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KL RAHUL'S LONG-TERM CAPTAINCY PLAN HITS ROADBLOCK
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Investors lose ₹9L cr as markets plummet

In 2-month high drop, Sensex crashes by 1,546

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investors lost ₹9 lakh crore in a day as the Indian equity market on Monday logged the steepest single-day drop in about two months. The benchmark Sensex crashed nearly 1,546 points to crack below the 58,000-level due to panic selling across counters tracking.

Tech stocks were hammered due to heavy sell-off in the US tech stocks. Pre-budget nervousness, week quarter three results, and global factors are supposed to be behind the crash. The market was also jittery with the fear of the USA's Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) taking some unpleasant decisions on the interest rate in its meeting starting Tuesday.

The BSE Sensex started the session on a weak note and got further overwhelmed by panic selling as the trade progressed and tanked over 2,050 points to touch the day's low at 56,984. Recouping some lost ground towards the fag-end, the index finally settled at 57,491.51 — clocking a massive 1,545.67 points or 2.62 per cent drop.

Likewise, the NSE Nifty slumped 468.05 points or 2.66 per cent to settle at 17,149.10. This was the biggest single-session fall for both Sensex and Nifty since November 26 last year and also the fifth straight session of loss for the indices.

The market crash wiped out ₹9.15 lakh crore of wealth and total market cap of BSE-listed firms has slipped to ₹260.49 lakh crore. Investors have become poorer by ₹19.33 lakh crore in the market fall since Tuesday last week.

On the Sensex chart, Tata Steel was the top loser, shedding around 6 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, Wipro, Tech Mahindra, Titan, Reliance Industries and HCL Tech.

"The Indian markets have been under significant pressure in the past few days, correcting by 7 per cent from the recent highs, after a smart pullback seen since mid-December.

Continued on Page 2

N-W, central India to shiver for 5 days with 5°C plunge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Snow-covered Salgran village following fresh snowfall in Lahaul & Spiti district on Monday PTI

The minimum temperatures in northwest and central India is likely to drop by three to five degrees Celsius over the next five days, leading to severe cold in Delhi and parts of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra

Cold day to severe cold day conditions are very likely over parts of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat over the next two to three days, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Monday.

Dense to very dense fog is predicted in parts of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, Assam, Sikkim, Meghalaya and Tripura over the next two to three days, it said.

Meanwhile, coastal Maharashtra and Konkan region witnessed haze due to dust storms in Gujarat and south Rajasthan days after the dust storm in Karachi in Pakistan that crippled the normal life.

Due to this, Mumbai's Air Quality Index (AQI) on Monday rose to a whopping 502, as per the System of Air Quality Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR). An AQI of more than 500 indicates "severe-plus" or hazardous pollution levels and can have profound health implications.

On Saturday, the IMD forecast said that a massive dust storm headed towards Gujarat and south Rajasthan. On Saturday morning, Karachi was caught off guard when a dust storm from Pakistan's west disturbed normal life, with visibility reduced to less than or about 500 metres.

On the other hand, north and north western States are reeling under cold day conditions. According to the IMD, a "cold day" is when the minimum temperature is less than 10 degrees Celsius and the maximum is at least 4.5 degrees Celsius below normal. A "severe" cold day is when the maximum temperature is at least 6.5 notches below normal.

In the plains, the IMD declares a cold wave if the minimum temperature dips to 4 degrees Celsius. A cold wave is also declared when the minimum temperature is 10 degrees Celsius or below and is 4.5 notches less than normal.

A "severe" cold wave is when the minimum temperature dips to 2 degrees Celsius or the departure from normal is more than 6.4 degrees Celsius. When visibility due to fog is reduced to the range of 0 to 50 metres, it is categorised as "very dense" fog, between 51 and 200 metres, it is "dense" fog, between 201 and 500 metres "moderate", and it is categorised as "shallow" if the visibility is between 501 and 1,000 metres.

CAPSULE

NAGALAND, ASSAM SETTLE BORDER FEUD

Rio Kohima/Guwahati: The Governments of Nagaland and Assam are ready for an out-of-court settlement of the long-pending inter-State boundary dispute between the two northeastern neighbours, Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio said here on Monday.

₹25K CR SCAM IN MAHA, ANNA HAZARE ALLEGES

Pune: Social activist Anna Hazare has written to Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah demanding a probe by a retired Supreme Court judge into the alleged ₹25,000 crore "scam" in the selling of cooperative sugar mills in Maharashtra and their purchase at "throwaway prices".

SIDHU: AAP'S DRIVE TO SELECT CM 'SCAM'

Chandigarh: Punjab Congress president Navjot Singh Sidhu on Monday dubbed AAM Aadmi Party's survey to select its Chief Minister face for the State Assembly polls a "scam" and "deceptive scheme" and said his party has lodged a complaint with the Election Commission against it.

PAK HANDS OVER 20 INDIAN FISHERMEN

Attari (Amritsar)/Islamabad: Twenty Indian fishermen arrested by Pakistan for allegedly entering into the country's territorial waters were handed over to India through the border on Monday. They crossed over to India through the land transit route of Attari border.

Modi interacts with PM Bal awardees, calls for drawing energy from past

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar awardees, through video conferencing, in New Delhi on Monday PTI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday interacted with "Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar" awardees via video conference and called for "drawing energy from the past" and "dedicating oneself to achieving great results in the coming 25 years of the Amrit kaal".

Digital certificates were conferred on the awardees for the years 2022 and 2021 using Blockchain Technology.

This technology was used for the first time for giving certificates to awardees. Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Zubin Irani and Dr Munjpara Mahendrabhai, her Minister of State, were among those present on the occasion.

Interacting with Master Avi Sharma of Indore, the Prime Minister enquired about the secret of his prolific output with regard to various aspects of Ramayana. Master Avi Sharma said he got the inspiration by the broadcasting of the serial Ramayana during the lockdown. Avi also recited some couplets from his creation.

Continued on Page 2

Covid spike in SE Asia driven by India: WHO

Positivity rate in India rises to 21%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Medical workers scan codes on people's smartphones at a mass coronavirus testing site in Beijing on Monday AP

Amid rising Covid-19 positivity rate in India, the World Health Organization (WHO) on Monday noted that the increase in infections in South-East Asia is mainly driven by India, with 150 per cent increase in numbers in the last one week. To drive home its point, the WHO said that India reported 15,94,160 new cases in the week that ended on January 23 as compared to 6,38,872 cases it recorded the previous week.

On Monday, India reported over three lakh new Covid-19 infections for the fifth straight day, though in actual numbers it was almost 8 per cent less than the previous day. The daily positivity rate - the share of coronavirus tests that return positive and considered a key marker of the pandemic's status is up from 17.78 per cent to 20.75 per cent while the weekly positivity rate was recorded at 17.03 per cent.

The Omicron variant is also constantly moving northwards with infection prevalent in almost all the States. The WHO also said that the Omicron variant of coronavirus has now been reported in 171 countries in the world.

Though the variant has a lower risk of severe disease and death following infection, the overall risk related to Omicron remains very high. INSACOG, the Government's research body has already said in its latest bulletin that the Omicron variant is in the community transmission stage in the country and has become dominant in several metros where new cases have been spiking exponentially.

Continued on Page 2

DDMA to decide on weekend curfew

New Delhi: Amid demands of lifting weekend curfew and odd-even system of opening shops by traders as well as the AAP and the BJP, Delhi's apex Covid-19 management body DDMA will meet on Thursday to review the pandemic situation in the city. The meeting of Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) to be chaired by Lt Governor Anil Baijal is scheduled at 12.30 pm on January 27. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is also likely to attend the meeting.

Capt gets 37 seats, BJP 65 in Punjab poll deal

Third partner Dhindsa's SAD to fight on 17 seats

New Delhi: The BJP in Punjab will contest on 65 assembly seats, the Punjab Lok Congress on 37 seats and the SAD (Sanyukt) on 17 seats, BJP chief J P Nadda said on Monday as he announced the seat-sharing agreement between his party and its allies for the February 20 state polls.

Nadda said Punjab is a border state and security is a very important issue as far as assembly elections are concerned.

Hailing Punjab as a "leader", especially in defence and food security of the country, he said, "Today Punjab needs special attention, it needs a double engine government and a better coordination between the Centre and the State."

Nadda announced the seat-sharing agreement at a press conference here at the BJP headquarters in the presence of Punjab Lok Congress supremo Amarinder Singh and Shiromani Akali Dal (Sanyukt) Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa.

"I am announcing a broader seat sharing agreement, BJP will contest on 65 seats, PLC on 37 seats and SAD (Sanyukt) on 15 seats," Nadda said.

After the press conference, a BJP delegation led by Union Minister Gajendra Shekhawat met Election Commission of India officials to complain against Sidhu's principal strategic advisor Mohammad Mustafa for allegedly making communal remarks at a public meeting in Malerkotla.

The former Punjab DGP has been booked for promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race and other identity markers to score gains in election. The FIR came a day after a video showing him making the alleged remarks was circulated on social media.

We have urged the ECI to act against Mustafa for giving a provocative speech in Malerkotla on January 20, Shekhawat said.

Addressing the conference, Singh said for the sake of national security and welfare of the state, all three parties have come together.

Expressing concern about the threat to the "hard earned" peace of Punjab, Singh said a large number of weapons for carrying out nefarious activities are coming into Punjab.

"During the course of my last four-and-half-years as Punjab chief minister, at least 1,000 rifles, 500 pistols, RDX, lakhs of rounds of ammunition were caught at the borders. The weapons were also dropped using drones... They were meant for carrying out some nefarious activity," Singh said.

Continued on Page 2

Twitter war replaces heat & dust of campaign trail in UP

Mayawati, Yogi exchange barbs over houses for poor

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the Election Commission of India (ECI) restricting political parties from physical rallies, the leaders are engaged in a bitter "Twitter war" blaming each other for the present situation.

When Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath commented on former Chief Ministers of the State building big bungalows for themselves instead of houses for the poor, BSP chief Mayawati immediately hit back by commenting on Yogi's Gorakhpur Math. Immediately, Adityanath's social media team hit back and even raised the issue of Mayawati's sandals.

The whole fracas started when Yogi said in Aligarh on Saturday that before 2017, the Chief Minister and Ministers used to build palaces for themselves, but the BJP built houses for the poor.

Furious over this, Mayawati attacked Yogi in a series of tweets on Sunday.

She wrote: "Perhaps the people of western UP do not know that the monastery built by Yogi ji in Gorakhpur, where he lives most of the time, is no less than a big bungalow."

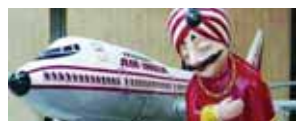
Yogi's office tweeted in return: "On one hand, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath dedicated the Government aircraft to protect the lives of the people during the Corona period, on the other hand, sandals were ordered from a Government plane, misusing State resources for personal splendour."

In another tweet, Yogi's office invited the BSP chief to visit Gorakshanath Math.

Continued on Page 2

AI's handover to Tatas expected on Jan 27

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI



Debt-laden Maharaja (Air India) is expected to be handed over to the Tata group on January 27. The closing balance sheet as of January 20 was provided to the new owner (Talace Private Limited, a subsidiary of the Tata groups holding company) on Monday so that it can be reviewed.

Sources said the final handover date was not finalised but the Government aims to hand over the airline by Thursday. The remaining formalities regarding the deal are likely to be completed in a few days.

After a competitive bidding process, the Government had on October 8 last year sold Air India to Talace Private Limited fo ₹18,000 crore.

In a message to the employees on Monday, Air India's director (finance) Vinod Hejmadi said the divestment of the national carrier is now decided to be on the January 27. "The closing balance sheet as on 20th Jan has to be provided on Jan 24th so that it can be reviewed by Tatas and any changes can be effected on Wednesday," Hejmadi said in the message on instant messaging platform.

Continued on Page 2

Delhi slashes dry days to 3, down from 21

New Delhi: The Delhi Government under its new excise policy has reduced the number of dry days to just three from 21 last year, according to an official order issued on Monday.

The licensed liquor shops and opium vends will remain closed on Republic Day, Independence Day, and Gandhi Jayanti, the order issued by the Delhi Excise department stated.

"In pursuance of the provisions of Rule 52 of Delhi Excise Rules, 2010, it is hereby ordered that the following dates shall be observed as "Dry Day" in Delhi by all the licensees of the Excise department," it said.

Continued on Page 2

Indian bizman blackmailed me with cocaine for spot fixing: Zimbabwe cricketer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Zimbabwe cricket star Brendan Taylor on Monday came out with a shocking revelation that he was given cocaine by an Indian businessman during his India visit and was blackmailed with videos of his inebriated condition. Taylor has alleged that the businessman put pressure on him to engage in match fixing.

In a detailed four-page letter uploaded on social media, Taylor said he confessed to ICC and going to visit a rehabilitation centre.

"In late October 2019, I was approached by an Indian businessman requesting that I attend India to discuss sponsorship and potential launch of a T20 competition in Zimbabwe and was advised that I could be paid US$ 15,000 to make journey... We had drinks and during the course of the evening they openly offered me cocaine, which they themselves engaged in, and I foolishly took the bait. I've gone over it a million times since and still feel sick to my stomach reliving that night and how they played me," said Taylor.

Continued on Page 2

2 killed, several injured as bus falls into ditch

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a tragic road accident in Barabanki, a private bus, while overtaking another vehicle near Ghagra Ghat on Bahraich highway, fell into a ditch.

The incident took place on Monday afternoon and two passengers were killed in the mishap which left over two dozen others injured.

The local police rushed to the rescue of the passengers and shifted the injured to the community health centre in Ramnagar from where 14 of them were referred to the district hospital.

According to reports, the bus was going from Balrampur to Lucknow, and there were about 50 passengers on board. The driver-operator fled the spot after the incident.

ASP Purnendu Singh reached the spot to supervise the rescue operation.

On the information of the accident, ARM RS Verma and ARTO enforcement officer Rahul Srivastava also reached the spot.

The injured include travelers from Gonda, Balrampur, Sitapur and Shravasti districts.

Two persons who died in the mishap were identified as Narendra, 36-year-old son of Shyamlal of Piprakhurd under Sadarpur police station of Sitapur, and 50-year-old Brijesh Kumar Tripathi of Mojni under Balapur police station of Balrampur.

Those seriously injured and shifted to the district hospital include Bittu (33) and Shuchi (36) of Bhadaura, Sitapur; Ambika Prasad's wife Usma Devi (40), son Ravi (8) and daughter Nita Devi (19), resident of Lal Bozhi in Shravasti; Girish Kumar (25) of Katra; Pradeep Kumar Dubey (42) of Balpur Karnailganj in Gonda district; Ritesh Kumar (30) of Katra Bazaar and his wife Jyoti (26); Ram Prasad (50); Vijay (36) of Bataura in Karnailganj; Vinod Kumar (60) of Patelnagar; Preeti Tiwari (35) of Badalpur Belsar; and Mahavir (30) of Itiyathok.

Meanwhile, in a separate incident in Piparpati locality of Ballia, the body of a newlywed was found hanging from a fan on Monday morning.

Police reached the spot and started investigation by taking possession of the body.

The deceased was married about two months back, on November 26, 2021.

Reports said that when Khushboo (28), wife of Barmeshwar Ojha of Piparpati village, did not come out of her room on Monday morning, the family members knocked on the door but got no answer. They called the police after which the door was broken open. The cops saw her body hanging from the ceiling fan with a dupatta.

As soon as the incident came to light, a crowd of villagers gathered there. Forensic team also reached the spot and collected evidence.

On the information of Inspector Virendra Mishra, SDM of Sadar, Zubair Ahmed, and CO of Bansdih, Preeti Tripathi, also reached the spot. The local police registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem.

Inspector Virendra Mishra said that it had come to the fore that the deceased had some dispute with her husband and because of this she committed suicide.Further investigation is going on.

The relatives of the deceased live in Delhi and they were informed of the incident.

Maha sees 12K dip in daily spike as it logs 28K fresh cases

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a significant drop in the Covid-19 infections, the daily Covid-19 cases came down by 12,519 cases to touch a tally of 28,826 in Maharashtra on Monday, even as the daily pandemic cases in Mumbai plunged further to 1857 cases.

On a day when the state recorded 86 Omicron cases in the state, the Covid-19 cases in the state dropped from 40,805 cases to 28,286 cases.

With the fresh cases reported on Monday, the total number of Covid-19 cases in the state went down from 75,07,225 cases to 75,35,511 cases.

Mumbai, where the daily infections have been dropping steadily for more than eight days, witnessed a further drop in the number of cases from 2,550 to 1,8567 on Monday. With the latest cases, the total number of cases in Mumbai mounted from 10,34,833 ro 10,36,690.

As 21,941 Covid-19 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March 2020 increased from 70,67,955 cases to 70,89,936. The recovery rate in the state dropped from 94.15 per cent to 94.09 cases.

The number of "active cases" in the state increased from 2,93,305 cases to 2,99,604 cases. The fatality rate in the state dropped from 1.89 per cent to 1.88 per cent.

With no let up in the worsening Covid-19 situation in Pune, the active cases in Pune shot from 89,673 on Sunday to 93,426 on Monday.

The active cases in Mumbai rose from 19808 on Sunday to 21,142 cases, while the active cases in the neighbouring Thane came down from 38,597 cases to 35,478 cases.

Nagpur accounted for 26,122 cases, followed Nashik (16,268) Raigad (11,978), Ahmednagar (10,350) Satara (7812) and Aurangabad (7754).

Of the 7,35,11,861 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 75,35,511 have tested positive (10.25 per cent) for COVID-19 until Monday.

Akhilesh pro-Pakistan and pro-Jinnah: Sambit Patra

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bharatiya Janata Party national spokesperson Sambit Patra hit out at Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, terming him a pro-Pakistani and pro-Jinnah leader and alleging that he had tried to free terrorists during his tenure as chief minister of Uttar Pradesh.

Addressing media in Lucknow on Monday, Patra said, "On UP Foundation Day, Yogi ji, Modi ji are congratulating all the people of the state on Uttar Pradesh's foundation day, while Akhilesh ji said in an interview in a newspaper that he does not consider Pakistan as the real enemy of India. Now you tell me who brought Pakistan and Jinnah in the election. Akhilesh Yadav must apologise for such a statement. Jo Jinnah se kare pyaar, woh Pakistan se kaise kare inkaar."

Accusing the SP chief of indulging in the politics of appeasement, the BJP leader said, "The SP is giving tickets to people like Nahid Hasan. If Akhilesh ji has his way, he would have named Yakub Memon too. Thankfully, Kasab was hanged or else SP would have made him its star campaigner and put him on campaign trail."

Training guns at the Samajwadi Party, Patra said that Akhilesh ji was not able to release the next list of his candidates because the list is full of goons, mafia like the previous one. Daring the SP chief, he asked Akhilesh to release his list of candidates and said that the list would expose him before the public. Sambit Patra also congratulated the people of Uttar Pradesh on the 73rd foundation day of the state and delved on how the state has been progressing under the double-engine government of the BJP since 2017.

"On one side there is Yogi Adityanath who is focused on development, while on the other side there is Akhilesh Yadav who is talking about Pakistan," he said.

Mounting a blistering attack on Akhilesh Yadav Patra said, "Akhilesh is saying that the opinion poll should be banned. I can say with certainty that on March 10 they will again cry over the EVMs being partisan. This election is between BJP and SP's expressways. The BJP's expressway is Ganga Expressway, Purvanchal Expressway, Bundelkhand Expressway, Gorakhpur Link Expressway while the SP's unique selling proposition have been gundai expressway, rangdari expressway and mafia expressway.

Indian bizman...

From Page 1

The cricketer said next day morning "the same men stormed " into his hotel room and showed video taken in the previous night and told him that if he did not spot fix at international matches for them, the video would be released to the public. Without naming anyone, Taylor said six men threatened him and gave him US$15,000 and promised additional US$20,000 after I completed the job of match-fixing. "I took money so I could get on a plane and leave India. I felt I had no choice at the time because saying no was clearly not an option. All I knew was I had to get out of there," he said.

Taylor said that after this incident he was suffering from stress which severely impacted his mental and physical health. "The 'businessman' wanted a return on his investment which I could not and would not give. It took me four months to report this offense and interaction to the ICC," said Taylor, adding that ICC is going to impose a multi-year ban on him. "And so, I would like to let you know that on Tuesday January 25 I am checking into a rehabilitation center to get clean and to get my life back on track," said Taylor in his four-page long letter.

A vendor selling Tricolor flags waits for customers ahead of Republic Day, in Guwahati on Monday PTI

Capt...

From Page 1

Taking on his bete-noire and Congress' Punjab unit chief Navjot Sidhu, Singh said, "Our bravehearts are fighting Pakistan at the borders. Yet, Sidhu wants to hug it out with the enemy."

Singh was referring to Sidhu hugging Pakistan Army Chief General Bajwa during the oath taking ceremony of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan.

After resigning from Punjab chief ministership, Singh quit the Congress and floated his own party Punjab Lok Congress and forged alliance with the BJP and SAD (Sanyukt).

The BJP's is paying the role of senior partner in the alliance in Punjab, where it had always played second fiddle in its more than two-decade long alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal. Elections for 117 seats in Punjab will be held in single phase on February 20. Punjab is likely to see a five-cornered contest this election between the farmers' political outfit, the BJP and its allies, Congress, AAP and SAD. *PTI*

Investors...

From Page1

It has been a quite broad-based correction across sectors and marketcaps, although the more expensively valued names and the recent IPO new age companies have seen a sharper cut," Milind Muchhala, Executive Director, Julius Baer, told news agency PTI.

The weakness largely mimics the rot in the global markets over the past couple of weeks, especially in the US markets, on continuing concerns of sticky inflation and Fed's action/rhetoric, he added.

PTI quoted Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, saying," Sell-off in global markets, weak Q3 results, and pre-budget nervousness triggered heavy sell-off in the domestic bourses as risk sentiment took a blow ahead of the FOMC meeting starting tomorrow." Investors are keenly awaiting the result of the two-day Fed meeting where the US Central Bank is expected to provide more guidance on its rate hike plans, he added.

While all sectors hit rough weather, stocks of the new-age tech companies were the most affected due to a drop in growth of profitability amid expensive valuations, Nair said.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Hong Kong and Seoul ended with losses, while Tokyo and Shanghai were positive. Equities in Europe were witnessing intense selling pressure in mid-session deals. Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude rose 0.32 per cent to USD 88.17 per barrel. On the forex market front, the rupee weakened by 17 paise to end at 74.60 against the US dollar on Monday. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) remained net sellers in the capital market, as they sold shares worth ₹3,148.58 crore on Friday, according to stock exchange data.

Covid...

From Page 1

"Despite a lower risk of severe disease and death following infection than previous SARS-CoV-2 variants, the very high levels of transmission nevertheless have resulted in significant increases in hospitalisation, continue to pose overwhelming demands on health care systems in most countries, and may lead to significant morbidity, particularly in vulnerable populations," the WHO said.

In India, with the addition of 3.06 lakh cases reported on Monday, the Covid tally in India -- the second worst-hit country after the US -- now stands at 3.95 crore.The active cases now comprise 5.69 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has decreased to 93.07 per cent.

As many as 439 people have died of Covid during the past 24-hour period, according to the Health Ministry. At least 60 per cent of the patients who died during the current wave of Covid pandemic were either partially or fully unvaccinated, said the government in a statement.

Maharashtra added 40,805 COVID-19 cases, taking its tally to 75,07,225, while 44 fatalities put the total number of deaths at 1,42,115. Delhi added 9,197 new cases, which is 19 per cent lower than yesterday's number (11,486). At 13.3 per cent, the positivity rate (the number of cases detected per 100 tests) saw a dip from 16.3 per cent a day before.

Kind Attention Rail Passengers

IMPORTANT NOTICE

In view of Republic Day Parade on 26.01.2022 (Wednesday) the movement of trains over Tilak Bridge during the Parade period will remain suspended. As a result the following trains will be regulated & diverted as under:

REGULATION OF TRAINS ON 26.01.2022

Train No. & Name	Station and Duration of Regulation
12204 Amritsar - Saharsa Garib Rath Exp.	These trains may likely to be regulated at New Delhi Station till clearance of parade as per instructions received from security agencies.
00158 Adarsh Nagar - Savda Kisan Spl.	
20506 New Delhi - Dibrugarh Rajdhani Exp.	
20504 New Delhi - Dibrugarh Rajdhani Exp.	
11078 Jammu Tawi - Pune Jn. Jhelum Exp.	
15128 New Delhi-Banaras Kashi Vishwnath Exp.	
12925 Bandra Terminus-Amritsar Paschim Exp.	These trains may likely to be regulated between Faridabad - Hazrat Nizamuddin as per instructions received from security agencies.
12715 Huzur Sahib Nanded - Amritsar Sachkhand Express	
22125 Nagpur - Amritsar AC Express	

DIVERSION/REGULATION OF TRAINS ON 26.01.2022

Train No. & Name	Diverted Route
04444 New Delhi - Ghaziabad MEX Special	Will be diverted to run via New Delhi - Delhi Jn. Delhi Shahdara - Sahibabad
14315 Bareilly - New Delhi Intercity Express	Will be diverted via Sahibabad - Delhi Shahdara - Delhi Jn. - New Delhi
12423 Dibrugarh - New Delhi Rajdhani Exp.	These trains may likely to be regulated or diverted via Sahibabad - Delhi Shahdara - Delhi Jn. - New Delhi as per instructions received from security agencies.
12313 Sealdah - New Delhi Rajdhani Exp.	
12056 Dehradun-New Delhi Janshatabdi Exp.	
12877 Ranchi - New Delhi Garib Rath Exp.	
20839 Ranchi - New Delhi Rajdhani Exp.	
12033 Kanpur Central-New Delhi Shatabdi Exp.	
12581 Banaras - New Delhi Express	
20801 Islampur - New Delhi Magadh Exp.	
12523 New Jalpaiguri - New Delhi Exp.	

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

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

Visit RailMadad Website :- www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Download RailMadad app.

162/22 RailMadad Helpline No. 139 Please join us on Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Modi interacts with PM...

