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THE ETERNAL FLAME CAN'T
BE PARTIAL TO OUR SOLDIERS

WORLD 8

UKRAINE URGES CALM, SAYING
RUSSIAN INVASION NOT IMMINENT

AVENUES 10

TIME FOR
SUCCESS

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY JANUARY 26, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

the pioneer

HAPPY REPUBLIC DAY

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ROHIT FIT TO
LEAD INDIA
AGAINST WI
11 SPORT1st CDS, Kalyan, Gita Press
head get Padma VibhushanBuddhadeb refuses to
accept Padma Bhushan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the eve of Republic Day, the Centre bestowed the Padma Vibhushan award, India's second-highest civilian award, on the country's first Chief of Defence staff, late General Bipin Rawat, and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister late Kalyan Singh. The other two Padma Vibhushan awardees are noted musician Prabha Atre and Gita Press Chairman Radheshyam Khemka (posthumously).

Among the 17 Padma Bhushan awardees, two political leaders from the Congress and the CPI(M) — Ghulam Nabi Azad and former West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee figured in the prestigious award list. However, Buddhadeb refused to accept the award. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Tuesday came out with a list of 128 distinguished personalities from different fields for Padma Awards.

The list comprises four Padma Vibhushan, 17 Padma Bhushan, and 107 Padma Shri Awards. Out of 128 awardees, 34 are women and the list includes 10 persons from the



category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI and 13 posthumous awardees. Padma Awards are conferred in three categories: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri. Padma Vibhushan is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; Padma Bhushan for distinguished service of high order and Padma Shri for distinguished service in any field.

The Centre also awarded Padma Bhushan to the country's two Covid vaccine makers Serum Institute's founder Cyrus Poonawala and jointly honoured Bharat Biotech promoters Dr Krishna Ella and wife Suchitra Ella. Indian origin CEO of Google Satya Nadella

and Microsoft CEO Sundar Pichai have been awarded Padma Bhushan. Former Home Secretary and CAG Rajiv Mehrishi, actor Victor Banerjee and Gujarati writer and preacher Swami Sachidanad got Padma Bhushan.

Among the 107 Padma Shri awardees Olympic Gold Medalist Neeraj Chopra, late IAS officer and Airports Authority Chairman Guruprasad Mohapatra, noted singer Sonu Nigam figured in the list.

Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh, who died last year, has been awarded Padma Vibhushan for Public Affairs, while late CDS

General Bipin Rawat got the same honour for Civil Service. Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad will be honored with Padma Bhushan for Public Affairs. Rawat hails from Uttarakhand and Kalyan from Uttar Pradesh, the two States which are headed for Assembly polls. The political significance of the Centre's decision to handpick Azad for giving the Padma award is not lost. Azad comes from Jammu & Kashmir, a Union territory, where the Centre is trying its best to win over the masses through the political process. Azad has been of late sidelined in the Congress and has also been in the news for repeatedly praising PM Narendra Modi.

Cong first family loyalist
RPN Singh joins BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gandhi family loyalist RPN Singh on Tuesday joined the long line of senior Congress leaders deserting the party. The former Union Minister on Tuesday embraced the BJP dealing a blow to the Congress and giving a psychological leg-up to the saffron party in the poll-bound Uttar Pradesh.

Singh, 57, is a prominent leader and a member of royalty from the Eastern UP. He has been a three-time Congress MLA from Padrauna and a Member of Parliament from Kushinagar.

He joined the BJP shortly after writing a brief letter of resignation to the Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

Singh's exit from the party has come as a massive blow to the grand old party in the run-up to Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections. The Congress leadership was apparently caught by surprise because it named Singh as the "star campaigner" only a few days ago.

A section of the party leaders feels that Singh's exit was good riddance because he had been hobnobbing with the BJP for the last one year to topple the Congress-JMM Jharkhand Government. RPN, known within the Congress circle, was Congress general secretary in charge for the Jharkhand for the last three years.



Former Congress leader RPN Singh joins BJP at party office in New Delhi on Tuesday

PTI

Singh, a key Kurmi OBC leader from eastern UP, is the second big exit for the Congress in the State after Jitin Prasada, who is now a Minister in the Yogi Adityanath-led BJP Government in UP.

Addressing the media after joining the party here at the BJP headquarters in the presence of BJP UP in-charge Dharmendra Pradhan, UP party president Swatantra Dev Singh, UP Deputy-Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Dr Dinesh Sharma, and Jyotiraditya Scindia, Singh lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi who, he said, is being "appreciated roundly for linking the ancient Indian civilisation and cul-

ture with the 21st century".

Singh is also seen as BJP's Assembly candidate against OBC leader Swami Prasad Maurya who recently left the BJP to join the SP.

Criticising the Congress, his erstwhile party, Singh said, "I spent 32 years in one political party (Congress). But that party has not remained the same as it was before when I joined it. I will work as a 'karyakarta' towards fulfilling PM Modi's dreams for India," said Singh.

He also praised the double-engine Government and the change in the law and order situation in UP.

Continued on Page 2

Delhi Govt offices to
have only Ambedkar,
Bhagat Singh photos

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

All Delhi Government offices will carry photos of Bhimrao Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh, and no pictures of any political leader, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Tuesday.

Kejriwal also made the announcement during the Delhi Government's Republic Day programme that the Government offices will henceforth not even have the Chief Minister's picture.

"The Delhi Government is trying to fulfill the dreams which Babasaheb and Bhagat Singh saw for Indian society. No other Government in the last 75 years tried to walk on the path shown by Dr Ambedkar and Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh. Babasaheb envisioned highest quality of education for every single child of India but no Government could provide that in 75 years, with the education revolution thriving in the State, the Delhi Government diligently working to ensure that we can fulfil Babasaheb's dream," the CM said.

"Both Babasaheb and



Bhagat Singh wanted an independent India wherein success did not depend on one's caste or class and everyone got equal treatment."

Addressing Delhiites on the eve of Republic Day, Kejriwal said the AAP Government increased 25 per cent and worked from starting to transform Delhi schools.

He also mentioned various programmes in Government schools.

"We are not just teaching our students to be good citizens but also inculcating entrepreneurship and Deshbhakti in them. We are establishing the Delhi Teachers' University with the goal of preparing next generation teachers of the highest global standards. Had Dr Ambedkar been here with us in the present, he would have accepted us with open arms and given us his patronage."

Continued on Page 2

Rift in Bengal BJP,
party ex-vice prez
among 2 suspended

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The rift in the Bengal BJP widened with former State vice-president Jayprakash Majumdar, known for his proximity to former State BJP president Dilip Ghosh and defiant Union Minister Shantanu Thakur, on Tuesday exploded against a section of the State and national leadership hours after he and former State general secretary Ritesh Tewari were suspended from the BJP.

Earlier the two leaders were suspended from the party hours after they were asked to show cause for their alleged anti-party activities. The two leaders were seen attending picnic parties of rebel MLAs organised by Thakur.

Attacking State president Sukanto Majumdar and general secretary Amitava Chakrabarty for making mess of party affairs post its stunning defeat in the last year's Assembly elections, Jayprakash Majumdar said that "about 80 per cent of the functionaries who took BJP from 4 per cent (vote share) to 40 per cent have been removed from their posts and the self-seeking

new comers who had joined the party after 2019, when we got 19 seats, to enjoy the nectar have been placed on top posts... with the result that the party is gradually sinking."

Alleging that "out of 42 district presidents 32 were unknown to their constituencies... even the State president and the organisational general secretary are only about 2-and-a-half years only in organisational politics," the suspended leader said, adding, "the voice was of State leaders were suppressed in the party... and after the electoral debacle all the leaders who came from outside Bengal scurried back leaving the grassroots at the mercy of Trinamool Congress men."

Alleging that "the BJP only resorted to laws suits to counter the violence against the party men as the workers continued to bear the brunt of the ruling party repression... the leadership did not even stand by them... whereas when Mamata Banerjee was the Opposition leader she launched movements against State oppression... she never jettisoned her workers."

CAPSULE

I'M STILL BJP WORKER:
MAURYA'S DAUGHTER

Budaun: Budaun's BJP MP Sanghamitra Maurya, whose father and UP Minister Swami Prasad Maurya recently defected to the Samajwadi Party, on Tuesday asserted that she was a very much a BJP worker, expressing her loyalty to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

7, INCLUDING MLA'S
SON, KILLED IN MAHA

Nagpur: Seven persons, including some medical students and the son of an MLA, were killed in Wardha district of Maharashtra when the car they were travelling in fell off a bridge in the wee hours of Tuesday, police said. The incident occurred around 1.30 am near Selsura village in the district in east Maharashtra, an official said.

and its people".

In the video, Channi can be seen as "Thor" carrying the Stormbreaker, Rahul Gandhi as "Bruce Banner" wearing the Hulkbuster, Punjab Congress president Navjot Singh Sidhu as 'Captain America', and senior party leader Sunil Kumar Jakhar as "Groot".

The video, which starts with Hulk-Rahul Gandhi announcing "Koi na bachna tussi" (you can no longer be saved) in a warning to the opponents, also portrays Channi in the lead role - in an indication to be the party's choice of CM candidate.

Continued on Page 2

Channi 'Thor', Rahul 'Hulk'
take on 'aliens' in Punjab


MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH


With the political parties fighting the ballot-battle in the virtual arena amidst restrictions on physical roadshows and rallies for February 20 Punjab polls, Punjab Congress has come up with a latest campaign video - inspired by 2018's Hollywood superhero movie "Avengers" - featuring Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi as the mighty god of thunder "Thor" and Rahul Gandhi as "Bruce Banner".

Through the 34 seconds video, the Congress has virtually declared war against its rival political parties. Sharing



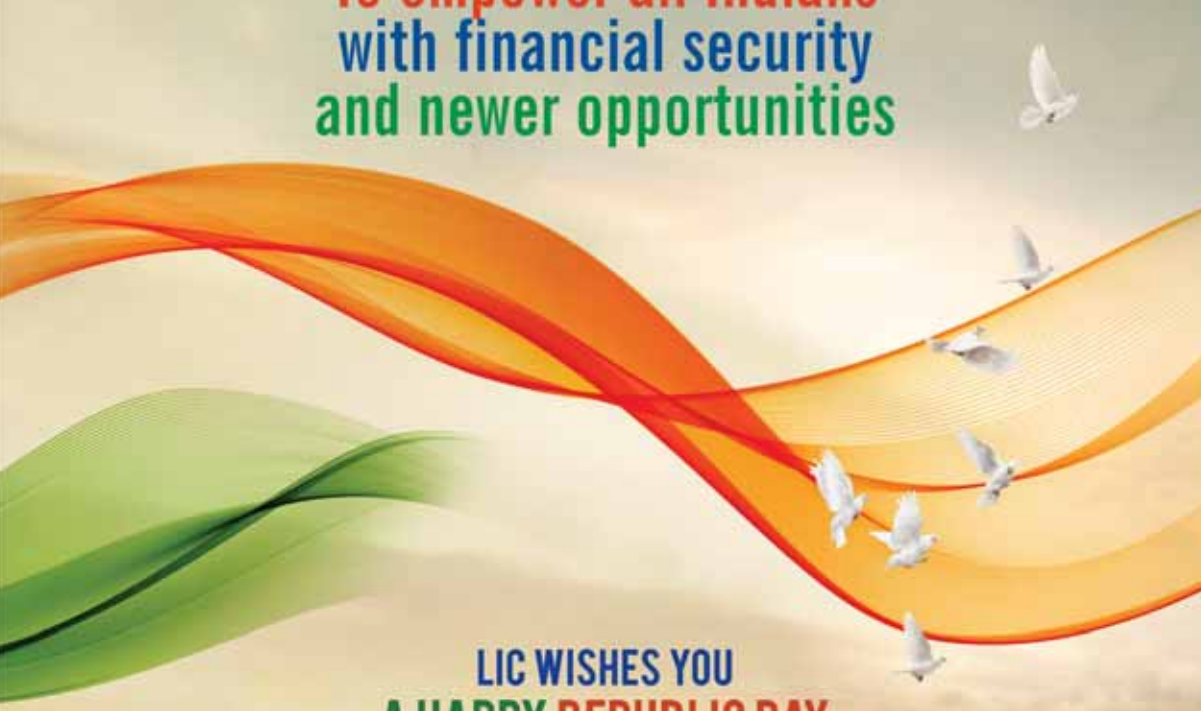
it on its social media handles, the party captioned, "We will do whatever it takes to redeem our beloved State from the clutches of evil forces working against the interest of Punjab

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Kerala logs 50K new cases in 24 hrs

People in 20-30 age group getting infected more, says Health Min

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

More than 50,000 persons were diagnosed with Covid-19 on Tuesday in Kerala, said Veena George, Minister of Health. Addressing a specially convened media conference at capital city, the minister said the transmission of the pandemic was more in the youth (those in the age group of 20 to 30).

With many doctors, nurses and paramedical staff testing positive in the State, the minister said the situation was a challenge. Test Positivity Rate was 49.4 per cent as on Tuesday evening, said the minister.

Later in a media release, the minister said that 55,475 persons were diagnosed with

Covid-19 in Kerala out of the 1.12 lakh samples tested during the last 24 hours. Veena had said last week that the number pf patients would peak by January 23 and then there would be a respite.

The death toll till date due to the pandemic reached 52, 141, said the minister. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who is undergoing treatment in a US hospital asked the people in the State not to panic. "There is nothing to panic about. All you need is a little bit of caution. We have the best medical health care system which is always at your finger tips," said the chief minister in a message sent from the US to the people in Kerala.

The Chief Minister also asked the people not to crowd the hospitals if they were diagnosed with Covid-19. "All you have to do is to stay indoors and be safe," said Vijayan.

Minister Veena said the Department of Health would launch a massive awareness programme across the State to remove all kinds of reservations and apprehensions from the

mind of the people. She also disclosed that district health officials would get in touch with private hospitals which refuse to admit Covid-19 patients. The minister said the sudden spurt in the number of cases was on account of the Omicron variant.

Doctors in Government service told The Pioneer that people planning to visit Kerala should postpone their travel plans to another date as it was not safe to be in the State at this time. "I am not confident of the safety assured by face masks and sanitizers. Think seriously before you embark on a journey to the State as there are Covid-19 afflicted persons walking freely along the roads and frequent hotels and restaurants," said a senior Government doctor.

Conceding to the demand made by the Government doctors to appoint more health workers, Veena George said the administration would soon launch a Covid Brigade of more than 4,000 workers across the State to tackle the pandemic.

5K cases logged after steep dip in daily spike in Maha

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a significant drop in the Covid-19 infections, the daily Covid-19 cases rose by 5,088 cases to touch a tally of 33,914 in Maharashtra on Tuesday, even as the daily pandemic cases in Mumbai plunged further to drop marginally from 1857 to 1815 cases.

On a day when the State recorded 13 Omicron cases in the State, the Covid-19 cases in the State rose from 28,826 cases recorded on Monday to 33,914 registered on Tuesday.

With the fresh cases reported on Monday, the total number of Covid-19 cases in the state went down from 75,35,511 cases to 75,69,425.

Mumbai, where the daily infections have been dropping steadily for more than eight days, witnessed a further drop in the number of cases from 1,857 to 1815 cases.

National award for BOC official

New Delhi: Satyendra Prakash, Principal Director General, BOC was today conferred with the National Award for enhancing electoral participation by the Election Commission of India for activities conducted towards voter awareness and education during the period 2021-22.

The award was given to Satyendra Prakash, by the Commission on the occasion of National Voters Day 2022 in the presence of Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister of Law and Justice, Chief Election Commissioner, Sushil Chandra and other senior dignitaries in the National Award function Ceremony at Ashoka Hotel, New Delhi.

The award has been given for his contribution in educating and creating awareness for enhancing the people's participation in casting vote during present challenging time of Covid-19. Post Covid-19 when direct interaction with the masses is a challenge, his contribution in devising new techniques to reach the people is very significant. It is to be noted



that such efforts have led to increase in percentage of voter's participation to 67.47% in 2019 which was 58.19 % in the year 2009.

Under the leadership of Satyendra Prakash, BOC with its 23 Regional Outreach Bureaus (ROBs) and 148 Field Outreach Bureaus (FOBs) are using new techniques viz. messaging through WhatsApp,

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter Tweets/Re-tweets, SMS, Telephonic Calls and organizing webinars. These social media platforms have been used as significant tools for reaching the people. Awareness activities by audio announcement using the Branded Mobile Vans are also used as a major tool for reaching the people in present situation.

Various Voter awareness / Education programmes as part of the SVEEP activities have been carried out through Cultural programmes, Digital Exhibitions, Photo exhibitions, Door to Door campaigns, Magic shows, Nukkad Natak, Demonstrations, Rallies etc. While organizing such campaigns BOC identifies mainly the low voter turnout areas and make the outreach activities more focused in such areas to disseminate the message of 'No Voter to Be Left Behind' of uphold Hon'ble Central Election Commission's and thereby strengthening the democratic process of the nation.

Satyendra Prakash was earlier awarded with the 'Rajat Kamal' for the Best Documentary Film Producer at the National Film Awards 2018. 6 films produced by him when he was Director General of Films Division of India were awarded with Rajat Kamal. He was also honoured with the Swachh Bharat Award in the year 2019 and 2020 for his exemplary work in Swachh Bharat Mission.

Aspirants involved in unlawful acts will face lifetime debarment from Railway jobs: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday warned the Railway job aspirants if they are found indulging in unlawful activities may face lifetime debarment from obtaining Railway job.

The notice came a day after railway job aspirants squatted on tracks at different places in Bihar, including the state capital Patna, to protest alleged erroneous results of Railway Recruitment Board's Non-Technical Popular Categories (RRB NTPC) exam.

"Railway job aspirants found involved in vandalism and unlawful activities while protesting will be barred from ever getting recruited in the railways," the Ministry of Railways issued a notice on its website and all Railway Recruitment Board website.

"Such misguided activities are the highest level of indiscipline rendering such aspirants unsuitable for railway/government job. Videos of such activities will be examined...and candidates/aspirants found indulged in unlawful activities will be liable for police action as well as lifetime debarment from obtaining railway job," the Ministry said in a general notice.

The protests, which continued till late in the evening on Monday, resulted in the cancellation of at least five long-distance trains originating from Patna. Routes of some other trains were diverted as the youth blocked tracks at Rajendra Nagar Terminal. The railways also cautioned the aspirants that they should not come under the influence of elements which are trying to misguide them for their own "selfish ends".

Officials said the railways has also got in touch with coaching centres to urge them to spread awareness among candidates. The controversy over the exam arose as many candidates claimed the screening process is designed to favour those with higher qualification, even in jobs that require lesser qualification. For the NTPC exam, around 1.25 crore candidates had appeared and the results were declared earlier this month.



