



## मुफ्त इलाज – मुफ्त टीका हुआ कोरोना का रंग फीका

सोच ईमानदार, काम ढमदार



कोरोना से बचाव हेतु 20 करोड़  
मुफ्त टीकाकरण

Remarks against  
Mahatma: Raipur  
police arrest  
religious leader



### BUMRAH KEY IN WIN

Jasprit Bumrah appeals successfully for an lbw decision against South Africa captain Dean Elgar at Centurion, Thursday. It was a key wicket in India's 113-run win in the first Test of the three-match series. [REPORT, PAGE 19](#)

### Corbett tiger safari: No sanction as state pushes work, cost up six times

**JAY MAZOOMDAAR**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

THE UTTARAKHAND government started work on a tiger safari facility in Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR) months before it received forest clearance in September from the Union Ministry of Environment and

GOVT CALLS FOR VIGIL, LINKS TO GLOBAL SURGE

### Covid curve climbs in six states, 9 key urban areas

Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, West Bengal, Karnataka, TN on radar

**KAUNAIN SHERIFF M**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

CALLING FOR "heightened vigilance" leading into the new year with the backdrop of a "sharp increase" in Covid cases over the last four days, the Centre Thursday said the spike being reported from several urban districts is likely part of the global rise pushed by the highly transmissible Omicron variant.

The Union Health Ministry has red-flagged nine urban districts and six "emerging states of concern", including Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, West Bengal, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, on the basis of an increasing trajectory in weekly case counts and positivity rates.

Summing up the data, Dr VK Paul, who heads the national Covid task force, said "there is a changing scenario in the pandemic situation".

INSIDE



1,313 NEW CASES IN  
DELHI; 54% CASES  
SHOW OMICRON

IN WEST BENGAL,  
CASES DOUBLE IN  
24 HOURS  
[PAGES 3, 9](#)

R-value over  
1 in big cities,  
likely start of  
third wave

**AMITABH SINHA**  
PUNE, DECEMBER 30

ALTHOUGH THE government has not described it as such, there are now unmistakable signs that

India has entered the third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. The surge in cases that has started is unlikely to subside or change course over the next few days.

But it is too early to say anything about the magnitude or the quality of this surge. It need not be similar to the first two waves that the country has witnessed so far, or follow the trajectories seen in some of the

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 2](#)

Minister, MPs attend  
Tibet event, China  
diplomat writes to  
them: Don't support

**SHUBHAJIT ROY,  
MANOJ CG & LIZ MATHEW**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30



Rajeev Chandrasekhar;  
Jairam Ramesh

GOVT & POLITICS

CHINA RAISES HEAT  
ON ARUNACHAL,  
NAMES 15 MORE  
[SITES PAGE 6](#)

Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, was  
also present.

China's unusually worded letter, sent Thursday by the Political Counsellor at its Embassy, is being seen as an undiplomatic move by Delhi, as foreign diplomats writing to MPs in India in this manner has not happened in the recent past.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 2](#)

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



The Audience Meter of this  
Year and the next –  
Policy Side!

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## WORLD



## YEARENDER 2021: HERE IS WHAT YOU READ THIS YEAR

We have trudged through another pandemic year. As we stay indoors, our curiosity for what is happening in the outside world seems to be scaling new heights. So *indianexpress.com* too is riding another year of the Covid bump powered by our extensive coverage of the pandemic, its impact on our lives and the economy.

## 'HOW DO WE EXIT THIS COUNTRY?'

No passports, no money, 62 Indians are stranded in Sudan

## ENTERTAINMENT



## MALAYALAM CINEMA'S BEST OF 2021

From Minnal Murali, to The Great Indian Kitchen and Malik

**EXPRESS AUDIO**
Looking back at 2021:  
Indian politics and economy

## NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Indian Express's Manoj CG and Udit Misra join host Snigdha Sharma to discuss the highs and lows of Indian politics and economy in the year gone by.

## FROM PAGE ONE

## R-value

other countries in Europe or in the United States. South Africa is following a very different trajectory, and so, it seems as of now, is Germany. In both these countries, cases seem to be stabilising, though it is not over yet, and part of the puzzle could also be related to inconsistent reporting of data during Christmas break.

Not surprisingly, the sharpest increases in cases are being seen in the major cities – Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, Kolkata, Chennai and others. This is not just because of their large, and concentrated, populations, but also due to the fact that these get the maximum number of incoming foreign travellers. The Omicron variant, which is the reason for the current surge, would first begin circulating in these populations before moving to the interior. These are also the places with better, and more prompt, testing infrastructure.

The reproduction number or R, an indicator of how quickly a disease is spreading in the population, has crossed 1 in all these megacities, according to the latest analysis by a group of researchers, led by Sitabirha Sinha, at the Chennai-based Institute of Mathematical Sciences. An R-value of 1, which signifies that every infected person is passing on the infection to at least one person on an average, is a key threshold after which cases begin to rise rapidly. Both Delhi and Mumbai have R-values over 2 right now, according to Sinha's analysis, indicating that in both these cities, one person is transmitting to more than two people on an average. This is a forecast for a very quick rise in cases in both these cities.

A major reason for the unprecedented surge in Europe and the US is the fact that it came during the annual festival season when large gatherings are the norm. And while many governments have announced some restrictions to control the

surge, they have largely been reluctant to spoil the Christmas or New Year celebrations or gatherings. There is no such compulsion in India right now, and if people do follow Covid-appropriate behaviour in a responsible manner, it is possible for the country to negotiate this wave with minimal economic disruption.

## Corbett safari

financial sanction. The project was initially envisaged as an animal rescue facility with open-to-air enclosures and an interpretation centre for tourists. But the state went ahead with unapproved works such as construction of 18 buildings with at least 60 rooms with attached bath at four locations around the tiger safari, creation of a water body requiring felling of trees to attract wildlife for tourists, and reinforcement of a forest road with provisions to widen it as a highway.

Following a writ petition in Delhi High Court and two field inspections by Central agencies, the illegal work was finally put on hold in November and Uttarakhand transferred as many as 30 forest officials, including the state's Head of Forest Force (HoFF) and Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW), to ensure a "transparent vigilance" probe. It has been over a month since, but Kishan Chand, the forest officer entrusted with the extensive construction work is yet to relinquish charge as Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Kalagarh, the western division of CTR. On Thursday, the Corbett staff "locked down" all office premises of this division to protest the "dual command" as Kishan Chand's replacement took "one-sided charge" on December 11.

When contacted, CTR Director Rahul said the safari work did commence without the final FC. "We had Stage-1 FC, other approvals and began constructing the interpretation centre this February. The work with no approval started in July and I asked the DFO to stop it," he said. DFO (Kalagarh) Kishan Chand did not respond to multiple phone calls and messages.

Vinod Kumar, who took charge as HoFF after the reshuffle, said the "question of work done without sanction" would be answered only after the completion of a vigilance probe ordered in November. "The police team has collected all the documents," he said.

Uttarakhand Forest Minister Harak Singh Rawat is optimistic the tigers will now be ready for tourists in January. "The interpretation centre and one of the three tiger enclosures are almost ready. There is no irregularity. Uttarakhand has so much forest and wildlife thanks to its people who must also benefit from tourism activities," he said. Asked why approvals were not taken for additional construction inside the CTR, Rawat

## Govt flags Covid spike in six states, calls for vigil

showing a trend, which is going up. The reproduction number is 1.22 from the available data. The cases are now enlarging, not shrinking. So far, deaths are stable – they are in the range of 260, below 300, typically. That remains stable and is reassuring, as of now," Paul said.

Paul also cautioned that any data on lesser severity of Omicron cannot be taken for granted, at this moment.

"As the scenario emerges, we believe what we are witnessing could be part of the global rise in cases, pushed by the Omicron virus...this variant is highly transmissible and that perhaps explains the speed with which it is rising in the world. The severity issues are still unsettled; the WHO statement says severity is, hopefully, mild. But it cannot be taken for granted because it is still a work in progress," he said. The Health Ministry, meanwhile, listed the six states of concern, based on a comparison of weekly cases and positivity rate of the last seven days (December 24-30)

with data from the preceding seven (December 17-23):

■ Maharashtra reported 13,200 cases, a 117% increase, with positivity jumping from 0.92% to 2.5%.

■ Delhi reported 2,587 cases, a 290% increase, with positivity rising from 0.2% to 1%.

■ Gujarat reported 1,711 cases, a 245% increase, as positivity rose from 0.19% to 0.54%.

According to the Ministry, West Bengal reported 4,442 cases (18.49% increase in cases), Karnataka 2,533 cases (26%) and Tamil Nadu 4,383 cases (2.35%).

The nine districts flagged by the Centre, based on a comparison of case counts of seven days (December 22-28) with data from the preceding seven (December 15-21), are: Mumbai City with a 232% rise in that period, from 2,044 cases to 6,787 cases; Pune from 1,554 to 2,076; Thane from 913 to 2,033; Bengaluru Urban from 1,445 to 1,902; Chennai from 1,039 to 1,720; Mumbai Suburban from 521 to 1,670;

Gurgaon from 194 to 738; Ahmedabad from 207 to 635; and Nashik from 333 cases to 383 cases.

Paul said the emphasis should be on responsible Covid-appropriate behaviour, not panic. "It is a reality check today and...there is no need to panic. Because as a nation we are prepared, we have experience, we have the massive shield of very high coverage of vaccination.

But there is a need to be responsible and to be disciplined. We must follow the restrictions and rules. All variants enter through the same route, and that route can be blocked by wearing a mask. So mask, mask, mask, has become even more important today," he said.

Asked if India is witnessing a third wave, Paul said: "This is an emerging situation. Where this will take us and where this should be stopped, is all in our hands. We have put all efforts to stop it. We have to suppress (the transmission) right now and at this level. It is in our hands, by vaccination, by precaution, and other public health measures," he said.

The task force chief warned that "this surge could be significant" and asked everyone to "be prepared" since "it may not necessarily be mild". Be prepared, the health systems are ready for the maximum possible level," Paul said.

ICMR chief Balram Bhargava said the Centre will soon come out with guidelines on whether the third "precaution" dose, to be rolled out on January 10, should be of a different vaccine platform.

"We are deciding what is the

population that will require this vaccine, including healthcare workers, frontline workers and 60-plus with comorbidities; what are the new vaccines available; which vaccines can be given after which vaccine in terms of safety and efficacy. We are analysing all the data... Whether it is going to be the same one or different one, before January 10, we will have clear-cut recommendations," he said.

said, "Who gives these approvals? The government only, no? Modi ji announced the tiger safari. The state and the Centre are working on it together. Maybe there are certain technical issues due to internal differences among some officials but ultimately tourism will benefit our people whose support is important for conservation." It was Rawat who had in December 2020 said that the "150-crore project would be ready for tourists by November 2021".

Rawat also said he planned to utilise funds from the CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority) coffers built on compensation collected in lieu of forest land diverted for developmental purposes. Told that CAMPA money is meant for conservation work and cannot be used for building tourism infrastructure, he said, "We will have to look into those policies. Anyway, these are residential quarters for forest staff." But several buildings under construction – and a few hurriedly demolished since – have been identified as tourism facilities by the two Central agencies.

After conservation activist and advocate Gaurav Bansal moved Delhi HC in August against illegal tree-felling and construction inside CTR, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and the MoEF's regional office at Dehradun conducted two separate site inspections in September and October.

The findings were scathing: ■ The extensive construction activity "appeared to be for the purpose of tourism which is a non-forestry" activity. For any of these, no legal, administrative, or financial approval could be produced by the DFO (Kalagarh) who "continued with the construction work at least till a day before" the inspection.

■ The ongoing "construction activities in one of the highest density tiger habitats of the world without any competent sanctions and by violating the various statutory provisions/court orders is an excellent example of both administrative and managerial failure" and "criminal liability needs to be fixed against the officers responsible for undertaking such construction." Official communications of the forest department show that out of the total budget demand of Rs 157.89 crore for construction work related to the tiger safari, a proposal for Rs 102.11 crore was recommended on September 15 by then chief wildlife warden JS Suhag who also headed the Uttarakhand CAMPA. This was, however, turned down at a meeting chaired by then HoFF Rajiv Bhartari, pending clarification as to how the cost of the tiger safari "escalated from 26.81 crores to 102.11 crores".

When contacted, Bhartari said: "Except one component of around Rs 5.5 crore for the tiger safari's approved electricity works, the proposal was returned." While Suhag, who continues to head the state CAMPA, refused to comment on his recommendation, Rahul described the inflated financial proposal as an "afterthought to meet the demands" of his deputy Kishan Chand.

**Raipur police** the religious leader from neighbouring Madhya Pradesh, triggering a war of words between leaders of both states.

An FIR was lodged on Sunday

based on a complaint by Congress leader Pramod Dubey alleging that at a 'Dharam Sansad' held on December 25-26 in Raipur, Kalicharan delivered a speech abusing Mahatma Gandhi and "promoting tensions between different communities". Dubey was present at the Sansad where Kalicharan made the speech.

While the FIR was earlier registered under Sections 505(2) (promoting enmity among classes) and 294 (obscene act in public place) of the IPC, the Raipur Police said sections related to sedition (124A) and outraging religious feelings (295A), among others, were added during investigation. According to senior police officials, while teams were sent to Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Maharashtra to arrest Kalicharan, he was eventually found 25 km from Khajuraho. He had rented a room near Bageshwar Dham. He was arrested at 4 am," said Raipur SP Prashant Agrawal.

At the sessions court in Raipur, where Kalicharan was presented after a medical examination, a group of people raised slogans seeking his release.

In Maharashtra, state Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil said the state police will seek Kalicharan's custody and investigate the cases registered against him over Sunday's speech.

Late Thursday, Kalicharan was presented before the sessions court in Raipur, where he was remanded in police custody for two days. The arrest led to an uproar in BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh, with state Home Minister Narottam Mishra alleging that the Chhattisgarh Police had violated norms by arresting Kalicharan without informing the Madhya Pradesh Police. In a tweet, Mishra instructed the Madhya Pradesh DGP to register his protest with his Chhattisgarh counterpart.

Madhya Pradesh DGP Vivek Johri said, "I have spoken to the Chhattisgarh DGP and registered my protest on the way the entire operation was conducted."

Responding to Mishra's comments, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said, "Strict action will be taken against those abusing the Father of the Nation... People asking questions about the arrest... I want to ask them, are they unhappy that such a man has been arrested?" Union Minister Giriraj Singh targeted Baghel and said the CM should focus on fighting "extremists" in the state. "I don't know how he handles law and order in the state, but he focused on getting even one area free of extremists, it would have been better," said Singh, who is on a trip to Bhopal.

Chhattisgarh BJP leader Brijmohan Agrawal, who was present at the Dharam Sansad on Sunday, tweeted in support of Kalicharan, with the hashtag #ReleaseKalicharanMaharaj.

In Maharashtra, state Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil said the state police will seek Kalicharan's custody and investigate the cases registered against him over Sunday's speech.

The letter stated that in a series of political documents, the Indian Government has recognised that the Tibet Autonomous Region is part of the territory of the People's Republic of China and reiterated that it does not allow Tibetans to carry out anti-China political activities.

"The idea is to build on those linkages. I think I have already received four or five letters from the Embassy. I give them befitting replies, too," he said.

Kalicharan had in his speech at the Dharam Sansad, besides speaking out against Mahatma Gandhi, claimed that since 1947, Muslims have been attempting to gain power through politics. He also said people should be prepared for a "Hindu Rashtra".

Meanwhile, an official in the Chhattisgarh Food and Civil Supplies Department was arrested in Raipur for allegedly making derogatory comments against Mahatma Gandhi in a Facebook post. Sanjay Dubey, an assistant food officer, was suspended and later arrested based on an FIR filed on December 27.

INPUTS FROM ENS, MUMBAI,

BHOPAL

## China envoy

Reacting sharply to the letter, BJD's Kumar said: "Who is the Political Counsellor at the Chinese Embassy to write to a Member of Parliament of India, the largest democracy? How dare send letters to Indian MPs? If anything, you can raise your protest through official channels. I think the MEA (Ministry of External Affairs) should take a stand."

The letter comes almost four years after the Government had asked "senior leaders" and "government functionaries" to not attend the events organised by the Political Counsellor. "When I was asked to speak (at the event), I said I never go to any evening functions but I have made an exception because of my profound admiration for the Buddha, deep respect for the Dalai Lama and in gratitude for the role Tibetan sources have played in the rediscovery of India's Buddhist heritage. It is largely to build a relationship between the government-in-exile and the people of India because of the shared history, shared civilization and linkages, because of Buddhism, because of trade between Tibet and India in the past. The idea is to build on those linkages. I think I have already received four or five letters from the Embassy. I give them befitting replies, too," he said.

When contacted, Congress' Jairam Ramesh confirmed that he has received a letter from the Political Counsellor. "When I was asked to speak (at the event), I said I never go to any evening functions but I have made an exception because of my profound admiration for the Buddha, deep respect for the Dalai Lama and in gratitude for the role Tibetan sources have played in the rediscovery of India's Buddhist heritage. It is largely to build a relationship between the government-in-exile and the people of India because of the shared history, shared civilization and linkages, because of Buddhism, because of trade between Tibet and India in the past. The idea is to build on those linkages. I think I have already received four or five letters from the Embassy. I give them befitting replies, too," he said.

Sixty years ago, around 10,000 Tibetans, along with their spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, left Lhasa after a failed uprising against the Communist rule and arrived in India.

The Tibetan exile administration, called CTA, is based in Dharamshala where the spiritual leader also lives. Around 140,000 Tibetans now live in exile, over 100,000 of them in different parts of India. Over six million Tibetans live in Tibet. In 2018, the Centre had advised senior ministers and bureaucrats to stay away from Tibetans while seeking a peaceful relationship with China, India's position has been to recognise Tibet as an autonomous region of the People's Republic of China. It continues to seek a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the vexed boundary issue with China.

Sixty years ago, around 10,000 Tibetans, along with their spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, left Lhasa after a failed uprising against the Communist rule and arrived in India.

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"The idea is to build on those linkages. I think I have already received four or five letters from the Embassy. I give them befitting replies, too," he said.

Addressing the MPs, Zhou wrote: "You are a senior politician who know the China-India relations well. It is hoped that you could understand the sensitivity of the issue and refrain from providing support to the 'Tibetan independence' forces, and make contributions to China-India bilateral relations." When contacted, Chandrasekhar told The Indian Express: "I was a member of the Indo-Tibetan Parliamentary

Committee and was transferred to the Tibetan Autonomous Region.

The note was sent by then Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale to Cabinet Secretary at the time, P K Sinha, who issued a directive two days later.

## Kashmir: Army jawan, 6 militants killed in two encounters

place in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir Wednesday evening, they said.

Two jawans and a police officer were also injured during the Anantnag operation, they said.

The encounters took place after the forces launched cordon and search operations in Nowgam, Shahabad area in Anantnag district, and Mirhama

1,313 CASES ON THURSDAY

# Omicron in community, 54% cases show variant, says Jain

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

Delhi's active Covid case count has jumped from 557 to 3,081 in a week's time. Amit Mehra

THE NEW omicron variant is circulating in the community in Delhi and is possibly the reason behind the recent increase in Covid cases, said Health Minister Satyendar Jain Thursday.

"Covid cases have increased rapidly over the last few days. As per the genome sequencing data, 54% of these are omicron variant, including people who have travel history as well as those who do not. This means omicron is now in Delhi," said Jain in an online briefing about increasing cases.

Delhi reported 1,313 Covid cases Thursday, up from 923 on Wednesday. Positivity rate also increased from 1.29% to 1.73%.

The total number of Covid patients admitted to hospitals on Thursday was 150. This includes patients from the airport. Of the 150, 83 are asymptomatic or have only mild symptoms; 66 have moderate symptoms and are on oxygen support. Only one

person has severe symptoms and is on ventilator support. Out of the 150 patients in hospitals, 118 are from Delhi. An additional 111 people who either have Covid or are suspected to have the disease are lodged in Covid Care Centres.

Delhi's active Covid case count has jumped from 557 to 3,081 in a week's time.

*The Indian Express* reported that the Delhi Disaster Management Authority in its meeting Wednesday accepted the possibility of community spread after no history of inter-

national travel or contact with an international traveller was found after the investigation in nearly 60 cases reported over Monday and Tuesday. Furthermore, 64 of the 73 new cases reported on Wednesday also did not have any history of travel or contact.

Keeping the rise in Covid cases and that of the omicron variant in mind, the Delhi government has ordered four centres to create step-down isolation or quarantine centres for those who might have the omicron variant.

Director General of Health

Services Nutan Mundeja passed an order Thursday allowing institutional isolation of Covid positive international passengers or their contacts arriving at the airport, at paid as well as free Covid Care Centres.

There will be 100 beds in Terapanth Bhawan that will be linked to Ambedkar Nagar hospital, 100 beds at Sardar Patel Covid Care Centre linked to Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya Hospital, 100 beds at IBSI hotel linked to Indira Gandhi hospital-Dwarka, and another 50 at CWG village linked to Lal Bahadur Shastri hospital. The centre at CWG village will be scaled up to 500 beds, according to an order issued by the special secretary (health) SM Ali. The linked hospitals will provide manpower, consumables, and arrange logistics for the centres as per the order. Currently, all those who have or are suspected to have omicron variant infection are admitted to the government's Lok Nayak hospital or four private hospitals — Sir Ganga Ram, Max hospital-Saket, Fortis Hospital-Vasant Kunj, and Batra Hospital.

Keep the rise in Covid cases and that of the omicron variant in mind, the Delhi government has ordered four centres to create step-down isolation or quarantine centres for those who might have the omicron variant.

Director General of Health

## OPD services, admissions curtailed at AIIMS

ANONNA DUTT  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

WITH THE number of Covid cases on the rise in Delhi, AIIMS will curtail patients visiting outpatient clinics as well as the number of routine admissions, as per the contingency plan that will come into effect on New Year's Eve.

Both old and new patients with existing appointments will receive consultations and only the numbers will be restricted, as per recommendations of the heads of the departments, according to the plan.

"No service will be stopped,

however, keeping in mind the increasing number of Covid cases in the city, the number of other patients will be restricted," said a senior official from the hospital, on condition of anonymity.

Covid-19 admissions in the hospital have increased five times over the course of the week — from two-three admissions a day earlier to 14 on Thursday, according to the official.

The increase seems like a lot as the number of cases have been low in the city for several months now. But, in comparison to the second wave, this is not too much. The number of cases have gone up, but most are mild

and do not need hospitalisation. We are expecting the number of hospitalisations to increase in the coming days but it is unlikely to be as much as the second wave," the official said.

### Plan for possible surge

The hospital will convert three floors, including the ICU, of its newly created burns and plastic block into a Covid-19 centre.

Two floors at its National Cancer Institute in Jhajjar will also be converted for treatment of Covid-19 patients. Rooms in the private ward are also being prepared for Covid cases.

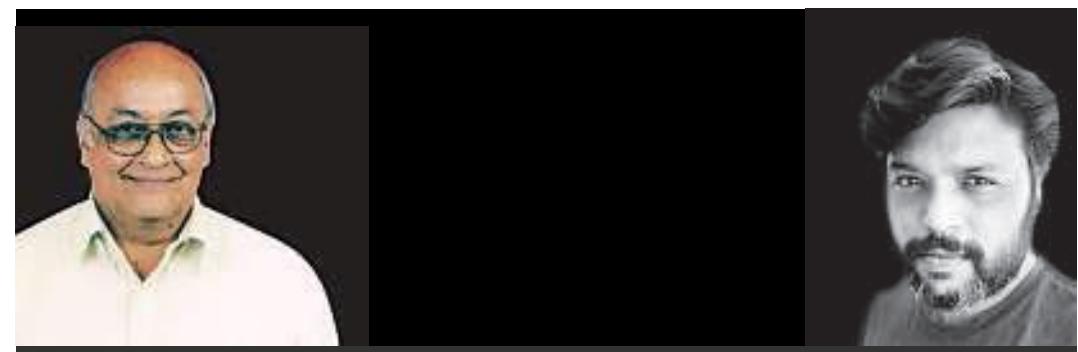
Other than that, one addi-

tional floor at the Jai Prakash Narayan Apex Trauma Centre will also be converted into a Covid treatment facility, in lieu of which a ward at the main AIIMS building will be freed up for trauma patients. Two floors at the centre already cater to Covid cases. The standalone trauma centre had completely been converted to a Covid-19 hospital since March last year and trauma services were slowly restarted when cases waned after the second wave of the pandemic in the city.

All doctors, nurses, and other staff at the hospital will also be redeployed as per need, according to the plan.

