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RANJI TROPHY
TO BE HELD IN
TWO PHASES: BCCI
14 SPORT

BJP reposes faith in sitting MLAs in UP

Party announces
91 candidates, 13
Ministers in list

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/DELHI

Reposing faith in sitting legislators, the BJP on Friday released another list of 91 candidates for the upcoming Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections where it has given tickets to 13 Ministers and repeated its sitting MLA in Ayodhya.

In this list, majority of the names were from those constituencies where elections would be held in the fifth and sixth phases but names of candidates for Lucknow, where the elections will be held in the fourth phase, are still under wraps.

Similarly, the future of the Speaker of the Assembly, Hridaynarayan Dixit, hangs in balance as his name is also not there in the list.

The party dropped Co-Operative Affairs Minister Mukut Bihari Verma but gave ticket to his son Gaurav who will be contesting from his Kaiserganj seat in Bahraich.

Major seat holders are Sidharthnath Singh from Allahabad West, Chief



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath talks with media during his visit to inspect Lala Lajpat Rai Memorial Medical College, in Meerut, Friday PTI

Minister's media adviser Shalabmani Tripathi from Deoria Sadar seat, Nand Gopal Nandi from Prayagraj South, Amit Chauhan from Bikapur in Ayodhya and Ramchandra Yadav from Rudauli.

The BJP has allotted tickets to nine women candidates in the current list of candidates.

The BJP women candidates in the new list are Sindhuja Mishra (Kunda), Neelam Karwariya (Meja), Aarti Kol (Karaon), Aarti Tiwari (Goshainganj), Saroj Sonkar (Balha), Anupama Jaiswal (Bahraich), A Neelam Sonkar (Lalganj), Manju Sonkar (Mehnar), and Sunita Parshit Singh (Zamania).

Apart from this, the BJP

has allotted tickets to Akhilesh Mishra from Azamgarh Sadar seat and Prateek Bhushan Singh from Gonda. The party has fielded Sindhuja Mishra against Raghuraj Pratap Singh, alias Raja Bhaiya, in Kunda and despite Opposition gave ticket to Rajesh Gautam from Kadipur (R) seat of Sultanpur.

The party, however, denied ticket to sitting MLA from Haidergarh Bajinath Rawat and instead fielded Dinesh Rawat. The BJP has fielded new faces from Barabanki Sadar (Arvind Maurya) and Sharad Awasthi from Ramnagar.

In Azamgarh, which is considered a stronghold of the BSP and the SP, the BJP has declared candidates for nine

out of ten constituencies.

Party declared Satyendra Rai from Gopalpur, Akhilesh Mishra from Azamgarh, Manoj Yadava from Nizamabad, Krishna Murari Vishwakarma from Didarganj, former MP Neelam Sonkar from Lalganj, and Manju Saroj from Mehnagar.

Manju Saroj, was the candidate of Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party in 2017 but lost the poll. She is now face of the BJP.

The BJP has not yet fielded anyone from Phulpur-Powai where the SP has given ticket to Ramakant Yadav, father of BJP MLA Arun Kant.

Among the Ministers who got tickets are: Suresh Pasi from Jagdishpur of Sultanpur; Rajendra Pratap Singh Moti from Pratapgarh; Sidharth Nath Singh from Allahabad West, Nand Gopal Nandi, Allahabad south, Rmapati Shastri from Mankapur, Gonda, Health Minister Jai Pratap Singh from Bansi in Siddharthnagar, Satish Dwivedi from Etwa in Siddharthnagar, Jai Prakash Nishad from Rudrapur in Deoria, Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi from Pathardeva in Deoria, and Upendra Tiwari from Phephna in Ballia.

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BJP pursuing negative politics: Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Seeking to counter the Bharatiya Janata Party's aggressive campaign over 2013 Muzaffarnagar communal riots and migration of Hindus from Kairana area, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav accused the saffron party of pursuing negative politics and trying to exploit the communal fault lines in Muzaffarnagar for meeting narrow political ends.

Countering the charge of migration of Hindus from Kairana during Samajwadi Party government in 2013, Akhilesh said, "This election will witness the political migration of the BJP from UP politics. *Baba Mukhya Mantri ka palayaan ho gaya hai*. Yogi Adityanath wanted to contest from Ayodhya and Mathura but the BJP packed him back to Gorakhpur."

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and Rashtriya Lok Dal president Jayant Chaudhary held a joint press conference in Muzaffarnagar on Friday and launched scathing attacks on the BJP ahead of the crucial UP assembly elections.

"Many people are raising questions if we are together. We would like to tell them that we are together and stronger. Only one leader has vision and experience and that is Akhilesh Yadav," said RLD chief Jayant



Chaudhary during the press conference.

Seeking to dispel the impression of being pro-Muslim alliance, Akhilesh said, "We both are sons of farmers. We have taken the pledge to fight for farmers till the end. The Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Lok Dal alliance will win a majority in the upcoming elections in the state. I always carry a packet in my pocket — *laal topi* and *laal poti*. I carry an *'ann sankalp'* to defeat the BJP and make them run away."

Attacking the BJP, Akhilesh said that it was time to end negative politics as the saffron party did not fulfill a single pre-2017 poll promise.

This was the first joint press conference of SP and RLD after the announcement of the UP assembly elections

and came after Union Home Minister Amit Shah extended an invitation to Jayant Chaudhary to quit the alliance and join the BJP.

On Wednesday, Shah, while talking to Jat leaders, had said that the ideology of both the BJP and RLD and the community were the same as both kept national interests first and had been fighting against "invaders".

The meeting held at the residence of BJP MP Parvesh Verma was also attended by BJP's prominent Jat leaders, including Union Minister Sanjeev Balyan, an MP from Muzaffarnagar in west UP.

Meanwhile on Friday, Akhilesh Yadav alleged that he was stranded in Delhi airport as his helicopter was not being allowed to take off from Muzaffarnagar.

CAPSULE

MAN GETS DEATH FOR RAPING 6-YEAR OLD

Araria: A special POCSCO court in Bihar's Araria district has awarded death sentence to a man for raping a six-year-old girl.

PAK'S FAITH TOURISM TOUR CANCELLED

New Delhi: The Pakistan Hindu Council (PHC) 'faith tourism tour' to India through chartered flights beginning from Saturday has been postponed amid the rising cases of Covid-19. India on Friday said that it has a positive plan and is willing to engage Pakistan once the Covid-19 situation normalises. PHC had proposed to fly 160 Pakistani Hindu pilgrims from Karachi to Jaipur on Saturday.

JAGANNATH TEMPLE TO REOPEN ON FEB 1

Puri: The Odisha Government on Friday announced the reopening of Shree Jagannath Temple here for devotees from February 1 keeping in view the livelihood of locals and "slight" improvement in the coronavirus situation in the State. The twelfth century temple will, however, remain closed on Sundays for sanitisation.

OVER 100 MIGRATORY BIRDS FOUND DEAD

Agartala: More than 100 migratory birds from California in the United States have been found dead in Sukhsagar, a sprawling lake in Tripura's Gomati district, forest officers said on Friday. The carcasses were found floating on the lake, they said.

Rebellion in Punjab forces Cong to review candidates for 6 seats

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

The rebellion is brewing within the Punjab Congress over the distribution of tickets. The party is facing revolt at no less than 15 seats out of the total 109 declared so far, forcing the party high command to review its decision on at least five seats.

The denial of party ticket has resulted in a massive resentment among the left out aspirants who have been demanding review, while many others have declared to contest as independents. In fact, its three sitting MLAs Rana Gurmeet Singh Sodhi (Guru Har Sahai), Fatehjung Singh Bajwa (Qadian), and Dr Harjot Kamal (Moga) have already parted ways with the party.

Prominent among the rebels include former MP Mohinder Singh Kaypee, former Minister Jagmohan Singh Kang, four-time Congress MLA from Samrala Amrik Singh Dhillon, Sunam halqa in-charge Daman Thind Bajwa, singer-turned-politician Satwinder Bitti, Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi's



younger brother Dr Manohar Singh, Cabinet Minister Rana Gurjit Singh's son Rana Randeep Singh, among others.

A day after Congress' four-time legislator from Samrala Amrik Singh Dhillon filed his nomination papers as an independent, Channi's brother Dr Manohar Singh on Friday filed his nomination from Bassi Pathana Assembly seat as an independent candidate against the Congress nominee and sitting MLA Gurpreet Singh GP.

Dr Manohar, who resigned from the post of senior medical officer at Kharar Civil Hospital, was staking claims for ticket

from Bassi Pathana. "Several prominent people of Bassi Pathana area have asked me to fight as an independent and I will go by what they have said. There is no chance of going back and I will surely fight the polls," said Dr Manohar after filing the nominations.

Kang, former MLA from Kharar, also revolted against the party and expressed anguish over denial of party ticket to him, while declaring that his son Yadavinder Singh Bunny Kang will contest as independent candidate from Kharar.

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BrahMos gets 1st export order from Philippines

India inks \$375mn cruise missile deal

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

India on Friday entered the niche defence export market by inking a deal worth over 375 million dollars with the Philippines for BrahMos super-sonic cruise missile. It is the first big export contract by India. The country hopes to cross the five billion dollar mark by 2025.

The Pioneer on January 14 had reported about the Government-to-Government deal between India and the Philippines for the missile system. While the BrahMos is a joint venture between India and Russia, the missile is indigenously designed and manufactured. The missile can be launched from land, air, sea and submarines.

Announcing the deal,



Defence Ministry officials said here on Friday that BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited (BAPL) signed a contract with the Department of National Defence of the Republic of the Philippines for supply of shore-based anti-ship missile system. The contract is an important step forward for India's policy of promoting responsible Defence exports.

Though the Government did not specify the number of missiles to be supplied to the Philippines Navy, sources said at least three batteries will be sold. The signing ceremony took place in Manila.

Moreover, the range of the missile for export is about 300

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New coronavirus NeoCov's risk to humans needs clarity: WHO

It can cause more deaths, highlight researchers in China, others say virus not new

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After Chinese researchers said they have detected new type of coronavirus "NeoCov" among bats in South Africa which can penetrate human cells in the same way as SARS-CoV-2, the WHO on Friday said that its potential needs further clarity.

Chinese researchers weighed in on the mortality rate stating that "one in every three infected persons dies", highlighting the higher death rate.

However, according to the reports, the NeoCov virus is not new. Associated with the MERS-CoV virus, it was discovered in outbreaks in West Asian countries in 2012 and 2015 and is similar to the SARS-CoV-2, which causes



coronavirus in humans. It has latent ability to mutate.

"It is only one mutation away from becoming dangerous for humans," researchers said in a paper posted on preprint website bioRxiv, and not peer-reviewed yet.

However, according to the WHO, the question of whether the NeoCov coronavirus, recently discovered in bats in South Africa, poses a threat to humans requires further study.

"Whether the virus detected in the study will pose a risk for humans will require further study," said the health body.

The WHO added that it "works closely" with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) in order to "monitor and respond to the threat of emerging zoonotic viruses."

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Urged to open schools, Centre working on all options, advisory soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Following demands from various quarters, particularly parents, the Union Health Ministry is working on options for opening schools with Covid appropriate norms and may soon issue an advisory to States in this regard.

"The Government is working on some model to open the schools due to increasing demands by parents. The Ministry has already asked its expert team to look into all the options for opening schools," sources in the Ministry said.

There has been increased pressure on the Government from parents and schools to reopen education facilities as the number of Covid-19 cases in India is on the decline.



Some States and Union Territories have already announced the reopening of schools for Classes 10 to 12 with the condition that students between the age group 15 to 18 can attend offline classes only if they had had at least one dose of vaccination. All staff and students above 18 must be vaccinated with both doses. Various global agencies like UNICEF and World Bank too have called upon the Governments to take steps in this direction.

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'Welcome aboard this historic flight' AI fliers greeted

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Tata Group took over Air India from the Government, passengers on Air India flights on Friday were addressed with a special welcome audio announcement.

Pilots on all Air India flights greeted passengers with the line "Welcome to the future of Air India" on January 28.

In an order, the operations department told the airline's pilots to make a specific announcement after door closure on every flight departing on Friday.

"Dear Guests, This is your Captain (Name) speaking...Welcome aboard this historic flight, which marks a



special event. Today, Air India officially becomes a part of the Tata Group again, after seven decades. We look forward to serving you on this and every Air India flight with renewed commitment and passion. Welcome to the future of Air India! We hope you enjoy the journey," is the special welcome announcement for passengers.

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V Anantha Nageswaran is new CEA



New Delhi: The Government has appointed Venkatraman Anantha Nageswaran as the next Chief Economic Adviser. Nageswaran assumed charge of his new role in the Finance Ministry on Friday, as per an official statement.

Nageswaran was till recently the Dean of the IFMR Graduate School of Business and a distinguished Visiting Professor of Economics at Krea University. He was also a part-time member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India from 2019 to 2021.

Agencies

SC revokes 'irrational' suspension of 12 Maha BJP MLAs from House

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Terming as "undemocratic" and "irrational", Supreme Court on Friday quashed the suspension of 12 BJP MLAs by the Maharashtra Assembly.

In a landmark judgment, the bench headed by Justice AM Khanwilkar said that suspending a Member of the House or Legislative Assembly beyond the remainder period of ongoing session would impact the democratic setup as a whole by permitting the thin majority or coalition Government to manipulate the numbers of the Opposition party in an undemocratic manner.

In its judgment delivered on the pleas filed by 12 BJP MLAs who had challenged

their one-year suspension from Maharashtra Legislative Assembly for allegedly misbehaving with the presiding officer, the bench comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and CT Ravikumar observed that one-year suspension is "worse than" expulsion, disqualification or resignation.

"In conclusion, we have no hesitation in allowing these writ petitions and to declare that the impugned resolution directing suspension of the petitioners beyond the period of the remainder of the concerned Monsoon session held in July 2021 is not est in the eyes of law, nullity, unconstitutional, substantively illegal and irrational," said the bench.

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Yediyurappa's granddaughter Dr Soundarya commits suicide

Bengaluru: Former Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa's granddaughter Dr Soundarya V Y was found hanging at her city residence here on Friday, with the police suspecting it to be a case of suicide.

Soundarya, daughter of the BJP leader's second daughter Padmavathi, was married to Dr Neeraj S, who works in the same hospital where she is employed, in 2018, police said.

On Friday morning, Neeraj left for duty while she was home at their Vasant Nagar residence here.

The matter came to light when the maid came to the house and knocked on the door repeatedly but in vain. She informed Dr Neeraj, who too called on his wife's phone but there was no response.

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CLASSIFIED

सूचना

हमारी सम्पत्ति 21/253 इंदिरा नगर लखनऊ का मूल आवंटन पत्र दिनांकित 26/8/1988 कहीं खो गया है। सूचित करें नरिन्दर कौर पत्नी गुरवरन सिंह पुत्री अमोलक सिंह मो 8054333983

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Unnati Gupta to Unnati Shankar D/o Ravi Shankar Gupta, Flat No. T4/6E, Rudra Greens Apartment, Bithoor road, Kalyanpur, Kanpur Nagar.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Sumit Kumar to Sumit Kumar Kanoujiya. In future I shall be known as Sumit Kumar Kanoujiya S/o Manoj Kumar Kanoujiya, 65/58, Moti Mohal, Kanpur.

NOTICE

I No. JC-522299A Sub Khem Singh S/o Sh Dharmu, Vill-Nowngrown PO Chail Chowk Teh. Chachyot Distt Mandi (HP) declare to correct my daughter's name from Debta Thakur to Divya Thakur in my Army record.

NOTICE

I Have Lost my original Allotment letter issued by Awas vikas House no 3D-304 Yojna no 2 Letter no 1527 Date 26/03/2010 Afroz jahan w/o Jameel Ahmad Residence 6/B Maletry Camp Railway Colony JuhI Kanpur 8858152140

NOTICE

No. 2717020H GDR VIVEK SINGH VILL & PO-JAITWARA, DISTT-SATNA (M.P.). I declare that my brother name & DOB is wrongly entered my service record as shivender singh 15-05-2002 His correct name is SHIVENDRA SINGH & DOB 15-10-2002 as per adhaar card. All concern not it infuture.

NOTICE

"Smt. Mala Awasthi W/o Sri Shashi Awasthi is owner of the Bhawan No.-01/LIG Block -N, Yojana-Tataya Topenagar Kanpur which Area 50.00 Sq.Mtr., of Original Allotment letter which No.- Nil dated 25/11/1999 have missed on the way, which use the above Document will be illegal."

NOTICE

I Kamlesh Yadav wife of No-15140956 A Rank HAV Name Darshan Kumar Unit-198 Field Regiment R/o-628F/128A, Tika Purwa ,C Block Indra Nagar Lucknow Declare that in my husband service Record my D.O.B. wrongly mentioned 03/06/1980,While my Correct D.O.B.23/01/1981, in all future purpose

NOTICE

I Army No. 15412142K Rank-Hav Name Prakash Kumar Pati Unit-1 MT BN AMC Center & College C/o 56 APO Pin Code-900450. In My Service Record my Wife Archana Pati date of birth has been wrongly mentioned as 3 Feb 1991. Kindly mention the right Date of birth 31 May 1991 which is mentioned on my wife's adhar card.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
I Dahari Chouhan, 46 yeas (Army No. 14621920Y Rank Havidar retired), S/o Sahdev Chouhan, Village-Masua (Matashi), Post- Bhagwat, District Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh declares that my village name is wrongly recorded as mathali. And wife name as Sheela Chouchan. Sheela. Her correct name is Sheela devi and Village correct name is Masua (Matashi). Sheela Chouhan, Sheela. and Sheela Devi, Village Mathali, Masua (Matahi) are same and Identical person vide affidavit sworn before notary public Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh.

Yogi: BJP necessary for UP's development

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that Bharatiya Janata Party was necessary for the state's development as with its farsightedness, the party had brought positive changes which had enabled Uttar Pradesh to regain its glory.

Addressing a 'Prabhaavi Matdata Samwad' (Effective Voter Dialogue) in Hastinapur (Meerut), Yogi Adityanath lashed out at the previous state governments headed by Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samajwadi Party over a host of issues, including law and order.

"The first decision we took was to work with the policy of 'zero-tolerance' towards crimes and criminals. We guaranteed development, growth and welfare of all. When the SP came to power in 2012, the first decision it took was to drop cases against terrorists," Yogi said.

The chief minister said that the SP provided shelter to the mafia, and it incited a series of riots in Kosi Kalan, Bulandshahr and Meerut. "The state had witnessed mafia rule and open extortion during the previous governments but the situation had changed over the last five years," he said.

The chief minister while highlighting the achievements of his government said, "Those who cannot stand up for you during a crisis and



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during an inspection at Lala Lajpat Rai Medical College in Meerut on Friday

do not possess good and positive intent can never work for the welfare of all. The ones who did not provide electricity, will they give it for free? What do you expect from those who themselves had become a threat to safety? Those who saved rioters and goons, will they be able to establish a riot-free state? They will continue to support the enemies of the nation for their own benefit."

Furthermore, he said that the implementation of Central and state government schemes had benefited women in Uttar Pradesh, adding that the previous governments did not even think about the welfare of women, implementing the schemes was a far-fetched idea.

"BJP is necessary for the development of the state," Yogi said.

Yogi said that the leaders who

were nowhere to be seen during the coronavirus crisis and who went into home-isolation, were now visiting places and asking for votes.

During their (SP) regime, there was no COVID-19, but they imposed curfews. We imposed only night curfew during the third wave... we are giving free vaccines, free tests, and treatment to all without any discrimination without any appeasement,"

Yogi Adityanath said.

Criticising the previous governments for indulging in corruption, Yogi Adityanath said that the sugar mills failed to function during previous governments because of extortion.

He said in the last five years, more than Rs 1.56 lakh crore had been paid to sugarcane farmers. He said the payment in the current season was also being made within 12 to 16 days. Our government has done more for the farmers than what was done in the last 14 years, he added.

Yogi also trained guns at the Congress along with the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party over discrimination during their rule and said, "Their thought process is divisive and destructive while we believe in nationalism and inclusion of all communities. They promise to give free electricity. One should ask them what they did when they were in power. In those days, there was no electricity."

The chief also inspected Lala Lajpat Rai Medical College and instructed the officials for effective management of COVID-19. He said that an adequate number of oxygen plants had been installed in every district. He said over 551 oxygen plants had been made functional in the state and in Meerut, about 29 oxygen plants were installed, out of which 28 were functional.

Raj Babbar may return to Samajwadi Party

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Former Congress MP and ex-UP Congress chief Raj Babbar is likely to return to Samajwadi Party ahead of the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections.

Interestingly, on Monday, he was named as one of the 30 star campaigners of Congress for the first phase of the UP polls. Sources said that Raj Babbar was in touch with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and could quit the Congress soon.

A former cine star and native of Agra, Raj Babbar began his political journey from Janata Dal in 1989 before switching allegiance to Samajwadi Party and was elected to Rajya Sabha in 1994. In the 1999 general elections, Babbar was elected from Agra constituency to Lok Sabha and retained this seat in 2004 Lok Sabha polls as well. However, he was suspended from the SP for his outbursts against the party in February 2006. On October 5, 2008, he formally joined Congress at a massive rally in Agra.

In the by-election to Firozabad Lok Sabha seat in November 2009, Babbar emerged victorious on a Congress ticket. However, he suffered a setback by losing to the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections from Ghaziabad and Fatehpur Sikri, respectively. In the meantime, Raj Babbar was a member of the Rajya Sabha from March 2015 to November 2020. Most importantly, he served as Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee president from 2016 to 2019.

For the past several months, Akhilesh



HE WAS SUSPENDED FROM THE SP FOR HIS OUTBURSTS AGAINST THE PARTY IN FEBRUARY 2006. ON OCTOBER 5, 2008, HE FORMALLY JOINED CONGRESS AT A MASSIVE RALLY IN AGRA

Yadav has embarked on a state-wide tour as a part of his "Samajwadi Vijay Yatra" in a bid to stage a comeback in the state's realpolitik. Buoyed by the overwhelming public support during his poll campaign, he has been claiming that the SP would win 400 seats in the 2022 assembly polls. While the former chief minister has ruled out any alliance with the Congress and Bahujan Samaj Party, the SP forged alliance with smaller outfits like Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) of Shivpal Singh Yadav, Mahan Dal, OP Rajbhar's Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party, Rashtriya Lok Dal and the Apna Dal faction led by Krishna Patel.

BSP fields Dalits against Akhilesh and Shivpal

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Aiming to keep her Dalit vote bank intact, Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati on Friday fielded Dalit candidates against Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and his uncle, Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party Lohia (PSPL) chief Shivpal Singh Yadav.

As per the list released by the BSP, Kuldeep Narayan will contest against Akhilesh Yadav from Karhal seat of Mainpuri while Brajendra Pratap Singh has been pitted against Shivpal Singh Yadav from Jaswantnagar assembly seat in Etawah. Both Karhal and Jaswantnagar are unreserved seats and considered the stronghold of Samajwadi Party. The SP has been winning Karhal and Jaswantnagar seats since the 1993 assembly polls.

A BSP leader said, "Narayan and Singh will be contesting the assembly elections for the first time. Both belong to the Jatav community and have been working for the party at the grassroots level, strengthening the support base in Mainpuri and Etawah.

BSP chief Mayawati decided to field Kuldeep Narayan and Brajendra Pratap Singh against the political heavyweights in order to send out a strong message to the party cadre that committed workers would be given preference in the assembly elections. The BSP hopes to mobilise the younger party

‘SP, BJP giving communal, casteist colour to UP polls’

Lucknow (PNS): Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati accused the Bharatiya Janata Party and Samajwadi Party of colluding to give a communal and casteist colour to the UP assembly elections.

In a tweet, Mayawati also cautioned the people against these designs citing media reports mostly highlighting communal and casteist hatred promoted by these two parties.

"The way religion and caste politics dominate the UP assembly elections, and the media is also full of such news, it seems that all this is happening as the SP and the BJP are colluding to give the elections the colour of hatred on Hindu-Muslim and casteist lines. People need to remain alert," the former chief minister of UP tweeted.

cadre at a time when most senior leaders have deserted the party." On Thursday, Mayawati released the BSP list of 53 candidates for the third phase of UP assembly elections where polling will be held on February 20 in 59 assembly constituencies across 11 districts. Among these districts Mainpuri, Etawah, Firozabad, Matha, Hathras, Kasganj,



Earlier too, the BSP chief had slammed the BJP, saying that the party was trying to capitalise on the development works done by the BSP government in the past.

