law does seem to have anger issues, but before expecting him to behave, your daughter too needs to look into her own flaws. Having said that, let me assure you that their marriage is going to stay. Progression of their charts suggest that they are expected to make necessary amends now and try to improve their relationship.

Let us now look at the astrological pointers to personality traits of the two. Your son-in-law is born with Aries *lagna*, which by itself is enough to indicate that he would be impulsive, aggressive, impatient and irritable. Mind signifying Moon occupies the constellation owned by Mars, incidentally the lagna lord, which is tenanted in Virgo sign. It brings in a perfectionist streak, by his self-defined measures. If others don't prove true to his expectations, it becomes difficult for him to digest. But then exalted Jupiter in the 4th house suggests that he would be a well-meaning person carrying the natural urge to improve. In terms of time frame, his progressed *lagna* was placed adverse to Saturn, which accounted for his unseemly conduct. But now he is coming out of that trap, and so is expected to self-reflect upon himself to make necessary amends.

Your daughter is born in Sagittarius *lagna*, which makes her tactless and undiplomatic, marked with indiscreet, ill-phrased and ill-timed reactions, which may offend others. Moon occupies Gemini sign, and is placed adverse to the Sun, which brings in the tendency to live on her own exclusive terms. And when she gets provoked, would be tempted to go for a fight till finish. In her case also, progressed *lagna* is closing up with natal Venus, which implies that life ahead should be comfortable.

These positive indications would however come true only when they are counselled to work upon their fault lines.

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