From Page 1

Talking to Kumari Remona Evette Pereira from Karnataka, the Prime Minister discussed her passion for Indian Dance. He inquired about the difficulties she faced in pursuing her passion. The Prime Minister complimented her mother for ignoring her own adversities to realise her daughter's dreams.

Interacting with Kumari Puhabi Chakraborti of Tripura, the Prime Minister enquired about her Covid related innovation. She also informed the Prime Minister about her fitness app for sportspersons.

Talking with Master Dhiraj Kumar from West Champaran, Bihar, the Prime Minister asked about the incident where he saved his younger brother from a crocodile attack. Prime Minister asked about his state of mind while saving his younger brother and how he feels after the fame he got now.

Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister noted that these awards become all the more significant in the light of the fact that they have been conferred during the important period when the country is celebrating 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.'

He said this is the time to draw energy from the past and dedicate oneself to achieving great results in the coming 25 years of the Amrit kaal.

Modi also greeted the daughters of the country on National Girl Child Day. The Prime Minister remembered the glorious history of the Freedom Struggle and the contribution of Birbala Kanaklata Barua, Khudiram Bose and Rani Gaidinilu.

"These fighters had made the country's freedom the mission of their lives at a very young age and had dedicated themselves for it" the Prime Minister noted.

The Prime Minister remarked that a digital statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose has also been installed near India Gate in Delhi. "We get the biggest inspiration from Netaji - duty of the nation first. Taking inspiration from Netaji, you have to proceed on the path of duty for the country", Modi added.

He referred to increasing role of women in the national development. The Prime Minister said in areas where daughters were not even allowed earlier, daughters are doing wonders in them today. "This is the new India, which does not hold back from innovating, courage and determination are the hallmarks of India today", he said.

Delhi...

From Page 1

The restriction on sale of liquor on dry days will not apply to the service of alcohol to occupants in case of hotels having L-15 license, said the order. Earlier, the dry days numbered 21 including on birth anniversary of great leaders and religious festivals.The business premises of a licensee will be kept closed on dry day. The order said that apart from the above three dry days, the government may declare any other day in the year as 'Dry Day' from time to time. The licensees will not be entitled to any compensation on account of any changes related to number of 'dry days'.

Twitter...

From Page 1

The tweet read, "Sister! The memories of sages-saints and revolutionaries of the freedom movement have been preserved in Shri Gorakshapeeth, the Tapobhoomi of Baba Gorakhnath ji in Gorakhpur. There are temples of Hindu gods and goddesses. This center of social justice is working for the welfare of all. Come sometime, there will be peace. The difference is clear!'

The BSP chief continued her attack on the BJP on Monday when she wrote: "It would have been better if the CM of UP, along with the praise of his Government, had also mentioned some works related to the public interest of the BSP Government, because they should know that BSP had launched schemes of giving houses to the poor and land to the landless. The Government's record has been better". She also wrote, "Under Manyavar Kanshi Ram Ji and the Shahari Garib Awas Yojana by the BSP Government, more than one and a half lakh pucca houses were given in only two phases and many families got the benefit under Sarvajan Hitaya Garib Awas Ownership Scheme. The land was also given to lakhs of landless families."

AI's handover to Tatas expected on...

From Page 1

In his email, Hejmadi appreciated the employees for their works and sought support from them.

"We have done an excellent job till now in providing all support for the disinvestment exercise. The next three days will be hectic for our department and I request all of you to give your best in these last three four days before we get divested," he added.

"If there is no disagreement on the balance sheet, it would be handed over any day after Republic Day", said sources in the Ministry. The Government has decided to complete the process on January 27 and will decide whether the company will take over the airline now or not. The handover was to be done in December but got delayed due to the various pending approvals. Following delays in finalising the balance sheet of the airline and procuring the necessary approvals from global regulators, the targeted timeline for the closure of the agreement was extended till January end.

The transfer of Air India to Tata Group was earlier supposed to be concluded on 23 January. However, this has since then been pushed by a few days and will be concluded by end of the month," sources added.

As per the RTI reply by the ministry of civil aviation, the various Government departments and ministries had pending payments amounting to Rs 278.49 crore to Air India till October last year.

The Government on October 11, 2021, issued a Letter of Intent (LoI) to the Tata group confirming the Government's willingness to sell its 100 per cent stake in the airline. On October 25, the Centre signed the share purchase agreement (SPA) for this deal. As a part of the deal, the Tata group will also be handed over Air India Express and a 50 percent stake in ground handling arm Air India SATS.

Tatas had on October 8 beat the Rs 15,100-crore offer by a consortium led by SpiceJet promoter Ajay Singh and the reserve price of Rs 12,906 crore set by the government for the sale of its 100 percent stake in the loss-making carrier.

While this will be the first privatisation since 2003-04, Air India will be the third airline brand in the Tatas' stable - it holds a majority interest in AirAsia India and Vistara, a joint venture with Singapore Airlines Ltd.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of ICICI Bank Ltd. that Mr. Navender Acharya & Mrs. Soma Acharya were the joint owners of **House / Flat Bearing No. 85C, in Block D-1, (Aravali Type), in Sector – 52, Noida Distt. Gautambudh Nagar, U. P. (the said property)** by virtue of Lease Cum Sale deed dated 17.08.2007 and after demise of late Mr. Navender Acharya his widow Mrs. Soma Acharya, is claiming ownership of ½ remaining share owned by her husband late Mr. Navender Acharya on the basis of Mutation letter dated16.12.2019 in the record of Noida Authority, All persons including other legal heirs if any are hereby informed that above mentioned owner want to sell the said property, to Mrs. Mamta Baghel who is taking Loan from ICICI Bank Ltd., for purchase of the said property, if anybody has any objection/s upon the ownership of Mrs. Mamta Baghel upon the above property its sale /Mortgage/litigation, and any kind of objections, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 10 days of the present.

Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
200, IInd Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, N. Delhi-15
Ph : 011-41112527-28 kumarassociates.advocate@gmail.com

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ASSEMBLY POLLS IN FIVE STATES

CM launches 'Ek Mauka Kejriwal Ko' campaign

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Monday launched a campaign for poll-bound States, appealing Delhiites to upload videos of the Delhi Government's 'good work' on social media platforms.

Launching the 'Ek Mauka Kejriwal Ko' (one chance to Kejriwal) campaign, the AAP National Convener said the party volunteers to ensure maximum visibility of videos and make them viral on different social media platforms.

Kejriwal added that the AAP Government in Delhi has done a number of good works such as providing free electricity and water. The Minister urged city people to share videos with their acquaintances in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Goa and Uttarakhand so that locals of these poll-bound states will learn about AAP and give them a chance.

Addressing Delhi people, the AAP minister said he has worked with relentless honesty throughout his life and do not have crores to spend on elections. "My most valuable asset is the support of the people of Delhi; if they decide to give AAP some time, then no one can stop us from rising to power. We could transform Delhi because the public showed faith in us and gave us a chance to form the government," he said mentioning how ruling AAP Government in Delhi changed their policies on education and health favoring common man.

"We will only be able to replicate the Delhi Model all over India if people in other states too trust and support us like Delhiites. Under the campaign, the residents of Delhi can make videos highlighting the fantastic work done by the Kejriwal Government and how it has helped them. I will personally meet 50 Delhiites whose videos get the most viral and invite them for dinner," he added.

"I want to make a humble appeal to the people of Delhi. For the last seven years, the AAP Government of Delhi has done tremendous work across the State. We have become a globally appreciated government. UN teams came to see the Mohalla Clinics, the First Lady of the US came to see our schools.

The residents of Delhi get free electricity supply 24x7. All of this was possible because of the support of the Delhiites. It was possible because the people showed faith in our ideas and gave us a chance to serve them. After seeing our 49 days long Government in 2013, the people elected us with thumping majorities in 2015 and 2020. We are being elected to power continuously because the Delhiites are not just pleased with our work but in awe of it too. Be it schools, hospitals, electricity, water, roads, we completely changed how people perceived these services to be. We fulfilled every promise we made," he added.

Demanding supports from Delhiites for active participation in digital campaign ahead elections in five states, Kejriwal said, " Make a video like this and share it on social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, and whatever other avenue you see. AAP is currently contesting elections in Punjab, Uttarakhand, Goa, and Uttar Pradesh. If you have any contacts in these states, you should share your video on WhatsApp and encourage your acquaintances to vote for the Aam Aadmi Party in their respective states. Tell the people there that if they, like you, give Arvind Kejriwal a chance, their lives would also change for the better."

Guidelines issued for R-Day

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the Republic Day celebration round the corner in the national Capital, the Delhi Police on Monday issued important guidelines stating that those attending the parade will have to bring their vaccine certificate, follow Covid-19 appropriate behaviour and co-operate with the security staff.

Taking to Twitter, the Delhi Police urged all the visitors attending the Republic Day celebrations to follow Covid-19 appropriate behaviour. Listing its guidelines, the Delhi Police tweeted that the seating blocks will open fit visitors at 7 am and they are requested to arrive accordingly.

"It is necessary to have both disses of anti-corona vaccine, visitors are requested to bring the vaccine certificate," it tweeted.

The force has strictly said that children below 15 years of age are not allowed in the function.

Since parking is limited, visitors have been advised to use carpool or taxi. The are also requested to carry a valid ID card and co-operate in the security check, it said.

"There will be provision for depositing remote controlled car lock keys in each parking area," the Delhi Police tweeted.

On Sunday, the Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana said that over 27,000 police personnel have been deployed for security duties in the national capital and anti-terror measures intensified.

These personnel include deputy commissioners of police, assistant commissioners of police and inspectors, sub-inspectors. Armed Police Force personnel and commandos, officers and jawans of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) have also been deployed, he said.

Security beefed up at Rajpath in view of the forthcoming Republic Day celebrations,in New Delhi on Monday
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Briefing the media about the Republic Day security arrangements, Asthana on Sunday said a total of 27,723 Delhi Police personnel including 71 DCPs, 213 ACPs and 753 inspectors have been deployed in the capital for the Republic Day parade. They are being assisted by 65 companies of CAPFs.

He mentioned that the anti-terror measures taken includes blockades (nakka bandi) at various places, checking of vehicles, hotels, lodges and dharamshalas and various verification drives like that of tenants, servants, labourers. So, in the last two months, the anti-terror measures have been intensified intensively.

Counter Drone technology is being used for air space security. The security in and around the area where the Republic Day celebrations will take place has also been secured with the help of Delhi Police along with other agencies, he said.

Along with creating awareness, Asthana said that through social media, they also put out facts and important information so that no anti-social elements run a misinformation campaign, Asthana asserted.

About traffic arrangements, he said an advisory had already been issued stating specific restrictions on routes so that no inconvenience is caused to the general public.

Delhi court frames sedition charge against Sharjeel Imam, denies him bail

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Monday framed charges under sedition against JNU student Sharjeel Imam and denied him bail in a case related to alleged inflammatory speeches made by him during the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) in 2019.

"Accused is directed to be charged for the offences under sections 124A (sedition), 153A (promoting enmity on grounds of religion), 153B (assertions prejudicial to national integration), 505 (statements conducing to public mischief), of Indian Penal Code and section 13 (punishment for unlawful activities) of UAPA. Vide separate order, the application filed by Sharjeel Imam for grant of regular bail is dismissed," Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat ordered.

As per the prosecution, Imam had allegedly made speeches at Jamia Millia Islamia on December 13, 2019, and at Aligarh Muslim University on December 16, 2019, where he threatened to cut off Assam and the rest of the Northeast from India. Imam, while seeking bail, said that his speeches do not fall within the meaning of Sedition. "Where is the call of violence? How does Sedition come into play? The context is to block the roads. How is this seditious? He called for a greater federal structure. That was the intent," his lawyer had argued before the court.

Whereas, the prosecution claimed that his speeches incited hatred, contempt, and disaffection towards the Central Government and instigated the people which led to the violence in December 2019.

"In the garb of CAA, he (Imam) exhorted people of a particular community to block highways leading to major cities and resort to 'chakka jaam'. Also, in the name of opposing CAA, he openly threatened to cut off Assam and other Northeastern states from the rest of the country," the Delhi Police's chargesheet stated.

Imam is in judicial custody since January 2020. He is also one of the accused in the Delhi riots conspiracy case. In his defence, Imam had earlier told the court that he is not a terrorist and his prosecution is a "whip of a monarch rather than a government established by law". Whereas, the prosecution claimed that violent riots took place pursuant to Imam's speech. Delhi Police had filed a charge sheet against Imam in the case, in which it alleged that he allegedly gave speeches inciting hatred, contempt, and disaffection towards the Central Government and instigated the people which led to the violence in December 2019. ***PTI***

DCW writes to police seeking man's arrest for torturing grandmother

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) on Monday sent a notice to city police seeking immediate arrest of grandson of a 70-year-old woman who was being allegedly tortured by him for her property. Police said that First Information Report (FIR) has been registered in the matter.

According to a DCW official, the 70-year-old woman had approached the Commission through DCW's 181 women helpline on 20 January after which their team visited her that day and helped her in filing an FIR in the matter.

"The woman who resides in East Vinod Nagar in Delhi informed DCW that she was facing constant harassment and torture from her grandson who is after her property. She further stated that in spite of her refusal, her grandson brought a dog six months back to her home and despite several requests, refused to remove it from her property," said the DCW official.

Expressing fear for her life, she informed the Commission that on January 13, her grandson instigated the dog to viciously attack her. The team met her and saw that she had serious wounds all over her hands.

DCW team immediately took her to Kalyanpuri police station where an FIR under section 289 (Negligent conduct with respect to animal) of Indian Penal Code was filed in the matter.

"It is matter of property dispute. An FIR has been registered in the matter and an investigation is going on," said a senior police official.

Seeing the seriousness of the matter, the Commission has asked the police to give details of steps being taken for ensuring the safety of the lady as well as to provide a detailed action taken report in the matter by January 31.

DCW Chairperson Swati Maliwal while expressing outrage over the incident stated, " Stringent action must be taken in the matter against the grandson and other culprits. Police must also ensure the lady's safety. I have sought a detailed report from Delhi Police."

City reports 5,760 new Covid cases

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi on Monday registered 5,760 daily cases of Covid-19 and the tests positivity rate recorded at 11.79 per-cent. According to the State health bulletin, 37.7 per cent dip in daily cases of coronavirus recorded from Sunday's cases 9,197. As per Government data, a total of 14,386 patients recovered from the virus in the last 24 hours while 30 people succumbed to the infection. On Sunday, the positivity rate declined to 13.32 from 16.36 per cent on Saturday, 45 deaths were also reported, the highest since June 5th.

On January 13, Delhi had reported 28,867 Covid-19 cases, the sharpest single-day spike since the beginning of the pandemic. With the addition of new cases on Monday, the active Covid-19 cases in Delhi stands at 39,380. Of these, 36,838 patients are in home isolation. A total of 2,290 Covid-19 positive patients are admitted in hospitals, of which 808 are on oxygen support, including 160 patients who are on ventilators, the data showed.

A health worker wearing personal protective equipment collects a nasal swab sample to test for the Covid-19 virus in New Delhi on Monday
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Mother among 4 held for selling baby for ₹2 Lakh

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested four persons, including a 30-year-old woman who had set a deal of ₹two lakhs to sell her one-month-old child for cash. Police said that to nab the accused and recover the baby safely, two police personnel posed as decoy customers and set a deal of Rs two lakhs to purchase the baby.

The accused have been identified as Praveen Khatoon (45), Santosh (35), Madhu Singh (30) and their only male associate Satish (35). Madhu Singh, a resident of Uttam Nagar wanted to sell her one-month-old baby for cash through the three alleged brokers.

According to Sagar Singh Kalsi, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), North district, on Saturday, the police team at Sabzi Mandi in North Delhi received information about involved of Praveen Khatoon in selling minor children and acting on the tip off, a raiding team was formed comprising of Sub-Inspector Lalit Kumar along with staff.

"Constable Rakesh and Woman Constable Anju, posed themselves as a fake couple and approached the suspects to purchase a child. After following due procedure, the informer introduced Praveen Khatoon and her associate Satish. Praveen Khatoon and Satish told Constable Rakesh that a woman Santosh, who resides at Mangolpuri would arrange a minor child," said the DCP.

"After that the police personnel who posed as decoy customers reached Manoglpuri wherein they met Santosh who then called Madhu at the spot who came with her one-month female child at her house.

After finalizing the deal, on the pretext of full payment, Constables -- Rakesh and Anju brought all the four alleged along with minor girl child at Barfkhana, Subzi Mandi here where Constable Rakesh paid cash ₹ 50,000 to Praveen Khatoon," said the DCP.

"Praveen Khatoon kept ₹10,000 as her share and then handed over ₹30,000 to Madhu, Rs. 4,000 to Satish, ₹6,000 to Santosh. After receiving the amount, accused Madhu handed over the custody of the child to constable Anju. Then constable Rakesh alerted his staff who nabbed all the four accused persons and recovered the amount from their possession," the DCP said.

"A case was registered at Subzi Mandi police station. During interrogation, Praveen Khatoon and Santosh were operating the gang of selling and purchasing minor children. They searched for persons, who intended to buy their children for money and made arrangements to sell minor children and Madhu wanted to sell her one month old female child for money," said the DCP.

"Mobile phones of accused Praveen Khatoon and Satish were analysed and found that there are many photographs of minor children found in their devices," police said, adding that all the previous antecedents of the accused are being verified.

PICTALK

Government buildings along the Rajpath, illuminated in the colours of the Tricolour ahead of Republic Day, at Vijay Chowk in New Delhi on Monday PTI

DTCP Dept for FIR against 31 offenders for illegal colonies in Gurugram

Gurugram: To tighten the noose on offenders who are indulging in developing illegal colonies in several parts of Gurugram, the District Town and Country Planning (DTCP) department has recommended 7 FIR against such 31 offenders at Farrukhnagar and Bhondsi police station.

The officials said the department has served notices in connection with developing illegal colonies to them and even the department has also conducted demolition drives in such areas.

"We used to organise awareness campaigns from time to time so that the innocent people could not invest their hard-earned money in such illegal colonies. These offenders are involved in public at large. We have recommended FIR against them at two police stations of Gurugram," DTP R.S. Bhath said.

According to data shared by the department, these offenders were involved to develop illegal colonies in Farrukhnagar, Ghamroj and Bhondsi.

The officials assume that they used to develop colonies between 1.6 acres to 6 acres of land. All colonies were at initial stages and demarcation of plots by way of DPCs, boundary walls was being done. ***SR***

20 dengue cases in first three weeks of January: Civic body

New Delhi: At least 20 cases of dengue have been reported in the national Capital in the first three weeks of January this year, according to a civic report released on Monday.

For the January 1-22 period, no cases were recorded in the preceding three years, while three cases was logged in 2017 and five in 2018, as per the report. Cases of vector-borne diseases are usually reported between July and November, but the period may stretch till mid-December.

Last year, 9,613 dengue cases, the highest number of cases of the vector-borne disease recorded in the national Capital in a year since 2015, and 23 deaths were reported.

As per the civic report on vector-borne diseases released on Monday, a total of 20 dengue cases have been recorded this year till January 22, with five fresh cases added in the past one week. In the years prior to 2021, the total dengue cases reported were -- 4431 (2016), 4726 (2017), 2798 (2018), 2036 (2019) and 1072 (2020), as per the report. ***PTI***

Govt holds consultation on Aggregator Scheme

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Government on Monday convened a virtual round-table consultation to deliberate on the various contours of Aggregator Scheme 2021

The round-table consultation was attended by over 100 participants from on-demand service mobility operators, fleet aggregators, Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), last-mile delivery operators, civil society organisations and experts in a virtual meeting.

More than 80 industry leaders participated in the discussion and shared their feedback and suggestions on the seamless implementation of the fleet aggregator scheme.

The round-table consultation started with the inaugural address and keynote speeches highlighting the intent of the Delhi Government to achieve a transition of 10% of the new-onboarded two-wheelers and three-wheelers by aggregators to be electric within the first 3 months from the launch of the scheme, and 50% in the first year of the scheme. Similarly, under the scheme, the aggregators will be required to convert 5% of their new onboarded four-wheelers to electric within 3 months, and 25% by the first year of the scheme.

Gahlot, Minister of Transport, Delhi Government said, "Delhi has become the first State Government to notify an Aggregator Policy to mandate electric vehicle fleets for ride aggregators and delivery services." He added, "The state government has also launched the state's electric vehicle website, which serves as a one-stop destination for all insights on electric vehicles in Delhi."

Highlighting the need for partnerships and collaboration across the EV ecosystem and the adoption of aggregator policy by the Transport Department, Ashish Kundra, Principal Secretary-cum-Commissioner (Transport) said, "We are committed to promote the adoption of electric vehicles in the city to address the issue of growing air pollution. However, we are keen to ensure a smooth transition of the ecosystem and not create major disruptions. The draft scheme conveys the intent of the Delhi Government, and subsequently, the feedback and suggestions received on the scheme shall enable us to create a conducive environment for these businesses to operate and flourish."

Two Hindu bodies move SC, seek to intervene as parties in Haridwar case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Two Hindu organisations "Hindu Sena" and "Hindu Front for Justice" have moved the Supreme Court seeking to intervene as parties in a pending plea in which notices have been issued to the Centre and others on allegations of hate speeches made against Muslim communities at Haridwar and New Delhi. The bench, headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana, on January 12, had sought responses from the Centre, Utttarakhand and Delhi Police on the PIL filed by journalist Qurban Ali and former Patna High Court judge and senior advocate Anjana Prakash seeking direction to ensure investigation and action against those who allegedly made hate speeches during the two events held recently in Haridwar and the national Capital.

One intervention application filed by Vishnu Gupta, National President of NGO 'Hindu Sena', through lawyer Barun Kumar Sinha, has sought directions to the State Governments to register FIRs against AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi and others including Tauqeer Raza, Sajid Rashidi, Amanatullah Khan, Waris Pathan for allegedly making hate speeches against Hindu community and its God and Goddesses.

"The applicants herein through the present application are praying to this court to direct an SIT to investigate the hate speeches given against the members of the Hindu community, their gods and goddesses," Gupta said in the plea.

Member of the Central Waqf Council, under Ministry of Minority Affairs, Rais Khan Pathan has filed a complaint against Taukeer Raza Khan, who allegedly gave a hate speech against the Hindus on January 7, 2022. In his complaint at local Rakhiyal Police Station in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Pathan has requested the State Government for lodging an FIR against Taukeer for inflammatory speech

SC to hear petition over FCRA registration

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said it would hear on Tuesday a petition which has sought quashing of the Centre's decision by which 5,789 entities lost their Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) registration.

The FCRA registration is mandatory for any association and NGO to receive foreign funding. The plea, filed by US-based NGO 'Global Peace Initiative', came up for hearing before a bench comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar and C T Ravikumar.

The bench said the matter would be heard on Tuesday.

There were 22,762 FCRA-registered organisations till December 31, 2021.

On January 1, the number came down to 16,829. These are considered "live" organisations. The officials had said the FCRA licences of 18,778 organisations were expiring between September 29, 2020 and December 31, 2021.

Out of them, as many as 12,989 organisations have applied for renewal of the FCRA licence between September 30, 2020 and December 31, 2021.

Since 5,789 organisations did not apply for the renewal of the FCRA licence, they were deemed to have ceased to be registered organisations, an official had said. In addition to them, renewal application of 179 organisations were also rejected by the Home Ministry due to different reasons.

50% Covid 1st wave +ve face life-long loss of smell

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

From the early pandemic days, sudden loss of smell, or an impaired or distorted perception of odours, emerged as an unusual symptom of Covid. While some people recovered, for some the sense of smell never quite returned to normal. Now a preliminary study has said that about 50 per cent of people infected with Covid-19 during the first wave of infections in 2020 may have long-term and even permanent changes to their sense of smell.

Scientists at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm found this after they ran comprehensive tests on 100 individuals who caught Covid in the first wave of infections in 2020. The findings of the yet-to-be peer-reviewed study showed that 18 months after recovering from Covid 4 percent people lost their sense of smell entirely.

However, a third had a reduced ability to detect odours, and nearly half complained of parosmia — where the sense of smell is distorted. The team concluded that 65 per cent of those who recovered from Covid displayed either a loss of smell, a reduced sense of smell, or distortions to the sense 18 months after the infection, compared with 20 per cent of those who had not caught the virus, the report said.

"Given the amount of time since [the] initial insult to the olfactory system, it is likely that these olfactory problems are permanent," they wrote. According to the UK Health Security Agency, a loss of smell or taste is less than half as common with Omicron than the Delta variant.

But there is no reliable data demonstrating that Omicron is less dangerous to the olfactory system, Johan Lundstrom, who led the research at the Karolinska Institute, was quoted as saying in the media reports.

A severe loss of smell could also lead to depression and to people changing their diets, often for the worse, causing them to put on weight, Lundstrom said.

"When you cannot smell, all you can sense is the five basic taste qualities, tactile sensations and spices," he said. "Unconsciously, people start to add more sugar and fat, or have an increased urge for fried food for the texture, all to get some enjoyment out of eating."

Lundstrom stated that people can get help by doing olfactory training. "They might not regain 100 per cent of past performance, but most of them will, with training, get back to a point where their reduced sense of smell will not affect their lives," he said.

Cong releases list of 30 star campaigners for UP polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Monday released its list of 30 star campaigners for the first-phase Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh, naming party president Sonia Gandhi, former prime minister Manmohan Singh, former party chief Rahul Gandhi, new entrant Kanhaiya Kumar and some of the G-23 leaders.

Former Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and former Rajya Sabha member Raj Babbar are among the G-23 leaders named as star campaigners. The group of 23 Congress leaders had earlier raised questions on the functioning of the party and sought an organisational overhaul.

Former Rajasthan deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot, who had revolted against its own government in the state led by Ashok Gehlot, also figures among the 30 star campaigners. AICC general secretary in-charge of Uttar Pradesh Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot and Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel are also among the star campaigners.

The list includes state party chief Ajay Kumar Lallu, Congress Legislature Party leader in the assembly Aradhana Misra 'Mona', former union ministers Salman Khurshid and RPN Singh, and former Rajya Sabha members Pramod Tiwari and P L Punia.

