

OPINION 6
EMPHASIS ON OFFENCE
& NEGLECT OF DEFENCE**WORLD 8**
BRITAIN FEARS HEALTH CRISIS AS OMICRON
PUTS HOSPITALS UNDER PRESSURE**AVENUES 10**
TRENDS IN
HR FOR 2022

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY JANUARY 5, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

the pioneer

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India staring at grim corona scenario

6-fold increase in
cases in 7 days,
with 37,379 new
cases, 124 deaths

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/ MUMBAI

Covid positivity rates are shooting up, caseload spiking, and authorities preparing for a Covid-19 spread far worse than the second wave that hit the country last year in March. India on Tuesday recorded 37,379 new cases and 124 fatalities in 24 hours.

This is the highest case number for a day since September 2021. India reported just 6,358 cases a week earlier on December 28. The six-fold jump in seven days points to grim scenario building up.

Maharashtra, Delhi and West Bengal account for nearly 80 per cent of the cases, but other States are fast catching up. During the last 24 hours, Delhi recorded 5,481 cases, Maharashtra 18,466 cases and Bengal 9,073. Karnataka logged 2,479 new cases and positivity rate shot up to 2.5 per cent while four people succumbed to the virus.

Delhi reported 5,481 new cases and three more deaths on Tuesday with positivity rate leaping to 8.37 per cent. The city now has 14,889 active cases and 168 people on oxygen support. At least 14 patients are on the ventilator support.



A health worker collects a swab sample of a traveler at a railway station to test for Covid-19, before he is allowed entry into the city, in Mumbai AP

Alarming, over 81 per cent of the total samples sequenced over the last two days were found to have the Omicron variant. In other words, of the 187 samples sequenced during the last 48 hours, 152 were cases of Omicron infection, as per the data shared by the Delhi Government.

The Delhi Government has directed private hospitals and nursing homes with 50 beds or more to reserve at least 40 per cent of their total beds for Covid patients.

The Covid-19 situation worsened in Mumbai on Tuesday, as a staggering 10,860

new positive cases were reported from various parts of the metropolis. The 10,860 Covid-19 cases in Mumbai were among 18,466 new cases reported from various parts of the State. With the 18,466 fresh cases, the total number of Covid-19 cases went up from 67,12,028 cases to 67,30,494.

Simultaneously, 75 Omicron cases were reported from various parts of the State taking the total number of Omicron cases detected in the State to 653.

Of the 75 Omicron cases, Mumbai accounted for a maximum of 40 cases, followed by nine cases in Thane, eight

cases in Pune, five cases in Panvel, three cases each from Kolhapur and Nagpur, two cases from Pimpri-Chinchwad and one case each from Bhiwandi-Nizampur, Ulhasnagar, Satara, Amravati and Navi Mumbai.

As 4,588 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 last year increased from 65,14,358 cases to 65,18,916. The recovery rate in the State dropped from 97.05 per cent to 96.86 per cent.

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Kejriwal, Union Minister,
Manoj Tiwari, Babul
Supriyo test Covid +veMany leaders
catch virus as
Covid soars

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to Union Minister Mahendra Nath Pandey and BJP leader Manoj Tiwari to TMC leader Babul Supriyo several politicians have tested positive as with each passing day India is adding a huge number of new Covid-19 patients to its caseload.

The list includes NCP leader Supriya Sule, Maharashtra Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad, Yashomati Thakur, HAM president Jitan Ram Manjhi, Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat, BJP leader Harish Khurana, and Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde.

In a tweet, Kejriwal on Tuesday said he has tested positive for Covid-19 and isolated himself at home. "I have tested positive for Covid. Mild symptoms. Have isolated myself at home. Those who came in touch with me in the last few days, kindly iso-

late urself (yourself) and get urself (yourself) tested," Kejriwal tweeted.

The Delhi CM recently went to Punjab, Uttarakhand and Goa to campaign for the party ahead of the announcement of Assembly polls. In April last year, his wife Sunita Kejriwal had tested positive for coronavirus, while he had developed symptoms, he tested negative.

Union Minister for Heavy Industries Pandey was admitted to Yashoda hospital, Kaushambi, after he tested positive for Covid-19. "I was unwell for the last two days due to which I underwent the Covid test and the report came positive. All those who have come in contact with me in the last few days are requested to take care of themselves and get the necessary investigations done," he tweeted.

BJP MP Tiwari on Tuesday said he tested positive for Covid-19 and has isolated himself at home. "Was feeling unwell since January 2 night. I could not go for poll campaigning in Rudrapur in Uttarakhand due to mild fever and cold. Have tested positive today."

Continued on Page 2

A first in Jan! Zozi
La opened to keep
up supply to forcesIndian Army unfurls
tricolour in Galwan
valley on January 1

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gearing up to meet any threat from China in the Ladakh region, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) for the first time opened the Zozi-La (mountain pass) in January to ensure sustained logistical support to the front line troops on the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

This major achievement came against the backdrop of the ongoing stand-off in eastern Ladakh between India and China for the nearly last two years. The Zozi La at a height of 11,649 feet connects Ladakh with the rest of the country and remains blocked with snow for at least three to four months during winters.

In another development, the Indian Army unfurled the national flag in the Galwan valley on New Year's Day. The photographs of the event were released on Tuesday, three days after the Chinese released pictures of its troops hoisting their flag on their side in the Galwan valley.

The photographs of the Indian troops holding the flag



were also posted by Union Law and Justice Minister Kiren Rijiju on Twitter with the caption "brave Indian Army soldiers in Galwan Valley on the occasion of #NewYear2022."

In one of the photos, released by sources in the Indian security establishment, around 30 Indian soldiers from the Dogra Regiment were seen with the national flag.

Another photo showed the group with four of them holding the national flag and another tri-colour flying high on a flagpole adjacent to a temporary observation post. The photographs were of January 1 in the Galwan Valley, sources said here.

The Indian and Chinese troops exchanged sweets and greetings at 10 border points along the LAC including in eastern Ladakh and North Sikkim on January 1.

Giving details about Zozi La, officials said it will provide a boost to strategic connectivity in the Ladakh region. As many as 72 vehicles crossed the mountain pass for the first time ever on January 2.

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Weekend curfew in Capital as 5,481
cases in 24 hrs, +vity shoots to 8.46%

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi imposed weekend lockdown amid Covid surge with the national Capital registering 5,481 fresh cases and three deaths in past 24 hours while positivity rate soared to 8.46 per cent, according to health bulletins issued on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, in a major relief for commuters, authorities announced that city buses and metro trains will run at their full seating capacity throughout the week in the wake of long queues at various bus stands and stations. The order came as the Delhi Government had feared that bus stops and metro stations could become super spreaders after the seating capacity had been halved and long queues were seen at such places.

The decision to impose further restrictions was taken at a high-level meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management



A crowded wholesale market in New Delhi on Tuesday PTI

Authority (DDMA) chaired by Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal.

The weekend curfew will be in place from Friday 10pm to Monday 5am.

After the meeting, Deputy

Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said, "In view of the rise in cases, the Government took a few decisions at the DDMA meeting today to help slow down the spread of the virus. Delhi will now have a weekend

Fresh restrictions in Delhi

- Night curfew from 10 pm to 5 am
- Weekend curfew from Friday 10 pm to Monday 5 am
- Private offices to remain open with 50 per cent capacity
- Government officials, barring those in essential services, to work from home
- Face masks mandatory for travelling in metro and DTC buses
- Cinemas, gyms shut
- Shops have been allowed on an odd-even basis

curfew on Saturdays and Sundays. We appeal to the people to stay at home unless extremely necessary, such as to go to hospital."

As per the DDMA order, Government employees, barring those engaged in essential services, have been asked to work from home, while private offices will remain open with 50 per cent capacity.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

PLEA FOR EWS QUOTA IN NEET: SC HEARING TODAY
New Delhi: The Supreme Court has agreed to hear on Wednesday a plea related to the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) quota in NEET-PG admissions, after the Centre sought urgent hearing in the matter.

STUDENT REMANDED IN 'BULLI BAI' APP CASE
Mumbai: A local court on Tuesday remanded a 21-year-old engineering student, arrested in the 'Bulli Bai' app case, in Mumbai Police's custody till January 10.

MUSLIM BOARD AGAINST IN SURYA NAMASKAR
New Delhi: The All India Muslim Personal Law Board Tuesday asked Muslim students not to participate in 'Surya Namaskar' exercise, claiming it is a form of "sun worship" which is not allowed in their religion. It also demanded the government withdraw an order issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in this regard.



A healthcare worker administers a nasal swab to a car passenger at a mass drive-through Covid-19 testing site at Miami-Dade College North campus in North Miami, Fla, on Monday AP

and one-third on Sunday. Still, the previous single-day record was about 5,91,000 cases, set on Thursday.

The preliminary total for Monday could drive the country to a weekly average of close to 4,50,000 cases per day. The previous highest total for a whole week, 1.76 million, figures to be not only surpassed but possibly doubled.

The US has recorded more

than 55 million confirmed Covid-19 cases, or one for every six people in the country — and more than 8,26,000 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

Meanwhile, the Food and Drug Administration on Monday expanded the emergency use authorisation of a booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine to include youths 12 to 15.

Over 10 lakh Covid
cases in US in a day

Washington: The US on Monday reported over 1 million Covid-19 cases amid rapid spread of the Omicron variant.

The US health authorities registered more than three times as many new cases as in any previous wave of the coronavirus, over 1 million reported on Monday alone.

A substantial increase in coronavirus infections was expected when this week's numbers came out, but nothing like this. About 1 of every 100 Americans will have been reported as a positive case just the last week.

By Monday, Johns Hopkins University data showed about 10,42,000 more cases than the day before, and it wasn't immediately clear that all states had reported in. That count clearly includes hefty numbers of backlogged cases.

About one-fifth of states reported infections on Saturday

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UP ready to deal with Covid 3rd wave: Dy CM

Allahabad: With the coronavirus cases rising across the country, Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma Tuesday said the state government is already prepared to deal with the third wave of the pandemic. "We have given instructions to all to follow the Covid guidelines in letter and spirit and have started the process to expeditiously vaccinate schoolchildren," he told reporters here.

He was in the city to attend the fourth convocation of Professor Rajendra Singh (Rajju Bhaiya) University as the special guest.

On the coronavirus vaccination drive in the state, he said about 86 per cent of the eligible population has been inoculated so far.

The State Government is ready to make available medicines, oxygen, ventilators and other facilities everywhere, he said. "Whatever preparations could have been done to deal with coronavirus has been done already by the government," he said.

The coronavirus situation in Uttar Pradesh is currently under control, and the government is assessing how it can pan out in the future, the deputy chief minister said.

On the upcoming assembly polls, he said people have liked the works done by the Central and state governments which is indicated by the "huge crowds that gather during the Jan Vishwas Yatras" of the BJP.

"I can say that Opposition parties are desperate and dis-

appointed and are fighting amongst themselves for the second, third and the fourth position," he said.

Sharma said the Samajwadi Party is fighting with the Bahujan Samaj Party which, in turn, is trying to corner the Congress. "And all three are facing Owaisi's party (the AIMIM)."

All these parties take the name of the BJP while competing among themselves so that they can compare themselves with the BJP, he said.

In his address at the convocation ceremony, the deputy chief minister said Uttar Pradesh is ahead in implementing the New Education Policy and has also brought radical changes in research works.

Stampede-like situation averted in UP

Cong holds marathon for young girls as part of its campaign in State

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A major disaster akin to the recent stampede at Maa Vaishno Devi was averted when a near similar situation occurred during a marathon for young girls organised by the Congress as part of its election campaign in Bareilly on Tuesday.

Luckily, only three girls sustained minor injuries.

Reacting to the incident, while the Congress alleged that the incident was a fallout of the laxity of the Bareilly district administration and termed it as a conspiracy, the Bharatiya Janata Party said that the opposition party was making girls "pawns" for its "petty politics".

Local officials, however, maintained that the turnout for the event was much higher than permitted.

City Magistrate of Bareilly,

Rajiv Pandey, said, "Permission was given for the participation of only 200 school students. However, the number of those who actually turned up for the event was much higher. The incident will be thoroughly probed and action will be initiated against the guilty. Three girls, who participated in the marathon, were injured and they were treated at the district hospital. What led to the near stampede-like situation, what was the laxity, how a large number of children gathered there and the permission given by the Higher Education department are some of the aspects that will be probed threadbare."

Pandey further said, "The organisers had announced a scooter as first prize for the marathon winner. Participants were over-excited to bag the first prize leading to pushing

and shoving that led to a stampede-like situation. Videos showed there was no social distancing and many participants were not wearing masks, violating Covid protocols."

The Congress has been organising marathons for girls in different parts of Uttar Pradesh under its 'Ladki Hoon, Lad Sakti Hoon' poll programme, an initiative taken by party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's women-centric agenda for the upcoming assembly polls.

On Tuesday, a large number of participants of the long-distance run had gathered around 9 am at a school ground and video clips showed that in a rush to race ahead, participants stumbled and fell over each other.

Local Congress leader and former Bareilly Mayor Supriya Aron said, "People had gone to

Vaishno Devi on a pilgrimage (on New Year day) and what happened there? What will you call it? It is human tendency to race ahead (of others). Here it is girls, who are studying in schools, and a little bit of 'bhaag daud' took place."

Not ruling out a conspiracy angle, Aron said, "See, all types of people manage to sneak into such events. I will also say there could be a possible conspiracy."

In Lucknow, Congress national spokesperson Supriya Shrinete told reporters: "Events like these are organised and some incidents like this do happen. But they (the incidents) should not have happened. Such incidents will not recur."

Meanwhile, a tweet posted by UP BJP unit said, "Making innocent girls pawns for your petty politics, is the height of shamelessness."

AIMPLB protests Centre's Surya Namaskar in schools order

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) on Tuesday opposed the directive of the Central government to organise 'Surya Namaskar' programme in schools to mark the 75th anniversary of Independence Day.

The programme is being organised in schools across the country between January 1 and 7 to mark Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations. However, the AIMPLB has opposed the move, saying Surya Namaskar is a form of Surya puja (worship of the Sun) and Islam does not allow it.

Defying all logic, AIMPLB general secretary Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani said in a statement issued on Tuesday, "India is a secular nation and the customs of the majority community cannot be 'imposed' on all religions. I urge Muslim students to boycott the Surya Namaskar programme."

Worshipping the Sun as a deity is not allowed in Islam and other religions. Therefore, the government should withdraw the order while respecting the secular values of the Constitution. If the government has to organise any programme in schools on Independence Day, then it should organise a programme of songs and music related to patriotism so that people of all religions can take part in it. Such a programme should not be organised in schools so that people of other religions face trouble in participating."

The Centre has started the Surya Namaskar initiative as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. The 75 crore Surya Namaskars project is also a tribute to 75 years of India's independence. The yogic practice of Surya Namaskar literally means 'sun salutation'. The project started on January 1 and will last till February 20, 2022.

As per the Union AYUSH Ministry, with 30 participating states, 21,814 participating institutions, the numbers are growing.

SP instigated Jawahar Bagh riots: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Singling out Samajwadi Party for instigating Jawahar Bagh riots during its tenure, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath termed the opposition party as "followers of Kans not Krishna" and said that they should fear Lord Krishna for giving birth to unscrupulous elements like Kans and for burning the state in the fire of hatred.

"I am dedicating this power project at Harduaganj (Aligarh) and Lord Krishna must be telling some people in Lucknow in dream to cry over their failures as the Bharatiya Janata Party has done the work they could not. Lord Krishna must have also told them that they did nothing for Mathura, Gokul, Barsana or Vrindavan. Contrarily they produced Kans and caused Jawahar Bagh riots in which superintendent of police-rank officer Mukul Dwivedi was martyred. Unhe Bhagwan Krishna se matlab nahi tha, woh log Kans ke upasak the, aur kans hi paida

karte the," Yogi said after inaugurating and laying the foundation stones of 113 development projects, including the inauguration of 660 MW Harduaganj thermal expansion project, the first super-critical unit of Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited, worth more than Rs 7,000 crore at Aligarh on Tuesday.

On this occasion, the chief minister also distributed tablets and smartphones to students and also announced the setting up of a sugar mill at Sathia.

Targeting Samajwadi Party, Yogi said, "It was Mathura where the first Kosi Kalan riots took place. The Jawahar Bagh incident took place in the same district. Who would have forgotten the Muzaffarnagar riots and the Aligarh controversy? But now, Uttar Pradesh has become riot-free as a result of the work done by our public representatives and police in the last five years. 'Aaj pradesh me danga nahi, ganna paida hota hai,' he said.

Mentioning COVID-19 management by his government, the chief minister also took a jibe at Akhilesh Yadav saying, "The boy who does not go to school for the entire year and then attends classes in the last month expects to top in the examination, which is impossible."

"Today, when bulldozers are razing the properties of those who looted people, then some people sitting in Saifai are feeling the pinch most. Even the brothers and sisters from Italy are crying over bulldozers ruining the mafia. Prior to 2017, public money was plundered, development was restricted to that of one family in UP.

The money meant for the poor was hidden by them in the walls. Now, we are digging out the same money with JCBs and giving tablets and smartphones to the youth and building houses for the poor. Earlier, the state government used to buy electricity at expensive prices and pass the burden on

to the public and even then power supply was inadequate," he claimed.

Talking about the uniformity in words and deeds of the BJP, Yogi said, "People have the seven year-rule of the Narendra Modi government and our governance in UP for the last five years to assess performance. We said that we will end terrorism from within the country, Modi ji and Amit Shah ji removed Article 370 relating to Jammu and Kashmir. 'Fark saaf hai, jo kaha woh kiya' (The difference is clear, we delivered what we promised)."

Yogi further said, "There was a period when temple was being demolished in Ayodhya, temples in Kashi and Mathura were being defiled. But now, Modi ji gave a grand look to Kashi Vishwanath Dham, a grand temple of Lord Shri Ram is being built in Ayodhya. For Modi ji, 135 crore people of the country are his family while for some, only their family matters."



A teacher working at a Government school gives an online class inside an empty classroom in Dharavi, Mumbai, on Tuesday

Kejriwal, Union Minister...

From Page 1

As a precautionary measure, I isolated myself yesterday (Monday) only. Please take care of you and your families", Tiwari said in a tweet in Hindi.

TMC leader Babul Supriyo on Tuesday informed that he

has tested positive for Covid-19 amid the fears of the Omicron variant. Along with Supriyo, his wife, his father and multiple staff have also tested positive for the deadly virus.

Maharashtra Minister Balasaheb Thorat has been tested positive for Covid-19. "I have tested positive for Covid-19. I am asymptomatic and taking treatment on the advice of a doctor. I appeal to all those who have come in my contact to get themselves tested. I urge everyone to wear a mask and

follow all COVID-19 protocols," Thorat tweeted.

A total of 1,892 cases of Omicron variant of coronavirus have been detected across 23 States and Union Territories so far, out of which 766 have recovered or migrated, according to the Union Health Ministry's data updated on Tuesday. Maharashtra has recorded the maximum number of 568 cases, followed by Delhi (382), Kerala (185), Rajasthan (174), Gujarat (152), and Tamil Nadu (121).

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Sd/- SHO
P. S: GTB Enclave, Delhi
DP/685/SHD/22
Tel. 011-7015036031, 9873322997

PD(9132)C

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Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Suneel Kumar/ Amit Kumar Verma A/c No:- LBDEL00002367176	Flat No 55, Block- C7, Pocket- 3, 3rd Floor, Sector G8, Narela, Delhi./ 03-January-2022	November 30,2019 Rs.12,23,945/-	Delhi

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : January 05, 2022
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

India...
From Page 1
The number of "active cases" in the State increased from 52,422 cases to 63,308. The fatality rate in the State stood static at 2.1 per cent.
Mumbai accounted for a maximum of 47,476 active cases, while there were 7953 active cases in Thane. There were 4202 active cases in Pune, followed by Palghar (1605), Raigad (1235), Nashik (998), Nagpur (526), and Satara (386) and Ahmednagar (380).
Of the 6,95,09,260 +samples sent to various laboratories across the State so far, 67,30,494 have tested positive (9.68 per cent) for COVID-19 until Tuesday.
Currently, 3,98888,391

THE PIONEER
CLASSIFIEDS
THANKSGIVING
Thank you Holy Spirit for all blessings Celine
PD(9132)C

Scientists have identified a new strain of the Covid-19 causing virus in Southern France. Known as 'IHU', the B.1.640.2 variant has been reported by researchers at institute IHU Mediterranee Infection in at least 12 cases, and has been linked to travel to African country Cameroon. However, the researchers noted that it is too early to speculate on how this variant behaves as far as infection and protection from vaccines is concerned.

people are in home quarantine while 1,110 people are in institutional quarantine.

Meanwhile, the State recorded 75cases of Omicron, taking the total number of new Covid-19 variant cases to 578 cases. All patients have been reported by the National Institute of Virology (NIV).

West Bengal on Tuesday

reported as many as 9,073 Covid-19 cases, highest-ever single day rise, the State health department notified. There are as many as 25,475 active cases in the state.

In India, the Omicron variant has infected 1,892 people in the country to date, according to the government's data. Of the 1,892 Covid patients, 766 have been discharged. Maharashtra and Delhi remain the leading contributors with 568 and 382 infections, respectively. Kerala, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu all feature in the top 10 most-hit States due to the variant and have over 100 infections recorded so far. Telangana, Karnataka, Haryana and Odisha are other States in the top 10 list in India, according to the health ministry's bulletin.

The daily positivity rate

was recorded at 3.24% while the weekly positivity rate was recorded at 2.05%, according to the health ministry.

The number of people who have recovered from the disease surged to 3,43,06,414, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.38%, the health ministry said.

The cumulative Covid vaccine doses administered in the country crossed 146.61 crore with more than 98 lakh shots being administered on Monday till 10.15 pm.

The State of Maharashtra, which is home to India's financial hub Mumbai, has so far detected 568 cases of the Omicron variant while the Capital territory of Delhi reported 382 cases. Together, they account for around half of all cases in India attributed to the new heavily mutated strain.

CBI submits status report to Calcutta HC on post-Assembly poll violence

Kolkata: The CBI has submitted a status report to the Calcutta High Court on alleged violence in West Bengal following the assembly elections in April last year.

The CBI said the state police had referred 64 incidents to it in accordance with an order of a five-judge bench of the high court, which directed the agency to investigate heinous crimes of murder, rape and attempt to rape, while other cases related to post-poll violence were to be probed by a special investigation team of three senior IPS officers of West Bengal cadre.

The CBI, which submitted the status report before a division bench presided over by Chief Justice Prakash Shrivastava on Monday, said that out of 64 cases referred to it by the state police, 39 alleged offences were taken over by CBI, which registered regular cases, while 4 references are under process.

It said 21 cases referred to it were returned to the state

police/SIT "on the ground of nature of offence", as CBI has been mandated by the order of the five-judge bench on August 19, 2021 to investigate post-poll violence cases of murder, rape and attempt to rape alone.

