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Dedication to the Nation

by

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Date : 16 November, 2021 | Time : 1:00 PM

Venue : Village - Arval Keeri Karvat

Tehsil - Jaisinghpur, District - Sultanpur

In august presence of

Anandiben Patel
Governor
Uttar Pradesh

Yogi Adityanath
Chief Minister
Uttar Pradesh

Satish Mahana
Minister, Infrastructure and Industrial Development, Uttar Pradesh

Surya Bhan Singh
MLA, Sultanpur

Jai Pratap Singh
Minister, Medical & Health, Family Welfare
Maternal & Child Welfare, Uttar Pradesh

Sitaram Verma
MLA, Sadar

Dharamveer Prajapati
Minister of State, Industrial Development
Uttar Pradesh

Devmani Dwivedi
MLA, Lambhua

Rajesh Gautam
MLA, Kadipur

Maneka Sanjay Gandhi
Member of Parliament
Sultanpur

Usha Singh
Chairman, District Panchayat, Sultanpur

Soch Imaandaar, Kaam Dumdaar



Information & Public Relations Department, Uttar Pradesh



Quarantine norms lifted for travellers from 99 countries
page 9



Farm fires contributed to only 10% of pollution, says Supreme Court
page 10



Biden to discuss 'guardrails' for U.S. and China, with Xi: official
page 11



Djokovic cruises past Ruud in his opening match of ATP Finals
page 13

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Centre to disburse ₹95,082 cr. to States to sustain recovery

Sitharaman meets CMs, State Finance Ministers to push growth and investment

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre will remit ₹95,082 crore to States next week, double the funds due to them from the shareable pool of taxes this month to enable them to deploy more money on capital spending, Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said late on Monday after a six-hour meeting with State Chief Ministers and Finance Ministers.

About 15 Chief Ministers, mostly from the NDA-ruled States, attended what Ms. Sitharaman described as a 'rare, one-off' meeting between the Centre and States, held to figure out ways to sustain the economic recovery after the second COVID-19 wave and understand States' concerns and plans. Three States were represented by deputy CMs while the



Booster shot: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman briefing the media in New Delhi on Monday. ■ PTI

C In most of the issues related to investment, development and manufacturing activities, it is the States who are doing work at the forefront. The support from the Centre is always there. But we also wanted to make sure that the States' understanding and the issues they want to discuss must be heard and that's the reason this meeting was called

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN

Finance Ministers of the rest were present, along with the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, she said.

"The context of the meeting was that after the second wave, we are seeing a robust growth. However, it's also a time where we are looking at ways to sustain the growth,

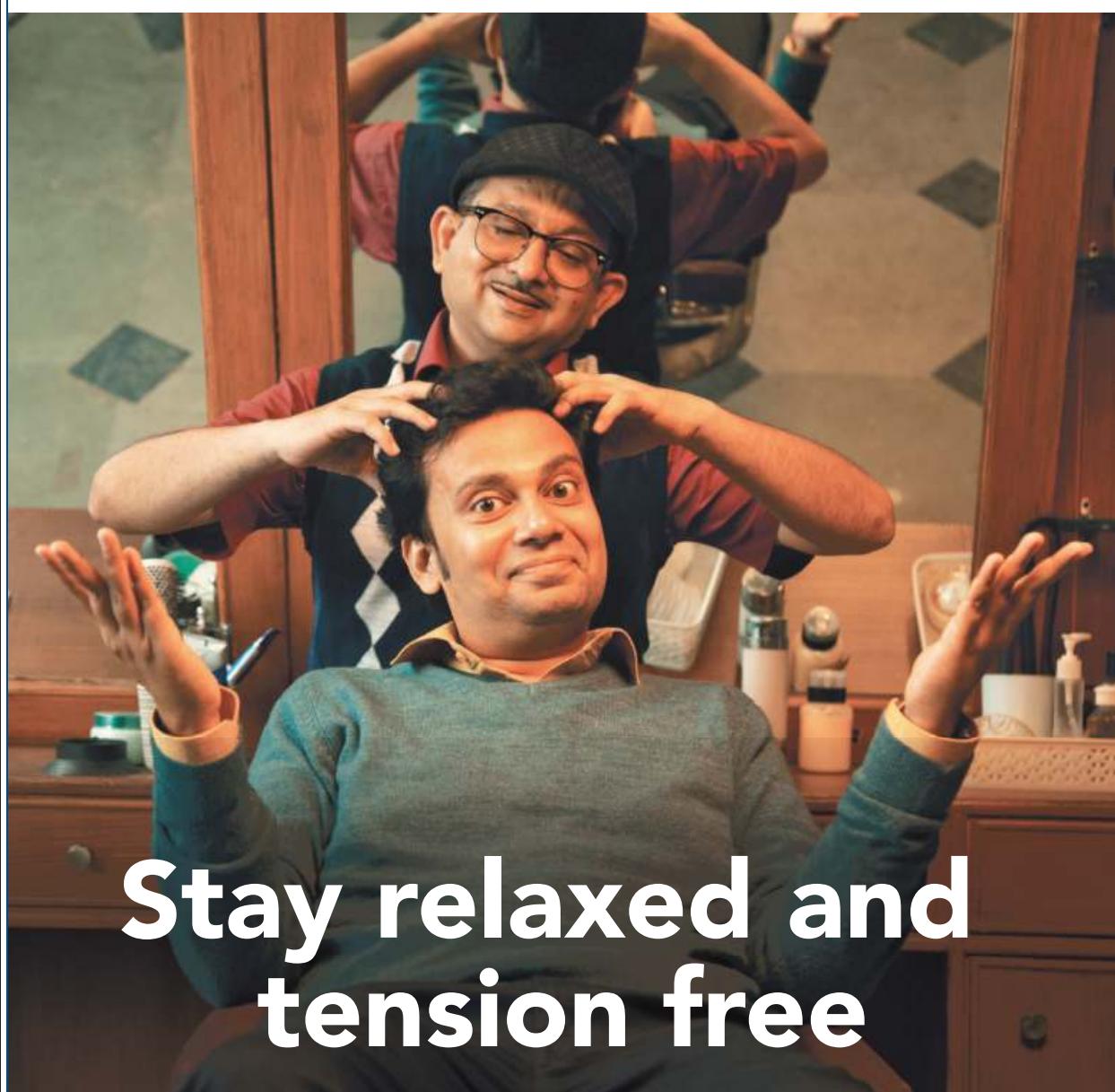
expediting ease of doing business measures and undertake power sector reforms.

States were also nudged to smoothen land acquisition and create land banks for investors as land is one of the major bottlenecks for investment projects. Moreover, with the Centre taking up monetisation of public assets, States were asked to consider doing the same.

"Unless States and the Centre put up money for building, the ripple effects for speedier and better growth would not be as desirable as we wish to have it and therefore, that expenditure is absolutely necessary," the Minister pointed out and said she has directed the Finance Secretary to concede to States' request as 'this is an exceptional year'.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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IN BRIEF



Salman Khurshid's house in Nainital vandalised

NEW DELHI

Former Law Minister Salman Khurshid's house in Uttarakhand's Nainital was vandalised on Monday by a mob protesting against his remarks in a recent book drawing a parallel between Hindutva and terror outfits like ISIS.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8

No liquor here, say two village panchayats

JAIPUR

Two villages in Rajsamand district of Rajasthan have voted overwhelmingly for permanent closure of liquor shops, following a prolonged campaign launched by women against liquor consumption in the region. Over 90% of the villagers voted in support of enforcing liquor prohibition in the polling.

STATES ▶ PAGE 4

PM reaches out to tribal people, unveils schemes

Modi launches Birsa Munda museum

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday reached out to tribal people, inaugurating the Birsa Munda museum in Ranchi as well as a slew of welfare schemes in Bhopal on what was the first-ever 'Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas' or tribal pride day.

Addressing the event in Bhopal, he said, "After Independence, for the first time in the country, on such a large scale, the art-culture of the entire country's tribal society, their contribution to the freedom movement and nation-building is being remembered and honoured with pride."

Some people were surprised when the contribution of tribal society in nation-building was discussed as these details were not told to the country. "This happened because those who ran the government in the country for decades after Independence gave priority to their selfish politics," he stated.

Mr. Modi dedicated sever-

U.P. accepts SC proposal for probe by ex-judge

Investigation in Lakhimpur Kheri case

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh government on Monday agreed to the Supreme Court's suggestion to appoint a retired judge to monitor the investigation into the Lakhimpur Kheri murders and violence.

The cases concern a convoy allegedly belonging to Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra, ploughing into a group of farmers and civilians protesting the controversial agricultural laws and the ensuing violence at Lakhimpur Kheri district. Minister's son Ashish Mishra is a prime accused in the case concerning the farmers' deaths.

"We leave it to Your Lordships... You may appoint whoever you want," senior advocate Harish Salve, appearing for U.P., submitted before a three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana.

The Bench, also comprising Justices Surya Kant and



HARISH SALVE
Senior Advocate

We leave it to Your Lordships... You may appoint whoever you want

Mr. Salve stated that the government had left it to the wisdom of the court. However, he made a suggestion. He made a point that the court's choice of a retired judge should not rest on whether he or she was from the State or outside.

"You mean it can be from any State..." the court sought to clarify from him.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Now, autopsy can be done after sunset

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Monday revised the post-mortem protocols to allow for conducting the procedure after sunset.

Apart from aiding the family of the deceased, the revision was also aimed at promoting organ donation and transplant as organs could be harvested in the stipulated time window after the procedure, said the Ministry in a release.

It noted that the change followed multiple references received from various sources and in line with the government's commitment to promoting ease of living by reducing the burden imposed due to compliance of government processes.

In view of the rapid advancement, especially the availability of required lighting and infrastructure, performing night-time post-mortem was now feasible, it pointed out.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

SC nod for elevation of Kirpal as Delhi HC judge

A turning point for LGBTQ community

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Collegium led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana has approved the proposal for elevating senior advocate Saurabh Kirpal as a judge in the Delhi High Court.

Mr. Kirpal, one of the lawyers whose efforts in the Supreme Court has led to the decriminalisation of homosexuality, is gay.

The recommendation is a recognition of his prowess as a lawyer adept in constitutional and business laws. The stamp of approval is a historic turning point for the LGBTQ community in their fight to be seen and treated as equal citizens.

The Delhi High Court collegium had reportedly recommended Mr. Kirpal's name for judgement on October 13, 2017. His file was received by the apex court collegium on July 2, 2018.

The collegium had considered and deferred its decision on September 4 of 2018, January 16 and April 1 in 2019, and March 2 this year.



Saurabh Kirpal. ■ TWITTER

The Government had raised several objections. In an interview to a news website, Mr. Kirpal had voiced his doubts whether his elevation may have been stalled because of his sexual orientation.

Earlier this year, CJI Ramana's predecessor, Chief Justice S.A. Bobde, had reportedly asked the Government to clarify its stand on Mr. Kirpal. The SC Collegium seems to have finally decided to take the initiative in favour of Mr. Kirpal.

Mr. Kirpal is a graduate of St. Stephen's College and had read law at Oxford University and done his LLM from Cambridge University. He began his practice in the Supreme Court after a stint with the UN.

Dengue cases in Capital cross 5,000; death toll remains at 9

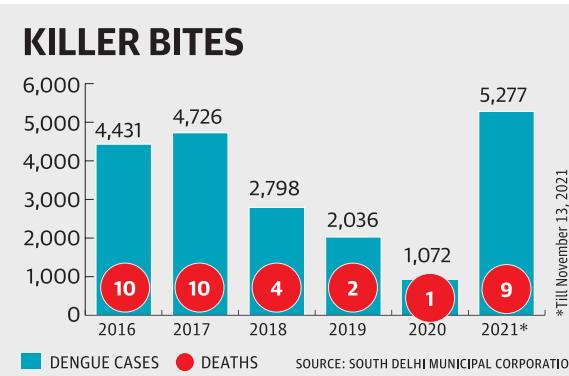
Last week's figure is almost equal to the total cases reported till November 6

MUNEEF KHAN
NEW DELHI

The Capital reported 2,569 cases of dengue over the past week (till November 13), taking this month's caseload to 3,740, a civic report said on Monday. This takes the season's total to 5,277 cases, the highest since 2017, while the death toll remains at nine.

The cases recorded last week are almost equal to the total number of cases reported till November 6: 2,708.

The Hindu on November 14 reported that only seven city hospitals had recorded more cases than the Government's official figure till November 6, which included patients from outside Delhi. While the official count was 4,362 cases, the data provided by sources from the seven hospitals, including Safdar-



A case spike in the entire National Capital Region is leading to more patients coming to Delhi hospitals due to better treatment facilities
SDMC OFFICIALS

trend and there is a surge in cases every four to five years. A case spike in the entire National Capital Region is leading to more patients coming to Delhi hospitals due to better treatment facilities. After dengue was made notifiable, reports of cases are received from the Delhi Government and not directly from hospitals," the SDMC officials said, adding that there is "no backlog of cases" in the civic body's public health department.

jung Hospital and Lok Nayak Hospital, put the total at over 4,600 cases. North Delhi reported the highest number of cases over the past week at 808, followed by south Delhi with 781 cases. Officials from the South Delhi Municipal Corporation's (SDMC) public health department said "many hos-

pitals" are reporting "backdated and repeated cases" after the Delhi Government's decision to notify vector-borne diseases under the Epidemic Diseases Act. They said that "heavy and late rains" in September and October had also led to an increase in "mosquito breeding causing dengue".

"Dengue has a cyclical



Garbage being burnt by the roadside at GTB Nagar in Delhi on Monday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

BJP slams Kejriwal for rising air pollution

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Reacting to the Supreme Court observations on the air pollution in the National Capital Region, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday termed Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal a source of pollution in himself.

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta said Mr. Kejriwal has not taken any concrete steps so far to control the pollution in the city. As a result, he said, every October, people are "forced to confine themselves to their homes" as venturing out is an invitation to diseases.

"Mr. Kejriwal has not even kept any one of his promises, whether it is making a green corridor, controlling dust particles, increasing battery vehicles, or solar activity," Mr. Gupta said.

"Mr. Kejriwal had made 24 announcements in 2018 to reduce pollution but why was not even one of them fulfilled?" he asked.

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri demanded Mr. Kejriwal's resignation on moral grounds. Mr. Bidhuri said that the affidavit filed by the Delhi Government or the arguments given in the Supreme Court were only to accuse others. "We have been saying that the biggest reason for pollution in Delhi is that its public transport system has collapsed," Mr. Bidhuri said.

The Delhi Congress said it has constantly raised concerns over Delhi becoming a gas chamber due to severe air pollution and now the Supreme Court has validated its concerns.

Despite ban on construction, dust pollution unchecked in many areas

Heaps of earth found uncovered in violation of CPCB guidelines

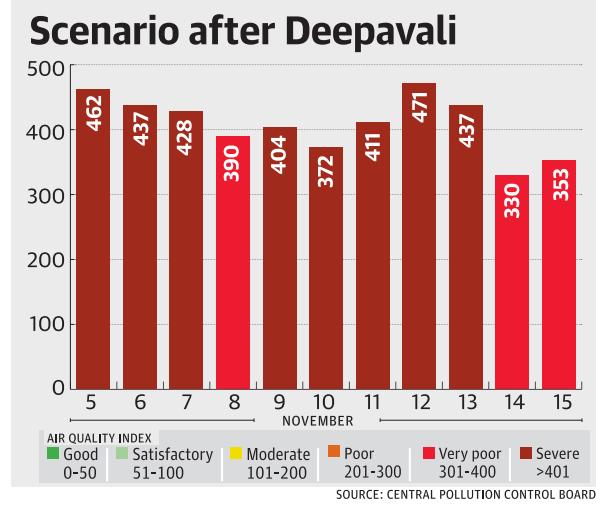
NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

Despite the city's air quality being in the "very poor" category for the last two days, dust pollution caused by construction activities was noticed in three areas along an eight-km stretch of road in central and south Delhi on Monday, which was selected at random for a spot check by *The Hindu*.

Roads were being dug up at a colony in Jor Bagh without following any dust-control measures, though there is a ban on construction activities in the city due to the high pollution levels.

The air quality index of the city was 353 (very poor) on Monday, up from 330 on Sunday, as per the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) 4 p.m. bulletin, which is the average of the past 24 hours.

On Monday afternoon, at B.K. Dutt Colony in central Delhi, more than a dozen sections on the road were dug up and work was going on in



multiple areas. Heaps of reddish earth were dug out and were not covered and water was also not sprinkled on them. Workers said they are laying cable for a company, which provides services related to telecommunication and Internet.

As per the CPCB guidelines for dust control issued in November 2017, sheets made of plastic, tarpaulin etc. should be used to cover construction material that are easily airborne and also the debris that are dumped at temporary storage sites.

Dust contributes to fine inhalable particles called particulate matter, which goes deep into the lungs and even bloodstream and causes health problems.

Students clash at JNU's activity centre

FIR lodged; both groups file complaints; administration condemns violence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A scuffle broke out at the students' activity centre at Jawaharlal Nehru University on Sunday night after a group of students, who had booked the facility, clashed with Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad (ABVP) members, who were conducting a meeting at the same venue.

Students from both groups said that they sustained injuries in the clash and a blame game ensued soon after.

Refused to vacate room
The JNUSU, which has the keys to the centre, said that a

student organisation had booked the room for an event which had been widely publicised on the campus and that the ABVP had tried to disrupt the event by refusing to vacate the room and then resorting to intimidating tactics to dismantle democratic structures.

The ABVP countered the JNUSU's claim by saying that their members had been attacked by the Left groups during an ongoing meeting of ABVP activists.

The Delhi Police said that an FIR was lodged at the Vasant Kunj police station. After the police rushed to the spot, they found that no

quarrel was taking place and on enquiry, it was learnt that heated arguments had broken out between two student groups over organising a seminar in the student union hall," DCP(South-West) Gaurav Sharma said.

