

OPINION 6

FEAR IS THE KEY TO
RULE MINDS, OR IS IT?

WORLD 8

RISHI SUNAK: BRITISH PRIME
MINISTER IN WAITING?

SPORT 12

SINDHU, SEN ENTER
SEMIFINALS OF INDIA OPEN

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY JANUARY 15, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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LOVED BEING
A PART OF 83:
WAMIQA
10 VIVACITY

ANOKHEY TALENT KI ZABARDAST VARIETY

TALENT DEKHNE KE LIYE
SCAN KARE

Maurya, Saini embrace SP India's BrahMos missile to arm Philippine Navy

6 other rebels too,
join Akhilesh; end
of BJP is nigh, says
Swami PrasadVIRENDRA NATH BHATT ■
LUCKNOW

Days after resigning from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) former Ministers and powerful Other Backward Class (OBC) leaders Swami Prasad Maurya, Dharam Singh Saini as well as six other rebel BJP MLAs officially joined the Samajwadi Party (SP) on Friday on the occasion of Makar Sankranti.

The defection from the party is a setback for the ruling BJP, which enjoyed the support of the OBCs in the 2017 Uttar Pradesh (UP) Assembly elections and 2019 General elections. The SP chief Akhilesh Yadav welcomed Maurya and the others into the party fold.

Addressing the meeting at the SP headquarters, Maurya said Makar Sankranti will mark the beginning of the end of the BJP. "The big leaders of the BJP who never paid any heed to our demands are having sleepless



Former UP Minister Swami Prasad Maurya and others join the Samajwadi Party in presence of party president Akhilesh Yadav at SP office in Lucknow, Friday. Five BJP MLAs and Apna Dal (Sonelal) legislator Amar Singh Chaudhary also joined the SP. PTI

nights now. The BJP has duped the OBCs, Dalits, minorities and youth of the country. They formed the Government by encashing on the name of Keshav Prasad Maurya and Swami Prasad Maurya. There were talks about making either of us the CM, but they brought someone from Gorakhpur and duped Dalits and Backwards", alleged Maurya.

He alleged that under the

Yogi Adityanath regime, upper caste people were enjoying their life, while backward castes and Dalits were struggling. "They say the elections are 80 per cent vs 20 per cent, but I say now its 85 per cent vs 15 per cent, 85 per cent *hamara hai* and 15 per cent *me bhi bantwara hai* (85 per cent is ours and there is division in 15 per cent too). BJP leaders say they will win on the Hindu card,

then why did they try to play with the reservation given to Dalits and Backwards. Appointment letters were given to 19,000 general category people, when 69,000 appointments were Okayed. I want to know if Backwards and Dalits are not Hindu? If yes, then why did you give their reservation to others," asked Maurya.

Further attacking the BJP, Swami Prasad Maurya said,

"When I was in the Cabinet, there was a proposal that the posts should be filled with general category applicants without advertisement as there were no applicants from Dalit and Backwards communities. I strongly objected and the CM noted down my objection, but still he didn't stop the proposal."

"Now they are disinvesting and privatising the Central PSUs only to scrap reservation for the SCs and OBCs. When things will go to private hands there will be no reservation. Yogi ji, I want to say that you are committing a sin while sitting on the CM's chair. Are only upper caste people Hindus in your eyes? If only those 10 per cent are Hindus in your view then your departure is definite. Now, all the Backwards, Dalits and everyone is against you. There will be further division in those eight to ten per cent with you as there are many Samajwadis and Ambedkarwadis in that percentage."

"I thought after spending 14 years in exile, the BJP would have learnt its lessons, but it seems that once again they will return to what they were before 2017.

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Make in India gets a boost with \$375 mn export deal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is all set to ink the first-ever export deal with the Philippines for the indigenously-designed and manufactured BrahMos supersonic missile. The Government-to-Government deal is worth over \$375 million.

This is the first major export of sophisticated weapon systems by India to any country. India is aggressively pursuing the target of exporting weapon systems worth over \$5 billion by 2025 and turn the country into an attractive manufacturing hub for Defence purchases.

The BrahMos Aerospace, the first joint venture between India and Russia to manufacture high-end missile system, recently submitted its price list to the Philippines which has accepted it, sources said here on



Friday. The two sides will shortly ink the deal totaling \$375 million, they said adding that the contract is for the shore-based anti-ship missile system for the Philippine Navy. India had recently offered a \$100-million line of credit to the Philippines for Defence purchases.

The Philippines Government recently allocated 2.8 billion pesos (\$55.5 million) for initial funding for the BrahMos cruise missile.

The Philippines selected the Indian missile system after

tough negotiations and extensive trials, officials said adding a team from the Philippine Navy visited the production unit of BrahMos Aerospace in Hyderabad some months ago as part of the acquisition process. The BrahMos Integration Complex in Hyderabad undertakes integration of mechanical systems and assembling electronic systems. Various sub-systems fabricated in other centres in India and Russia are integrated and checked at this complex.

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South India, UP see Covid surge, +ve cases in Delhi, Mumbai dip

India records 2.64 lakh cases in 24 hours

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi, Mumbai, and West Bengal, three Covid-19 hotspots in the latest wave of Covid infection saw marginal dips in new cases on Friday.

However, Southern India saw a huge spike in Covid-19 cases with Karnataka leading the way, followed by Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Overall, fresh Covid-19 cases in India rose by 7 per cent to nearly 2.64 lakh in the last 24 hours, a day after a record rise of more than 50,000 had



Relatives and health workers wearing PPE carry the body of a Covid-19 victim for cremation, at Shastri Nagar cremation ground in Jammu on Friday. PTI

pushed the day's tally to 2.47 lakh. Deaths from the virus remained relatively low but were rising.

Among the poll-bound

States, Uttar Pradesh is seeing big jump in the number of fresh cases by the day.

Karnataka on Friday reported 28,723 new Covid-19

cases and 14 deaths. Capital Bengaluru alone accounted for 20,121 new cases and seven deaths. The positivity rate is now at 12.98 per cent in the State. On Thursday the State had recorded 25,005 new cases of Covid-19 and 8 fatalities.

State Health Minister K Sudhakar said the number of hospitalisations in the third wave so far is less than that recorded during the second wave last year.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has sought Central assistance to raise the number of oxygenated beds and oxygen plants in the State. The total number of active cases across the State is now 1,15,733.

Doctors in the two States described the status of pandemics in the two southern States as black Pongal for Tamil Nadu and a black Friday for Kerala. Continued on page 2

3-kg IED found in bag at flower market in Delhi; defused by NSG

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Days before the Republic Day celebrations, an improvised explosive device (IED) was found in the national Capital's Ghazipur area on Friday morning, sending police and securities agencies into a tizzy. The IED weighing around three kilogram, aimed at causing maximum damage, was kept in an iron box inside a black backpack at Ghazipur's busy flower market main gate. The police suspect it was a terror attempt ahead of the January 26 Republic Day celebrations.

An FIR have been registered at Delhi Police Special Cell under the Explosives Act and a police team will also be receiving a detailed report by the NSG on the IED samples collected. According to National Security Guard



National Security Guard and police personnel cordon off the area after an Improvised Explosive Device was found inside a bag, at Ghazipur flower market in New Delhi on Friday. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

(NSG), which disposed the bomb, the initial examination suggested that the explosive is a nitrate and RDX mix while the triggering device could be a clock or a mobile phone.

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Entry into clouds led to CDS chopper crash: CoI

New Delhi: The Court of Inquiry (CoI) looking into the December 8 helicopter crash that killed all 14 passengers, including the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat, has ruled out sabotage, mechanical failure or negligence as the cause of the mishap. This was officially made public on Friday.

The Pioneer dated January 6 had reported that the most plausible cause of the accident was bad weather. Technically, it is known as Controlled Flight Into Terrain (CIFT) wherein an aircraft unintentionally collides with terrain be it the ground, a mountain, cliff or a tree-top.

The Tri-Services probe team headed by Air Marshal Manvendra Singh, himself an accomplished helicopter pilot and currently Chief of Training Command and IAF chief VR Chaudhari had apprised

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CAPSULE

META FACES \$3.1 BN LAWSUIT IN UK

London: Meta (formerly Facebook) is facing a \$3.1 billion class-action lawsuit in the UK over allegedly abusing its market dominance and if the lawsuit succeeds nearly 44 million British Facebook users could receive a \$68 payout each. Competition law expert Dr Liza Lovdahl Gormsen has brought the class-action lawsuit against Facebook's parent firm Meta at the UK's Competition Appeal Tribunal, *Daily Mail* reported on Thursday. P8

5-KG IED RECOVERED NEAR PAK BORDER

Chandigarh: Just a month ahead of the Assembly polls in Punjab, a special task force (STF) of Punjab Police on Friday recovered a 5-kg improvised explosive device (IED) and ₹ 1 lakh in cash near the India-Pakistan border.

The seizure from the outskirts of Dhanao village in Ajnala subdivision close to the Attari border was made on a tip-off about the smuggling of arms and ammunition from across the border.

POOR NATIONS GIVEN NEAR EXPIRY SHOTS

London: Third World nations were offered about 100 million Covid-19 vaccines that were near expiry, which the countries were forced to dump, according to the UN's children's fund Unicef. According to Unicef's head of supply Etleva Kadilli, more than 100 million vaccines were, in December alone, rejected by countries as they were unable to distribute them, *BBC* reported. P8

APPROPRIATION ACT 2021 GETS PREZ NOD

New Delhi: President Ram Kovind has given his nod to the Appropriation (No 5) Act 2021 that authorises payment and appropriation of ₹ 3.73 lakh crore from the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2021-22. According to a gazette notification published on Friday, the President gave his assent on January 12.

Budget Session of Parl to begin on Jan 31

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Budget Session of Parliament will commence on January 31 with the address of the President to both the Houses and conclude on April 8, sources said on Friday citing the recommendation of the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs.

The Union Budget will be presented on February 1. The Economic Survey is likely to be tabled on January 31 after the President's address. The first part of the session would conclude on February 11.

After a month-long recess, part two of the session would begin from March 14 and conclude on April 8, the sources said. The recess allows depart-



ment-related Parliamentary Committees to examine budgetary allocations made to their respective Ministries.

During part one of the session, campaigning for phase one of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections would be in full swing for which votes will be cast on February 10. When the two Houses meet after recess on March 14, the results of Assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur would be out as the counting is on March 10 for all the five States.

Continued on page 2

Batting has let us down, rues Kohli after SA series loss

Cape Town: A South African team going through one of its toughest transition phases embarrassed a star-studded Indian team with a seven-wicket victory in the third Test to clinch a memorable 2-1 series triumph here on Friday even as India Test captain Virat Kohli rued batting failures. The target of 212 wasn't a tough ask and starting the day at 101 for two, Keegan Petersen (82, 113 balls) along with Rassie van Der Dussen (41 not out) added 54 runs for the third wicket to seal the match before Temba Bavuma (32 not out) helped in putting the final touches. Continued on page 2

Bishop Mulakkal acquitted of all charges in Kerala nun rape case

PNS ■ KOCHI

A trial court in Kerala's Kottayam district on Friday acquitted Bishop Franco Mulakkal of Jalandhar Diocese of all rape charges levelled by a nun of the Missionaries of Jesus Convent.

The nun's case was that the Bishop had raped her 13 times during 2014 to 2016 and the Catholic Order to which she was associated had rejected her pleas. She had told the police that though she had approached all authorities in the Catholic congregation, including the office of the Pope, her pleas fell on deaf ears and she was forced to file a complaint.



Bishop Mulakkal, who hails from Thrissur district in Kerala, had denied the charges of rape as "baseless and concocted" and said allegations were born out of her ire against the religious order for rejecting her demands for favours.

Additional Sessions Judge

G Gopakumar of additional district and sessions court, Kottayam, who heard the case from November 2019 to January 2022, ruled on Friday that the prosecution had failed to produce corroborative evidences to substantiate the allegations made by the victim.

The judge said that the evidences do not match with the charges made by the nun and hence the Bishop was being acquitted of all rape charges.

S Harishankar, former Superintendent of Police, Kottayam, who was the Investigating Officer, expressed dismay and disappointment over the verdict. "We, the investigation team and the public prosecutor, were confident of the authenticity of our findings and were expecting the court to convict the accused. But this is a shocking verdict," said Harishankar while interacting with the media after the pronouncement of the judgment.

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Gujarat logs over 11K new cases, highest in 8 months

Ahmedabad: Gujarat on Thursday reported 11,176 new coronavirus positive cases, highest in nearly eight months, while five patients succumbed to the infection, the State health department said.

With the new cases, the state's caseload reached 8,96,894, while the death of five patients - one each in Ahmedabad, Surat, Valsad, Rajkot and Bhavnagar - took the toll to 10,142, it said in a release. On Wednesday, the state had witnessed 9,941 infection cases and four deaths.

At 3,697, Ahmedabad city recorded the highest number of infections, followed by 2,690 in Surat city, 950 in Vadodara city, 440 in Rajkot city and 337 in Valsad district.

As per the latest data available on the COVID-19 dashboard, Gujarat's positivity rate is 9.52 per cent.

While Ahmedabad district's positivity rate is 27.40 per cent, Surat district stands second with 16.45 per cent.

The recovery count went up to 8,36,140 as 4,285 patients got discharge during the day, the release said, adding that of the total 50,612 active cases, 64 patients are on ventilator support and 50,548 are stable.

As many as 9.44 crore doses of anti-coronavirus vaccines were administered to the eligible population so far, of which 3.11 lakh jabs were given during the day. At present, Gujarat has 138 laboratories to conduct RT-PCR tests to detect the infection.

Gujarat Health Minister Rushikesh Patel on Thursday told reporters that new testing laboratories will be set up in 40 sub-district hospitals across the state soon.

While 97,000 beds, includ-

G'gram sees greatest Covid surge in 6 mths

Gurugram: The number of Covid-19 cases are increasing day by day in Gurugram.

The district on Friday recorded 3,897 fresh coronavirus cases, the highest number of positive cases in the past six months. Two deaths were also reported in the city, with this district's COVID toll reached to 931, officials said. The Covid-19 tally in Gurugram has now risen to 2,07,642 according to the official daily health bulletin. A total of 1,89,172 have been cured and discharged including 1,531 on Friday.

Gurugram now has 17,539 active cases, including 17,401 in-home isolation. "A number of Covid-19 cases are increasing in the city. We are registering more than 2,000 plus cases from the last few days. We are working hard to contain spread in limited places. People need to follow Covid norms and maintain social distancing rules," Gurugram Civil Surgeon said.

PM Modi to interact with 150 startups today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will interact with 150 startups today which would also include startups linked to the sectors like agriculture, health, enterprise systems, space, industry, security and environment to live up the economic activities in the country.

More than 150 startups have been divided into six working groups based on themes including Growing from Roots; Nudging the DNA, From Local to Global; Technology of Future, Building Champions in Manufacturing; and Sustainable Development, according to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Each group will make a presentation before the Prime Minister on the allotted theme in the interaction.

₹2.07 cr assets of former dy drug controller attached

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has attached assets worth Rs 2.07 crore of former Deputy Drug Controller, Licensing Authority Solan, Himachal Pradesh, Kapil Dhiman and others under the Prevention of Money-laundering Act in a disproportionate assets case.

The attached assets include eight immovable properties consisting of land and building in Solan, Mandi, Kullu and Panchkula in the name of Kapil Dhiman and others and movable properties like balance in bank accounts, fixed deposit receipts (FDRs) and insurance policies maintained in various banks/financial institutions, the ED said in a statement.

Daily Covid spike sees over 3K dip in Maha, logs 238 Omicron cases

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The daily Covid-19 infections dropped by 3,195 cases to touch a tally of 43,211 cases on Friday, even as 238 Omicron cases were recorded, taking the total number of Covid-19 variant cases recorded in the state 1,605.

A day after it registered 46,406 cases, the daily infections dropped to 43,211, taking the total number of cases recorded from 70,81,067 cases to 71,24,278. As many as 19 Covid-19 deaths were reported from various parts of the state.

In Mumbai, the daily Covid-19 infections dropped for the second consecutive day, as the metropolis recorded 11,317 cases on Friday, as against 13,702 cases registered on Thursday. With the latest tally of fresh cases, the total Covid-19 cases in Mumbai rose from 9,69,989 to 9,81,306.

As 33,356 Covid-19 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March 2020 increased from 66,83,769 to 67,17,125. The recovery rate in the state dropped from 94.39 per cent to 94.28 per cent.

The number of "active cases" in the state increased from 2,51,828 cases to 2,61,658. The fatality rate in the state dropped from 2 per cent to 1.98 per cent.

Of the total recorded cases, Mumbai accounts for a maximum of 84,352 active cases, while there are 65,979 active cases in Thane.

Delhi Govt pays homage to Ex-PM Lal Bahadur Shastri

The nation today paid homage to the late Prime Minister Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri on his 56th death anniversary on 11th January 2022.

The Govt. of NCT of Delhi had made arrangements at Vijay Ghat to facilitate family members of the late Prime Minister to pay floral tributes at his Samadhi. Shri Anil Shastri and Shri Sunil Shastri were the first to reach Vijay Ghat to pay floral tributes to Shastri ji. Govt. of NCT of Delhi was represented by the officials of GAD. However Due to prevailing Covid situation, public was not allowed to visit Vijay Ghat. Mr. Naresh Wadhwa, National Secretary and Treasurer, Lal Bahadur Shastri Vichar Manch and his team also floral tributes to Shastriji.

Major India-bound flights' collision averted in Dubai

DGCA asks UAE's Civil Aviation authority to submit report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A major collision between two India-bound flights was averted in Dubai saving hundreds of lives on Sunday. Both were Emirates planes and the possible collision averted while both flights took off at the Dubai airport. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has asked UAE's Civil Aviation Authority to share their investigation report.