In a recent tweet, Mayawati posted, "Under the BSP government in UP, about two and a half lakh poor families were provided with basic amenities and preparations were underway for about 15-

20 lakh houses, but due to the change in government, that work remained incomplete, which the BJP is trying to capitalise on. What did they do on their own?"

"Fear, corruption, discrimination, and insecurity of life and property, poor law and order in UP, unemployment, and migration of lakhs are the biggest problems of this state," she said in another tweet.

equations in mind, the BSP chief has fielded maximum candidates from both communities. Under the social engineering formula, Brahmin and Rajput candidates have also been fielded in upper castes majority seats.

Mayawati will launch the BSP election campaign by addressing a public meeting from Agra on February 2.

SP rely on regional heavyweights, names 56 more candidates

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Even as the Samajwadi Party struggles to portray itself as a party pursuing inclusive politics, with the release of the list of 56 candidates for the eastern UP, the SP has affirmed that the party continues to rely on regional heavyweights across the board from the Other Backward Class communities.

The party has accommodated the upper caste Brahmins, many of them Bahujan Samaj Party turncoats, in its latest list of 56 candidates for eastern Uttar Pradesh.

At the centre of these efforts are Azamgarh and Amedkar Nagar districts.

In Azamgarh, where the SP won five out of 10 seats in 2017, the party has retained four sitting MLAs, Alam Badi, Sangram Yadav, Nafees Ahmad and Durga Prasad Yadav. Three other candidates from the district are former Lok Sabha MP and Yadav strongman Ramakant Yadav, who is contesting from Phulpur Pawai; Kamakant Rajbhar, son of former BSP leader and ex-speaker of UP Assembly late Sukhdev Rajbhar, from Didarganj; and Bechai Saroj, former MLA who has been repeated for Lalganj. Candidates for three other seats are yet to be announced.

In the neighbouring Amedkar Nagar, a traditional Bahujan Samaj Party bastion, the SP has an equally solid line-up of candidates. Senior OBC leaders and sitting MLAs Lalji Verma in Katehari and Ram Achal Rajbhar in Akbarpur; senior Jatav leader and former MP Tribhuvan Dutt in Alapur and Rakesh Pandey, father of BSP MP Ritesh Pandey, from Jalalpur.

Verma, Rajbhar and Tribhuvan Dutt had a long association with the BSP before they switched to the SP. Rakesh Pandey's son Ritesh was the MLA from Jalalpur before he contested the 2019 Lok Sabha poll and became an MP. The senior Pandey is also a former MP and a prominent Brahmin face in the region.

In Mau district, SP has fielded Dara Singh Chauhan, from Ghosi assembly seat. He quit as a cabinet minister recently. Dara Singh Chauhan, a BSP leader, had switched to the Bahujan Samaj Party in 2017 and contested from Madhuban, before moving to the SP recently.

In Gorakhpur, the bastion of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the SP has named candidates on seven seats. These include Vinay Shankar Tiwari, the sitting BSP MLA from Chillupar and son of Brahmin strongman Hari Shankar Tiwari, who is often considered a

challenger to Adityanath. The SP is, however, yet to name a candidate to take on Yogi Adityanath in Gorakhpur Sadar.

The SP's fresh list also includes Kajal Nishad, the Bhojpuri actress, who will contest from Campiarganj in Gorakhpur while Amrendra Nishad, the son of Nishad stalwart Jamuna Prasad Nishad, has been fielded again from Pipraich in the same district.

Former UP Assembly speaker Mata Prasad Pandey will contest from Itwa in Siddharthnagar, while another Brahmin leader Brahma Shankar Tripathi will contest from Pathardevra in Deoria. Both are expected to take on incumbent ministers in the UP government.

Former MP Daud Ahmad (Mohammadi in Lakhimpur Kheri), former BSP MLA Puja Pal (Chail in Kaushambi), sitting BSP MLA from Prayagraj Murtaza Siddiqui, Rakesh Verma (Kursi in Barabanki), the son of senior Kurmi leader Beni Prasad Verma who died last year, former MP Tufani Saroj (Kerakat in Jaunpur) and Yadav heavyweights Shaileendra Yadav Lalai (Shahganj) and Ramgovind Chaudhary (Ballia), the leader of the opposition also figure in the latest list. Former minister Om Prakash Singh will contest from Zamania in Ghazipur.

794 candidates in fray for second phase elections

Lucknow (PNS): Altogether 794 candidates are in the fray for 55 assembly seats going to polls in the second phase of assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh where polling is scheduled on February 14. On the last day of nominations on Friday, 382 candidates filed their papers, the Election Commission of India sources here on Friday said.

Bareilly cantonment saw the highest number of 23 candidates filing their papers followed by 22 each in Bilsil and Shahjahanpur and 21 in Katra assembly constituencies. There are seven candidates in Milak and eight each in Barhapur and Rampur assembly seats. The lowest number of candidates are in Baraut and Baldev assembly seats where six each have filed their papers. Meanwhile, in the third phase of nominations in 59 seats where polling is scheduled on February 20, 98 papers have been filed till Friday with 56nominations submitted on Friday. February 1, is the last day for filling nominations for the third phase polls. In the fourth phase nominations for 60 seats, where polling will be held on February 23, 35 papers have been filed so far with 21 filed on Friday. February 3 is the last date for filing nominations for phase four.

NOTIFICATION ISSUED FOR ELECTION TO 36 COUNCIL SEATS

The Election Commission of India has issued the poll schedule for election to 36 seats of UP Legislative Council from 35 local body constituencies.

The term of the members of Legislative Council elected from the local body constituency is ending on March 7 next. The UP Legislative Council, the upper house of the UP Legislature, has 100 members. The notification of election will be issued on February 4 and the last date of filing nomination is February 11. The scrutiny of papers will be held on February 14 and the last date of withdrawal is Feb 16. The polling will be held on March 3 and counting of votes will be held on March 12.

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E-Procurement Tender Notice No.- E.T.D./C.N.B./2021-22/04 Date : 24.01.2022

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Tender Opening Date	17.02.2022
EMD	2360

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NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

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Four candidates file papers on Day 2

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On Day 2 of the nominations on Friday, four candidates -- an educationist, a travel agent, a shoe shop owner and a social activist -- filed their papers for the assembly constituencies in Lucknow district.

Rajiv Bakshi from the Aam Aadmi Party filed his nomination for the Lucknow West constituency, Pratap Chandra from Rashtriya Rashtrawadi Party filed his papers for Sarojininagar seat, independent candidate Shyam Pal filed his papers for the Lucknow Cantonment seat and Kanti Pandey from the Rashtriya Rashtrawadi Party from Lucknow West constituency.

Aam Aadmi Party's 58-year-old Rajiv Bakshi is former director of Colvin School and runs three schools currently, including two in Uttar Pradesh and one in Uttarakhand. He switched over to the AAP from Congress in 2020.

Bakshi has filed his nomination for the Lucknow West constituency. He completed his masters in education from Northern State University, USA in 1999. His moveable assets are worth Rs 27,05,617.76. The current market value of his immovable assets is Rs 56,31,65,000. His liabilities are of Rs 1,55,708.

Bakshi said that he was contesting the elections for the first although he had been wanting to fight the elections since 2007 but the Congress, of which he was a member at that time, did not give him a chance.

"I belong to an old family which has been involved in the freedom movement and the bug of contesting elections was always there. I left the Congress because I thought that there was no future there," he said.

Kanti Pandey, a social activist who is 45-years-old filed her nominations for the Lucknow West constituency as a candidate of the Rashtriya Rashtrawadi Party. Her moveable assets are worth Rs 2,33,750 and



Kanti Pandey



Pratap Chandra



Rajiv Bakshi



Shyam Pal

of her spouse Rs 1,02,540. The current market value of her assets is Rs 32,00,000. A graduate from the Krishna Devi Degree College in Lucknow, her liabilities are Rs 6,00,000.

Kanti said that she had done extensive social work and had the support of the general public and her family to fight for the elections.

Pratap Chandra (52) from the Rashtriya Rashtrawadi Party said that he filed nominations for the Sarojininagar seat. Standing for the elections for the first time, the president of Rashtriya Rashtrawadi Party said that he had been working for electoral reforms since the last ten years.

His moveable assets are worth Rs 16,73,402 while those of his wife Rs 8,05,000. The market value of his immovable assets is Rs 2,85,00,000 and those of his wife Rs 44, 00,000. His total liabilities are Rs 1,10,66,280.

Pratap Chandra said, "I am fighting the elections because I have been carrying out a lot of work in the colonies of Sarojininagar such as Kanshi Ram Colony regarding problems of electricity and water issues. I had no intention for fighting the elections but the voters would keep turning to me for their problems. Hence I felt that if I have to carry out the work then why not gain power and do the work," he said.

He admitted that he had no support from his family including his wife and a daughter but that he was mentally prepared

to fight because he had been solving problems of the people in this area.

Shyam Pal (32) who filed his papers as an independent candidate for the Lucknow Cantonment seat is standing for the elections for the first time. He said that twice in the past, in the 2019 by-election and 2017 assembly election, he had tried to file his nomination papers but was unable to do so.

His moveable property worth is Rs 1,73,320 and of his spouse Rs 1,60,922.

Shyam Pal runs a small shop selling shoes and slippers as well as undergarments in Kannuati village of the Lucknow Cantonment assembly constituency.

"I jumped into the political fray because even after 73 years of getting independence, 70 per cent of the area in this constituency is missing out on basic amenities. They have not been able to construct a single water tank and in my area people are getting water through submersibles because of which the ground water level is going down. But no one bothers and hence finding no other way out, I decided to stand for elections," he said. He said that all his announcements would be for the welfare of the common man.

Meanwhile District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash said that permissions for meetings, transport and publicity would be given on first come and first served basis and the permission would be granted only to the candidate or his election agent.

He said for all the works related to publicity, permission had to be taken from the

Lucknow to have one pollution-free polling centre

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow will have one pollution-free polling centre in the assembly polls -- one of its kind in the state.

Giving this information, an official from the district election office said that they were still working on this centre and finalising where it would be set up.

"This polling centre will have solar electricity supply and will have battery operated vehicles. It is the brainchild of District Election Officer Abhishek Prakash," he said.

When asked whether there were any directions from the Election Commission of India in this regard, he said that it was an innovative idea put forth by the district election officer. The official said that they also planned 41 booths which would be manned only by women. "There are 4,018 polling booths in the district out of which one per cent will have all women staff. We are still in the planning process," he said.

For the physically challenged, the official said that they were planning booths where all kinds of facilities would be available along with staff to facilitate such voters.

returning officers. The district election officer said that door-to-door campaigning could be done with 10 people from 8 am to 8 pm. He added the 10 persons would not include the security guards.

The district election officer said that joint teams were visiting the sensitive liquor shops and checking for any sales of illegal liquor.

Covid cases decline as 7,907 test +ve

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The decline in COVID-19 cases continued for almost a week as Uttar Pradesh reported 7,907 new coronavirus infections in the last 24 hours while in the same period 14,993 people recovered from infection.

There were 65,263 active cases in the state on Friday evening.

More than 98 per cent of these people are recovering at home with minor symptoms, said Additional Chief Secretary (Information) Navneet Sehgal here on Friday.

He said with more than 25.51 crore Covid vaccinations, over 98.89 per cent of the adult population had got the first dose of the vaccine, while 67.52 per cent of the people had received both doses.

"Before the first phase of assembly elections, our target is to give the first dose of vaccine to 100 per cent of the people and second dose to 75 per cent of the eligible citizens.

In every case, it will be ensured that not a single citizen is deprived of the vaccine," he said.

Out of 1,40,40,000 adolescents in the age group of 15-17, more than 87,33,000 i.e. 63 per cent, have got the

vaccine cover. Similarly, according to the target till January 31, 80 per cent of the eligible people will also get a booster dose.

Meanwhile, 1,172 people tested positive for coronavirus infection in the city while 2,412 COVID-19 patients recovered in Lucknow during the last 24 hours.

Giving this information on Friday, Yogesh Raghuvanshi from the CMO office said the new cases included 669 males and 503 females.

There was one COVID-19 death in the city of a 72-year-old man who was also suffering from diabetes at the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital. A 62-year-old woman from Mahoba, who was also suffering from heart disease, died at the SGPGLIMS.

Amongst those who tested positive, 149 were from Chinhath, 156 from Alambagh, 198 from Aliganj, 121 from Indiranagar, 83 from Silver Jubilee, 93 from Sarojininagar, 44 from NK Road, 89 from Red Cross area and 37 from Tudiaganj.

They included 97 travellers, 338 contacts, 245 patients of influenza-like illness, 41 pre-surgical, six healthcare workers and five admitted in the Command Hospital.

UP CII to help SMEs

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh state office of CII along with global not-for-profit Wadhvani Foundation, the financial and outsourced service provider, Finance Crafter Enterprises and the online exchange for Trade Receivables Discounting System ("TReDS"), MIXchange have joined hands to help the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) of Uttar Pradesh towards making informed decisions regarding their business growth and how to navigate the volatile pandemic times through a workshop titled, 'Upgrading and upscaling SMEs in UP'.

It is well known that 65 million MSMEs with a 110 million workforce, make 33 per cent contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) and 50 per cent to exports and are the growth engine of the Indian economy, with Uttar Pradesh having the highest shares of SMEs. However, 95 per cent of the SMEs continue to remain in the unorganised category and the need of the hour is to make MSMEs more resilient, self-reliant and less vulnerable.

Against this backdrop, the workshop on 'Upgrading and upscaling SMEs of Uttar Pradesh' on Friday brought together important stakeholders of the MSME ecosystem on a common platform to brainstorm and share views on the key issues being faced by Indian MSMEs as also to evolve a roadmap for their sustenance and help them become globally competitive.

There were focused deliberations on SME revenue growth, financial solutions and smart finance. The highlight of the workshop was a live 30-minute diagnosis of participating businesses through the Wadhvani Advantage Discovery Tool.

Kiron Chopra, convener, CII-MSME UP State Panel and chairman and managing director of Chopra Retech Rubber Products Pvt Ltd, said, "It is ironic that MSMEs, the biggest job and wealth creators, get the least attention, handholding and policy support to perform to their full potential. This must change. This dialogue, therefore, assumes importance as the growth of MSMEs can transform the economic landscape of India and help its aspiration of becoming a \$5 trillion economy."

Through this partnership, the Wadhvani Advantage programme trained SMEs to diagnose their business problems and empower them with all-round capabilities for sustainable growth through tools, content and connections on their technology platform, 'Genie'.

‘Covid third wave peaked in UP on Jan 21’

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh has already passed the peak of the Omicron third wave on January 21.

Giving this information, Sanjay Gandhi Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences Director Prof RK Dhiman said that on January 21, Uttar Pradesh had approximately 18,500 fresh cases and now the number had declined to 10,000-11,000 fresh cases per day.

"Uttar Pradesh has already passed the peak and if we look at the numbers of the COVID-19 cases in the country, it is likely that the third wave in the country peaked two days back but it cannot be stated definitely," he said.

When asked if there could be an upsurge of cases in the coming days in UP, Prof Dhiman said that it was unlikely. "From January 21 to January 28 it is almost one week and the cases are not likely to increase now," he said.

When asked that with a virus which had such a high transmissibility, the peak had happened earlier than predicted, Prof Dhiman said that there could be a difference in the predictions and what ultimately happens, particularly when one has a virus which is spreading very fast.

"The virus is infecting more and more people and a majority of them have no symptoms or very mild symptoms. Hence you may not know and for every symptomatic patient there may be 40-50 patients who are

not symptomatic. Therefore, the right thing would be to conduct a sero survey as was done post-Delta wave and turned out to be 80-90 per cent sero positive. Since immunity comes down after three month hence a sero survey can best show now how much sero positivity prevails," he said.

When asked that it is stated that post Omicron infection a patient does not develop immunity because it is a common cold virus and common colds can recur, he said that this was not true.

"This is an RNA virus and all RNA viruses are unstable in nature and mutate. When mutation occurs then a mutant virus develops which can be a virus of concern which means that it can be highly transmissible, causing severe disease or need- ing hospitalisation. We have had so many variants in the past, the most important being those of Alpha, Delta and now Omicron and all the other variants which had come did not have much of an impact. It is incorrect to say that Omicron is not creating immunity because as a virus is an antigen it will create antibodies and develop immunity," he said.

Regarding the buzz about a new variant of Omicron, Prof Dhiman said that this had not been proved and the only thing which could be said was that Omicron was replacing Delta which means that a milder disease was replacing the more severe disease.

"One more important thing is

that in Uttar Pradesh, Omicron has already passed the peak and by February 15 it will likely be over with very less infection likely to be prevalent," he added.

Talking about the scenario post the ebbing of the wave, he said that Omicron could be the beginning of the end of the pandemic.

"The variants may keep coming but they will remain endemic. Just as we have seen in the case of influenza, in which every year the strain of the virus changes and a new vaccine comes and those elderly who are at risk get themselves vaccinated. It could be a similar case and in COVID-19 too new variants would keep coming and people at risk would get vaccinated. That possibility cannot be avoided," he said.

On how a patient can come to know that he has been infected by Delta or Omicron variant of novel coronavirus, Prof Dhiman said, "Since Omicron has a higher transmissibility it will replace Delta and in a community there would be 90 per cent cases of Omicron and 10 per cent of Delta. But the only way to know whether a patient has Omicron or Delta would be through genome sequencing," he said.

On chances of re-infection with Omicron, he said that it could not be avoided and any person could have reinfection with a new variant.

"A person has a 30-40 per cent chance of having a reinfection with a new variant but it would not be severe and would not lead to mortality," he said.

Chavan accuses BJP of betraying ex-servicemen

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Former chief minister of Maharashtra and senior Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan accused the Bharatiya Janata Party of betraying ex-servicemen and alleged that the ruling party sought votes in the name of army's bravery but infringed soldiers' rights every day. Releasing Congress party's 'White Paper' over the issue ahead of the UP assembly polls in Lucknow on Friday, Chavan alleged that the BJP cheated ex-servicemen over 'One Rank, One Pension' scheme, failed to fill vacant army posts and took away facilities.

"On one hand, the Narendra Modi government and the BJP used the army's valour to fulfill their political interests, and on the other, they attacked the interests of the army officers and personnel. They cheated them in the name of 'One Rank, One Pension', besides not filling vacant army posts, took away basic facilities of the armed forces' personnel, willfully ignoring anomalies, discriminating the army against civilian employees, hurting the rehabilitation and employment of ex-servicemen and weakening military power. All these are glaring examples of the Modi government's conspiracy to destroy the morale of the army," the senior Congress leader asserted while addressing media persons at the UP Congress Committee head-

quarters in Lucknow on Friday.

Chavan further said, "Whenever we remember our armed forces, we hold our heads high with pride. Whenever there is an attack on the dignity of Mother India, then the armed forces protect the pride of the nation without hesitating to make the supreme sacrifice. But the Modi government has compromised national security. Senior BJP leader Murli Manohar Joshi said this in a report of the parliamentary standing committee on estimates and said that the Modi government was playing with the national security of India. The present government made the biggest cut in the defence budget in the last 60 years."

The Congress leader pointed out, "What could be greater proof of the insensitivity of the Modi government that the day Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat and his wife died in a tragic chopper crash, the same day the BJP government of Madhya Pradesh bulldozed the tomb of his father-in-law. One thing is clear from all this, the BJP government at the Centre collects votes in the name of the bravery of the army, but attacks the rights of soldiers every day. Another senior BJP leader, Major General, BC Khanduri, while heading the parliamentary standing committee on defence, said in his report that the Modi government not only compromised national security, but

Cong candidate accuses party leader of discrimination against Muslims

Lucknow (PNS):

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's much publicised 'Ladki Hoon, Lad Shakti Hoon' campaign received another setback when ahead of the assembly elections, Congress candidate from Shekhpur assembly seat in Budaun, Farah Naem, accused district party president Omkar Singh of misogynist behaviour and discrimination against Muslims.

The allegations were made just a few hours after her ticket was cancelled by the party on Thursday. "Women are not safe in the Budaun unit of the party. The way I had to fight to get a ticket... Omkar Singh tried to stop me by slinging mud on my character and that of other women... He is of the view that Muslim women should not be given tickets although Congress wants the vote of every community," Naem told the media persons.

She added, "Omkar Singh did not leave any stone unturned to create hurdles for me... He tried to threaten and intimidate me. If people like Omkar Singh will remain a part of this party, then, I will not contest elections. At the same time, I also resign as a

member of Congress."

She also accused the district party president of trying to malign her image by labelling her 'too poor to contest elections' and 'characterless.' Naem said, "I am extremely hurt. But, I have decided to fight it out since I am a woman. I will continue to do my service in spheres where women continue to feel unsafe and isolated."

She emphasised, "I regret that I served under the Congress local chief. Omkar Singh used derogatory words against me."

She, however, thanked Priyanka Gandhi for giving her the inner strength to speak out about her ordeal. "As long as people like Omkar Singh are part of the Congress, I cannot remain there. So, I take back my election candidate as well as party membership. I am hurt," Farah Naem concluded.

On Thursday, the central election committee of the Congress issued a press release, highlighting the removal of Farah Naem as the party's official candidate from Shekhpur constituency in Budaun. The party replaced her with another candidate named Mamta Devi Prajapati.

also modernisation of the army.

On December 13, 2021, the defence ministry informed Parliament that 1,22,555 posts were lying vacant in the three Services, out of which about 10,000 posts were also of military officers. The UPA-Congress government gave pension to ex-servicemen thrice between 2004 and 2012, giving them an additional financial benefit of Rs 7,000 crore. But after coming to power, Modi went back on his promise. On November 7, 2015, the Modi government issued a new order and completely took away 'One Rank, One Pension' from 30-40 per cent of ex-army men."

The former Chief Minister said, "Soldiers of para-military forces like CRPF, BSF, ITBP, CISE, SSB, Coast Guard, etc., who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty, were denied the status of martyrs by the Modi government. As a result, neither their family could get proper compensation nor government jobs. On November 23, 2012, the Congress government, marking all paramilitary forces as 'ex-Central Armed Police Forces Personnel, issued orders to the Central and provincial governments that all retired personnel of CRPF, BSF, ITBP, CISE, SSB, Coast Guard and etc. officers be given all facilities of ex-servicemen of the three armed forces. But the Modi government at the Centre and the provincial BJP governments ignored it."

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POSSESSION NOTICE (for immovable property under Rule 8(1))

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized officer of the State Bank of India under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (2) and 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a demand notice. The Bank issued demand notice on the date mentioned against account and stated hereinafter calling upon them to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of said notice. The Borrowers/Guarantors/Legal heirs having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower's/Guarantors/Legal heirs 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 Rule on the dates mentioned against each account.

The Borrower's/Guarantors/Legal heirs in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of State Bank of India for the amounts and interest thereon.