People walk past a sand sculpture on the theme of 73rd Republic Day in Puri on Tuesday (L). A young woman, wearing bangles and a cap in the hues of the Tricolor, poses for a photograph in the backdrop of the historic Taj Mahal, in Agra on Tuesday (R) PTI



MLA's son among 7 killed in car accident

Wardha: Seven MBBS students, including the son of an MLA, were killed in Wardha district of Maharashtra in the wee hours of Tuesday when the car they were travelling in fell off a bridge, police said.

The incident occurred around 1.30 AM near Selsura village in Wardha district, 77 km away from Nagpur, in east Maharashtra.

An official said that all seven students died on the spot. One of the seven students, Avishkar Rahangdale, was the son of Tirora BJP MLA Vijay Rahangdale. He was a first-year MBBS student of the Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College at Sawangi (Meghe) in Wardha.

Police said the SUV was being driven by one of the students who all were returning from neighbouring Yavatmal district after celebrating the birthday of a student.

Due to the impact of the crash, the SUV was reduced to pulp. All the deceased were students of the Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, OSD of the Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences Dr Abhyuday Meghe told PTI.

"One of the deceased students was a medical intern. Of the rest six, two each were studying in the final year, third year and first year," he said. Other six deceased are identified as Niraj Chauhan, who hailed



from Daudpur in Gorakhpur, Pratyush Singh, Shubham Jaiswal from Chandauli (Uttar Pradesh), Vivek Nandan and Pawan Shakti (both from Gaya in Bihar), and Niteesh Kumar Singh from Belapur in Odisha. PTI

PM expresses grief over deaths in Selsura accident

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday expressed pain at the loss of lives in a road accident at Selsura in Maharashtra.

He also announced Rs 2 lakh each from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund to the next of kin of those who died in the accident and Rs 50,000 for each of the injured.

"Pained by the loss of lives due to an accident near Selsura in Maharashtra", he said. PTI

SC issues notices to Centre, EC on guidelines on 'freebies'...

From Page 1

The plea, filed ahead of Assembly polls in five States, said there should be a total ban on such populist measures to gain undue political favour from voters as they violate the Constitution and the EC should take suitable deterrent measures. The bench took note of submissions of senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for Upadhyay, that a law needs to be framed on the issue and steps like the seizure of party symbols or taking back the registration of parties or both may be thought of as ultimately it is the citizens who have to pay up.

"Let us see. For the time being, we will issue notice and let the Government of India and the Election Commission come back with some response," the bench said after hearing brief arguments.

The bench said that political parties may be included as parties to the plea later.

"Legally, I am asking some legal questions in the debate. We want to know how to control all this. It is a serious issue, no doubt. Freebie budget is going beyond regular budget and sometimes, as observed by the Supreme Court in this paragraph (of an earlier judgment), it is not the level playing field."

"The parties who make more promises have the advantage and chance of winning the elections even though it does not amount to corrupt practices under the law," the bench said.

The apex court took note of the fact that the poll panel has conducted only one meeting on the issue of the promise of freebies during the polls after the apex court's judgment on the issue.

"The apex court had directed the Election Commission to frame guidelines on this. They have framed guidelines but without any teeth," the senior lawyer responded.

PUBLIC NOTICE
To be known to all that I, Abhishek Bussu S/o Sh. Amar Nath Bussu R/o DDA JANITA Flat No.286, First Floor, Pul Pehladpur, New Delhi am the Allottee/owner of DDA JANITA Flat No. 286, First Floor, Pul Pehladpur, New Delhi vide File No./J2091275/92/P/01/NP/1 lost/misplaced my Original Allotment-cum-demand Letter, Possession Letter, Possession Slip and NOC for water and electricity of the above said property. An FIR to this effect has been lodged in Police Station, vide LR No.69925/2022 dt. 25/01/2022. Any person claiming any right, interest having any objection may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No.9718382451 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice and can personally inform or write to Dy. Director (Janita) H or Asst. Director (Janita) H, D-Block, Second Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

Court discharges Shilpa Shetty in 'kissing' case, calls actress victim of Richard Gere's act

Mumbai: Fifteen years after Hollywood star and AIDS awareness campaigner Richard Gere created sensation by kissing her in public, a Mumbai court has discharged Shilpa Shetty in an obscenity case filed against her.

While clearing the actress of the charges against, Ballard Pier Court Metropolitan Magistrate Ketaki M Chavan observed in her order that after perusing the complaint lodged against her, she had found that Shilpa Shetty was the victim of the alleged act by Gere. After going through the police report and documents presented to the court, the Magistrate held that the accusations against Shilpa Shetty was "groundless" and ordered her discharge from the case "Not a single element of any of the alleged offence is being satisfied in the complaint. Moreover, none of the papers annexed with the final report discloses the act of the present accused so as to bring her within the purview of Section 34 of IPC (common intention)," the Magistrate observed in her order. PNS

Cong first family loyalist RPN...

From Page 1

"For many years, people had been telling me to join BJP. Today, I can only say 'better late than never'," he added. Singh, a close loyalist of Rahul Gandhi, is among several leaders like Scindia, Jitin Prasada, Tom Vadakan, and Priyanka Chaturvedi who quit the party to seek greener pastures outside it.

"This is a new beginning for me and I look forward to my contribution to nation-building under the visionary leadership & guidance of Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, BJP president JP Nadda & Home Minister Amit Shah," Singh said.

Describing UP as the "heart of India", Singh said the State has seen massive development over the past seven years. "Everyone can attest to that. UP has benefited from double engine sarkar," said Singh.

After admitting Singh into the BJP, Pradhan said Singh is the right person in the wrong party.

Delhi Govt offices to have...

From Page 1

Delhi Government offices will no longer have the photos of politicians but instead the portraits of Dr Ambedkar and Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh will inspire everyone. Delhi Government will walk the path shown by Babasaheb and Dr Ambedkar and their vision will forever inspire us," said Kejriwal.

Channi 'Thor', Rahul...

From Page 1

Interestingly, Channi was seen exhibiting his fighting skills in the clip swinging the iconic Stormbreaker - Thor's weapon - to take on his opponents.

That was not all! The video also features Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal, and former Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh as "alien-enemies" with their faces superimposed on it.

Sidhu, who has all along been eying the Chief Ministerial berth and insisting on the high command to declare the party CM nominee, has somewhat been sidelined in the clip as a warrior fighting alongside the "hero" Channi.

Another contender for the CM post - State's former party chief Sunil Jakhar - is also portrayed as another warrior who sprints along with Channi

fearlessly straight into the enemy territory to kill them. Even as the Congress leadership is building up the narrative of fighting polls under "collective leadership" of Channi-Sidhu-Jakhar combine, the video - attracting nearly 5,000 likes - has, it seems, given some indications. Earlier also, the Congress had shared a video clip indicating Channi being the party face for the elections. The video came about a week after the Aam Aadmi Party released a video promoting their Chief Ministerial candidate Bhagwant Mann by taking an inspiration from Bollywood movie.

सर्विस नंबर 4201505 एल पद लांस नायक नाम लाल सिंह युनिट 11 कुर्माऊ पता श्याम बिहार कॉलोनी आगरा रोड एटा यूपी, मेरे आर्मी सर्विस रिकॉर्ड में मेरी पत्नी का नाम नीलम यादव दर्ज है, जो कि गलत है. सही व वास्तविक नाम नीलम है, जो सगरी वरदावेज में दर्ज है, जिसे मेरे सर्विस रिकॉर्ड में दर्ज किया जाए।

PD(9138)C I, Rashida Begum W/o. Mohd Aslam, Resident of 63/1, 4th floor, Gali No. 20, Zakir Nagar, Okhla, New Delhi-110025 have declared that my name is wrongly mentioned in my husband's passport No K7015443 as Jamsheeda Begum, and my correct & actual name is Rashida Begum for all future purposes.

PD(9139)A

Celebrate Indian-ness this Republic Day: Prez to people

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday said India has shown an unmatched resolve in the face of the extraordinary challenge to humankind posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. A strong and sensitive India is now emerging, he pointed out even as he asked people to celebrate "Indian-ness" this Republic Day.

Day, Kovind noted that democracy, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity form the bedrock of India and stressed that the observance of Fundamental Duties mentioned in the Constitution creates the proper environment for the enjoyment of Fundamental Rights. This year's celebrations may be muted due to the pandemic, but the spirit is as strong as ever, Kovind said. Doctors, nurses and paramedics have risen to the chal-



lenge, working long hours in difficult conditions even at the risk of their lives to attend to patients. Others have kept the

nation moving, managing supply chains and utilities, he said. Hailing the timely interventions by the leadership, policy-makers, administrators and others at the central and state levels during coronavirus pandemic, Kovind said it is a testimony to India's spirit in the face of adversity that the economy is on the move again and is projected to grow at an impressive rate in this fiscal, after going through contraction last year.

"The impressive economic performance is made possible due to improvement in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. I am happy to note that our farmers, especially young farmers with small holdings, are enthusiastically adopting natural farming," the President said.

As the supreme commander of the Armed Forces, Kovind said he was glad to note that it has been a watershed year for women empowerment in the armed forces. "Our daughters have broken a glass ceiling, and the permanent commission has now been allowed for women officers in new areas," he said, adding that "consequently, our armed forces will benefit from better gender balance."

Also, the talent pipeline for the forces will be strengthened with women coming through Sainik Schools and the prestigious National Defence Academy, the President said.

"I am confident that India is better placed today to meet the challenges of the future," Kovind said, adding that new opportunities await the next generation. Invoking Mahatma Gandhi, Kovind said he would have liked us to celebrate Republic Day by striving to become better human beings and contributing towards the making of a better India and a better world. "Two days ago, on 23rd

Neeraj awarded Param Vishisht Seva Medal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Twelve security forces personnel from the Army and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were awarded Shaurya Chakra by President Ram Nath Kovind on the eve of Republic Day on Tuesday. Olympic javelin gold medal winner in the Tokyo Games Neeraj Chopra was awarded Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM). He is a Subedar in the Rajputana Rifles.



This gallantry medal is the third-highest during peacetime. Five of the six awardees of the Army this year were conferred the medal posthumously. Most of them sacrificed their lives fighting militants in Jammu & Kashmir. Similarly, four of the six CRPF personnel were also awarded the medal posthumously.

approved awards of 384 Gallantry and other Defence decorations to Armed Forces personnel and others on the eve of 73rd Republic Day celebrations. These include 12 Shaurya Chakras, 29 Param Vishisht Seva Medals (PVSM), 04 Uttam Yudd Seva Medals, 53 Ati Vishisht Seva Medals (AVSM), 13 Yudd Seva Medals, 03 Bar to Vishisht Seva Medals, 122 Vishisht Seva Medals (VSM), 03 Bar to Sena Medals (Gallantry), 81 Sena Medals (Gallantry), 02

939 service medals announced on eve of R-Day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday announced a total of 939 service medals, including 189 for gallantry, for personnel of various Central and State police forces on the eve of Republic Day. However, no one has been awarded the topmost president's police medal for gallantry (PPMG) this time. Among the 189 gallantry awards, 134 personnel are being awarded for their gallant action in the Jammu and Kashmir region, 47 for their bravery in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas and one personnel for similar conduct in the north-east region.



The highest number of bravery medals, 115, have been awarded to the Jammu and Kashmir Police, followed by 30 to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), 10 to the Chhattisgarh Police, nine to the Odisha Police, seven to the Maharashtra Police, three each to the border guarding forces of Indo-Tibetan Border Police

Sanjeev Kumar Yadav IPS of Delhi Police Cell is among the Gallantry Medal winners. 53 personnel of the Border Security Force (BSF) have been decorated with various police service medals including gallantry decorations. Constables Anand Oraon and Sunder Singh have been awarded the PMG for thwarting smuggling bids by armed smugglers along the India-Bangladesh international border in West Bengal. 18 personnel of the India-China LAC guarding force Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) have been decorated with various police service medals including gallantry decorations. The PMG has been given to the team of Assistant Commandant Ashok Kumar, Inspectors Suresh Lal and Neela Singh for neutralising two wanted Maoists during a fierce encounter in the left wing extremism-affected area of Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon district in February, 2018. A huge assortment of arms and ammunition was also recovered after the operation.

Among the distinguished service medal awardees is DIG Ajay Pal Singh who joined the mountain-warfare trained force as an officer in 1990. DIG Ramakant Sharma and GC Upadhyay have also been awarded the distinguished service medal. CBI officers probing post poll violence cases in West Bengal besides the one who busted big bribery cases in Railways are among 29 agency sleuths awarded police medals. Joint Director Rannish Geer, who led the probe in cases like housing scam allegedly involving the then Union minister Sheila Kaul, Naval war room leak case, kidnapping of an NRI businessman and his release besides other high profile anti-corruption cases, received the coveted President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service. He was among the four CBI joint directors rushed from Delhi to West Bengal to oversee post poll violence cases reported in the state last year.

75% ICU Covid survivors grapple with health problems

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

At least 75 per cent of the Covid-19 survivors, who were treated in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), experience physical, mental and/or cognitive problems one-year post ICU, according to a large-scale MONITOR-IC study published in the journal JAMA. The study was led by Radboud university medical center, in which the health status of ICU survivors is monitored with questionnaires up to five years after ICU admission. The study regarding long-term health problems was conducted among 246 Covid-19 patients (176 men/70 women) who were treated in the intensive care unit (ICU) in the Netherlands. Their mean age was 61 years. Using questionnaires, they were asked how they were doing one-year post ICU. Worldwide, this is the first scientific research regarding long-term problems among Covid-19 ICU survivors. Patients in this study were admitted to the ICU during the first Covid-19 surge between March and July 2020.

Extended FCRA registration of 11,594 NGOs which applied within cut-off date, Govt tells SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday told the Supreme Court that Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) registrations of 11,594 NGOs, which applied within the cut-off date, have already been extended. Taking note of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's submission, a bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar refused to pass an interim direction that FCRA registrations of all organisations that were valid as on September 30 last year ought to be continued until further orders. The bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and CT Ravikumar, said the petitioners are free to make representation to the concerned authorities which may be considered on its merits in accordance with law. The FCRA registration is mandatory for any association and NGO to receive foreign funding. Mehta told the top court that 11,594 NGOs had applied within the cut-off date and their registrations have been extended for the time being.

The apex court, which is seized of a plea filed by a US-based NGO seeking quashing of the Centre's alleged decision by which 5,789 entities lost their FCRA registration, was dealing with arguments regarding interim relief in the matter. While referring to Mehta's submission, the top court said that in light of the stand taken by the authorities, it doesn't intend to pass such interim direction as prayed. The bench said the petition would be listed after the

judgement is pronounced on a batch of pleas, including those which have raised issues concerning the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (Amendment) Act, 2020. Senior advocate Sanjay Hegde, appearing for the US based NGO said they have the information which is available in public domain as per which there are around 6,000 NGOs whose registrations have not been extended for whatever reasons. The bench told Hegde that the Solicitor General has submitted that those who have applied, their registration has been extended. "If those 6,000 NGOs have chosen not to apply for registration, that means they do not want to continue in the present regime," the bench observed. 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.

As home isolation cases up, Mandaviya tells States, UTs to bolster teleconsultations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the majority of Covid-19 patients recuperate in home isolation, the Union Health Ministry is banking on teleconsultation services to provide timely care to them. On Tuesday, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya asked states to adopt the hub and spoke model and open additional teleconsultation centres. "This will enable beneficiaries to access advice from experts stationed at district hubs," it said. He said the government's e-Sanjeevani telemedicine system has provided services to more than 2.6 crore beneficiaries where people can seek medical advice from the confines of their homes," he said during an interaction with health ministers, senior bureaucrats and administrators of nine states and union territories. These were Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Chandigarh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Delhi, Ladakh and Uttar Pradesh, according to a statement from the health ministry. Mandaviya also urged the health ministers and state authorities to plug the existing gaps by efficiently utilizing the amount sanctioned for various infra projects. On the importance of teleconsultation services, Mandaviya urged them "This will prove to be a game-changer and will be of immense value and importance for the hard-to-reach and far-flung areas, and especially in the northern regions in the current winter season," he highlighted. He advised the states and union territories to ensure that those in home isolation are efficiently monitored in line with the national guidelines. This will ensure that the vulnerable categories of active cases in home isolation get the required medical help in a timely manner, the statement said. The virtual meeting was held to review public health preparedness for containment and management of Covid and the progress of the national Covid 9 vaccination campaign.

UP ELECTIONS

Star campaigner RPN's exit a massive blow to Congress

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister and a Congress leader for over three decades, RPN Singh's exit from the party has come as a massive blow for the grand old party just few days before the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections and just a day after he was named a star campaigner of the party. A section of the party leaders felt that the exit of Singh, who was incharge of party affairs in Jharkhand, is 'good riddance' since he was allegedly working against the Congress-JMM combine in the State. However, another section termed it as yet another alarm bell for the party leadership to wake up from slumber to put the house in order. The Congress late in the evening appointed Avinash Pandey as the AICC general secretary incharge in place of Singh. Singh, a key Kurmi OBC leader from eastern UP, is the second big exit for the Congress in the state after Jitin Prasada, who is now a minister in the Yogi Adityanath-led BJP government in UP. He had been giving enough



indications to leave the Congress since the run up to 2019 General Elections. AICC sources said he had not been attending the party meetings in the last several months though he was full time incharge for the Jharkhand Congress. Soon after Singh announced his resignation from the party, Jharkhand Barkagaon MLA Amba Prasad alleged that Singh had since several months been attempting to dislodge the Congress-JMM coalition government and that there were reports about him being in touch with BJP leaders. "The party leadership had been cautioned on several occasions about his anti-party activities. Every true member of Congress is happy with him (RPN) going to BJP," Amba Prasad tweeted. RPN posted his resignation

letter addressed to Congress president Sonia Gandhi, "Today, at a time, we are celebrating the formation of our great Republic, I begin a new chapter in my political journey. Jai Hind." Kunwar Ratanjit Pratap Narain Singh, popularly known as Raja Sahab of Padrauna, was a former Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs in Congress-led UPA government. Jyotiraditya Scindia's exit was among the triggers for a big churn in the party that led to 23 leaders writing to Sonia Gandhi asking for 'visible and full-time' leadership and collective decision-making. Scindia, Prasada, and Singh, all Doon school pals, were Rahul Gandhi aides and were in the Council of Ministers of the Manmohan Singh Congress led UPA governments. As the media was abuzz with RPN switching over to BJP, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinath at a Press conference quoted Priyanka Gandhi as saying that the "battle which Congress party is fighting can be fought only with bravery" and "cowards can't fight it".

