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Late City Vol. 16 Issue 356  
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DEHRADUN, WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 28, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹2



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## Hold local body polls sans OBC quota: HC to UP Govt

Yogi says 'will hold elections only after ensuring quota', UP Govt to move SC

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court on Tuesday quashed the State Government's draft notification on urban local body elections and ordered holding the polls without reservation for the OBCs. The verdict passed by a division bench of Justice DK Upadhyay and Justice Saurav Lavania annulled the December 5 draft notification issued by the Uttar Pradesh Government providing reservation to Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the urban local body elections.

The bench ordered the State Election Commission to immediately issue notification for the election. Unfazed by the HC order, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said the elections would not be held before the grant of reservation to the OBCs and the State would go to the Supreme Court to challenge the High Court's order for immediate notification of elections, if need be. "The UP Government will



constitute a commission as directed by the Allahabad High Court that will conduct a survey of OBCs as per the Supreme Court guidelines. We will not go for the elections without ensuring reservation for the OBCs. If required, we will go to the Supreme Court against the High Court's order," Yogi said.

The verdict comes in the light of PILs challenging the preparation of the OBC reservation draft without following the triple test formula prescribed by the Supreme Court. The petitioners had pleaded that the State Government must follow the apex court formula and constitute a dedicated commission to study the political backwardness of OBCs before fixing the reservation.

The State Government contended that it had conducted a rapid survey and said it was as good as the triple test. But the HC brushed aside the argument that a rapid survey was as good as the triple test.

The UP Government had earlier this month issued a provisional list of reserved seats for mayors of 17 municipal corporations, chairpersons of 200 municipal councils and 545 nagar panchayats and sought suggestions/objections within seven days.

According to the December 5 draft, four mayoral seats — Aligarh, Mathura-Vrindavan, Meerut and Prayagraj — were reserved for OBC candidates. Of these, the mayor's posts in Aligarh and Mathura-Vrindavan were reserved for OBC women.

## SP, BSP, Congress tear into Yogi Govt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party, the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Congress launched a scathing attack on the Yogi Adityanath Government over the decision of the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court, which ordered holding the local body polls without reservation for the OBCs.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav slammed the Government and said it was the result of a conspiracy by the BJP Government to deprive the backward classes of reservation.

"The Allahabad High Court directing conduct of the urban local body elections without OBC quota is unfortunate. Relevant facts were deliberately not placed before the bench of the Allahabad High Court by the Uttar Pradesh Government. The OBCs who constitute 60 per cent of the population have been deprived of their constitutional right of reservation," Yadav said on Tuesday. He added that the "BJP manipulated the issue of reservation for

the OBCs only for its political interests."

BSP supremo Mayawati tweeted that the State Government had to finalise the process of elections by fixing the system of OBC reservation on the basis of a triple test, following the instructions of the Supreme Court with full devotion and honesty, which didn't happen.

"The OBC society will definitely punish the BJP for this mistake," she said.

The Backward Classes Department of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee too slammed the Yogi Government, alleging that the present BJP Government is systematically denying the backwards and Dalits their rights in the civic elections.

Manoj Yadav, president of the backward classes department of UPCC, said the BJP and the Yogi Government wanted to end reservation. He said that under the guise of the HC order, the BJP was determined to end the reservation system for the deprived communities in the elections.

## No foul play in citizens' death: Russian embassy

Antov, vocal against Putin's Ukraine attack, and his friend, found dead in 2 days in Odisha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As mystery shrouds the death of two Russian citizens within a span of two days in Odisha at the same hotel, the Russian embassy said here on Tuesday the local police have not found any criminal link in the deaths.

This assertion came against the backdrop of reports alleging foul play.

The two deceased were identified as Pavel Antov and Vladimir Bidenov. Their post-mortem was conducted on Monday.

Authorities and the Russian Embassy are treating it a suicide case.

Antov, a multi-millionaire and elected politician, was reportedly highly critical of President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine and called it "terror".

"We are in constant contact with the relatives of the deceased as well as with local authorities. As we know, police do not yet see a criminal component in these tragic events," the Russian Embassy said.

Antov, 65, was found dead in a pool of blood at a hotel in Odisha's Rayagada district on



Saturday, December 24. Reports say he fell from the terrace of the hotel and died.

Antov was in Odisha for his 66th birthday celebrations.

He was travelling with 61-year-old Vladimir Bidenov, his associate, and a couple, Mikhail Turov and Natalia Panasenko. They were also accompanied by an Indian tourist guide.

Bidenov was found dead in the same hotel just two days before Antov's death. He was found lying unconscious in his room on the first floor of the hotel.

As per police, Bidenov died due to a stroke and was cremated. His friend, Antov, was depressed after Vladimir's death and he too died on December 25, the police further said.

The police are investigating

Pavel's death from all angles, including the possibility that he has fallen from the terrace accidentally.

"First tourist was found unconscious, after medical examination he was found dead. Second tourist was mentally disturbed after his friend's cremation, he was found lying on hotel premises. When taken to hospital, he was found dead," the owner of hotel Sai International in Rayagada, where the Russian tourists stayed, told the media.

Pavel Antov is not the first high-profile Russian to have died a mysterious and sudden death. In September this year, oil boss Ravil Maganov died after falling to his death from the sixth floor of a hospital in Russia. He was reportedly on antidepressants.

## China ends Covid ban on foreigners' arrival from Jan 8

PTI ■ BEIJING

Days after it faced nationwide anti-government protests against its stringent zero-Covid policy, China in a major shift of its coronavirus response policies has announced that it will scrap quarantine for international travellers from January 8 next year as it reopens its borders and comes out of international isolation after nearly three years.

The National Health Commission (NHC) on Monday announced that Covid-19 management will be downgraded from Class A to B from next month, in the same category as less-severe diseases, such as dengue fever.

China will cancel inbound quarantine for international arrivals starting from January 8, 2023, it said.

Previously passengers coming from abroad had to mandatorily stay in over two weeks of quarantine in government accommodations, which was gradually reduced to five days with three days' of observation.

These announcements come at a time when the country is grappling with a sudden spurt in coronavirus infections fuelled by the Omicron variant after the Xi Jinping regime relaxed its stringent zero-Covid policy earlier this month following a wave of anti-government protests.

## Nationwide mock drills assess Covid combat readiness

IMA, top doctors urge Govt to allow people to take 2nd booster dose

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Tuesday held Covid response mock drill across the country as part of precautionary measures to check its preparedness to deal with any surge in cases with Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya cautioning that the country might witness a spike in cases and there is a need to be on the guard.

"It is important that the entire Covid infrastructure in terms of equipment, processes and human resources are at a state of operational readiness," Mandaviya said after reviewing the Covid response mock drill at the centre-run Safdarjung Hospital here to check its readiness to deal

with any increase in the number of coronavirus cases.

"I reviewed the Covid response mock drill at Safdarjung Hospital. This mock drill was necessary to know how prepared our hospitals are," the minister said.

"Covid cases are rising all over the world and India might witness a spike in cases too. Hence it is important that the entire Covid infrastructure in terms of equipment, processes and human resources are at a state of operational readiness," he stated.

Meanwhile, representatives of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) and other top doctors and public health experts on Tuesday urged the Minister to allow people to take their second coronavirus booster doses.

The meeting, over a video conference, was called to discuss the preparedness for any possible surges in the outbreak.



Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya speaks with a doctor as a medic collects swab sample of a woman, during a nationwide mock drill for Covid-19 preparedness, at Safdarjung hospital in New Delhi on Tuesday

PTI

## On rethink, BJP to contest MCD mayor, deputy polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Taking a U-turn on its earlier stand on not contesting the mayoral elections in Delhi, the BJP on Tuesday named Rekha Gupta and Kamal Bagdi as its candidates for the posts of mayor and deputy mayor of the MCD. Gupta is a three-term councillor from Shalimar Bagh, while Bagdi is a first-timer from Ram Nagar.

The elections for the post of mayor and deputy mayor will be held on January 6.

The BJP has also named Kamaljeet Sehrawat, Gajendra Daral and Pankaj Luthra for the standing committee member posts.

The AAP has named Dr Shelly Oberoi and Aaley Mohammad Iqbal for the mayor and deputy mayor posts. The AAP ended the BJP's 15-year-rule in the MCD winning 134 of the 250 wards in the civic body polls earlier this month. The BJP managed to win 104 wards. One indepen-



dent candidate joined the BJP on Monday. The Congress has nine councillors, while there are two independent councillors.

The BJP's mayor candidate, Gupta, has been a general secretary and member of the party's national executive. She was the president of the Delhi University Students Union from 1996 to 1997. She has a stronghold in North

Delhi's Pitampura area.

Gupta, after filing her nomination, asserted that she will contest the election with full strength. "I appeal to all the councillors that vote for the development and betterment of Delhi. I hope they will choose the right mayor for the city by listening to the voice of their conscience," she said.

## Maha resolution plans to merge Marathi-speaking K'taka villages into State

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Reiterating its stand that it would pursue its litigation in the Supreme Court for inclusion of 865 disputed border villages in the State, the Maharashtra Assembly on Tuesday adopted a resolution urging the Centre to implement the decision taken at the recent joint meeting chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah with the Chief Minister of Maharashtra Eknath Shinde and Chief Minister of Karnataka Basavaraj Bommai in New Delhi.

In its resolution passed unanimously in the ongoing winter session of the State Legislature in Nagpur, the Maharashtra Assembly expressed its solidarity with the Marathi-speaking people in border areas and asked Union Home Minister Amit Shah to seek an undertaking from the Karnataka Government for the safety of its people living in

the border areas.

Condemning the Karnataka Government for its acts of "oppressing and terrorising the Marathi population" and also for its "anti-Marathi" stand in the border areas, the Eknath Shinde Government reiterated its claim for inclusion of 865 Marathi-speaking areas in Maharashtra.

While moving the resolution on Maharashtra-Karnataka border issue, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said, "All the necessary efforts would be made in the Supreme Court for inclusion of Belgaum, Karvar, Nipani, Bhalki, Bidar towns and 865 Marathi-speaking villages of Karnataka in Maharashtra under any circumstance."

The resolution said, "The Maharashtra Government stands firmly with the Marathi-speaking people in 865 Marathi-speaking villages in the border areas."

## Modi's brother, family injured in road accident near Mysuru

PTI ■ MYSURU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brother Prahlad Modi and family members sustained injuries when the car in which they were travelling met with an accident near here, police said on Tuesday.

According to sources, other than the driver, Prahlad Modi, his son, daughter-in-law and a grandchild were in the car.

They are said to have suffered some injuries and have been shifted to JSS Hospital for treatment.

As per the police, the injuries are said to be "minor" in nature.

The incident happened near Kadakola around 1.30 pm when their car, on the way to Bandipur, is said to have hit the road divider.

Mysuru Superintendent of Police Seema Latkar has visited the spot and the hospital, sources said.



Wrecked remains of the car after an accident in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brother Prahlad Modi and family members were reportedly travelling, in Mysuru on Tuesday

PTI

from Mysuru-Kodagu constituency Pratap Simha, who visited the hospital too, said the family that was on a private visit had sustained "minor" injuries, and the child has suffered a minor fracture, and is undergoing treatment.

Member of Parliament

## Subsidence causes hotel building to lean in Joshimath

PNS ■ JOSHIMATH

Continuing land subsidence in Joshimath has caused major cracks in two hotel buildings along the national highway in the Sinhdwar ward causing the building to tilt. More than a dozen families living in the vicinity of these buildings are now at risk. After a survey conducted by the local administration the residents of the buildings have vacated the buildings under threat. The owners of buildings near the affected buildings have submitted a memorandum to the administration and sought measures for their security.

In view of the continued subsidence in Joshimath, the municipality is conducting a survey of all the wards. Of the



16 families living in homes damaged by subsidence, eight have left the damaged buildings. The municipal council chairman Shailendra Panwar said that the municipal team is conducting inspection in whichever ward from where complaints of subsidence are being received. Considering the seriousness of the situa-

tion, the Chamoli district magistrate has also conducted an inspection of Sinhdwar, Manoharbagh and Gandhinagar wards. The district magistrate Himanshu Khurana said that during the inspection of Manoharbagh, he also saw large cracks in the farms. He said that a survey team had conducted an inspection in the past and had recommended work on the sewerage plan and drainage system. Work on these aspects is being carried out. The more affected areas are being inspected and necessary works will be expedited, he said.