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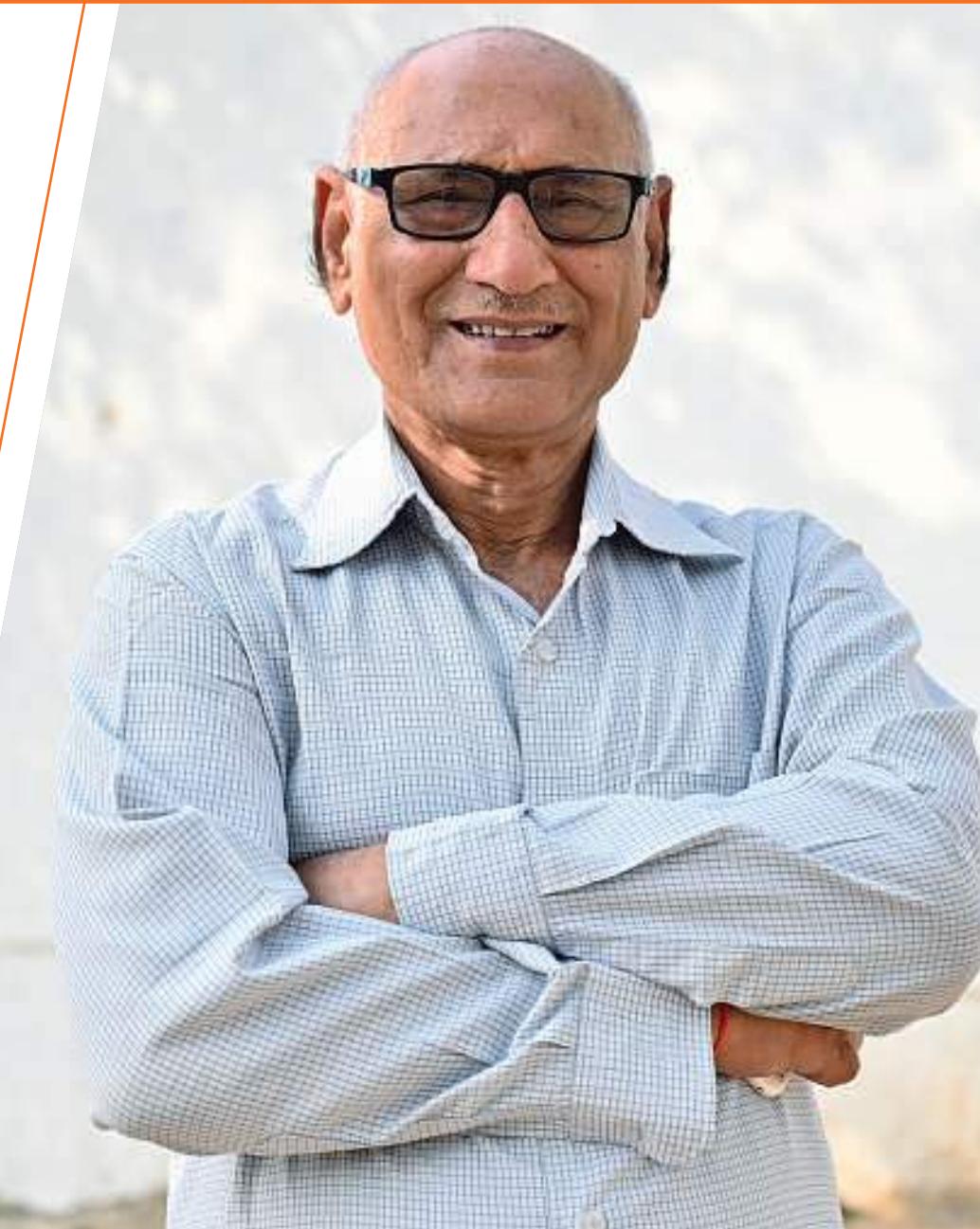
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सोच ईमानदार, काम धमदार



New Delhi



	Total			Vacant
	HOSPITAL BEDS	ICU BEDS		
<b>Dec 29</b>	<b>13,475</b>	<b>2,770</b>	<b>13,252</b>	<b>2,727</b>
<b>Dec 30</b>	<b>1,313</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>75,953</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3081*</b>	<b>14,18,227</b>	<b>25,107</b>	<b>3,26,51,345</b>

Total active cases

# Caught in delays, NEET-PG aspirants stare at uncertain future

**ANONNA DUTT  
& ABHINAV RAJPUT**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

WITH RESIDENT doctors from major medical college-associated government hospitals across the country continuing to protest against repeated delays in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test for Postgraduate Courses (NEET-PG) counselling and admission services in these hospitals have remained affected for 14 days now. The protesting doctors will hold a meeting today where they are expected to take a call on whether or not to end the strike.

The Indian Express spoke to the following aspirants who despite clearing NEET-PG held in September have not got admission in PG courses so far, with the crisis putting them under acute financial and social distress.

**Dr Shruti Pansare,  
Pune**

The delay has left Pune-based Dr Pansare uncertain not only about her finances but also her future.

"One whole year has been



Manish Rundla Choudhary; Sarang Bombatkar; Shruti Pansare; Risabh Kohli; Manish Singla

January 2021 but was deferred first to April and then to September.

Dr Pansare, who secured a rank above 9,000 in her second attempt, is now anxiously waiting for her PG admission.

"Due to the uncertainty about the NEET-PG dates, I have not been able to join work again. Also, it would have broken the flow of my studies. Now, hospitals are unwilling to hire us because they know that we will quit the job soon (after PG admission)," she said.

**Dr Preya Joshi, Bhuj**

After completing her MBBS and internship, Dr Preya Joshi,

based in Gujarat's Bhuj, started preparing for NEET-PG six months before the original exam date, January 6, 2021. However, in November 2020, she learned that the exam will be postponed. The exam dates were then scheduled for April.

"We even received our admit cards, but just two days before the exam it was pushed further. We were told that the exam will not happen for another four months, so I joined the Covid duty. All this uncertainty adds to mental stress, it has resulted in people getting worse ranks," she said.

With her rank being above 15,000, Dr Joshi is uncertain

whether she can get admission in her preferred course – anaesthesia or gynaecology.

"I want to appear for NEET-PG again and its dates have been announced for March 12, 2022, but can it happen if this year's counselling is not completed yet? I don't know what to do," she said.

Like Dr Pansare, Dr Joshi is finding it difficult to land a job in a hospital as it would know that she is biding time for her PG counselling and admission.

**Dr Sarang Bombatkar,  
Buldhan**

Amid continued delays in the NEET-PG counselling and admis-

sion process, Dr Sarang Bombatkar, based in Maharashtra's Buldhana, said he has been sitting at home for more than a year now.

"We are wasting so much time. I am not studying, not working. All hospitals say they will hire us only for four or six months, they do not want us because we will quit when the (PG) admissions happen," he said.

Dr Bombatkar also said that with the change in the NEET-PG admission quotas this year, he is not sure if he would be able to get the courses of his choice such as anaesthesia, ENT, or community medicine. "The pattern has changed this year and I cannot figure out what I might get. All this uncertainty is adding to my stress," he added.

**Dr Manish Rundla  
Choudhary, Kota**

What is worrying Kota-based Dr Manish Rundla Choudhary is that while he has been at home for the last one year because of uncertainty over the NEET-PG counselling, his resident doctor friends have been exhausted after working round the clock.

young PG aspirants, Dr Kohli says it is disturbing that despite clearing the exam, they can neither take admission in PG courses, nor can they join a job.

There have been delays and uncertainty about everything related to NEET-PG, he said, bemoaning that "the third Covid wave is at your door and this is the time when things should have been expedited instead of getting delayed".

**Dr Manish Singla,  
Faridabad**

Dr Singla (28), who lives in Faridabad, graduated from Karnataka's Basaveshwara Medical College. After preparing for two years, he qualified for NEET-PG this year – and continues to wait for admission now. "Almost a year has been wasted. The January NEET exam was delayed and pushed to September. The new reservation policy further delayed things," he said.

The situation, Dr Singla said, is grimmer for those PG aspirants who did not get good ranks. He also maintained that the aspirants were caught in uncertainty of whether they should wait for counselling or land a job.

## Multiplex body meets Sisodia, seeks reopening of theatres in city

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 30**

FOLLOWING THE Delhi government's decision to close theatres in the wake of a spike in Covid cases, representatives of the Multiplex Association of India (MAI) met Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia Thursday seeking reopening of cinemas with pre-emptive measures. Other cinemas and industry bodies have supported this appeal.

The delegation, led by Ajay Bijli, chairman of PVR Limited, highlighted the adverse economic impacts faced by the entertainment industry due to multiple lockdowns and restrictions since March 2020. In its appeal to Sisodia, he was informed that the decision to shut down cinemas has caused uncertainty.

Expressing his concerns, Bijli said: "We fully understand the challenges faced by the government in these tough times. However, instead of closing cinemas, we urge them to consider introducing a 'double vaccination requirement' for gaining entry into cinemas, as is the case in some states. Alternatively, a 50% seating cap can be reintroduced."

The association fears that



Theaters are shut under yellow alert restrictions. Archive



### WAITING TO BOARD

Commuters wait outside Rajiv Chowk Metro station, Thursday. New rules that came into effect on Wednesday allow Metro trains to operate at 50% seating capacity. Tashi Tobgyal

## Nuh: Months after 11-year-old went missing, 1 held for murder

**PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA  
GURGAON, DECEMBER 30**

FOUR MONTHS after an 11-year-old boy went missing from his house in Nuh, police Wednesday arrested a man for allegedly kidnapping and murdering the boy and for stealing Rs 3.62 lakh cash from him. Police said probe found that the boy was strangled to death in September near Sariska in Alwar. A police team has gone to Sariska to collect DNA samples.

Police said on August 24, the boy, a class VI student, had gone missing from his house. His father had initially lodged a missing person's complaint.

DSP Punhana Shamsher Singh said recently, the family filed another complaint alleging that the boy had taken a bag, which had over Rs 3.62 lakh cash, and had been kidnapped.

"One person, Arif (20) has

been arrested. He has also named another accused. Both are from the same neighbourhood. The victim was known to the duo and they took him to Gurgaon, Bahadurgarh, Hansi, Hisar and Haridwar. As per questioning, the accused said they strangled the boy to death in Sariska about 8-10 days after he went missing.

Their intention was to steal the money that the victim had brought. After killing him, they went to Mumbai to spend money. In the past few months, they kept returning to the village to evade suspicion," said DSP Singh.

Speaking to The Indian Express on Thursday, the boy's father, a farmer, said for four months, the family had been living in uncertainty. "Every day we feared someone would kill him since he was carrying so much cash. People kill for much less. Our fear came true. All we want is justice....," he said.

Police denied the allegations.

DSP Singh said, "Initially the family said they didn't suspect anyone. A few days after the incident, the boy called his cousin and said he was in Mathura and was safe. He also told them he had given Rs 50,000 to his cousin and taken the rest of the cash. We brought the cousin in for questioning too. The accused were trying to mislead the family at the time."

Alleging laxity by police, the father said he shared all leads with them: "Had they acted sooner, my son would be alive."

Police denied the allegations.

DSP Singh said, "Initially the family said they didn't suspect anyone. A few days after the incident, the boy called his cousin and said he was in Mathura and was safe. He also told them he had given Rs 50,000 to his cousin and taken the rest of the cash. We brought the cousin in for questioning too. The accused were trying to mislead the family at the time."

Additional DCP (South) M Harsha Vardhan said, "The inci-

## Upset by seating cap, commuters damage DTC buses; 6 arrested

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30**

A GROUP of commuters who were unable to board DTC buses due to the 50% seating cap allegedly vandalised 4-5 buses and blocked MB Road around 8 am on Thursday. Police said they arrested four men, two women and apprehended a juvenile for destruction of public property and violating Covid guidelines.

Videos showing people protesting and damaging bus windows went viral on social media. In one of the videos, a large gathering, in front of buses on the road, clash with police. Windshields of buses are damaged and policemen are seen pushing people with lathis.

Additional DCP (South) M Harsha Vardhan said, "The inci-

dent took place due to non-availability of seats in buses in view of Covid-related restrictions."

Benita Mary Jaiker, DCP (South), said, "We received several calls regarding a traffic snarl near Jamia Hamdard. We reached the spot and found that a group of commuters were protesting and instigating others to sit on the road as bus drivers and marshals were not letting them in. The driver could only allow 17 passengers inside as per the government's latest guidelines."

Police staff tried talking to the people to allow traffic to pass to no avail. "The group started damaging buses. We deployed women police staff to help. Staff neither used force nor lathi-charged anyone. We were neutralising the situation. One policeman sustained injuries in the process," said DCP Jaiker.

The project areas will cover different disciplines such as computer science, chemistry, mechanical engineering, physics, and biological sciences.

"In the future, there are plans to have participation from students from other regions in the country and turn the program into a residential one. The STEM Mentorship Program for schoolgirls is the second academic outreach initiative by IIT-Delhi for school students. In September 2021, the Institute had launched SciTech Spins lecture series for students from class IX-XII. Under this initiative, IIT-Delhi professors

engaged in cutting-edge research in science, technology and allied fields deliver online lectures and conduct laboratory demonstrations every month," IIT-D said.

"The program will give girls some required traction for getting into the fields of science and technology in the future. We believe students should be exposed to scientific concepts at an early age, to be able to appreciate the rigour of academic research, and to build up confidence to take up academics as a career when they grow up," said Pritha Chandra, Associate Dean, Academic Outreach and New Initiatives.

**'To ENCOURAGE GIRLS TO CHOOSE SCIENCE AS A CAREER'**

## IIT-D kicks off STEM mentorship program for Class XI girls, 10 shortlisted

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30**

THE INDIAN Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi Thursday launched the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Mentorship Program for Class XI girls from government schools to encourage them to choose science as their career.

"The primary objectives of the program, designed for Class XI girl students, are to train young students to think creatively about science and innovation, to provide them novel

hands-on experience in solving research problems, and to help them form a stronger knowledge foundation," the institute said in a statement.

For the program, 10 girls from various Kendriya Vidyalayas in the city have been shortlisted for now, who will be mentored by professors from IIT-D in their chosen topics of interest. They will also get access to research scholars under these professors.

During the mentorship period, they will be exposed to "foundational concepts in STEM disciplines, and also learn the experimental methods and tech-

niques used in science labs". Speaking about the program, IIT-D Director V Ramgopal Rao said, "STEM needs to have more women participation. Through the mentorship program initiated by IIT-Delhi, schoolgirls will get exposure to some of the world-class labs and research work going on here. I am hopeful this mentorship at IIT-Delhi will prove to be a turning point in their lives and they would be motivated to enter the world of science and technology and help society with their research work."

Among those shortlisted is Disha Rathor from KV JNU, who

is working with her mentor on cryptography and secure com-

puter science. "I think I could learn from the experience, and from the experienced faculty. I think this will be good for my career," she said.

Sanmita Paul from KV R K Puram said she was very enthusiastic about the different phases of the program. "I'm especially looking forward to the research activities and lectures by IIT professors... I would like to thank IIT-Delhi for giving us girls this opportunity to learn and explore more than just reading textbooks in our school," she said.

The program will have three levels. "A two-week winter proj-





BUSINESS  
BLASTERS

# MEET TODAY'S BUSINESS BLASTERS

## RULE BREAKERS

As kids, members of this tech start-up would often place their palms against their ears to pretend to make phone calls. They thought what if they are actually able to make calls using just their hands. This prompted them to develop a bluetooth ring that can make and receive calls while making their childhood fantasy come true!



## NEXT INNOVATION

Whenever Sujan visited his village, he faced electricity shortage resulting in phones not getting charged. Due to this he was unable to take online classes during lockdown. His friends shared similar experiences from their hometowns. To address this problem, this start-up came up with the idea of creating solar power banks!



## THE CRAFT HOUSE

Every Durga Puja, Hemant wanted to buy decorative items which his parents refused on account of budget constraints. Hemant then spoke with his friends and together they decided to make affordable festival decorations for people of all income groups. They have now expanded their product lines to include different types of lamps too!



Tune in this evening at 7 pm

NEW YEAR SPECIAL

31 December, 1 & 2 January at 7 pm

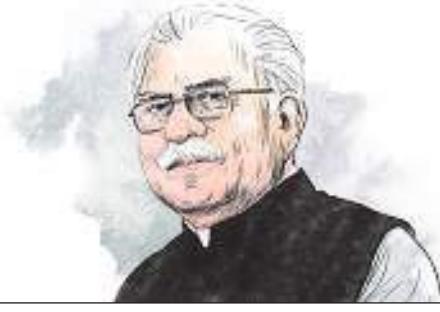
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# GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



## LANGUAGE SKILLS

DURING A media interaction on Thursday, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar surprised many with his language skills. After declaring that he can take questions in English, Hindi and Punjabi, he went on to interact with a reporter in Tamil, revealing that he has passed his school certificate course in the language. Besides, the Chief Minister said he is learning Japanese these days to interact with the large expat population in his state. If you have to build heart-to-heart relations with someone, you have to speak in their language, Khattar said.

## EXIT DOOR

THREE CONGRESS MLAs from Punjab – Rana Gurmit Singh Sodhi, Fateh Jung Singh Bajwa and Balwinder Singh Laddi – have joined the BJP in the past 10 days, delivering a jolt to the grand old party ahead of the Assembly elections. But the buzz in the party is that there could be more exits coinciding with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Punjab on January 5. The names of many leaders, including a couple of ministers, are being talked about in this connection. Asked about the speculation, one senior leader merely said, "Let's see who all remain after January 5." The Congress's central leaders are now said to be keeping their fingers crossed.

## FRESH TASK

CONSUMER AFFAIRS Secretary Leena Nandan will bid adieu to the Department of Consumer Affairs on Friday to take up her next assignment as Environment Secretary. On Thursday, her colleagues at Krishi Bhawan organised a farewell that was attended by Food Minister Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Food Ashwini Choubey. Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey was also present on the occasion. A 1987-batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre, Leena Nandan will hand over charge of the department to her successor Rohit Kumar Singh on Friday.

## Moga rally put off as Rahul goes abroad, disquiet in state Cong

KANCHAN VASDEV &amp; MANOJ CG

CHANDIGARH, NEW DELHI,

DECEMBER 30

DAY AFTER Congress announced that Rahul Gandhi will kick off the party's campaign for the forthcoming elections in Punjab by addressing a rally in Moga on January 3, the party postponed the event after it emerged that the senior party leader had flown abroad on a personal visit.

Sources said Rahul left India on Wednesday, a day after attending the party's 137th foundation day event at the AICC headquarters in Delhi. Sources said he is set to ring in the new year in Italy, where he will spend time with his aging maternal grandmother, like last year.

"Rahul Gandhi is on a brief personal visit. The BJP and its media friends should not spread rumours unnecessarily," Congress communication department head Randeep Surjewala said, confirming that the party president was abroad.

Party sources said Rahul, who spent nearly three weeks at an undisclosed foreign location in November as well, is expected to address the rallies in Punjab and Goa on January 15 and 16.

Rahul's trip abroad has led to disquiet in the Punjab unit of Congress as it comes at a time when the party is struggling with factionalism and desertions in the state.

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HINA ROHTAKI

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 30

DELHI CHIEF Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo, Arvind Kejriwal, on Thursday, arrived in Chandigarh to hold a victory march to commemorate his party's splendid performance during the recently concluded Chandigarh civic body polls and said that the win in Chandigarh "has sent a strong message across Punjab and started an AAP wave across the state."

Kejriwal on Thursday joined a victory march with his party's victorious councillors and made them take an oath that "they will never take any bribe and will

also not let anyone do anything wrong." He said that now that they have won, "they [the new

## All parties in UP want polls on time, will issue guidelines: EC

LALMANI VERMA

LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 30

DAYS AFTER a judge of the Allahabad High Court urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "take strong steps" and consider "stopping and postponing" rallies, meetings and elections in view of the rising cases and a possible third wave, the Election Commission said Thursday that all parties in Uttar Pradesh want the Assembly elections to be held as per schedule.

"All the political parties, without any difference of opinion, said that elections should be conducted on time while following Covid protocol," said Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra, speaking to reporters on the conclusion of a three-day visit to the state to assess poll preparedness.

Asked about the High Court remark, the CEC replied: "Cognizance of that will be taken."

Chandra said some parties, during their meeting with the EC delegation, expressed concern over flouting of Covid rules at election rallies, and also sought curbs on the number of rallies.



CEC Sushil Chandra (left) and Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey in Lucknow on Thursday. Vishal Srivastav

Asked whether the EC would consider postponing the elections, the CEC said: "EC will execute the responsibility assigned to it as per the Constitution. While executing that responsibility, whatever will be required to consider -- either rising Covid numbers or managing the increasing rallies -- elections will be announced after considering all that."

Asked about ongoing political rallies with huge gatherings, he said the EC's responsibility begins after the Model Code of Conduct comes into effect. Before that, it is the state administration's job, he said.

He said the EC has discussed

the issue with the Union Health Secretary, State Health Secretary, Chief Secretary, and all district election officers. "Whenever elections will be announced, this point will be definitely considered that how the big rallies are to be managed. Whether digital communication will have to be increased... We will issue a guideline in this regard... It's a dynamic situation. Considering all that, guidelines will be issued," he said.

"I have been told that 86 per cent of people in the state have got the first dose and 49 per cent the second dose of Covid vaccine. We have been assured that in 15-20 days, all eligible people

will get their first dose. We have asked for increasing vaccination," he said.

The CEC said some parties complained about the "biased" attitude of some police and administration officials. He said the complaints will be probed, and action will be taken. He said over 5,000 police personnel have been transferred in recent days.

Newly appointed UP Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra, who took charge on Thursday, said that in his meeting with the Election Commissioners, they expressed concerns over the Covid situation. "I assured them that I will sit with my officers and prepare a strategy to vaccinate everyone," Mishra said.

Meanwhile, the Congress said EC should take an independent decision on holding the polls.

"EC must remember that the countrywide data of Covid-19 infection, its spread... the doubling time, the results of genome sequencing and the impact of the vaccines on Omicron (variant) is with the government, and not with the political parties," Congress leader Ranveer Singh said in New Delhi.

WITHENS, DELHI



Amit Shah with CM Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow. PTI

### No 'bahubalis' in Yogi rule, just Bajrang Bali, says Shah

LALMANI VERMA

LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 30

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah on Thursday hit out at Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati, claiming she feared defeat in the upcoming assembly polls and urging her to step out for campaigning.

He also invoked Lord Hanuman to praise the Yogi Adityanath government, saying just "Bajrang Bali" was visible in his regime, not "bahubalis" (muslemen).

Addressing a public meeting in Moradabad, Shah said: "The SP (Samajwadi Party) and BSP cannot develop UP. Behenji ki to abhi thand hi nahi udi hai. Yeh bhaibeet hain. Behanjichunav aa gaya thoda bhar nikaliye. Baad meyeh na kehna ki maine prachar nahi kya. (Behenji is yet to get relief from cold weather. She is fearing defeat). Behenji, step out as elections have come. Don't say later that you had not campaigned," he said.

The Union minister said even if "baa, baabu and behen" (referring to Mayawati, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and Congress's Priyanka Gandhi Vadra) came together, they cannot win against BJP workers.

Targeting Akhilesh for mentioning Muhammad Ali Jinnah in an earlier speech, Shah said, "He does know name of gamma (sugarcane) and keep repeating Jinnah, Jinnah, Jinnah... Jinnah is of no use here."

While Sidhu has been seeking declaration of Chief Minister candidate ahead of the polls, asserting that he would not be just a showpiece for the elections, a section of party leaders said they were watching him closely. A party leader said, "We were hoping that the top leadership would intervene and control Sidhu. But it seems to be free for all now."

## Previous Uttarakhand govts looted with both hands: PM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

DEHRADUN, DECEMBER 30

TARGETING PREVIOUS state governments in Uttarakhand ahead of the Assembly elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday said they "looted Uttarakhand with both hands" and tried to save their governments even at the cost of the state.

He was addressing a rally after inaugurating and laying the foundation of projects worth over Rs 17,500 crore in Haldwani.

This included the inauguration of projects worth Rs 3,420 crore and foundation-laying of projects worth Rs 14,127 crore.

The inaugurated projects include three stretches of the Char Dham all-weather road which have been widened, the Nagina-Kashipur National Highway, the Suring Gad hydel project and sewage work under the Namami Gange programme at Nainital.

"We all know how many rivers start from Uttarakhand, but since independence people here have witnessed two more streams. One is keeping the mountains away from development, and the other is working day and night for the development of the mountains. People of

the first stream always want to keep you away from development. They kept running from the hard work required to bring roads, electricity and water to the mountains. Several generations here left Uttarakhand in the absence of good roads and facilities. Today I feel satisfied that people of Uttarakhand and the country are exposing those involved in this destruction," he said.