Sources said that EK-524 Dubai to Hyderabad was

scheduled for take-off at 9:45 PM, EK-568 Dubai to Bengaluru Emirates flight was also scheduled to take off for its destination. Unfortunately, both aircraft scheduled for take-off came on the same runway.

Sources said the Bengaluru flight was allowed to take off, while the Hyderabad flight was held back and awaited clearance. Preliminary reports suggest the Hyderabad flight did not have ATC clearance for take-off. According to the Emirates flight schedule, there is a five-minute gap between the departure times of both flights. After the ATC intervention, Bengaluru-bound Emirates flight took off and the Hyderabad-bound Emirates flight went back to the taxi bay and took off a few minutes later.

Batting has...

From Page 1

Petersen walked away with both the player of the match as well as player of the series honours. India Test captain Virat Kohli rued the batting failures in the 2-1 series loss to South Africa. He added that the team will continue to back the under-fire senior batters Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane despite their failures in the three-match series. After leading 1-0, India went on to lose the next two matches in Johannesburg and Cape Town to squander a chance of win-

ning their first-ever Test series in South Africa.

"The batting has let us down in the last two games. We needed to step up and there's no running away from that. Honestly, I can't sit here and talk about what will happen in the future. That's not for me to discuss. For that, you need to speak to selectors and ask what they have in mind because it's not my job. We have continued to back Cheteshwar and Ajinkya because of the kind of players they are," said Kohli in the post-match press conference after India lost the third and deciding Test by seven wickets on Friday.

India's...

From Page 1

The Philippines armed forces are implementing a revised modernisation programme. India and the Philippines signed an implementing arrangement in March last year for the Government-to-Government deals regarding military equipment including the BrahMos missile.

The Philippines will acquire the BrahmaMos missile which can cover a target range of 290 kms with a capability to carry a 200 kg warhead. India has other variants of this missile also having a range of more than 400 kms. This deal came about in the backdrop of India engaging with several Southeast Asian countries including Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam for the sale of the missile system, they added. India's ties with the Philippines were stepped up in the past few years. The two countries signed

a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Defence and Logistics in 2018. In 2020, an MoU on Sharing of White Shipping Information (non-military/non-government shipping vessel information) was signed. In 2019, the Philippine Navy participated in a group sail in the South China Sea along with the navies of India, the United States, and Japan.

India has inducted the land and sea version of the BrahMos into its security architecture. The supersonic cruise missile can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft, and land platforms. BrahMos missile flies at a speed of 2.8 Mach or almost three times the speed of sound. The Army and Navy have already inducted the highly versatile missile. Given the effectiveness of the missile capable of hitting targets at a range of more than 350 kms, operational commanders have deployed the BrahMos at various critical points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China.

Budget...

From Page 1

Amid a surge in Covid-19 cases, it would be mandatory for MPs as well as those entering the Parliament complex to have a negative RT-PCR report and a fully vaccinated certificate, parliamentary sources said.

A decision on whether the

two Houses should meet simultaneously or in separate shifts to ensure that not many people are present in the complex to ensure distancing norms is yet to be taken, the sources said.

The Monsoon Session of 2020 was the first full Session held under Covid protocol with the Rajya Sabha meeting in the first half of the day and the Lok Sabha during the second half.

Entry into...

From Page 1

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh here on January 5 about the findings of the investigations. However, no official announcement was then made.

On Friday, the Government said: "The Tri-Services Court of Inquiry into the Mi-17 V5 accident on 08 Dec 21 has submitted its preliminary findings. The inquiry team analysed the Flight Data Recorder and Cockpit Voice Recorder besides questioning all available witnesses to determine the most probable cause of the accident."

"The Court of Inquiry has ruled out mechanical failure, sabotage or negligence as a cause of the accident. The accident was a result of entry into clouds due to unexpected change in weather conditions in the valley. This led to spatial disorientation of the pilot resulting in Controlled Flight into Terrain. Based on its findings, the Court of Inquiry has made certain recommendations which are being reviewed,"

the official statement by the IAF said. The accident took place when General Rawat, his wife Madhulika, his Defence advisor Brigadier LS Lidder, staff officer to the Chief of Defence Staff, Lt-Colonel Harjinder Singh and decorated pilot Group Captain Varun Singh and others were to land at the Defence Services Staff College (DSSC), Wellington. General Rawat was scheduled to give a lecture there later in the day. The helicopter crew was also killed in the crash.

The CoI investigated all the aspects including the possibility of malfunction in the helicopter mechanism, any technical or human error leading to the accident. The investigators also examined the black box or flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder, they added. The probe team examined all likely scenarios for the crash, including possible human error or whether it was a case of disorientation of crew when the helicopter was preparing for landing, sources said. The helicopter crew had not made any distress call to the ground station when it sudden-

The same was followed for the first part of the Budget Session during 2021.

For the second part of the Budget Session and Monsoon and Winter Sessions last year, the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha reverted to normal timings, but with members sitting in the chambers and galleries of respective Houses to ensure distancing.

ly encountered thick clouds indicating that the pilots were in control of the helicopter. The commander of the flight was Wing Commander Prithvi Singh Chauhan and Squadron Leader Kuldeep Singh was the co-pilot. Both of them were highly skilled pilots with Master Green rating, they said. The CIFT phenomenon says the pilot or crew is unaware of the looming disaster until it is too late, and it most commonly occurs in the approach or landing phase of a flight. Moreover, the CIFT occurs when an unworthy aircraft, while under the complete control of the pilot, is inadvertently flown into terrain, water, or an obstacle. According to the IATA (International Air Transport Association), the term refers to accidents in which in-flight collisions with terrain, water, or another obstacle occur without indication of loss of control. The United States' Federal Aviation Administration says CIFT is "... an unintentional collision with terrain (ground, mountain, body of water, or an obstacle) while an aircraft is under positive control."

South India...

From Page 1

While the number of people diagnosed with Covid-19 shot up to 23,459 in Tamil Nadu during the last 24 hours (out of 1.5 lakh samples tested), Kerala registered 16,338 cases on Friday. The death toll in Kerala reached 50, 568 while Tamil Nadu's Department of Health Directorate said the number of victims succumbed to the pandemic to date reached 36,956.

The Tamil Nadu Government, shocked over the spurt in the number of Covid-19 cases, has tightened the rules and declared a partial shutdown with many restrictions. Schools and colleges have been asked to stick to online classes till further notice taking into account the warning issued by the Tamil Nadu Government Doctors Association.

The Kerala Government in a review meeting held on Friday decided to shut down all schools and asked the Government and private establishments to opt for online mode in districts where Test Positivity Rate is more than 20 per cent. The State's TPR on Friday stood at 23.68 per cent.

Uttar Pradesh too reported spike in cases. It registered 16,016 fresh Covid-19 cases, taking the tally of active cases in the State to 84,440, while three more fatalities pushed the death toll to 22,949, according to an official statement released on Friday evening.

With these fresh cases, the total number of cases recorded in the State so far stood at 18,01,231. Of the three deaths, two were reported from Meerut and one from Gautam Buddh Nagar, it said. Of the fresh cases, 2,209 cases were reported from Lucknow, 1,887 cases reported from Ghaziabad, 1,817 cases from Gautam Buddh Nagar and 1,203 cases from Meerut among others, it said.

At the same time, Delhi and Mumbai saw slight dip in the number of cases. Delhi recorded 24,383 new Covid cases in the last 24 hours, 15.5 per cent lower than Thursday's 28,867. The positivity rate in the national Capital jumped to 30.64 percent. It means nearly every third person undertaking the Covid-19 test is positive for the virus.

Friday's positivity rate in Delhi is the highest since May 1 last year, when it was 31.6 per cent.

The national Capital reported 34 deaths in the last 24 hours, taking the death count to 25, 305.

Mumbai reported 11,317 fresh Covid-19 cases and nine deaths on Friday as against 13,702 cases on Thursday. Nearly eighty-five per cent of the fresh cases are asymptomatic and don't require any hospitalisation.

The cumulative toll in the last seven days in India has nearly doubled to 1,096 from 562 in the preceding seven days. The number of confirmed cases of the Omicron variant that is driving the latest surge of the pandemic currently stood at 5,753.

Meanwhile, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Friday visited the "E-Sanjeevani" hub at CGHS headquarters in Delhi to review services being provided. He interacted with the doctors providing teleconsultation and personally viewed some sessions. "Tele-medicine services have been very useful in Covid. This E-Sanjeevani platform is used for teleconsultation. Lakhs of people use the platform every day to seek doctors', experts' advice. Aged people don't have to travel, can seek doctor's advice on the phone," said the Minister.

Bishop...

From Page 1

He said the prosecution would certainly challenge Friday's verdict in the High Court.

The chargesheet had said that the accused should stand trial for offences under Sections 342 (punishment for wrongful confinement) 376 (2) (k) , 376 (2)(n), 376 C(a), 377 (unnatural offences) and 506 (ii) criminal intimidation of the Indian Penal Code.

This was the first case filed against a Bishop of the Catholic Church in India under sections of rape, molestation and assault. While the investigation team took their own time in pursuing the leads, the civil society in Kerala staged demonstrations and marches demanding the arrest of the accused. A group of nuns, including the victim, sat on a fast in front of the Kerala High Court demanding the arrest of the Bishop. He was arrested on September 22, 2018 by the Kerala Police. On October 15, 2018, he was granted bail by the Kerala High Court. Though he had approached the judiciary with requests to discharge him from the case, the trial court, the High Court and the Supreme Court had rejected his pleas.

The chargesheet stated that the "Bishop had raped the victim on several occasions over a period of two years". The case took an interesting turn with P C George, the Kerala Congress leader and seven-term MLA, who is a devote Catholic, questioned the propriety and authenticity of the complaint by the nun and that too after four years and 13 rapes. "There are many missing links in the case and this is an attempt to portray the Church in poor light," George had said while declaring that the Bishop was innocent and a victim of calumny.

Meanwhile Bishop Mulakkal remained tight lipped throughout the trial. He had told The Pioneer in an exclusive interview that he was innocent and truth alone would win. "I wish all people win," he said. On hearing the verdict on Friday, the Bishop who was present in the court, said, "Praise the Lord! God is Great", and hugged all members of his legal team. Kevin Peter, president, Christian Association and Alliance for Social Action, said it was a memorable day for the Congregation as the dark clouds hovered around the Church has been blown over.

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No: SE/PRJ/TS/1543 **NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER** Dated: 12/01/2022
e-NIT NO. SE/PRJ/07/2021-22 Dated: 12/01/2022

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of UT of Jammu & Kashmir, Superintending Engineer, Procurement, JPDCL, Jammu invites online e-bids from original Govt. registered manufacturers for supply of material as under for the requirement of JPDCL:

NIT No. :- SE/PRJ/07/2021-22 dated 12.01.2022
Description of Material & Quantity (In Nos.) :- PURCHASE OF DISTRIBUTION TRANSFORMERS OF EEL-II OF RATING: 400 KVA (Cu Wound) - 68 Nos. 630 KVA (Cu Wound) 30 Nos.
Detailed NIT maybe downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> upto 7th of February 2022 till 11:00 Hrs. The tender shall be accepted through online mode only. In case, the tender process does not get completed due to any reason, no corrigendum will be published in the newspapers. The details regarding corrigendum may be seen on the above mentioned website.

No. DIP/J-5607-P/21 **Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Procurement, JPDCL Jammu**
Dated : 14-01-2022

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

◆ **CHANGE OF NAME** ◆

I Parveen Chander S/O Vilochan Prasad R/O House No. 111, Sainik Enclave, Sector-3, Mohan Garden, New Delhi-110059 have changed my name to Praveen Chand Juyal for all purposes.

PD(9135)A

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVERNMENT OF N.C.T. OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER (M)-I
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (M)-62 / T-2 E-BLOCK PARK: PREET VIHAR: DELHI-110092
Phone No. 22502206, Mail ID :- djbeeeastii@gmail.com

PRESS SHORT NIT No. 35 / (2021-22)

S. No.	Name of Work	Amount Put to Tender	Tender Processing Fee	Earnest Money	Tender ID No. & Date of release of tender in E-Procurement Solution	Last Date / Time of receipt of tender E-Procurement Solution
1.	Replacement of old damaged / rusted internal water distribution network in Vigyan Lok in AC-59 in East-II.	48,54,933.00	500.00	97,100.00	2022_DJB_214770_1 14-Jan-2022 04:00 PM	22-Jan-2022 02:00 PM
2.	Trapping of discharge of Patparganj Industrial area from SPS (DSIIDC) to interceptor sewer in AC-59 under AEE (M)-59.	37,90,455.00	500.00	76,000.00	2022_DJB_214770_2 14-Jan-2022 04:00 PM	22-Jan-2022 02:00 PM
3.	Replacement of old damaged / rusted internal C.I. water lines in Jagriti Enclave Ph-II/III in AC-59 in East-II.	33,18,400.00	500.00	66,500.00	202 2_DJB_214770_3 14-Jan-2022 04:00 PM	22-Jan-2022 02:00 PM
4.	Replacement of settled sewer line (300 mm) dia in the back lane from H.No. 13 to H.No. 28, Gagan Vihar to prevent contamination in AC-59 under ACE (M)-I	31,75,318.00	500.00	64,000.00	202 2_DJB_214770_4 14-Jan-2022 04:00 PM	22-Jan-2022 02:00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at

<https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>

Devender Kumar
EX. ENGINEER (M)-59

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. J.S.V. 1009(2021-22)

STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene

More than 75% who died were unvaccinated: Jain

New Delhi: More than 75 per cent of those who succumbed to the novel coronavirus infection in the current wave in Delhi were unvaccinated, Health Minister Satyendra Jain said on Friday. He also said that the city is expected to record less than 25,000 coronavirus cases on Friday.

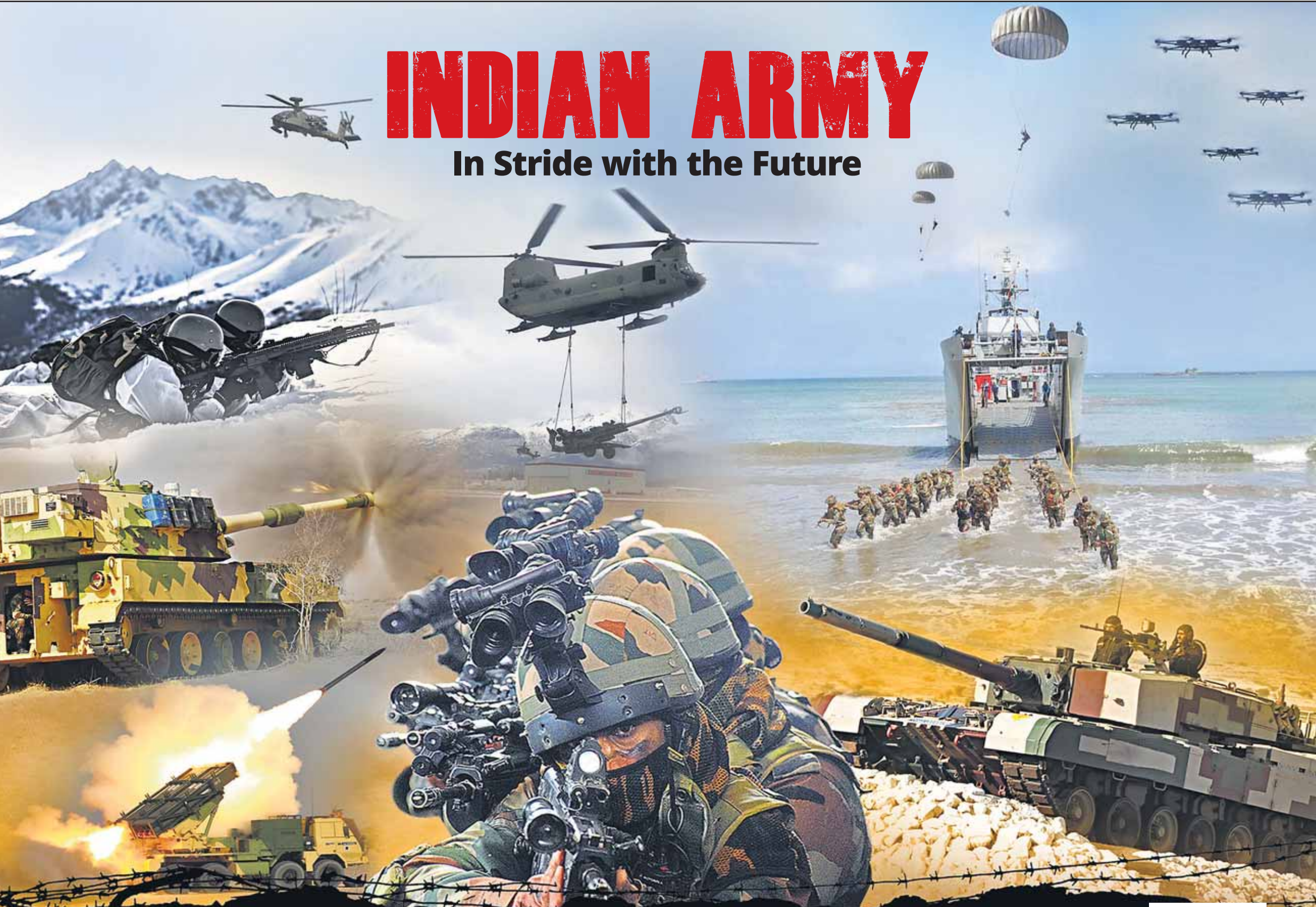
Delhi had on Thursday reported 28,867 Covid-19 cases, the sharpest single-day spike since the pandemic began, and 31 deaths, while the positivity rate surged to 29.21 per cent, according to the health department data. Delhi's previous biggest daily jump of 28,395 cases was recorded on April 20 last year.

