

BRIEF NEWS

Woman accidentally shot dead in Jammu

A woman died after being accidentally shot in Miran Sahib area here on Friday in the city outskirts.

Police on Friday said that the woman identified as Manju Devi, wife of Bodh Raj, resident of Khour Deonian, Miran Sahib, on Thursday night was injured in an incident of accidental firing at her home by 12 bore licensed rifle belonging to her father-in-law.

"The woman along with her son had gone to her in-laws house to celebrate Lohri and when she was keeping the loaded rifle in another room, the trigger accidentally went off injuring her seriously," police said.

The family members im

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Ladakh sees 124 fresh COVID-19 cases

Ladakh reported 124 fresh cases of COVID-19, taking the active number of cases to 598, while the total tally in the union territory has gone up to 22,773, officials said on Friday. Twenty eight patients were discharged from hospitals in Ladakh, taking the total number of recoveries to 22,153, they said. Of the 124 fresh cases, 104 were reported from Leh district and 20 from Kargil, they said. The union territory has

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Delhi Police recovers IED from Ghazipur flower market

In a major security threat, Delhi Police recovered an Improvised explosive device (IED) from an unattended bag at Ghazipur Flower Market on Friday.

It was seen that Delhi Police rushes bomb disposal squad to Ghazipur Flower Market in East Delhi after the recovery of an unattended bag. Delhi Police officials

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Budget session of Parliament to commence on January 31

Budget session of Parliament is set to commence on January 31 and will conclude on April 8. The first half of the budget session will run from January 31 to February 11. It will reassemble on March 14 to sit until April 8, subject to government exigencies. The President will also address both Houses of Parliament assembled together on 11 am on January 31 The government will present the Budget for the financial year 2022-23 on February 1.

"The 256th Session of Rajya Sabha (Budget Session – 2022) is summoned to meet on Monday, January 31, and subject to exigencies of Government Business,

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J&K 5 deaths, 2,456 positive cases

JAMMU RISING

JAMMU, JAN 14

The Government today informed that 2456 new positive cases of novel Corona virus (COVID-19), 934 from Jammu division and 1522 from Kashmir division, have been reported today, thus taking the total number of positive cases in Jammu and Kashmir to 352623. Also, 05 Covid death have been reported; 03from Jammu Division and 02 from Kashmir Division.

Moreover, 380more COVID-19 patients have recovered and been discharged from various hospitals including 211 from Jammu Division and 169 from Kashmir Division.

The Bulletin also informs that no new case of Mucormycosis has been reported today, thus the total

J&K activist arrested for inciting violence using social media: Police

JAMMU RISING

JAMMU, JAN 14

The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Friday arrested human rights activist Mohammad Ahsan Untoo for allegedly inciting violence through social media platforms.

Untoo, a resident of Kupwara district, is chairman of the International Forum for Justice and Human Rights Jammu and Kashmir.

A police spokesman said, "It was reliably learnt that Mohd Ahsan Untoo...a

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President gives assent to Act allowing govt to spend Rs 3.73 lakh crore extra during current fiscal

NEW DELHI, JAN 14

President Ram Nath Kovind has given his assent to the Appropriation (No. 5) Act, 2021 that authorizes the government to spend an additional Rs 3.73 lakh crore during the current fiscal. The Act authorizes "payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2021-22". This is the second batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants which the Parliament, during

Winter Session concluded in December last year, had approved the Appropriation (No.5) Bill, 2021 moved in both the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. "Appropriation (No. 5) Act, 2021 received assent of President on January 12, 2022, and is hereby published for general information," a Gazette notification issued on Friday mentions. "From and out of the Consolidated Fund of India there may be paid and applied sums issue

of three lakh seventy-three thousand seven hundred sixty-one crore rupees towards defraying the several charges which will come in course of payment during the financial year 2021-22," it added. The Budget 2021-22 had projected the government's total expenditure at Rs 34.83 lakh crore. But this is expected to overshoot considering the two batches of Supplementary Demands for Grants presented by the government so far. The extra

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NC delegation visits Roop Nagar, condemns JDA's selective demolition drive

JAMMU RISING

JAMMU, JAN 14

A high level National Conference delegation led by Additional General Secretary Dr Sheikh Mustafa Kamal and Provincial President Mr Rattan Lal Gupta today visited Roop Nagar and expressed solidarity with the Gujar families, whose dwelling units were razed to ground by Jammu Development

Authority, rendering them roofless in these chilly winters.

Dr Sheikh Mustafa Kamal expressed anguish over the authoritarian attitude of the JDA and accompanying official teams, saying subjecting the aged, old, sick, women and children to the worst type of miseries is a human rights violation, which cannot be condoned. The erring

official teams must be held accountable for their inhuman treatment to the hapless families.

Additional General Secretary expressed surprise over singling out a particular section of the population despite the JDA claiming whopping lands being under illegal occupation. He said this speaks

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CS reviews COVID surge in Jammu and Kashmir

Directs districts to retard the pace of transmission through enhanced testing, isolation and micro-containment

JAMMU RISING

JAMMU, JAN 14

The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta chaired a meeting today to review the rising COVID cases in Jammu and Kashmir and directed observance of strict containment protocols to effectively reduce the rate of

transmission.

Administrative Secretaries of the departments of Finance, Health & Medical Education, Home, MD, National Health Mission, Director General, Family Health, Divisional Commissioners Kashmir/ Jammu, Inspectors General of Police

Kashmir/Jammu, and Deputy Commissioners and District SPs were present in the meeting.

It was informed that the COVID cases in Jammu and Kashmir have risen by 10 times over the past 10 days, which has necessitated strict

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Major Rehsuffle in J&K Judiciary

10 Sessions Judges, 3 Sub-Judges and 28 Munsiffs Transfer

JAMMU RISING

JAMMU, JAN 14

In a major reshuffle in J&K Judiciary in which 10 Sessions Judges, 3 Sub-Judges and 28 Munsiffs transferred.

According to the order issued by Registrar Vigilance Shahzad Azeem that Sanjeev Gupta, Spl. Judge Anti Corruption (CBI) Cases, Jammu

is transferred and his services are placed at the disposal of Hon'ble the Chief Justice for his appointment as Registrar General, High Court, of J&K and Ladakh vice Shri Jawad Ahmed, Ramesh Kumar Wattal, Chairman, Sales Tax Appellate Tribunal is transferred and posted as Spl. Judge, Anti Corruption (CBI

Cases), Jammu vice Shri Sanjeev Gupta, Kishore Kumar, Additional District & Sessions Judge, Jammu is transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Jammu against the available vacancy, Jeema Bashir, P.O. Fast Track Court, POCSO Cases, Srinagar is transferred and her

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No Forward Movement On India-China Military Commanders' Talks

NEW DELHI, JAN 14

Military commanders of India and China met on Wednesday for the 14th time to discuss the pullback of troops in the Ladakh sector of the Line of Actual Control. The border crisis was triggered by the intrusion of the People's Liberation Army into the Indian side of the LAC in May 2020. The protracted stand-off has yet to be resolved.

Corps Commander's of India and China met at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Chinese side. The talks were long and laborious with both the In-

dian and PLA teams quibbling over every minor point. There was no progress on disengagement from the Hot

Spring area, the main agenda of the meeting, India also raised the issue of Depsang

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Order of 'forced' Surya namaskar in J&K stokes controversy

JAMMU RISING

JAMMU, JAN 14

The Jammu and Kashmir administration's order directing college heads in the union territory to organise large-scale virtual 'surya namaskar' on Makar Sankranti drew sharp criticism from mainstream political parties on Thursday. "Why should Muslim students be forced to do anything, including yoga, to celebrate Makar Sankranti? Makar Sankranti is a festival & to celebrate it or not must be a personal choice. Would the BJP be happy if a similar order was issued to order non-Muslim

students to celebrate Eid?" former chief minister and National Conference leader Omar Abdullah wrote on Twitter. Another former chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said the Centre's "misadventures" aim to collectively "humiliate" the people of Kashmir. "GOIs PR misadventures aim to demean & collectively humiliate Kashmiris. Forcing students & staff to perform suryanamaskars by issuing orders despite their obvious discomfort with imposition of something laden

with religious connotations gives an insight into their communal mindset," Mehbooba said in a tweet. NC spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar demanded the order be rolled back. "The fact that heads of colleges in Kashmir have been directed to 'ensure' participation of faculty, students and the fact that these Heads are now forced to force Muslims to perform 'Surya Namaskar' is a proof of religious interference. Roll the order back," he tweeted. Srinagar Mayor Junaid Azim Mattu too

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Dr Jitendra inaugurates Weather Radars for Leh, Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi

NEW DELHI, JAN 14

On the occasion of 147th Foundation Day of India Meteorological Department today, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated and dedicated to the nation four Doppler Weather

Radars at Leh, Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai respectively for better operational analysis and more accurate forecasts. With today's inauguration, the number of such radars in the country has reached up to 33. The Minister said that augmentation of modern observing platforms such as Automatic weather stations, Doppler Weather Radars and Meteorological Satellites will help in further improving weather and cli-

mate services. Dr Jitendra Singh said that India has taken a lead in Asian Continent to provide Weather and Climate services to South Asian, South-East Asian and Middle East countries. Addressing a galaxy of administrators, scientists and scholars on the occasion, Dr Jitendra Singh said that the severe weather forecasting being provided to many countries since 2016 under PM Narendra Modi has

come a long way and proved handy to countries like Nepal and Bangladesh in fighting severe climatic disasters. Referring to ISRO's SAARC Satellite, the Minister said, in coming days, IMD will reorient its weather and climate services in the most modern way to cater to global needs. Dr Jitendra Singh said that the Ministry of Earth Sciences will deploy and use Drone based

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C M Y K

C M Y K

C M Y K

Woman accidentally shot dead in Jammu
medially rushed her to the Government Medical College and Hospital Jammu but doctors declared her as brought dead. Police have taken the cognizance and have registered a case and investigations have started.

Ladakh sees 124 fresh COVID-19 cases
recorded 222 COVID-related deaths - 164 in Leh and 58 in Kargil - since the outbreak of the pandemic last year. No fresh death was reported, the officials said. A total of 1,080 samples in Ladakh tested negative, they said.

Delhi Police recovers IED from Ghazipur flower market
also informed that fire engines have been sent to the site. Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana told media persons today, “Based on the information received, an IED has been recovered.” More details are awaited. (

Budget session of Parliament to commence on January 31
the Session may conclude on Friday, April 8. During this period, Chairman may be moved to kindly adjourn the Rajya Sabha on Friday, February 11 to reassemble on Monday, March 14 to enable the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees to consider the ‘Demands for Grants relating to Ministries/Departments and prepare their reports,” a letter of Additional secretary-general of Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs Minister stated. There will be no sitting on March 18 on account of Holi. “The Union Budget for 2022-23 will be laid in the Rajya Sabha after its presentation in Lok Sabha on Tuesday, February 1 at 11.00 am,” the letter said. Recently more than 400 staff members of Parliament have tested positive for COVID-19. Consequently, the Chairman of Rajya Sabha and Speaker of Lok Sabha has reviewed the situation and given instructions to both houses to prepare a plan for the smooth functioning of both houses during the budget session of Parliament amid COVID -19 Pandemic.

Govt asks Notaries to submit annual return of notarial acts within 15 days

read that “As per Rule-14 of the Notaries Rules, 1956, every notary, shall, in the first week of January every year, submit to the appropriate Government, an annual return in Form-XIV of the notarial acts done by him during the preceding year”.
“It has been observed that despite the clear mandate of the aforementioned rule, most of the notaries have not submitted their annual return for the year 2021’, circular added.
It is, therefore, enjoined upon all the enrolled notaries, who have not submitted their annual return of notarial acts for the year 2021, to submit the same to the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs within a period of 15 days in Form-XIV as provided in Rule -14 of the Notaries Rules, 1956 from the date of publication of this circular, failing which action as warranted under rules shall be initiated.

President gives assent to Act allowing govt to spend Rs 3.73 lakh crore extra during current fiscal

spending includes an infusion of over Rs 62,000 crore into the company that holds residual assets and liabilities of Air India; Rs 58,430 crore by way of additional fertilizer subsidy; Rs 53,123 crore towards payment of pending export incentives; and Rs 22,039 crore to the rural development ministry for transfer to the National Rural Employment Guarantee Fund. Besides, the Department of Food and Public Distribution would be given an additional Rs 49,805 crore for meeting expenditure towards various schemes of food storage and warehousing. About Rs 2,400 crore would be given to the Department of Commerce for meeting expenditure towards subsidies under the 'Interest Equalisation Scheme', and investment under the Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) scheme, among others. Over Rs 5,000 crore and more than Rs 4,000 crore have been earmarked for additional spending by the ministries of defence and home, respectively.

J&K activist arrested for inciting violence using social media: Police

proactive secessionist, is an active participant and speaker at Twitter spaces, titled ‘Radio Resistance Kashmir’, led by two known secessionists Muzammil Ayyub Thakur and Dr. Asif Dar.” He said Thakur and Dar who are accused in several cases along with Untoo were actively spreading hatred against the Union of India on social media platforms.

By spreading false propaganda, disinformation campaign and hate speech through these social media spaces, Untoo is not only threatening to disturb the prevailing peaceful atmosphere of the union territory, but also spreading disaffection, ill-will and disharmony against the Union of India, the spokesman said.

He said Untoo is also actively spreading the terrorist, secessionist agenda and is thus inciting the youth to resort to violence and indulge in unlawful activities.

“As the aforementioned activities by Untoo amounts to commission of cognizable offence by him, accordingly Srinagar Police...registered a case against him under relevant sections of the law,” he said.

The spokesman said the investigation into the matter has been initiated and the accused has been arrested and is on police remand.

NC delegation visits Roop Nagar, condemns JDA's selective demolition drive

of the anti-poor, anti-minority and anti-people attitude of the administration, which has shown no compassion while dealing with the situation. He said the dwellers were residing in the area from ages and their ancestors were legitimate occupants of the land on which dwelling units were raised.

Provincial President Mr Rattan Lal Gupta condemned the demolition drive and expressed surprise that the dwelling units were razed to ground without any prior notice or intimation to the dwellers.

Mr Gupta sought course correction on the wrong committed and hoped that the administration will ensure their rehabilitation at their places of dwelling in the Roop Nagar area. In view

of the prevailing cold conditions, the residents cannot be left in lurch on roads. The government must show some compassion towards these unfortunate people, which include women and children, and take necessary steps in mitigating their problems.

Senior leader Mrs Vijay Dutta told the media persons that demolition of the structures without any prior notice speaks volumes about the administrative apathy and condemned the JDA action.

Prominent among those present in the delegation included : Sheikh Bashir Ahmed, Vijay Lochan, Abdul Gani Teli, Ch. Rehmat Ali, Farooq Mughal, S. Tejinder Singh, S. Sandeep Singh, Nitish Gowsami, Zamir Quershii, Mohinder Kumar Rana and others.

No Forward Movement On India-China Military Commanders' Talks

Bulge and Demchok. The marathon 13-hours of conversation produced no breakthrough.

Yet neither side has dubbed it as a total failure. The fact that a joint statement was issued after the talks is a positive sign. In the last round of military commanders meeting in October, the talks broke down with the two sides taking pot shots at each other in separate statements issued at the end of the meeting.

The military commanders’ talks are aimed at working out the withdrawal to positions held by both armies at the end of April 2020. The incursions across the LAC began in May, culminating in the Galwan clash on May 15. The confrontation in Galwan was a primitive and savage encounter, when the two sides fought with sticks and stones and engaged in hand-to-hand combat. 20 Indian soldiers and an unspecified number of Chinese were killed in the encounter on June 15. The loss of Indian lives has angered the nation and led to a near freeze in ties between Asia’s two major powers. The trust deficit implicit in India-China ties since the 19

Beijing does not help matters by its aggressive stand. Building a bridge over the Pangong lake, giving Chinese names to Indian villages on the Arunachal border and flying the Chinese flag in Galwan at the start of the New Year, though on the Chinese side of the LAC, is meant to annoy India.

“The two sides had a frank and in-depth exchange of views for the resolution of the relevant issues along the LAC in the Western Sector. They agreed that both sides should follow the guidance provided by the State Leaders and work for the resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest. It was noted that this would help in restoration of peace and tranquillity along the LAC in the Western Sector and enable progress in bilateral relations,” the joint statement released on Tuesday evening said.

The Indian delegation at the talks was led by Lt Gen Anindya Sengupta, the newly-appointed Commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps. The Chinese side by South Xinjiang Military District Chief Maj Gen Yang Lin.

Meanwhile China’s foreign office spokesman criticised India’s army chief M.M.Naravane’s statement about Chinese threat in the region. “We hope relevant people on the Indian side will refrain from making unconstructive remarks,” he said in response to a question. ends .