Majority of patients experience health problems one-year post ICU. This study shows that three quarters of the Covid-19 ICU survivors experience problems one-year post ICU. These are primarily physical problems, whereby half of the patients experience feelings of fatigue. Other physical problems are e.g. a reduced condition, pain, muscle weakness and shortness of breath. Also, mental symptoms are common; one in five Covid-19 ICU survivors experience feelings of anxiety or post-traumatic stress. Furthermore, one in six have cognitive problems such as memory or attention problems. These various problems negatively affect former ICU patients' daily lives. Over half of them indicate that they have work-related problems because of the health problems: they reduced their working hours; they are still on sick leave or have even given up their job. Yet another 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.

Law Minister slams 'elements' trying to 'discredit' EC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday called for increasing the voter turnout

to at least 75 per cent in the next Lok Sabha elections while Union Minister for Law and Justice, Kiren Rijiju said "elements" trying to discredit the

Election Commission (EC) were actually trying to discredit the democratic process of the country. The minister also said the courts have a right to make observations on the Commission but the judges will also have to think about the language being used.



In his message at an event on the occasion of the 12th National Voters Day, Naidu said as a nation we must think and arrive at a consensus to have simultaneous elections to all the three tiers of federal set up and move towards better governance by focusing on all-round development of our people. Naidu was the chief guest at the event but could not attend the function as he is in home isolation in Hyderabad after testing positive for COVID-19. The event was also attended by Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra and Election Commissioners Rajiv Kumar and Anup Chandra Pandey and representatives of recognised political parties, including Trinamool Congress, BSP, BJP, CPI, Congress and National People's Party. Naidu's message was read out in Hindi and English. The vice president said the country has come a long way from the first general elections of 1952 when only 44.87 per cent of the eligible voters turned up to vote. In the last general elections in 2019, 67.40 per cent or more than two-third of the eligible voters exercised their franchise, he noted. Rijiju said, people who want to challenge democracy have found a way of doing so by challenging the poll panel. The minister said the way EC has handled challenges from time to time, there is little scope to criticise it. He, however, did

not name the "elements" he was referring to. In a democracy, people are free to criticise the EC, but the criticism should be based on logic, he said, adding that the language used should be within civic norms. "If the courts says on EC, it can. Courts have a right. But the judges will have to think about what language they are using. Under what circumstances EC is working has to be understood," he said. Referring to the recent passage of a bill on electoral reforms, the minister said due to "ruckus" in the House he felt "handicapped" as he could not explain in detail the reforms being ushered in. CEC Chandra said the Commission has made arrangements for holding "Covid-safe" elections in the five states going to Assembly polls. The Commission conferred national awards for the best electoral practices to officers for their outstanding performance in the conduct of elections in different spheres.

Govt imposes curbs on export of human hair

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a sharp rise in instances of hair smuggling to China that has squeezed raw material supplies for Indian exporters of hair products, the government on Tuesday put restrictions on the export of human hair. Earlier, hair exports were allowed without any restriction. As per the new norms, now an exporter would have to seek permission or licence from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce to ship hair outside India. Last year, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence busted a scam involving Chinese nationals in exporting human hairs from Bengaluru to China via Myanmar. Bangladesh has now emerged as the new transit hub for human hair smugglers. While high quality locks go for anywhere between Rs. 4,000 to

Rs. 15,000 per kg, the lower quality human hair 'waste' starts at a comparatively measly Rs. 4 per kg. In a notification, the Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Santosh Kumar Sarangi on Tuesday said, the export policy of human hair, unworked, whether or not washed or scoured; waste of human hair or any other form of raw human hair...Has been put under restricted category, with immediate effect. The hair export market in India is worth Rs 6,000-8000 crore — 5 per cent of the hair comes from donations at temples and rest through collection of comb waste across villages. China, Hong Kong, Brazil and Italy are among the top five markets for India, when it comes to human hair exports. It is used for making wigs, false beards, eyebrows, extensions and also in extraction of a protein used in the baking

industry. It's used to make calligraphy brushes, wig making, cloth making, soy sauce, suit linings, and furniture. It's enlisted to clean up oil spills. It's even a part of the bagel-making process at Dunkin' Donuts. A large chunk of the hair exported comes from the ritual of hair tonsuring at the famous Tirumala Venkateswara Temple in Andhra Pradesh where thousands of devotees offer their hair to Lord Venkateshwara every day. It is estimated that over a ton of hair is collected at the temple on a daily basis. Welcoming the move, member of Human Hair and Hair Products Manufacturers and Exporters Association of India Sunil Eamani said that it was their long-pending demand. "Now with this restriction, only genuine exporters will be able to export the product," he said.



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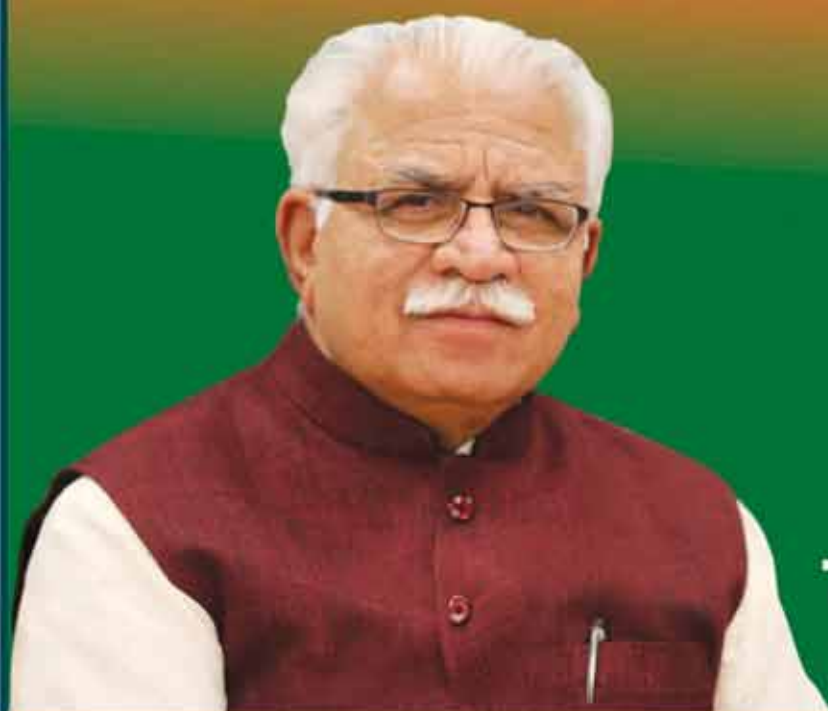
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“आज भारत वर्तमान के साथ ही अगले 25 वर्षों के लक्ष्य को लेकर नीतियां बना रहा है, निर्णय ले रहा है। इस कालखंड में भारत ने तेज, सर्वस्पर्शी विकास के और योजनाओं के संचुरेशन के लक्ष्य रखे हैं। विकास का यह कालखंड हरित भी होगा, स्वच्छ भी होगा, स्थाई भी होगा, विश्वसनीय भी होगा।”

- नरेन्द्र मोदी



वायदे नहीं, बुलन्द इरादे

Life before death

The vaccination drive in terror-hit regions hasn't run into any problem, which is a good sign

On June 8 last year, Weyan, a tiny hamlet in Kashmir's Bandipora district, became India's first village to vaccinate its entire adult population against COVID-19. In a few days, Jammu and Kashmir will become India's second State, after Himachal Pradesh, to vaccinate all those over 18. The achievements are noteworthy considering health workers had to brave inaccessible terrain, non-existent communication facilities, terrible weather and terrorism to complete the process of giving the first dose of the vaccine to all. The State's vaccination drive carried on in the face of frequent incidents of cross-border terrorism in one of the most hostile international border areas of the world. The drive stayed on course despite a wave of killings throughout October 2021 when terrorists targeted non-Kashmiris, members of minority communities and did not spare even daily wage labourers. The surge in violence left 33 dead. However, the health workers were welcomed wherever they went, especially in areas known for separatist sentiments. The presence of security forces accompanying the teams caused no reservation among the locals, who overcame their wariness to receive the doses. The possibility of some separatist elements or sympathisers surreptitiously getting a free dose by the State cannot be ruled out. For once, the fear of terror paled before the fear of the unseen virus. That brings us to the moot issue: Do anti-State elements, whether terrorists, militants, insurgents, Naxalites or Maoists have a right to COVID-19 vaccines?

Under international humanitarian law, in situations of conflict, the wounded and sick are entitled to medical care. During the pandemic that we currently face, such care can include a vaccine. The State, which alone can acquire the vaccine, arranges for it to reach across the country. It will respect its human rights duties towards the population living in the conflict areas. The resistance groups have the primary responsibility for the wellbeing of those living in their area of influence. Whether in J&K that witnesses terror attacks, the 'Red Corridor' districts in central India that brave Maoist attacks, or the deep interiors of some States in the Northeast which have a brush with insurgency, the issue must have cropped up when security agencies were preparing for the vaccination drive. In Maharashtra, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, there were reports of the virus infecting Maoist cadres deep inside forests. Many may have succumbed for lack of medical care. The lockdowns or movement restrictions prevented couriers and sympathisers from reaching medicine or oxygen cylinders to them. What we do know is that the vaccination drives were never disturbed. In the Northeast, too, the drives never met with harm. The insurgents, like the Maoists, must have realised the danger of the virus spreading in their areas. The States did offer anti-COVID treatment and vaccine doses to those who surrendered. It is not known how many acceded to the call. Parliament must debate the issue and give shape to a protocol for the future.

PICTALK



People walk past a sand sculpture on the theme of the 73rd Republic Day, in Puri

PTI

Happy R-Day

But it's time for agencies to work professionally and to let the suffocating security cover go

As India celebrates its 73rd Republic Day today, there is a multi-layered security ring enveloping the Capital. Of course, the pandemic is a hindrance to the grandiosity of celebrations for a couple of years now. But, that apart, is there really a need to insulate the normal, common Indians from their national celebration? Why shouldn't they be allowed to be part of the joy, pride and festivities as those who claim to be the top layer among equals, that too in the name of protecting the latter? And from whom; one's own countrymen? Of course one remembers what happened at the Red Fort this day last year. But one also distinctly remembers that when former US President Bill Clinton visited India towards the turn of last century, there was minimal inconvenience caused by the Secret Service people. They would diligently check all equipment besides mandatorily body-checking all incoming persons but they would never be overly intrusive. Why can't our security agencies be as professional? The only reason, it appears, is that they are still unsure of their own abilities; therefore, they'd rather issue advisories banning all sorts of items to a VVIP venue.

There is no denying that any untoward incident on such a momentous occasion would come as a major embarrassment for the Government and the security establishment but another way of looking at it is, as some politicians have said in the past, women shouldn't venture out of their homes late at night because rapists are on the prowl. Well, rather than advising a well-meaning, perhaps late-working, woman to stay indoors, shouldn't the police rather focus on increasing its presence on the streets and aim for crime prevention rather than trying to solve it after their laxity has allowed it to be executed? Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana has informed that more than 27,000 personnel of the force have been deployed for security duty and anti-terror measures have also been intensified. Delhi Police is also getting assistance from 65 companies of the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF). Anti-terror measures are intensified comprising of the checking of hotels, vehicles, blockades of several locations, among others. All of this is good, but the moot point is: Don't victimise innocent citizens. May hope and peace always be in the country! Happy Republic Day.

The eternal flame can't be partial to our soldiers

The 'othering' of Indian soldiers in colonial times was the biggest disservice to the collective memory of the armed forces; it must be rectified now

In his book *Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation*, Lt Gen JFR Jacob utilised one page to state: "The rifle and helmet that forms the centrepiece of the Amar Jawan War Memorial at India Gate once belonged to a soldier unknown to history who died on the battlefield on the outskirts of Jessore. There is no inscription on this monument." Then he recalls the legendary inscription at Kohima which, he says, is "appropriate for our jawans who laid down their lives in the rice paddies of Bangladesh: Let us not forget them."

India Gate and, under its canopy, the statue of the Unknown Soldier of 1971 war — called the Amar Jawan Jyoti — have become enduring symbols of nation's gratitude to the armed forces. Inside the India Gate arch are etched names of some Indian soldiers who fought in World War I and Third Afghan war — not the complete lineup of Indians who fought colonial wars of pre-Independence India. The National War Memorial that came up in 2019 recorded the names of all martyrs in wars, and internal stability operations after Independence. The 'othering' of soldiers in colonial times was the biggest disservice to the collective memory of the armed forces. The discrimination between British Indian Army and the Indian Army should have been challenged by Service Chiefs when Governments would ignore commemoration of battles fought by Indian troops abroad. Even now, the NWM has no place for the 'others' as India Gate was never an inclusive salute as it excluded those who fell in pre-Independence wars.

Thousands are buried across Europe, Middle East, SE Asia and N Africa. India's contribution to the Great Wars and other campaigns was outstanding. Field Marshal Claude Auchinleck said that Britain would not have won the wars without Indian Army's contribution. Even Prime Minister Winston Churchill praised the unsurpassed bravery of Indian troops. Of the 1.4mn Indians in World War I, 74,000 were killed and 64,350 wounded. About 2,200 decorations were



won by Indian soldiers. In World War II, 2.5mn took part; 87,000 were killed with 34,354 wounded. Including 18 Victoria Crosses, 4,000 decorations were awarded.

According to an Army source, the fusion of two flames and shifting the India Gate flame to NWM does not mean that the four urns surrounding the Unknown Soldier will be extinguished. One will continue to glow eternally, celebrating India's only military victory in 1,000 years. But there will be one NWM, not two. That still leaves several questions. Will one of the four urns continue to burn; will the tri-service guard remain under India Gate; will the statue of the Unknown Soldier be ultimately shifted to NWM? And who will occupy the vacated space. When the NWM was inaugurated, Government said the sanctity of the eternal flame will be maintained at India Gate. We are not sure. Last Sunday, the hologram of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was installed in the empty canopy near India Gate which once contained King George V's statue. Once his granite statue is sculpted, he will become the top contender for the space under India Gate. Prime Minister Modi said: "The heroes whose mem-



THE MERGING OF FLAMES AND TRANSFERRING IT TO NWM IS 'OTHERING' SACRIFICES OF PRE-INDEPENDENCE ERA SOLDIERS. THEIR VALOUR MUST NOT ONLY BE ACKNOWLEDGED BUT A SUITABLE MEMORIAL BE ADDED TO THE NWM BY THE NEXT REPUBLIC DAY TO HONOUR THEM

ory was being erased post-Independence are now being revived. The country is correcting its mistakes." One hopes he will rectify the omission of the British Indian Army martyrs from the NWM.

Almost 90 per cent of military traditions and regimental ethos, ethics and values are drawn from pre-Independence period, including Beating Retreat, colour presentations, gallantry awards and battle honours. Nearly 80 per cent of our regiments were raised 150-200 years ago. Almost everything in the military is carry-over of British relics and traditions; we must accept it unhesitatingly. Regiments still celebrate battle honours and gallantry awards that were won in the Great Wars. But we are still arguing about renaming Aurangzeb Roads and railway stations. Britain ruled for more than a century and created an empire that stretched from Belize to Hong Kong, surpassing the conquest of even the Mongols.

Today, Britain's tiny military has lost none of its sheen though its empire is gone. The entire British Army has dwindled to smaller than our 43 Gorkha battalions. Still, the glory lingers on and will never extinguish due to

embedded traditions. India has a lot to learn from its military history. India this year will surpass Britain's GDP to become the fourth biggest economy. The process of Indianisation has been extremely slow and in the wrong areas.

Beating Retreat is a very solemn ceremony. Introducing Indian instruments and theatrics ill-fit this grand and somber ritual. Dropping the hymn *Abide With Me* with lyrics composed in the aftermath of India's humiliating defeat in 1962 is not an enthusiastic end to the ceremony.

In erasing the past, the Government is committing the mistake of compartmentalising military history; then and now, theirs and ours. The merging of flames and transferring it to NWM is 'othering' the sacrifices of the pre-Independence era soldiers. Their valour must not only be acknowledged but a suitable memorial be added to the NWM by the next Republic Day to honour them.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BUDGET FOR EQUITABLE ECONOMY

Sir — Never before has a Budget demanded greater insight, acumen and earnest pragmatism. This one must go far beyond juggling the ledger and marquee headings to invite kudos from the Dalal Street. It ought to be all about restoring lost employment in the middle, lower middle classes and daily wagers, besides creating fresh avenues. This economy was already on jobless growth for four years. From a pandemic peak in unemployment of near 14 per cent, we are at 7.9 per cent in December 2021. Compare this with 2017-2018, at 4.7 per cent. Between 2019-20 and December 2021, the manufacturing sector lost 9.8 million jobs, services sector 1.8 million.

But most worrisome should be the drop in salaried jobs, which points to an unstable economy starved of investment. Without new investments, India will not be able to generate the kind of employment it needs. Rising interest rates and a depreciating currency make it worse. The Budget needs to focus on these issues. These sectors are in dire straits; earlier due to demonetisation, now pulverised by COVID. One of the key objectives of this year's Budget ought to be on employment returning to the class that needs to reclaim its lost purchasing power.

R Narayanan | Navi Mumbai

CONG'S DOWNSLIDE CONTINUES

Sir — In yet another severe setback to the Congress, which is struggling to keep its house in order ahead of the Assembly election in five States, Congress heavyweight and former Minister RPN Singh quit the party and joined the BJP. The resignation comes a day after the Congress named him among its list of star campaigners for the Uttar Pradesh polls. This is a body blow to Priyanka Vadra, leading the party from the front in UP. It is pathetic that party has remained clueless about internal bickering; it is completely out of sync with ground realities.

The party's central command, especially Gandhi scions Rahul and Priyanka,

The eternal flame of patriotism



The recent merging of Amar Jawan Jyoti with the newly instituted flame in the imposing National War Memorial (NWM), which was dedicated to the nation on February 25, 2019, must not be seen through a political lens. In fact, it has given a definite shape to our independent existence where the sacrifice of every soldier is recognised. Covering an area of over 40 acres with names of more than 26,000 fallen heroes

etched in granite invokes deep memories that should serve as inspiration. History is replete with examples of countries erecting war memorials, thereby remembering the supreme sacrifices made by their jawans. They continually remind us that we exist as a free nation because of the sacrifices of these brave soldiers.

Considering that a memorial was constructed in 1921 by Edward Lytens in the memory of soldiers who lost their lives in World War I and the Third Anglo-Afghan war, the names of a few British officers and soldiers also find mention there. It does not represent the sacrifices made by soldiers either during World War II or the wars fought by India since 1947. This anomaly was removed by setting up the NWM and now Amar Jawan Jyoti will serve as an integral part of it. The new memorial will infuse new vigour in all Indians and keep the fire of patriotism burning.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

are incapable of leading the party in situations that demand tactical strategies and smart moves. At the 2019 Congress Working Committee meeting, RPN Singh was the only Team Rahul member to point out that personal attacks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi had boomeranged. But instead of evaluating the point, the Gandhis began distancing him. It only implies that the party brass needs only yes-men around them. The murky state of affairs suggests its downfall is getting accelerated by the day.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

ACCOLADES FOR SMRITI MANDHANA

Sir — Cricket is a game of luck, so winning an award in a calendar year solely depends on lady luck. India women's cricket star Smriti Mandhana won the ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year in style despite stiff competition. Pakistan dominated the men's awards with two coveted prizes. However, it was Joe Root, despite his side not faring well at

the international level, who bagged the Men's Cricketer of the Year award. Mandhana, who also made it to the ICC T20 Women's Team of the Year, piped fellow nominees Tanmay Beaumont and others in a tight contest.

