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By UNNY

PM SECURITY BREACH: RETIRED SC JUDGE TO HEAD COMMITTEE

SC forms new probe panel, questions Centre on notices to Punjab officers

CJI bench acts after state opposes Centre panel, seeks 'independent' probe

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

SC to hear PIL for probe into Haridwar, Delhi hate speeches

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

THE SUPREME Court Monday agreed to take up a PIL seeking a probe into alleged hate speeches by participants at two separate events in Haridwar and Delhi on December 17 and 21 last year.

"We will take up the matter," Chief Justice of India NV Ramana told Senior Advocate Kartik Sibal who mentioned the pendency of Delhi resident Qurban Ali and Senior Advocate Arjunai Prakash.

Appearing before the CJI, Sibal said: "We are living in different times where the slogan has changed from Satyameva Jayate to Sasthamrevo Jayate."

The CJI asked if an inquiry already underway. "We will look it up. But hasn't some action already been taken?" he asked.

Sibal replied that though FIRs have been filed, no one had been arrested so far.

"We will take up the matter," the CJI said.

The petitioners, in their appeal, said they were constrained to approach the court seeking its urgent intervention "in respect of

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"totally self-contradictory".

Indicating that the composition of the committee will be similar to the one constituted on January 7 to secure the records of the PM's visit, Chief Justice of India N V Ramana, heading a bench also comprising Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli, said: "We are thinking on these lines. One retired Supreme Court judge will head the committee."

Hearing a plea by Delhi-based Lawyers Voice, the bench on January 7 had asked the Registrar General, Punjab and Haryana High Court, to "forth-

with seize and secure the records" of the visit. The Registrar General was to be assisted by the Director General of Police (Intelligence).

Earlier, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, urged the bench to allow the Centre's committee to

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Police, Union Territory of Chandigarh, and an officer of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), not below the rank of Inspector General, nominated by the NIA Director General.

These officers apart, the new committee, the bench indicated, would include another member, most likely the Punjab Additional Director General of Police (Intelligence).

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28-fold case rise, set to cross 4 lakh Covid high, but hospitalisation low; testing norms relaxed

SHUBHAJIT ROY &
KAUNALI SHERIFF M
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

INDIA REPORTED A 28-fold surge in Covid cases over the past fortnight, but there are indications from the national capital that, at current levels, the number of hospitalisations logged is far lesser than what was recorded during the peak of the second wave in April last year, according to senior government officials.

A senior official said that while the daily case count in Delhi of about 20,000 last April matches the latest numbers, the level of hospitalisations is just about one-fourth to one-fifth of that month.

"With the equal number of cases which happened in Delhi's case in April, and the number of cases which we have now, of around 20,000 cases per day, the level of hospitalisation is just about one-fourth to one-fifth. And the level of ICU admissions is even lower than that. So it is definitely one-fourth to one-fifth of what was in the second wave," the official said.

Last year, the daily count in Delhi crossed 20,000 cases on April 17, and was at 28,395 on April 25.

On Sunday, the daily case count was 22,751, dipping to 19,166 cases Monday. On December 27, 2021, India's case count was 6,358, which surged to 1,739 lakh on January 9.

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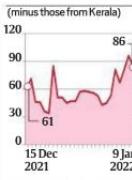
Omicron surge: uptick in deaths but share lower than second wave

AMITABH SINHA
PUNE, JANUARY 10

TWO WEEKS into the third wave in India, a rise in Covid-linked deaths is becoming visible, though the rate of increase is nowhere as fast as the surge in infections.

These deaths across the country — minus those from Kerala — are inching towards the three-figure mark after remaining in double digits for more than a month. However, com-

DEATHS



pared to the second wave, deaths as a proportion of the infection numbers are still very low, as of now.

During February and mid-March last year, India was reporting over 100 deaths on an average per day, with a case count between 15,000 and 20,000. These numbers began to rise sharply after that. But that is also because the rise in daily cases was much slower the previous time — it had taken more than a month for the count to increase

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AMID THE continuing rise of Covid cases in the Capital, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Monday ordered restaurants and bars in the city to shut, allowing only delivery services and takeaway.

The order comes as another blow to the industry that is among the worst hit due to the pandemic. After shutdowns during the first and second waves, with home delivery allowed af-

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MAJOR PROTESTS AS
EUROPE TIGHTENS
COVID RESTRICTIONS

FORMER SP MP HELD
IN UP FOR 'MURDER
OVER TICKET'

PAGES 12, 6

A life in Covid: Hotel manager to delivery staff to roadside death

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

IN MANY ways, the life of Salil Tripathi told the story of an entire nation's workforce, its moorings lost in wave after wave of an unrelenting pandemic. And in so many ways, his death summed up the tragedy.

Hailing from UP's Ayodhya, Tripathi had worked in several star hotels before climbing a step up to become a restaurant manager in the heart of the city. He was

leading a comfortable life at 36, according to his family, settling down in a bustling suburb in the

national capital with his wife and their son — and so much more to look forward to.

Until 2020 dawned, and the first lockdown came, Tripathi lost his job in the first wave, his father in the second. And within a year, this hotel management graduate had become a Zomato delivery executive.

On Saturday night, the final blow came in the form of an SUV driven by a police constable. The vehicle, police say, knocked him down. The driver, eyewitnesses

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Speaking at The Indian Express e-Adda programme, Irani underlined the need for people to cut across party lines and come together to address this issue.

Responding to a question on the targeting of Muslim women via apps, she said: "Women, irrespective of their religion, have been denied their dignity on social media platforms. I am grateful that the police are investigating this issue. I am absolutely

Delhi orders shutdown, restaurants say last blow

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

AMID THE continuing rise of Covid cases in the Capital, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Monday ordered restaurants and bars in the city to shut, allowing only delivery services and takeaway.

The order comes as another blow to the industry that is among the worst hit due to the pandemic. After shutdowns during the first and second waves, with home delivery allowed af-

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'Women, irrespective of religion, denied dignity on social media... Must unite, put politics aside on this'

PAGE 1
ANCHOREXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

STATING THAT she has been actively engaged with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and the Department of Telecommunications regarding security of women on the Internet and social media platforms, Union Minister for Women and Child Development

Smriti Irani said Monday that women, irrespective of religion, have been denied their dignity. Speaking at The Indian Express e-Adda programme, Irani underlined the need for people to cut across party lines and come together to address this issue.

Responding to a question on the targeting of Muslim women via apps, she said: "Women, irrespective of their religion, have been denied their dignity on social media platforms. I am grateful that the police are investigating this issue. I am absolutely

brought to light. I want to use this platform to say that this is an issue on which, irrespective of our politics, we need to come together."

Irani was in conversation with Anant Goenka, Executive Director, The Indian Express Group, and Vandita Mishra, National Opinion Editor, The Indian Express. The transcript of the programme will be published soon.

In wake of the 2012 Delhi gang rape and murder incident, there had been conversations,

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BELOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

	Working Age Population (in '000s)	Total Employed (in '000s)	Employment Rate# (in %)
GOA	1,229	606	49.31
Sept-Dec 2016	1,313	420	31.99
PUNJAB	23,268	9,837	42.28
Sept-Dec 2021	25,818	9,516	36.86
UTTAR PRADESH	149,570	57,589	38.5
Sept-Dec 2021	170,730	55,976	32.79
UTTARAKHAND	8,037	3,223	40.1
Sept-Dec 2021	9,141	2,782	30.43

#Total Employed as a % of working age population

Source: CMIE, Express Research

EXPLAINED
E. Setback for Centre

THE CENTRE had been swift in moving against Punjab's top officers over the security breach, serving them show-cause notices and warning of action. The new probe panel by the SC Bench also makes the committees appointed by the Centre and Punjab redundant.

Fewer have jobs in poll-bound Goa, UP, Punjab, Uttarakhand than five years ago

UDIT MISRA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

AN ANALYSIS OF unemployment data sourced from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) shows that in each of the four poll-bound states — Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Goa, and Uttarakhand — the total number of employed people at the end of December 2021 was lower than five years ago. The CMIE did not have data for Manipur, the fifth state that faces elections in February.

In Uttar Pradesh (UP), for instance, while the total working age population has increased by over 14 per cent (2.12 crore) to 17.07 crore from 14.95 crore in the past five years, the total number of people with jobs has shrunk by over 16 lakhs. As a result, its "employment rate" (ER) — the total number of employed as a percentage of the working age population (15 years or above) — has fallen from 38.5 per cent in December 2016 to 32.8 per cent in December 2021.

Another way to understand this fall is that if UP had the

same employment rate in December 2021 as it did in December 2016, then an additional 1 crore of its residents would have had a job today.

Similarly, five years ago, in Punjab, the total working age population in this group, more than 98.37 lakh of its 2.33 crore working age population was employed. Now, the total employed is down to 55,976 lakh (3.21 lakh less) despite the working age population growing by almost 11 per cent to 2.58 crore.

In percentage terms, Goa saw the sharpest fall in employment rate over the past five years as it fell from just under 50 per cent in December 2016 to below 32 per cent now. In other words, five years ago, every second person in Goa's working age population

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BIG BLOW TO CONG IN WEST UP

AFTER SLIDE, AAP BACK IN RECKONING IN PUNJAB

DECISION 2022, PAGE 5

"JAI JAWAN JAI KISAN"

BY DSI 3D

Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management, Delhi
pays homage to 2nd Prime Minister of India
Bharat Ratna
Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri
(October 02, 1904 - January 11, 1966)
on his 56th Punyatithi

"The basic idea of governance, as I see it, is to hold the society together so that it can develop and march towards certain goals"

Lal Bahadur Shastri

"मेरी समझ से प्रशासन का मूल विचार यह है कि लोगों को एकजुट रखा जाये ताकि वह विकास कर सके और अपने लक्षणों की तरफ बढ़ सके"

लल बहदुर शास्त्री

FROM PAGE ONE

SC probe panel

continue with its inquiry and place a report before the court but this was opposed by Punjab Advocate General D S Patwaria who said the state had "no hope" in the centre's committee and urged the court to constitute an "independent committee".

Mehtha said there is concern that the show-cause notices seek to pre-empt the outcome, the Centre can assure it will not take any till its committee examines the issue and places a report before the court. But the bench then came up with the suggestion of a committee under one of its former judges.

The bench initially wondered if the IC (Intelligence) of Punjab could be part of the committee, but Mehta said the IC "may also be the subject matter of scrutiny as he too is responsible... as per the security Blue Book".

Responding to a query from the bench, Patwaria said the ADGP (Intelligence) may be included.

The bench said it will pass a detailed order if asked the Centre and Punjab to put on hold inquiries by the committees they had constituted. It questioned the Centre on the show-cause notices issued to the Punjab Chief Secretary and DGP.

Justice Kohli said the "impression you are giving is that you have already made up your mind... then what is the point of coming to the court?"

Mehtha said it was not he but the petitioner who had approached the court.

Justice Surya Kant told the Solicitor General "your show-cause notice is only self-contradictory. By constituting a committee, you seek to inquire if there was a breach and then you hold the state CS and DG guilty. Who heard them?"

Justice Kohli said that after the court had directed seizure of records, "asking them to reply in 24 hours... is not expected of you". Mehta said "not expected of you is a little harsh" and "this [show-cause notice] was before the court ordered seizure [of records]."

At the outset, Patwaria informed the bench that as per its directions, the HC Registrar General had taken control of the records of the PM's travel.

He referred to remarks made on January 7 against chairman of the state-appointed committee by Senior Advocate Maninder Singh who appeared for the petitioner. The CJ said: "We went through the judgment. There is nothing against him" — Patwaria did not mention the judge he was referring to.

On January 7, Maninder Singh had said the name of the chairman of the committee appointed by Punjab had been the subject matter of a judgement of the Supreme Court in 2011. He said the Supreme Court had made adverse remarks on the conduct of the judge Singh did not name the judge or elaborate on the case.

The reference, however, appeared to be to a 2011 judgement of the Supreme Court which quashed an order by a Punjab and Haryana High Court bench directing a CBI probe against former IIPS officer Sumeeth Singh Saini in an alleged fake encounter case.

The IC bench included Justice Mehtab Singh Gill (now head of the Punjab committee) but the Supreme Court, in its then order, did not name the judge and mentioned only 'Me Justice X' while stating that "the order impugned (of the HC) has rightly been challenged to be a nullity at least three grounds" including 'judicial bias' and the "entire judicial process appears to have been drawn to achieve a motivated result which we are unable to approve of".

Pointing out that Punjab officials had been issued notices by the Centre on why action should not be taken against them, Patwaria said there was nothing against the Chief Secretary and "I (Chief Secretary) don't think I will get any fair hearing. There is some politeness".

"When proceedings are deferred, where is the question of disciplinary action," he said, urging delivery of hate speeches with impunity but also showed that the police authorities are in fact hand in glove with the perpetrators of communal hate".

The contents of the speech feed into an already prevailing discourse which seeks to reimagine the Indian Republic as exclusivist, and that which has for other cultures, traditions and practices. Such a discourse is in itself violative of communal hate".

"That the contents of the speech feed into an already prevailing discourse which seeks to reimagine the Indian Republic as exclusivist, and that which has for other cultures, traditions and practices. Such a discourse is in itself violative of con-

stitutional guarantees provided to minority cultures and religions," it said.

28-fold case rise

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), meanwhile, revises its testing norms to facilitate early detection of symptomatic cases. It recommended that asymptomatic individuals undertaking inter-state domestic travel and contacts of patients, unless identified as high-risk based on age or comorbidity, do not need Covid testing. It specified, however, that the advisory is "generic in nature and may be modified as per discretion of the state health authorities".

According to Government officials, the case-count peak will cross the 4-lakh mark this time — it had hit a daily peak of 41,414 lakh on May 6, 2021 — but the Government is prepared to handle the rising numbers.

As of January 8, infections appear to have spread rapidly across India. The number of districts reporting a weekly case positivity rate of more than 5 per cent has increased from 21 in the week ending December 25, 2021, to 203 in the week ending January 8 — a 10-fold increase in two weeks.

While Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Noida and Gurgaon are among the cities of concern, at least 40 districts across 13 states and UTs have positivity rates of more than 5 per cent. According to ICMR, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Assam, MP and Bihar.

The ICMR, meanwhile, also recommended that patients diagnosed from a Covid facility as per policy don't need to be tested.

The new advisory is also for early detection in the elderly and individuals with co-morbidities.

In a community setting, the ICMR recommended four categories to be tested: symptomatic individuals; at-risk contacts of laboratory-confirmed cases; individuals undertaking international travel; and international travellers arriving in India. It said that those who experience at least one of six symptoms — cough, fever, sore throat, loss of taste and/or smell, breathlessness, and/or other respiratory symptoms — should be tested.

The Council also listed at-risk contacts in two categories: more than 60 years of age, and those with comorbidity, such as diabetes, hypertension, lung or kidney disease, malignancy, obesity, etc.

In a hospital setting, it recommended testing according to the

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EXPRESS **AUDIO**
The challenges in busting India's narcotics nexus

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY
Today on the 3 Things podcast, we take a look at how India has become a significant hub on the international narcotics supply map

doctor's advice with the three considerations: no emergency procedure be delayed for lack of a test; patients should not be referred to other facilities for lack of a testing set-up; asymptomatic patients undergoing surgical or non-surgical invasive procedures, including pregnant women hospitalized for delivery, should not be tested unless warranted.

It further recommended that admitted patients may not be tested more than once a week.

A senior official from the Health Ministry said that "consistent with previous variants, Omicron has a growth advantage over Delta with a doubling time of 2-3 days".

The Union Employment Rate (UER) is over 90 per cent in urban areas, but in India's case especially over the past decade, UER has been ineffective in accurately assessing the true level of job distress. That's because JLR is expressed as "unemployed as a percentage of the labour force" but over the past decade, India's labour force participation rate (LFPR) has been declining.

The LFPR is essentially the labour force as a percentage of the working age population. In most other comparable countries, the LFPR lies between 60 per cent and 70 per cent. In India, it has been hovering around 40 per cent. What this means is that in other countries 60 per cent of people belonging to the working age group (i.e., 15 years and above) are employed while in India only 40 per cent look for a job.

While all the four states were below the national average, the fact is India is also at a -whales have been seen LFR and employment rate fall sharply over the past five years. Between December 2016 and December 2021, India's LFPR has fallen from 46 per cent to 40 per cent, and the employment rate from 43 per cent to 37 per cent. As a result, while India's total working age population has jumped to 545 per cent from 96 crore to 108 crore, the total number of employed has dropped about 2 per cent from 412 crores to 404 crores.

"The Indian economy has been losing its growth momentum since 2016. Between demonetisation, GST and Covid, there has been one disruption after another," says Himanshu Associate Professor of Economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

The fall has been steady and spread over five years in UP; Goa saw a rapid fall, with the January-March 2019 quarter witnessing the sharpest. In Punjab, the January-August 2020 period did witness a substantial fall.

Last week, Haryana Chief Minister M.L. Khattar had refuted the CMIE data showing high unemployment rate in the state. She will discuss the issue with the Advocate General and action shall be taken, if required," he had said claiming that official reports — read out from National Statistical Office — showed unemployment rate in Haryana at not more than 6.1 per cent.

While CMIE estimates of unemployment in Haryana are higher than NGO's, the two data sets are not comparable since they employ different definitions and methodologies. Moreover, even by NGO estimates, Haryana's unemployment has been in double digits since April 2020.

A month ago, nearly 20 states were reporting zero deaths. That number has come down to barely a dozen now. In states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat or Jharkhand, very few deaths were being reported over the past three months, sometimes one or two in ten days. More deaths are now getting recorded

working in 2003, and held jobs at City Park hotel, The Suraya hotel, Park Plaza Hotels & Resorts, and Rico's restaurant.

"Salil was a manager at the restaurant in Hudson Lane, but was fired after it shut down during the first wave. He was at home for a few months and used up all his savings. We thought the lockdown was temporary and Salil would get his job back, or find another job soon. I found one at a cafe but lost that too in 2021 because the owners faced losses due to Covid. Since then, he had only this delivery job," said Manoj, the brother.

Tripati's wife Sudha said his father, a former mechanical engineer at a printing unit, died from Covid last April. "It wasn't easy for Salil; his employers didn't even give him his salary. He had to join Zomato to help pay for school fees and other expenses. He worked day and night... the job was exhausting. I always worried for him," she said.

According to DCP (Rohini) Pranav Tayal, the constable involved in Saturday's accident, Zile Singh, was arrested the same night. The police are looking at claims of eyewitnesses that he was inebriated at the time.

But all that's little consolation to the family. "What do I do now? My son keeps asking questions," Sudha said, adding that they might shift to Ayodhya soon.

According to the family, Tripati worked 7-8 hours every day delivering food, and earned Rs 8,000-Rs 10,000 a month based on the orders and the workload. Before Covid, he was earning Rs 40,000-50,000.

His friend, Sameer, said: "We worked at the same restaurant, but many staffers were laid off. I knew he was struggling, but he was strong. He was an honest man and a great friend. He never complained."

The family said a Zomato official met them though they are yet to get any financial help.

A Zomato official said: "Our team has collected documents to ensure help is provided with the help of our insurance partners. There could be a delay from the insurance partner's side."

The official also said there has been an increase in the number of delivery partners they employ since the lockdown. "Most of them are students or individuals who want to do an interim gig because they can land a better job."

Kabir Suri, President of the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI), said the new guidelines were unsustainable and would impact 'over 3 lakh people' employed in eateries in Delhi. "This will lead to widespread unemployment, as no one knows how long this will go on," he said, adding that over 25 per cent of the restaurants shut last year and more than 24 lakh people lost their jobs permanently.

After the lockdown in Delhi, the restaurant sector was the first to shut, and almost the last one to restart during the first and second lockdown. Suri said: "They were allowed to stay open till midnight only towards the end of August 2021." We somehow survived so far, but with the new guidelines in Delhi it seems highly unlikely that we can sustain any longer," he said.

Suri said that date-out frequency in Delhi was the maximum — "6 times per month compared to the national average of 4.5 times" — whereas take-away delivery was meager.

According to officials present at the DDMA meeting, the sharp increase in the number of Covid cases over the past two weeks, and an uptick in deaths, have authorities worried.

On Monday, one in four persons tested in Delhi was found to be positive for Covid. A total of 19,166 cases were recorded.

Delhi also reported 17 deaths due to the infection for the second day in a row on Monday.

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1. Name of the Work: Rehabilitation of 6 nos. roads in the districts of Rohtak, Haryana

2. Estimated Cost of the Package: 50 Cr

3. Date of Contract Award: 30/03/2022

4. Estimated Cost more than Rs. 10.00 Crores but less than Rs. 20.00 Crores: 15.00 Cr.

5. Estimated Cost: less than Rs. 10.00 Crores but less than Rs. 3.00 Crores: 3.00 Cr.

6. Period of completion: 26/05/2022

7. Other details:

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For further information kindly visit : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hnrc.in

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Phone : 0674-23671445 Email: se_cvrrwv@hrgovt.co.in

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Dates for Submission of Bid: 10/01/2022 10:00 AM - 10/01/2022 10:00 PM

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1. HPMNL NET NO.40/AM/64/KV/BALVAR/2021-DATED 23.03.2021

2. HPMNL NET NO.30/CWDC-ZJ02- XHEMP/2021-DATED 17/12/2021

3. HPMNL 18/03/2021/75/343/H/2021-DATED 28.12.2021 ONLINE TENDER ID

4. HPMNL 20/03/2021/75/343/H/2021-DATED 28.12.2021 ONLINE TENDER ID

5. HPMNL 20/03/2021/75/343/H/2021-DATED 28.12.2021 ONLINE TENDER ID

6. HPMNL 20/03/2021/75/343/H/2021-DATED 28.12.2021 ONLINE TENDER ID

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etender.hnrc.gov.in

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3

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2022

THE CITY

AMID STAFF CRUNCH IN HOSPITALS

No quarantine after Covid duty for healthcare workers

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

WITH SHORTAGE of healthcare workers looming as more and more test positive — including at least 750 doctors across six major government hospitals in Delhi — doctors will not be required to quarantine after finishing their duties in Covid-19 wards, as per guidelines of the Union Health Ministry.

