



Imran Khan-led Pak govt is considering a proposal to borrow gold from citizens to increase the country's forex reserves that remain on a sliding path despite taking over \$5bn in loans in 3 months, say reports

Iranian Parliament has laid out six conditions for Tehran to rejoin the 2015 nuclear deal with global powers in a letter to President Ebrahim Raisi published on Sunday

Australia will welcome int'l tourists on Monday after nearly two years of sealing its borders, relying on high Covid-19 vaccination rates to live with the pandemic as infections decline

UK is set to drop legal requirement to self-isolate for up to 10 days on testing positive for coronavirus as part of the govt's so-called 'living with Covid' plan, Downing Street indicates

Queen Elizabeth II has tested Covid +ve & is experiencing mild symptoms, says Buckingham Palace. In a tweet, PM Modi has wished her speedy recovery

60% vote in 59 UP seats, rise in turnout at Yadav bastion

63.4% Polling In Punjab, Down From 76.8% In '17

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chandigarh/Lucknow: Punjab recorded an extensive dip in voter turnout from 76.8% in 2017 to 63.4% till 5pm on Sunday for the single-phase state assembly polls, while the third

BJP-SAD tie-up? Netas keep options open, PAGE OPP

round of UP elections saw a marginal drop in polling at 60%, as opposed to 62.2% five years ago. Figures are likely to change marginally when the EC updates them on Monday.

Held under the shadow of Covid that restricted rallies and door-to-door canvassing as well as a yearlong farmers' stir, the Punjab election saw for the

States must have power to recall guv: Kerala govt

Amid repeated tussles with governor Arif Mohammed Khan, Kerala government has put forward a recommendation to the Centre that state assemblies should have powers to recall the governor. P10

Wankhede booked over bar licence

A criminal case has been filed against NCB's Mumbai ex-zonal director Sameer Wankhede for allegedly securing a bar licence fraudulently 25 years ago. P10

New accreditation rules arbitrary: EGI

Editors Guild of India urged government to withdraw the new media accreditation rules, terming them "vague and arbitrary" with "draconian clauses". P10

NE Delhi riots: Bail to 4 in 3 murder cases

Delhi court has granted bail to four persons in three murder cases related to the northeast Delhi riots after the sole witness did not identify the accused. P7

Cop traces ₹17L gold forgotten on train

A quick-thinking cop recently helped a family trace their jewellery worth Rs 17 lakh left behind on the Chennai Express after it reached Mumbai. P18

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DHULL'S DOUBLE DELIGHT DEBUT

India's U-19 World Cup-winning captain Yash Dhull became only the third batter in history after Gujarat's Nari Contractor (1952-53) and Maharashtra's Virag Awate (2012-13) to score a hundred in each innings on Ranji Trophy debut

► Delhi's Dhull (113 not out off 202 balls) and Dhruv Shorey (107 off 165 balls) took Delhi to 228 for no loss in the 2nd innings against Tamil Nadu before the players shook hands for a draw

► Dhull is the 7th Delhi batsman to post a century in each innings of a Ranji match, joining MAK Pataudi (vs

India Win T20 Series 3-0, Do A 'Double' On WI

India (184/5) beat West Indies (167/9) by 17 runs in the 3rd T20I and achieved a rare 'double' after earlier trouncing the visitors 3-0 in the ODIs.

HIGHEST JUMP IN VOTING IN MAINPURI

► Third phase of UP election saw a turnout of approx 60% in 59 constituencies across 16 districts of three regions – parts of western UP, Awadh and Bundelkhand



► According to EC, till 5 pm, Mainpuri district recorded highest jump in polling percentage by 1.9, followed by Etah 1.1, Kasganj 0.4% and Auraiya 0.05 %

► Punjab witnessed 63.4% polling on Sunday till 5 pm

first time in the state's history a multi-cornered fight as new political combinations sprang up ahead of the polls. The key players include Congress, main opposition party AAP, the SAD-BSP alliance, and the coalition of BJP, ex-CM Amarinder Singh's Punjab Lok Congress and Rajya Sabha member Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa's Shi-

KCR meets Pawar, Uddhav in Mum to discuss non-BJP, non-Cong front

Mumbai: Embattled Telangana CM K Chandrasekhar Rao on Sunday flew into Mumbai to meet his Maharashtra counterpart Uddhav Thackeray and NCP president Sharad Pawar for drafting a new agenda for setting up a non-BJP, non-Congress front with 'like-minded' parties. There was unanimity among the three leaders on the urgent need for a 'parivartan' (change), reports Prafulla Marpawar.

The Telangana CM said Pawar "should take a lead in the formation of the front".

Attacking the NDA government over the "politics of revenge", Thackeray said: "We never believed in politics of revenge, it was neither Hindutva nor Indian culture... It's a worsening political environment. We have to bring our country on the right path. Who will be the PM can be discussed later. We will meet many political leaders from today onwards".

► 'Working on a plan', P 11

Modi said while BJP was committed to uplift the poor and focused on national security, parties like Akhilesh Yadav's SP had been "kind to terrorists". "I maintained silence for so many years since the Ahmedabad serial blasts case was being heard in court," he said. "Today, I am referring to this because these parties have been shielding terrorists just for the sake of protecting their vote bank, which is a very dangerous pattern," he said. "The blasts took place

► Dad dies day after Pune techie's acquittal, P 10

Modi said while BJP was committed to uplift the poor and focused on national security, parties like Akhilesh Yadav's SP had been "kind to terrorists". "I maintained silence for so many years since the Ahmedabad serial blasts case was being heard in court," he said. "Today, I am referring to this because these parties have been shielding terrorists just for the sake of protecting their vote bank, which is a very dangerous pattern," he said. "The blasts took place

► 'Seen SP's symbol', P 11

Girls in 2 K'taka colleges 'agree' to take practical tests today without hijab

Sruthy Susan.Ullas @timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: The pre-university (PU) II practical exams for science students in Bengaluru North are scheduled to start on Monday amid the hijab row in Karnataka, with education department officials claiming that students of the minority community have agreed not to wear the religious headscarf while taking the test.

"The Government PU College in Yelahanka and Bapu PU College in Yeshwantpur faced (hijab) protests. I went to both and convinced the students. I told them we have to respect the high court's interim order," Sriram GK, deputy director of PU education of Bangalore North, said.

Initial probe revealed that Murthi duped at least 31 people of roughly Rs 3.9 crore. "He charged a 'consultancy fee' at various stages (of tenders) while assuring the victims of a refund if they didn't get the order. He would then disappear with the money," joint CP (EOW) Chhaya Sharma said. TNN P8

► Most took hall tickets, P 12

Def consultant arrested for duping bizmen

The Delhi Police has arrested a "defence consultant" who duped scores of businessmen of crores of rupees on the pretext of helping them bag orders in the defence ministry, international establishments and Army canteens. The accused, K Venkata Krishna Murthi (58), a resident of Dehradun, is a chemical engineer who posed as an IITian having links with top officials of DRDO, police said.

Initial probe revealed that Murthi duped at least 31 people of roughly Rs 3.9 crore. "He charged a 'consultancy fee' at various stages (of tenders) while assuring the victims of a refund if they didn't get the order. He would then disappear with the money," joint CP (EOW) Chhaya Sharma said. TNN P8

► Most took hall tickets, P 12

Omigone? Covid deaths nearly halve in a week, sharp fall in cases continues

Amit.Bhattacharya @timesgroup.com

India's Omicron-driven third wave of Covid-19 appears to be flattening towards an early end. While cases continued to fall sharply for the fourth week running, deaths from the virus reduced in the week ending Sunday to a little over half the number reported in the previous seven days.

As the country recorded a second week of declining fatalities, there was a significant drop in deaths in the current week (February 14-20). India saw 1,898 deaths in the week, down 44% from last week's toll of 3,366. These figures exclude deaths from earlier periods that are being added to the toll.

► In Andhra, less than a day after being dropped from India's Test squad, Pujara struck an 83-ball 91 for Saurashtra

Suryakumar Yadav (65 off 31 balls) put on 91 with Venkatesh Iyer (35 off 19) for 5th wkt as India scored 86 in last 5 overs

FULL COVERAGE P 15

► Delhi's Dhull (113 not out off 202 balls) and Dhruv Shorey (107 off 165 balls) took Delhi to 228 for no loss in the 2nd innings against Tamil Nadu before the players shook hands for a draw

► Dhull is the 7th Delhi batsman to post a century in each innings of a Ranji match, joining MAK Pataudi (vs

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► Most took hall tickets, P 12

US Omicron toll 176% higher than Delta's

The Omicron wave is breaking, but deaths have surpassed the numbers from the Delta wave in the United States and are about 176% higher. In 14 states, the average daily death toll is higher now than it was two weeks ago. P 18

► While fresh cases declined for the fourth straight week, each of the past two weeks have seen infections dip by more than half. India reported 1.73

lakh new cases this week, down 56% from last week's tally of 3.94 lakh.

► 16,820 daily cases, P 12

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► TOI INTERVIEW P 18

► Haryana mulls amending building bylaws, P 12

locals are benefited. His remarks, in an interview to Akhilesh Singh, come days after the Supreme Court set aside the HC's stay on the reservation. "If industries don't give jobs (to locals), what use are they?" Khattar says. P 18

► 'Seen SP's symbol', P 11

Khattar: Haryana job quota won't hit industries

Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar has justified the state's 75% domicile quota in private sector, saying the law has been drafted carefully so that the industry is not impacted and at the same time

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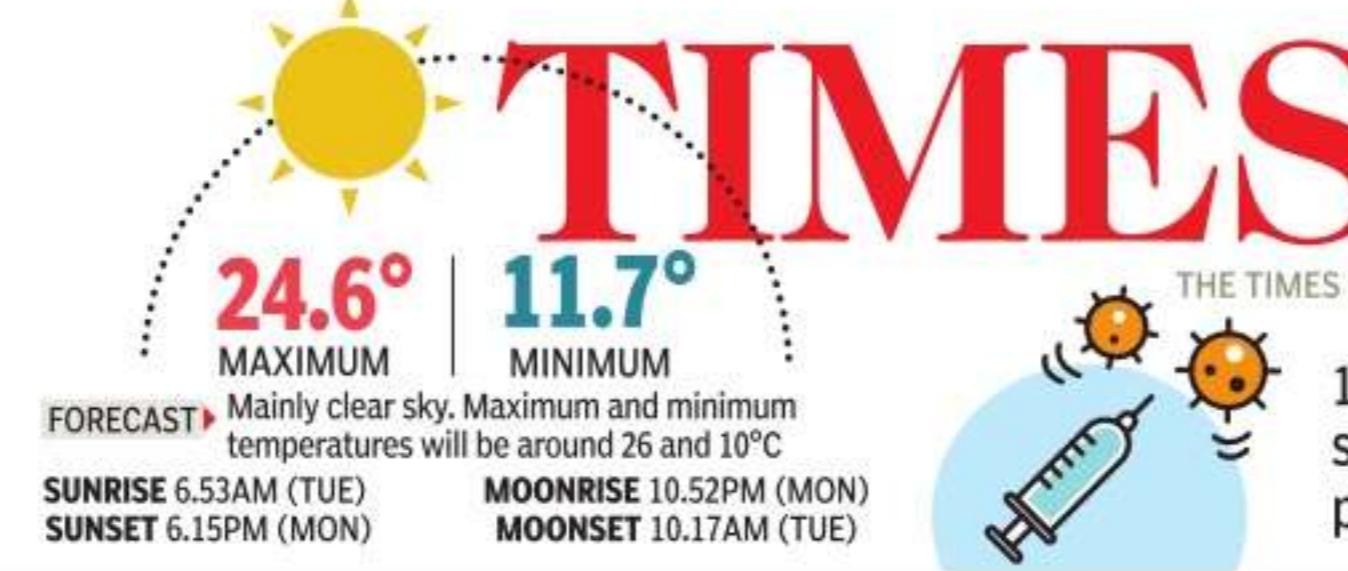
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► Amit.Bhattacharya @timesgroup.com

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Incidents of small fires up, dip in such cases at home | 7



CITY
THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2022

1856071
TOTAL COVID-19 CASES

NEW CASES	570	ACTIVE CASES	2,545
RECOVERED	18,27,425	DEAD	26,101

Birders witness dip in count on Big Bird Day | 5



February 21, 2022



Mobile phones are now prohibited in Afghanistan, everyone has to voluntarily submit their phones to Taliban government



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CWG-era Street Furniture Ready For Retouch

Installed In 2010 Near Sports Venues For Games, Govt Refurbishing Them; To Get Private Player For Upkeep

Sidhartha.Roy@timesgroup.com

events were held.

New Delhi: During the 2010 Commonwealth Games, Delhi government had beautified roads leading to sports venues by streetscaping, resurfacing of roads, streetlighting, etc. In the past decade, the sleek information panels, benches, toilets, kiosks, etc have not only faced the elements, but also vandalism. Delhi government is now working to bring back their lustre and add more facilities.

Earlier, the area around Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, which was the venue for wrestling, cycling and gymnastics events during CWG, and the stretch up to Moolchand in south Delhi were taken up for maintenance of infrastructure, replacing missing facilities and installing new street furniture.

The process has now started on similar facilities near and on roads leading to Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range and Siri Fort Sports Complex, where badminton and squash

RESTORING LOST SHEEN

STREET FURNITURE NEAR SIRI FORT SPORTS COMPLEX AND KARNI SINGH SHOOTING RANGE

Facility	Existing	To be installed
Dustbins	2	108
Police booths	5	10
Benches	11	31
Panels and flag poles	2	32
Public toilets	10	5
Vending kiosks	1	6
Information panels	4	4

CARRYING THE LEGACY FORWARD

During the 2010 Commonwealth Games, Delhi government had taken up a beautification drive of roads through streetscaping, resurfacing, and installing new streetlights and street furniture



Project sites along arterial roads

AIIMS August Kranti Marg Siri Fort Road Balbir Saxena Marg Mehrauli-Badarpur Road

- > Dustbins to have twin biodegradable and non-biodegradable bins
- > Prefabricated street furniture, involving minimal on-site work
- > Modular design for easy assembly and shifting, if required
- > Wooden cladding on steel benches to protect people from heated surfaces
- > Vandalism-proof design
- > Full or partial advertisements allowed on all street furniture, except benches and dustbins

Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation Ltd (DTTDC) had entered into a concession agreement for installation and maintenance of furniture on PWD roads leading to Commonwealth Games venues

DTTDC now plans to engage a concessionaire for maintenance of street furniture for a period of 3 years

7-star Swachhta ranking in sight, NDMC plans 100% machine cleaning in Lutyens'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: To get a seven-star ranking in the forthcoming Swachhta Survekshan, New Delhi Municipal Council has launched the initiative of "100% mechanical sweeping" of Lutyens' Zone.

NDMC vice-chairman Satish Upadhyay said in the first phase mechanical sweeping work would cover 14 blocks and seven radial roads of Connaught Place as it was the biggest and most prominent commercial market situated in the heart of the capital. The entire cleaning work of Connaught Place would be done with the help of mechanised sweepers, pressure jetting ma-



The project will also cover prominent markets in NDMC areas

chines, vacuum litter pickers and other equipment.

"The need of the hour is comprehensive planning of

Tenders will be floated within 3-4 months. In the second phase, the project will be implemented for Hanuman Mandir Vatika and Baba Kharak Singh Emporia Building area," said Upadhyay.

According to the proposed Standard Operating Procedures, work at Connaught Place would be divided into seven parts covering the inner, middle and outer circles, radial roads, parking areas, corridors, courtyards, public plaza, footpaths and paved areas. Sweeping, washing, scrubbing and maintenance work would be divided into two parts. In the first duration, sweeping would be done at night after shops close

from 11pm onwards. In the second duration, sweeping would be done during daytime.

Currently, sweeping work in parking areas, corridors, courtyards and pavements are carried out by workers of the health department. Greening of the area is carried out by the horticulture department and mechanised sweeping of the main roads is done by the civil department.

The duration of the tender would be of two years. The private company would use scrubbing machines for corridors and granite footpath of the market and washing of walls, railings and corners would be done through pressure jetting machines.

Beautify roundabouts for Azadi Mahotsav by Mar, corps told

Siddhanta.Mishra
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: All roundabouts in the city will get a facelift by the end of March, with directions issued by Union ministry of urban development to all three municipal corporations.

The issue came up in a meeting held by the lieutenant governor Anil Baijal last week over the ongoing plans and programs of celebrating 75 years of Independence in the city. The commissioners of the civic bodies—South Delhi Municipal Corporation, North Delhi Municipal Corporation and East Delhi Municipal Corporation were also present in the meet. The corporations were instructed on the identification and then beautifi-

cation of roundabouts under respective jurisdictions.

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM) is a central initiative to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of Independence. The ministry of housing and development had earlier asked all the state administrations to identify roundabouts for beautification with a fixed timeline and the theme of the celebration.

"The action plan should actively encourage citizens' participation," said the ministry's letter to all the states.

The Centre has made the initiative a part of the Swachh Survekshan, where performance under this activity will also be assessed under this year's ranking.

"Prepare an action plan for beautification with a detailed timeline for completion before March 31, 2022, which should encourage the maximum citizen's participation," says an order of the south corporation to all its zonal offices.

During the meeting with Baijal, it was also announced that the government would work on printing a booklet in vernacular languages, detailing all the activities for celebrating 75 years of Independence.

30प्र० लोक सेवा आयोग संक्षिप्त-विज्ञाप्ति

मुद्रण एवं लेखन समाचार विभाग, 30प्र०, के अन्तर्कारी कार्यक्रम अधिकारी के 01 पद हेतु आयोग के विभाग संख्या- 03/2021-22, विभाग संख्या- एस-9/05, दिनांक- 25.06.2021 के द्रम में सर्वसाधारण को एटद्वारा किया जाता है कि प्रश्नात पद हेतु विभिन्न अनिवार्य अर्थात् में 67.00 प्रतिशत से कम 64.00 प्रतिशत तक प्राप्तात्मक धाराने करने वाले कुल 16 अधिकारीयों से ऑफलाइन समस्त शैक्षणिक अधिकारों के सहित प्रश्नपत्रात आवेदन पत्र की मांग की गयी है। इस सम्बन्ध में विस्तृत विवरण आयोग के वेबसाइट पर [https://upsc.up.nic.in](http://upsc.up.nic.in) पर उपलब्ध है।

संख्या- 524(2)/17/डी03आर/एस-9/2020-21

दिनांक: प्रगतिरात्र, 19 फरवरी, 2022

विजय प्रताप सिंह
(उप सचिव)

Chhattisgarh Police Housing Corporation Limited

Reg. Office: Old Police Headquarters, S.I.B. Building, Civil Lines, RAIPUR (C.G.)
Email ID: cphclfinance@gmail.com, Ph. No. 0771-23231800 CIN : U45400CT2011SC000056
No. CGPHC/HQ/Tr/Account/500/2022

Raipur Date: 18/02/2022

Invitation for expression of interest for takeover of Loan of Rs. 599 Crores

Chhattisgarh Police Housing Corporation Ltd. (CGPHCL) is a State Government Company limited by shares. It was incorporated on 14th December, 2011 under the Companies Act 1956 (now Companies Act, 2013), with an objective of ensuring adequate construction of Police Buildings including houses with necessary support infrastructure for Police personnel of the state.

The CGPHCL is engaged in construction of residential houses under Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojna and is having term loans from banks under multiple banking arrangement. The Corporation is looking for better interest rate and terms for a term loan of 599 Crores. In this regard, the Corporation invites banks and financial institutions to submit their expressions of interest for providing long term finance of 599 Crores, backed by Government of Chhattisgarh.

In regard to a pre-EOI meeting is organised on 28.02.2022 at 04:00 PM at the registered office of the Corporation. Interested banks/Financial institutions may please attend the same. Note: For any correspondence and communication please send e-mail at cphclfinance@gmail.com.

Managing Director

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-Sd-

Dr. Asim Das, Dean

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Date : 14/02/2022

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(V.K. Suryawanshi)
Executive Engineer
MJP Division Mangaon

DGIPR/2021-2022/4497

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1.	Name of work with its location & Completion Period	Provision of rewiring of service building at Agra Division. Completion period 08 months
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⁵Source – Report published by Kantar Millward Brown | ⁶For details refer to press release published by CARE (https://www.careratings.com/upload/CompanyFiles/PR/05042021114839_Bajaj_Allianz_Life_Insurance_Company_Limited.pdf) | **Solvency ratio 604% as at 31 December 2021 against IRDAI mandated 150%. | ⁷Individual claim settlement ratio FY- 2020-2021.

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On Big Bird Day, Watchers Find Dip In Count, Point At Extra Rain

Huge Numbers Expected In February; Final Report To Be Ready In 2-3 Days

Priyangi.Agarwal
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New Delhi: Bird lovers stepped out of their homes early on Sunday to take part in Big Bird Day, the annual event to determine avian species in their natural habitat. Most birders said the density of birds was low this time compared with what was usually sighted in February. The final species count would be prepared in two-three days.

Nikhil Devasar, member, Delhibird, said, "We expected a huge number of birds in February, but the density was low this time. The excess rainfall recorded in the past six months caused them to disperse. There used to be a few wetlands earlier, but the intermittent rain recharged many waterbodies. Besides, the weather has become warm and birds might have started leaving."

Another birder, Col Pankaj Sharma, who led a team to Mandothi near Bahadurgarh, said the number of birds was lower than usual this time. "The number of birds sighted on Sunday was nearly half of the density of birds that I saw at the same site on February 6. Due to the change in weather, it seems that migratory birds have started leaving early. They usually start their return journey by mid-March," he added.

Though the birders said major migratory birds found in the region were spotted on Sunday, the rare sightings included Spotted dove in Yamuna, Merlin and Short-eared owls at Jhaneraula. "Merlin is usually sighted once every 4-5 years, while Short-eared owls are not commonly seen," said Devasar.

