

WORLD 5

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SPORT 7

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NEW DELHI, SUNDAY JANUARY 30, 2022; PAGES 12

sunday pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



NYT report triggers fresh controversy on Pegasus

Centre duped SC,
hijacked democracy,
says Cong; VK Singh
snubs 'Supari Media'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pegasus scandal erupted into a fresh controversy on Saturday after the *New York Times* published a report claiming India bought the Pegasus spyware from Israel as part of a defence deal in 2017.

Latching on to the report, the Congress on Saturday launched an all-out attack on the Government, accusing it of deceiving Parliament, duping the Supreme Court, hijacking democracy, and indulging in treason.

The party, which had earlier attacked the Modi Government over the Pegasus row and even stalled Parliament, said it intended to raise the issue again in the Budget Session starting next week and will demand accountability from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP Government on the floor of Parliament.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi accused the Government of treason by "tapping" phones of



Police detain IYC president Srinivas BV during a protest on Pegasus issue in New Delhi on Saturday PTI

Opposition leaders, Armed forces, and the judiciary using the Pegasus spyware. "The Modi Government bought Pegasus to spy on our primary democratic institutions, politicians, and public. Government functionaries, Opposition leaders, Armed forces, judiciary all were targeted by these phone tapings. This is treason," Rahul said on Twitter.

Reacting to the attacks from the Opposition, Union Minister General VK Singh hit out at the *New York Times*. "Can you trust NYT?? They are known as 'Supari Media'," he said in a tweet.

Sources in the Government

issue after the Opposition had jointly stalled the proceedings.

According to a report in *The New York Times*, the Israeli spyware Pegasus and a missile system were the "centerpieces" of a roughly USD 2-billion deal of sophisticated weapons and intelligence gear between India and Israel in 2017.

Addressing a Press conference here, Congress general secretary and chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala alleged the Modi Government "deceived" Parliament as well as "duped" the Supreme Court.

He said the BJP machinery engaged in a massive strategy to also "dupe" the people of the country and it is now clear that the BJP Government-led by Modi "purchased the illegal and unconstitutional" spyware from Israel and used it against Opposition leaders, the judicial, the media and its own functionaries.

They committed an act of treason ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, he alleged. "It is now very clear that Parliament was deceived by the Modi Government, the Supreme Court was also duped and the people of India were lied to by the Modi Government and its Ministers," he said.

Continued on Page 2

SP's cap stained with blood of Ram bhakts, says Yogi

'Party responsible for killing of hundreds of Hindus in Muzaffarnagar riots'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Training his guns on the Samajwadi Party, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Saturday it was responsible for the killing of hundreds of Hindus in the Muzaffarnagar riots.

Asking the people to beware of the politics of appeasement, he said voting for the SP alliance would be an insult to the innocent killed in the riots.

"The SP people have no right to be in power as they only harassed women and farmers and failed to ensure security for them," the Chief Minister said while interacting with the public in Baghpat district on Saturday.

He said, "More than 60 Hindus were killed and over 1,500 Hindus were put behind the bars during the Muzaffarnagar riots... This is the identity of SP. Their cap is stained with the blood of innocent Ram bhakts."

Yogi remarked that SP never had development-oriented thinking. "For them, development only meant construction of boundary walls of graveyards, not development of infrastructure like airports,



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addresses a public meeting ahead of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, at Muradnagar in Ghaziabad district, on Saturday PTI

highways, medical colleges and houses for the poor."

He squarely blamed the previous SP Government for patronising mafias, goons and terrorists looting money of poor and instigating riots in UP. "This time these people have made goons and criminals and those with Talibani mind-set their candidates. The Kairana candidate of the SP still threatens people. 'Lagta hai inki garmi abhi gayi nahi'," he commented.

Appealing for public support for the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate in Baraut, Yogi said the period from 2012 to 2017 was a "period of darkness" for Uttar Pradesh.

Yogi also addressed the

copters with instructions to shower flower petals on Kanwar yatras and stern action against anyone harassing any innocent participant of Kanwar yatras," he pointed out.

Mocking at SP's election announcements like free electricity, Yogi said when their Government failed to provide electricity, how was it to be expected that they would give electricity for free. There was no electricity during the previous regime, he said.

"We have given electricity for 24 hours and now the electricity rate of farmers has been reduced by half. Also, today no one dares to steal even the pump sets of farmers," he added.

He took a swipe at the SP and the BSP for issuing tickets to criminals, saying, "There is a competition between the SP and the BSP to give tickets to the biggest criminal. If these criminals become MLA, they will produce guns, not flowers and there is only one way to treat them, and it is by the bulldozer."

Referring to the works of the double-engine Government, Yogi said it takes courage to work. "Those people who used to surrender in front of mafias and criminals, such people cannot run the state and they can only take care of the family. They are harmful for the state and its people," he said.

WHO: Covid risk still high, no country out of woods yet

India cautioned
against dropping
guard after report
of decline in cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the Union Health Ministry claimed that certain States in the country had reported early sign of Covid cases plateauing, the World Health Organisation (WHO) cautioned India not to drop the guard since the risk of Covid-19 remained high and no country, irrespective of their current transmission scenario, is "out of the woods" yet.

"By becoming endemic doesn't mean that the virus will not be a cause of concern," said Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region, on Saturday. She advised that authorities should concentrate on reducing transmission and implementing situation-specific measures.



A view of the crowded Sadar Bazar after some ease in the weekend curfew by the Delhi Government on Saturday PTI

However, vaccines still seem to remain highly effective at protecting people against serious illness, hospitalisation, and death, she said, adding that vaccines were effective in reducing the likelihood of severe disease caused by the Omicron variant.

With 2,35,532 people testing positive for the coronavirus infection in a day, India's total tally of cases increased to over 4.08 crore,

Continued on Page 2

Omicron drives US deaths higher than in fall's delta wave

Washington: Omicron, the highly contagious coronavirus variant sweeping across the country, is driving the daily American death toll higher than during last fall's delta wave, with deaths likely to keep rising for days or even weeks.

India-Israel relations to achieve new goals: Modi on 30 yrs of ties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Underlining the strong ties between the two countries, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday commemorated the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel 30 years back. He was the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Israel in 2017, propelling the relations to a new strategic high in all spheres, including defence.

Marking the significance of the occasion, Modi, in a televised address lasting about four minutes, said, "When the world is witnessing important changes, the importance of India-Israel relation has increased even more. I am fully confident that the friendship will achieve new milestones in mutual co-operation in the coming years."

Elaborating upon the centuries-old relations in the absence of diplomatic ties, he said, "The history of the relationship between our countries is very old. There has been a

strong relationship between the people of India and Israel for centuries."

He said there cannot be a better time to set new goals for taking forward India-Israel relations and asserted that the cooperation between the two countries has played a key role in the growth stories of the two nations.

Though India had recognised Israel on September 17, 1950, full-fledged diplomatic relations between the countries were established on January 29, 1992. Since then, the bilateral relations between both countries have developed into multifaceted strategic partnerships. Earlier this week, Israel's envoy to India Naor Gilon had said the 30th anniversary of India-Israel diplomatic ties was a good opportunity to look ahead and shape the next 30 years of relations.

He exuded confidence that the close cooperation between the two countries in different fields will only grow further in the coming years.

Continued on Page 2

Akhilesh pledges Samajwadi Thali to wrest UP from BJP

VIRENDRA NATH BHATT ■
LUCKNOW

After the promise of 300 Aunits of free electricity, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday lured the voters with offers ranging from food to pension, canteen to Kirana stores.

Predicting victory for the SP-RLD alliance, Akhilesh said, "The next big surprise will not come from Uttar Pradesh but from Gujarat. The people of UP have made up their minds to dislodge the BJP from power in UP."

The Assembly elections are due in Gujarat later this year and the BJP is in power in the western State for over two decades.

Akhilesh promised to launch "Samajwadi Thali" priced at ₹10 for the poor people and Samajwadi Pension if his party formed the next Government. The SP chief also promised to start Samajwadi canteen, Samajwadi Kirana stores, restore the old pension and reopen the closed cycle factory in Ghaziabad.



Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav with RLD leader Jayant Choudhary during an election campaign meeting for UP Assembly polls, in Ghaziabad, on Saturday PTI

Addressing a joint Press conference with Jayant Chowdhary of the RLD at Ghaziabad on Saturday, Akhilesh said the alliance is banking on the politics of unity, harmony and cohesion while the BJP is pursuing the politics of division.

"The BJP claims that the Government has provided free food grain to 80 crore people

during the pandemic but they hide the crucial fact that same number of people lost their jobs," said the SP chief.

Flaunting the red colour small grain bag (Ann potli) Akhilesh said the people should show the red colour LPG cylinder to the BJP leaders visiting their home for door to door campaign.

Continued on Page 2

Drones dazzle Beating the Retreat audience

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Spectacular drone and laser show at the Beating the Retreat ceremony at Rajpath left the spectators and television viewers spellbound across the nation on Saturday.

The indigenously designed, manufactured and conceptualised drone show staged for the first time also propelled India into the top group of nations having the capability to put up a show of this scale and magnitude. The US, China, and Russia are the other three nations with this capability.

The laser show put up at the North and South Blocks at Vijay Chowk was also the first. It showcased the achievements of the nation to mark the 75th year of Independence and "Amrit Mahotsav" celebrations.

The Beating the Ceremony also had another first as the "Abide with Me" hymn was dropped and the function

ended with the military bands playing "Aye Mere Watan ke

Logon". Since 1950, "Abide with Me" signaled the culmi-

nation of the Beating Ceremony. Lata Mangeshkar



Light show using 1000 drones during Beating the Retreat ceremony of the 73rd Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi on Saturday Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

sang the immortal "Aye Mere Watan Logon" song after the 1962 India-China war.

The drone's display lasted nearly 15 minutes. More than 1,000 drones lit up the sky in perfect synchronisation over the Vijay Chowk showcasing the nation's aspirations and achievements. The Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) formed the image of Mahatma Gandhi, a map of India, and the majestically moving lion depicting "Make in India".

The dazzling show was the brainchild of Boltab, a start-up of the Indian Institute of India (IIT), Delhi.

These two shows enthralled the viewers in addition to the foot-tapping music and classical renditions that are there every year at the ceremony.

The ceremony is a centuries-old military tradition, dating back to the days when troops disengaged from the

battle at the sunset. As soon as the buglers sounded the "retreat", the troops ceased fighting, sheathed their arms, and withdrew from the battlefield.

The ceremony is performed every year on January 29 and marks the end of the Republic Day celebrations.

More than 1,000 participants from the three Services and the paramilitary forces played 26 tunes. President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and the three Services chiefs were among the audience at the Vijay Chowk.

A host of new tunes were added to the ceremony to commemorate 75 years of the country's independence (being celebrated as Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav). These included "Kerala", "Hind ki Sena" and "Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon".

Law should be made against religious conversions: Kejriwal

Jalandhar (Punjab): Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said that a law should be made against religious conversions but nobody should be wrongly harassed.

Stating that religion is a private matter, Kejriwal while addressing a public gathering in Jalandhar said, "A law should definitely be made against religious conversions but nobody should be wrongly harassed through this. Conversions done by scaring them is wrong."

The AAP national convener also said that everybody has a right to worship as per their choice.

Several States including Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have brought in laws to regulate forcible religious conversions.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

J&K COP MARTYRED IN TERRORIST ATTACK

Jammu: A head constable of Jammu & Kashmir Police succumbed to his bullet injuries shortly after "unidentified" terrorists targeted him near his residential house at Hasanpora Tabala area of Bijnbehara in South Kashmir district of Anantnag on Saturday.

PAY SCALES FUNCTION OF EXECUTIVE: SC

New Delhi: Equation of post and determination of pay scales is the primary function of the executive and not judiciary, the Supreme Court said.

BIRD CENSUS BEGINS: WINGED FRIENDS SEEN

Chennai: Greater Flamingos, numbering to several thousands, and other water birds have been spotted in Tamil Nadu. This shows the coastal wetlands of the State attract migratory birds, said the Forest Department on Saturday.

J&K head constable martyred in Anantnag

PNS ■ JAMMU

A head constable of Jammu and Kashmir police succumbed to his bullet injuries shortly after ‘unidentified’ terrorists targeted him near his residential house at Hasanpora Tabala area of Bijbehara in South Kashmir district of Anantnag on Saturday.

According to a police spokesman, the martyred head constable has been identified as Ali Mohd Ganie. He was posted at the Police station, Kulgam. The incident was reported around 5.30 p.m. The entire area was immediately cordoned off and searches were launched in the nearby areas to track down the footprints of the terrorists behind the targeted killing.

According to reports, the policeman, soaked in blood, was immediately rushed to the GMC Anantnag where he succumbed due to fatal injuries.

A case has been registered in this regard under relevant sections of law. Meanwhile, a terror module has been busted by the Ganderbal police by arresting 3 terror associates linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT/TRF along with arms & ammunition.

According to a police spokesman, “a special joint checkpoint was established by Police, 24RR and 115Bn CRPF at Shuhama area of Ganderbal. During checking, movement of three suspects was spotted and were intercepted by the joint forces. They have been identified as Faisal Manzoor son of Manzoor Ahmad Lone resident of Braripora Shopian, Azhar Yaqoob son of Mohd Yaqoob Ganie resident of Zaipora Shopian and Nasir Ahmad Dar son of Mohd Ayoub Dar resident of Begam Kulgam”.

On their personal search, incriminating materials, arms & ammunition including 02

Chinese Pistols, 03 Pistol Magazines, 15 rounds of ammunition, 02 hand grenades and three mobile phones were recovered from their possession. Subsequently, they were arrested and shifted to the police station.

According to a police spokesman, “during preliminary investigation it was revealed that the trio was working as terrorist associates of proscribed terror outfit LeT/TRF and involved in providing shelter, logistic support and transportation of arms/ammunition to the active terrorists across the district. Besides, they were also involved in various terror related activities in the district”.

In this regard, a case vide FIR No 07/2022 under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Ganderbal and further investigation is in progress, police spokesman added.

Mann files nomination from Dhuri AAP CM candidate from Punjab millionaire Mann declares assets



MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Aam Aadmi Party’s (AAP) Chief Ministerial candidate Bhagwant Mann, a millionaire, on Saturday filed his nomination papers from Dhuri Assembly segment.

Though Mann lives in a rented house, he is the owner of a Chevrolet cruise and two Fortuner cars. That’s not all! He also owns 16.50 marla agricultural land in Sunam and village Satuj, besides a shop-cum-office (SCO) in Urban Estate Phase I, Omaxe Mall, in Patiala and shops in Karheri village.

Mann declared his assets as a part of his nomination papers, a day after AAP chief

Arvind Kejriwal was asking people to choose a honest Chief Minister, while citing Mann’s record and pointing out that despite being two-time MP, Mann still lives in a rented house in Sangrur.

As per his papers, Mann owns movable and immovable property worth Rs two crore — movable property worth Rs 48.10 lakh including Rs 1.10 lakh cash, more than Rs six lakh deposited in the bank, two Fortuners and a Chevrolet cruise car, and 95 grams gold worth Rs five lakhs; and immovable property worth Rs 1.49 crore including agricultural land, SCO, and shops.

Interestingly, there was not much change or increase in Mann’s assets even after being MP for almost eight years now.

Mann contested his first elections as Manpreet Badal led People’s Party of Punjab candidate from Lehra Gaga against the former Chief Minister Rajinder Kaur Bhattal in 2012 assembly polls, and faced

defeat. At that time, he declared his movable assets worth Rs 20.62 lakhs — including an Innova car worth Rs 10.83 lakh, 95 grams gold worth Rs 2.65 lakh; and immovable assets worth Rs 1.18 crore.

In his first Lok Sabha elections in 2014 as AAP candidate from Sangrur, Mann declared his movable property worth Rs 63.87 lakh including a Fortuner car and a cruise car, 95 grams of gold; and immovable property worth Rs 1.21 crore. In 2019 Lok Sabha elections, his movable property stood at Rs 38.27 lakh while the immovable property was Rs 1.26 crore.

Accompanied by his mother while filing his papers, Mann said that he expects that people of this constituency will ensure victory for him with the biggest margin in Punjab. “It is the time for writing history for Dhuri assembly segment... I expect that the people of Dhuri will make this seat victorious with the biggest margin in Punjab,” he said.

Mann said that the people of Dhuri want change. “I am happy that I have been nominated by the party from this assembly segment... Dhuri will be made a model assembly constituency,” he added.

Mann is a two-time MP from Sangrur parliamentary constituency. Dhuri is one of the assembly constituencies of Sangrur Lok Sabha seat. Replying to a question, Mann said that corruption, unemployment, mafia raj, inflation were among the major issues of the state.

Asked that his rival opponents accuse him of missing from this constituency, Mann said that he stays in Dhuri and visits villages of this constituency.

Presently, Dhuri is represented by Congress MLA Dalvir Singh Goldy who is again seeking re-election from this seat.

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) has fielded former Sangrur legislator Parkash Chand Garg from this seat.

IAS officer held for TET scam in Maha

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a disturbing development, the sleuths of the Pune Cyber police have arrested IAS officer Sushil Khodwekar for alleged involvement in sensational State-wide Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) scam unearthed last year.

Khodwekar’s arrest comes on the heels of the arrest of Maharashtra State Council of Examinations (MSCE) Commissioner Tukaram Supe, former MSCE Commissioner Sukhdeo Dere, education consultant Abhijit Sawrikar and Director Pritesh Deshmukh, Director and former director of G. A. Software Technologies Pvt Ltd, a firm which had been awarded the contract for the TET and other government exams. The investigators have seized assets worth over Rs 7 crore allegedly amassed by the accused in an illegal manner.

A team of the cyber police team arrested Khodwekar from Thane and produced him before a Pune court which remanded him in police custody till January 31.

With Khodwekar’s arrest, the total number of arrests made in the scam has gone up to 36. The arrested persons comprised both the government official, private persons and middlemen involved in the TET scam.

Khodwekar is currently the Deputy Secretary in the State Agriculture Department. He had earlier held charge as deputy secretary of the School Education and Sports Department.

The investigations by the Pune police have revealed that those behind the scam had tampered the evaluation process to increase the marks of as many as 7,880 candidates in the Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) held in 2018 and 2020.

The investigations have also revealed that the accused persons working with M/s GA Software Technologies Pvt Ltd had access to the TET website which they allegedly misused for malpractices.

Law should be made against religious conversions...

From Page 1

Several other states like Assam are also mulling similar laws.

Mr Kejriwal also promised that if voted to power the AAP government would begin doorstep delivery service and Mohalla clinics. “We will make 16000 clinics and renovate hospitals in Punjab,” promised AAP national convener.

“Like Delhi, Punjab too will get all the benefits,” the Delhi chief minister said.

He also announced that no new tax will be imposed in Punjab after the AAP comes to power.

Agencies

India-Israel relations...

From Page 1

India’s Ambassador to Israel Sanjeev Singla said, “We are proud to mark the 30th anniversary of our bilateral relations and look forward to using the special logo throughout the year to celebrate this special milestone.”

Emphasising that “friendship and trust” are not only positive traits but also “real assets”, the Foreign Ministers of India and Israel in a joint op-ed for an Israeli daily on Friday said the two countries have worked together to “deepen their roots” for the last three decades, delving together to find solutions to common challenges, including in the security sector.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Israeli counterpart Yair Lapid contributed a joint piece, “Deepening Roots” for Israel Hayom to mark 30 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Bombay HC refuses to stall web series ‘Mission to Pakistan’ in copyright case

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court has refused to grant ad-interim relief by way of stalling the release of a web series tentatively titled ‘Mission to Pakistan’ over the issue of copyright by holding that ‘any order restraining the release of the web-series despite completion of the production and post-production work would cause irreparable loss to the producer’.