Dr Jitendra inaugurates Weather Radars for Leh, Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi

Observation Technology in a big way for strengthening the localised forecasting, besides adopting the High Resolution Models. He emphasised that the language used in forecast and information would be made easy to understand and serve as a clear basis for taking action by every citizen. Dr Jitendra Singh said that the Government is committed to make India Meteorological Department a World Class Organization for better delivery of services enabling a common man to take weather-wise and climate-smart decisions. He said, every common is impacted by 5 vital sectors of Agriculture, Health, Water, Energy and Disaster management being effectively catered to by IMD. R.K. Mathur, Lieutenant Governor, UT of Ladakh, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, MP, Ladakh, Dr.M. Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences,Chairman, ISRO Dr. K,Sivan, Dr M. Mohapatra, DG, IMD,Dr S D Attri, Scientist G and Chairman, Organizing Committee, Ex. DGMs and other retired officials of IMD and Directors of MoES Institutes, invited dignitaries, officers, scientists took part in the ceremony. Referring to about 20-40% improvement in accuracy of severe weather warning by IMD in recent five years as compared to previous five years, Dr Jitendra Singh said, forecast of high temperature and heat wave condition well in advance resulted in significant reduction in the number of deaths due to heat waves in subsequent years. He called upon all the agencies for zero heat related mortality in the coming year. Dr Jitendra Singh said, IMD has taken up upgradation and digitisation of several of its services and the results are evident in the form of near-accurate forecasts in short time range, advance prediction of cyclones and their tracks, expansion of sector-specific weather services to agriculture,water, health, power, energy, mining, disaster risk reduction and many other areas. The Minister extended his greetings to all the officers and staff members of India Meteorological Department and the Ministry of Earth Sciences and entire meteorological fraternity for the Foundation Day and Makar Sankranti. Dr Jitendra Singh said, the scientific temper and outlook of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has proved a boon for upgrading the country's weather forecasting and climate services, along with providing latest computing capabilities and infrastructure. He pointed out that in November, 2021, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, headed by Prime Minister approved Rs 2,135 crore for the continuation of Atmospheric and Climate Research-Modelling Observing Systems and Services (ACROSS). The Minister said, under this scheme, eight sub-schemes will be implemented from 2021 to 2026 and the IMD will majorly contribute in five sub-schemes - upgradation of forecasting systems, weather and climate services, atmospheric observations network, study of monsoon and clouds, and the commissioning of polarimetric doppler weather radars in the country. Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated the new platform like crowd searching for collection of observation through public, thus opening a new chapter in citizen science, which will act as a bridge between science and society. He said, the web GIS services launched by IMD today will be very helpful for the public, disaster managers and stakeholders to initiate timely response action to mitigate the disasters further and underlined that the impact based forecast issued by IMD is helping to minimise the loss of life and property. Dr Ji-

tendra Singh said that the recent extreme events have reminded us of the vulnerability of our society to weather, climate and water related disasters and these have tremendously increased the expectations of the society for better weather and climate services owing to accurate forecast provided by IMD in recent past. Underling that India's cyclone forecast has been appreciated by national and international bodies, the Minister noted with satisfaction that IMD has prepared district-level vulnerability atlas for extreme conditions like heat-wave, cold-wave, heavy rain, cyclones and thunderstorms. "I am sure the atlas will help disaster management authorities for risk assessment based on information collected over the years", he added. Dr Jitendra Singh congratulated all the awardees who have performed their duty with dedication and for improvement of Meteorological science and services despite the COVID-19 pandemic. He also complimented students who participated overwhelmingly in competitions on Weather and Climate organized during Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. IMD has the legacy of maintaining weather and climate records and monitoring and predicting the weather since its inception 147 years ago on 15 January, 1875 in the background of tropical cyclone hitting Calcutta in 1864, and the subsequent famines in 1866 and 1871 due to the failure of the monsoon. During 147 years of its existence, the department has served the cause of safety and well-being of Indian population against weather related hazards and to economic development of the country. It is one of the few departments of the government whose services touch almost every aspect of life and across all sectors of economy.

Order of 'forced' Surya namaskar in J&K stokes controversy

opposed the move, stating that such 'undemocratic directives' are against the principles of the country's constitution. A few weeks ago, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) had also opposed a directive by the Centre to organise a 'Surya Namaskar' programme in schools. In a following tweet, Mattu stated that he respects those who consider the sun to be a deity as well as their right to deify and worship the sun as much as he respects those who do not deify the sun as well, and they should not be forced to deify it. Criticising the order, PDP leader and former minister Naem Akhtar said he would not permit his children to participate in any such activity and nor force anyone else to do it his way. "There is no God but God and He alone is worthy of Worship. To you your faith to me mine (Qur'an) No compulsion in Faith (Qur'an). I would not permit my child participate in any such activity. Nor force anyone else to do it my way," Akhtar said. NC's former MLA and influential Shia leader Ruhullah Mehdi said if an individual can sign an order which is against his or her faith and freedom of religion, "it is more worrisome than the oppression itself". "The oppression does not reflect in this order or "desire" as much as the slavery reflects in the pen of the undersigned. They told them to bend, the so called "leadership" of Kashmir crawled. But what about the society as a whole? What does the signature in this case reflect? "If an individual can sign an order which is against his/her faith and freedom of religion, it's more worrisome than the oppression itself. If the people asked to attend, give in to this order and participate, it's us (the society) to be blamed for the consequences, not them," Ruhullah said on Twitter.

10 Sessions Judges, 3 Sub-Judges and 28 Munsiffs Transfer

services are placed at the disposal of Hon'ble the Chief Justice for her appointment as Registrar Inspection, Srinagar against the available vacancy, Jawad Ahmed, Registrar General, High Court of J&K and Ladakh is transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar against the available vacancy, Aijaz Ahmed Khan, Additional District & Sessions Judge, Sopore is transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Kargil vice Shri Mohammad Rafiq Chak, Deepak Sethi, Principal District & Sessions Judge, Leh is transferred and posted as Additional District & Sessions Judge, Jammu vice Shri Kishore Kumar, Sunil Sangra, Additional District & Sessions Judge, Budgam is transferred and posted as Additional District & Sessions Judge, Sopore vice Shri Aijaz Ahmed Khan, Mohammad Rafiq Chak, Principal & Sessions Judge, Kargil is transferred and posted as Chairman, J&K Sales Tax Appellate Tribunal on deputation vice Shri Ramesh Kumar Wattal, Om Parkash Bhagat, Additional District & Sessions Judge,, Baramulla is transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Leh vice Shri Deepak Sethi, Vinod Kumar, Special Mobile Magistrate (T), Jammu is transferred and posted as Sub Judge, Leave Reserve, High Court Wing Jammu vice Ms. Sudesh Sharma, Sudesh Sharma, Sub Judge, Leave Reserve, High Court Wing Jammu is transferred and posted as Chief Judicial Magistrate, Reasi vice Shri Adnan Syed, Adnan Syed, Chief Judicial Magistrate, Reasi is transferred and posted as Special Mobile Magistrate (T), Jammu vice Shri. Vinod Kumar, Iqbal Rafiq Vakil, Munsiff, Tangmarg is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Tangdhar vice Shri Mohammad Waseem Mirza, Ms. Madhu, Munsiff/Additional Spl. Mobile Magistrate, Samba is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Majalta vice Ms. Priyanka Mahajan, Zahoor Ahmed Ganai, Munsiff, Sumbal is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Baramulla vice Shri Mir Sayeem Qayoom, Lubna Sultan, Munsiff, Shopian is transferred and posted as Munsiff/Additional Spl. Mobile Magistrate, Pantha chowk, vice Ms. Massarat Jabeen. Jeewan Kumar, 2nd Additional Munsiff, Jammu is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Basholi vice Ms. Shama Sharma, Mir Sayeem Qayoom, Munsiff, Baramulla is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Shopian vice Ms. Lubna Sultan, Aarti Devi, Munsiff, Billawar is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Reasi against the available vacancy, Tabraiz Ahmed, 1st Addl. Munsiff, Srinagar is transferred and posted as Munsiff/Additional Spl. Mobile Magistrate, Surankote vice Mr. Shafiq Ahmed Malik., Shafiq Ahmed Malik, Munsiff/Additional Spl. Mobile Magistrate, Surankote is transferred and posted as 1st Addl. Munsiff, Srinagar vice Mr. Tabraiz Ahmed, Rajni Bhagat, 3rd Addl. Munsiff, Jammu is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Mahanpur vice Ms. Maleeka Sharma, Shabnam Sheikh, Forest Magistrate, Jammu is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Billawar vice Ms. Aarti Devi, Kamiya Singh Andotra, Munsiff, Udhampur is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Kalakote vice Ms. Meera Bangotra, Rafaqat Hussain, Munsiff, Kupwara is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Thanamandi against the available vacancy, Easar-ul-Nabi, Munsiff, Dangiwachha is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Tangmarg vice Mr. Iqbal Rafiq Vakil, Amandeep Kour, Munsiff, Chenani, is transferred and posted as Forest Magistrate, Jammu vice Ms. Shabnam Sheikh, Shama

Sharma, Munsiff, Basholi is transferred and posted as 2ndAddl. Munsiff, Jammu vice Mr. Jeewan Sharma, Priyanka Mahajan, Munsiff, Majalta is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Chenani vice Ms. Amandeep Kour, Massarat Jabeen, Munsiff/Additional Mobile Magistrate, Pantha Chowk is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Sumbal vice Mr. Zahoor Ahmed Ganai, Maleeka Sharma, Munsiff, Mahanpur is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Udhampur vice Ms. Kamiya Singh Andotra, Ananta Raina, Munsiff, Bishnah is transferred and posted as Munsiff/Additional Spl. Mobile Magistrate, Samba vice Ms. Madhu, Altaf Ahmed Mir, Munsiff, Tral is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Kupwara vice Mr. Rafaqat Hussain, Meera Bangotra, Munsiff, Kalakote is transferred and posted as 3rd Addl. Munsiff, Jammu vice Ms. Rajni Bhagat, Asma Chowdhary, Munsiff/Additional Spl. Mobile Magistrate, Reasi is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Bishnah vice Ms. Ananta Raina, Rohit Sharma, Munsiff, Gool is transferred and posted as Munsiff/Additional Spl. Mobile Magistrate, Billawar against the available vacancy, Cheena Sumbria, Additional Mobile Magistrate, Thanamandi is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Kathua against the available vacancy, Altaf Ahmad Mir-II, Munsiff, D.H. Pora is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Tral vice Mr. Altaf Ahmad Mir, Mohd. Waseem Mirza, Munsiff, Tangdhar is transferred and posted as Munsiff, Ganderbal against the available vacancy and Muddassir Bashir, under training (awaiting posting order) is posted as Munsiff, D.H. Pora vice Mr. Altaf Ahmad Mir-II.

J&K logs 5 deaths, 2,456 positive cases
results available, 352623 samples have tested positive and 19796010 samples have been tested as negative till date. Besides, 68,803 COVID tests have been conducted in last 24 hours.

Till date 5482972 persons have been enlisted for observation which included 7166persons in home quarantine including facilities operated by government, 10003 in isolation and 433786 in home surveillance. Besides, 5027460 persons have completed their surveillance period.

Providing district-wise breakup for positive cases reported today, the Bulletin said that Srinagar reported 464 cases, Baramulla reported 457 cases, Budgam reported 139 cases, Pulwama reported 22 cases, Kupwara reported 104 cases, Anantnag reported 101 cases, Bandipora reported 95cases, Ganderbal reported 12 cases, Kulgam reported 120 cases while as Shopian reported 08 fresh cases for today.

Similarly, Jammu reported 588cases, Reasi reported 90 cases for today, Udhampur reported 55 cases, Rajouri reported 29cases, Doda reported 18cases, Kathua reported 52 cases, Samba reported 16 cases, Poonch reported 49 case, Kishtwar reported 33 cases while as Ramban reported 04 fresh cases for today.

Moreover, the bulletin also highlights that against the availability of 4794 dedicated level 1 & level 2 COVID beds, only 260 (5.4%) are occupied.

The bulletin further informs the general public that they can contact helpline numbers 0191-2520982/2674444/2674115/2674908/2549676 in Jammu Division and 0194-2440283/2430581/2452052/2457313/2457312 in Kashmir Division for any kind of guidance and assistance.

In case of emergency, people can avail free ambulance services 24x7 by calling toll free number 108 while as pregnant women and sick infants can avail free services by dialling toll free number 102, the bulletin reads.

It also informs that the public can reach national helpline by dialling 1075.

Further the bulletin also informs the public that for any kind of COVID-19 query, login to www.covidrelief.jk.gov.in

The readers can also reach us on the official Twitter account of DIPR-J&K @diprjk; website: http://www.jkdirinf.in; Web-portal: jkinfonews.com and Facebook: @dipr-jammu.kashmir.

9 teachers terminated from services for unauthorized absence

from 1 November 2017.”
Apparently speaking orders have been issued against all. One of the orders for example, regarding Kour reads that she applied for 06 months extra ordinary leave w.e.f. 28/04/2014 with station permission to proceed to United States of America (outside the country). “In-anticipation of station leave permission/sanction of leave from the competent authority, the teacher proceeded outside the country United States of America and as such remained un-authorisedly absent from her legitimate duties w.e.f. 28/04/2014.”

Directs districts to retard the pace of transmission through enhanced testing, isolation and micro-containment

bservance of CAB, COVID SOPs and protocols and curtailment of unnecessary movement by the general public.

The Chief Secretary appealed to the general public to act responsibly during the third wave of the pandemic and avoid unnecessary and non-essential movement, especially during the weekend, and prevent further surge in cases.

Emphasising that Omicron has a growth advantage over the delta variant, Dr. Mehta impressed upon the divisional and district administrations to ensure fool-proof enforcement of all COVID protocols and SOPs.

He directed mass scale awareness campaign for promoting the district COVID helpline numbers for seeking medical assistance through tele-consultations and re-activation of block-level COVID medical grid to provide isolation facilities at Panchayat level, primary medical assistance at primary health care centres, and referral to district ad tertiary healthcare facilities in cases of emergencies.

The district administrations were directed to enhance their testing figures including RtPCR testing and expedite identification, isolation and micro- containment of the infection, besides speeding up vaccination drive in the 15-17 age category which is currently at 40%. They were asked to complete the vaccination in this age category within one week by raising the number of vaccination sites and decentralising the process.

The Chief Secretary asked the Health & Medical Education Department to prioritize administering booster doses in vulnerable populations through the continuing ‘Har Ghar Dastak’ campaign.

Moreover, the Revenue, Police and Health Departments were directed to vaccinate the frontline workers, healthcare workers and volunteers with the third precautionary dose.

The Chief Secretary directed the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Director SKIMS, Director General, Family Welfare, MCH & Immunization, and Principal GMC Srinagar to regularly give media briefings on the mitigation measures, current trajectory of the disease and suitably address the public concerns on the matter.

DC Srinagar inspects City markets to check CAB enforcement

JAMMU RISING

JAMMU, JAN 14

In wake of rapid spike in Covid-19 positive cases in the district, the Deputy Commissioner/ District Magistrate, Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad accompanied by Senior Superintendent of Police, Rakesh Balwal Friday visited various markets of Srinagar City to inspect the enforcement of Covid Appropriate Behavior (CAB) in public places.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner inspected various markets of Srinagar City including Mahraja Bazar, Saraibala, Jehangir Chowk, Lal Chowk, Ghanta Ghar, Residency Road, Regal Chowk, Polo View, Batamaloo and other adjoining business hubs to have first-hand appraisal of the situation arisen due to 3rd wave of Covid-19 Pandemic.

The inspection was carried



out to take stock of implementation of various Government Advisories and Guidelines and Covid-19 SOPs such as wearing of Masks, maintaining social distance, and other practices to protect the public health and prevent spread of infection of the deadly Coronavirus.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner interacted with the Traders, Transporters and Pedestrians and asked them to ensure strict compliance to the Government directions for larger public safety and health. He appealed to Traders and Transporters to

cooperate with District Disaster Management Authority Srinagar and strictly follow Covid-19 SOPs, guidelines and precautions to control the Covid-19 infection.

He urged people to visit nearest vaccination centers and get vaccinated at an earliest to defeat any possibility of Omicron, a new Covid-19 variant.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officers to monitor adherence of SOPs by service providers and called for strict legal action against the violators of Covid SOPs.

He provided face masks to shopkeepers and pedestrians who were without masks and also counseled, cautioned them to remain careful in future regarding wearing of Masks besides adopting Covid-19 Appropriate Behavior to avoid infection of virus.

Indian Army organises Armed Forces Veterans Day at Palmar

JAMMU RISING

JAMMU, JAN 14

In an endeavour to increase communication with veterans of the region, Indian Army today organised "Armed Forces Veterans Day" at Palmar Region of Kishtwar District.

Indian Army officers interacted with the veterans and apprised them of the various schemes and facilities available from Central and State Government. An ESM counter was also made functional throughout the event where the participants clarified their financial anomalies pertaining to pension and arrears.

Relevant issues pertaining to



health services and plans for enhancing quality of post retirement life was also discussed. The veterans were also explained about the digital life certificate system, its benefits and

usage. The event was also marked with interactive lectures by professionals on various topics pertaining to Banking, Postal and Allied insurance schemes available to veterans and their

families. A total of 60 veterans attended the event. The veterans lauded the initiative and expressed hope that the Army would conduct more such events in the future.

826 vaccinated for Covid in 15-17 age group, 2793 samples collected in Ramban

JAMMU RISING

JAMMU, JAN 14

As per District Immunization Officer, Ramban, Dr. Suresh the Health Department on Friday administered vaccine doses to 1359 people including 826 children in 15-17 years age group which includes 300 in Medical Block Banihal, 225 in Batote, 110 in

Ukhral and 191 in Gool.

Continuing the enforcement drive to implement Covid protocol across the district Ramban, the Enforcement teams today fined scores of violators for roaming without wearing face masks and not maintaining physical distance.

The enforcement teams, during the inspection in their

respective jurisdictions, recovered a fine of Rs. 36,400 taking the total amount fined since April 1, 2021 to Rs. 80, 60,500.

The Enforcement officers urged the people to wear face masks and maintain physical distance besides taking Covid vaccination doses at their nearest CVC.

As per daily bulletin issued by the Chief Medical Officer, Ramban, Dr. Mohammad Fareed Bhat, the Health Department has collected 2793 samples including 622 RT-PCR and 2171 RAT samples besides administering Covid vaccine to 1359 persons at 34 dedicated Vaccination Centres in the district.

Poonch: Lassana Seri Chowana team wins Inter-block Cricket Cup

JAMMU RISING

JAMMU, JAN 14

District Youth Services and Sports Department Poonch organised an Inter-block cricket tournament here at GHSS Seri Khawaja ground.

Final of the cup was played between Panchayat Seri Chowana and Panchayat Kalai teams.

After winning the toss Seri Chowana made 67 runs in 10 overs. Kalai failed to achieve the target and collapsed on 59.

Pyt. Seri Chowana A won the match by 8 runs. Pervaiz Malik Afridi was declared man of the



match who played an innings of 21 runs and Took 3 wickets. The PET Ifthakhar Bhatti and Imran Fazali acted as match umpires. Score was managed by Manzoor Ahmed Lone.

District Youth Services and Sports Officer Poonch Ch. Mo-

hammad Qasim was the chief guest, while the sports event was held under the supervision of ZPEO Surankote Vipin Khajuria.

Anis Ahmed PET, Wasim Akram PET, Iftekhar Bhatti PET, REK's including Shabir

Malik, Aijaz Malik, Manzoor Ahmed Lone, Manzoor Rather, Sajjad Rather, Ch israr, Ch Irfan, Javed Iqbal, Imran Fazli, Shahid Ahmed and Pervaiz Malik Afridi were also present as field staff and officiated the whole tournament.

DYSS Kishtwar organises virtual Yoga Asana under Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav

JAMMU RISING

JAMMU, JAN 14

District Youth Services and Sports Department Kishtwar today organized virtual Yoga Asana to mark Makar Sankranti festival being celebrated across India and under the aegis of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

District Youth Services and Sports Officer Kharati Lal Sharma, through virtual mode, informed all incharges to perform Surya Namaskar composed of 12 yoga poses which have an extremely positive impact on the body and mind.

