

WORLD 5

ROCKY FEW WEEKS AHEAD
FOR UK HOSPS: HEALTH SECY

MONEY 6

'CONSIDER BANKERS AS FRONTLINE
WORKERS FOR BOOSTER DOSE'

SPORT 7

DJOKO HAD COVID LAST
MONTH: LAWYERSPublished From
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7-phase polls in
UP from Feb 10Election in Punjab,
Uttarakhand, Goa
on Feb 14; EC bans
physical rallies till Jan
15 amid Covid surge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the midst of a Covid-19 surge, the election commission (EC) on Saturday announced dates for Assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Goa, Manipur, and Uttarakhand. The EC disallowed physical political rallies, roadshows, padyatras, cycle and bike rallies till January 15 when it will review the Covid situation.

Voting for the high-stakes Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections will be held in seven phases, starting from the western part of the politically crucial State on February 10 and moving eastwards. Punjab, Uttarakhand and Goa will vote on February 14 while elections in Manipur will be held on February 27 and March 3. The counting of votes for all five States will be held on March 10.

Announcing the election schedule with a strong focus on digital and virtual modes of campaigning, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra

State	Phase	Nomination	Polling date
Uttar Pradesh	1	21 Jan Fri	10 Feb Thu
	2	28 Jan Fri	14 Feb Mon
	3	01 Feb Tue	20 Feb Sun
	4	03 Feb Thu	23 Feb Tue
	5	08 Feb Tue	27 Feb Sun
	6	11 Feb Fri	03 Mar Thu
	7	17 Feb Thu	07 Mar Mon
Uttarakhand	1	28 Jan Fri	14 Feb Mon
Punjab	1	28 Jan Fri	14 Feb Mon
Goa	1	28 Jan Fri	14 Feb Mon
Manipur	1	08 Feb Tue	27 Feb Sun
	2	11 Feb Fri	03 Mar Thu

said that no physical political rallies, nukkad sabhas, cycle and bikes rallies, and road-

shows will be allowed till January 15. "Situation to be reviewed and fresh instructions to be issued later. The Commission will not hesitate to bar parties from further rallies if Covid protocol is not followed," Chandra said. He said parties and candidates have been advised to conduct their campaigns on virtual and digital modes as much as possible.

In Uttar Pradesh, voting will take place in 58 Assembly constituencies, covering 11 western districts, out of the 403 seats in the first phase on February 10. The second phase to be held on February 14 will cover 55 seats, the third phase of voting will cover 59 seats on February 20, while the fourth phase polling will be for 60 constituencies on February 23.

Continued on Page 2

Covid surge unabated in poll-bound States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The surge in Covid-19 cases continues unabated as 6,411 more people tested positive for novel coronavirus infection and six deaths were reported in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday. The silver lining during this period was that despite having 18,551 active cases, the pressure on the hospitals of the State was almost negligible as only around 300 people were

admitted in hospitals.

Uttarakhand on Saturday reported 1,560 fresh Covid cases and 270 recoveries.

Punjab reported 2,901 fresh infections on Friday while one more person succumbed to the disease, according to a medical bulletin.

Goa reported 1,432 new cases with a high test positivity rate of 21.72 per cent.

Manipur recorded 76 new Covid cases on Saturday.

Third wave to peak
by Feb 15: IIT-MOn Sat, Delhi records
20,181 cases, 19%
+vity; India 1.41 lakh,
3,071 Omicron cases
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The march of Covid-19 infection slightly slowed down in Mumbai and Delhi during the last 24 hours on Saturday, but overall the situation seems as alarming as ever.

On Saturday 1,41,986 daily infections were reported, taking the country's total caseload to 3,53,68,372, which included 3,071 Omicron variant.

Delhi on Saturday reported 20,181 fresh Covid cases, the highest single-day rise since May last year. The Capital reported 7 deaths over the last 24 hours. On Friday, Delhi reported 15,097 new cases. The test positivity rate stood at 19 per cent.

On the other hand, Mumbai on Saturday reported 20,318 cases in the last 24 hours, marginally lower than Friday's 20,971. The city logged 5 Covid-related deaths. On the whole, Maharashtra added 41,434 new Covid cases, marginally higher compared to Friday. Thirteen people died in the last 24 hours in the State. Of the total cases, 82 per cent are asymptomatic, down from 84 per cent.

Delhi Police check commuters during weekend curfew to curb spread of Covid-19 on Saturday
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

However, this is just the beginning, as indicated by a preliminary analysis by IIT Madras which has predicted the peak of the third wave between February 1 and 15.

They attributed this to India's R-naught or R0 value which indicates the spread of Covid-19 was recorded at 4 this week, suggesting a very high infection transmission rate. R0 indicates the number of people an infected person can spread the disease to. A pandemic is considered to end if this value goes below 1.

Based on preliminary analysis by computational modeling done by IIT Madras, the R0 value was close to 2.9 nationally in the past week (December 25 to December 31). The number was recorded

at 4 this week (January 1-6), according to a news agency.

Dr Jayant Jha, Assistant Professor, Department of Mathematics, IIT Madras, said R0 depends on three things — transmissibility probability, contact rate and the expected time interval in which infection can happen.

"Now, with the increase in quarantine measures or restrictions, maybe the contact rate will go down and then in that case R0 can decrease. So, based on our preliminary analysis, which is just based on the last two weeks, we can tell these numbers, but again, these numbers can change based on how much affirmative action is taken with respect to social gathering and all," he said.

Continued on Page 2

World records more than
20 lakh/day Covid cases270% rise since
Omicron outbreak
in S Africa in Nov

Paris: The world recorded more than two million daily coronavirus cases on average between January 1 and 7 with figures doubling in ten days, an AFP tally showed on Saturday.

An average of 2,106,118 new daily infections were reported over the seven-day period, shortly after the one million case threshold in the week of December 23-29, 2021.

New global case numbers have soared by 270 per cent

since the highly contagious Omicron variant was discovered in South Africa in late November. But Covid-related deaths were at their lowest level since October 2020, with an average of 6,237 per day recorded during January 1-7.

Although early studies suggest Omicron causes less severe illness, experts have warned the sheer volume of cases fuelled by the strain could still overwhelm health systems.

Countries around the world have reintroduced curbs and ramped up vaccination programmes in a bid to stem the spread of the virus.

Continued on Page 2

Govt restores FCRA of
Mother Teresa trust

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of controversy, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has restored the FCRA registration of Missionaries of Charity (MoC), the Catholic religious congregation set up by Nobel laureate Mother Teresa.

According to officials, the orders were issued on Friday evening. Last week, the Ministry issued a statement that the FCRA registration of the MoC was not renewed as "some adverse inputs were noticed". On January 7, the MoC was removed from the list of around 6,000 NGOs whose registration has ceased to exist.

Continued on Page 2

Punjab gets third
DGP in 3 months

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Punjab Police on Saturday saw its third Director General with the State Government appointing senior Indian Police Service Officer Viresh Kumar Bhawra to the post. The order came just before the announcement of the dates for the Assembly elections in Punjab.

Bhawra, who was the DGP of Punjab Home Guards, replaced officiating DGP Siddharth Chattopadhyaya. The Charanjit Singh Channi Government selected the 1987 batch officer Bhawra out of a panel of three officers shortlisted by the UPSC.

Continued on Page 2

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Maha out of bounds for group of 5+

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

As a precautionary measure to deal with the increasing number of Covid-19 cases, the Maharashtra Government on Saturday banned the movement of five or more persons from 5 am to 11 pm and no movement of people from 11 pm to 5 am, while it extended the closure of schools and colleges till February 15.

In fresh restrictions issued through an order on Saturday evening, the state government restricted the number of people at marriages, funerals and social, religious, cultural and political events to 50,20 and 50 respectively.

The state government banned visitors to the government offices. It ordered the closure of swimming pools, spas, wellness centres and beauty salons, allowed 50 per cent capacity in hair salons, hotels, restaurants, cinema theaters and auditoriums.

For the domestic travel, The state government made double vaccination or mandatory RTPC negative reports 72 hours of the arrival in the state. It made double vaccination for public travel.

State records 41K Covid cases, 144 Omicron cases

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

With no let up in the spread of pandemic cases, Maharashtra recorded 41,434 Covid-19 cases on Saturday, even as it registered as many as 144 Omicron cases in various parts of the State.

A day after the daily Covid-19 infections touched a staggering tally of 40,925 cases, the daily cases went up to 41,434, taking the total number of cases from 68,34,222 to 68,75,656. As many as 13 Covid-19 deaths were reported from various parts of the state.

Of the 41, 434 fresh cases recorded in the state, Mumbai accounted for 20,318 Covid-19 cases on Saturday. With the daily cases having dropped marginally from 20,971 on Friday to 20,318 cases on Saturday, the total number of cases in the metropolis rose from 8,74,780 to 8,95,098.

As 9,671 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 65,47,410 to 65,57,081. The recovery rate in the state dropped from 95.8 percent to 95.37 per cent.

The number of “active cases” in the state increased from 1,41,492 to 1,73,238 cases. The fatality rate in the state dropped from 2.07 per cent to 2.05 per cent.

Of the total recorded cases, Mumbai accounts for a maximum of 1,06,037 active cases, while there are 30,039 active cases in Thane. There are 15,376 active cases in Pune, followed by Raigad (5128), Palghar (5077), Nashik (2566), Nagpur (2050), Ahmednagar (851) and Satara (835).

Of the 7,03, 42,173 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 68,75,656 have tested positive (9.77 per cent) for COVID-19 until

Saturday. Currently, 8,45,089 people are in home quarantine while 1,851 people are in institutional quarantine.

Meanwhile, the State recorded 133 cases of Omicron, taking the total number of new Covid-19 variant cases to 1009 cases. Of the cases, 130 cases have been reported by the Institute of Social Science Education and Research, while three cases have been reported from Gujarat.

The following is the break-up of a total 1009 Omicron cases recorded in the state so far, Mumbai: 566, PMC-201, Pimpri-Chinchwad—53 Thane—36, Pune rural—32, Nagpur—30, Panvel—17, Navi Mumbai, Kolhapur—10 each, Satara—8, Kalyan Dombivli—7 each, Osmanabad and Vasai-Virar—5 each, Nanded, Amravati, Ulhasnagar—3 each, Aurangabad, Buldhana, Mira-Bhayandar Sangli, Sangli, ahmednagar—2 each, Latur, Akola and Raigad—1 each.

CNG, PNG price hike to affect 24 lakh consumers in Mumbai

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In the fifth hike effected in three months that 24 lakh consumers in the metropolis, the Mahanagar Gas Ltd (MGL) will go in for an increase in the prices of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and Piped Natural Gas (PNG) with effect from midnight of Saturday.

The basic price of CNG is being increased by Rs 2.50 per kg, while the domestic PNG is being hiked by Rs 1.50 per Standard Cubic Meter (SCM) for the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

Accordingly, the revised all-inclusive prices of CNG that fuels vehicles will go up from Rs 63.50/kg to Rs.66.00/kg, the domestic PNG shall shoot up from Rs 38 per SCM to Rs.39.50 per SCM.

This is the fifth hike in CNG and PNG prices carried out by the MGL since October 14. The hike will hit the domestic budgets of 16 lakh people living in the metropolis and neighbouring areas, eight lakh consumers using gas-powered vehicles will have to spend

Accordingly, the revised all-inclusive prices of CNG that fuels vehicles will go up from Rs 63.50/kg to Rs.66.00/kg, the domestic PNG shall shoot up from Rs 38 per SCM to Rs.39.50 per SCM

more because of the hike. The MGL had increased the prices PNG and CNG in the first week of October 2021, ahead of the festive season. It went in for one more hike on October 14.

On November 26 last year, the MGL increased the basic prices of CNG by Rs.3.06 per kg and domestic PNG by Rs. 2.26 per SCM for the MMR. As a consequence, the revised all-inclusive prices of CNG used by vehicles will go up from Rs. 57.54 per kg to Rs. 61.50 per kg,

while the domestic PNG will be Rs. 36.50 per SCM, in a single slab henceforth.

On December 17/18, the MGL had increased the rates of CNG by Rs 2.00 per kg and PNG by Rs 1.50 per SCM.

The MGL has sought to justify the latest hike in gas prices by saying that it had increased the prices to meet the shortfall in domestic gas allocation, it is sourcing additional market priced natural gas to cater to the increasing requirement of CNG and Domestic PNG segments. An MGL spokesperson said that on account of substantial increase in market priced natural gas price, its input gas cost has also increased substantially, and the fresh hike for consumers was expected to partly offset its costs. However, the MGL has claimed that despite the fresh hikes, the CNG offers attractive savings of around 59 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively, compared with petrol and diesel at current prices, and PNG saves around 22 per cent in comparison with the prices of domestic LPG cylinders.

6K more test +ve in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The surge in COVID-19 cases continued unabated as 6,411 more people tested positive for novel coronavirus infection and six deaths were reported in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday. During the corresponding period, 171 COVID-19 patients also recovered. The silver lining during this period was that despite having 18,551 active cases, the pressure on the hospitals of the state was almost negligible as 18,184 infected people are recuperating at home. Additional Chief Secretary (Medical and Health) Amit Mohan Prasad said that the importance of vaccination was evident because the need for hospitalisation was negligible for a vaccinated person.

To buttress his point, the official said that there were 2,556 active cases of COVID-19 in Lucknow district on March 29, 2021, out of which 312 people were admitted to hospitals, whereas on January 8, 2022, there are 2,573 active cases in Lucknow out of which 15 patients were undergoing treatment.

World records...

From Page 1

Europe, as well as the United States and Canada, are the world's infection hotspots. The two regions respectively represented 49 per cent and 33 per cent of global Covid cases in the past week.

Covid cases skyrocketed by 47 per cent in Europe and 76 per cent in the United States and Canada compared with the previous week.

In the same period, Covid infections increased by 224 per cent in Oceania, 148 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 116 per cent in the

Middle East and 145 per cent in Asia.

The number of new cases reported in Africa remained stable but, as elsewhere, were at their highest level since the start of the pandemic in March 2020.

The figures are based on official statistics produced by national health authorities.

A significant proportion of less severe or asymptomatic cases go undetected despite intensified testing regimes since the beginning of the pandemic. Testing policies also vary from one country to another.

Taking into account excess mortality linked to Covid-19, the World Health Organization estimates the overall death toll could be two to three times higher. **AFP**

7-phase polls...

From Page 1

The fifth phase on February 27 will also cover 60 seats, while 57 constituencies will go to vote in the sixth phase on March 3 and the remaining 54 seats in the last and seventh phase on March 7.

Punjab (117 seats), Uttarakhand (70 seats) and Goa (40 seats) will have single-day voting on February 14, coinciding with the second phase of polls in UP. For Manipur, the poll panel has decided to conduct voting in two phases — 38 seats on

February 27 and 22 seats on March 3 — coinciding with fifth and sixth phases of UP polls.

In all, elections will be held for 690 Assembly seats, and 18.3 crore people, including 8.5 crore women, will be eligible to cast their votes in the five States. For the first phase of seven-phased elections for five States, the notification will be issued on January 14, nominations can be filed till January 21 for scrutiny till January 24, while nominations can be withdrawn till January 27. The

polling will take place on February 10. For the second phase, the notification will be issued on January 21. For the third phase, the notification will be issued on January 25 while the fourth phase schedule will have the notification issuance on January 27. The fifth and sixth phase notification will be issued on February 1 and 4 while the last phase notification will be issued on February 10.

Out of the 5 poll-bound States, the BJP is in power in 4 States, including Goa, Manipur,

Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh and it is making a big push to capture Congress-ruled Punjab, where the Aam Aadmi Party is also emerging as an important player. In the politically important Uttar Pradesh, voting will start from the western region and move towards the east over seven phases.

While the tenure of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly ends on March 15, that of the Punjab House ends on March 27, Manipur on March 19, Goa March 15, and Uttarakhand on March 23.

Speaking about the challenges posed by the Covid resurgence, he said the situation is very dynamic and nobody can predict Covid numbers of a future date. Chandra said, “It is not correct to link elections

with the rise in coronavirus cases, and the commission aims to conduct Covid-safe elections with a focus on hassle-free experience for voters and maximum voter participation”.

He said booster doses will keep the polling staff safe. The vaccination rates in the States going for polls are high, Chandra added. He also assured voters that all necessary steps are being taken to ensure “Covid safe” elections and said they should come out in large numbers to exercise their franchise as polling booths.

The EC said that it has asked chief secretaries of the poll-bound States to expedite the vaccination drive. “More than 15 crore have got first dose, more than nine crore

Model Code of Conduct comes into force in UP as poll dates announced

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the announcement of the dates of Assembly polls by the Election Commission of India (ECI) on Saturday, the Model Code of Conduct has been enforced in Uttar Pradesh with immediate effect.

On the pattern of 2017 Assembly elections, the ECI has announced a seven-phase poll in Uttar Pradesh commencing from the western dis-

tricts and concluding in the districts of eastern region of the state. The polling dates for Uttar Pradesh have been scheduled on February 10, 14, 20, 23, 27 and March 3 and 7. Counting of votes for all 403 Assembly seats will be taken up on March 10.