The southpaw had won the award in 2018 as well when she was also named Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year, making her only the second women's player to win the highest individual distinction in the overall category. Virat 'King' Kohli was nowhere near the top in the charts this time. The Indian team lost to Pakistan and New Zealand and the captain wanted to save his neck and preferred Ashwin to win the next three games. Anyway, it was a solace that Smriti Mandhana got the better of the other competitors and kept the Indian flag flying at the international level.

CK Subramaniam | Navi Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Just like you came forward for the cleanliness drive, do the same for the Vocal for Local campaign.



Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



I congratulate Justice Ayesha Malik on becoming the first woman judge of the Supreme Court.

Pakistan PM — Imran Khan

I have not really been impressed by any political party, that they have an ideology I can blindly follow.



Actor — Raveena Tandon



I am truly honoured to receive the prestigious Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy for ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year 2021.

Indian opener — Smriti Mandhana

I am in touch with every caste and community. They want us to defeat the BJP...change is inevitable.



Samajwadi Party chief — Akhilesh Yadav

FIRST COLUMN

ADULT MARRIAGE ISN'T THE GOVT'S BUSINESS

How will increasing the marriageable age empower women or make them self-reliant?



S KALYANASUNDARAM

The Government is considering to change the eligibility of Indian girls getting married from 18 to 21. The intent of the Bill isto “make them self-reliant and to enable them to take decisions themselves”. An amendment seeks to define a child as a male or female who has not completed 21 years of age. How will increasing the marriageable age empower women or make them self-reliant? Gender equality per se is achieved with 21 becoming the marriageable age o men and women. But this stipulation for men itself is totally arbitrary and to make gender equality, men’s marriageable age should have been brought down to 18. Parity does not mean taking away the right or privilege from one group. When the government wants to decide the minimum age for marriage, strangely it claims that it is going to empower girls to decide on their own. As per Indian Majority Act, 1875 18 is the age for attaining majority. But,as per the same Act, a child appoint-



ed with a guardian by the court attains majority after completion of 21 years. Through Indian Majority (Amendment) Act 1999, Section 3 has been replaced with the following: “Age of majority of persons domiciled in India. — (1) every person domiciled in India shall attain the age of majority on his completing the age of eighteen years and not before.” So, whoever completes the age of 18 years the person is a major and cannot be treated as a child. Hence the proposed amendment with the nomenclature Prohibition of ‘child’ marriage act is a misnomer. Our law permits 18-year-olds, without representation by a guardian,to enter into any contract, own properties, pursue jobs, drive heavy vehicles in most states,and vote in elections. But the government wants to prescribe an age limit for marriage that too by branding the persons attaining majority as children. While introducing the Constitution (Sixty first Amendment) Act, 1988, the government stated as follows: ‘The present-day youth are literate and enlightened and the lowering of the voting age would provide to the unrepresented youth of the country an opportunity to give vent to their feelings and help them become a part of the political process. The present-day youth are very much politically conscious. It is, therefore, proposed to reduce the voting age from 21 years to 18 years.’ Is it not ridiculous to suddenly change the gear and say that girls of 18 years cannot decide on their own and hence should not marry?

UNICEF, also known as the United Nations Children’s Fund, is a United Nations agency responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide. Even UNICEF regards only the marriage of a minor (a person below the adult age) as child marriage and a violation of rights. It is a different matter that most of the girls and boys are not getting married even after they are eligible as per the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. As per a survey conducted with a sample of 10,005 respondents by YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey, one in four young adults in India do not want to marry. As norms and values around marriage and family life change, the Indian youth too are being influenced by recent trends. Compared to a decade ago, youth are now marrying later in life. This has been again brought out by Lokniti-CSDS Youth Studies in 2016 and 2007 which show the proportion of married youth decreased by eight percentage points from 55 per cent in 2007 to 47 per cent in 2016. The government must drop this amendment bill which is retrograde.

(The writer is a retired banker. The views expressed are personal.)

Tableau politics mars Republic Day preparations

The Centre and the States should together evolve a fair tableaux selection process without any heartburn to any stakeholder

Petty politics ought not to ruin the solemn atmosphere in celebrating the Republic Day or Independence Day. Unfortunately, more avoidable controversies arise between the ruling party and the opposition. For instance, while there is a well-established system for selecting the tableaux, the process always becomes a flashpoint for regional politics. This year too, there is furore in the opposition-ruled states as the Centre rejected the tableaux of West Bengal, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, among others. Chief Ministers like Mamata Banerjee and M.K. Stalinhave written to the Prime Minister to reconsider the decision but in vain. Only 12 states eventually made it to the list, including



KALYANI SHANKAR

poll-bound states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, and Goa. The selection criteria was that the R-Day parade must reflect the cultural diversity of India and the role of various communities in building modern India. Why shouldnot every State get an opportunity to display things it wants to? This year Republic Day is important because the theme is India@75 and getting a place in the parade is a matter of prestige for the states. It is also amidst the Covid pandemic which has shattered the globe. On the 75th Republic Day on Friday, one must recall the first Republic Day in 1950. It was a simple affair. The then last Governor-General of India, C. Rajagopalachari, read out the proclamation of the new Republic and the election

The US is in the grip of inflation

The American policy makers are diverting attention from the real cause of inflation — excessive expansion of money supply

Although inflation is a common phenomenon in most countries of the world including India, many past generations of Americans have never suffered the brunt of inflation. But in the last one year, the rate of inflation in America has reached around seven percent, and that has started affecting the lives of ordinary Americans. Ruling Democrats are fearing the consequences of the same in the 2022 mid-term elections. On the one hand, Covid-19, which has destroyed the jobs of 22 million Americans, has also caused a 30 percent drop in annual production, while on the other, Americans are facing further hardships due to rising inflation.

The question is, how America was saved from inflation in the past, and how it will come out of the grip of current. Inflation has been registered in almost every item of daily needs — eight percent increase in the price of eggs, 58 percent in the price of petrol, 14 percent increase in the prices of other groceries.

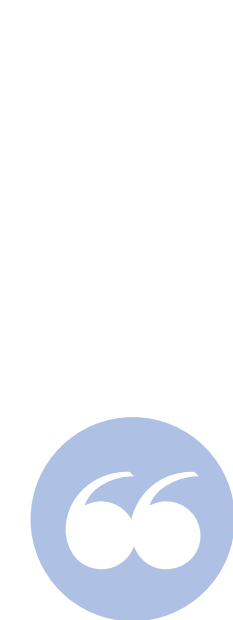
Some American economists believe that due to US Government’s bailout packages to revive the economy from the effects of COVID-19, there was an unprecedented increase in demand in the country. However, due to supply disruptions, the prices of goods are increasing fast. Economists believe that due to rising inflation, wage rates are also increasing, which may lead to a spiral effect on inflation. Experts believe that the pent-up demand of the Covid-19 period is also retuning back now.

During the pandemic period many people with permanent income also could not spend their incomes fully. Now, with return of normalcy, they are spending more on tourism, fuel, food items, restaurants, entertainment, etc. It is believed that as supply conditions improve, it will be possible to control inflation. But there is almost a consensus that there is no immediate relief from it.

US policy makers are trying to blame this record inflation on supply chain problems and shortage of raw materials, but most economists are citing the rising money supply as the main reason. It is true that the sudden spurt in consumer demand after the temporary relief from COVID-19 has led to a shortage of goods, but this is not the main reason for inflation in America.

Many policy makers in the US are saying that due to the shortage of goods, sellers have started raising prices. Therefore, inflation can also be curbed by price controls. But we must understand that one of the disadvantages of price control is that it reduces the incentive of producers to produce more. There is an apprehension that due to this (price control), the consumers may face shortage of goods.

But one area where price controls



AMERICAN POLICY MAKERS ALSO RECOGNISE THAT THEIR PEOPLE HAVE HUGE SAVINGS AND THEY WANT TO MAKE UP FOR THE GOODS AND SERVICES WHICH THEY COULD NOT ENJOY DURING COVID-19. BUT IT HAS TO BE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE REAL REASON FOR THE SURPLUS FUNDS LEFT WITH PEOPLE IS THE DISTRIBUTION OF HUGE AMOUNTS OF FINANCIAL BAILOUT PACKAGES BY THE US ADMINISTRATION

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



can play an effective role is the pharmaceutical sector. It is well known that American pharmaceutical companies charge high prices for drugs in the name of reward for intellectual property. Controlling drug prices can certainly give a huge relief to the consumers.

American policy makers are trying to cover up their past mistakes with a variety of arguments to divert attention from the real causes of inflation; and that mistake is the excessive expansion of money supply. It is a historical fact that the main reason for inflation all over the globe had been the expansion of money supply.

Irving Fisher’s quantity theory of money has been used for centuries to explain the phenomenon of inflation. According to modified version of this theory, if the total output of goods and services or ‘the volume of transactions’ in the economy remains the same, then the price level increases in proportion to the increase in the quantity of money. It is worth noting that first in the name of ‘quantitative easing’ (QEs) for a huge bailout package to overcome the financial crisis starting from 2007-08 and to compensate for the impact of the decline in the economy due to COVID-19 in the last almost two

years, the US Administration has been expanding quantity of money. Many economists believe that due to this huge increase in the quantity of money, inflation is now becoming uncontrollable.

American policy makers also recognize that people in America have huge savings with them and they want to make up for the goods and services, which they could not enjoy during Covid-19. But it has to be understood that the real reason for the surplus funds left with the people is the distribution of huge amounts of financial bailout packages by the US administration. Due to the limited income of the government due to the pandemic, the increase in inflation has become inevitable due to printing of the amount of currency in circulation by the Government and consequently a large increase in the money supply. Significantly, between November 2020 and November 2021, the total currency with the public in USA increased by \$1.56 trillion, i.e., an increase of 7.6 percent. But the increase in the supply of M1 money was even more, that is, 15.7 percent.

Bailout package by the US government to create additional currency is nothing new; however, in recent times there has been some decline in the popularity of

the dollar as global currency, which is being fast replaced by the Chinese currency yuan. Further, in order to give boost to US manufacturing, the US administration has been becoming more and more protective, resulting in fall in export of dollars. In such a situation, the supply of dollars outside the US is decreasing, due to which the fear of inflation in the US have increased due to increasing amounts of dollars with the public in US. It seems that if this trend continues in the future, then the increasing money supply in the US will continue to cause inflation in the future as well.

Manufacturing output in the US had been declining for a long time and most of the GDP in the US is derived from services. In that too, a large part of America’s GDP is the income earned abroad by American companies, due to which America has been receiving a huge amount of taxation. But for some time now, American companies have been trying to avoid this taxation in various ways. These companies are mostly e-commerce and tech companies. For this reason, the US government may have to resort to the creation of additional currency to meet its expenses in the future also, which may lead to further inflation.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THIEVES DON'T LIKE A MOONLIT NIGHT. THOSE WHO ARE PROMISING FREE ELECTRICITY KEPT PEOPLE IN DARKNESS FOR YEARS.
—UP CHIEF MINISTER YOGI ADITYANATH



WHAT DOES THE CHIEF MINISTER KNOW ABOUT ELECTRICITY FACTORS? THERE IS NO BIGGER A LIAR THAN THE CM.
—SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF AKHILESH YADAV

Tableau politics mars Republic Day preparations

The Centre and the States should together evolve a fair tableaux selection process without any heartburn to any stakeholder

Petty politics ought not to ruin the solemn atmosphere in celebrating the Republic Day or Independence Day. Unfortunately, more avoidable controversies arise between the ruling party and the opposition. For instance, while there is a well-established system for selecting the tableaux, the process always becomes a flashpoint for regional politics. This year too, there is furore in the opposition-ruled states as the Centre rejected the tableaux of West Bengal, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, among others. Chief Ministers like Mamata Banerjee and M.K. Stalinhave written to the Prime Minister to reconsider the decision but in vain. Only 12 states eventually made it to the list, including

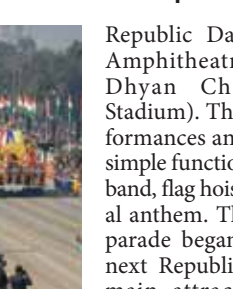


KALYANI SHANKAR

poll-bound states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, and Goa. The selection criteria was that the R-Day parade must reflect the cultural diversity of India and the role of various communities in building modern India. Why shouldnot every State get an opportunity to display things it wants to? This year Republic Day is important because the theme is India@75 and getting a place in the parade is a matter of prestige for the states. It is also amidst the Covid pandemic which has shattered the globe. On the 75th Republic Day on Friday, one must recall the first Republic Day in 1950. It was a simple affair. The then last Governor-General of India, C. Rajagopalachari, read out the proclamation of the new Republic and the election

of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, as the first President of India, at 10.18 AM on a chilly Thursday morning.

The Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution of India on November 26, 1949, and came into effect on January 26, 1950. Historically it was on January 26, 1930, Congress committed the nationalist movement to Purna Swaraj (total independence). Delhi held the first



Republic Day at the Irwin Amphitheatre (now Major Dhyani Chand National Stadium). There were no performances and floats. It was a simple function with the Army band, flag hoisting, and national anthem. The tradition of a parade began only from the next Republic Day. It is the main attraction of India’s Republic Day celebrations, which last for three days since then.

The Parade is primarily a military affair. The might of our defence services, including the latest tanks, missiles, radar systems, air force planes, defence communications systems, etc., mounted on trucks, are paraded, followed by a cultural pageant comprising tableaux. It is here that the participant states showcase their unique culture and achievements to the nation. The selection depends on a combination of factors, including visual appeal, idea, theme, music, and micro detailing. From 1950 and 1954, the parades were held at the Red Fort, National stadium, Kingsway Camp, and the Ramlila ground. It was from 1955 that Rajpath became the regular venue. It was discontinued in 1963 when the country was engaged in war with China, and was replaced by a procession of leaders led by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, his cabinet members, political representatives from states, students and teachers from Delhi University, etc. The Parade was restored the following year. Although they were disap-

pointed with the Centre’s rejection of tableau, the concerned opposition chief ministers have gone to the media to showcase their themes in their states. They feel the Centre was playing politics in the selection. Mamata Banerjee raised a point that their tableau commemorated the contributions of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his 125th birth anniversary and carried portraits of other leaders like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. She has decided to come out with the same tableau during the Republic Day parade on Red Road in Kolkata. Tamil Nadu’s Stalin also proposes showcasing the rejected tableau in Chennai in the Republic Day parade and also taking it to other districts in Tamil Nadu.

It does not behove to follow petty politics. While it is true that the sombre ceremony should not be disturbed by this kind of petty politics, one option could be to give a chance to all states. India is, after all, a Union of States. If there is a time constraint for some reason, the authorities could adopt the lottery system. The other option for the rejected states is to follow Mamata and Stalin to show off in the state R-Day celebrations. The display of the unique culture of each state brought to Delhi parade with their floats and dances might create the sense of the new nation in the Union of States. It is time that the Centre and the states come together and evolve a good selection process without any heartburn.

Ukraine urges calm, saying Russian invasion not imminent

AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine's leaders sought to reassure nation that a feared invasion from neighbouring Russia was not imminent, even as they acknowledged threat is real and prepared to accept a shipment of American military equipment Tuesday to shore up their defences.

Russia has denied it is planning an assault, but it has massed an estimated 100,000 troops near Ukraine in recent weeks, leading United States and its NATO allies to rush to prepare for a possible war.

Several rounds of high stakes diplomacy have failed to yield any breakthroughs, and this week tensions escalated further. NATO said it was bolstering its deterrence in Baltic Sea region, and US ordered 8,500 troops on higher alert to potentially deploy to Europe as part of an alliance "response force" if necessary.

The State Department has ordered families of all American personnel at US Embassy in Kyiv to leave country, and it said that nonessential embassy staff could leave.

Britain said it, too, was withdrawing some diplomats and dependents from its embassy. In Ukraine, however, authorities have sought to project calm. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said late Monday that situation was "under control" and that there is

"no reason to panic". Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov said that, as of Monday, that Russia's armed forces had not formed what he called battle groups, "which would have indicated that tomorrow they would launch an offensive.""There are risky scenarios. They're possible and probable in future," Reznikov told Ukraine's ICTV channel on Monday. "But as of today...Such a threat doesn't exist."

Oleksiy Danilov, the secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council, echoed that sentiment, saying that movement of Russian troops near Ukraine's border "is not news,"

"As of today, we don't see any grounds for statements about a full-scale offensive on our country," Danilov said Monday.Russia has said Western accusations that it is planning an invasion are merely a cover for NATO's own planned provocations.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Tuesday once again accused US of "fomenting tensions" around Ukraine, a former Soviet state that Russia has been locked in a bitter tug-of-war with for almost eight years. In 2014, following ouster of a Kremlin-friendly president in Ukraine, Moscow annexed Crimean peninsula and threw its weight behind a separatist insurgency in country's industrial heartland in east.

On Nuclear talks, Iran says 'ready' as US asserts 'direct meeting'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE ■ WASHINGTON

Iran for the first time Monday said it was open to direct nuclear negotiations with the United States, which declared itself ready to hold talks "urgently" -- in a possible turning point in efforts to salvage the 2015 nuclear accord.

Tehran has been engaged since last year in talks with the five other world powers still part of the agreement, which offered sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program.

After unilaterally withdrawing in 2018 under then-president Donald Trump, Washington has been taking part indirectly in the Vienna negotiations, which seek to bring the United States back into the nuclear accord and ensure Iran returns to its commitments.

But Washington has said on multiple occasions it would prefer to hold direct talks, and on Monday Iran's foreign minister said his country would consider doing so if it proved the key to a "good agreement" to salvage the floundering deal.

"If during the negotiation process we get to a point that reaching a good agreement with solid guarantees requires a level of talks with the US, we will not ignore that in our work schedule," said Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

A US State Department spokesman reiterated after the Iranian comments that the United States is "prepared to meet directly."

"We have long held the position that it would be more productive to engage with Iran directly, on both JCPOA negotiations and other issues," the spokesperson said, referring to the nuclear deal, known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"Given the pace of Iran's nuclear advances, we are almost out of time to reach an understanding on mutual return to full implementation of the JCPOA," the official added.

Iran is currently negotiating directly with the deal's other signatories: Germany, France, China and Britain. The talks, which started last April, were suspended two months later as Iran elected ultraconservative President Ebrahim Raisi, resuming in late November.

