

**OPINION 6**  
SHADOWY GENERALS  
IN RAWALPINDI GHQ**WORLD 8**  
SOARING OMICRON CASES COULD LEAD  
TO MORE DANGEROUS VARIANTS: WHO**MONEY 9**  
SENSEX RALLIES FOR FOURTH  
DAY TO RECLAIM 60K-MARK

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY JANUARY 6, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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# Breach in PM's security in Punjab, Modi skips event

**Modi's cavalcade stuck on flyover as kisan block NH, MHA seeks report**

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

In a major controversy just before the Assembly elections in Punjab, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was stopped in his tracks by the protesting farmers who blocked the national highway during his road trip from Bathinda to Hussainiwal (in Ferozepur) — an act the Centre described as “security breach”, while seeking a detailed report from the Congress-led Punjab Government.

Modi, who was on his first visit to Punjab after revoking the contentious farm laws, was forced to cancel his much-talked-about rally and return to the national Capital in the wake of the “security breach”, just about 10 kilometres away from the Pakistan border.

The Prime Minister's cavalcade got stuck in a road blockade in Piarana village near Hussainiwal for 15-20 minutes on the flyover, which the Union Ministry of Home Affairs described as a “major lapse” in his security. Following



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cavalcade stuck on a flyover in Ferozepur on Wednesday

PTI

this, the convoy decided to return without attending an event at the National Martyrs' Memorial, Hussainiwal, besides canceling the rally.

Taking strong note of the “serious security lapse”, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs has sought a report from the State Government asking how the PM's cavalcade was stranded on a flyover for over 15 minutes due to a protest when his programme had been duly communicated to the State police. At the same time, the Ministry has asked

the State Government “to fix responsibility” for this lapse and take strict action.

“The PM's schedule and travel plan was communicated well in advance to the Punjab Government. As per procedure, they have to make necessary arrangements for logistics, security as well as keep a contingency plan ready. Also in view of the contingency plan, the Punjab Government has to deploy additional security to secure any movement by road, which was clearly not deployed,” said the MHA.

The entire BJP leadership, right from the Union Home Minister Amit Shah to national president JP Nadda, lashed out at the Punjab Government.

“Today's Congress-made happening in Punjab is a trailer of how this party thinks and functions. Repeated rejections by the people have taken them to the path of insanity. The top-most echelons of the Congress owe an apology to the people of India for what they have done,” tweeted Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Channi denies lapse in security, blames last minute change

**Regret PM had to return, we have full respect for him, says Punjab CM**

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Amid the allegations of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's “security lapse” in a sensitive zone near to the Indo-Pak border, Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi on Wednesday categorically denied the charges while blaming the “last-minute change of plan”.

“The Prime Minister was not attacked. There was no threat to his life. It was just an agitation. There was a peaceful protest on the way. This is wrong to say that there was a security lapse. There should not be any politics in this. We have respect for our Prime Minister,” said Channi while addressing the media after



Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi addresses a Press conference after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cavalcade got stuck on a flyover in Ferozepur, at Punjab Bhawan in Chandigarh, on Wednesday

PTI

controversy erupted over a “major security lapse” during the Prime Minister's Ferozepur visit.

At the same time, the Chief Minister expressed “regret”

that the Prime Minister had to return. “He is our Prime Minister. We regret that he has had to go back. We have full respect for him,” he said.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Thanks Channi, I am alive, PM takes a jibe at Punjab CM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Akhi mein Bhatinda airport tak zinda laut paaya (Say thanks to your Chief Minister that I could return alive till Bhatinda airport). Prime Minister Narendra Modi reportedly told this to the officials at Bhatinda airport on his return after his cavalcade got stuck on a flyover in a highly sensitive zone for about 15-20 minutes due to a road blockade by the protesting farmers.

The Prime Minister, who was on his way to the National Martyrs' Memorial in Hussainiwal by road, was forced to cancel his onward journey after the incident due to the security breach and returned to Bhatinda.

The Prime Minister was visiting Punjab after a gap of two years.

## Covid cases 6-month high in India; 2-fold rise in Delhi, UP

**Delhi sees 8 deaths, Mumbai 3 in 24 hours**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI /MUMBAI/LUCKNOW

Driven by huge spikes in Delhi, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, India's Covid-19 surge turned alarming as the country registered 58,097 new coronavirus infections during the last 24 hours. This figure reported on Wednesday is the highest in 199 days, taking the country's total tally of cases to 3,50,18,358, while the active cases were recorded above 2 lakh after around 81 days.

While Delhi and UP saw a two-fold rise in a day. Delhi registered 5,466 cases on Tuesday, which went up to 10,671 on Wednesday. Eight persons died of the virus in one day. Similarly, UP's count went up from 999 to 2,038 during the same period.

Mumbai reported 15,166 fresh cases of Covid-19 on Wednesday, making it the highest daily count ever since the pandemic began. Three persons succumbed to the virus. The city also recorded 100 new cases of Omicron.

On the whole, Maharashtra reported 26,538 new cases, 8



A health worker interacts with a Covid-19 infected patient resting on her bed inside a Covid care centre of the Commonwealth Games (CWG) Village in New Delhi on Wednesday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

deaths and 5,331 discharges in a day. Active cases rose to 87,505. Maharashtra's Omicron count has now reached 797. Delhi currently has 23,307 active cases, a health bulletin said. The national Capital has reported 464 cases of the Omicron variant so far.

“Testing has been intensified. Around 90,000 tests were conducted on Tuesday. A Covid war room has been activated which will help in maintaining district and hospital-wise data about bed occupancy, patients, oxygen, etc,” Delhi Health Minister Satyendra Jain said.

Apart from that, private

hospitals have been instructed to increase the number of reserved beds for coronavirus patients to 40 percent.

While the number of patients in Delhi hospitals rose from 247 to 531 on Tuesday, the number of patients and oxygen support has also grown from 94 to 168 and ozone ventilators from four to 14 since January 1, 2022.

In UP, 2,038 more people have tested positive for novel coronavirus infection in the last 24 hours, almost 2 fold increase in cases since Tuesday when 992 cases were reported in one day.

Additional Chief Secretary

(Medical and Health) Amit Mohan Prasad said that out of the 1,92,430 samples tested in the last 24 hours, 2,038 were positive for coronavirus infection. He said that in the last 24 hours, 51 Covid-19 patients had recovered.

He said in view of the increase in Covid-19 cases, the Government issued two guidelines. One, children can avail holiday on the day of vaccination and the next day, and the second guideline specifies that all educational institutions up to class 10 will be closed in the districts where there will be more than 1,000 active cases.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Home quarantine reduced to 7 days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a sharp rise in daily coronavirus count in the country, the Centre has issued revised guidelines that no longer require asymptomatic contacts of patients to get tested. The Union Health Ministry also laid down home isolation rules for mild and asymptomatic cases, while cutting the quarantine period after testing positive from at least 10 days to seven.

“Patients under home isolation can end isolation after at least seven days have passed from testing positive and if there is no fever for three days in a row. They will continue to wear masks. There is no need for retesting after the home isolation period is over. Earlier, home isolation ended after 10 days from onset of symptoms,” said the guidelines.

The asymptomatic contacts would not be tested but would be required to monitor

their health in home quarantine.

The new guidelines replace those issued on April 29, 2021, under which a patient under home isolation was supposed to be “discharged and end isolation” after “at least 10 days” have passed from the onset of symptoms (or from the date of sampling for asymptomatic cases) and has had “no fever for 3 days”. Besides, all family members and close contacts were required to be “monitored and tested”.

Issuing the revised guidelines on Wednesday, the Health Ministry said, “Over the past two years, it has been seen globally as well as in India that a majority of the cases of Covid-19 are either asymptomatic or have very mild symptoms. Such cases usually recover with minimal intervention and accordingly may be managed at home under proper medical guidance and monitoring.” *Continued on Page 2*

## Covid-19 drug Molnupiravir not safe: ICMR

**ICMR observation raises question mark on its coordination with DCGI**

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) gave a green signal for restricted use of antiviral drug Molnupiravir in emergency situation for Covid patients, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Director General Balram Bhargava on Wednesday said the drug has major safety concerns, including mutagenicity, muscle and bone damage.

The observation raises a question mark on the coordination between the two major Government health agencies, the DCGI and the ICMR at a



time when the country is reeling under the spiraling Covid-19 infections.

“The antiviral Covid-19 pill is not included in the treatment guidelines of the Covid-19 national task force,” said Bhargava, adding that contraceptive methods should be used for three months if the drug is administered to women since the child may have problems.

“Molnupiravir has major safety concerns, including mutagenicity, muscle & bone damage.”

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## CAPSULE

**AMAZON-RELIANCE ARBITRATION STAYED**

**New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court on Wednesday stayed the Amazon-Future arbitration which is going on before a three-member arbitral tribunal over the latter's ₹24,500-crore deal with Reliance.

**BULLI BAI APP CASE: THREE ARRESTED**

**Mumbai:** Three people have been arrested in the ‘Bulli Bai’ app case, Mumbai Police Commissioner Hemant Nagrale said here on Wednesday.

**17 KILLED IN BUS ACCIDENT IN J'KHAND**

**Pakur:** Seventeen people were killed and 26 others injured in a head-on collision between a bus and a truck transporting gas cylinders in Jharkhand's Pakur district on Wednesday morning, police said.

**WOMAN WHO ENTERED SABARIMALA ATTACKED**

**Kozhikode:** A woman activist was allegedly attacked by an unidentified man at Kozhikode beach here on Wednesday, police said.

## Bad weather caused crash, death of CDS Rawat, 13 others: Probe report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The investigation team set up to probe the helicopter crash which killed first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat, his wife and 12 others briefed Defence Minister Rajnath Singh here on Wednesday.

Bad weather reportedly was the cause for the accident killing all onboard. Technically, it is known as Controlled Flight into Terrain (CIFT) wherein an aircraft unintentionally collides with terrain be it ground, mountain or a tree-top.

The tri-service Court of Inquiry headed by Air Marshal Manvendra Singh, himself an accomplished helicopter pilot and currently Chief of Training Command, and IAF chief VR Chaudhari, apprised Rajnath here about the findings of the investigations.

While there was no official word about the report, sources said the MI-17 helicopter was



trapped in a cloud due to weather suddenly turning bad moments before it was to land. The helicopter crashed into a cliff, they said.

The accident took place on December 8, 2021, when General Rawat, his wife Madhulika, his defence adviser Brigadier LS Lidder, staff officer to the Chief of Defence Staff, Lt Colonel Harjinder Singh and decorated pilot Group Captain Varun Singh and others were to land at the

Defence Services Staff College (DSSC), Wellington. General Rawat was scheduled to give a lecture there later in the day. The helicopter crew members too were killed in the crash.

The Court of Inquiry investigated all the aspects, including the possibility of malfunction in the helicopter mechanism, any technical or human error leading to the accident. The investigators also examined the black box or flight data recorder and cock-

pit voice recorder, they added.

The probe team examined all likely scenarios for the crash, including possible human error or whether it was a case of disorientation of crew when the helicopter was preparing for landing, sources said.

The helicopter crew had not made any distress call to the ground station when it suddenly encountered thick clouds indicating that the pilots were in control of the helicopter. The commander of the flight was Wing Commander Prithvi Singh Chauhan and Squadron Leader Kuldeep Singh was the co-pilot. Both of them were highly skilled pilots with Master Green rating, they said.

The CIFT phenomenon says the pilot or crew is unaware of the looming disaster until it is too late, and it most commonly occurs in the approach or landing phase of a flight.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Bengal BJP rebels refuse to settle down

**Union Minister Thakur in talks with other rebels to move out of party**

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

With infighting in the West Bengal unit of the BJP refusing to die down, rebel party MP and Union Minister Shantanu Thakur is known to have held a secret meeting with four other rebel leaders and saffron MLAs at Bongaon in North 24 Parganas, giving speculation about his future move, sources said.

All the five leaders had earlier quit a designated WhatsApp group of the party MLAs. The secret meeting was held on Tuesday, sources said, adding though that there was no immediate possibility of Thakur's joining the ruling Trinamool Congress.

The MLAs who had quit

the WhatsApp group and had been keeping cards close to their chest since then are Asim Sarkar (Haringhata MLA in Nadia), Ambika Roy (Kalyani MLA in Nadia), Subrata Thakur (Gaighata MLA in North 24-Parganas), Mukut Mani Adhikari (Ranaghat South MLA in Nadia) and Ashok Kirtaniya (Bongaon North MLA in North 24-Parganas district).

Incidentally, another BJP MLA, this time from Kharagpur, Hiran Chatterjee, also left the party WhatsApp group on Wednesday expressing displeasure with the leadership, including Ghosh, sources said. He is the 11th MLA to quit the party WhatsApp group in past one month.

According to sources, Thakur a strong Matua satrap was not happy with BJP national vice-president Dilip Ghosh for his alleged side-lining Ghosh. Thakur is known to enjoy a good chemistry with

another senior BJP leader and former Tripura Governor

Tathagata Roy. Roy has also been critical of Ghosh and some other national leaders like Kailash Bijaybargiya.

When asked as to what he would do in the coming days Thakur said he would take a decision shortly and make it known to the media. “I will inform the media people about my future stand soon,” he said.

Matuas are a well-knit scheduled caste community that migrated from Bangladesh and have a large vote base in three districts of Bengal — Nadia, North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas. The group can influence the voting pattern of about 70 Assembly seats in the State.

Thakur and the other BJP leaders were unhappy with the recent organisational shuffling in the State BJP unit complaining they were ignored while distributing of organisational posts.

*Continued on Page 2*



# Covid crisis looms over Maha as daily cases exceed 26K-mark, all non-agri edu institutions shut till Feb 15

State records 144 Omicron cases, tally reaches 797

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Covid-19 situation in Maharashtra turned into a crisis on Wednesday, as the daily infections jumped to an alarming tally of 26,538 cases – of which Mumbai accounted for staggering 15,166 cases. Taking serious cognisance of the worsening Covid-19 situation in the state, the Maharashtra Government ordered the closure of all non-agricultural, technical, deemed or private universities and their affiliated colleges and students

hostels till February 15. The move came after Higher & Technical Education Minister Uday Samant held a virtual conference with the Divisional Commissioners, Collectors and Vice-Chancellors of various non-agricultural universities. “Considering the safety and health concerns of the students, all colleges and universities have agreed to conduct the classes as well as the upcoming examinations online,” the minister said. With 26,538 fresh cases reported on Wednesday, the total number of Covid-19 cases went up from 67,30494 cases to 67,57,032 cases. Simultaneously, 144 Omicron cases were reported from various parts of the state taking the total number of Omicron cases detected in the state to 797.

Of the 144 Omicron cases, Mumbai accounted for a maximum of 100 cases, followed by eleven cases in Nagpur, seven cases each in Thane and Pune, six cases in Pimpri-Chinchwad, five cases in Kolhapur, two cases each in Amravati, Ulhasnagar, Bhiwandi, Nizampur and one case in Panvel and Osmanabad. After 15,166 Covid-19 positive cases detected in Mumbai, the total number of cases detected so far in Mumbai went up to 8,33,628. As 5331 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 65,18,916 to 65,24,247. The recovery rate in the state dropped from 96.86 per cent to 96.55 per cent.

The number of “active cases” in the state increased from 63,308 to 87,505 cases. The fatality rate in the state dropped from 2.1 per cent to 2.09 per cent. Mumbai accounted for a maximum of 61,923 active cases, while there were 11,262 active cases in Thane. There were 5617 active cases in Pune, followed by Raigad (2087), Palghar (1839), Nashik (1043), Nagpur (696), Ahmednagar (433) and Satara (422). Of the 6,97,77,007 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 67,57,032 have tested positive (9.68 per cent) for COVID-19 until Wednesday. Currently, 5,13,758 people are in home quarantine while 1,366 people are in institutional quarantine. Meanwhile, the State

recorded 144 cases of Omicron, taking the total number of new Covid-19 variant cases to 797 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: 508, PMC-78, Pimpri-Chinchwad—44, Thane –29, Pune rural –26, Nagpur –24, Panvel –17, Havi Mumbai, Kolhapur –10 each, Satara-8, Kalyan Dombivli—7 each, Osmanabad –5 Vasai-Virar-4, Nanded, Amravati, Ulhasnagar –3 each, Aurangabad, Buldhana, Mira-Bhayandar Sangli, Sangli –2 each, Latur, Ahmednagar, Akola and Raigad—1 each. Of the total cases 330 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 234420 (34,108 from At-risk countries and rest 200312 are from other countries), while passengers whose RT-PC tests have been done are 68629 (34108 are from high-risk countries and 24,521 are from other countries). Similarly, RT-PCR positive and samples sent for genomic sequencing was 673 (337 are from at-risk countries and 336 are from other countries). Additionally, field surveillance of all international passengers who have arrived since 1st November is underway. “Through airport and field surveillance, 2641 samples have been sent for genomic sequencing. The results of 102 are awaited so far,” the daily health bulletin said.

# 50 Cheetahs to be introduced in India in next 5 years: Min

**New Delhi:** After becoming extinct in 1952, cheetah is all set to return to India as the Central Government on Wednesday launched an action plan under which 50 of these big cats will be introduced in the next five years. Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav launched the action plan at the 19th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) saying, “The Cheetah that became extinct in independent India, is all set to return.” The plan to reintroduce cheetah had gone in limbo due to COVID-19, an NTCA official had earlier said. As per the action plan, a cohort of around 10-12 young cheetahs that are ideal for reintroduction shall be imported from Namibia or South Africa as a founder stock during the first year. “An existing coalition of wild males shall be selected while the selected females shall also be known to each other as far as possible. “The animals’ lineage and condition shall be checked in the host country to ensure that they are not from an excessively inbred stock and are in the ideal age group, so as to conform to the needs of a founding population,” said the over 300-page action plan.

# Breach in PM’s security in...

**From Page 1** “The Ministry of Home Affairs has sought a detailed report on today’s security breach in Punjab. Such dereliction of security procedure in the Prime Minister’s visit is totally unacceptable and accountability will be fixed, he added. Nadda accused the Congress Government of trying “all possible tricks to scuttle” PM’s programmes in Punjab, while Shah went on to

seek an “apology” from the Congress’ “topmost echelons” to the people of India for what they have done. Nadda said that fearing a resounding defeat the Congress Government tried all possible tricks to scuttle the Prime Minister’s programmes in the State. In a series of tweets, Nadda said, “Fearing a resounding defeat at the hands of the electorate, the Congress Government in Punjab tried all possible tricks to scuttle the PM

@narendramodi Ji’s programmes in the State.” Nadda claimed that by their cheap antics, the Congress Government in Punjab has shown that they are anti-development and have no respect for freedom fighters too. “In doing they did not bother that the PM was to pay tributes to Bhagat Singh & other martyrs, and lay the foundation stone for key development works. By their cheap antics, Congress Gov in Punjab has shown that they are anti-development & have no respect for freedom fighters too,” Nadda said. Referring to the “security breach,” Nadda said, “What is extremely worrisome is that this incident was also a big security lapse as far as the PM

is concerned. Protesters were given access to the Prime Minister’s route while the Punjab CS and DGP gave assurances to SPG that the route is clear.” Union Minister Smriti Irani alleged complete breakdown of law and order in Punjab and asked who leaked security details of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s travel route to Ferozepur in the State. “We know that Congress hates PM Modi, such is the breakdown of law and order in Punjab that DGP claims he’s incapable of providing security to PM,” said Irani. She lambasted the Congress, asking who in the Punjab Government gave

information about the PM’s route to individuals who planted themselves atop the flyover. Addressing a press conference she said, “The Congress Government in Punjab allowed this... Never before has a State Government knowingly constructed a scenario where the Prime Minister of the country will be brought in harm’s way.” On the other hand, the Congress party claimed that the Prime Minister decided to cancel the rally because seats at the rally were vacant. Congress general secretary and chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said all arrangements were made in tandem with SPG and other agencies. “Dear Naddaji, stop losing cool and all sense of propriety.

Please remember -- 10,000 security personnel were deployed for PM’s rally. All arrangements were made in tandem with the SPG and other agencies,” he said on Twitter. Meanwhile, Bhartiya Kisan Union (Krantikari) have claimed responsibility for stalling the Prime Minister’s cavalcade. Union’s general secretary Baldev Zira claimed that the farmers have taught the “arrogant Modi” a lesson. Notably, BKU Krantikari is believed to be an ultra left farmer union. Its president Surjit Phul was booked under different sections of UAPA in 2019, and arrested for allegedly having links with Maoist organisations.

# Channi denies... From Page 1

Accusing the BJP of blaming the Punjab Government for political reasons, Channi also stressed that everyone should resist giving “political colour” to the “unfortunate” incident. “It is wrong to link the farmers’ agitation with the threat to the PM’s security... We should not do any politics on this,” he said. Claiming that the Punjab Police was “capable of providing security,” Channi asserted, “All this happened because the PM’s travel plans were changed at the last minute. Yet, the PM’s office was informed beforehand that agitators had assembled on the road. He decided to cancel his rally. His team took the decision to cancel the rally” In pictures and videos going viral on social media and released from different sources, including the PMO, Modi was seen sitting in a black Toyota Fortuner secured by SPG officers. Barely a few feet from his car, people and policemen were seen in clusters. The Chief Minister maintained that the BJP workers can be stopped and we should immediately remove farmers. I assured him to take every precaution. We tried till 3 o’clock in the night to remove them from the roads,” he said.

cies planned to go by road. “Some protesters came on the way and they blocked the road with tractor-trolleys. Despite this, if they feel that there has been a security lapse, then we will get it investigated. So far, no action has been taken against any officer,” he said. Channi maintained that he had to receive the Prime Minister and go along with him. “I had to go to Ferozepur and attend the meeting. Yesterday, some of my office staff tested positive for Covid, then my principal secretary and PA tested positive. Because of this, considering my responsibility, I did not go there but requested the Finance Minister to welcome the Prime Minister,” he said, adding that Deputy Chief Minister (Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa) and local MLA were also requested to welcome the PM. The Chief Minister also maintained that he had been working till 3 am the day before to ensure that everything went well during the Prime Minister’s visit. “Yesterday I got a call from the Home Minister that the BJP workers can be stopped and we should immediately remove farmers. I assured him to take every precaution. We tried till 3 o’clock in the night to remove them from the roads,” he said.