The CBI said it had also received 29 complaints of sexual assault from NHRC related to sexual offences till December 22, out of which it has decided to hand over two cases to the state SIT on the grounds of nature of offences.

It said two complaints relating to same incident of sexual assault were received by CBI which were amalgamated, resulting in registration of only one regular case for investigation.

The agency said that at the time of submission of the status report, CBI had registered 50 regular cases and one preliminary enquiry into the alleged incidents of post-poll violence.

The CBI said it had submitted charge sheet in 10 cases while remaining cases are

under progress. The division bench directed the state government to file a report in the form of an affidavit on return of people who had allegedly been left homeless out of political vendetta by the next date of hearing on January 24.

The five-judge bench presided over by the then Acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal had on August 19, 2021 ordered a CBI investigation into all cases of alleged murder and crime against women regarding rape or attempt to rape in post-poll violence in West Bengal.

"Passing the judgement on PILs seeking independent probe in alleged violence in the state following the assembly elections, the bench had ordered constitution of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) comprising three IPS officers of the West Bengal cadre to probe all other cases.

The bench had directed that both the investigations will be monitored by the high court.

Weekend curfew...

From Page 1

Shops in malls and shopping complexes will be operate on an odd- even basis from 10 am to 8 pm and every municipal corporate will be allowed to have only one weekly market that will be opened with 50 per cent capacity.

"All cinema halls, theatres and multiplexes to be shut. All auditoriums and assembly halls will be closed. Capacity at restaurants again reduced to 50 per cent and will operate from 10 am to 8 pm. Bars and spas will operate from 12 pm to 8 pm with 50 per cent capacity. Hotels to work as quarantine centres. 20 people are allowed at weddings and funerals.

Sisodia said, the number of Covid -19 cases, especially of Omicron, are increasing in Delhi and the situation is worrying. "We got to learn many things from the past two waves

and this has also helped us learn from the international trend that Omicron has not been very destructive till now. But still we need to be prepared and take this situation seriously.

"At present Delhi has reported about 11,000 cases. Of which, only 350 people are hospitalized and only 124 patients are on oxygen beds. There are 7 people who are on ventilators as of now. According to experts, home-isolation is the most effective way to recover from the infection," he said.City on Monday reported 4,099 COVID-19 cases and positivity rate was 6.46 per cent.On December 28, the DDMA declared a 'yellow alert' after the positivity rate crossed the 0.5 per cent mark, and closed down cinemas and gyms. It had directed shops selling non-essential items to open on an odd-even basis and reduced the seating capacity in metro trains and buses to 50 per cent.

Night curfew from 11 pm to 5 pm has already been imposed in Delhi since December 27.

A first in Jan! ...

From Page 1

The development is a stellar achievement for the BRO, as it will provide the crucial link between the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh even during the peak winter season. The BRO personnel had to work in temperatures dipping below minus ten besides blizzards and stiff wind.

Covered under project Vijayak, the Zoji La pass is normally closed during the winter months. The BRO has been working on extending the winter operations of the pass by deploying equipment and personnel. Keeping Zoji La pass open in January is a daunting task and comes as a continuation of the BRO's effort to keep Zoji La open in December and the winter months that follow.

The BRO and other agencies are engaged in the construction of the 14.2 km long Zoji La road tunnel under the mountain pass. Inaugurated in 2018, the tunnel, once ready will reduce the travel time of over three hours to just 15 minutes. Ladakh administration and the locals lauded the efforts that this additional window reduces the logistic burden on the UT administration and helps the local inhabitants to stock additional rations and supplies to brave the impending harsh winters.

In the first three days of 2022, about 178 vehicles have been able to transit through the pass by the collective assistance of the BRO and the Police personnel.

The numbers are significant because after the temperatures plummet to Minus 20 degree centigrade, the road faced assault from frost and blizzard, which can cause accidents.

5,481 Covid cases, three deaths, positivity 8.37%

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital saw a single day rise of 5,481 fresh Covid-19 infections on Tuesday, taking the total tally of Covid-19 cases to 14, 63,701 while the active cases registered an increase for the fifth consecutive day reaching at 14,889 on Tuesday.

With three fresh fatalities, the total death toll climbed to 25,113, according to a health bulletin issued by the Delhi government on Tuesday.

The positivity rate recorded at 8.37 per cent. As per the health bulletin, a total of 65,487 tests -- 50,461 RT-PCR and 15,026 rapid antigen -- were conducted a day ago.

According to the health bulletin, only 531 of the 9,042 beds in Delhi hospitals are occupied.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday had said though the capital is witnessing a sharp spike in the number of daily cases and active cases of coronavirus,



there is no need to panic as most patients are asymptomatic or have very mild symptoms and do not need hospitalisation.

Witnessing spike in cases, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Tuesday decided to impose weekend curfew in the national capital in view of the surge in Covid cases driven

Reserve at least 40% of beds for Covid patients, Govt tells private hospitals

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amidst the surge in Covid -- 19 cases in the national Capital, the Delhi Government on Tuesday directed all private hospitals and nursing homes with 50 beds or more to reserve at least 40 per cent of their total bed capacity.

It may be noted, the positivity rate increased from 2.44 per cent on December 31, 2021 to more than eight per cent on Tuesday.

It also said that the transmissibility of the variant is very high and the number of Omicron positive cases in the community are rising exponentially.

"Therefore, the keepers of all private hospitals/nursing homes having total bed capacity of 50 beds or more are directed to reserve at least 40 percent of their total bed capacity (i.e. 40 percent of ward bed capacity and 40 percent of ICU bed capacity) for Covid patients," read the order issued by the Nursing Home Cell of the Delhi Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Meanwhile, a large number of doctors and paramedics in Delhi are turning out to be COVID positive

which might put the city's health infrastructure under severe strain, experts said on Tuesday.

At least 50 doctors have tested Covid positive at AIIMS in Delhi while 26 have been diagnosed with the disease at the Safdarjung Hospital, officials said. Forty-five healthcare workers, including 38 doctors, have contracted Covid at the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in the last few days, according to an official.

At the North Delhi Municipal Corporation-run Hindu Rao Hospital at least 30 doctors have contracted Covid while at the Delhi Government-run Lok Nayak Hospital it is seven, sources said. Even though the Delhi Government repeatedly stressed that most cases this time would be mild or asymptomatic not requiring hospitalisation, data shows an uptick in the number of Covid patients in hospitals and those requiring oxygen and ventilator support.

Experts said that since the highly transmissible Omicron variant is going to infect people in a never-seen-before number, those requiring medical care in hospitals will also be proportionate.

HC asks City Govt to consider early re-testing of Covid +ve int'l fliers

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday said that in case there were no guidelines issued by the Centre, it expected the city Government to expeditiously consider the issue of early re-testing of international travellers who test positive for Covid-19 on arrival.

Justice Rekha Palli, who was hearing a petition by a mother whose 18-year-old son from the United Kingdom was admitted to a private hospital here for isolation after testing positive for the virus upon his arrival, also asked the Delhi government why the genome sequencing report of the patient -- who was stated to be positive for the omicron variant-- cannot be shared with him.

The judge noted that during the pendency of the petition, the petitioner's son tested negative and was discharged from Fortis Hospital.

The petitioner told the court although her son was now with her, several other patients were being held up in various health facilities for days as the hospitals were not conducting COVID-19 re-tests periodically.

It was also contended that the mother has the "right to know" and should thus be given the genome sequencing report of her son.

"It is expected that in case no guidelines are issued by the Union of India, the Delhi government will expeditiously consider the matter so that patients, like the petitioner's son, do not suffer. Delhi gov-

ernment will also inform why the genome test report can't be made available," the judge ordered.

The petitioner, represented by lawyer Vikram Hegde, had moved the court last month seeking to know the outcome of the genome sequencing test carried on her son.

The counsel for the hospital stated that while the COVID-19 test report has been given to the patient, the genome sequencing report, which disclosed that the presence of omicron variant, was not given to him as the same was only with the government authorities.

"We don't have a copy of the genome report. We get an excel sheet (from the authorities)," said counsel Arjun Dewan, appearing for Fortis.

In response to the petitioner's assertion that the hospital was not conducting any re-test upon her son when he was admitted, the lawyer said that the hospital administration was only following the Delhi government directive that international travellers who test positive for the virus have to be re-tested on the tenth day of the first test or after three days of being asymptomatic, whichever is later. Delhi government counsel Arun Panwar said the directive was in line with the guidelines issued by the Centre and sought time to seek instructions.

Central government counsel Bharati Raju stated that there was no ban on repeat RT-PCR in their guidelines. **PTI**

City Govt to install telemetry devices on oxygen tanks to monitor oxygen supply

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In order to ensure smooth running and real-time monitoring of oxygen supply in the national capital, Delhi Government has started installing telemetry devices on oxygen tanks of government and private hospitals.

The Kejriwal government has issued an action plan under which telemetry devices will be installed in the oxygen tanks of 53 big government and private hospitals of Delhi.

"Real-time oxygen stock monitoring will be done through these telemetry devices installed in tanks that will help in supplying oxygen as per the need and ensure transparency," the health ministry said in a statement.

The decision was taken after experiencing a sudden shortage of oxygen in hospitals across the country last year and many hospitals started sounding the emergency alarm of running out of oxygen. The massive case load registered last year coupled with high death rate, had left the authorities in lurch. "At that time, the process of allocation of oxygen was being controlled by the central government, due to which it became very difficult to arrange oxygen for all the states," it said.

"The Kejriwal government has decided to install 100 remote telemetry devices in Liquid Medical Oxygen Storage Tanks in 53

major hospitals of Delhi so that real-time monitoring can be done centrally through the Delhi government's COVID War Room. These 100 oxygen storage tanks have a total capacity of 845.92 MT. With this device, the government will be able to ensure the information of oxygen availability on a real-time basis and oxygen will be delivered on time to the needy hospital without any hassle," it said.

With this facility, live monitoring of oxygen levels will be done through the Delhi Government COVID war room, it said, adding that this will help in monitoring how much oxygen is available in which hospital so that oxygen can be delivered to the needy hospital in time in case of emergency.

"The telemetry device will help in transmitting the live information of the amount of oxygen present in each liquid medical oxygen tank to the war room of the Delhi government. This will help in finding out how much oxygen is left in which hospital so that oxygen can be delivered to that hospital in time," it added.

Liquid Medical Oxygen is nothing but high purity oxygen which is used for medical treatment. The medical oxygen is stored in large tankers outside hospitals and delivered to patients through pipelines or through oxygen cylinders when needed. Telemetry devices are installed in these liquid medical oxygen tanks so that they can be monitored on a real-time basis.

Staffers vaccinated with at least 1 dose allowed to enter campus: Jamia



New Delhi: Jamia Millia Islamia has directed that only those employees who have received at least one dose of the anti-coronavirus vaccine will be allowed entry in their offices and departments, in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the campus.

In an order issued on December 31, the university said action will be taken against those employees who have not even taken a single dose of vaccine and they shall not be allowed entry in their offices. "The period of absence from duties of such employees shall be treated as 'On Leave' till the administration of the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine," the order stated.

The order said the administration of the first dose of the vaccine/complete vaccination will be verified by the department concerned through the Arogya Setu app or through the vaccination certificate produced by the employee concerned. **PTI**

Wedding industry cites losses, urges Kejriwal to ease Covid protocol

New Delhi: The city's wedding industry has urged Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to ease covid protocols imposed on wedding-gatherings in view of rising Covid cases.

Amid the peak season of weddings, the industry body called for a meeting with the government suggesting measures it could follow during gatherings.

The industry body wrote the government a letter saying 99 per cent weddings are getting postponed or cancelled due to capping of guests to 20 people.

Citing other industries which are allowed to function with 50 per cent capacity, such as hotels, it said no such provisions have been made for the wedding industry.

The abrupt shutdown without any fall back plan in place for them have made the industry suffer major losses, it said.

In its letter, the body suggested a few measures it could follow as COVID protocol.

It said all guests at the time of entry could be made to submit double vaccine certificate and go through temperature check before entering the venue.

It said entry will not be permitted without mask.

For those part of the wedding team, the industry said it will be subjected to same rules and a few more. It recommended submitting an RTPCR test report (48 hours) by the organisers of



their entire team to the respective District Collector office.

It also recommended sanitising of the venue twice a day.

The wedding industry in its letter urged the Delhi Government to allow them to host events with space of four square feet/person or with capacity of 200 people.

Delhi reported three Covid fatalities on Tuesday, its most in one day after over four months, while logging 5,481 fresh cases, the highest since May 16.

Delhi Teachers University Bill passed in Assembly

New Delhi: The Delhi Assembly on Tuesday passed a Bill for setting up a world-class teachers' training university that would offer programmes such as BA-BEd and BSc-BEd. The Delhi Teachers' University Bill was introduced in the House on Monday by Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia who also holds the education portfolio.

During a discussion on the Bill, he said the university will set a benchmark in teachers' training and enhance the quality of education.

Taking a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said the Sports University unveiled in Meerut copied the model of the one announced in Delhi.

"I felt very happy when the prime minister said students of the Sports University will gain degrees by excelling in sports and winning medals. This is exactly what we aimed and said while establishing a Sports University here in Delhi," Sisodia said in the House.

The Delhi Teachers' University will be spread over 12 acres of land in Bakkarwala village. It will have lecture halls, digital labs and a library with world-class facilities for 5000 students.

Sisodia had on January 1 visited the under-construction campus of the university in Bakkarwala and asked officials to expedite the construction work so that the session could be started at the earliest.

The university will offer teacher education programmes such as BA-BEd and BSc-BEd to create a new generation of teachers. Students of the university will collaborate with Delhi government schools for the duration of their courses and get hands-on experience with a focus on research.

Participating in the discussion on the Bill, AAP MLA Atishi said the Delhi government has done remarkable work in the field of education and teachers training.

It not only improved school infrastructure and education standards but also invested in the training of teachers, she said.

"If we want to invest in teachers then we will have to invest in their training. The Delhi government increased the budget of teachers training from Rs 10 crore to Rs 100 crore. Teachers and principals of government schools were sent to best institutions such as IIMs in India and abroad for training purposes by the AAP government," Atishi said in the House. **PTI**

DTCP demolish illegal structures in Gurugram

Gurugram: A team of the District Town and Country Planning (DTCP) department conducted a demolition drive in Gurugram against the illegal constructions on Tuesday.

DTP R.S. Bath along with PA Satinder Kumar and JE Anand carried out a demolition drive in village Bhaorakalan, Pataudi in Gurugram.

During the drive, 4 unauthorised colonies in approximately 10 acres were demolished with the help of earthmovers. Hundreds of policemen were present at the spot to deal with any untoward incident.

"All four colonies were at initial stages and demarcation of plots by way of DPCs, boundary walls was being done. A total of 10 under construction structures, dealer office was demolished and approximately 50 DPCs, sewer line and road network was demolished," Bath said.

The officials assume that the road network width and the sizes of plots it appeared that the colony was intended to be used for small plots.

"We appeal to the people not to invest their hard-earned money in such illegal colonies. The department will also ensure strict action against developers," Bath added.

G'gram liquor shops want closure timing to be extended after restrictions

Gurugram: The Haryana Government has imposed Covid restrictions in Gurugram for closure timings from 5 pm to 5 am on the market, malls, shops, liquor vends and others.

More than 50 liquor contractors from the East/West zone protested at the office of the District Excise Commissioner in Gurugram on Tuesday and tender a memorandum to the Commissioner and urged to extend their liquor shop closure timing at present from 5 pm to 11 pm and if not so they demanded a rebate in the license fee.

"The government has imposed timing restrictions due to covid-19, however, we are not against the government order but our 90% businesses have been hampered due to liquor shops closure timing till 5 pm. Maximum people used to buy liquor during the evening hours and if our shops will be closed at 5 pm how our business will run as we are paying a hefty licence fee to the government,"

Rohit Yadav, a liquor contractor said.

The contractors said while the bar and restaurant can operate till 11 pm with 50% occupancy but the closure of liquor vends at 5 pm makes no sense. Currently the liquor vends open timing is 9 am to 5 pm.

"We just urge before the commissioner to extend our timing from current 5 pm to 11 pm so that we can run our business. With this restriction, our business has been drastically hampered and if they will not rebate us we have no option but to close our establishment or in future, we will decide our future course of action. We are already following all covid restrictions," Vikram Yadav, another liquor contractor said.

An official of the excise department requesting anonymity said they have received a memorandum given by the liquor contractor they will inform the government over the issue and necessary help will be provided to them.

Over 9,600 dengue cases reported in 2021: Report

New Delhi: Over 9,600 people had been diagnosed with dengue in the national capital last year, which was the highest reported count of cases of the vector-borne disease here since 2015, according to a civic report released on Tuesday.

Twenty-three persons, including several minors and an eight-month-old boy, had succumbed to dengue in the last dengue season.

After showing a spike in cases in the past many weeks, only 68 fresh cases have been logged in the last one week, and no new cases of death have been reported.

According to the civic body's report on vector-borne diseases released on Tuesday, a total of 9,613 dengue cases and 23 deaths were recorded till December 31. Till December 25, the tally had stood at

9,545.

A total 1,337 cases were recorded in December, while November logged 6,739 cases, the highest for that month in at least the last six years. In the previous years, the total dengue cases reported were 4,431 (2016), 4,726 (2017), 2,798 (2018), 2,036 (2019) and 1,072 (2020), according to the report.

In 2015, the city had witnessed a massive outbreak of dengue with the number of cases crossing 10,600 in October itself, making it the worst outbreak of the vector-borne disease in the national capital since 1996.

The number of dengue fatalities this year is the highest in the national capital since 2016, when the officially reported death count was 10. The national capital recorded two deaths due to dengue in 2019, four in 2018, and 10 each in 2017 and 2016.

The number of deaths due to dengue in years preceding 2020, had stood at -- two (in 2019); four (2018); 10 (2017); and 10 (2016), according to the official tally maintained by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC).

On November 17, the city had recorded a total of 5,277 dengue cases, making it the highest number of cases of the vector-borne disease recorded in the national capital in a year since 2015. A total of 1,072 cases and one death, were logged in the entire year in 2020, according to the report released by the SDMC, the nodal agency for tabulating data on vector-borne diseases in the city.

The 6,739 cases reported in November, is by far the highest number of cases recorded in a month this year. **PTI**

Man held for cheating 150 people on pretext of sending them abroad

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested a 25-year-old man for allegedly cheating over 150 people on the pretext of sending them abroad on work visas.

According to Priyanka Kashyap, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), east district, police noticed some suspicious activities at Focus Travels running at Laxmi Nagar.

The accused has been identified as Mohammad Mohsin alias Parvez Ahmad (25), a resident of Muradabad in Uttar Pradesh.

"Later, it was found that a syndicate was running there which was involved in cheating people on the pretext of sending them abroad on work visas. Two persons -- Parvej Ahmad and Vishal Choudhary -- were running the office. The office was found locked for two to three days and some persons were wandering near the premises," said the DCP.

"Ahmad and Choudhary took Rs 22,000 from each of them for sending them to New Zealand, Kuwait and other countries of Middle East on work visa. Now they were not available in their office, but demanding more money to return their passports," said the DCP.

"During investigation, Ahmad was located in Delhi on Friday and was arrested from near Laxmi Nagar metro station. Ahmad disclosed his real name as Mohammad Mohsin and his associate's name as Mohammad Farhad (Vishal Choudhary)," said the DCP.

"He told police that he and his associate have



been running a travel agency called Focus Travels. They have their agents in various states who used to induce people to send them abroad on work visas, the DCP said.

The agents used to send such people to the Laxmi Nagar office. The accused used to collect the original passports of the victims and charge Rs 22,000 to 35,000 from each person. They had planned to close their office as they have already cheated more than 150 people, she said.

Mohsin worked as electrician in Zakir Nagar in Delhi where he came in contact with Farhad who led him in the crime, police said, adding that 101 passports, seven fake air tickets etc. were recovered from his possession. Investigation is on to nab the co-accused.

Mercury rises in Capital, minimum temperature 8.5 degrees Celsius

New Delhi: The mercury rose by a few notches in Delhi on Tuesday as the minimum temperature was recorded at 8.5 degrees Celsius, a notch above normal, officials said.

On Monday, the minimum temperature was 5.4 degrees Celsius, two notches below the season's average, while the maximum temperature was 21.5 degrees Celsius, two degrees above normal.

The maximum temperature on Tuesday was recorded at 23.2 degrees Celsius, four notches above normal, the India Meteorological Department said. The relative humidity level was 95 per cent in the morning. The minimum and maximum temperatures on Wednesday are likely to settle around 9 degrees Celsius and 20 degrees Celsius, respectively. The air

quality in Delhi was recorded in the 'very poor' category on Tuesday. The air quality index (AQI) was recorded at 360 around 8.45 pm, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'. **PTI**

Omicron infects upper respiratory tract: WHO

Results in milder symptoms than previous strains

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More evidence is emerging that the Omicron coronavirus variant is affecting the upper respiratory tract, which results in milder symptoms than previous strains, a World Health Organization (WHO) official said on Tuesday.

“We are seeing more and more studies pointing out that Omicron is infecting the upper part of the body. Unlike the other ones, that could cause severe pneumonia,” WHO Incident Manager Abdi Mahamud said, noting that it could be “good news”.

However, he added Omicron’s high transmissibility means it will become dominant within weeks in many places, posing a threat in countries where a high portion of the population remains unvaccinated.

His remarks on the reduced risks of severe disease chime with other data including a study from South Africa



Staffers arrange beds as part of preparations for the third wave of Covid-19, in Coimbatore, on Tuesday

PTI

which was one of the first countries where Omicron was detected.

While hailing the potentially “good news”, Mahamud stressed that Omicron’s high transmissibility means it will become dominant within weeks in many places - thus posing a

threat in countries where a high portion of the population remains unvaccinated.

His remarks on the reduced risks of severe disease chime with other data, including a recent study from South Africa.

However, Mahamud also

sounded a note of caution, calling the country an “outlier” since it has a young population among other factors.

