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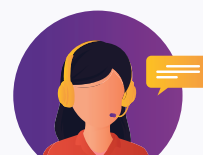
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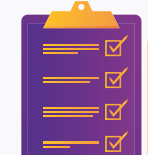
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Government of Rajasthan
Department of Medical, Health and Family Welfare
(I.E.C.), Jaipur

Telephone No: 0141-2222817, Email: directoriec-rj@nic.in

I.E.C./STORE/2021-22/451 **Date: 25.11.2021**

NIB No. I.E.C./STORE/2021-22/245 Dated 07-08-2021

EXTENSION for INVITATION OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL RFP
THROUGH E-BIDS

With above referred bid, all the prospective Bidders are hereby informed that the department has extended the last date of bid submission for RFP upto 2.00 PM on 12.01.2022. For detail information visit **SPPP, EPROC and department's website.**

UNB No: MHS2122SLOB01844.

Sd/-
(Meghraj Singh Ratnoo)
Director (IEC),
Medical and Health Department
Rajasthan, Jaipur

DIPR/C/11922/2021

	कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता चतुर्थ वृत्त, लोक निर्माण विभाग, रुद्रपुर, (उधम सिंह नगर) Phone/Fax: 05944-240921, E-mail: sepwdusn@gmail.com					
पत्रांक : 3749 / 23 एम-04 / 2021	राष्ट्रीय प्रतियोगात्मक निविदा (e-tendering)	दिनांक : 26.11.2021				
<p>महामहिम राज्यपाल महोदय, उत्तराखण्ड की ओर से अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, चतुर्थ वृत्त, लो0नोवि0 रुद्रपुर (उधम सिंह नगर) द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु ई-टेंडरिंग द्वारा टू-बिड सिस्टम द्वारा के अन्तर्गत निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा से सम्बन्धित सभी सूचनायें वेबसाइट http://www.uktenders.gov.in पर दिनांक 04.12.2021 से उपलब्ध होंगी।</p>						
क्र. सं.	कार्य का नाम	धरोहर घनराशि (लाख में)	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य (रु. में)	निविदा की वैधता (दिवस)	कार्य पूर्ण करने का समय (माह में)	ठेकेदार की श्रेणी
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	मा0 मुख्यमंत्री घोषणा सं0 311 / 2021 के अंतर्गत विधानसभा क्षेत्र गदरपूर में भजुवा नगला से बांसखेडी होते हुए बेरिया बरहेनी मार्ग तक मार्ग का पुनः निर्माण एवं डामरीकरण का कार्य।	3.07	5000.00 + 18% GST	120 दिन	09 माह	केन्द्र / राज्य सरकार के विभाग / उपक्रम में मार्ग हेतु श्रेणी बी एवं उच्चतर में पंजीकृत
नोट- उपरोक्त कार्य की निविदा स्वीकृति की प्रत्याक्षा में आमंत्रित की गयी है।						अधीक्षण अभियन्ता

DELHI JAL BOARD : GOVT OF N.C.T OF DELHI

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PROJECT)W-VI

CHANDRAWAL WW-II, CIVIL LINES DELHI-110054

PH: 011-23814133, E-mail:- eepw6.djb@nic.in

SHORT NIT No. 03 (2021-22) Tender ID- 2021_DJB_211687

S. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Tender fee (Rs.)	Last date/ time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	Boring and Installation of tubewells at Coronation Waste Water Treatment Plant facing Model Town Colony and other Suitable locations Tender ID- 2021_DJB_211687	2,11,17,586/-	Exempted	27.11.2021 9:00AM onwards	1500/-	09.12.2021 upto 3:00 P.M.

SHORT NIT No. 04 (2021-22) Tender ID- 2021_DJB_211699

S. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Tender fee (Rs.)	Last date/ time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	Boring and Installation of tubewells at Southern Side of Coronation Waste Water Treatment Plant and other Suitable locations Tender ID- 2021_DJB_211699	2,11,17,586/-	Exempted	27.11.2021 9:00AM onwards	1500/-	09.12.2021 upto 3:00 P.M.

SHORT NIT No. 05 (2021-22) Tender ID- 2021_DJB_211700

S. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Tender fee (Rs.)	Last date/ time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	Boring and Installation of tubewells at Coronation Waste Water Treatment Plant facing Coronation Park and other suitable locations Tender ID- 2021_DJB_211700	2,46,11,758/-	Exempted	27.11.2021 9:00AM onwards	1500/-	09.12.2021 upto 3:00 P.M.

SHORT NIT No. 06 (2021-22) Tender ID- 2021_DJB_211701

S. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Tender fee (Rs.)	Last date/ time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	Boring and Installation of tubewells along with Delivery Mains at Wazirabad WTP and other Suitable locations. Tender ID- 2021_DJB_211701	1,90,42,030/-	Exempted	27.11.2021 9:00AM onwards	1500/-	09.12.2021 upto 3:00 P.M.

The complete details can be seen on website <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>. The tender has been uploaded on website.

ISSUED BY PRO (WATER)

Advt. No. J.S.V. 675(2021-22)

Sd/- (S.P. Singh)

EE(Project)W-VI

9650291594

U. T. Administration of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu
Public Works Department, WD-II, Diu.
 No. Tender Notice No.64/2021-2022 dated: 25/11/2021

e-TENDER NOTICE


The Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Work Division-II, Diu invites tenders from eligible contractor / parties to participate in the following tenders :

1. Construction of Retaining Wall and Road at Simbor in Diu District
2. Construction of Retaining Wall along sea side at Mithabava, Ghoghla, Diu.
3. Repairing & strengthening of old fishing pile jetty and platform from passengers Jetty upto bearing platform near Gomitmata at Vanakbara Diu (2nd Call)

The last date for submission of bids : 09.12.2021 at 14.30 hrs.

For further details and downloading of tender document please visit our <https://www.ddtenders.gov.in>

Sd/-
(Executive Engineer)
PWD, WD-II, Diu.

 POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH, CHANDIGARH						
E-Tender Notice No. P/Proc/Pt-22301				Phone No. 0172-2756445		
Tender applications are invited for purchase of various items tender No. 1&2 from the Manufacturers or their sole authorized distributors/agents. The bidders can place their bids as per terms & conditions contained on http://www.eprocure.gov.in/procureapp						
Sr. No.	Equipment/Item Name	Quantity	EMD	Bid submission date	Bid Opening Date	Dr/pt Name
	Pre Bid cases.					
1.	Adenosine Deaminase Kit (ADA) & Nitric Acid Kit	As per technical specification	1,24,000/-	14-02-2021	15-02-2021	Biochemistry
2.	Fluorescent Cytoscopy Set with Ultramicroscope	01 No.	1,10,000/-	-do-	-do-	Paed. Surgery

Tender List can also be downloaded from website www.pgimer.edu.in and can be applied on website www.eprocure.gov.in. In place of Earnest Money Deposit/Bid Security only "Bid Security Declaration" may be submitted by the Bidders as per Rule 1700(a) of GPR 2017. The bidders shall be opened on the next date at 03:00 PM in the presence of the authorized tendering tenders. Tenders not admitted on the prescribed form, not accompanied with Bid Security Declaration shall be summarily rejected outrightway. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders received without assigning any reason thereof. **"PRE-BID CONFERENCE" WITH INTENDING BIDDERS FOR ITEM No. 1&2 shall be held on 06-02-2021 from 03:00 P.M. ONWARDS in the PUEP, OFFICE, PGIMER, CHANDIGARH.** The intending bidders are free to join Pre Bid Conference through video conference. For more details contact: 0172-2756449 a Procurement Branch (Import).

NOTE 1. The terms and Conditions of the original Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) available on PGIMER website will remain same. However on switching over to e-tendering on e-Procurement, the bids will be received in electronic form on e-Procurement website and no bid will be received in Physical form.

NOTE 2. If any of the tender opening dates happens to be a holiday in PGIMER, Chandigarh, then the same shall be opened on next full working day.

Additional Terms and Conditions.

1. The Institute has adopted amended Notice Inviting Tenders (NIT) which is available on e-Procurement website (<http://www.eprocure.gov.in/procureapp>) and Website: www.pgimer.edu.in. Therefore the bidders are requested to go through the Instructions Carefully before submitting bids.

PROFESSOR-IN-CHARGE (EP)

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SAMBALPUR
e-Procurement No. 3129 / Dated: 20.11.2021

Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur on behalf **Odisha State Rural Roads Agency** invites **Percentage (%) bids** through e-Procurement from eligible class of experienced bidders for construction of roads and CD works including maintenance for 5 years of rural roads under **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana PMGSY-III, Batch-I.**

1	Name of work	Construction of road and CD works including five year maintenance under PMGSY-III, Batch-I Package no. OR-03-245
2	Class of Contractor.	"A" and "B" Class
3	No. of packages.	1 No. of Package
4	Estimated cost	Approx. 206.24 Lakh (Information in DTCN will be Final)
5	Bid submission fee.	Rs. 10,000/- (Non-Refundable) per set of package
6	Mode of submission of tender.	Only through online in website. www.pmsgytenders.gov.in
7	Summary of key dates are provided below :	

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding		Last date & time for seeking clarification	Last date & time of submission of Original documents	Date & Time of opening of tender	
		From	To			Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural, Works Circle, Sambalpur	PMGSY-Online-RWCSBP-27/2021-22	29.11.2021 From 11.00 A.M.	14.12.2021 Up to 05.00 P.M.	08.12.2021 Up to 5.00 P.M.	17.12.2021 By 5.00 P.M.	15.12.2021 At 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

***Special conditions 1-** EPF registration is mandatory before drawl of agreement. 2- Rate quoted by the contractor shall be excluding GST. 3. Original Bid Security declaration form, Bid submission fee and original affidavits should be submitted at the O/o Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur **Or** O/o Executive Engineer/ Superintending Engineer of Concern Rural Works Division.

*Details can be seen from the e-procurement portal www.pmsgytenders.gov.in

*Subsequent modification/ corrigendum/ Addendum if required shall be appeared in the website only.

Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer
Rural, Works Circle, Sambalpur
 OIPR-25091/11/0032/2122

<p>Bride WANTED</p>	<p>Groom WANTED</p>
GUJARATI	GENERAL
<p>NRI GROOM</p> <p>Gujarati Hindu Baniya Boy, MS, Software Engineer on Work-visa, Dec'92, 5'5", 66 kgs., Wheatish, Horoscope believer. Looking for American Citizen / Green card / Work-visa girl, Family oriented, Cast no bar.</p> <p>Contact: 9427492881 sarjakshah92@gmail.com</p>	
<p>Sikh/PUNJABI</p>	
<p>Suitable match for post graduate Sikh sahani turbaned vegetarian boy 28 /6'8" Canada PR WhatsApp 6283708428</p> <p style="text-align: right;">0050187547-1</p>	
<p>Groom WANTED</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">DOCTORS</p>	
<p>Medico Match for Punjabi Hindu Khatri meritorious Girl, 5'4", March 1994, MD (Medicine) Working as SR in Govt. Medical College, From Status Family, Bureau Please Excuse, Whatsapp:9812433300,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">0040593356-1</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Sikh/PUNJABI</p>	
<p>PUNJABI beautiful girl 32 yrs/169 cm at Delhi NCR, lawyer in Multinational Co. seeks professional boy. 9810601196</p> <p style="text-align: right;">0050186793-1</p>	
<p>Sunni Muslim khan girl 30/5.2 B.Tech SBI Employee settled in Mumbai seeks alliance from Educated upper caste boy. 9833838972</p> <p style="text-align: right;">0070762016-1</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">MALYALEE KERALITE</p>	
<p>Professionally Qualified Hindu Ezhava Anizham Nakshatram Girl 27yrs 164cms B.Com, B.Ed, M.A English Born & Brought up outside Kerala D/O late Father, Mother(Rtd) Lt Col Residing @ Pune invites Proposals from parents of Suitable Working Boys (Preferably working outside Kerala) Mob No- 8087649982, 9765968280</p> <p style="text-align: right;">0090294806-1</p>	
<p>Hindu Maruthuvar/Vilakkuthalai Nair ,fair,tall ,26yrs engineer seeks suitable groom. Contact 9486407217</p> <p style="text-align: right;">0050186735-1</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">MUSLIM</p>	
<p>Wanted Settled Sunni Muslim Groom for Varanasi Muslim Girl 28 year. Completing Master of Dental Surgery 2021-22 examinations Modi Nagar. Working in a Government Institute as Junior Pharmacovigilance Associates Ghaziabad. Email : shahid.r rint@gmail.com</p> <p style="text-align: right;">0050187549-1</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">OTHERS</p>	
<p>Looking for well educated & well settled groom for our daughter Age/Height:30/ 5'7" Caste:Saini Religion:Sikh Profession:Associate Scientist in Bangalore Qualification:M.S. (Pharm.) Contact: 8054726025</p> <p style="text-align: right;">0050187536-1</p>	

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SUNDAY STORY

PAGE 10



CRYPTO CASH

What could be the way forward

GOVT & POLITICS



JUDGES MUST BE DISCREET ABOUT WHAT THEY SAY IN COURT: KOVIND [PAGE 9](#)

OMICRON VARIANT: AVIATION MINISTRY MONITORING SITUATION

PM seeks review of overseas travel, states tighten checks, Delhi wants flights stopped

Mumbai orders quarantine; Karnataka to trace, test arrivals since Nov 12 from South Africa and two other countries

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

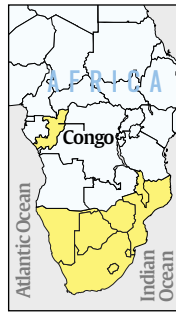
IN THE light of growing concerns regarding the new Covid variant first detected in South Africa, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked officials to review the lifting of international travel restrictions. A day earlier, the Ministry of Civil Aviation announced the resumption of international scheduled commercial flights from December 15,

after a 21-month gap. The PM held a meeting Saturday morning with top Health Ministry officials, where he was briefed on the new variant Omicron and its characteristics, its impact in other countries, and its implications for India. In a statement, the PMO said Modi highlighted the need to monitor all international arrivals, with focus on countries identified as 'at risk'. "The PM spoke about the need to be proactive in light of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Countries	First Dose Coverage	Second Dose Coverage
Botswana	37	20
South Africa	28	24
Zimbabwe	25	18
Mozambique	19	11
Namibia	14	11
Congo	8.8	2.3
Eswatini	22	21
Lesotho	27	27
Malawi	5.6	3

Source: Ourworldindata Figures in %



INSIDE

GUJARAT RELEASES 'AT RISK' NATIONS' LIST

PAGES 5, 13

MORE COUNTRIES STOP FLIGHTS

EXPLAINED
Flights restarting Dec 15

THE CIVIL Aviation Ministry is reviewing the decision regarding reopening of international travel, scheduled for December 15, after a 21-month gap. A decision would be taken based on how the situation evolves and in consultation with the ministries of Health, Home and External Affairs.

Farmers defer march to House, Tomar asks them to return home

SKM presses for MSP guarantee; Govt says relief, withdrawal of cases up to states

HARIKISHAN SHARMA & AMIL BHATNAGAR
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

THE SAMYUKT Kisan Morcha, spearheading the year-long protest by farmers at the gates of Delhi against the three new agriculture laws, said Saturday that it was suspending its march to Parliament following the Prime Minister's announcement that the laws will be repealed in the winter session of the House starting Monday.

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, meanwhile, urged farmers to return to their homes, saying there was no point in continuing the agitation



Farmer leaders at Singhu border on Saturday. Amit Mehra

following the announcement of the decision to repeal the farm laws.

He said the farmers' **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

RELATED REPORT
[PAGE 9](#)

House starts tomorrow, TMC to stay away from Opp meet called by Cong

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

IN THE first signs of strain in ties with the Congress, the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress, which is trying to gain a national footprint, indicated Saturday that it was not keen on coordinating its moves in Parliament with the Congress.

The TMC is unlikely to attend a meeting of Opposition floor leaders called by Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of the Opposition



in Rajya Sabha, on Monday. Although not comfortable with the TMC's expansion drive **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday. PTI

VIPs hired 'fake suits' gang to grab prime Bengaluru properties: CID probe

JOHNSON T A
BENGALURU, NOVEMBER 27

AN ALLEGED gang which obtained "fake decrees" from small-causes courts to illegally grab properties — by forging documents and creating a fictitious rental dispute between a "fake owner" and a "fake tenant" — was also hired by politically connected persons to grab some prime properties in Bengaluru, according to a probe by the state CID.

The evictions racket with as many 118 cases, allegedly involving the same set of lawyers and fake litigants, was unearthed last year following the intervention of the Karnataka High Court in a case filed by Shah Harilal Bhikabhai and Company, a private firm against whom an eviction order was obtained by putting up fake tenants and owners for a north Bengaluru property in a local court.

The High Court ordered an **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

UP Dalit family murder: Two cops suspended as Opp mounts attack

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 27

WITH THE Opposition mounting pressure on the Yogi Adityanath government over the murder of four members of a Dalit family in Prayagraj, of whom a minor may have been gangraped, police have suspended two of its personnel who allegedly were forcing the family to compromise with the accused over a land deal.

The accused include several

upper caste men, including Akash Singh, Babli Singh, Amit Singh, Ravi, Manish, Abhay, Raja, Ranchu, Kuldeep, Kanha Thakur and Ashok.

The administration also scrambled to contain the damage from charges that the family had been attacked earlier and was not provided help despite an FIR, with the promise of security and an arms licence to their relatives.

The bodies of the four — two children and their parents — were found Thursday morning at their house. A case was lodged

under IPC Sections for gangrape and murder, as well as under the POCSO Act and SC/ST Act, against 11, of whom eight have been arrested.

Police are investigating whether the daughter was sexually assaulted, as her clothes were dishevelled.

In a complaint, a family member named in-charge of the police station that the Dalit family had approached for protection, Ram Keval Patel, and Constable Sushil Kumar Singh. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

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5 GUJARAT

GULF OF KUTCH

Two foreign cargo ships collide, no casualties reported

AVINASH NAIR
AHMEDABAD, NOVEMBER 27

TWO FOREIGN cargo ships collided in the busy shipping lanes of the Gulf of Kutch in Gujarat Friday night, official sources said. No casualties were reported in the accident that happened between the coast of Okha in Devbhumi Dwarka and Mandvi in Kutch.

The accident happened between MV Atlantic Grace — a 50,000-DWT oil/chemical tanker sailing under the flag of Hong Kong — and a 19,000-DWT bulk carrier MV Aviator sailing under the flag of Marshall Islands. While MV Atlantic Grace was headed to Fujairah (the UAE) from Kandla, MV Aviator was headed to Kandla port.

"Until now, there has been no report of any casualties in the accident. No oil slick has been reported so far. But the tanker has breached the hull of the bulk carrier. Luckily, this breach is above the water level," said a government official monitoring the situation. Indian Coast Guard ships, including a pollution control vessel, are on stand-by in the vicinity and the situation is being closely monitored.

"We will need tugs to conduct the salvage operations. This is a delicate operation conducted



The accident occurred between MV Atlantic Grace and a 19,000-DWT bulk carrier MV Aviator. Courtesy: PRO Defence Gujarat

mid-sea where we have to ensure there is no further damage to the hull or the vessel does not tilt," the official added. Tugs and a team of salvage experts reached the site Saturday.

The Gulf of Kutch is one of the most important shipping routes for India as a large portion of the imported crude arrives at the ports of Kandla and Mundra. An accident in these shipping lanes could also cause irreversible damage to the unique Marine National Park in Jamnagar. "This is a very important shipping lane as over 35 percent of the crude oil imported into India comes through

the Gulf of Kutch," the official added.

When asked how the two cargo vessels travelling in the opposite directions collided, despite the presence of the state of art Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) system in the Gulf of Kutch, the official said, "It is too early to comment, but it seems to be a human error at this point in time."

Under the VTS system, multiple radars and port-monitoring stations, including those belonging to the Indian Coast Guard, are integrated and keep a close watch on all movements happening in the Gulf of Kutch.

Woman cop of Vadodara rly police attacked, 1 booked

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
VADODARA, NOVEMBER 27

GOTRI POLICE station in Vadodara city on Saturday booked an unidentified person for allegedly assaulting a woman police constable attached to the railway police, who was on her way to report for duty on Friday night. The constable, Payal Gamiti, 26, was walking from her residence in the police line in Akota area when an unidentified person allegedly injured her in her leg with a knife.

Gamiti, who is attached to the Vadodara railway police station, has stated in her FIR that she was leaving for duty with a colleague at around 8.15 pm on Friday when an unidentified person accosted her near Dinesh Mill area.

"The attacker came walking from behind and first grabbed my hair and immediately slashed me with a knife on my left thigh... My colleague and I immediately screamed for help and the man escaped," Gamiti told the police.

Gamiti has said that although she does not know the attacker, she could "recognise him" as being a man, who had previously threatened her around six months ago. Gamiti was rushed to SSG hospital following the attack on Friday night.

Police Inspector SV Chaudhari of Gotri police station said that the accused could possibly be a "stalker". The unidentified man was booked under various IPC sections as well as under the Gujarat Police Act.

Omicron Covid variant: 12 nations on state's 'at risk' list

Mandates RTPCR testing of passengers from the 12 countries

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, NOVEMBER 27

FOLLOWING THE Central government advisory Thursday recommending mandatory testing of all international passengers arriving from countries that have reported Omicron (B.1.1.59), the new Covid-19 variant, the Gujarat health department has released an 'at risk' list of 12 countries and regions. The samples of Covid-19 positive passengers arriving from the countries/regions on the list would be sent for whole-genome sequencing.

The list includes the UK, South Africa, Brazil, Bangladesh, Botswana, China, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Singapore, Hong Kong and Israel. While most of these countries were part of the 'at risk' list of the Central health ministry even on October 20, Singapore, Hong Kong and Israel were added by the state government-issued circulars dated November 26 and 27.