There is a minor change in the entire poll process as the duration has been reduced by five days. In 2017, the poll schedule was announced on January 4 and election results

were declared on March 11. This time elections have been announced on January 8 and the results will be declared on March 10. Moreover, in 2017, the first phase of poll commenced from assembly constituency number 1 at Behat in Saharanpur. This time the polling will commence from assembly constituency number 8 at Kairana in Shamli. The district shot into notoriety in 2013 for communal violence

leading to migration of Hindu community from the town. Polling in Behat assembly seat will be held in the second phase this time round.

Polling in all nine assembly constituencies of Lucknow district will be held in the fourth phase of election on February 23. The poll notification for the fourth phase will be issued on January 27 and the last date of filing nomination is February 3, scrutiny of nominations will

be held on February 4, the last date of withdrawal is February 7 and polling will be held on February 23. In the fourth phase polling will be held in 60 assembly constituencies.

The election process will commence from January 14, with issuance of notification for the first phase starting from western UP on January 14 where polling will be held on February 10. In the first phase, 58 assembly constituencies will

go to polls spread across 11 districts of Shamli, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Baghpat, Meerut, Hapur, Ghaziabad, Bulandshahr, Mathura, Agra and Aligarh. For the first phase poll, filing of nominations will commence from January 14, the last date for filing nominations will be January 21, scrutiny of papers will be held on January 24 and the last date for withdrawal will be January 27. In the second phase, polling

will be held on February 14, and filing of nominations will start from January 21. The last date for filing papers will be January 28, scrutiny will be done on January 29 and the last date for withdrawal will be January 31. A total of 55 assembly constituencies will go to polls in the second phase covering nine districts of Saharanpur, Bijnor, Amroha, Sambhal, Moradabad, Rampur, Bareilly, Budaun and Shahjahanpur.

Third...

From page 1

The Union Health Ministry on Wednesday said India is seeing an exponential rise in the number of coronavirus cases, which is believed to be driven by the Omicron variant. It also highlighted that the country's R naught value is 2.69, higher than the 1.69 recorded during the peak of the pandemic's second wave. Among the southern States, Tamil Nadu reported 10,978 new cases, 1,525 recoveries, and 10 deaths, in the last 24 hours. Karnataka reported 8,906 fresh Covid cases, 508 discharges, and 4 deaths in the last 24 hours. At the same time, Kerala's active Covid-19 cases reached 31,098 on Saturday after 5,944 more infections were reported during the last 24 hours.

Punjab gets third DGP in 3 months...

From Page 1

The other two officers in the panel were senior IPS officers Dinkar Gupta and Prabodh Kumar.

“On the consideration of the panel received from the UPSC, the Punjab Governor is pleased to appoint Viresh Kumar Bhawra, IPS as director general of police, Punjab (Head of Police Force),” the order said. Bhawra's term shall be for a minimum period of two years from the date of assumption of office, it added. Punjab got its

third DGP in a span of three months.

A few days back, the UPSC had sent a panel of three IPS officers -- Dinkar Gupta, V K Bhawra and Prabodh Kumar for the appointment of a regular Director General of Police of Punjab. According to the Supreme Court guidelines, out of the three shortlisted IPS officers by the UPSC, the State Government is to finalise the name of one officer for the appointment of a regular DGP. After Channi took over as

the new Chief Minister last September, the 1988-batch IPS officer Iqbal Preet Singh Sahota was appointed as the officiating DGP replacing Dinkar Gupta who was the State police chief when Amarinder Singh was the Chief Minister.

But Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu was against the appointment of Sahota.

Later after facing pressure from the former cricketer, the State Government had appointed 1986-batch IPS officer Chattopadhyaya as officiating DGP until a regular DGP is appointed out of a panel of three IPS officers shortlisted by the UPSC.

After assuming charge, newly appointed DGP Punjab said with Punjab Assembly

Elections 2022 around the corner, Punjab police will ensure smooth conduct of elections.

He said keeping in view the elections, the Punjab police will also ensure that elections are being conducted in Inducement free manner.

Apart from ensuring smooth elections, DGP Viresh Bhawra said his focus would be on eradicating drug menace and terrorism from the State. He added that People Centric Policing and Public Service delivery are among his top priorities.

The DGP said the Punjab police will make optimum use of technology for carrying out investigations of the various crimes.

Govt restores FCRA...

From Page 1

The NGO with the registration number-147120001 was included in the list of 16,908 NGOs whose FCRA registration is active as on January 7, said an official. There are 1,030 NGOs eligible to receive foreign donations in West Bengal and the MoC was added to the list.

The registration of nearly 6,000 NGOs ceased to operate from January 1 as the MHA refused to renew their application or the NGOs did not apply for renewal. Union Home

Ministry had earlier said in a statement that the MoC's renewal was refused on December 25 for not meeting the eligibility conditions. It said its license was valid till October 31 but was extended till December 31 along with other associations whose renewal is pending.

An MHA official said on January 1 that the Ministry declined to renew the FCRA registration of 179 NGOs, while 5,789 associations did not apply for a renewal before the December 31 deadline. The

deadline for those NGOs who had applied before December 31 and whose application was not rejected have been given an extension till March 31.

According to the 2020-21 annual financial returns filed by Missionaries of Charity (MoC), on December 13, the total balance in its foreign contribution bank account stood at Rs 103.76 crore.

The Mother Teresa-founded organisation has more than 250 bank accounts across the country to utilise the foreign funds.

3-day long colloquium held at Kadavalloor temple

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A three-day long colloquium presided over by Vedic scholars, astrologers, priests and spiritual leaders held at Kadavalloor Sri Ramaswami Temple found that the presiding deity of the centuries old temple is sad and losing his power due to aberrations in traditions and customs.

“Lord Sri Rama, the deity is shocked because of the steps taken by Devaswam Board (the Government department that administers the temple) and his ire is reflected on the population that constitute the serene village. Families get disintegrated, contagious diseases

are on the upswing and the village which gave birth to hundreds of scholars watch as the new generation is full of mediocre people,” observed Unnikrishna Panikkar, Cheruvalli Narayanan Namboodiri, Kerala's lead Vedic scholars who led an Ashtamangala Prasnam spread over three days (January 5, 6 & 7). Vedic astrologer Edamuttam Madhu Sakthidharan, helped the audience by translating and explaining the observations inferred by Panikkar and Namboodiri during the three days.

Sri Ramaswami Temple at Kadavalloor shot into global fame because of the Vedic

Anyonyam (face-to-face), a competition that measures the Vedic prowess of scholar who gathers in the village every November. “The administrators amended the rules of Anyonyam to make it popular and earn fast buck. But this has not been appreciated by the presiding deity,” observed Panikkar.

Ashtamangalam is the collection of eight auspicious materials that include flowers, grains, gold coin, fruits, betel leaves, mirror, cloth, lamp and saffron. The distinct characters of these materials as well as the nature of the person who lights the lamp are elucidated by Vedic scholars to explain what is in the mind of the Lord. “It

is an integration of mathematics, astronomy, astrology, nature and behavioural patterns which give out the results,” Panikkar told The Pioneer on the side lines of the Prasna Pooja.

The Vedas explain Ashtamangala Prasna exponents as “Jyotishashtara vidagdho Ganithapatur Vritavamscha Sathyavacha, Vinayee Vedadhyayee, Grahayajana parascha, Bhavathu Daivagna” which means only a scholar in astronomy, mathematics and Vedas and who is honest, humility and expert in worshipping Sun, Moon etc could be an astrologer

It was found during the Ashtamangala Prasna that the feet of the deity has been tampered with by people who were not qualified to perform the divine job. “It is like cutting the feet to suit the footwear. The babus of the Devaswam department are government officials and they do not know the complexities associated with aagamasastra,” said Cheruvalli Namboodiri. The scholars found out from planetary positions that a snake has been shot dead in the temple premises which has upset the Lord.

“There were instances of the Thanthri (chief priest) being over ruled by the Devaswam Board officials.

Priests are being transferred and posted without taking into consideration the fact that there are differences in the traditions associated with each temple. The job of a temple priest is not that of a lower or upper division clerk in Government office.” Said Panikkar. More than a dozen astrologers and hundreds of devotees including rationalists had assembled to participate in the colloquium. “We have genuine issues like troubled family ties, unusual marital discord and children born with defects. This has been troubling us for long and the Ashtamangala Prasna offered as solutions,” said Aravindan

Panikkar, lead astrologer at Kadavallur.

He said that the village owes its existence to Ghatolkacha, son of Bheem. “The idol at this temple was the one brought here by Ghatolkacha and the village has been known as Ghatolkachapuram, which later became Kadavallur,” he said.

Many devotees including women had doubts about the rituals in the temple dating back to centuries. Kadavallur Sri Ramaswami temple is one of the few temples in South India which is under the possession of Archaeological Survey of India because of the antiquity associated with it.

ICU beds increased in Capital hospitals

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi on Saturday reported more than 20,000 cases of coronavirus, with this the overall tally reached 1,526,979, as per the daily Covid-19 health bulletin issued by the Delhi Government. The positivity rate is now 19.6 per cent and seven people lost their lives.

In view of rising Covid-19 cases, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government increased 5,650 normal beds, 2,075 ICUs in 14 hospitals along with 2,800 beds in eight Covid care centres. Health Minister Satyendar Jain said, "Around 13,300 beds are still available for patients in Delhi hospitals. Very few patients are getting admitted in

this wave of corona, but we have made arrangements in hospitals to keep the situation under control in Delhi." It has been decided to increase the number of beds. The Delhi government is ready to deal with the most serious situation. Delhi's health system is fully prepared to prevent this wave of Corona and provide timely treatment to all the people of the state.

According to an order issued by Department of Health and Family Welfare, signed by Ajay Bisht, (Deputy Secretary), H and W, Delhi government, Indira Gandhi Hospital (1500 Normal and 330 ICU Beds), Lok Nayak Hospital + Guru Nanak Eye Center + Ram Leela Maidan (750 Normal and 500 ICU

Beds). GTB Hospital + Ram Leela Maidan (750 Normal and 400 ICU Beds). Burari Hospital (400 Normal and 195 ICU Beds). Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital (300 Normal and 150 ICU Beds) Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital (100 Normal and 50 ICU Beds). Deep Chand Bandhu Hospital (150 Normal and 75 ICU Beds). Shree Dadadev Matri and Shishu Chikitsalaya (100 Normal and 25 ICU Beds). Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya (100 Normal and 25 ICU Beds). Acharya Shree Bhikshu Hospital (100 Normal and 25 ICU Beds) Bhagwan Mahaveer Hospital (100 Normal and 25 ICU Beds), are hospitals where bed strength increased.

Weekend curfew relaxed for Guru Gobind Jayanti

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The weekend curfew imposed in the national Capital will be relaxed on Sunday due to Guru Gobind Singh birth anniversary, therefore devotees will be allowed to visit the Gurudwaras with Covid appropriate behaviour, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) said on Saturday. Issuing the order, the authority said that Covid appropriate behavior must be followed inside Gurudwara premises with 'thermal screening, social distancing, hygiene, wearing of mask, use of sanitiser, staggering of timing etc'.

The Delhi government urged Gurudwara Management Committees to follow the Covid-19 guidelines in 'letter and spirit' Meanwhile, poplar markets Janpath and Lajpat Nagar markets observed closed due to weekend curfew.

Amid the rising Covid-19 threat, shops and markets in places like Janpath and Lajpat Nagar on Saturday were completely closed and empty due to the weekend curfew that started at 10 pm on Friday in the national Capital.

AAP fully prepared to enter polls: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

While the nation will witness elections in five major States soon as the Election Commission of India (ECI) announced poll dates on Saturday, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convener Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said his party is fully prepared to enter the polls.

Appealing masses to vote for AAP, Kejriwal said voters of these five States were eagerly waiting for the announcement of elections; they have made up their mind to give a chance to honest politics; people will vote on basic issues this time and reject politics of hate based on caste-religion divides," he added.

The Election Commission announced the dates for the assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Goa, Manipur and Uttarakhand.

Soon after the ECI's announcement, Kejriwal tweeted,

"Aam Aadmi Party is fully prepared to enter the polls now that elections dates have been announced."

He said, "the Aam Aadmi Party is going among the people with a resolve to fulfill all the basic needs including providing good education, health, electricity, water, employment to everyone. I am sure, people will vote on basic issues this time and will reject the hate politics based on caste, religion divides."

Addressing the situation Senior Aam Aadmi Party Leader and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia issued a statement.

He said — in all the five states, not only the Aam Aadmi Party, but the people and the voters there were eagerly waiting for an opportunity to change the system and the politics that have betrayed them for long. They now have a chance to bring in the politics of



work and honesty. I appeal — give chance to Kejriwal ji," "give chance to Kejriwal ji's honest politics. Today people of Punjab, people of Uttarakhand, people of Goa and people of Uttar Pradesh are very inspired by Kejriwal ji's politics."

Meanwhile, on EC's decision for the virtual rallies till January 15, the AAP said, "the decision was difficult for the Election Commission, as well as difficult for the political parties, for the workers, but this decision was necessary in view of the safety of the people in view of Covid. Keeping in mind the safety of the people, everyone should cooperate with the decision taken. We are preparing for the virtual rallies. We will do door to door campaigning and I am sure the Election Commission will review it as soon as Covid subsides and then take its appropriate decision."

Cong demands all-party meet to discuss Covid

NEW DELHI: With the situation turning grimmer due to the rising number of Covid-19 cases in the national capital, Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar demanded an all-party meeting to discuss ways in containing the fast spreading Omicron variant.

Kumar said that the weekend lockdown imposed by the Delhi Government will impact the livelihood of daily wage earners, house maids, labourers and other sections of poor people, as they are not covered by any financial package by the Government. The Congress president also said that the limited curfew will not serve anything but will add rush due to the odd-even closure of shops during weekdays.

Attacking the Delhi Government for not "learning" any lessons from previous devastation caused due to Covid, he said that despite realizing that a third wave of the pandemic was round the corner, Kejriwal made false assurances to the people that there was no reason to panic, but when Covid cases doubled and trebled in a couple of days, the government left the people in lurch instead of taking measures to contain it.

Meanwhile, Sunil Kumar, Chairman of the Legal and Human Rights Department of the Delhi Congress has written to Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajaj and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, seeking exemption from uploading latest OBC (non-creamy layer) certificates for the post of 'Trained Graduate Teacher' (TGT) advertised by DSSSB. **SR**

Morphed video showing Cabinet panel discussion against Sikh originated from Pak: Delhi Police

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Saturday said that a morphed video of a cabinet committee wherein some persons tried to show that the meeting was against the Sikh community, originated from Pakistan.

During the monitoring of social media, it was observed that a fake/morphed video has been shared on Twitter by some Twitter handles, police had said. According to police, in reality, the video was of the meeting of the cabinet committee, which took place on December 9, 2021, after the demise of Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat. "The video was readily available on various news portals and social media platforms," police said.

K P S Malhotra, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) said that with the ill-intent to promote enmity and instigate communal disharmony, the video was morphed and a new voiceover was

super imposed in which the alleged persons tried to show that the meeting was against the Sikh community.

The Delhi Police registered a case under section 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony) of the Indian Penal Code and investigation was initiated, police said.

Primarily two Twitter accounts -- @simrankaur0507 and @eshalkaur1 -- were identified which had started the propagation of this video, they said.

During technical investigation, it was noticed that there are various accounts, which had tweeted the same video with the same content and same hashtag, police said.

All the accounts were created between October 2021 to December 2021. The technical analysis has been revealed that these accounts were being operated from a single browser (developed by multilogin.com), police said.

Gangster on prowl to avenge don held

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested a 41-year-old gangster from southeast Delhi's Badarpur area in connection with allegedly planning to harm a senior Tihar Jail official to avenge the death of Ankit Gujjar inside prison.

The accused has been identified as Ajay Gurjar alias Bhaji Ji, a resident of Palwal district in Haryana.

According to Jasmeet Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Special Cell, in August 2021, an audio call between two persons became viral. In this call, Satender alias Sattu was found asking his associate Ajay Gurjar to arrange an AK-47 rifle to execute the killing of a member of rival gang.

Satender was also talking of causing serious harm to a Deputy Superintendent of Tihar Jail to avenge the death of their associate Ankit Gujjar

in jail with the alleged connivance of jail staff. Ankit was found dead with multiple injuries on his body on August 4, 2021 inside central jail number 3 and Ankit's family members had alleged that he was killed in prison with connivance of jail staff," said the DCP.

"After the arrest of Satender on August 17, name of Ajay was identified as the caller on other end in the viral audio call. During investigation, an information was received on Thursday that Ajay would come to the Badarpur bus stand at Mathura Road around 7 pm to meet his associate. Later, a trap was laid and Ajay was nabbed," said the DCP.

"Ajay previously involved in more than 24 criminal cases, including of murder, attempt to murder, extortion, assault, in Delhi, Haryana, UP, Rajasthan and Mumbai. Ajay's cousin JP Gurjar, having underworld connections, sent him to Hafiz Baloch, a dread-

ed gangster in Mumbai. Baloch had killed Jubair Patel in 2008. After the murder, Baloch came from Mumbai and stayed with Ajay and JP," said the DCP.

After committing various cases of extortion, Ajay went to Mumbai and stayed in the house of Baloch. He was highly impressed with the luxurious lifestyle of Baloch and other gangsters of underworld. Since then, he has had underworld connections with four underworld gangsters -- Hafiz Baloch, Iqbal Ibrahim Kaskar (brother of Dawood Ibrahim), Subhash Thakur and Arif Jaan (brother-in-law of Chhota Shakil) -- in Mumbai, the DCP said.

