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THE ETERNAL FLAME CAN'T
BE PARTIAL TO OUR SOLDIERS

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UKRAINE URGES CALM, SAYING
RUSSIAN INVASION NOT IMMINENT

AVENUES 10

TIME FOR
SUCCESS

BHUBANESWAR, WEDNESDAY JANUARY 26, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹4



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HAPPY REPUBLIC DAY

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ROHIT FIT TO
LEAD INDIA
AGAINST WI
11 SPORT

1st CDS, Kalyan, Gita Press head get Padma Vibhushan

Buddhadev refuses to accept Padma Bhushan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the eve of Republic Day, the Centre bestowed the Padma Vibhushan award, India's second-highest civilian award, on the country's first Chief of Defence staff, late General Bipin Rawat, and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister late Kalyan Singh. The other two Padma Vibhushan awardees are noted musician Prabha Atre and Gita Press Chairman Radheshyam Khemka (posthumously).

Among the 17 Padma Bhushan awardees, two political leaders from the Congress and the CPI(M) — Ghulam Nabi Azad and former West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee figured in the prestigious award list. However, Buddhadeb refused to accept the award. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Tuesday came out with a list of 128 distinguished personalities from different fields for Padma Awards.

The list comprises four Padma Vibhushan, 17 Padma Bhushan, and 107 Padma Shri Awards. Out of 128 awardees, 34 are women and the list includes 10 persons from the



category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI and 13 posthumous awardees. Padma Awards are conferred in three categories: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri. Padma Vibhushan is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; Padma Bhushan for distinguished service of high order and Padma Shri for distinguished service in any field.

The Centre also awarded Padma Bhushan to the country's two Covid vaccine makers Serum Institute's founder Cyrus Poonawala and jointly honoured Bharat Biotech promoters Dr Krishna Ella and wife Suchitra Ella. Indian origin CEO of Google Satya Nadella

and Microsoft CEO Sundar Pichai have been awarded Padma Bhushan. Former Home Secretary and CAG Rajiv Mehrishi, actor Victor Banerjee and Gujarati writer and preacher Swami Sachidanad got Padma Bhushan.

Among the 107 Padma Shri awardees Olympic Gold Medalist Neeraj Chopra, late IAS officer and Airports Authority Chairman Guruprasad Mohapatra, noted singer Sonu Nigam figured in the list.

Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh, who died last year, has been awarded Padma Vibhushan for Public Affairs, while late CDS



General Bipin Rawat got the same honour for Civil Service. Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad will be honored with Padma Bhushan for Public Affairs. Rawat hails from Uttarakhand and Kalyan from Uttar Pradesh, the two States which are headed for Assembly polls. The political significance of the Centre's decision to handpick Azad for giving the Padma award is not lost. Azad comes from Jammu & Kashmir, a Union territory, where the Centre is trying its best to win over the masses through the political process. Azad has been of late sidelined in the Congress and has also been in the news for repeatedly praising PM Narendra Modi.

Cong first family loyalist RPN Singh joins BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gandhi family loyalist RPN Singh on Tuesday joined the long line of senior Congress leaders deserting the party. The former Union Minister on Tuesday embraced the BJP dealing a blow to the Congress and giving a psychological leg-up to the saffron party in the poll-bound Uttar Pradesh.

Singh, 57, is a prominent leader and a member of royalty from the Eastern UP. He has been a three-time Congress MLA from Padrauna and a Member of Parliament from Kushinagar.

He joined the BJP shortly after writing a brief letter of resignation to the Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

Singh's exit from the party has come as a massive blow to the grand old party in the run-up to Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections. The Congress leadership was apparently caught by surprise because it named Singh as the "star campaigner" only a few days ago.

A section of the party leaders feels that Singh's exit was good riddance because he had been hobnobbing with the BJP for the last one year to topple the Congress-JMM Jharkhand Government. RPN, known within the Congress circle, was Congress general secretary in charge for the Jharkhand for the last three years.



Former Congress leader RPN Singh joins BJP at party office in New Delhi on Tuesday

PTI

Singh, a key Kurmi OBC leader from eastern UP, is the second big exit for the Congress in the State after Jitin Prasada, who is now a Minister in the Yogi Adityanath-led BJP Government in UP.

Addressing the media after joining the party here at the BJP headquarters in the presence of BJP UP in-charge Dharmendra Pradhan, UP party president Swatantra Dev Singh, UP Deputy-Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Dr Dinesh Sharma, and Jyotiraditya Scindia, Singh lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi who, he said, is being "appreciated roundly for linking the ancient Indian civilisation and cul-

ture with the 21st century".

Singh is also seen as BJP's Assembly candidate against OBC leader Swami Prasad Maurya who recently left the BJP to join the SP.

Criticising the Congress, his erstwhile party, Singh said, "I spent 32 years in one political party (Congress). But that party has not remained the same as it was before when I joined it. I will work as a 'karyakarta' towards fulfilling PM Modi's dreams for India," said Singh.

He also praised the double-engine Government and the change in the law and order situation in UP.

Rs 3-cr brown sugar seized in Nayagarh



1 held; guns, ammo, Rs 65L cash recovered

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Special Task Force (STF) of the Crime Branch on Monday seized as much as 3.1 kg of brown sugar from a house at Sinduria village under the Nayagarh Town police station.

Besides, the agency also recovered arms and ammunition. A peddler, identified as K Vicky Rao of Rajabazar area of Khordha, was arrested from the spot. The market value of

the seized contraband is more than Rs 3 crore. Apart from the drug, cash of Rs 65.32 lakh, three 7mm sophisticated pistols, 43 live rounds of ammunition and a cash-counting machine were also recovered. This was the biggest drug haul by the STF so far in 2022. It was also for the first time that such a huge quantity of narcotics was seized from Nayagarh district. Crime Branch ADG Sanjeeb Panda said, "Our investigation is still on to ascertain the source of the seized drug to unearth the supply chain of the accused

Vicky." Panda said, "After we got reliable inputs, we conduct the raid. So far, it has been ascertained that Vicky was operating the drug racket with the help of two associates, who are still absconding." He said it was yet to be ascertained whether the pistols were meant to be sold or kept by the accused for protection.

Notably, the STF has seized more than 47 Kg of brown sugar in the special drive against narcotic trade since 2020. Similarly, 122 drug dealers/peddlers have also been arrested in several cases. The agency has also seized 67 illegal arms so far.

Pratibha gets Pradma Bhushan

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

On the eve of the Republic Day, as many as six eminent personalities from Odisha have been selected for the Padma Shri award while one will receive Padma Bhushan.



Para-athlete Pramod Bhagat (Sports), Aditya Prasad Dash (Science and Engineering), Narasingha Prasad Guru (Literature and Education), Shyamamani Devi (Art), Srimad Baba Balia (Social Work) and former Union Secretary Guru Prasad Mahapatra (Posthumous) will get Padma Shri. Pratibha Ray will be conferred with Padma Bhushan in the Literature and Education category.

State logs 5,891 Covid cases, 7 deaths

1,303 infections in BBSR

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

As reported on Tuesday, the downward trend in the Covid-19 cases continued in the State with 5,891 more testing positive in the 30 districts and the State pool. With this, the total tally increased to 12,17,842.

Among the freshly-infected were 852 children in the age group of 0 to 18 years. In the last 24 hours, 59,807 samples were tested

and the test positivity rate (TPR) was 9.85 per cent. The active cases stood at 77,340. Of the new cases, 3,413 were from quarantine and 2,478 local contacts. Khordha district reported the maximum 1,500 cases. Besides, 299 positive cases were from the State pool. Seven more persons succumbed to the disease, mounting the total death toll to 8,532. Three deaths were reported from Khordha district and one each from Jharsuguda, Kendrapada,

Dhenkanal and Jajpur.

However, 10, 244 more patients recovered, increasing the total recoveries to 11,42,161.

Capital Bhubaneswar registered 1,303 Covid-19, with which the total tally in the city rose to 14,5,747. The active cases were 10,404. One more person succumbed to the disease, taking the total death toll to 1,111. However, 1,644 more patients recovered, increasing the total recoveries to 13,4,211.

The Pioneer wishes its readers a Happy Republic Day

January 26, Republic Day, being a holiday in the offices of the Bhubaneswar edition of The Pioneer, the next issue of the paper will appear on January 28.

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Rural polls : Fresh nomination dates declared

For over 4,000 areas

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Election Commission (SEC) on Tuesday announced fresh dates for filing nominations for the upcoming panchayat polls to the constituencies where nominations have not been filed or rejected on various grounds.

Now, the aspirants can file their nomination papers for Ward Members, Sarpanches, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Members between January 29 and 31. “The candidates are being given second chance to file nomination for panchayat elections to different wards, sarpanches and panchayat samiti in constituencies where no



nominations were filled or nominations were rejected. We found that no application has been received from over 4,000 areas to contest the polls to the posts of Ward Members, Sarpanches, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Members,” State Election Commissioner Aditya Prasad Padhi told reporters. The notification in this regard will be officially released on January 27. The nomination papers will be verified on February 1. The nomination can be withdrawn on Febru-

ary 4. The final list of candidates will be announced in the evening of February 4.

“If no candidates will file the nominations from those places, the State Government will select the local representatives for the posts without election,” the SEC stated. The panchayat elections are scheduled in five phases on February 16, 18, 20, 22 and 24. The counting of votes will take place at block and Sadar levels on February 26, 27 and 28.

Gift the school something great for future generation

Under Mo School Abhiyan

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A strong desire to succeed and climb greater heights is what has made the students of the University High School, Vani Vihar, Bhubaneswar, different from others. Many of them have made name across the country and made the teachers proud. Now, it is the Diamond Jubilee year of the school and the old students have come together to inspire the present children of the school once again to keep the fame of the institution flying high.

The alumni of the school have formed an association to help the school in its continued onwards march towards excellence. It is quite heartening to mention that a corpus of Rs 13.50 lakh mobilised



through the support from the members of AAHUS under the Mo School Abhiyan has proved instrumental in getting two times of the matching contribution from the Government, i.e., Rs 39.50 lakh for the first-phase development of the school. This fund has been utilised by the alumni to equip the school with a computer centre, a science lab, a library, furniture, a bicycle stand, drinking water fa-

cility and renovation of toilets and classrooms, etc.

The exemplary contribution of the alumni in the development of the school has caught the attention of Mo School Abhiyan and has given an impetus for a much larger project in the second phase. The alumni, for a long time, has felt that the school is in need of a multipurpose hall to be used for morning prayers, serving midday

meals, cultural functions, seminars, workshops and indoor sports. To go ahead for this project, the alumni felt convinced that a state-of-the-art facility centre with an indoor hall to accommodate 750-1,000 students is required with an estimated outlay of Rs 1.5 crore. The alumni association started a campaign for the purpose with an appeal to the alumni spread across the globe; and within 15 days, Rs 40 lakh has been garnered. This contribution is going to be quite helpful in tapping a double contribution, i.e., Rs 80 lakh, under the Mo School Abhiyan from the Government of Odisha.

It is hoped that the celebration of Diamond Jubilee in 2022 with a beautiful multipurpose hall will be a great occasion and spread a message of “Let’s return to our school and be part of its glory”.

BJP seeks reservation for OBC med students

Morcha warns Govt of agitation

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The BJP State OBC Morcha on Monday announced that unless the State Government comes out with reservation for OBC students in education,

especially in medical studies, it would launch an agitation over the issue.

In a Press conference, Morcha president Surath Biswal asked that while all States have reservation for OBC students and when the Union Government favoured 27% reservation and the Supreme Court approved it, what prevented the Odisha

Government to announce the same. He questioned the silence of the State Government in this issue when medical counselling is going on at the national level and students of Odisha are participating in it. He demanded a statement in this regard from the ruling BJD.

Biswal stated that the State Government by its habitual

practice by blaming the Central Government and in the name of Supreme Court judgment is trying to escape from the core issue while providing reservation is the State Government’s responsibility based on its own surveys. It has nothing to do with the Central Government conducting a caste census or not, he added.

R-Day guidelines issued

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government on Tuesday issued Covid-related guidelines for celebration of the Republic Day on Wednesday.

Citizens have been advised to unfurl the National Flag in the premises of their houses with a congregation of not more than five persons. For public/ private



institutions, clubs and similar places, the Government advised to celebrate the occasion with not more than 10 persons. “

All Covid-appropriate behaviour such as social/ physical distancing, use of facemasks and hand hygiene shall be followed by one and all during the celebration,” said a Government notification.

Time we debated on adopting Presidential form of Govt



SATYA NARAYAN MISRA

As the Indian republic trundles into its 72nd year, one is amazed by the enduring continuity of the basic structure doctrine coined by the Supreme Court in the year 1973. Concepts like democracy, universal suffrage, ideals like federalism and secularism, salience of separation of powers, free and fair elections and independence of judiciary have come to stay and struck deep roots.

However, there are two areas where there are rumblings, like scrapping socialism from the script of the preamble and supplanting the Parliamentary form with the more dynamic Presidential form of Government of the USA. The choice of Parliamentary system was largely because of India’s familiarity with UK Parliamentary system and operationalisation of Government of India Act, 1935. However, there were prominent detractors like Dr BR Ambedkar who was more in favour of Presidential form of

Government. Gandhiji, on the other hand, wished for a system based on village panchayats rather than copy the British. He wrote, “If India copies England, it is my firm conviction that she will be ruined”. Ambedkar was very critical of the proposed Panchayati Raj system as he believed that it will add fuel to the fire of upper caste domination of political power. However, it was Pandit Nehru who tilted the balance for adopting Parliamentary system. KM Munshi, a revered member of the constitutional assembly also wrote, “If I was to make a choice again, I would vote for the Presidential form of Government, so that when the politicians fail the country, at least one organ of the State is capable of tiding over the crises. Much later, R Venkat Raman, as President, had expressed grave doubts regarding the future of Parliamentary democracy.

He was alluding to the emergency years (1975-77) when there was a mockery of collective responsibility as the President was made to sign an order without the approval of the Cabinet. As Granville Austin, the celebrated jurist observed, “Repression was piled upon repression and light seem to have gone out of India’s constitution.” The suggestion for a Presidential form hinges on four pillars. Firstly, it enables the President to have a cabinet of outstanding professional competence and merit without the choice being restricted to the elected

Member of Parliaments (MPs). Secondly, since the cabinet members are not elected, they would not be motivated to adopt chief populist measures. Thirdly, it permits cabinet ministers to be more involved in the job of governing the country instead of endless politicking. Finally, it would discourage defection, and horse trading, which has become a vexatious issue in the event of hung Assembly or Parliament. After nearly 30 years of economic globalisation there is an all pervading feeling that slogans like ‘Garibi Hatao’ and ‘Sab Ke Saath Sab ke Vikas’ rest on shallow sand. The biggest casualty has been poor delivery mechanism of basic services like quality primary education, affordable healthcare, proper sanitation and lack of accountability of the Government. Malnutrition amongst children is rampant (43%) as per RSOC Survey 2014. Nearly half of the adolescent girl who will become future mothers are anaemic. This is a major cause of high maternal mortality rates of 174 per lakh as against a target of 80 by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The national nutrition mission to eliminate hunger, stunting, and wasting amongst children has largely failed. Income inequality has been on the increase, due to public policy which promotes crony capitalism.

In contrast, under the Presidential form of Government of Franklin D Roosevelt, he ensured

that USA comes out of the quagmire of economic depression through massive investment programme, called the ‘New Deal’. America which was languishing with around 28% unemployment in 1929 had achieved full employment and ensured through a slew of social protection measures like right to food, health and social security, that the country cares for its unemployed. America became the global hegemon by the end of the Second World War. Similarly, President Johnson inked the great society programme in the 1960s which has helped in reducing racial injustice and poverty significantly. President Roosevelt had the benefit of having as his cabinet reputed corporate leaders like Nelson Rockefeller who were called ‘one dollar men’ in his cabinet. It is apprehended that any move to convert India to a Presidential form of Government will offend the basic structure doctrine. This is a debatable issue. There is no permanence to the constitution and it has to evolve over time as Thomas Jefferson, the architect of the US constitution, had once observed, “No one generation can bind another. The creator has to make the earth for the living and not for the dead.”

It’s therefore time to put an alternative system in place which is based on merit over mediocrity, pragmatism over procedure and accountability over glib promise. The time to debate presidential

form of Government has come.

The other issue which has been attracting attention is a private member bill tabled by KJ Alfons who was previously a minister in the Modi Government to replace the word socialism in the preamble of Indian constitution with the word equitable, as socialism carries the political connotation of erstwhile USSR socialist era. Besides, Chief Justice Pankaj Mittal of J&K High Court in an address in December 2021 to the RSS rally had observed that socialism and secularism in the constitution has narrowed India’s spiritual image. While the diatribe against secularism is ill founded as clarified by the Supreme Court in the Bommai case 1994, socialism as an economic ideology has been abdicated after India’s tryst with market economy since 1991. Here lies the deep dissonance between its Preamble to propitiate socialism and social justice and the pragmatic acceptance of free market dogma which will promote economic efficiency. Socio economic equity and justice remains an ideal, while distributive justice remains a rhetoric. The Republic is at the crossroads of hope of shared prosperity by the bottom half, who are deprived of quality foundational learning, basic healthcare, digital access and employment, while economic aggrandisement of top 10% marches on unabated.

(Prof Misra teaches Constitution at the KIIT School of Law)

Cyber fraud spike

‘Don’t download suspicious mobile apps’

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In view of the spiraling cyber fraud cases in Bhubaneswar, the Commissionerate police have warned citizens not to download any suspicious applications suggested to them by strangers.

“In many cases, the cyber criminals impersonating as officials of different establishments are convincing victims to download certain applications like AnyDesk, Quick Support and Team Viewer,” said city DCP Umashankar Dash. “If a user downloads these applications, a cybercriminal will manage to access the messages and one-time passwords sent to his other mobile phone,” said Dash. “In case some-

one falls prey to online crimes, they immediately should report the matter to the Cyber Help Desk of Bhubaneswar Urban Police District (UPD),” Dash said, adding that if a victim is able to report an online fraud to the help desk within an hour, it greatly increases the chances of retrieval of his or her defrauded money with the help of bank authorities. Notably, the number of unified payments interface (UPI) frauds have witnessed a surge in recent days and the Commissionerate police have received more than 100 such reports so far in January 2022 alone.

As per police sources, cyber fraudsters managed to clean up Rs 8 crore from the victims in Bhubaneswar in 2021.

In Puri

Another minor raped; accused held

PNS ■ PURI

The Baliapanda police in Puri town on Tuesday arrested a person on the charge of raping a five-year-old girl of his neighbourhood.

The incident came to light after the victim’s mother lodged a complaint with police that the accused had lured her daughter into his house on the pretext of offering her some food. The accused was identified as Subhashish Tripathy. His interrogation

by police was on. This is the second case of a minor girl reported in Puri in the last couple of days, the first victim having been raped in the Town Police station area. The accused, an acquaintance to the victim’s family, allegedly took the girl to the terrace of a house while she was playing near her house and raped her.

Four teams have been formed and a manhunt is underway to nab the accused, a driver by profession, who is on the run.

NHRC to Mayurbhanj DM

‘Compensate man wrongly jailed for 19 yrs’

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the Mayurbhanj district Collector to take appropriate action on a petition for payment of compensation and proper rehabilitation of a poor tribal man for wrongly keeping him behind prison for 19 years.

While disposing the petition filed by civil rights activist and hu-

man rights lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy , the apex human rights panel of India passed the order on January 24. The travesty of justice in the present case is Habil Sindhu, a poor man who was convicted in a triple murder case, was found innocent, after he was languishing in jail for almost 19 years. The victim Habil , a resident of Balarampur village under the Jashipur police limits of the

Mayurbhanj district, was booked on charges of killing three of his neighbours, including a child. He was also accused of practising black magic, the plea stated.

Habil was arrested by police following a complaint registered with Jashipur police station in 2003. Subsequently, in 2005, the Additional District and Sessions Judge convicted Habil for committing three murders and sen-

tenced him to life imprisonment. Later Habil challenged the district court's judgment in the Orissa High Court. Considering the sensitivity of the case, the court appointed an amicus curiae to probe the case. After due analysis of the investigation report and statements by the witnesses, the HC found Habil as completely innocent and directed the State to free him.

Sambalpur Varsity to hoist giant Tricolour

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

To mark the 73rd Republic Day on Wednesday, the Sambalpur University will unfurl a giant Tricolour in its premises.

A permanent flagpole built at a cost of about Rs 9.5 lakh has been installed at the campus for hoisting of the National Flag measuring 100 feet. A concrete platform has also been constructed at Rs 8 lakh to support the flagpole. The initiative has jointly been taken by the university and a Rourkela-based private college. Hoisting of the giant National



Flag on Republic Day would definitely be a glorious moment for the institution, said university Vice-Chancellor Sanjeev Mittal.

The university authorities said arrangements have been made for observance of the day in adherence to Covid-19 guidelines.

In Ganjam

Man kills youth for misbehaving with daughter

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

In what appears to be a revenge killing, a man on Monday shot dead a youth, who had misbehaved with his daughter six months ago at Rampudi village in the Polasara area of Ganjam district.

According to reports, deceased Kartik Sabar (40) had allegedly misbehaved with the daughter of one Ladu Sabar of the village and was absconding following the incident. However on Monday evening, Ladu spotted Kartik near his house and allegedly shot him. Kartik died on the spot. Getting information, the Purushottampur police reached the village and sent the body for post-mortem. They detained Ladu for questioning and started an investigation into the incident.

On the basis of an FIR lodged by Kartik's wife, police have registered a case. The murder weapon was seized from the possession of Ladu.