While the JNUSU has not lodged any complaint so far, ABVP-affiliated students have given written complaints and so has the Left-affiliated students' organisation. "Both sides are levelling allegations against each other for disrupting their meeting," the DCP said, adding that further enquiry is under way.

The JNU administration

said the activity centre belongs to all without discrimination and every student is entitled to use the place adhering to the rules of the university. "Violence and unruly behaviour have no place in an academic institution and the JNU administration would strongly disapprove of any kind of violence and disorderly conduct on the campus," chief proctor Rajnish Kumar Mishra said.

Conduct march

The JNUSU as well as the ABVP conducted a march on Monday evening on the campus to defend the democratic spaces of JNU.

BJP leader moves HC against summons

Case pertains to Gahlot's defamation suit

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI



BJP MLA Vijender Gupta

BJP MLA Vijender Gupta on Monday moved the Delhi High Court against summons issued to him in a criminal complaint filed by Delhi Cabinet Minister Kailash Gahlot for allegedly making defamatory statements on purported irregularities in the procurement of 1,000 low-floor buses by the Delhi Transport Corporation.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Jyoti Singh agreed to list the case for hearing on Tuesday.

Mr. Gupta was summoned as an accused in the criminal complaint by a trial court on October 11 and was asked to appear before it on November 16.

The trial court had said there was *prima facie* enough evidence to summon Mr. Gupta as an accused of the alleged offence of defamation.

Political mileage
Mr. Gahlot had alleged in his complaint that Mr. Gupta "intentionally and for mala fide purposes" defamed him and tarnished his repu-

Four of family injured in LPG cylinder blast

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Four members of a family sustained burn injuries following a cylinder blast at their residence in Outer Delhi's Nangloi on Monday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Parvinder Singh said that the injured have been identified as Daron, 40, his wife Reena, 35, both labourers, and their two minor children – a son aged 13 and daughter aged 15.

The police said that they received information about the incident at 7.23 a.m. where the caller said that a gas cylinder blast in a house in Nihal Vihar had caused fire. It was revealed that there was a leak in the domestic gas cylinder while Daron was preparing tea which caused the fire.

The police said that all four injured were shifted to Sanjay Gandhi Hospital in Mongolpuri and three fire tenders were pressed into service.

Daron and his wife have suffered 80% and 50% burns respectively. Daron is said to be battling for life and Reena is also critical. The children are stable, the police said.

Nageswara Rao was dealing with an appeal filed by the Centre against the High Court decision clearing the way for the scheme.

The court recorded the submissions made by the parties that the scheme could not anyway be implemented before November 22 and the High Court would continue to hear it in the meanwhile.

A Bench led by Justice L.

Issue communication
The Delhi Government shall first issue communication to each of the fair price

shop holders informing them of the particulars of the ration cardholders who have opted to receive their rations at their doorstep and, only thereafter, the rations, to the extent that they are being supplied to such beneficiaries, need not be supplied to the fair price shop holders," a Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Jasmeet Singh of the High Court had said.

Delhi's ration delivery scheme under progress: SC +

Centre, city Govt. asked to place arguments before High Court on Nov. 22

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday noted that the Delhi Government's preparation for the doorstep delivery ration scheme was still "under progress" and asked it and the Centre to place their arguments before the Delhi High Court on November 22 and the High Court would continue to hear it in the meanwhile.

A Bench led by Justice L.

Nageswara Rao was dealing with an appeal filed by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government to issue communication to fair price shop dealers informing them of the particulars of cardholders who have opted for the delivery.

Delivery
The High Court had directed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government to issue communication to fair price shop dealers informing them of the particulars of cardholders who have opted for the delivery.

Issue communication
The Delhi Government shall first issue communication to each of the fair price

shop holders informing them of the particulars of the ration cardholders who have opted to receive their rations at their doorstep and, only thereafter, the rations, to the extent that they are being supplied to such beneficiaries, need not be supplied to the fair price shop holders," a Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Jasmeet Singh of the High Court had said.

The patent was eventually granted on March 10, 2021, and is valid up to December 2038.

The suit claimed Canva, which as on September 14, 2021, was reportedly valued at \$40 billion, continues to offer the 'Present and Record' feature on its website despite Maruthi Viswanathan, CEO of RxPrism, himself apprising its co-founders of his patent and requesting them for a dialogue.

Restrain from usage
RxPrism's suit, filed through advocate Sanyam Khetarpal, has asked the court for a direction to restrain Canva from "using, making, manufacturing, offering for sale, publishing," their patented technology through the 'Present and Record' feature.

RxPrism said it had on December 19, 2018, applied for Indian patent for its invention – 'A system and a method for creating and sharing interactive content rapidly anywhere and anytime'.

The patent was eventually granted on March 10, 2021, and is valid up to December 2038.

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Petitioner says Canva's feature is an infringement of its patented product

**SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI**

An Indian software start-up has moved a patent infringement suit before the Delhi High Court against Australian design software giant Canva over its new publishing feature 'Present and Record'.

RxPrism Health Systems,

which is based out of Bengaluru, claimed that Canva's 'Present and Record' feature was an infringement of its patented product 'My Show & Tell', that helps businesses and individuals create interactive talking head presentation.

A Bench of Justice Asha Menon on Monday sought response from Canva, its co-founders Melanie Perkins and Clifford Obrecht, and Cameron Adams, co-founder and chief product officer.

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Valid driving licence
Women applicants having a valid driving licence of light motor vehicle or holder of a three-seater autorickshaws driving licence could apply for the registration of e-au-

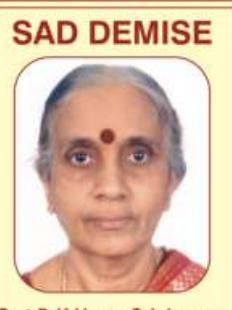
tos if they have an Aadhaar card with a Delhi address.

The public service vehicle (PSV) badge is not required at the time of application.

However, the successful applicant will have to obtain a PSV badge within 45 days of the draw of allotment. Women applicants can visit transport.delhi.gov.in to apply for e-auto registration and can call on 1076 helpline number of the Delhi Government for any assistance.</

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH



Smt D K Hema Srinivasan

Age: 80 yrs.

W/o D K Srinivasan,
Tambaram,
attained Acharyan Thiruvadi
at 8 pm on 14/11/2021

Mourned by

D K Srinivasan
Sons & Daughters-in-Law:
D K Hari & Hema Hari
Dr. D K Sriram & Devika Sriram
Grandsons:
D K Aditya & D K Varun
and rest of the D K Family.
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DEATH

P.V.GOPALAKRISHNAN (69), Retired Assistant Engineer - Graphics, The Hindu, Chennai. Passed away on 15-11-2021. Address: Parkav Apt-1, Phase - 3, Mariamman Koil Street, K K Nagar (West), Chennai - 600078. Contact: 9940499048

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES



SRI LAKSHAMMA

D.O.D.: 16.11.2020

*My Mother last word: Be always situations people truth trust
We miss you every moment in our life,
your presence continues to surround us, in our hearts, you are always there.*

Inserted by: P.Janarthana Reddy,
Pavani Kumar, R. Sunish Kumar Reddy,
S.Krishnakumari & Grandchildren

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Delhi Palam Today
27°C The pollution level will be severe with dry weather. Morning will be very cool with shallow fog and mist. Day will be comfortable.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
26°C The weather will be comfortable with sever pollution level. A very cool morning with shallow fog and mist turns comfortable day.

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Timings

DELHI

TUESDAY, NOV. 16

● RISE 06:45 SET 17:28

● RISE 15:54 SET 03:50

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 17

● RISE 06:45 SET 17:27

● RISE 16:23 SET 04:44

THURSDAY, NOV. 18

● RISE 06:46 SET 17:27

● RISE 16:55 SET 05:38

THE HINDU
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No liquor here, say two village panchayats

Invoking a 45-year-old law, Rajasthan villagers vote overwhelmingly in favour of closing licensed shops

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

Utilising a legal route to abolish alcoholism, two villages in Rajsamand district of Rajasthan have voted overwhelmingly for permanent closure of liquor shops following a prolonged campaign launched by women against liquor consumption in the region. Over 90% of the villagers voted in support of enforcing liquor prohibition in the polling held on Saturday.

A 45-year-old law, the Rajasthan Excise (Closure of Country Liquor Shop by Local Option) Rules, 1975, published in the State Gazette on January 8, 1976, was invoked for the unusual voting, which made the closure of licensed shops possible. The statutory rules lay down that if 51% of the registered voters in the village panchayat opt for closure of a liquor shop, it has to shut down.

The campaign against al-

coholism was launched in Barar and Hamela Ki Ver villages of Bhim tehsil in Rajsamand in 2015, when the women submitted a memorandum to the district administration seeking closure of liquor shops. They complained that liquor consumption had ruined several families and given a boost to domestic violence and other crimes.

Women at forefront

Led by Barar Sarpanch Panjaka Singh, women and local activists periodically organised rallies, held demonstrations and approached the administration repeatedly with the plea to save the families through prohibition. After the verification of the petition as per the Excise Act, the administration fixed the date for referendum in April this year, which was deferred to November because of second wave of the pandemic.

In the referendum held at



Villagers queuing up for a referendum on closure of licensed liquor shops at Barar village in Rajasthan. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT.

five polling booths set up at Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra in Barar, 3,624 of the 5,632 registered voters in the two villages turned up for the poll. Women came out in hordes with enthusiasm to take part in the exercise which involved putting a stamp on 'yes' or 'no' in the ballot paper.

An overwhelming number of 3,261 votes, comprising more than 90% of the total votes, were cast in favour of closure of liquor shops,

while only 146 were against. "The referendum's outcome reflects the resentment against alcoholism, which has led to domestic violence against women and children, distress sale of property, families falling in debt trap and the youth falling addicted to liquor," Ms. Singh told *The Hindu* on Monday.

Interestingly, the activists had appealed to the migrant workers, who had come home to celebrate Deepavali, to stay put till voting day and

participate in the referendum. Bhim MLA Sudarshan Singh Rawat and Hamela Ki Ver Sarpanch Ramesh Kumar camped outside the polling booths and appealed to the voters to cast their ballot in favour of shutting the liquor vends.

Licence to be withdrawn

All the liquor shops in the two villages will be closed and their excise licence withdrawn from the commencement of the next financial year on April 1, 2022, for which a notification will be issued shortly. With the completion of referendum, seven village panchayats in the State have so far exercised their right and opted for liquor or prohibition.

The other villages where similar referendums were undertaken earlier and liquor shops closed were Kachhbali, Mandawar and Thaneta in Rajsamand district, Phoga Bharthari in Churu and Rojda in Jaipur district.

Don't suspend Ansals' jail term: AVUT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The Association of Victims of Uphaar Tragedy (AVUT) on Monday urged a Delhi court not to suspend the 7-year jail terms awarded to real estate barons Sushil and Gopal Ansal for tampering with evidence in the 1997 case of Uphaar fire.

The counsel for the association made the submission before Additional Sessions Judge Anil Antil in response to the pleas moved by Ansals. Senior advocate Vikas Pahwa said the offence of tampering was serious as it affects the criminal justice system.

Raigarh bids adieu to martyred Colonel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA RAIGARH

mortal remains of her son and chanted 'Jai Hind'.

Earlier in the day, a special plane of the Indian Air Force carrying the mortal remains of the colonel, his wife and son landed at an airstrip in Raigarh at 12.42 p.m.

From the airstrip, the coffins were taken in an open flower-decked truck to Colonel Tripathi's home with a large number of people standing on both sides of the road chanting 'Colonel Iplav amar rahi'.

The atmosphere turned more sombre when Asha Tripathi (70), saluted the

Punjab should make fiscal situation public every month'

State reeling under acute debt, says PCC chief Sidhu

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

"Today Punjab is the most indebted State in India. Debt accounts for 50% of State GDP. Half of our expenditure is funded by expensive debt. Let's not derail from real issues to which every Punjabi & party worker demands solution, because there's #PunjabBeyond2022," he tweeted.

"Financial Accountability and Transparency are pillars of Punjab Model. Accountability demands revealing sources of funds at every scheme announcement, whether from income or

from more debt. Transparency demands making public State's fiscal health every month," the Punjab Congress chief stated.

'Don't borrow'
"Borrowing is not the way forward! Taxes should not go to settle debt but go back to the people in the form of development. Solution oriented model is to stop theft of State's resources, fill up public exchequer and create a Welfare State through income generation," he added.

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IN BRIEF



1,240 kg ganja seized in Hyderabad, 3 arrested

HYDERABAD A total of 1,240 kg ganja, worth over ₹2.08 crore, was seized from a garage here on Monday and three drug peddlers were arrested, the police said. The ganja had been brought from Sileru Agency in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh and was to be transported to Mumbai, the police said. PTI

Two youth drown in Krishna river, one missing

VIJAYAWADA Two members of a family drowned and another went missing in Krishna river at Thottavallur village in Andhra Pradesh's Krishna district on Monday. The cousins had gone for a holy dip on the occasion of Kartika Somavaram. The dead were identified as Goriparthi Pavan, 18, and G. Nagaraju, 20. A search is on for Nagendra Babu, 18.

Kerala HC dismisses plea in ISRO frame-up case

KOCHI The Kerala HC dismissed a revision petition filed by S. Vijayan, former police officer and an accused in the ISRO espionage frame-up case, against an order rejecting his plea for a CBI probe into his allegation that former ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan had bribed the then CBI officials to hush up the ISRO espionage case.

RSS worker hacked to death in Palakkad

PALAKKAD A Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) worker was hacked to death at Mambaran near here on Monday. A. Sanjith, 27, was travelling on a motorbike with his wife when he was attacked by a four-member gang. The BJP said the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) was behind the attack.

Heavy rain continues in Kerala, 3 dead

Yellow alert issued for eight districts today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Heavy rain continued to lash parts of Kerala on Monday affecting Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Kottayam districts the most, resulting in the death of three persons and widespread damage to property.

The India Meteorological Department has issued a yellow alert for eight central and northern districts for isolated heavy rain on Tuesday. They are Kottayam, Ernakulam, Idukki, Thrissur, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod.

The State Disaster Management Authority informed that in the last 24 hours, three lives, including that of two toddlers, were lost. In all, five persons have



No trace: A flooded municipal stadium in Pathanamthitta district on Monday. ■ LEJU KAMAL

died in rain-related incidents in the State since November 10.

Parts of Pathanamthitta and Alappuzha continued to battle waterlogging on Monday. Pathanamthitta has 69 relief camps, accommodating 2,410 people, while in Alappuzha 619 people were housed in 26 camps.

Across the State, 12 houses were fully damaged and 229 partially since November 10. Between October 12 and November 15, the State reported crop loss on 62,991.41 hectares, affecting 1.43 lakh farmers. The Upper Kuttanad region has been hit hard. The water levels at the Mullaperiyar and Idukki re-

servoirs were rising slowly on Monday, despite Tamil Nadu increasing the tunnel discharge from Mullaperiyar and the opening of a shutter of the Cheruthoni dam of the Idukki reservoir on Sunday. The IMD has forecast a reduction in rain after Tuesday.

(With PTI inputs)

Aim at winning 2024 poll, Shah tells A.P. team

Intensify fight against YSRCP Govt'

STAFF REPORTER
CHITTOOR



Amit Shah praying at the Kapileswara Swamy temple in Tirupati on Monday. ■ PTI

power in A.P. in 2024.

Mr. Shah wanted the party cadres to intensify their fight against the "anti-peopple policies" of the YSRCP government. Various aspects of the Andhra Pradesh State Reorganisation Act were discussed at the meet, Ms. Purandewari said.

Fight over capitals halted growth: A.P. CJ

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh High Court Chief Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra has observed that the development of the State has come to a standstill due to the legal battle over the government's proposal to have three capital cities and that he would therefore like to settle the dispute expeditiously.

Mr. Mishra said he wanted to right away resume hearing the writ petitions which questioned the validity of the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions and CRDA Repeal Acts of 2020 as because of them, development of the entire State appeared to be held up.

'Centre will look into our concerns on river linking'

South zonal meet positive: Bommai

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Claiming positive outcome from the southern zonal council meeting in Tirupati, Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Monday said Union Home Minister Amit Shah had instructed the Jal Shakti Ministry to consider the State's concerns on the peninsular rivers' inter-linking project before taking it forward.

"Karnataka argues that the share of basin States have to be decided before working on the detailed project report involving Godavari, Krishna, Cauvery, and Palar rivers," the Chief Minister told reporters here on his return from Tirupati.

On the efforts to resolve

Will ensure safety of pilgrims'

STAFF REPORTER
PATHANAMTHITTA

Health Minister Veena George, who assessed the flood situation in Pathanamthitta district on Monday, said the safety of Sabarimala pilgrims would be ensured. A team of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has been positioned at Kulanad.

The temple opened for the Mandalam-Makaravilakku season on Monday.

The Pampa is flowing turbulently. Most roads in the Konni-Achencoil region, which form part of the pilgrimage circuit, are unnavigable. The police are diverting vehicles to alternative routes.

Ex-BJP Minister arrested for Amravati violence

Conspiracy to foment riots, says Malik

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The Maharashtra police on Monday arrested BJP leader and former State Minister Anil Bonde, along with a few other party members, in connection with the rioting in Amravati last week.

Authorities said they are also on the lookout for BJP MLC from Amravati Praveen Pote, who is apparently "missing" since the violence of November 12 and 13.

Maharashtra Minority Development Minister and senior NCP leader Nawab Malik accused the BJP of hatching a "pre-planned conspiracy" to foment riots across the State.

More than 70 persons have been arrested thus far and over 25 FIRs registered at four police stations in Amravati in connection with the violence. Officials said Mr. Bonde – the State Agriculture Minister under the erstwhile BJP regime – and Mr. Pote were instrumental in organising the BJP's shutdown on November 13.

Stressing that there had

been no "communal clashes" in Amravati district, Mr. Malik said that Mr. Bonde had "conspired" to start riots by distributing money and liquor to miscreants.