Hearing application for ad interim relief filed by Solificks Filmworks Pvt Ltd (SFPL) seeking to restrain Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) from releasing the web series, Justice NJ Jamadar ruled in favour of the ZEEL, saying that “since the defendant has already appointed another production house for producing the web-series, at this juncture, the balance of convenience tilts in favour of the defendant.”

“What is of significance is the fact that the Production

Agreement provided a mechanism for addressing the consequences which entail premature termination of the contract. Once the Court finds that the claim of the ownership of copyright in the underlying work and the developed work or for that matter episodes, is not prima-facie sustainable, the issue of remedy on account of unlawful or unjustified termination of the Production Agreement, squarely falls in the realm of damages,” Justice Jamadar observed.

“Since the defendant has already appointed another production house for producing the web-series, at this juncture, the balance of convenience tilts in favour of the defendant. An order restraining the release of the web-series despite completion of the production and post-production work would cause irreparable loss to the defendant. For the foregoing reasons, I am persuaded to hold that at this juncture the plaintiff is not entitled to ad-

interim relief,” the Judge noted.

While refusing to grant an interim relief, the high court allowed ZEEL to file an affidavit-in-reply within a period of four weeks. It also allowed the SEPL to file an affidavit-in-rejoinder to the affidavit-in-reply within two weeks of ZEEL making its submission.

Among other things, SFPL had in application urged the court to restrain ZEEL from acting in pursuance to the termination letters, by which the Production Agreement was purported to be terminated.

Solificks Filmworks Pvt Ltd (SFPL) had also urged the court to restrain ZEEL from entering into an agreement with any third party and from utilising any intellectual property rights ‘belonging to SFPL’ with respect to the series.

The SEPL had told the court that it had first approached ZEEL for the first time in August 2018 through SFPL’s predecessor partnership firm Ahaana Productions

with an “initial concept.”

Having liked the concept which was based on a book “Mission to Pakistan, ZEEL had signed a Development Agreement with SEPL in 2019 to further commission works and develop it further.

In February last year, the two parties signed a Production Agreement appointing SFPL as Line Producer to execute the production of the ‘developed work’ and ‘developed concept’ into an audio-visual program comprising episodic content tentatively titled as ‘Mission to Pakistan’. SFPL was to be paid Rs 2,12,45,750 per episode aggregating to Rs 16,99,66,000 for eight episodes all inclusive of artist cost, production of program, packaging etc.

ZEEL cleared the screenplay on March 7, 2021 and proceeded with the next stage which involved getting dialogues written and providing a shoot timeline with regards to commencement of shoot from March 20, 2021. However, on

June 16, 2021, ZEEL proceeded to terminate the production agreement citing a clause which talked about “creative differences/discontent warranting termination of the contract”.

On August 28, 2021, ZEEL intimated SFPL intimated SFPL that it was in the process of appointing another party to take over the work of Line Producer’s work, which resulted in SFPL approaching the court.

Seeking ad-interim relief, SEPL’s senior Advocate Birendra Saraf argued that SFPL held the copyrights in the work and that termination of the Production Agreement was not justified as there weren’t any serious creative differences.

He also argued that the terms of the agreements were required to be construed “keeping in view the unequal bargaining power” and that the instant case “epitomised the manner in which the creators/authors of original work are denuded of all their rights”.

Saraf argued that the

Development Agreement clearly said that SFPL shall be the exclusive owner of the copyright in the initial concept and as per the subsequent clauses in the Development Agreement and the clauses in the Production Agreement there can be no valid assignment under section 18 of the Copyright Act, 1957.

Saraf told the court that since SFPL had incurred expenses of more than Rs.4 crore for execution of the work under the Production Agreement, ZEEL should be restrained from releasing the web-series and commercially exploiting it till the interim relief application was finally heard.

Senior Advocate Venkatesh Dhond, appearing for ZEEL, argued that the case of “unequal bargaining” was argued before the court for the first time and was not pleaded in the suit at all, therefore it cannot be taken into account now.

Citing various clauses of the agreements signed between

the parties, Dhond told the court that SFPL had copyright only in the ‘initial concept’ which was assigned to ZEEL in the Development Agreement and later acknowledged and further assigned in the Production Agreement. He said that clause 4.1 of the Development Agreement provided for Rs 87,90,000 as consideration for SFPL for rendering services and assignment of all the rights in relation to the initial concept, developed concept and development work.

Akhilesh...

From Page 1

He said the cost of the cylinder is beyond the reach of the common people. Targeting the BJP on three farm laws, SP chief said the BJP failed to tell the people as to why the three laws were brought and why the bills were repealed. Akhilesh asked farmers to be wary of the BJP, saying the ruling party’s Government had withdrawn its controversial farm laws only for the sake of votes. He also assured farmers that if their alliance forms the Government in Uttar Pradesh, they will not allow the implementation of any such anti-farmer law in the State.

The SP chief said this time the BJP will face a “political exodus”.

“Have you not seen what type of exodus our Baba CM (Yogi Adityanath) has to make? He was seeking ticket from Ayodhya, Mathura or Prayagraj. The BJP sent him back home,” he said referring the CM’s candidature from Gorakhpur urban, the area which he had represented in Parliament earlier.

Akhilesh reiterated that Chaudhary Charan Singh should be awarded the Bharat Ratna. “Jayant Chaudhary and I will remove the politics of negativity and we will fight to save our Ganga-Jamuni ‘tehzeeb’ (culture) and brotherhood,” Akhilesh said.

Rashtriya Lok Dal chief Jayant said his party’s alliance with the SP is “solid” and aimed at furthering the cause of farmers. Ahead of the Assembly polls, the BJP is reaching out to the Jats in western Uttar Pradesh, from where members of the community had taken part in the year-long stir against the laws at the Delhi border points.

the people of the country”.

The money belongs to the public but these people are using it for snooping on people who are opposing them, he alleged.

Kharge said if the government was doing it for the safety and security of the country, it was fine, but they are using it against Opposition leaders, Ministers and Government functionaries, the judiciary and the media. The Government had previously denied all Opposition allegations in the matter.

“It is treason, it is a hijack of democracy and it is a systematic deception and attack on the fundamental rights of privacy and dismantling of national security considering who all were spied upon illegally and unconstitutionally by this government,” he alleged.

Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, who joined him at the Press conference, said when the Government was “not ready to discuss the issue of Pegasus on our demand, it shows that they wanted to hide something from

Maha registers over 27K Covid cases, 61 deaths

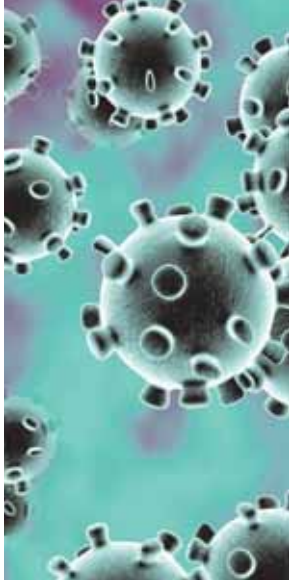
T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a moderate increase in the daily Covid-19 cases, Maharashtra recorded 27,971 fresh infections and 61 deaths on Saturday, even as the daily infections in Mumbai went up marginally to 1,411.

On a day when 85 fresh Omicron cases were reported in the state, the daily infections rose from 24,948 on Friday to 27,971 cases on Saturday. With the fresh infections, the total number of Covid-19 cases in the state rose from 76,55,554 cases to 76,83,525 cases.

With 61 fresh deaths, the total number of deaths registered in the state since the outbreak of Covid-19 in the state in March 2020 went up from 1,42,461 to 1,42,522.

Mumbai, where the daily infections have been dropping steadily for more than eight days, witnessed an increase in the number of cases from 1,312 to 1,411. With the latest cases, the total number of cases in Mumbai mounted from 10,43,059 cases to 10,44,470 cases. As 50,142 Covid-19 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state



after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March 2020 increased from 72,42,649 to 72,19,271. The recovery rate in the state rose from 94.61 per cent to 94.91 per cent. The number of ‘active cases’ in the state dropped from 2,66,586 to 2,44,344. The fatality rate in the state dropped from 1.86 per

cent to 1.85 per cent.

The active cases in Pune dropped from 85,629 on Friday to 75,991 cases on Saturday.

The active cases in Mumbai dropped from 14,344 cases to 12,187 cases, while the active cases in the neighbouring Thane came down from 21,342 cases on Friday to 18,855 on Saturday. Nagpur accounted for 27,120 cases, followed by Nashik (17,072), Ahmednagar (10,128), Raigad (7,096), Aurangabad (7,588) and Satara (6,698).

Of the 7,43,33,720 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 76,83,525 have tested positive (10.34 per cent) for COVID-19 until Saturday. Currently, 11,49,182 people are in home quarantine while 3,375 people are in institutional quarantine. Meanwhile, as many as 85 fresh Omicron cases were recorded in Maharashtra, taking the total number of the new Covid-19 variant cases to 3,125. Of the cases reported, Pune municipal Corporation (PMC) accounted for 44, followed by Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation –39, Pune Rural and Akola –one each.

WHO: Covid risk still high, no...

From Page 1

according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Saturday. On 21 January, the country reported a total of 3,47,254 new Covid-19 cases after which the daily infection count has been reducing. A decline in Covid cases and positivity rate have been especially observed in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Odisha, Haryana, and West Bengal.

Asked if the pandemic is entering in endemic stages, Singh said, “Currently, we are still in the midst of the pandemic and the focus should be to curtail the virus spread and save lives”.

Compared to the Covid-19’s Delta variant, she said Omicron is able to more rapidly infect the tissues of the upper respiratory tract rather than the lungs, which may also help the spread of this variant.

“There appears to be a lower risk of severe disease and death following Omicron infection as compared to other variants. However, due to the very high numbers of cases, many countries have seen a significant increase in the incidence of hospitalization, putting pressure on healthcare systems,” she said.

Data suggests that infection with Omicron may be associated with a lower risk of hospitalization compared to infection with Delta, Singh said, but noted that the severity of illness increases with age and in the presence of underlying medical conditions and among people who are not vaccinated.

She stressed on the need to rapidly accelerate efforts to vaccinate all at-risk populations in all countries.

“There is growing evidence on vaccine effectiveness for Omicron, but we still have a lot to learn. So far, we think that vaccines are less effective against Omicron infection and symptomatic disease compared to Delta. Having a booster shot seems to increase protection,” she said.

Singh said the emergence of Omicron means that the protective behaviours remain critical such as keeping a safe distance from others, avoiding crowds, wearing a well-fitted mask covering mouth and nose, cleaning hands regularly, keeping indoor spaces well ventilated, and covering coughs and sneezes.

NYT report...

From Page 1

Surjewala said these things being clear now, the role of the Prime Minister and his responsibility is now directly in question. “We will seek accountability from the prime minister on the floor of the Parliament along with that of the government in the people’s court,” he said.

“We will urge upon the Supreme Court to suo motu now take note and issue appropriate penal proceedings against this Government for attempting to deliberately and knowingly deceive the Supreme Court,” Surjewala said, alleging the “deception” with the top court is nothing short of perjury.

Sl. No.	Particulars	Standalone					Consolidated					
		Quarter ended	Quarter ended	Nine months ended	Nine months ended	Year ended	Quarter ended	Quarter ended	Nine months ended	Nine months ended	Year ended	
		31.12.2021 (Unaudited)	31.12.2020 (Unaudited)	31.12.2021 (Unaudited)	31.12.2020 (Unaudited)	31.03.2021 (Audited)	31.12.2021 (Unaudited)	31.12.2020 (Unaudited)	31.12.2021 (Unaudited)	31.12.2020 (Unaudited)	31.03.2021 (Audited)	
(₹ Crore)												
1	Total income from operations	28864.79	24509.26	83232.31	72639.86	99206.72	33292.61	27526.03	95584.21	81428.55	111531.15	
2	Net profit before tax (before exceptional items)	5409.01	3561.59	12678.27	11489.31	15278.52	6127.08	4298.99	14498.78	12978.06	16998.93	
3	Net profit before tax (after exceptional items)	5409.01	3561.59	12678.27	10126.31	13915.52	6127.08	4296.91	14498.78	11469.02	15486.74	
4	Profit after tax	4131.99	3315.34	10489.53	9290.30	13769.52	4626.11	3876.36	11760.78	10319.91	14969.40	
5	Profit after tax attributable to owners of the parent company						4498.58	3766.46	11509.40	10092.84	14634.63	
6	Total comprehensive income after tax	4099.29	3279.89	10460.89	9167.73	13701.33	4590.73	3833.91	11724.56	10167.05	14870.31	
7	Paid-up equity share capital (Face value of share ₹ 10/- each)	9696.67	9696.67	9696.67	9696.67	9696.67	9696.67	9696.67	9696.67	9696.67	9696.67	
8	Other equity excluding revaluation reserve as per balance sheet	116669.00	107630.87	116669.00	107630.87	109288.82	124446.25	114281.33	124446.25	114281.33	116041.80	
9	Net worth*	125674.98	116788.37	125674.98	116788.37	118306.11	133397.47	123396.73	133397.47	123396.73	125016.19	
10	Paid-up debt capital	168675.49	175470.33	168675.49	175470.33	173616.19	206097.92	211360.39	206097.92	211360.39	209310.38	
11	Debt redemption reserve	5651.68	6763.93	5651.68	6763.93	6240.43	6418.09	7477.22	6418.09	7477.22	6970.47	
12	Earnings per share (of ₹ 10/- each) - (not annualised) (including net movement in regulatory deferral account balances); Basic and Diluted (in ₹)	4.26	3.35	10.82	9.39	13.99	4.64	3.81	11.87	10.20	14.87	
13	Earnings per share (of ₹ 10/- each) - (not annualised) (excluding net movement in regulatory deferral account balances); Basic and Diluted (in ₹)	4.32	2.42	9.61	7.30	12.18	4.68	2.86	10.55	7.95	12.93	
14	Debt Equity Ratio	1.33	1.50	1.33	1.50	1.46	1.54	1.70	1.54	1.70	1.66	
15	Debt service coverage ratio	2.65	1.92	1.76	2.41	2.36	2.42	1.94	1.27	2.13	1.97	
16	Interest service coverage ratio	5.05	3.92	4.45	4.11	4.42	4.62	3.82	4.15	3.92	4.14	

* Excluding Fly ash utilization reserve, Corporate social responsibility reserve and reserve for equity instruments through other comprehensive income.

Notes:

- The above is an extract of the detailed formats of financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 and 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full formats of the financial results of the Company are available on the investor section of our website <https://www.ntpc.co.in> and under Corporate Section of BSE Limited and National Stock Exchange of India Limited at <https://www.bseindia.com> & <https://www.nseindia.com>
- Previous periods figures have been reclassified wherever considered necessary.

For and on behalf of Board of Directors of NTPC Limited
 Sd/-
(A. K. Gautam)
 Director (Finance)
 DIN-08293632

Place: New Delhi
Date: 29 January 2022

Regd. Office: NTPC Bhawan, SCOPE Complex, 7, Institutional Area, Lodi Road,
New Delhi - 110003 CIN: L40101DL1975GOI007966 Website: www.ntpc.co.in

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ISI to step up attacks on forces in J&K: Intel

Holds meet with terror groups after terrorist violence cases drop in J&K

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Following a marked decline in terrorist violence in Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) held a meeting earlier this month with the commanders of terror groups like Lashkar-e-Tayabba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Al Badr and Hizbul Mujahideen in PoK and decided to step up attacks on security forces and political workers in the Valley, according to intelligence inputs.

The meeting was held at Malakpaiyan, Muzaffarabad, Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir earlier this month by one Major Yaqoob of ISI with the terror

commanders and expressed his dissatisfaction with the tanzame commanders over the decline in terrorist activities in the Kashmir Valley. Major Yakoob directed the commanders to make arrangements for suitable terrorist attacks in the Valley, according to an Intelligence report generated from Srinagar.

Movement of local Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist Rayees Ahmad of Joibal Veer in Anantnag and two unidentified terrorists have been observed in village Nubuk Nanil under Mattan police station in Anantnag has been reported by the agencies. Ahmad along with other two terrorists frequently visit Nubuk Nanil and are apparently planning to shift their location to an apple orchard in nearby villages. They are also in the process of recruitment of local youth from the district, officials said, quoting from the chatter picked up

by the agencies.

This group, they said, is planning to attack security forces and political workers in between Bijbehara and Anantnag.

During the last two-three years, the security forces have neutralized a number of terrorist commanders during operations and the Pakistan-backed groups are finding it difficult to find suitable replacements.

Additionally, the recruitment of cadres has also taken a beating owing to a variety of factors including a crackdown on funding channels like NGOs and trade-based financing of terrorism in the Valley. The National Investigation Agency and the Enforcement Directorate have undertaken a number of probes to choke terrorist financing and money laundering respectively, leading to constricted funds flow to the terror outfits, officials added.

CRPF Day Parade on March 19 every year

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has decided to celebrate March 19, the day it was granted President's Colour in 1950, as the CRPF Day Parade every year.

Earlier, the raising day was celebrated as CRPF Anniversary Parade on one of four dates every year—March 19 (President's Colour was awarded to CRPF on March 19, 1950, July 27 (Crown Representative Police (CRP) was originally raised on this date in 1939, October 31 (Birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel who was born on this date in October 1875 and December 28 (After Independence, CRP was rechristened as Central Reserve Police Force by enacting CRPF Act 1949 on this date).

The reasons for the change in dates were attributable to the heavy rain in the month of July, coinciding birthday of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel on October 31 with assassination of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and extreme winter in the



national capital in December besides availability of Chief Guest for the event, officials said.

Since 2018, the anniversary function has been conducted on March 19 every year.

An online meeting was held earlier this month under the chairmanship of Director General of CRPF Kuldiep Singh with all the Zonal Commanders and other Sector officers to discuss various issues regarding celebration of 83rd CRPF Anniversary Parade this year, they said.

The reason to celebrate

CRPF Anniversary Parade on different dates/days was discussed in depth and it was unanimously agreed and decided that henceforth, the CRPF Anniversary Day will be re-designated and celebrated as "CRPF Day on March 19 every year."

"It has been decided by the Competent Authority that henceforth, the nomenclature of CRPF Anniversary is hereby changed as CRPF Day Parade," a senior paramilitary official said quoting from the order issued by Inspector General (Administration) at

the CRPF Directorate here, Anshuman Yadav, on Friday.

Necessary correction/amendment in the Hand Book on Ceremonies is also being made and the decision in connection with the fixation of March 19 as the date for anniversary celebration and the change in nomenclature has been approved by the DG, CRPF.

Insiders in the paramilitary said it remains to be seen if the anniversary date will remain the same under the fluctuating command and leadership of IPS officers or will be subjected to

changes following change in the top paramilitary leadership.

Ideally, the anniversary day parade should have been on December 28 when the CRPF was actually created through an Act of Parliament, another official said. CRPF veterans also opposed the logic of cold winter as a reason for not holding the anniversary celebrations on December 28 especially when the Border Security Force (BSF) continues to celebrate its raising day on December 16 every year.

The veterans said the raising day cannot be changed at the whims and fancies of the CRPF leadership and the date of enactment of the CRPF Act in Independent India should be treated as the CRPF Day.

Even the Republic Day Parade and the rehearsals are held in January and winter is not a dampener for a range of Forces taking part in it. A full parade is also organized to grant farewell to the retiring paramilitary chiefs, including the CRPF DG, and weather has never been a hindrance in holding such ceremonies, they added.

EPFO to cover 7,453 employees of Tata's Air India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After Tata group's takeover of the State-owned Air India, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has on-boarded the airline for social security coverage to provide the social security benefits to its 7453 employees.