As per the new guidelines released on Sunday night, under the head, "Regular quarantine of healthcare workers after performing duty in Covid-19 areas", it is stated that any quarantine or isolation of healthcare workers other than "stipulated above" is not warranted. The doctors say this could lead to cross-transmission of the infection.

"Our hospital will be treating only Covid-19 patients during the duration of this month. This means that the entire staff was treating only those who already had the infection. Also, there is a five-day gap after Covid-19 duty where the staff remained in isolation, thereby, reducing the risk of transmitting the infection to the others," said a resident doctor from Lok Nayak hospital on condition of anonymity.

The doctor added, "Now, with so many doctors, nurses and staff members testing positive, the hospital is strictly following the



At least 750 doctors across six major government hospitals in Delhi have tested positive. Archive

new guidelines wherein no quarantine is allowed. Without taking a break, the doctors have to continue working in non-Covid areas where the patients might already have poor immune systems and may be caught clinical management of Covid patients, the Centre has said.

The Indian Express had earlier reported that in several hospitals, doctors have been asked not to quarantine themselves even if they are exposed to a Covid-19 positive person, unless they start developing symptoms and test positive.

In case of a breach in the personal protective equipment (PPE), meaning that the healthcare workers come in contact with a positive person without appropriate masking, etc, they will continue working with

proper PPE and get tested on the fifth day of exposure.

Only if the healthcare workers have symptoms suggestive of Covid-19 will they isolate and get tested. They will receive treatment as per the severity of the disease. "Healthcare workers can resume duties while wearing appropriate personal protective equipment if symptoms have resolved (except mild cough), and they are afebrile (without fever) for 3 successive days," the guidelines read.

Adoptor from Safdarjung hospital, which also has nearly 200 doctors positive, said this is not only putting the patients but also families of doctors at risk. "Earlier, the doctors were provided rooms for isolation while they were on Covid-19 duty and for a period of one week after that. Now that the hospital is not arranging for it, doctors have to go back home and put their families at risk," the resident doctor said.

A senior faculty member from the hospital said, "There is a crisis of manpower; there is a need now to rationally deploy the staff to ensure all services are kept running."

The resident doctor from Lok Nayak said, "The way the infection is spreading among the staff, I think the administrators are waiting for everyone to just get exposed and then they will have their entire workforce available in a couple of weeks."

Significant number — 37 — had come to the hospital after

CORONAVIRUS IN THE CAPITAL

VACCINATIONS IN LAST 24 HOURS	OMICRON CASES
25,030	513
PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL: 1,999	
OXYGEN SUPPORT	438
VENTILATOR SUPPORT	65

DELHI: TOTAL CASES	HOSPITAL BEDS	Total	Vacant
15,68,896	4,086	14,410	12,360
ICU BEDS		3,634	
Jan 9	Cases	Recoveries	Deaths
22,751	10,179	17	96,678
Jan 10	19,166	14,076	17
Total	65,806*	14,77913	76,670
Active cases	25,177	3,35,60,422	

*Daily figures; Jan 10, **previous day
CASES IN NOIDA*
1,223 Deaths 0 (***)
CASES IN GURGAON*
2,621 Deaths 1 (***)

their oxygen saturation levels dropped below 94. Doctors have advised people who have tested positive for Covid to check their oxygen saturation levels regularly and go to the hospital in case the levels fall below 94.

Of the 46, 12 died the same day as they were admitted, while 14 died three to seven days after admission. Only three were admitted for longer than a week, data shows.

Govt plan for 1 lakh cases a day

The Delhi government, meanwhile, presented its bed requirement assessment at Monday's meeting. It said that if Delhi sees 1 lakh cases a day, the city will have to prepare 46,000 hospital beds — 28,000 oxygenated ones and 18,000 ICU beds.

This is based on the assumption that of all those people who test positive, 5% will be admitted to hospitals.

Assuming a hospitalisation rate of 5%, if daily cases touch the 30,000 mark, 1,500 patients would be in need of hospitalisation; 1,200 would be in need of oxygen support; 300 would need ICU support; and the total hospital beds needed to tackle this magnitude would be 13,800.

At present, there are 65,800 active cases in the city. Of them, only 1,999 persons are hospitalised. There are 438 persons on oxygen support and 65 patients on ventilators.

46 deaths in five days this month in capital, 34 had co-morbidities

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

OF THE 46 people who died of Covid-19 between January 5 and January 9, 25 were above the age of 60 years. 34 had co-morbid conditions, while 21 tested positive after being admitted to hospital for some other ailment.

Only 11 were vaccinated.

According to officials, among those who died were also people who had been injured in accidents, or children born with congenital issues, who happened to test positive for Covid as well.

Data related to deaths of patients was discussed in the Delhi Disaster Management Authority meeting on Monday, where Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Lt-Governor Anil Baijal were present.

The number of Covid deaths has gone up significantly this month, after low numbers were recorded since September 2021. There have been 70 deaths due to the infection in the first 10 days of the year, the data shows.

There were only nine deaths in December, seven in November, four in October, and five in September.

Out of the 46, 28 were men and 18 were women. One person was below the age of 15; one below the age of 20; 5 below the age of 50; and 14 were between 41 and 60 years of age.

A significant number — 37 — had come to the hospital after



At Shehnai banquet hall Covid care centre, Monday. Abhiram Saha

DEATHS THIS MONTH

COVID DEATHS BETWEEN JANUARY 5 AND 9: 46



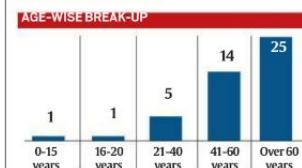
People who tested positive after admission for another condition: 21

Those who came to hospital with oxygen saturation under 94: 37

Those with co-morbid conditions: 34

Those in ICUs: 32

Vaccinated: 11



On Day 1, over 8,000 in 60+ age group get precaution dose

ANONNA DUTT & GAYATHRI MANI
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

OVER 8,000 people in the 60-plus age category with co-morbid conditions received their 'precaution dose' as the drive began on Monday. As per data, 18,795 precaution doses were administered till Monday evening, of which 8,040 were given to the elderly. In comparison, 6,212 health-care workers and 4,542 frontline workers received the shot.

The above above the age of 60 years were keen on getting their precaution dose; over the last couple of days, I have been receiving several queries about it. We have already told all our vaccinees that they are to give the dose to anyone over the age of 60 who comes to get the shot. There is no need for them to get a doctor's certificate stating that they have co-morbidities," said a Delhi health department official.

As per the Centre's estimate, nearly 20% of those over the age of 60 years would receive the precaution dose. However, the Delhi official said they were planning for more people to come in: "There is a scare because of the high number of cases right now and we expect a high proportion of people over the age of 60 years to get it."

Asha Devi (82) said she went through a harrowing experience during the second wave after her family tested positive: "My family and I went through a painful time and I don't want to go through that again. I request everyone to get vaccinated."

Nearly 2,40,000 health-care workers, 3,500 lakh frontline workers, and 3,80,000 lakh co-morbid 60-plus years old are eligible for the precaution dose in Delhi. Persons become eligible only after 9 months of their second dose or 3 months after an infection.

A senior administrator from Lok Nayak hospital said: "We vaccinated 50 staff members to-



As per data, 18,795 precaution doses were administered till Monday evening. Abhiram Saha

day. Healthcare workers are eager to get the shot because they see that many among them are testing positive."

AIIMS Director Dr Ranjeet Gulera, also took his precaution dose on Monday.

Doses were administered at existing vaccination sites by increasing their capacity by 20%. However, there were some glitches in the CoWIN portal. "In the morning, healthcare workers at private hospitals were unable to get the shot as the portal kept prompting that vaccination was to happen at government centres only. There was also an issue with registration of walk-in candidates for 1-15 hours, and some people had to be turned away. The glitches have been sorted and we think there will be a higher turnout tomorrow," said the government official.

Worst-hit during pandemic, feel targeted: Restaurants on dine-in ban



Home delivery and takeaways will be allowed. Archive

Restaurants, which runs around 20 restaurants in the capital including Smoke House Deli and Social, said, "I would like to be enlightened on how this is going to help — given that we are already following 50% seating. Restaurants are tired of shut completely."

"This will lead to widespread unemployment because one knows how long this will go," Suri said, adding that the industry employs lakhs of people at various levels, and contributes significantly to the GDP.

"World over, the key is to follow social distancing norms, get boosters and go on with life, but each time there is a surge in infections, the hospitality industry is singled out," he added.

Riyaz Amlani, CEO and MD of Impresario Handmade

seems highly unlikely that we can sustain any longer."

There are 9,187 eateries in Delhi. Out of these, 32,777 are organised restaurants (with FSSAI number and GST) and the revenue generated per year from these is Rs 31,132 crore. Also, the dine-out frequency in the city is maximum, six times per month, compared to the national average of 4.5 times, whereas takeaways/delivery are meagre. All of this is going to be at a standstill once again, the statement adds.

Even as the order does not specify any duration for the dine-in restrictions, their only hope is it doesn't last too long. Zarawar Kalra, founder-director of Massive Restaurants, which includes brands such as Farzi Cafe, includes

pears, what I eat — all this information is being leaked by Sagar and Sonu Mahal."

Sushil then asked two wrestlers to leave the stadium and said he wanted to "teach a lesson to some people". Co-accused Rahul claimed in his statement that he along with Sushil, who was allegedly carrying a licensed pistol, and another associate reached the stadium and forced them to leave the stadium and found coaches and wrestlers gathered there.

Just as they arrived, a few dogs started barking and Sushil, "who was very angry at the time", allegedly fired in their direction. Sushil then asked two wrestlers to leave the stadium. When a wrestler, Vikas, asked Sushil, "What happened?", he allegedly assaulted Vikas and chased him away after snatching his phone.

According to Rahul, after chasing away a third wrestler, Sushil said, "Where I go, who I

saying, "Do not leave them alive. Beat them mercilessly."

Co-accused Praveen, a "notorious criminal" involved in four criminal cases including murder, further quotes Sushil as saying, "I am the gunda of this area. How can you take over my flat?" as he allegedly assaulted them with a stick.

Diman claimed that they "assaulted them with lathi, danda, hockey stick and baseball bat. Our intention was to kill Sagar and Jaibaghwan were collecting information on him and wanted him to harm him (to his life); that's why Sushil wanted to kill them..."

According to the chargesheet, he quoted Sushil as

Hours before wrestler's murder, Sushil fired at dogs, assaulted fellow athletes: Chargesheet

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

HOURS BEFORE the alleged abduction and murder of 27-year-old wrestler Sagar Dhanchar last year, Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar, the main accused, allegedly made his way to Chhatrasal stadium, fired at a pack of barking dogs, assaulted athletes with his pistol, and forced them to leave the stadium and found coaches and wrestlers gathered there.

Just as they arrived, a few dogs started barking and Sushil, "who was very angry at the time", allegedly fired in their direction. Sushil then asked two wrestlers to leave the stadium. When a wrestler, Vikas, asked Sushil, "What happened?", he allegedly assaulted Vikas and chased him away after snatching his phone.

Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar is the main accused in the alleged murder case, which took place in May last year. Archive

According to the chargesheet, he quoted Sushil as

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Last date of receipt of applications in
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For details log on to website
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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 C/01/2022 Post Number of Posts & Department Level
Academic-I/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

CRIMES TOOK PLACE IN PAST 2 YEARS: FARIDABAD POLICE

Serial killer who murdered 4, including 3 minors, nabbed

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA
GURGAON, JANUARY 10

FARIDABAD POLICE Monday claimed to have arrested a 54-year-old serial killer, who has allegedly murdered four women, including three minor girls, in the past two years. The accused, a security guard at a currently-inoperative private hospital in Faridabad, was also arrested three decades ago in connection with murder of his uncle and nephew, but was later acquitted, said police.

Police said the accused tried to allegedly sexually assault the minors, and when they complained or resisted, he strangled them and dumped their bodies in a canal

Since December 31, was found near the bushes from Agrasola Canal in Faridabad's Sector 17 on January 5.

The woman, a college student from Palwal, went missing when she was on her way from the market to a relative's place in Bhutan. Her family filed a missing persons' complaint on January 1, and the accused was arrested on January 7, after he allegedly informed a woman's relative over the phone that he had killed her and dumped her body in the canal.

The accused, Singhraj, hails from Jasana village, and also has three prior cases of theft and cheating against him. The case was cracked after the decomposed body of a 22-year-old woman, who had been missing

Surinder Sheoran, ACP crime, said that during questioning the accused confessed to murdering three minor girls, aged 12-15, who were reported missing.

"He used to lure the minors by offering them money or something to eat. He would later molest them at the hospital building and if they complained, resisted or raised an alarm, he would strangle them. He wrapped the bodies in blankets, cycled to the canal and dumped them there early in the morning. The bodies would float away and were never recovered. So far, he has confessed to raping one minor girl," said Sheoran.

Police said in December 2019, he allegedly lured a 15-year-old daughter of a tea seller to the hospital building. In August 2020, he targeted a 12-year-old who was a friend of the tea seller's daughter he murdered earlier. And in June 2021, he allegedly raped and killed a 15-year-old girl who had been employed as a sweater at the

building

Narendar Kadiyan, DCP Crime, Faridabad, said in 1987, the accused was named in connection with the murder of his paternal uncle and his nephews a land dispute case. "He was later acquitted and the family reached a compromise. He got emboldened with each murder as he evaded arrest. He was arrested after we traced his last phone call."

In the recent murder case, police said the accused knew the 22-year-old woman for over two years. On December 31, he called her from the market to sector 17/18 Chowk and took her near the canal on his cycle. "He attempted to sexually assault her and when she resisted, he strangled her and threw the body in the canal. He left, assuming the body would float away, but it got stuck," said ACP Sheoran.

Police said he claimed to have murdered the woman over a phone call with her relative on January 5 as he "repented" it.

Nuh: Four teenage girls buried alive as mound of soil caves in, one minor injured

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, JANUARY 10

FOUR TEENAGE girls were killed while a minor girl was injured after they were buried underneath a mound of soil on Monday evening in Nuh.

The victims have been iden-

Police said the accused tried to allegedly sexually assault the minors, and when they complained or resisted, he strangled them and dumped their bodies in a canal

tified as Wakeela (19), Janista (18), Taslima (10) and Gulafsha (9).

Police said a nine-year-old girl, Sofiya, was injured and rushed to a nearby hospital, where her condition is said to be stable.

According to police, the incident took place around 6.30 pm

in Kangarka village in Tauru when the victims were collecting dry soil from a panchayati earth mound for personal and household use.

Suresh, SHO, Sadar Tauru police station, said, "While collecting and digging dry soil from the bottom, the mound got hollowed out and soil from the top collapsed on them. Four of them were buried underneath the mound. After hearing

the cries for help, one girl was rescued and rushed to a hospital."

Police said the bodies were pulled out of the mound and four were declared dead at a hospital.

DC Nuh Shakti Singh visited the spot on Monday night and assured the family of support as per the law. "It is a tragic incident. I visited the site of accident and met the families."

Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd Milma Bhawan, Patton P.O. Thiruvananthapuram-695004 Phone: 0471 2786415 & 416 e-mail: purchase@milma.com

Managing Director

MILMA ETENDER FOR DAIRY CONSUMABLES

Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd Milma Bhawan, Patton P.O. Thiruvananthapuram-695004 Bids are invited through e-tenders from interested Bidders for supply of Dairy Consumables cream packing materials for our Danies. e-tenders are hosted in www.etenders.kerala.gov.in. Last date for submission of bids is 28.01.2022. For more details, log on to www.etenders.kerala.gov.in or www.milma.com

For more details and submission of bid please see the IREPS website

Tenders can only be submitted through web portal www.ireps.gov.in upto 15:00 hrs. on 31.01.2022

26/22 (P)

North central railway www.nctrailways.gov.in

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RWS & S DIVISION, BARGARH
Email: erwss_rws@nctrailways.gov.in, Ph : 06646 233220,
FAX: 06646 234262

No. 157/2021-D/2021

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e"- PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Bid Identification No 11 of 2021-22

The Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Bargarh on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites tenders from the valid licensed holder contractors of class 'B' or 'A' registered with any department of State Government or equivalent class of Central Govt, etc. to be eventually drawn up to G2 Contract Form for the work mentioned below:

1. Name of the work- Execution of Improvement with retrofitting of Rural piped water supply to different villages on clubbed up mode under Padampur & Jhardenia Block in the District Bargarh - 5 Nos.

2. Approx. Estimated Cost:- Rs Varies from Rs 79.21 to 299.30 lakhs

3. Date for receipt of award of contract in the portal:- Dt. 25.01.2022 to Dt. 23.02.2022 up to 5.00 PM

4. Last date/ time of opening of tenders:- 24.02.22 at 11.00 A.M.

5. Name and address of the tender inviting Bid:- Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Bargarh, Bargarh

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersrissa.gov.in/>.

The authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Secy
Executive Engineer,

RWS&S Division, Bargarh

OIPR - 251571/11/0014/122

OFFICE OF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER,LATEHAR

Ref No: 37 Date: 07-01-2022

Very Short-term Tender for the Selection of Architectural Firm/Agency/Consultant for the Complete Design and Build of Sports Complex under DMFT.

SL. NO.	INFORMATION SUBJECT	DETAIL
1	2	3
01	NAME OF WORK	Selection of Architectural Firm/Agency/Consultant for Complete Design and Build of Sports Complex under DMFT
02	DATE OF PUBLICATION OF BID	07-01-2022
03	EARNEST MONEY TO BE DEPOSITED	Rs 1,00,000.00 (One Lakh)
04	LAST DATE & TIME FOR BID SUBMISSION	11-01-2022, 02:00 PM
05	BID SUBMISSION PLACE	DRDA Office,Latehar
06	DATE AND TIME FOR BID OPENING	17-01-2022, 04:00 PM
07	BID OPENING PLACE	D.C Office, Latehar
08	NAME AND OFFICE FOR INVITING TENDER	Deputy Commissioner, Latehar
09	HELPLINE NO. AND EMAIL ADDRESS	ddt_latehar@nctrailways.gov.in

NOTE : - FOR FURTHER DETAIL PLEASE VISIT THIS <http://latehar.nctrailways.gov.in>

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER LATEHAR

PR 261401(Latehar-2122'D

1X660MW PANKI EXTENSION PROJECT, PANKI, KANPUR UTTAR PRADESH RAJYA VIDYUT UPADAN NIGAM LTD.

E-Tender Notice

Bids are hereby invited for all mentioned E-Tenders. Details of

Tender Notice as well as Total quantity of work, Tender Specifications, Other terms & conditions available on our Web Site: www.uprvn.org/ e-tender portal www.tender.uprvn.nic.in.

Tendering authority reserves the right to cancel any or all e-bids without assigning any reason.Corrigendum, Addendum, Extension if any, shall be uploaded on the E-Tender website. Bidders are advised to visit the website regularly for updated information from time to time.

1. E-Tender – PTEP/SE(HQ)/CPD/HOSPITAL/ET-01/2022 Supply of Emergency Medicines for the Year 2021-2022 for Project Hospital, 1X660 MW, PTEP, Panki. **Estimated Cost: 1,49,00,000.** **Tender Fee: 236.00, Earnest Money: 3,000/-** OPENING DATE OF E-TENDER: 03.02.2022

www.uprvn.org **EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**
पर्यावरण विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार, कानपुर, उत्तर प्रदेश, 247122
पर्यावरण विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार, कानपुर, उत्तर प्रदेश, 247122
SAVE ELECTRICITY FOR THE NATION

GitHub case accused got idea from similar app in 2019, say police

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

DAYS AFTER arresting a 25-year-old software developer in connection with the "Sulli deals" app, where photos of Muslim women captioned "deal of the day" were posted six months ago, the accused, Amankarsh Thakur, was learnt to have told police he had posted doctored photos of at least 100 Muslim women, along with lewd remarks and comments, on December 31. Both the apps were hosted on US-based GitHub.

called "Tradmahasabha".

Thakur was arrested days after four persons, including two engineering students and a Delhi University student, were arrested in connection with which posted doctored photos of at least 100 Muslim women, along with lewd remarks and comments, on December 31. Both the apps were hosted on US-based GitHub.

"He joined the group on

Muslim women was shared.

During questioning, Thakur is learnt to have told police about how he got the idea about the 2019 app and having discussions with other members of the "Tradmahasabha" group.

"He joined the group on Twitter in January 2020 and the idea was to defame and troll Muslim women. He then made the app and shared it on the group along with its code. Two-three other members then designed the app further," said an officer.

Police said that when com-

plaints were filed by women targeted on the app, Thakur deleted it.

Thakur also left the Tradmahasabha group, which was deleted in the second week of July. All members left the group and deleted their Twitter handles. We have recovered his iPhone and iPad and forensic examinations are on. He claims that 15-20 anonymous handles were active in the group, but we are verifying this," the officer said.

Thakur has completed his schooling from Indore and BCA from IPS Academy. He was doing freelance work as a website developer from home, police said.