Accusing previous governments of "looting Uttarakhand with both hands" since the state's formation 20 years ago, PM Modi said that hindering developmental projects was their trademark.

"Uttarakhand has completed 20 years of its formation. In these years, you have also seen such people running the government who used to say 'you may loot Uttarakhand, but save my government,'" he said.

On the Lakhwar project, he said it was first thought of in 1976, and that it was his government which finally laid its foundation. "Look at my record of the last 7 years and all my time goes to searching for such old things and making them right," he said.

The PM said these inaugurated development projects will ensure better connectivity and health for the people of Haldwani.

"What Pawar said was only the half-truth... And he is speaking as per his convenience," state BJP spokesperson Keshav Upadhyay told *The Indian Express* Thursday.

Upadhyay said party leader and former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis had already spoken about what transpired during those days. "We do not wish to speak about the episode again," he said.

At a book launch in Pune Wednesday, Pawar, during a conversation with *LokSatta* Editor Girish Kumar, said that PM Modi had made an offer to him for an alliance with his party after the 2019 Maharashtra Assembly elections, the state BJP unit on Thursday said Pawar "was speaking only the half-truth... according to his convenience".

"What Pawar said was only the half-truth... And he is speaking as per his convenience," state BJP spokesperson Keshav Upadhyay told *The Indian Express* Thursday.

Along with Pawar, Raut is considered one of the architects of the Maha Vikas Aghadi government, which came into being after the Shiv Sena approached the Congress and NCP about forming an alliance. The Sena had earlier ended its decades-long alliance with the BJP in the state after the two parties fell out over who would get the chief minister's post.

Paveen Darekar, opposition leader in the state Legislative Council, said: "Whatever happened between the two leaders, only they know it. Let's not dig out the past. The MVA government is now in place. Alliances happen in politics, there is nothing new about it."

## KARNATAKA URBAN LOCAL BODY POLLS

## Cong defeats BJP, wins most wards

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

BENGALURU, DECEMBER 30

AHEAD OF THE 2023 Assembly elections, the Congress in Karnataka Thursday outperformed the BJP in the polls held for 58 urban local bodies (ULBs) in 20 districts.

Congress emerged as the single largest party, winning 501 of 1,184 wards that went to the polls on December 27. BJP won 433 wards and the JD(S) won 45. A total of 195 Independents also won in the elections. AAP and Janata Party have won one seat each, while AIMIM and SDPI in 20 districts.

"We have performed better than the last time though we should have performed better in this election," he said. "If you ob-

serves, as these places have concentration of minority community voters, we have not been getting good results, but this time due to efforts, in places like Gadag and others, we have got success."

The BJP also lost in Bommai's constituency. On this, he said: "We had never won there (in Bankapur), minority voters are 65 per cent, it won't be right for me to say more. Same is the case with Guttal... we will continue with our development work there also."

Karnataka Congress party chief DK Shivakumar said, "Election results in recent times have indicated a Congress wave in the state..." PTI INPUTS

## AAP wave after Chandigarh win: Kejriwal

HINA ROHTAKI

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 30

DELHI CHIEF Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo, Arvind Kejriwal, on Thursday, arrived in Chandigarh to hold a victory march to commemorate his party's splendid performance during the recently concluded Chandigarh civic body polls and said that the win in Chandigarh "has sent a strong message across Punjab and started an AAP wave across the state."

Kejriwal on Thursday joined a victory march with his party's victorious councillors and made them take an oath that "they will never take any bribe and will

also not let anyone do anything wrong." He said that now that they have won, "they [the new

councillors] should move beyond party lines and work together" to bring Chandigarh back

to number 1 during the Swachh Survey.

"Chandigarh ke nateejon ke baad Punjab mein ek lehar si daud gayi hai... Chandigarh mein ab shapath grehan karne aayenge Punjab jeet ke (The victory in Chandigarh has started an AAP wave. We will again return to Chandigarh after winning the Punjab elections)," Kejriwal said during the victory march (Vijay Yatra) that started from Aroma Chowk in Sector 22 and ended in Sector 23.

Addressing a gathering at the end of Thursday's victory march, Kejriwal said, "You people of Chandigarh have achieved an amazing feat. This is nothing short of a miracle."

Supporters greet Kejriwal in Chandigarh. Jasbir Malhi

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# Trials in Muzaffarnagar cases and gold-smuggling trail winners in Investigative Reporting category

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

FROM INVESTIGATING the aftermath of a riot to following the trail of gold smugglers along the Indo-Nepal border, they dug deep to uncover the truth.

Kaunain Sheriff M of *The Indian Express* is the winner in the Investigative Reporting category for print, and S Mahesh Kumar of Manorama News is the winner of the award for broadcast media.

Sheriff's investigation -- which resulted in a three-part series called 'The Muzaffarnagar Whitewash' -- revealed that in the six years following the Muzaffarnagar riots in 2013, all the 158 men accused of murder, gang rape and arson had walked free. Sheriff scrutinised court



Kaunain Sheriff M



S Mahesh Kumar

Interviewed officials to discover that 53 men accused of murder had been let off.

The first challenge was to access the documents. Rape cases are in-house proceedings so you cannot enter the court to witness the trials. It took days, sometimes even weeks, to get these documents. The delay in the trials was another challenge. The

court would set a date for the hearing and the defence kept asking for another date. I had to travel from Delhi to Muzaffarnagar every time the court fixed a date and around 85 per cent of the time, I returned without anything when the trial was deferred. The third challenge was language. All the documents and court recordings

were in Hindi which wasn't easy to translate. So it took time to identify the glaring loopholes in the investigation," says Sheriff.

The miscarriage of justice was grave. "It showed the prejudice in the system as the state government did not appeal against any of the acquittals, especially the rape cases, in the High Court. We also found how victim protection during the trials was totally compromised," adds Sheriff.

Kumar's investigative series, Operation Nepal Gold, exposed the gold smuggling racket along the porous Indo-Nepal border where operators took advantage of lenient check posts.

"We travelled along the dangerous routes through which gold is smuggled into the country by evading all kinds of taxes. We started our investigation by going to Kathmandu. We trav-

elled from Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu to different places along with the gold carrier to collect information and film secret visuals of the illegal trade. We also gathered information by meeting some carriers in Nepal jails. In the jail and at the checkposts, we used spy cameras to avoid being caught," says Kumar.

"After we exposed the names of Kerala-based smuggling mafia kingpins and details of the smuggling dens in Dubai, we again faced several threats from the mafia. The gold carriers who helped us unearth the smuggling routes and activities now get constant threats to lives," adds Kumar.

After the exposé, the Customs and DRI launched special probes to check the gold flow, leading to a 25-kg gold haul from Thiruvananthapuram airport.

THE CENTRE on Thursday notified monetary jurisdiction of consumer commissions, with the district commissions having jurisdiction to entertain complaints where value of goods or services paid as consideration does not exceed Rs 50 lakh. The state commissions will have jurisdiction to similar complaints with value of goods or services between Rs 50 lakh and Rs 2 crore, and the National Commission over Rs 2 crore.

# Centre notifies new rules for consumer panels

HARIKISHAN SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

THE CENTRE on Thursday notified monetary jurisdiction of consumer commissions, with the district commissions having jurisdiction to entertain complaints where

value of goods or services paid as consideration does not exceed Rs 50 lakh. The state commissions will have jurisdiction to similar complaints with value of goods or services between Rs 50 lakh and Rs 2 crore, and the National Commission over Rs 2 crore.

The jurisdiction of the commissions has been notified by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

The Act provides a "three-tier quasi-judicial mechanism" for redress of consumer disputes: district commissions, state commissions, and the national commission. The law also provides pecuniary jurisdiction of each tier of consumer commission.

As per existing provisions, district commissions have jurisdiction to entertain complaints where value of goods or services paid as consideration does not exceed Rs 1 crore, state commissions Rs 1 crore to Rs 10 crore, and national commission above Rs 10 crore.

Giving reasons for fixing a lower limit for district and state

commissions, the ministry said in a statement, "After the Act came into force, it was observed that existing provisions relating to pecuniary jurisdiction of consumer commissions were leading to cases which could earlier be filed in State Commissions and cases which could earlier be filed in District Commissions. This caused a significant increase in workload of District Commissions, leading to rise in pendency and delay in disposal of cases, defeating the very object of securing speedy redressal to consumers as envisaged under the Act."

It stated, "With regard to revision of pecuniary jurisdiction, Central Government held consultation with States/UTs, consumer organizations, law chairs etc. and examined the issues that had created long pendency of cases in detail," the statement said.

According to the statement, under the law, every complaint is to be disposed of "as expeditiously as possible", and attempt is to be made to decide the complaint within a period of three months from the date of receipt of notice by the "opposite party", where the complaint does not require analysis or testing of commodities and within 5 months if it requires analysis or testing of commodities.

## Centre approves Rs 3,000 cr more aid to states for natural disasters

New Delhi: The Union government has approved additional assistance of more than Rs 3,000 crore to six states this year to cover damages caused by natural disasters, a Home Ministry statement said Thursday.

Gujarat was granted Rs 1,133.35 crore for Cyclone Tauktae and West Bengal received Rs 586.59 crore for Cyclone 'Yaas'.

Similarly, for disasters such as floods and landslides during the monsoon, Assam was granted Rs 515.3 crore, Karnataka was given Rs. 504.06 crore, Madhya Pradesh got Rs. 600.50 crore and Uttarakhand Rs 187.18 crore.

This assistance is over and above the funds released by the Centre to states in the State Disaster Response Fund. ENS

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Advertisement No. 9/2021- Eighty Five (85) post of Assistant Professor/Scientist  
Details may be downloaded from the University Website- [www.nduat.org](http://www.nduat.org). Applications on prescribed Proforma must reach to the office of the undersigned before 5.00 PM of 28 January, 2022 through Registered/ Speed post only.  
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(Sunil KS Bhaduria)  
Deputy Director (Admn.)

For & on behalf of Director, LHMC

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### HYDERPORA ENCOUNTER

## Return son's body: Father of killed Ramban youth files petition in HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, DECEMBER 30

THE FATHER of Amir Magray, one of the four people killed in an encounter in Hyderpora area of Srinagar on November 15, on Thursday filed a writ petition in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court, seeking the return of his son's body, saying he was innocent and citing his family's long contribution in the fight against terrorism.

Police, who have so far returned the bodies of two local Kashmir residents to their families, have not handed over Amir's body to his family yet, saying he was an associate of the Pakistani militant who was also killed in the encounter.

Mohammad Latief filed his petition through counsel

Deepika Singh Rajawat and Mohammad Arshad Chowdhary two days after a Special Investigation Team of J&K Police, which probed the encounter, said that Amir, the youth from Ramban district in Jammu Division, was a militant.

In his petition, Latief said, "...That being close to Amir, the petitioner knew everything good and bad about him, thus can state on oath that his son was never involved into any anti-national activities or was associated with any such outfit that conspires to bring harm to the nation."

Invoking Article 21 of the Constitution, which extends the right to have decent burial as per religious ceremonies and rules, for his son, the petitioner said he has been instrumental in fighting and curbing militancy in Gool Singalan area by working as a

civilian volunteer with the Army. Referring to an incident of August 6, 2005, when he along with his wife and other family members killed a Lashkar-e-Toiba militant who had barged into his house and opened fire on the inmates, the petitioner said he was conferred the state bravery award in 2012 by the J&K government.

"That apart..., the petitioner has been well appreciated by the Indian Army for his service towards the nation in eliminating militancy in his area -- Gool Singalan, Ramban," the petition said.

In view of the family's support to the Army, the petitioner said he has remained vulnerable to attacks, owing to which security was provided to him and his family, which is still in place outside their house.

(WITH INPUTS FROM PTI)

## Banaras Locomotive Works seeks to expand earnings through exports

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
VARANASI, DECEMBER 30

BANARAS LOCOMOTIVE Works (BLW), a production unit of Indian Railways, is planning to expand its earnings through manufacturing locomotives for export.

In 2021, it had completed an order of six 3,000 HP Cape Gauge locomotives to Mozambique.

After the agreement for the order was made with Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES) in November 2020, the locomotives were handed over from March to August this year, and it received an order for a seventh locomotive in September.

"The Mozambique order is significant because the entire thing was completed during Covid times. We got the order in

November 2020... In such little time, it is difficult to complete an international order, that too when over 1,000 of our staff were down with Covid in April and May. Another thing it did was that it gave supply opportunities to the private sector and public sector. So many firms partnered with us, and a new market opened up for them," said BLW general manager Anjali Goyal.

Similarly, for disasters such as floods and landslides during the monsoon, Assam was granted Rs 515.3 crore, Karnataka was given Rs. 504.06 crore, Madhya Pradesh got Rs. 600.50 crore and Uttarakhand Rs 187.18 crore.

This assistance is over and above the funds released by the Centre to states in the State Disaster Response Fund. ENS

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This

Ministry of Railways, Government of India invites applications from eligible persons for the following posts in National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) which is implementing Mumbai-Ahmedabad high speed train project:

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The applications, along with enclosures may be sent to:

Shri Manoj Kumar, Director/Deputation, Ministry of Railways, Room No.107, Rail Bhawan, New Delhi-110001.

Last date for receipt of applications is 17.30 hrs. on 31.01.2022. Applications received after the last date will not be entertained and no correspondence will be entertained in this regard.

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## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male namely Sunil Siddanta S/o Siddant Nigam R/o TA-6, Rajibai Chawl, Mahim Causeway (West) General Arun Kumar Metro, Mumbai City Age : About 41 years, Complexion : Wheatish, Height : 5'2", Build : Thin, Face : Oval, wearing Red & Black colour Strip T-Shirt & grey colour track suit jacket and lower, was found unconscious on 16.12.2021. He is admitted in LBS Hospital, Delhi, where doctor declare him brought dead. In this regard a DD No. 72A dated 17.12.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Madhu Vihar, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

**SHO : P.S. Madhu Vihar, Delhi**  
Tel. No. : 011-22732429, 22732426,  
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दिनांक : 30 दिसम्बर, 2021

विज्ञप्ति

एतद्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि दिनांक: 12 दिसम्बर, 2021 को आयोजित सामिनियत सत्रान् (विनियोग) अवधि के अन्तर्गत प्रक्रिया के अन्तर्गत सत्रान् अध्ययन एवं सामान्य युक्ति परीक्षण की चारों सीरीज़ (A, B, C & D) में चालत उत्तरायण्ड लोक सेवा आयोग ने वेबसाइट <http://www.ukpsc.gov.in> पर अन्यथापूर्वक सूचीबद्ध प्रसारण गत दिनों तक चारों सीरीज़ के लिये अपने उपलब्ध एवं उत्तरायण्ड में नई आपत्ति हो तो वह आयोग ने वेबसाइट पर Online Answer Key Objection देख दिये गए लिंक पर जाकर अपनी आपत्तियों को आयोग द्वारा जारी दिया जाने के अनुरूप दिनांक: 31 दिसम्बर, 2021 से 06 जानवरी, 2022 (समय तकि के 23:59:59 बैंक तक) तक अपने काश सत्रों के अन्यथा द्वारा प्रति-प्रत्यन्त जारी की जाने के लिये अपनी द्वारा भर्तुल रूप से अन्यथा द्वारा दिया गया उत्तरायण्ड के साथ नियोगिता युक्त रुप से 50.00 का नुस्खा दिया जाना होगा।

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## Ludhiana blast probe: RDX packed in plastic container

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

A FORENSIC examination of last week's blast inside a washroom at the Ludhiana district court complex has revealed the use of around 1.5 kg of RDX packed in a plastic container along with a significant amount of shrapnel, indicating the intention to cause significant damage and loss of life.

The Indian Express had reported on December 25 that the examination had initially been hampered as a water pipe had burst in the blast, washing away vital clues. "Experts worked on the spot over the next couple of

**Gujarat: 55 AAP workers granted bail, set to be released today**

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
AHMEDABAD, DECEMBER 30

AS MANY as 55 AAP workers who were jailed at the Sabarmati Central Prison in Ahmedabad for the past 11 days for protesting outside the BJP headquarters in Gandhinagar on December 20, will be released on Friday morning after a Gandhinagar court granted them conditional bail on Thursday.

According to the bail order, the 55 AAP men will not be allowed to enter the Gandhinagar city and their passports will be seized. The jailed workers include AAP Gujarat president Gopal Italia, Youth Wing general secretary Nikhil Savani, senior leaders Isudan Gadhi, Hasmukh Patel, Shiv Kumar and Pravin Ram, along with 10 college students aged between 18 and 22 years, who are part of AAP's student and youth wings.

"All 55 leaders of the AAP have been granted bail by a sessions court in Gandhinagar on the solvency of Rs 50,000 and conditions that they cannot enter the Gandhinagar city area and cannot leave the country. The bail proceedings went on till late Thursday... They will be released from Sabarmati Central Prison on Friday around 10 am," said Pranav Thakkar, legal counsel, AAP Gujarat.

Police arrested 93 AAP workers for allegedly holding a protest outside Shri Kamalam in Koba of Gandhinagar against the leak of question paper of Gujarat Subordinate Service Selection Board examination for recruitment of head clerks. Among the arrested were 28 members of the AAP women's wing, 10 bus drivers and conductors, and 55 male AAP leaders. While women members were given bail last week, the 10 drivers and conductors were also given bail in the past two days.

### MALEGAON BLAST WITNESS CLAIM

**UPA forced witness to change case angle: BJP leader named earlier**

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

WITH A witness in the 2008 Malegaon blast case claiming that he was pressured by the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) to name five RSS members, including Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, a BJP leader who is among those named by the witness on Thursday alleged that the Congress-led UPA government had forced the witness to "change the angle of the case" as part of its appeasement strategy.

According to Sunil Deodhar, BJP national secretary and former RSS Pracharak, the pressure on the witness was part of a "larger conspiracy to coin the word Hindu terror."

"The witness has given a statement that he was under pressure and torture to name five Hindu leaders - Yogi Adityanath, Indresh Kumar, Aseemanand, Sunil Deodhar and Kakkaji. I don't know who this Kakkaji is," Deodhar told The Indian Express.

According to him, after the Malegaon blast there was a 'chin-tan baithak' (brainstorming session) of the NCP in Alibaug, where party chief Sharad Pawar, he

 **BJP National Secretary Sunil Deodhar**

maintained, had said that Muslims could not do such a blast on a Friday, which the community holds as a pious day. "This shows there must be a different angle to this case," Deodhar said. "At that time (UPA) were in power. He had probably instigated a new angle... I was regularly exposing the then (Congress-led) Maharashtra government and their appeasement towards terrorist activities and protecting the terrorists."

"There was one SMS...that all Muslims are not terrorist but all terrorists are Muslims. This was because of the serial blasts across the country and those responsible were all Muslims. So, there was a conspiracy to make Hindus also part of it. There was a larger conspiracy to coin the word 'Hindu terror'..."

Deodhar said the witness' statement has endorsed that the term Hindu terror was wrong and the then government had been misusing the investigative agencies against Opposition party.

days and managed to pick up some traces that turned out to be RDX," sources said.

"Given that it is a military grade explosive, the evidence of it having come from across the border and the incident's links with pro-Khalistan groups supported by Pakistan have become stronger," a senior officer in the security establishment said.

The new findings in the case come at a time when security agencies have flagged renewed activity of pro-Khalistan terror groups in Punjab, with regular drops of arms, ammunition, explosives and IEDs being detected from across the border using drones. In the recent past alone,



At the blast site in Ludhiana district court. Express file

43 drone sightings have been reported by police close to the border near Amritsar and Pathankot.

According to Punjab Police, the

lone casualty in last Thursday's blast, which injured six others, was the man carrying the explosives. He has been identified as Gagandeep Singh (30), a former policeman who was sacked two years ago after being booked in a case of drug smuggling.

Gagandeep's charred body was identified based on a tattoo and a mobile phone recovered from the spot. "While the phone was completely destroyed, NSG (National Security Guard) personnel were able to recover the memory card and dongle. During forensic examination, it gave vital clues not only about the identity of the perpetrator but also his links," the senior officer said.

According to police, Gagandeep was dismissed from service after his arrest in August 2019 and spent two years in jail before being bailed out in September this year. A Punjab Police officer said the "evidence suggests he was not an expert in assembling bombs and committed some mistake, setting off the blast (on the second floor)".

On Saturday, Punjab DGP Siddharth Chattopadhyay had said that Gagandeep came in contact with pro-Khalistan elements during his time in jail, and there were indications that the blast was linked to Khalistani and narco-terror elements operating from Pakistan.



Bandra Wonderland in Mumbai was vacated on Thursday evening in line with new Covid restrictions. Amit Chakravarty

## Mumbai's Covid-19 positivity rate shoots up to 7.67%

RUPSA CHAKRABORTY  
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 30

AMID APPREHENSIONS of a possible third wave of Covid-19, the daily positivity rate in Mumbai skyrocketed to 7.67 per cent on Thursday. This has raised an alarm among public health experts, who are anticipating a much higher daily count than the second wave.

Out of the 46,337 tests conducted in Mumbai on Thursday, 3,555 were positive for Covid-19, recording a 7.92 per cent Test Percentage Rate (TPR), the number of positive cases detected compared to the total tests conducted. This is a rise of more than 3 percentage points in TPR over Wednesday, when 2,510 Covid-19 cases were detected out of the 51,843 tests conducted, recording a daily positivity rate of 4.84 per cent.

The surge in cases also pushed up the state's Covid-19 tally. Mumbai contributed 66 per cent of the state's total 5,368 Covid-19 cases reported on December 30.

### TWO DAYS AFTER HIS DEATH, REPORT SAYS MAN HAD OMICRON

Pune: Two days after a 52-year-old man died at Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation's Yashwantrao Chavhan Memorial Hospital, a report by the National Institute of Virology on Thursday said he was infected with Covid-19's Omicron variant. However, health officials said the man, who had travelled to Nigeria, died of a heart attack. ENS

Experts said the daily cases are expected to increase more than the second wave. "Considering that the cases are doubling within 24 hours, it is expected that the cases would increase more than the second wave. However, hospitalization would be less along with fatality. So, it is not the time to keep our guard down," said Dr Shashank Joshi, member of the Covid-19 task force.

...In view of the rising number of Omicron cases globally as well within the country, the state government has decided

## Covid cases double in 24 hours, Bengal halts flights from UK

SWEETY KUMARI  
KOLKATA, DECEMBER 30

THE NUMBER of new Covid-19 cases in West Bengal doubled to 2,128 in the last 24 hours with Kolkata alone reporting 1,090 new cases on Thursday. The test positivity rate also saw a huge jump. The weekly test positivity rate for Kolkata rose to 12.5 per cent, according to the data shared by the state Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. West Bengal's test positivity rate has increased to 5.47 per cent.

Amid the sudden surge in Covid-19 cases in the state in the wake of the emergence of the Omicron variant of the virus, the West Bengal government on Thursday decided to suspend all direct flights from the United Kingdom from January 3.

...In view of the rising number of Omicron cases globally as well within the country, the state government has decided

to temporarily suspend all direct flights from the United Kingdom to Kolkata with effect from January 3," read a government notification.

Flights from "at risk" countries will not be allowed to land in the state, the notification said. "Further, with effect from January 3, all passengers arriving from other 'non-at-risk' countries via international flights to West Bengal will have to undergo a mandatory Covid-19 test on arrival," it added.

The airlines will randomly select 10 per cent of the passengers for an RT-PCR test and the remaining 90 per cent shall undergo a rapid antigen test (RAT) on arrival at the airport. Those found positive in the rapid antigen test will further have to undergo an RT-PCR test. Further, all passengers have to mandatorily pre-book the test before boarding to reduce waiting time on arrival, which the airlines must ensure before allowing boarding," said an official of the health department.

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2021

# THE EDITORIAL PAGE

## The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## DANGEROUS DELUSION

J&K Police gives itself a clean chit, threatens critics. It needs to be urgently disabused of the notion that it is above the law

**T**HE JAMMU & KASHMIR Police appear to be under the dangerous delusion that they are the strong arm of a police state. How else could one explain the bizarre threat by the Deputy Inspector General of Kashmir of penal action against anyone expressing a critical view on the clean chit that the police have given themselves in an encounter in the Hyderpora neighbourhood of Srinagar in which two innocent civilians were killed? The inquiry itself seemed distinctly odd – a “special investigation team” of police officers to inquire into the killing of two civilians by a posse of police, army and paramilitary personnel, setting aside the first principle of natural justice that no one should be a judge in their own cause. No surprise, then, that this so-called SIT should have absolved the security forces of any wrongdoing, laying the blame for one civilian killing on the alleged militant who was also killed in that encounter, and attributing the second to “crossfire”. Only two weapons were recovered from the site of the alleged encounter. A media conference by the police to announce these findings at a time when the government is studying the report of a magistrate’s inquiry into the same incident gives the distinct impression that the police now consider themselves above judicial scrutiny. Its edict that no member of the public or any local politician should challenge the findings of the SIT only confirms that the force views itself above questions or accountability.