Both the circulars, issued by Additional Director of Health Department Nilam Patel, mandates RTPCR testing of passengers from the 12 countries/regions upon their arrival in Gujarat.

On Saturday, the UK Health Security Agency reported two cases of the Omicron variant, while one was reported in

COVID CASE TRACKER			
Places	Confirmed	Deaths	New cases
Ahmedabad	2,29,276	3,411	10
Amreli	10,888	102	0
Anand	9,650	49	0
Aravalli	5,469	79	0
Banaskantha	13,660	162	0
Bharuch	11,454	118	0
Bhavnagar	21,737	301	0
Botad	2,217	42	0
Chhota Udepur	3,398	38	0
Dahod	9,590	38	0
Dang	866	18	0
Devbhoomi Dwarka	12,937	82	0
Gandhinagar	20,858	205	0
Gir Somnath	8,562	67	0
Jamnagar	36,646	478	1
Junagadh	20,545	272	0
Khedra	10,411	48	1
Kutch	12,570	145	2
Mahisagar	8,313	72	0
Mehsana	24,293	177	0
Morbi	6,505	87	0
Narmada	5,982	15	0
Navsari	7,255	25	1
Panchmahal	11,743	70	0
Patan	11,623	129	0
Porbandar	3,856	19	0
Rajkot	58,756	725	0
Sabarkantha	9,345	157	0
Surat	1,44,021	1,959	8
Surendranagar	8,123	136	0
Tapi	4,449	24	0
Vadodara	78,116	788	4
Valsad	6,464	55	1
Other states	148	3	
Total cases:	8,35,646	New cases:	28
Cumulative discharge:	8,16,999	Cumulative deaths:	10,092
First dose takers till date		Fully vaccinated till date	
4,56,99,094		3,41,81,161	

Israel. According to an Ahmedabad airport official, while there are no direct flights from South Africa to the city, the new state government guidelines do not change much as international travellers are required to furnish a negative RTPCR report upon arrival.

The WHO, in its statement Friday, had noted that "several labs have indicated that for one widely used PCR test, one of the three target genes is not detected (called S gene dropout or S gene target failure) and this test can, therefore, be used as a marker for this variant, pending sequencing confirmation." However, a health official of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) added they would not be using S gene target failure as a marker and will only be relying on whole-genome sequencing results to determine whether a positive case involves the Omicron variant or not, with sequencing results taking anywhere between one week to 15 days.

The new rule also becomes significant in light of the upcoming Vibrant Gujarat programme, scheduled for January 2022.

Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC) director Chaitanya Joshi said the lab has not seen any increase in the number of samples being sent for whole-genome sequencing, which otherwise ranges between five to 20 a day. Samples from the state are sent to GBRC and NIV Pune for whole-genome sequencing.

Gujarat reported 28 new cases of Covid-19, including 10 from the AMC jurisdiction, Saturday.



देकर विकास का सन्देश बनाया यूपी को एक्सप्रेस प्रदेश



उत्तर प्रदेश में
4 नये एक्सप्रेसवे

सोच ईमानदार, काम दमदार

Poverty index : UP, Bihar, MP dists tail list

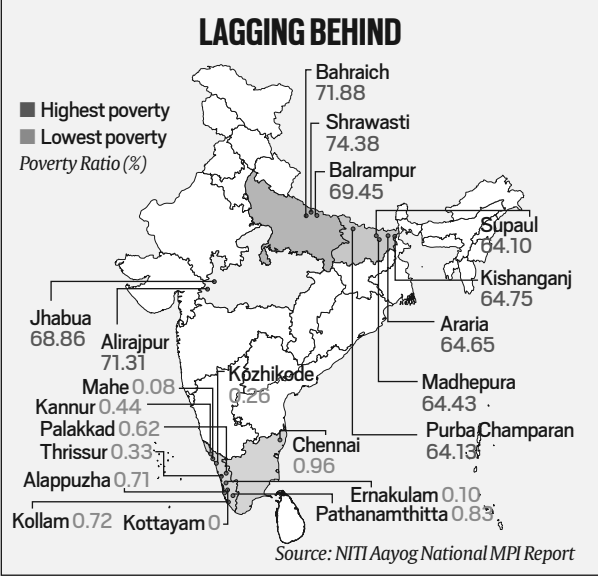
ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

THREE DISTRICTS in Uttar Pradesh has nearly 70 per cent and above population who are multidimensionally poor, and Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh combined have the top 10 districts with highest poverty ratio among states, according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report prepared by the NITI Aayog.

Kerala is a standout state with lowest percentage of population being multidimensionally poor at 0.71%, with nine out of its 14 districts having poverty ratio of less than 1%. Kottayam is an outlier district with not even a single poor person.

This is based on data analysed from the first ever MPI report, which puts the all-India poverty ratio at 25.01%. The MPI seeks to measure poverty across its multiple dimensions and in effect complements existing poverty statistics based on per capita consumption expenditure.

It has three equally weighted dimensions — health, education, and standard of living — which in turn are represented by 12 indicators such as nutrition, school attendance, years of schooling, drinking water, sanitation, hous-



ing, bank accounts, among others. Among states, Bihar has the highest proportion of people — at 51.91% of its population — who are multidimensionally poor. Eleven Bihar districts have poverty ratio above 60%, with highest rate of 64.75% in Kishanganj, followed by Araria (64.65%), Madhepura (64.43%), Purba Champaran (64.13%), and Supaul (64.10%).

The lowest ratio was in Patna at 29.20%, followed by Bhojpur (40.50%), Siwan (40.55%), Rohtas

(40.74%), and Munger (40.99%). Three districts in Uttar Pradesh has poverty ratio of nearly 70% and more: Shrawasti (74.38%), Bahraich (71.88%), and Balrampur (69.45%). Lucknow has the lowest poverty ratio in the state at 12.16%, followed by Kanpur Nagar (14.34%), Gautam Budh Nagar (17.08%), and Ghaziabad (17.47%).

Other key districts in UP have variations in poverty ratios such as 40.79% for Unnao, 34.10% for Rai

Explained: Broader powers, effective deterrent

GIVING BROADER powers to the SFIO and CEOs of public sector banks, the Centre wants to prevent wilful defaulters like Jatin Mehta, Vijay Malviya and Nirav Modi from fleeing the country. The SFIO has even probed a few of these cases and powers to request LoCs directly instead being routed through other agencies or ministries may have prevented some wilful defaulters from leaving the country.

Bareilly, 35.33% for Mathura, and 33.59% for Agra. Overall poverty ratio in the state is 37.79%, according to th MPI report.

Nine out Kerala's 14 districts had poverty ratio of less than 1%, with Kottayam's ratio at zero per cent, followed by Enakulam (0.10%), Kozhikode (0.26%), and Thiruvananthapuram (0.71%). The highest ratio in the state is in Wayanad district at 3.48 per cent. The overall poverty ratio in Kerala is 0.71%.

Union Territory of Puducherry has among the lowest multidimensional poverty in each of its four districts: Yanam at 5.18%, Karaikal at 3.13%, Puducherry at 1.30%, and Mahe at 0.08%. Overall poverty ratio in the UT is 1.72%. This baseline report of the na-

tional MPI measure is based on the reference period of 2015-16 of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), and provides analysis of the headcount ratio and intensity of multidimensional poverty at the national, state/UT, and district levels. The MPI uses the globally accepted methodology developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

Three districts in Madhya Pradesh has poverty ratio above 60 per cent: Barwani (61.60%), Jhabua (68.86%), and Alirajpur (71.31%). Districts with lowest poverty ratio in the state include Indore (10.86%), Bhopal (12.91%), and Jabalpur (19.50%).

Matter of pride that Kerala has lowest poverty levels: CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOVEMBER 27

CHIEF MINISTER Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday said it was a matter of "pride" that Kerala was ranked the lowest in the NITI-Aayog's first ever multi-dimensional poverty index (MPI) released this week.

The government think tank's Multi-dimensional Poverty (MPI) Index listed the state as the one with lowest poverty of 0.71 per cent across India, followed by Goa with 3.76 per cent, Sikkim with 3.82 per cent, Tamil Nadu with 4.89 per cent and Punjab with 5.59 per cent.

In a Facebook post on Saturday, Vijayan said: "It is a matter of pride that the activities done by the Government to ensure the welfare of the people despite several challenges including devastating floods (of 2018) and natural calamities, has laid the foundation for this achievement."

IPI award for NDTV, The Week journalists

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

THE INTERNATIONAL Press Institute (IPI) India on Saturday announced the Award for Excellence in Journalism for this year to Sreenivasan Jain and Mariyam Alavi NDTV and Lakshmi Subramanian and Bhanu Prakash Chandra of The Week, according to a media release issued by IPI.

Jain and Alavi won the award for a report on exposure of the untruthfulness of cases of forcible conversion registered against young men belonging to Muslim community who had married Hindu women in Uttar Pradesh in the name of 'love jihad', the release stated. In the print category, Subramanian and Chandra's report tracing Indians trapped in refugee camps in the civil war-torn regions of Syria and Iraq was selected for the award, it stated.

Trial in a day: Convict in POCSO case gets life term

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, NOVEMBER 27

IN WHAT may be the fastest verdict by a POCSO court in the country, a court in Araria has completed the full trial in a case and delivered its verdict and punishment to the convict in one day, according to a press note issued by the directorate of prosecution under Bihar's Home Department.

On October 4 this year, the court of special judge (POCSO) Shashi Kant Rai conducted trial, recorded statements of witnesses, heard arguments and counter-arguments, convicted

the accused and pronounced quantum of sentence, the release said. The matter pertains to the rape of an eight-year-old girl on July 22. The FIR against the convict was lodged the next day. During the October 4 hearing, special judge Rai sentenced the convict to life in prison and ordered him to pay a fine of Rs 50,000. The court has also ordered a compensation of Rs 7 lakh be paid to the victim from the victim compensation fund.

"Bihar has now made a national record by conducting trial in a single day by giving life sentence to the convict till his last breath," the release said.

Kashmiri traders beaten up, forced to chant Jai Shri Ram in Ranchi

Ranchi: A group of Kashmiri traders were allegedly attacked and forced to chant *Jai Shri Ram* and *Pakistan mardabad* in Ranchi's Doranda on Saturday morning, about two weeks after a similar incident was reported in the area. Police said three suspects have been arrested and an FIR has been registered over the case. "We have formed a team to investigate

why two similar incidents have occurred against Kashmiri people. In the current incident three persons have been arrested," Ranchi Senior Superintendent of Police Surendra Jha said.

The complaint was filed by Rizwan Ahmad Wani who lives in Jharkhand's Doranda, and sells winter clothing in Ranchi.

ED opposes Deshmukh secy plea in money laundering case

OMKARGOKHALE
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 27

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) on Friday opposed and sought dismissal of a plea by former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh's private secretary Sanjeev Palande, seeking to quash money laundering and corruption case against him lodged by the Central agency.

Palande and Deshmukh's personal assistant (PA) Kundan Shinde were arrested by the ED in June after the agency conducted searches at the residence of Deshmukh in Nagpur.

The ED probe had claimed that Deshmukh, while in office as the home minister of Maharashtra, "received illegal gratification of approximately Rs 4.7 crore in cash from various orchestra bar owners" between December 2020 and February 2021 through now-dismissed Mumbai police officer Sachin Waze. According to the ED, Deshmukh's family "laundered Rs 4.18 crore and showing it as received by the trust."

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY-e-TENDER NOTICE

Tender No: 47/2021-22/KWA/PHC/D2/TVM JJM 2021-22:- Providing FHCT's & connected works and pipe line extensions in various wards of Venganoor Grama Panchayath (Phase-3). EMD: ₹200000/-. Tender fee: ₹10000/-. Last Date for submitting Tender: 22.12.2021, 03:00 pm. Phone : 0471-2322303.

Website: www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in
KWA-JB-GL-6-595-2021-22 Sd/-, Superintending Engineer, PH Circle, Thiruvananthapuram

Classifieds

PERSONAL

Change of Name
My Old Name was Yogeswari Pradan. Now My New Name is Jogeswari Pradhan.
Address : Salunkisahi, Phulabani Town, Kandhamal Odisha 762001

I, Lalit Kumar S/O Kirpa Ram Sharma born on 27-10-1989 residing at C 404 Sweet shukra apartment Sargasan Gandhinagar 382421, have changed my name to Lalit Sharma vide affidavit dated 22-11-2021 at Nadiad. 0050187804-1

BUSINESS

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Uniform Mass: Crisis in Kerala Catholic Church over directive

SHAJUPHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOVEMBER 27

KERALA-BASED Syro-Malabar Catholic Church has plunged into a crisis over the implementation of a uniform method of offering Mass, the top procedure of worship in the Christian world.

Bishops and priests in several dioceses in Kerala and elsewhere in the country came out on Saturday against the directive of Church head Cardinal George Alencherry to implement the uniform Mass code from November 28.

For several decades, dioceses under the Syro-Malabar Church have been following different modes of celebrating Mass. While a section of priests offers Mass facing the people, another does so facing the altar. In certain other dioceses, the Church follows a mix of both. Bishops and priests have been divided over the conduct of Mass. As per the uniform mode of offering Mass, priests and bishops across the Church in all dioceses have to perform the ritual facing the altar throughout the service.

After several rounds of deliberations, in July this year, Pope Francis approved the uniform mode of offering Mass and directed the Kerala Catholic Church to implement it at the earliest.

However, in a severe setback to Alencherry, who was mired in shady land dealings in the past, his subordinate and Ernakulam Archbishop Antony Kariyil issued a directive to priests and people of his diocese that status quo (facing the people) will continue as far as offering Mass. Kariyil also claimed that he had the Vatican's consent to issue such a directive.

The showdown between Alencherry and Kariyil reached a flashpoint after the former claimed there was no such directive from Rome to Kariyil. Subsequently, Kariyil released the letter from the Vatican, embarrassing Alencherry.

Church sources said the issue would trigger protests in many dioceses on Sunday where priests are not willing to follow the Church directive.

Earlier, there was a divide among the bishops in the Catholic Church over liturgical matters.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BOLANGIR
e-Procurement Notice

1. Name of the Work	: Construction of Bridge under Biju Setu Yojana for the year 2021-22
2. No. of work	: 10 (Ten) bridge works.
3. Time for completion	: 9 calendar months.
4. Approximate estimated cost/ varies from	: Rs. 156.21 lakhs to Rs 252.80 lakhs
5. Mode of Submission of tender	: Tender should be submitted online in www.tendersodisha.gov.in
6. Other details are as follow	

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of opening of Tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Chief Construction Engineer, R.W. Circle, Bolangir	BLGR-Online-15/2021-22	29.11.2021 At 11.00 A.M.	14.12.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.	13.12.2021 upto 1.00 P.M.	15.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M.	The date will be intimated to the technically qualified bidders later on

- Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
- Any Corrigendum/ Addendum will be displayed in the above e tender website only.

Sd/- D.K Seth
Chief Construction Engineer,
R.W.Circle, Bolangir
OIPR-25118/11/0020/2122



General Insurance Corporation of India

(Government of India Company)
CIN: L67200MH1972GOI016133 IRDAI REG. NO. 112
Regd. Office: "Suraksha", 170, J. Tata Road, Churchgate, Mumbai-400 020.
Tel: +91-22-22867000 Fax: +91-22-22884010
E-mail: investors.gic@gicofindia.com, Website: www.gicofindia.com

NOTICE TO THE SHAREHOLDERS OF 49th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 49th Annual General Meeting (49th AGM) of the members of General Insurance Corporation of India will be held on **Tuesday, the 21st December, 2021 at 3.00 p.m.** (IST) through Video Conferencing/Other Audio Visual means to transact business, as set out in the Notice of the 49th AGM being sent through email.

In view of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs ("MCA") has vide its Circular dated 05th May, 2020 read with circulars dated 08th April, 2020, 13th April, 2020 and 13th January, 2021 (collectively referred to as "MCA Circulars"), permitted the holding of AGM by the Companies through Video Conferencing/Other Audio Video Means (VC/OAVM), without the physical presence of the members at a common venue. Accordingly, in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the said circulars and SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirement) Regulations, 2015, the Corporation has decided to convene its 49th AGM through VC/OAVM and the shareholders can participate through VC/OAVM.

The Notice of the 49th AGM alongwith the Annual Report for the financial year 2020-21 is being sent only by electronic mode to those members whose email addresses are registered with the Corporation/ Depositories in accordance with the aforesaid MCA Circulars and SEBI Circular dated 12th May, 2020 and 15th January, 2021. Members may note that the notice of the AGM and the Annual Report for the financial year 2020-21 will also be available on the Corporation website www.gicofindia.com, websites of the Stock Exchanges i.e. BSE Limited and National Stock Exchange of India Limited at www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com respectively. Members can attend and participate in the AGM through Video Conferencing/ Other Audio-Visual means (OAVM) facility only. The instructions for joining of the AGM are provided in the Notice of the AGM. Members attending the AGM through VC/OAVM shall be counted for the purpose of reckoning the quorum under Section 103 of the Companies Act, 2013. The Corporation is providing remote e-voting facility ('remote e-voting') to all its Members to cast their votes on all the resolutions set out in the Notice of the AGM. Additionally, the Corporation is providing the facility of voting through e-voting system during the AGM (e-voting). Detailed procedure for 'remote e-voting'/ 'e-voting' is provided in the Notice of the AGM.

Members who have not yet registered their email addresses are requested to register the same with their DPs in case the shares are held by them in electronic form and with M/s KFIN Technologies Private Limited in case the shares are held by them in physical form.

Members are requested to intimate changes, if any, pertaining to their name, postal address, email address, telephone/mobile numbers, Permanent Account Number (PAN), mandates, nominations, power of attorney, bank details such as name of the bank and branch details, bank account number, MICR Code, IFSC Code etc., to their DPs in case the shares are held by them in electronic form and to M/s KFIN Technologies Private Limited in case the shares are held by them in Physical form.

For General Insurance Corporation of India
Sd/-
(Satheesh Kumar)
Company Secretary

Place: Mumbai
Date: 28.11.2021

KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD.

(A Government of India Undertaking)
Head Office, Udhampur Srinagar Baramulla Rail Link "USBRL" Project, Satyam Complex, Marble Market, Extn-Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir-180 011 India Tel: +91-91-2480778

Notification No. KR/HO/JK/P-R/03/2021 dated 18/11/2021

KRCL invites applications for the following posts on Contract basis to work at Udhampur – Srinagar – Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) Project, Jammu & Kashmir, UT.

Sr. No.	Name of The Post	Fixed Remuneration (In Rupees)	No. of Post				Essential Qualification & Experience
			SC	ST	OBC	GEN	
01	Jr. Technical Assistant (S&T)	₹ 30,000/- P.M.	03	02	04	09	Full Time Engineering Degree (B.E./B. Tech) in Electronics / Electrical & Electronics / Electronics & Telecommunication / Communication/ Instrumentation with not less than 60% Marks from a recognized University approved by AICTE

The details of Post, Date, Time and Place of walk-in interview is as follows: -

Category	Date of Interview	Place and Time of Walk-in Interview
SC	13/12/2021 & 14/12/2021	"USBRL Project Head Office, Konkan Railway Corporation Limited.", Satyam Complex, Marble Market, Extn-Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir UT. 180011
ST		
OBC		
GEN	15/12/2021 to 17/12/2021	

Candidates should see the details notification, eligibility criteria, date and time of Walk-in-Interview on the KRCL website www.konkanrailway.com at the link → Recruitment → Current Notification and may report directly for walk-in-interview at the above address.

Chief Engineer/Works & Planning

PADMANABH ALLOYS & POLYMERS LTD.

Registered Office : N.H.8, Palsana, Dt. Surat-394315
Email : investor@padmanabh.in Website: www.padmanabh.in
Corporate Identity Number : L17110GJ1994PLC023540

Particular	Quarter Ended 30/09/2021	Half Year Ended 30/09/2021	Corresponding 3 Months ended on 30/09/2020
Total Income from Operations	76867513.00	141790514.00	83208506.00
Net Profit / (Loss) for period (before tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(430921.00)	216432.00	3285935.00
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(430921.00)	216432.00	3285935.00
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(430921.00)	8472.00	3048290.00
Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)	(430921.00)	8472.00	3048290.00
Equity Share Capital	54133000.00	54133000.00	54133000.00
Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet	22702700.00	22702700.00	20888042.00
Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) -			
1. Basic	(0.08)	(0.00)	0.56
2. Diluted	(0.08)	(0.00)	0.56

Note: The above is an extract of the detailed format of Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Financial Results are available on the websites of the Stock Exchanges at <http://www.bseindia.com> and the listed entity at <http://www.padmanabh.in>.