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### E-Tendering/Tender Notice

**Letter No. 13/Nivida/02      Date : 04.01.2022**

**Name of Work :-** Over Head Tank, Pump House, Boundary Wall & appurtenant works in Gidhor SVS water supply Scheme under Block Sitarganj.

1	Date of Calling of tenders	05.01.2022
2	Date of Online Publication	06.01.2022 at 17:00hrs.
3	Document download : Start Date 07.01.2022 at 10:00hrs. and End Date 20.01.2022 at 17:00 hrs.	
4	Pre Bid Meeting	11.01.2022 at 14:00 hrs.
5	Bid Uploading : Start Date 07.01.2022 at 10:00hrs. and End Date 20.01.2022 at 17:00 hrs.	
6	Offline Submission of documents	21.01.2022 upto 17:00 hrs.
7	Date of Technical Bid Opening	22.01.2022 at 11:00 hrs.
8	Details of tender, corrigendum or cancellation etc may be obtained at web site: <a href="http://www.uktenders.gov.in">www.uktenders.gov.in</a>	

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### E-Tendering/Tender Notice

**Letter No. 20/Nivida/03      Date : 05.01.2022**

**Name of Work :-** Jal Jeevan Mission Programme, Single Bid System Under Over Head Tank, Pump House, Boundary Wall & appurtenant works under following tenders.

**Name of Scheme :-** (1) Bhainsa MVS W/S Scheme under Block Khatima. (2) Mundeli-2 SVS W/S Scheme under Block Khatima

1	Date of Calling of tenders	05.01.2022
2	Date of Online Publication	06.01.2022 at 17:00hrs.
3	Document download : Start Date 07.01.2022 at 10:00hrs. and End Date 20.01.2022 at 17:00 hrs.	
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### E-Tendering/Tender Notice

**Letter No. 21/Nivida/04      Date : 05.01.2022**

**Name of Work :-** Jal Jeevan Mission Programme, Two Bid System Under Pipe Line, FHTC & appurtenant works under following tenders.

**Name of Scheme :-** (1) Bhainsa MVS W/S Scheme under Block Khatima. (2) Mundeli-2 SVS W/S Scheme under Block Khatima. (3) Gidhor SVS W/S Scheme under Block Sitarganj.

1	Date of Calling of tenders	05.01.2022
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**Executive Engineer**

# Covid cases 6-month...

**From Page 1** The official said that at present there were more than 1,000 active cases of Covid-19 only in Gautam Buddha Nagar while there were less than 10 active cases in 33 districts of the State. The night curfew will remain in force from 10 pm to 6 am on Thursday, he said. Apart from this, people will be checked by setting up Covid Help Desk in zoos, memorials and other public places. Hotels, food points and cinema halls will operate with 50 per cent capacity. Prasad said a new guideline had been issued by the

Government of India regarding home isolation, according to which, the period of home isolation had been reduced to seven days. He said that the hospitalisation of new patients of COVID-19 was negligible. “Testing and treatment of COVID-19 is being done free of cost at government centres. The coronavirus infection is not completely over yet. Therefore, people should follow Covid protocol. Be sure to follow the Covid protocol even after vaccination. In case of any problem, contact on Covid Helpline 18001805145, he said. The countrywide scenario is equally grim. India has recorded more than 6.3 times increase in cases in the last 8 days to nearly touch 60 thousand infections on Wednesday itself. India’s Omicron tally too

went past the 2000-mark with 153 more cases taking the total number of patients to 2,043. The variant is now spread across 24 states and Union Territories in the country with fresh cases being recorded in Meghalaya. The Health Ministry has identified Maharashtra, Delhi, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Jharkhand and Gujarat states as ‘emerging States of concern’ while it found that six states recorded more than 10,000 active cases and two states recorded between 5,000-10,000 cases. Meanwhile, a total of 2,135 cases of Omicron variant of coronavirus have been detected across 24 States and UTs so far, out of which 828 have recovered or migrated, according to the Ministry data update.

# Home...

**From Page 1** The revised guidelines identify asymptomatic cases as “laboratory-confirmed cases who are not experiencing any symptoms and have oxygen saturation at room air of more than 93%.” “Clinically assigned mild cases” are defined as “patients with upper respiratory tract symptoms with or without fever, without shortness of breath and with oxygen saturation at room air of more than 93 per cent”. In the earlier guidelines, the oxygen saturation threshold for both categories of cases was above 94 per cent. On clinical management of “mild/ asymptomatic cases”, the

guidelines say: “The patient should be clinically assigned as a mild/ asymptomatic case by the treating Medical Officer. Further, a designated control room contact number at the district/ sub-district level shall be provided to the family to get suitable guidance for undertaking testing, clinical management related guidance, assignment of a hospital bed, if warranted.” Asymptomatic cases are laboratory-confirmed cases that are not experiencing any symptoms and have oxygen saturation at room air of more than 93 per cent. Clinically assigned mild cases are patients with upper respiratory tract symptoms with or without fever, without shortness of breath and having oxygen saturation at room air of more than 93 percent, said the guidelines.

**Government Of Jharkhand**  
**Urban Development Department**  
**OFFICE OF THE NAGAR PARISHAD MADHUPUR**  
**Very Very urgent Notice Inviting Tender**

**E-Tender Reference no-UDD/MMC/04/2021-22      Date :- .....**

Sl. No.	Name of work	BOQ Amount cost (Rs.)	Earnest Moneyor Bid security(Rs.)	Cost of tender paper (Rs.)	Class of contractor eligibility	Time of Completi	Name of the concerned office
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Construction of marriage hall at panahkola under Madhupur nagar Parishad, district-Deoghar	Rs. 13931848.6	Rs. 319318	Rs. 10000 /- (Non-Refundable)	Class I only	18 Months	Executive Officer Nagar Parishad Madhupur

Sl. No.	1	2
1.	Tender Inviting Office Name	MADHUPUR NAGAR PARISHAD
2.	Date of Publication of Tender in newspaper	07.01.2022 (Friday)
3.	Date/Time for receiving of Bid online	08.01.2022 to 20.01.2022 (10:00 am to 6:00 pm)
4.	Date & Time of Bid Opening	22.01.2022 after 2:00 pm
5.	Last Date of receiving hard copy of Earnest money & Cost of Tender Paper	21.01.2022 up to 2:00 pm
7.	Only E-Tender will be accepted further details can be seen on Website-	<a href="http://jharkhandtender.gov.in">http://jharkhandtender.gov.in</a>

Note:-Helpline no- 7368005128

Executive officer, Nagar Parishad Madhupur .

PR.NO.261114 Deoghar(21-22):D



# Online exam solving module busted, 6 held: Delhi Police

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the arrest of six people, the Cyber Cell of Delhi Police has busted an online examination hacking/solving module. Police said that Russian hackers were also used by the syndicate to get access to various examination portals.

The accused have been identified as Arshad Dhunna (39), Salman Dhunna (28) and Hemal Shah (42), all residents of Mumbai, Kunal Goel (39), a resident of Delhi, while Mohit Sharma (35) and Raj Teotia (33), both residents of Karnal in Haryana. Teotia, has a reward of Rs one lakh on his arrest from Haryana and was also wanted by CBI, police said.

The accused helped 18 candidates to clear the GMAT (Graduate Management Aptitude Test) exam and around 500 candidates in other exams in three years, police said.

According to K P S Malhotra, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Cyber, police received information that a few syndicates were involved in unauthorized access of various competition exams and charging hefty amount for getting the candidates the desired scores.

"These syndicates claimed to have access into online examinations of GMAT, JEE etc. During investigation, the accused persons were contacted and a deal for cracking GMAT exam was struck with them. The exam was booked in the name of a decoy police official, fee was submitted and the slot for exam was booked," said the DCP.



"Token money of the deal was also deposited in the bank account provided by them. On the exam day on December 26, the accused asked the decoy candidate to download software "Ultraviewer" and thereby gained the remote access of the candidate's laptop," said the DCP.

"They also connected the candidate's laptop to the solver who had attempted the exam and evaded the detection from the proctor and other safety measures. The hacker got access to the laptop and disguised the remote access file as the system file. The decoy candidate got a total score of 780 out of 800, which is 97 percentile and can get admission to the top MBA colleges worldwide," said the DCP.

"During technical analysis and financial data led to the identification of the syndicate members based in Mumbai. Later, raids were conducted in Mumbai, and Arshad, Salman and Shah were apprehended on Saturday from Mahim,"

said the DCP.

"These three were primarily involved in striking the deal and then connect the decoy customer with another module of syndicate to solve the exam. On their instance, Goel was apprehended from Pitampura. He runs an institute for networking training course and used to arrange the solvers for the Mumbai based module. Later, Sharma, who was the solver in this case, was also nabbed from Gurgaon," said the DCP.

"Sharma told police that he entered this profession due to Teotia, who is one of the most infamous exam hackers and wanted by CBI and Haryana Police in various cases. A reward of Rs 1 lakh on his arrest was declared by Haryana Police," said the DCP.

"On Monday, Teotia was apprehended from Jaipur in Rajasthan. Teotia revealed that he is engaged in online examination hacking and solving for the last five years and had been in touch with Russian hackers also for getting the exams hacked. He also visited Russia in 2018. He got developed tool to remotely access the online examination system developed by one of the reputed IT companies," said the DCP.

"A total of 15 laptops and nine mobile phones have been seized," police said. GMAT is a computer-based examination for the admission in graduate management programs of business schools. Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) is the owing agency of GMAT.

# Delhi traders unhappy over odd-even norm, weekend curfew

**New Delhi:** Traders in the national Capital are unhappy over the DDMA's decision to impose weekend curfew along with odd-even arrangement on weekdays as they said the move will limit their number of business days to as low as two per week.

They argued that with eight to 10 business days a month, it will be difficult for them to manage shop rent, workers' salaries and other expenses of the trade. The traders suggested that if weekend curfew was inevitable, then the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) should have at least allowed opening of shops on all days during the week.

The Delhi Government on Tuesday had announced a weekend curfew and work from home for its offices as the city had recorded 5,481 fresh Covid-19 cases, the highest number since May 16, with a positivity rate of 8.37 per cent and three fatalities.

Sadar Bazar Market Association president Devraj Baweja said the order is nothing but another move to trouble the traders and shopkeepers across the city. "Weekend curfew clubbed with the odd-even arrangement for markets will leave only two or three days per week or 10-12 business days a month for shops which is very less," Baweja said.

"If a shop is open on Tuesday and Thursday, then due to odd-even restrictions and weekend curfew, its next turn will come only on Tuesday in the other week. This is injustice," Baweja told PTI.

He demanded that the DDMA should have at least allowed non-essential goods

shops to function all weekdays, if it intended to impose a weekend curfew.

Palika Bazar Shopkeepers Welfare Association chairman Baljeet Singh Kohli said traders are always the first one to face the axe be it lockdown, weekend curfew or the odd-even arrangement.

He said the traders are the worst-affected during the Covid pandemic as their businesses have collapsed and have incurred huge losses.

"We are already at loss and this weekend curfew coupled with odd-even functioning of shops will kill the business. We will get less days to earn but will have to pay full month salary to our staff, full month rent and other expenses. This is becoming just too hard for traders," Kohli lamented.

He said authorities, be it the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) or the Delhi government, do not extend support to traders.

"We have several times appealed to the NDMC to reduce our rent as we are not able to do business due to restrictions time and again but to no avail. We will again write to them to give us some relaxation in rent as our shops will not function on most of the days in the month," Kohli said.

During the weekend curfew that will come into force at 10 pm on Friday and will be in place till 5 am on Monday to tackle a surge in Covid-19 driven by Omicron, all essential services will be allowed in the national capital.

Along with weekend curfew, night curfew and odd-even arrangement for markets will also continue to be in place during weekdays. **PTI**

# Covid: Leave of Delhi Govt officers, officials, staff cancelled

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has cancelled the leave of all its officers, officials and staff, and directed them not to leave station in view of a rising number of Covid-19 cases in the city and the need of enough manpower to handle the situation.

It is anticipated that the containment of the pandemic will involve a huge mobilisation of human resources at various levels in the city government, according to an order issued by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Tuesday.

"The competent authority directs to cancel all leave granted, except medical leave, to all officers/officials/staff in all the departments, offices of Delhi Government until further order," the order said.

It further directed that no leave, except for medical reasons, shall be granted to the officers, officials and staff of different departments of the GNCT of Delhi nor shall they be allowed to leave station.

Delhi recorded 10,665 fresh Covid cases and eight more deaths due to the viral disease in a 24-hour period, according to a health bulletin issued by the city Government on Wednesday.

# 94 bus drivers challaned in city for traffic rule violations

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Traffic Police in a one-day special drive conducted in its three ranges on Wednesday took action against 94 'errant buses' for violation of traffic rules.

"On Tuesday, the special drive was conducted in its Western, Eastern and Central Range to prosecute such violating buses. The drive was conducted after several complaints were received from various quarters against buses committing traffic violations," police said.

According to the data shared, In Central Range alone 14 buses were challaned for dangerous driving and 14 others for permit violation. In northern range, 14 vehicles were challaned for dangerous driving, two for supreme court violation, two for permit violation and 15 for lane violation.

The Supreme Court violation includes-- traffic offences such as over-speeding, crossing the yellow line, violation of traffic signals.

Meanwhile, in Western range, 13 vehicles were challaned for dangerous driving, 11 for supreme court violation, 6 for permit violation and 3 for lane violation, the data showed.

Vivek Kishore, the Joint Commissioner of Police, Traffic said that it was observed that a number of drivers of DTC and Cluster buses do not ply their vehicles in the bus lanes and also drive dangerously. Such erring buses also indulge in a number of road accidents.



A health worker interacts with a Covid-19 infected patient resting on a bed inside a Covid care centre at the Commonwealth Games (CWG) village, in New Delhi on Wednesday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

# G'ram reports 1,178 Covid cases

**Gurugram:** The rapid increase of coronavirus cases in Gurugram continued on Wednesday with 1,178 cases and 12 omicron cases reported in Gurugram.

The Covid-19 tally in Gurugram has now risen to 1,85,890 out of which 1,81,545 have been recovered according to the official daily health bulletin.

The figures of COVID active patients are 3,418 and 3,399 are in home isolation and around 71 patients were discharged on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, amid increasing the covid cases in Gurugram, a meeting of the District Task Force Committee constituted for the prevention of corona infection was organized under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner Vishram Kumar Meena on Wednesday.

Representatives of the Government and private hospitals participated in this meeting. During the meeting, necessary points related to the prevention of corona infection were discussed. In which hospitals were directed they should provide correct information about the availability of oxygen to the district administration for this a Google form will be sent to them soon. Apart from this, in a separate meeting

headed by the Municipal Corporation Gurugram (MCG) Commissioner, Mukesh Kumar Ahuja, necessary directions were given to the MCG officials.

The commissioner appointed senior sanitation Inspector Rishi Malik as the nodal officer for the lifting of biomedical waste of the home isolation patients.

For biomedical waste pickup, contact number 9821395131 was also shared. Also, Instructions have been given by the commissioner to arrange 8 vehicles for lifting biowaste.

Besides, sanitation officer Vijender Sharma has been given the responsibility of Nodal Officer for transporting the COVID-19 dead bodies. For dead bodies, anyone can contact on 9599316882, the commissioner informed.

"Adequate staff has been arranged by the MCG for contact tracing, which will be increased as per requirement. Based on the data received from the health department a call will be made to the concern between 9 am to 10 pm. If a person does not pick up the call even after calling twice, untraceable data will be shared with the police twice a day so that contact tracing can be done at the earliest," Ahuja said.

# Over 1 lakh voters added to electoral roll

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Chief Electoral Officer of Delhi, Dr. Ranbir Singh, on Wednesday informed that the Special Summary Revision of the Electoral Roll with 01.01.2022 as the qualifying date has been completed in the NCT of Delhi with the final electoral roll being published today.

He stated that during the period, there was a net increase of 1,03,610 electors, including 50,562 male, 52,964 female, and 84 third gender electors as compared to the previous roll published in January 2021. This increase, according to Dr. Singh, is a step in realizing the ECI vision of "No Voter to be left behind".

The overall number of electors on the final electoral roll released is 1,48,99,159 including 81,38,593 male, 67,59,534 female, and 1,032 third gender electors. The gender ratio of electors registered on the final electoral roll has risen from 826 last year to 831, demonstrating significant progress towards greater electoral in inclusion of women, said Dr. Singh.

The increase in the number of third gender electors also demonstrates the positive result of intense efforts made by electoral machinery



towards ensuring an inclusive electoral roll.

Dr. Singh further informed that for the convenience of the public, the numbers of polling stations have been increased from 13789 to 13820, through a rationalization exercise as per the ECI guidelines.

He said, "during the Special Summary Revision, various SVEEP activities were carried out to raise awareness among prospective voters about the 01.01.2022 qualifying date,

such as regular announcements in the Delhi Metro, advertisements in print media, attention-grabbing jingles on different FM Radio channels, Nukkad Natak in public spaces, Munadi and display of banners in prominent locations to catch hold of general public's attention."

The SWEEP campaign was branded as "Dilli Ka Voter Utsav 2022" and the campaign slogan was "Chalo Voter Bane Hum" and "No Voter to be left Behind".

# DIAL completes refurbishing of British-era runway; hands it over to ATC for operations

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) has completed refurbishing work on the 09/27 runway at Indira Gandhi International Airport and handed over the facility to ATC for commercial operations late last month, which will help in reducing the runway operations time.

According to DIAL officials, the newly rehabilitated runway, which was constructed during the British period, complies with Category-I (CAT-I) Instrument Landing System (ILS), which assists pilots during landing an aircraft in low visibility conditions, it said.

DIAL undertook the rehabilitation work of runway 09/27 (first runway) as part of Delhi Airport's phase 3A expansion projectAccording to the private airport operator, the British constructed the 2,816 meter-long and 60-meter-wide runway in the pre-Independence era and used it during World War II.



DIAL said it undertook major rehabilitation works, including milling down the entire length of the runway's flexible pavement to a depth of 60 mm and overlaying it with Polymer Modified Bitumen (PMB), which can withstand heavy-duty traffic and extreme weather conditions.

The British-era runway was rehabilitated and made operational for commercial operations as part of DIAL's effort to enhance

the infrastructure and passenger experience at Delhi Airport to make it future-ready," said I Prabhakar Rao, Dy Managing Director, GMR Group.

He said the newly rehabilitated runway will have a design life of 20 years and would be instrumental in handling the increased air traffic movements (ATMs), once pre-pandemic level traffic returns to Delhi Airport.

# Electrocuted peacock saved by Delhi Police' promptness

**New Delhi:** The Delhi Police saved a peacock's life it found electrocuted on a road in north Delhi's Burari area, a senior police officer said on Wednesday. The incident was reported on January 3 at Burari Police Station regarding electrocution of a Peacock, he said.

When it reached the spot, the police found the peacock lying on road hurt and about to die, said the officer.

Acting fast, SHO Rajendra Prasad co-ordinated with the Wild Life NGO and Charity Bird Hospital near Red Fort and put together a team with ASI Roop Singh, Constable Bhim, and Constable Sukhvinder, he said.

"The national bird was immediately taken to the Bird Hospital by the team in a clean cloth. It is only because of strenuous efforts and prompt action the life of the peacock was saved," he added. **PTI**

# Rain in Delhi, max temp drops to season's lowest

**New Delhi:** The national Capital recorded light rain on Wednesday, while its maximum temperature dropped to 15.7 degrees Celsius, four notches below the normal and the season's lowest so far.

A cloud cover pushed the minimum temperature up to 10.9 degrees Celsius, four notches more than normal.

The Safdarjung Observatory, considered the official marker for the city, recorded 7.3 mm rainfall.

The weather stations at Palam, Lodhi Road, Ridge and Ayanagar received 6.1 mm, 6mm, 5.8mm and 4.8 mm rains, respectively.

Cloudy weather and on and off light rainfall is predicted in the city till January 9



Vehicles ply amid light rain and low visibility on a cold winter morning, in New Delhi on Wednesday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

under the influence of two back-to-back western disturbances, officials at the India Meteorological Department said.

"Generally cloudy sky and light rains" are expected till January 9 and the minimum temperature is expected to rise to 13-14 degrees Celsius by Saturday.

Mahesh Palawat, vice president (Meteorology and Climate Change), Skymet Weather, said the mercury is likely to drop to around four degrees Celsius after the withdrawal of western disturbance.

One or two spells of moderate rain are also expected in the capital, he said. **PTI**

# Man arrested for creating fake FB profile, posting 'obscene' photos of woman for revenge

**New Delhi:** A 21-year-old man was arrested for allegedly creating a fake Facebook profile of his brother-in-law's sister and uploading her objectionable photographs, police here said on Wednesday. The accused, identified as Nitesh Pandey, created the profile allegedly to take revenge from his brother-in-law's family for torturing and leaving his sister soon after marriage, they said.

Pandey, who belongs to Bihar, lives in Gurugram where he works as a helper in a workshop, they said.

The arrest was made by the Kamla Market Cyber Police Station acting on a complaint registered on January 3 by a woman.

In her complaint, the woman alleged that some unknown person had created a fake profile on Facebook using her name and photographs and

written objectionable remarks under the profile for her and her elder sister, police said.

The accused was traced with the information gathered from the URL of the FB profile and use of technical surveillance, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Shweta Chauhan said.

During interrogation, Pandey revealed that his sister had married Kshitij Pandey, the victim's brother, on May 2 last year, but soon after marriage he started torturing his sister and eventually left her, the officer said.