Ajay had fired on nephew of Karan Singh Dalal and also on Shivcharan Lal Sharma, both ex-ministers of Haryana and one Chandni Ram Gupta, councillor of the area in Palwal, for extortion in 2012. Ajay was arrested in 2018 and came out of jail around 10 months ago, said the DCP.

2 women, man held for stealing, trafficking newborn

Gurugram: The Gurugram police have arrested two women and a man with the help of a taxi driver, involved in stealing and trafficking newborn children. Two newborn girls were also recovered from their possession which was stolen from Delhi and about to sell for Rs 3 lakh in Alwar (Rajasthan).

Those arrested were identified as Surinder Kaur (45) of Alwar, Rajasthan, Neha a resident of Rohini, Delhi and Harjinder Singh (32) of Alwar, Rajasthan. During interrogation, they disclosed that they along with their companions used to steal newborn children from different places and sell the children to earn quick money. They are involved in this illegal trade since 2014.

Two new-born babies have been recovered whereas police are trying to establish infants entities. **SR**





हरियाणा सरकार



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लख-लख बधाइयां

रविवार, 9 जनवरी, 2022

“श्री गुरु गोबिन्द सिंह जी मानवता के रक्षक, एक महान योद्धा एवं एक महान कवि थे। उनका जीवन और उपदेश मानवता के लिए प्रकाश पुंज हैं। आइये, उनके मानवीय मूल्यों, अधिकारों एवं सिद्धांतों के प्रति अपनी प्रतिबद्धता को दोहराएं। मैं गुरु साहिब जी से प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि वे समूची मानवता को शांति, समृद्धि और प्रगति प्रदान करें।”

- मनोहर लाल

“श्री गुरु गोबिंद सिंह जी के व्यक्तित्व में अनेक विधाओं का संगम था। वो जितने अच्छे योद्धा थे उतने ही बेहतरीन कवि और साहित्यकार भी थे। अन्याय के विरुद्ध उनका जितना कड़ा रुख था, उतना ही शांति के लिए आग्रह भी था। मानवता की रक्षा के लिए, राष्ट्र की रक्षा के लिए, धर्म की रक्षा के लिए, उनके सर्वोच्च बलिदान से देश और दुनिया परिचित है। यही सारे मूल्य नए भारत के निर्माण के मूल में हैं।”

- नरेन्द्र मोदी

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BJP confident of win in State polls: Nadda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As battle lines have been drawn with the Election Commission on Saturday declaring the schedule for Assembly elections in five States, of which four are BJP-ruled, BJP president J P Nadda expressed confidence that his party will emerge victorious in the Assembly polls and urged party workers to adhere to Covid-related guidelines laid down by the election body.

"People will again bless the BJP, which will return to power with a big majority and take development works to new heights", he said.Nadda said his party will come to power with an overwhelming majority.

"I welcome the Election Commission of India's announcement of the assembly election dates for the five States - Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Goa and Manipur.

"I appeal to all the BJP workers to strictly follow all the guidelines announced by the Election Commission of India

Cong: Will retain Punjab, wrest other from BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the five States are all set for Assembly polls, the Congress on Saturday expressed confidence that it will retain Punjab and capture power in BJP-ruled Goa, Manipur and Uttarakhand while expecting to play a decisive role in Government formation in Uttar Pradesh.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala told a press conference that it was a 'golden opportunity' to defeat the BJP, whose rule has led to joblessness, price rise and crime against women, Dalits and marginalised sections of the country.

He said the Congress workers will fight the polls with full strength.

related to Covid -19 and all the otherimportant instructions", he said in a statement.

"I also appeal and urge the Bharatiya Janata Party workers to participate with fullenthusiasm and vigour in this important festival of our democracy," he said. Nadda said "he is fully confident that in these assembly elections in the five States the BJP will once again win the trust and confidence of the electorate under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi." Exuding confidence, Nadda said his party- will again win the assembly elections with a massive majority in all the five States.

"Our Governments will take these states to newer heights of growth, development, progress and prosperity", said the BJP chief.Union Home Minister Amit Shah appealed to the people of all these states "to elect a government that contributes to the progress."

Union Minister and Punjab BJP in-charge Gajendra S Shekhawat said, "We're fully prepared for the polls."

Covid-19 hits paramilitary forces hard

Positivity rate jumps over 11 times in 11 days, 1,668 positive cases reported in last 10 days

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The number of active Covid-19 cases in the paramilitary forces has jumped over 11 times in just 11 days from a meagre 148 cases as on December 28 to 1,668 cases till Friday.

In a single day, the tally of Covid cases jacked up by 441 cases from 1,227 cases on Thursday to 1,668 cases on Friday which is a surge of over 35 percent in just one day.

As on Friday, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) topped the list with 466 active cases followed by 485 cases in Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), 354 in Border Security Force (BSF) and 217 in Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

Likewise, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) had 64 cases followed by 57 in the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and 25 in National Security Guards (NSG).

On December 28, the tally of the infected was just 42 in CRPF, 44 in CISF, 46 in BSF, eight in SSB, five in ITBP, one in NDRF and two in NSG.

"The country has been

Stringent measures needed to contain Covid rise in S-E Asian countries: WHO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The World Health Organization (WHO) on Saturday called for stringent implementation of public health and social measures as Covid-19 cases surged in most countries in the South-East Asia region, with some nations witnessing an exponential rise.

Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region said that, "All preventive and protective measures must be implemented with full earnestness by one and all. Authorities must implement situation-specific measures to arrest the further spread of the virus. People must adhere to these measures.

witnessing a steady rise in Covid-19 cases in the last two weeks and there is sudden upsurge of the cases from last three days and the potential threat of new variant "Omicron" is looming large," according to a communication

Masks, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, ventilation and physical distancing is an absolute must."

Though the Omicron variant of Covid-19 may appear to be less severe, it should not be dismissed as 'mild', she said. The highly infectious variant, which has emerged as the most predominant one, is already overwhelming health systems around the world, she pointed out, adding that globally the Omicron variant has led to hospitalisations and deaths.

"We must also not forget that not every Covid-19 case is an Omicron infection. Other variants including Delta are also circulating which, as we know, causes severe infections and deaths," the Regional

Director said. Each positive case of Covid-19 should, hence, be a cause of concern.

The covid-19 virus spreads mainly between people who are in close contact with each other, for example at a conversational distance. The virus can also spread in poorly ventilated indoor settings or crowded settings, Dr Singh said.

Often, infected people do not have symptoms or don't know that they are carrying the virus, so it is important to ensure good ventilation by opening windows and doors when sharing an indoor space with other people. It is extremely important for people to wear well-fitting masks and avoid crowds, besides taking other precautions.

December 27, 2021 has provided a narrative framework for States/Union Territories to facilitate decision making on test positivity of 10 percent or more in the last one week and bed occupancy rate of 40 percent or more on oxygen sup-

port/ICU beds.

However, based on the local situation and population characteristics, states and UTs can take containment measures and restrictions before these thresholds are reached.

In view of the sudden upsurge of Covid-19 infection and potential threat of Omicron, the CRPF has directed all its formations to reactivate all Covid Care Centres (CCC) and dedicated Covid Health Centres (DCHC).

In addition, the CRPF has further directed re-establishment of all isolation/quarantine facilities and strict isolation/quarantine of all returnees from leave/temporary duties/courses in accordance with the Covid-19 state protocols.All social gatherings in the CRPF have been advised to be cancelled/postponed. Meeting of officers may be done in virtual/online mode.

The Medical Directorate of the CRPF has also advised that attendance in offices may be reduced to 50 percent. All non-essential travel of service personnel may be curtailed. Physical attendance in courses/training may be stopped.

Nadda to visit Tripura to reassess party strategy, strengthen alliance



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of Trinamool Congress's recent attempt to expand its footprints from Bengal to Tripura, the BJP's national president J P Nadda will be visiting Tripura from January 10 to January 11 to reassess organisational strategy and enhance party cadre.

Nadda is to address State executive and also sort out tribal differences between the BJP and its ally, Indigenous People's Front of Tripura. The central leadership is continuing to back Chief Minister as the State is to face Assembly poll in 2023.

BJP has recently scored decisive election victory in the local civic elections winning 329 of 334.

BJP is trying to thwart TMC from wooing its MLAs in the State as the latter has done in Bengal. TMC's aggressive moves in the state too would figure in the discussions during Nadda's two-day visit according to central functionaries.

The latest visit of Prime Minister to Tripura where he inaugurated an integrated terminal at Maharaja Bir Bikram airport this week is again part of the Central Government's increasing focus on the state which had been for decades a left bastion.

Demanding money in courts unacceptable: SC

Apex court modifies punishment of court staffer for seeking money



New Delhi: The Supreme Court has said that demanding money as illegal gratification while working in courts is "unacceptable" and very high standards apply to not only judges but also those employed there.

The apex court observed this while modifying the punishment given to a man, who was posted in a district court in Bihar and was dismissed from service on the charge of having demanded ₹50,000 for acquittal of the accused in a case, to removal so that he may explore the possibility of another employment.

A bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar and C T Ravikumar was told by the counsel appearing for the appellant that for the last 24 years, the man had an unblemished service and this was the first allegation against him.

"You (appellant) were working in court and demanding money..." the bench

observed, adding that the appellant had admitted his guilt.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by the man against the January 2020 order of a division bench of the Patna High Court which had dismissed his plea against the single judge bench verdict.

The single judge had in January 2018 refused to interfere with the punishment imposed upon the man, who was earlier posted in the office of a presiding officer of a court in Aurangabad.

During the arguments before the top court, the counsel appearing for the appellant said that the man was dismissed from service in 2014 and the punishment imposed upon him was extremely harsh.

"Why do you say harsh? It is after inquiry, is it not?" the bench observed.The counsel said the appellant was exonerated by the enquiry officer in

SCBA to hold candlelight march at Rajpath to express grievances

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) on Saturday said it will hold a candle march at the Rajpath here to raise several grievances, including non-consideration of its members' names for elevation as judges in various high courts.

The SCBA said its executive committee held a meeting on Friday and unanimously resolved to organise a candle march at a time and date to be decided by the SCBA President and senior advocate Vikas Singh, when lawyers can participate following Delhi Disaster Management Authority's COVID-19 guidelines.

In a press release, the SCBA said the candle march will be held to raise grievances including, "the lawyers are being muted and unmuted by the court staff and the same militants against the concept of open court hearing as mandated

in Article 145 of the Constitution".

It said the other grievances included — matters not being listed on non-discriminatory basis, that is, strictly as per date of filing and the delay in finalisation of seniority list for allotment of chambers.

"Non-consideration of SCBA members for elevation to various high courts," said one of the grievances mentioned in the press release.

The bar body said it will also raise grievances regarding no steps being taken for construction of new lawyers' chamber on the land near ITO here and not giving apex court advocates access to the auditorium and additional space in the Supreme Court building.

The SCBA had recently written a letter to Chief Justice of India N V Ramana expressing anguish at the non-consideration of several pending issues of the bar, including

issue of elevation of its members as judges in various high courts.

In his January 6 letter, SCBA president Vikas Singh said the bar body had constituted a search committee which identified 48 names for consideration for elevation in various high courts.

It said the names were handed over to the Chief Justice of India (CJI) several months back.

However, none of the names suggested by the committee has been considered by any of the high court collegium despite having a large number of vacancies in the high courts, it said.

"The entire exercise was also to bring more transparency in the exercise of appointment to the higher judiciary which is repeatedly being alleged to be under a cloak of secrecy," it was claimed in the letter. **PTI**

Offices of Pak-based TRF waging terrorism in J&K: Experts

Pakistani terror handler runs TRF terror show

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Experts tracking terrorism in the South Asian region and beyond have pinpointed the operational and technical offices of The Resistance Front (TRF), an affiliate of the

Pakistan-based UN-designated terror group Jaish-e-Mohammad, in Karachi and Islamabad respectively through which Islamabad is directing terrorist actions in Jammu and Kashmir.

One key Pakistani terror handler Abu Hamza is running the TRF terror show from Street No. A 9076, Postal Code 75020, Karachi, Pakistan. All the terror commands to the ter-

rorists operating on the ground in Jammu and Kashmir are being directed from this Karachi office, experts said.

The Pakistan Army-ISI combine has floated a company styled as Hoster PK Pvt Ltd. headquartered at 2 & 3, Plaza 117, Civic Centre, Phase IV, Bahria Town, Islamabad to manage the propaganda and technical issue of the TRF besides also housing the han-

dlers of the terror outfit, they said.

The virtual space/domain on the social media is being outsourced from a US-based cloud service provider that also provides server services to the ISI as well as terror groups like LeT and JeM, according to the counter-terrorism experts.

The TRF has emerged as a key outfit spearheading terrorist violence in Jammu and

Kashmir at the behest of Pakistan Army-ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) combine and its terror cohorts like JeM and Lashkar-e-Tayabba (LeT), said security officials based in Srinagar.

"All the TRF terrorist operations in Jammu and Kashmir are being controlled from Karachi office. One main handler Abu Hamza is handling the terror operations in the

Kashmir Valley. All technical issues concerning communication, propaganda and anti-India cyber warfare is being controlled from Islamabad," Counter-terrorism expert Dr Rituraj Mate told *The Pioneer*.

Such a well-coordinated terror machinery could not run without the tactical and operational support from the Pakistan Army and the ISI, Dr Mate said, adding that the role

of American cloud server service providers companies should face international scrutiny for hosting Internet-based services to the terrorist groups which are exploiting the virtual technology for both radicalization and recruitment as well psychological operations against legitimate governments in countries like India.

Counter-terror analyst Dr

Arvind Sahu said, "The TRF has emerged as a key outfit through the Pakistani deep state has lost loose terror in Jammu and Kashmir to continually hit Indian security interests through so called low cost and low intensity conflicts."

The TRF is engaged in both radicalization and recruitment besides carrying out direct terrorist action on the ground in the Valley, he added.

Railways to charge station development fee from passengers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Long-distance train travel is likely to cost more for passengers boarding or alighting at redeveloped stations as the Railways is planning to levy a station development fee ranging from ₹10 to ₹50 depending on the class of travel. Senior railway officials said the fee is likely to be added to the train tickets during booking. The fee will be levied only after such stations become operational.

The user fee would be in three categories. ₹50 for all AC classes, ₹25 for sleeper class and ₹10 for the unreserved class. No station development fee will be charged for suburban train journeys, according to a circular issued by the Railway Board. It stated that platform tickets at these stations will also be costlier by ₹10.'Station Development Fee (SDF) shall be collected from the passengers (boarding as well as alighting at such stations). Class-wise SDF for developed/redeveloped stations shall be charged as under: For alighting passengers at such stations, the SDF shall be 50 per cent of the rates indicated above. If both boarding/alighting such stations, in that case, SDF shall be 1.5 times of the applicable rate," the circular stated.

NO2 emitting from tailpipe vehicles reason for 20L new cases of pediatric asthma: Study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

There is yet another reason besides climate change for the Government to switch over to electric vehicles and junk old fossil fuel guzzlers. A study has found that ground concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) – a pollutant that primarily comes from tailpipe vehicle emissions besides power plants and industrial sites– is the reason for nearly 20 lakhs new cases of pediatric asthma every year across the world. The study is published in the Lancet Planetary Health.

Asthma manifests through wheezing attacks and breathlessness, which are spurred by the inflammation of air passages. The nerve endings in the airways also become hypersensitive, contracting and dilating erratically, and restricting airflow to the lungs, as per health experts.

In India, according to estimates around 16 per cent of urban children suffer from childhood asthma while it is 5.7 per cent in rural areas. Main causes may be genetic. But it can be

due to traffic-related pollution too as was found by researchers from George Washington University who had studied ground concentrations of NO2. They tracked new cases of asthma that developed in children from 2000 until 2019 in more than 13,000 cities.

"Our study found that nitrogen dioxide puts children at risk of developing asthma and the problem is especially acute in urban areas," said Susan Anenberg, a co-lead author of the article and a professor of environmental and occupational health at the varsity.

"The findings suggest that clean air must be a critical part of strategies aimed at keeping children healthy," she added. The findings showed that out of the estimated 1.85 million new pediatric asthma cases attributed to NO2 globally in 2019, two-thirds occurred in urban areas.

Despite the improvements in air quality in Europe and the US, dirty air, and particularly NO2 pollution, has been rising in South Asia, Sub-Saharan African and the Middle

East.

Pediatric asthma cases linked to NO2 pollution represent a large public health burden for South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

In a second study, published in the same journal, researchers from the varsity showed that 1.8 million excess deaths can be linked to urban air pollution in 2019 alone.

The team found that 86 per cent of adults and children living in cities around the world are exposed to a level of fine particulate matter that exceeds the guidelines set by the World Health Organisation.

"Reducing fossil fuel-powered transportation can help children and adults breathe easier and may pay big health dividends, such as fewer cases of pediatric asthma and excess deaths," Anenberg said. "At the same time, it would also reduce greenhouse gas emissions, leading to a healthier climate."In an effort to reduce pollution and curb global warming, India is in the process of taking steps to slowly phase out diesel vehicles with electric vehicles.

MeitY bans social media accounts for misinformation, hateful, explicit content

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 73 Twitter handles, four YouTube videos and one game on Instagram that were allegedly circulating misinformation or hateful content have been suspended or removed.

