

दिल्ली सरकार
आप की सरकार



Heartiest greetings on the occasion of the 356th Prakash Parv of Sahib-E-Kamaal
Shri Guru Gobind Singh ji

“Shri Guru Gobind Singh ji fought against injustice and tyranny. Let us take inspiration from his courage and determination and lead our lives based on his teachings.”

-Arvind Kejriwal
Chief Minister, Delhi



Directorate Of Information and Publicity, Government Of NCT Of Delhi

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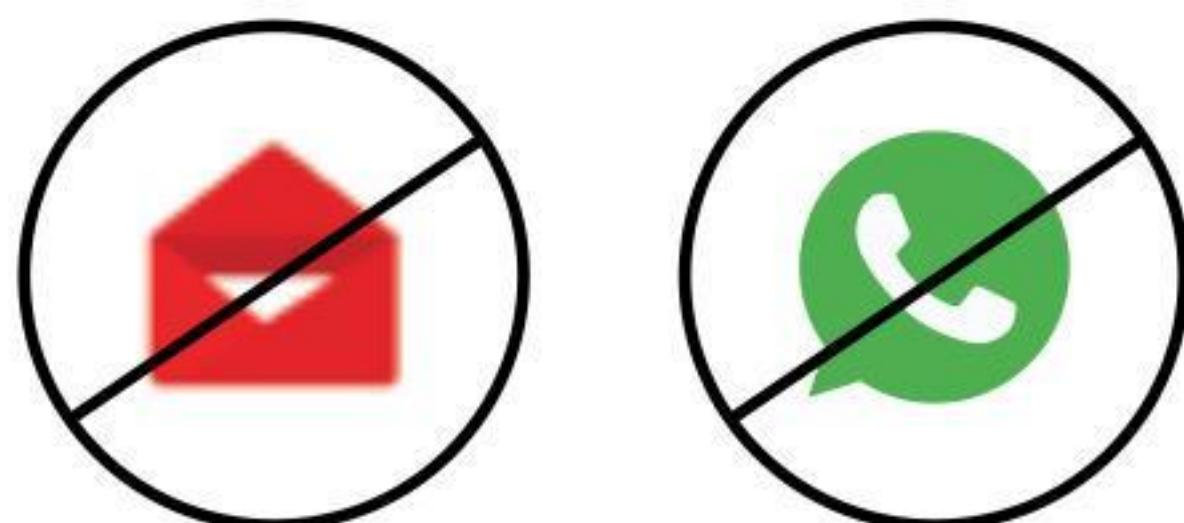


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FORWARD IS BACKWARD

*Why rely on borrowed matter
when the original is right here?*



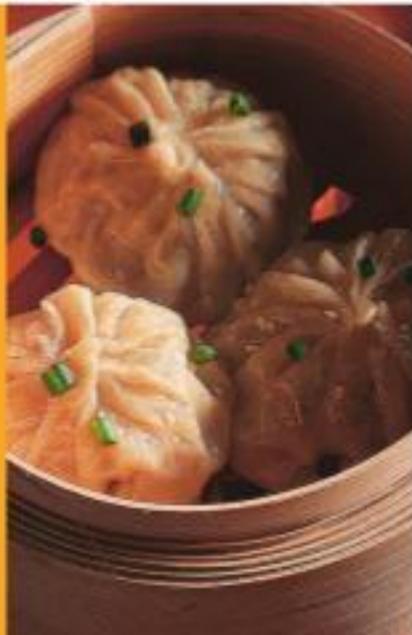
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PAGES 15, 16, 17



Weekend curfew was imposed in Delhi Saturday. Praveen Khanna

Over 750 doctors at 6 big Delhi hospitals are Covid-positive

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

AT LEAST 750 doctors and hundreds more nurses and paramedics from the six major hospitals in Delhi are currently down with Covid-19. Although most of them have mild symptoms and are in home isolation, it has taken away a huge chunk of the workforce, resulting in hospitals having to curtail rou-

tine clinics and surgeries.

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) is worst hit, with nearly 350 resident doctors currently in isolation. "And, these are just resident doctors. Some faculty members and many nurses and paramedics have also tested positive," said a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

MORE REPORTS

PAGE 6

Govt renews Missionaries of Charity's FCRA registration

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

DAYS AFTER the Union Government said it had "refused" to renew the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) registration of the Missionaries of Charity (MoC)

based on "adverse inputs", it restored the same Thursday. The new FCRA certificate will be valid till the end of 2026.

With the renewed registration, the charity set up by Mother Teresa will be able to receive and use funds from foreign contributors.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

ASSEMBLY POLLS START FEBRUARY 10, COUNTING MARCH 10

Slew of measures, restrictions as poll panel announces election schedule for 5 states

Ban on rallies, roadshows until Jan 15; 24.9 lakh first-time voters, says CEC

ANISHA DUTTA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

THE ELECTION Commission of India set the ball rolling Saturday for Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur, announcing a schedule spread over seven phases between February 10 and March 7, and concluding with the counting of votes on March 10.

While Uttar Pradesh will vote in seven phases on February 10, 14, 20, 23, 27, March 3 and 7, polling in Punjab, Uttarakhand and Goa will be held on February 14. Manipur will vote in two phases on February 27 and March 3.

Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra announced a ban on roadshows and rallies until January 15 amid a surge in Covid-19 cases and the spread of the Omicron variant.

The Model Code of Conduct came into effect immediately after the announcement of the schedule.

Chandra said total electors across the five states were over 18 crore with 24.9 lakh first-time voters.

While the term of the current Uttar Pradesh Assembly is scheduled to end in May, those of the other states are slated to end in March.

The poll panel announced a



CEC Sushil Chandra on Saturday. Prem Nath Pandey

EXPLAINED

Dealing with Covid

THE SURGE in Covid cases and the spread of Omicron pose a challenge and the ECI has, therefore, banned roadshows, rallies until January 15. It will review the situation thereafter. The other measures taken are a reduction in the number of electors in a polling station, and raising the candidate expenditure limit to encourage digital, virtual campaigning.

slew of curbs on rallies and campaigning given the pandemic.

"There were a lot of queries on this (Covid-19) issue. The decision to go ahead was taken after

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



DECISION
2022

POLLS IN COVID
SHADOW

POLLING CALENDAR

UTTAR PRADESH		UTTARAKHAND	
Phase 1	Feb 10	All seats	Feb 14
Phase 2	Feb 14	GOA	
Phase 3	Feb 20	All seats	Feb 14
Phase 4	Feb 23	MANIPUR	
Phase 5	Feb 27	Phase 1	Feb 27
Phase 6	Mar 3	Phase 2	Mar 3
Phase 7	Mar 7		

PUNJAB

All seats

THE VERDICT

MARCH 10

POSITIVITY RATE

State

Positivity Rate

ELIGIBLE VOTERS

State

2017

2022

State	2017	2022
Goa	16.54%	
Punjab	6.98%	
Manipur	1.93%	
Uttarakhand	2.70%	
Uttar Pradesh	0.93%	

*Dec 31-Jan 7

SUNDAY STORY

PAGE II



A letter from Samrala, Ludhiana

'Are Covid norms only for us commoners?'

DECISION 2022

BJP BANKS ON MODI FACTOR AGAIN

ON DRAWING BOARD, SHAPE OF OPPOSITION

FULL COVERAGE, PAGE 8

3rd wave may peak in Delhi, Mumbai mid-Jan: Sutra model scientist

Polls contribute but not key to surge: IIT Kanpur's Agrawal



Runs computer model that tracks the Covid curve

Kanpur professor and mathematician Manindra Agrawal.

He said his projection is based on current calculation, which is preliminary as data for the entire country is still not in.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Hours before model code, Punjab gets new DGP

NAVJEEVAN GOPAL
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 8

HOURS AHEAD of the announcement of poll schedule for the Assembly elections, bringing the code of conduct into place,

the Punjab government appointed 1987-batch IPS officer Viresh Kumar Bhawra as the state Director General of Police.

He replaces 1987-batch Siddharth Chattopadhyaya who was serving as the officiating DGP.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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Har Pal Aapke Saath



Cloudy skies and light rainfall remain on the forecast for Sunday as well. Gajendra Yadav

City sees highest 24-hour rainfall for Jan since 1999

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

DELHI WITNESSED a rainy day on Saturday, beginning in the early hours with thunderstorms and continuing into the evening.

The Safdarjung weather observatory, which provides representative figures for the city, recorded 40.6 mm of rainfall in 24 hours between 8.30 am on Friday and 8.30 am on Saturday. Most of this rainfall was recorded in the early hours of Saturday. This is the highest 24-hour rainfall recorded in the past 22 years in January, according to scientists at the IMD.

The rainfall recorded on Saturday came second to the 46 mm of rainfall recorded on January 7, 1999. The highest 24-hour rainfall recorded in January last year was only 25.1 mm, while it was 16.8 mm in January 2020.

Meanwhile, the Palam station recorded 47.6 mm of rainfall between 8.30 am on Friday and 8.30 am on Saturday, making it the highest 24-hour rainfall in January in the past 27 years at the observatory. In the same time frame, the observatory at the Ridge recorded 48 mm, Aya Nagar 49 mm, and Lodhi Road 42.2 mm.

The IMD had predicted a wet spell over northwest India till January 9, on account of a western disturbance lying over north Pakistan and surrounding areas, and an induced cyclonic circulation over east Rajasthan and the neighbourhood induced by the western disturbance.

Western disturbances originate over the Mediterranean Sea, Caspian Sea or Black Sea, and eastwards across North India, bringing winter rainfall, according to the IMD.

"This was an intense system and the season's most active western disturbance. The rainfall depends on the moisture picked up from the Arabian Sea, and it picked up fresh moisture after coming over to the India and Pakistan region. If it was further north, it would not have picked up moisture from the sea," said R K Jenamani, senior scientist, IMD.

WEEK AHEAD		
Date	Max temp	Min temp
Jan 9	18	12
Jan 10	19	9
Jan 11	20	7
Jan 12	19	7
Jan 13	20	8
Jan 14	20	7

(in degrees Celsius)

Cloudy skies and light rainfall remain on the forecast for Sunday as well.

The rainfall brought with it an improvement in the air quality. The AQI on Saturday was 91, in the 'satisfactory' category. This is the first such 'satisfactory' air day since October, when October 25 recorded AQI in the 'satisfactory' range.

From January 1 to 8, the capital had witnessed one 'severe' air day. Going by the Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi, the AQI is likely to be in the 'moderate' category on Sunday.

The minimum temperature, at 15.2 degree Celsius, was eight degrees above the normal for this time of the year while the maximum temperature was 16.4 degree Celsius, three degrees below normal.

There was little difference between the minimum temperature, usually recorded at night, and the maximum temperature that is usually registered in the day. This was also on account of the western disturbance, and the associated moisture levels, clouds and wind, according to IMD scientists.

ACCUSED SAME IN BOTH CRIMES 2 Uber drivers choked to death in hours

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

TWO CAB drivers working with Uber were robbed and killed, allegedly by the same accused, in two different places in the national capital on Thursday night, as the curfew was on. Central district police have arrested two men and found during investigation that they, along with a third accused, booked the cabs using a stolen phone and choked the drivers to death. The motive, police believe, was robbery — the accused took three phones and Rs 600 from the victims.

When contacted, DCP (Central) Shweta Chauhan said the accused have been identified as Akash Kumar (19) and Junaid Razzaq (19). The latter, police said, is allegedly a drug addict and used to commit robbery to get money for drugs. He was released from jail in a robbery case three months ago.

"The first case came to light on Friday at 8.45 am, after a PCR van noticed a WagonR parked on the roadside in Anand Parbat and a man lying unconscious inside. He was taken to RML hospital but was declared dead on arrival. No apparent injury was visible, but blood was seen coming out of his mouth. He was identified as Anil (48); his phone and wallet were missing," the DCP said.

"They bought drugs from a local supplier and then booked the second cab," said an officer.

CHAUDHARY CHARAN SINGH UNIVERSITY, MEERUT (U.P.) RECRUITMENT NOTICE
Online Applications are invited from Indian Citizens for appointment against following posts of **Assistant Professors** in the University:
Advertisement No. Post Number of Posts & Department Level
Academic/01/2022 Assistant Professor Sanskrit (UR – 02 & OBC – 02) 10
• The Last date of online submission of application form is **30.01.2022**.
• Last date of submission of the printout of online filled form (downloaded) is **05.02.2022**.
• Link for the form and other details: <http://www.ccsuniversity.ac.in/registrar>

Note:- For further details and submission of applications through online mode, please visit Institute's website www.sppgi.ac.in

Gurgaon cab driver helps bust interstate baby trafficking gang, three arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, JANUARY 8

THREE MEMBERS of an interstate gang allegedly involved in trafficking infants were arrested Saturday, with some help from a Gurgaon-based taxi driver. Police said two children, both 20-25 days old, were rescued and handed over to the child welfare committee. Initial probe showed that a cab driver used to kidnap or steal infants from Delhi and sell them for Rs 3-4 lakh in neighbouring states.

Police said the trio, Surinder Kaur from Alwar (45), Neha Kumar (32) from Delhi, and Harjinder Singh (32) from Alwar, hailed a cab from Daula Kuan to IFFCO Chowk Thursday. The driver, Umesh Lohiya, said, both women were carrying infants. On the way, the accused asked

volved in trafficking of newborns since 2014. Yesterday, they had struck a deal of Rs 3 lakh in Alwar, which did not go through due to a disagreement over payment. We are questioning them about their accomplices. It seems they were part of an organised syndicate and many people are involved in the nexus."

Lohiya to take them to Alwar. In the complaint, Lohiya said, "Near Kherki Daula toll, the man went to buy milk while one of the women got a call. I overheard them talking about not staying in Alwar for long... On another call, the woman mentioned they needed Rs 3 lakh for a deal. In Manesar, when they abruptly told me they didn't want to go to Alwar, I suspected they had kidnapped the infants." On the way back, he told the accused he would take a detour near DLF phase 3 Metro station to run an errand and contacted police. The police commissioner announced a Rs 25,000 reward for Lohiya.

INDIRA GANDHI INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
(A Super Speciality, Autonomous Institute Of Govt. Of Bihar)
IGIMS Medical College, IGIMS Nursing College
Sheikhpura, Patna-14, EPBX:0612-2297099/2297631, Website: www.igims.org

Re-Tender Notice No. IGIMS 10 / EW / E-Tender 2021-22

Percentage rate for Schedule items and rates of non-schedule items in two bid systems (Technical and Price Bid) are invited through e-tendering process from eligible experienced contractors / firms registered under, CPWD, BCD, Energy Department, PESU, Railway or in any government organization under which similar nature of work has been carried for the following works. Intending bidders must be registered with e-procurement cell on www.eproc.bihar.gov.in. After registration bidders will get user ID, password and digital signature which will provide an opportunity and eligibility to take part in e-tendering process.

SI No.	Name of works	Estimated cost ₹	Completion period of the work
1	Supply, Installation, Testing and commissioning of Air-conditioners and associated electrical works at various locations in state cancer institute (SCI) building at IGIMS, Patna-14	Rs.4,24,73,300.00	60 Days

The details can be viewed on institute website: www.igims.org and www.eproc.bihar.gov.in Director, IGIMS, Patna-14

SANJAY GANDHI POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
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RECRUITMENT

Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS) Lucknow is an autonomous Institute under Government of Uttar Pradesh invites online application from Indian Citizens for the following posts. The vacancies are tentative in nature and may decrease or increase as per requirement of the Institute. The details of Posts, Age, Educational qualification and Pay Scale are given below.

SN	Name of Post	Essential Qualification & Experience	Pay Matrix	UR	OBC	SC	Upper Age Limit
1	Principal, College of Nursing	(a) Master Degree In Nursing with Advanced specialization on Nursing. (b) Must be registered Nurse and midwife (c) 10 years experience in the nursing field after registration as Nurse out of which 7 years must have been spent in Nursing Education OR Administration after obtaining the prescribed Post Graduate qualification.	PB-4 Rs 37400-67000 GP-Rs. 8700/-	01	-	-	50 Yrs
2	Lecturer, College of Nursing	(a) Master Degree in Nursing from a recognized Institution/University (b) Must be registered Nurse and Midwife (c) 05 years experience with a minimum of two years teaching experience in Nursing after obtaining the Postgraduate qualification.	PB-3 Rs 15600-39100 GP-Rs. 6600	-	01	01	50 Yrs

Note:- For further details and submission of applications through online mode, please visit Institute's website www.sppgi.ac.in

ADVT.No.:I-51/ACAD/2021-22

(Executive Registrar)

Residential properties of Gurugram Zone		Residential properties of Panchkula Zone						
Sr. No.	Sector/ Urban Estate	No. of Plots	Sr. No.	Sector/ Urban Estate	No. of Plots	Sr. No.	Sector/ Urban Estate	No. of Plots
1	5, Gurugram-I	2	20	51, Gurugram-II	3	1	21, Panchkula	26
2	7, Gurugram-I	1	21	52, Gurugram-II	3	2	25, Panchkula	2
3	9, Gurugram-I	4	22	57, Gurugram-II	6	3	26, Panchkula	3
4	9-A, Gurugram-I	8	23	6, Dharuhera	7	4	28, Panchkula	17
5	10, Gurugram-I	2	24	18-Def, Rewari	10	5	31, Panchkula	4
6	15-I, Gurugram-I	1	25	10-Part, Mahendergarh	5	6	30, Pinjore	16
7	15-II, Gurugram-I	4	25	Part, Mahendergarh	5	7	15, Jagadhari	3
8	Pataudi, Gurugram-I	5				8	18, Jagadhari	1
9	21, Gurugram-I	3				9	18, Kaithal	6
10	38, Gurugram-II	4				10	21, Kaithal	7
11	39, Gurugram-II	7				11	8, Ambala	5
12	40, Gurugram-II	10				12	5, Karnal	3
13	42, Gurugram-II	6				13	6, Karnal	4
14	43, Gurugram-II	1				14	9, Karnal	8
15	45, Gurugram-II	6				15	14 (P-II), Karnal	3
16	46, Gurugram-II	2				16	16, Karnal	7
17	47, Gurugram-II	3				17	32-P, Karnal	2
18	49, Gurugram-II	9				18	33-P, Karnal	25
19	50, Gurugram-II	7				19	Taraori	5

The detailed information of the sites and terms & conditions of e-auction will be available on <https://hsphv.org.in>.

TEMPORARY DIVERSION / RESCHEDULING OF TRAINS

In order to upgrade the infrastructure & enhance safety standards, South Central Railway will undertake the Pre-Non-Interlocking and Non-Interlocking Works in connection with yard remodeling of Tangarmunda & Bamra Stations of Chakardharpur Division. To execute this work South Central Railway will take traffic cum power block on 09.01.2022. During this period the following trains will temporarily be affected on the dates as shown under:

Train No. & Train Name	Diverted Route	Dates from originating station
18477 Puri - Yogi Nagar Rishikesh Utkal Express	Via Cuttack - Angul - Jharsuguda Road - Bilaspur Jn.	08.01.2022
18478 Yogi Nagar Rishikesh - Puri Utkal Express	Via Bilaspur Jn. - Jharsuguda Road - Angul - Cuttack	08.01.2022

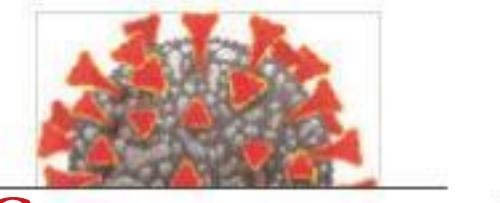
RESCHEDULING OF TRAIN

18311 Sambalpur-Banaras Express will be rescheduled at 15:25 hrs. instead of 13:05 hrs. on 09.01.22.

For any kind of information such as timings, composition and stoppages enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

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

NORTHERN RAILWAY
visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

CORONAVIRUS
IN THE CAPITALVACCINATIONS IN
LAST 24 HOURS

1,79,885

OMICRON
CASES

513

PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL: 1,586

OXYGEN SUPPORT

348

VENTILATOR SUPPORT

27

TOTAL
CASES

15,26,979

HOSPITAL BEDS

14,314

ICU BEDS

4,090

Total

12,664

Vacant

3,793

Tests

97,762

*Total active cases

25,143 3,33,87,074

POSITIVITY RATE UP TOO

Covid cases continue to race, 20,000 and counting



A civil defence volunteer guides passengers to Covid testing kiosks at New Delhi railway station on Saturday. Praveen Khanna

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

THE DAILY tally of Covid-19 cases crossed the 20,000-mark on Saturday, with the capital reporting 20,181 new cases of the infection. Delhi also scaled up testing further with 1,02,965 tests conducted on Friday as reported in Saturday's bulletin.

Despite the government pushing up the number of tests, the positivity rate (proportion of total samples that return positive) has continued to increase reaching 19.6% on Saturday. In comparison, when Delhi last saw over 1,00,000 tests being conducted in a day — during a 10-day period in April last year — the positivity rate ranged from 4.9% to 15.9%.

The rise of the positivity rate has also been quite sharp during the current wave of infections. It shot up from less than 1% to 19.6% within 11 days; during the delta variant driven wave in April-May last year, it took 28 days for a similar increase, data shows.

Despite the sharp spike in cases, the number of hospitali-

dered an increase of 1,300 beds for Covid-19 patients in 14 of its hospitals (taking the total to 5,650), according to an order by deputy secretary (health and family welfare) Ajay Bisht. Of these, 2,075 would be ICU beds. There will also be 2,800 beds in eight Covid health centres for isolation of those who might not have adequate space at home.

As per the bulletin, Delhi also reported seven more deaths due to Covid-19, taking January's toll to 36. There were only nine deaths in the month of December, seven in the month of November, four in October, and five in September as per the data.

"Almost all of the deaths were in patients who had co-morbid conditions and were admitted to the hospital for other treatments," said Health Minister Satyendar Jain in a video briefing on Saturday.

The Delhi government or-

ganisation has remained low. At present, there are 48,178 active cases in Delhi of which 1,586 are admitted to hospitals. When there were nearly 50,000 active cases during the delta wave, there were over 8,800 persons in hospitals while cases were going up and over 14,000 while cases

were on the decline.

"At the moment, 10% beds are occupied in hospitals and 90% are vacant. Around 13,300 beds are still available for patients... There were six-seven times more patients hospitalised when Delhi was reporting similar number of cases last time. Most people are

getting a mild disease this time and can recover in home isolation. They can break home isolation after seven days, provided they have not had symptoms for three consecutive days," said Health Minister Satyendar Jain in a video briefing on Saturday.

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UNSC aid resolution cuts Taliban more slack, disquiet in Delhi

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN
CHENNAI, JANUARY 8

A UNITED Nations Security Council resolution on Afghanistan that was adopted last month has created disquiet in New Delhi even though India backed the resolution.

The resolution provides an exemption from sanctions against the Taliban to allow humanitarian aid and saw Russia and China successfully push for liberal terms of engagement with the Kabul regime with practically no conditions.

Official sources said Resolution 2615, passed on December 22, gives the Taliban an effective "free pass" on the questions of preventing terrorist safe havens on its soil, human rights including gender and minority rights, the formation of an inclusive government minority, and on allowing unhindered access for humanitarian work.

These were the key demands made of the Taliban in an earlier resolution (UNSC resolution 2593) passed on August 31, on the last day of India's two-month rotating presidency of the Council, and two weeks after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.

These conditions have been the main "asks" from the de facto Taliban regime to be granted recognition, and have been reiterated at several regional and international forums on Afghanistan.

"The carve out (from the sanctions) is good for Afghanistan, as it will enable humanitarian assistance to be sent to Afghanistan, it meets every humanitarian requirement. But it also goes far be-

yond in a way that provides a free hand to the Taliban to solidify their position. And it does not help the cause of Resolution 2593," said an official.

Resolution 2615 lays out that humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan is not a violation of the sanctions against the Taliban, and permits "the processing and payment of funds, other financial assets or economic resources, and the provision of goods and services necessary to ensure the timely delivery of such assistance or to support such activities".

It "encourages" assistance providers "to use reasonable efforts to minimize the accrual of any benefits" to Taliban members named in the sanctions list.

However, this is not a condition for the flow of humanitarian aid.

"In a way, 2615 has made 2593 redundant," the official said, adding that it was not just China and Russia, but also the US and several other countries in the Security Council that backed the "ambiguous" language of the December resolution.

"The West has abdicated its responsibility. Where is the ask on women's rights? What about the minorities?" the official said.

After the vote, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations T.S. Tirumurti – India also chairs the Taliban Sanctions Committee – told the Council humanitarian assistance must be scaled up as more than half the population of Afghanistan was facing acute food insecurity, and said the regime must provide "unhindered access" to the UN and other aid agencies.