Party leaders Deepinder Singh Hooda, Supriya Shrinate, Imran Pratapgarhi and Kanhaiya Kumar are also among the 30 star campaigners of the Congress. In the first of the seven phases, polling will be held in 58 assembly constituencies spread over 11 districts on February 10.

The districts which are going to poll in the first phase are Shamli, Muzaffarnagar, Baghpat, Meerut, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddh Nagar, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Mathura and Agra. The final-phase polling will be on March 7 and the results will be declared on March 10.

EC issues guidelines for video van campaigning

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While allowing the political parties to use video vans for campaigning in poll-bound States, the Election Commission has made it clear that the vehicle cannot stop at any viewing point for more than 30 minutes.

It had cautioned that the video van events should not cause inconvenience to the people and should not be a hindrance to smooth flow of traffic.

After allowing use of video vans on Saturday, the Commission had issued instructions to its chief electoral officers on use of such vehicles for campaigning by parties. 'The video van of the political party should be used to propagate its programme and policies to seek votes. Votes or support for any particular candidate should not be solicited," the EC letter to the Chief Electoral Officers read.

However, if the video van is used for seeking votes or support for a candidate then the expenditure of the video van should be accounted for by such candidate appropriately.

"Expenditure observers to closely monitor this," the letter underlined.The vans can only be operated between 8 am and 8 pm and these vehicles cannot be used for rallies and roadshows.The parties are barred from displaying their campaigning material through these vehicles in market areas or crowded places.

It will be the responsibility of the political party to ensure that the maximum stoppage for viewing of the vehicle at any location is not more than 30 minutes, it said.

While extending the ban on physical election rallies till January 31 to curb the spread of Covid, the EC had on Saturday allowed video vans for publicity with usual Covid restrictions at designated open spaces with a maximum of 500 viewers.

After allowing use of video vans on Saturday, the Commission had issued instructions to its chief electoral officers on use of such vehicles for campaigning by parties.

Assembly polls are scheduled to be held in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur, Goa and Uttarakhand.

Poll panel to observe 12th National Voters' Day today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (EC) will observe the 12th National Voters' Day (NVD) on January 25 with the theme 'Making Elections Inclusive, Accessible, and Participative'. The topic of this year's NVD, 'Making Elections Inclusive, Accessible, and Participative,' envisions an emphasis on EC's commitment to facilitating active voter participation during elections and making the whole process hassle-free and memorable for all types of voters.

M Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President of India, has agreed to be the Chief Guest at the national occasion. However, because he will be unable to attend the celebration in person, his message will be given digitally at the event. Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister for Law and Justice, will be present at the event as the Guest of Honour. To mark the occasion, National Awards for the Best Electoral Practises for the year 2021-22 will be conferred on State and District level officers for their outstanding performance in the conduct of elections in different spheres such as IT initiatives, Security Management, Election Management, Accessible Elections and contribution in the field of voter awareness and outreach.

National Awards will also be given to important stakeholders like government departments, EC icons and media groups for their valuable contribution towards voters' awareness. During the function, the newly enrolled voters would also be felicitated and handed over their Elector Photo Identity Card (EPIC). The Commission has recently launched a new initiative to deliver the EPIC to newly enrolled voters, along with a personalised letter and a Voter Guidebook.

An EC Publication 'Leap of Faith: Journey of Indian Elections' will be released. The book narrates India's electoral history and the growth of representative and electoral principles in India as it evolved from the nineteenth to twenty first century.

PM, President enquire about VP Naidu's health

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were among the prominent personalities who spoke with Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Monday, who has tested positive for coronavirus, and enquired about his health.

According to officials in the Vice President Secretariat, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, several Cabinet ministers, chief ministers and leaders of various political parties also spoke to Naidu, who is in home isolation in Hyderabad. Naidu had tested positive for the virus on Sunday. This is for the second time the vice president, who is also Chairman of Rajya Sabha, has been infected with the virus.

"Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, who is in Hyderabad, tested COVID positive today. He has decided to remain in self-isolation for a week. He has advised all those who came in contact with him to isolate themselves and get tested," the Vice President Secretariat tweeted. It seems unlikely that he will participate in Republic Day celebrations on Wednesday.

Meanwhile results of 875 people, who were tested for Covid in Parliament, have returned positive, sources said days before the start of its Budget Session. The data, they said, is of tests conducted since the beginning of the third wave of the pandemic till January 20. The session is scheduled to start from January 31 and its first part will conclude on February 11.

As many as 2,847 tests have been conducted in Parliament since the starting of the third wave, and out of these results of 875 returned positive, the sources said. Out of the total tests, 915 were conducted by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat and 271 samples were found to be positive for the infection, they said. According to the sources, the session will be held following Covid-related protocols.

In the wake of a spike in Covid cases, a call has to be taken whether Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha will sit simultaneously or in different shifts, they said.

ED searches premises of AJIL

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has carried out search operations on at the business premises, bank lockers of Atlas Jewellery India Limited (AJIL) under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) at three places in Mumbai, Bengaluru and New Delhi and made a total seizure of Rs 26.59 crore in the form of fixed deposit, Indian currency, gold, silver and diamond jewellery.

The ED had initiated a money laundering investigation on the basis of an FIR. registered by the Kerala Police, Thrissur East Police Station, Thrissur against Atlas Jewellery, MM Ramachandran and Indira Ramachandran under various Sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for cheating South Indian Bank, Round South

Branch, Thrissur, Kerala, the ED said in a statement.

With an intention to cheat, these accused planned and presented forged documents to the bank and availed loan worth Rs 242.40 crore during the period March 21, 2013 to September 26, 2018 and have not repaid the money.

"Investigation revealed that MM Ramachandran had invested Rs 100 crore by way of purchase of equity shares of Atlas Jewellery India Limited (AJIL), New Delhi and transferred another Rs 14 crore in the Escrow Account with Axis Bank, New Delhi," it added.

₹69.14 cr assets of TN bizman attached under PMLA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached assets worth Rs 69.14 crore of Dhanraj Kochar, Tamil Nadu-based businessman and his family members under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in a cheating case.

The ED had initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by City Crime Branch (CCB), Tamil Nadu Police against Dhanraj Kochar, his family members and associates under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for cheating and criminal conspiracy of more than Rs 100 crore.

The ED had conducted a search operation on September 29 last year at the residential and business premises and bank lockers of Kochar and his family members and seized Indian currency and jewellery besides various incriminating documents.

Investigation by ED revealed that one MS Hameed and Kochar along with one Abdul Rawoof were the directors of a company –DR Foundations & Estates Private Limited, which was into real estate business. During 2005-06, the properties in Siruseri village under the jurisdiction of Thiruporur Sub Registrar Office, bifurcated in 20 property documents, were purchased out of funds invested by Hameed and his family members along with his business entity Paramount Builders, DR Foundations and Real Estates Pvt. Ltd. the ED said in a statement.

These properties were clandestinely transferred to the names of Kochar and his family members and some properties were directly purchased in their names from the funds invested by Hameed in the company.

"Some of the properties have also been sold in the interregnum. In order to prevent further sale of the said properties, which are proceeds of crime and to prevent frustration of further proceedings under PMLA, 2002, immovable properties and movable assets (in the form of FDs and jewellery) to the tune of Rs 69.14 crore of Dhanraj Kochar and his family members has been provisionally attached," it added.

National Girl Child Day: Min interacts with girl achievers in science, tech

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

On the occasion of National Girl Child Day, Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Monday interacted with girls who have excelled in the areas of science, technology and innovation.

Union Science and Technology Minister Singh said several Government schemes are instilling confidence among children to think innovatively, look for out-of-the-box solutions for different problems and to break the barriers of the past to undertake unconventional initiatives.

He stressed upon sustainable start-ups with viable livelihood linkage and new vocational opportunities.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's exhortation that "innovation is the key to realising the dream of new India," Singh reiterated all government support and help to young achievers and said empowerment of girls will lead to a better tomorrow.

During the online interaction, Digantika Bose, first-year B.Sc student from Bengaluru, said that she had developed a virus destroying mask which was preventive against the coronavirus also and the project was shared with the Department of Science & Technology. She sought the minister's help to market the mask, to which he promised her to help undertake an evidence-based trial before its marketing.

Manisha Ramola, first-year B.Sc student from Uttarakhand, has developed an Al-based solution designed to provide in-depth information on medicinal leaves and herbs with just a single image.

The minister complimented her for coming up with an innovation that combined ancient herbal medicine knowledge of the Himalayas with the futuristic concept of Artificial Intelligence.

Nishi Goswami from Panna in Madhya Pradesh demonstrated to the minister an Al-based Chatbot that provides consultation services like a doctor and answers health or medical queries to a user.

The minister brought to her notice that she had developed an AI-based interface between the patient and doctor. The same could be extended and linked with telemedicine. Vinisha Umashankar from Thiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu presented her solar ironing cart, while Manya Joshi, Class 12 student from Delhi, initiated a forecasting project for natural disasters.

Anushka Shrivastava, Class 12 student from Bhopal, came up with an eco-friendly water bottle.

Cong asks Govt to address income disparity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Citing a report that stated the incomes of the rich increased and that of the poor declined during the pandemic, the Congress on Monday alleged the Modi Government is for the rich and demanded that the union budget should focus on bridging the widening income divide.

"The entire country suffered during the Covid pandemic, but the poor and the middle class are also victims of the 'economic epidemic' of the Modi Government. The credit for digging this widening gap between the rich and the poor goes to the central government," former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said in a tweet.

He cited a report that claimed that incomes of the poor reduced by 53 per cent while that of the rich increased during Covid times. The report showed the widening disparity in annual household incomes, with the poorest 20 per cent of the population witnessing 52.6 per cent decline in their incomes and the lower middle class comprising 20 per cent facing a decline of 32.4 per cent in their income, while the richest (20 per cent) saw 39 per cent rise in their incomes.

Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate said at AICC press conference that the Modi government is only working for the benefit of the rich and the incomes of 20 per cent poor population have halved and the income of 60 per cent of the population has reduced to its lowest level during the Modi regime.

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"We categorically and assertively insist that the union budget must focus on bridging this divide.... The union budget should only focus on increasing money in the hands of the poor. The union budget should pay attention on how urban poverty is going up many fold and rural poverty in comparison has gone up," she said. Shrinate also demanded that the government institute a gross economic mismanagement index to know how badly mismanaged the Indian economy is.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala alleged that the "Modi government is only for the rich! It is now before us - 'The poor is poorer and 'Hum do, hamare do' is reaping silver."

Budget Session: Rajya Sabha to sit in morning, Lok Sabha in evening due to Covid restrictions

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The two Houses of Parliament will meet at separate times of the day for five hours each — Rajya Sabha in the first half and Lok Sabha in the second half — to ensure Covid distancing norms during the Budget Session beginning January 31.

Lok Sabha will meet at 11 am on February 1 for the presentation of the Union Budget and it will meet from 4 pm to 9 pm from February 2 to February 11, when the session will go on a recess.

During sittings of the Lower House of Parliament, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha chambers and their galleries will be used for seating of members in view of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, a Lok Sabha bulletin said.

While the exact timings of Rajya Sabha are yet to be formally notified, sources said the Upper House of Parliament could meet from 10 am to 3 pm.

A final decision on timing is yet to be taken as Rajya Sabha Chairman and Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu is infected with COVID-19 and has isolated himself in Hyderabad.

The budget session will begin on January 31 with the address of President Ram Nath Kovind to the joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament.

Air India to conduct pre-flight checks of cabin crew's grooming, body mass index

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Air India has decided to check grooming and measure the body mass index (BMI) of cabin crew members at the airports just before their flights, according to an official order. The carrier's two unions — Air India Employees' Union (AIEU) and All India Cabin Crew Association (AICCA) — on Monday wrote a letter to Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) Vikram Dev Dutt opposing the order on the grounds that it is dehumanising and in violation of rules prescribed by aviation regulator DGCA.

"BMI is a person's weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in metres. A high BMI can indicate high body fatness," stated the website of US' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The order dated January 20, 2022, has come days before Air India's hand over to the Tata group, which acquired the carrier in a competitive bidding process last year.

Cabin crew, who are well dressed and well groomed according to uniform standards and regulations, present a positive and professional image of the airline, the order stated.

"It is therefore emphasized that, all cabin crew adhere to uniform regulations communicated by the circular dated November 18, 2019," the order noted.

Assam, Nagaland resolve border row

Ready for out-of-court settlement, States to discuss with Shah in Feb: Rio

Kohima/Guwahati: The Governments of Nagaland and Assam are ready for an out-of-court settlement of the long-pending inter-State boundary dispute between the two north-eastern neighbours, Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio said here on Monday.

Rio said that Nagaland and Assam delegations are likely to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah in February to discuss and formulate how to go about the settlement.

The Nagaland Assembly's select committee to examine the border issue held an hour-and-a-half closed-door meeting, a day after Rio, his deputy Y Patton and NPF legislature party leader T R Zeilang met Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at Guwahati on Sunday.

"We had gone to Guwahati and had fruitful discussions on the border issue with Sarma. Nagaland and Assam had jointly taken up the matter with Union Home Minister Amit Shah on December 23, 2020.

"Both the state governments are in favour of an out-of-court settlement, and maybe our teams will meet Shah in the first part of February to discuss and formulate how to go about it," Rio told reporters here.

The issue of royalty on petroleum and natural gas along the Assam-Nagaland border was also discussed.

"If we resolve the border dispute and the issue of royalty, it will be good for both sides as we are going to remain neighbours," Rio said.

Asked about the delay in getting the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) report on the killing of 14 civilians by security forces in Mon district, the chief minister said that the Special Investigation Team (SIT) has completed the probe and is awaiting the forensic report.

"Without the CFSL report, the findings will be incomplete, and there will be no evidence or scientific proof to proceed further," Rio said.Asked whether Nagaland will get a forensic laboratory, the chief minister said that he will take up the matter with Shah.

On Konyak Union and Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation giving a call to boycott Republic Day celebrations in protest against the killings, Rio said that they are asking the government only to hoist the Tricolour in public offices.

"They can say whatever they want in a democracy but the government will also do whatever it deems necessary," he said.On demands for carving out more districts since the creation of Tseminyu, Nuiland and Chumukedima districts on December 18 last year, Rio said that the state government believes in tribal unity and has decided not to divide any existing tribal district.

"There are demands for division of Mon, Mokokchung, Zunheboto, Wokha and Phek districts. But the fragmentation of tribal districts is not in the interest of Nagas. I appeal to various tribal organisations to understand this policy of the government for the welfare of Nagas as a whole," he said.

The inter-state boundary dispute erupted after Nagaland state was carved out of Assam in 1963. The two states share a 512.1-km-long border.

The Nagaland State Act of 1962 had defined the state's borders as per a 1925 notification when Naga Hills and Tuensang Area (NHTA) were integrated into a new administrative unit and made an autonomous area.

Nagaland, however, did not accept the boundary delineation and demanded that the new State should comprise the Naga Hills and all Naga-dominated areas in the then North Cachar and Nagaon districts of Assam, which were part of Naga territory. ***PTI***

Forces on tenterhooks in J&K

Army jawans maintaining tight vigil to prevent any BAT op along LoC

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In the run up to the 73rd Republic day celebrations the security forces deployed across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir will be spending the long wintry nights on their tenterhooks to prevent any major infiltration bid/terror plot from across the border.

The foot soldiers guarding the frontiers along the International border with Pakistan have been briefed by their local commanders not to lower their guard and give a befitting reply to any misadventure from across the border.

The army jawans deployed along the line of control are also maintaining tight vigil to prevent any BAT operation targeting Indian patrols.

On its own BSF has intensified patrolling along the border and relying on electronic surveillance to pin down the infiltrators near the barbed wire fence.Counter drone technology has been activated to prevent any strike on vital security installations. Fearing possible terrorist strikes on 'soft targets' the security grid has already been tightened across the twin capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar for the last couple of days.Regular frisking and checking of pedestrians, suspected vehicles is going on in the close vicinity of the main venue of the Republic day functions.

Security has been beefed up along the National Highway after intelligence reports warned against possible terrorist strikes on soft targets in the run up to the Republic day celebrations.

Inspector General, BSF Jammu Frontier DK Boora Monday said, "Keeping in mind the present security scenario, Intelligence inputs on the eve of Republic Day, BSF Jammu has been on high alert across Jammu frontier". Addressing reporters at the frontier headquarters in Paloura, IG BSF maintained BSF is carrying out extensive Anti-Tunneling drive, Special Patrolling and Depth area domination despite extremely hostile weather conditions. To strengthen the border domination, mobilization of troops has been done . Regular monitoring of suspicious activities of the counterpart is being carried out through surveillance equipment.

In Jammu, the jawans of J&k police are also on high alert and have set up checking points to check movement of suspicious persons. Thorough screening of visitors were carried out across small hotels and guest houses in the walled city area and near the venue of the Republic day parade to track down any miscreant.

"The crowded market places, railway and bus stations have been sanitised with the help of sniffer dogs to expose any terror plot", police spokesman said.

A joint patrolling/exercise is also being conducted along with Army, CRPF and State Police to scuttle any nefarious attempts of anti national elements.

HC dismisses PIL seeking direction to Centre to allow Bengal's tableau on Netaji for R-Day parade

Kolkata: The Calcutta High Court on Monday dismissed a PIL seeking direction to the Centre to allow West Bengal's tableau on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose for the Republic Day parade in New Delhi.

Observing that the petitioner has approached the court at a late stage, a division bench presided by Chief Justice Prakash Shrivastava said that no effective direction can be issued now with the Republic Day celebration to be held on Wednesday.The bench, also comprising Justice Rajarshi Bharadwaj, noted various defects in the petition, which were pointed out by the additional solicitor general.

"Hence, no case for interference in the present writ petition is made out which is accordingly dismissed," the bench said in its order.

The petitioner, an advocate of the high court, prayed for issuance of a direction to the central government to permit the West Bengal tableau of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose for the ensuing Republic Day parade.

The petitioner submitted this is the year of the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji and that the Centre has "wrongly rejected" the state's tableau for the Republic Day parade themed on the great patriot and Indian National Army (INA) without assigning any reason.

Appearing for the Central Government, Additional Solicitor General Y J Dastoor submitted that the petition is not maintainable citing technical defects in it. He also submitted that "though Netaji was ignored by the earlier governments, the present government is treating Netaji as icon and recognising his contribution in hastening the process of Independence".

Dastoor said in his submission that January 23, the birth anniversary of Netaji, has already been declared 'Parakram Diwas' and the central government is celebrating it from January 23 to 30.

"Hologram of Netaji has been put at India Gate which will be replaced by statue of Netaji in August, 2022," he stated before the court.The ASG also submitted that if the State wants, the same can be supplied and the decision to exclude a tableau is taken as per the rules. Advocate General S N Mookherjee, representing the State, stated that he has no instruction if the reasons for rejection have been communicated to the State Government. ***PTI***

Devotees walk on the snow-covered path leading to the shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi after heavy snowfall, near Katra in Reasi district on Monday PTI

Padma fever high in Kerala as award day draws near

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Despite the reservations expressed by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and former minister A K Balan that persons nominated by the Kerala Government were not being considered by the Government of India for the country's civilian honours, the State is as usual in a Padma fever. The Rashtrapathi Bhavan would declare the names of the Padma awards (India's civilian awards) by Tuesday evening, the eve of the Republic Day. If the number of phone calls received by media offices and journalists enquiring whether the 'list' has been released is any indication, there is no dearth for people's craving, especially that of the nouveau riche for this recognition by the Union Government.

Balan, a CPI(M) leader reportedly told that since the Modi government assumed power in New Delhi, the civilian awards are bestowed on tribals and traditional physicians/artisans leaving the intellectual class high and dry. Chief minister Vijayan went one step further and announced that his Government would honour the crème de la crème of the Kerala society with new awards to be known as Kerala Sri and Malayala Simham (Simham is the Malayalam for Lion).

But these announcements have not dampened the spirit of the honour seekers. There were reports of a Malayali businessman spending ₹4.5 crore for a Padma honour. Ranjith, the chairman of Kerala State Film development Corporation has made a movie in 2010 'Pranchiyettan And The Saint' starring mega star Mammootty. The protagonist, a Thrissur based businessman pays ₹1.5 crore to a wheeler dealer who promises him a Padma Sri so that Pranchiyettan could get his name anglicised to Padma Sri Francis. But he gets deceived in the end.

Bobby Chemmannur, a businessman from Thrissur, said in a Television interview that some persons had approached him promising a Padma honour. "But they wanted ₹50 lakh to meet initial expenses and hence I gave up the attempt," he said

Bobby Chemmannur, a businessman from Thrissur, said in a Television interview that some persons had approached him promising a Padma honour. "But they wanted ₹50 lakh to meet initial expenses and hence I gave up the attempt," he said. Chemmannur is a favourite character in social media for those engaged in trolling and spoofs.

Though these awards do not bring any cash or other benefits, the crave for this recognition is increasing by leaps and bounds. The only notable feature of these awards namely Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Sri is the honours reserved for the winners. The Padma awardee would get State honours during their last rites. The Police would fire a volley of bullets in the air to mark the end of the awardee's life journey.

Film actors, musicians, writers, CPI(M)'s intellectual faces, missionaries, media barons, expatriates in West Asia and USA and former politicians form the list of hopefuls from Kerala. The bandwagon from Tamil Nadu too constitute the same categories. There are persons who have postponed their Padma aspirations to 2025 and they are confident that they would get the honours during Republic Day 2025.

15% women quota in non-gazetted posts in J&K Police approved

PNS ■ JAMMU

The Union Territory Administration headed by Lt-Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday approved 15 per cent reservation for women in non-gazetted police posts.

Announcing the token gesture on his twitter timeline Lt Governor Sinha made it clear "this is just the beginning".

"On NationalGirlChildDay, approved 15% reservation for women in non-gazetted posts of @JmuKmrPolice. This is just the beginning. We are determined and committed to increase it further in future," the Lt Governor said in a tweet.

In another tweet, he said his administration is committed to ensure 'Nari Shaktis' social and economic empowerment.

"For women and girls to be agents of change, J&K government is committed to ensure Nari Shaktis' social and economic empowerment while redressing long-standing inequalities to build a more just and resilient society," Sinha said.

Archaeologist R Nagaswamy dies

CHENNAI: R Nagaswamy, internationally renowned archaeologist and epigraphist who was the longest serving director of the department of archaeology passed away at Chennai on Sunday. He was 92 and is survived by two daughters and two sons. Dr Nagaswamy had been honoured with Padma Bhushan by the President of India for his path breaking research works.

Dr Nagawamy has authored many books on archaeology and the science of temples. He was also an authority on architecture, numismatics, iconography, temple rituals and also on temple inscriptions. His latest work "Tamil Nadu-The Land of Vedas" literally silenced the proponents of the Dravidian theory who always ridiculed the concept that Dravidian Land was a separate entity and had no links with India.

Dr Nagaswamy's research and works were focussing more on the unity and similarities in the culture, tradition and Indian system of knowledge which would stand the test of time. "The entire intellectual output from him is the result of his deep rooted studies and research which are unparallel," said Dr S Kalyanaraman, director, Saraswathy Research Centre, Chennai.

The ace archaeologist was upset when the government of the State resorted to sand blasting technology to renovate the walls and pillars in the temples. "These walls and inscriptions were royal edicts and orders issued by the government of the day informing the people the reason behind the construction of the

temple, who are the donors and the area of the landed property owned by the temple. It also has details like how the income of the temples should be utilized for the welfare of the society," Dr Nagawamy had told The Pioneer when the State government deployed sand blasting in temples.

The Government of Tamil Nadu had sought the assistance and guidance of Dr Nagaswamy to find out the antiquity and ancient nature of the idols stolen from temples in the State which were recovered by the special investigation team headed by Inspector General Pon Manicka Vel.

Dr Nagaswamy,after undertaking an arduous trip across the length and breadth of the sub-continent, established that all villages in the country had been built on a definite pattern with a temple standing in the centre and well laid our roads cross crossing the landscape. "The temples represented the Parashakthi, the Almighty, and the landscape was proof of the harmony that existed here for centuries," he had said.

NCP supports Uddhav over his comments on Hindutva

Mumbai: Backing Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray for his comments on Hindutva, the NCP on Monday said everyone should be proud of the religion they profess, but it is wrong to spread hatred in its name and the Shiv Sena president has given the same message.

In his address to Shiv Sainiks on Sunday, which was also the birth anniversary of his father and party founder Bal Thackeray, the Chief Minister said the Sena has left the BJP and not Hindutva.

The CM had also said, "I believe that BJP's opportunistic Hindutva is only for power. The Shiv Sena had aligned with the BJP as it wanted power for Hindutva. The Sena never used Hindutva for the sake of power."

Reacting to the comments, State minister and NCP's chief spokesperson Nawab Malik said, "Everyone should be proud of their religion, but it is harmful if there is hatred against others."

"The Shiv Sena is trying to say the same thing that one must be proud of their religion and propagate it, but it is wrong to spread hatred against others. ***PTI***

Shiv Sena's Hindutva merely in black and white, not beyond speeches: Fadnavis

Mumbai: A day after Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's comments on Hindutva, senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis on Monday hit back at former ally Shiv Sena, saying its Hindutva is merely on paper and doesn't go beyond speeches. Fadnavis said under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a Ram temple is being built in Ayodhya. Modi also developed the Kashi Vishwanath temple corridor, the former Maharashtra CM said addressing a press conference.

On the other hand, the Sena (which is in power in Maharashtra) could not even rename Aurangabad as Sambhajinagar, and Osmanabad as Dharashiv. ***PTI***

COVID BULLETIN

Covid ex-gratia compensation can't be denied: HC

Bombay HC asks Maha Govt why claims physically denied or delayed

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Monday said ex-gratia compensation for the kin of Covid-19 victims was a matter of right and they must not be deprived of it.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice MS Karnik directed the Maharashtra Government to take instructions on why claims for compensation were filed through post, or physically were being denied or delayed.