The Ministry of Information and Technology (MeitY) has taken action against several accounts on Twitter, Facebook and Telegram for circulating morphed videos of a cabinet briefing and promoting explicit or hateful content.

In a tweet, Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar revealed that 73 Twitter accounts had been suspended, four YouTube videos had been deleted, and one Instagram game had been taken down. The minister said owners of such accounts are being identified for action

under the law, and asserted that platforms will be reviewed on their due diligence.

"Taskforce on Safe & Trusted Internet at @GoI_MeitY at work. Handles that tried to push fake/inciting content on twitter, youtube, fb, insta have been blocked," Chandrasekhar tweeted on Saturday.

On Friday evening, the minister had responded to a tweet that urged him to take action against the "creators of a very violent video that features the PM," which "has been in the public domain since December 2020". The minister had responded, saying, "On the job. @GoI_MeitY takes its responsibility to keep Internet Safe and Trusted and Intermediaries accountable for the content and due diligence very seriously".

According to the ministry, it had received a number of complaints stating that particular handles, users, and chan-

nels were posting inappropriate content and attempting to split communities.

Furthermore, multiple films have been circulating on social media, including the most recent altered footage purporting to depict a cabinet briefing with overlay audio.

Sources said the government had identified 73 Twitter handles, 4 pieces of YouTube content, and 1 Instagram game. Accordingly, 73 Twitter handles have been suspended, 4 YouTube content and the particular Instagram game have been removed.

The government, last year, had introduced stringent rules for social media platforms to make them more accountable to end-users in one of the world's largest internet markets. The rules require social media companies to take down contentious content quicker, appoint grievance redressal officers and assist in investigations.

Rocky few weeks ahead for UK hosps: Health Secy

London: UK Health Secretary Sajid Javid said that there will be a "rocky few weeks ahead" for the National Health Service (NHS) as Covid cases continue to soar in the country. Speaking during a visit to a hospital in London, Javid said these are "challenging times" for the health service and the "best thing" people can do is get their booster jab, reports

Xinhua news agency. Javid's remarks came after two major incidents were declared in England due to pressures caused by the Omicron variant's spread. "We know now that Omicron is less severe and we certainly know that once you get boosted that your chance of hospitalisation, our latest analysis shows, is almost 90 per cent

Austrian Chancellor tests Covid +ve

Vienna: Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer has tested positive for Covid, the Federal Chancellery said, adding that he was infected by a member of his security team. Nehammer shows no symptoms and carries out his official duties from home via video and telephone meetings, Xinhua news agency quoted the Chancellery as saying on Friday. He will not attend in-person meetings in the next few days, the Chancellery said, adding that Nehammer has received three Covid-19 vaccine doses.

Meanwhile, the Chancellor's wife and children have tested negative. "There is no need to worry, I am fine," Nehammer was quoted by the Chancellery as saying. "My appeal continues to be: Go get vaccinated, get a booster, that will protect you with high probability against serious illness." All persons with whom the Chancellor was in contact on Thursday were notified. **IANS**

Fifth Covid wave hits Hungary

Budapest: The fifth wave of the Covid-19 pandemic fuelled by the Omicron variant has hit Hungary, a top official announced.

Bela Merkely, rector of Semmelweis Medical University in Budapest and leader of the Clinical Epidemiology Working Group, said said that since the Omicron variant is highly contagious, tens of thousands of new cases can be expected in the country in the coming days and weeks, reports Xinhua news agency. "The Omicron variant typically causes only mild upper respiratory infections in vaccinated people -- runny nose, sore throat, headache and fever lasting for a day or two," he explained, warning that the hospitalization rate for unvaccinated people may increase. "The proportion of serious cases is likely to be lower than in the third and fourth waves," he said. **IANS**

Turkey registers 63,214 new Covid cases

Ankara: Turkey has reported 63,214 new Covid-19 cases, raising its tally of infections to 9,850,488, according to its health ministry. The death toll from the virus in Turkey on Friday rose by 157 to 83,388, while 29,197

more people recovered in the last 24 hours. A total of 406,796 tests were conducted over the past day, it said. Turkey has started mass Covid-19 vaccination on January 14, 2021.

less than it was with Delta," he said.

The UK reported another 178,250 coronavirus cases in the latest 24-hour period, bringing the total number of cases in the country to 14,279,785, according to official figures.

The country also reported a further 229 deaths. The total number of coronavirus-related deaths in Britain now stands at 150,222, with 18,454 patients still in hospital.

Some 200 Armed Forces personnel are being deployed to support the NHS in London as hospitals grapple with staff shortages, according to Sky News.

The Royal College of Nursing has said the deployment means the government can no longer deny there is a "staffing crisis" within the NHS.

More than 90 per cent of people aged 12 and over have had their first dose of vaccine and more than 82 per cent were fully inoculated, according to the latest figures.

More than 61 per cent have received booster jabs. **IANS**

Singapore reports 777 new cases of Covid-19

Singapore: Singapore has reported 777 new cases of Covid-19 on Friday, bringing the total tally of the disease in the country to 283,991.

Of the new cases, 366 were in the community, 15 were in migrant worker dormitories and 396 were imported cases, Xinhua news agency reported, citing the statistics released by

Indonesia sees 518 new Covid cases, 5 more deaths

Jakarta: Indonesia has confirmed 518 new Covid-19 cases, raising the country's tally of infections to 4,265,187, according to the country's Health Ministry.

The ministry on Friday reported that the death toll from Covid-19 in the country rose by five to 144,121, while 214 more people recovered from the disease during the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of recoveries to 4,115,572, Xinhua news agency reported.

As the Indonesian government is accelerating its national vaccination programs to curb the spread of the virus, more than 168.81 million people have received their first doses of vaccines, while over 116.11 million have taken the second doses.

Indonesia started mass Covid-19 vaccinations in January last year.

Aiming to fully vaccinate 208.2 million people in the country, the Indonesian government has administered over 286.23 million doses, including the third booster jabs. **IANS**

NATO ready for dialogue with Russia: Stoltenberg

Brussels: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) remains ready for meaningful dialogue with Russia, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has said.

Addressing a press conference following the extraordinary meeting of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Stoltenberg on Friday said that the meeting addressed Russia's military build-up around Ukraine and the implications for European security, Xinhua

news agency reported.

He said Russia's actions "seriously undermine the security order" in Europe. "NATO remains committed to our dual-track approach to Russia: strong deterrence and defense, combined with meaningful dialogue."

Stoltenberg welcomed Russia's readiness to "come to the table and talk." Next week, the NATO allies will meet with Russia in the NATO-Russia Council. The US and Russia

will also hold talks in Geneva on Monday.

"Next week's series of engagements are an opportunity for Russia to demonstrate that it is serious about dialogue and diplomacy. We are always ready to listen to Russian concerns. And NATO will make every effort to find a political way forward," he said.

Stoltenberg said NATO will engage in dialogue with Russia "in good faith, and on substance," and also "be prepared

for the possibility that diplomacy will fail." He said ministers stressed that "any further aggression against Ukraine would have significant consequences."

Asked about the situation in Kazakhstan, the NATO chief said he was concerned about the crisis and was following the situation very closely.

"We demand that the violence stop and that the right to demonstrate peacefully be respected," he said. **IANS**

Sao Paulo cancels Carnival street parades

Sao Paulo: Brazil's largest city of Sao Paulo has cancelled Carnival street parades following an increase in Covid-19 infections and hospitalisations fuelled by the Omicron variant, Mayor Ricardo Nunes announced.

"We have decided to cancel the street Carnival as a result of the epidemiological situation," Xinhua news agency quoted Nunes as saying at a press conference.

The decision impacts neighbourhood bands that traditionally parade through the streets at Carnival time, which draws 10 million to 15 million revellers every February for Brazil's most popular annual celebration.

Nunes said the Carnival highlight, the parade of samba school floats at the city's Sambodrome, will take place as planned at the end of February, since it will be easier to apply sanitary and social distancing measures at the venue.

In the last 10 days, Covid-19 hospitalisations have risen by 30 per cent in Sao Paulo, following Christmas and New Year's celebrations and social gatherings, according to local health authorities. **IANS**

Putin discusses Kazakhstan with leaders of CSTO member states by phone

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin held several phone calls on Thursday and Friday with leaders of the member states of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), discussing the situation in Kazakhstan, the Kremlin has said.

"The Russian President had telephone conversations with Kyrgyz President Sadyr Zhaparov, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan," Xinhua news agency quoted Kremlin as saying.

Putin also spoke by phone several times with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, it said.

"The discussion focused on the developments in Kazakhstan and joint actions under the CSTO mandate to combat international terrorism, restore order and protect the country's citizens," it added.

Meanwhile, since the launch of the CSTO peace-

keeping operation, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu has been regularly reporting to Putin on the progress of transfer of peacekeeping forces to Kazakhstan and the completion of assigned tasks, the statement said.

Violent protests in Kazakhstan have caused multiple deaths over the past days, according to various reports.

Tokayev accepted the government's resignation on Wednesday, and has sought help from the CSTO.

A joint CSTO peacekeeping force has arrived in Kazakhstan to take part in maintaining order, the Kazakh presidential press service said Friday, adding that they came only for a limited time to ensure the protection of strategic facilities.

The peacekeeping forces include troops from Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the CSTO said in a statement on its website. **IANS**

Global dementia cases may triple to 150 mn by 2050: Study

New York: Dementia cases are expected to rise by over 150 million by 2050, which is about three times more than in 2019, suggests a new study.

The study, published in The Lancet Public Health journal, indicated that the number of people with dementia would increase from 57.4 million cases globally in 2019 to 152.8 million cases in 2050.

"We estimated that there were more women with dementia than men with dementia globally in 2019 and we expect this pattern to continue to 2050," according to the study. Globally, the number of people affected by dementia was estimated to have increased by 117 per cent between 1990 and 2016, largely due to population ageing.

Demographic analyses suggest that these patterns are driven by decreases in fertility coupled with increases in life expectancy, which together lead to large changes in the age structure of the population.

These changes lead to large increases in the number of people affected by dementia. **IANS**

21 tourists stranded in cars freeze to death in Pakistan hill station

New Delhi: At least 21 people died of cold after they were stranded in their cars during the snowstorm in Murree in Pakistan on Friday night, according to Pakistan Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed, Samaa TV reported.

The hill station was crowded after tourists headed there to witness snowfall. On Friday night, the government imposed a ban on the entry of tourists to Murree and Galiyat region. They won't be allowed to go beyond Satra Meel Toll Plaza, Rasheed said, except in the case of extreme emergency.

On Saturday, the minister revealed that so far, 23,000 cars have been brought back, while an operation is underway to rescue 1,000 more cars trapped in the snow. Heavy

machinery has been called in to clear the roads as well. According to reports, this week, nearly 140,000 vehicles entered Murree. Meanwhile, hundreds of people spent Friday night on the roads. Local residents have been out on the streets distributing warm clothes, blankets, and food to stranded tourists, the report said.

The deaths took place because roads were blocked and people were stuck in their cars for hours. They couldn't reach their hotels.

Meanwhile, Pakistan opposition leaders have questioned the role of the government during the crisis. "Where was the government? What was the PM doing now? Why weren't they prepared," asked PML-N's Hamza Shahbaz. **IANS**

Volcano erupts in Ecuador's Galapagos Islands

Quito: Wolf Volcano, the tallest in Ecuador's Galapagos archipelago, has erupted, the country's Geophysical Institute reported. According to the institute, the eruption began at 12.20 a.m. (local time) on Friday, generating a cloud of gas and ash with a variable height between 1,900 and 3,800 metres above sea level, reports Xinhua news agency.

The natural event did not cause any immediate damage, since "there are no populated areas near the volcano or in the direction of the ash clouds", the institute said. The volcano, 1,707 metres above sea level and in the shape of an inverted plate, last erupted in May 2015. The Directorate of the Galapagos National Park published a photograph of the beginning of the eruption on its Twitter account taken by personnel of the institution observing the event. **IANS**

EU to share 700 mln Covid vax doses by mid-2022: Von der Leyen

Brussels: The European Union (EU) is on track to meet its pledge of sharing 700 million Covid-19 vaccine doses by the middle of 2022, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said.

In a video statement, she said the EU had exceeded its vaccine-sharing target in 2021, sharing 380 million doses instead of the planned 250 million doses with low and middle-income countries, reports Xinhua news agency.

More than 255 million of these doses have already been delivered to the recipient countries.

Von der Leyen said that "we will step up our efforts to support Africa, where vaccination rates are lower than in other parts of the world".

"We will only control this global pandemic if we fight it in every corner of the world," she said. **IANS**

Nawaz Sharif asks party to agitate against Imran Khan

New Delhi: Former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has directed his opposition PML-N party not to let incumbent premier Imran Khan off the hook on the basis of the Election Commissions damning report on the ruling PTIs foreign funding case, aggressively agitate the matter and not let both Houses of Parliament run smoothly till "justice" is done, Dawn reported.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz supremo directed party President Shehbaz Sharif, to start holding workers' conventions at the district and divisional levels in Punjab province to mobilise party workers ahead of the Pakistan Democratic Movement's (PDM) planned anti-inflation march on Islamabad in March.

"Do not let Imran Khan off the hook as he has been caught red-handed while stealing money through the party's foreign funding. His so-called honest image has completely been shattered and he should

be exposed before the nation," Nawaz Sharif told a party meeting, which was attended by the PML-N's central and Punjab leadership, including Shehbaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz, in Model Town on Thursday via video link.

Nawaz Sharif was "very categorical" regarding the ECP's findings on the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's foreign funding, directing the PML-N leaders not to let this matter die down till it reaches its logical end, said the Dawn news report. "Don't let the National Assembly, Punjab Assembly and Senate run smoothly, and aggressively agitate this matter in which the true face of Imran Khan has been exposed," Nawaz Sharif was quoted as saying in the report.

Nawaz Sharif, who has been in the UK since November 2019 for 'medical treatment', asked the participants to expose Khan's alleged theft on all forums. **IANS**



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RO No. 26

e-TENDER NOTICE

Date: 07.01.2022

Office of the Executive Engineer (E&M), Maneri Dam, Maneri, Uttarkashi invited online bid from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:
(1) Tender No. : 12/EE(E&M)/Maneri Dam/2021-22 & 13/EE(E&M)/Maneri Dam/2021-22
(1) Name of work: Supply and Replacement of Steel Wire Rope with socket and pin etc. for three numbers of Radial gates of Maneri Dam in Distt - Uttarkashi under Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project, Phase-II.
(2) Name of work: Design, Fabrication, Supply, Erection and Commissioning Of Trash Racks at Maneri Dam in Distt - Uttarkashi under Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project, Phase-II.
Estimated cost : (1) ₹66,67,661.00 (inclusive GST) (2) ₹1,38,67,296.00 (inclusive GST)
Date of availability of bid document on website: 15.01.2022 at 10:00 hrs. Last date of submission of bid on website: 14.02.2022 at 17:00 hrs. For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in> **Executive Engineer (E&M)**

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"



SEARCH FOR MISSING
General Public is hereby informed that one lady **Namely: Maya, W/o: Sudarshan, R/o: 26/168 Trilok Puri, Delhi, Age: 30 Years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Fair, Built: Medium, Face: Round, Wearing: Yellow Colour Suit & Blue Colour Pajami with Black Dupatta & Sleeper** in feet has been missing since 26.11.2021 from the area of PS Mayur Vihar, Delhi. In this regard **DD No. 6A, Dated 27.11.2021**, has been registered at **P.S. Mayur Vihar, Delhi**.
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing lady but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone have any information about this missing lady please inform to the following:-
Web-site : <http://cbi.nic.in> **SHO**
E-Mail ID: cic@cbi.gov.in **P.S. Mayur Vihar, Delhi**
Fax: 011-24368639
DP/861/ED/2021 **Ph.: 011-22710335, 8750870627**

FORM B PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT (Regulation 12 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Liquidation Process) Regulations, 2016) FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE STAKEHOLDERS OF M/S NARMADA CEREAL PRIVATE LIMITED		
S.No.	PARTICULARS	DETAILS
1.	Name of corporate debtor	Narmada Cereal Private Limited
2.	Date of incorporation of corporate debtor	28/03/2007
3.	Authority under which corporate debtor is incorporated / registered	Registrar of Companies, NCT Delhi & Haryana
4.	Corporate Identity No. / Limited Liability Identification No. of corporate debtor	U20296DL2007PTC161251
5.	Address of the registered office and principal office (if any) of corporate debtor	Shop No. 14, Pocket-A Market Santa Vihar, New Delhi - 110076
6.	Date of closure of Insolvency Resolution Process	04.01.2022
7.	Liquidation commencement date of corporate debtor	04/01/2022 (Intimation received from AA on 05.01.2022)
8.	Name and registration number of the insolvency professional acting as liquidator	Prabhat Jain IBBI/IPA-001/IP-P01980/2020-2021/13123
9.	Address and e-mail of the liquidator, as registered with the Board	B-61, Flatted Factory Complex, Jhandewalan, New Delhi-110055 Mob-9810290371 Mail-prabhat@pdmco.in
10.	Address and e-mail to be used for correspondence with the liquidator	B-61, Flatted Factory Complex, Jhandewalan, New Delhi-110055 Mob-9810290371 Mail-liquidator.narmada@gmail.com
11.	Last date for submission of claims	04.02.2022
Notice is hereby given that the National Company Law Tribunal, New Delhi, Bench-3 has ordered the commencement of liquidation of the Narmada Cereal Private Limited on 04.01.2022. The stakeholders of Narmada Cereal Private Limited are hereby called upon to submit their claims with proof on or before 04.02.2022, to the liquidator at the address mentioned against item No. 10. The financial creditors shall submit their claims with proof by electronic means only. All other creditors may submit the claims with the proof in person, by post or by electronic means. Submission of false or misleading proof of claims shall attract penalties. Date : 07/01/2022 Sd/- Place : New Delhi Name and signature of liquidator: Prabhat Jain		



KIND ATTENTION RAIL PASSENGERS!