Arbitral award: In HC, DMRC submits its financial position

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

THE DELHI Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) Monday informed the Delhi High Court that it has only a total of Rs 6,20,83 crores in its bank accounts, which includes its earnings worth Rs 1,014.69 crore.

According to the Anil Ambani-led Reliance Infrastructure-promoted Delhi Airport Metro Express Pvt Ltd (DAMEPL), the DMRC has to pay at least Rs 6,268 crore to comply with the 2017 arbitral award.

The arbitral award, which pertains to the Delhi Airport Metro Express Line, was upheld by the Supreme Court in September 2021. Section 89 of the Metro Railways Act, 2002, states that only earnings of the metro railway administration can be attached by a court in the execution of a decree or order.

The court, last month, had directed the DMRC to furnish details of all its bank accounts and asked why it cannot take a loan from banks to pay the amount to the Reliance company. In the affidavit filed before the court on Monday, the DMRC said that it has a total of 1642.69 crore earnings. But out of this, its Rs 514 crore is committed liability which is "due to employees and pensioners of the corporation and post-retirement leave salary and post-retirement leave salary". Rs 1,014.69 crore is a deposit of security card which is refundable to the claimants.

The rest of the Rs 6,20,83 crore available with the DMRC is already earmarked for its various projects, within and outside Delhi, according to details submitted before the court. A major

chunk — Rs 2,869.33 crore — has been set aside for Phase III and IV of the Metro. Against making the payment at once to the DAMEPL, the DMRC has argued that the court has not yet decided the amount of the award. The court has rejected the offer made by DAMEPL. Last month, the court directed the DMRC to furnish its bank accounts details. The court, last month, had directed DMRC to furnish its bank accounts details. *Archive*

This was done on the basis of a Supreme Court order which directed the CAQM to invite suggestions with the aim of finding a permanent solution. The commission had provided 14 days for submission of suggestions. The nine-member expert group will be headed by the chairman of the Haryana State Pollution Control Board. The group includes Mukesh Sharma, professor at IIT-Kharagpur; Sanjiv Ghosh, scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology; Anumita Roychowdhury at the Centre for Science and Environment; and Prashant Gargava, Member Secretary, Central Pollution Control Board. The group will be required to examine the suggestions received, recommend measures for "formulation a permanent solution for the air pollution menace," and suggest a "policy" to curb air pollution. It is required to submit its report within two months.

The rest of the Rs 6,20,83 crore available with the DMRC is already earmarked for its various projects, within and outside Delhi, according to details submitted before the court. A major

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

THE COMMISSION for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has constituted a group of experts which will examine suggestions it has received on curbing air pollution.

Last month, the commission had invited suggestions from the public and experts on a "permanent solution for air pollution in Delhi-NCR".

This week includes a suggestion to reorganise the school vacation. The CAQM, in consultation with state governments, should evaluate reorganisation of annual school vacations such that the worst pollution period in Delhi-NCR is treated as school vacation. This will ensure that children do not suffer from learning loss on account of school closures," the letter stated.

The communication, signed by 110 parents, also suggests that specific scientifically proven measures be considered for schools, such as providing N95 masks to reduce exposure.

Another set of suggestions was sent by the Clean Air Collective, a network of organisations and individuals across the country who work on pollution issues. Suggestions include revising the Graded Response Action Plan before peak pollution season in 2022, using the Early Warning Forecasting System proactively to reduce emissions, strengthening agencies like the Delhi Pollution Control Committee, and making all buses in NCR districts run on CNG.

KRISHNA BHAGYA JALA NIGAMA LIMITED (A GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA UNDERTAKING)

Office of the Executive Engineer, KBJNL, Dam Division, Narayanpur-583219 Taluk Hunasagi, Dist: Yadgir

IFT No. KBJNL/DDN/PB/DRIP-II/P-1/2021-22/1449 Date: 10.01.2022

NATIONAL OPEN COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTIFICATION (ONLY THROUGH E PROCUREMENT SYSTEM)

National Open Competitive Procurement Tender in electronic mode on item rate basis is invited from the eligible tenderers vide this office tender notice No.KBJNL/EE/DDN/DRIP-II/P-1/2022 by the undersigned or on behalf of Managing Director, KBJNL, Bangalore. The tender will be offered through e-procurement system only and will be in two stages system viz Technical Bid and Financial Bid. The tenderers can access e tender document through website www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in and can be submitted through electronic mode only.

The details of work put to tender and the category of contractors eligible is as under

No.	Name of Work	Approximate amount put to tender (Rs. in Lakhs)	EMD (Rs in Lakhs)	Transaction Fee Rs.	Stipulated period for completion of Work	Category /Class of Contractor Eligible
1	Treatment of Masonry Dam for Block No.38 to 52 below MDDRL 486.00 M including arresting observed leakages in Drainage gallery of Concrete over flow section of Narayanpur Dam (Package-I) under DRIP Phase-II	2171.15	INR 21.72	As per e-Procurement	18 months (Including Rainy Season	Bidders registered with the Government of India or other State Governments/Central Government Undertakings

The intending bidders are requested to submit any queries not later than **24.01.2022** through the e-procurement portal only or raise enquires during the pre-Bid meeting. All the queries will be answered in the pre-Bid meeting.

The Calender of Events of bidding process is as under:

Calender of Events	Dates
1 The Tenderer can have access to the e-tender technical bid document in the website: www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in on payment of e-cash towards transaction fee as per e-procurement	From 17.01.2022 to 18.02.2022 up to 5.00 PM
2 Pre-Bid meeting at the Office of the Managing Director, KBJNL, PWD Annex II, K.R.C Circle, Bengaluru	26.01.2022 11.00 AM
3 Last date of receipt of queries from the prospective bidders	24.01.2022 up to 5.00 PM
4 Last date for submission of completed tender documents	18.02.2022 up to 5.00 PM
5 Date of Opening of technical bid at O/o Managing Director, KBJNL, PWD Annex, II Floor, K.R.C Circle Bengaluru	21.02.2022 at 11.00 AM
6 Date of Opening of financial bid at O/o Executive Engineer, KBJNL, Dam Division, Narayanpur	Will be intimated to the qualified bidders after approval to Technical Bid.

Further information can be had from the Office of the undersigned during office hours.

Secy
(Shankar H.Naikodi)
Executive Engineer, KBJNL, Dam Division, Narayanpur

5

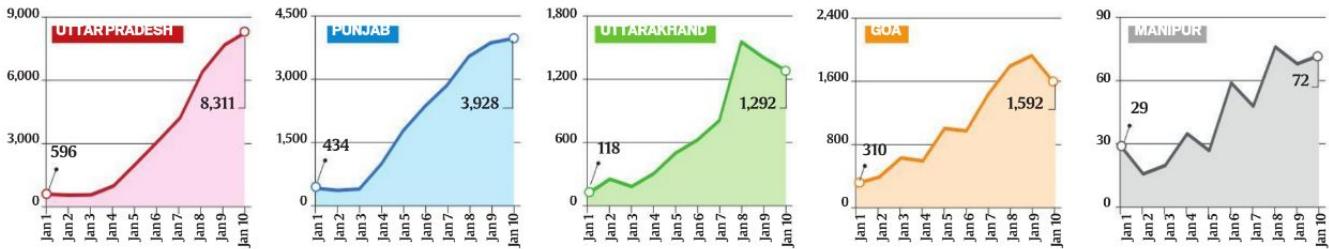
THE INDIAN EXPRESS, TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2022

DECISION 2022

UTTAR PRADESH • UTTARAKHAND • PUNJAB • GOA • MANIPUR



TRACKING COVID CASES IN ELECTION-BOUND STATES



Big blow for Cong in west UP: Gandhi camp leader quits party, to back SP

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 10

INAJOR SETBACK to the Congress before the Assembly polls, its prominent minority face from Western Uttar Pradesh, Imran Masood, announced on Monday that he was parting ways to support the Samajwadi Party.

Other leaders close to Masood are expected to leave the Congress in his wake.

Masood had a fast rise within the Congress from being an outsider to being part of 'Team Kaha', to a national secretary of the AICC. In 2014, a speech by the leader attracted Prime Minister Narendra Modi who had run into controversy. However, Masood's popularity in the area, that has a large Muslim population, has failed to translate into electoral success. This is also believed to have prompted the 50-year-old to switch sides at a time when the 2022 polls are heading for a BJP vs SP contest.

Addressing his supporters in Saharanpur Monday, Masood said he was going to the SP for the sake of 'jamhooriyat' (democracy). "I have taken this decision, it's sarkar ko harane ke liye (to defeat this government). We will win all the seats here," Saharanpur and neighbouring areas are considered Masood's base.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Masood said his 'birth as a politician' was in the SP, and that he was 'pained' to have left it in 2011. "Similar is the case now. I am pained to leave the Congress. But the political situation is such that the Congress is nowhere in the fight in UP, and to defeat the BJP, the SP has become the only option." A day before his announcement, Masood said: "I am obliged to Priyanka Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi for giving me all the re-



Imran Masood

spect. Priyanka Gandhi is also working hard, but the situation demands that if we want to establish the rule of law, we should support the SP." While in the Congress, Masood had more than once expressed his frustration with the party.

The nephew of former MP Rashed Masood, Imran Masood contested and won his first election in 2007 as an independent from Muzzaffarnagar Assembly constituency (now known as Behat). Picked up as a youth face for the Congress in 2012, he lost the Assembly election from Nalur in Saharanpur the same year.

Just before the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, a video clip surfaced, in which Masood was seen threatening Modi, while the PM candidate, as blamed the BJP and RSS for the Muzaffarnagar riots. His supporters said the video may have polarised voters in the Lok Sabha elections that followed.

Masood said: "I have apologised. I am not the person in that video. I was never that person and I will never be."

His ill-fortune continued in the 2017 Assembly and 2019 Lok Sabha polls, when he lost to the BJP and BSP, respectively.

Among the Congress leaders considered close to Masood is MLA Nares Saini, one of the 7 candidates who won in 2017 polls.

Saying new leaders hold favour, Goa BJP MLA, minister quit

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PANAJI, JANUARY 10

TWO-TIME BJP MLA Michael Lobo resigned from the Assembly and the party on Monday, becoming the first minister to leave the BJP amid the series of defections ahead of Goa polls. The Port and Waste Management Minister in the Pramod Sawant government, Lobo is likely to join the Congress on Tuesday.

Soon after Lobo's resignation, Pravin Zante announced his departure as BJP MLA, and said he was headed for the Maharashtra Gomantak Party (MGP). A former BJP ally, the MGP has entered into a pre-poll alliance with the Trinamool Congress. "My association with the BJP has been 15 years long, so I feel very sad and pained. The BJP doesn't have a clear agenda for the people," Lobo, a political heavyweight in the Bardez taluk, said, adding that he wanted to leave "nicely" and not be thrown out.

What he learnt in the BJP under the late Manohar Parrikar will stay with him, Lobo added, but the party no longer valued its grass-root workers. He said earlier that the 38-year-old Sachar, a qualified engineer turned philanthropist, would



State minister Michael Lobo

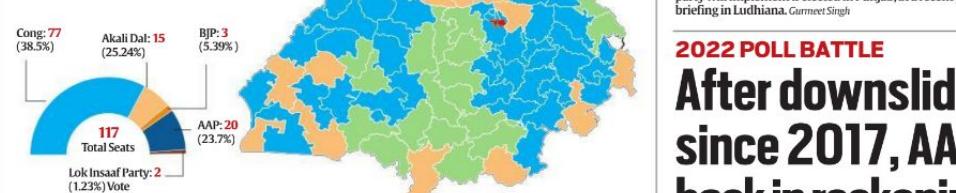
many in the party had told him so. "They said the party has become so big it has no place for small people like us. It is bringing new leaders," Zante, a former Congressman who won from Maynor in North Goa in 2017 on a BJP ticket, said. He had joined the BJP on Parrikar's appeal and that the party had changed after Parrikar's death. "I am joining the MGP because I want to be in a party that will work for the people."

Playing down the impact of Lobo's exit, MGP's CM Savant tweeted: "A few defectors; to fulfil the agenda of greed and personal ambition, to deter the agenda of good governance."

Goa BJP president Sadanand Tamavade said they had been expecting Lobo's resignation. "All these resignations are due to personal reasons where they are either unlikely to get the ticket or are greedy for more than one ticket in the family," he said.

How Punjab voted in 2017

The Congress returned to power with a record mandate after two terms of the SAD-BJP combine. On February 14, over 2 crore voters will choose the state's next govt



PUNJAB

A history of coalitions and agitations

MANJARI GREWAL
SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 10

PUNJAB BEGAN its journey in independent India with a coalition of short-lived governments born out of fractured mandates, punctuated with spells of President's Rule, as several agitations rocked the state.

It was only after the end of militancy in the mid-1990s that the state enjoyed political stability, with power alternating between the Akali Dal-BJP and the Congress. Next month, Punjab will vote in its first multi-cornered contest — in an election that follows the longest agitation by farmers in independent India.

Post-Partition Punjab

The first Punjab government in independent India was born out of an alliance between the Congress and Akalis under the chief ministership of Dr Govt Chittaranjan. But the uneasy relationship came to an end in 1949, after the Constituent Assembly refused to provide the safeguards for Sikhs. The state had its first brush with President's Rule in 1951. The Akalis fought the 1952 elections on the issue of Punjabi Suba (a state on linguistic lines), but the Congress won — and Bhim

Sen Sachar became Chief Minister. In 1956, Sharad was replaced by then PCC chief Partap Singh Kairon, who remained Chief Minister until 1964, a year after which he was assassinated.

Reorganisation

In September 1966, the state was split into Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh on linguistic lines. Coinciding with the advent of the Green Revolution, it led to a new political discourse in Punjab. The era saw four short-lived post-poll coalitions. The first an alliance of anti-Congress parties led by CM Guruman Singh, fell after eight months in 1967, but the next government under CM Lachman Singh Gill, could survive for only nine months. After mid-term polls in 1969, an Akali-Jana-Sangh coalition government returned to power, but it too collapsed soon.

Parshad Singh Badal became CM in March 1970, but his government lasted only 15 months. President's Rule followed. The next elections in 1972 returned a Congress government.

The 1985 elections were held in the backdrop of the Rajiv-Lonawala accord, and the Akali Dal led by Surjit Singh Barnala took over the state. But by then,

the 1977 polls, which the Akalis contested under the umbrella of Janata Party in alliance with the CPI and CPIM, were over. Soon, the Parkash Singh Badal government fell foul of the Nirankaris and the Jana Sangh.

1980s: The dark decade

In this phase, extremists who favoured secessionism over the demand for autonomy, took the upper hand. Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980 and dismissed nine non-Congress state governments, including that of Punjab. President's Rule was followed by elections and the Congress returned to power, which the Akalis contested under the umbrella of Janata Party in alliance with the CPI and CPIM. Until his assassination in 1985, Singh remained CM from 1992 until his assassination in 1995. This period also saw the panthic Akali Dal transform itself into an iconic Punjabi party. The SAD-BJP combine came to power in 1997, and Parkash Singh Badal became the first CM since Kairon's fall in 1964 to serve a full term.

1990s: Return to peace

After five years of President's Rule, Assembly elections were held in 1992. The Akali Dal boycotted the polls, and only 24 per cent turned out to vote, but it was an important first step. Beant Singh of the Congress, whose term saw a crackdown on militancy, remained CM from 1992 until his assassination in 1995. This period also saw the panthic Akali Dal transform itself into an iconic Punjabi party. The SAD-BJP combine came to power in 1997, and Parkash Singh Badal became the first CM since Kairon's fall in 1964 to serve a full term.

Crowned field

In 2002, Badal was succeeded by the Congress-CPI combine headed by Capt Amarinder Singh. The SAD-BJP alliance came to power in 2007, headed by Parkash Singh Badal. The party retained only one of its four seats — that of its state president Bhagwant Mann. The results were equally dismal in local body polls.

However, the last one year has seen hectic rebuilding efforts.

While the Badal MIA (MLA) was appointed state in-charge by the national leadership, this was soon followed by the appointment of Raghav Chadha, also a Delhi MLA, as the state co-in-charge. Chadha, who has been leading the rebuilding exercise, has on numerous occasions said that the AAP will fare much better in the Maha region than it did in 2017. The party has announced 109 candidates for the 117 Assembly seats. On Sunday, Chadha pointed to infighting in the Congress. "Chandu does not get along with Sidhu. Jaihara does not get along with Charanjit Singh. Sidhu and Randhawa do not get along with Sidhu," he said.

The AAP's performance in the Chandigarh-Mohali Municipal Corporation polls, when it ended up with 14 wards, more than the BJP (12), Congress (8) and Akali Dal (1) — has come as a morale booster for the party.

Congress infighting and Akali Dal's slump may end up helping AAP

MAN AMAN SINGH CHHINA
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 10

THE AAP Admni Party (AAP) entered the 2017 elections with a lot of hype but ended up with a sub-par performance, following which the party saw a string of descretions and exits. Now, with days left for the Assembly elections, AAP seems to have got its act together and is now back in the reckoning.

While the turnaround is being attributed to deep divisions within the ruling Congress, the failure of the Shiromani Akali Dal to rebuild itself post the 2017 poll debacle, and the desire for change among the public — all of which have ended up making the AAP look good — the party has also worked to claw its way back.

Over the last five years, AAP had been hit by bitter infighting. Having entered the Punjab Vidhan Sabha with 20 MLAs, the party is now left with barely half the numbers after several MLAs quit to join the Congress. While the party still has 17 MLAs to提名 in the Assembly, this figure is misleading since those who switched loyalties continue to occupy AAP benches.

While many predicted the party to win around 100 seats in 2017, AAP managed to win only 20, with majority of the seats (18)

coming from Malwa region and two from Doaba. The party failed to open its account in the Majha region. The slide in AAP's popularity continued in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, with the party retaining only one of its four seats — that of its state president Bhagwant Mann. The results were equally dismal in local body polls.

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Sachar said she chose the Congress as it was the oldest national party and because she was impressed with the work Channi had done as CM. "My parents always voted for the Congress." Sachar added that she was a social worker and the Congress felt I was one of the best candidates for Mogra.

On Kailash's opposition, Sachar said: "He is like my elder brother. We will meet and sort out differences."

Channi expressed confidence that the result will be resolved and said: "We will make adjustments as per requirement. I will go and meet him (Kailash) soon."

RELATED REPORTS ON
www.indianexpress.com

MALVIKA SOOD

Sonu Sood's sister to debut with Cong; sitting MLA opposes

DIVYA GOYAL GOPAL
LUDHIANA, JANUARY 10

ACTOR SONU Sood's sister Malvika Sood joined the Congress on Monday in the presence of Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi and party state chief Navjeet Singh Sidhu.

Soon after the press conference where the two Congress stalwarts welcomed Sood into the party, its sitting MLA Harpal Singh Kamal indicated he was not happy over the big-banner entry. The Congress leader from Moga, in fact, who was present to welcome her at Monday's event was former Mahila Congress chief Mati Thapar.

With the Soods having said earlier that the 38-year-old Sachar, a qualified engineer turned philanthropist, would

like to serve their native Moga, Kamal said he would contest from the seat with or without a Congress ticket.

That the Congress is placing much stock in Sachar -- whose Bollywood fame made a name for himself for his work for migrants during the Covid-19 crisis -- was clear from how Sidhu dropped in to meet the siblings at home before the press meet.

The Sood siblings run a charity in memory of their late parents. It was in November last year that Sood had announced that Sachar would be the party's candidate for the Moga bypolls. Sood skipped the formal entry of Sachar into the Congress. Later, indicating he had no political ambitions for now, Sood said: "My own work

as an actor & humanitarian continues, without any political affiliations or distractions."

Asked if the party would give the Moga ticket to Sachar, Channi said he did not reply in a yes or no, only saying it was clear that she was

the party's choice.

Kamal too stayed away from the event, even as hundreds of his supporters and party workers held a demonstration in his support, and tried to make their way to the Sood residence to

meet Sidhu and Channi.

Calling Sachar a "parachute candidate", Kamal told *The Indian Express* he had nurtured Moga even as the Congress was finished in the seat, and won in 2017 at a time when AAP had swept the rest of Malwa. "I defeated Mukhan Singh Brar, the son of Akali Dal veteran Tota Singh. Why should I leave my constituency? Sarpanches of 46 villages, Mayor Nitika Bhalla, councilors and block samiti members are with me."

Sidhu claimed Sachar joining would be a "game-changer" for the Congress. "Moga is an educated woman, and we will give this family as much respect as we can. We welcome her and thank Sonu Sood, the greatest philanthropist of our times..."

Malvika is a precious member of our family and we will keep her safe like a jewel," he said. Channi said Sood had made Moga and

the entire Punjab proud with his acting skills and philanthropic works. "Such a family getting associated with our party is a matter of pride for us."

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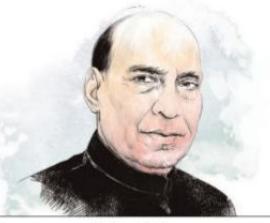
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DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



POSITIVE, NO NEGATIVE

WITH DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh testing positive for Covid-19 on Monday, and joining several Union ministers who contracted the virus earlier — Mahendra Nath Pandey, Bharati Pawar, Nitin Gadkari and Rajeet Chandrasekhar — BJP strategists are hoping that the wave will subside soon, and by the time candidates are announced in the five poll-bound states, the leaders will be ready to hit the campaign trail. While all the ministers have a hectic campaign schedule, the good news for the party is they have got mild symptoms and will manage with home quarantine. Singh on Monday tweeted, "I have tested positive for Corona today with mild symptoms. I am under home quarantine. I request everyone who have recently come in my contact to isolate themselves and get tested."