Pankaj Gupta, a birder who sighted the Spotted dove said, "It is mostly found in the lower hills of eastern and

NOT UP TO THE MARK



Great cormorants

BIRD COUNT OVER THE YEARS

Biodiversity park	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Special sightings
1. Yamuna Biodiversity Park	102	103	98	83	101	102	Marsh harrier, grey bushchat
2. Aravalli Biodiversity Park	51	63	46	54	46	73	Eastern orphean warbler, black eagle
3. Tilpath Valley Biodiversity Park	64	45	53	43	49	43	Small minivet
4. Northern Ridge (Kamla Nehru Ridge)	54	49	59	59	60	58	Indian spotted eagle
5. Neela Hauz Biodiversity Park	26	27	22	33	38	20	Common pochard
6. Tughlaqabad Biodiversity Park	69	55	49	53	51	55	Black-headed ibis
7. Kalindi Biodiversity Park	-	-	-	40	80	69	Barheaded goose and greylag goose

central India. The bird has shattered the winter records of sighting in Delhi."

Around 30 teams visited over 25 sites in Delhi-NCR to record different bird species. Holding binoculars and cameras, the teams followed the set trail for the survey. After spotting a bird, they recorded their sightings on the eBird app. Volunteers were elated to spot different migratory

and residential birds.

At Yamuna Biodiversity Park, the participants were also educated about different species of trees, shrubs and grasses and their role in biodiversity. All seven biodiversity parks spread over an area of about 2,500 acres were a part of the event. Of these, four parks saw an increase in bird species this year compared with last year.

Faiyaz Khudsar, scientist in-charge, Biodiversity Parks Programme, said, "Yamuna and Kalindi biodiversity parks are in the river floodplain and are now known for their functional wetland ecosystems and migratory birds. During winter, we receive about 30 species of migratory birds from Europe, Siberia and Central Asia and China at Yamuna Biodiversity Park

in which Ferruginous pochard is noteworthy among wintering ducks."

Aravalli Biodiversity Park is known for its beautiful restored scrub jungle, thorn forest and Kullu and Dhawa forest communities as typical representatives of Aravali vegetation, which is home to many migratory and resident terrestrial bird species, added Khudsar.

ups that included resident species and migratory birds from various other countries flocking in and around the site," he said.

The nature walk on Sunday, the second event of DDA's two-week programme with the theme of 'Rejuvenation of River Yamuna floodplains', was led by ornithologists from Delhi Bird Foundation (DBF), a team of birder enthusiasts. The authority's vice-chairman Manish Kumar Gupta took part in the walk along with other senior officials.

"Over 100 participants, including bird enthusiasts, nature lovers and officers of DDA took part in this walk who were divided in groups led by DBF members," a DDA spokesperson said.

"Around 90 species of birds were spotted by the group

- The density of birds was low this time in comparison with previous years
- Excess rain recorded in the past six months and warmer days were the main reasons behind low number of birds being sighted
- Final report of Big Bird Day will be compiled in a couple of days

RARE SIGHTINGS |

Spotted dove in the Yamuna, and merlin and short-eared owls at Jhanjerla

No. of teams | AROUND 30

Total sites covered in Delhi-NCR | OVER 25

Some important locations covered | Najafgarh lake, Asola, Yamuna Khadar, Surajpur, JNU campus, Dhanuri, Sultanpur, Mangar, Bhondsi and NTPC Jhajjar



Purple heron

Purple swamphen

Common pochard

DPCC to intensify online check to cut pollutant inflow into Yamuna

Priyangi.Agarwal@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Delhi Pollution Control Committee is considering enhancing its online continuous water quality monitoring systems to identify minor drains and industrial outlets, causing pollution in the river. DPCC currently has 18 stations but it has submitted an action plan to Central Pollution Control Board, seeking Rs 21 crore for setting up 44 additional stations at major drains, outlets of industries, Najafgarh drain, and supplementary drains in Delhi.

The capital has around 100 drains, and of these, 18 major drains fall directly in the Yamuna. A senior DPCC official said: "We want to increase our online continuous water quality monitoring systems so that we can identify the stretches, which discharge maximum pollution to the Yamuna. The assessment of water quality of drains and industrial outlets will help us in ascertaining the supplementary drains or industries, which are most polluted. Once we determine the industrial clusters or drains causing pollution, we can take action accordingly." The official added that the



DPCC has submitted an action plan to CPCB for ₹21 crore to set up 44 additional stations at major drains and outlets of industries

agencies concerned can take steps to improve the water quality and DPCC will act against the industries discharging untreated effluents.

TOI had earlier reported that DPCC is planning to map all the drains to regularly check the water quality and to identify the locations where considerable pollutants are entering the Yamuna.

The setting up of new online continuous water quality monitoring systems will take the total number to 62. "We have

submitted our proposal to CPCB. As per the order dated January 22, 2019, the National Green Tribunal has granted approval for utilisation of a 25% environmental compensation fund for specified activities. We have requested to CPCB that the project cost of Rs 21 crore may be reimbursed from the environmental damage compensation fund available with the central agency," said another official.

A new report prepared by DPCC on water quality status of drains after samples were collected in December last year; 20 out of 27 drains, which go into river Yamuna, are not meeting the prescribed parameters in respect to biochemical oxygen demand (BOD). DPCC report said some drains are also flouting prescribed standards of Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) and Total Suspended Solids (TSS).

In its report, which was submitted to the union ministry of Jal Shakti, DPCC said it has taken action against 1,509 water-polluting industries or units between January to November 2021. Of these units, 1,430 industries were located in conforming areas, while remaining in the non-conforming areas.

Ask govt to get Lokayukta in a mth: Plea in HC

New Delhi: A public interest litigation has been filed before Delhi High Court seeking a direction to the AAP government to appoint within one month a Lokayukta as promised by it in its election manifesto of 2020.

The petitioner, Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, a lawyer, stated that the political party came into existence after the historic anti-corruption movement, but the post of Lokayukta has been lying vacant since December 2020.

The petitioner has alleged that Delhi government is not taking steps to weed out the menace of bribery, black money, benami property, tax evasion, profiteering and other economic as well as white-collar offences and therefore, being the protector of fundamental rights, the court has to intervene in the matter of the appointment of a Lokayukta.

"When Justice Reva Khetrapal retired as Delhi Lokayukta, the government did not fail to fill the post till date and hundreds of complaints relating to corruption are pending in the office," the petitioner stated. "AAP promised a stringent and effective Jan Lokpal Bill in 2015 and 2020 election manifesto but rather than enacting the law, it is not even appointing the Lokayukta under outdated ineffective 1995 Act," it added. PTI

Mid-March date to open Chandni Chowk parking

Vibha.Sharma@timesgroup.com



The multilevel parking lot will have space to accommodate 1,000 cars

here," Jain said.

"The complex will be equipped with modern facilities such as CCTV, lifts for passengers, and a firefighting system. It will have a heritage element of Old Delhi," he added.

The parking project, though conceived in 2013, has been long delayed. This led to the north corporation being pulled up by a city court in 2018. "Earlier, the corporation had given September 2021 as the deadline, but there has been a delay because of the construction work being halted due to Covid," said a senior official.

The civic body claims to be simultaneously working on two other parking projects at

Qutab Road and Shiva Market. "Over 70% work is at Qutab Road (parking space for 174 vehicles) and 90% work near Shiva Market (parking capacity for 500 cars) have been completed. These will become operational in next three months," said the official.

The Qutab Road parking facility is spread over 1,335 sqm area. It will have seven floors, including two basements and five upper floors. Of these, two floors will be developed as a commercial complex.

"We have also received bids for multilevel parking at Bank Street for 500 vehicles and work will start here soon," said the official.

Max a bit down, but temp to be near 30°C in a week

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

rate air quality."

According to the Met department, the minimum and maximum temperatures are likely to be around 26 and 10 degrees Celsius, respectively, on Monday. However, strong winds at the speed of 20-30 kmph are likely to return on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"Two feeble western disturbances are likely to impact this week. Due to this, cloudy sky is expected on February 22 and 25, but there is less chance of rain this month. However, we are monitoring the situation," said Jenamani.

According to IMD, the city has in February so far received 18.6mm rainfall and has already surpassed the normal mark. The city is currently experiencing pleasant weather due to strong winds, near-normal temperature and moderate

173
AQI IN MODERATE CATEGORY IN CITY DUE TO STRONG WINDS

had recorded just 2.6mm rainfall in February 2021.

Meanwhile, strong winds helped Delhi's air quality to remain in the 'moderate' category with an overall Air Quality Index (AQI) of 173. System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR), the forecasting body under the Union ministry of earth sciences, said, "Relatively high wind speed kept AQI within 'moderate' category. AQI is likely to degrade slightly on Monday due to low wind speed and weak dispersion. On February 22, AQI is expected to improve to 'lower end of moderate' due to relatively high temperature and wind speed causing strong ventilation. From February 23, low wind speed is likely to degrade air quality to 'poor' category."

Three held for robbing man of ₹10 lakh

New Delhi: Three people were arrested for robbing a man at gunpoint in outer-north Delhi's Bhalwa Dairy. The accused have been identified as Pawan (26), Amardeep (37) and Shiva (26).

On February 15, an auto driver, Surender, who was carrying Rs 10 lakh, was waylaid by three people on a bike and robbed of the said amount at gunpoint. "The driver was carrying the cash for one Bhaskar Chand, who runs an electroplating plant at Harsh Vihar. Bhaskar had asked his relative, Surender, to collect the cash from Rohini Sector 15," the officer said.

Police said that after the robbery, they went to a mall and purchased clothes and shoes. They were then planning to go to Manali, but changed their plans at the last moment. TN

Do not miss Education Times, a 4-page pullout with today's issue

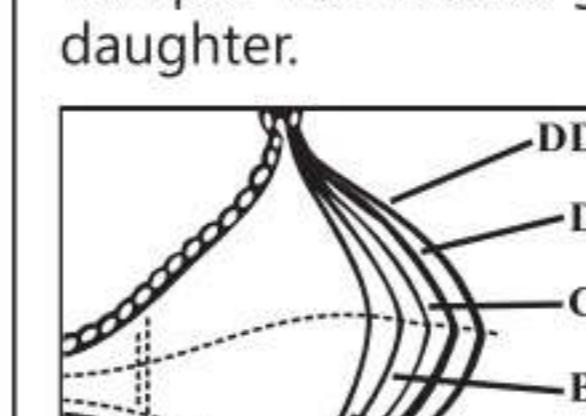
Is this how your teenage daughter passes time?



Mirror... the expression of teenager's first love, hours and hours in front of the mirror, trying out new hairstyles, latest designer wear and admiring new contours. What she needs is self-confidence. Any teenager is naturally over conscious of her physical development. But her mother knows about the natural process and also knows the right time when her daughter would need a bra. But will any bra suit her?

For natural breast growth, a teenager needs a particular bra.

You must have observed that inspite of wearing a bra a teenager appears to be uncomfortable and feels a little awkward and shy. The reason: she wears a wrong bra, does not feel self-confident and relaxed. Even a bit of carelessness at this age will hamper the natural growth and will affect the figure and feminine beauty of your daughter.



Why is the correct cup size required for teenagers?

For natural figure growth and comfort, it is necessary that your daughter should wear the proper cup size bra. There are 5 cup sizes in each bra size, A-small, B-medium, C-large, D-extra large & DD-double XL, so your daughter should get perfect fit bra.

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2-yr expiry: 8k cervical cancer vax wasted

Somrita.Ghosh
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Around 8,000 vials of the human papillomavirus vaccine (HPV) given for prevention of cervical cancer were wasted at Delhi State Cancer Institute (DSCI) owing to no takers in the past two years.

HPV vaccination was first started in Delhi in November 2016 at the Shahdara branch of DSCI, which is the only government institution providing the vaccine for free to adolescent girls aged 11 to 15 years.

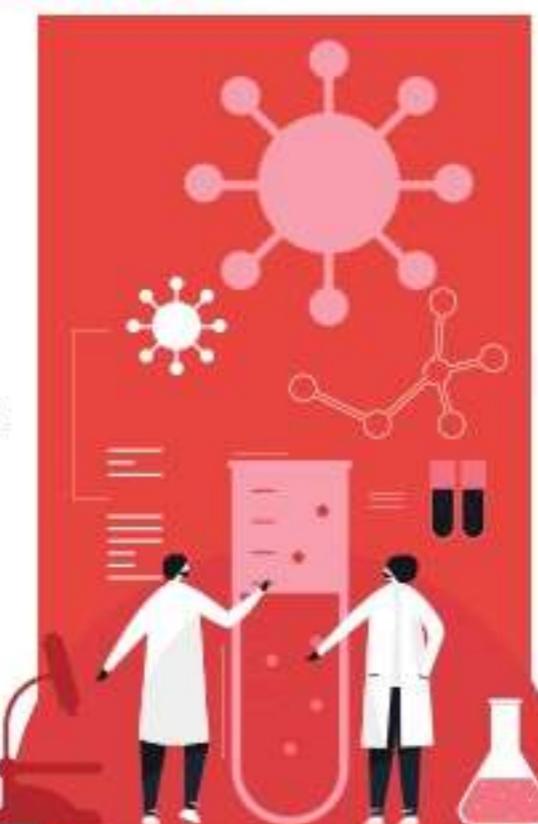
"We are procuring a fresh supply of the vaccine as the contract with the company based on the old rate has expired. We hope to restart vaccination soon. The company has picked up stock for replacement, but Covid-19 has hampered the process," said DSCI medical director Dr Kishore Singh.

An official said due to the lockdowns and the focus being on inoculation against Covid-19, there were hardly any takers for the cervical cancer prevention vaccine. "Around 8,000 vaccines have expired. They had an expiry

A SHOT AT PROTECTION

WHAT ARE HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS VACCINES

- HPV vaccines protect against infection with human papillomaviruses (HPV)
- HPV is a group of more than 200 related viruses, of which more than 40 are spread through direct sexual contact
- Among these, two HPV types cause genital warts
- About a dozen HPV types can cause certain types of cancer (cervical, anal, oropharyngeal, penile, vulvar, and vaginal)



NUMBER OF DOSES

- The HPV vaccine is given as a series of shots
- Different dosing schedules, depending on the age when the vaccination series is started
- Children who start the vaccine series before 15 years of age need only two doses to be fully protected
- People who start the series at 15 or older and those who have certain conditions that weaken the immune system need three doses to be fully protected

date of two years. As there was a low turnout in the past two years, they could not be used," added the official.

"Also, we have very little stock left. We have asked the state health department for procurement of the vaccine since we have to import it from other countries. We are not operating in the same manner as in the pre-pande-

mic era, but if anyone comes for the vaccine, we will provide it to them from our limited stock," the official said.

Another official said they were procuring two types of the vaccine from abroad — Cervarix from the UK and Gardasil from the US. "Despite these vaccines being expensive, we are providing them for free to adolescent

girls," added the official from the hospital.

When the programme was launched, it had few takers. "A lot of motivation was required to get the girls to take the vaccine in the initial days. However, with time more girls started coming. Demand surged after 2018 as hesitancy among girls went down. Now, they are more

initially, the programme was held in collaboration with schools. Later, with growing awareness, girls started coming on their own.

"We met the principals of both government and private schools and asked them to educate girls on HPV and cervical cancer. We also had to identify the target audience, which was possible only through schools. As of now, we are focusing on east Delhi. We had planned to expand the programme, but couldn't due to lack of manpower and infrastructure," said the official in charge of the programme.

Before the pandemic, the facility was vaccinating 250-300 girls every month. "Since August 2020, we have vaccinated 4,000 girls. Now, around 500 girls who were supposed to take their second and third doses are coming, along with the first timers," said another official. "Even one dose is enough to boost immunity to resist cervical cancer," added the official.

Jab At Home Makes Fight Easy For Many

1,800 Who Can't Go Out Vaccinated So Far

AT YOUR DOORSTEP

Eligibility

Severely disabled | Bedridden | Immobile beneficiaries | Restricted mobility or disability | Special needs that limit accessibility to nearby Covid-19 vaccination centres



DISTRICT HELPLINE NUMBERS

Central 011-23270151
New Delhi 1800 111 323
South 8287898412
South East 8595748455
South West 011-25073502 / 05 / 07 / 08
West 011-25100093 / 94 / 96 / 97 7982661695
North 011-23645701
North East 011-22120014
North West 011-25951182 8130854050
Shahdara 011-22120020
East 011-22029103

Somrita.Ghosh
@timesgroup.com

sed, we got a call from the district magistrate and my mother was vaccinated at home. She also got her second and booster doses at home," she said. "Around 50% of the residents in our society are senior citizens who cannot go to vaccination camps. They all have received jabs at home."

DM (SOUTH) SAYS
The pace of vaccination at home during the Omicron wave was restricted to an extent, but we still continued to cater to the requests

Last year, the central government initiated a programme, Near to Home Covid Vaccination Centres, for elderly and differently abled citizens, following which the state authorities, too, rolled out the process of identifying and getting these people vaccinated.

The health department has issued a state helpline number,

along with 11 district helpline numbers, where families can call for the vaccine. "If a call is made to the state helpline number, the details are forwarded to the districts. Asha workers are also visiting the houses and noting down the details of the eligible beneficiaries. So far, we have vaccinated around 220 people at home," said Cheshita Yadav, district magistrate of North West Delhi.

Sonali Jiwanji, DM (South), said NGOs and residents welfare associations were also helping in identifying the eligible people for home vaccination and those left out.

"We have a helpline, people call us on that. Then, we have a list of people who were given the first dose, so we know when they are supposed to be given the second and booster doses. Now many people are aware about the drive for both aged people and disabled ones," Jiwani pointed out.

"The pace of vaccination at home during the Omicron wave was restricted to an extent, as there was a manpower crisis, but we continued to cater to the requests," she added.

Don't seek govt IDs from disabled: NGOs to Centre

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New Delhi: To ensure that physically challenged individuals are not left unvaccinated, NGOs and several bodies of persons with disabilities (PwDs) have sent suggestions to the Union health ministry as asked by Supreme Court. The NGOs opine that such people should be vaccinated without the requirement of any government IDs.

A total of 3,09,91,704 vaccination doses have been administered till date, out of which 1,72,41,297 were first doses, while 1,33,64,877 were second doses.

In addition to this, the cumulative Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in the country crossed 175.33 crore on Saturday.

Owing to the dip in cases, since last week, the educational institutes have opened up. The schools reopened for nursery classes to class VIII from last Monday. Earlier, schools reopened for classes IX to XII on February 7.

Last week, after a long gap, Delhi University too opened up and offline classes resumed, to the relief of many students who were missing out on their college life and education.

Doctors with Disabilities (DWD) said no one should be

asked to prove disability as many individuals having specified ailments, such as atetoid cerebral palsy, leprosy, amputees, intellectual or visual disabilities, faced difficulty during biometrics, so they did not have Aadhaar cards.

"Many vaccination centres insist on Aadhaar despite Supreme Court not making it mandatory. Any other identity card can be used. Wherever possible, PwDs should be strongly encouraged to use UDID as data on those getting vaccinated is not available," DWD suggested.

DWD added that consent for homeless people with psychosocial disabilities could be navigated by nominated representatives. In Delhi, Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences Ashray Adhikar Abhiyan serves this purpose.

"States should identify PwDs with high support needs and they should be provided at-home vaccination. Near-to-home CVCs should be constituted in leprosy colonies, mental health institutions and old age homes," it suggested.

Evara Foundation NGO said pre-vaccination doubts and post-vaccination issues of PwDs needed to be addressed by trained medical professionals. "A dedicated centralised 24x7 helpline should be set up. The queries should be only answered by trained healthcare or rehabilitation professionals. The nodal officer in each district should be a domain knowledge expert. He/she should be responsible for all grievance redressals and facilitate vaccination of PwDs. Their details should be made available via all Covid-19 helpline numbers," it added.

Dr Satendra Singh, DWD organisational head, said, "No one is safe from Covid-19 until everyone is safe, which includes the missing 15% PwDs. Researchers, doctors and nurses with disabilities hold the key as they are never involved by the Centre at the NEVGAC, ICMR or Central Advisory Board on Disability level. The health ministry needs to work with the disability sector to achieve inclusive vaccine equity framework."

Why cheating case not filed, SEBI asked

Usha.Das@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: A Delhi court has sought explanation from the deputy general manager of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), as to why a matter related to cheating of 1868 investors was not reported to the police as the allegations of cheating and forgery were apparently made out of the material available with the authorities.

Additional sessions judge Dharmender Rana noted in the order that perusal of the complaint revealed that the accused have allegedly siphoned off investors' money and were shying away from complying with the directions of SEBI for getting an independent audit conducted.

The court further noted that it was revealed that the accused have claimed to have paid a sum of about Rs

3.08 crores to about 1868 investors and only Rs 10.0 lakhs was pending for payment to about 60 investors.

However, despite numerous directions from SEBI, accused persons avoided to undergo independent audit to test the veracity of their claim. It is further revealed that as per the auditor of the accused persons itself, it is revealed that payments were made to non-existing entities and the accused have fudged up the record to cover up the misdeeds," it stated in an order on February 19.

"Before proceeding ahead, I deem it appropriate to call for a report from the worthy deputy general manager, SEBI that as to why matter was not reported to the police as apparently allegations of cheating and forgery are made out from the material available with SEBI authorities," the judge said.

Remembering



SHRI SUDHIR SAREEN JI
(03.06.1945 - 21.02.2013)

Time flies fast.

Life goes on at its own pace.
But some Memories can Never
be forgotten or erased
from the mind of the dearest ones.
You will always remain in our thoughts.

Fondly Remembered By

SUNITA SAREEN

SIDDHARTH SAREEN & BHAVNA SAREEN

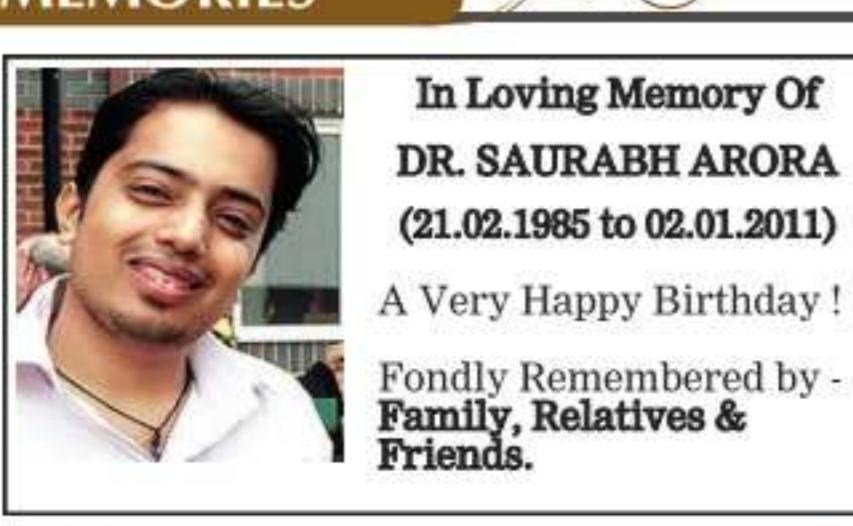
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Smt. Poonam Nath
November 24, 1952 to Eternity
To live in the hearts of those left behind is not to Die.
Dr. Kashi Nath & Family
D-3/33, Sector-16, Rohini,
Delhi.