US-Iran ties have been severed since April 1980, just months after the fall of the shah and the occupation of the American embassy by Islamist students loyal to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Relations worsened significantly after Washington withdrew from the nuclear deal and reimposed biting economic sanctions, prompting Tehran to begin rolling back its own commitments.

US child abuse report: Deaths of Black children up in pandemic

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The latest national child welfare report shows an increase in the number of Black children who died, even though fewer abuse-related fatalities were investigated in the yearlong period that included the first several months of the pandemic.

The findings were released in the 2020 Child Maltreatment Report, issued Friday by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The report covers data from October 2019 to September 2020 and only partially reflects how COVID-19 disrupted the work of child welfare. "Disparities that were present before the pandemic were intensified, and COVID-19 exposed gaps in our human services delivery system," Aysha E. Schomburg, of the department's Children's Bureau, said in a statement.

The report noted an overall 10per cent drop in the number of child protective services cases handled by states in the early days of the pandemic. That's a troubling trend that the Associated Press first reported last year with an analysis of state child welfare data.

The federal data confirm a drop by hundreds of thousands in documented cases of child abuse reports, investigations, substantiated allegations and support for at-risk families. But experts say that's not necessarily good news - children

were out of the public eye during the pandemic, and some cases likely weren't reported until they became more severe, if at all.

The numbers on fatalities in particular are concerning, because such cases are notoriously underreported, said Amy Harfeld, of the Children's Advocacy Institute. Social workers often investigate a child's death only if the family had already been involved with a child welfare agency.

"The numbers that we know of are not reflective of the numbers that are experienced," Harfeld said.

Federal officials highlighted a 4per cent decrease in child abuse and neglect-related deaths, though the data also show a roughly 17per cent increase in the number of Black children who died when compared with the previous year's report.

The latest report identified 504 Black children who died - 73 more than the previous tally. This means Black children are now three times more likely to die of suspected child abuse or neglect than white children, according to report.

The agency did not immediately comment on disparity but broadly acknowledged challenges ahead. "While data in today's report shows a decrease in child maltreatment, there is still work to do," said JooYeon Chang, the acting assistant secretary for Administration for Children and Families.

Pakistan slips further on Corruption Perceptions Index, ranks 140 out of 180 countries: Transparency report

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has dropped 16 spots on the global Corruption Perceptions Index for 2021 and is ranked 140th out of 180 countries, Transparency International said in a report

on Tuesday, in a major blow to Prime Minister Imran Khan's government which came to power on the promise of introducing a clean governance system.

The report released by the Berlin-based non-profit organisation formed to combat global corruption said that corruption levels remain at a standstill worldwide, with 86 per cent of countries making little to no progress in the last 10 years.

In its 2021 edition, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean), drawing on 13 expert assessments and surveys of business executives.

In 2020, Pakistan's CPI was 31 and it was ranked 124 out of 180 countries. According to Transparency International, the country's corruption score has now deteriorated to 28 while it is ranked 140 out of the total 180 countries on the index. Comparatively, India's score stands at 40 and is ranked 85, while Bangladesh's CPI is 26 and stands at 147th position. Explaining the causes of low score of Pakistan, the report

said the absence of the "rule of law" and "state capture" were the main reasons. The report comes at a time when Prime Minister Khan is under pressure to improve the performance of his government which came to power in 2018 on the promise of introducing a clean governance system.

His advisor on accountability, Shehzad Akbar, stepped down on Monday amidst reports of his poor performance to bring the corrupt elements under the law.

To add to Khan's woes, Justice (ret'd) Nasira Iqbal, Vice-Chair of Transparency International Pakistan, said that the ranking of Pakistan under the PTI government has gradually come down.

In 2019, it was 120th out of 180 countries, in 2020, it was 124th and in 2021 it worsened further to 140, she said.In contrast, in 2018, during Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) period, Pakistan's ranking was 117 out of 180 countries. Former prime minister and PML-N leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi while addressing media said that report showed that Khan's government is corrupt and incompetent.

"This government is most corrupt government in entire history of Pakistan," he said, and demanded Khan step down immediately. The CPI global average remains unchanged at 43 for the tenth year in a row, and two-thirds of countries score below 50, the report said.

PUBLIC NOTICE
General public is hereby informed that Mrs. Kasum Lata W/o Mr. Ved Prakash is the current owner of Property Bearing Plot Nos. 38 and 39, Now Known as RZ-38-39, area measuring 96 Sq. Yds., Khazra No. 184, Situated in the Area of Village Nadraur, colony Kinnera & Durga Park, New Delhi by virtue of Sale Deed dt. 13.09.2021 regd. vide doc. no. 8786, and she is intending to mortgage the same to Citi Housing Finance Ltd. The 1. Original GPA, ATS and Will dt. 28.02.2005; 2. Original GPA, ATS and Will dt. 15.05.1986; 3. Original GPA, SPA, ATS and Will dt. 19.05.1994 pertaining to the aforesaid property have been lost and FIR No. bearing no. NDR No. 1781/2014 has been registered on 08.11.2014 with Police Station Janakpuri Delhi Police.
If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim in this property, then contact the undersigned within 15 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of the aforesaid property.
Raghav Tewari (Advocate)
Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi - 110014
Mob. +91-8076188328

CORRIGENDUM NO. 1 FOR TENDER NOTICE NO. CON/2022/JAN/02 DTD. 07-01-2022
Corrigendum to Tender Notice No.: CON/2022/JAN/02 Dtd: 07-01-2022 against Tender No. CE/CONIA-G/PA/2022/01 and CE/CONIA-G/PA/2022/02 is published in IREPS. For detail, please visit in website www.ireps.gov.in.
Chief Engineer/CON-3, Maligaon NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY Construction Organization
Serving Customers With A Smile

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client Sh. Rajeev Agarwal S/o Late Shri Jagdish Prasad and his wife Smt. Sudha Agarwal R/o Old Address A-810, Oxy Homez, Near Koyla Enclave, Bhopura, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201005 present address C-506, Oxy Homez, Near Koyla Enclave, Bhopura, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201005 has debarred his son Nitish Agarwal and his wife Rekha Agarwal from his all moveable-immovable properties, social relations and severed all his relations due to their bad conduct and misbehaviour. My client shall not be responsible for any act of them in future. Since they are not loyal for my client and any bodies dealing would be at their risks and costs.
Mahender Kumar Bhardwaj (Advocate)
Ch.No.G-308, Karkardooma Court Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client Shweta Tibrewal W/o Shri Uttam Kumar Tibrewal, and her husband, R/o old address A-810, Oxy Homez, Near Koyla Enclave, Bhopura, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201005 present address D-1008, Oxy Homez, Near Koyla Enclave, Bhopura, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201005 has debarred his brother Nitish Agarwal and his wife Rekha Agarwal from his all moveable, immovable properties, social relations and severed all his relations due to their bad conduct and misbehaviour. My client shall not be responsible for any act of them in future. Since they are not loyal for my client and any bodies dealing would be at their risks and costs.
Mahender Kumar Bhardwaj (Advocate)
Ch.No.G-308, Karkardooma Court Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is hereby stated that the originals of all the title documents in respect of the following property owned by M/s. Texmaco Infrastructure and Holdings Limited (earlier known as Birla Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills) have been lost / misplaced somewhere and are not traceable:
Khasra numbers: 3 at Village Delhi Gaon, Tehsil and District Delhi and bearing Plot Nos. 12119-12207 P.O. Roshnara Road, Roshnara Extension, Shakti Nagar, Delhi-07, known as 'Roshnara Building, Shakti Nagar or Shivaji Line earlier known as Peel Building.
Notice is hereby given to the public at large that no person / entity should deal with, use or transact in any manner, on the basis of the title documents, with respect to the above mentioned property, and any person / entity in custody of the title documents of the above mentioned property or having any knowledge thereof is hereby called upon to contact the undersigned.
Sanjay Pahwa
Mobile-9873747274

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It is hereby stated that the originals of all the title documents in respect of the following property owned by M/s. Texmaco Infrastructure and Holdings Limited (earlier known as Birla Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills) have been lost / misplaced somewhere and are not traceable:
Khasra numbers: 197 (0-12),198 (0-17),199 (0-3),200 (1-00),213 (33-03),214 (0-15), 218(2-11) at Village Delhi Gaon, Tehsil and District Delhi and bearing Plot Nos. 6938 to 7157, 7167,7184,7158 to 7166,7168 to 7177 and 7183 P.O. Birla Lines, Delhi-07, known as 'Birla Lines or officer flats earlier known as Acharwaia Bagh.
Notice is hereby given to the public at large that no person / entity should deal with, use or transact in any manner, on the basis of the title documents, with respect to the above mentioned property, and any person / entity in custody of the title documents of the above mentioned property or having any knowledge thereof is hereby called upon to contact the undersigned.
Sanjay Pahwa
Mobile-9873747274

BANARAS LOCOMOTIVE WORKS, VARANASI- 221004
Bid No. :E-57/2021-22 E-TENDERS Date: 25.01.2022
E-Tenders are invited for and on behalf of the President of India for the supply of following items. Only E-offer will be accepted for which vendors must have Class III Digital Signature and registration on IREPS. The details of tenders are in the following sequence:-S.No. - Tender no. (Due Date), Description and Quantity
S.N. 1, 05225012, (14.02.2022), **Angular contact thrust ball bearing**, 1 No., S.N. 2, 05225013, (14.02.2022), **Pneumatic polyurethane tube**, 1 Set., S.N. 3, 05225014, (14.02.2022), **Diameter 27 mm single insert drill kit**, 2 Set., S.N. 4, 05215181A, (15.02.2022), **Die and punch**, 1 Set., S.N. 5, 05225010, (15.02.2022), **D/R Spherical roller bearing**, 16 Nos., S.N. 6, 05225023, (15.02.2022), **Spare parts for tow truck**, 1 Set., S.N. 7, 05225015, (17.02.2022), **Special Type D Shackle Clamp**, 40 Nos., S.N. 8, 03201063, (14.02.2022), **Tube Cu**, PL No. 29170321, 5104.50 Mtr, S.N. 9, 03211653A, (14.02.2022), **Flexible Hose Assy**, PL No. 29230123, 423 Set, S.N. 10, 03211708, (17.02.2022), **Cab Side Door**, PL No. 29170916, 40 Set, S.N. 11, 03221004, (15.02.2022), **Valve Auto Drain**, PL No. 17390059, 331 Nos., S.N. 12, 03211600, (08.02.2022), **Description: Aluminium Finish Strip, Part No. 93120230**, Quantity 4284.73 Kg., S.N. 13, 03211020, (14.02.2022), **Description: Pinion 20 teeth, Part No. 29420039**, Quantity 235 Nos., S.N. 14, 08211005 Advertise Tender, (18.02.2022), (1) Key Multiplier-2 for Traction Component as per Specn. CLW/ES/3/0049/F, PL No.- 29387091, Qty-239, Sets, (2) Key Multiplier-1 for M/C Component as per Specn. CLW/ES/3/0049/F, PL No. 29388004, Qty-239, Sets. **Note:** The details of above tenders are available in www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in and www.ireps.gov.in.
Corrigendum No. 1, Tender No: 08211243, Bid Inv. No. 54, Existing due date: 07.02.2022, Revised due date: 21.02.2022, Existing Qty. 422 Nos., Revised Qty.: 1395 Nos., **Corrigendum No. 2**, Tender No: 03211068, Bid No. E-51, Details of corrigendum: Tender (due to open on 27.01.2022) has been Postponed and due to open on 02.02.2022, **Corrigendum No. 3**, Tender No: 09211207 Single Core Cable Part No. 29600108, Bid No. E-53, Revision-1, Details of corrigendum: The Tender conditions has been revised and now the same will be opened on 17.02.2022 instead of 07.02.2022 with revised tender conditions, **Corrigendum No. 4**, Tender No: 04211463, Bid No. E-51, Revision-1, Details of Correction: This Tender will be open on 04.02.2022 for qty. 358 Nos instead of 212 Nos. **Note:** All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged for above tenders.
PRO/BLW/S-65 PCMM
www.banaraslocowork *Website: <http://blw.indianrailways.gov.in>

UK PM Johnson hit with new row as Scotland Yard opens 'partygate' probe

PTI ■ LONDON

Britain's embattled Prime Minister Boris Johnson is on Tuesday facing fresh allegations in ongoing "partygate" scandal as details emerged of a surprise 56th birthday cake "party", organised for him at peak of first COVID lockdown in June 2020.

The scandal continues to spiral out ahead of an internal Cabinet Office inquiry report, expected this week, as Scotland Yard confirmed that Metropolitan Police will investigate potential lockdown breaches related to alleged parties at Boris Johnson's office-residence at 10 Downing Street, as well as other government offices in London.

"As a result firstly of information provided by Cabinet Office inquiry team and secondly by officers own assessment, I can confirm that Met is now investigating a number of events that took place at Downing Street and Whitehall in last two years," Met Police Commissioner Dame Cressida Dick told London Assembly Police and Crime Committee at Mayor of London's office.

"I should stress that we are now investigating does not mean fixed penalty notices will necessarily be issued in every instance and to every person involved.

We will not be giving a running commentary on our current investigations but I can assure you we will give updates at significant points," she said.

Earlier, Downing Street said Johnson, who turned 56 on June 19, 2020, was present at an event "for less than 10 minutes" as his staff "gathered briefly" to wish him a happy birthday.

The strict lockdown rules imposed at the time to contain the spread of coronavirus banned most indoor gatherings involving more than two people.

But ITV News' reported on Monday night that up to 30 people attended event, sang Happy Birthday and were served cake.

The event reportedly took place in Cabinet Room of Downing Street just after 2 pm local time that day and had been arranged as a surprise for Johnson by his then fiancée and now wife, Carrie Symonds, after he returned from an official trip to a school in Hertfordshire.

"A group of staff working in Number 10 that day gathered briefly in Cabinet Room after a meeting to wish PM a happy birthday.

Soldiers declare military junta in control in Burkina Faso

AP ■ OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO

More than a dozen mutinous soldiers declared Monday on state television that a military junta had seized control of Burkina Faso after detaining the democratically elected president following a day of gunbattles in the capital of the West African country.

The military coup in a nation that was once a bastion of stability was the third of its kind in the region in the last 18 months, creating upheaval in some of the countries hardest hit by Islamic extremist attacks.

Capt. Sidsore Kabere Ouédraogo said the Patriotic Movement for Safeguarding and Restoration "has decided to assume its responsibilities before history." The soldiers put an end to President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré's presidency because of the deteriorating security situation and the president's inability to manage the crisis, he said.

It was not immediately known where Kaboré was, and the junta spokesman said only that the coup had taken place "without any physical violence against those arrested, who are being held in a safe place, with respect for their dignity."

A soldier in the mutiny, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of situation, told The Associated Press that Kaboré had submitted his resignation. The new military regime said it had suspended Burkina Faso's constitution and dissolved the National Assembly.

Abrupt lockdowns loom over Beijing life ahead of Olympics

AP ■ BEIJING

Beijing residents are coping with abrupt local lockdowns and sweeping COVID-19 testing requirements as the Chinese capital seeks to prevent a coronavirus outbreak ahead of Winter Olympics that opens in less than two weeks.

The lockdowns are part of China's "zero tolerance" measures to fight the pandemic that have been ratcheted-up ahead of Games. Those now include requiring tests for anyone who purchases medications to treat cold, cough, fever and other maladies.

University student Cheryl Zhang said that health code app that all Chinese have installed on their smart phones began notifying her to get tested after she bought medication four days previously.

"I was seriously panicking," said Zhang, who was taking a stroll across street from Olympic Village. "But when I got to hospital and saw medical workers striving to keep things in order, I didn't feel angry any more.

The problem was sorted out very quickly."Such purchases are tracked via a smart phone app that requires customers to swipe their information when they buy health supplies or simply enter pharmacies.

China strictly controls sales of medications and a doctor's prescription is often required for ordinary cold medications or even vitamins.

A notice posted at a Beijing pharmacy Tuesday said anyone who had bought any of four types of medication over past two weeks was required to obtain a test within 72 hours.

Thailand first in Asia to move to decriminalise marijuana

AP ■ BANGKOK



FILE - Thailand's Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul shows off a bottle of extracted cannabis oil during a press conference at his ministry in Bangkok, Thailand, Wednesday, Aug. 7, 2019. Thailand on Tuesday, Jan. 25, 2022, became the first country in Asia to approve the de facto decriminalization of marijuana, as its anti-narcotics agency agreed to have the Health Ministry drop cannabis from its list of controlled drugs. (AP Photo/Sakchai Lalit, File)

Law. Police and lawyers contacted by The Associated Press

Thai PM arrives in Saudi Arabia, easing diamond heist row

AP ■ DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Thailand's prime minister arrived in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday for the first high-level meeting since relations between nations soured three decades ago over a sensational jewelry heist that led to a diplomatic row and string of mysterious killings.

The official visit by Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha to Riyadh signals nations are seeking to thaw ties, long chilled by the 1989 scandal. Saudi Arabia downgraded its diplomatic relations with Thailand over theft that became known as Blue Diamond affair.

While Prayuth's visit marked a major breakthrough, his discreet arrival in the country hinted at lingering tension.

A notably low-ranking official, the deputy governor of Riyadh, received the prime minister at the airport without the typical live TV report.

Hours later, however, the country's powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman gave Prayuth more of a royal welcome, guiding prime minister down lavender carpet rolled out for important state visits and taking him to king's Al-Yamamah Palace for talks.

The Saudi government statement about visit was vague, saying only it showed the kingdoms' "keenness to strengthen joint relations and build bridges of communication with all countries around world."

removes all parts of the plant from the list. Health Minister Anutin has been the driving force behind decriminalizing marijuana. He is the leader of the Bhumjai Thai Party, a major partner in the country's coalition government, and campaigned in the 2019 general election for legalization of marijuana production to aid farmers. The latest measure is also seen as helping to promote cannabis products as a major industry in Thailand.

Anutin said last week that the FDA's delisting "responds to the government's urgent policy in developing marijuana and hemp for medical and health care benefits, developing technology and creating income for the public." His party announced that on Wednesday it will propose in Parliament a draft Cannabis Act to clarify the legal status of marijuana.

IMF cuts economy growth forecast to 9% in FY22

Washington: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has cut India's economic growth forecast to 9 per cent for the current fiscal year ending March 31, joining a host of agencies which have downgraded their projections on concerns over the impact of a spread of new variant of coronavirus on business activity and mobility.

In its latest update of World Economic Outlook on Tuesday, the Washington-based international financial institution, which had in October last year projected a 9.5 per cent GDP growth for India, put the forecast for the next fiscal FY23 (April 2022 to March 2023) at 7.1 per cent.