Only in Bollywood films of a certain vintage are police officers seen to have such overweening powers to lay down their own rules, make up their own law. Senior police officers in J&K must also remember that the ranks and the constabulary are drawn from the local population. As a civilian force, the J&K police have played a stellar role in countering militancy right from the 1990s. They have been able to do this primarily because people identify with the police in a way that they may not with the armed forces.

If the police continue in this vein, however, they will find their duties, including dealing with a militancy that does not seem to be disappearing anytime soon, becoming even more difficult in a climate where the public loss of trust in government is the biggest challenge. It falls on the Union Home Ministry, which governs the Union Territory of J&K directly, to disabuse the police leadership of the notion that it is unaccountable. Or else it would invite the conclusion that a mid-ranking officer could not have said what he did without the support and concurrence of the Lieutenant Governor or the political bosses in Delhi.

## LAB TO PEOPLE

Despite new vaccines, India relies on first generation shots. Government must enable manufacturers to ramp up production

**A**MID A SURGE in Omicron-driven infections, India’s Drugs Controller General has granted emergency use approval to Molnupiravir, the world’s first Covid-19 pill. The regulator also gave an EUA to two vaccines, Hyderabad-based Biological E’s Corbevax and Covovax manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, under licence from the US vaccine company, Novavax. The pharmacological interventions are potential game-changers in the battle against the scourge that has tormented the world for two years now. If it can replicate the clinical trial results in an actual outbreak scenario, Molnupiravir can reduce hospitalisation amongst patients with severe Covid infection by 50 per cent. Corbevax and Covovax have demonstrated close to 90 per cent efficacy in clinical trials. Though these protein-based vaccines take longer to develop compared to the jabs that use the viral vector or mRNA platforms, they tutor the recipient’s immune system to react faster to a viral attack.

India now has at least five homegrown or indigenously manufactured vaccines. However, the country’s inoculation drive continues to rely predominantly on the two first generation vaccines, Covishield and Covaxin. In August, the drug regulator cleared the use of Zydus Cadila’s Zycov-D for children and adults. Eight months later, the DNA-based vaccine will reportedly be used in a limited manner in seven states for adult inoculation. The inoculation programme for 15-18-year-olds, that will take off from next week, will draw on Covaxin, despite its Hyderabad-based manufacturer, Bharat Biotech, pleading production constraints several times during the inoculation drive for adults. Similarly, the protein-based vaccines are not amongst the initial options for the “precautionary doses” announced recently for healthcare professionals, frontline workers, and elderly citizens. According to the government’s estimates, released in June, about 300 million shots of Corbevax were to be available between September and December. Biological E’s latest statements indicate that it is aiming at a monthly manufacturing target of 100 million shots by February. Production must be ramped up and timelines scrupulously adhered to for the vaccine to justify its potential.

India’s experience with Covid vaccination shows that the country’s scientific bodies and its vaccine manufacturers and developers are adept at generating technological knowhow – this includes institutions other than the world-renowned SII. However, Bharat Biotech’s performance indicates that these firms struggle to produce at the scale necessary to make their presence felt in the inoculation drive. There are early and worrying indications that Biological E and Zydus Cadila could go the Covaxin manufacturer’s way. The government should ascertain if these firms are facing production-related difficulties and create an enabling milieu for them.

## WHAT’S IN A NAME CHANGE?

The curious case of Urdu poet

Akbar Allahabadi’s new name

**R**ENAMING HAS A long history in India. The British once mangled native names in imperial arrogance; nativist rulers now rename cities and *kasbas*, streets and stadiums to avenge history, and inflame old wounds. For a brief while this year, it seemed that *sarkari* fiat wanted to do even more – not just rewrite history for political ends, but even give a spanking new digital ID to the dead. On the website of Uttar Pradesh Higher Education Services Commission, Urdu poet Akbar Allahabadi, whose *takhalus* paid homage to the city he lived in and worked in till his death in the 1920s, had been renamed Akbar Prayagraji.

The poet would not have been amused. Allahabadi was a sharp satirist, a nationalist despite being a servant of the British government, and he firmly believed that the destinies of Hindus and Muslims were inseparable. For him, Prayagraj and Allahabad were not on either side of a fault line. But nearly a century after his death, his city’s name, found too Mughal by the powers-that-be, was changed by official diktat. How could he be exempt? Indeed, Allahabadi is not the only one to suffer this inelegance – two other poets, who had adopted similar pen-names, had found their names changed on the website.

What’s in a name change? The bureaucratic machine is not known to be a friend of poetry or the imagination; it is the literalness of paperwork that it recognises – offered in triplicate, duly attested by a gazetted officer. But was Allahabadi’s renaming only about the earnest logic of bureaucratic compliance? Was it a find/replace function error? The unthinking work of an incompetent bureaucrat? Or something more purposeful, given the current manufactured prickliness to anything Urdu or Muslim? The UP government claims that the changes were unintentional and that the website had been hacked. Allahabadi’s name has been restored. And the curious case of Akbar Prayagraji laid to rest.



HASEEB A DRABU

EVEN BEFORE THE Delimitation Commission headed by Justice Ranjana Desai was constituted, its mandate and jurisdiction with respect to J&K were severely curtailed. Two of its three key decisions were pre-empted by legislative fiat. Circumventing the Delimitation Act of 2002, the Union government increased the number of seats in the legislative assembly of J&K from 107 to 114 through the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019.

The Union government also predetermined the population base: Clause xi of the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019 stipulated the 2011 Census as the basis for delimitation. In all other states, including the four going in for delimitation along with J&K, the 2001 census is being used in accordance with the Delimitation Act of 2002.

By doing this, the Union government has ridden roughshod over the Delimitation Commission, which has the sole prerogative to decide on both these matters. As spelt out, clause 8(b) of the Delimitation Act of 2002, mandates and empowers the Delimitation Commission to decide on the “the total number of seats to be assigned to the Legislative Assembly of each State and determine on the basis of census figures”.

Having been belittled and bypassed even before its constitution, the only job left to the Commission was to distribute the seven predetermined additional assembly seats. After deliberating for a year-and-a-half, the Commission has proposed allocating six additional seats to Jammu and one to Kashmir. Hence, out of the 116 assembly constituencies, 42 will belong to Jammu and 47 to Kashmir. The remaining 24 seats continue to be reserved for representatives from areas occupied by Pakistan.

In the last assembly, constituted in 2015 and dissolved in 2019, 37 legislators were elected from Jammu, 46 from Kashmir and four from Ladakh. With Ladakh now a separate unit, increasing the assembly constituencies in Jammu seeks to redress the imbalance in the political power structure within J&K. Jammu, a Hindu majority divi-

J&K Delimitation Commission privileges ‘considerations’ over ‘criteria’, introduces imbalance in representation

sion, is widely perceived to have been discriminated against and underrepresented in the political superstructure of the Muslim majority J&K.

Facts, however, are to the contrary. Jammu, with a 43 per cent population share had a 43 per cent share in the legislative assembly. While Kashmir with a 55 per cent share in the population of the state, had a 53 per cent seat share. Ladakh, as part of the erstwhile state, had a two per cent share in population and four per cent in the assembly.

Far from seeking to end the non-existent discrimination against Jammu, the Commission has introduced an imbalance in the regional representation. The allocation proposed by the Commission gives 47 per cent of the seats to Jammu which accounts for 44 per cent of the population. The obverse of this is that 56 per cent of the population living in Kashmir will have only a 52 per cent share in the assembly. Including the 22 elected members of the legislative council – 11 were from the Jammu division as against nine for the Kashmir – gives Kashmir, with a population share of 55 per cent, only a 50 per cent share in the legislature.

That Jammu has been underrepresented since 1951 fits more snugly with the ideological narrative of Hindus being discriminated in the Muslim majority state than with any empirical facts. In the last assembly, out of 87 MLAs, 52 were Muslims, 33 Hindus and two Buddhists. As such, while Hindus accounted for 28 per cent of the population, they had a 38 per cent representation in the assembly. As against this, Muslims, who are 67 per cent of the population, accounted for only 60 per cent of the legislative assembly. So much for discrimination of Jammu Hindus and domination by Kashmir Muslims.

The near-ideal balance of regions and religions in the J&K assembly thus far is in stark contrast to the share of minorities in the representation pie of other states. In Assam, for instance, Muslims whose share in the population is 34 per cent, constitute only 22 per cent in the state legislative Assembly. In

Kerala, the Muslim minority of 27 per cent has 21 per cent share in the assembly. In West Bengal, a 27 per cent population share translates into a 17 per cent seat share in the Assembly.

Instead of emulating the fair minority representation in J&K in the past, the Commission has introduced a brazen bias towards Jammu. In doing so, it has shown scant respect for the only universally accepted criteria for distribution of electoral constituencies, which is population.

In all the four previous delimitation commissions, the basis for the creation of constituencies is the criterion of population. In addition to which some considerations, such as topography, geographical continuity and physical features are stipulated for drawing of the constituency boundaries. By giving primacy to “considerations” over the “criteria”, the Commission has paved the way for the gerrymandering of constituencies especially those whose land area falls under two or more districts because of the creation of eight new districts in the state in 2006.

The actual electoral cartography could very well see pockets of Muslim concentration especially in districts in Pir Panchal and Chenab belt, like Doda, Kishtwar and Rajouri, being dispersed across constituencies to dilute their numerical strength. Lest it sounds conspiratorial, this has happened earlier. A case in point is Assam where the Muslim-majority pockets of Kajidahar, Chandpur and Nagdirgram in the Sonai constituency were amalgamated with the Dholai seat to subsume them numerically.

More than that, though, it is the Commission’s adventurism in playing around with the most cardinal principle of adult franchise “one person, one vote” that will have serious ramifications across the country in the future. A dangerous precedent is being set as yet another institution bites the dust.

The writer is the former finance minister of J&K



HSIN-HUANG MICHAEL HSIAO AND SANA HASHMI

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN-LED Summit for Democracy was held on December 9-10 in a virtual format. As one of the flourishing democracies, Taiwan was seen in attendance, represented by Audrey Tang, Taiwan’s digital minister, and Bi-khim Hsiao, Taiwan’s representative to the United States. The summit was driven by the idea that in the face of populism, authoritarianism, and other forms of non-democratic systems looming large, it is critical to keep the “democratic” flock together.

The salience of this summit lies in a deeper understanding on the part of the Biden administration that democracy is not just a form of government, it is a goal in itself, a value that must be cherished, preserved and celebrated. It is this vision of democracy as a norm that has seemingly rattled authoritarian countries. That said, unlike other political systems, democracy is also a way of life – a work in progress that needs sustained attention and careful nurturing to make it more resilient.

Ideas like these are consistently echoed in Taiwan’s policy circles. For instance, during the 2021 Open Parliament Forum held in Taiwan, President Tsai Ing-wen reiterated Taiwan’s commitment to work with liberal democracies for forging an alliance to bolster collective democratic resilience and realise open governance.

These goals were highlighted during this year’s Yushan Forum, where Vice President Lai Ching-te articulated the three principal priorities that would shape Taiwan’s external cooperation in the post-pandemic world – recovering from the pandemic, restoring the economy, and safeguarding democracy.

Despite their apparent flaws and criticisms, democracies have fared much better than others in dealing with the pandemic. The world woke up to the perils of authoritarianism during the pandemic, which has also made the world realise the virtues of a democratic system.

## DEMOCRACY’S WORK IN PROGRESS

Pandemic has underlined that transnational challenges demand joint efforts

These goals are not only in sync with global priorities but also complement the objectives set forth in Taiwan’s New Southbound Policy (NSP), launched in 2016 to bring Asia closer to Taiwan and vice-versa. The NSP is aimed to be a pivotal tool to engage like-minded democracies in the region.

Focusing on recovery (post-pandemic), revival (economy), and safeguarding (democracy) may help find a sustainable way in establishing a development-oriented regional engagement framework. The post-pandemic world would be more invested in some of these areas – for example, health diplomacy and collaboration in the medical sector, climate change mitigation, and developing sustainable and resilient supply chains. Taiwan is already proving its efficacy as a viable platform for the semiconductor industry. The US and its friends in the region, particularly India, Japan and Australia, have been proactively exploring possibilities of creating resilient supply chain mechanisms. With its technological knowhow, and shared interests and concerns, Taiwan fits perfectly in this agenda.

Greater interactions between Taiwan and EU on the technology cooperation front, stimulated by the latter’s renewed interest in the Indo-Pacific region, makes Taiwan a desired partner of fellow democracies.

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However, political resilience needs to be

complemented by economic and social resilience. Greater consultations and cooperation amongst democracies are needed to restore economic stability in the post-pandemic world. Post-pandemic regional economic recovery has to be tackled collectively as success hinges on sustained corrective steps of regional nature. As an industrialised democracy, Taiwan could play an important role, especially since countries are trying to reduce dependence on China and establish supply chain resilience. One big lesson the Covid-19 pandemic has taught us is that nobody is safe until everybody is safe.

During the pandemic, Taiwan elucidated the resilient nature of its foreign policy. In the early days of the pandemic, Taiwan, with its exceptionally low number of cases, reached out to friends. As part of its health diplomacy, Taiwan donated surgical face masks, personal protective equipment (PPE) kits, oxygen cylinders and concentrators to Covid-affected countries.

Taiwan, however, cannot afford to take its eyes off the challenges posed to democracies by authoritarianism. It is important for liberal democracies to acknowledge that they are facing similar challenges and view Taiwan as an indispensable partner. Deft diplomacy is in order since transnational challenges demand joint efforts by liberal democracies.

Hsiao, chairman, Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation and Adjunct Research Fellow, Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, is currently senior advisor to the President of Taiwan; Hashmi is a visiting fellow at Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation



DECEMBER 31, 1981, FORTY YEARS AGO

### JUDGES’ CASE VERDICT

THE SUPREME COURT dismissed all writ petitions in the judges’ case and by a majority of 4-3 upheld the actions of the Union government on the three main questions involved. The transfer of Chief Justice KBS Singh of the Patna High Court, the government decision not to extend the term of the additional judge of the Delhi HC, and the Law Minister’s circular to chief ministers to obtain the consent of transfer anywhere of those who wanted to be permanent judges, were held valid. Justices A C Gupta, V D Tulzapurkar, Justice K S Pathak, and Justice E S Venkataramiah held that the transfer of the Patna Chief Justice was valid.

However, Justice P N Bhagwati, presiding judge, Justice D A Desai and Justice Murtaza Fazal Ali, held that the transfer was in the nature of a punishment and it was in the case of Justice Singh that the Chief Justice of India filed an affidavit of his own to clarify the stages of consultation between him and Justice Singh. The Patna judge had contradicted the statements of the Chief Justice of India.

### PM ON OPPOSITION

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi criticised Janata rule for reversing the process of development initiated by her government and ridiculed the opposition move for unity.

Addressing a public meeting here at the end of her visit to the state, Mrs Gandhi said she was not worried about the accusations being hurled at her government. The opposition was in the habit of running down its achievements, she said.

### ASSAM ON EDGE

SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS HAVE been tightened all over the Brahmaputra valley as four bomb explosions were reported from various parts of Darrang and North Lakhimpur districts with barely hours to go for the 36-hour “Path Bandh” (road blockade) campaign organised by the AASU and AGP.

New Delhi



## Namita Gokhale, Tamil writer Ambai win Sahitya Akademi Award

**ADITYA VADDEPALLI**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

TAMIL FEMINIST writer Ambai, Kannada biographer DS Nagabhusan, Telugu poet Goreti Venkanna, and English author Namita Gokhale, among others, are this year's winners of the Sahitya Akademi Award. The award was announced for literary works in 20 languages on Thursday.

This year, seven books of po-



Ambai (left); and Gokhale

etry, two novels, five short stories, two plays, one biography and autobiography, a book on criticism, and a poem were chosen for the award. Awards in Gujarati, Maithili, Manipuri, and Urdu lan-

guages will be announced at a later date. The awardees will receive a cash prize of Rs 1,00,000.

The other winners are Mwdai Gehai (Bodo), Sanjiv Verenkar (Konkani), Hirshikesh Mallick (Odia), Meethesh Nirmohi (Rajasthani), Vinodshwariprasad Nish (Sanskrit), Arjun Chawla (Sindhi), Raj Rahi (Dogri), Kiran Gurav (Marathi), Khalid Hussain (Punjabi), Niranjan Hansda (Santali), Anuradha Sarma Pujari (Assamese), George Onakkor

(Malayalam), Bratya Basu (Bengali), Daya Prakash Sinha (Hindi), Wali Muhammad Aseer Kishhtwari (Kashmiri), Chhabilal Upadhyaya (Nepali).

Talking about winning the prestigious award for her book *Things to Leave Behind*, Gokhale says, "To be a Sahitya Akademi awardee as an English writer, amidst those books in 22 languages, is a privilege. I believe in the concept of many languages, one literature."

Gokhale's book is set during

1840-1912 in the Kumaon region. "It looks at the new fragile modernity that was emerging at that time. It looks at colonial history from the point of view of both the colonisers and of Kumaon — my home state. It has many themes but the basic story is about three generations, of stubborn Kumaon women. There's a peculiar obstinacy that characterises the mountain women," she told *The Indian Express*.

A lot of the material for the book came from Gokhale's previ-

ous work *Mountain Echoes: Reminiscences of Kumaon Women*, where the author explores the oral history of the Kumaon region through the memories of her grandmother and three great aunts. "It gave me an idea of how people lived, especially the women of the household. My great grandfather, BD Pandey, had written the first history of Kumaon, which was a credible source. Another source was *The Himalayan Gazetteer*, written by ET Atkinson," she says.

## Gurgaon to get commercial hub on lines of 'Dubai model'

**SUKHBIR SIWACH**  
CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 30

HARYANA DEPUTY Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala Thursday said the government has planned to launch a Global City project in Gurgaon, spread over 1,000 acres, "on the model of Dubai's Business Bay" in 2022.

Chautala told *The Indian Express* that they have plans to initiate the tendering process for the project within a month. "The map has been prepared for the Global City and we plan to launch it by the first quarter of 2022. The Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (HSIIDC) will develop the infrastructure and auction the big plots. We plan to develop the area in a phased manner; initially, we intend to develop a chunk of 50 or 100 acres of land only. On the model of Dubai's Business Bay, it will have shopping malls and commercial and residential buildings. For construction purposes, 3.5 FAR (floor area ratio) will be permitted."

According to Chautala, the Global City will have walking, cycling and service lanes: "It will have non-stop lanes too where vehicle crossing will take place via underground lanes only. There will be space for civic amenities at underground spaces like in Delhi's Connaught Place."

He further said the Global City will have the biggest heli-hub, which will be spread over 25 acres. "It will be much bigger than a helipad," he added.

Officials said the site of the Global City is part of Gurgaon's Sector-36-37 and is located at the junction of Pataudi road and Dwarka Expressway. A source

**E EXPLAINED**  
Business in focus

DUBAI'S BUSINESS Bay is a hotspot of residential and hospitality highrises, with several recognisable landmarks. The project in Gurgaon, planned across 1,000 acres, will similarly have shopping malls and commercial buildings as well as residential complexes. Initially, 50-100 acres will be developed. The Global City is coming up at the junction of Pataudi road and Dwarka Expressway.

said: "The site has been chosen for high-end development. Mainly, only green industries will be permitted here like manufacturing of items related to electronics, bio-technology, and information technology. Chautala has instructed officials to initiate the tendering process early so that the project takes off soon."

Officials said the 1,000 acres of land is part of 1,383 acres which Reliance had returned to the Haryana government in 2014. Earlier, there were plans to set up a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) here but that did not take off.

Chautala said the government

has 130 acres available to develop a commercial city near the Global City. "The commercial city will have four dedicated towers. For example, one may be for gifts only, another for furniture items, and third may be for residential utilisation items. The idea is simple: residents get everything from one building."

**Cardinal Oswald Gracias, one of the seven special advisers to Pope Francis, at Raj Bhavan. Express**

## Pope visit likely next year, says adviser

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
PANAJI, DECEMBER 30

DAYS AFTER Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke of his visit to the Vatican City on Goa's 60th liberation day on December 19, Cardinal Oswald Gracias, one of the seven special advisers to Pope Francis, visited the Raj Bhavan here on Thursday.

Cardinal Gracias said preparations for Pope Francis's visit to India are being made for 2022-end, or towards the beginning of 2023.

"We have to prepare the people spiritually also. With the Prime Minister's Office, we have already begun (discussions) on where he could go, where he could stay, etc. I hope Goa is one of those important stops," Cardinal Gracias told Prudent Media news channel here.

In his address on December 19 in Taleigao, the Prime

Minister had spoken of his visit to the Vatican City in October and mentioned that he had extended an invitation to Pope Francis to visit India. "I invited him (the Pope) to India... Pope Francis said, 'This is the greatest gift you have given me'. This is his affection towards India's diversity and our vibrant democracy," Modi had said.

On his meeting with Goa Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai, Cardinal Gracias, president of Catholic Bishop's Conference of India, who was on a three-day visit to Goa, said, "We had a heart-to-heart talk and exchange about the good of the nation, good of Goa and how we can take the country forward..." Cardinal Gracias also visited his ancestral home in Goa's Orlim.

"We are all worried about the pandemic. We are hoping the pandemic tapers off and goes off," he said.

## Yet to determine tax liabilities of raided perfume trader: DGFI

**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

CLARIFYING THAT tax liabilities from the recent cash seizure from searches conducted at the residential and business premises of Uttar Pradesh-based businessman Peeyush Jain are yet to be determined, GST authorities on Thursday said no deposit of tax dues has been made so far.

The total amount of cash in the ongoing case from residential and factory premises of M/s Peeyush Jain has been kept as case property in the safe custody of the State Bank of India pending further investigations. No deposit of tax dues has been made by M/s Odochem Industries from the seized money to discharge their tax liabilities and their tax liabilities are yet to be determined," the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGFI) said in a statement.

Citing some reports which stated that the department is treating the Rs 197.49-crore cash recovered from Jain as business turnover and a fourth of it being allowed to be deposited as tax, DGFI called such reports "purely speculative". Voluntary submissions by the accused are under investigation, which will decide the exact nature of the liability, it stated.

The DGFI stated, "Voluntary submissions made by Shri Peeyush Jain are a subject matter of ongoing investigations and any view on the source of cash



Gold and cash recovered in a raid on Peeyush Jain's residence in Kannauj on Wednesday. PTI

seized by the department and the exact tax liabilities of M/s Odochem Industries or other parties involved in the investigation shall be taken on the basis of appraisal of evidences collected from various premises during the searches and the outcome of further investigations."

A total Rs 197.49 crore cash, 23 kg gold and some offending goods of high value have been recovered so far in searches carried out in UP's Kannauj at Odochem Industries — a manufacturer of perfumery compounds — and its proprietor Peeyush Jain, the statement said.

The department denied it had treated the recoveries as turnover and the accused has been allowed to deposit Rs 52

crore as tax dues. Such reports are without any basis and seek to "undermine the integrity of the ongoing investigations which are being carried out in a most professional manner based on specific intelligence", it said.

The DGFI said that "based on voluntary admission of guilt and evidence available on record," Jain was arrested on December 26 and produced before the competent court the next day, which sent him to 14 days of judicial custody. Jain has been charged under Section 132 of the Central Goods and Services Act, 2017, which deals with offences of supplying any goods or services without an invoice, the issue of any invoice or bill without supply of goods or services, or evading tax.

**Rajasthan gets Centre's nod for mining in Chhattisgarh**

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
JAIPUR, DECEMBER 30

THE RAJASTHAN government has received environmental clearance from Union environment ministry for mining in Chhattisgarh's Hasdeo Aranya Coal Field, state officials said on Thursday, months after the Wildlife Institute of India raised concerns over the project.

The state has received clearance for Phase 2 of Parsa (East) and Kete Basan (PEKB) in Chhattisgarh, Subodh Agarwal, additional chief secretary for energy, said Thursday.

Approval from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change will enable the state to start mining activities in an area of 1,136 hectares in PEKB, he said.

Rajasthan will now need approval of the Chhattisgarh government on both proposals. The Congress-led governments in the two states, however, are at loggerheads over mining clearance in Parsa block, located at Surguja district of Chhattisgarh.