CANCELLATION OF TRAINS DUE TO NON-INTERLOCKING WORK

It is notified for the information of Rail Passenger that Bilaspur Division of South East Central Railway will undertake Pre-Non-Interlocking and Non-Interlock activity at Chhulha station on Jaithari-Chhulha section from 11.01.2022 to 16.01.2022. As a result following trains will be affected as under:-

CANCELLATION OF TRAINS	
Train No. & Name	Date (from the Originating Station)
22867 Durg-Hazrat Nizamuddin Express	11.01.2022 (Tuesday) & 14.01.2022 (Friday)
22868 Hazrat Nizamuddin-Durg Express	12.01.2022 (Wednesday) & 15.01.2022 (Saturday)
18201 Durg-Nautanwa Express	12.01.2022 (Wednesday) & 14.01.2022 (Friday)
18202 Nautanwa-Durg Express	14.01.2022 (Friday) & 16.01.2022 (Sunday)

For any kind of information, passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.


Visit RailMadad website www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Download RailMadad app.



RailMadad Helpline No. 139

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Office of the Superintending Engineer

3rd Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh

Email: sepwdpth@rediffmail.com

Letter No.159/984C-03/2022

Dated: 07/01/2022

Short Term E- Tender Notice

The Superintending Engineer 3rd Circle, Public Works Department Pithoragarh invites tender through E-Tendering (**Two Bid System**) in anticipation of Senction on behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand for following works. All other information will be available from date 18-01-2022 at 5.00 Pm onward on website <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>

S. No.	Name of work	Earnest Money (In lac)	Cost of Tender (in Rs)	Validiy of Tender (day)	Time of Completion (months)	Contractor's Category of Registration
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Improvement of Surface with 25 mm S.D.B.C. of Chandak Bans motor road, Rai Mrh Rodipali motor road, Aincholi Barabey motor road, Jajerdeval to Khanker motor road and Aincholi Jakhpuran motor road in District Pithoragarh under Special Assistance Scheme. (Length- 18.19Km.) (in anticipation of Senction)	10.40	Rs.5000 +18% GST	120	06	Category 'A' and Above for Road works in any State Govt./ Govt. of India/ Govt. undertaking.
2	Improvement work by SDBC 25 MM of Diffrent Roads in District Champawat under Special Assitanance Scheme 2021-22 (1) Champawat-Manch-Tamli motor road in Km. 3.00, 4.00, 5.00, 30.00 & 31.00 (Length 5.35 Km.) (SH-64) (2) Champawat-Khetikhan Motor road in km. 11.00 to 14.00 (Length- 4.68 Km.) (SH-64) (3) Dhunaghat-Bhingarara-Reethasahib Motor road in Km. 5.00 to 9.00 (Length 5.85 Km.) (SH-64) (in anticipation of Senction)	5.07	Rs.5000 +18% GST	120	06	Category 'A' and Above for Road works in any State Govt./ Govt. of India/ Govt. undertaking.
3	Surface Improvement by SDBC of Kathgogam Bhimtal Khutani Padampuri Bhanachuli Padampuri Shaharphatak Mauranala - Devidhur Lohaghat Pancheshher M/R SH- 10 km 155 to 169 and Lohaghat Ring Road length 3.420 km under Special Assitance Scheme. (in anticipation of Senction)	6.95	Rs.5000 +18% GST	120	06	Category 'A' and Above for Road works in any State Govt./ Govt. of India/ Govt. undertaking.

Raghavan: Extraordinary zeal of entrepreneurs needs to be matched with domain expertise

Ahmedabad: The "extraordinary zeal" shown by the potential innovators and entrepreneurs needs to be matched with deep domain expertise, or else there is a danger of failing for entirely avoidable reasons, Principal Scientific Adviser to Government of India K VijayRaghavan said on Saturday.

Such innovators and entrepreneurs need a much better connection with the national and global ecosystem of technologies and techno-economic perspectives. For this, they require "a high-quality mentorship at an individual level", he said.

"One thing which is striking to all of us interacting with the potential innovators and entrepreneurs is their extraordinary zeal... But on the ground level today, the zeal--to be slightly critical--needs to be matched with deep domain expertise and/or access to that expertise," VijayRaghavan said.

He was addressing through video conference a grand finale pitch event called 'EVangelise,' virtually organised by iCreate, an Ahmedabad-based start-up incubator, to identify the next generation of innovators in the electric vehicle sub component segment.

In the lack of domain expertise, there are chances of a potential innovator and entrepreneur falling by the way side for relatively obvious and simple reasons rather than falling for more complex reasons and learning in the process, said the distinguished biologist.

"And there, we need to have a much better connect with the national and global ecosystems in every kind of technology, so that the best advice from the scientific perspective -- but also from the techno-economic perspective -- comes in," said VijayRaghavan, who is a former director of the National Centre of Biological Sciences. He said that the "techno-eco-

nomic" part is substantially missing among entrepreneurs in the ecosystem. "I have been saying this for some time, that we need high quality mentorship at the individual level so that this process takes place," he said.

Leaving aside those who have "connections and pedigree", organisations like iCreate can "make sure that everyone who needs access in a particular domain has access, both technologically, financially, techno-economically," he further said.

He also said that entrepreneurs should concern themselves with what they want to do and whose problems they are trying to solve. "Entrepreneurship is solving a problem stated by someone rather than having a new mouse trap and marketing that to the people who want it to buy," he said.

Entrepreneurships should also keep in mind global supply chains and innovations. "Entrepreneurs are so stuck in getting their next day's work done that they sometimes miss this both in terms of opportunities and threats, and there too, advice is necessary," he said.

The grand finale pitch of the maiden EV challenge called "EVangelise," had ten finalists making their pitches to an expert panel of jury, with a total ₹ 88.5 lakh being awarded to them across found innovation challenges and stages.

It has been organised by of iCreate (International Centre for Technology and Entrepreneurship), an autonomous technology business incubation centre located on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, with the top three winners to receive cash prizes of ₹10 lakh, ₹ 7.5 lakh, and ₹5 lakh, besides an assured incubation support of ₹50 lakh each as well as market connection and industry mentorship. **PTI**

FIEO inks pact with RebelCorp to help MSME exporters create websites

New Delhi: Apex exporters body FIEO has inked an initial pact with digital platform provider RebelCorp to help MSME exporters create their own websites at affordable cost and expand business.

Saad Khan, Founder and COO of Mumbai-based startup RebelCorp said the company will help the exporters create a portal which can be easily managed by themselves. "At a time when the world is facing serious issues due to COVID-19 pandemic, our product will help exporters and businesses particularly from the MSME segment to create their own websites and reach out to global players," Khan said.

He added that credibility is crucial to promote business and digital presence of MSMEs is key to attract global customers and boost the country's overall outbound shipments.

"Through our product, one can develop their portal with just Rs 799 and that too without having any technical knowledge. If you can prepare a simple power point presentation, you can develop your portal by using our simple tools and reach out to your customers and expand your global customer base," Khan said.



Talking about the MoU signed with Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), he said the company would design special website templates for the members of the organisation, keeping in mind their requirement as exporters to cater to the global market. The company would also organise workshops and training programmes for member exporters to help them manage their websites with ease. "Web presence medium is very strong and that needs to be understood by small businesses," he added.

FIEO provides an interface between the international trading community of India with the central and state governments, financial institutions, ports, railways, surface transport and all engaged in trade facilitation.

Sujata Uchil, Regional Head, FIEO Western Region, said the initiative will help exporters in promoting their businesses in different countries. **PTI**

Mango, pomegranate exports from India to US to start from Jan-Feb

New Delhi: Exports of mango and pomegranate from India to the US will start from January-February to boost the country's outbound shipments of agri-products, the Commerce Ministry said on Saturday.

Exports of pomegranate aril to the US and imports of Alfalfa hay and cherries from America would also begin from April this year, it added. In pursuant to the 12th India - USA trade policy forum meeting held on November 23, 2021, the Department of Agriculture and farmer's welfare and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) have signed a framework agreement for



implementing the "2 Vs 2 agri-market access issues", it said.

This access concept includes inspection and oversight transfer for Indian mangoes, pomegranate and pomegranate arils, and market access for US cherries and Alfalfa hay in India.

"Mango and pomegranate exports will start from January - February 2022 and pomegranate aril from Apr 2022," the ministry said. Further, it said that the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying has conveyed its readiness to provide market access for US pork.

These issues were discussed during the Trade Policy Forum meeting. India has not exported mangoes to the US for the last two years. **PTI**

CSB Bank MD&CEO takes early retirement, lender to set up panel to find successor

New Delhi: CSB Bank on Saturday said its managing director and chief executive C VR Rajendran has decided for an early retirement on health grounds, and the lender will set up a committee to find a successor. This is to inform you that the bank's board in its meeting held on January 8, 2022, considered and accepted the request of C VR Rajendran to take an early retirement from the position, to take care of his health under the advice of his physicians, CSB Bank said in a regulatory filing. The board has further requested Rajendran

to continue in the office of MD & CEO till March 31, 2022, it said. Rajendran has been holding the position of MD & CEO since December 9, 2016 and the current term is up to December 8, 2022. "The board further decided to constitute a search committee comprising the chairperson of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee and two members of the board, to identify and evaluate candidates, from within or from outside, for the position of Managing Director & CEO," the bank said in the filing.

Consider bankers as frontline workers for booster dose: AIBOC to FM

New Delhi: Bank officers' union AIBOC has urged Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to consider bankers as the frontline workers for administering booster shots amid rising COVID-19 cases across the country. In a letter addressed to the Finance Minister, All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC) also suggested the implementation of a 5-day week to break the chain of the spread of the virus.

At all branches or offices, only 50 per cent staff should be physically present, and remaining staff should be allowed to work from home, it said, adding special status to bankers for availing public transport, including suburban railways under essential service category.

The government has said the precaution dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to be given to healthcare workers, frontline workers and those aged 60 years and above with comorbidities from January 10.

There should be mandatory rapid antigen tests for bankers to 'Detect, isolate and treat' at regular intervals, AIBOC general secretary Soumya Datta said in the letter. Iting out that about 2,000 bankers lost their lives in the first two waves, the letter said, "We consider ourselves to be a part of the 'Financial Army',



who have braved the constraints and have served the nation in the time of crisis". Unfortunately, it said, the recognition of bank employees as Frontline Covid Warrior (FLW) was delayed, denying the opportunity of getting vaccinated along with other FLWs in the first instance, which could possibly have averted the loss of precious lives.

As per the Union Health Ministry latest data, the country witnessed a single-day rise of 1,41,986 new coronavirus cases, including 3,071 cases of the Omicron variant reported across 27 states and Union territories so far. **PTI**

Agility Ventures to launch ₹450 cr fund

New Delhi: Angel investor network Agility Ventures on Saturday said it has received approvals from markets watchdog Sebi for an angel fund with a total corpus of ₹450 crore (USD 60 million) that will be deployed over the next 3-4 years.

Agility Ventures network invests in startups or early-stage businesses in industries such as education, technology, healthcare, e-commerce, automobiles, electric vehicles, robotics, agri-tech and manufacturing, among others. For 2022, Agility Ventures has set a target of increasing its network by 4,000, which currently stands at over 1,500 angel investors, a statement said. With AIFs (Alternative Investment Funds), it is looking at deploying ₹ 75 crore this year in over 50 startups, which will also include fintech, cyber security and crypto, the statement added.

Sebi's approval to launch the fund is just the kind of start Agility Ventures was looking for in this New Year, co-founder Dhianu Das said. After launching Fluid Ventures (a

D2C focused Sebi-registered category-1 VC fund) last year, this is exactly the kind of fuel needed to roll out the plans for 2022, Das said. "After having invested in 5 companies through Fluid Ventures, we are not only ambitious about deploying Rs 75 crore this year through Agility Ventures angel fund and investing it in over 50 startups but also very focused on achieving it. We are here to create more than just a ripple in the startup investment space and the angel fund will help us reach that goal," he added.

Prashant Narang, co-founder of Agility Ventures, said the interesting thing about raising the kind of angel fund that has been approved by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) is that it is sector-agnostic and does not limit itself to co-investments.

"This model also simplifies the financing process without changing the core style of the angel network. In fact, it adds to the pre-existing angel investor's style of financing, which usually entails Bridge rounds to pre-series A rounds," Narang added.

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BANARAS LOCOMOTIVE WORKS, VARANASI-221004

No.BLW-S/Vendor Meet/2021 Dated: 04.01.2022

VIRTUAL VENDOR MEET ON 11.01.2022

BLW is organizing a Virtual Vendor Meet on 11.01.2022, 10:30 AM to 13:00 PM, to develop new vendors and enhancing product range of existing vendors. All existing and prospective vendors interested to supply materials to the railways are requested to participate through google video online link Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/pdk-zjms-kxx> or link is also available on BLW official Website-www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in.
P.R.O./BLW-S-60 Dy.CMM/M&P
f t i o /blwvaranasi Website:- www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in

Delhi Division of Northern Railway made a record

New Delhi: The Delhi Division of Northern Railway has given special focus on freight movement under the Business Development Unit (BDU) in the current financial year. As a result of continuous interaction and fruitful dialogues with trade and industry, the freight and freight earnings of Delhi Division have registered an increase in the current financial year 2021-22. The division has also set a record by carrying the most cargo in a day.

Delhi Division has achieved the best ever container rake loading in a day of 34 rakes and 1,318 wagons on January 07, 2022, which is more than the previous best of 31 rakes and 1316 wagons as on January 23, 2021. This includes container rakes loading from Tughlakabad, Garhi Harsaru Junction, Patli, Palwal, Asavati, Bhodwal Majri, Bhaili, Rajlu Garhi, Diwana and Mohiuddin Pur.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CONSTRUCTION DIVISION, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM, CHAMPAWAT
Phone/Fax : 05965 - 230044 E-Mail:- executivechampawat@gmail.com

Bid Notification No : 80 / Nivida / 68 Date: 07.01.2022

E - TENDER NOTICE

1- Name of the works : 1. Mouda (Retro) W/S Scheme (JJM)
2. Sulla Phase-2 W/S Scheme (JJM)
3. Kharkagad Dhura (Mangoli) W/S Scheme (JJM)
4. Banoli W/S Scheme (JJM)
5. Bairakh W/S Scheme (JJM)
6. Chilniya & Simalkhet Solar Pumping W/S Scheme (JJM)
7. Mantandey W/S Scheme (JJM)
8. Tapniral (Retro) W/S Scheme (JJM)
9. Sango & Ghigarukot W/S Scheme (JJM)

Date of Publication on e-procurement portal Date. 10.01.2022 at 15.00 hrs.

Note : Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal - www.uktenders.gov.in & contact 05965-230044.

Executive Engineer

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL
HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
Telefax No. :- 0194-2496089, Email Id:- xenmhchcdk@yahoo.in

Gist of e-tender
NIT No: MHCHD/TS /2021-22/264/e-tendering
Dated: 06.01.2022

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir UT, e-tenders, valid for 180 days, are invited from the Registered, reputed & experienced firms as detailed in the NIT for below mentioned works:

Name of Work:- Providing and Fitting of new FCUs along with PPR pipeline for various sections at ground floor of Govt. Super Speciality Hospital, Srinagar.

Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs) :- 2.04, Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees) :- 200, Completion Time (in days) :- 10, AA No. :- MC/Plan/AAA/6277-19, Dt: 03-01-2022, TS.NO :- MHCHD/TS/187 of 01/2022, Earnest Money (in Rupees) :- 4100

1. Downloading of Bids :- The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 06.01.2022 (18.00 hrs) and can be downloaded from 06.01.2022 (18.00 hrs).

2. Uploading: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 07.01.2022 (10.00 hrs) to 14.01.2022 (16:00hrs) in two (02) covers.

3. Opening of Bids:- The bids received upto due date and time shall be opened on 15.01.2022 at 14.00 hrs or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar.

No. DIPK-16346/21 Dated:- 07.01.2022

Sd/- Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar

Equitas Holdings to fully divest stake in subsidiary ETPL ahead of merger with Equitas SFB

New Delhi: Equitas Holdings Ltd will divest its entire stake in subsidiary Equitas Technologies Pvt Ltd (ETPL) as part of the requirement for the merger with Equitas Small Finance Bank (ESFB).

As part of the RBI's licensing conditions, being the promoter of ESFB, the boards of Equitas Holdings and ESFB had in July 2021 approved the scheme of amalgamation between them.

According to this scheme, all the assets held by Equitas Holdings, including its investments in ETPL, have to be transferred to and vested in ESFB.

"Since ETPL is not engaged in financial services, the company is required to fully divest its investment in ETPL. Accordingly, the board of directors in its meeting held on January 7, 2022, approved sale of its entire shareholding in the company's subsidiary, ETPL," Equitas Holdings said in a regulatory filing on Saturday.