According to the Ministry of Labour and Employment, these employees will receive extra two per cent employer's contributions in their Provident Fund Accounts at 12 per cent of their wages.

"The social security benefits will be provided to around 7,453 employees for whom contributions have been filed by Air India with EPFO for the month of December 2021," the Ministry said. The approval was granted on January 13 after Air India Ltd applied for voluntarily cover under the EPF and MP Act 1952.

Earlier, the employees were



covered under the PF Act of 1925, like all government organisations, where the contributions to the provident fund were at 10% by the employer and 10% by the employee.

Under the EPF Act which is now covering Air India, a guaranteed minimum pension of Rs 1,000 will be available to employees and to family and dependents in case of death of an employee. An assured insur-

ance benefit in case of death of a member will be available in the range of minimum Rs 2.50 Lakh and a maximum Rs 7 Lakh. No premium is charged to the EPFO covered employees for this benefit.

"Since 1952-53, Air India and Indian Airlines were the two separate companies that were covered under PF Act 1925. In 2007, both the companies merged into one company- Air India Ltd. Under the

PF Act 1925, the benefit of Provident Fund was available but there was no statutory pension scheme or insurance Scheme. The employees used to participate in self-contributory annuity-based pension scheme.

Based on the scheme parameters, the accumulations used to be paid to the employees. There was no minimum pension guarantee and no extra benefit in case of death of a member," a statement of the ministry of labour and employment said.

Air India has officially been handed over to the Tata Group after all formalities of the divestment process was completed on January 27.

Earlier, it was clarified that the current employees of Air India will be retained for a year and there will be no layoffs. In the second year, if old employees are sacked then that will be considered as paid VRS.

For cervical cancer, we need to address pelvic test stigma: MP



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the occasion of Cervical Cancer Awareness month, Rajya Sabha MP Priyanka Chaturvedi has said that it's time that we need to address the stigma attached to pelvic examination.

"There are some issues that have taken priority over cervical cancer such as TB and

COVID. If we intend to prioritize the need to eradicate cervical cancer this would go a long way. The challenges are that we need to address the stigma attached to pelvic examination, and build awareness amongst women in all strata," she said in a webinar organised by ASSOCHAM as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month on Friday.

Dr Princess Nothemba

(Nono) Simelela, Assistant Director-General and Special Advisor for Strategic Priorities, World Health Organization (WHO), stressed on the need to be optimistic and we need to recognise global health complexity.

Dr. Shalini Singh, Director, ICMR-National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research, MoHFW, GOI, focused on the need to spread awareness, which is lagging behind.

Narendra Varde, Managing Director - India & Neighbouring Markets, Roche Diagnostics India, Ravi Bhatnagar, Co-Chairperson, ASSOCHAM CSR Council, Director, External Affairs and Partnerships (SOA)-Reckitt, Dr. S. Shantha Kumari, President, were amongst the other dignitaries who addressed the webinar.

EC bans exit polls for State polls till March 7



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Saturday banned all exit polls pertaining to the upcoming Assembly elections scheduled in five States — Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Manipur — till March 7. Anyone violating the order will be punished with a two-year jail or fine or both.

"Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers under sub Section (1) of Section 126A of the RP Act 1951, the Election Commission having regard to the provisions of sub Section (2) of the said Section hereby notifies the period between 7 AM on 10 February 2022 and 6.30 PM on 7 March as the period during which conducting any exit poll and publishing or publicising by means of the print or electronic media or dissemination in any other manner whatsoever, the result of any exit poll in connection with the aforesaid General Election shall be prohibited," the EC said in a notification on Saturday.

The poll body further said that it is clarified that under Section 126 (1) (b) of the RP Act 1951 displaying any election matter including results of any opinion poll or any other poll survey, in any electronic media, would be prohibited during the period of 48 hours ending with the hours fixed for conclusion polls in the respective polling areas in connection with General Election.

NM-ICPS innovation hubs help tackle challenges thrown by Covid-19 pandemic

One AI-driven platform helped X-ray interpretation of images sent over WhatsApp

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Twenty-five innovation hubs set up across the country through the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS) are churning out best technologies in various sectors, including the health sector to do their bit in tackling challenges thrown by Covid-19 pandemic.

For instance, ARTPARK at IISc Bangalore has developed an AI-driven platform that helps Chest X-ray interpretation of images sent over WhatsApp brought early intervention through rapid screening of Covid-19, aiding doctors who have no access to X-ray machines. Similarly, a team of scientists from IIT Bombay has developed a tapestry method for screening Covid-19 under Remedial Action, Knowledge Skimming, and Holistic Analysis of Covid-19 (RAKSHAK), an effort supported by the Technology Innovation Hub (TIH) at IIT Jodhpur.

According to an official from the Union Ministry of Science and Technology, the ARTPARK has a solution called XraySetu which is quick and easy to use and can work with low-resolution images sent via mobiles, facilitating detection in rural areas. "Using machine learning algorithms, it generates a patient report showing suspicious abnormal regions in the lungs and detects if the person is likely positive for Covid, pneumonia, or other lung abnormalities," he said.

Similarly, RAKSHAK which has been shortlisted by X-prize in an open Innovation Track has led to the develop-

ment of a New Chest X-ray based Covid diagnosis System (in the ICMR validation process now), Open Data for Indian and International Covid cases - COVBASE (Imaging, clinical parameters, longitudinal data, and annotations), Campus RAKSHAK - A decision framework for Campus Safety.

On the other hand, AmbiTag, a first-of-its-kind Internet of Things (IoT) device that monitors ambient temperature during the transportation of vaccines, including Covid-19, medicines, blood samples, food and dairy products, meat products, and animal semen, has been developed by researchers at the IIT Ropar Technology Innovation Hub - AWaDh and its startup ScratchNest.

"So far, such devices were being interpreted by India. The institute is gearing up for its mass production of AmbiTag. The device will be made available to all companies involved in Covid-19 vaccine transportation from production facilities to the last mile vaccination centers in the country at the production cost of Rs 400," said the official.

A consortium launched by IITM Pravatark Technologies Foundation and five other entrepreneurial start-up companies in deep tech and engineering domain have been established under the mission I-STAC.DB - Indian Space Technologies and Applications Consortium Design Bureau.

The NM-ICPS, which fosters technological solutions in health, education, energy, environment, agriculture, strategic cum security, Industry 4.0 is being implemented through 25 Technology Innovation Hubs (TIHs) established in top academic, and national R&D Institutes. It was approved by the Union Cabinet at a total cost of Rs 3660 crores in December 2018. All the hubs are working on developing solutions for people-centric problems.

57% of world leprosy patients from India

Stigma, neglect main reasons

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leprosy is now completely curable and can be rendered non-contagious by administering first dose of Multi-Drug-Therapy (MDT). However, India continues to be the home of around 57 per cent of the global population of people with leprosy — mainly because of stigma and discrimination against the sector.

There are at least 97 legislations at the Centre and States levels that have various clauses that allow continuation of discrimination against leprosy affected persons in the country. With such legal discrimination,

various other welfare and medical measures taken by the Government are not yielding desired results, say experts.

Taking serious note of these legal discrepancies, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in an advisory to the States sought immediate removal of such legal provisions.

Of 97 legislation in the country, at least 21 are central laws while rest are implemented by the States like Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Odisha, Punjab, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Assam, Gujarat, West Bengal and Kerala.

The clauses openly discriminate and restrict people

with leprosy from taking certain professions or contest municipality polls or enter public places.

Caused by the bacteria Mycobacterium leprae, leprosy primarily affects the peripheral nervous system causing skin lesions, numbness, and other deformities. Latest data from the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) reveals that a total of 65,147 new leprosy cases were detected during 2020-21 in India.

On the eve of the World Leprosy Day, Alice Cruz, the UN Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members took strong umbrage at the discriminatory laws, which she said whether actively enforced or not, motivates, authorizes and nor-

minalizes substantive violations, especially against women.

"The mere existence of laws allowing for divorce on the grounds of leprosy have a devastating impact on women, hindering their access to health care and justice," the UN expert said.

"By formalizing harmful stereotypes as lawful labels and normalizing humiliation and violence as authorized practices, such laws significantly compromise livelihoods, exclude people affected by leprosy from political and civic participation, and augment the State's negligence towards this marginalized group," she further added.

NHRC chief justice (retired) Arun Kumar Mishra in the advisory issued by the Commission also suggested the Centre to consider enacting a

law to provide for substitution of "derogatory terms" used to describe persons affected by leprosy. The advisory called upon authorities to ensure that no person or any of his family members is discriminated against and denied all or any of the right to healthcare, employment, education and land rights.

For the betterment of lives, the NHRC urged authorities to start special programmes to provide vocational training, employment and unemployment benefits, health insurance among others.

The NHRC members also felt that besides several problems notwithstanding, the COVID-19 pandemic further worsened the condition of leprosy-affected persons, particularly with regard to their food and livelihood.

Calcutta HC takes up pleas seeking reopening of schools, colleges

Kolkata: Three petitions seeking resumption of physical classes in educational institutions of West Bengal were taken up by the Calcutta High Court on Thursday.

The state government told the division bench presided by Chief Justice Prakash Shrivastava that it was willing to reopen schools and colleges, but a call would be taken once the COVID-19 situation is properly analysed.

Hearing of the petitions, filed by a teacher, a student and a lawyer, were adjourned till February 14, when the state will be informing the court on its plan to reopen the educational institutions.

The petitioners, claiming that long closure of the institutes was affecting education of students, prayed for a direction to the state government on reopening of schools colleges and universities for physical classes.

Schools and colleges in Bengal have largely remained shut since March 16 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Institutes had briefly opened in November last year only to close down again as number of infections started soaring across the State.

PTI

Self-governed social, religious trusts can't be subjected to overarching State control, says SC

New Delhi: Self-governed social and religious trusts cannot be subjected to "overarching state control" as it would undermine the principle of autonomy and democratic decision-making and would reduce the fundamental right of freedom of association "an empty husk", the Supreme Court said on Friday.

The verdict dealing with the right of the state instrumentalities over the affairs of registered social and religious trusts came on an appeal of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman, Mhow, which was denied the nod by the Registrar of the society to sell its five properties in Madhya Pradesh despite following the due procedures.

"The impugned judgment and the decision of the Registrar are hereby set aside," a bench comprising justices U U Lalit, R Ravindra Bhat, and Bela M Trivedi said and permitted the Parsi trust to implement its decision to sell its five properties after fresh valuation of each of the properties. Justice Bhat, writing the judgement, acknowledged the state's power to monitor the affairs of registered social and religious trusts to ensure that their properties are not frittered away, but said it cannot control the decision-making process of self-governed societies.

The verdict said the role of designated state officials like the commissioner or registrar is to ensure that accounts are properly maintained and monies are expended in accordance with the aims and objects of the endowments.

"Such regulation does not mean that the state is allowed to appropriate monies which rightly belong to the endowment. The aim of public control is to ensure that the trust is administered efficiently and smoothly," it said.

PTI

Daughter of farmer bags ₹2.8 cr scholarship for admission abroad

New Delhi: The daughter of a smallholder farmer in Mizoram is among five successful recipients of a scholarship for admission to prestigious Asian University for Women in Bangladesh. The \$375,000 (2.8 cr) scholarship will cover tuition, room and board, health coverage, textbooks, and supplies along with possibility of internship opportunities with Syngenta.

Hmangaihuali, a resident of Thingsul in Mizoram, is admitted to AUW and will pursue undergraduate program in Politics, Philosophy & Economics, & Public Health at this all-women university, that endeavors to nurture skilled, effective and innovative professionals.

Recipients of this scholarship are selected from interested students from farming communities based on their academic excellence and demonstrated leadership.

In a statement Pamela Gonzalez, Head of Asia Group and APAC Head of Diversity & Inclusion said rural women are key to achieving the transfor-

mational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development.

"But limited access to credit, healthcare and education are among the many challenges they face, which are further aggravated by the global food and economic crises and climate change. Empowering them is key not only to the well-being of individuals, families, and rural communities, but also to overall economic productivity, given women's large presence in the agricultural workforce worldwide. Syngenta and the Asian University for Women are empowering these rural women to become leaders of tomorrow with right access to quality education," she said.

Rafael Del Rio, Managing Director Syngenta India Pvt. Ltd. said this initiative is in recognition of the significant economic contributions of women in agriculture and is aligned to the commitments of AUW and Syngenta in expanding opportunities to help rural women succeed.

PNS

Determining SC/STs inadequate representation in Govt jobs State's discretion: SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday refused to 'lay down any yardstick' for granting reservation in promotion to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Government jobs saying determination of their inadequate representation is the discretion of the State.

The top court said it is neither legal nor proper for the Courts to issue directions or advisory sermons to the executive in respect of the sphere which is exclusively within their domain under the Constitution. "Determination of inadequate representation of SCs and STs in services under a State is left to the discretion of the State, as the determination depends upon myriad factors which this Court cannot envisage..." Laying down of criteria for determining the inadequacy of representation would result in curtailing the discretion given to the State Governments', a three-judge bench headed by Justice L. Nageswara Rao said.

Omicron drives US deaths higher than in fall’s delta wave

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Omicron, the highly contagious coronavirus variant sweeping across the country, is driving the daily American death toll higher than during last fall’s delta wave, with deaths likely to keep rising for days or even weeks.

The seven-day rolling average for daily new Covid-19 deaths in the US has been climbing since mid-November, reaching 2,267 on Thursday and surpassing a September peak of 2,100 when delta was the dominant variant.

Now omicron is estimated to account for nearly all the virus circulating in the nation. And even though it causes less severe disease for most people, the fact that it is more transmissible means more people are falling ill and dying.

“Omicron will push us over a million deaths,” said Andrew Noymer, a public health professor at the University of California, Irvine. “That will cause a lot of soul searching. There will be a lot of discussion about what we could have done differently, how many of the deaths were preventable.”

Omicron symptoms are often milder, and some infected people show no symptoms, researchers agree. But like the flu, it can be deadly, especially for people who are older, have other health problems or who are unvaccinated.

“Importantly, milder” does not mean mild,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said this week during a White House briefing.

Until recently, Chuck Culotta was a healthy middle-aged man who ran a power-washing business in Milford, Delaware. As the omicron wave was ravaging the Northeast, he felt the first symptoms before Christmas and tested



People walk between buildings at the University of Kansas Hospital Friday, in Kansas City. At least 50 Covid-19 patients have died this month and more than 200 are being treated at the hospital where the facility's morgue has been at or above capacity almost every day in January

AP

positive on Christmas Day. He died less than a week later, on December 31, nine days short of his 51st birthday.

He was unvaccinated, said his brother, Todd, because he had questions about the long-term effects of the vaccine.

“He just wasn’t sure it was the right thing to do — yet,” said Todd Culotta, who got his shots during the summer.

At one urban hospital in Kansas, 50 COVID-19 patients have died this month and more than 200 are being treated.

University of Kansas Hospital in Kansas City, Kansas, posted a video from its morgue showing bagged bodies in a refrigeration unit and a worker marking one white body bag with the word “COVID.”

“This is real,” said Ciara Wright, the hospital’s decedent affairs coordinator.

“Our concerns are, Are the funeral homes going to come fast enough? We do have access to a refrigerated truck. We don’t want to use it if we don’t have to.”

Dr. Katie Dennis, a pathologist who does autopsies for the health system, said the morgue has been at or above capacity almost every day in January, “which is definitely unusual.”

With more than 878,000 deaths, the United States has the largest COVID-19 toll of any nation.

During the coming week, almost every US state will see a faster increase in deaths, although deaths have peaked in a few states, including New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Maryland, Alaska and Georgia, according to the COVID-19 Forecast Hub.

Singapore reports more infectious BA.2 Omicron variant

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore has recently reported 198 cases of Covid-19 traced to the BA.2 Omicron sub-lineage, which appears to be more infectious than the more common BA.1, but hospitals are coping well in spite of the current wave infecting thousands of people daily, according to reports.

A total of 150 BA.2 cases were imported infections and the remaining 48 were local cases since January 25, 2022, the TODAY newspaper reported.

Investigations into the characteristics of BA.2, including immune escape properties and virulence, should be prioritised independently (and comparatively) to BA.1, said the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The BA.2 Omicron sub-lineage differs from BA.1 in some of the mutations, including in the spike protein, the WHO wrote on its website.

The BA.2 sub-lineage has been detected in more than 50 countries, most notably in Denmark and the UK as of Friday.

Meanwhile, Singapore reported 5,554 new COVID-19 cases, including 282 imported infections, and three deaths as of noon on Friday.

Singapore has so far recorded 338,625 cases since the start of the pandemic.

Omicron sub-lineage BA.2 has substantial ‘growth advantage’ over original, UK finds

PTI ■ LONDON

The BA.2 sub-lineage of the Omicron variant of Covid-19, which is classed as a variant under investigation in the UK, spreads much faster than the original BA.1 strain but it also seems to show higher vaccine protection, health authorities said.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) said that BA.2 has an increased growth rate compared to BA.1 in all regions of England where there are enough cases to assess it. As of January 24, 1,072 genomically confirmed cases of BA.2 have been identified in England and all assessments remain preliminary whilst case numbers are relatively low.

“While growth rates can be overestimated in early analyses of a new variant, the apparent growth advantage is currently substantial,” the UKHSA said.

The experts said their analysis from routine contact tracing data indicates that transmission is likely to be higher among contacts of BA.2 cases in households at around 13.4 per cent than those for contacts of other Omicron cases at 10.3 per cent in the period between December 27, 2021, to January 11, 2022.

A linked preliminary assessment did not find evidence of a difference in vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease for BA.2 compared to BA.1.

Third Covid wave looms in Indonesia as omicron spreads

AP ■ JAKARTA

Indonesia is bracing for a third wave of Covid-19 infections as the highly transmissible omicron variant drives a surge in new cases, health authorities and experts said Saturday.

The country reported 9,905 new infections and seven deaths on Friday in the latest 24-hour period. It was the highest daily caseload since August last year when the country was struggling to contain a delta-driven wave.

Indonesia had recovered from last year’s spike in cases and deaths that was among the worst in the region, and daily infections had fallen to about 200 by December. But cases are rising again just weeks after the country reported its first local omicron case.

Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin said the next few months will be critical because omicron is spreading “rapidly and massively.”

Its upsurge will be extremely fast ... We will see a sharp rise in the near future,” he told a news conference Friday, adding that the current wave would likely peak at the end of February or in early March.

The government has prepared mitigation measures to deal with a potential surge, including dedicating more hospital beds for COVID-19 patients, ensuring adequate tracing and testing measures.

In France, anti-vax fury, politics make public service risky

AP ■ LE PECQ (FRANCE)

In Sainte-Anastasie-sur-Issole, a village that curls cat-like in verdant Provence hillsides, voters are making an early start on France’s presidential election.

From their ballot box this weekend and next will come the name of the candidate — picked from among dozens — that they want their mayor to endorse.

Normally, the choice would be Mayor Olivier Hoffmann’s alone, under a right that, at election time, turns small-potato public office-holders into hot properties — wooed by would-be candidates who need 500 endorsements from elected officials to get onto the April ballot.

But in an inflamed climate of election-time politics, and with fury among opponents of Covid-19 vaccinations increasingly bubbling over into violence directed at elected representatives, Sainte-Anastasie’s staunchly apolitical mayor doesn’t want to be seen taking sides.

Safer, he figures, to let the 2,000 villagers choose for him.

“I know lots and lots of people in the village, many are my friends, I don’t want to create tensions,” Hoffmann said in a phone interview. “So no politics.”

“Politics,” the mayor added, “often do more harm than good.”