But he also said that humani-

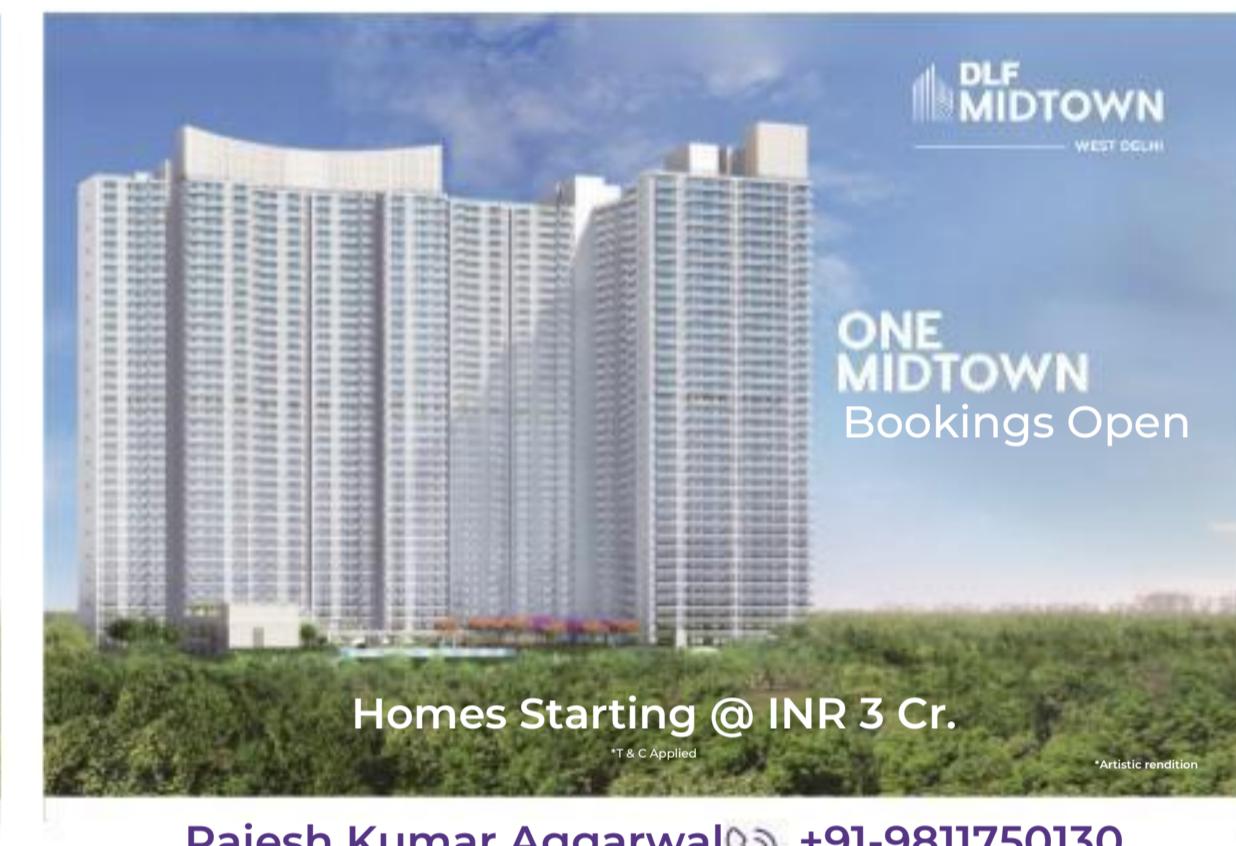
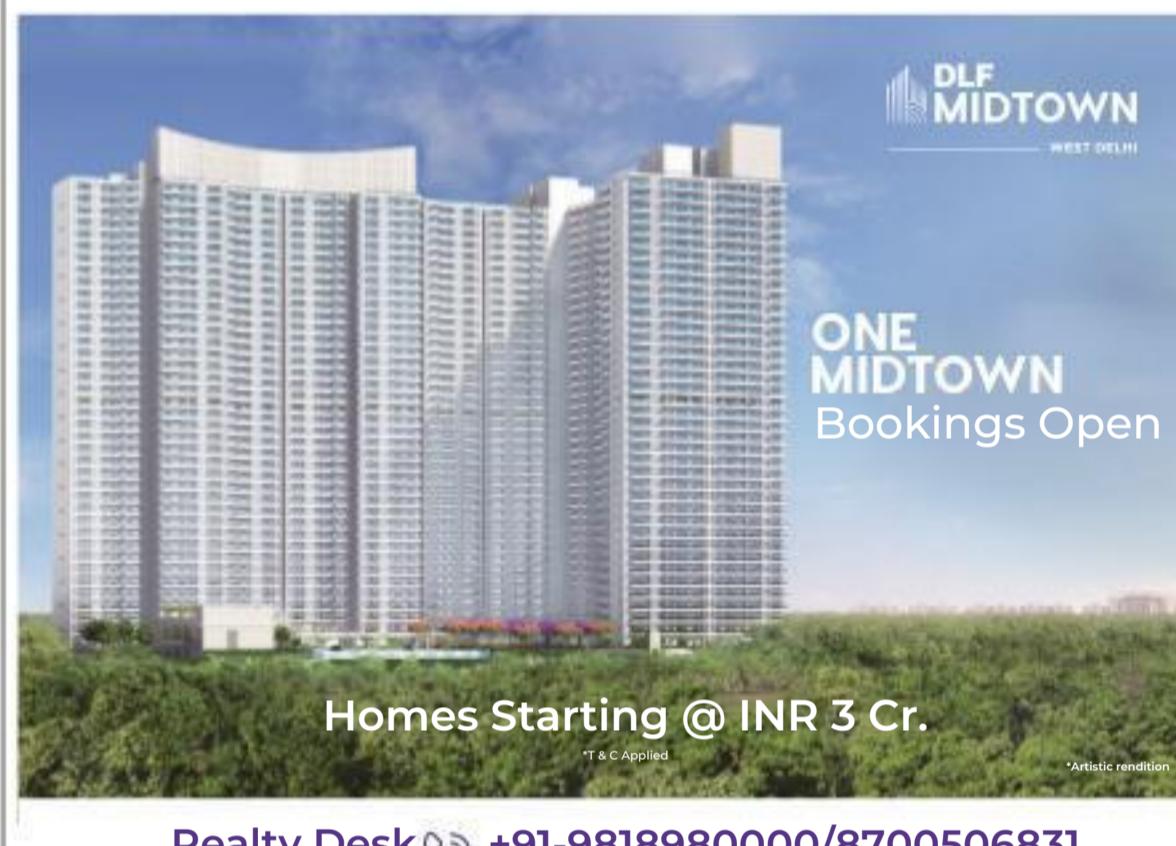
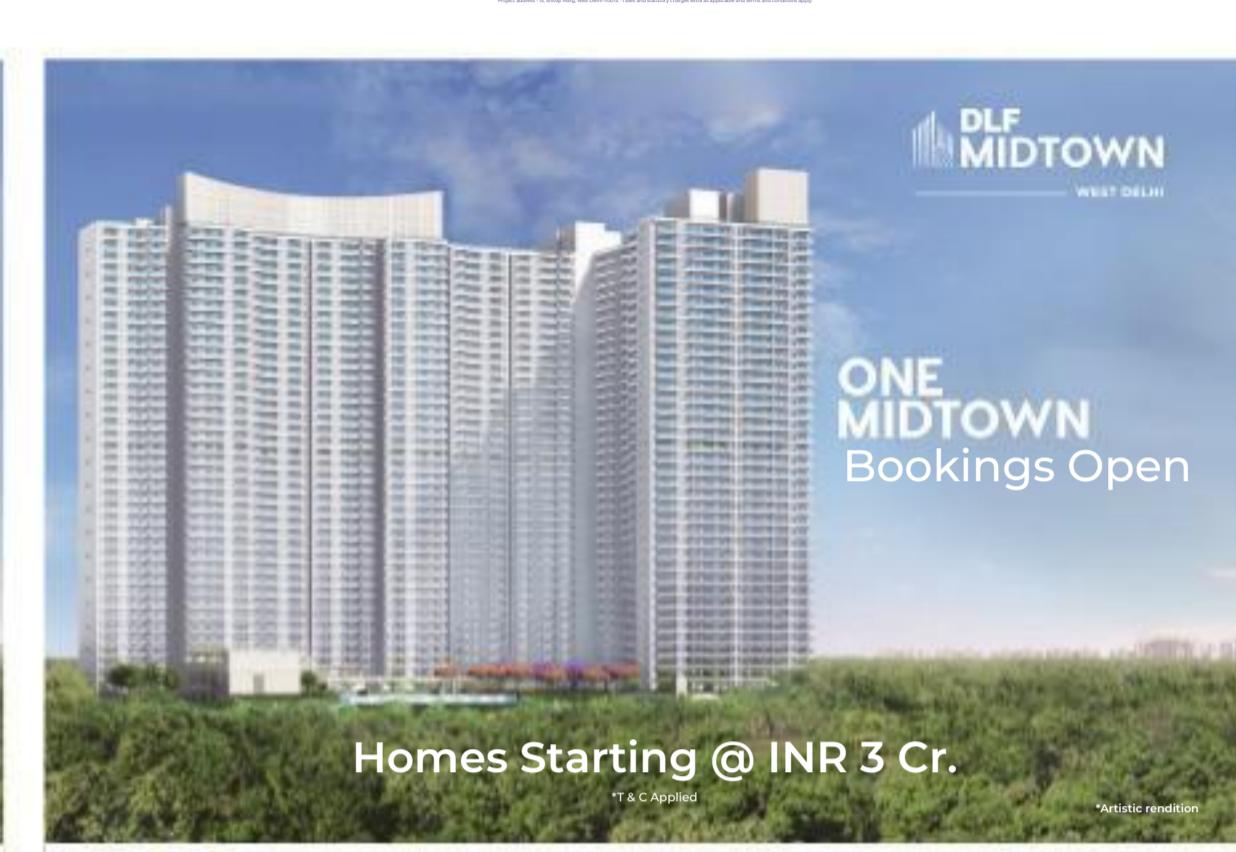
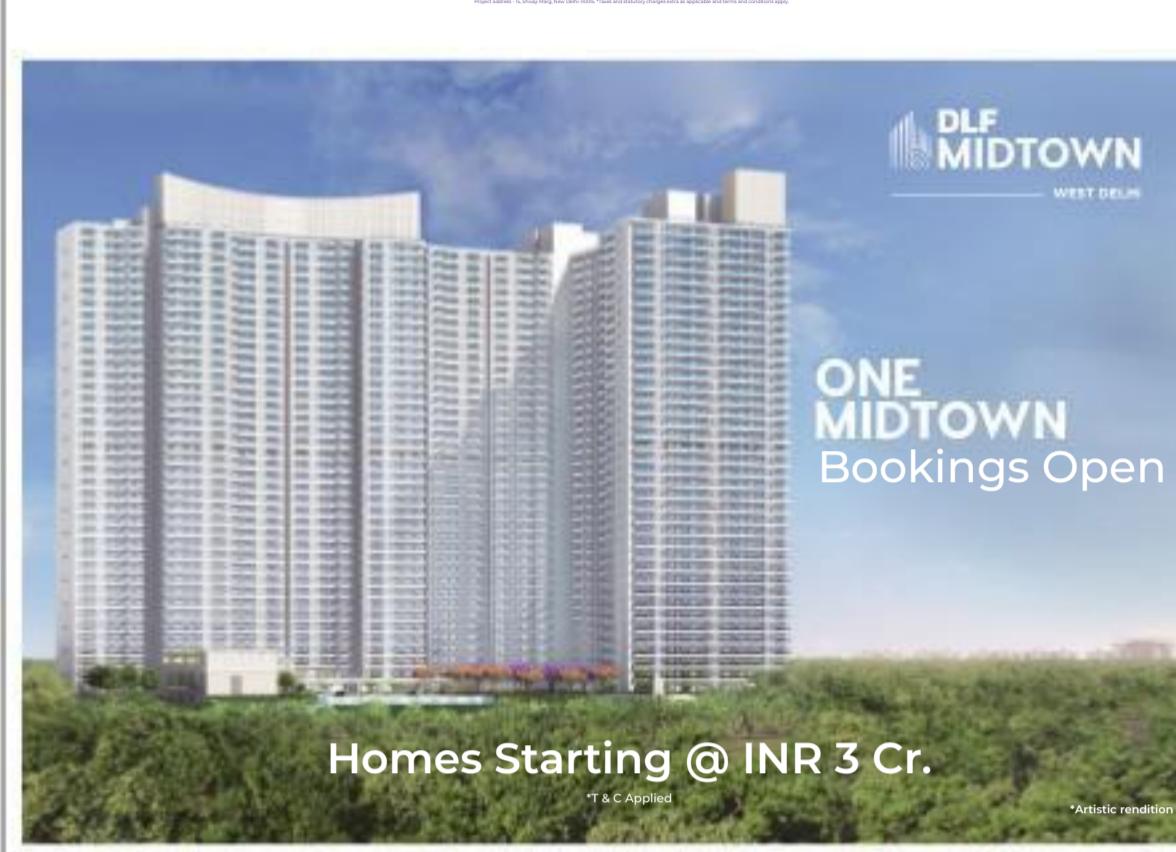
tarian assistance should be based on the "principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence; disbursed to all regardless of ethnicity, religion or political belief; and reach the most vulnerable first, including women, children and minorities."

India has responded to Afghanistan's crisis by sending vaccines, life-saving drugs and food grains. It has had two public meetings with Taliban leaders and is also said to be in backchannel negotiations with sections of the Taliban. Tirumurti told the Council while the immediate needs of the Afghan people had to be addressed, the international community "must be guided by the requirements set out in resolution 2593".

In an indication of the complex positioning on Afghanistan by various players in the region and the international community, sharp differences emerged during discussions on several drafts of the resolution with India, a non-permanent member of the Council, and France, one of the Permanent 5, on the same side and China and Russia on the other.

According to the MacArthur Foundation-supported Security Council Report, which provides analyses of happenings at the horseshoe table, Resolution 2615, proposed by the US on December 3, was hard fought over three weeks.

India and France, with a couple of other non-permanent members advised caution, while China and Russia pushed for, and succeeded in getting a more open-ended arrangement, which was also backed by several non-permanent members.



Centre grants Y+ security cover to Punjab MLA who joined BJP

New Delhi: The Union government has provided Y+ category VIP security cover to Punjab MLA Fatehjung Singh Bajwa who recently joined the BJP, according to official sources.

The legislator from Punjab's Qadiani Assembly seat switched over to the BJP from the Congress on December 28 last year.

Sources in the security estab-

lishment told PTI that Fatehjung Singh Bajwa has been provided the Y+ security cover for his movement in poll-bound Punjab. The Union Home Ministry sanctioned the deployment on the basis of a recommendation sent by central intelligence agencies that underlined potential security threats to him, they said. PTI

Railways to levy fee at redeveloped stations

New Delhi: The Indian Railways is planning to levy a station development fee ranging from Rs 10 to Rs 50 depending on the class of travel for passengers boarding or alighting at redeveloped stations.

Officials said the fee is likely to be added to the train tickets during booking. No fee will be charged for suburban train journeys, according to a circular issued by the Railway Board. PTI

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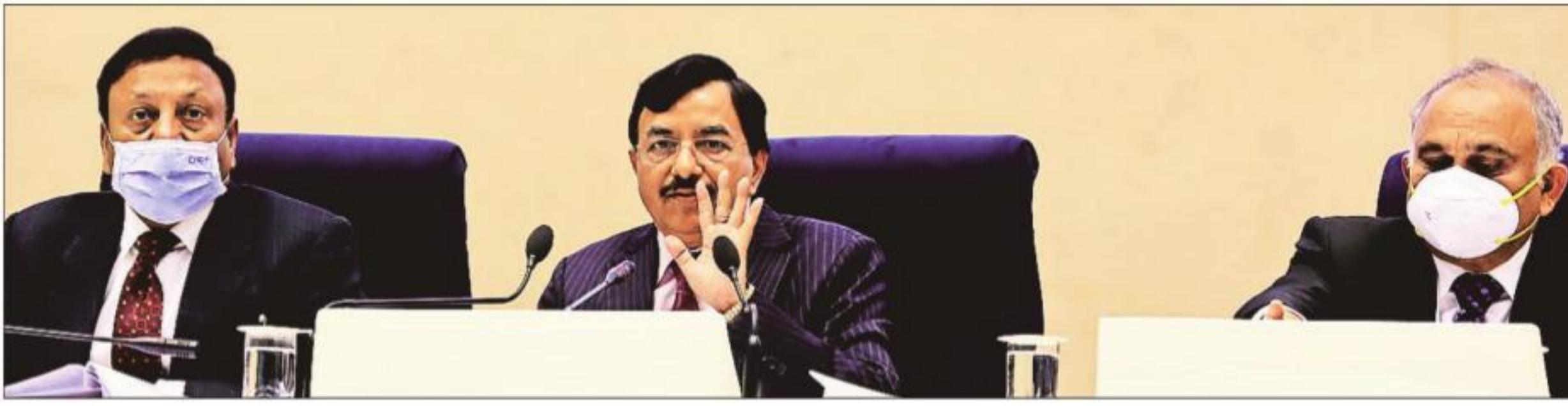
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FINALLY, THE DATE WITH DATES

Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra with Election Commissioners Rajiv Kumar (left) and Anup Chandra Pandey (right) in New Delhi Saturday. Prem Nath Pandey

With development and Hindutva plank, Yogi eyeing second innings as UP CM

LALMANI VERMA
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 8

THE UPCOMING polls in Uttar Pradesh, the country's politically most-important state, will be the first Assembly elections for Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) firebrand Yogi Adityanath as the Chief Minister. It is going to be crucial for Adityanath as well as his key rivals including Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati.

In the previous UP Assembly polls in 2017, when the Akhilesh-led SP was in power, the rival parties such as their main Opposition BSP had campaigned against the Akhilesh government over issues like law and order and corruption. The BJP had then focused on its "appeasement of Muslims" plank by raking up Muzaffarnagar riots and alleged exodus of Hindus from Kairana.

In the run-up to the February-March 2022 UP polls, the major contenders ranged against the BJP, including the principal Opposition SP, BSP and Congress have been seeking to target the Adityanath government over a variety of issues such as farmer problems, law and order, price rise, and the BJP government's alleged mishandling of the Covid pandemic, among others.

The Adityanath government is also highlighting its moves to set up new medical colleges and AIIMS centres as well as expressways during its tenure.

SP chief Akhilesh is seeking a mandate by wooing non-Yadav OBCs by forging alliances with smaller parties such as the Mahan Dal, Janwadi Socialist Party and Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP), which was a BJP ally in 2017.

It is also going to be high-stakes elections for Mayawati. After losing two consecutive Assembly polls in 2012 and 2017, the BSP has now gone back to its strategy of "creating bhaichara (brotherhood) between Dalits and Brahmins".

The Congress continues to be in political wilderness in UP. Led by AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the party is looking for its revival in the key state.



UP CM Yogi Adityanath

manding its apology over police firing on karsevaks in Ayodhya in 1990 during the then Mulayam Singh Yadav government.

They have also been targeting SP president Akhilesh Yadav for his purported remark praising Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

Just a couple of days ahead of the Election Commission's announcement of the Assembly poll schedule, the Adityanath government announced a reduction in power tariff for private tube wells. The announcement came after SP and AAP promised free power for farmers and free electricity of 300 units per month for domestic users.

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A crowded, prickly field, it's up in the air in Punjab

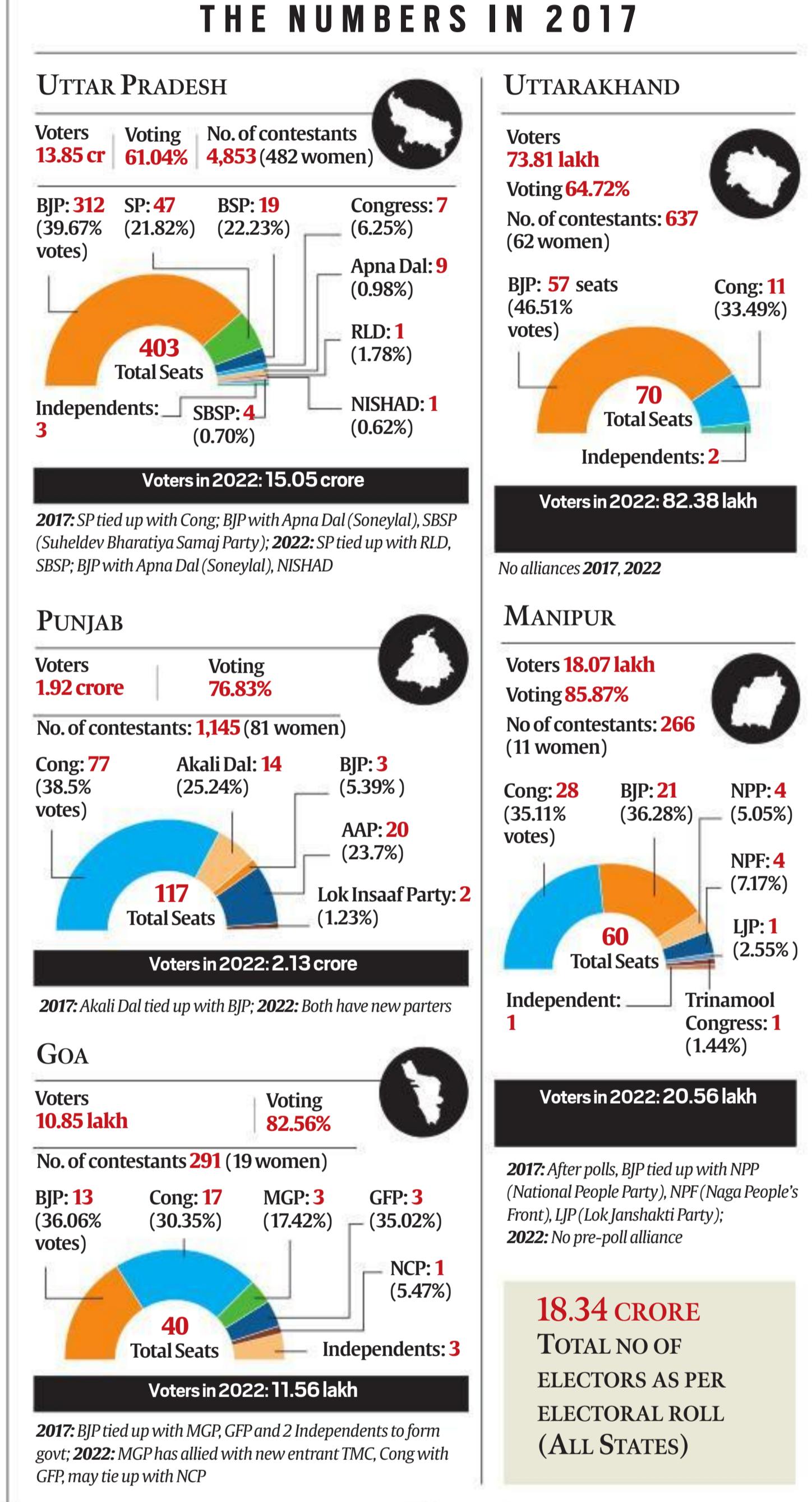
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 8

PUNJAB IS poised for its maiden multi-cornered contest in the coming Assembly elections, with split allies, splinter groups and resurgent farmers complicating poll equations. It may also be one of its shillest, as the thwarted rally of Prime Minister Narendra Modi cranks the pitch up to "national security".

The 2017 election had seen the Aam Aadmi Party stun the Akali Dal and emerge as the second largest party after the Congress. Since then, the fortunes of all three parties have been rendered un-

certain. While the Akali Dal is heading into its first state election since 1996 without the BJP as partner, AAP has squandered some of its gains through early defections, while the Congress is still to emerge from the upheaval of Amarinder Singh's departure. Meanwhile, the BJP, which was written off following the farm agitation, is hoping to regain some ground through its alliance with Amarinder Singh and a splinter Akali group, and following the re-peal of the farm laws.

In the last lap, what all parties wondered about also came true when 22 of the farm unions, which were part of the Morcha that caused the Modi government



Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi

to yield after a year-long agitation, announced their own party, and plans to contest. The Samyukta Samaj Morcha, that has applied for registration with the Election Commission, is led by BS Rawat, a notable name after the agitation.

The Congress, which came to

power with an overwhelming majority in 2017, bagging 77 of the 117 seats and adding three more in the 2019 bypolls, hopes its gamble of choosing a relatively unknown Charan Singh Channi to replace Amarinder will help it battle anti-incumbency and popular angst. As the first Dalit CM, Channi has managed to not only win over the substantial Scheduled Caste vote but has fast established himself as a man with ear to the ground. However, would that be enough to drown out the frequent tirades of PPCC chief Navjot Singh Sidhu against his own party, remains to be seen.

AAP too is going to the polls without a CM face. The party has

been canvassing in the name of Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and his model of development. Kejriwal gave a number of 'guarantees' to the state, including payment of Rs 1,000 a month to women.

The BJP and its allies, the Lok Congress Party of Amarinder and SAD (Samyukt), have been focusing on "security for the border state" and promises of a fiscal package from the Centre. The recent security breach during Modi's visit may help the BJP's campaign pitch.

The Akali Dal has been trying hard to reclaim its cadre by emphasising how it broke away from the BJP at the Centre to throw its lot with the farmers.

The Congress, which came to

get the NCP and the Shiv Sena as part of its coalition.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is another new player, which, like the TMC, has launched an aggressive, high-voltage campaign in the run-up to the polls in the coastal state.

The TMC had on Friday even floated a proposal for a larger alliance of the Opposition parties to take on the BJP, expressing its willingness to join hands with the Congress and other parties. The Congress was however not enthused by this proposal.

Amid shifting alliances, Goa heads for high-voltage polls

MAYURA JANWALKAR
PANAJI, JANUARY 8

EVEN BY the standards of Goa's volatile, multi-party politics, the 14 February election to the 40-member state Assembly is set to be an unprecedented battle.

As Goa, India's smallest state, gears up to elect its eighth Legislative Assembly since it was accorded statehood in 1987, the battlefield, which has already become crowded, is getting increasingly more unpredictable,

with the game of defections and shifting political alliances playing out in full swing.

The ruling BJP's campaign is being spearheaded by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who took over the reins after party stalwart and former CM Manohar Parrikar's demise in 2019. In the previous Assembly polls in 2017, the BJP, despite being the ruling party, had won only 13 seats, with the principal Opposition Congress emerging as the single largest party with 17 seats. The BJP had then how-

ever managed to cobble up a ruling coalition with regional parties like the Maharashtra Samajwadi Party (MSP), Goa Forward Party (GFP) and two in-

dependents, with Parrikar playing the key role in this exercise.