The Sports Department performed Asna Suriya Namaskar across all zones

under the control of ZPEOs. The suriya Namaskar comprises of twelve (12) asanas namely Pranamasana, Hastautanasana, Hasta Padasana, Ashwa, Sanchalanasana, Dandasana, Ashtanga Namaskara, Bhujangasana, Parvatasana, Ashwa, Sanchalanasana, Hasta Padasana, Hastautanasana, Tadasana.

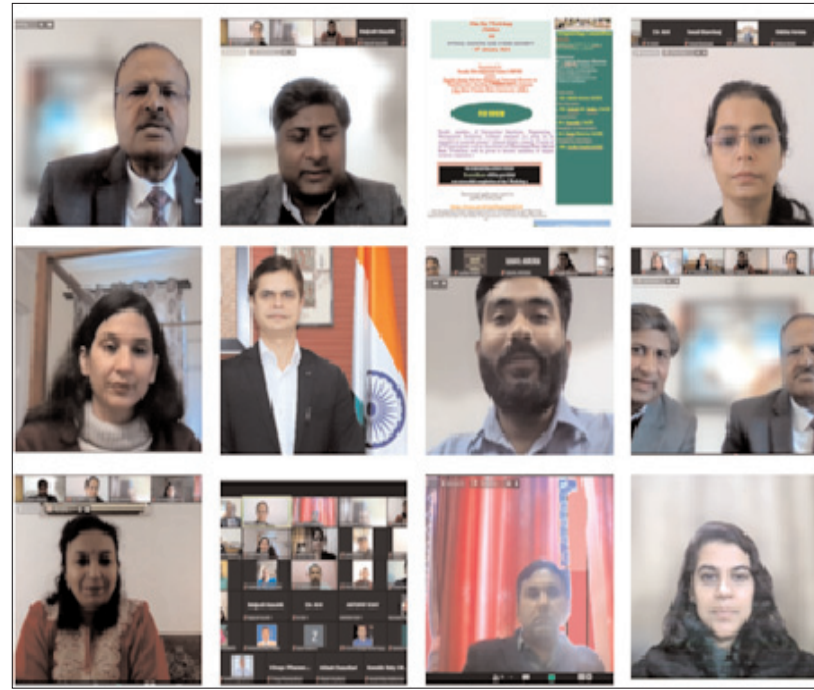
One Day Workshop on Ethical Hacking & Cyber Security Conducted at SMVDU

JAMMU RISING

JAMMU, JAN 14

Faculty Development Centre (FDC), Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU) under PMMNMTT Scheme, GoI, organised a one-day workshop on 'Ethical Hacking and Cyber Security' which witnessed a huge participation of faculty members from premier institutions across the country. In the inaugural address, Padmashree Prof. R.K. Sinha, VC, SMVDU, emphasized the need for creating awareness about the cyber security issues as the digital and personal identities of individuals are getting seamlessly integrated. Dr. Supran K. Sharma, Coordinator, FDC-SMVDU, embarked on the need for upgrading the skills of the faculty members. Sh. Nagendra Jamwal, Registrar SMVDU, conveyed his best wishes.

The keynote address was delivered by Prof. (Dr.) Nishakant Ojha, an expert in Cyber, Aerospace Security & National Security issues. He shared an insight in the core area of national security strategies & cyber policies. Dr. Bajinath Kaushik, Head, School of Computer Science, talked about the various domains and aspects of cyber security and how keeping abreast with the



latest in the field may be of relevance to all. Mr. Dheeraj Madulkar, Director, Techno Legends and Application Security Engineer and Cyber Security Expert, dwelled upon ethical hacking. At the onset, Dr. Sakshi Arora, Convener, gave an introduction of the various themes of the workshop while focusing

on cybercrime & security and the Indian cyber law framework. The workshop ended with Mr. Sudesh Kumar inviting the feedback, and Dr. Pooja conducted the proceedings of the workshop. Dr. Sunanda offered a formal vote of thanks, and the valedictory note was delivered by Ms. Sonika Gupta.

ADC Bhadarwah finalizes R-day 2022 arrangements

JAMMU RISING

JAMMU, JAN 14

Additional Deputy Commissioner Bhadarwah, Rakesh Kumar today convened a meeting to discuss the arrangements for the celebration of upcoming Republic day 2022.

Discussions regarding security, first aid, sanitation, Fire and Emergency Services, Seating arrangements, Power & water Supply, and issuance of invitation cards were discussed during the meeting.

All the concerned departments were directed to put in the required arrangements well before 24th January, the day of full dress rehearsal.

It was apprised that the function will be held in the New Bus stand Kotli Bhadarwah, where National Flag will be unfurled at 9:55 AM and the contingents of CRPF, JKAP, IRP and NCC senior



division and the junior division will present March past parade. It was also decided that the day shall start with playing of Shenai Vadan by the Information Department

Bhadarwah.

The Full Dress Rehearsal of the programme will be held on 24th January 2022.

The meeting was attended by Tehsildar, SDPO, Execu-

tive Officer, MC Bhadarwah, XEN PWD, BMO, ZEO, AEE, PMGSY, AEE PDD, AEE PHE, TSO and other official representatives were also present.

Kathua students shine in National level Kala Utsav 2021

JAMMU RISING

JAMMU, JAN 14

Five students of Government schools of District Kathua participated in the prestigious national level 'Kala Utsav 2021' competitions that concluded here at Teacher Bhawan Gandhi Nagar, Jammu.

'Kala Utsav' is an initiative of the Ministry of Education (MOE) wherein students display their talent by competing with each other in different categories such as dance, vocal music, instrumental music, painting etc. The competition is held every year under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) to promote finer arts and culture. This year also competitions were first held at school level and the winners competed at Zonal level, from where the winners got a chance to perform at District level. Further, the district level winners competed at division level and finally the division level winners competed at UT level to get a chance to compete at National level.

Around 18 students from the UT of Jammu and Kashmir displayed their talent in this year's Kala Utsav-2021, out of which 8 belong to Kashmir Division and 10



Jammu Division including 5 students coming from district Kathua alone. Pertinently, the UT level competition saw District Kathua outshine the rest of the districts of Jammu and Kashmir by winning 13 medals which included 7 gold, 4 silver and 2 bronze medals. The best district award was also won by District Kathua only.

The 5 students from Kathua, who represented Jammu and Kashmir at national level this year are Shobha (Little Angels

School) in Visual Art 2D category, Vishal (GHS Panyalag, Bani, in Dance Traditional Folk category, Deepak (GHSS Budhi) Visual Art 3 D category, Aniksha (Mount Litera Zee School) in Vocal Music Traditional Folk category and Harsha (GGHSS Kathua) in Dance Traditional Folk category.

The feat was achieved with the joint efforts of the participants, their mentors, HOIs of their Schools, DRG Pawan Vivek, DICC,

Monika Khosla, all ZICCs, Anita Pangotra Master HS Logate and Meena, teacher from HS Logate, evaluators, experts of different art forms, vocational trainers from GHSS Forelain and all other stakeholders.

Director, Deep Raj and Coordinator, Prem Nath played their roles to perfection resulting in students performing at optimal level, said CEO Kathua, Prakash Lal Thapa while congratulating the students and staff members.

DC Kupwara kick-starts vaccination drive for 15-17 year age children

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Imam Din today kick-started vaccination drive for 15-17 year age group of children at a function organized at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Khumriyal.

DDC Member Kalaroos, Ghulam Mustafa, Principal GHSS, Tehsildar Kupwara, BDO Kalaroos, Nodal Officer Covid Vaccination and other concerned were present at the occasion.

Addressing the function, the DC said that the vaccination for 15-17 year age group of children has been kick-started to safeguard them from any Covid related infection and to continue their studies.



He appealed to the students who got vaccinated to become ambassadors and inform other children to vaccinate themselves for their safety and the safety of others.

The DC appealed the

people to follow Covid Appropriate behaviour (CAB) religiously and those who are yet to get a second dose of vaccine to inoculate themselves at the nearest vaccination centre.

He impressed that CAB

and vaccines are the only tools to get safety against the deadly Covid-19 and its new variant Omicron.

On the occasion, numbers of students were given the Covaxin dose by the Health workers.

2-day training programme for MOs to make PCCC's functional commences at IHM, Rajbagh

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

To strengthen Covid-19 containment measures at primary level in villages and to mitigate the pressure on secondary and tertiary care health institutions amid spike in fresh Covid-19 positive cases, the two days training programme for Medical Officers (MOs) of all the districts commenced today at Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) Rajbagh, here.

The Divisional Covid-19 Control Room Kashmir (DCCRK) has organised the training programme with an aim to sensitize Medical Officers of all districts regarding the treatment and man-

agement of Covid patients who have a mild disease at Panchayat Covid Care Centres (PCCCs) established during the 1st and 2nd waves. The training programme was presided over by Dr Talat Jabeen Epidemiologist, SSO Kashmir while the resource persons on the occasion were Community Medicine Specialists at DC-CRK, Dr Rouf Hussain Rather and Dr Umar Nazir. In her inaugural speech, Dr Talat recapitulated the role played by Panchayat Covid Care Centers during the first two waves where patients with mild symptoms were admitted and treated by the designated medical teams.

She said that PCCCs were established at every Panchayat that reduced pressure

on patients in Sub district, district hospitals and tertiary care hospitals. She said PCCCs facilitated isolation of covid patients with every requirement from treatment to the proper referral to these patients.

Dr Umar in his presentation highlighted the need to make these PCCCs functional once again and also described the augmentation of the medical and paramedical staff besides making these Medics as master trainers so that they can train Paramedics, PRIs, Teachers, NGOs and Social Workers to make those centers functional without wasting much time.

He stressed on the identification of patients with mild infection who shall be ad-

mitted at those centers besides he stressed on making all the previous logistics functional so the third covid wave could be contained successfully.

In the 2nd presentation, Dr. Rouf highlighted the importance of CAB & Vaccination and also threw light on the evolving situation of Covid-19 globally, national and at divisional level.

Later, a question answer session was held during which the participants asked questions regarding the third wave, severity, its impact on health and immune system, its treatment and SOPs which were answered by Resource persons to the best satisfaction of the participants.

Animal Husbandry B'pora approves 66 KCC diary cases

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, the Department of Animal Husbandry today organized tenth District Level KCC Camp at Office Complex of Block Development Officer, Nowgam.

KCC Cases belonging to the areas of Nowgam, Ganastan, Gaadkhud, Ankul, Shahgund, Gund Jahangir, Naidkhai, Sumbal, Shilvat, Trigam, Gunde Nowgam, Payeen Nowgam, Zalpora, Rakh Sultanpora and Nasbal were discussed with the bankers, beneficiaries and were approved on spot. The Camp was presided over by Chief Animal Husbandry Officer Bandipora, Dr G A Lone and marked the par-



ticipation of Lead Bank Manager Bandipora, Concerned Bank Managers, Nodal officer, Concerned

Veterinary Assistant Surgeons and the beneficiaries.

66 Dairy KCC Cases were

settled on spot to generate part time employment and livelihood support to the beneficiaries.

6.3 MVA Transformer commissioned to augment power supply to Rajouri town

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

To improve the power supply scenario in Rajouri Township, the Power Development Department today commissioned an additional 6.3 MVA capacity transformer at Thudi.

The power supply to the Rajouri town was previously supplied by 10 MVA capacity Feeder which was compelling the forced curtailments in the town due to increased demand.

The commissioning of this new transformer will



mitigate the problem to a large extent as the curtailments would now be of lesser duration.

District Administration Rajouri under the leadership of the District Development Commissioner Ra-

jour, Vikas Kundal is taking effective measures to ease the lives of the common masses and more steps would be taken in near future to augment power infrastructure in the district.

The DDC Rajouri, Vikas Kundal in a recent review meeting has passed a slew of directions for improvement of Power scenario in the district. The DDC has directed for installation of 6 different capacity transformers in the town and immediate commissioning of this 6.3 MVA transformer

RDD Dir visits Kulgam, reviews progress, achievements of RDD in district

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

The Director, Rural Development Department (RDD) Kashmir, Tariq Ahmad Zargar today visited Kulgam and chaired a meeting of officers to review progress on different flagship schemes under implementation in the district.

During the meeting, the Director reviewed progress and achievements made under PMAY-G, MGNREGA, B2V, 14th FC, RGSA, CAPEX and other flagship schemes.

The Director was informed through a power-point presentation that against the target of 14.80 lac mandays, 14.68 lac mandays have been achieved with a release of an amount of 37.56 crore as wages.

It was also informed that there is 100 percent geo-tagging of works and the district has made 99 percent timely payment with 100 percent Aadhar seeding.

It was also revealed in the meeting that u 14th-FC



3651 works stands completed with an estimated cost of 37 crore.

ACD informed the chair that under District CAPEX 2021-22, expenditure of 11.36 crore have been made and 801 works stands completed.

He also apprised the chair that 61, B2V-3 works have been completed with an ex-

penditure of 2.81 crore and under PMAY-G out of 1714 units 1401 structures have been completed with an expenditure of 20.44 crore.

Director instructed the concerned to redouble efforts to achieve targets well in time and to identify land for construction of new Panchayat Bhawans under RGSA and to prepare forest

convergence plan.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD), Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, District Panchayat Officer, Executive Engineer REW, Block Development Officers, AEE and other officers of the Rural Development Department.

Virtual/ physical performing of 'Surya Namaskar' Aasan held at Anantnag

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

The Youth Services and Sports office (YS&SO) Anantnag today organized a large-scale Virtual/ Physical performing of 'Surya Namaskar' aasan under 'Azaadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav' campaign at different venues of the district at Zonal level.

The programme was inaugurated at District Headquarter Anantnag by following the directions from the activity section of YS&SO Anantnag. The different Zonal Physical Education Offices of the district also organized the said programme at different locations by adhering to CAB.

In strict adherence to CAB and other SOPs, the least number of staff and students



as per the Government Guidelines participated in the Surya Namaskar events.

The participants showed a lot of interest in the event as they all believe that such

events improve physical fitness, mostly when they are in home isolation due to Covid-19 restrictions.

On the occasion, District Youth Services and Sports

Officer Anantnag interacted with all participants virtually and encouraged them for participation despite harsh winter climatic conditions.

Ramban: Nadir Bakerwal leads Gandhote village to a Sweet Revolution

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

Ramban is on the verge of 'Sweet' revolution through honey production on a large scale by progressive farmers helped and supported by government sponsored 'Promotion of Bee Keeping' scheme and 'One District, One Product' scheme.

Starting with only 5 honey bee colonies in 1990, Nadir Bakerwal, 85 had ventured into the honey bee business with an aim to supplement his farm income in his village Gandhote perched atop a hill overlooking the National Highway.

Coming a long way, Nadir and his three sons own more than 350 honey bee colonies and inspired 40 other progressive farmers of his village who together own 5000 colonies. Almost all these progressive farmers belong to the Scheduled Tribe Communities including Gujjars and Bakerwals.

According to Mohammed Ashraf, 45 (Son of Nadir) his family including his two other brothers, Abdul Rashid and Nasir Ahmed earn an annual income of Rs.10. Lakh from apiculture business.

"We are satisfied with this business which has now become the mainstay of our livelihood and my son, Mohammed Showkat has also adopted it as a full time business. He too owns 90 colonies", he said.

According to him Nadir, father of six sons and three daughters own 25 colonies; his sons M. Ashraf, Abdul Rashid and Nasir Ahmed own 90, 80 and 75 colonies respectively,

besides his grandson, Mohammed Showkat, is owner of 90 colonies. Besides increasing his colonies he kept on giving the bee colonies free of cost to other villagers and encouraged them to take up this farming seriously despite all odds.

He said that his father has shown a lot of perseverance and steadily built up the business to this level by dint of hard work and fighting all odds. Initially, Nadir used to load and unload the bee colony boxes himself for transportation to other places during seasonal migration.

Ashraf said that in 1990 his father, Nadir was motivated by the brother of a teacher, GM Tantray of Banihal to adopt beekeeping and after seeing his beekeeping business in Banihal he had bought five colonies from him and thus started his beekeeping business.

"Although, it (business of apiculture) suffers from occasional losses by the pest infection, climatic adversities etc. yet now it has become a choice for many villagers in Ramban district with the financial, material and technical supports provided by the government through the Department of Apiculture.. "With gradual success and increasing returns we are highly encouraged and are grateful to the Apiculture Development Officer, Ramban, Ayaz Ahmed Reshi who leaves no stone unturned in guiding us and providing all information and help regarding this, throughout the year "he added.

According to Ashraf some

of his family members are in Rajasthan since November to feed their bees on mustard flowers. "They will stay there till the end of January and then move to Pathankot in February for one month stay where the bees will feed on mustard and Safeda (eucalyptus or poplar trees) flowers. On way back they will stay in Jammu for the whole March and then migrate to Kashmir valley where they will stay till August. They will return to Gandhote in September to feed their bees on Solai shrubs" he explained reflecting his deep knowledge about the trade.

"The honey made by the bees after feeding on Solai is one of the best in the world which has several medicinal properties and sells like hot cakes for a very good price. The honey production has been included under the government's 'One District, One Product' programme of Ramban district and Ramban is the producer of 70% of honey produced in the entire Jammu province.

The Beekeepers have extended their gratuities to Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Mussarat Islam for taking personal initiative in making hassle free migration of their Bee colonies to Rajasthan without loss of time.

Solai Honey, Acacia Honey and Multi Floria Honey are the three types of honey produced from Solai, Acacia (Kikkar) and multiple flowers in Ramban with Banihal tehsil leading in the district. As many as 35000

colonies of beehives have been established in the district which includes 450 prominent Beekeepers.

Thirty new beekeepers will be established in Batote Tehsil alone in 2022-23 which will boost the rural economy," said Reshi, District who is now- a days on a tour to different parts of Rajasthan to help and guide the beekeepers of Ramban district who are there with their bee colonies.

He informed that last year the total production of honey in Ramban district was about 6,000 qtl and this year the target is to produce 8,000qtl and exuded confidence that if all beekeepers emulate Nadir and show the determination and hard work of his level it would be certainly achieved. He said that rewarding farmers like Nadir would go a long way in encouraging other farmers to achieve big goals in farming. He said that under the 'Promotion of Beekeeping' Scheme 2 honey extracting machines have been given to Nadir's family and in all 11 machines to other farmers in the village besides Beehives, Bee Colonies, Comb Foundation Sheets and necessary medicines.