Pegasus, a missile system were ‘centerpieces’ of \$2 bn deal between India, Israel in 2017: NYT

PTI ■ NEW YORK

The Israeli spyware Pegasus and a missile system were the “centerpieces” of a roughly USD 2 billion deal of sophisticated weapons and intelligence gear between India and Israel in 2017, according to a report in The New York Times.

A massive controversy erupted last year when the NSO Group hit the headlines with the alleged use of its Pegasus software by some governments to spy on journalists, human rights defenders, politicians and others in a number of countries, including India, triggered concerns over issues relating to privacy.

The NYT, in a report titled “The Battle for the World’s Most Powerful Cyberweapon”, said that the Israeli firm NSO Group had for nearly a decade been “selling its surveillance software on a subscription basis to law-enforcement and intelligence agencies around the world, promising that it could do what no one else -- not a private company, not even a state intelligence service -- could do: consistently and reliably crack the encrypted communications of any iPhone or Android smartphone.”

The report also referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Israel in July 2017 - to

become the first Indian prime minister to visit the country.

“For decades, India had maintained a policy of what it called “commitment to the Palestinian cause,” and relations with Israel were frosty. The Modi visit, however, was notably cordial, complete with a carefully staged moment of him and (then Israeli) Prime Minister (Benjamin) Netanyahu walking together barefoot on a local beach,” it said.

“They had reason for the warm feelings. Their countries had agreed on the sale of a package of sophisticated weapons and intelligence gear worth roughly USD 2 billion -- with Pegasus and a missile system as the centerpieces. “Months later, Netanyahu made a rare state visit to India. And in June 2019, India voted in support of Israel at the UN’s Economic and Social Council to deny observer status to a Palestinian human rights organisation, a first for the nation,” the report said.

PTI has reached out to the government for a reaction to the NYT report but there was no immediate response.

Last year, a row erupted over Israeli spyware Pegasus allegedly being used for targeted surveillance in India.

Epidemic of scams: Singapore victims lost over \$712 mn in 5 yrs: Report

Singapore:Singapore is facing an epidemic of scams with victims having lost more than USD 712 million in the last five-and-a-half years as fake love on the internet remains one the most lucrative online cheating formats since 2011, according to a media report on Saturday.

Authorities have acknowledged difficulties in tackling the problem, pointing out that many of the perpetrators are based overseas, and once the money is transferred, its recovery is difficult, The Straits Times reported.

In the last five-and-a-half years, victims have lost 965 million Singapore dollars (over USD 712 million), it said.

The police, meanwhile, have had some success with their Anti-Scam Centre saying that of the 7,400 scams involving losses of over 201.7 million dollars (USD 148 million) last year, it was able to recover 66

million dollars (USD 48 million), the report said, highlighting an epidemic of scams, given the recent phishing saga involving customers of OCBC Bank, one of the largest banks in Singapore.

Scammers pocketed a record 268.4 million dollars (USD 198 million) in 2020, Home Affairs and Law Minister K Shanmugam said in a written response to a parliamentary question on scams. It was nearly triple the 89.7 million dollars (USD 66 million) stolen in 2016.

The report said that internet love scams have remained one of the most lucrative scams in Singapore since 2011.

The amount duped from lovehorn victims has grown from 2.3 million dollars (USD 1.6 million) in 2011 to 8.8 million dollars (USD 6.4 million) in 2014 and 33.1 million dollars (USD 24 million) in 2020.

PTI

Trump facing legal, political headwinds as he eyes comeback

Conroe (US):As he prepared to tee off at one of his Florida golf courses, a fellow player introduced Donald Trump as the “45th president of the United States.”

“45th and 47th,” Trump responded matter-of-factly, before hitting his drive.

The quip — a moment of levity on the links captured on shaky cellphone video — was a reminder that the former president often has another presidential run on his mind. But the declaration belied the growing challenges he’s confronting as a series of complex legal investigations ensnare Trump, his family and many associates.

The probes, which are unfolding in multiple jurisdictions and consider everything from potential fraud and election interference to the role he played in the January 6 insurrection, represent the most serious legal threat Trump has faced in decades of an often litigious public life. They’re intensifying as a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found Trump’s iron grip on the GOP may be starting to loosen.

His popularity among Republicans is declining somewhat, with 71 per cent saying they have a favorable opinion of Trump compared with 78 per cent in a September 2020 AP-NORC/USAFacts poll.

AP

Rejected by New Zealand, reporter turns to Taliban for help

Wellington:A pregnant New Zealand journalist says she turned to the Taliban for help and is now stranded in Afghanistan after her home country has prevented her from returning due to a bottleneck of people in its coronavirus quarantine system.

AP

In a column published in The New Zealand Herald on Saturday, Charlotte Bellis said it was “brutally ironic” that she’d once questioned the Taliban about their treatment of women and she was now asking the same questions of her own government.

“When the Taliban offers you — a pregnant, unmarried woman — safe haven, you know your situation is messed up,” Bellis wrote in her column.

New Zealand’s COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins told the Herald his office had asked officials to check whether they followed the proper procedures in Bellis’s case, “which appeared at first sight to warrant further explanation.”

New Zealand has managed to keep the spread of the virus to a minimum during the pandemic and has reported just 52 virus deaths among its pop-

ulation of 5 million.

But the nation’s requirement that even returning citizens spend 10 days isolating in quarantine hotels run by the military has led to a backlog of thousands of people wanting to return home vying for spots.

Finnish diplomats’ mobile devices hacked with spyware

AP ■ STOCKHOLM

The mobile devices of Finnish diplomats working abroad have been hacked with the use of sophisticated spyware, Finland’s Government said Friday, and the Nordic country’s spy chief said a “state actor” was likely to blame.

The Finnish Foreign Ministry said the victims were targeted through Pegasus software developed by Israeli spyware company NSO Group.

The software can seamlessly infiltrate a mobile phone and allow its operators to gain access to the device’s contents and location history.

“The highly sophisticated malware has infected users’ Apple or Android telephones without their noticing and without any action from the user’s part,” the Foreign Ministry said in a statement which was also tweeted.

“Through the spyware, the perpetrators may have been able to harvest data from the device and exploit its features.”


Jarmo Sareva, Finland’s Ambassador for Cyber Security, would not disclose the data harvested, but said under government protocols information transmitted by phone must be public or classified at

the lowest level.

“As you know Pegasus spyware does take the phone under its control,” Sareva said. “Even the microphone and camera of these devices were being spied on.” He wouldn’t say how many diplomats were targeted or in which countries they were stationed.

Asked who was believed to be behind the cyber espionage he said: “We have our suspicions of course,” but declined to elaborate.

The Foreign Ministry said it had been investigating the case since the fall, adding that “the espionage is no longer active.”

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

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Chandra Wati/ Ram Singh LBDEL00002405966	Flat No 44, Ground Floor Sec G2 Pocket 2 Block D1 Lig Narela Delhi 27th January, 2022	June 19, 2021 Rs.12,29,310/-	Delhi

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

Date : January 29, 2022
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

PARIJAT PAPER MILLS LTD.				
CIN: L21012UP1989PLC010589				
Regd. Office: Vill: Jat Mujhera 10.6 km Stone Bhopa Road, Muzaffarnagar - 251308 (U.P.)				
Website: www.parijatpapermills.com, Email: parijatpapermills@yahoo.com				
EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF UN-AUDITED STANDALONE FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 31.12.2021				
(Rs. In Lacs)				
S. No.	PARTICULARS	Quarter ended	Year to Date figure (9 months ended)	Quarter ended
		31.12.2021 (Unaudited)	31.12.2021 (Unaudited)	31.12.2020 (Unaudited)
1.	Total Income from operations (net)	3363.79	8704.65	2553.21
2.	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period (before Tax, exceptional and/or extraordinary item)	264.72	176.20	42.75
3.	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period before Tax, (after exceptional and/or extra ordinary items)	264.72	176.20	42.75
4.	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period after Tax, (after exceptional and/or extra ordinary items)	235.69	147.17	41.53
5.	Total comprehensive income for the period [Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after Tax)]	235.69	147.17	41.53
6.	Paid-up Equity share capital (Face value Rs. 10/- each)	329.00	329.00	329.00
7.	Other Equity (Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserves)	756.22	756.22	565.92
8.	Earnings per share (of Rs 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)	7.16	4.47	1.26
1. Basic 2. Diluted				
Note: 1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly & year to date Financial Results filled with the stock exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and other disclosure requirements) Regulation, 2015. The full format of the quarterly & year to date Financial results are available on the Stock Exchange website www.mseil.in and the company's website (www.parijatpapermills.com)				
2. The above results were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on 29th January 2022				
For and on behalf of Parijat Paper Mills Limited				
Sd/-				
Place: Muzaffarnagar		Amit Mittal (Whole time Director)		
Date: 29.01.2022		DIN 00754471		

UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking)
Corporate Identity No. U40109UR2001SGC025867/2358
Victoria Cross Vijayta Gabar Singh Urja Bhawan, Kanwali Road, Dehradun
Telephone-(0135)-2763672-76, Fax- (0135)-2760289

Corrigendum regarding postponement of pre-bid meeting
Due to some unavoidable circumstances, the online pre-bid meeting for E-tender Specification No. CCP-1/56/2021-2022 invited by this office for Works under Uttarakhand Transmission Strengthening and Distribution Improvement Program (UTSDIP) with financial support of M/s ADB on turnkey basis is hereby postponed and will be held 15.2.2022 at 11:30hrs in online mode.
Other terms & conditions will remain same as per original tender notice. For further details, please visit our website www.uktenders.gov.in.
No: 68/EE(CM)/UPCLA-2
Dated: 28.01.2022
Superintending Engineer Corporate (C&P-I)
SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION. Use LED Bulb, Save Electricity (Toll Free No. 1912) "Pay Electricity bill Online 24x7 from www.upcl.org". (For Information on Electricity theft, informer may report to Toll free No. 18001804185/ Fax No. 0135-2760911)

PASUPATI ACRYLON LIMITED
Regd. Office : Kashipur Road, Thakurdwara, Distt. Moradabad (UP)
Tel. : 011-47627400, Fax: 011-47627497
Email : delhi@pasupatiacrylon.com
CIN: L50102UP1982PLC016532
website : www.pasupatiacrylon.com

NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 a Meeting of Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Monday, the 7th February, 2022 inter-alia to consider and approve the Un-audited Financial Results of the Company for the quarter and nine months ended 31st December, 2021. The said intimation is available on the Company's website at www.pasupatiacrylon.com and website of stock exchange at www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com.
By order of the Board
For Pasupati Acrylon Ltd.
Sd/-
Bharat Kapoor
Company Secretary

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE No. ELS_SRE_T-22 Dtd. 29.01.2022
Open tender through E-tendering are invited by Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRS, Electric Loco Shed, Khanalimpura Yard, Northern Railway, Saharanpur (Ambala Division) for and on behalf of the President of India from the registered tenderer on web site www.irops.gov.in for the following work upto 11:00 hrs. on the date of closing shown against the work and will be opened thereafter:-

Open Tender No.	ELS_SRE_T-22
Name of Work	"Overhauling of Air Dryers (SIL, FTRTL, Knorr, Trident & Prag make) of WAG-7 & WAG-9 Electric locomotives for a period of Two years."
Date of Closing/Opening	21.02.2022
Approx. Cost	₹22,78,233.26
Earnest Money	₹45,600.00
Completion period	02 years
Cost of tender form	Free of cost
Validity period	45 days

- Tenderer(s) should have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate to participate in E-Tendering of Works/Tenders.
- Tenderer are required to upload self-attested scanned copies of all related eligibility documents as per conditions.
- Taxes & Charges will be applicable as per extant rule.
- For details, please log on IREPS website www.irops.gov.in

207/22

PUBLIC NOTICE
M/S METRO TECHNOBUILD PVT LTD
Regd Office at 397, Kohat Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi-34,
Website: www.mksventures.in
Whereas, M/s Metro Technobuild Pvt Ltd. had obtained a licence bearing no. 162 of 2014 for undertaking development of a Residential Group Housing colony over an area measuring 12.125 acres in Sector-2, Sohna, in accordance with the provision of Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh ("DTCP"). And whereas, the Company under the Migration Policy dated 18.02.2016 and as amended 24.01.2018 of Town and Country Planning Department has proposed to migrate license no. 162 of 2014, granted for setting up Residential Group Housing Colony for taking license of affordable plotted housing policy 2016 Deen Dayal Jan Awas Yojna and company has not created any third party right on applied land under migration policy on an area measuring 12.125 acres in Sector-2, Sohna. And whereas, if any individuals have made bookings/entered into purchase agreement for allotment of plot/property in Colony ("Allottees"). And whereas, the revised layout plan are being revised in accordance with the Letter of Intent "LOI" issued by DTCP, bearing memo no. LC-4575-JE(MK)-2022/1577 dated 20.01.2022, for setting up of an affordable residential plotted colony under DDJAY 2016. And whereas, the DTCP has required for seeking objections to the above stated migration from the Allottees of license colony of License no. 162 of 2014 accordingly vide this public notice objections are hereby invited from the Allottees for which a copy of the already approved revised layout plan of the Colony bearing drawing no. DGTCP memo no 20923 dated 26.10.2015 and the proposed revised layout plan due to carving out of affordable residential plotted colony has been made available for perusal on the website of the Company www.mksventures.in, at the office of Company at MKS Ventures, MKS Shiva Market, Near Madhuban Chowk, Outer Ring Road, Pitampura, Delhi-34 as well as in the office of District Town Planner, Gurugram. Any Allottee having any objection in this regard, may file his objection in the office of District Town Planner Gurugram or in the office of Company within 15 days of the publication of this notice, failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the said migration.
Place: Delhi
Date: 29-01-2022
For Metro Technobuild Pvt Ltd.

SBI suspends circular on recruitment of pregnant women



New Delhi: After facing criticism from various quarters, the country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) on Saturday decided to suspend its circular on recruitment of pregnant women. SBI recently reviewed its 'Fitness Standards for Recruitment in the Bank', including norms for Pregnant Women candidates. Under the new rules, a woman candidate with more than three months pregnancy will be considered "temporarily unfit" and can join the bank within four months after delivery.

The move elicited criticism from various quarters, including from labour unions and the Delhi Commission for Women. In view of the public sentiments, SBI has decided to keep the revised instructions regarding recruitment of pregnant women candidates

in abeyance and continue with the existing instructions in the matter, the bank said in a statement. In its latest medical fitness guidelines for new recruits or promotees, the bank said a candidate would be considered fit in case of pregnancy which is less than three months.

"However, if pregnancy is of more than 3 months, she will be considered temporarily unfit and she may be allowed to join within 4 months after delivery of child," as per the medical fitness and ophthalmological standards for new recruits and promotees dated December 31, 2021.

SBI said that the revised guidelines were intended to provide clarity on various health parameters where instructions were not clear or were very old.

Remote working new normal; 82% staff prefer working from home, says study



Mumbai: With the Covid-19 pandemic bringing unprecedented changes in work life, a study has revealed that 82 per cent respondents admitted that they prefer working from home to going back to the office.

The remote work trend was initially forced on employees due to the pandemic, however, after two years remote working has become a new normal and as things settled down new habits have formed, according to the Tech Talent Outlook by job site SCIENCE.

The study revealed that 82 per cent of respondents admit that they prefer working from home to working from the office. The Talent Tech Outlook 2022 study is an analysis of inputs from 100 plus C-suite and human capital leaders across four continents, done by SCIENCE through surveys, social media inputs, interviews and panel discussions. The study further revealed that 64 per cent employees said they are more productive working from home and feel less stressed.

The new normal for HR shifted from engaging face to face to engaging with remote employees whom they meet only virtually most of the time, it stated. More than 80 per cent of the HR managers admitted that hiring employees for full-time office presence is getting more difficult, the study said. Working from home is no longer a choice but a new normal that every tech talent expects from their employer and the employers not willing to adapt will face challenges in hiring good talent and retaining those already

employed, it observed.

The tech workforce has found new love with remote working, giving them freedom and productivity that requires HR to be more trusting, it said adding that unengaged or underutilised employees will find alternatives faster and exit faster than pre-pandemic times.

"It is interesting to observe how the fast-evolving 'Future of Work' is getting past the world of conventional HR and transforming into an ecosystem that now involves people beyond the confines of company payroll and office boundaries. Welcome to the world of remote work, the gig economy, and the power of the crowd that is waiting to be explored before it explodes," SCIENCE founder and CEO Karunjit Kumar Dhir said.

Technology is already moving swiftly to change the way companies engage with their employees and get a deeper, more meaningful engagement to everyone's advantage, he added.

Meanwhile, the study found

that only 18 per cent of tech hiring managers are looking at using psychological assessment as a part of the hiring process in 2022, down from 68 per cent in 2019. Since remote is the new normal the offices too will become more occasional meeting places and alternate workplaces, the study stated.

More than 67 per cent of companies admit that hiring talent with office-only working conditions has become increasingly difficult, it said.

However, two years of remote working has given a sense of new flexibility that benefits both employers and employees, it added.

The study said more than 70 per cent of HR and Tech managers admitted that giving on the spot or quick awards for a job well done is more important to retain a workforce that is scattered and needs that 'little' motivation regularly.

Over 36 per cent of the respondents have already initiated quick rewards as their model to engage and retain their talented workforce, it added.

NTPC profit rises 19 pc to ₹4,626 cr in Dec quarter

New Delhi: State-run power giant NTPC on Saturday posted more than 19 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 4,626.11 crore in the December quarter compared to the year-ago period mainly driven by higher revenues.

The company had reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 3,876.36 crore in the quarter ended on December 31, 2020, according to a BSE filing.

Total income of the company rose to Rs 33,783.62 crore in the quarter from Rs 28,387.27 crore in the same period a year ago. The Board of Directors in its meeting on Saturday also decided, inter alia, to pay interim dividend at the rate of 40 per cent (Rs 4 per share) on the face value of paid-up equity shares of Rs 10 each for the financial year 2021-22.

The gross power generation of the company stood a 72.70 billion

units (BU) in the quarter, higher than 65.41 BU a year ago. The plant load factor (capacity utilisation) of its coal-based power units rose to 67.64 per cent in the quarter from 64.31 per cent in the year-ago quarter.

However, the PLF of its gas-based stations dipped to 6.24 per cent in the quarter from 6.76 per cent a year ago.

It got domestic coal supplies of 52.81 million metric tonnes (MMT) in the quarter, up from 45.56 MMT a year ago. Similarly, coal imports rose to 0.52 MMT in the quarter from 0.26 MMT a year ago. Its average tariff rose to Rs 3.91 per unit during April to December 2021, from Rs 3.87 per unit in the same period a year ago.

The installed power generation capacity of the NTPC Group increased to 67,757.42 MW as on December 31, 2021, from 62,975 MW a year ago.

Toyota's Glanza and Urban Cruiser cross 1 lakh units wholesale mark

New Delhi: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) on Saturday said its premium hatchback Glanza and compact SUV Urban Cruiser, which are sourced from Maruti Suzuki India under an alliance between Toyota and Suzuki, together have crossed cumulative wholesales of 1 lakh units. The Glanza and Urban Cruiser are the cross-badged versions of Maruti's Baleno and Vitara Brezza, respectively.

Launched in June 2019, the Glanza has clocked over 65,000 units, while the Urban Cruiser, which hit the market in September 2020, registered cumulative wholesales of more than 35,000 units, TKM said in a statement.

Commenting on the feat, TKM Associate Vice President, Sales, and Strategic Marketing, Atul Sood said the milestone is a "testament to the best ownership experience, exceptional sales and after-sales services, as well as peace of mind that is offered to every single

Toyota customer".

These models have helped TKM strike a defined balance to reach young aspiring customers, who desire to own a Toyota early in their lives, he added.