"In order to teach a lesson to his brother-in-law's family, he created a fake profile using the name of the victim and uploaded her and his sister's photographs with vulgar and objectionable remarks," the DCP said. **PTI**



# NO MIX-MATCH ALLOWED FOR BOOSTER DOSE: GOVT

Precautionary Covid-19 vaccine dose will be the same as has been given previously. Those who have received Covaxin will receive Covaxin, those who have received primary two doses of Covishield will receive Covishield

— Dr Dr VK PAUL, MEMBER (HEALTH) OF NITI AAYOG



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As India is all set to launch the "Precautionary Covid-19 vaccine" for a certain category of population from January 10, the Government on Wednesday made it clear that no mix and match will be allowed for the booster dose.

The Government asserted this in the wake of a few studies claiming that mixing doses of Covaxin and Covishield is absolutely safe. For instance, a study, conducted by AIG Hospitals along with researchers from the Asian Healthcare Foundation, has found that mixing of vaccines is absolutely safe and no adverse effect on participants was noticed.

However, Dr Dr VK Paul, member (health) of Niti Aayog made it clear at a Press briefing here that the "precaution shot" will be the same as the original jab. Healthcare, front-line workers and people above

the age of 60 with comorbidities will be eligible for the precaution dose which would be administered from January 10.

"Precautionary Covid-19 vaccine dose will be the same as has been given previously. Those who have received Covaxin will receive Covaxin, those who have received primary two doses of Covishield will receive Covishield," Dr Paul said.

Further, health officials also said that the upsurge of Covid-19 cases is happening in cities and the Omicron variant is the predominant circulating strain.

For the study, conducted by AIG Hospitals along with researchers from the Asian Healthcare Foundation, Covaxin and Covishield were mixed and tested it on 330 healthy volunteers. These volunteers were neither vaccinated nor had any history of Covid-19 infection.

The researchers divided 44 people into four groups and were administered doses.

They were observed for 60 days to see if there are any adverse effects. The study found that the Spike-protein neutralising antibodies were significantly higher in the mixed vaccine groups when compared with the same-vaccine groups.

"Spike-protein neutralising antibodies are the ones which kill the virus and reduce the overall infectivity. We found that when the first and second dose are of different vaccines, the Spike-protein antibody response is four times higher compared to two-dose of the same vaccine," said Dr D Nageshwar Reddy — chairman, AIG Hospitals — who was among the researchers involved in the study.

"Mixed doses can certainly boost these Spike-protein neutralising antibodies and will enhance the vaccines' effectiveness even against the Omicron variant," Dr Reddy added.

## Civil Services (Main) Exams to be conducted as per schedule

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Civil Services (Main) Examination, 2021 will be conducted as per schedule from Friday, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) said on Wednesday.

Keeping in view the restrictions being imposed by Governments to curb the spread of Covid-19, the commission has urged the states to ensure that no inconvenience is caused to the candidates and examination functionaries in their movement, especially those who are coming from the containment and micro-containment zones.

The commission said if necessary, the e-admit cards of the candidates and the identity cards of the examination functionaries are to be used as movement passes. "After carefully reviewing the situation prevailing due to Covid-19

pandemic, the Commission has decided to conduct the Civil Services (Main) Examination, 2021 as per schedule i.e. On 7th, 8th, 9th, 15th and 16th January, 2022," it said in a statement.

The civil services examination is conducted annually in three stages — preliminary, main and interview — to select the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) officers, among others.

The States have further been requested to make public transport operational to the optimum level, at least a day before the exam starts till it concludes — from January 6 to January 9 and from January 14 to January 16 — in order to ensure a smooth movement of the candidates and examination functionaries, the statement said.

All the competent district authorities and the venue

supervisors have been provided with the guidelines of the commission for the conduct of the exam in these times of pandemic, it added. The guidelines are mainly related to the personal hygiene of the candidates and examination functionaries, maintenance of social distancing and wearing of masks by them all the time and the provision of hand sanitiser at convenient places in the venues.

The guidelines also ask the examination functionaries and candidates to carry their own sanitiser in transparent bottles. The guidelines include sanitisation of each venue on a regular basis and two surplus examination rooms for accommodating the candidates who would be coughing, sneezing, complaining of breathlessness, feeling feverish so that they can write the examination under appropriate safety protocols, the statement said.



A healthcare worker collects a swab sample of a passenger for Covid-19 test, at Bandra Terminus, in Mumbai, on Wednesday PTI

## Telegram channel targeting Hindu women blocked

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After "Sulli Deals" and "Bulli Bai" App controversy where photos of Muslim women were shared for 'auction' on GitHub, a new controversy has emerged on social media where now Hindu women are being targeted and bullied with derogatory words and photos on Telegram.

After a row on social media, the Government got the channel blocked and has assured action against those behind this.

Meanwhile, in a related development, the Delhi Police has transferred the "Bulli Bai" case to its Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) unit and is planning to get a nod for Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty procedure to seek information about the

app from its foreign-based hosting platform. IFSO unit is also probing the "Sulli Deals" mobile application case that emerged in July last year.

Union Minister for Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnav took cognisance of the matter after details of the channel were shared by a Twitter user. Replying to the tweet, he informed that the channel has been blocked and the Government of India is coordinating with state police authorities for action.

"Channel blocked. Government of India coordinating with police authorities of states for action," tweeted Vaishnav. There's no information yet on who created this Telegram channel and what action the police have taken. A verified user complained against this particular Telegram



channel which was created in June 2021 and has been targeting Hindu women, sharing their photos and abusing them.

Many social media users expressed outrage over the Telegram channel abusing Hindu women. Concerned citizens on Twitter are also asking Microsoft and GitHub to take

the matter seriously, for this has happened not once but twice under their watch.

Sources in the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeiTY) have said that it is closely monitoring the Bulli Bai app case through its Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-IN).

Sources further said CERT-IN is coordinating with GitHub, Twitter, Delhi Police and Mumbai Police in the matter. Sources also said that the IFSO unit on Tuesday got a nod for Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) procedure in criminal matters from the Centre.

The action comes just days after outrage regarding shocking 'auction' of Muslim women online via a webpage named 'Bulli Bai' on open-source platform GitHub.

Hundreds of Muslim women were listed for auction on the dodgy app with photographs sourced without permission and doctored. It has happened for the second time in less than a year. The application appeared to be a clone of 'Sulli Deals', which triggered a similar row earlier.

## Won't insist on physical appearance in probe against Amazon, ED tells Delhi HC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday told the Delhi High Court that in view of the coronavirus pandemic, it will for the time being not insist on physical appearance of people in connection with its probe against an Amazon subsidiary under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

The oral assurance was given by Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the central agency, on petitions by Amazon Wholesale (India) Pvt Ltd and Amazon Seller Services Pvt Ltd challenging jurisdiction of the ED and its officers to investigate the first company and seek information pertaining to Amazon's ongoing arbitration with the Future Group.

Justice Rekha Palli listed the case for further hearing on January 12 and asked the senior lawyer for the agency to "advise officers that if they want any information, they will do so through video conferencing". "Because of Covid-19, we will hold our hand (on insistence on physical appearance)," Raju said.

Lawyer Amit Mahajan, also appearing for the ED, added that the agency would not ask any person connected with the petitioners to come to Delhi.



The court said at this stage, it "would not comment" on the aspect of information being sought by the agency in the investigation or ask the agency to "hold its hand" in matters of probe.

Senior advocate Sidharth Luthra, appearing for Amazon Wholesale, contended that the ED's investigation was beyond the scope of its power under FEMA and that it could not seek details with respect to the legal opinions sought by the company. He clarified that his client had nothing to do with the deal between Amazon and Future Group, and urged the court to direct the agency to hold its hand till the next date of hearing.

In November, Amazon had said it was in receipt of summons by the ED in connection with its deal with the Future Group. In the plea, the two companies, which are indirect subsidiaries of the US-based e-commerce giant, have said they are Indian resident entities and are challenging the ED investigation as it pertains to transactions that have no foreign exchange element.

## Jaipur-based electoral trust donated ₹3.31 cr to Cong in 20-21

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The details available on the Election Commission (EC) website showed that Jaipur-based Small Donations Electoral Trust made donations worth Rs 3.31 crore to the Congress in 2020-21 in 11 instalments while the Janpragati Electoral Trust donated Rs 37 lakh to four political parties. The Progressive Electoral Trust linked to the Tata Group declared 'nil' contributions to political parties in 2020-21.

According to details filed by the Small Donations Electoral Trust, it received Rs 3,32,30,270 as contributions in 2020-21 and donated Rs 3,31,00,000. The Rs 3.31 crore was donated to the Congress in 11 instalments, all made on different dates in March 2021.

Delhi-based Janpragati Electoral Trust received contributions worth Rs 39 lakh from Harrisons Malayalam Limited and made donations worth Rs 37 lakh — Rs 12 lakh to Congress, Rs 2 lakh to Lok Thantrik Janatha Dal (Shreyams Kumar), Rs 5 lakh to CPI and Rs 18 lakh to CPI (M).

Progressive Electoral Trust — which in 2018-19, the year of Lok Sabha poll, had contributed Rs 472 crore to parties, including Rs 356 crore to BJP — has declared nil donations for the second straight year.

## EC assesses polls preparations with all stakeholders from States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls, the Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday assessed the polls preparations with all stakeholders, including with top officials and representatives of political parties from Manipur.

The EC has raised concern over low vaccinations and asked the Chief Secretary to expediting the same.

During the review meeting, the Commission emphasised focus on the conduct of safe elections with 100 per cent vaccination of all polling staff,

proper sanitisation and social distancing at the polling stations.

After virtual meeting with all stakeholders amid the Omicron scare, the EC has decided to reduce the maximum number of electors' norm at a polling station from 1,500 to 1,250. In the meeting, the main issues raised by the political parties, included concerns about use of money power, illicit liquor, narcotics drugs and intimidation to influence voters.

The political parties also raised concerns about implementation of strict Covid pro-

ocols for safety of everybody. The EC team has already visited Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Goa and Uttarakhand to assess the covid situation and poll preparations ahead of the assembly polls in five states.

"Political parties requested for strict vigilon election expenses by candidates to ensure free and fair poll. While expressing concerns about pre-poll violence, the political parties demanded deployment of adequate security forces during the poll process and other relevant measures," the Commission said in a statement.

## Mandatory for promotion field service of 2-3 yrs: MHA to para forces

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has directed all the paramilitary forces that for every promotion to the next level, mandatory field service of two/three years would be pre-conditioned and relaxation can be granted only by the ministry on a case to case basis.

The guidelines for objective waiver/relaxation in the eligibility condition regarding "mandatory field service" as prescribed in the Recruitment Rules for promotions were formulated by the Ministry in 2012.

The guidelines further provide that cases of CAPF (Central Armed Police Force) personnel who have not com-

pleted the MFS owing to their own request for being posted in static posting/offices where service rendered is not counted as MFS or where the personnel have expressed unwillingness for posting to field units, are not be considered for relaxation.

Further, while posting such CAPFs personnel to the static postings, the personnel are to be informed about the consequences that their tenure will not be counted towards MFS and no representation will be entertained for claiming promotion to next rank in relation to prescribed MFS.

MFS is the operational and functional requirement of the Force personnel to hold high-



er responsibilities and thus has been prescribed as one of the eligibility conditions in the statutory Recruitment Rules before promotion to the next higher rank.

Any waiver/relaxation in the statutory requirement of MFS adversely affects the operational efficiency and functional effectiveness of CAPFs or

the paramilitary forces. Moreover, any relaxation in the eligibility conditions prescribed in the RRs also requires approval of the Department of Personnel and Training.

"Therefore, the guidelines issued to DsG of CAPFs and ARs (Assam Rifles vide order dated 02.06.2012 for considering waiver/relaxation in the eligibility condition of MFS for promotion of personnel to the next rank, have been reviewed. It has now been decided that henceforth cases of all officials/officers of CAPFs and ARswho, on consideration by DsG of CAPFs and ARs in terms of guidelines.....are found to be eligible for waiver/relaxation in the MFS con-

dition for promotion to the next rank, may be referred to this Ministry with justification/grounds for waiver/relaxation for seeking relaxation from DoPT to the statutory eligibility condition," reads an order issued by the Home Ministry and circulated to all the paramilitary chiefs.

The move comes after several officers on deputation were availing promotion to the next level without fulfilling the prerequisite of completing field service in respective operational areas. The move is expected to help maintain the operational fitness of the personnel for taking higher responsibilities upon being promoted, officials added.



# Kolkata film fest postponed as Covid cases surge

KIFF panel chairman +ve; dates to be announced later

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA**

With corona pandemic beginning to engulf Bengal as never before the State Government on Wednesday decided to postpone the highly prestigious Kolkata International Film Festival scheduled to commence on January 7. The Fest was to end on January 14.

“After assessing the present covid situation in the State and taking into consideration the possibility of further contamination of covid among the cine lovers and the citizens and also owing to the fact that a number of cine personalities attached to the film festival committee and many others have been affected by covid, the State Government, upon careful consideration of the safety of the citizens have decided to temporarily postpone the 27th Kolkata International Film Festival scheduled to be held from January 7-14,” a media statement said,adding the next date of the Festival would be announced later.

Fest committee chairman

Raj Chakrabarty who was himself down with corona along with committee member and actor Parambrata said “we donot want the people and the cine lovers many of who are seniorcitizens to get infected at a time when pandemic situation is alarmingin Bengal and Kolkata... hence this decision was taken.”

No decision had yet been taken on other events involving massgatherings. The Government is also likely to inform the Calcutta HighCourt --- on Thursday --- where a suit is pending regarding theholding of Ganga Sagar Mela whether the Fare would be allowed to beorganized.

That the situation was grim in Bengal with Capital Kolkata witnessinga near 1,100 fold rise in corona cases in the past one week or so.“While on December 28 the number of infections was 382 it had leapt upto 4,759 on Tuesday,” a senior Health Ministry official said addingthe situation was not as intense during the peak periods of first andsecond wave.

In October 2020 when the first wave of the pandemic had peaked thetotal number of daily infected cases in Kolkata was 910 whereas on May3, 2021 when the second wave peaked the number of infected patientswas 3990. “And we have not even peaked now ...

the peak is expected inthe third or fourth week of January ... just imagine what the number ofinfections would be then,” the official said amid reports that atleast 200 police personnel including senior IPS officers and more than500 medical staff including doctors nurses were down with the disease.

According to sources the eastern zonal director of National Instituteof Cholera and Enteric Diseases (NICED) had contacted the disease. Anumber of CBI officials too had been infected, sources said.

Meanwhile, considering the abnormal spurt in infections the StateElection Commission has written to the DMs and SPs of four districtswhere civic elections were scheduled to be held on January 22 tostrictly ensure the corona protocol.

“Already the attendance in mass gatherings has been reduced to 200from earlier 500,” SEC sources said adding “the Commission is keepinga strict vigil on the situation.”

Elsewhere troubled by reduction in the number of local trains thedaily commuters had resorted to train blockade at Bongaon in North 24Parganas. The blockade which started at 2 AM on Wednesday wascontinuing for the past 18 hours, sources said.

## Curbs reimposed in Bihar, night curfew to start today

Patna logs 565

cases, a three-fold rise in 24 hours

**Patna:** Patna district on Tuesday exploded with 565 fresh Covid-19 cases, a three-fold increase in 24 hours while Bihar's single day infections tally shot up two-and-a-half times to 893, forcing the Nitish Kumar Government to order night curfew and other restrictions which will come into effect from Thursday.

According to a notification issued by the state's home ministry, the curfew hours will be from 10 PM to 5 AM and, along with other curbs, shall remain in force till January 21.

Schools shall remain closed for up to Class VIII though online teaching will be allowed and offices, government as well as private, shall be permitted to function with not more than 50 per cent attendance.

The measures spelled out in the notification were adopt-

ed after a high level meeting of the Covid crisis management group chaired by the Chief Minister in the evening.

Other curbs include closure of gyms, cinema halls, swimming pools and stadiums and not more than 50 per cent occupancy for restaurants. The state is now left with an active caseload of 2,222, a nearly 70 times rise since a month ago.

Patna, where nearly 100 doctors are among those to have tested positive in the last few days, has 1,250 active cases. Gaya, which reported 99 fresh cases and has 460 active cases, is the second worst hit district.

There has, however, been no Covid related fatality for about a week. Testing rate has been cranked up in view of the recent spike. As many as 1,44,675 samples were tested in the last 24 hours. So far there has been only one confirmed Omicron case in the state where altogether 7,28,766 people have caught the contagion and 7,14,447 have recovered.

**PTI**

## Goa records 592 new corona cases; positivity rate touches 14%

**Panaji:** Goa reported 592 fresh cases of COVID-19 on Tuesday with positivity rate remaining high at 13.89 per cent, while two more patients succumbed to the infection in the state, an official said.

With these additions, Goa's COVID-19 tally rose to 1,82,793, while the death toll increased to 3,525, he said, citing health department data. The state government has imposed curbs on indoor activities, while educational institutions continued to remain shut in view of the soaring cases.

The case positivity rate was 13.89 per cent on Tuesday, which was lower than Monday's 26.43 per cent. The positivity rate was 10.7 per cent on Sunday. The rate indicates the percentage of people who test positive for the virus of those overall who have been tested.

On Monday, Goa had reported 631 COVID-19 cases.

The number of recovered cases in the state rose to 1,76,505 after 67 patients were discharged from hospitals during the day, the official said. Goa now has 2,763 active cases."With 4,261 new tests, the number of tests conducted in the state has gone up to 16,41,352," he added.

Goa's COVID-19 figures: Positive cases 1,82,793, new cases 592, death toll 3,525, discharged 1,76,505, active cases 2,763, samples tested till date 16,41,352.

**PTI**

## UP schools shut till Jan 15, night curfew extended by two hours

**Lucknow:** In view of steady increase in COVID-19 cases, the Uttar Pradesh government on Tuesday ordered closure of all schools up to Class 10 till January 15 and extended the night curfew by two hours. In the districts where the number of active cases exceeds 1,000, not more than 100 people will be allowed at marriage ceremonies and other events. Public places like gyms, spas, cinema halls, banquet halls and restaurants will operate at 50 per cent capacity. The night curfew will be imposed from 10 pm to 6 am from Thursday, according to a statement.

Presently, the night curfew is being implemented from 11 pm to 5 am. The decisions were taken at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on a day the state reported 992 new infection cases. Currently, no UP district has more than 1,000 coronavirus cases.

The CM said genome sequencing has confirmed 23 Omicron variant cases in the state. Tracing and testing of those who came in contact with them should be done, the CM said.

He directed that it should be made mandatory for devotees coming to Prayagraj Magh Mela to produce a negative RT-PCR test report, which should not be older than 24 hours.

According to an official release, 992 new cases were detected on Tuesday in the state.

The number of active cases in the state stood at 3,173, the release said, adding that the highest 174 cases were found in Ghaziabad, followed by 165 in Gautam Buddha Nagar, 150 in Lucknow and 102 in Meerut.

No death was reported in the state in the past 24 hours. The death toll stood at 22,916.

**PTI**

## 3 JeM terrorists gunned down in J&K’s Pulwama

**MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU**

Three more terrorists belonging to the Pakistan based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit were neutralised by the joint team of security forces in Chandgam area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district on Wednesday.

According to police, the killed terrorists have been identified as Mir Owais resident of Ashmander Pulwama and a Pakistani national Talha Yasir linked with proscribed terror outfit JeM. The identity of the third terrorist is yet to be ascertained. Talha Yasir was an IED expert, police said.

According to a police spokesman, all the killed terrorists were part of group

involved in several terror crime cases including attacks on security forces and civilian atrocities. Several terror crime cases were registered against both the killed identified terrorists. Terrorist Owais was involved in killing of a civilian namely Azad Ahmad Dar of Kangan Pulwama. The killed Pakistani terrorist Talha was mastermind in preparation of Vehicle-borne IEDs besides, involved in attack on civilian at Wanpora area of Pulwama.In the ensuing encounter, three terrorists were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of encounter.

Arms and ammunition including 02 M-4 Carbine and 01 AK series rifle were recovered from the site of encounter, police spokesman added.

## Kerala Govt draws flak for reinstating suspended babu

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

The decision of the CPI(M)-led Kerala Government to cancel the suspension of M Shivsankar, former principal secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, and reinstate him in service has drawn the ire of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee.

Shivsankar, an IAS officer, was suspended from service following his interrogation by the Customs and Enforcement Directorate in connection with the gold smuggling channel in Thiruvananthapuram International Airport allegedly with the connivance of the United Arab Emirates' Consulate General. He was arrested and was imprisoned for about 100 days. The Kerala

Government placed him under suspension on 2020 July 16.

Ramesh Chennithala, former Leader of Opposition lambasted the decision of the Kerala Government to revoke the order suspending Shivsankar and reinstate him in Government Service as a big fraud played on the people of the State by the CPI(M). “This is a ploy by the Chief Minister and Shivsankar to derail the investigation into the gold smuggling scam in which the name of Pinarayi Vijayan had figured many times. The main accused in the case had hinted the involvement of Pinarayi Vijayan in the case,” said Chennithala.

The senior Congress leaders said in a release on Wednesday that the investigation agencies probing the gold

scam have not given any clean chit to Shivsankar. “Now Vijayanand the CPI(M) are likely to bring back Swapna Suresh, another accused in the case back to the Government Service,” said Chennithala.

The decision of the Kerala Government to reinstate Shivsankar follows the silence of the probe agencies to the queries by the state administration about the progress in the investigation and also the role of Shivsankar in the case. A committee of Government Secretaries headed by Chief Secretary had asked the Government last week to withdraw the suspension order of Shivsankar as the investigating agencies did not reply to the enquiries sent by them about the role of the former principal secretary in the scam.



A woman poses for a photograph before Taj Mahal wrapped in a blanket of fog in a cold winter on Wednesday

**PTI**

## Bombay HC issues notice to CBI, ED, NHAI in Pune-Satara toll case

**T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

The Bombay High Court has issued notices to the CBI, Enforcement Directorate (ED) and National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) in a case filed by RTI activist-advocate Pravin Wategaonkar seeking a directive to implead M/s. Reliance Infra-floated SPV M/S P S Toll Road Pvt Ltd in the case involving the alleged irregularities in the Pune-Satara toll collection project.