## 24-hour power supply being ensured across the nation: Singh

PNS ■ NEW TEHRI

The Union minister for Power and, New and Renewable Energy RK Singh averred that 24 hour power supply has been ensured in urban and rural areas in the country. He said that electricity was inadequate till 2015 due to which it was supplied for about 12 hours a day in many areas but now it is being supplied round the clock across the nation which is also boosting the nation's economy. Singh said this after arriving here for the three-day 4th Ranking & Open Canoe Sprint Senior championships to be held on the Tehri dam reservoir from Wednesday. Singh was welcomed by the Tehri MLA Kishore Upadhyay, THDCIL chairman and



managing director RK Vishnoi and district officials on his arrival here. It should be mentioned here that about 300 participants from 21 States are participating in the sporting event. The championship is being organised by the THDCIL in collaboration with the Kayaking and Canoeing Association of Uttarakhand, Indian Olympic Association, Uttarakhand Olympic Association and ITBP as technical partner.

## Maharaj invites tourists to make New Year memorable

Says State also encouraging snow wedding concept

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Tourism and Culture minister Satpal Maharaj has said that people from across the country and abroad



visit Uttarakhand to spend the first day of the year in the mountainous regions. He said that visiting the mountains in Uttarakhand is a very good choice to make the first day of the new year memorable. Exhorting the tourists to visit Uttarakhand for celebrating the New Year, Maharaj said that if the weather goes as expected, tourists will be able to enjoy snowfall in the mountainous regions in the coming days. "I request the tourists

that before coming to Uttarakhand for celebrating the New Year, they should make their bookings on time in hotels and homestays. Those who do not make their bookings on time may find it difficult to find accommodation in hotels or camps," he said. The minister said that tourists generally visit Dehradun, Mussoorie, Dhanaulti, Chakrata, Auli, Lansdowne, Nainital, Mukteshwar, Kausani and other places to celebrate the New Year. This year too a large number of tourists are expected to arrive in the State on the occasion. He said that the government is also encouraging snow-wedding in Uttarakhand with couples from across the nation coming here to get married amidst the snow. People planning to get married are contacting the authorities consistently to get married at Nainital, Almora, Mussoorie, Joshimath and Triyuginarayan while enquiring about the places where snowfall is likely in the coming days.

## Severe cold day conditions likely in plains today

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State meteorological centre has issued an alert regarding the possibility of cold day to severe cold day conditions in the plains on Wednesday. Dense to very dense fog is also likely to occur in some parts of plains especially in Udham Singh Nagar and Haridwar districts. The cold day to severe cold day conditions are likely to

The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be about 23 degrees Celsius and six degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun on Wednesday.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in various parts of the State on Tuesday were 24.4 degrees Celsius and seven degrees



occur at a few places in the plains especially in Udham Singh Nagar and Haridwar districts today. The provisional State capital Dehradun is forecast to experience mainly clear to partly cloudy sky with mist likely to occur during the morning hours.

Celsius respectively in Dehradun, 11.5 degrees Celsius and 5.2 degrees Celsius in Pantnagar, 14.4 degrees Celsius and 2.7 degrees Celsius in Mukteshwar and 15.4 degrees Celsius and 3.4 degrees Celsius respectively in New Tehri.

## UPES wins Shaheed memorial tournament

PNS ■ DEHRADUN



The 9th annual Shaheed memorial cricket tournament hosted by UPES to pay tribute to the martyrs of armed forces and financially support their families, concluded on Tuesday with UPES winning the tournament for the third time in a row. The tournament was organised to remember and support the family of martyr Naik Harendra Singh from Pipsalsari village in Pauri district who made the ultimate sacrifice in October 2021 during counter insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir. The university chancellor The martyr's family was presented a cheque for Rs 2.51 lakh raised through the tournament. Besides raising money through the tournament, UPES will be supporting both the sons of martyr Naik Harendra Singh with free education and a job to one member of the family at UPES. Paying tribute to Singh, UPES chancellor Sunil Rai said "It is our privilege to be supporting the family of such courageous soldiers and an honor for us to be able to support the dependents. Supporting the family of late Naik Harendra Singh is our way of extending gratitude towards his heroism and gallantry." A total of 10 teams participated in the tournament.



CM Pushkar Singh Dhahi pedals after flagging off a cycle rally from Dehradun as part of the Mussoorie winter carnival on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

## Utkhand police to use drones for surveillance during New Year celebrations

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand police will use drones equipped with high definition cameras for surveillance purposes in famous tourist locations during the New Year's celebrations. All station in-charges have also been directed to make elaborate security arrangements to keep strict vigil over the movement of any potential anti-social elements under their respective police stations. The additional director general (ADG) of police, Law and Order, V Murugesan stated this on Tuesday while talking about the police preparation to ensure people indulge in New Year celebrations without causing any disturbance to law and order. He said that some tourist places of the State like Mussoorie, Nainital, Dehradun and Haridwar attract a large number of people for New Year celebrations, which usually increase the chances of untoward incidents due to the presence of some anti-social elements.

Considering this, police will use drones equipped with high definition cameras for surveillance purposes in all such tourist places, said the ADG. He said that sufficient force will be deployed in all locations where crowd gathering is expected across the State. The police department would also deploy specialised PAC in tourist locations. He said that the police will also take action against any violation of law by an individual or establishments like hotels and restaurants in the name of celebrations causing disturbance in law and order. "We have made all arrangements to ensure safe New Year's celebration in all districts. I also appeal to all locals and those visiting the State for celebrations to celebrate the New Year without any violation of law. The police will take stringent action against such anti-social elements affecting law and order," said Murugesan.

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## RTO warns of action against Rapido in Dehradun

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Regional Transport Office (RTO) has pasted a notice outside Rapido's office in Dehradun for allegedly running its taxi and two-wheeler services without get-

ting an aggregator license from the State government. The regional transport officer (administration) of the Dehradun division Sunil Sharma said that the Rapido company does not have a licence to operate as a bike and auto rickshaw aggregator as per the rules but despite that, it has been operating for months blatantly. Considering this, the RTO has sought clarification from the company officials on the matter by pasting a notice outside their office, said Sharma. He said that the RTO has ordered the representatives of Rapido company to appear in the RTO office on December 29 along with all the documents

clear its side on the matter but none of the employees came. He also said that senior officials of the department have been informed regarding the matter and appropriate action will be taken as per the law if Rapido fails to comply with the rules.



company officials of filing a case against them if they continue the illegal operation of their vehicles in Dehradun, added the RTO. He said that RTO has initially asked the representative of Rapido to be present in the transport office to

that potentially claim that the government had issued a license allowing them to operate as a bike and auto rickshaw aggregator. The RTO has also warned the

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2.	27/SrDEE/G/MB/2022/Call- Electrical work for Improvement of electrical amenities in Oak Grove School Jharpani	79,11,353.58 (Including GST)		1,58,200/-	4 (Four) Months		

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क्र० सं०	कार्य का नाम	घरोहर धनराशि (₹ लाख में)	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य (₹)	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	निविदा की वैधता	ठेकेदार की पंजीकृत श्रेणी
1	राज्य योजना 2022-23 के अन्तर्गत जनपद हरिद्वार के विधानसभा क्षेत्र पिरान कलियार के ग्राम पाडली गुर्जर तेलीवाला में सी०सी० इण्टरलॉकिंग टाईल्स द्वारा सड़क निर्माण कार्य।	1.20	4000.00 + 18% GST	9 माह	120 दिन	मार्ग कार्य हेतु 'डी' एवं उच्चतर में पंजीकृत
2	राज्य योजना 2022-23 के अन्तर्गत जनपद हरिद्वार के विधानसभा क्षेत्र पिरान कलियार के अन्तर्गत बहादुराबाद- धनौरी-पिरान कलियार-भगवानपुर गागलहेड़ी राज्य मार्ग के कि.मी. 18 से ग्राम हकीमपुर तुरा में सी०सी० इण्टरलॉकिंग टाईल्स द्वारा सड़क निर्माण कार्य।	0.65	2500.00 + 18% GST	9 माह	120 दिन	मार्ग कार्य हेतु 'डी' एवं उच्चतर में पंजीकृत
3	राज्य योजना 2022-23 के अन्तर्गत जनपद हरिद्वार के विधानसभा क्षेत्र पिरान कलियार के अन्तर्गत ग्राम मुकरंबपुर में सी०सी० इण्टरलॉकिंग टाईल्स द्वारा सड़क निर्माण कार्य।	0.82	3000.00 + 18% GST	9 माह	120 दिन	मार्ग कार्य हेतु 'डी' एवं उच्चतर में पंजीकृत

नोट:- निविदादाता को निविदा अपलोड करने की अन्तिम तिथि एवं निर्धारित समय से पूर्व निम्नलिखित अभिलेख अद्योहस्ताक्षर की कार्यालय में मूल में उपलब्ध कराना अनिवार्य होगा, जिनके प्रस्तुत न करने पर निविदा पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा।

- निविदा प्रपत्र की लागत कॉलम 4 के अनुसार का डिमांड बैंक ड्राफ्ट, जो कि अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण खण्ड, लो०नि०वि०, रुड़की के नाम बन्धक हो। निविदा प्रपत्र एवं जी०एस०टी० की धनराशि के बैंक ड्राफ्ट अलग-अलग दिये जायें।
- निविदा की वैधता हेतु अन्डरटेकिंग जो ₹ 100.00 मात्र का नॉन जूडिशियल स्टाम्प पेपर रू० 1.00 के रैवेन्यू स्टाम्प पर हस्ताक्षर सहित 120 दिन वैधता की अवधि इंगित करते हुये प्रमाण पत्र।
- निर्धारित घरोहर धनराशि, जो कि अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण खण्ड, लो०नि०वि० रुड़की के नाम बन्धक हो।
- फर्म के रजिस्ट्रेशन सर्टिफिकेट की प्रति संलग्न करें।
- उक्त निविदा दिनांक 31.01.2023 को अपराह्न 2:00 बजे तक ऑनलाइन वेबसाइट पर अपलोड की जा सकेगी एवं दिनांक 31.01.2023 को अपराह्न 3:00 बजे तक शील्ड लिफाफे खण्डिय कार्यालय में टेंडर बॉक्स में डाले जायेंगे एवं दिनांक 31.01.2023 को अपराह्न 3:30 बजे निविदादाताओं को समझ खोले जायेंगे, जिसके पश्चात् दिनांक 31.01.2023 को ही उपरोक्तानुसार प्राप्त निविदाओं की प्राइस बिड Online माध्यम से खोली जायेगी।

सहायक अभियन्ता, निर्माण खण्ड, लो०नि०वि०, रुड़की

# Pithoragarh DM to hold meeting with Nepalese counterpart on stone pelting at border

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Pithoragarh district magistrate Reena Joshi will hold a meeting with her Nepalese counterpart in two days in view of the stone pelting incidents experienced in the past few days from across the border which has affected embankment work along the Kali river in Pithoragarh's Dharchula area. The sub-divisional magistrate Divesh Shashni told The Pioneer on Tuesday that some anti-state elements have been pelting stones on workers building the embankment on the Indian bank of the Kali river between Nepal and Pithoragarh. He said that the district administration has been in constant touch with Nepalese authorities regarding these incidents and they have assured that they will take action in the matter.

He said, "We had already talked about differences the Nepalese officials have regard-



ing the construction along the Kali river. We have also contacted the chief district officer (CDO) of Darchula district of Nepal who is equivalent to a DM here about the stone-pelting incidents from their side. He has promised to take ac-

tion against the offenders." "Presently, he is out of station and is scheduled to return in two days. The DM Reena Joshi will hold a meeting with him in two days to discuss the stone pelting issue and clear any misapprehension the

Nepalese officials might have regarding the construction work along the river," added the SDM. He also said that construction work of the embankment along the river is presently in progress.

# CM stresses on constructive and swift disposal of files in secretariat

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama attended meetings of the secretariat section officers and officials from the under secretary to the additional secretary level. He said that the sections should lay special focus on constructive notings in files for resolving the problems of the common people. There may be different views on files but focus should be on contributing to their disposal with a constructive viewpoint. The chief minister also announced that good governance awards will be presented at the secretariat level.



Dhama said that section officers should be given training at least once a year for better working and arrangement should be made for any other training which the officials need for better disposal of work. A help desk should also be formed to guide citizens who reach the secretariat with issues. All basic facilities should be provided in the sections for better execution of works in the secretariat, he said. Along with sanitation, proper toilet facilities should also be ensured in the secretariat complex,

said Dhama. Chief secretary SS Sandhu said that the initial noting in any file is very important. The relevant rule should be mentioned without fail while making any noting in the file. In proposals which are very important in public interest, the noting should be made in a good way from the beginning. If rules are not clearly mentioned in such proposals, the constructive solution should be mentioned in the noting. He said that section officers will be taken on field visits

from time to time. Files important in public interest should be disposed of first, he added. Additional chief secretary Radha Raturi said that special focus is being laid on the e-office system. Officials concerned are now being informed by e-files, email and WhatsApp regarding meetings, she said.