He said that within few days all these beekeepers who are all registered with National Bee Board will be a part of a Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) in Ramban and once they become a member of it they will be able to sell their honey to any part of the world and would start fetching a good price of their product.

Advisor Farooq Khan inaugurates FCS&CA Deptts Blood Donation Camp

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Farooq Khan today inaugurated the Blood Donation Camp at JLNH Hospital, Rainawari here.

The camp was organised by Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) department in association with Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir.

Speaking on the occasion, Advisor Farooq Khan said that blood donation is a noble job which is performed by the blessed lot of the society.

Complimenting the employees for donating blood, Advisor Farooq Khan urged upon more employees and people to come forward for this noble cause and contribute towards the welfare of masses as well as needy people.

The Advisor further said that the administration highly recognizes and appreciates the selfless service of the



blood donors for the entire well being of the society.

During the blood donation camp, 30 employees of FCS&CA department donated blood.

Among others, Director, FCS&CA department, Director Agriculture Kashmir, senior officers of health department and other concerned officials participated in the camp.

Director Agriculture visits Vegetable Clusters of Maloora, Srinagar

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

The Director Agriculture Kashmir, Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal today stressed for pushing the boundaries in terms of awareness and innovations when it comes to round the year availability of vegetables to add new dimensions to the economic transformation of the farming community.

The Director said this during his visit to the vegetable clusters of Qamarwari Zone of the district.

He acknowledged the collaborative efforts of the farmers and department in making the export of vegetables (from Kashmir to international destinations like Sharjah, Dubai) dream come true. He added that it was an unprecedented move and has opened a new global window for the Agriculture products from Kashmir.

Iqbal reiterated the importance of a more vibrant mar-



keting strategy. He asked for redesigning/reshaping of different marketing models to increase the export of Vegetables from Kashmir. He said for the promotion of trade at international level, implementation of an effective marketing policy has a big role to play.

On this occasion, Joint Director Agriculture Marketing Mohammad Qasim Gani presented a detailed blueprint for providing marketing facilities to the farmers at their door steps. He informed the Director of various steps taken by the Department for the promotion of trade, financial security of the farmers.

Earlier Chief Agriculture Officer Srinagar apprised the Director of various interventions by the department for the promotion of vegetable cultivation on modern scientific lines. He enumerated the steps taken by the department to attract more people towards the vegetable sector.

Earlier, the Director visited various progressive farmer fields and hi-tech Poly houses and inspected different agriculture activities and asked the concerned officers to ensure every technical support to the farmers and work in a coordinated manner.

During the visit, Director was accompanied by Joint Director Marketing M. Qasim Ghani, Sub Divisional Agriculture Officer Srinagar, and Agriculture Extension Officer Qamarwari besides other senior officers of the district.

Divisional Forest Officer Nowshera holds meeting on updation of Peoples' Bio-diversity Register

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

Divisional Forest Officer Nowshera, Neelima Shah held a meeting of newly pass out Forest Guards, who have been assigned the task of updation of Peoples' Bio-diversity Registers, here at Nowshera.

The objective of the meeting was to train and guide the newly pass out Forest Guards in the updation of the already prepared PBRs.

The Divisional Forest officer guided the participants on the objectives of BMC, their role in preparation of PBRs and the methodology for holding the meeting of Bio-diversity Management Committees.

She also emphasized on holding meetings with all the stakeholders of the particular BMC along with the persons having local traditional knowledge. She also



told them to hold separate meetings with women folk as they have local knowledge of curing number of ailments by using local available resources.

The PBR is a very important document which needs to be updated carefully. It contains the data pertaining to all the biological resources available within the jurisdiction of a particular BMC.

The data pertaining to depletion of resources should be specially highlighted in PBR.

Rakesh Verma, Range Officer Sunderabni, provided the hard copy of already updated PBR to Forest guards. He said that the existing PBR will further help in updation of their PBRs. He said that the staff of Sunderabni Forest Range has previously done the exercise of updation of PBR and now they are

readily available to help in further updation.

Divisional Forest Officer Nowshera handed over hard copies of respective PBR to Forest Guards. She also told them to update the data on excel sheet in prescribed formats so that it could be timely submitted to the J&K Biodiversity Council. The meeting was also attended by Sudesh Kumar Range Officer Nowshera.

Untiring efforts being made to restore power supply in Rajouri: PDD

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

The recent incessant rains and snow have caused extensive damage to power infrastructure in Rajouri district and the Power Development Department is making untiring efforts to restore the supply to the affected

The district witnessed massive damage to Power infrastructure including transformers across the district leading to piling up of damaged distribution Transformers at the District workshop.

On the directions of DDC, the workshop staff is working overnight to restore the damaged transformers.

To inspect the working of the Workshop, a team of the District Information Centre along with a group of media persons visited the PDD workshop and found the staff working in wee hours at 5:30 AM to rectify the faults of the Transformers.

Armed Forces Veterans Day observed at Kupwara

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

The Zila Sainik Welfare Office Kupwara today celebrated Armed Forces Veterans Day to honour the sacrifice of veterans in serving the nation.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Imam Din who is also Chairman Zila Sainik Welfare Board presided over the function.

Zila Sainik Welfare Officer, Javaid Ahmad Zargar; prominent veterans and Widows of the district participated in the celebration.

Addressing the function, the DC emphasized the role of army veterans towards the service of the nation and highlighted the welfare measures taken by the district



administration from time to time for the development and welfare of ex-servicemen of the district.

On the occasion, the DC urged all the participants for implementation of Covid appropriate behaviour including usage of masks, hand hygiene and maintaining of social distance.

The Zila Sainik Welfare Officer also spoke and highlighted the activities of the office.

Prizes were also distributed among the widows and veterans at the occasion.

Kishtwar: Red Cross Society, DIPR launch awareness cum Mask and sanitizers distribution drive

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

District Red Cross Society Kishtwar, in collaboration with Department of Information and Public Relation (DIPR) Centre Kishtwar today launched awareness cum face masks and sanitizers distribution campaign here in the Town.

The campaign has been launched on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Ashok Shama and under the supervision of District Information Officer, Tariq Parveaz Qazi.

During the special drive, Secretary District Red Cross Society Kishtwar, Asgar Ali Sheikh, Volunteer RCS, Shahid Hussain and employees of DIPR Kishtwar Manoj Kumar and Subash Chander distributed face masks and



sanitizers among patients/attendants at District Hospital Kishtwar and among shopkeepers/drivers/passengers at Dak Bungalow Kishtwar.

The common masses, shopkeepers, eco/Sumo drivers, hawkers and pedestrians were asked to follow COVID appropriate behaviour avoid crowding wear face masks and maintain social distance.

JMC conducts anti-encroachment drive


JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

On the instructions of Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation, Avny Lavasa, the enforcement wing of the Corporation today launched a massive drive to clear the footpaths, pavements and road sides in different parts of Jammu City.

The Enforcement staff led by Assistant Commissioner Revenue conducted anti-encroachment drive at Indira



Chowk, Panama Chowk area and seized materials, goods, articles kept by shopkeepers on footpath and pavements and also seized Rehri installed illegally on footpath/ road side. Jammu Municipal Corporation appealed to the people particularly shopkeepers, vendors not to encroach upon footpaths and pavement as the same cause inconvenience to the pedestrians and also create obstruction in the free movement of vehicular traffic.



सत्यमेव जयते

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
IRRIGATION & FLOOD CONTROL
DEPARTMENT

Office of the Executive Engineer Irrigation Division No.1 Jammu

ifcmuxenid1jmu@gmail.com

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING E-

TENDERS

Fresh E-NIT No.:15 of 01/2021-22

For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Executive Engineer Irrigation Division No-1, Jammu invites e-tenders in two cover system **Cover 1st** containing prequalification documents and **Cover 2nd** containing Price Bid from registered contractors of appropriate Class for the below mentioned works.

S.No	Name of work	Advt. cost of work (Rs. in lacs)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Time of completion (In days)	Class of Contractor	Cost of Tender Documents (Rs.)
01	Construction of Ramp and Bathing Ghats U/S RD : 13500M including parapet wall of MRC.	4.07	8140	30 days	A B C D	500
02	Construction of D6 RD 4000 to 6000M including backfilling RD 10001200M of MRC.	11.82	23640	45 days	A B C D	500

a)Position of A.A.A
B)Position of T. S
c)Position of Funds

: Accorded
: Under Process
: Partially available

1. The bidding documents can be downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> w.e.f. **12.1.2022 (4.00 PM) to 19.1.2022 upto 6 PM.**

2. The bids shall be uploaded/ submitted in electronic format on the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> w.e.f **12.01.2022 (5.00 PM) to 19.1.2022 upto (6PM).**

3. The complete bidding process will be **ONLINE.**

4. The tender uploaded on the website up to due date will be opened on **20 -1-2022 (10:00 AM - Subjective)** in the office of the **Executive Engineer Irrigation Division No-1, Jammu** in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

DIP No:DIP/J-11776/21

Sd/-

No: JID-I/ 5204-16
Dated: 11.1.2022

Executive Engineer,
Irrigation Division No:1

EDITORIAL

As Omicron surfaces in Kashmir, DAK advises take precautions

With the detection of 5 cases of Omicron in Kashmir valley, Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Wednesday advised people to take precautions to protect themselves from the new variant of Covid-19.

“Simple precautions would help prevent the spread of the variant,” said DAK President and Influenza expert Dr Nisar ul Hassan.

Dr Hassan said people should continue wearing masks as they are effective at reducing the risk of contracting or spreading Covid-19 including Omicron.

“Masks act as barrier, trapping and filtering out virus particles from the air we breathe,” he said.

“If the infected person wears a mask, that reduces the risk of infection to those around them. If the uninfected person wears a mask, that reduces the risk of infection to them from the infected person,” he added.

The DAK President said people are advised to avoid crowding and gatherings.

“Crowding puts you at higher risk of getting Omicron and it increases the chances for the virus to spread in the community,” he said.

“If you are down with respiratory symptoms, self isolate and get tested,” said Dr Nisar.

“If your test turns positive, report to the health authorities for tracing your contacts,” he said adding contact tracing is an important tool to prevent the virus from spreading in the community.

General Secretary DAK Dr Arshad Ali said vaccine remains the single best tool against Covid-19 and its variants including Omicron.

“Fully vaccinated people have significant protection against Omicron infection, serious illness and death,” he said.

“Those who are unvaccinated should go and get it now. People who are eligible for boosters should take them as soon as possible to protect themselves, their families, loved ones and the community,” he added.

Spokesperson DAK Dr Riyaz Ahmad Dagga said Omicron is more contagious than delta which devastated us in the second wave. We don’t know how Omicron will impact our senior citizens and immunocompromised.

“Even though Omicron causes less severe disease, the sheer number of cases could once again overwhelm our hospitals,” he said adding that healthcare capacity including ICUs, ventilators and staff need to be strengthened at all levels.

The problem with Modi-centric discourse in Indian politics

Subrata Mitra

There is no gainsaying the fact that the figure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emerged as the most significant talking point in Indian politics. Now that the Election Commission has set the dates for the five assembly elections, one can only expect the obsession of India’s political commentators and campaign managers with Modi to grow, and the process of showcasing his persona as the epitome of all that is good, or evil, in the current politics of the vast country to be speeded up. The point that the critics and acolytes of the prime minister miss is the harm that the narrowing down of the political agenda to just one person does to the larger interests of the country and its bustling, resilient democracy.

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This poverty of public discourse about the nature and content of politics in India with its rich, classical tradition in political theory, vigorous political debates during the long-drawn-out freedom movement, its continuation in the Constituent Assembly debates, and in parliamentary

debates during the early decades after Independence, is astounding. Had agenda-setting not been as important as it is for the critical decades ahead, all the Modi-bashing of the political class and the cartoons around his theatricality, would have provided some comic relief during these dark days of the pandemic. But the stakes are much too high not to take notice of what gets left out of political discourse thanks to the obsession with Modi, to the point of merchandising his personal security, in the ruthless game of political upmanship.

How has this fixation with Modi and the reduction of the full range of politics entirely to his persona come about? To this question, there are two possible answers. The images of a “saintly” Modi taking a holy dip in the Ganges, widely diffused by TV channels, would lead cultural anthropologists to take a cue from Clifford Geertz in pointing to the causal link of pomp and theatricality with state power. The second answer, going back all the way to Marx, would argue more about the political acumen of a talented leader, exploiting a structural

flaw to cast himself as the embodiment of popular aspiration and will. “Man makes history, within conditions imposed by history”. Both insights help explain the emergence of Modi as the focal point of Indian politics, much like the parallel rise, quite ironically, of Gandhi and Churchill — in their deft use of language, metaphor, accoutrements, and theatricality — to the pinnacles of public visibility during the last decades of the freedom movement.

Deconstruction of Modi’s rise reveals the adroit manner in which he has encapsulated three strands of the deeper layers of Indian politics — the stalled process of state formation, a deep collective anxiety about where to place medieval history within the structure of the present, and, of course, state subsidised welfare such as cooking gas, micro-bank-accounts, toilets, infrastructure and so on. An analysis of the outcomes of the two parliamentary elections of 2014 and 2019 and the assembly elections in between, shows how neatly the electoral performance of the BJP follows the combination of the three

strands. The most spectacular demonstration of the vulnerability of a Modi-centric campaign was seen in West Bengal, where the region has found its own mode of integrating Islam within its political culture and the tap of welfare was firmly in the grip of Mamata Banerjee — the local supremo and an equally deft politician in the mirror-image of the prime minister.

Shifting the focus away from Modi as the single issue will help bring public attention back to the structural parameters of Indian politics that get scant attention today. Not doing so will have grave, unintended consequences.

As things stand, a Modi win signals the continuation of his symbolic acts such as cow worship — it skips any analysis of the proper role of the cow in the agricultural value chain. A Modi defeat reinforces the tendency to “let sleeping issues lie” and skip over stalled processes of territorial integration, reform in key sectors of agriculture and integration with the global market economy, or even deeper and more conflictual issues of

citizenship and national identity. In brief, with a single-issue election, India loses, whether Modi wins or concedes defeat.

Lest we forget, a Modi-centric electoral discourse skirts around the biggest conundrum of the politics of transitional societies: Can electoral democracy replace revolution? Elections — however free and fair — can only process politics “within the system”, but are not any good at tackling the “politics of the system”. Elections produce mandates that promise structural changes in the economy and society, but the hardship that they entail for key sections of the electorate stymie their implementation. Caught in a “middle democracy trap”, India is likely to go through cycles of “maintaining” elections that focus on the rewards of office, alternating with “transforming” elections that promise basic structural changes. By bringing the larger agenda of politics back in again, one would be able to prepare the electorate for the rough ride ahead as the next electoral cycle sets in, instead of their panicking about democratic “backsliding”.

Understanding our DIY fame culture

Sumana Roy

“Are you a distinguished person?” I ask my friend in a text message. “Very,” he replies, prompter than usual. “How did you become distinguished?” I ask, not giving up on my research. “I made an application,” he says.

My question to him wasn’t a joke. It came on the heels of a discussion I’d just had at home. My husband, an academic, had been looking for an appropriate title for the lectures he wanted to organise in his department. I’d offered my suggestions, some of which had been taken, but there was one word that I kept protesting against. “Distinguished” — “Distinguished Lecture Series”.

“Why do you need to call something or someone distinguished?” I asked.

His answer was simple: “Otherwise people wouldn’t know that it is”.

“Let people decide whether it is distinguished or not ...” I gave up after some time.

“Distinguished” is only one of the many words that belong to the genre of image-building in the world of arts and letters. To many of us it might seem like putting the cart before the horse, for a word like that is meant to force obedience — we’ve been told that it is distinguished, and there is no space allowed for disagreement. This is how consensus is built, but, more importantly, this is how fake news is created. The whisper network has the butterfly effect, but the whisper begins from one person. Quite often, particularly in our times, the

whisper about greatness begins from the person whose greatness is about to be proclaimed.

The mode of operation is similar to that of a ponzi scheme (I’m also thinking of the stunt that entrepreneur Elizabeth Holmes was able to pull off for years). Like the non-existent company that investors trust their money with, adjectives are conjured to create reputations. It is, of course, a scam. But we are its willing collaborators. One only needs to look at the bios of writers and academics to see its operation. People calling themselves “eminent” in their bios is a sad commentary on the culture of self-advertisement that is necessary for survival, or “eminence”.

“Prestigious” is a word used for forums, but now, like a transferred epithet, also for people. Since it is hard to call oneself a prestigious person, particularly because the sophisticated society I am talking about wouldn’t ever be caught saying “Pata hai mera baap kaun hai?”, we call our endorsers prestigious. This is our way of endorsing those who endorse us, so that their endorsement of us is magnified.

“Famous”, “great”, “well-known”, “eminent”, “excellence”, “esteemed”, “legendary”, “magisterial”, “much-travelled”, “award-winning” — these are some of the stocks; there are the other more common ones: brilliant, unique, original, and, increasingly, “a classic”. This is the moment when I, in spite of my unease with such dictums, think of the MFA instructor’s phrase: “Arrey baba, show, don’t tell”. King, Emperor,

Raja, Sultan, Ustad, Pandit, Gurudev — these were once the words designating a special status. In our new economy, the markers of fame have moved from nouns to adjectives. Once upon a time, one could be just a noun: “Professor”. That isn’t enough anymore. The adjectives must be worn like an army man wears their decorations.

There’s a bullying economy in those adjectives, and the sound of the siren that announces the arrival of automobiles with red lights, not very different from Bond’s use of the proper noun: the name is Bond, James Bond. The self-advertisement and self-congratulatory manner have been forced on us. A couple of weeks ago, while looking up a book online, I found an anthologist’s bio that made me pause to check whether I had read it right: They had been called “the most respected anthologist in the country”. Surely there had been a competition among anthologists whose news hadn’t reached me.

There’s a tragicomedy happening in our culture. We are praising ourselves because no one else is praising us. This is only part of the DIY culture that is essential for survival now. We are frantically arranging adjectives like one assembling a piece of IKEA furniture — the result must be as functional. That is the status of fame in our culture — its necessary functionality translating into axiom, like the United States of America calling itself the “greatest country in the world”. First self-belief, in these words, only then will the world outside us believe us.