While hearing a PIL filed by RTI activist-advocate Wategaonkar and Sanjay Shirodkar, a HC division bench of Justices A.A.Sayyed and Abhay Ahuja ordered on Monday that NHAI be made a respondent in the case. The HC also ordered that notices be issued to the CBI, ED and NHAI and asked the three parties to file their say by January 24, 2021.

In his application filed before the high court on December 13, Wategaonkar had told the high court that the Union government had amended rules and taken away contractors' right to collect toll with effect from January 1, 2014 for not completing six-laning of Pune-Satara National Highway as per agreement with NHAI.

As per agreement the contractor was to complete six-laning during the period October 2008 to March 2013. With a further grace period of 9 months, the contractor was to complete the project latest by December 2013. The petitioner stated that six laning remains incomplete even today. Advocate for Contractor informed the Court that Six laning would be completed by March 2022.

The petitioner told the court that the contractor how-

ever continued to “misrepresent” to the public at large that he enjoys the right to collect toll and has been collecting toll which amounts to cheating vehicle owners using the Road.

The petitioner pointed out that a complaint was filed with CBI. CBI has registered and completed Preliminary Enquiry as per its manual and found prima facie cognizable offence.

After the Maharashtra government withdrew general consent to CBI to register a case, the central investigating agency had written to the Uddhav Thackeray dispensation seeking permission to register the case.

The petitioner urged the Court to grant prayer seeking direction to CBI to produce a copy of the Preliminary Enquiry, its report and correspondence entered into with State Govt.

## PM reaping what he has sown: MPCC

**T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

Slamming the BJP for giving Sa “political twist” to the incidents of farmers blocking Narendra Modi's convoy during his visit to Punjab, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee president Nana Patole said here on Wednesday that the Prime Minister was reaping what he sowed last year when his government “inflicted” a lot of atrocities on the farmers by among other things “laying nails on their route and beating them mercilessly”.

In a statement issued here over the BJP's reaction over what he called the BJP's attempts to politicise the issue of farmers blocking the Prime Minister's convoy to “misguide” the people on the issue of security in an effort to “gain sympathy” ahead of the Punjab Assembly polls, Patole said: “The atrocities have not been forgotten by the farmers in Punjab and across the country. Modiji, you are reaping what

you have sown”.

Alluding to the incident in which the members of the Kisan Mazdoor Sangrash Committee (KMSC) blocked three routes of Modi to Ferozepur to address his first election rally in Punjab, Patole said: “The Prime Minister has SPG security. There is no question of compromising his security. He was scheduled to reach the rally spot by helicopter, but suddenly he changed his route and took the road to reach the location”.

“Farmer groups are already protesting in Punjab. There is a huge dissatisfaction among the farmers against the BJP and the Modi government are well aware of their sentiment. Modi's meeting had to be called off due to poor response and not because of any other reason. But the BJP is trying to gain sympathy by spreading false information,” Patole alleged.

Patole charged that an attempt was being made by the

BJP to blame the Congress government in Punjab for the security breach.

“Considering the issue of security, the life of the members of the Gandhi family has always been in danger. The family has made two sacrifices for the country, Indiraji and Rajivji. Yet, Soniaji Gandhi and Rahulji Gandhi meet the people, mingle with them without worrying about security,” Patole said.

“Rahulji Gandhi's car was attacked during the 2017 Gujarat Assembly elections. What was the security situation of Rahulji Gandhi and Priyankaji Gandhi while visiting the victim's family in Uttar Pradesh? Has the BJP forgotten that Priyankaji Gandhi was assaulted by the male police personnel? Who compromised on their security? At whose behest were Rahulji and Priyankaji stopped on their visit?, Patole asked as he came out with a series of questions for the BJP and the Modi government.

“The BJP should answer my questions,” the State BJP president said.

A former Speaker of Maharashtra Assembly, Patole is the Maharashtra Congress chief. Currently MLA from Sakoli Assembly segment in Vidarbha region, Patole is a known Modi baiter. He had earlier been elected to the State Assembly for three terms between 1999 and 2014. He was elected to Lok Sabha in the 2014 polls from Bhandara-Gondia constituency on a BJP ticket.

It may be recalled that Patole had created a major stir in the political circles in the last week of August 2017 by saying that Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not like party men asking him questions. He had in the process made no bones about his unhappiness about the state of affairs in the ruling BJP.

Patole had said on August 31, 2017: “Modi doesn't like to take any questions. He got

very angry when I raised some issues about the OBC Ministry and farmer suicides at a meeting of BJP MPs. When Modi is asked questions, he asks you if you have read the party manifestos and are aware of various government schemes”.

Patole resigned from \*the Lok Sabha and BJP. Subsequently, he joined the Congress in December 2017.

Patole had unsuccessfully contested the 2019 Lok Sabha polls against senior BJP leader from Nagpur Nitin Gadkari. While Gadkari had polled 6,60,221 votes, Patole had secured 4,44,212 votes.

In October 2019, Patole contested and won the Sakoli seat to enter the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly and was later elected the Speaker after the MVA government assumed office in November 2019. He resigned as the Speaker in February last year and was appointed as the Maharashtra Congress immediately afterwards.



A flock of migratory ducks seen at Santragachi Jheel on National Bird Day, in Howrah district of West Bengal on Wednesday

**PTI**

## Produce more children if you want to save your daughters from jihadis: Giri Maharaj

**Aligarh:** Mahamandaleshwar Narasimhanand Giri Maharaj, who arrived in Tappal's village Nurpur to inaugurate the newly built lord Hanuman temple, while addressing the people said that if you want to save Hindu daughters from jihadis, then produce more children. Those Hindus who have followed the practice of having one child at a time, they will only be called Naag-Nagin. With this, waving a sword on the stage, he said that now this will protect us.

A few months ago, there was a ruckus in Nurpur village for not allowing the daughters

of the Scheduled Castes to march in front of the mosque. After the beating, people belonging to the Scheduled Castes had written 'House for sale' on their doors. In front of the people arriving at that time, the people of the Scheduled Castes had told about the existence of three mosques and not a single temple in the village. On this, RS Bali, the national president of Hindu Ekta Sangathan, collaborated with the construction of Hanuman temple in Nurpur. People from many provinces attended the inauguration program of the temple.

**PNS**

## IT-GST raid on SP neta’s mill

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

In yet another raid on businessmen close to Samajwadi Party leaders, a joint team of Goods and Services Tax (GST) and Income Tax departments raided a flour mill owned by SP leader Tariq Seth at Kamalganj in Farrukhabad on Wednesday.

The raid comes close on the heels of a GST team raiding a perfume trader and SP MLC Pushpraj Jain and raids at the Lucknow residence of close associates of Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav.

On December 31, income tax officials had conducted multi-state searches in connection with perfume traders, including SP leader Pushpraj Jain. He is the same perfume

trader whose name was referred to by SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, saying that the Central agencies had mistakenly conducted raids on the wrong perfume trader, while taking a dig at the IT raids on Kanpur-based businessman Piyush Jain.

The IT had also raided several premises of a real estate developer Ajay Chaudhary at Noida, Agra and other locations on Monday.

Perfumer and SP MLC Pushpraj Jain had launched 'Samajwadi Ittra' (Samajwadi Perfume) in October last year along with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, as a part of the party's political campaign. The Income Tax Department had conducted multiple raids at 50 locations linked to perfume traders in

Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Mumbai. The income tax searches came ahead of the UP assembly polls, at a time when the Bharatiya Janata Party has been continuously targeting Samajwadi Party for propagating corruption during their regime in UP. On its part, the Samajwadi Party, has termed the raid as another instance of political vendetta unleashed by the ruling BJP against its political opponents.

“As soon as party president Akhilesh Yadav addressed the press conference in Kannauj, the Central agencies started carrying out raids at the premises of SP MLC Pampi Jain. The BJP's fear and anger are clear, People are ready to teach a lesson to the BJP”, said a SP leader.







FIRST COLUMN

ECONOMY: THE OPPN HAS FAILED PEOPLE

The Opposition is in a dilemma whether to oppose or accept the Government's moves



SHIVAJI SARKAR

The Indian Opposition has failed the people. Bereft of ideas and probably suffering from the ruler syndrome, they have become a mere shadow of the ruling party, oblivious of the key issues and problems of the people. It is indeed a critical economic situation where the opposition could not play a constructive role. It can be traced back to November 8, 2016, when the demonetisation was announced. They did raise their voice but were unable to show the nation a way from which it could really move forward. The opposition was on the back foot because they were in a dilemma whether they should oppose the move or accept it. The government communication was forceful and drowned out the opposition completely. Lakhs of people were standing in queues, to get hold of their money. The richer classes were able to replace their currency notes at a discount, giving rise to a new breed of middle men. The opposition parties remained in a quandary



over the 'black money' aspect of demonetization that the government highlighted. That was because many politicians had money hidden from authorities. Suffering from a guilt complex, most opposition parties raised feeble, incoherent charges, only strengthening the arguments of their rivals. The opposition did little on the farmers' protest issue as well though it gave some of them the opportunity to seek new alignments. Similarly, the Opposition remained silent on excessive toll charges on highways, high parking fees and train fares. In July 2017, the GST was brought in, changing the tax structure. It was surprising that a party that had blocked the GST proposal when they were in the opposition would be pressing for it when they became the ruling party. And the opposition parties once again showed their 'ruling' instinct by keeping petroleum fuel out of the GST ambit. The people started taking the brunt as did the economy because soon after, both the states and the Centre started hiking taxes every other day. Today the opposition is trying to rake up issues of inflation, price rise and difficult living conditions as the key election planks little realizing they share the blame as well. The pandemic exposed how brittle the Indian economy is. While transportation costs went on going through the roof, people in panic left their working places to reach back to the safety of their homes. They could not ride the trains that were inexplicably cancelled at a few hours' notice. The opposition party governments were oblivious of the needs of about 18 crore migrants. Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra, UP, Rajasthan, Bihar and other states, whether ruled by the BJP or the opposition, behaved badly with the migrant workers. Amid the pandemic came the New Education Policy and the opposition virtually gave it a pass without discussion. The duration of the degree course was increased to four years to tune it to the US system. The nation does not know that the US "degree mills" - largely not-so-repute institutions - provide degrees on a platter. Let us recall how opposition stalwarts like George Fernandes or Tarakeshwari Sinha opposed linking graduation degrees to jobs as it delayed their employment by two to four years. The nation is committing similar follies now. At present many syllabi are tailored for 2.5 years but the degrees are given after three years. Now students will have to remain away from the job market for one extra year. The opposition should regain its lost glory. The ruling NDA may be doing fine but an analytical opposition could keep it on its toes. The New Year can begin with this resolve.

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

Bhojeshwara temple:

A hidden living gem

One of the most intriguing features of the Bhojeshwara temple is that it was never completed, and no one knows why



PARTHA SARATHI SEN SHARMA

On any trip to Bhopal, one can make a couple of detours and visit two famous world heritage sites. Bhimbhetka, the site of ancient rock cut arts, made in caves, some of them as ancient as fifty thousand years old. Or Sanchi, to see the most impressive Buddhist stupa of Ashokan times. But I had never heard of the Bhojeshwara Temple that one can visit on a day trip from Bhopal. It is an unheard-of gem, that makes travel that much more interesting.

The huge rock temple of Bhojeshwara, which was never completed, but nevertheless is still being used as a place of worship, stands on a raised hill-like structure. The temple overlooks a narrow, blue ribbon of a river that flows below the hillock. I was told that it was the same river 'Betwa' that I had seen so many times, in its pristine elegance, near Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh. I had not expected this and I looked again at the river, so very different here. It was as if suddenly one comes across a stranger only to realize that he or she is indeed a friend of a long past.

It is believed that the great Raja Bhoj, who ruled these lands of Malwa in the 11th-12th centuries, had started building the temple, hence the name. His original capital was the nearby town of Dhar but perhaps he was planning to build a new capital city, Bhojpur, on this land, on the banks of river Betwa. Perhaps, that is why a massive dam was built over the river, the remnants of which one can see even today. It is believed that the dam resulted in the creation of huge reservoir that extended all the way to horizon.

One of the most interesting features of the site of Bhojpur are the brilliantly and neatly inscribed plans of the nearby buildings, some built but most never implemented upon, that one can still find on the rock floors around the temple. It is as if the town planners and architects were using the rock surfaces as a drawing board and then would have made the buildings as per the plans. Those, nearly a thousand years old building plans still exist, despite years of sun, rain and storms, for anyone to see and marvel at, a clear and visible proof of the heights of science, engineering and architecture that our ancestors in central India had reached in those times.

But if one needs any further proof, one only has to turn around and look up at the huge and magnificent, albeit incomplete temple of Bhojeshwara. For one, it is huge and in terms in terms of sheer dimensions, I don't remember to have seen anything like this in entire north India. The dimensions of the richly carved gateway, the intricately carved gargoyles, the false pavilions on the side walls, the cavernous interiors with the largest Shivalinga inside surrounded



IT IS AS IF THE TOWN PLANNERS WERE USING THE ROCK SURFACES AS A DRAWING BOARD AND THEN WOULD HAVE MADE THE BUILDINGS AS PER THE PLANS. THE NEARLY 1,000-YEAR-OLD BUILDING PLANS STILL EXIST, DESPITE YEARS OF SUN, RAIN AND STORMS, FOR ANYONE TO SEE AND MARVEL AT, A CLEAR AND VISIBLE PROOF OF THE HEIGHTS OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE THAT OUR ANCESTORS IN CENTRAL INDIA HAD REACHED IN THOSE TIMES

(The writer is an IAS officer, presently Additional Secretary, Ministry of Culture. The views expressed are personal.)



with wide walkways, the sculptures of various gods and goddesses on the inner walls, all of them fill up a curious visitor with awe. The sheer size, beauty, architecture, history and myths associated with it and the continuous living tradition around it, all of them flood one's senses and one can just about stand and absorb the moment.

One of the most intriguing features of the Bhojeshwara temple is that it was never completed and therefore the temple today doesn't have a 'Shikhar' and there is a hole in its roof, like an oculus, through which the sunlight filters in and the rays of the sun fall on the Shivalinga and illuminates the interior. A few years ago, Archeological Survey of India placed a transparent fiber top to cover this hole to prevent the rainwater leaking inside and damaging the structure. The day I visited, a priest was performing puja on the shivinga and scores of devotees, mostly from nearby areas, had come to offer their worship. And yet amidst all the hustle and bustle of the devotees at this living temple, if one looks carefully around, one can discern a construction project abandoned midway. Apart from the obviously incomplete roof, one can see the stone ramp on the outside

that must have been used to carry the construction material to the roof and would have been demolished once the temple was complete. One can see the various ancient stone pieces lying around that would have been used in the later stages of construction. Interestingly, some of the stones show markings, most probably signature markings of the artisans who would have carved the piece. Perhaps that was the way to account for their remuneration.

The fact that the medieval Bhojeshwara temple was left incomplete, otherwise a rather unfortunate event, does provide us today with a rare glimpse of the methods, stages and efforts that went into such a massive temple construction project in those days.

As one comes out of the dark sanctum and into the daylight and stands in front of the temple and looks beyond at the horizon, where the green forests merge into the blue skies, and feels the footsteps of devotees all around one, devotees whose ancestors would have worshipped at the same place and would have walked over the same steps, for hundreds of years and generations, one does wonder what would have made Raja Bhoj to abandon his cherished project. He was no

ordinary king. His valour, his learning, his writings and his wisdom as well as the legends associated with him survive to this day and even the modern airport of Bhopal is named after him. To the best of my knowledge, Raja Bhoj had a long and prosperous reign. His kingdom was peaceful and prosperous till the end. But then what was the reason that would have made such a mighty king to abandon his most cherished project. Perhaps it was some natural event or some bad omen, perhaps a fiscal compulsion or a looming danger of attack from the west, or just successors not willing to take forward his project post his death. One can only speculate.

As I sat quietly on the rocks strewn around the millennia old Bhojeshwara temple that afternoon, wondering about those long forgotten years of Raja Bhoj and his domains, suddenly I felt the present merge with the past, as it so often happens with me, and the abandoned temple and the site of Bhojpur spread all around me, reminded me of the incessant, inevitable, relentless and inescapable march of time in which we all, the mighty king and the common devotee, are all equal, just tiny specks of dust in the sands of time.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

LORD KRISHNA COMES IN MY DREAMS EVERY NIGHT AND SAYS THAT YOU ARE GOING TO FORM THE (NEXT) GOVERNMENT IN UTTAR PRADESH. —SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT AKHILESH YADAV



THE ONE WHO ATTACKS THOSE WHO PRAY TO LORD RAM SHOULD NOT TALK ABOUT RAM RAJYA. WHO KNOWS WHAT HE IS DREAMING? —UP DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER KESHAV PRASAD MAURYA

Fatal paragliding accidents mar tourism in Himachal

There is a growing demand for a complete ban on paragliding until proper safety measures are incorporated and implemented



BRIJENDER SINGH PANWAR

In the past five years, over 30 paragliders have crashed at different places in Kangra and Mandi districts in Himachal Pradesh after taking off from Billing, killing 10 pilots including foreigners. A Canadian pilot, Cheval Christian Yves Mare, was killed when his paraglider crash-landed near Bir. Chevan was flying alone when the tragedy occurred.

In 2018, a Singaporean pilot, Kok Chang, died after his glider crash landed in the upper reaches of Dhauladhar hills. Earlier, two Russian pilots were killed in similar mishaps. Last year, Rohit Badhoria, a Delhi-based pilot, was killed and his body was recovered after seven months from the Dhauladhar hills. In another mishap, paraglider Akshya

(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman, Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)

and co-pilot Shyam Lal were killed. Both of them were untrained.

Tourism is the mainstay of the economy of Himachal Pradesh. It contributes the major part of revenue to the state Government and is a source of livelihood to the local population. Due to the rising incidents of accidents of the paragliders and other adventure trekkers and mountaineers, the state government have come under the scanner and is getting a bad name. Several organizations including siblings Pavi Sareen and Naveen Sareen, who introduced paragliding in Billing in the 1990s, and the families of victims have demanded a complete ban on paragliding till proper safety measures are incorporated and implement-



ed. Rightly so, because it was found that most of the pilots involved in such accidents lacked experience and had incomplete documents. Many pilots lack dual insurance cover, which has been made mandatory by the state government. The failure of the state agencies to check their documents and equipment has made the matter worse. In many cases, the gliders used by the pilots do not meet the safety standards. The pilots do not adhere to the tariff fixed by the Tourism Department and

often fleece the tourists. Many of them are lured by inexperienced pilots, who charge less amount and this practice leads to fatal accidents. There is heavy influx of tourists at Billing and only one supervisor of Special Area Development Authority (SADA) is available to manage the affairs. Apart from the responsibility of managing the affairs of paragliding, he is also assigned other duties and his major job is compromised leading to inefficiency.

The state government directed the SDM Baijnath, Salem Aazam, and District Tourism Officer, P.P Singh, to hold consultations with the stakeholders. After discussion, it was decided to enforce the international SOPs for paragliding. Inexperienced

pilots would not be allowed to fly solo or undertake tandem flights. Cooperation of paragliding association would be sought to address the issues. Keeping in view the rising mishaps, the government was also considering imposing a complete ban on paragliding.

Himachal Pradesh is blessed with famous adventure tourism destinations like Prashar lake, the Kamrunag valley, Baralacha Pass, Shinkula Pass, the Shikari Devi temple and many more fortrekking and hiking. These tourist destinations situated in the lap of nature attracts a large number of tourists round the year. Due to high altitude, these regions receive heavy snowfall during winters and become inaccessible. However, trekkers do not hesitate to visit them in

winters. That leads to serious mishaps. Many fatal incidents are reported every year, putting the state administration under pressure. The recent incident of the death of three tourists belonging to Goa and Maharashtra during a trip from Uttarkashi in Utrakhand to Sangla in Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh is a case in point. Concerned about these fatal mishaps during trekking in high mountains claiming precious lives, the Himachal Pradesh government has decided to undertake a mapping of various routes and classify them as red, orange and green. The IT department has been instructed to develop an app on which every trekker or even local residents embarking on a journey will have to register and their mobile numbers

would be recorded so that the rescue parties could contact them while launching rescue operations. This will help the government to keep the record of all trekkers travelling on the route and it will be easy to monitor their movement and provide the required assistance in time of crisis. All Deputy Commissioners have been asked to identify trekking routes and zones so that the mapping of all major treks can be completed. This exercise will also help travel agents, guides and the trekkers to choose the journey they wish to undertake. The treks will be planned according to the skills and physical endurance levels of the tourists which would further reduce the changes of mishap in case of inclement weather conditions.



# Soaring Omicron cases could lead to more dangerous variants, warns WHO

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE ■ STOCKHOLM

Soaring Omicron cases around the globe could increase the risk of a newer, more dangerous variant emerging, the World Health Organization in Europe warned on Tuesday.

While the variant is spreading like wildfire around the world, it appears to be far less severe than initially feared and has raised hopes that the pandemic could be overcome and life return to more normality.

But WHO senior emergencies officer Catherine Smallwood sounded an ominous note of caution, telling AFP that the soaring infection rates could have the opposite effect.

"The more Omicron spreads, the more it transmits and the more it replicates, the more likely it is to throw out a new variant. Now, Omicron is lethal, it can cause death ... maybe a little bit less than Delta, but who's to say what the next variant might throw out," Smallwood told AFP in an interview. Europe has registered more than 100 million Covid cases since the start of the pandemic, and more than five million new cases in the last week of 2021, "almost

dwarfing what we have seen in the past", Smallwood said. "We're in a very dangerous phase, we're seeing infection rates rise very significantly in Western Europe, and the full impact of that is not yet clear," she said.

Smallwood also noted that while "on an individual level there's probably a decreased risk of hospitalisation" with the Omicron variant compared to Delta, overall, Omicron could pose a greater threat because of the sheer number of cases. "When you see the cases rise so significantly, that's likely to generate a lot more people with severe disease, ending up in hospital and possibly going on to die," she said.