It was hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by a local organisation, Prameya Welfare Foundation, seeking among other things, a direction to the State government to not insist that citizens apply for such compensation online only, and give compensation to those who are applying physically or by post.

The petitioner's counsel Sumedha Rao told HC many of those submitting claims were slum dwellers or poor people who were not adept at filing and annexing documents online.

Petitioner's counsel Sumedha Rao told HC many of those submitting claims were slum dwellers or poor people

The BMC counsel told HC the civic body had, so far, received 34,000 applications seeking compensation, of which 16,884 applications had been forwarded to the disaster management department for approval and payment.

The rest had some issues such as incomplete addresses, missing information etc, while those applications that had come from areas outside BMC jurisdiction were being forwarded to relevant authorities.

Rao, however, told HC the applicants were not being given reasons for rejection of their applications nor were they being informed of the status of their applications.

"These are poor people who find the online system difficult since they have to upload so many annexures. They have applied through post, physically but have got no response, no reasons," Rao said.

The state's counsel Poornima Kantharia, however, told HC the government had already paid compensation to several claimants who had applied through its online portal, which was created so that one could make a claim for compensation online and the money could be transferred directly into their bank accounts.

The HC then asked the state government why it was insisting on online applications, and reminded it that the Supreme Court had recently directed all state and Central authorities to reach out to the kin of Covid-19 victims and pay ex gratia compensation.

"The spirit of the SC order is that the state must reach kin of those who died of Covid-19. Why must you be so technical that they have to apply online only? The web portal is for the state government's convenience. Getting compensation is their (the kin of victims) right. Why must they be deprived? Reach out to them," the HC bench said.

After granting time to Kantharia to get instructions from the state, the HC posted the matter to Thursday for further hearing. ***PTI***

NCP chief Sharad Pawar tests positive

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) Sharad Pawar quarantined himself at home on Monday, after he tested positive for Covid-19.

Taking to twitter, 81-year-old Pawar said: "I have tested Covid positive but there is no cause for concern. I am following the treatment as suggested by my doctor. I request all those who have been in contact with me in the past few days to get themselves tested and take all necessary precautions". Interacting with the media separately, NCP spokesperson Nawab Malik said that Pawar had cancelled all his programmes for the next seven days. "After he tests negative, the cancelled programmes will be re-scheduled," Malik said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi called Pawar and enquired about the latter's health. "Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji called to enquire about my health. I am thankful for his concern and good wishes," the NCP chief said.

Later in the evening, Pawar thanked all those who wished him and prayed for his speedy recovery. "I am in good health and taking all the necessary precautions as advised by my doctor. Thank you for your prayers and good wishes for a speedy recovery," the NCP chief tweeted.

A health worker prepares a pediatric Covid-19 ward at a hospital, in preparation for potential Covid-19 spread among children, after schools reopened for all classes in Maharashtra, in Thane on Monday PTI

NEW DELHI | TUESDAY | JANUARY 25, 2022

the pioneer

Opinion 06

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Cover-up

A few Karnataka colleges are debating whether girl students should be allowed to wear hijab

The New Year is all about hijabs and saffron scarves in some parts of Karnataka. On January 1, a pre-university college in Udipi barred a few girls from attending classes for wearing the hijab in contravention to college rules. The management says the girls can wear the hijab on campus but not in class. The reasoning is the teacher should have an unobstructed view of the students' faces while teaching. The girls, unconvinced, raised a protest. They say that they need to wear the hijab to cover their hair in front of men. One argument is why object to the hijab if it only covers the hair, like a scarf. If so, why fasten it with a pin to cover the face as well, runs the other argument. Things turned political when Campus Front of India (CFI), the student wing of the radical Islamic group, Popular Front of India, intervened, claiming religious freedom was being interfered with. The situation is unresolved. In another Karnataka village, Balagadi in Koppa district, some college students wore saffron scarves to protest the management allowing Muslim girls to wear the hijab in the classroom. In the third incident in Kolar district, a Hindu group staged a protest at a Government school, claiming the principal had permitted Muslim students to offer prayers in the classroom on Fridays. The district collector is probing the matter. Slowly but surely, these incidents are not just becoming controversial but triggering a debate on whether a hijab is part of the uniform.

In India, where public display of religion is quite common, these incidents should not have received publicity at all. But what's worrisome is that such sentiments are flaring up when Karnataka is readying for two major rounds of election. Elections to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike may be held along with or close to the Zilla Panchayat and Taluk Panchayat polls. That will involve a joint electorate of nearly four crore voters. And the State Assembly elections are slated for early next year. These issues are fodder for religious groups to vitiate the secular atmosphere already burdened by the politics of polarisation. The higher judiciary has to step in to settle the issue once and for all. India is not France, where the display of religious symbols in public is disallowed. In India, everybody wears religion on one's sleeve, whether the *bindi* and bangles or the hijab, the holy cross or the Sikh *patka*. The question of discrimination should not arise at all. The Constitution allows the freedom to practice religion, but the law limits the protection to practices found essential and integral to religion. In a 2016 judgment, the Kerala High Court said that a hijab and a long-sleeved dress are an "essential part of the Islamic religion". Then the only question the judiciary should sort out is whether the "essential practice" of wearing hijab offends the social order in a classroom and hampers the teacher's duties.

PICTALK

The snow-covered path to the shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi, near Katra in Reasi district PTI

Wet town

The Delhi Govt has reduced the number of dry days from the earlier 21 to just three

In a bit of good news that is certain to cheer up the Capital's Bacchus devotees, the AAP-led Delhi Government has announced its decision to curtail the number of 'dry days' this year from the earlier 21 to just three — the Republic Day, Independence Day and Gandhi Jayanti. The 21 'dry days' was one of the highest number as compared to other States and UTs in India. The official order, which was notified on Monday, is part of the city Government's new excise policy and ensures that the shutters of licensed liquor shops, bars, pubs and opium vends across the city can remain open and these can legally do business except for these three days. While the Government's decision to curtail the number of 'dry days' is welcome in the sense that it would remove the taint of 'buying liquor illegally' and instances of bootlegging in a major way, there is hardly any change in the situation expected on the ground. Just as it is a fact that the state of prohibition is a malady both for the taxpayer and for the Government's coffers, it's an open secret for decades that regular drinkers stock up their 'supply' in the days preceding 'dry days'.

Even otherwise, alcohol is available at the drop of a hat on 'dry days' if one knows his way around the city. However, the positive difference the Government's decision would make is that a buyer won't be caught unawares if he fails to take into account in advance the closure of liquor vends to mark one leader's or another's birth anniversary. Also, in the days preceding the 'dry day/s', it's become the tendency of the salespersons to often 'push' certain brands over the counter owing to the handsome 'commission' they pocket from the distributor/manufacturer. Since the supplies run short and the queues get longer each passing minute on such evenings, the experienced buyers know that it is futile to argue with the salesperson or go hunting for his favourite tipple elsewhere. Adding another dimension to the consumer's "choice" would mean that the latter is harassed less; other such steps such as privatising the liquor vends and opening one in each ward of the Capital have already started showing results since one now does business with a courteous salesperson in a clean and not-so-shady outlet, which was invariably the case earlier.

FSSAI GM regulation puts health in a soup

INDRA SHEKHAR **SINGH**

The Authority has a new scheme to mix genetically modified organisms in our foods even though the EU doesn't allow GM food on its plate

Careful of what you eat in 2022 as the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has a new scheme to mix genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in our foods. The white and black bureaucratic-looking draft notification on GM food regulation has locked India's food fate with Big Ag. It's only a matter of time before a tsunami of GM food products floods the Indian market as the gates of our fortress have been opened from the inside.

But first, what are GM foods? These are foods that are derived from genetically modified crops. Companies like Monsanto/Bayer have developed patented crops varieties which have genes from two different life forms. For example India's only GM crop, Bt Cotton, uses a toxin producing gene from a ground bacteria, Bacillus thuringiensis, and combines it with a cotton plant. Some of the other popular GMOs are soybean, corn, sugar beets and canola. While some of these crops are owned by European companies, EU doesn't allow GM food on its plate. GM foods are also used for animal feed and biofuels. Apart from the EU, independent scientists have raised serious biomedical concerns, linking the consumption of GM foods leading to a plethora of health defects.

So what does the notification say? Firstly, it allows for "1 per cent and below GM content foods" to go unlabelled. But why have this 1 per cent at all? Can't India have truthful labels, where the consumers know what they eat? Perhaps aware of the risks of GM food, FSSAI regulators have clearly stated that GMOs are "not permitted in infant foods". So why the obfuscation on labelling standards and then, in the same breath, the stance on infant foods? Is there something FSSAI knows and not telling Indians?

Let's take a second and look at our past. In the late 90s, India was flooded with cheap GM soybean oil imports that not only killed small mustard farmers but also destroyed the local oilseed markets. But now, also consider, GMOs are already trickling into our *thalis* with the rampant blending of Bt cottonseed oil in our foods. Both FSSAI and GEAC were aware about it for years; in fact, Dr Vandana Shiva and I sent RTIs to both organisations and found out, FSSAI and GEAC both treated GMO cottonseed and natural cottonseed to be the same. This was an unscientific position, conveniently forgetting the genetic modifications on Monsanto/Bayer's Bt cottonseed. On further investigation, I found that biosafety documents submitted to GEAC came from Monsanto labs. No independent biosafety data was found at GEAC for Monsanto/Bayer's Bt Cotton.

Currently, those pages are dead links on GEAC's website. In the draft notification too, FSSAI adhered to similar biosafety standards and, in some cases, allowed for the documents to be submitted by the applicant and not necessarily the regulatory authority-approved dossiers.

Now the next major confusion occurs when the notification calls for "(11) Once GMOs or Genetically Engineered Organisms or Living Modified Organisms having unique identification code provided by Biosafety Clearing House, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development etc, is approved by FSSAI, approval for the same will not be required for any other Food Business Operator. Approval will also not be required if it is used as an ingredient in any product."

> INSTEAD OF DEREGULATING GM FOODS, FSSAI NEEDS TO FIRST DO HOUSE CLEANING AND TAKE COGNISANCE OF THE ILLEGAL GM FOODS THAT ARE BEING FED TO INDIANS. IF GM FOOD IS NOT SAFE FOR EUROPEAN CHILDREN TO EAT, THEN INDIAN CHILDREN OUGHT NOT HAVE IT

On plain reading, this point appears innocuous. But the devil is always in the details. Given that EU doesn't allow for GM food, half of the influential countries are out. What does FSSAI mean as it wrote this point? Is it perhaps referring to the corporate food hegemony on GM standards? The US, along with many others in the Americas, is deeply entrenched in GM crops cultivation and freely allows for GM foods, labelled or unlabelled, to enter markets.

It is no surprise that US citizens along with their Latin American counterparts suffer from food-style related diseases. French scientist Eric Seralini, using peer review scientific journals, demonstrated how GM foods are harmful not only to cows but their toxicity including the pesticide/herbicide used to grow third-generations GMOs like RRF Cotton and hamper human health as well.

Monsanto/Bayer has already lost billions of dollars to victims of Round-Up poisoning. Round-Up is a patented herbicide used to grow GM crops, and is known carcinogenic.

The parliamentary standing committee on GM crops, chaired by Renuka Chowdhary, has already pulled up FSSAI on GM food and a court order of August 2017 empowers petitioners to approach the court again in case the FSSAI rules are unsatisfactory.

GM or not GM? It is obvious that the FSSAI notification is doing someone else's bidding — corporates or Uncle Sam? Who knows? But as a concerned citizen, I urge them to reconsider. Instead of deregulating GM foods, FSSAI needs to first do house cleaning and take cognisance of the illegal GM foods that are being fed to Indians. We must aspire to have the most progressive GM laws on a par with EU, and not below them. For, if GM food is not safe for European children to eat, then Indian children ought not have it.

(The author writes on agriculture and environment, and is a former Director — Policy & Outreach, National Seed Association of India. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A DESPICABLE ACT

Sir — We have been routinely witnessing how the rightwing Hindutva brigade has been belittling, denigrating and tarnishing the image of Mahatma Gandhi at the fall of a hat through their manifestations, particularly by praising Nathuram Godse in tune with the ideology of their parent organisation. While the nation has been saddened by their tirade against Mahatma Gandhi, the Government for its part has now dropped the traditional Christian hymn, '*Abide with me*', believed to have been a favourite of the Mahatma, from the list of songs to be played at this year's Beating Retreat ceremony. The tune has been played at the annual ceremony every year since 1950.

By doing this, the saffron outfits may be happy that they have hit both, the Mahatma and the Christian community, with their intolerant act but the entire world that has great reverence and respect for the Mahatma would have formed a poor opinion about the Government and its unpalatable act against the Father of the Nation. At this rate, one will not be surprised if the Government's next move will be to remove the title "Father of the Nation" from Gandhi's name and confer it on one of their own ideologues.

Tharcius S Fernando | *Chennai*

POISONING TURTLES HURTS US, TOO

Sir — In an unfortunate incident, dozens of turtles were found dead in a lake in Kalyan, Maharashtra. Wildlife conservationists feel that poisoning is the cause, probably by people who found that these creatures were consuming fish which they had been illegally breeding there. As freshwater turtle species are protected under India's 1972 Wildlife Protection Act, causing them harm can result in heavy penalty and punishment. The locals could have sought permission to breed fish from the authority concerned.

It is sad that most people are unaware about the usefulness of turtles in our ecosystem. They regulate the energy flow of a given environment and consume and deposit seeds, which later germinate into vegetation needed for the maintenance of an area's ecosystem. No wonder they are called 'environmental engineers' and play an important role in the earth's food web. They are also vital for the health of seas, rivers, ponds and other water bodies. More campaigns must be launched to make people aware regarding the protection of such creatures.

M Pradyu | *Kannur*

THIRD TIME UNLUCKY

Sir — Each cricket match is like a game of chess and, therefore, every move counts in the shortest form of the game. Having lost the Test series in a one-day fashion, we could have chalked out a strategy to erase the mistakes committed in the longest form of the game. The major shortcoming is that the so-called "strong batting" failed to live up to the expectations and the bowlers were put to test. In the event of a small total to defend, our strategy should be to dismiss the opposition within a low score. But to add salt to the wound, we lost both the ODIs and the T-20 World Cup chances through sheer lack of shrewd captaincy.

We had a team with the number one bowler in the world but we made him toil hard for a place in the side in England and in the T20 World Cup. The ODI and Test captain flattered to deceive. As a matter of fact, Ashwin accounted for the left-handers' wickets maximum in his international career and the captain made a mess of his role and proved unlucky for the third time and lost five out of the six games and finished the tour on a losing note.

CK Subramaniam | *Navi Mumbai*

Honour Bose's idea of India

The nation is celebrating the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as Parakram Diwas to acknowledge his monumental contribution. Whenever one remembers Netaji, one is reminded of his valour, courage, patriotism, extraordinary leadership skills and unflinching devotion to the motherland. In India, however, statues and streets are often named after political leaders, religious personalities, scholars, business tycoons, eminent sporting personalities or kings, while our soldiers are rarely mentioned. In this context, the decision to instal Netaji's statue at India Gate must be lauded. His larger-than-life legacy is enough to prove that he played a stellar role in arousing the consciousness of society.

In fact, going by the Kautilyan adage "my enemy's enemy is my friend", Bose showed solidarity with the axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan which, he believed, could act as a counterpoise to the British imperialistic designs. Bose had a firm belief that if the loyalty of soldiers to the British Indian Army be turned around, the British would be left with no option but to leave. His militant agitation precipitated Britain's hasty withdrawal from India. Apart from being a great patriot and nationalist, it was his unwavering commitment to secularism that was destined to become the cornerstone of the Indian Republic. It was his idea of a united and inclusive India that is even more relevant in today's fractured society.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | *Nainital*

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

The amendment proposal strikes at the very root of our federal polity and State autonomy.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister
—MK Stalin

My wedding will not be going ahead (as the nation imposes new restrictions to slow Omicron's spread).

New Zealand Prime Minister
—Jacinda Arden

The Eternals are all very powerful, but they are the most powerful when they come together.

Actor
—Salma Hayek

The desire to win the World Cup still gives me the motivation to be the best version of myself.

Women's team ODI captain
— Mithali Raj

One thing that distresses me is that religious and cultural divisiveness take too strong a position.

Netaji Subhas' daughter
— Dr Anita Bose-Pfaff

FIRSTCOLUMN

TRIBALS AND THEIR RELIGION

The Sanatana Dharma has ingredients of tribal worship

VK **BAHUGUNA**

Let us examine the theory of naming a few people as tribals by sociologists and others. The western media under the influence of Christianity has been for decades trying to declare tribals as indigenous people. The connotation of 'indigenous' in terms of the great Indian civilization, which grew with great saints who lived in sylvan surroundings in thick forests, is a travesty of truth. It is an insult to ancient Indian culture to call the tribals as indigenous or, for that matter, calling them tribal at all. For, the tribal traditions have great history of language, music, art, paintings, medicine and of course worship of nature in its different form which enriched the Sanatana Dharma and traditions. In fact, all Indians must have been once part of some tribe or the other and it is the lop-sided modern development which now differentiates between tribal and non-tribal people. Unfortunately, our constitution is also trapped in the tribal and non-

tribal verbosity. The raging debate that tribals have no set pattern of religion is basically a politically motivated and foreign-supported propaganda being launched in India by different churches thatbelieve in proselytization. The Sanatana Dharma which is now known as Hinduism has all the ingredients of tribal worship. In tribal areas most of the divinity is dominated by nature worships and many tenets and festivities of Hinduism are drawn from them. The argument by a few politicians that tribal people never had an organized religion does not hold water if we see the history of the country. The first organised census was held in 1871 - the first synchronized census was held in 1881 — in which the 95 percent tribal people have entered their religion as Hinduism. Only two percent people from the North-East declared atribal religion because of the interpretational bias during census. In 1891 only three percent were shown as following tribal religion and rest as Hindu.

In 1991 census information on sects of Christianity was also collected. In the first census after independence in 1951, 97-98 percent tribals had shown Hinduism as their religion. It only after several decades later when the Christian missionaries started converting the tribals in central and eastern India that nature worship was systematically sought to be separated from Hinduism. In Tripura the Tripuri, Jamatias and other Tribes have been worshiping Shiva as depicted in the rock carvings. Similarly, Sarna method of divinity is focused on the worship of nature and spirits and holds all natural objects to be sacred. This belief system is followed by several tribal groups in Jharkhand and neighbouring states, and it is fully reflected in their social and cultural life. The 'other' category for religion in the census after independence had created this confusion because of the census staff relegating such tribal beliefs as the 'other'. There is a well-orchestrated propaganda launched by a few political leaders for supremacy in the tribal belt aided and abetted by Christian missionaries and the naxalites to disconnect the tribal population from the larger part of Sanatana dharma. This writer during February 2021 has visited a tribal area in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh. In a corner of the fair, a person who spoke fluent English was selling books deriding Hinduism and recommending a book, 'Tribals are not Hindu'. I had to admonish the organizer, a foreign-funded NGO, for creating such a situation in the tribal belt. The issue today is not to interfere with religious beliefs and cultural lives of tribal people. The focus should be to bringing them to the mainstream by providing them best health, educational and livelihood and preserve their art, language, culture, and music.

(The writer is Chairman of Centre for Resource Management and Environment. The views expressed are personal.)

Fertiliser DBT stymied by lobbies for years

UTTAM **GUPTA**

When a subsidised product is not available in the marketplace, the dubious characters will have nothing to prey upon

It is budget time. After two years of splurge, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has alluded to a return to fiscal consolidation. A major area meriting attention is fertilizer subsidy which jumped from ₹80,000 crore during 2019-20 to ₹134,000 crore during 2020-21 and is likely to be ₹140,000 crore during 2021-22.

Fertilizer subsidy arises because the Union Government wants manufacturers/imports to sell fertilizers to farmers at a low maximum retail price, unrelated to the cost of production and import and distribution, which is much higher. In case of urea, it exercises mandatory control on MRP and reimburses the manufacturers for the excess of cost over it as subsidy on a 'unit-specific' basis under the new pricing scheme. In case of phosphatic and potassic (P&K) fertilizers, it fixes 'uniform' subsidy on per nutrient basis for all manufacturers and importers under Nutrient Based Scheme.

Subsidy per ton being the difference between cost and MRP, if the cost increases, MRP remaining unchanged, on each ton of fertilizer sold, subsidy will increase. On the other hand, if MRP decreases, cost remaining unchanged, then also subsidy will increase. Thirdly, for any given level of subsidy per ton, increase in the quantity of fertilizer sale results in higher total subsidy payment.

The factors impinging on the cost of urea are: cost of natural gas - feedstock/fuel used in its production andprice of imported urea (it accounts for 1/3rd of consumption). In case of P&K fertilizers, the factors are cost of raw materials, viz.,phosphoric acid, ammonia and price of imports in finished form viz.di-ammonium phosphate (these account for nearly 50 percent of DAP consumption) and price of muriate of potash - entirely imported.

Given the preponderance of imports in making urea and non-urea fertilizers available (even for producing domestic urea, 1/3rd of the gas requirement is met from imports), there is little that the Government can do to rein in these costs.

However, there are plant specific inefficiencies (besides inter-state variation in VAT on gas) that result in widely varying costs. Of around 35 million tonannual urea supply, there are tonnages suppliedat ₹20,000 per ton, ₹25,000 per ton, ₹30,000 per ton and so on. The cost of import is even higher. During the current year, some supplies have even come at US$ 900 per ton which works out to around ₹70,000 per ton at the farm gate.

A ridiculously low MRP of urea (currently at ₹5360 per ton, it is almost the same as two decades ago)in the face of increasing costlies at the root of increase in subsidy per ton. Add to this, the quantity boost that comes from (i) excessive use: low price prompts farmers to use more than what is required by the soil; (ii) large/rich undeserving farmersalso getting access to subsidized urea; (iii) large-scale diversion such as smuggling to neighboring countries, industrial use and so on - inevitable when the market price is 4-5 times higher. The outcome is ballooning total subsidy bill.

> THE CONTRACTION IN DEMAND FROM ALL THREE SOURCES WILL YIELD HUGE SAVINGS IN SUBSIDY (QUANTITY EFFECT). THERE WILL BE AN INDIRECT GAIN AS WELL. INDIA BEING A MAJOR IMPORTER OF FERTILISERS, A SIGNIFICANT DEMAND-INDUCED CUT IN IMPORT WILL REDUCE THE INTERNATIONAL PRICE AND, IN TURN, REDUCE THE COST OF IMPORTS

(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

Excessive use is undesirable as it leads to imbalance in fertilizer use, erosion in soil health (this in turn, undermines the sustainability of agriculture in the medium to long-run) and adverse impact on the environment besides human health. Giving cheap urea to those (read: rich farmers) who can afford to pay more is also patently unfair. But, diversion or misuse of subsidized (albeit heavily) urea will shake the conscience of any right-thinking person. Yet, it has been going on for decades and could be as high as 30 percent.Look at the dynamics of how it is happening.

During the initial years of the subsisting scheme (it is in vogue since 1977), bulk of the subsidy amount was released to manufacturers on 'dispatch' of the material from the factory. Even as they were required to ensure that fertilizer was actually sold to farmers, there was no fool proof institutional mechanism to check it. Disappearance of the product at various levels in supply chain viz. rail-head, stocking point in district and retailer was rampant.

Ein the early 2000s, the arrangement was changed to provide for payment of 95 percent of the urea subsidy on receipt of material in the district (for non-urea fertilizers, the share was 85 percent) and balance 5 percent on confirmation by the state government (15 percent in case of P&K fertilizers). Under this mechanism also, the field was wide openfor dubious players to prey on the subsidized stuff - beyond stocking point in the district.

From April 2018, the Modi government linked subsidy payment to manufacturers to sale of fertilizers to farmers by retailers. Under the new scheme, manufacturers receive 100% of the subsidy after fertilizer is delivered to the farmer and his identity viz. Aadhaar is captured on electronic PoS machine at dealer's shop. Though a significant improvement, even this is prone to diversion albeit at retail level. This is all the more because anyone(including non-farmers) with Aadhaar unique identity number can buy the subsidized product.

The government has also tried other measures. These include (i) mandatorily requiring all manufacturers/importers to neem-coatall of urea supplies (2015); (ii) restricting purchase by each purchaser to 100 bags per transaction (down from 999 bags earlier) and capping number of transactions per month (August 2020) and (iii) tracking top 20 urea purchasers in each district and initiating action against those violating purchase norms etc. These too have not delivered.

Now, the government is working on a plan to cap the number of subsidized fertilizer bags that individual farmers can buy in any cropping season.But,this won't help either.

In fact, so long as the core of the scheme, i.e., 'routing subsidy through the manufacturers' remains intact, there is no way it can make any dent on the scourge of diversion.

The way forward is direct benefit transfer (DBT) of subsidy. The Government should give subsidy 'directly' to the farmers and allow manufacturers to sell at market determined price.This will completely eliminate diversion; when a subsidized product is not available in the marketplace, dubious characters will have nothing to prey upon.It will also curb excessive use; when, the product carries the right price tag, farmers will use it judiciously.It will also be possible to target subsidy to poor farmers only.

The contraction in demand from all three sources will yield huge saving in subsidy (quantity effect). There will be an indirect gain as well. India being a major importer of fertilizers, a significant demand-induced cut in import will reduce the international price and in turn, reduce the cost of imports. As a result, subsidy per ton will also decline.

To conclude, DBT will help fiscal consolidation, reduce trade deficit, reduce imbalance in fertilizer use, improve soil health, promote sustainable agriculture and environment friendly. There will be losers too: inefficient/high cost producers who will have to close their shop; dubious traders and corrupt politicians/bureaucratswho make big money from leakage/diversion; rich farmers whoare major beneficiaries of extant scheme.

DBT of fertilizer subsidy has been on government's radar since 2012-13. So far, its launch has been stymied due to the clout of these lobbies. Can the Prime Minister surmount it?