The section officers suggested that files which are sent from the section to the under secretary, deputy secretary and joint secretary lev-

els in which they mark some objection should not be sent back to the section but should be sent to the additional secretary and secretary. They also suggested that works should be made time bound for swift disposal of the files. The CM said that officials from the under secretary to the additional secretary level should also attend Chaupals at the village level from time to time. They should make regular field visits for better implementation of schemes.

# STF nabs trio from Rishikesh for making counterfeit government identity cards

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand special task force (STF) nabbed three men from a common service centre (CSC) in Rishikesh for allegedly making counterfeit documents including Aadhaar cards, voter ID cards and PAN cards on fake documents for citizens of other States and Nepal. Many

resident of police Ayush Agrawal said the three accused including the CSC owner were arrested late on Monday evening after an Aadhaar card and voter ID was delivered to a Nepalese man, a police decoy for Rs 10,000. He said that the accused had forged all government identification docu-

Singh Saini, his brother Babu Saini and a native of Nepal Bharat Singh who was currently living in the Kalyasaur area of Pauri. The SSP said that use of fake documents for government identity documents is a serious matter of concern as these can be easily used by any person for anti-national activities.

It can be used for purchasing mobile SIM cards by criminals that cannot be traced back to them as they never submitted their identity documents to acquire the SIM cards. He said that the authorities are investigating the arrested accused to get information about how many such government identity documents they have issued since they started this scam. He said that it appears to be a big racket and many others are also potentially involved in issuing such documents. The STF will proceed on the matter as per the information revealed during the investigation, added Agrawal.



residents from Nepal have allegedly been living in Garhwal division as citizens with the help of such counterfeit documents.

The STF senior superintendent of police Ayush Agrawal said the three accused including the CSC owner were arrested late on Monday evening after an Aadhaar card and voter ID was delivered to a Nepalese man, a police decoy for Rs 10,000. He said that the accused had forged all government identification documents depicting the Nepalese man as a resident of a village of Pauri district. He said that the STF team arrested three men who have been identified as-CSC operator Lakshman

many others are also potentially involved in issuing such documents. The STF will proceed on the matter as per the information revealed during the investigation, added Agrawal.

# Mayor orders construction of public toilets under flyovers

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Dehradun mayor Sunil Uniyal 'Gama' on Tuesday directed the officials concerned to construct public toilets under flyovers in the city that fall under the Na-

tional Highways Authority of India (NHAI). He also directed the officials to ensure regular cleaning of drains constructed along with the na-

transferring the management work of street lights and electricity poles to PWD.

He also instructed the officials concerned to issue a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to the corporation for the construction of a vending zone under the Mohkampur flyover that falls under NHAI. The mayor directed the officials to expedite the construction work of public toilets under flyovers on the route of national highways in the city to ensure basic sanitation facilities can be provided to commuters. He said that Swachh Survekshan 2023 has also started and such initiatives can make a significant difference in getting the city into the top 50 cleanest cities in the country.



tional Highways Authority of India (NHAI). He also directed the officials to ensure regular cleaning of drains constructed along with the na-

office in the Municipal Corporation of Dehradun (MCD). He also said that NHAI should pay all its dues to the electricity department before

also started and such initiatives can make a significant difference in getting the city into the top 50 cleanest cities in the country.

Visit : [www.pioneeredge.in](http://www.pioneeredge.in)

## Attention GST Taxpayers!

### Please file your Annual Return in FORM GSTR-9\* and FORM GSTR-9C# for F.Y. 2021-2022

Before Due Date

December 2022

# 31

**GSTR-9 & GSTR-9C**

**FILE**

**\*Taxpayers required to file FORM GSTR-9**

All GST taxpayers having Aggregate Annual Turnover above ₹ 2 Crore (during F.Y. 2021-22) except the following:

(i) Input Service Distributor

(ii) TDS Deductor

(iii) TCS Collector

(iv) Casual Taxable Person

(v) Non-Resident Taxable Person

**#Taxpayers required to file FORM GSTR-9C**

A self-certified reconciliation statement in FORM GSTR-9C needs to be filed along with Annual Return in FORM GSTR-9 by the taxpayers whose Aggregate Annual Turnover is above ₹ 5 Crore (during F.Y. 2021-22)

Please Scan for details on GST Annual Returns

Late filing of FORM GSTR-9 and FORM GSTR-9C will attract late fee

**Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs**

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PUBLIC NOTICE			
ICICI Bank Limited			
Registered office: Landmark, Race Course Circle, Vadodara 390 007. Corporate office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Mumbai 400 051.			
GOLD E-AUCTION CUM INVITATION NOTICE			
The below mentioned borrowers have been issued notice to pay off their outstanding amount towards the facility against gold ornaments ('Facility') availed by them from ICICI Bank Limited ('ICICI Bank'). We are constrained to conduct an E-Auction of pledged gold ornaments on Jan 07, 2023 as they have failed to repay the dues. ICICI Bank has the authority to remove account/change the E-Auction date without any prior notice. Auction will be held online - <a href="https://jewel-auction.procuretiger.com">https://jewel-auction.procuretiger.com</a> between 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm. For detailed Terms and conditions, please log into given website. In case of deceased borrower, all conditions will be applicable to legal heirs.			
Loan A/C No.   Customer Name	Loan A/C No.   Customer Name	Loan A/C No.   Customer Name	Loan A/C No.   Customer Name
091205001650   Nishchal Rathaur	351005009690   Hegdhar Singh Kandari	179405001843   Lucky Saxena	101805001389   Rakesh *
091205001628   Nishchal Rathaur	024005003666   Ravinder Singh	158905001324   Om Gupta	160005001813   Praveesh Kumar
Branch Name: Dehradun - Anurag Chowk	Branch Name: Haridwar - Shivalki Nagar	Branch Name: Pithoragarh	Branch Name: Rudrapur - S. Nagar
243805001270   Manoj Kumar	245905001352   Naveesh Kumar		245905001427   Naveesh Kumar
S/d Authorised Officer For ICICI Bank Limited			
Date : 28.12.2022 Place : Dehradun, Udham Singh Nagar, Haridwar, Garhwal, Almora, Nainital, Pithoragarh			



# AIADMK will lead mega alliance for 2024 LS polls: Palaniswami

**PTI ■ CHENNAI**  
AIADMK interim general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami on Tuesday urged party members to strive hard and improve the tally in the 2024 Lok Sabha election and said the party would lead a mega alliance for the poll.  
Palaniswami, who is confronted by estranged colleague O Panneerselvam over the leadership tussle, hopes to resurrect the party, surmounting all odds, and steer it to victory, a senior leader said.  
"His agenda is to form an alliance and win the Lok Sabha polls decimating the DMK," he said.  
At the district secretaries meeting held here, Palaniswami told the functionaries that the AIADMK will forge a mega alliance and that the party

members should strive hard to ensure victory at the hustings.  
The party should be strengthened at the booth level and the members should focus more on people's issues, Palaniswami said at the meeting attended by several senior leaders.  
The AIADMK leadership would decide on the number of seats to be allocated to the alliance constituents, he said.  
"The year 2023 is very crucial for us. We hope to make a turnaround in our political fortunes and ensure the AIADMK registers a huge victory in the 2024 Lok Sabha election," former state minister D Jayakumar said.  
Speaking to reporters after the district secretaries' meet, Jayakumar reiterated that the alliance would be formed under the AIADMK leader-



ship.  
Asked about the constituents, he replied, "there's still a year to go. You will come to know about those parties."  
"Honestly speaking there was no discussion about O Panneerselvam, V K Sasikala or T T V Dhinakaran at today's meet. Our sole objective is to

face the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and to defeat the DMK," Jayakumar said.  
At the meeting, senior leader and former state minister Natham Viswanathan echoed the general feeling among the party members on not taking back Panneerselvam into the AIADMK.

# Value education should be included in curriculum: Murmu

**PTI ■ HYDERABAD**  
President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday stressed on the importance of teaching value education to children to make them good citizens.  
Murmu, who addressed the students and faculty members of the Keshav Memorial Educational Society at a function organised as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav here, said parents also, in view of competition, focus on children studying the syllabus taught in their books.  
"I say everywhere that value education should be added in our curriculum, our system, our syllabus," she said.  
If value education is imparted from the beginning, it will help in ushering in a good society, she said.  
She was responding to a query from a student that the absence of study of ethical val-



ues is leading to unwanted incidents in the society.  
In her speech, she expressed confidence that the implementation of National Education Policy 2020 will create a learner-centric education system to foster critical thinking and creativity.  
This shift in focus will not only benefit the students as individuals, but will also contribute to the overall progress and development of the nation, she said.  
Emphasising on the importance of reading, the President said the habit of reading is one of the most effective means for self-development. It is a skill that would serve students well throughout their life, she said.  
"In an age of internet and social media when attention span is getting shorter and communication is limited in characters, I will urge you to read more in order to improve your understanding and widen your perspective," she said.

# Principals, teachers face CBI-ED in Bengal job scam

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA**  
A number of college principals and lecturers may soon come under the scanner of the Enforcement Directorate and Central Bureau of Investigation for their alleged role in the multi-crore school level recruitment scam.  
According to sources the agencies have stumbled upon the names of some professors and college principals during the course of investigation and are preparing a list of these persons who have allegedly acted as intermediaries in the SSC and TET recruitment scam.  
According to sources many of these functionaries had concluded with then TET chairman and Trinamool Congress MLA Manik Bhattacharya and then SSC chairman Subires Bhattacharyya.  
Both of these persons are presently in jail along with former Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee who was also the second senior most minister in the Mamata

Banerjee cabinet.  
"Though their exact role is not known it seems that these people acted as conduits who presented the names of would be appointees and also probably reached the cash they paid to the people higher up in the chain ... this was easier for them to do as they came from the same education department ... besides they were on high posts which increased their credibility," agency sources said.  
Scores of illegally appointed people have already lost their jobs following directives issued by the Calcutta High Court.  
Thousands of people purchased jobs in schools in what is being called a multi-layered scam.  
While lakhs of aspiring candidates appeared for TET and SSC exams in successive years several thousands of them managed to purchase their jobs as school teachers in the primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary

levels. On the other hand many eligible candidates despite having qualified the exams were bracketed in the waiting lists.  
The scam also took place in the appointment of Group C and D employees.  
The candidates' marks were arbitrarily increased whereas thousands of OMR sheets written by them were destroyed in a bid to obliterate the footprint of the crime.  
Notwithstanding, the investigating agencies in due course of investigation managed to recover a few thousand OMR sheets and hard discs of various exams from Uttar Pradesh.  
While many of these OMR sheets showed that some candidates had obtained "Zero" mark. Mysteriously however, their marks were artificially increased in the website of the SSC.  
According to sources these jobs were sold for anywhere between Rs 5 and Rs 30 lakh, Meanwhile, Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu



Adhikari on Tuesday said that the big thieves of Bengal who had masterminded the scams would go to Tihar jail.  
Asking the people to prepare for the panchayat elections Adhikari said "soon the biggest fishes that had perpetrated cattle smuggling, coal smuggling, teachers' scam and even usurped the poor people's houses in the PM Awas Yojna scheme would be banished to Tihar Jail.  
"The ill-gotten cash from all these scams had finally found their ways to Kolkata where the TMC's top leadership gobbled

# I&B Min buildings' audit led to vacating 11 lakh sqft space in 20 cities: Thakur

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**  
Union Minister Anurag Thakur on Tuesday said a space audit of buildings of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting led to vacating space of over 11 lakh square feet across 20 cities.  
During an informal interaction with reporters, Thakur said a space audit and efficient management of buildings carried out as part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan also led to earnings of about Rs 22 crore. The space audit was started on September 29 by Thakur's visit to Doordarshan Kendra in Ahmedabad and concluded in Bhopal on Monday.  
Personal inspection by Thakur in buildings housing offices of the ministry in Mumbai led to clearing of 90,000 square feet of space at prime locations which, if rent-



ed out, could earn the government crores in revenue. The vacated space is spread across 20 cities -- Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kurnool, Chennai, Thirissur, Thiruvananthapuram, Jabalpur, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Coimbatore, Panaji, Amritsar, Sambalpur, Bhawanipatna, Puducherry, Mangaluru, Berhampur and Bhopal.  
The Ministry now plans to co-locate its various offices in the space vacated during the audit to bring about greater synergy among sister organisations and effective dissemination of information through integrated publicity plans, Thakur said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also mentioned the space audit carried out by the ministry in his 'Mann ki Baat' programme on December 25.