1.32-cr assets of Head Clerk found

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Vigilance police on Tuesday conducted simultaneous house searches on the properties of Prafulla Kumar Sa, Head Clerk, Agalpur block in Balangir district, on the allegation of possession of assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

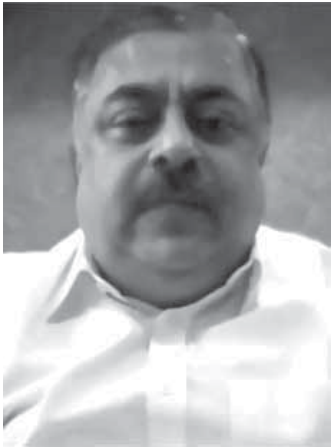
During the searches, a double-storied building at Gandhinagar Pada and a double-storied building at Hatpadapada in Balangir district, four plots in Balangir town, two two-wheelers, insurance deposits of over Rs 3.19 lakh, bank deposits, gold and silver ornaments and other movable and immovable properties, all totalling over Rs 1.32 crore, were unearthed during the searches so far.

CSNR releases discussion paper on police reform

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The civil society organisation CSNR on Sunday released a discussion paper on police reform in a function held virtually ad participated by human rights defenders, police officials and researchers.

The paper is the culmination of a longstanding effort to collect, probe and analyse cases pertaining to willful negligence of responsibilities by duty-bearers across the State. Despite provision of policy instrument, cases of negligence are



frequent and more insidious, which often goes unrecorded and un-reported, said a CSNR release. Joining as guest speakers, Odisha State Human Rights Commission (OSHR) Member Asim Amitabh Das, Additional DGP Pranabindu Acharya, New Delhi-based Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative director Dr Sanjay Hazarika researcher Debyani Srivastav praised the CSNR's efforts for bringing the publication and discussed various aspects of jurisprudence. While Das stressed on sensitising public on the

relevance of Section 4, Acharya mentioned that field-level officials are ignorant about certain Acts which are sensitive and demanded a higher level of accountability.

He further expressed that the prevailing ambiguity that is limiting application of Sec 4 is charges can be levelled only when the administrative inquiries are done, but the Act is unclear about the administrative procedure. The meeting was moderated by CSNR secretary Dharendra Panda and human rights

Poll violence Sarpanch's house torched in K'pada



a relative, the miscreants torched his two thatched rooms at about 12.30 am with an intention to kill him to settle political enmity. Nayak stated that as his

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

In a first poll violence in Kendrapada district, miscreants torched the house of the sitting Sarpanch of Balakati GP under Aul block on Monday night with an intention to kill him.

Aul PS IIC Sarpanch Salil Pradhan said Dibakar Nayak has lodged an FIR that while he and his family members were going to attend a marriage function of

new house construction is underway, he kept all household items, gold, silver, valuable documents and a cash of Rs 50,000 in the thatched house, where he and his family used to sleep. As the house was set afire, properties worth over Rs 5 lakh were gutted. Later, fire tender personnel doused the fire.

Notably, Nayak has this time has skipped from participating in elections.

KISS boy for Nat'l Kho Kho Coaching

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Arjun Singh, a +3 student of KISS, has been selected for the National Kho Kho Coaching Camp 2022 being organised by the Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) from January 28 to February 26 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi.

From this camp, players will be selected for the upcoming Ultimate Kho Kho League, which envisions to revolutionise Kho Kho in India, elevating it to international standards and giving an opportunity to young talents to showcase their skills. The first edition of Ultimate Kho Kho will feature eight teams named after the country's promi-



nent regions. There will be an initial draft of players where Kho Kho players from across the world.

KIIT & KISS founder Prof Achyuta Samanta congratulated Arjun and conveyed his best wishes to him.

Hockey WC 2023 to be exciting: Manpreet

A year left for mega event in BBSR, R'kela

TATHYA ■ BHUBANESWAR

With a year left for the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 which will be held at Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, the Indian Men's Hockey Team Captain Manpreet Singh said that the event would be an exciting one.

The mega sporting event is scheduled to be held from January 13, 2023 to January 19, 2023. The 15th edition of the Men's Hockey World Cup will be staged



in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, where a new world-class hockey

stadium with a seating capacity of over 20,000 is being constructed. "Our plans are already in place, and we just have to approach step-by-step for the World Cup. We've had a wonderful 2021, and we look to capitalise on it as we have a lot of important tournaments scheduled in 2022. So, we will take one tournament at a time, and prepare ourselves fully to play the marquee event at the home turf," said Manpreet. "Playing in front of the home crowd during the 2018 World Cup was one of the best experiences for us. The people from Odisha are very passionate about hockey, and with two venues being utilized for

the 2023 World Cup, I am sure it will be bigger and more exciting," added Manpreet. Thanking the people of Odisha and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Manpreet said: "The people of Odisha and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Ji have given so much to hockey, and we will always be thankful for their love and support," said the 29-year-old player.

The FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar-Rourkela will be hosted for the record fourth time in India. It will hold a special significance for India as the country will be celebrating 75 years of its Independence in 2023.

Race begins for B'swar civic body chief post

BJD, BJP top contenders; Cong too in bandwagon

UBACHAK MOHANTY ■ BALESWAR

At a time when filing of nominations for the three-tier panchayat elections is underway, a race has begun among the woman aspirants of various political parties to grab the Baleswar Municipality chief post. The post is reserved for women.

Although it might change afterwards after receiving objections, yet several politically active women have upped the ante for the coveted post of the second oldest urban body of the State. The Baleswar Municipality was formed after Kendrapada's and as per the latest notification, the post is reserved for women who will be elected directly. According to information, this is the third occasion when direct election for the post will be held and the last direct election for the post of Chairman was held

in 1992 for the civic bodies. It may be noted that aspirants of not only BJD and BJP but also from Congress are in the race. There are talks that a political person having no political experiences and having a societal influence might be fielded for the post. Most of the aspirants have begun campaigning in support of their candidatures using various social media platforms as tools. The top political leaders of three major parties are tight lipped and parried a query on probable women candi-

dates; rather they maintained the top leadership of their party would take a call on the matter. The Baleswar Municipality having population about 1.5 lakh (as per 2011 census) has 31 wards and in the last election, 24 councillors in BJD symbol had won and the Chairman post was held by the BJD.

It may be noted that for the rural polls the ticket distribution of political parties was delayed because of too many aspirants and infighting among their supporters.

Odisha workers trapped in Telangana brick kiln

Plead for rescue

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

At least 65 labourers, including women and minors, from Nuapada district, who had migrated to a village near Hyderabad of Telangana to work in a brick kiln, are allegedly trapped and being exploited by the owner.

The incident came to the fore when the trapped workers released a video pleading with the Odisha Government to rescue them forthwith. After Diwali last year, the unemployed workers from Rajana, Ghotaswara, Tarabod and Belagaon villages in Nuapada district left for Chandrampet village in Sircilla of Telangana with the help of a middleman. However, the owner

of the brick kiln is allegedly torturing them both mentally and physically. It is alleged that the owner is beating them for trivial reasons and not paying proper wages to them.

With no option, the victims have released the a video on social media urging the Odisha Government and the Nuapada district administration to rescue them.

PPT PROVIDES FOOD FOR NEEDY

Paradip: As part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Paradip Saksharata Samiti under the aegis of PPT distributed a pickup load of grocery, foods, clothing, sanitiser and masks at the Maa Santoshi Old Age Home, Balijhara. PPT Chairman PL Haranadh said, "PPT's guiding principles are to serve and help the needy and downtrodden." Paradip Ladies' Club president P Girija Sundari along with other office-bearers participated in the noble cause.



DA CASE : EX-DI OF SCHOOLS GETS 2-YR RI

Rayagada : The Court of Special Judge, Vigilance, Jeypore on Monday convicted Jagabandhu Dash, former District Inspector (DI) of Schools, Rayagada, in a disproportionate case and sentenced him to undergo two years' rigorous imprisonment. The court also ordered Dash to pay a fine of Rs 50,000. Earlier, the Vigilance police had registered a case against Dash for possession of disproportionate assets worth Rs 15.40 lakh than his known sources of income.

GIRL CHILD DAY HELD AT BARIPADA



Baripada: The National Girl Child Day was celebrated here on Monday with an art competition on the theme "Care for the girl child" and a group discussion on "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" organised by the Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK) at the MPC College premises. There was also an awareness meeting. While Mayurbhanj NYK Project Officer Ashok Sahu was chief guest, writer and journalist Kavi Vishnu Satpathy was chief speaker. The speakers dwelt on "the place, position, prestige & privilege enjoyed by Indian women down the ages".

MAHINDRA DONATES AMBULANCE TO PARIBARTAN

Bhubaneswar: The Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services recently donated a Mahindra Supro ambulance to NGO Paribartan as part of its Covid-19 relief project. Deepankar Verma, Circle Head Farm Equipment Loans Mahindra Finance, handed over the keys to Sudhansu Mohan Dash and Subhransu Bhusan Swain, team leads of Paribartan.



HOME TOWN STARTS 'MANO YA NA MANO' DRIVE

Bhubaneswar : Home Town, a one-stop destination for home solutions, has announced its annual consumer campaign "Mano Ya Na Mano" It aims to bring exquisite interior décor products to add a touch of brilliance to customers' life. It offers a range of nearly 100,000 products. A month-long sale from January 8 is designed to make the home décor and furniture shopping experience more memorable by availing the special offers on any purchase from a massive selection of latest products like furniture, tableware and modular kitchen, said MD Mahesh Shah.

Celebrate Indian-ness this Republic Day: Prez to people

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday said India has shown an unmatched resolve in the face of the extraordinary challenge to humankind posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. A strong and sensitive India is now emerging, he pointed out even as he asked people to celebrate "Indian-ness" this Republic Day.

Day, Kovind noted that democracy, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity form the bedrock of India and stressed that the observance of Fundamental Duties mentioned in the Constitution creates the proper environment for the enjoyment of Fundamental Rights. This year's celebrations may be muted due to the pandemic, but the spirit is as strong as ever, Kovind said. Doctors, nurses and paramedics have risen to the chal-



lenge, working long hours in difficult conditions even at the risk of their lives to attend to patients. Others have kept the

nation moving, managing supply chains and utilities, he said. Hailing the timely interventions by the leadership, policy-makers, administrators and others at the central and state levels during coronavirus pandemic, Kovind said it is a testimony to India's spirit in the face of adversity that the economy is on the move again and is projected to grow at an impressive rate in this fiscal, after going through contraction last year.

"The impressive economic performance is made possible due to improvement in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. I am happy to note that our farmers, especially young farmers with small holdings, are enthusiastically adopting natural farming," the President said. As the supreme commander of the Armed Forces, Kovind said he was glad to note that it has been a watershed year for women empowerment

in the armed forces. "Our daughters have broken a glass ceiling, and the permanent commission has now been allowed for women officers in new areas," he said, adding that "consequently, our armed forces will benefit from better gender balance." Also, the talent pipeline for the forces will be strengthened with women coming through Sainik Schools and the prestigious National Defence Academy, the President said.

"I am confident that India is better placed today to meet the challenges of the future," Kovind said, adding that new opportunities await the next generation. Invoking Mahatma Gandhi, Kovind said he would have liked us to celebrate Republic Day by striving to become better human beings and contributing towards the making of a better India and a better world. "Two days ago, on 23rd

January, all of us observed the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, who had adopted the energising salutation of 'Jai-Hind'. His quest for independence and his ambition to make India proud inspire all of us," the President said. Referring to a visit to his village in Kanpur, he also urged the people to remember their roots and work for the development of their native village, city and country.

Neeraj awarded Param Vishisht Seva Medal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Twelve security forces personnel from the Army and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were awarded Shaurya Chakra by President Ram Nath Kovind on the eve of Republic Day on Tuesday. Olympic javelin gold medal winner in the Tokyo Games Neeraj Chopra was awarded Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM). He is a Subedar in the Rajputana Rifles. This gallantry medal is the third-highest during peacetime. Five of the six awardees of the Army this year were conferred the medal posthumously. Most of them sacrificed their lives fighting militants in Jammu & Kashmir. Similarly, four of the six CRPF personnel were also awarded the medal posthumously. Giving details here on Wednesday, Defence Ministry officials said the President has



approved awards of 384 Gallantry and other Defence decorations to Armed Forces personnel and others on the eve of 73rd Republic Day celebrations. These include 12 Shaurya Chakras, 29 Param Vishisht Seva Medals (PVSM), 04 Uttam Yudd Seva Medals, 53 Ati Vishisht Seva Medals (AVSM), 13 Yudd Seva Medals, 03 Bar to Vishisht Seva Medals, 122 Vishisht Seva Medals (VSM), 03 Bar to Sena Medals (Gallantry), 81 Sena Medals (Gallantry), 02

Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry), 40 Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty), 08 Nao Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty), and 14 Vayu Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty). The Shaurya Chakra awardees are Naib Subedar Sreejith M (posthumous), Havildar Anil Kumar Tomar (posthumous), Havildar Kashiray Bammanalli (posthumous), Havildar Pinku Kumar (posthumous), Sepoy M Jaswanth Kumar Reddy (posthumous), and Rifleman Rakesh Sharma. The CRPF Shaurya Chakra awardees include Commandant Dilip Malik, Assistant Commandant Anirudh Pratap Singh, Head Constable Ajeet Singh (posthumous), Constable Vikas Kumar (posthumous), Constable Puranand (posthumous) and Head Constable Kuldeep Kumar Urawan (posthumous).

939 service medals announced on eve of R-Day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday announced a total of 939 service medals, including 189 for gallantry, for personnel of various Central and State police forces on the eve of Republic Day. However, no one has been awarded the topmost president's police medal for gallantry (PPMG) this time. Among the 189 gallantry awards, 134 personnel are being awarded for their gallant action in the Jammu and Kashmir region, 47 for their bravery in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas and one personnel for similar conduct in the north-east region. The highest number of bravery medals, 115, have been awarded to the Jammu and Kashmir Police, followed by 30 to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), 10 to the Chhattisgarh Police, nine to the Odisha Police, seven to the Maharashtra Police, three each to the border guarding forces of Indo-Tibetan Border Police



(ITBP) and the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), and two to the Border Security Force (BSF), among others. Eighty-eight personnel have been awarded the distinguished service medal while 662 have been given the meritorious service medal. 42 fire service medals, 37 correctional service medals for police personnel and 51 'Jeevan Rakshak Padak' were also announced. The 'Jeevan Rakshak' series of medals are given for meritorious act of human nature in saving the life of a person.

Sanjeev Kumar Yadav IPS of Delhi Police Cell is among the Gallantry Medal winners. 53 personnel of the Border Security Force (BSF) have been decorated with various police service medals including gallantry decorations. Constables Anand Oraon and Sunder Singh have been awarded the PMG for thwarting smuggling bids by armed smugglers along the India-Bangladesh international border in West Bengal. 18 personnel of the India-China LAC guarding force Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) have been decorated with various police service medals including gallantry decorations. The PMG has been given to the team of Assistant Commandant Ashok Kumar, Inspectors Suresh Lal and Neela Singh for neutralising two wanted Maoists during a fierce encounter in the left wing extremism-affected area of Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon district in February, 2018. A huge assortment of arms and ammunition was also recovered after the operation. Among the distinguished service medal awardees is DIG Ajay Pal Singh who joined the mountain-warfare trained force as an officer in 1990. DIG Ramakant Sharma and GC Upadhyay have also been awarded the distinguished service medal. CBI officers probing post poll violence cases in West Bengal besides the one who busted big bribery cases in Railways are among 29 agency sleuths awarded police medals. Joint Director Raminish Geer, who led the probe in cases like housing scam allegedly involving the then Union minister Sheila Kaul, Naval war room leak case, kidnapping of an NRI businessman and his release besides other high profile anti-corruption cases, received the coveted President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service. He was among the four CBI joint directors rushed from Delhi to West Bengal to oversee post poll violence cases reported in the state last year.

75% ICU Covid survivors grapple with health problems

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

At least 75 per cent of the Covid-19 survivors, who were treated in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), experience physical, mental and/or cognitive problems one-year post ICU, according to a large-scale MONITOR-IC study published in the journal JAMA. The study was led by Radboud university medical center, in which the health status of ICU survivors is monitored with questionnaires up to five years after ICU admission. The study regarding long-term health problems was conducted among 246 Covid-19 patients (176 men/70 women) who were treated in the intensive care unit (ICU) in the Netherlands. Their mean age was 61 years. Using questionnaires, they were asked how they were doing one-year post ICU. Worldwide, this is the first scientific research regarding long-term problems among Covid-19 ICU survivors. Patients in this study were admitted to the ICU during the first Covid-19 surge between March and July 2020. Majority of patients experience health problems one-year post ICU. This study shows that three quarters of the Covid-19 ICU survivors experience problems one-year post ICU. These are primarily physical problems, whereby half of the patients experience feelings of fatigue. Other physical problems are e.g. a reduced condition, pain, muscle weakness and shortness of breath. Also, mental symptoms are common; one in five Covid-19 ICU survivors experience feelings of anxiety or post-traumatic stress. Furthermore, one in six have cognitive problems such as memory or attention problems. These various problems negatively affect former ICU patients' daily lives. Over half of them indicate that they have work-related problems because of the health problems: they reduced their working hours; they are still on sick leave or have even given up their job. Yet another study has said that about 50 per cent of people infected with Covid-19 during the first wave of infections in 2020 may have long-term and even permanent changes to their sense of smell. Scientists at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm found this after they ran comprehensive tests on 100 individuals who caught Covid in the first wave of infections in 2020.

Extended FCRA registration of 11,594 NGOs which applied within cut-off date, Govt tells SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday told the Supreme Court that Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) registrations of 11,594 NGOs, which applied within the cut-off date, have already been extended. Taking note of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's submission, a bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar refused to pass an interim direction that FCRA registrations of all organisations that were valid as on September 30 last year ought to be continued until further orders. The bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and CT Ravikumar, said the petitioners are free to make representation to the concerned authorities which may be considered on its merits in accordance with law. The FCRA registration is mandatory for any association and NGO to receive foreign funding. Mehta told the top court that 11,594 NGOs had applied within the cut-off date and their registrations have been extended for the time being. The apex court, which is seized of a plea filed by a US-based NGO seeking quashing of the Centre's alleged decision by which 5,789 entities lost their FCRA registration, was dealing with arguments regarding interim relief in the matter. While referring to Mehta's submission, the top court said that in light of the stand taken by the authorities, it doesn't intend to pass such interim direction as prayed. The bench said the petition would be listed after the

judgement is pronounced on a batch of pleas, including those which have raised issues concerning the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (Amendment) Act, 2020. Senior advocate Sanjay Hegde, appearing for the US based NGO said they have the information which is available in public domain as per which there are around 6,000 NGOs whose registrations have not been extended for whatever reasons. The bench told Hegde that the Solicitor General has submitted that those who have applied, their registration has been extended. "If those 6,000 NGOs have chosen not to apply for registration, that means they do not want to continue in the present regime," the bench observed. There were 22,762 FCRA-registered organisations till December 31, 2021. On January 1, the number came down to 16,829. These are considered "live" organisations. The officials had said the FCRA licences of 18,778 organisations were expiring between September 29, 2020 and December 31, 2021. Out of them, as many as 12,989 organisations have applied for renewal of the FCRA licence between September 30, 2020 and December 31, 2021. Since 5,789 organisations did not apply for the renewal of the FCRA licence, they were deemed to have ceased to be registered organisations, an official had said. In addition to them, renewal application of 179 organisations were also rejected by the Home Ministry due to different reasons.

As home isolation cases up, Mandaviya tells States, UTs to bolster teleconsultations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the majority of Covid-19 patients recuperate in home isolation, the Union Health Ministry is banking on teleconsultation services to provide timely care to them. On Tuesday, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya asked states to adopt the hub and spoke model and open additional teleconsultation centres. "This will enable beneficiaries to access advice from experts stationed at district hubs," it said. He said the government's e-Sanjeevani telemedicine system has provided services to more than 2.6 crore beneficiaries where people can seek medical advice from the confines of their homes," he said during an interaction with health ministers, senior bureaucrats and administrators of nine states and union territories. These were Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Chandigarh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Delhi, Ladakh and Uttar Pradesh, according to a statement from the health ministry. Mandaviya also urged the health ministers and state authorities to plug the existing gaps by efficiently utilizing the amount sanctioned for various infra projects. On the importance of teleconsultation services, Mandaviya urged them "This will prove to be a game-changer and will be of immense value and importance for the hard-to-reach and far-flung areas, and especially in the northern regions in the current winter season," he highlighted. He advised the states and union territories to ensure that those in home isolation are efficiently monitored in line with the national guidelines. This will ensure that the vulnerable categories of active cases in home isolation get the required medical help in a timely manner, the statement said. The virtual meeting was held to review public health preparedness for containment and management of Covid and the progress of the national Covid 9 vaccination campaign.