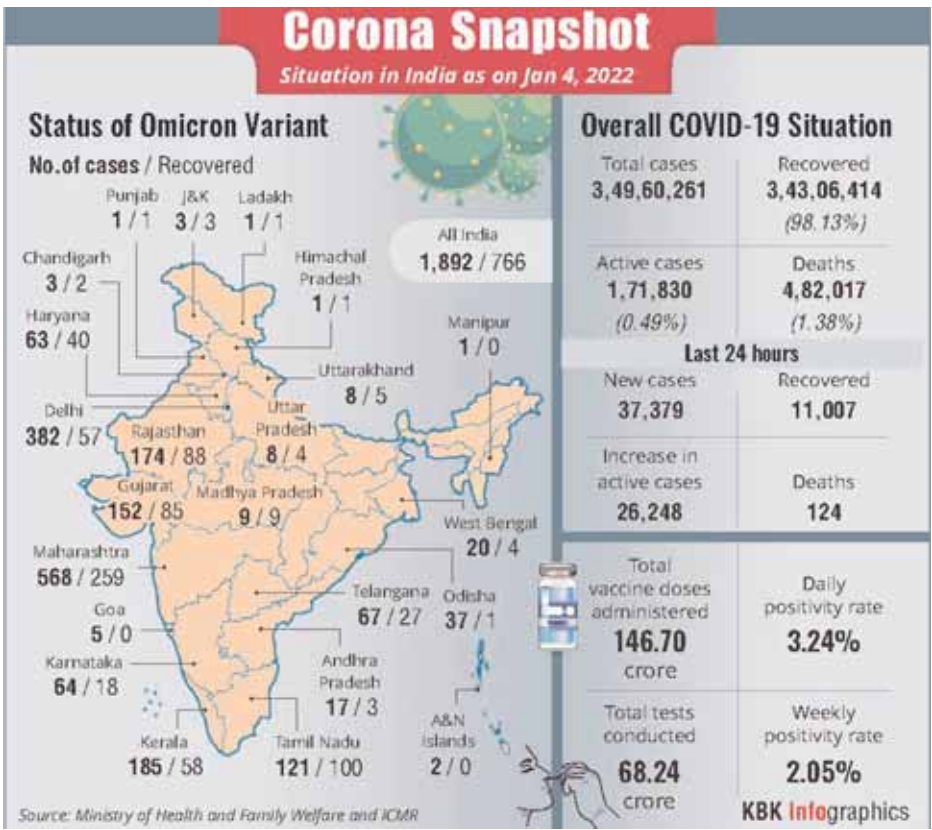
Asked about whether an Omicron-specific vaccine was needed, Mahamud said it was too early to say but noted the decision required global coor-

dination and should not be left to the commercial sector to decide alone.

A recent study, which is yet to be peer reviewed, showed that when compared with both Delta and the original coronavirus, the Omicron variant was quicker at getting into the upper airways and lungs, but much slower at infiltrating the lung tissue itself.

A combined United States and Japanese study — still under peer review — found that rodents that were infected with Omicron had less lung damage, lost less weight and were less likely to die than those infected with Delta.

Meanwhile, a team studying the Omicron variant in Glasgow believe this variant is unable to infect the lung cells as much, because an essential protein that usually helped previous SARS-COV-2 variants to gain entry into the lung cells bound less strongly to Omicron.



Covid antiviral 5-day course of pill priced at ₹1,399 to ₹3,000

New Delhi: Amid rising cases of new Covid variant Omicron in the country, about a dozen of pharma firms, including Torrent, Cipla, Sun Pharma, Dr Reddy’s, Natco, Mylan, and Hetero, are all set to launch Covid antiviral drug Molnupiravir with a price range between ₹1,399 and ₹3,000 for a five-day course for mild to moderate infection.

An expert panel of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation had last week approved Molnupiravir for restricted use in emergency situations. It is an antiviral medication that inhibits the replication of certain RNA viruses. It is used to treat Covid-19 in those infected by SARS-CoV-2.

The recommended dose of Molnupiravir 800 mg is twice a

day for five days. A patient needs to take 40 capsules containing 200 mg of medication. Molnupiravir, developed by MSD and Ridgeback Biotherapeutics, is also the first oral anti-Covid pill approved by UK’s drug regulator. The US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) has also cleared Molnupiravir for the treatment of mild-to-moderate Covid-19 in adults, and for those who are at a high risk to severe disease.

Siources said Cipla, Sun Pharma, and Dr Reddy’s Laboratories are expected to release Molnupiravir capsules in the coming weeks. Dr. Reddy’s Laboratories will launch Molnupiravir capsules 200mg under brand name Molflu at Rs 35 per capsule. 10 capsules contained per strip, and the total

course of 40 capsules over 5 days will cost Rs 1,400, said a representative from the pharma company. Mankind Pharma plans to launch Molnupiravir at Rs 35 per capsule by next week and the full treatment of Molulife (brand name) will cost Rs 1,400 while Cipla intends to market Molnupiravir under the Cipmolnu brand name. Cipmolnu 200mg capsules will be available in leading pharmacies and Covid treatment centres across the country in the near future.

Majority of companies had entered into a non-exclusive voluntary licencing agreement with Merck Sharpe Dohme to manufacture and supply Molnupiravir in India and over 100 other low and middle-income countries. **PNS**

Omicron hits doctors, health care

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reports of doctors and health care being stung by the highly transmissible Omicron and Covid-19 have started emerging from all across the country, including the national Capital, in what could be called a worrying development that might stress the health system in the near future.

This is also likely to add anxiety among the doctors, say health experts as they called for interventions that emphasise physicians’ ability to work safely and efficiently in providing care to the patients.

However, so far most of the doctors that have been found positive have shown mild symptoms unlike in the second wave of Covid-19 when delta virus had taken lives of at least 798 doctors in the country of which maximum 128 doctors



lost their lives in Delhi, followed by Bihar at 115.

“This time symptoms are mostly minor and no hospitalization is required for any case. Most of the doctors who have reported positive for Covid are all isolating themselves,” said an official from the Union Health Ministry, adding that most of them have received two doses of Covid-19 vaccines.

In Delhi, at least a total 180 doctors from six big hospitals have tested positive amid a steep rise in Covid infections. To begin with, in the country’s premier health institution All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, at least 50 doctors have gone into isolation after some tested positive while others showed symptoms of Covid-19. The hospital has already canceled the doctors’ winter vacation amid rising Covid cases. In a notice issued on Monday, the AIIMS Delhi directed all fac-

ulty members to join back their duty with immediate effect at the hospital.

Apart from AIIMS, more than 23 doctors at the Safdarjung Hospital, also in the national capital, have also tested positive for the coronavirus over the past one week.

“These are not Omicron cases. Symptoms are mostly minor and no hospitalization is required for any case. They are all isolating themselves,” said a doctor from Ram Manohar Hospital, which caters to a large number of patients particularly from poor strata. At Least 25 medicos are in isolation at the RML. There are reports of doctors from Maulana Azad Medical College and Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital showing Covid like symptoms.

In Punjab’s Patiala, a total of 80 people, including doctors, students and support staff, of the Government Rajindra

Hospital and Medical College have tested positive for the virus as the district is turning out to be the worst-hit region in terms of a rising number of coronavirus cases.

District Epidemiologist Dr Sumet Singh said 22 resident doctors, 34 medical students, nine faculty members and 15 support and paramedical staff at the Government Rajindra Hospital and Medical College have tested positive for Covid-19.

Similarly, in Bihar, ten medical staff of the Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (IGIMS) Patna and four medical staff of Jayprabha Medanta hospital have been found to be corona positive. So were the 96 junior doctors of Nalanda Medical College and Hospital (NMCCH) in the North State.

In Pune, at least 49 female MBBS students and two staff members from the Government Medical College at Miraj in Sangli district have tested positive for coronavirus. “All students are largely asymptomatic and stable. As a precaution they have been admitted to the hospital attached to the college. The infection was reported in one section of the hostel as students used to gather for meals in the mess,” said Dean Dr Sudhir Nanandkar.

In West Bengal, around 35 doctors have been infected at

So far most of the doctors that have been found positive have shown mild symptoms unlike in the second wave of Covid-19 when delta virus had taken lives of at least 798 doctors in the country of which maximum 128 doctors lost their lives in Delhi, followed by Bihar at 115

Dr R Ahmed Dental College and Hospital while 36 doctors have tested positive for Covid at the Chittaranjan Seva Sadan Hospital. Regional Institute of Ophthalmology (RIO), the only state run eye hospital has 15 doctors down with Covid, as per reports.

“There is a need to establish mechanisms to reduce the risks of stress and anxiety among physicians besides ensuring their health, safety and wellbeing. Mental health coping interventions through counseling should be based on COVID-19 protocol guidelines,” said Dr JS Titaiyal, Professor of Ophthalmology and Chief of RP Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, AIIMS, Delhi.

Covid-19 has exposed health workers and their families to unprecedented levels of risk. Although not representative, data from many countries across WHO regions indicate that COVID-19 infections among health workers are far greater than those in the general population, says the WHO.

Central Govt to undertake cultural survey under ‘Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar’



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre is all set to undertake the country’s first ever cultural survey of India’s villages christened as ‘Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar’ through a mobile application.

The Ministry of Culture has partnered with the Common Services Centres (CSC), under the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MEITY), in this regard.

The survey seeks to document the cultural identity at the village level by involving citizens to share what makes their village, block, or district unique. The entire exercise is expected to be completed by mid-2022.

Under the survey, a CSC Village Level Entrepreneur called VLEs will conduct meetings with citizens at the villages and then upload interesting facts about their village, its places of interest, customs and traditions, famous personalities, festivals and beliefs, art and culture, etc., on to the application. VLEs will also upload photos and videos regarding these aspects of the application. Speaking about the survey,

Dr. Dinesh Tyagi, Managing Director, CSC, said: “India has a unique cultural identity rooted in its villages. No one can understand it better than the CSC VLEs who are embedded in the community they serve. This survey builds upon a successful track record of CSCs engaging on official enumerations like the 7th Economic Census and some other surveys done for the state governments.”

Tyagi added “the availability of digital technology and tools has enabled such a unique and massive survey to be conducted at the grassroots. CSC, with its skilled team of digital entrepreneurs, will assist the Government in successfully mapping the cultural identity of India.”

As per the agreement signed between the two entities, CSC will develop a mobile application and train the VLEs in conducting the survey. Over 4 lakh Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs), managing the CSCs across the country, will conduct the survey in 6.38 lakh villages and upload the details on to the application.

ED attaches assets worth ₹3.36 cr of Panna Lal Mahto

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached the assets worth ₹3.36 crore belonging to Panna Lal Mahto, alias Ganjhu, and others under the provision of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) related to the offences of human trafficking.

The attached properties include five land parcels in Argora, Ranchi, four land parcels in Khunti district, cash deposits of Rs 17.71 lakh in various bank accounts and one Toyota Fortuner vehicle, the

ED said in a statement.

The ED initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of FIRs and chargesheet registered by Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) District-Khunti Jharkhand against Panna Lal Mahto and his accomplices.

Further, the FIR bearing No. 07/19 dated July 19, 2019 of AHTU, Khunti, Jharkhand was taken over by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), Ranchi which also filed chargesheet under the sections of Indian Penal Code, Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment

and Conditions of Services) Act, 1979 and Juvenile Justice (Care and protection) Act, 2015.

“During investigation under PMLA, it was revealed that Panna Lal Mahto and his accomplices were running Human Trafficking racket in the guise of several Placement Agencies in Delhi which used to do illicit trade of poor and innocent persons (including minors) from different districts of Jharkhand on the pretext of providing them jobs in Delhi and further trafficked them to different states as domestic servant and other purposes, who were never paid

actual wages or the wages as promised to them,” it said.

These placement agencies were running without obtaining license under the Delhi Private Placement Agencies (Regulation) Order, 2014 or the labourers (victims) were registered under the provisions of The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979.

Mahto and his accomplices used to ill-treat the victims and did not allow them to return to their respective native village and forced them to work against their desire. By committing the scheduled offence under the

PMLA, Panna Lal Mahto in connivance with others had trafficked about 5,000 persons through their well-organized placement agency racket in Delhi as he had himself admitted in his statement given to the ED that he had acquired assets to the extent of Rs 4.5-5 crore.

Investigation under PMLA, 2002 revealed that Panna Lal Mahto alias Ganjhu has acquired various immovable and movable properties to the tune of Rs 3.36 crore, in his name and in the name of his wife Sunita Devi and projected them as untainted properties, it added.

PM’s silence on China building bridge on Pangong deafening, says Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress continued to mount pressure on Centre over its handling over the border issues related to China. Former party president Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday questioned the silence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi over reports of China constructing a bridge on the Pangong Tso Lake in Ladakh near the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

“PM’s silence is deafening. Our land, our people, our borders deserve better,” Rahul Gandhi said on Twitter.

Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, also targeted the Narendra Modi Government by alleging that it is busy in elections when the ‘enemy’ is at India’s gate. “China is busy building a bridge on Pangong Tso to make it easier to deploy troops. Meanwhile, Beijing Janata Party leaders led by PM



(Prime Minister) & HM (Home Minister) are busy in election rallies. Enemy is at our gates. PM Modi is taking a sista. One has to open their eyes to show the promised Lal Aankh!” tweeted Kharge. Congress and Rahul Gandhi have been critical of the Government’s handling of the border situation with China in



eastern Ladakh and questioned the Government over media reports that the Chinese troops had unfurled the Chinese flag at the Galwan Valley.

“How dare China raise the Chinese flag over Galwan valley, where only the Indian Tricolour can be flown, unfurled proudly. It is a bounden duty of our government and the Prime Minister to ensure that Chinese transgression into India’s territories is defeated decisively,” Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala had said.

NEET-PG admission: SC agrees to list plea for hearing today

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has agreed to hear on Wednesday a plea related to the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) quota in NEET-PG admissions, after the Centre sought urgent hearing in the matter. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana and justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who appeared for the Centre, that the matter pertains to admissions to post-graduate medical courses and that students have been facing difficulties.

“It concerns EWS of the society. There’s a statement made by us which prevents further counselling of resident doctors,” the law officer submitted, seeking urgent hearing of the matter. “Resident doctors are protesting and their concerns are genuine.”

The CJI said, “The problem is it is a three-judge bench matter, this entire week is a mis-



cellaneous week. Let me see if tomorrow, some judge is available, we will constitute a bench. Let me see. If possible, I will constitute a three-judge bench or it will go before a Division bench tomorrow.”

The CJI said the first week after the winter vacation is the miscellaneous week and hence, no three judge bench was available except the one led by him.

On Monday, a bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud had told the Centre that a bench of requisite strength can be set up by the CJI as the EWS quota matter is being heard by a three-judge bench. **PTI**

Banned CPI (Maoist) leader’s assets attached by ED

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached assets worth Rs 27.87 lakh belonging to the family members and associates of Dilip Sahni, alias Dilip Kumar Sahni, alias Nitesh of Hajipur, Vaishali, Bihar under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Sahni is an active member of the banned CPI (Maoist).

Properties attached are in the form of three land parcels, LIC policies, fixed deposits; and balance held in bank and a motor cycle, all amounting to Rs 27.87 lakh, the ED said in a statement.

The ED had initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of 12 FIRs lodged in various police stations of Bihar, against Sahni.

Scrutiny of the FIRs/chargesheets revealed that he is a habitual offender and is accused of the several offences under Indian Penal Code, Arms Act, Explosive Substances Act and unlawful activities for the crime related to murder, attempt to murder, criminal conspiracy, use of arms and ammunition in Bihar.

Investigation under PMLA revealed that the accused has invested the proceeds of crime, for acquiring various immovable properties and deposits with bank in the name of his family members so as to project them as untainted.

Further investigation in this matter is under progress, it added.

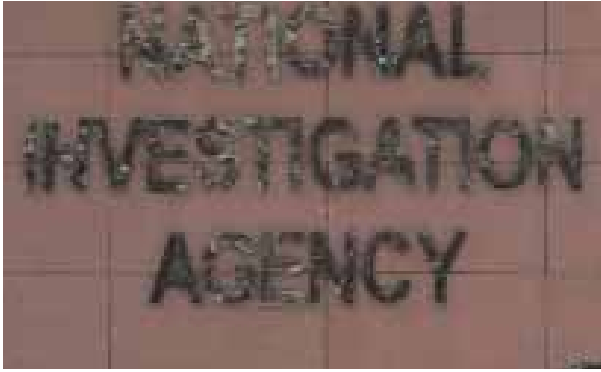
M'lore woman's arrest for ISIS links doesn't shock parents

Her love marriage to extremist sealed her fate: Parents

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Monday's arrest of Mariyam from Ullal in Mangalore by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for her alleged links with Islamic State might have sent shock waves across the society but her parents say that they were expecting it the day she overruled them and got married with Anas Abdul Rehman much against their wish.

Mariyam belonged to an affluent family in Coorg and her name was Deepthi Marla. "She was studying dental science in a Bangalore college when she fell in love with Anas Abdul Rehman, son of late B M Idinabba, former MLA of the Congress from Ullal constituency. All of us had tried to dissuade her from the relationship as we were aware of the links the Idinabba family had with extremist outfits.



But she blatantly refused to listen to our pleas and walked away with Anas, got converted to Islam and changed her name to Mariyam," said a close relation of her household who did not want to be named.

O Sruthi, a post graduate in English literature, who got converted to Islam and was brought back to her original religion by the timely intervention of Arsha Vidya Samaj in Kerala told The Pioneer that there were thousands of Deepthi Marlas from northern Kerala and southern Karnataka

who have fallen victims to the offers and promises made by missionaries only to be find themselves as sex slaves in war-torn West Asian countries.

According to sources in NIA, Mariyam and the Idinabba family were under observation since August 2021 for their alleged ties with Mohammed Ameen alias Abu Yahya, an IS operative.

The NIA team took Mariyam by a special flight to New Delhi where she would be interrogated about her links with extremists from Jammu and Kashmir.

Cordelia with Covid patients aboard back to Mumbai

All 63 patients transported to Covid care centre: BMC

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Not wanting to take any chances, teams of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the Mumbai police took charge of all the passengers on board Cordelia Cruise – including 66 passengers who have tested positive for Covid-19, as the luxury ship returned and anchored at a passenger terminal in south Mumbai on Tuesday evening.

The BMC health officials, accompanied by a team of Mumbai police personnel, were waiting at the passenger terminal at Ballard Pier in south Mumbai with five 15 seat-seat ambulances, when the luxury ship arrived there at 6.30 pm from Goa. Shortly afterwards, the BMC officials transported 66 infected passengers through the green gate on board Cordelia Cruise to Covid care



A man wearing a face mask walks past the Cordelia cruise ship in Mumbai on Tuesday

AP

centre for treatment. "The positive patients have been given the option of staying in hotels at their expense," a senior BMC official said.

More than 1,900 passengers, who had gone on a New Year revelry trip, have been asked to stay back on board the luxury ship, till they undergo RTPC tests and those who test positive will be quarantined either at them to institutional quarantine centre at the Richardson & Cruddas at

Mazagaon in south Mumbai or asked to isolate themselves in the city hotels at their expense.

"The RTPCR testing will be done at laboratories. The RTPCR reports are expected tomorrow by 9 am. It is only after the test reports are received that the remaining passengers will be allowed to disembark from the ship. Those who test negative people will be stamped for 7 days home isolation. The passengers who test positive will either be

sent to institutional quarantine or be asked to stay in isolation in paid hotels," the BMC official said.

Meanwhile, the company operating the cruise M/s Waterways Leisure Tourism Pvt Ltd claimed that several of the guests might have been infected before they boarded the ship for a New Year holiday cruise, while one of their crew members tested positive on Sunday.

In a detailed statement, Waterways Leisure Tourism Pvt. Ltd. CEO and President Jurgen Bailom said that after the sole infected crew member displayed mild symptoms, he was immediately isolated and then all the other crew and guests had to undergo Covid tests again.

"...the guests who have tested positive as of this morning (Jan. 4) were already infected with the virus prior to boarding. However their tests showed otherwise, hence they were permitted on board," Bailom said.

Bailom said that there are several similar incidents on flights and trains which were 'unfortunate and unexpected' despite everyone taking utmost

care, and the Cordelia Cruises' extreme pro-activeness in conducting the RTPCR tests.

Bailom said that his company was 'compliant' with all regulations of the Director-General of Shipping. "All crew members and guests have to compulsorily undergo a RT PCR test 48 hours prior to boarding the ship, even if they are fully vaccinated," he said.

This is the second occasion when Cordelia Cruise has hit the news headlines for the wrong reasons.

It may be recalled that on the night October 2, 2021, Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan, Arbaaz Merchant, Munmun Dhamecha and five others were initially detained on the night of October 2 and later arrested on October 3, after the NCB officials busted a rave party and seized 13 grams of cocaine, 5 grams of MD (Mephedrone), 21 grams of Charas, 22 pills of MDMA (Ecstasy) and Rs 1.33 lakh in cash from Goa-bound Cordelia Cruises' Empress ship, off the Mumbai coast. Subsequently, 12 more persons were arrested in connection with the mid-sea rave party.

BJP against empowerment of women, says Cong

Lucknow: Congress on Tuesday accused the BJP of mocking women after BJP president JP Nadda made a comment on its 'ladki hoon lad sakti hoon' campaign aimed at women empowerment.

"BJP President Nadda on Monday mocked a strong slogan like 'ladki hoon, lad sakti hoon' and the voice of women of Uttar Pradesh. This is not the voice of Congress but of every girl of Uttar Pradesh who wants to fight for her rights," Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete told media here.

"What is the problem of Naddaji and his party against the empowerment of women? Why are they so afraid of women power?" she asked. Congress coined the slogan ahead of the upcoming assembly election in Uttar Pradesh.

The party has also promised giving 40 per cent tickets to women. Shrinete accused the BJP of reducing women needs to gas cylinders one toilets.

PTI

Schools to remain shut for Class I-VIII till Jan 30 in Pune

Pune: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Tuesday said the administration has decided to shut schools for Classes 1 to 8 in Pune district till January 30 due to the rise in COVID-19 cases. Speaking to reporters after attending the review meeting of the COVID-19 situation, Pawar, who is also the guardian minister of the district, said teaching in online mode will continue.

The decision has come a day after the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation announced that schools for Classes 1 to 9 and 11 will remain shut in Mumbai till January 31. "In view of the rising cases of COVID-19, we have decided to shut schools in Pune district for Classes 1 to 8 till January 30," Pawar said, adding that online teaching will continue for these classes.

Pune district comprises Pune city, Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation area and Pune rural. The minister advised people to use three-ply or N95 masks, instead of cotton ones.

He further stated that directives have been given to local authorities to fine people found wandering without masks.

PTI



Children play with snow on the outskirts of Srinagar on Tuesday

Audit of GTA funds will be ordered soon: WB Guv

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Governor Jagdeep Bhandkhar on Tuesday mounted fresh attack on the Trinamool Congress Government, wondering why no audit had been conducted into the financial transactions of the Gorkhaland Territorial Authority and saying an audit would be ordered soon to ascertain the amount of "fraud perpetrated in handling of the funds."

The Governor said that the GTA was formed which "high hopes" and "hundreds of crores were sanctioned for the development of the area" but despite repeated reminders "no audit was conducted" for these many years the Governor said alleging it was clear that large amount of money had been "siphoned off from the GTA fund."

No one involved committing fraud with public money

would be spared ---howsoever powerful one was and which ever political party one went to for asylum, the Governor warned.

"I have been hearing since long time that an audit would be conducted into the GTA funds but nothing happened," he was quoted as saying. "But next time I will come to Darjeeling after getting the audit done". For this he would write to the Centre, The Governor said.