# BSF jawan murdered by 7 members of family in Guj

**He had gone to accused house to protest against daughter's objectionable video posted online**

**PTI ■ KHEDA**  
A 42-year-old Border Security Force jawan was murdered allegedly by seven members of a family in Gujarat's Kheda district after he went to their house to protest while holding one of them responsible for circulating an objectionable video of his minor daughter on social media, police said on Tuesday.  
The incident took place at around 10 pm on Saturday and the seven accused were arrested on Sunday, they said.  
BSF jawan Melaji Vaghela, his wife and son went to the house of Dinesh Jadav at Chaklasi village in Nadiad taluka of the district to protest against the objectionable video of Vaghela's daughter, which they claimed was circulated on



social media by Jadav's son.  
"After a heated argument over the issue, Jadav and his six other family members attacked Vaghela and his family members with sticks and sharp weapons," Nadiad's Deputy Superintendent of Police V R Bajpai told reporters.  
Vaghela received injuries on his head and other body parts and died on the spot, he said.  
His son Navdeep too suffered severe head injuries and his wife was also injured, the

official said.  
An FIR was registered on Sunday night at Chaklasi police station under various Indian Penal Code Sections including 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 504 (intentional insult) and 143 (unlawful assembly), he said.  
All the seven accused were arrested. They were sent to judicial custody on Monday, the official said.  
An investigation was on into the incident. A forensic team was in the process of collecting evidence, he said.  
The incident took place when Vaghela was visiting his family on a holiday before his transfer to Barmer in Rajasthan from Ambasan in Mehsana, Superintendent of Police Rajesh Gadhiya said.

# Deshmukh to walk out of jail, HC refuses stay on his bail

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**  
Former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh is likely to walk out of jail on Wednesday as the Bombay High Court on Tuesday refused to extend its stay on an order granting him bail in a corruption case registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).  
Justice M S Karnik had granted bail to the 73-year-old Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader on December 12, but stayed the order for 10 days as the CBI sought time to challenge it in the Supreme Court.  
The probe agency moved the apex court but the appeal would be heard only in January 2023 as the court is closed for vacation.  
Last week, the high court had extended the stay till December 27 on the CBI's request.  
On Tuesday, the central agency sought another extension.

Deshmukh's lawyers Aniket Nikam and Inderpal Singh claimed that the CBI was trying to "overreach" the earlier order of the HC which had stated that under no circumstances another extension will be granted.  
"They are failing to make out any urgency in the Supreme Court, and coming here seeking stay. This cannot be permitted," Nikam argued.  
The vacation bench of the High Court, after hearing the arguments, said that "no further extension can be granted".  
With the court refusing to extend the stay, Deshmukh could be released on bail on Wednesday, his lawyers told PTI.  
The high court, while granting bail to Deshmukh, had noted that except for dismissed police officer Sachin Waze's statement, no testimony recorded by the CBI indicated that money was being extorted from bar owners in Mumbai at the behest of the NCP leader.

Deshmukh approached the high court after a special CBI court rejected his bail plea last month. He sought bail both on medical grounds and merits of the case.  
He has been in jail since November 2021 after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested him in an alleged money laundering case.  
In April this year, the CBI arrested him in a corruption case.  
Deshmukh, who has denied the allegations levelled against him, is in judicial custody at the Arthur Road Jail in Mumbai.  
In October, the high court had granted him bail in the ED case.  
Former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh in March 2021 alleged that Deshmukh, the then home minister, had given a target to police officers to collect Rs 100 crore per month from restaurants and bars in Mumbai.  
Former assistant police inspector Waze, who was



arrested in the case of an explosives-laden vehicle found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's house in Mumbai last year, also levelled similar allegations.  
The high court in April 2021 directed the CBI to carry out a preliminary inquiry.  
Based on this inquiry, the CBI registered an FIR against Deshmukh and others for alleged corruption and misuse of official powers.  
The NCP on Tuesday welcomed the court's decision.  
In a statement, Mahesh Tapase, chief spokesperson of the party, said, "It has been proved that Anil Deshmukh was wrongfully framed in a fake case and he will come out of the jail tomorrow after spending more than one year behind the bars. We will take his case to the people and make them aware of the injustice meted out to him."  
The allegations against Deshmukh were politically motivated and no "money trail" was found, he said.  
"The party extends its support to Deshmukh and we will continue to fight against the people who falsely framed him," Tapase added.

# TMC's Mondal arrested for cattle smuggling gets bail in attempt to murder case

**PTI ■ DUBRAJPUR**  
A court in West Bengal's Birbhum district on Tuesday granted bail to TMC leader Anubrata Mondal in an attempt to murder case.  
Mondal, arrested by the CBI in August in the cattle smuggling case, was booked by the police under IPC sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 325 (causing grievous hurt) and 307 (attempt to murder) on the complaint of a TMC worker

who alleged that he was assaulted.  
The sub-divisional court in Dubrajpur granted bail to Mondal when he was produced, after the expiry of his seven-day police custody.  
Public prosecutor Rajendra Prasad Dey said, "The investigating officer prayed for police custody but the court after examining the case diary and other records granted him bail. On behalf of the state, I opposed the bail petition."

# Vijayan meets Modi in Delhi

**PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/NEW DELHI**  
Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the latter's official residence in New Delhi, an official source said.  
The Chief Minister's Office shared photographs of the meeting which is being held in the wake of farmers and residents of areas close to forested parts of the southern state protesting against implementation of the one-kilometre eco-sensitive zones (ESZ) in those places.  
Other than photographs of the meeting, no other details were released by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO).  
An official source on Monday had said that the ESZ issue was likely to be discussed during the meeting.  
Besides that, the delay in getting the Central govern-



ment's clearance for the semi-high speed rail project SilverLine, connecting Kasaragod in the north to Thiruvananthapuram in the south, and the financial crisis that has gripped the state during the time of COVID-19 pandemic may also be topics of discussion, the source had said.  
The state government has

# Kashmiri Pandit staff move CAT challenging order prohibiting transfer from Valley

**PTI ■ JAMMU**  
Protesting Kashmiri Pandit employees have approached the Central Administrative Tribunal against a Jammu and Kashmir administration order stating those granted employment under the prime minister's special package cannot be transferred.  
The move to approach the CAT's Srinagar bench comes days after Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha announced that the striking employees would not be given salaries, a statement criticised by all major political parties.  
Kashmiri Pandit employees have been on a strike for over seven months to demand their "relocation" from the Valley in view of targeted killings by terrorists.  
The protesting employees



have also sought interim relief from being forced to join work at their respective postings till the government provides them a secure work environment and releases their pending salaries.  
The petition filed by Boopinder Bhat and Yogesh Pandita is likely to be listed for hearing after the tribunal resumes functioning on December 30.  
They have challenged sub-rule 4 of rule 4 of the Jammu and Kashmir Kashmiri Migrants (Special Drive) Recruitment Rules, 2009, which provides that "in case the appointee migrates from valley again for any reason whatsoever, he shall lose the job without any notice and shall stand terminated".

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PAPER WITH PASSION

## National parties?

Both the BJP and Congress units in Maharashtra and Karnataka have opposite views on land dispute

**M**aharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has upped the ante by presenting a resolution on the decades-old border dispute with Karnataka in the state Assembly. It enunciates Maharashtra's resolve to contest the pending case in the Supreme Court with full strength for the inclusion of each and "every inch" of 865 villages including Belgavi, Karwar, Nipani, and Bidar Bhalki. This is reminiscent of the resolution that both houses of our Parliament unanimously adopted on February 22, 1994, stressing that Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of India, and that Pakistan must vacate parts of the state under its occupation. But Pakistan is an enemy nation that has illegally grabbed the territory; in the present instance, both states involved are Indian and following the Indian Constitution. In both states, the Bharatiya Janata Party, which prides itself on its nationalist credentials, is in power. Such a resolution is an affront to national unity. To be fair to Shinde and his deputy, Devendra Fadnis, their Government was apparently responding to an equally deplorable resolution passed by the Karnataka Assembly a few days ago. Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai moved the resolution which was unanimously adopted by a voice-vote. "There is no compromise on the matters relating to Karnataka's land, water, language and Kannadiga's interest. The feelings of Karnataka's people and members [of the Assembly] is one of this subject, and if it is affected, we are all committed to unitedly take constitutional and legal measures to protect the interest of the state."

Since both resolutions were unanimously adopted in the respective Assemblies, all parties, including the BJP and the Indian National Congress, consented to their contents. A question arises: where do these national parties stand on the land dispute between the two states? The state units of BJP and Congress Maharashtra believe that "every inch" of the land in dispute belongs to Maharashtra; similarly, the state units of BJP and Congress Karnataka believe that "every inch" of the land in dispute belongs to Karnataka. What, pray, do the BJP and the Congress believe — that is, if they believe in anything other than power? For how long can national parties keep pandering to the groups which thrive on sentimentalism, be it region, linguistic, or religious? Governance is a serious business, which must be carried out with reliance on facts, commonsense, and reason; it cannot be allowed to run amok, following the vicissitudes of demagogic politicians. But, unfortunately, that is exactly what seems to be happening. Former Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray is of the view that the Centre should declare "Karnataka-occupied Maharashtra" areas as a Union Territory. Despite the inappropriate description of the dispute areas, his suggestion is worth examining; it can be a UT till the Supreme Court decides over the matter. It is, however, not just the duty of the Centre to sort out the dispute but also of the two national parties.

### PICTALK



Snow-covered Himalayas mountain range after fresh snowfall, seen from Shimla

PTI

## Nature's wrath

Extreme weather is playing havoc in the USA where such a big chill is being witnessed after decades

**A**t least 48 people have already died and thousands of flights have been canceled in the USA due to storms and severe cold conditions which are being touted as one of the biggest chills in decades. The cold is so stark that it is posing danger not only to humans but to entire ecosystem. Though it has been over a week there are no signs of any let-up and it is feared that the worst is yet to come. Buffalo, New York is one of the severest hit areas by the storm which is causing high-speed wind, rains, and snow across the US. According to the forecasts, the extreme cold settling over the US this week will be biting, as a blast of arctic air and strong winds threaten to plunge several regions into subzero temperatures. Roughly 150 million people across the US are facing the frigid conditions, posing life-threatening dangers to anyone without shelter, wrecking havoc on holiday travelers and causing power outages, and blocking supply lines. Since this extreme weather is not normally witnessed in the USA it is not as prepared to face it as Canada where sub-normal temperatures are routine. Govt agencies across the country are urging households to prepare for the worst, with strong winds adding to the possibility of disruption in power supply. People are being advised to keep extra supplies, including blankets, to face any eventuality. This could be life saver.



Ironically, worldwide stark winters are becoming less common. The dramatic and sudden shift in temperatures, can have a profound effect on adaptation, especially for plants, animals, and ecosystem. The extreme weather and storms may be direct consequence of upheaval in climate change, and fall out of human actions and interference. But it's clear that the underlying impacts caused by global heating may make them harder to endure. The abruptness of the drop in temperatures is also expected to impact aquatic life. It may be intriguing to know that such conditions can prevail in warmer climates like ours as some scientists are indicating. What has been the reason for such a sharp decrease in such a short span of time is still being debated but the reason for so many deaths can be attributed to a lack of preparedness and lesser tolerance for extreme cold conditions. This extreme winter is also a reminder that no matter how technically advanced you might be, you cannot beat nature which can take away what it gives. Life!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

# Restore deterrence along LAC for peace



ASHOK K MEHTA

A 'Snow Leopard' style operation is needed to dissuade China from doing another Yangtse. The lasting peace can come only through quid pro quo.

**R**am Madhav, once a powerful RSS voice who counted in the government, recently remarked that Indian action at Yangtse was only defensive but India is now prepared for China, adding that only Operation Snow Leopard against China was proactive. On the 15,000 feet high Yangtse plateau, the LAC follows Yangtse Ridge, the watershed where Indian border posts are located along a stone wall. Overlooking the plateau are the Yangtse heights which command a towering 360-degree view, especially of Tawang bowl 30 km away extending to Sela Pass where a tunnel is being built. It is one among several disputed areas resulting from the patchy marking of the McMahon Line on an 8-inch map and perhaps the only disputed area in Indian possession. This riles China as it was under its possession for two months in 1962. China's new border law 2022 equates territory with sovereignty and makes recovery of lost territory sacred.

The PLA's attempt to unilaterally alter the status quo at Yangtse is not their first. They've done so regularly since 2016 to assert China's claim over disputed territory. According to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, supported by satellite imagery Dec 2022 of Planet Labs, Chinese infrastructure has improved significantly in one year with a road now 150 m short of LAC with new villages coming up close by. China's infrastructure development along LAC has created an 'escalation trap' for India which it tries to compensate for with increased readiness and surveillance to reduce the risk of accidental escalation. On 9 December, the PLA operation started around 3 am in foggy conditions, expecting to overwhelm Indian troops who were forewarned and beat back intruders with clubs and sticks. Through these attempts, says ASPI, China is testing Indian willingness and readiness to resist while eroding the status quo.