BACK & IN POLL BUSINESS

AFTER a nearly two-week foreign trip, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is back in India. He returned Sunday night and one of his first meetings was with P Chidambaram, party's senior observer for Goa, and K C Venugopal to take stock of election preparations in the state. The meeting was interesting since Congress leaders have claimed that the TMC had been reaching out to it, evincing interest for an electoral co-operation. One central leader said that some of the senior Goa leaders got calls from TMC election strategist Prashant Kishor. But the central Congress leaders strongly rejected any possibility of a tie-up with the Trinamool, arguing that joining hands with the party that has poached several of its leaders would be suicidal. One leader said there was a very strong sentiment in Goa Congress against any association with TMC.

VOTE FOR... CAULIFLOWER

AS YRINGA, a pen nib with seven rays, a hat and a javelin being thrown — these are some of the interesting common symbols allotted by the Election Commission (EC) to eight registered, unrecognised political parties in the poll-bound states of Goa, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Manipur. Former Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh's new party, Punjab Lok Congress, has been allotted 'hockey' and a ball as its symbol. Among other interesting symbols allotted are a TV set, telephone, ship, road-roller, fountain — and even a cauliflower. The EC on Monday wrote to chief electoral officers of the states and said the returning officers may allot these common symbols.

Jharkhand man was lynched for protesting cow slaughter: BJP

ABHISHEK ANGAD
JHARKHAND, JANUARY 10

JHARKHAND BJP on Monday alleged that the 32-year-old man, who was lynched and set on fire last week in Simdega district's Bestiara, was murdered because he had protested against the slaughter and sale of cow meat in the area.

Soon after the murder, police had said Sanju Pradhan was killed by a mob over allegations that he was involved in fire felling in an area which is considered sacred according to tribal customs.

Former CM and BJP legislature party leader Babulal Marandi said after Pradhan's killing a BJP team visited his family members. "We got to know that Sanju Pradhan used to protest against sale of cow meat and always protested against the slaughter. It is due to this fact he received multiple threats... On January 4, he was called in front of police and threatened," he said.

Marandi said the issue is being diluted or demanded for a CBI probe into the killing and compensation of Rs 10 lakh for Pradhan's family.

Cow slaughter and sale of beef is banned in Jharkhand.

The police refused to comment on Marandi's allegation, Deputy Commissioner Sushant Gaurav said: "Yes, slaughter of cow and sale of beef in the area remained an issue, but an old one. The murder happened due to culmination of a lot of factors, including felling of trees." He said an inquiry is being conducted for a detailed report.

Meanwhile, police have arrested the prime accused, village headman Suban Bud, taking the total number of arrests to eight. On Saturday, Pradhan's wife had alleged the killing took place in police presence despite her begging him to save her husband.

Panel to manage Uttarakhand's Badrinath, Kedarnath shrines

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, JANUARY 10

THE UTTARAKHAND government, criticised for a previous move to form a shrine board, on Sunday announced a three-member committee to manage the Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee (BKTC) will be in charge of managing the two Himalayan shrines.

The two temples — Kedarnath and Badrinath — will once again be managed by the BKTC, this time under a new head.

The decision comes weeks after the state government disbanded the Uttarakhand Char Dham Devasthanam Management Board to manage 51 temples, including the four shrines in the Char Dham pilgrimage, in Uttarakhand.

The Char Dham yatra includes Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamnotri temples.

A notification issued by culture secretary HC Seawali on Monday appointed BJP leader Ajendra Ajay as president of the

Military meet: India hopes for positive dialogue with China

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

INDIA is looking towards a constructive dialogue in the upcoming 14th round of military discussions with China on Wednesday. On Monday, security establishment sources said that the Indian side is "looking forward to constructive dialogue to resolve the balance [remaining] friction areas".

This will be the 14th Senior Highest Military Commander Level (SHML) meeting to resolve the standoff in eastern Ladakh, nowon for more than 21 months.

The meeting between the Corps Commanders will take place on the Chinese side of the Chushul-Moldo Border Personnel Meeting (BPM) point. This will be the first time that Lt Gen Anindya Sengupta will lead the Indian delegation.

Lt Gen Sengupta, who took over from Lt Gen P G K Menon as the commander of Leh-based XIV 'Fire and Fury' Corps last

E
Explained
The ground
Report

TILL NOW, the two militaries have disengaged from PP14 in Calvin Valley, north bank of Pangong Tso, heights of Kalash Range in the Chushul sub-sector, and PP17A near Gogra Post. Both sides have more than 50,000 troops each in the region, along with additional air defence assets, artillery, missiles, tanks and other military equipment.

week, was part of the 13th meeting in October as well — Lt Gen Menon had then led the Indian delegation.

The last meeting had ended without a breakthrough, even though India had been hopeful of reaching an agreement on disengagement from Patrolling Point (PP) 15 in Hot Springs. Each side has a platoon-sized strength

soldiers in the area. Apart from PP15, there are two more outstanding issues in eastern Ladakh.

In Deosai Plain, China transports by land and their soldiers from accessing their traditional patrolling limits at PP10, PP11, PP11A, PP12 and PP13. The area is close to India's strategically significant Daulat Beg Oldi near Karakorum Pass in the north.

In Demchok, some so-called civilians from China have pitched tents on Indian side of the LAC, and are refusing to vacate.

The meeting in October had ended with both sides blaming each other for the situation. After the meeting, India had said that during the discussions the Indian side had "emphasised [that] such resolution of the remaining areas would facilitate future relations", and had made "constructive suggestions for resolving the remaining areas".

However, "the Chinese side was not agreeable and also could not provide any forward-looking proposals", it said.

Hate app complainant receives threats; cops looking for callers

JAYPRAKASH NAIDU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 10

THE COMPLAINANT in the Buli app case in Mumbai has received threats from unknown callers, prompting her to submit a written complaint with the cyber police crime branch on Sunday. The cyber police have lodged a non-cognisable complaint under section 506 of the IPC. DCP (cyber) Dr Rashmi Karandikar added that a probe is on to trace the callers.

The complainant is FIR'd to the arrest of four students. Neeraj Bishnoi, 21, the creator of the app which had obscene content on 126 Muslim women, was confident they will never get caught and he repeatedly communicated this to the three others accused on Twitter groups. A frustrated Bishnoi later took to Twitter to allegedly abuse Mumbai Police for arresting his team mates which eventually led to his arrest by the Delhi Police. Bishnoi, an Assam

native and second-year engineering student of Vellore Institute of Technology, Bhopal, was suspended from college after his arrest last week. Mumbai Police said they will seek his custody.

A cyber police official said Bishnoi and one of the arrested accused, Vishal Kumar Jha, 21, were on a Twitter group when a similar app, Sullideels, was made last year to target prominent

Muslim women. Jha had then retweeted and liked tweets on Sullideels. Jha, a second-year civil engineering student, told police that he was simply following Bishnoi's instructions.

Meanwhile, a magistrate court in Bandra on Monday extended the custody of Sharmila and Rawat till Friday while Jha, who was testifying for Covid, was sent to judicial custody.

Muslim women, Jha had then retweeted and liked tweets on Sullideels. Jha, a second-year civil engineering student, told police that he was simply following Bishnoi's instructions.

Porters that the murder was planned and the two 21-year-old workers killed in state last year, PNI quoted state Congress chief Sudhakaran as saying. "We all know who is behind all the attacks. It is the BSF which terrorises campuses. They don't have any right to blame us..."

Calling the murder "extremely sad and highly condemnable", Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said, "Attempts to create violence in college campuses will not be allowed under any circumstances. Police have been directed to bring Deeqar's killers to justice as soon as possible."

The SFI called for a boycott of

classes across the state on Tuesday following the murder, a few incidents of face-off were seen on campuses elsewhere in the state, but nothing untoward was reported.

Alleging that Congress workers had unleashed violence in Kerala, after Sudhakaran assumed office as party's state unit chief, Balakrishnan said, "The last six years, CPI(M) has lost 21 workers — they were killed by Congress, BJP and SP(activists). Sudhakaran is provoking the party workers to take up arms."

He also alleged, "The murder in Idukki took place with the connivance of senior Congress leaders."

Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi reacted to Punjab and Haryana Court directions by saying that "[Majithia] got the bail,

ED attaches assets of man who duped investors of Rs 1,200 crore

was not the Chief Minister at the time — as he was on a visit to Kedarnath to check preparations ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the shrine.

The Board was dissolved on December 27, 2019, after the protestors forced a Hukum Hakeemullah Mahapanchayat Samiti and announced that they will field their own candidates for 15 Vishwanath Sabas seats in Uttarakhand and campaign against the BJP. The plan was dropped after the Board was abolished.

President of the Mahapanchayat Samiti Krishna Kant Kotiyal told The Indian Express that the priests welcome the government's decision. "We welcome the decision, however, there is one objection that those appointed are mainly people from outside, but still it is a welcome decision," he said.

The priests of the four shrines were opposed to the formation of the Board, the Shri Badrinath-Shri Kedarnath Act, 1939, was in place for the management of the Badrinath and Kedarnath shrines.

ED sources said the attached assets include deposits in multiple bank accounts, immovable properties, including land of Nishad, the managing director of Bengaluru-based Long Rich Technologies and a few related shell companies. Earlier, police in Kannur had registered multiple cheating cases, but Nishad left the country after obtaining anticipatory bail in these cases. ED sources said their probe has so far revealed Nishad, through his various companies, collected deposit money from the investors in the guise of ICO for the launch of Morris Coin Crypto Currency.

EWS

The Char Dham yatra includes the Kedarnath shrine. FILE

15-member committee and party colleague Kishor Panwar its vice-president.

The priests of the four shrines were opposed to the formation of the Board, the Shri Badrinath-Shri Kedarnath Act, 1939, was in place for the management of the Badrinath and Kedarnath shrines.

In November last year, the priests displayed black flags to Trivedi Singh Rawat — who

came to the rescue of Pradhan and

EWS

THE UTTARAKHAND government, criticised for a previous move to form a shrine board, on Sunday announced a three-member committee to manage the Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee (BKTC) will be in charge of managing the two Himalayan shrines.

The two temples —

Ex-MP, kin held for murder of party colleague

Hatched plan to get SP ticket for daughter

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 10

BALRAMPUR police on Monday arrested former Samajwadi Party MP Rizwan Zaheer and five others, including his daughter and son-in-law, in connection with the murder of a 50-year-old local Samajwadi Party leader, Firuz Ahmed alias Pappa.

Zaheer, a two-time MP and three-time MLA, has 14 criminal cases against him. The criminal cases include those of murder and attempt to murder. During the last year's panchayat election, police booked Rizwan for creating nuisance and invoked National Security Act (NSA) against him. However, NSA could not be confirmed against him after the Advisory Board did not approve it, said Singh, adding that Merajul Haq too has criminal cases against him.

Firoz Ahmed, who joined the Samajwadi Party (SP) last October, was on his way home in Tulsipur on January 4 night when he was attacked by a group of men who slit his neck.

The murder appears to be a fall out of political ambition and domination in the area," said Superintendent of Police (Balrampur) Hemant Kutilay.

According to police, Firoz was preparing to contest the Assembly election from Tulsipur seat, and Rizwan Zaheer (55), who recently returned to the Samajwadi Party from SP, was also vying for the party ticket for his 33-year-old daughter Zeiba Rizwan.

"Rizwan developed enemies by rising popularity and inspired to kill Firuz for last one-and-a-half month and had made three attempts earlier but failed. He said that Rizwan and others were unhappy with Firoz's rising popularity and suspected that he might get the Samajwadi Party ticket to contest from Tulsipur constituency. Since Rizwan wanted to get the ticket for his daughter, they decided to eliminate Firoz," said the Circle Officer.

Police said they have recovered weapons, iron rods, knives, and cellphones that were used in the crime from the accused.

The case has not ended. He will have to appear before [the STT] on Wednesday.

Chief constable said this while responding to media in Moga where he had gone to conduct an investigation. His son's sister Malvika Sood Sachar in party fold.

SAD spokesman Daljit Singh Cheema had questioned the promotion of Principal Inspector Saturday and told *The Indian Express* that "This is very serious. Right from appointment of DGP Chhattopadhyaya who was brought to register a false case against Bikram Singh Majithia this is all malafide. Another thing should be added is he has been added."

A Mohali court had turned down Majithia's plea for anticipatory bail in the case following which he moved High Court.

Off Assembly poll heat, BJP raises pitch on Telangana front

SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, JANUARY 10

FROM TALKING of "Dharma Yuddh" to quips that "BJP leaders are not braniyan who would be swayed by a few nice words", the SAD has started to raise its game.

On December 27, after the protestors forced a Hukum Hakeemullah Mahapanchayat Samiti and announced that they will field their own candidates for 15 Vishwanath Sabas seats in Uttarakhand and campaign against the BJP. The plan was dropped after the Board was abolished.

ED sources said the attached assets include deposits in multiple bank accounts, immovable properties, including land of Nishad, the managing director of Bengaluru-based Long Rich Technologies and a few related shell companies. Earlier, police in Kannur had registered multiple cheating cases, but Nishad left the country after obtaining anticipatory bail in these cases. ED sources said their probe has so far revealed Nishad, through his various companies, collected deposit money from the investors in the guise of ICO for the launch of Morris Coin Crypto Currency.

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With the Congress listless, the BJP believes it has an opportunity to occupy the vacant Opposition space in the state. The row over

Manipur: BJP worker among 2 killed ahead of Assembly polls

JIMMY LEIVON
IMPHAL, JANUARY 10

A BJP worker close to a Manipur minister, along with his cousin, was gunned down at Samouru in Imphal West district Sunday night in what was termed by Chief Minister N Biren Singh as political violence in the polluted Northeast state.

Police sources said an unknown assailant shot Abijam John, 57, who was close to Agriculture Minister O Lukhoi, and his cousin Abijam Sashikanta, a hawker in the India Reserve Battalion, near John's house around 10pm at Samouru Bazaar. They succumbed to injuries in different hospitals in Imphal, the sources added.

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh, who visited the deceased men's families, termed it an attack on BJP workers and said the attackers will not be spared. And minister Lukhoi called the incident an act of cowardice. "Whatever their faults, they should be given a chance to mend their ways. Killing is not the solution," he said.

Political violence has increased in the Northeast state slated to go to the polls on February 27 and March 3.

A college student was shot dead by alleged BJP workers in Heiror Thoubal district in December last year.

'Ex-Muslims' launch own party in Kerala

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JANUARY 10

A GROUP OF people "who abandoned their religion" have floated a new organisation called 'Ex-Muslims of Kerala', offering a platform and support to those who stopped practising Islam. The organization observed January 3 as 'Ex-Muslims Day'.

The outfit's president, Liyakkathali CM, said this is the first organisation of its kind in India. "We have formed a 10-member executive committee and membership campaign is on. Initially, we have identified 300 Muslims, who have abandoned their religion over the years, who are coming forward to support the cause," he said.

He said the organisation aims to provide support to those who quit Islam. "There are many Muslims who have abandoned their religion but are reluctant to declare it openly as they fear repercussions from society. Many are forced to hide their identity. They fail to get support from even family and are targeted at places of work. We want to give support and courage to people who are willing to come out of the religion. Those who abandon religion should be allowed to live fearlessly," he said. Liyakkathali said he had abandoned Islam two years ago "after I realized the holiness of religion."

The first to fly down to register his protest over Bandi's arrest was BJP president P Nadda, who came to lead a rally. The plan was later scrapped as police cautioned that the meeting, expected to draw thousands of BJP workers, would be a "Covid magnet", but in a direct attack on Rao, Nadda accused the CM of being undemocratic and intolerant of any criticism, and of being afraid of the BJP. The tussle, he said, was a "Dharma Yuddh".

Since then, Union minister Bhagwant Khalsa, former Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh, Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma have held meetings, all well-attended, while ex-Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis is coming Tuesday.

Chouhan said CM Rao was "living in fear" and that "A CM should respond when a senior Opposition party leader raises any issue, not drag and arrest him." Raman Singh said "Nizam's rule" runs in Telangana.

**FULL REPORT ON
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E. EXPLAINED

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2022

TRACKING INDIA'S COVID CURVE

DASHBOARD, AS ON JAN 9		
New cases	Active cases	Deaths
1,79,723	7,23,619	327
Weekly CFR: 4.39% Overall CFR: 1.39% Total deaths: 44,83,936		

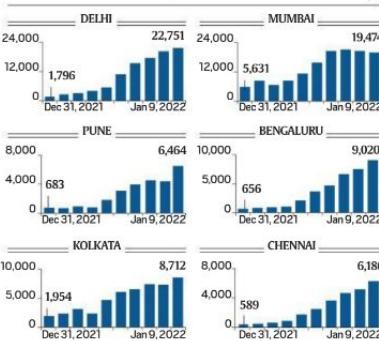
NEW CASES, DAILY



SURGE IN THE STATES

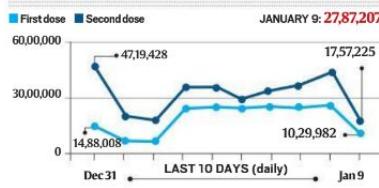
State	ON JANUARY 9		
	New Cases	Active Cases	Deaths
Maharashtra	44,388	2,02,259	16
West Bengal	24,287	78,111	18
Delhi	22,751	60,733	17
Tamil Nadu	12,895	51,335	12
Karnataka	12,000	49,631	4

SURGE IN THE CITIES, LAST 10 DAYS



TOTAL TESTS		
TESTS ON JAN 9	WEEKLY POSITIVITY	OVERALL POSITIVITY
15,40,827	7.39%	5.16%

INDIA TOTAL DOSES **149,55,98,072**
(1st DOSE: 86,18,42,021; 2nd: 63,37,56,051)



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Valour of the Chhote Sahibzaade, and PM's political outreach to Punjab

DIVYA GOYAL GOPAL
LUDHIANA, JANUARY 10

THE NATION would henceforth observe December 26 as 'Veer Baal Diwas'. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on Sunday (December 9), the Parkash Purab (birth anniversary) of the tenth Sikh Guru Gobind Singh.

What is the importance of December 26 in the history of Sikhism, and the political context of the PM's announcement a month ahead of elections in Punjab?

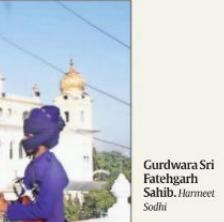
Courage and sacrifice

Veer Baal Diwas – a tribute to the bravery of children – is dedicated to the Chhote Sahibzaade, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, the youngest sons of Guru Gobind Singh, who were bricked alive on the orders of Wazir Khan, the Mughal faujdar of Sirdih, for refusing to renounce their faith and become Muslim. Zorawar Singh was 9 at the time, and Fateh Singh only 7. Soon after they were walled up alive, their grandmother Mata Gujri (Guru Gobind Singh's mother) died of shock.



Today, Gurdwara Sri Fatehgarh Sahib stands on the site where the two Sahibzaades were executed on December 12, 1705, which translates to December 26 in the calendar now in use.

It is believed that after no one in Sirdih town agreed to spare land to cremate the two Sahibzaades, a rich Hindu trader named Diwan Todar Mal purchased a small piece of land by covering it with at least 7800 gold coins, and performed the last rites after getting their bodies released from the Mughals. Later, Gurdwara Jyoti Sarup was built at this site in Fatehgarh Sahib.



Prof Paramvir Singh of the Department of Encyclopaedia of Sikhism at Panjab University, Patiala, said: "Guru Gobind Singh had four sons, the Chaar Sahibzaade, all of whom sacrificed their lives to uphold the identity and dignity of the Khalsa Panth against the Mughals. Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh died in the battle of Chamarlaur. But the bravery and sacrifice of Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh is considered unparalleled not just because of the tender age at which they chose death, but also for the cruel and barbaric conditions that the Mughals had cre-

ated for them and their grandmother before their execution."

The Sahibzaades and their grandmother were held captive at the open-air Thanda Burj (Cold Tower) of the Mughal fort for days in chilly weather, during which they shivered endlessly but refused to convert, Prof Singh said. "They were pressured and threatened with death if they did not accept Islam, but

they refused to renounce their faith," he said.

Jujhar, Zorawar, and Fateh were the sons of Guru's first wife Jito Ji, and were cared for by their grandmother after Jito Ji died.

A long-pending demand

For long, the Sikh community has asked that December 26 be marked as a special day in memory of the Chhote Sahibzaade, for

Meja, a religious fair, is organised from December 25-28 every year in memory of the Sahibzaades and their grandmother at Sri Fatehgarh Sahib, which is attended by lakhs of devotees from Punjab and elsewhere.

Current political context

The BJP is going into the Assembly election of February 14 without its old ally Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), a panthic party that puts religious and gurdwara affairs on top of its agenda.

For the Modi government and the BJP, which have lost significant political capital during the year-long standoff with farmers protesting against the three farm laws that the Centre was ultimately forced to withdraw, the announcement is in the nature of a peace offering.

It is seen as an effort to placate angry and upset Punjabis – not just Sikhs, but people from all communities who revere the sacrifice of the Chhote Sahibzaade.

The SAD has objected to the decision being taken without consulting the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). SGPC spokesperson Dr Daljit Singh

Chenna said, "We appreciate the PM's move to honour the sacrifice of the Chhote Sahibzaade, but the name of the day should be decided after consultation with the SGPC to do justice to the history behind this unparalleled sacrifice. The Sikh religious literature and gurbani should be consulted to name this day."