When asked to comment on the Governor's statements former Bengalminister and senior TMC leader Gautam Deb said that the State had never seen "such a politically biased Governor ... It seems that he is running a party office at the Governor's House ... he is making statements and acting on behalf of the people who have appointed him."

American virologist praises UP Govt's Covid management

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh government recently came in for praise from American virologist and immunologist Dr Robert Malone for its "miraculous" handling of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and for protecting the people of the state by ensuring prompt treatment.

During the December episode of 'Joe Rogan Experience' podcast, Dr Malone mentioned that Uttar Pradesh was able to take control of the pandemic by providing early treatment to coronavirus infected patients. Known for his pioneering work in mRNA technology, the virologist said, "They deployed early treatment as packages and managed the pandemic effectively despite being densely populated."

PNS

WB bans cocktail drugs to treat Covid patients amid no Centre's directive

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Even as number of corona cases increased drastically in Bengal, the State Government released a new protocol banning cocktail drugs to treat corona cases "in absence of any clear directive from the Centre," a senior State Health Department official said.

The State Government also decided vaccinates all the pilgrims bound for Ganga Sagar Islands for the holy dip. "There is no clear directive from the Centre on the use of cocktail drugs ... hence the Government has presently excluded it from the list of medicines to be used for the corona patients," the senior officialand a doctor said adding the revised protocol regarding when a patient will have to be hospitalized.

"If the patient sneezes more than 24 times per minute and one's saturation drops below 94 then only the doctors can consider hospitalization," the official said adding "from now on co-morbidity beyond-sixty age will not be the only condition for hospitalization."

The Government's revised guidelines came at a time when the coronagraph continued to climb drastically requiring the Kolkata and Howrah Municipal Corporations to mark 27 and 22 containment zones respectively.

For North and South 24 Parganas adjoining Kolkata the authorities marked 24 and 52 containment zones, Health Departmentsources said adding "this time round we are witnessing a large number of infections among the medical staff."

While more than 80 doctors and nurses were infected in Calcutta Medical Colleges the figure for NRS Medical College was 70 and for the Calcutta National Medical College it was 80 again.

North Bengal Medical College in Siliguri had 17 infected medical staff including 14 doctors. About 36 doctors and nurses were infected in State-runCittaranjan Seva Sadan and 24 had been infected in Dr R Ahmed DentalMedical College and Hospital, the only such government-owned facility in the State.

There was high infection rate in the police circle too with at leastsix Deputy Commissioners and two Joint Commissioners of policecontacting the disease. Lal Bazar police headquarters in Kolkata reported at least 50 cases of corona infection, sources said.

The total number of corona patients till Monday late evening was 6,128and the figure was expected to go further up on Tuesday sources said. Politicians like Babul Supriyo and his entire family were reported to be down with corona and were in home isolation.

Those taken vax 6 months ago must be allowed booster: Gehlot

Jaipur: Chief Minister Shri Ashok Gehlot said that in the form of Omicron variant, a new existential crisis has come before the country and the world. To protect mankind from this danger, it is necessary that it is more than 6 months after the second dose of vaccine, all such people should get booster dose as per need and children below 15 years of age should also be given free of cost at the earliest. The State Government will pressurize the Central Government to take an early decision in this regard, so that the people of the State can be saved from the danger of third wave. He directed that just as the State Government has made excellent management of vaccination so far with the cooperation of all sections, with the same spirit, 100 per cent vaccination of 15 to 18 years of age group should be ensured in the same spirit.

Gehlot was addressing the children and parents present in the inauguration program of free vaccination for the age group of 15 to 18 years at Government Adarsh Girls Higher Secondary School, Gangauri Bazar on Monday.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister encouraged 5 teenage girls who got the first dose of Covid and presented them chocolates on his behalf.

The Chief Minister said that the threat of Covid epidemic has shaken the world. After facing the first and second deadly wave, now a new threat has emerged in the form of Omicron variant.

In view of the rapidly spreading infection due to the Omicron variant, which has reached most countries of the world, the World Health Organization has warned of its taking the form of a tsunami. We have to understand the gravity of this menace and ensure 100% vaccination from adults to children.

Security forces neutralise two ultras in Kulgam

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

While the tourists camping in different parts of Kashmir valley were seen enjoying the fresh spell of snowfall at the picturesque ski resorts of Gulmarg, Pahalgam and other exotic locations it was business as usual for the men in uniform as they engaged two local terrorists in Okey village of Kulgam and later neutralised them during a brief encounter on Tuesday.

Around 42 flights from Srinagar Airport remained suspended due to inclement weather conditions. Snowfall was also recorded in the higher reaches of Doda, Kishtwar, Nathapoth and Trikuta hills of Jammu region.

In the plain areas of Jammu region, the Border Security Force further intensified its patrolling drills with the advent of the foggy weather conditions.

The foot soldiers have been deployed in different sectors to physically dominate the vulnerable pockets in order to prevent infiltration bids from across the International border in Pakistan.

During winter season, after the snowfall in the higher reaches block several mountain passes the terrorist handlers activate launching pads in the Jammu region to push in small groups of terrorists and consignments of arms and ammunition. Inspector General of BSF, Jammu frontier DK Boora Monday said deployment of troops and surveillance systems have been "strengthened" along the border with Pakistan amid intelligence inputs of heightened activity at terrorist launch pads on the other side ahead of Republic Day.

He said, the alertness of troops deployed on the border led to the seizure amid heightened terrorist activity on the Pakistani side, Boora said, adding that Pakistan continues to make attempts to push terrorists and smuggle arms and narcotics into Jammu and Kashmir.

In Srinagar a police spokesman said, based on a specific intelligence input a joint cordon and search operation was launched by Police, 9RR and 18Bn CRPF in village Okey area of Kulgam,

During the search operation, as the joint search party proceeded towards the suspected spot, the hiding terrorists fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which was retaliated effectively leading to an encounter.

In the ensuing encounter, two terrorists of proscribed terror outfit LeT (TRF) were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of the encounter. They have been identified as Amir Ahmad Wani resident of Alamgunj Shopian and Sameer Ahmad Khan resident of Tiken Pulwama.

As per police records, the killed terrorist Amir Ahmad was a categorized terrorist linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT (TRF), however the other killed terrorist joined terror folds recently. Both the killed terrorists were part of a group involved in several terror crime cases.

Incriminating materials arms & ammunition including 01 AK-47, 01 pistol were recovered from their possession, police spokesman added.

Mumbai logs over 10K Covid cases Accounts for 40 of 75 Omicron cases in Maha

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Covid-19 situation worsened in Mumbai on Tuesday, as a staggering 10,860 new positive cases were reported from various parts of the metropolis.

The 10,860 Covid-19 positive cases detected in Mumbai were among a total of 18,466 new cases reported from various parts of the State. With the 18,466 fresh cases, the total number of Covid-19 cases went up from 67,12,028 cases to 67,30,494. Simultaneously, 75 Omicron cases were reported from various parts of the state taking the total number of Omicron cases detected in the state to 653.

Of the 75 Omicron cases, Mumbai accounted for a maximum of 40 cases, followed by nine cases in Thane, eight cases in Pune, five cases in Panvel, three cases each from Kolhapur and Nagpur, twom cases from Pimpri-Chinchwad and one case each from Bhiwandi-Nizampur, Ulhasnagar, Satara, Amravati and Navi Mumbai.

As 4,588 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people



ple discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year increased from 65,14,358 cases to 65,18,916. The recovery rate in the state dropped from 97.05 per cent to 96.86 per cent.

The number of "active cases" in the state increased from 52,422 cases to 63,308. The fatality rate in the state stood static at 2.1 per cent.

Mumbai accounted for a maximum of 47,476 active cases, while there were 7953 active cases in Thane. There were 4202 active cases in Pune, followed by Palghar (1605), Raigad (1235), Nashik (998), Nagpur (526), and Satara (386) and Ahmednagar (380).

Of the 6,95,09,260 +samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 67,30,494 have tested positive (9.68 per cent) for COVID-19 until Tuesday.

Currently, 3,98888,391 people are in home quarantine while 1,110 people are in institutional quarantine.

Meanwhile, the State recorded 75cases of Omicron, taking the total number of new Covid-19 variant cases to 578 cases. All patients have been reported by the National Institute of Virology (NIV).

The following is the break-up of a total 653 Omicron cases recorded in the state so far, Mumbai: 408, PMC-71, Pimpri-Chinchwad—38, Pune

rural --26, Thane MC- 22, Panvel --16, Nagpur--13, Navi Mumbai-10, Satara-8, Kalyan Dombivli --7 each, Osmanabad and Kolhapur -- 5 each, Vasai-Virar-4, Nanded, Bhiwandi Nizampur --3 each, Aurangabad, Buldhana, Mira-Bhyandar Sangli, Sangli --2 each, Latur, Ahmednagar, Akola and Raigad, Ulhasnagar and Amravati--1 each. Of the total cases 259 patients have been discharged after a negative RT-PCR test.

In a related development, the authorities said the total number of passengers who arrived at Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur airports since December 1 was 2,29,429 (32,402 from At-risk countries and rest 1,96,027 are from other countries), while passengers whose RT-PC tests have been done are 55,332 (33,402 are from high-risk countries and 21,930 are from other countries). Similarly, RT-PCR positive and samples sent for genomic sequencing was 563 (313are from at-risk countries and 250 are from other countries).

Additionally, field surveillance of all international passengers who have arrived since 1st November is underway.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Nonchalant

Amid signs of an impending wave, Govts need to scale up testing for the virus

Here we are, trying to handle Omicron, and the French have already discovered the latest, the B.1.640.2 variant, named IHU. Goes to show how unpredictable the virus is. One hopes studies indicating that Omicron is soft compared to previous variants are not making the States complacent. Fresh cases are on the rise in India and the positivity rate is touching or crossing 10 per cent. In Maharashtra, occupancy rates in hospitals are going up. These are clear signals of an impending wave of the Coronavirus pandemic and the States are still reluctant to impose severe restrictions on people's movement. Attempts at making people follow safety protocols have failed. Many still avoid wearing masks. People throng markets and places of worship. Imposing a night curfew is not a reassuring step. What is needed is restricting movement in the daytime without impacting economic activity. That can only be achieved by making work from home compulsory for all except the frontline workers and the manufacturing sector. The odd-even system in Delhi has reduced the crowds to some extent. It is time to be decisive; otherwise, all the planning done and infrastructure put in place for a new wave would go to waste. The Delhi Government, for instance, said it will declare a red alert if the positivity rate is over five per cent for two consecutive days. It has ranged between six and eight per cent in the last 48 hours, but the decision is still in abeyance.

Instead, some decisions have been taken which raise eyebrows. The Metro has been allowed to run at full capacity instead of 50 per cent to reduce passenger queues outside stations. You cannot 'uncrowd' the stations by crowding the trains.

Mumbai is facing the fresh wave heat, but the Government plans to wait for the daily caseload to top 20,000 before it imposes a lockdown. In their ways, Delhi and Mumbai are losing the initiative by their indecision. It is easy to understand why. They do not want a repeat of last year when the lockdown led to the migration of millions of workers and the unmanageable chaos it led to. There is also a consensus in the country, going by experience, that a lockdown that arrests economic activity will not be popular and should be the last resort. What the States ought to do apart from strict restrictions is ramp up testing because that data alone tells us when to introduce or lift containment restrictions. And that is the crucial area we are lacking in. On January 3, 11,54,302 samples were tested in the country; quite a low figure that says nothing about the depth and speed of spread. Daily testing dropped drastically since September, hovering between 9-12 lakh tests in the first week of December. Compare this with the Centre's target set last May — 4.4-5 million tests per day. During the second COVID-19 wave, 16.8 million tests were conducted every day on an average.



Camel riders pass through the shallow part of the Ganga at Vindhyachal dham in Mirzapur

Sick of it

Poll rallies and other public functions have led to politicians testing positive

As almost always, political leaders and sundry other public representatives have been totally negligent of and careless about following COVID-appropriate behaviour, with the express result that reports have now started trickling in of a number of them having contacted one or the other strain of the pernicious virus. Understandably, the rise in the number of such cases is especially remarkable in the States that are going to elections in the first quarter of this year, or of those leaders who have been out campaigning or routinely attending public gatherings. However, unfazed by the threat of COVID-19 and the fast-spreading Omicron variant in States like Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, the political parties in the fray continue to hold rallies. For its part, the Election Commission has said the parties want polls to be held amid strict COVID-19 safety guidelines. According to experts, the third wave of COVID-19 may have already started in India, spurred by Omicron. While the variant is dubbed less lethal in terms of its illness compared to Delta, it is still considered to be one of the most infectious variants the world has yet seen.

On Tuesday, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who has been campaigning for his Aam Aadmi Party in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Goa, conveyed that he has tested positive for the infection and has been isolated. During the devastating second wave of the pandemic in April 2021, Kejriwal along with his wife Sunita had tested positive for the virus. Later, BJP MP Manoj Tiwari made a similar announcement, saying he was displaying "mild symptoms" of the virus. The MP from Northeast Delhi could not attend his party's Rudrapur (Uttarakhand) campaigning on Monday as he wasn't "feeling well" since the night of January 2. In the recent days, the other leaders who tested positive include Union Minister for Heavy Industries Mahendra Nath Pandey, TMC leader Babul Supriyo, former Bihar CM Jitan Manjhi, Karnataka Education Minister BC Nagesh, 10 Ministers and 20 MLAs in Maharashtra. Needless to point out that each and every life, be it of the leaders or of common people, is far more important than the quest for staking claim to form a Government. Now the EC must take cognisance of such programmes and announce punitive measures against the violators, including the candidate, campaigners and the party concerned. It can't just look the other way.

Emphasis on offence & neglect of defence

Right through known history, greater attention and expenditure have been devoted to killing enemy soldiers than to protect one's own men

It is a military axiom that an offensive military operation generally costs thrice the blood, money and resources than a defensive one. Yet, conquerors — ambitious and impatient as they usually are — do not wait long enough for an adversary's provocation to attack. In the last century, Adolf Hitler was an outstanding example of not being patient enough to wait for the enemy to attack first. In the 19th century, Napoleon Bonaparte was a similar case. Napoleon and Hitler met with defeat; the latter also with death. In Hitler's case, a lady crystal-gazer had predicted that he had to fulfil his military ambitions by 1943. Thereafter, her crystal showed a dark curtain. Hitler too had declared on Radio Berlin that he would rather fight in his 40s than wait till his 50s.

Training and sustaining a soldier are expensive. Added to this expenditure is the humanitarian factor like the life of one's brethren who have volunteered to defend one's country. Incidents of our country's soldiers falling in action make most Indians grieve. Our latest experience has been the tragic death of Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat and 13 others in a helicopter crash. Emotion of this intensity might not be seen or felt if an Air Force plane crashes or a naval ship sinks; as did *INS Khukri* in the 1971 war.

Most countries term their functionaries in charge of the military forces as Ministers or Secretaries of Defence, although in a few nations they are known as Secretary of War; the United Kingdom in WWI, for instance. This might be because of the implicit embarrassment of a Minister being proudly called a warmonger. Yet, right through known history, greater attention and expenditure have been devoted to killing enemy soldiers than to protect one's own soldiers. The sword and the spear cost more than the shield. In the centuries gone by, there were no medics in the event of injuries to soldiers; nor was an ambulance available to salvage the wounded soldier. The *Stanford Encyclopedia* informs



us that the system of organised medics began in the 19th century during the Napoleonic Wars. For the animals — mainly horses — in Europe and also elephants and camels in India, there was never any medical facility until their deployment in war died out.

The advent of gunpowder and later the innovation of the field gun, a revolutionary weapon, were more damaging to the enemy, but of no protective utility to one's own soldiers. The musket was actively used in Spain in the Battle of Parma in 1521, with its design undergoing improvement to transform into the modern rifle, in which the cartridge travels in a groove. This was developed in the 19th century based on the mechanics conceived by English mathematician Benjamin Robins. It was entirely an offensive weapon. Helmets thereafter have become compulsory battle-gear for soldiers. The head-gear is ancient but its consistent use began only towards the second half of World War I. The bulletproof jacket is not yet compulsory for all soldiers, although its use is now being increasingly man-



THINGS CERTAINLY HAVE COME A LONG WAY SINCE THOSE RATHER SORDID DAYS. THE TWO WORLD WARS, PLUS THE POSSIBLE HORROR OF A NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST, HAVE CERTAINLY FORCED A SEA CHANGE IN THE APPROACH TO CONFLICT AND WARFARE

dated by Special Forces across the world.

The reason for such snail's-pace progress in the evolution of defensive or protective equipment for soldiers must be sought in the mindset of aggrandisers and conquerors, who believed in and lived for conquests. Wars were the most potent means of attaining the political objectives of kingdoms, empires and, later, nations. Territorial conquests and continual expansions were the order of the age, for much of history. Soldiers were seen and treated as cogs in the wheel of a heartless machinery or, to put it crudely, cannon fodder. They came from the lowest rungs of the socioeconomic ladder and the incentive for the common folk to enlist and shed their lives — other than the undeniable attachment to one's land, religion and way of life — was also the promise of a share in the spoils of war. The last factor was particularly crucial for monarchs and adventurers wanting to line up multitudes of able-bodied men for conquests in far-away lands. Soldiers were meant to fight and die for their king, country or God; such was the thinking prevail-

ing till the 19th century.

Prince Klemens von Metternich, diplomat, statesman and Austria's Foreign Minister during the Napoleonic age, met Napoleon to try and persuade him to cease his quest for hegemony over Europe at the expense of human lives. Bonaparte's bland riposte was: "Aristocrats like you don't understand us soldiers born in the cantonment (Napoleon was born in one). They (soldiers) are meant to fight and die. I don't give a damn about them and neither do they." Things certainly have come a long way since those rather sordid days. The two World Wars, plus the possible horror of a nuclear holocaust, have certainly forced a sea change in the approach to conflict and warfare. While only the naïve would believe that war is a thing of the past, the technologies of the defence or war industry are undeniably reflective of increased concern for the safety of the fighting man and his individual and societal welfare.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EC MUST CONSIDER COVID THREAT

Sir — We have been witnessing another increase in COVID cases in some parts of our nation as well as in other countries, too. This situation, akin to the rising of the Phoenix from ashes, should be a wakeup call for India. At home, the number of COVID cases is rising steadily and the States have started imposing the night curfew as a precautionary measure. The second wave affected our country drastically and the holding of elections in some States was one of the primary reasons for the spread of the virus at that time.

It is ironic that the Election commission has recently given the go-ahead for holding Assembly elections in five States in the coming weeks, even after the tragic experience of the devastation caused by the second wave. India can ill-afford another situation like last year. Some of the alternatives in this situation are imposing President's rule in those States where the elections are due and conducting these when the situation comes under control. Another alternative is to permit election meetings through live video sessions by banning physical meetings. Also, the EC can allow election rallies with smaller crowds by allowing parties in the poll fray with strict COVID-appropriate behaviour.

Nitesh Mandwariya | *Nemuch*

WHY A FILM FALTERS AT BOX OFFICE

Sir — There were high hopes that the film, 83, will become a box office hit. The initial reports also revealed that the film is a money-spinner and that there is every possibility of the film becoming a major commercial success. At a time when even matinee idol Rajinikanth's film failed at the box office, 83 could not get the much-needed response despite it being about the heroics of Kapil Dev and the entire Indian cricket team in England. But there are reasons for such a setback. COVID-19 is a common factor for these failures as the audience could not go to the theatres to see films with the same old enthusiasm. Among other reasons, the most

Making a career in sports



Recently, while laying the foundation stone for the Major Dhyan Chand Sports University in Meerut, named after the national hockey icon, Prime Minister Narendra Modi rightly highlighted the need to encourage youngsters to take up sports as a career. It is true that 2021 was a watershed year in the sporting arena, as it produced the best ever performance in Olympics by the country, including Neeraj Chopra's historic gold in

the javelin throw and the bronze in men's hockey since the Moscow Olympics in 1980, among other individual efforts. However, seven Olympic medals do not reflect the true potential of a large and populous country like India.

There is no dearth of talent, it just needs to be tapped and harnessed to its true potential. The reality, however, is different. With the cricket IPL ruling the roost, other sports are bereft of a healthy professional ecosystem, resulting in lukewarm response from the public, thereby relegating these to the background. It is no wonder then that sports as a viable career option does not get the attention it deserves. The success stories of China, the US, Japan and other European countries speak volumes about their strong sporting culture in schools and universities. In India, creating a separate sports ecosystem that caters to the needs and aspirations of youngsters hoping to make it professionally will go a long way in realising their dream.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | *Nainital*

prominent are that 83 was made on too huge a budget (₹270 crore) and then the pandemic increased costs by ₹30 crore; also, there was too much cricket in the movie (all matches except Kapil's 175 are available on *YouTube*); the younger generation does not have the same nostalgia value for the 1983 win that we have; the overkill of advertising and pre-release marketing; and terrific competition from *Spiderman* and *Pushpa*. The audiences have proved yet again that only the content is king.

MR Subramaniam | *Mumbai*

TEST MATCH BATTING IS AN ART

Sir — Cricket is a team sport where performance is the name of the game. The Indian cricket team currently touring South Africa is finding it difficult to cross the 200 run-mark and that is a worrying factor. The top order is making a

mess of the first use of the wicket. At Wanderers, we find the going tough. Both Pujara and Rahane failed to negotiate genuine pace and fell in successive balls. The future hangs on their showing in the second innings. In the midst of failures, another seasoned batsman Ravichandran Ashwin stood firm and stroked freely to hit 46 off 50 balls. Thus, he added valuable runs and helped the Indian side cross a decent 200-plus total.

Batting is an art and Ashwin has learnt it well. As an opener during his early days, he made a match of it with his aggressive batting. Ashwin is a match winner in his own right even as a bowler and this time he proved his worth as a batsman.

Calicut Krishnan Ramani | *Trichy*

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

I have tested positive for COVID-19. Mild symptoms. Have isolated myself at home.



Delhi Chief Minister — Arvind Kejriwal

The UK's State-run hospitals will face considerable pressure in the coming weeks.



British Prime Minister — Boris Johnson

I love India. I love the people and I love the food. It's a very warm and welcoming atmosphere over there.



Actor — Chris Hemsworth

I don't think Virat Kohli has too much of an issue playing bouncers. It's just about knowing where your off-stump is.



Cricket commentator — Aakash Chopra

Every single night Lord Krishna appears in my dreams and tells me that we shall form the Government in UP.