For Padmanabh Alloys & Polymers Limited
Sd/-
Chetankumar Mohanbhai Desai
Whole Time Director
(DIN: 00051541)

Aspire Home Finance Corporation Limited

Motilal Oswal Tower, Rahimtullah Sayani Road, Opposite ST Depot, Prabhadevi, Mumbai-400025.
Email :- info@ahfc.com. CIN :- U65923MH2013PLC248741

POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY/IES)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Aspire Home Finance Corporation Ltd. under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & in compliance of Rule 8(1) of Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued deemed notice(s) on the date mentioned against each account calling upon the respective borrower/s to repay the amount as mentioned against each account within 60 days from the date of notice(s)/date of receipt of the said notice(s). The borrower/s having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/s and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property/ies described herein below in exercise powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the dates mentioned against each account. The borrower/s in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealing with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of Aspire Home Finance Corporation Ltd., for the amount and interest thereon as per loan agreement. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Sr No	Loan Agreement No. / Name of the Borrower/ Co Borrower/ Guarantor	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Date of possession Taken	Description of the Property/ies mortgaged
1	LXRSUR00217-180064313 / Randhir Kumar Narayan Mahto & Aarti Kumar Randhir Mahto	20-07-2021 for Rs. 1157256/-	25-Nov-2021	Row House No - 134, Shiv Sagar Residency, Type - D, Behind Sarvottam Hotel, Near Sai Kutiir Residency, Canal Road, Bardoli Road, Dastan, Palsana, Surat, Gujarat - 394310
2	LXRSUR00215-160015804 / Jogandhar Bakeshi Singh & Indravatidevi Yogendra Singh	20-07-2021 for Rs. 367684/-	24-11-2021	Flat No - 108, Nilkanth Residency, Opposite Decent Hotel, National Highway No - 8, Near, Palsana Chokdi, Chorasi, Surat, Gujarat - 395010
3	LXRSUR00216-170046352 / Sureshkumar Jayshankar Gaud & Phulkumari Suresh Gaud	20-07-2021 for Rs. 625179/-	24-Nov-2021	Flat No - A-411, Viraj Complex, Near Sachin Railway, St. Road, Chhotukaka Ni Wadi, Paligam, Sachin, Surat, Gujarat - 394327
4	LXRSUR00315-160012581 / Shivshankar Pruthvi Sinh & Pritysingh Shivshankar Tomer	22-02-2021 for Rs. 544259/-	25-11-2021	Flat No. - B - 203, 2Nd Floor, Block No. - 138/B, Shivam Residency, Near Srp Compound, Ganesh Residency, Navagam, Kamrej, Surat, Gujarat - 394180
5	LXRSUR00216-170023054 / Mohanlal Lilaram Sirvi & Kailashkumar Mohanlal Sirvi	29-08-2017 for Rs. 592674/-	25-Nov-2021	Flat No 201, Vinayak Residency, Shree Nivas Green City Vibhag 2, Kadodara Bardoli Road, Kadodara, S.No. 133/2B, Block No. 108, 109& 120 Plot No.1To5 Nr Sai Residency Surat Gujarat 394327
6	LXNAV00416-170035724 / Bholabhai Gopalbhai Chotaliya & Jayshreebhen Bholabhai Chotaliya	24-06-2019 for Rs. 1196304/-	25-11-2021	Building No C-16, Flat No 303, Mansarovar Residency, Near Ginnar Hotel, Chorasi, Surat, Gujarat - 394185
7	LXRSUR00116-170033358 / Kalpeshkumar Ashokbhai Dodiya & Alpeshkumar Ashokbhai Dodiya	23-10-2019 for Rs. 346586/-	25-11-2021	Flat No 112, Building No C, 1St Floor, Shivam Residency,Kamrej, Plot No 313 To 324, Shiv Nagar, Near Swapnagavli, Opp Krishna Residency, Chorasi, Surat, Gujarat - 394185
8	LXRSUR00216-170050683 / Maheshkumar Sureshbhai Gohil & Bhanuben Sureshbhai Gohil	23-10-2019 for Rs. 576296/-	25-11-2021	Flat No 212, Shivam Residency, Shiv Nagar, Kamrej-Va Dada, B/H Bhagavan Mandir, Kamrej, Surat, Gujarat - 394125
9	LXKAD00417-180064868 / Shitalukaprasad Sobhnath Shaw & Sunita Devi Shitalukaa Prashad Shaw	15-11-2019 for Rs. 1045274/-	25-11-2021	Plot No 39, Anurag Row House, Mauje Talithaiya Kadodra, Palsana , Surat, Gujarat - 384327

EXPRESS NETWORK

EMERGENCE OF OMICRON VARIANT

Only 11% fully jabbed in Africa, inequity in focus

AMITABH SINHA
PUNE, NOVEMBER 27

A LITTLE more than a quarter of health workers in Africa have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19 till now. That is roughly the coverage of first doses in the entire population of South Africa as well.

The emergence of Omicron variant of SARS-CoV2, first reported from South Africa earlier this week, has brought spotlight on inequalities in accessing vaccines. While the developed world struck advance deals with manufacturers to secure billions of doses even before the vaccines were approved, poorer countries have been dependent primarily on inadequate and erratic supplies from Covax facility set up by the World Health Organization and some other international agencies. Nowhere is the inequality starker than in Africa. Just about 11 per cent of the population has had at least one dose of the vaccine, and only 72 per cent is fully vaccinated, according to Our World In Data.

Europe and North America, on the other hand, have got more than 50 per cent of their population fully vaccinated, while the first dose coverage is over 60 per cent. In Asia, close to 50 per cent people are fully vaccinated now.

A recent report from WHO said less than 10 per cent nations in Africa—or just about five countries—are likely to achieve their year-end target of vaccinating 40 per cent of their populations. Most African countries missed a

EXPLAINED Dependence on Covax

MOST OF Africa has been almost entirely dependent on supplies from Covax, or vaccine diplomacy from countries like China, India and Russia. Covax facility, in turn, is dependent on contributions, either in form of doses or money to buy them, from other countries. So far, Covax facility has delivered 537 million doses in over 100 countries, of which 330 million has gone to Africa.

September target to vaccinate at least 10 per cent of their populations. A total of 227 million doses have been administered in Africa. That is less than 20 per cent of doses administered in India. Over 900 million doses have been administered in Europe, and more than 450 million in the US.

"We have enough vaccines that, if they were distributed appropriately, can protect those who are most at risk for severe disease and our frontline workers," Dr Maria Van Kerkhove, technical lead for Covid-19 at WHO, was recently quoted as saying.

"Too many vaccines are going wasted and too many vaccines are not being used most appropriately... frankly this inappropriate use... is prolonging the pandemic," she said.

VACCINATION COVERAGE CONTINENT-WISE		
Continents	First Dose Coverage (% of population)	Second Dose Coverage (% of population)
Africa	11	72
Asia	62	48
Europe	62	58
North America	64	54
South America	72	56

Source: Ourworldindata

Karnataka tightens curbs as more Covid clusters appear

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, NOVEMBER 27

STUDENTS ARRIVING from Kerala and Maharashtra will mandatorily need a negative RT-PCR test. This will apply especially to nursing students and those at hostels... At all hostels, a second RT-PCR test must be done seven days from arrival," Karnataka Revenue Minister R Ashok said. He said there will be a strict vigil in the border regions of Kerala and Maharashtra.

The state has written to the Centre seeking booster doses for frontline workers and a decision is expected soon, he added. A total of 281 students and faculty at the SDM College of Medical Sciences in Dharwad tested positive for Covid over the past two days. Another 48 nursing students in Mysuru tested positive, and in Bengaluru rural, 12 nursing students from Kerala at the Spurthy College of Nursing were diagnosed.

On Thursday, 33 students, all minors, and a staff member at a private boarding school too tested positive for the viral illness.

who have come from Kerala 16 days ago must undergo a fresh RT-PCR test. This will apply especially to nursing students and those at hostels... At all hostels, a second RT-PCR test must be done seven days from arrival," Karnataka Revenue Minister R Ashok said. He said there will be a strict vigil in the border regions of Kerala and Maharashtra.

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Two SA citizens in Bengaluru test positive for Delta variant

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, NOVEMBER 27

TWO CITIZENS of South Africa who arrived in Bengaluru tested positive for Covid-19, briefly sparking concerns over the new Omicron variant detected in that country before a genome sequencing test found that they had the Delta variant.

The development, however, prompted CM Basavaraj Bommai to call a high-level meeting on Saturday. Bommai said authorities would intensify screening of international passengers at the airports and make the RT-PCR test report compulsory for those arriving from Kerala and Maharashtra. K Srinivas, the Deputy Commissioner of Bengaluru Rural district under which Kempegowda International Airport falls, said: "Two South African nationals who arrived to Bengaluru on 11 and 20 November respectively were tested positive for Covid-19 and were traced living in Bengaluru. They have been isolated and are under treatment. We have found them to have the Delta variant." About 84 people arrived in Bengaluru in November from 10 high-risk countries and 94 of them came from South Africa.

Only vaccinated people can use public transport in Maharashtra

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 27

THE MAHARASHTRA government on Saturday issued fresh Covid restrictions, which mandated that only fully vaccinated citizens would be allowed to access public transport in the state.

The new guidelines also said that all domestic travellers entering the state should either be fully vaccinated or carry an RT-PCR test report valid for 72 hours. "... the State Government is now considering to open up economic, social, entertainment and cultural activities with fewer restrictions especially for fully vaccinated persons," the order signed by Maharashtra Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte said.

The order said that all people connected with "the organisation of any programme, event or show" should be fully vaccinated.

All visitors to malls, gatherings and such places should also be fully vaccinated, it said.

All public transport shall be used only by fully vaccinated people, adding the Universal Pass created by the state government or the CoWin Certificate with a valid photo ID proof will be sufficient, the order said.

Tripura CM asks police to review anti-terror cases

DEBRAJ DEB
AGARTALA, NOVEMBER 27



Tripura CM Biplab Kumar Deb

OVER THREE weeks after Tripura booked 102 social media users under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) for sharing content online over the alleged vandalism in October along with alleged fake news and rumour mongering, Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb has instructed Director General of Police V S Yadav to review the cases and submit a report.

DGP Yadav has further directed the Crime Branch, which is now investigating these cases.

A senior official of the Chief Minister's Office told *The Indian Express*, "There was a conspiracy to disturb law and order in Tripura few days back by posting fake photos and videos of arson in mosques on social media. In order to bring the situation under control and maintain communal harmony, Tripura Police filed cases against 102 people including some journalists and lawyers."

Requesting anonymity, the official said police will take action against everyone who deliberately tried to disturb communal harmony, and cases will be dropped if there isn't enough evidence.

On November 3, Tripura Police served notices to Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, asking them to block accounts of 102 users who allegedly posted content that "have potential to flare

up communal tension". The accused included 68 Twitter users.

An investigation of these Twitter handles by *The Indian Express* revealed they included nine journalists, seven political workers, five students, two activists, and seven profiles were affiliated to different religious organisations. The content on a majority of these suggested they were critical of the government. After serving the notice to Twitter, Tripura Police said 47 Twitter posts and one YouTube post were removed. As on November 17, 44 of 68 Twitter profiles were still available while 24 were pulled down or suspended by Twitter.

Police also said that at least one post by Indian American Muslim (IAM) Council had links with a terrorist outfit of Pakistan and was allegedly supporting Taliban and lobbying with foreign organisations against India in connivance with Pakistan's spy agency.

"There are at least 14 links which have originated from outside India revealing that the conspiracy hatched outside India as well for promoting hatred between religious groups and creating disturbances", the statement said. They later sent a list of 94 tweets accused of similar charges.

2 weapons used in Bikru ambush seized in MP

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 27

OVER A year after the Bikru incident in which eight policemen, including Deputy Superintendent of Police rank officer, were killed during an attempt to arrest gangster Vikas Dubey in July last year, the Kanpur Police on Saturday claimed that two weapons allegedly used in the shootout by assailants have been seized in Madhya Pradesh.

Police said the two weapons—a semi-automatic rifle and a .12 bore rifle—were seized from Madhya Pradesh and belonged to prime accused Vikas Dubey, who was later gunned down in an encounter in Kanpur.

The Madhya Pradesh police recovered the weapons from two local criminals, who claimed to have purchased them a few months ago, police added.

Two days ago, a team of the Kanpur Police went to Bhind in Madhya Pradesh and brought the semi-automatic rifle after completing legal formalities. "We will soon bring the other weapon, too. The weapons will be sent to a forensic laboratory for ballistic examination," said station house officer, Choubeypur police station, KM Rai. The incident dates back to July 3 last year, when a police team came under heavy gunfire near Dubey's residence at Bikru. Eight policemen died in the ambush. Of the 21 people named in the FIR, the police gunned down six accused, including Dubey, in alleged encounters over the weeks.



National Conference leader Omar Abdullah meets family of Amir Magray, who was killed during the Hyderpora encounter, in Ramban district of J&K. PTI

‘Will continue fight for Art 370’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, NOVEMBER 27

FORMER JAMMU and Kashmir chief minister and National Conference (NC) leader Omar Abdullah on Saturday reiterated his party's resolve to continue fighting for restoration of Article 370, stating that "today our bad luck is that we have to fight even for getting back the body of an innocent (person)".

Omar, who visited the family of Amir Magray at Thatharka, later addressed a public meeting in Gool and said that he had gone to Srinagar to work since he could not find a job here. Even today, he added, Amir's father lives under police protection since he had

fought against militancy. Amir, along with a Pakistani militant, was among four people, including a doctor and the owner of the building, who were killed by police in an encounter in Handwara last week. While bodies of the building owner and the doctor were exhumed in Handwara and handed over to their families following protests, Amir's body remained buried there, as police called him an associate of the slain Pakistani militant.

"Today, a father, who had fought against militancy and the gun in the past, asks for the body of his son so that he can give him a burial as per rites," Omar said. He also asked whether August 2019, when special status to the erstwhile state was withdrawn, "was

thrust upon us that Amir Magray, a youth from Gool, gets buried in Handwara and no one knows where his grave is".

Pointing out that today if his father wants to offer *fatiha* on his grave, he will perhaps be unable to trace it, Omar, without naming anyone, asked, "Where are our leaders who keep on talking about Jammu? Is Gool not a part of Jammu?"

Stating that a "strange situation" has arisen after August 2019, Omar said he does not understand which direction the present rulers are taking J&K, or what their intentions are. He asked the Centre what it has done for the people of J&K after August 2019 regarding employment, new development works, etc.

PUNJAB ASSEMBLY ELECTION

Kejriwal non-committal on AAP's CM pick

MAN AMAN SINGH CHHINA
MOHALI, NOVEMBER 27

DELHI CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal was non-committal on naming Bhagwant Mann as the chief ministerial face for Punjab Assembly elections at a public meeting in Mohali on Saturday and, in a snub to those demanding he be made the CM face, said that the priority of the workers should be to ensure that Punjab is saved and not to make someone minister or MLA.

Kejriwal made the comments when faced with vocifer-



Arvind Kejriwal

ous demands from the party supporters who interrupted his comments by raising slogans in favour of Mann.

The public meeting being held by Kejriwal in Mohali was attended by state president and Sangrur MP Bhagwant Mann, state in-charge Jarnail Singh, Leader of Opposition Harpal

Elephant deaths: Five TN officials ‘detained’ in Kerala, say cops

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COIMBATORE, NOVEMBER 2

FIVE FOREST officials from Tamil Nadu, who had gone to Palakkad to enquire about the speed of the train that nowed down three elephants, near Ettimadai on the outskirts of Coimbatore on November 26, were reportedly detained at Palakkad railway station on Saturday, police said.

The loco pilot and co pilot, both from Kerala, were questioned about the incident earlier. The forest personnel from Tamil Nadu, who went to Palakkad railway station, were reportedly detained by railway police there. Hearing about this, some political outfits staged a protest.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PANAJI, NOVEMBER 27

GOA CHIEF Minister Pramod Sawant on Saturday said his government will act on the allegedly illegal structure in Old Goa that has sparked protests. Activists and residents demanding the demolition of the structure in the Old Goa heritage precinct, meanwhile, continued their fast on its fourth day on Saturday.

He said that the permissions for the construction of the bungalow—built on the land that was partly bought by Manish Munot, husband of BJP spokesperson Shaina NC and party by Survarna Lotlikar, wife of former Goa Forward Party (GFP) treasurer Suraj Lotlikar—was granted prior to the term of his government.



Activists say the bungalow construction is illegal.

"From what I have understood he had obtained a construction license and permission at the time... But now since everyone is protesting against it, our government will act on it," Sawant said.

Sawant said that the government will take action as per the law and since the matter is pend-

ing in Supreme Court in an SLP filed, the government will also have to factor in the legal bearing of its action. Sawant also pointed a finger at a "former minister" who had "sinned". GFP President Vijai Sardesai, meanwhile, wrote to Deputy Chief Minister and TCP minister Chandrakant Kavlekar that the permissions were granted in 2016 before he was made TCP minister and the construction took place in 2019 after he was dropped from the BJP government.

In a jibe at Sardesai, former deputy CM and TCP minister, Sawant said: "... it is a private plot, a third party has purchased it, a person who was close to a political party... There is no need to burden me with this sin. Those who have sinned have been seen in photos and videos,"

Aircel-Maxis: Chidambaram summoned on December 20

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

A DELHI Court Saturday issued summons to former Union minister P Chidambaram, his son Karti Chidambaram and others on December 20 after taking cognisance of the Central Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement Directorate chargesheets in the Aircel-Maxis case. CBI and ED had alleged that the Congress leader, as finance minister during the United Progressive Alliance regime, granted approval to the deal beyond his capacity—benefiting certain persons—and received kickbacks.

The case had been revived around two years ago after a judge had adjourned the matter sine

dine, noting that both agencies were seeking adjournment and not addressing arguments on point of cognisance.

All the accused mentioned in the CBI and ED chargesheets have to appear before the court on December 20. Special Judge MK Nagpal noted that there was sufficient evidence to summon Chidambaram and the other accused persons in the corruption and money-laundering cases by CBI and ED, respectively.

On the CBI chargesheet, the court observed that that it appears that the former minister who was at the time the finance minister had granted FIPB approval to M/S GCSHL for US\$ 800 million in furtherance of a "well hatched criminal conspiracy between all the accused persons".

UP, BIHAR NUMBERS ENCOURAGING

ESHAROY
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

INCREASED USE of contraception across the country has been a major contributing factor in preventing unwanted pregnancies, and in turn the decrease in India's Total Fertility Rate to below replacement level, NFHS-5 data show. In five years between NFHS-4 (2015-16) and NFHS-5 (2019-20), use of modern contraceptives for family planning has increased from 47.8 per cent to 56.5 per cent, data show.

While 30 of 36 states/UTs have shown an increase in contraception use, experts point out that improvement in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar's numbers have been particularly encouraging, given their

large populations. In Bihar, Modern Contraceptive Prevalence Rate has almost doubled: from 23.3% in NFHS-4 to 44.4% in NFHS-5.

"The decrease in fertility is the function of three main factors: use of contraception, increase in age of marriage, and abortions," Dr Niranjana Saggurti, director, Population Council of India, said. "In Bihar, age of marriage continues to remain low, with 43% girls married under the age of 18 in NFHS-4, which decreased marginally to 41% under the age of 18 in NFHS-5. But what has been successful is increase in modern contraceptive use. This points to push in family planning schemes by the state government. But what is most significant in Bihar's case is the increase in education, which

has translated into increased use of contraception and increased family planning."

Saggurti points out that for UP, the good news has been that the age of marriage has increased. Twenty-one per cent women under the age of 18 were married, NFHS-4 had found, which has decreased by 5 percentage points in five years—16 per cent girls under 18 were married in UP, the recent survey reported.

"UP has also shown a very good balanced contraception method mix, with a shift from sterilisation to reversible contraception," Saggurti said.

In its contraception mix, 40% is now sterilisation and 60% is use of reversible contraceptive methods. In UP, contraception use has increased from 31.7 per cent in

2015-16 to 44.5 per cent in 2019-20. UP has also shown a marginal decrease in female sterilisation of 0.4 per cent. The date show Bihar (21%), Goa (35.3%), Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (24%), Nagaland (24%) and Arunachal Pradesh (20.6%) have reported the highest increase in contraception use in NFHS-5 over NFHS-4. Rajasthan has also shown a significant increase in contraception use of 9 per cent.

Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Haryana and Goa have 60 per cent or more contraception use.

Punjab and Ladakh have reported the highest decrease, while Meghalaya (22.5%) and Manipur

(18.2%) have registered the lowest contraception use in the country.

"Data show women want smaller families. While the use of contraception has increased, indicating improving success of India's family planning programme, women would have even less pregnancies if they had increased access to contraception and increased agency to make decisions," Alok Vajpeyi, head of Knowledge Management at the Population Foundation of India, said.

Prof K. James, director, International Institute for Population Sciences, the Health Ministry's partner organisation that carried out the survey, said if TFR correction occurs in four states—Bihar, UP, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan—it will

put India on a definite course correction for population control.

"One of the most important contributing factors for decreasing TFR is the use of modern contraceptive methods," James said. "Despite the fact that age of marriage of women has not increased significantly in the country, with some states having as much as 30-40 per cent women marrying under the age of 18, family planning programmes are showing results. Once countries attained 60 per cent contraceptive use, they reach replacement levels."

"Family planning has been the most enhanced programme... because of continuing concerns of over-population. But what these results have shown is that it can be achieved with increased contraception..."

EXPRESS NETWORK

Congress calls for House condolence resolution on deaths of farmers amid stir

MANOJ CG

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

WITH THE government set to introduce the bill to repeal the three contentious farm laws in Parliament, Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Saturday demanded that the House pass a condolence resolution for the farmers who lost their lives during the year-long agitation.

The government is expected to introduce the bill on the opening day of the winter session on Monday.

On Saturday, Chowdhury wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla conveying his demand for a resolution. "I would sincerely request you that as a mark of respect towards our annadats (farmers), the House may unanimously pass a condolence resolution for the farmers who lost their lives during the farmer agitation. The passing of the resolution in the House will convey our gratitude for the sacrifice that our farmer brethren have given to the nation," he wrote.

Farmer unions and Opposition leaders say hundreds of cultivators have died during the agitation, which reached Delhi's borders in November 2020. Farmers from across states were protesting against the three agriculture laws that the govern-

We are not answerable to another party: Moitra on Nadda's salvo in Goa

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

PANAJI, NOVEMBER 27

TRINAMOL CONGRESS MP and Goa in-charge Mahua Moitra Saturday responded to BJP president J P Nadda's criticism of the TMC saying they were not answerable to another party.