According to official data, of the 97 people who died here due to Covid, between January 9 to January 12, 70 people were unvaccinated, while 19 had taken the first jab and eight were fully vaccinated. Besides seven were minors.

"More than 75 per cent of the people who died due to coronavirus had not even taken a single dose of the vaccine. Ninety per cent of the people had severe comorbidities like cancer and kidney ailments.

Even the seven patients below 18 years had chronic issues," Jain noted. He said one of the persons who died had allegedly attempted suicide and was hospitalised for it.

"He tested positive and died three days later," said the Minister. The Minister added that more than 13,000 hospital beds are lying vacant in the city.



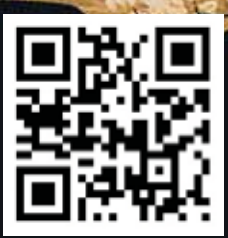
INDIAN ARMY

In Stride with the Future



74TH ARMY DAY

15 JANUARY 2022



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Our Army always puts the Nation first.
I salute all those great individuals
who sacrificed their lives while serving the Nation.
India will never forget our valiant heroes.

OUR FALLEN HEROES IN THE YEAR 2021								
RANK	NAME	ARMS/SERVICES	RANK	NAME	ARMS/SERVICES	RANK	NAME	ARMS/SERVICES
NAIB SUBEDAR	RAVINDER, SM	INFANTRY	SEPOY	VIKESH KUMAR SAH	INFANTRY	SEPOY	VAISAKH H	MECHANISED INFANTRY
NAIK	NISHANT SHARMA	MECHANISED INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	KASHIRAY BAMMANALLI	ENGINEERS	SUBEDAR	EBENEZAR AMADALA	ARTILLERY
SEPOY	LAXMAN	INFANTRY	NAIB SUBEDAR	SREEJITH M, SM	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	DEB KUMAR BHATTACHARJEE	ARTILLERY
LANCE DAFADAR	DEEPAK KUMAR	ARMOURED	SEPOY	MARUPROLU JASWANTH KUMAR REDDY	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	AJIT KUMAR SHUKLA	ARTILLERY
HAVILDAR	NIRMAL SINGH	INFANTRY	NAIK	GURJANT SINGH	INFANTRY	SUBEDAR	AJAY SINGH	INFANTRY
BATTERY HAVILDAR MAJOR	KULDEEP SINGH	ARTILLERY	SUBEDAR	KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA	INFANTRY	RIFLEMAN	YOGAMBAR SINGH	INFANTRY
HAVILDAR	PINKU KUMAR	INFANTRY	SEPOY	BOOPATHI S	ARMY SERVICE CORPS	RIFLEMAN	VIKRAM SINGH NEGI	INFANTRY
LIEUTENANT COLONEL	RISHUBH SHARMA	ARMY AVIATION	SUBEDAR	RAM SINGH	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	HARENDRA SINGH RAWAT	INFANTRY
RIFLEMAN	PRADEEP KUMAR	INFANTRY	LANCE DAFADAR	JOGINDER SINGH	ARMOURED	SEPOY	HIMANSHU	INFANTRY
GUNNER	SAYAN GHOSH	ARTILLERY	SIGNALMAN	BEEPRIN BICHHWALIA	SIGNALS	SEPOY	BRIJESH RAUTELA	INFANTRY
NAIK	K DEVENDRAN	ENGINEERS	COLONEL	ASHWANI KUMAR	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	RANJEET KUMAR	ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS
NAIK	UTTAM KUMAR SINGH	SIGNALS	HAVILDAR	SUDHEESH KUMAR S	ENGINEERS	NAIK	DEVA ANAND A	ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS
NAIK	PANDRANKI CHANDRA RAO	EME	NAIK	RAMARAO VANJARAPU	ENGINEERS	SEPOY	KAMAL DEV VAILOYA	INFANTRY
SUBEDAR	DOIPHODE LAXMAN SANTU	SIGNALS	SEPOY	PRABHJOT SINGH	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	KAILASH CHAND GURJAR	MECHANISED INFANTRY
NAIK	MANISH KUMAR	SIGNALS	SEPOY	JAGRAJ SINGH	INFANTRY	SEPOY	LOVEPREET SINGH	INFANTRY
HAVILDAR	HAOBIJAM PREMANANDA SINGH	ARTILLERY	HAVILDAR	MOHD SALEEM AKHOON	INFANTRY	LIEUTENANT COLONEL	ABHEET SINGH BATH	ARMY AVIATION
NAIK	BADAL SINGH CHANDEL	INFANTRY	NAIB SUBEDAR	SUDHAKER SINGH	ARTILLERY	CAPTAIN	JAYANT JOSHI	ARMY AVIATION
HAVILDAR	GANESH YADAV	ARTILLERY	HAVILDAR	BHADOORIA KULDIP SURESH	MECHANISED INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	RAKESH KUMAR	INFANTRY
LANCE DAFADAR	VIKRAM SINGH	ARMOURED	SUBEDAR	RAM SHANKER	ENGINEERS	HAVILDAR	GURNINDER SINGH	INFANTRY
NAIB SUBEDAR	PARWINDER SINGH	INFANTRY	SUBEDAR	VIRENDRA KUMAR	ARTILLERY	SOWAR	SHANAVAS A	ARMOURED
SEPOY	PARABJEET SINGH	INFANTRY	SEPOY	RAVI CHANDRAN R	INFANTRY	SUBEDAR	DAMBAR CHAND	INFANTRY
SEPOY	AMARDEEP SINGH	INFANTRY	NAIK	RATHOD JASHAVANTSINH JAVANSING	ARMY SERVICE CORPS	NAIB SUBEDAR	JAIPAL SINGH CHAHAR	INFANTRY
SEPOY	PARGHAT SINGH	INFANTRY	SEPOY	KARN VEER SINGH	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	RAJESH KUMAR	ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS
NAIB SUBEDAR	NITUL GOGOI	INFANTRY	NAIB SUBEDAR	JASWINDER SINGH, SM	MECHANISED INFANTRY	GUNNER	VISHAL KUMAR	ARTILLERY
SEPOY	POLUKANTI SIVAGANGADHAR	EME	NAIK	MANDEEP SINGH	INFANTRY	COLONEL	VIPLAV TRIPATHI	INFANTRY
SEPOY	SASANKHA SEKHAR SAMAL	EME	NAIK	GAJJAN SINGH	INFANTRY	MAJOR	PANKAJ KUMAR PANDAY	INFANTRY
NAIB SUBEDAR	VIJAY KUMAR SHARMA	EME	SEPOY	SARAJ SINGH	INFANTRY	MAJOR	MAYANK VISHNOI, SM	INFANTRY
NAIK	ABHILASH KUMAR S	EME						

WHO recommends two new Covid treatments

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Amid rise in hospital admissions augmented by the transmissible Omicron variant across the countries, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has recommended two new Covid-19 treatments — Baricitinib, an oral drug, used in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and Sotrovimab, an alternative to casirivimab-imdevimab, which is monoclonal antibody cocktail.

WHO experts said arthritis drug baricitinib used with corticosteroids to treat severe or critical Covid patients led to better survival rates and reduced need for ventilators. The guidelines by the UN agency's panel of international experts have been published in the British Medical Journal on Friday.

Experts also recommended an experimental monoclonal antibody treatment, Sotrovimab for people with non-serious Covid at highest risk of hospitalisation, such as the elderly, people with immunodeficiencies or chronic diseases such as diabetes. Monoclonal antibodies are lab-created compounds that mimic the body's natural defence mechanism.

Sotrovimab's benefits for people not at risk of hospitalisation were deemed insignificant and the WHO said its effectiveness against new variants like Omicron was "still uncertain".

Only three other treatments for Covid-19 have received WHO approval, starting with corticosteroids for severely ill patients in September 2020. Corticosteroids are inexpensive and widely available and fight inflammation that com-

WHO has recommended Baricitinib, an oral drug used in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, and Sotrovimab, an alternative to casirivimab-imdevimab, which is monoclonal antibody cocktail

monly accompanies severe cases.

Arthritis drugs tocilizumab and sarilumab, which the WHO endorsed in July, are IL-6 inhibitors that suppress a dangerous overreaction of the immune system to the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Baricitinib is in a different class of drugs known as Janus kinase inhibitors, but it falls under the same guidelines as the IL-6 inhibitors. Baricitinib is produced by United States pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly, and while generic versions are available in India and Bangladesh, patents are in force in many other countries including Brazil and Indonesia.

"When both are available, choose one based on issues including cost and clinician experience," the guidelines say.

Synthetic antibody treatment Regeneron was approved by the WHO in September and the guidelines say Sotrovimab can be used for the same type of patients. The WHO's Covid treatment recommendations are updated regularly based on new data from clinical trials.

Pranayama effective in preventing Corona: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

A specially designed Pranayama module comprising of a string of breathing exercises, every day for 28 days can be highly effective in preventing Covid-19 infection in exposed healthcare professionals (HCPs), finds a study conducted by doctors from Lady Hardinge Medical College and Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY) under the Union Ayush Ministry.

The experts said that the study which was conducted during the first wave in 2020 is still relevant as Pranayama remains the first line of defense for the frontline health care workers amid the third wave that now looms large over the country.

The researchers included Dr Rakesh Sarwal from (NITI) Aayog, Dr Rajinder K. Dhamija, Professor and Head of Neurology, Lady Hardinge Medical College, Delhi and Khushbu Jain and Dr Ishwar V. Basavaraddi, both from MDNIY, Delhi

Dr Basavaraddi said a few studies have shown the practice of Pranayama, a component of Yoga, to be effective in improving immune function and reducing infection.

However, no clinical trial on the efficacy of Pranayama in preventing Covid-19 has been conducted till date.

"We conducted a pilot project in five hospitals in the national capital during September-November, 2020. 280 HCPs assigned duties with Covid-19 patients who were found negative in antibody tests in pre-intervention assessment were recruited and ran-

domly assigned to intervention and control groups.

The intervention group practiced specially designed Pranayama modules twice a day (morning and evening) for 28 days, while those in the control group were advised general fitness practices (like walking, jogging, running).

The morning protocol comprised activities like Dhyana that helped to clean the nasal passages and maintain the sinuses and helps to get rid of pathogens while Kapalabhati is a process of forceful exhalation and normal inhalation which helps to improve pulmonary functions and secretions, also cleanse the frontal sinuses and ease movement of diaphragm.

"Since body's immunity plays an important role in Covid-19 infection, non-pharmacological interventions which have an immune-modulatory effect, could serve as a preventive as well as a therapeutic measure for patients with infection," Dr Basavaraddi said.

"Our study reveals that twice daily practice of specially designed Pranayama Modules administered by trained Yoga instructors in HCPs exposed to active cases lead to a significant protective effect in preventing Covid-19 infection.

"This is the first of its kind study to assess the effect of the specially designed Pranayama protocol in preventing Covid-19 infection," said Dr Dhamija.

Co-author Sarwal said that Pranayama modules may be promoted and adopted to improve immunity in all sections of the population. Considering the implications of

Corona: Study

Over 75 lakh perform Surya Namaskar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

More than 75 lakh people from across the globe performed Surya Namaskar on Friday as part of the 'Surya Namaskar for Vitality' programme organised by the Ministry of AYUSH under the Centre's Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav initiative. The programme was launched virtually by Union AYUSH minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Union Minister of State Munjapara Mahendrabhai.

Sonowal said, "Sun worship is done through Surya Namaskar to improve the physical and mental well-being of people. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, yoga and Surya Namaskar are being promoted for the wellness and health of mankind."

Surya namaskar is a combination of eight asanas performed in 12 steps. The AYUSH ministry has not only engaged other ministries and state governments but has involved all major stakeholders in the global yoga fraternity in this mass demonstration programme.

The study for health care professionals and the general public living in fear of COVID-19, larger studies across different geographical, ethnic and cultural backgrounds are needed to extend and verify the generalization of the present results.

1 in 10 may have Covid after quarantine period

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

In some settings, such as people returning to care homes after illness, people continuing to be infectious after ten days could pose a serious public health risk.

For, a study has said that one in 10 people may have clinically relevant levels of potentially infectious SARS-CoV-2 past the 10 day quarantine period. The research is published in the international Journal of Infectious Diseases.

Led by the researchers from University of Exeter, the study used a newly adapted test which can detect whether the virus was potentially still active. It was applied to samples from

176 people in Exeter who had tested positive on standard PCR tests.

The study found that 13 per cent of people still exhibited clinically-relevant levels of virus after 10 days, meaning they could potentially still be infectious. Some people retained these levels for up to 68 days. The authors believe this new test should be applied in settings where people are vulnerable, to stop the spread of Covid-19.

The paper is entitled 'Persistence of clinically-relevant levels of SARS-CoV2 envelope gene subgenomic RNAs in non-immunocompromised individuals'.

Professor Lorna Harries, of the University of Exeter Medical School, who oversaw

the study said: "While this is a relatively small study, our results suggest that potentially active virus may sometimes persist beyond a 10 day period, and could pose a potential risk of onward transmission. Furthermore, there was nothing clinically remarkable about these people, which means we wouldn't be able to predict who they are".

Conventional PCR tests work by testing for the presence of viral fragments. While they can tell if someone has recently had the virus, they cannot detect whether it is still active, and the person is infectious. The test used in the latest study however gives a positive result only when the virus is active and potentially capable of onward transmission.

Covid jumps 4-fold in paramilitary forces

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The number of Covid-19 cases in the paramilitary forces jumped nearly four-fold in a week from 1,668 cases on January 7 to 6,595 cases on January 13, including one death due to the deadly viral disease in CRPF and 1,254 infections within the last 24 hours.

Till now, as many as 95,980 paramilitary personnel have been infected with Covid-19 of which 89,036 patients have recovered. The forces have suffered 349 deaths till so far and 6,595 patients continue to be active.

As on Thursday, out of a total of 6,595 cases, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) tops the list with 2,237 active cases followed by 1,824 in Central Reserve Police Force

(CRPF), 1,048 cases in Border Security Force (BSF), 892 in Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), 365 in Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), 181 in National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and 48 cases in National Security Guard (NSG), according to official data.

However, genome sequencing has not been undertaken and there is no clarity if there are any cases of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus in their ranks, officials said.

During the last 24 hours, as many as 1,254 personnel were detected with the infection, including a maximum 423 in CISF, 362 in CRPF, 187 in SSB, 182 in BSF, 60 in ITBP, 21 in NSG and 19 in NDRF. This is nearly three times the number

of paramilitary personnel contracting the disease in a single day as on January 7 with a tally of 441 cases.

In a single day, the tally of Covid cases had jumped by 441 cases from 1,227 cases on Thursday to 1,668 cases on January 7.

Out of the total casualties of 349, the CRPF has taken the maximum toll at 133 deaths followed by 90 in BSF, 83 in CISF, 23 in SSB and 17 in ITBP. Likewise, the NDRF lost two personnel and the NSG suffered a casualty of one personnel due to Covid-19.

Earlier, 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 on January 7.

EC asks poll observers to be accessible, neutral

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to conduct free, safe and fair elections, the Election Commission (EC) on Friday asked observers, who will be deployed for assembly polls in five states, to be visible, accessible, neutral and ethical while functioning as the eyes and ears of the poll body. The poll body will meet on Saturday to decide whether to continue with its ban on physical election rallies, road shows and pad yatras as the COVID-19 cases on Thursday crossed over 2.66 lakh cases in a day. During the briefings, observers are given comprehensive inputs about various aspects of election management by senior officials of the EC. Over 1,400 officials attended the briefing, with 140 officials attending it in person and the rest connecting virtually. In his address on Friday, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra also told expenditure observers to sharpen their skills and be innovative in countering newer methods being used to induce voters. Chandra made these remarks while addressing general, police and expenditure observers to be deployed in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur during the elections. Chandra asked the observers to work in coordination with enforcement

agencies. This is the first briefing of the commission to the senior officers, who have been deployed in the forthcoming elections. Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar cautioned that even stray instances of human errors by polling personnel abd non-compliance of Covid protocols at polling material distribution centres can create a 'deviant narrative and derail the smooth conduct of elections'. According to an EC statement, Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey, while acknowledging that conducting elections amidst COVID-19 was a challenging task, exhorted the designated observers to ensure that a level-playing field is maintained for all political parties and candidates. Officers drawn from IAS, IPS, IRS and other accounts services across the country are deployed as general, police and expenditure observers. Kumar reminded the observers that they are always under strict and microscopic scrutiny by stakeholders and thus should be careful and discreet about their own behaviour and conduct during the election process. He said observers are representatives of the commission and must be acutely aware and cognisant of this sacred and onerous duty entrusted upon them.

Sibal writes to UP, U'khand to prevent hate speeches

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

A day after the Supreme Court order on 'dharam sansad' events where hate speeches were given, senior lawyer and a former Union Minister Kapil Sibal on Thursday wrote to authorities in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand seeking prevention of inflammatory speeches at more such events planned this month.

On behalf of the petitioners in the hate speeches case in the Supreme Court, Sibal wrote to the district magistrates of Aligarh and Haridwar urging them to take preventive measures including imposition of Section 144 to prevent holding of such events.

"We are in the midst of general elections to the legislative assembly and while we do not want to attribute motives to any person, but if such speeches are made in the midst of an election, they will destabilize the social order and have serious consequences on the polity of this country. We request you to take such preventive action within your powers as is necessary, including under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code,

1973 and Sections 3 and 5 of the National Security Act, 1980," Sibal said in his letter.

He has also sent copies of his letters to chief ministers, home secretaries and police chiefs of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand besides the superintendents of police in Aligarh and Haridwar. A copy was also sent to the Election Commission.