In 2019, the BJP ousted its alliance partners from the government when 10 Congress MLAs defected to its camp, giving it a comfortable majority number.

The BJP's miffed former allies, the MGP and the GFP, have now forged new alliances for the upcoming polls, with the MGP tying up with a new entrant into the Goa fray, the Trinamool Congress (TMC), while the GFP has allied with the Congress, which also seems to be looking

to get the NCP and the Shiv Sena as part of its coalition.

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The TMC had on Friday even floated a proposal for a larger alliance of the Opposition parties to take on the BJP, expressing its willingness to join hands with the Congress and other parties. The Congress was however not enthused by this proposal.

It subsequently lost Madhya Pradesh to the BJP. In Goa, it has been squeezed into a corner by the TMC and AAP. In Punjab, its leaders can't stop squabbling, and in Manipur it has been facing behind-the-scenes losing out in the government



Goa CM Pramod Sawant



AIMING TO RETAIN POWER IN 4 STATES

BJP makes PM Modi its poll mascot again

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

BATTLE LINES have been drawn with the Election Commission Saturday declaring the schedule for Assembly elections in five states – including Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur – whose outcome is going to have crucial ramifications for the ruling BJP.

Except Punjab, the BJP is ruling in all these states. The polls also mark the middle period of the Narendra Modi government's second term.

For the BJP, which has been in an election mode for the last six months, retaining power in the four states – especially the Hindi heartland state of Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state in the country – is crucial, even as the party has made its election campaign centred round Prime Minister Modi once again.

The scale on which the BJP raked up the issue of a security breach during the PM's recent visit to Punjab clearly signalled that Modi will continue to be the face of its electioneering for the coming round of Assembly polls too.

The elections will be held amid the third wave of the Covid pandemic and could be a test for the BJP dispensation, both at the Centre and in states, which had drawn flak for its handling of the second Covid wave during April-June last year while also getting kudos for the nationwide vaccination programme thereafter.

The saffron party is looking for a successive win in UP to boost its prospects in the 2024 general elections. The UP victory is considered to be crucial for the BJP's plan to further consolidate the organisation and expand its reach across the country.

For Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who has emerged as a key BJP leader and a highly polarising figure in the party's poll campaigns, it will be the first Assembly polls as the CM,

whose results will have a critical bearing on his own political career – even within the BJP politics as he is considered by a party section to be a potential successor of Modi.

Uttarakhand might be a tough battle for the BJP which had to change its Chief Ministers thrice in the state in four months last year. With the anti-incumbency factor and the state government's alleged failure in generating jobs perceived to be hurting the party's electoral prospects, the BJP leadership is keen to replace 40 per cent of its sitting MLAs with fresh faces in the hill state, party sources said.

Although it has set a target of scalping 60 seats in the 70-member Uttarakhand Assembly, it is going to be an uphill task for the faction-ridden state unit.

A victory in Manipur would help the BJP retain its recently-attained dominance and influence in the North-east region, with the party maintaining that its "double-engine" government model at the Centre and in the states" has brought development at the doorstep of the "region neglected so far". However, party leaders have admitted that the electoral scene in Manipur is still tricky due to the entry of new players like the Trinamool Congress.

In Goa, the BJP would capitalise on a division in the Opposition ranks, with AAP and TMC entering the fray and launching campaigns that may harm the main Opposition Congress. However, a senior BJP office-bearer,

Unlike in West Bengal in the 2021 Assembly polls, where it could not beat the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC, a regional party, the BJP will be now in direct fight with the Congress in Uttarakhand, Manipur, Goa and Punjab. "Any win for the Congress could be damaging for the BJP's future plans as it would revive that party and could easily muster support for a strong anti-BJP front at the national level,"

On the drawing board, the shape of Opposition

Can Cong win any? Can AAP promise hold? Can SP, BSP matter?

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

WHILE THE Assembly elections in five states, including the politically crucial Uttar Pradesh, will be a mid-term appraisal for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP, it will be more critical and defining for the Opposition, especially the Congress but also regional forces like the Samajwadi Party, BSP and Aam Aadmi Party.

The outcome could shape larger Opposition politics, reaffirming or challenging the Congress's claim as the nucleus of the anti-BJP bandwagon in the run-up to the 2024 general elections. It would also impact the internal dynamics in the tottering grand old party which is preparing to elect a new president this year.

Having relentlessly attacked the BJP government over the Covid crisis, price rise, unemployment and farm laws, the Opposition will be looking at the polls to see if its campaign has hit home, or the popularity of Modi has taken any beating.

In power in Punjab and within winning distance in Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa, this might be the last chance for the Congress to stay in the game. In the past seven years since Modi became PM, the party has been able to form governments in only five states – the Union territory of Puducherry in 2016, Punjab in 2017, and Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh in 2018.

It subsequently lost Madhya Pradesh to the BJP. In Goa, it has been squeezed into a corner by the TMC and AAP. In Punjab, its leaders can't stop squabbling, and in Manipur it has been facing behind-the-scenes losing out in the government

the SP, which was in the throes of a family feud. The outcome was a humiliating, all-time low of seven seats. This time, the face of the contest is Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, another member of the Nehru-Gandhi family.

As general secretary in charge of the state, her women-oriented 'Ladki hun lad sakti hun' campaign has hit some right notes, but the party remains a fringe player in UP. And, should the Congress make no gains, Vadra will dwindle as the Congress's shiny hope.

Akhilesh is similarly shouldering the SP almost alone this time, with father Mulayam Singh Yadav ailing. He has been campaigning aggressively and forging alliances, including with Jayant Chaudhary's RLD and several small but influential caste-based parties.

Having won just 19 seats in UP in 2015, Mayawati is facing the most important election of her career, though she has been surprisingly low-key about it. Another state where the BSP is in contention is Punjab, where it has tied up with the Akali Dal.

The poll defeat in Punjab will be a staggering blow for the Akali Dal, fighting without an alliance with the BJP and Partap Singh Badal's towering presence, as well as under the cloud of several charges.

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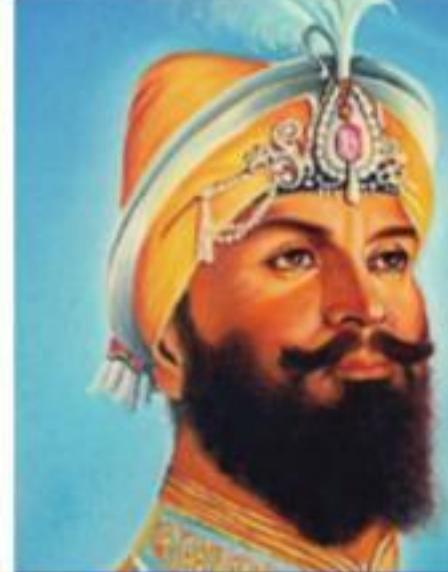
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ADVERTORIAL

Prakash Purab - Guru Gobind Singh Ji

Shri Guru Gobind Singh A paragon of Sacrifice

These are perhaps the most evocative couplet from the Zafarnamah, the 'Epistle of Victory', penned by Sahib Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji Maharaj to Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor sometime in 1705. These lines superbly capture the justification of the struggle of Khalsa panth against the Mughal repression. This also depicts the poetic excellence and philosophical underpinning of the Guru's creation Zafarnamah which he wrote in Persian in the form of a letter to Aurangzeb.

December 9 is the birth anniversary of the Founder of Khalsa Panth (the Perfect Ones) Shri Guru Gobind Singh. This is the day when we should rededicate and vow to follow his example of love for one's country. No where in the world one would discover a parallel of the sacrifices made by him. At the tender age of 9 he urged his father Shri Guru Teg Bahadur ji to intercede on behalf of Kashmiri Pandits who were forcibly being converted to Islam by the Mughal ruler. He sacrificed his entire family in the service of his nation and the country. His four sons were martyred even before his death; the eldest two were killed in battle against the Mughals while the youngest were captured, bricked alive to the shoulders and beheaded for refusing to convert to Islam. What a great Guru he was. After such an unparalleled sacrifice of his four sons he said, "So What Four have died, thousands are still alive".

The creation of Khalsa was a watershed moment in the history of the



Shri. Jaspal Singh
Special Commissioner of Police,
Delhi Police.

India. Here were the ones who would now protect the weak and the meek. They would not let any one cast a bad eye on the daughters and daughters in laws of the larger Hindu Community. Khalsa would challenge the repression of the Mughals. The Khalsa's aims were to fight oppression, assist the poor, believe in one God, abandon superstition and defend the faith. This is symbolised by the Kirpan or dagger which every baptised Sikh is required to carry. Those baptised were required to adopt 'Five Ks'. These Ks symbolise unshorn hair, a small comb, a loose pair of shorts worn under the trousers, a steel bracelet and a sword. The meaning of these symbols is open to

interpretation and flexible, though many agree that the Kirpan is symbolic of the Sikh's constant vigilance against tyranny and willingness to stand up for the innocent.

The existence of the Khalsa and the image of the Sant Sipahi (Saint – Soldier) which was built around the tenth Guru , have been the driving force in the Sikh concept of the dharamyudh or War of dharma (righteousness). The Guru fought many a battles with the Mughal Sirdars and was a precursor of the ultimate establishment of Khalsa Raj in Punjab when Maharaja Ranjit Singh established Sikh State in Punjab.

Apart from being a warrior, the Guru was a scholar par excellence of Braja, Persian, Sanskrit and Punjabi

Granth as the Guru. Guru Granth Sahib should be accepted as the living Guru. Those who wish to meet God, will find Him in the holy Word".

He propagated the concept of oneness of humanity when he said, " Manas ki jaat sabhay ek hi pehchan lo" (The entire humankind should be treated as One). Guru Gobind Singh gave the Khalsa the social ideal of equality, no distinction of birth, caste, class or colour. All are equal in social status, with the same rights and privi-

the West; Himmat Rai, a cook from Jaggannath in the East; and Sahib Chand, a barber from Bidar in the South. So his concept of Khalsa was Pan- India and not confined to Punjab and reflects his national outlook. In regard to brotherhood , the Guru pledged that he would "teach the sparrow to fight the hawk".

Guru's humanity transcended barriers of religion. One day during a war a few Sikhs complained to the Guru that Bhai Ghanhaiya was giving first aid and water to the wounded enemies and Sikhs alike. They also accused him that practically he was helping the enemy, as the soldiers , who had been cured by him were again becoming fit to face the Sikhs. The Gurucalled Bhai Ghanhaiya and asked him about the accusations ascribed by other Sikhs. Bhai Ghanhaiya said, " My Lord ! It is true, i provide water and first aid to all wounded persons though they might be Turks or Sikhs. But actually I am neither serving Sikhs or Turks, I have been servingbyou. Your teachings have opened my mind and I see you in every human body which lies wounded on the battle field. So i am supplying water and providing first aid to none else , but you. The Guru was very much pleased to hear this answer and he stood up and patting him said, " Bhai Ghanhaiya, you are great, you have

achieved your target, you have crossed the worldly ocean and now have been exempted from further transmigration. Such was his humanity .

The Guru's writings are contained in Dasam Granth. It is mostly written in Braj, the language used in many medieval North Indian writings. Tradition states that the Tenth Guru chose to compose many of the works contained within Dasam Granth to inspire Sikhs to take up arms in defence of their religion and of righteousness. Violent imagery is extremely commonplace ,especially with respect to the sword and other weapons. Similarly, a variety of mythological tales from the Hindu puranas each of which stresses the destructive aspect of God when dealing with those who defy truth and righteousness.

Guru Gobind Singh ji is a role model not only for every Sikh but for all Indians. It is perhaps only time in spiritual history that a Guru has requested his followers to bestow the exalted status of ' Singh ' to him. In 1699, he himself received baptism from the five Sikhs he had first initiated. The Panth, the assembly and the Guru became one. After his demise, there was no living Guru for the Sikhs. The Shabad , in the presence of the Sangat, became the Guru , the guiding light and in the presence of Akalpurukh, the Timeless Being. His teachings, his sacrifice and his contribution to nation building are ever relevant. Every Indian should follow the example of his selfless contribution in the service of nation, community and universal brotherhood.



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"Central Park Flower Valley (CPFV) is an integrated development of land parcels developed under different licenses bearing no. 54 of 2014, 84 of 2014 and 28 of 2016, situated in villages Dhunela and Berka, Tehsil Sohna and Dist. Gurugram and duly registered under RERA vide registration no. 95 of 2017, 150 of 2017 & 11 of 2020. Images shown are pictorial conceptualization and an attempt to replicate the project, however actual may differ. Travel time given is estimated and based on ongoing upgradation of infrastructure works on NH248 A (Sohna Road). The receivables of CPFV are hypothecated to Indusind Bank. CIN: U45200HR2008PTC037964. <https://haryanaregular.gov.in/>"



Kashmir journalist held over video of slogans by slain militant's family

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 8

THE J&K Police has arrested a journalist days after he posted a video of a slain militant's family raising slogans after his death. Sajad Ahmad Dar, who writes under the name Sajad Gul, is "always in search of anti-government news" and uploads "fake tweets", police said.

Dar's family said he was arrested from his home at Gund Jahangir village in Bandipora district during an Army raid, and added that he was later handed over to police.

"On Wednesday (January 5), the Army raided our house twice. They were looking for Sajad," the journalist's older brother Javed Ahmad told *The Indian Express*.

"He was not at home and was at the university. They (the Army) took his number."

Dar is a journalism student at Central University of Kashmir, and writes for several newspapers in the Valley.

His brother said Dar returned home in the evening, after which

TMC says AAP also part of anti-BJP space in Goa

Panaji: A day after she hinted at attempts to forge an opposition alliance in Goa, TMC MP Mahua Moitra on Saturday said defeating BJP is "most important", and "Our ego will not stand in the way of anybody". She also said, "AAP is also part of the anti-BJP space. We may not have added

he was taken away by the Army. "Till late night, we continuously called his number, but he did not pick up," Javed Ahmad said. "At around midnight, someone took the call and said they are in the police station, and then dropped the call," he added.

The raid on Dar's house came three days after he shared on social media a video of slain militant commander Saleem Parray's family. In the video, Parray's family and neighbours could be heard raising slogans.

Vijay Kumar, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, said in an official release: "(The) so-called journalist runs a Twitter account in the name of Sajad Gull (and) is always in search of anti-government news."

The IGP's statement said Dar uploaded a video of "anti-national slogans" raised by "some women folk, mostly relatives" of slain militant Parray, and "thereby tried to disrupt the peace".

"The activities of the subject (Dar) are prejudicial to the security and sovereignty of the country," the statement said.

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

AAP to the tweet (on Friday) but have included them in this. There is no problem."

Congress leader P Chidambaram said, "I think Congress is capable of defeating BJP if any party wishes to support Congress, why should I say no? Let us see what the official offers." ENS

MAJ ANURAG SRIVASTAVA, SC (POSTHUMOUS) In fond remembrance of Major Anurag Srivastava, SC (Posthumous) who was martyred in a counter infiltration operation in Kupwara, Jammu and Kashmir on 11 Jan 1996. He was commissioned into 2 MECH INF [1 JAT (LI)] on 27 Aug 1983. "Sherry" as he was fondly known shall always inspire "The Royal Jats"

Colonel Prakash Prasad, Sena Medal and All Ranks

2 MECH INF [1 JAT (LI)] On this day 5036571K Link Umar Singh Gurung, Vir Chakra (Posthumous) of 5/1 Gorkha Rifles made the supreme sacrifice in 'POONCH SECTOR' Jammu and Kashmir in Jan 1973 in a true act of valour & courage. The brave soldier will always be remembered for his enthusiasm. To this brave heart we pledge that we shall always be guided by his immortal spirit and make his name proud.

CO AND ALL RANKS, 5/1 GORKHA RIFLES

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5796/01/01/2022 RFP for Interior Work of Incubation Center at Jodhpur. Rs. 6.00 Crores/ Rs. 12.00 Lacs 07.01.2022/ 28.01.2022

Details can be seen on the websites <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://www.doiit.rajasthan.gov.in> and <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>.

Technical Director (Civil & Electrical)

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF HEALTH SERVICES)

22-Sham Nath Marg, Delhi - 110 054

Walk-in/interview/ skill test for filling up of the 05 positions i.e. 02-Laboratory Technician & 03 Laboratory Attendant, for functioning of different work related to testing of COVID-19 samples in the high end equipment namely COBAS-6800 during the pandemic of COVID-19 to be filled purely on contract basis for a period one year, to be held in the month of January, 2022 at NCCD, 22-Sham Nath Marg (Near Civil Line Metro Station), Delhi-110004.

The exact details of Walk-in/interview/ skill test along with other details regarding essential qualifications/ experience & conditions of the contractual posts may be viewed on the NCCD website www.nccd.gov.in. Eligible candidates fulfilling the educational qualification and experience etc. may appear for Walk-in/interview/ skill test on the dates and times as mentioned along with a resume, one passport size photograph, original certificates and their self-attested copies. Registration of eligible candidates for interview will be held between 10.00 AM to 11.00 AM. Candidate reporting after 11.00 AM will not be entertained.

(PRASHANT DODA) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER FOR DIRECTOR

Email: prakashdoda@gmail.com Phone No. 011-23971875

davp 17129/11/0009/2122

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY SCHEDULE OF E-AUCTION NOTICE (SCRAP SALE)

Month **Division** **Date** **Mobile**

Pl. Deen Dayal Upadhyay 07.02.2022 (Monday) 14.02.2022 (Monday) 979484770

21.02.2022 (Monday) 28.02.2022 (Monday)

Dhanbad 01.02.2022 (Tuesday) 08.02.2022 (Tuesday) 9771426770

15.02.2022 (Tuesday) & 22.02.2022 (Tuesday)

Danapur 02.02.2022 (Wednesday) 09.02.2022 (Wednesday) & 23.02.2022 (Wednesday)

Samastipur 03.02.2022 (Thursday) 10.02.2022 (Thursday) 17.02.2022 (Thursday) & 24.02.2022 (Thursday)

Sonepur 04.02.2022 (Friday) 11.02.2022 (Friday) 18.02.2022 (Friday) & 25.02.2022 (Friday)

Samastipur 07.03.2022 (Monday) 14.03.2022 (Monday) 21.03.2022 (Monday) & 28.03.2022 (Monday)

Sonepur 08.03.2022 (Tuesday) 15.03.2022 (Tuesday) 22.03.2022 (Tuesday) & 29.03.2022 (Tuesday)

Danapur 02.03.2022 (Wednesday) 09.03.2022 (Wednesday) 16.03.2022 (Wednesday) 23.03.2022 (Wednesday) & 30.03.2022 (Wednesday)

Pl. Deen Dayal Upadhyay 03.03.2022 (Thursday) 10.03.2022 (Thursday) 24.03.2022 (Thursday) & 31.03.2022 (Thursday)

Dhanbad 04.03.2022 (Friday) 11.03.2022 (Friday) & 25.03.2022 (Friday)

(a) Bidders are advised to inspect the scrap lot before submission of bid. They are allowed to inspect the lot, on an authority from the concerned officer of Railway Administration, at the site of lot mentioned in the auction catalogue on any working day (except Sunday).

(b) The complete details of materials and terms and conditions will be as per Auction Catalogue, which shall be available with the respective auction conducting authority of East Central Railway or from our website: www.ireps.gov.in prior to the date of auction.

PR/1472/HQ/Store/N/21-22/104 Principal Chief Material Manager

41,434 NEW COVID-19 CASES

Maharashtra imposes curbs on movement, shuts institutes

YOGESH NAIK
MUMBAI, JANUARY 8



A teenage girl gets a dose of Covid vaccine at a municipal facility in Navi Mumbai on Saturday. Amit Chakravarty

Ions will be closed. Only hair cutting salons will be allowed with 50 per cent capacity from 7 am to 10 pm. Entertainment parks, zoos, forts, museums and other ticketed places, including tourist spots, will remain closed.

Restaurants and eateries will be allowed to operate from 8 am to 10 pm at 50 per cent capacity.

Theatres and auditoriums will also operate between 8 am to 10 pm at 50 per cent capacity.

Shops and malls will be closed.

Shopping malls and market complexes can operate at 50 per cent capacity, and information about the present number of visitors should be displayed on noticeboard.

Only fully vaccinated people will be allowed to enter malls and shopping complexes, and these establishments will be closed after 10 pm. These units will also be required to set up a rapid antigen testing unit.

10 PDP leaders booked for Covid norms breach

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 8

THE J&K Police has booked 10 PDP leaders for violating Covid protocols during a gathering to mark the sixth death anniversary of party founder and former CM, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed.

Sayed's daughter, former chief minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, in turn called out the J&K Police and the administration for "bias" against her party, pointing to a candle light protest by BJP workers in Srinagar Thursday to protest the security breach during PM Narendra Modi's visit to Punjab.

The BJP protest was allowed by the government.

Shops and malls will be closed.

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Over 2 crore teens jabbed with first dose

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

WITH THE number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered to children in the 15-18 age-group crossing the two-crore mark on Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged everyone to "maintain momentum" and follow appropriate protocol.

"Excellent! Well done my young friends. Let us continue this momentum. Urging everyone to follow all Covid-19 related protocols and get vaccinated, if you haven't already," Modi tweeted.

More than two crore children between the ages of 15 and 18 have received their first dose of the Covid vaccine since January 3, when the vaccination drive for this age group was rolled out, a Health Ministry statement said.

In a tweet, Union Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya also "praised" the "enthusiasm" among adolescents for vaccination and congratulated them.

India reported 1,41,986 new Covid cases on Saturday and the active caseload reached 4,72,169, the statement added.

PM Modi had said the decision to vaccinate teenagers will "further strengthen our fight against the pandemic" and reduce stress among parents who were worried about children returning to school.

New UGC chief: JNU, Pune varsity V-Cs among top 3 picks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, JANUARY 8

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU University's Vice-Chancellor Prof M Jagadesh Kumar is among the three names picked by a search-and-selection committee to become the next University Grants Commission (UGC) chairman.

The two other frontrunners for the key post are Pune University V-C Prof Nitin R Karmalkar and Director of Inter-University Accelerator Centre (IUAC) Prof Avinash Chandra Pandey, sources said.

The post of the UGC chairman fell vacant on December 7 after Prof D P Singh, who had taken charge in 2018, resigned upon turning 65. The post of the vice-chairman of the higher education regulator is also vacant.

Higher Education Secretary K Sanjay Murthy is currently discharging duties as UGC chairman.

The shortlisting of Prof Kumar's name is significant as he is also among the frontrunners to become the next director of IIT Delhi. His five-year tenure as JNU's V-C had ended on January 26, but the Ministry of Education allowed him to continue holding the post till a successor was picked.

While Prof Kumar's academic credentials are strong, with him being a prominent name in field of electronic engineering, his tenure as JNU V-C has been marred by controversies and campus unrest.

Prof Karmalkar, who specialises in research on igneous petrology, was appointed Pune University's V-C in May 2017. Prof Pandey, who was the V-C of Bundelkhand University between 2012-2015, is credited with establishment of Nanotechnology Application Centre in Allahabad University.

MP HC stays move to shift children from orphanage

IRAM SIDDIQUE
BHOPAL, JANUARY 8

THE JABALPUR bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court has stayed an order of the state-run Child Welfare Committee (CWC) for shifting orphan children from an orphanage run by a Christian missionary in Sagar district.

The Sagar CWC's move came after the licence of the Saint Francis Orphanage was not renewed by the district administration over allegations that beef was being served to the kids in the orphanage run by the Sagar Diocese of the Catholic community.

Some members of the right-wing Hindu groups had also alleged conversion of tribal kids in the charitable orphanage and demanded FIR against the institution.

The High Court not only stayed the shifting of 44 orphan children but also sought a report from the Sagar CWC on why they were being shifted in this cold weather amid spiking Covid-19 cases.

Justice Nandita Dubey passed the order on January 6 on a petition filed by the Saint Francis Orphanage after the district administration authorities shifted three kids from the orphanage over non-renewal of its licence.

Taking serious cognisance of the shift-

Akhilesh to EC: Give funds to SP, others for digital campaign

ASAD REHMAN
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 8

SAMAJWADI PARTY chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday urged the Election Commission to release funds for virtual campaigning to political parties that do not have the "digital infrastructure to compete with BJP".

CEC Sushil Chandra on Saturday said a ban on rallies, roadshows, and other such physical modes of canvassing will be reviewed on January 15.

Asked whether parties are equipped to contest polls by campaigning digitally, Akhilesh told the media in Lucknow, "I would appeal to EC to give some funds to parties so that they can prepare their infrastructure, because we can't compete with BJP's infrastructure...and the democratic set-up is on equal platform."

More than two crore children between the ages of 15 and 18 have received their first dose of the Covid vaccine since January 3, when the vaccination drive for this age group was rolled out, a Health Ministry statement said.

In a tweet, Union Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya also "praised" the "enthusiasm" among adolescents for vaccination and congratulated them.

The SP's legal team will get an FIR against the BJP IT cell head, who sits in Delhi and is ruining UP from there. BJP's teams are constantly working to ensure fake news is spread," he said.

THE SUNDAY PROFILE

In the corner office

Last week, Alka Mittal was handed additional charge of Chairperson and Managing Director of ONGC. KARUNJIT SINGH on how Mittal made her way to the top position in one of the country's biggest PSUs — and how she has cleared the course for others to follow in her footsteps



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

ways recognised the value of her work. Starting out as an administrative officer in Vadodara, she saw people did not want to report issues to a woman. "I decided it was important that they feel comfortable. I would chat with them, ask them about their families till they saw me as one of their own."

On the work-home balance, Mittal says women professionals must prioritise the role that needs their attention at any given moment. "While I was posted in Assam, away from my family, my younger daughter was facing some health issues. It was a very difficult time but my family and I realised that

we could manage it. I was in charge of HR-ER (Human Resources-Employee Relations) then and I knew that if I didn't do this role sincerely, no one would ever give this assignment to a woman. So I stayed on and completed the goals I had set for my time there."