SGPC member Kiranji Kaur tweeted, "I strongly oppose naming Shaheedi Diwas of Sahibzaade as Veer Baal Diwas. Babas are being reduced to children. Govt has no business reinterpreting our beliefs in a reductionist way."

Prof Paramvir Singh said that even though Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh were only 9 and 7 respectively at the time of their martyrdom, they are referred to as "Baba Zorawar Singh" and "Baba Fateh Singh" because according to Sikh faith, they were not merely children.

"Their actions and wisdom were beyond their age and hence they are referred to as 'Babas', not children. We consider them our revered elders who made the supreme sacrifice for the Sikh faith, so limiting them to the word 'Baba' might be objectionable," he said.

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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Selecting the booster shot

'Precautionary' doses for vulnerable groups have begun, using the same vaccine the beneficiaries were previously given. What is the rationale behind this, and the arguments for and against mixing vaccines?

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS
PUNE, JANUARY 10

ON MONDAY, the government began administering an additional "precautionary" dose of the Covid-19 vaccine to vulnerable groups – those over 60 and with comorbidities, and healthcare and frontline workers. The two vaccines most prevalently in use in India, Covishield and Covaxin, are given in two doses; so the "precautionary" or "booster" dose is the third one for those eligible.

Over 63 crore Indians have received both doses of their vaccine until Sunday, out of nearly 150 crore doses administered overall.

For those eligible for the booster, the Centre has not allowed mixing of vaccines as of now: If someone has received two doses of Covishield, she will be given the same vaccine for the third shot, and so on for Covaxin. Once more data is available, a heterologous approach (using a different vaccine for the third jab) will be taken later, the Centre has said.

What purpose does a booster serve?

The immunity provided by a regular course of vaccines is known to wane over time. Various studies in India and elsewhere have reported a decline in antibodies of vaccinated people, recorded at various points of time after the last dose. This decline happens not only with antibodies, but even memory T-cells.

A booster is given so that people can maintain their level of immunity for longer. In the past, boosters were recommended for smallpox prevention every three to five years. Tetanus toxoid boosters are also recommended today for adults and pregnant women after childhood vaccination.

Regulators in some countries, such as the United States' Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the United Kingdom's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), have looked at booster dose data and given approvals.

In India, a recent study found that six months after the second Covaxin dose, a booster using the same vaccine led to neutralising T-cell and B-cell responses. This suggests good immune memory responses and long-term protection from severe disease, manufacturer Bharat Biotech said in a statement.

Why has the Centre chosen to use the



same vaccine for the booster shot?

There are regulatory and clinical aspects. From a regulatory and legal perspective, a regular course of vaccines is known to wane over time. Various studies in India and elsewhere have reported a decline in antibodies of vaccinated people, recorded at various points of time after the last dose. This decline happens not only with antibodies, but even memory T-cells.

"These vaccines are under emergency use authorization (EUA) which means that they are not fully licensed. For instance, in the national programme on immunisation, we have off-label recommendation for the rotavirus vaccine... For the inactivated polio vaccine... the licence is for a full dose given intramuscularly. What this means is that off-label use for the rotavirus vaccine is part of the childhood vaccination programme and is recommended at a later age than the three doses are given," Dr Ravi said.

"We also have to consider the issue of indemnity. What if something goes wrong when you use another vaccine: then who is responsible?" she said.

From the clinical standpoint, leading virologist Dr Ravinder Singh said that the fundamental attribute of the immune system is memory. "If you shoot with the same vaccine one will boost the memory. Boosting with a homologous vaccine [the same one given earlier] will also fetch a good response," Dr Ravi said.

Immunologist Dr Vineeta Bal said many traditional vaccines are used as a second or third dose as the primary vaccination regime followed by a booster of the same a few months or years later. For instance, tetanus toxoid is part of the childhood vaccination programme and is recommended at a later age too, including pregnant women.

What have studies on mixing of vaccines shown so far?

In India, there is no clear data yet on mixing the two vaccines that make up the bulk of the doses being administered: Covishield and Covaxin. Efforts are being taken up to generate and analyse data. A recent pilot study by the Asian Institute of Gastroenterology (AIG) examined the safety profile of mixing Covishield and Covaxin and also checked antibody response by comparing small homologous and heterologous vaccine groups. It found that mixing vaccines was safe.

Dr D Nageshwar Reddy, chairman, AIG Hospitals, said that the most important finding of the study was that antibodies neutralising the coronavirus spike protein were the same for those licensed in Covaxin as for those that are not.

From a policy perspective, a significant correlation between serum IgG titres and neutralisation GMT against the omicron in the face of immune escape by this variant would lend support for an additional dose of vaccine to augment antibody response. This is being implemented in a few countries including India and has the potential to offer better protection in vulnerable people," Dr Bal said.

Of the nearly 150 crore vaccine doses given until Sunday, over 130 crore are of Covishield (5 in every 6) and over 19 crore are of Covaxin. Experts noted that since Covaxin is the only one in use for under-18 vaccination, there could be a possibility of a shortage of the vaccine for heterologous boosting of the Indian adult population.

If and when India decides to vaccinate the adult population, what about supply?

Experts have stressed the importance of achieving a right balance between effectiveness and safety concerns and the availability of vaccine platforms and supplies. "Apart from the absence of Indian data in the public domain on how mix-and-match vaccination would benefit, there could be supply chain, vaccine availability issues," Dr Bal said.

Against Omicron, only 5 out of 20 in both vaccine-only groups, 5 out of 19 in the Covaxin-plus-infection group, and 9 out of 20 in the Covishield-plus-infection group exhibited neutralisation titres above the lower limit of quantification. This suggested better neutralisation in those with prior infection.

However, reduction in neutralisation may not translate into dramatic reduction in vaccine effectiveness. We have to give a balanced message to people that in general, the body's own defence mechanism even before vaccines were good enough to prevent symptomatic infections in a large majority of people. Among those clinically infected a large majority had mild disease, due to natural immune defence mechanism in humans," Dr Garg said. Even if Omicron is spreading, being vaccination prevents severe disease in 80%-90% of the people, Dr Garg said. "Boosting may be required in a sub group of people which is allowed from today onwards."

There was no difference in the neutralisation levels between the two vaccines.



PAPER CLIP

NEW RESEARCH

Antibodies, T cells & boosters

A recent study by THSTI published in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* has shown that besides neutralising antibodies, T-cell immune responses are important for controlling SARS-CoV-2 infection. The researchers said this seems to be true for Omicron too, as demonstrated by South African researchers.

From a policy perspective, a significant correlation between serum IgG titres and neutralisation GMT against the omicron in the face of immune escape by this variant would lend support for an additional dose of vaccine to augment antibody response. This is being implemented in a few countries including India and has the potential to offer better protection in vulnerable people," the study said.

Lead author Guruprasad Medigeshi and other researchers have said in the study that the drop in neutralisation might be alarming, but the real-world impact of these reduced neutralisation titres on hospitalisation rates and mortality rates have to be interpreted along with other factors such as pathogenicity of the variant, immunisation uptake and seroprevalence from natural infection in different geographical regions and the expected role of cellular immune responses to the variant.

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2022



THE EDITORIAL PAGE

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

FORTIFY THE SHIELD

Omicron variant adds a new dimension to discourse on booster shots. Precautionary shot regime must become more expansive

THE TURN-TAKEN by the pandemic in the past two weeks has made the smooth conduct of the "precautionary" inoculation drive for the elderly, healthcare professionals and frontline workers, that commenced from Monday, imperative. While the virus seems to have assumed a milder form during the current wave, some of the caveats issued by the WHO late November after South African authorities alerted the world about the pathogen's newest variant, Omicron, remain salient. The global health agency had warned that Omicron's high transmissibility could offset its less virulent character and stressed the need for protecting the aged and the immunocompromised. Reports of large numbers of doctors in Delhi and Mumbai being afflicted by Covid should also be a matter of concern. While these medics do not have a severe form of the disease and hospitalisation rates have, so far, been low, the healthcare sector can ill-afford the absence of large numbers of doctors, nurses, and paramedics. There are already reports of hospitals in Delhi having to cut down on routine consultations and surgeries. That's why a section of experts believes that the country would have been better prepared to take on the current outbreak had it planned the drive for additional doses earlier.

Last week, the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation ended speculation about the vaccines to be used for "precautionary" doses. Given the lack of consensus on a mixed vaccine approach, the expert body did the right thing in recommending that the precautionary dose would be the same as the first two jabs. Moreover, evidence from the UK shows that the third dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine – Covishield in India – reduces severe Covid and hospitalisation by 88 per cent. Conversations on mixing vaccines must, however, continue. Unlike in the US and Europe, there have been very few studies in India on vaccine effectiveness and experts rightly believe that more data on the duration of the immunity offered by the vaccines in use in the country will help in the quest for developing more potent boosters. The propensity of the virus to mutate into variants like Omicron that can undermine vaccine performance and cause breakthrough infections has added a new dimension to this discourse. Preliminary studies show that a broad booster approach can bring down the R number – the number of people infected by a Covid positive person – to less than 1 during the Omicron-driven surge. The government's next task, therefore, should be to make the coverage of the additional doses more expansive. It must also begin planning to extend the inoculation drive for children.

Omicron has once again underlined that the virus is a moving target. We are, however, much better prepared to take on the contagion's newest avatar compared to the despair-filled days of the second wave. In the coming weeks and months, the government and scientific bodies must endeavour to strengthen the shield provided by vaccines.

INSECURE STATE

Weaponising ED, tax authorities to expand counterinsurgency umbrella in Kashmir is a fraught move

COUNTERINSURGENCY (COIN) OPERATIONS ARE usually understood to target weapon-wielding militants, their organisations, and their leaders. As reported in this newspaper, in Kashmir, where the sweeping changes of 2019 have failed to end the militancy, COIN operations appear to have changed tack to fold in an increasingly wider swathe of the population. They now cover funders and financiers, and "overground workers", a term that was recently used at an Army-organised seminar at Srinagar's Badami Bagh garrison, as a description that fit young, old, man or woman, scholars, doctors, teachers, businessmen, lawyers, and anyone else "from gunners to runners". Now it is not just the police, the army and the paramilitaries but a plethora of other organisations such as the Enforcement Directorate, and others included in the Terror Monitoring Group such as the two Central Boards dealing with direct and indirect taxes and customs. On the face of it, a case can be made that instead of focussing on the numbers of "kills" of militants, which may end up pushing more young people to take up arms and declare war against the Indian state, focussing on breaking their networks, whether financial, logistical or ideological, is a more intelligent way of dealing with an insurgency. Far too many recent encounters have led to the killings of barely adult teenagers with no training and armed with nothing more than a pistol. Instead, if a crackdown on those who give them money and shelter, and other types of support can lead to arrests and save lives, this new approach may even win community support.

However, the danger in the ever-widening definition of overground workers is that it can end up profiling or labelling an entire population as such, and lead back to the same undesirable result – alienation and a simmering militancy. After thousands of arrests under draconian laws such as the Unlawful Activities and Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Public Security Act over the last three years, the government is no closer to making friends with the people in Kashmir. Add the new rules of conduct for government employees, and several dismissals under constitutional provisions that require no reason to be given, a muzzled press, the barring of dissent to the extent that even the police force says its actions must not be questioned, this feels more like the hatchet arm of a security state bent on tethering the people of the Valley.

This heavily securitised approach to bringing back "normalcy" and zero community outreach, the continuing absence of a political process with restrictions on the movement and activities of the former state's political leadership even as the rest of the country is forever in election mode has only served to emphasise the difference.

A SMALL HOPE

The story of a lost baby being reunited with his family in Kabul offers a glimmer of positivity in a tumultuous time

APAIR OF arms reaches upwards, passing a wailing baby over a barbed-wired wall into the hands of a US soldier. This photo was flashed around the world as a symbol of the desperate straits that the Afghan people found themselves in after the Taliban forces entered Kabul on August 15 last year. The arms belong to the infant's father, Mirza Ali Ahmadzai who was at the airport of the Afghan capital on August 19 with his family – along with hundreds of others – hoping to get evacuated. In the tumult, he handed Baby Sohail across the airport wall to a soldier, fully expecting to be reunited with his son almost immediately on the other side. What followed, however, was a five-month long separation, with the baby finally being returned on January 8 to members of his family who had stayed on in Kabul. His parents and siblings, who managed to get evacuated to the US, watched the reunion on video.

Following the Taliban takeover of Kabul and the ensuing chaos, approximately 1,300 Afghan children were evacuated to the US without their parents or legal guardians, according to the US Department of Health and Services. Most are still waiting to be united with their families. Unlike in the case of Sohail, who was found in Kabul – where he had been "adopted" by a local taxi driver as his own son – the outlook for these children appears bleak due to the lack of a clear legal mechanism that can reunite them with families who are still stuck in Afghanistan.

This is why Sohail's story is so rare and precious right now. At a time when Afghanistan grapples with a massive humanitarian crisis and an economic meltdown, in addition to the Covid pandemic, to know that a lost baby has been returned to his family is warming. From a symbol of desperation, Sohail's story has become one of hope.



YASHOVARDHAN AZAD

Stalling PM's cavalcade

Fix responsibility for the glaring gaps behind the PM's security lapse, don't use it for propaganda

ON THE BITTER cold wintry afternoon of January 5, under a smoky grey sky, the prime minister's convoy came to a grinding halt on an overbridge along the Moga Ferozepur Highway, 20 km short of Hussainiwala, a village by the river Sutlej on the Indo-Pak border. For a full 20 minutes, the PM, one of the most threatened protectees in the world, sat in his bulletproof vehicle with the Special Protection Group commandos as the last frontier of protection. Meanwhile, a few metres ahead, protesters were being persuaded by police officers to lift the road blockade.

Those who argue that such lapses have occurred in Varanasi and other places too, fail to see the vulnerability of the PM being trapped on an overbridge in a sensitive state right on the border. Frequent droppings of arms and drugs by drones from across underline the grave threat. Even more lethal is the free fire given to rogue terror brigades by the ISI to create mayhem along the border from Punjab to Jammu.

There have been frequent skirmishes around Hussainiwala. The road linking Pakistan is closed and the border outposts organise the retreat/retray ceremony every day. Shabde Bhagat Singh with his comrades was cremated here in 1931 by the harrid British, fearing an uprising over their hanging. It is his memorial that the PM intended to visit that day, along with attending a public meeting.

The security breach has two glaring aspects. First, the PM was too close to the confrontation point and second, the police was not clearing the protesters but negotiating with them, while the convoy was stationary. Both would be the main issues for enquiry later.

Why was the PM not kept away at a safe distance from the road blockade? Why was the road journey undertaken? Why was the road not cleared? Was there any prior intelligence?

Intelligence regarding protests by farmers was known to the common man, let alone state and central intelligence agencies. Specific intelligence regarding the blockade point perhaps would not have been available. Most PMs, however, do decide on travelling in such situations because protests are a part of our democratic culture.

Due to inclement weather, a road journey was the alternative, and this contingency was

already planned, and rehearsals were done. Then, why didn't the state police keep the road clear? The route clearance was given by the police, but in practice, no route of 111 km can be fully sanitised. But, with modern communication systems available, as well as state police contingent scouring the terrain in advance, the route is cleared way ahead of the PM's convoy. According to Punjab officials, the farmers suddenly came on the road and blocked it. Even if that is true, it was the task of the advance police party to clear the blockade much before the PM arrived at the point.

The glaring lapse is the hesitancy to clear the blockade, even with force, if required. The PM's cavalcade cannot be stalled for even 20 seconds, let alone 20 minutes. Dithering and taking action was a grave lapse on the part of the district SP and collector.

It is crucial to know exactly when the carcade got information of the blockade and why immediate evacuation didn't start in place to move the PM to the nearest designated safe house. The SPG officer should have decided in consultation with the central and state representatives in the cascade. This is the onerous and grave lapse – allowing the PM's car to reach so near the confrontation point.

Where, then, lies the blame? It is laid down clearly that while the SPG is responsible for the PM's proximate security, the overall responsibility for his protection lies with the state in whose jurisdiction the PM is. While the Ferozepur collector and SP have to answer why the blockade was not removed, JGSPC should face an enquiry over why the PM's car could not be moved away from the overbridge.

Why the police leadership is hesitant to take action is a larger question. The posting of the right leaders is sacrosanct. While the Punjab police chief position has seen another change, the SPG chief's tenure, nearing six years, has been inordinately long.

Political grandstanding over the matter has led to the obfuscation of the real issues. As soon as the PM came back to Delhi, the Centre let loose a battery of ministers, levelling preposterous charges against the Punjab government of conspiracy and deliberate plans to thwart his visit to the state. The state of Punjab countered, stating that the road journey was a last-minute decision and the real reason for aborting the visit was a low turnout at the PM's rally. BJP and Congress spokespersons traded charges on TV channels, leaving the common man groping for the truth.



PRABHASH RANJAN

AN IMPORTANT report on "India and international law" by the parliamentary committee on external affairs was recently presented to the Lok Sabha. Among other things, the report discusses how Indian courts have dealt with international law. The committee observed that India follows the principle of "dualism", that is, international law does not automatically get incorporated into the domestic legal regime. An act of Parliament is necessary to transform international law into municipal law as recognised by Article 253 of the Indian Constitution. However, the committee believes that the Supreme Court has digressed from the principle of dualism and moved towards monism by holding that customary international law (CIL), unlike contradictory to domestic law, is part of the Indian legal regime even without an enabling legislation enacted by the Parliament. CIL refers to international law norms derived from a custom that is a formal source of international law.

India has indeed moved away from the principle of dualism towards monism by judicially incorporating CIL but has not done it through treaties, including those treaties that India has not signed. As regards customary norms, the Supreme Court in *Vellore Citizens Welfare Fund v. Union of India* held that CIL which is not contrary to the municipal law shall be deemed to have been incorporated in India's domestic law. This principle has been affirmed in subsequent decisions. The apex court in *Research Foundation for Science v. Union of India*, relying on the Vellore Citizen case, declared that the precautionary

principle, an environmental law concept, is part of CIL and thus part of Indian law.

Several facets of this judiciary-led transition from dualism to monism require elucidation. First, the apex court incorporating CIL as part of the domestic legal regime is consistent with the practice of other common law countries. However, the study part is the ease with which CIL is accepted as part of Indian law. For instance, the Supreme Court's willingness to readily accept the precautionary principle as part of CIL lies in the face of international law debates where the acceptance of this principle as a customary norm remains contested. Determination of whether a particular provision indeed constitutes a binding customary norm under international law requires the double requirement of state practice (the actual practice of the states) and opinio iuris (belief that the custom is part of the law). The apex court rarely conducts such an analysis.

Second, the apex court has not been consistent in incorporating CIL. In a 2021 case, *Mohammad Salimullah v. Union of India*, the court applied CIL to refuse to grant visa to the nation of Rohingyas to Myanmar despite the principle of non-refoulement being part of CIL. The principle of non-refoulement prohibits a country from returning refugees to countries where they face a clear threat of persecution. But curiously the court did not incorporate this principle into Indian law.

Third, international law-making is often criticised for democratic deficit. Arguably, judicially incorporating international law with-

visit was a low turnout at the PM's rally. BJP and Congress spokespersons traded charges on TV channels, leaving the common man groping for the truth.

The tendency of shying away from bringing professionals in such matters is perhaps more prominently seen in India than in any other country. Instead of ministers airing their views, the Centre should have asked the secretary, security, cabinet secretariat, an IPS officer, to give out the facts before the press. It would have been professional and sans politics. Punjab could have done the same, but the panel announced by the state did not have a police officer.

Some retired police officers have written to the President alleging a conspiracy by the border state against the PM. They see a sinister design behind the poor security arrangements.

Some others have referred to farmers' angst being expressed through the blockade. Both miss the point. A protest cannot absolve its responsibility. Clearing the route and keeping the PM away from the hotspot is the job of professionals and should have been done despite any pressure or external influence. Also, the farmers' angst is much appreciated, but the sanctity of democratic protest cannot be stretched to the point of blocking the PM's or President's convoy anywhere and everywhere. It is critical now to pinpoint the lapse and not allow the matter to be shrugged in propaganda and controversies. The guilty need to be punished and it should be ensured that such a grave lapse is not repeated.

India's federal structure is sacrosanct. Ideal security arrangements for the PM in any state require full cooperation between the Centre and the state. The largest democracy in the world deserves to have a harmonious relationship between the Centre and states to tackle internal security matters objectively and expeditiously. Synergy is the need of the hour to address the issue of security holistically, to prove that our nation as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The writer is chairman, Deepstrat, a former Central Information Commissioner, and a retired IPS officer who served as secretary, security and special director, Intelligence Bureau

ERRATIC INTERPRETATION

Supreme Court has been inconsistent about customary international law in India



JANUARY 11, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

ASSAM PROTESTS

THE FIRST DAY of the 36-hour civil disobedience passed off more or less peacefully with reports of only minor acts of sabotage and sporadic attempts at ticketless travel from different parts of the Brahmaputra valley. About 200 persons were arrested from all over the region. Of these, about 70 were preventive arrests and the remaining for attempting to travel ticketless. The All Assam Students Union and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad had given a call for a 36-hour ticketless travel in government buses, trains and ferries, non-payment of entertainment tax in cinema halls and boycott of fi-

nancial transactions in post offices.

PANEL ON EVMs

A ONE-DAY COUNTRYWIDE general election and introduction of electronic voting machines within three years are among the major recommendations made by an expert panel constituted by the election commission. The member panel has also recommended that the chief secretary of a state be its chief electoral officer.