Samajwadi Party chief — Akhilesh Yadav

FIRST COLUMN


ECONOMY AMID VIRUS & ENERGY TRANSITION

Middle-class consumers are shifting towards buying need-based goods and services



DHIRESH KULKSHRESTHA

Omicron rapidly rising in India has triggered fears of a third wave. It will highly impact on the agricultural, industrial, services sectors, the tourism industry and the balance of payments position. The policy makers are trying to maintain the forecast of 9 per cent of GDP growth in FY2022, with a clear K-shaped divergence amongst the formal and informal parts of the economy. Rising consumption will push capacity utilisation above the crucial threshold of 75 per cent by the end of 2022, which should then trigger a broad-based pick-up in private sector investment activity in 2023. The government of India will very soon circulate the revised e-commerce policy for raising the online trading pattern while maintaining the swoosh economy shape of recovery through its flagship PPP economic model. The Q3 FY 2022 data does not provide convincing evidence of sustainable growth for current the monetary policy in India and I expect



the Indian monetary policy to change in the upcoming budget in February 2022 in order to control the direction of economic recovery amid the Omicron situation. The Government is also planning to make a roadmap for energy transition in India. The policy makers are intent on maintaining net-zero emissions by 2070. The oil and gas sectors are vital players for achieving the set target. Today, if we look at the global energy systems, it is still largely dominated by fossil fuels, with well-established conventional technologies. Coal, crude oil, and natural gas account for about 84 per cent of primary energy, with about 12 per cent from renewable energy and four per cent from nuclear power. The energy transition is essentially matching end-use applications with renewable resources using appropriate energy technologies in a cost-effective system, to bring the share of renewable energy to more than 90 per cent. Reports say that Indian oil, GAIL and BPCL have also started the process to set up green hydrogen production facilities. The run-up to the renewable energy policy is marred by the rapid surge in Omicron cases and it has already led to economic disruptions across many countries in the world. Cases are also rising in India and will badly impact the Indian economic recovery. The Government must focus on its development policy for working towards an economic revival despite Omicron. The new variant of Covid-19 has set a new barometer of uncertainty for the Indian economy aimed at disrupting the speed of economic revival. Recently, the economic revival through foreign portfolio investors increased the pace of selling in the secondary equity market of India. As per NSDL, net sellers of equities were worth \$4.5 billion. This is the highest figure since March 2020. The economy endured to forge ahead in India, emerging out of the shackles of pandemic, but the rise of Omicron has emerged as the biggest risk factor especially in the automobile sector as an oligopolistic market player. The middle-class consumers are shifting towards buying needs-based goods and services (NBGS) for their defensible lifestyle during the times of viral uncertainty. However, it is too early to quantify the risk Omicron poses for Q3 FY2022. The recovery rate needs to wait for the data of Q4 FY2022 for understanding the economic shape of the country. The policy makers need to create awareness about the risks and Covid-appropriate behaviour. There is a need for extreme caution till more is known about the virus and the impact on the economy.

(The writer is Dean of Economics, Chitkara University, Punjab. The views expressed are personal.)

The TRIPS waiver is needed more than ever



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

The lack of vaccination facilities in the larger part of the world and the expensive treatment for COVID-19 is haunting all, especially the poor

For the last two years, humanity is going through a terrible pandemic whose end is not in sight in the near future. Instead of ending, the pandemic appears to be worsening with wave after wave. In the last few weeks, due to the spread of a new type of variant named Omicron, there has been an atmosphere of fear in the world. Humanity is not only faced with the burden of disease, lack of vaccination in a major part of the world and expensive medicines and treatment after the disease is haunting all especially, the poor.

In such a situation, universal availability of vaccines and cheap medicines and treatment in case of disease, has become a necessary condition to save humanity. It is worth noting that companies have patents and other intellectual property rights of medicines and equipment necessary for the treatment of COVID-19. Moreover, companies also possess control over the formulations and raw materials for the vaccines.

Due to the alertness of the government, the efforts of scientists and the hard work of the coronavirus warriors, India has been better off than many countries of the world in battling this pandemic. With nearly 142 crore vaccinations, 65 percent of the country's adult population fully vaccinated and about 80 percent with at least one dose, it is believed that Indian population has got good immunity to fight COVID-19. It is hoped that India will also be able to save itself from the new Omicron variant as well. But the rest of the world is not so fortunate. There are many countries in the world where the process of vaccination has not yet started. Expensive medicines and treatment are no less than a death knell for the poor people of these countries.

What does an exemption from TRIPS mean? In October last year, a petition was made by India and South Africa in the World Trade Organization seeking exemption from Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), so that vaccines and corona medicines in the world are available to the entire humanity on affordable basis. Globally, TRIPS mandates countries to honour intellectual property rights. The exemption from TRIPS would mean that companies that have intellectual property rights on vaccines, medicines and medical equipment would be revoked for the period so decided, and many countries of the world, including India, would be able to produce these vaccines, medicines and devices on their own. This demand of India and South Africa got the support of more than 100 member countries of WTO. Although initially, the US was opposing it, later it changed its stand and supported exemption from TRIPS, though only for the vaccine. The European Union continued



WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT THE INDIAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN DEMAND FOR TRIPS WAIVER WAS NOT ONLY FOR THEMSELVES BUT FOR ENTIRE HUMANITY. SOME FOREIGN FIRMS IN INDIA HAVE GIVEN VOLUNTARY LICENSES OF MEDICINES NECESSARY FOR THE TREATMENT OF CORONAVIRUS AND THEIR PRICE IS STILL VERY HIGH. HOWEVER, IF THESE DRUGS ARE EXEMPTED FROM TRIPS PROVISIONS, THEY WILL BE MUCH MORE AFFORDABLE

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



POINTCOUNTERPOINT

LIQUOR SHOPS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO OPERATE NEAR RELIGIOUS PLACES, SCHOOLS AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS. —DELHI BJP CHIEF ADESH GUPTA



THE BJP IS FEELING PAINED BECAUSE THEIR THEFT (ILLEGAL LIQUOR SALES) HAS BEEN PLUGGED. IT HAS BEEN COMPLETELY JOLTED. —DELHI DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER MANISH SISODIA

Safe poll campaigning is the need of the hour

If Omicron spreads further, as it has in the United States and Europe, political parties in India will have to take an equal share of the blame

Many people doubt whether it is necessary to hold the upcoming Assembly polls in the poll-bound states next month or postpone them, as the Allahabad High Court has suggested. In the previous round of elections last year, the Madras High Court had held the Election Commission irresponsible for conducting the polls during the pandemic. Some argue that, after all, there are precedents of postponement of polls earlier even though former Chief Election Commissioner S.Y. Qureshi thinks Constitutionally it is not possible.

With the scheduled elections in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Goa, Manipur, and Uttarakhand, next month it is clear that the people can escape



KALYANI SHANKAR

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

the killer Covid-19 only if the Election Commission guidelines are strictly enforced.

Nearly 70 countries the world over have deferred elections because of the pandemic. Forty-two countries have postponed national elections and referendums. Even if the EC could not delay the polls as the political parties want to stick to the schedule, can the Commission at least ban the super-spreader poll rallies?

The poll panel decided to hold the elections after discussing with all the stakeholders even though the March-April 2021 elections had resulted in a massive increase of Covid-19 cases in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and other poll-bound states. From April 1 to 14, coronavirus cases increased by 532 percent



in Assam, 420 percent in West Bengal, 165 percent in Puducherry, 159 percent in Tamil Nadu, and 103 percent in Kerala, according to official figures.

In the past few months, as infections fell, India had lifted mainly restrictions on public gatherings, travel, and public spaces. However, the new variant Omicron is spreading fast. Covid-19 cases in several states have been rising, and the third wave may peak around February. Things are complicated by people refusing to wear face masks. They get tested less frequently than before, and congregate in large numbers.

Explaining the decision, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra said recently: I have been told that 86 per cent of people in the state have got the first dose and 49 per cent the second shot of Covid vaccine. We have been assured that in 15 to 20 days, all eligible people will get their first dose. We have asked for increasing vaccination.

The Commission has decided to increase the voting time by an hour to make the voting easy, assuring that all poll officials on duty would be fully vaccinated. The poll body will reach out to the doorsteps of those who cannot come to the polling booth to vote. Additionally, live webcasting facilities will be available at around one lakh voting booths to ensure transparency in the election process. Chandra said because of the pandemic, the number of polling booths in the state would be increased by 11,000 to maintain proper social distancing.

While poll-bound states have taken many steps to check the pandemic, party leaders enjoy addressing massive rallies. As parties scramble for votes, politicians are not the shining examples of how to follow Covid-10 regulations. They are brazenly going ahead with mega rallies. For instance, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav's Unnao rally, Union Home Minister Amit Shah's roadshow in Hardoi, and Priyanka

Gandhi's women's march drew massive crowds. The most prominent state among the five election states, Uttar Pradesh, has been declared a Covid-affected state. Some wonder why poll rallies are unregulated when the government has regulated the number of people at weddings.

Can the nature of poll campaigns change? Most parties are now active in social media and use Whatsapp and mobile communication besides TV ads. A digital campaign is also an option.

Due to the efforts of the Union and state governments, we have controlled the pandemic to a great extent. But no one knows the trajectory of the Omicron variant. The government machinery is on high alert, but people have to obey government regulations like wearing the mask, keeping the social distance, and avoiding crowded places.

If Omicron spreads further, as it has in the United States and Europe, political parties have an equal share of the blame. In any case, all those who come to listen to their 'netas' do not always vote for the party. If wiser counsel prevails, leaders might opt for virtual rallies and other methods of digital communication. Ideally, the nature of poll campaigns must also change, and the political fraternity should come together and think of safe campaigning methods. Above all, it is for the people to comply with Covid-19 regulations as the government alone cannot do everything to contain the pandemic.

Britain fears health crisis as Omicron puts hospitals under pressure

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE ■ LONDON

Britain on Tuesday faced warnings of an impending hospital crisis due to staff shortages caused by a wave of Omicron infections, as the country returned to work after Christmas.

Daily case numbers chalked up multiple records in the run-up to New Year, with Prime Minister Boris Johnson promising action to plug staffing gaps in the worst-hit areas. Hospital admissions have not hit anything like the peaks of previous waves of the pandemic and the number of people requiring ventilation has remained flat so far.

But the state-run National Health Service (NHS), which is regularly under strain during the winter months from seasonal respiratory infections, is struggling with staff forced to stay at home after testing positive.

Transport networks also battled absences, leaving commuters facing long waits on their return to work, while other public services such as household bin collections were hampered. Minister for vaccines and public health Maggie Throup told Sky News it was unclear how many Britons were currently in self-isolation after the Christmas surge in the highly transmissible virus mutation. "But what is good

news, it doesn't seem to be resulting in severe diseases as some of the other variants did," she told Sky News. Around 50,000 NHS staff were absent from work last week because they were ill or self-isolating, The Sunday Times has reported. At least six hospital trusts have declared critical incidents, which mean crucial services may be under threat.

'Almost impossible'

Matthew Taylor, chief executive of the NHS Confederation which represents healthcare providers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, said cases appeared to have levelled off in London. But he told Times Radio that staff shortages and rising cases across the rest of the country were a concern. "The unpredictability of staff absence means NHS leaders having to work around the clock just thinking about how they can deploy their resources best to deal with the most urgent and pressing needs," he added.

"Even using all their imagination and creativity, it is becoming almost impossible, which is why we see hospitals declaring critical incidents."

Anyone testing positive for the virus has to self-isolate for 10 days, or seven days if they produce a negative test. There have been calls to ease those restrictions for health staff to ease what Johnson on Monday

said was "considerable pressure" on hospitals. Taylor said reducing the self-isolation period to five days should only be done if the data indicated it was "absolutely safe". Pupils returning to school also faced the prospect of mass staff absences and merged classes. Secondary school pupils have been advised to wear face masks in class as a "temporary" measure.

Britain has seen nearly 149,000 deaths since the start of the pandemic in early 2020 and Johnson has defended his decision not to increase restrictions over Christmas in England, unlike in other parts of the UK. A review of restrictions is expected this week.

Germany relaxes travel restrictions on 8 nations

BERLIN: Germany has relaxed restrictions on travel from the U.K., South Africa and seven other southern African countries that were imposed following the emergence of the new omicron coronavirus variant. The nine nations were removed Tuesday from Germany's list of "virus variant areas." Airlines and others are restricted largely to transporting German citizens and residents from countries on that list. *AP*

Japan leader promises boosters, new measures against omicron

TOKYO: Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida vowed Tuesday to speed up coronavirus vaccine booster shots, secure imported supplies of drugs to treat COVID-19 and reorganize medical facilities to respond to the fast-spreading omicron variant.

Kishida, who took office in October, said he had ordered strict border controls from November to buy time for such preparations. Japan has basically shut out incoming travel except for returning residents and Japanese nationals.

The response to the contagious omicron variant will now shift to domestic measures, such as making free coronavirus tests more readily available, while border controls will continue, he said.

"I just offered prayers so that we may overcome the coronavirus pandemic and this year will be a fantastic year for all of you," he told reporters after praying at the Ise Shrine in Mie Prefecture, southwest of Tokyo. Japanese leaders visit the picturesque shrine complex at the start of every year, although Kishida's predecessor Yoshihide Suga canceled it last

year because of the pandemic.

Kishida said the oral drug from Merck has been distributed to thousands of hospitals, and efforts were underway to procure the Pfizer oral drug as well, for use starting next month in treating symptomatic coronavirus cases.

"I want to make this year one of dramatic challenges to forge ahead with a new era. But in areas where we need to exercise caution, we must not forget the humility to proceed with caution," Kishida added, noting care was needed for a proper pandemic response.

He said everyone who tests positive for COVID-19 and needs hospitalization will be speedily admitted for treatment, while those who can recover at home should do so, monitored by medical professionals. Other facilities will also be readied for those who don't need to be hospitalized but need to quarantine, depending on symptoms, he said. Although COVID-19 cases and deaths have fallen lately in Japan, worries are growing about another "sixth wave" of infections because of the omicron variant. *AP*

Australia's Covid-19 cases, hospitalisations hit new records

SYDNEY: New virus cases in Australia surged to record levels on Tuesday, increasing the strain on hospitals and testing centers across country. In New South Wales, Australia's most-populous state, 23,131 new cases were reported, an increase on record of 22,577 cases on New Year's Day. There were 1,344 people in hospitals, up 140 on the previous day and 78 more than record previously set in late September. The new cases were detected from 83,376 tests, a positivity rate of 28%.

Victoria state reported 14,020 cases on Tuesday, eclipsing record of 8,577 set on Monday. There were 516 people in hospitals, including 108 in intensive care. The numbers do not necessarily reflect true spread of virus as they only include number of recorded cases. The new numbers, however, confirm that Australia has passed the milestone of 500,000 COVID-19 cases. New South Wales Chief Medical Officer Kerry Chant on Monday urged people not to seek hospital treatment unless absolutely necessary. *AP*

Sporadic violence reported at protest site against country's pandemic curbs in Germany

AP ■ BERLIN

Police in Germany have reported sporadic violence at demonstrations against the country's pandemic restrictions, with one protester in the eastern town of Lichtenstein biting an officer and another attempting to steal a service weapon.

Tens of thousands of people in total took to the streets in scores of German towns and cities for weekly marches that have organizers have labeled "strolls" in an attempt to bypass restrictions on public gatherings.

Counter-protests were also held in towns such as Rostock and Trier, the dpa news agency reported. Most of rallies passed peacefully, though many broke rules on social distancing, prompting officers to intervene.

People detained dozens of people, some of whom face criminal charges or fines for breaching COVID-19 rules. Police in eastern state of Saxony said the incident late Monday in Lichtenstein, about 20 kilometers (12 miles) west of Chemnitz, occurred when officers tried to pull about 60 rowdy people out of a march to

check their identities. Several of the protesters attacked police and sprayed them with chemical irritants.

"One person attempted to seize an officer's service weapon and another police officer suffered a bite wound from a participant of the gathering," Saxony police said in a statement. In Bautzen, further east, some participants of a 600-strong march attempted to break through a police cordon. Officers responded with pepper spray and batons.

In Magdeburg, the capital of neighboring Saxony-Anhalt state, protesters hurled bottles and fireworks at police. No officers were injured, police said. The protests took place before a meeting Tuesday of Germany's pandemic expert panel, which is expected to submit new recommendations to the government for how to respond to outbreak. A meeting of state and federal leaders is scheduled for Friday. The national disease control center, the Robert Koch Institute, said Tuesday that 30,561 new coronavirus cases were reported in past 24 hours, over 9,000 more than a week earlier.



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STANDARD BIDDING DOCUMENT FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF AIRCRAFT INSURANCE

NAME OF WORK: Procurement of Insurance for Cessna FA152 aircraft. Registration no: VT-ENH.

O/o Adviser, Civil Aviation Haryana-cum-Chief Executive Director, Haryana Institute of Civil Aviation, Civil Aerodrome, Pinjore.
Press Notice (Inviting of Bids through E-tender)

Endorsement No. HICA/PNJ/2022/519-521 Dated: 03-01-2022

Adviser, Civil Aviation Haryana-cum-Chief Executive Director, Haryana Institute of Civil Aviation, Civil Aerodrome, Pinjore. Invites the bids vide **E-Tender No.: 2022_HBC_202500** dated 03-01-2022 from the Public Sector Undertaking Insurance Companies through online for the renewal of comprehensive insurance of Cessna FA-152 aircraft, VT-ENH (Equipped with ARC Avionics radio communication receiver and transmitters, ADF, ARTEX ME406ELT). Existing insurance of the aircraft is valid up to 22-02-2022. For more details you may visit e-tender website www.etenders.hry.nic.in and official website <http://haraviation.gov.in/>. Adviser Civil Aviation, Haryana or approach O/o Haryana Institute of Civil Aviation, Civil Aerodrome, Pinjore. (Email id- hicachd@gmail.com or pinjorehica@gmail.com)


GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER
MAHANADI GODAWARI BASIN
RAIPUR (C.G.)
e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
eProcurement Portal: <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>
(1st Call)

System Tender No. : 89619 /NIT No. : 15/SAC/2021-22, Mahasanund, Dated: 03.01.2022
Online Tenders are Invited for The Following Works up to 24.01.2022 at 17:30 Hour (1ST):-
Name of Work : Construction of under ground pipe line from R.D. 0 M. to 630 M., Remodelling and C.C. lining of Main canal from R.D. 1500 M. to 10200 M., Kodopali Minor from R.D. 0 M. to 1800 M, Banjibahal Minor from R.D. 0 M to 4200 M, Construction of 14 Nos. structure (V.R.B. 07 No., Fall 03 No, Pipe line chamber 04 No.), construction of Drain Toe wall from R.D. 0 M. to 630 M., fixing of outlets 48 Nos., Repair of old lining work from R.D. 630 M. to 1500 M, and Repair of old structures of Ghorghati Tank Scheme in block Saraipali of Mahasanund District
Probable Amount : Rs.550.41 Lakhs
of Contract

The details can be viewed and downloaded online directly from the Government of Chattisgarh Integrated e-Procurement Portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) from Date 10.01.2022, at 17:31 Hours (1ST) onwards.

NOTE:- All eligible/interested contractors/bidders are mandated to get enrolled on the Integrated e-procurement portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) and get approval on specific vendor class from PWD under Centralized Contractor/Supplier Registration in order to download the tender documents and participate in the subsequent bidding process.

Sd/-
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Water Resources Division, Mahasanund
R.o.No. - 66508/5 for, Chief Engineer, Mahanadi Godawari Basin
R.o. Date- 04/01/2022 **Water Resources Department, Raipur (C.G.)**



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

Whereas

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI BANK Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	S.K. Nanda F&b Food Centre Rama Nanda/ Vijay Parkash Nanda/ Veena Nanda/ Narendra Prakash Nanda/ Pratik Nanda/ Surinder Prakash Nanda/ LBDEL00004713455/ LBDEL00005314811	Ground & 1st Floor, Plot No- C-2, Vishal Enclave Rajouri Garden, New Delhi/ January 01, 2022	August 24, 2021 Rs. 1,68,94,644/-	Delhi/ NCR

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : January 05, 2022
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

Sale Notice

The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on **"AS IS WHERE IS BASIS"** and **"AS IS WHAT IS BASIS"** for recovery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-

Sr. No.	Case Details	Asset Details
1.	ICICI Bank Ltd Vs Jitendra Chaturvedi, (Cm) 22/2020	Vehicle No-UP14FT7814, Make & Model -CHEVROLET SAIL UVA LT, Manu Year-2016, Reserve Price Rs.40,000/-, DD/PO amount Rs.4000/-, DD/PO is to be made in favour of ICICI BANK LIMITED Payable at Delhi and bidder has to bring original DD/PO at site with KYC.
2.	ICICI Bank Ltd Vs Subodh Kumar, CM (M) 602/2020 & CM APPL.30659/2020	Vehicle No-UP14FT6208, Make & Model -RENAULT LODGY RXE, Manu Year-2016, Reserve Price Rs.1.25,000/-, DD/PO amount Rs.12500/-, DD/PO is to be made in favour of ICICI BANK LIMITED Payable at Delhi and bidder has to bring original DD/PO at site with KYC
3.	ICICI Bank Ltd Vs Ata, Abbas, CS No. 3387/18	Vehicle No-DL1RTB2176, Make & Model -MARUTI WAGON R LXI, Manu Year-2016, Reserve Price- Rs. 90,000/-, DD/PO amount-Rs. 9,000/-, DD/PO is to be made in favour of ICICI BANK LIMITED Payable at Delhi and bidder has to bring original DD/PO at site with KYC
4.	ICICI Bank Ltd Vs Dev Prakash, CS (COMM) 1121-20	Vehicle No-UP16BW6148, Make & Model -HYUNDAI I-20 SPORTZ CRDI, Manu. Year-2018

Auction Date: 12-January-2022 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.
Venue: Godara Yard, Khawat No: 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chowk, Behind Gyan Devi School, Sec-17, Sukhrali, Gurugram- 122022.
Contact Person- Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809)/ Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)

Terms of Sale

The particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the information and knowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstatement or omission in the said particulars. The interested participant/s are therefore requested, in their own interest, to satisfy himself / themselves/ itself with regard to the said asset and other relevant details pertaining to it before submitting the bids. All bidders are required to come at site with original KYC proofs to participate in the auction and also original DD of EMD wherein applicable.

Successfully approved bidder shall have to deposit sale amount (Excluding EMD amount if applicable) within 5 days from the auction date by the way of pay order/demand draft/RTGS/NEFT. In case if you fail to make the remaining sale amount within 5 days, your EMD amount will be forfeited wherein you have submitted EMD.

The intending bidders may visit at **ICICI Bank Ltd, 1st Floor, SD Tower, Community Center, Plot no-7, Rohini Sector-8, New Delhi-110085**, for details and inspection of the said hypothecated vehicle.



उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम
कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण शाखा, विकासनगर
(झाकटखर रोड निबर पुल नं०-०१) ईमेल eeddevikasanagar@gmail.com

पत्रांक ०१/निविदा "ई-निविदा सूचना" दिनांक ०४.०१.२०२२

अधीक्षक अभियन्ता, निर्माण मण्डल, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम, देहरादून के पत्रांक ३९ /निविदा / २३, दिनांक ०४.०१.२०२२ द्वारा जल जीवन मिशन कार्यक्रम के अन्तर्गत जनपद देहरादून के विकासखण्ड शीशमबाड़ा पेयजल योजना एवं जाटो पेयजल योजना निर्माण एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्यो हेतु राज्य सरकार की वेबसाइट <http://www.uktender.gov.in> के माध्यम से दिनांक ०४.०१.२०२२ से दिनांक १८.०१.२०२२ तक ई-निविदा (e-tender) आमन्त्रित की जा रही है। निविदा की नियम एवं शर्तें उपरोक्त वेबसाइट से प्राप्त की जा सकती है। अधिशासी अभियन्ता "जल संचय-जीवन संचय" कृपया जल स्रोतों को प्रदूषित होने से बचावये "वैधानिक चेतावनी-जल स्रोतों को प्रदूषित करना दण्डनीय अपराध है।



The Project Manager Construction Unit
Uttarakhand Pejyal Nigam Ranikhet (Almora) 263645

Letter No. 3492 / NIVIDA / 253 Date: 24-12-2021

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

The Project Manager Construction Unit Uttarakhand Pejyal Nigam Ranikhet (Almora) 263645, on behalf of Chairman Uttarakhand Pejyal Nigam invites sealed item rate tender on e-Government Procurement System (e-GPS) portal i.e. <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>, for the following works-

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Cost of Work
1	Construction of Food Godown at Chaukhutiya, District -Almora.	73.28 Lacs.

The tender form can be downloaded from e-Government Procurement System (e-GPS) portal i.e. <http://www.uktenders.gov.in> from 28.12.2021 at 17:00 hrs. to 11.01.2022 at 17:00 hrs. Other information can be seen in tender form or office notice board or obtained from office or phone no. 05966 220690 of office of tender inviting authority.

Project Manager



Uttarakhand Pejyal Nigam Ranikhet (Almora) 263645

Letter No. 3492 / NIVIDA / 253 Date: 24-12-2021


NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

The Project Manager Construction Unit Uttarakhand Pejyal Nigam Ranikhet (Almora) 263645, on behalf of Chairman Uttarakhand Pejyal Nigam invites sealed item rate tender on e-Government Procurement System (e-GPS) portal i.e. <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>, for the following works-

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
Project Manager



PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that our Pigmy Agent Mr. Pran Nath Vinayak, agent code PDSUSP4 has expired on 23 June 2021. All customers belong to him are advised to visit the branch within one month from this notice for balance confirmations. Any difference in balance after this period will not be entertained by the bank.

Sd/- Senior Branch Manager
CANARA BANK
A-257, Derawal Nagar,
G.T.K. Road, Azadpur, Delhi-9



PUBLIC NOTICE

The Public at large is hereby informed that Late Imran Hussain Shah S/o Mohammad Hussain Shah R/o Flat No. 18 FF, K-2.1, Primrose Independent Floors, Sector-83, Vatika India Next, Gurugram, Haryana was having residential property in joint ownership along with his wife Gazala Bakshi in our project Primrose Independent Floors, Sector-83, Vatika India Next, Gurugram, Haryana, Flat no. 18 FF, K-2.1 admeasuring 1263.16 sq.ft which his legal heirs Mohammad Hussain Shah, Shahnaz Shah, Gazala Bakshi, Zainab Shah, Dawood Shah requested the company to transfer it to his wife Gazala Bakshi, and her daughter Zainab Shah and his son Dawood Shah. Any person having any objection on this please may contact the company officer details as under within 15 days after this No Claim would be accepted

Vatika Limited
A-002, Ground Floor, Block A, Vatika IWXI City Centre, Sector-83, Gurugram, Haryana-122012



CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No.: PCMM/CLW/DKAE/E-Procurement/ 1-21/253 Dated:-23-12-2021. PCMM/CLW/DKAE on behalf of the President of India invites electronic bids from established reliable manufacturer for supply of the followings. The following E-Tender's is/are for supply of materials for manufacture of Electric Locomotive. The Prospective/likely suppliers are requested to look up the website www.ireps.gov.in for detailed instructions. These are E-Tenders only electronic offer bids shall be accepted. SL No. 1146/CLW/DKAE

No. 1146/CLW/DKAE Description of Stores : (1)
(1) Cable Gland PG-21 with Bell Mouth as per CLW's Drg./Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0129/D. (2) Cable Gland PG 21 MS-NI as per CLW's Drg./Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0129/D. (3) Cable Gland PG 29 MS-NI as per CLW's Drg./Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0129/D. Qty. : As per tender doc. Due On: 17.01.2022. Tender Cost: ₹.00.

P.S. PCMM/CLW/DKAE
Like us on: www.facebook.com/clwrrailways

Investors' wealth zooms ₹5.36 lakh cr in first two days of trading in 2022

New Delhi: Equity investors are a happy lot as their wealth jumped by over ₹5.36 lakh crore in the first two days of trading in the New Year, driven by optimism in the broader market amid firm global cues.

The 30-share Sensex zoomed 672.71 points or 1.14 per cent to settle at 59,855.93 on Tuesday. The benchmark had jumped 929.40 points or 1.60 per cent to close at 59,183.22 on Monday, the first trading day of 2022.

Helped by the ongoing rally, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies jumped by ₹ 5,36,139.91 crore in just two trading sessions to reach ₹2,71,36,351.46 crore. On Tuesday, NTPC was the lead gainer in the 30-share Sensex pack, jumping 5.48 per cent, followed by PowerGrid, SBI, Titan Company,

CCI orders probe against IREL (India) for alleged abuse of dominant position

New Delhi: Competition Commission has ordered a detailed probe against state-owned IREL (India) Ltd, which is into mining and production of minerals, for alleged abuse of dominant position.

It was alleged that IREL abused its dominant position by indulging in prohibitive increase in the sillimanite prices by following discriminatory pricing against the interests of the micro, small and medium enterprises in the domestic market.

The informant also alleged that the company favoured multi-nationals and/or foreign parties and fixed the supply of sillimanite as per its whims and fancies and forcing its customer to accept arbitrary quantity.

Competition Commission of India (CCI) said that based on facts and circumstances of the present case, it is prima facie noted that OP is the only entity engaged in the mining and supply of beach sand mineral in India, which allows it to operate independently of the market forces.

The Commission has also perused the allegation in the information pertaining to unfair and discriminatory pricing, for which no response has been forthcoming from the OP.

PTI

IN THE COURT OF THE SENIOR CIVIL JUDGE AND MACT AT MADOUR
M.V.C. No. - 1304/2019
Petitioner: Vasanthamma and others --Vs--
Respondents: M/s. Delhi Gujarat Fleet Carrier Pvt. Ltd., and another
Respondent No. 1: M/s. Delhi Gujarat Fleet Carrier Pvt. Ltd., Plot No.16, Industrial Area,Dhanuhera,Haryana-123002
Represented by it's Director, Ashok Kumar Dhingra, S/o. Late. S.H. Gopichand Dhingra, R/o No. 1/43, Shivaji Nagara, Gurugram, State of Haryana.

PAPER PUBLICATION NOTICE
Whereas, the petitioners have instituted the above case against you / Respondent No. 1 claiming compensation for the death of 1st petitioner's husband in the motor vehicle accident. You are here by summoned to appear in this court in person or by a pleader on the day of 19-01-2022 at 11.00 clock to answer the same, failing which the petition will be disposed of exparte.
Given under my hand and seal of this court on the day of 28-12-2021.

By the order of the court
Sd/- Chief Ministerial Officer
COURT OF THE SENIOR CIVIL JUDGE AND MACT AT MADOUR
Advocate for the petitioner
H.S. Mahesha
Advocate, Madour.

IN THE COURT OF MS. SHEETAL CHAUDHARY PRADHAN ACJ/CCJ/ARC-(South-East) Room No.203, Second Floor Saket Courts, New Delhi. SS- 60/2021

VIKAS GUPTA
S/o Late Promod Gupta R/o B-15, Kalindi Colony, Maharani Bagh, New Delhi-110065Petitioner

VS.
THE STATE
(Through Concerned SDM)
Office at: DM Office Road, National Park, Old Gargi College Building, Lajpat Nagar-4, New Delhi-110024 Respondent
Whereas, on application U/s 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 has been made by **Sh. Vikas Gupta** successor of Late **Promod Gupta** for grant of Succession Certificate in respect of debts/securities of deceased.
And whereas the said applicant shall come for hearing on **17.01.2022 at 10.00 A.M.**
Therefore, the public at large is hereby given notice if any person has objection to the grant of succession certificate in favour of the said applicant, he may appear and file objections in writing, in person or through duly appointed pleader, on the said date and time.
Given under my hand & seal on **03.01.2022.**
Sd/-
(Sheetal Chaudhary Pradhan)
ACJ/CCJ/ARC-(South East)
Room No. 203, Second Floor
Saket Courts, New Delhi

RBI: SBI, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank continue to remain systemically important banks

Mumbai: The RBI on Tuesday said state-owned SBI, along with private sector lenders ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank continue to be Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) or institutions which are 'too big to fail'.

SIBs are perceived as banks that are 'too big to fail' (TBTF). This perception of TBTF creates an expectation of government support for these banks in times of distress. Due to this perception, these lenders enjoy certain advantages in the funding markets.

"SBI, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank continue to be identified as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), under the same bucketing structure as in the 2020 list of D-SIBs," the Reserve Bank said in a statement.

The additional Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) requirement for D-SIBs was phased-in from April 1, 2016 and became fully effective from April 1, 2019. The additional CET1 requirement will be in addition to the capital



उत्तराखण्ड लोक सेवा आयोग
हरिद्वार
फ़ोन कोड- 249404

संख्या :: 229/16/E-2/DR/AG(APS)/2020-21 दिनांक :: 04 जनवरी, 2022

विज्ञापित

अपर निजी सचिव परीक्षा-2021 (महाधिवक्ता कार्यालय, उत्तराखण्ड, नैनीताल)
एतद्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि विज्ञापन संख्या--**A-4/E-2/DR/AG(APS)/2021**, दिनांक 26 सितम्बर, 2021 द्वारा विज्ञापित है महाधिवक्ता कार्यालय उत्तराखण्ड, नैनीताल में अपर निजी सचिव परीक्षा- 2021 के रिक्त 01 पद पर सीधी भर्ती द्वारा चयन हेतु प्रारम्भिक परीक्षा का आयोजन दिनांक 30 जनवरी, 2022 (रविवार) को परीक्षा भवन, उत्तराखण्ड लोक सेवा आयोग, हरिद्वार में किया जायेगा। उक्त परीक्षा के लिए औपबन्धिक रूप से अर्ह अस्थायी अपना प्रवेश-पत्र (Admit-Card) दिनांक 16 जनवरी, 2022 से आयोग की वेबसाईट www.ukpsc.gov.in से डाउनलोड कर सकते हैं। अस्थायियों को डाक द्वारा प्रूथक से कोई सूचना/प्रवेश-पत्र (Admit-Card) प्रेषित नहीं किये जायेंगे।
-Sd-
(कर्मन्ध सिंह) सचिव।



Salman

General public is hereby informed that one boy namely **Salman S/o Iqrar**, R/o Village Reusa, PS Reusa, District Sitapur Uttar Pradesh. Age 11 years, Height 4'10", Complexion Wheatish, Long Face, Normal Built, Wearing Black & white colour T-shirt and blue colour jeans pant has been missing since 09.06.2018 from Old Delhi Railway Station Open Shelter, Morigate/ Kashmere Gate, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out this boy, but no clue has come to light so far. In this regard a FIR No. 209/18 dated 25.06.2018 U/S 363 IPC has been registered at PS Kashmere Gate, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing boy may kindly inform to the undersigned at the address or telephone no. given below.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph: 011-23011334
Ph: 011-23014046, 23015218
DP/1688/N/2021

PS: Kashmere Gate, Delhi
Ph. 011-23968730, 8750870123

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Naved S/o Dilshad R/o Kalyan Akhare Wali Gali Braham Puri, Delhi Also at:- Village Dhampur P.S. Nagina, District-Bijnor-U.P.** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 316/2020, U/s 25/54/59 Arms Act** has been registered at **PS Lahori Gate, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Naved** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Naved** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).
Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Naved** accused of **FIR No. 316/2020, U/s 25/54/59 Arms Act, PS Lahori Gate, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer said complaint on or before **31.03.2022.**
By Order
Ms. Neha Gupta Singh, Metropolitan Magistrate-09, Central Room No. 286, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi
DP/1832/N/2021-(Court Matter)

SHO
PS. Kashmere Gate, Delhi
Ph. 011-23968730, 8750870123

Airtel withdraws scheme for new corporate structure announced in April 2021

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Withdrawing its scheme for a new corporate structure announced in April 2021, Bharti Airtel on Tuesday said it will merge wholly-owned subsidiary Telesonic Networks with itself, resulting in consolidation of fibre assets into the company, while Nettle Infrastructure Investments too will be merged with Airtel.

The scheme of arrangement for the new corporate structure announced on April 14, 2021 stands withdrawn as the board is of the view that the existing corporate structure of the company is optimal for leveraging emerging opportunities, unlocking value while continuing to scale up the digital businesses, it said in a statement.

The company, as announced earlier, will pursue its plan to eventually fold the DTH business (Bharti Telemedia) into Airtel, the statement added.

"Under a modified scheme, the company, as previously approved by the board, will merge its wholly-owned subsidiary Telesonic Networks Limited, resulting in consolidation of its fiber assets into Airtel," the statement said.

Nettle Infrastructure Investments Limited will also be merged with Airtel.

"As announced earlier, the company will pursue its plan to eventually fold the DTH business (Bharti Telemedia) into Airtel to move towards the NDCP vision of converged services to customers," it added.

NDCP refers to the National Digital Communications Policy. The company's businesses continue to be categorised under four key verticals -- India, Digital, International and Infrastructure.

Airtel noted that the "seminal" telecom sector reforms package announced by the government has significantly boosted the outlook and investor confidence for the industry while simplifying the licence framework.



The Project Manager Construction Unit
Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam Ranikhet (Almora) 263645

Letter No. 3491 / NIVIDA / 252 Date: 24-12-2021

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

The Project Manager Construction Unit Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam Ranikhet (Almora) 263645, on behalf of Chairman Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam invites sealed item rate tender on e-Government Procurement System (e-GPS) portal i.e. <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>, for the following works-

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Cost of Work
1	Construction of Food Godown at Saraikheth, District -Almora.	48.45 Lacs.

The tender form can be downloaded from e-Government Procurement System (e-GPS) portal i.e. <http://www.uktenders.gov.in> from 28.12.2021 at 17:00 hrs. to 11.01.2022 at 17:00 hrs. Other information can be seen in tender form or office notice board or obtained from office or phone no. 05966 220690 of office of tender inviting authority.

Project Manager



Jaswant Singh @ Goldi

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that a male namely **Jaswant Singh @ Goldi**, S/o Sh. Gurnam Singh, R/o Village Pathiaha, P.S. Sitargarh, Dist. Udhham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand. Age : 26 years, Height : 5'9", Complexion- Sallow, Face-Round, Built-Medium, ID Mark-Bracelet in the right hand and wearing kirpan, Wearing-Black colour Turban on head, red colour jacket, black colour jeans, gold star shoes in Feet has been reported missing from Gangaram Hospital, Rajender Nagar since 17.12.2021 in this regard **DD No. 13A dated 18.12.2021** has been lodged at **PS. Rajender Nagar, Delhi.**

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this male please inform to the following:-

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph : 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax : 011-23011334
DP/1182/CD/2021

SHO
PS. Rajender Nagar, Delhi
Ph. : 011-28744012, 8750870431

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that an one Female person was found dead in GTB Hospital mortuary dated **08.06.2020**. In this regard a vide **DD No. 74A**, dated **08.06.2020** has been registered at **P.S. GTB Enclave, Delhi**. The description of the dead body is given as under **Name:** Kamlesh, **D/o:**Unkonwn, **R/o:**Unkonwn, **Age:** 32 years, **Height:** 5'6", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Normal, **Wearing :** Green and Yellow printed colour suit and green salwar.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the dead female person but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this dead female person please inform undersigned.

SHO
P.S. GTB Enclave, Delhi
Ph. : 011-22580947, 7065036031



Solar open access installation rises nearly two folds to 307 MW in July-Sept: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Solar open access installations in India jumped 85 per cent to 307 megawatt (MW) in July-September period of 2021, Mercom India Research said in a report.

The installations stood at 166 MW during the same quarter in 2020, the research firm said in its report titled "India Solar Open Access Market Report Q3 2021" on Tuesday.

It said the country installed 935 MW of open access solar capacity during January-September 2021, registering a rise of 143 per cent compared to 385 MW installed during the same nine-month period of 2020.

The pipeline of solar open access projects under development and pre-construction is estimated to be over 1.1 GW (gigawatt), the report added.

It has also expanded coverage to include two new markets, Uttarakhand and Punjab. Uttar Pradesh had the most installations, constituting about 35 per cent of the projects installed during the quarter.

Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka accounted for 11 per cent, 10 per cent, and 7 per cent of the installations, respectively during the quarter.

"The power crisis triggered by the depleting coal stocks in thermal power plants in Q3 2021 was a major wake-up call for the C&I (commercial and industrial) segment to opt for alternative sources of power procurement.

Centre opposes Swamy's plea in HC seeking to set aside Air India disinvestment process

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday opposed a plea filed by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy in the Delhi High Court alleging that the methodology adopted by the government in the valuation of national carrier Air India was "arbitrary, illegal and against public interest". Swamy has sought to set aside and revoke any action or decision or grant of any further approvals, permissions or permits by authorities with respect to the Air India disinvestment process.

The bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh heard the arguments put forward by Swamy, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and senior advocate Harish Salve, who appeared in the matter on behalf of Tata Group's Talace Private Limited. The Bench said it will pass an order on the petition on January 6. The court also asked the counsel for the Centre and the other respondents to file a short note during the day and granted liberty to Swamy to file a short note by Wednesday.

Swamy has also sought a CBI investigation into the role and functioning of authorities and the submission of a detailed report before the court. In October last year, the Centre accepted the highest bid made by a Tata Sons company for 100 per cent equity shares of Air India and Air India Express, along with the government's 50 per cent stake in ground-handling company AISATS -- the

first privatisation in the country in 20 years.

Swamy submitted that a consortium led by SpiceJet was the other bidder but as insolvency proceedings are going on against the airline in the Madras High Court, it was not entitled to bid and therefore, effectively there was only one bidder. "The methodology adopted by the government in the valuation of Air India was arbitrary, illegal, corrupt, mala fide and against public interest," he said.

Mehta contended that the petition was founded on three misconceptions and it does not need any consideration. He said according to the petitioner, SpiceJet was the second bidder, but the fact is that the airline was never a part of the consortium that submitted the bid and proceedings pending against it have no relevance here.

"One individual, Ajay Singh, was part of the consortium, which was the second bidder and not SpiceJet," the solicitor general said. However it is well known that Ajay Singh is promoter of SpiceJet.

He said Air India's disinvestment was a policy decision taken by the Centre, keeping in view the huge losses being incurred by the airline, and that the government was competent to take such a decision. Salve contended that there was nothing in the petition and that the bids were complete, the share agreements signed and all this has been in public domain for quite some time.

TENDER NOTICE

No.SSA/CW/KGBV-Majbat/255/2020/8253 Dated -30/12/2021

The Mission Director, SSA, Assam, invites fresh bids for the following work from registered contractors [Class- I (A, B & C)] under A. P.W.D.(Building) Assam, having experience of similar nature of work.

Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e. www.assamtenders.gov.in and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from 05/01/2022(04:30 PM) to 27/01/2022 (2:00 PM)


The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.gov.in

Name of Work	Package No	Place	Approx. Value of Work	Time of completion	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	E.M.D. to be drawn in favour of	Tender Cost
CONSTRUCTION OF KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA (CLASS VI TO X) (ACADEMIC BLOCK ASSAM TYPE WITH RCC HOSTEL Building (G+2) (KGBV-TYPE-II), SSA, ASSAM	1U	Majbat, Udalguri	Rs.1,91,28,900.00 (Per site)	12 (twelve months)	Rs.3,82,578.00 (for General) Rs.1,91,289.00 (for reserved Category) [PER SITE]	The Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Guwahati-19	Rs.5000.00



Sd/-Mission Director
SSA, Assam
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog/CF/2701/21



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

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Shree Salasar Overseas, Sanjay Kumar Gupta, Gyan Chand Agarwal, Narayan Colonisers Pvt. Ltd, Nouveau Multimedia Ltd., Sanjay Kumar Gupta, B-14 Heera Nagar Ganga, Jamuna Crossing, Maansarovar, Jaipur, Rajasthan. A/c No:- LBGUR00001329278	N-2/32, N-2/32, Dif City Phase-II Gurgaon Haryana	01-Nov-2021, Rs. 76,15,156.11/-	09/08/2021
2.	Shalini Sharma, Sunjoy Daaadhich, Explo Media Private Limited, Apartment No.1619-A, The Mangolias Dif Golf Course Gurgaon Haryana. A/c No:- LBGUR00003957467 & LBGUR00004776573	Flat No-PL- 1/2101, 21th Floor, Tower PL-1, Hiend-1, Paras Quarter, Village- Gwal Pahari, Sector 2, Gurgaon, Haryana	28-Oct-2021, Rs. 4,12,68,326.9/- & Rs. 19,71,395.92/-	31/01/2021
3.	Ram Chander Meena, Maya*, Flat No.-100, Sector-19, Pocket-2, Dwarka, N. Delhi, Delhi, A/c:- LBDEL00001094280	Flat No.533, 9th Floor Pocket-8, Dwarka Delhi	04-Aug-2021, Rs. 10,30,652.22/-	31/03/2021
4.	Rama Kanta Behera, Minati Lata Sahu, H No A-1/124 New Kondli, Delhi, Delhi, A/c No:- LBDEL00002380953 & LBDEL00002354573	Flat No.50, Second Floor Dda Lig, Block- B2, Pocket- 5, Sector- 35, Rohini Delhi	20-Aug-2021, Rs.64,472/- & Rs.11,18,799.7/-	11/01/2021
5.	Vipin Kumar, Davender, Krishna Devi, House No-151 J-Block May Field Garden, Gurgaon Haryana. A/c No:- LBDEL00005133691	Showroom Room-1397/29, Situated At Plot No- 245R, Bata Showroom, Model Town, Delhi Road, Rohtak Haryana	23-Jul-2021, Rs. 61,60,864/-	31/12/2020
6.	Akash Mishra, Indra Mishra, Flat No-B 1/26 Sf-2 Dif Ankur Vihar Ghaziabad, Ghaziabad, A/c:- LBNOD00004979181	Flat No.140199, 12th Floor Tower-V 14th Avenue Plot No GC 12 and GC 14 Gr 03 Sector 16C Gurgaon Noida Noida 201307	28-Jun-2021, Rs. 1,27,494/-	31/01/2021
7.	Akshay Grover, Inder Mohan, B-30, Block-b, New Krishna Park, Vikas Puri, Delhi, Delhi, Delhi A/c:- LBDEL00001951008 & LBNOD00001953710	Flat No. F-2, First Floor (HIG) Back Side (Without Roof Right), Plot No. Niti Khand- II/ 458, Indrapuram Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh	28-Jun-2021, Rs. 20,44,896/- & Rs.60,293.7/-	31/01/2021
8.	Dhanalakshmi Behera, Gara Rajanikanta Rac, Flumesh Engineering Pvt Ltd, F-10, F Block, Vikasuri, Delhi, Delhi, Delhi, A/c:- LBDEL00002282447	Plot No.10, Block No.F, Vikas Puri New Delhi	28-Jun-2021, Rs. 20,42,392/-	31/01/2021
9.	Kusha Charan Swain, Sradhanjali Swain, House- 6/2/29 Ground Floor Sector-6 Vaishali Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh A/c No:- LBGHZ00002360284	Flat No.1602, 16th Floor Block B Gayatri Aura Towerplot No Gh 011 Sec 01 Greater Noida Noida	17-Jul-2021, Rs. 17,94,858/-	11/01/2021
10.	Parul Goel, Indian Embroiders, Vikalp Goel, 22/1 Patperganj Village, 3rd Floor, Mayur Vihar Phase 1, Delhi. A/c No:- LBDEL00003296851	Flat No.702, Block-B, 7th Floor Divyansh Fabio, Plot No-GH-5A Crossing Republic, Nh-24 Dhundahera, Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh	17-Jul-2021, Rs. 54,18,130/-	31/10/2020
11.	Pradeep Jain, Vandana Jain, 17/31, Block-17, Shakti Nagar, Delhi A/c No:- LBDEL00001932676	T-15-203, 2nd Floor, Tower15, Parnvnath Privilege, Greater1, Noidanoida	17-Jul-2021, Rs. 26,13,762.2/-	31/01/2021

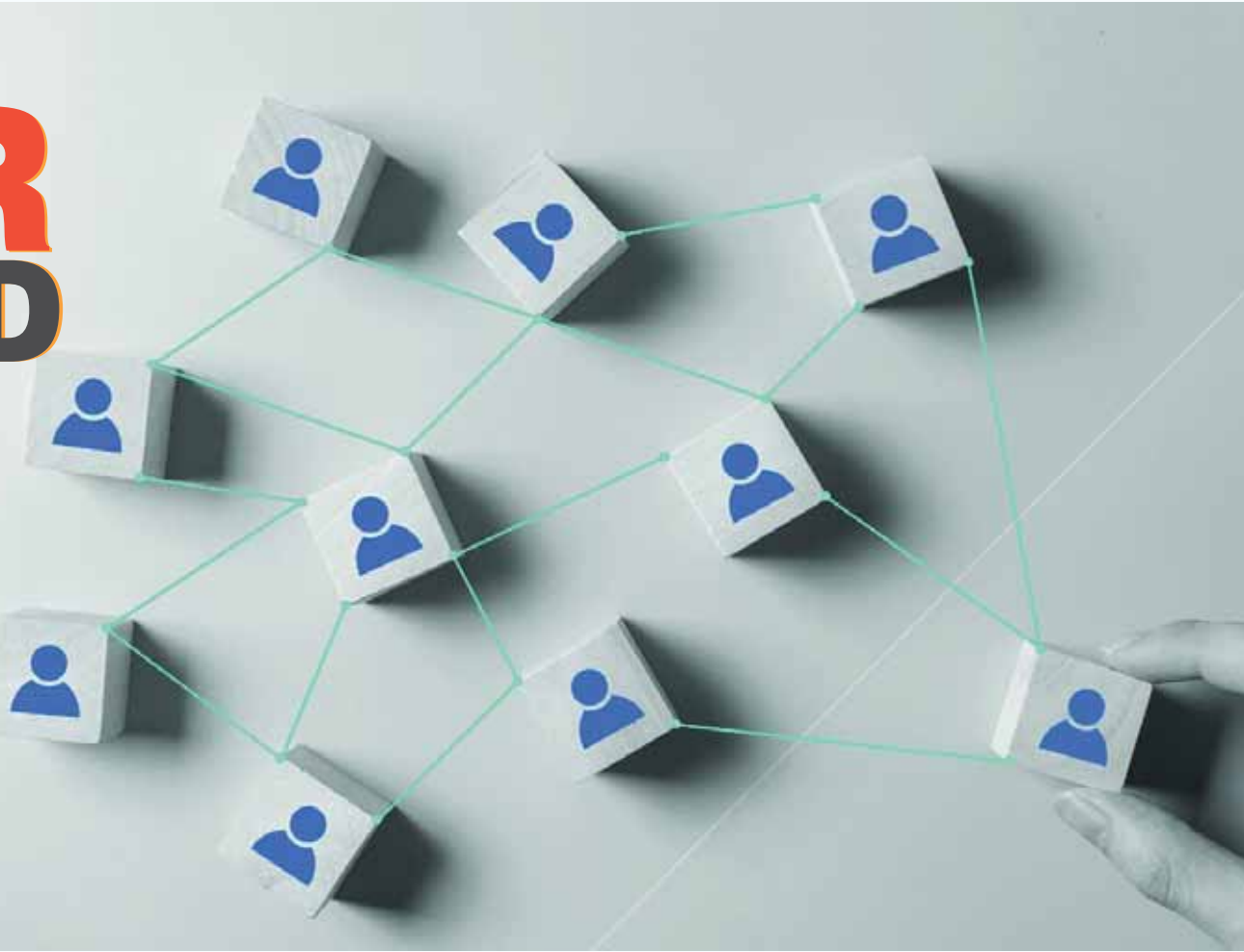
The steps are taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : January 05, 2022
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

THE YEAR AHEAD

2022 promises to be a special year for the HR function with a clear need and scope of reimagining and reinventing itself. The focus would be a lot more on digital and overall health and well-being of employees, says DEVROOP DHAR



The ongoing pandemic and the subsequent hybrid work model has brought in significant disruption in the way the HR function operates. As we enter 2022, the HR function would need to significantly reimagine and reinvent itself to keep pace with the changing time and needs of people. The critical asks in front of the HR function would be to:

- ♦ Evolve from being enforcer of HR Policies to representing people to frame new set of policies
- ♦ Building organizational culture in a Physi Virtual world
- ♦ Creating a new paradigm on communication when you don't see or meet your employees regularly
- ♦ Address the enhanced anxiety level of employees and help them on their overall well-being

HR practices would be realigned to be in sync with the hybrid work model

A hybrid mode of working with some employees working from offices and some from home or away from office is a reality and is expected to remain the same.

Even when the pandemic recedes, many companies are expected to continue with a hybrid mode of working.

The HR function needs to align and rediscover itself to the same and bring in policies, procedures and

practices that support this. For example, policies on eligibility of transport allowance for employees may need to change, the process of recruitment would change with less in-person interviews, learning & development programs may need to be more digital etc. Similarly, companies may be able to offer more attractive work policies for returning mothers with options of work from home.

The benefit and reward management system would need critical refinement

The benefit and reward management system would need to look beyond traditional monetary benefits and bring in aspects that promote mental health and overall well-being of employees and their family. Organizations that look at the holistic benefit of employees would continue to thrive and grow.

Digital HR will be the need of the hour

The HR function would have to come alive on a robust digital platform, especially on a mobile app, to ensure easy access to all employees as in-person meetings and discussions will be rarer.

Companies would look at investing in a digital platform that can bring the whole HR function, including organization culture, ethos and values into a digital platform for employees to feel and understand the organization they are working in.



Devroop Dhar
Co-Founder & Managing Director, Primus Partners

ORGANISATIONS THAT WOULD THRIVE IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES ARE THE ONES WHERE THE HR FUNCTION WILL BE UP TO THE TASK AND MEET THESE CHALLENGES

HR would need to support Mental health and well-being of the team

The HR function will move beyond supporting the needs of employees at office and look at overall well being of the team, with special focus on mental health. The HR function would need to be strengthened with psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors working with the team.

HR would look beyond supporting the employees and look at the well-being of their family

With the distinction between home and workplace becoming hazy and work timings becoming flexible, the HR function would not only have to focus on the mental health and well being of their employees, but even extend it to their families. Initiatives like awareness sessions, counselling sessions, meditation sessions for family members would have to be brought in the future.

There would be tremendous focus on virtual team bonding

With the hybrid working environment becoming a reality, the traditional concept of a team working together at the same location or in office premises would change and the HR function would need to reinvent itself in being able to help teams bond, collaborate and build camaraderie even when they are located far from each other. This would be a critical area that would define success of

companies and organizations which are able to drive, motivate and build a cohesive team even when they are located in separate places would thrive and win in the marketplace.

The Learning and Development (L&D) function would need to bring in digital interventions for upskilling and development of the team

The pandemic and the subsequent hybrid work model and digital drive have ensured that people would need newer skills to succeed in this changing work environment and marketplace. Most of the new skills and upskilling initiatives would have to be delivered virtually and hence the L&D function would need to change and bring in online learning programs with use of new age digital interventions like gamification, simulations, VR to bring in an enhanced learning experience.

2022 promises to be a special year for the HR function with a clear need and scope of reimagining and reinventing itself. The focus would be a lot more on digital and overall health and well being of employees and their immediate families. The hybrid work environment would also offer them scope for bringing in numerous benefits including a chance to offer more attractive work options for returning mothers, which they should consider. Organizations that would thrive in these challenging times are the ones where the HR function will be up to the task and meet these challenges.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Real education should consist of drawing the goodness and the best out of our own students.

— Cesar Chavez

UG/PG AT INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ART AND DESIGN

The Indian Institute of Art and Design (IIAD) in collaboration with Kingston School of Art, London offers undergraduate programmes in Fashion Design, Fashion Business Management, Communication Design and Interior Architecture & Design. It also offers postgraduate programmes in Fashion Design and Fashion Business Management.

The Institute offers these programmes through its creative studio-based education and strives to groom the next generation of designers and design thinkers at its state-of-the-art campus in New Delhi.

To know more about the admission process and scholarships, visit our website.

Website: www.iiad.edu.in
Admission Process: IIAD Entrance Test

Last Date to Apply: January 24, 2022

Exam Date: January 29, 2022

Helpline: +91 98713 83633, +91 11 4138 0000



MSC BIODIVERSITY AND CONSERVATION

The University of Sheffield, UK is inviting applications for its MSc in Biodiversity and Conservation course starting in September 2022.

Develop fundamental knowledge about major conservation issues and their human and environmental drivers, including marine plastics, urbanisation, tropical logging and the balance between sustainable food production and biodiversity.

Duration: 1 year
Eligibility: Holders of a three year bachelor degree with a minimum of 60% or "first class" from a reputable university in biological sciences or other relevant science subject
Fee - Overseas is £28,500

NAV BackOffice makes sure everyone gets quality education

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Education is one of the worst hit sectors during the unprecedented coronavirus pandemic and has left many children especially those belonging to the lower-economic section of the society out of the school.

In order to provide continuous learning facilities to such destitute learners, city-based ITes solutions provider NAV BackOffice has decided to distribute pullovers and given a cheque of one lakh to purchase tablets and bicycles so that nothing can be a hindrance in attaining quality education.

The company has collaborated with two different NGOs I-India and Top Neurons so

that they can cater to the needy ones in large numbers.

According to a latest report from UNESCO, education has been hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic with 1.53 billion learners out of school and 184 country-wide school closures, impacting 87.6% of the world's total enrolled learners. Drop-out rates across the globe have risen as a result of this massive disruption to education access.

NAV BackOffice has been running a unique campaign to mount such humanitarian assistance to common people affected in any way by COVID-19. The campaign, titled 'Hum Layenge Khushiyan' rolled out across Jaipur and leveraged the 1500-strong employee base of the company.

Higher education to shape human capital

Institutes must train students by providing essential skills to contribute to society more effectively. Before acquiring the skillset that will allow for their effective social participation, they have to understand the processes and value of the society, says DR CHANDRA SEKHAR

Higher education plays a significant role in shaping human capital in India, coupled with The Ministry of Education's mission to create a higher education environment that fosters academic and institutional excellence. In the 21st century India, there is a need for institutions of higher education that are forward-looking both academically and societally. Society contains the conventional truths and dynamics of an evolving organism that is continually changing to maintain a degree of stability among its citizens.

It also argues that students, especially at higher education institutions, must comprise an integral part of the struggle for social improvement as they strive to become participating citizens in a democratic society. Social change results only when students take upon themselves the task of getting involved and making a difference.

Today's students are different in many ways from the students of the previous generation, as many articles on the Millennials have noted. They have access to the Internet, and social media tools veterans never imagined. In addition, they are far more broadly and deeply engaged in community service through student organisations, faith communities, service-learning courses, alternative breaks, and numerous other organised activities.

The college needs to facilitate high-quality learning experiences to know that critical reflection plays an essential role. Institutes must train students by providing essential skills to contribute to society more effectively.

Colleges must develop partnerships with like-minded organisations, which conduct district-wide training on social dimensions. Social, family-focused interventions can help individuals identify abuse early on and prevent it from happening in the future

In college, learning is as diverse as the range of social experience in general, and the activities to are of a wide variety. They could offer the specialisation of appropriate choices in any particular social context having sociological implications. Specialisation choices will positively contribute to the ability of students to make appropriate choices in a particular social context.

The author recommends using a range of activities from discussion and Think-Pair-Share to concept mapping, debate, role-play to cultivate social moments where students dialogue, master vital cultural skills, and explore social realities. Uses of cases centred on violence, substance abuse, isolation, inequality and more empower the students to advance their understanding of social change to become more competent members of society.

For example, In India, many families have

limited access to health care but are also dealing with discrimination, poverty and living in dangerous environments; the chance of contracting an illness increases drastically. With evidence-based social strategies, students can help bridge the healthcare gap and provide practical solutions to families in need.

Before acquiring the skillset that will allow for their effective social participation, they have to understand the processes and value of the society. They might be short of such mindfulness. Students might not know how to talk, how to think, what to do, what to value. However, student past social experience plays a significant role in their adaptability and later ability to deal with others. Few significant challenges comprise adaptability, self-awareness, which significantly influence their action and how they respond and interpret the meaning of the environment.

In conclusion, the author argues that colleges must develop partnerships with like-minded organisations, which conduct district-wide training on social dimensions. Social, family-focused interventions can help individuals identify abuse early on and prevent it from happening in the future. By adopting new policies that support income generation and decrease economic hardship, students more effectively guide/serve struggling families.

The writer is Assistant Professor in the Human Resource Management Area at FORE School of Management



Youva: Constant upgradation is essential

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Youva, the domestic stationery brand from the house of Navneet is all set to begin the new year with the launch of a new sub-category of premium long books 'Youva Stellar', a much-required upgrade with an aim to provide a better-quality writing experience for students.

Over the years we have seen so many upgrades in

categories like mobile, fashion, automobile but the student longbooks space was neglected. Longbooks are used by college students to write their study notes, practice, and revise answers. It is an integral part of college life and remains with the individual all the time. Many students complain about the paper quality or the impression of ink coming onto the other side of the page while writing. Youva

identified this problem and developed a new subcategory for students who want no distractions while studying and that is why it is essentially an upgrade. Youva seeks to introduce this unique product range as a symbol of their progressive move towards enhancing students' user experience. Over a period of time, everyone evolves. There is a constant thirst to upgrade our lives, habits, preferences and

Youva Stellar is an extension of this.

The thicker papers (64 gsm) will ensure not leaving any mark on the other side, helping them retain their attention on the work they are doing. It is also a fact that writing on a thicker and better-quality paper inspires one to write with good handwriting.

Stellar longbooks offer a sophisticated and finished matte look.

Vidyamandir Classes to conduct NAT online

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pertaining to the increasing COVID cases (omicron variant) in the country, Vidyamandir Classes (VMC), National Institute for JEE and NEET preparation is all set to conduct its National Admission Tests (NAT) on 15th, 16th 22nd and 23rd January through online mode.

While the Government has released an order to shut offline schools but continue the curriculum as scheduled, until further

notice, the online test will provide a big boost to JEE & NEET aspirants throughout their preparation journey with mentorship, free doubt resolution and hand holding support at the nearest VMC centre all days a week, motivation sessions, and free mock tests and practice board tests for present class final exams from the comfort of their homes.

This online test is an opportunity for students of Class VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI & XII to join one of the various courses available at

Vidyamandir Classes (both classroom and online courses) for batches starting from September 2022, providing them with an early start advantage and an opportunity to grab scholarship of upto 100 per cent.

The National Admission Test will provide an Early Start advantage for students of class VI, VII & VIII and assisting in building strong fundamental which will be an added advantage for various competitive exams like IIT-JEE (Main & Advanced), NEET, NTSE,

KVPY and Olympiads as well. With exposure to competitive exams at an Early stage, Best-in-class faculty and a comprehensive teaching methodology, students will be geared up for Scholastic/Competitive examinations.

This test is planned for JEE and NEET candidates who want to be a part of top-ranked engineering and medical colleges of the nation. These online sessions will be taken by the best of the faculty members including VMC Founders.

The writer is Kishan Jain, Director at Goldmedal Electricals



LOOKING AHEAD

The announcement of new progressive policies and measures adopted by education hubs like the US, the UK, Canada, and Australia will welcome international students. Destinations like Germany, France and UAE are also building essential infrastructure, says PRATEEK GUJRAL

After two challenging years across the globe, a stable outlook is expected in 2022 for higher education. Everyone must take responsibility to stop the Omicron spread.

If all goes well, the announcement of new progressive policies/measures adopted by the international education hubs like the US, the UK, Canada, and Australia will welcome international students. Emerging destinations like Germany, France and UAE are also in process of building essential infrastructure, policies, that will help them to join the league in 2022.

The US will continue to be the favoured destination by students owing to a higher education system that features outstanding student support, massive and unconventional academic programmes offering a global standpoint, cultural diversity, and providing better work and growth prospects.

Today, students are much more aware. They should be called the explorers. They are abreast of all new developments and come for admissions carrying complete

knowledge about the universities. They are aware of various fields and which of them has a better future. Accordingly, they research a good institution that provides them with an integrated learning approach in their field of interest. They know what to take as major and minor areas of study.

Besides, they are equally cautious about making a safe choice. Now students add healthcare services to their list of top priorities while selecting a country and respective university there. Thus, leading higher education destinations and their leadership or government must work towards building a strong and supportive reaction to handle any untoward health crises.

The year 2022 will continue to observe decent impetus in online and hybrid programmes. While many institutions are now looking and preparing for transitioning back to in-person classes from Spring 2022, the accessibility of online and hybrid courses will continue to dominate conversations around programme development and recruitment over the

The year 2022 will continue to observe decent impetus in online and hybrid programmes. While many institutions are now looking and preparing for transitioning back to in-person classes from Spring

next decade.

As faculties get better at teaching in an online environment, they will keep learning employment of newer technologies, software tools, and how other resources can improve the quality of the online teaching/learning experience. The most important consequence of the adoption of digital and hybrid learning will be the enhancement in the level of access to quality education across nations. Institutions can now involve faculty who may not otherwise be able to teach at a particular university. The Internet has made classes global — both for faculties and students.

Bringing international students back on campus premises to the extent acceptable in the face of travel restrictions and other impediments to travel, will be one of the top priorities of international universities. While there will be many faculties who choose to return to the conventional classroom settings, but their teaching will unquestionably be shaped by their digital teaching experience.

As the pandemic continues, the focus will stay on the sole

objective of offering the best quality teaching and learning environment while opening doors for many students to educate themselves. Academic institutions will further endure emphasis on diversity and inclusion in their mission and strategic planning, as well as re-examine the ways to be more transparent with their audiences. Institutions must look at sustaining and increasing their efforts to aim for more diverse faculty and staff to reach levels of representation mirroring their student body.

Interestingly, India has become the second-largest market for e-learning after the US, according to the KPMG report. Under the New Education Policy 2020, the integration of the Indian higher education system with international education will set the stage to take India to the global stage that it long deserved. NEP will be a landmark transformative initiative to improve the quality of higher education in India, but also its reach; making it globally competitive.

The writer is Principal Advisor (South Asia) at Truman State University

‘Schools will have to integrate technology’

Under the new normal, schools have to integrate technology into every aspect of education, be it classroom or at home, says SUMEET MEHTA

■ How is the institute reshaping school education in India?

Our mission is to transform school education in India. We serve 2000-plus schools across 400-plus cities, and reach eight lakh-plus students and 10k plus teachers. As long as a school has teachers, students, a building and furniture, our integrated school system provides everything else — software, hardware curriculum, books, a school kit, and training sessions. Our uniquely designed ed-tech system covers the entire breadth of schooling, from pre-primary through Class X.

■ How are you different from other ed-tech players?



Sumeet Mehta
CEO-co-founder, LEAD

Most other institutions offer either piecemeal or peripheral digital solutions, whether it is in the area of higher education, tutorials or upskilling. We are addressing the challenges at the core education level and transforming conventional schooling in India with its tech integrated solutions. We replace the purely textbook-based listen and repeat system with multimodal learning. The institute also replaces twice a year assessments that used results to label children as 'good' or 'bad' with multiple assessments throughout the year with ample opportunity for remediation built into the timetable.

■ What is your vision for schools in India?

We want to transform the arc of education with superior technology solutions. The new normal driven by school ed-tech is an opportunity for schools everywhere to recoup learning loss, infuse digital technology into pedagogy, revise curricula to maximise high-quality learning and become innovative in how we teach students. Schools can and must — reimagine the classroom, transform schools into tech-based centers of excellence, make learning both engaging and exciting.

■ What is the on-ground reality of schools and what is needed?

The COVID-19 has impacted school education, especially the delivery of quality education as well as classroom-based teaching and learning. It has become one of the major concerns for parents. Over 130 million students who go to Government schools were deprived of any learning. At school

learning is core to education and critical to impact learning outcomes of the 270 million students in the country. Schools must focus beyond academics in schools.

■ Will go back to their old ways once physical schooling starts completely?

While the learning losses across grades can't be measured, it has allowed school owners, educators and teachers to transform education — not to the pre-COVID-19 days, but a post-pandemic new normal backed by a robust school ed-tech. Schools have to integrate technology into every aspect of education, whether in the classroom or at home and give the students the best of blended learning. In the new normal, schools will have to integrate technology not just with pedagogy and curricula but also routine administrative tasks, attendance management, extracurricular activities and PTA meetings.

■ What are the future plans?

We aspire to reach 26 million students and 60,000 schools by 2026. Second, we are looking to deliver teacher delight so that she has more time to teach. We will use AI and ML to automate homework checking which takes up 20 per cent of a teacher's time. Finally, we want to enhance personalisation, both for the teacher to build her skill and for the student.