UP ELECTIONS Star campaigner RPN's exit a massive blow to Congress

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister and a Congress leader for over three decades, RPN Singh's exit from the party has come as a massive blow for the grand old party just few days before the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections and just a day after he was named a star campaigner of the party. A section of the party leaders felt that the exit of Singh, who was incharge of party affairs in Jharkhand, is 'good riddance' since he was allegedly working against the Congress-JMM combine in the State. However, another section termed it as yet another alarm bell for the party leadership to wake up from slumber to put the house in order. The Congress late in the evening appointed Avinash Pandey as the AICC general secretary incharge in place of Singh. Singh, a key Kurmi OBC leader from eastern UP, is the second big exit for the Congress in the state after Jitin Prasada, who is now a minister in the Yogi Adityanath-led BJP government in UP. He had been giving enough



indications to leave the Congress since the run up to 2019 General Elections. AICC sources said he had not been attending the party meetings in the last several months though he was full time incharge for the Jharkhand Congress. Soon after Singh announced his resignation from the party, Jharkhand Barkagaon MLA Amba Prasad alleged that Singh had since several months been attempting to dislodge the Congress-JMM coalition government and that there were reports about him being in touch with BJP leaders. "The party leadership had been cautioned on several occasions about his anti-party activities. Every true member of Congress is happy with him (RPN) going to BJP," Amba Prasad tweeted. RPN posted his resignation

letter addressed to Congress president Sonia Gandhi, "Today, at a time, we are celebrating the formation of our great Republic, I begin a new chapter in my political journey. Jai Hind." Kunwar Ratanjit Pratap Narain Singh, popularly known as Raja Sahab of Padrauna, was a former Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs in Congress-led UPA government. Jyotiraditya Scindia's exit was among the triggers for a big churn in the party that led to 23 leaders writing to Sonia Gandhi asking for 'visible and full-time' leadership and collective decision-making. Scindia, Prasada, and Singh, all Doon school pals, were Rahul Gandhi aides and were in the Council of Ministers of the Manmohan Singh Congress led UPA governments. As the media was abuzz with RPN switching over to BJP, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinath at a Press conference quoted Priyanka Gandhi as saying that the "battle which Congress party is fighting can be fought only with bravery" and "cowards can't fight it".

Law Minister slams 'elements' trying to 'discredit' EC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday called for increasing the voter turnout

to at least 75 per cent in the next Lok Sabha elections while Union Minister for Law and Justice, Kiren Rijiju said "elements" trying to discredit the

Election Commission (EC) were actually trying to discredit the democratic process of the country. The minister also said the courts have a right to make observations on the Commission but the judges will also have to think about the language being used. In his message at an event on the occasion of the 12th National Voters Day, Naidu said as a nation we must think and arrive at a consensus to have simultaneous elections to all the three tiers of federal set up and move towards better governance by focusing on all-round development of our people. Naidu was the chief guest at the event but could not attend the function as he is in home isolation in Hyderabad after testing positive for COVID-19. The event was also attended by Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra and Election Commissioners Rajiv Kumar and Anup Chandra Pandey and representatives of recognised polit-



ical parties, including Trinamool Congress, BSP, BJP, CPI, Congress and National People's Party. Naidu's message was read out in Hindi and English. The vice president said the country has come a long way from the first general elections of 1952 when only 44.87 per cent of the eligible voters turned up to vote. In the last general elections in 2019, 67.40 per cent or more than two-third of the eligible voters exercised their franchise, he noted. Rijiju said, people who want to challenge democracy have found a way of doing so by challenging the poll panel. The minister said the way EC has handled challenges from time to time, there is little scope to criticise it. He, however, did

not name the "elements" he was referring to. In a democracy, people are free to criticise the EC, but the criticism should be based on logic, he said, adding that the language used should be within civic norms. "If the courts says on EC, it can. Courts have a right. But the judges will have to think about what language they are using. Under what circumstances EC is working has to be understood," he said. Referring to the recent passage of a bill on electoral reforms, the minister said due to "ruckus" in the House he felt "handicapped" as he could not explain in detail the reforms being ushered in. CEC Chandra said the Commission has made arrangements for holding "Covid-safe" elections in the five states going to Assembly polls. The Commission conferred national awards for the best electoral practices to officers for their outstanding performance in the conduct of elections in different spheres.

Govt imposes curbs on export of human hair

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a sharp rise in instances of hair smuggling to China that has squeezed raw material supplies for Indian exporters of hair products, the government on Tuesday put restrictions on the export of human hair. Earlier, hair exports were allowed without any restriction. As per the new norms, now an exporter would have to seek permission or licence from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce to ship hair outside India. Last year, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence busted a scam involving Chinese nationals in exporting human hairs from Bengaluru to China via Myanmar. Bangladesh has now emerged as the new transit hub for human hair smugglers. While high quality locks go for anywhere between Rs. 4,000 to

Rs. 15,000 per kg, the lower quality human hair 'waste' starts at a comparatively measly Rs. 4 per kg. In a notification, the Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Santosh Kumar Sarangi on Tuesday said, the export policy of human hair, unworked, whether or not washed or scoured; waste of human hair or any other form of raw human hair...Has been put under restricted category, with immediate effect. The hair export market in India is worth Rs 6,000-8000 crore — 5 per cent of the hair comes from donations at temples and rest through collection of comb waste across villages. China, Hong Kong, Brazil and Italy are among the top five markets for India, when it comes to human hair exports. It is used for making wigs, false beards, eyebrows, extensions and also in extraction of a protein used in the baking

industry. It's used to make calligraphy brushes, wig making, cloth making, soy sauce, suit linings, and furniture. It's enlisted to clean up oil spills. It's even a part of the bagel-making process at Dunkin' Donuts. A large chunk of the hair exported comes from the ritual of hair tonsuring at the famous Tirumala Venkateswara Temple in Andhra Pradesh where thousands of devotees offer their hair to Lord Venkateshwara every day. It is estimated that over a ton of hair is collected at the temple on a daily basis. Welcoming the move, member of Human Hair and Hair Products Manufacturers and Exporters Association of India Sunil Eamani said that it was their long-pending demand. "Now with this restriction, only genuine exporters will be able to export the product," he said.

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TENDER NOTICE

MPMKVVCL, Bhopal, invites following bids from manufactures through e-tendering.

Tender Specification Number	Particulars	Approx. Value (Rs. Lakh)	Tender Fee Inclusive of GST (in Rs.)	Pre-Bid Conference at 3:30 PM	Date of opening tender at 3:30 PM
MD/MK/04/744	Supply of 132 KV/110 Volt, 0.2S Potential Transformer (PT) & Current Transformer (CT) of various ratio	38.16	5900.00	31.01.22	10.02.22

Other details are available on Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & <https://mptenders.gov.in>
M.P. Madhyam/103449/2022 CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (PROC.)

‘Kerala logs 50K new Covid cases in 24 hrs’

People in 20-30 age group getting infected more, says Health Min

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

More than 50,000 persons were diagnosed with Covid-19 on Tuesday in Kerala, said Veena George, Minister of Health. Addressing a specially convened media conference at capital city, the minister said the transmission of the pandemic was more in the youth (those in the age group of 20 to 30).

With many doctors, nurses and paramedical staff testing positive in the State, the minister said the situation was a challenge. Test Positivity Rate was 49.4 per cent as on Tuesday evening, said the minister.

Later in a media release, the minister said that 55,475 persons were diagnosed with

Covid-19 in Kerala out of the 1.12 lakh samples tested during the last 24 hours. Veena had said last week that the number of patients would peak by January 23 and then there would be a respite.

The death toll till date due to the pandemic reached 52,141, said the minister. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who is undergoing treatment in a US hospital asked the people in the State not to panic. “There is nothing to panic about. All you need is a little bit of caution. We have the best medical health care system which is always at your finger tips,” said the chief minister in a message sent from the US to the people in Kerala.

The Chief Minister also asked the people not to crowd the hospitals if they were diagnosed with Covid-19. “All you have to do is to stay indoors and be safe,” said Vijayan.

Minister Veena said the Department of Health would launch a massive awareness programme across the State to remove all kinds of reservations and apprehensions from the

mind of the people. She also disclosed that district health officials would get in touch with private hospitals which refuse to admit Covid-19 patients. The minister said the sudden spurt in the number of cases was on account of the Omicron variant.

Doctors in Government service told The Pioneer that people planning to visit Kerala should postpone their travel plans to another date as it was not safe to be in the State at this time. “I am not confident of the safety assured by face masks and sanitizers. Think seriously before you embark on a journey to the State as there are Covid-19 afflicted persons walking freely along the roads and frequent hotels and restaurants,” said a senior Government doctor.

Conceding to the demand made by the Government doctors to appoint more health workers, Veena George said the administration would soon launch a Covid Brigade of more than 4,000 workers across the State to tackle the pandemic.

4 injured in grenade attack ahead of R-Day in Srinagar

PNS ■ JAMMU

On the eve of the Republic Day celebrations in Srinagar, unidentified terrorists targeted a security vehicle by lobbing a grenade at the highly secured Hari Singh High Street injuring four persons including a police officer on Tuesday. The grenade attack was reported around 3.30 p.m.

Moving swiftly the security personnel cordoned off the entire area to track down the foot prints of the terrorists who might have lobbed a grenade taking advantage of the heavy rush in the area.

Window panes of several shops located in the area were broken while chaos prevailed in the area till security personnel restored order by channelising smooth movement of vehicles.

Confirming the total number of injuries, a twitter handle of Srinagar police advised local residents to remain vigilant and inform nearest security personnel on noticing any suspicious movement.

“All civilians are advised to be vigilant in view of today’s

J&K admin orders training, placement of 60K youth under ‘Himayat’ scheme in next FY

Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir administration on Tuesday directed the Rural Development Department to ensure training and placement of 60,000 unemployed youth under livelihood mission ‘Himayat’ during the next financial year.

Chief Secretary Arun Kumar Mehta passed the directions at a meeting convened to review the Himayat scheme - a skill development programme for the youth which is under implementation since 2011 and will close on March 31, 2023.

In its latest report, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has flagged poor implementation of

Himayat in Jammu and Kashmir and said only 4,494 aspirants were given skill training under the scheme as against a target of 53,547 between 2016-19. Mehta said the training and consequent job placement of 60,000 youth under Himayat and other self-employment initiatives launched by the government would further its objective of driving down unemployment in Jammu and Kashmir to below five per cent.

The chief secretary said as the scheme will close on March 31, 2023, the department should target short term skill-based courses spanning three to nine months.

PTI

grenade attack that caused minor splinter injuries to four Locals. Please bring any suspicious movement/person to the notice of nearest Security personnel. Let’s spoil the nefarious

66-yr-old swims for 5 hrs with hands, legs chained; sets record

Mangaluru: Swimming 3.5 km in the Arabian sea for five hours and 35 minutes with his hands and legs chained, a 66-year-old man from Udupi has entered the Golden Book of World Records.

Gangadhar Kadekar, who entered the sea from Padukere beach shore in Udupi at 7.50 am on Monday, completed his swim by 1.25 pm.

The representative from the Golden Book of World Records Manish Vishnuy, who watched the feat, issued a provisional certificate to Kadekar.

“The swimmer’s achievement at an age when people retire and remain at home is really great,” Vishnuy said. Kadekar said he swam like a dolphin as both his hands and legs were chained. “The record was created to make children to draw inspiration from it and I am happy,” he said.

Kadekar had earlier entered the India Book of Records by swimming 1.4 km in 73.7 minutes by chaining his legs in the ‘Padmasana’ posture at Padukere on January 24,

Gangadhar Kadekar, who entered the Arabian Sea from Padukere beach shore in Udupi at 7.50 am on Monday, completed his swim by 1.25 pm

2021. He also created a record by swimming with his 41 students at St Mary’s Island on February 14, 2021.

Kadekar, who took to swimming at the age of 50, founded the Jai Durga swimming club in Udupi and has been providing training to youths for the last two years. More than 1,000 students are under training under him at present.

He had taken part in state and national level aquatic championships and won 31 gold, 16 silver and nine bronze medals at the senior level. **PTI**

MLA’s son among 7 killed in car accident

Wardha: Seven MBBS students, including the son of an MLA, were killed in Wardha district of Maharashtra in the wee hours of Tuesday when the car they were travelling in fell off a bridge, police said.

The incident occurred around 1.30 AM near Selsura village in Wardha district, 77 km away from Nagpur, in east Maharashtra.

An official said that all seven students died on the spot. One of the seven students, Avishkar Rahangdale, was the son of Tirora BJP MLA Vijay Rahangdale. He was a first-year MBBS student of the Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College at Sawangi (Meghe) in Wardha. Police said the SUV was being driven by one of the students who all were returning from neighbouring Yavatmal district after celebrating the birthday of a student.

Due to the impact of the crash, the SUV was reduced to pulp. All the deceased were students of the Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, OSD of the Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences Dr Abhyuday



Mangled remains of a car which fell into the Yashodha River off a bridge, at Deoli near Wardha on Tuesday

Meghe told PTI.

“One of the deceased students was a medical intern. Of the rest six, two each were studying in the final year, third year and first year,” he said. Other six deceased are identified as Niraj Chauhan, who hailed from Daudpur in Gorakhpur, Pratyush Singh, Shubham Jaiswal from Chandauli (Uttar Pradesh), Vivek Nandan and Pawan Shakti (both from Gaya in Bihar), and Nitesh Kumar Singh from Belapur in Odisha.

PM expresses grief over deaths in Selsura accident

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday expressed pain at the loss of lives in a road accident at Selsura in Maharashtra.

He also announced Rs 2 lakh each from the Prime Minister’s National Relief Fund to the next of kin of those who died in the accident and Rs 50,000 for each of the injured.

“Pained by the loss of lives due to an accident near Selsura in Maharashtra. In this hour of sadness, my thoughts are with those who have lost their loved ones. I pray that those injured are able to recover soon,” he said.

Seven persons, including some medical students and the son of an MLA, were killed in Wardha district of Maharashtra when the car they were travelling in fell off a bridge in the wee hours of Tuesday, police said.

National award for BOC official

New Delhi: Satyendra Prakash, Principal Director General, BOC was on Tuesday honoured with the National Award for enhancing electoral participation by the Election Commission of India for activities conducted towards voter awareness and education during the period 2021-22.

The award was given to Satyendra Prakash, by the Commission on the occasion of National Voters Day 2022 in the presence of Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister of Law and Justice, Chief Election Commissioner, Sushil Chandra and other senior dignitaries in the National Award function Ceremony at Ashoka Hotel, New Delhi.

The award has been given for his contribution in educating and creating awareness for enhancing the people’s participation in casting vote during present challenging time of Covid-19. Post Covid-19 when direct interaction with the masses is a challenge, his contribution in devising new techniques to reach the people is very significant. It is to be noted



that such efforts have led to increase in percentage of voter’s participation to 67.47% in 2019 which was 58.19 % in the year 2009.

Under the leadership of Satyendra Prakash, BOC with its 23 Regional Outreach Bureaus (ROBs) and 148 Field Outreach Bureaus (FOBs) are using new techniques viz. messaging through WhatsApp,

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter Tweets/Re-tweets, SMS, Telephonic Calls and organizing webinars. These social media platforms have been used as significant tools for reaching the people. Awareness activities by audio announcement using the Branded Mobile Vans are also used as a major tool for reaching the people in present situation.

Various Voter awareness / Education programmes as part of the SVEEP activities have been carried out through Cultural programmes, Digital Exhibitions, Photo exhibitions, Door to Door campaigns, Magic shows, Nukkad Natak, Demonstrations, Rallies etc. While organizing such campaigns BOC identifies mainly the low voter turnout areas and make the outreach activities more focused in such areas to disseminate the message of ‘No Voter to Be Left Behind’ of uphold Hon’ble Central Election Commission’s and thereby strengthening the democratic process of the nation.

Satyendra Prakash was earlier awarded with the ‘Rajat Kamal’ for the Best Documentary Film Producer at the National Film Awards 2018. 6 films produced by him when he was Director General of Films Division of India were awarded with Rajat Kamal. He was also honoured with the Swachh Bharat Award in the year 2019 and 2020 for his exemplary work in Swachh Bharat Mission.

Aspirants involved in unlawful acts will face lifetime debarment from Railway jobs: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday warned the Railway job aspirants if they are found indulging in unlawful activities may face lifetime debarment from obtaining Railway job.

The notice came a day after railway job aspirants squatted on tracks at different places in Bihar, including the State capital Patna, to protest alleged erroneous results of Railway Recruitment Board’s Non-Technical Popular Categories (RRB NTPC) exam.

“Railway job aspirants found involved in vandalism and unlawful activities while protesting will be barred from ever getting recruited in the railways,” the Ministry of Railways issued a notice on its website and all Railway Recruitment Board website.

“Such misguided activities are the highest level of indiscipline rendering such aspirants unsuitable for railway/government job. Videos of such activities will be examined...and candidates/aspirants found indulged in unlawful activities will be liable for police action as well as lifetime debarment from obtaining railway job,” the Ministry said in a general notice.

The protests, which continued till late in the evening on Monday, resulted in the cancellation of at least five long-distance trains originating from Patna. Routes of some other trains were diverted as the youth blocked tracks at Rajendra Nagar Terminal. The railways also cautioned the aspirants that they should not come under the influence of elements which are trying to misguide them for their own “selfish ends”.

Tamil actor gets relief from Madras HC in car import fine case

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Joseph Vijay, Tamil film industry’s reigning ‘mega’ star got a major relief from Madras High Court on Tuesday as a division bench ordered the expunging of certain critical comments made by a single bench judge against the former in July 2021. The judge’s scathing comments on him had pained the actor and he had approached the court with a plea to remove the same.

S M Subramaniam, the judge of the Madras High Court, while hearing a plea filed by the actor seeking exemption from paying entry tax for a Rolls Royce Ghost car which he had imported from England had slapped a fine of ₹1 lakh and gave him a piece of his mind which hogged national headlines.

“The public consider you as a role model- a real hero. You should have promptly paid the entry tax the moment the authorities asked you to pay it. Actors who portray themselves as champions

of social justice and against corruption should not evade tax. Super stars are not expected to behave like reel heroes. Tax evasion is to be construed as an anti-national habit, attitude and mindset and unconstitutional,” Judge Subramaniam has observed in this verdict.

Vijay, who was pained by these comments filed a petition seeking its expunging. A Division Bench consisting of Pushpa Sathyanarayana and Mohammed Shaffiq on Tuesday allowed the appeal filed by Vijay and ordered the removal of the “scathing remarks” made by the single bench judge in paragraphs 7, 8, 9 and 12 of the order dated 13 July 2021.

Senior lawyer Vijay Narayan, who represented Vijay, had contended that the adverse remarks had created negative publicity and were hurtful and noted that the court had rejected similar pleas for tax exemption but had not made comments like those directed against Vijay.

Court discharges Shilpa Shetty in ‘kissing’ case, calls actress victim of Richard Gere’s act

Mumbai: Fifteen years after Hollywood star and AIDS awareness campaigner Richard Gere created sensation by kissing her in public, a Mumbai court has discharged Shilpa Shetty in an obscenity case filed against her.

While clearing the actress of the charges against, Ballard Pier Court Metropolitan Magistrate Ketaki M Chavan observed in her order that after perusing the complaint lodged against her, she had found that Shilpa Shetty was the victim of the alleged act by Gere.

After going through the police report and documents presented to the court, the Magistrate held that the accusations against Shilpa Shetty was “groundless” and ordered her discharge from the case.

“Not a single element of any of the alleged offence is being satisfied in the complaint. Moreover, none of the papers annexed with the final report discloses the act of the present accused so as to

bring her within the purview of Section 34 of IPC (common intention),” the Magistrate observed in her order.

The controversial incident – in which Gere held a surprised Shetty in tight embrace arching over her and kissing her a couple of times in full public view at the AIDS awareness event – took place during a promotional event in Rajasthan in 2007.

In all three cases were filed against Shilpa in 2007 in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh for publicly kissing Gere.

The complaint filed before a Judicial Magistrate First Class in Mundawar, Rajasthan seeking registration of an FIR against Shilpa Shetty and Richard Gere, was allowed. The actress and Gere came to be booked under Sections 292, 293, 294 (obscenity) of the Indian Penal Code, along with provisions of the Information Technology and Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act.

Maha logs 5K cases after dip in daily spike

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a significant drop in the Covid-19 infections, the daily Covid-19 cases rose by 5,088 cases to touch a tally of 33,914 in Maharashtra on Tuesday, even as the daily pandemic cases in Mumbai plunged further to drop marginally from 1857 to 1815 cases.

On a day when the State recorded 13 Omicron cases in the State, the Covid-19 cases in the State rose from 28,826 cases recorded on Monday to 33,914 registered on Tuesday.

With the fresh cases reported on Monday, the total number of Covid-19 cases in the state went down from 75,35,511 cases to 75,69,425.

Mumbai, where the daily infections have been dropping steadily for more than eight days, witnessed a further drop in the number of cases from 1,857 to 1815 cases. With the latest cases, the total number of cases in Mumbai mounted from 10,36,690 to 10,38,505.

As 30,500 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 70,89,936 to 71,20,436 cases. The recovery rate in the state dropped from 94.09 per cent to 94.07 per cent.

Pak Hindu Council pleads for allowing flights carrying pilgrims to India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After allowing Indian wheat trucks to Afghanistan via road, Pakistan’s foreign office has forwarded a proposal on behalf of the Pakistan Hindu Council (PHC) chief patron Ramesh Vankwani to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) asking that two chartered flights of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) carrying pilgrims be allowed to fly from Lahore and Karachi to destinations in India this Saturday.

Meanwhile, the MEA and Ministry of Civil Aviation has not responded to the proposal so far. Earlier, pilgrims used to visit each other’s countries either by road or via Samjhauta Express.

Vankwani, who is from Prime Minister Imran Khan’s Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) party, said he would lead a delegation of Pakistani pilgrims to India on January 29 on a special chartered flight of the Pakistan Airlines International (PIA).

“Now PHC has decided to embark on yet another initiative, during current month of January (3 days, from 28th to 30th January), where through 170 Pilgrims of Khwaja Nizamuddin Dargah Delhi and Hazrat Moinudin Chishti Dargah Ajmer, from Pakistan would be taken in PIA flight, up to Delhi.