'Money transferred'

"It was a pre-planned conspiracy to foment riots across Maharashtra but the public ensured that it never spilled outside Amravati city. It is also emerging now that a large sum of money for the purpose of spreading the riots was transferred from Mumbai to Amravati but the police had the situation well under control when the violence started," he said.

On November 12, violence erupted in at least three cities in Maharashtra – Amravati, Malegaon (in Nashik district) and Nanded – after some minority groups reportedly called for a day-long shutdown in protest against incidents of mosques being vandalised in Tripura. A 'counter-bandh' was called by the BJP in Amravati as a challenge on November 13.

Liquor body seeks end to prohibition in Bihar

AMARNATH TEWARY



Basavaraj Bommai

the water sharing dispute with Tamil Nadu, Mr. Bommai said, "The Cauvery dispute dates back to pre-Independence days. There is always politics over the issue in Tamil Nadu. We have objected to their project downstream, and they have objected to our project [Me-kedatu]. There needs to be a fair and just decision."

policy in the scheduled meeting on Tuesday but insisted that prohibition would continue.

In a letter to the Chief Minister and leaders of the ruling NDA coalition, the CIABC said, "Bihar is paying a heavy price for its prohibition policy because of availability of spurious liquor, hooch deaths, rise of liquor mafias and huge loss of government revenues."

The CIABC listed out only two positive and 10 negative impacts of prohibition in the State.

T.N. government moves to monetise temple assets

Tender floated to choose agency to prepare a road map

DENNIS S. JESUDASAN
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Government is planning to monetise the assets of religious institutions and charitable endowments so as to facilitate their religious autonomy, financial viability and sustained development of the respective temples.

A total of 38,652 Hindu and Jain religious institutions are under the control of the Department.

These temples own large parcels of commercial, residential, mixed residential and agricultural land, among other assets.

They are spread out across municipal corporations, municipalities, town panchayats and village panchayats.

Under the proposal, the

ownership of the assets will rest with the temples, while the development rights will be offered to the developers for a specific period. The income from monetisation will be used for the development of the respective temples.

Arulmigu Dhandeeshwar Thirukovil at Velachery in Chennai under the Department has proposed to appoint a consultancy for preparing a road map for the monetisation process for all 38,652 institutions.

The company will suggest activities to be taken up on the land parcels through the temples' own funds or lease or public-private partnership or joint venture. Or, it will come out with a suitable development model.

Court asks for Centre's stand on Kannada in UG courses

Karnataka says it is policy decision to promote the language

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka on Monday directed the Centre to make its stand clear on the State Government's order of making Kannada as a compulsory language for undergraduate courses from the academic year 2021-22 on the "pre-text" of implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi and Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum issued the direction while hearing a PIL petition filed by the Sanskrit Bharati (Karnataka) Trust and other educational institutions.

The petitioners have questioned the legality of

the Government Orders (GOS) issued on August 7, 2021, and September 15, 2021, making Kannada one of the two languages to be compulsorily studied in degree courses irrespective of the languages they studied up to Class XII, the State from which they hail from, and their mother tongue or the regional language.

At this stage, the Bench orally asked the A-G whether the State does not have any other means to promote Kannada without making it compulsory while pointing out that promoting a language was different than making it compulsory.

The A-G also clarified to the court that two levels of Kannada – one for those who have studied Kannada prior to joining UG courses and the other for those who come from outside Karnataka and foreign countries for UG courses without having any knowledge of Kannada – had been prescribed.

UDF seeks inquiry into CAG findings on KIIFB

'Govt. owes people an explanation'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The CAG's damning special audit of KIIFB has left the LDF government defenceless, Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan has said.

Mr. Satheesan, who demanded an investigation into the CAG's findings, said the report was an indictment of the opaque and corrupt functioning of the KIIFB.

The CAG had questioned KIIFB raising funds from the foreign financial market to fund mega public work projects. It had also pointed out the callous manner in which KIIFB withdrew deposits from banks, costing the exchequer crores in terms of interest on deposits.

The special audit report had also flagged backdoor appointments in KIIFB and

unjustifiably high salaries for some employees. The CAG also found anomalies in the auditing of daily spending. He said the Government had sat on the special audit report to avoid embarrassment during the Assembly session. However, the findings were trickling out into the open, and the Government owed the people an explanation.

Mr. Satheesan said KIIFB would sink the State in debt. Many KIIFB funded projects had floundered due to poor execution.

The government had not conducted any study to assess the adverse environmental, financial, and social impact of SilverLine. It merely had pushed ahead with land acquisition using funds borrowed by KIIFB from the foreign market.

The document said the Government was "involved in the administration of Hindu religious institutions and charitable endowments so as to facilitate their religious autonomy, financial viability and sustained development".

A tender was floated recently for selecting an agency to prepare a road map. "The assets are not productively utilised and there are also instances of encroachments. In order to monetise the assets through productive utilisation, the Department has decided to take up projects with funding from temples or by involving private developers," the tender document read.

These temples own large parcels of commercial, residential, mixed residential and agricultural land, among other assets.

They are spread out across municipal corporations, municipalities, town panchayats and village panchayats.

Under the proposal, the

Bid to get heritage status for jackfruit tree

The 250-year-old tree in Magadi taluk of Karnataka is now in the limelight

B.S. SATISH KUMAR

BENGALURU

A jackfruit tree, aged around 250 years, located 40 km from Bengaluru, is believed to be Karnataka's oldest tree of this variety and one of the oldest in the country. The tree at Janagere village in Magadi taluk is now in the limelight as agricultural and horticultural scientists are striving to get "heritage" status for it.

With a vast canopy, a height of 19.5 m and a trunk girth of 6.5 m, the tree is visible from a long distance to visitors who come to this village during summer to taste its fruits.

he is the 10th generation owner of the tree that has been protected not only by the family of owners, but

its ability to continuously bear a big number of quality fruits.

Yields 300 fruits a year

"The tree yields 250 to 300 fruits a year ranging between 8 kg and 20 kg. Each fruit fetches ₹300 to ₹500 depending upon the size," says K. Narayana Gowda, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Agricultural Sciences-Bengaluru, who is part of a four-member study team that inspected the tree to assess its characteristics scientifically in a bid to get it heritage status.

The scientists have taken up the proposal with the Central authorities along with scientific data for getting heritage status for the tree.



Green asset: The jackfruit tree at Janagere village in Magadi taluk, about 40 km from Bengaluru. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

progressive in its own way – firm belief in the desirability of women's education being one of the features – Mannu Bhandari was made to feel inferior on account of her dark complexion. It's a painful reality that even today Indian society feels the need for fairness creams.

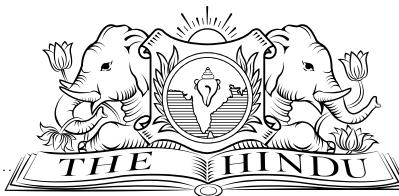
However, young Mannu overcame her circumstances by sublimating them into an inner creative force and gradually emerged as a noteworthy writer.

Hailing from a conservative Marwari family that was



way she discussed her relationship with Yadav, one of the pillars of nayi kahani (new story) movement in Hindi literature, in her autobiography. She is survived by her daughter Rachana Yadav, who is a noted Kathak exponent.

Bhandari's first novel *Aapka Bunti* (Your Bunti), published in 1971, established her as a novelist as it very sensitively depicted the tragedy of a child whose parents have divorced and are trying to find new ways of relating to each other and to him.



Exception to the rule

Allowing yearly extensions to heads of CBI, ED will compromise their autonomy

The new law authorising an extension of the services of the heads of the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate until they complete a total tenure of five years will seriously compromise the autonomy of those agencies. It goes against the spirit of the Supreme Court judgment in *Vineet Narain vs Union of India* (1997) which laid down a dictum that the Directors of the CBI and the ED should have a minimum tenure of two years. This was to prevent their sudden transfer out of office if their functioning goes against the interests of the regime of the day. While it did not specifically bar longer terms or extensions, the prospect of getting an annual extension can be an incentive for displaying regime loyalty in the discharge of their duties. Significantly, in the case of the present Director of Enforcement, S.K. Mishra, who was appointed for two years in November 2018, his services were extended by an order on November 13, 2020, which amended the original term of appointment from two years to three years. That the changes were brought in through the ordinance route in November raises a doubt whether the Government is keen on retaining him at the helm. Given that the central agencies have drawn much criticism for their focus on personages linked to Opposition parties, such a measure will be seen as a reward for guided functioning instead of a necessity to keep ongoing investigations on track.

As it is, the fixed tenure for certain posts means their superannuation within that period will not end their term. In effect, there is an implied extension for an officer appointed to one of these protected posts if the appointment comes within two years of retirement. A further extension that will take the officers' services well beyond superannuation, that too one year at a time, will render the heads of two investigating agencies unacceptably beholden to the Government. Also, in Mr. Mishra's case, the Supreme Court declined to interfere with the one-year addition to his original term of appointment, but also said that "extension of tenure granted to officers who have attained the age of superannuation should be done only in rare and exceptional cases". And that the further extension should only be for "a short period". It also made it clear that no further extension shall be granted to him. It is possible that the Government will abide by this order and not give the benefit of the amendment to Mr. Mishra, but it does not render the act of authorising year-on-year extensions to future appointees any less detrimental to the public interest. The protection given by a fixed tenure and the use of a high-ranking committee to recommend appointments and transfers were meant to dilute the 'doctrine of pleasure' implicit in civil service. However, it may be breached, if the extension allowed in exceptional circumstances becomes the rule.

A return to form

In T20 World Cup win, Australia is seeking to revive the fortunes of a rugged outfit

Australia's reiteration of its cricketing prowess was the overwhelming theme of the latest ICC Twenty20 World Cup. After the domination of the West Indies waned in the 1990s, it was Australia that claimed top dollar in the willow game before England, India and New Zealand at varying points highlighted their superiority. To make it worse, the 2018 ball tampering controversy sullied Australia's reputation; and, at home, twice it lost Test series to India. Its recent performances were middling but when frenetic cricket became intrinsic to the United Arab Emirates, which first hosted the remainder of the Indian Premier League (IPL) and then conducted the T20 World Cup on behalf of original host India, it was Australia that had the last laugh. Aaron Finch's men won the championship on Sunday after defeating New Zealand in the final and it revealed a welcome return to form and supremacy of a rugged outfit seeking a turnaround in its fortunes. David Warner's runs, Mitchell Marsh's chutzpah, Matthew Wade's pyrotechnics especially in the semi-final against Pakistan, and Adam Zampa's guile all combined to propel Australia to the pinnacle in the T20 format. But New Zealand was not far behind; runner-up in the 2019 World Cup, this year's ICC World Test Championship winner and now emerging second in the T20 World Cup, Kane Williamson's men showed that they are the most consistent unit across formats.

The Trans-Tasman summit clash may not have been a last-over humdinger but it had its soaring moments and Williamson's 48-ball 85 was a remarkable innings, high on urgency but one that did not sacrifice its innate batting aesthetics. It was much akin to Mahela Jayawardene's unbeaten 103 against India in the 2011 World Cup final at Mumbai. However, just like Jayawardene's effort, Williamson's knock also got shrouded in defeat. If Australia and New Zealand proved to be the last two teams standing, credit is also due to Pakistan. Often deemed a maverick squad that either soars or crashes, Babar Azam's men prospered with batter Fakhar Zaman and left-arm speedster Shaheen Afridi leading the revival. On the flip-side, the exit of defending champion West Indies and India's shocking ouster, reiterated sport's unpredictability. It was the end of an era for the West Indies with some of its T20 stars like Dwayne Bravo and Chris Gayle walking into the sunset while India's meltdowns against Pakistan and New Zealand jinxed its campaign. Ever since it landed in England on June 3, India has been on the road and with the IPL being part of the schedule, fatigue was evident within the ranks. But this edition was not just about winners and losers, but also about Afghanistan turning up despite the turmoil back home and seeking relief through cricket.

Pegasus inquiry must reverse the 'chilling effect'

The Government's complacency in the snooping case is worse than its alleged involvement under the garb of 'security'



M. SRIDHAR ACHARYULU

It is startling to know that governments in India purchase very expensive Israeli software to bug the Opposition and suppress dissent. The revelations about the misuse of Pegasus spyware have shaken the world and even India has felt its reverberations. The Government has stonewalled queries on the subject, has refused to order any probe, and even allowed a whole Parliament session to be washed away as a discussion on the subject was denied. The Pegasus scandal matches the Watergate scandal that brought down U.S. President Richard Nixon in the 1970s, but here in India, business has been as usual.

There was a fact-finding judgment in May 5, 2021 by the Royal Courts of Justice Strand, London (<https://bit.ly/3HraRx4>) that was to look into "factual allegations" made by a princess that the software had been installed in her phone as well as those used by her solicitors, her personal assistant and security by her husband (a high-profile ruler in the United Arab Emirates) in the case of the welfare of their two children. It was an example of how even the phones used by royals have been hacked using Pegasus. After the United States government determined that Pegasus was acting contrary to the foreign policy and the national security interests of the U.S., it blacklisted the NSO group by putting it on an "entity list". But India has neither looked into the facts nor blocked the hacker.

In India, the suspected abuse of surveillance power followed by blatant denial of Right to Information requests and Parliament questions, defiant responses to Public Interest Litigation (PIL) notices and, above all, the 'inaction' of the Government are what have com-

elled the Supreme Court of India to act. On October 27, 2021, a Bench of the Court, led by the Chief Justice of India (CJI), N.V. Ramana, constituted a three-member independent expert committee to conduct an investigation (it will be overseen by a retired Judge of the Court) and protect public faith in the constitutional system. In the world over, this is the first-ever inquiry ordered by any Chief Justice with such wide-ranging terms into spying by Pegasus. This initiative of the CJI will embolden civilians to question the suppression of rights and instil fear among rulers. It should reverse the chilling effect. This dynamic order evoked positive responses while some wanted greater relief than what was prayed in the original PILs.

A worrying silence
The Union Government has been consistently silent on the question on whether it had or has invaded the privacy of hundreds of innocent non-accused citizens and what it has done with the collected 'intelligence'. It has a constitutional duty now to justify its defence of 'national security' before the Court-appointed inquiry committee or face politico-constitutional consequences. More than anything else, what is worrisome is the Centre's deafening silence.

The Court turned down the Government's request to allow it to set up the inquiry committee, as the principles of natural justice will not permit the 'accused' to select his investigators. The Bench has enough reasons to suspect that the Government is a party to this unconstitutional action (Pegasus). It made it clear that allowing that request "would violate the settled judicial principle against bias, i.e., that 'justice must not only be done, but also be seen to be done'."

The use of the invasive spyware was noticed in May 2019 when WhatsApp claims that 'Pegasus' had infiltrated the devices of WhatsApp users; the fact of Indians being affected was acknowledged by the Minister for Law in

November 2019; and when Amnesty International and Citizen's Lab reported on June 15, 2020 of nine individuals in India having been targeted. The nation cannot afford to ignore the Pegasus Project, or the report of a consortium of 17 media organisations on July 18, 2021, which showed, based on its investigation, that a "list of over 50,000 phone numbers in more than 45 countries had been potentially targeted for surveillance by misusing Pegasus". The list included the numbers of over 300 Indians, some of whom were senior journalists, doctors, lawyers, political persons and even court staff. WhatsApp, in 2019, said it had notified the Government that 121 Indian citizens had been targeted. Yet, there has been no response.

Privacy, a sacrosanct right
Though privacy was not a specifically guaranteed right earlier, unabated surveillance was never allowed. The Supreme Court emphatically defined it in *R. Rajagopal* in 1994. With the landmark order in 2017 by the Supreme Court declaring that the right to privacy is as sacrosanct as human existence and is inalienable to human dignity and autonomy, the burden to secure this right has also fallen on the top court.

Snooping can be justified only on three counts: the restriction must be by law; it must be necessary and only if other means are not available, and proportionate (only as much as needed); and it must promote a legitimate state interest (e.g., national security), according to paragraph 325 of the nine-judge Bench judgment on privacy. Without establishing this justification, the Government cannot use 'national security', in the

case of Pegasus, as an empty or lame excuse, because surveillance directly infringes on the privacy right. If the Government wants to justify the surveillance as authorised then it has to answer the question whether anybody has been prosecuted for terrorism with evidence procured by snooping. And who is the authority that decides the need and mode of surveillance? Without this information, the state cannot rely on the excuse of 'national security'. The leaked list of phone numbers, which includes those of journalists, politicians and lawyers only raises the suspicion of abuse of surveillance power.

Injures freedom of speech
The Bench led by the CJI observed that surveillance injures the freedom of speech and results in fear-based self-censorship. When it relates to the freedom of the press, it results in a chilling effect on the basic civil right of freedom of speech. Using the highly expensive software, Pegasus, is an assault on the vital public watchdog role of the press, which could undermine the ability of the press to provide accurate and reliable information which is needed for people to know about the acts of their elected government. The potential technological power of Pegasus must be challenged. The Centre's complacency is worse than its alleged involvement that needs to be probed. In fact, the Court has faced criticism of 'inaction', giving a long rope to the Government, and refused to stay the notification issued by the West Bengal government, setting up an inquiry commission to investigate the revelations of the Pegasus Project. The Delhi-based lawyer, Gautam Bhatia, even wrote that the Court should ask the Government to answer whether it ordered spying on citizens who are not accused of any crime. If yes, it should be made liable. If the Government refuses to answer, or says 'no', what is the Court expected to do? This is what the committee must probe.

Ensuring the independence and

the objectivity of members of the committee is not a mean task. The Court has explained how the chairman and other members were chosen with great care and research. The terms are specific: the committee has the task of finding answers to whether spyware was used to access conversations and information through the devices, the interception of the communications, who the victims were, which law authorised this, and who decided this on what basis and at what cost.