TKM said since the launch, the Glanza and the Urban Cruiser have played a significant role in catering to 66 per cent of first-time Toyota buyers, especially in tier II & III markets. "This has also helped TKM garner young-millennial customers who are not only seeking exceptional automobile ownership experience, but also the best balance of economically viable options," the company added.

"Our focus on expanding footprints covering the tier II and tier III markets, has enhanced TKM product accessibility and service coverage to a wider and newer set of customer base," Sood said, adding at present TKM has 418 dealer outlets in the country.

JNPT prepares action plan to effect green initiatives

Mumbai: The country's premier container port, JNPT on Saturday said it has prepared an action plan covering all its activities, including cargo handling, storage, evacuation and many other activities related to environmental protection.

Jawaharlal Nehru port is committed to sustainable development, and the Port takes adequate measures to maintain ecological balance. To address the global climate change problem at its level, the facility has taken the initiative to acquire "Green Port Status," JNPT said in a statement.

As part of the green initiatives, the facility has installed solar panels, inducted electric vehicles, among others, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) Chairman Sanjay Sethi said.

JNPT has total 3,402 hectares of land with it, out of which, more than a third -- 1,147 hectares -- is under green cover, including mangroves, it said. The port operator said it provides shore power supply to tugs and port crafts, and many such initiatives.

"The Port has prepared an action plan covering all activities of the Port including cargo handling, storing, evacuation and many other activities related to environmental protection," Sethi said. Under the Maritime India Vision 2030, JNPT intends to use 60 per cent of renewable energy, adoption of multi fuel (CNG, LNG and electric), shore power, LNG bunkering, and upcoming solar plants of 2.5MW capacity, among others, it stated.

Earlier in the day, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonwal, chaired a meeting with all major ports, Cochin Shipyard Ltd and Inland Waterways Authority of India to review the progress on various green initiatives implemented as per Maritime India Vision 2030, JNPT said.

Fintech industry hopes for incentives in Budget to push financial inclusion

New Delhi: Stepping up demand for tax concessions in the forthcoming Budget, the fintech industry is stressing that the fiscal and non-fiscal incentives are needed to promote financial inclusion and move towards a less-cash economy.

The fintech industry and experts have urged Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to lower the TDS rates, saying such a move would free the capital for the sector without any impact on the Government's revenue.

Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Union Budget for the next financial year on February 1.

Nitin Jain, Partner, Financial Services, PwC India, said qualification criteria for digital lenders, short-term credit, partnership guidelines with loan service providers, data governance norms, transparency norms are all required to ensure an optimal business environment for digital lending.

Mihir Gandhi, Partner & Payments Transformation Leader, PwC India, stressed on increasing the scope of the Payments Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) and introducing Central Bank Digital Currency for wholesale and retail payment transactions. Shruti Aggarwal, Co-founder, Tashfin, said the financial empowerment of women also leads to her family being financially empowered. It will be encouraging to have a budget that is guided by this principle, with a specific focus on the digital financial inclusion of every woman to enable her to be financially 'atmanirbhar', she said, and expressed hope that the Budget will incentivise smaller NBFCs led by women entrepreneurs through tax rebates.

On what should be in the Budget, Kapil Mehta, Co-founder, SecureNow, said fintech plays a major role in providing access to finance and

insurance for small businesses and individuals in remote areas. "It would be extremely helpful if, in the Budget, TDS rate for fintech startups is reduced to 1 per cent. This will free up much-needed working capital without costing the exchequer because the TDS is refunded in any case for loss making companies," he said.

Mehta also suggested that to stimulate financial access, the government could have large PSUs create a financial inclusion fund, similar to the CSR requirements. This fund could be run in a commercial manner.

Amid high hopes from the February 1 Budget, Praveen Dhabhai, COO, PayWorld, said fintech has played a major role in promoting transparency, cashless economy and access to timely payments to underprivileged in remote corners of the country.

"It is imperative to provide the conducive environment to both new and existing fintech

companies / startups, in terms of easing access to funding at concessional rates and lower taxation by providing 'Infrastructure Status with special provisions' for the new-age yet important nation building industry such as fintech," said Dhabhai. Nitya Sharma, CEO & Co-Founder, Simpl, stressed that there is an urgent need to deepen financial inclusion and create a more robust financial ecosystem that would be able to withstand future disruptions like the pandemic, much better.

"Though PSU banks have been actively exploring partnerships with new-age fintech to digitally transform themselves, initiatives from the government in the form of sufficient incentives, outreach programmes for adoption of digital channels and streamlining of the current digital financial channels are needed to deepen financial inclusion across the nation," he said.

Manan Dixit, Founder,

FidyPay, said in rural India the financial inclusion gap is still visible. "To bring them all onto the financial inclusion platform, we must first enable UPI in cooperative banks and microfinance institutions. Once its done, their customers, the unorganised sectors, small businesses, farmers, truckers, and individuals will be able to do digital transactions in their daily lives," Dixit said.

On his expectations from the Budget, Vineet Tyagi, Global CTO, Biz2X, said the government should allocate allowances and resources to speed up digital innovation to enable banking space adapt to disruptive changes that occurred during the last two years. Banks are required to adopt proactive outreach programs to make access to credit convenient. The government should shift from cash-drive to digital oriented and cashless economy for a seamlessly functional economy," he suggested.

RBI 'behind the curve' criticism: Deputy Governor Patra says approach has served us well

Mumbai: Addressing criticism of the RBI being "behind the curve" by continuing with the accommodative monetary policy stance longer than other countries, Deputy Governor Michael Patra on Friday said that so far, "the approach has served us well".

India is placed "much better" to deal with future waves of the pandemic as compared to being affected the worst in the first wave after the nationwide lockdown, he said, expressing concerns on inflation being elevated due to crude prices.

It can be noted that the RBI has been criticised in some quarters for being 'behind the curve' by holding on to its GDP growth-enhancing accommodative stance even as the pressures on its core objective of inflation become evident and at a time when many of its peers have shifted to tightening of rates. Those making such calls have been suggesting that the central bank shift its policy stance to neutral.

The US Fed has indicated that it will be switching over to hiking rates to tame the record high inflation, which is already leading to nervousness in the capital markets the world over. The comments asserting the RBI's efficacy also come just days away from the Union Budget to be presented on February 1.

"Yes, there has been criticism that RBI has fallen behind the curve but only time will tell whether or not India got it right. So far, the approach has served us well and has helped in charting a course for ourselves into the future with a difference to the rest of the world," Patra said, delivering the 18th C D Deshmukh Memorial Lecture organised by Council for Social Development.

Patra said the slew of over 100 measures taken by the central bank since the onset of the pandemic, which included conventional ones like rate cuts and also unconventional ones, have contributed significantly in engineering a turnaround in the Indian economy.

Conceding that the impact of the measures is still unravelling, Patra said, "the overall state of the economy and of financial markets -- which is what these measures sought to address -- provides some evidence of the efficacy or otherwise of the RBI's pandemic response." Patra said even before the start of the pandemic, the economy was

already in a "cyclical downturn" with growth decelerating to a decadal low, which had forced the Monetary Policy Committee to turn accommodative in February 2019 itself and added that the central bank had already cut its key rates by a cumulative 1.35 per cent by February 2020.

The GDP contracted by 24.2 per cent in the first quarter of FY21, which was among the deepest in the world, and the experience of the global financial crisis in 2008, where central banks led the fight, made the RBI swing into action, he said, adding that over 100 measures were taken to address stress at the system level and also in specific sectors.

"I would not hazard the audacity of anticipating the judgment of history, but today, India is much better placed to deal with future waves of the pandemic relative to the first wave," Patra said, pointing out that the GDP is set to grow by 9.2 per cent in FY22 after a 7.3 per cent contraction in FY21 courtesy the exports growth.

In remarks that come at a time when oil prices touched a seven-year high of USD 90 a barrel, Patra termed inflation as being "elevated" on commodity prices, including crude oil, but admitted that it has come off the highs seen during the pandemic.

Meanwhile, in other concerns, he said employment is yet to recover fully and labour force participation also remains low. Bank credit has begun to gain pace courtesy the easing of stress on lenders balance sheets but private consumption and investment are still work in progress.

Restoration of livelihoods and the revival of MSMEs is a formidable task that lies ahead, an optimistic Patra said.

Patra also pointed out that Governor Shaktikanta Das' 13 statements during the pandemic were the leit motif around which RBI's policy response was shaped and also termed them as instrument of policy in light of the central bank utilising its conventional options.

The RBI shuns the glare of the limelight but is ever ready to act, he said, adding that the central bank will learn the lessons from the pandemic and emerge more stronger and resilient to pursue the mandate of price stability while keeping in mind the objective of growth, Patra said.


IDFC First Bank Q3 profit more than doubles to ₹281 cr

New Delhi: IDFC First Bank on Saturday reported more than two-fold increase in net profit to ₹281 crore for the third quarter ended on December 31, 2021. The private sector bank had reported a net profit of ₹130 crore for the October-December period of 2020-21.

Total income during the quarter increased to ₹5,197.79 crore from ₹4,711.72 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal, IDFC First Bank said in a regulatory filing. "NII grew by 36 per cent on a YoY basis to reach ₹2,580 crore in Q3-FY22. NIM stood at 5.90 per cent excluding interest income pertaining to prior period for one telecom account. Including the same, NIM is at 6.18 per cent for the quarter," it said.

The bank's asset quality declined as gross non-performing assets (NPAs) or bad loans rose to 3.96 per cent of the gross advances as of December 31, 2021 as against 1.33 per cent by the same period a year ago. Similarly, the net NPAs increased to 1.74 per cent from 0.33 per cent in the third quarter of previous fiscal. Provisions other than tax were lower by 32 per cent at Rs 392 crore as against Rs 461.57 crore in the same quarter a year. Capital Adequacy Ratio of the bank stood at 15.38 per cent with CET-1 Ratio at 14.83 per cent.

"The business conditions are normalising. We are seeing strong growth in credit once again; our home loan business has grown by 44 per cent year-on-year. For the last three years, we have been laying a strong foundation by building a strong deposit base, increasing," IDFC First Bank CEO Vaidyanathan said.

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Vivek G/ Gaddirala Murahari- U 46 28 4th Floor U Block, Dlf Phase 3 Gurgaon- 122002/ LBBNG00002906867	Schedule 'A' Property (Description of the entire property) All That Piece And Parcel of residentially converted lands in Survey No. 133 measuring 18 Acres 21.08 Guntas, Survey No. 134 measuring 5 acres 34 Guntas and Survey No. 135 measuring 12 Acres 27 Guntas, in all measuring 37 Acres 2 ½ Guntas or 1,50,015.72 square meter, all situated at Tavarekere Village, Tavarekere Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore Schedule 'B' Property (Description of the Residential Plot conveyed to the Purchasers under this deed) Residential Site/Plot bearing No. 58 measuring East to West 15 Meters and North to South 9 Meters, totally measuring 135 Square meter, (equivalent to 1453.14 Square feet) in the Residential Layout named "Pipal Tree, a Project Jointly promoted by Salarpuria and Sattva Group" carved on the Schedule 'A' Property Vide Magadi Planning Authority sanction bearing No. MAYOPA/ LAO/22/2012-13 dated 29.04.2015, having its Khatha No.150200301700422229 and 6433/58 issued by Tavarekere Grama Panchayat, together with all common areas attributed thereto	10.06.2021/ Rs. 17,83,503/-	30.11.2020

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

Date : January 29, 2022
Place: Delhi/ NCR (Gurgaon)

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

Office rent stable in Pune, NCR, drops up to 6% in 4 major cities in Dec qtr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Average office rental fell by up to 6 per cent year-on-year during the December quarter in Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata on lower demand for workspace amid the Covid pandemic, while it remained stable in Pune and Delhi-NCR, according to Vestian.

In its quarterly newsletter - The Connect Q4 2021, property consultant Vestian mentioned that the rental rose marginally by 1 per cent in Bengaluru as the office demand in the city remained strong from the IT companies. There were no major changes in rentals across seven cities during the October-December period compared with the previous quarter.

According to the data, the weighted average rental value fell 6 per cent in Kolkata to Rs 45 per sq ft a month during October-December 2021 as compared

with the year-ago period.

The average monthly rental value in Mumbai dropped 4 per cent to ₹ 120 per square feet, while Chennai saw a 3 per cent dip to ₹57 per square feet. The weighted average rental value in Hyderabad declined 2 per cent to ₹ 61 per square feet. Office rentals in Pune and Delhi-NCR remained stable at ₹70 and ₹ 65 per square feet, respectively.

"While the first two quarters of the year 2021 saw a cautious office market, with the second pandemic wave impacting occupier decisions, the succeeding quarters saw the market bounce back favourably owing to pent-up demand and strategic growth plans of large corporates," the report said.

However, the rise of Omicron variant at the year-end led the market to observe relative restraint, it pointed out. As per the report, gross office space

absorption across these seven major cities rose 8 per cent to 39.61 million square feet in 2021.

New office supply grew 20 per cent to 39.25 million square feet. Bengaluru continued to lead the way with 28 per cent share of the total absorption in these seven cities, followed by NCR and Hyderabad at 18.4 per cent and 17.6 per cent share, respectively.

The IT/ITeS sector continued to be the major demand driver of office absorption, though the year saw its share softening by a fair margin.

The co-working/managed office space segment, on the other hand, strengthened substantially in 2021, accounting for 15 per cent of the total absorption.

US-based Vestian has presence in Indian market and is one of the leading property consultants in India.

BARTY WINS AUSTRALIAN OPEN

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Ash Barty recovered from 5-1 down in the second set to win the Australian Open final 6-3, 7-6 (2) over Danielle Collins on Saturday, ending a 44-year drought for Australian women at their home Grand Slam tournament.

Barty was the first Australian woman into the singles final here since Wendy Turnbull in 1980 and is now the first Australian champion since Chris O'Neil in 1978.

The top-ranked Barty now has major titles on three surfaces, adding the hard court at Melbourne Park to her win on grass at Wimbledon last year and on clay at the French Open in 2019.

"This is just a dream come true for me," the 25-year-old Barty said.

"I'm just so proud to be an Aussie."

Evonne Goolagong Cawley, a tennis icon with seven Grand Slam titles and a trailblazer for Indigenous athletes from Australia, was a surprise guest to present the champion's trophy to Barty, who is part of a new generation of Indigenous stars.

O'Neil was involved in the night, too, after carrying the trophy into the stadium for the pre-match ceremony.

"I'm an incredibly fortunate and lucky girl to have so much love in my corner," Barty said, thanking her coach and support team, her family, the organizers and the crowd. Barty hadn't dropped a set and had only conceded one service game through six matches, against American Amanda Anisimova in the fourth round.

The 28-year-old Collins was the fourth American to take on Barty in four consecutive rounds. Barty had beaten Anisimova, Jessica Pegula and 2017 U.S. Open runner-up Madison Keys in straight sets.

Collins had spent more than four hours longer on court than Barty in her previous six matches, having to come back from a set and break down to beat Danish teenager Clara Tauson in the third round and rally from a set down to beat Elise Mertens in the fourth.

Barty took the first set after saving a break point in

the fifth game and then breaking in the next.

Not to be outdone, Collins hit back quickly with her high-intensity game, breaking Barty's serve in the second and sixth games to take a 5-1 lead.

Collins twice served for the set and twice was within two points of leveling the match and taking her first Grand Slam final to a deciding set. But Barty launched a comeback, picking up the energy from an almost full house in Rod Laver Arena, despite government restrictions on ticket sales in the COVID-19 pandemic. She won five of the next six games to force a tiebreaker and then took control by racing to a 4-0 lead.

"As an Aussie, the most important part of this tournament is being able to share it with so many people," Barty said.

"This crowd is one of the most fun I've ever played in front of.

You relaxed me, forced me to play my best tennis."

Barty congratulated Collins and told her she "absolutely" belonged in the Top 10, adding: "I know you'll be fighting for many of these in future." The run to the final was the best at a Grand Slam so far for Collins, who reached the semifinals in Australia in 2019 and the quarterfinals at Roland Garros.



Lakshya, Malvika to lead Indian team at Badminton Asia Team Championships

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India Open champion Lakshya Sen and Syed Modi International finalist Malvika Bansod will lead the Indian men's and women's squad in the Badminton Asia Team Championships to be played at Shah Alam, Malaysia from February 15-20.

The Badminton Association of India (BAI) announced a new look team for the continental team championship giving importance to the performances in the two All India Ranking tournaments played in Chennai and Hyderabad last month.

The players were selected on the basis of aggregate ranking points scored in the two events.

"We have been considering domestic tournaments for selection for a while now and selecting players in the top-25 world ranking directly.

But with most senior players recovering from Covid and injury, it is a good opportunity for us to give the bench strength opportunities to make their mark in the tournament," BAI secretary Ajay Singhania said in a statement.

The men's team had won the bronze

medal in the last edition of the tournament in Manila, Philippines while the women's team was withdrawn due to the pandemic as most players were not willing to travel then.

The men's doubles charge will be led by Kerala's PS Ravi Krishna and Udaykumar Shankarprasad, who also impressed with their performance against the experienced Malaysian combination of Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi at the India Open. The combination of Simran Singhi and Khushi Gupta along with the experienced Aarthi Sara Sunil and Riza Mahreen would look to make a mark in women's doubles.

Teams:

Men's singles: Lakshya Sen, Mithun Manjunath, Kiran George, Raghu M Doubles: PS Ravi Krishna/Udaykumar ShankarPrasad, Amsakarunan Hariharan/Ruban Kumar, Dingku Singh Konthoujam/Manjit Singh Khwairakpam.

Women's singles: Malvika Bansod, Aakarshi Kashyap, Ashmita Chaliha, Tara Shah Doubles: Simran Singhi/Khushi Gupta, V Nila/Arubala, Aarthi Sara Sunil/Riza Mahreen.

Starc wins maiden Allan Border medal

PTI ■ CANBERRA

Senior pacer Mitchell Starc claimed his Smaiden Allan Border medal while Ashleigh Gardner became the first indigenous person to win the Belinda Clarke award, the top two honours at Cricket Australia (CA) Awards.

Starc was honoured for his strong performance in all three formats of the game. He is only the fifth bowler in 22 years to win the award.

Gardener also bagged the recognition for the first time. She is the first indigenous player to clinch the top gong in Australian women's cricket.

"I never dreamt of ever winning this award. When I took the call I was in complete surprise," Gardner told Channel Seven.

"I'm still in shock. To be the first ever First Nations person to win this award is super special not only for me but for my family and my people too."

"I've certainly grown up both on and off the field and maturing off the field has an impact on my game. All I ever want to do when I go out with the ball or with the ball is to win for the team," Gardener added.



The awards were decided by a voting process for the period 2021-22.

The winners were decided by votes from players, umpires and media representatives throughout the year. The announcement came during the lunch break of the ongoing women's Ashes Test here.

Starc, who took 43 wickets across all formats in the 12-month period, edged out all-rounder Mitchell Marsh by one vote.

"I'm not really sure what words to say at the moment. It was a huge surprise. To look at some of those names who have won

GARDENER ALSO BAGGED THE RECOGNITION FOR THE FIRST TIME. SHE IS THE FIRST INDIGENOUS PLAYER TO CLINCH THE TOP GONG IN AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S CRICKET. "I NEVER DREAMT OF EVER WINNING THIS AWARD."

it before, it will take a bit to sink in. Hugely honoured to receive this award," Starc said.

Gardner was Australia's third-highest run-scorer and fifth-highest wicket-taker across the voting period, scoring 281 runs at an average of 35.10 that included four half centuries while also claiming nine wickets.