Mittal also set up several leadership pro-

grammes at ONGC to shepherd talented individuals to appropriate roles within the organisation, and pushed women employees to lean in and take on more challenging roles, including field jobs such as those at offshore rigs.

"She has paid special attention to having more women in technical and field-role assignments," says Mehagna Pegu, ONGC's Deputy General Manager, HR, who has worked with Mittal for about a decade. Pegu says Mittal's push was also keeping in mind that people with technical and field experience would always have an edge in the sector.

There are currently about 160 women at onshore and offshore installations of ONGC.

Mittal herself regularly visits the onshore and offshore facilities to touch base with employees and, according to Ranjan, unfailingly "comes back with sweets for everyone".

It was on one such visit to an offshore installation, says Pegu that Mittal, who was wearing the same uniform as the women working there, realised that the orange overalls were evidently designed for men and were "quite uncomfortable" for women.

"She asked us to connect with the National Institute of Design to enquire about uniforms for women," says Pegu, describing Mittal as more of a leader than a boss.

Before taking over as HR Director, Mittal was ONGC's Chief of Skill Development (CSD), during which she is credited with streamlining operations across its skill development centres. Mittal has also headed the company's CSR operations, during which it built a 300-bed hospital at Sivasagar, Assam.

Mittal also set up Urjasvini, a programme to mentor women employees for Board-level roles in the company.

With more women now in senior and middle management level roles in the company, Mittal foresees many of them in Board-level positions in the near future. "Sixty-five per cent of our women executives are from technical disciplines. I believe that in times to come, a woman director in our core area is very likely," says Mittal. 'Core areas' for ONGC include technical and field services, onshore and offshore exploration operations.

Mittal, who superannuates in August, has a lot on her table now. The key priority for ONGC right now is raising crude oil and natural gas production. The government has been leaning on the company to bring in foreign partners to enhance oil and gas recovery from existing fields, which have become less productive and for exploration in new fields such as ultra-deep water fields.

"We are looking at international partners who have had successes in similar analogous basins in other parts of the world. We are approaching them with an open mind," says Mittal.

Another challenge, she says, would be succession planning. "With many of our experts superannuating in the near future, we have to ensure that their wisdom is passed on to the younger generation. We have to make them future-ready to take on challenging roles."

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TAKE 5
LEAVE TO MEET PARENTS

BASHAB CHANDRA KALITA,
CHIEF ADVISOR, ASSAM
GOVT EMPLOYEES' UNION



"Given coming Magh Bihu, timing may pose a problem"

'Special leave good step... but some say financial aid would have been more useful'

Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma recently announced a one-time special leave so

that government employees, officials and ministers could spend "quality time" with their parents and in-laws. The leave was sanctioned for January 6 and 7. Clubbed with January 8 and 9

(Saturday and Sunday), the employees would get four days off. The catch:

employees had to share photographic proof of the "quality time". Bashab Chandra Kalita, Chief Advisor, Sadou Asam Karmachari Parishad, an association of government employees, speaks about the initiative.

TORA AGARWALA

1 What was your initial reaction to this announcement?

In our society, it's our duty to take care of parents. Therefore, we welcome this announcement. These days, the Chief Minister's Secretariat runs 24 hours a day and government karmacharis work very hard. Often they live very far away from their parents and families, and are rarely able to spend time with them. So it is a very, very good step.

2 Do you think it can be implemented properly?

While we welcome the decision, there is a logistical problem. The holiday comes just before Magh Bihu (13th, 14th, 15th), which is our most important festival. Employees will visit home during Bihu. For those who live far away from Guwahati (districts in Upper Assam or interior areas in Karbi Anglong), these dates are problematic because it takes more than a day to reach these areas. But they still have to attend office between the special leave and Bihu. Logistically, it makes little sense and will not give them much relief.

3 What could have been the alternative?

Some say that instead of granting leave, it would have been more helpful if the government had provided some financial assistance for medical treatment for ailing parents. Often, in case of lower-rung employees, their salaries are not enough to cover medical expenses.

4 What do you think of the requirement of photographic proof?

That is a great decision — it is quite possible that employees might take advantage of this special leave and misuse it.

5 Have many taken the special leave?

A lot of people, including ministers and senior bureaucrats, have taken leave. All said and done, people are happy about it.

FOR AN organisation where women constitute less than 8 per cent of the workforce, the New Year heralded change. Alka Mittal, 59, moved to the helm of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), India's largest oil and gas exploration company and among the country's biggest PSUs, holding additional charge of Chairperson and Managing Director of the company.

With her move to the corner office, Mittal has shattered the glass ceiling twice in the space of three years — in 2018, she became the first ONGC full-time woman director as Director, Human Resources.

PSU top jobs are largely a male preserve. Soma Mondal (SAIL) is currently the only other woman heading a Maharatna PSU. Of the 47 executive directors at the 10 Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprises, only four are women. Mittal is currently the only woman executive director on the board of ONGC.

Arundhati Bhattacharya, former chairperson of State Bank of India, the first woman to lead an Indian Fortune 500 company, welcomes Mittal's appointment as a "role model". "Even after retirement, they (women CMDs) will be in a position to get on boards of other companies," Bhattacharya told *The Sunday Express*, noting that this would in turn help other women reach senior roles.

It's a responsibility Mittal is well aware of, but one she wears with ease.

"When I was interviewing women for senior roles as part of the Board of Directors, I saw that they would normally give answers to me, regardless of who was asking the questions," Mittal tells *The Sunday Express*, indicating that women feel more comfortable applying for senior positions when they see other women in such roles.

"We have to create a critical mass of women in leadership positions," she adds.

A Master's in Economics from DAV College, Dehradun, Mittal has an MBA and a PhD in business and commerce with specialisation in corporate governance from Jamia Millia Islamia.

As ONGC's Head of HR, Mittal conceptualised 'People's Connect', an initiative to facilitate exchange between retiring employees and young professionals. Her colleagues say it reflects her collaborative style that extends to even competitors within the organisation.

"Alka and I were once both in contention for a senior role, but she kept giving me ideas on my strengths that I should highlight," says Somesh Ranjan, chief of CSR at ONGC.

Mittal also spearheaded the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme, as part of which more than 5,000 apprentices are engaged across ONGC's work centres.

Ranjan talks of how Mittal digitised the whole process. "Earlier we had to sort through paper applications that we got by the sack-fulls."

Mittal admits facing issues as a woman early in her career, but says her seniors al-

1,284 million

The number of passengers carried by the India Railways in 1950-51. In 2019-20, the Railways carried 8,086 million passengers

489 tonnes

The average net load per train — or the weight carried on each train — running on broad gauge in 1950-51. That has gone up to 1,728 tonnes in 2019-20

388 route-km

The length of the electrified route of the Indian Railways in 1950-51. This has gone up to 39,329 route-km in 2019-20

HARIKISHAN SHARMA

'Are norms only for us commoners? Corona hai vi ki nahin'

At a Cong election meeting, there is a lot to keep people from wearing masks — *chai, pakodas, slogan engineering*, and the unmasked CM himself. But as a medical camp takes random samples, for results that are delayed, virus worries are in every conversation

RAAKHI JAGGA

AROUND 11 am on Thursday, a crowd is making its way to the Dana Mandi (grain market) of Machhiwara, a small town in the Samrala constituency of Ludhiana, for a rally by Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi. Samrala is a constituency of around 1.80 lakh voters, half of whom belong to Machhiwara alone.

It's a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi cancelled his first public meeting in Punjab since the repeal of the three contentious farm laws, due to a security breach. The cascade of resultant ripples has spread out from Chandigarh to Delhi, to BJP units across the country.

That only partly explains the crowd who have come from even neighbouring villages and towns for the rally, with few seemingly worried about the rising Covid cases that have led Punjab to impose a night curfew from 10 pm-5 am and close educational institutions. Deputy CM O P Soni, who holds the health portfolio, admits there is concern. "There are no guidelines of the Centre regarding rallies, but I personally feel big public meetings should not be held in Covid times."

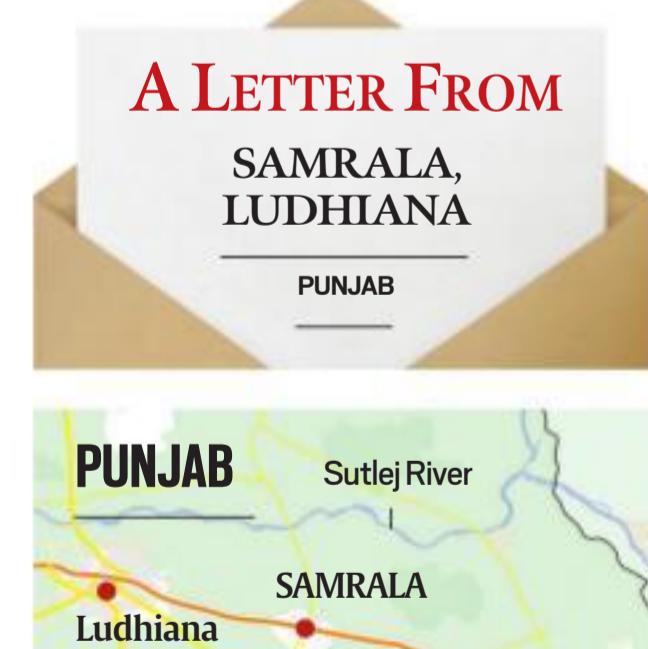
At the grain market though — spread over 15 acres — it is election as usual, with tents in Tricolour hues and plastic chairs laid out. The only change is a medical camp outside the venue, where a team of doctors and paramedics from the Machhiwara Civil Hospital are soldiering on, taking samples of the crowd for RT-PCR tests.

Dr Jaspreet Kaur, a senior medical officer at the hospital, says they are doing random tests. "We took 102 samples and the reports are pending. With laboratories busy, the results are likely to take at least 24 hours."

Dr Rajesh Baskar, the nodal officer for Covid in Punjab, says: "Off and on, we organise medical camps near big rallies. It's not

A LETTER FROM
SAMRALA,
LUDHIANA

PUNJAB



Cong is happy about the crowd that came, with many standing outside. Gurmeet Singh

done regularly. So far, we have not come to know whether anyone tested positive at these rallies."

Congress Samrala MLA Amrik Singh Dhillon, the organiser of the Machhiwara rally, indicates the tests are just a drop in the ocean. Thousands are here for the meeting, he says. "Jinne andar baite si, onne hi bahar khade si" (The same number of people as you can see sitting inside, are present outside too.)

Among those standing as chairs are all taken is 41-year-old Dharamvir Dhammi, a contractor, who is among the 200-odd people raising slogans cheering the Congress. None of them is wearing masks. In between asking party workers if they have had refreshments, including *chai* and *pakodas*, Dhammi, who is the block president of the Congress's Scheduled Caste cell, says: "I gave masks to everyone and asked them to wear them too. But when you have to raise slogans, you can't wear masks."

About gatherings during Covid, he says: "No doubt, large meetings should stop. I will raise this point at our next SC cell meeting."

Ludhiana is seeing a big spike in Covid numbers the past few days, accounting for 292 of the 2,427 cases that tested positive in Punjab on Thursday, and reporting a positivity rate of 11.5%. The district has 776 active cases.

The snacks stall located outside the grain market premises is almost as crowded as the ground inside, with almost everyone halting for a quick bite before proceeding for the meeting, and sitting down without particular attention to social distancing. MLA Dhillon says all are welcome at the pandal, "whether they attend the rally or not". "In this chilly weather, this is the least we can do for people."

About Covid precautions, he says, "We have placed sanitisers outside the pandal and ensure people use it. The chairs have been spaced out... *Prachar has to be done* (we have to carry on with campaigning), but we are following all the Covid instructions."

In his speech, Channi uses the virus to take a swipe at Modi's cancelled rally (the Congress claims that the PM didn't proceed for the meeting as it drew a very thin crowd). "You can come near me," the CM says. "I am not scared like Modi. You all have come to lis-

ten to me, I am thankful."

To underline his "confidence", Channi's men allow the public to occupy the area in front of the stage that is usually kept aside for security.

Watching on from the snacks pandal, Gurpreet Singh, who is in his mid-30s, points to the muffler he has around his face, like several others around him. "It saves you from the cold and Covid protocol is also met. Look outside, how bad the weather is."

There are loud cheers as Channi seeks blessings for Dhillon's grandson Karanvir, 31, saying youngsters should "get a chance". Satpal Banga, who runs a photography studio and is busy clicking, agrees vehemently.

Sarabjit Singh, 45, the owner of a printing press who is passing by, stops to comment on the crowd. "How will we take Corona seriously when politicians are doing rallies, not wearing masks and congratulating people for coming in large numbers? What purpose will mere closure of schools serve?"

Present in large numbers, women who are reluctant to talk say they have given their samples for testing but, irrespective of the results, have to carry on. "Rallies can stop, but not our chores," says Raj

Across
THE AISLE

P CHIDAMBARAM

Website: pchidambaram.in

Twitter: @Pchidambaram_IN

First they came for the Communists, and I did not speak out – Because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out – Because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out – Because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out – Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me – And there was no one left to speak out for me.

— Martin Niemöller, German Theologian (1892-1984)

SATURDAY, December 25 was Christmas. Before the celebrations ended – in some places well before midnight – all the evils that Christ preached against reared their heads. If the year ended on a sour note, the new year has begun on an ominous note. The last two weeks have been a challenge for Christians and liberals alike.

The year 2021 witnessed the death of Fr Stan Swamy, a Christian missionary from Tamil Nadu who spent all his life among the tribal people of Jharkhand. He was accused (falsely, in my view) of terrorist activity, treated inhumanely in prison, denied bail even on medical grounds, not tried, and allowed to die. The year ended with the Missionaries of Charity (founded by Mother Teresa) denied the right to re-

ceive foreign contributions for its charitable work on an alleged minor accounting infraction.

CHRISTMAS DEFILED

What happened on Christmas Day was unforgivable, even if Christians are prepared to forgive the mischief makers for they know not what they do. Just consider recent events:

■ In Ambala, Haryana, there is the Church of the Holy Redeemer, built in the 1840s. At about midnight, after the church was closed, two people entered and knocked down the statue of Jesus Christ and burnt the figures of Santa Claus. Two days earlier, a group had entered a church in Pataudi, Gurugram, Haryana, and disrupted the prayers with slogans like *Jai Shri Ram*.

■ In Agra, Uttar Pradesh, several Santa Claus figures were set on fire in front of missionary colleges. The activist of the Bajrang Dal justified the vandalism and said, "They attract our children by having Santa Claus bring them gifts and attract them to Christianity." He failed to say that the missionary colleges had also selflessly taught many thousands of our children for several decades.

■ In Cachar district, Assam, two persons dressed in saffron broke into a Presbyterian church on Christmas night and demanded that all Hindus leave the place. At other Christmas masses, activists shouted slogans like 'Death to missionaries'.

FRINGE BECOMES MAINSTREAM

Through the year 2021, several states, notably Karnataka, passed or drafted anti-conversion Bills aimed at Christians. There is scant evidence that people of other faiths, especially Hindus, are being converted to Christianity. It is clear Christians are the target of the extreme right-wing that is abundantly present in the RSS, the BJP and other RSS-affiliated organisations. They are no longer fringe elements; they have become the mainstream and are represented even in the council of ministers of the central government.

The Muslims – and now the Christians – are the targets of what is called 'hate speech'. Hate speech is part of spreading hate against non-Hindus. Six months ago, an app called 'Sulli Deals' surfaced in Delhi and a few days ago, another app named 'Bulli Bai' surfaced in Mumbai. The apps put up faces of Muslim women online for auction. The Twitter handle that promoted 'Bulli Bai' used Sikh-sounding names such as 'Khalsa Supremacist', 'Jatinder Singh Bhullar' and 'Harpal', perhaps foretelling who will be the next target of the hate merchants – the Sikhs.

The Muslims, Christians and Sikhs are as much Indians as the Hindus. They have a right to practise their religion and, if you have read Article 25 of the Constitution, the right to propagate their religion. The extreme right-wing is challenging their right to practise their religion. This is unconstitutional.

MR MODI'S AGENDA

A sample of what is in store was revealed in Haridwar. Excerpts from the speeches:

"If you want to finish them off, then kill them... We need 100 soldiers who can kill 20 lakh of them (meaning Muslims) to win this" and "Get ready to kill or be killed, there is no other option... Every Hindu, including Police, Army, Politician should start the cleaning like it happened in Myanmar". This is more than hate speech, it is a call to genocide.

These are not the rantings of mad men, there is a method in the madness. Mr Hilal Ahmed, in an op-ed article (*The Indian Express*, January 6, 2021) explained why and how Mr Modi has redefined the BJP's agenda. According to Mr Ahmed, the Covid catastrophe, the farmers' movement and the growing economic crisis have forced Mr Modi to "consolidate his position as the ultimate leader within the Hindutva fold". Development and Hindutva are no longer to be separated and, for this purpose, the extreme right wing has cast the non-Hindu religions (and their believers) as enemies of development, besides Hindutva.

The disruptions of Christmas celebrations, the hate speeches and the malicious apps have not evoked a word of condemnation from the Prime Minister. Prepare for the future, bigotry will be unbound. And speak up, or there will be no one left to speak for you.

Fifth COLUMN
TAVLEEN SINGH

Twitter: @tavleen_singh

The breach
was serious

THE BREACH in the Prime Minister's security was disturbing last week as were the reactions that came from the highest ranks of our political leadership. Instead of uniting to examine why the security breach happened, what we saw was partisan politics play out in a way that proved that our politicians have a long way to go before they learn to respect the institutions that hold up our democracy. The office of the Prime Minister of India is one of the most important of our democratic institutions. When it comes under threat, it is India that comes under threat, not the individual who happens to occupy the post. This is something that went almost unnoticed in the histrionics and hysteria that followed the ominous incident in which the Prime Minister's cavalcade was stranded on a high bridge for 20 minutes. This at a time when Punjab is seeing the first signs of a return to the darkest era in this state's history.

That was a time when the military men who control the Islamic Republic next door had infiltrated its agents not just into the ranks of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale's army but into the ranks of Punjab's administrative and law enforcement machinery. In recent days there have been scary signs of this happening again. Men have been beaten to death for unproven acts of sacrifice in gurdwaras. A suicide bomber accidentally blew himself up in a courthouse toilet not long ago and reports of drones dropping arms, drugs and Khalistani propaganda pamphlets on our side of the Punjab border have become routine. So, there is no question that the Prime Minister's cavalcade could have come under attack in the 20 minutes that it was stranded on a high bridge.

Had the Government of India taken the breach in the Prime Minister's security perimeter seriously, it would cooperate with the Punjab government to investigate what went wrong. Instead, the immediate reaction from Modi's senior ministers was to openly accuse the Punjab government of 'conning' in a plot to harm the Prime Minister. The day after the incident, BJP chief ministers ensured that TV cameras recorded their visits to temples to give thanks for Modi having survived what they said publicly was an attempt to kill him.

If the BJP's top leaders behaved as if it was their leader, Narendra Modi, and not the institution of the Prime Minister of India, whose security was endangered, the Congress party responded with competitive immaturity. First reactions came even as pictures of the Prime Minister's stranded cavalcade were flashing across our TV screens and going viral on social media. Congress leaders who should know better made vulgar comments that were in such bad taste that they will not be repeated in this space. In making them they proved that despite long years of being our ruling party they have not understood the importance of respecting democratic institutions like the office of the Prime Minister.

Politicians who put the country above their narrow partisan politics are what we need at this time, and it must be said that there appears to be a serious dearth of them. An exception has been Manish Tewari who made the only sensible comments I heard last week. In an interview to *India Today* he said that instead of separate inquiries in Delhi and Punjab that, in this atmosphere of poisonous polarisation, will have minimal credibility, there should be a judicial inquiry into what happened that day. This could be the only way in which we will ever know what really happened. There are many, many unanswered questions.

Why did the SPG (Special Protection Group) not know in advance that there were protesters blocking the Prime Minister's route? When they found out, instead of just standing around, why did they not immediately ensure that the Prime Minister was moved to a safe location? Videos have now surfaced of BJP supporters carrying party flags hovering inside the security perimeter of the Prime Minister's car. Why was this allowed? If it is true that someone in the Punjab Police told protesting farmers that the Prime Minister would be passing that way, why did this happen?

Instead of allowing hysteria about how the Congress party 'hates' Modi and prayers in temples that appear meant for TV cameras and not the gods, Modi needs to order his ministers and chief ministers to take what happened more seriously. When it is the Prime Minister's security that is clearly breached, then it is not a BJP problem but a national problem. If, while his cavalcade was stalled on a high point, it had come under attack by trained snipers, it would have led to a national crisis. And if Pakistan's fingerprints were found perhaps, even worse. So it is the duty of the governments of India and Punjab to allow a full investigation by a judge. In the poisonously partisan atmosphere that exists today, this is the most important thing that needs to happen.

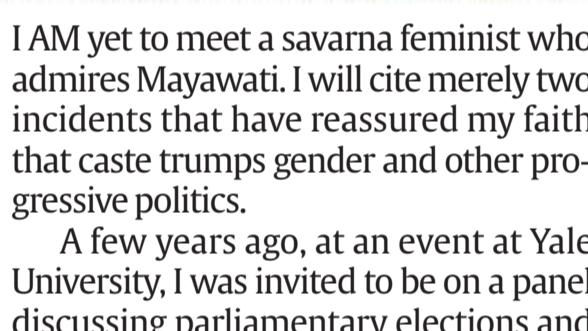
We are talking about a breach in the security of a vital democratic institution and not of an individual, so the truth of what happened on that foggy, rainy afternoon last week must be fully and impartially investigated. The BJP's endless, dreary narrative about how anyone who asks questions is really someone who 'hates' Modi must be suspended for now in the national interest. This is about national security, not politics.

Views about Mayawati, and what they tell us

Dalitality

SURAJ YENGDE

Twitter: @Surajyengde



I AM yet to meet a savarna feminist who admires Mayawati. I will cite merely two incidents that have reassured my faith that caste trumps gender and other progressive politics.

Another incident. I was invited to deliver a keynote lecture at a conference in Washington D.C. One of those attending was a Tamil Brahmin professor, a self-confessed "brown feminist" fighting against white supremacy. Her views of Mayawati were so crude they would not pass the editorial policy of this newspaper. Sufficient to note that she, an Indian American, didn't have any relatable knowledge of Mayawati.

The same level of discomfort is seen in the case of Lalu Prasad and Hemant Soren, an OBC and Scheduled Tribe respectively.

Such liberals and caste-privileged academics and activists in the West exhibit the ancestral bigotry running in their blood.

Like Mayawati, Mamata Banerjee is a woman leader of a national political party. But she has the privilege of being a Brahmin, and gets an easy pass.

The savarnas are united in their defiance of Mayawati even though she has appointed Brahmins as leaders of the party in both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha.

If the new awakened culture is really committed to representation to marginalised identities, they will not find an alternative better than Mayawati. She checks all the boxes of progressivism and redemption. She is a woman, a single woman, Dalit, comes from a backward region and is revered by the most marginalised and rejected masses of the country.

A three-time chief minister of one of the largest states, who implemented inclusivity and development as her administration's *raison d'être*, but who saw meida and experts ignore the same.

If only people start examining themselves through the critical caste approach, they might be honest enough to realise the worth of the BSP. If whites in America can support a black person, is it a waste of energy to think of privileged castes rallying behind Mayawati across India?

If Mayawati is not an option for the feminists, progressives, and the woke culture, then they are a house of charlatans devoted to eliminating the Dalit self-respect movement, and no attention should be paid to their abuses peddled as opinions.

I asked them if they considered Mayawati a woman at all? Did they think their feminist solidarity could be extended to a woman politician who is single, and paving her way in a Brahminical-patriarchial society? Could they think of anyone like Mayawati in India who had defied all known norms and defined new frontiers of politics and social revolution? Is there a figure who could compete with the status and story of Mayawati?

The activist responded that Mayawati was unsuitable for Indian politics, that she

had dictatorial proclivities. A Pakistani political scientist who was present pushed back, asking the activist to imagine the meaning of feminism, and why did they not apply the same rules to the politicians they admired.

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LOVE COMES naturally, but does motherhood also? It should, we are told, in perfect sunlit frames beaming out at us from movies, books, social media posts, and trite Hallmark quotes, sprinkled with honorable nods to "purpose", "fulfillment", and so on.

But what if you are an "unnatural" mother, as Leda Caruso asks in *The Lost Daughter* (the book, and the new Netflix film)? Is there space for a mother who loves what her tiny tots have brought into her life, but also resents how much they have taken up of it? Is there space for a mother who always carries around with her the warmth of her child's stretched arms to welcome her home, but who can't shake off that feeling of being overwhelmed by it all? Is there space for a mother to be selfless at all times, but also selfish? Is there space to be a caring mother, yet one who in public has shown herself "to be unaffectionate, not the mother of church or Sunday supplements". And is there space for a mother to step away from it all, and then make her way back?

It's not often that you get a mother such as Leda in popular culture. Sure we have our horror and killer moms, cruel and cold moms, and young and tired moms. However, Leda, in Elena Ferrante's novel, is a run-of-the-mill mom. She is warm, likable, loving, leads the hunt when a stranger's child goes missing and is understanding towards a harried young mother. However, she is also a woman who once dreamed of a life starkly different from her own mother's long line of domesticity, of independence and some recognition in the big city, who fears she is getting sucked into the same "hell" that she had managed to escape. And who, tentatively at first and then more openly, knows it is her children (whom she had when she was too young) who are standing in her way. "Children," she tells in one passage, to a shocked audience, "are a 'crushing' responsibility."