When I wrote about what we call “literary” as being Brahminical (‘Read, without the sacred thread’, IE, December 19, 2020), there was a sense of anger in a certain group of people. Needless to say, they had been beneficiaries of how the “system” operates. Like the surname that indicates our caste, the words that announce or trail our names are like our surnames — perhaps this explains why Indians, when using the English language, have often conflated “title” and “surname”. Some of these new surnames are names and surnames of other people, often dead: Nobel, Fulbright, Charles Wallace, Windham-Campbell; or Booker and Chevering; or Oxford, Harvard, Rome; or New Yorker, Granta, The Paris Review, and so on. As if all of this weren’t enough, we also have those who claim Adam-like status: “was the first to be awarded the (some award or fellowship) ...” and places which advertise themselves as “one of the greatest institutions in India”.

One must find fame somehow, and the easiest way to do so seems to be contagion: To be touched by the famous, their versions of gurukul, their gharana, their endorsements, deriving pedigree from them like people once used to by virtue of birth and the wealth of connections that brought. As I see the fame toolkit in operation everywhere, I sometimes think of Mark Antony’s words in Julius Caesar, and how he might have substituted “honourable” with famous today: “And... is a famous man”.

Today’s hate crimes are bitter harvests of fields cultivated for a century

Satish Deshpande

The truly shocking fact about the so-called “Bulli Bai” app (which reportedly featured a humiliating mock auction of more than a hundred Muslim women active in public life) is that some of its alleged perpetrators have actually been arrested. Vishal Kumar Jha, Shweta Singh, Mayank Rawat and Neeraj Bishnoi — those arrested so far — must be wondering if they have suddenly been transported into an alien world. Because, in the world that we have lived in for several years, this would clearly count as cruel and unjust punishment.

The “angry Hindu” cloak of impunity is evidently available to assorted godmen to incite mass violence against Muslims on millions of television screens. It is claimed by our highest elected officials to routinely denigrate those who say “abba jaan” or those who can be “identified by their clothes”. It is also offered to mobs who prevent Friday prayers. And even killers who led lynch mobs are pub-

licly feted and tacitly assured that the law will go easy on them. If all this can happen, then it is certainly unfair to single out a mere digital app that has, after all, killed no one. A police force eager to bend before the winds of power would immediately recognise that, regardless of the Indian Penal Code, nothing much needs to be done here since the alleged purveyors of the app bear clearly Hindu names and their targets are all Muslim women. This is what happened some months ago when a similar app called “Sulli Deals” appeared. Neither the Mumbai police — which has suddenly woken up in the Bulli Bai case — nor the Delhi, Gurgaon or Noida police showed any unseemly eagerness to act. Why the flurry of activity now?

Opinion [Meeran Chadha Borwankar writes: Bulli Bai is latest example of harassment women face online]

The most plausible answers involve the unfavourable coverage in the international media and the fact that Ma-

harashtra is not ruled by the BJP. But these are not entirely convincing, because nothing happened in Maharashtra when the previous app appeared. It is also possible, but unlikely, that sustained pressure from the victims (many of whom are prominent in public life) finally forced the Mumbai police to act the second time around.

We may never be able to fully answer the why question, but the what questions are far more important. What is the larger significance of the uncharacteristic response to the Bulli Bai app? What does it point to or represent?

The first thing that the anomalous arrests point to is the changing character of our institutions. If we are surprised when the police act to curb crimes — something they are supposed to do — then it is obvious that a lot has changed. Of course, the law has never treated everyone alike in practice. In most societies and in most times, the rich and the privileged are treated more leniently than the poor

and the powerless. But long-familiar patterns of social pampering and persecution are being radically re-arranged now. The Hindu-Muslim divide is being elevated above all our other divisions, including those between victim and perpetrator, or the innocent and the guilty. Moreover, this division is being turned into a rigid dichotomy. In India, we are used to the messiness of our social categories — there are always exceptions, grey areas, or contextual variations. But the Hindu-Muslim divide is being purged of its porosity and turned into a sharp, permanent line — literally a social Line of Control. A new border is being drawn inside our nation, where, as with international borders, no ambiguity is allowed about who is on which side.

This is still a journey, a process in the present-continuous tense. But its end is not far, and all our public institutions are well on their way towards the same destination. Our Parliament, our highest courts, our hugely bloated

media, educational institutions and the entire bureaucracy, including especially its coercive arms — they are all changing their tune. Like the animals in Orwell’s Animal Farm, they are no longer a choir but a chorus chanting the same doha or couplet: “Hindus good, Muslims bad. Government good, opponents bad.”

The second thing that the Bulli Bai arrests alert us to is that the last line of the couplet is the punch line — the first is only a means towards this end. The anti-Muslim agenda is the most potent weapon in the electoral armoury of the current regime, the rath or chariot that has brought it to power. Its pitch and intensity can be adjusted according to need. But the new — and increasingly, the only — benchmark for our institutions is the government line on any issue. They are behaving as though their highest duty is to obey the stated and even the unstated wishes of the ruling regime rather than the Constitution or their own charters.

Immature, cannot be a role model like this: Gambhir slams Kohli

NEW DELHI

Virat Kohli's outburst against a controversial DRS decision during the third Test against South Africa was "immature" and with such "exaggerated" reaction, the India skipper will never be a role model to youngsters, feels former opener Gautam Gambhir.

Kohli, his deputy K.L. Rahul and off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin made some unsavoury comments about umpiring and technology in stump mic after rival skipper Dean Elgar got a massive reprieve due to a contentious DRS decision in the last hour on day 3.

"This is really bad. What Kohli did, going near the stump mic and reacting in that manner, that is really immature. This is not what you expect from an international captain, from an Indian captain," Gambhir told Star Sports.

Gambhir pointed out that Mayank Agarwal too had got a reprieve during the first Test in Centurion but it didn't invite similar response from the South African skipper.

"Then technology isn't in your hand. Then you have reacted in the same manner when there was a caught-behind appeal on the leg-side, neither did Dean Elgar react in that manner. During that Mayank Agarwal appeal, it looked out from the naked eye, but Elgar did not react in that manner," he said.

In the 21st over, Elgar was adjudged LBW by the on-field umpire Marais Erasmus when he was hit on the pads by an Ashwin delivery. However, the decision was overturned on review.

Livid with the decision, a fuming Kohli went up to the stumps and said: "Focus on your team as well when they



shine the ball eh, not just the opposition. Trying to catch people all the time."

Rahul and Ashwin also expressed similar reactions. It's the whole country against 11 guys, said K.L. Rahul, while Ashwin slammed the broadcaster: "You should find better ways to win, Super-Sport.""No matter what you say, stuff like he plays with his heart on his sleeve, this reaction was an exaggerated one and you can't be a role model in this manner. No budding cricketers would want to see this kind of a reaction, especially from the Indian captain," Gambhir said. "No matter the result in this Test match, this is not what you expect from a Test captain who has led the team for so long. I hope Rahul Dravid has a word with him, because the type of captain Dravid was, he would have never reacted in this manner."

Former South African batter Daryll Cullinan also slammed Kohli for his outburst, saying for too long he has got away with such behaviour.

Djokovic's Australian visa cancelled again by immigration minister

NEW DELHI

Australia has cancelled the visa of tennis star Novak Djokovic once again, which means he could be deported ahead of the start of the Australian Open.

The Serbian star though could launch another legal challenge to stay and compete.

Australia's immigration minister Alex Hawke released a statement saying that he exercised his power to cancel the visa on health and good order grounds.

A few days ago, the Federal Circuit and Family Court in Melbourne quashed a prior cancellation decision by the Australian Border Force as Djokovic had not taken his vaccination as mandated by the country.

"In making this decision, I carefully considered information provided to me by the department of home affairs, the Australian Border Force and Mr Djokovic," read the statement.

Djokovic gets top seed after Aus Open draw delayed over his visa issue

Djokovic clarifies mistake made in



immigration document

Novak Djokovic's family 'grateful' for his release

The 34-year-old Serb had his visa cancelled on arrival in Melbourne when his vaccination exemption was questioned, but he won a legal battle on procedural grounds that allowed him to stay in the country.

If Djokovic does not appeal the minister's decision he will be deported and may be barred from being granted any future visa for the next three years.

The defending champion was then awarded the top seed at the announcement of the draw.

Djokovic travelled to Australia seeking to win a 21st Grand Slam titles to break the men's record of 20 he shared with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

Djokovic practises for Australian Open as he waits for visa ruling

NEW DELHI

World tennis number one Novak Djokovic took to the court on Friday to practise for the Australian Open as he waited to hear whether Australia will cancel his visa for a second time, threatening his bid for a record 21st major tennis title.

A relaxed looking Djokovic practised his serves and returns with his entourage on an empty court at Melbourne Park, occasionally resting in a chair to wipe sweat from his face.

Djokovic, the defending champion, was included in Thursday's draw as top seed and was due to face fellow Serb Miomir Kecmanovic for his opening match, probably on Monday or Tuesday.

A decision to again cancel his visa over COVID-19 entry regulations could set up a second court battle by the Serbian tennis star, after a court quashed an earlier revocation and released him

from immigration detention on Monday.

Melbourne's The Age newspaper cited a source in Prime Minister Scott Morrison's Liberal Party as saying the government was "strongly leaning" towards revoking the visa again.

Djokovic, a vaccine sceptic, fuelled widespread anger in Australia when he announced last week he was heading to Melbourne for the Australian Open with a medical exemption to requirements for visitors to be inoculated against COVID-19.

On arrival, Australian Border Force decided his exemption was invalid and put him in an immigration detention hotel alongside asylum-seekers at for several days.

Australia has endured some of the world's longest lockdowns, has a 90% vaccination rate among adults, and has seen a runaway Omicron outbreak bring nearly a million cases in the last two



weeks.

Finance Minister Simon Birmingham said on morning television on Friday that visa decisions were a matter for the country's Immigration Minister Alex Hawke, but the policy settings of the

League Cup: Arsenal earns 0-0 at Liverpool despite Xhaka red

NEW DELHI

If Granit Xhaka getting sent off came as no real surprise, Arsenal holding out with 10 men at Anfield certainly was a shock.

Liverpool failed to take advantage of Xhaka's 24th-minute red card for a chest-high lunge on Diogo Jota and was held to a 0-0 draw by Arsenal in the first leg of the English League Cup semifinals on Thursday.

With star forwards Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane at the African Cup of Nations, Liverpool lacked a cutting edge up front against an already-depleted Arsenal team that lost two more players—Cedric Soares and Bukayo Saka—to injury during the game.

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta was looking for a reaction after a humbling loss to second-tier Nottingham Forest in the third round of the FA Cup on Sunday and he got it with some obdurate defending, with centre backs Ben White and Gabriel particularly impressive.

"There is so much fight in this team," White said. "It's hard enough to come here with 11 men and to get one sent off is not easy. Absolutely superb from everyone."

His job was made much tougher by Xhaka, the hot-headed Switzerland midfielder who has now collected five red cards since joining Arsenal in 2016. No other Premier League player has so many in that period.

Xhaka was chasing back after Jota, who was attempting to run onto a long ball by Andy Robertson, when he stuck out his left leg and smashed it into the chest of the Portugal international. Jota would have been through on goal and the referee went straight to his back pocket to show the red card.



It was Xhaka's second red card of the season—the other was in a 5-0 loss at Manchester City in the Premier League when Arsenal's defense proceeded to fold. Not this time.

Liverpool, which beat Arsenal 4-0 in the league at Anfield this season and had previously scored 43 goals in 15 games against the London club under Jurgen Klopp, barely called Arsenal goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale into action until the final frantic minutes.

Takumi Minamino wasted the biggest chance for Liverpool, slicing his shot over the crossbar with the goal at his mercy in the 89th minute after Ramsdale flapped at a cross from the right.

Liverpool might have had 78 per cent possession but managed only one shot on target, and that came in second-half stoppage time.

"I think we showed great fight, determination, attitude, brotherhood, Arteta said. "We played the game we had to play. It's not our game but we

had to play it."

The winner of this semifinal will meet Chelsea in the title match at Wembley Stadium next month, and the second leg is at Arsenal's Emirates Stadium next week.

"It's a two-legged game and it's half-time, Klopp said. "I can't remember when it was 0-0 at halftime, wherever I've been, and I thought, We have no chance.' We will give it a proper go."

Mane and Salah will again be missing, though Arsenal's absentee list is even longer at the moment heading into Sunday's North London derby against Tottenham in the league.

Arteta's midfield looks particularly threadbare, with Xhaka now suspended, Martin Odegaard out with COVID-19, Emile Smith Rowe injured and both Thomas Partey and Mohamed Elneny at the African Cup.

Arteta ended up deploying Saka and Gabriel Martinelli as centre midfielders for much of the game after Xhaka's sending-off.

India Open: Sindhu advances, Saina knocked out

NEW DELHI

Two-time Olympic medallist shuttler P.V. Sindhu and H.S. Prannoy advanced to the quarterfinals but Sania Nehwal's campaign ended at the Yonex-Sunrise India Open on Thursday.

Former champion and 2012 Olympic bronze medallist Saina suffered a 17-21 9-21 straight-game loss to compatriot Malvika Bansod.

Malvika, ranked 111th, took 34 minutes to see off the former world number 1.

Saina has had a prolonged injury hiatus from the sport. The former world number one was forced to miss a lot of tournaments in 2021, including the World Championships, due to multiple injuries.

Still not completely fit, Saina reached the second round of the India Open, where she was not even expecting to play.

She advanced after her opponent Czech Republic's Tereza Svabikova suffered a back injury and retired mid-way, on Wednesday. Saina was leading 22-20, 1-0 at that time.

Earlier, the top-seeded Sindhu had no



problem dispatching fellow India Ira Sharma 21-10 21-10.

She will meet compatriot Ashmita Chaliha, who got the better of french shuttler Yaelle Hoyaux 21-17 21-14, in the quarterfinal.

Prannoy received a walkover as his opponent Mithun Manjunath withdrew from the tournament after testing positive

for COVID-19.

The men's top seed Kidambi Srikanth, doubles player Ashwini Ponnappa, Ritika Rahul Thakkar, Treasa Jolly, Simran Aman Singh and Khushi Gupta are the other players who had to withdraw from the tournament due to the positive COVID-19 results, which led to several walkovers.

exemption against that," he said on Channel 9's Today Show.

An online poll by the News Corp media group found that 83% favoured the government trying to deport the tennis star. Greek world number four Stefanos Tsitsipas said Djokovic was "playing by his own rules" and making vaccinated players "look like fools".

"No-one really thought they could come to Australia unvaccinated and not having to follow the protocols... it takes a lot of daring to do and putting the grand slam at risk, which I don't think many players would do," Tsitsipas said in an interview with India's WION news channel.

"The stats say 98 per cent of players have been vaccinated and did what they had to do in order to come and perform and play in Australia," he said.

The saga has intensified global debate over rights of choice for vaccines and become a tricky issue for prime

minister Morrison as he campaigns for re-election. Australia is due to hold an election by May, and while Morrison's government has won support at home for its tough stance on border security, it has not escaped criticism over the botched handling of Djokovic's visa.

Fans, however, including many Serbian Australians, gave him noisy support when he was detained, anti-vaxxers have hailed him as a hero, and his family have portrayed him as a champion for individual rights. The Committee for Melbourne, which represents business and arts leaders, says the city's reputation for hosting events has been damaged by the dispute.

"The Djokovic visa and vaccination saga has reflected poorly on all those involved, which is a tragedy considering the excellence of our infrastructure and tournament planning," Chief executive of the committee Martine Letts told The Age.

I will finish off the BJP: Swami Prasad Maurya

NEW DELHI

The Samajwadi Party brought together its new inductees on a stage at its office in Lucknow- a gathering it claimed would have run into lakhs had the Model Code of Conduct not been in place.

Will disruption strategy help BJP in upcoming assembly polls?

Swami Prasad Maurya's daughter claims her father has not joined any party yet

The first of the newly minted Samajwadis was Dharam Singh Saini, former Ayush minister who said that in Akhilesh Yadav he saw a “practicality, humanity and communal amity that is not seen in any leader of the world”. He said that he joined the party to ensure that Yadav became CM in 2022 and PM in 2024. Saini was formerly with the BSP.

Swami Prasad Maurya, former labour minister said that while he might not have made a party, he had a massive support base. “It is recorded that any party that I leave is not seen after that”, claimed Maurya. His reference was to the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) from which he had switched over just before the 2017 elections.

Maurya said that the BJP rode to power on false promises made to the backward castes. “They got votes by projecting either Keshav Prasad Maurya or Swami Prasad Maurya as the chief minister”, Maurya said.

There would be a tsunami of change, Maurya said. “This will leave



the BJP in the Indian Ocean”.

Maurya used the stage to highlight some issues he had opposed in his time as minister- including the outsourcing of jobs and the appointment of general category candidates on posts reserved for SC and ST candidates. “By privatizing all public entities this government will effectively stop reservations altogether”.

Responding to media criticism that he had resigned too late in the day, he said that he had hoped that the BJP after having been in the wilderness for so long would have better sense to govern. “Now is the time to blast off the party...I will finish off the BJP. It is time to free UP from the exploitation of the BJP”, he said.

When it was his turn, Yadav said, “Though our Baba CM does not know

how to play cricket, even if he did, he would have dropped the catch”.

“These leaders do not come alone. They come with their supporters”, he said welcoming new joiners.

He said that in the alliances that the party had struck for the forthcoming polls, 80 per cent of the electorate was already with the party. “Now even the remaining 20 per cent are with the party (SP)...they (BJP) claim they will get 3/4ths of the seats but they will get three or four seats”, Yadav said.

Government spokesperson Sidharth Nath Singh said, “The BJP gives tickets based on feedback...when you know this (that ticket will not be given) you will run. The doors of Akhilesh are anyone open to admit all. We have no objection. The score will still be 300 plus”.

NCB writes to ED to examine money laundering charges against Sameer Khan

NEW DELHI

The travails of Sameer Khan, son-in-law of NCP minister Nawab Malik, may be far from over with the Narcotics Control Bureau writing to the Enforcement Directorate to examine whether charges of money laundering can be made out against him.

The internal communication comes after the NCB claimed he was involved in the sale and purchase of herbal tobacco in January last year and started examining the financial transactions made by him.

According to senior officials, disproportionate amounts have been found running into high-value transactions in the case which the anti-narcotics agency has found to be suspicious. Since the NCB does not have the mandate to probe the financial aspect of the case, it has asked the ED to examine the matter. If the ED finds sufficient sums that indicate money laundering, it can probe the matter further under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

The NCB's case against Khan has been termed a case of “political vendetta” by the NCP leader who has claimed his son-in-law is being framed by the central agencies. Sameer Khan has already got bail in the NCB case in September even as the anti-narcotics agency has moved the court this month for its cancellation.