Daniel Chukwu's lone goal hand Jamshedpur 1-0 win



PTI ■ BAMBOLIM

Jamshedpur FC inflicted a huge blow to FC Goa's aspirations for a play-off berth with a solitary goal win in an Indian Super League (ISL) match here on Friday.

The win took Owen Coyle's men to second place in the league table but kept Derrick Pereira's men stuck at ninth place with four games without a win.

The solitary goal came through Daniel Chima Chukwu (49th minute), who scored on his first outing for

Jamshedpur after signing for them in the January transfer window.

The match had an eventful start with Chukwu sending his left-footed shot narrowly wide off the mark.

On the other end, Ivan Gonzalez hit the underside of the crossbar with a header. The rebound fell to Edu Bedia whose low shot was brilliantly saved by TP Rehenesh. The Gaurs threw in more subsequent attacks at the JFC defence but to no avail.

The first half was very feisty to say the least, which led to three yellow cards being handed out to Alex Lima, Anwar Ali and Daniel Chukwu respectively.

The injuries and stoppages led to four minutes of added time but neither team managed to break through the defences and score the opening goal.

The second half started with JFC pushing for a goal and they got one through the debutant Chukwu, whose volley was too powerful for Naveen Kumar. The custodian got both hands on the ball but could not prevent it from slipping into the back of the net.



Peru wins at Colombia 1-0 in key step for WC spot

AP ■ SAO PAULO

Edison Flores scored in the 85th minute, and Peru beat Colombia 1-0 for a key road win in its bid for a second consecutive World Cup appearance.

Flores lifted his country to a third consecutive victory in South American qualifiers. He beat David Ospina with a shot between the Colombian goalkeeper and the right post.

It was Peru's fourth shot on goal for the game.

Peru plays again Tuesday at home against third-place Ecuador, which can secure its ticket to Qatar with a victory.

Coach Ricardo Gareca agrees Peru scored a key win at Colombia, but insists his team will face three finals until the end of qualifying.

"We know we depend on our efforts and this team has to fight in each final. We have another one on Tuesday, and we are ready for that. We are facing tough teams that are also in need (of points)," Gareca said.

After Ecuador, Peru will take on Uruguay away and Paraguay at home in the end of March. Colombia wasted 30 opportunities against Peru. Coach Reinaldo Rueda's team has not scored for more than 450 minutes in South American qualifiers, which led fans to boo after the final whistle. "This streak is unexplainable," Rueda said in a press conference.

"When they have opportunities to score, the goal is closed. There's nine points left and we have to play for them."

Next up is another tough match Tuesday at second-place Argentina. Also Friday, Salomon Rondón led bottom-of-the-table Venezuela to a 4-1 victory over Bolivia. The striker scored in the 25th, 35th and 67th minutes. Darwin Machis also scored for Venezuela. Bolivia got its only goal from Bruno Miranda in the 38th minute. South America has four direct World Cup spots, and the fifth-place team will play an international playoff against an Asian rival for a berth. There are three more rounds to be played.

Domestic players elated at Ranji announcement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A bunch of seasoned domestic cricketers, starved of red ball cricket for the past two years, couldn't hide their excitement after hearing that premier domestic tournament, the Ranji Trophy will finally be held in 2022, albeit in two phases.

Organising a 38-team event amid the COVID-19 pandemic is a massive challenge for BCCI, whose secretary Jay Shah on Friday announced that Ranji Trophy knockouts could be held post IPL in June while the league stage can begin as early as second week of February.

Staging the event in parts adds to the challenge but for cricketers, who have been facing financial instability and not get-



ting a platform to move up Indian cricket's pathway ladder, playing with the red cherry only matters.

"Every domestic cricketer in the country is not thinking about the league phase or knockouts, no one is thinking about bubble or COVID, they just want to play.

"Playing is everything right now and rest will follow," said

star Saurashtra batter Sheldon Jackson, whose team has had an extended run as defending champions, with the last red ball game in the country held back in March 2020.

"We all very thankful to the BCCI which has decided to conduct red ball cricket even in these tough times. Only when you are able to play, you can think of climbing up the ladder.

"No doubt red ball is the toughest form of cricket but we all want to excel in it. It will be a challenge initially but when muscle memory comes back we should be fine," he added.

As per the event's format, each team will have to play five leagues games. That can be completed in a month with three rest days after every match.

Australia beat Pakistan to reach Super League semifinal

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND

Riding on some fine top-order batting, Australia became the third side to enter the ICC Under 19 World Cup Super League semifinals following a comprehensive 119-run win over Pakistan here.

They joined England and Afghanistan in the final four on a day when batting first was the order of the day. The United Arab Emirates set a target beyond hosts West Indies on their way to a Plate semifinal success, while Uganda were 35-run winners in the Plate play-off semifinal against Papua New Guinea.Half-centuries for Teague Wylie and Corey Miller, as well as a 47 from Campbell Kellaway, helped Australia to 276 for seven from their 50 overs and that proved far too much for Pakistan in Antigua. Barring a 50-run partnership



for the third wicket, Pakistan were always behind in their chase and eventually crumbled to 157 all out with the wickets shared among the Australian bowlers.

Pakistan won the toss and elected to field, but soon regretted that decision as Kellaway and Wylie (71) put on 86 for the first wicket. Kellaway was stumped off the

bowling of Qasim Akram (3-40), but that just brought Miller to the crease and he accelerated the run-rate on his way to 64. Their stand of 101 was brought to an end by Awas Ali, who had Wylie bowled, with Miller following soon after to leave Australia 203 for three with just under 10 overs remaining.

Skipper Cooper Connolly chipped in with 33 and William Salzmänn cracked a quickfire 25 off 14 balls from No.7 to set a competitive target. It soon became clear that it would be well beyond Pakistan, with Muhammad Shehzad and Haseebullah Khan both caught behind to leave their side 27 for two in the fifth over.

Abdul Faseeh (28) and Irfan Khan (27) started to rebuild before the latter was bowled by Salzmänn (3-37), and the wickets fell at regular intervals from then on.

India beat China 2-0 to win bronze, Japan win title

PTI ■ MUSCAT

Last edition champions India defeated China 2-0 to win a consolation bronze medal at the women's Asia Cup hockey tournament here on Friday.

The Indians left behind the disappointment of their semifinal defeat to Korea and controlled the proceedings in the first two quarters, scoring two goals in the process, to go into half time with a 2-0 lead against China. They, however, failed to score any more goals in the second half.

Japan emerged champions after beating Korea 4-2 in the summit clash later on Friday.

Earlier in the day, the Indians started brightly and earned a couple of penalty corners and from one such situation, Sharmila Devi gave her side the lead in the 13th minute, scoring from a rebound after Gurjit Kaur's initial flick was saved by the Chinese

THE INDIANS LEFT BEHIND THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF THEIR SEMIFINAL DEFEAT TO KOREA AND CONTROLLED THE PROCEEDINGS IN THE FIRST TWO QUARTERS, SCORING TWO GOALS IN THE PROCESS, TO GO INTO HALF TIME WITH A 2-0 LEAD AGAINST CHINA.



defence.

India continued in the same vein in the second quarter and had the better share of chances.

The Indians kept up the pressure on the Chinese defence with relentless raids and secured another penalty corner in the 19th minute which was converted by Gurjit with a superb drag-flick to make the scoreline 2-0.

China responded swiftly, securing a penalty corner which was brilliantly kept away by India captain and goalkeeper Savita Punia.

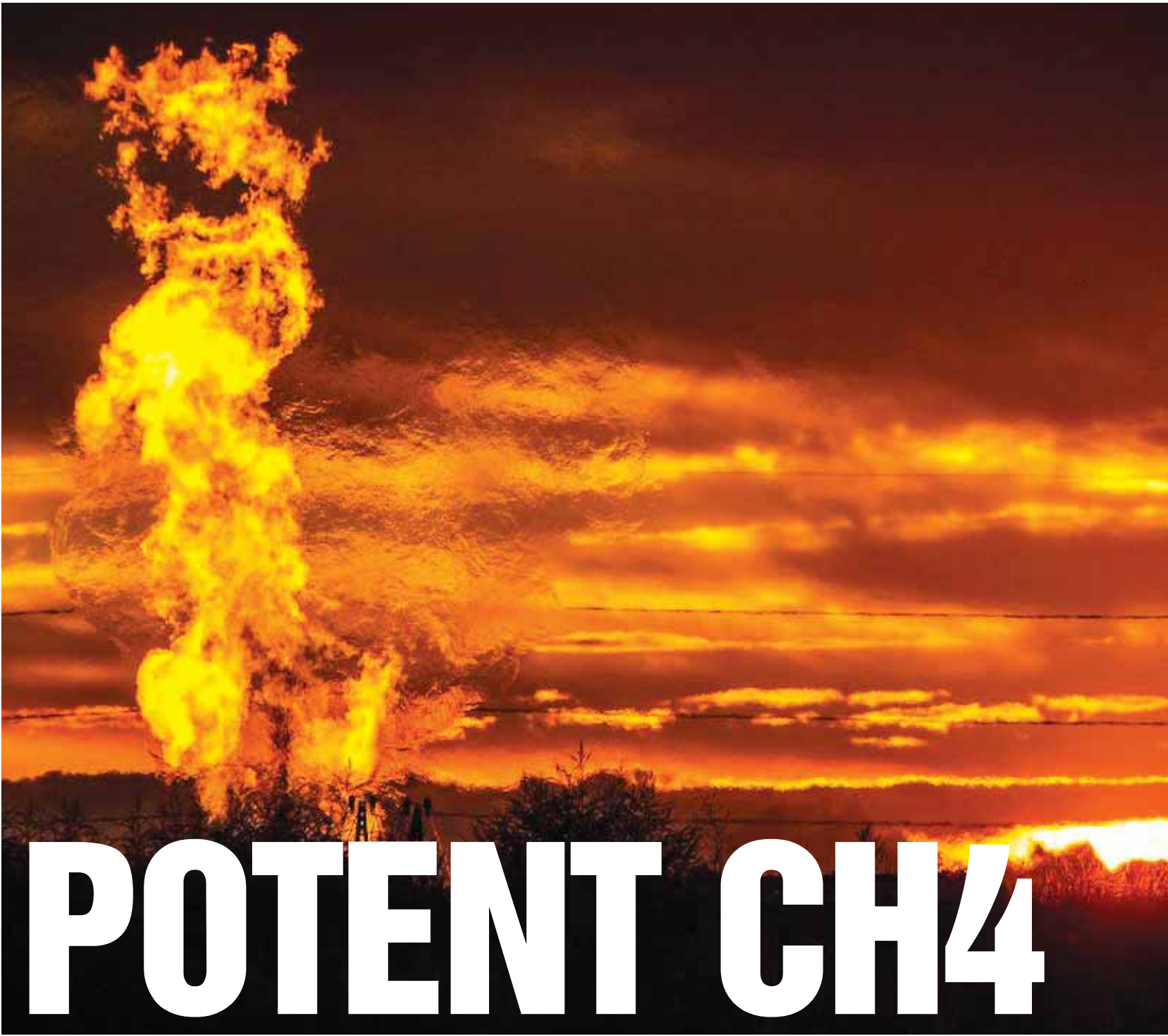
Down by two goals, China came out with more intent after the change of ends and tried to put pressure on the Indian defence but to no avail.

The Indians kept up the pressure on the Chinese defence at the start of the fourth and final quarter but failed to create any clear cut chances. China earned a penalty corner 10

minutes before time but the Indians defended in numbers to thwart any danger to their citadel. Towards the end of the match, China pressed hard and secured three consecutive penalty corners with two minutes left in the clock but lacked in final execution as the chances went wasted. Lack of match practice due to the COVID-19 pandemic after finishing a historic fourth at the Tokyo Olympics, cost defending champions India dearly as they produced inconsistent performances in crucial matches to crash out of the title race.

After thrashing lowly Malaysia 9-0 in their opener, India suffered a 0-2 defeat against Asian Games champions Japan before beating Singapore 9-1 to qualify for the semifinals.

But in the semifinals, some sloppy defending and poor penalty corner conversions put paid to India's hopes as they were beaten 2-3 by Korea.



POTENT CH4

It is a well-known fact that CO2 is contributing to global warming. But there are other greenhouse gases like methane that also influence climate change. The present speed at which the change is happening is disruptive. SHALINI SAKSENA speaks with climatologist PROFESSOR MURARI LAL who says that solution lies in newage technology

A study published by researchers at Duke University has thrown some alarming figures. It says that India has lost 259 billion hours of labour annually between 2001 and 2020 due to global warming. The loss of labour hours due to humid heat has cost India ₹46 lakh crore which is equivalent to almost seven per cent of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017, the study said.

Carbon dioxide, a by-product of fossil fuel combustion, is the principal greenhouse gas contributing to global warming. However, climate change is also influenced by greenhouse gases, including methane, nitrous oxide, and other industrial-process gases.

One is told that methane is 24 times more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide with important implications for climate change. "Although methane has a much shorter atmospheric lifetime than carbon dioxide (CO2) — around 12 years, compared with centuries for CO2 — it absorbs much more energy while in the atmosphere. The methane gas (CH4) accounts for 18 per cent of greenhouse gases, is responsible for more than a quarter of global warming which comes majorly from landfills, agriculture, and the energy industry. Thus, while methane tends to receive less attention than CO2 until now, reducing methane emissions will be critical for avoiding the worst effects of climate change," Professor Murari Lal, a climatologist says.

Besides the Glasgow Declaration and the parties' individual Nationally-Determined Commitments (NDCs) to limit emissions in COP 26 (as agreed under the Paris Agreement), more than 100 countries signed a first-of-its-kind pledge to cut emissions of methane by 30 per cent by 2030, in combating climate change. The signatories represent 70 per cent of the global economy, including six of the world's top 10 methane polluters. Reducing methane emissions from oil and gas operations is among the most cost-effective and impactful actions that governments can take to achieve global climate goals.

"The importance of this breakthrough in COP 26 can't be overlooked and yet it sounds too good to be true. A major concern is that several methane polluting nations — including Turkmenistan and Russia — haven't signed the pledge. Similarly, the commitment is voluntary and lacks enforcement mechanisms, as is the Paris Agreement. Therefore, its success will depend on countries holding themselves (and each other) accountable. Unfortunately, the world has a bad track record when it comes to this," Lal opines

Unlike CO2, methane only lasts for 12 years in the atmosphere. Methane, that has a higher global warming potential, traps heat in the atmosphere 80 times more effectively than CO2; therefore even a tiny amount of it in the atmosphere can have huge effects on the climate. Reducing methane emissions in the atmosphere will pay off very quickly for the planet and for human health. Also, up to half of human-generated methane emissions can be

cut at low or even negative cost using existing technology.

The world's wetlands contribute about three-quarters (75 per cent) of the enduring natural sources of methane. Agriculture and livestock on the other hand is the largest anthropogenic source of methane emissions, accounting for around a quarter of the total, followed by the energy sector, which includes coal, oil, natural gas (most of it is methane), and biofuels. The oil and gas sector emitted around 70 metric tonne of methane (approximately 2.1 Gt CO2-eq) in 2020 — over five per cent of global energy-related greenhouse gas emissions.

"The present speed of warming of our planet is much faster than what we have experienced historically, and climate change at that speed is disruptive. It is not just a matter of getting warmer; traditional growing seasons and weather patterns will change, disrupting our established ways of life, including how we produce our food. It is in this context that perhaps reducing methane emissions is one of the most cost-effective strategies to rapidly reduce the rate of warming and contribute significantly to global efforts to limit temperature rise to 1.5° C. The UN has called for a 45 per cent reduction in methane emissions below a 2030 business-as-usual baseline, an aggressive cut that would avoid nearly 0.3° C of global warming by the 2040s, while improving human health and agricultural yields through reduced ground level ozone," Lal says.

Wetlands remain a major area of concern with respect to climate change. Recent studies suggest that high rates of anaerobic (no oxygen) methane oxidation in freshwater wetlands can substantially reduce atmospheric emissions of methane. Methane, primarily from agriculture and livestock, contributes 16 per cent of all anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. Waste management, energy use (which includes coal, oil, natural gas and biofuel), and biomass burning also contribute to CH4 emissions.

Methane routinely leaks out from oil and gas wells, pipelines, and processing facilities into the atmosphere, exacerbating climate change. Methane is also emitted by natural sources like natural wetlands. Past estimates have suggested that about 2.5 per cent of human-induced climate warming can be attributed to rice farming.

"Rice production is estimated to be responsible for 10 per cent to 12 per cent of total methane global emissions, mainly due to its anaerobic decomposition during its production processes. The flooded rice fields in waterlogged soil is a perfect breeding ground for methanogens, the microbes that produce methane gas," Lal tells you

Approximately 20 per cent of India's anthropogenic methane emissions come from enteric fermentation, manure management, coal mines, municipal solid waste, natural gas, and oil systems. Wetland rice fields have been identified as one of the major sources of methane emission in India.

"Methane emission from wetland rice cultivation is expected to increase due to the like-

ly intensification of rice cultivation in the coming decades. Alternate wetting and drying irrigation can effectively reduce CH4 emissions and total water use. Improved high yielding rice varieties together with efficient cultivation techniques will also significantly contribute to the curtailment of the methane emission fluxes," Lal says.

China is responsible for the most emissions from agricultural production, followed by India, Brazil and the US during the past 20 years. Together, these top four agricultural emitters were responsible for 37 per cent of global agricultural production emissions. China and India's agricultural production emissions have increased by 16 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively since 2000. However, in terms of per capita agricultural emissions, the top three countries are Australia, Argentina and Brazil.

"In order to keep warming to 1.5° C, the limit scientists assert is necessary for prevent-

IN ORDER TO KEEP WARMING TO 1.5 DEGREE C, THE LIMIT SCIENTISTS ASSERT IS NECESSARY FOR PREVENTING SOME OF THE WORST IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN TECHNOLOGY, POLICIES & FARMING PRACTICES WOULD BE NECESSARY TO REDUCE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION EMISSIONS BY 40 PER CENT BETWEEN 2016 AND 2050 AND INCREASE CARBON REMOVAL FROM THE ATMOSPHERE WITH VAST AMOUNTS OF REFORESTATION

ing some of the worst impacts of climate change, significant changes in technology, policies and farming practices would be necessary to reduce agricultural production emissions (mainly nitrous oxide from synthetic nitrogen fertilizer use and production, and carbon dioxide, both from energy used to produce fertilizer and other chemicals, and from generating electricity for farm use) by 40 per cent between 2016 and 2050 and increase carbon removal from the atmosphere with vast amounts of reforestation," he explains.

He tells you that majority of agricultural production emissions come from raising livestock.

"Globally, more than 70 billion animals are raised annually for human consumption. The

biggest single source is methane from cow burps and manure. Enteric fermentation (fermenting acetate and H2-CO2 in soils into methane and carbon dioxide) — a natural digestive process that occurs in ruminant animals such as cattle, sheep and goats — accounts for about 40 per cent of agricultural production emissions in the past 20 years (primarily methane, mostly from cattle digesting grass, and both methane and nitrous oxide from manure management)," he says.

In India, major contribution to methane emission by livestock during the past few decades has from buffalo, followed by cattle, swine, goat, sheep and other species. Buffalo shared about half (50.8 per cent) and cattle 39.6 per cent of the total manure methane emission.

Interestingly, only marginal changes in head count of these livestock have taken place in India during the past one and a half decade. Methane emissions in future from dairy and other categories of livestock populations could be reduced substantially through proper dairy herd management (and diet management — e.g., feeding garlic plants to live stocks) without compromising animal production.

The natural gas demand is expected to grow worldwide in the coming decades in contrasts to coal and oil, which would drop globally by almost 60 per cent and 30 per cent respectively by 2040. Fossil fuel operations currently generate nearly one-third of all methane emissions from human activity. Action on methane is therefore one of the most effective steps the energy sector can take to mitigate climate change.