The defence and a pointer

The stock defence of 'national security' for snooping has provided, *prima facie*, grounds to believe the involvement of the 'state'. The Court has explained: "The Petitioners have placed on record certain material that *prima facie* merits consideration by this Court. There has been no specific denial of any of the facts averred by the Petitioners by the Respondent – [the] Union of India". Although it is a "settled position of law that in matters pertaining to national security, the scope of judicial review is limited", the Bench was vocal in saying "this does not mean that the state gets a free pass every time the spectre of 'national security' is raised." It is well within the four corners of its jurisdiction for the Supreme Court to constitute this committee as specifically prayed in the 12 PILs.

Using criminal spyware is not only a mere violation of Part III rights but is also a serious blow to freedom of the press, expression of dissent by the Opposition, and fearlessness of lawyers to challenge in courts the unconstitutional actions of the state. It undermines democracy and converts elected leaders into absolute dictators. The Supreme Court committee and Bench has the onerous duty of resurrecting the constitutional scheme of rule of law.

M. Sridhar Acharyulu is Former Central Information Commissioner. He is Dean, School of Law, Mahindra University, Hyderabad

Batting for an important yet misunderstood species

A world with fewer bats around is one that has failed to understand the critical role they play in ecosystems



SUSHMA TAISHETE &
UMA RAMAKRISHNAN

Imagine dusk in our rural hearthland, groups of people returning to their homes from farms, factories and forests. At the same time, hordes of winged mammals called bats (nearly 128 species in India; over 1,200 species worldwide) emerge from their roosts in trees, caves, rock ledges, temples and buildings. Bats and humans have cohabited since time immemorial. Throughout the night, these bats devour insects in farms, fields, forests, grasslands and around our homes, including agricultural pests and disease-causing mosquitoes.

Some bats sip nectar, pollinate flowers, eat fruits, and spread the seeds of many important tree species including wild varieties of bananas, guava, cashew, mango, figs, mahua and other fruits. A study in Thailand has shown that pest bio-control provided by just one species of bat prevented the loss of 2,900 tons of rice per year – or a savings of \$1.2 million, and meals for 26,200 people annually. Bat droppings (guano) mined from caves are widely used as a fertilizer for agricultural crops as they have high concentrations of nitrogen and phosphorous.

Role in disease spread
Unfortunately, despite these critical roles bats remain among the most misunderstood of all animals. In India, we have almost no studies on the ecosystem services that bats provide. With scientific evidence mounting that the SARS-

CoV2 virus that causes COVID-19 originated in bats, there are growing fears of further disease transmission from bats.

A significant and unique feature of bats is that they are known or suspected to be the natural reservoirs for many novel and recently emerged pathogenic viruses such as Nipah, Hendra, Marburg, Ebola and the coronaviruses that cause severe acute respiratory syndrome. Despite being reservoirs for viruses, bats never fall sick. Flying is a very stressful business, and results in toxic by-products which could damage cell contents. Bats have evolved mechanisms to avoid such damage by suppressing their immune systems. Scientists think that such suppression results in a continuous auto-immune response which helps them combat infections and control virus propagation. Interestingly, this ability to limit excessive inflammatory response (which is responsible for the adverse effects of such viruses in infected humans), ensures they do not over react to viral infections and protects them from multiple chronic age-related diseases.

In other words, in gaining the ability to fly long distances, bats have also inherited an immune system that protects them from viruses. The same immune system also makes them age slower, and live longer. They are among the longest lived mammals for their body size.

Due to COVID-19, we have suddenly become aware of the several viruses bats carry because they could spill over to us. But such spillovers – the transmission of pathogens from their natural host or reservoirs to novel hosts such as humans – are unusual and rare events, and tend to occur when there is increased contact between humans and wild hosts.

Over the last several 100 years,

humans have significantly modified the landscapes around them – cutting of forests, clearing of land for agriculture and development – resulting in disturbances to bat roosts, and forcing them to change their 'homes'. Activities such as mining destroy natural cave systems that bats live in. Scientists have shown that when bats are disturbed, they become stressed and could shed viruses that they carry, increasing the risk of spillover. This suggests that human habitat destruction makes bats move closer to human habitation, resulting in stressing them, and in turn viral shedding.

The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled us to look back on the mistakes made in destroying this fine ecological balance, and study how bats and humans can co-exist in certain areas. This is as important as searching for the cure for SARS. Yet, we still do not know too much about the ecology of bats, even in the context of viruses. Are chances of spillover higher in areas with more bat species? Are viruses shed by bats throughout the year or only seasonally?

Study of human-bat interface
Several indigenous people had understood the importance of giving enough space to all animals including bats whilst staying with them. Some have isolation practices such as quarantine following hunting. They are dependent on animals and nature, and have achieved a balance without any

harm to both sides. The Bomrr clan in Nagaland, for example, have traditionally celebrated the annual bat harvest for many years. They gather at a place called Mimi to smoke a cave full of bats and as bats start exiting, kill them for consumption. In the process, the bats bite them or scratch them. Yet, there has been no major disease outbreak among the Bomrr clan.

To understand how and why the Bomrr are immune to the viruses in the bats they interact with, the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS-TIFR), an aided Centre of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) are carrying out sero-ecological studies on this human-bat interface. They are exploring microbial diversity associated with the bats, and also serology (antibody response to known viral families) to investigate which part of this diversity is potentially pathogenic. So far, they have found: genetic prevalence/detection (between 3%-10% of bats) of several bacterial and viral families and evidence that both bats and humans have shared antibody response to some viral families, indicative of a spillover.

The NCBS is also in the process of sequencing whole genomes of bat viruses. This study could help build a bank of virus genomes as baselines to be prepared for any possible future outbreaks. Local practices and traditions could serve as a guide for us to understand how we should minimise risk of infectious disease spillover from bats in the future. The rich biodiversity and cultural diversity in India serves as an excellent and unique place for such studies.

Some precautions
But the fact remains that bats carry many viruses. So how can we continue to co-exist with them? We could take a few sensible pre-

cautions that minimise our direct interactions with bats – such as avoiding handling or eating bats, and not eating fallen fruits gnawed by bats or fruits likely to be contaminated by bat fluids. This would greatly reduce the risk of spillover. In the longer term, we should work towards restricting and reversing land-use change practices that are bringing us in greater contact with, and increasingly stressing out, animals that may harbour 'emerging infections'.

Restore the balance
In India, many people are dependent on the ecosystems they live in, and the various services those ecosystems provide, for example water, clean air and pollination. Over the last few decades, habitat destruction and land-use change has impacted most of India. We can regain this balance with nature and animals through a combination of habitat restoration and co-existence with wildlife such as bats. Integrated approaches such as One Health, where human health is linked to that of the environment and animals can result in the best possible outcomes. Any such future will require a global commitment to reduction of habitat loss, and the preservation and restoration of our natural habitats and biodiversity. A world with fewer bats around us will be one that suffers greater crop losses to agricultural pests, witnesses increased incidences of other diseases such as those transmitted by mosquitoes, and one without mahua, too.

Sushma Taishete is Joint Secretary in the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Mumbai. Uma Ramakrishnan is a Professor at the National Centre for Biological Sciences, TIFR, an aided centre of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Mumbai

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Parliament undermined
The Union government's decision to promulgate ordinances, to extend the tenures of the directors of the CBI and the ED, barely weeks before the winter session of Parliament shows the extent to which Parliament is being

undermined. It is not for the first time that Parliament has been made redundant this way; it is estimated that under this government, there have been 3.7 ordinances for every 10 Bills. Crucial decisions that involve critical subjects do need to

be discussed threadbare in Parliament.
**S.K. KHOSLA,
Chandigarh**

■ This seems to be the reward for 'henchmen'. The hasty act in resorting to the ordinance route amounts to disrespecting our

parliamentary democracy. The Prime Minister in his address in the United Nations General Assembly recently said that India is the mother of all democracies. It seems to be for a western audience. What is happening in the country is quite the opposite. Parliament in India is losing

its great importance and immense significance.

**D. SETHURAMAN,
Chennai**

At Dubai, on Sunday
Australia proved its supreme worth at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. The skipper is very

self-assured, aggressive and a committed cricketer who led the team well. His fellow men also put their heart and soul into the game and the Australian flag is flying high.

**RAJAMANI CHELLADURAI,
Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu**

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The debacle of demonetisation

Five years later, it is clear that the policy was neither economically sound nor ethically grounded



PULPARE BALAKRISHNAN

On November 8, 2016, the Prime Minister announced that from midnight, ₹500 and ₹1,000 notes would no longer be legal tender. Though Indians were given the opportunity of redeeming the full value of their money held in this form, they could do so only by depositing the notes in a bank or Post Office savings account. The total value of the currency affected by this move, henceforth referred to as demonetisation, was 85%. A former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury said this was by far the "most sweeping change in currency policy that has occurred anywhere in the world in decades". With five years of experience, we are now in a position to give an unqualified verdict on the consequences of this move.

Changing goalposts

The original argument given for demonetisation was that it would extinguish unaccounted or 'black' money. The presumption underlying this was that with unaccounted income inevitably held as cash, owners of these hoards would be hesitant to turn them in to banks as they would have to explain the source. When it was pointed out that unaccounted income is very likely to have been converted into real assets or transferred overseas, the government shifted the narrative. It then explained that the move was meant to get the economy to run on 'less cash'. Finally, it strongly asserted that the move would incentivise direct tax payment and this would raise the government's revenues sufficiently to allow for greater public investment and the provision of more public services.

The Reserve Bank of India's Annual Report of 2019 settled the first issue conclusively when it reported that approximately 99% of the affected money supply was deposited into accounts with commercial banks. So, the existence of black money hoards may have been exaggerated, to put it mildly, even though this does not imply that all earnings were being



People wait in front of State Bank of India in Ramanathapuram on December 20, 2016. ■ L. BALACHANDAR

declared to the income tax authorities.

What about the predicted move towards less cash? Well, the ratio of currency with the public to national income has, at 11.5%, remarkably remained the same from 2015-16 onwards. Money seems to remain a chosen medium of exchange for Indians, even if purchases are increasingly being made online. Any independent economist could have pointed out to the government that in an economy where a large section of the population has little income to save, cash is likely to stay as a medium of exchange for some time. After all, electronic payments other than those based on credit cards draw upon prior savings. All this is besides the point, however, and misses how disingenuous the official narrative was. If the idea was to make the population use less cash, there was no need for the secrecy implicit in the hurried announcement of demonetisation. It could have been simply achieved by amendment of the Income Tax Act requiring all large-value transactions to be made by cheque or electronic means.

Finally, we come to the claim that demonetisation would lead to an increase in direct tax payments. Why this would be so was never spelt out,

but the data can settle this matter conclusively. We find that the ratio of direct tax collections to the national income rose marginally in 2016-17, but higher rates had been achieved earlier. It continued to rise marginally for two more years, but this cannot confidently be attributed to demonetisation alone. The Goods and Services Tax introduced in 2017 may have nudged potential income tax assesses to comply with the law due to the surveillance that came into force. We can see in the Finance Ministry's latest 'Budget at a Glance' that the trend of a rising direct tax to national income ratio came to an end in 2019-20, and is now lower than it was at the beginning of the decade.

Reversing growth acceleration

With not a single one of the claims made for it having materialised, it may seem that there cannot be a more stinging assessment of demonetisation but there is worse to come. In 2016-17, India's economy did register a slight increase in the rate of growth. This may appear to validate the action, but it does not. It is explained by the fact that the growth of the agricultural sector registered a positive swing of over 7% that year. As agricultural yield is weather related, it is independent of

economic conditions in the short term. But in the other sectors of the economy, production could have been held back by the cash crunch engineered by demonetisation, thus slowing expansion. We see this in the data on the manufacturing sector, with growth slowing by about a third immediately. Nevertheless, growth of the overall economy did not slow in 2016-17 as much of the services sector held out. This was to come the next year, with annual growth slowing continuously ever since. So, this is something demonetisation did achieve. It reversed a growth acceleration that had been in place for at least two years when the Modi government took over in 2014 and had continued till it met the gleefully named 'surgical strike'.

Imposing hardship

Numbers cannot, however, capture the hardship and insecurity that were so casually imposed on the population by the move. The country was thrown into utter chaos with people trying to change their hard-earned small cash savings in banks that were utterly unprepared for the task. There was an acute shortage of currency notes for at least a couple of months. The supply chain for farm produce was severely disrupted but a history of informal credit meant that it did not die out entirely. Indeed, India was bailed out by the traditional practices of its business communities, even as the government was ostensibly goading it into modernity.

Vladimir Lenin reportedly said, "the best way to destroy the capitalist system [is] to debauch the currency." In one of the ironies of history, a whole century later, a government committed to capitalism in all its forms attempted precisely that. But demonetisation was not just a flawed economic policy move. Economic policies must not only be sound, they must also be ethically grounded.

While it may have been within the government's constitutional powers to implement demonetisation, on an ethical conception of powers it was a moral failure. Perhaps not since Muhammad bin Tughlaq have the people of India been forced to endure as much by the state. The difference is that today India is a democracy.

Pulpore Balakrishnan teaches at Ashoka University, Sonipat, Haryana

The EU's role in the Indo-Pacific

By being more assertive with China and more cooperative with India, the EU can create a vantage position for itself



RAJIV BHATIA

The Indo-Pacific region has acquired striking salience with the U.S.-China strategic contestation becoming sharper than before. Speedy development of the Quad comprising Australia, Japan, India and the U.S.; the emergence of AUKUS comprising Australia, the U.K. and the U.S.; and other alignments raise the question: where does Europe stand in relation to this churning?

It is complicated

Europe's Asia connect is old, strong and multi-layered. Asia is viewed and evaluated through national and regional perspectives. This explains why at least since 2018, countries such as France, the Netherlands, Germany and the U.K. announced their specific policies towards the Indo-Pacific. The European Union (EU) is in the process of coping with the rise of China and other Asian economies, the tensions due to China's aggressiveness along its periphery, and economic consolidation through the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. In this backdrop, the announcement by the Council of the European Union of its initial policy conclusions in April, followed by the unveiling of the EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific on September 16, are notable.

Seen from Brussels, the EU and the Indo-Pacific are "natural partner regions". The EU is already a significant player in the Indian Ocean littoral states, the ASEAN area and the Pacific Island states, but the strategy aims to enhance the EU's engagement across a wide spectrum. Future progress will be moulded by principles ranging from the imperative to defend the "rules-based international order"; promote a level-playing field for trade and investment, Sustainable Development Goals and multilateral cooperation; support "truly inclusive policy-making" encompassing the civil society and the private sector; and protect human rights and democracy.

The policy document also says cooperation will be strengthened in sustainable and inclusive prosperity, green transition, ocean governance, digital governance and partnerships, connectivity, security and defence, and human security. The EU thus promises to focus on the security and development dimensions of its relationship with the region.

But the EU's security and defence capabilities are quite limited, as compared to the U.S. and China. To obviate an imbalance in favour of economic links, EU will need to give adequate space and support to France which has sizeable assets and linkages with the Indo-Pacific. It also must forge strategic coordination with the U.K. as the latter prepares to expand its role in Asia as part of its 'Global Britain' strategy.

As a major economic power, the EU has an excellent chance of success in its trade negotiations with Australia, Indonesia and New Zealand; in concluding discussions for an economic partnership agreement with the East African Community; and in forging fisheries agreements and green alliances with interested partners to fight climate change. To achieve all this and more, EU must increase its readiness to share its financial resources and new technologies with partners.

Approach to China and India

The EU suffers from marked internal divisions. Many states view China as a great economic opportunity, but others are acutely conscious of the full contours of the China challenge. They believe that neither China's dominance in Asia nor bipolarity leading to a new Cold War will serve Europe's interests.

The risks facing the EU are varied. Russia next door is the more traditional threat. It is increasingly on China's side. Hence, the EU should find it easy to cooperate with the Quad. However, AUKUS muddied the waters, especially for France. Yet, endeavours by a part of the western alliance to bolster naval and technological facilities to deal with China cannot be unwelcome. What the EU needs is an internally coordinated approach.

India has reasons to be pleased with the EU's policy. India's pivotal position in the region necessitates a closer India-EU partnership. The India-EU Leaders' Meeting on May 8, followed by the External Affairs Minister's Gymnich meeting in Slovenia with the EU foreign ministers on September 3, were designed to "foster new synergies". Early conclusion of an ambitious and comprehensive trade agreement and a standalone investment protection agreement will be major steps. Cooperation in Industry 4.0 technologies is desirable. Consolidating and upgrading defence ties with France, Germany and the U.K. should also remain a significant priority.

The EU can create a vantage position for itself in the Indo-Pacific by being more candid with itself, more assertive with China, and more cooperative with India.

Rajiv Bhatia is Distinguished Fellow, Gateway House and a former Ambassador

STATE OF PLAY

Is SilverLine on the right track?

It is the LDF government's responsibility to address the various concerns about the project

G. ANAND

The Kerala government is facing political heat over its ambitious 540-km-long semi high speed railway project, SilverLine, which proposes to reduce the travel time between Thiruvananthapuram in the south to Kasaragod in the north. The project also aspires to open up verdant hinterlands to development, decongest highways and reduce Kerala's carbon footprint. The government has pegged SilverLine's cost at ₹63,941 crore. K-Rail, a Central and State joint venture, will execute the project. Kerala holds a 51% share in K-Rail and the Union Railways Ministry holds the rest.

Concerns
The Congress-led UDF, the BJP and environmentalists have said the project poses serious environmental issues. A UDF fact-finding sub-committee found that the 4 to 10 m high steep railway embankment for the track would tear the State asunder geographically. The causeway would run uninterrupted for at least 250 km. The barrier would impede natural drainage and exacerbate floods during the monsoon. The UDF said the government would have to hollow out the Western Ghats to excavate enough granite to raise the rail barrier. It said SilverLine would subsume large expanses of ecologically fragile wetlands and mangrove forests.

The Leader of the Opposition, V. D. Satheshan, termed it a white elephant. The scheme would foist an irredeemable debt of more than ₹24,000 crore on the public, he said. Mr. Satheshan also accused the administration of not publishing an environmental impact study and being opaque about the project.