In its bail order, the special court said there was no case of illicit drug



trafficking and conspiracy against Sameer Khan. The high court is yet to hear the NCB's plea. Khan was arrested by the NCB on January 13, 2021.

Malik, however, alleged that they have been harassed since they exposed the NCB's raid on a cruise in Mumbai in which Aryan Khan, son of Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan, was arrested.

The NCB and other central agencies will have to proceed carefully with sufficient evidence given the fact that it has suffered huge embarrassment over the handling of the Aryan Khan case. In its detailed order granting bail to

Aryan Khan, the court once again said there was no evidence to suggest a conspiracy.

The matter not only turned into an ugly political battle with fingers being pointed at the alleged misuse of central agencies, but also invited criticism for the shoddy investigation by its Mumbai unit.

The case finally saw the repatriation of NCB's Mumbai zonal director Sameer Wankhede, who is facing a vigilance inquiry. Malik and Wankhede traded charges in public with the latter being accused of bribery. Wankhede has denied all charges. But the NCB has been in a tough spot ever since.

UN chief warns millions of Afghans are on "verge of death"

NEW DELHI

The United Nations chief warned Thursday that millions of Afghans are on the “verge of death,” urging the international community to fund the UN's USD 5 billion humanitarian appeals, release Afghanistan's frozen assets and jumpstart its banking system to avert economic and social collapse.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told reporters that “freezing temperatures and frozen assets are a lethal combination for the people of Afghanistan,” and “rules and conditions that prevent money from being used to save lives and the economy must be suspended in this emergency situation.”

Afghanistan's aid-dependent economy was already stumbling when the Taliban seized power in mid-August amid the chaotic departure of US and NATO troops after 20 years.

The international community froze Afghanistan's assets abroad and halted economic support, unwilling to work with the Taliban, given their reputation for brutality during their 1996-2001 rule and refusal to educate girls and allow women to work.

The UN says 8.7 million Afghans are on the brink of starvation and Guterres said it's critical to rapidly inject liquidity into the Afghan economy “and avoid a meltdown that would lead to poverty, hunger and destitution for millions.”

It's “absolutely essential” to avoid a breakdown, he stressed, “because with the present situation you have Afghans on the verge of death.”

The secretary-general said the United States has “a very important role to play because most of the financial system in the world operates in dollars” and the United States has frozen \$ 7 billion in

Afghan foreign reserves, mainly held in the US.

UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths and Peter Maurer, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, are scheduled to hold a virtual meeting Friday with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Guterres said one reason for the meeting is to try and create “mechanisms that allow for an effective injection of funds into the Afghan economy and, at the same time, create the conditions for the financial system in Afghanistan to be able to operate in the local currency.”

The UN chief said international funding should be allowed to pay the salaries of doctors, sanitation workers, electrical engineers and other civil servants, as well as help Afghan institutions deliver health care, education and other key services.

Ramveer Upadhyay, BSP's prominent Brahmin face, resigns

NEW DELHI

Ramveer Upadhyay, a prominent Brahmin face of the Bahujan Samaj Party, resigned from the party today.

Upadhyay, who had been with the party for 25 years, is a four-term MLA.

In his resignation letter addressed to party chief Mayawati, Upadhyay wrote that the party had not carried out any evaluation despite the losses in the 2009 and 2014 Lok Sabha elections; and the 2012 and 2017 Vidhan Sabha elections.

“I had demanded this from time to time. I had also apprised you that we would not win seats as per expectation in the 2019 Lok Sabha election as we have lost even our cadre vote”, he wrote.

In May 2019, Upadhyay the minister for power in the Mayawati cabinet, had been expelled from the BSP for anti-party activities.

Upadhyay alleged that the BSP had veered off the ideals and principles of its founder Kanshiram.

The MLA from Sadabad said, “There is no place for honest party workers anymore. Our leader is inaccessible and isolated”.

Upadhyay's disenchantment from the



party is not new. His family members had joined the BJP over the last year. His suspension from the party was for openly supporting rival candidates in the 2019 elections.

In the 2017 elections, the BSP had won 19 seats in the Vidhan Sabha. Since then, 11 MLAs have been sacked from the party- taking the BSP to its lowest

ever count in the state assembly.

Brahmins are among the castes that the BSP is targeting to improve its performance in the forthcoming Vidhan Sabha polls. The party's low key election campaign has included Brahmin sammelans across the state under the watch of party general secretary, Satish Chandra Mishra.

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N. Korea fires likely missile in 3rd launch this month

NEW DELHI

North Korea on Friday fired at least one possible ballistic missile in its third weapons launch this month, officials in South Korea and Japan said, in an apparent reprisal for fresh sanctions imposed by the Biden administration for its continuing test launches.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the weapon was fired toward the east but did not immediately say where it landed or provided other details.

Japan's Prime Minister's Office and the Defense Ministry also said they detected the North Korean launch and said it was possibly a ballistic missile.

The Japanese coast guard issued a safety advisory, saying an object had possibly landed already. It urged vessels between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, as well as the East China Sea and the North Pacific, to “pay attention to further information and to keep clear when recognizing falling object.”

The Biden administration on Wednesday imposed sanctions on five North Koreans over their roles in obtaining equipment and technology for the North's missile programs in its response to the North's missile test this week. It also said it would seek new U.N. sanctions.

The announcement by the Treasury Department came just hours after North

Korea said leader Kim Jong Un oversaw a successful test of a hypersonic missile on Tuesday that he claimed would greatly increase the country's nuclear “war deterrent.”

Tuesday's test was North Korea's second demonstration of its purported hypersonic missile in a week. The country in recent months has been ramping up tests of new, potentially nuclear-capable missiles designed to overwhelm missile defense systems in the region, as it continues to expand its military capabilities amid a freeze in diplomacy with the United States.

In a statement carried by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency, an unidentified Foreign Ministry spokesperson defended the North's launches of purported hypersonic missiles as a righteous exercise of self-defense.

The spokesperson said the new sanctions underscore hostile U.S. intent aimed at “isolating and stifling” the North despite Washington's repeated calls for Pyongyang to resume diplomacy that has stalled over disagreements about sanctions relief and nuclear disarmament steps.

The spokesperson accused the United States of maintaining a “gangster-like” stance, saying that the North's development of the new missile is part

of its efforts to modernize its military and does not target any specific country or threaten the security of its neighbours.

“Nevertheless, the US is intentionally escalating the situation even with the activation of independent sanctions, not content with referring the DPRK's just activity to the UN Security Council,” the spokesperson said, using an abbreviation of North Korea's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. “This shows that though the present U.S. administration is trumpeting about diplomacy and dialogue, it is still engrossed in its policy for isolating and stifling the DPRK ... If the U.S. adopts such a confrontational stance, the DPRK will be forced to take stronger and certain reaction to it,” the spokesperson said.

Hypersonic weapons, which fly at speeds in excess of Mach 5, or five times the speed of sound, could pose a crucial challenge to missile defense systems because of their speed and maneuverability.

Such weapons were on a wish-list of sophisticated military assets Kim unveiled early last year along with multi-warhead missiles, spy satellites, solid-fuel long-range missiles and submarine-launched nuclear missiles.

Vedanta Group willing to spend \$12 bn to buy govt stake in BPCL

NEW DELHI

Vedanta Group is willing to spend \$12 billion to acquire government's stake in Bharat Petroleum Corp. Ltd. (BPCL), reports Bloomberg.

The government's plan to sell its stake in India's second-largest fuel retailer has run into rough weather with bidders struggling to find partners.

The government owns 53 percent stake in BPCL, which has a current market capitalisation of around Rs 84,827 crore (\$11.4 billion).

Global sustainability rules that restrict large investments in fossil fuels have put hurdles on global oil majors who want to team up with investment funds.

"We're not going to bid aggressively, but we will put the right price," billionaire chairman Anil Agarwal said in an interview in Riyadh on Wednesday.

The sale, as part of plans to raise a record ?2.1 lakh crore from disinvestment proceeds, is crucial for the govern-



ment because it needs to raise revenues for its spending programs.

"The market cap of the company is about \$11 billion to \$12 billion, so this is the amount of investment we're looking at," Anil Agarwal said.

Besides Vedanta Group, private eq-

uity firms Apollo Global Management and I Squared Capital have also showed interest in acquiring the government's holding in the oil refiner, according to Bloomberg.

India is likely to open the bids for BPCL in March.

Reliance signs MoU to invest Rs 5.95 lakh crore in green energy projects in Gujarat

NEW DELHI

In a bid to make Gujarat net zero and carbon free, Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Limited has signed a MoU for an investment of Rs 5.95 lakh crore in green energy and other projects in the state.

An official of RIL said that over a period of 5 to 10 years, the company would invest Rs 5.95 lakh crore for setting up a renewable energy power plant generating up to 100GW and green hydrogen ecosystem development. The company will develop an ecosystem for assisting small and medium enterprises and encourage entrepreneurs to embrace new technologies and innovations leading to captive use of renewable energy and green hydrogen.

Sources said that this MoU was to be signed at the Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors Summit 2022. The Summit, scheduled to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was postponed due to the rising number of COVID cases in Gujarat. Ambani was to be among the business leaders who were to attend the meet.

Parimal Nathwani, director of corpo-



rate affairs of RIL, said that the bond between RIL and Gujarat is very old and the journey of Reliance began from a mill in Naroda. He said that green energy and other projects would bring in 10 lakh jobs, directly and indirectly, in the state.

Amid Omicron scare, Vibrant Gujarat Summit to be held on Jan 10

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel was also present at the MoU-sign-

ing ceremony on Thursday.

The company, the official said, has begun the process to scout for land in Kutch, Banaskantha and Dholera for the 100 GW renewable energy power project.

RIL is also to invest additional Rs 25,000 crore in existing projects and new ventures in three to five years. This would also include upgradation of the Jio network to 5G.

Australian government cancels Djokovic visa again

NEW DELHI

Australia cancelled Novak Djokovic's visa for a second time on Friday saying the world tennis number one who has not been vaccinated for COVID-19 may pose a health risk, effectively ending his bid for a record 21st Grand Slam title at the Australian Open.

Immigration Minister Alex Hawke used discretionary powers to again cancel Djokovic's visa, after a court quashed an earlier revocation and released him from immigration detention on Monday.

"Today I exercised my power under section 133C(3) of the Migration Act to cancel the visa held by Mr Novak Djokovic on health and good order grounds, on the basis that it was in the public interest to do so," Hawke said in a statement.

Under the section of the Migration Act used to cancel the visa, Djokovic would not



be able to secure a visa to Australia for three years, except in compelling circumstances that affect Australia's interest.

The decision to again cancel his visa over COVID-19 entry regulations raises the prospect of a possible second court battle by the Serbian tennis star to be allowed to stay and play in the Open starting Monday.

A source close to Djokovic's team confirmed that he is considering the decision and weighing his options.

The controversy has assumed an importance that goes beyond tennis: it has intensified a global debate over the rights of the unvaccinated and become a tricky political issue for Prime Minister Scott Morrison as he campaigns for an election that is due by May.

While Morrison's government has won support at

home for its tough stance on border security during the pandemic, it has not escaped criticism over the botched handling of Djokovic's visa.

Djokovic, 34, the Australian Open defending champion, was included in Thursday's draw as top seed and was due to face fellow Serb Miomir Kecmanovic for his opening match, probably on Monday or Tuesday.

A relaxed looking Djokovic practised his serves and returns with his entourage on an empty court at Melbourne Park earlier on Friday, occasionally resting in a chair to wipe sweat from his face.

Djokovic, a vaccine sceptic, fuelled widespread anger in Australia when he announced last week he was heading to Melbourne with a medical exemption to requirements for visitors to be inoculated against COVID-19.

Liverpool frustrated by 10-man Arsenal

NEW DELHI

Liverpool were frustrated by 10-man Arsenal in a 0-0 League Cup semi-final first leg on Thursday at Anfield where the visitors defended superbly after Granit Xhaka's early sending off.

Switzerland international midfielder Xhaka was shown a red card in the 24th minute for a high challenge on Diogo Jota at the edge of the area, catching the Portuguese forward in the

ribs and denying him a scoring opportunity.

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta responded by bringing on defender Rob Holding in place of striker Eddie Nketiah, the hat-trick hero against League One side Sunderland in the quarter-finals, leaving Alexandre Lacazette as the lone man up front.

Despite Liverpool enjoying most of the possession, Arsenal kept them out with an impressive performance under

pressure and still looked dangerous on the break.

The hosts were toothless without their potent strike pairing of Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane, who are playing at the Africa Cup of Nations for Egypt and Senegal respectively.

"I would have preferred to score the goal rather than them getting the red card, especially after the game now," Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp told Sky Sports.

Rising COVID cases, curbs to hurt India's GDP growth: Economists

NEW DELHI

Its been over two years since the first cases of COVID-19 were reported. But, the pandemic continues to cast a shadow on global economy. Despite, the second wave of the COVID-19 that hit hard in April-May 2021, India's GDP grew 20.1 per cent in the June quarter and 8.4 per cent in the September quarter. But, the emergence of the new Omicron variant has once again cast a shadow of uncertainty on the growth.

Several states have imposed a few restrictions on services-related activities, while many offices have also moved back to work from home. Domestic airline passenger traffic too has dropped, which is expected to delay the sector's recovery.

In the backdrop of the resurgence in COVID cases and continued supply shortages in areas like semiconductors, economists have now revised their GDP growth forecasts.

A few top economists share their views:

Sonal Varma, MD and chief economist (India and Asia ex-Japan), Nomura Securities:

With the third wave rapidly spreading, the voluntary pullbacks and state restrictions are starting to bite. The third wave has led to the Nomura India Business Resumption Index falling to 109.9 for the week ending January 9 from 119.8 during the prior week.

'We are entering the next phase of the bull market, but expect a bumpy ride'

India's FY22 GDP growth at 9.2%, beats estimates

Pakistan moving from geo-political contestation to geo-economic cooperation: FM Qureshi

From a direct standpoint, the restrictions are likely to delay the recovery in the services sector, which even prior to the third wave, was still trailing pre-pandemic levels by 12 percentage points. Previous pandemic waves have led to supply-side disruptions and a



flare-up in inflationary pressures, which tend to persist even after the wave ends, adding another headwind to households' balance sheets.

The third wave will adversely affect growth in January-March 2022, although the loss in momentum should be much less than during the second wave and largely concentrated in services for a shorter duration. Accordingly, we lower our Q1 GDP growth forecast to 3.2 per cent from 5.2 per cent. On a financial year basis, we now expect GDP growth of 8.7 per cent in the year ending March 2022, down from 9.2 per cent, and 7.8 per cent in FY23, down from 8.2 per cent.

M. Govinda Rao, chief economic adviser, Brickwork Ratings:

After having witnessed a sequential improvement in the second quarter of FY '22, due to pent-up demand, it appears that the growth rates in the third and fourth quarters need a downward revision. An apparent third wave, rising international crude oil prices, mineral products, steadily increasing costs of raw materials and freight rates, disruptions in semiconductor supply, and coal and power supply are likely to slow down the growth momentum.

For the full fiscal, we expect agricultural activities to be resilient as usual, while the manufacturing and services

sectors will bear the brunt, if the current situation prolongs further. Our GDP estimates for the current fiscal have been revised to 8.5 to 9.0 per cent as against our earlier estimate of 10 per cent.

Aditi Nayar, chief economist, ICRA:

The year-on-year performance of a majority of the available high frequency indicators, such as vehicle registrations, ports cargo traffic, electricity generation, rail freight traffic, GST e-way bills and non-oil merchandise exports has deteriorated in Q3 (Oct-Dec) FY2022 relative to Q2 FY2022, mainly driven by base normalisation.

The implicit GDP growth of 5.6 per cent for second half of FY2022 built in by the NSO (National Statistical Office) does not factor in the evolving impact of Omicron. Our sense is that after a 6.0 to 6.5 per cent rise in Q3 (Oct-Dec) FY2022, the GDP expansion is set to slip below 5.0 per cent in the ongoing quarter.

The widening restrictions triggered by Omicron will thwart the nascent recovery in the contact-intensive services. Amid the ongoing uncertainty, we currently peg the impact of Omicron on GDP growth in Q4 (Jan-March) FY2022 at around 40 bps, posing a mild downside to our FY2022 GDP growth forecast of 9.0 per cent.

Tesla India launch: 'Working through lot of challenges' says Musk

NEW DELHI

US-based Tesla is working through a lot of challenges with the government to launch its products in India, the electric car major's founder and CEO Elon Musk said on Thursday.

Responding to a tweet on the company's plans to launch its products in India, Musk tweeted: "Still working through a lot of challenges with the government".

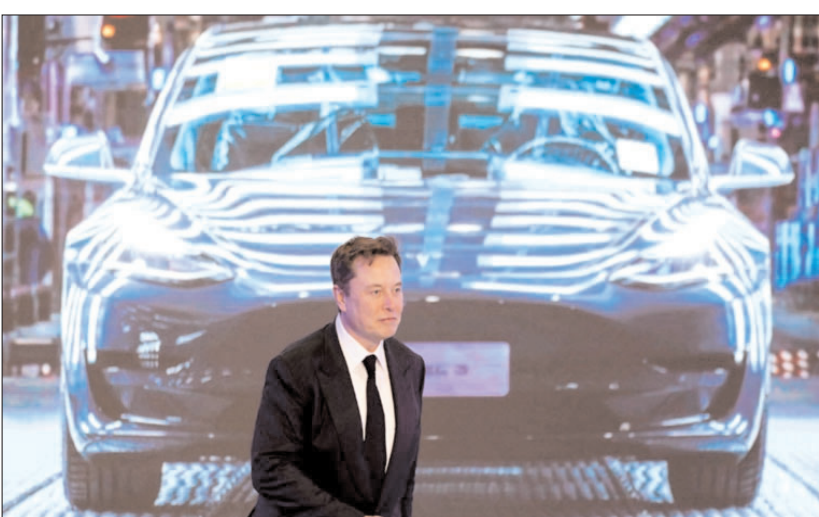
Last year, Tesla had sought a reduction in import duties on electric vehicles (EVs) in India.

The heavy industries ministry had asked the electric car major to first start manufacturing its iconic electric vehicles in India before any tax concessions can be considered.

The government sources had noted that they were not giving such concessions to any auto firm, and giving duty benefits to Tesla will not send a good signal to other companies that have invested billions of dollars in India.