The Borrower's/Guarantors/Legal heirs attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Detail of Property where possession has been taken are as follows:-

Sl. No.	Name & Address of the Borrowers/Guarantors/A/C No.	Description of the movable/Immovable Property Mortgaged	Total Amount O/s [as per Notice u/s 13(2)]	Date of Demand Notice/ Date of Possession
1.	Borrowers:- M/s Sanjay Fashion House Prop: Vijay Kumar Tiwari S/o Shri Ram Murli Tiwari. Address:- Dhanthwa Tehsil- Milkipur, District- Ayodhya, U.P. A/C No.: TL/A/C 39691526527 CCA/A/C 36175442080	Property owned by: Shri Ram Murli Tiwari S/o Raj Kumar Tiwari all that part and parcel of the property consisting of purchased via sale deed No. 1093 dated: 18.05.2004 Book No. 1, Zild No. 477, Page 383 to 408 in office of Sub Registrar Milkipur Faizabad, Khata Khatauni No: 348, Gata No. 1153M Vill: Bawan Pargana Khandasa Tehsil Milkipur District: Faizabad, Area of Land 672 sq.ft. Boundary as per Deed: East: Faizabad to Raibarely Road, West: House Imamuddin, North: House Keshri Sing (Shop Kamta Prasad), South: House of Sri Chandra Gupta.	Rs. 10,82,593.00 and Interest Thereon	01.11.2021 24.01.2022
2.	Borrowers:- M/s Shri Balaji Traders Prop: (Brijesh Kumar Upadhyia S/o Krishna Chandra Aliota Mata Badal). Gaurantors:- Smt. Neelam Upadhyia W/o Brijesh Upadhyia. Address:- Village Turshampur Post Palpur Tehsil- Milkipur, District- Ayodhya, U.P. A/C No.: 35652258494	Property owned by: Smt Neelam Upadhyia W/O Brijesh Upadhyia all that part and parcel of the property consisting of purchased via sale deed dated: 05.01.2016 having Document No. 46, Plot No. 1437M, Area- 300 Sq.Mt, Situated at Village Turshampur, Post-Palpur, Tehsil- Milkipur, Ayodhya within registration District Ayodhya. Boundary as per Deed: East: Chak Brijesh Kumar, West: Road Turshampur Bhakhtuli, North: Garden Santosh Kumar, South: Rest Land Seller	Rs. 7,52,316.00 and Interest Thereon	19.03.2021 24.01.2022
3.	Borrowers:- Smt Kewal Patti W/o Sri Kailash Nath Tiwari. Address:- Village Kaurpal Post Khandasa Tehsil- Milkipur, District- Ayodhya, U.P. A/C No.: 38283101833	Property owned by: Smt Kewal Patti W/o Sri Kailash Nath Tiwari all that part and parcel of the property consisting of purchased via sale deed No. 2298 dated: 08.09.2009 having Document No. 01, Volume no-1050 page 37 to 52 in the office of subregistrar Plot NO.131, khata No: 00024 Area- 504 sq.ft, Situated at village Bhatpur Pargana: Khandasa, Tehsil- Milkipur Ayodhya within Registration District- Ayodhya. Boundary as per Deed: East: Road Bhadrangaj to Khandasa Marg, West: Field of Hriday Ram, North: Rest Land of Seller, South: Rest Land Seller.	Rs. 7,81,548.00 and Interest Thereon	23.07.2021 24.01.2022

Date : 29.01.2022, Place : Ayodhya

Authorized Officer, State Bank of India

SP takes lead in fielding its candidates in Purvanchal

RAMESH K SINGH ■ VARANASI

Samajwadi Party (SP), taking a lead by announcing the names of at least one-third candidates out of 102 assembly constituencies of 17 districts in Purvanchal (eastern UP), has shown its seriousness in this region where in 2017 the party had received a big blow, though this biggest region out of six in the state had played a key role helping the party come to the power with a thumping majority in 2012. In the last elections, there were several seats in this region where the party had changed its candidates twice or thrice creating not only a lot of confusion among the party workers but also increasing infighting among the party folds which was one of the main factors for the debacle of the party.

However, this time the party has not waited long like its rivals in declaring the names of 35 candidates out of 102 seats showing its full confidence in the strengths of the party's faithful and experienced leaders who remained with the SP even during the difficult phases, especially when many were quitting the party. Most of the other parties including ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which virtually ruled head and shoulders above the rest winning 69 seats apart from five by Apna Dal

(Sonelal) and four by the then National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partner Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP) in the last polls are still keeping their aspirants to wait and watch.

The NDA had claimed more than 76 per cent seats in the region. It was a totally reverse picture as the SP had done similarly a dominating performance in 2012.

This time the SP had made more alliances with several smaller parties including the SBSP than its arch rival BJP and this is one of the main reasons the party is still waiting to finalise its all the lists of candidates. Surprisingly, the BJP, which has a large number of sitting MLAs, is still keeping its aspirants in confusion though most of the sitting MLAs have intensified their electioneering through contacts.

Not only the BJP but also the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Congress are still busy in finalising the lists of candidates for third and fourth phases while in most of the seats in Purvanchal, the elections will be held in sixth and seventh phases.

Both the BJP and Congress have just announced their candidates for just a few seats including Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath from Gorakhpur Urban where the SP is still waiting to open its trump card. The

SP has also not opened its cards in any of the eight seats of Varanasi district as Prime Minister Narendra Modi represents Varanasi parliamentary seat, though it was expected that there would be at least one name of former UP Minister Surendra Patel from Sewapuri in the SP's already announced lists.

Out of four and three seats of Chandauli and Bhadohi respectively, the SP has announced the name of one each from these districts who are sitting MLA Prabhu Narayan Singh Yadav (Sakaldiha) and Jahid Beg (Bhadohi). From Ghazipur the SP has fielded two out of seven including six-time MLA and former Minister Om Prakash Singh (Zamania) and sitting MLA Dr Virendra Yadav (Jangipur) and from Jaunpur, four candidates out of nine including ex-MLA Om Prakash Dubey (Badlapur), former Minister Shailendra Yadav 'Lala' (Shahganj), former MP Toofani Saroj (Kerakat) and sitting MLA Lucky Yadav (Malhani).

The party has almost opened its card from its stronghold Azamgarh district as its President and former CM Akhilesh Yadav is also an MP from Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat, declaring the names of seven out of 10 seats of the district.

They are several time MLA Durga Prasad (Azamgarh Sadar), Sangram Singh Yadav (Atrauliya), Nafis Ahmed (Gopalpur), Alambadi (Nizamabad), Kamalakant Rajbhar (Didarganj), Ramakant Yadav (Phoolpur Pawai) and Bechai Saroj (Lalganj (SC). In Ballia, the party has already announced its three candidates out of seven seats and they are leader of Opposition in Vidhan Sabha Ram Govind Chaudhary (Bansdih), Sangram Singh (Phephna) and former Minister Jiyauddin (Sikanderpur). However, from Mau the party has disclosed only one out of four, showing its faith in Minister of Yogi government Dara Singh Chauhan from Ghosi who joined the party recently only after announcement of elections like another Cabinet Minister Swami Prasad Maurya. The party has yet not declared any candidate from five seats of Mirzapur but named three out of four from Sonbhadra including seven-time MLA Vijay Singh Gond (Duddhi), Sunil Singh Gond (Obra) and Avinash Kushwaha (Robertsganj). Besides, the party has already announced the names of three candidates out of seven from Deoria, six out of nine from Gorakhpur, one out of five from Basti and three out of five from Siddharth Nagar.

Govt flayed for fake nationalism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Congress national spokesperson Supriya Shrinet and international boxer Vijender Singh strongly criticised the Modi government for its fake nationalism and hurting the interests of the army. Talking to the reporters at the party's Maidagin office here on Friday, they also raised some issues showing the failures of the government related to the military front.

They said that whenever we remember our forces, then our heads go up with pride, but the Modi government on one hand use the sacrifice and valour of the army to fulfill its political interests and on the other hand, attack the interests of the army and soldiers as about 1,22,555 army posts are falling vacant as informed by the Ministry of Defence on the floor of Parliament on December 13 last. They also alleged that about 30 lakh ex-servicemen were cheated on One Rank, One Pension (OROP) and added that the previous Congress government



Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinet and Vijender Singh addressing a press conference in Varanasi on Friday.

had increased the pension of ex-servicemen thrice between 2004 and 2012, giving them an additional financial benefit of Rs 7,000 crore.

“On 17.02.14 the Congress government had issued an order and approved the OROP with effect from 01.04.14. In this, it was decided that all the soldiers retiring from the same rank after serving for the same time should be given the same pension, even if their retirement date is different, and the

benefit of pension increase in future will also be given to the old pensioners,” they said, and added that however rejecting the OROP order of previous government, a central government took out a new order on 07.11.15 and completely snatched the OROP from 30-40 per cent of the soldiers.

They further said that during Congress regime, priority was given to ex-servicemen, their widows, retired soldiers

who were injured in service, in petrol pumps, gas agencies, coal shipments, transport contracts, government security contracts but now these facilities too have been abolished. Same is the case with toll plazas and most of the government contracts.

Besides, they alleged that the Modi government does not give 'martyr' status to the soldiers of paramilitary forces. 'Neither the families get compensation nor government jobs,' they added whereas on November 23, 2012, the Congress government, marking all paramilitary forces as 'Ex Central Armed Police Force Personnel', issued an order to the central and state governments that all retired officers of CRPF, BSF, ITBP, SSB, CISF, Coast Guard etc should be given facilities at par with the forces but the present BJP led central and state ignored it. Earlier, former MLA Ajay Rai, district president Rajeev Gautam and city chief Raghvendra Choubey welcomed Supriya Shrinet and Vijender Singh.

Chairman of Sunbeam Group congratulates Shivangi Singh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chairman of Sunbeam Group of Education Dr Deepak Madhok and Director Bharti Madhok extended their congratulations to Shivangi Singh, a student of Sunbeam College for Women, Bhagwanpur who got an opportunity to participate in the Republic Day parade as a part of IAF tableau at Rajpath, New Delhi on the occasion of Republic Day.

It may be mentioned here that Shivangi Singh did her BSc from Sunbeam College for Women, Bhagwanpur in Varanasi during academic session from 2013-2016. She had taken pilot training by being a part of degree and also did pilot training by being a part of 7 UP wing in NCC Cadet Core of college affiliated to BHU.

She was an outstanding cadet of NCC in Sunbeam College Bhagwanpur unit of Air Force.

On the occasion of the Republic Day, Shivangi participated in the Republic Day parade as a part of the Air Force's tableau titled 'Indian Air Force, Change for the Future' at Rajpath in New Delhi and gave an opportunity not only to her college but also to the city to feel proud. She is the second woman fighter pilot to be a part of the Air Force tableau. Last year, Flight Lieutenant Bhawana Kanth was the first woman fighter pilot of the



NCC cadet Shivangi Singh being honoured by Sunbeam director Bharti Madhok in Varanasi on Friday for participating in Republic Day parade in New Delhi.

country to be a part of the Air Force tableau.

Flight Lieutenant Shivangi Singh joined the Indian Air Force in 2017 after taking NCC training during her college days.

The first consignment of Rafale arrived in India in 2020 and it was landed at Ambala air base. Shivangi was inducted as the first woman Flight Lieutenant in the squadron Golden Arrow of fighter aircraft Rafale. She is now part of Rafale's first squadron after qualifying technical training.

She had also represented the Uttar Pradesh team during the Republic Day parade in Delhi in 2013. Shivangi has flown in MiG-21 and she has also been posted at the airbase on the Pakistan border in Rajasthan.

She had made history in

2017 itself, when she had joined five women pilots to fly fighter planes in the Indian Air Force.

On her achievement to be part of the Air Force's tableau on Republic Day parade, the Chairman of Sunbeam Group of Education Dr Deepak Madhok and Director Bharti Madhok congratulated her and also to her parents and lauded the college's dedication to women empowerment.

ONE COVID DEATH REPORTED: One death from novel coronavirus was reported in Varanasi on Friday. While, the active cases were reported as 2417.

As per data made available by the Health department on Friday evening, one death was reported from deadly novel coronavirus. Besides, a total of 287 were tested positive

(5.30%) taking the tally to 10671.

At the same time, a total of 531 (77.28%) patients recovered from home isolation as well as Covid hospitals increasing the figure of cured patients to 8247. The active cases were reported as 2417.

NOTICE ISSUED TO CONG CITY PRESIDENT: The district administration has issued a notice to city president of Indian National Congress Raghvendra Chaubey for the violation of election code of conduct and sought clarification from him within 48 hours. If he failed in giving clarification within the stipulated time, legal action will be ascertained by making into cognisance of the Election Commission, the notice stated.

During the vehicle checking around 5.30 pm on Thursday last, the SST team recovered election materials of party of the Congress Party such as 2000 pamphlets with photos of party president Sonia Gandhi, former party president Rahul Gandhi and party UP In-charge Priyanka Gandhi from Tata Safari (No-UP-65-CV0/0022) being driven by Sanjay Prajapati, a resident of Khochwa village under Mirzamurad police station. On the recovered pamphlets there was no name of publisher/printer which comes under the violation of section 127(A) of election code of conduct.

‘There is a need to incorporate the traditional knowledge in present education system’



Vice-Chancellor of Gujarat Central University, Gandhinagar, Prof RS Dubey and Vice-Chancellor, Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University, Prof Seema Singh with Gold medalists at 16th convocation of UP Rajarshi Open University.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

There is a need to preserve and incorporate the traditional knowledge as well as cultural values of India for the excellence in the present higher educational system, said Prof Rama Shankar Dubey, Vice Chancellor Gujarat Central University, Gandhinagar while delivering convocation address at the 16th Convocation of UP Rajarshi Tandon Open University on Friday.

Monika Pandey of Lucknow was awarded the Chancellor Medal at this Convocation. The Convocation was organised at Atal Auditorium on the Sarswati campus of the University following the Covid-19 Protocol. The programme was chaired on line by the Uttar Pradesh Governor/Chancellor Mrs Anandiben Patel. The Chief Guest of the convocation Prof Rama Shankar Dubey. As

many as 21 Gold medals were awarded to the students who obtained top ranks from different schools of University in this 16th Convocation.

The Chancellor Anandiben Patel online inaugurated the digilocker. Presiding over the convocation ceremony she blessed all meritorious students and wished them a bright future.

The Chief Guest of convocation Prof Rama Shankar Dubey, Vice Chancellor Gujarat Central University, Gandhinagar said that education is a powerful tool of economic and social empowerment. Higher education is an essential factor to make India prosperous in different fields. The status and progress of the society is known only by the level of higher education.

Further, Professor Dubey said that quality and innovative research are the result of great importance in the identification of educational institu-

tions. There is a progressive growth in research and investigations in various fields including Agriculture, Science, Medicine, Technology and Management. He expressed his happiness that UP Rajarshi Tandon Open University has also started a new initiative in the field of research and innovation.

Professor Dubey urged teachers and meritorious students involved in the convocation to work together to develop such an environment as well as a system in which everyone gets an opportunity to perform their duty with full honesty and integrity. He said that students are the future and energy of the country. They give impetus to the development of the nation. Giving a mantra to the students, he said that education is the name of the Saraswat process which continues throughout life.

Vice-Chancellor of UPRTOU Prof Seema Singh

presenting the welcome address and the report of the last year of the university, said that the university is determined to spread education and upgrade the quality of programmes. Further she said the university developed a student-friendly website and digilocker.

In the 16th convocation the Chancellor Medal was awarded to Monika Pandey from Lucknow Regional Study Centre of the University. Monika Pandey completed her M.A. (Yoga) in first class and obtained highest Marks among all the Graduate and Post Graduate Passed students of the all schools of the University.

The convocation Ceremony was conducted in online as well as offline mode. The convocation was broadcast live via youtube.

The convocation Ceremony was conducted jointly by Prof Vinod Kumar Gupta and Dr Shruti.

BJP launches Voters Connect Digital Campaign

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

With top BJP leaders launching the door-to-door election campaign to woo voters in western districts seats ahead of the first phase of polling, the Kashi Prant leadership has also unleashed a targeted plan to cover at least five lakh houses under the “Voters Connect Digital Campaign” in all 16 districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh.

The campaign was launched by the NGO cell of the BJP to cover at least 5,000 houses each in all the 69 assembly constituencies of eastern UP to ensure a clean sweep in the 2022 assembly polls.

Rajni Kant, Kashi Prant co-convenor (NGO cell) told the mediapersons “Volunteers of NGO cell of BJP have launched the campaign in all 16 districts of Kashi Prant, where we would be covering at least 69 assembly seats... The workers would

cover at least 5,000 houses in every assembly seat to ensure a clean sweep in the state assembly polls.” The campaign is also called Digital Vijay Abhiyan 2022, he said.

“We are interacting with voters and compiling all details in a digital format like district, name of assembly segment and voters, their mobile numbers, address, polling booth details, expectations from government, as well as details of the BJP worker who visited the house,” he added.

BJP leaders and workers (NGO cell) in Prayagraj district have also intensified their door-to-door drive and are aggressively urging them to cast their franchise.

Aiming for a record show, BJP workers will also interact with members of women self help groups (SHGs), Asha, social workers and others, listing out the welfare schemes of the Union and state govern-

ments.

The BJP state leadership has, in fact, chalked out a special strategy to reach out to each house ahead of polling day and scores of teams have been formed to connect with voters.

Local leaders has assigned workers the responsibility for successfully running the ‘Har Ghar Bjp’ campaign in 12 assembly seats in Prayagraj district that include Meja, Karchhana, Allahabad West, Allahabad North, Allahabad South, Phulpur, Phaphamau, Pratappur, Handia, Bara, Soraon and Koraon to garner support for the party.

OUTREACH CAMPS START WORKING IN NCR: Outreach camps started working in North Central Railways to address the concerns of candidates.

In order to address the concerns of candidates appearing in RRB NTPC and RRC level 1 examinations, RRB

Allahabad and North Central Railway have opened outreach camps at Agra, Prayagraj and Jhansi to facilitate candidates raising and registering their concerns.

On Friday, 03 candidates visited the outreach camps at Prayagraj. The camps have been manned by officials from the personnel branch of the divisions under the overall guidance of Senior Divisional Personnel Officers, in addition to the officials from RRB Allahabad.

Apart from physically visiting the camps, 910 candidates registered their grievances through google link which is active on RRB Allahabad's website and 156 emails have been received by 17 hrs on Friday. All these concerns are being compiled by RRB and the same are being sent to the High Power Committee formed by the Railway Board to address the concerns of the candidates.

Lover plotted girlfriends’ murder

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

With the arrest of her lover, the police have claimed to have worked out the case of a murder of a BA student in the forest behind the IIT near Salori area of the city.

Police claimed that her alleged lover Aman was involved in the rape and murder of the student. He had done this cruelty with friends. He was taken into custody by the police after the girl's disappearance but during interrogation he kept on misleading. Eventually investigation and forensic evidence confirmed his complicity after which two of his associates were arrested by the police. Police officers said that Aman did this infidelity with the girlfriend in a planned manner.

On Friday, SSP Prayagraj Ajay Pandey gave detailed information about this much talked murder in a press conference. It is noteworthy that this student of Sarai Mamrej area of the district used to study for the second year of BA, living in the lodge of Salori. She had left the roommate at

around 8.30 pm on the night of January 22 saying that she was going to get medicines and a copy after which she didn't return.

Her mobile phone was also switched off. On being asked by the family members the next day, when the roommate told about this, the police were informed. With the help of mobile surveillance, the police nabbed Aman, a resident of Azamgarh living in Salori, who had spoken to the missing girl on the phone on the evening of the incident.

When the police interrogated Aman, he told police that he had a love affair with the girl. That evening he had called the girl student to meet him. Both of them were talking sitting near the bushes behind the IERT, when four or five youths came and dragged the girl into the forest after beating him. When the police searched the place on Wednesday evening, some items including the student's copy were found. Then the dead body was seen in a 40 feet deep well, which was pulled out in the middle of the night after a lot of effort.

When the police took out the call details of Aman's mobile, it was only late in the evening of the incident that a young man came to know about the call. On this, Aman had clarified that he had called his friend for help when the girl was dragged. The police were suspicious of his words, so the DNA of Aman and his two friends was sent for matching with some evidence found on the girl's body. Eventually these three turned out to be the killers of the girl.

SP DECLARES NAMES OF CANDIDATES FOR UP ASSEMBLY POLLS: Samajwadi Party has declared the names of three candidates of Prayagraj division in another list released for the UP assembly elections. Among them, Muftaba Siddiqui has been made candidate from Phulpur seat of Prayagraj. Similarly, Pooja Pal has been declared a candidate from Kaushambi's Chail seat. Girijesh has been made a candidate from Babaganj assembly seat of Pratapgarh. Samajwadi Party has declared Pooja Pal as its candidate from Chail seat for

this election. Till now, there was talk of Phulpur or Pratappur for Pooja Pal, but after the ticket of Muftaba, who left the BSP, was confirmed, Pooja has been fielded from Chail, where BJP's Sanjay Gupta is currently an MLA. Pooja Pal's name became famous after the murder of her husband, BSP MLA from Allahabad City West, Raju Pal.

Raju Pal, who was a history-sheets of Dhumanganj police station, created a sensation in the 2004 elections by defeating SP candidate Ashraf in the city western seat. The defeat of Ashraf, brother of Atique, who was a five-time MLA from here, was big and Raju's victory too. A few months later, on January 25, 2005, Raju Pal's convoy was intercepted on GT Road in Sulem Sarai and fired upon. Three people including Raju Pal were killed. Atique and Ashraf were made accused in the murder along with other shooters. First the police, then the CBCID and some time ago the CBI investigated and filed the charge sheet, but the decision is still to come in this case.

Many candidates file nominations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Over one dozen candidates from different political parties filed their nominations including prominent BJP sitting MLA Abhijit Sanga and SP MLA Mushtaq Solanki at the nomination office on Friday. Massive police force had been stationed at the entry points. The entry was allowed only after thermal checking and checking of the vaccination certificates. The officials did not allow more than the fixed number of people to accompany the candidate. The Covid-protocol was strictly followed. The District Magistrate, City, Neha Sharma carried out umpteen rounds at the places where the nominations were being filed.

She appealed to the candidates and the proposers to ensure they kept their masks on and carried hand sanitisers. The filing of nominations were held on Friday in a peaceful manner as there was a total ban on procession in the city.



Nominations for the Assembly elections were carried out peacefully on Friday.

POSTAL BALLOT OPTION: The Additional District Magistrate, City, Daynand Sagar addressing a meeting said that as the voting for the city will be held on February 20, 2022 thus a big section of people were involved in the election duty and thus they would not be able to take part in the election.

He said thus proper arrangements had to be made for the postal ballots and enough awareness be created among them that they can exercise their franchise by the postal ballot.

He said the officials of the departments concerned need to apprise their staff that if they were keen on postal ballot

then they will have to fill Form 12 and ensure that it was submitted to the Secretary KDA.

He said the training for the postal ballot will be held between February 8 and 14 at Polytechnic and said all such personnel who were on election duty should be informed through post about their facility of postal ballot.

KNN to buy 150 small vehicles to strengthen garbage collection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Kanpur Municipal Commissioner, Shiv Sharanappa GN expressing concern over the poor sold waste management of the city on Friday said that the Kanpur Nagar Nigam had decided to purchase 150 small vehicles and this will strengthen the door to door garbage collection. He said with the resource crunch the KNN was unable to meet the needs of this big industrial city and thus plans were being worked out under Smart City Project to ensure that Kanpur had proper infrastructure and resources to meet the solid waste disposal of this city.

He said at Bhu Singh Panki at the garbage dumping ground daily around 1000 metric tonnes garbage was being disposed of and the pending garbage of 15 lakh metric tonnes was making it more than 2000 metric tonnes garbage disposal challenge. However moves were afoot to ensure that this was given top priority.

He said currently optimal use of the vehicles was being carried out and said the KNN has not been able to purchase even 20 per cent of the vehicles from the major target. He said the Central team was going to make survey of the city its garbage output and its disposal rate.

He said due to lack of dumping space, financial constraints and inadequate capacity of urban local bodies, problem of garbage disposal in Kanpur had increased manifold. He said the main factors responsible for it were lack of dumping space, financial constraints and inadequate capacity of the Urban Local Bodies. He said Kanpur faces major environmental challenges associated with waste generation and inadequate waste collection, transport, treatment and disposal. He said current systems cannot cope with the volumes of waste generated by an increasing urban population, and this impacted on the environment and public health.

It may be mentioned here that as per recent report of IIT-K the priority was to move from reliance on waste dumps that offer no environmental protection, to waste management systems that retain useful resources within the economy.

Waste segregation at source and use of specialised waste processing facilities to separate recyclable materials had a key role. Disposal of residual waste after extraction of material resources needs engineered landfill sites or investment in waste-to-energy facilities.

Jewellery exhibition to be held in Mumbai

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Gems and Jewellery Council Chairman, Ashish Pethe while addressing the meeting on Friday said Mumbai will be conducting a massive exhibition between March 1 and 4, 2022 and this will be immensely beneficial for the smaller jewellers as they will get a platform for promoting their products at the national level and on the larger scale. He said they will also be apprised of the newer methods and techniques which were being adopted all over and they will be able to upgrade themselves. He said UP had enough potential and thus this platform will not only be beneficial but productive as well.