"There are news reports now that another 'dharam sansad' is being organised now in Aligarh on January 22-23, 2022 wherein the speakers who participated in the aforementioned events held between 17-19th December, 2021 are likely to be speaking again," Sibal said in his letter to Aligarh DM.

In another letter to Haridwar DM, he said, "There are news reports now that the Shankaracharya Parishad seers announced on 06.01.2022 a protest meeting to be held on January 16, 2022 against the first information report (FIR) registered against speakers at the December 17-19 meeting of the Dharma Sansad."

The senior Congress leader said the responsibility to take preventive measures to prevent any possible incident of mob

violence falls on the district administration, "so the responsibility falls on your shoulders to take preventive action to ensure no speeches of this nature are made".

"We believe if such events are held in the state of Uttar Pradesh as well and similar speeches are made, it will not only disturb the public order but will amount to various criminal offences," Sibal noted. He also referred to the judgement of the Supreme Court in the Tehseen Poonawala versus Union of India case, where the state government was directed to appoint nodal officers in each district for taking measures to prevent incidents of mob violence. These nodal officers have not been appointed in Uttar Pradesh.

The Supreme Court had issued notice to the respondents and posted the matter for hearing after 10 days. The top court was hearing a petition filed by journalist Qurban Ali and former Patna High Court judge and senior advocate Anjana Prakash, who have also sought a direction for an "independent, credible and impartial investigation" by an SIT into the incidents of hate speeches against the Muslim community.

Centre all set to ask carmakers to provide six airbags for better safety

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Centre is all set to make it mandatory for carmakers to provide a minimum of six airbags in motor vehicles that can carry up to 8 passengers for enhanced safety of occupants. Union Minister Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said his ministry had already mandated the implementation of fitment of the driver airbag with effect from July 1, 2019 and front co-passenger airbag with effect from January 1, 2022.

"In order to enhance the safety of the occupants in motor vehicles carrying upto 8 passengers, I have now approved a Draft GSR Notification to make a minimum of 6 Airbags compulsory," Gadkari said. GSR here stands for General Statutory Rules.

He further said that to minimise the impact of frontal and lateral collisions on the occupants seated in both front and rear compartments, it has been decided that 4 additional airbags be mandated in the M1 vehicle category.

"Two side/side torso airbags and two side curtain/tube airbags covering all outboard passengers. This is a crucial step to make motor vehicles in India safer than ever," Gadkari said in a tweet message. According to the Minister, this will ultimately ensure the safety of passengers across all segments, irrespective of the cost/variant of the vehicle

According to latest government data, total 1,16,496 road accidents occurred on national highways (NHs), including expressways, in 2020, causing 47,984 deaths. Last year, Gadkari in an interview had said small cars, mostly

purchased by lower middle-class people, should also have an adequate number of airbags and had wondered why automakers are providing eight airbags only in big cars bought by rich people.

His remarks had come against the backdrop of the automobile industry raising concerns that high taxation and stricter safety and emission norms for vehicles have made their products expensive. Mostly, lower middle-class people buy small economy cars and "if their car won't have airbags and when accidents happen, then it may result in deaths. So, I appeal to all car manufacturers to provide a minimum of six airbags across all variants and segments of the vehicle," he had said.

The minister had acknowledged that additional airbags in small cars will increase their cost by at least Rs 3,000-4,000.

2021 was India's 5th warmest year in 121 yrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The year 2021 was the fifth warmest year in India since 1901, with the country recording its annual mean air temperature at 0.44 degree Celsius above normal. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday released its annual statement on climate of India for the year 2021, which is found to be the fifth warmest year after 2016, 2009, 2017 and 2010 during the last 121 years (1901-2021).

As per the annual statement, as many as 1,750 deaths were reported across India due to extreme weather events such as floods, cyclonic storms, heavy rain, landslides, lightning, among others, during the year. Maharashtra was the most adversely affected state during 2021, which reportedly claimed more than 340 deaths mainly due to extremely heavy rainfall, floods, landslide, lightning, cyclonic storms and cold-wave events.

"The annual mean air tem-

perature for the country was recorded at 0.44 degree Celsius above normal. The warm temperature during winter and post-monsoon season mainly contributed to this," it said.

"In 2016, the mean air temperature was 0.71°C higher than normal; 0.55°C in 2009; 0.54°C in 2017 and 0.53°C in 2010. In the 121 years between 1901 and last year, the mean temperature rose by 0.63°C above normal," the report said.

The report showed that 11 out of 15 warmest years were during the recent fifteen years (2007-2021). The past decade (2011-2020/ 2012- 2021) was also the warmest decade on record with the decadal averaged annual mean temperature anomaly (Actual-LPA) of 0.34 degree Celsius/ 0.37 degree Celsius. The country averaged mean monthly temperatures were warmer than normal during all the months of the year except four months (April, May, June, and November). "The winter (January to February) and post-monsoon

(October to December) seasons with all India mean temperature anomalies of 0.78 degree Celsius and 0.42 degree Celsius respectively mainly contributed to this warming," it said.

Also, the country last year witnessed a rise in the annual rainfall, which was 105% of its long-period average (LPA). Rainfall during the southwest monsoon season, from June to September, was normal at 99% of the LPA. Notably, the north-east monsoon period saw rainfall at 171% of the LPA - record highest since 1901.

Speaking on the 147th foundation day of the IMD, Union Minister of State for Earth Sciences, Jitendra Singh on Friday said the IMD is going to play a major role in India's crusade for climate preservation at international fora.

The data showed that heavy rainfall and flood-related incidents claimed over 750 lives last year, while thunderstorms and lightning killed at least 780 people in different

IMD predicts cold wave with dense fog in North India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

People should brace up to face severe cold wave along with dense to very dense fog in north India in the next few days. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Thursday predicted dense to very dense fog over North India during next 4-5 days and a wet spell over east and adjoining central India during

parts of the country.

There were five cyclonic storms in 2021 - Tauktae over the Arabian Sea (May 14-19); Yaas over the Bay of Bengal (May 23-28); Shaheen over the Arabian Sea (September 29-October 4); Gulab over the Bay

next two days, which will decrease significantly thereafter. "A Western Disturbance (WD) would affect northwest Himalayas on 16th & 17th and another WD affect Northwest India from 18th to 20th January, 2022", it said. Meanwhile, no significant change in minimum temperatures is very likely over north-west and central India during next 4-5 days.

of Bengal (September 24-28) and most recently, Jawad over the Bay of Bengal (December 2-6). The most devastating of them was Tauktae, which slammed the Saurashtra coast-line on May 17, eventually claiming at least 144 lives.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL
HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
Telefax No. :- 0194-2496089, Email Id:- xennhchdk@yahoo.in
(Short Term)
GIST of E -NIT NO: MHCHD/TS /2021-22/285/e-tendering
Dated:-13-01-2022
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited from registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:-
Name of Work:- Complete Servicing of CP-40 Air Compressor Of 350 LPM Oxygen Plant installed District Hospital Kulgam.
Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs) :- 2.35, Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees) :- 200, Time of completion (in days) :- 05, AA Accorded Vide No :- 660-JK(HME)of 2020 Dt:-07.09.2020, TS_NO :- MHCHD/TS/218 Dated 01/22, Earnest Money (in Rupees) :- 4700/-
1. The Tender document 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/downloaded from the departmental website **www.jktenders.gov.in** from **13-01-2022 (18.00 hrs)**.
2. The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from **14-01-2022(10.00 hrs) to 19-01-2022(14:00 hrs)** in two (02) cover.
3. The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on **19-01-2022(16.00 hrs)** or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar.
No. DIPK-16685/21
Dated:- 13.01.2022
Sd/- Executive Engineer,
MHCHD, Srinagar

DELHI JAL BOARD
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER(M)-7
NANGLOI PH-III, NEAR SURAJMALI STADIUM METRO STATION, NEW DELHI-110041
NIT No. 75/EE(M)10/ACE(M)7/2021-221
Short Press Notice Tender

S. N	Name of Work	Amount Put to tender (Rs.)	EMD	Tender Fee's	Dt. of release of tender procurement solution / I.D. No.	Last dt./time of receipt of tender through E-procurement solution
1	Providing/Laying/ replacement of sewer line in Sultanpur Mazra village in AC-10 under EE(M) 10/ACE(M)7	39,37,956/-	78,800/-	500/-	13/01/2022/ 2022_DJB_214669_1	21-01-2022 at 3.00 P.M.

Further details in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 1004 (2021-22)
"STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"
(Himanshu Agarwal)
EX. ENGINEER(M)10

SP takes dig at BJP’s 3/4th seats claim

SP supremo says ‘BJP meant they will win three or four seats’ in UP Assembly polls



Lucknow: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday took a swipe at Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, saying by the ‘80 versus 20” assertion, he meant only 20 per cent of the population will back the BJP in the Uttar Pradesh elections, while the remaining 80 per cent will support his party. But after the arrival of Swami Prasad Maurya and others in the SP, the saffron party would lose even this 20 per cent, Yadav said in his speech after giving party membership to Maurya and others here. “Baba mukhya mantri

(Adityanath) should engage a math teacher,” the SP president said, referring to the chief minister’s “80 vs 20” remarks. Adityanath had recently said that in the Uttar Pradesh elections, while 80 per cent supporters will be on one side, 20 per cent will be on the other, which many thought was alluding to the 20 per cent Muslim population in the state. Yadav also pooh-poohed the BJP’s claim of winning three-fourth seats in the 403-member Uttar Pradesh Assembly, saying, “they meant they will win three or four seats.” **PTI**

Yogi shares meal at Dalit house, says it was ‘social exploitation’ during SP rule in UP

Gorakhpur: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had a meal at a Dalit household here on Friday and said during the Samajwadi Party rule it was “social exploitation” and not “social justice”, whereas the BJP government was working for the development of every section of society without any discrimination. Adityanath’s visit to the Dalit family in Gorakhpur came a little before Swami Prasad Maurya, Dara Singh Chauhan and Dharam Singh Saini, who resigned from the government accusing it of being anti-Dalit, gathered at the Samajwadi Party office in Lucknow to take up its membership in the run-up to the assembly polls beginning February 10. Several BJP and Apna Dal legislators have also quit their respective parties to join the SP. After having meal at Amritlal Bharti’s home on the



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath having lunch with BJP worker Amrit Lal Bharti at his residence, in Gorakhpur **PTI**

occasion of Makar Sankranti, Adityanath told reporters, “Only 18,000 houses were given to people under PM Awas Yojna in full five-year term of the Akhilesh Yadav government in UP, whereas the present BJP government has given 45 lakh houses to the poor and the deprived under the scheme.” “It was ‘samajik shoshan’

(social exploitation) and not ‘samajik nyay’ (social justice) during the SP rule in UP,” he said, taking a swipe at his predecessor and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav. He said 2.61 crore households got toilets and 1.36 crore families benefitted from the Ujjwala Yojana under the “double engine” government, referring to the BJP rule at the Centre and in the state. **PTI**

Didi and not anybody else is my leader, says TMC MP

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Voice of decent against alleged dynastic politics seems to have begun in the Trinamool Congress with senior party MP Kalyan Banerjee reiterating that he “will continue in the Trinamool Congress till Mamata Banerjee is around ... no one except her is my leader.” Referring to TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee’s statement that he for one was opposed to any public gathering --political or religious --- for another two months in view of rising corona cases, Kalyan Banerjee said that “such decisions are taken by our supreme leader Mamata Banerjee and not anyone else.” He said “such statements need her approval and since my leader MamataBanerjee has not spoken anything about it I will assume that it is nother view ... in that case I do not subscribe to whatever he

(Abhishek) has said.” On whether he regarded Abhishek Banerjee --- who is also the nephew of the Chief Minister --- as his leader the TMC Lok Sabha Chief Whip said, “I consider only Mamata Banerjee as my leader ... I am around till sheis there ... I do not accept anyone else as my leader.” Attacking Abhishek for making a statement that was in tune with what the BJP demanded Kalyan Banerjee said “whatever he said matches witht he views of the BJP ... because his statement came soon after the BJP leadership made similar statements ... but did he (Abhishek) tell anything about the UP elections ... did he tell anything about the-crowds gathering in other parts of the country.” Though there was no immediate reaction from the Chief Minister another senior leader and party disciplinary committee chairman Patrho Chatterjee asked all sides to make statements commensurate to the party policy. “No statement against any leader that goes against the party’s conductrules will be tolerated ... everyone is asked to exercise restraint,”Chatterjee said even as State party spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said cognizance of Kalyan Banerjee’s statements would be taken by the party. Another TMC MP from Hooghly Aparupa Poddar too came out against Kalyan Banerjee seeking his resignation as the Chief Whip. “He knows full well that Abhishek Banerjee is the party national general secretary and we are bound to follow his line ... now after he has made statements against him, Kalyan Banerjee should resign as the Chief Whip of Lok Sabha because he has acted like Bivishana --- the epic figure of Ramayana who left his brother Ravana the demon king to join the ranks of Lord Rama.”

MP Rupa seeks CBI probe into train mishap which killed 9 people

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Technical snags might have led to the Thursday’s train accident at Moynaguri in North Bengal that left 9 people dead and many others injured, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday said after visiting the spot. This, even as BJP MP Rupa Ganguly demanded a CBI investigation into the mishap considering the timing of the accident. “Are the Railway tracks thinking creatures that they will cause the train to derail ... Do trains derail out of nothing ... we have to consider the timing of the accident ... the elections are around and considering the fact that no big mishap has taken place in the past several years it becomes imperative to get the investigation conducted by the CBI to ascertain the truth,” Ganguly said drawing instant reaction from the

ruling Trinamool Congress. “Even the Union Railway Minister has not said anything about any conspiracy ... even he has pointed at some technical snag and here their leader is raising political issues which is unacceptable... instead of reaching out to the people they are politicizing the matter,” saidTMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh. Meanwhile, former engineers of the Railways said that prima facie it seemed that one of traction motors of the engine had fallen off blocking the tracks and causing the coaches to derail. “We are conducting a high level investigation and will make things known soon after we come to a conclusion,” Commissioner for Railway Safety Latif Khan said. Twelve coaches of the Bikaner-Guwahati Express train had derailed and some of them capsized near Domohani in Jalpaiguri district on Thursday.

RLD-SP pick candidates on different criteria

Noida: The Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) has chosen educated candidates hailing from the constituency and with no criminal background, while partner the Samajwadi Party picked them on their ‘winnability’ factor as the alliance announced the first list of nominees for the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls. The alliance of Akhilesh Yadav’s and Jayant Chaudhary’s parties, which was stitched last year, on Thursday announced candidates on 29 seats – 10 from the SP and 19 from the RLD - in western Uttar Pradesh which will go to polls on February 10. These seats across districts like Muzaffarnagar, Shamli, Aligarh, Agra, Ghaziabad, Meerut, Hapur, Ghaziabad were largely won by the BJP candidates in the 2017 elections but have now seen a considerable influence of the recent farmers’ agitation and changing caste equations. “The criteria for ticket distribution have been a candidate’s background. Of the candidates announced by the RLD today, no one has a criminal

background. They are all educated and qualified candidates having a good connect with the people of their region. None of our candidate is an outsider. All belong to the assembly seat where they are contesting the election,” RLD spokesperson Sandip Chaudhary told PTI. He added that party leaders have held campaigns and panchayats in recent months which has led the RLD to also take decisions on the basis of “public feedback”. Chaudhary also highlighted that the recent agitation of farmers against the four contentious central farm laws, which have now been repealed, have dented the BJP’s prospects in Uttar Pradesh, particularly in the western region. “The farmers are unhappy. The Muslim community is also unhappy with the BJP. The people have realised the BJP’s false promises and false dreams it had shown to them last time,” he claimed. As the tickets were announced, Samajwadi Party spokesperson Abbas Haider said the alliance of his party

and the RLD has a “definite influence” in western part of Uttar Pradesh. On distribution of tickets, Haider told PTI, “Winnability of a candidate is the first criteria for ticket distribution in the alliance. The party workers are also being kept in mind during the process.” “The atmosphere in the region is against the BJP and that is evident as people across sectors have come out in support of the SP-RLD alliance,” he claimed. Of the 29 seats on which the alliance announced candidates Thursday, the Samajwadi Party’s Nahid Hasan had won the 2017 polls from Kairana and Rafeeq Ansari from Meerut and the party has repeated both the candidates this time. Sahender Singh Ramala was the only RLD candidate who won the party a seat in the last elections. He had won from the Chhaprauli seat in Baghatp district, once considered a party stronghold. The 2022 candidate from the seat is yet to be announced. **PTI**

Bengal BJP dissolves all departments, cells

35 depts, 15 cells all bound to shut amid growing resentment among leaders

Kolkata: BJP’s West Bengal unit president Sukanta Majumdar on Thursday dissolved all the departments and cells of the party in the state amid growing resentment among its leaders.The BJP has 35 departments and 15 cells in West Bengal. Among these are the legal department and the refugee cell. “As per instructions of Dr Sukanta Majumdar, all departments and cells stand dissolved till the time they are reconstituted, and new appointments are made,” said a statement issued by the state BJP. The announcement was made days after Union

Minister Shantanu Thakur, a leader from the politically powerful Matua community, quit the party’s WhatsApp groups amid disappointment over the newly-formed state office bearers’ committee. Last month, five MLAs had left the WhatsApp groups in protest after being dropped from the committee. A senior state BJP leader said dissolving the departments and cells is a usual process in the party after a new president takes over. “Whenever a new president takes charge, he forms new committees, departments and cells. After Sukanta Majumdar took over last year, he did not form the new committees and cells,” he said. However, a disgruntled BJP leader said all the party old-timers and experienced leaders have been sidelined by the new dispensation in the state unit. **PTI**

COVID BULLETIN

‘No shortage of vaccines in Maha’

Union Health Ministry scotches media reports on scarcity of jabs

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after the Maharashtra Government asked the Centre to provide 40 lakh Covaxin and 50 lakh Covishield doses to increase the vaccination coverage, the Union Health Ministry on Thursday scotched reports in a section of the media that the State was facing vaccine shortage and said that it had 24 lakh unutilised doses of Covaxin and that it received additional 6.35 lakh doses during the day. Alluding to media reports stating that the State Government was unable to increase the pace of vaccination

in the State owing to shortage of vaccine, the Union Health Ministry said in a statement: “Such reports are ill informed and incorrect. It is clarified that, as per the reports available today (14th January 2022), Maharashtra has over 24 lakh unutilized doses of Covaxin available with it. An additional 6.35 lakh doses have been received today.” “As per their weekly consumption data available on Co-WIN, the average consumption by Maharashtra for Covaxin to cover the eligible beneficiaries for 15-17 years and for precaution dose is almost 2.94 lakh doses per day. Therefore, the State has

adequate vaccine doses for about 10 days to cover the eligible beneficiaries with Covaxin,” the Health Ministry said. “Furthermore, for Covishield, the state has 1.24 crore unutilized and remaining doses available as on date. With an average consumption of 3.57 lakhs per day, this will sustain for more than 30 days for the beneficiaries to be vaccinated using the vaccine,” the Union Health Ministry statement said. “Hence, the media reports are not factually correct and do not reflect the correct picture of the available stock of balance and unutilized Covid vaccine

doses with Maharashtra,” the statement added. At a meeting of Chief Ministers and ministers of various states called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take stock of the Covid-19 situation across the country, the Maharashtra government had asked the Centre to provide 40 lakh Covaxin and 50 lakh Covishield doses to increase the vaccination coverage. Talking to media persons after the meeting, State Public Health Minister Rajesh Tope had said: “Covaxin is required for the vaccination for the 15-18 age group and Covishield for people over 60 years of age and the frontline workers.”