One fine day, in the midst of an affair

We mothers, we agonise, we overwork and think we underwork, we are never ever enough — never enough loving, never enough strict, never enough around, never enough away, never enough patient, with never enough time

hugs and desperate calls.

Mothers and daughters, mothers and dolls, dolls and girls, is this cycle ever broken? We sustain them, and they sustain us. In the best of times and the worst of times, the things we leave behind are also the things we take away. As Ferrante writes,

The perfect mom?
Should there be one?Olivia Coleman as Leda Caruso in *The Lost Daughter*

that appropriately starts at the kind of dreamy literary conference that romantic novels often talk about, Leda walks away from her children, doesn't look back, and gets at least somewhere close to where she wants to be. Only, what is that she wants, and can she even know it for sure?

Ferrante explored some of the same themes in her three acclaimed Neapolitan novels. And in the Netflix film directed by Maggie Gyllenhaal, Olivia Colman as Leda and Jessie Buckley, playing a younger version of her, bring home with heartbreaking tenderness this other side of motherhood — in their every twisted smile and wrenched tear, broken

the more twisted the bond, the stronger it gets in "remorse".

In the book, Leda's daughters never indicate to her in any way what they thought of her attempt to explain why she went away. Is it an act of kindness on their part, or that of cruelty? Leda herself can't really say why she came back. But we know, don't we, as she sits down to peel an orange in one long tendril, without letting it break, just like her daughters want her to.

In the end, that's what it is about. We mothers, we agonise, we guilt, we chafe, we overwork and think we underwork, we are never ever enough — never enough loving, never enough strict, never enough around, never enough away, never enough patient, and with never enough time.

But having raised my children into their teens now, on and through a time that has kept testing us, what I can tell Leda — and an older Leda can perhaps tell us — is that there is no one right way to be mom.

And that your kids probably know that already.

National Editor Shalini Langer curates the 'She Said' column



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How the past informs the present

perspective, Justice Nazeer stressed that Indian jurisprudence must be included as a compulsory subject in law degree courses.

Currently, Indian society is divided into those who feel that an insidious Western influence has turned us into stunted copycats and that we should carefully re-examine our glorious past to appreciate our uniqueness. The others, a far smaller number, fear that a self-congratulatory ethnocentrism prevails, closing our minds to established facts from around the world. The truth, as always, lies somewhere in between. Even in India, the winds of change are impossible to miss. The stories we have been told about ourselves, family dictats on how we should live, seem unconvincing at odds with a global reality. Laws support LGBTQ rights, single working women are a potent force and you get the sense that the youth are impatiently shedding all inhibi-

tions. The 'wise elder' of Indian households commands respect but has lost the control he once exerted.

At the same time, if not in legal circles, modern interpretations of Kautilya's 2,00

CABINET NOTE BEING PREPARED, TO BE TABLED FOR APPROVAL SOON

BBNL-BSNL merger scheduled for this fiscal; telco may finish BharatNet work

AASHISH ARYAN

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

IN A move to consolidate all its telecom operations under one umbrella, the government is likely to merge the operations and assets of Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), sources in the know of the development told *The Sunday Express*.

The scheduled merger is likely to be completed by March 31 this year. A Cabinet note on the proposed merger is being prepared and it is likely to be placed before the Cabinet for its approval soon, the sources said.

In response to queries seeking details of the merger, Department of Telecommunications (DoT) Secretary K Rajaraman said there was "no such decision as of now", while a spokesperson for BBNL

said the organisation was "not aware of any such development and therefore would not like to comment" on the issue. Emails to Chairman and Managing Director of BSNL did not elicit any response.

BBNL, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) of the Ministry of Communications, was incorporated in 2012 as a public sector unit. It was handed over the task of implementing the BharatNet project, which was till then known as National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN).

The SPV is funded by from the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), which is raised from a Universal Access Levy (UAL) applicable to all telecom licence holders. It came into effect from April 1, 2002 and mandated that all telecom service providers must pay a percentage of their revenue into the USOF funds.

Of the 8 per cent adjusted gross revenue, 5 per cent goes into

EXPLAINED **Possible obstacles ahead**

THE MERGER, once approved, could pose challenges to use of the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) as BSNL competes directly with other private telecom service providers which contribute to the fund. The merger could also lead to the job losses of some of contractual workers of BBNL.

the USOF, while the rest goes into the central exchequer. With the merger of BBNL and BSNL, this fund – which currently stands at close to Rs 60,000 crore – is likely

to go to BSNL and help the state-run telco come out of its crunch.

Sources also said the pending work on BharatNet, which aims to connect all the six lakh villages in the country with high speed internet, will now be completed by BSNL by creating a separate division inside the state-run telco.

The initial aim of BharatNet, which was started as NOFN, was to connect 2.5 lakh gram panchayats (GP)s with high speed broadband internet by 2014. The initial phase one was supposed to connect 1.5 lakh GP's, while phase two was supposed to connect the remaining 1 lakh GP's.

In 2020, the scope of the scheme was expanded when Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on August 15 that over the next 1,000 days, BharatNet would connect all six lakh villages through high speed internet. Earlier in June 2021, the DoT

had decided to change the implementation model of BharatNet by taking the public-private-partnership (PPP) route. As part of the revised plan under the PPP model, a concessionaire will be selected through a competitive international bidding process and will be responsible for creation, upgradation, operation, maintenance and utilisation of BharatNet. The revised strategy will be followed in 16 states for now.

The implementation of BharatNet under the PPP model is estimated to cost Rs 29,432 crore, of which the government will spend Rs 19,041 crore as viability gap funding. The PPP model will initially be launched in Kerala, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh.

CRUDE WATCH

OIL RISES 5% IN FIRST WEEK OF 2022

London: Spurred on by supply concerns, oil prices on Friday posted a 5% weekly rise in the first week of the new year, with prices at their highest since late November. Brent gained 5.2% to settle at \$81.75, while US WTI rose 5% to \$78.90 a barrel. **REUTERS**

NOMINAL GDP ESTIMATE OF 17.6% LEAVES SPACE OF AROUND ₹65K CR

With expenditure lagging, additional fiscal space could translate into a lower deficit

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

FIRST ADVANCE ESTIMATE RELEASED FRIDAY

On Friday, the National Statistical Office (NSO) released the first advance estimates, which projected a real gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of 9.2 per cent and nominal GDP growth rate of 17.6 per cent for the financial year 2021-22

As per estimates by economists, a higher nominal GDP implies the government's fiscal deficit could be around 6.5% of GDP as against the budgeted target of 6.8% of GDP. Or, in other terms, it translates into an additional fiscal space of around ₹65,000 crore

FY2021, based on which we anticipate a lower growth of GFCE (government final consumption expenditure) in the latter half of the current fiscal," ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayak said.

The components of GDP get revised later on at the time of second advance estimates and provisional estimates.

For instance, government final consumption expenditure for 2020-21 was estimated at Rs 174.7 lakh crore (released in January last year), which was subsequently revised down to Rs 15.87 lakh crore in second advance estimates, and then to Rs 15.86 lakh crore in the provisional estimates. The second advance estimates are released by February-end, while provisional estimates are released by May-end of the next fiscal year.

As per the first advance estimates of GDP for FY22 released Friday, on the expenditure side, government final consumption expenditure is seen 7.6 per cent higher than FY21 and 10.7 per cent higher than FY20.

According to the Controller General of Accounts, the government has spent 59.6 per cent of its total budgeted amount till November-end. In the year-ago period, the Centre had spent 62.7 per cent of its budgeted expenditure in the same period.

It is also expected that the GDP estimate for government expenditure will get revised downwards for the October-March period of FY22 going ahead.

"The year-on-year growth projected by the NSO in the components of GDP in H2 FY2022 varies sharply from a muted 1.8% for private final consumption expenditure to a moderate 6.1% for gross fixed capital formation, to a rather high 13.9% for government final consumption expenditure. While we do expect the government of India's spending to be back-ended in H2 FY2022, this is similar to the situation in H2

As reflected by the buoyant gross fixed capital formation (GFCF), is seen growing 14.9 per cent in FY22 compared with FY21 and 2.6 per cent higher than pre-pandemic year of FY20. Consumption demand, which is 55 per cent of the GDP, is estimated to remain sluggish, below the pre-Covid year (2019-20) levels.

5G spectrum: Trai to take call on private networks

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

THE ISSUE of allocation of spectrum – through auctions or administratively – for setting up private networks will be decided by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) when it submits its recommendations on the reserve price for 5G spectrum auctions. The recommendations are expected by March.

Since 5G would herald the era of private networks, the Trai has asked the telecom operators and other stakeholders whether the licensing framework needs to be changed when bandwidth is used for purposes other than providing direct services to consumers.

"They can be used by industries to automate manufacturing lines, to reduce security risks, to protect employees from dangerous environments, monitoring and control of assets etc," the regulator has said. **FE**

Equitas Holdings to divest stake in its arm ETPL

New Delhi: Equitas Holdings Ltd will divest its entire stake in subsidiary Equitas Technologies Pvt Ltd (ETPL) as part of the requirements in accordance with Reserve Bank of India norms for its merger with Equitas Small Finance Bank (ESFB).

According to this scheme, all the assets held by Equitas Holdings, including its investments in ETPL, have to be transferred to and vested in ESFB. "Since ETPL is not engaged in financial services, the company is required to fully divest its investment in ETPL. Accordingly, the board of directors in its meeting held on January 7, 2022, approved sale of its entire shareholding in the company's subsidiary, ETPL," Equitas Holdings said in a regulatory filing. **ENS, WITHTPI**

13

TECH WATCH

ONLINE CONTENT

Over 75 accounts on various social media websites blocked for fake, inciting content

AASHISH ARYAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

These handles were identified after Twitter users tagged MoS Rajeev Chandrasekhar, asking him to look into them. **File**

THE MINISTRY of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has identified 73 Twitter handles, four YouTube channels and one game on Instagram for fake and inciting content, and asked the respective social media intermediaries to suspend them, a senior government official said. As per instructions, these accounts have been suspended.

These handles had been identified after Twitter users tagged MoS Rajeev Chandrasekhar, asking him to look into them. **File**

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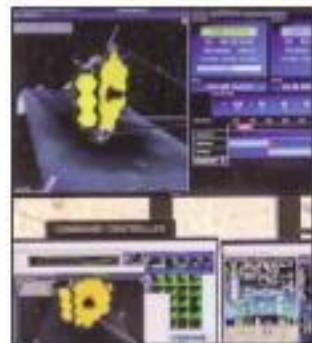
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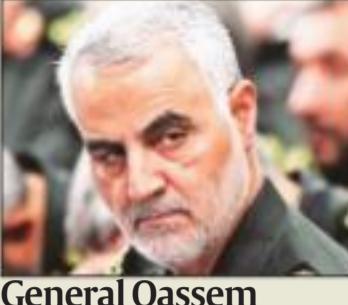


MEANWHILE

SPACE TELESCOPE'S 'GOLDEN EYE' OPENS

NASA's new space telescope opened its huge, gold-plated, flower-shaped mirror Saturday, the final step in the observatory's dramatic unfurling. The last portion of the 21-foot (6.5-meter) mirror swung into place at flight controllers' command, completing the unfolding of the James Webb Space Telescope.

TOP OF THE WORLD



General Qassem Soleimani. NYT

IRAN

Sanctions imposed on Americans over Soleimani killing

Dubai: Iran on Saturday imposed sanctions on dozens more Americans, many of them from the US military, over the 2020 killing of General Qassem Soleimani in a drone strike. Iran's Foreign Ministry said the 51 Americans had been targeted for what it called "terrorism" and human rights violations. The step lets Iranian authorities seize any assets they hold in Iran, but the apparent absence of such assets means it will likely be symbolic. Soleimani, the commander of Iran's Quds Force, the overseas arm of the elite Revolutionary Guards, was killed in Iraq in a drone strike on Jan. 3, 2020, ordered by then President Donald Trump.

REUTERS

CHINA

Strong quake shakes western China region

Beijing: A strong overnight earthquake shook a sparsely populated area in western China early on Saturday and forced the suspension of high-speed rail service because of tunnel damage, authorities said. Four people with minor injuries in Menyuan Hui Autonomous County had been treated and released, officials said. The magnitude 6.9 quake struck at 1.45am in a mountainous part of Qinghai province. AP

ALBANIA

Opp supporters clash over party leadership

Tirana: Albanian police intervened on Saturday to move away protesters who broke into the headquarters of the country's main opposition party in an internal squabble over the party's leadership. Police used a water cannon truck and tear gas, and scores of officers pushed away hundreds of protesters who had stormed the ground floor of the centre-right Democratic Party's headquarters. They detained and removed some protesters. At least one civilian and one police officer were "slightly wounded," according to Lorenc Panganika, the head of police in Tirana. AP

Virus testing shortages & delays help fuel US surge

Number of hospitalised children who've tested positive jumping, says CDC

AGENCIES
JANUARY 8

MANY AMERICANS have been waiting in long lines at free testing sites since before the Christmas and New Year's holiday rush. Plenty of others are avoiding the lines and paying \$20 or more for over-the-counter, at-home tests—if they can find one. The difficulty finding coronavirus test kits in many parts of the country and delays in getting results are causing increasing frustration and contributing to the surge of infections that in just two weeks more than doubled the number of people in hospitals with Covid-19.

Delays in getting results—or inability to find a test kit—can mean people with very mild or no symptoms may presume they are not infected and go about their usual routines.

"If you are tested and you're positive then you know you need to isolate," said Abraar Karan, an infectious diseases doctor at Stanford University. "If you can't get tested, and you don't have the luxury to just quarantine without knowing sure, you may have people going out and infecting others."

Meanwhile, Covid-19 hospitalisations in the US poised to hit a new high as early as Friday, according to a Reuters tally, surpassing the record set in January of last year as the Omicron variant fuels a surge in the number of cases.

Hospitalisations have increased steadily since late December as Omicron quickly



The increase was observed in children aged 4 and younger, who are not eligible for vaccination. Reuters

EXPLAINED
Why is US buying test kits?

IT REPRESENTS an acknowledgement by the President that the administration needs to do more to increase access to Covid-19 testing, which is an important tool to help slow the spread of the virus. In cases where infected people show symptoms or not, testing is the only way to find out if they have the virus so they can avoid being out and about and potentially spreading disease.

hospitals for reasons other than Covid and then tested positive.

The rise may at least be partly explained by the overall surge of Omicron cases, which affects all populations, as well as the spread of other respiratory infections. And officials said there was no sign of an increase in severe cases.

More than four in 100,000 children aged 4 years or younger admitted to hospitals were infected with the coronavirus as of January 1—double the rate reported a month ago, and about three times the rate this time last year. Children infected with the variant are still at much less risk of becoming severely ill than adults, and even young children seem less likely to need ventilators than those admitted during previous surges, experts said.

The number of children admitted to the hospital who test positive rose precipitously last week to the highest levels since the beginning of the pandemic, according to data released on Friday by the CDC.

The increase was observed in children aged 4 and younger, who are not eligible for vaccination, and the data include those admitted to

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE

eye



POINT OF VIEW

Woven in Rich Tapestry

How the Rashtrapati Bhavan interiors were curated with the great heritage of Indian textile

BOOKS

- Review of Syed Akbaruddin's *India vs UK: The Story of an Unprecedented Diplomatic Win*
- Review of *Rising to the China Challenge*
- Review of Arvind Panagariya's *My Father*



GETTY IMAGES

A BASKET OF SURPRISES

From a migrant dish to a city staple, momos recorded more than a crore orders last year. What does it mean for those selling the dumplings?

Damini Ralleigh

GEET IN line! Distance *banake rakhiye* (maintain some distance)," hollers Dolma Tsering, reminiscent of a school teacher trying desperately to discipline an unruly bunch of students. Except, everyone standing in front of her is an adult – few masked, fewer heeding caution. They all seem to be galloping towards Tsering's shop in Delhi's Lajpat Nagar, weaving through the crowd to get to a plate of piping-hot momos.

Nothing shrinks the country's appetite for momos, not even a raging pandemic. Food aggregator Zomato recently posted a report on its Instagram feed, titled "Presenting the 2021 Memorable Rewind and A Little Bit About How India Ordered", which claimed the momo trumped vada pav and its long-standing rival samosa, by some lakhs of orders. It received more than 1 crore orders, as biryani consolidated its top position, with two biryanis delivered every second.

As COVID-19 cases rise again, Delhi's food vendors, mostly migrants, are gripped by fears of a lockdown and livelihood loss. "Bohot mushkil ho jayega agar lockdown ho gaya phir se (It'll be hard to survive another lockdown)," says Tsering, 53. Not listed with a food aggregator, the lockdowns meant long periods of zero revenue for her. Tsering named her take-away spot after what customers call her – "Dolma Aunty," an epithet reserved for women of a certain age, and Dolma Aunty Momos has become somewhat of a landmark in one of Delhi's busiest markets, since she started plying shoppers with steamed dumplings in 1994.

Back then, she and her sister-in-law would head to the market every evening, armed with nothing but a plastic stool that worked as a stand for her steamer pot and a kilogram or two of folded, uncooked momos that she

hoped would sell by the end of the day. Twenty-eight years later, four Dolma Aunty Momos outlets stand tall with pride in the city. "It was difficult in the beginning," says Tsering, who'd never negotiated the streets as a vendor before. She came to the Capital as a new bride in 1990, and was employed as a domestic worker. "I did several jobs – cleaning, washing, cooking, even as a runner for people – but couldn't make ends meet. That's when my sister-in-law and I decided to start our own momo business," she recounts.

The Delhi that once associated deep-fried food with the streets, didn't take kindly to her efforts. They'd accuse her steamed momos of being *kaccha* (uncooked), which would make them sick. With great difficulty she'd try, in broken Hindi, to explain what momos were. "But those who bought our momos, kept coming back. And with that, we were able to make enough money to feed ourselves," she says.

It's unknown when the momo came to the country. Estimates suggest it was when the Dalai Lama sought asylum in India in 1959. Thousands of Tibetans, including Tsering's parents, followed their leader. With them, came the momo. "Ten or fifteen small meat dumplings (*mo-mo*) would often be a Tibetan gentleman's lunch, noted Tibetologist and British India's ambassador to Tibet Charles Alfred Bell in his book *People of Tibet* (1928).

But here, it remained confined to the Tibetan settlements that cropped up across the country – Majnu Ka Tila (Delhi), Bylakuppe and Mundgod (Karnataka), Puruwala (Himachal Pradesh), Tezu (Arunachal Pradesh), among others. Since most settlements functioned largely as self-reliant units, keeping daily activity and interaction limited to the community, the momo, too, was primarily made by and sold to Tibetan refugees, save for a few momoficionados who made special trips for it.

The Nepalese, too, contributed to its spread. The Newar merchants of Kathmandu, during their travels along the Silk Route, are said to



COMFORT IN PARCELS

(Top) Steamed momos revolutionised street food's 'fried' image; Dolma Tsering at her shop in Delhi

have picked up the recipe, made traditionally with yak meat in Tibet, and brought it to India. Many momo vendors trace their lineage to the Gorkha community (the British army began recruiting the Nepalese as "Gorkhas" in 1815), and refer to Sikkim as their home, where the momo has dethroned the traditional hyoント – a cheese-filled steamed dumpling made with millet flour – as the state's go-to dish.

Momos are essentially parcels with fillings of myriad kinds, and find an expression in most cultures. It is Japan's gyoza, China's jiaozi, Korea's mandu, Turkey's mantı, Afghanistan's mantoo. Poland's pierogi and Italy's ravioli or agnolotti, too, could be likened to it. Even in India, steamed savoury or sweet variants existed prior to the momo. Gujia, Varanasi's fara, to the jaggery-and-coconut filled dumplings, like Maharashtra's modak, Bengal's bhapa puli pithe, Kerala's kozhukkattai, Tamil Nadu's kolukkattai or Andhra Pradesh's kudumulu.

Outside the Himalayan region, the momo, as we know it today, remained relatively unknown to the rest of India till the 1990s. When a newly liberalised economy held the promise of employment and better living conditions, it drove migrants, particularly from the Northeast, to the metro cities like Delhi. Immigrants from Nepal and the Lhotshampas, Bhutanese of Nepali origin, who were made refugees in their own country, too, arrived in India. Along came their cuisines. Despite a liberal approach towards them, most refugees and migrants have struggled with invisibility, social exclusion and a denial of their entitlements. This pushed many migrants, particularly women, to rely on the strength of their culinary skills to establish a foothold in the city.

Entrepreneurs like Tsering dot the country today, selling momos in the evenings and disappearing into the margins. "It's much easier now; when we started, ladies-log itna bahan

kaam nahi karte the (women didn't go out to work as much). We'd feel awkward as the only women vendors in the market," she says.

Ubiquitous in most cities, it's sold near Metro stations, bus stands, outside schools, colleges and offices, even hospitals. "I've often spotted people selling momos from nothing but a bicycle. They hang the uncooked momos on its handle and set up the steamer on the carrier. And that's sometimes their entire shop, the bicycle's anatomy serves as the infrastructure of their shop," says Shamita Chaudhary, architect and founder of Malba Project, a construction/demolition waste management start-up, who frequents the momo vendors in her office's neighbourhood.

At the break of dawn, in the "urban village" of Chirag Dilli, migrant workers start to chop onions, garlic and ginger, roll out little balls of maida, and stuff them with cabbage and carrot or chicken fillings. Each dumpling is shaped into a half-crescent moon or fat, round *potli*. These are supplied to momo vendors by noon, who sell them across the city. Readymade and frozen momos are also sold by the kilo in wholesale markets like Sadar Bazar.

Like this relatively invisible workforce, the vendors, too, hail from elsewhere. Pradip Ghora, 32, from West Bengal's Medinipur, who sells momos out of a "Chinese van" in New Rajendra Nagar, first had a taste of it in Delhi's Munirka in 2001. "I'd come here to look for work and someone bought me a plate. I didn't like the taste initially," he says. So, then, why does he sell it? "Because it sells," he says.

Unlike Ghora, for Zacile Kenn, 36, it's a way to remember her life in Dimapur, Nagaland, where she once ran a "small restaurant", which she hopes to resurrect after having saved enough money from her Delhi job. "Momos were usually a Sunday affair for us. My family would get together after church service and make momos for the evening," she says. In her Zeliang tribe, it has "always been a part of the table" and she "feels closer to home" when

cooking it at the Ministry of Pork in Delhi's Humayunpur, an urban village next to the upscale Safdarjung Enclave, that hosts cafés run by people from the Northeast and other states.

Shyam Thakur, 38, founder and CEO of Momo King, a Malaysian restaurant chain that he brought to Delhi in 2017 and is now a fast-expanding cloud kitchen, finds the homogeneity in the taste of momos served across the city slightly amusing. His venture distinguishes Darjeeling momos from Lahad ones, by using Nepalese spices such as *timur* and *situm*. They also offer gluten-free and vegan options. "The momo's popularity is undeniable. Unique in its versatility, it can be altered to suit any palate without destroying its essence. That it's favoured by the elderly as much as kids, the health-conscious and gastronomes add to its popularity," he says. Momo King plans to expand to tier-II and -III cities, the US and UAE next, and aims to open 100 cloud kitchens by 2023.

Their menu also features the city-bred cult: Tandoori momo. The momo has evolved, and how. From the traditional Nepalese *jhol momo* (momos in a comforting broth), to the fusion malai momo, kurture momo, the bizarre momo pizza or moburg (momo burger), and the extravagant chocolate momo at a cloud-kitchen chain, Wow! Momo. "My best friend and I have an annual tradition of eating butter chicken momos – momos in a butter chicken gravy. Now that I'm vegetarian, they make a paneer version for me. It's gimmicky but fun," says Chaudhary.

Behind the adaptable momo, signalling an evolving country, are migrants like Tsering, who have shaped how India eats from the sidelines of the food world. "When I started, I wanted to make enough money to feed my family, but, today, it's my identity. If you take momos away from me, I don't know who I would be," says Tsering.

Damini Ralleigh is a Delhi-based food writer

Eat Your Worms

Are insects the future of food? Entomophagy could address global food-security concerns and save the planet

Pooja Pillai

IN FEBRUARY last year, Hollywood star Robert Downey Jr created something of a stir in the nascent edible-insects industry when he made a case for protein derived from mealworm larvae in an interview with *The Late Show* host, Stephen Colbert. The product the presenter showed to Colbert was from a company that he happens to back, but there's more to this episode than a simple case of an investor getting people to buy a product he has put money into.

Consider this: the climate emergency is expected to affect current forms of agriculture and, indeed, the entire global food sys-

tem. At present, food production is responsible for nearly a quarter of greenhouse-gas emissions (among other environmental impacts), the bulk of it coming from the production of animal-based foods. In light of this, millions have been poured into the production of plant-based alternatives to animal food, including vegan meat, eggs, dairy and seafood, with some of the largest companies in the world jumping onto the bandwagon. Not a little of this rush is owing to the positive press that the burgeoning plant-protein industry has received – something that the edible-insect industry has been, unsurprisingly, struggling with. But with high-profile backers, like Downey Jr, that just might be changing.



ROAST THE BUGS

A traditional Mexican snack of chapulines grasshoppers and guacamole

as a "novel food", making it the latest in the still-short list of insects – yellow mealworms and house crickets are others – that could be made available for human consumption in that part of the world.

The problem, until now, has been the belief – pervasive in the West, but also in several other parts of the world – that humans aren't supposed to eat insects. This is evident in the EU's formulation of mealworms, locusts and crickets as "novel" foods. Because the fact is that these are not "novel" foods – not in Mexico, where the eggs of a certain water bug are as prized as caviar, nor in Zimbabwe where flying termites are a popular source of protein and not in several other parts of the world.