BJP State president K. Surendran said the Centre was sceptical about the financial and environmental viability of SilverLine. The Union Minister for Railways had communicated the Centre's reservations to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. While the Centre envisaged an elevated high speed railway corridor, SilverLine through might lead to social and political upheaval.

struction of scores of underpasses and still would not serve the purpose of an MRTS, he said.

The Congress and BJP have said there will be street protests if the government does not drop SilverLine. Both parties have suggested a network of small greenfield airports and an augmented railway network to address public transportation woes.

However, the government seems to have crossed the Rubicon. It recently appointed special revenue officers to expedite land acquisition and ensure the speedy relocation of displaced families and disbursal of compensation. The proposed track will pass through 11 districts. SilverLine would require the acquisition of 1,198 ha of private land at an estimated cost of ₹13,362.32 crore and affect 9,314 buildings. The government has raised ₹2,000 crore from the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) for the initial phase of land acquisition. It is in touch with international agencies to get low-interest loans. The administration is also exploring options to raise money from the open financial market for SilverLine via the KIIFB.

The LDF says the Congress and BJP are 'anti-development' for stridently opposing SilverLine. Mr. Vijayan has said the Opposition's fears are misplaced. He said SilverLine would skirt population centres and use elevated paths to bypass rivers, lakes, forests and ecologically fragile lands and cause minimal displacement.

Allaying fears
A comprehensive environmental impact study would serve public interest. The government should shed the perceived opaqueness about the project's financial viability, social impact and execution. The government should also allay the fears of families and businesses that SilverLine will displace. It should ensure speedy and adequate compensation for those displaced. Any attempt to bulldoze SilverLine through might lead to social and political upheaval.

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DATA POINT



Unknown donors

The chart shows the sources of income of select regional parties in FY20. The total income for the selected regional parties in FY20 amounted to ₹803.24 crore, of which 55% was from unknown sources



Parties and their unknown sources of income

About 55% of the funds received by regional parties in FY20 were from unknown sources, an analysis of the Association for Democratic Reforms shows. 'Income from unknown sources' refers to those donations that are made without the details of the donors. These include donations made through electoral bonds, sale of coupons, miscellaneous income and voluntary contributions. On the other hand, when parties provide details of the donors to the Election Commission of India, such donations are referred to as 'income from known sources'. This constituted only 23% of the total funds received by regional parties in FY20. The rest of the 22% were from other known sources such as moveable and immoveable assets, membership fees and bank interest. Five parties – TRS, TDP, YSRCP, DMK and BJD – received most of their funds through unknown sources, and almost all of them were through the electoral bonds route.

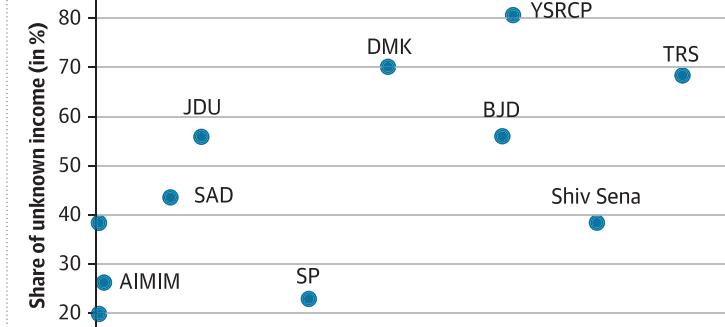
By The Hindu Data Team

Party-wise share

The chart plots the total income of select regional parties in FY20 against the share from unknown sources.

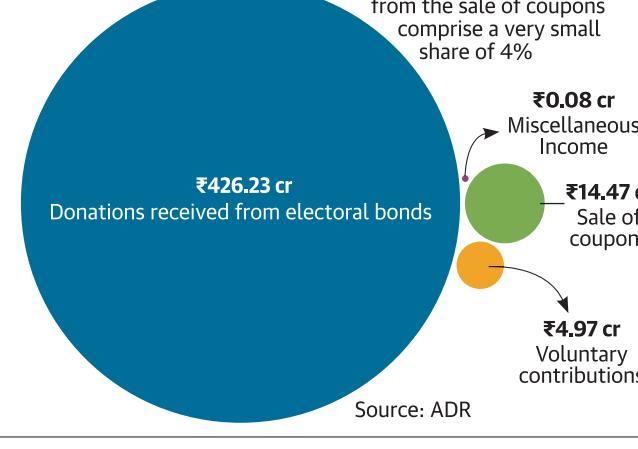
Five parties – TRS, TDP, YSRCP, DMK and BJD – received more than ₹60 crore of funds, of which more than 50% were from unknown sources.

The AIADMK, too, received close to ₹90 crore. However, the share of income from unknown sources was less than 10%



Bonds, electoral bonds

The chart depicts the share of income from unknown sources, under various routes, received by the regional parties in FY20. Nearly 96% of such funds were received through electoral bonds. Other sources such as voluntary contributions and collections from the sale of coupons comprise a very small share of 4%



Absent from the list

Not all regional parties have submitted details of their income and sources to the ECI. A list of such parties:

- About 14 regional parties submitted their total income to the ECI, but information about known sources of income was not available. These parties include the RJD, AJSU, Sikkim Krantikari Morcha, All India Forward Bloc, Kerala Congress (M), People's Democratic Alliance, and Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party.
- For nine parties, neither the total income nor the information related to income from known sources was available. Such parties include the Rashtriya Lok Samta Party, Bodoland Peoples Front, Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party, and People's Democratic Front.
- Two parties – Maharashtra Navnirman Sena and Jammu and Kashmir

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 16, 1971

Indecent behaviour

(From an Editorial)

The ugliest perhaps among the many unsavoury incidents that have taken place in the wake of the split in the Indian National Congress is the forcible occupation of the headquarters of the undivided AICC in New Delhi on Saturday by some leaders of the Congress (R) and their supporters. The premises involved was in the continued possession of the Congress (O). And it is obvious that any rights to the premises that the Congress headed by Mr. Sanjivayya thinks it has, can be established only in the same manner in which the dispute over the election symbol has been established, namely, by recourse to a court of law. Especially after the Supreme Court has indicated that its verdict in the symbol case is confined to the symbol and any other dispute about the division of property belonging to the undivided Congress has to be resolved by lawful means. By the ruling that it regarded the symbol as "not property to be divided by co-owners", the Supreme Court had made it clear that disputed property calls for other legal remedies. By taking the law into their own hands and occupying the building the Congress (R) leaders have not merely ignored the implications of the court's ruling; they have set a bad example for public conduct by thus substituting naked force to the rule of law.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO NOV. 16, 1921

Police administration

The review of the Bengal Government on the Police administration of the province during

FROM PAGE ONE

Centre to disburse ₹95,082 cr. to States

"In most issues related to investment, development and manufacturing activities, it is the States who are doing work at the forefront. The support from the Centre is always there. But we also wanted to make sure that the States' understanding and the issues they want to discuss must be heard and that's the reason this meeting was called," she added.

Several States requested the Centre for early release of funds to speed up capital spending just as it had front-loaded the remittance of their GST compensation dues for this year.

Cash flow

Accordingly, on November 22, instead of the normal monthly instalment of devolution amount which is normally ₹47,541 crore, the Centre will release another ₹47,541 crore, so a total of ₹95,082 crore will be given to the States. Normally, the Centre shares States' 41% share of revenues over 14 instalments during the year, with one instalment falling due this month on November 20.

Finance Secretary T.V. Somanathan emphasised that States had a positive cash balance of ₹2,66 lakh crore at the end of October and just four States had negative balances. "So, it is not as if most of the States are in

cash trouble, but this will enable them to frontload their spending," he said.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said he requested the Finance Minister to review the North East Industrial & Investment Promotion Policy and highlighted the need for timely release of central sector scheme funds, and early approval of externally aided projects worth ₹15,000 crore to Assam.

His Karnataka counterpart Basavaraj Bommai sought a transparent mechanism to share leads about potential investors and a clear policy on forest and environmental clearances.

The Finance Ministry dismissed States' concerns that the recent excise duty cuts on petrol and diesel will be from the shareable pool of taxes.

"The entire reduction of ₹10 and ₹5 per litre of diesel and petrol, is from the non-shareable portion of excise which means the entire reduction is borne by the central government. There is no revenue loss to the States because of this," Mr. Somanathan said. Ms. Sitharaman said if some States had not followed up with value-added taxes on petroleum products, "it is for their citizens who voted for their government to ask".

U.P. accepts SC proposal for probe by ex-judge

Mr. Salve explained that the focus should be on the person, the judge, whether or not from or outside the State. "It should be just that Your Lordships are appointing a person..." he offered.

The Bench indicated that it may consider either a retired Supreme Court or High Court judge willing to take up the assignment.

The court further asked the government to provide it with a list of names of direct IPS officers of U.P. cadre, but who were not na-

PM reaches out to tribal people, unveils schemes

Addressing the gathering virtually, he said that as the country celebrated 75 years of Independence next year, it had been decided to honour the contributions of tribal people.

"For this, a historic decision has been taken that from today, every year the country will celebrate November 15 i.e. the birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda as 'Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas,'" he stated.

Nine other tribal museums – one each in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Manipur, Mizoram and Goa – would be opened soon, he stated.

"This museum [Birsa Munda museum] will become a living venue of our tribal culture full of diversity, depicting the contribution of tribal heroes and heroines in the freedom

struggle," he noted.

Birsa Munda knew that social welfare could not be achieved by eschewing India's diversity, ancient identity and nature in the name of modernity. He believed in modern education and speaking out against societal ills.

Mahatma Gandhi was fighting against racial discrimination in South Africa and Birsa Munda was fighting against British rule in India.

Vajpayee's role

Mr. Modi pointed out that former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's strong will was behind the formation of Jharkhand on November 15, 2000.

"It was Atal ji who was the first to form a separate Tribal Ministry in the government of the country and linked the tribal interests with the policies of the country," he added.

Now, autopsy can be done after sunset

The protocol stipulated that post-mortem for organ donation be taken up on priority and conducted even after sunset at the hospitals that have the infrastructure for conducting such procedure on a regular basis.

Video recording
The fitness and adequacy of infrastructure etc. shall be assessed by the hospital in charge to ensure that there was no dilution of evidentiary value.

It was also to be ensured by the facility that video recording shall be done for all such post-mortem at night to rule out any suspicion and preserved for future reference for legal purposes, it stated.

However, cases under categories such as homicide, suicide, rape, decomposed bodies and suspected foul play should not be subjected for post-mortem during night unless there was a law and order situation.

Centre amends rules to clear tenure extension

Posts of chiefs of CBI and Enforcement Directorate now added to list of top govt. servants whose term is flexible

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day after promulgating two ordinances that would allow the Centre to extend the tenures of the Directors of the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate from two years to up to five years, the Personnel Ministry issued an order to amend the Fundamental Rules, 1922 adding the two posts to the list whose services can be extended by up to two years beyond the two-year fixed tenure in "public interest".

The previous list comprised Defence Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Home Se-



The CBI and ED are two of the country's top investigative agencies.

cretary, Director, Intelligence Bureau and Secretary, Research and Analysis Wing. Though Director, CBI, was also mentioned in the previous order, the Monday notification adds the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 (25 of 1946) under which the investigation agency's head is appointed.

The notification amended

fifth proviso of Clause (d) of Rule 56 of the Fundamental Rules, 1922. It said, "Provided also that the Central Government may, if it considers necessary in public interest so to do, give extension in service under this rule, does not exceed two years or the period provided in the respective Act or rules made there under, under which

their appointments are made."

Retrospective move

The Centre had retrospectively extended the tenure of Sanjay Kumar Mishra as the Director of the ED in 2020. The Finance Ministry said a November 19, 2018 order through which Mr. Mishra, a 1984-batch Indian Revenue Service official, was appointed has been modified with approval from the President and it would now be read for three years. He is to retire on November 17.

The NGO Common Cause, represented by advocate

Prashant Bhushan, had challenged the retrospective extension in the Supreme Court. The SC on September 8 said Mr. Mishra should not be given any further extension.

On August 12, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) gave a one-year extension to Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, beyond his two-year fixed tenure that was to end on August 22. On May 28, one-year extension in service was granted to Intelligence Bureau Director Arvinda Kumar and R&AW Secretary Samant Kumar Goel.

Ordinances disrespect SC order'

Cong. leader says they take away independence of agencies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday claimed that the two ordinances brought by the Narendra Modi government that allows the Centre to extend the two-year fixed tenures of CBI Director and Enforcement Directorate chief not only takes away the independence of these agencies, but also disrespects a recent Supreme Court order.

Addressing a press conference, Congress spokesperson and senior Supreme Court advocate Abhishek Singhvi argued that instead of ensuring the independence of tenure, "the ordinance just does the opposite".

Tight leash'

"This ordinance says that I will keep you on probation, I will keep you on a tight leash, I will keep you on a master-servant relationship, I will ask you every 6

months, 9 months, look, your next extension is due next January or next March, have you behaved? Have you done his master's voice? Have you done the master's bidding? If you have, I may consider an extension," Mr. Singhvi said.

"The crucial word in this ordinance, is the word extension. The attempt is to substitute servility and subordination to political masters in place of independence. It is to substitute subjectivity in place of objectivity," he added.

On Sunday, President Ram Nath Kovind promulgated two ordinances that would allow the Centre to extend the tenures of the CBI Director and ED Directorate chief from two years to up to five years.

While the move will not

immediately benefit the incumbent CBI Director Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, appointed in May this year, it has come just days before the incumbent ED Director Sanjay Kumar Mishra is to retire.

Hearing a case that had challenged a one-year retrospective extension to Mr. Mishra in November 2020, a Supreme Court bench of Justices L. Nageswara Rao and B.R. Gavai had directed the government not to give any more extensions to the incumbent ED chief.

"So, Supreme Court's order with the deepest respect is not worth the paper on which it is written, in the way you have reacted to it. Is it contumacious? Is it disrespectful? Is it completely subverting a hallowed institution of Indian democracy?" said Mr. Singhvi.

Kartarpur Sahib is one of the holiest sites in Sikhism.

wara just 4.7 kilometres across the border from the Indian town of Baba Dera Nanak.

Ahead of Gurpurab, Pakistan's government had already issued around 3,000 visas to Sikh pilgrims to visit gu-

Trinamool moves notice for resolution

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Trinamool Congress on Monday moved a notice for statutory resolutions in the Rajya Sabha objecting to the ordinances by the government to extend the tenure of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) chiefs, sources said.

On Monday, the party moved two separate statutory resolutions for the two laws the government has amended through the ordinances to extend the tenure.

"Two brazen Ordinances extend ED and CBI Director terms from 2 to 5 years #Parliament Winter Session begins two weeks from now. Be rest assured, Opposition parties will do all it takes to stop India from turning into an elected autocracy," tweeted Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien.

A view of Congress leader Salman Khurshid's house in Nainital after it was vandalised and set on fire.

cannot be Hinduism," Mr. Khurshid asked on Facebook.

Rallying behind Mr. Khurshid, Lok Sabha member Shashi Tharoor tweeted, "This is disgraceful. Salman Khurshid is a statesman who has done India proud in international forums and always articulated a moderate, centrist, inclusive vision of the country domestically. The mounting levels of intolerance in our politics should be denounced by those in power".

(With PTI inputs)

Govt. mulls reopening Kartarpur Corridor

Nod awaited from PMO ahead of Gurpurab on Nov. 19; Pakistan has issued 3,000 visas for pilgrims

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

The government is considering reopening the Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara corridor to Pakistan this week to allow Sikh pilgrims to cross over, more than 20 months after it was shut down due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

According to government sources, the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs have cleared the proposal, and are awaiting a final clearance from the Prime Minister's office, with a view to opening

the route by November 19, the birth anniversary of the Sikh founder Guru Nanak, known as Gurpurab or "Pra-kash Parv".

Speculation over the likelihood of the proposal going through grew after a delegation of BJP MLAs from Punjab met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, followed by a meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday, requesting the reopening. Other parties in the State had also called for the Kartarpur corridor reopening, that leads to the Gurud-

waras in Pakistan including to Guru Nanak's birth place Nankana Sahib, and the Gurudwara at Kartarpur where he died.

Pakistani officials could not confirm whether the Indian government had already communicated its desire to reopen the corridor. The officials told *The Hindu* that the Kartarpur Corridor was "not closed on the Pakistani side, and groups of Indian Sikhs pilgrims were already being facilitated to visit the Gurudwara through the Atari-Wagah border crossing".

"Land travel between India and Pakistan is being conducted on a limited scale through the Atari-Wagah Integrated Check Post in coordination with Pakistan," said Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi last week.

IN BRIEF



Anil Deshmukh sent to judicial custody

A special court under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act on Monday remanded former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, 72, in judicial custody. He was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on November 2.

Advocate Aniket Nikam, appearing for Mr. Deshmukh, filed an application for home food and medicines for him. He said it was a harmless request considering his age and post-COVID-19 health. The court allowed him a bed from home and medicines.

2 militants killed in Srinagar encounter

Two militants and a civilian were killed in an encounter in Srinagar on Monday evening. The encounter was triggered off when a joint team of the police and the Army launched a search operation in Srinagar's Hyderpora area "following a tip off". A cordon was laid (in the area). Militants fired on the security forces that (was) retaliated," an Army spokesman said. The owner of the house were militants were hiding was also killed.

Summons to Amazon over marijuana delivery

The Bhind Police in Madhya Pradesh issued summons to Amazon Inc's local officials after it arrested two men with 20 kg of marijuana. The two were accused of using Amazon India platform to illegally take orders and deliver marijuana to various States. They were doing this by listing the contraband as *kadi patta*, said the police. A Visakhapatnam-based firm was supplying the marijuana, police said.

Project SIREN Award for *The Hindu*

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

The Hindu has been awarded the Project SIREN Award for Newspapers 2021 for "its consistent high performance on Project SIREN's scorecards measuring responsible reporting on suicide between June 2020 and June 2021."

Project SIREN is an initiative of the India Mental Health Observatory (IMHO) under the Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy (CMHLP), which systematically tracks reports on suicides in major English newspapers and online news publications to promote responsible reporting.