Quantitatively, the energy sector is responsible for around 25 per cent to 30 per cent of the total anthropogenic methane emissions which includes emissions from coal, oil, natural gas and biofuels. In the oil and natural gas industry, methane is released during upstream production when natural gas is flared or vented. Methane is also released in small leaks, called fugitive emissions, from faulty valves and drilling equipment (unintentional releases) used in drilling and production.

One of the biggest hurdles to effective regulation of methane from the energy sector—including oil, natural gas, coal and bioenergy is the extent of uncertainty — about the magnitude of emissions, emissions sources and variability including lack of reliable data on leaks.

According to IEA estimates, the methane emissions from the oil and gas sector will need to fall to around 20 metric tonne per year by 2030 — a drop of more than 70 per cent from levels in 2020. It is recognised now that methane leaks are not an inevitable part of today's oil and gas business. They can be reduced cost-effectively — and this has to happen if the world is to address climate change.

Considering average natural gas prices from 2017-2021, almost 45 per cent of current methane emissions from oil and gas operations could be avoided with measures that would have no net cost. Policy makers have at their disposal well-established policy tools that

have already been demonstrated in multiple contexts to drive these emissions reductions, for instance Leak Detection and Repair (LDAR) requirements, staple technology standards and a ban on non-emergency flaring and venting.

Unfortunately, the methane releases and leaks in the oil and natural gas industry are often intermittent and easy to miss. In local areas, ground-based sensors can detect leaks, but they are not very effective.

Drone and airplane surveys are time-consuming and costly, and most of the world is inaccessible by air.

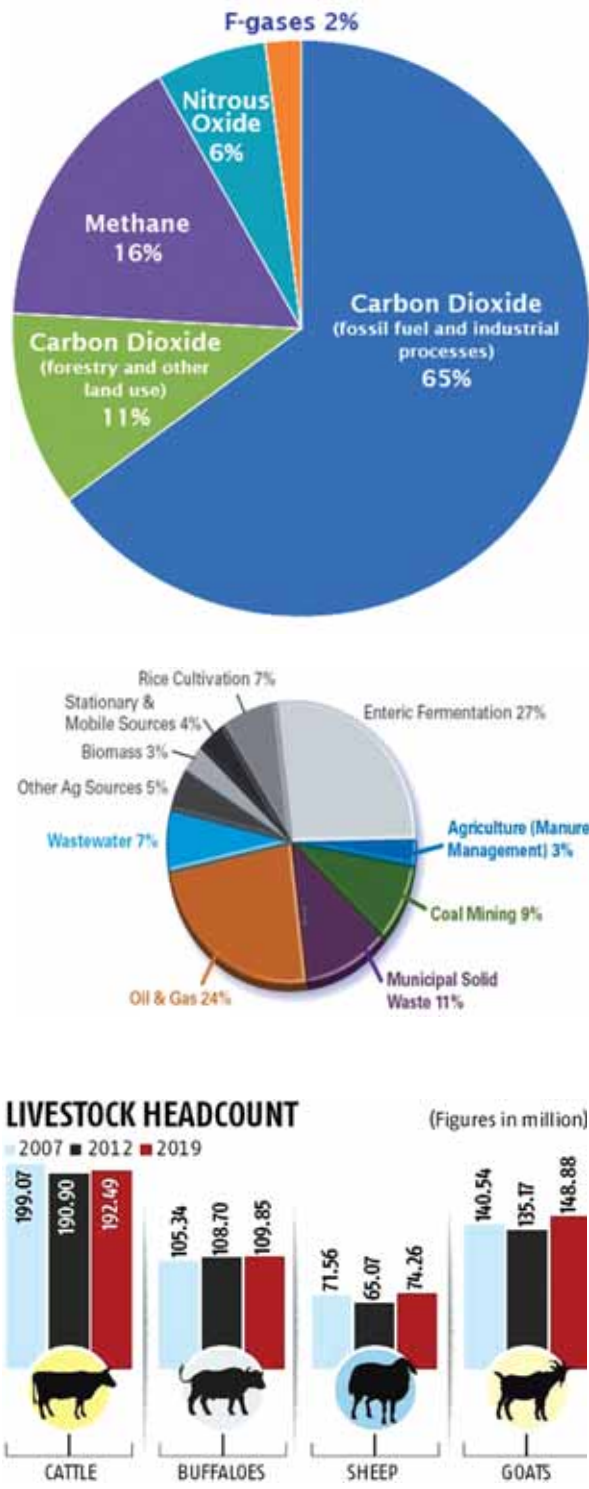
The solution lies in powerful new imaging technology. "A methane-hunting satellite can sniff out the emissions and track them to their sources. Various satellites with multiple sensors in operation today can provide estimates of the atmospheric concentration of methane across geographic areas," Lal says.

For example, the satellite Sentinel 5P (Precursor), part of the European Space Agency (ESA) Copernicus programme, provides readings of methane concentration across areas of 5 km by 7.5 km, covering the whole world on average every four days. The satellite GHGSat covers a much smaller area each day but can provide data at a very fine spatial resolution (around 50 m by 50 m).

"The coverage and accuracy of these readings is only going to improve, especially with the envisaged launches of the Environmental Defense Fund's MethaneSat, ESA's Sentinel 5 and additional satellites from GHGSat. Targeting emitters on a global scale from space in the coming years would be an important new tool for routine sustained monitoring of greenhouse gases for developing regulations and guiding enforcement to combat climate change," Lal tells you.

We have never been more in need of urgent action than now to combat climate change. There has been a shift in the scientific community's awareness of the scale and speed of needed action. There is not much time left to avoid setting the world on a dangerous, potentially catastrophic trajectory.

"For the climate crisis to be resolved, the world must first reduce greenhouse gas emissions significantly and then achieve net-zero emissions by the middle of the century or earlier. Methane leaks from abandoned oil and gas wells must be prevented and coal mines must be cleaned up. The challenge presented by methane emissions from oil and gas in tackling the major leaks promptly would also require key oil companies to pursue and maintain high operational standards, and policy makers to put in place well-designed technical support and policy regulations. A smart national action plan would be needed that would require polluters to pay for their methane emissions — and offer oil and gas companies help in cleaning up their act. Since methane is a valuable product in the oil and gas industry and can often be sold if it is captured, this revenue can help offset some of the costs of deploying the measures needed to prevent the emissions and leaks," Lal says.





the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

Bapu: A Hindu Patriot

Making of a Hindu Patriot is based mostly on Gandhi's own correspondences & conversations

2



4

Live life at ease for peace

By becoming aware, we may understand how & where we fit into the large & complex game plan of life

Sometimes you've got to know when it's time to leave the party
— Victoria Beckham



The fact remains that Hindu mythological stories are so effective in the contemporary times that they manage to convey the crux of the stories to the listener and thus guide him/her towards a better life, writes Shubira Prasad

Mythology is all pervasive. The myth of yesterday is the reality of today, in a new attire, new thoughts, new circumstances and new approaches. We probably do not understand or have not been able to define this new identity, which is there in our blood from time immemorial and will probably will always be. Thomas Mann, the German Nobel Prize novelist, declared, "Life is a steady mythical identification, a procession in the footsteps of others, a sacred repetition."

The Indian sub-continent amply portrays and follows this thought. We can witness this by the plethora of books and movies that are based on mythology in the present scenario. Hindu religion is supposed to be the oldest in the world. The Hindu mythological stories are thought to have taken place around 5,000 years to 10,000 years back. There has been a natural evolution of the happenings or the stories, initially vocal, later in writing, from generation to generation through centuries. The beauty of the whole thing is that though there may be geographical or other differences, stories which have been taken from the *Veda* or *Puranas* or other such highly revered books, the original intent remains the same. The differences could be in the imagery or the languages. The feelings and thoughts of men and women, that is thoughts of love, hate, jealousy, greed, power, corruption, intrigue, insecurity etc. remain the same.

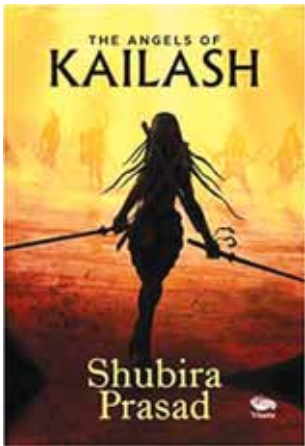
The fact remains that these mythological stories are so effective in the contemporary times that they manage to convey the crux of the stories to the listener and thus guide him/her towards a better life. Many Hindu mythological stories point out in the direction that maybe our ancestors (or Gods) were from a different place other than Earth and were more advanced than us in all aspects of life, specially science. Some of these points are:

- Take the case of the *Pushpak Viman*. It was with the *devtas*, then with Kuber from whom Ravan wrestled it. Then after *Bhagwan* Ram defeated Ravan, he took the *Pushpak Viman* to Ayodhya and finally left for Vaikunth in the *Pushpak Viman*.
- Arjun too travelled to visit *Devlok* in a *Pushpak Viman*. There are many more examples of the *Pushpak Viman* scattered throughout the ancient Hindu texts.
- There is a great possibility of nuclear weapons being used in the *Mahabharat* and in other ancient times. In *Mahabharat*, there was approximately a destruction of 1.5 billion people in eighteen days. This is not possible unless weapons of mass destruction like the nuclear bombs were used.
- Cloning too was practiced during the *Mahabharat*. According B.G. Matapurkar, the

renowned medical researcher and multilingual poet, the Kauravas were products of technology which was not heard of or developed yet. He claims that the Kauravas were created by splitting the single embryo into hundred parts and growing each part in a separate container. It can be said the doctors and scientists at that time not only knew about test tube babies but also had the technology to grow human fetuses outside human body. Similarly, Mahadev and Parvati's son Kartikeya too was born outside the body.

- Abhimanyu was the son of Arjun and Subhadra. When Subhadra was carrying Abhimanyu in her womb, Arjun once explained the intricacies of the formation of the *Chakravyuh* to her. Even as a fetus, Abhimanyu could listen and understand the entrance procedure of the *Chakravyuh*, but he could not hear the exit procedure, because his mother had fallen asleep. This was ridiculed and taken as a mythical story, but now it is accepted by scientists that this is very much a possibility. According to Dr. Makoto Shichida, in his book, "Right Brain Education in Infancy," the right brain is active during gestation.
- The Ram Setu which was built by *Bhagwan* Ram is an engineering feat. It was made by two architects Nal and Neel. The bridge of floating rocks was made between India and Lanka. Popular belief says that it was faith in *Bhagwan* Ram that the floating bridge was made in such a short time. But it was very superior civil engineering methods through which the bridge was constructed.
- Plastic surgery and organ transplant: Probably *Bhagwan* Ganesha's head transplant was the first known transplant on this Earth. Folklore says that Mahadev cut off child Ganesha's head when Ganesha did not let him enter his mother's chamber. When Parvati saw this, she began wailing. After getting to know the story, Mahadev was repentant. He sent his people to procure the head of the first living being that they could find. The result was an elephant's head which Mahadev attached to Ganesha's body.
- Our ancient texts are full of such instances where it is proved that our ancient times were much more advanced than our present times, like Sanjay's *Divya Drishti*.

Since there is no written record, only word of mouth stories through the generations, people call them just stories or even mythology. Many of them could be just figments of imaginations too as word of mouth does get exaggerated especially when it is verbally passed through the generations. But the fact that the messages of these stories have survived for so long, goes on to prove that the messages are pretty strong and will continue to guide in the future too.



ALL OUR GREAT EPICS ARE BROADLY CATEGORISED AS MYTHOLOGY. IT IS BELIEF AND FAITH AND CRITICAL SCIENTIFIC THINKING TOO, THAT MYTHOLOGY IS TAKEN SERIOUSLY BY THE NON-BELIEVERS ALSO



Apart from the above points, there are many other moot and interesting happenings in the so-called mythological periods. Some of these are:

- According to the Hindu scriptures, the civilisation is divided time wise into four *Yugas*. The *Vedas* state that the first *Yuga*, the *Satya*, was the purest and the holiest of the *Yugas*. Slowly and steadily, degeneration began creeping in the other *Yugas*. *Kalyug* is said to be the last and the most degenerate of the four *Yugas*. It has been predicted, that in the end of the *Kalyug*, the world will be destroyed, and the previous cycle of the *Yugas* will be repeated.
- Hindu mythology states that the first *Yuga* or the *Satya Yug*, spanned a period of 1,72,80,000 years. It was the age of truth enlightenment, virtue, and reason. It was the golden age. Because of the ideal state of mind and body, the normal height of a person was approximately 31 feet and people lived for hundreds and thousands of years.
- Next comes the *Treta Yug*, second of the *Yugas*. By the end of the *Satya Yug* and the beginning of the *Treta Yug*, the purity of the *Satya Yug* had begun diminishing somewhat. According to the ancient scripts the *Treta Yug* was of 1,296,000 human years. *Tamas* and *Rajas Gunas* had now begun mixing with the purity of thoughts and deeds. A human being's physiology and life span too had become shorter.
- The third *Yug* was the *Dwapar Yug*. It is said that in the *Dwapar Yug*, the good and the evil had become equal to each other. Thirst for power had reared its ugly head as amply personified in the *Mahabharat*. *Dwapar Yug* is said to have lasted 864,000 years and the average life span shortened to about 1,000 years.
- The last age of the *Yug* cycle is the *Kali Yug*. It is the shortest *Yug* and will last for 432,000 human years. Approximately 5,000 years have passed of the *Kali Yug*. Corruptions of all kinds will be prevalent in this *Yug*. There will be little, or no conscience left. Human beings will be at the lowest both in terms of physicality and intellect. The average life span will be from 100 to 120 years and the average height will be between 5 to 6 feet. It has also been predicted that in the last stages of the *Kalyug*, man's life span will be around 20 years.

All our great epics are broadly categorised as Mythology. It is belief and faith and critical scientific thinking too, that mythology is taken seriously by the non-believers also. Though the level of depravity has and will go up to the highest level, it has also been claimed that it is in the *Kalyug* that spirituality will be at its highest level. I believe this will be due to the extensive reading of our great epics. Thus, the belief and guidance in the so-called mythological epics will greatly help the emancipation of mankind in the present.

Two of the greatest and the most popular epics are the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat*. Apart from these there are other equally great and influential epics which leave a great impact on humankind. Some of these epics are the *Raghuvamsha*, the *Budhacharita*, *Shishupalvadha*, the *Kirtarjuniya*, the *Manimekalai*, the *Silapadikaram*, the *Kumarsambhava* and *Shri Ramcharitmanas*. All these epics teach us how to live a peaceful and moralistic life.

We do not think much about it, but it is the so-called mythology, from which we follow our ubiquitous traditions like the Holi, Diwali and Dussehra. These traditions have been set from the times of the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat* and even before that. They still teach us about right and wrong, why wrong should not be tolerated and why victories over evil should be celebrated. Unfortunately, this line has blurred so much in the present context, that we fail to differentiate between good and evil.

The social evils have crept in our society so surreptitiously that we invariably fail to recognise good and evil. In this *Kalyug*, we have stopped working for the good of mankind and become apathetic, lethargic, and work only towards the smallest gains, which are nihilistic and fallible in the long run. In other words, we have forsaken our vision. It is here that the role of mythology comes in. Reading of the great epics teach us bravery and self-confidence. They teach us how to face tragedies, hatred, betrayal, and major losses. Where is the motivation in our present lives? The only motivation is to procure wealth any which way, even killing and looting.

I am clubbing mythology and epics together here. Many scientists now agree that many modern-day weapons can be traced back to the ancient times when celestial weapons were used by *Bhagwan* Ram or by the characters of *Mahabharat*. I have described some of these divine weapons in my trilogy of the war between demons and human beings too. One such instance was when the protagonist of the book 'The Demons of Jaitraya', used the *Narayan astra* to destroy the demons. The *Narayan astra* can be likened to the invention of missiles, which locks on to a target, finds it and finishes it. I have used several other celestial weapons in my second book of the trilogy, 'The Angels of Kailash', too. The mode of transportation, either the *Pushpak Viman* or any other viman can be comparable to the helicopters and the other aircrafts that we have today.

To sum up we can say that the role of mythology in the present context is to enhance and make us aware of our cultural identity, integrity, and our very existence.

The author is an educationist, writer, and an astrologer. Her latest book, The Angels of Kailash, has been published by Vitasta

Tulip of Istanbul is a historical novel depicting the Ottoman Empire's most glorious times in art and aesthetics, elegance and grandeur of dreams. At the same time, it was an era of splurge and wastage, of economic and social collapse. Known as the Tulip Age, this period saw in 1730 a great public revolt which changed the course of Turkey's destiny. The story is interwoven with historical and cultural details, introducing the reader to life within royal palaces and dervish lodges, horticultural secrets about growing exclusive tulips, innovative treatment for the mentally unstable in the asylum, torture devices in the prison, and conspiracies hatched in coffee houses and hamams by disaffected revolutionaries and gangsters.

Burkina Faso military can't win war against jihadi

Burkina Faso, a West African country, has fallen into the hands of the country's military. Its armed forces have ousted democratically elected President Roch Marc Christian Kabore who was in power since 2015. The main reason behind the military takeover seems for now is to crush the growing tide of Islamic fundamentalist forces as the Kabore failed to tackle the menace. The mutinous soldiers quietly stormed his house and took him to safe custody. Meanwhile, Captain Sidore Kader Ouderaogo, the spokesperson of the military, who addressed the media immediately after the coup, said that the military has dissolved the Government and the National Assembly and suspended the Constitution.

Why the Army has taken such a drastic and immediate step? For long, both the Army and the people have been complaining about the inaction of Kabore against the rising militancy of al-Qaeda and Islamic State (ISIS) in the country. And the deposed President was not adequately supporting the security forces in the fight against fast-engulfing insurgency of the jihadi.

How serious was the threat posed by the Islamic militancy in the country? Indeed, the chaos sparked by the Islamic jihadi is spreading in this poor nation, similar to what is happening in many other African nations. And the Government of Kabore has been facing growing public criticism for a long time for failing to stem the roots of militants' insurgency. These terror groups have brought a large swathe of lands under their control by displacing about 1.4 million people over the years.

The statement released by the Army came from an organisation called the Patriotic Movement for Safeguard and Restoration or MPSR. Precisely, the MPSR is an almost unheard identity that claims to represent almost all factions of the Army that desperately wanted to put an end to the reign of Kabore.

The military leader behind the quiet coup in Burkina Faso, Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, once started his career as a part of the prestigious presidential guard of former President Blaise Compaore, who ruled the country till 2014. Compaore had to quit as massive popular uprising came up against him all around the country. Damiba studied in France at a military academy and had a master's in criminal sciences from there. Interestingly, he had been in



People take to the streets of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on January 25, 2022, to rally in support of the new military junta that ousted democratically elected President Roch Marc Christian Kabore and seized control of the country

AP

the forefront in the country's fight against Islamic militancy in the past. He also opposed a military coup in 2015 that lasted for nearly a week. The 41-year-old officer penned down a book on Islamic militancy in 2021 called "West African Armies and Terrorism: Uncertain Responses?" It is Damiba who could now save the country from slipping into an abyss. Ironically, the chaos in Burkina Faso did not all emerge in the country itself. Its roots lie in neighbouring Mali, a long terror-infested nation that has witnessed the evil designs of major Islamic groups of western Africa.