Even in India, a variety of insects have been consumed – not just for their nutritional value, but also for their taste. In Assam, for example, silkworms are loved not only for the luxurious fabric they yield, but also as a food: they are enjoyed fried, roasted or raw with salt and chilli. Another example is the red-ant chutney, relished in the tribal belt of central India. Apart from the communities that have traditionally made insects a part of

their diet, there is a small number of others who seem to have got over the revulsion to the very idea of entomophagy. Writer and researcher Tansha Vohra, for example, has been running the Boochi project, a digital exploration of entomophagy and offers recipes – sourced from the Northeast – such as weaver ant chutney, giant hornet, with sichuan pepper, tree tomato and pork fat, carpenter worm with bamboo shoot juice and tree tomato and eri silk worm with chilli, garlic and fermented bamboo shoot.

According to the "Entomophagy: A Resource Guide", an online research resource created by the US Library of Congress, there are an estimated 2 billion people around the world who regularly consume insects. As the total global population is around 7.9 billion, this means nearly a quarter of the world's population thinks nothing of snacking on locusts or stir-frying moth larvae for a nutritious meal. This number does not include the growing number of gourmets who are curious – even eager – to try edible insects. All of this implies that if the idea of eating insects disgusts you, you're likely to find yourself in a minority in the not-too-distant future.

DOWN IN JUNGLELAND

Ranjit Lal

Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and bird watcher

The Skinklet on the Carpet

The lizard's cousins, often seen in parks and at homes, are harmless

WHEN I first sighted it on the dining room carpet one morning, I thought it was a highly anorexic lizard variant, whose limbs had stopped growing and whose sharp-ended tail was severely sunburnt or had got stuck in the toaster. The creature was long and sinuous, the top of its back tan, with cream edging on its sides, the body profusely spotted as if pins had been pricked into it. Or, was it a tiny (about 9 cm long) genetically mutant snake that was, perhaps, trying to morph into a lizard? My man Friday declared it to be extremely venomous, that it moved lightning fast. At the moment, it seemed dead.

"Okay, so we take it out into the garden," I said. A duster was gently manoeuvred over it and it suddenly sprang to life, wriggling, writhing and slithering like a psychotic coil spring, making us all jump back in alarm. The sharp-tipped tail looked like it had just come out of a volcano — and so, maybe, had its temper, too! It had two tiny pinpoint eyes and very small spindly looking legs. I photographed it and then we enveloped it in the duster again and let it out into the garden, where it wriggled off at warp speed and vanished into the foliage.

"It's a common garden skink, non-venomous," said Dr Faiyaz Khudsar, of the Yumana Biodiversity Park, when I sent him the photograph. "It's completely harmless!"

Well, if it was common, how come I hadn't come across it before? I began checking up on the little guy — or girl. These skinks are quite a clan and, according to the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), just over 1,600 species are found worldwide, of which 62 are found in India, 33 of which are exclusive to us. They are a kind of subset of lizards: while all skinks are lizards, all lizards are not skinks. They are found pretty much worldwide (except the Arctic and Antarctic regions), in a variety of ecosystems and nearly all are harmless to us. Most can't even puncture human skin when they're encouraged to bite us. They are easy to look after and make for calm, popular pets, and I can well imagine schoolboys trying to gross out, or, maybe, impress girls by taking them out of their



SKINNY TALES

Only the common garden skink youngsters have a red-hot tail

pockets! Skinks prefer open spaces, school playgrounds, rocky areas, parks, garages, homes, and areas strewn with rocks and trees — where they can conceal themselves and are fond of tunneling and the underground life. Fossils of skink-like lizards date back to 140 million years, so they have been around for a while.

The one in the dining room, perhaps, found the insides of the house warmer than outside. In winter, these cold-blooded creatures can be found basking in the sun, on the tops of rocks, branches and walls. In the rains, they may head indoors if their tunnels and crevices get flooded.

Skinks measure between 7.5 and 35 cm (the whopper being the Solomon Islands Skink that can grow up to 81 cm) and are active, lively hunters of insects — flies, cockroaches, beetles, ladybirds, etc., as well as small invertebrates and spiders. One report mentioned they can eat vegetables — provided they are cooked! (How skinks say *batingan ka bharta* in the wild was not mentioned, so, presumably, this only applies to skinks kept by vegans as pets!) Another report noted raw vegetables are eaten, too. They chase down their prey or wait in ambush beneath a rock or foliage and pounce on their victims, clamping down on them with their sharp little teeth. They themselves are on the menu of many birds, cats and small mammals, and so spend much of the time in hiding, even lying doggo semi-buried under leaves, rocks and topsoil (it's called being semi-fossilised), many are well camouflaged and difficult to spot — maybe why I hadn't come across them so far. They need just one meal every four-five days. Gardeners love them, because they're effective and selective pest-control agents who work for free.

My common garden skink was apparently a youngster — as only the juveniles have the red-hot tail. Dots line up on its surface (which, my friend already had) and turn into line markings as the reptiles mature. Like most lizards they can drop their tail, and leave it wriggling and squirming in the startled face of a predator: the tail continues to wriggle and writhe, distracting the hunter as the erstwhile owner makes off at top speed. Growing a new tail is an energy expensive proposition, but has to be done.

They haven't been researched enough (the ZSI has a book on them, but it is phenomenally priced). My common garden skink is known as *saamp-ki-mausi* (snake's aunt!) in Hindi as well as the common dotted garden skink, common snake skink, punctate supple skink, and spotted supple skink. While most skinks lay eggs which hatch, some have live births. These babies are called skinklets — a truly charming moniker if there ever was one!

How the Rashtrapati Bhavan interiors were curated with the great heritage of Indian textile

Anjali Bakshi

SINCE ANCIENT times, Indian textile has been much sought after, and its story is one of the oldest in the world. The earliest known reference is to be found in the *Rig Veda*. Romans apparently gave gold coins in exchange for Indian textiles of the same weight. The textile industry raked in gold and silver, India-made silk and cotton found buyers in ancient Greece, Egypt and the Arab world, and, later, in Europe under colonial rule. Medieval India's economy reached its pinnacle of glory, and the Indian artisan, with his master skills, caught the eye of European travellers and traders.

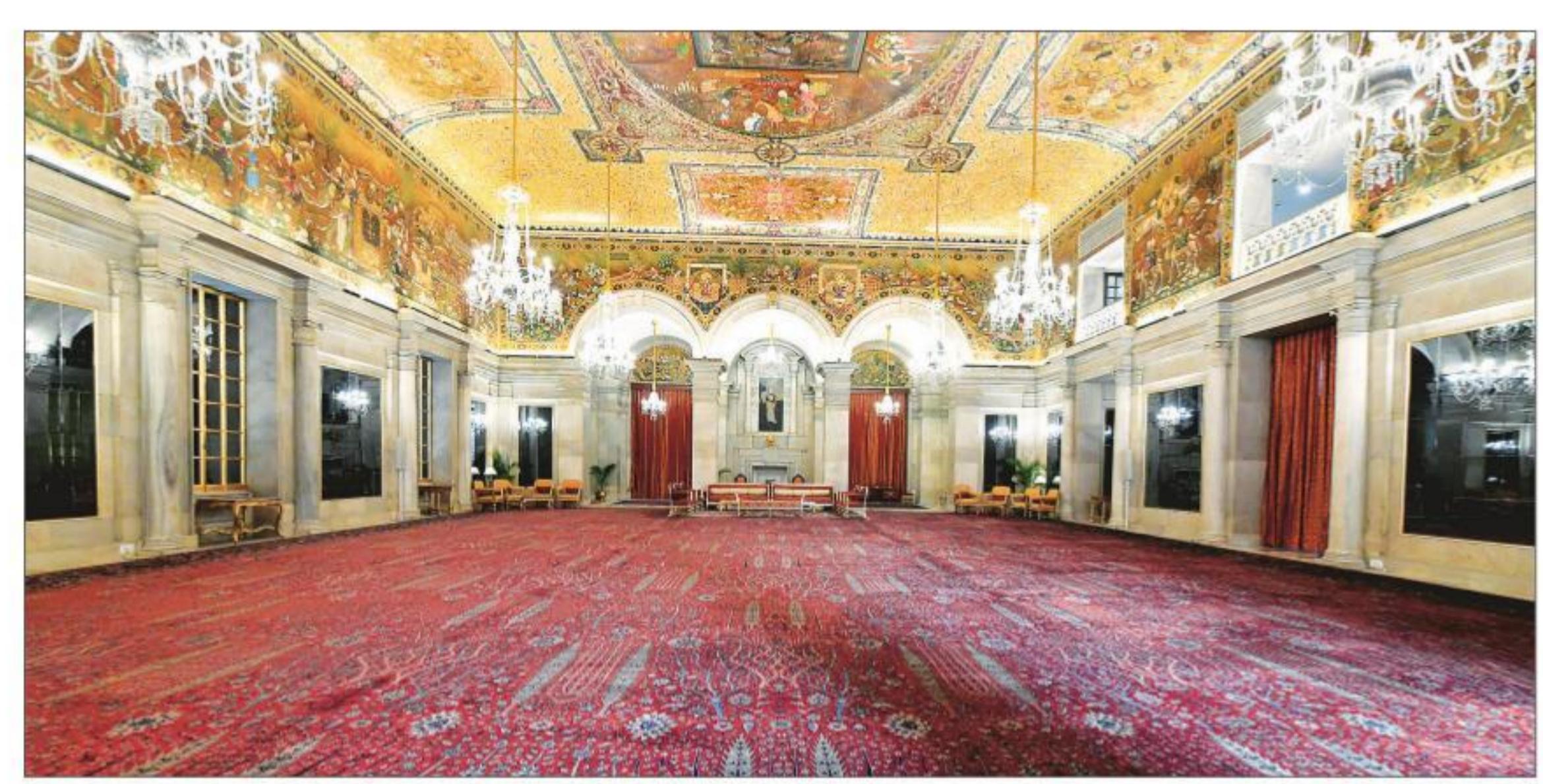
The story of Indian textile is layered with stories of cultural appropriation and colonialism. India's freedom movement saw the revival of the country's textile traditions as a crucial political move. The richness of India's textile tradition was repressed under colonial rule, when India was reduced to a mere supplier of raw materials to Britain. The principle of self-reliance underlined Mahatma Gandhi's Swadeshi Movement, to boycott foreign goods, and alleviate poverty by employing the masses in spinning, weaving and wearing Khadi. Nationalists adopted Khadi as a symbol of resistance, and incorporated the spinning wheel in the design of their flag.

The Rashtrapati Bhavan is a repository of the country's distinct textile traditions, ranging from *zardozi* and gold-embroidered velvets in its carpets, bed and table coverings, to fine muslin and silk drapes. Its architect Edwin Lutyens wanted to use Khadi as a furnishing in the Rashtrapati Bhavan, it being aesthetically suitable, but he was not allowed. Khadi was seen as a symbol of India's struggle for independence.

The British government probably wanted to convey a sense of imperial grandeur through British fabrics in regal colours, such as gold, dark blue, maroon.

And since the styles of Indian chintz and *kinkhab* (brocade), and Indian carpets, were in vogue among the Victorian interiors and fashion, thus these were acceptable in adorning the interiors of the Viceroy's House. The Bhavan's archival images — that show the use of heavy velvets with gold braid, floral carpets and chintz fabric — indicate how Lutyens had adapted to the requirements of the regal taste.

The colour palette and designs of the carpets are similar to Mughal, Persian and



Kashmiri patterns. Lutyens had imbibed 16th-17th century originals and reproduced them. Made with the most exquisite textiles in India, almost all the carpets in the Rashtrapati Bhavan are grand, covering the entire floor of the rooms, and almost all of them display floral motifs, exuding a sense of being in a garden full of blooming flowers. The one in the Ashoka Hall, for instance, measuring 32 x 20 m, has a deep-red base with trees and flowers in green, blue and white. The cypress trees etched in the carpet are symbols of eternity. A similar carpet, from 17th-century Persia, exists in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The curtains in Ashoka Hall are rust-coloured, with trees and animals in gold — matching the murals on the ceiling.

Some of the elements designed and selected by Lutyens are still displayed and in use at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, such as *zardozi* velvets and colonial carpets — showcasing

ROYAL SHOW
(Clockwise from top)

The Ashoka Hall carpet has a deep-red base with flora motifs in green, blue and white, rust-coloured curtains with gold motifs, matching the murals on the ceiling; the cypress trees etched in the carpet are symbols of eternity; various State rooms adorn silk Khadi weaves, Banarsi brocades, *kinkhab*, Kashmiri carpets, velvets and damasks.

India's embroidery and weaving traditions. *Zardozi* hangings and coverings — on the walls, beds, and floors — form part of the Bhavan's textile collection. They were also used as *masnads* (Persian for seat). Used by Mughal emperors, who sat on these seats when holding court, *masnads* are made on a wooden frame, on which the velvet is stretched out on all sides. The embroidery is done using a thin metal wire with a hook-shaped needle. The raised design gives a three-dimensional look and the technique is known as *kalabattu*. The embroiderer works the gold thread over a base that is padded with cotton or paper. Archival images show these velvets were draped over the steps, at the time of the swearing-in ceremony of the first president Rajendra Prasad in the Durbar Hall. This tradition might have been emulated by the British rulers. These velvets are displayed in the Rashtrapati Bhavan and Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum.

Independence ushered in the process of transforming Viceroy's House into Rashtrapati Bhavan, the fabrics now reflected India's nationalist ideals as the selection of fabrics were done keeping our traditions in mind. The choices reflect India's textile her-

itage. Various State rooms now adorn silk Khadi weaves, and Banarsi brocades, *kinkhab*, Kashmiri carpets, velvets and damasks. The revival of Indian traditional textiles was ushered in by the setting up of handicrafts and handloom boards.

Challenges of industrialisation came up with India's independence, of increasing factory production to cater to India's vast population requirements. To protect India's textile heritage, to support and revive ancient textile crafts and hand-weaving techniques, the government had set up the All India Handloom Board (now dissolved) and established the National Institute of Design. Today, many studios produce handmade textiles. Indian craftsmanship is also in demand for its embroidery and hand-beading. The craftsmanship with its quality and diversity of skills, and its ability to innovate designs for varied international tastes helped Indian artisans regain markets. But only a few know how the Rashtrapati Bhavan interiors were curated and has preserved the great heritage of Indian textile with great zeal.

Anjali Bakshi is joint director at the Rashtrapati Bhavan

Living History

AN INDIAN EXPRESS
COLLABORATION WITH THE
RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN

SLICE OF LIFE



Suvir Saran

Suvir Saran is a chef, author, educator and world traveller

IT'S A pulsating loud, wildly raucous rally in a huge stadium. The crowd is on its feet and thumping. There could easily be a stampede, but nobody would care. They would gladly die for the cause. Every word coming out of the speaker's mouth is going directly into each person's heart, touching a raw nerve, making them proud of their country, proud of their religion, proud of their skin colour, and proud of their place in the world, determined that they must protect their own kind. They have willingly and enthusiastically placed themselves in the hands of the puppeteer.

These rallies are taking place all over the world. The speakers are not leaders of small nations. These are leaders of nations that are secular in their constitution, that have pluralistic societies, that have people of all colours and creeds living in them. And yet, by touch-

ing the hearts and minds of the fearful populace, these demagogues are able to rule over the people of the nation and go against all the norms of civil democracy.

Strongmen, rabble-rousers, jingoistic nationalists strutting around like patriots, and yes, fascists — it is these men and women who are finding popularity across the world. In the oldest and largest democracies of the world, we are seeing a rise of proudly sectarian nationalism that is gaining mainstream admiration. Its ideologies and those speaking with muscular majoritarian language who are finding favour at the voting booth and greater bandwidth on news channels and other media platforms. Left or Right, extreme viewpoints are gaining more and more access into hearts and minds that are otherwise mostly apolitical.

As we begin another year where we find ourselves gripped by questions and fears that are part and parcel of living in these pandemic times, we mustn't fool ourselves into thinking that ultra-nationalism and woke-secularism are passing trends. Neither of these is the mainstay of any one nation, religion, people, or continent. They are as universal as cellphones and our shared humanity. These extreme Left and Right viewpoints have always existed, have always been part of our human ethos, and have always provided connecting links for disparate people who might not share much else.

These extreme viewpoints are easily supported and sustainably bred in people fraught with the terrors borne out of the strongman's cold avarice and brute ego. All firebrand agitators, both woke and right-wing, understand the value of preying upon people's fears and prejudices. They know that people who are broken and feel forgotten will accept lies and trumpery nonsense when they are convinced that what the other side is offering is evil and inhuman. These people, exploited by both the Right and Left, and after generations of having been ignored and living without basic ameni-



US AND THEM

This is the Left's wake-up call to not become mere reactionaries, and for the Right to be cognisant of the old diktat that what goes around comes around.

comes around

ties and access to things most of us take for granted, will believe the despot's lies and vote against their own interests. Donald Trump didn't do anything that remotely furthered his slogan "Make America Great Again", but those who voted for him and still support his messaging and his kind will most likely seek to vote those like him back into power.

Strongmen know that extreme viewpoints, more than moderate ones, are easier to sell and even easier to emulate and embrace. They come with a personality that has life and energy; they are easier to comprehend, and readily replicable. Finding the middle ground isn't easy; it requires time and concerted effort, takes more explanation and educational support, and the results are slow in coming and lack the flamboyance of the extremes. There weren't many who thought Trump was smarter than Hillary Clinton, but his was a story that was easy to parse and even easier to sell. Similarly, although Clinton had greater experience and more solid grounding, Barack Obama brought with him a much more muscularly defined message of hope than hers of measured centredness. Left or Right, people chose the fiery over the nuanced, style over substance, popularity over erudition, showmanship over statesmanship.

People are people, some more Left-leaning than Right, others more Right than Left. Few have the chops and stamina to survive in the not-so-popular-or-easily-understood Centre. To rid ourselves of the deeply vexing majoritarianism that is enveloping the world everywhere, those on one end must recognise that those on the other are our neighbours, our fellow humans, with ticking hearts and thinking brains. They have loved ones; they have dreams and aspirations and hopes, too. We cannot hate them, alienate them, or look at them simply as losers who are destroying the world. We must make a concerted effort to reach out to them, invest in our shared humanity, and make time to appreciate other viewpoints. We must grapple with the whys and whats that have brought us to these difficult times where our fellow humans are voting for the likes of Vladimir Putin, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Castro brothers, and their proxy — strongmen who are creating frightening divisiveness. Sad that these authoritarian leaders are followed like false prophets when they could well be emperors with no clothes. We must invest in understanding the motives that drive people to vote or support leaders as they do. We are out of touch with each other, and how we feel, and what we want. We are living like pendulums, not as human beings who understand each other.

This is the Left's wake-up call to show a side of themselves that is not politically correct, but correct; to smartly appreciate the bruises that are making majority groups nervous; and to show empathy and not apathy when dealing with the other. They must listen first, and then reflect, so as not to become mere reactionaries.

And for the Right, these are no times of comfort and complacency. It must be cognisant of the old diktat that what goes around comes around. Today, it is the other they are going after. Tomorrow, that other will be from within the fold. Muscles have memories, and the brain is the organ with the most nuanced control of all muscles. A person who has learned to hate must have a target. Once a dog has been taught to bite, when no prey is in sight, it will turn and bite the hand that feeds it.

As we begin the 365-day journey towards another year, we mustn't allow ourselves to be divided by predators who are interested only in their own rise to power. Wherever ideology creates schisms between us, we should quickly rise beyond the comforts of those divides and choose to continue walking on the road that unites us as humans, no matter how long or challenging that journey might seem. All humans are but just that, human, and it is we who give permission and credence to some in our midst to have messianic power and popularity. It is, thus, pertinent for us to understand that humanity — that consciousness that gives all men and women of the human fraternity a common link — is nothing we ought to ever take for granted.

An Absolute Majority

A new book tells the story of an unprecedented win for India at the UN and brings home the changing power equations and India's place in the world

Manjeet Singh Puri

GEETING THE better of a member of a permanent member (Big Five or P5) of the Security Council at the UN is always a moment to cherish but if the P5 member happens to be the colonial power that lorded over you, for nearly two centuries, the flavour has much more than a tinge of sweet. India's win over the UK at the UN in 2017 for a seat at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) was just that and is the tale of the book, *India vs UK*, authored by Syed Akbaruddin, known as Akbar in the diplomatic fraternity.

The ICJ, popularly known as the World Court, is located at The Hague (Netherlands). In 2017, India decided at the last minute to field Justice Dalveer Bhandari, who had earlier been at the Supreme Court and was just finishing his term at the ICJ, for re-election even though all earlier indications were that this election would not be contested. The book essentially details the hectic pace in the Indian Mission to the UN in the six months from the decision to contest in the middle of the year to the election itself at the end of the year. Written in a diary form, it has been put together in a manner that forces the reader to keep wanting to know the next round of happenings.

ICJ judges are elected for nine-year terms through concurrent elections in the UN General Assembly and Security Council. A winning candidate must secure a majority in both the Assembly and the Council. Obviously, the elections are not contests of judicial prowess of the candidates but political power games among nations with candidatures announced years in advance and serious campaigning in New York and major capital cities. The P5 have a clear edge in the Security Council not only as they willingly bond with each other on issues such as their presence in key UN organs but also because the non-permanent members find it politically expedient to be on their right side. How tall the order was for India can be assessed by the fact that the ICJ confrontation was directly with the UK. And India was not on the Security Council that year.

The 2017 election saw six candidates contesting for five vacancies at the ICJ. Latin America and Africa had one candidate each from Brazil and Somalia, respectively, while the Europeans and Asia had two each. The two Europeans were from France and Britain, both countries being permanent members of the Security Council with a kind of "divine" right to key UN bodies. The two Asians were the Permanent Representative of Lebanon and Justice Bhandari. The Lebanese had long been



PHOTOCOURTESY/ICJ-CD.ORG

canvassing for the vacancy that would be created by Justice Bhandari's tenure coming to an end with no counter campaign by India.

Though there is no formal geographical seat allocation at the ICJ, the convention is that judges from one region are replaced by others from their own region. The results of the voting were, therefore, along expected lines when the candidates from Brazil, Somalia, France, and Lebanon went through. While, in that sense, India had "lost" the election, the nail biting moment was that the British candidate had failed to cross the halfway mark in the General Assembly with Justice Bhandari similarly placed in the Security Council. While, in the past, such scenarios had seen the candidate winning in the General Assembly prevail after multiple rounds of further voting, never had the opponent been a candidate from a P5 country. Conventional wisdom dictated that attrition would work

ORDER OF THE DAY

(Above) The seat of the International Court of Justice at the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands; Justice Dalveer Bhandari



candidate, Christopher Greenwood, withdrew. The book vividly describes the last few days of political high-drama leading to this outcome, including an eyeball-to-eyeball meeting with the British Permanent Representative and the Security Council president to scuttle the British attempt to resurrect a rule from the UN's predecessor, the League of Nations' Permanent Court of Justice, to force a victory for themselves. Tackling "friends" and your own was also a necessity. Akbar had to push the US Permanent Representative to dial back not their vote, but at least efforts to persuade others to vote for the Britain. And, in his own backyard, so to say, where even though there

was sterling support from the External Affairs Ministry, the Minister had to be gently told not to take a call from her British counterpart.

The book is also rich with nuggets of information pertaining to the UN and India at the UN. For instance, while many are aware of India's charter membership of the UN, it is not well known that India's first attempt at being elected to the Security Council in 1947 didn't succeed, resulting, possibly, in huge political consequences that bedevil us to this day (the Security Council first considered the India-Pakistan question on January 6, 1948).

Akbar has been one of India's most noticeable faces in the Indian Foreign Service in recent years, who helmed the office of the spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs and, thereafter, as India's Permanent Representative to the UN. His book is certainly a story of an unprecedented win for India at the UN, but, in keeping with Akbar's profile, it visibly brings home the changing power equations and India's place in a new global balance. It is certainly a must-read for students of international relations but also for those generally interested in world politics.

Manjeet Singh Puri is former Ambassador of India to the EU & Nepal and Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN

Keeping a Balanced Life

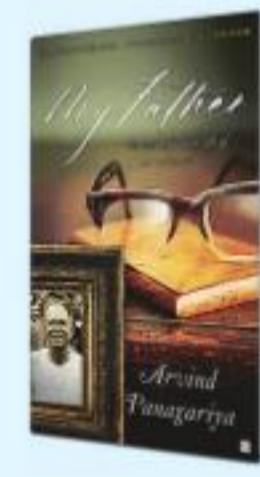
Former NITI Aayog vice-chairman Arvind Panagariya's book on his father is also an insightful account of 20th-century Indian history

Geeta Gandhi Kingdon

MY FATHER: *The Extraordinary Life of an Ordinary Man* is an interesting, personal story of Baloo Lal Panagariya, straddling the pre- and post-Independence period, and spans most of the 20th century. While largely biographical, it is also a political and social history of Rajasthan.

The author, Arvind Panagariya (former vice-chairman NITI Aayog), poignantly showcases his unlettered, widowed and indigent grandmother's uncanny understanding of the benefits of education, and her heroic sacrifices to educate her son, which dramatically alters not only the course of her son's life but also that of the next generation. The author shows how his studious father — the subject of the biography — acquired his education under extreme privations and setbacks, bailed out sometimes by the patronage and munificence of the local *rajah*, who was impressed with his academic brilliance.

The story covers the birth, childhood and education of the senior Panagariya, his time as a writer/journalist for a magazine and newspapers, and for the newsletter of the *praja mandal* (a people's movement started by those who lived in princely states), his long stint as a bureaucrat in the government of Rajasthan, and after retirement, his substantial period as a researcher, historian and author. Despite it being written by an adoring son, this biography maintains a high level of objectivity and avoids being a hagiography.