Devotees react as they take a holy dip in the Ganga river on ‘Makar Sankranti’ in Prayagraj, on Friday **PTI**

Uddhav should delegate powers if he is not well: BJP

Maha Opp seeks delegation of power after CM skips PM meet due to ill health

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Upping the ante over the ill-health of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray once again, the Opposition BJP on Friday asked him to step aside and hand over his post to someone elsewhere till his health condition improved. The BJP’s demand should be seen in the context of the fact that Uddhav -- who has been recouping from the cervical spine surgery that he underwent at HN Reliance Hospital here on November 12 -- did not attend the Covid-19 review meeting through video conferencing called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday, owing to health reasons. Talking to media persons at Kolhapur in western Maharashtra, State BJP president Chandrakant Patil said: “The State Health Minister has

said that the chief minister did not attend the Covid-19 review meeting called by the Prime Minister as he cannot sit at one place for two to two and a half hours. That being the case, Uddhav Thackeray should hand over the chief minister’s responsibility to someone else in the party till recovers fully from his illness”. “People are saying that the chief minister has not met people for almost 70 days now. That being the case, Uddhav Thackeray should delegate his powers to someone who can attend daily meetings and sometimes visit some places in the state,” Patil said. “He (the chief minister) is like our friend, so I wish him a speedy recovery. However, the task of administering the state, which has a population of around 12 crore, cannot be done just by sitting at home. Such responsibilities should

be taken more seriously,” the state chief said. On Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut’s criticism of the BJP, Patil said: “Raut should understand that the Sena is losing due to this coalition government. A Shiv Sena candidate cannot win the election of Mumbai cooperative Bank, whereas an NCP candidate becomes its chairman”. Referring to the NCP’s decision to contest the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, Patil said: “If Sena is contesting upcoming elections in Goa and Uttar Pradesh, it is merely to win a certain number of votes in order to get the tag of a national party. You need to get a certain number of votes in more than one state to get such recognition”. Patil had made a similar demand that Uddhav should step aside from his chief minister’s post till he recovers fully from his

cervical spine surgery that he underwent at HN Reliance Hospital two months ago. The reiteration of his demand by Patil comes a week after the a BJP social media functionary Jiten Gajaria had sparked a controversy by putting out an “objectionable” tweet describing Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray’s wife Rashmi Thackeray as “Marathi Rabri Devi”. In his tweet put out along with photograph of Rashmi Thackeray, Gajaria had likened her to Bihar’s former chief minister Rabri Devi, who had taken over the reins of the northern state after her husband and RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav resigned in the wake of his involvement in the fodder scam.Through his tweet, Gajaria had indirectly referred to the health issues faced by chief minister Uddhav Thackeray. **PTI**

Karnataka Govt seeks Central assistance to raise number of oxygenated beds, O2 plants

Bengaluru: Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Thursday sought Central assistance to raise the number of oxygenated beds and oxygen plants in the State. Bommai sought the assistance today while taking part in a video conference held by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Chief Ministers of various states over the COVID-19 situation in the country. “I explained the measures taken by the state government to control and manage Covid. The Prime Minister appreciated the high rate of testing and vaccination in the state which is higher than the national average,” the CM was quoted as saying by his office in a release. Noting that the PM was also apprised about measures initiated to ramp up the medical infrastructure, he said, “I

sought the central assistance to raise the oxygenated beds and oxygen plants.” The Prime Minister gave instructions on making all preparations based on the experience of the first and second wave of Covid, as the pandemic is expected to peak in February, the CM said. During the third wave over 94 per cent infected are in home isolation, and therefore the Prime Minister wanted to give priority to ensuring supply of medicines, appropriate care and measures to instill a sense of confidence among the infected, he said. Further Bommai said, the Union government has suggested ramping up testing, purchase of ambulances and improving medical infrastructure under the Rs 32,000 crore package it has provided. **PTI**

Kerala, TN see surge in Covid-19 cases in 24 hours

CHENNAI ■ KOCHI

A black Pongal for Tamil Nadu and a black Friday for Kerala. That’s how doctors in the two States described the status of pandemic in the two southern States. While the number of people diagnosed with Covid-19 shot up to 23,459 in Tamil Nadu during the last 24 hours (out of 1.5 lakh samples tested), Kerala registered 16,338 cases on Friday. The death toll in Kerala reached 50, 568 while Tamil Nadu’s Department of Health Directorate said the number of victims succumbed to the pandemic till date reached 36,956. Tamil Nadu Government, shocked over the spurt in the number of Covid-19 cases have tightened the rules and declared a partial shut down



with many restrictions. Schools and Colleges have been asked to stick to online classes till further notice taking into account the warning issued by the Tamil Nadu Government Doctors Association. The Kerala Government in a review meeting held on Friday decided to shut down all schools and asked the Government and private establishments to opt for online mode in districts where Test Positivity Rate is more than 20 per cent. The State’s TPR on Friday stood at 23.68 per cent.

FIRST COLUMN

SEARCHING FOR ANTIDOTE TO COMMUNAL HATE

Hate speeches against any religion serve to imbalance public order and peace



JAGDISH KAUR

India woke up to the new year with shocking revelations regarding the "Bulli Bai" app targeting minority women in a derogatory and humiliating manner. The app had misused photographs of a number of Muslim women, including students, prominent personalities, journalists, and social workers. Protests were lodged all over the country. With pressure from human rights and women groups, the Bulli Bai app was blocked by Github. A couple of owners of the Bulli Bai App have now been arrested by the CERT-IN (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team) and currently in police custody. The 'Sulli Deals' App, which was launched last year, had listed Muslim women for 'auction' with photographs sourced without permission and doctored. Its mastermind has also been arrested now. Will these arrests stop this kind of humiliating intent against certain religions, sects, communities, castes, or groups? Certainly not, because these are not one-time or stand-alone crimes. These are the



result of organized and sustained hate campaigns poisoning the minds of Indians, especially youth, against minority communities. For last some years, the social media has been extensively used to create platforms and material by these perpetrators of hate. As per Statista Research Department, most hate crimes during 2015-2019 were targeted at Dalits, followed by Muslims. There have been several reports of Muslims not being allowed to pray in certain places in North India and Christians being targeted on suspicion of being involved in religious conversions. Human rights groups which monitor atrocities against Christians in India have documented the violence by Hinduva groups from all states and released a fact-finding report titled 'Christians under attack in India'. The report released by the Association of Protection Civil Rights, United Christian Forum and United Against Hate at a press conference in Delhi in October 2021 says over 300 such instances were reported from across 21 states, particularly in North India, in nine months of 2021.

The farmers who protested for almost a year were repeatedly labelled as 'Khalistanis' and hate messages against them were doing the rounds on all social media platforms. Various forms of provocative incidences against minorities have been on the rise in the last few years. We keep hearing about the incidences of 'love jihad', 'ghar wapsi' and other newly coined terms to target certain communities. The Supreme Court has agreed to take up a PIL seeking probe into alleged hate speeches at two separate events at Haridwar and Delhi in December 2021. There are messages and videos circulating on social media regarding the atrocities committed on Hindus by Mughals (Muslims) during the Middle Ages. The voices for making India a 'Hindu Rashtra' are getting louder by the day. The hate speeches and hateful actions against any religion can only serve to imbalance the public order and peace in society. Educated young people are debating religion and hate rather than constructive issues for nation building. Do we have a solution? The harrowing trend of communal hatred is likely to meet with retaliation by those targeted in due course leading to destruction of the very fabric of multi-cultural Indian society. As Mahatma Gandhi said "an eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind". The Constitution of India enshrined and ensured equality and respect for all Indians. Hate campaigns against any religion, community or sect need to be condemned in the strongest words and strict legal action should be taken against the perpetrators. Politicians, religious and community leaders, and people from all walks of life should come together to oppose hate campaigns. School curricula should have mandatory content on communal harmony so that future generations learn to value of compassion and brotherhood.

(The writer is President, Women's Initiative for Liberation, Growth & Action, a national body working for women empowerment. The views expressed are personal.)

Mahatma Gandhi an ecological economist?



BKP SINHA

Gandhi's ideas could not be more relevant than today when India is witnessing jobless growth and facing the worst unemployment crisis

India was earlier known for its flourishing trade in spices and textiles, along with precious metal and stone. After Independence, India inherited an economy that was one of the poorest in the world with no industrial base and mostly devastated land deprived of forest and fertility. The British left a poor base for the already developed handicrafts universally acclaimed for their quality and craftsmanship.

In Mahatma Gandhi's view, industrial civilisation fostered by British rule was the main cause of India's social, ecological and economic distress. He believed that India's salvation lay in the restoration of its ancient civilisation where economic progress and moral progress intertwined. Gandhi knew that "India lives in her seven lakh villages" therefore the economic and social revival of these villages is a pre-condition for reconstruction of India. He wanted to make the villages self-sufficient and build a rural economy which is not solely based on agriculture and allied activities but also has strong rural industries thereby generating employment for the villagers.

Gandhi once said, "If the village perishes, India will perish too". He imagined his ideal village will consist of cottages made from locally sourced materials with sufficient light, ventilation, proper sanitation and produce its own grains, vegetables, fruits, and Khadi. It will have wells, places of worship, a common meeting place, a common grazing field, a co-operative dairy, primary and secondary schools where vocational training will be imparted and panchayats for settling disputes.

Gandhi was against the concentration of power and the system that makes the individual subservient to the machine and material. He wanted a development process which is harmonious, poverty free, non-violent, based on cooperation and ethics. Therefore, he proposed an ecological model centered on limitation of wants in contrast to the modern civilization that promotes material welfare and individual profits. He was sure that too much emphasis on materialism could lead to violence, unhappiness and a culture of oppression, exploitation, and dominance.

Gandhi's concept of sustainable development is rooted in a holistic approach which emphasizes the development of an individual and society as a whole in connection with nature. By preaching "simple living," Gandhi sought to curb both human greed and mindless exploitation of natural resources. He said, one should know the difference between 'need' and 'want' and taking more than required to fulfil our need, in a way is theft from other species, humans and the future.

Gandhi often said, "The earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed".

He warned against the perils of massive industrialization and unsustainable patterns of consumption in the west. He



CLIMATE CHANGE HAS ONCE AGAIN SHED LIGHT ON GANDHI'S PHILOSOPHY OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MADE THE WORLD REALISE THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTISING A LIFESTYLE THAT HAS MINIMAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT. THESE PRINCIPLES REMAIN THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND ALL THE UN'S CLIMATE AGREEMENTS, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION TREATIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

(The writer is a former Indian Forest Service officer. The views expressed are personal.)



described the process of urbanization as a "double drain", i.e., it will harm the villages and the villagers and thus proving fatal to both. Hence, in order to ensure economic balance, it is important that the urban sector does not drain the rural sector and shift the focus from centralization to decentralization. He argued, that a technologically sophisticated economy will have two major consequences: it would disempower the economic autonomy of the masses and greatly undermine the ecological fabric on which millions depend.

Therefore, to increase the productivity, we should avoid indiscriminate use and non-selective adoption of imported technology. He foresaw that the development of small-scale technology could boost efficiency in rural production without displacing rural labour and advocated an appropriate technological mix with controlled production to maximise the social benefits of science and technology and to maintain a proper balance between man and environment.

He emphasized the development of village and cottage industries where handicrafts, spinning, weaving, and likewise remain constant sources of income and revenue generation. This will protect the village crafts and the workers from the crushing competition of the power-driven machinery and ensure jobs for the villagers.

Gandhi's ideas could not be more relevant than today when India is witnessing jobless growth and facing the worst unemployment crisis in this pandemic situation. It is evident that the current paradigm of development is causing serious environmental problems which is neither ecologically nor socially sustainable. It is leading the planet into a vortex of inequality, widening the rift

between rich and poor, and proved inadequate to address the issues of the millions living in poverty.

Gandhi was well aware of the pitfalls of such developments as well as the consequences of unequal distribution of wealth between different classes. The World Inequality Report 2022 ranked India as the most unequal country in the world. The top 10 per cent and top one per cent hold 57 per cent and 22 per cent of the total national income, respectively, while the bottom half's share has come down to 13 per cent and they barely have anything. Thomas Piketty asserts in his influential book, Capital in the Twenty-First Century, that inequality is rapidly intensifying and global cooperation is desirable to prevent the wealthy from simply shifting assets into other jurisdictions. He proposed, an extremely high income-tax rates on upper-income taxpayers along with a global wealth tax. Economic progress devoid of moral elements will deepen divisions and increase dissensions among people.

With growing population, the increase in food demand has considerably altered land-use practices which has led to agricultural intensification at the expense of forests and grazing lands. Increased use of chemicals and fertilizers are causing pollution, soil and ground water contamination, loss of biodiversity and kill the beneficial organisms which increases fertility. Gandhi believed in sustainable agriculture and advised the use of bio-manures and bio-pesticides to improve soil fertility. Today, the experts in the healthcare are emphasizing the importance of chemical-free crops because excessive amounts of chemicals in plants are causing health related problems in humans as it affects kidneys,

lungs, may also cause cancer and congenital abnormalities like malnourished children, etc.

Gandhi's understanding of the ecological crisis was far ahead of his time and anticipated many of our greatest challenges of today. Knowing that afforestation can be an effective step to combat future water crisis, he urged people to plant trees. He also proposed, water harvesting for irrigational purposes to prevent droughts and famines.

Climate change has once again shed light on Gandhi's philosophy of self-sufficiency and sustainable development and made the world realize the importance of practicing a lifestyle that has minimal environmental impact. These principles remain the driving force behind all the UN's climate agreements, environmental conservation treaties, and sustainable development goals. Many of his ideas foreshadow the holistic thinking behind the "Agenda 2030: Transforming Our World" for Sustainable Development. The central idea of Agenda 2030 is captured by the tagline "Leave No One Behind." The plan aims to achieve prosperity for people and the planet and calls for "transformative" change, which includes changing the way we live, produce, and consume.

Thus, the current climate crisis and the need to find sustainable means has brought a long-suppressed and quintessentially Galbraith's unanswered question to the fore — "How much should a country consume?" — along with Gandhian corollary — "How much should a person consume?". They have become fundamental questions for the 21st century and will dominate the intellectual and political debates.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE POLICE CLOSE THEIR EYES WHEN THE RULING PARTY CONDUCTS RALLIES. WE WERE ONLY FIVE BUT THEY STOPPED US FROM CAMPAIGNING. —BJP NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT DILIP GHOSH



DILIP GHOSH IS LYING THAT ONLY FIVE OF THEM WERE CAMPAIGNING. HIS SECURITY GUARDS ALONE ARE FIVE IN NUMBER. —TMC LEADER MOLOY GHATAK

Poisonous tobacco products must be made unaffordable

The sale of 'sin products' needs to be limited and kept out of reach of the maximum number of citizens, especially teenagers

Tobacco consumption is a menace that is worse than the current Covid-19 pandemic and causes innumerable fatalities. Both Finance Ministry and GST Council appear to have overlooked the causes of this malady despite representations by civil society organizations, Members of Parliament, the medical fraternity, state representatives, Ministers and citizens.

There have been no major tobacco tax increases after the GST council placed tobacco products in the 28 per cent bracket in 2017. The option of tax increase on tobacco products gives the government a golden opportunity to raise badly required finances. Remember, lower taxes increase the affordability of



KIRIT BHAI SOLANKI

(The writer is a medical practitioner and Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

tobacco consumers, especially teenagers and children. The Union Government has the option of hiking the excise duty and NCCD in the annual budget while the GST Council can increase the cess. This will ensure India has optimal tobacco taxation as mandated by WHO.

A submission to Parliament mentioned that a small excise duty hike ensured tax collection of Rs 4962 crores. This proves the point that raising excise duty and calamity duty substantially in the coming budget can fetch a handsome revenue.