**In Loving Memory Of
DR. SAURABH ARORA**
(21.02.1985 to 02.01.2011)

A Very Happy Birthday!

Fondly Remembered by - Family, Relatives & Friends.

OBITUARY

REMEMBRANCES

REMEMBRANCE

You were our shining & guiding light.

SARASWATI GUPTA
(1939-2021)

wife of Maman Chand Gupta passed away peacefully on 21st February 2021 in Delhi

A universal mother, remembered for her warm generosity, magnetic personality, fearless spirit, unshakeable faith and a life well lived for her children and society
Deeply Remembered by Maman Chand Gupta, Aruna, Usha, Praveen, Ashok, Archana, Pradeep, Neeru & all family members.

TIMES TRIBUTES RATE CARD

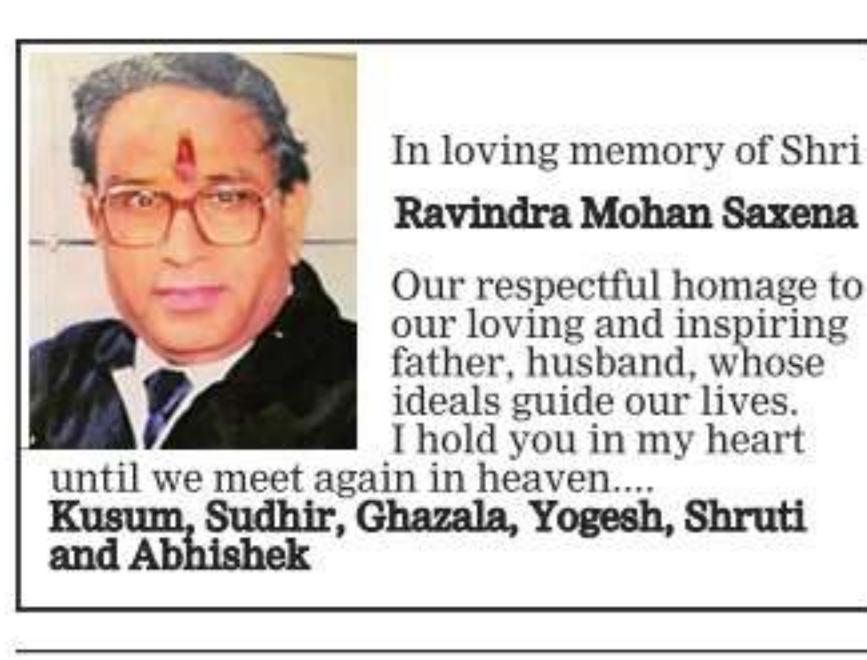
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Vinod: 9958992088

Pankaj: 8130604727



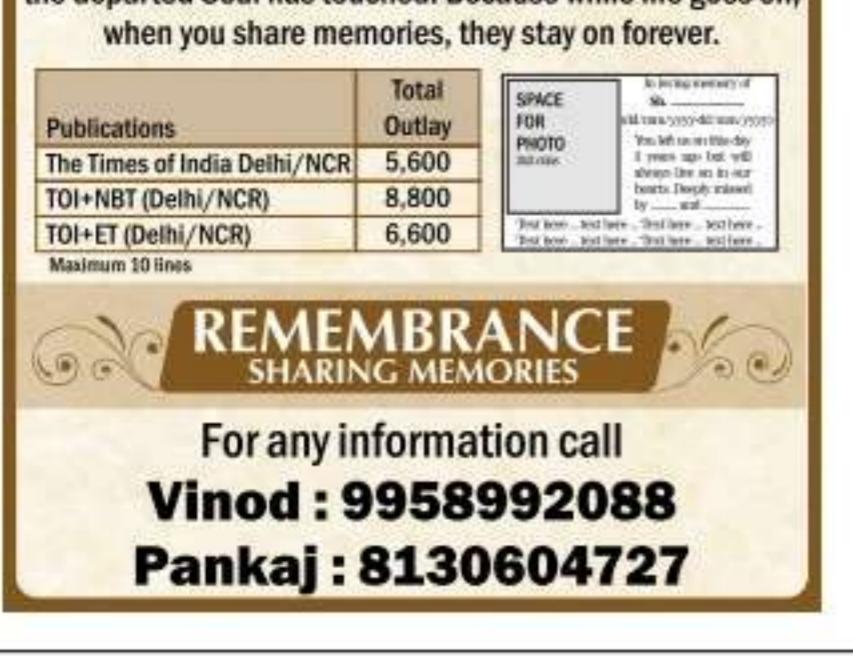
**In Loving Memory of
Sd. Avtar Singh Vedi**
(12.10.1935-21.02.2013)

Sdn. Gurmeet Kaur Singh Vedi Your unbound love, affection and blessings are always felt by us.

Your teachings will forever be engraved on our hearts and mind. May Babjee bless your souls and your spirits continue to guide us. All Family Members and Friends. (9811045089)

In loving memory of Shri Ravindra Mohan Saxena Our respectful homage to our loving and inspiring father, husband, whose ideals guide our lives. I hold you in my heart until we meet again in heaven....

Kusum, Sudhir, Ghazala, Yogesh, Shruti and Abhishek



For any information call

Vinod : 9958992088

Pankaj : 8130604727

Small fires up, count down at home in 2 yrs

Industrial Fires Increased; Carelessness, Electrical Fault, Arson Main Causes, Says DFS

Abhay@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: An analysis of fire incidents in the past two years has revealed that small fires rose by 10% in 2021, while residential fires decreased by 3.5%. Data of Delhi Fire Service (DFS) showed that in 2020 about 14,785 fire incidents were reported, while firefighters attended to 15,687 calls last year.

According to firefighters, there are mainly three reasons behind the fires—carelessness, electrical fault, and in rare cases arson—apart from the process failures.

In 2020, there were 9,512 small fire incidents and 10,592 in 2021. "There has been an increase in open burning incidents, which adversely affects the environment. This reflects behavioural changes among people. Earlier, people would douse small fires, but now they prefer to call the fire brigade," said an assistant divisional officer from DFS, adding that sometimes burning beeds



A factory in Mayapuri caught fire last year

Fire incidents		
	2020	2021
Deaths	39	59
Injured	441	434

Other incidents (road accidents, sewer deaths, drowning, etc)		
	2020	2021
Deaths	266	493
Injured	763	1,013

- 2,239 personnel involved in firefighting
- Delhi Fire Services (DFS) claimed there was an increase in cases of open burning
- In several cases, DFS found the fire was small and could have been caused by people
- Residential fire incidents dropped in 2021
- In most cases, residential buildings were being used for running small factories
- Heavy machines increased the load on wires causing a short-circuits

or cigarette stubs thrown on waste resulted in fire.

Last year, 3,506 residential fire incidents were reported and 3,633 in 2020. "The reduction in residential fires indi-

cates a decrease in activities resulting in their occurrence and decrease in electrical loads, which often leads to over-heating," an officer said.

There was an increase in

industrial fire incidents. About 367 such incidents were reported last year compared with 357 in 2020. "During the lockdown, factories were closed. The machines, which

were shut for a long period, were restarted without any servicing due to which chances of short circuit increased," said a firefighter.

Fire incidents in business areas, like offices, decreased slightly as 189 cases were reported last year compared with 206 in 2020.

There was also a decrease in fires in shops and other mercantile properties. About 604 such cases were reported last year and 674 in 2020.

There were 167 storage fire incidents reported last year compared with 165 in 2020. Similarly, 34 fire incidents were reported last year in places with a gathering of more than 50 people, like restaurants and railway stations, compared with 28 in 2020.

In educational institutes, about 42 such cases were reported in 2020 and 43 in 2021. About 40 cases were reported from hospitals, nursing homes, jail, etc last year, while 38 were reported in 2020.

DFS said improper wiring

was an important role in fire incidents. Atul Garg, DFS director, said, "People should ensure that electrical wiring of houses and offices are properly maintained. The use of multiple machines or electronic equipment increases the load on wires, which can result in fires. In most cases, we found overloading resulted in fires, so regular maintenance of wires is very important. There should not be any improper wiring."

The presence of combustible materials in factories, restaurants and pubs played an important role in the spread of fires. About 145 cases were reported from JJ clusters in 2021 and 130 in 2020.

JJ clusters have highly combustible materials, which increases the risk of fires. In several cases, slum residents were found storing huge quantities of rags, plastic bottles, etc. An electrical spark or somebody leaving a burning object near such materials can easily lead to fires," the officer said.

According to police, a crime team reached the spot. On inspection, burnt clothes and foam were found dumped near the door of a room on the first floor of the house. Upon inquiry, cops found that Allauddin, the victim's father, had put an immersion rod in water to heat it. "Allauddin repairs sofa and bed. The foam found was used for repairing sofas. The fire

24-yr-old woman got mom Witness didn't identify, 4 get killed for property, caught bail in 3 riots murder cases

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A 24-year-old woman was arrested for getting her mother killed with the help of a man in south Delhi's Ambedkar Nagar on Friday. Investigators claimed that she tried to pass off the incident as a robbery gone wrong. The other accused was also arrested.

On Friday, the PCR received a call regarding the incident after which a team rushed to the spot in Madangir. "We saw a woman lying on a bed in a pool of blood. Her throat was slit with a sharp weapon. The deceased was a BJP worker and involved in small-time finance work. In 2003, her husband was murdered. In 2007, she contested the municipal polls, but lost," said an officer.

DCP (South) Benita Mary Jaiker said, "During investigation, her daughter, who was at the spot, claimed that at 9.30pm two masked men forcefully entered the house and killed her mother during a robbery."

As the woman kept changing her statement, the cops got suspicious. The scene of the crime was inspected and no sign of struggle was found in the room. All articles were found intact. There was a deep incised wound on the deceased's neck and a lot of blood was scattered on the bedsheet. But no drop of blood was found at the spot.

When the team under inspectors Satyabir Singh and Santosh Kumar Rawat questioned the daughter repeatedly, she finally admitted that she and her boyfriend's friend killed her mother and tried to pass it off as

POLICE SAY

The accused was married to a man and they also have a four-year-old son. However, she left her husband and started to live with her boyfriend. The victim threatened to disown her from the property

robbery gone awry.

"The accused woman was married to a man from Greater Noida. They also have a four-year-old son. However, she left her husband and started to live with her boyfriend, who stays in Dakshinpuri," said the officer.

The victim was not happy and wanted her daughter to break off the relationship and start living with her husband again. "She threatened to disown her from the property. The woman was also frustrated as her mother had stopped helping her financially," the officer said.

The woman then hatched a plan to kill her mother and roped in her boyfriend's friend, who was allegedly infatuated with her. On Friday, she gave tea mixed with sleeping pills to her mother and maternal uncle Sanjay. When both of them lost consciousness, she called the man, who slit the woman's throat with a surgical blade and threw the weapon out of the window. Later, she gave her mother's jewellery and cash to the man and asked him to flee.

The court noted that keeping in mind the nature of the deposition of the witness, the special public prosecutor, appearing for police, fairly submitted that he had no objection to the bail applications.

"Considering the nature of the testimony of witness Shashi Kant, which was recorded in this case and taking into account no objection given by the SPP, the bail application is hereby allowed," it said in similar orders passed

Usha.Das@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: A Delhi has granted bail to four people in three murder cases related to the northeast Delhi riots after the sole eyewitness did not identify the accused during his deposition.

The cases relate to the alleged murder of Ashfaaq, Zakir and Mehtab, who were caught and severely beaten up by a mob during the communal violence on February 25, 2020, which ultimately led to their death.

Additional sessions judge Virender Bhat granted relief to Ashok Kumar, Jitender Kumar, Ajay and Shubham on furnishing a bail bond of Rs 10,000 with one surety of like amount each. The accused had sought bail after witness Shashi Kant did not identify them.

The court noted that keeping in mind the nature of the deposition of the witness, the special public prosecutor, appearing for police, fairly submitted that he had no objection to the bail applications.

A perusal of the postmortem report of deceased Zakir revealed that he had received as many as 22 injuries, out of which seven injuries were so grave in nature that they themselves were sufficient to cause death of any person in ordinary course of nature.

A review of the postmortem of Ashfaaq revealed that he had received 31 injuries,

out of which one injury was sufficient to cause death under ordinary circumstances. All the injuries were fresh before death. Some of the injuries were caused by a sharp-edged weapon and the rest were due to application of the blunt force.

The postmortem of Mehtab showed that he had received 11 injuries, out of which three injuries were opined to be caused by a sharp-edged sword and were so grave in nature that they themselves were sufficient to cause death of any person in ordinary course of nature.

At the stage of hearing of their earlier bail arguments, the court had noted that the eyewitness, who was a resident of the locality, had duly identified the accused allegedly indulging in rioting while one of them was carrying a sword.

Next-gen DMRC app to offer virtual mall, tourism hub

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New Delhi: Delhi Metro is going to launch a 'DMRC FuNB' mobile application, which would allow Metro users to shop from 'homegrown' stores through a virtual mall. The app would also offer other features, like information through live commentary on nearby areas that Metro train passes through, exclusive offers on services, booking cabs, etc.

A Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) official said that the organisation is creating

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24-yr-old charred to death, brother hurt in west Delhi fire

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

According to an officer, foam is a highly combustible material and it acted as a catalyst, causing the fire to spread fast

was triggered by a short circuit," an officer said.

Talim (29) and Sahil (24) were working with their father at the time of the incident. "Sahil was declared dead on arrival at the hospital. Talim was referred to Safdarjung Hospital for treatment," the officer said.

A case under sections 288 (negligent conduct with respect to pulling down or repairing buildings) and 304 A (causing death by negligence) was registered and further investigation in the case was on.

According to an officer, foam is a highly combustible material and it acted as a catalyst, causing the fire to spread fast.

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In a first in India, AIIMS uses rare op to treat fetal lung mass

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heart and lungs.

Dr Vatsala Dadhwal, professor, maternal fetal medicine division, department of gynaecology and obstetrics, said usually in some cases, shunts are inserted to drain the fluid from the lungs so that compression on the heart can be removed to prevent heart failure. But this is a temporary measure, she said.

The other option is to burn the blood vessel supplying the tumour or abnormal lung tissue under ultrasound guidance inside the womb. "This is a technically demanding procedure requiring a high level of expertise. This procedure can

be done by laser energy, which has been reported previously. The other technique which can be performed is the Radio-Frequency Ablation (RFA) that uses radiofrequency energy to ablate the vessel. We chose the latter to operate on the fetus as the vessel supplying blood to the tumour was quite big," Dr Dadhwal said.

"Till date, the use of RFA for such a condition has been reported previously only in three cases of which only one baby has survived. Ours is the second successful case in the world," the AIIMS professor said. "Ours is the first case of the same from India," she added.

AIIMS performed the surgery on December 23. The baby was delivered on February 5. "The day following the procedure,

me of birth, the tumour had completely disappeared. The baby was discharged in a healthy condition," she added.

A 27-week fetus suffering from bronchopulmonary sequestration had a large lung mass that was causing a massive collection of fluid in the chest. The doctors chose to burn the blood vessel that was supplying the tumour or abnormal lung tissue under ultrasound guidance inside the womb

the fluid started decreasing. It disappeared completely by day seven and the lungs also expanded," Dr Dadhwal explained. She further said that by the ti-

The AIIMS doctors said parents should be aware that many conditions of the fetus are amenable to treatment inside the womb. There are others

wherein some temporary interventions can be done inside the womb and definitive management after birth so that the baby can survive in the womb till delivery. This knowledge should be used both by patients and the general physicians to refer patients to fetal medicine centres like AIIMS, New Delhi in time for possible treatment, they said.

The division of fetal medicine, AIIMS has been in existence since the 1980s and has been the first centre in the country to provide fetal interventions, both diagnostic and therapeutic.

AIIMS, New Delhi has been

the first centre to start fetal blood transfusions in the country having performed more than 1,500 procedures so far. "We are probably performing the maximum number of such procedures in the world presently. In the last 10 years, we have started and perfected the procedures for managing complicated twin pregnancies that need treatment inside the womb using laser and radiofrequency ablation. We have also got experience of inserting shunts for draining fluids from bladder or the lungs and managing various fetal heart rate abnormalities inside the womb," Dr Dadhwal said.

Former cop DERC's new ombudsman

New Delhi: The capital's power regulator DERC has appointed Delhi Police's former special commissioner Pardeep Kumar Bhardwaj as its ombudsman to examine grievances of the city's electricity consumers.

A 1987-batch IPS officer of the AGMUT cadre, Bhardwaj had earlier held several prestigious posts in the central government and had retired as a special commissioner of Delhi Police.

He was administered the oath of office by the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission Chairman Justice (Retd) Shabihul Hasan earlier this week, said a DERC statement.

The institution of the Electricity Ombudsman was established by the Commission under the provisions of Sections 42(5) and 42(6) of the Electricity Act, 2003 and the DERC (Forum for redressal of grievances of the consumers and ombudsman) Regulations, 2018.

Four consumer grievances redressal forum (CGRF), one each for consumers of discoms BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd (BRPL), BSES Yamuna Power Ltd (BYPL), Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd (TPDDL) and New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) have been functioning since 2004.

Any aggrieved electricity consumer may approach the appropriate forum seeking redressal of his grievance related to metering, billing, grant of a new connection, disconnection, reconnection, change of name of the registered consumer.

But these forums cannot be moved in matters related to the unauthorised use or theft of electricity and meter tampering among others. PTI

'Defence consultant' in net for duping bizmen of crores

Lured Them With Promise Of Securing Supply Tenders

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



CAUGHT: K Venkata Krishna Murthi

consultancy fees. He promised to return the consultancy fees if his entity failed to arrange any orders within six months and gave post-dated cheques as security," said Sharma.

A team led by DCP K Ramesh learnt that Murthi used to execute consultancy and fees protection agreements with the victims to win their trust. They then seized the original consultancy and fees protection agreements. The details of bank accounts of the victims were obtained and payments made by them authenticated. The bank accounts of the accused were then frozen.

The

accused

had hired several salaried executives to entice more companies through social media platforms.

A notice was issued to Murthi, but instead of joining the investigation he left Delhi. He had also opened offices in other states, including one in Mumbai.

He frequently changed his whereabouts to avoid being arrested. He was tracked down to Dehradun using technical surveillance.

Living in fear, guilty roam free, Paradiso residents say at protest

Akanksha.Gupta@timesgroup.com



an incident could have been averted.

According to residents, to date, no one from the Chintels' management has reached out to them. "Our fellow residents of D tower have been displaced from their homes, and the residents of other towers have been living in a state of fear and anguish in an unsafe environment. The rubbles from the collapse are yet to be removed and are a constant reminder of the horrifying incident of February 10," Sanjay Sugah, a resident of F block of the condo, said.

Two separate FIRs have been registered in the incident till now.

Meanwhile, a group of residents also met chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar and were assured that strict action would be taken against all responsible. On February 14, the CM had directed the state government's town and country planning department (DTCP) to identify all residential buildings where RWAs report structural damage and initiate safety audits.

The developer said that in case of any defect, the owner of the flat would be given an alternative accommodation till the repair work was over. The developer will also reimburse the affected flat owners who are willing to stay in the society. District town planner (enforcement) RS Bath said the developer would be asked to deposit the amount with the district administration.

"The company will not be allowed to pay directly to the auditor. It will have to be done through a government agency," he added.

'No sale registration for Chintels projects'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

India Pvt Ltd," the letter read.

Apart from Paradiso, the other projects of the developer include Chintels Serenity, Chintels Corporate Park, Sobha City, International City and ATS Cocoon. All these projects are off the Dwarka Expressway.

Will bear structural audit cost, ready to reimburse: The developer of Chintels Paradiso will bear the cost of structural audit of residential towers in the society, a spokesperson for the company said on Sunday.

On February 14, the town and country planning department had written to the director of IIT-Delhi for conducting an audit of the buildings at Paradiso, where a vertical collapse of five living rooms led to the deaths of two residents on February

10. Apart from ascertaining the reason behind the cave-in, the district administration had also sought the IIT's advice on whether the towers were safe to live in or not and if the defects were repairable. There was, however, uncertainty over who would bear the cost of the audit.

In a statement on Sunday, the developer said that in case of any defect, the owner of the flat would be given an alternative accommodation till the repair work was over. The developer will also reimburse the affected flat owners who are willing to stay in the society. District town planner (enforcement) RS Bath said the developer would be asked to deposit the amount with the district administration.

"The company will not be allowed to pay directly to the auditor. It will have to be done through a government agency," he added.

Green View to be given to NBCC by March 1

Gurgaon: Deputy commissioner Nishant Yadav has appointed district town planner (enforcement) RS Bath as the nodal officer and duty magistrate to supervise the entire process of NBCC Green View's handing over to the developer for carrying out repair work at the society.

Yadav's order said, "As the nodal officer, Bath will supervise handing over of the project to the developer by March 1."

Yadav also said if need arises, the nodal officer can seek police assistance to execute the order, and in case any person acts against the directive, the department will initiate proceedings under Section 188 of IPC, sections 51-60 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and other legal provisions.

Bath told TOI that officials will try to get the flats vacated amicably without using any force or causing any inconvenience to the residents. "We held a meeting with families in Green View and explained to them about the situation. A team will again visit the society on Monday," he said. TNN

Adventures in Gadgetland

CITY CITY BANG BANG

SANTOSH DESAI



In the 70s, when we first bought a tape recorder, those little boxes with a few buttons, one of them red, their role was largely to record the sound of our own voices. The idea that music could be played back on it never really occurred to us, at least not in the beginning. The wonder of listening to our own voices, trapped in a little box for eternity, was by itself enough. The earliest recordings were of our performances — a poem, a joke, some funny *shayaris*, a song punctuated with large gulps of air between the words and some very laboured and self-conscious conversation. Hearing ourselves revealed something hitherto hidden to us — the pitch, the timbre, the sound of the laugh, the squeals of delight — all felt like an out-of-body experience. We could listen to, and inflict on others, what in retrospect were thoroughly unentertaining snippets of silliness over and over again.