The *Indian Express* reported in November that despite a biodiversity report from the Wildlife Institute of India warning that forests in Hasdeo Aranya Coal Field should be declared a "no-go area", Chhattisgarh was pushing for permission to start Phase-II of mining in the PEKB coal block, in the same area.

## NOTICE BOARD

CORPORATE ASSOCIATE DIARY

APPOINTMENTS, MOVEMENTS, CELEBRATIONS, HONOURS



### MoU - SECI

In order to realize green energy objectives and the GOI's efforts towards carbon neutral economy, a MoU was recently signed between BPCL and Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI) in New Delhi.



### CSR - OIL

As part of OIL's CSR intervention, the company recently launched brand Harbest (Best of Harvest) under CSR project OIL Jeevika at Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati.



### AGREEMENT - PNB

PNB entered into tie-up arrangement with Lendingkart Finance Ltd for Co-lending Business, in presence of Surendra Kumar Dixit, CGM PNB and Arun Sharma, GM (Agriculture), PNB, Ashok Kumar Gupta, GM (MSME) PNB.



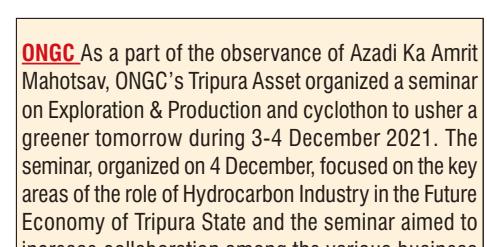
### AWARD - PFC

Dr. MN Pandey, Union Minister of Heavy Industries, Gol, presented the 'IEI Industry Excellence Award 2021' to R. Rahman, Executive Director (PR & CSR) and PK Sinha, Executive Director (Projects), from PFC.



### AGREEMENT - PNB

PNB entered into a tie-up arrangement with Paisalo Digital Ltd. & Vedika Credit Capital Ltd. for co-lending business, in the presence of SK Dixit, CGM & A Sharma, GM (Agriculture), PNB.



**ONGC** As a part of the observance of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, ONGC's Tripura Asset organized a seminar on Exploration & Production and cyclotron to usher a greener tomorrow during 3-4 December 2021. The seminar, organized on 4 December, focused on the key areas of the role of Hydrocarbon Industry in the Future Economy of Tripura State and the seminar aimed to increase collaboration among the various business partners in the E&P business in Tripura.

**TP-DDL** won two prominent awards – Platinum Award under the 'Best Country Award for Overall CSR Performance' category and Silver Award for 'Best Community Programme' categories at the prestigious 13th Global CSR Awards. The awards were announced during a virtual award ceremony. Company's CSR Initiatives are run under the mother brand Saathi (a companion) in order to effectively reach out to over 1 million underprivileged people, also company's consumers, residing in 220+ JJ clusters in North Delhi. Saathi focuses on 4 main pillars – Women Literacy (Unnati), Youth Empowerment (Ujjwal), Better Health (Sanjeevani), and Energy Conservation (Club Enerji).

**THDCIL** Gol and State Government of Arunachal Pradesh have offered 02 Mega Hydro Projects to THDCIL in Arunachal Pradesh for implementation. These Hydro Projects are viz. 1200 MW Kalai-II and Demwe(Lower) 1750 MW in Lohit Basin of Arunachal Pradesh. These projects have been offered as a part of Basin wise Indication of Projects in North Eastern Region as overall development initiative of the state. RK Vishnoi, CMD, thanked the Ministry of Power, Gol and Government of Arunachal Pradesh and said that very soon THDCIL is going to open office establishment in Arunachal Pradesh to expedite the above mandate.

**REC** State Governments of Meghalaya and Assam have become the frontrunners in planning their operational and financial reforms as well as the underlying works to accomplish the same under Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (Nodal Agency – REC). Accordingly, their state-level Distribution Reforms Committee (DRC) and State Cabinet have approved the proposals, including Action Plan and DPR, for consideration under the scheme.

**ATS Group** ATS HomeKraft has received an overwhelming response for the first phase of its Pious Orchards project in Noida. The Company has achieved sales value of more than INR 350 crores in the Project in a single-day event, wherein 290 apartments were sold with an area of approx. 700,000 sq ft. This volume of sales makes Pious Orchards launch as the most successful launch, in terms of volume in NCR market, and one of the most successful launches across India in recent times.

### INAUGURATION - LIC

The LIC of India "LIC Digi Zone" to enhance the Digital Operations of LIC was inaugurated by LIC Chairperson M.R. Kumar, in the presence of MD's – Raj Kumar, Siddhartha Mohanty, BC Patnaik and C. Vikas Rao, ZM, Western Zone.



### MOU - NCL

NCL inked an MoU with CSIR IICT, Hyderabad for Clean Coal Technologies & Gainful Utilisation of Overburden in the virtual presence of CMD PK Sinha & others, from NCL & Dr. VM Tiwari, Director, & others from CSIR IICT, Hyderabad.



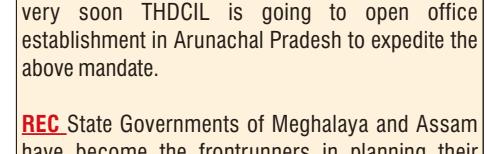
### PASSING OUT PARADE - CRPF

117 Directly Appointed Gazetted Officers of CRPF passed out from the CRPF Academy in a ceremony marked with impeccable parade, fanfare, and roar of oath to serve the nation. N Rai, MoS for Home Affairs, was the Chief Guest.



### APPOINTMENTS

**IOL** DS Nanaware has taken charge as Director (Pipelines), Indian Oil Corporation Limited. With a rich and varied experience of over 36 years, he is also the Chairman of IHL Ltd. a JV of IndianOil, HPCL and BPCL, which is building the world's longest LPG pipeline from Kandla to Gorakhpur. Before he assumed the office of Director (Pipelines), he was ED (Projects) at the Pipelines Division HO. Earlier, as the head of Southern Region Pipelines (SRPL), he was instrumental in starting the prestigious Ennore-Tuticorin Gas Pipeline Project and successfully commissioning its Ennore-Manali and Ramanathapuram-Tuticorin sections.



### SAIL

Vejendra Srinivasa Chakravarthy recently took charge as Director (Commercial) of SAIL. Chakravarthy joined SAIL in 1987 in the company's Central Marketing Organization. Rising through the ranks, Chakravarthy became the ED, Marketing, in SAIL before taking over as the Director (Commercial) of the company. He is known for his commercial & marketing acumen. As ED, he has contributed to formulation and implementation of various products and price strategy.

### AGREEMENT - REC

REC has entered into an agreement with KfW Development Bank for availing ODA term loan of USD 169.5 million under Indo-German Bilateral Partnership in accordance with the approval granted by Dept. of Economic Affairs.



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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2021

## E. EXPLAINED

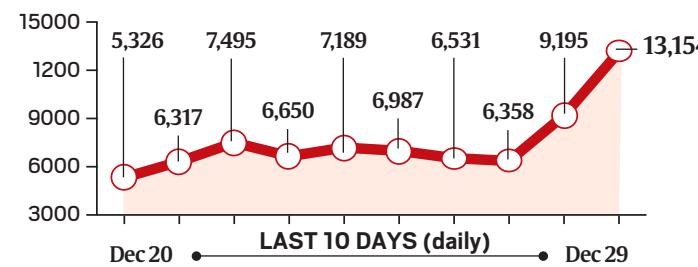


@ieExplained

#ExpressExplained

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

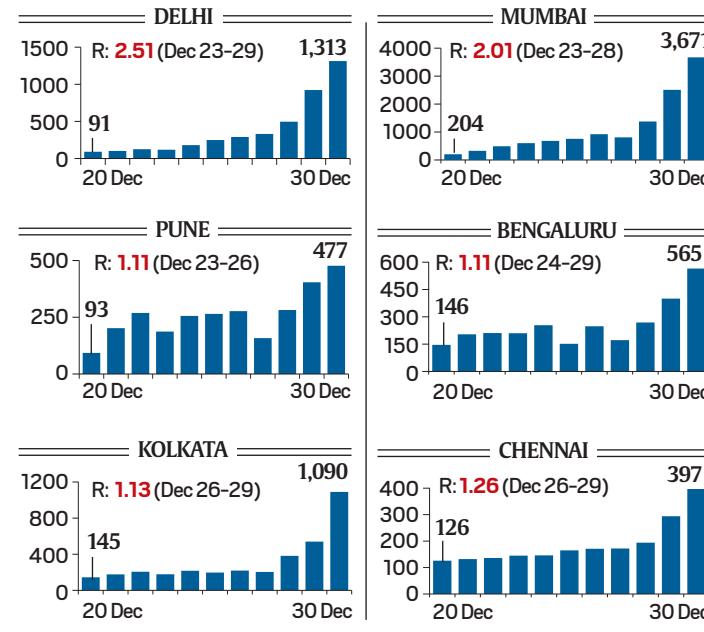
## CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

INDIA NEW CASES (last 24 hours) **13,154**ACTIVE CASES, DECEMBER 29: **82,402** (Dec 28: 77,002)

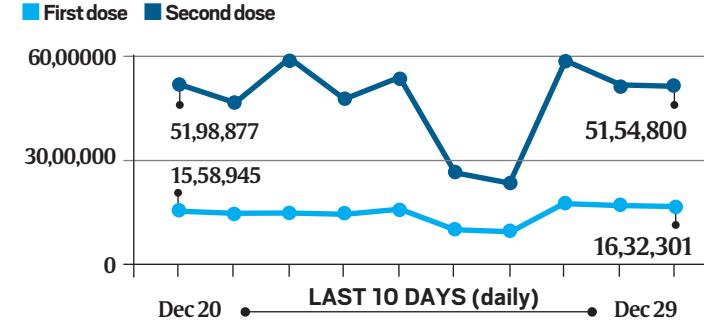
## NEW CASES, TOP 5 STATES

Maharashtra	3,900	Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare; Dec 29 figures updated on Dec 30
Kerala	2,846	
West Bengal	1,089	
Delhi	923	
Tamil Nadu	739	

## SURGE IN THE CITIES: LAST 10 DAYS

INDIA TOTAL DOSES **143,83,22,742**

(1st DOSE: 84,16,19,301; 2nd: 59,67,03,441)

DOSES ON DECEMBER 29 **67,87,101**

DEC 28: 68,53,905 (1st DOSE: 16,32,301; 2nd: 51,54,800)

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## EXPLAINED YOUR MONEY

## India's economy and your investments: flags to watch in 2022



SANDEEP SINGH &amp; SUNNY VERMA

THE OMICRON-LED surge in Covid-19 cases around the world has poured cold water on the hopes of rapid economic recovery, and dampened investor sentiment. Gates of workplaces and businesses that had opened in anticipation of a return to normalcy are being slammed shut again as partial lockdowns of varying intensity begin to be re-imposed.

How the pandemic pans out in its third year will determine the pace and nature of the recovery. Investments across asset classes will depend on factors such as inflation, interest rate movements, credit growth, foreign portfolio investments, and the price of crude oil. Employment generation, and a certainty of steady income for those at the bottom of the pyramid who were hit by the economic disruptions of the

first and second waves, will be key to long-term sustainable growth for India.

## Omicron concern

There is cautious optimism that the new variant, which is highly transmissible but not necessarily equally deadly, will not trigger a wave of serious illness that will overwhelm hospitals and fill cremation grounds in the way Delta did in April-May. Some experts have argued that the emergence of Omicron in fact signals the "beginning of the end" of the pandemic, and the virus may be entering the endemic stage.

It is hoped that lockdowns will remain relatively soft and there will be limited disruption in economic activity; however, there is also concern that exponentially rising case numbers may hurt consumption and the revival of corporate earnings.

"Now that Covid is a known unknown, it may not hit economic activity, C.J. George, MD, Geojit Financial Services, said. "The bigger concern is over the way inflation and interest rates will move in 2022, and the impact they will have on debt and equity markets."

## Interest rates

The stimulus programmes announced

by governments to support national economies in 2020 and 2021 have led to the problem of inflation. While inflation in India is still in a comfortable zone, it has touched a four-decade high in the United States. The Federal Reserve decided to increase the pace of reducing monthly asset purchases; it is also likely to hike rates twice, possibly thrice, in 2022.

Market participants say the pace of withdrawal of stimulus and hike in interest rates may disrupt equity and debt markets going forward. As the Fed started tapering, foreign portfolio investments (FPIs) have been pulling out — they have pulled out over Rs 40,000 crore from Indian equities since November 22, putting pressure on the benchmark indices.

However, domestic institutional investors (DILs) have been buying — and have invested a net of over Rs 48,900 crore during the same period.

If equity markets are impacted by FPI outflows, a hike in interest rates in India may reduce the pace of money deployment by retail investors in domestic equities, and see some reallocation from equity to debt.

## Equities outlook

Some market experts feel that while in-

terest rates may go up in 2022, inflation will not be much of a worry in India. There is expectation that equities may do well if Omicron does not cause a major disruption, and domestic retail flow into equities remains stronger than FPI inflows.

"Investors will have to moderate their expectations of returns from equities in 2022. It is a fair value market. If Omicron does not cause big disruption, domestic retail inflows remain stronger than FPI outflows, and corporate earnings remain strong, then it will outperform other asset classes," Niles Shah, MD, Kotak Mahindra AMC, said.

George of Geojit pointed out that while interest rate hikes in developed markets will put some pressure on domestic equities as FPIs will pull out money, even domestic rate hikes will see a decline in money flows into equities from retail investors.

## Debt market

Yields on government securities have started hardening, rising from the recent low of 6.1 per cent on September 22 to 6.4 per cent on Thursday. While the RBI has deviated from central banks in developed countries and argued for the need to maintain an accommodative stance, the market is pushing

interest rates higher in anticipation of the rising cost of capital. The largest state-owned lender, State Bank of India, increased the base rate by 10 basis points to 7.55 per cent per annum earlier this month — an indication that the era of low rates may be over.

Movements in yields, which depend on trends in interest rates, can result in capital gains or losses for investors. If an individual holds a bond carrying a yield of 6%, a rise in bond yields in the market will bring the price of the bond down. On the other hand, a drop in bond yield below 6% will benefit the investor as the price of the bond will rise, generating capital gains. Investors in fixed deposits can opt to keep the tenure lower in order to capture higher rates going forward.

Rising yields also have implications for home loans. Floating rates may rise, as banks try to pass on any increase in costs to customers.

Gold has corrected from the peak of around \$2,120 per ounce in August 2020 to around \$1,800. Gold is expected to stay positive going ahead, and gain momentum in case it closes above \$1,850 on expectations of rising interest rates and inflation.

## Geopolitics potential

As the confrontation between China

and the West escalates, India could be a beneficiary of foreign direct investments from the US and Europe, market experts feel.

International manufacturing firms have started to look towards India as they seek to diversify production away from China, and several private equity investors and venture capital funds have increased their investments in India.

However, India will have to work hard on requirements of policy, skill development, and regulation, in order to attract these investments.

Former chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian wrote in a recent article in Foreign Affairs magazine that while "India has made impressive recent progress in building the 'hardware' of economic success... the country continues to struggle to fix its 'software,' the crucial economic framework under which domestic entrepreneurs and foreign firms must operate".

"Policies are changed abruptly; rules are altered to favour certain firms. As a result, domestic entrepreneurs and foreign companies have been reluctant to undertake the investments needed to exploit India's rapidly advancing hardware," Subramanian wrote.

## Year when hybrid workforce can expect 5G and wait for metaverse

The metaverse is an idea whose time has come, and tools to connect to it may become more accessible. The advent of 5G connectivity will help, besides impacting sectors such as automobiles and medicines. And the software that enabled working from home will have to evolve to cater to a hybrid work model.



Gettyimages

NANDAGOPAL RAJAN  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

LAST YEAR, the predictions were somewhat easy. We said technologies around working from home would get better. And they did, from more features in all the videoconferencing software most of us now call office, to better front-facing cameras in the new computers that make us all look good at work. Yes, there was better access to doctors via online platforms even as we stayed away from hospitals as far as possible. The gadgets did get better as more companies took the Apple route to get their own silicon in place. But no, 5G is still somewhere in the air as far as India is concerned.

But 2021 has also been a mixed year. Although still in the middle of the pandemic, we have ventured out of our homes after a long period of caution as the cases came down in countries like India after a brutal second wave. Travel was back, so was eating out and cinemas. But that does not mean the pandemic is over, and Omicron has reminded us of that. The last few weeks of this year have suddenly made people rewrite the outlook for the coming year. Here is how we think the tech world will be in the third year of the pandemic.

**Building the metaverse**

Metaverse is more than a buzzword. It is an idea whose time has come. But then, the metaverse is not really a new concept; it has been around as an idea for decades. In fact, most of us are already in the metaverse in some way or the other, especially children who spend hours building their own worlds in games like Minecraft. For them, the restrictions of the pandemic have meant that the online realm is where they communicate, ideate, build and dream.

In the new year, we will see many companies try to do the same with the metaverse. They will all start popping up pillars of what will be "a new way to experience the Internet". This is not going to be an easy task because there are no standards yet to make

these different silos interoperable. So even as you will hear the word metaverse being used for everything people are unsure of on the Internet, there will be a lot of work happening behind the screens to make this one connected virtual universe and not a collection of bubbles.

The metaverse is different from the Internet as we know it because it gives users the ability to create, transfer and possess stuff purely in its realm. And the necessity to make these transactions possible within the different meta bubbles will be what actually starts connecting the now disjointed worlds.

You could also see some of the tools to connect to the metaverse in its rich form become more accessible, like VR/AR headsets from companies such as Oculus and others. But the fact is that you really don't need all this to start being a part of the metaverse; you are already in it.

## Smartphones and beyond

With a new way to experience the Internet just round the corner, it won't be surprising if we start seeing the next big smartphone disruptor in the coming year. Let's get one thing clear: The smartphone disruptor does not have to be a smartphone or something that carries forward that form factor. In fact, what could really change the way we access the Internet, communicate and work could be something without a screen we can touch.

The smartphone sector has hit saturation point with hardly any innovation happening in terms of changing the user experience drastically, and this is why any concept that offers a better way to experience the metaverse version of the Internet could well be the future of personal communication.

## 5G, finally?

One of the enablers of the metaverse will be access to high-speed, low-latency and zero-downtime 5G networks. India has finally announced a timeline for its rollout in cities and this could trigger a high degree of adoption for both the latest generation of connectivity as well as the new version of

NEW IN  
THE NEW YEAR  
2022  
TECHNOLOGY

## CALENDAR 2022

JAN 5-8: CES 2022

EARLY FEB: Samsung Unpacked 2022

END FEB: Mobile World Congress

APRIL: Apple Spring event

JUNE: WWDC 2022

MAY: Google I/O 2022; Microsoft Build 2022

JUNE: Computex 2022;

SEPTEMBER: iPhone event; Amazon hardware event

OCTOBER: Microsoft Surface event; Google Pixel event

NOVEMBER: Apple iPad event

Internet, a more immersive, experiential vision of the web.

While the metaverse is still more meta and less verse, where 5G technology could make significant impact will be in sectors like automobiles and medicines. For instance, 5G will enable more intelligence in connected vehicles, allowing them to make split-second decisions based on what they are seeing and sensing in real time. If 4G helped millions get remote health consultations during the pandemic, in a 5G world they may be able to get operated on by a doctor sitting in some other part of the world. Even if that does not happen, 5G will enable real-time analysis of complex health data to advise those who don't have access to the best tech or experts in the field.

## A hybrid workforce

Across the world, a lot of people are back

at work with signs of the pandemic easing at one point, and also because of an acceptance that you might as well live with Covid-19 than try to stay away from it. This has posed new challenges for everyone from device manufacturers to IT administrators of companies. A hybrid workforce, shuttling between home and office, is not as easy to manage as one that is restricted to either environment. This will mean the software that helped us stay connected from home will evolve to cater to this new work model, even as new products will be spawned to solve specific problems such as keeping devices and data secure while the networks they work on change.

This is bound to make the traditional network security model obsolete and prompt companies to look at decentralised models based on access points and individuals. Companies will also have to evolve and optimise for a model that might make their present office infrastructure redundant for the near future.

**More power to consumers**

Over the past few years consumers of personal technology devices have been used to getting better features and lower prices. But all that might go for a toss if the present scarcity of processors continues. Already prices of everything from budget smartphones to automobiles are going up because of the chip shortage, and the situation is unlikely to improve at least in the first half of 2022 when supply is expected to again catch up with demand.

But things are not all that bad. Across product ranges, features that once used to be premium are now becoming more accessible to regular users. If in 2021 we saw technologies like noise cancellation, high-refresh rate screens and fast charging come down to more affordable price points, in the new year expect to see the foldable form factor become more

## Classifieds

## PERSONAL

I Gang Preethy Subramanyan D/o Sh. Subramanyan W/o Sh. Sudhir Viswanathan R/o 23, Bank Apartment, Plot No.22, Sector-4, Dwarka, South West Delhi, Delhi-110075 have changed my name to Preethy Sudhir Viswanathan for all purposes. 0040597628-1

I Bansi Verma S/o Ram And R/o 4785, Ahala Kidara, Pahari Dhiraj, Delhi-110006 have changed my name to Bansi Lal 0040597710-1

I Babi Ram Kaur D/o Late Saran Singh R/o UC-27/A, Usha Park, Jail Road, Hari Nagar, Delhi-110064 have changed my name to Babyram Kaur for all purposes. 0040597628-2

I Arji Singh S/o Amar Singh R/o UC-27/A, Usha Park, Jail Road, Hari Nagar, Delhi-110064 have changed my name to Harjeet Singh for all purposes. 0040597628-1

I Anil Ray Resident Of Smg 92/02 Air Force Station Chandigarh ,Baghpur (UP)-250615 Have Changed My Daughter's Name From Aradhya Ray To Aaradhyaa Ray Vide Affidavit No.In- UP7843996443584T DTD 23 DEC 21 Before Ghaziabad court. 0050189566-1

I, Vikash Soni,S/O Mukesh Soni,R/O,1/512,Durga-Nivas Street,No-4,Balbir-Nagar Shahdara,Delhi-110032,have changed my name to VIKAS SONI. 0040597751-5

I,Shallu Duleja W/o Saksham Arora,R/o 11/2-A,Double-Storey, Prem-Nagar, Janakpuri,Delhi-110058,have changed my name after-marriage as Taishaa,all future Purposes. 0040597759-2

It is for general information that I,Rehana Khan,W/o-Mohd. Shoyab Khan,R/o-S-58/10, Gali-No.24,S-Block, Brahmupuri,Delhi-110053, declare that name of mine has been wrongly-written as Rehana in my minor son Zain Waris Khan(14Years)T.C. and Schlool-Record.The actual-name of mine is Rehana Khan,which May be amended accordingly. 0040597739-10

I,hitherto known as CHIRAG,S/o-SATBIR SINGH YADAV,residing, PLOT NO.41,FORTH/F.1 B1 EXTNENSION,SEWAK PARK, UTTAM-NAGAR,D.K.MOHAN-GARDEN, WEST-DELHI,DELHI-110059,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as CHIRAG YADAV. 0040597748-4

I,Yatin Grover,S/o Sh.Harish Kumar R/o-4/684,Ram-Nagar, Near Shiv Mandir, Gurugram, Haryana-122001.That Yatin & Yatin Grover are one and same person. 0040597751-9

I,VANDANA,W/O,BIJENDER KUMAR SINGH,FLAT,NO-1096, TOWER-L,14TH AVENUE,GAUR CITY-2 GREATER NOIDA, GAUTAMBUDH-NAGAR U.P.-201308. Changed my name to BANDANA SINGH, permanently. 0040597739-1

I,Tarannum Naz,aged 40 years, D/o Mohd Saeed,R/o-H.No-256,DDA Quarters,New Seema Puri,hereby declares that,I am a mother of Mohammed Zidane,Student of St Lawrence Public School, Dilshad garden. 0040597729-2

I,Tamanna Abbot,W/o Sidharth Mohanty R/o-J/5/101H, Rajouri-Garden, Delhi-110027,have changed my name to Tamanna Mohanty. 0040597739-5

I,Sonal Sharma,D/o-Vidyaa prakash Sharma,W/o-Nitin Rastogi,R/o-D-474,S/F, Gali-No.11,Bhajanpura,Delhi-110053,Have Changed My Name To Shilpa Rastogi.Sonal Sharma And Shilpa Rastogi is One And The Same Person. 0040597739-4

I,Sandeep Kumar S/o Sanjay R/o-H.No:-F/1-218, Sangam Vihar,Delhi-110080,have changed my name from Sandeep Taank to Sandeep Kumar and father's name,from Sanjay Taank to Sanjay for all,future purposes. 0040597740-4