The costs imposed on our society and our economy, both direct as well as indirect, have been huge. India has over 27 crore tobacco users today and the consumption of tobacco



kills more than 13 lakh Indians annually. At a global level, eight million deaths are reported every year. Over seven million deaths are due to direct use of tobacco while the rest are caused by passive smokers exposed to the poisonous smoke. As per the data of GYTS (Global Youth Tobacco Survey) in 2019, nearly one-fifth of the stu-

dents aged 13-15 have used any form of the tobacco product (smoking, smokeless, and any other form) in their life. Clearly, consumption of tobacco is not just about one's health at the individual level, but a societal problem we face nationally.

Tobacco taxes and, therefore, the prices have to be increased regularly, so as to significantly reduce the affordability over a period of time. This was the practice in the pre-GST era with additional options of the states adding VAT. Tobacco taxes and prices have not been increased enough over time to reduce the affordability of these products resulting in more numbers of consumers getting addicted. A long, four-year gap of no tax increase has tobacco companies share prices

soaring on the one hand, and on the other, we see rampant consumption leading to more deaths and spread of dreaded diseases. The tobacco industry may have its reason to look the other way, but the government has no such option.

The annual economic cost from all tobacco products is estimated to be Rs 177,341 crores in 2017-18 amounting to more than one per cent of India's GDP. This will continue to grow in the post-Covid era and the next GATS report will surely point out the alarming rise of casualties. In a country like India, an estimated 1.3 million deaths are accounted for by tobacco abuse. As per WHO data, the most common way tobacco kills is through cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) - nearly 4,49,844

deaths such deaths occurred in India as of 2018. The high prevalence of non-communicable diseases due to tobacco use is posing a huge challenge to the country's response to Covid-19 management, amplifying India's health burden in such difficult times.

It is time that the Finance Ministry launches a multi-pronged attack for the social cause of tobacco control by increasing taxes on tobacco products both in the annual budget and also in the GST council to wipe out the gap of the last four years. Doing this social good will not raise any eyebrows and citizens will welcome it for reasons of public health.

I am sure that the listening posts in the Ministry will convey the right message to the

Minister and also work out the modalities of tax rationalization which mandates that a sin product sale needs to be limited and citizens be protected. We are especially talking about children and teens who are major contributors to our economy.

A resilient healthcare system as an outcome will emerge that complements our 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' mission, which not only focuses on revival of the economy but also on overall improvement of the health of our citizens. To mark the National Youth Day which has the theme, 'Saksham Yuva, Sashakth Yuva', by making tobacco products unaffordable we may save the young generation from this deadly product and make them healthy and aatmanirbhar.

Rich nations dump near expiry Covid jabs on poor countries

IAN S ■ LONDON

Third world nations were offered about 100 million Covid-19 vaccines that were near expiry, which countries were forced to dump, according to UN's children's fund Unicef. According to Unicef's head of supply Elevea Kadilli, more than 100 million vaccines were, in December alone, rejected by countries as they were unable to distribute them, BBC reported. The problem was compounded by many countries' insufficient storage facilities, Kadilli was quoted as saying to members of European Parliament on Thursday. Many of world's poorest countries, most of them in Africa, have been relying on UN-backed Covax scheme for their vaccines.

The programme faced challenges in accessing doses early last year, but situation significantly improved towards end of 2021 with wealthier countries releasing doses they were hold-

ing. According to provisional tracking by UNICEF, about 910 million doses were delivered through UN-backed initiative as of December 30. Nearly half of doses delivered in December came from three US-backed vaccine manufacturers: Johnson & Johnson, Moderna and Pfizer. However, many of doses offered have been close to their expiry date, and have been rejected by recipient nations, BBC report said. Some countries such as Nigeria struggled with administering vaccines forcing them to destroy expired jabs.

Only about 10 per cent of population on continent has been fully vaccinated. "More than 9.4 billion vaccine doses have now been administered globally. But 90 countries did not reach target of vaccinating 40 per cent of their populations by end of last year, and 36 of those countries have not yet vaccinated 10 per cent of their populations," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, chief of World Health Organization.

UK PM faces fresh 'partygate' allegations at Downing Street

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Friday faced mounting leadership pressure amid further allegations of parties

held at his Downing Street office-residence by staff, categorised as a "partygate" scandal due to the apparent serial breaches of lockdown rules in place at the time.

'The Daily Telegraph' reported on two farewell parties made up of about 30 people drinking alcohol and dancing to music until the early-hours of April 17 last year, the night before the funeral of Prince

Philip – the Duke of Edinburgh's funeral. Downing Street said the timing was "deeply regrettable" and that it had apologised to Buckingham Palace.

"It is deeply regrettable that this took place at a time of national mourning and Number 10 has apologised to the Palace," the UK Prime Minister's spokesperson said. "You heard from the prime minister this week, he's recognised Number 10 should be held to the highest standards and take responsibility for things we did not get right," the spokesperson said.

It is understood that a call from the Prime Minister's office was made to the Palace on Friday. Restrictions at the time banned indoor mixing between different households and Queen Elizabeth II sat alone during the church ceremony for her late husband in keeping with social distancing rules. "This event should not

have happened at the time that it did. I am deeply sorry, and take full responsibility," said James Slack, the UK Prime Minister's former Director of Communications, at the centre of the farewell that led to the party last April.

Slack, now deputy editor-in-chief at "The Sun" newspaper, apologised "unreservedly for the anger and hurt caused".

While Prime Minister Johnson was not at either of the two gatherings in April 2021 as he was spending the weekend at his Buckinghamshire country estate Chequers, the latest revelations added to the saga around rules being broken at the heart of the UK government.

Ministers have insisted that top civil servant Sue Gray's ongoing internal investigation into such gatherings will determine the extent of wrongdoing and therefore judgment should be reserved until her probe concludes.

"If the details that are in this story turn out to be true, clearly people are going to form their judgment," UK Security Minister Damian Hinds said on Thursday, with reference to the fresh revelations which call Boris Johnson's leadership of his party and country into question.

"I am entirely behind the Prime Minister and the government, and I think the leadership that the Prime Minister has shown, particularly through the coronavirus, has been very strong," said Hinds. But battle lines are being drawn within the Conservative Party, with many of Johnson's own MPs demanding he step down as leader. "I want to apologise.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/Traction Distribution, DRM's Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi for & on behalf of President of India, invites open e-tender under single packet system for the under noted work:

No.	Name of work with its location	Approx. Cost of work
1	Design, supply, erection, testing & commissioning of 25 Kv ac OHE modification work required in connection with augmentation of homing capacity of ELS/GZB from 200 to 225 Locomotives.	Rs.20800/-
2	Approx. Cost of work	Rs.2036062.22
3	Earnest Money Deposit	Rs.40800/-
4	E-Tender Bid Online Submission Period	23.01.2022 (00.00 Hrs.) to 07.02.2022 (15.00 Hrs.)
5	E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time	07.02.2022 (15.00 hrs.)
6	Fund Allocation	21426203
7	Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in

E-Tender No.: 16-TRD-NDLS-2021-22 Dated : 14.01.2022 95/2022

Serving Customers With A Smile

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

E-Tender Notice Number: PUB/AF/Zone-III/2022/01 Date : 11.01.2022

E-Tender Notice

For and on behalf of the President of India, Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, North Central Railway, Agra invites e-tender on prescribed forms under single packet system for the period of 05 years from the interested parties for the following works. Details of tenders to be awarded :-

e-tender No.	Description of work	Details of site, Area and type of media for commercial Publicity	Minimum reserved Price of contract for first Year (in ₹)	Minimum Reserved Price of Contract for 05 Years (in ₹)
PUB/ AF/ Zone-III/ 2022/01	Commercial Publicity Advertisement Contract at Agra Fort. Railway Station Zone-III (PF No. 01 side Circulating Area Boundary wall)	As per ANNEXURE - I	1,97,760/-	10,50,106/-

Earnest Money (in ₹) : 21,100/-, Cost of Tender Form (Including GST): 2360/-, Time & date for the opening of tender : At 15.30 hrs. on 10.02.2022. For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railway website **www.ireps.gov.in**. Tender can only be submitted through web portal **www.ireps.gov.in**. 40/22 (D)

North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPRONCR

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified deadbody of female **Age : Approx. 62 years, Height: 4'6", Complexion : Wheatish, Face: Oval, Identification: A small cut mark on face, wearing pink colour saree, cream colour blouse and cream colour jersey, was found dead on 05.01.2022 at T-16/19, Safeda Jhuggi Parking, Near Shamshan Ghat Picket, Geeta Colony, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 21-A dated 05.01.2022 has been lodged at P.S. Geeta Colony, Delhi.**

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

SHO - P.S. Geeta Colony, Delhi
Tel. No. : 011-22506665, 9813813768

DP/698/SHD/22

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Progen Sas Technologies India Private Limited, sanjay Rawat (Director) , Puja Rawat (Director), Sandeep Rawat (Director), Sushil Kaushik (Director) , Bhawna Kaushik (Director), Sandeep Rawat, Sanjay Rawat, Sushil Kaushik, Puja rawat, Sanjay Rawat, A/c No:- 777705790029	BQ- 58 Shalimar Bagh, Sarawati Vihar, Delhi- 110088	11/12/2021 Rs. 22,09,705.75/-	31/08/ 2021

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

Date : January 15, 2022 Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

Rishi Sunak: British PM in waiting?

PTI ■ LONDON

As Boris Johnson's "party-gate" troubles mount and members of his own Conservative Party demand he step down as the British Prime Minister, one name is doing the rounds as a frontrunner to take charge –his Indian-origin Chancellor and Downing Street neighbour Rishi Sunak. The UK-born son of a pharmacist mother and a National Health Service (NHS) general practitioner (GP) father is an Oxford University and Stanford graduate. He is married to Akshata Murty, the daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, and the couple has two young-daughters Krishna and Anoushka. The MP for Richmond in Yorkshire first entered the UK Parliament in 2015 and has quickly risen up the Tory party ranks as a staunch Brexiteer, who had backed Johnson's strategy to leave the European Union (EU).

From working in my mum's tiny chemist shop to my experience building large businesses, I have seen how we should support free enterprise and innovation to ensure Britain has a stronger future," Sunak had

said during the Brexit referendum. He co-founded a 1-billion-pound global investment firm and specialised in investing in small British businesses before his entry into politics. As the first Chancellor of the Exchequer of Indian heritage, Sunak made history in February 2020 when he was appointed to the most important UK Cabinet post.

If the Tory party murmurings and bookie betting odds are anything to go by, then the 41-year-old may well be in line to make history as Britain's first Indian-origin Prime Minister. "No, definitely not. Seeing what the Prime Minister has to deal with, this is a job hard enough for me to do," Sunak said back in

October 2020, when asked if he had prime ministerial ambitions. But a lot has happened since, with Sunak leading the charge for the country's economic fightback against the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the schemes he put in place as finance minister, including the furlough-based Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and COVID support grants for struggling businesses over the course of several lockdowns have proved largely popular.

However, proposed tax hikes coming up from this April and consistently rising energy and cost of living costs have proved less popular with in the Conservative Party base. The famously low-tax favouring Tories may find his high tax plan to recoup some of the lost economic ground during the pandemic hard

to digest when things really come to a leadership scrum.

In fact, there is already talk within the party ranks of him having overplayed his hand by not speaking out more firmly in support of

57-year-old Johnson, following his Parliament apology earlier this week over a Downing Street garden party in apparent breach of lockdown rules. Sunak, who was miles away on a business visit, tweeted much later in evening to say that "the PM was right to apologise and I support his request for patience while Sue Gray carries out her enquiry". This was seen as a half-hearted show of support and viewed as reflective of his own leadership ambitions. The wealth associated with Sunak and his wife Akshata has also often hit spotlight for wrong reasons, with the Chancellor's 95-pound pair of slippers spotted in official photographs released pre-Budget last

October the latest luxury item to hit the headlines. This followed being pictured with a 180-pound so-called "smart mug", which was reportedly a gift from his wife.

CHINA EXPANDING SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

China devoted resources to expanding mass surveillance systems nationwide, in the absence of meaningful legal protections against unlawful or abusive government surveillance, the Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in its World Report 2022.

Chinese companies with reported links to government continue to draw global scrutiny for their data collection practices, the HRW report said.

March 2021 marked fifth anniversary of landmark Anti-Domestic Violence Law, yet victims continued to face an uphill battle in seeking authorities' protection and accountability for their abusers. In February, an article by former journalist Ma Jinyu on violent abuses she suffered by her husband ignited a heated discussion on social media about government's persistent failure to prosecute domestic violence.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), announced in 2013, is the government's trillion-dollar infrastructure and investment program stretching across some 70 countries. Some BRI projects have been criticized for lack of transparency, disregard of community concerns, and negative environmental impacts, the HRW said.

The HRW published a report last August that documented economic, social, and cultural rights violations in Cambodia resulting from Lower Sesan 2 dam's displacement of nearly 5,000 people between 2013 and 2018 and impacts on livelihoods of tens of thousands of others upstream and downstream.

The dam was a BRI project funded mainly by a Chinese-state owned bank and built by a Chinese-state owned electricity generation company. China Labour Watch, an NGO, reported, in April, that overseas Chinese workers working on BRI infrastructure projects in Algeria, Indonesia, Pakistan, and other countries were victims of human trafficking and forced labour, including being deceived into working illegally, held against their will, and

forced to work while infected with Covid-19 in early and mid-2020. China is by far largest emitter of greenhouse gases globally, making a major contribution to climate crisis that is taking a mounting toll on human rights around globe.

China's imports of agricultural commodities drive more deforestation globally than those of any other market, including imports of all 27 member states of European Union (EU) combined.

Canada, the EU, the UK, and US imposed coordinated and bilateral targeted sanctions on Chinese government officials and companies responsible for serious human rights violations, including international crimes, in Xinjiang.

The US also imposed sanctions on several senior Hong Kong officials for imposing the National Security Law. In August, the US gave Hong Kong people in US a temporary 18-month "safe haven."

In September, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet expressed "regret" that authorities had not given her meaningful access to Xinjiang, and said that her office would issue an assessment of human rights in that region

in Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and UK passed resolutions accusing Chinese government of committing genocide against Uyghurs; some also called on their governments to limit participation in 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

The UK Parliament passed a non-binding motion supporting a diplomatic boycott of Games. Members of European Parliament halted EU's proposed Comprehensive Agreement on Investment with China, citing human rights concerns, and freezing consideration of deal for as long as they are subject to Beijing's counter sanctions. In September, they also adopted a recommendation for a new, more assertive, and better coordinated EU strategy on China, placing human rights at its core.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that Vinod Singh Bisht is the absolute owner of Flat No. 45/1 at Parvatan Vihar Co-operative Group Housing Society also known as Parvatan Vihar. Plot No. B-8 Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi-96 having acquired by Relinquishment Deed dated 13.12.2021 (registration No. 10142) executed by Vijay Singh Bisht, Subhash Singh Bisht, Savitri Bisht & Kiran Negi legal heirs of Late Baldev Singh Bisht. All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

Kamal Kanti Gupta (Advocate)
Shop No. 5 & 6, Pkt-E, CSC, Mayapuri Vihar-I, Delhi-91
011-43552822, 09811005351

PUBLIC NOTICE

Surrender Of SEBI Investment Advisor registration by PROFITGATE INVESTMENT ADVISORS, a registered partnership firm NGP000002179, is registered with SEBI as an Investment Advisor under the SEBI (Investment Advisor) Regulation, 2013 from 06-05-2016. After doing a detail business evaluation, the firm has decided to surrender its Investment Advisor License on 20-08-2020. There are no outstanding or pending investment advisory mandates as on 31-03-2020. In view of the same, if any one has any grievance, they can inform the grievance with us at **mohit@profitgate.in** or SEBI scores.gov.in within 15 days of the date of this notice. **Registration Name:** PROFITGATE INVESTMENT ADVISORS **Registration No.:** NA00004641 **Category of intermediary:** Investment Advisor. **«Registered Address.»** PROFITGATE INVESTMENT ADVISORS Plot No. 95, 2nd Floor, Sanda Transport Bldg. CA Road, Bagadganj, Nagpur 440008 13 January 2022

APPENDIX IV A
[See proviso to Rule 8(6)]
Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Properties

E-Auction sale notice for sale of immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property(ies) mortgaged/charged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is", "whatever there is" and "without any recourse" basis on 17.02.2022 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M. (with unlimited automated extensions of 5 minutes each in terms of the Tender Document), for recovery of Rs. 22,10,384/- (Rupees Twenty Two Lakh Ten Thousand Three Hundred Eighty Four only) Pending towards Loan Account No. HHLNDAA00341973 by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 11.01.2022 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 12.01.2022, along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from **AKASH TIWARI and RAKHI TIWARI**.

The Reserve Price of the immovable Property(ies) will be Rs. 13,00,000/- (Rupees Thirteen Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,30,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Thirty Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price. The EMD shall be paid by DD/ RTGS/ NEFT or through any other proper banking channels to the credit and in favour of **INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LTD.,** Account No. 32180585427 with **State Bank of India (IFSC: SBIN0009995)**, having its branch at **CAG Branch, Mumbai (Maharashtra)**, before submitting the tender in order to participate in the online public auction. The successful bidder shall pay 25% amount of the sale price (less 10% of the Reserve Price paid before submitting the tender) immediately i.e. either on the same day or not later than the next working day and the remaining balance of the Sale Price shall be paid within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY(IES)
P.NO. B-152, UGF (REAR SIDE/EASTERN PORTION), BLOCK-B, VISHWAS PARK, UTTAM NAGAR, PIN-110059, NEW DELHI.
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. **www.indiabullshomeloans.com** and **www.auctionfocus.in**

Sd/
Date: 11.01.2022
Place: NEW DELHI
Authorized Officer
INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED

Capitol Hill attack: House panel raps Meta, YouTube, Twitter

IAN S ■ WASHINGTON

Disappointed after months of engagement, a US House panel has slammed YouTube parent company Alphabet, Meta (formerly Facebook), online discussion forum Reddit and Twitter for failing to provide additional information on how those platforms were used to organise violent events at the US Capitol on January 6 last year.

Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) announced that the Select Committee has issued subpoenas to four social media companies as part of its investigation into the January 6 attack on the US Capitol and its causes.

After inadequate responses to prior requests for information, the Select Committee is demanding records from Alphabet, Meta, Reddit, and Twitter relating to the spread of misinformation, efforts to overturn the 2020 election, domestic violent extremism, and foreign influence in the 2020 election.

"Two key questions for the Select Committee are how the spread of misinformation and violent extremism contributed to the violent attack on our democracy, and what steps "if any" social media companies took to prevent their platforms from being breeding grounds for radicalising people to violence," said Chairman Thompson.

It's disappointing that after months of engagement, "we still do not have documents and information necessary to answer those basic questions". Alphabet's YouTube was a platform for significant communications by its users that were relevant to planning and execution of January 6 attack on US Capitol, including livestreams of attack as it was taking place, according to panel.

Meta faces \$3 b lawsuit in UK over exploiting users' data

IAN S ■ LONDON

Meta (formerly Facebook) is facing a \$3.1 billion class-action lawsuit in the UK over allegedly abusing its market dominance and if the lawsuit succeeds nearly 44 million British Facebook users could receive a \$68 payout each.

Competition law expert Dr Liza Lovdahl Gormsen has brought the class-action lawsuit against Facebook's parent firm Meta at the UK's Competition Appeal Tribunal, Daily Mail reported on Thursday.

The lawsuit claims that Facebook should pay its 44 million UK users compensation for the exploitation of their data between 2015 and 2019.

"It is claimed this allowed the firm to generate billions in revenues from their data, while users received no monetary returns, which the claim labels an 'unfair deal', said the report.

The lawsuit alleged that Facebook made billions by "imposing unfair terms and conditions that demanded consumers surrender valuable personal data to access the network".

"In the 17 years since it was created, Facebook became the sole social network in the UK where you could be sure to connect with friends and family in one place," Gormsen said in a statement.

"Yet, there was a dark side to Facebook; it abused its market dominance to impose unfair terms and conditions on ordinary Britons giving it the power to exploit their personal data.

I'm launching this case to secure billions of pounds of damages for the 44 million Britons who had their data exploited by Facebook," she elaborated. Dr Gormsen is a Senior Research Fellow at the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL) and the director of the Competition Law Forum.

N Korea fired two suspected ballistic missiles: Seoul

IAN S ■ SEOUL

North Korea fired two suspected ballistic missiles eastward on Friday, after Pyongyang publicly warned earlier in the day of a "stronger and certain" response to the new US sanctions, South Korea's military said.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said the short-range projectiles were launched from Uiju in North Pyongan Province, a northwestern region bordering China, and that they flew around 430 km at an altitude of 36 km, reports Yonhap News Agency.

It detected one of the missiles at 2.41 p.m and the other at 2.52 p.m. The missiles flew at top speed of around Mach 6, six times the speed of sound, according to officials.

The intelligence authorities of South Korea and the US are conducting a detailed analysis for more information, the JCS said.

The North's latest firing marks its third show of force this year. The North fired what it claimed to be hypersonic missiles on January 5 and Tuesday.

South Korea's military is monitoring related North Korean movements and maintaining a firm readiness posture, the JCS said.

Earlier in the day, Pyongyang issued the warning after Washington slapped the sanctions on six North Koreans involved in the regime's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the US Indo-Pacific Command said that it is aware of the missile launches, but assessed they do "not pose an immediate threat to American personnel or territory or to our allies".

<p align="center">APPENDIX IV A [See proviso to Rule 8(6)] Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Properties</p>			
<p>E-Auction sale notice for sale of immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.</p>			
<p>Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property(ies) mortgaged/ charged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029 ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is", "whatever there is" and "without any recourse" basis on 17.02.2022 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M. (with unlimited automated extensions of 5 minutes each in terms of the Tender Document), for recovery of Rs. 25,02,942/- (Rupees Twenty Five Lakh Two Thousand Nine Hundred Forty Two only) Pending towards Loan Account No. HDHLLAJ00487623 (Earlier being Loan Account No. 00044652 of DHFL), by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 11.01.2022 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 12.01.2022 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from ARPIT KISHORE and SHIVANI KISHORE.</p>			
<p>The Reserve Price of the immovable Property(ies) will be Rs. 16,00,000/- (Rupees Sixteen Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,60,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Sixty Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price. The EMD shall be paid by DD/ RTGS/ NEFT or through any other proper banking channels to the credit and in favour of INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LTD., Account No. 32180585427 with State Bank of India (IFSC: SBIN0009955), having its branch at CAG Branch, Mumbai (Maharashtra), before submitting the tender in order to participate in the online public auction. The successful bidder shall pay 25% amount of the sale price (less 10% of the Reserve Price paid before submitting the tender) immediately i.e. either on the same day or not later than the next working day and the remaining balance of the Sale Price shall be paid within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale.</p>			
<p align="center">DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY(IES)</p>			
<p>PROPERTY BEARING NO. RZF -988/16 (STILT + UG+3 STOREY) LAND MEASURING AREA 250 SQ. YDS. I.E. 209.03 SQ. METERS KHASRA NO. 59/11/7 SITUATED AT REVENUE ESTATE OF VILLAGE PALAM COLONY AS RAJ NAGAR-II PALAM COLONY NEW DELHI -110077 AND WHICH IS BOUNDED AS UNDER:</p>			
EAST	:OTHER PROPERTY	WEST	:OTHER PROPERTY
SOUTH	:ROAD 18 FEET	NORTH	:ROAD 20 FEET
<p>For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com and www.auctionfocus.in</p>			
<p>Date: 11.01.2022</p>			Sd/
<p>Place: NEW DELHI</p>			Authorized Officer
<p align="center">INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED</p>			

Govt. of Bihar

ROAD CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT
Office of the Executive Engineer, Shahabad Road Division, Ara
SBD BASED DETAILED NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
(Through E-procurement mode Only Website : www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
NIT No. RCD/Ara-11/2021-22

1. Designation and Address of the Advertiser 2. Date of issue of Notice inviting Tender 3. Period for download of Tender Document 4. Time Date & Place of Pre Bid Meeting 5. Last Date & Time for uploading tender documents by bidder 6. Last Date, Time & Place for submission of original instrument of EMD and cost of BOQ + processing fees.	: Executive Engineer, Shahabad Road Division, Ara : Date 12.01.2022 : From 25.01.2022 to 01.02.2022 up to 15.00 P.M. (From Website: https://www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in) : 27.01.2022 to 15.00 P.M., Chief Engineer, South RCD, CDO Building, Bishweshwaria Bhawan Bailey Road, Patna : Date 02.02.2022 till time 15.00 P.M. on https://www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in : Date-03.02.2022, Time-15.00P.M. or next working day of last date of uploading of tender document by the bidders as stated in above serial-5 Place of office of the – (i) Executive Engineer, Shahabad Road Division, Ara. (ii) Superintending Engineer, Bhojpur Road Circle, Ara (iii) Chief Engineer, South RCD, CDO Building, Bishweshwaria Bhawan, Bailey Road, Patna : Date-04.02.2022, Time-15.30 P.M. or next working day of last date of uploading of tender document by the bidders as stated in above serial-5. Place- on website- https://www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
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8. Details of works :

Sl. No.	Name of work	Estimated / B.O.Q. Amount (in Lakh)	Earnest money (in Lakh)	Cost of B.O.Q. (in Rs.)	Bid processing fee (non-refundable) (in Rs.)	Time of completion of work (in month)	Type of work
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Widening & Strengthening work from km 0.00 to 16.00 of Ara-Salempur Road for the year 2021-22 (RIDF-XXVII, NABARD)	4410.74	54.11	10000.00	5900.00	18 months	SBD

9. Bid Validity : 120 Days.
10. Any Contractor registered with the Central Government / any State Government or any PSU or an agency of international or national repute may participate in the tender, but registration with the Road Construction Department, Bihar will be essential after issue of L.O.A. and before executing the agreement.
11. Detailed NIT can be seen on web site state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar or <https://www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in> or on the notice board of the office of the undersigned.
For further details please visit website www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar

Executive Engineer
Shahabad Road Division, Ara

PR. No. 11691 (RCD) 2021-22

नशामुक्त हो जाए बिहार, सुरक्षित रहे घर परिवार।

SOUTH AFRICA WRAP UP SERIES WITH SEVEN-WICKET WIN

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

A South African team going through one of its toughest transition phases embarrassed a star-studded Indian team with a clinical seven-wicket victory in the third Test to clinch a memorable 2-1 series triumph here on Friday.

The target of 212 wasn't a tough ask and starting the day at 101 for two, young pretender Keegan Petersen (82, 113 balls) along with Rassie van Der Dussen (41 not out) added 54 runs for the third wicket to seal the match before Temba Bavuma (32 not out) helped in putting the final touches.

Petersen walked away with both the player of the match as well as player of the series honours.

Sunil Gavaskar termed it as a "Nightmare for India" as they were not even close to competing in the last two Tests and Dean Elgar's ear to ear grin and the bear hugs that he shared with his teammates said it all.

It was especially sweet for the hosts who lost premier pacer Anrich Nortje to injury before the series and were then hit by Quinton de Kock's sudden mid-series retirement.

The Indian team, meanwhile, lost it in their mind after the contentious DRS review of Elgar that went wrong on Thursday and their focus on using stump microphone more to take digs at broadcaster Supersport instead of focussing on getting Petersen out spelt their doom.

"It's a great spectacle of Tests for everyone to watch; hard-fought series. Great first game but SA did amazingly well. In both Tests they won, they were clinical with the ball in crunch moments," India skipper Virat Kohli admitted after the game.

With this series defeat, India's record of never having won a Test series in the Rainbow Nation for three decades, remained intact.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni is the only India captain to have managed a drawn series back in 2010.

It was one of the strongest Indian teams on paper against one of the weakest South African teams on paper.

However, the operative word here was "on paper" as Elgar's unheralded bunch showed a lot of character in punching above their weight and also getting heavily rewarded for their relentless efforts.

"The way our bowling unit delivered throughout the series is brilliant.

I threw down the challenge after the first game and the guys responded brilliantly," said an elated Elgar.

The mindless chatter and incessant sledging didn't bother the likes of Petersen and Van der Dussen as they went about their job in a thoroughly professional manner.

India's batters were far too dependant on bowlers to bail them out for the past few years but this series showed that this attack is human too even though they put their best foot forward, which was-



n't complemented at all by the willow wielders.

The only hope for India was the first spell from Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami in sultry conditions with the semi-new ball and they did their bit with all sincerity.

Petersen was beaten time and again but, in between, scored his

runs to keep the scoreboard ticking.

Their strategy was to see off the first spell and capitalise when Umesh Yadav, who is known to bowl boundary balls, was brought into the attack.

Bumrah, in his second spell, did get one to straighten but Cheteshwar Pujara, enduring a poor series with

the bat, dropped a crucial regulation slip catch with the batter on 59.

If one remembers, it was Ross Taylor, who had got a 'life' when Pujara dropped a sitter during World Test Championship final and the bowler at the receiving was again, Bumrah.

It was Shardul Thakur who

finally had the young man played on but by then Petersen had ensured a series win for his team.

It needs to be put as it is. India did not lose the Test because of one DRS that went wrong but for the consistent poor batting throughout the series save the first innings of the first Test.

The scores of 202, 223 and 198 is the reason India lost and the second innings effort at both Wanderers and Newlands showed that Indian bowlers could only do as much.

The heavy duty tirade against the host broadcasters Supersport with their customised diatribe did not look good in the face of a dismal performance.

The skipper himself led the attack and it seemed like a forceful way of trying to put the blame squarely on technology that "may or may not have gone wrong".

The die-hard Kohli fans believe that the Indian skipper needs a narrative to spur him on and his favourite script is "he and his team against the entire world" as his deputy for the series KL Rahul would have fans believe on the stump-mic.

It's far from truth but it works well for him to push the envelope.

Van der Dussen was subjected to intense sledging on the fourth morning and so was Petersen but they remained unfazed.

Once Bavuma started hitting those boundaries, the strokes did the answering.

But Kohli losing his counsel and blowing his top was also a projection of a man who is under immense pressure and a Test defeat against a much lower-ranked side which had been grappling with all kinds of socio-political issues over the past few years, isn't going to go down well with the BCCI.

It's really immature, you can't be a role model in this manner: Gambhir

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Virat Kohli's outburst against a controversial DRS decision during the third Test against South Africa was "immature" and with such "exaggerated" reaction, the India skipper will never be a role model for youngsters, feels former opener Gautam Gambhir.

Kohli, his deputy KL Rahul and off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin made some unsavoury comments about umpiring and technology in stump mic after rival skipper Dean Elgar got a massive reprieve due to a contentious DRS decision in the last hour on day 3 on Thursday.

"This is really bad. What Kohli did, going near the stump mic and reacting in that manner, that is really immature. This is not what you expect from an international captain, from an Indian captain," Gambhir told Star Sports.

Australian great Shane Warne felt the ball was hitting the stumps.

"That's going on to smash half way up middle though, there is no way that's going over, even Erasmus



shook his head," Warne was quoted as saying by Fox Sports.

Gambhir pointed out that Mayank Agarwal too had got a reprieve during the first Test in Centurion but it didn't invite similar response from the South African skipper.

"Then technology isn't in your hand. Then you have reacted in the same manner when there was a

caught-behind appeal on the leg-side, neither did Dean Elgar react in that manner. During that Mayank Agarwal appeal, it looked out from the naked eye, but Elgar did not react in that manner," he said.

Former England captain Michael Vaughan was critical of the Indian skipper.

"I think that is disgraceful from

the Indians personally," Vaughan said on Fox Sports.

"Decisions go with you, they go against you, that didn't go the way they think it should have gone. Virat Kohli is a legend of the game, but that's not the way to act, that is not the way to act in a game of Test match cricket.

"The ICC have to stamp this down, they have to stamp down on the Indian side, you can't get away with talking down the stump microphone like Ravi Ashwin has done and the Indian captain has done," said Vaughan.

In the 21st over, Elgar was adjudged LBW by on-field umpire Marais Erasmus when he was hit on the pads by an Ashwin delivery. However, the decision was overturned on review.

Livid with the decision, a fuming Kohli went up to the stumps and said: "Focus on your team as well when they shine the ball eh, not just the opposition. Trying to catch people all the time."

Rahul and Ashwin also expressed similar reactions.

Head's century lifts Australia from 12-3 to 241-6 vs England

AP ■ HOBART

Travis Head spoiled a promising start for England in the Ashes on Friday with his second century of the series as Australia recovered from 12-3 to reach 241-6 at stumps on a rain-hit first day of the fifth Test.

Head, who scored 152 in the opening test at Brisbane, counter-punched England's early success with an aggressive 101 off 113 balls in the day-night test as Australia came back strongly after losing the toss.

Cameron Green contributed an authoritative 74 and Marnus Labuschagne scored a rapid 44 before rain arrived around half an hour after tea and prevented further play.

Head entered with Australia in serious trouble after a brilliant spell of swing and seam bowling from Ollie Robinson (2-24), one of the five changes England made, and Stuart Broad (2-48) on a lively green wicket.

Head, who missed the Sydney Test due to the coronavirus, first put



the innings back on track with a 71-run stand with Labuschagne, but not before Zak Crawley had dropped Labuschagne at second slip before the batter had scored.

That drop proved costly for England which has already lost the Ashes after losing the first three test matches at Brisbane, Adelaide and Melbourne before the draw in Sydney. "Nice to be back and contributing," Head told Channel 7.

"I was really conscious of making the right decisions -- attacking

the right balls, defending the right ones, being hard to get out.

I felt like I came into this test ready to go."

Labuschagne counterpunched the pace of Chris Woakes (1-50) and Mark Wood (1-79) by clobbering nine boundaries before getting dismissed in a bizarre fashion just before the first session. Labuschagne was clean bowled in an unusual style when he appeared to slip in the crease and Broad had the middle stump knocked back with the batsman falling over on his knees while going way across his stumps. But Head and Green continued to prosper against Wood and Woakes in a dominant middle session which yielded 130 runs. Head played some exquisite drives on both sides of the wicket, particularly in front of square as he hammered 12 boundaries before raising his century by cutting Woakes to backward point for two runs. However, Head fell a ball later after reaching his hundred when he lobbed a gentle catch to mid-on. Green didn't have trouble with the pace before he finally fell to a trap

Can class of 2022 go all the way at U-19 World Cup?

PTI ■ GEORGETOWN (GUYANA)

Record four-time champions India will be aiming to maintain their envious record and unearth a plethora of talent along the way when they begin their U-19 World Cup campaign against South Africa here on Saturday.

Expectations will be high from the likes of Harnoor Singh, Rajvardhan Hangargekar, skipper Yash Dhull and Ravi Kumar, who have already shown glimpses of their potential in tournaments leading into the World Cup.

India flew into the Caribbean straight after their Asia Cup triumph and tuned up for the ICC event with wins over hosts West Indies and Australia in the warm-up games.

India have been the most successful team in the tournament's history and getting into the final of the last three editions is a testimony to their remarkable consistency.

No player from the 2020 batch, which finished runners-up to first-time champions Bangladesh, has gone on to play for India and only time will tell if someone from the class of 2022 reaches the highest level.