"While we applaud the consistent performance by *The Hindu*, we encourage *The Hindu* to further prioritise sensitive and responsible reporting on suicides," said Soumitra Pathare, director, Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy, Indian Law Society.

Mangeshkar Hospital.

He passed away a little after 5 a.m. on Monday.

He was given a state funeral and his final rites were performed at the city's Vaidiknath crematorium, which saw the attendance of the 'who's who' of Maharashtra's political and cultural fields. Known by his moniker 'Shivsahir' (literally Shivaji's bard), Mr. Purandare is considered one of the pre-eminent authorities on

Travel from Baba Dera Nanak to Kartarpur through the regular border crossing means a circuitous route of approximately 200 kms. In contrast the Kartarpur corridor agreement allows pilgrims to travel visa free through the corridor.

"Land travel between India and Pakistan is being conducted on a limited scale through the Atari-Wagah Integrated Check Post in coordination with Pakistan," said Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi last week.

Tributes flowed in from the political spectrum with

Heroin worth ₹600 cr. seized in Gujarat village

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) has seized 120 kg of heroin worth ₹600 crore from Zinzuda village in Morbi district and arrested three people, who reportedly received the consignment via sea route from Pakistan.

The three arrested are Mukhtar Hussein alias Jabbar Jodiya, Shamsuddin

Hussein Saiyyed and Ghulam Hussein Umar Bhagad. "Preliminary investigation revealed that the consignment was brought by Mukhtar Hussein and Ghulam Bhagad after receiving the delivery from a Pakistani boat," the ATS stated in a release, adding, "This drug consignment was sent by Zahid Bashir Baloch, a resident of Pakistan, who is absconding in an earlier case."

Chamu Krishna Shastry, a founding member of the RSS-affiliated Samskrti Bharati whose mission is to revive Sanskrit as a spoken language, has been chosen to chair a new High Powered Committee for the Promotion of Indian Languages, according to a circular issued on Monday by the Education Ministry.

The member-secretary of the committee will be the Vice-Chancellor of the Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri National Sanskrit University, an institution that will also provide secretarial assistance, appoint experts, conduct workshops and house the panel for its two-year tenure. The panel is also expected to advise the Ministry on revitalising languages.

RSS-affiliated scholar to chair panel on languages

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Number of Indian students in U.S. dropped to 5-year low last year

Record 62,000 student visas issued to Indians this summer, signifying recovery

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The number of Indian students in the United States dropped 13.2% in 2020-21 to a five-year low of 1.67 lakh, according to data released on Monday from a study funded by the U.S. Government.

However, India remains the second highest country of origin among international students in American universities, and the U.S. consulate officials say a record number of student visas were issued to Indians over the past summer, signalling a likely revival as vaccinations grew and global travel restrictions are eased.

"Despite the global pandemic, Indian students were able to apply for visas and travel to the United States.



Steep fall: The number of Indian students in the United States dropped 13.2% in 2020-21. ■ FILE PHOTO

We issued over 62,000 student visas [to Indian students] this summer alone, more than in any previous year," said the U.S. Consular Affairs official Don Heflin, at the release of the report.

Open Doors 2021

Overall, the number of international students in the U.S.

dropped 15% to 9.14 lakh in 2020-21, according to Open Doors 2021, an annual survey conducted by the International Institute of Education in partnership with the State Department. More strikingly, new international student enrolment plunged more than 45% last year. A Fall 2021 snapshot of enrol-

ment for the new academic year indicated a partial recovery with 68% growth from last year's low base.

However, 99% of higher education institutions are holding in-person classes this semester and at least 65% of the international students are present on campus in the U.S. for the 2021-22 academic year. Among students from India, the large contingent of graduate students dropped almost 20% from 85,160 students in 2019-20 to 68,869 in 2020-21. The number of Indians pursuing optional practical training programmes also fell 9.3%, while there was a 5.2% drop in the number of undergraduate students and a 27% fall among the small fraction travelling to the U.S. for non-degree programmes.

INTERVIEW | K.C. VENUGOPAL

'Hope to jolt Govt. into action on rising prices'

Jan Jagran Abhiyan will show the impact of Modi's failed economic policies, says Cong. general secretary

SOBHANA K NAIR

The issues facing the Congress are no different from those facing other parties but we face greater media scrutiny, according to party General Secretary (Organisation) K.C. Venugopal. Excerpts:

The Congress is running a 15-day campaign against price rise - Jan Jagran Abhiyan, that began on November 14. What exactly is the motivation behind this agitation?

■ The people of our country are suffering because of the policies of the Narendra Modi Government. Our campaign is to highlight their concerns and hopefully jolt this government into action. The edible oil prices have doubled in the last one year. Prices of seasonal vegetables have gone up by 40-50% in the last one month alone. The cost of subsidised LPG cylinder has gone up by 50%

to ₹900-1,000 in the last one year. Petrol and diesel prices have gone up by ₹34.38 and ₹24.38 to ₹103.97 and ₹86.67 per litre respectively in the last 18 months. Our leaders will conduct padyatras across the country and will go to each district. This will include night halts at villages and then *prabhat pheris*.

The Congress concentrated all its efforts on Pegasus in the last Parliament session ignoring price rise. Your comments.

■ That is not true. Our leader Rahul Gandhi led a cycle rally to Parliament to highlight the spiralling fuel prices. Yes,

we raised Pegasus, but at the same time we also spoke about inflation. The government was not willing to let the house run or have any discussion. They want to pass all the bills in a hurry, without any credible debate.

The Congress President Sonia Gandhi had recently said that there is lack of clarity and cohesion even among State level leaders on important issues. How is the party addressing this?

■ As per her vision, we have already decided to have a permanent training programme in place. Even as part of our Jan Jagran Mission from 12-15 November we had training in Wardha, Maharashtra. By December we will have training modules in every State; by January this will be taken to the districts and by February we will have block-level training modules

In the last few months, the internal tussle in Punjab, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan has kept the party in the news. When will the Congress put the house in order?

■ I don't think there is any infighting. In Rajasthan, all issues have been amicably resolved. In Punjab, Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi is doing a splendid job. In Chhattisgarh, also there are no issues. It is un-



which will also be attended by our booth presidents.

In the last few months, the internal tussle in Punjab, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan has kept the party in the news. When will the Congress put the house in order?

■ Will we see a Cabinet reshuffle in Rajasthan?
■ Maybe.
■ Will there be a change of guard in Chhattisgarh
■ I do not want to comment on it.

fortunate that the media attention which should be trained on the government, seeking accountability for them, is far more focused on the Congress. In Uttarakhand, three Chief Ministers were changed but the media largely sought to ignore it. We have a Governor of a State who has been openly criticising the BJP Government in Uttar Pradesh, but again the media ignores it. This is not to deny our problems, but if you put in context, they are not any larger than what other parties, especially the BJP has.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) would formally dedicate a number of schemes to the nation from November 17-19 in events that were part of "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" celebrations," Mr. Kumar said on Monday.

The Light Combat Helicopter was designed and developed by HAL.

The AH-64E Apache helicopters in service.

In Jhansi event, PM to hand over indigenous LCH to IAF

MoD to formally dedicate a number of schemes to nation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Later this week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi would hand over the indigenous Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) to the Indian Air Force (IAF), drones built by start-ups to the Army and electronic warfare suites to the Navy at a three-day celebration titled *Rashtriya Raksha Samarpam Parv* in Jhansi, Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar said on Monday.



The Light Combat Helicopter was designed and developed by HAL.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) would formally dedicate a number of schemes to the nation from November 17-19 in events that were part of "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" celebrations," Mr. Kumar said on Monday.

The twin-engine LCH, designed and developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), is a 5-8 tonne class dedicated combat heli-

copter. It is the only attack helicopter in the world which can land and take off at an altitude of 5,000 m with considerable load of weapons and fuel, significantly augmenting the fire-power of the IAF and the Army in high-altitude areas. It will eventually be deployed along the Line of Actual Control with China in addition to

the Prime Minister would also hand over the DRDO-designed and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)-made advanced electronic warfare suites to the Navy for installation on all front line warships, including aircraft carrier Vikrant, which is undergoing trials, Mr. Kumar said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh would inaugurate the event on November 17 and Mr. Modi would launch the initiatives in a grand ceremony being organised in the precincts of the Jhansi Fort on November 19, which is the birth anniversary of Rani Lakshmi Bai, Mr. Kumar noted. The *Rashtriya Raksha Samarpam Parv* was being organised by the MoD along with the Uttar Pradesh Government.

Prime Minister to inaugurate Purvanchal Expressway today

BJP trying to steal credit for the project: SP

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

With three months left for the 2022 Uttar Pradesh elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Tuesday inaugurate the 341-km six-lane Purvanchal Expressway that would connect the State capital to the eastern regions of the State.

Since the leading Opposition Samajwadi Party (SP) has built a formidable caste alliance against the ruling BJP in the region and claimed credit for the project, the new expressway has come under the political spotlight much like the Agra-Lucknow Expressway built under Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav.

Politics over the expressway intensified after the Ghazipur administration denied permission to the SP to hold a roadshow to Azamgarh citing that no traffic would be allowed on the expressway on November 16 due to Mr. Modi's launch of the highway on the same day.

In response, Mr. Yadav on Monday said his party would shower petals at different places on the highway and mark a "symbolic"



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath walking back after the inspection of Purvanchal Expressway. ■ AP

launch of the highway the foundation stone of which, he said, was laid during his tenure. Mr. Yadav accused the BJP of trying to steal credit for the project.

With the farmers protest raging in western U.P., the stakes are high for the BJP in Purvanchal where it hopes to showcase the expressway as a beacon of development.

CJI urged to list key cases before Constitution Benches

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Eminent citizens and members of the public have written to Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana requesting the top judge to list several cases of national importance pending before the Constitution Benches.

The letter written by people from a cross-section of society, including Admiral L. Ramdas, activist Medha Patkar, and retired IPS

officer Julio Ribeiro, said the recent appointment of nine new judges should facilitate the hearing of these cases which have not been listed for long. Some of the "urgent" cases mentioned in the letter include petitions challenging the abrogation of Article 370 without due parliamentary process, continuing misuse of the UAPA, the Citizenship Amendment Act, farm laws, sedition and the electoral bonds scheme.

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'Urban factors, not farm fires, cause of pollution'

Cat is out of the bag, says SC; farm fires in Punjab, Haryana and U.P. contributed to only 10% of the air pollution, says Centre

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said the "cat is out of the bag" to prove that urban factors such as construction activities, industry, vehicular exhaust and road dust were actually the major causes of pollution in Delhi and not farmers' stubble burning.

A special Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana gleaned the fact from the affidavits filed by the Centre and the Delhi Government. The Centre, for one, said farm fires in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh contributed to only 10% of the pollution.

In the previous hearing, the court had questioned the narrow focus of the Centre and the Delhi Government on farmers.

"You say 76% of the pollution is caused by industry,



Under grey skies: Heavy traffic moving under a thick layer of smog in New Delhi on Monday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

dust, vehicles and construction and not due to stubble burning... So the cat is out of the bag... You are now trying to target pollution that is insignificant?" Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, on the Bench, asked both Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta and senior advocate Rahul Mehra, appearing for the Centre and Delhi

respectively.

Justice Surya Kant asked, "Are you agreeing in principle that farm fires are not the major cause? So all that hue and cry had no scientific or actual basis?"

Chief Justice Ramana said the court had been insisting that stubble burning was not the major cause. "Pollution

The Delhi counsel said the

is caused by city-related issues... You first take care of them and then we will come to stubble burning," he said, nudging the Centre, Delhi and the States towards a firm commitment to act against pollution.

The court was shocked to realise that Delhi had only 69 mechanised road sweepers to cover all the streets of the capital. The municipal corporations in Delhi were autonomous bodies and the court should ask the mayors to file "specific" affidavits, Mr. Mehra said. Justice Kant lashed out at the Delhi Government for coming up with "lame excuses". If this went on, the court would be constrained to order an audit inquiry into the money the Government spent on "popularity slogans" seen across the capital.

The Delhi counsel said the

Government had been doing everything the Union of India had asked to quell the pollution. "Everything that needs to be done further, will be done in 24 to 48 hours."

During the hearing, the court found that the Centre's Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region (NCR) and Adjoining Areas Act had not, over the weekend, "precisely" chalked out a plan to immediately control pollution caused by construction, vehicles, power plants and industries. In fact, Mr. Mehta said, "drastic steps" like the odd-even vehicles' scheme, ban on entry and plying of trucks in the capital and a complete lockdown had been "deferred" for now. "The severest step would be a lockdown."

But Delhi said it was will-

ing to initiate a lockdown, provided it was "cohesive arrangement" involving the NCR.

The court directed the Centre to call an urgent meeting in 24 hours with Punjab, Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to craft effective anti-pollution measures and their implementation. The court also asked the Centre, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to introduce work from home for now.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, for the petitioners, said the Centre had made a "wrong statement in court today on stubble burning as their high-powered meeting last night has recorded that stubble burning even now is responsible for 35-40% of Delhi's air pollution".

The court scheduled the next hearing for November 17.

longer to disperse.

The entire Indo-Gangetic plain, which traverses large parts of Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and eastern Uttar Pradesh, constitutes an air shed, meaning that roughly the same atmospheric conditions prevail. Therefore, when adverse weather prevails, the effect of key sources of particulate matter pollution – road dust, vehicle exhaust from transportation, from the burning of wood for heat and cooking and from heavy industry – that are ever present through the year become amplified.

During this Deepavali, however, a change in wind direction also increased the contribution of particulate matter from stubble fires and a new variable, crackers.

Chennai-Bengaluru expressway gets environment clearance

Phase-III stretch falls in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu

T.K. ROHIT

CHENNAI

The Expert Appraisal Committee of the Environment Ministry has recommended phase-III of the eight-lane expressway between Chennai and Bengaluru for environmental clearance.

The project, implemented by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), passes through Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh and Vellore, Ranipet, Kanchipuram and Tiruvallur districts of Tamil Nadu.

The stretch falls in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The total length of the alignment is 106.10 km, starting from Ramapuram in Chittoor to Irungattukottai in Tirerumbudur taluk.

Improved connectivity

The project is meant to improve connectivity between Bengaluru and Chennai and act as a link between the major commercial and industrial

centres of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

31 major bridges

The road proposed under phase-III will have 31 major bridges, 25 minor bridges, 137 culverts, 13 vehicular underpasses, 5 vehicular overpasses, 3 light vehicle underpasses, 50 pedestrian underpasses, 7 interchanges, 3 road over-bridges and 6 toll plazas.

One animal underpass has also been proposed on the Forest Department's recommendation. There is also a provision for 3 truck laybys, 4 rest areas and high mast lights.

Minimal losses

The NHAI had informed the committee that there are about 16,954 non-forest trees and 2,058 forest trees in the proposed right of way and committed itself to cutting trees within formation width so as to minimise losses.

It said all the major and minor bridges and culverts should not affect the drainage systems.

The floodplains of the rivers and the drainage systems should not be disturbed.

Centre notifies transfer of Madras HC Chief Justice Banerjee to be moved to Meghalaya

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Law Ministry on Monday notified the transfer of Madras High Court Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee to the Meghalaya High Court after President Ram Nath Kovind accepted the Supreme Court Collegium's recommendation of transfer.

"In exercise of the power conferred by clause (1) of Article 222 of the Constitution of India, the President, after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, is pleased to transfer Shri Justice Sanjib Banerjee, Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, as the Chief Justice of the Meghalaya High Court," read the notification by the Ministry of Law and Justice.

The notification said Mr. Kovind had directed Justice Banerjee to assume the office of the Chief Justice of the Meghalaya High Court.

The Supreme Court Collegium recommended the transfer of Justice Banerjee from the Madras High Court with a sanctioned strength of 75 judges to a High Court

whose current strength is two judges. Though the decision was taken on September 16, it was made public earlier this week.

Justice Banerjee is the second Chief Justice of the Madras High Court to have been recommended for a transfer to Meghalaya in the past two years. In 2019, the then Chief Justice V.K. Tahirramani resigned in protest after she was transferred to Meghalaya.

Justice Banerjee's transfer within 10 months of his assuming office had prompted 31 senior advocates of the Madras High Court to submit a representation to the collegium.

The court would also examine whether these special

courts deprive the accused of their right to a rung of appeal. Here, the argument raised is that some of these cases are triable by magistrates. In the normal course, if an accused has failed before the magistrate, he or she could file an appeal against the decision before the sessions court. In such cases, the trial judge is the magistrate. The sessions court is the first appellate court and the High Court the second appellate court.

Petitioners have argued that a special court would have the powers of a sessions court. If the case of an MLA or MP whose offence

Will talk with States to curb pollution: Centre

Minister holds discussion with CPCB

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Environment Ministry will hold a meeting on Tuesday with officials of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to review the steps taken to address air pollution.

"The Minister [Bhupender Yadav] already had meetings with officials from the Central Pollution Control Board [CPCB] and will also have a meeting tomorrow [on Tuesday]," a Ministry spokesperson said.

When wind speeds are

over 10-15 kmph and temperatures are warm, fine particulate matter rises and is easily flushed out to the higher recesses of the atmosphere, but with the reduction of this so-called mixing height post monsoon, pollutants take much

Will examine validity of special courts for MPs, MLAs, says SC

A Madras HC panel had said it was not legally permissible

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday decided to examine questions regarding the legal jurisdiction of the special courts set up to exclusively prosecute Members of Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies for various offences.

Sanjib Banerjee

The Madras High Court, in a report on October 13 last year through a three-judge Criminal Rules Committee, had raised the issue of the "constitutional validity" of the special courts for MPs/MLAs. The committee had even said it was not "legally permissible" to create such special courts. It had said special courts "can only be offence-centric and not offender-centric". The High Court committee had flagged how a special court to try an MP/MLA could override the jurisdiction of a special court already in existence under an Act.