Britain on Tuesday faced warnings of an impending hospital crisis due to staff shortages caused by a wave of Omicron infections, as the country's daily Covid caseload breached 200,000 for the first time.

Smallwood said she expected that scenario to play out in other European countries as well. "Even in well-capacitated, sophisticated health systems there are real struggles that are happening at the moment, and it's likely that these will play out across the region as Omicron drives cases upwards."

## Hong Kong bans flights from India, 7 other nations, ramps up Covid curbs

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong announced strict new anti-coronavirus controls on Wednesday, banning flights from eight nations, shuttering bars and gyms and cancelling evening restaurant dining after the Omicron variant was detected within the city. The restrictions are the latest economic blow to an international business hub pursuing a zero-Covid strategy that has kept cases low but left residents cut off from the rest of the world. Like mainland China,

Hong Kong has maintained some of the world's harshest measures throughout the pandemic -- including virtually closed borders, weeks-long quarantines, targeted lockdowns and mass testing.

The city has recorded 114 Omicron cases as of Tuesday evening, with the vast majority identified at the airport or during the 21-day hotel quarantine that is mandatory for most arrivals. But a small community outbreak traced to Cathay Pacific airline staff in

## Virus surge tests limits of primary health care in Europe

AP ■ MADRID

Like many people, Alberto López de Madrid used a home test to discover that his headache and cold-like symptoms were caused by COVID-19.

Unable to contact his local health center, where calls went unanswered and online appointments were booked up for the following week, he turned to a hospital emergency room for confirmation. After waiting three hours to be seen, health workers there agreed with his self-diagnosis but provided no PCR test to ensure a more reliable result.

"The nurse seeing me said that, because I had not lost my sense of taste or smell, I had the omicron variant," said Pérez, 39, who works as an online game developer in the Spanish capital. "But how could she know?" Overwhelmed by people wanting tests, requiring medication or needing certificates to excuse their absence from work, primary health care services in Spain are oper-

ating well past their limit during the current phase of the coronavirus pandemic. The omicron variant has fueled the latest surge of infections, although data shows it produces less-severe disease than earlier strains.

Family doctors are usually the first stop for health care in Europe. They and primary care nurses are viewed as vital to helping prevent sickness, keeping the pressure off hospitals and providing continuity of care.

In a country that only a few weeks ago thought itself relatively safe because more than 80% of the target population is fully vaccinated, the mounting workload in Spain has prompted doctors and nurses to cancel regular checkups for conditions other than COVID-19 and postpone visits to vulnerable people at home.

On Tuesday, Spanish hospitals cared for nearly 13,000 COVID-19 patients -- the highest number since February. Nearly 2,000 were in ICUs, the most in almost five months.

## With Omicron, experts explain what could help permanently defeat Covid

**Paris:** With new versions forcing vaccine makers to re-test jabs, the virus that causes Covid-19 has proven highly unpredictable. But latest variant to sweep globe has persuaded some experts that long hoped-for collective immunity is in sight, and that virus may be evolving into a relatively benign seasonal illness.

Omicron has proven particularly contagious, infecting people thought to have immunity conferred by vaccines or a bout with disease itself. But

## In Israel, Omicron drives records, zigzag policy, 4th shots

**TEL AVIV, Israel:** Israel opened to tourists for the first time in nearly two years. After just a month, it slammed shut. Now the omicron variant has set a widely-expected record for new infections in the country, which will once again crack open on Sunday — but only to travelers from certain nations.

The back-and-forth has created whiplash for many Israelis. Even in the relatively small, wealthy Mideast nation - an early global leader against the coronavirus pandemic - the omicron variant is outpacing the government's ability to make and execute clear pandemic public policy.

What once was a straightforward regimen of vaccines, testing, contact tracing and distancing for the nation of 9.4 million has splintered into a zigzag of rules that seem to change every few days.

The confusion here, on everything from tourism to testing, quarantines, masks and school policy, offers a glimpse of the pandemic puzzle facing

governments worldwide as the omicron variant burns through the population. Someday, the World Health Organization will declare pandemic over. But in meantime, leaders are weighing how much illness, isolation and death people are willing to risk. In Israel as elsewhere, what's clear is that ultra-continental omicron variant has pushed fight against COVID-19 into a messier phase of rules governed by a key assumption: Large portions of public will contract the omicron version, which is more contagious but appears to cause less severe illness and death, especially among vaccinated people. But vaccinated people are catching the variant too, driving a surge fed in part by gatherings over the winter holidays.

On Wednesday, the government reported a record for the pandemic in Israel, with 11,978 new infections a day earlier. That beats the previous high of 11,345 infections in a single day set on Sept. 2 during the delta variant wave. *AP*

## Biden urges concern but no alarm in US as omicron rises

**WASHINGTON :** President Joe Biden urged concern but not alarm as the United States set records for daily reported COVID-19 cases and his administration struggled to ease concerns about testing shortages, school closures and other disruptions caused by omicron variant.

In remarks Tuesday before a meeting with his COVID-19 response team at the White House, Biden aimed to convey his administration's urgency in addressing omicron and convince wary Americans that the current situation bears little resemblance to the onset of the pandemic or last year's deadly winter.

The president emphasized that vaccines, booster shots and therapeutic drugs have lessened the danger for the overwhelming majority of Americans who are fully vaccinated.

"You can still get COVID, but it's highly unlikely, very unlikely, that you'll become seriously ill," Biden said of

vaccinated people. "There's no excuse, there's no excuse for anyone being unvaccinated," he added. "This continues to be a pandemic of unvaccinated." He also encouraged Americans, including newly eligible teenagers 12 to 15, to get a booster dose of vaccines for maximum protection.

Compared with last year, more Americans are employed, most kids are in classrooms, and instances of death and serious illness are down — precipitously so among the vaccinated. "We're in a very different place than we were a year ago," said White House press secretary Jen Psaki when asked if the country had lost control of the virus.

Still, over the past several weeks Americans have seen dire warnings about hospitals reaching capacity amid staffing shortages, thousands of holiday flight cancellations in part because crews were ill or in quarantine, and intermittent reports of school closures because of the more-transmissible variant. *AP*

## New variant 'IHU' hasn't become much of a threat so far, says WHO

**Bloomberg:** The World Health Organization said a coronavirus variant found in France hasn't become much of a threat since it was first identified in November. The variant "has been on our radar," Abdi Mahamud, a WHO incident manager on Covid, said at a press briefing in Geneva on Tuesday. "That virus had a lot of chances to pick up."

The variant was identified in 12 people in southern Alps around same time that omicron was discovered in South Africa last year.

The latter mutation has since traveled the globe and kindled record levels of contagion, unlike French one that researchers at IHU Mediterranee Infection -- helmed by scientist Didier Raoult -- nicknamed IHU. The first patient identified with variant was vaccinated and

had just returned from Cameroon, IHU researchers wrote in a paper published on medRxiv server in late December where they first drew attention to atypical mutations. It's "too early to speculate on virological, epidemiological or clinical features of this IHU variant based on these 12 cases," they wrote in article, which hasn't been peer reviewed.

Raoult stirred controversy in the early stages of the pandemic by recommending treatment with hydroxychloroquine. The WHO monitors multiple variants, and when it finds one may pose a significant risk, it declares it a "variant of concern." This one is The World Health Organization said a coronavirus variant found in France hasn't become much of a threat since it was first identified in November.

## Taiwan conducts F-16 fighter jets' drill amid tensions with China

**Chiayi, Taiwan:** Taiwan air force jets screamed into sky on Wednesday in a drill simulating a war scenario, showing its combat readiness amid heightened military tensions with China, which claims island as its own.


Before takeoff, flight crews at a base in southern city of Chiayi - home to U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets that are frequently scrambled to intercept Chinese warplanes - rushed to ready aircraft as an alarm sounded.

The exercises were part of a three-day drill to show Taiwan's battle readiness ahead of Lunar New Year holiday at end of this month. Tensions across sensitive Taiwan Strait have been rising in past few years, with Taiwan complaining of repeated missions by China's air force near democratic island.

Chinese military aircraft frequently fly into southwestern part of its air defence identification zone (ADIZ), airspace around island that Taiwan monitors and patrols. "With very high frequency of Communist planes entering our ADIZ, pilots from our wing are very experienced and have dealt with almost all types of their aircraft," Major Yen Hsiang-sheng told reporters, recalling a mission in which he was dispatched to intercept Chinese J-16 fighters late last year. China has not ruled out using force to bring Taiwan under its control.

Taiwan has termed China's activities as "grey zone" warfare, designed to both wear out Taiwan's forces by making them repeatedly scramble, and also to test its responses.


In a new year message for China last week, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen said military conflict is not answer. Beijing responded with a stern warning that if Taiwan crossed any red line it would lead to "profound catastrophe". *AP*


**NORTHERN RAILWAY**

**TENDER NOTICE**  
**Invitation of tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)**

N.I.T. No.	15/21-22 Dated : 05.01.2022
Approx cost of work	₹ 21,97,175.00/-
Earnest Money	(It should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway only. Note:- FDR will not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Board letter no. 2015/CE-1/CT/75/1 dated: 31.08.2016)
Cost of tender on cash/by post	(It should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway only. Note:- FDR will not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Board letter no. 2015/CE-1/CT/51/1 dated: 31.08.2016)
Completion period of work	02 Months
Date and Time for submission of tender and opening of tender	Closing date of tender on 28.01.2022 at 1500 hrs.
Website particular notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.	
Above tender available on website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in	
128-W/269/O.E./TNT NO.15/21-22/W.E. Dated: 05.01.2022	

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**CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 Website: www.ujvn.com**

**Ro.No.- 13**  
**Date Extension Notice-4**  
Dated- 05.01.2022

Due to unavoidable circumstances the date of e-NIT No.11/EE (C-M)/DDN/2021-22 invited by Executive Engineer (Civil-Maintenance) Yamuna Bhawan, Yamuna Colony, Dehradun is hereby extended as below:

Last date for submission of bids on website : Upto 17:00 hrs of 14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022


Last date of submission of hard copies of bids : Upto 17:00 hrs of 14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022

Date of opening of bids on website : at 12.30 hrs of 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022

For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in>"

Executive Engineer (Civil-Maintenance)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"


**Chief Engineer, Uttarakhand Rural Roads Development Agency**  
First Floor, Directorate of Panchayatraj, Opp-IT Park, Sahasthradhara Road, Dehradun.

Ref. No.: 2663/JI-02(xix)/ITCO/URRDA/21  
**PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY)**  
**e-Procurement Notice-26/2021-22**

The Chief Engineer, URRDA on behalf of Governor of Uttarakhand invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system for construction of Bridges under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the Districts of Bageshwar, Pithoragarh & Tehri for 03 number of Packages with estimated cost totaling to **Rs. 10.02 Crore** including their maintenance for five years from the eligible contractors registered with PWD/CPWD or equivalent".

Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 06-01-2022.

**Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission:** The bid documents are available online and should be submitted online in [www.pmgstyendersuk.gov.in](http://www.pmgstyendersuk.gov.in). The bidder would be required to register in the website which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities.

The bidders are required to submit original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (ii) of ITB with **CONCERNED CIRCLE OFFICES, mentioned in SBD/MBD, only up to or before the time and date of the submission of the Bids (for World Bank funded Works) and on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the bid (for Regular PMGSY Works)**, either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive. No Physical documents will be accepted after the closing date and time of submission of bids.


Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 11-01-2022 01:00 PM.

For further details please log on to [www.pmgstyendersuk.gov.in](http://www.pmgstyendersuk.gov.in)


**Chief Engineer, URRDA, Dehradun.**

\* Non Registered bidders may submit bids, however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.

**Note :** For e-Procurement for any sort of queries 0135-2608125 number may be contacted 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM.


**ग्रेटर नोएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण**  
भूखण्ड संख्या-1, नॉलेज पार्क-04 ग्रेटर नोएडा सिटी, गौतमबुद्ध नगर

**सार्वजनिक सूचना**  
ग्रेटर नोएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण क्षेत्र के अन्तर्गत M/s Solaris Realtech Pvt. Ltd. के भूखण्ड संख्या -GH-16B सेक्टर-01 ग्रेटर नोएडा को दिनांक 31.01.2014 को पुनरीक्षित मानचित्र स्वीकृति प्रदान की गयी थी। तदोपरान्त विकासकर्ता द्वारा (Tower-A & Tower-B) का अधिभोग प्रमाण पत्र (Occupancy Certificate) हेतु दिनांक- 18.08.2021 को आन लाईन के माध्यम से आवेदन किया गया है, जिसका आवेदन संख्या -CC-1973 है, तत्क्रम में U.P. Apartment Act-2010, Amendment 2016 in Section-4 Sub Section-B, के अन्तर्गत परियोजना के आवंटियों से आपत्ति/सुझाव आमंत्रित किये जाने का प्रावधान है। इस सम्बन्ध में विकासकर्ता द्वारा प्रस्तुत कार्यपूति मानचित्र एवं Declarations of UP Apartment Act 2010 का परीक्षण किसी भी कार्यदिवस में सुबह 9.30 से साय 6.00 बजे के मध्य नियोजन विभाग में तथा प्राधिकरण की वेबसाइट पर किया जा सकता है।  
अतः उपरोक्त परियोजना के आवंटियों द्वारा Completion Map एवं Declarations of UP Apartment Act 2010 के सम्बन्ध में सूचना प्रकाशित करने के 30 दिनों के अन्दर आपत्तियां/सुझाव आमंत्रित की जाती है। उपरोक्त के निहितार्थ अपनी आपत्तियां लिखित से अपने आवेदन पत्र, नाम, पता एवं दूरभाष नम्बर के साथ कार्यालय समय व कार्यदिवस में ग्रेटर नोएडा प्राधिकरण के मुख्य प्रशासनिक कार्यालय, भूखण्ड संख्या-1, नॉलेज पार्क -04, ग्रेटर नोएडा में स्थित नियोजन विभाग में सूचना प्रकाशित होने के 30 दिवसों के अन्दर जमा करायी जा महापत्रक (फियो/वारसुड) ग्रेटर नोएडा प्राधिकरण



**SEARCH FOR MISSING WOMAN**

General public is hereby informed that this woman namely Jyoti W/o Deepak R/o: H.No. D-243, Dakshinipuri, New Delhi **Age : 42 years, Height : 5'3", Complexion : Wheatish, Build : Thin, Face : Round, wearing red colour suit and slipper in feet, has been missing since 12.12.2021 at about 11:00 A.M. from her house along with her three daughters namely 1. **Roshni: Age : 16 years, 2. **Karishma : Age : 11 years and 3. **Radhika: Age: 6 years.** In this regard DD No. 64-A dated 13.12.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Ambedkar Nagar, New Delhi.******

Any person having information or clue about this missing woman and her daughters may kindly inform to the following:-

**E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)**  
**Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>**  
**Fax: 24368639,**  
**Tel.: 24368638/24368641**


**SHO : P.S. Ambedkar Nagar, New Delhi,**  
**Tel. No. 011-29052304, 29051917, 8750870832**


**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED**


General Public is hereby informed that one female **Namely: Foolmati, W/o: Lt. Lalaram, R/o: H.No. D-78, Kumhar Basti, Near Raghukul School, Garholi Village, MV-III, Delhi** has been missing since **17.12.2021** at 11:00 am from her house from the area of P.S. Ghazi Pur, Delhi. In this regard a case vide **DD No. 70A dated 18.12.2021** has been registered at P. S. Ghazi Pur, Delhi. The description of the missing female are as under: **Age: 75 years, Sex: Female, Height: 5'5", Face: Long, Built: Thin, Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: Green colour saree & shawl and pink colour sleeper in her feet.** Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the female but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this female kindly inform to the following.

**Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>**  
**E-mail Id - [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)**  
**Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641**  
**Fax No. 011-24368639**  
**DP/844/ED/2021**

**SHO P.S. Ghazi Pur, Delhi**  
**Tel.No. 011-22610068, 8750870625**


**PUBLIC NOTICE**

General Public is hereby informed that my clients **Radhey Shyam Meena S/o Sh. Tunda Ram Meena & Purni Devi W/o Sh. Radhey Shyam, Both R/o H-No-218, Bharat Vihar Kakraula, South West Delhi-110078** have disowned and debarred their daughter **Smt. Manju D/o Radhey Shyam Meena** due to her misconduct and misbehavior from their all movable & immovable property, and also severed all connection with them and in case anybody dealing with her will do that at his/her own cost and consequence and my clients will not be responsible in any manner.**ALOK KUMAR RAI (Advocate) Chamber No. 832,Dwarka Court Complex, Sector-10,Dwarka New Delhi-110075 Mob. No. 9868438241**


**SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY**

**E-TENDER NOTICE FOR MISCELLANEOUS WORKS**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE NO: NIT/11/21/26, Dated: 30.12.2021.**

On behalf of the President of India, The Sr. Divisional Materials Manager/ South East Central Railway, Bilaspur division invites e-tender for the following items.


Srl. No	Tender No	Due Date	Due Time	Tender Cost. (Rs)	EMD (Rs.)
1	11215523A	24.01.2022	10:30	00	00

**Description 1:-** Supply erection testing and commissioning of Low loss air cooled reactor suitable for a capacitor bank of 5500 kVAr at 40 kV including all accessories and fitting as per RDSO specification : T/SPC/PSI/FC&SR/ 0100(01/10) with A&C slip No. 1 or latest, STR : T/STR/004 with due dismantling of exiting reactor. Make RDSO/CORE approved vendors. Tendedr please visit IREPS website at <https://www.ireps.gov.in>.  
**Note:-** In controversial condition English text version will be considered certified.

**Sr. Divisional Materials Manager S.E.C. Railway, Bilaspur**

CPR/10/298

**f South East Central Railway** **E @secrail**


**Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam Limited (GMVN)**  
(A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking) 74/1, Rajpur Road, Dehradun — 248001 (Uttarakhand)  
CIN U51101UR1976SGC004259 Phone: 0135-2746817, 2749308 E-Mail: [mis.gmwn@gmail.com](mailto:mis.gmwn@gmail.com)

**No.....**  
**GMVN Invites E-Tenders for the following works/services under two-bid system:**

S. N.	Details of Tender	Period	Tender Fees	Last Date & Time for Submission
1	Selection of Service Provider to Operate and Manage Spa Centre at Tourist Resort Chilla of GMVN on Rent	Five Years	5,900	21-01-2022 05.00 PM
2	Selection of Service Provider to Operate and Manage Adventure Equipment at Tourist Resort Chilla of GMVN on Rent	Three Years	5,900	22-01-2022 05.00 PM
3	Selection of Vendor for Hiring of Taxi for Tours Run by GMVN	One Year	1,770	24-01-2022 05.00 PM
4	Selection of Vendor for Hiring of Maxi for Tours Run by GMVN	One Year	1,770	24-01-2022 05.00 PM
5	Selection of Authorisee for Broadcasting of Advertisements on LED Screen on Space at Selected TRHs of GMVN on Rent	Three Years	5,900	21-01-2022 05.00 PM
6	Selection of Lessee for providing Building of GMVN situated at Noida on Lease Rent	Five Years	11,800	21-01-2022 05.00 PM
7	Selection of Vendors for providing Selected Shops on Rent at Hotel Drona and Hotel Garhwal Terrace Mussoorie of GMVN	Two Years	2,950	21-01-2022 05.00 PM

Tender details are available at [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) and/or [www.gmwnonline.com](http://www.gmwnonline.com) All further updates will be available only on these websites therefore interested parties are advised to visit these websites regularly.

**Managing Director**

## US pushes unity on Ukraine ahead of key Russia meetings

**WASHINGTON:** In a display of unity, the Biden administration and its European allies are beginning a series of meetings aimed at showing Russia that an invasion of Ukraine would be met with a forceful response. Using virtually identical language, the US and its European allies have several times in past month issued joint and individual messages advising Russian President Vladimir Putin that his country will face "massive consequences" and "severe costs" if he goes ahead with further military intervention in Ukraine.

Yet severity of response hinges largely on Germany, Europe's biggest economy and a diplomatic heavyweight within 27-nation European Union. Potential actions — be they economic, diplomatic or political — will top agenda in talks in Washington on Wednesday between Secretary of State Antony Blinken and new German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock. The Blinken-Baerbock meeting will follow a telephone call last week between President Joe Biden and Putin, a conversation Sunday between Biden and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and a group discussion Tuesday among Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan and his counterparts from the five Nordic nations. *AP*



# Sensex rallies for fourth day to reclaim 60,000-mark; bank, finance stocks spurt Investor wealth jumps over ₹9.30 lakh cr in four days of market rally

**Mumbai:** Equity benchmark Sensex stretched its winning run to the fourth straight session on Wednesday to reclaim the 60,000-level as robust gains in banking and financial stocks offset profit-book- ing in the IT pack.

A rebounding rupee and continuous buying by foreign funds added to the momentum, traders said.

Overcoming a wobbly start, the 30-share BSE Sensex surged 367.22 points or 0.61 per cent to end at 60,223.15. The index last closed above the key 60,000-mark on November 17, 2021.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty climbed 120 points or 0.67 per cent to finish at 17,925.25. Bajaj Finserv was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, spurt- ing 5.09 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, Kotak Bank, Axis Bank, Tata Steel, HDFC Bank, Asian Paints, Maruti and ICICI Bank.

On the other hand, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, HCL Tech, Wipro, PowerGrid and Dr Reddy's were among the major lag- gards, dropping as much as 2.87 per cent.

Market breadth was in favour of the bulls, with 18 of the 30 Sensex counters logging gains.

"In a highly volatile session, the domestic market witnessed a recovery fol- lowing a mild dip though the global sen- timents were not in favour of bulls. Increasing COVID cases leading to stricter

restrictions has pressurised market volat- ility. The banking sector outshone other sec- toral indices as few private lenders report- ed double-digit business growth during the third quarter.

"IT stocks took a blow as investors awaited the onset of the quarterly results season. US and Asian markets traded weak ahead of the release of the US Fed meet- ing minutes while European indexes held ground," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking, said markets have witnessed an excellent start to the calendar year but may now take a breather. "Currently, the banking and finance majors are leading from the front so their performance would hold importance...Besides, the scheduled weekly expiry would add to the volatility. Amid all, traders should opt for trailing stop losses for their existing posi- tions and stay put. However, one should wait for some consolidation or a dip for fresh buying in the index," he noted.