The current batch doesn't possess prodigies like Prithvi Shaw and Shubman Gill (2018 pass outs) but some of the players have already attracted attention.

Jalandhar-born left-hand opener Harnoor is expected to score a bagful of runs in the tournament, much like what Yashasvi Jaiswal did in the previous edition.

The 18-year-old was India's leading run-getter in the Asia Cup with 251 runs in five games and struck an unbeaten 100 against Australia in the team's final warm-up game on January 11.

Right-arm pacer Hangargekar, who has played senior cricket for Maharashtra, is another player to watch out for.

He impressed with his raw pace in the Asia Cup, picking up eight wickets, and is also a handy batter down the order.

Left-arm pacer Ravi Kumar will also be expected to provide timely breakthroughs and he will be high on confidence following a four-wicket haul against the Australians.

Skipper Dhull, who is a highly rated batter in Delhi cricket circles, did not do anything noticeable in the Asia Cup but his back-to-back



fifties in the warm-up games show he is in good touch. All-rounder Raj Bawa, who bowls right-arm medium pace and bats left-handed, will also play a crucial role for the team.

Head coach Hrishikesh Kankar spoke about India's rich legacy in the competition ahead of the South Africa game.

"There is a huge legacy since India has done so well in this tournament.

It doesn't help that we have won four times. There is a new team, so you have to start afresh," said Kankar adding that the players are also getting used to bi-bubble life in COVID times.

India are placed in Group B alongside South Africa, Ireland and Uganda. Top two teams qualify for the knockouts.

The game against South Africa is likely to be the toughest one for India.

The 2014 edition winners South Africa's chances of success on home soil were ended at the quarter-final stage two years ago.

All-rounder Dewald Brevis has generated maximum attention in the junior Proteas camp.

He played in the CSA Provincial T20 Knockout competition in October and his batting style drew comparisons with AB de Villiers, while his leg-spin caused West Indies plenty of problems in a recent warm-up series against the hosts.

Left-arm spinner Asakhe Tsaka and captain George van Heerden will also hope to make a name for themselves in the coming weeks as South Africa look for a second title.

Ireland beats West Indies in rain-hit 2nd ODI

AP ■ KINGSTON

Ireland beat the West Indies by five wickets in a rain-interrupted second one-day international at Sabina Park.

Ireland was chasing 230 to win and was well ahead of the run rate at 157-4 in the 32nd over when rain stopped play for 90 minutes.

When the match resumed, the Duckworth-Lewis method reduced Ireland's ask to 168 from 36 overs, or 11 more runs from 28 balls. The Irish knocked them off in seven balls, winning on a pair of no balls at 168-5.

Victory tied the series 1-1, with the deciding ODI on Sunday on the same ground.

This ODI was rescheduled from Tuesday, when Ireland was too depleted to field a side because of five coronavirus cases and two injured players. Four weren't available on Thursday, including captain Andy Balbirnie.

The West Indies successfully defended 269 last Saturday but not so much 229, which



was boosted by 30 extras.

William Porterfield and stand-in skipper Paul Stirling gave Ireland a flying start of 37 in the first five overs.

Harry Tector anchored the show with 54 not out off 75 balls, his second straight half-century and fourth in his last five ODIs.

Tector featured in stands of 44 with Andy McBrine, who added 35, and 53 with Curtis Campher.

McBrine also starred with the ball when West Indies was made to bat first.

The West Indies was cautious from the start and medium-pace Craig Young took

Isolation hitch threatens NZ-Aus white-ball series

AP ■ WELLINGTON

New Zealand's white-ball cricket tour to Australia later this month is in doubt because of extended border restrictions which require the team to have isolation places booked for their return.

The Black Caps are due to leave for Australia on Jan. 24, to play one-day matches on Jan. 30, Feb. 2 and Feb. 5 and a Twenty20 international at Canberra on Feb. 8.

New Zealand Cricket didn't book places in managed isolation for the team in February because they anticipated the implementation in mid-January of a policy which would allow New Zealand citizens and residents returning from Australia to do so without going through managed isolation.

The change has now been delayed until late February because of the emergence of



the omicron variant which New Zealand so far has contained at the border.

New Zealand Cricket on Friday said it expects the Australian tour to go ahead but is discussing options with Cricket Australia. That might include rescheduling or delaying the team's return from Australia.

A spokesperson told media the team will not travel to Australia unless a plan is in place for its return.

Sindhu, Sen enter semifinals of India Open

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two-time Olympic medallist P V Sindhu and world champion bronze medallist Lakshya Sen registered contrasting wins to advance to the women's and men's singles semifinals, respectively, at the Yonex-Sunrise India Open badminton tournament here on Friday. Top seed Sindhu, a former world champion, got the better of compatriot Ashmita Chaliha 21-7 21-18 in 36 minutes, while Sen rallied his way to a hard-fought 14-21 21-9 21-14 victory over H S Prannoy in another all-Indian quarterfinal.

The 26-year-old from Hyderabad set up a women's singles last-four clash with Thailand's sixth seed Supanida Katethong, who entered the semifinals after the third seeded Yeo Jia Min of Singapore pulled out of the tournament due to "high fever".

Sen, seeded third, will square off against Malaysia's Ng Tze Yong in the semifinals.

In the other women's semifinal, Aakarshi Kashyap will face second seeded Thai Busanan Ongbamrunphan after the Indian notched up a 21-12 21-15 win over compatriot Malvika Bansod on Friday.

Busanan trounced USA's Lauren Lam 21-12 21-8 in another last-eight clash.

Second seeded men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty also entered the semifinals with a 21-18 21-18 win ver

The 26-year-old from Hyderabad set up a women's singles last-four clash with Thailand's sixth seed Supanida Katethong, who entered the semifinals after the third seeded Yeo Jia Min of Singapore pulled out of the tournament due to "high fever." Sen, seeded third, will square off against Malaysia's Ng Tze Yong in the semifinals.



Singapore's Hee Yong Kai TerryAnd Loh Kean Hean.

Haritha Manazhiyil Harinarayan and Ashna Roy also made it to the last four in women's doubles after beat-

ing Rudrani Jaiswal and Jamaludeen Anees Kowsar 21-16 21-16 in the quarterfinals.

The last time Sindhu was up against Chaliha, at the 83rd Yonex-

Sunrise Senior National Championship in 2019, the youngster from Assam had produced a spirited performance.

On Friday, Chaliha took time to

get into the groove and put up a good fight in the second game but couldn't stop Sindhu from walking away with the match.

Sindhu came out all guns blazing

in the opening game, jumping to a 11-5 lead at the interval and then reeled off the last 10 points to earn the bragging rights.

Chaliha gave a better account of herself in the second game as she tied 9-9 before Sindhu managed a slender one-point advantage at the break. Sindhu zoomed to 15-11 but Chaliha again clawed her way back to 15-15.

Thereafter, Sindhu switched gears and grabbed four match points. Chaliha saved two match points before Sindhu closed out the tie.

In men's singles, it was the first international meeting but third overall between Sen and Prannoy as the duo engaged in a battle of supremacy. On a comeback trail, Prannoy, who had reached the quarterfinals at the last world championships, dominated the proceedings initially to secure a 6-2 lead. He got his acts together in time to turn the tables at 12-10 and then zoomed from 15-14 to pocket the opening game.

"The pace was high in the first game as both of us tried to up the pace but I made errors at 13-13 and it cost me the game," Sen said.

Sen, however, roared back into the contest in the second game as he ran up a huge 12-5 lead and didn't look back from that point, as Prannoy crumbled. In the decider, Prannoy took the early initiative, opening up a 6-1 advantage but couldn't sustain it as Sen moved to 11-9 at the interval and then pocketed nine of the next 11 points to seal the match in his favour.

India withdraws from Asian Under-22 boxing championship

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Boxing Federation of India has decided to pull out of the Asian Under-22 Championships for men and women in Tashkent, Uzbekistan due to the global surge in COVID-19 cases but is willing to participate if the tournament is rescheduled to a time when the pandemic subsides.

A reliable source in the federation has confirmed to PTI that a letter has been sent to the Asian Boxing Confederation as well as the tournament's organising committee confirming India's withdrawal.

The event was scheduled to be held from January 20 to 30. The Asian event was originally slated to be held from December 7 to 17 last year but was postponed because of the pandemic.

Indian boxing has been hit by a COVID crisis of its own. The men's senior



national camp in Patiala has reported 26 cases, including 20 boxers.

Boxers born in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are eligible to compete in the event that is being held for the first time in the continent.

The competition was to be held in 12 women's and 13 men's weight categories.

The Indian men's squad featured the likes of Asian youth bronze-medallist Mohammed Etash Khan (63.5kg) and reigning national champion Rohit Mor (60kg) among others.

The women's squad featured the likes of world youth champion Arundhati Chaudhary (71kg) and international medallist Jaismine (63kg). Chaudhary had recently made the headlines by taking the Boxing Federation of India to court for not holding trials in her weight category for the world championships in Turkey.

HI announces core probable group for women's hockey team



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hockey India on Friday announced a new-look core probable group for the senior women's team which will play in many major international tournaments this year. The group was selected following selection trials held in Sports Authority of India, Bengaluru for a group of 60 who were called-in on the basis of their performances in various nation-

al level events. "It is time for us to start afresh and plan for the future. We have grown over the past year with our experiences in Tokyo and we must continue to develop, and grow in the coming years, ahead of Paris 2024," India women's team chief coach Janneke Schopman said in a release issued by Hockey India. While an 18-member Indian team, led by Savita, will be travelling to Muscat for the upcom-

ing women's hockey Asia Cup, the remaining players from the core group will stay on at the camp and continue to train for the FIH Hockey Pro League matches to be held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha next month. "The upcoming camp is important for us to recognise the players who are ready to showcase their skills on the biggest stages, and also to work on the areas where we need to improve upon," Schopman said. List of players: Savita, Rajani Etimaru, Bichu Devi Kharibam, Deep Grace Ekka, Gurjit Kaur, Nikki Pradhan, Uditia, Ishika Chaudhary, Suman Devi Thoudam, Akshata Abaso Dhekale, Mahima Chaudhary, Rashmita Minz, Nisha, Salima Tete, Sushila Chanu Pukhrambam, Jyoti, Navjot Kaur, Monika, Namita Toppo.



First target is to make quarters, which is realistic one: Dennerby

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Indian women's football team head coach Thomas Dennerby said his side is well prepared and its first realistic target is to reach the quarterfinals of the upcoming AFC Asian Women's Cup.

Hosts India will open their campaign against Iran on January 20. "I said from the beginning when we started, we said that yes, to come to the quarter-final is our first target, first aim," Dennerby said during a virtual media interaction in the run-up to the continental tournament on Friday.

"And if we come all the way to the quarterfinal, everything can happen because when we are in quarterfinal and it's a knockout stage, everybody, all teams will play under pressure. But definitely (reaching) quarterfinals is our target and we also think it's a realistic target."

The Indian team has been drawn against Iran (January 20), Chinese Taipei (January 23) and China (January 26) in Group A of the competition that consists of 12 teams.

Talking about the opposition, Dennerby said: "It is (like) three different teams with three different playing styles. I guess the first game against Iran will be a tough one for us because what we have seen so far (they are) defending very well. They are organized and they will play low, defending."

"They also have one really good striker that's always on the run. So, even if we dominate the game, as a defender you always have to be on your toes."

"They are also good on set pieces, they scored a lot of goals on free-kicks and corners, so we also need to be very sharp on that (front). Don't give them any corners or easy free-kicks," he added.

According to Dennerby, India's second game against Chinese Taipei will be an "equal game" but the final match against China will be a tough one.

"Finally, China, I will say from my point of view; classical Asian style with a lot of short passes with good combinations. It is going to be a tough one, of course, but still China is not at the level they were a couple of years ago and they won this tournament. But still a very good team and probably the toughest game for us," he noted.

The 62-year-old Swede said that the team is well prepared for the marquee tournament.

"We have (had) such a long preparation time now and we have been together for more than five months. In total there are over 200 different sessions including football, strength, running sessions and game against proper teams and different styles and all that. So, yeah, we finally feel that we are really well prepared now."

For Dennerby, all the 23 players are important as he refused to single out a player when asked who would be his trump card.

"For us, all the 23 players are very important and I hope that all players are prepared and ready to play," Dennerby said.

Visa revoked again, Djokovic faces deportation

AP ■ MELBOURNE



Novak Djokovic faces deportation again after the Australian government revoked his visa for a second time, the latest twist in the ongoing saga over whether the No 1-ranked tennis player will be allowed to compete in the Australian Open despite being unvaccinated for COVID-19.

Immigration Minister Alex Hawke said Friday he used his ministerial discretion to cancel the 34-year-old Serb's visa on public interest grounds — just three days before play begins at the Australian Open, where Djokovic has won a record nine of his 20 Grand Slam titles.

Djokovic's lawyers were expected to appeal at the Federal Circuit and Family Court, which they already successfully did last week on procedural

grounds after his visa was first canceled when he landed at a Melbourne airport.

A hearing was scheduled for Friday night. Deportation from Australia can lead to a three-year ban on returning to the country, although that may be waived, depending on the circumstances.

Hawke said he cancelled the visa on "health and good order grounds, on the basis that it was in the public interest to do so."

His statement added that Prime Minister Scott Morrison's government "is firmly committed to protecting Australia's borders, particularly in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic."

Morrison himself welcomed Djokovic's pending deportation. The whole episode has touched a nerve in Australia, and particularly in Victoria state, where locals went through hundreds of days of lockdowns during the worst of the pandemic and there is a vaccination rate among adults of more than 90%.

Australia is currently facing a massive surge in virus cases driven by the highly transmissible omicron variant. On Friday, the nation reported 130,000 new cases, including nearly 35,000 in Victoria state.

Although many infected people aren't getting as sick as they did in previous outbreaks, the surge is still putting severe strain on the health system, with more than 4,400 people hospitalized. It's also causing disruptions to workplaces and supply chains.

"This pandemic has been incredibly difficult for every Australian but we have stuck together and saved lives and livelihoods. ... Australians have made many sacrifices during

this pandemic, and they rightly expect the result of those sacrifices to be protected," Morrison said in a statement.

"This is what the Minister is doing in taking this action today."

Everyone at the Australian Open — including players, their support teams and spectators — is required to be vaccinated for the illness caused by the coronavirus. Djokovic is not inoculated and had sought a medical exemption on the grounds that he had COVID-19 in December.

That exemption was approved by the Victoria state government and Tennis Australia, apparently allowing him to obtain a visa to travel. But the Australian Border Force rejected the exemption and canceled his visa when he landed in Melbourne on January 5.

Djokovic spent four nights in an immigration detention hotel before a judge on Monday overturned that decision. That ruling allowed Djokovic to move freely around Australia and he has been practicing at Melbourne Park daily to prepare to play in a tournament he has won each of the past three years.

He had a practice session originally scheduled for mid-afternoon Friday at Rod Laver Arena, the tournament's main stadium, but pushed that to the morning and was finished several hours before Hawke's decision was announced in the early evening.

An Australian Open spokeswoman said tournament organizers did not have any immediate comment on the latest development in Djokovic's situation, which has overshadowed all other story lines heading into the year's first Grand Slam event.

Mauritius' Pandoo appointed as first HPD for weightlifting

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Sports Ministry has approved the appointment of Mauritian Avenash Pandoo as the first High Performance Director (HPD) for weightlifting until the 2024 Paris Olympics. His appointment was recommended by the Sports Authority of India's (SAI) Foreign Coach Selection Committee in conjunction with officials of the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWF). According to a statement issued by the SAI, his annual salary will be USD 54,000 (approx Rs 40.50 lakh).

The HPD has been appointed with specific focus on development of junior talent, with an eye on 2028 Olympics and to create strong coaching structure with a capabilities

Imran Khan to visit China for Beijing Winter Olympics

Prime Minister Imran Khan will be travelling to Beijing next month to attend the opening ceremony of Winter Olympics, bolster the all-weather bilateral ties and seek more investments in various projects under the ambitious CPEC, the Foreign Office said here on Thursday.

The Beijing Winter Olympics will be held from February 4 to 20, followed by the Paralympics Winter Games from March 4-13, amid a diplomatic boycott by several Western countries, including the US and the UK over concerns of China's alleged human rights abuses.

"The premier will be embarking on a three-day visit to Beijing from February 3 on the invitation

of the Chinese leadership," Foreign Office Spokesperson Asim Iftikhar said during his weekly news briefing.

Khan will also have an interaction with the Chinese leadership to further strengthen Pakistan-China all-weather strategic cooperative partnership and to exchange views on regional and international issues, Iftikhar said.

Khan's visit is considered significant because several western and European countries have announced a diplomatic boycott of the event.

Tensions have risen between China and several Western countries over a number of issues.



Pakistan welcomes the Global Development Initiative put forward by Chinese President Xi Jinping as a timely and good intention to facilitate implementation of the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

The US has accused China of genocide in its repression of the predominantly Muslim Uyghur minority in the western region of Xinjiang - an allegation China has rejected.

While projects pertaining to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will be key to the talks between the two sides, Iftikhar opined that Khan's visit would help promote international cooperation required to overcome the challenges faced due to the ongoing pandemic and open up avenues of collaboration with other developing countries.

The USD 60 billion CPEC connecting China's resource-rich

Xinjiang province with Pakistan's strategic Gwadar port in Balochistan is regarded as the flagship project of the multi-billion Belt and Road initiative, the pet scheme of Chinese President Xi Jinping aimed at furthering China's influence globally with Chinese funded infrastructure projects.

Iftikhar said that Pakistan welcomes the Global Development Initiative put forward by Chinese President Xi Jinping as a timely and good intention to facilitate implementation of the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

"Pakistan and China are global partners, and we look forward to further strengthening this partnership under China's Global Development Initiative," he added.