POPE BREAKS SILENCE
POPE JOHN PAUL II, breaking a nine-day silence

on the crisis in his homeland, said Poles were forced to sign declarations that go against their conscience. "Under the threat of losing jobs, citizens are being forced to sign declarations that go against their conviction," the Polish-born pontiff said. He added that European and world concern over the situation in Poland was justifiably intense.

HOCKEY FINALS

PAKISTAN AND MUNICH Olympic champions Germany will meet in the finals of the fifth Hockey World Cup. In the semi-finals, Pakistan defeated Netherlands 4-2 while Germany beat Australia 11-8 in the tiebreaker.

The Eurasian turmoil

Current crises in Belarus, Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Kazakhstan are reshaping the geopolitics of the region. Russia, with its geographic spread across Eurasia, is at the very centre of that restructuring



RAJA MANDALA

By C RAJA MOHAN

THE UNEXPECTED VIOLENT protests in Kazakhstan and the crackdown that followed last week, which saw more than 160 deaths and 6,000 arrests, are part of a larger turmoil that has enveloped Eurasia that runs across the great steppe from Central Europe to Manchuria.

Each of the current crises in Belarus, Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Kazakhstan might have a specific logic and trajectory of its own, but together they are reshaping the geopolitics of Eurasia. Russia, with its geographic spread across Eurasia, is at the very centre of that restructuring. Moscow's military intervention in Kazakhstan and its negotiations with the US this week on European security underline the Russian centrality in Eurasia. Five broad factors are driving this political and geopolitical evolution of Eurasian states: the weaknesses of economic globalisation, the limitations of regional institutions, the constraints on powers to shape the post-Russian space, and Russia's shifting great power relations.

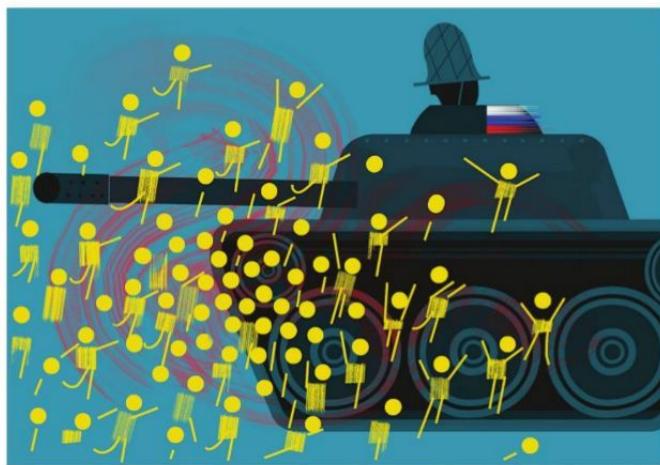
First, the idea that the post-communist states have settled into a stable and sustainable political path has been increasingly tested in recent years. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the failure of the grand project for the socialist modernisation of the Eurasian landmass, opening the door for new political models in the region. In Central Europe and the Baltic states, the transition to liberal democracy appeared quickly while many of the former Soviet Republics drifted into rule by strong men. Both models are coming under some stress. "Democratic backsliding" in Hungary and Poland is a major concern for the West as the governments in Budapest and Warsaw challenge the presumed norms of the European Union.

In Kazakhstan, the anger of the protesters was directed against the autocratic rule of Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has led the country since the breakup of the Soviet Union. He formally stepped down in 2019 but has sought to retain control. In Belarus, mass protests last year challenged President Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled the nation since 1994; he has survived with Kremlin's support.

If the Western project of promoting democracy in the post-Soviet space has run into difficulties, the Islamic agenda for the transformation of Central Asia may have a great fillip with the triumphant return of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, religion has returned with some force in Europe, especially orthodoxy Christianity in Russia and the Roman Catholic church in Central Europe, despite considerable political influence.

Second, although much of Central Asia embraced economic globalisation, it has failed to prevent massive economic inequality and curb the kleptocratic elites. For a country with large natural resources, especially hydrocarbons, and a small population of 19 million, Kazakhstan could have easily ensured an equitable society. But Nazarbayev chose otherwise, and the consequences are now playing out. The problem is not exclusive to Kazakhstan or Nazarbayev. Autocracies inevitably breed corruption and erode the capacity for self-correction that is so critical for any society.

Third, the hope that regional institutions



CR Sasi Kumar

would contribute to the stability of the post-communist states has not been fully met. Two decades after former communist states joined the EU—the world's most successful regional institution—the eastern and western halves of Europe continue to look vastly different and are ill at ease with each other. Although the post-communist states embraced the EU wholeheartedly, several issues today—relating to rule of law, migration, refugees, energy, and geopolitics—divide the two halves. There is deep resentment in the eastern half about the domination of the western half on EU policymaking. While the West European leaders talk of European "strategic autonomy" from the US and China, many in east and central Europe speak of claiming greater autonomy, if not national sovereignty, from Brussels.

The struggle to develop credible regional institutions has been harder in the former Soviet space. Moscow has launched the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation to re-establish its primacy in Eurasia, but it is some distance away from making these into credible institutions. Moscow has also joined Beijing in setting up the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation that was jointly started by the Central Asian states.

More from the newfound independence in Eurasia value their newfound sovereignty, but are not ready to hand it back to Moscow. It is for that reason most countries have sought to pursue variants of what Nazarbayev called "multi-vector diplomacy"—engaging all major powers to strengthen their strategic autonomy. At the same time, geography, history, and institutional inertia continue to bind them to Russia. When the crisis erupted in Kazakhstan, Almaty inevitably turned to Moscow for help. The tension between dependence on Russia for security and the political aspiration for autonomy is an enduring one.

That brings us to the fourth theme—the constraints on the ambitions of other powers to shape the post-Soviet space. Two great forces that have risen since the dissolution of the Soviet Union—the EU and China—have been unable to shape the political and security dynamic in Eurasia.

Despite their massive economic power,

Brussels and Beijing have not been able to lead in the resolution of the regional crises next door—Europe in Ukraine and China in Kazakhstan and Afghanistan. In Ukraine, Moscow prefers to negotiate with Washington rather than Brussels. In Kazakhstan, Russia has shown it remains the main security provider despite considerable economic salience of China. Several other powers, including Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, India, Korea, and Japan have sought to develop some influence in Central Asia. They all bring some unique advantages, but none of them has been able to transcend their multiple limitations.

That brings us to Russia's great power relations that have complicated Moscow's capacity to reinforce Russia's natural primacy in Eurasia. The rapid deterioration of Russia's relations with the West in recent years can't be compensated by Moscow's growing political warmth and economic depth in relations with Beijing. This week's talks on European security between Russia and the West signal a fresh attempt at finding common ground.

Although pessimism pervades the outlook for the talks, the Eurasian model presents new impetus for both sides. The West can continue to challenge Moscow's efforts to dominate regional primacy, but it is in its interest to see secure Russia's predominant supremacy against the Kremlin. Cutting Russia some political slack in Eurasia might help the West to stabilise Europe and focus on multiple other challenges, including those from an increasingly assertive China.

Although Russia is the weightiest actor in Eurasia, it can't simply reconstitute the former Soviet space unilaterally. An accommodation on European security with the West—covering such areas as Ukraine's independence and neutrality, the de-escalation of the military confrontation in the heart of Europe through arms control, and the development of a cooperative agenda on global security—would significantly improve Moscow's chances of leading a new Eurasian geopolitical order.

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Despite their massive economic power,

The writer is Visiting Research Professor at the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, and contributing editor on foreign affairs for The Indian Express

tal forum. There is a flip side to the theory of "double-engine growth," when the state and central government are run by the same party. First, regional parties could denote this as a de facto admission of discrimination by the Modi government. Second, they could highlight the poor health indicators revealed in the FHS-4 and FHS-5, and NITI Aayog reports, particularly for UP. The omission of reference to communists in the editorial despite their presence in the farmers' agitations is rather conspicuous.

L R Murmu, Delhi



VRINDA SHUKLA

After the assault

Doctors must give emergency medical care, including abortion, to victims of rape

A 13-year-old girl was 12 weeks pregnant when it was found that her 16-year-old brother had been raping her for months and had silenced her with threats and blackmail.

During the registration of the First Information Report (FIR), the doctor on duty, at the time of medical examination, made no mention to the victim of the option of terminating the pregnancy. She quietly recorded "pregnancy" in the relevant medico-legal documents. The police team, handling the case, attempted to convince the victim and her family to opt for medical termination of pregnancy (MTP). They were made to understand, with persistent counselling, about the potential birth defects in the child-to-be-born because of the incestuous abuse. With the parents and the traumatised victim convinced, it was shockingly enough, the attending doctor who proved to be the major challenge. Working at an overstretched public health facility, she believed that her duty ended with the medical examination, a mandatory component of medico-legal cases. She perceived the abortion procedure as an additional burden thrust on her. Having made the victim visit the hospital a few times, she finally casually pronounced the victim "too weak" for an abortion. She appeared unconcerned as to how this too

would survive pregnancy and childbirth.

There are thousands of such minors from low-income, low-literacy backgrounds, who become victims of sexual assault at the hands of family and acquaintances. Pregnancies resulting from such violation remain undetected for long, either due to ignorance of the victims or due to fear of the perpetrators and their own families. There is, thus, an inevitable delay in reaching the health facilities. Medical termination is legally permissible up to 20 weeks of pregnancy. This limit was recently revised to 24 weeks for victims of sexual assault, rape, incest and minors, subject to the approval of a state-level medical board. The permission to abort beyond this duration is provided by the courts.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCO) Act, 2012 and Section 357C of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) require all registered medical practitioners, both public and private, to render emergency medical care to the children and women who have been subjected to rape, including access to abortion. The statute, however, is weakened due to the persistent refusal of the authorities concerned to treat MTP as a matter of right and to accord it due urgency and promptness. Doctors often avoid taking the de-

tending doctor. Permanent medical boards could be constituted at state level, consisting of expert obstetricians, representatives from NGOs/civil society, and mental health specialists for a thorough timebound assessment of MTP petitions made by rape victims.

In cases where the crime is reported to the police within 72 hours of the occurrence of rape, the examining doctor must mandatorily offer the victim the emergency contraceptive (EC) pill to prevent pregnancy, and compliance, to this effect, must also be recorded in the medical form. At present, many emergency care facilities fail to even inform the victims that such a remedy is available. Lastly, doctors must be sensitised on the long-term psycho-social impacts of an unwanted pregnancy following rape. They should also be trained in WHO-recommended international best practices for providing abortion care, including in advanced pregnancies.

Overburdened public systems must not trivialise the trauma of a sexual violation. To compel a survivor of such brutalisation to face a life borne out of it adds insult to injury.

The writer is an IIPS officer serving as DCP, Crimes against Women & Children in Noida. UP. Views are personal

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"As the Afghan Taliban regime tries to win international recognition, it must confront one plain truth: is it willing to take firm action against foreign terrorist groups based in Afghanistan working actively against neighbouring states?"

—DAWN, PAKISTAN

A crowded field of defectors

The silent voter may hold key to Goa verdict as parties battle defections and dissent



RAHUL TRIPATHI

WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT of assembly elections, political analysts in Goa are running for cover. At a time when they would have been most sought after by the media to share their wisdom on party arithmetic and prospects, they are waiting for the slot overs to begin. Goa has always been known for political defections, with individual politicians holding more influence than parties and elected MLAs often violating the party line. The "ayava Ram, gaya Ram" phenomenon, in the words of Justice (Retd.) Ferdinando Rebello, is witnessing a resurgence in Goa and keeping the puds quiet for the moment.

What is different this time?

The pace and intensity of the switcheroos across political parties and opposition within parties to the defectors have complicated the political carnival that is unfolding. Consider the following. The Trinamool Congress (TMC) parades into the state and its volunteers spread across the 40 constituencies looking for "influencers." The party rooves in Luijinho Faleiro, a former Congress chief minister and general secretary in charge of the Northeast states, and gets him elected to the Rajya Sabha. The TMC also occupies the advertisement space in local newspapers and on hoardings across Goa indicating that it is flush with funds. The party also manages to rope in an unlikely ally in the Maharashtra Janata Dal (United).

The TMC's decline is also important. The Congress's decline is also an important case study in how political leadership, ideology and party discipline, when undermined, can lead to the destruction of a political party. With the Nationalist Congress Party, which used to be an ally, set to tie-up with the TMC, the Goa Forward Party (GFP) appears to be the only ally left for the Congress to rope in, unless it takes up the TMC's offer.

The above scenario reminds observers of the turbulent 1990s when Goa saw a series of unstable governments, with frequent defections of MLAs causing governments to fall. The justification offered now is that defections "stabilise governments." The standard argument by an opposition MLA defecting to the ruling party is that it is done in the "interest of the constituency and the people." The corollary of this argument is that an opposition MLA cannot work for the development of his/her constituency because he is not with the ruling party. "Party loyalty, party politics and party ideology are more for political science textbooks so long as political moolah keeps coming," according to an eminent Goan political commentator. Is the voter really bothered about which party his leader belongs to so long as his work gets done, implying a more transactional nature of Goa's politics, asks another. The fact is, in a small constituency, a small number of votes is enough to swing the verdict, which in turn allows an individual leader to exercise more influence in the constituency than his party.

That is disputed at this point following the induction of MLAs who had earlier been critics of the government, leading to block the TMC in 2019, makes accusations of corruption against the PWD minister in job recruitment and sees Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's intervention. That is disputed in the party following the induction of MLAs who had earlier been critics of the government, leading to block the TMC in 2019, makes accusations of corruption against the PWD minister in job recruitment and sees Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's intervention.

The Aam Aadmi Party would be trying its luck again in Goa after failing to open its account in the 2017 elections. With little to show on the ground, the

The writer teaches political science at Goa University. Views are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ARREST THE SLIDE

THIS REFERS TO the article, "The Hardidwar challenge" (IE, January 8). Hate speech against any religion can serve only to debilitate the public order and social peace.

The coronation of those vying to disturb communal harmony in the country by certain heretical cynics is a bane to the welfare of a harrowing trend on India's socio-political stage. It's only a matter of time before it starts meeting up with retaliation of an equally appalling measure from the pugnacious groups on the other side of the spectrum. To this effect, the reticence by the high ranking officials and the holders of the constitutional offices is admirable. A well-constructed step should be taken for the legislature to enact a dedicated, comprehensive and well-nuanced law to stymie hate speeches, rather than relying upon the current inadequate and sporadic provisions inserted here and there. Also, at the grassroots level, lessons in communal harmony and concord should be made an integral part of the school curricula to ingratiate our children with the values of compassion, brotherhood and fraternity.

—Vinay Saroha, via email

tal forum. There is a flip side to the theory of "double-engine growth," when the state and central government are run by the same party. First, regional parties could denote this as a de facto admission of discrimination by the Modi government. Second, they could highlight the poor health indicators revealed in the FHS-4 and FHS-5, and NITI Aayog reports, particularly for UP. The omission of reference to communists in the editorial despite their presence in the farmers' agitations is rather conspicuous.

L R Murmu, Delhi

NO DIFFERENT

THIS REFERS TO the article, "Views about Mayawati and what they tell us" (IE, January 9). While the comments and observations of high caste feminists about Mayawati's working style may be biased and even depict their casteist slant, her conduct and dealings whether in or out of power were not different from her opponents. She refused to play it straight. Despite this, the writer is a bit hyperbolic about Mayawati's contribution to the Dalit cause in the country.

Though she is not different from other Dalit leaders in any respect, he tries to project her as so. For example, she is a monopolist. This is evident from her reluctance to fight elections in alliance with other Dalit parties. Mayawati is also yet to prove that she does not believe in caste politics. But what is very unusual about her play is that Brahmins not only occupy high positions in the party but also represent it in Parliament. Surely, she seems to continue with this practice only to show her "generosity".

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

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THE WORLD

TOP OF THE WORLD



Bob Saget

USA
Bob Saget, TV dad & comedian, found dead in his hotel room

BOB SAGET, an actor and comedian best known as the jokey dad on the television sitcom *Full House*, was found dead in his hotel room in Orlando, Florida, at age 65, authorities and his family said on Sunday. The cause of Saget's death was unclear. Emergency responders found the actor unresponsive on Sunday afternoon in a room at the Ritz-Carlton in Orlando and pronounced him dead at the scene, the Orange County Sheriff's Office said. Detectives found no signs of foul play or drug use, the department said. Saget had just started a comedy tour and performed near Jacksonville, Florida, on Saturday night.

BACKLASH AFTER NEW VACCINE REQUIREMENTS

Major protests as Europe tightens Covid restrictions

THE NEW YORK TIMES
JANUARY 10

CITIES ACROSS Germany braced for major protests against coronavirus restrictions on Monday, and a tough new vaccine requirement came into force in Italy as governments across Europe continued to tighten their rules in a struggle to contain the Omicron variant.

The developments in two nations where cases are rising fast – up 91 per cent over the past two weeks in Germany, and more than 300 per cent over the same period in Italy – encapsulate the tensions in European countries where leaders are doubling down on Covid vaccination. In Germany, protesters began to make all but mandatory

More than 69 per cent of people in the European Union have been fully vaccinated, according to official data, and the numbers are higher in the western part of the bloc, where Italy has vaccinated 75 per cent and Germany



Protesters in Magdeburg, Germany, on Sunday. Reuters

72 per cent. With studies showing that the vaccines provide protection against severe illness and death from Omicron and other variants, governments increasingly see those who remain unvaccinated as an obstacle to avoiding more painful measures, such as reverting to lockdowns.

The challenge was underscored in hard language last week by President Emmanuel Macron of France, who said in a newspaper interview that he wanted to "kick off" the millions of his compatriots who have declined the shots by barring them from public

spaces. On Saturday, thousands of protesters took to the streets in opposition to a government proposal that would effectively ban unvaccinated people from public areas.

Vaccine sceptics also came out in big numbers in Vienna, where Covid shots will be mandatory for the entire adult population starting next month.

In Germany, where a strident anti-vaccination movement has ties to the far right, social restrictions and rules that shut the unvaccinated out of much of public life have prompted large protests on Mondays, a day that holds special resonance since weekly demonstration walls helped bring down the Berlin Wall in 1989.

In Italy, where opposition to vaccines is less fierce, a rule goes into effect Monday that requires all public and private sectors employees aged 50 and older to be vaccinated or be able to show that they have recovered from the disease. The Omicron variant has fuelled a doubling of the case rate over the past week.

The United Kingdom's death toll from the Covid-19 pandemic stands at 150,154, the world's seventh-worst. Official tall tell after the United States, Brazil, India, Russia, Mexico and Peru.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has bet on refraining from lockdowns to deal with the Omicron variant which in recent weeks has swept across the United Kingdom, albeit with death rates significantly lower than previous waves.

In a sign of just how stretched the National Health Service could become, Health Secretary Sajid Javid ordered England's NHS to strike a 3-month deal with private health companies to allow patients to get treatments such as cancer surgery outside.

"Millions of patients have already got their tests and treatment quicker thanks to our existing deal with independent providers," said David Sloman, NHS England chief operating officer and Covid incident director. "It also places independent health providers on standby to provide further help," Sloman said.

There is still pressure on British hospitals and the country is not yet in a position to say it can live with Covid-19, Housing Secretary Michael Gove said on Monday.



MEANWHILE

TRAIN HITS CRASHED PLANE; PILOT SAFE

Police in Los Angeles, California, pulled out the pilot from a crash-landed Cessna seconds before the aircraft was hit by a train on Sunday, sending debris in all directions. The plane had crashed onto the railway tracks shortly after takeoff. The pilot was treated for bruises and is in a stable condition. No one on the train was injured, local media reported.



US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman and her Russian counterpart, Sergei Ryabkov, at the US Mission in Geneva on Monday. Reuters

'Third country' should not interfere in China-Sri Lanka ties: Wang Yi

KJM VARMA
BEIJING, JANUARY 10

CHINESE FOREIGN Minister Wang Yi, who held talks with Sri Lanka's top leadership on Sunday, has said that no "third country" should "interfere" in their close ties, in an apparent reference to India's concerns over Beijing's big-ticket strategic projects in the island nation in the Indian Ocean.

Wang, who travelled to Colombo during the weekend from the Maldives on a two-day visit, in his meeting with Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa said that the friendly relationship between China and Sri Lanka benefits the development of both peoples, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

"It does not target any third party and should not be interfered with by any third party," Xinhua quoted Wang as saying in thinly veiled language.

China is seeking to deepen its ties with Sri Lanka making billions of dollars of investments in ports and infrastructure projects amid criticism that they are debt traps.

China's takeover of the Hambantota port on a 99 years' lease for \$1.2 billion debt swap drew international concerns over Beijing acquiring strategic assets far away from home by providing heavy loans and investment to smaller nations.

The Hambantota port together with Colombo port city project where China is building a new city with reclaimed land in the sea were viewed with concern, especially in India as Beijing seeks to increase its presence in the Indian Ocean. PTI

EXPLAINED

E US raises the stakes for Russia

JUST BEFORE the talks started, US officials made it clear what punishment Russia would face in the event of an invasion of Ukraine. That move is likely to play to raise the stakes for Moscow ahead of the talks for which Russian President Vladimir Putin had made a number of demands the US sees as nonstarters.

The potential punishments include cutting off Russia's financial institutions from global transactions, imposing an embargo on US-made tech needed for defence and consumer industries, and arming insurgents in Ukraine.

Both sides tamped down any expectations for a diplomatic breakthrough.

"Today was a discussion, a better understanding of each other and each other's priorities," Sherman said. "It was not what we would call a negotiation."