Nadda had said Thursday that new parties had come knocking on Goa's doors ahead of Assembly elections slated for February 2022. "Somebody should ask them what they have done in West Bengal? Today, West Bengal is number one in human trafficking, in crimes against women, absence of law and order and crime rate," he had claimed.

Addressing a press conference in Panaji Saturday, Moitra said: "How do I care?... He is the national president of another party. They had the chance in Bengal, they were there morning and evening making accusations. What happened? I wish him all the best... why should we answer to what another party's president says?"

She said TMC would contest

Send Bill for replacing NEET to President, TN CM urges Governor

ARUN JANARDHANAN

CHENNAI, NOVEMBER 27

CHIEF MINISTER M K Stalin on Saturday urged Governor R N Ravi to send the Undergraduate Medical Degree Courses Bill, 2021 – which aims to change the state's eligibility criteria for admission into undergraduate medical courses – for President Ram Nath Kovind's assent immediately.

The bill, passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly in September, allows for admissions into undergraduate courses in medicine, dentistry, Indian medicine and homeopathy on the basis of Class 12 marks, instead of the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (NEET). The legislation, which aims to restore the admission criteria that the state had before the introduction of NEET, also provides for 7.5% horizontal reservation for the students of government schools.

It was to be sent for the assent from President Kovind.

A statement from the state


Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury

ment said were necessary to reform the industry.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in an address to the nation on November 19, announced that the three farm laws will be repealed as his government was unable to explain their benefits to the farmers.

During the Budget Session of Parliament in February this year, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi had surprised everyone by asking Opposition members to stand up to observe two-minute silence as a tribute to the farmers who died during the agitation.

His move then had not go down well with the Speaker. Three BJP members later moved a breach of privilege notice against Gandhi's move, saying that asking members to observe silence without the permission of the Chair was contempt of the House.

In a separate letter to the Speaker, Chowdhury on Saturday also urged the Speaker to initiate the process of appointment of Deputy Speaker – a post that has been lying vacant since the constitution of the 17th Lok Sabha in 2019.


TMC Goa in-charge Mahua Moitra in Panaji, Saturday.

all 40 seats in Goa without any alliance.

She also claimed Chief Minister Pramod Sawant was a "puppet" controlled by BJP's general secretary (organisation) Satish Dhond. "There is no Mukhya Mantri in Goa. There is a Maha Mantri... He is Satish Dhond. The BJP should answer how Mr Dhond, who is not even a minisyster, is entering government meetings"

Goa BJP chief Sadanand Tanavade dismissed the remark. "Does she (Moitra) even know Satish Dhond? Somebody tutors her and she just says what she is told," he said.


MK Stalin

for Presidential assent considering the impact on medical admissions in the state.

The legislation was introduced in the backdrop of a series of suicides by medical aspirants who could not clear NEET.

The bill was an outcome of recommendations from a government appointed committee led by Justice AK Rajan – a retired judge of the Madras High Court – to look into the impact of NEET in the state. The key question to be analysed was whether the NEET is an equitable method for selection of students.

The state's main contention is that NEET, a common entrance exam, puts at a disadvantage students from rural areas and those from lower economic groups and backward classes.

Need to take everyone on growth path: Govt on farm laws repeal

LIZ MATHEW

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

EVEN THOUGH "only a group of farmers are protesting" against the farm laws, the government "has tried to sensitise the farmers" and "explain the merits" but as India "celebrates the 75th Year of Independence – "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav", the need of the hour is to take everyone together on the path of inclusive growth and development", explains government as its reasons behind the repeal of the farm laws in the Bill that is to be tabled in Parliament on Monday.

In the Farm Laws Repeal Act, 2021, circulated on Saturday evening, the government says the three laws -- the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act -- were enacted as a part of the Government's endeavour to improve the condition of farmers including small and marginal farmers.

"These enactments were made for the overall socio-economic development of the farmers and rural sector after extensive consultations with various stakeholders following the felt need and demand of the farmers' organisations, suggestions and recommendations of the experts, professionals, agricultural economists, expert committees over the years," says the statement on the objectives and reasons for the Bill.

UP election a fight between forces for and against India, says Yogis

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 27

CHIEF MINISTER Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said the electoral fight in the upcoming UP Assembly polls would be between pro-India and anti-India forces.

Addressing BJP booth chiefs in Janapur district, he claimed that every Indian was disrespected by the comparison drawn by SP chief Akhilesh Yadav between Vallabhbhai Patel with Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

"It is natural that the 2022 elections in UP have become a centre of attraction in the country and the world... All the anti-BJP and anti-India people are uniting. And on the other hand, under the guidance and leadership of Prime

EXPLAINED

The justification for the repeal

The government justifies repeal of the contentious farm laws as a move to show its willingness to be inclusive. In its statement on objects and reasons, it tries to justify the laws by listing their benefits and advantages. With elections to several states, including the politically crucial Uttar Pradesh, due next year, the government seems to be hoping that this move would help stop the farm agitation, which had triggered reactions in several parts of the country. The explanation also reflects the government's optimism that the move would lead to a positive response in the upcoming polls.

prove the condition of farmers including small and marginal farmers.

"These enactments were made for the overall socio-economic development of the farmers and rural sector after extensive consultations with various stakeholders following the felt need and demand of the farmers' organisations, suggestions and recommendations of the experts, professionals, agricultural economists, expert committees over the years," says the statement on the objectives and reasons for the Bill.

It says although various Governments during the last three decades have tried to initiate such reforms, but, they were "not in comprehensive way".

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in an address to the nation, announced that the three laws, which triggered protests among the farmers in Punjab, Haryana and parts of UP, would be withdrawn.

"Even though only a group of farmers are protesting against these laws, the Government has tried hard to sensitise the farmers


UP CM Yogi Adityanath visits a temple in Balrampur district on Saturday. PTI

Minister Narendra Modi, every worker works to protect self-respect and pride of India. The whole fight has been divided into two parts – anti-nationals and pro-India," said the CM.

Defence Minister Rajnath


SP chief Akhilesh Yadav addresses a public meeting in Sandila, UP, Saturday. Twitter

BJP supporters mowed down farmers, party trying to instill fear: Akhilesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 27

SAMAJWADI PARTY president Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday hit out at the ruling BJP, accusing it of trying to instill fear among people and alleging that its supporters mowed down farmers in Lakhimpur Kheri last month.

Eight people, including four

farmers, were killed in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence on October 3. The farmers were mowed by vehicles, one of which allegedly belonged to a BJP leader.

Addressing a public meeting in Sandila in Lucknow, Yadav said, "Farmers had come out to demand the withdrawal of farm laws and BJP's MoS for Home's supporters crushed them under

the tyres of a jeep."

"The British had fired from the front at the Jallianwala Bagh and the BJP people mowed down farmers from behind," Yadav said. "They think they can do politics by making people afraid. The British ruled by dividing and they (BJP) think they can rule by making people afraid. This time, no one will get afraid and we will wipe them out," he said.

States yet to avail of Centre's Good Samaritan scheme

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

THE CENTRE'S Good Samaritan scheme, meant to encourage and felicitate those helping road accident victims, has received a tepid response from the states more than a month since its launch.

The Road Transport and Highways Ministry announced this scheme so that taking a road crash victim to hospital is not just hassle-free but there is also the incentive of a reward and recognition.

Historically, Indians are reluctant in taking victims to hospital because of associated legal

processes and investigations that follow. To address that, the Centre inserted Section 134A in the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019, which deals with "Protection of Good Samaritans". It says that a Good Samaritan will not be liable for any civil or criminal action for any injury to or death of the victim of an accident involving a motor vehicle, where such injury or death resulted from the Good Samaritan's negligence in acting or failing to act while rendering emergency medical or non-medical care or assistance etc.

However, despite the Centre willing to give an initial grant of Rs 5 lakh for it, states have not

even opened bank accounts to get the money. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, which sent out a reminder last month, will send another one to states to operationalise the scheme, sources said. The Centre also wants to felicitate the topten Good Samaritans in Delhi during the Road Safety Month next year.

The scheme entitles any person, who helps save a life by taking a road crash victim to the hospital, to a reward of Rs 5,000 per accident. The new law is that the "Good Samaritan" is free to not disclose their name to the hospital or law enforcement authorities; they can also choose not to take part in any legal

on the importance of the Farm Laws and explain the merits through several meetings and other forum," it says, adding: "Without taking away the existing mechanisms available to farmers, new avenues were provided for trade of their produce. Besides, farmers were free to select the avenues of their choice where they can get more price for their produce without any compulsion. However, the operation of the aforesaid farm laws has been stayed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. During the Covid period, the farmers have worked hard to increase production and fulfil the needs of the nation." The statement also lists the Narendra Modi government's several interventions to support farmers, including small and marginal farmers by providing quality seeds, credit, insurance, procurement and market support.

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar has announced the Bill to repeal the acts will be brought in on the first day of the winter session. The session begins on November 29 and is scheduled to conclude on December 23.

RSS-affiliated farmers' union seeks rollback of import duty cuts

DEEPTIMANT TIWARY

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

BHARATIYA KISAN Sangh, the RSS-affiliated farmers' union, has accused the government of easing imports at a time when farmers have an opportunity to sell produce at a good price.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the group demanded a long term import-export policy for agricultural produce and asked the government to roll back the import duty cuts.

The outfit said it had submitted a memorandum on this to Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal.

"Maize is not bought at the minimum support price (MSP) in any state. And when the time comes for the market itself to offer the price, then prices are controlled by easing imports. Maize is a good alternative to soybean meal as poultry fodder. But by easing import of soybean meal, the government is annoying maize farmers," said the statement, quoting from the memorandum.

The communique, signed by BKS General Secretary Badri Narayan Chaudhary, also said soybean meal is derived from genetically modified crops which could "threaten the non-GM tag that India enjoys in the international market".

Odisha govt should rethink University Amendment Act: Education minister

AISHWARYA MOHANTY

BHUBANESWAR, NOVEMBER 27

UNION MINISTER of Education Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday urged the state government to rethink the contentious Odisha Universities (Amendment) Act, 2020, which was passed in the Assembly in November last year.

The amended Act brings the appointment to important academic and administrative posts in state universities, including the re-


President Ram Nath Kovind with CJI Justice N V Ramana and Law Minister Kiren Rijju in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

Judges must be discreet about what they say in court: Kovind

ANANTHAKRISHNANG

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

CALLING UPON judges "to exercise utmost discretion in what they say in courtrooms", President Ram Nath Kovind Saturday quoted the saying by an American judge that "history teaches that the independence of the judiciary is jeopardised when courts become embroiled in the passions of the day, and assume primary responsibility in choosing between competing political, economic and social pressures".

Speaking at the valedictory session of the Constitution Day celebrations at the Vigyan Bhavan here, organised by the Supreme Court, Kovind said: "In Indian tradition, judges are imagined as a model of rectitude and detachment more akin to sthitpragya (steady wisdom)... We have a rich history of legions of such judges known for remarkable sagacity and conduct beyond reproach, which have become the hallmark for the future generations."

Stressing that "there is no doubt that you have set for yourself a high bar", the President said: "Hence, it is also incumbent upon judges to exercise utmost discretion in what they say in courtrooms. Indiscreet remarks, even if made with a good intention, give space for dubious interpretations to run down the judiciary."

Going on to quote what Justice Frankfurter of the US Supreme Court said in the 1951 case Dennis versus United States, he said: "Courts are not representative bodies. They are not designed to be a good reflex of a democratic society. Their essential quality is detachment, founded on independence. History teaches us that the independence of the judiciary is jeopardised when courts be-

come embroiled in the passions of the day, and assume primary responsibility in choosing between competing political, economic and social pressures."

Kovind also touched upon what Chief Justice of India N V Ramana said at the Constitution Day event on Friday, regarding "attacks on the judiciary... particularly (in) social media". The President said: "It pains me no end... to note that of late there have been cases of some disparaging remarks against the judiciary made on social media platforms."

In his address at the valedictory event, the CJI referred to pendency of cases, and said: "Legislature does not conduct studies or assess the impact of the laws that it passes. This sometimes leads to big issues," Justice Ramana also said "rebranding the existing courts as commercial courts, without creating special infrastructure, will not have any impact on the pendency".

The CJI urged Law Minister Kiren Rijju, present at the event, to expedite the process of filling judicial vacancies.

Rijju said there was a need to balance fundamental rights with fundamental duties. He said several people trampled on rights of others for their own rights, adding that it must be discussed why a law passed by Parliament or Assembly could not be implemented because some sections feel it affects their rights.

"When the Supreme Court decides something, it is the law of the land. When Parliament or an Assembly passes a law, it also becomes the law of the land. How can we see a situation where the Supreme Court or High Court or Parliament or Assembly passes a law, and yet there is difficulty in implementing it," he said, without going into specifics.


Dharmendra Pradhan

cruitment of teaching staff, under control of the Odisha government.

The legislation altered the committee's composition for the selection of VCs of universities, and said that the teachers' recruitments will be done by the Odisha Public Service Commission. Selection to these posts were previously done by the universities.

"From the administrative point of view, you can implement a unitary system to keep a check on how the state government's education budget is being spent, what disciplines must be taught... but for academic excellence, it is necessary that Universities are given their freedom," Pradhan said while delivering the keynote address on the 79th Foundation Day of Utkal University in Bhubaneswar. "The NEP is preparing a bigger launching pad for academic excellence. Keeping this in mind, Odisha government should rethink its decision."

'BEIJING JANATA PARTY': KHARGE ATTACKS BJP ON CHINA INCURSION

New Delhi: Congress Saturday stepped up its attack on the government over the reported Chinese incursions with Rajya Sabha Opposition Leader Mallikarjun Kharge calling the BJP "Beijing Janata Party".

Kharge took a dig at some BJP leaders for sharing an image of Beijing Airport and passing it off as the model for Jewar airport. "In Arunachal Pradesh, BJP govt let's China to build villages. In Uttar Pradesh, BJP govt showcases Chinese airport as its own. In Ladakh, BJP govt... cedes our territory to Chinese. BJP has transformed into Beijing Janata Party!," Kharge tweeted. **ENS**

Across
THE AISLE



PCHIDAMBARAM

Website: pchidambaram.in
Twitter: @Pchidambaram_IN

It is crystal clear that the Modi government fears only one thing — losing an election. Petrol and diesel prices were reduced within hours of the results of the by-elections to 30 Assembly seats, where the BJP won just seven. The sudden decision to withdraw the farm laws — taken by Mr Modi without Cabinet approval — was a clear indication that he feared massive losses in UP, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa and being blanked out in Punjab

Big, rich and unaccountable

THE RICH get big and the big get rich. Once they are big and rich, there is the clear and present danger that they will be unaccountable. John Sherman, a United States Senator (the first Antitrust Act, 1890, is commonly referred to as the Sherman Act) said, "If we will not endure a king as a political power, we should not endure a king over the production, transportation, and sale of any of the necessities of life." Standard Oil and AT & T were broken up in the US. China has cracked down on Alibaba, Tencent and Didi. Microsoft, Google and Facebook face the heat in many countries. Why? Because they have become too big, too rich and unaccountable.

Just as we will not endure a king as ruler, we ought not to endure a ruler who wants to be king. Many countries have term limits on their President or Prime Minister because he/she could acquire absolute power.

DEMOCRATIC & RICH

Mr Vladimir Putin has found a way to remain the real power whether as President or Prime Minister. Mr Xi Jinping has consolidated his power, abolished term limits and is all set to begin his third term next year. By any definition, both countries are not democracies. Nor have they broken into the ranks of the rich countries.

The top 10 richest countries of the

world by per capita income are: 1. Luxembourg, 2. Ireland, 3. Switzerland, 4. Norway, 5. United States, 6. Iceland, 7. Denmark, 8. Singapore, 9. Australia and 10. Qatar. Except Qatar, which is a monarchy, and Singapore, which is a qualified democracy, the other eight countries are full-fledged democracies. I cannot name the President or Prime Minister of any of the eight, except of the US and, with some effort, of Australia. The moral is that a country and its people can be rich and democratic, though led by quiet, reserved and faceless leaders. None of these leaders has, to my knowledge, been accused of hubris or arrogance.

SLIDE TO UNACCOUNTABILITY

Democracy ill sits beside absolute power or disdain for Parliament and the media. There is no place for 'I know it all' or 'I am the saviour' rhetoric. These qualities are acquired when a political party becomes too big, too rich and unaccountable. The BJP claims to be the biggest party in the world and we know it is the richest in India. It has 300 seats in the Lok Sabha (out of 543) and 1,435 seats in the State Legislative Assemblies (out of 4,036). It is the ruling party in 17 states (out of 28). That makes it too big. The BJP is also too rich. According to the Association for Democratic Rights, in

2019-20, the BJP collected Rs 2,642 crore (out of Rs 3,377 crore for all parties) from unknown sources, including the infamous electoral bonds. In the last round of state elections in five states, the BJP spent Rs 252 crore; of that Rs 151 crore was spent in West Bengal alone!

In the last seven years, the BJP has become more unaccountable. It shuns debate in Parliament; passes Bills without scrutiny by parliamentary committees and, often, without a debate in the two Houses; the Prime Minister religiously avoids Parliament and the media; and the government has no hesitation in using the CBI, ED, Income Tax, NIA and now the NCB (Narcotics Control Bureau) against political opponents, social activists, journalists and students.

Despite being too big, too rich and unaccountable, the BJP has won a string of elections. Where it lost, it had no compunction in buying legislators and forming the government with the help of obliging governors. They have proudly given a name to the sordid exercise — Operation Lotus!

FEAR ONLY LOSING

The hubris and arrogance were in full display in the passing of the three farm laws and the obstinate defence of the laws. The laws were made through ordinances and converted into legislation without a debate in Parliament. Farmers

protested for 15 months, but the government did not yield. The invitation to farmers for talks was insincere and the talks were political theatre. The abuse and name-calling of the farmers and their supporters ('Khalistanis, anti-national') reached indecent limits. The police crackdown was brutal. The response to the Supreme Court was defiant. Throughout, the government was self-satisfied and smug — until the intelligence reports and survey results seeped into the high chambers.

It is crystal clear that the Modi government fears only one thing — losing an election. Petrol and diesel prices were reduced within hours of the results of the by-elections to 30 Assembly seats, where the BJP won just seven. The sudden decision to withdraw the farm laws — taken by Mr Modi without Cabinet approval — was a clear indication that he feared massive losses in UP, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa (where his party rules today) and being blanked out in Punjab. The contrived praise for the PM's 'statesmanship' by his ministers only exposed what a crowd of dumb cheerleaders they had become: Mr Modi was a statesman when he passed the law and Mr Modi was a bigger statesman when he repealed the law!

Democracy may yet survive in India as long as the BJP fears losing an election. Even better, an actual defeat in February 2022 may prod the BJP to shed some of its hubris and arrogance.

Fifth
COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH

Twitter @tavleen_singh



We must never forget 26/11

LAST WEEK, in a small sort of way, we commemorated the thirteenth anniversary of 26/11. Why we always have this remembrance only in a small sort of way instead of on the scale that the United States commemorates 9/11 has begun to puzzle me more and more. Let me explain why. After Narendra Modi became Prime Minister in 2014 and went to New York to attend the UN General Assembly's annual meeting, he made it a point to visit the 9/11 memorial. It is a sombre and moving experience, and since I happened to be present, I noticed that Modi looked both sombre and moved. So why in the past seven years that he has been Prime Minister has he not considered building a memorial to those who died in the worst terrorist act committed on Indian soil? This is a Prime Minister who sets great store by memorials, which makes this oversight more puzzling.

It is easy to understand why, when there was a Congress Prime Minister in Delhi, he preferred to forget what happened in the hope that everyone would forget the terrible mistakes made during the attack and after. If the mistakes made during the attack were bad, the mistakes made after it were worse. The attack on Mumbai was an act of war by Pakistan, and the Indian government did no more than whine at public forums that we had provided sufficient proof that those who planned and orchestrated the unspeakable horror we call 26/11 continued to move about freely in Pakistan and continued to remain unpunished.

This itself is proof that the Pakistani State was directly involved. What makes India's weak-kneed response more shameful is that it allowed Pakistan to take charge of the narrative. Pakistanis I met in the wake of 26/11 said they believed that it was Indian intelligence agencies who had planned the whole thing, or they boasted of how "all it took was 10 young Pakistanis to bring India to her knees". The government led by Manmohan Singh, and controlled by Sonia Gandhi, behaved disgracefully and had no reason to attend remembrance ceremonies or build a memorial. It is much harder to understand why Modi has done so little.

After the Pulwama attack, the Indian Air Force conducted a 'surgical strike' on terrorist camps in Pakistan, and many political analysts believe that it was this aggressive retaliation that won Modi a second term. But surely this is not all that the mighty Government of India is capable of? This kind of cowardly, undeclared war, disguised as jihadist terrorism, is likely to be the only kind that Pakistan will fight in its endless quest to weaken India, so should we not have a strategy by now that fights back using the same tactics? Jihadist killers continue to be sent into Kashmir with the help of the Pakistani army, and their numbers are likely to grow now that we have a gang of violent holy warriors ruling Afghanistan. What is India's strategy to stop this from happening? When incidents of jihadist violence decreased after the abrogation of Article 370, there was no shortage of kowtowing ministers who credited Modi with having stopped jihadist terrorism. Now that we are seeing a jihadist attack almost every other day, who should we blame?

As someone who spends many months of the year in Mumbai, it shames me to report that if Pakistan wanted to repeat what happened 13 years ago, it easily could. All that has changed since November 26, 2008, is that armed police commandos and armoured cars can be seen on patrol in those parts of the city where the attacks took place. But, they seem to have more training in protecting VIP politicians than in counter-terrorism. As for ordinary policemen, who are always the first responders in a terrorist attack, they would certainly be as unprepared as they were 13 years ago.