Sectorally, BSE banks, finance, metal, oil and gas and realty climbed up to 2.43 per cent, while IT, teck, power, healthcare and consumer durables nursed losses.

Broader markets were mixed, with the BSE midcap index advancing 0.36 per cent, while the smallcap gauge dipped 0.08 per cent. **PTI**

## Rupee jumps 20 paise to 74.38 against US dollar

**Mumbai:** The rupee surged 20 paise to close at 74.38 against the US currency on Wednesday, propped up by foreign banks' dol- lar sales and fund inflows into domestic equities.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 74.54 against the greenback and wit- nessed an intra-day high of 74.30 and a low of 74.55. It finally set- tled at 74.38, a rise of 20 paise over its previous close. In the previ- ous session, the rupee had tumbled 30 paise to close at 74.58.

"Rupee erased previous day's loss on stronger domestic equities and the weaker dollar index. Dollar sell- ing on behalf of big corporates also added strength in rupee..." said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

The market is also positioning for better dollar inflows this quar- ter amid big bang IPO plans, Parmar added. Dollar index reversed gains taking cues from fall in US Treasury bond yields ahead of the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting min- utes.

"USD/INR is expected to trade lower in coming days and could find near term support around 74 before heading towards medium-term trend line support of 73.70 while on the higher side 74.70 becomes the resistance," Parmar noted. On the domestic equity mar- ket front, the BSE Sensex ended 367.22 points or 0.61 per cent high- er at 60,223.15, while the broader NSE Nifty jumped 120 points or 0.67 per cent to 17,925.25. **PTI**

## Economists see Omicron forcing RBI to delay policy normalisation

**Mumbai:** As COVID-19 infections spike in the country resulting in restrictions in various states and impacting the fragile recovery, many economists are expecting RBI to delay the policy normalisation move, which is expected in the February review.

The country has reported a sin- gle-day rise of 58,097 new COVID- 19 cases as of Wednesday morn- ing--the highest in around 199 days-- of which 2,135 are Omicron cases and later in the day, the first confirmed Omicron-related death has also been reported.

Maharashtra recorded the maximum number of 653 Omicron cases followed by Delhi at 464, Kerala 185, Rajasthan 174, Gujarat 154 and Tamil Nadu 121 cases, taking the total tally of cases to 3,50,18,358.

The active cases were recorded above 2 lakh after around 81 days and the COVID toll has climbed to 4,82,551 with 534 daily fatalities.

HDFC Bank chief economist Abheek Barua does not see the RBI-monetary policy committee (MPC) going ahead with the policy nor- malisation drive anytime soon, at least not in the next review in February as he expects the rising Omicron cases to shave 30 basis points off the March quarter GDP.

"Rate hike expectations will moderate as the growth gets impact- ed and the reverse repo hike expect- ed in February is also uncertain now," Barua said in a note, adding the central bank will continue with its focus on liquidity normalisation and capping yields.

Similarly, Tanvee Gupta-Jain,

the chief economist at UBS Securities India also expects the cen- tral bank to remain in "wait-and-see mode" for some more time. "If the risks surrounding the new Omicron variant remain, adding to near-term uncertainty, we think the MPC could remain in 'wait-and-see' mode at the February policy meet- ing and can delay policy normal- ization to the April policy meeting," she said.

Echoing similar views, Ibra Ratings chief economist Aditi Nayyar said the Reserve Bank will remain in a hold mode for an extended time given the rising risks to fragile growth.

"Given the surge in COVID-19 cases and the widening of restric- tions leading to heightened uncer- tainty, it is increasingly unlikely that the RBI will commence the much- delayed policy normalisation next month itself, unless inflation pro- vides an acutely negative surprise, which looks all the more unlikely," Nayyar told PTI.

Nayyar also revised down the Q4 growth forecast by 40 basis points to 4.5-5 per cent due to the third wave but has retained full year GDP forecast at 9 per cent, with moder- ate downside risks, saying anyway Ibra's forecast was the lowest among the consensus numbers which vary from 8.5-10 per cent, with the RBI pegging it at 9.5 per cent.

These economists also think the rupee will be under increased pres- sure this year given the fluid situa- tion that the global economy is in and the US Fed's already announced tapering. **PTI**

# India slaps ₹653 cr import duty evasion notice on Xiaomi

**New Delhi:** Chinese phone maker Xiaomi's India unit has been slapped with a ₹ 653 crore notice for alleged evasion of import duty, as per an official statement.

A show-cause notice has been slapped on Xiaomi India following recovery of docu- ments during searches on its premises that indicated remit- tance of royalty and licence fee to US and Chinese firms under contractual obligations, the union finance ministry said on Wednesday.

Replying to an email query, a Xiaomi spokesperson said, "At Xiaomi India, we give utmost importance to ensuring we com- ply with all Indian laws. We are currently reviewing the notice in detail. As a responsible com- pany, we will support the author- ities with all necessary docu- mentation."

Evidence gathered during investigations by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) indicated that neither Xiaomi India nor its contract manufac- turers were including the amount of royalty paid by the firm in the assessable value of the goods imported by the com- pany and its contract manufac- turers, which is in violation of the customs law, the ministry said.

By not adding "royalty and licence fee" in the transaction

value, Xiaomi India was evading customs duty, being the benefi- cial owner of such imported mobile phones, the parts and components thereof, it added.

"After completion of the investigation by the DRI, three show cause notices have been issued to M/s Xiaomi Technology India Private Limited for demand and recov- ery of duty amounting to Rs. 653 crore for the period April 1, 2017 to June 30, 2020, under the pro- visions of the Customs Act, 1962," the finance ministry said.

During the investigations, it further emerged that the "roy- alty and licence fee" paid by Xiaomi India to Qualcomm USA and to Beijing Xiaomi Mobile Software Co Ltd, China (related party of Xiaomi India) were not being added in the transaction value of the goods imported by the firm and its contract manufacturers.

Investigations further showed that Xiaomi India is engaged in the sale of MI brand mobile phones and these mobile phones are either imported by the com- pany or assembled in India by importing components of mobile phones by contract man- ufacturers of Xiaomi India.

The MI brand mobile phones manufactured by the contract manufacturers are sold exclusively to Xiaomi India, in terms of the contract agreement.

## Vedanta Aluminium signs pact with GEAR India for electric forklifts

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

The aluminium business of Vedanta has entered into a pact with GEAR India to deploy one of the largest fleets of lithium-ion battery-pow- ered electric forklifts in the country.

The company will com- mission 23 such forklifts in a phased manner over the next few months at its aluminium smelter in Jharsuguda, Odisha, which is one of the world's largest single-location alu- minium smelters, Vedanta said in a statement.

Substituting diesel-fuelled forklifts with this green fleet will reduce diesel consumption by more than 2.5 lakh litres annu- ally, thereby ensuring GHG (greenhouse gas) emission savings of nearly 690 tonnes of CO2 equivalent, it said.

Vedanta Aluminium cur- rently operates a large fleet of forklifts for finished goods handling, material movement, etc. The new lithium-ion forklifts will help maximise pro- ductivity of operations by enabling longer working cycles via rapid charging.

"Vedanta Aluminium is committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Our partnership with GEAR to deploy one of India's largest and most advanced electric forklift fleets, is in line with our endeavour towards leveraging the power of innovation and technology to make our oper- ations future-ready.

## Sebi initiates steps to raise awareness on online grievance redressal mechanisms

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Markets regulator Sebi on Wednesday encouraged investors to lodge their com- plaints through online mecha- nisms, more specifically through SCORES portal and mobile application, for effective redressal of grievances.

SCORES stands for Sebi Complaints Redress System. Further, in order to increase awareness regarding online grievance redressal mecha- nisms, Sebi has asked stock exchanges including com- modity derivatives exchanges, depositories and clearing cor- porations to display option to lodge complaint with them directly on the home page of their websites and mobile apps.

In addition, they have been directed to display link to SCORES website as well as link to download SCORES mobile app on the home page of their websites and mobile apps, according to a circular.

Also, the regulator has asked these market infrastruc- ture institutions to communi- cate to Sebi, the status of the implementation of the provi- sions of this circular through the Monthly Development Report.

SCORES is a grievance redressal system launched in June 2011. It is a platform designed to help investors lodge their complaints online with Sebi, pertaining to the securities market, against com- panies, intermediaries, and market infrastructure institu- tions.

## Sebi invites applications to engage young professionals for securities market ops

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Capital markets regulator Sebi plans to engage young professionals to assist it in different domains like securities market operations, law, information technology (IT) and research.

In a public notice, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said it is looking to engage a total of 38 young professionals and invited applications under its 'Young Professional Program'.

Such young professionals will be paid a monthly stipend of Rs 60,000. "S e b i Young Professional Program is intended to provide an exceptional opportunity to qualified and motivated young professionals to learn the nuances of Indian capital markets and functioning of a regulatory organisation by working on different projects in the Board," the regulator said in a notice on Tuesday. The programme offers oppor- tunities to candidates of var- ious educational backgrounds to assist Sebi in different domains - securities market operations, law, IT and research.

Listing out eligibility cri- teria, Sebi said a candidate must be an Indian citizen of age not more than 30 years. All the candidates are expect- ed to have a reasonable understanding of financial markets, analytical ability, knowledge of Informational Technology tools, aptitude for research, oral and written

communication skills, and judgment and interpersonal skills. Of the 38 young professionals (YPs) to be engaged by Sebi, 16 would be engaged for securities market operations, 10 for law domain and six each in research and information technology.

Sebi said the duration of engagement of YPs will be one year, which may be fur- ther extended by two stretch- es of one year each, depend- ing on the performance of YPs and organisational requirements. The total dura- tion of engagement of a YP will not exceed three years. During their engagement with Sebi, these professionals will be assigned several pro- jects or work of non-confi- dential nature, depending on their domains. Some of the projects include analysis of initial public offering (IPO) applications data in the pri- mary market, analysis of a framework for fundraising through different modes in the primary capital market across the world, streamlining the processing of various pub- lic offer documents filed with Sebi and draft letters of offers filed for buybacks and takeovers and mutual fund surveillance.

In a separate notice on Wednesday, Sebi has begun a recruitment drive inviting applications for 120 senior-level executives as part of its plan to beef up its headcount for faster and more effective execution of its role.

## Udaan raises USD 200 million via convertible notes

**New Delhi:** B2B e-commerce platform Udaan has raised about USD 200 million (about Rs 1,486 crore) through convertible notes, its CFO Aditya Pande said in an internal mail to employees.

A convertible note is an instrument typically used by companies at pre-IPO stage, and the instrument converts into equity at the IPO. Pande in an internal note said Udaan has raised USD 200 million via con- vertible notes. "We are excited and glad to share that we have five new marquee investors com- ing onboard the Udaan juggen- naut, as part of our recently con- cluded convertible note financ- ing," according to the note penned by Pande. This round was oversubscribed two times and also saw participation from existing investors, includ- ing those who bought into the com- pany through the secondary (ESOP) round in H1 2021.

With this financing, the total funds raised by Udaan via debt and convertible note through just the last quarter of 2021 has USD 250 million, "setting us up well to continue executing our strategic agenda", he wrote. **PTI**



**Doon University Dehradun**  
Mothrowala Road Kedarpur, P.O. Defense Colony,  
Dehradun-248012, Ph. No.: 0135-2531314

**No. 13/220/2021 Dated 4 Jan 2022**  
Doon University, invites application from eligible candidates for the posts of NTPC Chair Professor. Details can be downloaded from University's website [www.doonuniversity.ac.in](http://www.doonuniversity.ac.in). Last date for applying is 31-01-2022.

**Registrar**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given to the general public on behalf of ICICI Bank Ltd. that M/s. Phoenix Express Pvt. Ltd is owner of Property Bearing No. K4-88, area measuring 355 sq. yds, situated at Block-4, Kailash Nagar, Ghaziabad, (U.P.). The said property by virtue of sale deed dated 25.07.2018, registration No. 5757, executed by Mr. Umesh Kumar, who was owner of the undivided share by virtue of her death dated 09.03.1997 in a period of 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her/their share or claim, if any, with all supporting documents, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of Said Property and the transaction, if any shall be completed without reference to the claims, if any.

**Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)**  
206, 2nd Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Mori Nagar, N. Delhi-15  
Ph. 011-4112257-28, kumarassociates.advocates@gmail.com

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
My client Smt. Rita Devi W/o Late Sh. Surya Pratap Singh R/o C-1/130 Sector-11, Rohini, Delhi severe all relations & debar her son Rajeshwar Singh @ Rahul from all movable - immovable property(s) due to their misconduct & misbehavior with my client and my client will not be responsible for any of their acts in future whatsoever.

**Gagan Kumar (Advocate)**  
C-1/140 Sector-11, Rohini, Delhi-110085

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
TAKE NOTICE THAT at behest of our client, we are investigating title of Mr. Anind Rastogi, Mr. Nirin Goel, Mrs. Chitra Rastogi, Mrs. Shweta Goel & Mr. Gaurav Rastogi ("Owner") for Built up Property bearing No. 647, area measuring 209.25 Sq. Mtrs., Ward No.15, Situated in Mohalla Bouda, 6 Tooti Chowk, Pithampur, New Delhi ("Said Property"), who intends to avail loan from our client i.e. Fullerton India Credit Company Limited by creating a mortgage against said property. Any Person having any claims or rights in respect of the Said Property are/is hereby requested to make the same known in writing to the undersigned within a period of 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her/their share or claim, if any, with all supporting documents, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of Said Property and the transaction, if any shall be completed without reference to the claims, if any.

**Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)**  
206, 2nd Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Mori Nagar, N. Delhi-15  
Ph. 011-4112257-28, kumarassociates.advocates@gmail.com

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**MRF LIMITED**  
Regd. Off: 114, Greams Road, Chennai 600 006  
Email: [mrfshare@mrfmail.com](mailto:mrfshare@mrfmail.com)  
Tel: 044-28292777; Fax: 91-44-28295087  
CIN: L25111TN1960PLC004306;  
Website: [www.mrftraders.com](http://www.mrftraders.com)

Notice is hereby given that the following share certificates are reported misplaced or lost or stolen and the shareholder/ claimants thereof have appealed to the company for issue of duplicate share certificates:  
Share Cert Nos. 12623, 62482, 81637, 106505, 144951 for 23 shares bearing distinctive nos. 736111-736120; 1951975-1951977; 2562660-2562665; 1038680-1038681; 2140540-2140541 all inclusive under Ledger Folio no. D00743 in the name of MRS. SUNDER KANTA DHANDA residing at HOUSE No. E-23, POORVI MARG, VASANT VIHAR-1, NEW DELHI-110057.

The public are hereby warned against purchasing or dealing in any way, with the above share certificates. Any person[s] who has/have any claim in respect of the above share certificates should lodge such claim in writing to the company at the address mentioned above within 21 days from the date of publication of this notice, after which no claim will be entertained and the company will proceed with the issue of duplicate share certificates

**Chennai For MRF LIMITED**  
**Date: 23/12/2021 S. DHANVANTH KUMAR**  
**Company Secretary**

**(Pursuant to rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014)**  
Advertisement to be published in the newspaper for change of registered office of the company from one state to another.

Before the Central Government, Regional Director, Northern Region.

In the matter of the Companies Act, 2013, Section 13(4) of Companies Act, 2013 and Rule 30 (5) (a) of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014.

**AND**

In the matter of M/s **INDIA HOSTELS PRIVATE LIMITED**, having its registered office at 328, Mandakini Enclave, Alaknanda, New Delhi 110019, the Petitioner.

**Notice** is hereby given to the General Public that the company proposes to make application to the Central Government under section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 seeking confirmation of alteration of the Memorandum of Association of the Company in terms of the special resolution passed at the Annual General Meeting held on 10.11.2021 to enable the company to change its Registered office from "State of Delhi" to "State of Rajasthan".

Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the company may deliver or cause to be delivered or send by registered post of his/her interest and grounds of opposition to the Regional Director, Northern Region, B2 Wing, 2nd Floor, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi 110003, within fourteen days from the date of publication of this notice with a copy of the applicant company at its registered office at the address mentioned here in above.

**FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE COMPANY**  
**ABHISHEK KHADELWAL**  
**DIRECTOR**

Date: 06-01-2022  
Place: Delhi

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
To be known to all that my clients, Maharaj Singh S/o Devi Singh R/o Flat No.128,Gf,Site-4,Vikas Puri,Delhi,Lost Documents in respect of DDA Janta Flat Flat No.128,Ground Floor,Site-4, Vikaspuri,Delhi. Vide DDA File No -1J8(178)81/ NP/V has applied for conversion of the aforesaid flat from lease hold to free hold in DDA. The original documents i.e. Demand Gum Stamped Letter, Possession Letter, N.C.C. For Water And Electric Connection, Site Possession SI/ & Payment Challans of the above said flat has been lost. An F.I.R./NCR/LR No. 16118/2022 dated 05/01/2022 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi.(Any person/s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 9654121907 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Dy.Director/LAB/IR/Janta/Vikas Sadan,N/A, New Delhi

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
To be known to all that my client, Sangeta Saxena W/o Sh. Vinod Kumar Saxena Allottee/Mutatee/GPA/purchaser of DDA SFS Flat No.EA-403, First Floor, G-8 Area Rajouri Garden, Maya Enclave, Hari Nagar, New Delhi-110064 vide DDA File No.F.23(1836)81/SFS/II have applied for conversion of the aforesaid flat from lease hold to free hold in DDA. The original documents i.e. Demand Gum Stamped Letter, Possession Letter, N.C.C. For Water And Electric Connection, Site Possession SI/ & Payment Challans of the above said flat has been lost. An F.I.R./NCR/LR No. 16118/2022 dated 05/01/2022 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi.(Any person/s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 9654121907 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (Housing)-SFS or Director (H)-SFS, D Block, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi.

**उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम**  
कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण शाखा, हरिद्वार

पत्रांक : 19 / निविदा / 03 **ई-निविदा सूचना** दिनांक 04.01.2022

अधीक्षक अभियन्ता, निर्माण मण्डल, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम, देहादून के पत्रांक 23 / निविदा / 20, दिनांक 03.01.2022 द्वारा जल जीवन मिशन कार्यक्रम के अन्तर्गत जनपद हरिद्वार के विकासखण्ड बहादुराबाद लक्सर की विभिन्न पेयजल योजनाओं के निर्माण एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्यों हेतु राज्य सरकार की वेबसाइट <http://www.uktender.gov.in> के माध्यम से दिनांक 04.01.2022 से दिनांक 17.01.2022 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 संवय-जीवन संवय" कृपया जल स्रोतों को प्रदूषित होने से बचाइये  
"वैधानिक चेतावनी-जल स्रोतों को प्रदूषित करना दण्डनीय अपराध है।"

**उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम**  
कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण शाखा, विकासनगर (झाकपथस्थ रोड नियर पुल नं०-01) ईमेल [eeedvिकासnagar@gmail.com](mailto:eeedvिकासnagar@gmail.com)

पत्रांक 03 / निविदा / 03 **ई-निविदा सूचना** दिनांक 05.01.2022

अधीक्षक अभियन्ता, निर्माण मण्डल, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम, देहादून के पत्रांक 41 / निविदा / 25, दिनांक 04.01.2022 द्वारा जल जीवन मिशन कार्यक्रम के अन्तर्गत जनपद देहरादून के विकासखण्ड विकासनगर, चकराता एवं कालसी की विभिन्न पेयजल योजनाओं के निर्माण एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्यों हेतु राज्य सरकार की वेबसाइट <http://www.uktender.gov.in> के माध्यम से दिनांक 06.01.2022 से दिनांक 20.01.2022 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 संवय-जीवन संवय" कृपया जल स्रोतों को प्रदूषित होने से बचाइये  
"वैधानिक चेतावनी-जल स्रोतों को प्रदूषित करना दण्डनीय अपराध है।"

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd. 4/10, Mythree Tower, Bommanahalli Hosur Main Road Bangalore-560068

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.	C R K Jithendra/ Ch Sathiah- G-3, Ground Floor, Plot No: 66 & 75, Jayabheri Park, Sy No: 147, Kompally (V) & Gp, Quthbullapur (M), Rr Dist: Hyderabad- 500854/ LBHYD00001761615	Plot Nos 66 and 75 Total area 533.32 Sq.yards or 445.85 Sq. Mtrs Survey No.147 Jayabheri Park Village & Gram Panchayat Kompally Mandal Quthbullapur Sub- Dist: Medchal, Dist and Regn. Dist: Ranga Reddy A.P. Bounded By: North: By Plot Nos.67 and 74, South: By Plot No. 65 and 76 East: By 30' Wide Road West: By 30' Wide Road Schedule 'B' Property Semi-finished Flat No: G-3 in Ground Floor Plinth area 1,450 Sft, (Including Common area) Car Parking Area of 80 Sft. Undivided Share of Land Admeasuring 47.00 Sq. Yards Out of 533.32 Sq. Yards on Plot Nos. 66 and 75 Apartment Name: 'Sai Manju Arcade'survey No. 147 Jayabheri Park Village & Gram Panchayat Kompally Mandal Quthbullapur Sub-Dist: Medchal, District And Regn. Dist: Ranga Reddy A.P. Bounded By: North: Open to Sky South: Open to Sky East: Corridor / Flat No. G-2 West: Open to Sky	30.08.2021 Rs. 17,75,403.00/-	10.06. 2021
2.	Manu Kant/ Kawaljeet Kaur- Premises No 10-5- 385/5/11/14, 60/4/13/5/1, 64, 390/9, 391/1, 390/6/10, 385/1/15, And 10-5- 385/4/ 11, Block K, Ward 12, Sy No 129/77, Ts No. 26 Syed Nagar Hyderabad- 500001/ LBHYD00005043051	All That The Plots of Land Covered Under Premises Nos. 10-5-385/11/14, 60/4/13, 5/1, 84, 390/9,391/1, 390/6/10, 385/1/15 & 10-5-385/D/II, Totally Admeasuring 7625.5 Square Yards, Equivalent to 6374.91 Square Meters, in Survey No. 129/77, T.S. No.26, Block-K, Situated At Syed Nagar, First Lancer, Hyderabad- Telangana. Second Schedule Property Sold Hereby All That The Part And Parcel of The Flat Bearing No.4, on The 4th Floor in Tower No.A6, Admeasuring 2423 Sft (Including Common Areas), Along With Undivided Share of Land Admeasuring 51.01 Sq.yards, Out of Total Land Area 7625.5 Square Yards, Equivalent of 6374.91 Square Meters, in the Apartment Known As "the Valencia", Situated At The Premises Bearing Municipal Nos.10-5-385/5/1, 10-5-385/84, 10-5-385/A/12, 10-5- 385/1/15, 10-5-385/60/4/B 10-5-385/5B/12, 10-5-390/B/10, 10-5-385/11/14, 10-5- 385/4/11, 10-5-385/53/4/1, 10-5-390/9, 10-5-391/1 and 10-5-385/11/19, In Block K of Ward No.12 in T.S. No.26 Corresponding to Survey No.129/77 of Shaikpet Village And Mandal, At Syed Nagar First Lancer, Hyderabad, Telangana State And Bounded By: North: Open To Sky South: Open To Sky East: Open To Sky West: Corridor	13.08.2021 Rs. 1,12,20,678.00/-	07.06. 2021

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

**Date : January 06, 2022**  
**Place: Gurgaon & Ghaziabad**

**Authorized Officer**  
**ICICI Bank Limited**



As a part of its mission to improve the livelihoods of the tribals (both forest dwellers and artisans) and work towards tribal empowerment, TRIFED, ever since its conception in August 1987, has been carrying out several programmes and initiatives.