At present, cars imported as completely built units (CBUs) attract customs duty, ranging from 60 to 100 per cent, depending on the engine size and cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value less or above \$40,000.

In a letter to the road ministry, the US



firm had last year said that the effective import tariff of 110 per cent on vehicles with customs value above \$40,000 is "prohibitive" to zero-emission vehicles.

The electric car major had requested the government to standardise the tariff on electric cars to 40 per cent, irrespective of the customs value, and withdraw the social welfare surcharge of 10 per cent on such vehicles.

It had said that these changes would boost the development of the Indian EV ecosystem and the company will make significant direct investments in sales, service and charging infrastructure; and significantly increase procurement from India for its global operations.

In January 2021, Tesla registered its Indian arm amid indications that the company is set to enter the country's automobile market.

According to a regulatory filing, the firm registered Tesla India Motors and Energy Pvt Ltd with RoC (Registrar Of Companies) Bangalore.

The company has been registered as an unlisted private entity with a paid-up capital of Rs 1 lakh.

Gambhir slams Kohli for stump mic reaction

NEW DELHI

Virat Kohli's frustrated stump mic rant has taken the spotlight after an absorbing day's play on Thursday in the third and final Test against South Africa in Cape Town.

Former cricketer Gautam Gambhir slammed India's Test skipper Kohli for his reaction to the controversial DRS decision.

Former Indian opening batter added that Kohli's reaction was 'exaggerated' and 'really immature'.

Team India was visibly irked after a controversial Decision Review System (DRS) call helped South Africa skipper Dean Elgar get his LBW decision overturned in the ongoing fourth innings of the Cape Town Test.

The incident occurred in the 21st over of the innings which was bowled by Ashwin. The spinner bowled a tossed-up delivery and it drifted in, beating Elgar on the inside edge and the ball struck him right in front of the stumps, and on-field umpire Marais Erasmus raised his finger. However, Elgar reviewed the decision and replays showed that the ball was going over the stumps, and hence the decision was overturned.

The controversial call evoked different reactions from KL Rahul, skipper Virat Kohli, and spinner Ravichandran Ashwin.

First, the mic caught Ashwin as saying: "You should find better ways to win Supersport (South Africa broadcaster)." Then Virat Kohli walked towards the stump mic and said: "Focus on your

team as well and not just the opposition, trying to catch people all the time." At last, KL Rahul said: "Whole country playing against XI guys."

After the end of the day's play, Gambhir in conversation with Star Sports said: "This is really bad. What Kohli did, going near the stump mic and reacting in that manner, that is really immature. This is not what you expect from an international captain, from an Indian captain. Then technology isn't in your hand. Then you have reacted in the same manner when there was a caught-behind appeal on the leg-side, neither did Dean Elgar react in that manner. During that Mayank Agarwal appeal, it looked OUT from the naked eye, but Elgar did not react in that manner," he said."

Bollywood veterans and young stars are breaking the mould with OTT projects

The opportunity to create a wide variety of content with global reach is encouraging filmmakers and actors to go digital. After the pandemic brought the entertainment industry to a standstill, filmmakers and production houses had to choose to release their works through OTT platforms. In 2020 itself, there were more than 50 Bollywood releases on OTT platforms.

Though there were a few OTT releases in Bollywood even before the pandemic, like Vicky Kaushal-starrer Love Per Square Foot, digital platforms have gained more prominence now. Amitabh Bachchan’s Gulabo Sitabo was the first major Bollywood film to skip theatrical release and debut on a streaming platform amid the pandemic. The popularity of streaming services in our lives has only increased since then.

Interestingly, streaming platforms have also made way for the comeback of many talented actors who had taken a break from the big screen. With diverse content and non-stereotypical roles, OTT platforms have opened up a new space for these actors, and audiences are thrilled to watch them perform again.

Former beauty queen and actress Sushmita Sen made her acting comeback after a decade through the web series Aarya, which also bagged an International Emmys nomination. She recently announced the second season of the show. Raveena



Tandon, who has been in the showbiz for over 30 years now, recently made her way back digitally through Netflix thriller series Aranyak. She said that OTT platforms offered a lot of shows that portrayed strong women as central characters and that she was glad to be part of this change.

Poonam Dhillon who is back in the game seemed to enjoy the transition to OTT. She had mentioned in an interview earlier that she is glad to see the change and how there are more opportunities when it comes to OTT platforms. Kajol, too, earned praises for her comeback through Netflix release Tribhanga last year. “Dhak Dhak” dancer and actress Shilpa Shetty also made her comeback through the digital platform last year—Hungama 2 released on Disney plus Hotstar. After a decade-long break, Pooja Bhatt returned to acting

through the Netflix Series Bombay Begums.

Actor Saif Ali Khan, who had already made his appearance on OTT through Sacred Games, was among the first mainstream Bollywood actors to enter the digital medium. He always had a positive outlook towards the medium and believed that OTT allowed people to see everyone as equals.

This year, too, many popular big-screen actors are set to make their digital debut. Actor Ajay Devgn is foraying into the digital space with the crime-drama series Rudra: The Edge of Darkness. Shahid Kapoor is excited and anxious at the same time to mark his presence on OTT through Raj and DK’s drama-thriller series that will release on Amazon Prime Video later this year. Finding Anamika, a Netflix release, will also mark the debut of actress-dancer Madhuri Dixit. The

movie is a suspenseful family drama and also stars Sanjay Kapoor who has already marked his presence on OTT through Lust Stories, The Gone Game and The Last Hour.

Popular comedian and TV show host Kapil Sharma is set to tickle your funny bone on Netflix as well. The trailer for his Netflix show I’m Not Done Yet, which marks his digital debut, is already making headlines. Kareena Kapoor Khan has also hinted about an OTT release soon to mark her comeback after a short break from movies. Juhi Chawla, Soha Ali Khan, Sonakshi Sinha and Jaya Bachchan are some other actresses who are expected to have an OTT release this year.

Many others are yet to announce their digital release but one thing is guaranteed—everyone is excited to be back in the business through the digital platforms.

Vicky Kaushal gives a warm hug to Katrina Kaif as they celebrate their first Lohri after the wedding – view pics

Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif celebrated Lohri yesterday. The two lovebirds’ first Indian festival after their Big Fat Bollywood wedding on December 9. Vicky Kaushal took to his social media to handle a couple of hours ago and shared a cosy picture of himself and his gorgeous actress wife, Katrina. He wished everyone on the occasion of Lohri. In the picture, we see Vicky embracing Katrina, as they face the bonfire. The two lovebirds are flashing their widest smiles and it’ll tug at every VicKat fans’ heartstrings. It seems Katrina has worn a Punjabi suit while Vicky is seen in casuals, tracks. Check out Katrina and Vicky’s Lohri celebrations here:

Katrina Kaif also shared some mushy pictures in her Instagram stories of their Lohri celebrations. Katrina and Vicky’s happiness in the pictures will leave y’all gushing. Check out Kat’s Instagram stories here:



Aditya Roy Kapur begins shooting for his debut OTT project- The Night Manager

While back reports surfaced that Hrithik Roshan had been roped in for the official Hindi remake of the show The Night Manager. However, soon after rumours emerge that Roshan had opted out of the venture. Now we hear that, Aditya Roy Kapur has begun shooting for the adaptation which will mark his OTT debut.

Kriti KharbandaSharvari WaghSharvari WaghSharvari WaghSharvari WaghPriyanka Chopra JonasPriyanka Chopra Jonas

Says a source, “After Hrithik opted out of the adaptation of The Night Manager the makers roped in Aditya Roy Kapur to essay the role that was originally played by Tom Hiddleston. In fact, Aditya has already begun shooting for the show”. While an official announcement of the shoot commencement is awaited, it will mark yet another Bollywood celebrity making the shift to OTT



post the pandemic.

As for the show, The Night Manager is an espionage thriller where a clandestine

agent and a hidden armaments dealer engage in a frantic cat and mouse chase.

Los Angeles police investigate Ye after battery complaint

Police are investigating after a battery report was filed Thursday against Ye, the rapper formerly known as Kanye West.

The incident that spurred the complaint took place in downtown Los Angeles at about 3 am Thursday, LAPD spokeswoman Redina Puentes said. No arrests have been made.

The street where the alleged battery happened is outside Soho West, a members-only downtown club popular with celebrities.

An email seeking comment from a representative for Ye, the 44-year-old rapper, producer and fashion designer who legally changed his name last year, was not immediately returned.

He is in the midst of divorce proceedings with Kim Kardashian West, who requested in December that she



be declared legally single and have his former last name dropped.

Allu Arjun clocks 15 million followers on Instagram

Telugu film star Allu Arjun on Friday expressed gratitude to his fans and well-wishers for their unending love and support as he crossed the 15 million followers mark on Instagram.

The 39-year-old actor, who is currently basking in the glory of his latest release Pushpa: The Rise, shared a picture of himself on the photo-sharing app and celebrated the milestone.

“15 M. Thank you soo much for all the love you all shower. Humbled. Gratitude Forever. And Happy Sankranti,” Arjun captioned the post.

Arjun made his debut in 2003 with Gangotri and rose to prominence in the next



year with Sukumar’s Arya.

In his two-decade long career, he has featured in the mainstream cinema films such as Bunny, De-

samuduru, Parugu and Ala Vaikuntapuramlo.

Arjun is set to begin shooting from March for the second part of Pushpa, titled

Pushpa: The Rule. He is also speculated to team up with filmmakers A R Murugodoss and Prashant Neel for their upcoming projects.

“We are going ahead with our release of Bangarraju”, says Nagarjuna

Nagarjuna says his producers are going ahead with the release of the out-and-out comedy Bangarraju which stars Nag and his son Naga Chaitanya. Says Nag, “We are releasing as per schedule on January 14. The third wave is not that strong in Hyderabad and Andhra. Yesterday there were huge traffic jams in Hyderabad as people made their way back to their villages. We are confident that people would want to see our film.”

Team Brahmastra with S.S. Rajamouli in HyderabadBrahmastraBrahmastraBrahmastraPhotos: Nagarjuna spotted at the old Dharma office today-Nagarjuna, Aditi Rao Hydari, Krystle Dsouza and others snapped at the airportCelebs grace Saina Nehwal’s wedding receptionBrahmastra

Nag is confident of getting his audience, “It is the kind of escapist no-brainer that people need right now. We have no intellectual pretensions in Bangarraju. It is a straightforward escapist entertainer meant to make people forget their worries for two hours.”

But Rajamouli chose to postpone the release of RRR again.

Nag reasons, “But postponing that film is not the same thing as postponing our film. We are targeting our film at predominantly an Andhra-Telangana audience whereas RRR is meant for a pan-India audience. In fact why just India? RRR is aimed at a global audience. There is no comparison between the expected reach of their film and ours.”

Bag is confident that audiences will turn up in movie theatres for Bangarraju “There is a tradition of watching movies in Andhra and Telangana for Makkar Sankranti. They do their pujas and then they dress up in new clothes and go see a movie. Every year as many as 4-5 big film are released on Makar Sankranti. This time, the situation being what it is, it’s just Bangarraju. I am not saying to take risks to see it. But mask up, take all



precautions and you are promised a super time. It is actually a super-hero film.

Nag calls Bangarraja a super-hero though not like the Malayalam blockbuster Minnal Murali “Bangarraju is not a super-hero film in that sense. Neither Chaitanya nor I get into super-hero suits. But it is about powers that guide us through life. In Indian culture we believe that our ancestors look over us. Bangarraju is about that. It also has a wise thoughtful snake. It’s a crazy crazy film, as mad as Manmohan Desai’s cinema. Audiences should leave their brains behind and come for it.”

Nag shares screen space with his son Naga Chaitanya. The younger Akkineni was not nervous of his father’s presence. “If he was, I didn’t see any nervousness. I saw a remarkable change in Chaitanya during Bangarraju. When we did Manam together he was new and raw. Now after Love Story last year, I saw a very confident co-actor in Bangarraju. Initially Chaitanya was nervous about doing something so over-the-top.

But he gradually got a hang of it. By the time we completed the film he was as confident as me.”

Chaitanya conducted himself with dignity during the family crisis last year. Speaking for the first time on the family crisis when Naga Chaitanya’s wife Samantha ended their marriage, Nargajuna says, “I am very proud of how calm he remained through it all. He was not provoked into uttering a single word. Like any father I was very worried about him. But he was more worried about me than I was about him. He would ask me, ‘You okay, Dad?’ and I’d be like, errr, ‘Isn’t that what I should be asking you?’

Looking back at the challenges that destiny threw at his family last year Nag says, “I would rather focus on the good than the bad. Both my sons broke through the so-called jinx to deliver mature performances in hit films. I am proud of both Chaitanya and Akhil for what they achieved in Love Story and Most Eligible Bachelor.”

Soaring Covid-19 cases renew US debate over mask mandates

Officials across the US are again weighing how and whether to impose mask mandates as Covid-19 infections soar and the American public grows ever wearier of pandemic-related restrictions.

Much of the debate centers around the nation’s schools, some of which have closed due to infection-related staffing issues. In a variety of places, mask mandates are being lifted or voted down.

The changes come as the federal government assesses the supply of medical-grade respirator face coverings, such as N95 or KN95 masks. During a briefing Wednesday, White House Covid-19 Response Coordinator Jeff Zients said officials were “strongly considering options to make more high-quality masks available to all Americans,” noting the government has a stockpile of more than 750 million N95 masks.

The best mask “is the one that you will wear and the one you can keep on all day long, that you can tolerate in public indoor settings,” said Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

On Monday, officials in Wyoming’s capital city voted to end a mask mandate for students and teachers that had been in place since September. The Cheyenne school district also reduced Covid-19 isolation requirements, voting to require that only people with symptoms and positive tests—not just those exposed—need to stay home for five days and mask for five days thereafter.

The University of Missouri’s governing board on Tuesday rejected the university system president’s request to temporarily require masks on the Columbia campus, as well as a mandate specific to classrooms and labs.

A school board meeting was canceled Monday in Wichita, Kansas, after three new members refused to wear masks for a swearing-in ceremony. Meanwhile in the Topeka area, elected officials rejected a plea to



mandate masks, urging people to be cautious but saying they were not ready for a requirement.

Some jurisdictions are making the move on their own toward more stalwart masking policies, including requiring higher-grade mask materials.

Last week, the University of Arizona announced it would require a medical-grade mask in indoor spaces where social distancing is not possible. The school said on its website that it no longer considers cloth masks to be adequate, although a cloth mask can be worn over a medical-grade mask to improve fit and increase protection.

A new indoor mask mandate takes effect Wednesday in New Orleans ahead of the Mardi Gras season. Louisiana’s statewide coronavirus daily hospitalization numbers have increased sevenfold in three weeks—a spike that has strained hospitals, where emergency room waits are sometimes as long as 12 hours, according to the city’s health director, Dr. Jennifer Avegno.

Health officials in Omaha, Nebraska, announced a temporary mask mandate on Tuesday, but the state has threatened to sue if the rule is imposed as planned. Omaha City Council President Pete Festersen said a majority of the council supported the move.

“This is not a decision I made lightly. This was not an easy decision at all, and I know that it’s going to

create some waves,” Douglas County Health Director Lindsay Huse said. “But this is a tool that we have in our toolbox. We have research, evidence, out there showing that masks decrease transmission.”

Other places hesitated to bring back requirements that ended months ago. In Michigan, where state officials said record-high Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations could peak in late January or early February before beginning to drop, health leaders remained reluctant to reinstate restrictions or masking mandates. They continue to implore people to get vaccinated, get booster shots, wear well-fitting masks in public and avoid large gatherings.

Elizabeth Hertel, director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, recommended that people wear an N95 mask or two well-fitting face coverings. A parent group has called for school mask requirements, which are in place in a majority of individual districts but not at the statewide level.

In Utah, as lawmakers prepared to begin meeting for the year, GOP Gov. Spencer Cox exempted the Capitol and other state facilities from a municipal mask mandate. Jenny Wilson, Salt Lake County’s Democratic mayor, said the governor did not have the authority to make exceptions to the policy, which requires N95 and KN95 or similar masks for a month in indoor spaces, including schools.

Omicron quickly overtaking Delta globally in terms of circulation

Omicron is quickly overtaking the Delta variant of COVID-19 and becoming dominant around the world, a senior WHO official has warned, with the global health agency cautioning that there is “increasing evidence” Omicron is able to evade immunity but has less disease severity as compared to other variants.

It could take some time for Omicron to overtake Delta in some countries, because it depends on the level of circulation of the Delta variant in those countries, Infectious Disease Epidemiologist and COVID-19 Technical Lead at the World Health Organisation (WHO) Maria Van Kerkhove said on Tuesday.

“Omicron has been detected in all countries where we have good sequencing and it’s likely to be in all countries around the world. It is quickly, in terms of its circulation, overtaking Delta. And so Omicron is becoming the dominant variant that is being detected,” Kerkhove said during a virtual questions and answers session.

She further cautioned that even though there is some information that Omicron causes less severe disease than Delta, “it’s not a mild disease” because “people are still being hospitalized for Omicron.”

The COVID-19 Weekly Epidemiological Update, released by the WHO, said that over 15 million new COVID-19 cases were reported globally in the week of January 3-9, a 55 per cent increase as compared to the previous week when about 9.5 million cases were reported.

Over 43,000 new deaths were reported in the past week. As of 9 January, over 304 million confirmed

COVID-19 cases and over 5.4 million deaths have been reported.

The highest numbers of new cases were reported from the US (4,610,359 new cases; a 73 per cent increase), France (1,597,203 new cases; a 46 per cent increase), the UK (1,217,258 new cases; a 10 per cent increase), Italy (1,014,358 new cases; a 57 per cent increase) and India (638,872 new cases; a 524 per cent increase), the update said.

Kerkhove said the 15 million cases reported in the last seven days are a “record high in this pandemic” and are an “underestimate” given the challenges in surveillance around the world and COVID-19 self-tests at home that are not registered.

The WHO update said that the Omicron variant has a substantial growth advantage and is rapidly replacing other variants.

“This variant has been shown to have a shorter doubling time as compared to previous variants, with transmission occurring even amongst those vaccinated or with a history of prior SARS-CoV-2 infection; there is increasing evidence that this variant is able to evade immunity,” the update said.

It said that in terms of disease severity, there is growing evidence that the Omicron variant is less severe as compared to other variants.

Citing a non-peer-reviewed retrospective cohort study from the US, the update said the findings suggest that while the absolute number of cases and hospitalisations among children are currently increasing in the US, the risk of hospitalisation still remains lower compared to other age groups during the period when Omicron is circulating as

compared to the period when the Delta variant was dominant.