I,Rajjat Vijay Agarwal R/o C-37, Sector-26, Noida(U.P) have changed my daughter's name from Saanvi Agarwal to Saanavi Agarwal for all purposes. 0040597714-1

I,Prabhneet Singh Anand,S/O Mandip Singh R/o-A-104, Second-Floor,Ganesh-Nagar Tilak-Nagar,Delhi-110018,have changed my name to Prabhneet Singh. 40597751-3

I,Parmod S/o-Kapton Singh, R/o-House-No-120, Gali No-4, Jaipur Ext. Part-2, Badarpur, New Delhi-110044,Have Change my, name to Pramod Chauhan and both are same person. 0040597751-8

I,Nandini Bhardwaj,D/o Ompr Bhardwaj,H.no-1217, Sector-46, Gurgaon Haryana 12002, Changed my name to Nandiyini Bhardwaj. 0040597751-1

I,ISHWAR CHAND SHARMA, S/O JATHASHANKAR JHA, R/o- Navkarhi, Naokarhi, Madhubani, Bihar, have changed my name to ISHWAR CHAND JHA. 0040597769-9

I,Pooja Agarwal w/o Vinay Surya R/o-36/78 West Punjabi,New Delhi-110026,have changed my name to Puja Surya,for all purposes. 0040597739-5

I, MOHAMMED AMAAN/S/O MOHAMMED SULEMAN R/o P 48/1 GALI NO-5-BATLA HOUSE JAMIA NAGAR N.DELHI 110025 IN MY PASSPORT MY NAME SPELING IS WRONGLY MENTION MOHD AAAMAN BUT MY CORRECT SPELING IS MOHAMMED AMAAN. 0040597587-6

I,NEERU KUMARI,W/O LALIT KUMAR SHUKLA,R/o,Flat-1205, Tower-C,Antrik Golf-View-1,Sector-78,Noida,Gautam Budh-Nagar(UP)have changed my name to NEERU KUMARI SHUKLA. 0040597739-1

I,Vinod Kumar Chadha S/O-Late Shri.Chander Bhan Chadha R/O-H.No.347,First-Floor, Sector-5, Gurugram, Haryana-122001,have changed my, name to Vinod Chadha for all,future purpose. 0040596505-8

I,Neha Mishra,D/o-Sh.Vinod Kumar Mishra,R/o-D-63,B, Ishwar-Colony,Arjun Park, Najafgarh-New-Delhi-110043.I am also known as Neha and my Aadhar-Card my name is mentioned Neha Mishra.Neha and Neha Mishra is one and the same person. 0040597729-1

I,Manjeet Singh R/o-Ajit Singh R/o-K-45,Gali-No.13, Krishna Park Extn.Tilaknagar, New Delhi-110064,have Changed My Name to Manjeet Singh. 0040597740-2

I,MOHAMMAD Shahid,S/O mohd. Yaqoob khan,R/o-1383 Gali No.15, Gandhi-Nagar new-Mustafabad delhi-110094,have Changed my name to Mohd Shahid,khan,for all purposes. 0040597751-6

I,Kapil Arora S/o Ashok Kumar Arora,R/o 11/2-A, Double-Storey, Prem-Nagar, Janakpuri, Delhi-110058,have changed my name to Kapil,for all,future Purposes. 0040597759-1

I,Jugdish Kaur,W/o Surinder Singh,R/o,Village-Mallian Pakkian,Dheriwala Gurdaspur, Punjab-143518,have changed my name to Gurdish Kaur. 0040597751-4

I,Iltherto known as Mohammad Arif,S/o Mohammad Yaseen,R/o-H.N.114, Asara-1, Baghpat, U.P.-250623, Have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Arif Chaudhary. 0040597739-3

I,LJAGAT SINGH S/O RAJKUMAR SINGH R/o-E-3/1201AA,12th-Floor,Bharat City Indraprasha Yojna,Loni,Ghazabadi,UP. 201102,inform that,my father name-written in my,PAN and Aadhar as RAJKUMAR SINGH and in my,Education-Certificate as RAJKUMAR.Both are one and, the same person. 0040597751-10

I,Gaganpreet Singh S/o- Gurcharan Pal Singh Kocher R/o-1/200-U.G.F.,LIC Colony, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi-87,Have Changed My Name to Gaganpreet Singh Kocher. 0040597740-3

I,Bhim Sain alias Bhim Sen,S/o Ramashwer Das R/o-869 Sector-31 Faridabad Haryana-121003,changed my name to Bhim Sain Mittal, permanently. 0040597739-7

I,IMRAN ULLAH KHAN R/o-202, Green Ville(T8),NRI City-1,Greater Noida, G.B.Nagar-201310,have changed my minor son name,from ALI KHAN TO ALI KHAAN. 0040597739-2

I,Amarjit Kaur W/o-Manjeet Singh,R/o-K-45,Gali-No.13, Krishna Park Extn.Tilaknagar, New Delhi-18,Have Changed My Name to Amarjeet Kaur. 0040597693-10

I,Amrit Singh S/o Shri Radhey Shyam R/o-659, Sector-8,R.K. Puram, South-West Delhi, Delhi-110022 have changed my name to Amrit Singh Meen for all purposes. 0040597676-1

I, khushboo kakwani, w/o Tarun bajaj, Add-G/18/31,3rd floor,sec-15,Rohini, Delhi,have changed my name to Sakshi bajaj. 0040597693-5

I,Vinod Kumar S/o Shri Shishpal R/o H.No.30, Gali No.1, Near Hanuman Mandir, Mandoli Road, Chander Lok Shahdara, Delhi-110093 have changed my name to Vinod Kumar Verma for all future purposes. 0040597676-1

I,Vineet Kumar S/o Sarda Ram resident of H.NO.174, Ali Ganj, Kotla Mubarak Pur, New Delhi-110003, have changed my name to Vineet Balsoya for all purposes. 0040597667-1

I,Tithi Agrawal,D/o Kameshwar Nath Urf Agarwal, W/o-Mr. Mohit Goyal, R/o-Tower-A5, Flat No.604,Tulip-White Sector-9, Badshahpur,Gurugram (Haryana)-122101,have changed my name to Tithi Agarwal. 0040597693-4

I,Sonika,D/o Narain Singh, R/o-701-A-2, Tulip ACE Aptt, Pataudi Road, Sector-89, Gurgaon, Haryana-122055, have changed my name from Sonika to Sonika Yadav. 0070767129-1

I,Simran W/O Shri Bhupinder Singh,R/o H-106, Sector-16, Rohini, Delhi-110089, have changed my name to Simran Singh. 0040597748-11

I,Simon Kaur Kumra,D/o Satinder Pal Singh, R/o T-139, Shukkar Bazar, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059,Have changed my Name to Simone Kaur. 0040597748-2

I,Satnam Singh Randhava,S/o Jeevan Singh Randhava, R/o-RZD-18A,Gali-No.5, Mahir-Enclave, South-West Delhi-110045,have changed my name to Satnam Singh Randhava. 0040597693-1

I,Sameem S/o Mustafa, R/o-155, Vill-Talhdi Buzurg, P.S. Deoband Saharanpur-247554, U.P. have changed my name to Shamim. 0040597693-8

I,Abhishek,S/o Anil Kumar, R/o H-78, Vaid Panna, Mundhela Kalan, South West Delhi-110073. Declare that Name of My Father has been wrongly written as Anil in my Educational Documents. The actual name of My Father is Anil Kumar, which may be amended accordingly. 0040597666-1

I,Sri Devi Gunda W/O, Hanumantha Rao Bonala R/o D-49/29, Dilshad Colony, Delhi-110095 have changed my name to Sri Devi Bonala for all purposes. 0070767125-1

I,Sahed Ahmed S/o Chand R/o-E-136, Welcome, Seelampur, Delhi-110053,have changed my name to Saeed Ahmed. 0040597693-1

I, Ravi Kankani S/o Goverdhan Das Kankani R/o 222-23, N-Block, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur U.P., have changed my name to Ravi Prakash Kankani 0040597726-1

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HIMACHAL PRADESH  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
e-Procurement Notice  
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer, Shimla Division No. I, HPPWD, Shimla-3, H.P on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the works as detailed in the table.

Sr. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost.	Starting date for downloading Bid	Earliest Money	Deadline for submission of Bid	Time Allowed
1	Construction of road from Bhattakuler to IGMC Phase-II km 0/700 to 2/400 in District Shimla (HP) - 1/F/C, C/O R/wall, Hume pipe 30mm, P/B, GSB, G.I.G-L.G.III, 50mm thick BM, 30mm thick BC, C/O V-Shape drain, PCC parapet walls etc).	34612471/-	19-01-2022	69300/-	3-02-2022	180 days

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website [www.hptender.gov.in](http://www.hptender.gov.in).  
The executive Engineer reserves the right to accept/reject any tender/application or all tenders without assigning any reason.

5942/HP

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI OFFICE OF THE ADDL. CHIEF ENGINEER (M) - 5 ROOM NO. 312, VARUNALAYA PHASE-I JHANDEWALAN, DELHI- 110005			
PRESS NIT No. 17 (2021-22) M-5			
S. No.	Name of Work	Amount put to Tender	E/Money (EMD)
1	Providing / Laying additional 600 mm dia NP4 RCC- HDPE lining pipe by Micro Tunnelling from Majnu Ka Tila to Aruna Nagar SPS under AEE(M)-20.	₹ 6,52,44,152/-	₹ 13,04,883/-

Further details in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>  
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)  
Adv. No. J.S.V. 922(2021-22)

(P.C. Sharma)  
Asst. Executive Engineer (T)M-5

"STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing and Maintain Hand Hygiene"

JAL SHAKTI, PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING, DEPARTMENT  
NOTICE INVITING TENDER

e-NIT No. 118 OF 2021-22 Dated: 28.12.2021

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of J&K, Chief Engineer, Jai Shakti (PHE) Department, Kashmir/Jammu invites e-bidders from reputed and resourceful Contractors/ Firms/Companies/Joint Venture of all classes registered in JKPWD/CPWD/Railways or any other state Government for "Empanelment of Eligible Contractors at Provincial Level and fixing of item rates for HILLY AREAS (GRAVITY) falling in District Barmeria for Execution of Jai Jeevan Mission (JJM) works costing Above 3 crores up to 10 crores and above (GROUP V)", details of which are given below. The bidding process shall be completed online in two covers v/s. Cover 1 consisting of Pre-Qualification Bidding, tender fee, earnest money, General Terms and Conditions and Technical Specifications. Cover 2 shall consist of Financial Bid in the prescribed BOQ.

Sr. No.	Particulars of the work	Estimated Cost (Lacs)	Cost of Document/Tender Fee (In Rs.)	Earliest Money (Lacs)	Bid Validity	Time of Completion of Work (Days)
1	1. Empanelment of eligible contractors at Provincial level and fixing of item rates for each district/geo-graphically different zone for execution of Jai Jeevan Mission (JJM) works. These works are broadly as under:	1000/-		180 Days		
	a. Construction of water supply schemes by way of filtration plants, pump houses, service reservoir, overhead tanks, laying of distribution mains.					
	b. Retrofitting of electro-mechanical equipment's at various Water Supply Schemes					
	Group-V	Above 3 Crores upto 10 Crores & above		1.00	180	

Position of funds: Approved Under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)  
The tender inviting authority is Chief Engineer, Kashmir/Jammu Jai Shakti (PHE) Department.  
The awarding authority is District Jal Jeevan Mission (DJM).

Note: In view of the fact, that this NIT for item rate contract has been framed for the first time in the Department, a helpdesk shall be established at the Direction office level as well as district level for encouraging and facilitating the intending bidders for participation in the instant NIT to ensure wide participation across all the Districts.

KEY/CRITICAL DATES:

I	PUBLISH DATE	29.12.2021
II	DOCUMENT DOWNLOAD/SALE START DATE	29.12.2021
III	CLARIFICATION START DATE	29.12.2021
IV	BID SUBMISSION START DATE	03.01.2022
V	CLARIFICATION END DATE	20.01.2022
VI	PRE-BID MEETING DATE	03.01.2022
VII	DOCUMENT DOWNLOAD/SALE END DATE	25.01.2022
VIII	BID SUBMISSION END DATE	25.01.2022
IX	DATE AND TIME OF BID OPENING	27.01.2022

1. Bid documents can be assessed at and downloaded from the website <http://jkttenders.gov.in>  
2. The pre-bid meeting will be held in the office chamber of the Chief Engineer, Kashmir/Jammu, PHE Department, through virtual/online mode.  
3. The Bids shall be deposited on the website <http://jkttenders.gov.in>  
4. The complete bidding process will be online <http://jkttenders.gov.in>  
5. The financial bids of the bidders shall be opened online in the office of the Chief Engineer, Kashmir/Jammu, Jai Shakti (PHE) Department.  
6. Bids must be accompanied by bid security and cost of Tender Document as specified in column 6 & 7 of the table and shall be payable at Srinagar/Jammu.  
a. Bid Security to be pledged in favour of FA/CAO, Kashmir/Jammu, Jai Shakti PHE Department. Bid Security will have to be in form of CDR/ FDR/BG of any kind and shall have to be valid for at least one year after last date of submission of Bid. The Bid of bidders having bid security less than as specified will be rejected.  
b. The cost of downloaded tender documents should be in form of DD/TT/R/e challan in favour of FA/CAO, Kashmir/Jammu, Jai Shakti (PHE) Department.  
7. The hard copies of cost of tender document in shape of DD/TR/e-challan, Earnest money in shape of CDR/FDR/BG and other relevant documents shall be obtained from the bidder who is declared as L1 after opening of financial cover.  
8. The bids remain open for acceptance for a period of 180 days from the date of opening of price bids. If any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/offer before the said period or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid, the said earnest money shall stand forfeited and the bid shall be declared non-responsive.  
9. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents from the website <http://jkttenders.gov.in>.  
10. Queries by email if any should be made at [kmpred@gmail.com](mailto:kmpred@gmail.com)/[phcejm@gmail.com](mailto:phcejm@gmail.com).

No: CE/PHE/KM/34034-49  
Chief Engineer,  
Kashmir, Jai Shakti, PHE Department.  
Date: 28.12.2021 DIPK-15877

ADVERTISEMENT NO : 30373/TRIAL/2023-24/ST-25  
MG ASC HEADQUARTERS NORTHERN COMMAND  
UDHAMPUR : SHOWCASING AND DISPLAY OF SPECIAL RATION ITEMS FOR REVISION OF INVENTORY FOR THE CY 2023-24

1. Inventory of Special Ration Items (packaged food products) in respect of Northern Command is being revised for the Consumption Year 2023-24 & onwards.

2. A showcasing/display/trial is being organised in two phases by this Headquarters at Udhampur as per details given below:

(a) Phase-I- Initial Screening of Items wef 01 March 2022 wherein all interested firms/vendors to submit item details/ catalogue/ product description only along with an application (Application form can be obtained from HQ Northern Command/ 603 ASC Bn (AM), Chandigarh, FSD BD Bari/ FSD Udhampur/ FSD Srinagar/ 497 (I) Comp Pl, ASC, Chandigarh)

**Note : NO SAMPLES TO BE SUBMITTED IN PHASE-I**

(b) Phase-II - Technical Evaluation of Items will be held at Udhampur at NSOI tentatively on 09 Apr 2022, wherein samples (five) of items screened in Phase-I only will be called for evaluation. Confirmed dates will be intimated later.

(c) The List of Items is as under:

Soups	Juices	(xxvi)	Tomato Puree
(i) Tomato Soup	(xii) 100% Apple Juice	(xxvii)	Tomato Ketchup
(i) Chicken Soup	(xiii) 100% Orange Juice	(xxviii)	Semiyani
Tea	(xiv) Guava Juice	(xxix)	Ready to Eat Dal Makhani
(iii) Tea CTC	(xv) Mango Juice	(xxx)	Paneer Ready Made
(iv) Kahwa Tea	(xvi) Coconut Water	(xxxi)	Roasted Pista Giri
Noodles	(xvii) Pineapple Orange Fruit Drink	(xxxii)	Ground Nut Salted
(v) Noodles Veg	(xviii) Mango Fruit Drink	(xxxiii)	Honey
(vi) Non Veg Noodles	(xix) Pineapple Fruit Drink	(xxxiv)	Gulab Jamun
(vii) Cup Noodles	Other Items	(xxxv)	Soya Chunks
Biscuits	(xx)	Roasted Ground Nuts	(xxxvi)
(viii) Cookes Cashew	(xxi)	Chikki Peanut	(xxxvii)
(ix) Biscuit Bourbon	(xxii)	Walnut (Vaccum Sealed Kernels)	(xxxviii)
Chocolates	(xxiii)	Eclairs	(xxxix)
(x) Milk Chocolate	(xxiv)	Digestive Candy	(xxxx)
(xi) Chocolate Temptation	(xxv)	Mixed Pickle	

Note:- 1. Preferably the life of ibid items should be best before nine months & above.

2. Tentatively delivery stations are Chandigarh, Leh & Srinagar.

3. Original manufacturers/ authorised managers or managing directors/ authorised C&F agents/ authorised distributors can participate in the above event.

4. The above event is on 'no cost no commitment basis' and Headquarters Northern Command reserves the right to reject any item/ firm/ vendors without assigning any reasons.

5. Interested firms/ vendors may submit their item details/ catalogues/ product description in a sealed envelope duly mentioned "**SHOWCASING AND DISPLAY OF SPECIAL RATION ITEMS FOR REVISION OF INVENTORY FOR THE CY 2023-24"** on the envelop in Tender Box kept at Headquarters Northern Command, Main Gate at **reception by 01 March 2022 by 1200 Hrs (no application will be accepted thereafter)**.

6. Any other detail can be obtained from this office of the Executive authority on any working day between 1100hrs to 1200 hrs on under mentioned details:

(a) Email address - [jayan\\_569p@gov.in](mailto:jayan_569p@gov.in)  
(b) Contact No - 01992-242153 & 270714\* (Extn 2763)  
\*(Udhampur Exchange Helpline No)

MG ASC  
HQ Northern Command

davp 10602/11/0067/2122

WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM  
THE INDIAN EXPRESS, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2021

NORTHERN RAILWAY  
TENDER NOTICE

No. 74-W/2/3/WA/Publication DATED: 29.12.2021

SRDEN/II/MB acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against following tenders closing date 13.01.2022 16:00. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

Tender No. Date 171-DRM-MB-21-22-Date 29.12.2021

Name of work Improvement / upgradation of L-Xing road surface by providing Rubberised surface at various LCs in MB Division. (2<sup>nd</sup> time)  
Tender Closing Date Time 13.01.2022 16:00  
Advertised Value (Rs.) 8502429.00  
Bidding Start Date 29/12/2021  
Validity of Offer (Days) 20 Days  
Period of Completion 2 Months

3081/21

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Government of Jharkhand  
Department of Mines & Geology  
Directorate of Geology  
Engineers' Hostel No-2, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004  
Email: [dir-geology@jharkhandmail.gov.in](mailto:dir-geology@jharkhandmail.gov.in)

Cancellation

Important Notice

Tender No. MSTC/RNC/DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND GEOLOGY/39/19-20/24439 Dated 30.10.2019

e-Auction of Lodhatap, Jobhipat and Hethlodha Bauxite Block

In Consonance with Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 (as amended), the Tender No. MSTC/RNC/DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND GEOLOGY/39/19-20/24439 Dated 30.10.2019 for auction published in different News Papers vide PR No. 224530 (Mines and Geology) 20-21 of Lodhatap, Jobhipat and Hethlodha Bauxite Block over an area of 75.198 Ha in Gumla District, Jharkhand for grant of Mining Lease has been annulled.

Sd/-  
(Vijay Kumar Ojha)

PR 260760 Mines and Geology(21-22)D

Director Geology

PR 260760 Mines and Geology(21-22)D

SD/-  
(Vijay Kumar Ojha)

Director Geology

PR 260760 Mines and Geology(21-22)D

SD/-  
(Vijay Kumar Ojha)

Director Geology

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2021

# THE WORLD



MEANWHILE

**SCHWARZENEGGER'S DIVORCE FINAL AFTER 10 YRS**

Arnold Schwarzenegger and Maria Shriver's marriage is officially over more than 10 years after the award-winning journalist petitioned to end her then-25-year marriage to the action star and former California governor. The pair had been married since 1986 when Shriver filed for divorce in 2011 after Schwarzenegger disclosed he had fathered a child with a member of their household staff years earlier.

TOP OF THE WORLD



Simorgh rocket ahead of its launch. AP

IRAN

**State TV: Tehran launches rocket bearing 3 devices**

Tehran: Iran on Thursday announced it launched a satellite carrier rocket bearing three devices into space, though it's unclear whether any of the objects entered orbit around the Earth. The state TV report, as well as others by Iran's semi-official news agencies, did not say when the launch was conducted nor what devices the carrier brought with it. However, previous launches have drawn rebukes from the US. The US State Department, Space Force and the Pentagon did not respond to requests for comment. Ahmad Hosseini, a Defense Ministry spokesman, identified the rocket as a Simorgh, or "Phoenix," rocket. He said the three devices were sent up 470km (290 miles). AP

CHINA

**Two from news outlet charged with sedition**

Hong Kong: Two former editors from a Hong Kong online pro-democracy news outlet were charged with sedition and denied bail on Thursday, a day after the outlet said it would cease operations following a police raid on its office and seven arrests. National security police said they charged two men, aged 34 and 52, with one count each of conspiracy to publish a seditious publication. Police also said they would prosecute the company for sedition. Both were denied bail. AP

**UNITED STATES**  
Navy seizes \$4 million worth of heroin

Dubai: United States navy vessels seized 385kg of heroin in the Arabian Sea worth some \$4 million, in a major bust by the international maritime operation in the region, officials said on Thursday. The drugs were hidden aboard a stateless fishing vessel plying Mideast waters, the international task force said in a statement. The seizure took place on Monday. The Navy said the fishing vessel likely came from Iran. All nine crew members identified themselves as Iranian, an official said. He did not elaborate on who manufactured the drugs or the ultimate destination. AP

**PAKISTAN**  
Pak buys 25 fighter aircraft from China

Islamabad: Pakistan has acquired a full squadron of 25 multirole J-10C fighter jets from China in response to India's purchase of Rafale aircraft. Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said. He added that a full squadron of 25 all-weather aircraft comprising J-10C will attend the Pakistan Day ceremony on March 23 next year. "VIP guests are coming (to attend 23rd March ceremony) for the first time in Pakistan, the fly-past ceremony of JS-10 (J-10C) is being held..." Ahmed said. PTI

**MASK UP: PARIS MAKES MASK**

must for people stepping outdoors

**COVID VACCINE: MEXICO APPROVES**

use of Cuba's Abdala coronavirus vaccine

**BOOSTER: J&J'S SHOT TO HELP**

against severe Omicron disease, says study

# Half a million new cases in US in a day

Figure is almost twice as high as the worst days of last winter

NYT &amp; REUTERS

DECEMBER 30

WITH A caseload nearly twice that of the worst single days of last winter, the United States shattered its record for new daily coronavirus cases, a milestone that may still fall short of describing the true toll of the Delta and Omicron variants because testing has slowed over the holidays.

Omicron cases are expected to surge even faster across the United States as schools reopen next week after the winter holiday, experts cautioned. Within weeks, the Omicron variant has fueled thousands of new Covid hospitalisations among US children, raising new concerns about how the many unvaccinated Americans under the age of 18 will fare in the new surge.

Doctors say it is too early to determine whether Omicron causes more severe illness in children than other variants of the coronavirus, but that its extremely high transmissibility is one key factor that is driving up hospitalisations.

reported more cases than in any other seven-day period.

The rise has been driven by the highly contagious Omicron variant, which became dominant in the United States last week. So far, however, the increase has not resulted in more severe disease, as hospitalisations have increased only 11 percent and deaths have decreased slightly in the past two weeks.

As a second year of living with the pandemic was drawing to a close, the new daily case total topped 488,000 on Wednesday, according to a New York Times database. (The total was higher on Monday, but that number should not be considered a record because it included data from the long holiday weekend.)

Wednesday's seven-day average of new daily cases, 301,000, was also a record, compared with 267,000 the day before, according to the database. In the past week, more than two million cases have been reported nationally, and 15 states and territories



Long lines are forming at testing sites across the country, including Manhattan, on Wednesday. NYT

**Omicron will soon replace Delta as dominant global variant: Experts**

GURDIP SINGH

SINGAPORE, DECEMBER 30



As many as 170 new cases in Singapore

EXPERTS IN Singapore, where 170 new Omicron cases were reported on Wednesday, have warned that the new and supposedly more contagious variant is likely to replace Delta over the coming weeks to months.