MY FATHER: THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF AN ORDINARY MAN BY ARVIND PANAGARIYA HarperCollins India 240 pages; ₹599

Alongside this personal story, one reads the fascinating history of the freedom movement in Rajasthan in the late raj period, through the eyes of Panagariya, who was a young man at the time. It is particularly interesting to read about the various pulls and pressures behind the integration of the princely states of Rajputana into the newly formed state, the stance of Congress towards *rajas* and *maharanas*, and their encouragement of the *praja mandals*.

The book also presents the unfolding of India's administrative order in the post-independence period, through the lens of this one state, Rajasthan. As one fascinated by the history of people and places, but unfamiliar with that period of history, this biography

was a treat. It was interesting to read the stories of Panagariya's integrity and efficiency — preventing 200 acres of land going to an individual who had no provable title to it, and winning the war against powerful and corrupt liquor barons, among others. Of particular interest was the section about Panagariya's challenge to the views of scholars about the figure of Mahanara Pratap as portrayed in history books. This shows Panagariya as a man of courage and justice, passionate and emotional, very determined to rectify what he regarded as mistaken interpretations of history, which he argued through reason and logic. I loved that he enjoyed playing Bridge (I like it, too) and followed cricket. A life exemplifying balance, discipline and good values is worthy of admiration.

At a critical juncture in his life, soon after independence, Panagariya confronted the choice between continuing as a civil servant in the state government and joining politics. Though the latter option carried the prospect of reaching even the highest office of the state, he chose the former in the interest of his family and the children's education — something I regard as exemplary because, to me, it represents the right values. My ambitious and indefatigable father, who at age 34 had become an independent MLA in the Uttar Pradesh legislature in 1969, left politics in 1975 to join the Baha'i faith, and devoted his life to the education of children (his own and others), a decision which he says "saved his soul".

The legacy of Panagariya and his supportive wife, Mohan Kumari, continues beyond their lives through the distinguished services rendered to the nation and the world by their three offspring.

Geeta Gandhi Kingdon is chair of Education Economics and International Development, University College, London

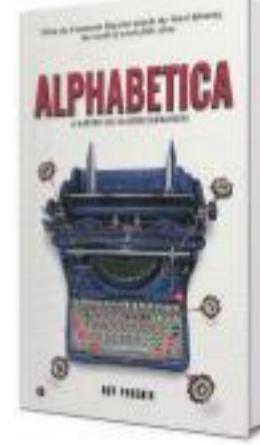
Times We Live In

Kaushik Das Gupta

WE LIVE in dark times. Just as it seemed that the world was beginning to overcome the virus, it seems to have raised its head again. A scourge that affects all of us would have made humanity put up a common front. But nothing close to it has happened. We had been riven by conflict much before the microbe struck. Our capacity to make well-informed decisions constrained by interneccine rivalries, between identities that are a complex combination of lived realities and toxic political imaginations, often

championed by authoritarians who don't brook any dissent. Amid all this, humour has been a salve despite dictators not liking being mocked at. That's why Roy Phoenix's *Alphabetica* is a book for our times. Its charm lies in making complex things simple with wit and irony, while never losing sight of its purpose.

What could be a more apt vehicle for such an allegory than alphabets, something that's been fundamental to human existence? *Alphabetica*'s characters, vowels, consonants, symbols, and numbers, live in an eponymous homeland in Planet Typewriter. Their homes are built on a



ALPHABETICA: A SATIRE ON MAJORITARIANISM BY ROY PHOENIX Notion Press 220 pages; ₹549

foundation of love and camaraderie, and their workplace, Underwood, an estate of cooperation with pay parity. Underwood is presided over by The Poet, The Benefactor of the Planet Typewriter — a self-contained machine that is also his Temple of Free Speech. But trouble is brewing in this abode of tranquility.

Ypsi, one of the keenest learners on Planet Typewriters has numerous peeves, that indicate "her desperation to be recognised as someone special, with a unique identity". Things come to a head when this troubled soul hears the Poet and his wife discuss the evolution of the English alphabet. She gives the conversation a nefarious spin and claims that the consonants are the original inhabitants of Alphabetica, descendants of the Phonecians, who founded the

planet. Vowels, she claims, are infiltrators — descendants of the Greeks, who blackmailed The Poet into changing the name of the planet from Phoenicia to Alphabetica. This newly twisted understanding of the past Ypsi inflates her already exaggerated sense of self-importance and makes her vocabulary particularly violent. In no time, she mobilises her fellow consonants by raising the bogey of Alphabetica being taken over by the minority vowels.

Doesn't all this sound eerily familiar? The author's intent is, of course, evident from *Alphabetica*'s subtitle, "A Satire on Majoritarianism". But the 200-odd pages that follow contain a riveting narrative on the war of words in Alphabetica that will make the reader think on how and why we came to what we have become today.

Roadmap for Diplomacy

Some of India's finest minds present a compass to navigate the geopolitical churn with China

Vikram Singh Mehta

WHEN SIX former public servants and scholars of unique distinction conjointly author a book on China, it cannot be disregarded. A well-written, analytical, empirically rich and policy-oriented product, it deserves to be in the "must read" lists of the year.

Rising to the China Challenge: Winning Through Strategic Patience and Economic Growth has been authored by Gautam Bambawale, India's former Ambassador to China; Padma Vibhushan Vijay Kelkar, former chairman of the 13th Finance Commission; Padma Vibhushan Ramesh Mashelkar, Fellow of the Royal Society and former director-general of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research; Ganesh Natarajan, executive chairman and founder of 5F World; Ajit Ranade, group executive president and chief econo-

mist at the Aditya Birla Group and Professor Ajay Shah, formerly with the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy.

Much has been written and spoken about the potential for India to arrest and narrow the widening economic gap with China. This book is, however, among the very few that goes beyond that statement. With the help of readily understood numerics, it provides a road map for India to reach this objective.

The "rise of China" has been a growing concern. The "Thucydides Trap" aptly captures this sentiment. Popularised by American political scientist Graham Allison, the phrase defines the conflict between an incumbent super power and an emergent power that looks to displace it. India is caught in the midst of this geopolitical churn. With Chinese President Xi Jinping signalling a willingness to use military coercion to resolve territorial disputes, India has to navigate the cross-currents of border se-



DRAW A LINE

The authors analyse India's potential to narrow the widening economic gap with China

curity, economic dependency, and nationalistic sentiment. This book provides a compass for navigating through this churn.

The authors have laid out three preconditions for charting the right path. First, the government must not intervene excessively in the economy. The present tendency to "pick winners" and create "artificial monopolies" imposes regressive "political and policy risk" on businesses. Second, the coequal balance of power enshrined in the

Constitution, between the Executive, the Judiciary and the Legislative, should be restored. The concentration of power in the hands of the Executive — the creation of the "administrative state" — dilutes entrepreneurialism and private-sector confidence.

Third, the rule of law must be respected in letter and spirit. The arbitrariness of authority should be circumscribed by law.

On this assumption that these three conditions will be met, the authors argue that

India is well placed to move on to a faster economic-growth trajectory than China and that through the power of compounding it can substantially narrow the current economic gap. They argue that India is demographically advantaged, that China's export base is weakening, and that the fundamental tension between market economics and autocratic politics will in time choke China's growth. They also detail the competitive potential of six sectors (telecom, consumer electronics, automobiles, chemicals, healthcare and pharmaceutical, and agriculture) and provide extensive data and analysis to describe how India can push China off its dominant perch in each of these sectors.

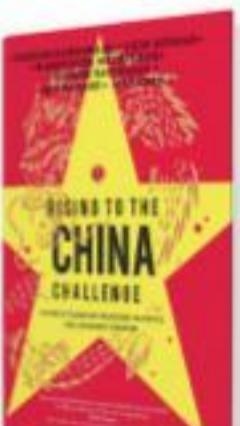
The analytical narrative is realistic and strategic. The authors recognise the importance of the existing economic relations with China and advise against "myopic jingoism". They emphasise that China must not be allowed entry or access to any sector that has strategic or security significance. Chinese executives must not be given a board position on any company that controls or owns national security assets; Chinese equipment must not be used in the telecom/internet business and Indian companies that rely on China for sour-

ing of raw materials and/or intermediaries must hold at least six months of inventory to limit China's leverage over them.

Economics is one of the two prongs of strategic advice offered in the book. The second prong is diplomacy. The authors task Indian diplomats to build international coalitions along three axes of natural partners. The first axis is other democracies (such as Australia, the US, Japan); the second, the countries that have faced the heat of China's muscular diplomacy; and the third, India's subcontinental neighbours. The objective of building "balancing coalitions" with the 20 countries that fall along these axes should be to counter China across the swathes of economic, military and intelligence issues.

China has run ahead of India in several economic and social spheres. There are many who maintain the race is lost. Through analytic logic, empirical data and pragmatic policy recommendations, the authors argue this would be a premature conclusion. The book should be read for their insight.

Vikram Singh Mehta is chairman, Centre for Social and Economic Progress



RISING TO THE CHINA CHALLENGE: WINNING THROUGH STRATEGIC PATIENCE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH BY AJAY SHAH, AJIT RANADE, GANESH NATARAJAN, GAUTAM BAMBAWALE, RA MASHELKAR, VIJAY KELKAR Rupa Publications 224 pages; ₹595

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, RISHABH JAGATRAM, S/o DURGESH KUMAR JAGATRAMKA, R/O-512, Supertech Estate, Vaishali, Sector-9-U.P.-201010, have changed my name to RISHABH JAGATRAMKA FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES. 0040598733-4

I, DURGESH KUMAR JAGATRAM, S/o-BISWANATH JAGATRAMKA, R/O-512, Supertech Estate, Vaishali, Sector-9-U.P.-201010, have changed my name to DURGESH KUMAR JAGATRAMKA, FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES. 0040598733-4

LOST & FOUND

I, Pitamber, S/o Sh. Badley Singh, R/o-B-2/5, Kondli, Delhi-110096, have lost my property-paper (Sell-Deed) page No.-17 and its backside ie last page. Address of property is A-2/803, Supertech ECO Village-III, Greater-Noida,(W.U.P.). 0040598733-10

I, Pappu S/o Rajender Prasad R/o-N-116/620, J.J.Camp, Badli-Village, Badli, Delhi-110042, have changed my name to Paras Kumar for all purposes. 0040598733-7

I, MANISH GOEL, S/o NARESH KUMAR GOYAL R/H NO.228, 2nd FLOOR, RAJDHANI ENCLAVE, PITAMPURA, DELHI-110034, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MANISH GOYAL. 0040598733-1

I, Damianpreet Singh, S/o Raghbir Singh, R/o Nabipuri, Gurdaspur, Punjab, have changed my name to Dhamanpreet Singh. 0040598733-5

I, Arjun Singh, S/o Ramesh Chand R/o-H.No.128,Gali-No.05, Sector-2,Sainik-Enclave, Uttam-Nagar, West-Delhi, Delhi-110059, have changed my name to Shri Krishan. 0040598733-6

I, ANITA JAGATRAM, D/o-JAGDISH PRASAD GADODIA, R/O-512, Supertech estate, Vaishali, Sector-9-U.P.-201010, have changed my name to ANITA JAGATRAMKA FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES. 0040598733-2

I, Satyendar Singh S/o Vijay Singh R/o-P-32/C, Shankar Vihar, Delhi Cantt-10 have changed my name to Satyendar Singh Rathore for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 03/01/22 before Adv Madanlal Gupta, Delhi 0040598733-1

I, Lissy EM, W/O Glory Kunjumon, R/O Putten Pura House Cherumoodu Velimmon P.O-Kundara Kollam Kerala. have changed my name to Name Anna Glory to Anna Glory Age-19 years is suffering, from serve Antisit Spectrum Disorder. As A Guardian this is all information correct and true. 0040598733-9

I, Barkha, D/o Sh. Amod Kumar Dubey, Permanent Resident, R.O. 0040598733-26/H2 Type M-Road, Bistupur-Jamshedpur, Jharkhand-831001, Presently at 2/31, Double Story, Vijay Nagar, New Delhi-110009, have changed my name to BARKHA DUBEY, for All Purpose. 0040598733-8

SAYYED SHAMIRA PARVEEN, D/O SHER ALI, R/O NO.B-4-1604, S.EMPRISE PANCHSHEEL GREEN2, SEC-16, BISRAKH, GAUTAM BUDHA NAGAR (GREATER NOIDA WEST) UTTAR PRADESH-201308.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SAIYAD SHAMIRA. 0070768125-1

I, Saradha Debi, dependent Mother of Birendra Kumar Roy resident of SMDM 11/2, Safed Sagar, AFFSR, Gurugram-122001 have changed my name from Saradha Debi to Sharada Devi vide Affidavit 1798/10 dated 06/01/2022 before District Court Gurugram. 0050190018-1

I, Kamaldass S/o Indro Dass alias Indra Mohan Das (both name are same person) R/o-B-69, gali no.-6, Joshi Colony, I.P.Extension, Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Kamal Das. 0040598712-1

I, Jagdish Singh Sani S/o Trilok Singh Sani R/o 241, B-Pocket C-2, Janta Flats Mayur Vihar Phase-III, East Delhi-110096, have changed my minor son's name from Shivansh Singh Sani aged 11 Months to Madhav Singh Sani forever 007068115-1

I, Baljit Sandhu W/o Brig. Gurpal Singh R/o A-505, Himachal Apartment, Dwarka, Sec-5, Plot-No.21, Delhi-110075, have changed my name from Baljit Kaur to Baljit Sandhu and date-of-birth is 04.12.1949 for all future purposes. 70768124-1

I, Ramphuli Alias Preeti D/o Brijesh Kumar R/o House No-A-332, Gokal Puri, Saba Pur Delhi-110094, have changed my name to Preeti 0070768116-1

I, Rakesh Kumar S/o Late Sh. Bhola Prasad Singh R/o Block No-A-802, First Floor, Spring View Floor, Lal Kuan Crescent Park, Sare Home, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201001 have changed my name to Rakesh Kumar Singh for all purposes. 0040598714-6

I, Pushpanjy Kaur alias Pushpanjy Kaur Bindra D/o Sh. Amarjit Singh Bindra R/o VB-127, 1st Floor, Gali No.4, Virender Nagar, Delhi-110058 have changed my name to Pushpanjy Kaur Bindra for all purposes. 0040598714-7

I, Jai Prasad Gupta S/o Late Moti Chand Gupta R/o House No.64/8, Ashok Nagar, Tilak Nagar, New Delhi-110018 have changed my name to Jai Ram Prasad Gupta for all purposes. 0040598714-5

I, Vishal Kumar Sharma S/o Shri Ashok Kumar Sharma, R/o 79/11, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110068, declare that Vishal Kumar Sharma and Vishal Sharma, are one & same person. Hereinafter I will use my name as Vishal Kumar Sharma for all purposes. 0040598717-1

I, DURGESH KUMAR JAGATRAM, S/o-BISWANATH JAGATRAMKA, R/O-512, Supertech Estate, Vaishali, Sector-9-U.P.-201010, have changed my name to DURGESH KUMAR JAGATRAMKA, FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES. 0040598733-4

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Roshni Lal and Smt. Anju Arora both R/o 18/3rd Floor, Kirti Nagar, Delhi have severed all their relations with their son Jatin Arora and his wife. They are estranged, dissident and in fact Roshni is living at her parental home. My clients further disclosed Jatin Arora & his wife Roshni have sold all their movable and immovable properties and my clients are not liable to any body for their acts and deeds.

Sd/- (NITIN ARORA)
Advocate

Ch. No. 465, Western Wing,
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-54
Mobile: 981819667
Enr. No. D-209/10

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I, Damianpreet Singh, S/o Raghbir Singh, R/o Nabipuri, Gurdaspur, Punjab, have changed my name to Dhamanpreet Singh. 0040598733-5

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I, ANITA JAGATRAM, D/o-JAGDISH PRASAD GADODIA, R/O-512, Supertech estate, Vaishali, Sector-9-U.P.-201010, have changed my name to ANITA JAGATRAMKA FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES. 0040598733-2

I, Satyendar Singh S/o Vijay Singh R/o-P-32/C, Shankar Vihar, Delhi Cantt-10 have changed my name to Satyendar Singh Rathore for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 03/01/22 before Adv Madanlal Gupta, Delhi 0040598733-1

I, Lissy EM, W/O Glory Kunjumon, R/O Putten Pura House Cherumoodu Velimmon P.O-Kundara Kollam Kerala. have changed my name to Name Anna Glory to Anna Glory Age-19 years is suffering, from serve Antisit Spectrum Disorder. As A Guardian this is all information correct and true. 0040598733-9

I, Barkha, D/o Sh. Amod Kumar Dubey, Permanent Resident, R.O. 0040598733-26/H2 Type M-Road, Bistupur-Jamshedpur, Jharkhand-831001, Presently at 2/31, Double Story, Vijay Nagar, New Delhi-110009, have changed my name to BARKHA DUBEY, for All Purpose. 0040598733-8

Suitable Medico Match For Handsome Hindu Tonk-Kashtriya Boy, MBBS, Working As Emo, 1993, 5'-6" Very Well Settled Family In Punjab, Caste No Bar. Marriage Bureau Excuse M: 9517811130, 9517721130 0050189872-1

Professionally qualified, BDS, MBBS, tall, slim girl for well settled MTECH Labana Sikh turbaned boy in UK, 5'11", 1989, drawing 7 figures p.a. Contact 9350689452 0040598733-1

PQM willing to relocate for Australia based Hindu Khatri girl, 49,5'3" never married govt employee, visiting India- bestmatch1@yahoo.com 0050189866-1

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The General Public is hereby notified that my client Mr. Rakesh Mittal S/o Late Shri Gopi Chand R/o-30, Nirman Vihar, Delhi-110092, it is stated that his property's previous Chain documents named SALE DEED NO. 1849 & 1850, BOOK-1, VOLUME NO. 197A ON PAGES 187-191 & 192-196 DATED 28.07.1987 REGD. WITH S.R.N. DELHI related to Property situated in Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-110020. The said property is situated in area of Village Chandivali, Delhi, has been misplaced and not traceable despite of best efforts. If anyone traced the same pls. inform on M. No. 9810030340

PUBLIC NOTICE

Mayur Chauhan (Advocate)

CHAMBER # G-308,
KARKARDOOJA COURT,
SHAHDARA, DELHI

I, Pitamber, S/o Sh. Badley Singh, R/o-B-2/5, Kondli, Delhi-110096, have lost my property-paper (Sell-Deed) page No.-17 and its backside ie last page. Address of property is A-2/803, Supertech ECO Village-III, Greater-Noida,(W.U.P.). 0040598733-10

I, Pappu S/o Rajender Prasad R/o-N-116/620, J.J.Camp, Badli-Village, Badli, Delhi-110042, have changed my name to Paras Kumar for all purposes. 0040598733-7

I, MANISH GOEL, S/o NARESH KUMAR GOYAL R/H NO.228, 2nd FLOOR, RAJDHANI ENCLAVE, PITAMPURA, DELHI-110034, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MANISH GOYAL. 0040598733-1

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SPORTLINE

Super raider

Nicknamed the 'Express', Naveen Kumar, the first 'centurion' of PKL 8 is becoming a big name in the sport

SHAHID JUDGE
MUMBAI, JANUARY 8

IT WAS just a few months after the first Pro Kabaddi League season in 2014 when Ajay Thakur was invited to be the chief guest for a local junior tournament in Himachal Pradesh. Immediately after the matches, he would be surrounded by the players who would ask for autographs and photographs.

Now, seven years later, he recalls one of those youngsters beseeching him for a memento. "Ajay bhaiya," he recites the words the unknown teen had said to him. "Mujhe aap bohot acche player lagte ho, main fan hoon aapka." Then we took a photograph together.

"As luck would have it, we are teammates now."

That persistent youngster is Dabang Delhi's talismanic raider Naveen Kumar Goyat – a skinny boy who weighed under 45 kgs back then, but is now one of the brightest new stars in the sport.

The word 'new,' is perhaps used loosely. The 21-year-old is currently playing in his third season of the marquee league, but he had already become his team's spearhead in 2018 – his debut season – as an 18-year-old. And how the records started tumbling.

He became the youngest to score a Super 10 (at least 10 raid points in a single match) and later became the youngest to reach 500 points. And now he's currently on a tremendous run of scoring 28 consecutive Super 10s.

Along the way, the nickname 'Naveen Express' came into being (the other options were 'toofan' and 'Krish' – after the Bollywood superhero flick).

But amidst the glitz and glamour of the league, the talented raider has not been lost to stardom and the newfound fame.

"He's very grounded. I've never seen him ever get affected by the stardom," Thakur, a Padma Shri, says. "I've seen it go to so many people's heads, even if it is for a few days. But that's never happened to him. He's the No 1 raider in India right now, but with his mannerisms, you just can't feel it."

Perhaps that's why Naveen isn't the first name that comes to mind when you discuss the big PKL stars. There's no frog-leap celebration at the end of a successful raid. No 'Thigh 5' after a running hand touch. No accusatory finger-pointing if a defender refuses to accept being tagged. He just walks back into his own half with the points and gets ready to defend.

He doesn't even bother sporting the carefully manicured hair that has become a staple for successful athletes – and even your ordinary joe. Instead, he prefers the messy mop. "I like being a bit simple. I don't



feel driven to do a fancy haircut and all. I just do what I like," he says.

Amidst the new riches of the PKL universe, it's still the simple village life he enjoys.

Simple joys

He's currently plying his trade in a posh-Bengaluru hotel, where the league is taking place in a bubble. But he's already worked out what he plans to do as soon as he gets home. The same thing he does every time.

"I have a few close friends who come over. We swim in the tube well, climb jaamun trees and eat the fruit," he says, laughing as he describes his routine.

"Phir ped ke neechi soot jaate hai. Gaon me mazza hi alag hai."

The 'mazza,' the story goes, was never really kabaddi. In fact, the sport was only used as an avenue to get out of studying.

Growing up in Bhaini Kungar village in the Bhawani district of Haryana, he attended a private school but loathed his schoolwork.

"I was never interested in studying. I didn't like going to school at all," he says. "But in 2010, the government school nearby started a sports program with the benefit that athletes would not need to stay in class for too long. A friend told me about it, so I tried and got in."

The condition to getting to stay out of the classroom was to play kabaddi. It was a sport he had never played before, but this was the learning he was willing to do. And then slowly he started to get inspired by the prizes on offer.

"Some of the senior players would go out for tournaments and come back with prizes. Rs 100, 200, 500. Naya lota milta tha kabhi, par naam toh naam hota hai."

It was only in 2014 though, when he won the 'Best Raider' award at the National School

Games that he started to envision a career in the sport. The life he knew till then – the naps under the tree, running through the family farm, looking after the three buffalos that he'd climb, pull tails, and then get a hiding from his parents – all changed when he was selected as the 'New Young Player' (NYP) for Dabang Delhi in 2018.

In the spotlight

"All youngsters keep an eye over their shoulder to check if the coach is watching," says Delhi coach Krishan Kumar Hooda, a Dronacharya Award recipient in the lifetime category. "They're trying to impress you so that you pick them for the PKL. But Naveen was different."

Hooda talks about how the unknown youngster became conspicuous during the trials simply by staying low-key. But the veteran coach knew he had found his next player.

"He would get on the court, do what he needed to do, and get off. Nothing fancy, no big celebrations. But you could see the speed in which he moved and the running hand touches were perfect," he adds.

Once Naveen made the cut, he became the first person from his village to become a professional sportsperson. There was a celebration back home when he returned, but his parents had another surprise in store for him.

"They used to watch PKL and saw the players are all well-built. I used to weigh 70 kgs at the time, so they decided to double my food intake every day," Naveen says.

"I used to have a litre of milk every day, they made it two litres. And they stuffed me with almonds. I couldn't handle it. I did it for five days and then told my parents I can't do this



In his first season Naveen Kumar Goyat (in blue) top scored for his team with 177 points and then followed it up in 2019 with 303. (Above) Goyat in 2014 standing to the left of his hero Ajay Thakur.

anymore. They agreed, but only after a few stomach upsets."

His father, a bus driver for the Haryana Roadways, too, got a boost when his supervisor started giving him short routes instead of long-distance ones. "The person in charge likes to watch my matches, and then he discusses them with my father," Naveen says.

But when the league started, the youngster could no longer float under the radar.

In the first season, he top-scored for his team with 177 points. In 2019 he went up to 303 – the third-best that season – and single-handedly took Dabang Delhi to the final, losing to Bengal Warriors. Currently, in his third term, he's scored 123 points and is the only one to hit three figures. And then there's the matter of the 28 consecutive Super 10s.

"Every raider has a staple set of moves. Maybe they'll enter from the right or left all the time. Naveen is very unpredictable," says Raju Bhavsar, a gold-medallist from the 1990 Asian Games. "It's difficult to read him as a defender because he changes his strategy mid-raid. He's a quick player – that speed itself gets him out of so many tackles. But now he's become much more patient and mature. He knows when to make a move."

The young player in a team filled with decorated veterans – Thakur, Manjeet Chhillar, Sandeep Narwal, Jogiinder Narwal – stands just as tall in stature now.

There was a time when Naveen struggled to adjust to the lighting in the glitzy league. Now he's well used to the eyes and cameras capturing his every move. It's why, he says, he's never bothered getting an 'after' picture with Thakur after all these years later.

"Abhi photo lene ka zaroorat nahi. Bohot professional cameraman hai jo lete hai."

Khawaja's second ton puts Australia in driver's seat

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SYDNEY, JANUARY 8

USMAN KHAWAJA'S stunning return to test cricket continued Saturday with a blistering century in Australia's second innings on day four which led the hosts to 265-6 declared and set England an unlikely 388 runs to win the fourth Ashes Test.