He said the maximum demand for gold is in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and south India was equally important on this front as well majorly their data tallied where as in these two states it did not tally.

He informed that during the pandemic the import of gold had drastically dropped to mere 400 tonne but despite that the exports had shot up drastically and said the shortfall of gold witnessed last year has substantially been covered and said in 2021 around 1000 tonne of gold was imported in the country and this was encouraging because for the past of couple of years it was stagnant at around 700 tonnes.

Specialised clinic facility being provided at LNM Railway Hospital

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

With a view to provide better health facilities to railway personnel and their family members the facility of specialised clinic is being provided at Lalit Narayan Mishra (LNM) Railway Hospital here. Under the special clinic facility, for the examination and treatment of the following diseases by fixing the day and time the doctor was nominated which is as follows.

The examination and treatment of diabetes and endocrine by Dr Manmath Nath every Wednesday from 03.30 pm to 5.00 pm. The examination and treatment of senior citizens and heart disease by Dr Dipankar Chaurasia on every Thursday from 03.30 pm to 5.00 pm. Likewise the examination and treatment of cataract and cornea on every

Wednesday from 03.30 pm to 5.00 pm by Dr Jaya Gupta. On the other hand, the examination and treatment of glaucoma every Thursday from 03.30 pm to 5.00 pm by Dr Jatinder. Besides, the retina examination and treatment every Friday from 03.30 pm to 5.00 pm by Dr Tribhuvan. The antenatal and postnatal examination and treatment every Tuesday from 03.30 pm to 5.00 pm by Dr Tanu Verma. On the other hand, the examination and treatment of arthritis disease by Dr Faheem every Wednesday from 03.30 pm to 5.00 pm. The examination and treatment of genetic diseases every Monday from 03.30 pm to 5.00 pm by Dr Bharti Singh. The investigation for nutritional disorders every Monday from 03.30 pm to 5.00 pm by Dr Ayaz. The examination and treatment of asthma and COPD diseases by

Dr Nand Kishor every Tuesday from 03.30 pm to 5.00 pm. Likewise the diet check-up and treatment every Monday to Friday from 10.30 am to 1.00 pm. The examination and treatment of genital cancer screening every Friday from 03.30 pm to 5.00 pm by Dr Sangeeta. The examination and treatment of pain and anesthesia by Dr Anita, Dr Snehlata and Dr Deepti every Saturday from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm. The examination and treatment of neurological diseases by Dr Pawan Lal every Wednesday from 03.30 pm to 5.00 pm. With the availability of specialist doctors in Lalit Narayan Mishra Railway Hospital here the railway employees and their dependents have got a lot of treatment facilities, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh said.

Flag marches conducted

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

In order to hold assembly elections in a peaceful, free and fair manner police conducted flag marches/area domination exercise in areas under two police stations on Thursday. Under City Kotwali area, SHO Arvind Mishra led the flag march which started from Sankatmochan Marg and passed through Vasliganj, Sundargarh, Trimohani, Narghat, Gurhatti, Penhti Ka Chauraha, Tahssel Chauraha, Hospital Tiraha and adjacent areas and streets. The police interacted with shopkeepers as well as common people and asked them to feel fearless and inform the police about any type of harassment. The flag march was accompanied by heavy police and paramilitary force. Under Madihan police station the flag march passed through Jamui, Kalwari, Suggapakh, Deepnagar, Gopalpur markets and adjacent villages Kakarad, Karaunda, Gurudevsnagar and others. An appeal

was made to common people to follow Covid guidelines and create an atmosphere to vote in large numbers. Meanwhile the flying squad team-3 seized ₹2 lakh under Adalhaat police station on Thursday.

SEIZED: Under the joint operation of Excise department and police 165 litres of illicit liquor was recovered and six persons were arrested from areas under two police stations on Thursday. Under the drive to control crime and illegal trade of liquor a team led by excise inspector Roshan Lal and Lalganj SHO Vijay Kumar Chaurasia conducted a raid at Khajuri village under Lalganj police station. During it police destroyed utensils, four breweries, recovered 65 litres of liquor and arrested three persons identified as Rajesh Pal, Minna Lal, and Gulab. After registering a case, the police sent the accused to jail. Besides Jigna police arrested three persons with liquor. After registering a case the police completed the legal formalities.

Vindhyachal Project employees honoured

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

On the occasion of 73rd Republic Day of the country organised a simple function in the administrative building. On the occasion as per the guidelines of the Government of India all precautions of social distancing and Covid-19 guidelines were followed. The function was inaugurated by the Project Head (Vindhyachal) Subhash Chandra Nayak by unfurling the tricolour. Subhash Chandra Nayak while addressing the employees present congratulated everyone on Republic Day. Nayak said in the modern machine age development and electricity complement each other. Without electricity it is impossible to imagine any kind of development in modern times. He said that NTPC Vindhyachal is making significant contribution at the regional and national level through its continuous power generation since last 39 years. When there was a shortage of coal all over the country NTPC Vindhyachal on October 27, 2021, in a day transported 89,000 metric tonnes maximum coal through 31 rakes which is a matter of pride. Along with it many concrete steps related to environmental protection have been taken due to which BTAP rake filled with fly ash was sent to RCPL and Maihar which is one of the friendly methods for environmental protection. The nation's first FGD has been installed at Unit 13 of NTPC Vindhyachal. Besides, distribution of essential food items, clothes, education material, medical facilities, self-employment and other basic facilities are being made



available by CSR and Suhasini Sangh in public interest. Nayak while wishing for the bright future of officers and employees, inspired them to work with the same passion and teamwork. After project head's speech tricolour balloons were released in the sky as a symbol of independence. Project head (Vindhyachal) SC Nayak honoured selected employees of CISO with gallantry awards and also honoured 51 officers and employees of Vindhyachal Project with HOP Meritorious Award for their outstanding service and dedication. The contingent of CISO also presented yoga on the occasion which was appreciated by all present. Keeping in view the situation of Covid-19 infection the cultural programme was organised in a simple way. In the programme mainly General Manager (Operation and Maintenance) E Satya Phani Kumar and all other General Managers, Additional General Managers (AGMs), head of department /section head, chairperson of Suhasini Sangh Srotaswini Nayak and its other office-bearers, senior commandant (CISO) JP Azad, Deputy Commandant CISO

Shiv Kumar, Assistant Commandant (CISO/Security) Ajit Toppo and others were present and many members of NTPC family were also connected through webcast.

At the end of the function while proposing the vote of thanks the head of the department (Human Resources) Prabir Kumar Biswas once again extended warm wishes and greetings to everyone on Republic Day. On the occasion the national flag was unfurled by General Manager (Operation and Maintenance) E Satya Phani Kumar in the service building in the presence of other office-bearers. Simultaneously, the chairperson of Suhasini Sangh, Srotaswini Nayak, unfurled the national flag at Bal Bhavan and Tiny Tots in the presence of other office-bearers of Women's Club Suhasini Sangh. Along with it the tricolour was unfurled by senior officers in Vindhya Chikitsalaya, Vindhya Club, Viva Club, CITU Union office, INTUC Union office and Executive Union office. After that plantation was also done by Suhasini Sangh in the presence of senior officers.

Special vaccination drive held

PNS ■ VARANASI

Under the guidance of General Manager (GM) Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) Anjali Goyal and leadership of Principal Chief Medical Officer (PCMO) Dr Devesh Kumar on Thursday a special vaccination campaign was conducted by the medical team with the aim of increasing the immunity of its employees working to fight against Covid-19 infection and their self-confidence. In it Chief Mechanical Engineer (CME)/SE Suneel Kumar and Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer (DCME), Plant-II, Prakash Ratan, by getting booster doses themselves inspired their subordinate employees for vaccination. For



registration and vaccination for both the Covid-19 vaccines Covishield and Covaxin arrangement for two special counters was made in which 300 employees were administered the booster doses at their workplace itself so that their immunity to fight against the infection can be increased and in them self-confidence

towards work can be boosted. In the vaccination programme in addition to CME/SE and DCME/Plant-II, supervisor PC Sharma, Divisional Medical Officer (DMO) Dr Tanmaya Anand and BLW employee leader, Krishna Mohan Tiwari also registered their presence and encouraged the employees for vaccination.

DM reviews preparations for training of poll duty personnel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The District Magistrate, City, Neha Sharma while reviewing the preparations going on at the Polytechnic on Friday for the training of personnel on election duty said all those involved in election duty training must have received two shots and a booster as well so that they can be entitled for taking part in the training. She said special vaccination camps will be held at the Polytechnic itself. She said the training will be conducted in two sessions in a day. She said entry of every person on the premises should be allowed only after thermal scanning.

She said hand sanitisers should be made available at every desk and should be frequently used during the training and poll duty and added that the whole training will be carried out as per the COVID-19 protocol. She said in view of the substantial number of personnel left out from vaccination special arrangements were being made at the Polytechnic for their vaccination. She said people who have been left out of the vaccinations and even the booster dose must get themselves vaccinated at these camps. She said proper arrangements for parking and other civic facility should be arranged.

She then inspected that Tehsil Sadar where the nomi-



District Magistrate, City, Neha Sharma reviews the progress at Polytechnic on Friday.

nation were being carried out and directed all the officials to ensure that as per the directives of the Election Commission it should be followed in the true letter and spirit. She said all the process of filing nominations should be videographed and photographed for concrete evidence and there should be no laxity in this regard. She directed the officials concerned to ensure they regularly monitort

the CCTV footages and said all the recording should be kept as backup as well. She said no laxity will be tolerated in this regard.

Sharma then reviewed the progress of the venue of nomination filing of Bithoor and Bilhaur and later inspected ther CCTV control room as well. She said it was the bounden duty of the officials to ensure that the entire process

of election was conducted peacefully and in a free and fair manner. She said social distancing should be strictly followed. She added that full transparency need to be maintained all through the election process.

Prominent official present were CDO, Dr Mahendra Kumar, ADM Dayanand Prasad, Principal Polytechnic and several other officials.

Mehndi application contest held to raise voter awareness

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The buzz around elections was in full swing in Kanpur and the institutions have joined hands in creating awareness among the voters in a big way. The students were organising poster rallies, forming human chain and organising Mehndi Application Contests to create awareness among the electorate. Prominent schools which organised contests were Rajkiya Balika Inter College, Saryu Narain Bal Vidyalaya, Juhari Devi Girls College and several other institutions.

Addressing the event the coordinator, Dr Shipra Srivastava, said mehndi application has been the most favourite tradition of India be it any festival, marriage, Raksha Bandhan or Karva Chauth all such events had one thing in common. She said taking cue from this the students decided to craft message for voters to take part in the voting.

She said election was the most crucial event in any democracy and the citizens had the right to vote for any candidate or a party and in our country this right was given to people aged 18 years and above.

The Uttar Pradesh elections were scheduled on February 20, 2022 and the Election Commission was taking all possible measures to



Students of girls inter colleges took part in Mehndi application contest to raise voter awareness on Friday.

make sure that more people were encouraged to vote as it formed the basis of a robust

democracy.

She said to make this endeavour more effective, the

The young student 'activists' also requested people to extend help to those with disability. Information about sign language interpreters, postal ballots, pick and drop facilities at polling booths was also promised.

BJP richest party, BSP, not Cong, comes 2nd

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Political parties in India cumulatively hold assets worth around a whopping ₹9,117.95 crore with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) topping the list with a staggering wealth including cash, bank investments, movable and immovable properties, vehicles etc — worth ₹4,847.78 crore. However, it is the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and not the Congress, which followed BJP declaring assets worth ₹698.33 crore (9.99 per cent).

While the Congress declared assets worth ₹588.16 crore (8.42 per cent), CPI(M) declared ₹569.51 crore, Trinamool Congress (TMC) ₹247.78 crore, CPI ₹29.78 crore and NCP ₹8.20 crore.

According to the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) analysis report, the seven national parties together hold ₹6,988.57 crore while 44 regional parties have ₹2,129.35 crore. All these parties together hold assets worth ₹9,117.95 as on 2019-20.

Among the national parties, the BJP and BSP declared the highest assets under FDR/Fixed Deposits, ₹3,253.00 crore and ₹618.86 crore respectively while the Congress declared the highest assets under FDR/Fixed Deposits, ₹240.90 crore for the 2019-20.



The total liabilities declared by the seven national and 44 regional political parties for the same duration amounted to ₹134.93 crore. The national political parties declared the total liabilities of ₹74.27 crore, ₹4.26 crore under Borrowings and ₹70.01 crore under Other Liabilities. The Congress declared the highest total liabilities of ₹49.55 crore (66.72 per cent) followed by All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) declaring ₹11.32 crore (15.24 per cent).

Among the 44 regional parties, the assets of the top 10 parties were worth ₹2028.715 crore or 95.27 per cent of the total declared by them all combined. In 2019-20, among the regional parties, the highest assets were declared by the Samajwadi Party at ₹563.47 crore (26.46 per cent), followed by the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) worth ₹301.47 crore and All India Anna

Dravid Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) worth ₹267.61 crore. Fixed Deposits/FDR constituted the largest share of ₹1,639.51 crore (76.99 per cent) of the total assets declared by regional parties in 2019-20.

The highest assets were declared under FDR/Fixed Deposits by SP (₹434.219 crore), TRS (₹256.01 crore), AIADMK (₹246.90 crore), DMK (₹162.425 crore), Shiv Sena (₹148.46 crore) and Biju Janata Dal, BJD (₹118.425 crore) among others. The regional political parties declared the total liabilities of ₹60.66 crore, ₹30.29 crore was declared under Borrowings and ₹30.37 crore under Other Liabilities. Amongst them, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) declared the highest total liabilities of ₹30,342 crore (50.02 per cent) followed by DMK that declared ₹8.05 crore (13.27 per cent).

PM hails NCC's role in nation building



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Lauding the role played by the National Cadet Corps (NCC) in nation building, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Friday the Government has prepared over one lakh new NCC cadets in the border areas of the country. He also stressed the need for inducting more girls into the NCC.

Addressing the annual NCC rally on the occasion of the Republic Day, the Prime Minister also gave credit to it for shaping his personality. "The training I got in the NCC and the things I learned here have provided me immense strength in delivering upon my responsibilities. Recently, I had also received an NCC alumni card as well," he

said.

"I am proud that I was also an active member of NCC. Our government is taking several steps to strengthen NCC. A large number of girl cadets participated in the rally, this is the change India is witnessing today," Modi said while addressing the cadets.

Earlier, he inspected the Guard of Honour, reviewed March Past by NCC contingents and also witnessed the NCC cadets displaying their skills in army action, slithering, micro-light flying, para-sailing as well and cultural programmes. The best cadets also received medals and batons from the Prime Minister.

In his address, Modi noted in the celebrations as the country is marking the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. He paid trib-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi wore a Sikh cadet turban while participating in the NCC rally here on Friday. The colour of the turban was military green with a red colour plume. The Prime Minister wears turbans or 'pagri' at events of national importance like Independence Day and Republic Day.

utes to Lala Lajpat Rai and Field Marshal K M Cariappa for their contribution in nation building.

The Prime Minister talked about the steps being taken to strengthen the NCC in the country in a period when the country is moving forward with new resolutions. In the last two years, one lakh new cadets have been created in the border areas of the country, he said.

The Prime Minister elaborated on the steps being taken to open the doors of the defence establishments for girls and women. He noted the presence of the large number of the girl cadets and termed it to be a symbol of changing attitude of the nation.

Noting the young profile of the cadets, who are mostly born in this century, Modi underlined their role in taking the country towards 2047. He also underlined the major role that youngsters can play in the 'vocal for local' campaign.

SC refuses to lay down yardstick for reservation in promotion to SC/ST in Govt jobs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Friday refused to lay down a yardstick for granting reservation in promotion to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Government jobs.

A three-judge bench headed by Justice Nageswara Rao said States are obligated to collect data on inadequacy of representation of SCs/STs.

The apex court said it cannot lay down any yardstick to determine the inadequacy of representation of SCs/STs and it for the states to do so.

The Centre had earlier told the bench that it is a fact of life that even after around 75 years if independence those belonging to SCs and STs have not been brought to the same level of merit as the forward classes. The apex court had reserved its verdict on October 26, 2021.

SC gives SpiceJet three weeks to resolve dispute with Swiss firm

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday granted three weeks to SpiceJet to resolve its financial dispute with Swiss firm Credit Suisse AG and stayed the Madras High Court order on its winding up, saying that it was a "serious matter" and the airlines cannot say it is a busy organisation and would not pay.

A bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana, while staying the publication of winding up notice and the order directing the official liquidator attached to the Madras High Court to take over the assets of the low-cost airline, questioned the approach of SpiceJet.

The bench, also comprising Justices AS Bopanna and Hima Kohli, took note of the submissions of senior advocate Harish Salve that SpiceJet would try to resolve the issue with the Swiss firm.

India 'vibrant' democracy, no certificate needed: MEA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India is a "vibrant" democracy and does not need any validation or "certificate," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said here on Friday. This rebuttal came in the backdrop of former Vice President Hamid Ansari and four US lawmakers airing concern over human rights situation in the country.

Making India's stand clear, MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said here said India is a vibrant democracy, which does not require certification from others, and the track record of the event's organisers was as well known as the biases and

political interests of the participants.

Asked about the virtual panel discussion organised by the Indian American Muslim Council on Wednesday during which Ansari and the US lawmakers expressed concern over the current human rights situation in India, Bagchi said, "We have seen reports on this event. India is a robust and vibrant democracy. It does not require certification from others."

The claim that others need to protect our constitution is "presumptuous and preposterous," he said. "The track record of event organisers is as well known as the biases and political interests of the participants," Bagchi said.

With Israel's aide, Centre to convert villages into 'Village of Excellence'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday said it has decided to convert as many as 150 villages into 'Villages of Excellence' in 12 states with technical assistance from the Israel government. Already, the Israel government has established 29 Centre of Excellence (CoEs) in 12 states, which are producing more than 25 million vegetable plants, over 3,87,000 quality fruit plants and can train more than 1.2 lakh farmers per year. The 150 villages that are located around CoEs will be converted into 'Villages of Excellence.' "Out of these, 75 villages are being taken up in the first year to commemorate the 75th year of India's independence, where India and Israel will work together," Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar conveyed in a meeting with new Israeli Ambassador to India Naor Gilon on January 27. Gilon said these CoEs are a great example of cooperation between the two countries and proposed the certification of CoEs to further enhance the standards and quality of services being provided to the farmers. He also evinced interest in further collaboration with agri-research body ICAR and making available the latest technologies available with Israel. Gilon also invited Tomar to visit Israel.

'Air Vaidya' fumigation can mitigate Covid-19 infection: BHU scientists

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

At a time when the world is grappling with the highly transmissible Omicron variant of Covid-19, scientists at the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) have, in a first-of-its-kind study, found that anti-viral, anti-bacterial, and anti-inflammatory properties in the fumes of Air Vaidya Herbal Dhoopa (AVHD), an ayurvedic formulation, could be effective in preventing air-borne infections in humans and home settings.

Prepared by AIMIL Pharmaceuticals, 'Air Vaidya' contains phytochemicals from 19 medicinal ingredients such as Raal, Neem Patr, Vasa, Ajwain, Haldi, Lemon grass (lamajjaka), Vacha, Tulsi, Peeli Sarson, Safed Chandan, Ushir, Sudh Guggal, Nagarmotha, Mehendi, Tagar, Loban, Kapoor, Jigat and Cardamom husk, which are known for their potential therapeutic effects to combat the virus.

Dr. KRC Reddy, Professor, Department of Rasa Shastra (Ayurveda), Institute of Medical Sciences, BHU, who led the research, said, "Though Dhoopan (fumigation), a medicinal therapy has been described in Ayurveda compendia for ages for its potency in anti-microbial, anti-fungal, anti-viral action, in the backdrop of rising Covid-19 cases, this is the first scientific study."

Dr. Reddy explained, "Participants were divided into two groups—intervention group (150 persons) and controlled group (100 persons). Since the Covid-19 virus generally enters through nose and mouth into the human body, medicinal fumigation therapy was given to the participants of the intervention group. They were asked to inhale 'Air Vaidya Herbal Dhoopa' (AVHD) fumes for ten minutes twice a day, while the control group was not given any such treatment. "The results were encouraging. Just 4 percent of the intervention group put on the medicinal therapy showed Covid like symptoms such as fever, cough, cold, or no taste or smell; on the other hand, at least 37 percent, who were not given such therapy, were found to have Covid-19 like symptoms." The fumes were also chemically safe on Drosophila flies in the first phase of the clinical trial, Dr. Reddy said.

PHC's 'faith tourism trip' to India put off due to Covid

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Pakistan Hindu Council (PHC) 'faith tourism trip' to India through chartered flights beginning from Saturday has been postponed due to rising cases of COVID-19. PHC chief patron Ramesh Vankwani on Friday said that the tour has been postponed for the time being after the Government of India's request due to the rising cases of COVID-19.

India on Friday said there is an interest on both the Indian and Pakistani sides to expand the agreed list of shrines and mode of travel under the 1974 protocol for visits to religious places, asserting that it has a positive approach on the matter and is willing to engage with Islamabad on it. PHC has proposed to fly 160 Pakistani Hindu pilgrims from Karachi to Jaipur on Saturday. The assertion comes days after Vankwani who is a member of the National Assembly from Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's ruling party, urged India to issue visas

The Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi has issued a visa to Muhammad Habibaka Sika Khan to visit his brother Muhammed Siddique and other family members in Pakistan. The two brothers separated in 1947 were recently reunited after 74 years at Kartarpur Corridor. A short video clip, which went viral on social media, showed that the two brothers burst into tears as soon as they saw each other at Kartarpur.

to a delegation of pilgrims to visit the country as part of his faith tourism initiative between the two neighbours.

Responding to a query, the Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, "As you are aware, under the 1974 Protocol between India and Pakistan, visits to religious shrines are being facilitated regularly. There is an interest on both sides to expand the agreed list of shrines and mode of travel." It naturally needs to be discussed under the protocol, he said.

PIC TALK



NCC cadets perform during Prime Minister's NCC rally, at Cariappa Parade Ground in New Delhi on Friday

PTI

Delhi's day temp rises to 20.6 deg C

New Delhi: Delhi experienced a day full of bright sunshine on Friday which put an end to a streak of damp and cloudy days. The Safdarjung Observatory, considered the official marker for the city, recorded a maximum temperature of 20.6 degrees Celsius, two notches below normal. It was after 19 days that the mercury crossed the 20 degree-Celsius mark in Delhi. The minimum temperature settled at 6.4 degrees Celsius, three notches below normal.

Day temperatures are likely to rise to 22 to 23 degrees Celsius in the next few days

while night temperatures may rise to 10 to 11 degrees Celsius over the next few days, the weather department said. The capital had been recording below normal maximum temperatures since the second week of January. The minimum temperatures have been close to or above normal. There have been seven western disturbances in Delhi this January as against a normal of three to four in the month.

Rains due to the western disturbances increased moisture in the air which led to foggy conditions amid low temperatures on most days.

NIA chargesheet in ISIS Kerala Module case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA on Friday filed a chargesheet against eight accused persons in ISIS Kerala Module case.

The eight chargesheeted alleged ISIS terrorists are Deepthi Marla alias Maryam, Mohammad Waqar Lone alias Wilson Kashmiri, Mizha Siddeeqe, Shifa Haris alias Ayesha, Obaid Hamid Matta, Madesh Shankar alias Abdullah, Ammar Abdul Rahiman and Muzamil Hassan Bhat, the NIA said in a statement.

Bharat Biotech gets DCGI nod for phase-3 trial of its intranasal Covid vax

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The country's top drug regulator, DCGI, has given permission to Bharat Biotech to conduct phase-3 clinical trial for its intranasal COVID vaccine as booster dose on participants who have been previously inoculated with SARS-CoV 2 vaccines.

The trials will be conducted at nine locations in the country. It will be done on 900 subjects.

The trials would evaluate the nasal vaccine for both the two-dose primary schedule

and also to use as a booster dose schedule, said officials in the DCGI.