A major game-changing initiative that has been implemented by TRIFED in the recent past is the Van Dhan programme, which TRIFED is spearheading in 27 states/UTs and 307 districts with availability of MFPS as well as significant forest dwelling tribal population. In a bid to expand its activities and help more and more tribals, TRIFED has been getting into active collaboration with like-minded organisations, be it in the private or public sector. The objective of these collaborations is to combine the synergies so that tribals can get maximum benefit.

TRIFED entered into an agreement with Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini-Nation First Policy Research Centre (RMP-NFPRC) on December 29, 2021. This MoU is for a collaborative effort in leveraging knowledge, expertise and institutional strengths. The scope of the partnership will include, but is not limited to, the following strategic areas:

- To develop and execute research projects around tribal development and related activities.
- To engage in assessing and reviewing the existing and



## TRIBAL EMPOWERMENT

TRIFED signs MoU with Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini-Nation First Policy Research Centre (RMP-NFPRC) to leverage knowledge, expertise and institutional strengths

upcoming government schemes like Van Dhan Yojana.

- To publish research findings in the form of joint reports, or any other publication(s).
- To promote and disseminate research, conduct sessions, and meetings with experts on the topic.
- To jointly host conferences, seminars and other such activities pertaining to the research.

- To exchange information, provide access to personnel(s) and data relevant to the research in hand.
- To forge collaborations with other like-minded entities outside this agreement, if found mutually desirable.
- To allow access to information from regional offices, state implementing agencies and other entities relevant to the scope of the project.

Among its flagship programmes and implementations, The 'Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & Development of Value Chain for MFP' Scheme, in particular, has impacted the tribal ecosystem as never before. Implemented by TRIFED in association with State Government Agencies across 21 states of the country, the scheme

has injected more than ₹3,000 crores directly in the tribal economy since April, 2020. Aided by the Government push in May, 2020 wherein the prices of Minor Forest Produce (MFPS) were increased by up to 90 per cent and the inclusion of 23 new items in the MFP list, this flagship scheme of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, which draws its strength from The Forest Rights Act of 2005, aims to provide remunerative and fair prices to tribal gatherers of forest produces.

The Van Dhan Vikas Yojana, also a component of the same scheme, further complements MSP beautifully and has emerged as a source of employment generation for tribal gatherers and forest dwellers and the home-bound tribal artisans. The beauty of the programme is that it ensures that the proceeds from the sales of these value-added products go to the tribals directly.

To take this to the next logical phase, TRIFED is exploring convergences with organisations, government and non-government and academic, to continue its mission towards tribal empowerment. The aim is to pooling strengths together and undertake work that will help in boosting the income and livelihoods of the tribal people.

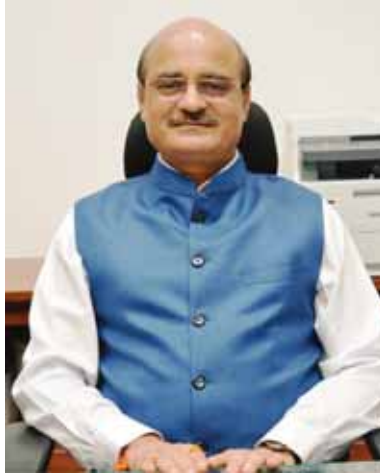
TRIFED continues to work towards generating income and livelihoods for tribal people through such flagship schemes like the MSP for MFP and the Van Dhan Yojana.

## Make in India

Northern Railway holds a virtual Vendor Meet to achieve the objective of 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat'

In pursuance to the 'Make in India' policy of Government of India to promote manufacturing and production of goods, services and works in India with a broader objective of achieving 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat', Northern Railway organised a virtual Vendor Meet on December 28. The focus of the meet was to have an industry perspective about implementation of 'Make in India' policy in Ministry of Railways and understand their nature of feedback to further strengthen implementation of the policy. The meet was attended by more than 50 participants from various industries across the country.

During the meet, it was highlighted that the procurement processes of Northern Railway are conducive to the Make in India products. Special care has been taken to avoid any restrictive or discriminatory criteria so as to help the domestic industry to participate in various procurements. Attention was also drawn to the provisions of the policy for increasing 'local content' through partnerships, cooperation with indigenous companies, establishing production units in India or joint venture with Indian suppliers. Discussions were also held to clarify the various provisions of the policy including the correct interpretation of 'local content', the categorisation of vendors under class-I, class-II and non-local suppliers, the extent of purchase preference and the process of applying the same



in tender decision.

A digital exhibition of items having limited indigenous vendor-base was also on display with all the relevant information for the industry to enhance the local manufacturing capacity. Industry representatives actively participated in the interactive session for clearing their doubts.

The Industry representatives expressed satisfaction over the implementation of the policy in Northern Railway and were hopeful of larger participation in future under 'Make in India' policy to achieve the objective of 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat'.



## Create awareness

POWERGRID, NR-I celebrated the anniversary of One Nation-One Grid-One Frequency under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

As a part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', POWERGRID, NR-I commemorated its landmark achievement of completion of One Nation-One Grid-One Frequency celebrated with full enthusiasm and happiness on December 31, 2021 at its numerous substations. On this occasion, an outreach activity was also carried out to make people aware about the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of India's Independence and the progress made by the nation thereafter.

During the celebration, free health check-up and medical camps were organised under the supervision of well qualified doctors and their staff. Around 2,000 people from around the public places, nearby villages and the local population benefited from these medical camps through free healthcheck-up camps. Apart from this, blood donation camps were also organised at various places.

On this occasion, plantation of fruit-bearing saplings were extensively taken with 'Janbhagidari' and the premises of the substations were decorated with tricolour lighting.

NTPC SAIL Power Company Limited (NSPCL), a joint venture (JV) company of NTPC Limited & SAIL (50:50) paid second interim dividend of ₹45 crores/- (net of TDS) for the financial year 2021-22 towards NTPC Limited's 50 per cent share.

Debasish Chattopadhyay, CEO, NSPCL had presented the cheque to Gurdeep Singh, chairman and MD of NTPC on December 29, 2021. A K Gautam, director (Finance), D K Patel, chairman of NSPCL and director (HR), NTPC, Ramesh Babu V, director (Operations), NTPC, C K Mondol, director (Commercial), NTPC, U K Bhattacharya, director (Projects), NTPC, Alka

## NSPCL paid second interim dividend of ₹45 crores to NTPC Ltd for the financial year 2021-22



Saigal, director (NSPCL) and general manager (Internal Audit), NTPC, Nandini Sarkar, company secretary, NTPC and N K Gupta, CFO, NSPCL were also present on the occasion.

The interim dividend is also being paid to other Joint Venture partner viz SAIL on its shareholding of 50 per cent in NSPCL. The total interim dividend paid to its promoters for the financial year 2021-22 is ₹150 crores.

NSPCL has paid a total dividend of ₹1,540 crores since inception.



## Achieving milestones

CLW created a record in locomotive production during the last year

Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW), a production unit under Ministry of Railways plays a key role in making Indian Railways self-reliant in the field of electric locomotive production, thus, becoming a prime mover for the Indian economy.

The previous year had been a challenging year. CLW faced many difficulties in keeping up the pace of the production owing to the COVID pandemic.

In its saga of making Atmanirbhar Bharat truly successful, CLW scripted another page in history by turning out a record of 467 locos in the calendar year January-December 2021. This is the best ever production figure anyone has achieved in a year.

This was achieved due to their continuous trend of production streaks of 40+ locos per month.

CLW produced 11,000 locomotives of various classes in 70 years, which comprises 2,351 steam locomotives (1950-1968), 842 diesel locomotives (1968 -1993) and 7,936 electric locomotives of various types from 1961 till December 31, 2021. About 90 per cent of all electric locomotive ever used by IR have come from assembly lines of CLW.

They also produced 100 electric locomotives in 81 working days in financial year 2021-22.

Satish Kumar Kashyup, the general manager, congratulated the entire team of CLW and appreciated their effort in the successful production of the locomotives.

## Pensioners' paradise

Government extends the date for submission of Life Certificates till February 28

In view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in various states and keeping in view the vulnerability of elderly population to Corona virus, Government has decided to further extend the time limit up to February 28 for submission of Life Certificate (Jeevan Pramaan) by the Central Government pensioners.

Pensioners can submit life certificate through any of the permissible modes during the extended period. A pensioner is required to submit the life certificate in the month of November every year.

The time limit for submission of 'Jeevan Pramaan' by the Central Government pensioners was earlier extended up to December, 2021. Pension will continue to be paid by the Pension Disbursing Authorities (PDAs) uninterrupted during the extended period. PDAs have been advised to continue to maintain Covid-19 appropriate behaviour while obtaining Life Certificates and to ensure proper arrangements and social distancing measures at the bank branches to prevent overcrowding.



Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) Chennai is well-known for its role in social causes and overall societal development. Chancellor Dr G Viswanathan, vice presidents Sankar Viswanathan, Dr Sekar Viswanathan, G V Selvam and assistant vice president Kadhambari S Viswanathan considered the request of NIEPMD, VIT Chennai has contributed to

## Sponsoring smiles

VIT Chennai contributes to social cause by helping NIEPMD

the National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities (NIEPMD) by sponsoring 40 Milton Thermo Flasks with VIT logo to Sri Nachiketa Rout director of NIEMPD.

These flasks were handed over by Dr V S Kanchana Bhaaskaran and additional registrar, Dr P K Manoharan in a function organised by VIT Chennai on January 5 in VIT Chennai Campus.

## Preventive measures

To contain the spread of Omicron, all offline public hearings in DDA offices get suspended with immediate effect till further notice

booking online appointment: <https://citizenservices.dda.org.in/>.

For urgent hearings on individual cases, appointment

will be sought through email from the concerned director and above. Prior permission with appointment, date/time

should be sought through email to enter DDA premises. The official email IDs of DDA officers are available on DDA's website under 'Employees Corner'.

Kindly check the DDA website, [www.dda.gov.in](http://www.dda.gov.in) and DDA's social media handles for further instructions and advisory.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an unprecedented global public health crisis that has overwhelmed the entire healthcare delivery infrastructure. However, one good thing to come out of it is the accelerated adoption of technology in healthcare delivery. The adoption of technology has been a game-changer in the delivery of healthcare services and the industry has been working tirelessly to implement digital health to ease the burden, increase efficiency and maximise capacity. Nonetheless, due to the swift adoption of technology, a stark divide has been created between the tech-savvy and the non-tech savvy population. Digital health solutions have been designed to be inclusive but most of them aren't tailored for the elderly and those who have lower digital literacy.

According to the report by the 75<sup>th</sup> round of National Sample Survey (NSS), only 4.4 per cent of rural households have a computer as compared to 23.4 per cent in urban households, 42 per cent of urban households have access to the internet, whereas in rural households the figure stands at 14.9 per cent.

As per the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, digital literacy is defined

## Telehealth revolution

RAMYA SUBRAMANIAN discusses the future of healthcare for India's non-tech-savvy population

as the ability of individuals and communities to understand and use digital technologies for meaningful actions within life situations. Any individual who can operate a computer/laptop/tablet/smartphone and use other IT related tools is being considered digitally literate. Over the last few years, technology has disrupted the country's households with the speed of a bullet. In the current climate, we do not need more technology; the requirement is to rather improve the quality of outcomes and increase the accessibility to the existing technology.

As an initiative to bridge the digital divide across rural and urban India, the Government of India launched the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) scheme in 2017. The scheme's objective is to provide 20 hours of basic training on digital devices and the internet, and how these tools can be used to avail gov-



ernment-enabled e-services. So far, approximately 2.76 crore candidates have been certified under the scheme. The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has undertaken various initiatives using Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the public healthcare system and it is continuously work-

ing on planning and introducing more ICT initiatives. These initiatives will have a tremendous impact as mobile technologies penetrate deeper into rural India.

### Indian telehealth market

The healthcare stakeholders such as providers, clinics, patients, pharmaceuticals, specialists, wear-



ables etc are all multi-billion dollar industries individually. The problem lies in the fragmented ecosystem. Furthermore, the tertiary care centres are clustered in cities, which brings about a vast disparity amongst the Indian population who have access to quality healthcare. Hence, thriving to solve this very problem, there is a visible boom in the commercial interest towards the telehealth sector. It has given rise to established players and start-ups offering virtual healthcare services.

Telehealth is making quality healthcare more accessible which has been hampered by severe geographical barriers across years. According to an Inc42 report named 'India's eHealth Market Opportunity Report 2021', India is home to more than 5,295 health tech startups and 133 funded e-Health startups in India. The estimated market size of eHealth is expected to touch \$10.6 billion by

2025, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 39.6 per cent.

Telehealth is proving to be the cornerstone of the healthcare industry during the ongoing pandemic and it is here to stay. However, for it to be sustainable, telehealth providers must address the issue of fragmentation, quality care delivery, awareness and acceptance. As digital healthcare gains prominence, service providers also need to address the underlying issues of the elderly and the non-tech savvy population.

### Betterment of telehealth accessibility

- Training patients to use digital systems at primary care centres to acquaint them with the technology and eradicate inhibitions about digital tools.
- The major barriers to entry into remote areas are language and infrastructure. Service providers need to address the language barrier and build a better infrastructure of healthcare delivery.
- Using artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as an emotion index feature that can help doctors gauge their patients' mental state for quicker and more accurate diagnoses.
- Developing algorithms and software that could enable video

consultations to function seamlessly even on low bandwidth.

- Maintaining electronic medical records (EMR) and increasing compatibility across devices to shift to a preventive approach towards healthcare.
- The non-tech-savvy population does not bother monitoring their health regularly. Wearable devices could prompt them to become more health-conscious.
- Training and equipping regional care providers with wearables and portable tools to facilitate remote doctor-patient consultations for rural residents.
- Encouraging the rural population to register for government health schemes and avail care services.

Telehealth is still in the early stages of development and acceptability in the country. With increasing internet penetration, we also need stable and faster connectivity in India's remote geographies. At the current unsaturated state of the healthcare market, more research, innovations and administration's support can endlessly increase the reach and efficacy of the digital healthcare industry.

(The author is the co-founder & COO of the global telehealth startup, Docty.)



# Poland beats Argentina to secure semifinal spot at ATP Cup



PTI ■ SYDNEY

Hubert Hurkacz beat Diego Schwartzman 6-1, 6-4 to secure Poland's victory over Argentina on Wednesday and a spot in the ATP Cup semifinals.

Poland finished the round-robin stage 3-0 in Group D, with wins over

Georgia, Greece and in the top-of-the-table match against Argentina.

Kamil Majchrzak rallied twice from serve breaks in the second set before beating Federico Delbonis 6-3, 7-6 (3) in the opening singles match and No. 9-ranked Hurkacz clinched the semifinal spot with his win over of Schwartzman in the second singles encounter. Poland won the

doubles to complete a sweep.

"I'm so happy for our team. We're in the semis, so super proud of that achievement," Hurkacz said.

"We have great team spirit. We support each other. I think the atmosphere that we bring helps us play better."

Poland will next meet either Spain or 2020 champion Serbia for a spot in the

**Kamil Majchrzak rallied twice from serve breaks in the second set before beating Federico Delbonis 6-3, 7-6 (3) in the opening singles match and No. 9-ranked Hurkacz clinched the semifinal spot with his win over of Schwartzma**

final. Chile's 2-1 win over Norway meant Serbia needed to sweep Spain later Wednesday to move into top spot in Group A and advance to the semifinals.

Alejandro Tabilo beat Viktor Durasovic 6-1, 6-7 (5), 6-1 to give Chile the lead before No. 8-ranked Casper Ruud levelled it for Norway with a 6-4, 6-1 win over Christian Garin.

Tabilo and Tomas Barrios Vera clinched the doubles 6-0, 6-4, giving Chile a 2-1 record in the round-robin stage and leaving Norway 0-3 after earlier losses to Spain and Serbia.



## Liverpool-Arsenal cup semifinal match off after Covid cases

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool's match against Arsenal in the English League Cup semifinals was postponed Wednesday following a COVID-19 outbreak in Liverpool's squad that has forced the club to close its training center. The first-leg match that was scheduled to take place at Arsenal's Emirates Stadium on Thursday will now be staged at Anfield on Jan. 13. The second leg will take place at the Emirates on Jan. 20.

Liverpool thanked Arsenal

and the competition organizers for their understanding "as we continue to navigate through this challenging period."

Pepijn Lijnders, the coach who has been filling in for Jurgen Klopp while the Liverpool manager is in isolation, was one of "multiple players and staff" who tested positive for COVID-19 in the latest round of checks on Tuesday, the club said.

Liverpool was already short of numbers due to previous COVID-19 cases, injuries and absences because of the African

Cup of Nations, with Sadio Mane, Mohamed Salah and Naby Keita taking part in the tournament.

After consulting with public-health authorities, the club temporarily shut its first-team training facilities on Wednesday. Practice was canceled on Tuesday. England has seen the most disruption caused by the coronavirus. Eighteen Premier League games have been postponed in recent weeks while other major European leagues have been on planned winter breaks.



## International Boxing Association renews partnership with ITA as part of anti-doping measures

PTI ■ LAUSANNE

The International Boxing Association (IBA) has renewed its partnership with the International Testing Agency for three years, an agreement which will cover in-competition dope testing, long-term sample storage, and investigations among other aspects.

The IBA first entered into an agreement with ITA after the 2016 Rio Olympics.

"The agreement includes IBA outsourcing all anti-doping activities to the ITA, including testing, intelligence gathering, test distribution planning, education and Therapeutic Use Exemption handling, as well as result management and the handling of anti-doping rule violations," the IBA said in a statement.

"The full scope of the new agreement now also covers in-competition testing, long-term sample storage, intelligence and investigations...In strict adherence to the World Anti-Doping Code and the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA's) International Standards," it added.

The move is part of the IBA's efforts to regain affiliation from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which suspended it in 2019 owing to financial irregularities, and administrative issues.

"It is our duty to protect our athletes

and reinforce the values of clean sport in boxing. Continuing our work with the ITA will ensure we do exactly that," said IBA President Umar Kremlev.

Benjamin Cohen, ITA Director General added, "By entrusting the full range of its anti-doping programme to us at the ITA, we hope in turn that we can enable IBA to focus fully on its core mission of developing boxing, in a transparent manner, worthy of wider trust."

"We look forward to continuing to provide IBA and boxers with our expertise and are fully committed to supporting IBA in its fight against doping."

IBA is following a roadmap given by the IOC for reinstatement in 2023. Competitions that will fall under the renewed ITA partnership will include the World Boxing Championships.

Boxing has managed to stay on board for the 2024 Paris Olympics but has been dropped from the provisional roster for the 2028 Games.

Its future depends on the roadmap of good governance that IOC wants the body to implement.

The IBA recently announced a revamp of its administrative structure and promised conduct of elections by June end this year as recommended by an independent governance review.

## Jamshedpur aim to get back on track against unpredictable NorthEast United

PTI ■ BAMBOLIM

Jamshedpur FC will be eager to make their way back into the top four after a few indifferent outings when they take on an unpredictable NorthEast United FC in the Indian Super League here on Thursday.

Jamshedpur have looked excellent this season with a collection of some really talented footballers. But in their last few games, the Owen Coyle-coached side looked off the boil and managed two points from three games.

They lost to Chennaiyin FC in their previous outing, lacking the teeth upfront which they usually have. Sitting sixth in the points table, Jamshedpur can move back to the top four with a win.

Lithuanian striker Nerijus Valskis jumped ship to Chennaiyin FC in the January transfer window but such are the riches of Jamshedpur that they can afford to let go of a forward of his quality.

Greg Stewart has been brilliant, to say the least for the Men of Steel, playing a part in 64.3 per cent of Jamshedpur's goals this season. But that is also a cause of concern



for Coyle as his team has been heavily relying on the talismanic Scotsman.

"We've had a couple of opportunities that we let slip by. We should have had something

from the Chennaiyin game. But Chennaiyin rode their luck and they got their points. That's the margins in the league.

We know we are capable of winning

## RAT for athletes on arrival at camps and training centres: SAI's fresh SOPs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Athletes will be required to undergo Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) upon arrival at national camps and training centres, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Wednesday as it came up with a slew of measures to combat the renewed threat posed by COVID-19. Unlike the latest guidelines, the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that SAI had issued before the Tokyo Olympics last year, required an athlete to take an RT-PCR test within 72 hours before arrival at camp with a negative report.