The update also noted that since December, six studies have provided evidence of reduced vaccine effectiveness (VE) of COVID-19 vaccines against the Omicron variant.

“While early VE estimates against the Omicron variant should be interpreted with caution due to potential biases, these preliminary results provide evidence of reduced overall effectiveness of vaccines against the Omicron variant, with greater declines in effectiveness with increasing time since vaccination, relative to Delta... While a booster vaccination appears to improve VE against infection and hospitalisation due to the Omicron variant, more data are needed to assess both the magnitude and duration of the protection,” the update said. The WHO Technical Advisory Group on COVID-19 Vaccine Composition (TAG-CO-VAC) said that as coronavirus evolves, the composition of current COVID-19 vaccines may need to be updated, to ensure that “COVID-19 vaccines continue to provide WHO-recommended levels of protection against infection and disease by VOCs, including Omicron and future variants.”

Kerkhove added that as Omicron enters and circulates among vulnerable populations, “we will see increase in hospitalisations and deaths. So please treat this virus as seriously as it needs to be treated. The narrative that it’s the common cold is not true. The narrative that it is just mild is not true. So we have to really fight against it. It’s not the time to give up.”

Kerala could see COVID peak after February 26: IIT Madras

According to experts at IIT Madras, the number of COVID cases in Kerala will reach a peak between February 26 and March 17, if the outbreak continues at the current trajectory. Currently, the number of infections is increasing by 6 per cent to 10 per cent, according to a joint study by the Department of Mathematics and the Centre for Excellence in Computational Mathematics and Data Science.

The study, based on analysis of data available on the COVID 19 tracker, was led by Dr. Jayant Jha, Prof. Nilesh S. Upadhyaya and Prof. S. Sunder. IIT Madras researchers had



earlier warned that the R-value had reached a record value of four. R-value of 4 means one infected person can transmit the virus to

four others.

Kerala on Thursday reported more than 10,000 new COVID-19 cases for the second day running

with the state logging 13,468 new infections, which raised the caseload to 53,17,490.

Covid-19: How bad is Omicron?

For nearly two years, millions of members of the public have been submitting daily health reports to the ZOE Covid Study, helping us to track the pandemic as it unfolds. In particular, the 480 million reports submitted via the study’s app have shown that as the virus has evolved, so too have the symptoms it causes.

Back in 2020, it quickly became clear that the original and alpha versions of the coronavirus caused three very common symptoms—cough, fever and loss of smell—as well as at least 20 others. These included fatigue, headaches, shortness of breath, muscle pains and gastrointestinal problems, as well as more unusual phenomena such as skin rashes and “Covid tongue”.

When delta appeared, we then noticed a shift in the most frequently reported symptoms. Previously common symptoms such as shortness of breath, fever and loss of smell fell down the rankings. Cold-like symptoms—including a runny nose, sore throat and persistent sneezing – became more common, along with a headache and cough, particularly in people who had been vaccinated.

Omicron appears to be continuing the trend set by delta. It’s causing symptoms that are much more like a regular cold, particularly in people who’ve been vaccinated, and fewer general systemic symptoms, such as nausea, muscle pains, diarrhoea and skin rashes.

We looked at health reports from people who reported having Covid in December, as omicron spread through the UK, and compared them with data from early October, when delta was the dominant variant. We then checked our findings from this comparison by also analysing data from a small group of contributors who had been told by the government that their



positive PCR results were suspected or confirmed omicron infections.

What are the symptoms of omicron?

Our analysis showed no significant difference in the overall symptom profile of delta and omicron, with the top five symptoms in both time periods being a runny nose, headache, fatigue, sneezing and a sore throat. But when it comes to the overall prevalence of the symptoms, there are some clear differences.

For example, anosmia (loss of smell or taste) was in the top ten in October but has fallen to 17th place. What was once a key indicator of Covid is now only seen in around one in five people testing positive. And according to our data, less than a third of people (29 percent) will ever experience a fever, which is also far less common than we’ve seen in the past.

Importantly, we found that only half of people with Covid had any of the classic three symptoms of fever, cough or loss of sense of smell, suggesting that the government’s guidance for PCR testing (which suggests that you should get a test if you have one of these three symptoms) is woefully outdated.

How bad is omicron?

This new variant is much more infectious than previous variants, causing a surge in cases across the UK and in other countries. And al-

though it’s not yet clear whether we will be facing an overwhelming wave of hospitalisations from the disease, it’s important to remember that while omicron and delta may feel like a cold to many of us, it can still kill or cause long-term symptoms that disrupt daily life, especially for people who have not been vaccinated or are immunocompromised.

So far, we’ve seen the majority of cases in younger people, but we’re also now seeing cases rising in older age groups while the overall infection rate remains so high. The recent rise in positive cases in the over-75s is worrying, but we’re hopeful that the high levels of vaccination in the UK in older and more vulnerable groups will continue to translate to milder symptoms and few hospitalisations. The major problem with omicron is more the wave of sickness absence it’s causing in key health staff.

Is it omicron or a cold?

As we head further into the depths of winter here in the UK there are some pretty nasty colds going around, as well as the perennial flu. The ZOE Covid Study app data tells us the symptoms caused by the current Covid variants are very similar to those of a regular cold. This means that it’s not possible to know for sure what you’ve got based on symptoms alone. When the rate of Covid is

high, a new sore throat, runny nose or unusual fatigue should be treated as Covid until you’ve been tested.

Because contributors to the ZOE Covid Study app log any daily symptoms they’re experiencing, as well as any Covid test results, we’re also able to track the prevalence of non-Covid colds. Just three months ago, around one in 12 people with new respiratory symptoms tested positive for Covid. However, with omicron around 50 percent of “new colds” currently are, in fact, Covid.

So if you or a family member are feeling unwell, there’s a good chance that it could be Covid, especially if you’re snuffling and sneezing a lot. You should stay home and get tested to be sure. Bear in mind that although lateral flow tests are good, especially if you swab both your throat and nose, they are less sensitive than PCR tests. When you do one, try and repeat it in the following days, as a single negative lateral flow result isn’t a guarantee that you aren’t infected.

Finally, regardless of the government guidelines, whether you have Covid or not, it’s best to stay at home if you’re feeling ill with strange or cold-like symptoms, and to avoid contacts and wear a mask if you do go out, to avoid spreading your germs to others who may be more vulnerable.

How to remain youthful and resilient despite stress

A bit of stress can be good for your mental and physical wellbeing, but too much can lead to anxiety, depression and other health problems. It can also make you age faster. So learning to become more stress-resilient is important if you’re not in a hurry to grow old fast.

Studies have shown that people who aren’t good at managing their stress can increase their risk of dying prematurely by 43 percent. The increase in deaths

might in part be due to the effect stress has on DNA.

DNA, which is found in nearly every cell (except red blood cells), contains genes that code for the building blocks (proteins) that comprise your body. DNA consists of two strands woven together in the famous “double helix”. Your cells are constantly making copies of themselves, and when a cell divides, the two strands unravel and an identical

copy is made of each—well, most of the time.

Sometimes mistakes happen during the replication process, especially at the end of DNA strands. These mistakes can cause mutations in the copied DNA, leading to the cell becoming cancerous. Luckily, cells have protective caps called telomeres at the ends of the DNA strand that are designed to ensure these mistakes don’t happen.

Chief Secretary reviews preparations for Republic Day celebrations

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta today chaired a meeting to take stock of preparations to be put in place for the celebration of Republic Day-2022.

Director General of Police, Administrative Secretaries of Departments of Health & Medical Education, Home, PWD(R&B), General Administration, Youth Services & Sports, Forest, Ecology & Environment, Rural Development, Jal Shakti, besides Divisional Commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir, Additional Director General of Police, along with HODs of concerned departments participated in the meeting.

Detailed deliberations were held regarding the venues, security arrangements, parade/band contingents of Army, CRPF, Police, School children, cultural items, seating arrangements, transport/parking arrangements, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, medical aid, and emergency facilities.

It was informed that the main Republic Day functions will be organized at MA Stadium Jammu and Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium, Sri-



nagar. Further, Beating the Retreat ceremony will be organized on 29th January, 2022.

The Chief Secretary directed the concerned to ensure arrangements regarding various facilities including transport, parking, seating, availability of drinking water, uninterrupted electricity supply, deployment of health, fire and emergency staff and equipment, cultural programmes and illumination of important government buildings.

Dr. Mehta underscored the importance of observing of the COVID SOPs and CAB by the participating contin-

gents and audience. The concerned departments were directed to ensure maintenance of social distance by the gathering with only 50% seating at the venues.

The Health Department was asked to put in a mechanism for testing the participants prior to their participation in the event along with thermal screening of audience on the day of the function at both the venues.

The Home Department, School Education Department and the Youth Services and Sports Department were asked to observe CAB and laid down protocols during

the rehearsals. It was informed that in view of the prevailing COVID situation, participation of only vaccinated people is being ensured, with a special focus on school children in the age group of 15-17 years who are being vaccinated on priority.

The Chief Secretary impressed upon the Culture Department to lay special emphasis on befitting celebrations of the 73rd Republic Day under the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav which is being observed across the country to celebrate 75 years of Independence.

CS hands over trilingual Land Pass Books to farmers

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

As a major initiative towards good governance and ease of convenience to the citizens, Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, today launched trilingual Land Pass Books in Hindi, Urdu and English making it an easy and simple document for reference and record.

Dr Mehta termed the initiative a historical step towards transparency and good governance. He complimented the Revenue, IT and Law departments for making this facility a possibility in a very short time. He asked them to dedicate the facility to all the landowners of the UT by the Independence Day this year.

He maintained that this document will decipher the revenue information to land owners in a very lucid form besides acting as a valid paper to present before financial and other institutions. He felicitated the farmers who received this vital document on the occasion.

The CS handed over Land Pass Books to landowners of village Chak Lal Din of Tehsil Jammu West of district Jammu and village Bagh-e-Mehtab of Tehsil Chanpora of district Srinagar respectively.

It was revealed that the Land Pass Books issued to landholders contains entry from the Jamabandi in rev-



enue estate, so as to enable the landholder to make its use for credit facilities and for other matters connected therewith. It was therefore called a tool for redressal of different grievances, litigations, disputes at various forums and for reference.

It was also stated that the Land Pass Book prescribed by the Revenue Department is true to the record and can be generated online by landholder without visiting a Patwari or Tehsildar or any Revenue office thereby saving his time and energy.

With scanning and digitization of land records already under implementation for the convenience of citizens and under good governance initiative the department has also framed the Jammu and Kashmir Land Passbook Rules-2022 for

online issuance of Land Passbook.

As far as its legality is concerned the Pass Book is an evidently valid entity carrying same evidentiary value as if being certified copies of Record-of-Rights (Misli Haqiat) for all intents and purposes before courts and financial institutions. It is an authoritative document for grant of financial assistance by a financial institution thereby saving the farmer from visiting revenue offices for securing fards and extracts.

Moreover the farmers were encouraged to provide their Aadhar and Mobile numbers for generating this document online by 15th of August this year. It was also stated that the Pass Books are being rolled out gradually in the areas where land

records stand digitized. Seeding of Aadhar and Mobile numbers of landholders in the database will enhance transparency and help citizens in generation of Land Pass Books online, as was informed in the gathering.

Besides the DDC Chairpersons from Reasi and Kishtwar the ceremony was attended by Financial Commissioner, Revenue; Principal Secretary, GAD; Commissioner Secretary, RDD; Commissioner Secretary, Revenue; Secretary Law; Commissioner, Survey & Land Records; and many other officers and officials of the department.

Meanwhile DC Srinagar handed over the pass books to landowners at Srinagar and all other DCs participated in the event through video conferencing.

Omicron symptoms mild but spike in cases can create trouble: Dr Fayaz

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

While it took 25 days for daily cases to rise from 100 to 1000, during the second wave of Covid-19, the numbers have more than doubled in just 15 weeks in the third wave. Roughly double the number of cases are being recorded in half the time in the present Omicron wave.

Professor Department of Medicine, Government Medical College Jammu, Dr. Fayaz Ah-

mad Wani has warned that the high infectivity rate of the coronavirus during the present wave should not be taken lightly. Although the symptoms are mostly mild in appearance, the sheer number of infected is a major concern nonetheless, he highlighted.

Dr Wani advised everybody to keep observing Covid appropriate behaviour, maintain social distancing and avoid unnecessary public gatherings. He suggests that senior citizens, comor-

bid patients and those with severe health conditions need to take extra precaution and take a healthy diet.

The Professor also assured that the Covid hospitalisation rate is only around 5 to 10 percent, which is less as compared to 20-23 percent recorded during the second coronavirus wave. He warned that the rate might even increase owing to the sudden rise in positive cases as hospitalisation is usually required a week post infection.

For asymptomatic patients and people in isolation, Dr Wani said that such persons must contact the doctor if they feel breathlessness, chest pain, have their breath rate exceeding 24 or if they feel a sense of confusion. Any such unusual development must be intimated to the doctor and medical help be sought, he advised.

The doctor has also urged all eligible persons to get vaccinated and practise hand hygiene and frequent hand sanitisation.

NC leaders visits LoC areas of Poonch Call for special recruitment, new mobile towers, and rehabilitation of land min victims

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

In order to listen to grievances of people living in areas along Line of Control, a team of National Conference leaders headed by YNCs Provincial President Ajaz Jan visited LoC areas of Poonch.

Jan was accompanied by NCs District President Bagh Hussain Rathore, YNCs Provincial Vice President Gourav Kapoor and other NC leaders.

The leaders visited Khari Karmara village located on LoC in Poonch sector and met with local population who put forth grievances faced by them in day to day life.

The main issue confronting people is poor mobile communication in the area and NC leaders demanded installation of new mobile towers in the area to ensure that border people face no hardships in communication in their day



to day life.

NC leaders said that rehabilitation of land mine victims is still a distant dream for people living on LoC who fall victim of deadly mines spread

in areas along LoC but they find no takers in Government quarters for their helplessness.

The NC leaders while endorsing the issue raised by

border population demanded for special recruitment drive in armed force with border specific enrolment so that youth living in areas along LoC can get recruited.

DC Rajouri inspects patient care & COVID mitigation measures at SDH Sunderbani

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

To take stock of the health care facilities available for the patients and review COVID mitigation measures, Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Vikas Kundal today visited Sub-district Hospital Sunderbani.

Among the others, DDC Member Subderbani, Rajinder Sharma; ADC Subderbani, Vinod Kumar Behnal and BMO Sunderbani, Dr Man-

zoor Hussain accompanied the Deputy Commissioner during his visit.

During his visit, the DC inspected various sections of the hospital including the emergency ward, laboratory and x-ray unit, OPD rooms etc and took stock of the medical supplies and facilities being provided to the patients.

While interacting with the hospital staff, the DC asked them to work with dedication

and ensure that the best and quality healthcare facilities are provided to the patients.

He also inspected the 500 LPM Oxygen Plant and reviewed its functioning. The staff informed that the plant is fully functional and there is no dearth of medical oxygen supply in the hospital.

He also asked to scale up the pace of testing to contain the spread of infection by early detection of the positive patients.

The DC also asked the concerned officers to make sure that all the COVID-19 protocols are strictly adhered to by the staff and patients to avoid the risk of infection.

He also appealed to the public not to lower guard and follow Covid Appropriate Behaviour religiously to safeguard their own others life. He made it clear that the District Administration will not allow any violation of Covid protocol.

GDC Jindrah performs mass Surya Namskar on the eve of Makar Sankranti

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

The NSS unit of Government Degree College (GDC) Jindrah participated in the mass Surya Namskar demonstration programme on the eve of Makar Sankranti.

Raj Shree Dhar, College Principal applauded the efforts of the NSS team and congratulated the students and staff for their active participation.

Dr. Sunil Sharma, Program officer, NSS Unit of GDC Jindrah supervised the whole programme and Dr. Seema, Librarian and member of NSS team compiled and reported the whole event.

The whole activity was conducted through online mode. The students used what's app



platform to send their videos performing Surya Namskar.

The participants were presented certificates of participation

from the Ministry of AYUSH, Govt of India.

Power shutdown

Koulpur, Bandral and adjoining areas shall remain affected on January 15 from 9 am to 3 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Barnoti, Nanan, Marheen, Paharpur and adjoining areas shall remain affected on January 15, 17, 19 and 21 from 9 am to 3 pm.

Likewise, the power supply to Billawar, Parnalla and adjoining areas shall remain affected on January 15, 17, 19, 21, 23 and 25 from 9 am to 3 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Housing Colony, PHE, Ward No-1 and adjoining areas

shall remain affected on January 16 from 10 am to 1 pm.

Likewise, the power supply to Changran, Shaheedi Chowk, Nagri Adda, Lower Shiva Nagar, Jakhbar, Badala and adjoining areas shall remain affected on January 16 from 1 pm to 4 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Only Cement Factory shall remain affected on January 16 from 9 am to 3 pm.

Likewise, the power supply to Battal Ballian Rathian and adjoining areas shall remain affected on January 16 from 10 am to 4 pm.

Similarly, the power supply

to the areas fed from Hajar Kotli Grid Station shall remain affected on January 16 from 7 am to 2 pm.

Likewise, the power supply to Gura Brahmana, Kot Garhi Burmal, Kanachak and adjoining areas shall remain affected on January 17 from 10 am to 4 pm.

Meanwhile, Superintending Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL, O&M Circle, Kathua has informed that the power supply to Arazi Samba, Damsal, Mandi, Triloki di Chhapri, Garh Mandi shall remain affected on January 16 from 9 am to 2 pm.

Surya Namaskar' Aasan held at Ramban

JAMMU RISING
JAMMU, JAN 14

Indian System of Medicine AYUSH Department Ramban today organized virtual and physical performance of 'Surya Namaskar' Aasan on the occasion of Makar Sankranti under 'Azaadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav' campaign here at different venues across the district.

The programme was held at AYUSH dispensaries and other offices. Other departments also organized similar programmes at different locations by adhering to Covid



SOPs.

As per the Government Guidelines, the least number of staff and students participated in the Surya Namaskar events.

As per District Nodal Officer, Ramban, Dr. Sanjay Chadha, the participants evinced keen interest as such practices improve physical fitness, mostly when they are in home isolation due to Covid-19 restrictions.

District Youga Officer, Dr. Masood Zargar interacted with participants virtually and encouraged them to participate despite harsh winter climatic conditions.