Simultaneously things would be worked out to bring 170 Pilgrims of SPJM Mandir from India, for one day tour, on 20th February 2022 (Flight arrival time 8 am and Departure time 8 pm on / from Bacha Khan international airport Peshawar), in Air India flight,” Vankwani said in a letter to Secretary, Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan.



People walk past a sand sculpture on the theme of 73rd Republic Day in Puri on Tuesday (L)



A young woman, wearing bangles and a cap in the hues of the Tricolor, poses for a photograph in the backdrop of the historic Taj Mahal, in Agra on Tuesday (R) **PTI**



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Life before death

The vaccination drive in terror-hit regions hasn't run into any problem, which is a good sign

On June 8 last year, Weyan, a tiny hamlet in Kashmir's Bandipora district, became India's first village to vaccinate its entire adult population against COVID-19. In a few days, Jammu and Kashmir will become India's second State, after Himachal Pradesh, to vaccinate all those over 18. The achievements are noteworthy considering health workers had to brave inaccessible terrain, non-existent communication facilities, terrible weather and terrorism to complete the process of giving the first dose of the vaccine to all. The State's vaccination drive carried on in the face of frequent incidents of cross-border terrorism in one of the most hostile international border areas of the world. The drive stayed on course despite a wave of killings throughout October 2021 when terrorists targeted non-Kashmiris, members of minority communities and did not spare even daily wage labourers. The surge in violence left 33 dead. However, the health workers were welcomed wherever they went, especially in areas known for separatist sentiments. The presence of security forces accompanying the teams caused no reservation among the locals, who overcame their wariness to receive the doses. The possibility of some separatist elements or sympathisers surreptitiously getting a free dose by the State cannot be ruled out. For once, the fear of terror paled before the fear of the unseen virus. That brings us to the moot issue: Do anti-State elements, whether terrorists, militants, insurgents, Naxalites or Maoists have a right to COVID-19 vaccines?



Under international humanitarian law, in situations of conflict, the wounded and sick are entitled to medical care. During the pandemic that we currently face, such care can include a vaccine. The State, which alone can acquire the vaccine, arranges for it to reach across the country. It will respect its human rights duties towards the population living in the conflict areas. The resistance groups have the primary responsibility for the wellbeing of those living in their area of influence. Whether in J&K that witnesses terror attacks, the 'Red Corridor' districts in central India that brave Maoist attacks, or the deep interiors of some States in the Northeast which have a brush with insurgency, the issue must have cropped up when security agencies were preparing for the vaccination drive. In Maharashtra, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, there were reports of the virus infecting Maoist cadres deep inside forests. Many may have succumbed for lack of medical care. The lockdowns or movement restrictions prevented couriers and sympathisers from reaching medicine or oxygen cylinders to them. What we do know is that the vaccination drives were never disturbed. In the Northeast, too, the drives never met with harm. The insurgents, like the Maoists, must have realised the danger of the virus spreading in their areas. The States did offer anti-COVID treatment and vaccine doses to those who surrendered. It is not known how many acceded to the call. Parliament must debate the issue and give shape to a protocol for the future.

PICTALK



People walk past a sand sculpture on the theme of the 73rd Republic Day, in Puri

PTI

Happy R-Day

But it's time for agencies to work professionally and to let the suffocating security cover go

As India celebrates its 73rd Republic Day today, there is a multi-layered security ring enveloping the Capital. Of course, the pandemic is a hindrance to the grandiosity of celebrations for a couple of years now. But, that apart, is there really a need to insulate the normal, common Indians from their national celebration? Why shouldn't they be allowed to be part of the joy, pride and festivities as those who claim to be the top layer among equals, that too in the name of protecting the latter? And from whom; one's own countrymen? Of course one remembers what happened at the Red Fort this day last year. But one also distinctly remembers that when former US President Bill Clinton visited India towards the turn of last century, there was minimal inconvenience caused by the Secret Service people. They would diligently check all equipment besides mandatorily body-checking all incoming persons but they would never be overly intrusive. Why can't our security agencies be as professional? The only reason, it appears, is that they are still unsure of their own abilities; therefore, they'd rather issue advisories banning all sorts of items to a VVIP venue.

There is no denying that any untoward incident on such a momentous occasion would come as a major embarrassment for the Government and the security establishment but another way of looking at it is, as some politicians have said in the past, women shouldn't venture out of their homes late at night because rapists are on the prowl. Well, rather than advising a well-meaning, perhaps late-working, woman to stay indoors, shouldn't the police rather focus on increasing its presence on the streets and aim for crime prevention rather than trying to solve it after their laxity has allowed it to be executed? Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana has informed that more than 27,000 personnel of the force have been deployed for security duty and anti-terror measures have also been intensified. Delhi Police is also getting assistance from 65 companies of the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF). Anti-terror measures are intensified comprising of the checking of hotels, vehicles, blockades of several locations, among others. All of this is good, but the moot point is: Don't victimise innocent citizens. May hope and peace always be in the country! Happy Republic Day.

The eternal flame can't be partial to our soldiers



ASHOK K MEHTA

The 'othering' of Indian soldiers in colonial times was the biggest disservice to the collective memory of the armed forces; it must be rectified now

In his book *Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation*, Lt Gen JFR Jacob utilised one page to state: "The rifle and helmet that forms the centrepiece of the Amar Jawan War Memorial at India Gate once belonged to a soldier unknown to history who died on the battlefield on the outskirts of Jessore. There is no inscription on this monument." Then he recalls the legendary inscription at Kohima which, he says, is "appropriate for our jawans who laid down their lives in the rice paddies of Bangladesh: Let us not forget them."

India Gate and, under its canopy, the statue of the Unknown Soldier of 1971 war — called the Amar Jawan Jyoti — have become enduring symbols of nation's gratitude to the armed forces. Inside the India Gate arch are etched names of some Indian soldiers who fought in World War I and Third Afghan war — not the complete lineup of Indians who fought colonial wars of pre-Independence India. The National War Memorial that came up in 2019 recorded the names of all martyrs in wars, and internal stability operations after Independence. The 'othering' of soldiers in colonial times was the biggest disservice to the collective memory of the armed forces. The discrimination between British Indian Army and the Indian Army should have been challenged by Service Chiefs when Governments would ignore commemoration of battles fought by Indian troops abroad. Even now, the NWM has no place for the 'others' as India Gate was never an inclusive salute as it excluded those who fell in pre-Independence wars.

Thousands are buried across Europe, Middle East, SE Asia and N Africa. India's contribution to the Great Wars and other campaigns was outstanding. Field Marshal Claude Auchinleck said that Britain would not have won the wars without Indian Army's contribution. Even Prime Minister Winston Churchill praised the unsurpassed bravery of Indian troops. Of the 1.4mn Indians in World War I, 74,000 were killed and 64,350 wounded. About 2,200 decorations were



won by Indian soldiers. In World War II, 2.5mn took part; 87,000 were killed with 34,354 wounded. Including 18 Victoria Crosses, 4,000 decorations were awarded.

According to an Army source, the fusion of two flames and shifting the India Gate flame to NWM does not mean that the four urns surrounding the Unknown Soldier will be extinguished. One will continue to glow eternally, celebrating India's only military victory in 1,000 years. But there will be one NWM, not two. That still leaves several questions. Will one of the four urns continue to burn; will the tri-service guard remain under India Gate; will the statue of the Unknown Soldier be ultimately shifted to NWM? And who will occupy the vacated space. When the NWM was inaugurated, Government said the sanctity of the eternal flame will be maintained at India Gate. We are not sure. Last Sunday, the hologram of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was installed in the empty canopy near India Gate which once contained King George V's statue. Once his granite statue is sculpted, he will become the top contender for the space under India Gate. Prime Minister Modi said: "The heroes whose mem-

“THE MERGING OF FLAMES AND TRANSFERRING IT TO NWM IS 'OTHERING' SACRIFICES OF PRE-INDEPENDENCE ERA SOLDIERS. THEIR VALOUR MUST NOT ONLY BE ACKNOWLEDGED BUT A SUITABLE MEMORIAL BE ADDED TO THE NWM BY THE NEXT REPUBLIC DAY TO HONOUR THEM

ory was being erased post-Independence are now being revived. The country is correcting its mistakes." One hopes he will rectify the omission of the British Indian Army martyrs from the NWM.

Almost 90 per cent of military traditions and regimental ethos, ethics and values are drawn from pre-Independence period, including Beating Retreat, colour presentations, gallantry awards and battle honours. Nearly 80 per cent of our regiments were raised 150-200 years ago. Almost everything in the military is carry-over of British relics and traditions; we must accept it unhesitatingly. Regiments still celebrate battle honours and gallantry awards that were won in the Great Wars. But we are still arguing about renaming Aurangzeb Roads and railway stations. Britain ruled for more than a century and created an empire that stretched from Belize to Hong Kong, surpassing the conquest of even the Mongols.

Today, Britain's tiny military has lost none of its sheen though its empire is gone. The entire British Army has dwindled to smaller than our 43 Gorkha battalions. Still, the glory lingers on and will never extinguish due to

embedded traditions. India has a lot to learn from its military history. India this year will surpass Britain's GDP to become the fourth biggest economy. The process of Indianisation has been extremely slow and in the wrong areas.

Beating Retreat is a very solemn ceremony. Introducing Indian instruments and theatrics ill-fit this grand and somber ritual. Dropping the hymn *Abide With Me* with lyrics composed in the aftermath of India's humiliating defeat in 1962 is not an enthusiastic end to the ceremony.

In erasing the past, the Government is committing the mistake of compartmentalising military history; then and now, theirs and ours. The merging of flames and transferring it to NWM is 'othering' the sacrifices of the pre-Independence era soldiers. Their valour must not only be acknowledged but a suitable memorial be added to the NWM by the next Republic Day to honour them.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BUDGET FOR EQUITABLE ECONOMY

Sir — Never before has a Budget demanded greater insight, acumen and earnest pragmatism. This one must go far beyond juggling the ledger and marquee headings to invite kudos from the Dalal Street. It ought to be all about restoring lost employment in the middle, lower middle classes and daily wagers, besides creating fresh avenues. This economy was already on jobless growth for four years. From a pandemic peak in unemployment of near 14 per cent, we are at 7.9 per cent in December 2021. Compare this with 2017-2018, at 4.7 per cent. Between 2019-20 and December 2021, the manufacturing sector lost 9.8 million jobs, services sector 1.8 million.

But most worrisome should be the drop in salaried jobs, which points to an unstable economy starved of investment. Without new investments, India will not be able to generate the kind of employment it needs. Rising interest rates and a depreciating currency make it worse. The Budget needs to focus on these issues. These sectors are in dire straits; earlier due to demonetisation, now pulverised by COVID. One of the key objectives of this year's Budget ought to be on employment returning to the class that needs to reclaim its lost purchasing power.

R Narayanan | Navi Mumbai

CONG'S DOWNSIDE CONTINUES

Sir — In yet another severe setback to the Congress, which is struggling to keep its house in order ahead of the Assembly election in five States, Congress heavyweight and former Minister RPN Singh quit the party and joined the BJP. The resignation comes a day after the Congress named him among its list of star campaigners for the Uttar Pradesh polls. This is a body blow to Priyanka Vadra, leading the party from the front in UP. It is pathetic that party has remained clueless about internal bickering; it is completely out of sync with ground realities.

The party's central command, especially Gandhi scions Rahul and Priyanka,

The eternal flame of patriotism



The recent merging of Amar Jawan Jyoti with the newly instituted flame in the imposing National War Memorial (NWM), which was dedicated to the nation on February 25, 2019, must not be seen through a political lens. In fact, it has given a definite shape to our independent existence where the sacrifice of every soldier is recognised. Covering an area of over 40 acres with names of more than 26,000 fallen heroes

etched in granite invokes deep memories that should serve as inspiration. History is replete with examples of countries erecting war memorials, thereby remembering the supreme sacrifices made by their jawans. They continually remind us that we exist as a free nation because of the sacrifices of these brave soldiers.

Considering that a memorial was constructed in 1921 by Edward Lutyens in the memory of soldiers who lost their lives in World War I and the Third Anglo-Afghan war, the names of a few British officers and soldiers also find mention there. It does not represent the sacrifices made by soldiers either during World War II or the wars fought by India since 1947. This anomaly was removed by setting up the NWM and now Amar Jawan Jyoti will serve as an integral part of it. The new memorial will infuse new vigour in all Indians and keep the fire of patriotism burning.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

are incapable of leading the party in situations that demand tactical strategies and smart moves. At the 2019 Congress Working Committee meeting, RPN Singh was the only Team Rahul member to point out that personal attacks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi had boomeranged. But instead of evaluating the point, the Gandhis began distancing him. It only implies that the party brass needs only yes-men around them. The murky state of affairs suggests its downfall is getting accelerated by the day.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

ACCOLADES FOR SMRITI MANDHANA

Sir — Cricket is a game of luck, so winning an award in a calendar year solely depends on lady luck. India women's cricket star Smriti Mandhana won the ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year in style despite stiff competition. Pakistan dominated the men's awards with two coveted prizes. However, it was Joe Root, despite his side not faring well at

the international level, who bagged the Men's Cricketer of the Year award. Mandhana, who also made it to the ICC T20 Women's Team of the Year, piped fellow nominees Tanmay Beaumont and others in a tight contest.

The southpaw had won the award in 2018 as well when she was also named Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year, making her only the second women's player to win the highest individual distinction in the overall category. Virat 'King' Kohli was nowhere near the top in the charts this time. The Indian team lost to Pakistan and New Zealand and the captain wanted to save his neck and preferred Ashwin to win the next three games. Anyway, it was a solace that Smriti Mandhana got the better of the other competitors and kept the Indian flag flying at the international level.

CK Subramaniam | Navi Mumbai

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SOUNDBITE

Just like you came forward for the cleanliness drive, do the same for the Vocal for Local campaign.



Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



I congratulate Justice Ayesha Malik on becoming the first woman judge of the Supreme Court.

Pakistan PM — Imran Khan

I have not really been impressed by any political party, that they have an ideology I can blindly follow.



Actor — Raveena Tandon



I am truly honoured to receive the prestigious Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy for ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year 2021.

Indian opener — Smriti Mandhana

I am in touch with every caste and community. They want us to defeat the BJP...change is inevitable.



Samajwadi Party chief — Akhilesh Yadav

FIRST COLUMN

ADULT MARRIAGE ISN'T THE GOVT'S BUSINESS

How will increasing the marriageable age empower women or make them self-reliant?



S KALYANASUNDARAM

The Government is considering to change the eligibility of Indian girls getting married from 18 to 21. The intent of the Bill isto “make them self-reliant and to enable them to take decisions themselves”. An amendment seeks to define a child as a male or female who has not completed 21 years of age. How will increasing the marriageable age empower women or make them self-reliant? Gender equality per se is achieved with 21 becoming the marriageable age o men and women. But this stipulation for men itself is totally arbitrary and to make gender equality, men’s marriageable age should have been brought down to 18. Parity does not mean taking away the right or privilege from one group. When the government wants to decide the minimum age for marriage, strangely it claims that it is going to empower girls to decide on their own. As per Indian Majority Act, 1875 18 is the age for attaining majority. But,as per the same Act, a child appoint-



ed with a guardian by the court attains majority after completion of 21 years. Through Indian Majority (Amendment) Act 1999, Section 3 has been replaced with the following: “Age of majority of persons domiciled in India. — (1) every person domiciled in India shall attain the age of majority on his completing the age of eighteen years and not before.” So, whoever completes the age of 18 years the person is a major and cannot be treated as a child. Hence the proposed amendment with the nomenclature Prohibition of ‘child’ marriage act is a misnomer. Our law permits 18-year-olds, without representation by a guardian,to enter into any contract, own properties, pursue jobs, drive heavy vehicles in most states,and vote in elections. But the government wants to prescribe an age limit for marriage that too by branding the persons attaining majority as children. While introducing the Constitution (Sixty first Amendment) Act, 1988, the government stated as follows: ‘The present-day youth are literate and enlightened and the lowering of the voting age would provide to the unrepresented youth of the country an opportunity to give vent to their feelings and help them become a part of the political process. The present-day youth are very much politically conscious. It is, therefore, proposed to reduce the voting age from 21 years to 18 years.’ Is it not ridiculous to suddenly change the gear and say that girls of 18 years cannot decide on their own and hence should not marry?

UNICEF, also known as the United Nations Children’s Fund, is a United Nations agency responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide. Even UNICEF regards only the marriage of a minor (a person below the adult age) as child marriage and a violation of rights. It is a different matter that most of the girls and boys are not getting married even after they are eligible as per the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. As per a survey conducted with a sample of 10,005 respondents by YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey, one in four young adults in India do not want to marry. As norms and values around marriage and family life change, the Indian youth too are being influenced by recent trends. Compared to a decade ago, youth are now marrying later in life. This has been again brought out by Lokniti-CSDS Youth Studies in 2016 and 2007 which show the proportion of married youth decreased by eight percentage points from 55 per cent in 2007 to 47 per cent in 2016. The government must drop this amendment bill which is retrograde.
(The writer is a retired banker. The views expressed are personal.)

The US is in the grip of inflation

The American policy makers are diverting attention from the real cause of inflation — excessive expansion of money supply

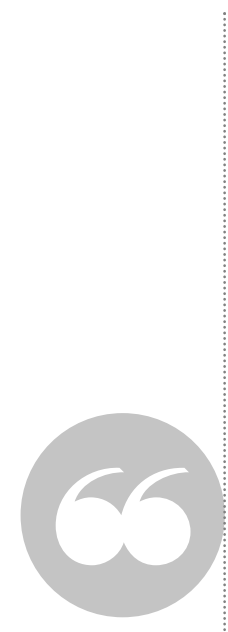
Although inflation is a common phenomenon in most countries of the world including India, many past generations of Americans have never suffered the brunt of inflation. But in the last one year, the rate of inflation in America has reached around seven percent, and that has started affecting the lives of ordinary Americans. Ruling Democrats are fearing the consequences of the same in the 2022 mid-term elections. On the one hand, Covid-19, which has destroyed the jobs of 22 million Americans, has also caused a 30 percent drop in annual production, while on the other, Americans are facing further hardships due to rising inflation.

The question is, how America was saved from inflation in the past, and how it will come out of the grip of current. Inflation has been registered in almost every item of daily needs — eight percent increase in the price of eggs, 58 percent in the price of petrol, 14 percent increase in the prices of other groceries. Some American economists believe that due to US Government’s bailout packages to revive the economy from the effects of COVID-19, there was an unprecedented increase in demand in the country. However, due to supply disruptions, the prices of goods are increasing fast. Economists believe that due to rising inflation, wage rates are also increasing, which may lead to a spiral effect on inflation. Experts believe that the pent-up demand of the Covid-19 period is also retuning back now.

During the pandemic period many people with permanent income also could not spend their incomes fully. Now, with return of normalcy, they are spending more on tourism, fuel, food items, restaurants, entertainment, etc. It is believed that as supply conditions improve, it will be possible to control inflation. But there is almost a consensus that there is no immediate relief from it.

US policy makers are trying to blame this record inflation on supply chain problems and shortage of raw materials, but most economists are citing the rising money supply as the main reason. It is true that the sudden spurt in consumer demand after the temporary relief from COVID-19 has led to a shortage of goods, but this is not the main reason for inflation in America.

Many policy makers in the US are saying that due to the shortage of goods, sellers have started raising prices. Therefore, inflation can also be curbed by price controls. But we must understand that one of the disadvantages of price control is that it reduces the incentive of producers to produce more. There is an apprehension that due to this (price control), the consumers may face shortage of goods. But one area where price controls



AMERICAN POLICY MAKERS ALSO RECOGNISE THAT THEIR PEOPLE HAVE HUGE SAVINGS AND THEY WANT TO MAKE UP FOR THE GOODS AND SERVICES WHICH THEY COULD NOT ENJOY DURING COVID-19. BUT IT HAS TO BE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE REAL REASON FOR THE SURPLUS FUNDS LEFT WITH PEOPLE IS THE DISTRIBUTION OF HUGE AMOUNTS OF FINANCIAL BAILOUT PACKAGES BY THE US ADMINISTRATION

(The writer is Professor, PGDAV College, University of Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)



can play an effective role is the pharmaceutical sector. It is well known that American pharmaceutical companies charge high prices for drugs in the name of reward for intellectual property. Controlling drug prices can certainly give a huge relief to the consumers.

American policy makers are trying to cover up their past mistakes with a variety of arguments to divert attention from the real causes of inflation; and that mistake is the excessive expansion of money supply. It is a historical fact that the main reason for inflation all over the globe had been the expansion of money supply.

Irving Fisher’s quantity theory of money has been used for centuries to explain the phenomenon of inflation. According to modified version of this theory, if the total output of goods and services or ‘the volume of transactions’ in the economy remains the same, then the price level increases in proportion to the increase in the quantity of money. It is worth noting that first in the name of ‘quantitative easing’ (QEs) for a huge bailout package to overcome the financial crisis starting from 2007-08 and to compensate for the impact of the decline in the economy due to COVID-19 in the last almost two

years, the US Administration has been expanding quantity of money. Many economists believe that due to this huge increase in the quantity of money, inflation is now becoming uncontrollable.

American policy makers also recognize that people in America have huge savings with them and they want to make up for the goods and services, which they could not enjoy during Covid-19. But it has to be understood that the real reason for the surplus funds left with the people is the distribution of huge amounts of financial bailout packages by the US administration. Due to the limited income of the government due to the pandemic, the increase in inflation has become inevitable due to printing of the amount of currency in circulation by the Government and consequently a large increase in the money supply. Significantly, between November 2020 and November 2021, the total currency with the public in USA increased by \$1.56 trillion, i.e., an increase of 7.6 percent. But the increase in the supply of M1 money was even more, that is, 15.7 percent.