The Indian economy had contracted by 7.3 per cent in the 2020-21 fiscal year. The IMF's forecast for the current financial year is less than 9.2 per cent that the government's Central Statistics Office has predicted and 9.5 per cent that the Reserve Bank of India has estimated. Its forecast is lower than the 9.5 per cent projection by S&P and 9.3 per cent by Moody's but more than the

8.3 per cent projection by the World Bank and 8.4 per cent by Fitch.

According to the IMF, India's prospects for 2023 are marked up on expected improvements to credit growth and, subsequently, investment and consumption, building on better-than-anticipated performance of the financial sector.

The IMF said that global growth is expected to moderate from 5.9 in 2021 to 4.4 per cent in 2022, half a percentage point lower for 2022 than in the October WEO, largely reflecting forecast markdwns in the two largest economies -- the US and China. A revised assumption removing the Build Back Better fiscal policy package from the baseline, earlier withdrawal of monetary accommodation, and continued supply shortages produced a downward 1.2 percentage-point revision for the United States, it said.

In China, pandemic-induced disruptions related to the zero-tolerance COVID-19 policy and protracted financial stress among property developers have induced a 0.8 percentage-point downgrade.

The global growth is expected to slow to 3.8 per cent in 2023. "Although this is 0.2 percentage point higher than in the previous forecast, the upgrade largely reflects a mechanical pickup after current drags on growth dissipate in the second half of 2022. The forecast is conditional on adverse health outcomes declining to low levels in most countries by end-2022, assuming vaccination rates improve worldwide and therapies become more effective," said the report.

In a blog post, IMF's chief economist Gita Gopinath wrote that the continuing global recovery faces multiple challenges as the pandemic enters its third year. The rapid spread of the Omicron variant has led to renewed mobility restrictions in many countries and increased labour shortages, she said.

Supply disruptions still weigh on activity and are contributing to higher inflation, adding to pressures from strong demand and elevated food and energy prices, Gopinath wrote. **PTI**

RAI says there is need for Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme for biz establishments

New Delhi: Retailer's body RAI on Tuesday said there is a need for the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for business establishments of the sector, which have been impacted by COVID-19-related restrictions.

In its Budget wish list, the Retailers Association of India (RAI) also said more money needs to be put in the hands of the poor and the salaried as two years of the pandemic have impacted many in the poorer section of the population. "ECLGS for finance in retail needs to be announced as most of the lockdowns impact high contact sectors like restaurants, shops, salons, etc," RAI Chief Executive Officer Kumar Rajagopalan said in a statement.

While the retail sector recently got included in priority lending guidelines under MSME, he said, "It is important for the sector to get all support that MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) policies accord as more than 90 per cent of retail can be classified and MSME."

Calling for support to retail with policy around digi-

tisation, Rajagopalan said retailers need to get themselves digitised faster and need to get e-commerce ready.

"Financial support for digitisation can help better boost the sector. Also, a directional focus to enable retailers through the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) will give a big boost to the sector," he added.

Seeking a better direction for the implementation of goods and services tax (GST), RAI said any increase in GST on clothing, food and housing creates a direct impact on consumption.

"A direction for a more predictable GST regime will be welcome. Similarly, many clauses around carry forward and refund of GST needs clarification," Rajagopalan said, adding that directional support to the creation of a nation-level policy for retail and internal trade will help.

Asking for more money in the hands of the poor and the salaried, RAI said the two years of the coronavirus pandemic have impacted many in the poorer section of the population. **PTI**

Rupee slides to 1-month low against dollar on forex outflows

Mumbai: The rupee on Tuesday depreciated by 18 paise to close at a nearly one-month low of 74.78 against the US dollar due to month-end dollar demand from oil importers, forex outflows and a stronger dollar in overseas markets.

Investors' weak appetite for riskier assets also weighed on the rupee. Moreover, market participants are now eyeing the US Fed's meeting outcome for further cues.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 74.60 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.57 and a low of 74.80 during the session.

The rupee finally settled at 74.78, down by 18 paise over its previous close of 74.60. This is the second straight session of loss for the local unit and the lowest closing level since December 27, 2021. The rupee has declined by 33 paise against the American currency in two days.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.22 per cent up at 96.12. **PTI**

Best Agrolife Q3 profit jumps to ₹15.5 cr; revenue at ₹232 cr

New Delhi: Agro-chemical firm Best Agrolife Ltd on Tuesday reported a sharp jump in its net profit to ₹15.5 crore for the quarter ended in December.

Its net profit stood at ₹ 2.7 crore in the year-ago period.

The company recorded revenue of ₹232.5 crore in the third quarter of this fiscal as against ₹56.8 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year, the company said in a statement. Vimal Alawadhi, MD of Best Agrolife, said the performance is expected to be sustainable in Q4, FY22, as the production in newly set up formulation unit will commence. During the coming quarters, he said the strategic entry in the international business will also open up a new profitable vertical for the company. **PTI**

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles.

- VEHICLES FOR SALE**
- 1) EICHER1059
DL1LAC9430- YOM 2019
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 710000
 - 2) MAHINDRA DI 3200
DL1LAC5034- YOM 2019
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 400000
 - 3) CB ASHOK LEYLAND DOST
GOODS UP12BT4927- YOM-2020
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 250000
 - 4) TATA 1412
DL1GC7975- YOM
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 850000
 - 5) T INTRAV20
UP16HT1380- YOM 2021
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 415000
 - 6) SM SAMRAT
UP14JT0863- YOM 2019
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 550000
 - 7) EICHER 11.14
UP14GT2837- YOM 2017
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 510000
 - 8) EICHR VECVEVPRO2049
DL1LA4221- YOM 2020
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 585000
 - 9) BOLERO MAX
DL1LAE4019- YOM 2020
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 535000
 - 10) PRO 2110 EICHR VECV
HR38AB3917- YOM 2021
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 1250000
 - 11) TATAMOTORSLPT709CHP
DL1LAC5022- YOM 2019
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 575000

UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS (ONLINE/ OFFLINE) WITHIN 15 DAYS FROM THIS PAPER PUBLICATION I.E. ON OR BEFORE 10.02.2022 (PLEASE NOTE THAT CLOSING AUCTION DATE WOULD NOT BE A WEEKLY OFF / HOLIDAY).
BRANCH ADDRESS: KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD., PLOT NO.7 INSTITUTIONAL AREA, SECTOR-125 NOIDA NEAR DELL CAMPUS NOIDA (U.P) UP-201313 OR CONTACT - RAJESH ANTIL KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT / 09711173320 EMAIL : rajesh.a.ntil@kotak.com

Benchmarks halt 5-day rout as bargain hunters move in; Maruti spurts

Mumbai: Market benchmarks managed closed in the green on Tuesday after five sessions of steep losses as investors accumulated recently-battered banking, auto and FMCG counters amid a supportive trend in European equities.

However, traders said the overall sentiment remains cautious ahead of a crucial two-day meeting of the US Federal Reserve where it will take a call on its rate hike trajectory.

Russia-Ukraine tensions, stubborn inflation and unabated selling by foreign funds are the other risk factors in the near-term, they added. After plunging below the 57,000-level in opening trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex gained momentum as the session progressed to finish 366.64 points or 0.64 per cent higher at 57,858.15.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty rose 128.85 points or 0.75 per cent to close at 17,277.95.

Maruti topped the Sensex gainers' chart with a jump of 6.88 per cent after the country's largest carmaker posted a consolidated net profit at Rs 1,041.8 crore for the December quarter -- down 48 per cent y-o-y but well above analyst estimates. Axis Bank, SBI, IndusInd Bank, Bharti Airtel, PowerGrid and NTPC were among the other prominent gainers, spurring as much as

6.76 per cent. In contrast, Wipro, Bajaj Finserv, Titan, Infosys, Tech Mahindra and UltraTech Cement led the laggards list, shedding up to 1.75 per cent.

"After a week-long consolidation, domestic indices took a breather supported by low-level buying. Western markets also supported, staging recovery following correction in oil markets, and as uncertainties over Fed policy and geopolitical tensions eased.

"However, volatility is expected to linger as investors await the Fed's final policy statement, providing clarity on the timeline of rate hikes," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said, "Markets will react to the Fed meeting outcome in early trade on Thursday and we expect volatility to remain high, thanks to the scheduled monthly expiry. Keeping in mind the scenario, we reiterate our cautious view and suggest preferring hedged positions."

Barring IT and consumer durables, all BSE sectoral indices mustered gains. Telecom climbed 2.46 per cent, followed by utilities, power, auto, bankex and realty. In the broader markets, the BSE midcap and small cap indices advanced up to 1.03 per cent. **PTI**

Gold rises ₹86; silver tanks ₹522



New Delhi: Gold prices rose by ₹86 to ₹48,555 per 10 gram in the national capital on Tuesday on local demand and rupee depreciation, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal settled at ₹48,469 per 10 gram. Silver declined by ₹ 522 to ₹ 63,907 per kg from ₹64,429 per kg in the previous trade.

The rupee declined by 16 paise to 74.67 against the US dollar on Tuesday.

In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,841 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 23.78 per ounce.

"Gold prices traded weak with spot gold prices at COMEX trading marginally down at USD 1,841 per ounce on Tuesday," Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities), HDFC securities said. **PTI**

Future Retail in SC to avert defaulter tag; independent directors reject Amazon brought offer

New Delhi: Embattled retailer Future Retail Ltd (FRL) on Tuesday moved the Supreme Court to avert insolvency proceedings over missing a loan repayment deadline, even as its independent directors rejected an Amazon-supported offer to sell the company businesses at less than a third of what Mukesh Ambani's Reliance is offering.

India's second-largest retailer, which operates multi-brand retail chains such as Big Bazaar, Easyday and Heritage, failed to pay Rs 3,494.56 crore to lenders by the due date of December-end and sought a 30-day grace period to resolve the situation.

Unable to find money, it moved the apex court seeking to restrain its lenders from declaring the company a defaulter, which can invite initiation of insolvency proceedings.

In the petition, Future cited its dispute with partner Amazon, which has stalled its Rs 24,713 crore retail asset sale to Reliance, to seek a restraint on lenders from declaring it as a non-performing asset (NPA), court filings showed.

In the petition, which also contained a January 15 letter from the State Bank of India (SBI) warning it of the possibility of initiating insolvency proceedings if it did pay its dues, Future asked for more time for loan payment and requested the Supreme Court to "extend the timeline stipulated under the

Framework Agreement for monetization of the Small Format Stores."

Future "finds itself in a peculiar position where it wishes to comply" with its obligations to lenders, but "the litigation with Amazon is effectively preventing it from doing so", the filing said as it sought quashing of default notices from its lenders.

Amazon has opposed the Future-Reliance deal saying it violates a 2019 pact it had signed with the retailer when it invested USD 200 million in a Future unit.

The US firm's position has so far been backed by a Singapore arbitrator. The matter is now in courts. With the legal dispute stalling funding options, independent directors of Future Retail Ltd (FRL) last week asked Amazon if it was willing to provide a long-term loan to avoid default due on January 29.

Amazon replied that it was willing to financially assist Future Retail through Samara Capital's Rs 7,000 crore deal to take over businesses such Big Bazaar, but the retailer must shelve its Rs 24,713 crore deal with Reliance.

Independent directors have now turned down Amazon's offer, saying it is "plainly an attempt to buy the Future's assets on the cheap".

In a letter on Tuesday, they said it is now clear that Amazon's letters were "just a game of smoke and mirrors". **PTI**

try show that the Government recognises the importance of the EV sector's growth.

The company added that the guidelines are already emphasising on enabling faster adoption of EVs, providing affordable tariffs and promoting energy security that finally aims at reducing the emission intensity in India.

"As part of India's growing EV industry, we hope that the Union Budget includes lowering of GST rates on raw materials, especially for the EV players.

"Support for R&D (research and development) and indigenous technology development while lowering of GST on auto components should be on the top of FM's agenda list," said Omega Seiki Mobility Chairman and founder Uday Narang.

He further said allocating funds for the clean air campaign could be brought under the Swachh Bharat Mission to create better awareness and improve the adoption of electric mobility.

Export concessions can also be looked at to support the Indian EV manufacturers like OSM, it said, so that such companies can tap new markets, making India not just 'Aatmanirbhar' but a global powerhouse. **PTI**

Govt confers Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar to SEEDS

New Delhi: As an acknowledgement of their exemplary work in disaster management, the Government of India has felicitated Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) with the "Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2021" in the institutional category. SEEDS co-founder Manu Gupta said the award bears testimony to the fact that we are on the right path. Anshu Sharma, Another co-founder of SEEDS, said, "SEEDS has constantly evolved to cater to the needs of communities with changing times." **PNS**

Webinar on Air Sports Opportunities in India organised

New Delhi: Chamber, Rajasthan Chapter organised a Webinar on "Air Sports Opportunities in India - With Special Focus on Rajasthan".

Pradeep Multani, President, PHD Chamber in his Welcome and Presidential Address outlined the tremendous potential for promoting aero Sports sector in Rajasthan.

Looking to the demographic Pattern of India which has significant percentage of youth, the Aero Sports sector has very bright future in India which need to be developed as one of the top Air Sports Nations by 2030, Mr. Multani added.


Shares in demat form must for processing investors' service requests: Sebi

New Delhi: With an aim to enhance ease of dealing in securities markets, Sebi on Tuesday said listed companies will issue the securities in dematerialised form only while processing the service request from investors.

Also, the regulator has put in place operational guidelines for dematerialisation of securities while processing investor's service request.

As an on-going measure to enhance ease of dealing in securities markets by investors, it has been decided that listed companies will henceforth issue the securities in dematerialised form only while processing certain service request, Sebi said in a circular.

These request from investors include issue of duplicate securities certificate, claim from unclaimed suspense account, renewal/exchange of securities certificate, endorsement, splitting of securities certificate, consolidation of securities certificates or folios, transmission and transposition. Sebi said that securities holder/claimant will have to submit a form -- to be hosted on the website of the issuer companies and the RTAs (Registrars to an issue and share Transfer Agents) -- as per the format specified by the regulator along with necessary documents.**PTI**




PUBLIC NOTICE

DESTRUCTION OF MEDICAL RECORD OF PATIENTS

Notice is hereby given that Max Super Speciality Hospital Patparganj (A Unit of Max Balaji Medical and Diagnostic Research Centrl) will be destroying medical records related to the treatment and/or test performed of its patients at the Hospital pertaining to the period January/ 2013 to December-2016. Any patient who wishes to acquire Certified True Copy of his/her Medical Records pertaining to above stated period may request in writing to the contact person mentioned in the table below, between 10AM to 5PM (Monday to Saturday). All such request applications must reach the concerned person as mentioned in the below, within 3 (three) month from the date of publication of this notice. The request for medical records should be submitted in the prescribed format along with the self-attested copy of the photo identity proof of the patient. The patient can also authorize any other person to apply for and/or collect the Medical Records on his/her behalf with a valid authority letter/power of attorney for the same along with the self-attested copy of the photo identity and signature proof of the Patient and authorized person. In case of deceased patients, the attendant recorded in the Medical Records may apply/authorize someone to apply for the same. Please note that standard charges shall be applicable for supplying such records.

Name & Address of the Hospital
Max Super Speciality Hospital, Patparganj
(A Unit of Max Balaji Medical and Diagnostic Research Centre)
Contact Person's detail
Ms. Rasalamma Jacob
Email:Rasalamma.jacob@maxhealthcare.com
Mobile: 9971685759
Office: 011-43032437
For Max Super Speciality Hospital, Patparganj
(A Unit of Max Balaji Medical and Diagnostic Research Centre)
Sd/-
Authorised Signatory
Date:26/1/2022



E-Tender Notice

e-tender is invited on Behalf of the President of India for the under mentioned works:
S.No. 01, Name of the work with its location : Design, fabrication, supply, installation, erection, testing & commissioning of 3 Phase 11/0.433 KV power supply arrangement and associated electrical works at T-18 Depot at Shakurbasti in connection with Setting up maintenance Depot for Trainsets at Shakurbasti, Northern Railway. E-tender No. WP/Elect/Trainsets-SSB-WT-01(Open), SI No. 02, Approx. Cost of the work : Rs. 63610352/-, S.No. 03 **Earnest money to be deposited : Rs. 468100/-, S.No. 04 Date and time for closing of tender : 03.03.2022 up to 13.00 hrs, S.No. 05** Website particular and notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc. : Tender can be down loaded from IREPS website: www.ireps.gov.in and detailed can be seen from the notice board at office of CAO/WP, Chamber Bhawan, J.C. Road, Patna-800001. Any e-tenders which is sent by Post/Courier/Fax or by hand will not be accepted. All such manual submission of tender even if it is on firm's letter pad or received in time will not be accepted. The above e-tender document along with full information is available on website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.
Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/WP Workshop Project Organisation, Patna PR0101555/WPO/Elec/TI21-22/56

NORTHERN RAILWAY

NOTICE REGISTRATION OF PANEL OF RETAIL SHOPS FOR SURGICAL ITEMS

Applications on prescribed Performa are invited from Retail Shops located within **5 Km** of Northern Railway Central Hospital New Delhi, for **Registration of Panel of Retail shops for supply of Branded supply of Disposable/ Surgical Items (Sutures, ligatures, CAPD Bag and IV Fluids)** under Retail Local Purchase in Northern Railway Central Hospital New Delhi.

The application form along with copy of terms and conditions can be obtained from and deposited in Room No. 26, between **10:00 AM to 05:00 PM** on payment of **Rs. 500/-** to be deposited in cash with Divisional Cashier Baroda House, New Delhi or by way of Bank Draft in Favour of FA&CAO (E)/ Northern Railway or can be downloaded from Northern Railway website www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in under head tender. The last date for receiving the application form is **21.02.2022 at 11:00 AM**. The application can be deposited in **Room No. 26** on all working days between **10:00 AM to 05:00 PM**.




172/2022

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

TIME FOR SUCCESS

Stepping into 2022, the role of HR professionals is more critical now than it was before. They are the ones who will reconsider the basic tenets of their company, says SONICA ARON

It wouldn't be wrong to say that companies, to a great extent, be it in any industry, have met or are gradually meeting the challenges of the current global health crisis situation. However, as we move towards the post-pandemic era, their strategies and policies of the past will no longer meet the needs of the evolving workforce.

The last two years have changed a lot. Not just the way we work, though it has become evident that remote and hybrid working models can be as effective as erstwhile physical/in-person working models if managed effectively. The changes go deeper. People have changed in the way they think of work, work-life balance, their expectations from employers, their growth and job satisfaction.

Hence, organisations will need to evolve and adapt management styles that are flexible, responsive, and established around employee speak, including more connection, simplification and automation, demographic shifts, and much more.

Stepping into 2022, the role of HR professionals is critical than ever before as they are the ones who will reevaluate the basic tenets of their company in order to support the right shift, balancing between business growth needs, employee experience and retention.