Equitas Holdings Ltd (EHL) has two subsidiaries -- ESFB and ETPL. The latter is engaged in the business of freight aggregation.

Equitas Holdings said it has appointed SBI Capital Markets (SBICAPS) to advise on the strategic buyout and/or stake sale of ETPL.

SBICAPS is in the process of undertaking a public auction process to identify potential buyer(s) and complete the transaction, it added. The RBI approved the merger between the promoter and subsidiary company in July last year.

As per the RBI norms on small finance banks, it is mandatory for the promoter of a small finance bank to reduce the stake in the subsidiary to 40 per cent within five years of commencement of operations of the small finance bank.

ESFB commenced operations from September 2016. As of September 30, 2021, EHL held 81.55 per cent stake in Equitas Small Finance Bank (ESFB), according to data on BSE. **PTI**

S D Polymer signs pact with Dubai-based AI Composites Materials FZE

Mumbai: S D Polymer FZE, subsidiary of S D Polymer, on Saturday said it has signed an agreement with Dubai-based AI Composites Materials FZE for expanding polymer compounding facilities in the Middle East.

Under this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), both the company will invest proportionally in the Middle East to expand the polymer compounding facility for developing, manufacturing and distributing polymer composite materials and advanced polymer compounds, S D Polymer FZE said in a statement.

According to internal sources of the company, S D Polymer is in talks to invest approximately around USD 50 million in the Middle East region. The actual amount, however, remained undisclosed.

It's an amalgamation between SD Polymers Pvt Ltd and AI Components Fze operating under the name of SD Polymers Fze, the statement added.

"We are very pleased to welcome AI Composite Materials as an important strategic and long-term partner of S D Polymer Pvt Ltd. Once materialised, the cooperation under this agreement will not only help our company expand global production footprint and improve its development structure but assist the company to solidify its long-term position in its industry," company spokesperson Dhanish Goyal said.

D-Mart Q3 net profit rises 23.6 pc to ₹ 552.53 crore

New Delhi: Avenue Supermarts, which owns and operates retail chain D-Mart, on Saturday reported a 23.62 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to ₹552.53 crore for the third quarter ended December 31.

The company had posted a net profit of ₹ 446.95 crore in the same quarter a year ago, Avenue Supermarts said in a BSE filing.

Its revenue from operations was up 22.22 per cent at ₹9,217.76 crore during the quarter under review against ₹ 7,542 crore in the corresponding quarter last fiscal.

The total expenses also increased 21.72 per cent to Rs 8,493.55 crore in Q3 FY 2021-22, compared to Rs 6,977.88 crore in the year-ago quarter.

Avenue Supermarts CEO and Managing Director Neville Noronha said: "Revenue in the D-Mart stores grew by 22 per cent in this quarter over the corresponding quarter of last year. Overall gross margins are marginally lower due to mix deterioration".

General merchandise and apparel business is consistently seeing relatively lesser sales contribution, while

essentials and FMCG are doing better, he added.

"Inflation and lesser opportunities to go out are negatively impacting certain categories more than others. We are seeing higher inflation as an opportunity to make our buying more efficient, our assortment sharper and continue to keep our costs low," Noronha said.

According to the company, for the last nine months of FY22, its total revenue stood at ₹22,190 crore, compared to ₹16,731 crore in the year-ago period.

"Net Profit stood at Rs 1,066 crore for 9M FY22, as compared to Rs 686 crore for 9M FY21. PAT margin stood at 4.8 per cent in 9M FY22 as compared to 4.1 per cent in 9M FY21," said Avenue Supermarts in a post earning statement.

Over the outlook, Noronha said that considering the current COVID wave, D-Mart's sales and footfalls will be dependent on local regulations. "We continue to take all precautions to ensure every shopper, employee, and partner is operating in a safe environment," he added. **PTI**

How chocolate from Assam reached Myanmar markets!

Guwahati: A chocolate named 'dark fantasy', manufactured in Assam's Mangaldai town, made its way into the markets of Myanmar after travelling over 2,000 km and passing through Siliguri, Kolkata, Singapore, Yangon to finally reach Kale.

This nugget of information was shared by K K Dwivedi, Commissioner to the Department of Industries & Commerce, Assam, while speaking at the ongoing Northeast Festival here on Friday.

At the 'Make in Northeast - DoNER Dialogue', Dwivedi also dwelt on several aspects of the region including how

the term 'Northeast' was first used in 1884 by the then chief commissioner of Burma, Alexander Mackenzie, in his book 'History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal'.

Dwivedi also recalled how Jyoti Prasad Saikia coined the term 'seven sisters' for the northeast while participating in a talk show in 1971.

On the journey of 'dark fantasy', he said this is a classic example of why there is a need for proper connectivity for cost effectiveness and saving of time. "A team of officials and MLAs from Assam

had visited Kale in Myanmar. In a small market there, they saw a chocolate made in Mangaldai called 'dark fantasy'. After inquiring about it, they found the chocolate came through Guwahati, Siliguri, Kolkata, Singapore and Yangon before reaching Kale town," Dwivedi said.

The chocolate travelled over 2,000 km and for nearly two months when it would have taken two days had it travelled through the border town of Moreh in Manipur, he added. Once there is connectivity network, trade and commerce will accelerate, he asserted. **PTI**

Khawaja twin centuries lifts Australia to big lead

AP ■ SYDNEY

Usman Khawaja's stunning return to test cricket continued Saturday with a blistering century in Australia's second innings on day four which led the hosts to 265-6 declared and set England an unlikely 388 runs to win the fourth Ashes test.

Openers Zak Crawley and Haseeb Hameed then survived a nervous 11 overs in fading light to get England safely to stumps at 29 without loss.

Khawaja, who scored 137 in the first innings in his first appearance since the 2019 Ashes series in England, headlined another dominant day for Australia with an unbeaten 101 off 138 balls as part of a 179-run partnership with Cameron Green. The 35-year-old scored his first fifty off 86 balls, but then accelerated his scoring rate by playing some extravagant strokes and brought up his hundred just 45 balls later with a two off Dawid Malan.

"I don't think it has sunk in yet," said Khawaja, who's 10th test century included 10 boundaries

and two sixes. "I've always wanted to score a century in both innings of first class cricket and never done it."

"But it's a nice one to tick off and put the team in a situation where hopefully we can win a test match tomorrow."

It was just the third time that twin centuries have been made at the Sydney Cricket Ground with former Australia captain Ricky Ponting the last man to score two centuries in an SCG test — 2006 vs. South Africa.

Khawaja is playing this test only because of Travis Head testing positive for COVID-19 ahead of the match, but has surely put in a undeniable claim to be retained for the fifth test in Hobart after back-to-back centuries.

"Happy for him, but obviously would have liked it against different opposition," said England batting coach Graham Thorpe.

"I thought he played very well and made it very hard for Australia to leave him out."

"He looked a better player from when he last played for Australia and not a bad one com-



ing in to the team." Green (74) made a welcome contribution for Australia, which had sunk to 86-4 earlier in the day, with his second half-century in his eighth test.

The record successful fourth innings chase at the SCG is 288 runs, which was achieved by Ponting's Australia in the same 2006 test against South Africa.

While it's highly unlikely England will defy SCG history and chase down a near 400-run target, Crawley (22 not out) and Haseeb (eight not out) helped give England a glimmer of hope that it may yet save the game and achieve its best result so far in the series. "With some of the injuries we've got we're going to need whether it is two, three or four players to really stand up and bat for a long time," said Thorpe.

"What I want to see is us play positively and have a good mental approach to it."

"I thought tonight our approach from Zak and Hass (Haseeb) was very good. I thought they moved well, you could see their intent." Rain is also forecast for Sydney on Sunday which may assist England's

cause in playing for a draw. "(It will) be interesting to see how tomorrow plays," said Khawaja.

"Fingers crossed we get some good weather because we probably need all those 98 overs that we have."

"It's going to be a bit of a grind but if we can keep asking questions over and over again I think we're a chance."

Earlier, Spinner Jack Leach took four wickets for England, including taking Green and Alex Carey off the final two balls of Australia's innings, in what was his best bowling performance of the series.

Leach (4-84) also took Marcus Harris (27) and then got the prize wicket of Steve Smith for 23, bowling the star batsman with a delivery that kept low of the SCG pitch to reduce Australia to a potentially vulnerable 86-4.

Mark Wood, who has troubled all of Australia's batsmen with his pace this series, got the wickets of Warner (3) and Labuschagne (29), both caught behind by Ollie Pope, who had replaced injured wicket-keeper Jos Buttler.

Cape of 'Confusion': Ishant's restrictive bowling or Umesh's attacking instinct?



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ishant Sharma's immense experience might gain precedence over Umesh Yadav's classical outswingers when Indian team management zeroes in on an injured Mohammed Siraj's replacement for the series-deciding final Test against South Africa.

Siraj, who sustained a hamstring strain while bowling on the first evening of the second Test, managed only 15.5 overs in the two innings and coach Rahul Dravid admitted that his injury did affect the team strategy while defending 240 in the fourth innings.

Dravid had said that it is difficult to commit whether Siraj will get fit in next few days as hamstring injuries don't heal that easily.

They require extensive rest and rehabilitation, more so for fast bowlers, who have way more workload than batters. In this backdrop, India have two options for the Newlands Test starting January 11. One is 33-year-old Ishant, who hasn't been in the best of forms but has experience of more than 100 Tests and is a work-horse.

The other is 34-year old Umesh, who has 51 Tests under his belt and in the recent past has been a better performer than Ishant, who seemed to have also lost out on a bit of pace with age catching up.

However both Dravid and skipper Virat Kohli, who everyone expects would make a comeback from his back injury in the final game, may prefer the lanky Delhi speedster for multiple reasons.

One of the biggest reasons could be his near 6 feet 3 and half inch height, which might help in creating those awkward lengths for the Proteas batters, something that the home team pacers like Marco Jansen and Duanne Olivier have enjoyed. "It just felt like the ball seemed to misbehave a little bit more for them, and that could be [because of the] fact of the height."

On up-and-down wickets sometimes just having that extra height might tend to make a little bit of a difference, so it just felt for us [that] the balls didn't misbehave as much," Dravid had said.

Even former chairman of selectors MSK Prasad agreed that Ishant should be the choice.

"We missed a tall fast bowler in Johannesburg and the only one we have is Ishant. On these kind of tracks, he is my choice ahead of Umesh. Had it been an Indian track which is rugged and feels like dustbowl, Umesh would be my 'go to' man."

The ideal length on South African tracks is somewhere in between back of the length (short) and good length (6 metre).

It's indeed a tricky one says former India keeper Deep Dasgupta, who feels that despite Ishant going off the boil in past few games, he still should be preferred at Newlands. "I won't be able to say whether Kohli has the same faith in Ishant's abilities which he had till 2019. But even then in this game, Ishant, if played, could come in handy compared to Umesh."



PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Bopanna-Ramkumar pair cruise to final in Adelaide

India's Rohan Bopanna and Ramkumar Ramanathan Upstaged fourth seeds Tomislav Brkic and Santiago Gonzalez in straight sets to reach the final of the Adelaide International, here on Saturday.

The unseeded Indian duo ousted the Bosnian-Mexican duo 6-2 6-4 in the doubles semifinals.

The Indians will now lock horns with top seeds Ivan Dodig of Croatia and Brazilian Marcelo Melo in the summit clash of the of the ATP 250 event.

It will be an interesting match as the 41-year-old Bopanna and Dodig have often paired up together, the most recent being in the US Open in September when the duo was knocked out in the third round. Bopanna and Ramkumar, who have paired up for the first time on the ATP tour, have enjoyed a good week so far. The two have notched straight-set wins in the tournament barring the second round match against the American duo of Nathaniel Lammons and Jackson Withrow when they were stretched to a super tie-breaker.

COVID-HIT MAN CITY OUSTS 4th-tier Swindon 4-1 in FA Cup

AP ■ SWINDON (ENGLAND)

Manchester City easily coped without seven coronavirus-infected players in eliminating fourth-tier club Swindon 4-1 to open the third round of the FA Cup.

City was still able to deploy a lineup packed with international players including the first three scorers — Bernardo Silva, Gabriel Jesus and Ilkay Gundogan.

The 19-year-old Cole Palmer scored the fourth after Harry McKirdy scored past goalkeeper Zack Steffen to pull one back for Swindon on Friday.

With manager Pep Guardiola isolating with COVID-19, assistant coach Rodolfo Borrell led the English Premier League champions.

Palmer set up the opener in the 14th minute, playing the ball into the box which was met at the far post by Bernardo Silva to tap in.

Swindon was caught unsuccessfully trying to play the ball out from the back, with City winning the ball back and Kevin De Bruyne playing



in Gabriel Jesus to double the lead in the 28th.

Ilkay Gundogan curled around the wall and into the bottom corner of the net in the 58th. City restored its three-

goal advantage after McKirdy gave Swindon something to celebrate when Palmer picked up the rebound from Silva's strike and shot into the bottom corner in the 82nd.

Naomi Osaka withdraws from Melbourne tournament semifinal



AP ■ MELBOURNE

Defending Australian Open champion Naomi Osaka withdrew from her semifinal match Saturday at a WTA tournament with an abdominal injury, allowing her opponent Veronika Kudermetova to advance to the final on a walkover. "I had a lot of fun playing here in Melbourne. Unfortunately I have an abdom-

inal injury which I need to rest and prepare for the Australian Open," Osaka said in a statement issued by Tennis Australia.

"Sad to withdraw due to injury from my match today, my body got a shock from playing back to back intense matches after the break I took," Osaka added later on Twitter.

"I'll try to rest up and I'll see you soon!" The Australian Open begins

on Jan. 17. Kudermetova on Sunday will face second-seeded Simona Halep, who beat Zheng Qinwen 6-3, 6-2 in the other semifinal Saturday in the Summer Set 1 event.

American Amanda Anisimova advanced to her first final since 2019 with a 6-2, 6-0 win over Daria Kasatkina in the Summer Set 2 event at Rod Laver Arena. Anisimova will play either fellow American Ann Li or Aliaksandra Sasnovich of Belarus, who played their semifinal later Saturday.

In the semifinals of an ATP tournament at Melbourne Park, Rafael Nadal faced Finland's Emil Ruusuvuori in a night match. The winner will play American Maxime Cressy, who beat Grigor Dimitrov 7-5, 7-6 (9). At the Adelaide International, top-ranked and Wimbledon champion Ash Barty was scheduled to play her night semifinal against former French Open winner Iga Swiatek.

Danushka Gunathilak, 30, retires from Test cricket

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's aggressive opening batter, Danushka Gunathilak, has decided to retire from Test cricket at the age of 30 to focus on the white ball formats, the country's apex cricket body said on Saturday.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) said the batter "will now be focusing on the shorter formats."

The development comes close on the heels of another 30-year-old batter, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, announcing his decision to retire altogether from international cricket and a day after the board lifted a one-year bio-security breach suspensions on Gunathilaka, Kusal Mendis and Niroshan Dickwella with immediate effect.

Schopman eyeing WC berth for India women through women's Asia Cup

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Indian women hockey team chief coach Ianneka Schopman says qualifying for the World Cup is key objective for her side at the upcoming Asia Cup, where she will also assess her players' style and standard, going forward.

India will enter Asia Cup, to be held in Muscat from January 21 to 28, as defending champions. The winner of the event will qualify for the World Cup, which will be held in Netherlands and Spain from July 1 to 17 this year.

Schopman, for whom the Asia Cup will only be her second assignment with the team, is eager to make a positive start.

"First of all, our key objective will be to qualify for the World Cup. That is most important because that is where the best teams in the world come together to

compete," Schopman said in a Hockey India release. "I am also very keen to see the level where we are at the moment and whether we can execute the style of play that I envision for the team."

"I am not looking to measure my team against our opponents in the competition, but instead against my own expectations of how I want my team to play. I am eager to see how the team will perform in Oman as it will be really challenging," Schopman added.

Schopman, who was Sjoerd Marijne's deputy during the Tokyo Olympics where Indian women narrowly missed out on a historic bronze and finished fourth, said her main focus in the ongoing training camp here is on striking a balance between attack and defence.

"We are working on defining our style

of play as the Indian women's team. That means a lot of movement on and off the ball and people joining in attack as we want to play fast and attacking hockey. We want to make use of our skills and speed to good effect. "At the same time, we want to be a sturdy defensive unit. I am happy with what I am seeing because the better we defend in training, the more necessary it becomes to attack better, and that really accelerates the progress of the team," said Schopman, an Olympic gold medalist with the Netherlands team in 2008 Beijing.

Also a World Cup gold medalist, Schopman is realistic about her expectations from the Indian women's team.

"Having been a player myself, I understand that there are certain situations when you are just expected to win. However, my expectations from the team are quite different. "Each player has a job to do on the field and I am more concerned with how the players execute their own jobs and responsibilities out on the field. "I am more concerned with the performance than the results, and if we are able to keep performing how we want then I am sure that the results will follow," she concluded. India will open their campaign in the eight-nation tournament against Malaysia on January 21.

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Lawyers for Novak Djokovic filed court documents in his challenge against deportation from Australia that showed the tennis star contracted COVID-19 last month, the Australian Broadcasting Corp. Reported Saturday. The No. 1-ranked Djokovic was denied entry at the Melbourne airport late Wednesday after border officials canceled his visa for failing to meet its entry requirement that all non-citizens be fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Djokovic was given a medical exemption backed by the Victoria state government and Australian Open organizers based on information he supplied to two independent medical panels.