Bailout package by the US government to create additional currency is nothing new; however, in recent times there has been some decline in the popularity of

the dollar as global currency, which is being fast replaced by the Chinese currency yuan. Further, in order to give boost to US manufacturing, the US administration has been becoming more and more protective, resulting in fall in export of dollars. In such a situation, the supply of dollars outside the US is decreasing, due to which the fear of inflation in the US have increased due to increasing amounts of dollars with the public in US. It seems that if this trend continues in the future, then the increasing money supply in the US will continue to cause inflation in the future as well.

Manufacturing output in the US had been declining for a long time and most of the GDP in the US is derived from services. In that too, a large part of America’s GDP is the income earned abroad by American companies, due to which America has been receiving a huge amount of taxation. But for some time now, American companies have been trying to avoid this taxation in various ways. These companies are mostly e-commerce and tech companies. For this reason, the US government may have to resort to the creation of additional currency to meet its expenses in the future also, which may lead to further inflation.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THIEVES DON'T LIKE A MOONLIT NIGHT. THOSE WHO ARE PROMISING FREE ELECTRICITY KEPT PEOPLE IN DARKNESS FOR YEARS. —UP CHIEF MINISTER YOGI ADITYANATH




WHAT DOES THE CHIEF MINISTER KNOW ABOUT ELECTRICITY FACTORS? THERE IS NO BIGGER A LIAR THAN THE CM. —SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF AKHILESH YADAV

Tableau politics mars Republic Day preparations

The Centre and the States should together evolve a fair tableaux selection process without any heartburn to any stakeholder

Petty politics ought not to ruin the solemn atmosphere in celebrating the Republic Day or Independence Day. Unfortunately, more avoidable controversies arise between the ruling party and the opposition. For instance, while there is a well-established system for selecting the tableaux, the process always becomes a flashpoint for regional politics. This year too, there is furore in the opposition-ruled states as the Centre rejected the tableaux of West Bengal, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, among others. Chief Ministers like Mamata Banerjee and M.K. Stalin have written to the Prime Minister to reconsider the decision but in vain. Only 12 states eventually made it to the list, including



KALYANI SHANKAR

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

poll-bound states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, and Goa. The selection criteria was that the R-Day parade must reflect the cultural diversity of India and the role of various communities in building modern India. Why shouldnot every State get an opportunity to display things it wants to? This year Republic Day is important because the theme is India@75 and getting a place in the parade is a matter of prestige for the states. It is also amidst the Covid pandemic which has shattered the globe. On the 75th Republic Day on Friday, one must recall the first Republic Day in 1950. It was a simple affair. The then last Governor-General of India, C. Rajagopalachari, read out the proclamation of the new Republic and the election

of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, as the first President of India, at 10.18 AM on a chilly Thursday morning. The Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution of India on November 26, 1949, and came into effect on January 26, 1950. Historically it was on January 26, 1930, Congress committed the nationalist movement to Purna Swaraj (total independence). Delhi held the first



Republic Day at the Irwin Amphitheatre (now Major Dhyani Chand National Stadium). There were no performances and floats. It was a simple function with the Army band, flag hoisting, and national anthem. The tradition of a parade began only from the next Republic Day. It is the main attraction of India’s Republic Day celebrations, which last for three days since then. The Parade is primarily a military affair. The might of our defence services, including the latest tanks, missiles, radar systems, air force planes, defence communications systems, etc., mounted on trucks, are paraded, followed by a cultural pageant comprising tableaux. It is here that the participant states showcase their

unique culture and achievements to the nation. The selection depends on a combination of factors, including visual appeal, idea, theme, music, and micro detailing. From 1950 and 1954, the parades were held at the Red Fort, National stadium, Kingsway Camp, and the Ramlila ground. It was from 1955 that Rajpath became the regular venue. It was discontinued in 1963 when the country was engaged in war with China, and was replaced by a procession of leaders led by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, his cabinet members, political representatives from states, students and teachers from Delhi University, etc. The Parade was restored the following year. Although they were disap-

pointed with the Centre’s rejection of tableau, the concerned opposition chief ministers have gone to the media to showcase their themes in their states. They feel the Centre was playing politics in the selection. Mamata Banerjee raised a point that their tableau commemorated the contributions of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his 125th birth anniversary and carried portraits of other leaders like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. She has decided to come out with the same tableau during the Republic Day parade on Red Road in Kolkata. Tamil Nadu’s Stalin also proposes showcasing the rejected tableau in Chennai in the Republic Day parade and also taking it to other districts in Tamil Nadu.

It does not behove to follow petty politics. While it is true that the sombre ceremony should not be disturbed by this kind of petty politics, one option could be to give a chance to all states. India is, after all, a Union of States. If there is a time constraint for some reason, the authorities could adopt the lottery system. The other option for the rejected states is to follow Mamata and Stalin to show off in the state R-Day celebrations. The display of the unique culture of each state brought to Delhi parade with their floats and dances might create the sense of the new nation in the Union of States. It is time that the Centre and the states come together and evolve a good selection process without any heartburn.

Ukraine urges calm, saying Russian invasion not imminent

AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine's leaders sought to reassure nation that a feared invasion from neighbouring Russia was not imminent, even as they acknowledged threat is real and prepared to accept a shipment of American military equipment Tuesday to shore up their defences.

Russia has denied it is planning an assault, but it has massed an estimated 100,000 troops near Ukraine in recent weeks, leading United States and its NATO allies to rush to prepare for a possible war.

Several rounds of high stakes diplomacy have failed to yield any breakthroughs, and this week tensions escalated further. NATO said it was bolstering its deterrence in Baltic Sea region, and US ordered 8,500 troops on higher alert to potentially deploy to Europe as part of an alliance "response force" if necessary.

The State Department has ordered families of all American personnel at US Embassy in Kyiv to leave country, and it said that nonessential embassy staff could leave.

Britain said it, too, was withdrawing some diplomats and dependents from its embassy. In Ukraine, however, authorities have sought to project calm. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said late Monday that situation was "under control" and that there is

On Nuclear talks, Iran says 'ready' as US asserts 'direct meeting'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE ■ WASHINGTON

Iran for the first time Monday said it was open to direct nuclear negotiations with the United States, which declared itself ready to hold talks "urgently" -- in a possible turning point in efforts to salvage the 2015 nuclear accord.

Tehran has been engaged since last year in talks with the five other world powers still part of the agreement, which offered sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program.

After unilaterally withdrawing in 2018 under then-president Donald Trump, Washington has been taking part indirectly in the Vienna negotiations, which seek to bring the United States back into the nuclear accord and ensure Iran returns to its commitments.

But Washington has said on multiple occasions it would prefer to hold direct talks, and on Monday Iran's foreign minister said his country would consider doing so if it proved the key to a "good agreement" to salvage the floundering deal.

"If during the negotiation process we get to a point that reaching a good agreement with solid guarantees requires a level of talks with the US, we will not ignore that in our work schedule," said Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

A US State Department spokesman reiterated after the Iranian comments that the United States is "prepared to meet directly."

"We have long held the position that it would be more productive to engage with Iran directly, on both JCPOA negotiations and other issues," the spokesperson said, referring to the nuclear deal, known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"Given the pace of Iran's nuclear advances, we are almost out of time to reach an understanding on mutual return to full implementation of the JCPOA," the official added.

Iran is currently negotiating directly with the deal's other signatories: Germany, France, China and Britain. The talks, which started last April, were suspended two months later as Iran elected ultraconservative President Ebrahim Raisi, resuming in late November.

US-Iran ties have been severed since April 1980, just months after the fall of the shah and the occupation of the American embassy by Islamist students loyal to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Relations worsened significantly after Washington withdrew from the nuclear deal and reimposed biting economic sanctions, prompting Tehran to begin rolling back its own commitments.

US child abuse report: Deaths of Black children up in pandemic

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The latest national child welfare report shows an increase in the number of Black children who died, even though fewer abuse-related fatalities were investigated in the yearlong period that included the first several months of the pandemic.

The findings were released in the 2020 Child Maltreatment Report, issued Friday by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The report covers data from October 2019 to September 2020 and only partially reflects how COVID-19 disrupted the work of child welfare.

"Disparities that were present before the pandemic were intensified, and COVID-19 exposed gaps in our human services delivery system," Aysha E. Schomburg, of the department's Children's Bureau, said in a statement.

The report noted an overall 10per cent drop in the number of child protective services cases handled by states in the early days of the pandemic. That's a troubling trend that the Associated Press first reported last year with an analysis of state child welfare data.

The federal data confirm a drop by hundreds of thousands in documented cases of child abuse reports, investigations, substantiated allegations and support for at-risk families. But experts say that's not necessarily good news - children

were out of the public eye during the pandemic, and some cases likely weren't reported until they became more severe, if at all.

The numbers on fatalities in particular are concerning, because such cases are notoriously underreported, said Amy Harfeld, of the Children's Advocacy Institute. Social workers often investigate a child's death only if the family had already been involved with a child welfare agency.

"The numbers that we know of are not reflective of the numbers that are experienced," Harfeld said.

Federal officials highlighted a 4per cent decrease in child abuse and neglect-related deaths, though the data also show a roughly 17per cent increase in the number of Black children who died when compared with the previous year's report.

The latest report identified 504 Black children who died - 73 more than the previous tally. This means Black children are now three times more likely to die of suspected child abuse or neglect than white children, according to report.

The agency did not immediately comment on disparity but broadly acknowledged challenges ahead. "While data in today's report shows a decrease in child maltreatment, there is still work to do," said JooYeon Chang, the acting assistant secretary for Administration for Children and Families.

Pakistan slips further on Corruption Perceptions Index, ranks 140 out of 180 countries: Transparency report

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has dropped 16 spots on the global Corruption Perceptions Index for 2021 and is ranked 140th out of 180 countries, Transparency International said in a report

on Tuesday, in a major blow to Prime Minister Imran Khan's government which came to power on the promise of introducing a clean governance system.

The report released by the Berlin-based non-profit organisation formed to combat global corruption said that corruption levels remain at a standstill worldwide, with 86 per cent of countries making little to no progress in the last 10 years.

In its 2021 edition, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean), drawing on 13 expert assessments and surveys of business executives.

In 2020, Pakistan's CPI was 31 and it was ranked 124 out of 180 countries. According to Transparency International, the country's corruption score has now deteriorated to 28 while it is ranked 140 out of the total 180 countries on the index.

Comparatively, India's score stands at 40 and is ranked 85, while Bangladesh's CPI is 26 and stands at 147th position. Explaining the causes of low score of Pakistan, the report

said the absence of the "rule of law" and "state capture" were the main reasons. The report comes at a time when Prime Minister Khan is under pressure to improve the performance of his government which came to power in 2018 on the promise of introducing a clean governance system.

His advisor on accountability, Shehzad Akbar, stepped down on Monday amidst reports of his poor performance to bring the corrupt elements under the law.

To add to Khan's woes, Justice (ret'd) Nasira Iqbal, Vice-Chair of Transparency International Pakistan, said that the ranking of Pakistan under the PTI government has gradually come down.

In 2019, it was 120th out of 180 countries, in 2020, it was 124th and in 2021 it worsened further to 140, she said. In contrast, in 2018, during Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) period, Pakistan's ranking was 117 out of 180 countries. Former prime minister and PML-N leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi while addressing media said that report showed that Khan's government is corrupt and incompetent.

"This government is most corrupt government in entire history of Pakistan," he said, and demanded Khan step down immediately. The CPI global average remains unchanged at 43 for the tenth year in a row, and two-thirds of countries score below 50, the report said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that Mrs. Kasum Lata W/o Mr. Ved Prakash is the current owner of Property Bearing Plot Nos. 38 and 39, Now Known as RZ-38-39, area measuring 96 Sq. Yds., Khazra No. 184, Situated in the Area of Village Nadra, colony Kinnera A, Durga Park, New Delhi by virtue of Sale Deed dt. 13.09.2021 regd. vide doc. no. 8786, and she is intending to mortgage the same to Citic Housing Finance Ltd. The 1 Original GPA, ATS and Will dt. 28.02.1986; 2. Original GPA, ATS and Will dt. 15.05.1986; & 3. Original GPA, SPA, ATS and Will dt. 19.05.1994 pertaining to the aforesaid property have been lost and FIR No. bearing no. NDR No. 1781/2014 has been registered on 08.11.2014 with Police Station Janakpuri Delhi Police.

If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim in this property, then contact the undersigned within 15 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of the aforesaid property.

Raghav Tewari (Advocate)
Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi - 110001
Mob. : +91-9876188328

CORRIGENDUM NO. 1 FOR TENDER NOTICE NO. CON/2022/JAN/02 DTD. 07-01-2022

Corrigendum to Tender Notice No.: CON/2022/JAN/02 Dtd: 07-01-2022 against Tender No. CE/CONIA-G/PA/2022/01 and CE/CONIA-G/PA/2022/02 is published in IREPS. For detail, please visit in website www.ireps.gov.in.

Chief Engineer/CON-3, Maligaon NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY Construction Organization
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PUBLIC NOTICE

My client Sh. Rajeev Agarwal S/o Late Shri Jagdish Prasad and his wife Smt. Sudha Agarwal R/o Old Address A-810, Oxy Homez, Near Koyla Enclave, Bhopura, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201005 present address C-506, Oxy Homez, Near Koyla Enclave, Bhopura, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201005 has debarred his son Nitish Agarwal and his wife Rekha Agarwal from his all moveable-immovable properties, social relations and severed all his relations due to their bad conduct and misbehaviour. My client shall not be responsible for any act of them in future. Since they are not loyal for my client and any bodies dealing would be at their risks and costs.

Mahender Kumar Bhardwaj (Advocate)
Ch.No.G-308, Karkardooma Court Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client Shweta Tibrewal W/o Shri Uttam Kumar Tibrewal, her husband, R/o old address A-810, Oxy Homez, Near Koyla Enclave, Bhopura, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201005 present address D-1008, Oxy Homez, Near Koyla Enclave, Bhopura, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201005 has debarred his brother Nitish Agarwal and his wife Rekha Agarwal from his all moveable, immovable properties, social relations and severed all his relations due to their bad conduct and misbehaviour. My client shall not be responsible for any act of them in future. Since they are not loyal for my client and any bodies dealing would be at their risks and costs.

Mahender Kumar Bhardwaj (Advocate)
Ch.No.G-308, Karkardooma Court Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby stated that the originals of all the title documents in respect of the following property owned by M/s. Texmaco Infrastructure and Holdings Limited (earlier known as Birla Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills) have been lost / misplaced somewhere and are not traceable:

Khasra numbers: 3 at Village Delhi Gaon, Tehsil and District Delhi and bearing Plot Nos. 12119-12207 P.O. Roshnara Road, Roshnara Extension, Shakti Nagar, Delhi-07, known as 'Roshnara Building, Shakti Nagar or Shivaji Line earlier known as Peel Building.

Notice is hereby given to the public at large that no person / entity should deal with, use or transact in any manner, on the basis of the title documents, with respect to the above mentioned property, and any person / entity in custody of the title documents of the above mentioned property or having any knowledge thereof is hereby called upon to contact the undersigned.

Sanjay Pahwa
Mobile-9873747274

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby stated that the originals of all the title documents in respect of the following property owned by M/s. Texmaco Infrastructure and Holdings Limited (earlier known as Birla Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills) have been lost / misplaced somewhere and are not traceable:

Khasra numbers: 197 (0-12),198 (0-17),199 (0-3),200 (1-00),213 (33-03),214 (0-15), 218(2-11) at Village Delhi Gaon, Tehsil and District Delhi and bearing Plot Nos. 6938 to 7157, 7167,7184,7158 to 7166,7168 to 7177 and 7183 P.O. Birla Lines, Delhi-07, known as 'Birla Lines or officer flats earlier known as Acharwala Bagh.

Notice is hereby given to the public at large that no person / entity should deal with, use or transact in any manner, on the basis of the title documents, with respect to the above mentioned property, and any person / entity in custody of the title documents of the above mentioned property or having any knowledge thereof is hereby called upon to contact the undersigned.

Sanjay Pahwa
Mobile-9873747274

BANARAS LOCOMOTIVE WORKS, VARANASI-221004

Bid No. :E-57/2021-22 E-TENDERS Date: 25.01.2022

E-Tenders are invited for and on behalf of the President of India for the supply of following items. Only E-offer will be accepted for which vendors must have Class III Digital Signature and registration on IREPS. The details of tenders are in the following sequence:-S.No.- Tender no. (Due Date), Description and Quantity. S.N. 1, 05225012, (14.02.2022), **Angular contact thrust ball bearing**, 1 No., S.N. 2, 05225013, (14.02.2022), **Pneumatic polyurethane tube**, 1 Set., S.N. 3, 05225014, (14.02.2022), **Diameter 27 mm single insert drill kit**, 2 Set., S.N. 4, 05215181A, (15.02.2022), **Die and punch**, 1 Set., S.N. 5, 05225010, (15.02.2022), **D/R Spherical roller bearing**, 16 Nos., S.N. 6, 05225023, (15.02.2022), **Spare parts for tow truck**, 1 Set., S.N. 7, 05225015, (17.02.2022), **Special Type D Shackle Clamp**, 40 Nos., S.N. 8, 03201063, (14.02.2022), **Tube Cu**, PL No. **29170321**, 5104.50 Mtr, S.N. 9, 03211653A, (14.02.2022), **Flexible Hose Assy**, PL No. **29230123**, 423 Set., S.N. 10, 03211708, (17.02.2022), **Cab Side Door**, PL No. **29170916**, 40 Set., S.N. 11, 03221004, (15.02.2022), **Valve Auto Drain**, PL No. **17390059**, 331 Nos., S.N. 12, 03211600, (08.02.2022), **Description: Aluminium Finish Strip, Part No. 93120230**, Quantity 4284.73 Kg., S.N. 13, 03211020, (14.02.2022), **Description: Pinion 20 teeth, Part No. 29420039**, Quantity 235 Nos., S.N. 14, 08211005 Advertise Tender, (18.02.2022), (1) Key Multiplier-2 for Tractor Component as per Specn. CLW/ES/3/0049/F, PL No.- 29387091, Qty-239, Sets. (2) Key Multiplier-1 for M/C Component as per Specn. CLW/ES/3/0049/F, PL No. 29388004, Qty-239, Sets. **Note:** The details of above tenders are available in www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in and www.ireps.gov.in. **Corrigendum No. 1**, Tender No: 08211243, Bid Inv. No. 54, Existing due date: 07.02.2022, Revised due date: 21.02.2022, Existing Qty. 422 Nos., Revised Qty.: 1395 Nos., **Corrigendum No. 2**, Tender No: 03211068, Bid No. E-51, Details of corrigendum: Tender (due to open on 27.01.2022) has been Postponed and due to open on 02.02.2022. **Corrigendum No. 3**, Tender No: 09211207 Single Core Cable Part No. 29600108, Bid No. E-53, Revision-1, Details of corrigendum: The Tender conditions has been revised and now the same will be opened on 17.02.2022 instead of 07.02.2022 with revised tender conditions. **Corrigendum No. 4**, Tender No: 04211463, Bid No. E-51, Revision-1, Details of Correction: This Tender will be open on 04.02.2022 for qty. 358 Nos instead of 212 Nos. **Note:** All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged for above tenders.

PRO/BLW/S-65 PCMM

[f](https://blw.indianrailways.gov.in) [t](https://blw.indianrailways.gov.in) [w](https://blw.indianrailways.gov.in) /banaraslocowork "Website: <https://blw.indianrailways.gov.in>"

UK PM Johnson hit with new row as Scotland Yard opens 'partygate' probe

PTI ■ LONDON

Britain's embattled Prime Minister Boris Johnson is on Tuesday facing fresh allegations in ongoing "partygate" scandal as details emerged of a surprise 56th birthday cake "party", organised for him at peak of first COVID lockdown in June 2020.

The scandal continues to spiral out ahead of an internal Cabinet Office inquiry report, expected this week, as Scotland Yard confirmed that Metropolitan Police will investigate potential lockdown breaches related to alleged parties at Boris Johnson's office-residence at 10 Downing Street, as well as other government offices in London.

"As a result firstly of information provided by Cabinet Office inquiry team and secondly by officers own assessment, I can confirm that Met is now investigating a number of events that took place at Downing Street and Whitehall in last two years," Met Police Commissioner Dame Cressida Dick told London Assembly Police and Crime Committee at Mayor of London's office.

"I should stress that we are now investigating does not mean fixed penalty notices will necessarily be issued in every instance and to every person involved.

We will not be giving a running commentary on our current investigations but I can assure you we will give updates at significant points," she said.

Earlier, Downing Street said Johnson, who turned 56 on June 19, 2020, was present at an event "for less than 10 minutes" as his staff "gathered briefly" to wish him a happy birthday.

The strict lockdown rules imposed at the time to contain the spread of coronavirus banned most indoor gatherings involving more than two people.

But ITV News' reported on Monday night that up to 30 people attended event, sang Happy Birthday and were served cake.

The event reportedly took place in Cabinet Room of Downing Street just after 2 pm local time that day and had been arranged as a surprise for Johnson by his then fiancée and now wife, Carrie Symonds, after he returned from an official trip to a school in Hertfordshire.

"A group of staff working in Number 10 that day gathered briefly in Cabinet Room after a meeting to wish PM a happy birthday.