Role of HR in organisational success

◆ **Establish a healthy culture:** It is one of the most important predictors of how effectively a company achieves its goals. Employees that are glad to come to work will be more driven to move the company forward in the long run. It's possible that a company's culture could use a makeover. Connecting with people to understand what they expect in today's time is key. Is it real time communication? Is it transparency? Is it real time feedback? Is it about owning their own learning?

After determining the work-force expectations, it is important to act on it and ensure that every one in the business is on the same page so that everyone can contribute to moving the new corporate culture forward. It will require a holistic approach and not just reprinting slogans. It will need changing processes, policies, ways of working and embedding key behaviours in day-to-day transactions.

It will require being receptive to new ideas and opinions, on how to do things differently, deploying new processes and practises.

◆ **Change with the times:** The world has changed and will continue to evolve over time. Employees' needs will also vary because of this. We will need to take chances and adapt – not be hesitant to implement new processes and solutions to fulfil

your employees' ever-changing demands. Offering customised perks and ways of working could be one way to meet such needs.

Depending on where they are in life, employees may seek different benefits and work arrangements. An employee who is responsible for a family of four will most likely want and desire a different benefits package and work environment than a recent college graduate who is just starting out in their profession. Before making any decisions, it would be critical to understand the demographic landscape of the organisation in detail and understand employee life stages and needs.

◆ **Map skill gaps:** Every company probably requires specific expertise as business models and markets have evolved. By speaking with several departments, one may get a good idea of which functional and behavioural competencies individuals, teams, managers, and leaders require right now and which they will require in the future. Then, to address those needs, plan the capability building agenda, and talent acquisition agenda accordingly.

◆ **Target employee retention:** We have all witnessed the big quit and we are all aware of the tangible and intangible costs associated with voluntary attrition. It is not always easy to find a replacement on time, leading to productivity loss; loss of tacit knowledge, experience, clients; added extra responsibilities for existing employees, resulting in overwork, burnout and more attrition. Creating a culture where employees feel valued, included, where their contribution is recognized and appreciated, where they feel happy and have fun is critical. A holistic approach to employee retention goes beyond fun Fridays, zero meeting hours and birthday celebrations. An employee experiences an organisation each day, each moment through their managers and their peers, and building psychologically safe team environments is key to retention. This would be a key role of the HR function in 2022, given that most businesses would be on an ambitious growth path, they should not lose sight of this goal.

◆ **Understand business strategy:** End of the day, People are the business's most important asset, and the HR function is the custodian of this asset. The deeper the HR function understands the company's business plan, the more effectively they can leverage the human potential in the organisation through the right policies, processes, structures, and culture.

HR function is like the arterial system that runs across the organisation, across C-suite leaders, departmental managers, and employees, disseminating the purpose, main objectives, and

cultural values of your company. Possessing sound knowledge of both business tasks and of employees' needs, expectations, skills, competencies, and aspirations, they have the lethal combination of making businesses succeed.

The world of HR is constantly changing, and new trends will emerge. HR will continue to be the driving force behind many new strategies and policies, as we have witnessed over the last two years, such as improving employee experience, develop-

ing new organisational models, creating a more flexible workforce, and much more. 2022 is going to be yet another exciting year for the HR function!

The writer is Founder and Managing Partner,
Marching Sheep

QUOTE OF THE DAY

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

— Cesar Chavez

LLB AND LLM

The University of Manchester's law programme is recognised by the Bar Council of India and offers a distinctive approach to legal education that brings together a research-informed and practice-led approach to the study of law.

The students of Law School will have the opportunity to draw on the abundant expertise of academics, professional net-



works, legal practitioners, and experts in social justice across the School of Social Sciences.

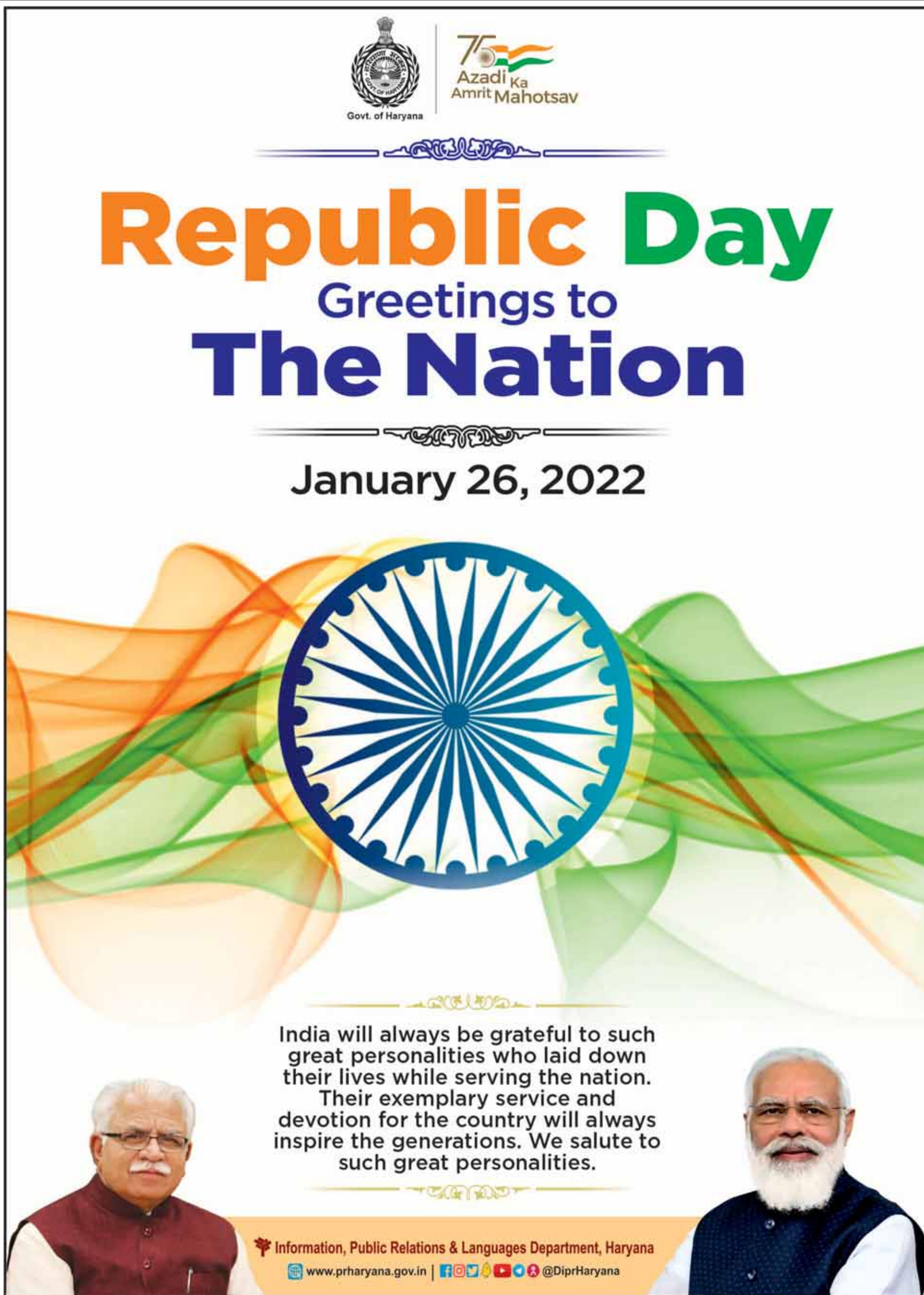
Deadline:
For the September 2022 intake, February 26th, 2022.

College Board's UniTalk India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

UniTalk India, an event for the Indian students wishing to study in India or abroad, was held virtually on January 20, 2022. This special UniTalk helped with the needs of students during the pandemic. College Board brought together few of its top

member universities from India and the US. They provided insight into admissions processes and policies to facilitate student applications. Admissions professionals will talk about how undergraduate programs in India and the U.S. are changing, as well as the career opportunities these programmes lead to.



Rohit fit to lead India against WI

Bhuvneshwar and Ashwin, after their indifferent performance against SA in their 0-3 ODI series defeat, will come under scanner

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's white-ball captain Rohit Sharma is "fit" and ready to lead the side against the West Indies in a six-match white-ball series starting February 6 with the three ODIs in Ahmedabad. However, the team selection meeting, which is set to happen this week, will be an interesting one as some senior players like Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Ravichandran Ashwin, after their indifferent performance against South Africa in their 0-3 ODI series defeat, will come under the scanner.

But Rohit is ready to lead the side after a left hamstring injury ruled him out of the South Africa tour. The T20 matches against the Caribbean team are set to be held from February 16 to 20 in Kolkata. "Rohit is fit and available for the series against the West Indies," a senior BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"By the time, the West Indies series starts, it will be more than seven and half weeks of rehabilitation and recuperation for Rohit. "He is already training in

Mumbai and is expected to be in Bangalore for the fitness test and get a formal okay from the National Cricket Academy," the source informed.

ROHIT SET TO BE NAMED TEST CAPTAIN TOO

It is almost certain that for the time being, Rohit will be named the Test captain although BCCI will be looking at other options considering his workload and the responsibility that comes with leading India in two back-to-back World Cups in 2022 and 2023.

It is understood that KL Rahul's first stint as captain hasn't gone as per expectations and for now, he will have to remain an apprentice under Rohit till he is seen to be ready to lead the national team in near future.

Under Rahul, India lost all four international games in South Africa and for men who matter in Indian cricket, he hasn't exactly come across as a proactive captain.

It is understood that Rahul's performance as Lucknow Super Giants captain will be keenly monitored

during this edition of the IPL.

HARDIK PANDYA'S COMEBACK



Hardik Pandya has been bowling in the nets and even though it is not clear whether he can bowl full tilt but Venkatesh Iyer's relative

ROHIT WILL BE NAMED THE TEST CAPTAIN ALTHOUGH BCCI WILL BE LOOKING AT OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERING HIS WORKLOAD AND THE RESPONSIBILITY THAT COMES WITH LEADING INDIA IN TWO BACK-TO-BACK WORLD CUPS IN 2022 AND 2023



inexperience at No.6 and Rahul Dravid's admission that the colourful Baroda man was missed, can pave the way for his comeback against the West Indies.

"You have to remember after the T20 World Cup, Hardik was dropped and not rested because of his fitness. The selectors wanted to send him a message after his underwhelming show at World T20 but he is too good a player to be kept out for long.

"If not against West Indies, then he will surely be back against Sri Lanka," the source added.

Ravindra Jadeja also seems to be close to attaining full fitness and will play either against West Indies or in the next assignment against Sri Lanka.

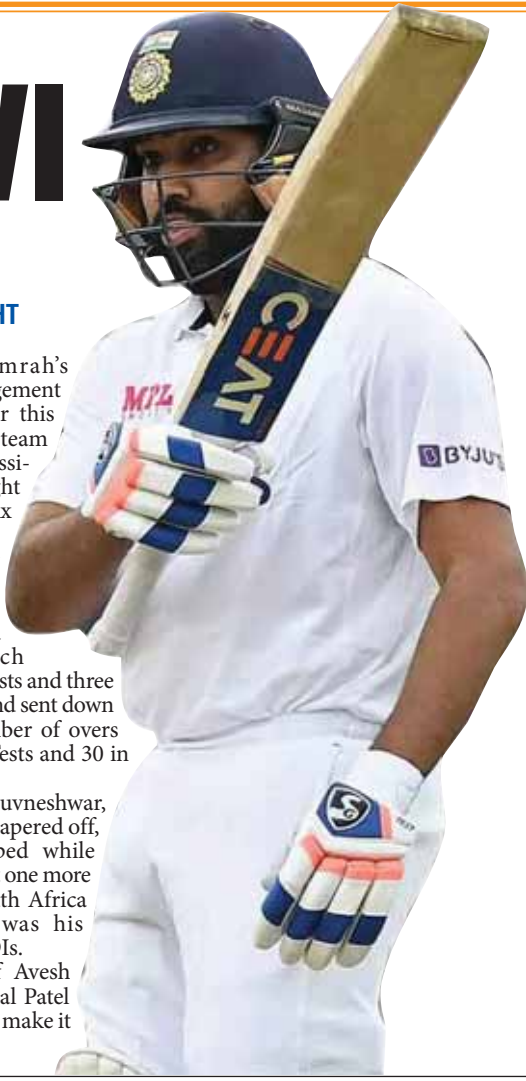
BUMRAH MIGHT BE RESTED

Jasprit Bumrah's workload management is paramount for this current Indian team and there is a possibility that he might be rested for the six matches.

This is after Bumrah played all six games in South Africa which, which included three Tests and three 50-over games, and sent down the highest number of overs (104.5 overs in Tests and 30 in ODIs).

However, Bhuvneshwar, whose form has tapered off, might be dropped while Ashwin might get one more series as the South Africa white-ball leg was his comeback in ODIs.

The likes of Avesh Khan and Harshal Patel could once again make it to the T20 team.



You can't win every game, it's a temporary phase for Team India, says Ravi Shastri

PTI ■ MUSCAT

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri does not see any reason to press the panic button after the team's shocking Test and ODI series loss to an under-strength South Africa as he believes it is a "temporary phase" and the side will tide over it soon.

In the backdrop of Virat Kohli's departure as captain from all formats, India, under stand-in skipper KL Rahul, were blanked 0-3 in the ODIs to cap a forgettable tour to South Africa.

India had earlier suffered back-to-back defeats in Wanderers and Cape Town to lose the Test series 1-2. At the end of that series, Kohli stepped down from captaincy in the

longest format, marking the end of an era in Indian cricket.

"If you lose one series, you people start criticising... You can't win every game, there will be wins and losses," Shastri, who ended his tenure after the T20 World Cup in UAE last year, told PTI on the sidelines of the ongoing Legends League Cricket.

The ODI series defeat in South Africa was their first after Kohli was sacked as skipper in the 50-over format in December last year.

Shastri said he did not follow a single ball of the South Africa series but refused to believe that the standard has dropped.

"How can the standard go down suddenly? For five years,



you have been number one side in the world," he asserted.

Keeping in mind the T20 World Cup in Australia in October, India have a packed white-ball calendar and will be hosting West Indies, Sri Lanka and South Africa this year.

With IPL being a 10-team affair this time, the home season would stretch till June before the Indians leave for England to play the final Test of a series that was halted midway last year due to a COVID-19 outbreak, followed by three T20Is and 3 ODIs.

Shastri maintained that there's nothing to worry about and dismissed the recent set-backs as a temporary phase.

"When you have a win ratio of 65 per cent over the last five years, what is there to worry about, our rival teams should worry," he said.

Kohli announced his decision to quit as Test skipper a day after the team lost 1-2. Shastri such decisions should be respected as it boils down to

individual choice.

"It's his choice. You have to respect his decision. There is a time for everything. A lot of big players in the past have left captaincy when they felt they wanted to focus on their batting or on their cricket.

"Whether it's (Sachin) Tendulkar, (Sunil) Gavaskar or (MS) Dhoni. And, it's Virat Kohli now."

Asked whether his body language has changed following the captaincy saga, Shastri said: "As I said, I've not followed a single ball in the series. But I don't think there will be too much change in Virat Kohli."

"I took a break after seven years in the game, been part of the team. One thing is very clear, I do not wash dirty linen in public.

Focussed on winning Asian Games to qualify for Paris Olympics, youngsters will get opportunities: Sreejesh



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh on Tuesday said the Indian men's hockey side's main focus is qualifying for the Paris Olympics by winning the Asian Games this year besides giving opportunities to youngsters.

He said that a lot of youngsters will be given opportunities in a hectic year for the team in which it will compete in marquee events like the Commonwealth Games and Asiad.

The Tokyo Olympic bronze medal-winning side will begin the year with the FIH Hockey Pro League, starting next month.

"After every Olympics we plan for next four years. So after Tokyo we have already started planning for the Paris Olympics," Sreejesh said during a virtual media interaction.

"There are a lot of changes that are going to happen in the team (for Paris), lot of new comers are going to be added into the core group," he added. Sreejesh is a part of the International Institute of Sports Management's initiative in which 18 of the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics medallist have come together to recite the national anthem in a video, which was released on Monday. Asked if it is the right time to groom youngsters with the Paris Olympics only two years away, Sreejesh said with several fixtures line up, it will be good to give the junior players a chance.

"I didn't say we will get a lot of the youngsters straight into the team but their addition in the core group will give them more opportunity. We are starting this year with the Pro League before Asian Games and CWG."

"We will get almost 16 matches and most probably Asian Cup will be there and that is the platform where we can try out the youngsters, give them opportunities to play tournaments," Sreejesh added.



Made the announcement too soon: Sania Mirza on her retirement

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Indian tennis star Sania Mirza, who recently announced that 2022 would be her last season, says she had made the announcement too soon and was "regretting" it since she was being asked about it all the time.

Mirza's swansong appearance at the Australian Open ended with a quarterfinal loss to local pair Jaimee Fourlis and Jason Kubler in the mixed doubles event here.

"I am not actually thinking about that at every match to be honest very, I think that I made the announcement too soon to be very honest, I am kind of regretting it because that's all I am being asked right now," Mirza said when asked whether her outlook towards tennis and the Tour has changed considering it was her last season.

The 35-year-old, who is India's most accomplished woman tennis player, having won six Grand Slam titles, including three mixed doubles trophies, was speaking on "Extraa Serve" on Sony Sports Network.

Mirza, who hails from Hyderabad, maintained that she plays tennis to win matches.

"I am playing tennis to win matches and until I play, I am going to try and win every match I play, so it (retirement) is not something that is on my

mind constantly.

"I enjoy playing tennis, I have always enjoyed it, win or lose, and I still have the same outlook to it, I give my 100 (per cent), sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't but I am still in it 100 per cent for the rest of the year and I don't want to really think about what's going to happen at the end of the year..." elaborated Mirza.

On the game, which she and Ram lost, Sania said that it wasn't the best of their matches.

"It happens, you don't have a great day once in a while and it is unfortunate when it happens in a (Grand) Slam.

"But I guess we were not able to string it together, both of us and in the end, we were in it in the second set but we didn't take our chances and that's it, at least I could have played better, but that's how it goes, it happens sometimes," said Mirza.

Mirza on January 19 had announced that she will hang up her racquet at the end of 2022 season as her body was "wearing down" and the motivation and energy for everyday grind was not the same anymore.

She had made the retirement announcement after losing the Australian Open women's doubles first round with partner Nadia Kichenok. They lost to Slovenia's Tamara Zidansek and Kaja Juvan.

Barty beats Pegula to reach semis in Australia

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Top-ranked Ash Barty moved into the Australian Open semifinals with a 6-2, 6-0 win over No. 21 Jessica Pegula.

The 2021 Wimbledon champion is aiming to become the first Australian woman to win the Australian Open since 1978.

She will next face 2017 U.S. Open runner-up Madison Keys for a place in the final. It's Barty's second trip to the semifinals at Melbourne Park — she lost to eventual champion Sofia Kenin in 2020.