China will compromise on Tawang and will by hook or



crook, even by use of force, try to retake Tawang which was under its possession for two months in 1962. China's new border law 2022 equates territory with sovereignty and makes recovery of lost territory sacred.

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**INDIA HAS GONE SILENT ON DOKLAM IN BHUTAN WHERE IN 2017, INDIAN TROOPS ALLEGEDLY 'ILLEGALLY CROSSED LAC' INTO CHINESE TERRITORY TO PREVENT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A ROAD TO THE DISPUTED TRI-JUNCTION INVOKING ITS TREATY OBLIGATIONS WITH BHUTAN**

India has gone silent on Doklam in Bhutan where in 2017, Indian troops allegedly 'illegally crossed LAC' into Chinese territory to prevent the construction of a road to the disputed tri-junction invoking its treaty obligations with Bhutan. Following an agreement, the Indian and Chinese disengaged after 73 days. But the Chinese feigned withdrawal and soon returned. According to Planet Lab's, imagery obtained this month Chinese village 9 km east of Doklam at Pangda is inside Bhutan with now a bridge over Torsa Nullah. This will create a new red-line situation for India with Indian troops at Dokla just meters away from PLA at Doklam. India has allowed the Doklam front to reopen as Bhutanese would any day settle their differences with China but for India's security concerns in Chumbi valley.

It is increasingly clear China will neither clarify LAC nor settle the border question. It will repeat its 2020 tricks in East Ladakh in other areas as its infrastructure expands further. After withdrawal from Hot Springs in September, China said it would not accept the status quo of 2020 created by India's 'illegal crossing of LAC'. This fiction China has

used after every clash with Indian troops in shifting the onus of blame to India. High time India paused to rethink its China policy of diplomacy which has hit a cul de sac. PM Modi's handshake at Bali with President Xi Jinping has made little difference. Last week's 17th round of military talks produced a blank with zero progress on friction points Depsang and Demchok. It is the end of Disengagement without any Deescalation.

Madhav is wrong claiming India is prepared for China. Far from it. Deterrence has broken down and military diplomacy has also failed. The government's resolve to keep Parliament in the dark and Modi's reluctance to utter the 'C' word add to the complexity of the LAC dilemma. China is extracting maximum advantage from it. One way to rebuild deterrence is through QPQ (Quid Pro Quo) operations like Snow Leopard. Political will is needed for QPQ but so is a worthy allocation to next year's defence budget to boost deterrence.

(The writer, a retired Lt Gen, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, & founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff; views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT ANYWAY?

Sir — This is in response to Prafull Goradia's article titled "The life & career of Mohammad Ali Jinnah" (December 24). Though it would be unfair to say that the Partition of India was the handiwork of MA Jinnah only, the whole world knows that the Muslim League leader played a pivotal role in that gory episode. Had Pakistan been achieved by taking resort to non-violence dialogues debates and the population of the sub-continent not got adversely affected; perhaps a favorable case could have been made for Jinnah.

But the fact remains that it was Jinnah's call of "Direct Action Day" that provoked the year-long Great Calcutta Killings and resulted in thousands of innocents being butchered to death. Jinnah's dream of Pakistan got fulfilled at the expense of the lives of millions. And those who survived the mayhem found themselves raped, widowed, orphaned, uprooted, and homeless overnight. After achieving his goal, Jinnah acted piously by promising equality for all Pakistanis, irrespective of their religious affiliation! But that rhetoric is not enough to absolve Jinnah of the deadly crime that he had perpetrated against humanity. So painting him as "originally secular" is meaningless in the context of his future deeds.

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

### NEW GOVT IN NEPAL

Sir — Instability in Nepal for the last few decades has cast an ugly shadow on both its internal and external affairs. The November general election failed to produce a single candidate as no party could claim to form the govt despite Nepali Congress emerging as the single largest party. However, in a dramatic turn of events after weeks of speculation and negotiations were put to rest as former Maoist rebel leader Pushpa Kumar Dahal, Prachanda, is set to become the PM of the Himalayan state. His previous two terms in 2008, 2009 and 2015-16

### A good decision



The decision or initiative of the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi who invited Samajwadi Party (SP) President Akhilesh Yadav, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati and Jayant Singh of Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) to participate in the Bharat Jodo Yatra (BJY), as per

sources for the unity of the country is a welcome step. A formal letter has been written by the Congress leader but its not received consent from these leaders.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra will resume on January 3 from Ghaziabad in UP and it is said that Congress wants all like-minded parties to participate in the Yatra which is already successful in other states with a very large participation of people from all castes, communities, and religions. Earlier, many non-Congress leaders and celebrities including actor and politician Kamal Haasan joined the yatra. It is high time leaders of political parties must join the Yatra irrespective of different ideologies.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

were marred in controversy owing to a political crisis over sharing of power. His decade-long armed struggle from 1996 to 2006 only ended with establishing peace in November 2006 by means of an agreement.

In a nation clouded by political and economic instability where smaller parties role as brokers by siding either with Mr Deoba or Mr Oli, it is no surprise then that its pressing problems like maintaining law and order, fighting corruption, creating jobs, improving economic conditions, providing health and quality education remain as elusive as ever. The new govt has its task cut out. The political changes may not bode well for India as the guerrilla leader's proximity to China and his pro-China stance will pose problems for a healthy relationship.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

### SPORTSPERSONS' CAREERS

Sir — Sportspersons' careers often hang on slender threads, waltzing amidst swings in fortunes. None can be a better example of this fact than the two soccer giants - Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, whose contrasting campaigns were the highlights in the recently con-

cluded FIFA 2022 World Cup. While Messi reached the pinnacle of glory by winning the cup, in contrast, Ronaldo's extraordinary career has undergone a sudden, undeniable, and maybe irreversible shift. It is really sad that the Portugal star, post world cup, has been relegated to a state where he has millions of die-hard fans, yet still being lonely. Imagine a football giant, who everyone came to watch, yet was stuck on the bench often because of the rift in the relationship between him and Coach Fernando Santos. Or precisely, being Cristiano Ronaldo, yet not being wanted now.

Hitting the football into the net with regularity was what Ronaldo had been doing for years. But when he can't do that anymore, his value plummets. Sadly, just in the space of one world cup, Ronaldo's legacy has been battered beyond repair. As for Messi, completing the set of trophies with the summit clash of the game is not only phenomenal but also like cutting through the knife in the heart of Ronaldo.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUNDBITE

He (Vajpayee) was a rare combination of a politician, poet, fearless human being, and sympathetic leader who had no enemies, like Ajatshatru.



Former President — Ram Nath Kovind



I wished (Modi) a successful G20 presidency...now I count on India's participation in its implementation. I also thanked (him) for humanitarian aid and support in the UN.

Ukrainian President — Volodymyr Zelensky

... I was coming out of some serious cinema with Uri, Bhoot. As an actor, even I was hungry to explore.



Actor — Vicky Kaushal



I feel honoured to have been assigned this responsibility by the PCB Management Committee and will have no stone unturned in fulfilling this responsibility to the best of my abilities.

Pakistan cricketer — Shahid Afridi

A lot of lies are being spread about Rahul-jii. They should start Rahul Gandhi Troll Ministry and put Smriti Irani as the in-charge. She does not talk about when atrocities are committed against women.



Congress Social Media incharge — Supriya Srinetra

## FIRST COLUMN

## HEALTHY, FIT INDIA IS MUST FOR WELLBEING

Govt is addressing numerous critical health challenges



MONIKA ARORA

Health is the building block for the prosperity of a nation. The Covid-19 has brought the focus back on healthy living and the need for robust health infrastructure, and the Indian government has been quick to respond. Even before the pandemic struck, the government was emphasising on the holistic health and well-being of all.

With programmes like Ayushman Bharat and Mission Indradhanush, the government has been addressing numerous critical health challenges and promoting Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Another important but often ignored area for health programming has been women and adolescents. The health of the nation depends on the health of its women, children, and youth but health-seeking data among them in India is less than one per cent as per a study.

Similarly, only a few adolescents (5 per cent young men and 8 per cent young women) are aware of AFHC in India. Health Promotion among adolescents is the need of the hour as their empowerment is crucial to address the looming burden of overweight – obesity and NCDs among adolescents alongside the unfinished agenda of malnutrition and communicable diseases.

POSHAN Abhiyaan is a path-breaking government flagship programme to improve nutritional outcomes for children, adolescent girls, pregnant women, and lactating mothers.



CNNS data has highlighted huge overweight-obesity prevalence among 10-19 years in India with five per cent in both girls and boys. Over 17 million children, aged 5-19 years in India are affected by obesity. If left unchecked, these numbers will increase to 27 million by 2030-34. Thus, addressing the food environment to enable healthy choices for children and adolescents is crucial. Findings of a recent study conducted by the PHFI's research team with support from the WHO country office for India in 2021 highlighted that the advertising environment in and around schools is obesogenic, despite government and educational institutes guidelines on restricting the availability and accessibility of HFSS foods.

Another PHFI study conducted a content analysis of food advertisements on popular television channels among children and youth in India. The results revealed that a total of 88.6 per cent of 1735 food advertisements were for HFSS foods and a higher proportion of food advertisements were seen on children's channels (38 per cent) than on youth channels (23 per cent). The study highlighted that the majority (90-95 per cent) of advertisements broadcast on television channels targeting children and youth were of HFSS foods. These studies laid the foundation for designing and initiating the 'Let's Fix Our Food' (LFOF) campaign to combat an obesogenic environment for children and youth.

Better adolescent health can only be achieved by meaningfully engaging adolescents in intervention design and implementation. Recently, when multiple stakeholders convened nationally on the issue of addressing obesity among children and adolescents in India, it was noted that adolescents' voices were missing in these academic and scientific debates. It led to the launch of the 'LFOF initiative, which is co-created with adolescents. Under this initiative, their meaningful engagement in creating a healthy food environment in the country and leading to ownership of issues as campaigns are designed and delivered by the youth themselves. It will create health-promoting norms among adolescents, in families, and communities and will also support policies that will enable addressing malnutrition by addressing both ends of malnutrition: obesity and undernutrition. The time is ripe to come together and work towards the nation of our dreams, a healthier and happier India, by bringing all the relevant stakeholders for strengthening awareness and adoption of healthy behaviours around nutrition and physical activity among adolescents.

(The author is Vice-President, Public Health Foundation of India)

## Teachers should play role of friend, parent

A teacher's job is to equip the students to overcome the travails they face in their later life



DR BIJU DHARMAPALAN

There was a time when a teacher was looked upon as a role model by students. Apart from imbuing knowledge, students also copied their teacher's attitude and character in their private life. A teacher is considered as par with God; whatever they deliver is considered divine by the students and the parents. They were the sole provider of knowledge for students. Before the implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009, corporal punishment by teachers was never considered a punishable act.

There are instances where parents supported the action of the teachers, for they knew that teachers punish students only for their betterment. Situations have changed recently, and parents consider even compelling a student to learn as a grave crime! If a student commits suicide, authorities make the teacher a culprit, and the media also goes against the teachers. A true teacher should act as a guiding light in the life of students, correcting them when they make mistakes and acting as a philosopher to provide tips to manage the travails in life.

But in today's digital era, the public perception of teachers has changed a lot. They are no longer considered a provider of knowledge. For today's generation, Google and YouTube are the knowledge sources. Even a kindergarten child knows how to use these on a laptop and smartphone. Today's children learn to attain every skill through the internet. They learn foreign languages, learn music and other skills easily using apps available on the internet.

Suppose the purpose of a university is to facilitate the advancement of knowledge and the development of high cognitive skills in the community. In that case, Google can aptly be called a 'Google University'.

In this era of 'Google University', a teacher is considered secondary, mostly to act as an intermediate between humans and machines. For teachers to survive in this new world is challenging, especially for school and college teachers.

Teachers in the earlier generations ranked based on their knowledge in their domain and their attitude. Today if a teacher has to earn respect in the knowledge domain, they need to overpower the 'Google University'. This is a difficult task for many. The attitude of a teacher in the present generation is hard to define. Indian society gives high respect to teachers and the teaching profession. Our tradition considers teachers as par with God, and hence they expect some qualities from a teacher that a student can emulate.

Truthfully speaking, most teachers are just moving with the trends of the society and never try to keep their individuality at the forefront. They try to satisfy the needs of the present generation of students.