The court would also examine whether these special

courts deprive the accused of their right to a rung of appeal. Here, the argument raised is that some of these cases are triable by magistrates. In the normal course, if an accused has failed before the magistrate, he or she could file an appeal against the decision before the sessions court. In such cases, the trial judge is the magistrate. The sessions court is the first appellate court and the High Court the second appellate court.

Petitioners have argued that a special court would have the powers of a sessions court. If the case of an MLA or MP whose offence

can be tried by a magistrate is directly placed before a special court, the accused would lose his right to defend his case before a magistrate and also is stripped of his right to make his first appeal before a sessions court.

A special Bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana, Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and Surya Kant have agreed to hear the issues on November 24.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal said the issue raises a "major problem and will affect the right to appeal". He said an administrative order would force a case triable by a magistrate to be prosecuted by a sessions court. Among the suggestions was whether there should be special magistrate courts along with special sessions court in every jurisdiction.

Amicus curiae, senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, assisted by advocate Sneha Kalita, said the special courts were meant to speedily dispose of cases pending for long.

ICMR mints change in cattle rearing practices, shift from coal

This is to combat challenges of climate change'

JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI

Senior scientists at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) have recommended that India shift from "traditional animal husbandry practices" and "urgently wean away from coal as its main source of energy". This

is to combat the challenges of climate change that is posing a global threat, the scientists argued in a policy brief that accompanies the 2021 Global Lancet Countdown report focussing on premature mortality due to ambient air pollution by sector; emissions from agricultural production and consumption; and detection, preparedness and response to health emergencies.

The recommendations come a day after India defended its right at Glasgow,

mainly in power plants followed by industrial and household settings, has resulted in an increase in premature mortality. Therefore, India needs to urgently wean away from coal as its main source of energy and needs to invest more on renewable, cleaner and sustainable sources such as solar, wind or hydro energy," the brief noted.

The recommendations come a day after India defended its right at Glasgow,

Scotland, to use coal even as it would continue to increase its reliance on renewable sources of energy. India intervened hours before the text of the agreement was finalised to insist that it read that coal would be "phased down" as opposed to "phased out". India was also among the countries that did not sign on a methane pledge. The U.S. and the European Union have jointly pledged to cut emissions of

the greenhouse gas methane by 2030 by 30% compared with the 2020 levels. India is the third largest emitter of methane, primarily because of the size of its rural economy and by virtue of having the largest cattle population.

"Since 46% of all agricultural emissions in India are contributed by ruminants such as goats, sheep and cattle, India needs to move away from the traditional animal husbandry practices

Six held in journalist murder case in Bihar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

After the charred body of a young journalist and Right to Information (RTI) activist Buddhinath Jha, alias Avinash Jha, was found by the side of State Highway 52 in Benipatti area of Madhubani district in Bihar on November 12, the police on Monday said they were investigating the case from a love

affair angle, along with the alleged involvement of an illegal private clinic, nursing homes and pathological lab owners named in the case. Six persons, including a woman who was a nursing staff in the clinic, have been arrested, the police said.

Buddhinath Jha had gone missing from his home located at Lohia Chowk on November 9.

FAITH

Sterling qualities

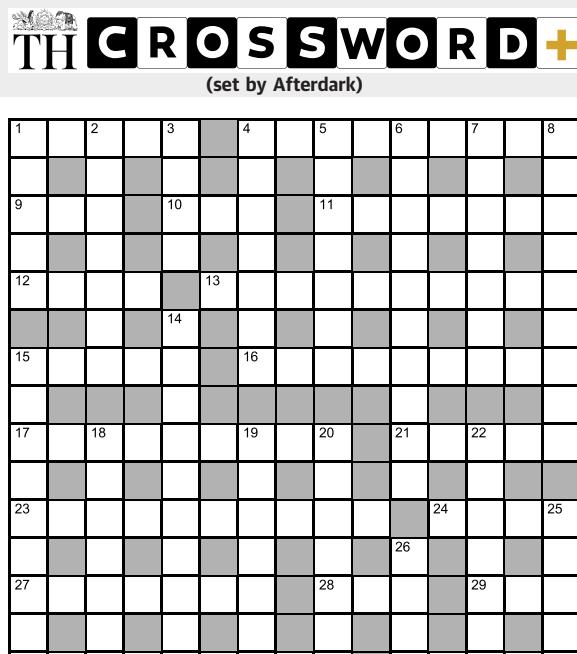
Dasaratha told the people of Ayodhya that Rama was to be crowned as next in line to the throne. They lauded Dasaratha's decision, and spoke of Rama's sterling qualities which made Him the right choice for the position. They said Rama was an authority on dharma, said Navalpakkam Vasudeva Chariar in a discourse. When the need arose to go to battle, Rama did not hesitate. When Rama returned after His successful military campaigns, He enquired of His citizens whether they were doing well. His questions covered many areas of concern. He would ask about their families, their wives and children. He would ask if they had been performing all the required everyday rituals. To the spiritual preceptors, He would ask about their students. The citizens of Ayodhya mention all these things to Dasaratha.

In Srirangam, Lord Ranganatha, the deity of the Iksavaku family to which Rama belonged, stops to make enquiries when He goes out on a procession. This happens just once a year, during the Brahmotsava in the Tamil month of Thai. Lord Ranganatha stops before every house in the streets around which the procession passes, and makes enquiries. This is a boon to those who are unable to go to the temple during the festival. And it is similar to Rama enquiring after the welfare of His subjects in Ayodhya.

Asking pertinent questions to people is an art, and Rama had mastered this art. He knew what question should be addressed to whom. When He met Sabari, He asked her about her tapas. Dasaratha's subjects told him that Rama was like a father to all the people. If they were sorrowful, Rama treated their sorrow as His own. If they were glad, He was delighted too. Rama spoke the truth, but also made sure that no one was hurt by His speech.

TH CROSSWORD (set by Afterdark) 13403

Display keystrokes of genius.
Type your answers in our online grids:
<https://qrqo.page.link/jjpTn>



ACROSS
1 Bad temper? Take book, holy book (5)
4 We, people primarily, are immersed in feelings and doubts (9)
9 Superstar is old; conceals (3)
10 Wife and husband going where before? (3)
11 Hitchcock film about buccaneer, peacekeepers evicted... (7)
12 ... film's climax edited by Bay (4)
13 A soft fruit can be crushed for juice at the end on show (10)

SUDOKU

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Biden to discuss 'guardrails' for U.S. and China, with Xi: official

Taiwan issue may be discussed; no concrete deliverables expected from meeting

SIRIRAM LAKSHMAN

U.S. President Joe Biden will discuss "guardrails" to the U.S.-China dynamics with his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, during the duo's virtual meeting on Tuesday morning (IST), a senior U.S. administration official said. However, no specific deliverables are expected from the virtual meeting.

Mr. Biden also plans to discuss divergences between the two countries - China's actions towards Taiwan, most notably, but also human rights and China's "coercive" tactics, in addition to areas of alignment, the official said.

"...It's important to keep channels of communication open. That's why President Biden initiated this meeting. We want to make clear our intentions and our priorities to avoid misunderstandings," the official told reporters on a briefing call on Sunday, while previewing the meeting.

"The President will also make clear that we want to



Reaching out: U.S. President Joe Biden will gauge Chinese President Xi Jinping's reaction to the AUKUS deal. • FILE PHOTO

build common sense guardrails to avoid miscalculation or misunderstanding," the official said.

Monday's interaction would be different from the two calls the two leaders have had since Mr. Biden became President (most recently in early September), as per the official, because it would be a virtual, face to face (rather than voice only) interaction and because of the level of preparation going into the meeting.

The official listed China's "coercive and provocative behaviour" with respect to Taiwan, human rights, Chi-

na's "extraordinary" state support of enterprises, and its actions in cyberspace, as among the issues on the agenda for Monday's discussions.

"This is an opportunity for President Biden to tell President Xi directly that he expects him to play by the rules of the road," the official said.

The U.S. has been alarmed at the number of intrusions by Beijing into Taiwan's Air Defence Identification Zone in recent months. China, on the other hand, had objected to U.S. support for Taiwan. Tensions around the issue were evident in

The virtual meeting with Mr. Xi is scheduled for 6:15 a.m. on Tuesday (IST).

both sides' summaries of a call on Friday between U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi.

On Australia's plan to acquire nuclear-powered submarines via the AUKUS (Australia-U.K.-U.S.) security partnership, the Biden administration official suggested they would see how Beijing raised the issue on Monday.

"It's certainly possible that we could hear from them on that," the official said.

Australia's support

Australian Defence Minister Peter Dutton had said over the weekend that it was "inconceivable" that Australia would not join the U.S. in any action taken to defend Taiwan. The official was unwilling to commit to a position on whether Mr. Biden would accept any invite to attend the Winter Olympics, scheduled to be held in Beijing in 2022.

The virtual meeting with Mr. Xi is scheduled for 6:15 a.m. on Tuesday (IST).

Up to 4,000 migrants are stuck in makeshift camps in freezing weather after Poland reinforced its border with Belarus with 15,000 soldiers.

The 27-country EU has already imposed four sets of sanctions on Belarus authorities and senior officials over the disputed election in August last year that returned Mr. Lukashenko to office and the security crackdown on peaceful protesters that followed.

The EU is preparing a fifth lot, and on Monday, the bloc's Foreign Ministers extended the scope of those measures to add airlines, travel agents and others accused of helping to bring migrants to Minsk.

EU headquarters said the bloc will now be able to target individuals and entities organising or contributing to activities by the Lukashenko regime that facilitate illegal crossing of the EU's external borders.



Border crisis: Migrants gathered on the Belarusian-Polish border in Kuznica on Monday. • AFP

nowhere to retreat further," he was quoted as saying by the state news agency Belta.

Asked at the EU meeting in Brussels about the danger that more sanctions might only make things worse, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said: "I don't have the impression that Belarus behaves constructively without sanctions. That wasn't the case in the past."

"We are far from the end of the spiral of sanctions," Mr. Maas added.

France slams U.K.'s remarks on migrants

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE PARIS

France told Britain on Monday to stop "giving lessons" on migrants in an increasingly acrimonious row between London and Paris over the numbers crossing the Channel.

Britain "should stop using us as a punch-ball in their domestic politics," Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said ahead of talks with his British counterpart Priti Patel later on Monday. The longstanding dispute has intensified in the last days after record numbers of migrants crossed the Channel to reach England from the French coast.

"I will remind my British counterpart that the NGOs that prevent the police from working are largely British NGOs with British citizens who are on French soil," he said. And he added: "The smugglers, who organise networks and exploit women and children, are very often based in Britain."

EU to add airlines to Belarus sanctions as tensions mount

Bloc members will target entities encouraging migrants

ASSOCIATED PRESS BRUSSELS

The European Union on Monday ratcheted up pressure on Belarus by agreeing to slap sanctions on airlines accused of helping President Alexander Lukashenko to wage a "hybrid attack" against the bloc using migrants, as tensions mounted on the Polish border.

Up to 4,000 migrants are stuck in makeshift camps in freezing weather after Poland reinforced its border with Belarus with 15,000 soldiers.

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"We are far from the end of the spiral of sanctions," Mr. Maas added.

Taliban crack down on IS hideouts

Four fighters, three civilians killed in operation in southern Afghanistan

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE KANDAHAR

The Taliban have launched a crackdown on suspected Islamic State hideouts in southern Afghanistan, officials said on Monday, following an increase in bloody attacks by the group in recent weeks.

The operation against Islamic State-Khorasan – the local chapter of the jihadist group – started around midnight in at least four districts of Kandahar province and continued through Monday

morning, Taliban provincial police chief Abdul Ghafar Mohammadi said.

"So far, four Daesh (IS) fighters have been killed and ten arrested... one of them blew himself up inside a house," he said.

Blast in Kabul

A member of the Taliban intelligence agency who declined to be named said at least three civilians were killed in the operation.

Local media quoted a Taliban official as saying there

claimed by IS-K in northern Kunduz province killed more than 60 people.

The group on Sunday claimed responsibility for a bomb that destroyed a minibus in Kabul at the weekend killing a well-known local journalist and up to two others. IS-K boasted it had killed or injured "20 Shiite apostates" in the incident.

Earlier this month IS-K fighters raided the city's National Military Hospital, killing at least 19 persons and injuring more than 50 others.

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STEP

U.K. raises terror threat level after Liverpool blast

Taxi driver's heroics save the day

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LIVERPOOL

Britain raised its terrorism threat level on Monday after a deadly explosion outside a hospital in Liverpool in an attack involving a home-made bomb that was reportedly foiled by a quick-thinking taxi driver.

Interior Minister Priti Patel said intelligence officials had increased the threat from "substantial" to "severe" – the second-highest level meaning an attack is highly likely.

Ms. Patel said the decision was made because Sunday's blast, which destroyed a taxi and killed a passenger outside the Liverpool Women's Hospital, was the second incident in a month.

Last month, veteran British MP David Amess was stabbed to death as he met constituents in southeast England, in an attack that prosecutors said had a "terrorist connection".

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the Liverpool attack was a "stark reminder of the need for us all to remain utterly vigilant".

Russ Jackson, in charge of counter-terrorism policing in northwest England, said the motive for the Liverpool attack was unclear.

But he told reporters that the improvised explosive device, which ignited in the cab, turning it into a fireball, was "built by the passenger" who died. Mr. Jackson added that it was being treated

as a "terrorist incident".

The explosion came just minutes before a Remembrance Sunday service at nearby Liverpool Cathedral, prompting speculation the event was the intended target.

Three men aged 21, 26 and 29 were arrested under the Terrorism Act soon after the explosion in the nearby Kensington area of the city and were taken for questioning.

A fourth man, aged 20, was detained earlier on Monday, Mr. Jackson said, adding that "significant items" had been found at a second address in Sefton Park, near Kensington.

Remarkable escape
The blast and fireball sent thick smoke into the air just seconds before Britain fell silent in tribute to its war dead and military veterans at 1100 GMT.

There was immediate praise for the taxi driver, who reportedly locked the passenger – a man – inside the cab after growing suspicious about his intentions.

The passenger had wanted to go to the annual service at Liverpool's Anglican cathedral, according to U.K. media quoting investigators.

But road closures forced the taxi to detour and they ended up at the nearby hospital, where the bomb went off just after the driver had escaped, the *Daily Mail* reported.

Negotiations held

The 37-year-old's release was secured following "face-to-face negotiations" between former top U.S. diplomat Bill Richardson and junta chief Min Aung Hlaing, Richardson's organisation said in a statement.

The press has also been squeezed as the junta tries to tighten control over the flow of information. More than 100 journalists have been arrested since the putsch, according to Reporting ASEAN, a monitoring group. It says at least 30 are still in detention.

Iran invites UN nuclear body chief to Tehran for talks

Rafael Grossi had expressed concern over 'lack of contact'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE TEHRAN

Iran has invited the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for talks after the UN official expressed concern over a lack of contact with Iranian authorities, Tehran said on Monday.

UN nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi "has been invited" to Tehran and a visit date has been put forward, Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said, without providing specifics on the possible timing of the trip.

Mr. Grossi is expected to meet with Iran's Foreign Minister and the country's atomic energy chief, Mr. Khatibzadeh told journalists, while also adding that

"we await his response".

Mr. Grossi had been hoping to visit Iran before the next meeting of the IAEA's Board of Governors starts on November 22, but on Friday described a lack of contact with the Iranian government as "astonishing".

List of things
"There's a long list of things we need to discuss," he said.

Rafael Grossi last visited Tehran in September, where he clinched a deal over access to surveillance equipment at Iran's nuclear facilities.

Days after that visit, the IAEA complained that it had been denied "indispensable" access to a centrifuge component manufacturing workshop where it needed

to service equipment.

The invitation comes as

talks are expected to resume on November 29 in Vienna aiming to revive a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

The deal, which offered

Tehran relief from sanctions in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program, was torpedoed when the U.S. unilaterally pulled out in 2018.

Talks have been on hold since June following the election of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

On Monday, Mr. Khatibzadeh reiterated Iran's demands for guarantees that the U.S. would not pull out of the deal again, adding that progress in negotiations was contingent on the lifting of sanctions.

ELSEWHERE



Despite offer to retire, Duterte to run for senate
MANILA

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte filed his candidacy for a senate seat in next year's elections, walking back on his vow that he would retire from politics and prompting rights groups to say he is working to evade accountability for his deadly anti-drug campaign. AP

Shell wants to shift headquarters to U.K.

LONDON
Royal Dutch Shell proposed moving its headquarters from the Netherlands to the United Kingdom in hopes of making it easier to move forward in a world transitioning away from dependence on fossil fuels. Dutch officials said they were "unpleasantly surprised" by the move. AP

CMYK

Win the toss and ice the chase: what worked in the UAE

Though the impact of the coin was huge, the quality and consistency of the teams also mattered; Finch won six out of seven tosses and the trophy too

ICC T20 WC

AMOL KARHADKAR
DUBAI

The seventh edition of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup that began on October 17 culminated in Australia becoming the sixth team to win the tournament on Sunday.

Here's a look at the biggest talking points of the tournament:

Toss is boss: So evident was the impact of the toss on the outcome of a match was that Aaron Finch, the Australia captain, was asked immediately after the final about how he managed to win six out of the seven tosses.

The only time the coin did not land in his favour, Australia was demolished by England in the Super 12.

The Dubai trend
Two-thirds of the total 45 games ended up in favour of the team that won the toss. However, the trend was more evident while playing in Dubai. Of the 13 games at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, including the final, only two were won by teams that were not lucky with the spin of the coin.

Still, while considering

the impact of the toss, one should not undermine the fact that eventually it all boiled down to the quality and consistency of teams.

Otherwise, Afghanistan would have been in the knockouts, having won all five tosses in Super 12s. And New Zealand would have been sent packing after losing three tosses in the league stage.

Mystery is history: Mystery spinners were supposed to be the show-stoppers in the World Cup but the tournament has shown that batters have ensured mystery spinners' magic is on the wane, at least when it comes to picking wickets consistently.

Basic numbers
A look at their basic numbers reveals the story.