It was the experience of capturing a sense of our living selves, as against photographs that immortalised us by freezing our existence, that was exhilarating. To a generation that associated recorded voices only with the famous or the truly talented, the idea of hearing one's own voice coming out of a gadget felt a little miraculous. It is strange how that specific need of self-recognition seems to have disappeared or more likely dissolved into video recordings of the self.

The first impression that a new gadget made in those constrained times often had nothing to do with its eventual function. In the case of the tape recorder, it had also to do with the fact that in its earliest days, there were no pre-coded cassettes that were easily available, so the act of recording music was a painful song-by-song effort, which involved connecting a tinny tape-recorder to an even tinnier transistor. However, in the case of the refrigerator, it was because the wonder lay elsewhere.

When the first refrigerator came, ice

was magic. Cold water was great too, but ice cubes, the unlikely junction of winter and geometry, were mesmerising. The first few days were spent crunching ice loudly, for where else did one access an unlimited supply of this delightful but occasional form of water? The fridge's main function — that of preserving food — was of little interest. In fact, even today, in many parts of India, the preference for fresh food is so strong that the fridge is little more than a cupboard that makes ice and keeps water cold.

But the 70s and 80s were times when gadgets were monuments. Imposing, sacred, to be approached with the greatest reverence and not a little fear. They were installations that exuded mystery and

The gadget was part of the act of establishing one's world. Bit by bit, we crystallised our existence by filling out our homes. The function these gadgets served was important, but even more important was their value as objects to be owned

needed to be dealt with only by Important People, namely the men of the house. We never had a record player and had access to it only when we went to an uncle's house. No religious rite has been carried out with greater ceremony; the Japanese tea ritual is a quick act compared with the fastidious and highly elaborate regimen for playing music on the gramophone, as it was then called. It involved first removing the ornate cover from the stereo system, carefully selecting a disc from a neatly stacked pile of options, wiping the cover of the album, slowly, really slowly extracting the record from the sleeve, caressing it clean with the merest whisper of a cloth, placing it with adoring care in its slot, lifting the needle as gingerly as if were a vial of toxic plutonium, waiting purposefully just for the heck of it before finally uniting the needle with its destined groove, and letting the music flow.

Small increments in functionality

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DU to give 1.7 lakh degrees digitally at 98th convocation

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi University (DU) is set to hold its 98th convocation on Saturday, where it will give digital degrees to nearly 1.73 lakh students.

Senior officials said that the graduates would also receive the printed degrees within a month of the convocation.

"On the day of the convocation, we will release the digital degrees and all students who completed their respective courses in 2021 will be receiving emails for the same. We have sent all the data for printing the hard copies already," said DS Rawat, DU's dean of examinations.

"We should receive the same by the second week of March, after which individual verification of the degrees will occur. Once this is done, the degrees will be sent to the respective colleges and students can collect the same," he said.

The varsity's move to issue

650
STUDENTS TO BE
AWARDED WITH
PHD DEGREES
THIS YEAR, SAID
OFFICIALS

printed degrees to graduates is aimed at reducing woes faced by students as it takes at least a couple of years to get the degrees after graduation.

According to data shared by varsity officials, over 77,500 undergraduate and post-graduate students will be receiving their degrees this year. Over 91,800 undergraduate and 1126 post-graduate students from the School of Open Learning will get their degrees in the next two months. Officials added that 650 PhD students would also be awarded their degrees this year.

"Earlier data was collected through colleges and it ended up being a time-consuming process," Rawat said.

"But this year, we are nearly ready with the degrees as we collected the data directly through the new examination form. Hence, the mark sheet and admit card data was ready and could be sent for printing," he explained.

IIT hopes to create drug molecules to treat Alzheimer's

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Researchers at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi have designed and demonstrated a new strategy for developing potential drug molecules that can be used for treating various diseases like encephalitis and protein aggregation diseases such as Alzheimer's.

IIT SAYS
Molecules have shapes just like objects. Designing and synthesising molecules with diverse shapes is an art in itself

Presently, computer-aided rational drug discovery is utilised to find target molecules for a particular protein target and it takes a considerable amount of time, according to IIT.

"Drugs are mostly organic molecules that interact with molecules present in the human body. The molecules in the body are bigger in size and are typically called macromolecules. The researchers have come up with a chemical strategy ba-

sed on the macromolecular mimicry. Molecules have shapes just like objects. Designing and synthesising molecules with diverse shapes is an art in itself. Mimicking the macromolecular interface by uniquely shaped small molecules is an approach adopted by the research group," the institute said.

Professor V Haridas of IIT Delhi's chemistry department collaborated with virologist professor Guruprasad Medigeshi of Translational Health Science and Technology Institute and biochemist professor Bishwajit Kundu of Kusuma School of Biological Sciences, IIT Delhi, for the research work.

"The tools of organic chemistry and biophysics were utilised to design molecules that target protein interface. We used this strategy to design drug molecules, which could be useful for treatment of Japanese Encephalitis Virus (JEV), the main cause for viral encephalitis in Southeast Asian countries and protein aggregation diseases such as Alzheimer's. We have also patented the JEV inhibitor drug molecule," the professor said.

Investor expo to be held for Business Blasters: Govt

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

DU, JNU vice-chancellors meet, discuss implementation of NEP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The vice-chancellors of Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University have held discussions on the New Education Policy (NEP).

In a tweet Sunday, JNU said

"that among other things, "the heads of the two leading universities discussed strategies to accelerate the implementation process of NEP."

Speaking to TOI, DU VC Yogesh Singh said that while

his meeting with Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, the vice-chancellor of JNU, was a courtesy call, there were discussions on the policy.

"We did discuss the NEP

implementation but frameworks for DU and JNU will be quite different. JNU primarily has post-graduate courses and not many bachelor's courses. For DU, on the other hand, the framework is only for undergraduate courses. For PG courses, we will be discussing and debating the framework only

after a year or two when the requirement arises," Singh said.

DU will be implementing the NEP 2020 from the upcoming academic session where a four-year undergraduate programme will be offered to students. According to the framework to be adopted by DU, students with a three-year undergraduate course can pursue a two-year PG degree while those with a four-year PG course will be able to complete their master's programme in a year.

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* THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2022

GOVT WORKING TO MAKE ARUNACHAL A MAJOR GATEWAY TO SOUTHEAST ASIA, SAYS PM MODI

MEHBOOBA URGES PEOPLE TO VOTE FOR GUPKAR ALLIANCE TO DEFEAT BJP IN NEXT J&K POLLS

Wanted: A super vaccine that fights all coronavirus variants

Variants have made last year's vaccines less effective, and new coronaviruses that start new pandemics might be on the horizon. It's time for a vaccine that can fight them all

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Death visited every neighbourhood in last summer's Delta wave, but it was a time of low vaccination. Omicron's sweep across the country in December and January was unexpected though. While the death toll remained low, it showed that lasting "immunity" from Covid is probably unachievable. Not with two vaccine doses, not even with three or four.

In Israel, health workers got infected even after taking two booster shots. A Financial Times report says: "A fourth dose of the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine was largely ineffective in stopping Omicron infections despite increasing antibodies."

In a way, vaccine makers acknowledge this reality while recommending more booster shots. But from the public's point of view, boosters are inconvenient, expensive and, perhaps, impractical. Never before have governments run adult immunisation programmes. So, a Covid strategy based on yearly vaccination is unlikely to succeed. But if we could have a vaccine that takes care of not only Covid's variants but also new coronaviruses that emerge in the future, it could be a game changer.

Need For Universal Vaccine

In December, American disease expert Anthony Fauci and two of his colleagues made a case for a universal vaccine in the New England Journal of Medicine. They said Covid is unlikely to go away, and existing vaccines won't be able to stop the rise of its new variants. At the same time new coronaviruses could escape from the wild to start new pandemics. Therefore, scientists need to find a universal coronavirus vaccine urgently.

A recent article in Nature also calls for making "variant-proof" vaccines because the "protection offered by a booster dose is transient and will wane with time". It says we need vaccines that prevent infection as much as severe disease.

Work In Progress

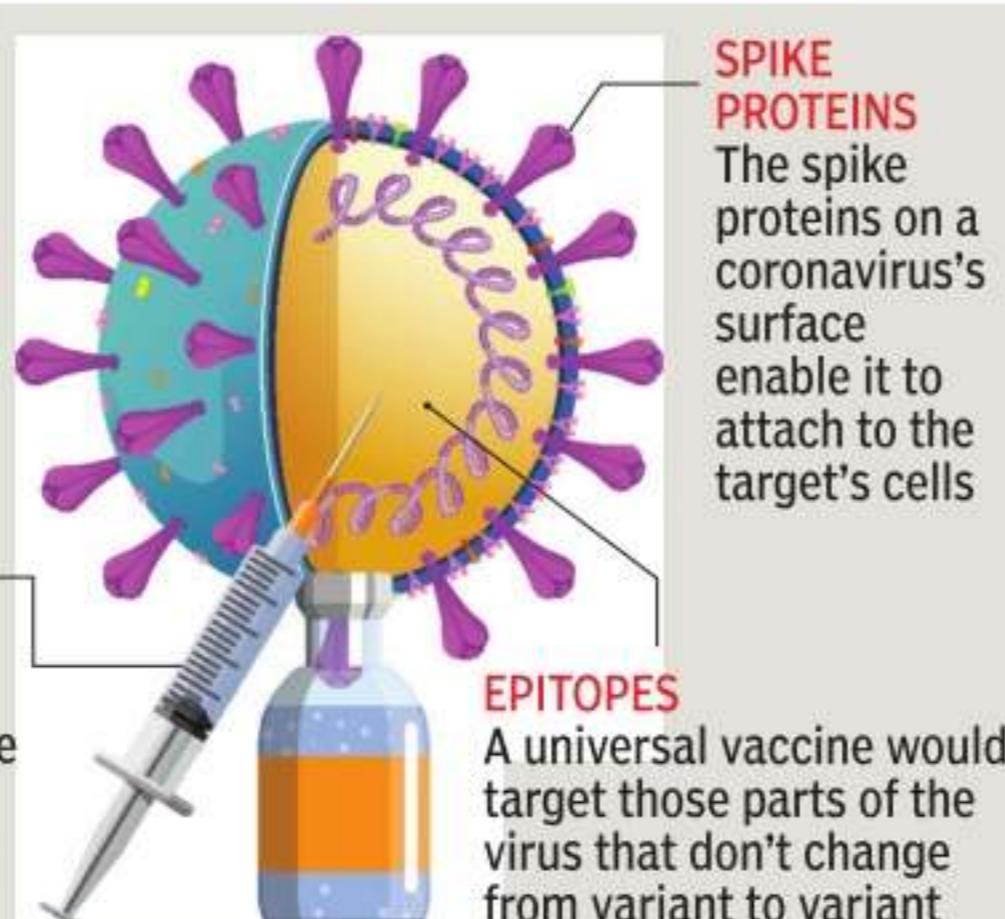
The idea of a universal vaccine is not new. Scientists have been trying to make a universal flu shot for over 10 years. Clinical trials of a candidate vaccine started in 2019, but it's not approved for the market so far.

Fauci and other experts admit a universal vaccine for Covid variants and future coronaviruses won't materialise anytime soon. Unlike the current crop

SHIFTING TARGETS

VACCINES

Existing coronavirus vaccines train the immune system to neutralise the spike proteins. But the spike mutates, so vaccines become less effective as new variants arise



SPIKE PROTEINS

The spike proteins on a coronavirus's surface enable it to attach to the target's cells

EPITOPES

A universal vaccine would target those parts of the virus that don't change from variant to variant

of Covid vaccines where "we knew what the target was: it was there, it was right in front of us," he says in the FT article, a universal vaccine will be targeted at genetic sequences that are not known.

But new research shows making such a vaccine is possible. So far, all coronavirus vaccines have targeted the virus's spike protein, which is prone to mutation. Between the original 'Wuhan' virus – on which all vaccines are based – and Omicron there are at least 30 differences in the spike alone. Which explains the diminishing efficacy of vaccines.

So, for a universal vaccine scientists are aiming at those parts of the virus that do not change from variant to variant. If the immune system could be trained to recognise these "conserved" parts, also known as "epitopes" – a vaccine targeting a range of coronaviruses would be possible.

And a few such vaccines are already under development. The US military's Walter Reed Army Institute of Research is awaiting phase-I results of its pan-coronavirus vaccine candidate. FT mentions another potential universal vaccine being developed by the firm DIOSynVax.

Massachusetts-based VBI Vaccines has taken a different approach. Instead of identifying the stable virus parts or epitopes, it has placed the spike proteins of three different coronaviruses that cause SARS, MERS and Covid on particles that resemble a virus and induce the immune system to react. Will these vaccines free us from the need for yearly boosters? It's too early to say. Some experts think lifelong immunity

Source: Media reports

A SHOT OF HOPE

might not be possible even with a "universal" shot. But protection for even 5 or 10 years would be a huge improvement.

Looking Beyond Coronaviruses

Other scientists have been trying to find a way to boost immunity against not just coronaviruses but all types of pathogens. The New Yorker describes it as "broad spectrum" immunity.

They have known for years that vaccines for one disease sometimes improve immunity against other diseases also. For example, in the Soviet Union people were given the oral polio vaccine every year as protection against flu. Data also shows babies given the BCG shot against TB at birth have a 75% lower risk of death in early life. And countries with higher BCG coverage appear to have lower Covid mortality rates too.

Scientists have also observed that vaccines containing a live, weakened germ – such as BCG, OPV and the MV vaccine for measles – produce stronger overall immunity than vaccines containing just a part of the germ.

The New Yorker says, "In theory, we could use a preexisting vaccine to protect against a new virus while more specific vaccines are still being developed."

This approach could reduce the initial severity of a new pandemic. While researchers develop a disease-specific vaccine, an "immunity booster" shot of some other vaccine could keep the death toll down and make lockdowns and other disruptions unnecessary.

"It wouldn't halt a virus's progression, but it might slow it, and perhaps spare the most vulnerable some of the worst effects," the New Yorker says.

Source: Media reports

Pak arrests 31 fishermen, seizes 5 vessels

Islamabad: Pakistan's maritime authorities have arrested 31 Indian fishermen and seized five of their vessels for allegedly fishing in the country's territorial waters, officials said on Sunday.

The Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) said that it apprehended the intruding vessels on Friday during patrolling in the Pakistan Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

The PMSA said that one of its "ship apprehended five Indian fishing boats along with 31 crew."

The boats were towed to Karachi for further legal proceedings as per Pakistani Law and UN Convention on Law of the Sea, it said.

Pakistan and India regularly arrest fishermen from either side for violating the maritime boundary which is poorly marked at some points.

Fishermen from Pakistan and India usually end up in jails after they are arrested for fishing illegally in each other's territorial waters. □

PIB new accreditation norms vague, arbitrary: Editors Guild

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The Editors Guild of India said the Press Information Bureau should undertake a meaningful consultation with all stakeholders to come up with revised guidelines

cessing and reporting from the headquarters of Government of India," EGI said in a statement.

It also referred to as "arbitrary" and "manifestly vague and subjective", the provisions of the guidelines and objected to journalists being denied an opportunity to be heard before their accreditation is cancelled.

"Most surprisingly, 'defamation' has been included as a ground for cancellation," the EGI said.

A new clause requiring police verification added

without defining the contours of such verification, the Editors Guild of India said can grant unfettered powers to the police for denying accreditation to journalists who seen as critical of the government, since no standards have been prescribed.

"It is clear that these vague, arbitrary, and draconian clauses have been included with an intent to restrict any critical and investigative reporting of government affairs," it said adding that guidelines were introduced without any prior consultation with journalists' bodies, media organisations or any other relevant stakeholders.

"The Guild therefore demands a withdrawal of these guidelines and urges the PIB to undertake meaningful consultation with all the stakeholders if it is intent on revising them," the Editors Guild of India said.

Shabana, who is fond of singing, told TOI she was encouraged to take up medicine by the orphanage trustees, who ensured she was never deprived of adequate study material. She had attempted NEET two years ago too, but wasn't satisfied with her scores. So she re-attempted the test last year, and got a place in an Autangabad college.

"I don't remember my biological family who left me and my brother to fend for ourselves. Instead of looking back and pitying myself for that, I focussed on creating a better

future for myself and the orphanage, which is now my family and has supported me throughout. My friends here are proud of me. They have always helped me with routine chores so that I could focus on my studies. Because of them, I could study for eight to ten hours at a stretch, daily, and prepare for the medical entrance exam," said Shabana, who wants to specialise in gynaecology and serve society.

Social activists say the girl has set an example for others to emulate as many facing a similar situation in life often tend to lose hope and waiver from their ambitions.

Shabana's achievement has drawn the attention of Thane collector Rajesh Narvekar, who recently felicitated her and assured assistance, whenever required.



SETTING AN EXAMPLE: Shabana was brought to an orphanage in Badlapur. Though the girl had initially clammed up, keeping to herself and not speaking to anyone, the staff could see that she was clever, outshining the other children her age in assigned educational tasks. But little did they think that the child would do the institution proud one day. "Shabana always showed exemplary performance at studies. Later on, we encouraged

her to pursue any field of her choice. She always said she wanted to be a doctor. Little did we realise that one day she would surprise us all," said Padma Gudhe, superintendent at Bombay Teen Chalenge orphanage.

Shabana, who is fond of singing, told TOI she was encouraged to take up medicine by the orphanage trustees, who ensured she was never deprived of adequate study material. She had attempted NEET two years ago too, but wasn't satisfied with her scores. So she re-attempted the test last year, and got a place in an Autangabad college.

"I don't remember my biological family who left me and my brother to fend for ourselves. Instead of looking back and pitying myself for that, I focussed on creating a better

Girl from orphanage clears NEET

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Thane: Someone who is abandoned by her family at four, along with a year-old kid brother, and reared at an orphanage would elicit pity perhaps even years later. Not much would be expected of such a child, given how cruel fate was to her. But meet Shabana Shaikh, who has set an example for many others like her. Now 22 years old, the feisty girl didn't allow circumstances to dampen her spirits, and recently secured a seat in a medical college after clearing the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test, or NEET, thus achieving the first step towards realising her dream of becoming a doctor.

Shabana was found with her brother at a Mumbai hospital around 18 years ago and



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Set up dedicated green body on lines of GST council: States

'Move Will Aid India Achieve Climate Goals'

Vishwa.Mohan@timesgroup.com



Kameng river flows through Dirang valley in Arunachal Pradesh. The state, along with Meghalaya, forms the biggest carbon sinks in India

New Delhi: With experts demanding a separate body to deal with issues linked climate change for long, states have proposed setting up a dedicated 'environmental council' like GST council to implement India's climate action at all levels.

Although the Centre has an apex committee, comprising members from 13 key ministries, to coordinate actions for achieving India's climate goal under the Paris Agreement, the idea to have a separate council came up during the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) where state representatives, including ministers, proposed having such an independent body for more focused action.

They pointed out that the implementation aspects of cli-

mate action, be it mitigation, adaptation and resilience, often falls on the state governments and therefore there should be a dedicated body composed of representatives from the Central and the states/Union Territories (UTs).

"On the lines of the GST Council, if we have the environment and forest ministers of all states along with the Union minister of environment in a council, I think that is where we can set targets and policies at the national level and implement at the state level," said Aaditya Thackeray.

At the session, moderated by TERI director general, Vib-

ha Dhawan, the ministers highlighted the need for newer measures and yardsticks to assess and tackle climate change related impacts. Emphasising the crucial role of sub-national governance to tackle climate change, James K Sangma, environment and forest minister of Meghalaya, said, "The need of the hour is to have a concerted effort where all the states come together, put aside their differences and work collectively."

Pointing out that Meghalaya along with Arunachal form the biggest carbon sinks crucial for India to honour the commitments made under the Paris Agreement, Sangma also put forth the need for the north-eastern region to be a unique green laboratory. Meghalaya aspires to be a leader to create a green bloc coalition to find solutions to fast depleting natural assets," he said.

Echoing Thackeray's suggestion, Palanivel Thiagarajan, finance minister of Tamil Nadu, said, "While policies are framed at the national level, bulk of the work is to be done at these levels."

Groom, 8 others killed as SUV falls into river in Rajasthan

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kota: Nine persons, including a bridegroom and his brother, were killed on Sunday after their SUV fell into the Chambal river from a bridge in Rajasthan's Kota city early Sunday morning. The groom, 23-year-old Avinash Valmiki who was to wed Saturday evening, was travelling with his friends and relatives in the SUV, while other members of the wedding party were in a bus. The wedding procession was from Chauthka Barwada in Sawai Madhopur and was on its way to Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh.

The driver is believed to have taken the lower bridge not open to traffic instead of the main bridge out of confusion.

The fatal fall claimed the lives of all the occupants.

The other deceased include Avinash's 30-year-old brother Keshav and driver 35-year-old Islam Khan.

Cop falls off terrace ahead of marriage, killed

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Muzaffarnagar (UP): A 30-year-old Delhi Police constable died after allegedly falling off the terrace of his house in a village here on Sunday, police said. The incident took place when Anuj Kumar was talking on his phone at home in Kutbi village before leaving for his marriage ceremony in Loni, Ghaziabad, they said.

The body was sent for a post-mortem examination, the police said.

Meanwhile, two bodies were found in separate places on the railway tracks at Khatali in the district, police officials said. One of the victims was identified as Ramesh Chand Saini. The bodies were sent for post-mortem examination, they said. □

remove the governor in case of violation of the Constitution, lapses in duty of the chancellor or in taking criminal prosecution procedures.

"...as far as the governor is concerned, in addition to constitutional functions, he is entrusted with certain statutory functions such as chancellor of universities. Therefore specific grounds such as violation of Constitution or failure of discharge of his functions should be incorporated in Article 156," says the note titled "final views of the state of Kerala" approved by the cabinet.