DCGI's Subject Expert Committee (SEC) gave an 'in-principle' approval to Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech for the 'phase-III booster dose study' for its intranasal Covid vaccine, a first of its kind in India, and asked it to submit protocols for approval 3 weeks ago.

BBV154 (nasal covid vaccine) has received approval for phase-3 clinical trials. The trials will evaluate BBV154 nasal vaccine for both the two-dose primary schedule and booster

dose schedule, the sources said.

An intra-nasal vaccine would not only be simple to administer but also reduce the use of needles and syringes, among others. It would also impact the overall cost of a vaccination drive, chairman of Bharat Biotech Krishna Ella had said.

Bharat Biotech is the second company to submit an application for the phase-III trial of the third dose in India. The intranasal vaccines reportedly have the potential to prevent transmission for new Covid-19 variants such as Omicron.

HC asks Centre to clarify if it wishes to withdraw stand opposing pleas to criminalise marital rape

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Friday asked the Centre to inform whether it wishes to withdraw its 2017 affidavit in which it had submitted that marital rape cannot be made a criminal offence as it could become a phenomenon which may destabilise the institution of marriage and an easy tool for harassing husbands.

A bench of Justices Rajiv Shakdher and C Hari Shankar, which has been conducting marathon hearings on a batch of petitions seeking criminalisation of marital rape, asked Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma to take instructions on this aspect and listed the matter for January 31.

The court's direction came after advocate Karuna Nundy, representing petitioner NGOs RIT Foundation and All India Democratic Women's Association, sought a clarification as to whether she shall address on the written submissions and affidavits

filed by the central government so far or they are withdrawing it. To this, Justice Shakdher said, "Mr Sharma take instructions on that as well. What do you want? Monday."

This assumes significance as the Centre, in its affidavit filed in August 2017, had said the Supreme Court and various High Courts have already observed the rising misuse of Section 498A (harassment caused to a married woman by her husband and in-laws) of Indian Penal Code (IPC). It had further said that marital rape has not been defined in an statute or law and while the offence of rape is defined under section 375 IPC, defining marital rape would call for a broad based consensus of the society.

However, in January, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the high court that it was considering a "constructive approach" to the issue and has sought suggestions from several stakeholders and authorities on com-

prehensive amendments to the criminal law. He had said criminalisation of marital rape involves "family issues" as well as the dignity of a woman and cannot be looked at from a "microscopic angle" and sought some time to respond with the government's stand.

The bench, on January 24, granted 10 days to the Centre to come back with its stand on the issue. The court, which has been hearing the pleas on a daily basis since January 10, has concluded hearing the submissions of petitioners, Delhi government and some NGOs which have been opposing the pleas. On Friday, Sharma submitted that the petitioners should advance their rejoinder arguments after the Centre places its arguments before the court.

However, the bench said that either the central government shall start its submissions from January 31 or it would hear the rejoinder argu-

ments of petitioners. "You are not starting so we will hear them. What to do now? If you do not start, we will hear them. Without you it is not going anywhere. At least we will hear Karuna Nundy and Colin Gonsalves (counsel for petitioners)," the bench said.

Sharma responded by saying there was "no unseemly hurry" in the matter and the court has already granted time to the Centre. To this, Justice Shakdher shot back, "Please don't say that. We have taken out our judicial time on this, so don't say this and don't enter on side issues. Let us have a dialogue on more substantial things, which is the law." "Take a week after they have finished but at least start. You can come back on that," the bench said.

During the hearing, NGO, Men Welfare Trust (MWT), which is opposing the batch of petitions seeking criminalisation of marital rape,

submitted that the Domestic Violence Act was specifically promulgated for recognizing spouse sexual violence.

Advocate Sai Deepak J, representing the NGO, submitted that the immunity provided is to protect the civil liberties of the husband, thanks to the nature of the relationship.

He also clarified that the entity which he represents is not against recognition of spousal sexual violence and claimed that some of the news reports have slightly misconstrued his submissions. On this, the bench said "by the time we finish, we will also face flak." Nundy also submitted that she has received rape threats but she has not talked about it.

MWT's counsel had earlier argued that sexual intercourse between a husband and wife cannot be treated at par with that in non-marital relationships as the issue of consent cannot be divorced from the context of a marriage.

PTI

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Missing classes

There is still no clarity from any quarter on whether it's okay to reopen schools

One would have expected the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (Insacog) or the National COVID Task Force or the entire body of epidemiologists and virologists to at least now come up with a view on the reopening of schools. Unfortunately, their view eludes us. Schools remained closed for all of 2020 and most of 2021. They began to reopen in several States at the end of the second wave but closed down again when Omicron surfaced. Scientists predict that the current wave is subsiding fast, but they do not want to tell us if it is okay for children to return to school. Restrictions are being lifted but no State Government is willing to bell the 'school reopening' cat. Is there something we do not know but ought to know? Or is it that nobody wants to take the risk because nobody can say with confidence that the reopening will increase, or not increase, the risk of infection? The children and their parents are owed an explanation. For over 600 days, students have missed school, been kept away from classroom studies and subjected to forced home isolation and, for no fault of theirs, they are becoming victims of mental distress. We hear the usual from the scientists that children have a strong immune system that prevents them from catching infection easily. On the contrary, months of sitting isolated at home without exercise or physical activity may have dented their immunity.



There is no data on how children faced infection and no surveys on whether strict precautions in schools can ward off infection till they are vaccinated. To a large extent, the hesitation of the Government in reopening schools is justified because children are the only segment of the population without a vaccine. Those over 15 are getting their first dose now. Vaccines for children above two years of age will have to wait for a while longer, probably till early summer when five vaccines will be available to them — Cadila Healthcare's ZyCoV-D, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, the Serum Institute's Covovax, Biological E's RBD and Johnson & Johnson's 26COV.2S vaccine. In the meanwhile, there should have been a national assessment of the fall in education reception, or knowledge absorption and in the standards among children, if any. The shortcomings of the online method of teaching are already in the public sphere. Students from poor families are suffering from not being able to afford digital devices or lacking electricity to run them. Parents are beginning to ask why education is not an "essential" service like economic activity is. They find it surprising that bars are the first to reopen, but not schools. They say it is naïve to suppose children are not exposed to the virus when adults in the family go out regularly for work. It is time for rationality, not emotions, to decide on the reopening of schools. There is no scientific reason to keep them closed, anyway.

PICTALK



Tourists paraglide as weather clears after snowfall in the Solangnala plains of Manali

PTI

Opportunists

Political leaders of myriad hues have turned elections into a joke in their lust for power

Till the 1980s, June and July used to be months of activity in Kolkata's football maidans despite the monsoon. That was the period of inter-club player transfers as a prelude to the Calcutta League. Though neither Bengal nor India were anywhere near the top 10 teams in Asia, the transfers took place with decency and dignity. The Indian Soccer League has since robbed the Calcutta League and the player transfers of their importance. The elections to five State Assemblies, to be held in February 2022, bring to mind more or less a similar scenario. Ministers, Assembly's sitting members and the out-of-favour leaders have suddenly sprung to life and are animatedly defecting from their old party to new outfits for the lure of tickets and other benefits. In Uttar Pradesh, many Ministers and their hangers-on have jumped fences and crossed over to parties which offered to fulfil their demands. A leader in the BJP's UP Government suddenly got enlightened that his community, Dalits and Muslims were being ignored by the Government in power since 2017 and so he walked off to the rival camp.



On why he kept quiet for five long years before crossing over to another party, his explanation was that people had given him the mandate for five years and that period was over once the election was declared! While this Minister defected to the Samajwadi Party, a leader from the house of the SP bosses jumped ship and joined the Hindutva bandwagon, portraying it as 'secular and humane'. The Uttarakhand PCC president joined the BJP because he would not have made it to the list of party candidates in the GOP. These are not stray incidents but routine shows that play out before every election. The Aaya Rams and Gaya Rams are still around... in modern avatars. Though Rajiv Gandhi after becoming Prime Minister amended the Constitution in 1985 with a view to checking defections, our ingenious political leaders have designed new strategies to circumvent the anti-defection laws. Politics is degenerating into 'politricks' and has truly become the 'Great Indian Political Circus'. If the common man opts for "one nation, one election" as proposed by the Prime Minister, it is only to get rid of this political gymnastics. A senior and respected MP was heard saying the other day she was willing to step aside provided her son was accommodated in her place. Cry, my beloved country!!

Hindus as punching bags for centuries?

There are several mentions in historical recordings and scholarly papers to show that pre-Islamic religious edifices were razed to build mosques

There is no doubt that Hindus have had the image of being soft and, therefore, a useful punching bag. It was overdue for a firm stand to be taken as was rightly done by TS Tirumurti, the Indian permanent representative to the United Nations, very recently. Swami Vivekananda was palpably aware of the Hindu image having been tarnished and there being a Hindu phobia. Accorded a tumultuous welcome upon his return after making a great name for himself and his faith overseas, Swamiji gave a frank explanation for why there was Hindu phobia.

Sir Sankaran Nair, a member of the Viceroy's Council, in his book called *Gandhi and Anarchy* (published by Tagore & Company, Madras, 1922), wrote: "For sheer brutality on women, I do not remember anything in history to match the Malabar rebellion. It broke out about the 20th of August (1921). Even by the 6th of September, the results were dreadful." Gandhiji's comment which he wrote in *Young India* of September 29, 1921: "We have forgotten the divine out of dying for our faiths without retaliation..." The Hindus must have the courage and the faith to feel that they can protect their religion in spite of such fanatical eruptions." He warned the Government against excessive repression of the Moplahs. The ending of the revolt was a matter not only of urgency, but of simple humanity: "Be the Moplahs ever so bad, they deserve to be treated as human beings."

Amongst Swami Dayanand's successors, Swami Shradhdhananda was the most successful in implementing *shuddhi*. He was murdered in his sick bed. Gandhi's comment was: "I have called Abdul Rashid a brother and I repeat it. I do not even regard him as guilty of Swami's murder. Guilty indeed are those who excited feelings of hatred against one another."

The message of Vivekananda was clear that many problems have their roots in us. There is no power in the universe to injure us unless we first injure



ourselves. One-fifth of the population in India has become Mohammedan. Whose fault is it? One of our historians says in ever-memorable language: "Why should these poor wretches starve and die of thirst when the perennial fountain of life is flowing by? The question is: What did we do for these people who forsook their own religion? Why should they have become Mohammedan?"

To go back to Aurangzeb, over two centuries after the desecration, F Growse, the magistrate of the district in the 1870s, felt that of all the sacred places in India, none enjoys greater popularity than the capital of Braj, the holy city of Mathura. For nine months in the year, festival follows upon festival in rapid succession and the ghats and temples are daily thronged by new troops of way-worn pilgrims. So great is the sanctity of the spot that its panegyrist do not hesitate to declare that a single day spent in Mathura is more meritorious than a lifetime passed in Benares. All this celebrity is due to the fact of it being the birthplace of lord Krishna.

In his *Mathura: A District Memoir*, Growse has recorded his exhaustive survey of



THE MESSAGE OF VIVEKANANDA WAS THAT MANY PROBLEMS HAVE THEIR ROOTS IN US. THERE IS NO POWER TO INJURE US UNLESS WE FIRST INJURE OURSELVES. ONE-FIFTH OF THE POPULATION IN INDIA HAS BECOME MOHAMMEDAN. WHOSE FAULT IS IT?

Brajbhoomi. He was so overwhelmed by the vandalism that visited the area repeatedly that he wrote feelingly, although his home was in far-away England. To quote: "Thanks to Muhammadan intolerance, there is not a single building of any antiquity either in the city itself or its environs. Its most famous temple, which was dedicated to Kesava Deva (Krishna), was destroyed in 1669, the 11th year of the reign of the iconoclast Aurangzeb. The mosque (*idgah*) erected on its ruins is a building of little architectural value."

Today, Balkrishna is worshipped in a little room which appears like a servant quarter adjoining the back of the *idgah*. Pathos can be experienced by any visitor, whether a devotee or otherwise. The mischief with *masjids* extends from Sonmuth in the west to Adina mosque on the Bangladesh border in the east. The Adina mosque is situated on National Highway No.34 near Gaur. On the wall outside, distinct remnants of Hindu deities are visible. One stone slab displays Ganesh by the side of his consort. Inside the mosque, the stone work is equally convincing that the original building was a temple. There



PRAFULL GORADIA

has obviously been done a fair amount of work on this place of worship. Memoirs of Gaur and Pandua by M Abid Ali Khan, subsequently revised by HP Stapleton, prove this.

A more recent work of scholarship is entitled *Mosque Architecture of Pre-Mughal Bengal* by Dr Syed Mahmudul Hasan. Evidently, local legend as to who built the Adina mosque and why, appears to be incorrect. According to scholars, it was established by Sultan Sikandar Shah between 1366 and 1374 AD. There is a difference of opinion, especially between JH Ravenshaw and other scholars as to whether Gaur, the famous capital of medieval Bengal, was older or whether Hazrat Pandua, where Adina is located, flourished earlier. The significance of the controversy is about how much rubble from pre-Islamic edifices could have been used. Dr Hasan is impartial enough to quote various scholars at length, although he betrays some unhappiness at the allegation about the use of Hindu materials.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the *Rajya Sabha*. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE MAHARAJA'S HOMECOMING

Sir — For the Tatas, the original owners of Air India, nothing can be greater delight than the homecoming of the debt-laden, yet the nation's prestigious, air carrier after nearly seven decades. Air India, which gave wings to the nation, was much more than a business venture to the country's biggest conglomerate. (*Air India lands up in Tatas' hands*, January 28). From the first operation from Karachi to Bombay in October 1932, with JRD Tata steering a Puss Moth aircraft, to seizing control of Air India 89 years later, the Tata Group has had a rollercoaster ride in Indian civil aviation history.

While normally aircraft head back to their original destinations after flying, perhaps for the first time in aviation history has an airline company itself headed back to its original roots. The skies of independent India had long witnessed the dominance of the country's flagship airliner, and perhaps they are eagerly waiting to welcome the beginning of a new era in India's aviation ecosystem. And the Maharaja, whose famous moustache was designed by Bobby Kooka, a close associate and friend of JRD Tata, is truly back with a bang.

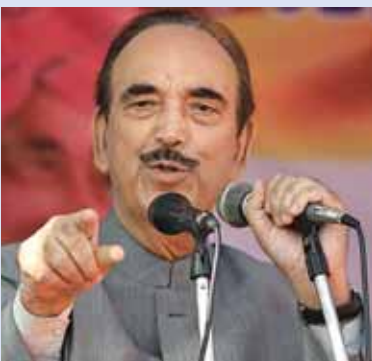
Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

INT'L HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Sir — We observe the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27 every year to mark the liberation of Nazi Germany concentration camp, Auschwitz Birkenau, from the historical atrocities committed on Jews. This day reminds us of the crimes committed by Nazi Germany in concentration camps, leading to about 1.1 million deaths between 1940 and 1945. On this day, the qualities of tolerance, equality, free speech and human rights need to be inculcated in this world beset by a number of challenges and inequalities. As the holocaust memories fade in the mist of time, anti-Semitic, religious and racial intolerance are taking the centre stage.

Since the number of Holocaust survivors is showing a downward trend, the younger generation must be made aware

Reason for Cong's discomfiture



This refers to the editorial, 'Missing focus' (January 28). The Government awarding the Padma Bhushan to Congress veteran Ghulam Nabi Azad in recognition of his services to public affairs has brought the fault lines in the party to the fore. Innuendoes and indignities against him are flying around. Praising the one from West Bengal as "Azad" for rejecting the national honour and mocking the other as

"Ghulam" for accepting it signifies the grand old party's deep decline. Azad's public affairs credentials are impeccable. He was the J&K CM in 2005, after Congress' CM Syed Mir Qasim in 1975. Also, he was Cabinet colleague to the party's who's-who of Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh.

This Government has in the past honoured Congress stalwarts like Pranab Mukherjee and Tarun Gogoi, too. Terming the present conferment 'political' is not true. Even the Government's harshest critics, the Shiv Sena and TMC, endorse the honour to Azad. After being sidelined by his party since he is a G23 member, Azad is doing well by pulling crowds in his home State. He may be eying a new political innings in J&K. That he may align with the BJP is probably worrying the Congress. Sad that while senior party members are polarised on the issue, the party's top leadership is in such disarray that it cannot even focus on the upcoming State elections.

SK Prabhakar | Gurugram

of it so as to be able to separate facts from falsehoods and hatred. Enlightening the youth about the agony of Holocaust is a tool that can spring them into action against the scourge of hatred. When Holocaust survivors' memories become ours, the future generations will avoid the mistakes of their ancestors. Collective memory has the propensity not just to serve as a blueprint for the future but also to rekindle the past memories and avoid repeating mistakes.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

WHAT'S WRONG WITH INDIAN CRICKET?

Sir — Cricket is like a game of chess and so every move counts in its shortest form. Having lost the Test series in a one-day fashion, we could have chalked out a strategy to avoid the mistakes committed in the longest form of the game. The blame game has started. It started from the Kohli era but we blame Rahul for the

downfall. The ex-captain is enjoying his cricket just like it is an outing in the park. As the captain, he was sending flying kisses to the pavilion and now, as a player, he is doing a cradle celebration.

The batting standards have gone down considerably, which forced such a situation that the bowlers were put to test. In the event of a small total to defend, most of the time on the tour our strategy should be to dismiss the opposition early. We lost to South Africa 1-2 in Test matches and 0-3 in One-Day matches. As a result, we sacked certain star bowlers as scapegoats. How long can we bank on our home wins? What is wrong with Indian cricket? Thus India's T-20 ranking is by far the best, compared to Test (3rd) and ODI (4th) after the debacle in South Africa.

Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

In the 75th year of Independence, we must resolve to ensure 75% turnout in every election.

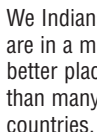


Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



No deal with prosecutors (in graft trial). I will continue to lead Likud (Party).

Israeli ex-PM — Benjamin Netanyahu



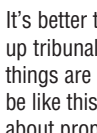
We Indians are in a much better place than many other countries.

Singer — Daler Mehndi



I asked myself 'What'd Novak do?' And I thought, OK, fight to the last point.

Russian tennis player — Daniil Medvedev



It's better to wind up tribunals if things are going to be like this. What about propriety?

Chief Justice of India — NV Ramana

FIRST COLUMN

SOVEREIGN BOND MOVE IS A WELCOME IDEA

Foreign capital inflow will ease down the bond yield to some extent



SHSHANK SAURAV


Union budget 2022 is few days away and there are speculations around inclusion of India's sovereign bond in the global bond index. Sometime back RBI governor said that the process is on and it should happen in few months. Historically, India has remained averse to the foreign ownership in the country's debt. This policy choice was largely driven by our experience related to balance of payment situation in 1990s. Government opened up the corporate sector for foreign capital (via FDI/Filroute) and even FPI limit in corporate bond was kept high but RBI continued to keep a conservative stand on sovereign bonds. Things have changed now and our foreign exchange reserve is enough to withstand the short-term volatility caused by sudden capital outflow. The Covid pandemic has curtailed revenue generation on one hand while public spending has increased on the other. The Government has resorted to borrowing as other non-tax receipts (like disinvestment proceeds or asset monetisation schemes) are lagging behind the target. The GOI 10-year bond yield has touched two years high of 6.54 percent in January 2022. Economic growth is still under the shadows of pandemic and therefore government borrowing is unlikely to come down drastically. When economy revives and credit demand picks up, banks would not be showing the same appetite for the Government papers and it appears that yields are not going to ease in near term. A higher yield means more outflow on account of interest payment and thereby leaving less amount with government for infrastructure and asset creation.

Foreign capital inflow will ease down the bond yield to some extent. However, this inflow will cause appreciation of INR and it will be detrimental to the exporters. This exchange rate movement can be managed by the RBI with its market intervention policies. Despite of various concessions and incentives given by government, private investment is not picking up and government has to come forward for almost all major infrastructure projects. Domestic borrowing directly impacts the liquidity which has direct impact on demand/consumption and inflation. In our case, external borrowing should be used for growth purpose only and foreign capital should not be tapped just to finance the fiscal deficit. Country's risk perception determines the demand of the government papers by the buyers. Credit Default Swap spread is generally used to gauge the risk perception on the securities issued by the borrower. India's five-year sovereign CDS spread has consistently fallen (after reaching its peak in March '20 due to Covid-related uncertainty) which means that credit perception has improved. India's sovereign credit rating has remained stable and downgrading by Moody's in June 2020 from Baa2 to Baa3 had invited severe criticism. Attractive yields on Indian bonds are remunerative to the foreign investors even if exchange rate risk is factored in and therefore demand of these securities is not a question which policy makers should worry about. There are certain areas which need to be clarified by the RBI and finance ministry before this policy shift sees the light of the day. Though there is an overall ceiling of six percent and two percent of outstanding loans for central Government and state development loans respectively, operational process should be smooth. Taxation aspect (both interest receipt at periodic interval and capital gain) is important as any relaxation to the foreign investors would be detrimental to the domestic investors. A concession to the foreign investors while taxing the transaction in the hands of domestic investors would go against the principles of equity. This structural shift shows change of mindset and it is a welcome step but will need to be monitored cautiously post implementation.

(The writer is a Chartered Accountant, author and public policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

Solid waste management policy still suffers from niggles

Primary segregation is key to effective solid waste management, specifically recycling and composting



RAJESH KUMAR

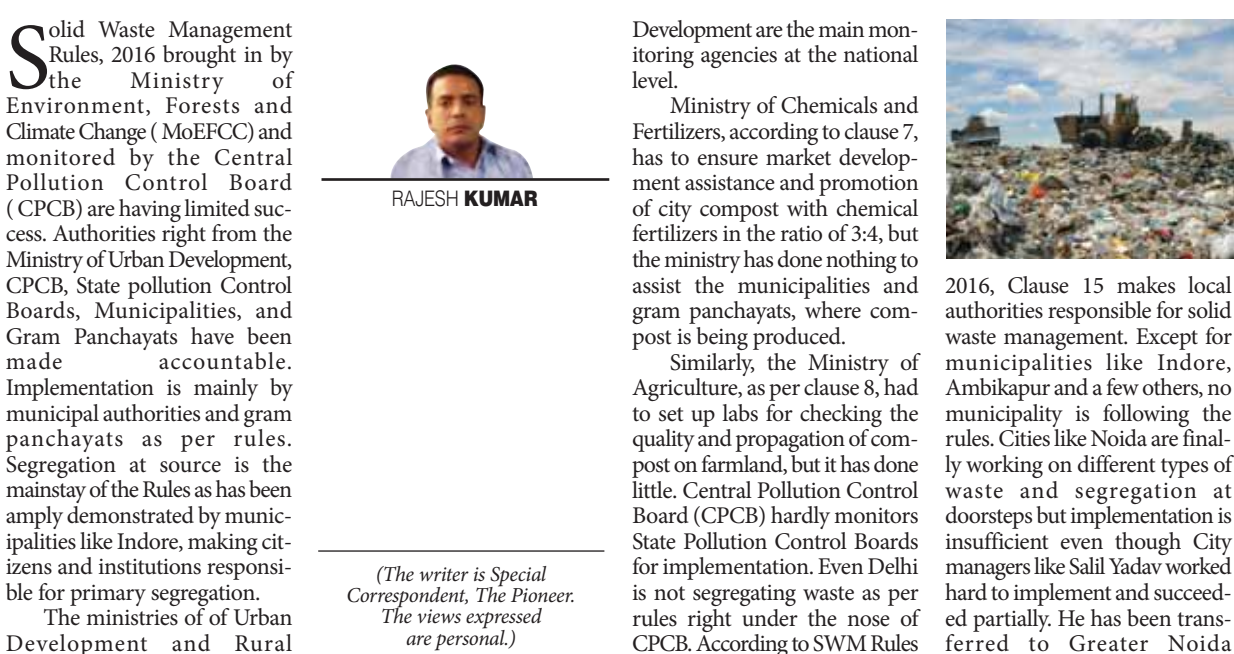
Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 brought in by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and monitored by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) are having limited success. Authorities right from the Ministry of Urban Development, CPCB, State pollution Control Boards, Municipalities, and Gram Panchayats have been made accountable. Implementation is mainly by municipal authorities and gram panchayats as per rules. Segregation at source is the mainstay of the Rules as has been amply demonstrated by municipalities like Indore, making citizens and institutions responsible for primary segregation.