Openers Zak Crawley and Haseeb Hameed then survived a nervous 11 overs in fading light to get England safely to stumps at 29 without loss. Khawaja, who scored 137 in the first innings in his first appearance since the 2019 Ashes series in England, headlined another dominant day for Australia with an unbeaten 101 off 138 balls as part of a 179-run partnership with Cameron Green.

The 35-year-old scored his first fifty off 86 balls, but then accelerated his scoring rate by playing some extravagant strokes and brought up his hundred just 45 balls later with a two off David Malan.

"I don't think it has sunk in yet," said Khawaja, who's 10th Test century included 10 boundaries and two sixes.

"I've always wanted to score a century in both innings of first class cricket and never done it. But it's a nice one to tick off and put the team in a situation where hopefully we can win a Test match tomorrow."

It was just the third time that twin centuries have been made at the Sydney Cricket Ground with former Australia captain Ricky Ponting the last man to score two centuries in an SCG Test, 2006 vs. South Africa.

Khawaja is playing this Test only because of Travis Head testing positive for COVID-19 ahead of the match, but has surely put in a undeniable claim to be retained for the fifth Test in Hobart after back-to-back centuries.

"Happy for him, but obviously would have liked it against different opposition," said England batting coach Graham Thorpe.

"What I want to see is us play positively and have a good mental approach to it. I thought tonight our approach from Zak and Haseeb (Haseeb) was very good. I thought they moved well, you could see their intent."

Rain is also forecast for Sydney on Sunday which may assist England's cause in playing for a draw. Earlier, Spinner Jack Leach took four wickets for England, including taking Green and Alex Carey off the final two balls of Australia's innings, in what was his best bowling performance of the series.

Leach (4-84) also took Marcus Harris (27) and then got the prize wicket of Steve Smith for 416 dec & 6 for 265 dec (Khawaja 101*, Green 74, Leach 4-84) by 357 runs



Usman Khawaja is only the third player to score two centuries in a Test at SCG. Reuters

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2355

QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- 8. Singer Coolidge (4)
- 9. Excessive (5)
- 10. Complete defeat (4)
- 11. A secret code (6)
- 12. Coming out (8)
- 13. Used (8)
- 15. Disappear (6)
- 17. Makes a hole in the ground (7)
- 19. Suspend the meeting (7)
- 22. Tremble with fear or cold (6)
- 24. Branch of trade or manufacture; hard work? (8)
- 26. Accumulating by skimping? (8)
- 28. Fund-raising ticket sale? (6)
- 30. Clay water jar (4)
- 31. Castles on the chessboard? (5)
- 32. Way out (4)

DOWN

- 1. Audio system (2-2)
- 2. Unmarried man (8)
- 3. Common mineral that's a form of silica (6)
- 4. Information added in the end as supplements (7)
- 5. Hoodwinked (8)
- 6. Mythical monster (6)
- 7. Currency of China (4)
- 14. Hard, strong (5)
- 16. More certain (5)
- 18. Distinguished fighters (8)
- 20. Hardened or become bonelike (8)
- 21. Realm (7)
- 23. Oral or spoken (6)
- 25. Force, coercion (6)
- 27. Greasy (4)
- 29. Star Wars princess (4)

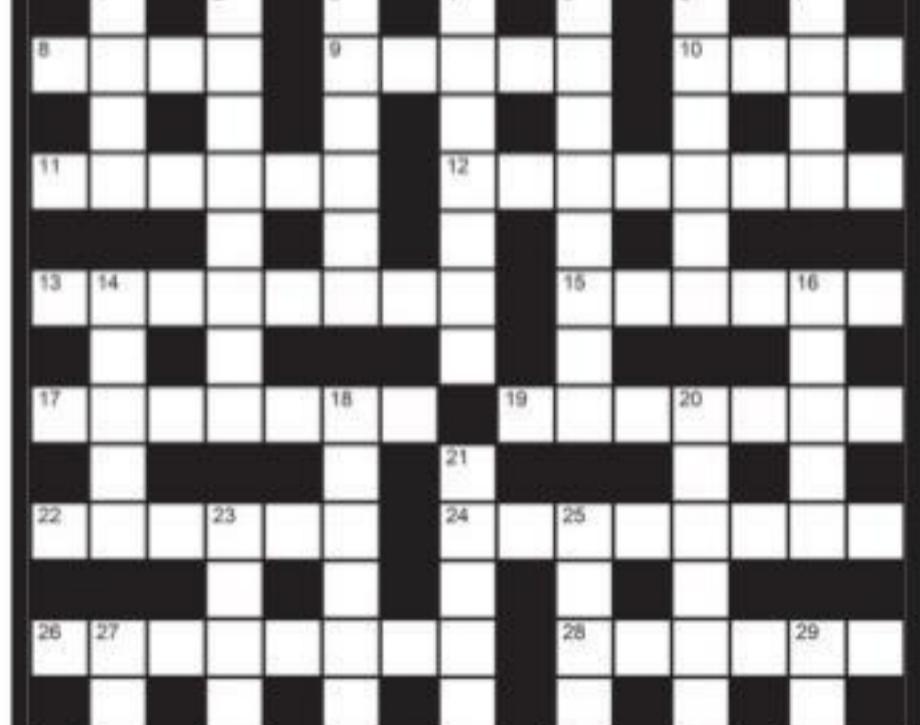
CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- 8. Man of action joins party with hesitation (4)
- 9. Do cattle salute at the river-bend? (5)
- 10. A course taken abroad (4)
- 11. After five rings perform with love following fetish worship (6)
- 12. Olive possibly dismissed when gas is not used (3-5)
- 13. Not in to be part of the drama (3-5)
- 15. Facts briefly giving a girl a bad reputation (6)
- 17. Hear welcome? (7)
- 19. The whole boiling lot can go in these (3,4)
- 22. Lewis has exercise in small tunnel (6)
- 24. Raw leader writer following a

DOWN

- 1. Chanel No 5 in brown? (4)
- 2. Shine goes into diamonds (8)
- 3. Key of gold or a ring (6)
- 4. An unusually bad sign for one's stomach? (7)
- 5. Son keen to get drinking (8)
- 6. List sailor's condition, a little bit frail (6)
- 7. "Hair" is the new title (4)
- 14. Girl fared badly (5)
- 16. The clergyman's home is in the East German sector (5)
- 18. Communities of not great many numbers of people (8)
- 20. Situation vacant? (4,4)
- 21. Somewhat dumb but game to be a lady? (7)
- 23. Get your feet wet propelling



Solutions to 2354

- QUICK CLUES Across: 1 Victoria, 5 Uphold, 10 Onion, 11 Abounding, 12 Attesting, 13 Thrub, 14 Thence, 15 Deluded, 19 Ripping, 20 Choose, 22 Corgi, 24 Monastery, 25 Amplifier, 26 Brato, 27 Marty, 28 Blossoms. Down: 1 Vernal, 2 Courtship, 3 Versatility, 4 Imagine, 6 Punctiliousness, 8 Osier, 9 Dogsbody, 9 Jogging, 16 Desperado, 17 Proclaim, 19 Gambit, 20 Control, 21 Tylons, 23 Riper, CRYPTIC CLUES Across: 1 Down-cast, 5 Ageing, 10 Onion, 11 Ups-a-daisy, 12 Presented, 13 Whoso, 14 Carver, 15 Philtre, 18 Unlatch, 20 Thaca, 22 Banjo, 24 A dog's life, 25 Emaciated, 26 Orion, 27 Lean-to, 28 Crayoned. Down: 1 Droops, 2 Whitehall, 3 Conservator, 4 Shutter, 6 Go down in history, 7 In go, 8 Guy-ropes, 9 Used up, 16 Tactician, 17 Dumb-bell, 19 Hearts, 20 Inorder, 21 Penned, 23 Nyasa.

SOLUTIONS TO 2354

If it's your Birthday

Sunday January 9

After a short period when you could dream your dreams and fantasise your fantasies, you're in for a reality check. You will be discovering your limits, but there will be a very good payoff.

Monday January 10

You can persuade people to support you by convincing them that your vision of the future is the brightest and brilliant.

Tuesday January 11

It's a positive moment and you can take your time to decide where to go from here. You will be able to implement changes in whatever area of life you wish.

Wednesday January 12

One thing is for sure, bright times lie ahead. You are in an emotional mood, yet you must now ask yourself why you should feel so strongly attracted to some people, and what you can do about it.

Thursday January 13

If you are ready for total change, be prepared. Actually, you can steer events very much to your favour by choosing those changes which suit you.

Friday January 14

The moment you relax your grip, someone else will steal a march on you or gain the advantage in some other way. You will be called in to set an example and make peace.

Saturday January 15

You'll be receiving your share of opportunities and offers in four days', four weeks' or four months' time. What counts though, is how you use them.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

The planets are still in a formation which encourages secrecy, but please do steer clear of people who are determined to spread rumours or go behind partners' backs. Upheavals early in the week could knock you off course, but you'll soon steady your nerve.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Rarely have the trends been better for Taurceans with professional ambitions. Venus and Mars indicate that this is an excellent week for securing a new job, or if you're staying put, achieving respect for your accomplishments so far.

The world is fast

In what is becoming a golden era of fast bowling, some of the best Test teams have banked on quartet of quick bowlers to rise to dominance

SANDIP G

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

Whisper Cape Town and the mental images roll out as instantly as the frame of the majestic Table Mountain in the backdrop of the arena. You could see the gnarl of Allan Donald and the snarl of Dale Steyn; the sneer of Shaun Pollock and the stare of Kagiso Rabada. You could see the fear in batsmen's eyes and the quiver of their knees too.

The best of South Africa's seamers produced their best at this most scenic of venues, better suited for a leisurely barbecue afternoon than five days of spine-chilling, intense cricket. Here, Dale Steyn has 74 wickets at 21; his trusted accomplice Vernon Philander has grabbed 53 at 18.2; Shaun Pollock's 51 have come at 19 while Allan Donald has nabbed 30 at 22, a haul his latest heir Rabada has already surpassed (35 at 21). There wouldn't be an apter venue for the supremely-skilled pace-bowling batteries of South Africa and India to settle the series.

If there is nothing more uplifting or hair-raising in the theatre of cricket than the sight of great fast bowlers, sweat-glistened, sun on his back, the series had plenty of such moments to be treasured for ages. There was a microcosm of fast-bowling's most vaunted skills.

The inexorable genius of Jasprit Bumrah was brimming at the Supersport Park—he is perhaps fast-bowling's equivalent of Shane Warne sans the showboating. The virtuoso of his craft just keeps unfolding different, and beautiful, layers, so much so that his talent seems a bottomless pit of ingenuity. There is so much you could see of Bumrah; there seems to be so much more to be seen too. A new trick, or a tease, an idea or an improvisation seems just round the corner.

So much so that his wizardry overshadows the masterfulness of his fast-bowling colleague Mohammed Shami, an expert seam merchant himself. There are few tricks he can't do that Bumrah can. Maybe, the yorker and the assorted slower balls, but he could arguably brag about a more potent short-ball and the heavy ball that bursts awkwardly into the batsmen.

Well, the competency of most competitive teams of this era are built on competent pace-bowling firms.

New Zealand won the World Test Championship on the sweat and labour of their pace quartet—Tim Southee, Trent Boult, Neil Wagner and Kyle Jamieson.

Under arguably the most lethal new-ball pair, a bunch of apprentices are blossoming too, Mohammed Siraj and Shardul Thakur. Siraj could swing and seam at a slippery pace; Thakur could swing too, besides possessing a variety of slower balls. He has the gift of breaking partnerships, but he should not be confined to that lazy categorisation alone.

The quartet seemed to condemn South Africa's pace-pack to obscurity in the series. Kagiso Rabada and Co. were wayward in Centurion as well as for a large part of the second Test at the Wanderers too.

But like Bumrah, Rabada too could influence the game in a spell or two, as he orchestrated in an hour leading up to lunch on Day 3. He ejected the entrenched Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane to twist the game on its head.

The pressure he accumulated dizzied the cricketing common-sense of Rishabh Pant. That he was a few notches beneath his high notes of sharpness and precision but could still inflict damage illustrate his immeasurable worth. Rabada is still only 26, and his best years could yet to be.

He would be deadlier, if South Africa could groom the young pack of up-and-coming seamers.

The signs are promising. The beanpole left-arm Marco Jansen looks destined for a bright future. Just two Tests into his career, he has already shown signs of discernible progress.

Deceptive and skillful

He can alternate between lengths, bargains steep bounce and even though his incoming ball to the right-hander is a study in progress, he could make the ball hold its line from a discomfiting middle-stump line. Lungi Ngidi is a rough diamond that could be the crown in their jewel in the coming years, while Andre Nortje's return from injury could make Proteas' pace-pack a dreaded one. Like that of India, Australia and New Zealand.

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New Zealand won the World Test Championship on the sweat and labour of their pace quartet—Tim Southee, Trent Boult, Neil Wagner and Kyle Jamieson.



Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah have able colleagues in Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Umesh Yadav and Ishant Sharma.

Australia retained the Ashes on the shoulders of Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Jhye Richardson and Scott Boland, who made up for the injured Josh Hazlewood. Whatever little joys England have enjoyed in the last couple of years have been down to their ageless pair of James Anderson and

Stuart Broad and their often rotated side-kicks, Mark Wood and Ollie Robinson.

If only Jofra Archer had been fit, they could have had a tougher opposition in the Ashes.

None of them might reproduce the raw chill of the Windies quartets—hence com-

paring them is a self-defeating exercise—but they surely win matches.

This, then, is the golden age of fast-bowling units, or cartels as an Aussie bowling coach embellished a deathly ring to it. They are the equivalent of hunters in pairs of the 90s, the time when Waqar Younis and Wasim Akram, Curtly Ambrose and Courtney Walsh, Allan Donald and Shaun Pollock were kings.

The turn of the century ushered in pace-bowling tridents—Glenn McGrath, Jason Gillespie, Brett Lee axis; Shoaib Akhtar joined Waqar and Wasim; England unleashed Steve Harmison, Matthew Hoggard and Andrew Flintoff. But in the last 10 years, the cricketing world has gravitated to cartels of quartets.

Every team is aspiring for one. Pakistan hope to weave one around Shaheen Afridi, a genuine thunderbolt of a bowler. There is the 21-year-old tearaway Muhammad Hasnain, and there could pop up, impromptu, a dozen of them from its alleys and gully. At some corner of the country, there is always a destiny's child scripting his narrative. Even Bangladesh have shed their left-arm spinner obsession and begun investing in seamers.

The result was Ebadot Hussain and their first win in a SENAs country, when they beat New Zealand in Mount Maunganui. West Indies are busy assembling one of their own—though a far-cry from their heyday destructibility; Sri Lanka are wading through such a peculiar crisis that their best bowlers are seamers and not spinners.

In short, fast bowlers are messiahs in a team's ascent to the pinnacle. It has been the case in most eras—supremacy in Test cricket was built on seam bowlers—but it's even more pronounced in this milieu. There are a few world-class spinners around—Ravi Jadeja, Ravi Ashwin and Nathan Lyon; there are fewer quality opening batsmen.

The batting line-ups of most teams are flawed (as in India, New Zealand and Australia), rebuilding (like Pakistan and South Africa) or in mess (like England, Sri Lanka, West Indies).

To cover up their cracks and crevices, there are fast-bowlers on speed-dial. There is a lament about batting standards plummeting, but it could be more the case of

fast-bowlers scaling new peaks.

Youth and experience

It's not just that there is quantity; there is quality too. There are seven speedsters/seamer bragging a sub-24 average (who have played more than 10 Test matches)—Jamieson (17.11), Rabada (22.57), Bumrah (23.24), Cummins (21.32), Shaheen Afridi (23.89), Mohammad Abbas (23.02) and Hasan Ali (21.59). There is the old-guard who has ripened with age. Like Anderson and Broad, Ishant Sharma and Umesh Yadav, Shannon Gabriel and Kemar Roach.

Among them, there are seamers and swingers, back-of-length predators and full-length probers, short and tall ones, stocky and wiry ones, calm and fiery ones. Consequently, according to Cricviz, pace bowlers averaged 26.1 per wicket in the 2018–2021 block, the lowest in a three-year block since 1956–58. That they are all young—Abbas is the oldest one, but most in the 22 to 28 range—portends hard times for batsmen.

An out-and-out quick is perhaps the only vacant slot. A clutch of these aforementioned seamers could clock 150kmh fairly consistently, but they are not in a perpetual quest to challenge the speed gun like Akhtar or Lee, as witnessed in the first decade of this century.

Speed is not what defines them—it's just one of their several attributes. Most of them are quick, accurate, comfortable with different lengths, and could cajole some movement off the surface.

It's little coincidence that most of them rely on pace and seam movement rather than swing. Swing is volatile, susceptible to the vicissitudes of overhead conditions; seam is more reliable, and the measured movement it extracts is adequate for nicks.

And on any given match-day, at any corner of the world, one could see the hypnotic unfolding of their diverse skills.

Even if Newlands were not to be a seamers' paradise—spinners too have relished the extra bounce it offers, and a decade ago, Harbhajan Singh almost spun India to a series win—you would expect the wonderfully gifted pace units of South Africa and India to produce a magnificent fire-sparking of pace bowling. That's the way of the world.

MESSI CONTINUES RECOVERY

Paris: Lionel Messi will miss Paris St Germain's Ligue 1 trip to Olympique Lyonnais on Sunday as he continues his recovery from COVID-19, the capital club said on Saturday. The Argentine forward is back in Paris from his home country after testing negative but has not been cleared to play.

REUTERS

Court documents show Djokovic was infected with COVID last month

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MELBOURNE, JANUARY 8

NOVAK DJOKOVIC'S lawyers filed court papers Saturday in his challenge against deportation from Australia that show the tennis star tested positive for COVID-19 last month and recovered, grounds he used in applying for a medical exemption to the country's strict vaccination rules. The No.1-ranked Djokovic was denied entry at the Melbourne airport late Wednesday after border officials canceled his visa for failing to meet its entry requirement that all non-citizens be fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Djokovic was given a medical exemption backed by the Victoria state government and Australian Open organizers on Jan. 1, based on information he supplied to two independent medical panels, and he was approved for a visa electronically.

But it has since emerged that the Victoria state medical exemption, allowed for people who tested positive for the coronavirus within the last six months, was deemed invalid by the federal border authorities.

Djokovic has been confined to an immigration detention hotel in Melbourne, where he's been preparing for the legal challenge against his visa cancellation in the Federal Circuit Court on Monday.

The Australian Open starts Jan. 17. Djokovic is the defending champion and has won the Australian Open men's singles title nine times. He has 20 Grand Slam singles titles, a men's record he shares with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. The Australian Broadcasting Corp. and the Australian Associated Press reported details of the documents late Saturday. It showed Djokovic received a letter from Tennis Australia's chief medical officer on Dec. 30 last year "recording that he had been provided with a 'medical exemption from COVID vaccination' on the grounds that he had recently recovered from COVID."

The exemption certification said the date of the 34-year-old Serb's first positive test was Dec. 16, 2021, "and that he had not had a fever or respiratory symptoms in the past 72 hours." Djokovic attended a Dec. 17 event in Belgrade honoring young tennis players. The event was covered by local media, and parents posted photos on social media showing Djokovic and the children not wearing masks. It's not clear if Djokovic knew the results of his test at the time.

On Dec. 14, Djokovic had attended a Euroleague basketball game between Red Star and Barcelona in a packed sports hall in Belgrade. He was photographed hugging sev-



Djokovic tweeted this picture on 17 December, a day after he tested positive.

Djokovic could miss 3 Australian Opens

Melbourne: World No.1 Novak Djokovic could miss upto three Australian Open Grand Slam tournaments if he fails to have his visa cancellation overturned and gets deported for not having evidence to support a medical exemption to Australia's Covid-19 vaccination rules. In an emailed response to The Associated Press about what could transpire if Djokovic loses his legal fight, the Australian Border Force said: "A person whose visa has been cancelled may be subject to a three-year exclusion period that prevents the grant of a further temporary visa. The exclusion period will be considered as part of any new visa application and can be waived in certain circumstances, noting each case is assessed on its own merits."

AP

eral players of both teams, including some who soon later tested positive.

The court submission Saturday said Djokovic received confirmation from Australia's Department of Home Affairs say-

ing that his travel declaration had been assessed and that his responses indicated he met the requirements for quarantine-free arrival in Australia.

So, who is at fault? Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said "rules are rules" and that incoming passengers were responsible for meeting border regulations.

Tennis Australia and the government of Victoria state, where the Australian Open is played, are blaming confusion over the precise definitions regarding grounds for medical exemptions.

Tennis Australia, which runs the tournament and organizes the logistics for more than 2,000 players, staff and officials, reportedly gave incorrect interpretations to players about the acceptable grounds for an exemption. That included the interpretation that having had a coronavirus infection within the previous six months would qualify. The federal government disagreed. The Victoria state government mandated that all players, staff, fans and officials must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 to enter the tournament.

The state, which approved the medical exemptions for Djokovic, said those exemptions were for access to Melbourne Park, not the border. Australian Open organizers have not commented publicly since Wednesday, except to tell Australian newspapers that no players have been misled over the vaccination requirements.

SBI

**STATE BANK OF INDIA
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E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

SALE OF IMMOVABLE ASSETS CHARGED TO THE BANK UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002.

The undersigned as Authorized Officer of State Bank of India has taken possession of the following property/ies u/s 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act., 2002 Public at large is informed that e-Auction (under SARFAESI Act, 2002) of the charged property/ies in the below mentioned case for realisation of Bank's dues will be held on "**As is where is, As is what is and Whatever there is**" Basis. The Auction is schedule on **15.02.2022**. The other details of the Auction are as under :-

Sl. No.	Name of Borrower(s)	Amount of Demand (as per SARFAESI notice)	Description of the property :	Name of Mortgagor/ Guarantor	Date of Demand notice under SARFAESI act.	Reserve Price below which the property will not be sold EMD Bid Increment Amount
1.	M/s Manthan Agri Tech Pvt. Ltd. (Director : Debendra Ray & Santosh Ray)	₹ 79,08,103/- as on 16.02.2019 with further interest from 17.02.2019 + cost & other charges etc.	1. All that land measuring 04 Kattha 04 Dhur (15.619 Decimal) located at Mouza- Jajouli, Survey Plot No. 2293,2294,2295,2296 & 2297, Thana no.83, Tauzi No.2476, Khata No.66 & 81,PS-Masrak Distt- Saran and registered in the name of Sri Santosh Ray S/o Sri Devendra Ray vide Sale Deed No. 4293 & Correction Deed no. 4871 dated 05.11.2015. Boundary:- North: Punyadeo Ray, South: Kachchi Road, East: Niz Haza, West: Niz Haza. (Property Id for e-auction : SBIN36484494183)	Sri Santosh Ray S/o Sri Devendra Ray	16.02.2019	₹ 36,89,000/- ₹ 3,68,900/- ₹ 10,000/-
2.	Plant & Machinery	situated at Factory Land & building at Mouza- Jajouli, Near Basauli Sainik School Rajkiya Prathmik Vidyalaya, Plot No.2293,2294,2295,2296 & 2297, Thana no.83, Tauzi No.2476, Khata No.66 & 81,PS-Marhara Distt- Chhaphra(Saran) described as under : Rubber Dehusking Machine (1 Pcs) Masal Grinding Chakki (1 Pcs) Masala roasting Machine (1 Pcs) Cross Flow Tray Dryer (1 Pcs) Vertical Band Sealer(1 Pcs) Afis Type packaging Machine(1 Pcs) Pneumatic Multi Head Way Filler (1 Pcs) Air Compressor for Afis Machine(1 Pcs) Steam Boiler with kettle and Alfitting(1 Pcs) Link Industrial Batch Code Printer (1 Pcs) Rewind Machine WEB for Batch Codier(1 Pcs) Food Grade Conveyor(1 Pcs) Ink & Solvent(1 Pcs) Power Generator with 38 HP/30KVA Eicher Alternator (1 Pcs) Laminated Flexible Package Material(plastic) (1 Pcs) Grafic Design & Serviced(1 Pcs) Out Door Distribution Transformer 63 (1 Pcs) Annel for complete wiring Machine (1 Pcs). (Property Id for e-auction : SBIN35389227805)	Sri Santosh Ray S/o Sri Devendra Ray	16.02.2019	₹ 33,13,000/- ₹ 3,31,300/- ₹ 10,000/-	

e-Auction Terms And Condition

- Date & Time of e-auction : 15.02.2022; Time : 120 Minutes. Form 12:00 Noon to 02:00 PM. with unlimited extension of 10 Minutes each.
- The auction sale will be "**online through e-auction**". The intending Bidders/ Purchasers are required to participate in the e-Auction process at e-Auction Service Provider's website <https://mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp>.
- The intending Bidders/ Purchasers are requested to register on portal (<https://mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp>) using their mobile number and email-id. Further, they are requested to upload requisite KYC documents. Once the KYC documents are verified by e-auction service provider (may take 2 working days), the intending Bidders/ Purchasers has to transfer the EMD amount using online mode in his Global EMD Wallet before the e-Auction Date and time in the portal. The registration, verification of KYC documents and transfer of EMD in wallet must be completed well in advance, before auction.
- Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) amount as mentioned above shall be paid online through NEFT/ Transfer After generation of Challan from (<https://mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp>) in bidders Global EMD Wallet. NEFT transfer can be done from any Scheduled Commercial Bank, however for Transfer the bidder has to visit Indian Bank Branch. Payment of EMD by any other mode such as Cheques, etc will not be accepted. Bidders, not depositing the required EMD online, will not be allowed to participate in the e-auction. The Earnest Money Deposited shall not bear any interest.
- MSTC Central Helpdesk Number (for any technical help) : 033-40645207, 40609118, 40645316, 40602403, 40067351, 40262853. SBI contact no (for property related enquiry): 9835645107.
- The General Terms and Conditions of e-a