Soldiers declare military junta in control in Burkina Faso

AP ■ OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO

More than a dozen mutinous soldiers declared Monday on state television that a military junta had seized control of Burkina Faso after detaining the democratically elected president following a day of gunbattles in the capital of the West African country.

The military coup in a nation that was once a bastion of stability was the third of its kind in the region in the last 18 months, creating upheaval in some of the countries hardest hit by Islamic extremist attacks.

Capt. Sidsore Kabere Ouédraogo said the Patriotic Movement for Safeguarding and Restoration "has decided to assume its responsibilities before history." The soldiers put an end to President Roch Marc Christian Kabore's presidency because of the deteriorating security situation and the president's inability to manage the crisis, he said.

It was not immediately known where Kabore was, and the junta spokesman said only that the coup had taken place "without any physical violence against those arrested, who are being held in a safe place, with respect for their dignity."

A soldier in the mutiny, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of situation, told The Associated Press that Kabore had submitted his resignation. The new military regime said it had suspended Burkina Faso's constitution and dissolved the National Assembly.

Abrupt lockdowns loom over Beijing life ahead of Olympics

AP ■ BEIJING

Beijing residents are coping with abrupt local lockdowns and sweeping COVID-19 testing requirements as the Chinese capital seeks to prevent a coronavirus outbreak ahead of Winter Olympics that opens in less than two weeks.

The lockdowns are part of China's "zero tolerance" measures to fight the pandemic that have been ratcheted-up ahead of Games. Those now include requiring tests for anyone who purchases medications to treat cold, cough, fever and other maladies.

University student Cheryl Zhang said that health code app that all Chinese have installed on their smart phones began notifying her to get tested after she bought medication four days previously.

"I was seriously panicking," said Zhang, who was taking a stroll across street from Olympic Village. "But when I got to hospital and saw medical workers striving to keep things in order, I didn't feel angry any more.

The problem was sorted out very quickly."Such purchases are tracked via a smart phone app that requires customers to swipe their information when they buy health supplies or simply enter pharmacies.

China strictly controls sales of medications and a doctor's prescription is often required for ordinary cold medications or even vitamins.

A notice posted at a Beijing pharmacy Tuesday said anyone who had bought any of four types of medication over past two weeks was required to obtain a test within 72 hours.

Thailand first in Asia to move to decriminalise marijuana

AP ■ BANGKOK

Thailand on Tuesday became the first country in Asia to approve the de facto decriminalization of marijuana, though authorities have left a grey area around its recreational use.

Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul announced that the Narcotics Control Board had approved the dropping cannabis from the ministry's list of controlled drugs.

The delisting by the ministry's Food and Drug Administration will now need to be formally signed by the health minister and enters into effect 120 days after its publication in the government gazette. It follows the removal of cannabis — a plant species to which both marijuana and hemp belong — last month from the list of illegal drugs under Thailand's Narcotics



FILE - Thailand's Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul shows off a bottle of extracted cannabis oil during a press conference at his ministry in Bangkok, Thailand, Wednesday, Aug. 7, 2019. Thailand on Tuesday, Jan. 25, 2022, became the first country in Asia to approve the de facto decriminalization of marijuana, as its anti-narcotics agency agreed to have the Health Ministry drop cannabis from its list of controlled drugs. (AP Photo/Sakchai Lalit, File)

Law. Police and Lawyers contacted by The Associated Press

said it was unclear if possession of marijuana would no longer

European court says Turkey violated journalist's rights

AP ■ ANKARA, TURKEY

The European Court of Human Rights ruled Tuesday that Turkey violated the rights of German-Turkish journalist Deniz Yucel, who was jailed in Turkey for a year and later convicted of engaging in propaganda in favor of Kurdish rebels.

The Strasbourg, France-based court ruled that the pre-trial detention of Deniz — a correspondent for Germany's Die Welt newspaper—amounted to a violation of his right to liberty and security as well as his right to freedom of expression. It also ruled that journalist had not been adequately compensated for his unlawful detention.

"The Court ruled that Mr. Yucel had been placed and retained in pre-trial detention in absence of plausible reasons to suspect him of committing a criminal offense," a court statement said.

Yucel was arrested in Istanbul as part of a vast government clampdown in the wake of July 2016 coup attempt, and charged with propaganda on behalf terror groups, including outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK.

He was held in pretrial detention for a year and returned to Germany after his release. In 2020, a court in Istanbul convicted Yucel of charge of engaging in terrorist propaganda and sentenced him in absentia to more than two years and nine months in prison. A year earlier, the

AP ■ DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Constitutional Court, Turkey's highest court, said Yucel's year-long detention violated his rights. His case led to a diplomatic crisis with Germany, which accused Turkey of conducting "arbitrary arrests" of German citizens suspected of links to PKK or the network led by U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gulen.

"That judges in Strasbourg have established that my right to freedom and safety and my right to freedom of opinion were violated is satisfying," Yucel told Die Welt. "But it is disappointing that the judges didn't want to find a violation of ban on torture—despite nine months in solitary confinement and despite psychological and physical violence I was sometimes subjected to at (Istanbul's) Siliyri No. 9 high-security prison."

Yucel added that he was also disappointed that court didn't find that proceedings against him were politically motivated. "I suspect that even (President) Recep Tayyip Erdogan didn't expect that," he said, accusing the Turkish leader of "repeated public attacks" and of making him an object of political negotiations.

He also said prosecutors made him wait a year for an indictment on Erdogan's "personal orders." Yucel was referring to statements by Erdogan in 2018 who called him a "spy" and a "terrorist." "Even the circumstances of my release — there is not a fiber of these proceedings that was not politically motivated," Yucel said.

Thai PM arrives in Saudi Arabia, easing diamond heist row

AP ■ DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Thailand's prime minister arrived in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday for the first high-level meeting since relations between nations soured three decades ago over a sensational jewelry heist that led to a diplomatic row and string of mysterious killings.

The official visit by Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha to Riyadh signals nations are seeking to thaw ties, long chilled by the 1989 scandal. Saudi Arabia downgraded its diplomatic relations with Thailand over theft that became known as Blue Diamond affair.

While Prayuth's visit marked a major breakthrough, his discreet arrival in the country hinted at lingering tension.

A notably low-ranking official, the deputy governor of Riyadh, received the prime minister at the airport without the typical live TV report.

Hours later, however, the country's powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman gave Prayuth more of a royal welcome, guiding prime minister down lavender carpet rolled out for important state visits and taking him to king's Al-Yamamah Palace for talks.

The Saudi government statement about visit was vague, saying only it showed the kingdoms' "keenness to strengthen joint relations and build bridges of communication with all countries around world."

removes all parts of the plant from the list. Health Minister Anutin has been the driving force behind decriminalizing marijuana. He is the leader of the Bhumjai Thai Party, a major partner in the country's coalition government, and campaigned in the 2019 general election for legalization of marijuana production to aid farmers. The latest measure is also seen as helping to promote cannabis products as a major industry in Thailand.

Anutin said last week that the FDA's delisting "responds to the government's urgent policy in developing marijuana and hemp for medical and health care benefits, developing technology and creating income for the public." His party announced that on Wednesday it will propose in Parliament a draft Cannabis Act to clarify the legal status of marijuana.

IMF cuts economy growth forecast to 9% in FY22

Washington: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has cut India's economic growth forecast to 9 per cent for the current fiscal year ending March 31, joining a host of agencies which have downgraded their projections on concerns over the impact of a spread of new variant of coronavirus on business activity and mobility.

In its latest update of World Economic Outlook on Tuesday, the Washington-based international financial institution, which had in October last year projected a 9.5 per cent GDP growth for India, put the forecast for the next fiscal FY23 (April 2022 to March 2023) at 7.1 per cent.

The Indian economy had contracted by 7.3 per cent in the 2020-21 fiscal year. The IMF's forecast for the current financial year is less than 9.2 per cent that the government's Central Statistics Office has predicted and 9.5 per cent that the Reserve Bank of India has estimated. Its forecast is lower than the 9.5 per cent projection by S&P and 9.3 per cent by Moody's but more than the

8.3 per cent projection by the World Bank and 8.4 per cent by Fitch.

According to the IMF, India's prospects for 2023 are marked up on expected improvements to credit growth and, subsequently, investment and consumption, building on better-than-anticipated performance of the financial sector.

The IMF said that global growth is expected to moderate from 5.9 in 2021 to 4.4 per cent in 2022, half a percentage point lower for 2022 than in the October WEO, largely reflecting forecast markdwns in the two largest economies -- the US and China. A revised assumption removing the Build Back Better fiscal policy package from the baseline, earlier withdrawal of monetary accommodation, and continued supply shortages produced a downward 1.2 percentage-point revision for the United States, it said.

In China, pandemic-induced disruptions related to the zero-tolerance COVID-19 policy and protracted financial stress among property developers have induced a 0.8 percentage-point downgrade.

Gold rises ₹86; silver tanks ₹522



New Delhi: Gold prices rose by ₹86 to ₹48,555 per 10 gram in the national capital on Tuesday on local demand and rupee depreciation, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal settled at ₹48,469 per 10 gram. Silver declined by ₹ 522 to ₹ 63,907 per kg from ₹64,429 per kg in the previous trade. The rupee declined by 16 paise to 74.67 against the US dollar on Tuesday.

In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,841 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 23.78 per ounce.

"Gold prices traded weak with spot gold prices at COMEX trading marginally down at USD 1,841 per ounce on Tuesday," Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities), HDFC securities said. **PTI**

Future Retail in SC to avert defaulter tag; independent directors reject Amazon brought offer

New Delhi: Embattled retailer Future Retail Ltd (FRL) on Tuesday moved the Supreme Court to avert insolvency proceedings over missing a loan repayment deadline, even as its independent directors rejected an Amazon-supported offer to sell the company businesses at less than a third of what Mukesh Ambani's Reliance is offering.

India's second-largest retailer, which operates multi-brand retail chains such as Big Bazaar, Easyday and Heritage, failed to pay Rs 3,494.56 crore to lenders by the due date of December-end and sought a 30-day grace period to resolve the situation.

Unable to find money, it moved the apex court seeking to restrain its lenders from declaring the company a defaulter, which can invite initiation of insolvency proceedings.

In the petition, Future cited its dispute with partner Amazon, which has stalled its Rs 24,713 crore retail asset sale to Reliance, to seek a restraint on lenders from declaring it as a non-performing asset (NPA), court filings showed.

In the petition, which also contained a January 15 letter from the State Bank of India (SBI) warning it of the possibility of initiating insolvency proceedings if it did pay its dues, Future asked for more time for loan payment and requested the Supreme Court to "extend the timeline stipulated under the

Mumbai: Electric vehicle maker Omega Seiki Mobility (OSM) has said the government should consider categorising EVs in the priority lending sector to further strengthen the segment, besides export concessions, to help the manufacturers tap new markets.

In its pre-Budget expectations, OSM also expressed hope that the Union Budget includes announcements related to lowering of GST rates on raw materials, especially for the electric vehicle (EV) players.

This played a key role in the progress of electrification of the domestic automotive sector. However, the financial year 2022-23 is the time to start firing on all cylinders, Omega Seiki said.

"We are expecting Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to usher in good news for the EV sector. "To further strengthen the EV market, the government should consider categorising EVs in the priority lending sector. It will make EVs more affordable for the users and help in incentivising the whole transition," the company said.

It said that the revised guidelines issued by the power ministry to accelerate the e-mobility transition in the coun-

try show that the Government recognises the importance of the EV sector's growth.

The company added that the guidelines are already emphasising on enabling faster adoption of EVs, providing affordable tariffs and promoting energy security that finally aims at reducing the emission intensity in India.

"As part of India's growing EV industry, we hope that the Union Budget includes lowering of GST rates on raw materials, especially for the EV players.

"Support for R&D (research and development) and indigenous technology development while lowering of GST on auto components should be on the top of FM's agenda list," said Omega Seiki Mobility Chairman and founder Uday Narang.

He further said allocating funds for the clean air campaign could be brought under the Swachh Bharat Mission to create better awareness and improve the adoption of electric mobility.

Export concessions can also be looked at to support the Indian EV manufacturers like OSM, it said, so that such companies can tap new markets, making India not just 'Aatmanirbhar' but a global powerhouse. **PTI**

Govt confers Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar to SEEDS

New Delhi: As an acknowledgement of their exemplary work in disaster management, the Government of India has felicitated Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) with the "Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2021" in the institutional category. SEEDS co-founder Manu Gupta said the award bears testimony to the fact that we are on the right path. Anshu Sharma, Another co-founder of SEEDS, said, "SEEDS has constantly evolved to cater to the needs of communities with changing times." **PNS**

Webinar on Air Sports Opportunities in India organised

New Delhi: Chamber, Rajasthan Chapter organised a Webinar on "Air Sports Opportunities in India - With Special Focus on Rajasthan".

Pradeep Multani, President, PHD Chamber in his Welcome and Presidential Address outlined the tremendous potential for promoting aero Sports sector in Rajasthan.

Looking to the demographic Pattern of India which has significant percentage of youth, the Aero Sports sector has very bright future in India which need to be developed as one of the top Air Sports Nations by 2030, Mr. Multani added.

RAI says there is need for Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme for biz establishments

New Delhi: Retailer's body RAI on Tuesday said there is a need for the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for business establishments of the sector, which have been impacted by COVID-19-related restrictions.

In its Budget wish list, the Retailers Association of India (RAI) also said more money needs to be put in the hands of the poor and the salaried as two years of the pandemic have impacted many in the poorer section of the population.

"ECLGS for finance in retail needs to be announced as most of the lockdowns impact high contact sectors like restaurants, shops, salons, etc," RAI Chief Executive Officer Kumar Rajagopalan said in a statement.

While the retail sector recently got included in priority lending guidelines under MSME, he said, "It is important for the sector to get all support that MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) policies accord as more than 90 per cent of retail can be classified and MSME."

Calling for support to retail with policy around digi-

tisation, Rajagopalan said retailers need to get themselves digitised faster and need to get e-commerce ready.

"Financial support for digitisation can help better boost the sector. Also, a directional focus to enable retailers through the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) will give a big boost to the sector," he added.

Seeking a better direction for the implementation of goods and services tax (GST), RAI said any increase in GST on clothing, food and housing creates a direct impact on consumption.

"A direction for a more predictable GST regime will be welcome. Similarly, many clauses around carry forward and refund of GST needs clarification," Rajagopalan said, adding that directional support to the creation of a nation-level policy for retail and internal trade will help.

Asking for more money in the hands of the poor and the salaried, RAI said the two years of the coronavirus pandemic have impacted many in the poorer section of the population. **PTI**

Sebi notifies stricter norms for appointment of managing director at listed cos

New Delhi: Putting in place stringent norms, Sebi has said that a person rejected by shareholders at a general meeting can be appointed or re-appointed as a managing director or whole time director or manager, only after providing detailed justifications and ensuring compliance with various conditions.

"The appointment or a re-appointment of a person, including as a Managing Director (MD) or a Whole Time Director (WTD) or a Manager, who was earlier rejected by the shareholders at a general meeting, shall be done only with the prior approval of the shareholders," Sebi said in a notification on Monday. For considering the appointment or re-appointment of such a person earlier rejected by the shareholders, there should be a detailed explanation and justification by the company's nomination and remuneration committee and the board of directors for recommending the person. **PTI**

CONSTRUCTION OF STATION BUILDING & OTHER ANCILLARY WORKS
Tender Notice No.: CON/2022/JAN/05; Dated: 20-01-2022. Open tender (through e-tendering system is invited from experienced and reputed Contractor(s)/ firm(s) for the following works:- **SN-1. Tender No. CE-CON-D-K-BLD-2022-01. Name of work:** Construction of Moolm Station Building, Passenger Platform, CC Drain, Platform wall, P.P Shed, Over head Tank, Approach road, Development of Circulating area, staff quarters & other ancillary buildings etc. in connection with Dimapur - Kohima New Line Project. **Approx. value:** ₹15,27.85,387.65. E-tender will be closed at 14:30 hrs. on 18-02-2022 and opened at 15:30 hrs. on 18-02-2022. For Details Please visit www.irebs.gov.in.
Chief Engineer/Con/6, Maligaon Northeast Frontier Railway (Construction Organisation) "Serving Customers with a smile"

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY E-Tender Notice
e-tender is invited on Behalf of the President of India for the under mentioned works:
S.No. 01, Name of the work with its location : Design, fabrication, supply, installation, erection, testing & commissioning of 3 Phase 11/0.433 KV power supply arrangement and associated electrical works at T-18 Depot at Shakurbasti in connection with Setting up maintenance Depot for Trainsets at Shakurbasti, Northern Railway. E-tender No. WP/Elect/Trainsets-SSB-WT-01(Open), SI No. 02, Approx. Cost of the work : Rs. 63610352/-, S.No. 03 **Earnest money to be deposited : Rs. 468100/-, S.No. 04 Date and time for closing of tender:** 03.03.2022 up to 13.00 hrs. **S.No. 05** Website particular and notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.: Tender can be down loaded from IREPS website: www.irebs.gov.in and detailed can be seen from the notice board at office of CAO/WP, Chamber Bhawan, J.C. Road, Patna-800001.
Any e-tenders which is sent by Post/Courier/Fax or by hand will not be accepted. All such manual submission of tender even if it is on firm's letter pad or received in time will not be accepted.
The above e-tender document along with full information is available on website <http://www.irebs.gov.in>.
Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/WP Workshop Project Organisation, Patna PR/01555/WPO/Elec/T/21-22/56

Rupee slides to 1-month low against dollar on forex outflows

Mumbai: The rupee on Tuesday depreciated by 18 paise to close at a nearly one-month low of 74.78 against the US dollar due to month-end dollar demand from oil importers, forex outflows and a stronger dollar in overseas markets.

Investors' weak appetite for riskier assets also weighed on the rupee. Moreover, market participants are now eyeing the US Fed's meeting outcome for further cues.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 74.60 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.57 and a low of 74.80 during the session.

The rupee finally settled at 74.78, down by 18 paise over its previous close of 74.60. This is the second straight session of loss for the local unit and the lowest closing level since December 27, 2021. The rupee has declined by 33 paise against the American currency in two days.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.22 per cent up at 96.12. **PTI**

Best Agrolife Q3 profit jumps to ₹15.5 cr; revenue at ₹232 cr

New Delhi: Agro-chemical firm Best Agrolife Ltd on Tuesday reported a sharp jump in its net profit to ₹15.5 crore for the quarter ended in December.

Its net profit stood at ₹ 2.7 crore in the year-ago period.

The company recorded revenue of ₹232.5 crore in the third quarter of this fiscal as against ₹56.8 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year, the company said in a statement. Vimal Alawadhi, MD of Best Agrolife, said the performance is expected to be sustainable in Q4, FY22, as the production in newly set up formulation unit will commence. During the coming quarters, he said the strategic entry in the international business will also open up a new profitable vertical for the company. **PTI**

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles. **VEHICLES FOR SALE**
1) EICHER1059 DL1LAC9430- YOM 2019 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 710000
2) MAHINDRA DI 3200 DL1LAC5034- YOM 2019 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 400000
3) CB ASHOK LEYLAND DOST GOODS UP12BT4927- YOM-2020 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 250000
4) TATA 1412 DL1GC7975- YOM MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 850000
5) T INTRAV20 UP16HT1380- YOM 2021 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 415000
6) SM SAMRAT UP14JT0863- YOM 2019 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 550000
7) EICHER 11.14 UP14GT2837- YOM 2017 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 510000
8) EICHR VECVEVPRO2049 DL1LA4221- YOM 2020 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 585000
9) BOLERO MAX DL1LAE4019- YOM 2020 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 535000
10) PRO 2110 EICHR VECV HR38AB3917- YOM 2021 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 1250000
11) TATAMOTORSLPT709CHP DL1LAC5022- YOM 2019 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 575000
UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS (ONLINE/ OFFLINE) WITHIN 15 DAYS FROM THIS PAPER PUBLICATION I.E. ON OR BEFORE 10.02.2022 (PLEASE NOTE THAT CLOSING AUCTION DATE WOULD NOT BE A WEEKLY OFF / HOLIDAY).
BRANCH ADDRESS: KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD., PLOT NO.7 INSTITUTIONAL AREA, SECTOR-125 NOIDA NEAR DELL CAMPUS NOIDA (U.P) UP-201313 OR CONTACT - RAJESH ANTIL KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT / 09711173320 EMAIL rajesh.a.ntil@kotak.com

Benchmarks halt 5-day rout as bargain hunters move in; Maruti spurts

Mumbai: Market benchmarks managed closed in the green on Tuesday after five sessions of steep losses as investors accumulated recently-battered banking, auto and FMCG counters amid a supportive trend in European equities.

However, traders said the overall sentiment remains cautious ahead of a crucial two-day meeting of the US Federal Reserve where it will take a call on its rate hike trajectory.

Russia-Ukraine tensions, stubborn inflation and unabated selling by foreign funds are the other risk factors in the near-term, they added. After plunging below the 57,000-level in opening trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex gained momentum as the session progressed to finish 366.64 points or 0.64 per cent higher at 57,858.15.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty rose 128.85 points or 0.75 per cent to close at 17,277.95.

Maruti topped the Sensex gainers' chart with a jump of 6.88 per cent after the country's largest carmaker posted a consolidated net profit at Rs 1,041.8 crore for the December quarter -- down 48 per cent y-o-y but well above analyst estimates. Axis Bank, SBI, IndusInd Bank, Bharti Airtel, PowerGrid and NTPC were among the other prominent gainers, spurring as much as

6.76 per cent. In contrast, Wipro, Bajaj Finserv, Titan, Infosys, Tech Mahindra and UltraTech Cement led the laggards list, shedding up to 1.75 per cent.