Islamic militancy has been on the rise in Burkina Faso since 2015. Nearly 2,000 lives have been lost in terror attack since then. In fact, schools are getting closed in several parts of the country as terror attacks and networks have become rampant. In June 2021, the terrorists had taken the lives of 100 people in the northern village of Solhan. And this time, terrorists have crossed over to Burkina Faso from neigh-

boursing Mali. This Solhan saga prompted the Opposition forces to demand the immediate resignation of Kabore. He then had to immediately reshuffle the Government and appointed himself as the Defence Minister of the country. But by November 2021, another ghastly attack on the Inata military base ramped up the cry against the Government all over the country. During this attack, more than 50 security men were killed. The worst part of the tragedy was that these soldiers were sending requests for food and more ammunitions two weeks before the attack which never reached them. This being another setback for Kabore, he immediately sacked the Government by appointing a new Prime Minister and Defence Minister ahead of national reconciliation dialogue with the Opposition.

How the trouble started in Burkina Faso? Despite West Africa's security and political volatility, Burkina Faso enjoyed a relatively calm atmosphere for some years in the past. But this fragile stability did not last

for long time. It all came to a halt when a popular uprising suddenly brought down the regime of long-time former President Compaore in 2014. Again, a military coup in 2015 left the country's military widely divided about the future of the nation. And in the same year, Kabore was elected on a promise to unify the country.

Clearly, the trouble began in Burkina Faso with the coming of Compaore to power in the year 1987. He took power in that year through a coup and managed the first four elections till 2010. But in the same year, his election victory was widely contested. Also people and Opposition parties came out to protest his attempt to amend the country's Constitution and extend his rule. Finally, he had to quit in 2014 and took refuge in Ivory Coast. And then, his former Prime Minister and national assembly President Kampore took over in November 2015.

From 2015 onwards, capital city Ouagadougou and most parts of the north of the country encountered constant kid-

nappings and attacks mounted by various terror groups either affiliated to al-Qaeda or the ISIS. On January 15, 2016, the jihadists attacked the posh Splendid Hotel and a restaurant killing nearly 30 people, mostly westerners. This sudden strike of the Islamists shocked the Western Governments, particularly the year-old Government of Kampore. Further, this indicated the vulnerability of the security system at the very heart of the country. By 2017, the former colonial power France backed G5 forces began its cross border joint operations in three West African nations — Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

However, with all these multi-national operations, the jihadists did not relent their targeted attacks. This time, the terror outfits mounted their assault on French forces and its embassy in the capital, killing 8 soldiers and injuring about 85 civilians in the beginning of the year 2018. The Government of Kampore couldn't be of much help against the massive forces of the terrorists. But

Ouagadougou simply clamped a national emergency in various provinces by the end of the 2018. And the worst descended in Burkina Faso in 2019. Terror-related incidents have become a regular affair across the country, almost pushing the country into the brink of a massive civil war like scenario.

A helpless Kampore, by putting all the blames on the Armed Forces, simply sacked the head of the Army and brought a new government to the capital. This time by the end of 2019, Burkina Faso saw a massive attack by the armed fighters over an army base near Mali border, called Arbinda that led to the death of more than 42 people. In the midst of the crisis, Kampore got re-elected to the presidency in November 2020, but many voters could not cast their ballot because of the wide-ranging threats from the radical groups. And Kampore's second term witnessed chaos across Burkina Faso.

Meanwhile, the UN, the West African bloc known as the Economic Community of

West African States (ECOW-AS) and the African Union condemned the sudden power grab by the Burkina Faso military. Currently, the whereabouts of Kabore, who won the second term in office in 2020 is not known. Many of the anti-government protesters who directly supported military takeover say that the ECOW-AS does not care about their country and the international community is simply condemning terrorist violence in Burkina Faso.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said in a statement that he strongly condemns any attempted takeover of government by the force of arms, calling it a coup. He also said that the coup leaders must lay down their arms and ensure the safety of the President and the protection of the country's institutions. Both the ECOW-AS and the African Union held the soldiers responsible for safety of Kabore. The US said it is deeply concerned about the developments in Burkina Faso and urged a swift return to civilian rule. Josep Borrell, the European Union's High Representative, said the bloc was very worried about the evolution of the situation in Burkina Faso. French President Emmanuel Macron condemned the coup and said that he planned to hold talks on the matter with regional leaders. Till 1960, Burkina Faso was a French colony when it got independence.

Interestingly, the Chinese Foreign Ministry also reacted to the political developments in Burkina Faso and called for all parties in the country to peacefully resolve differences via dialogue and safeguard national stability.

For now, the military takeover is fine. If the Army thinks, it can handle the terror threat posed by the Islamists, it is purely misguided. This jihadi network is too big to be countered by the ill-equipped Army of Burkina Faso. With the growing economic and political instability in the country, now the fundamentalists will be able to strike back and spread more terror across this poor nation.

(Dr Makhan Saikia has taught political science and international relations for over a decade in institutions of national and international repute after specialisation in globalisation and governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He is the chief editor of the Journal of Global Studies, an international research journal)

The Army has got widespread support from the people as they believe the international community is not doing anything against terrorist violence in Burkina Faso. For now, the military takeover is fine. But if the Army thinks it can handle the terror threat posed by the Islamists, it is mistaken. The jihadi network is too big to be crushed by the ill-equipped Army of Burkina Faso. With the growing economic and political instability in the country, the jihadi will be able to strike back and spread more terror across this poor nation



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Combating terrorism during pandemic

India should have in place a multilayered security apparatus to promptly deal with the issues related to funding of terrorists activities and cyber terrorism by enhancing the technological innovation and tightening border and maritime security information gathering exercise



SUDHIR HINDWAN

At a time when the coronavirus pandemic has hogged the limelight, terror organisations from across the border have unleashed a wave of terror in Kashmir to attract attention from the media to upturn the diminishing morale of the mercenaries.

Seen in this perspective are the recent sinister designs of the terror forces in Pulwama and Shopian districts of the Valley. In the past few days, the insurgency has resulted in the martyrdom of five Army soldiers and three CRPF men in the Valley.

This highlights the continued challenges the Government faces on this terror front despite exigencies of its war on Covid-19, which has come as a hindrance in the resolve to fight terror.

There is an urgent need for creating a long route of combined international mechanism to deal with monster head on. And within the country, India should have in place a multilayered security apparatus to promptly deal

with the issues related to funding of terrorists activities and cyber terrorism by enhancing the technological innovation and tightening border and maritime security information gathering exercise.

India needs to be quite agile and very prompt in case of a surprise challenge. Hence, cooperation in building communication capability and management of security arrangements to deal with any kind of threat is the main weapon in the combat strategy.

Although India has boosted cooperation in this direction, the catch here is how to generate prudence to anticipate any possible threat from insurgents.

There is strong need for a quick mechanism to facilitate cooperation between the security and defence establishment among the nations of the world. It should chalk out strategies how to deal with the worst scenario in which biological and chemical weapons fall into the hands of new

breed of terrorists.

International cooperation in terms of forming strict laws and regulations to prevent the possession of biological and chemical weapons can provide a strategic management in dealing with the worst form of terrorism. Cooperation between the Government and the media can ensure quality assurance and positive outlook in patching the differences and defeating terrorism.

India has already in place a mechanism that gathers sufficient data about the area within which the event is unfolding. There has been a hidden strategy to whip up religious sentiments that has helped certain terrorist organisations create and reinforce their base to indulge in proxy war with States across the globe. New fear psychosis induced by terrorists is more pernicious since it involves local populace in creating disturbance through stone pelting and shouting anti-India slogans.

Besides, the rampant use of

battery operated improvised explosive devices in public places has become an important part of their tactics.

A combating strategy has to be a combination of various tactics such as eliciting prior knowledge about the possible terrorist attack, learning secretive mission of the intruders and creating cognitive dissonance through relentless application of latest information on changing strategies with feedback from those deployed and constant interactive communication with various branches dealing with law and order maintenance on daily basis.

Therefore, there is an urgent need for integrated programmes and services which support both Army and local police making them more efficient with present circumstances of dealing with the worst form of propaganda terror.

Many efforts have been made by a number of nations to control State-sponsored terrorism, such as through eco-

nomical sanctions, but so far they have not reached a consensus either at the national or global level.

During the last two decades, increasing drug smuggling and the unholy nexus between drug smugglers and terrorists have posed a serious problem to the internal State-security networks and compelled various nations to organise themselves and wage a relentless war against such a nexus.

But mere implementation of vigorous drug laws cannot become effective unless the judicial procedure is modified for ensuring speedy trials. The continuing uncertainties with regard to terrorism have encouraged various countries to launch psychological warfare against terrorism.

The London Economic Summit Conference, organised by NATO States and Japan a few years ago, proved to be another landmark for the eradication of terrorism. It was discussed in detail to attack at the root of terrorism.

Creation of general awareness and organisation of public support against terrorist acts could be of immense use.

While it is desirable to allow police and the Armed forces to employ better informed judgement about local problems, there is, of course, a danger that this attempt of the Government could dilute the benefits to those deemed deserving and, thus, any possibility of peace and negotiation.

Rapid international transportation and use of sophisticated weapons have helped the expansion of terrorist networks globally. Besides, the new suicide squads have left the entire security apparatus shocked.

As religiously-motivated attacks increase globally, the concept that one man's terrorist can be another man's freedom fighter must be done away with.

The local populace should cooperate with the law enforcement machinery even at the cost of personal misery while

prompt and strict decisions should be undertaken by various nations for controlling terrorists psychologically.

In a changing environment, the security apparatus and police need to diversify activities by bringing together technical and professional expertise based on many decades of experience in maintaining internal security.

In this regard, the most crucial aspect is to develop the capability to anticipate security needs.

The web of myriad challenges entangled into challenges posed by the paradoxes of globalisation has finally brought about a paradigm shift at the global level wherein there has been a confused struggle searching for religious and ideological interlinkages against the stark realities of Covid-19.

(The writer, a recipient of Bharat Gaurav Award, is a professor and expert on strategic affairs)



LIKE GRAVITY, KARMA IS
SO BASIC WE OFTEN
DON'T EVEN NOTICE IT
— SAKYONG MIPHAM



**YOUR
WEEK
AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week despite the workload and stress, you remain cool and poised. You have unbonded energy and stamina. Use your energy in a creative direction. Health remains good and you have control over your sensory delights. On the career front, your determination and will power work to achieve your targets will overcome hurdles and delays at work. Your tough decisions give you the strength to move forward and lay out the plan in moments of crisis. Follow the advice of a senior person who is close to you and knows your boundaries. On the personal front, you may face the opposition of your near and dear ones. Rift and conflicts in the family are likely. Be a little softer and more compassionate.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Wednesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week you find yourself restricted on the health front. Fear, anxiety, and negative thoughts are not allowing you to lead a normal life. You need to bring balance with body, mind, and spirit. Health gets affected when thinking is negative or filled with anxiety. Meditate and listen to your body. On the work front, there may be some unexpected fall or injustice in your situation. The position which you have been aspiring for may be given to another candidate equal to your calibre. The difficulty to choose whether to remain in the existing one or join the new one will prevail. On the relationship front, ensure to take the time and effort to stay connected to keep the spark alive.

Lucky number 17
Lucky colour Magenta
Lucky day Friday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week you may feel elevated and happy on the health front. You should be full of vitality and hopeful about the future. Think about your usual mode of thought, remember that your mindset affects your health. Maintain a positive outlook. You are in a position now to mentor others and share spiritual insights. On the career front, you are nearing the point where work success and recognition are well within your grasp. Do your best to be organised and productive. This will pay you off. This is not a time to gamble or take risks. On the personal front, good luck will follow you in matters of the heart. If you are already in a relationship, it may deepen and become better and sweeter. You feel emotional contentment.

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Tuesday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week you feel depressed and gloomy as things are not going your way. Some health issues may alarm you. Don't take much tension; this is a temporary phase. All tests will be fine. Strain is the biggest disease. On the professional front, you are likely to rise. There will be money, prestige, and honour. Those in business can earn good money. You take time out for healing and massage therapy. On the emotional front, this is fairly a good week. A new love/romance is on the cards. Those married need to have concern and understand the feelings of their partner. There is a communication gap that must be sorted out, which is the root cause of distance and isolation between your partner.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Pastel Blue
Lucky day Thursday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Your health situation is likely to be good this week. You will be bursting with energy and enthusiasm. But be careful when exercising, there could be minor sprain or injuries. It is important to start on a health regime if you have been laid back and casual. On the work front, you may encounter a man of influence and leadership skills, who would like to mentor you. You need his presence to guide you in the right direction. If you have been facing some challenges, then this is the time for you to be in control of the situation. You will be goal-oriented and visionary in your approach. On the relationship front, this week will be a magical one. This is a time to trust your instincts.

Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Mauve
Lucky day Monday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week your challenges on the health front will come to an end. You are likely to realise that health is particularly important and needs care and attention. The proverb 'Prevention is better than cure' fits you right. You attend classes and seminars on healing therapies and apply them in your life. On the professional front, you need to come out of the self-made restrictions which are hampering your career growth. In some matters, you are required to be fluent and quick-witted, but your confusion and duality in mind interrupt you. Curb your expenditure. Keep your eyes and ears open to be aware of the opportunities coming your way. On the personal front, promises are not made to break, if you are doing it, you may have to pay in terms of relationships.

Lucky number 22
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Friday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week pay attention to your health. The week starts with the creative energy. You feel active, agile, and enthusiastic. But as the week progresses some health issues may crop which need your immediate attention. There is a cure for everything. Be positive, everything will go well. On the professional front, if you are not dedicated to your work, you may have to pay for it. People are watching you and giving minute-to-minute detail to higher authorities. You might be questioned for your irregularities in duties and finances as well. On the relationship front, this is a highly emotional time. Things can quickly become heated and uncomfortable. Take a break if you need to. Pick your battles and be sure to treat your lover like a friend.

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Off-white
Lucky day Monday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week will be tough for you with regard to your health. Panicking at this time will make things worse. After every crisis, there is a promise of an enjoyable time. However, it depends on what you do about it. Be incredibly positive about it and reach out to others for help. Practicing meditation will be a great booster. On the career front, things may not be looking that great. You are close to completing a project or task but are faced with yet another challenge or task at your workplace. You need to be resilient and not be intimidated by others pulling you down. On the personal front, you will find yourself in conflict with others. You need to understand that open communication with your partner can help resolve all the differences.

Lucky number 31
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Wednesday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

Your tension is reflected in all your works. Follow your intuition when it comes to your health issues. If a diagnosis doesn't feel right get a second opinion. For those that use alcohol or drugs, this is a time to avoid and take a break from any kind of intoxication. On the work front, you need to be a more giving and generous person. People look to you for help, your friend or colleague may ask for financial help from you. This is the time to invest in long term projects. Your generosity and kindness will earn a good name for you. On the relationship front, there is agony and pain. For the relationship to survive both parties must be willing to work on and talk about it. This is the time to meditate and introspect.

Lucky number 1
Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Friday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week health needs attention and follow up exercises for those with serious ailments. Discontinue unhealthy habits as you well know they are not good for you. Take good care of yourself, only then will you truly be able to care for others. On the work front, a good news might bring pleasure to you this week. You may get a call letter for a job with better perspective, rewards, and facilities. Those waiting for posting may get the desired destination. For business people, monetary financial gains are indicated this week. The relationship front is not as good as you thought. You must make effort. Put your ideas and views to your near & dear ones in such a way that could easily be accepted, else they might be rejected.

Lucky number 9
Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Saturday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week some good news is in store for you. Even if you are facing serious health challenges, a positive attitude can work wonders. If you suspect something is wrong with your physical being, make sure that your medical support will help you. Trust your instincts. On the work front, there is happiness and celebration. You are about to see some results of your hard work and efforts. If you are looking for a position, you will find something that is better than what you hoped for. Your efforts are valued and appreciated. On the relationship front, your spouse's attitude may be irritating, and you feel depressed and lonely. A feeling of being left out may take over you. Broaden your horizons and try hard to think positively.

Lucky number 3
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Saturday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

Your health and vitality would be strong this week. This is a great time to correct unhealthy habits. Starting with small goals like a daily walk could very well lead you to a healthier and stronger self. Spend time to bring balance in body, mind, and spirit. On the work front, there may be monetary loss in business or a situation of unemployment. Your fears, addictions, and other harmful impulses may create a negative environment around you. You feel despair and have a pessimistic view of life. Be positive, this is the time to learn from mistakes. On the personal front, your situation is good, especially for an existing romance. Your relationship will move into a lighter and more balanced phase, with treating each other as equals.

Lucky number 14
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Thursday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331



ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Live life at ease for peace

Human beings are born with an indwelling sense of freedom. Unlike other species bound by their predetermined nature, having no scope to make any exception, human beings do enjoy this privilege to a certain level. They can guide their actions by choice and discrimination. It needs to be appreciated here that the discriminatory ability is not there just to evaluate the choices in hand before putting them into action. It also calls upon you to explore and become aware of the realities of life — the way the world is made out. Becoming aware, thus, we may understand how and where we fit into the large and complex game plan of life. We then know how to relate to the world around.

When we have exposure to the design parameters underlying our existence, we realise that the whole world, with all its apparent differences and diversities, is actually an inseparable unitary organism. In this scheme of things, no individual existence has a reality independent of the whole. In fact, we are all framed into an interdependent mechanism, complementing and supplementing each other's efforts, to carry on the cycle of life. By oneself, we can't service

even our bare existential needs. So, we all have a shared destiny. In such an integrated mechanism, if the collective existence is ever in a state of disarray, each one of us will suffer, as has been in evidence during the ongoing pandemic. Also, unseemly act of even a few can adversely affect the societal dynamics as a whole. It implies that freedom option is not absolute. It though allows you with the privilege to pursue your individualistic aspirations, but at the same time calls for being conscious about our collective obligations. Here again comes the role of our discriminatory ability, which may help you conduct in a way that doesn't any way come in conflict with collective wellbeing.

In earlier times when we grew in a joint family, where at least three generations coexisted, children learnt how to be in accord with all despite all individual differences. As every individual is born unique, each manifesting varied traits, difference is normal. Yet, the living order has to keep moving ahead. That calls for a lesson in the 'Art of Living,' which lets you appreciate others sensibilities in concern even while pursuing your individualistic agenda. This is now wanting with



nuclear families coming into place. Consequently, they are becoming more and more self-centric, tempted to passionately pursue their whims and fancies. They wish to live more in a demanding mode on their own exclusive terms, least bothered about other's sensibilities and concerns. Intolerance and impatience are on the rise, which is adversely affecting familial and societal ties. That has made it difficult for even two generations to coexist. In the process, the parents, who given their aging, need support from youngsters, are being left helpless.

A case in point is that of USA based parents of their only child being pushed out because the son wishes to live by himself. Fact remains that the old couple, now in their seventies, toiled all their life to raise their child in a way that he doesn't have to go through similar ordeal. And now they are being forced to seek retirement and move back to India, so that he could enjoy independent space with his partner.

A couple of months back, the old man, worried about continued argument between his son and his partner, not knowing the underlying cause, had forwarded his son's chart to figure out his

partnership prospects.

A look at the son's astrological pointers made things clear. He is born in a Scorpio *lagna* which makes him keen about living in a demanding mode. The *lagna* lord Mars in debilitation is parked in the 8th house identified with difficulties of his own making. Also, he would be aggressive, impulsive, irritable, intolerant and impatient. If that would not be enough, Mars is placed adverse to 9th lord Moon and 4th lord Saturn, respectively signifying his father and mother. It implies that if the son somehow gets trapped into the circumstances of his own making, he will not hesitate unsettling even his parents, which is now in sight. Venus, the 7th lord placed adverse to Uranus makes him vulnerable to get into unseemly partnership, which has happened. Now, clueless on how to make it work, he seems to have lost his sense of reasons. Look at the timing. Transit Saturn has been moving opposite natal Mars and the Sun, and the problem got aggravated.

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com