While Delta is still the most common variant in all continents except Africa, Omicron is spreading quickly, said Dr Sebastian Maurer-Stroh, executive director of the state-owned Agency for Science, Technology and Research's Bioinformatics Institute here.

Of the genome submissions sent to the Munich-headquartered Gisaid, a data science initiative that provides the shared genome plat-

form for Covid, the Omicron strain has comprised between 7 percent and 27 percent of new submissions over the past month, up until Tuesday. The figures refer to all continents except Africa.

"From current data, it looks like Delta will go down over time relative to Omicron," The Straits Times said quoting Dr Maurer-Stroh, who is part of the global team that maintains Gisaid.

Omicron is already dominant in Australia, India, Russia, South Africa and the United Kingdom, noted Professor Dale Fisher, a senior consultant at the National University Hospital's Division of Infectious Diseases.

Based on local experience, if a person tests positive for the S-gene target failure, the individual is likely to have the Omicron variant. While the Delta variant has 13 mutations with nine on the spike protein, Omicron has about 50 mutations not seen together before, and 32 of them are on the spike protein.

Because of its mutations, the Delta variant attaches effectively to human cell receptors, causing it to be more infective, said Fisher. PTI

**Messages pour in for whistleblower doctor in China who died of Covid**

MARTIN QUIN POLLARD

SHANGHAI, DECEMBER 30



THOUSANDS OF people left messages on the social media account of the late Chinese Covid-19 whistleblower Li Wenliang on the anniversary of the day he learned of possible pneumonia-causing virus cases in Wuhan and shared the information with doctors.

On December 30, 2019, Li, an ophthalmologist at a hospital in Wuhan where the Sars-CoV-2 virus outbreak was first detected, saw a medical report showing potential SARS coronavirus cases were confirmed in the city, he wrote in a post on his Weibo account on January 31.

In early January, after the information on "SARS cases" was shared in a WeChat group, Li was reprimanded by the local police, according to the same Weibo post.

People attend a vigil for late Li Wenliang in Hong Kong

Reuters file

died on February 7, 2020. Since then confidence has grown in China's response to the pandemic, but people have continued to post to Li online, especially on certain anniversary days as they did on Thursday.

"Happy new year Dr Li, we will remember you forever," wrote a user called Tdby. Others posted candle emojis, brief messages of thanks and exclamations of how two years have gone by so quickly, in the comments section of one of Li's posts on Weibo, China's equivalent of Twitter. Many wrote conversationally as if they were speaking to him beyond the grave.

Fang Kecheng from the Chinese University of Hong Kong said Li's Weibo microblog has become a place where people express their feelings they are not comfortable expressing elsewhere. REUTERS

**NATIONS TRY TO BALANCE OMICRON CURBS WHILE KEEPING ECONOMIES OPEN**



Political leaders in some nations, fearful of the economic impact of keeping so many workers at home, were considering shortening the period required for isolation after a positive Covid test or exposure.

**SPAIN** is reducing the quarantine period to seven days from 10, while Italy said it was planning to relax isolation rules for those who came into close contact with sufferers of the virus.

**UNITED STATES** released new guidance shortening the isolation period for people with a confirmed infection to five days from 10, so long as they are asymptomatic.

**BRITAIN** Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he will not issue new restrictions this year to limit the spread of Omicron, which now accounts for roughly 90% of all community infections.

**CHINA** stuck to its policy of zero tolerance, keeping 13 million people in Xian, capital of central Shaanxi province, under rigid lockdown for a seventh day.

**AUSTRALIA** plans to make urgent changes to Covid testing rules to ease pressure on testing sites.

**3 Indo-Canadians receive Canada's civilian award**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

TORONTO, DECEMBER 30

THREE INDIAN-origin Canadians have been bestowed with the Order of Canada — one of the country's highest civilian honours — for their outstanding achievement, dedication to the community, helping in building a better nation and promoting bilateral ties between Canada and India.

Internationally renowned scientist and innovator Dr Vaikuntam Iyer Lakshmanan; real estate mogul Bob Singh Dhillon, also known as Navjeet Singh Dhillon; and renowned paediatrician Dr Pradeep Merchant were among the 13 individuals honoured with the prestigious award, according to a press note uploaded on the website of the

Governor General of Canada on Tuesday. "Today, Her Excellency Right Honourable Mary Simon, Governor General of Canada, announced 135 appointments to the Order of Canada," it said, sharing the list of the recipients.

"Delighted to see the contributions of the dynamic Indian heritage community in Canada being recognised with Order of Canada. Congratulations to Dr Vaikuntam Iyer Lakshmanan, @BobDhillon\_MEQ and @PradeepMerchant," the High Commission of India in Ottawa tweeted on Wednesday.

According to the citation, Lakshmanan from Mississauga, Ontario was honoured "for his philanthropy and for his expertise in hydrometallurgy and business, which greatly benefited Canada-India relations."

**Ghislaine Maxwell convicted of hiring four teenage girls for Epstein sex abuse**

LUC COHEN

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 30

GHISLAINE MAXWELL was found guilty by a U.S. jury on Wednesday of helping the late financier Jeffrey Epstein sexually abuse teenage girls, sealing a remarkable fall from grace for the British socialite.

Maxwell, 60, was accused of recruiting and grooming four teenagers between 1994 and 2004 for Epstein, her former boyfriend, who killed himself in 2019 in a Manhattan jail cell while awaiting trial on sex abuse charges of his own.

She was convicted on five of six counts, including one count of sex trafficking. Lawyers for Maxwell, who faces up to 65 years in prison, vowed to appeal. Maxwell's trial was widely seen as the reckoning Epstein never had and one of the highest-profile



Maxwell was accused of recruiting four girls between 1994 and 2004 for Epstein. NYT file

cases in the wake of the #MeToo movement, which encouraged women to speak out about sexual abuse by famous and powerful people.

Meanwhile, members of Maxwell's family say they still believe

EXPLAINED

E. Charges against Maxwell

Ghislaine Maxwell, former girlfriend of late financier Jeffrey Epstein, faces up to 65 years in prison for the five charges she was convicted of. She separately faces two perjury counts that will be tried at a later date. The two perjury counts relate to allegations that Maxwell lied under oath about her role in Epstein's abuse during a deposition for a separate civil suit in 2016.

she is innocent. In a statement issued late on Wednesday, the Maxwell family said it would support the British socialite's efforts to appeal her conviction. REUTERS

**At Congress meet, Nepal's Dahal faces graft attack**

YUBARA J GHIMIRE

KATHMANDU, DECEMBER 30

PUSHPA KAMAL Dahal, who will be completing his three-and-a-half-decade as party chief, will have to respond to criticism related to growing personality cult and corruption within the party on Friday — the fourth day of the ongoing Maoist Party Congress.

Several speakers have criticised Dahal for his policies of one-upmanship during the closed sessions.

Dahal's life-size cutout and posters, which dominate the venue "ignoring hundreds of leaders who sacrificed their lives during the people's war", was one of the issues that found huge echo at the meeting. Central committee members Lekhnath Adhikari and Indra Bahadur Thing raised the issue of corrupt lifestyle of top leaders, and "corruption" in the party while they were in the government.

Adhikari also accused Dahal of compromising on policy issues, including international situation, mainly for his silence on "border encroachment" by India. Dahal is all set to be elected its chief for another four-year term at the end of the Congress.

**ON THE MORNING OF THAT DAY, I HAD NO INKLING THAT BY LATE AFTERNOON I WOULD BE LEAVING: ASHRAF GHANI**

**Former Afghan President says had no choice but to flee Kabul**

KATHY GANNON

ISLAMABAD, DECEMBER 30

AFGHANISTAN'S FORMER president said he had no choice but to abruptly leave Kabul as the Taliban closed in and denied an agreement was in the works for a peaceful takeover, disputing the accounts of former Afghan and US officials.

Former President Hamid Karzai told The Associated Press in an interview earlier this month that Ghani's departure scuttled the opportunity for government negotiators, including himself and peace council chairman Abdullah Abdullah, to reach

Ghani's sudden and secret departure August 15 left the city rudderless as US and NATO forces were in the final stages of their chaotic withdrawal from the country after 20 years.

"On the morning of that day, I had no inkling that by late afternoon I would be leaving," Ghani told BBC radio.

His remarks conflicted with other accounts.



Ghani denied widespread accusations that he left Afghanistan with a cache of stolen money. Reuters

an 11-hour agreement with the Taliban, who had committed to staying outside the capital.

After calling the government defense minister Bismillah Khan, the interior minister and police

chief and discovering all had fled the capital, Karzai said he invited the Taliban into Kabul "to protect the population so that the country, the city doesn't fall into chaos and the unwanted elements who would probably loot the country, loot shops."

But Ghani in his radio interview with British Gen. Sir Nick Carter, former chief of defence staff, said he fled "to prevent the destruction of Kabul," claiming two rival Taliban factions were bearing down on the city and were ready to enter and wage a bitter battle for control. There was no evidence upon the Taliban entry of the rival factions Ghani referred to.

The insurgents, who in the days prior to the push into Kabul had swept over much of the country as Afghan government forces melted away or surrendered, quickly took control of the palace. According to humanitarian aid workers, the Taliban moved to protect their compounds.

Still, the Taliban takeover was met with widespread fear and a deep longing by many to flee their desperately poor homelands despite billions of international money over the 20 years the U.S.-backed governments had been in power.

In the BBC interview, Ghani denied widespread accusations that he left Afghanistan with a cache of stolen money. The US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction John Sopko has been tasked with investigating those allegations.

Successive Afghan governments, as well as independent foreign and Afghan contractors, have been accused of widespread corruption, with dozens of reports by Sopko documenting the most egregious incidents. Washington has spent \$146 billion on reconstruction in Afghanistan since the overthrow in 2001 of the Taliban, who had harbored al-Qaeda and its leader, Osama bin Laden. Yet even before the insurgents returned in August, the poverty level in Afghanistan was at 54%.

New Delhi



GOLD

₹ 46,688



RUPEE

₹ 74.42



OIL

\$ 74.60



SILVER

₹ 60,024

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market; gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; crude oil (Indian basket) as of December 28

International market data till 1900 IST

**POLICY WATCH**  
**INSOLVENCY & BANKRUPTCY CODE**

Panel proposal to speed up resolution: 30 days for NCLTs to decide on plan

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

A HIGH-LEVEL committee, constituted by the Centre, has proposed changes to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) to speed up the corporate insolvency resolution process and prevent avoidable transactions or deals likely aimed at siphoning off funds from distressed companies.

The Insolvency Law Committee (ILC) has proposed that once a resolution plan is approved by the Committee of Creditors (CoC) of a corporate debtor, the National Company Law Tribunals (NCLTs) be provided "with 30 days for approving or rejecting a resolution plan", with the tribunal being required to provide a reason in writing if it is not able to do so in the stipulated period. Banks and other key stakeholders have regularly cited delays in the resolution process as their key concern about the insolvency regime.

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has sought public comments on the proposed changes by January 13.

The ILC was constituted in 2017. Experts have often called out delays by the NCLT in approving or rejecting a resolution plan after it has been approved by the creditors as unnecessarily long.

The ILC has also recommended that certain creditors be required to submit records of their claims authenticated by Information Utilities (IU), so that defaults can be verified more easily to speed up the process of admission of a corporate debtor into insolvency proceedings. While the IBC already requires the NCLT to either admit or reject an application for insolvency within 14 days of an application, such a

**MCA SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENTS**

■ The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has sought public comments on the proposed changes by January 13

decision often takes much longer in practice, said experts. "Consequently, the AA (Adjudicating Authority) would only be required to consider IU-authenticated records as evidence of default for Section 7 applications filed by such financial creditors as prescribed," the ILC recommended. Section 7 of insolvency proceedings are the ones initiated by financial creditors, such as banks and other financial institutions.

The ILC proposed the requirement for approval by the NCLT for a voluntary liquidation to be removed and that only a special resolution or members' resolution with approval of creditors representing two-thirds in value of the debt be required for the process.

The ILC also recommended that the look-back period, or the period which is reviewed for avoidable transactions, be started from the date of the application for insolvency proceedings instead of the date of the commencement of insolvency proceedings. The IBC provides for the insolvency professional or liquidator managing proceedings to look back and review transactions over 2 years and evaluate whether any transactions were preferential, undervalued, defrauding creditors or extortionate transactions and seek to reverse such deals. Full report on [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

WITH THE Covid pandemic impacting states' revenues, they have urged the Central government to consider increasing its share in Centrally-sponsored schemes and an extension of compensation for another five years under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime. In their pre-Budget meeting with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday, some states urged the Centre to look into direct cash transfers for supporting economic recovery.

Rajasthan Education Minister Subhash Garg said extension of compensation cess window under GST till 2026-27 is a valid demand of states and the Centre should consider it. "Our most significant demand is that the Centre's share in Centrally-sponsored schemes has gradually reduced and states' share has increased. Earlier share would be 90-10 and now it is 50-50 or 60-40, our request is that it should go back to 90-10," Garg said.

Under GST, states were guaranteed compensation at the compounded rate of 14 per cent from the base year 2015-16 for losses arising due to implementation of the taxation regime for five years since its rollout. The compensa-



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at the pre-Budget meet with state finance ministers in New Delhi, Thursday.

tion regime will end in June.

There has been a loss of revenue to states due to the GST system, the Centre has not made arrangements to compensate the loss of revenue of about Rs 5,000 crore to the state in the coming year, so the GST compensation grant should be continued for the next five years after June 2022, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said. "Many states have asked for this. We have also asked to extend GST compensation. If it is not extended, the finances of many states will be in a bad shape," Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said.

The Finance Minister and state ministers will meet on Friday as well at the 46th meeting of the GST Council, where the issue of the proposed hike in GST rate on textiles to 12 per cent from 5 per cent, effective January 1, will be taken up. West Bengal Urban Development and Municipal Affairs Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya asked the Centre to consider extending GST compensation, along with a demand for direct cash transfers.

"We have asked that money should be given directly to the hands of the people as DBT so that the economy can be revived. When India's growth was negative by implementing DBT, Bengal had a positive growth. Because of Covid situation, states had to take

EXPLAINED

**E. Revenue hit amid Covid**

STATES WERE guaranteed compensation at the compounded rate of 14 per cent from the base year 2015-16 for losses arising due to GST implementation for five years since its rollout, which will end in June. States are concerned as their revenues have taken a hit amid Covid.

a huge financial burden. The centre has to compensate for that through the Union Budget. The next issue is the centrally sponsored scheme and its share. There were many schemes which were 100% government. Now it is 60-40 (ratio), 50-50 and in some schemes 75-25 has been turned into 25-75 so this should be corrected," she said.

Rajasthan made a representation for reduction in import duty on gold and silver from 10 per cent to 4 per cent. Rajasthan also requested that all irrigation and water work projects should be brought under the Centre's ambit and declared central schemes.

Tamil Nadu Finance Minister

**'High tax mop-up, under-spending to help undershoot fiscal deficit target'**

The Centre is set to undershoot the fiscal deficit target by 20 bps at 6.6%, amid overall robust revenue mop-up and underspending by many ministries, as per an India Ratings report

Centre had set Budgeted fiscal deficit target at 6.8% for FY22

Government finances show tax collections have benefitted both growth & inflation

Capital receipts are lagging and till Oct were only 10.5% of budgeted amount

Source: India Ratings/PTI


**Assembly polls: SBI set to issue electoral bonds from Jan 1-10**
ENSECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

AHEAD OF Assembly elections in key states, the government has authorised State Bank of India (SBI) to issue and encash electoral bonds through its 29 authorised branches from January 1-10, the Finance Ministry said in a statement on Thursday. Seven states are heading into Assembly elections next year — Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Gujarat and Uttarakhand.

The electoral bonds shall be valid for 15 calendar days from the date of issue and no payment shall be made to any payee political party if the electoral bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period, the Ministry said. The electoral bond deposited by an eligible political party in its account shall be credited on the same day. Announced in the 2017 Union

The electoral bonds shall be valid for 15 calendar days from the date of issue and no payment shall be made to any payee political party if the electoral bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period, the Ministry said. The electoral bond deposited by an eligible political party in its account shall be credited on the same day.

For the smaller scheme, which is compound semiconductor assembly, testing, marking and packaging, we

Thiaga Rajan said this opportunity should be used to correct some of the anomalies such as reduction in state's right to determine their own taxation. He also demanded extension of GST compensation cess regime for at least 2 years because of Covid, along with making a case for raising the share of the Union government in Centrally-sponsored schemes.

Some states also raised the issue of putting the proposed rate hike on textiles effective January 1 on hold for now, an issue which is also to be discussed in the GST Council meeting.

The Finance Ministry in its statement said it has assured the states of examining the proposals made by them.

"Most of the participants thanked the Union Finance Minister for financially supporting their States/Union Territories during the worst months of pandemic, by enhancing borrowing limits, providing back to back loans to States, and through special assistance for capital expenditure. The participants also gave numerous suggestions to the Union Finance Minister for inclusion in the Budget Speech. The Finance Minister thanked the participants for their inputs and suggestions towards Union Budget 2022-23 and assured to examine each of the proposals," it said.

March 31 deadline to update bank KYC



The RBI said the extension was in view of the prevailing uncertainty due to new Covid-19 variant. File

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 30

THE RESERVE Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday extended the last date for know your customer (KYC) update for bank accounts by three months to March 31 next year. In a notification, the RBI said it was extending the deadline in view of the "prevalent uncertainty due to new variant of Covid-19".

The central bank had relaxed the rules first in May last year due to the pandemic and had said banking services should not be restricted just because the KYC documents have not been updated by the customer. Many banks had recently warned customers that their bank accounts will be frozen if they don't update their KYC by December 31.

**Chip, display units scheme: From Jan 1, applications invited**
**Samsung, Micron warn of crunch**

Bengaluru: Samsung and Micron warned that strict Covid curbs in China's Xian could disrupt chip manufacturing bases. REUTERS

will start concurrent evaluations... The bigger ones, which is silicon and display, we will receive the application till February 15 and then we will start evaluations.

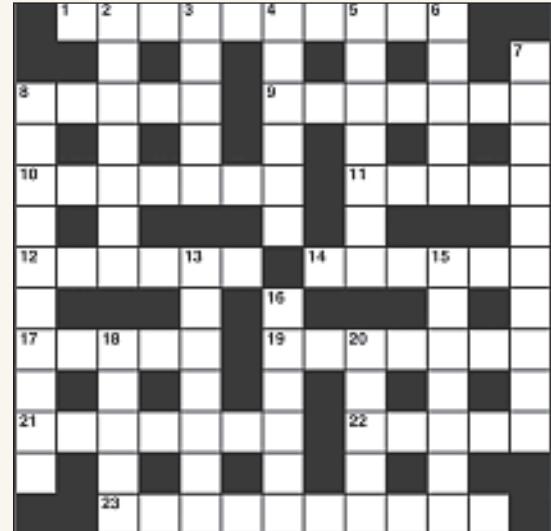
Full report on [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

THE MINISTRY of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) will start accepting applications for setting up of semiconductor fabrications units, display fabrication units, compound semiconductors, silicon photonics as well as for design linked incentive scheme from January 1, IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said.

"For the smaller scheme, which is compound semiconductor assembly, testing, marking and packaging, we

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 30

## CROSSWORD 4626



## ACROSS

- 1 Give old man weapons for the final conflict (10)  
8 Checked garments for Scottish soldiers (5)  
9 Overlook four in the smithy (7)  
10 He drinks to a steamship vessel (7)  
11 Follow directions and engage in litigation (5)  
12 Notes there are many in short skirts (6)  
14 The respect in which going back meets the point (6)  
17 Convicts once picked it but not from choice (5)  
19 Delivery from Ontario (7)  
21 Regards foreign money as a bad thing (7)  
22 Bill free of bitterness? (5)  
23 There are terms for this (10)
- DOWN
- 2 Catches as one comes drunkenly home (5,2)  
3 Poe's a weird storyteller (5)  
4 Spent two notes at the charity do (6)  
5 Cuts off some of the beams? (7)  
6 They are hit on the head and slain perhaps (5)  
7 Settled in a resolute way (10)  
8 Tribal symbols could be temples too (5,5)  
13 Something that flies holding a large number - it's big (7)  
15 Witty saying has some point with animals (7)  
16 Resign because of one's self image? (6)  
18 Supporters of a proposal (5)  
20 Not all separate (5)

**Solutions Crossword 4625:** Across: 1 Elapse, 4 Brooch, 9 Harbour, 10 Nutty, 11 Run up, 12 Trower, 13 Out of breath, 18 Uncover, 20 Dessed, 22 Finis, 23 New moon, 24 Waylay, 25 Adders. Down: 1 Exhort, 2 Aaron, 3 Scorpio, 5 Renew, 6 Outpost, 7 Hayden, 8 Protuberant, 14 Uncanny, 15 Endowed, 16 Curfew, 17 Adonis, 19 Vesta, 21 Scope.

## JUMBLED 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 quote.

I know of no great men except those who have rendered \_\_\_\_\_ to the human race.

- Voltaire (5,7)