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

I AM NOT SAYING THAT I AM THE CHIEF MINISTER FACE OF THE CONGRESS IN UTTAR PRADESH ELECTIONS.
—CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY
PRIYANKA GANDHI

THE CONGRESS IS SO MISERABLE THAT ITS CM CANDIDATE FOR UP ELECTIONS CHANGED HER STAND WITHIN A FEW HOURS.
—BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY CHIEF
MAYAWATI

No breakthrough in military-level Indo-China talks

The stalemate will continue and about 75,000 Indian troops will continue to occupy the positions along the LAC facing the PLA

PK **VASUDEVA**

There was no breakthrough in the marathon military-level talks between India and China on January 13 with Beijing showing reluctance to complete troop disengagement at a friction point in eastern Ladakh and refusing to discuss steps to diffuse the bigger problems of Depsang and Damchok.

The joint statement stated that "representatives from the defence and foreign affairs establishments of the two sides were present at the meeting" and they had "a frank and in-depth exchange of views for the resolution of the relevant issues" along the LAC in the Western Sector.Both sides "also agreed to consolidate on the previous outcomes and take effective efforts to maintain the security and stability on the ground in the Western Sector including during winter" and to "stay in close contact and maintain dialogue via military and diplomatic channels and work out a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest" the statement said.

(The writer is former Senior Professor, International Trade and Member, Vivekananda International Foundation. The views expressed are personal.)

However, China on January 14 said that it hopes "certain individuals" in India will refrain from making "unconstructive remarks" following Indian army chief General M M Naravane's remarks that the threat in eastern Ladakh has "by no means reduced" and Indian Army will continue to deal with the Chinese military in a "firm and resolute manner".

China is unpredictable and is now building a bridge across the Pangong Tso as well as new

roads and helipads within its territory in the region for faster troop mobility, as part of its continuing consolidation of military positions facing India amid the 20-month-long confrontation in eastern Ladakh.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is further strengthening its military infrastructure with additional troop shelters, gun positions, helipads and jetties in the area between 'Finger-8' and its military bases to the east at Sirijap-I and II on the north bank of the Pangong Lake. The new bridge, in turn, is coming up in the Khurnak Fort area further to the east. The bridge is being constructed, with prefabricated structures, well within Chinese territory. But it will help the PLA move troops and weaponry much faster from the north to the south banks of Pangong Tso and vice versa. China obviously wants to counter India's quick-reaction capability that saw our soldiers take the Kailash Range heights on the south bank towards end-August 2020.

The LAC runs north to south at Finger-8 in the mountainous spurs region of the brackish 134-km long Pangong Tso, two-thirds of which is controlled by China as it extends from Tibet to India at an altitude of 13,900-feet.

The PLA's Sirijap complex is around six km east from the LAC at Finger-8, with the Khurnak area being another 20-km beyond it, as per officers who have served in the area. The PLA had captured the Khurnak area in the late-1950s, and then expanded its control westwards to the Sirijap area during the 1962 war.

With India having better connectivity between the two banks of Pangong Tso, China now wants to address the gap. Khurnak is one of the narrowest points of the lake around mid-way during its length. Once the bridge is ready, the PLA can avoid the long loop through Rudok to reach the south bank. It will provide the PLA with an alternate route.

The subsequent troop disengagement in February last year saw Indian soldiers pull back westwards to their Dhan Singh Thapa post between Finger-2 and Finger-3 and vacate the Kailash range heights. PLA troops, in turn, withdrew to their old positions east of Finger-8 to establish a buffer or no-patrol zone in-between.

China had refused to complete the stalled troop disengagement at Patrolling Point-15 in the Hot Springs-Gogra-Kongka La area during the 13th round. The standoff at ChardingNinglung Nallah (CNN) track junction at Demchok and the Depsang Plains is considered even more intractable, as was reported earlier. Consequently, the two armies continue to forward deploy around 50,000 troops each, along with tanks, howitzers and surface-to-air missile systems, for the second consecutive winter along the frontier in the forbidding high-altitude area.

Consequently, after the 14th round of military level talks between the two giants, the stalemate will continue and about 75,000 Indian troops will continue to occupy the positions along the LAC facing the PLA. India has started constructing two-lane roads, bridges and permanent structures all along the LAC so that troops movement, tanks, howitzers and other heavy equipment can move smoothly to thwart any adventure of PLAand also for the sustenance of Indian troops in the extreme cold weather conditions.

WHO chief warns against talk of 'endgame' in pandemic

AP ■ GENEVA

The head of the World Health Organisation is warning that conditions remain ideal for more coronavirus variants to emerge and says it's dangerous to assume omicron is the last one or that "we are in the endgame", while saying the acute phase of the pandemic could still end this year - if some key targets are met.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO's director-general, laid out Monday an array of achievements and concerns in global health over issues like reducing tobacco use, fighting resistance to antimicrobial treatments, and risks of climate change on human health.

But he said "ending the acute phase of the pandemic must remain our collective priority". "There are different scenarios for how the pandemic could play out and how the acute phase could end. But it's dangerous to assume that omicron will be the last variant or that we are in the endgame," Tedros told the start of a WHO executive board meeting this week.

"On the contrary, globally, the conditions are ideal for more variants to emerge."But he insisted that "we can end COVID-19 as a global health emergency, and we can do it this year," by reaching goals like WHO's target to vaccinate 70 per cent of the population of each country by the middle of this year, with a focus on people who are at the highest risk of COVID-19, and improving testing and sequencing rates to track the virus and its emerging variants more closely.

"It's true that we will be living with COVID for the foreseeable future and that we will need to learn to manage it through a sustained and integrated system for acute respiratory diseases" to help prepare for future pandemics, he said.

"But learning to live with COVID cannot mean that we give this virus a free ride. It cannot mean that we accept almost 50,000 deaths a week from a preventable and treatable disease."

In stark terms, Tedros also appealed for strengthening WHO and increasing funding for it to help stave off health crises. "Let me put it plainly: If the current funding model continues, WHO is being set up to fail.

The paradigm shift in world health that is needed now must be matched by a paradigm shift in funding the world's health organisation," he said.

Omicron may not evade all monoclonal antibodies, lab study suggests

Washington: The Omicron variant of coronavirus may evade several, but not all, monoclonal antibodies used clinically to prevent patients from developing severe COVID-19, according to a laboratory study. Monoclonal antibodies are laboratory-made proteins that mimic immune system's ability to fight off harmful pathogens such as viruses. Several past studies have shown that such antibodies are unsuccessful in neutralising Omicron. The team led led by researchers at Washington University, US, tested five antibody combinations, including those discovered at Vanderbilt University Medical Centre (VUMC) in the US. *PTI*

NATO outlines 'deterrence' plan as tensions with Russia soar

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Tensions soared Monday between Russia and West, with NATO outlining a series of potential troop and ship deployments and Ireland warning that upcoming Russian war games off its coast would not be welcome while concerns abound that Moscow is planning to invade Ukraine.

The Western alliance's statement summed up moves already announced by individual member countries - but restating them under the NATO banner appeared aimed at showing alliance's resolve.

It was just one of a series of announcements that signalled West is ramping up its rhetoric in information war that has accompanied Ukraine standoff.

Russia has massed an estimated 100,000 troops near Ukraine's border and is demanding that NATO promise it will never allow Ukraine to join and that other actions, such as stationing alliance troops in former Soviet bloc countries, be curtailed.

Some of these, like any pledge to permanently bar Ukraine, are non-starters for NATO - creating a seemingly intractable standoff that many fear can only end in war.

Russia denies it is planning an invasion, and has said Western accusations are merely a cover for NATO's own planned provocations. Recent days have seen high-stakes diplomacy that failed to reach any breakthrough and maneuvering on both sides.

On Monday, NATO said that it is beefing up its "deterrence" in Baltic Sea area. Denmark is sending a frigate and deploying F-16 war planes to Lithuania; Spain is sending three ships to join NATO naval forces and four fighter jets to Bulgaria; and France stands ready to send troops to Romania. The Netherlands also plans to send two F-35 fighter aircraft to Bulgaria from April. Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said alliance will "take all necessary measures to protect and defend all allies." He said: "We will always respond to any deterioration of our security environment, including through strengthening our collective defence."Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov charged that it was NATO and US who were behind "tensions escalating" in Europe, not Russia.

"All this is happening not because of what we, Russia, are doing. This is happening because of what NATO, the US are doing," Peskov said during a conference call with reporters. He also cited US media reports suggesting that Russia is evacuating its diplomats from Ukraine, something officials in Moscow denied.The NATO announcement came as European Union foreign ministers sought to put on a fresh display of unity in support of Ukraine, and paper over concerns about divisions on best way to confront any Russian aggression.

In a statement, the ministers said EU has stepped up sanction preparations and they warned that "any further military aggression by Russia against Ukraine will have massive consequences and severe costs".Separately, the EU also committed to increase financial support for embattled Ukraine, vowing to push through a special package of 1.2 billion euros ($1.4 billion) in loans and grants as soon as possible.

The West is nervously watching Russian troop movements and war games in Belarus for any signs that a new invasion of Ukraine is imminent. Russia has already invaded Ukraine once, annexing Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

Moscow has also supported pro-Russian Ukrainian separatists fighting Kyiv government in Donbass region. Fighting in eastern Ukraine has killed around 14,000 people and still simmers. Asked whether EU would follow a US move and order the families of European embassy personnel in Ukraine to leave, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said: "We are not going to do same thing."

China sends 39 warplanes toward Taiwan, largest in new year

AP ■ TAIPEI

China flew 39 warplanes toward Taiwan in its largest such sortie of the new year, continuing a pattern that the island has answered by scrambling its own jets in response.

The formation Sunday night included 24 J-16 fighter jets and 10 J-10 jets, among other support aircraft and electronic warfare aircraft, according to Taiwan's defense ministry.

Taiwan's air force scrambled its own jets and tracked the People's Liberation Army planes on its air defense radar systems, the defense ministry said. Chinese pilots have been flying towards Taiwan on a near-daily basis in the past year and a half, since Taiwan's government started publishing the data regularly.

The largest sortie was 56 warplanes on a single day last October. The activity has generally been in the air space southwest of Taiwan and falls into what Taiwan's military calls the air defense identification zone, or air space it monitors out of national security considerations.

Taiwan and China split during a civil war in 1949, but China claims the island as its own territory. As a result, Beijing opposes any

action that would identify Taiwan as a sovereign state and has used diplomatic and military means to isolate and intimidate Taiwan.

Tensions have been high since Taiwanese citizens elected Tsai Ing-wen as president in 2016, to which Beijing responded by cutting off previously established communications with the island's government. Tsai's predecessor was friendly to China and had endorsed Beijing's claim that the two are part of a single Chinese nation.

Pakistani Hindu lawmaker says he will visit India with pilgrims

Islamabad: A Hindu lawmaker from ruling Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf party said on Monday that he will travel to India later this week with a delegation of pilgrims. In a statement issued here, Patron-in-chief of Pakistan Hindu Council and Member of National Assembly Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani said that delegation would go to India on January 29 on a special chartered flight of Pakistan Airlines International (PIA) and would stay there for three days. During their stay, the delegation will visit Dargah Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi, Dargah Khawaja Gharib Nawaz in Ajmer and Taj Mahal in Agra.

Taliban begin talks in Norway as hunger stalks Afghanistan

Oslo: A Taliban delegation led by acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on Sunday started three days of talks in Oslo with Western officials and Afghan civil society representatives amid a deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

The closed-door meetings are taking place at a hotel in the snow-capped mountains above the Norwegian capital. On Sunday, Taliban representatives were meeting with women's rights activists and human rights defenders from Afghanistan and from the Afghan diaspora. Before the talks, the Taliban's deputy minister of culture and information tweeted a voice message from Muttaqi, expressing hope for "a good trip full of achievements" and thanking Norway, a country he hoped will become "a gateway for a positive relationship with Europe." The trip is the first time since the Taliban took over in August that their representatives have held official meetings in Europe. Earlier, they have traveled to Russia, Iran, Qatar, Pakistan, China and Turkmenistan.

During the talks, Muttaqi is certain to press the Taliban's demand that nearly $10 billion frozen by the United States and other Western countries be released as Afghanistan faces a precarious humanitarian situation. The United Nations has managed to provide some liquidity and allowed the new administration to pay for imports, including electricity. But the U.N. Has warned that as many as 1 million Afghan children are in danger of starving and most of the country's 38 million people are living below the poverty line.

The Norwegian Foreign Ministry said the Taliban delegation would also meet with Afghans in Norway, including "women leaders, journalists and people who work with, among other things, human rights and humanitarian, economic, social and political issues."

"Norway continues to engage in dialogue with Taliban to promote human rights, women's participation in society, and to strengthen humanitarian and economic efforts in Afghanistan," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Pakistan inducts China-made multi-role frigate in its navy

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Monday inducted a China-made multi-role frigate and 10 helicopters provided by Qatar in its navy as part of efforts to strengthen its sea frontiers.

The induction ceremony of PNS Tughril, the first of four Type 054-A/P frigates, made by China and 10 Sea King helicopters was held at PN Dockyard, Karachi, according to a statement by Pakistan Navy (PN).

The contract for four multi-role frigates for Pakistan Navy was signed between Pakistan and China in June 2018 and the PNS Tughril is the lead ship of Type 054-A/P, while the Sea King helicopters were gifted by Qatar.

PNS Tughril is the first ship of its kind that was built at a shipyard in Shanghai. It is a multi-mission capable ship, fitted with weapons such as Surface-to-Air (SAM) and Supersonic Surface-to-Surface Missiles (SSM).

"The state-of-the-art ship can carry out numerous maritime operations due to installation of weapons and sensors," according to the PN statement.

President Dr Arif Alvi, who was the guest of honour at the event, expressed satisfaction and confidence that a highly capable Pakistan Navy Fleet and its air arm will continue promoting peace and stability while "guarding our maritime frontiers".

Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi, underlined that the new inductions would further augment PN combat capabilities.

UAE shoots down 2 ballistic missiles fired by Houthis over Abu Dhabi

PTI ■ DUBAI

The UAE defence forces on Monday intercepted and destroyed two ballistic missiles that Houthi terror group fired towards its capital Abu Dhabi, days after two Indians and a Pakistani were killed in a rare drone and missile attack claimed by Yemeni rebels.

The attack did not result in any human losses, the Ministry of Defence said, adding that the remnants of intercepted and destroyed ballistic missiles fell in separate areas around Abu Dhabi."The air defences had intercepted and destroyed two ballistic missiles fired by terrorist Houthi group towards country on Monday," the ministry announced on Twitter. In response to attack, the Joint Operations Command of the UAE's Ministry of Defence (MOD) "immediately" destroyed a ballistic missile launcher in Yemen's Al Jawf province after it fired two missiles at Abu Dhabi.

The ministry also shared a video on Twitter showing an F-16 fighter jet destroying ballistic missile launcher in Yemen."MOD Joint Operations Command announces that at 04:10 hrs Yemen time an F-16 destroyed a ballistic missile launcher in Al Jawf, immediately after it launched two ballistic missiles at Abu Dhabi. They were successfully intercepted by our air defence systems," ministry said in a tweet. In a statement, the ministry affirmed its "full readiness to deal with any threats," adding that it will "take all necessary measures to protect UAE from any attacks," according to official WAM news agency.

CAPRI GLOBAL CAPITAL LIMITED

CAPRI GLOBAL CAPITAL LIMITED
Registered & Corporate Office :- 502, Tower-A, Peninsula Business Park, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013
Circle Office :- Capri Global Capital Limited 2nd Floor ,3B Pusa Road Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110005

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 mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Constructive/physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Capri Global Capital Limited Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on dates below mentioned, for recovery of amount mentioned below due to the Capri Global Capital Limited Secured Creditor from Borrower mentioned below. The reserve price, EMD amount and property details mentioned below.

SR. NO.	1.BORROWER(S) NAME 2. OUTSTANDING AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION OF THE MORTGAGED PROPERTY	1. DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION 2. LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF EMD 3. DATE & TIME OF THE PROPERTY INSPECTION	1. RESERVE PRICE 2. EMD OF THE PROPERTY 3. INCREMENTAL VALUE
1.	**1.M/S Nav Bharat Impex ("Borrower") 2.M/s Aar Bee Industries 3. Arun Kumar Aggarwal 4. Akansh Aggarwal 5.Shishir Chaturvedi (Co-borrower) LOAN ACCOUNT No. LNCGCDELTL0000003476 Rupees 2,81,90,813/-** (Rupees Two Crores Eighty One Lacs Ninety Thousand Eight Hundred Thirteen Only) **along with interest from 20.01.2022 along with applicable future interest.**	All Piece and Parcel of Entire Ground floor of Built up House No. 24, Block-B-6, area admeasuring 279.16 Sq Mtrs., Situated at Safdarjung Development Area Residential Scheme in the colony known as Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi. ALONGWITH CONSTRUCTION THEREON PRESENT AND FUTURE BOTH.	**1. E-AUCTION DATE: 28.02.2022 (Between 3:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.) 2. LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF EMD WITH KYC: 25.02.2022 3. DATE OF INSPECTION: 24.02.2022 between 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM**	**RESERVE PRICE: Rs. 3,50,00,000/-** (Rupees Three Crores Fifty Lacs Only). **EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT: Rs. 35,00,000/-** (Rupees Thirty Five Lacs Only) **INCREMENTAL VALUE: Rs. 1,00,000/-** (Rupees One Lac Only)
2.	**1.Yoginder Kumar ("Borrower") 2.Pooja (Co-borrower) LOAN ACCOUNT No. LNMECHA000032563 Rupees 24,11,311/-** (Rupees Twenty Four Lacs Eleven Thousand Three Hundred Eleven Only) **along with interest from 20.01.2022 along with applicable future interest.**	All Piece and Parcel of House No. 1/10059A, area admeasuring 30 Sq Yds., khasra No. 542/304, Gali no. 3-H, West Gorakh Park, Village Babar Pur, Illaqa Shahdara, Delhi ALONGWITH CONSTRUCTION THEREON PRESENT AND FUTURE BOTH. , Boundaries as Under:- East:- Part of Property West :- 16 ft wide Gali, North :- Part of Plot, South:- 12 ft wide Gali	**1. E-AUCTION DATE: 28.02.2022 (Between 3:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.) 2. LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF EMD WITH KYC: 25.02.2022 3. DATE OF INSPECTION: 24.02.2022 between 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM**	**RESERVE PRICE: Rs. 32,83,200/-**(Rupees Thirty Two Lacs Eighty Three Thousand Two Hundred Only). **EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT: Rs. 3,29,000/-** (Rupees Three Lacs Twenty Nine Thousand Only) **INCREMENTAL VALUE: Rs. 20,000/-** (Rupees Fifty Thousand Only)

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Capri Global Capital Limited Secured Creditor's website i.e. www. Capriglobal.in/auction/

TERMS & CONDITIONS OF ONLINE E- AUCTION SALE:-

1. The Property is being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS, WHATEVER THERE & WITHOUT RECOURSE BASIS". As such sale is without any kind of warranties & indemnities.
2. Particulars of the property / assts (viz. extent & measurements specified in the E-Auction Sale Notice has been stated to the best of information of the Secured Creditor and Secured Creditor shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission. Actual extant & dimensions may differ.
3. E-Auction Sale Notice issued by the Secured Creditor is an invitation to the general public to submit their bids and the same does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or nay representation on the part of the Secured Creditor. Interested bidders are advised to peruse the copies of title deeds with the Secured Creditor and to conduct own independent enquiries /due diligence about the title & present condition of the property / assets and claims / dues affecting the property before submission of bid/s.
4. Auction/bidding shall only be through "online electronic mode" through the website https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net Or Auction Tiger Mobile APP provided by the service provider M/S eProcurement Technologies Limited, Ahmedabad who shall arrange & coordinate the entire process of auction through the e-auction platform.
5. The bidders may participate in e-auction for bidding from their place of choice. Internet connectivity shall have to be ensured by bidder himself. Secured Creditor /service provider shall not be held responsible for the internet connectivity, network problems, system crash own, power failure etc.
6. For details, help, procedure and online bidding on e-auction prospective bidders may contact the Service Provider **M/S E-Procurement Technologies Ltd. Auction Tiger, Ahmedabad (Contact no. 079-68136880/68136837), Mr. Chintan Bhatt Mob. 9265562821 & 9265562818. Email: Chintan.bhatt@auctiontiger.net,.**
7. For participating in the e-auction sale the intending bidders should register their name at **https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net** well in advance and shall get the user id and password. Intending bidders are advised to change only the password immediately upon receiving it from the service provider.
8. For participating in e-auction, intending bidders have to deposit a refundable EMD of 10% OF RESERVE PRICE (as mentioned above) shall be payable by interested bidders through Demand Draft/NEFT/RTGS in favor of **"Capri Global Capital Limited" on or before 25-Feb-2022.**
9. The intending bidders should submit the duly filled in Bid Form (format available on **https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net)** along with the Demand Draft remittance towards EMD in a sealed cover addressed to the Authorized Officer, Capri Global Capital Limited Regional Office **Plot no. 3B, 2nd Floor, Pusa Road, New Delhi 110 005 latest by 03:00 PM on 25-Feb-2022**. The sealed cover should be super scribed with "Bid for participating in E-Auction Sale- - in the Loan Account No. _____ (as mentioned above) for property of "Borrower Name.".
10. After expiry of the last date of submission of bids with EMD, Authorised Officer shall examine the bids received by him and confirm the details of the qualified bidders (who have quoted their bids over and above the reserve price and paid the specified EMD with the Secured Creditor) to the service provider M/S eProcurement Technologies Limited to enable them to allow only those bidders to participate in the online inter-se bidding /auction proceedings at the date and time mentioned in E-Auction Sale Notice.
11. Inter-se bidding among the qualified bidders shall start from the highest bid quoted by the qualified bidders. During the process of inter-se bidding, there will be unlimited extension of "10" minutes each, i.e. the end time of e- auction shall be automatically extended by 10 Minutes each time if bid is made within 10 minutes from the last extension.
12. Bids once made shall not be cancelled or withdrawn. All bids made from the user id given to bidder will be deemed to have been made by him alone.
13. Immediately upon closure of E-Auction proceedings, the highest bidder shall confirm the final amount of bid quoted by him BY E-Mail both to the Authorised Officer, Capri Global Capital Limited, Regional **Office Office/ Plot no. 3B, 2nd Floor, Pusa Road, New Delhi 110 005** and the Service Provider for getting declared as successful bidder in the E-Auction Sale proceedings.
14. The successful bidder shall deposit 25% of the bid amount (including EMD) on the same day of the sale, being knocked down in his favour and balance 75% of bid amount within 15 days from the date of sale by DD/Pay order/NEFT/RTGS/Chq favouring Capri Global Capital Limited.
15. In case of default in payment of above stipulated amounts by the successful bidder / auction purchaser within the stipulated time, the sale will be cancelled and the amount already paid (including EMD) will be forfeited and the property will be again put to sale.
16. At the request of the successful bidder, the Authorised Officer in his absolute discretion may grant further time in writing, for depositing the balance of the bid amount.
17. The Successful Bidder shall pay 1% of Sale price towards TDS (out of Sale proceeds) (if applicable) and submit TDS certificate to the Authorised officer and the deposit the entire amount of sale price (after deduction of 1% towards TDS), adjusting the EMD within 15 working days of the acceptance of the offer by the authorized officer, or within such other extended time as deemed fit by the Authorised Officer, falling which the earnest deposit will be forfeited.
18. Municipal / Panchayat Taxes, Electricity dues (if any) and any other authorities dues (if any) has to be paid by the successful bidder before issuance of the sale certificate. Bids shall be made taking into consideration of all the statutory dues pertaining to the property.
19. Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful bidder only upon deposit of entire purchase price / bid amount and furnishing the necessary proof in respect of payment of all taxes / charges.
20. Applicable legal charges for conveyance, stamp duty, registration charges and other incidental charges shall be borne by the auction purchaser.
21. The Authorized officer may postpone / cancel the E-Auction Sale proceedings without assigning any reason whatsoever. In case the E-Auction Sale scheduled is postponed to a later date before 30 days from the scheduled date of sale, it will be displayed on the website of the service provider.
22. The decision of the Authorised Officer is final, binding and unquestionable.
23. All bidders who submitted the bids, shall be deemed to have read and understood the terms and conditions of the E-Auction Sale and be bound by them.
24. **For further details and queries, contact Authorised Officer, Capri Global Capital Limited: Mr. Sushil Gupta Mo. No. 7400445137.**
25. This publication is also 30 (Thirty) days notice to the Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantors of the above said loan account pursuant to rule 8(6) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, about holding of auction sale on the above mentioned date / place.

Special Instructions / Caution: Bidding in the last minutes/seconds should be avoided by the bidders in their own interest. Neither Capri Global Capital Limited nor the Service Provider will be responsible for any lapses/failure (Internet failure, Power failure, etc.) on the part of the bidder in such cases. In order to ward off such contingent situation, bidders are requested to make all the necessary arrangements / alternatives such as back-up power supply and whatever else required so that they are able to circumvent such situation and are able to participate in the auction successfully.

Place: Delhi/NCR Date : 25-01-2022 **Sd/- (Authorised Officer) Capri Global Capital Ltd.**

Burkina Faso's President Kabore is held by mutinous soldiers

AP ■ (BURKINA FASO)

Burkina Faso's President Roch Marc Christian Kabore is being held by mutinous soldiers, two of the soldiers told The Associated Press by phone early Monday. They did not say where Kabore is being held, but said he is in a safe place.

Gunshots were heard late Sunday night near the president's residence and in the early hours of Monday a battle took place at the presidential palace while a helicopter flew overhead. The roads of the capital were empty Sunday night except for checkpoints heavily guarded by mutinous soldiers.State news station RTB was heavily guarded on Monday morning.