Since Modi became Prime Minister, what has changed is that his spokesmen and supporters have no compunction in using the word Pakistani as a term of abuse. They appear with relentless regularity on primetime TV shows to rant and rave against Pakistanis, Islam, and Muslims in general, but as that old cliché says, they sound exactly like empty vessels making a lot of noise. Instead of helping India's case, they end up wrecking it with their venom and childish hostility.

It is time that the Prime Minister took personal charge of evolving a new strategy to deal with Pakistan's covert, clandestine war with our own covert, clandestine war. If Hafiz Saeed and his gang of killers cannot be brought to justice in the courts of Pakistan, then India needs to show that it has the capability to deal with them as Israel deals with its enemies. Meanwhile, at an official level there is no harm in reviving dialogue with Pakistan, and this time making clear that we know what happened on 26/11 and we know what is happening in Kashmir.

Instead of the Prime Minister complaining at international forums about terrorism, he needs to show that India can and will deal with those who attack us. Only then will the shame of India having done nothing after the 26/11 attack be erased. A memorial to those who died for no reason is necessary because it will serve to remind everyone that India does not forget or forgive her enemies.

Invisibility of caste in environmental studies

Dalitality

AMBIKA AIYADURAI & PRASHANT INGOLE



WHEN WE discuss environmental issues in Indian academic spaces, there is reluctance on referencing caste. Environment as a formal subject is taught in most institutions. The field of Environmental Humanities started around 2000 and has been gaining momentum, but in India, it functions with the glaring omission of caste.

We raise two points. First, why is this so in environmental studies in general and Environmental Humanities, in particular. Second, what are the (im)possibilities of anti-caste Environmental Humanities in Indian academia?

Way back in 1997, the late Gail Omvedt had drawn our attention to the question 'Why Dalits dislike environmentalists?'. Preservation of resources, protection of species, setting up of protected areas and campaigns for environment often do not acknowledge the role of as well as impact of these initiatives on the marginalised, mainly Dalits. While there are new studies exploring the issues of caste in the context of the environment, for example Mukul Sharma's *Caste and Nature*, caste-related discussions are yet to be included in the formal pedagogy.

Why are the issues of Dalits and their relation with land, water and food seldom highlighted in environmental academic discussions? Is it because the dichotomy of mainstream and margin is subverted, where the "margins" are essentially the core component of the environment studies discipline. In the field of environmental humanities, the emphasis is on "interconnectedness", between humans, nonhumans; nature, culture; and people, environment. This appears an antithesis to the Indian social system that is deeply and rigidly hierarchical, with unequal access to resources, along the gradient of caste.

The invisibility of caste in environmental studies is deliberate. In fact, some studies justify the caste system as a sustainable way reflecting "genuine cultural adjustment" to "shared" resources. One particular study by M Gadgil and K C Malhotra, 'Adaptive Significance of India's Caste System: An Ecological Perspective', claims that "resource partitioning" has

helped reduce competition over scarce natural resources, and created the right psychological environment.

Such studies thus legitimise the misappropriate distribution of resources without questioning the inbuilt structural mechanisms holding back Dalits.

Lack of representation of Dalits or tribals in these institutions is also a reason. It is our failure that anti-caste discourse, and literature and culture of the marginalised, are yet to become institutionalised in premier educational institutes. Inclusion of caste in the formal syllabus of environmental studies seems possible only at the individual faculty level. For example, at IIT Gandhinagar, where we are based, it is an important part of a formal course. We invite Dalit poets and researchers to discuss their work on environment with reference to caste, with a mandatory field trip.

One of the field sites is Ahmedabad's largest garbage dumping site at Pirana. Those who inhabit these highly degraded inhumane spaces are invariably Dalits, Muslims and the migrant poor. Caste and its connection to resource distribution is what Joel Lee has appropriately coined 'Environmental Casteism'.

While elite institutes may appear less enthusiastic to including caste, the power of individuals in making caste issues part of the formal environment curricula is possible. We strongly believe that an anti-caste approach and perspective from the margins will make this field more inclusive and diverse in terms of adding more critical reflections from a Phule-Ambedkarite point of view.

This will be an attempt to de-casteise and de-Brahmanise along the lines of Braj Ranjan Mani's argument of questioning Brahmanical pedagogy.

Prashant Ingole is a Postdoctoral Fellow and Ambika Aiyadurai an Assistant Professor at IIT Gandhinagar, and the author of *Tigers are Our Brothers: Anthropology of Wildlife Conservation in Northeast India*

Suraj Yengde, author of *Caste Matters*, curates the fortnightly 'Dalitality' column

life & WORK

POONAM MUTTREJA



WHEN THE Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released the findings of the fifth National Family Health Survey (NFHS), documenting government data on health and family welfare issues, there were a flurry of chest-thumping declarations. Many in the media reported that India's population had "stabilised" and some even claimed that it had begun "declining".

This is not entirely true. According to the findings, India's total fertility rate (TFR) — the average number of children born to a woman in the country over her lifetime — has slipped to 2.0. According to the United Nations, if women have on an average 2.1 children each over a sustained period of time, the population neither grows nor declines and thus stabilises. This means that for India's population to stabilise or decline, it would have to maintain a TFR equal to or less than 2.1 for a sustained period of decades.

Regardless, this drop in India's TFR, which stood at almost 6 in the 1950s, to its current levels is a significant feat. The credit for this achievement must go to the people of India, along with successive governments, especially the bureaucracy. This drop is a sign of changing aspirations, especially among women, who are seeing the wisdom of having fewer children.

Started as back as 1951, India's family planning programme is among the world's oldest. The earliest government communication campaigns sought to promote smaller families. But there was little progress as India continued to see rapid population growth.

In 1975, when the Indira Gandhi-led government declared Emergency, the desperation to control the population took a dark turn. A widespread mandatory sterilisation programme saw thousands of vasectomies, many of which were forced. These sterilisations became a major issue in the 1977 general elections, when Indira Gandhi was voted out, and India saw its first non-Congress government at the Centre.

This was the first time we saw strong evidence of a clear popular rejection of a coercive population-control policy.

For several decades after the Emergency, governments stayed away from family planning. In 1994, the International Conference on Population Development (ICPD), convened under the auspices of the United Nations, brought about a landmark shift in the way governments viewed population-related issues. At the ICPD, 179 governments, including

Population slowdown is triumph of India's people



There is no better contraceptive pill than education. According to NFHS data, women who had no schooling had the highest TFR of 3.06. Abhinav Saha

India, recognised and committed to a rights-based approach to family planning, which held that if people's needs for family planning and reproductive healthcare are met, along with other basic health and education needs, then population stabilisation will be achieved naturally, not as a matter of control or coercion.

The ICPD inspired India's 2000 National Population Policy. But implementation only picked pace when the National Rural Health Mission, now part of the larger National Health Mission, was launched in 2005.

The 2000s saw a rekindled interest in population stabilisation, but the burden of family planning stayed with women, with female sterilisation being the most available method. The lack of emphasis on quality of care led to some egregious practices. In 2014, 16 women died in Bilaspur after they were sterilised at a government camp. As a member of a fact-finding team comprising several civil society organisations, led by the Population Foundation of India, I visited the site and conducted several interviews. We found that gross negligence and compromised quality of care had led to these deaths.

Our team's inquiry resulted in a report that became the basis for a landmark judgment by the Supreme Court in 2016 and transformed the way family planning services are provided in India. The order by a two-judge Bench headed by Justice Madan Lokur asked the government to put a stop to sterilisation camps and focus on providing tempo-

rary methods of contraception.

Increased reach of the media has changed women's aspirations, and their desire for greater control over their lives. Although NFHS data show that women desire to have less than two children, their inability to access family planning services has resulted in a high unmet need. However, increased focus on providing services in high-fertility districts may have helped improve knowledge and acceptance of family planning.

India's large young population — about 30 per cent is aged between 10 and 24 — is gearing for change. The government needs to play a pivotal role and invest in education, health and creating economic opportunities for young people. It needs to understand that there is no better contraceptive pill than education. Girls' education has a direct co-relation with a decrease in fertility. According to NFHS data, women who had no schooling had the highest TFR of 3.06, as compared to women with 12 or more years of education who had a TFR of 1.71.

The government must provide health and life-skills education at an early age along with ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services. It must absolutely swear off coercive population-control policies for good. The way forward requires less chest-thumping and more collaborative efforts if we are to sustain the trend towards population stabilisation.

The writer is the Executive Director of Population Foundation of India

On the LOOSE

LEHER KALA

leherkala@gmail.com



STAND-UP comic Vir Das elicited a wholly predictable response to his impassioned lament on the dichotomy of surviving two, contradictory Indias. In the much-applauded monologue held at Washington's prestigious Kennedy Centre, Das highlighted the shocking contrasts we internalise, like how the world's largest population under 30 endures "75-year-old leaders with 150-year-old ideas". Madhya Pradesh's Home Minister declared Das persona non grata in his state while another BJP leader filed a complaint against him for "vilifying" India on foreign soil. Comedy in India has become a dangerous business: in January, comedian Munawar Faruqui was arrested

The power of ridicule

for allegedly passing indecent remarks about Hindu deities. In 2019, comic artist Agrima Joshua received rape threats for a joke on a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji.

It's not difficult to see why touchy politicians feel threatened by comedians. They instinctively understand humour packs in so much more than just frivolous entertainment; it provides clarity on bizarre situations that are otherwise impossible to comprehend. Some years back, a friend's father expired on a cruise liner in the Caribbean. There's nothing funny about this — until you hear that the friends he was travelling with continued with their vacation despite this catastrophe. Undoubtedly, it cast a dampener on everyone's spirits, but logic had reared its sensible head. They had paid a full advance and had flights booked only at the end of the cruise. Meanwhile, my friend

doesn't tire of relating this morbid story, how he reached shattered three days later, to a teary mother and his father in a morgue. A way, perhaps, to process the painful realisation: what makes every trauma bearable yet unbearable is that life goes on.

Throughout history, disaster has inspired dark satire. The genre of 'tragicomedy' emerged around the 3rd century BC and gained in popularity as theatre evolved to include nuance. It is thriving in a new millennium because we are all familiar with the dysfunctions of adulthood. Existence is n't purely tragic or comic but a frustrating combination of the two. In fact, if it was not find fault with Das's diatribe, it's that it wasn't (bitterly) hilarious enough. The best jesters point out deficiencies in human nature and society by slyly revealing them to be absurd. Basically, turning the grim into

grimly amusing. Ridiculousness is implied, never overtly stated. However, when a joke speaks truth to power, it can turn into a lethal tool for disruption. Bill Cosby's life blew up because of one sneer by a comedian: "You rape women, Bill Cosby, so turn the crazy down." Just like that, the floodgates to uncontrollable fury burst open.

Indians are not known for their ability to laugh at themselves. In our defence, life here has always been a struggle to keep suffering at bay while building endurance. You need to be able to take basics for granted to engage in light-hearted merriment. But circumstances have us tightly wound up, unable to relax. Alas, even a who-cares attitude is a privilege of richer nations. Our countrymen are religious but not spiritual, which means a lot of mind space is wasted worrying about nonsense, like kids' mar-

riages and relatives' opinions. So, when comedians use our depressing realities as material, not everyone sees that truth is way funnier than fiction. Many people feel genuinely aggrieved that Das was denigrating India abroad, not realising that articulating the unsaid stirs dialogue. It makes room for the perspective that, even with all our differences, we are essentially the same.

To brand comedians as dissenters for critiquing historical wrongs through parody is, ironically, a perfect example of the genre of absurdist comedy — that taps into the paradoxes and irrationalities of the modern world. It takes courage to make peace with our chaotic country and, occasionally, we are entitled to laugh at it. In any case, who are we kidding? The joke's on us.

The writer is director, Hutkay Films

12 ECONOMY

DIIs ACCUMULATE ₹12,818 CRORE OF STOCKS IN LAST SIX SESSIONS

Domestic institutions bought stocks as FPIs rushed out during market rout

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 27

DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONAL investors (DIIs) were active buyers last week when stock markets faced a nervous sell-off with foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) dumping stocks across the board.

While foreign investors exited from stocks worth Rs 25,000 crore (\$3.34 billion) in the last six sessions, DIIs accumulated stocks worth Rs 12,818 crore during the same period. Domestic institutions have been using every major correction to buy into stocks and reshuffle their portfolios. The benchmark Sensex nosedived 2,901 points, or 4.83 per cent, to 57,107.15 in the last six sessions.

On Friday, when the Sensex fell 1,688 points, FPIs pulled out Rs 5,785 crore from Indian markets

while DIIs invested Rs 2,294 crore, according to data available from stock exchanges. On November 24, when the Sensex declined by 320 points, FPIs sold Rs 5,122 crore stocks but DIIs were buyers of Rs 3,809 crore worth of stocks. Insurance companies led by LIC and mutual funds are the major players in the market, absorbing the sales triggered by FPIs.

"Domestic institutions follow the policy of 'buy when others sell'. They are long-term players and utilise every opportunity to get stocks cheap," said an analyst.

In November so far, FPIs have taken out Rs 31,124 crore from Indian markets while DIIs invested Rs 20,598 crore. LIC alone usually invests around Rs 50,000 crore in the markets every year.

Analysts are worried about the sell-off continuing in the wake of several uncertainties relating to

INVESTMENTS BY FPIs AND DIIs (in ₹ crore)		
DATE	FPIs	DIIs
Nov 26	-5,785	+2,294
Nov 25	-2,300	+1,367
Nov 24	-5,122	+3,809
Nov 23	-4,477	+1,412
Nov 22	-3,438	+2,051
Nov 18	-3,930	+1,885

Source: BSE data

the new Covid variant and tightening of the monetary policy in the United States. The sharp correction in the market on Friday was mainly triggered by concerns arising out of the new strain of the virus spotted in Africa.

In March 2020, when the Covid pandemic first hit the world, the market crashed with

FPIs pulling out Rs 65,816 crore. However, DIIs which bought Rs 55,595 crore worth of stocks made a good profit as markets bounced back subsequently.

Setting the stage for further downward pressure on other world markets, the Dow Jones Industrial Average in the US on Friday dropped about 905 points, or 2.5 per cent, for its worst day of the year, while the S&P 500 and Nasdaq Composite slid 2.3 per cent and 2.2 per cent, respectively. The Dow was down more than 1,000 points at session lows.

The big question is whether retail investors will follow the exit route taken by FPIs. Retail investors have been pumping money into the stock markets through SIPs of mutual funds in the last 12 months. Another possible impact of the market rout will be on the IPO market which has been wit-

nessing a flurry of activity with the entry of high-profile unicorns.

The FPI sell-off can accelerate if the US tightens monetary policy. "Foreign brokerages had downgraded India early this month on high valuations. India's valuations vis-a-vis emerging market peers also became stretched. The further negative trigger came from the RBI observation that valuations are stretched," said VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

The market action next week will depend on how the new virus strain spreads and its impact on the world. There are concerns over rising inflation in the minutes of the recent US FOMC meeting, signalling higher chances of an aggressive policy tightening. Worries over overvaluation and a possible rate hike have been haunting foreign investors.

down carbon intensity of its economy by 45%

Based on current state of play, India will fall far short of its climate objectives, Fitch said

By 2030, the shares in primary energy mix will fall, with coal accounting for 45%, oil 33%, and natural gas 8% — with a decline in coal largely offset by a rise in oil and gas

Strongest prospects for displacing fossil fuels are in the power sector, but targets are likely to be missed in absence of a step change in the sector

Emissions reduction benefits will be limited, as long as fossil fuels are the dominant source of power generation

Source: Fitch Solutions/PTI

'India faces uphill battle to meet 2030 climate targets'

India must substantially alter its current trajectory if it has to deliver on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's climate targets for 2030, Fitch Solutions said in a note



At the COP26, Modi announced that by 2030, India will increase its non-fossil fuel power generation capacity to

500 GW, generate 50% of its power from renewable sources, reduce its total carbon emission by 1 billion tonnes and bring

Analysts forecast nuclear, hydropower and non-hydropower renewables generation capacity to reach 314 GW by 2030, with their share in total generation rising to around 30%

Omicron strain forces WTO to postpone ministerial meet

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

THE WORLD Trade Organization (WTO) has postponed its crucial meet of trade ministers from various countries — scheduled to start from November 30 in Geneva — for a second time, after an outbreak of a new strain of the Covid-19 virus led several governments to impose travel curbs.

It is the first major trade casualty of the new Covid variant. No date has been set for reconvening the 12th ministerial conference, widely seen as a test of the WTO's relevance amid criticism by key members on the multilateral trading system that it represents.

The Geneva meet was to run until December 3 and host talks on a broad range of issues, including the WTO's response to containing Covid-19, curbs on fishery subsidies and a permanent solution to the public procurement programmes for food security.

The B.1.1.529 variant, known as the Omicron variant, detected in South Africa has been classified as a "variant of concern" by the WHO, which says it may spread more quickly than other variants.



WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said many could not have participated due to travel constraints. Reuters file

WTO director-general Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said the travel constraints meant that many ministers and senior delegates could not have participated in face-to-face negotiations at the ministerial Conference. "This would render participation on an equal basis impossible," she said. The meeting was originally due to take place in June 2020 in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan. Although the General Council decided to move the meeting to Geneva, Kazakhstan was chosen to chair the meet. **FE**

Tai: US to keep pushing for vaccine IP, WTO reform

DAVID LAWDER
WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 27

US TRADE Representative Katherine Tai said the United States would continue to push for WTO members to agree on an intellectual property framework for Covid-19 vaccines after a major WTO ministerial meeting set for next week was postponed Friday.

The delay of the in-person meeting in Geneva over travel restrictions and concerns about the spread of the new Omicron Covid-19 variant complicates Tai's plans to push her vision for WTO reform and rekindling the spirit of dynamism and compromise that led to the trade body's creation in 1995. In a pair of tweets, Tai said the postponement "is a reminder that we still have much work to do to end the pandemic." **REUTERS**

CRUDE WATCH

BRENT SEES OVER 8% WEEKLY FALL

New York: With the new variant of the coronavirus spooking investors and causing concerns that a supply surplus could swell, Brent crude settled at \$72.72 a barrel, a weekly decline of over 8%, while US WTI crude fell 10.4% for the week to \$68.15 on Friday. **REUTERS**

INTERVIEW: CO-CHAIR OF BACC & FOUNDER-CEO OF COINSWITCH KUBER

'We never advocated crypto as legal tender... but this tech is solving real world problems'



Credit: Company

"Most of our users are very young. It is the Gen Z population, which is very excited about crypto. Average age is about 25-26 years on our platform that is investing in crypto."

ASHISH SINGHAL

Be it Covid-19 certificates, checks getting issued on Ethereum blockchain in the US.

There are many real world problems that this technology is solving, and these are the problems that we see many companies from India solving. We will be the custodians for retail users to invest in these companies. Think of us as an exchange equivalent in the world where crypto companies are creating value.

Could you give us a sense of who in India is investing in or is invested in cryptocurrencies?

Today, 45 per cent of our users come from tier-1 cities and 55 per cent come from tier-2 and tier-3 cities. Most of our users are very young. It is the Gen Z population, which is very excited about crypto. Average age is about 25-26 years on our platform that is investing in crypto. People from over 4,000 pin codes have invested in crypto — so it's not that just people from tier-1 cities have invested but the whole of India is investing in cryptos through CoinSwitch Kuber. To give a sense of the kind of money they are putting in — on average, they are putting in about Rs 10,000 every month for investment into crypto and the value decreases when you go to tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

What role do crypto exchanges play in the next 5-10 years and what problem are you hoping to solve?

Think of us like the stock exchanges of the world. Amazing companies do IPOs, create value and an NSE or a BSE provides that access to investment for these companies. The use cases of crypto may be smaller, but those use cases are being solved amazingly.

Goyal to industry: Our effort is to reduce burdensome compliances



PIYUSH GOYAL
Commerce Minister

File

nalise the renewal process. But it only happens when we work together. Self-regulation and self-certification should be the way forward," the union minister said. On fast resolution of commercial disputes, Goyal said the government is working on making mediation the preferred mechanism rather than everybody rushing to courts. **WITHPTI**

Gems, jewellery: Goyal stresses on design, tie-ups

New Delhi: Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday asked the gem and jewellery industry to focus on areas like design, diversification of export product basket and lab grown diamonds.

"Focus on four points... Good design should be patented; include new things such as pearls, platinum and fashion jewellery in the exports basket; increase collaboration with other countries for fusion jewellery; and lab grown diamonds," he said at the inauguration of Gems & Jewellery Manufacturing Association, 2021. **PTI**

BRIEFLY

MoSoninternet

New Delhi: Democratic countries need to join hands to think about creating safety, trust and accountability on the internet which has no boundaries, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said on Saturday at the first ever India Internet Governance Forum (IIGF).

MCL solar plant

Sambalpur: Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL) will set up a 50-MW solar power plant in Odisha's Sambalpur at a cost of Rs 301.92 crore as part of its goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2024. **PTI**

'Xiaomi to set up car plant in Beijing'

REUTERS
SHANGHAI, NOVEMBER 27

CHINESE SMARTPHONE giant Xiaomi Corp will build a plant that can produce 300,000 vehicles annually in Beijing for its electric vehicle unit, authorities in the capital said on Saturday.

The plant will be constructed in two phases and Xiaomi will also built its auto unit's headquarters, sales and research offices in the Beijing Economic and Technological Development Zone, the economic development agency Beijing E-Town said in its official WeChat account.

Black Friday draws US shoppers, but many go online

RICHANAIDU & ARIANNA McLYMORE
CHICAGO, NOVEMBER 27

BARGAIN HUNTERS ventured out in chilly weather to buy Christmas gifts on Black Friday only to discover that many US retailers offered smaller price markdowns this year amid tight supplies.