As the nation was recovering from the implications caused by the 2nd wave of COVID-19, people thought that this could bring an end to the uncertainty and anxiety. However, with the explosion of the news of the new COVID-19 variant, Omicron, people have fallen into the grips of anxiety and fear of the future once again. Companies have begun to put a spanner in their return-to-office mode, holiday plans are being stalled, and mass gatherings are being reconsidered yet again.

According to a recent survey conducted by YourDOST, around 65 per cent of the respondents all over the

country reported that they are stressed to a point that it was affecting their sleep and productivity. The three emotions experienced by the people according to the report include:

Anxiety: Fear of uncertainty definitely fuels anxiety, because people tend to lose control of their thoughts imagining the worst case scenarios.

Anger: Anger signals that we have been threatened and deprived of our expectations due to loss of control in situations.

Loneliness: Socialising has become a distant dream due to which people feel more lonely than ever, triggering more stress and

depression.

Among the countless negatives, a silver lining from the pandemic has been to the awareness and importance Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing has received from people.

A survey conducted by The LiveLoveLaugh Foundation reported that around 92 percent of the respondents said that they would seek treatment and also support a person seeking treatment for

MIND IT

the ways to deal with the uncertainty:

■ Focus on what can be controlled: While it may feel easier to resort to thinking about the worst case scenarios, try to set limits of being in that space and focus on the present moment. This makes us feel a lot in control, thereby reducing the free-floating anxiety.

■ Work on your time management skills: If you feel extremely overwhelmed, and the anxious thoughts affect your productivity, take a step back and plan for small yet smart goals. Prioritise your tasks and set deadlines so that you feel in control of things.

■ Build a support system: Loneliness can worsen the pandemic stress because it becomes difficult to vent out feelings. Talk to your loved ones, family and/or friends— whoever makes you feel heard and validates your feelings. Avoid long conversations about the new variant and try picking up topics that interest you and your loved ones.

■ Seek professional help: Mental Health Professionals are qualified and trained to help people with stress and anxiety. If you feel like, reach out to a counselor to understand and solve your issues better.

The writer is Richa Singh, CEO-co-founder, yourDOST

Scholarship

The Internshala invites applications for its annual scholarship — **Internshala Career Scholarship for Girls (ICSG)-2022**. The reward is ₹25,000 and meant to recognise a girl who has fought against odds to pursue a career of her dreams in any field — academics, sports, arts, or any other field.

The scholarship will be awarded as an allowance for pursuing an internship or undertaking a project in the chosen field, payment towards a specialised training programme and special equipment.

Eligibility: Any girl of Indian nationality between the age group of 17 to 23 years (as of 31st December 2021) is eligible to apply for the scholarship by 15th January 2022. To apply, the girl students need to fill this form and state their career objective. The applications will be shortlisted based on four elements including the fight against odds, achievement, purpose, and need.

Interview: A short-list for a telephonic interview would be announced and interviews would be conducted. You would be asked to furnish all the necessary documents and proofs before the interview.

Referee check: After the interview, your referee (provided in the form) would be con-

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AT CASPIAN IMPACT INVESTMENTS
Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/j/dd03cf
Deadline: January 13, 2022

VIDEO MAKING/EDITING AT FINSTREET
Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹15,000-₹20,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/j/b0397b
Deadline: January 12, 2022

CONTENT COORDINATION & EDITING AT ASAAN ECOMMERCE
Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹9,000-₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/j/5126d2
Deadline: January 13, 2022

WEB DEVELOPMENT AT V TOUCH SOLUTIONS
Location: Lucknow
Stipend: ₹10,000-₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/j/4cbfb2
Deadline: January 8, 2022

HR AT WORKCAVE COWORKING
Location: Chandigarh
Stipend: ₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/j/20cd6d
Deadline: January 12, 2022

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (SALES) AT PHOENIX FOOD SERVICES
Location: Bhubaneswar
Stipend: ₹12,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/j/2ca803
Deadline: January 10, 2022

VIDEO ANALYTICS PIPELINE AT UNCANNY VISION SOLUTIONS
Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹30,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/j/5e2bd2
Deadline: January 13, 2022

MASTER'S PROGRAMME IN ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The Indian Institute of Technology Madras is going to launch a Master's Program in Electric Vehicles. This Interdisciplinary Dual Degree will boost the students' engagement with eMobility and will be offered for its BTech and Dual Degree Students. This program will enhance the research capabilities in this exciting field. Students are expected to enrol in this programme from January 2022 during their third year of BTech and dual degree programmes. The initial intake is expected to be 25 students.

The students graduating from this program will have the skill sets required to pursue job opportunities in EV Product Development including EV Integration, Vehicle Aggregate Engineering, Communication and Calibration, Verification and Validation, and Product and Portfolio Planning.

Professor. T. Asokan, Head, Department of Engineering Design, IIT Madras, said: "The course will be the result of nearly eight departments collaborating to induct the skills required for a student to engineer Electric Vehicles. The content offered is carefully curated to build sufficient depth in each domain, starting from Vehicle Basics and going to very specific EV aggregates including Batteries and Motors."

ACHIEVEMENT FOR IIT MANDI

The Indian Institute of Technology Mandi witnessed another year filled with achievements in diverse sectors ranging from R&D, academics, entrepreneurship, and innovations. 2021 saw a significant increase in the number of sponsored research projects and funding for IIT Mandi. The total number of projects sanctioned in the year 2021 are 32, with the sanctioned amount of over ₹14.41 crores.

FASHION DESIGN AT EDU BRAIN ACADEMY

The Edu Brain Academy collaborated with the world's most prestigious National and International universities offering bachelor programmes in Fashion Design, Fashion Business Management, Communication Design and Interior Architecture & Design. It also offers postgraduate programmes in Fashion Design and Fashion technology. It announced admissions at the Edu Brain Academy School of Design for UG, PG and diploma-level courses.

FREE CRASH COURSE 2022 FOR ALL JEE ASPIRANTS

The Extramarks has launched a free online crash course #JEEKITaiyaari to help students prepare for Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) 2022. Commencing on 3rd January 2022, the sessions will be conducted by top-ranking JEE experts and faculty for Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics for all JEE aspirants who want to get into the top-notch engineering colleges in India.

The COVID-19 has affected the preparation of thousands of students studying offline, and hence Extramarks is going an extra mile to offer free access to JEE prep material via Extramarks JEE YouTube channel and Extramarks app.

The comprehensive crash course module is designed by JEE faculty and experts at Extramarks; to revise the entire syllabus in just 70 days with 115-plus hours of live sessions, 13-plus complimentary mock tests to help boost scores and 70-plus practice worksheets at zero cost. The experts will touch basics of all priority topics for extra preparation and polishing concepts, for students of all levels of preparation, be it - beginner, intermediate or advanced. The experts will also be sharing tips & tricks, doubt solving, and error analysis to get students exam-ready.

GMAC ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL REGISTRATION WINDOW

The Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), administrator of the NMAT by GMAC exam and a global association of leading graduate business schools, today announced the additional registration window for the NMAT by GMAC exam starting January 3 until January 9, 2022.

It has been GMAC's singular focus to help candidates and schools continue to operate in a virtual, ever-changing environment. In its effort to support candidates who are aspiring to pursue their management degree, this is the second year in a row that GMAC is offering an additional registration window to students.

PREP CLASS FOR NEET 2022 ASPIRANTS AT NO COST

The Affinity Education is coming up with bonanza's offer to help aspiring NEET aspirants 2022 with a free coaching facility. They will get all the expert guidance from medical professionals.

The specially designed feature on this app provides students to avail all the free facilities which include physics, chemistry, and biology classes under experienced teachers on its application without paying a single rupee.

Apart from this, free study material, doubt sessions, mock tests, and other features of the app make this offer a complete package for aspirants.

Commenting on app, Founder, and CEO, Vishu Tripathi said: "Free coaching facility is an attempt to reduce the stress and financial burden of medical students. All the lectures and complete study material will be made available online for all the registered students without any cost. Also, experienced medical professionals will connect to guide students through webinars on this platform."

Ranji Trophy put on hold due to surge in Covid cases

Not to start from Jan 13

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's premier domestic first-class competition Ranji Trophy will not start as scheduled on January 13 due to a massive surge in COVID-19 cases across the country, a BCCI official told PTI on Tuesday.

The first round was to start in multiple cities on January 13 but has been put off and the BCCI will deliberate on when to conduct the blue riband tournament some time later.

"Yes, the Ranji Trophy has now been put on hold and will not start on January 13," a BCCI tournament committee member told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Recently, the Bengal team reported six COVID-19 cases, including five players while Mumbai's India player Shivam Dube also tested positive and is in isolation. The Ranji Trophy is being held in six cities including Bengaluru and Kolkata among others.

Shardul's 7 brings India back in game

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

Unheralded seam bowler Shardul Thakur turned out to be an unlikely hero with a career-best 7 for 61 to keep India on even keel against South Africa on an intriguing second day of the second Test here on Tuesday.

Standing at 5 feet 7 inches and with a physique which is an antithesis of what is perceived to be a fast bowler's body, the skiddy Thakur (17.5-3-61-7) landed crucial blows at opportune moments to send the Proteas packing for 229 in their first innings.

It was his effort that nullified India's seemingly inadequate first innings score of 202 with the lead being restricted to 27 and then erased by visitors as they reached 85 for 2 at stumps, losing stand-in skipper KL Rahul (8) and Mayank Agarwal's (23) wicket.

The two under-fire seniors Cheteshwar Pujara (35 batting) and Ajinkya Rahane (11 batting) were at the crease and for a change showed lot of positivity and intent. India now lead by 58 runs.

Shardul means 'Tiger' in Sanskrit and his teammates teasingly call him 'Lord Beefy' which incidentally is legendary all-rounder Ian Botham's nickname.

The 'Tiger' was in a mood to hunt inside the 'Bull Ring' under sunny the Johannesburg skyline and he did exactly that, coming up



with a performance which is over and above what even coach Rahul Dravid would have expected. On a pitch with spongy, tennis ball like bounce, a total of 180 to 200 will be an onerous fourth innings chase for South Africa as the match is expected to end well within four days if the weather doesn't play spoilsport. The day started nicely for South Africa as their dogged skipper Dean Elgar (28 off 120 balls) was happy to play the ugly waiting game while allowing his younger colleague Keegan Peterson (62 off 118 balls) to

play an attacking role.

It was going well in a stand of 74 as South Africa reached 88 for one before Thakur was brought into the attack in the 34th over as the second change.

With Mohammed Siraj bowling from a shorter run-up and not able to exert himself fully due to a hamstring injury, the man from Maharashtra's Palghar district had to take more responsibility with the team virtually one bowler short.

Mohammed Shami (2/52 in 21 overs)

and Jasprit Bumrah (1/49 in 21 overs) once again bowled their hearts out, beat the outside edges without much luck before Thakur came into the picture and dealt three blows in quick succession just before lunch.

UNDER-RATED SKILL SETS BUT VERY EFFECTIVE

Thakur, when he burst into the domestic scene, was more of a 135 kmph plus bowler but over the years, he is bowling in the 120-130 kmph band but possesses a mean outswinger and a lethal off-cutter delivered with scrambled seam and grip of a slower delivery.

In case of a scrambled seam, the stitched part of the ball doesn't hit the ground and if the ball's shine is maintained well, which the Indian team did diligently, it lands on the skin (red part) and starts skidding at a pace which is more than what the batters can apprehend.

"Since he has a habit of bowling a lot of off-breaks (slower delivery for pacers with tweak of finger) in limited overs cricket, he is using that skill effectively in Tests also. He might bowl at 130 kmph but with the scrambled seam, he hurries the batter a touch more)," his childhood coach Dinesh Lad told PTI from Mumbai.

The delivery that got Peterson was a conventional outswinger which wasn't at drivable length and the batter went for a non-existent

punch through covers only to land in second slip Agarwal's palms.

Before that, Peterson's left-handed skipper Elgar got one that moved late taking the outside edge.

Similarly, in the second session, just when Temba Bavuma (51 off 60 balls) and Kyle Verreynne (21) added 58 and looked like heading for a sizeable lead, Thakur produced a fuller one with scrambled seam that landed on the 'fifth off stump' and cut back sharply to trap the young keeper leg before.

In case of Bavuma, the delivery was fired towards his rib cage and was drifting down before Rishabh Pant took an extraordinary catch down the leg-side.

A CONTENTIOUS CAUGHT BEHIND

Out of Shardul's seven wickets, the dismissal of Rassie van der Dussen did create some controversy as TV replays turned out to be inconclusive whether Thakur's off-cutter, that literally had the batter cut into half, was taken cleanly by Pant.

One angle seemed to suggest that it was picked on the bounce and it was learnt that home team captain Elgar visited the match referee's room to have a chat.

In 2011, Mahendra Singh Dhoni in an exemplary show of sportsmanship had called back Ian Bell after the batter was adjudged run-out in the post lunch session.

Ebadot puts Bangladesh on top in 1st test vs New Zealand

AP ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI NEW ZEALAND

Ebadot Hossain bowled Bangladesh to the brink of a famous victory over World Test Champion New Zealand in a fiery spell Tuesday on the fourth day of the first cricket test.

On a pitch on which Bangladesh and New Zealand collectively amassed 786 runs in their first innings — with the tourists taking a 130-run lead — Ebadot reduced New Zealand to 147-5 at stumps, a lead of only 17 runs.

After dismissing first innings century-maker Devon Conway for 13, Ebadot removed Will Young (69), Henry Nicholls (0) and Tom Blundell (0) in the space of six balls to fortify the strong position the Bangladesh batters had created.

"The first thing to know about Ebadot as a person is that he only came to cricket about five years ago," Bangladesh's West Indies-born bowling coach Ottis Gibson said.

"He won a fast-bowling competition somewhere and two years later he was playing international cricket.

"He's a joy to work with because he's enthusiastic and he wants to learn so much. When his confidence is high he can bowl spells like this."

New Zealand was just hanging on at stumps in the face of Ebadot's aggressive swing bowling. Veteran Ross Taylor, in his penultimate test match before retirement, was 37 and allrounder Rachin Ravindra was 6.

Bangladesh hasn't won any of its previous 43 matches in New Zealand across all three formats and wasn't expected to test New Zealand in this match in the absence of veteran players such as Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal and Mahmudullah.

But the tourists have steadily got on top of New Zealand, and Ebadot rammed home their advantage on Tuesday, finishing the day with figures of 4-39.

Bangladesh first dismissed New Zealand for 328, claiming the last five wickets for 70 runs to leave it short of a par score on a docile pith at the Bay Oval. Bangladesh replied with 458, lifted by the contributions of captain



Mominul Haque (88), Liton Das (86), Mahmudul Hasan Joy (78) and Najmul Hossain Shanto (64).

Resuming on Tuesday at 401-6, Bangladesh added a further 57 through Mehidy Hasan (47) and Yasir Ali (26).

When the tourists finally were all out, New Zealand had been in the field for more than 176 overs — the better part of two days — in hot conditions and seemed wilted when their second innings began.

Latham again was out cheaply when he dragged a short ball from Taskin Ahmed onto his stumps. Ebadot had his first wicket when Conway was caught at slip by Shadman Islam, though the Decision Review System was needed to confirm the dismissal.

Sania-Kichenok, Ramkumar-Bopanna advance in Adelaide



PTI ■ ADELAIDE

On an all-win day for Indian tennis players, Sania Mirza and the pair of Ramkumar Ramanathan and Rohan Bopanna emerged victorious in their respective first round matches, albeit in contrasting fashion, in the ATP and WTA tournaments, here on Tuesday.

Sania and her Ukrainian partner Nadiia Kichenok overcame a first-set thrashing to knock out second seeds

Gabriella Dabrowski and Giuliana Olmos 1-6-3 10-8 in the WTA 500 event.

In the ATP 250 men's event, the Indian combination of Ramkumar and veteran Bopanna, pairing up together for the first time on the ATP tour, had an easy day out.

They trounced American Jamie Cerretani and Brazilian Fernando Romboli 6-2 6-1 to set up the pre-quarterfinal with eighth seed American pair of Nathaniel Lammons and

Jackson Withrow.

"We had a good match. Both of us served And returned well. We combined well and stuck to the plan," Ramkumar told PTI.

"We had practiced once with the same team before the draw which helped us.

"I am always happy to play with Bops (Bopanna), who is so experienced and is someone who has always been of good support and helps me with my tennis with all the experience he has," he added.

Since India will host Denmark on grass courts in New Delhi in their next Davis Cup tie in March, it is a possibility that Bopanna and Ramkumar, who has developed a fantastic serve and volley game, may pair up for the doubles.

This tournament will give them that opportunity to find out what works for them, if at all the captain decides to field them as a team.

Interestingly, Ramkumar got a chance to play with Denmark's top singles player Holger Rune in the singles Qualifiers and lost 4-6 6-7(7) in a close first round match.

Rune, ranked 103, eventually qualified for the main draw.

The match must have given him a fair idea of what to expect from Rune when he lands in Delhi for the Davis Cup.

Boland retains spot in Australia line-up for 4th Ashes test

AP ■ SYDNEY

Scott Boland has retained his spot in Australia's bowling attack for the fourth Ashes test after his starring role on debut in the series-deciding victory over England last week.

Boland took six wickets for seven runs as England collapsed in the second innings to be all out for 68 in Melbourne, allowing Australia to retain the Ashes with two matches to spare.

Any debate about Boland's spot in the starting XI ended when veteran pace bowler Josh Hazlewood was ruled out for a third consecutive match because of a side strain.

Australia made one injury enforced change for the fourth test starting Wednesday at the Sydney Cricket Ground, with Usman Khawaja replacing middle-order batter Travis Head.

Khawaja's return for the first time since 2019 comes after Head was ruled out following a positive COVID-19 test.

England's coronavirus concerns have mainly been off the field, with head coach Chris Silverwood among the support staff in isolation in Melbourne and missing the Sydney match.

Assistant coach Graham Thorpe, who will guide the squad in Silverwood's absence, recalled 35-year-old paceman Stuart Broad in the only change to England's lineup. Broad missed selection for the first



and third tests but returned to replace Ollie Robinson, who leads the team with nine wickets in this series but has been sidelined with a shoulder problem.

Australia's pace bowling stocks are strong, with skipper Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc getting good support across the last two tests from Boland in Melbourne and from Richardson and Michael Neser in Adelaide, as well as allrounder Cameron Green.

After inspecting the SCG pitch, Cummins opted against bringing in Mitch Swepson as a second spinner to work with Nathan Lyon. "You need that disciplined

stump to stump bowler. That's what Scott brings to the table," Cummins said.

"It's no secret. If Josh Hazlewood was available he was going to play. (But) it would have been a real shame to see Scotty not play this week after his efforts last week.

I'm really glad he gets another crack out here."

Thorpe said Broad and star allrounder Ben Stokes, who is yet to hit top form since returning in Australia from a prolonged break, were like a "couple of caged tigers" ahead of the Sydney match as England tries to end a run of 13 Ashes tests in Australia without a win.

Multiple COVID-19 outbreaks hit Australian domestic leagues

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Multiple COVID-19 outbreaks inside bio-bubbles threw Australian domestic leagues haywire on Tuesday as cricket administrators grappled to keep schedules on track while players complained of anxiety.

Both the men's and women's domestic games were hit hard and Cricket Australia (CA) was forced to make many late schedule changes.

Two matches of the Women's National Cricket League involving Western Australia were postponed till March due to border closures after a spike in COVID-19 cases. This has pushed the women's domestic 50-over final to mid-March.

WA were scheduled to play Tasmania in Hobart twice this week, on January 7 and 9, but the games have been pushed back to March 9 and 11 given the western state's hard border with the rest of the country.

Djokovic given medical exemption to play at Australian Open



AP ■ BRISBANE

Novak Djokovic will get a chance to defend his Australian Open title after receiving a medical exemption to travel to Melbourne, ending months of uncertainty about his participation because of the strict COVID-19 vaccination requirements in place for the tournament.

The top-ranked Djokovic wrote on Instagram on Tuesday he has "an exemption permission" to travel to Australia.

Djokovic, who is seeking a record 21st Grand Slam singles title, has continually refused to reveal if he is vaccinated against the coronavirus.

The Victoria state government has

mandated that all players, staff and fans attending the Australian Open must be fully vaccinated unless there is a genuine reason why an exemption should be granted.

Australian Open organizers issued a statement later Tuesday to confirm Djokovic will be allowed to compete at the tournament, which starts on Jan. 17, and is on his way to Australia. He earlier withdrew from Serbia's team for the ATP Cup, which started last weekend in Sydney.

"Djokovic applied for a medical exemption which was granted following a rigorous review process involving two separate independent panels of medical experts," the statement said.



Schwag, Yuvraj, Harbhajan to play for India Maharaja in inaugural Legends League Cricket

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Virender Sehwag, Yuvraj Singh and Harbhajan Singh will be among a host former stars in the India Maharaja team which will take part in the inaugural edition of the Legends League Cricket (LLC), starting on January 20 in Oman.

The first season of LLC, which is a professional cricket league for retired international cricketers, will be played at the Al Amerat Cricket Stadium in Oman among three power-packed teams.

The other two teams would be representing Asia and rest of the world.

Apart from the above trio, Irfan Pathan, Yusuf Pathan, Badrinath, RP Singh, Pragyan Ojha, Naman Ojha, Manpreet Gony, Hemang Badani, Venugopal Rao, Munaf Patel, Sanjay Bangar, Nayan Mongia and Amit Bhandari will also be part of the India Maharaja team.

Mbappe hat trick as PSG beats Vannes 4-0 in French Cup

AP ■ PARIS

Kylian Mbappe scored a second-half hat trick as French Cup holder Paris Saint-Germain won at fourth-tier Vannes 4-0 to reach the last 16. Goalkeeper Clement Petrel made a couple of smart saves before PSG central defender Presnel Kimpembe stooped to score a powerful header from a Nuno Mendes corner in the 28th minute.

Mbappe was kept quiet by the Vannes defense in the first half on a rainy night in the



Brittany region of northwestern France. But he made it 2-0 in the 59th when he latched

onto Kimpembe's long pass from defense to sprint clear and finish with a low shot that

looped in. His next goal was far more emphatic as he arrowed a shot high into the net from 20 meters, after good work from midfielder Marco Verratti allowed 18-year-old Dutch midfielder Xavi Simons to send Mbappe through in the 71st.

His third goal was from close range after swapping passes with substitute Eric Ebimbe in the 77th. It marked his 18th goal in 25 games overall. PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino also picked 18-year-old French midfielder

Edouard Michut, who impressed with his technical ability albeit against modest opposition.

PSG was without Lionel Messi, isolating at home in Argentina after being among four players who tested positive for the coronavirus during a brief winter break. Pochettino was uncertain if Messi will recover in time to play at Lyon in the league on Sunday.

Lens hosts Lille in a northern derby on Tuesday for the final spot in the last 16.