Julian Assange wins right to appeal extradition in UK Supreme Court

London: Wikileaks founder Julian Assange on Monday won the latest round in his legal battle against being extradited to the US, as High Court judges in London granted the Australian national permission to take his extradition appeal to the UK's Supreme Court.The 50-year-old is wanted in America over the leak of thousands of classified documents related to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. His lawyers argued that he should not be taken to the US because of a real and "oppressive" risk of suicide. Last month, the US authorities won an appeal against a previous court ruling that he could not be extradited due to concerns over his mental health. *PTI*

UJVN LIMITED
H.O.: "UJJWAL', Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006,
Telephones.: 0135-2763808, Fax- 0135- 2763508,
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866

प.सं. 49 "e" Procurement दि0: 24.01.2022

DATE EXTENSION NO. - 1

Due to unavoidable reasons, Date of Submission and opening for e-NIT No. NCB/06/EE (E&M)/Dakpathar Barrage/2021-22 invited by the office of the Executive Engineer (E&M), Dakpathar Barrage, Dakpathar, Dehradun is being extended as below;

Last Date & Time for submission of Tender in the portal : Upto 17:00 hrs of 31 January 2022

Last Date of Offline Submission of Hard Copies in Original : Upto 12:00 hrs of 01 February 2022

Date & Time of Opening of Tender in the portal : at 15:30 hrs of 01 February 2022

Other Terms & Condition will remain same.

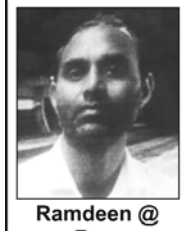
Information regarding Addendum/ Corrigendum/ Cancellation etc of tender may be obtained from Nigam's website.

Full & Further Details of tender can be seen from the e- procurement portal " **http://uktenders.gov.in**"

Executive Engineer (E&M)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON



Ramdeen @ Ram

General public is hereby informed that one person namely **Ramdeen @ Ram S/o Rampal,** R/o H.No. E-1/352, Gali No. 8, Prem Nagar, Nangloi, Delhi. Age 35 years, Height 5'6", Complexion Shallow, Round Face, Thin Medium, Wearing Pink colour shirt, black colour pant and black shoes in feet has been missing since 13.04.2021 from his house. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out this person, but no clue has come to light so far. In this regard a DD No. 47-A dated 13.04.2021 has been lodged at PS Kashmere Gate, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing person may kindly inform to the undersigned at the address or telephone nos. given below.

Website: http://cbi.nic.in
Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-23011334
Ph: 011-23014046, 23015218
DP/1718/N/2021

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

More anti-coup protests as turmoil in Sudan continues

AP ■ CAIRO

Thousands of Sudanese took to streets in capital of Khartoum and other cities Monday, activists said, continuing relentless anti-coup protests that have rocked country since a military coup three months ago.

Security forces fired tear gas to disperse protesters in several locations in capital, including area around fortified presidential palace, which has seen clashes in previous rounds of protests since Oct 25 coup, according to activists.

The military takeover has upended Sudan's transition to democratic rule after three decades of repression and international isolation under autocratic President Omar al-Bashir. The African nation has been on a fragile path to democracy since a popular uprising forced the military to remove al-Bashir and his Islamist government in April 2019.

Protesters, mostly young people, marched Monday in streets of Khartoum and its sister city of Omdurman, according to pro-democracy movement. There were also protests elsewhere in country, including provinces of Kassala, Red Sea, Jazira and already restive Darfur region movement said.

Pak journalist shot dead outside press club in Lahore

PTI ■ LAHORE

A senior Pakistani journalist was shot dead by unidentified men outside Lahore Press Club (LPC) here on Monday, police said. "Hasnain Shah, who was in his 40s, was parking his car outside press club when two motorcyclists opened indiscriminate fire, killing him on spot," an official of Inspector General Police (IGP) Punjab official told PTI.

Both armed men managed to flee congested area, he said. Shah, a resident of Lahore, was working as Crime Reporter for Capital TV. He is survived by his wife and two children. "We are investigating reports that he had enmity with some people," official said. Meanwhile, IGP Rao Sardar Ali Khan has directed Lahore police chief to ensure arrest of culprits atearliest.

The journalists' associations in Pakistan have condemned Shah's killing and demanded Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government to arrest his killers. "A journalist's murder in front of Lahore Press Club in a broad daylight is a moment of reflection for government," Lahore Press Club President Azam Chaudhry said. According to UN data, 85 journalists have been killed in Pakistan since 1993, including four in 2021.

CAIT accuses Amazon of concealing facts for more retail takeover nod

Files complaint with CCI

New Delhi: Traders' body CAIT on Monday filed a complaint with the Competition Commission of India against Amazon accusing the e-commerce major of committing a fraud while seeking approval for the takeover of More Retail's stores in India.

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) claimed that in case of acquiring More Retail, Amazon committed the same fraud, misrepresentation of facts, misleading the CCI in the matter too as was done in takeover of Future Retail.

"It amply exposes the sinister designs of Amazon to control Indian retail companies in a fraudulent manner to capture the physical retail trade and inventory-based e-commerce in India causing enormous harm to the traders," the traders' body alleged. CAIT said that Amazon has taken over More Retail through Samara Alternate Investment Fund (Samara AIF) that owns 51 per cent equity in Witzig Advisory LLP that in-turns owns More Retail Limited.

It further stated that Amazon has obtained approval from CCI for the takeover of More Retail Limited "by suppression and concealment". An email sent to Amazon India did not elicit a response.

"As is the case with Future, Amazon has represented to CCI that (a) Amazon has made only a financial investment in Witzig. It has not invested in More Retail; (b) the rights Amazon has acquired over More Retail Limited are only investment protection rights and Amazon has no strategic interest in More Retail," CAIT claimed in its complaint.

Future group and Amazon have been locked in a bitter legal tussle after the US e-commerce giant dragged Future Group to arbitration at the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) in October 2020, arguing that FRL had violated their contract by entering into a deal for the sale of its assets to billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Retail on a slump sale basis for ₹ 24,713 crore. ***PTI***

Can't accept offer until legally viable, says FRL ind director on Amazon proposal

New Delhi: Independent directors of Future Retail have turned down Amazon's offer of financial support to the company through a deal with private equity firm Samara Capital, saying any legally invalid offer cannot be accepted.

Future Retail's independent directors had last week asked Amazon if it was willing to give a long-term loan to avoid default on repayment of ₹3,500 crore loan due on January 29. Amazon replied to that saying it was willing to financially assist Future Retail through the Samara Capital deal but the retailer must shelve ₹24,713 crore deal with the Reliance group. Independent directors say Amazon hasn't shown them the money that Future Retail urgently needs to stall being declared a defaulter. They want to know if Amazon can act on behalf of Samara Capital and has the authority to negotiate and finalise such transaction on its behalf.

Speaking to PTI, Ravindra Dhariwal, an independent director of Future Retail Ltd (FRL) said if Amazon wants to help FRL, it needs to show the structure through which it will put the money. "We cannot accept the offer until and unless it is legally valid and unless it comes in time. What is the point of giving an offer after 'chidiya chug gayi khet'...If you want to help, then show us the structure through which you will put the money and we have asked you in good faith to put in ₹3,500 crore now so that we can repay the bank and the company is not treated as NPA and is not liable to IBC," he said.

Amazon told FRL that Samara Capital remains interested in buying out the debt-strapped retailer's businesses such as Big Bazaar for ₹ 7,000 crore, and had asked FRL to provide its financial details to Samara Capital for the private equity fund to conduct expedited due diligence. Dhariwal expressed concern that the support being extended is more of publicity.

"This just do not have a tenable structure, neither do they have a viable structure. The issue is very simple. We owe money to the banks, bondholders and vendors," he said.

Asked if Samara has directly reached out to the independent directors, Dhariwal answered in the negative. "We, the independent directors, have never heard about Samara. We have no idea they are interested, why they want to do it. We, independent directors, have never talked to Samara. Samara has discussed the terms sheet with the promoters of Big Bazaar with Biyani brother and they have acknowledged the term sheet, but not supported the term sheets. It is one of the 2-3 term sheets which they (FRL) have got. They never discussed it with us and never made it to the Board because they (Biyanis) found it inadequate," he said. ***PTI***

World shares mostly lower ahead of Federal Reserve meeting

Bangkok: Shares were mostly lower in Europe and Asia on Monday after Wall Street logged its worst week since the pandemic began in 2020.

Shares fell in Paris, London and Frankfurt but rose in Tokyo. Shanghai was little changed.

Investors have been growing increasingly worried about how aggressively the Federal Reserve, which holds a policy meeting this week, might act to cool rising inflation.

Historically low interest rates, dubbed quantitative easing, or QE, have helped support the broader market as the economy absorbed a sharp hit from the pandemic in 2020 and then recovered over the last two years.

"The FOMC (Fed) meeting dominates the macro calendar this week and is likely to keep risk sentiment on the hesitant side with an end to QE and imminent rates hikes likely to be announced," economists Nicholas Mapa and Robert Carnell of ING said in a commentary.

Germany's DAX shed 1.1% to 15,431.03 while the CAC 40 in Paris gave up 1.4% to 6,971.19. In London, the FTSE 100 fell 0.7% to 7,447.03.

The futures for the S&P 500 and the Dow industrials gained 0.3%.

Some economists believe the Fed and other central banks need to move faster to tamp down surging prices by raising rates.

U.S. Consumer prices rose 7% in December compared to a year earlier, the biggest increase in nearly four decades.

Rising costs are raising concerns that consumers will start to ease spending because of the persistent pressure on their wallets. ***AP***

Rupee slumps to 3-week low against US dollar on geo-political worries

Mumbai: The rupee on Monday slumped by 17 paise to close at a more than three-week low of 74.60 against the US dollar due to high crude oil prices, forex outflows and heavy losses in domestic equities amid growing geopolitical worries. Forex traders said the strength of the American currency in the overseas market and weak appetite for riskier assets also dragged down the local unit.

Moreover, market participants are now eyeing the US Fed's January 25-26 meeting for further cues. "The Indian rupee has weakened amid the big crack witnessed in domestic equities in tandem with other Asian markets. The sentiments are quite fragile in the markets amid the geopolitical tensions in Eastern Europe and as investors are fretting over the possibility of a quicker pace of interest rate hikes in the US," Sugandha Sachdeva, Vice President - Commodity and Currency Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

Riskier assets have come under pressure amid the prospects of a Russian invasion of Ukraine. The US and the UK have advised the families of their diplomats in Ukraine to leave the country.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 74.43 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.42 and a low of 74.69 during the session. The rupee finally settled down by 17 paise or 0.23 per cent at 74.60, the lowest closing level since December 27, 2021.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.12 per cent up at 95.75. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.33 per cent to USD 88.18 per barrel. With inflationary pressures building up, the overwhelming consensus suggests that the era of near-zero interest rates is likely to come to an end very soon, Sachdeva said, adding that the rupee is still finding some comfort from the fact that the country's forex reserves have surged by USD 2.229 billion to USD 634.965 billion for the week ended January 14.***PTI***

RBI to conduct overnight VRR auction of ₹75,000 cr on Monday

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India on Monday said it will be conducting an overnight variable rate repo auction under liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) for an amount of ₹ 75,000 crore today.

The date of reversal is on January 25, 2022, the central bank said in a release.

On January 20, the RBI had conducted an overnight variable rate repo (VRR) auction of ₹50,000 crore.

The central bank had said it will continue to rebalance liquidity conditions in a non-disruptive manner while maintaining adequate liquidity to meet the needs of the productive sectors of the economy. ***PTI***

Govt to facilitate ecosystem for creating indigenous operating system for mobile phones: MoS IT

New Delhi: The Government is planning to come up with a policy that will facilitate an ecosystem for the industry to create an indigenous operating system as an alternative to Google's Android and Apple's iOS, Union Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said on Monday.

At present, mobile phones are dominated by two operating systems - Google's Android and Apple's iOS that are driving the hardware ecosystem as well, the minister told PTI in an interview.

"There is no third one. Therefore, in a lot of ways there is tremendous interest in MeitY and in the Government of India to even create a new handset operating system. We are talking to people. We are looking at a policy for that," Chandrasekhar said.

He said that the government is looking for capabilities within start-up and academic ecosystems for development of an indigenous operating system (OS). ***PTI***

Home buyers' body FPCE moves SC for time-bound implementation of RERA by West Bengal Govt

New Delhi: Home buyers' body FPCE has filed a plea in the Supreme Court seeking directions to the West Bengal government for the time-bound and proper implementation of the real estate regulatory law RERA in the state.

The Supreme Court, in May last year, had struck down West Bengal government's law -- WBHIRA -- for regulating real estate sector saying it was "unconstitutional".

The apex court's ruling came while it was hearing a plea filed by the Forum For People's Collective Efforts (FPCE).

Now, nearly eight months later, the FPCE has filed a miscellaneous application in the Supreme Court over non-implementation of RERA (Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act), 2016) in West Bengal.

The FPCE has urged the apex court to pass an order directing the West Bengal Government to take all appropriate steps and actions for implementation of RERA in a time-bound manner. ***PTI***

Housing.Com partners with Loom Solar to provide solar rooftop solutions

New Delhi: Real estate portal Housing.Com on Monday said it has tied up with Loom Solar to provide solar rooftop solutions for homes. With the help of this innovative residential solution, homeowners can save up to 90 per cent on their electricity bills, it said in a statement.

The partnership aims at leveraging and augmenting the strength of both organisations for providing a one-stop solution to home owners for their solar needs. "At Housing.Com, we continuously aim to create new offerings to add greater value to our customers. This tie up with Loom Solar is another step in that direction," said Dhruv Agarwala, group CEO, Housing.Com, Makaan.Com and PropTiger.Com. Amod Anand, Co-Founder & Director, Loom Solar said, "We crossed 50,000 homes adopting rooftop solar systems and this tie-up with Housing.Com takes another footstep towards addressing a bigger mission." *PTI*

SBI Card Q3 profit zooms 84 pc to ₹386 cr on higher card spends, fall in bad loans

New Delhi: SBI Cards and Payment Services on Monday reported 84 per cent jump in net profit at ₹386 crore for December quarter 2021-22 on the back of healthy card spends, fall in bad loans and higher income from other sources.

The pure-play credit card issuer promoted by the country's largest lender SBI had posted a net profit of ₹ 210 crore in the year- ago same quarter. Total revenues of the company rose 24 per cent to ₹3,140 crore during the quarter under review as against ₹2,540 crore in the same period of 2020-21, SBI Card said in a release. The increase in income was primarily due to higher income from fees and services during the quarter, SBI Card said.

On the other key metrics, the company witnessed 10 per cent growth in new accounts volume at 10,08,000 as against 9,18,000 in the year-ago quarter. Card-in-force grew 15 per cent to 1.32 crore and total spends surged 47 per cent to ₹55,397 crore. ***PTI***

कार्यालय उप वन संरक्षक, बून्दी

क्रमांक एफ/विकास/उवसं/2021–22/ दिनांकः– .....

ई–निविदा सूचना संख्या 7 वर्ष 2021–22

राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से इस कार्यालय द्वारा **Road Side Planting Work NH-27 Chittorgarh To Kota** के एक कार्य जिनकी अनुमानित लागत 121.50 लाख रूपये है, हेतु उपयुक्त श्रेणी के संवेदक एवं राज्य सरकार/केन्द्र सरकार के अधिकृत संगठनों/केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग/डाक एवं दूर संचार विभाग/रेल्वे इत्यादि में पंजीकृत संवेदको/पंजीकृत व्यवसायों/निर्माताओ से निम्न कार्यो हेतु निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ई–प्रोक्यूरमेन्ट के माध्यम से ऑन लाईन ई–निविदाये आमन्त्रित की जाती है। निविदा फार्म ऑनलाईन वेबसाईट **www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** से निम्नानुसार डाउनलोड एवं अपलोड किये जा सकते है। उपरोक्त निविदा से संबंधित विवरण वेबसाईट **www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in** पोर्टल तथा कार्यालय हाजा के नोटिस वोर्ड पर कार्यालय समय में देखी जा सकती है। इच्छुक संवेदको को अपने डिजिटल (DSC) हस्ताक्षर के माध्यम से वेवसाईट **http:/www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** पर रजिस्टर्ड करवाना आवश्यक है।

क्र. स.	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (लाखों में)	धरोहर राशि 2 प्रतिशत राशि (रू0 में)	निविदा डाउनलोड करने की प्रारम्भिक दिनांक व समय	निविदा/डाउनलोड/अपलोड करने की अंतिम दिनांक व समय	तकनीकी बिड खोलने की दिनांक व समय	निविदा शुल्क राशि (रू0 में)	ई–टेण्डरिंग प्रक्रिया शुल्क राशि (रू0 में)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Tree Guard (4 RCC Pannels) Height 1.8 mtr.	121.50	243000.00	13.01.2020 9.30 AM	02.02.2022 6.00 PM	03.02.2022 1.00 PM	1000	1000

नोटः– वित्तीय विड खोलने की सूचना पृथक से दी जावेगी।

हस्ता/–
(सोनल जौरिहार)
उप वन संरक्षक
बून्दी

NIB CODE NO:- FOR2122AO445
UBN NO. FOR2122GLOB00666
DIPR/C/822/2022

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Bank

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

Whereas

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Prabhat Arora/ Sudesh Lal Arora LBDEL00004132477 & LBDEL00004966577 & LBDEL00005121577	Prop No G 52, Ground Floor, Plot No 9-B and 9 C, Cross River Mall, Shahdara, Delhi. Admeasuring an area of 738 Sq Ft 19/Jan/22	June 25, 2021 Rs. 1,01,10,479.00/-	Delhi/ NCR

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

Date : January 25, 2022
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

CAPRI GLOBAL CAPITAL LIMITED

CAPRI GLOBAL CAPITAL LIMITED

Registered & Corporate Office :- 502, Tower-A, Peninsula Business Park, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013
Circle Office :- Capri Global Capital Limited 2nd Floor ,3B Pusa Road Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110005

APPENDIX IV POSSESSION NOTICE (for immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Capri Global Capital Limited (CGCL) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorised Officer of the company to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) mentioned herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of the Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub –section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeemthe secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of CGCL for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon.

S. N.	Name of the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Description of Secured Asset (Immovable Property)	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Date of Possession
1.	(Loan Account No. **LNMEKKD000024016, LNBLKKD000048978 of our Noida Branch)** **Bhumika Enterprises** (Borrower) **Sunil Kumar, Rahul Bhadana, Sonika, Ramesh Devi**(Co-Borrower)	All Piece and Parcel of Plot No. 40/1, area admeasuring 150 Sq Yds., out of Khasra no. 4134, Rameshwari Vihar, Village Loni, Tehsil and District Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh alongwith construction thereon present and future both; Boundaries as under, East :- Road, West :- Other's Property, North :- Gali, South ;- Other's Property	**25-10-2021 Rs. 46,32,400/-**	**19-01-2022**
2.	(Loan Account No. **LNMEOKH000050051 of our Okhla Branch)** **Pawan Kumar** (Borrower) **Suman** (Co-Borrower)	All Piece and Parcel of Land/Plot admeasuring 188 Sq Yds., Khasra no. 100, Village Milki Lachchi, Pargana & Tehsil Dadri, District Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh alongwith construction thereon present and future both;	**25-10-2021 Rs. 22,43,445/-**	**22-01-2022**

Place : DELHI/NCR Date : 25-01-2022 **Sd/- (Authorised Officer) For Capri Global Capital Limited (CGCL)**

CAPRI GLOBAL CAPITAL LIMITED

CAPRI GLOBAL CAPITAL LIMITED

Registered & Corporate Office :- 502, Tower-A, Peninsula Business Park, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013
Circle Office :- Capri Global Capital Limited 2nd Floor ,3B Pusa Road Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110005

APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6) and 9(1)]
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) and 9(1) 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 mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Constructive/physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Capri Global Capital Limited Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on dates below mentioned, for recovery of amount mentioned below due to the Capri Global Capital Limited Secured Creditor from Borrower mentioned below. The reserve price, EMD amount and property details mentioned below.

SR. NO.	1.BORROWER(S) NAME 2. OUTSTANDING AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION OF THE MORTGAGED PROPERTY	1. DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION 2. LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF EMD 3. DATE & TIME OF THE PROPERTY INSPECTION	1. RESERVE PRICE 2. EMD OF THE PROPERTY 3. INCREMENTAL VALUE
1.	**1.M/s Nanda Sales** ("Borrower") **2.Mrs. Amisha 3.Mr. Amit Kumar** (Co-borrower) **LOAN ACCOUNT No. LNCGCDELTL0000006439 AND LNCGCDELTL0000006205** **Rupees 54,07,425/-** (Rupees Fifty Four Lacs Seven Thousand Four Hundred Twenty Five Only) **along with interest from 31.10.2021 along with applicable future interest**	All Piece and Parcel of ENTIRE FIRST FLOOR OF BUILT-UP PROPERTY NO. K-14, BEARING MUNICIPAL NO. WZ-L2/35, AREA MEASURING 93 SQUARE YARDS WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS, PART OF KHASRA NO. 30, Alongwith Common Scooter Parking On The Ground Floor Under Stairs, Situated In The Area Of Village Nangli Jalib, Colony Known As Krishna Park Extention, Gali No. 12, New Delhi – 110018 Alongwith Construction Thereon present and future Both.	**1. E-AUCTION DATE: 11.02.2022 (Between 3:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.) 2. LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF EMD WITH KYC: 10.02.2022 3. DATE OF INSPECTION: 09.02.2022 between 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM**	**RESERVE PRICE: Rs. 28,80,000/-** (Rupees Twenty Eight Lacs Eighty Thousand Only). **EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT: Rs. 2,90,000/-** (Rupees Two Lacs Ninety Thousand Only) **INCREMENTAL VALUE: Rs. 20,000/-** (Rupees Twenty Thousand Only)
2.	**1.Vijay Kumar** ("Borrower") **2.Saroj Bala 3. Chetan Chhabra** (Co-borrower) **LOAN ACCOUNT No.LNCGCDELTL0000007086** **Rupees Rs. 26,03,470/-** (Rupees Twenty Six Lacs Three Thousand Four Hundred Seventy Only) **along with interest from 30.11.2021 along with applicable future interest.**	All Piece and Parcel of Property bearing No. 382, area admeasuring 40 Sq Yds., Ward No. 4, Part of Khasra No. 1151/3, Satbir wali Gali, Mehrauli, New Delhi-110030 Alongwith Construction thereon Present and Future both. Boundaries as under:- EAST:- Other Property West:- Other Property, North:- Gali 9 fts South:- Gali 6 fts.	**1. E-AUCTION DATE: 11.02.2022 (Between 3:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.) 2. LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF EMD WITH KYC: 10.02.2022 3. DATE OF INSPECTION: 09.02.2022 between 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM**	**RESERVE PRICE: Rs. 24,67,000/-** (Rupees Twenty Four Lacs Sixty Seven Thousand Thousand Only). **EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT: Rs. 2,47,000/-** (Rupees Two Lacs Forty Seven Thousand Only) **INCREMENTAL VALUE: Rs. 20,000/-** (Rupees Twenty Thousand Only)
3.	**1.Mr. Navin Kumar** ("Borrower") **2.Mrs. Dolly,** (Co-borrower) **LOAN ACCOUNT No.LNCGCJGDTL0000007494** **Rupees 24,50,678/-** (Rupees Twenty Four Lacs Fifty Thousand Six Hundred Seventy Eight Only) **along with interest from 30.11.2021 along with applicable future interest**	All Piece and Parcel of Property No. C-530/B, Entire Upper Ground Floor, alongwith one two wheeler parking, Without roof Rights, Block-C, Kh. No. - 355, Gali No-25, Bhajanpura, Shahdara, Delhi-110053 Alongwith Construction Thereon present and future Both.	**1. E-AUCTION DATE: 11.02.2022 (Between 3:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.) 2. LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF EMD WITH KYC: 10.02.2022 3. DATE OF INSPECTION: 09.02.2022 between 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM**	**RESERVE PRICE: Rs. 11,70,000/-** (Rupees Eleven Lacs Seventy Thousand Only). **EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT: Rs. 1,20,000/-** (Rupees One Lac Twenty Thousand Only) **INCREMENTAL VALUE: Rs. 20,000/-** (Rupees Twenty Thousand Only)

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Capri Global Capital Limited Secured Creditor's website i.e. www. Capriglobal.in/auction/