Covid fears and fewer "door-buster" sales thinned crowds the day after the US Thanksgiving holiday, which kicks off the year-end holiday shopping season.

On the same day, the World Health Organization named the newly identified omicron variant of the coronavirus as a "variant of concern," triggering worldwide alarm and a selloff in the US stock market.



People line up near a store on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, New York City, on Black Friday. Reuters

Stores on Black Friday had the lowest level of clearance goods for sale in five years or more, Cowen analysts said in a note.

Many shoppers chose to pick up merchandise curbside rather

than venturing inside stores. Black Friday retail sales are up 29.8 per cent versus 2020 through 3 p.m. ET, according to Mastercard SpendingPulse.

Consumers spent \$6.6 billion

up until 9 p.m. ET on Friday, according to Adobe Digital Economy Index, which expected total spending of between \$8.8 billion and \$9.2 billion for the day.

Walmart and Target stood to outperform other retailers in part because of their buy-online-pick-up-at-store services, Cowen said. Target added more than 18,000 "drive-up" parking spaces, more than doubling spots versus last year.

The company said its most popular Black Friday deals included \$219.99 for a KitchenAid professional stand mixer that regularly sells for \$429.99, and savings of up to \$60 on Apple Watches and AirPods.

Several retailers — including Walmart, Target and Best Buy — are expected to post lower fourth-

quarter profit margins because of tight inventory and higher costs for raw materials, freight and labor. "Even though the holiday season should be okay from a sales standpoint — because retailers are discounting less — the margins won't necessarily be higher because of inflation," said Forrester Research analyst Sucharita Kodali.

US consumers are entering the holiday season flush with cash thanks to a still-hefty pile of savings from multiple rounds of government pandemic relief and double-digit wage increases as businesses compete for workers. Yet retailers had lured shoppers to make holiday purchases as early as September, because the supply chain logjam has prevented them from quickly replenishing year-end merchandise. **REUTERS**

Paytm Q2 loss stretches to ₹473 crore

New Delhi: One 97 Communications, the parent company of fintech major Paytm, on Saturday posted a widening of consolidated loss to about Rs 473 crore during the quarter ended September, mainly on account of increase in payment processing charges.

Paytm had a loss of Rs 436.7 crore in the same quarter a year ago, according to an exchange filing. Its consolidated total income rose 49.6 per cent to Rs 1,086.4 crore during the quarter from Rs 663.9 crore in the corresponding period of FY21. Paytm's expense of payment processing charges rose 36 per cent to Rs 670 crore during the quarter. **ENS, WITHPTI**

13 THE WORLD

TOP OF THE WORLD



Burned cars block a road in Petit-Bourg, Guadeloupe. *Reuters*

FRANCE

Paris says willing to talk autonomy for Guadeloupe

FRANCE IS willing to discuss autonomy for the French Caribbean territory of Guadeloupe if it is in the interests of the people who live there, government minister Sebastien Lecornu said. Guadeloupe and the nearby French island of Martinique have seen several days of protests against Covid-19 measures that have spilled over into violence. Lecornu, the minister for France's overseas territories, said in a YouTube video issued late Friday that certain elected officials in Guadeloupe had raised the question of autonomy, changing its status as an overseas region. "The government is ready to talk about this. There are no bad debates, as long as those debates serve to resolve the real everyday problems of people in Guadeloupe," he said. **REUTERS**

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Police find three bodies after violent protests

SOLOMON ISLANDS police found three bodies in a burned-out building and arrested more than 100 people in this week's violence sparked by concerns about the Pacific nation's increasing links with China. Australian media reported the bodies were recovered late Friday after riots and protests subsided. No other details were given. Authorities imposed a curfew in the capital Honiara, after a 36-hour lockdown ordered by the embattled PM Manasseh Sogavare ended Friday. Sogavare blamed outside interference for stirring up the protests calling for his resignation, with a thinly veiled reference to Taiwan and the US. **AP**

SOUTH KOREA

Widow of dictator issues apology

THE WIDOW of South Korea's last military dictator issued a brief apology over the "pains and scars" caused by her husband's brutal rule as dozens of relatives and former aides gathered at a Seoul hospital on Saturday to pay their final respects to Chun Doo-hwan. Chun, who took power in a 1979 coup and violently crushed pro-democracy protests a year later before being jailed for treason in the 1990s, died at his Seoul home Tuesday. **AP**

OMICRON VARIANT: MORE COUNTRIES IMPOSE TRAVEL CURBS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

UK reports cases of new variant, world on alert

Probable case of omicron in Germany

AP & REUTERS

LONDON, NOVEMBER 27

BRITAIN BECAME the latest country Saturday to report cases of the new potentially more contagious omicron variant of the coronavirus as governments around the world sought to shore up their defences by slapping restrictions on travel from nations in southern Africa.

Amid fears that the recently identified new variant — named omicron by the WHO — has the potential to be more resistant to the protection offered by vaccines, there are growing concerns that the pandemic and associated lockdown restrictions will persist for far longer than hoped.

UK Health Secretary Sajid Javid confirmed that two people have tested positive with the omicron variant and that the cases are linked and related to travel from southern Africa.

Britain added four more countries — Angola, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia — onto the country's travel red list from Sunday. Six others — Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe — were added Friday.

A host of countries, including the Pakistan, US, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Iran, Japan and Thailand, joined others, including the European Union and the UK in imposing restrictions on southern African countries.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson tightened up rules Saturday, saying anyone arriving in England will be asked to take a mandatory PCR test for Covid-19 on the second day and must self isolate until they provide a

EXPLAINED

Doubts over travel curbs

EVEN AS countries rush to impose travel bans on South Africa and its neighbours, the WHO has warned against taking such steps before there is more information about the new variant. Some experts have said that it is likely that the variant is already spreading in other parts of the world, and that travel bans at this stage would already be too late. There are also suggestions that omicron was detected in South Africa because of the advances made by the country in genome sequencing and identifying new variants, and not necessarily because the variant originated there.

negative test. He also said mask-wearing in shops and on public transport will be required and that vaccination will be accelerated.

In addition to the UK, cases have been reported in travellers in Belgium, Israel and Hong Kong. Germany also said it suspected a positive case and Dutch authorities were testing if 61 people who arrived on flights from South Africa with Covid-19 have the variant.

US President Joe Biden on Friday reiterated his call for nations to agree to waive intellectual property protections for Covid vaccines in the wake of the new variant. "The news about this new variant should make clearer than ever why this pandemic will not end until we have global vaccinations," Biden said in a statement.



GERMAN AIR FORCE PLANES TRANSFER COVID PATIENTS: A Covid-19 patient is taken into an air force aircraft in Memmingen, Germany. Hospitals in southern and eastern regions of Germany have warned they are running out of ICU beds because of the large numbers of Covid-19 patients, prompting the country to organise large-scale transfers of patients to other regions. Germany's health minister said he hopes the sight of air force planes transferring patients across the country will act as a "wake-up call" to those who still haven't got vaccinated. **AP**

S Africa feels 'punished' by travel bans after detecting new variant

LYNSEY CHUTEL

JOHANNESBURG, NOV 27

AS THE US and European countries close their borders over fears of the recently detected coronavirus variant, many South Africans say they feel as if they are being "punished" for alerting global health authorities.

Hours after South African scientists announced the existence of a new variant that they said displayed "a big jump in evolution," Britain banned travellers from southern Africa. Other European nations and the US followed suit. "I do apologise that people



A lab at the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine in Durban

took a very radical decision," said Tulio de Oliveira, director of the KwaZulu-Natal Research and Innovation Sequencing Platform and the scientist who announced the new variant on Thursday.

MEANWHILE

SPANISH POLICE MARCH IN MADRID

Thousands of Spanish police officers marched through Madrid on Saturday to protest against a proposed reform of a security law which they say will hamper their ability to do their work. They were opposed to proposed changes to the 2015 Citizens Security Law, which critics say violates the right to protest and limits free expression.

Top UK scientist says Omicron 'not a disaster', vaccination likely to protect

ADITI KHANNA

LONDON, NOVEMBER 27

THE NEW potentially highly-transmissible variant of Covid-19, named Omicron by the WHO, is not a disaster as vaccines are still likely to protect against the serious disease from it, a UK scientist, who advises the government, said on Saturday.

Professor Calum Semple, a microbiologist from the UK government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE),

struck a note of caution on the worldwide headlines around the new B.1.1.529 variant detected in South Africa.

"This is not a disaster, and the headlines from some of my colleagues saying 'this is horrendous' I think are hugely overstating the situation," Semple told the BBC.

"Immunity from vaccination is still likely to protect you from severe disease. You might get a snuffle or a headache or a filthy cold but your chance of coming into hospital, or intensive care or sadly dying are greatly diminished by the vaccine and still will be going into the future," he said. **PTI**

A cure for Type 1 diabetes? For one man, it seems to have worked

GINA KOLATA

NOVEMBER 27

BRIAN SHELTON'S life was ruled by Type 1 diabetes.

When his blood sugar plummeted, he would lose consciousness without warning. He crashed his motorcycle into a wall. He passed out in a customer's yard while delivering mail. Following that episode, his supervisor told him to retire, after a quarter century in the Postal Service. He was 57.

His ex-wife, Cindy Shelton, took him into her home in Elyria, Ohio. "I was afraid to leave him alone all day," she said.

Early this year, she spotted a call for people with Type 1 diabetes to participate in a clinical trial by Vertex Pharmaceuticals. The company was testing a treatment developed over decades by a scientist who vowed to find a cure after his baby son and then his teenage daughter got the devastating disease.

Shelton was the first patient. On June 29, he got an infusion of cells, grown from stem cells but just like the insulin-producing pancreas cells his body lacked. Now his body automatically



Brian Shelton may be the first person cured of Type 1 diabetes. **NYT**

controls its insulin and blood sugar levels.

Shelton, now 64, may be the first person cured of the disease with a new treatment that has experts daring to hope that help may be coming for many of the 1.5 million Americans suffering from Type 1 diabetes.

"It's a whole new life," Shelton said. "It's like a miracle."

Diabetes experts were astonished but urged caution. The study is continuing and will take five years, involving 17 people with severe cases of Type 1 diabetes. It is not intended as a treatment for the more common Type 2 diabetes.

"We've been looking for something like this to happen literally for decades," said Dr Irl Hirsch, a diabetes expert at the University of Washington. **NYT**



UK: STORM ARWEN LEAVES 2 DEAD

Waves crash against the pier wall at Seaham Lighthouse during Storm Arwen, in Seaham, Britain, on Saturday. At least two people died and tens of thousands were left without power as Storm Arwen brought strong winds across many parts of the UK, with gusts of up to 160 kph. *Reuters*

US city panel clears bid to demolish Wright Brothers' first bicycle shop

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DAYTON, NOVEMBER 27

THE DAYTON Board of Zoning Appeals has approved the city's request to demolish a 129-year-old historic building that once was the site of the Wright brothers' first bike shop.

The city wants to tear down the site because the building has deteriorated to a point where it can no longer be maintained, the *Dayton Daily News* reported. The Dayton Landmarks



At the site of the shop in Dayton, Ohio. **AP**

Commission had rejected the city's demolition request in September.

CRITICS SAY THE NEW RULES ARE HALF-BAKED, SHORT ON DETAIL AND UNFEASIBLE

Workers' paradise? Portugal's new teleworking law takes flak

BARRY HATTON

LISBON, NOVEMBER 27

PORTUGAL'S NEW law on working from home makes the European Union country sound like a workers' paradise.

Companies can't attempt to contact their staff outside working hours. They must help staff pay for their home gas, electric and internet bills. Bosses are forbidden from using digital software to track what their teleworkers are doing.

There's just one problem: the law might not work. Critics say the new rules are half-baked, short on detail and unfeasible.

And they may even backfire by making companies reluctant to allow working from home at all.

"The law is badly written and doesn't meet anybody's needs," says José Pedro Anacoreta, an employment attorney at PLMJ, one of Portugal's main law firms. "It's no good for anyone. ... It doesn't make any sense."

In many places around the world, the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated a prior trend toward the digitalisation of work and more flexible work arrangements. Amid such a sudden and massive shift in the employment landscape, governments are scrambling to accommodate working from home in their em-



Portugal's new law on working from home has grabbed attention around the world. **AP**

ployment laws. Those efforts are largely still in their infancy.

During the pandemic some countries have recommended teleworking. Others — like Portugal — have demanded it. Most EU countries have specific legislation on teleworking, though with different ap-

proaches, and others are considering it through amendments, extensions or conventions.

As home working grew in recent years, workers' "right to disconnect" — allowing staff to ignore work matters outside formal working hours — was adopted before the pandemic in

countries such as Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Belgium. It is now becoming the standard.

But Portugal is taking that concept a step further, by flipping the onus onto companies. "The employer has a duty to refrain from contacting the employee outside working hours, except in situations of force majeure," meaning an unanticipated or uncontrollable event, states the new law.

Also, parents or caregivers with children up to eight years old have the right to work from home if they choose, as long as the type of work they do is compatible with teleworking.

Fines for companies breaking

the law go up to almost 10,000 euros for each infringement.

The Portuguese rules are meant to address the downside of what has become known as WFH.

The technology that enables working from home has also opened the door to abuses, such as drawn-out workdays as staff remain reachable outside their normal eight-hour shift. But the new law has met with scepticism from those it is intended to protect.

Andreia Sampaio, 37, who works in communications in Lisbon, agrees with the law's purpose but thinks it is too general and will be "very hard" to enforce.

Prompted by the pandemic but designed to apply in the fu-

ture irrespective of Covid-related measures, the law could come into force as soon as December 1.

Nevertheless, practical questions abound: must staff be taken off company email lists when their shift finishes and then put back on when they start work again? What about Europeans who work in financial markets and need to know what's going on in, say, Hong Kong, and have colleagues working in different time zones?

"The devil is always in the details ... but also in the implementation," says Jon Messenger, a specialist on working conditions at the International Labor Organization. **AP**

Russia spy chief says Ukraine invasion plan 'malicious' US propaganda

REUTERS

MOSCOW, NOVEMBER 27

RUSSIA HAS no plans to invade Ukraine and suggestions to the contrary are malicious US propaganda, Moscow's foreign intelligence chief said on Saturday.

US, NATO and Ukrainian officials have raised the alarm in recent weeks over what they say are unusual Russian troop movements near the border with Ukraine, suggesting that Moscow may be poised to launch an attack.

Russia has repeatedly said it is free to move its troops on its own territory and that such movements should not be a cause for concern.

"I need to reassure everyone. Nothing like this is going to happen," Sergei Naryshkin, head of Russia's foreign intelligence agency, said in an interview broadcast on state television, referring to comments on Russia's alleged invasion plans.

"Everything that is happening around this topic right now is of course malicious propaganda by the US State Department."

Naryshkin spoke a day after the State Department's top US diplomat for European affairs said all options were on the table in how to respond to Russia's troop buildup near Ukraine's border and that NATO would decide on the next move after consultations next week.

While US officials have voiced concerns about a possible Russian attack on Ukraine, Moscow has accused Washington, Kyiv and NATO of provocative and irresponsible behaviour near its borders.



Stephen Sondheim

American musical theatre master Stephen Sondheim dies

MARK KENNEDY

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 27

STEPHEN SONDHEIM, the songwriter who reshaped the American musical theatre in the second half of the 20th century with his intelligent, intricately rhymed lyrics, his use of evocative melodies and his willingness to tackle unusual subjects, has died. He was 91.

Sondheim's death was announced by Rick Miramontez, president of DKC/O&M. Sondheim's Texas-based attorney, Rick Pappas, told *The New York Times* the composer died Friday at his home in Roxbury, Connecticut.

Sondheim influenced several generations of theatre songwriters, particularly with such landmark musicals as *Company*, *Follies* and *Sweeney Todd*, which are considered among his best work. His most famous ballad, *Send in the Clowns*, has been recorded hundreds of times, including by Frank Sinatra and Judy Collins.

The artist refused to repeat himself, finding inspiration for his shows in such diverse subjects as an Ingmar Bergman movie (*A Little Night Music*), the opening of Japan to the West (*Pacific Overtures*), French painter Georges Seurat (*Sunday in the Park With George*), Grimm's fairy tales (*Into the Woods*) and even the killers of American presidents (*Assassins*), among others.

Tributes quickly flooded social media as performers and writers alike saluted a giant of the theater. "We shall be singing your songs forever," wrote Lea Salonga. Aaron Tveit wrote: "We are so lucky to have what you've given the world."

"The theatre has lost one of its greatest geniuses and the world has lost one of its greatest and most original writers. Sadly, there is now a giant in the sky," producer Cameron Mackintosh wrote in tribute. **AP**

eye



POINT OF VIEW

With a Dot and a Dash

How the use of the telegram was of strategic interest for different power structures in the country



ARTS etc

Eenam-Pechi in Your Backyard

An animated short film presents a slice-of-life glimpse into characters who populate the afterlife in Malayalam folklore

Benita Fernando with Ankita Dwivedi Johri

STAND-UP comedian Munawar Faruqui's post on social media from the last fortnight goes something like this:

I come from Two Indias
1947
2014 #FreedomOfSpeech

Faruqui's joke, while alluding to the controversial statements made by actor Kangana Ranaut (who claimed that India actually got its freedom in 2014 when the Narendra Modi-led government came to power, and not in 1947), is modelled along the lines of yet another controversy — stand-up comedian Vir Das' Emmy-nominated monologue, *I Come from Two Indias*.

On November 15, Das, 42, posted a YouTube video that presented observations on India, some intended to expose the nation's hypocrisies and ironies, at a sold-out show at the Kennedy Centre, Washington, US. "I come from an India where we take pride in being vegetarians and yet run over the farmers who grow our vegetables" was part of this piece as were remarks on Bollywood, cricket, and the PM Cares fund.

The viral clip from the show lasted all of six minutes. As of this week, at least two persons associated with the BJP in Mumbai and Delhi have lodged police complaints against Das; the Madhya Pradesh home minister Narottam Mishra, also from the BJP, has disallowed Das' future performances in the state; and INC spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi tweeted that Das had generalised "the evils of a few individuals and vilified the nation as a

Comedians now have staggering reach and the potential for impact and that's making everyone nervous

Ravina Rawal
editor, *DeadAnt Co*

whole in front of the world".

Das is the latest in a long line of stand-up comedians and satirists who have been intimidated or arrested in recent years for hurting religious or national sentiments. In January this year, Faruqui, 28, was arrested at a venue in Indore even before he could perform his set, *Dongri to Nowhere*. The arrest came after a complaint from the son of a BJP MLA, who accused Faruqui of making jokes on Hindu deities and home minister Amit Shah. The alleged jokes, however, were not made at the venue, as per eyewitness accounts reported in news and research website *Article 14*. Faruqui spent over a month in jail.

"Someone or the other is targeted everyday on the internet now," says Faruqui, who started off with open mics in 2018 and has risen to nearly 1.5 million subscribers on YouTube recently. Earlier this month, organisers cancelled his events in Mumbai and Goa following threats of physical, emotional and financial harm. Faruqui says, "You say what you think is right and what you stand by. There are lots of people who follow you on public platforms. You have to take the responsibility that comes along with it."

Other comics have also faced backlash on grounds of "hurting" sentiments, religious or otherwise. By now, it's clear that political humorists come from two Indias — one, where you are thrown in jail for a joke and another, where you joke about your time in jail. In a country where biker groups and physiotherapists are offended by jokes, nationalists can't be far behind. Comedians prepare for a whole lot of things — awkward silences or an audience that is not in on the joke — but is an FIR also among them?

There have been several warnings in recent years about the shrinking space for freedom of expression in India, such as a steadily falling rank in the World Press Freedom Index. Speaking on this subject also has become a challenge, with observers often labelled as dissenters. Several well-known comedians chose not to comment for this story or retracted their comments, citing various reasons.

"We have artists like Kunal Kamra and Varun Grover, who have developed a strong voice in the space... But they know that it still comes with potential legal complications, threats of violence, people showing up at venues to shut down shows or vandalise the place, and even getting tossed in jail, as we saw earlier this year. Younger comedians are extra cautious. Few are willing to open themselves up to the increasing risks involved," says Ravina Rawal, editor, *DeadAnt Co*, an online publication that tracks India's comedy culture.

Stand-up comedy in India is currently a well-defined genre, distinct from film com-

edy and YouTubers, but just over a decade old. From around 2017 onwards, Rawal recounts, a lot of comedians were venturing into the space of political satire, and it looked like it could evolve into a solid sub-genre with many exciting voices. Aisi Taisi Democracy (ATD), Das's *News on the Loose*, AIB's *On-Air With AIB*, were among them. Audiences also got used to laughing at things they haven't had the nerve to say out loud themselves. "But things started getting messy quickly. I think it comes from the realisation that comedians now have staggering reach and the potential for impact — on young voters, for instance — and that's making everyone nervous," she says.

When Mumbai-based comic Azeem Banatwalla, 32, calls himself a "traditional Muslim man", the audience scoffs, knowing well that the comedian is by no means one. In July 2020, Banatwalla suspended his Twitter

account and later issued an apology for tweets from many years ago. He stated that he was subjected to the "vildest of Islamophobic abuse". Over email, Banatwalla tells us that he has spent most of his career making jokes about the culture he was born and brought up in. There are jokes about the stereotype of Muslims being terrorists, but that seems forgotten because the focus is always on perceived slights against "Hindu culture". People with political agendas attack smaller comics and venues — soft targets, essentially — to showcase themselves to their political peers, he adds. Banatwalla says that it is easy for a lot of comics, especially the newer ones, to joke about the right wing. "It's an easy laugh because, let's face it, nobody in the government exactly covers themselves in glory," he says.

Banatwalla's apology was one of the many posted online around the same time in 2020.