But it has since emerged that the medical exemption, allowed for people who tested positive for the coro-

Lawyers say Djokovic had Covid-19 last month

navirus in the previous six months, was deemed invalid by border authorities. Djokovic is in an immigration detention hotel in Melbourne preparing for his challenge in the Federal Circuit Court on Monday.

The ABC reported that in the documents filed Saturday, Djokovic's lawyers said Tennis Australia on Jan. 1 granted the 34-year-old Serbian player a "medical exemption from COVID vaccination" on the grounds that he had recently recovered from the coronavirus. The exemption certification said the date of Djokovic's first positive test was Dec. 16, 2021, and that he had not had a fever or respiratory symptoms in the past 72 hours. The court submission said



Djokovic received a document from Australia's Department of Home Affairs saying that his travel declaration had been assessed and that his responses indicated that he met the requirements for quarantine-free arrival in Australia.

If he fails to have his visa cancellation overturned and gets deported for not having enough evidence to support a medical exemption to Australia's COVID-19 vaccination rules, Djokovic risks missing more than one Australian Open and could be barred for up to three years. In an emailed response to The Associated Press about what could transpire if Djokovic loses his legal fight, the Australian Border Force said: "A per-

son whose visa has been canceled may be subject to a three-year exclusion period that prevents the grant of a further temporary visa."

"The exclusion period will be considered as part of any new visa application and can be waived in certain circumstances, noting each case is assessed on its own merits."

Australian Open organizers have not commented publicly, except to tell Australian newspapers that no players have been misled over the vaccination requirements.

Tournament director Craig Tiley has continued working with Djokovic, hoping to get the defending champion into the tournament that starts a week from Monday.

Tiley's video message to Australian Open staff about the tournament's "difficult time in the public arena" was published in News Corp. Newspapers Saturday.

"There's been a circumstance that relates to a couple of players, Novak particularly... In a situation that is very difficult," Tiley said in the video. "We're a player-first event. We're working closely with Novak and his team, and others and their team, that are in this situation."

The 34-year-old Djokovic, who shares the men's record of 20 Grand Slam singles titles with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, is one of two players put into detention in a hotel in Melbourne that also houses refugees and asylum seekers. A third person, reported to be an official, left the country voluntarily after border force investigations.

LOOKING AHEAD

From watching out the actors of the year to the most awaited movies to styling your outfits, the year has plenty to offer even though it has started off on an ominous note with 1.42 lakh COVID cases reported as of January 8, 2022, says SUNDAY PIONEER

**talktime**

HARSH BENIWAL

The actor, who plays Sudheer in MX Player's Campus Diaries speaks with Supriya Ramesh about the show, how he found his knack for comedy among other things

‘MAKE UNIQUE CONTENT AND PUT YOUR HEART INTO IT’

■ What is Campus Diaries about?

It's a college show that depicts the life of our students where they bunk classes and indulge in ragging. They have their experiences with toxic relationships, love, drug abuse, caste discrimination which is showcased elaborately.

■ What is your role?

I am playing a Haryanvi guy whose name is Sudheer. He is a character for which friends come first and is a jack of all trades. His head is always into getting things done somehow as he throws around promises and then strives to complete them. He finds validation in people's good will.

■ According to you, how much can one college student relate to the show?

College students can definitely relate to it because it has everything that happens or happened in a person's life during the college phase. Say love, studies, friends, canteen etc. A whole lot of people would relate to it.

■ How nostalgic was it for you while shooting it?

One example is that when you are sitting in the canteen and you order things in your friends name and let them pay the hefty bill. Back in the day we used to do that along with bunking lectures and falling head over heels love with a beautiful woman even one sided affections. I was pretty nostalgic while doing this project.

■ How did you find your knack for comedy?

When I was starting out, I wanted to act but realisation hit me like a truck. Acting is a vast department with many disciplines such as thriller, drama, comedy etc. When I made my first video I loved comedic stuff in general as I was with my friends, cracking jokes. I gained significant interest with that and thought that comedy is something that the majority of people love and enjoy. So, I thought I have to do this and then I didn't stop. Luckily, my audience started increasing along with my work so I ventured into it and started exploring the genre of comedy. That's why I created new characters and then kept going further in small calculated steps.

■ What would be the one thing you would like to tell the aspiring youtubers or someone who wants to do comedy?

I would like to convey that if you want to become an actor like I did and are passionate about it, make your content exclusive for the people who appeal to it. Make sure that your work has the widest reach and leaves people talking about it. This is what happened in my case, where I portrayed myself as an actor and wished to get offers just like that. So, make unique content and put your heart into it with a touch of perfection. If you have talent and potential, things will surely start moving in the right direction.

■ What were the challenges while doing the show?

One challenge was that in this show I had to play a guy from Haryana. I know how to speak Haryanvi but I didn't want to speak it so purely that people don't understand it altogether. North Indians can relate to it but citizens from elsewhere would not understand that. The challenge was to keep that accent but keep the Hindi speaking audience in the light. So the audience can relate to my Haryanvi but are not left in the dark altogether. I have said some typical Haryanvi words so that they understand new slang words but made sure not to go extreme with the dialect.

■ I am sure you kept your co-stars entertained throughout the shoot. Tell us about your experience with them?

I enjoyed and made so many memories while I was shooting for this project. I can wholeheartedly say that I now have five new friends and more. The cast has some phenomenal actors and honestly, I had so much to see and learn because they have have so much experience with their ventures in the industry. When they are with you, you get to learn new techniques and realise new ways of portraying events. Whenever I go to Mumbai, I make sure that I meet them and they have promised to do the same when they come to Delhi.

■ What are your upcoming projects?

There are multiple projects that are being worked on. Unfortunately, due to the embargo I can't open up about them. But I assure you that I will keep my best foot forward and entertain everyone like I usually do.

WHEN I WAS STARTING OUT, I WANTED TO ACT BUT REALISATION HIT ME LIKE A TRUCK. WHEN I MADE MY FIRST VIDEO I LOVED COMEDIC STUFF. I WAS ALWAYS CRACKING JOKES WHEN I WAS WITH FRIENDS. I GAINED INTEREST AND THOUGHT THAT COMEDY IS SOMETHING THAT THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE LOVE AND ENJOY



ACTORS TO WATCH OUT

VICKY KAUSHAL: He has the power to raise the *Josh* among the audience with his mere presence. Tall, dark, and handsome - the actor is the perfect definition of a dreamy man! With his Army Avatar in *Uri — The Surgical Strike*, the hero became the nation's crush. After essaying *Sardar Uddham*, he is ready to mint love with his next *Sam Bahadur* due 2022.

VARUN DHAWAN: The mass entertainer hero boasts a massive female fan following owing to his deadly combination of sharp looks, witty humour, and killer dancing moves. The actor is undisputedly one of the hottest men on the block. While he made a splash with *Coolie No. 1*, the coming year will watch him in *Bhediya* and *Jug Jugg Jeeyo*.

ADITYA ROY KAPUR: There is not an ounce of doubt that Aditya Roy Kapur is one of the most loved heroes in today's time. With his sculpted body and infectious smile, the actor is guilty of making female fans go weak on their knees. The star's flair for music is a brownie point! 2022 will see the handsome star headlining *OM, Thadam* remake, and Hindi adaptation of *The Night Manager*.

RANBIR KAPOOR: One can't talk about desirable men and not have Ranbir Kapoor on the list. From his innocent smile to the boy-next-door vibe, the star has been ruling the hearts since his debut. 2022 holds a bigger surprise for his fans as he will make a comeback after three years with *Brahmastra* and *Shamshera*.

RANVIR SINGH: It is Ranveer Singh's flamboyance that makes him all shades beguiling! The actor holds command over the audience with his quirky looks, infectious energy and unparalleled screen presence. Over the years, the actor has earned himself a massive fan base across the nation. This year will see him in *Jayeshbhai Jordaar* and *Cirkus*.

The 2022 is finally here and we can't wait to see what trends will rock the new year. There are a lot of trends that were seen in 2021 which were only blooming among smaller groups, however these trends are likely to spill over in 2022 and take over the market.

A lot of micro trends which have been peeping in since the last two years will be making a grand entry this year and will be here to stay. The year 2022 is going to be a year where people want to try out new styles since they have missed so much in the last two years.

CORSET TOPS
We saw a lot of cropped rib tops in 2021. This 2021 is transitioning the 2020 crop rib top trend into corset tops. They can be casually worn with wide legged denims or even fitted pants. The corset top trend is a big inspira-

tion from the off duty model look which has been on a watch out since a while now.

MINIS
The mini length in dresses, skirts and shorts will be back in 2022. We all did see a snippet of mini skirts in 2021, specially in



the street style. The mini length will be popular in all the bottom wear categories this year. We can already see a catalogue of minis on many fashion platforms like Stargate Club & Urbanic.

CUT-OUTS
The 2010 teenage trend of cut outs is back in 2022 for all of us. It is a glamour trend this time and hence we will see cut-outs in the occasion/party wear category. A lot of icons like Kendall Jenner and Dua Lipa

were seen flaunting this trend and it is all set to hit the commercial market in 2022.

BRALETTES
Bralettes was the most watched out trend in 2021 but didn't make it to many wardrobes. 2022 will see this trend widely available on a lot of trend focused e-commerce sites and other popular retailers. People observed this trend last year and are now all ready to flaunt it them-



selves.
VOLUME SLEEVES
Volume sleeves have been an evolving trend. Initially volume sleeves were seen only as a part of occasion wear outfits, however people are now all ready to take over this trend for casual dressing. Volume sleeves can be worn as a statement piece with casual denims, shorts or skirts which make this trend wearable for everyday wear.
— Courtesy: Mitali Joshi, Marketing Manager, Stargate

STYLE BEAUTIFUL



IT IS ALL ABOUT SELF-BELIEF & HARD WORK



Success requires sacrifices and patience, is what truly proved through several stories of successful people. However, some people have thrived the world with their superpower belief system that they lit in their inner soul. Sharmistha Ghosh is one such role model for several women who dream of going beyond their limitations.

At the age of 19, being a mother with her curiosity in the world of glamour, she fostered her personality by modelling looks. With her dedication towards the fashion world, she participated in the *KingFisher Calendar Model* content in 2011

and was among the top five KingFisher models. In spite of her great work in modelling she decided to turn her career towards entrepreneurship and started her own restaurant in Goa called *Our Shack* in North Goa, launched in 2011. With no time her innovative ideas took the attention of tourists towards her restaurant and became popular in the city. It was also awarded by Goa Tourism for best ambience and service.

However, no success is without thorns. She has to close her restaurants. But she never lost hope, she moved to Mumbai and worked as a marketing manager from 2015 and 2018.

Further, seeing her growth in Toronto, Canada, she migrated and worked as a restaurant supervisor. Realising her unstoppable entrepreneur attitude she is on her urge to start her own restaurant in Toronto, working on her business plan, and waiting for the funding to get approved.

She is the idol of passion, determination, and courage. With the role of a mother, she is emerging as an inspiration to several other struggling women. She wishes to set up multiple restaurants to fulfil her daughter's dreams. She also wants to open a foundation where she can adopt orphan kids.

TELLY TALE

DRAMA IS ALL YOU NEED

Zee TV recently launched a romantic drama - Aggar Tum Na Hote, that encapsulates the love story of Niyati Mishra (essayed by Simaran Kaur), who is a young, hard-working nurse, and Abhimanyu Pandey (essayed by Himanshu Soni), who is a charming, rich yet seemingly normal young man dealing with mental instability. Showcasing the extent to which a nurse goes to treat her patient, Aggar Tum Na Hote has managed to inspire viewers to love beyond boundaries. While the show seems to have already won the viewers' hearts, the fans



will now watch Himanshu perform a dangerous stunt on the show.

In the upcoming track, Abhimanyu will be seen creating a fuss in a busy market, embarrassing, and insulting Niyati in front of everyone. What will intrigue the audience more is

the jaw-dropping stunt performed by Himanshu where he will be seen breaking a glass with his bare hands, only to express his agitation towards Niyati. In fact, the whole act was spontaneous, and even Simaran didn't know that Himanshu would actually use his hands to break the glass.

Niyati said, "To be honest, I didn't even know that Himanshu would actually go and break the glass with his bare hands. I was stunned to see him do that because usually, a trained stuntman performs these acts and not the actors."

SNEAK PEEK INTO SATRANGI FAMILY

There are families, and then there's a Satrangi family, signifying uniqueness, and diversity like each of the colors in the rainbow in its true sense. This Satrangi family is all set to entertain the audience soon on Sony SAB in the upcoming show, *Sab Satrangi*. With a fine blend of fresh storyline and unique characters, *Sab Satrangi* will take the viewers to the picturesque city of Lucknow, to the Maurya household, an unconventional family who



share their joys, sorrows, dreams, and despite the differences, they hold on to each other and stay united.

The show revolves around, Mankameshwar urf

Manu, played by actor Mohit Kumar. Manu is one of the most kind-hearted hardworking, resilient man you'll ever meet, who believes that good things happen to good people and that if you don't harm or have bad intentions towards anyone, bad things won't happen to you. Manu is his Daadi's laadla, the head of the Maurya family, played by Joyoshree Arora.

CONVINCING SEEMS LIKE A TASK

This week, Sony SAB's *Ziddi Dil Maane Na* has arrived at a heartfelt moment where Sid (Kunal Karan Kapoor) asks Sanjana (Diljot Chhabra) out on a date in the most romantic manner ever. While Sanjana is ecstatic and looking forward to the date, her fiancé Kundan (Angad Hasija) is angry because she has refused to get married to him. Agitated and hurt, he calls Sanjana's parents and tells them how their daughter has betrayed him and his mother's trust



and eventually convinces them to come to Devlali.

Sanjana makes up her mind that she will tell the truth to her parents and break off this engagement. Monami sees Kundan asking

for Sanjana, she is shocked to find out that Kundan is her fiancé. While at a crucial juncture in her life, Sanjana is shocked to see her parents outside the academy. Amidst a series of arguments, Sanjana's father is adamant on her and Kundan's marriage. Sanjana is in a fix. Will she give in to her father's wishes or would take the bold step of stepping out of the marriage? How will Sid react to this? Stay tuned to find out.

the pioneer agenda



FROM THE INSIDE

To new beginnings

This New Year, we must resolve to meditate regularly to experience the divine power within

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4

Gear up to brave challenges

We need to be on full alert to brave the challenges coming our way, and grab the opportunities arising well in time

Teenagers only have to focus on themselves — it's not until we get older that we realise that other people exist — Jennifer Lawrence



METaverse: THE BIGGEST TREND FOR 2022

You can't escape the world's growing fascination with the virtual world and all that it brings. Metaverse is set to be the hottest trend for 2022, and it will change how we interact with the world forever, writes GAURAV GUPTA

2021 was a tough year as the world bore the brunt of a raging virus, collapsing economies, job losses, political uncertainties and mental health. Everyone billed 2021 to be the year of resurgence after an unexpectedly devastating 2020, but in an anti-climax, this year left humanity reeling as new covid variants took us further away from life as we knew it.

Yet, the resilience of the human spirit stands tall, and if history is something to go by, it is tough times like these that forefront innovation and usher in new ideas. Our lives over the last two years have been reshaped with technology to adapt to the new normal, replacing almost every aspect of our real life experiences — whether it's education, offices, or social interactions. We are seeing newer ideas emerge everyday that help people communicate, collaborate and earn without needing to leave their physical space.

As the importance of "where" fades in our lives and livelihood, humanity is having its first brush with globalisation in the true sense. Digital technology allows us to be present in shared virtual spaces, sharing the same experience as someone across the globe from us, and being counted for who we are, rather than where. You didn't know it, but you are already experiencing life in the Metaverse.

WHAT IS THE METAVERSE?

The Metaverse is the next iteration of the internet where users will be able to build virtual lives, cohabitate, share spaces, transact and collaborate in new ways. The term "Metaverse" was coined in 1992 by author Neal Stephenson for his science fiction novel, Snow Crash. He used the combination of Meta and Universe to talk about life-like avatars meeting in virtual reality. Today, that vision comes to life as users can enter the metaverse to share an immersive experience, facilitated by augmented and virtual reality.

The Metaverse has not sprung upon us in a day. It is a natural evolution of our digital and social media interactions. People today spend hours curating a picture for their profile picture, let their food go cold for the perfect Instagram story, and strive to create a happy, successful social media image irrespective of how their day went. The importance given to our digital lives has grown rapidly over the past decade, and now we move from 2D apps to 3D environments to build on our virtual personas.

Imagine a day in life of a 20-something today. They start their morning by grabbing their phone, scrolling through social media, texting friends, getting ready for their office zoom calls, ordering lunch from an app, working out to a Youtube video, and streaming Netflix at night. There is an app on their phone for everything — from banking to grocery shopping, and

even one for reminding them to drink water.

The Metaverse strives to improve this experience — The same person can wake up to attend a Yoga class with his friends who gather in the virtual gardens. He can attend a virtual office with higher employee interaction. He can order his meal from his favorite restaurant in the foodverse, and enjoy it with a friend. He can head to the virtual theatre and watch a movie with his girlfriend. It's the same activities that form his daily routine today, but enhanced by the power of the third dimension.