IN THIS ERA OF 'GOOGLE UNIVERSITY', A TEACHER IS CONSIDERED SECONDARY, MOSTLY TO ACT AS AN INTERMEDIATE BETWEEN HUMANS AND MACHINES. FOR TEACHERS TO SURVIVE IN THIS NEW WORLD IS CHALLENGING, ESPECIALLY FOR SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TEACHERS

(The author is a science communicator and academic)

Many of today's teachers try to be friends with students to be in their good books and be among them. Partying with students, dancing with them and being with them on social media are new means of impressing students. There are hardly very few students who expect their teachers to be a knowledge repository.

Everyone in our society, be it students or teachers, has become an attention seeker through social media. Seeking attention is the basic human instinct. Toddler seeks attention from their parents; a student seeks attention from their teachers; a teenager from friends of the opposite sex, a professional from their peers; in every sphere of life and every stratum of society, people have become attention seekers.

The quantum of posts available on various social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, or Pixstory is ample proof of this. A teacher being a part of this new digital society is no exception. Teachers dancing with students, partying with students, or even dating students and posting their photos and videos on social media has become a new norm in this new world. Many teachers play appeasement politics with their students for their survival.

Of course, like any other person, a teacher has a professional as well as private life. There is no need to intrude into their private life. That doesn't make sense to have the teacher and student consuming alcohol together or taking a smoke together. There are excellent teachers who have their tempta-

tions like any other person. The authorities should check whether the teacher is doing their profession judiciously.

Even though a good teacher should be a friend to a student, they should know where to draw the line. They should know how to keep a distance from students. Too much closeness to students may be misused by some.

Many institutions have put forth a dress code for teachers, driven mainly by the prevailing traditions in that society. The dress code also gives dignity to the profession and helps demarcate teachers from students. Otherwise, it would be tough to identify a young teacher from a student. Imagine how our army men/women would look without proper uniforms.

The unwritten rules and codes of ethics formulated by society are based on the experience our ancestors gained through their experience. The teachers are dealing with students, who are mostly in the age group of adolescents or teenagers. Their brain is fluid and is driven by the temptations caused by body chemicals. Many times the outward behaviour a student expresses is beyond their control. It's the duty of every teacher not to instigate their physiological status to extremes. In a recent affidavit filed by the Kerala University of Health Sciences at the Kerala High Court, it was stated that "absolute freedom on attaining the age of 18 may not be appropriate and good for the society, and maturation is fully accomplished at the age of 25".

In this digital communication world, a teacher must be more cautious in their attitude and behaviour on social media, as their students are constantly monitoring them. In this era, it is the duty of teachers to teach students how to behave on social media and how to tackle crimes associated with it. They should teach students how to use the internet judiciously.

With the emergence of AI technologies, all creative things like writing, drawing, compositions, etc., where human brains need to be used, can be done using the internet within minutes. In this situation, evaluating a student and developing content for teaching is an arduous task for the teachers.

A teacher's job is not only to complete the syllabus or pass examinations but to equip the students to overcome the travails they face in their later life. A good teacher should play the role of a good student, friend and parent. Only if they consider themselves a student will they be curious to learn more from their domain. Similarly, they should be a good friend to students, listening to their concerns. They should also play the role of parents showing empathy and correcting them when they make mistakes.

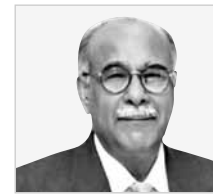
The problem we face in our education system is that we lack teachers who are passionate about the profession. Many have taken up the job either by accident or by peer pressure.

Teaching is a divine profession, and teachers should show divinity by inculcating the spirit gained from our rich heritage.

## POINTCOUNTERPOINT

YOU CHANGED THE ENTIRE [PCB] CONSTITUTION TO BRING IN ONE PERSON, NAJAM SETHI, AND TO ADJUST HIM. I'VE NEVER SEEN THIS ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD.

— EX-CHAIRMAN OF PAKISTAN CRICKET BOARD RAMEEZ RAJA



THE CRICKET REGIME HEADED BY RAMIZ RAJA IS NO MORE. THE 2014 PCB CONSTITUTION STANDS RESTORED. THOUSANDS OF CRICKETERS WILL BE EMPLOYED AGAIN. THE FAMINE IN CRICKET WILL COME TO AN END.

— CHAIRMAN PAKISTAN CRICKET BOARD NAJAM SETHI

## Next year will be crucial for India on several counts

Economy, politics and foreign affairs will hog limelight with keen global interests in 2023

What is in store for the year 2023? Will it be good or bad? For the past three years, the world has faced an unprecedented pandemic, Covid-19, which has devastated the globe. Crystal-ball gazers are hoping for a better scenario next year. They expect the economy's health will be restored and hope to resolve the war-like situation in Ukraine.

But the famous French astrologer Nostradamus predicted that in 2023 the Ukraine crisis might lead to a world war. He foretold a temperature rise and heralded the arrival of a new Pope, a civil war in America, civil unrest in the world, and a Mars landing.

The Economist magazine notes the global interlocking challenges, including the war



KALYANI SHANKAR

in Ukraine, food and fuel prices, the fight against inflation, the transition to renewable energy, and China's uncertain post-pandemic path. India might overtake China as the world's most populous country next year. It has the world's largest youth population.

On foreign policy, India will host the prestigious 18th G20 Heads of State and Governments summit on September 9-10, 2023 in New Delhi. As part of the Summit, India will hold more than 200 events spread across major metro cities. Prime Minister Modi plans to showcase himself and India in a grand show to project himself as a world leader ahead of the 2024 polls.

The coronation of King Charles 111 is a colourful

event next year. Politically, for India, the upcoming nine state elections are the most significant in 2023. It will decide the fate of several parties and their leaders, including Congress, the BJP, and other regional parties. The strength of Rahul Gandhi will be tested in these polls after his current Bharat Jodo yatra ends in February.

Nine states will go to polls over the next 12 months. They are—Meghalaya, Tripura, and Nagaland in February; Karnataka in May; Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Telangana, and Rajasthan in November. The government might also hold elections in Jammu and Kashmir. The results will be a precursor for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Who wins and

who loses will impact the electorate and the workers' morale.

The ruling BJP is making all efforts to expand its base. For the Opposition, it is vital to ensure that non-BJP parties win to stop the BJP juggernaut. There is a direct fight between the BJP and the Congress in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh. In Karnataka, there will be a triangular contest between BJP, Congress, and JDS. In Telangana, a triangular fight will be between TRS, Congress, and BJP. In Tripura, too, there will be a triangular fight between the BJP, the Congress, and the Left Front.

Of these, the BJP rules Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. Both are critical for Congress and the BJP. And so are Chhattisgarh and

Rajasthan, the only two states Congress currently holds. The BJP wants to wrest Telangana from chief minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, who fancies himself as the challenger to Modi. Confident because his party has maintained over 40 per cent vote share, establishing its formidable position in Telangana, KCR wants to perform a hat trick. Though he has finished the Congress and Telugu Desam, to his dismay, the BJP has emerged as the main opposition party in the space vacated.

The immediate focus is on Karnataka. The BJP has high stakes as that is the only state the BJP is ruling in the south. The Congress-JD(S) combine has a chance to wrest the government from the BJP.

Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Mizoram are poll bound in the Northeast. The BJP currently rules Tripura. In Meghalaya and Nagaland, the BJP-backed governments are in power. The Mizo National Front government is ruling in Mizoram. The once pre-eminent Congress is almost finished now.

Will Congress revive its strength? Will Rahul Gandhi emerge stronger? The Himachal Pradesh win this month has boosted the morale of the Congress. It has allowed a chance for Congress to unite the Opposition.

The opposition parties have realised that Modi will get a third term unless they combine. They will decide on the prime ministerial candi-

date only after the polls. There are at least half a dozen contenders, mostly the egoistic regional satraps like Mamata Banerjee, KCR, and Arvind Kejriwal.

The return of covid with a new variant is a new threat. India managed to contain the pandemic by vaccinating a billion plus people. Still, the government should be on guard against any new variants.

On the economy, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Union Budget on February 1. Inflation and price rise are two critical issues. The World Bank expects India's GDP growth to be better than expected, but inflation would stay above 7 per cent.

Overall, 2023 might bring us better prospects in most spheres.

# Russia says it shot down Ukrainian drone near airbase

AP ■ KYIV  
The Russian military reported Monday that it shot down a Ukrainian drone approaching an air base deep inside Russia, the second time the facility has been targeted this month - again revealing weaknesses in Russia's air defenses.

after such a long trip inside Russia again raises questions about the effectiveness of Russia's air defenses, particularly those intended to protect its most strategic military assets such as warplanes capable of carrying nuclear weapons. In keeping with the Kyiv government's long-standing practice of not confirming cross-border attacks but welcoming their results, Ukrainian air force spokesperson Yuri Ihnat didn't directly acknowledge his country's involvement in Monday's incident in an interview on Ukrainian television, but said: "These are the consequences of Russian aggression." He added: "If the Russians thought that the war wouldn't affect them deep behind their lines, they were deeply mistaken."



Luhansk region, which is almost entirely under Moscow's control, and is on an important supply route for Russian forces and serves as a gateway for movement into other strategic positions. Earlier, Haidai reported that Russia had withdrawn its occupying government administration from Svatove, 51 kilometers north of Kreminna. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address Monday that "the situation there is difficult, painful. The occupiers are expending all the resources available to them - and they are considerable resources - to squeeze out at least some advance."

Haidai told Ukrainian television on Monday that Russian forces in the region are "suffering huge losses and medical facilities are overwhelmed with wounded soldiers." The Russian army is redeploying paratroopers from the Kherson region to the area, he added. In neighbouring Donetsk region, partially occupied by Russia, fierce battles continue around the city of Bakhmut, which Russian forces have been trying to seize for weeks to consolidate their grip on Ukraine's

east. Zelenskyy said last week Bakhmut was the hottest spot on the war's 1,300-kilometre front line. Ukrainian officials have maintained ambiguity over previous high-profile attacks, including drone strikes on Russian military bases earlier this month. On Dec. 5, unprecedented drone strikes on Engels and the Dyagilevo base in the Ryazan region in western Russia killed a total of three servicemen and wounded four others. In retaliation, Russia launched a massive missile barrage in Ukraine that struck homes and buildings and killed civilians. Elsewhere on the battlefield, at least four civilians were wounded in Russian shelling of five Ukrainian southeast regions over the past 24 hours, according to the deputy head of Ukraine's presidential office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko. Overall, the intensity of the shelling from Sunday night into Monday was significantly lower. For the first time in weeks, Russian forces didn't shell the Dnipropetrovsk region, which borders the partially occupied southern regions of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, its governor,

Russia has suffered numerous cross-border attacks during the war on its main territory, as well as on the Crimean Peninsula, which it illegally annexed in 2014. The incidents have outraged Russian military bloggers who say they show the country's weak air defenses and security systems in general. In another cross-border

incident that couldn't be independently confirmed, Russia's Tass news agency reported Monday that the country's security forces had killed four Ukrainian saboteurs attempting to enter the Bryansk region from Ukraine. The report claimed the infiltrators carried explosive materials when they were caught Sunday. The cross-border attacks on Russian military and other strategic sites prompted Russian President Vladimir

Putin to order almost weekly missile and weaponized drone attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, causing widespread blackouts that also knocked out heating and water supplies in increasingly frigid weather. The attacks, which began in October across much of the country, have been occurring as ground fighting focused on Ukraine's southern and eastern regions. In eastern Ukraine on Monday, Luhansk's Ukrainian

governor, Serhiy Haidai, said Russian forces have withdrawn from their military command operations post in the town of Kreminna as Ukrainian forces were approaching after months of intense fighting. Russia's Defense Ministry didn't comment on the withdrawal claim. Russian forces relocated to Kreminna and several other areas in September after they pulled back from the Kharkiv region in eastern Ukraine. Kreminna is in the eastern

Valentyn Reznichenko, reportedly on Telegram. "This is the third night in 5.5 months since the Russians started shelling" the areas around the city of Nikopol, Reznichenko wrote. Nikopol is located across the Dnieper River from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which is under the control of Russian forces and whose six reactors are shut down. Ukrainian-controlled areas of the neighboring Kherson region were shelled 33 times over the past 24 hours, according to Kherson's Ukrainian Gov. Yaroslav Yanushevich. No casualties were reported. On Sunday, Russian forces attacked the city of Kramatorsk, where Ukrainian forces are headquartered. Three missiles hit an industrial facility and damaged residential buildings, but no casualties were reported, according to local officials. On Saturday, a deadly attack on the city of Kherson, which Kyiv's forces recaptured last month, killed and wounded scores of people. Local residents are lining up to donate blood for the wounded, Yanushevich said Monday.

# Ukraine FM aims for February peace summit

AP ■ KYIV  
Ukraine's foreign minister said Monday that his nation wants a summit to end the war but he doesn't anticipate Russia taking part, a statement making it hard to foresee the devastating invasion ending soon.