Rohan Joshi, Sahil Shah and Sapan Verma (also members of East India Company), and Aadar Malik were among them. The spate of apologies rose in the aftermath of a joke on misinformation surrounding a proposed Shivaji statue in the Arabian Sea. Agrima Joshua, the stand-up comedian who had made the joke, was threatened by a Hindu activist with legal action if found guilty of insulting a state and national icon; she was viciously trolled online and subjected to rape threats.

Practising for the last five years, Joshua, 31, has often made digs on Indian politics, but doesn't identify herself as a political humorist. In her first and only video, "UP is the Texas of India", Joshua jokes about life in Uttar Pradesh, as both a citizen and a Christian. She unlisted the video that also mentions the Shivaji statue after threats to her life. "If you profile these men attacking comedians, women and

artistes, you'll learn they are the same people who made an issue out of (Pakistani actor) Fawad Khan performing in India. There's a lot to unpack here — fragile masculinity and the need to protect women or our culture, along with the panic over interfaith and inter-caste relationships," she says.

Stand-up comedian Shyam Rangeela, 26, says that sometimes his family asks him to "go easy" on his content. Earlier this year, when Rangeela was visiting his village in Sri Ganganagar in Rajasthan, he got into a discussion with his friends regarding the petrol price crossing the Rs 100 mark. "As I expressed my concern, most of them said *Modiji har kaam soch samajh kar kartein hain* (The PM gives a lot of thought to all his deci-

sions). The hike in fuel prices must be to deal with the pandemic-induced slump in the economy," recalls Rangeela, who rose to fame mimicking the Prime Minister. It gave him an idea for a new act. He immediately searched for the nearest petrol pump and got verbal permission from the owner and agreed to share the video with him, he says. The next day, however, moments after he had uploaded the two-minute parody video in the Prime Minister's voice on his YouTube channel, he got a call from the owner, informing him that he was filing an FIR against him.

Rangeela uploaded another video, 'Petrolwala crime', explaining why he decided to not take down the February 16 act. It has got close to 30 lakh views. "If I had taken down the video, then it would have been better to just give up doing comedy. Even I support PM Modi, but that does not mean that I cannot disagree with him," says Rangeela, but admits that decisions such as these have come at a cost. In 2017, the comedian was allegedly told on a reality TV show, on which he was a contestant, to not mimic either Modi or Rahul Gandhi. He was eventually eliminated from it.

Political satirist and member of ATD, Sanjay Rajoura, 49, says his scripts are tailored for his audiences and he relies mostly on everyday observations for inspiration. "Today there is an audience for stand-up comedy even in small towns, where people respond to jokes on issues related to daily life. In urban centres, people are largely ignorant," he smiles, adding, "But jokes on government's criticism work in all centres. Everyone relates to it."

Rajoura and ATD had an FIR registered against them following a show in Shillong in 2019 titled *Science ki honour killing*, but, over the years, he says, only "those who identify

Venues are brick-and-mortar spaces. When a comic is hard to find, the venue is an easier target

Balraj Singh Ghai
owner, *The Habitat*, Mumbai

with our content come to our shows" and so the backlash has reduced. "Say if there are 2,000 people in the audience, then only 4-5 people will disagree with us... We also don't upload most of our shows, only small clips," he says.

Many believe that political humorists are inherently anti-establishment. Karthik Kumar, who runs *Evam Standup Tamasha* in Chennai, says that comedy takes pot-shots at the establishment, that they wouldn't take labels like right-wing or left. "We really don't care who's in power. We are the ones who call the emperor naked and if we are not allowed to do that, there is a great loss..." There are comedians whose material aren't anti-establishment, as much as just pointing out little absurdities in political leadership or the social fabric. It may be a small part of a larger narrative on, say relationships and sex, but attacks against them are focused on that stray line or two.

In 2017, 34-year-old comedian Sourav Ghosh's joke on how airports in Mumbai were named after Shivaji became the basis for an attack from Maharashtra Navnirman Sena's (MNS) supporters. When Ghosh responded to comments on his video, MNS supporters grew more enraged and Ghosh was forced to issue a statement. The incident came in the way of getting shows in the city, too. "I was never the kind of comedian who had sold-out shows. But even the controversy did not help me sell tickets," he says with a laugh. Last year, Ghosh left Mumbai for good due to pandemic-related reasons. He opened his own comedy venue, Topcat Retired Comedy Club in Kolkata, with the intention of building the scene in his city. "Comedians have to find a way that works for them because attackers will always find a way. Currently, the whole comedy scene in India is a tad bit defensive," he says.

In Mumbai, The Habitat, currently the most popular venue for comedy events, is no stranger to controversies. Joshua's attackers had vandalised the venue when she had performed her piece; a mob had gathered outside the venue in retaliation to Ghosh's show, and Balraj Singh Ghai, its owner, was asked by the police to shut the venue for a week. Ghai says, "Venues are brick-and-mortar spaces. When a comic is hard to find, the venue is an easier target." As of this year, Ghai has started a light screening of scripts being performed at the venue and is more vigilant about what parts of the show make it to digital platforms.

In one of Faruqui's videos, *Ghost Story*, The Habitat's logo gleams, dented in a corner from the time the attackers came to the venue in July 2020. "I think we are going to let that be there. It's like Leopold Cafe has its bullet marks [from the 26/11 terror attacks]. Let people know what we are dealing with," says Ghai.



ILLUSTRATION: SUVAJIT DEY

No LAUGHING MATTER

Stand-up comedians in India prepare for a lot of things — awkward silences or an audience that is not in on the joke. But, over the last decade, amid increasing instances of fragile egos and easily-hurt sentiments, is an FIR also among them?

SPORTLINE

Hors de combat

Issues of inclusivity, cruelty to animals may soon result in riding being left out of Modern Pentathlon

SHIVANI NAIK
NOVEMBER 27

THE VERY premise of horses in a warzone -- an ode to which was the modern pentathlon combining show-jumping with swimming, fencing, shooting and running -- has been archaic. Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who patched together this bespoke Olympic sport, was himself giving in to romantic martial nostalgia of knights fleeing enemies. What started as a throwback in the first place is fast fading in sepia too.

The disbanding of ancient cavalries led to military dressage and show-jumping finding their way into international sport, on neatly raked sand. Even that was 109 years ago, when the Swedes at the Stockholm Games aggravated the Baron's annoyance by asking everyone to 'bring your own horse' (BYOH). But the horse question has been ticklish for a few decades now in its century-old history, with the sport's governing body, the International Modern Pentathlon Union (UIPM), having set up an Innovation Commission around the Rio Games to contemplate what could be done about the horses.

While the Innovation Commission was innovating, a German coach struck a glum horse, who felt more neigh than aye and refused to jump for his rider at the Tokyo Games. The short clip of the cruel hit on Saint Boy, seen by the greater world, precipitated an internal decision in UIPM to drop riding from the sport. If the buzz inside UIPM is to be believed, the decision had been inevitable, with the only question remaining on which sport would replace riding.

Forty-six top names in pentathlon have since written to IOC to keep the horses in the sport, alleging that removing one of the five disciplines cannot be bulldozed by merely amending the "competition rules" of October 31, but will require deliberations on the 100+ year-old statutes.

They also pleaded to IOC's sense of tradition and history in preserving the fundamentals of the founder's sport. The IOC, meanwhile, has embarked on its path to engage with the youth, and include accessible sports that can hook an evolving trendy demographic.

Even the current set of pentathletes believe that animal welfare needs to be at the core of any reform - forcing a reluctant horse to jump, merely for sport and competition, is too brutish for anyone riding in 2021.

"As the past two decades have proven, we are all ready to adopt changes in the competition rules in order to modernise our sport and make it more possible and accessible," the letter written by the 46, read. "Nevertheless, we are deeply convinced that leaving out rid-



Annika Schleu of Germany broke down at Tokyo Games after she couldn't control her horse to compete in the equestrian portion. Reuters

I'm angry, disappointed and disagree with the idea. They didn't speak to anyone from the athletes' federation. We knew and agreed that there were problems after Tokyo with the ride, and were ready to propose new ideas to improve the sport."

JOE CHOONG
REIGNING OLYMPIC CHAMPION

ing will not solve any of the common reservations about modern pentathlon. Instead, it will create additional challenges and ruin years of hard work for hundreds of athletes. Our equestrian discipline is a fundamental foundation of our sport - to be the ideal athlete - is to be preserved."

Pentathlon isn't shy to change. A few Olympic cycles ago, it welcomed laser-runs, replacing air-pistol target shooting with 20 hits

or 3-minute-40-second laser load and shoot and 800mx4 cross-country. As such, what used to be a 5-day event, in which fencing went on for 14 hours, became a single-day competition in 1996 and will be crunched into 90 minutes at Paris.

While Olympic hosts themselves had parried away Coubertin's efforts to lug in rowing into the modern pentathlon programme at the outset, an entire team event was packed off, to finally make way for a women's competition.

There had been reports after the Executive Board voted out riding that cycling would be included instead, but the UIPM according to a November 5 report in CNN said that wasn't the case. The newly-introduced sport-climbing was an option, again with an eye on the yuppie demographic that has seen more paintball than cavalries blitzing in.

Joe Choong, the reigning Olympic champion in men's modern pentathlon, started out as a national-level swimmer in Britain, and dabbled in rugby and cross-country for fitness. Riding was the last of the five he learnt, and even suffered a fall when a moody horse threw him off in his first competition. "Riding, I found the hardest to pick. It took some time to realise that you can't be thinking about yourself, but must think of the animal. The reward was in striking that balance with someone else, and it gave me another sense of achievement," Choong tells *The Sunday Express*.

Talent scouts came calling for pentathlon, since it's rare to find athletes who swim and run, he says. Usually, swimming sets the tone - and fencing and shooting are added, at youth levels. He is miffed with UIPM for unilaterally dropping a fifth of history, while blindsiding those at the centre of the sport - athletes. "I'm angry, disappointed and disagree with the idea. They didn't speak to anyone from the athletes' federation. We knew and agreed that there were problems after Tokyo with the ride, and were ready to propose new ideas to improve the sport."

The Olympic gold medalist from Bromley watched most of the women's event and was heartbroken to watch it unfold, also with rising anxiety at what this implied.

"It was not nice to watch, very difficult for both the horse and the athlete," he recalls, adding the height of jumping fences has been a persistent problem, with Tokyo only erupting after years of neglect from the federation.

"It's been happening for more than 10 years or more. In fact, if you speak to athletes even from Sydney and Athens (Olympics), they'll tell you the same issues persist with the ride," Choong says. The nuance - though a big blight it casts - is in the height of the jumps, a newly-acquainted horse is expected to jump with an unfamiliar rider, after just 20 minutes of bonding.

"Even at the Pan Am Games, horses used

to jumping 90 cm or unschooled in show-jumping are asked to go over 120. That's always a disaster. Twenty-minute preps and then a 120 cm jump is not at all easy. Changing the height to 1 metre might be the simple solution," he says.

Choong, however, doesn't think bringing one's own horse is the solution. "No, history says that you have to establish a bond with an unknown animal. I see the ability to form a bond with an animal as technical. Horses bring diversity to our sport and link up the tale of the cavalryman. At the heart of Coubertin's thinking was history - find the first horse you can - stolen from the enemy, not your horse. You meet them just minutes before, strike the bond and live the image of the cavalry soldier. Also, if you ask everyone to bring their own horse, that'll make it elitist and limit accessibility to newer countries," he stresses.

Costly affair

Thirty-six riders share 18 horses at the Olympics. Pentathlon can get expensive. And for two medals, the investment, which can run up to 1.5 crore INR a year in training, is wildly exorbitant. To master the 12 hurdles can cost one 25 lakh INR at a riding school in Egypt.

Other issues with governance in the sport include smaller tournaments, which make do with a tetrathlon, omitting riding up to the semifinals. "Then you hope you get a really good horse. But that sends the wrong message out that you are only concerned about four participants," he says. It effectively deprives the rest of the field of what can go awfully wrong at the Olympics: a sullen equine, refusing to jump.

It is expected that beyond the dozen nations, the European traditional powerhouses and Australia, others will vote out riding, hoping to make the sport as compact and relevant as possible. Minus the ride, newer nations might well benefit, while medal gluttons US and China tend to accept rules and get on with sharpening those skills. Pentathletes worry that the sword hangs over fencing next.

Choong's younger brother Henry, 15, is entering the sport under this cloud of uncertainty, and while he himself straddled both the pellets (2-3 years) and laser years - finding laser easier because of the smaller recoil - he says animal welfare needed to be at the heart of riding.

"There are many small things. Tokyo temperatures were 35 degrees, you need to feed water to them because they got thirsty. Don't force them to jump if they refuse and are under stress. Make them as comfortable as possible, use as little as possible of whips, spins. It's not just 'get on the horse and finish round'. Not patting it, forgetting to congratulate it is not okay. It needs the well done and the pat," he says.

Chess Worlds: Carlsen blunders as Game 2 ends in a draw

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NOVEMBER 27

MAGNUS CARLSEN and the challenger Ian Nepomniachtchi sat across the board and dissected some of their moves at the end of Game 2 of the World Chess Championship, which finished in a draw after 58 moves. When the microphone was turned up on the official feed, the current two best players in the world were heard asking questions to each other. They were like two toppers who had given in their paper but were far from satisfied with their answers.

Carlsen, in his post-game comments, used the word 'blunder'. Playing with white pieces Carlsen was expected to give the unconventional Nepomniachtchi a hard time but the Russian was up to the task.

"It was tough. I blundered when I allowed knight c5. I think a lot of things could have been done differently. After that I was trying to hang in there not to lose. The position was very interesting and it was going my way for a bit, but I could not really find a plan. He certainly had chances as well," Carlsen said.

The players will now go into the third consecutive day before they have a rest day. The toll the two draws have taken on them could be vital on Sunday. The game on Saturday was not linear and both players had a chance to wrest the initiative. Carlsen admitted as much that knight c5 'completely escaped his attention'. Nepomniachtchi said despite Carlsen 'missing knight c5' he played interesting lines. "It was a puzzling but interesting game," Nepomniachtchi said.

The Russian at times played very quickly. Once he made a move, often he quickly got up and left, leaving Magnus alone for long periods. At times, when he made a quick move, Nepomniachtchi stared at the world champion before sipping from his cup.

Carlsen, however, said he was unaffected by what Nepomniachtchi did.

"I just reckoned he was thinking in the restroom. So yeah it was obviously unusual but I don't think (it affected me)," Carlsen said in the post game media interaction.

What is clear in the early stages of the competition is that Carlsen is yet to find a way to really rattle Nepomniachtchi. The Russian said he didn't feel any nerves after making the first move in Game 1 on Friday.

Carlsen felt it was a must-win game he could have played differently but he didn't find a clear window of opportunity in Game 2. "I didn't feel I had any great chances per say. I didn't feel that my position was improving quite a bit. I couldn't really see a way to comfortably improve my position and that is why I decided to basically force a draw here," Carlsen said.

BRIDGE

Dealer: West Vulnerable: North/South

NORTH			
♠	KJ87		
♥	QJ1042		
♦	542		
♣	2		
SOUTH			
♠	AQ964		
♥	63		
♦	AQ6		
♣	A76		

West leads the king of clubs, which South won. What should the next card out of his hand be?
The West Hand: S-52H-K5D-KJ107C-KQJ104
The East Hand: S-103H-A987D-983C-9853

South should lead a heart. Start setting up heart tricks. It would be horribly wrong for South to do what many players would do, which is ruff clubs in dummy. South has more to worry about than his club losers. He has to worry about his diamond losers too. West is very likely to have the king of diamonds and if so, South has two potential diamond losers to go with the two heart losers.

When South leads his heart West hops up with the king and leads the queen of clubs. South ruffs this one and leads the queen of hearts, taken by East's ace. So East, who could not respond to 1C, has the ace of hearts. He won't have much more. East's next play is the nine of diamonds. Should South finesse?

No. South is not interested in finessing. He takes the ace and draws two rounds of trumps, which brings in all the missing spades. South now has eleven tricks and can claim the rest. What happens if South tries to ruff a club at trick two?

If South had ruffed a club and come back to his hand to ruff another club it would have cost him his contract. He could no longer set up and use the heart suit (the defenders would remove dummy's last spade entry) and the falling diamond finesse would be fatal.

Dealer: South Vulnerable: North/South

NORTH		SOUTH	
♠	A1074	♠	K2
♥	AKQ5	♥	764
♦	83	♦	KJ
♣	AK10	♣	QJ9874

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass		
Pass	2NT	Pass	3C
Pass	4S	Pass	5C
Pass	6C	Pass	Pass

West leads the jack of hearts, won by the ace in dummy. South saw that he had eleven top tricks and wished that he had gotten a diamond lead, which would have spared him having to guess the diamonds. How do you think South should play the diamonds? Should he lead to the king or the jack?

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2349

QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- Ancient city of the oracle (6)
- Undecided (2,3,3)
- Singe (4)
- Wanton or lewd (10)
- Opposite of low (4)
- Swiss peak (10)
- Sports channel (4)
- Stock play (5)
- Defeat (4)
- Dedicate formally to divine or holy purposes (10)
- Is in debt (4)
- Robbing or stealing from? (7,3)
- Extras at cricket (4)
- Unique (8)
- A group of nine - "End Ena" anagram? (6)

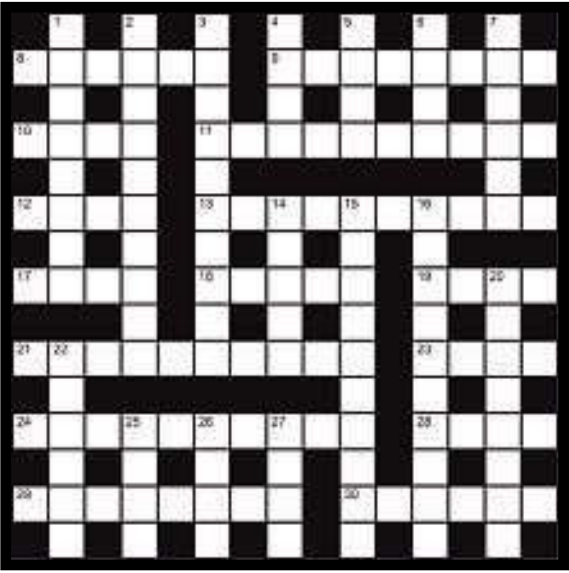
DOWN

- The science of heredity (8)
- Seizes or arrests (10)
- Offensive (10)
- "Zn" chemically speaking? (4)
- Render senseless or incapable of action (4)
- Of local origin locally (4)
- Liquid substance; alcoholic drink (6)
- Head ornament (5)
- 132 inches? (6,4)
- Associating on very friendly terms (10)
- Bony (8)
- Genesis or lineage (6)
- Young attendant (4)
- ____ and void? (4)
- Hideous giant (4)

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- Shale I find for my girlfriend (6)
- I'm taking two articles to a first rate copier (8)
- Cylindrical body has a resting place outside (4)
- Baseball player foolishly fueled riot (10)
- Said differently when belonging to the girl? (4)
- Sadly, no US beer at this southern England resort (10)
- Deal arranged by a Spartan queen (4)
- Tree from New Zealand and New Guinea is good for nothing! (5)
- Nothing in a dry boat (4)
- It takes the father and mother of a mind to produce it! (5-5)
- Skinny object cut short (4)



- Money you don't get for nothing? (4,3,3)
- Letters demanding an answer? (4)
- Town you hear in Bega rim roughly! (8)
- Extremely clever somewhat in part (4,2)

DOWN

- Smart fellow who makes battle-axe expire (8)
- Indian thus translates into his own language (10)
- I fatten a Pole on ice cream endlessly, the manner being worthy of the Corsican (10)
- Scandal - there hasn't been a clean-up (1,4)
- Producing a fellow if I get a girl (4)
- Profitable lack of information in the old country (4)
- It's on the fire, even if it's still out of it (6)
- Police beat up sadist and throw away key (5)
- Would you get it by tapping a rich vein? (5-5)
- Render duct badly when not dissuaded (10)
- Put money back in waistcoat after talk of cheque (8)

Solutions to 2348

QUICK CLUES Across: 8 Amre, 9 Ramshackle, 10 Repast, 11 Athletic, 12 Handicap, 14 Gentry, 16 Lied, 17 Mouse, 18 Begs, 19 Sermon, 21 Business, 23 Tractors, 26 Yorker, 27 Decoration, 30 Prey, Down: 1 Imperative, 2 Rewarded, 3 Critic, 4 YMCA, 5 The Hague, 6 Screen, 7 Alt, 13 Plumb, 15 Registered, 17 Manmohan, 18 Bankrupt, 20 Micron, 22 Shying, 24 Reel, 25 Swim.

CRYPTIC CLUES Across: 8 Non-U, 9 Ungrateful, 10 Pliers, 11 Suppress, 12 Polish up, 14 Tawdry, 16 Otis, 17 Flush, 18 Seem, 19 Grocer, 21 Baby boom, 23 Scuttles, 26 Onrush, 27 Brain-child, 28 Ee-us.

Down: 1 Cook-porter, 2 Suetries, 3 Putsch, 4 Ages, 5 Bad patch, 6 Hebrew, 7 Bugs, 13 Plumb, 15 Reasons out, 17 Forelock, 18 Suborned, 20 Catnip, 22 Blonde, 24 Carp, 25 Slim.

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 quip.
Half the ____ is often a great ____ - Benjamin Franklin (5,_,3)

NSUER



AOUWLT



EHLIT



MMSUHU



SOLUTION: NURSE, LITTLE, OUTLAW, HUMANS

SUDOKU 4668

Difficulty Level 3s

Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level

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



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4667



If it's your Birthday

Sunday November 28

It is time for serious contemplation. You have some big ambitions, but remember projects will work best if you understand the broader pattern. Listen closely to a family member who has some surprising advice.