The ministries of Urban Development and Rural

Development are the main monitoring agencies at the national level.


Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, according to clause 7, has to ensure market development assistance and promotion of city compost with chemical fertilizers in the ratio of 3:4, but the ministry has done nothing to assist the municipalities and gram panchayats, where compost is being produced.

Similarly, the Ministry of Agriculture, as per clause 8, had to set up labs for checking the quality and propagation of compost on farmland, but it has done little. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) hardly monitors State Pollution Control Boards for implementation. Even Delhi is not segregating waste as per rules right under the nose of CPCB. According to SWM Rules



2016, Clause 15 makes local authorities responsible for solid waste management. Except for municipalities like Indore, Ambikapur and a few others, no municipality is following the rules. Cities like Noida are finally working on different types of waste and segregation at doorsteps but implementation is insufficient even though City managers like Salil Yadav worked hard to implement and succeeded partially. He has been transferred to Greater Noida

Can Modi-Capt duo help BJP in Punjab?



AMITABH SHUKLA

Several Assembly polls have shown that Modi alone cannot be the face of BJP; it needs that extra zing, that extra person or an issue, to ride home

The Enforcement Directorate's raids on the house and business premises of the relatives of Punjab chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi follows a set pattern being followed by the central agencies for a while now in poll-bound states.

"This will generate a lot of smoke, this smoke will remain visible for a while but it will have little or no adverse political consequences for those who have been targeted," a leader in Punjab quipped on the timing of the raids when elections have been announced and the electoral process has begun.

Those who are knee-deep into politics say that the ED or Income Tax raids or any raid by a central agency hardly benefits the BJP in the elections as the fire is extinguished by those affected by the raid the very next day by playing the victim card to the hilt. The smoke too clears in the next 3-4 days after the agencies give an account of the recoveries and the dust it generates settles down in a week.

So, BJP in Punjab will have to rely solely on the charisma of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the political guile of two-time chief minister Amarinder Singh, having a combined tenure of nine and a half years in the top job of the state.

As we all know by now, Modi has a great influence when it comes to something like presidential type elections where he hardly has any political rivals and easily towers over others. It happened in 2014 and 2019 where the election was clearly Modi versus the rest. Obviously the combined "rest" was no match to Modi and the results hardly had any element of surprise. Not much has changed even in 2022 on this front.

However, at the same time, the Assembly elections in several states clearly showed that Modi alone cannot be the face of BJP and it has to get that extra zing, that extra person or an issue to ride home. Even in the home state of the Prime Minister, Gujarat, Congress did reasonably well despite the fact that Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah hailed from the same state. There were a string of losses in states all over the country, suggesting that local and regional leaders held on their own in their home turfs.

In Chandigarh Municipal Corporation elections, Modi was the only face of the BJP in the polls and the party could not win a majority despite ruling the civic body for five years. It's a different matter that through political machinations, it managed to get its "minority" Mayor elected, though the Aam Aadmi Party had two seats more than the BJP in the House.

So in Punjab, it is unlikely that Modi will have a big influence in the voting process and outcome, whatever his supporters say. The only rally he was supposed to address before the polls were announced, in Ferozepur, had to be canceled after the much-publicized security breach. Though the weather was bad on that day and prevented people from getting out, the low presence at the rally ground suggested that despite the repeal of the three farm laws, BJP has still to cross several more bridges to gain the trust of the Punjabis. To bridge that gap, one election is too short a time. It will take a while and sustained political efforts before BJP comes with the right formulae and local social engineering to get going in Punjab.

As far as Amarinder Singh is concerned, many in the state, some even his supporters, now believe that for him, forming Punjab Lok Congress and aligning with BJP is not a serious shot at power but only an attempt to ensure that Congress which he feels humiliated him, is defeated. Also, many in his old party believe that Amarinder could well be looking at fishing in troubled waters with half a dozen MLAs in a possible hung Assembly.

Without getting into ifs and buts of what would happen after the polling, it is clear that BJP wants to have a roadmap of its own in the Sikh majority state in the near future. It was in alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal for over two decades in the border state and used to contest 20 seats in the urban areas as a junior partner. The two parties complemented each other well-SAD, claiming to put across Sikh point of view while BJP the Hindu point of view in a state which was badly affected by militancy in the 1980s and early 1990s.

The now repealed three agricultural laws changed the political dynamics of the state and no one either from the BJP or the SAD could envisage the consequences it would have on state politics before the bills were conceptualized and eventually passed. As Sikh farmers from the state gathered at Delhi borders in one of the most visible non-violent protests in decades, opposition to the farm laws became a sort of mass movement in Punjab which a party could neglect only at its peril. SAD took the initiative and parted ways with its partner BJP and withdrew its minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal from the Modi Cabinet.

Even when BJP was in alliance with SAD, particularly, during the ten years of its rule (2007 to 2017), there were demands within BJP to test electoral waters independently. This chorus grew louder since 2014 when Modi emerged as a towering leader and BJP won several state elections and changed the political dynamics of the country. So, in 2022 it will be the first time in decades that BJP would be the big brother in the alliance with Congress turncoat and PLC chief



Amarinder Singh and would contest 65 odd seats. If BJP manages a decent show and the definition of a decent outing would vary from one leader to the other, a new alignment could emerge in Punjab. But given the fact that BJP has been unable to grow in rural Punjab due to multiple factors, it looks like a long haul for the safe-party at present.

Many in the SAD believe that Amarinder Singh's PLC is only a one election wonder and they have little or no differences with BJP, more so when the reason for their differences-Farm Acts-no longer exists. So there would hardly be much surprise if the SAD is back in alliance with the BJP for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and a soft understanding soon after the 2022 Assembly polls. In fact, none of the two parties-SAD and BJP-are making noises against each other in the campaign, making it clear that there is hardly any difference of opinion amongst them. If BJP does reasonably well in assembly polls, it will then bargain for more seats in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls from SAD. That seems to be the refrain of some BJP leaders as well as an aging Captain Amarinder is no guarantee for their future political plans in the state and SAD completes the Hindu-Sikh political stereotype which helps BJP in rest of the country as well.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

WARM CONGRATULATIONS TO @GHULAMNAZAD ON HIS PADMA BHUSHAN. IT'S GOOD TO BE RECOGNISED EVEN BY A GOVT OF THE OTHER SIDE. — CONGRESS LEADER SHASHI THAROOR



RIGHT THING TO DO (REFUSING THE AWARD). HE (BUDDHADEB BHATTACHARJEE) WANTS TO BE AZAD (FREE), NOT GHULAM (A SLAVE). —CONGRESS RAJYA SABHA WHIP JAIRAM RAMESH



Economy needs more hand-holding, fiscal correction can wait: Report

Mumbai: Warning that any sudden and sharp fiscal consolidation steps can throttle the nascent and uneven recovery of the Indian economy, a Wall Street brokerage has said the Budget should instead focus on boosting overall demand, from rural consumption in particular, and invest more in infrastructure.

The successive waves of the pandemic has made it more difficult to reduce government debt as a share of GDP in the medium-term, said Goldman Sachs in a pre-Budget note.

It thus pencilled in a gradual fiscal consolidation with FY23 falling by 50 basis points

to 6.3 per cent from 6.8 per cent in FY22, and set a target of bringing it down to 4.5 per cent by FY26. The brokerage believes that even though allocation for COVID related expenses will come down, the government will have to continue to focus on welfare spending and also expects capex to increase 12 per cent. But the higher spending will most likely be financed by higher tax revenue in FY23 and deferred asset sales from the current year, helping reduce the deficit.

It also sees the general government fiscal deficit falling to 9.3 per cent of GDP in FY23 from 10.1 per cent in FY20 and

the back of stronger nominal GDP growth.

If the Budget removes capital gains tax and withholding tax on foreign bond investments in the country, India will likely be included in the global bond index by Q4 of 2022 and this can help the country attract an additional USD 30 billion inflows in 2023, which again will lead to lower deficit.

Gross tax collections in the first eight months of FY22 rose to 70 per cent of budget estimates which is the highest in the last 10 years. Direct taxes have grown 66 per cent on-year, led by income and corporate tax growth while indirect taxes

have grown 39 per cent driven by buoyant GST and excise duties on fuel prices.

The report expects gross tax revenue to overshoot budget estimates by about 1.1 per cent of GDP in FY22 and non-tax revenue to be higher by 0.1 per cent of GDP driven by increased dividends from the RBI and higher deferred payments from telcos.

The report expects the divestment shortfall to be around 0.6 per cent of GDP and taking all this into consideration, total receipts to be higher by only 20 basis points of GDP in FY22 over budget estimate. *PTI*

Taxing beedi industry to impact tribals: SJM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Swadeshi Jagaran Manch has said that taxing the beedi industry at par with sin tax levied on the cigarette manufacturers has internal security imperatives especially in the Naxal-hit States.

As many 95 lakh people, including 85 lakh tribal women, mostly in Naxal-hit States are directly engaged in beedi rolling and the industry provides employment to another three-and-a-half crore more people, like those engaged in collection of tendu leaves.

“These women in the impoverished regions sustain their families through earnings at their homes generated from beedi rolling, essentially a cottage industry in which the raw materials are provided to the workers at their homes on a daily or weekly basis,” SJM Co-convenor Dr Ashwini Mahajan said on Thursday. While in the long term winding up the industry could be a desirable option but not before providing sustainable alternate employment opportunities to those engaged in the beedi industry, he said.

Stating that even the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, an affiliate of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, has backed handling of the beedi industry in right perspective, he said there is need to undertake scientific studies to ascertain

the health hazards of smoking beedis and till then decisions should not be based on narratives of certain lobbies like cigarette industry or NGOs backed by them. “The issue of employment of women in mostly backward regions must be balanced with public health as women participation is maximum in the beedi industry,” he said. The beedi industry, unlike the cigarette industry, does not have lobbies to protect its interests, he said and justified his backing for the make in India cottage industry. “Even Home Ministry reports have suggested that there are foreign lobbies working against the beedi industry and thereby hitting local Indian interests. This has also led to cancellation of FCRA licences of certain NGOs,” he said.

Higher taxes on beedis also lead to increased smuggling of Chinese cigarettes, further adding to New Delhi’s trade imbalance with Beijing. Higher taxes on beedis also lead to increased consumption of non-smoking products which pose a higher health risk to the consumers, he said, demanding reduction in the GST imposed on the beedis at the rate of 28 per cent. He also demanded that beedis should be kept out of the purview of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) and backed innovations to exploit export potential of the home-grown product.

Railway Mall Godam Workers’ gets recognition

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Labour has considered the long pending demands of the Indian Railway Mall Godam Workers’ Union by approving the registration of workers on the e-shram portal paving a way for recognition of the railways mall godam workers across India.

In view of this, the Indian Railway Mall Godam Workers Union held meetings with railway mall godam workers and their families at various places across India from January 26-28 to solve the problems and demands like all the Railway Good shed workers need to provide a fixed contract for “Wages”, proper to “Wage Receipt” for preventing corruption, as per “Ayushman Bharat” all workers should have proper basic amenities like drinking water, proper restroom, canteen at railway shed, free medication for workers and their families, accidental insurance, rail pass etc besides Pension benefits and job replacement for their family member in case of any mishapening.

Spokesman for the organisation Parimal Kanti Mondal said Ministry of Labour has led our Mall Godam workers to a new direction in life by giving them the identity.

Chief Labour Commissioner DPS Negi encouraged the work done by the Mall Godam workers and their families.

JBCPL to acquire brands from Sanzyme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

J.B. Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals Limited (JBCPL), one of the fastest growing pharmaceutical companies in India, on Friday announced that it will acquire brands for the India market from Sanzyme Private Limited (Sanzyme), a leading player in the probiotics and reproductive health segment in the country.

The transaction is valued at Rs 628 crore and is expected to be completed in the next two weeks subject to customary closing formalities. Sanzyme, ranked amongst the top five probiotics players in the country, is engaged in the manufacture, distribution and marketing of specialty probiotics formulations, infertility management products and nutraceuticals products.

RBI asks people to follow safe digital banking practices

Mumbai: Worried over rising incidence of cyber frauds, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday issued a public notice asking people to follow safe digital banking practices to prevent any possible financial loss.

Observing that unscrupulous elements are defrauding people by using innovative mode operandi, including social media techniques and mobile phone calls, the RBI urged the members of public to take all due precautions while carrying out digital financial transactions.

“... The Reserve Bank cau-

tions members of public to be aware of fraudulent messages, spurious calls, unknown links, false notifications, unauthorised QR codes, etc. Promising help in securing concessions/ expediting response from banks and financial service providers in any manner,” the central bank said. Fraudsters attempt to get confidential details like user id, login/ transaction password, OTP (One Time Password) as well as debit/ credit card details and other personal information.

The RBI has highlighted some of the typical modus

operandi being used by fraudsters like Vishing, Phishing, and Remote Access.

“RBI urges the members of public to practice safe digital banking by taking all due precautions while carrying out any digital (online/mobile) banking/ payment transactions. These will help in preventing financial and/ or other loss to them,” the notice said.

Vishing refers to phone calls pretending to be from bank/ non-bank e-wallet providers/ telecom service providers in order to lure customers into sharing confidential details in the

pretext of KYC-updation, unblocking of account/ SIM-card, and crediting debited amount. Phishing means spoofed emails and/ or SMSes designed to dupe customers into thinking that the communication has originated from their bank/ e-wallet provider and contain links to extract confidential details.

By using Remote Access, fraudsters lure customer to download an application on their mobile phone/ computer which is able to access all the customers’ data on that customer device. *PTI*

NIFTY 50					
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	17208.30	17373.50	17077.10	17101.95	-8.20
NTPC	1400	1440	1380	1402.5	5.25
UPL	778.00	806.50	777.55	791.10	19.15
SUNPHARMA	816.00	842.90	812.10	829.45	17.35
TATACONSUM	706.50	729.90	706.50	718.50	12.55
INDUSINDBK	897.00	925.75	895.00	903.70	15.60
ONGC	167.55	174.70	166.25	168.50	2.80
M&M	864.40	896.00	860.40	871.00	12.95
IOC	123.30	127.55	123.30	124.50	1.80
BHARTIARTL	714.90	754.00	701.65	717.70	9.75
ITC	215.10	219.25	215.10	217.20	2.90
WIPRO	550.10	564.95	546.65	552.00	7.25
TCS	3646.00	3729.80	3646.00	3697.85	48.60
BRITANNIA	3494.15	3595.00	3494.15	3530.00	35.85
COALINDIA	160.60	165.00	160.60	161.90	1.35
GRASIM	1700.00	1736.35	1691.05	1700.00	12.95
TATAMOTORS	500.50	509.35	499.00	497.30	2.90
TITAN	2315.00	2377.80	2308.00	2321.10	11.05
BPCL	384.95	393.50	383.15	383.95	1.75
JSWSTEEL	161.00	164.95	162.55	162.90	2.90
INFY	1681.00	1727.55	1679.50	1685.80	7.20
HDPC	2513.70	2556.80	2488.70	2513.90	9.75
DIVISLAB	3941.00	4070.00	3930.15	3954.50	14.65
SHREECEM	2943.90	2957.80	2943.90	2905.00	88.20
CIPLA	926.55	942.00	917.50	930.60	3.00
ADANIPORTS	713.00	732.80	707.50	712.20	2.10
HCLTECH	1079.00	1102.20	1077.25	1080.90	3.15
HINDALCO	493.05	506.60	488.45	490.10	0.95
BAFINANCE	6961.05	7045.60	6845.00	6848.00	11.00
KOTAKBANK	1895.00	1956.90	1888.65	1891.30	2.05
ASIANPAINT	3130.00	3170.00	3103.00	3119.20	2.05
KANBANK	1846.00	1864.00	1832.25	1838.05	3.60
HDCLIFE	621.35	632.90	619.05	621.40	-0.10
INDUSTOWER	7120.90	7266.40	7094.00	7097.00	-3.70
RELIANCE	2365.00	2375.90	2328.40	2336.00	-2.10
BAJAJ-AUTO	3505.00	3562.30	3481.00	3496.25	-4.85
TATASTEEL	1105.85	1125.75	1080.95	1086.00	-2.35
HINDUNILVR	2294.60	2318.70	2280.75	2285.45	-9.90
SBILIFE	1210.00	1237.75	1201.00	1204.00	-7.65
LT	1916.10	1948.00	1891.30	1897.85	-13.00
DREDDY	4248.80	4380.00	4175.45	4225.00	-31.35
HDPCBANK	1477.50	1486.70	1460.00	1461.35	-1.35
ECHERMOT	2655.20	2747.00	2598.60	2618.00	-25.85
SBIN	534.00	546.00	521.40	523.30	-5.65
BAJAJFINSV	15601.00	15787.65	15150.00	15190.00	-109.85
AXISBANK	778.10	784.70	761.50	764.00	-9.85
HEROMOTOCO	2720.20	2755.00	2663.05	2674.00	-41.00
ICICIBANK	803.75	805.85	778.50	782.00	-12.65
POWERGRID	217.50	217.50	209.25	210.95	-3.90
TECHM	1446.00	1482.90	1406.25	1409.00	-36.60
MARUTI	8795.00	8930.00	8522.35	8537.15	-283.05

NIFTY NEXT 50					
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	40591.65	41314.60	40556.85	40633.20	333.90
APOLLOPHOSP	4346.00	4456.00	4335.25	4403.00	187.75
NMDC	136.35	141.15	135.00	138.45	4.25
CADILAHC	385.15	402.70	385.10	396.35	11.95
SBICARD	841.40	875.55	841.40	869.45	25.05
UTI	5760.00	6094.00	5600.00	5910.10	164.40
PEL	2320.00	2419.95	2315.00	2365.00	59.60
AUROPHARMA	619.20	639.00	614.00	624.50	15.70
AMBUJACEM	354.40	367.10	353.00	360.10	8.45
HDPCBANK	2174.90	2251.40	2148.00	2190.49	49.25
JUBLFOOD	3298.40	3445.00	3260.70	3317.00	73.95
ACC	2179.90	2238.55	2173.85	2214.75	47.05
MARICO	463.45	475.60	462.00	472.50	9.25
JINDALSTEEL	380.00	396.80	380.00	382.70	7.00
BERGEPAINT	720.00	739.45	719.50	726.95	12.75
HINDPETRO	310.15	322.60	310.00	313.50	5.20
DLF	376.50	389.50	376.20	380.00	5.85
MCDOWELLN	852.00	873.40	845.75	855.00	12.90
LUPIN	893.40	922.00	889.20	900.50	12.40
ADANIGREEN	1945.00	1957.00	1949.95	1936.00	25.75
DABUR	533.25	542.50	531.10	535.45	6.40
SAIL	97.65	100.40	97.15	97.45	1.05
PIDILITIND	2461.90	2517.00	2461.00	2485.00	24.10
INDUSTOWER	254.20	262.40	251.00	252.05	2.45
BIOCON	361.40	369.40	358.30	362.90	3.50
BOSCHLTD	16290.00	16590.00	16262.50	16360.00	127.05
MUTHOOTFIN	1440.50	1486.00	1430.55	1443.85	8.30
COPAL	1392.00	1415.70	1390.55	1402.70	7.85
ADANIANT	1702.50	1744.10	1683.95	1694.00	8.00
GAIL	142.15	146.20	141.30	141.75	0.45
ICICIRULI	545.10	558.00	541.25	544.50	1.15
IGL	395.00	406.40	393.00	398.80	0.80
SIEMENS	2290.70	2333.10	2268.90	2283.40	4.30
GODREJCP	885.95	900.10	877.65	880.95	1.55
DMART	4130.00	4150.90	4040.00	4070.00	6.70
PIIND	2374.05	2407.70	2360.00	2376.00	2.50
NAUKRI	4402.25	4451.80	4380.00	4396.00	1.85
VEDL	339.00	335.90	323.15	327.85	-0.35
INDIGO	1869.00	1901.25	1826.00	1860.35	-2.25
HAVELLS	1151.00	1174.95	1135.65	1143.50	-1.75
BAJAJHLONG	5121.00	5170.80	5079.75	5101.90	-10.20
ICICI	1366.00	1415.80	1366.00	1369.10	-4.10
BANKBARODA	104.45	106.50	102.75	103.15	-0.35
PGHIL	14703.35	14950.00	14380.05	14530.00	-63.90
TORTHPHARM	2705.00	2718.00	2620.30	2659.00	-24.50
PNB	42.10	42.40	40.70	40.75	-0.40
YESBANK	13.55	13.80	13.30	13.40	-0.15
BANDHANBNK	324.40	327.50	314.00	317.25	-5.10
ADANTTRANS	2000.00	2075.00	1960.00	1977.20	-32.10
CHOLAFIN	660.80	672.65	638.00	637.75	-16.15
GLAND	3409.85	3431.85	3285.00	3285.00	-94.25

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP
RELIANCE	2365.00	2372.40	2329.00	2335.40
TATAPOWER	244.30	249.90	242.90	244.05
SBIN	534.10	536.30	521.20	523.35
TCS	3659.00	3729.00	3650.00	3690.25
ONGC	168.00	174.70	166.75	168.95
WIPRO	550.00	565.00	547.30	552.20
TATASTEEL	1106.80	1126.00	1080.75	1084.60
IRCTC	826.00	859.95	820.25	845.50
IDEA	10.90	11.30	10.70	10.80
BANKBARODA	104.30	106.45	102.70	103.25
TATAMOTORS	500.10	509.30	495.40	497.40
BAJFINANCE	6950.00	7044.00	6850.00	6870.50
HDPCBANK	1485.00	1486.35	1460.05	1463.30
ICF	1090.00	1126.95	1078.15	1089.15
KEF	1685.00	1727.10	1680.00	1685.25
BHARTIARTL	718.00	752.80	702.00	715.90
SUNPHARMA	812.20	842.50	812.20	827.25
TECHM	1447.00	1482.55	1406.40	1410.55
DIXON	4396.05	4555.20	4120.00	4388.05
INDUSINDBK	892.00	925.25	892.00	903.55
WELCORP	181.75	185.25	177.30	178.00
TATAELXSI	7040.00	7400.00	7026.45	7195.45
KOTAKBANK	1897.00	1956.00	1889.15	1898.20
LICHSGFIN	358.00	396.65	356.75	383.30
CANBK	242.25	243.95	236.65	238.85
RBLBANK	157.40	157.40	146.40	147.60
VEDL	331.00	335.75	323.25	327.70
ITC	215.45	219.20	215.20	217.55
AXISBANK	778.35	784.80	761.80	764.75
M&M	872.00	895.95	864.15	869.70
PNB	42.30	42.40	40.70	40.85
DEEPAKNI	2127.00	2280.00	2127.00	2220.90
CIICBANK	818.00	818.00	778.80	781.90
MINDTREE	3665.00	3857.80	3638.35	3724.70
HCLTECH	1080.00	1101.65	1077.40	1080.50
MGL	815.50	830.40	813.45	813.80
SUZLOZ	11.94	12.01	11.31	11.38
BHEL	61.50	61.70	57.50	58.80
NATIONALUM	108.00	112.10	107.20	108.80
IBULHSGFIN	209.00	217.90	209.00	211.15
LAURUSLABS	433.20	508.80	433.20	499.50
BAJAJFINSB	15601.00	15780.00	15141.55	15200.00
YESBANK	13.59	13.78	13.32	13.37
MARUTI	8819.00	8915.15	8522.75	8553.20
COFORGE	4501.00	4825.50	4500.75	4713.20
1718BRCDSCT	62.20	65.00	57.80	59.05
JUBLFEDCO	3293.15	3444.90	3271.00	3304.80
APOLLOHOSP	4307.00	4564.00	4307.00	4484.45
DREDDYD	4233.45	4378.75	4179.35	4217.95
MMTC	57.20	57.20	54.70	55.55
ZEEL	286.55	292.70	284.05	285.60
JINDALSTEL	378.00	396.60	378.00	382.55
SAIL	97.85	100.40	97.10	97.40

Russia: Won't start war over Ukraine tensions

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russia's top diplomat said Friday that Moscow will not start a war in Ukraine but warned that it wouldn't allow the West to trample on its security interests, amid fears it is planning to invade its neighbor.