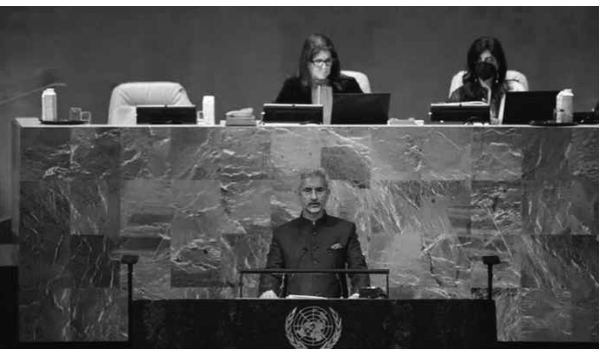
Zelenskyy's visit to the US last week, and he revealed that the US government had made a special plan to get the Patriot missile battery ready to be operational in the country in less than six months. Usually, the training takes up to a year. Kuleba said during the interview at the Foreign Ministry that Ukraine will do whatever it can to win the war in 2023. "Every war ends in a diplomatic way," he said. "Every war ends as a result of the actions taken on the battlefield and at the negotiating table."



missile battery, during the trip. Kuleba said that the move "opens the door for other countries to do the same." He said that the US government developed a programme for Ukrainian troops to complete training faster than usual "without any damage to the quality of the use of this weapon on the battlefield." While Kuleba didn't mention a specific time frame, he said only that it will be "very much less than six months." And he added that the training will be done "outside" Ukraine. During Russia's ground and air war in Ukraine, Kuleba has been second only to Zelenskyy in carrying Ukraine's message and needs to an international audience, whether through Twitter posts or meetings with friendly foreign officials.

# Amid Ukraine conflict, COVID-inflicted crises, India emerges as voice of Global South

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS



Commenting on Kuleba's proposal, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told the state RIA Novosti news agency that Russia "never followed conditions set by others. Only our own and common sense." A Kremlin spokesman said last week that no Ukrainian peace plan can succeed without taking into account "the realities of today that can't be ignored" - a reference to Moscow's demand that Ukraine recognise Russia's sovereignty over the Crimean Peninsula, which was annexed in 2014, as well as other territorial gains.

Other world leaders have also offered to mediate, such as those in Turkey and Saudi Arabia. The foreign minister again downplayed comments by Russian authorities that they are ready for talks. "They (Russians) regularly say that they are ready for negotiations, which is not true, because everything they do on the battlefield proves the opposite," he said. Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed few days ago that his country is ready for talks to end the war in Ukraine, but suggested that the Ukrainians are the ones refusing to take that step. Despite Putin's comments, Moscow's forces have kept attacking Ukraine - a sign that peace isn't imminent.

Zelenskyy's visit to the US was his first foreign trip since the war started on February 24. Kuleba praised Washington's efforts and underlined the significance of the visit. Ukraine secured a new USD 1.8 billion military aid package, including a Patriot

India emerged as a voice of the Global South during its two-year term in the powerful UN Security Council, which acrimoniously deliberated on Russia's invasion of Ukraine that led to unprecedented levels of global food and fuel insecurity as the world continued to grapple with inequalities amplified by the pandemic. Before relinquishing its non-permanent seat in the 15-member Council on December 31, 2022, India presided over the powerful UN body in December with the country's first woman Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj sitting in the President's seat at the horse-shoe table. Just about two months into India's second year of its 2021-2022 term on the Council as elected non-permanent member, Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a 'special military operation' in eastern Ukraine on February 24. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres made a direct and strong appeal to Putin to "stop your troops from attacking Ukraine" and give peace a chance as the UN chief called the invasion the "saddest moment in my tenure as Secretary-General of the United Nations." As the Russian invasion unfolded, India's then UN

envoy Ambassador T S Tirimurti in February underscored New Delhi's call for urgent de-escalation of tensions and cautioned that the situation was in danger of spiralling into a major crisis. In statements in the Council and the General Assembly throughout the year, India consistently called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and an end to violence. New Delhi emphasised that dialogue and diplomacy are the only way forward and actions that exacerbate the conflict should be avoided. "Our world faced many trials and tests in 2022 - some familiar, others we might not have imagined just one year ago," Guterres said, adding that even in the brutal war in Ukraine, the power of determined, discreet diplomacy has helped people and tackle unprecedented levels of global food insecurity. India abstained on most

resolutions related to the Russia-Ukraine war in the Security Council, General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, including on a Security Council procedural resolution to convene a rare emergency special session of the General Assembly. The 193-member General Assembly, the most representative body of the United Nations, convened the rare emergency session on February 28 on Russia's aggression against Ukraine, only the 11th such emergency session of the UNGA since 1950. Kamboj, who took charge of India's Permanent Mission in New York in August, has asserted that in the course of the Ukraine conflict, India has "spoken in one voice that we are for peace. Peace is also a side and we favour diplomacy and dialogue... We are among the few countries, dare I say, which are speaking to both sides."

# Assassination bid on Imran 'planned conspiracy', says JIT



social media post. Waqas on November 3 had tweeted "something big is going to happen today in Imran Khan's rally". Khan had blamed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah and Major General Faisal Naseer of ISI for hatching a plot to assassinate him. The Punjab police had registered the FIR in connection with the assassination attempt on Khan but didn't mention the high-profile suspects including ISI's top man Khan held responsible for the attack. Khan dismissed the FIR, saying without nominating Sharif, Sanaullah, and ISI Counter Intelligence Wing head Maj-Gen Faisal in the FIR it is a mere "piece of trash". The Punjab police said they nabbed Naveed from the crime scene and he had confessed to his crime. Naveed in his confessional statement said that he wanted to kill Khan as music was played during Azan time during his long march. Indirectly blaming the powerful military establishment, Khan had said: "I wonder if I, being former Prime Minister of Pakistan, can't get an FIR registered in connection with the attack on me and other PTI workers what will happen to the common man."

PTI ■ LAHORE  
The assassination bid on Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan during his long march to Islamabad last month was a "well-thought-out conspiracy," according to the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) probing the incident. Khan, the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, suffered bullet injuries in the right leg on November 3 when two gunmen fired a volley of bullets at him and others standing on a container-mounted truck in the Wazirabad area (some 150-km from Lahore), where he was leading the long march to press for snap polls. Briefing the media on the findings of the JIT headed by Lahore police chief Ghulam Mahmood Dogar, Punjab Home Minister Omar Sarfraz Cheema said on Monday that

the gun attack on Khan was "organised one and well-thought-out conspiracy." He said the JIT investigation found that more than one attacker tried to assassinate 70-year-old Khan in the rally. Police had arrested the prime suspect, Muhammad Naveed, who has been in the JIT custody on a physical remand till January 3 for interrogation. The minister said Naveed is a "trained assassin and he was present at the crime scene with his accomplices." He said Naveed also failed a polygraph test. Naveed had told police he wanted to kill Khan as music was played during Azan time during his long march/rally. Naveed's cousin Muhammad Waqas has also been in the JIT's custody till January 3 for a controversial

# Sharif pledges to eliminate terrorism from Pakistan



PTI ■ ISLAMABAD  
As Pakistan reels from multiple incidents of terrorism, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has reaffirmed his vow to eradicate the menace amid criticism from ousted premier Imran Khan on the government's "failure" to curb militancy during its eight-month stint. Addressing a gathering in the Dera Ismail Khan district of the restive Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province on Monday, Sharif said that the menace of terrorism was on the rise and the state would crush it very soon, the Dawn newspaper quoted him as saying. He said that with the help of provincial governments and security forces, the government would eliminate terrorism in all its forms. Sharif said that a meeting of the National Security

Committee (NSC) would be summoned in a few days to take stock of the security situation. Commenting on the attack on a security compound claimed by the outlawed Pakistani Taliban (TTP) terror group in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district last week, Sharif said it was heart-breaking and added that the law enforcement agencies conducted a successful operation, killing all terrorists who had taken over the compound. Meanwhile, former prime minister Khan, who wants snap polls in the country at all costs and is likely to dissolve Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies, lambasted the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government for its "failure" to rein in terrorism after coming to power

in April this year. During a Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf meeting at his residence in Lahore, Khan, the chairman of the party, claimed that his government had "controlled terrorism and was proudly leading the country towards making it one of the world's top tourism destinations". He expressed his concern over the situation at the Pakistan-Afghan border as well. He claimed there was a 52 per cent increase in terror incidents since April and chided the government for the resurgence of terrorism. "At least 52 per cent increase has been recorded in terrorism cases across the country that claimed some 270 precious lives and left over 550 people injured," the former premier said. Separately, PTI party leader Fawad Chaudhry told reporters that terrorism was returning to Pakistan. He said that during its tenure, the PTI government was proudly projecting Pakistan as the world's top tourist destination, and now the nation was being pushed into the "fire of terrorism, and the embassies were issuing advisories to their employees to avoid five-star hotels" in Islamabad.



# Pakistan makes 'special' security plan for Islamabad amid terror alert

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD  
Pakistan Police on Tuesday announced special security measures, including setting up 25 new check-posts, to tighten security in the federal capital here after several countries, including the US, UK, Saudi Arabia and Australia asked their citizens to restrict their movement, warning of a possible terror threat. According to the security plan, shared on Islamabad police's official Twitter account, entry points of the Red Zone will be recorded via Safe City cameras while video surveillance of metro bus passengers would also be conducted. Pakistani citizens as well as foreign nationals have been asked to carry their identification documents with them. "Special security plan issued in view of the current

security situation in Islamabad. Temporary security check posts have been established at 25 different locations in Islamabad," it said. Police also advised the local people to register tenants and employees at the nearest police station and warned that those employing unregistered local or foreign workers will be investigated. All motorists have been instructed to ensure their vehicles had number plates issued by the excise office. People have been asked to inform authorities of any unusual activity on the helpline. The security plan comes in the wake of the US, UK, Saudi Arabian and Australian governments issuing advisories to their respective citizens in Pakistan to restrict their movements due to possible terror threats.



# Western New York hit by cold, storm; death toll ups to 28

**AP ■ BUFFALO**  
Buffalo residents hovered around space heaters, hunted for cars buried in snow drifts and looked for more victims Monday, after 28 people died in one of the worst weather-related disasters ever to hit western New York.  
The rest of the United States also was reeling from the ferocious winter storm, with at least another two dozen deaths reported in other parts of the country.  
Up to 9 more inches of snow (23 centimeters) could fall in some areas of western New York through Tuesday, the National Weather Service said. "This is not the end yet," said Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz, calling the blizzard "the worst storm probably in our lifetime," even for an area accustomed to punishing snow.  
Some people, he noted, were stranded in their cars for more than two days.  
President Joe Biden said his prayers were with the victims' families, and offered federal assistance Monday to the hard-hit state.  
Those who lost their lives around Buffalo were found in cars, homes and snowbanks.

Some died while shovelling snow, others when emergency crews could not respond in time to medical crises.  
Melissa Carrick, a doula, said the blizzard forced her to coach a pregnant client through childbirth by telephone. An ambulance crew transported the woman to a hospital about 45 minutes south of Buffalo because none of the closer hospitals were reachable.  
"In any other normal Buffalo storm? I would just go because that's what you do — just drive through the snow," she said. "But you knew this was different."  
Scientists say the climate change crisis may have contributed to the intensity of the storm. That's because the atmosphere can carry more water vapour, which acts as fuel, said Mark Serreze, director of the National Snow and Ice Data Center at the University of Colorado, Boulder.  
Victor Gensini, a meteorology professor at Northern Illinois University, likened a single weather event to an "at-bat" — and the climate as your "batting average."  
"It's hard to say," Serreze said. "But are the dice a little bit loaded now? Absolutely."