TERMS & CONDITIONS OF ONLINE E- AUCTION SALE:-

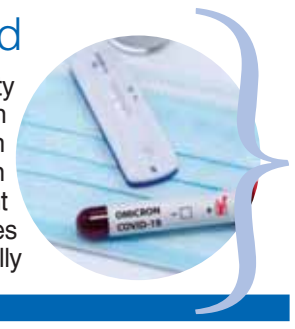
1. The Property is being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS, WHATEVER THERE & WITHOUT RECOURSE BASIS". As such sale is without any kind of warranties & indemnities.
2. Particulars of the property / assts (viz. extent & measurements specified in the E-Auction Sale Notice has been stated to the best of information of the Secured Creditor and Secured Creditor shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission. Actual extant & dimensions may differ.
3. E-Auction Sale Notice issued by the Secured Creditor is an invitation to the general public to submit their bids and the same does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or nay representation on the part of the Secured Creditor. Interested bidders are advised to peruse the copies of title deeds with the Secured Creditor and to conduct own independent enquiries /due diligence about the title & present condition of the property / assets and claims / dues affecting the property before submission of bid/s.
4. Auction/bidding shall only be through "online electronic mode" through the website https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net Or Auction Tiger Mobile APP provided by the service provider M/S eProcurement Technologies Limited, Ahmedabad who shall arrange & coordinate the entire process of auction through the e-auction platform.
5. The bidders may participate in e-auction for bidding from their place of choice. Internet connectivity shall have to be ensured by bidder himself. Secured Creditor /service provider shall not be held responsible for the internet connectivity, network problems, system crash own, power failure etc.
6. For details, help, procedure and online bidding on e-auction prospective bidders may contact the Service Provider **M/S E-Procurement Technologies Ltd. Auction Tiger, Ahmedabad (Contact no. 079-61200531/576/596/559/598/587/594/.), Mr. Ramprasad Sharma Mob. 800-002-3297/ 79-6120 0559. Email: ramprasad@auctiontiger.net,.**
7. For participating in the e-auction sale the intending bidders should register their name at **https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net** well in advance and shall get the user id and password. Intending bidders are advised to change only the password immediately upon receiving it from the service provider.
8. For participating in e-auction, intending bidders have to deposit a refundable EMD of 10% OF RESERVE PRICE (as mentioned above) shall be payable by interested bidders through Demand Draft/NEFT/RTGS in favor of **"Capri Global Capital Limited" on or before 10-Feb-2022.**
9. The intending bidders should submit the duly filled in Bid Form (format available on **https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net)** along with the Demand Draft remittance towards EMD in a sealed cover addressed to the Authorized Officer, Capri Global Capital Limited Regional Office / **Plot no. 3B, 2nd Floor, Pusa Road, New Delhi 110 005 latest by 03:00 PM on 10-Feb-2022**. The sealed cover should be super scribed with "Bid for participating in E-Auction Sale- - in the Loan Account No. _____ (as mentioned above) for property of "Borrower Name.".
10. After expiry of the last date of submission of bids with EMD, Authorised Officer shall examine the bids received by him and confirm the details of the qualified bidders (who have quoted their bids over and above the reserve price and paid the specified EMD with the Secured Creditor) to the service provider M/S eProcurement Technologies Limited to enable them to allow only those bidders to participate in the online inter-se bidding /auction proceedings at the date and time mentioned in E-Auction Sale Notice.
11. Inter-se bidding among the qualified bidders shall start from the highest bid quoted by the qualified bidders. During the process of inter-se bidding, there will be unlimited extension of "10" minutes each, i.e. the end time of e- auction shall be automatically extended by 10 Minutes each time if bid is made within 10 minutes from the last extension.
12. Bids once made shall not be cancelled or withdrawn. All bids made from the user id given to bidder will be deemed to have been made by him alone.
13. Immediately upon closure of E-Auction proceedings, the highest bidder shall confirm the final amount of bid quoted by him BY E-Mail both to the Authorised Officer, Capri Global Capital Limited, Regional Office / **Plot no. 3B, 2nd Floor, Pusa Road, New Delhi 110 005** and the Service Provider for getting declared as successful bidder in the E-Auction Sale proceedings.
14. The successful bidder shall deposit 25% of the bid amount (including EMD) on the same day of the sale, being knocked down in his favour and balance 75% of bid amount within 15 days from the date of sale by DD/Pay order/NEFT/RTGS/Chq favouring Capri Global Capital Limited.
15. In case of default in payment of above stipulated amounts by the successful bidder / auction purchaser within the stipulated time, the sale will be cancelled and the amount already paid (including EMD) will be forfeited and the property will be again put to sale.
16. At the request of the successful bidder, the Authorised Officer in his absolute discretion may grant further time in writing, for depositing the balance of the bid amount.
17. The Successful Bidder shall pay 1% of Sale price towards TDS (out of Sale proceeds) and submit TDS certificate to the Authorised officer and the deposit the entire amount of sale price (after deduction of 1% towards TDS), adjusting the EMD within 15 working days of the acceptance of the offer by the authorized officer, or within such other extended time as deemed fit by the Authorised Officer, falling which the earnest deposit will be forfeited.
18. Municipal / Panchayat Taxes, Electricity dues (if any) and any other authorities dues (if any) has to be paid by the successful bidder before issuance of the sale certificate. Bids shall be made taking into consideration of all the statutory dues pertaining to the property.
19. Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful bidder only upon deposit of entire purchase price / bid amount and furnishing the necessary proof in respect of payment of all taxes / charges.
20. Applicable legal charges for conveyance, stamp duty, registration charges and other incidental charges shall be borne by the auction purchaser.
21. The Authorized officer may postpone / cancel the E-Auction Sale proceedings without assigning any reason whatsoever. In case the E-Auction Sale scheduled is postponed to a later date before 15 days from the scheduled date of sale, it will be displayed on the website of the service provider.
22. The decision of the Authorised Officer is final, binding and unquestionable.
23. All bidders who submitted the bids, shall be deemed to have read and understood the terms and conditions of the E-Auction Sale and be bound by them.
24. **For further details and queries, contact Authorised Officer, Capri Global Capital Limited: Mr. Sushil Gupta Mo. No. 7400445137.**
25. This publication is also 15 (Fifteen) days notice to the Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantors of the above said loan account pursuant to rule 8(6) and 9 (1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, about holding of auction sale on the above mentioned date / place.

Special Instructions / Caution: Bidding in the last minutes/seconds should be avoided by the bidders in their own interest. Neither Capri Global Capital Limited nor the Service Provider will be responsible for any lapses/failure (Internet failure, Power failure, etc.) on the part of the bidder in such cases. In order to ward off such contingent situation, bidders are requested to make all the necessary arrangements / alternatives such as back-up power supply and whatever else required so that they are able to circumvent such situation and are able to participate in the auction successfully.

Place: DELHI Date : 25-01-2022 **Sd/- (Authorised Officer) Capri Global Capital Ltd.**

ImpactExplained

Omicron variant is now in community transmission stage in India, the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) said in its latest bulletin on Sunday, noting become dominant in multiple metros, where new cases have been rising exponentially



DOCYARD

DR PANKAJ AGGARWAL

M D (Hom),
PhD Senior Homeopath

AGRAWAL HOMOEO CLINIC

Check immunity frequently

Every new year we make a number of resolutions and promise ourselves to achieve some specific goals. Some of us promise ourselves to avoid drinking and smoking. Some want to achieve study goals while others say they want to hit the gym from January 1 itself. There is thus no dearth of promises and resolutions. But there is one most important resolution which is a foundational one and a key to success in all areas of your life. Isn't that your health? We all must take a pledge and resolve to stay healthy. It is a supreme goal that we can gift ourselves so that we can stay healthy and disease free this new year and build upon it.

There are many medical systems. Each perhaps has its own place in the overall architecture of the health environment. Homeopathy is one of the best systems that can be adopted to maintain a disease free and healthy lifestyle.

There are a number of homeopathic remedies which can be adopted in our day to day life to improve the quality of our health. They are not highly invasive therapies but smooth and impactful. **The most effective and widely accepted methods are:-**

Check your immunity

Immunity is defined as the capability of an individual's body to fight against any infectious disease or illness. Nowadays we often hear that people with low immunity are vulnerable and have a higher chance of getting infected by COVID. But there is no need for any fancy medication to improve immunity. There are a number of remedies that can be suggested to have a strong immunity. Gelsemium, Arsenicum album, Oscillococcinum, Allium Cepa and Lycopodium 30 are few remedies suggested under homeopathy to increase immunity. But to have learnt their names does not mean that you can buy it and take it. Please consult a professional homeopath. In our system generally one size does not fit all.

Look after your mental health

Living in this world of stress, anxiety, depression and god knows what other mental sins one is used to which remain elusive and we often get confined with these that can create future problems. All these mind games have a very bad effect on our health which can be seen in the longer run. The uniqueness of Homeopathy is that it deals with all the habits and early signs that forewarns any major health issues.If not cured at the early stage Stress, anxiety, depression may lead to serious possible conditions like heart attack, kidney failure, liver failure and even brain hemorrhage. If you are suffering from any of the aforementioned problems, immediately consult your homeopathic doctor. Homeopathic medicines like Aconite, Argentum nitricum, Arsenicum album, Gelsemium and Ignatia can be used under such circumstances. But as it is always necessary to emphasize self medication is not advised and can be dangerous.

Regular check-ups

Homeopathy follows the mantra of curing the disease before it occurs. It simply means to eradicate the early symptoms of any disease before it hits you hard. This can be done by regular check-ups with your homeopathic professional. Update your calendar for a monthly routine check-up with your homeopathic doctor to have a regular track of your blood sugar levels, cholesterol level, blood pressure and other vitals.

Take care of heart

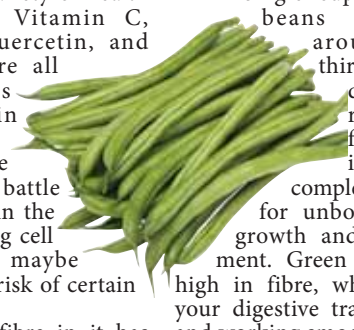
Heart plays the most crucial role in our body but is very sensitive at the same time. It is very important to look after our cardiac health and be aware of any early symptoms if seen. Cardiac arrest is the most common cause of death that kills millions of people every year but it can be prevented using homeopathic treatment. Homeopathy suggests use of naturally synthesized medications that do not have any adverse effect on our heart. Aconitum Napellus, Arnica Montana, Cactus Grandiflorus and Digitalis Purpurea can be used in times of heart related issues. Again it is important to note all these medicines can be prescribed under the care of a homeopathic doctor.

No to bad habits

Most of us have become slaves of our habits. Some adopt good habits while the majority are prone to destructive habits for getting fleeting pleasures and excitement. Peer pressure is another important factor. Smoking, drinking, junk eating, all these habits are going to be a burden for the future. Homeopathy has a cure for addiction like alcoholism and smoking. Homeopathic treatment is seen as effective towards alcoholism and smoking and provides faster results as well. Natrum Mur, Avena Sativa, Nux Vomica, Kalium Bich, Silicea, Sterculia and Strychninum Nit are some of the common remedies that can be used to cure addictions.

WARMFOOD

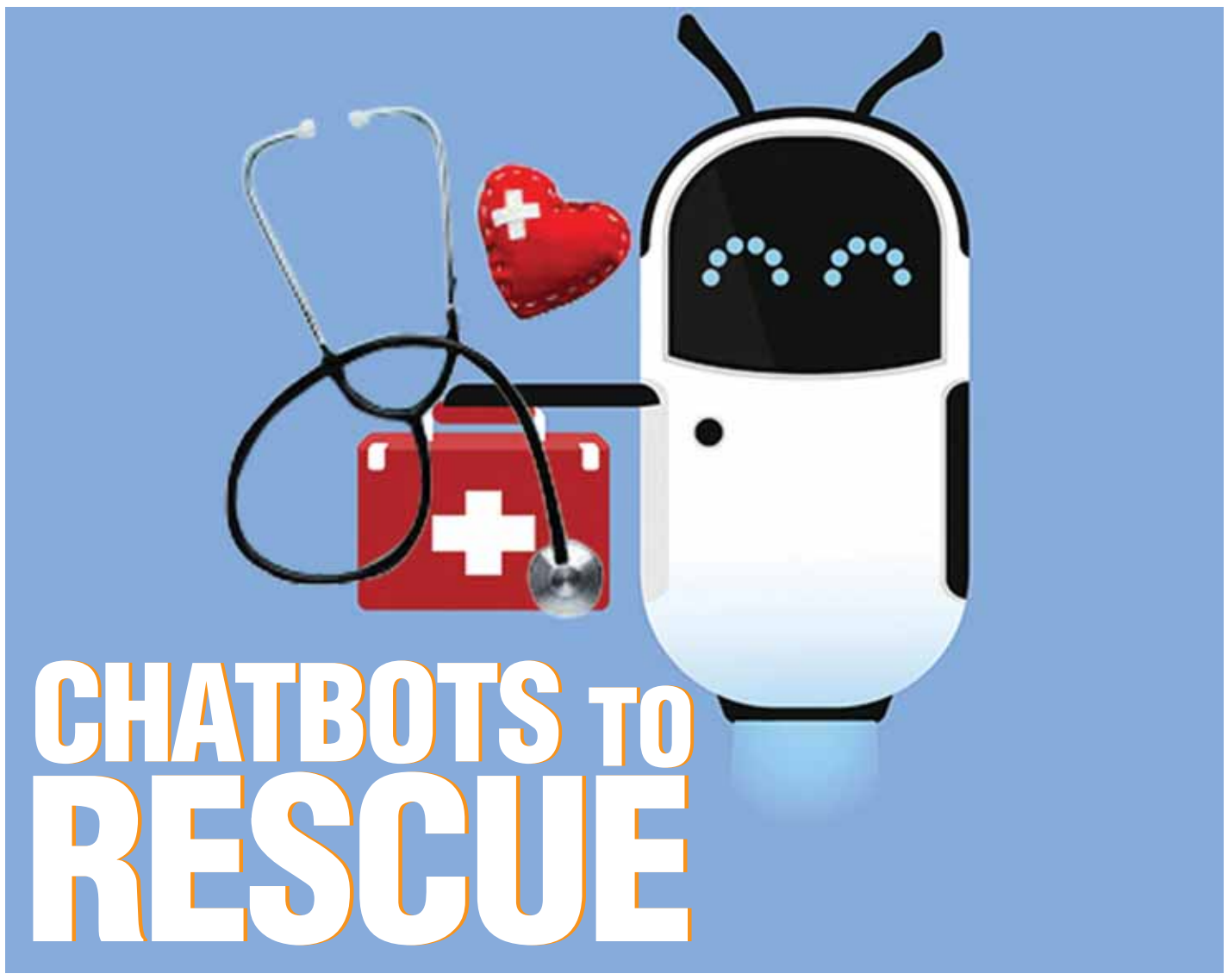
GREEN BEANS: Green beans are low in calories, but they are high in nutrients that have a variety of health advantages. Vitamin C, flavonols, quercetin, and kaemferol are all antioxidants found in legumes.



These antioxidants battle free radicals in the body, reducing cell damage and maybe lowering the risk of certain diseases.

Soluble fibre in it has been shown to promote heart health by reducing LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol).

A single cup of green beans contains around one-third of your daily required folate intake, a B complex essential for unborn babies' growth and development. Green beans are high in fibre, which keeps your digestive tract healthy and working smoothly.



CHATBOTS TO RESCUE

Chatbots can offer support, companionship and therapy which can lessen the load on therapists and is a viable option for people who face challenges in terms of affordability and accessibility, says DR PRAKRITI PODDAR

Delivering proper care to those with mental health issues has always been a big challenge. India is on the verge of a mental health epidemic, yet it's hard to find a public discourse on ways to prevent mental health disorders or treat them.

According to a report by the World Health Organisation in 2019, over 264 million people are affected by depression and almost 800,000 people die by suicide each year. The situation has been further worsened by the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. The isolation because of lockdown, uncertainty and fear due to job cuts and general discomfort due to the inability to control different aspects of life has triggered severe mental trauma in people across India. The issue has been made even more complicated by the fact that no one has any idea when things will ever return to normal.

To tackle the issue of rising mental health issues among people, technology companies are leveraging Artificial intelligence-based solutions to develop chatbots tuned to help patients with mental health concerns. These conversational agents support patients with mental health issues while offering a high level of privacy and anonymity.

Chatbots can be effective but are they really the answer?

A chatbot is able to simulate a conversation on different platforms using audio or text and sometimes video too. While some chatbots are fully automated, some utilise human interfaces. The AI frameworks required to be trained with vast amounts of data to make these chatbots compatible with the complexity of human communication have the ability to understand cultural nuances.

There are chatbots designed to detect subtle changes in facial expressions, length of pauses or rates of speech and build a diagnosis accordingly. In case the chatbot detects a deep-seated problem in the patient, an option to meet an actual therapist is offered to them, and relevant helpline numbers are shared.

A part of the population especially, the millennials and Gen Z, believe that chatbots are a great way to address the issue of the mental health crisis in India. The young crowd is tech-savvy and more comfortable in sharing responses with a chatbot rather than a real person. This makes sense when we think about how workplaces are becoming more remote, and increasing internet conversations are making human interaction more limited.

However, not all are convinced and it can be debated whether one ought to be. Issues related to mental health are complex and articulating how one feels can be quite difficult even in front of a trained professional who can see the facial expressions, nuanced inflections in body language and even tone. Compared to that, using a chatbot may seem superficial.

Apart from that, there are other issues as well. A chatbot is trained with underlying neural nets and learning algorithms and can inherit the prejudice of its makers. The algorithms behind a chatbot have to be designed in a way that makes sure it behaves in a specific manner, which is helpful for the person talking to it on the other side. The people developing the chatbot need to be well aware of the nuances of mental health.

Dr Prakriti Poddar
Mental Health Expert
Director Poddar Wellness

A part of the population especially, the millennials and Gen Z, believe that chatbots are a great way to address the issue of the mental health crisis in India

Bridging the Gap

Human beings are complicated creatures, even those who are not struggling with mental health issues. Those suffering from anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, and suicidal thoughts have several layers of thinking and multiple faces that they put on for their interactions. A chatbot, in this scenario, often helps to bring down the 'wall' since its biggest weakness is its greatest strength too. A chatbot is never judgemental, it will never show empathy too. Most questions used by chatbots are fed in an algorithm based on the CBT technique. The lack of emotional bonding is often what a person suffering from mental health is often looking for. However, it is important to remember that chatbots can be effective in early interventions and a primary diagnosis of mental health disorders but it is best not to let chatbots engage in full-blown mental health therapy without any human supervision.

In conclusion, chatbots can offer support, companionship and therapy which can lessen the load on therapists drastically. It is indeed a viable option for people who face challenges in terms of affordability and accessibility. In the years to come, technology companies need to develop chatbots that can strike the right balance of being empathetic without being judgemental. Those using them must be made aware of the limitations of the chatbot and the areas in which it can help — a transparent system is what is required.

Keep infections at bay

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women, after breast cancer. DR PRIYA BHATI tells us how we can stay safe among other things

Cervix is the narrow passage which forms the lower end of the uterus. Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in Indian women, after breast cancer. It usually happens in the age group of 40-50 years and unfortunately, most of the patients end up presenting in advanced stages. The bright side however is that this disease usually provides a long window for its detection in early stages. It is one of the few cancers that is largely preventable.

The warning symptoms are usually an excessive or smelly vaginal discharge, or unusual bleeding from the vagina. This bleeding can happen in between periods, or as heavy bleeding during periods. Bleeding after intercourse is an important warning sign as well. Rarely, pain in the lower abdomen, blood stained urine might also occur. Any of these symptoms should prompt a gynecological check up without delay. In its early stages, it is treated by surgery, and more advanced stages are generally treated with radiation and chemotherapy, or a combination of these.

Cervical cancer is caused by a virus called the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). This particular virus infects almost everyone after they become sexually active, but 90 per cent of people will clear the virus within one to two years of getting infected. Hence, just having the virus does not mean one is going to get cancer.

There are robust screening tests available for picking up the early disease. Two such tests are the pap smear and HPV test. Both these tests are easily and widely available, affordable and done on an outpatient basis, without much discomfort. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all women above the age of 30 should get screened, and get routine screening every few years to enable doctors to pick up this deadly disease in its nascent stages.

Another very important aspect to consider and understand is the need for HPV vaccination. Talking about the sexual health of our children is still a taboo in our country, which we need to break. Making them aware of safe sexual practices is an important discussion that the children need to be involved in. Vaccinating the children against a sexually acquired virus can be a difficult conversation in a lot of families, but it is the need of the hour. HPV vaccine is recommended for all young adolescent girls aged 9-14 years of age by the WHO. The vaccine can also be given to boys aged 11-12 years. The vaccine is most effective when given before the onset of sexual activity. Young immune systems are more responsive to vaccines, thereby providing better protection.

The writer is Gynae oncology surgeon, Department of Gynaecologic Oncology, Amrita Hospital, Kochi

Better healthcare infrastructure is the key

The medical tourism sector is booming globally and India is ranked 10th among 46 countries in the Medical Tourism Index 2021

With escalating medical expenses, people are scampering to book doctor's appointments far away from their homes. A large number of patients travel from nations lacking healthcare infrastructure or less advanced in medical facilities to countries providing highly-specialised healthcare facilities.

The medical tourism sector is booming globally and India is ranked 10th among 46 countries in the Medical Tourism Index 2021. As per Tourism Ministry statistics, India received just over 1.82 lakh medical tourists in 2020, which contributed 6.7 per cent to the overall tourism inflow into the country.

India so far has attracted medical tourists from smaller nations lacking proper healthcare facilities back home, like Maldives, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kenya, Oman, or NRIs from developed countries who come for affordable medical treatment, only to go back when they get well.

India offers a variety of healthcare services including Medical Treatment & Surgeries to cure chronic ailments, physical appearance enhancements like cosmetic surgery, Fitness & Rejuvenation for mental & physical relaxation or mindfulness, and Alternative Medicine Treatment to seek AYUSH.

India has immense potential to offer healthcare as per international standards, and at a fraction of the cost. Some of the key medical advantages that India brings is the skilled and qualified healthcare manpower, state-of-the-art Tier 1 hospitals equipped with the latest technologies, quality nursing care & post-operative facilities, high-end diagnostic services and top-quality yet affordable medicines (compared to developed nations). There is, therefore, no doubt that the medical tourism market in India is estimated to grow to USD 13.42 billion by 2026.

However, to achieve this milestone, it is important to remove the disparity in urban and rural healthcare infrastructure. All the facilities mentioned above are available in Tier 1 cities only while the rural folks grapple with the most basic requirement of access to a good, qualified doctor. This restricts the options available to tourists seeking quality medical treatment in India and are made to choose cities like Mumbai & Delhi having a higher cost of living.

Further, it also discourages regular tourists from visiting Tier 2 or below cities in India, if they don't have good healthcare facilities close by, especially in case of senior citizens & family travel.

The Government recognizes this struggle and is working to give wings to its National Digital Healthcare Mission (NDHM) to provide the much needed technology push to public healthcare by digitising health records for easy access by end users.

I also suggest this data being made available for restricted use for R&D and clinical research purposes only, to devise more accurate treatments for common & serious ailments, thus giving India the edge in diagnostic sciences.

Further, the Government is looking to increase JCI (Junior Chamber International) accredited hospitals in various cities from the current 38 hospitals. A coalition of over 100 private healthcare specialists have formed a first-of-its-kind, made in India telemedicine application called Swasth that aims to deliver equitable and affordable healthcare to all Indians. Further, the Ministry of Ayush and Council of Scientific & Industrial Research completed a multi-center clinical trial of a medicine, AYUSH 64, for the treatment of mild-to-moderate COVID-19 infections and not to mention Covaxin, our very own indigenously developed COVID Vaccine through PPP, by Bharat Biotech.

All these factors are positive developments towards making healthcare infrastructure a driving factor for tourism in India. In fact, we must learn from our friendly neighbour, the UAE, which is fast becoming a tourism hub for international patients seeking customised and affordable treatment.

I feel India is already grabbing attention from global tourists looking for quality, affordable & holistic healthcare by correcting the regional disparity in healthcare infrastructure.

INBRIEF

College graduates launch helpline support for mental well-being

While the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has not only struck the masses in terms of the physical consequences but has also taken a toll on everyone's mental well-being. In order to support such people undergoing emotional trauma, a 22-year-old graduate started a support COVID mental health helpline for the vulnerable last year and has answered more than 20,000 calls.

Nikita Gupta was recently awarded with Young Women Leader in India Award.

"The helpline started operations in March 2020 and has continued so far. Our approach has been in twofold, one, focussed on scaling operations so more people can get access to mental health support in more languages and two, to create awareness about mental health through social media.

Our aim is to create more accessible mental healthcare solutions and build a robust solution seeking platform as mental health problems are extremely common," said Nikita Gupta. Mental health is an extremely overlooked issue in India, that has considerably worsened over this period of pandemic. Already being a major contributor to the burden of illness in India, suicide deaths due to mental health issues attribute to atleast one-third among females and one-fourth of all males. Most of this illness and death goes unnoticed.

REPUBLIC DAY SPECIAL

RUSTIC RHYTHMS

RABINDRANATH TAGORE felt that painting was closer to nature, as compared to any other art form, and could be universally understood, says UMA NAIR

Rabindranath Tagore, was not just the Nobel laureate poet, author, thinker, composer, but he was also a self-taught artist. This Republic Day it is good to ponder on his brilliance as an aesthetician of Indian heritage and experience. According to Christie's, New York, his volume of poems, *Gitanjali*, established his international reputation when it was published in London in 1912 in his own English translation, and the following year Tagore became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

As a result, he became a literary celebrity and frequently toured Europe and America. His flowing robes and long white hair and beard conformed to the common western conception of an Indian sage and his lectures attracted huge audiences. Jacob Epstein, who sculpted a striking bust of him in 1926, reported that, 'he carried no money and was conducted about like a holy man'.

Tagore turned to painting later in his life. By the time his first exhibition of paintings and drawings at the Galerie Pigalle, Paris in 1930, Tagore, at the age of 69, had been recognised as one of the greatest writers who had ever lived. He had an early inclination toward representational art but had given up hope of being a professional painter around 1900. Over the years, Tagore maintained private journals where he continued to doodle and sketch. Then almost suddenly, in 1924, while in Argentina as Victoria Ocampo's guest, his doodles assumed more elaborate and expressive intent.

Ocampo recognised Tagore's talent and found spiritualism in his images of prehistoric monsters, birds and faces as they were much more than naturalistic interpretations. Compared to his early doodles, these were not entirely spontaneous but inspired by his interest in anthropology and the examples of both primitive and modern art he had seen.

The world Tagore revealed in his best works was one of self-reflexive evolution, where the images themselves were in the process of taking shape, as was his art. His early paintings were rendered mainly in monochrome, followed by two-toned and three-toned drawings. The pen-point brush was often used laterally, fingers and bits of rag spread the inks and the brush was the last to be adopted.

It is heads and figures executed by Tagore in a variety of styles, that have elicited the most interest. Restrained yet restless, suggestive, bizarre and haunting, these portraits are considered to be among his most memorable works. 'The pensive ovoid face of a woman with large unwavering, soulful eyes was perhaps his most obsessive theme. Exhibited first in 1930, endless variations of the same mood-image continued to emerge throughout. The earlier ones were delicately modelled and opalescent, while the latter examples were excessively dramatic with intensely lit forehead, exaggerated nose-ridge, painted in strong colours, bodied forth from a primal gloom.' (Robinson, The Art of Rabindranath Tagore, Calcutta, 1989, p. 56.)

These influences on Tagore evolved over his lifetime and emerged as expressions of innovation and modernity through his paintings which were unlike anything being produced by Indian artists at the time. In the present works, the woodcut *Namaz* and the *Untitled*, Tagore suppressed physical detail, creating basic curvilinear forms. The body is represented as a solid field of colour with strokes. Scholars say he had a natural inclination toward the tenets of what we now understand as primitivism in modern art; the search for symbols and meaning in visual forms borrowed from non-Western, pre-historic and rural traditions and people. So, we glimpse rural regeneration in the rustic rhythms.