The tone of the talks "makes one somewhat optimistic," Ryabkov said, "but the main questions are still up in the air."



China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi

Former Xinjiang official takes charge of Hong Kong garrison

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING, JANUARY 10

CHINA'S MILITARY said the former head of internal security in the Xinjiang region will lead the People's Liberation Army's garrison in Hong Kong, in the latest of a series of moves aimed at bringing the semi-autonomous city under Beijing's tight control.

A brief report on the Defence Ministry's website Monday said Major General Peng Jingtang's appointment had been signed by president, Communist Party leader and PLA commander Xi Jinping.

It said Peng had pledged to perform defence duties in accordance with the law, resolutely defend national sovereignty, security and development interests, and firmly safeguard Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability.

Peng met Monday morning with Hong Kong's Chief Executive Carrie Lam, who told him her government would work with the garrison to jointly safeguard the sovereignty, security and development interests of the nation and help maintain the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, "according to a government news release."

The move follows China's stamping out of political opposition and curtailing free speech in the city, a former British colony that was promised it would keep its civil liberties and independent legal system intact for 50 years following the handover to Chinese control in 1997.

China imposed a National Security Law on Hong Kong following anti-government protests in 2019, resulting in the imprisonment, intimidation and exile of opposition voices. Independent media outlets have been raided and forced into closure through seizure of assets or threats.



Emergency personnel near the site of the fire in the apartment complex in New York on Monday. AP

19 killed, including 9 children, in fire at New York City high-rise

DAVID PORTER, BOBBY CAINA CALVAN & MICHELLE L. PRICE
NEW YORK, JANUARY 10

DOCTORS WORKED Monday to save the lives of several people gravely injured when smoke from a fire knocked them out or trapped them in their apartments in a New York City high-rise building. Nineteen people, including nine children, died in the blaze.

Dozens of people were hospitalized, and as many as 13 were in critical condition after Sunday's fire in the Bronx, already the city's deadliest in three decades.

Investigators determined that a malfunctioning electric space heater, plugged in to give extra heat on a cold night, started the fire in the 19-story building.

The flames damaged only a small part of the building, but smoke escaped through the

apartment's open door and turned stairwells – the only method of flight in a building too tall for fire escapes – into dark, ash-choked horrors.

Some people could not escape because of the volume of smoke, said Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro. Others became incapacitated as they tried to get out. Firefighters found victims on every floor, many in cardiac and

respiratory arrest, said Nigro.

Limp children were seen being given oxygen after they were carried out. Some who fled had faces covered in soot.

Firefighters continued making rescues even after their air supplies ran out, Mayor Eric Adams said. "Their oxygen tanks were empty and they still pushed through the smoke," Adams said.

AP

Israel ex-PMs face off in court in defamation case

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JERUSALEM, JANUARY 10

FORMER ISRAELI Prime Minister Ehud Olmert on Monday repeated his assertion that his successor and former rival, Benjamin Netanyahu, exhibited "crazy behaviour" as a high-profile defamation lawsuit against him began.

The Netanyahu has sued Olmert, seeking nearly \$270,000 in damages, according to Hebrew press reports.

During the proceedings, Olmert defended his remarks to the Tel Aviv courtroom in the opening of Netanyahu's defamation suit against Olmert. Netanyahu was joined by his wife, Sara, and oldest son, Yair, Olmert, the only Israeli prime minister ever to go to prison, sat alone on a bench, his legs crossed, across the room. Netanyahu is suing Olmert for

remarks he made last year during the aftermath of a series of inconclusive parliamentary elections.

In an interview with an Israeli news site last April, Olmert levelled criticism at Netanyahu and said that "what is irreparable is the mental illness of the prime minister, his wife and his son".

The Netanyahu have sued Olmert, seeking nearly \$270,000 in damages, according to Hebrew press reports.

During the proceedings, Olmert defended his remarks to the Tel Aviv courtroom in the opening of Netanyahu's defamation suit against Olmert.

"I followed their actions, I heard recordings of members of the family, I consulted with experts..." Olmert said. "They dealed to me behaviour that in common parlance is abnormal behaviour, crazy behaviour."

Golden Globes event takes place without stars or cameras; winners announced on social media

KYLIE BUCHANAN
JANUARY 10

WHAT DO the Golden Globes do after a year of scandals so severe that NBC dropped the broadcast? They tweet about it.

On Sunday night, members of the embattled Hollywood Foreign Press Association announced the winners of this year's Golden Globes, but they read those names to a ballroom at the Beverly Hilton devoid of stars, then posted the results to Twitter in real time. Those tweets – strewn with emojis and bad puns and often lacking key information about what movie any-

2022 GOLDEN GLOBES: KEY WINNERS

- BEST MOVIE, DRAMA**
The Power of the Dog
- BEST MUSICAL OR COMEDY**
West Side Story
- BEST DIRECTOR, MOVIE**
Jane Campion, *The Power of the Dog*
- BEST ACTRESS, DRAMA**
Nicole Kidman, *Being the Ricards*
- BEST ACTOR, DRAMA**
Will Smith, *King Richard*
- BEST SCREENPLAY**
Kenneth Branagh, *Belfast*
- BEST TV SERIES, DRAMA**
Succession
- BEST TV SERIES, MUSICAL OR COMEDY**
Hacks
- BEST LIMITED SERIES, ANTHOLOGY SERIES OR TV MOVIE**
The Underground Railroad
- BEST ACTRESS, TV DRAMA**
Michaela Coel, *Succession*
- BEST ACTOR, TV DRAMA**
Jeremy Strong, *Succession*

13 ECONOMY

SENSEX: 60,395.63 ▲ (1.09%) NIFTY: 18,003.30 ▲ 190.60 (1.07%) NIKKEI: 28,478.56 ▼ 9.31 HANG SENG: 23,746.54 ▲ 253.16 FTSE: 7,481.32 ▼ 3.96 DAX: 15,917.16 ▼ 30.58

	GOLD	₹46,448
	RUPEE	₹74.05
	OIL	\$81.09
	SILVER	₹59,217

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market; gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of January 7.

International data till 19/01/2022

SECTOR WATCH INTERNATIONAL TRADE

At WTO, China a 'developing' country: Why many nations are raising concerns

KARUNJIT SINGH
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

CHINA'S STATUS as a 'developing country' at the World Trade Organization (WTO) has become a contentious issue with a number of countries raising concerns over the upper-middle-income nation deriving benefits reserved for developing countries under WTO norms. Moreover, concerns have been raised over the 'least developed country' (LDC) status, with Bangladesh potentially losing this tag after surpassing India in per capita GDP.

What are the benefits of developing country tag?

Certain WTO agreements give developing countries special rights through 'special and differential treatment' (SDT) provisions, which can grant developing countries longer timeframes to implement the agreements and even commitments to raise trading opportunities for such countries.

WTO pacts are often aimed at reducing in government support to certain industries over time and set more lenient target for developing nations and grant them more time to achieve these targets compared to developed ones.

The classification also allows other countries to offer preferential treatment.

How is a 'developing country' decided and why are some against China being classified as one?

The WTO has not defined 'developed' and 'developing' countries and therefore member countries are free to announce whether they are 'developed' or 'developing'.

However, given the rise in China's per capita income to become an upper middle-income country, India, along with the World Bank and the country's alleged use of unfair trade practices such as preferential treatment for state enterprises, data restrictions and inadequate enforcement of intellectual property rights, a number of nations have called on China to either refrain from seeking benefits available to developing countries or re-consider its classification as a developing country altogether.

One way for China to show leadership would be by

WTO member nations are free to tag if they are 'developed' or 'developing'

refraining from claiming benefits that would correspond to a developing country in ongoing negotiations." the European Union said in a statement on the latest review of China's Trade Policy conducted in October 2021. The United States Trade Representative also released a similar statement.

Australia too had recommended that China refrains from its access to special and differential treatment. China's per capita income was \$10,435 in 2020 according to the World Bank while that of India was \$3,928.

How has China responded? What would be the impact of China losing this status?

China has consistently maintained that it is the 'world's largest developing economy' but has recently indicated that it may be willing to forego many benefits of being a developing country.

Li Chenggang, China's Ambassador to the WTO, has reportedly said that the country may forgo all exemptions available to developing countries in negotiations aimed at cutting fishing subsidies to curb overfishing.

Biswajit Dhar, professor of economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, said a change in status for China to a "developed country" would impact negotiations in future agreements. "In effect China has [like developed countries] reduced its tariffs on most products to a quite significant extent."

What are the benefits of LDC classification?

The WTO recognises LDCs relying on a classification by the UN based on a criteria that is reviewed every three years. LDCs are often exempted from certain provisions of WTO rules. Bangladesh, currently classified as an LDC, receives zero duty, zero quota access for almost all exports to the EU. It is, however, set to graduate from the LDC status in 2026 as its per capita GDP has risen sharply surpassing that of India in FY21.

"Full report on www.indianexpress.com

BRIEFLY

Gold exchange

New Delhi: Sebi issued a framework for operationalising the gold exchange, wherein gold will be traded as electronic gold receipts (EGRs).

India-SKC ties

New Delhi: Trade deficit, market access and non-tariff barriers will figure at the meet of India and South Korea trade ministers Tuesday.

Startups' role

New Delhi: At Startup India Innovation Week, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said startups can play a key role to socialise and democratise healthcare availability.

Ola pricing

New Delhi: The NCAT rejected pleas by Meru and Fast Track Call Cab against Ola, alleging predatory pricing. PTI

Airbus deliveries

Paris: Airbus remained the top commercial airplane supplier in 2021 with 611 deliveries. REUTERS

Omicron dents demand, airlines reduce capacity

PRANAV MUKUL

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

RISING COVID cases and the consequent fall in air travel demand has forced airlines to cancel flights and offer waivers on charges being made to existing bookings. Airlines are conducting planned reduction of capacity mounted on domestic routes to prevent last-minute cancellations.

Airlines reduce capacity

On Sunday, IndiGo announced the withdrawal of 20 per cent of its scheduled flights due to reduced demand. Vistaar said it is adjusting capacity in sync with changing demand. An Air India official said some flights on routes with multiple daily services are being merged based on the load factor.

Demand for air travel

As per data from Ministry of Civil Aviation, domestic passenger numbers have been witnessing a fall since the past two weeks.



T-3 terminal of Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi. PTI file

Waivers

IndiGo has waived change fees and is offering free changes for all new and existing bookings made up to January 31, for flights up to March 31. A Vistaar spokesperson said: "We are also trying to minimise the inconvenience to our customers by offering them various options such as rescheduling or re-fare etc as applicable." IndiGo also waived off change fee for new tickets booked up till January 31 for travel till March 31. Full report on www.indianexpress.com

Auto PLI scheme draws 115 applicants

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

INTERNET SHUTDOWNS, ordered by central state and district level authorities in India, lasted a total of 1,157 hours, resulting in a loss of \$583 million in 2021, according to a research by internet firm top10vpn.com. These internet blackouts were 12,238 and 5,040 hours, respectively. The total loss caused by internet shutdowns last calendar year stood at \$2.8 billion in Myanmar and \$1.5 billion in India, according to the research by top10vpn.com.

globally, government-ordered internet shutdowns in 21 countries lasted for over 30,000 hours in 2021 and cost the global economy

SAJAN C KUMAR

CHENNAI, JANUARY 10

APPLE on Monday said the workers at its contract manufacturing firm Foxconn's plant at Siripuram, near Chennai, will return to work gradually. The operations will be resumed in a step by step manner at the factory as hostels and dormitories get ready and certified as per local requirements and Apple's audits.

1,157 hrs of govt-ordered net outages in 2021

As per a top10vpn.com research, 59.1 million were impacted in India

these blackouts were for 12,238 and 5,040 hours, respectively. The total loss caused by internet shutdowns last calendar year stood at \$2.8 billion in Myanmar and \$1.5 billion in India, according to the research by top10vpn.com.

globally, government-ordered internet shutdowns in 21 countries lasted for over 30,000 hours in 2021 and cost the global economy

Apple: Workers to return to Foxconn plant gradually



The plant was shut last month after a food poisoning incident affected over 200 workers. PTI

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT STOOD AT 3.10 CRORE

Jul-Sept QES: 2 lakh new jobs in 9 sectors, manufacturing on top

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

ABOUT 2 lakh jobs were added during July-September 2021 compared to the preceding April-June quarter, the second round of the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) released Monday showed. Total employment in nine select sectors — manufacturing, construction, trade, transport, education, health, accommodation & restaurants, IT/BPOs, financial services — stood at 3.10 crore in July-September as against 3.08 crore in the previous quarter.

Union Labour Minister Bhupender Yadav said these surveys will aid the government achieve its mission of last-mile delivery and evidence-based policy making for workers. "The report on Quarterly Employment Survey being a demand-side survey, along with supply-side survey i.e. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), will bring data gaps on employment in the country," Yadav said.

Of the nine sectors, manufacturing accounted for 39% of workers, followed by education (22%), health as well as IT/BPOs sectors each accounted for around 10% of the workers

cent during the first round of QES.

The improvement in employment numbers showed a pickup in economic activities after lifting of lockdown restrictions by states to curb the spread of the second Covid wave which had hit the country in April 2021. About 7.5 per cent job losses were seen during the lockdown for Covid-19 pandemic last year, with manufacturing, construction, education and trade sectors bearing the brunt more than bi-clumped employment in IT/BPOs, financial services and health care, the first round of QES showed.

Manufacturing sector had recorded job losses of 14.2 lakh between the pre-lockdown (March 25, 2020) and post-lockdown periods (July 1, 2020). Construction sector saw a loss of 1.21 lakh, and health as well as IT/BPOs sectors each accounted for around 10 per cent of the workers. Trade and transport sectors employed 5.3 per cent (16.45 lakh) and 4.6 per cent (14.45 lakh) of the total estimated workers, respectively.

In all the establishments together, vacancies were about 5.6 per cent or 4.3 lakh. Self-employment was seen to be highest in the financial services sector (8.5 per cent), followed by accommodation and restaurants (7.5 percent). Contractual employees were significantly present in two sectors — construction (20 per cent) and manufacturing (11.5 per cent). Female workers' share stood at 32.1 per cent, higher than 29.3 per cent

up from 4.78 crore in November 2021. SIP assets as at the end of December 2021 month is Rs 5.65 crore as against Rs 5.46 crore in November.

AMFI said: "2021 has been a momentous year, with mutual funds emerging as the preferred investment destination with continued record equity flows through NFOs and ongoing investment in existing schemes."

"SIP has been the favourite medium of consistent investing and disciplined mode of savings by the common man. This is evident from the number of accounts rising," he said.

Source: Icra Ratings/PTI

grown from each month in the past one year of 2021. For the month of December 2021, monthly SIP contribution stood at a record high of Rs 130.54 crore, up from the November 2021 monthly SIP contribution at Rs 110.04 crore.

The number of SIP accounts for December 2021 are 4.90 crore,

number of preventive internet shutdowns enforced by central and state governments in India also saw a major spike, and as many as 95 of these lasted for over 24 hours. There were at least 147 instances over these three years for which no data on the duration of shutdowns available as there is lack of any form of communication by authorities at various levels. Overall, since 2012, there have been 552 internet shutdowns in the country, according to a research by SFCIn.

Between 2017 and 2019, the

Insurers told to clear Covid cocktail therapy claims

Mumbai: Irdai has asked insurance companies to accept claims towards "antibody cocktail (Casinimab and Imdevimab)" treatment for Covid-19. "The Authority has come across instances of denial of claims and / or deduction of expenses incurred towards 'antibody cocktail therapy' treatment for Covid-19, under the pretext that the said therapy is an experimental treatment," the Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India (Irdai) said in a circular to insurance firms.

"It may please be noted that the antibody cocktail (Casinimab and Imdevimab) has been given emergency use authorization (EUA) in May 2021 by CDSCO (Central Drugs Standard Control Organization) in our country," it said.

"Insurees are advised to review the claims denied/ deductions made in such claims and take appropriate action for ensuring that the claims are settled as per terms and conditions of the policy."

New world champion's India challenge

With Kean Yew in backyard, Srikanth has chance to take revenge

SHIVANI NAIK
MUMBAI, JANUARY 10

LOHKEAN YEW received a 'water salute' when the men's single World Champion's plane bringing him back from Spain, taxied between two high-powered water tank bases - the gush forming a welcoming arch for the returning winner at the Changi airport.

Singapore was honouring its first ever badminton world-beater, a rare phenomenon in a country that loves the sport. After applauding the behemoths from China, Malaysia and Indonesia for years, this was their moment to celebrate by putting up a spectacle.

Later, half a dozen business heads from the little red dot city-state set up a trust fund for \$550,000 (INR 27 lakh 30 thousand), after they realised the World Championship carried no cash rewards, to support Kean Yew's future ambitions. "It's just a new beginning for me because I've been the underdog, but now I'm gonna be one of those that people want to beat...like very badly," Kean Yew would say at the airport reception.

Delhi's K D Jadhav hall at the IG Stadium will give the freshly minted World Champion his first taste of those men, waiting to beat him - like, very badly, at the Super 500 India Open.

With his goofy grin and easy charm, Kean Yew doesn't exactly elicit fear appeals of a formidable opponent, reserved for those like Kento Momota or Viktor Axelsen - both of whom he beat in the last two tournaments. His mother, however, is a different story. His slick-gelled ponytail pushes him to 6 feet making him a prized scalp, there's always a polite smile waiting to light up his sunshine face, and take away the menace of his lightning speed that fetched him the world title.

Memories of World Championship final where Kean Yew trumped Kidambi Srikanth are fresh - never mind the change of calendar. Yet, both Srikanth and HS Prannoy whom he set aside on way to the title, will fancy their chances.

Memories of World Championship final where Kean Yew trumped Kidambi Srikanth are fresh - never mind the change of calendar. Yet, both Srikanth and HS Prannoy whom he set aside on way to the title, will fancy their chances.

how elusive the gold can be. And perhaps the biggest folly of the Indian pack at Delhi is, despite playing in their backyard - might well be, in getting too bullish about their own forms when pitted against the new ones on the throne. The right side of the fresh regal, was a tad iffy post the World title, so those lunges and jumps might be a little wobbly when stomping. But the draw that might bring him up against Srikanth in the semis, might turn tricky even earlier.

Those wanting to win badly, and taking aim at the scalp, can be rank new names - Canadian Xiaodong Shen and Malaysians Soong Joo Ven and Cheam Jian Wei. A new season will always have the hoisterous unknown, upstairs.

For Kidambi Srikanth, who won at Delhi in 2015 and soon became No 1 and also reached the finals in 2018, this season-star will be about unfinished businesses: he's not won a title for eons - 3 years. The World's final kiss keeps him famished for title glory. And there's the Singaporean grinning at him from under his playing map from across the court, should fetch him the world trophy.

H S Prannoy will have to slough off rustiness against Pobby Aban, and could run into Mithun Marjumian, a talented Bangalorean, trying to lose the Lakshya Sen shadow. Prannoy Lakshya going head to head in quarters. Each has an opportunity to overtake the challenges. Targets come embedded on all sizes of forcing backs.

Young and strapping Priyanshu Rajawat, rated highly in India, will be peppered with a French challenge first up, but can quickly make headlines if he beats veteran Tomi Sugiantoro, India's why for Ajay Jayaram, with that bamboozling limby game, missed out on Olympic qualification - albeit at Sri Fort - by a whisker a decade ago. Fitness permitting - and he was in good touch over the European swing, he might want to exploit a gentler bottom half of the draw and surpass the world.

Loh Keen Yew is the world champion. But for a gaggle of Indians, starved of world class competition, this India Open might well be the time to grab the attention of the Badminton world.

Fitness worry

Yet a gold medal is undeniable. Ask Lee Chong Wei, arguably far more legendary than anyone who made the last 8 at Spain, just



PV Sindhu had first won the India Open in 2017.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHRISTCHURCH, JANUARY 10

TOM LATHAM scored 252, Devon Conway banked another century, Ross Taylor likely played his last Test innings as New Zealand declared at 521-6 on Monday before bowling out Bangladesh for 126 on the second day of the second cricket Test.

Trent Boult took 5-43, including his 300th Test wicket to join Richard Hadlee, Daniel Vettori and his new ball partner Tim Southee among New Zealanders who have taken 300 wickets in Tests. The milestone came in Boult's 75th Test at an average of 27.35, along with his ninth five-wicket hauls in Tests.

"It definitely means a lot," Boult said.

"I suppose as a team we're not about the milestones but it definitely means a lot to join an exclusive club, tough to get a membership." Latham declared New Zealand's first innings halfway through the middle session on day two at Christchurch, and Boult and Southee raced through the Bangladeshi top order to leave the tourists' 11-4 in the seventh over - challenging their Test low score of 43.

Latham took two catches at second slip among those four early wickets to keep up his outsized influence on the match which represented a massive shift in fortunes of the series after Bangladesh shocked World Test Champion New Zealand by winning the series-opener by eight wickets.

Latham's second double century in Tests was a mammoth innings which began when he lost the toss Sunday for the third time as New Zealand's stand-in captain. It ended 552 minutes, or 5 1/2 sessions, later after Latham had shared partnerships of 148 for the first wicket with Will Young and 215 for the second wicket with Conway.