U.S. President Joe Biden warned Ukraine's leader a day earlier that there is a "distinct possibility" that Russia could take military action against the former Soviet state in February.

"There won't be a war as far as it depends on the Russian Federation, we don't want a war," Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in a live interview with Russian radio stations. "But we won't let our interests be rudely trampled on and ignored."

Tensions have soared in recent weeks, and United States and its NATO allies warily eyed a buildup of more than 100,000 Russian troops near Ukraine, worrying that Moscow was preparing to attack. Russia has repeatedly denied having any such plans, but has demanded that NATO promise Ukraine will never be allowed to join and that alliance roll back deployments of troops

and military equipment in Eastern Europe. The U.S. and NATO formally rejected those demands this week, though Washington outlined areas where discussions are possible, offering hope that there could be a way to avoid war. Russia's official response to those proposals will come from President Vladimir Putin, but Kremlin has said there was "little ground for optimism."

Lavrov echoed that grim note Friday. "While they say they won't change their positions, we won't change ours," he said. "I don't see any room for compromise here." Putin opened the weekly meeting of his Security Council on Friday, saying only that it would address foreign policy issues.

Later, in a video call with French President Emmanuel Macron, the Kremlin said he emphasized that U.S. and NATO failed to consider Russia's key demands: precluding NATO's expansion, stopping the deployment of alliance weapons near Russian borders and rolling back its forces from Eastern Europe. At the same time, Putin spoke in favor of continuing talks about a stalled peace agreement for eastern Ukraine, where Russia-

backed rebels are fighting Ukrainian forces. Those talks are among Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany, and presidential envoys from four countries met in Paris on Wednesday and agreed to have another meeting in Berlin in two weeks. Following 2014 ouster of a Kremlin-friendly president in Kyiv, Moscow annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and began backing insurgency in country's eastern industrial heartland.

Earlier, Lavrov noted that U.S. suggested two sides could talk about limits on deployment of intermediate-range missiles, restrictions on military drills and rules to prevent accidents between warships and aircraft.

He said that Russia proposed discussing those issues years ago — but Washington and its allies never took them up on it until now. While he described U.S. offers as reasonable, he also emphasized that Russia's main concerns on NATO. He noted that international agreements say that security of one nation must not come at expense of others — and that he would send letters to ask his Western counterparts to address that obligation.

Biden says Russian invasion in February 'distinct possibility'

AP ■ MOSCOW

The White House says President Joe Biden warned Ukraine's president Thursday that there is a "distinct possibility" Russia could take military action against Ukraine in February. The Kremlin likewise sounded a grim note, saying it saw "little ground for optimism" in resolving the crisis after the U.S. this week again rejected Russia's main demands.

Russian officials said dialogue was still possible to end the crisis, but Biden again offered a stark warning amid growing concerns that Russian President Vladimir Putin will give the go-ahead for a further invasion of Ukrainian territory in the not-so-distant future.

The White House said Biden's comments to Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a phone call amplified concerns that administration officials have been making for some

time. "President Biden said that there is a distinct possibility that Russians could invade Ukraine in February," White House National Security Council spokesperson Emily Horne said. "He has said this publicly and we have been warning about this for months." Tensions have soared in recent weeks, as United States and its NATO allies expressed concern that a buildup of about 100,000 Russian troops near Ukraine signaled that Moscow planned to invade its ex-Soviet neighbor. Russia denies having any such designs — and has laid out a series of demands it says will improve security in Europe. But as expected, the U.S. and Western alliance firmly rejected any concessions on Moscow's main points Wednesday, refusing to permanently ban Ukraine from joining NATO and saying allied deployments of troops and military equipment in Eastern Europe are nonnegotiable.

Japan to watch WHO probe of director's alleged racism, abuse

AP ■ TOKYO

Japan's government said Friday it will watch the World Health Organization's investigation into staff complaints over racism and abuse by a top Japanese official at the agency but denied it inappropriately received sensitive vaccine information from him.

Meanwhile in Geneva, France's diplomatic mission said that if the allegations are proven to be true, the possible consequences include the termination of the WHO director's contract.

An investigation by the Associated Press this week found WHO staffers alleged that Dr. Takeshi Kasai, the U.N. health agency's top director in Western Pacific, engaged in unethical, racist and abusive behavior, undermining WHO's efforts to curb the coronavirus pandemic, according to an internal complaint filed last October. The complaints were also emailed to senior WHO leaders last week and describe a "toxic atmosphere" with "a culture of systemic bullying" at WHO's regional headquarters in the Philippines.

China says UN rights chief welcome in Xinjiang, but not for probe

PTI ■ BEIJING

China said on Friday United Nations human rights chief Michelle Bachelet is welcome to visit Xinjiang, where Beijing faces serious human rights allegations against Uygur Muslims, after Winter Olympic Games to promote cooperation and not an investigation based on "presumption of guilt".

Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said at a media briefing here that invitation was extended a long time ago and two sides have been maintaining communication. "China welcomes Madam Bachelet to visit China, including Xinjiang," Zhao said.

"Our position is consistent and clear. The purpose of the visit is to promote exchange and cooperation, not investigation based on presumption of guilt. We oppose anyone using this for political manipulation to pressure China," he said.

The spokesman, however, skirted a direct answer when asked to comment on a media report stating China is also insisting Bachelet should not

release her report on Xinjiang before February 4 Beijing Winter Olympics opening ceremony as demanded by US politicians. "I can tell you Xinjiang enjoys economic prosperity and social order and people there are leading happy lives with their human rights fully protected," he said. China firmly opposes tactics of using Xinjiang to smear country by distorting facts, he said.

China has launched a diplomatic offensive to mobilise world leaders to attend February 4 opening ceremony of Winter Olympics as US, the EU and several western countries announced a boycott of event by their diplomats to highlight allegations of human rights violations in Xinjiang, including incarceration of over a million Uygur Muslims in camps.

A host of world leaders including Russian President Vladimir Putin and Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, besides UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres are due to attend opening ceremony to show solidarity with Beijing.

Russia nears 100,000 daily infections as omicron rages

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russian authorities on Friday reported over 98,000 new confirmed coronavirus cases, but according to the Kremlin, the actual number is likely to be much higher as the highly contagious omicron variant continues to rage through the vast country.

Russia's state coronavirus task force on Friday registered 98,040 new infections tallied over the past 24 hours - another all-time high for the country that in recent weeks has faced its biggest surge of contagions in the pandemic. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Friday

that "it is obvious that this number is higher and possibly much higher," because "many people don't get tested" and have no symptoms. Peskov noted that Russia's numbers are "so far lower than in Western European countries, than in the US, so one can't rule out that they will grow further".

The Kremlin spokesman also admitted that a lot of people in the presidential administration have gotten infected with the virus. "The vast majority continue to work from home after having isolated themselves," Peskov said. "This explosive contagiousness of the omicron, it demonstrates itself in full." Coronavirus

infections in Russia started to soar nearly three weeks ago, with daily tallies of new cases spiking from about 15,000 on Jan 10 to almost 100,000 on Friday.

Philippines lifts ban on foreign tourists as outbreak eases

Manila: The Philippines will lift a ban on the entry of foreign tourists and business people next month after nearly two years, in a move to revive the battered tourism industry as the latest coronavirus outbreak started to ease, officials said Friday.

Scotland Yard seeks 'minimal reference' to some partygate events

PTI ■ LONDON

Scotland Yard on Friday said it has sought "minimal reference" to events it is investigating from a UK Cabinet Office inquiry, being led by top civil servant Sue Gray over so-called "partygate" scandal of alleged gatherings within government quarters that may have breached COVID lockdown rules in 2020-2021. Gray's inquiry report, which poses a serious threat to British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's leadership, is said to be complete but there has been a delay since some of its findings were passed on to London's Metropolitan Police earlier this week, to probe "serious and flagrant" breaches of corona laws.

Ready for 'long overdue' pick of Black female justice: Biden

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden strongly affirmed Thursday that he will nominate the first Black woman to the U.S. Supreme Court, declaring such historic representation is "long overdue" and promising to announce his choice by the end of February. In a White House ceremony marking a moment of national transition, Biden praised retiring Justice Stephen Breyer, who will have spent nearly 28 years on the high court by the time he leaves at the end of the term, as "a model public servant at a time of great division in this country."



And with that the search for Breyer's replacement was underway in full. Biden promised a nominee worthy of Breyer's legacy and said he'd already been studying the backgrounds and writings of potential candidates. "I've made no decision except one: The person I will nominate will be somebody of extraordinary qualifications, character and

integrity," he said. "And that person will be the first Black woman ever nominated to the United States Supreme Court. It is long overdue." Biden's choice will be historic on its face: No Black woman has ever served on the high court. But the decision is also coming at a critical time of national reckoning over race and gender inequality. However, the court's 6-3 conservative majority is destined to remain intact. Biden is using his choice to fulfill one of his early campaign promises, one that helped resurrect his moribund primary campaign and propel him to the White House in 2020.

And it gives him the chance to show Black voters, who are increasingly frustrated with a president they helped to elect, that he is serious about their concerns, particularly with his voting rights legislation stalled in the Senate. It also could help drive Democratic enthusiasm amid concerns about a midterm routing in congressional races.

Biden spent his first year in office working to nominate a diverse group of judges to the federal bench, not just in race but also in professional expertise, and he has been reviewing possible high court candidates along the way.

FROM PAGE 1

BJP REPOSES FAITH IN SITTING MLAS IN UP

List of candidates:

Nirmal Verma (Biswan), Mayankeshwar Singh (Tiloi), Ashok Kori (Salon (SC)), Dharendra Pratap Singh (Sereni), Suresh Kumar Pasi (Jagdishpur (SC)), Rajesh Gautam (Kadipur (SC)), Rajesh Sachan (Bhoginipur), Ramkesh Nishad (Tindwari), Nagesh Pratap Singh 'Chhote Sarkar' (Rampur Khas), Keshav Paasi (Babaganj (SC)), Sindhuja Mishra (Kunda), Rajendra Pratap Singh (Patti), Lal Bahadur Majhanpur (SC)), Guru Prasad Maurya (Phaphamau), Praveen Kumar Patel (Phulpur), Neelam Karwaria (Meja), Siddharthnath Singh (Allahabad West), Nand Kumar Gupta 'Nandi' (Allahabad south), Aarti Kol (Koraon), Sakendra Pratap Verma (Kursi), Sharad Awasthi (Ramnagar), Arvind Maurya (Barabanki), Amrisha Rawat (Zaidpur (SC)), Satish Chandra Sharma (Dariyabad), Ramchandra Yadav (Rudauli), Dinesh Rawat (Haidergarh (SC)), Baba Gorakhnath (Milkipur), Amit Singh Chauhan (Bikapur), Ved Prakash Gupta (Ayodhya), Aarti Tiwari (Gosainganj), Subhash Rai (Jalalpur), Saroj Sonkar (Balha), Arun Veer Singh (Matera), Sureshwar Singh (Mahsi), Anupama Jaiswal (Bahraich), . Subhash Tripathi (Payagpur), Gaurav Verma (Kaiserganj), Padmasen Chaudhry (Bhinga), Ramferan Pandey (Sravasti), Kailash Nath Shukla (Tulsipur), Shailesh Kumar Singh (Gasdi), Ram Pratap 'Shashikant Verma' (Utraula), Paltu Ram (Balrampur), Vinay Kumar Dwivedi (Mehnoun), Prateek Bhushan Singh (Gonda), Bhuwan Singh (Katra Bazar), Ajay Kumar Singh (Karnailganj), Prem Narayan Pandey (Tarabganj), Ramapati Shastri (Mankapur), Prabhat Kumar Verma (Gaura), Shyamdhani Rahi (Kapilvastu), Jai Pratap Singh (Bansi), Satish Chandra Dwivedi (Etwā), Raghvendra Pratap Singh (Dumarianganj), Ajay Kumar Singh (Hariya), Chandra Prakash Shukla (Kaptanganj), Dayaram Chaudhry (Basti Sadar), Ravi Kumar Sonkar (Mahadeva), Ankur Raj Tiwari (Khalilabad), Ganesh Chandra Chauhan (Dhanghata), Bajrang Bahadur Singh (Farenda), Gyanendra Singh (Panjyara), Fateh Bahadur Singh (Campiarganj), Mahendra Pal Singh (Pipraich), Pradeep Shukla (Sahjanwa), Shriram Chaohan (Khajni), . Vimlesh Paswan (Bansgaon), Rajesh Tripathi (Chillupar), Surendra Kushwaha (Fazilnagar), PN Pathak (Kushinagar), Mohan Verma (Hata), Jai Prakash Nishad (Rudrapur), Shalabh Mani Tripathi (Deoria), Surya Pratap Sahi (Pathardeva), Surendra Chaurasia (Rampur khas), Deepak Mishra (Barhaj), Satyendra Rai (Gopalpur), Akhilesh Mishra 'Guddu' (Azamgarh), Manoj Yadav (Nizamabad), Dr Krishna Murari Vishwakarma (Didarnagar), Neelan Sonkar (Lalganj), Manju Saroj (Mohnagar), Chattu Ram (Belthara Road),

Babban Rajbhar (Rasra), Sandy Yadav (Sikanderpur), Upendra Tiwari (Phephna), Ramesh Chandra Mishra (Badlapur), Girish Chandra Yadav (Jaunpur), Dr. Harendra Prasad Singh (Zafarabad), Dinesh Choudhary (Kerakat) and Sunita Parikshit Singh (Zamania).

SC REVOKES 'IRRATIONAL' SUSPENSION OF 12 MAHA BJP MLAS FROM HOUSE

The top court declared the resolution to be "ineffective in law", insofar as the period beyond the remainder of the stated session in which the resolution came to be passed. It said the 12 MLAs are entitled to all consequential benefits of being the members of the Legislative Assembly, on and after the expiry of the period of the remainder of the concerned session. The apex court said that suspension beyond the remaining period of the ongoing session would be violative of "basic democratic values" owing to the unessential deprivation of the member concerned and more importantly, the constituency would remain unrepresented in the Assembly.

In its 90-page judgement, the bench said, "Suffice it to observe that one year suspension is worse than 'expulsion', 'disqualification' or 'resignation' - insofar as the right of the constituency to be represented before the House/Assembly is concerned." The bench said that in absence of any express provision bestowing power in the Legislature to suspend its members beyond the term of the ongoing session, the inherent power of the Legislature can be invoked only to the extent necessary and for proper exercise of the functions of the House at the relevant point of time.

The apex court, which referred to Rule 53 of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Rules that deals with power to order the withdrawal of a member, said this rule not only speaks about the procedure to be adopted for passing the "drastic order" of withdrawal of a member but also about the substantive disciplinary or rationality of self-security measure to be taken in a graded manner.

"The non-compliance of or deviation from the former (procedure) may be non-justiciable. However, in regard to the substantive disciplinary or the rationality of the self-security measure inflicted upon the erring member, is open to judicial review on the touchstone of being unconstitutional, grossly illegal and irrational or arbitrary," the bench noted.

It noted that if it is a case of grossly disorderly behavior in the House, the speaker/chairman himself is free to take instantaneous decision to order the withdrawal of the member from the meetings of Assembly during the remainder of the day's meeting and if it is a case of repeat misconduct in the same session - for the remainder of the session.

"A priori, if the resolution passed by

the House was to provide for suspension beyond the period prescribed under the stated Rule, it would be substantively illegal, irrational and unconstitutional," it said. The bench said the suspension beyond the remainder period of the ongoing session would also "impact the democratic setup as a whole by permitting the thin majority government (coalition government) of the day to manipulate the numbers of the Opposition party in the House in an undemocratic manner."

The apex court said the Opposition will not be able to effectively participate in the discussion in the House owing to the constant fear of its members being suspended for a longer period. It observed that it is in the public domain, through print, electronic and social media, that members of Parliament or Assembly or Council of the State, spend much of the time in a "hostile atmosphere" and Parliament and Legislative Assembly are becoming more and more "intransigent place". The top court said that for becoming world leaders and self-dependant or reliant, the quality of debates in the House ought to be of the highest order and directed towards intrinsic Constitutional and native issues confronting the common man.

BRAHMOS GETS 1ST EXPORT ORDER FROM PHILIPPINES

km with the capability of carrying 200k warhead even though the Brahmos has the capability of hitting a target at more than 400 km, they said.

Indian ambassador to the Philippines Shambhu Kumaran said he was privileged to witness history in the making. "Signing of the Brahmos acquisition contract by Philippines Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana today marks a decisive step forward for Prime Minister's Mission Sagar and India's Indo-Pacific engagement," he tweeted.

He thanked Lorenzana and Philippines Cabinet Secretary Teddy Locsin Jr for their active support to build stronger relations with India.

"Today we are one step closer to elevating ties between our democracies to a strategic partnership and our shared objective of a free and peaceful Indo-Pacific," Kumaran noted.

"It is also a moment of deep pride as India establishes itself as a source of high-technology equipment and a trusted partner towards capability development of friendly nations," he added.

Reacting to BrahMos's export order, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) chairman G Satheesh Reddy said, "Surface to air missile Akash, Astra, anti-tank missiles, radars, torpedoes gain the interest of various countries. More systems are being developed which have export potential."

The Philippines selected the Indian

missile system after tough negotiations and extensive trials, officials said adding a team from the Philippine Navy visited the production unit of BrahMos Aerospace in Hyderabad some months back as part of the acquisition process.

The BrahMos Integration Complex in Hyderabad undertakes integration of mechanical systems and assembling electronic systems. Various sub-systems fabricated in other centres in India and Russia are integrated and checked at this complex.

NEW CORONAVIRUS NEOCoV'S RISK TO HUMANS NEEDS CLARITY: WHO

"Animals, particularly wild animals, are the source of more than 75 per cent of all emerging infectious diseases in humans, many of which are caused by novel viruses. Coronaviruses are often found in animals, including in bats which have been identified as a natural reservoir of many of these viruses," the global body said to a Russian news agency.

The Chinese scientists said that they "unexpectedly found that NeoCoV and its close relative, PDF-2180-CoV, can efficiently use some types of bat Angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2) and, less favourably, human ACE2 for entry".

The study "demonstrates the first case of ACE2 usage in MERS-related viruses, shedding light on a potential bio-safety threat of the human emergence of an ACE2 using 'MERS-CoV-2' with both high fatality and transmission rate".

'WELCOME ABOARD THIS HISTORIC FLIGHT' AI FLIERS GREETED

The employees have been told by the Tata Group that there will be a change in "image, attitude and perception" of Air India, they said.

Cabin crew members have been instructed to address all passengers as "guests" and the cabin crew supervisors will have to ensure safety and service standards provided to the guests, they noted.

The crew members will have to be smartly dressed and well-groomed, and there will be grooming executives who will be conducting checks at the airports, they mentioned.

Since on-time performance is extremely important, all endeavours will have to be made by the crew members to ensure that the doors are closed 10 minutes before the flight's departure, they said.

The Tata Group, which had placed the highest bid of Rs 18,000 crore in the Air India disinvestment, took over the airline from the Government on Thursday. Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the

national Capital before attended the hand-over ceremony at Airlines House.

For Tatas, Air India will be the third airline. It already operates Vistara in joint venture with Singapore Airlines and AirAsia India in partnership with AirAsia Group.

YEDIYURAPPA'S GRANDDAUGHTER ...

the police said, adding, the door was then opened by force.

The body was later shifted to the Bowring Hospital where the post-mortem was performed.

Learning about the incident, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, some ministers and senior BJP functionaries rushed to Yediyurappa's house to console the bereaved family members, BJP sources said.

REBELLION IN PUNJAB FORCES CONG TO REVIEW CANDIDATES

Former Minister declared that he would oppose Congress' official nominee Vijay Sharma Tinky, a liquor contractor, who has been given ticket from Kharar due to his proximity with the Chief Minister Channi, who had opposed his candidature due to "personal reasons".

"My son Yadevinder will contest as an independent candidate from Kharar...Congress has done injustice to me and my services for society and party have been ignored," said Kang while maintaining that the decision was taken after holding meetings with his supporters.

Kang, a day before, had also written to the party chief Sonia Gandhi seeking review of the ticket.

Disgruntled Mohinder Singh Kaypee, who continued to be in rebel mode despite several efforts by the party leadership to placate him, is also weighing his options to contest polls. Kaypee, during his meeting with Chief Minister Channi on January 26, had made it clear that he would be contesting polls, but how and from where is yet to be decided. He has been assured that the party high command is review the ticket allotment in Adampur segment.

Kaypee, Channi's close relative, was denied ticket which was allotted to a BSP leader Sukhwinder Singh Kotli. "Adampur seat in under review...Kaypee is not angry with the party. He was there at Jalandhar and met Rahul Gandhi also," a senior Congress leader told The Pioneer.

Another seat under review is Majitha from where the party has fielded Jagwinder Pal Singh alias Jagga Majithia. Jagga Majithia is the brother of former Congress leader Sukhjinder Raj Singh Lalli Majithia, who had switched over to the Aam Aadmi Party, and is party nominee.

Congress' Amritsar Rural unit president Bhagwantpal Singh Sachar, who has been eyeing the ticket from Majitha, had left the party and joined the BJP. However, a day after, he returned to the Congress party after he was assured of reviewing the decision.

Ticket aspirant Daaman Bajwa, who was demanding ticket from Sunam, also expressed her displeasure over the party's decision of ignoring her candidature. The Congress has fielded Jaswinder Singh Dhiman, nephew of Amargarh MLA Surjit Singh Dhiman, from Sunam.

Channi had also supported Bajwa's candidature as she has been worked in the segment since past many years. Now, Bajwa is holding parallel meetings and rallies in the constituency.

Another aspirant Satwinder Kaur Bitti, who is known Punjabi singer and a former national level hockey player, was sure of party ticket from Sahnewal seat, from where the party has fielded Vikram Bajwa - the son-in-law of former Chief Minister Rajinder Kaur Bhattal.

Without naming anyone, Bitti alleged, "The Congress has played into SAD's hands and given its candidate a walkover by fielding a weak candidate." She has also declared to contest as independent.

The viral videos of Jasmel Singh, the husband of Ferozepur Rural legislator Satkar Kaur, crying inconsolably were enough to prove their resentment over denial of ticket to the sitting legislator. The Congress fielded Aashu Banger, AAP's nominee from the seat who recently shifted loyalties towards Congress, from Ferozepur Rural seat.

URGED TO OPEN SCHOOLS, CENTRE WORKING ON ALL OPTIONS, ADVISORY SOON

UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore said in a statement on Friday "As the Omicron variant of Covid-19 continues its spread all over the world, we urge Governments to do everything in their power to keep it from further disrupting children's education.

"Keep schools open. An estimated 616 million children are currently affected by full or partial school closures. We know that mitigation measures help keep schools open. We also know that investments in digital connectivity can help us make sure that no child is left behind."

"We need bold action to enable every child to return to school. This includes providing comprehensive support with a particular focus on marginalized children in each community, such as catch-up classes, mental health and nutrition support, protection and other key services," said Fore.



SHORTCIRCUITS



FATIMA SANA SHAIKH
I believe, acting is a lot of reacting. It's always good to have good performers opposite you so that you can feed off their energies. It has been a blast working with Sidharth (Malhotra). We gelled so well on the sets, it didn't feel like it was the first time we were working together.



TAAPSEE PANNU
I went to say no to the film (*Loop Lapeta*), thinking that "I've done a similar film in the South, so I'll maybe not do a film which has a similar concept in Hindi. Then he (director, Aakash Bhatia) narrated the film to me so well that he literally looped me in, and I said 'yes' right there and then!



ISHWAK SINGH
I find written words helpful. There is great joy in reading written words. When I write about the characters and their dialogues, I identify better, and it helps me make the role my own and it helps me navigate the pauses between scenes.



AZIZ ANSARI
I kind of started turning off the internet and, you know, I deleted all social media and all this stuff, and I've slowly just kept going further and further. I stopped using email maybe like four years ago. It's thinking about your mental diet and what you're putting in your head.