Utility trucks line up in Buffalo, N.Y., where thousands remain without power after blizzard conditions on Monday. AP | PTI

The blizzard roared across western New York Friday and Saturday. With many grocery stores in the Buffalo area closed and driving bans in place, some people pleaded on social media for donations of food and diapers.  
"It was like looking at a white wall for 14 to 18 hours straight," Poloncarz, the county official, said.  
Relief is coming later this week, as forecasts call for temperatures to slowly rise, said Ashtun Robinson Cook, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.  
Cook said the bomb cyclone — when atmospheric pressure drops very quickly in

all totals are not far off from the 242 centimeters the area normally sees in an entire winter season.  
The National Weather Service said the snow total at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport stood at 1.25 metres at 10 am Monday. Officials say the airport will be shut through Wednesday morning.  
Shahida Muhammad told WKBW that an outage knocked out power to her 1-year-old son's ventilator. She and the child's father manually administered breaths from Friday until Sunday when rescuers saw her desperate social media posts and came to their aid.  
In a makeshift hut in her living room, Trisha LoGrasso was still huddled around a space heater Monday with three of her children and her eldest daughter's boyfriend. The temperature inside her Buffalo home was 5.5 degrees Celsius. She was without heat because of a gas leak, and burst pipes left her with no running water.  
"I've lived here my whole life, and this is the worst storm I've ever seen," the 48-year-old said. Melissa Osmon and her husband James were without

power for more than 72 hours in the Buffalo suburb of Williamsville, and would retreat to their car to stay warm for hours at a time.  
"We even watched the Buffalo Bills game on our phone," Osmon said, speaking by phone from her GMC Acadia. "You can see your breath inside the house," she said. "That's how cold it is."  
The storm knocked out power in communities from Maine to Seattle.  
Storm-related deaths were reported practically nationwide, including at least eight killed in crashes in Missouri, Kansas and Kentucky. A woman fell through Wisconsin river ice, and there was a fatal fire at a Kansas homeless persons camp.  
In Jackson, Mississippi, crews struggled Monday to get water through the capital city's beleaguered water system, authorities said. Many areas had no water or low water pressure. On Christmas Day, residents were told to boil their drinking water due to water lines bursting in the frigid temperatures.  
"The issue has to be significant leaks in the system that we have yet to identify," the city said in a statement Monday.

# More Rohingya refugees reach Indonesia after weeks at sea

**AP ■ PIDIE**  
A second group in two days of weak and exhausted Rohingya Muslims landed on a beach in Indonesia's northernmost province of Aceh on Monday after weeks at sea, officials said.  
At least 185 men, women and children disembarked from a rickety wooden boat at dusk on Ujong Pie beach at Muara Tiga, a coastal village in Aceh's Pidie district, said local police chief Fauzi, who goes by a single name.  
"They are very weak because of dehydration and exhaustion after weeks at sea," Fauzi said. They were taken to the village hall and will stay there while they receive help

from residents, health workers and others. Fauzi said that immigration officials and police were trying to identify the refugee to determine if they were from the group of 190 Rohingya who were reported by United Nations to be drifting in a small boat in the Andaman Sea for a month.  
The UNHCR on Friday urged countries to rescue the refugees, saying reports indicated they were in dire condition with insufficient food or water.  
"Many are women and children, with reports of up to 20 people dying on the unseaworthy vessel during the journey," the agency said.  
Also on Friday, another group of 58 Rohingya — all



Indonesian soldiers help ethnic Rohingya women and children to step out of a military truck upon arrival at a temporary shelter after their boat landed in Pidie, Aceh province, Indonesia on Monday. AP | PTI

men — arrived in Ladong village in Aceh Besar district.  
Azharul Husna, who heads the Aceh branch of KontraS, an Indonesian rights group, said Monday that the men in the group all carried UNHCR cards from refugee camps in Bangladesh and had left in search of a better life in Malaysia.  
Since 2017, Myanmar security forces have been accused of mass rapes, killings and burning of thousands of homes belonging to Rohingya.

# Foreign firms happy as China ends quarantine

**AP ■ BEIJING**  
Foreign companies welcomed China's decision to end quarantines for travellers from abroad as an important step to revive slumping business activity while Japan on Tuesday joined India in announcing restrictions on visitors from the country as infections surge.  
The ruling Communist Party's abrupt decision to lift some of the world's strictest anti-virus controls comes as it tries reverse an economic downturn. It has ended curbs that confined millions of people to their homes and sparked protests, but hospitals have been flooded with feverish, wheezing patients as the virus spreads.  
The announcement late Monday that quarantines for travellers from abroad will end Jan. 8 is the biggest step toward ending limits that have kept



most foreign visitors out of China since early 2020. Quarantines were reduced last month from seven days to five.  
Also Monday, the government downgraded the official seriousness of Covid-19 and dropped a requirement for people with the virus to be quarantined. That added to a rapid drumbeat of steps to dismantle controls that had been expected to stay in place at least through mid-2023.  
"It finally feels like China has turned the corner," the chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce in China, Colm Rafferty, said in a statement. He said ending the quarantine "clears the way for resumption of normal business travel." Business groups have warned companies were shifting investment away from China because foreign executives were blocked from visiting.  
The American chamber said more than 70% of companies that responded to a poll this month expect the impact of

the latest wave of outbreaks to last no more than three months, ending in early 2023.  
The British Chamber of Commerce expressed hope China will restart normal processing of business visas to allow "resumption of crucial people to people exchanges." It said that will "contribute to restoring optimism and reinstating China as a priority investment destination."  
The move "will potentially boost business confidence," but companies are likely to "wait to see how the situation on the ground evolves" before making long-term decisions, the European Chamber of Commerce in China said in a statement.  
Meanwhile, Japan announced visitors from China will undergo virus tests starting Friday as a "temporary emergency measure."

# UN agency probes origin of Rohingya refugees in Indonesia

**AP ■ PIDIE**  
A United Nations agency is seeking information about the voyage of over 100 Rohingya Muslim refugees who landed on an Indonesian beach this week, and warned Tuesday that there will likely be more.  
A distressing video circulated widely in social media showed the dehydrated and exhausted Rohingya, crumpled weakly and emaciated, many crying for help.  
At least 185 men, women and children disembarked from a rickety wooden boat Monday at dusk on Ujong Pie beach at Muara Tiga, a coastal village in Aceh's Pidie district, said local police chief Fauzi, who goes by a single name.  
"They are very weak because of dehydration and exhaustion after weeks at sea," Fauzi said.  
Muhammad Rafki Syukri, the Protection Associate at United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

said the agency would provide Rohingya language translators and counselling to determine if they were from the group of 190 Rohingya who were reported by United Nations to be drifting in a small boat in the Andaman Sea for a month.  
"With prolonged-conflict and insecure situations in their country of origin, it is possible that the movement of refugees to find safe places will continue to grow," he said.  
Chris Lewa, the director of the Arakan Project, which works in support of Myanmar's Rohingya, confirmed Tuesday that the boat that landed Monday on Ujong Pie beach was from the group of 190 Rohingya. But Syukri said the UNHCR could not verify that information and was still coordinating with governments in the region.  
"But we will continue to search for further information to ensure the actual data," Syukri told reporters on Tuesday while visiting the Rohingya refugees.

# Israeli air force veterans say incoming government a danger



Israeli doctors reject Netanyahu ally's anti-LGBTQ remarks  
**AP ■ JERUSALEM**  
Israel's largest medical centre and healthcare workers from hospitals around the country have spoken out against remarks by allies of Benjamin Netanyahu calling for a law to allow discrimination against LGBTQ people in hospitals and businesses.  
It was part of a broader backlash against remarks made this week by Religious Zionism politicians calling for legal discrimination against LGBTQ people.  
Netanyahu's new government — the most religious and hard-line in Israel's history — is made up of ultra-Orthodox parties, an ultranationalist religious faction, and his Likud party. It is to be sworn in on Thursday.  
Nun, a former commander of the air force and Amos Yadlin, a former head of military intelligence.  
All three are former fighter pilots. Former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his ultra-Orthodox and far-right partners captured a parliamentary majority in Nov. 1 elections.

# Japan PM sacks 4th minister to patch up scandal-hit Cabinet

**AP ■ TOKYO**  
Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Tuesday dismissed his fourth minister in two months to patch a scandal-tainted Cabinet that has raised questions over his judgment of staff credentials.  
Kenya Akiba, minister in charge of reconstruction of Fukushima and other disaster-hit areas, has faced allegations of mishandling political and election funds and of having murky ties to the Unification Church, whose cozy political ties and practices surrounding followers' huge donations have

raised controversy.  
"I have made a heavy decision and submitted my resignation," Akiba told reporters after meeting with Kishida. He repeated that he has never violated any law in relation to the issues for which he has been criticised.  
Kishida tapped former reconstruction minister Hiromichi Watanabe as a replacement. Watanabe's appointment was to be official after a palace ceremony.  
Akiba's dismissal was seen as Kishida's attempt to remove an administration's soft spot.

# UN agency probes origin of Rohingya refugees in Indonesia

said the agency would provide Rohingya language translators and counselling to determine if they were from the group of 190 Rohingya who were reported by United Nations to be drifting in a small boat in the Andaman Sea for a month.  
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"But we will continue to search for further information to ensure the actual data," Syukri told reporters on Tuesday while visiting the Rohingya refugees.

# Public Notice

**Public Notice**  
This is to inform general public that Mrs. Nita Parti has acquired the Ground Floor (Without Roof Rights), "Said Floor," Built on Property Bearing No. F.271 Land area measuring 125 Sq. yds. Situated in the Layout Plan of New Rejender Nagar, New Delhi vice Reacquisition Deed dated 14.01.2013. Doc no. 254, New. Mrs. Nita Parti is intending to sell above said property to Mr. Lakshay Rajeev, Mr. Mohinder Rajeev and Mrs. Sunita Rajeev and further Mr. Lakshay Rajeev, Mr. Mohinder Rajeev and Mrs. Sunita Rajeev are mortgaging the above said property with "SBI Bank Ltd. & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhanraj, Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas North, Unit No. 507, 5th Floor, G3-111, Tower, (B-08), Naital Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/981822636/811.

# Public Notice

**Public Notice**  
My client Shri Ram Lal's/o Late Shiv Lal r/o 603, Sunlight Colony-II, New Delhi-110014, hereby disown his (1) grand-son Shri Tarun Kumar s/o Shri Harbans Lal, (2) grand-daughter-in-law Smt. Anita, w/o Shri Tarun Kumar, both r/o 619, Sunlight Colony-II, New Delhi-110014, and debar them from inheriting any share in entire property No.619, Sunlight Colony-II, New Delhi-110014, belonging to my client, as my client Shri Ram Lal has already transferred the said property in favour of his son Shri Tarun Kumar & Smt. Anita will be doing so at his own risks and consequences.  
Kapil Gupta, Advocate  
525-A, Jangpura B, New Delhi-110014

# Public Notice

**Public Notice**  
BIHAR BANDHU CO-OPERATIVE GROUP HOUSING SOCIETY LTD Flat No.3, Pocket-5, DDA Flats, Sector-12 Dwarka, New Delhi-110075  
In accordance with rule 19(2) of DCS rules, 2007, it is to inform publicly that the 2 members of the Bihar Bandhu CGHS Ltd. have resigned from the society and they have been paid their share money & contributions. The names of resigned member are 1. Sh. Mahesh Chandra Pant (M. No. 129) and 2. Smt. Anshu Sharma (M. No. 237). If anyone who is having objections, may lodge objections at the society office, which is located at Flat No.3, Pocket-5, DDA Flats, Sector-12, Dwarka, New Delhi-78, or at the RCS office, Parliament Street, New Delhi within 7 day from the date of publication of the public notice.  
Secretary - Bihar Bandhu CGHS Ltd.

# Public Notice

**Public Notice**  
It is to inform to the public at large that Mrs. Rama Chauhan w/o. Mr. Arun Kumar Chauhan who is/are purchasing the Fourth Floor, built up on Eastern Side Portion, area measuring 75 Sq. Yds., part of Property bearing Municipal No.XV/1980, 1981, 1983 & 1984, Ward No. XV, comprised in Khasra No.375 (743/218/216) and 376 min. Situated at Chuna Mandi, Pahar Ganj, New Delhi-110055; from (1) Mr. Anil Kumar and (2) Mr. Parveen Kumar both S/o Late Mr. Ramesh Chand vice Reacquisition Deed dated 08.10.2018, vide Document No.9221, registered with the Office of Sub-Registrar-II, Asaf Ali Road, Delhi, registered on 15.10.2018 and same to be financed by mortgage by Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Limited. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim/right title/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc.  
Lucem Legal LLP  
136, Basement Floor, Uday Park, near Mother Dairy, New Delhi-110049 Contact: 011-40046316, 41667327

# Public Notice

**Public Notice**  
This is to inform general public that Mrs. Nita Parti has acquired the Ground Floor (Without Roof Rights), "Said Floor," Built on Property Bearing No. F.271 Land area measuring 125 Sq. yds. Situated in the Layout Plan of New Rejender Nagar, New Delhi vice Reacquisition Deed dated 14.01.2013. Doc no. 254, New. Mrs. Nita Parti is intending to sell above said property to Mr. Lakshay Rajeev, Mr. Mohinder Rajeev and Mrs. Sunita Rajeev and further Mr. Lakshay Rajeev, Mr. Mohinder Rajeev and Mrs. Sunita Rajeev are mortgaging the above said property with "SBI Bank Ltd. & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhanraj, Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas North, Unit No. 507, 5th Floor, G3-111, Tower, (B-08), Naital Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/981822636/811.

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