Painting allowed Tagore to break away from the limitations of language. He felt that painting, unlike any other art form, was closer to nature and could be universally understood and shared.

Building blocks

Four architects define how architecture has transformed over the years in our country. By TEAM VIVA

Architecture is more than just throwing together raw materials such as concrete, glass, and wood. The concept of architecture has changed over the years, and today, architecture is a way for the designer to play around with various elements while honing their art and practice. Architecture is a complex discipline that is an amalgamation of design, art, math and science to arrive at a balanced compendium of form and function. The monuments of India are some of the world's most stunning works of architecture. From the Red Fort to Hampi, everything that our forefathers and ancestors built has been a source of great pride. But due to pollution, natural weathering, and poor civic sense, the monuments have been facing a preservation crisis. However, with the help of architects, and the way they are devising new plans to preserve the monuments, there is an excellent chance that these pieces of our collective history will be standing tall for future generations. Architects have been employing stratification techniques, logistic recognition, and using reconstruction methods to preserve the monuments in all their glory.

Manish Dikshit: The founding partner of Aum Architects believes that architecture is a way to look at human history as a whole. It reflects the change in needs and thinking patterns of a community, which becomes even more critical when one is looking to contextualise their existence. The power of good architecture must not be underestimated as it helps in connecting people while protecting the environment. Since the awareness and need for sustainable architecture have been expressed by experts, architects have been working tirelessly to help fit extremely utilitarian buildings while expressing the need to have carbon-neutral structures. We, as architects, are constantly looking to upgrade systems and functions, so it is fulfilling for us to deliver highly concise designs.

Sumit Dhawan: The founder and principal architect at Cityspace '82 Architects is of the view that architecture is synonymous with endurance and longevity. He explains that buildings and structures made by man must be long-lasting while being able to withstand the rapidly changing human times. A building needs to be both functional and have perfectly-balanced aesthetics. It also needs to be expectant of the human changes that will inevitably come as time passes. Architecture is also becoming more community-based. So, long gone are the days wherein architects would create lofty structures that would inevitably intimidate folks. Simple and highly utilitarian buildings are the new vogue. We cater to a myriad of community-based activities that serve to increase its value.

Anil Badan: The founder & architect at Studio B Architects, states that architecture is all about being accessible. From simple structural incorporations like ramps and banisters that would help the elderly or the disabled to buildings designed with the help of logic and common sense, we firmly believe in having architecture made for the public and its people. So, in a way, architecture is all about improving the lives of people. Architecture also deals with the simplest forms of human equations, wherein it has the capacity to change lives, enrich human experiences and create a context for human existence to move forward. With the advent of new materials or finding new methods of using old, reliable materials, the art of architecture has changed by leaps and bounds.

Anurag Pashine: The principal architect from Salankar Pashine & Associates, recommends that design has the potential to change the way we work. Explaining his view with an example — an office with a scorching and sweltering area with poor ventilation and lack of windows will impact the productivity of employees as they will not be able to focus on their work. With the help of new technology and new materials being discovered every day, this office conundrum can easily be solved with proper glass facades that allow ventilation and an HVAC system that will eventually help air circulation. Taking one element out of the equation and working on it so that it is better can lead to changing human lives for the better. While architects aim to create user-friendly buildings, aesthetics also play an essential role in attracting people to the facets, so it is more like a delicate game of Jenga that needs to balance various elements.

At the same time, it is also essential to recognise the fact that architecture and human lives are constantly in touch with each other. While recognising that architecture is used to shape and help propel human lives, human interactions also aid in shaping architecture. Reflecting the changing needs and wants of the communities, architecture ultimately helps in the proliferation of urbanisation of various rural areas as well.

A half-full glass

While the demand for cultural and inventive content has escalated throughout the lockdown period, economic indicators assume that the cultural sector will be one of the most affected and also the slowest to recover, say JUNED and SUFIYAN KHATRI

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed the cultural and innovative industries at the heart of the inventive economy at crossroads. The ruin, widespread closures of borders, venues and physical distancing measures are impacting whole segments of the innovative economy. Many people working in the art industry have lost their jobs. Live performance and venue-based industries have been impacted majorly, impacting livelihoods, artist potency, market access and artistic freedom, together with broader effects for the value chain of suppliers and service providers. The crafts sector is a major employment provider for many countries that have experienced a massive downfall. The crisis has expedited pre-existing trends, in particular digitalisation, and it has exposed the pre-existing inequalities and precarities of the innovative economy in most of the countries around the world, also in the countries where public support schemes for the creative sector are in place.

Since the start of the pandemic, the arts and culture sector has been witnessing a paradoxical situation. While the demand for cultural and inventive content has escalated throughout the lockdown period — and digital access has now become more critical than ever before— economic indicators assume that the cultural sector will be one of the most affected and also the slowest to recover. Beyond short-term initiatives such as surveys or data collection aiming to provide artists and intermediaries with financial and logistical support, both academics and practitioners must engage in thinking about the future of art expenditure, especially from a consumer's point of view.

Many players in the local art industry have shifted to contactless and digital ordering. Other adaptive strategies have included frequent COVID-19 testing of artists and staff and regular consultation of medical experts to inform any reopening plans. Since many non-profit arts organisations are losing revenue because of restrictions and also because more people are staying at home, these additional costs pose further strain. The increased desire to supplement or replace in-person services with virtual arts experiences also adds to expenditures for arts organisations. In some situations, online platforms have allowed artistes and arts groups to reach a larger audience during the epidemic than would have been possible otherwise.

While virtual platforms have become one of the most popular adaptations for arts organisations and artists, they are not without their drawbacks. Many artistes and arts groups were forced to invest in new equipment and systems, develop new skills, and figure out how to sell their work in a virtual world. At the same time, viewers' ability to fully adapt to a virtual culture is not assured.

The pandemic has brought some improvements — collaboration to create new works, higher online visibility, and the ability to reach audiences and consumers differently — to the disorganised local art industry and its artiste community. But

whether the community stands for sustained advocacy with the government and private sector for recognition and support remains to be seen.

Governments are becoming increasingly interested in controlling internet creative expression. However, they must concentrate on narrowing the existing wide gap between the rich and the impoverished in the art world. While certain art forms will transition to the digital sphere, it is impossible to present street/festival performances online. To guarantee that subsidies and other programmes reach the intended recipients, governments should maintain a public registry of artistes. It's vital to recognise gig workers in this industry, as well as enhance legislation that protects cultural assets.

Not all forms of art are financially self-sustaining. The loss of employment and earnings in the creative industry will have a severe impact on innovation, citizen well-being, and community vibrancy and diversity. The respect and value for an artist's work must be built from an appreciation for art's significance in presenting society with a sense of normalcy during these lonely times. Otherwise, we shall be collectively accountable for the extinction of our cultural heritage.

Local artisans, organisations and institutions around the world have met the challenges posed by the pandemic with agility. For many, the pandemic accelerated the transition to the digital medium; the act of self-preservation often led to innovation. The Internet provided unprecedented chances for artists and institutions to communicate with one another in a variety of ways, resulting in new partnerships and channels for the arts. We've merely scratched the surface of what a digital platform can provide in terms of entertainment, education, and participation. Geographical boundaries may have vanished thanks to digital media, but it is not without its drawbacks: global rivalry, shorter attention spans, and digital weariness.

The pandemic has not only strengthened ties inside the art field, but has also improved worldwide coordination. Virtual collaboration and support of one another, not only domestically but worldwide, is the way to go to maintain and grow stronger roots. Virtual cooperation will go a long way toward helping individuals stay connected in a world when physical travel is limited.

(The authors are co-founders of Kutchi Bazaar, an e-commerce platform for craft products made by the local artisans of Kutch.)

THE MYSTICAL KRISHNA: DIVINITY THROUGH DIVERSE ART FORMS

An exhibition of art & sculptures dedicated to Lord Krishna has among other things vibrant paintings including a vintage one of the God lifting Govardhan Parvat on his finger to protect the villagers from heavy rains and thunderstorms is shown beautifully using lovely vibrant colours.

The exhibition also has Pichhwai art which is a traditional Indian art having its origins in Rajasthan. Pichwai art features intricate paintings portraying Lord Krishna (Shrinath*ji*) on cotton fabric using natural colours. There is a massive vintage Pichwai painting illustrating the Nathdwara Lord Krishna along with Gopis, Yamuna*ji,* Gosai*ji* and the Devs.

A collection of Tanjore paintings has also been added to the exhibition. From a spectacular gold finish handmade Tanjore painting of young Lord Krishna in the act of eating butter to a one of Lord Krishna along with Rukmani and Bama there are spectacular works. The exhibition also has some beautiful, handmade copper & brass sculptures dedicated to the mystical god. Krishangarh paintings that are a fusion of Mughal and regional style paintings have also been added. There are a few depicting the unconditional love of Radha and Krishna. There is also a handmade painting where Jamunaji is seen welcoming Lord Krishna.

Where: https://www.indianshelf.in/exhibition/

When: Till February 5

DIALOGUES ON CHILD LABOUR

A webcast on the role of the private sector and the media in eradicating child labour will have panellists Tanja Brok, communications coordinator, Work: No Child's Business, the Hague, The Netherlands; Dr Shankar Borua, creative entrepreneur and communications professional and Smita Agarwal, head, education programme at Tata Steel's Corporate Social Responsibility who has worked in the field of education for over two decades. The introductions will be done by Aditi Datta, senior manager, Research and Communications, ICCSPL and the session moderated by Rakhi Sehgal, labour researcher and trade union activist who is currently coordinating an ILO project on industrial relations in the Indian garment industry

It is the third and final discussion in a series of three dialogues addressing the root causes of child labour organised in collaboration with Work: No Child's Business (WNCB) to mark the International Year for Elimination of Child Labour (IYECL - 2021).

Where: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZXDTG9OkR7ujbilDyvn8GA

When: January 25 at 4.00 pm

THE GREAT PERTINENCE OF GANDHI TO INDIA IN THE 75TH YEAR OF ITS INDEPENDENCE

The discussion will see the inaugural address delivered by Justice M N Venkatachaliah, chairman, Sarvodaya International Trust and the valedictory address by N N Vohra, President, IIC. The speakers include M Hamid Ansari, former Vice President of India; professor Rajmohan Gandhi, research professor, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; and Dr Gita Dharampal, professor emeritus, Heidelberg University, Germany.

The speakers at the second session include Lord Bhikhu Parekh, chairman, Gandhi Foundation, UK; Shyam Saran, life trustee, IIC; and Amb. Alan Nazareth, author Gandhi's Outstanding Leadership and Gandhi: Soul Force Warrior. The sessions will be moderated by Arun Maira, former chairman, Boston Consulting Group

Where: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HRW01qwbQfiZbw-d4xmmSw

When: January 31 at 11:00 am

Big dent to KL Rahul's long-term captaincy ambitions

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A stand-in captain, who seemed stunningly short of ideas, few seniors at the business end of their careers and a dated approach in white-ball cricket -- India's woes during the tour of South Africa were many, turning what started memorably into an eminently forgettable outing.

The signs were ominous even before they departed with now former Test skipper Virat Kohli's much publicised acrimony with top BCCI officials.

The entire episode didn't leave the team in good stead and once there it all went haywire after the opening Test win.

Stand-in ODI captain KL Rahul was then left to do a lot with too little at his disposal against an opposition, which had gained invaluable confidence.

In the end, it turned out to be a nightmare with dark clouds hovering over the future of this Indian team and no sign of 'VIBGYOR' in the Rainbow Nation.

Kohli might not admit but the former captain is going through the toughest phase as a cricketer after having given up captaincy in two out of three formats and being sacked in another.

But Because he is Kohli and in a different class, he managed a fine 79 in the lost third Test, where he looked the best.

He also got two half centuries in ODIs with minimum fuss where he looked more like an accumulator rather than an enforcer that one associates with 'King Kohli'. The meltdown at Cape Town with his misdirected anger at broadcasters for a DRS gone wrong also tarnished his reputation and letting the game drift away with mindless antics wasn't his finest hour when it came to judging his temperament.

But if one is very blunt, KL Rahul perhaps blew his chance towards being a long-term option across formats once Kohli relinquished Test captaincy after losing the Test series.

"Did KL Rahul by any stretch look like a captain to you?" a senior BCCI official counter-questioned PTI when asked if he would be considered for the Test captaincy factoring in Rohit Sharma's track record of injuries.

It is understood that coach Rahul Dravid wants to see his namesake as a long-term option and it was evident that he didn't want to put a lot of blame on his captaincy.

"He did more than a decent job and a lot about captaincy is how your players execute the skills. We were short on the ODI side. He will grow constantly and get better as he leads more," Dravid's observation drifted towards the old adage of a captain being as good as his team.

But what would hurt Rahul more is his approach in batting which was more about self preservation. The 55 off 79 balls in the second ODI deserves more criticism for the balls wasted and strike not rotated rather than the runs accumulated by him.

It is for sure that Rahul, if he has to be in the white-ball scheme of things, will have to bat in the middle-order and be a finisher.

His bowling changes didn't work in the middle overs and after watching Temba Bavuma make some inspired moves like starting the attack with Aiden Markram, he introduced Ravichandran Ashwin early in one game but that was more of a reactive move rather than a pro-active one.

What stuck out like a sore thumb is the fact that even the biggest of Proteas fans couldn't have imagined that a team facing huge transitional problems and a coach due to face a commission inquiring into his racial misconduct, would turn the heat on and win five out of six international matches and that too at a canter.

The South Africans played good cricket but were liberally helped by an Indian team that didn't walk the talk on its proclaimed cricketing philosophies.

There wasn't any fearlessness for better part of the tour, no innovative, out of box thinking and at times, they seemed short on execution of skills.

Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane showed some spark in the second innings of the second Test but for the better part, they were not playing their positive game.

Balance of ODI side an issue, accepts head coach Dravid

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

India's head coach Rahul Dravid had no hesitation in admitting that the ODI squad lacked balance with the likes of Hardik Pandya and Ravindra Jadeja unavailable to execute their all-round skills at numbers six and seven respectively.

India lost the three-match ODI series 0-3 and Dravid answered a range of questions covering the poor show in middle-overs both in batting and bowling, KL Rahul's nascent captaincy career and how Venkatesh Iyer is not being thought of as a top-order batter.

"Yeah, we understand the template. Obviously, a large part of the template is also dependant on the balance of your squad," Dravid replied when asked if the Indian team needs to revisit its template in 50-over cricket.

"I think if you are a little bit honest, some of the guys who help us balance the the squad out and give us those all-round options at Nos 6, 7 and 8 are probably not here, and available for selection," Dravid said, clearly talking about the absence of Pandya, who is trying to get his bowling fitness back and Jadeja, who is recuperating from a knee injury.

"Hopefully, when they (Hardik and Jadeja) come back, it will give us lot more depth, it allows us then to probably play in a slightly different style," Dravid made it clear as to what he missed in the series.

Dravid's assessment of his namesake's leadership skills was pretty lavish as he wanted people to factor in that he could only do as much with the kind of squad he had at his disposal. "I thought he did a good job. Not easy to be on wrong side of the result. He is just starting out as captain," he said.

".....And he will learn and a large part of captaincy is execution of skills by your players and quality of side you have got. We were a little bit short on the ODI side of things and I thought he did a very decent job, someone who is growing and will constantly be improving and get better as a captain."

There was no denying that India's batting lacked momentum in all three games especially between overs 20 to 40. "We certainly could do better with batting in middle overs," Dravid said.

"But having said that, even South Africa who batted first on two occasions scored 290 as well and if I think back and look at the 30th over in both those games, we should have chased them down.

"We didn't because we played some poor shots and we didn't play some smart cricket at critical situations," he said without naming anyone.

Dravid isn't someone who believes in taking names but when he spoke about demanding performances in lieu of security and extended run given to some middle-order batters, he obviously meant Shreyas Iyer and Rishabh Pant.

Smriti Mandhana named ICC women's Cricketer of Year

IANS ■ DUBAI

India opener Smriti Mandhana on Monday was named ICC women's Cricketer of the Year for 2021. After being named in the ICC's women's T20I team of the year, Smriti has now won the Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Trophy awarded to the ICC women's cricketer of the year for the second time after 2018.

The left-handed opener beat competition from Tammy Beaumont of England, Lizelle Lee of South Africa and Gaby Lewis of Ireland to clinch the honour. Smriti has also become the second women's cricketer after Australia's Ellyse Perry to win the honour more than once.

"I am truly honoured for receiving the prestigious Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy for the ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year 2021. I am grateful to my teammates, my coaches, my family, friends and fans who believed in my potential and supported me in this journey," said Smriti in her acceptance of the award.

Despite India enduring a difficult 2021, Smriti stock continued to rise this year, scoring 855 runs in 22 international matches at an average of 38.86 with one century and five half-centuries.

In the limited-overs series against South Africa where India won just two of the eight matches at home, Smriti played a major role in both wins. She made 80 not out as India chased down 158 in the second ODI that helped them level the series and scored 48 not out to win the final T20I.

Smriti then played a sublime knock of 78 in the first innings of the one-off Test against England at Bristol that ended in a draw. She played an important knock of 49 in India's only win in the ODI series. Her 15-ball 29 and fifty in the T20I series went in vain though as India fell short in both the matches and lost the series 2-1.

"A recognition of such high class from the global governing body of cricket in an exceptional and difficult year will motivate me to continue to better my game and contribute to Team India's success going forward. I look forward to 2022 with a clear focus on winning the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2022 in New Zealand as we continue to prepare as a team and unit," added Smriti. Smriti was in good touch in the multi-format series against Australia, starting with the ODI series where she scored 86 in the second match. She compiled a brilliant century in the only Test (the first of her career), and was awarded the Player of the Match for the same.

Lucknow IPL team to be called Lucknow Super Giants

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

The Lucknow franchise of the Indian Premier League will be called Lucknow Super Giants after its owners announced the name chosen by its fans.

The official IPL team of Lucknow, owned by RPSG Group, decided to take public opinions from its fans and the name was shared by owner Sanjiv Goenka in a video message on Monday.

"Thank you so much for your overwhelming response to the 'Naam banao naam kamao' contest. Lakhs and lakhs of people responded, based on that we are very happy to choose the name for the Lucknow IPL team," Goenka said in his message, while revealing the team name.

"And the name that we have chosen based on your recommendations is Lucknow Super Giants. Thak you so much for your response and love and continue to give us your blessings in the future as well."

The franchise owners had launched a consumer engagement campaign on social media on January 3 to decide the name of the new IPL side.

Lucknow and Ahmedabad will be the two new teams in the IPL from this year as the lucrative T20 tournament expanded its wings to become a 10-team contest.

India fined for slow over-rate after losing third ODI

IANS ■ CAPE TOWN

India have been fined 40 per cent of their match fees for maintaining a slow over-rate against South Africa in the third and final ODI of the series in Cape Town on Sunday. In the match, India were bowled out for 283 in 49.2 overs while chasing 288 at the Newlands Cricket Ground, which meant South Africa won the series 3-0.

"Andy Pycroft of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees imposed the sanction after KL Rahul's side was ruled to be two overs short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration," said the International Cricket Council (ICC) in a statement.

In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to minimum over-rate offences, players are fined 20 per cent of their match fee for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time.

Rahul pleaded guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing. On-field umpires Marais Erasmus and Bongani Jele, third umpire Allauhudien Palekar and fourth umpire Adrien Holdstock levelled the charge. After Quinton de Kock's 124 propelled South Africa to 287 in 49.5 overs, Shikhar Dhawan and Virat Kohli made 61 and 65 respectively while Deepak Chahar made a quick-fire 54 off just 34 balls. But the Indian trio's efforts went in vain as they fell short of getting over the line by four runs.

World Cup dreams over for Indian women football players

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

For a bunch of Indian women football players hailing from humble backgrounds, life in the last one year has revolved around playing in the AFC Asian Cup and with that taking a shot at the elusive FIFA World Cup but that dream lay shattered after COVID-19 knocked them out of the tournament.

From captain Ashalata Devi to the youngest in the squad, Hemam Shilky Devi, the Asian Cup was a once in a lifetime opportunity and all of them were looking forward to qualify for the quarterfinals, which would have also taken them to the 2023 World Cup, before they were left "heartbroken". If not a World Cup berth, they would have made it to the intercontinental play-offs which would have been historic in Indian football.

But it is now in the realm of 'ifs' and 'buts' after 12 players tested positive for the virus and the match against Chinese Taipei was called off. The Asian Football Confederation on Monday confirmed that India are deemed to have withdrawn from the continental showpiece. "Absolutely devastated," said senior player and goalkeeper Aditi Chauhan aptly capturing the sentiment within the squad right now.

"In the last one year, our lives have revolved around the Asian Cup. Our sole aim was to qualify for quarterfinals and take a shot at the World Cup," said another player.

"We are extremely sad and disappointed at the moment. But it is not the end of the world and the hope that we will get chances to achieve this in future if we keep on doing well is giving us solace."

Many of the players have fought tremendous odds to reach at this level.

Some took up to the sport as it was "cheaper" to pursue while others had to go against the will of their parents and community. Skipper Ashalata faced opposition from her family. Ditto was the case of Shilky, who is all of 16 and had the distinction of being the tournament's youngest player.

The journey wasn't easy for any of them and this setback is definitely going to cause turmoil in their minds.

National Poker Series returns with its 2nd edition

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's most notable poker series - National Poker Series India is back with its 2nd edition in 2022. PokerBaazi.com, which is India's biggest poker platform, will continue as the hosting partner for the NPS. The series, scheduled to begin from March 6, has announced a prize pool of 18.5 crores for 84 tournaments across 15 days. With 252 medals on the line to be awarded to podium finishers in all 84 tournaments, and three NPS Podium medals for the three finishers with highest medal tallies, this year's National Poker Series will yet again have Golden Rush as one of its marquee events. Additionally, NPS Podium finishers will get to play the world's biggest international poker event in Las Vegas, USA. The qualifier tournaments, also known as satellite tournaments, have already commenced from January 15.

Babar Azam, Joe Root, Shaheen Afridi bag top honours

PTI ■ DUBAI

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam was on Monday named ICC ODI Cricketer of the Year while England Test captain Joe Root took home the top honours in the red-ball category, beating competition from, among others, Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. Babar's team-mate and left-arm pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi won the Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year. He was bestowed the honour for taking 78 wickets across formats in 36 internationals at an average of 22.20 in 2021.

The 27-year-old Babar scored 405 runs in six games at an average of 67.50 in 2021. He was the second-highest run-scorer with 228 runs and was the Player of the Match in both of Pakistan's wins in the 2-1 series victory against South Africa.

The architect of Pakistan's chase of 274 in the first ODI, Babar made a century and laid the foundation with an 82-ball 94 in the final ODI where the visitors posted 320 batting first.

He was the lone warrior for Pakistan when they were swept by England 3-0. He accumulated 177 runs in three games but found no support as none of the other batters managed to score more than 100 in the series.

Alize Cornet reaches quarterfinals at her 63rd Grand Slam

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Alize Cornet dropped to her knees on the hard blue court, clasped her hands and took a few moments to let it sink in.

In her 17th trip to the Australia Open, her 63rd run at a Grand Slam, and two days after celebrating her 32nd birthday, Cornet finally qualified for the quarterfinals at one of the four major events in tennis.

Cornet recovered after a second-set meltdown in the hot Melbourne sun on Monday to advance to the last eight at the Australian Open with a 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 win over two-time major champion Simona Halep.

"It's never too late to try again!" Cornet said in her on-court TV interview. "To be in my first quarterfinal. It's a dream come true.

"The journey goes on. I still can't believe it."

Cornet led by a set and 3-1 before losing five consecutive games and 16 straight points as Halep took the match to a decider.

The match was 2-2 in the third set after Cornet held a service game at love, saying "allez" after every shot she hit.

Halep got a break-point chance two games later with a forehand down the line that just caught the outside of the paint and which Cornet could barely believe. She saved it and held serve, then broke Halep's serve for a 4-3 lead that set her on course for the quarterfinals.

Cornet will next play Danielle Collins, the No. 27 seed from the United States who beat 19th-seeded Elise Mertens 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 in an almost three-hour match to open play on Rod Laver Arena. Collins was a semifinalist in Australia in 2019.

Cornet made her main draw Grand Slam singles debut as a wild-card entry at the 2005 French Open. She lost five previous fourth-round appearances but had gone close to reaching the quarterfinals before, having match points in the fourth round in Australia in 2009 before losing to eventual runner-up Dinara Safina.

With a ranking of 61 — 50 lower than her career-high No. 11 — Cornet came into the 2022 season acknowledging retirement must be close and that it was now or never for a Grand Slam breakthrough.

"I don't know if it's helping," she said.

"I just told myself that if it should happen, then it will happen.

Maybe leave it in the hands of fate, destiny, I don't know."

The marquee men's match was on Margaret Court Arena, where U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev beat 70th-ranked Maxime Cressy 6-2, 7-6 (4), 6-7 (4), 7-5. The second-ranked Medvedev is trying to become the first man in the Open era to win his second major singles title in the next Grand Slam event. He's now potentially three wins from achieving that.

Medvedev was a runner-up in Australia last year but avenged that with a win over Novak Djokovic in the U.S. Open final. Djokovic isn't defending his Australian Open title after being deported on the eve of the year's first major for failing to meet the country's strict COVID-19 vaccination criteria.

Cressy's serve-and-volley style created some frustrations for Medvedev, who said late in the fourth set that this was the "most unlucky day I've ever had in my life."

His luck changed quickly. After saving eight break-point chances in the set, Cressy was broken in that game and Medvedev served out at love.

He will next play ninth-seeded Felix Auger-Aliassime, who beat 2014 U.S. Open champion Marin Cilic 2-6, 7-6 (7), 6-2, 7-6 (4). Medvedev beat the Canadian in the semifinals at last year's U.S. Open.

No. 11 Jannik Sinner ended Australia's last hope in the men's draw when he beat No. 32 Alex de Minaur 7-6 (3), 6-3, 6-4.

The temperature hit 34 degrees Celsius (93 degrees F) on Day 8, with extra breaks allowed for players to cope with the heat.

Cornet used bags of ice to cool down her head during changeovers, and draped cold towels over her neck.