The government has recommended that the state legislature should be empowered to

sions, with the latest being that of him accusing the government of trying to "control" the Raj Bhavan. He has raised charges against the government on appointment of ministers' personal staff and said such staff are not entitled to pension benefits anywhere in the country. He had locked horns with the government on appointments in universities and the Lok Ayukta Act amendment earlier. The note says, "Article 155 need an amendment in such a way that the governor of a state shall be appointed by the President in consultation with the state concerned and the appointment shall be effected from a panel furnished by the state."

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Khan had run into serious differences of opinion with the government on many occasions, with the latest being that of him accusing the government of trying to "control" the Raj Bhavan. He has raised charges against the government on appointment of ministers' personal staff and said such staff are not entitled to pension benefits anywhere in the country. He had locked horns with the government on appointments in universities and the Lok Ayukta Act amendment earlier. The note says, "Article 155 need an amendment in such a way that the governor of a state shall be appointed by the President in consultation with the state concerned and the appointment shall be effected from a panel furnished by the state."

On Saturday, Thane excise inspector Satyawan Shankar Gogawale submitted a complaint to Kopri police, following which an offence was registered against Wankhede under the Indian Penal Code sections 181 (false statement on oath before a public servant), 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by a public servant), 420 (cheating), 465 (punishment for forgery), 468 (forgery for the purpose of cheating) and 471 (using a forged document).

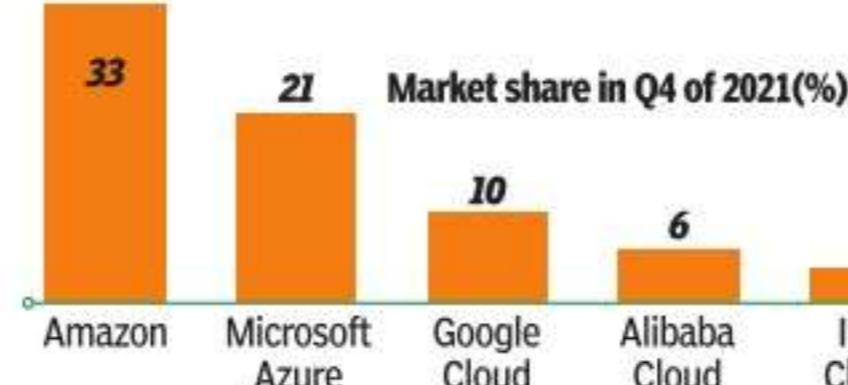
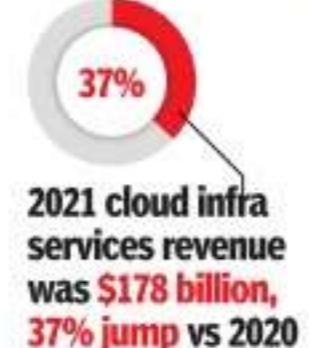
Wankhede, who was on deputation with NCB, was repatriated to his parent department, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, on completion of tenure in January.

FIR against Wankhede over bar licence

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In Q4 2021, global cloud infrastructure service revenues surpassed \$50 billion for the first time, bringing the industry total for the year to \$178 billion. Amazon and Microsoft accounted for more than half in the final three months of 2021, with the eight largest providers controlling roughly 80% of the market. Amazon's slice in the worldwide cloud infrastructure pie amounted to 33% in Q4 of 2021, still exceeding the combined market share of its two largest competitors, Microsoft and Google.



(Source: Synergy Research Group)

Statutory auditors may not get large cos' non-audit ops

Govt Explores Possibility Of Joint Audit For Some Entities

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New Delhi: The government is looking to ban statutory auditors from taking up non-audit work on "public interest" companies — which means those that are listed or are above a certain threshold — and their subsidiaries.

Besides, it is exploring the possibility of joint audit for certain companies as part of the amendments to the Companies Act, for which a Bill is planned to be introduced during the Budget session of Parliament that reconvenes next month, sources told **TOI**.

The ministry of corporate affairs (MCA), which will pilot the Bill, is currently engaged in consultations and is yet to decide the final details of the legislation, which will also need inter-ministerial discussion and a go-ahead from the Union Cabinet.

While both the issues — joint audit and ban on non-audit work by audit firms — have been discussed in the past, the government has been reluc-

PUBLIC INTEREST COMPANIES	
Listed 5,563	Unlisted 1,156
Banks 83	Insurance companies 18
Both issues — Joint audit and ban on non-audit work by audit firms — were discussed earlier	Government has been reluctant to legislate due to opposition from CAS
Moving forward will come as a setback for Big Four firms, including Deloitte, EY, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers, and also for some large Indian players	Source: NFRA

tant to legislate on the issue principally due to opposition from chartered accountants, a powerful interest group.

The move will come as a setback for not just the Big Four firms, including Deloitte, EY, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers, that operate through a network of firms, but also for some of the large Indian players. Sources indicated that the plan is to restrict it to "public interest". Companies will be modelled on the lines of the regime under the National Financial Reporting Agency (NFRA), which supervises the functioning of 6,820 companies and their auditors and audit firms. On Friday, the agency said that all listed companies, as well as unlisted companies with paid-up capital of over Rs 500 crore, or turnover of over Rs 1,000 crore or with debt and deposits of Rs 500 crore or more are under its ambit. In addition, insurance companies, banks, power generation and distribution companies and those governed by special laws are monitored by NFRA.

The fresh discussions around the ban on non-audit work follows the experience with several entities that have faced a crisis in recent years, including IL&FS, and some of the troubled banks and non-banking finance companies, where the role of auditors has come under scrutiny.

Similarly, on the issue of joint audit, MCA had almost dropped the plan after a report by a committee under former finance secretary Ashok Chawla, but has re-opened the issue, despite protests from industry chambers and other interest groups that fear that the cost will rise significantly.

If RBI's experience in dealing with tighter regulations for auditors is anything to go by, the government will face a volley of protest. Last year, the RBI had mandated a three-year term for auditors, a mandatory cooling off and checks on non-audit activities for banks, finance companies and mortgage players.

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Insurtech co Coverfox turns around, eyes 3x biz in FY23

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Mumbai: Online insurance distributor Coverfox, which is now controlled by private equity investors led by Avaan Capital after the exit of its founders, has recouped revenues and slashed its burn rate by 90%. The company has almost halved monthly expenditure and is pursuing a strategy of embedding its insurtech with partners to gain market share.

Coverfox faced an existential crisis two years ago when the founders of the company — CEO Premanshu Singh and its chief technology officer Devendra Rane — quit weeks before the country went into a lockdown in March 2020.

"We started this year with monthly revenues of Rs 1 crore, but we are ending it with Rs 7.5 crore. It took 21 months to get the revenue back to where it was and reduce the burn from Rs 8 crore a month to Rs 70-80 lakh," said Coverfox CEO San-

Delhi stadium added to asset monetisation list

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New Delhi: The government will soon appoint a transaction adviser for the asset monetisation of the capital's Jawaharlal Nehru (JLN) Stadium and the Indira Gandhi Sports complex has been added to the list, after resolving the security and other related issues.

Sources said once the transaction adviser is in place for JLN Stadium, the process of rolling out bids would be stepped up and could spill into the next financial year. They said that security and other issues linked to the monetisation of the Indira Gandhi Sports complex have been resolved and the process would be rolled out as well.

The Indira Gandhi Stadium, along with two regional centres at Zirakpur and

TO GATHER PACE	
The total value of assets considered for monetisation by the sports ministry is estimated at ₹11,450 crore for FY2022-2023	
FY 2022 ₹1,650 cr	
FY 2023 ₹2,100 cr	
FY 2024 ₹3,200 cr	
FY 2025 ₹4,500 cr	

Source: NMP, Nitin Aayog

bly. However, the sources said these concerns have been resolved. Under the national asset monetisation pipeline, the sports ministry has a target of raising Rs 1,650 crore in the fiscal year 2022.

Sources said under the proposed national monetisation pipeline (NMP), the surplus land at JLN stadium could be used for setting up a shopping mall, offices and hostels, among other facilities. The NMP announced last year had said JLN Stadium is expected to be a pioneer in creating a financially sustainable sporting model in India through an OMDA-operation management and development agreement-based PPP concession agreement for integrated development, with shared usage of sports facilities.

The target under the NMP for the current year is estimated at Rs 88,000 crore.

3 Guj highway stretches may be lined up for sale

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New Delhi: The government may look to add three highway stretches from Gujarat to the asset monetisation pipeline after they were handed back to the National Highways Authority of India after end of the 15-year concession period.

The Centre's target to mop up Rs 45,000 crore from monetisation of highway projects is expected to get a boost during the next financial year as the roads are high toll earners, sources told **TOI**.

The three projects in Gujarat, with a cumulative length of 377 km, can be monetised to generate Rs 18,000-20,000 crore, the sour-

ces said. The current toll revenue of these six-laned highway projects — Vadodara-Baruch, Baruch-Surat and Surat-Dahisar — is around Rs 1,700 crore. The NHAI has been monetising projects for 20 years to get upfront payment from successful bidders.

TOTAL 377KM

These were among the first few projects, which were bid out by the NHAI under the build, operate and transfer (BOT-Toll) model of public-private-partnership (PPP). The first stretch had gone to Larsen & Toubro (L&T) and it had made upfront one-time payment of around Rs 475 crore and the other two projects were

bagged by the IRB — one with payment and another on revenue-sharing model.

"We have amicably completed the process of getting back the projects with no claims or counter-claims. This is also a successful example of how BOT-Toll projects can be managed well, protecting interests of the government agency and private players. These are completed operational projects and the tolling has stabilised over years," said an official.

He added that this is also the first case where an entire corridor will be back to NHAI at the end of the stipulated concession (contract) period after settling all issues amicably.

IT cos hire record no. of freshers

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Chennai: A combination of increased digitisation projects and rising attrition at the mid and senior level at IT companies is bringing record job opportunities for fresher engineering talent. With most IT firms looking to pay premium for specialised skills, the average pay for freshers has also gone up across campuses.

IT companies including TCS, Infosys, Wipro, Cognizant, HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra, Accenture and Capgemini have already added over 2.3 lakh new graduate talent in fiscal year 2022 — a record figure — and have conveyed plans

to expand their fresher hiring programmes in fiscal 2023, industry estimates show.

Research firm UearthInsight estimated in a recent report that, by the end of fiscal 2022, the fresher additions at the top IT services firms will stand at 3.5-3.6 lakh, with proportion of fresher talent in these firms at the 14-18% mark. "The IT industry

growth outlook remains intact, despite the pandemic and this financial year, the industry is likely to achieve best ever revenue growth and will continue to add workforce according to the estimates," UearthInsight founder & CEO Gaurav Vasu said.

Sriram Rajagopal, managing partner at talent sourcing firm Diamondpick, said engineering graduates are likely to have more than one job option to choose from if they do their part right. "We've hired almost more than 8,000 people from tier-2 centres in the last couple of quarters," Tech Mahindra chief people officer Harshavendra Soin said earlier this month.

It has started to an extent. IIP

Source: UearthInsight (based on estimates and company reports)

*Cognizant's number relates to Jan-Dec 2021, rest for April 2021 to March 2022 (E: Estimated)

Company	FY22 fresher hiring target	Freshers already hired in nine months
TCS	1,05,000(E)	77,000
Infosys	55,000	41,250 (E)
Wipro	17,500	15,000
HCL	22,000	15,787
Cognizant	33,000*	33,000
Accenture	16,000(India)	35,000

are put in place to check misuse. Every country has certain comparative advantages, you may be efficient in one and I may be good at something else. When we take a collaborative approach, it can be beneficial for both. One has to strike a fine balance.

What is the expectation on FDI inflows this year and for next financial year?

We have created a facilitative mechanism and opened the sectors a lot. It depends on several factors, including liquidity, the geopolitical situation and investment climate across several countries.

Are you seeing better capacity utilisation in sectors and are certain industries have started adding capacity?

It has started to an extent. IIP

What is the experience with single-window clearance?

We have got 15 states and 20 departments on board and 11 more departments will be on-boarded by March-end. We are in talks with remaining states, some of them don't have a single-window approval. There are some end-to-end decisions that have been taken place through the platform. Lot of improvements are being undertaken by some of the departments.

Cos delay IPO plans to avoid LIC clash

No Offer For 3 Weeks Around Insurer's Mega Listing That May Suck \$10Bn Out Of System

Reeba Zachariah & Partha Sinha | TNN

unprecedented new set of retail investors participating in the capital market, which will be long-term positive."

A recent report by Axis Capital said 41 companies have the regulatory go-ahead to launch their IPOs. BVG India, which handles the cleaning and maintenance of, among others, the Prime Minister's residence, Parliament House and several other facilities, plans to raise around Rs 1,300 crore via an IPO. It's delaying its plan to launch our IPO from the end of March. But LIC's IPO could lead to revisiting of the timelines," said BVG India chairman H R Gaikwad. "We shall

fund distributors in terms of average assets under management and commission received.

The LIC IPO, expected to be the nation's biggest-ever and the fourth-biggest of any insurer globally, is just one concern of companies that are looking to tap primary market. From April 1, new IPO norms will come in, something that "will change the way IPOs are subscribed," according to Arun Kejriwal of Kejriwal of

Sebi, among other rules, has mandated that companies that go for an IPO saying that they will acquire some entity can only use 25% of the amount raised for M&A,

HITTING PAUSE BUTTON?

A few forthcoming IPOs with date of Sebi approval that's still valid:

Delhivery	Jan 13
Global Health	Jan 21
Kevanta Agro	Dec 16
Emcure Pharma	Dec 8
Sterlite Power	Dec 2
VLCC	Nov 25
One MobiKwik	Oct 7
Go Airlines	Aug 26

IPO anchors will be locked for 30 days for half of what they get in IPO, and 90 days for remaining half

HNIs will see 1/3rd allotment for applications of 2-10L, and 2/3rd for over ₹10L

(Source: Axis Capital, Sebi)

reschedule the IPO launch according to advice from investment bankers and legal counsels with respect to its timing and applicability of the new norms, which will come into play from April 1, 2022."

There is a small number of companies also willing to take the risk of launching an IPO just ahead of the life insurer's. "We are planning and hopeful of

**A thought for today**

No Government can be long secure without a formidable Opposition

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

2024 Is Far Away

State poll results are important. But recently they have been poor predictors for national polls

Telangana chief minister K Chandrashekhar Rao's meeting with Maharashtra counterpart Uddhav Thackeray and NCP supremo Sharad Pawar represents another attempt by regional parties to find answers to BJP's national dominance. Meanwhile, the ongoing five-state assembly elections are witnessing SP in UP, AAP in Punjab and NPP in Manipur offering resistance to BJP and Congress. But if opposition parties do well in this round, a big if, what might it mean for national elections in 2024? Going by recent history, all extrapolations should be consumed with large helpings of salt, even though it is true that a major state victory does provide political impetus.

Congress's strong showing in three Hindi heartland states in 2018 was supposed to have a bearing on BJP's 2019 LS poll performance. It hardly mattered. There is now all round recognition that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has partly altered the dynamics of national elections. Voters in some states may also be distinguishing between a vote for Modi at the national level and BJP in states. So, it can work badly for BJP, too. Post its huge LS win in 2019, BJP faced adverse or not-too-happy outcomes in Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Delhi and Bengal.

What is undisputed is that regional parties are struggling to spot a durable national alternative or a pan-India leader to take on Modi. Parties like TMC and AAP are attempting to tackle this by testing waters in multiple states. Another reality check for some regional parties is their struggle in LS polls, even against Congress. In 2019, AAP trailed behind BJP and Congress in vote share in Delhi. TRS, which trounced a grand alliance of Congress-led opposition parties in 2018, had to share the honours with BJP and Congress six months later. Similarly, in Kerala, CPM, though dominant in the assembly and panchayats, was decimated by Congress-led UDF in 2019.

No less facile is the talk of UP elections as the semifinal before 2024. There are other states that matter: Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh this year, and Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana in 2023, are all poised to witness intense contestation. But then again, if, say, BJP wins in Telangana and Congress in MP – it doesn't necessarily mean that 2024 will see a saffron surge in the south and GOP revitalisation in the heartland. In 2017, Congress almost wrested Gujarat from BJP. In 2019, it got thumped. So, an assembly poll win in UP is great for BJP or SP. But it is no predictor for 2024.

Paradiso Lost

Shabby construction is taking a toll across urban India, as municipal regulators sleep on their job

As challenging as the long haul to take possession of one's home can be in India, the multi-storeyed cave-in at Gurgaon's Chintels Paradiso complex highlights what home-buyers are up against even afterwards. Even as two FIRs have been filed, including one naming the directors of the real estate company, the structural engineers and the architect, and an SIT has begun investigating the case, the district's town and country planner has declared four more towers in the building complex unfit for living. Identifying and punishing the guilty is a necessary part of the restitution process. But actually preventing the building collapses that have become a common story across urban India needs fixing a more fundamental regulatory rot.

The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act makes provision for the promoter rectifying structural defects without further charge if they are brought to its notice within five years of handing over possession. But, first, this five-year provision is woefully inadequate given that a person invests in a home for her lifetime and her children's beyond that. Second, legal expenses here would both be considerable and on top of EMI and rent. Rather than homeowners from Shimla and Delhi to Mumbai and Bengaluru wretchedly chasing compensation and justice, municipal regulators must do their job properly in the first place.

In the Chintels case, not only the original structural audit but also its follow-up after a roof slab collapsed last July, were evidently subpar. Failures to enforce state building bylaws and to make sure that the National Building Code of India is followed, are tied to rampant corruption. But equally, municipal authorities are very poor in engineering, geological and other building forensics skills. This is also a reminder of the limits of new CMs to deliver change, as long as local governance is overwhelmingly corrupt and/or inept.

Dress code for girls

XX chromosome comes with its own wardrobe, which schools soberly monitor

Shinie Antony

The devil may wear Prada, but schoolgirls in India don't. Female fashion in classrooms is set by moth-eaten school manuals and high-fiving parents and principals. It all begins at the school gate, where a snitch is stationed to look you up and down, and culminates on the assembly ground where you are called out by name. The walk of shame is to the principal's room for a) skirt too short, b) shirt too tight, c) lack of a slip... Modesty has always been a woman's job; no rapist should be able to stand in a court and say, 'but her collar button was undone, milord.' The XX chromosome comes with its own wardrobe.

The big bully in the school playground is the uniform seller. He measures you two sizes larger so you can wear it till the day you die and also leaves ample cloth to be let out. Schools gladly swapped skirts for salwar suits when the latter went national. Dupattas were primly pinned to the shoulder or unsightly vests added. An all-female college in Kerala where students had to wear saris suspended whoever wore anything else. A Bangalore college used to employ a dress inspector who personally pulled out tops tucked into waistbands; girls got around by wearing untucked tops just an inch past the belt. In another college where pre-university teenagers must don salwar-kameez, parents are urgently summoned if pants reveal ankle, kurta is kurti and dupatta a stole or scarf. College is not willing to accept that it all shrank in the wash.

There are stray parents who exult in the micro mini a daughter wears, which is code for 'we are modern western type ji.' But mostly young girls must dash into the mall loo to shed their sartorial sobriety. Some pin their skirts up to keep it cool, some flick the tie askew. By the time daddy comes to pick up, they are back in baggy jeans and T-shirts loose enough to hide a full-term pregnancy.

There is no rest though for those in charge of hemlines and necklines. In this guarding of virtue 24/7, women become each other's unsolicited chaperones. They will suddenly pat your bra strap into place, though it's costlier than the blouse and deserves a little red carpet of its own. Or bend with a tut-tut to tug your sari over your heels. This is India – your mortality is directly proportionate to your morality.



COMFORTING THE AFFLICTED



AFFLICTING THE COMFORTABLE

THE TIMES OF INDIA
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For India, The Reality Of 5%

Why recent high growth numbers will not be sustainable for either this country or the world

Ruchir Sharma



A hot spurt for global growth is generating breathless headlines. India is on pace to be "the world's fastest growing large economy" and France is posting its "strongest growth in 52 years". President Joe Biden cites the latest quarterly growth data as evidence that the US is growing "faster than China" and is "finally building an American economy for the 21st century".

Alas, 2021 looked so good only because so many economies contracted sharply the year before. This bounce back blip says nothing about the 21st century. The question is how fast economies can grow after the pandemic, once base effects fade and stimulus recedes. Trends in demographics and productivity suggest the global economy is likely to grow even more slowly in the 2020s than it did last decade.

A brief history shows why. After the Second World War, the baby boom nearly doubled global population growth to 2%, a historic high. Productivity growth tripled to around 2%, boosted by new technologies and a massive investment boom. With more workers, each producing more, global GDP growth also doubled to an unprecedented level, close to 4%. The postwar miracle was in full swing by the 1950s.

In the 1980s, cracks appeared. Population growth ebbed as fertility rates declined. Productivity growth started to slow, for a number of hotly debated reasons. But new forces emerged to keep the growth miracle era alive.

First, a debt boom. With inflation under control, central banks could slash interest rates to record lows, while financial liberalisation allowed for much more lending and borrowing. Second, a new free-market consensus opened borders to trade, money, workers and, later, data. Juiced by debt and globalisation, global GDP kept growing at nearly 4%.

The financial crisis of 2008 marked a major turn. Flows of trade and people slowed; flows of money collapsed. Only data flows carried on growing. Burnt by



the crisis, many households in the developed world cut back debt. While total debt continued to swell, driven by governments and corporations, it did so at a slower pace, providing a weaker boost to growth.

Global productivity growth fell back towards 1%, even as labour-saving digital technology continued to spread. With a predictable lag, falling birth rates started to cramp growth in the working population (aged 16-64), which has dropped from 1.5% to about 1% worldwide.

These forces explain why the global economy grew at barely over 2.5% a year in the 2010s – the slowest decadal pace in postwar history. The four "Ds" – depopulation, declining productivity, deglobalisation and debt – all weighed on economic growth. The pandemic has only magnified those factors,

significantly during the pandemic, based on early numbers.

Historical data shows that it is very rare for any country to sustain an annual growth rate of more than 6% once the growth rate of the working age population falls below 2%. India's working age population growth first fell below 2% in 2010 and the decline

Global economy grew at barely over 2.5% a year in the 2010s. Four Ds – depopulation, declining productivity, deglobalisation and debt – weighed on economic growth. The pandemic has only magnified those factors, triggering a wave of retirement and quitting, a global migration bust, and a baby bust even in India

significantly during the pandemic, based on early numbers.