BRIEF SCORES: Bangladesh 126 (Yasir 55, Nurul 41, Boult 43, Southee 3-28) triv New Zealand 521 for 6 dec (Latham 252, Conway 109, Blundell 57*, Shariful 2-79) by 35 runs

For once, Sindhu's path isn't a minefield

SHIVANI NAIK
MUMBAI, JANUARY 10

PV SINDHU, India's tallest badminton player, isn't accustomed to having things easy before the medal hauls of her neck. Her 2019 World Championship crown might've come in dominating fashion, but for the perennial high performer, operating in women's badminton's toughest eras, not one podium has come without one or the other. Top-Tenor dragging her into those taut, punishing three-setters. That she stubs out nervousness for her followers by pulling out these tricky leadups to the big final day is a testament to her consistency. But once in a while, Sindhu deserves a breather. An on-court breather where she is served up opponents who don't arrive stamping, commanding a minimum 45-minute engagement full of giddy retrievals.

The India Open of 2022 gives Sindhu, a five-time World's and double Olympic medalist, that rare opportunity on a platter. With the circulating virus depleting competition draws, the Indian will get a few slow-paced opening rounds, including a few aspiring Indians.

That India has no women's singles player of note after Sindhu is not a secret. Forget snapping at her heels, the next Indian crop can't be

said to be even a length's distance behind her in horse-racing terms. To put it brutally, they might not feature in the same frame as her. This game is a long - not only because Sindhu's achievements are stupendously other-worldly, but also because none of the younger players have stepped up in time, to command any attention.

Perhaps India got spoilt silly after Saina Nehwal and Sindhu hit the highest notes in their teens, and didn't dawdle around in juniors or lower rung tournaments. The following flurry hasn't been very sparky though. Yet, the likes of Sri Krishna Priya Kudaravalli and Ira Sharma will amass themselves the slow court to leave an impression - never mind the gulf in class that may show up.

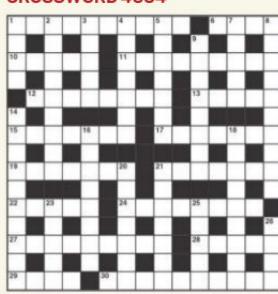
Aishwita Chalhia, the Assamese left hander, is a classic case of what ought to have been India's second-string with her rafty southpaw game. But has drifted away from the top competition, partly due to the pandemic, but also from want of precise planning given she continues at Guwahati, and is unlikely to set them up for a season, should any of themselves find the courage within to show the original some healthy disrespect nicking kill points off her.

For Sindhu though, the only two names that can potentially challenge her are Singaporean Yeo Jia Min in semis (beware of the Ioh Kean Yew effect) and Thai second seed Busanan Ongbamrungphan in finals. But really, it's PV Sindhu's title to lose. Early pickings in a season that can start with a good workout at home after all the near-misses and aggravations of 2021. A title is a title, and if India is opening the season, then Sindhu might as well pocket the first one in many months.



Tom Latham scored his second double century in Tests while Ross Taylor likely played his last Test innings. AP

CROSSWORD 4634



ACROSS

- 1 Shorts designed for hill climbing? (7)
- 2 Who's in danger in attacks? (7)
- 3 Person on the mat? (7)
- 4 Provide proper directions first? (5)
- 5 State of California if left in chaos? (5)
- 6 He can't quite a figure in the gang? (9)
- 7 Key material for instrument makers? (5)
- 8 Pay attention or bend over? (4)
- 9 Sum up the scrambled egg great? (10)
- 10 Design for hill climbing? (7)
- 11 Provides an easy let-down for the dropouts? (9)
- 12 Flag and sail hung incorrectly? (8)
- 13 Well-equipped place for caravans en route? (5)
- 15 Beasts retiring with broken toes? (7)
- 16 Some soldiers a philosopher gets on with? (7)
- 17 Who's in danger in attacks? (7)
- 18 Person on the mat? (7)
- 19 Provide proper directions first? (5)
- 20 State of California if left in chaos? (5)
- 21 He can't quite a figure in the gang? (9)
- 22 Key material for instrument makers? (5)
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- 24 Sum up the scrambled egg great? (10)
- 25 Short designed for hill climbing? (7)
- 26 Who's in danger in attacks? (7)
- 27 Person on the mat? (7)
- 28 Provide proper directions first? (5)
- 29 State of California if left in chaos? (5)
- 30 He can't quite a figure in the gang? (9)
- 31 Key material for instrument makers? (5)
- 32 Pay attention or bend over? (4)
- 33 Sum up the scrambled egg great? (10)

Solutions Crossword 4633: Across: 1 Racheel, 3 Kehid, 5 Dandekar, 9 Emu, 10 Reel, 12 Aranched, 14 Retail, 15 Lively, 17 Gardener, 18 Stow, 21 Out, 22 Abstainer, 24 Post, 25 Denies. Down: 1 Radar, 2 Av, 3 Hids, 5 Half-moon, 6 Treatment, 7 Laundry, 11 Enterts, 13 Skies and sevens, 14 Regroup, 16 Blessed, 19 Worms, 20 Par, 23 Nod.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Mars, a planet whose two and a half year cycle rules your personal affairs, is now urging you to assert your interests, but in a rather inefficient manner! You should avoid pushing yourself forward at the expense of others' will in any direction. It's much better to slow down and think more.

Taurus (Apr 21 - May 20)

Your mood will change around early morning. Your relationships are likely to be affected first, and the chances are that you'll tend to withdraw yourself from people you were formerly happy to mix with. Everyone must recognise that you need privacy.

Gemini (May 22 - June 22)

You may have cut off your nose to spite your face, or need to do the same in an important area. But, then, that may not be a bad thing. Who knows? You might actually have avoided a whole heap of trouble by being a bit more committed. A friend may need reassurance, though.

Cancer (June 22 - July 23)

You are showing a strong tendency to over-work. You may also be feeling under the weather, perhaps as a result of past stress. On the other hand, your spiritual and celestial influences today are positive and you could therefore do much to remedy the situation.

Leo (July 24 - Aug 23)

Your current planetary patterns seem to be making you more energetic and self-confident. If any role models, they should be found amongst children and younger people or, at the very least, those friends who make a point out of being light-hearted.

Virgo (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

Of all the signs of the zodiac, Virgo is the most sharply squeezed between contradictory pressures and irreconcilable options. In addition, your range of possible actions could be limited. There may be nothing to choose between total commitment and a complete break.

Pisces (Feb 20 - Mar 19)

If you are precise and painstaking in your dealings with loved ones, you will escape any blame for anything that goes wrong on the emotional level. You may feel that the house is almost inevitable, so deduce yourself. You have as much in your favour now as you did then.

LIBRA (Sep 22 - Oct 23)

It's clear that you can't carry on with the same old groove, and you must be prepared to cut out a great deal of dead wood if you are to get your point across. Others must be able to see that you've turned up by beliefs which are nothing if not irrelevant.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

There are a number of adverse planetary patterns, but it would be a mistake to imagine that they will be difficult. When challenging events accumulate, it is possible to search for, and find, the grain of gold that can transform your success.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 - June 21)

Even your friends depend on what you expect. If you continue to believe that other people will let you down then they probably will. However, once you are in a personal square, might be more recognise others' independence, just as you insist that they respect yours.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Any current restlessness is likely to be born out of the way you live positively at the present time. If you are in a personal square, you might give up on your own interests, make sure you do it for a deserving cause.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

There are still too many uncertainties and loose ends, but that is often the way life is. If you like, don't complain. Memory is a great gift, and if you look back to a time when life was more secure, you are almost certainly deluding yourself. You have as much in your favour now as you did then.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 19)

If you are precise and painstaking in your dealings with loved ones, you will escape any blame for anything that goes wrong on the emotional level. You may feel that the house is almost inevitable, so deduce yourself. You have as much in your favour now as you did then.

JUMBLIED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quiz.

Most people have to... so they won't... — May Sarton (4,4)

KNOAE

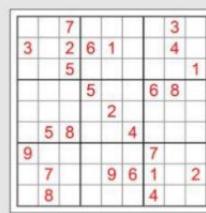
FGHIILT

AMOAR

ACTWHK

SUDOKU 471
Difficulty Level 4
Instructions:
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every number from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
1 = Very easy; 2 = Easy;
3 = Medium; 4 = Hard;
5 = Very Hard; 6 = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 470



Djokovic takes first set vs Australia

World No. 1 wins court battle to move out of detention, government eyeing another move to deport him

ROD MCGUIRK & MARK D. BAKER

JANUARY 10

NOVAK DJOKOVIC returned to the tennis court Monday for training, having won a legal battle to stay in Australia and play in the Australian Open after his exemption from strict coronavirus vaccine rules was questioned. But the government is still threatening to cancel his visa and deport him.

Federal Circuit Court Judge Anthony Kelly reinstated Djokovic's visa, which was pulled after his arrival last week because officials said he didn't qualify for an exemption to a rule that all non-citizens are fully vaccinated. Djokovic's lawyers say that since he recently recovered from COVID-19, didn't need to be inoculated, and court documents say he is not.

The judge ruled that the No. 1 player had not been given enough time to speak to his lawyers before the decision was made and ordered the government to release him from a Melbourne quarantine hotel where he has spent the last four nights. But government lawyer Christopher Tran told the judge that the immigration minister "will consider whether to exercise a personal power of cancellation."

That would mean that the nine-time Australian Open champion could again face deportation and could miss the tournament, which starts on Jan. 17. It could also bar him from the country for three years.

The back and forth has gripped the world and caused a furor in Australia, where many initially decried the news that Djokovic, who has been a vocal skeptic of vaccines, had received an exemption to strict rules to compete in Melbourne. Many felt the star was being given special treatment since Australians who aren't vaccinated face tough travel and quarantine restrictions. Melbourne, in particular, has faced severe restrictions and is one of the world's most locked down cities.

But when border police then blocked the 34-year-old on arrival, others cried foul, saying he was being scapegoated by an Australian government facing criticism for its recent handling of the pandemic. The tennis star's brother, Djordje Djokovic, told television network Prva in Belgrade, Serbia: "This is definitely politics, all this was politics."

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's conservative government is seeking re-election for a fourth term in polls due by May.

While his government was widely praised for containing the nation's COVID-19 death toll at the start of the pandemic, he has since loosened some rules, just as omicron cases have been rapidly surging. He has been criticized for that strategy as well as for shortages of rapid antigen tests and for refusing to make the tests available to all for free.

Minister Andrews did not immediately respond to a request for comment. But a spokesperson for Alex Hawke, minister for immigration, citizenship, migrant services and multicultural affairs, acknowledged the court's decision, adding the minister's personal discretion remains in play.

Still, at a news conference in Belgrade, Serbia, Djokovic's family declared victory.

"This is his greatest victory, greater than all the Grand Slams that he has won," his mother, Dijana Djokovic, said.



Hundreds of fans gathered on Monday outside Novak Djokovic's lawyers' office in Melbourne, chanting 'Free Nole'. AP

'What more could this man have done?'

The verdict, reasoning and the possible aftermath of the ruling which released Djokovic from detention

THE VERDICT

The ruling voided the government's decision to cancel Djokovic's visa. Furthermore, judge Anthony Kelly ordered the government to pay Djokovic's costs as agreed or assessed, to "take all necessary steps" to immediately release Djokovic from detention, and return Djokovic's passport and all other personal effects to him.

THE REASONING

According to judge Kelly, Djokovic had not been given sufficient notice of his visa cancellation or enough time by the government to prepare materials.

The government lawyers conceded that the decision to proceed with interviewing Djokovic in the early hours of Thursday and cancel his visa before he could contact Tennis Australia or his lawyers was unreasonable.

On Thursday, Djokovic was told at 5:20 am that he had until 8:30 am to respond to a notice of intention to cancel his visa. His comments, however, were sought instead at 6:14 am and his visa was cancelled just over an hour later. Kelly also said that the status of Djokovic's medical exemption "preoccupied" him, describing it as a



RETURN TO TRAINING

Late Monday night, Djokovic tweeted out a photo that showed him, coach Goran Ivanisevic and the rest of his team standing on one of the main show courts of the tournament. He was already back to training, his brother told reporters in Serbia.

"I'm pleased and grateful that the Judge overturned my visa cancellation. Despite all that has happened, I want to stay and try to compete @AustralianOpen," Djokovic said in the post.

"relatively significant fact" that Djokovic had obtained an exemption from "a professor and eminently qualified physician", further approved by an independent expert panel established by the Victorian state government.

"The point I'm somewhat agitated about is: what more could this man [Djokovic] have done?" Kelly said.

THE IMPLICATION
After the ruling, government barrister Christopher Tran said that the

Migrant for Immigration, Citizenship, Migration Services and Multicultural Affairs would consider "whether to exercise its original power of cancellation."

Hawke — who in December 2020 threatened to deport backpackers at a Sydney beach party — was said to be "considering the matter" and can personally decide to cancel the visa on new grounds. That again could prompt a court hearing as Djokovic would face being banned from Australia for three years.

ENS

BRIEFLY

Coch Behar knockouts postponed after Covid outbreak

New Delhi: A day after The Indian Express reported around 60 positive cases of Covid-19 among players, support staff and others involved in the upcoming Under-19 Coch Behar Trophy knockout stage matches, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced its postponement. The eight teams to have qualified for the Coch Behar Trophy knockouts are Mumbai, Maharashtra, Vidarbha, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Haryana and Bengal. They were scheduled to play four-day knockout games in Pune starting Tuesday. Among the persons found infected, 30 are players, nine support staff, and the rest groundsmen and match officials designated for the tournament.

PTI

Golfers Lahiri, Aditi; equestrian Mirza included in TOPS

New Delhi: Golfers Anirban Lahiri, Aditi Ashok and Diksha Dagar, Olympic equestrian Fouad Mirza and alpine skier Mohammed Arif Khan were among 10 athletes who have been recently included in the Sports Ministry's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS). While Lahiri, Aditi, Diksha, Mirza and Khan were included in the core group, golfers Shubhangi Sharma and Tvesa Malik and judokas Yash Ghansah, Ummati Sharma and Linthoo Chanbam have been placed in the development group. According to a statement issued by the Sports Authority of India (SAI), after these additions the total number of athletes under TOPS rose to 301.

Hardik set to lead new Ahmedabad franchise

New Delhi: The CVC-owned Ahmedabad franchise will be appointing senior India all-rounder Hardik Pandya as captain for its maiden season in the Indian Premier League, for which it has got the all-clear from the BCCI. One of the world's leading venture capitalists, who bought the Ahmedabad IPL team for INR 5,625 crore, the owners had to wait longer for the BCCI to give them the Letter of Intent as legal vetting was required. The delay in getting the green light was due to CVC's investments in betting firms in Europe and although they have no such operations in India where betting is illegal, the country's cricket board wanted to be sure about the legal ramifications before giving them the go-ahead.

REUTERS

Barty pulls out of Sydney event ahead of Aus Open

Sydney: World number one Ash Barty pulled out of the Sydney Tennis Classic on Monday to give her time to recover for the Australian Open, which starts next week. Barty won the Adelaide International singles title on Sunday with a 6-3 6-2 victory over Elena Rybakina before partnering Storm Sanders to the doubles title. "I'm sorry I won't get the chance to play in front of the Sydney fans this year. I hope to see you all again soon. I wish the players and the tournament team all the best for the week ahead," Barty said in a statement. Meanwhile, Nick Kyrgios said on Monday that he had pulled out of the Sydney Tennis Classic after testing positive for COVID-19, but hoped to be at the Australian Open next week "if all goes well".

REUTERS

Whether or not I agree with Djokovic on some things, justice has spoken and has said that he has the right to participate in the Australian Open and I think it is the fairest decision to do so, if it has been resolved that way... On a personal level, I'd much rather he didn't play."

RAFAEL NADAL, 20-TIME GRAND SLAM CHAMP, CALLED DJOKOVIC'S COVID-19 VACCINATION CONTROVERSY IN AUSTRALIA 'A CIRCUS'

Unfazed India bid to conquer S. Africa's Newlands citadel

SANDIP G

JANUARY 10

THE SERIES-DECIDER in Cape Town is replete with symbols. It's where, four years ago, Virat Kohli embarked on world conquest; it's where Jasprit Bumrah made his Test debut four years ago; it's where India have twice come close to securing their first series win in South Africa. Should they achieve it this time — the only outpost of the cricketing globe they have never conquered — it could end up defining Captain Kohli and his generation. But should they lose, the series could signal the end of an era. Conversely, if South Africa sustain their turnaround after losing the first Test, it could herald a much-needed resurgence.

There is a sense of heightened anticipation. South Africa's tenacity has breathed life into what was forecast as a one-sided series, more so after the visitors steamrolled the hosts in the first Test. South Africa suddenly seem buoyant; they have shed anxiety and fear. "We have a great record here. We are looking forward to it. South Africa's pacers have always enjoyed themselves here," skipper Dean Elgar said before the match.

Two recent arrests: South Africa have lost only five of their 34 games since winning the series. The extra bounce on the surface abets as well as the lateral movement it provides in the first test, turbocharged their paces of the past as well as the contemporary inheritor of their mantle, Kagiso Rabada. Against India, they have been invincible here — beating them in three of the five duels. Only Australia (four times) and England (once) have managed to beat them here in 20 years. That in itself would be enough to raise hopes.

But fortresses no longer daunt India. They have breached a few over the last six years, from Galle at the tip of the Indian Ocean to Brisbane, a few miles off the Coral Sea, from Kingston on the banks of the Hennops River. Rather, the sight of citadels has only reinvigorated Kohli, who would be returning to helm in the side at an arm-stretch of destiny.

Fond memories

It's not like Cape Town has been utterly kind to India's cricketers of the past either. India have had their moments here, and each of their expeditions has produced an immortal memory or two. Jagavali Srinath was adjudged man of the match in India's first-ever tour to South Africa; Sachin Tendulkar penned two of his majestic hundreds here (169 in 1997 and 146 in 2011, his last in Tests, besides averaging 81.50); Mohammad Azharuddin stroked a ton; Rohit Sharma took a hat-trick once; Harbhajan Singh and S Sreesanth once put individuality above all else; and for a while, but for the dourness of Jacques Kallis, Harbhajan's seven-wicket haul (7 for 120) is still the best bowling figures by a bowler here since South Africa's reintegration. In fact, finger-spinners have enjoyed bowling here. Saeed Ajmal and Paul Harris too have six-fors.

On his YouTube channel, Harbhajan exhorted Kohli to pick two spinners. "Every time I have played here, my best analysis have come at this venue. I picked up seven wickets in an innings in Cape Town. Even other spinners have



India captain Virat Kohli has recovered and will play the final Test. BCCI

performed well. So India too should field two spinners at this venue," he marveled.

India picked two spinners in highly doubtful, but Rohit Sharma Ashwin could be more influential figure here. He has been largely peripheral — bowling only 43 overs across four innings — as both Wanderers and SuperSport Park overwhelmingly allied with seamers. Newlands would no doubt assist them again, but the extra bounce and dryness could benefit Ashwin. Whereas he was deployed as a defensive option — Kohli duly pointed out his containing job in the second innings at Wanderers, where in a 10-over spell he leaped only 19 runs — Newlands could present a more colourful palette for his attacking brushstrokes.

Track record

The bounce here is different — less spongy, more linear and true. It implies that batsmen could play more freely once they bed in. Little surprise then that the top two highest scores ever at this venue have been essayed by overseas batsmen — Steven Fleming (262) and Ben Stokes (258).

Though there have been bizarre days when teams have lost wickets in clusters — like 18 wickets India and South Africa lost on Day 4 in 2018 — Newlands has a reputation of being kinder to visiting batsmen. Not to be misconstrued as a flat track — fast bowlers are the expected protagonists, as there would be some lingering lateral movement throughout the day and some extra zip if they bend their backs. A reason than back-to-back players enjoy the conditions than back-to-back bowlers.

Should Kohli and Co. hold their nerve, they could be bettered. Putting out-of-sorts into of Cheteshwar Pujara, Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane to rediscover run-making touch. Both Pujara and Rahane showed signs of revival in the second innings at the Wanderers before a red-hot spell from Rabada, while Kohli said he was "at peace with how I'm playing".

Kohli and Co would do well to summon history to discover solace and confidence in their bid to make history themselves.

LIVE: South Africa vs India 3rd Test from 1:30pm on Star network and Hotstar

Roots in Punjab, blooming in England, Australia

PRATYUSH RAJ
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10



Teacher Gurj Singh Landa's son Fateh Singh (left) is an all-rounder for England, and cab driver Baljit Singh's son Harkirat Bajwa is a 'mystery spinner' for Australia. Express

Apart from their roots, the other similarity between Fateh and Harkirat is their admiration for Indian spinners R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja. Fateh, who bowls left-arm spin, idolises Jadeja. Harkirat, a right-arm offspinner, is an Ashwin fan.

ing three List A appearances for his club. He was also named Academy Player of the year in 2021 for taking 32 wickets from 13 matches for the U-19 team, averaging 25.89 with the bat. Harkirat, Australia's youngest player in the U-19 World Cup, has also had a rapid rise.

"He debuted in the top grade this season only. He claimed 14 wickets from six matches at an average of 12.92, and immediately caught the selectors' attention," said Rajit.

"During the Women's T20 World Cup, Harkirat was a net bowler. His prowess impressed then India coach W V Ramam (former India opener and ex-India women's team head coach). "Rajit said, adding that he will never forget Ramam's prediction about his son. "Raman sir told me that your son will get the Baggy Green by 2023. I was shocked, but how can one argue with someone with such a fine cricketing brain."

According to the team lists, there are several others with a Punjab connection at the World Cup. They include Canada's Anoop Chima, Gurmek Singh, Ranvir Dhillon; UAE's Shivpal Bawa; and of course, India's own Harmanpreet Singh Panju from Jalandhar and Raj Angad Bawa from Chandigarh. In all, they will make a global Punjab XI.