TECH-TOGETHER

This experience of course will not be possible without interactive technologies and tools. While Metaverses will rely on graphics to create an immersive environment, the virtual world will be ably supported by Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) for an overall experience.

Over the past few years, technological developments in VR and AR have made them less futuristic and more of a reality. But with limited use-cases until now, we could not bring mainstream adoption to live up to the potential of the technology. The Metaverse changes that. For the first time, metaverses can usher in mass adoption for VR headsets, AR extensions and gadgets, and tie them together to enhance the virtual experience.

THE METAVERSE WILL BE EVERYWHERE

Contrary to naysayers, the Metaverse will completely blow up in 2022 and become completely mainstream by the middle of the year. With big giants like Facebook and Microsoft setting sights on virtual world dominance, you will be hearing a lot more about metaverse happenings in 2022. The world is now intently watching the dance-off between traditional tech giants and crypto-native projects like The Sandbox and Decentraland for metaverse supremacy.

As we go along the year, metaverse projects are set to move from their early-adopter phase to mass adoption as millions of people will start engaging and investing in these models. Founders will work on creating value in their projects, building communities and we will see not one winner, but many successful decentralised spaces. We will see general metaverses like The Sandbox which will be built out like virtual cities, as well as themed metaverses like OneRare, which is focused on celebrating Food from across the globe.

THE GREAT MENTAL RESET

The Metaverse forces all of us to reset our minds. Since our birth, our lives and life choices are determined by our geographical location.

“THE TERM “METAVERSE” WAS COINED IN 1992 BY AUTHOR NEAL STEPHENSON FOR HIS SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL, SNOW CRASH. HE USED THE COMBINATION OF META AND UNIVERSE TO TALK ABOUT LIFE-LIKE AVATARS MEETING IN VIRTUAL REALITY. TODAY, THAT VISION COMES TO LIFE AS USERS CAN ENTER THE METAVERSE TO SHARE AN IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE, FACILITATED BY AUGMENTED AND VIRTUAL REALITY



From our school to our friends, our brains process the gamut of opportunities in our lives based on where we are.

The Metaverse forces us to look beyond our physical presence, and open our minds to the equal opportunities of a virtual world. A person in Kenya can now explore the virtual world on equal footing as the person living in Australia. Life opportunities in the metaverse are equal for all individuals — from education to recreation.

The ability to attend classes in metaverse universities will change the face of education forever. Students will be able to study the subjects of their choice, at their own pace and break away from traditional syllabus models to explore their strengths. They can study in any part of the world and interact with global student communities, with no financial burden of visas and foreign education.

Hiring across all industries will also experience a dramatic shift as virtual offices eliminate the need for employees to be present in the same city as the company. Companies will now gun for top talent across the world rather than be restricted by geographical barriers. The Metaverse is in reality, the first time we are a truly globalised world.

DISRUPTING TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES

With the advent of the Metaverse, we will also see a radical shift in traditional industry thinking in 2022. Despite the wariness to embrace new technologies, many industries will realise the critical advantages blockchain brings to the table, and embrace the metaverse.

The transparency of blockchain transactions and ability to maintain eternal records is a great asset for the Real Estate industry. The piles of documentation, transactions and meetings that come with every sale can be streamlined into a virtual city where marked plots hold all records for the land and transactions are recorded onto the blockchain.

The 9-to-5 Office Model underwent a dramatic transformation as Covid-19 sent everyone home. While employees adapted well to the Zoom & Trello model, there is fatigue setting in after almost 2 years of Work-from-Home. While some companies have enjoyed the financial benefit of cancelling office rental leases, they also realise the lack of team spirit and social connections between employees. Virtual Offices will look to re-energise employees by giving them enhanced social experiences at work, attending meetings in 3D avatars and co-working in an immersive office setting.

Working with the Food Industry ourselves, we see a massive opportunity for Chefs and Restaurants to move beyond their local monetisation models and interact with global audiences for the first time. In OneRare's Foodverse,

food professionals are not restricted to their region. They can monetise their dishes as NFTs, host interactive cooking classes, launch new global menus, and allow users to swap NFTs for real meals at their restaurants. From table reservations to virtual restaurants, there is so much to explore.

BRANDS IN THE METAVERSE

A decade ago, social media platforms started creeping into our lives and no one noticed. It was considered a fad, a whimsy of the young and restless. But it wasn't a fad. Early movers in the space were able to create multi-million dollar businesses on the basis of their social presence. Individuals became brands in their own right, and in the past few years, traditional advertising has been steadily replaced by influencer marketing.

Nowadays, many brands run entire operations via their social profiles without the need for a physical location or a website. Even the ones who begrudged the toxicity of social media had to accept its overarching ability to reach their audience. The Metaverse is the next iteration of social media for brands, and this time, companies and marketers are on high alert.

With more companies realising the power of community, brands are making a beeline for curating the ultimate metaverse experience for their consumers in 2022. Brands are already working hard to leverage social media to make users feel more connected and part of the creative process, and the 3D immersive model will allow them to take this a step further.

THE METAVERSE IN 2022

Everyone in blockchain wants to be early to the party, be ahead of the curve. With the first of the Metaverses coming out, expect a lot of noise in 2022. The believers, the investors, the users, the gamers — everyone has a reason to be excited about the Metaverse and its endless possibilities.

While Metaverse developments are in early stages, we will begin to see the impact of the one-world concept in 2022. Virtual lands will be treated with the same care as real land with NFT Art adorning virtual homes. Users will design their virtual personas with the same passion as their social media profiles. People will begin to explore the true meaning of a life without geographical barriers.

Life in the Metaverse will be a long journey, and while we may not know where it leads, one thing is certain. The Metaverse is here to stay, and 2022 will be a defining moment for the rest of time.

The writer is Co-Founder, OneRare, the first-ever metaverse for food, gaming, and NFTs on the blockchain ecosystem

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MAKHAN SAIKIA



ALL GREAT BEGINNINGS
START IN THE DARK, WHEN
THE MOON GREET'S YOU TO
A NEW DAY AT MIDNIGHT
—SHANNON L. ALDER

tarot 12

New Delhi, January 9, 2022



**YOUR
YEAR
AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This year your Yin Yang energies are extremely well balanced and thus you will enjoy a happy and secure relationship with friends, family and beloved. You are likely to spend quality time with your loved ones. Those singles will find someone to warm your heart. Career-wise, you have more than two work avenues that establish your career and a significant income. You will set your goals clear and work sincerely to achieve them. You are likely to face important decisions this year, therefore meditate and connect with your angels to help you in making the right decision. Overall, this year, you will appreciate life to the fullest. In terms of your spiritual beliefs, they will be understood with respect by others.

Lucky Colour Grey, White, Turquoise
Lucky Number 9, 19, 30
Lucky Day Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This year, you will learn from your previous experience and will work towards reinforcing your existing relationships. You will eventually find the strength to move forward and open doors for brand new love to enter your life. In the career sector, you may take a chance which is in all good intentions, but it may not work out as hoped. Finance related worries will soon get over. New opportunities will open their doors as soon as you close the old one. This year, all that was bothering you in the past will fade away and convert into a brand-new beginning. Over a period of time, you have learnt some really valuable lessons that have, in turn, developed inner security and will enable you to follow your dreams.

Lucky Colour Pink, Peach, White
Lucky Number 10, 11, 12
Lucky Day Monday, Tuesday, Friday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This year, your relationship with your family, friends or beloved look good. You will spend some quality time with your near and dear ones. You will be surrounded by those you love and will be delighted with what's happening around you. Those who are single, love will come your way and grow stronger this year. Your professional life will be enriched and contented and you will have the energy to incline towards the career perks. As you approach a new phase, you will attend important events and meet interesting and influential people who will lead you to new ideas and career opportunities. On the emotional and spiritual front, you will learn from your previous mistakes and will use your knowledge to grow in life.

Lucky Colour Black, Gauge, Peach
Lucky Number 4, 11, 19
Lucky Day Thursday, Saturday, Sunday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

Love is always available to you easily. You attract love into your life because you know the importance of appreciating loved ones. This year you to get comfortable in your current relationship. Those who are single will find a way to connect with their soul mate. Your career is likely to get affected by some changes in your area of romance and relationship. You need to organise and bring balance to your professional and personal life. Like your career sector, your financial situation is also affected by your personal life. Slowly and with the help of friends and loved ones, you will move forward and soon will attain financial stability. New beginnings may arise in March that will help you conquer. Overall, a good time with your family and friends.

Lucky Colour Indigo, Pink, Yellow
Lucky Number 2, 6, 23
Lucky Day Sunday, Thursday, Friday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Until now what seemed hard to understand will now become crystal clear. You will realise and trust the cycle of life. You are likely to go with the flow of love life. Love is waiting for you; all you need to do is breathe easy. On the career front, you know how to grab the attention of influential people and gain their trust. This is the year you are likely to make an important decision regarding your existing job. To make the right decision, connect with your inner voice. Your inner self will be your guide to success. Overall, you will reinforce strong energy of prosperity and blessing into your life. The year will be full of new opportunities. In spiritual terms, you will realise that it's a divine right to live in a harmonious and emotionally rich environment.

Lucky Colour Peach, Green, Sky Blue
Lucky Number 14, 18, 26
Lucky Day Monday, Tuesday, Thursday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This year you will receive love and will focus your attention on your loved ones and their happiness. Those who don't feel the energies in your spirits, then you need to leave behind the toxic vibes and let go of the relationship. Career-wise, travel will be relevant to your career growth. The days ahead will bring in career-changing opportunities. Your dreams are just on the horizon. There might be a bit of a struggle to realize your dreams, but you will overcome all hurdles and achieve your goals. Financially, this year will be satisfactory. All you need to do is to stand your ground with your strength. This is because you have a hand of destiny over you. Keep a positive attitude and meditate to connect with your inner self.

Lucky Colour Yellow, Brown, Baby Pink
Lucky Number 7, 12, 13
Lucky Day Monday, Wednesday, Saturday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

Love will come to you only when you start loving yourself. You will slowly come out of a phase where you have become exhausted by giving all out to your loved ones. You need to connect with the frequency of love and care. In career, something amazing will happen. Many new opportunities and sources will come your way. You will vibrate in positive and affirmative prosperity. Travel is on the cards either associated with work or further studies. Overall, it will be a good year, career-wise. Financially, you will be doing well. You will experience a spiritual elevation to a higher dimension, and this will make you feel closer to the universe. All your efforts will be paid and you will regain confidence in yourself.

Lucky Colour Orange, Purple, Red
Lucky Number 3, 6, 10
Lucky Day Tuesday, Thursday, Friday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

In terms of relationship, a lot of transformation is expected in this area. The harmony and joy in your life will be affected due to workload. To maintain a balance in your life, you may require to dismantle the current workloads and start afresh. You need to protect your emotional life and need to love and take care of yourself. On the career front, you will take a stand for your rights within conditions. The year ahead looks promising for you. Those looking for a change should take advantage of any kind of experience you have to attract your kind of work. Take your chances, luck will favour you. Your finances will improve gradually, and you will be able to start saving for your future and your family. Overall, the year is looking good for you.

Lucky Colour Brown, Grey, Green
Lucky Number 9, 12, 17
Lucky Day Friday, Saturday, Sunday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This year, new and amazing love experiences are in store for you. New life lessons will come your way. You are about to learn to live and love with full spirit. The card indicates that you will lead to a new level of love that will make you appreciate every individual around you. On the career front, everything will be manageable, until you find yourself as having to undertake unexpected expenses. You need to put in a little more effort and work hard to realise your goals. Dedication is the key to success this year. Financially, you will do well. You will experience a boost of energy that will help you finish pending tasks. New chapters of life await you this year. Get ready to enjoy the fruits of your labour.

Lucky Colour Pastel Color, Magenta, Brown
Lucky Number 8, 18, 20
Lucky Day Wednesday, Friday, Saturday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This year the energy of love will enforce and attract your exciting relationship. Singles will take time to find their soul mates, but you will vibrate in amazing love frequency from their family and friends. In career, you will handle any job with ease and grace. You will be known for your hard work and honesty. All of this will make you feel content. A positive attitude will help you feel comfortable, and success will flow in abundance. Financially, you are likely to start something new. Whatever finance you may need will come to you easily. You are likely to understand your inner self and life path. Though challenges will come your way, this time you know how to deal with them. You will benefit tremendously from your karma credit.

Lucky Colour Parrot Green, Silver, Grey
Lucky Number 13, 15, 18
Lucky Day Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This year is all about energy and passion. You will explore new paths in your life which will allow you to creatively use your skills in your home and relationships. At a certain point in time, you need to take things easy and take your time. Connect with your inner vibration for care and gratitude. Career-wise, you need to understand that what might seem impossible could be a blessing in disguise, later. Financially, you will emerge from the dark phase and will experience hope. You will have more than one source of income and all of them will yield you good. In terms of your well-being, you are likely to gather strength to walk away from a spiritual or religious avenue that has ceased to hold true in your eyes. You can set your goals and pursue them.

Lucky Colour Red, Mauve, Golden
Lucky Number 7, 20, 22
Lucky Day Monday, Saturday, Sunday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

You know the meaning of deep love and you will find comfort in your relationship. Your creative visualisation will help you to turn your lifestyle wishes into reality. You are likely to walk away from a negative phase of your life. You will find reasons to celebrate with loved ones. On the work front, you are in the right position to make some career-oriented decisions. You are a hard worker and this year you will bear the fruits of your efforts. As per the card, new beginnings are in alignment that will be very productive. You are likely to undertake something new that offers a substantial increase in your financial status and security. New and influential people will enter your life as you educate yourself and increase your knowledge by expanding your spirituality.

Lucky Colour Green, Sky Blue, Indigo
Lucky Number 15, 23, 31
Lucky Day Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Gear up to brave challenges

I wish the valued readers a happy New Year and a pleasant life ahead. Nothing, however, comes easy. The world remains in a state of flux. Energy dynamics of the cosmos keeps varying, throwing fresh environmental challenges. We have been facing Covid onslaught all across the globe for the past 2 years. It does also unfold fresh opportunities. We have, however, managed the situation much better than the last pandemic between 1918-1920. It's all because of human efforts, especially of scientists aggressively engaged in developing vaccines and medicines, and people's collective response. With Omicron variant of Covid raising head, growing in number day by day, it needs no astrological analysis to make out that the challenge is yet not over. So, we can't lower our guards.

Let us look at the legacy we have carried forward from the previous year, through the lens of the astrological chart drawn at the time of Lunar Eclipse on November 19, 2021. Pisces *lagna* was rising at time of full Moon, with its lord Jupiter in debility in the 12th house identified with losses. It is a clear indication of public health suffering, and common people due for a tough time ahead.

Consequently hospitals would be under great strain. Mercury conjunct Mars in the 8th house, placed adverse to Saturn and Jupiter, points to mortality rate being high. How big? Time ahead will tell. As the Sun, identified with general immunity level enters Capricorn sign, and closes up with limiting Saturn, covid cases may considerably go up. Eighth lord Venus in the 10th placed adverse to Sun identified with ruling class posited in the 8th house indicates that government is on a weak wicket, especially in terms of financial management. Youth will be restless. It will be a tough time for policy makers. Security situation will need watch, especially when Mars transits close to Saturn during March-April. In May, Mars transits close to Jupiter when religious strife and financial trouble seems imminent.

Nation's Independence chart too doesn't appear to be encouraging. Transit Rahu and Ketu will be respectively over their natal positions, indicating unpredictable turn of events, which could affect even polity, akin to 2003-2004, 1984-85, and 1966-67. Transit Saturn opposite natal Mercury implies policy flip flops, literary world coming under great strain, and vilification of intellectuals. During



January and February, transit Saturn will be opposite its natal position and Venus implying financial concerns, baffling the ruling class. During March-April, transit Saturn will be opposite natal Sun. By April end, Saturn moves to Aquarius sign. But early June, Saturn becomes retrograde and will revert back to Capricorn sign in mid-July. Once again transit Saturn will be opposite natal Sun. It is indicative of political uncertainties. Many a times, such alignment lead to change of guard also. Mars transit to Capricorn sign opposite natal Moon, Mercury, Saturn and Venus may raise public anger, youth unrest, upsetting financial situation and serious security concern. Even border skirmishes are not ruled out. Security concern even in May seems probable as Mars transits to Pisces sign wherefrom it will be trine to natal Saturn. For, Mars and Saturn form adverse angle in nation's Independence chart.

Let us now look at the astrological pointers of New Year chart. *Lagna* and 10th lord Mercury placed in the 4th house, adverse to Mars and debilitated Moon is indicative of people's desperation and public anger. Incidentally, the *lagna* sub-lord Moon conjunct Mars and also placed adverse to mischievous Neptune is

indicative of unforeseen turn of events. Many scandals may be in sight. 10th sub-lord Saturn in the 5th house (8th from 10th) placed adverse to Uranus in the 8th house, and tenanted in the constellation owned by Moon in the 3rd house (6th from 10th) is indicative of the Government being on a weak wicket, making them defensive.

Even solar ingress of the Sun in Capricorn sign, the natural signifying sign for India doesn't look any good. Mars firmly placed in its own sign in the 10th house opposite Moon and placed adverse to mischievous Neptune implies that it will become difficult for the ruling clique to face public ire.

These are general indications to be forewarned, and should not be taken in finality. Much will depend on how those at the head of things steer the course of events. We, however, need to be on full alert to intelligently brave the challenges coming our way, and grab the opportunities arising well in time.

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