The SAI has issued the fresh SOPs to deal with the drastic rise in the positive cases, mostly owing to the Omicron variant, across the country. These measures will be strictly implement-

ed at the various National Centres of Excellence (NCOE) as well as the ongoing national coaching camps. Upon arrival to the training centres, all athletes will undergo mandatory Rapid Antigen Test (RAT).

"If the test comes negative, they will train and dine separate-

ly until the sixth day of joining. A repeat of the RAT would take place on the fifth day," SAI stated in a press release.

"The ones who get a positive result would undergo a RTPCR test and be treated in isolation, while the athletes testing negative would continue normal training,"

it added. Proper isolation facilities are being earmarked for COVID positive or symptomatic athletes across the camps and the facilities would be sanitised twice a day.

There will also be a micro bio-bubble, where the athletes will be divided into small groups for training and dining. The athletes have also been strictly asked to avoid interacting with other groups.

Besides, random testing of athletes, coaches, support staff and non-residential staff in the NCOE will be carried out once every 15 days. "It has also been recommended that athletes would be participating in only those competitions recommended by the respective National Sports Federations (NSFs) and the SAI HQ officials," the nodal sports body said in a release.

## Eriksen eyes comeback from cardiac arrest, targets World Cup

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

Christian Eriksen is targeting a comeback from his cardiac arrest to play for Denmark in the World Cup in November.

The 29-year-old Eriksen has not played since collapsing during Denmark's opening match at the European Championship against Finland in June.

Unable to play in Italy due to being fitted with an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator, the playmaker's contract with Inter Milan was terminated by mutual agreement last month.

"My goal is to play in the World Cup in Qatar," Eriksen he told Danish broadcaster DR1 in an interviewed aired Tuesday.

"That has been my mindset all along."

Eriksen, who won the Serie A title last season, has resumed some training in recent weeks but is without a club.

AP ■ BRISBANE

With his medical exemption approved, Novak Djokovic may have some explaining to do when he gets to Melbourne to defend his Australian Open title.

The exemption allows the top-ranked Djokovic entry to the tournament regardless of his vaccination status for COVID-19, a subject he has declined to clarify amid months of speculation he could miss the season-opening major unless he can prove he's had two doses of a coronavirus vaccine.

That's a Victoria state government-mandated condition of entry for all players, staff, fans and officials entering Melbourne Park when the tournament starts on Jan. 17.

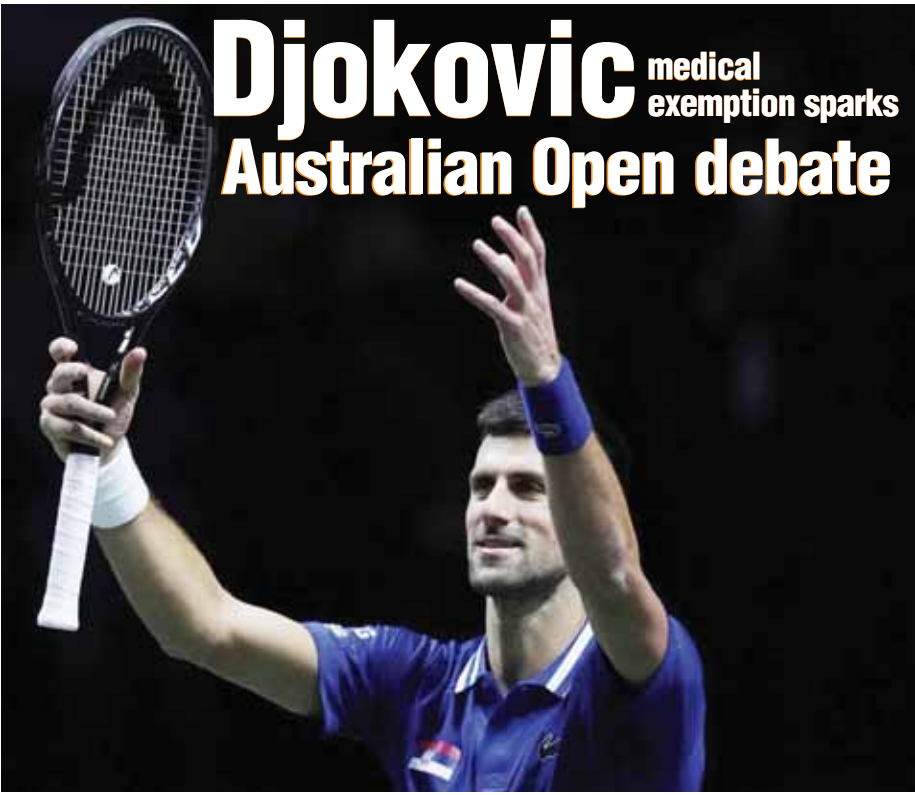
His revelation on social media that he was heading to Australia seeking a record 21st major title sparked some debate and plenty of headlines on Wednesday, with critics questioning what grounds

Djokovic could have for the exemption and backers defending his right to privacy. Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley defended the "completely legitimate application and process" and insisted there was no special treatment for Djokovic.

Only 26 people connected with the tennis Grand Slam event applied for an exemption and, Tiley said, only a "handful" — estimated at about five — were granted.

The names, ages and nationalities of applicants were redacted for privacy reasons before each application for a vaccine exemption was assessed by two independent panels of experts, and Tiley noted Djokovic is under no obligation to reveal his reason for seeking one.

But, he suggested, it would be "helpful" if Djokovic chose to explain it to a Melbourne public still getting over months of lockdowns and severe travel restrictions imposed at the height of the pandemic.



## Djokovic medical exemption sparks Australian Open debate



# South Africa in hunt as defiant Elgar takes home team to 118/2

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

South African batters, led by their gutsy skipper Dean Elgar, dug their heels in to reach within 122 runs of a series-levelling victory against a determined India as the second Test seemed poised for a gripping fourth day finish here on Wednesday.

Elgar (46 batting off 121 balls) took some nasty blows off deliveries that spat off the cracks but kept his team on course at 118 for 2 in pursuit of a tricky 240-run target set by India in the wake of a solid century-plus partnership from the under-fire duo of Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane.

Shardul Thakur (1/21), who is in the middle of a great Test match, got his eighth victim of the game in an over during which the ball seamed, bounced and kept low from the same spot with the last one finding opener Aiden Markram's (31) pads.

Keegan Petersen (28) added 46 with his skipper before Ravichandran Ashwin (1/14) got one to drift and turn getting a leg before decision going his way.

However, like every new innings in this game where heavy roller has made batting easier by ironing out the divots on the good length spots, Elgar was ready to play the ugly game putting his body on the line, getting hit on knuckles, chest, shoulder and even on head prompting a quick on-field concussion test.

While South Africa will that

**Pujara (53 off 86 balls) and Rahane (58 off 78 balls) gave fresh lease of life to their respective careers with timely knocks while Hanuma Vihari (40 not out) also played a crucial part in swelling India's overall lead as they finished their second innings at 266. Kagiso Rabada (20-3-77-3) was inspirational in the final half-an-hour before lunch as he brought his team back with quick dismissals**



they have half a foot through the victory door, there has been numerous instances in the series where a batting collapse has changed the course of the game.

There are two things that would keep India worried going into the fourth day.

In this Test, the batting conditions have improved as the match has pro-

gressed --- 202, 229, 266 -- and secondly, Mohammed Siraj is far from fit and bowled only four out of the 40 overs sent down till now.

The Indian team, in its mind, knows that it is a bowler short.

While 240 as a target is more than decent, India could have pushed it a bit more had Rishabh Pant's poor shot selection, that incurred legendary

Sunil Gavaskar's wrath in the commentary box, not happened at the most inopportune of moments.

Having been hit by a Kagiso Rabada bouncer, Pant charged to another short ball like a raging bull only to be caught behind that prompted Gavaskar to question his sense of "responsibility" urging for the "non-sense" in garb of natural game" to

stop.

But it was a day when India's middle order finally came good through combative half-centuries from Pujara and Rahane.

Pujara (53 off 86 balls) and Rahane (58 off 78 balls) gave fresh lease of life to their respective careers with timely knocks while Hanuma Vihari (40 not out) also played a crucial part in swelling India's overall lead as they finished their second innings at 266.

Kagiso Rabada (20-3-77-3) was inspirational in the final half-an-hour before lunch as he brought his team back with quick dismissals.

Marco Jansen (17-4-67-3) and Lungi Ngidi (10.1-1-43-3) also played their parts to perfection.

The Indian middle-order, which has flattered to deceive on most occasions in the past couple of years, did its job and also got some much needed late-order support from Shardul Thakur (28).

Pujara and Rahane, in a rarely seen counter-attacking mode, added 111 runs in just 23.2 overs, getting some breathing space for themselves. Having understood that time is indeed running out for them, both the batters decided not to try and hang around as they looked for scoring opportunities.

The half volleys were driven imperiously and the width was dispatched disdainfully square off the wicket.

When Jansen bowled one short, Rahane uncorked the slash over

point for a six. Pujara's 50 came off 62 balls while Rahane's half-century was completed in 67, signalling that they were trying to show 'intent' and put team's interest above everything else.

They hit 18 fours and a six between them.

There was a time when India were 155 for two with a lead of 128 and it seemed that South Africa's propensity to bowl too short or too full was proving to be damaging.

But then Rabada, South Africa's best exponent of fast bowling since Dale Steyn, produced an inspired show that is so synonymous with the traditional format.

Rabada found that ideal back of length and it landed on the crack to deviate sharply, taking Rahane's edge into keeper Kyle Verreynne's gloves.

Pujara then got one from Rabada in the off-stump channel to be plumb in front despite lunging far forward.

However, the man who disappointed one and all was Pant, who first got a snorter from Rabada that hit his helmet visor when he tried to defend awkwardly, and then he charged to convert a short ball into a half volley. The result was an edge to keeper.

It was Vihari and Shardul, who were involved in a 41-run stand for the seventh wicket and then had two little but enormously important stands of 17 and 21 respectively with tailenders Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj to set up a good chase for the Proteas.

# EBADOT STARS AS BANGLADESH BEATS NZ BY 8 WICKETS

AP ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI NZ

Fast bowler Ebadot Hossain took a career-best 6-46 as Bangladesh beat World Test Champion New Zealand by eight wickets in the first cricket test Wednesday, capturing its first-ever win in New Zealand.

Ebadot had bowled Bangladesh to the brink of a famous victory by the end of the fourth day when he had figures of 4-39. He broke down the last of New Zealand's resistance with two quick wickets as the home team was dismissed in its second innings for 169, its lowest score against Bangladesh.

New Zealand trailed by 130 runs on the first innings, leaving Bangladesh to score only 40 for victory. It lost two wickets in doing so but current captain Mominul Haque, top-scorer in the first innings, and former captain Mushfiquir Rahim were at the crease when Bangladesh reached 42-2.

It was only Bangladesh's sixth test win away from home and its first test win over a team ranked in the top 5 ranked team: New Zealand is ranked No. 2 and Bangladesh No. 9. The result also brought to an end



New Zealand's unbeaten streak in its last 17 tests at home.

Ebadot, a former volleyball player who became a test cricketer after winning a fast bowling competition, had only 11 test wickets at an average of 81 when he came into this match as Bangladesh's third seamer.

He took 1-75 in New Zealand's first innings of 328 but came into his

own in the second innings, running through the middle order on Tuesday with the wickets of Devon Conway (13), Henry Nicholls (0), Tom Blundell (0) and Will Young (69). That left New Zealand 147-5 at the start of play Wednesday, only 17 ahead of Bangladesh.

The possibility of any stern resistance by New Zealand, marshaled around veteran batsman

Ross Taylor who was 37 not out when play began, quickly dissolved, thanks to Ebadot.

The tall right-arm, who snaps to attention and salutes when he takes a wicket, saluted twice when he bowled Taylor for 40. Then he dismissed Kyle Jamieson to leave New Zealand 160-7. Shoriful pulled off a brilliant diving catch at mid-wicket to complete the second dismissal.

Taskin Ahmed then stepped in to help wrap up the New Zealand innings.

He removed the other overnight batsman, allrounder Rachin Ravindra, for 16. Ravindra had edged a delivery from Ebadot between first slip and the wicket-keeper but this time the edge carried finer to keeper Liton Das.

Taskin bowled Tim Southee (0) and Mehidy Hasan Miraz finished it off with the wicket of Trent Boult, who was brilliantly caught at deep mid-wicket by the substitute Taijul Islam. "It's a long story, volleyball player to test cricketer," Ebadot said. "But I'm a soldier of the Bangladesh Air Force and I know how to salute.:"

# KL Rahul gains 18 places in ICC Test rankings; Shami, Bumrah too move up

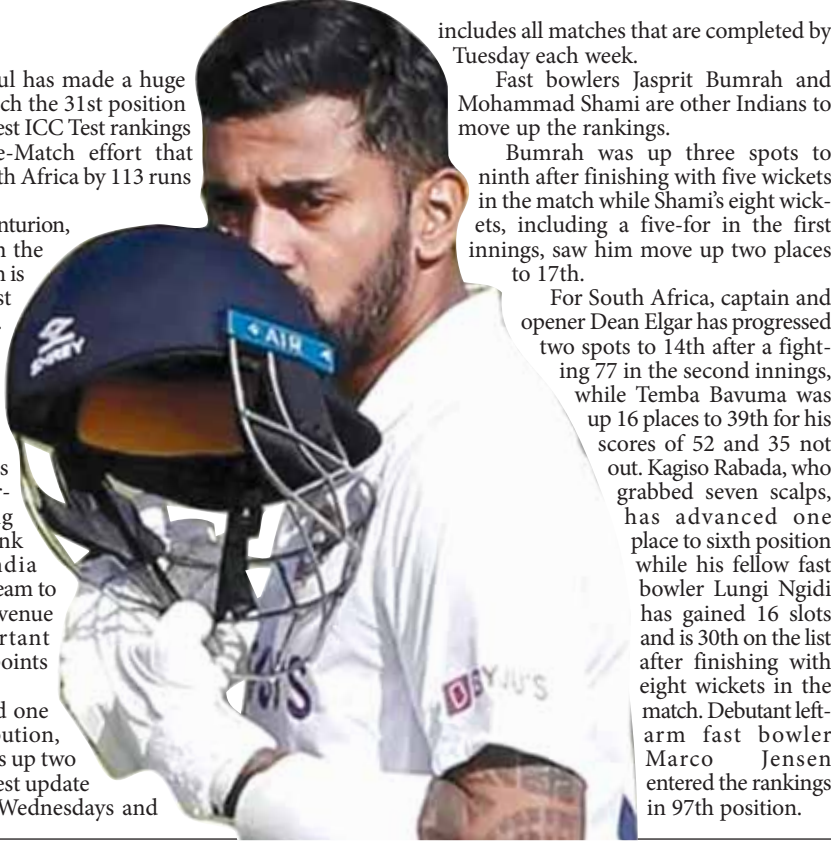
PTI ■ DUBAI

India opener KL Rahul has made a huge gain of 18 slots to reach the 31st position among batters in the latest ICC Test rankings after his Player-of-the-Match effort that helped India defeat South Africa by 113 runs in the first Test.

With the win in Centurion, India took a 1-0 lead in the three-match series which is a part of the World Test Championship (WTC).

Rahul, whose best in the format is eighth position that he attained in November 2017, struck 123 in the first innings and was associated in an important 117-run opening partnership with Mayank Agrawal (60) as India became the first Asian team to win a Test match at the venue while gaining important points in the WTC points table.

Agarwal has gained one place for his contribution, while Ajinkya Rahane is up two places to 25th in the latest update that is carried out on Wednesdays and



includes all matches that are completed by Tuesday each week.

Fast bowlers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammad Shami are other Indians to move up the rankings.

Bumrah was up three spots to ninth after finishing with five wickets in the match while Shami's eight wickets, including a five-for in the first innings, saw him move up two places to 17th.

For South Africa, captain and opener Dean Elgar has progressed two spots to 14th after a fighting 77 in the second innings, while Temba Bavuma was up 16 places to 39th for his scores of 52 and 35 not out. Kagiso Rabada, who grabbed seven scalps, has advanced one place to sixth position while his fellow fast bowler Lungi Ngidi has gained 16 slots and is 30th on the list after finishing with eight wickets in the match. Debutant left-arm fast bowler Marco Jensen entered the rankings in 97th position.

# Australia 126-3 after rainswept Day 1 of 4th Ashes test



AP ■ SYDNEY

The fourth Ashes test sprung to life late on Day 1 after sweeping showers threatened to dampen the prospects of both teams for a positive start at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

After rain delays permitted only 21 completed overs in the opening two sessions Wednesday, runs and wickets came more frequently in the final passage of play as Australia reached 126-3 at stumps.

Steve Smith was unbeaten on six and Usman Khawaja was four not out when rain ended play for the day.

"It's obviously out of our control," opener David Warner said of the frequent stoppages for weather. "We just have to read-just when we come off and go back on again."

"It is frustrating but we can't do anything about it"

Veteran seamer Stuart Broad, recalled to the England team after being omitted for the third test in Melbourne, went

someway to vindicating his selection by dismissing Warner and generally appearing the most threatening bowler in the England attack.

Harris and Warner put on 50 for the first wicket before Broad made the breakthrough for England in the 21st over, teasing Warner onto the front foot and finding the edge which carried comfortably through to Zak Crawley at second slip for his 527th wicket in 151 matches.

Warner, who made 30 with six boundaries off his 72 balls, swiped his bat through the air in frustration at his dismissal and not capitalizing after making another good start to an innings in this series.

It was the 13th time Broad (1-34) has captured Warner's wicket in tests, the most any bowler has captured the pugnacious left-handed opener.

"It is one of those things where a bowler bowls a lot at you and he obviously pitches the ball on the right areas a lot of the

time," Warner said.

"He's very consistent, holds his length well and tries to create that false shot, which today I tried to drive the ball too straight where the other ones I drove through the covers was a bit squarer."

"That was my disappointment," he added, "but it is awesome just to see Broady back out there. You want to see a world-class bowler and to have him and Jimmy Anderson bowling at us is great."

Marnus Labuschagne joined Harris at the crease, but four balls into the 22nd over show-ers swept back over the ground forcing the players from the field after only 9 overs of play in the middle session, much to the disappointment of the crowd of about 30,000.

Play resumed shortly after tea and Harris and Labuschagne lifted the scoring rate, often finding the gap through cover for runs, and then clipping through square leg as the English bowlers over-corrected their line.

Harris made 38 but, like Warner, failed to capitalize on a good start as he edged a Jimmy Anderson (1-24) delivery through to England captain Joe Root at first slip to have Australia at 111-2. Next over, Mark Wood (1-31) got a deserved wicket when his pace straightened up Labuschagne (28) on the crease and the world's top-ranked batsman feathered an edge through to wicketkeeper Jos Buttler.

"You want to try and test yourself against the best players," said Wood, who has now taken Labuschagne's wicket in consecutive matches."

# Giles calls for systemic changes in English cricket post Ashes defeat



PTI ■ LONDON

Apologising for the Ashes defeat Down Under, ECB managing director Ashley Giles has called for systematic changes in English cricket, but stressed that mass sacking is not the solution for the team's recent struggles in Test cricket.

England trail the ongoing five-match Ashes series 0-3. The visitors were completely outplayed in the first three games.

England lost the Boxing Day Test by an innings and 14 runs inside two days and a session, while a dom-

inant Australia had won the first Test by nine wickets in Brisbane and then registered a convincing 275-run victory in the next match in Adelaide.

"I absolutely feel the responsibility of losing this Ashes series," Giles told 'BBC Sport'.

"We all do and we can only apologise. I know there will be a lot of emotion, a lot of anger about how we've lost it. But we know it's not an easy place to come. In the last 34 years we've come here and won once (in 2010-11).

"We've not done well in terms of results. In the 1990s (a similar record) was accepted as normal for England leadership and they got away with it. We set our standards much higher than that," he added.

England have lost a record nine Tests in 2021 and the Ashes defeat has led to speculations regarding the future of Test skipper Joe Root and head coach Chris Silverwood, while Giles role is also under the scanner.

But the former England spinner feels changing leadership without addressing systematic shortcomings will not help English cricket.

"Unless we look at more systemic change, a collective responsibility, and collective solutions, we can't make whatever changes we want."

# Australia cricketer Maxwell tests positive for Covid-19

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia all-rounder Glenn Maxwell on Wednesday became the latest cricketer from the Big Bash League to test positive for COVID-19.

Maxwell, who is the captain of Melbourne Stars in the BBL, became the 13th player from the franchise to test positive for the virus.

Maxwell's positive test was confirmed on Wednesday morning through a rapid antigen test which he had taken following his side's Melbourne derby against Renegades on Monday, cricket.Com.Au reported.



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PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka batter Bhanuka Rajapaksa on Wednesday announced his retirement from international cricket with immediate effect, citing family obligations.

Rajapaksa's ODI career lasted less than six months as the 30-year-old left hander had made his debut in July 2021.

He tendered his letter of resignation to Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), which posted the development on its website.

"I have very carefully considered my position as a player, husband and am taking this decision looking forward to fatherhood and associated familial obligations," Rajapaksa wrote in his resignation letter. Rajapaksa represented Sri Lanka in five ODIs and 18 T20Is, scoring a total of runs 409 across formats which included three fifties.

He was part of Sri Lanka's T20 World Cup 2021 squad and finished as the third-highest run-scorer for his team with 155 runs from eight matches.



He also underwent a PCR test and is currently awaiting its result. Meanwhile, the spurt in COVID-19 cases in the BBL continues with the Renegades becoming the fifth club to report a positive case.

Three other BBL clubs have reported positive COVID-19 cases. On Tuesday, the Brisbane Heat's were forced to withdraw from their match against the Sydney Sixers scheduled for Wednesday. The fixture has been postponed.

The BBL organisers are desperately trying to keep the tournament going despite a surge in COVID-19 cases across the league.