Historical data shows that it is very rare for any country to sustain an annual growth rate of more than 6% once the growth rate of the working age population falls below 2%. India's working age population growth first fell below 2% in 2010 and the decline

continues. The working population is now growing just over 1%, and ultimately fewer workers will slow growth.

Though productivity typically surges early in a recovery, this time it continued to languish in many economies. India's productivity growth rate has been trending downward over the past few years, according to CEIC data.

Major powers from the US to China and India are turning further inward, extolling "self-sufficiency" over globalisation. Major emerging markets led by India, China and Russia are world leaders in authoring new rules on data flows, threatening to deglobalise even the internet.

As governments spent heavily to counter national lockdowns, debt levels hit new highs. But now, as interest rates head higher, borrowers of all kinds will be reluctant to take on more debt to fuel growth. India's total debt burden spiked from 160% to 175% of GDP, which is unusually high for a country in India's income class. The deepening impact of the four Ds suggests the trend towards slower growth will continue.

No country is an island, isolated from these global trends. All need to reconsider how fast they can grow in the new era. High-income countries such as the US that still aim for 3% annual growth will be lucky to top 2% in this decade. Lower-income nations such as India need to lower their benchmark for success from 7% to 5% or better.

Complicating this picture is that inflation has returned, driven by temporary supply shortages and heavy stimulus, but likely to be sustained by shrinking labour forces and rising wages. With inflation back, policymakers will no longer feel empowered to keep growth alive with constant doses of stimulus. Investors, who have grown accustomed to central banks propping up markets at the first sign of trouble, will need to wean themselves off the comforts of constant state support.

Rather than hyping a temporary spike in growth data, it is time to recognise that a post-pandemic world shaped by the four Ds is likely to result in even slower growth and higher inflation.

The writer is an author and global investor

After 2 Years, Case For Returning To Office This March

Human interaction is the key fuel for every organisation, and we are running short on it

Harsh Goenka



Work-office routine as we knew it consisted of a series of daily rituals. Dress codes, the commute, the exchange of pleasantries at the workplace, informal banter, meetings, bonding with colleagues over tea and coffee, discussions, arguments, teaming up to finalise policy, presentations or perhaps make deals, staying on late, bidding good-nights, the list is endless.

The Covid-19 pandemic abruptly brought this typical work routine to a halt, forcing us to experiment with novel concepts of remote working. Work from home became the new norm. And with that, casual dressing, make-shift workspaces, multi-tasking in the home environment, digital meetings, calendar invites and juggling time with family have gained acceptance.

Once the pandemic is over there could be many who would be tempted with the idea that working from home could provide the perfect work-life balance. But the question is, is that the best way forward? And the answer, when we look deep into why a common physical office matters, is a resounding NO.

Culture eats strategy for breakfast'

An important reason for this is a fundamental facet of organisational functioning – work culture. At the root of every organisation is its culture or ethos. The oft-quoted Peter Drucker phrase "culture eats strategy for breakfast" is a testimony to the importance of this all-pervading facet of every organisation. Within its ecosystem, human interaction remains the most significant fuel. The prolonged persistence of the pandemic is beginning to erode this capital and threaten its very existence. How do we prevent this erosion?

One of the recent developments affecting organisations has been the extremely unusual and high rate of



ONCE UPON A TIME: Office samosa party

attrition. This is more prevalent in the technology sector and despite the efforts of companies to stem it, the attrition has been rising. While there may be many reasons for this, one of the driving forces is the lack of personal interaction and the eventual loss of a sense of belonging. Being together in a common workplace builds unity and helps remove the sense of isolation and makes us feel we are part of something much bigger, having a larger purpose.

After the third wave, three options

In the wake of the third wave, local administrations in cities called for a partial shutdown and reduced commercial and social activity. At this juncture, it was an unavoidable necessity in order to stem the rapid flare-up in infections. Once we pass this wave, it is important that organisations educate people on the subjective benefits of in-office working because that aspect in spite of being so vital is least understood.

There are some solutions that are worth exploring. One is a hybrid model option where people work

remotely for part of the week and at the workplace for the other part. This will help alleviate some of the downsides of WFH. Also it will help shake off the inertia developed with remote working in the last two years.

Another option is to categorise people into those that mandatorily need to work from office and those that can have a more flexible schedule. The advantage of this model is that the core group that are critical to driving the business and are those that come face to face with customers are able to engage in the physical workplace.

A third option, which I personally do not advocate, would be to make it mandatory for all to attend all the time.

Reconnect all levels of the organisation

Besides these, seeking inputs and involvement of people from all levels of the organisation on major decisions can help raise the feeling of empowerment. A robust communication within the organisation is also important. Leaders should find the time to engage with people in small groups or even individually where necessary to motivate and keep people engaged so that the cultural fabric is kept intact. Reward and recognise people who further your culture. Treat people with empathy and kindness. All of these can be differentiators that ensure the organisation is well connected culturally.

A soothsayer warned Julius Caesar, "Beware the Ides of March." Mid March 2020, the planet encountered a life-threatening virus which forced us into isolation, into our limited residential spaces. It was necessary and unavoidable. Two years into the pandemic, whether we believe we are at the end of the beginning or at the beginning of the end, the efforts to reconnect must start now. At stake are the energy and enthusiasm and vibrancy and everything else at the workplace that we have cultivated which collectively we refer to as our organisational culture. We must carefully nurture it back to life.

The writer is chairman of RPG Enterprises

Sacredspace

Love That's Blissful

Love in absolute purity gives strength ... Ultimate love is love for love's sake – pure love. We love spontaneously, simply, effortlessly and purely without any fear of mental, social or moral bondage, desire, need and expectation. This highest form of love is guided by true wisdom and bestows bliss and joy.

Meena Om



What You're Longing For Is Also Longing For You

Sumit Paul

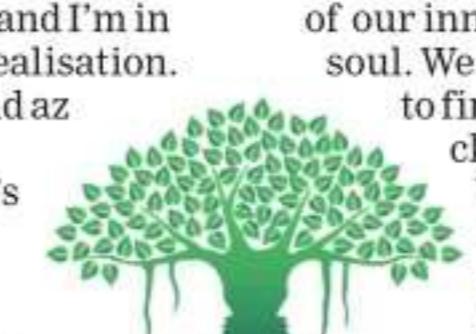
While reading Persian mystic Jalaluddin Rumi, I stumbled upon a soul-gladning thought that made me pause and go into a state of trance: 'Lovers don't finally meet somewhere. They've been with each other all along.' What a heart-warming thought. Reading these lines brought to mind Hafiz Shirazi's immortal verse: 'Love is perennial. It chooses the lovers, not the other way round.'

True love is divine in nature – Ishq-e-Haqueeqi. Walt Whitman wrote in the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, "We existed forever for each other/ Waiting for that moment to be divinely aware." This is the turning point in love: To be aware of that precise moment when both understand that they have loved each other through ages and births, as a

young Muhammad Iqbal put it: 'Dil dhadakta tab bhi tha/ Par aaj ye ayaan hua/ Hum mein hain aap aap/ Aur aap mein hum/ Iss baat ka irfaan hua' – Heart throbbed then as well! But today I've realised that you're in me and I'm in you/ This is the greatest realisation.

'Tishnagi gar aab zooyad aajhaan/ Ab hum zooyad ba-aalam tishnagaan' – It's not only the thirst that longs for water/ Water also craves the thirsty man. This Persian couplet by Rumi resonates with all of us. We all search for the ultimate with a blinkered vision, not knowing that what we have been looking for is not separate from us. Our search for truth begins and ends at our very doorstep.

Remember, what you're longing for is also longing for you. To quote Asadullah Khan Ghali,



Khan Ghali, 'Hum hain mushthaq aur woh beazaar/ Ilahi ye maajra kya hai?' – I'm agog, and my beloved



WOODS MUM ON RETURN DATE, WILL ATTEND MASTERS CHAMPIONS DINNER



DIEGO SCHWARTZMAN TO FACE SPANISH TEENAGER CARLOS ALCARAZ IN RIO OPEN FINAL

SURYA FIREWORKS MAKE INDIA'S DAY

Hosts Complete Rare Double Sweep With 17-Run Win In Third T20I Against Windies

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Kolkata: Rain stayed away throughout the day so did the sun. But Suryakumar Yadav joined the party under the Eden Gardens floodlights here on Sunday with all guns blazing. The rather gloomy Kolkata day turned into an evening of fireworks as Suryakumar, along with Venkatesh Iyer, guided India to 184 for five in the third and final T20 International against the West Indies.

The total eventually proved adequate, with the West Indies being stopped in their tracks at 167 for 9. Nicholas Pooran continued his defiance with a 47-ball 61. Rovman Powell and



194.54 Suryakumar Yadav's strike rate, along with his runs tally of 107 at 53.50, are the highest by an Indian batter in the just-concluded series against West Indies.

Suryakumar Yadav drives at Eden Gardens on Sunday

Romario Shephard blazed briefly, but those weren't enough. Like the ODIs, the T20I series was a clean sweep for India with this 17-run win.

West Indies, meanwhile, will have a lot to introspect. For the record, India had beaten New Zealand 3-0 too, in their previous T20I series at home. The major talking point during the West Indies innings was injury to Deepak Chahar, who pulled a muscle before the last ball of his second over, the third of the innings. Having already dismissed the West Indies openers, Chahar's walking off the ground was a blow to India, although in the context of the match it did not matter much.

The Sunday showstopper was a great effort by India's fifth-wicket pair of Yadav and Iyer; considering that the 100th run came in the 16th over of the innings. The partnership was worth 91 runs, coming in

only 37 balls, with the last five overs fetching 86. A crowd of around 20,000 watched and roared as all this unfolded.

Suryakumar scored 65 off just 31 deliveries, which had seven sixes. His only boundary, a brilliant cover drive, had even the West Indians applauding. He perished on the 19th ball, going for maximum again.

Venkatesh remained unbeaten on 35 and had two sixes

SCOREBOARD

India: R Gaikwad c Mayers b Holder 4, I Kishan b Chase 34, S Iyer c Holder b Walsh 25, R Sharma b Drakes 7, S Yadav c Powell b Shephard 65, V Iyer n.o. 35; Extras (lb0, w4): 14; Total (5 wkt): 184; Fow: 1-10, 2-63, 3-66, 4-93, 5-184; Bowling: Holder 4-29-1, Shephard 4-50-1, Chase 4-0-23-1, Walsh 4-0-30-1, Drakes 3-0-37-1, Allen 1-0-5-0

West Indies: K Mayers c Kishan b

Chahar 6, S Hope c Kishan b Chahar 8, N Pooran Kishan b Thakur 6, R Powell c Thakur b Patel 25, K Pollard c Bishnoi b V Iyer 5, J Holder c S Iyer b V Iyer 2, R Chace b Patel 12, R Shephard c Sharma b Patel 29, F Allen n.o. 5, D Drakes c Sharma b Thakur 4, H Walsh n.o. 0; Extras: (b6, w7) 10; Total: (9 wkt): 167; Fow: 1-6, 2-26, 3-73, 4-82, 5-87, 6-100, 7-148, 8-158, 9-166; Bowling: Chahar 1-0-15-2, Khan 4-0-42-0, V Iyer 2-1-23-2, Thakur 4-0-33-2, Bishnoi 4-0-29-0, Patel 4-0-22-3.

Yash Dhull, with a century in each innings (113 & 113*) of his maiden Ranji Trophy match against TN in Guwahati, has become just the third batsman to post a century in each innings on Ranji Trophy debut.

He followed up his 113 in the first innings with an identical score in the second as Delhi's match against Tamil Nadu in Guwahati ended in a draw. The others to have achieved this feat are Nari Contractor (152 and 102*) – playing for Gujarat during the 1952-53 season – and Maharashtra's Virag Awate (126 and 112) in 2012-13.

Yash, in the company of Dhruv Shorey (107*, 13x4), lit up the ground during their unfinished opening stand of 228 in the 60.5 overs that were bowled on Day 4. The two were on top of their games and tore the TN attack with shots all around the ground.

While the experienced Dhruv was the aggressor, Yash began to open up once he got his eye in. If effortless stroke-making was the standout feature of Yash's maiden hundred, the youngster's calm-headedness came

RAGING DHULL: IN ELITE LEAGUE

• Yash Dhull, with a century in each innings (113 & 113*) of his maiden Ranji Trophy match against TN in Guwahati, has become just the third batsman to post a century in each innings on Ranji Trophy debut.

• Nari Contractor (152 and 102*) had accomplished the feat for Gujarat against Baroda in Baroda in November 1952 and Virag Awate (126 and 112) for Maharashtra against Vidarbha in Nagpur in November 2012.

• Dhull is now the seventh Delhi batsman to post a century in each innings of a Ranji Trophy match, joining Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi (vs Services 1964-65), Surinder Khanna (vs Karnataka, 1978-79), Madan Lal (vs Railways, 1980-81), Ajay Sharma (vs Railways, 1995-96), Raman Lamba (vs Maharashtra, 1996-97) and Rishabh Pant (vs Jharkhand, 2016-17).

to the fore in the century he scored on Sunday. Yash was prepared to wait for the loose balls and never played a false shot during the course of his 202-ball innings.

Rajesh Nagar, Yash's long-time coach, believes his ward couldn't have asked for a better start to his first-class career: "Yash had told me at the end of Day 3 that he would go out and score a hundred in the second innings. To have done what he said shows his char-

acter. Yash has made a smooth transition from white-ball format to the more demanding Ranji Trophy and is fulfilling the immense potential he has," Rajesh told TOI.

Yash announced his arrival on Day 1 of the clash with a 150-ball 113. "To score a debut hundred is always a special feeling. To be part of the Delhi team, get an opportunity and make the most of it gives me a lot of confidence," Yash had said.

PUJARA (91), TAILENDERS DENY MUMBAI VICTORY

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Displaying incredible resilience and nerves of steel, skipper Jaydev Unadkat (32*, 72b, 4x4) and Chetan Sakaria (10*, 44b, 1x4, 1x6) put up a valiant, unbeaten tenth wicket 31-run partnership in 104 balls to help Saurashtra deprive Mumbai of an outright win which would've given them six points, on a thrilling final day in their Ranji Trophy Group D opener at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

Saurashtra went into tea at 313 for five on Sunday, but lost four wickets quickly in the final session as a superb, marathon effort by left-arm spinner Shams Mulani (7 for 114 in 42 overs) brought Mumbai within sniffing distance of a victory. However, Unadkat and Sakaria's dogged

partnership enabled the defending Ranji Trophy champions to hang on for a well-fought, nail-biting draw. Staving off Mumbai's bowlers by the skin of their teeth, Saurashtra finished at 372/9.

Earlier, Cheteshwar Pujara responded to his axing from India's Test side for the home Tests against Sri Lanka by letting his bat talk. A day after he was dropped, Pujara – after getting out for a duck in the first innings – smashed a quickfire 91 (83b, 16x4, 1x6).

Taking out the frustration of his axing from the Indian Test side on Saturday on Mumbai's bowlers, Pujara – denied what would've been his 51st First Class century when he offered no shot to Mulani – batted as if he was playing in a one-day. The 34-year-old reached his fifty off 57 balls with nine fours with a pull off a short ball for a four. Later, he also pulled left-arm spinner Tanush Kotian for a six. The Test discard was especially severe on both Mumbai's spinners, Mulani and Kotian.

MENDIS HELPS SL AVOID OZ SWEEP

Melbourne: Opener Kusal Mendis struck an unbeaten 69 off 58 balls to help secure a consolation five-wicket victory for Sri Lanka, who fired with both bat and ball against Australia in the fifth and final Twenty20 international on Sunday. The hosts posted 154-6 after opting to bat in Melbourne, but the Sri Lankan batsmen finally found their feet to reach 155-5 with one ball remaining, ending the series 4-1 in Australia's favour.

Mendis batted positively, but sensibly, with captain Dasun Shanaka (35) in an 83-run

partnership which powered Sri Lanka to their first win against Australia in any format since 2017. Seamer Kane Richardson

RANJI SCORES

GROUP A: MP 274 and 251 (Shubham Sharma 103 not out; Chintan Gohil 6/48) beat Gujarat 331 and 88 (Kumar Kartikeya Singh 5/34, Shubham Sharma 2/7) Points: MP 6, Gujarat 0.

GROUP B: Baroda 181 and 255 lost to Bengal 88 and 350/6; 91.3 overs (Abhimanyu Easwaran 79, Shahbaz Ahmed 71 not out, Abhishek Porel 53 not out). Points: Bengal 6, Baroda 0.

GROUP C: Karnataka 481 & 223 for 9 in 63.2 overs (R Samarth 83; Amit Mishra 4 for 58, Karn Sharma 3 for 47) drew Railways 426 in 128.3 overs (Arindam Ghosh 105, Mohammad Saif 84) and 69 for 4 in 33 overs. Karnataka: 3 points, Railways: 1.

Pondicherry: 343 & 124 in 45.5 overs (Parvez Rasool 5 for 29) lost to J&K 426 in 114.1 overs (Qamran Iqbal 96, Abdul Samad 103) and 45 for 2 in 12.4 overs. J&K: 6 points, Pondicherry: 0.

GROUP D: Mumbai: 544/7 decl. drew Saurashtra 220 and 372/9 in 116 overs (Snehl Patel 98, Cheteshwar Pujara 91; Shams Mulani 7/14). Mumbai: 3 points, Saurashtra: 1.

GROUP E: Services 176 and 204 lost to Uttarakhand 248 and 136 for 1 in 28.3 overs (Jay Bista 87 not out). Uttarakhand: 6 points, Services: 0.

Rajasthan 275 and 316 beat Andhra 224 and 209 in 53.3 overs (S Sharma 4 for 32).

Rajasthan 6 points, Andhra: 0.

GROUP F: Haryana 556 and 81/1 drew Tripura 436; 159 overs (Samit Goel 122, Rajat Dey 67). Points: Haryana 3, Tripura 1.

Himachal Pradesh 354 and 402/8; 115.4 overs (Akash Vasisth 140, Praveen Thakur 103 not out) drew Punjab 526. Match drawn. Points: Punjab 3, Himachal 1.

GROUP G: Maharashtra 415 beat Assam 248 and 160 (Satyajeet Bachch 7/45), Maharashtra: 7 points, Assam: 1.

UP 301 and 280/6 (Saurabh Kumar 81 not out) drew Vidarbha 548/6 (Faiz Fazal 192, Akash Wadkar 102 not out; Saurabh Kumar 3/160). Vidarbha: 3 points, UP: 1.

GROUP H: Delhi 452 and 228/0 in 60.5 overs (Yash Dhull 113 not out; Dhruv Shorey 107 not out) drew Tamil Nadu 494 in 107.5 overs. TN: 3 points, Delhi: 1.

India's women's team needs to field better

Harbhajan Singh

I wouldn't deny for once that I have been very disappointed with India not being able to defend challenging totals like 270 and 279 in back-to-back games against the White Ferns. Save Jhulan Goswami, who is still as good as gold, and Deepti Sharma, who has been able to hit the ideal length for an off-break bowler on these surfaces, the others need to put in more concerted effort.

For young pacers like Renuka Singh Thakur and Simran Dil Bahadur, I believe there is a lot of room for improvement. They certainly need to bowl in better areas against a world-class batting lineup. They are still inex-

GALLERY

Faulkner leaves PSL over payment row

Karachi: Australia bowler James Faulkner allegedly damaged a hotel chandelier before quitting Pakistan's Twenty20 league at the weekend claiming he hadn't been paid, claims that were refuted as "baseless" by the country's cricket board. Faulkner, a member of Australia's 2015 World Cup-winning team, had been playing for Quetta Gladiators in the Pakistan Super League (PSL). Faulkner abruptly left the league and took to social media to claim that he'd been lied to by the Pakistani Cricket Board (PCB) and that his treatment had been a "disgrace".

There will be pressure on Tim David when he plays for MI, says Watson: Former Australian all-rounder Shane Watson has said that there will be pressure on Tim David when he turns up to play for the Mumbai Indians in the IPL. Mumbai Indians had picked up Tim David for Rs 8.25 crore. "Definitely, with the high price tag, comes a lot of expectations and pressure from your franchise. It is not until you get into the gametime when you really know how to absorb that pressure that is there," said Watson on the 'ICC Review' show.

'IPL rights value to reflect league growth': Media rights for the IPL will capture value worthy of the league's rapid rise, especially after the addition of two new teams and strong digital growth, secretary of BCCI Jay Shah said. He declined to discuss any dollar figures, but said: "The valuation will mirror the rise and growth of the league." AGENCIES

ACTION TODAY

FOOTBALL: ISL: Bengaluru vs Odisha 7:30pm (Star Sports 1)
HOCKEY: FIH Pro League: 11:30pm (Star Sports Select 2)

CURTAINS DOWN

Beijing Winter Olympics Comes To A Close As Norway Top The Tally With 37 Medals

Beijing: The city doused its Olympic flame on Sunday night, closing a Games that will be remembered for the extremes of its anti-Covid-19 measures and outrage over the doping scandal that enveloped 15-year-old Russian skating sensation Kamila Valieva.

Chinese President Xi Jinping was on hand for the snowflake-themed ceremony at the Bird's Nest stadium, where International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach described the Beijing Games as "truly exceptional" before declaring them closed.

The Beijing Games, contained inside a "closed loop", were the second Olympics in six months to be deprived by Covid of much of its festivity.

SNOWFLAKES AND LANTERNS

On one side of the stadium, which was roughly half full, red Chinese lanterns projected a glow as Olympic athletes entered en masse to "Ode to Joy", dancing and taking selfies.