"After a week-long consolidation, domestic indices took a breather supported by low-level buying. Western markets also supported, staging recovery following correction in oil markets, and as uncertainties over Fed policy and geopolitical tensions eased.

"However, volatility is expected to linger as investors await the Fed's final policy statement, providing clarity on the timeline of rate hikes," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said, "Markets will react to the Fed meeting outcome in early trade on Thursday and we expect volatility to remain high, thanks to the scheduled monthly expiry. Keeping in mind the scenario, we reiterate our cautious view and suggest preferring hedged positions."

Barring IT and consumer durables, all BSE sectoral indices mustered gains. Telecom climbed 2.46 per cent, followed by utilities, power, auto, bankex and realty. In the broader markets, the BSE midcap and small cap indices advanced up to 1.03 per cent. **PTI**

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ E- TENDER NOTICE
E-TENDER NOTICE No. AGC-M-WRP-AGC-2022 Date: 24.01.2022
Sr.DME (C&W)/North Central Railway, Agra acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites "Open Tender" through on Line only (E-Tendering) for the following work:

Sr.	Item	Details of Work
1.	Name of work with its location	Operation & maintenance of Water recycling plant at AGC coaching Depot for three years.
2.	Approx. Cost of the work	Rs. 20.88,587.76/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh Eighty Eight thousand Five Hundred Eighty Seven and Paise Seventy Six only).

For Full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railway Website www.irebs.gov.in. Bidders will be able to submit their bids through web portal www.irebs.gov.in upto 15.00 hrs. on 15/02/2022. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. 86/22(AN)
North central railways | www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in | @ CPNCR

RAJASTHAN HOUSING BOARD
No. : ACE-I/RHB/JPR/2021-22/592 Dt. 20.01.2022
NIB : 13/2021-22
Bids for 1. Construction of Library Building in Coaching Hub at Sector-16, Pratap Nagar, Jaipur 2. ARC work of Providing, Laying, Jointing, Testing of DI/HDPE pipe line with interconnection works and construction of tube well & the work of Providing, Laying, Jointing & Testing of Sewerage line with manhole the jurisdiction of Division PHE-I, RHB, Jaipur 3. ARC work of Providing, Laying, Jointing, Testing of DI/HDPE pipe line with interconnection works and construction of tube well & the work of Providing, Laying, Jointing & Testing of Sewerage line with manhole the jurisdiction of Division PHE-II, RHB, Jaipur 4. Overlay of existing Internal Roads & Construction of New Internal Roads of Sector-03, MIG-B Zone, I.G. Nagar, Jaipur 5. ARC work of Repair and maintenance of electric works at different RHB Residential Schemes under ACE-I RHB, Jaipur 6. External electrification & street light work for remaining developed area at Mahala Residential Scheme, RHB, Jaipur are invited from interested bidders from Date 27.01.2022 to 16.02.2022 upto 6:00PM. Other particular of bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.raj.nic.in>) of the state & <http://urban.rajasthan.gov.in/rhb> department website.
UBN: RHB2122WLOB00238, RHB2122WSOB00239, RHB2122WSRC00237, RHB2122WSOB00242, RHB2122WSOB00240, RHB2122WSOB00241
Raj.Samwadi/CI/11003/2021-22 Addl. Chief Engineer-I, Jaipur

NORTHERN RAILWAY NOTICE
REGISTRATION OF PANEL OF RETAIL SHOPS FOR SURGICAL ITEMS
Applications on prescribed Performa are invited from Retail Shops located within 5 Km of Northern Railway Central Hospital New Delhi, for **Registration of Panel of Retail shops for supply of Branded supply of Disposable/ Surgical Items (Sutures, ligatures, CAPD Bag and IV Fluids)** under Retail Local Purchase in Northern Railway Central Hospital New Delhi.
The application form along with copy of terms and conditions can be obtained from and deposited in Room No. 26, between 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM on payment of **Rs. 500/-** to be deposited in cash with Divisional Cashier Baroda House, New Delhi or by way of Bank Draft in Favour of FA&CAO (E)/ Northern Railway or can be downloaded from Northern Railway website www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in under head tender. The last date for receiving the application form is **21.02.2022 at 11:00 AM**. The application can be deposited in **Room No. 26** on all working days between **10:00 AM to 05:00 PM**.
 
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 172/2022

TIME FOR SUCCESS

Stepping into 2022, the role of HR professionals is more critical now than it was before. They are the ones who will reconsider the basic tenets of their company, says SONICA ARON



It wouldn't be wrong to say that companies, to a great extent, be it in any industry, have met or are gradually meeting the challenges of the current global health crisis situation. However, as we move towards the post-pandemic era, their strategies and policies of the past will no longer meet the needs of the evolving workforce.

The last two years have changed a lot. Not just the way we work, though it has become evident that remote and hybrid working models can be as effective as erstwhile physical/ in-person working models if managed effectively. The changes go deeper. People have changed in the way they think of work, work-life balance, their expectations from employers, their growth and job satisfaction.

Hence, organisations will need to evolve and adapt management styles that are flexible, responsive, and established around employee speak, including more connection, simplification and automation, demographic shifts, and much more.

Stepping into 2022, the role of HR professionals is critical than ever before as they are the ones who will reevaluate the basic tenets of their company in order to support the right shift, balancing between business growth needs, employee experience and retention.

Role of HR in organisational success

♦ **Establish a healthy culture:** It is one of the most important predictors of how effectively a company achieves its goals. Employees that are glad to come to work will be more

driven to move the company forward in the long run. It's possible that a company's culture could use a makeover. Connecting with people to understand what they expect in today's times is key. Is it Real time communication? Is it transparency? Is it real time feedback? Is it about owning their own learning?

After determining the workforce expectations, it is important to act on it and ensure that everyone in the business is on the same page so that everyone can contribute to moving the new corporate culture forward. It will require a holistic approach and not just reprinting slogans. It will need changing processes, policies, ways of working and embedding key behaviours in day-to-day transactions.

It will require being receptive to new ideas and opinions, on how to do things differently, deploying new processes and practises.

♦ **Change with the times:** The world has changed and will continue to evolve over time. Employees' needs will also vary because of this. We will need to take chances and adapt – not be hesitant to implement new processes and solutions to fulfil your employees' ever-changing demands. Offering customised perks and ways of working could be one way to meet such needs.

Depending on where they are in life, employees may seek different benefits and work arrangements. An employee who is responsible for a family of four will most likely want and desire a different benefits package and work environment than a

HR will continue to be the driving force behind many new strategies and policies, as we have witnessed over the last two years, such as improving employee experience, developing new organisational models, creating a more flexible workforce, and much more

recent college graduate who is just starting out in their profession. Before making any decisions, It would be critical to understand the demographic landscape of the organisation in detail and understand employee life stages and needs.

♦ **Map skill gaps:** Every company probably requires specific expertise as business models and markets have evolved. By speaking with several departments, one may get a good idea of which functional and behavioural competencies individuals, teams, managers, and leaders require right now and which they will require in the future. Then, to address those needs, plan the capability building agenda, and talent acquisition agenda accordingly.

♦ **Target employee retention:** We have all witnessed the big quit and we are all aware of the tangible and intangible costs associated with voluntary attrition. It is not always easy to find a replacement on time, leading to productivity loss; loss of tacit knowledge, experience, clients; added extra responsibilities for existing employees, resulting in overwork, burnout and more attrition. Creating a culture where employees feel valued, included, where their contribution is recognized and appreciated, where they feel happy and have fun is critical. A holistic approach to employee retention goes beyond fun Fridays, zero meeting hours and birthday celebrations. An employee experiences an organisation each day, each moment through their managers and their peers, and building psychologically safe team envi-

ronments is key to retention. This would be a key role of the HR function in 2022, given that most businesses would be on an ambitious growth path, they should not lose sight of this goal.

♦ **Understand business strategy:** End of the day, People are the business's most important asset, and the HR function is the custodian of this asset. The deeper the HR function understands the company's business plan, the more effectively they can leverage the human potential in the organisation through the right policies, processes, structures, and culture.

HR function is like the arterial system that runs across the organisation, across C-suite leaders, departmental managers, and employees, disseminating the purpose, main objectives, and cultural values of your company. Possessing sound knowledge of both business tasks and of employees' needs, expectations, skills, competencies, and aspirations, they have the lethal combination of making businesses succeed.

The world of HR is constantly changing, and new trends will emerge. HR will continue to be the driving force behind many new strategies and policies, as we have witnessed over the last two years, such as improving employee experience, developing new organisational models, creating a more flexible workforce, and much more. 2022 is going to be yet another exciting year for the HR function!

The writer is Founder and Managing Partner, Marching Sheep

QUOTE OF THE DAY
Real education should consist of drawing the goodness and the best out of our own students.
— Cesar Chavez

LLB AND LLM

The University of Manchester's law programme is recognised by the Bar Council of India and offers a distinctive approach to legal education that brings together a research-informed and practice-led approach to the study of law.

The students of Law School will have the opportunity to draw on the abundant expertise of academics, professional networks, legal practitioners, and



experts in social justice across the School of Social Sciences.

Deadline:
For the September 2022 intake, February 26th, 2022.

College Board's UniTalk India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

UniTalk India, an event for the Indian students wishing to study in India or abroad, was held virtually on January 20, 2022. This special UniTalk helped with the needs of students during the pandemic. College Board brought together few of its top member uni-

versities from India and the US. They provided insight into admissions processes and policies to facilitate student applications. Admissions professionals will talk about how undergraduate programs in India and the U.S. are changing, as well as the career opportunities these programmes lead to.

Social campaigns to eliminate child labour

Awareness campaigns are almost commonly used to create effective communication skills and listening skills. Being aware is extremely important and there are many methods to create awareness. You need to check your thoughts as well and see if they are positive or negative. Circulating positive thoughts is most important to grow in life. There are huge benefits of self-awareness, firstly developing empathy, better communication & listening skills, better leadership qualities, affluent decision-making skills, increased creativity and seeing the perspective of others. It also leads to better decision making. Spreading the word about something important, Mohammed Rashid Khan has planned many such awareness campaigns. One of the things that need attention in India is child labour. This is a grave



problem and causes a huge impact on the future of the nation.

Cryptork makes a mission to let people aware of child labour and this will help in leveraging the thoughts. In this, people have started many social media campaigns to make people aware of child labour and make all the people aware that children are meant to study and make the future. They are not the tools for earning.

Economics, a master discipline

It is hard to imagine a world where economics becomes irrelevant, for it is in the very nature of human beings to strive for a better life, says

DR ADITYA KUVALEKAR

With global vaccination efforts and tackling new variant waves, the world is learning to live with the COVID-19 pandemic. This has arguably been the greatest challenge humanity has faced since World War-II, and just like WWII, this pandemic will fundamentally alter aspects of our lives. From the possibility of permanent remote work to a radical shift to the service-based, online nature of businesses, we are facing unfathomable and unpredictable changes to how we live, work, eat and travel. Businesses will, and already have, shut down, new industries will arrive and thrive, old and established jobs will disappear, jobs that were once thought to be niche will suddenly show an exponential rise. It is very hard for anyone to predict what changes will be witnessed over the next few years.

Therefore, this is, perhaps, a very good time to invest in skills for the future. What makes the current climate special are two factors. First is that COVID-19 led to restructuring of the economy and demand for previously popular industries may be suppressed for a long time. Second, while the economic recovery has begun, it may take a while before it is nearly complete. Therefore, now is a good time to invest in skills that are likely to be in demand when the market is hot.

This is particularly relevant for students deciding what to study at university. While the idealistic view of doing what you are passionate about may sound romantic in the-

ory, there are many who, justifiably, view education as a means of attaining a good lifestyle, and therefore wish to choose a subject that is likely to be rewarded in the subsequent labour market.

Career opportunities

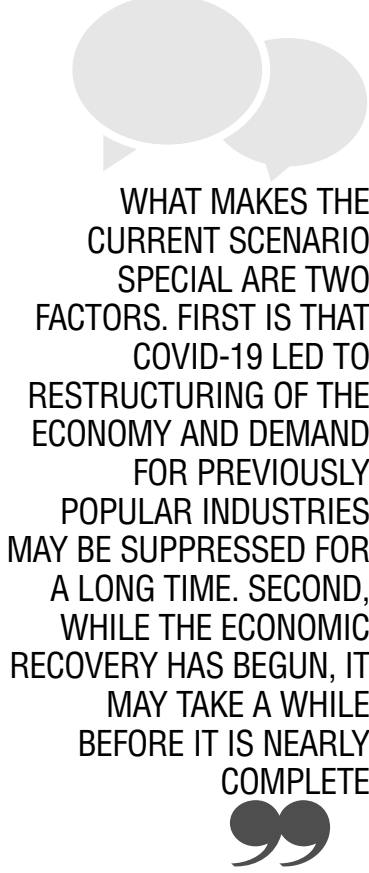
Economics already offers immensely lucrative career opportunities. The range of job opportunities includes consulting firms, financial firms, government organisations, international organisations such as the World Bank and the IMF, NGOs for those interested in working in the development sector, to industries such as big tech and financial journalism.

For example, leading technology giants such as Google, Amazon, Facebook and Microsoft recruit economists every year with large salaries. It is harder to think of a career path that can offer as diverse opportunities as economics.

There are many universities that have designed the undergraduate and master's programs keeping these options in mind. As a result, an economics student can learn from a wide range of experts specialising in development economics, macroeconomics, to even FinTech and Big Data, the new buzzwords. In fact, considering the growing importance of understanding the concepts of economics and proficiency in programming, universities started to offer a BSc Economics with Computing.

Economics, a master discipline

Pursuing such courses are likely to be intellectually and materially rewarding. For



one, economics as a discipline borrows heavily from diverse fields ranging from philosophy and mathematics to psychology and history. Therefore, a student will be exposed to a wide range of topics, which will be good for both their professional and personal development.

Second, a good command of the basics of economics is a tremendously valuable skill in analysing complex, real-world problems, and is therefore extremely valuable in the labour market. This is why studying economics can lead to some of the highest-paid jobs – starting salaries in the UK for someone with a masters in economics are often upwards of £60,000 - £75,000.

Also, most students are concerned about the safety aspect, and economics is perhaps safer than any other discipline. In the 1970s, there was buzz around engineering, in the 1990s it was programming, in the 2000s it was finance, and now it's big data and machine learning. However, economics has always maintained its steady presence offering a range of job prospects for students.

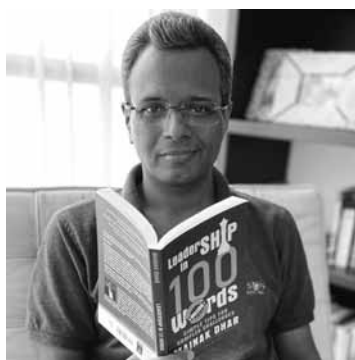
It is harder to imagine a world where economics – a science of prosperity – becomes irrelevant, for it is in the very nature of human beings to strive for a better life. Therefore, if you are a student, or a parent, thinking of a career choice for undergraduate or a postgraduate degree, economics is perhaps second to none. Take the plunge!

The writer is Lecturer, Department of Economics University of Essex, UK

101 lessons on leadership and mentoring

Author Mainak Dhar's book *Leadership in 100 words* published by Bloomsbury India is all about leadership and mentoring. The book is inspired by a series of Dhar's LinkedIn posts *#leadershipin100words*. These were sparked by conversations the author was having with people he was mentoring, which made him realise that while he had been blessed with many great mentors throughout his career, many others did not have access to mentors to help guide them in life and career choices. These posts sought to address common questions people have about careers, through simple, straightforward advice – one hundred words at a time.

He says that the book does not seek to provide answers, but rather provokes thought and introspection. A good mentor does not tell you what to do, but makes you think of issues differently, to ask the right questions instead of giving you the answers. He hopes that readers find thought-starters to how they may approach common career and leadership challenges through this book. He has tried to distil not only his personal experiences, but a lot of what he learned and observed in the many great mentors he have had in his life and career. "There are many people out there who feel the need for mentors, but don't have access to one, either because they don't have broad enough networks or feel that senior leaders are not accessible to them. I hope that my book does its bit to change that status quo by making



mentoring accessible to many," he says.

His *#leadershipin100words* posts on LinkedIn had become a great way to engage with people, respond to questions he got and more than him providing the answers, it became a great way to dialog with people on common leadership and career challenges. "To be honest, I hadn't planned on a book emerging from these, but several people began asking me on LinkedIn why I didn't pull this thinking together in the form of a book, which would give readers these thought starters in an accessible form whenever they needed advice to common challenges. That was the spark which led to the idea for the book," he says.

Dhar is an alumnus of IIM-Ahmedabad with twenty-five years of experience at blue-chip multinationals. In addition to being a senior business leader, he is also a prolific author.

4th edition of ICEIL at Amity University

PNS ■ UTTAR PRADESH

The Amity University organised the Valedictory Ceremony of 4th Edition of International Conference on Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Leadership (ICEIL 2022). Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma, Minister of State, MSME was the Chief Guest while renowned Film Maker Subhash Ghai was the Guest of Honor.

Verma said, "I'm extremely delighted to be present here today and would like to congratulate Amity for organizing such a wonderful conference which promotes and encourages entrepreneurship, innovation and leadership amongst the youth of our country."

"I'm glad to be present here on this occasion and remember my meetings with Dr. Aseem Chauhan in Mumbai and also with

Honourable Founder President of Amity Education Group, Dr. Ashok K. Chauhan, when I started my Film Institute, Whistling Woods. He has been my first Guru and mentor for starting this institute. It is only by following his principles that I could establish Whistling Woods successfully," Ghai said.

Dr Aseem Chauhan, Chancellor, Amity University, Haryana, said, "The

Conference aimed at bringing the start-ups, Entrepreneurship aspirants, SMEs, Incubates, Academicians, Researchers, Bankers, Venture Capitalists, Accelerators, Investors, Financial Experts, Corporate Leaders etc., from varied fields, on a common platform to promote Entrepreneurship & Innovation and exchange of best Business Practices, Trends, etc.

VIT-AP's international conference ICAMEMS

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The first International Conference on Advances in Mechanical Engineering & Material Science (ICAMEMS) was held virtually at VIT AP University, Amaravati from January 22 to 24, 2022.

Chief guest S Balchandran, Executive Chairman and CEO, Buimerc Corporation Ltd, Dubai, UAE emphasised the role of mechanical, civil and electrical engineering in building blocks of current technologies development. The recent years of pandemic has started a new era of reflection and technologies play a vital role with the uni-



versities efforts in developing technologies for the needs of society.

Dr Mohammad Younis, Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering,

Binghamton University, State University of New York, USA motivated students to make use of the conference to develop technologies based on the challenges the society faced.

Dr S V Kota Reddy, Vice Chancellor, VIT-AP highlighted the role of multidisciplinary research and innovation for development of technologies with patent filing. The participants are going to present the research findings in the areas of materials and mechanical engineering for the benefit of the scientific community.

Dr C L V Sivakumar, Registrar, faculty, scholars and staff were also present.



ENERGISE YOUR FUTURE

Renewable energy is booming. Wind farms, hydropower plants, solar panels or sustainable farming, there are hundreds of thousands of unique jobs in this sector, says DR MUKESH KWATRA

Energy is fundamental to development. It is critical for all future investments, innovations, industries that generate jobs and push economic growth. With the advent of new technologies in AI, Metaverse, Cryptocurrencies, Blockchain and NFTs, there is a dire need for alternative and renewable sources of energy as the fossil fuels are finite and are an environmental hazard when used for energy generation. Besides Climate Change caused mainly by greenhouse gas emissions is threatening the very existence of the world.

India's economy is under huge pressure due to rising fuel prices, energy demand, and the climate change related problems. India has been on the forefront in adopting renewable energy. Projects like biomass, hydropower, geothermal, wind and solar energy generation are being developed in India.

It aims to substitute the use of coal, oil and wood for energy. We

has already achieved its Nationally Determined Contributions target with total non-fossil based installed energy capacity of 157.32 gigawatts, which is 40.1 per cent of the total installed electricity capacity of 392.01 GW. There is a dire need for Government and businesses to invest heavily and provide green, clean and renewable energy.

Renewable energy is a booming sector. Wind farms, hydropower plants, solar panels or sustainable farming, there are hundreds of thousands of unique jobs in renewable energy. There are institutes with courses for the skill development training programme on renewable energy. The aim is to develop skills of the participants to effectively use alternative sources.

PROSPECTS
There is a demand for equipment manufacturing in this sector, due to which there is a rise in the requirement of skilled manpower. It is not only limited to the man-

There are job opportunities for physicists, geologists, ecologists, biologists, architectural and structural engineers, planners and project managers in renewable energy sector today

ufacturing sector but also in other areas like Installation, System Designing, Operations & Maintenance, Financing and Marketing. Biologists and ecologists are required for analyzing the effects of the wind farm on biodiversity. Architects to design buildings, fabricators, installation experts, skilled administrators, finance experts and managers are essential to successfully run the show.

ENGINEERS
For engineers, endless renewable energy applications exist, making engineering a big job prospect in this sector. For instance, engineers design hydro-electric dams, solar panels and batteries, wind turbines, the systems that carry the electricity from the wind farm, dam or solar field to the power plant. They help in generating ethanol from corn, green fuel from biomass. They are also required in the field of equipment manufacturing to address the

challenges of production, design and delivery in this sector. Engineering is not a quick-entry renewable-energy career, but it can be a long-lasting one.