She says "I've grown as a person. I've grown as a player. I feel like I'm a more complete player."

Keys is back in the last four for the second time after losing to Serena Williams in the semifinals in 2015.

Barty saved the only break point she faced against Pegula and converted five of the nine chances she had to break serve.

Keys beat French Open champion Barbora Krejickova 6-3, 6-2 in the opening match on Rod Laver Arena on Day 9.

Lack of red-ball cricket hampering players' skills already: Jaydev

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Saurashtra skipper Jaydev Unadkat feels the players' skills against the red ball have started diminishing and potential cancellation of a second consecutive Ranji Trophy season will be a "great loss" for domestic cricket in India.

After the COVID-19-forced cancellation of Ranji Trophy last year, a first in the tournament's rich history, the postponement of the current season due to the third wave of the pandemic has left many players worried. The premier tournament was supposed to begin on January 13 and lead pacer Unadkat and the rest of the Saurashtra players had started their preparations to defend the maiden title they won back in March 2020.

'Players' skills are being hampered'

It felt like a different ball game altogether at the camp with players only used to white ball cricket for the last two seasons.

"Two years in a row would be a great

loss. One year itself was a great loss. When we started our pre-season camp before the eventual postponement, it felt like a whole new game," Unadkat told PTI.

Leaving the ball, bowling with pace and bowling long spells. All that had gone out of the picture. It is going to be difficult if it doesn't happen this year too.

"I hear that BCCI is keen on staging it. If the virus situation doesn't become threatening, we can have it in February with a stricter bubble and more vigilance," said the left-arm pacer who picked a record 67 wickets in a memorable 2020 season. If February is not possible, then the BCCI must start the next season with Ranji Trophy, feels the pacer who has played one Test, 7 ODIs and 10 T20Is for India.

"For batters, even when I was batting I left the first ball alone it felt very different to be honest. I had not left a ball in two years of my batting practice. Probably the same for all batters barring the openers who were doing it even in one-dayers.

Djokovic could play in France under latest vaccine rules

AP ■ PARIS

Top-ranked player Novak Djokovic could be allowed to defend his French Open title under the latest COVID-19 rules adopted by the French government, even if he is still not vaccinated when the clay-court Grand Slam starts in May.

Djokovic was deported from Australia and barred from playing in the Australian Open this month for not meeting the country's strict COVID-19 vaccination rules.

It initially appeared that the Serb tennis star would not be welcomed at Roland Garros either under a new law intended to exclude the unvaccinated from stadiums, restaurants, bars and other public places.

As questions quickly arose about Djokovic's status in France following his deportation from Australia, Sports Minister Roxana Maracineanu previously said that as soon as the law was passed the country's vaccine pass would become compulsory to enter



stadiums, theater or exhibitions, "for all spectators, practitioners, French or foreign professionals."

But the vaccine pass is not restricted to vaccination.

Under the law that took effect on Monday, anyone who has proof they tested positive within the previous six months is exempt from having to show

a vaccine pass. That suggests Djokovic could play in the French Open in May and June, the next Grand Slam tournament, because he has said he tested positive in mid-December.

The French sports ministry was not immediately available to answer questions from The Associated Press on Djokovic.

Shafali Verma regains top spot among batters in ICC T20 ranking



PTI ■ DUBAI

India's teen sensation Shafali Verma on Tuesday moved up one place to regain her position at the top of the ICC Women's T20I rankings for batters while her opening partner Smriti Mandhana dropped a spot to fourth.

The Australian duo of Beth Mooney and Meg Lanning occupied the second and third positions in the rankings respectively. Another Australian, Alyssa Healy, featured in the sixth place.

New Zealand also have two representatives in the top 10, with Sophie Devine and Suzie Bates managing to hold on to their fifth and seventh positions respectively.

Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu gained six positions to break into the top 10 after a superb performance in the Commonwealth Games Qualifiers, where she amassed 221 runs at an outstanding average and strike-rate of 55.25 and 185.71 respectively.

Athapaththu was sitting in eighth place in the rankings.

England's Danni Wyatt also rose three places to 13th after her superb knock of 70

against Australia in the first T20I of the Women's Ashes recently while Australia's Tahlia McGrath gained 29 places in the rankings to rise up to 28th. McGrath remained unbeaten on 91 off just 49 deliveries to chase down a target of 170 against England in Adelaide.

In the bowler's rankings, the top three remained unchanged with England's Sophie Ecclestone and Sarah Glenn occupying the first and second spots respectively while the third place stayed with South Africa's Shabnim Ismail.

India's Deepti Sharma gained one position to displace Australia's Megan Schutt from the fourth place.

The all-rounders' rankings didn't see much change either with Sophie Devine and Natalie Sciver holding on to their first and second places respectively.

Deepti Sharma again gained one place to third. Pakistan's Nida Dar and Thailand's Nattaya Boochatham also climbed up two places to the ninth and 10th positions, respectively, while Australia's Ellyse Perry went down four positions to go out of the top 10.

Republic Day honours the date on which the Constitution of India came into effect on January 26, 1950. The date was chosen because it was on this day in 1930 when the Declaration of Indian Independence (Purna Swaraj) was proclaimed by the Indian National Congress as opposed to the Dominion status offered by the British Regime.

While India gained independence from the British Raj in 1947, it wasn't until January 26, 1950, that the Indian Constitution came into effect, and India became a sovereign state, declaring it a republic. A committee was created a few days later, on August 29, 1947, to draft a permanent constitution for independent India. Dr BR Ambedkar was made chairman of the committee.

On November 4, 1947, the committee drafted the constitution and



Massed Bands, and at the same time, the Tricolour is unfurled. Military bands, pipes and drums bands, buglers and trumpeters from various Army regiments perform during the ceremony. Besides, there are bands from each of the Navy and Air Force.

'Beating the Retreat' has emerged as an event of national pride when the colours and standards are paraded. It traces its origin to the early 1950s when Major Roberts of the Indian Army indigenously developed the unique ceremony of display by the massed bands. It is reminiscent of a centuries-old military tradition when the troops ceased fighting, sheathed their arms, withdrew from the battlefield and returned to the camps at sunset at the sounding of the Retreat. Colours and standards are cased and flags lowered. The ceremony creates a longing for the times gone by.

EMBODYING THE IDEALS

The entire country comes together as one to celebrate the adoption of the Constitution

submitted it to the Constituent Assembly. The Assembly met in numerous sessions for nearly two years before finally adopting the Constitution. The Constitution was adopted by the Indian Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949, and on January 24, 1950, the 308 members of the Assembly signed two handwritten versions of the agreement — one in Hindi and one in English — after much deliberation and a few changes.

The Constitution came into effect two days later, on January 26, 1950, with a democratic government system, completing the country's transition towards becoming an independent republic. Dr Rajendra Prasad began his first tenure as President of the Indian Union on that day.

India's Constitution, which was formally adopted in 1950, replaced the British colonial Government of India Act (1935) as the country's governing text. It established fundamental rights that should be enjoyed

by all citizens of this country, regardless of their political beliefs. It also establishes some fundamental duties for all citizens of the country to abide by.

Republic Day is one of three national holidays in India, the other two being Independence Day and Gandhi Jayanti.

On Republic Day, flag hoisting ceremonies and parades by Armed Forces and school children are held in different parts of the country. The grandest and most important of these parades is held at Rajpath in New Delhi. It showcases a multi-hued image of the country's rich cultural heritage and military prowess. These are a tribute to India's unity in diversity and rich cultural heritage.

This parade is presided over by the President of India. One of the main functions of the Republic Day parade is to pay tribute to the martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for the country. Before the National War Memorial was constructed, the

Prime Minister of India used to lay a wreath at the Amar Jawan Jyoti at India Gate, in memory of all members of the armed forces who gave up their life for the country. This was followed by the 21 gun salute, unfurling of the National Flag and singing of the National Anthem. Bravery awards are conferred on military persons, citizenry and children for showing courage in the face of adversity.

Additionally, the President of India distributes Padma awards to the deserving civilians of the country to honour their contribution to the nation. Brave soldiers are also awarded Paramvir Chakra, Ashok Chakra and Vir Chakra. Live web-cast of the Republic Day Parade is also made accessible every year to millions of people who wish to view the parade over the Internet or TV.

The parade begins with winners of gallantry awards saluting the President in open military jeeps, followed by the display of various tanks, missiles and other equipment added



to the arsenal of the military. After this, is the march-past of different regiments of the armed forces, police, Home Guards and National Cadet Corps. The President of India, being the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Armed Forces, takes the salute. This is followed by a vibrant parade comprising tableaux from different States and cultural dances by patriotic school children.

Children who have won

Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar ride past the spectators on colourfully decorated elephants. These children are honoured and awarded by the Indian Council for Child Welfare for performing outstanding deeds of bravery and selfless sacrifice.

The Republic Day parade is concluded by daredevil motorcycle riding and a flypast by Indian Air Force fighter jets over Rajpath as spectators look on with their hearts filled with pride.

In 2022, the country is celebrating its 73rd Republic Day. Republic Day is celebrated with much pomp all across the country.

nation pays homage to the Mahatma and other martyrs on this day.

The President, the Vice President, the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister and the three service Chiefs gather at Rajghat and lay wreaths on the *samadhi* of Mahatma Gandhi. The inter-services contingent reverses arms as a mark of respect to the martyrs. A religious prayer ceremony is held and Gandhiji's favourite *bhajans* are sung.

BEATING RETREAT CEREMONY

The ceremony at the Vijay Chowk on January 29 every year marks the culmination of the four-day-long Republic Day celebrations. The Chief Guest of the function is the President of India who arrives in a cavalry unit escorted by the 'President's Bodyguards' (PBG). When the President arrives, the PBG commander asks the unit to give the National Salute, which is followed by the playing of the Indian National Anthem, *Jana Gana Mana*, by the

- DID YOU KNOW**
- Between 1950 and 1954, the Republic Day parade was held at Irwin Stadium (now National Stadium), Kingsway, Red Fort, and Ramliha grounds.
 - Republic Day celebrations have been held at Rajpath since 1955. Rajpath was once known as the Kingsway, in honour of India's then emperor, George V. The road was renamed Rajpath after independence, which also means King's Way in Hindi.
 - Every year, the leader of a particular nation is invited to be the chief guest for the Republic Day parade. President Sukarno of Indonesia was the first to attend India's Republic Day celebrations as chief guest in 1950.
 - The parade starts after the arrival of the President of India. The President's cavalier bodyguards salute the National Flag first. The National Anthem is played, followed by a 21-gun salute. The firing is, however, not done using 21 canons. It is done with seven canons of the Indian army known as '25-Ponders' that fire three rounds each.
 - Each member of the army who takes part in the march must go through four layers of investigation. Aside from that, their arms are extensively inspected to ensure they are not carrying live bullets.

BRAHMOS

A strategic defence asset

The potent supersonic cruise missile has time and again demonstrated its usefulness for the Indian Armed Forces

The strategic nature of threats has underscored the importance of technology in expanding defence capabilities. In this context, the Indian Armed Forces are making extraordinary strides in the development of combat capabilities even as the government strengthens its resolve to have a leaner and meaner military.

India faces unprecedented security challenges across land, sea and air from hostile neighbours to its east and west, from the Western Pacific to the Indian Ocean. Hence, the Indian Armed Forces play a crucial role in protecting sovereignty, integrity and national interests. One of the most unique weapon systems boosting India's strategic capabilities is the BRAHMOS supersonic cruise missile. The powerful missile system is already a part of the defence arsenal of all three arms of the Indian Armed Force.

BrahMos Aerospace — a joint venture between India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Russia's rocket design bureau NPO Mashinostroyeniya — is the designer, developer and producer of the BRAHMOS weapon system.

The universal missile with a range of 290 km can be launched from mobile launchers, aircraft, ships and submarines. It has network-centric architecture, multiple trajectories, way-point capability and is capable of engaging any kind of land or sea targets beyond the horizon in a minimum deployment time.

The Indian Army plays a significant role in preventing the belligerence of enemies at our borders. It is the world's only land force to have a supersonic weapon with surgical strike potentiality. The mobile land-based configuration of BRAHMOS has achieved several advancements over the years in the form of Block I, Block II and Block III variants, each having distinct potentiality to hit and



destroy the enemy target. The Block-III version has advanced guidance and upgraded software incorporating high manoeuvres at multiple points and steep dives from high altitudes.

Modern-day naval assets are required to swiftly adapt to an unprecedented range of roles and scenarios when survival hinges on a matter of seconds. It goes without saying that they must be equipped with rapid and flexible weapon systems that enable a lightning-fast response. The speedy BRAHMOS is vital to naval warfare in this age of long-range anti-ship weaponry. The missile has been designed to elude shipboard defences, combined radar and fire-control system found onboard destroyers and cruisers. The potent missile can be launched in solo or salvo mode from a warship and destroy single or multiple targets

within a fraction of a second. The vertical launch configuration of the missile enhances the stealth capabilities of the ship. Meanwhile, BRAHMOS installation in submarines will increase manifold the 'offensive power' of the vessels without compromising 'defensive power' as the torpedo tubes can be fully utilised for protection.

The Mach 2.8 BRAHMOS travelling with such velocity means that it would be difficult for air defence systems utilising surface-to-air missiles to intercept the missile while making it easier for it to target and neutralise targets. The BRAHMOS equipped with inertial navigation and global positioning systems can effectively engage ground targets from an altitude as low as 10 m for surgical strikes. The air-launch variant is a 2.5 tonne, air to surface cruise


missile. The BRAHMOS has given the Indian Air Force a much-desired capability to strike — from large stand-off ranges — any target at sea or on land with pinpoint accuracy by day or night irrespective of weather conditions.

The BRAHMOS missile has been successfully tested with numerous indigenously-developed systems proving the prowess of the indigenous technology development programme for tactical missiles. The launchers for the air, naval and land platforms — including all ground support equipment — were also developed locally realising the government's "Make in India" and "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" campaigns.

"Today BrahMos is the weapon of choice for our armed forces and will be the first strike weapon in case of any misadventure from any hostile nation. Its fast reaction time, the precision of attack and easy operability has been time-tested numerous times," says Atul Dinkar Rane DG BrahMos DRDO & CEO & MD BrahMos Aerospace and adds, "We are committed to continuously enhancing its capabilities and fulfilling our user requirements."

The advanced BRAHMOS air-launched cruise missile (ALCM), after undergoing a series of successful launches from the front-line Su-30MKI platform, was successfully inducted into the IAF's Tigersharks Squadron. The Sukhoi-30s armed with BRAHMOS missiles act as a key tool of strategic deterrence to hostile neighbours across land borders as well as India's ocean waters. BrahMos Aerospace has also conceptualised a much sleeker and stealthier system named BRAHMOS NG. The lighter and smaller projectile is expected to raise the missile's speed to approximately 3.5 Mach.

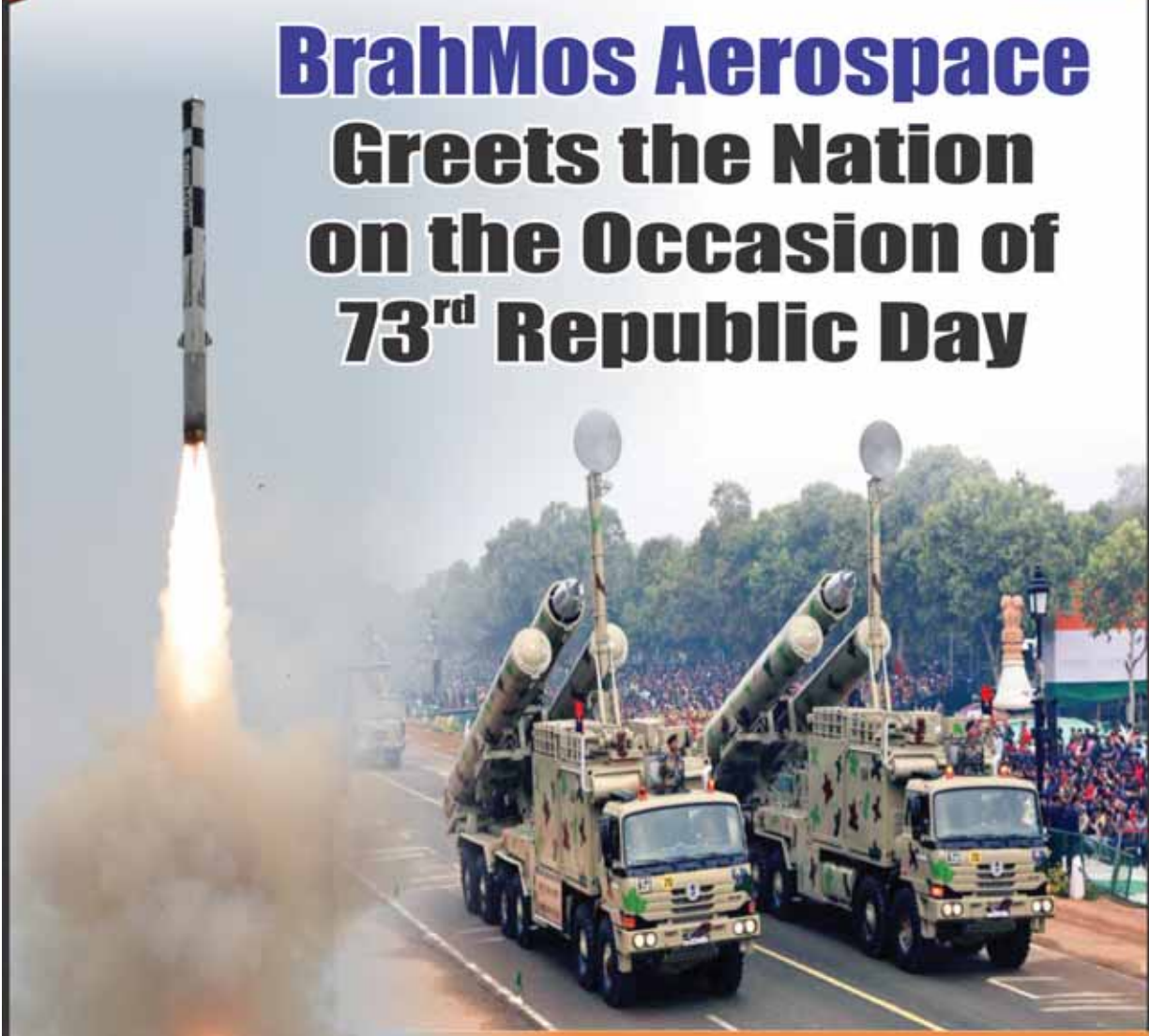
The BRAHMOS thus play a crucial role in the terrestrial, aerial and oceanic domains.



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BrahMos Aerospace Greet the Nation on the Occasion of 73rd Republic Day



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