DOPING SCANDAL

The biggest legacy of the Olympics will be the controversy surrounding Valieva, who stumbled under pressure in her final skate, and the outrage directed towards Russian sports officials and the country's history of doping, which meant its athletes could not compete under Russia's flag. Valieva failed a doping test at December but the result was only revealed on Feb. 8, a day after she helped the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) win the team event. She was nonetheless allowed to participate in the singles and finished fourth. AGENCIES

TAIWAN PREMIER WANTS ATHLETE PUNISHED FOR WEARING CHINA SUIT

Taipei: Taiwan's premier wants a Taiwanese Olympic speedskater to be punished for wearing what appeared to be a suit from China's team during training. Symbols of the two sides are especially sensitive at a time when China's ruling Communist Party, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory even though the island has long operated with its own government, is trying to intimidate the democracy by flying fighter jets and bombers nearby. Huang Yu-ting, one of four Taiwanese athletes at the Winter Games, posted a video on her social media page on Jan 23 showing her training in what appeared to be a Chinese suit. It said Huang apologized and removed the video. AGENCIES

FINLAND BEATS RUSSIANS FOR ITS 1ST OLYMPIC HOCKEY GOLD MEDAL

Beijing: Sheets of paper rained down like super-sized confetti on the bench, which players leapt off at full speed to pile on top of goaltender Harri Sateri with such force that they knocked the net off its moorings. After finally accomplishing what so many Finland teams before were unable to do, there was plenty of strength to go around. Finland, known as Suomi in Finnish, is now synonymous with gold. The Finns knocked off the favoured Russians 2-1 Sunday to win the men's hockey tournament without NHL players at the Beijing Games, capturing an Olympic gold medal for the first time in the nation's history. Finland had never won the gold medal on the men's or women's side. AGENCIES

Skier Remi suffers frozen penis in mass start race

Zhangjiakou: The men's 50km mass start race at the Beijing Games was shortened to 30km but that did little to help Finland's Remi Lindholm, who needed a heat pack at the end of the race to thaw out a particularly sensitive body part.

Lindholm spent just under an hour and 16 minutes traversing the course in howling, freezing winds, leading to his penis becoming frozen for the second time in a cross-country skiing race following a similar incident in Ruka, Finland last year.

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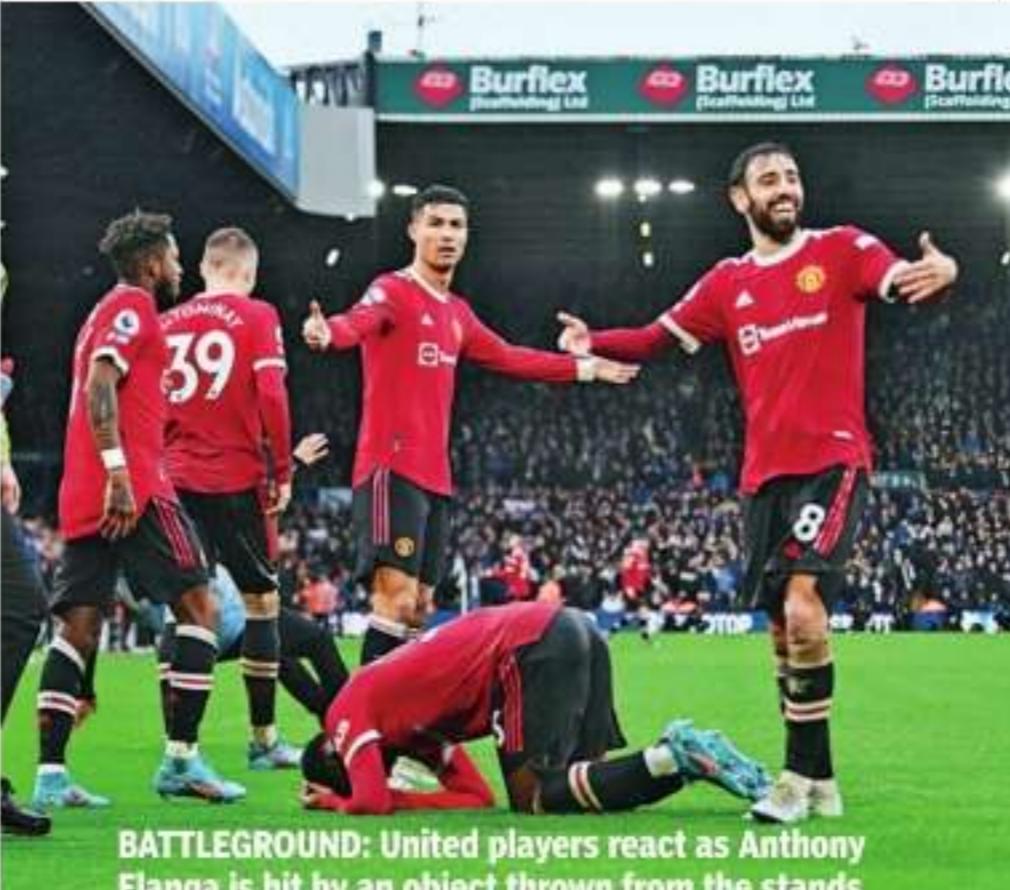
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SUPER SUBS

Leeds: Second-half goals from substitutes Fred and Anthony Elanga earned Manchester United a 4-2 victory over Leeds United in a thriller at Elland Road in the Premier League on Sunday.

In a red-hot atmosphere, the visitors took the lead in the 34th minute, with captain Harry Maguire heading home to score his side's first league goal from a corner all season. As the rain became more torrential, United compounded the home side's woes when Bruno Fernandes squeezed another header into the net.

Seemingly dead and buried, Leeds turned the match on its head with two goals in less than a minute early in the second to lift the roof off Elland Road. Spanish forward Rodrigo's cross managed to loop over United stopper David de Gea before



BATTLEGROUND: United players react as Anthony Elanga is hit by an object thrown from the stands

Dan James squared for Leeds substitute Raphinha to level at the far post. The visitors were the ones to get over the line, however, as Fred put his

Fred And Elanga Step Up From The Bench To Secure United 4-2 Win In Red-Hot Leeds Cauldron

'Kane' in the neck for Pep!
Pep Guardiola once labelled Tottenham Hotspur 'the Harry Kane side' and the Spaniard was left marvelling at the striker as his two goals loosened Manchester City's grip on the EPL title race.

It was only City's third league defeat of the season but their second to Tottenham. The champions now have only a six-point lead over Liverpool, who have a game in hand. Juergen Klopp's men visit the Etihad in April.

"Tottenham have a lot of quality, they give the ball to Harry Kane. They are really good up front. In the first half they have the goal, no more."

"In the second half they have one attack with Harry Kane at the start and they score. They are clinical. They have Kane and Son and (Dejan) Kulusevski." REUTERS



TAKING FLIGHT: Barcelona's new signing Aubameyang celebrates after scoring against Valencia

Barcelona roll back to fourth; Sevilla slip

Valencia: Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored his first two goals for Barcelona in a convincing 4-1 win at Valencia on Sunday, lifting his side to fourth place in LaLiga.

It was the eighth and ninth goals of the season for the former Arsenal striker, who last found the net for the Gunners in October in a 3-1 win over Aston Villa. Frenkie de Jong and Pedri also scored for Barcelona, who looked much improved after strug-

gling at the start of the season. Carlos Soler scored a consolation goal for the locals.

The win lifted Barcelona into fourth place on 42 points from 24 games, tied with Atletico who are fifth on goal difference. Real Madrid top the table with 57 points.

Sevilla stumbled again in the Spanish title race as a 1-1 draw away at Espanyol left Real Madrid with a six-point lead at the top.

Former India coach Akramov passes away

New Delhi: Former Indian football team coach Rustam Akramov, who introduced the legendary Bhaichung Bhutia to the international game in 1995 and took the Blue Tigers to their highest-ever FIFA ranking, has died in Uzbekistan. He was 73.

The Uzbek coach died on February 15, according to the official website of the National Olympic Committee of Uzbekistan. Akramov was in charge of the national team from 1995 to 1997.

Akramov gave a teenage Bhaichung Bhutia his debut in a Nehru Cup match against Thailand in March 1995. Akramov helped Bhutia shape up as a striker instead of the attacking midfielder role he played at club level. The Indian team under Akramov was full of great players like IM Vijayan, Carlton Chapman and Bruno Coutinho, besides a young Bhutia. The team rose to 94th in the Feb 1996 FIFA rankings. PTI

Jamshedpur close in on semifinals

Vasco: Jamshedpur FC breezed past Chennaiyin 4-1 in a lopsided Indian Super League (ISL) match to move to the second place on Sunday.

Ritwik Das (23rd), Boris Singh (33rd) and Daniel Chima Chukwu (40th) got on the score-sheet before Deepak Devrani scored an own goal (46th) as Jamshedpur made it three wins to rack up 31 points from 16 matches. They are one point behind league leaders Hyderabad FC with a game in

hand. For Chennaiyin, Nerijus Valskis (62nd) scored a consolation goal against his former side. Chennaiyin are eighth in the table with 20 points from 17 matches and are all but out of a semifinal berth.

Jamshedpur bossed the game from the start with Boris warming Debjit Majumder's gloves early on with an effort from the right-wing. The Red Miners saw a lot more of the ball and that translated into a goal soon. Greg Stewart's corner was headed back by Peter Hartley as Chennaiyin failed to clear their lines.

Ritwik was on hand and the in-form midfielder guided the ball on the rise into the back of the net past Debjit. PTI

BAYERN RIDE ON LEWA BRACE

Berlin: Two goals from Robert Lewandowski saw Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich come from behind to beat bottom club Greuther Fuerth 4-1 and avoid a second successive shock defeat on Sunday.

A week after they slumped to a 4-2 defeat at Bochum, Bayern survived another scare against a promoted side as Lewandowski scored his eighth brace of the season to haul his side out of trouble. The win keeps the league leaders comfortably ahead of second-placed Dortmund.

CITY 'APALLED' BY FODEN ATTACK

Manchester City said they were "shocked and appalled" by an attack on midfielder Phil Foden and his family after a video appeared to show them involved in a scuffle at Saturday's fight between Amir Khan and Kell Brook at the Manchester Arena.

NEYMAR SCORES, MISSES PENALTY AS PSG SLUMP TO NANTES DEFEAT

Paris: Paris Saint-Germain were brought back down to earth after their Champions League win over Real Madrid as they slumped to a 3-1 defeat at Nantes in Ligue 1.

Nantes raced into a stunning 3-0 lead at the break - the first time PSG had conceded three goals before half-time in over two years. Neymar gave PSG hope with his first goal since last Nov, but then saw a 59th-minute spot-kick saved. The giants remain 13 points clear of Marseille.

Rebic avoids embarrassment for Milan; Mourinho sent off

Salerno: Serie A leaders AC Milan averted a shock defeat to basement club Salernitana with Ante Rebic rescuing a 2-2 draw with a late strike. Roma came back from two goals down to salvage a 2-2 draw at home to Verona but coach Jose Mourinho was sent off. AGENCIES

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went into the final round in a four-way tie for the lead with Andrew Evans, Matthew Millar and Blake Collyer.

DJ sticking with PGA Tour
A proposed Saudi-financed rival golf league took a big hit when Dustin Johnson said he was "fully committed" to stay with the PGA Tour.

Chile's Niemann leads by 3
Joaquin Niemann fired a 3-under par 68 to take a three-shot lead at the Genesis Invitational with a record total of 9-under 194 at Riviera CC. AGENCIES

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THE TIMES OF INDIA



INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

FM Nirmala will be on a two-day visit to Mumbai from Monday, where she will hold post-Budget discussion with stakeholders from Maharashtra

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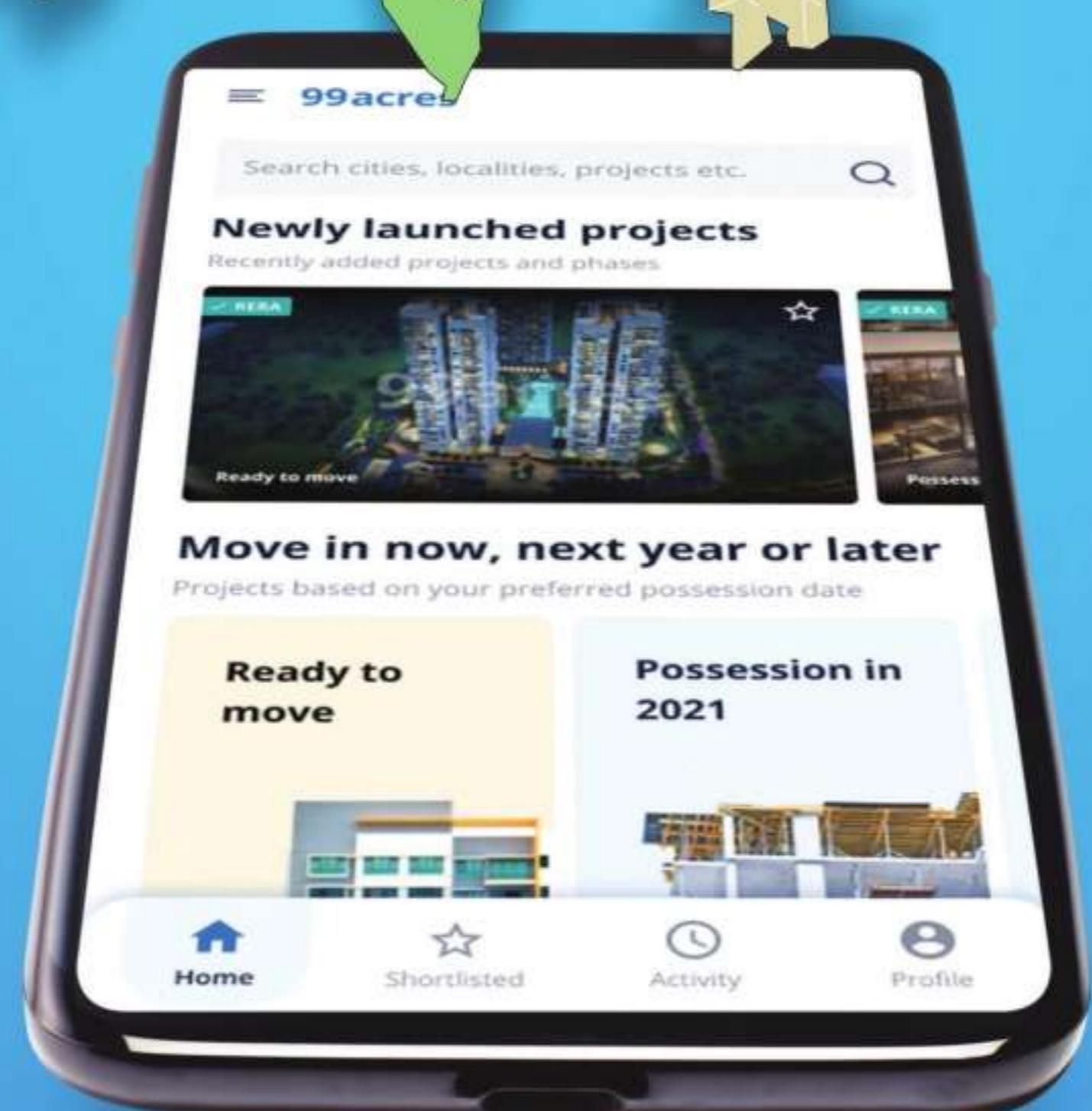
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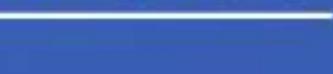


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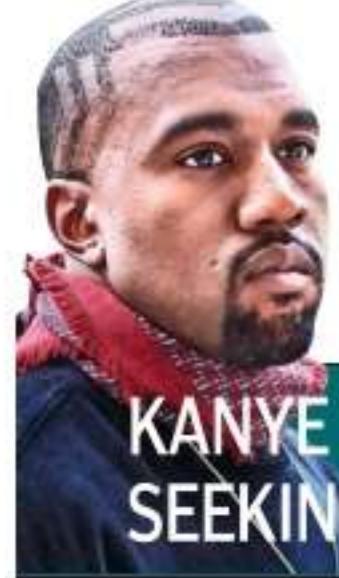
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KANYE WEST COULD BE CHARGED WITH ALLEGEDLY ASSAULTING FAN SEEKING AN AUTOGRAPH OUTSIDE AN LA NIGHTSPOT IN JAN: REPORT

THE WISH FOR HEALING HAS ALWAYS BEEN HALF OF HEALTH
— LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA



PATRICK SCHWARZENEGGER POSTS PHOTO OF ARNIE GIVING HIM A HAIRCUT WITH HUGE SCISSORS, CAPTIONS IT, 'SAVED 50 BUCKS TODAY'

Russian tanks reported rolling towards Ukraine

In Ray Of Hope, Macron & Putin 'Agree' On Need For Diplomatic Solution; Blinken Says Biden Ready To Engage With Russia Prez To Prevent War

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: US President Joe Biden is meeting with his National Security Council on Sunday as Russian tanks are reported to be rumbling toward Ukraine in what Washington says is a foregone decision by Moscow to invade the neighbouring country. There was a glimmer of hope that precipitous action by Russia could be averted following the French President Emmanuel Macron engaging his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin with a pledge to convene "a meeting at the highest level to define a new order of peace and security in Europe." The White House has not responded to the French proposal.

Armoured tanks painted with a letter 'Z' are reported to be rolling from Shebekino in Russia, towards Ukraine's Kharkiv Oblast just across the border, according to Twitter posts from military analysts accompanied by videos. The markings are said to be aimed at differentiating Russian tanks assigned with specific roles and preventing friendly fire. The forward troop movement is taking place even as Macron reached out to his Russian counterpart to forestall what Nato allies say is an imminent invasion. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky also urged Putin to meet him for talks amid the escalating crisis. On its part, Moscow says the US and Nato allies have not responded to specific



Protesters in Warsaw, Poland, rally for peace in Ukraine on Sunday

'West may cut Russia cos' access to dollar, pound'

The US and Britain would cut off Russian companies' access to US dollars and British pounds if the Kremlin orders an invasion of Ukraine, British PM Boris Johnson said on Sunday. The US and Britain have repeatedly cautioned that Russia is about to invade Ukraine, a step Washington and London say would trigger the biggest conflict since the end of World War II. Johnson said Western sanctions on Russia in the event of an invasion would go much further than he has previously suggested in public. "We are even, with our American friends, going to stop them trading in pounds and dollars," he said. "That will hit very, very hard." Johnson, though, questioned if the threat of curbs would be enough to deter Russia's President Putin because the Kremlin chief might not be thinking logically. "We have to accept at the moment that Vladimir Putin is possibly thinking illogically about this and doesn't see the disaster ahead," Johnson said. REUTERS

proposals by Russia to take the talks forward. While there was a glimmer of hope that the situation would be defused following a 105-minute phone talk between Macron and Putin, where they reportedly agreed on "the need to favour a diplomatic solution to the ongoing crisis and to do everything to achieve one," there was a hint of impatience on part of Moscow at what it sees as delay and obfuscation on part of US and Nato allies. Putin "once again emphasised the need for the US and Nato to take Russia's demands to ensure its security guarantees as seriously as possible and to respond specifically and to the point," Kremlin said. A French presidential adviser said the two agreed that a meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), with representatives from Ukraine and Russia, be held on Monday. Poland, cur-

rently the OSCE chair, earlier said that at Ukraine's request it was convening an extraordinary session of the council, which is dedicated to preventing armed conflict, on Monday. Zelensky called on Sunday for an immediate ceasefire in the eastern part of the country. Macron blamed the separatists for the renewed hostilities, while Putin blamed Ukraine, the French presidential adviser said.

US secretary of state Antony Blinken is scheduled to meet his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on Wednesday but President Biden has said the talks will be off if the invasion takes place before that. Blinken said on a Sunday TV talk show that Biden is prepared to engage with Putin "at any time, in any format, if that can help prevent a war," but didn't sound very optimistic. "We believe President Putin has made the decision (to invade Ukraine). But until the tanks are actually rolling and the planes are flying, we will use every opportunity and every minute we have to see if diplomacy can still dissuade President Putin from carrying this forward," he told CNN. The US has told allies that any Russian invasion of Ukraine would potentially see it target multiple cities beyond the capital Kyiv, according to three people familiar with the matter. Cities that could also come under attack include Kharkiv in the northeast and the seaport cities of Odessa and Kherson in the south. (With updates from agencies)

Pak eyes people's gold to increase forex reserves

Islamabad: The Imran Khan-led Pakistan government is considering a proposal to borrow gold biscuits and bars from the people to increase the country's foreign exchange reserves that remain on a sliding path despite taking over \$5 billion loans in the past three months from bilateral and multilateral creditors, according to a media report on Sunday.

The proposal has been discussed in the Economic Executive Council (EEC) — the body comprising all economic ministers and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) governor, Express Tribune reported, citing sources in the ministry of finance. As per the propos-

sal, the commercial banks will issue a negotiable discounted instrument to the gold owner and pay an interest rate on the precious metal. The commercial bank will deposit the gold with the SBP that can monetise it to increase the foreign exchange reserves. The central bank's reserves slid to \$17 billion as of February 11, according to an SBP statement dated December 31. In the past three months, the government took a \$3 billion loan from Saudi Arabia, raised the most expensive debt of \$1 billion in Pakistan's history by pledging motorway and received another \$1 billion from the IMF. But still the reserves could not be stabilised. PTI

Nepal debates US aid amid protests

Kathmandu: Nepal's government presented a contentious half-billion-dollar aid grant from the US for approval in parliament on Sunday, triggering a fresh round of clashes between protesters and police outside the legislature. Hundreds of protesters gathered outside parliament to try to push through barbed wire barricades and pelted riot police with stones.