OTHER FIELDS
Engineers and scientists used to dominate this sector. But now, graduates with commercial skills are welcome as well. There are job opportunities for physicists, geologists, ecologists, biologists, architectural and structural engineers, planners and project managers to computer operators, communications professionals, business developers and logistic professionals. Besides academic qualifications, the skill set requirements vary as per the job. Basics are the same as in other jobs. Focus on the work assigned, dedicated effort to achieve goals, handling pressure on and off work situations, and so on. For a specialised job requirement, the skills are essential as per the particular work.

The writer is Founder, Smiling Tree

‘Prepare for these questions thoroughly’

Many times an aspirant loses out on a lucrative opportunity due to an interview. DR KULNEET SURI shares a few questions that can help

Interview questions that are generally put up to business management graduates in job interviews are mostly focused on the candidate's abilities to lead groups, work in a team, delegate tasks, and other management skills. Although one cannot prepare word by word for the interviews, there are a few questions that are repeated.

■ **Tell us something about yourself.**

This holds a lot of weightage for your final selection. It is important that you practice this question thoroughly. Prepare a short and crisp answer to this question, as being prepared will make sure you do not ramble on about yourself towards an awkward end. Your communication skills are mostly judged by the interviewer. Focus on the course you have completed and your accomplishments and try to relate them to the job description you are being interviewed for.

■ **Why are you interested in this job?**

You need to provide some tangible reasons for wanting the particular job and thus you must make sure that you know the job description well so that you can relate your answers accordingly. Remember one thing, recruiters definitely won't want someone who is just randomly coming for interviews hoping to get into any company.

■ **What are your strengths and weaknesses?**

List out strengths that you have that would benefit the job and the organisation as a whole. List out three strengths that you have that set you apart and which you can also relate to the job as well. While listing your weaknesses, never ever tell the recruiter any negative points about yourself. Always see to it that you relate your weaknesses to an aspect that is, in fact, good for the job.

■ **How would your friends and teachers describe you?**

Highlight your personal and professional attributes. It would be better if you don't make something up. Paint an accurate but attractive picture of what you are really like.

■ **What are your hobbies?**

Interviewers often ask such questions to get an insight into your personality and understand how you would fit in a workplace environment. Just make sure that you do not lie about what



Dr Kulneet Suri
Senior Director
Institute of Management Studies, Noida

you do as a hobby as the interviewer probably has years of experience in his or her field and will be quick to catch your lie.

■ **What are your short term and long term goals?**

Prepare the answer to this question well as it shows your clarity of thought. Your short-term goals should be practical, concrete and achievable while your long-term goals should reflect your ambitions, passion, and your personality.

■ **Why should we hire you for this job?**

Blowing one's own trumpet and doing it tactfully is not an easy feat but it has to be done. Do it as tactfully as you can and keep in mind that there are other students being interviewed for the same job with the same credentials as yours so make sure your answer highlights your skills as an individual that sets you apart from others.

■ **Do you have any questions for us?**

Most interviewers will ask this question at the end of the interview. Be prepared with some good questions to ask them. Some simple examples would be your growth prospects in the organisation and their performance management system.

The above are not an all-inclusive list. You may be asked different questions. The key is to be confident.

The COVID-19 has caused severe financial disruptions. However, as the economy rebounded on the back of nationwide vaccination program and other safety initiatives, the world started witnessing an impressive uptick in job openings. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, this figure touched the 11 million mark in June 2021 compared to 6.7 million in December 2020, a more than 50% jump.

With organisations adopting flexible concepts like WFH and hybrid working, more and more professionals are now looking for jobs that offer these alternatives. Around 55% of working

professionals in the US are likely to look for a new job in the next 12 months. Nearly 40% of people have cited remote work, career advancement, and flexibility as their primary reasons to change jobs. Companies now have no choice but to acclimatise to modern recruitment strategies and practices

Delving deeper into programmatic job advertising: It is a process of buying, placing, and optimising job ads using data, analytics, AI, and ML. It helps employers place the right jobs before the target audience, set goals, and have technology work towards them.

Today's job landscape is brimming with

MIND IT

potential candidates. As a result, connecting and engaging with each of them manually would be very difficult and time-consuming for HR teams. This is why they need Programmatic Job Advertising platforms to do this job on their behalf.

With this, they can automate the entire hiring process. It will help HRs prevent slip-ups and give them more time to spend on other critical activities while also cutting down their overall hiring costs without

affecting the key hiring goals. This way, they can make the entire hiring process simple, quick, quality-oriented, and cost-effective.

The game changer: As an employer, when you adapt to a digital hiring strategy, you expand your talent pool by inviting candidates from anywhere and everywhere. This increases your advertising costs. However, by leveraging Programmatic Job Advertising, you can automatically manage spending using predictive data and intelligent

algorithms. This technology optimizes how jobs are delivered in sync with job ad metrics like cost per apply, cost per source and hire per source across the ecosystem. Eventually, this process helps you secure the best ROI. Moreover, you can see and evaluate your performance in real-time and thus make better and more informed decisions when recruiting the right talents.

Remote hiring calls for scouting candidates across several states and cities in a country. As a result, managing job postings and following up with candidates can be highly taxing for a small team of recruiters if they are doing it manually. This is where

programmatic job advertising works wonders. It automates the entire hiring process. It enables recruiters to utilise this time on other critical tasks like engaging with talent on social media, responding to employee reviews, creating virtual job previews. When jobseekers see relevant content, they naturally engage with the advertisement to explore the opportunity. Due to these features, programmatic job advertising has recorded an 8% spike in candidates reaching the final hiring stages compared to conventional job boards.

The writer is Amitt Sharma, founder-CEO, Receptix



deadline to apply for the award is May 1, 2022.

The University of Twente is offering the ICD University of Twente International Scholarships in the Netherlands. The awards are available for applying for a Master of Science in Electrical Engineering at the University of Twente.

Award: Each successful scholar will receive the amount of € 6,000 for one year.

Eligibility: Applicants from EU/EEA countries as well as non-EU/EEA countries are eligible to apply for the award.

Supporting documents: Students have to attach the following documents: An official transcript of records or preliminary transcript of records in Dutch or English.

A valid international passport; Curriculum vitae (CV); Letter of motivation

Contact information of two references.

Admission requirements: For taking admission, candidates must fulfill the entry requirements of the university.

Language requirement: If your native language is not English, aspirants have to provide evidence of English language proficiency.

How to apply: To apply, aspirants have to enroll in the postgraduate degree coursework at the University of Twente.

Application deadline: The

Applications are invited for the President's Doctoral Scholar International Awards at the University of Manchester. The fund is available for the academic year 2022-23.

Eligibility: Must hold a conditional/unconditional propose for a PhD programme; Must hold a first-class honours undergraduate degree (or international equivalent) from a highly regarded institution. Have a track record of research engagement. Which can include contributions to publications/articles, encouragement for a wider audience for their research, research awards or project work

Must be interested in the presence of a series of exclusive events to facilitate connections with the academic community and network with other PDS award holders.

Supporting documents: Pre-qualification degree, copies of academic transcripts, certificates of English language proficiency, a statement, and a copy of passport.

Admission requirements: Meet the entry requirements of the University.

Language requirement: An IELTS certificate is not required at the time of application. If shortlisted, you will be asked to take the IELTS test.

How to apply: Submit an online application form.

Application deadline: It is April 29, 2022.

DATA ENGINEERING - PYTHON SQL DEVELOPMENT AT AASA TECHNOLOGIES

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹15,000-₹25,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/91af76
Deadline: February 2, 2022

CONTENT WRITING AT TROOPR

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹15,000-₹20,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/d232ef
Deadline: February 2, 2022

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (SALES) AT INVESTCARE

Location: Delhi, Dehra Dun
Stipend: ₹7,000-₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/1f371a
Deadline: February 2, 2022

OPS AT MADMAN TECHNOLOGIES

Location: Delhi, Ghaziabad, Noida
Stipend: ₹10,000-₹14,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/ef67f6
Deadline: February 2, 2022

MARKETING AT DENTIST ON WHEELS

Location: Lucknow, Faridabad, Delhi, Ghaziabad, Noida
Stipend: ₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/c38c48
Deadline: February 1, 2022

OPERATIONS AT TRUETAB

Location: Bhubaneswar
Stipend: ₹20,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/6cb2fe
Deadline: February 1, 2022

CONTENT WRITING AT DESIGNSHALA FOUNDATION

Location: Ranchi
Stipend: ₹6,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/672867
Deadline: February 2, 2022

QUOTEUNQUOTE

The Government should continue to encourage digitalisation, creation of rural e-infrastructure, and to provide additional incentives for research and development spending. Additionally, introducing more corporate tax benefits, simplifying tax regimes, and providing more sops under SEZ will make the business environment more conducive. Given the current work from home (WFH) situation, there is also a need to introduce easy norms for WFH especially for SEZ units for the IT/ITES sector. Further, enhancing land and labour laws would improve the ease of doing business.

— Arun Kumar Gupta, CFO, Newgen Software



Two immediate challenges need to be addressed: Teachers: They have been caught unaware, but have somehow managed. But the pedagogy of teaching online is very different than Classroom based training. Investment as well as directives in this regard are necessary. Access: In most families children need to share device with siblings or parents. In the lower economic strata, having meter access itself is a challenge. A concerted effort is necessary to provide equitable access, as a first step.

— Manoj Chawla, CBO, Tribyte Technologies

With the rise in the number of unicorns in 2021, the Government, in the Budget must consider the immense potential of the start-up community to help attain its goal of the single largest economy in the world. The Government must be committed to building a steady digital ecosystem capable of supporting this astronomical growth. They must also ensure seamless access to funding through schemes and favourable taxation for start-ups.

— Rasesh Seth, Founder, Nextyn

We have had a fantastic 2021 from the startup ecosystem perspective. With further Government support this growth could reach new heights. This could include simplification of GST rules with respect to availing of credits and monthly procedural requirements. Also an offset of capital gains by investing in other start-ups could help boost investments and contribute to the growth of the overall startup ecosystem.

— Abhishek Goenka, Head and CIO, RPSG Capital Ventures

With the announcement of National Education Policy back in 2020, India took a bold step to transform the highly inward approach it carried towards higher education space. There is a huge potential to take the Indian higher education system to the international levels. Post the announcement of NEP, UGC took a plunge to put in place a legislative framework for the internationalisation of education. Things must take shape faster; India's education system should be ready to sync with the global aspiration

— Prateek Gujral, Principal Advisor (South Asia), Truman State University

Our expectation from budget is 2 fold - one is a apprentice levy on all organisations paying wage bills more than 15 crores. This levy should be charged at 0.5% - 1% of the wage bill. This levy can be used to build apprentice training programs which can help massive number of students getting out of higher education to access these programs and get skilled. Employers will benefit from a great talent pipeline in this process.

— Sumesh Nair, Co-founder & CEO of Board Infinity

The Budget will be a watershed moment in many ways, as a result of the despair that gripped the country during the previous fiscal year. The COVID-19 has thrown numerous difficulties at humanity that will take years to overcome, but the budget can marshal a positive start from the negative impact and help sustain growth and bring back prosperity. There is a need for the Government to subsidise student education loans to make it simpler for students to seek higher education. The Government should encourage the educational institutions to collaborate more with academia to ensure that the curriculum given meets the demands of the industry. Academic institutions should be given special recognition and concessions for collaborating with industry to provide students with the necessary skills.

— Ashwani Awasthi, Managing Director, RICS School of Built Environment

India's demographic advantage is as good as the health of the people. Keeping this philosophy in mind, there should be higher budgetary allocation towards the development of medical infrastructure, including affordable hospitals for the burgeoning middle class. With a larger share of the Indian population residing in rural India, Budget 2022-23 should also allocate resources in developing the primary healthcare infrastructure. Medical insurance should be exempted from GST, thereby bringing relief to middle class households. Lastly, the GST rates for medical products should be rationalized to bring uniformity.

— Rajiv Mistry, Founder & Managing Director, Ascent Group of Companies

Only a skilled and competitive workforce can help achieve this ambitious target. India's youth need to be armed with the right mindsets and with tomorrow's skillsets to be able to drive us towards the target. Corporate India and the world is craving for multi-skilled individuals who can contribute effectively. It is the marriage of relevant domain skills, soft skills and digital skills, that arms an individual with ability to contribute to building country's evolving GDP.

— Girish Singhanha, CEO, EduBridge

As far as the education sector is concerned now that we have brought a well-drafted national education policy of 2020 (NEP 2020), we need a road map of 10 years that will articulate the way forward for the implementation of NEP 2020. We need a very strong budget for this and we cannot ignore or just say that look we don't have the budget. We will have to cut down other expenses but provide enough money for the education budget because that is where the future lies in India.

— Nitin Poldar, Partner, J Sagar Associates

National Education Policy, 2020 demonstrated commitment to educational reforms and reaffirmed the recommendation of increasing public investment on education to 6% of GDP as recommended earlier. It will be a welcomed move but budgetary allocation merits detailing and attention. The Budget should also have more initiatives like National Educational Alliance for Technology so that skill-oriented courses like animation and design can be introduced at all school levels in view of the growing demand in the creative industries.

— Dr Manoj Singh, CEO, RUBIKA India

Rohit fit to lead India against WI

Bhuvneshwar and Ashwin, after their indifferent performance against SA in their 0-3 ODI series defeat, will come under scanner

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's white-ball captain Rohit Sharma is "fit" and ready to lead the side against the West Indies in a six-match white-ball series starting February 6 with the three ODIs in Ahmedabad. However, the team selection meeting, which is set to happen this week, will be an interesting one as some senior players like Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Ravichandran Ashwin, after their indifferent performance against South Africa in their 0-3 ODI series defeat, will come under the scanner.

But Rohit is ready to lead the side after a left hamstring injury ruled him out of the South Africa tour. The T20 matches against the Caribbean team are set to be held from February 16 to 20 in Kolkata. "Rohit is fit and available for the series against the West Indies," a senior BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"By the time, the West Indies series starts, it will be more than seven and half weeks of rehabilitation and recuperation for Rohit. "He is already training in

Mumbai and is expected to be in Bangalore for the fitness test and get a formal okay from the National Cricket Academy," the source informed.

ROHIT SET TO BE NAMED TEST CAPTAIN TOO

It is almost certain that for the time being, Rohit will be named the Test captain although BCCI will be looking at other options considering his workload and the responsibility that comes with leading India in two back-to-back World Cups in 2022 and 2023.

It is understood that KL Rahul's first stint as captain hasn't gone as per expectations and for now, he will have to remain an apprentice under Rohit till he is seen to be ready to lead the national team in near future.

Under Rahul, India lost all four international games in South Africa and for men who matter in Indian cricket, he hasn't exactly come across as a proactive captain.

It is understood that Rahul's performance as Lucknow Super Giants captain will be keenly monitored

during this edition of the IPL.

HARDIK PANDYA'S COMEBACK



Hardik Pandya has been bowling in the nets and even though it is not clear whether he can bowl full tilt but Venkatesh Iyer's relative

ROHIT WILL BE NAMED THE TEST CAPTAIN ALTHOUGH BCCI WILL BE LOOKING AT OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERING HIS WORKLOAD AND THE RESPONSIBILITY THAT COMES WITH LEADING INDIA IN TWO BACK-TO-BACK WORLD CUPS IN 2022 AND 2023



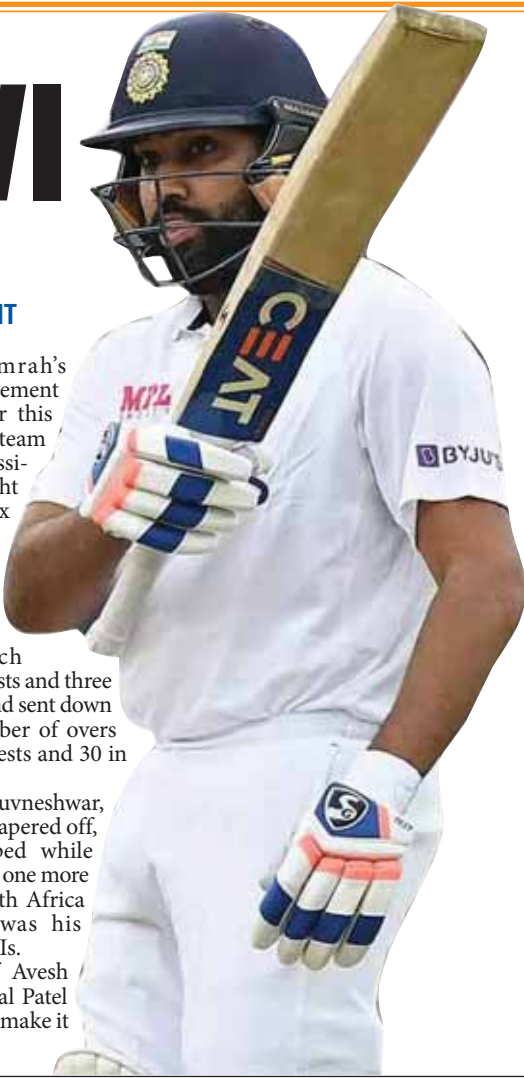
BUMRAH MIGHT BE RESTED

Jasprit Bumrah's workload management is paramount for this current Indian team and there is a possibility that he might be rested for the six matches.

This is after Bumrah played all six games in South Africa which, which included three Tests and three 50-over games, and sent down the highest number of overs (104.5 overs in Tests and 30 in ODIs).

However, Bhuvneshwar, whose form has tapered off, might be dropped while Ashwin might get one more series as the South Africa white-ball leg was his comeback in ODIs.

The likes of Avesh Khan and Harshal Patel could once again make it to the T20 team.



You can't win every game, it's a temporary phase for Team India, says Ravi Shastri

PTI ■ MUSCAT

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri does not see any reason to press the panic button after the team's shocking Test and ODI series loss to an under-strength South Africa as he believes it is a "temporary phase" and the side will tide over it soon.

In the backdrop of Virat Kohli's departure as captain from all formats, India, under stand-in skipper KL Rahul, were blanked 0-3 in the ODIs to cap a forgettable tour to South Africa.

India had earlier suffered back-to-back defeats in Wanderers and Cape Town to lose the Test series 1-2. At the end of that series, Kohli stepped down from captaincy in the longest format,

marking the end of an era in Indian cricket.

"If you lose one series, you people start criticising... You can't win every game, there will be wins and losses," Shastri, who ended his tenure after the T20 World Cup in UAE last year, told PTI on the sidelines of the ongoing Legends League Cricket.

The ODI series defeat in South Africa was their first after Kohli was sacked as skipper in the 50-over format in December last year.

Shastri said he did not follow a single ball of the South Africa series but refused to believe that the standard has dropped.

"How can the standard go down suddenly? For five years, you have been number



one side in the world," he asserted.

Keeping in mind the T20 World Cup in Australia in October, India have a packed white-ball calendar and will be hosting West Indies, Sri Lanka and South Africa this year.

With IPL being a 10-team affair this time, the home season would stretch till June before the Indians leave for England to play the

final Test of a series that was halted midway last year due to a COVID-19 outbreak, followed by three T20Is and 3 ODIs.

Shastri maintained that there's nothing to worry about and dismissed the recent setbacks as a temporary phase.

"When you have a win ratio of 65 per cent over the last five years, what is there to worry about? What is

there to worry about, our rival teams should worry," he said.

Kohli announced his decision to quit as Test skipper a day after the team lost 1-2. Shastri such decisions should be respected as it boils down to individual choice.

"It's his choice. You have to respect his decision. There is a time for everything. A lot

of big players in the past have left captaincy when they felt they wanted to focus on their batting or on their cricket.

"Whether it's (Sachin) Tendulkar, (Sunil) Gavaskar or (MS) Dhoni. And, it's Virat Kohli now."

Asked whether his body language has changed follow-

ing the captaincy saga, Shastri said: "As I said, I've not followed a single ball in the series. But I don't think there will be too much change in Virat Kohli."

"I took a break after seven years in the game, been part of the team. One thing is very clear, I do not wash dirty linen in public."

Shafali Verma regains top spot among batters in ICC T20 ranking



PTI ■ DUBAI

India's teen sensation Shafali Verma on Tuesday moved up one place to regain her position at the top of the ICC Women's T20I rankings for batters while her opening partner Smriti Mandhana dropped a spot to fourth.

The Australian duo of Beth Mooney and Meg Lanning occupied the second and third positions in the rankings respectively. Another Australian, Alyssa Healy, featured in the sixth place.

New Zealand also have two representatives in the top 10, with Sophie Devine and Suzie Bates managing to hold on to their fifth and seventh positions respectively.

Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu gained six positions to break into the top 10 after a superb performance in the Commonwealth Games Qualifiers, where she amassed 221 runs at an outstanding average and strike-rate of 55.25 and 185.71 respectively.

Athapaththu was sitting in eighth place in the rankings.

England's Danni Wyatt also rose three places to 13th after her superb knock of 70 against

Australia in the first T20I of the Women's Ashes recently while Australia's Tahlia McGrath gained 29 places in the rankings to rise up to 28th. McGrath remained unbeaten on 91 off just 49 deliveries to chase down a target of 170 against England in Adelaide.

In the bowler's rankings, the top three remained unchanged with England's Sophie Ecclestone and Sarah Glenn occupying the first and second spots respectively while the third place stayed with South Africa's Shabnim Ismail.

India's Deepti Sharma gained one position to displace Australia's Megan Schutt from the fourth place.

The all-rounders' rankings didn't see much change either with Sophie Devine and Natalie Sciver holding on to their first and second places respectively.

Deepti Sharma again gained one place to third. Pakistan's Nida Dar and Thailand's Nattaya Boochatham also climbed up two places to the ninth and 10th positions, respectively, while Australia's Ellyse Perry went down four positions to go out of the top 10.

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