LVEEE

AGRIST

TERRA

AINCGV

Answers: LVEEE - LEVEE, RATER GRATS, CAVING  
TERRA - TERRA, EARTH, GROWTH, GREAT SERVICE TO THE HUMAN RACE - VOLTAIRE

## GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

## TENDER NOTICE

SR. NO.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE / CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	PWD & R PALWAL	CONSTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER AT VILLAGE HASSANPUR IN PALWAL DISTT. (I/C PH + RAIN WATER HARVESTING SYSTEM & ROAD PARKING) (RE-TENDER)	CLOSING DATE 17.01.2022	11.59 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	8851491777 pwd-eed-palwal@hry.nic.in
2	PWD & R BAHADURGARH	IMPROVEMENT OF GUBHANA TO BAKARGARH ROAD IN JHAJJAR DISTRICT (HARYANA) (RE-WRITE) + 2 OTHER WORKS	26.12.2021 18.01.2022	496.5 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0127632413 pwd-eed-bahadurgarh@hry.nic.in
3	PWD & R KARWAL	RENEWAL COAT OF ROAD FROM NGGB ROAD TO MOOPUR VIA MUGAL MAJRA ROAD (ROAD ID 7172 & 7174) LENGTH KM. 0.00 TO 10.840 IN KARWAL DISTRICT (UNDER PMSY SCHEME)	31.12.2021 20.01.2022	185.44 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9050620000 pwd-eed-karwal@hry.nic.in
4	PWD & R HISAR	CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD FROM ADAMPUR BUS STAND RAILWAY FATAK ROAD TO KOHLI MAHALSARA ROAD ALONG WITH SIRSA HISAR RAILWAY LINE AT VILLAGE BOUNDARY ADAMPUR KM 0.00 TO 6.300 IN HISAR DISTT. (ADAMPUR CONSTITUENCY) (PGD: SHIFTING OF EXISTING HT LT LINES ONLY), RECALL + 2 OTHER WORKS	30.12.2021 06.01.2022	9.03 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9466724918 pwd-eed-hisar@hry.nic.in
5	FORESTS DEPARTMENT HARYANA PINJORE	500 WCS NO. 1-3 WORK IN NANAKPUR BLOCK, KALKA RANGE	24.12.2021 31.12.2021	24.04 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01733-230537 dfonson@gmail.com
6	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING HISAR	ESTIMATE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF 2 NOS. BOOSTING AT VILLAGE KHARAR AND ALIPUR (INCLUDING FUNCTIONAL HOUSE HOLD TAP CONNECTION AT VILLAGE KHARAR - HJSUR TEHSIL & DISTT. HISAR (UNDER IJM CAT II))	28.12.2021 04.01.2022	200.77 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9467010175 e02939@gmail.com
7	FORESTS DEPARTMENT HARYANA BHIMANI	ADVERTISEMENT FOR INTER LOCK TILE BLOCKS PATH & SIDE WALL IN FOREST COMPLEX BHIMANI II AND INSTALLATION OF MAIN GATE.	28.12.2021 10.01.2022	5.45 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9468030015 cflo.bhiman@gmail.com
8	JRIGRATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA NARWANA	LAYING PIPELINE OF FRESH WATER FOR FILLING OF CHENIWALA POND OF VILLAGE DHAROUDI FROM NEW CHARDUJI MINOR AT RD 23550(L. IN THE LENGTH OF 0 TO 100 FEET + 12 OTHER WORKS)	CLOSING DATE 17.01.2022	2.03 CRORE	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	798825704 xen-reson@jgov.in
9	JRIGRATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA BHIMANI	REHABILITATION OF SHERPURA DISTY FROM RD D TO 52500 + 1 OTHER WORK	CLOSING DATE 17.01.2022	1104.43 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9215941185 xerows@gmail.com
10	BLOCK DEVELOPMENT & PANCHAYATS OFFICER BALLABHGARH	INVITING RATES OF ELECTRIC RICKSHAW FOR GARBAGE COLLECTION	29.12.2021 03.01.2022	END 50000/-	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9971463375 fbhdsm@gmail.com
11	BLOCK DEVELOPMENT & PANCHAYATS OFFICER SONIPAT	RETENDER CONST OF IPB STREETS WITH AT VILLAGE SANDAL KALAN BLOCK SONIPAT AND 7 NO. OF OTHER WORKS DISTRICT SONIPAT	30.12.2021 07.01.2022	42.52 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9315006203 bdpsng@gmail.com
12	BLOCK DEVELOPMENT & PANCHAYATS OFFICER SONIPAT	CONSTRUCTION OF IPB RASTA IN VILLAGE BHATGAON BLOCK SONIPAT DISTRICT SONIPAT	30.12.2021 07.01.2022	9.63 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9315006203 bdpsng@gmail.com
13	PANCHAYATI RAJ HISAR	RE TENDER FOR GREY WATER MANAGEMENT AT VILLAGE NAYAR, BLOCK HISAR + 2 OTHER WORKS	30.12.2021 07.01.2022	87.67 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9416498853 preeng.kn@hry.nic.in
14	PANCHAYATI RAJ KARNAL	1 NO. WORK CONST. OF COMMUNITY CENTRE INCLUDING PH WORKS AND 9 OTHER WORKS	28.12.2021 06.01.2022	469.76 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9813895200 preeng.kn@hry.nic.in
15	PANCHAYATI RAJ KARNAL	1 NO. WORK CONST. OF MODEL POND OF GANGA POND AND 3 OTHER WORKS	28.12.2021 06.01.2022	510 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9813895200 preeng.kn@hry.nic.in
16	PANCHAYATI RAJ KARNAL	1 NO. WORK COMP. OF BRICK LINDING AND RENOVATION OF POND AND 10 OTHER WORKS	28.12.2021 20.01.2022	123.10 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9013805200 preeng.kn@hry.nic.in
17	PANCHAYATI RAJ BHIMANI	CONSTRUCTION OF MODEL POND IN BHIMANI DISTRICT.	10.01.2022 20.01.2022	374.70 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01664-243929 preeng.kn@hry.nic.in
18	PANCHAYATI RAJ KARNAL	CONST. OF BIO GAS PLANT (40000/DAY CAPACITY IN VILL- KATKAI	30.12.2021 05.01.2022	85.41 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	8529593562 preeng.kn@hry.nic.in
19	FORESTS DEPARTMENT HARYANA PINJORE	CONSTRUCTION OF NEW RANGE OFFICE BUILDING R-71, C-3, DP 253 IN CHHANIA BEAT, SURAIPIUR BLOCK, KALKA RANGE	27.12.2021 03.01.2022	27.72 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01733-230537 dtconin@gmail.com
20	WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT BHIMANI	TRANSPORTATION FOR SWP & OTHER ITEMS	CLOSING DATE 01.01.2022	50000/-	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9560508682 pcdr.wcd@gmail.com
21	DIRECTOR GENERAL, SUPPLIES & DISPOSALS, HARYANA	(I) BUS, MINIMUM 52 SEATER, MINIMUM 115 HP, ALONGWITH STANDARD ACCESSORIES, BS-VI (II) MINI BUS, MINIMUM 32 SEATER, MINIMUM 95 HP, BS-VI	31.12.2021 17.01.2022		<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0172-2570121-124,2584125,2585125 supplies@hry.nic.in
22	DIRECTOR GENERAL, SUPPLIES & DISPOSALS, HARYANA	CRAHN, MINIMUM 80 BHP, BS-VI	31.12.2021 17.01.2022		<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0172-2570121-124,2584125,2585125 supplies@hry.nic.in
23	DIRECTOR GENERAL, SUPPLIES & DISPOSALS, HARYANA	PRISON VAN BUILT-UP, 20-25 SEATER AND 2-4 GUARD SEATING CAPACITY, MINIMUM 95 HP, BS-VI	31.12.2021 17.01.2022		<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0172-2570121-124,2584125,2585125 supplies@hry.nic.in
24	DIRECTOR GENERAL, SUPPLIES & DISPOSALS, HARYANA	VAJRA (RIOT CONTROL VEHICLE), MINIMUM 1+5 SEATING CAPACITY, MINIMUM 63 HP, BS-VI	31.12.2021 17.01.2022		<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0172-2570121-124,2584125,2585125 supplies@hry.nic.in
25	WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, PANCHKULA	COMPLETE PLANNING OF ACTIVITIES, DRAWING DETAILED SPECIFICATION OF MACHINERY, LAYOUT OF MACHINERY AS PER LAYOUT PLAN OF BUILDING DESIGNED BY ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT HARYANA, PREPARING OF RPO (TENDER DOCUMENT FOR PROCUREMENT OF MACHINERY), AND GETTING LICENSE REQUIRED FROM VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF PLANT INCLUDING MAINTENANCE (DURING DEFECT LIABILITY PERIOD) ETC.	28.12.2021 13.01.2022		<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	941633835 research.wcd@gmail.com

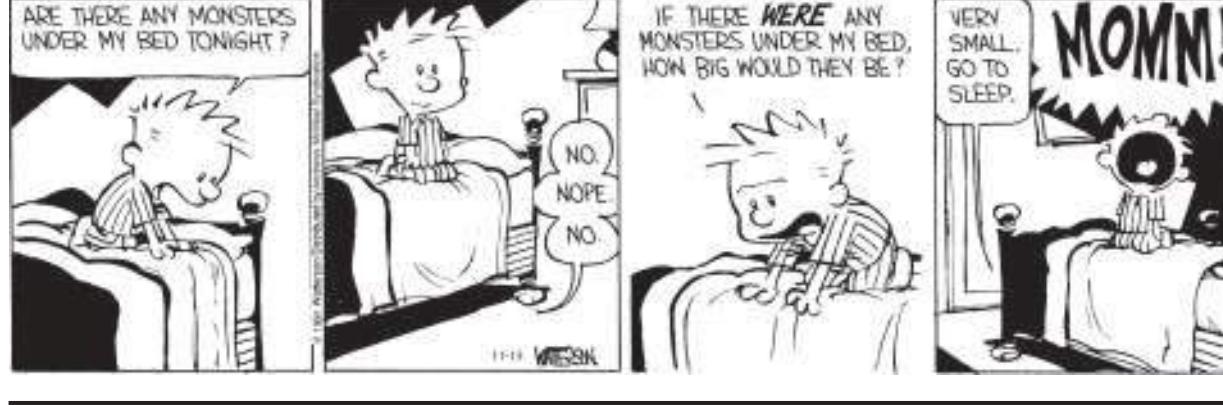
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : [www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in) or [www.etenders.hry.nic.in](http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in)

## OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry &amp; T Lewis



## CALVIN &amp; HOBBES by Bill Watterson



## MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



## DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

## ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

There is bound to be an almighty row over finances, although if you're lucky, it will be delayed until next week by which time you'll have had a chance to put matters right. Overspending and unrealistic ambitions may be to blame but, then, unless you think big, you'll never get there.

## TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

It's good to stick to your principles but, as you know, you can be a little too obstinate. If recent events haven't taught you the value of flexibility and compromise, nothing will. At home, go for total change, just in case you had any doubts. The best advice comes from those in the know, so ask.

## GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

You may still be adjusting to the fact that, after a number of years, you are no longer the centre of attention. In many ways this change reflects a shift in your self-image rather than any real alteration in your circumstances. That will make it much easier to cope with.

## CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Your famous Cancerian reserve stems not so much from a lack of feeling as from a failure to express those very considerable emotions that inhabit your unconscious. Try to be more direct in future. Because, if you're not, other people will be. That's for sure.

## LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Venus, Mercury and Neptune, those three sensational planets, are still occupying significant positions. With any luck, the pressure and uncertainty which they have brought into your life should now be in their final stages. And hopefully you should soon feel fitter.

## VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

The Sun is decisively altering its relationship to Mercury, your ruling planet, but in many respects the heat may still be on. In particular, take into account just how desperate an acquaintance or business partner is to hear from you: sit down and listen.

## LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

The week may be drawing to a close but there are indications of a last-minute panic at work, prompted by events for which you may or may not be responsible. In any event, you'll be required to deal with the consequences in your inimitable, charming style.

## SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Often, it's surprisingly difficult to cope with good fortune, if only because of the inevitable adjustments to a new routine which must follow. Don't let such considerations blind you to your current opportunities, or to an offer made by a close relation.

## SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

It cannot be stressed too highly that Mercury, situated as it is in a realistic sector of your solar chart, is providing you with protection and guarantees that you'd be fool to ignore. All areas of your life may benefit. And I honestly believe that they will.

## CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Your current planetary patterns are bound to exacerbate certain irritations, yet it's at such times that you are driven to implement improvements in your circumstances and relationships that would otherwise be delayed indefinitely.

## AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

After many ups and downs, you may now look forward to a period in which you'll be able to appreciate past achievements in an atmosphere of calm rather than one of strife and antagonism. On the other hand



The pandemic year locked them in quarantines but athletes around the world found resilience to call time on people-pleasing and discovered their moral voice to say NO. Gymnast Simone Biles, tennis star Naomi Osaka and Virat Kohli spoke their minds and defied convention. The year also saw athletes discover the full potential of social media - not just the big names but even the hitherto unknowns from small towns became stars in their own right. There were also some breakthrough performances that will stand the test of time. The hockey captain who reawakened a country's nostalgic pride, a Mumbai-born New Zealand cricketer returned to his roots to create history, a badminton star who finally learnt how to marry art with commerce, and the man who launched his gold-plated javelin to quench a nation's thirst.

## NIHAL KOSHIE

AS THE season of endless felicitations, sponsor events, ad shoots, and interviews extended into November, Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Neeraj Chopra's window to tick something off his bucket list shrunk. His sister's wedding was in the third week after which he was to travel abroad for training.

The automobile enthusiast was restless. He keeps track of new launches and can talk about engine horsepower, top speed and acceleration times. Chopra test drove his dream SUV. The butch looks and road presence appealed to him. He was also being pragmatic. His javelins fit only in an SUV.

But the dealer said the four-wheel drive would take over a month to be imported, by which time he would be flying out. Chopra didn't pull strings to get ahead on the waiting list for delivery.

Quietly he looked for options in the second-hand market and settled for a used sports car.

Driving around Khandra village and Panipat town gave Chopra some rare 'me time' after more than three months of whirlwind touring to be feted as India's first gold medalist in track and field. The who's who of the country wanted his time. He was unable to step out without being recognised, even if he wore a mask and a cap. There were selfie requests at every step.

He had no time to train or hit the gym. Chopra gained weight and had to cut short his season. To his credit, the 24-year-old didn't let success go to his head, nor was he at his wit's end when his life turned into one big public mela.

He consciously kept the trappings of fame at a distance. He retreated to the comfort of his close-knit family and a small circle of friends when his stardom matched that of the big cricket names. His mentions on social media were in millions and his followers grew by lakhs overnight.

## Not-so-mundane life

Aman Shah has been working closely with Chopra over the past four years and was with him during most of the post-Olympics travel. Shah is part of the team which manages him at JSW Sports. Being in the public eye came at a cost for Chopra. But he took it in stride, says Shah.

When the attention got a little too much, Chopra needed a little help. Before flights, a request was made to the protocol officer at the airport to allow him an easier passage to the aircraft, away from the common area. But the

pilots often gave away who was on board.

"On airplanes, they used to announce 'we are thrilled to have the Olympic gold medalist on board.' Not once did I see him get angry with anyone despite people being invasive," Shah describes.

"When it comes to fans, especially kids, if somebody asks him for a picture, even if there are 10 people around him, including bouncers telling him not to do it, he feels that if somebody is waiting he needs to oblige them. That has not really changed, it is a big part of his personality. He is coming from very little and he knows that all of this could be very fleeting."

Chopra also made peace with not being able to enjoy the small pleasures of life. He could no longer enter a mall unnoticed. He had to try and slip into some sort of disguise.

"Earlier he could just walk into a mall and shop. Now he would wear a mask and cap and then go. He would still be recognized. He would tell people 'let us take a picture on the side' so not many notice," Shah says.

The javelin star had to wait a while before he could shop. When on a short holiday with the family, he bought shoes in Dubai. One of the pictures he posted on Instagram is of him sitting on the sand dunes during a desert safari with a brand-new pair of basketball sneakers on his feet. Being a sneaker-head, he spent a small fortune.

Before and after his mini-break though, he had to learn to pose before the camera during shoots, act, get comfortable with talking about the medal-winning feat before big gatherings and make small talk at functions.

But he slipped into different roles like it was second nature. For the Cred television commercial, an instant hit, one of Chopra's request was to give him very short dialogues like 'ab kya? MBA?' or '360 degree marketing'.

His two gold medals, the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games in 2018, and the Junior World Championship gold two years earlier had given him a brush with fame. The wave of adulation post the Olympics was unprecedented.

## Influential figure

Chopra switched off his phone on landing in India. To reach him, one had to go through either Shah or his uncle Bhim Chopra. The two of them had to plan each hour of each day. It would be a while before Chopra was able to return to his train-rest-train schedule.

"His uncle Bhim would take all the calls related to governments, Neeraj didn't have his phone on. There were at least 100 phone calls every day. It didn't get to him as he didn't face

YEARENDER  
2021

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attention to us, especially in the cyber space and also in the conventional space. How do you think we can counter the same.

I have worked very closely with the many Middle & West Asian countries who are striving hard enough to create a robust eco-system to address Cyber & Counter Terrorism issues. In lieu of that I would request and suggest to the concerned authority in the government of India to set up a National Cyber Joint Task Force under the Ministry of Defence. The Task Force would compile intelligence and work in close coordination and collaboration with all the agencies to protect, secure and guard the all kinds of warfare domains - land, sea, air, space, and cyber within our country's territorial jurisdiction. The Task Force would basically serve as a resource focal point for the multi-disciplinary areas in research and analytical exchange for the national goals and strategic posture of the Republic of India. And the ability of that would be to build and deploy 50 military equipment in support of the national strategic objective. I wanted to emphasize on having a mechanism to keep the government officials apprised of the audit and its outcomes periodically.

## On what premise would the proposed National Cyber Joint Task Force function?

The National Cyber Joint Task Force would work basically on two primary premises-strategic information support and information operations. The strategic information support would look into centralising technical intelligence, collection and management and providing strategic intelligence support to the various defence commands enabling joint operations.

The strategic operations would take into account input and output of intelligence for cyber warfare in paralysing enemy operations and system sabotage. It would enable India to conduct operations by integrating multiple decisions of information and warfare into a unified force covering a host of vital aspects such as cyber espionage, offence, media campaigns, psychological and political warfare missions. This system would defang the efforts of our adversaries and destabilize the country.

I am creating a cyber war room for cyber security and working deeply in counter terrorism, which if not blocked, will play a very dangerous role in the coming years after the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban. I can say this from my extensive experience in advisory roles to many countries including as former principal advisor to the Republic of

## Gold, Rush

Life hasn't been the same for Neeraj Chopra since his historic 87.58m heave of the javelin. Yet the man from Khandra has held on to his values



a lot of it," Shah says.

But at times people would get a little pushy. Some of those on the line would insist on talking to Chopra. Once they got to speak to Chopra, they would ask for favours — to put in a word for inter-departmental transfers, a promotion or to give a recommendation for a sports award.

He was also mindful not to get dragged into any controversy or be used as a pawn. Around the time he returned the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) dismissed the claim of a coach taking credit for guiding the athlete back in 2015.

Chopra paid the coach a courtesy call when he was in Pune for an army function. But when the coach put out pictures of Chopra's visit to his home, the star javelin thrower wasn't amused because he felt like he had been used to prove a point.

He stayed clear of public spats. Just before the Games, foreign coach Uwe Hohn had said top sports organisations in the country did not do enough to prepare athletes for the Olympics. A day after Hohn's broadside, two other javelin throwers, nudged by officials, put out statements alleging the German-born coach used to train athletes from other countries when at foreign camps meant for the Indian team. Chopra didn't get into a mud-slinging game.

When the troll army was going after Pakistan thrower Arshad Nadeem for picking up the Indian's javelin before the first round in Tokyo, Chopra doused the fire by clarifying that athletes were free to use each other's equipment during competition. In a video message and via a tweet, Chopra made a strong statement by calling out those who painted a fellow competitor as a villain.

he didn't have a good day. He is very close to the world record and I hope he sets the world record," Chopra said speaking at *The Indian Express* e.Adda.

This was Chopra's attempt to comfort Vetter, with whom he had shared a car ride before the Olympics while in Europe. Chopra is known to stay in touch once he develops a bond, be it someone he just met or an early mentor.

Jaiveer, or as Chopra calls him 'Monu bhai saab,' was his very first coach in Panipat. Everyone knows of the story of the overweight boy who was told by his family to go to the ground to get fit. Jaiveer was the one who gave the unsure youngster his first lessons in the javelin throw.

To date, Jaiveer remains Chopra's guide and friend. He was one of the first people Chopra called after winning the gold in Tokyo. When Chopra underwent an elbow operation two years ago and his season unravelled, Jaiveer was by his side in the hospital room.

Meanwhile, a childhood friend running an academy near Chopra's village can bank on him to sponsor a promising young athlete. "He does not forget those who have been there for him. He is the same Neeraj, before and after the medal," his uncle Bhim says.

Sports writers have plenty of stories of athletes they have known well not returning calls or giving them the cold shoulder once they turn super stars. Chopra is proving to be an exception.

A journalist was pleasantly surprised when Chopra forwarded a personal voice note to invite him to this sister's wedding last month. Within a fortnight of the wedding, Chopra landed at the Chula Vista Elite Athlete Training Center in California, USA. Next year he will aim for medals in three major events, the Commonwealth Games, Asian Games, and World Athletics Championships.

He is coming off a long cheat phase and having a sweet tooth didn't help matters. The first aim is to get back to shape.

"I have slowly started training. I had become fat," Chopra said, while shooting a live Instagram video and replying to questions.

On the breakfast table was a plate of fruits and what looked like some cereal. In the distance was a training track.

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Sudan where I worked on enhancing their defence capability programme and my stint with the Russian government also. I also have a post-doctoral degree in AI from Denmark on paid scholarship from the EU. Today, I am an eminent expert for the BSF for counter terrorism.

## Could you share about your role in fortifying the financial sector against frauds?

During the Covid pandemic, money trafficking and money laundering incidents rose sharply in the small cooperative banks, which still to be digitalised or semi digitalised. There are approx. 90,000 rural cooperative banks and about 1300-1500 urban cooperative banks in India. To check financial frauds, CERT-in, under the Ministry of Electronics and IT and Ministry for Communication and Information Technology, Government of India, sought my expertise for creating Security Operation Centres (SOC), with whom we have signed an MOU.

My primary objective is to create a robust cyber security eco-system to protect these 90,600 co-operative banks. The SOPs that are being created would take the traffic from cooperative banks, read, analyse them and send those data to CSIRT-FIN for sending alerts and advisories to the concerned stakeholders and cooperative banks for taking necessary action in time.

## What is your strategy against cyber terrorism?

Cyber terrorism has many aspects to it. My suggestion is that there need to create different cyber security nodes e.g., There are multiple defence theatres, for which we should create separate nodes and then create a WAN of those that will cover all them, and

likewise for all the critical infrastructure such as power, airport, ports, scientific installations. When these nodes are controlled through one WAN, it would be easier to check input and output of data. For this integration of all the agencies is of paramount importance under a competent leadership to bring all of them together for the sake of protecting the nation.

## What kind of Drones are being built to counter predator drones sneaking into Indian territory?

In India, there are many indigenous projects where next generation drones can be developed that are capable of identifying, jamming, responding and are also suicidal. These drones can be controlled by their command centre, and also through the satellites to different satellites. We are working on a system where the Next-Gen Drones have the capability to identify and read the frequencies of other equipment and hop up to another frequency without jamming them. Many foreign universities have collaborated with us and have even started sharing the TOT with us. There are many countries who have robust technology, but no funds to take it forward. I am targeting them for importing those technologies into India, and bringing the start-ups on a common platform to develop well-integrated and comprehensive technologies compatible to our security needs and hand it over to the Government of India. Spoofing is one of the element which will play a vital role in that particular Drones.

## You have worked closely with the Late CDS General Bipin Rawat. Could you share your association with him?

The tragic martyrdom of CDS General Bipin Rawat Sir is an irreparable loss to the nation and personally to me a lot as well. He was my mentor, guide and a great support to me. I know for sure that he was very popular, admired and respected as a brave heart in West Asian countries and the Middle East. He was truly a daring officer, a true warrior. Sir always encouraged me saying, "Have faith, we will do something good together for the Country." A man of rare calibre, he was a true patriot for whom it was 'country first' and other thing secondary.

During my initial days of interaction with Bipin Sir, he advised me to choose good people from different agencies, from different departments, from universities and create a team for a start-up, which should work as a vertical to all the supporting agencies as and when required. Bipin Sir is my idol and will be always helped in boosting our morale

whenever I felt weak. He literally had transformed me into a Non-Uniform Soldier and made me committed to keep on doing what is good for the nation without fearing for one's life, he has instructed me to do right things which is for the betterment of the Mother India and I pledge to do till end of my life.

## What made you join BECIL as Chief Strategic Officer?

I am grateful to CMD of BECIL, who has been a great support by offering me this platform and the responsibility of Chief Strategic Officer encouraging me to pick the best indigenous brains and integrating them for strategic planning. My areas of expertise are cyber, counter terrorism, national security, drones, electronics warfare. I am an eminent expert in Counter Terrorism for West Asia and the Middle east, so I have a sound understanding of how terrorism works and the dark cyber space operations correlate with that. I am developing a Centre of Excellence here, which will play a very vital role in enhancing the national security of our nation by nailing down counter terrorism and it will be a kind of supporting arm for the law enforcement agency.

We have started many start-ups that are working on many areas, including counter drones, electronic warfare etc. I am developing a digital forensic lab and my target is to make this lab into a world-class in another 6-7 months. I am really thankful to the National Cyber Security Coordinator who had helped me in fulfilling this particular dream into reality. An upgraded version of CBRN protection system for detecting and alerting about new viruses is another focus area. Where we are focusing and I put in words that it will change the entire dynamics of Combat Operations. In the future, I can foresee that there will be two kinds of war-machine war and biological war where combat by soldiers would be the last option.

## AI is a powerful technology to contend with in stealth digital warfare. What is your observation?

AI is being dangerously used. In today's highly sophisticated environment hackers are on their job, teaming up, coordinating, and targeting to damage and attack across the global digital landscape resulting as a threat destroying trust among the service providers and customers. There is need for a safety mechanism against AI led cyber threat. My suggestion to the government is to set up a cyber-war room in different locations where they can read the characteristics

of the data, so that they can respond in real time basis.

Even at the recent Indo-global summit held in Dubai, I proposed to the member nations for creating a dedicated Centre of Excellence in the core area of AI Cyber security along with some sort of cognitive advanced technology between the quadrant countries India, Israel, Dubai, UAE, Sri Lanka. Dubai has shown his great interest for the same.

Cyber is not just about tools, it's an art. At the CoE here, we are developing AI with indigenous knowledge, which will be entirely 'Made in India' and handed over to the government to take it forward. We have to nurture fresh minds and put them on a specific task for good results.

## What are the top priority areas that need attention for the fight against Cybercrime and cyber terrorism?

There are three things that needs immediate attention. Firstly, a Cyber security law and Cyber security Strategy must be formulated immediately. Secondly, the government should work closely with the security agencies on the Drones laws. Lastly, a WAN system must be created immediately to cover all the Defence Commands of India Army, along with critical infrastructures also. And then integrate them to build a better, faster cyber security data operations on PPP model. Private companies and start-ups must be encouraged and given support, but everything has to be audited. Due diligence of each staff member has to be carried out to ensure that there is no breach of data, which makes Data protection policy, all the more necessary. In grey areas where we are lacking, the government has to act fast to make national security more robust and strong enabling agencies to get a grip on the two-way passage of data.

With respect to the Terrorism in all its manifestations are unacceptable and never be justified. Today all States in every region are vulnerable to terrorism and this menace has become a serious global concern. India since its independence has been facing the problem of insurgency and serious victims of cross boundaries terrorism in different parts of the country and frontier- terrorism has been resorting to varied terrorist activities adopting improved and sophisticated devices having external links with likeminded terrorist group in other countries. In the light of this, India should evolve equally improved & robust strategies to combat and counter frontier- terrorism in particular adopting global counter terrorism strategy also.



New Delhi