Monday November 29

There's intensity in the air. Feelings will well up from the deep, stirring emotions which you had forgotten. A financial choice could trigger a long-term shift in your life.

Tuesday November 30

A shift in solar patterns brings fresh possibilities and new people. Open your heart to the world, but after you have faced the truth. You may agree with someone who has been standing in your way.

Wednesday December 1

You seem to be able to go almost anywhere you want and do what you wish. The coming year is a time to think about what you might do, not about what you ought to be doing. The sky is the limit.

Thursday December 2

You're almost ready to take a leap into the future. You are about to reach a point of no return professionally. It all now depends on what you know.

Friday December 3

Be businesslike. Make practical choices. Fun is based on planning and there'll be time for frivolity, as you have laid the groundwork. Don't worry if a partner is impatient.

Saturday December 4

Venus is forming a relationship with your chart. Expect happy news over the coming month. Those of you entering a new romance will hear declarations of love.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Your most decisive planets strike at the very summit of your solar chart, challenging you to achieve your ambitions, using not one hundred percent effort, but something like a hundred and ten percent. If you experience a setback, it's a message to change your direction.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

You have probably been through enough, but there are still some choices to be made and decisions to be taken. Your best teacher is the law: that doesn't just mean that you must be guided by what is permissible, but what is morally just and right, especially for partners.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Underlying certain superficial concerns, like money and joint financial matters, are deeper psychological issues, such as how you cope with an emotional loss and the way you handle separation from those you love. It's time to focus on your spiritual self.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Be prepared for some sort of personal surprise, or even a shock, though by no means an unpleasant one. If you have any say in the matter, arrange to mix with people who are original, lively and interesting. An unusual friend will transform your life over the next six months.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Venus, the graceful and charming planet of love and beauty is now endowing your life with its beautiful attentions. This obviously favours your emotional affairs over the next few weeks, although always remember how easily your passions can run out of control.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sept 23)

There are creative schemes on the go, and if you are sensible you will divert more energy to exciting new projects, especially personal ones, and less to obligations and commitments which you've now outgrown. Romantic matters are ready to prosper at the end of the week.

LIBRA (Sept 24 - Oct 23)

Where there's a will there's a way would seem to be a suitable saying for the moment. Professional affairs are to be afflicted by uncertainty, but the underlying reason may not be clear. In this, as in romantic matters, you must wait two weeks for a mystery to be solved.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)

It's all up for grabs, as the stars jostle for position. How about making a bid for increased recognition of your talents? This may mean showing off just a little, and as long as you're not arrogant, other people should respond favourably.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)

It is a surprising feature of your sign that you have too often allowed yourself to be under-valued, and you have also taken to heart other people's low estimate of your abilities. Please realise that you have fallen into a trap from which you can now release yourself.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

It could be said that, after you were made, the mould was broken. Everyone born under your sign now has the right to be considered a genuine one-off, completely unique. If there's anything to learn at the moment, it's that you have your own destiny to fulfil.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

Family members don't always behave as you would like. Partners are challenging you to explain yourself, yet now may not yet be the right time to come out with hidden truths. There still seems to be a chance that the truth, if it emerges, will be misunderstood.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

It's time to keep your Piscean feet firmly on planet Earth. Solid practical arrangements are required, especially if you want to put your dreams into practice. There is little room for sentiment, and no space at all for useless frills.

Michael Vaughan has apologised "for the hurt" that whistleblower Azeem Rafiq experienced but again denied making racist comments while at Yorkshire. In a BBC interview shown Saturday, Vaughan was asked if he ever made any racist comments during his time at Yorkshire. He replied: "No I didn't, no."

BRIEFLY

Sindhu, Satwik-Chirag lose in Indonesia Open semis

Bali: Ace Indian shuttler P V Sindhu's impressive campaign at the Indonesia Open came to an end after she lost her hard-fought semifinal to former world champion Ratchanok Intanon, here on Saturday. Third seed Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, lost 21-15 9-21 14-21 to world number eight and second seeded Ratchanok in 54 minutes for her third semifinal finish on the trot. The 26-year-old Sindhu had made it to the last four in Indonesia Masters last week and also at the French Open in October. World number 11 men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, seeded sixth, lost excited the Super 1000 tournament after a 16-21 18-21 defeat to top seeded Indonesian combination of Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo in the semifinals. It was 10th straight defeat for the Indian pair against the world number one pair, a two-time former All England Open champions and reigning Asian Games gold medallist.

PTI

ICC calls off Women's World Cup Qualifier

Dubai: The ICC on Saturday called off an ongoing qualifier for next year's Women's ODI World Cup in Harare following the emergence of a new COVID-19 variant in the African region, paving the way for Pakistan, West Indies and Bangladesh to make the cut on the basis of rankings. Travel restrictions have been introduced from a number of African countries after detection of the new variant in South Africa stoked fears around the world. The ICC said the decision to stop the event was based on its concerns about how the participating teams would head back in the wake of Omicron variant's rise. The decision was taken during the preliminary league phase of the nine-team tournament, that was to decide the final three qualifiers for the World Cup 2022, to be played in New Zealand, as well as two additional teams for the next cycle of the ICC Women's Championship. "The qualifiers will now be decided according to the team rankings as detailed in the tournament playing conditions. Therefore, Bangladesh, Pakistan and the West Indies will now progress to the event in New Zealand," said the ICC.

PTI

Gone in 11 minutes: ATK Mohun Bagan crush SC East Bengal

Fatorda: ATK Mohun Bagan crushed arch-rivals SC East Bengal 3-0 in the much-anticipated season's first derby of the Indian Super League at Tilak Maidan here on Saturday. In a scintillating display, ATK Mohun Bagan scored through Roy Krishna (12th minute), Manvir Singh (14th) and Liston Colaco (23rd) as they did not allow SCEB the breathing space to make it three out of three in their ISL exchanges. After a quiet start, Fijian star marksman Krishna connected a perfect cross from Pritam Kotal to net the derby's opening goal. Singh was quick to double the strike with a thunderbolt strike within two minutes. Colaco capitalised on a goalkeeping bloomer from Bhattacharja to make it 3-0.

PTI

SANDIPG KANPUR, NOVEMBER 27

THERE ARE days where it pays to hold the line, not panic and just wait. If India were fretful on the second day, they poured in an incredible amount of attrition and patience to reclaim the advantage on the third day, bowling out New Zealand for 296, when they looked destined to erase India's first-innings total of 345.

For 66.1 overs and five hours, as New Zealand's openers, Will Young and Tom Latham welded discipline to technique and temperament, thwarting India at every turn, nothing seemed to work or happen.

The strip was tormentingly sluggish, so much so some of the close-in fielders were kneeling and not crouching, edges agonisingly evading the fielders, and reviews were being misjudged. India could have easily wilted, but they laboured on, masking their frustrations, sustaining their energy and sound levels, blocking runs tigerishly, probing tight lines and lengths, barely gifting freebies and shuffling their strategies.

Perhaps, a comeback fashioned in the mould of their new coach Rahul Dravid's ideals. One built on sweat and blood.

Then late in the first session, patience brought its dividends, as Ravi Ashwin terminated Will Young and Umesh Yadav took out Kane Williamson. Then in the second, they bolted the stable door, dislodged the obdurate Tom Latham and skinned through the middle order. At the end of an engrossing, if old-fashioned, day of cricket in the subcontinent, New Zealand, who had begun their innings so promisingly, walked off gloomily, shrugging their heads and pondering how they squandered the advantage, even as India left the field on a pleased note, glowing in the sweat of their toil.

The Test is still on a knife-edge, India's overall lead of 63, is not yet a match-winning proposition. At the heart of India's comeback narrative was Axar Patel, perceptively the most understated of their three-man spin firm. In spite of his mind-spinning entry into Test cricket, he's judged condescendingly, often stereotyped as a conditions-reliant bowler. All of his 27 wickets might have been wrought in extremely beneficial conditions in Chennai and Ahmedabad, against a group of English batsmen allergic to spin as ghosts are to a cross. But here, his five wickets were heckled from a largely unresponsive wicket, where his most decorated partners, Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, laboured 74 overs for three wickets, showing that he could bring a third dimension to India's spin attack.

He is not a Jadeja clone, or an inferior version of him. Rather, he is a different bowler, operating with a different bandwidth of skills, with a different perspective, and someone who is utmost comfortable in his skin. With his height, he wooed more bounce from the wicket, and on a surface with variable bounce, this attribute of him stood out. Though he has a slightly round-arm, he still generates ample bounce. Resultantly, New Zealand batsmen, who were comfortably playing Ashwin and Jadeja on their front foot, were more tentative against him, forcing them to play him a lot on their back-foot and coming out of their comfort zone.

Latham's dismissal was a classic example. He was resolute against most spinners, but the variation of bounce was playing at the back of his mind. So to unsettle him and force him to bowl shorter or fuller—Axar was mostly hitting the spinner's good-length—he stepped out. But the ball sped quicker after pitching, turned in a shade, and took his inside edge to be stumped. Among the three, he turned the ball the least, but he discovered more spite from the wicket than the rest. The lighthouse was brought down, New Zealand lost their di-

rection, even though they did fight till the end.

In that sense, he is more early-year Anil Kumble like in his methods, relying on bounce, discipline, over-spin, change of angles and pace. He might not possess too many eye-popping variations—he skids the ball in, makes it turn away a shade, bowls the hard-spun straighter one—but he knows how to maximise his gifts. There are more subtleties to his game too. He occasionally uses the scrambled seam to check if he gets more bite. He then presses the middle finger harder on the ball at release to get it to go straighter. A few deliveries were under-cut so that the ball skidded on.

Slowing the pace

Some of the other dismissals are equally illustrative of his craft. He slowed up his pace against Ross Taylor, encouraged him to the front-foot and after he conceded a false sense of security, he slipped one faster into him with a bit of inward turn. Taylor played inside the line and edged behind. Had he been on the back-foot, he could have wristed it through the leg-side. Rather than bamboozling batsmen, he dulls them into making mistakes. Taylor's exit put India further on the front-foot.

Henry Nicholls was given a quick working over. A few balls on length stayed low, and Nicholls brought out his sweep, so that he would push the length back. Axar smartly second-guessed the intention, flung one fuller and faster, which Nicholls completely missed and was trapped in front. By this time, he had grown so much on Kiwi batsmen that doubts began to creep up, and they were increasingly and dangerously content at playing him on the back-foot.

With other bowlers, they could trust the bounce, and the turn, as it was slow. But with Axar, they were unsure of how much he would bounce and how much he would not. Tom Blundell realised the folly when he hung back to defend a good-length ball, only to see his stumps splayed by a crawler. He then fooled Tim Southee with his angle from wide of the crease to wrap up with his fifth five-for in seven innings, an incredible feat irrespective of conditions. His accomplices, Ashwin and Jadeja did their part too—Ashwin in continuously chatting with him and encouraging him, putting behind his own lack of fortune. Jadeja, though not at his deceptive best, kept his end quiet. Their chemistry was such that irrespective of the nature of the pitch, India could field three in typical subcontinental pitches in the future.

In many ways, Axar was the perfect poster boy of India's third-day resurgence, because he held the line, did not panic and just waited. He out-willed New Zealand's will. He might not turn the ball by much, but could surely turn the destiny of a match.

SCOREBOARD: India 1st Innings: 345 **New Zealand 1st Innings:** (Overnight 129/0) Tom Latham st sub (KS Bharat) b Patel 95, Will Young c sub (KS Bharat) b Ashwin 89, Kane Williamson lbw b Yadav 18, Ross Taylor c sub (KS Bharat) b Patel 11, Henry Nicholls lbw b Patel 2, Tom Blundell b Patel 13, Rachin Ravindra b Jadeja 13, Kyle Jamieson c Patel b Ashwin 23, Tim Southee b Patel 5, William Somerville b Ashwin 6, Ajaz Patel not out 5 **Extras:** (B-6, LB-4, NB-5, W-1) 16 **Total:** (all out in 142.3 overs) 296 **FoW:** 1-151, 2-197, 3-214, 4-218, 5-227, 6-241, 7-258, 8-270, 9-284. **Bowling:** Ishant Sharma 15-5-35-0, Umesh Yadav 18-3-50-1, Ravichandran Ashwin 42.3-10-82-3, Ravindra Jadeja 33-10-57-1, Axar Patel 34-6-62-5.

India 2nd Innings: 14-1 Mayank Agarwal not out 4, Shubman Gill b Jamieson 1, Cheteshwar Pujara not out 9 **Extras:** 0 **Total:** (1 wkt, 5 Overs) 14 **FoW:** 1-21 **Bowling:** Tim Southee 2-1-2-0, Kyle Jamieson 2-0-8-1, Ajaz Patel 1-0-4-0.

India beat Poland, to face Belgium in QFs

New Delhi: Once they went up by two goals inside 10 minutes, India practically stopped playing. Keeping themselves fresh for the quarterfinals but more importantly, aware that their last-eight opponents were watching from the stands, keeping a close on every move they were making. Yet, India eased past Poland 8-2 to end their group stage commitments, finishing second behind France to whom they lost in the opening match. That defeat means while France will face a relatively-easier opponent, Malaysia, in the quarterfinals, defending champions India will square up against Belgium, whose senior side is currently the best in the world. It'll be an even contest—a repeat of the 2016 Junior World Cup final—given that both teams have had wobbles in the group stage.

ENS

Manpreet. "We are analysing the games from the stands and after it's over, we are giving the players our feedback."



Axar Patel's five-for included the key wicket of opener Tom Latham.

PTI

Six-hitting Dhoni fan KS Bharat shows his prowess behind stumps

SANDIPG KANPUR, NOVEMBER 27

AFTER THE first day's play, Srikar Bharat was stretching in the corner of the ground, when a few teenage boys spotted him. "Voh RCB wala hai na? Six maarke match jeeta tha!" (He is the RCB player right? He hit a six and won a game). Bharat's last-ball six against Delhi Capitals a couple of months ago is his instant connect with the fans. They fumbled for his name, before they gave up, though they squealed for a selfie, which a coyly smiling Bharat obliged. They yelled out a parting wish too, "Six maarke match jitwao!" (Hit a six and win the game).

Bharat responded with an all-knowing smile. He wouldn't hit a six in the match; for he was not even in the eleven. He was, yet again, fated to be a nearly man. If Rishabh Pant was not fit for the England series, he would have made his Test debut; if Wriddhiman Saha was not fit for this series, or if he had hurt his neck a day before, he would have been playing in this Test.

But fate, in a twisted way, was kinder to him, as Saha sustained a stiff neck on Friday, giving Bharat his first outing in a Test match, but one that would not statistically count as he played as a substitute keeper. He ended and began the day as it is, someone waiting for his first Test appearance.

But between the end and start of the day, he demonstrated that he has the requisite standard to stake a larger claim in the playing eleven. It was a tough examination on an up-and-down wicket, an ordeal for keepers, which he passed with flying colours.

The stumping of New Zealand opener Tom Latham might be his most spectacular moment of the match, wherein his agility of mind and body stood out, but there were several other instances too. The moment Latham jumped down the track, he made that side-ward shuffle, his hands following his feet in a



KS Bharat appeals against New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson.

AP

harmony of muscles, in anticipation of a stumping. But what happened next was the stuff of nightmares. Latham bottom-edged it, and rather than collecting the ball from left-side, he had to gather from his right in less than a split second. What's worse, the ball dropped on to the ground in an instant. Now he had to realign his eyes from the left down to the ground.

But Bharat had the flexibility of mind and speed of reflexes to make complex moments look natural. A lot of keepers would have groped at it, but he didn't. The hands, like a good keeper's, descended with the ball, the upper-body arched just enough, the knees flexed just enough to maintain the balance, as he gathered the ball and whipped the bails off in the blink of an eye.

From where he was standing, it must have emerged into view at the very last second, but he pushed his hands through, moving forward and stumped him with time to spare. There is a bit of MS Dhoni too—his favourite cricketer and whose maiden ODI century he watched as a ball boy on the ground—in his stumping,

in the absence of follow-through. Bharat's flourish is not as minimalistic as Dhoni's, but it's relatively less than Saha. Even when picking on the off-side, he doesn't lift his right-leg as pronouncedly as say Nayan Mongia, that keeper-artist.

The impeccable balance when gathering stood out, most gloriously when he pocketed the catch of Will Young, a faint outside edge off a ball that kept low. He doesn't lose his shape and even when the ball seems to have misbehaved, he is there to pick it, like a strict hostel warden with a never-flinching gaze on his inmates.

A few times, the ball did beat him, especially on the leg-side, but there is only so much he could have done on this deck. Relatively easier was the Ross Taylor one, or rather he made it look easy. It's what he always does—makes it look ridiculously simple. He often makes the magnificent look mundane, in a positive sense. When lesser-gifted keepers lunge, he just needs to stretch his arms, because he is already in a better position.

His stability begins with his stance—he has his head on the sixth stump to get the proper vision on the bowler's hand and ball, because any further, batsmen would block the sight of the ball, and as good keepers are Bharat's eyes are always fixed on the ball and not the batsman.

But for all the verve he displayed in this match, he could end up as a perennial fringe keeper; deputy to Saha as well as Rishabh Pant. Therein is his fix—he is a better keeper than Pant, but not a better batsman (supposedly); he is a better batsman than Saha, but not a better keeper than him. It could turn out to be the story of his career too. Nonetheless, if he could pile on performances like in the chance breaks he gets he could put pressure on both Saha, now 37, and Pant, still unpredictable. He might not win every game with a six, but he can win games with his glove-work. As was evident on Thursday.

India seniors taking notes and guiding the U-21s at Jr Hockey Worlds

MIHIR VASAVDA BHUBANESWAR, NOVEMBER 27

HOURS AFTER their shocking loss to France, some of India's junior players received a link for an e-meeting. Their host was the Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist Harmanpreet Singh. Having watched from the stands the team concede five goals against an unheralded opponent, the defender-cum-drag-flicker had prepared a dossier of sorts.

Next door, India captain Manpreet Singh was having a conversation on leadership and tactics with the junior team skipper Vivek Sagar Prasad.

These weren't crisis talks. Rather, just a casual exchange of ideas between veterans who have been there, done that and rookies for whom this is an initiation to international hockey, except Prasad who was in Tokyo as well.

The relationship between India's senior and junior teams has evolved over the months; from being 'respectful' of the 'seniors', they now idolise the bronze medalists.

Prasad is in awe of the way Manpreet carries the team together. Drag-flicker Sanjay Kumar, who has netted a couple of hat-tricks already, has modelled himself on Harmanpreet. Goalkeepers Pawan and



India started strong and lead by two goals within 10 minutes.

Hockey India

Prashant Chauhan look up to PR Sreejesh and forward Araijeet Singh Hundal is in awe of Akashdeep Singh, who wasn't in Tokyo but remains an integral part of the team.

Now, in Bhubaneswar, the U-21 players' heroes have turned into their analysts and mentors. During every match India's colts have played in this World Cup, the senior team members have sat in the stand behind the goal and dutifully made notes. "It's a learning experience for us too," says

Returning favour

In a way, it's returning a favour as well. Both, senior and junior, teams had a far-from-desirable build-up to their respective marquee events of the year. For a major part of the last two years, they were locked inside Sports Authority of India's Southern Centre in Bangalore, staying and training together.

As the Olympics got closer and with the national team barely getting any match practice due to the pandemic-forced travel restrictions, the junior team turned into a simulation machine of sorts for them. During training, the coaches would make the under-21 side line up and play like India's opponents at the Tokyo Games. They even played six matches against each other, and the colts eked out a win in one.

The mentoring process began with that. "Whenever we used to spot something, we spoke to them. If they had any problem, they reached out to us," Harmanpreet says. "They just needed some fine-tuning, not a lot of work."

After India returned from Tokyo with the bronze, the senior team resources were shifted to the junior side. Chief coach Graham Reid was asked to take over the side and the players started to individually guide their juniors.

Even though both teams are in Bhubaneswar—the senior side preparing for next month's Asian Champions Trophy—they

are staying in separate bio-bubbles, which means physical interactions aren't possible. "So, we have been in touch through online meetings," Harmanpreet says.

Exchanging ideas

The senior team vice-captain, who was a member of the 2016 Junior World Cup-winning side, has been guiding the defenders and drag-flickers. He spoke to the two freemen—the player who floats between his team's defence and midfield—in particular, Sanjay and Yashdeep Siwach.

"Even I play as a freeman so from whatever I observed watching from the stands, I told them. I spoke to them in detail about how they need to stay within the danger lines, aligning with the goalposts, so that they can intercept dangerous balls," Harmanpreet says.

For the senior players, analysing the junior sides from the stands has helped them improve knowledge about their opponents, given that the styles and patterns used by most teams in the World Cup have been very similar to their senior sides. "So, while watching them, we also understand the areas where we can improve," Manpreet, who captained India in the 2013 Junior World Cup, says.

After the team lost to France, the biggest upset of the Junior World Cup so far, Manpreet had an immediate talk with Prasad.

RESULTS

Pakistan	3	1	Egypt
France	11	1	Canada
South Africa	3	4	Malaysia
Belgium	3	0	Chile
India	8	2	Poland

TODAY'S FIXTURES

- South Korea vs Spain
- Netherlands vs USA
- Pakistan vs Argentina
- Germany vs Egypt

"That wasn't a time to blame anyone or finger-point. He had to lead the team on the field, make sure the players communicated with each other and showed unity," Manpreet says. "They need to believe in themselves."

Manpreet knows. Belief carried the team onto the podium in Tokyo.

And as the colts prepare for the biggest test of their nascent careers, facing Belgium in Wednesday's quarterfinals, they'll know the seniors have their backs.