Police beat the protesters with bamboo batons, fired tear gas and water canons, leaving injuries on both sides. "The decision to accept development assistance is taken by Nepal in terms of our national interest and priorities," Nepal's ministry of foreign affairs said in a statement. "It is the sovereign parliament of Nepal alone that decides what development assistance is needed in the best interest

of Nepal and its people," it said. Opposition to the aid grant comes mainly from two of the Communist parties that are part of the coalition government. They claim the conditions in the grant agreement will prevail over Nepal's laws and threaten the country's sovereignty. They say it's part of Washington's Indo-Pacific strategy, which has military components that could bring American soldiers to Nepal. US officials have spoken to Nepalese leaders re-

cently to assure that the grant concerns only Nepal's development. The money is meant to be used for the construction of power transmission lines and improvement of roads in the Himalayan nation. Nepal's Leftist political parties say it was not in national interest and that it was meant to counter China. On Friday, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin in Beijing said that China is "glad to see" international assistance to Nepal but it should come without any political strings attached. Inside parliament, government minister Gyanaendra Bahadur Karki presented the grant proposal. A thick line of security personnel blocked the protesting members from approaching the minister. The debate is expected to last several days. AGENCIES

AROUND THE WORLD

British queen tests Covid positive, has mild symptoms

Queen Elizabeth II tested positive for Covid-19 on Sunday and is experiencing mild, cold-like symptoms, Buckingham Palace said. The palace said the 95-year-old British monarch will continue with light duties at Windsor Castle over the coming week. "She will continue to receive medical attention and will follow all the appropriate guidelines," the palace said. The queen has received three doses of coronavirus



MASK FUN: Revelers attend the annual carnival in Venice

Cops reclaim Ottawa as trucker siege ends

The last big rigs were being towed on Sunday out of Canada's capital, where the streets were quiet for the first time in three weeks after a massive police operation ended a three-week siege over Covid curbs. A major cleanup was underway in Ottawa's downtown area, where police faced off with trucker-led demonstrators for two days, finally driving them out of their protest hub outside parliament. On Sunday, police were manning checkpoints restricting access to a 500-acre area, while a sizeable force remained on standby to defend the ground reclaimed from the truckers. Only a handful of protesters remained testing the perimeter. A total of 191 protesters have been arrested since Friday. Police said 57 vehicles have so far been towed out of the city. AFP

In Dec, EPFO added 14.6L subscribers, a rise of 20%

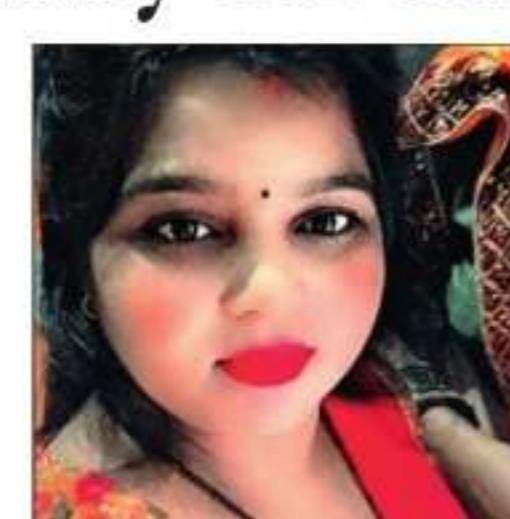
New Delhi: Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has added 14.6 lakh net subscribers during December last year, an increase of 19.9% as compared to November 2021, said the ministry of labour and employment on Sunday. The ministry informed that the provisional payroll data of EPFO has been released on Sunday. The comparison shows an increase of around 2 lakh in net payroll additions in December 2021 as compared to 12.5 lakh net subscribers added during the corresponding month previous year.

Of the total 14.6 lakh net subscribers added, 9.1 lakh new members have been enrolled under EPF & MP Act, 1952 for the first time. Approximately 5.5 lakh net subscribers exited but rejoined EPFO by opting to continue their membership with EPFO by transferring their PF accumulations from previous to present PF account instead of opting for final withdrawal. Further, the number of members exiting EPFO has been on a declining trend since July 2021.

Age-wise comparison of payroll data shows that the age-group of 22-25 years has registered highest number of net enrolments with 3.8 lakh additions during December 2021. Age-group of 18-21 also registered a healthy addition of around 2.9 lakh net enrolments. Age-groups of 18-25 years have contributed around 46.8% of total net subscriber additions in December 2021. ANI

In video before death, woman blames hubby for slashing neck

Ishita Mishra
@timesgroup.com



The victim, Poonam Devi, ran in UP's Bulandshahr

Poonam said on her deathbed. The couple has a three-year-old child.

Eye-witnesses said that Poonam was bleeding profusely when she rushed out of the cabin of her clinic on Saturday afternoon. She

ran to the room where her colleagues were sitting and asked them to call an ambulance. The injured woman then rushed outside the clinic and alerted locals to catch her fleeing husband.

The police reached the spot before the ambulance and a constable recorded her dying declaration. Due to her alertness, locals managed to catch Neeraj before he could flee. Those present at the spot placed cotton and applied pressure on her neck to stop the bleeding. They also tied a stole around it. However, she was declared dead by the doctors when taken to the hospital. The accused has been booked and sent to jail.

Family forgets ₹17L of jewellery on train, cop brings cheer back

Nitasha Natu
@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: The Annampali was devastated when they realised that they had left behind a bag of jewellery — worth Rs 17 lakh — on a long-distance train recently. They spent the next few hours panic-stricken, carrying out searches at various railway stations. But thanks to a quick-thinking policeman, they got back their valuables.

The constable tracked down the train to a yard, squeezed in through an

emergency window and managed to trace the bag the same day. The Annampali are Andheri residents and had gone to their hometown in Telangana to attend an annual festival. They were returning home on Chennai Express. Early on Friday, they alighted at Dadar station and then took a local train to Andheri.

"On reaching home, we realised that the bag with the jewellery was missing," Anand Annampali said. After finding out that the train terminated at CSMT, relatives approached the GRP

'When industry isn't providing revenue, it should give jobs'

In his first comments after SC set aside the stay HC had granted on the state's 75% domicile quota in the private sector, Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal

Khattar has strongly justified it saying the law has been drafted carefully so that industry is not impacted and at the same time locals are benefited. He spoke to TOI's Akhilesh Singh about the contentious law and other issues. Excerpts from the interview:

There has been industrialisation in Haryana and youth from neighbouring states expect employment. Besides, some experts have dubbed the new law regressive. Your comments.

Firstly, it is the state's responsibility to provide employment opportunities for their people, more than any other agency. Secondly, there was a time when we used to invite industries and they would become a source of revenue for the state. But since GST has been rolled out, the industry is not a main source of revenue.

GST has made revenues consumption-based. The industrial sector still wants concessions related to land, tax benefits, cheap electricity. When industry is not providing revenue, the only benefit is employment generation. In the 75% quota, a business owner can decide the worker's qualifications or salary or skills. This is their prerogative, not ours. On these prerogatives, if a Haryana domicile is not ready to work, then you can hire from outside as well. It is quite simple. You try to employ 75% people, consider

the ones who apply from Haryana, if your quota is not being fulfilled, just inform the deputy commissioner and hire from outside. We have also slashed the salary bracket from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 30,000 per month. Only that salary bracket is under the

regulation, not skilled workers who make more than that. The Haryana model might be implemented in other states as well like we are already seeing in Andhra Pradesh. So has there been any dialogue between other chief ministers and you, as to what exactly will be the ramifications of this law?

I had spoken to SC advocates. I congratulated and thanked them for reversing the stay that had been put by the HC. They told me that the expedited and easy provisions in our legislation are unmatched by any other state's legislation. No one is facing any difficulty in adjusting to our provisions. That's why the SC gave its affirmation. The matter is still pending with the high court...

TOI INTERVIEW

“In the 75% quota, a business owner can decide the worker's qualifications or salary or skills. This is their prerogative, not ours”

■ It is not a problem. Everyone works according to their party's principles, but we haven't faced any big difficulties. My alliance experience in the past has been different. We have been the smaller partner, but this time we are the bigger partner. I understand the difficulties well. Sometimes we have to explain or reason with our partners.

Your electoral performance was the reason you had to do form an alliance. Have you recovered the public's trust enough to get the requisite seats next time?

■ We have run alliances in the Centre too. At the time, BJP was along with the majority, but we still kept alliance partners. See, the more opinions and ideas we have, the better it is for the country and society. We say to the opposition too, why always blindly oppose, we can work together too. During election season, we should see limits are not crossed. Take Punjab, for instance. Kejriwal has gotten so desperate as to partner with secessionists. Kumar Vishwas has exposed him.

Did you discuss the law with start-up entrepreneurs and business owners?

■ Of course. Several times, I had pointed out the same facts that I am pointing out to you. Ultimately, they agreed with the fact that industry doesn't provide revenue, only employment. If industries don't give employment, what use are they? We told them to build their offices here, give their services here, open warehouses, but take industries to far off place.

Your opponents say that Haryana has the most unemployment as per CMIE figures.

■ I don't believe in them. It is a private agency and they can have their own interests. But the ground reality is different. In December, their figure was



How has your experience been in running an alliance government?

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JAISHANKAR STARTS 3-DAY VISIT TO FRANCE DURING WHICH HE WILL ATTEND EU MINISTERIAL FORUM FOR COOPERATION IN INDO-PACIFIC AMID CHINA TENSION

UGC to let 900 autonomous colleges offer online degrees

Value Will Be
Same As That
Of Regular Ones

Manash.Gohain
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Come 2022-23 academic session, students who cannot get into their target college due to high cutoffs need not be disappointed and grudgingly go for their second choice. That's because in addition to universities, nearly 900 autonomous colleges across the country will be able to offer courses remotely from July onwards as the government opens up the online education sector in a major reform to achieve 50% gross enrolment ratio by 2035 in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

NO NOD FROM UGC NEEDED

- Class 12 & UG pass will be eligibility criteria for admission to UG & PG courses
- Colleges will not need to take prior approval of the UGC
- Evaluation will be done via online proctored exam or computer-based test



If we stick to only universities, it becomes limited. There are a large number of high-quality autonomous colleges in the country. This will enhance access for learners...

— M JAGADESH KUMAR, UGC CHAIRPERSON

rents are required to have a certain score at the Class 12 level, eligibility for admission to these online undergraduate degree programmes will be simply "senior secondary pass". Similarly, for admission to online postgraduate degree programmes, the eligibility will be "pass" in the relevant undergraduate course.

The draft for the amendment in the existing UGC (Open and Distance Learning Programmes and Online Programmes) Regulations, 2020 is being finalised and will be available for feedback from stakeholders this week. The new framework, accessed exclusively by TOI, will let higher educational institutions, including autonomous colleges, teach courses in emerging areas that may not be possible in in-person mode.

► Flexibility in pros, P 12

NSE fraud: CBI quizzes ex-CEO Ravi Narain

The CBI on Saturday interrogated former NSE director Ravi Narain, who served as the CEO before Chitra Ramakrishna, in connection with its ongoing probe related to the alleged abuse of colocation facility by an NSE stockbroker, officials said on Sunday.

The investigators lobbed several sharp questions, but Narain was reportedly evasive. He may be called again for further questioning. On Friday, the agency had questioned Ramkrishna.

► CBI probing others, P 11

Govt asks diplomats' kin, students to leave Ukraine

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: With the Ukraine situation still on a knife edge, the government on Sunday asked the family members of all Indian diplomats in the country to return to India. The decision suggests a rethink on the prevailing security situation by Indian authorities who had so far maintained the Indian mission will continue to function normally.

Earlier, in another advisory, the government asked all Indian students, as also other Indian nationals whose stay is not essential, to leave Ukraine. It advised them

to make use of available commercial flights for timely and orderly departure.

► 'Use charter flights', P 12

Pak arrests 31 Indian fishermen

Mid fears of invasion of Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron agreed on the need for a diplomatic solution to the crisis. US said President Biden was ready to engage with Putin "at any time, in any format". P 18

The boats were towed to Karachi for further legal proceedings according to Pakistani Law and UN Convention on Law of the Sea. Going by lists of prisoners exchanged by the two countries at the start of this year, 577 fishermen were among 628 Indian prisoners lodged in Pakistan's jails. P 10

LIC IPO

Reservation for Policyholders

To participate, policyholders must meet the following criteria:

- Resident Individual Policyholders of the Corporation having one or more policies of the Corporation as on February 13, 2022 and Bid/Offer opening date are eligible.*
- Policyholder's PAN details should be updated with the Corporation on or before February 28, 2022.

* Please also refer draft red herring prospectus dated February 13, 2022

DEMAT Account Opening

- Go to the nearest Common Service Centre (CSC) to open a DEMAT account.
OR
- Visit either of these websites for registered Depository Participants (DP) to open a DEMAT account:

NSDL: https://nsdl.co.in/Open_NSDL_Demat_Account.php

CDSL: <https://www.cdslindia.com/DP/dplist.aspx>

LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA is proposing, subject to applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, receipt of requisite approvals, market conditions and other considerations, to undertake an initial public offer of its Equity Shares and has filed the draft red herring prospectus dated February 13, 2022 ("DRHP") read with the corrigendum dated February 15, 2022. The DRHP is available on the websites of SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in, websites of the Stock Exchanges i.e., BSE at www.bseindia.com and NSE at www.nseindia.com, respectively and is also available on the websites of the BRLMs, i.e. Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Limited at <https://investmentbank.kotak.com>, Axis Capital Limited at www.axiscapital.co.in, BoFA Securities India Limited at www.ml-india.com, Citigroup Global Markets India Private Limited at www.online.citibank.co.in/html/citigroupglobalscreen1.htm, Goldman Sachs (India) Securities Private Limited at www.goldmansachs.com, ICICI Securities Limited at www.icicisecurities.com, JM Financial Limited at www.jmfi.com, J.P. Morgan India Private Limited at www.jpml.com, Nomura Financial Advisory and Securities (India) Private Limited at www.nomuraholdings.com/company/group/asia/india/index.html and SBI Capital Markets Limited at www.sbicaps.com. Potential investors should note that investment in equity shares involves a high degree of risk and for details relating to such risk, please see the section titled 'Risk Factors' of the RHP when filed. Potential Investors should not rely on the DRHP filed with SEBI for making any investment decision. Specific attention of the investors is invited to "Risk Factors" beginning on page 23 of the DRHP.

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With united show, Yadav clan sends message to heartland

Members Of Family Vow Allegiance To Akhilesh

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Kanpur: After six years, the body language of the first family of Samajwadi Party appeared robust with the Yadav clan unitedly queuing up to vote in their backyard Saifai on Sunday, dousing any undercurrent of tension. With ailing SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav, who wheeled into a booth at noon to cast his vote, serving as the glue, the entire Yadav family had fallen in line.

Family sources confirmed to **TOI** that MSY had a word with Akhilesh's once estranged uncle Shivpal a night before and emphasised on the need to deliver a message of unity in the entire Yadav heartland and beyond.

And it was not since 2016 that Mulayam's cousin Ram Gopal Yadav and his once feuding brother Shivpal appeared in a photo-op. Not just this, in a rare show of unity, the duo inspected the Abhinav Vidyalya booth in Jaswantnagar and Shivpal touched his feet to seek blessings. The message from Saifai was unanimous — the entire Yadav clan was rock-solid behind Akhilesh to crown him chief minister. The Yadav clan's stance was in sharp contrast to its fragmented position in the run-up to 2017 assembly elections.



SP chief Akhilesh Yadav with wife Dimple in UP's Saifai on Sunday

SP not safe even in its fortress: Modi

In an apparent reference to the Karhal constituency from where SP president Akhilesh Yadav was in the fray in the third phase of polling in UP elections on Sunday, PM Modi said that SP was poised to lose from the seat if considered the "safest", reports **Pankaj Shah**. Addressing a rally in Unnao, Modi, without naming anyone, said the opposition leader had to rope in his ailing father, requesting him to secure the seat.

"One can gauge the mood when the CM candidate of a party himself is insecure in his seat," Modi said.

MSY's brother Abhay Ram Yadav was the early bird. He rode pillion on a bike to cast his vote at 7am and soon the other family members followed suit. "Make no mistake, queued up to vote. Talking to reporters, Ram Gopal was emphatic that SP had already won the poll battle in the third phase and Yogi Adityanath will manage to bag only 20% votes. "Akhilesh will win Karhal by a mammoth margin and the BJP candidate will forfeit his deposit," he said.

BATTLEGROUND
UTTAR PRADESH

my nephew Akhilesh is returning to power and will be CM," said Abhay Ram.

After party general secretary Ram Gopal's tryst with the vote, Shivpal was next in line, followed by son Aditya. Then came Ram Gopal's elder brother Chetram Yadav. Later, Akhilesh and his wife Dimple

Karhal sees 2nd highest turnout ever in keen battle

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow: Karhal, the bastion of Samajwadi Party's first family, on Sunday registered 62.3% turnout, the second highest in its history. The highest turnout was in 1974 when the constituency had witnessed 71.4% polling.

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav is contesting from this high-profile seat while BJP has fielded Union minister Satya Pal Singh Baghel, who is also a former personal security officer of SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav. Karhal has 3.7 lakh registered voters, including 1.2 lakh Yadavs and 18,000 Muslims. In 1951, Karhal was divided into two seats — Karhal West-Shikohabad East and Karhal East-Bhongaon South. In 1957, the present day Karhal was carved out from these two seats.

In 1974, when Karhal recorded its highest poll percentage, Nathu Singh from Bharatiya Kranti Dal won the election by a margin of 6,926 votes. Since the inception of SP in 1992, Karhal has been dominated by SP. It lost only once in 2002 against BJP. Back then, Sobaran Singh Yadav, the current SP MLA from Karhal, was a member of BJP and won the seat with a mere 925 votes margin against SP candidate Anil Kumar Yadav.

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Related reports, P11

Joining the chorus, Shivpal, who's contesting from Jaswantnagar on the SP symbol, said Akhilesh's government will be formed in the state. "I have the blessings of 'Netaji' (Mulayam Singh Yadav) and even I will be victorious in Jaswantnagar with record votes," he said.

Yogi has been better CM than I was, says Rajnath

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cessfully, he said. "Now goons and mafia prefer to stay inside jails. Yogi's bulldozers have become the talk of the town and I have even advised him to purchase more bulldozers," the defence minister said.

The properties of mafia and goons are being demolished and the Yogi-led state government is now constructing houses for the poor on that land, he added.

The defence minister also praised chief minister Yogi's active role for the construction of the international airport at Jewar and said thousands of people would get jobs because of it.

Will BJP & SAD ally again? Netas keep options open

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chandigarh: BJP has neither accepted nor denied the possibility of a post-poll alliance with Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in Punjab, preferring instead to wait it out till the election results are out on March 10. The two parties ended their almost 24-year alliance after SAD walked out over three contentious farm laws that kept the state on the brink for over a year.

"Let the public mandate come first. I am not saying yes or no to any possibility," BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh said on Sunday. He was reacting to a statement purportedly made by Bikram Singh Majithia, the SAD legislator and candidate for Amritsar East constituency.

A media organisation quoted Majithia as saying that SAD will decide on forming an alliance with BJP after the poll results are out. Majithia later said he was misquoted.

"Our alliance is with BSP (Bahujan Samaj Party) only," he said.

Speculation about a possible BJP-SAD tie-up has been



Former Punjab CM Parkash Singh Badal, his son and SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal, daughter-in-law and Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal, and granddaughter Harkirat cast their votes in Bathinda on Sunday

doing the rounds lately, with people citing PM Modi sparing the SAD first family (former CM Parkash Singh Badal and his son and party chief CM Sukhbir Singh Badal) in his speeches during his extensive campaign in the state before Sunday's vote. He also called SAD patriarch Parkash Singh Badal after he tested positive for Covid in January.

The action came after the SAD claimed to have spotted Sood influencing voters outside some polling booths at Landek. Not a registered voter of Moga, Sood was supposed to leave the town after the campaign came to an end on the evening of February 18. His sister, Malvika Sood Sachar, is a Congress candidate for this seat.

Sood asked to stay at home after SAD plaint

Bathinda: Catching Bollywood actor Sonu Sood out in Moga on the polling day despite not being a voter, the district authorities impounded his car and confined him to home for the day, reports **Neel Kamal**.

The action came after the SAD claimed to have spotted Sood influencing voters outside some polling booths at Landek. Not a registered voter of Moga, Sood was supposed to leave the town after the campaign came to an end on the evening of February 18. His sister, Malvika Sood Sachar, is a Congress candidate for this seat.

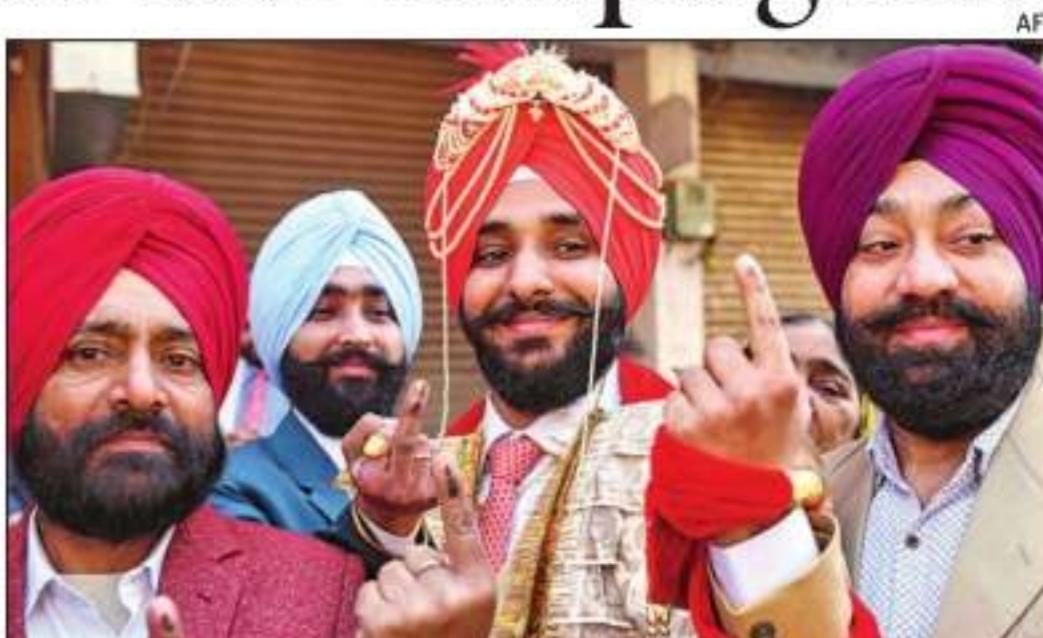
EC relaxes poll curbs further, allows more star campaigners

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Announcing more relaxations in its Covid-19 guidelines, the Election Commission on Sunday raised the maximum limit for star campaigners to 40 from 30 for recognised national and state parties and to 20 from 15 for the rest of them.

The poll panel has given political parties time until 5pm on February 23 to submit the names of their additional star campaigners. This means that the new star campaigners can join electioneering from the fifth phase onwards, as campaigning for the fourth phase ends on Monday.

The latest relaxation in Co-



A groom after casting his ballot in Amritsar on Sunday

vid curbs comes against the backdrop of receding numbers of both active and new Covid-19 cases, particularly in UP where polling is mid-way and Manipur where it is yet to begin. Also, the restrictions put in place in the wake of outbreak of third wave are being lifted in a phased manner.