BRADLEY COOPER
I grew up with this idea that we do what we do for a living. I don't know if I ever dreamt this big. I don't even know if I allowed myself to. Shame on me if I don't work hard, and I'm here now. I'm not going to squander this. No way, man. No way. It all comes from love.



TIME TRAVEL

VIKRANT NEXT DOOR

As the actor retraces his steps to TV, with *Kahani Navbharat Ki*, he tells SAIMI SATTAR the reasons for his move and why is the show a must-watch

Vikrant Massey, the name almost always conjures up the adjective earnest, followed by humble, grounded and all the antonyms for bratty, entitled and high-headed. Right from the time he caught popular attention — as Shyam Madan Singh — in the memorable *Balika Vadhu*, Massey played every character, including those who were a deep shade of grey, with deep conviction. Whether it was *Deda* s Mukherjee, a thief, in his debut film *Lootera* (2013) or a cuckolded husband, Rishu in the more recent *Haaseen Dillruba* (2021) or even Bablu, the brains behind the gang in *Mirzapur* (2018) it was this total belief in his character that made him shine with a boy next door ordinariness.

So, it isn't surprising that a TV media house zeroed down on him to play anchor for the show *Kahani Navbharat Ki* which charts the history of the country. We connect over a call and chat about the world as Massey reciprocates with his customary warmth.

He informs me that though he had a Covid scare, the tests thankfully were negative. The discussion then switches to his latest venture. Excerpts from the interview:

♦Why and how did you decide to switch back to TV?

It was a no-brainer. The team explained the concept, that they had been researching for two years. The larger context of the show was to celebrate 75 years of Independence. When I read the script, I immediately wanted to be a part of it. It might sound really cliched, but *main sach keh raha hun* (I am being honest), it seemed God-sent. I always wanted to be a part of something like that... a show which is a mix of history, knowledge, hope and everything worthwhile. It was ready-made and offered to me on a platter. I recognised that in some way or the other I would be contributing my bit. I want to do that through the films and shows that I take up.

The younger generation, unfortunately, is engrossed in consumerism. Research shows that grown-up adults spend about a quarter of their waking time on mobile. So, I wanted to come out with something unobserved, kept on the rack for the longest of time and dust it off to present it nicely and bring it out in a manner that we can take pride in our history. It really encapsulates that mood. It is full of hope, pride and what better time than 75 years of Independence to share these stories.

♦Was there any particular incident that got your attention?

There were so many things. It is a 10-episode series and I really can't pinpoint one. Our history is so vast that we had to filter out some things. Everything has its significance and place. There are so many people in the younger generation

who are not aware of the many challenges we faced and overcame as a young country or the many hurdles that were thrown at us. Take our approach to Science in the 50s... Or the fact that we practised secularism with all our heart and soul... Or that we gave marginalised women the right to education and to vote. How did we overcome all of that? Despite all trials and tribulations, the way we liberalised our economy. How we are one of the largest democracies in the world. Despite the ups and downs, we are facing... these are the things that, I strongly feel, we need to take cognisance of, feel proud of and share with our people. When we are approaching this milestone, we can also think about what the coming 75 years would be like. How will we chart the future... depends on the present.

♦The show talks about history... of late, it has become a contentious issue. How have you tackled that?

History has always been a contentious issue. Our generation is seeing it for the first time. But these things have always existed. However, the history we are talking about is devoid of any tilt, tint, lineage or conformism. Yes, I agree that the public discourse, especially on social media, is marred by politicisation. We consciously tried to refrain from that. We had academicians and historians who worked diligently on the show. It was a conscious decision to understand and take pride in our identity as Indians first and share these highly significant stories. And the rest is up to the audience. We have cooked up the dish with fair diligence and honesty.

♦Anchoring and acting are two different ball games. What are the points of differences and similarities?

Acting for fiction is a completely different ball game. It is a make-believe

world that you are trying to encapsulate your audience with and convince them of the story. But when I'm hosting a show, I'm sharing my privacy, opening the door for the audience to come in to also share my experiences. It's far more challenging and I enjoy that. People see me as an actor and here I'm sharing a piece of my heart, ideology, hope and belief. I am proud to be associated with the show as, I said, we tried to highlight the story and history of India and hope to inspire people who will shell out their valuable time and watch it.

♦You've dabbled in TV, OTT and films. Do you approach the roles differently in each? And does each help your growth as an actor?

I have never limited myself to the medium. I have always believed that I am a storyteller. I have also believed that I have a knack for being able to adapt to changing times, which everyone should. But my larger idea is to go out and tell stories. Till the time I am able to do that, I am sleeping soundly. When I am unable to do so, I will be facing another set of challenges.

What makes you take up any role or show?

It's a mix. The challenges that it puts out for me as an artiste, my belief in the story. I also strongly feel that, as a creative independent artiste, it's my responsibility to be in sync with current times. And as long as I tick off these boxes, I'll take up these stories. I think it is an amalgamation of things.

♦You have done a wide variety of roles — *Mirzapur*, *Haaseen Dillruba*, *Lootera* ... what goes into making a character that is believable? Is it by observing the people or discussions with the director?

Can I cut you in? This set of ques-

tions, we can keep for another day. I join hands and apologise for this. We will sit and discuss this.

♦So, coming back to the show, were there any challenges during its shooting or content development?

As an actor, there were not many challenges. I can be so proudly indulgent and say that we had a great team of statisticians, data analysts, historians, technicians who made this show good. But there were challenges that every team goes through, whether it is fiction or non-fiction. And especially when you are dealing with a sensitive topic like history. And as you said, it is a contentious issue. You are actually treading landmines. So, those were the set of challenges we faced but did manage to overcome smoothly. There were historical and factual challenges.

♦Was there a lot of back and forth in the script?

That happens everywhere. It is like cooking a recipe. Mid-way you realise, *haldi thodi kam pad gai hai*. *Thodi haldi daal den* (The turmeric is a little less. We should add more of it). It is a part of storytelling. As long as you stay true to the idea of storytelling, without any indulgence or conformism, these are likely to happen. It happens everywhere. Even in journalism, when you have written a piece and are revising it... you edit a few words, add others. It is applicable everywhere.

♦What are the future projects that we see you in?

Love Hostel will be out soon. I am doing the official remake of *Forensic*. There is also *Mumbaikar* with Santosh Sivan. I am filming for *Blackout* and waiting to start *Gaslight* with Pavan Kriplani who is a dear friend.

DEEP DIVE

Value It Up

Business analyst RATTAN JONEJA believes that the quintessence of a successful investment is to understand the worth of a company and urges everyone to learn the importance of creating value to excel in the world of investing. By KHUSHBU KIRTI



are investing based on price and momentum without understanding any concept of value. The subject is not as difficult as people think it is. It is a simple subject that people need to understand while making investments.

I wanted to bring this concept forward in a very straightforward and lucid manner, particularly, since the number of investors across the world are increasing.

♦Your book is a fast-track programme for learning business valuation. Give us a brief as to how it will benefit this era of entrepreneurs.

In today's start-up world, entrepreneurship is all about Capital, Capital, and Capital. It is difficult to build and survive without significant capital. Be it an old economy company or a new age start-up, an entrepreneur needs to understand the value of what he/she is building.

The quintessence of successful investment is to understand if the market is ignoring anything and how the market is valuing, thus, making it essential to understand the worth of a company before investing.

At the end of the day, you may be more valuable than you think.

So many entrepreneurs

today end up diluting so much equity even after having a successful venture. Thus, it is very important to determine how much capital is required during the journey of a company and what will the existing founders/shareholders left with at the end of each stage of the company.

For existing companies, there are many decisions and value-creating strategies that need to be taken such as divestitures, mergers and acquisitions, going public share repurchases, business model changes, and so on, for maximising value where valuation is the key decision-maker.

♦Fortunately, the current generation is trying to be more informed about healthy investing. However, due to the lack of prior knowledge, there's not much to start with.

What will you suggest to an aspiring investor (also an amateur) to begin with? Should they read books or just track the market mindfully, or both?

Both, actually! Every investor needs to do a lot of reading. Even celebrated investors like Warren Buffet today spend most of their time reading and learning. Reading is a must, and they have to read books, news, companies and annual reports simultaneously and give equal importance to all.

They need to track the market too, to analyse what signals the market is giving, or if the market is behaving irrationally.

♦When does the stock market become harmful, if at all?

The stock market in the

long term is not going to be harmful and will continue to grow. It becomes harmful when people start building expectations more than what the company can achieve.

Forming of bubbles in a sector, for instance, valuation of companies without meaningful earnings built on narratives, which when it does meet expectations, which can lead to stock prices crashing. We have seen what happened during the dot com bubble and you may see it in some new-age companies in this era.

When markets start pricing stocks for high growth rates, value growth duration and improvement in margins that are not achievable or not sustainable, it may all lead to a bust.

In bull markets, the stock markets start valuing stories. When stories fall short, the markets will punish them.

♦Why, in your opinion, do schools not talk about real-life stuff like mental health, taxes, or investing?

Very few business schools cover business/investment valuation in depth. There needs to be a significant time and depth required to teach and promote the understanding of the subject. It is very briefly touched upon and not explained in greater depth.

Similarly, teaching taxes requires a lot of time and schools can't cover them all in their course. And, so, specific courses and books play an integral part in enhancing knowledge in these subjects for people who really want to understand them.



Tahir roots for Indian content

Tahir Raj Bhasin, whose performance in *Yeh Kaali Kaali Ankhein* is being considered one of the best acting pieces in the Indian digital space, is a big fan of Manoj Bajpai and Kay Kay Menon. The versatile actor's career is on a huge high after he delivered a smashing performance in the recently released web series *Yeh Kaali Kaali Ankhein*. Bhasin says he is humbled that people are pegging his performance to be amongst the best delivered by a leading man in a web series. He reveals that he is a 'big binger' of Indian content on OTT and his personal favourite performances have been from Manoj Bajpai for *The Family Man* and Kay Kay Menon for *Special Ops*. Bhasin says, "I was awestruck seeing the magnificent performances by Manoj Bajpai in *The Family Man* and Kay Kay Menon in *Special Ops*. They are two of my favourite actors to have ever graced the screen and if my show and performance is being rated as amongst the best

performances by a leading man in an OTT web series, I feel deeply honoured and humbled." He adds, "As an actor, I'm constantly inspired by great work around me. I am a big binger of Indian and International shows and I'm always excited by the outstanding acting performances that the digital space has to offer today. I'm also a big rooter for Indian content because we have produced amazing authentically Indian shows over the last couple of years."

Bhasin has had two back to back OTT releases in *Ranjish Hi Sahi* and *Yeh Kaali Kaali Ankhein* and these projects are amongst the highest rated content ever in the digital space in India. The actor says, "I'm honoured that my shows are among the top-rated shows of all time and my intent will be to pick and choose disruptive content that truly stands out, entertains the audience and enables me to showcase my talent as an actor who can perform any role."

An entrepreneur and venture capitalist, Rattan Joneja's work mainly focusses on the application of creating shareholder value to corporates and mergers, divestitures and acquisitions.

He is also the founder and CEO of CoValue Technologies Pvt Ltd. Co Value is an application with an aim to empower investors and businesses, to create wealth.

His recent book, *Value It Up: Simplifying the Art of Intrinsic Valuation*, takes the reader on a journey of learning about intrinsic valuation. With real-life investment success stories that draw instances of how value can be a key determinant of investment decisions narrated by celebrated investors. The book can be used as a helpful ladder of understanding the world of investing, and is designed for investors, analysts, stock market researchers, business students, or just anyone planning to enter into the field of stocks and investing. It is divided into 22 chapters where every chapter is aphoristically framed with quotes and concepts supported by the life story of a celebrated investor.

Read on for excerpts from an exclusive interview with the author:

♦Please give us an overview of *Value It Up: Simplifying the Art of Intrinsic Valuation*.

Value It Up is a book that simplifies and elucidates the 'Art of Valuation'. The book focusses on the key growth drivers of any given stock to explain the concepts of Intrinsic Valuation with real-world examples and computations.

♦What was the inspiration behind the book?

Primarily, most investors

Nadal, Medvedev to meet in Australian final

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Rafael Nadal is within one victory of a men's record 21st Grand Slam singles title.

The 35-year-old Spaniard advanced to the Australian Open final for the sixth time with a 6-3, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 win over seventh-seeded Matteo Berrettini on Friday.

He'll have to beat U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev on Sunday to make history. And Medvedev is chasing a piece of history of his own after reeling off the last five games to defeat Stefanos Tsitsipas -6 (5), 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 in a heated semifinal. He's aiming to be the first man in the Open era to win his second Grand Slam title at the next major tournament.

The second-seeded Medvedev has had an emotional and challenging run to back-to-back Australian Open finals. He had to deal with a hostile crowd in his second-round win over Nick Kyrgios, had to save a match point and rally from two sets down to beat Felix Auger-Aliassime in a nearly five-hour quarterfinal win, and had to regain his composure after an angry outburst at the umpire on Friday.

He yelled at chair umpire Jaume Campistol after dropping serve in the second set, demanding that Tsitsipas be cautioned for receiving coaching from his father in the crowd. He took a five-minute break after dropping the set, took control late in the third set and then dominated the last five games after Tsitsipas was eventually cau-

tioned for getting coaching from the stands.

Nadal's run to a 29th Grand Slam final has been comparatively serene.

After the last point, he stopped, beamed a wide grin and then punched the air three times.

Nadal arrived in Australia not knowing how long he would last after months off the tour dealing with a serious foot injury and then a bout of COVID-19. He skipped Wimbledon after losing in the French Open semifinals to Novak Djokovic, and didn't play at all after August.

"Every day has been an issue in terms of problems on the foot. Doubts still here ... Probably for the rest of my career because I have what I have and that's something that we cannot fix," Nadal said.

"But for me it's amazing ... (to) just compete and play tennis at the high level again, facing the most important players of the world."

Last month, he wasn't even sure he'd be able to return to the tour.

But he won a tune-up tournament in Melbourne to start 2022 and has taken six straight matches at the first Grand Slam event of the year.

One more and he'll break the record of 20 major championships he shares with Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic. Nadal would also become just the fourth man to win all four Grand Slam titles at least twice.

Nadal's win over Wimbledon runner-up Berrettini, under a closed roof at Rod Laver Arena because of heavy rain, was his



500th on hard courts at tour level. He's only won the Australian Open once, in 2009.

Adding a second was his lone focus after yet another semifinal win.

"For me, it's all about the Australian Open more than anything else," Nadal said in his on-court TV interview.

"I have been a little unlucky (here) in my career with some injuries.

I played some amazing finals with good chances."

He lost classic five-set finals at Melbourne Park to Djokovic in 2012 and Federer in 2017. Nadal lost in four sets to Stan Wawrinka in 2014 and had a straight-set defeat against Djokovic three years ago.

"I feel very lucky that I won once," he said. "I never thought about another chance in 2022." Nadal broke Berrettini's opening service games in the first two sets and, after dropping the third set on a rare service lapse, he rallied to finish off the match in just under three hours. That in itself was a relief after his long five-set win over Denis Shapovalov two days earlier in the quarterfinals. Nadal was the only member of the so-called Big Three who had a chance to break the deadlock in Australia this time.

Federer missed the tournament to continue his recovery from knee surgery. Djokovic, who has won nine of his Grand Slam titles at Melbourne Park, was deported after an 11-day visa saga on the eve of the tournament because he failed to meet Australia's strict COVID-19 vaccination requirements.

Ecuador draws Brazil and nears WCup

AP ■ SAO PAULO

Ecuador is one win away from returning to the World Cup after a 1-1 home draw with South American qualifying leader Brazil.

Coach Gustavo Alfaro's team will qualify to play in Qatar if it beats Peru next week.

Chile, once a force in the region, saw its chances shrink dramatically after a 2-1 home loss to second-place Argentina. The Chileans will have to pull good results at Bolivia and Brazil, with their last match in the competition likely to be in Santiago against bitter rival Uruguay.

Uruguay rose back to contention after a 1-0 win at Paraguay, with a goal by veteran Luis Suarez. It was the team's first win for new coach Diego Alonso, who took over after veteran Oscar Tabarez was fired due to poor results.

Brazil (36 points) and Argentina (32) have already qualified for the World Cup. Ecuador has 24 points, five ahead of Uruguay. Colombia and Peru, which will clash in Barranquilla, Colombia, on Friday, are at 17 points. Chile has 16 and could be overtaken by Bolivia (15), which will travel to Venezuela — the only team in the region out of contention for a spot.

South America has four direct World Cup spots, and the fifth-place



team will play an international play-off for a berth.

Ecuador drew at home against Brazil to boost its chances of qualifying in a game that saw two players sent off and a number of major refereeing decisions overturned by video review.

Casemiro opened the scoring by tapping into an empty net in the sixth minute for Brazil — which has already qualified for the World Cup in Qatar — before Ecuador equalized in the 75th minute with a header by Felix Torres. But it was Colombian referee Wilmar Roldan who drew the most

attention by getting a series of key decisions overturned after VAR — with Brazil goalkeeper Alisson being shown a red card twice only to have both rescinded.

Roldan did not even whistle for a foul when Ecuador goalkeeper Alexander Dominguez planted his studs into the neck of Brazil striker Matheus Cunha as he challenged for a ball at the edge of the area in the 16th minute. After a VAR review, Dominguez was handed a straight red card. Brazil defender Emerson Royal was then handed a second yellow in the 20th minute and Alisson appeared to become the third player sent off 10 minutes later after also hitting an opponent in the head with his leg after a clearance. However, Roldan changed his mind and only showed a yellow card after VAR stepped in.

The second half had a similar theme as the Colombian referee awarded two penalties to Ecuador only to reverse both decisions after a review.

The second penalty was in injury time and involved Alisson getting a second yellow, which was also rescinded.

"I was sent off playing for Liverpool, I touched the ball outside the penalty box," Alisson said.

"In situations like that you should not complain, you should accept the referee's decision.



Pietersen receives PM Modi's Republic Day letter

PTI ■ LONDON

Among the "friends of India" who received a letter of appreciation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the 73rd Republic day of the country, former England cricket captain Kevin Pietersen on Friday thanked him for the gesture and said the nation of over a billion is a global 'powerhouse'. Sharing the letter on Twitter, Pietersen said he was thankful to the Prime Minister for acknowledging his 'affection towards India". South African great Jonty Rhodes and West Indies swashbuckler Chris Gayle had also received similar letters from the PM. "Dear, Mr @narendramodi, Thanks for the incredibly kind words in your letter to me. Ever since stepping foot in India in 2003, I've grown more in love with your country on every visit.

"I was recently asked, 'what do you most like about India' & my answer was easy - THE PEOPLE," he posted.

Kiran George stuns 3rd seed Subhankar to enter semis

PTI ■ CUTTACK

Kiran George upset third seed Subhankar Dey to advance to the men's singles semifinals while in-form shuttler Malvika Bansod also cruised to the last four round in the women's event at the Odisha Open badminton tournament here on Friday.

The unseeded Kiran eked out a hard-fought 21-16 10-21 21-19 win over the higher ranked Subhankar, who was the last remaining seed in the men's singles event.

The 21-year-old will meet the winner of the quarterfinal between Ansal Yadav and Tharun Manneppalli.

Malvika, who reached the final of the Syed Modi International where she lost to PV Sindhu before defeating Saina Nehwal at the India Open earlier this month, continued to impress as she registered a 21-13 16-21 21-17 victory over fellow Indian Tanya Hemanth in a gruelling 58-minute quarterfinal contest.

Fifth seed Ashmita Chaliha got the better of Rhucha Sawant 21-17 21-15 to book her spot



in the last four of the women's singles, where she will meet compatriot Smit Toshniwal, who came from behind to beat USA's Ishika Jaiswal 8-21 21-9 21-14. In another women's singles quarterfinal, Unnati Hooda handed fellow Indian Samiya Imad Farooqui a 21-10 21-15 defeat in 26 minutes.

She will lock horns with Malvika, who is ranked 87th, in the semifinal.

Unseeded Mithun

Manjunath, who had stunned seventh seed June Wei Cheam of Malaysia on Thursday, lost a hard fought battle 21-13 14-21 8-21 to Priyanshu Rajawat in 51 minutes in another men's singles quarterfinal match.

In the mixed doubles event, three Indian pairings -- MR Arjun-Treesa Jolly, Balkeshari Yadav-Swetaparna Panda and Maurayan Kathiravan-Kuham Balashri -- advanced to the semifinals.

India beat China 2-0 to win consolation bronze

PTI ■ MUSCAT

Last edition champions India defeated China 2-0 to register a consolation third place finish 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.

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 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.

Japan will be up against Korea in the summit clash later on Friday.

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.



ACT disappointment was a good learning experience: Reid

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Still smarting from the semifinal exit at the Asia Champions Trophy, Indian men's hockey team chief coach Graham Reid on Friday said the setback came as a reality check for the Tokyo Olympic bronze medal winners ahead of a busy calendar year.

Defending champions India were stunned 3-5 by Japan in the semifinal of the ACT in Dhaka last month.

"It's always difficult. You have to be put in situations. Everybody including myself hated that semifinal loss to Japan in ACT. No one likes to experience something like that. But sometimes you have to experience that to learn from it," Reid said in a virtual press conference. "The message after that tournament was 'Look this is what happens if we don't treat every single game with the utmost importance. I think it was really good learning experience."

Reid said his message to the team after the historic Olympic medal was straight

forward: "This is just the beginning and not the end of the road" and the loss against Japan will act as reminder for them ahead of a busy year that includes FIH Pro League matches, Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games. "Straight after the Olympics I also said that 'This is not it, this is just the start' and that's has been our message from the moment we won the bronze medal in Tokyo. "...We have to take the best out of the opportunities from here," he said.

India will start the year with back-to-back Pro League ties against South Africa and France in Potchefstroom from February 8 to 13. Olympic bronze medal-winning captain Manpreet Singh will lead a 20-member Indian team in the double-leg contests in South Africa. The team will also have its veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh back besides getting two new faces -- young dragflicker Jugraj Singh and striker Abhishek. "We were able to do that in Bangladesh (give chances to new players). We were able to give the

players who haven't had the opportunity for a while.

"We also needed to bring back some of the other players who haven't had a game since the Olympics. The other important message is that these will be very tough games, we are taking them pretty seriously so the team we picked is reflective of that," the coach said about the squad.

Talking about the two new players, Reid said: "Jugraj is quite a versatile player who can play in both midfield and defence. He is also very quick when he dragflicks. I am quite excited if we can get him little more consistent where he puts them. "Abhishek likes scoring goals, a prolific scorer. He is strong and young."

The Australian tactician is also impressed with the longevity and commitment of veteran goalkeeper Sreejesh.

"He (Sreejesh) is back again, he had a long break but you don't get to play so long for your country as he has without being open to new ideas and changes and development and continual improvement.

Mavididi leads Montpellier's French Cup bid

AP ■ PARIS

Having missed a chance of emulating his idol Thierry Henry by playing for Arsenal in the English Premier League, Stephy Mavididi is now making a name for himself in French soccer.

The 23-year-old forward is doing well with Montpellier and will be leading his side's bid to reach the French Cup quarterfinals away to Marseille on Saturday. Mavididi scored a superbly-taken winner in stoppage time last weekend as Montpellier beat Monaco 3-2 to move sixth in the league. He also played a part in the first goal against Monaco and scored the second.

Last season, he grabbed nine league goals for Montpellier supporting first-

choice duo Andy Delort and Gaetan Laborde.

Since they both left Mavididi has thrived in the spotlight. He leads the club with eight league goals and is second in assists with three, behind silky playmaker Teji Savanier. Mavididi showed strong potential early on.

He joined Arsenal's academy at the age of 13 and was coached by the club great Henry for the under-19s side.

"He's been my idol, still is my idol," Mavididi told the French league's podcast.

"The socks (pulled right up over the knees like Henry used to), the boots, everything really." But while Henry lit up English soccer for years, Mavididi never made it into the Gunners' first team. After loan spells with modest sides



Charlton, Preston and Oldham he joined Italian giant Juventus in 2018. Initially signed to play only for the third-tier reserve

side, he netted six goals in 32 Serie C games during the 2018-19 season and made one appearance in Serie A.