Rashid Khan (8 wickets in 5 matches), Tabraiz Shamsi (8 in 5), M. Theekshana (8 in 7), Varun Chakravarthy (0 in 3) couldn't really run through sides.

The only exception was Mujeeb Ur Rahman of Afghanistan but five of his seven wickets in three games were against Scotland.

On the other hand, con-

ventional spinners like Adam Zampa (13 in 7), Shadab Khan (9 in 6) Ish Sodhi (9 in 7) and R. Ashwin (6 in 3) were as successful.

Lessons from the leagues: IPL is the most sought-after franchise-based T20 league in the world, with BBL, PSL and CPL vying for the second slot.

A few smart players – Josh Hazlewood and Kane Williamson, for instance – have timed their exposure in T20 leagues to precision, and the T20 World Cup underlined that the countries that host the biggest leagues don't necessarily benefit from it at the biggest stage. Commercial appeal, quality of cricket and popularity of a T20 league don't guarantee that the host country's team does well at the big stage.

Consistent Kiwis
New Zealand's consistent run despite a low-profile domestic league and India's and West Indies' ordinary performances are examples.

Besides, the old or tired warriors may end up excelling in T20 leagues but when it comes to the World Cup, they cannot really lead their respective teams to success.

Desert storm

BLAZING AWAY

Top run-scorers	M	Runs	HS	SR	50s
Babar Azam (Pak)	6	303	70	126.25	4
David Warner (Aus)	7	289	89 n.o.	146.70	3
Mohammad Rizwan (Pak)	6	281	79 n.o.	127.72	3

Most 50s



BABAR AZAM
4
half-centuries in six innings

Double distinction



HASARANGA
16 scalps (8 inns) and also a hat-trick

As the dust settled on the seventh edition of the World T20 gala in the UAE, a look at some significant numbers

Century-maker



JOS BUTTLER
101 not out (Eng vs SL, Sharjah)

STRIKING IT RICH

Top wicket-takers	M	Wkts	BBI	Econ
Wanindu Hasaranga (SL)	8	16	3/9	5.20
Adam Zampa (Aus)	7	13	5/19	5.81
Trent Boult (NZ)	7	13	3/17	6.25

THE FIVE-FORS

ZAMPA 5/19
(Aus vs Ban, Dubai)

MUJEEB UR RAHMAN 5/20
(Afg vs Sco, Sharjah)

HAT-TRICKS

CURTIS CAMPHER (Irl vs Ned, Abu Dhabi) – took four wickets in four balls

HASARANGA (SL vs RSA, Sharjah)

KAGISO RABADA (RSA vs Eng, Sharjah)

STATS INCLUDE QUALIFICATION ROUNDS | SOURCE: ESPNCRICINFO

LONG-LASTING IMPRESSION

The player-of-the-tournament in the seven editions

Shahid Afridi (Pak) 2007

Tillakaratne Dilshan (SL) 2009

Kevin Pietersen (Eng) 2010

Shane Watson (Aus) 2012

Virat Kohli (Ind) 2014

Virat Kohli (Ind) 2016

■ Pietersen and Warner are the only players to win the man-of-the-series award and the T20 World Cup in the same edition

DRYING IT UP

TRENT BOULT
Balls delivered: **166**

Dot balls: **85**

Dot ball%: **51.20**

TIM SOUTHEE
BD: **167**

DB: **85**

DB%: **50.89**

BEST FIGURES

ADAM ZAMPA
4-0-19-5

COMPILED BY R. NARAYANAN AND G. PRASAD | GRAPHIC: A. GANESHAN

No Indian in ICC's team of the tournament

Babar given honour of leading the side

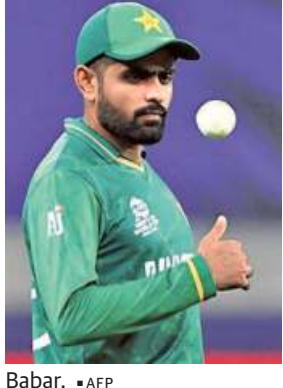
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DUBAI

No Indian cricketer figured in the ICC's T20 World Cup Team of the Tournament which comprises players from six different countries, including Sri Lanka and South Africa. Pakistan's Babar Azam was named captain of the squad.

India was ousted in the group stage after being thrashed by Pakistan and New Zealand before winning three inconsequential games against Afghanistan, Scotland and Namibia.

Bishop's explanation
Former West Indies pacer Ian Bishop, one of the jury members, said: "As with any team selection, there will be varying opinions and robust discussion on the final composition of the squad."

"The panel respects that, and we encourage the strong debate that will ensue."



"This team was incredibly difficult to select over such a highly competitive tournament. Selections were based predominantly from the Super 12 to the final."

The team: David Warner (Aus), Jos Buttler (Eng, wk), Babar Azam (Pak, Capt.) Charith Asanka (SL), Aiden Markram (RSA), Moeen Ali (Eng), Wanindu Hasaranga (SL), Adam Zampa (Aus), Josh Hazlewood (Aus), Trent Boult (NZ), and Anrich Nortje (RSA).

12th man: Shaheen Afridi (Pak).

We are excited to have Dravid, says Rahul

A great opportunity for us to get better as cricketers'

NZ IN INDIA

ASHWIN ACHAL

K.L. Rahul shares a long-standing bond with new India head coach Rahul Dravid. Over 15 years ago, Rahul scored two double centuries for Mangalore Zone in the KSCA inter-zonal under-13 tournament, and caught the eye of Dravid.

Dravid, then an India star, called Rahul aside and had a long chat with him. The young Rahul was over the moon to gain an audience with a legend.

Rahul may have now climbed the ranks to become an India star himself, but he still feels a sense of excitement at the prospect of interacting with Dravid.

Fortunate
"I've been fortunate to know him (Dravid) for a long time. As a youngster, I tried to pick his brain and better understand the art of batting. He has been more than kind to



Gelling well: Rahul shares a long-standing bond with new India head coach Dravid. ■ FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

us with his time back home in Karnataka. Having him here is a great opportunity for us to get better as cricketers. We all know what a big name he is, and what he has done for the country," Rahul said on Monday.

"I've played a couple of

games under Dravid in the India 'A' set up, and we've had a chat with him before coming here. He was a team man when he was playing, and that is the sort of culture he wants here. He wants everyone to put the team ahead of individual goals. We are

excited to have him. It is a great time for Indian cricketers," Rahul said.

The three-match T20I series against New Zealand, which commences at Jaipur on Wednesday, will also see Rohit Sharma taking over as captain from Virat Kohli.

Tactically good

"There is nothing new about Rohit being captain. For as long as I can remember, he has been the captain of Mumbai Indians. His stats speak for itself. He has a great understanding of the game. He is tactically very good, and that is why he has been able to achieve great things as a leader. He will bring a lot of calm into the dressing room."

"The next few days and weeks will be exciting, as we will understand what sort of goals and culture that Rohit has in mind. It's a big change in Indian cricket, and we're all very excited about it," Rahul said.

rantine before the first T20I against host India on Wednesday.

"They arrived in the evening and will be tested as per protocol before they have their practice session tomorrow," confirmed a Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA) official.

Karnataka meets Saurashtra

Kerala-HP, Maharashtra-Vidarbha in other pre-quarterfinals



Primed for more action: The Syed Mushtaq Ali matches resume on Tuesday. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

MUSHTAQ ALI

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Two-time champion Karnataka is expected to assert its superiority over reigning Ranji Trophy champion Saurashtra for a place in the quarterfinals of the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy at the Ferozeshah Kotla ground on Tuesday.

The other two quarterfinal spots will be decided after Kerala takes on underdog Himachal Pradesh at the Air Force ground and a confident Maharashtra plays an almost untested Vidarbha at the Kotla.

Under skipper Manish Pandey, Karnataka has the resources to go all the way despite the late replacements for Mayank Agarwal, Devdutt Padikkal, Prasidh Krishna and K. Gowtham.

For the record, Karnataka began by drubbing Mumbai

and followed it up with victories over Chhattisgarh, Services and Baroda before losing to Bengal and finishing second best in Group B.

Karnataka's batting could well be tested by the pace duo of Jaydev Unadkat and Chetan Sakariya on a placid Kotla pitch.

Saurashtra impressed with the way it bounced back after losing its opener to Hyderabad in Group E.

Saurashtra's line-up has Sheldon Jackson whose flamboyant style and range of strokes had kept him in the mix before the National selectors.

Overall, Saurashtra will have to punch way above its weight.

Kerala, which relies heavily on opener Robin Uthappa, skipper Sanju Samson and Sachin Baby, will have the advantage of having played at the Air Force ground in the league. Kerala showed great character in bouncing

Djokovic feels at ease in 'second home'

Cruises past Ruud in his opener

ATP FINALS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TURIN

Novak Djokovic began his attempt to equal Roger Federer's record number of ATP Finals triumphs with a straight-set 7-6(4), 6-2 win over Casper Ruud on Monday.

World No. 1 Djokovic is looking to complete a remarkable year with a sixth Finals title after only just missing out on claiming all four Grand Slams in a single season, and got off to a strong start against eighth seed Ruud, winning in around 90 minutes.

Djokovic attracted wild applause from the Turin

crowd when he insisted on speaking in Italian for his on-court interview after the match, before which he was honoured for once again being the world's top player.

"It's a great feeling being back

TV PICKS

Syed Mushtaq Ali T20: (pre-quarterfinals); Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 8.30 a.m. & 1 p.m.

European WC 2022 Qualifiers: Sony Ten 1, 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 1.15 a.m. (Wednesday)

IN BRIEF



Bagnaia wins Valencia GP; Rossi finishes 10th

Valentino Rossi claimed his fourth victory in the last six MotoGP races at the season-ending Valencia Grand Prix on Sunday as nine-time world champion Valentino Rossi finished 10th in his final race. REUTERS



Rossi already regretting retirement

Motorcycling legend Valentino Rossi, who completed his final MotoGP after 26 years in the saddle on Sunday, thinks retirement will be difficult especially in March when the season starts again. "I regret stopping, already," he admitted. AFP

Hyderabad races postponed

The Stewards of the Hyderabad Race Club have decided to postpone the races to be held on November 21 (Sunday) to November 22 (Monday) due to administrative reasons.

Bengaluru races cancelled

The Stewards of the Bangalore Turf Club, have decided to cancel the fifth day of the Bangalore Winter Meeting scheduled to be held on Tuesday, Nov 16, (postponed from Friday, November 12) due to consistent heavy rain and inclement weather rendering the underfoot conditions not conducive for racing.

Application moved to implead Lovlina

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA Boxer Arundhati Choudhary on Monday moved an application through her lawyer Sandeep Lamba to 'implead' Olympic bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain in the case in which she sought her selection in the Indian team for the World women's championships in Turkey.

It may be noted that the International Boxing Association (AIBA) has postponed the World women's boxing championships to March 2022.

N R I Valley bags Totaram's Cup

HYDERABAD: Trainer R.H. Sequeira's N R I Valley ridden by Akshay Kumar won the Totaram's Cup, the main event of Monday's (Nov 15) races.

The winner is owned by Mr. Ravinder Reddy Male.

1. ELUSIVE HERO PLATE (1,100m, (Terms) Maiden, 2-y-o only (Cat. II); NEGLECT ME NOT (Ashad Asbar) 1, Galway Bay (C.S. Jodha) 2, Lights On (Nakhat Singh) 3 and Wind Sprite (Nikhil Naidu) 4. 1-1/2, Nk and 3/4, Im 8.75s, 223 (w), 13, 12 and 25 (p), SHP: 37, THP: 59, SHW: 11 and 13, FP: 78, Q: 32, Tanala: 451. Favourite: Galway Bay.

Owners: Mr. Kethi Reddy Venkat Reddy, Mr. K. Ram Gopal Rao, Mr. Srinivas Rao Thotta & Mr. Shahnawaz Hasan. Trainer: M. Srinivas Reddy.

2. BHONGIR PLATE (Div. I) (1,100m) Maiden, 3-y-o & upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III); ONE MORE TIME (Nakhat Singh) 1, N R I Touch (Akshay Kumar) 2, Gregor Clegane (R. Ajinkya) 3 and Exotic Dancer (Kuldeep Singh) 4. 2-3/4, 1-1/4 and 1, Im 7.13s, 166 (w), 25, 13 and 15 (p), SHP: 33, THP: 51, SHW: 44 and 14, FP: 958, Q: 213, Tanala: 3,505. Favourite: N R I Touch.

Owner: Mr. Alagappa Murugappan. Trainer: K. Satheesh.

3. BLOOMER PLATE (1,200m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III); BUCKLEY (C.S. Jodha) 1, Stunting Force (A.A. Vikrant) 2, Farrell (Akshay Kumar) 3 and Moonlight Ruby (Ajeeth Kumar) 4. Not run: Bed-

ford and Plethora. 1, Hd and 2, Im 12.98s, ₹21 (w), 12, 15 and 12 (p), SHP: 42, THP: 47, SHW: 13 and 35, FP: 11, Q: 69, Tanala: 246. Favourite: Buckley.

Owners: Mr. K. Vachha & Mr. & Mrs. Shapoor P. Mistry rep. Manjri Horse Breeders' Farm Pvt. Ltd. Trainer: S.K. Sunderji.

4. GOLCONDA CUP (1,400m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II); KNOTTY DANCER (A.A. Vikrant) 1, Red Snaper (Nikhil Naidu) 2, One Wish (C.S. Jodha) 3 and Mark My Day (Gaurav Singh) 4. Not run: Cosmic Run, 4-3/4, Sh and Hd, Im 26.08s, ₹14 (w), 12, 25 and 14 (p), SHP: 99, THP: 49, SHW: 10 and 89, FP: 220, Q: 231, Tanala: 558. Favourite: Knotty Dancer.

Owners: Mr. Krishnan Kamesh, Mt. K. Balamukunda Das & Mr. Srikanth Badruka. Trainer: D. Netto.

5. KINNERANAS PLATE (DIV. I) (1,400m), rated up to 25 (Cat. III); SOUTHERN ACT (Rohit Kumar) 1, Lorena (Gaurav Singh) 2, Royal Girl (Ajit Singh) 3 and Salisbury (Nikhil Naidu) 4. Not run: Isra and Tenth Attraction. Im 27.81s, ₹30 (w), 11, 10 and 42 (p), SHP: 32, THP: 85, SHW: 25 and 14, FP: 83, Q: 38, Tanala: 788. Favourite: Lorena.

Owners: Mr. Chandrasekhar Reddy Challuri, Mr. Rakesh Reddy Kondakalla & Mr. G. Narasa Reddy. Trainer: Robin Reddy Kondakalla.

6. BHONGIR PLATE (DIV. II) (1,100m), Maiden, 3-y-o & upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III); CA-

BELLO (P.S. Chouhan) 1, Beauty Flame (B. Nikhil) 2, Sally (G. Narendran) 3 and Hot Seat (Md. Islam) 4. 2, 1-1/4 and Nk, Im 7.27s, ₹20 (w), 13, 23 and 25 (p), SHP: 66, THP: 66, SHW: 11 and 39, FP: 243, Q: 147, Tanala: 5,075. Favourite: Buckley.

Owners: Mr. & Mrs. Shapoor P. Mistry rep. Manjri Horse Breeders' Farm Pvt. Ltd. & Mr. Teegala Vijender Reddy. Trainer: K.S.V. Prasad Raju.

7. TOTARAM'S CUP (1,400m), rated 20 to 85 (Cat. II); N R I VALLEY (Akshay Kumar) 1, Saffron Art (S.S. Tanwar) 2, Scramjet (P.S. Chouhan) 3 and Staridar (B. Nikhil) 4. 3-1/4, 2 and 1/2, Im 25.00s, ₹27 (w), 11, 17 and 13 (p), SHP: 58, THP: 59, SHW: 18 and 15, FP: 142, Q: 120, Tanala: 348. Favourite: Scramjet.

Owner: Mr. Ravinder Reddy Male. Trainer: R.H. Sequeira.

8. KINNERANAS PLATE (DIV. II) (1,400m), rated up to 25 (Cat. III); SIRI (Rohit Kumar) 1, Lightning Fairy (Ajeeth Kumar) 2, Red River (R.S. Jodha) 3 and Wild Card (Anel) 4. 3-3/4, Sh and 1, Im 28.91s, ₹27 (w), 13, 14 and 23 (p), SHP: 45, THP: 64, SHW: 18 and 14, FP: 118, Q: 49, Tanala: 656. Favourite: Siri.

Owners: Mr. D. Balarama Raju, Mr. Rakesh Reddy Kondakalla & Mr. Vijay Anand Jaganti. Trainer: Robin Reddy Kondakalla.

Jackpot: 70%; ₹1,299 (277 tkts.), ₹30,167 (920 tkts.).

Treble: (i) 2,903 (16 tkts.), (ii) 153 (259 tkts.), (iii) 326 (201 tkts.). Mini Jackpot: ₹7,761 (6 tkts.).

Serbia stuns Portugal

Spain and Croatia set to fly to Qatar after narrow wins

WC QUALIFYING

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LISBON

Cristiano Ronaldo's hopes of playing in a record-equalling fifth World Cup hang in the balance after Serbia stunned Portugal 2-1 in Lisbon to qualify for the 2022 World Cup.

Spain and Croatia did secure their places in Qatar on Sunday thanks to 1-0 wins over Sweden and Russia respectively.

Ronaldo already holds the record of playing in five European Championships and looked well on course for another milestone as Portugal stormed out of the blocks to open the scoring after just two minutes through Renato Sanches.

However, Serbia bounced back to dominate the remainder of the first half and deservedly levelled when Dusan Tadic's strike squeezed in off the post after Dusan Vlahovic had hit the woodwork.

Ronaldo was kept quiet as another chance to score his 800th career goal came and went.

Instead it was Aleksandar



Team effort: Serbian players can't hide their emotions after securing their place in the Qatar World Cup. ■ AFP

Mitrovic who grabbed the vital goal as stoppage time approached.

Portugal must now navigate two tricky one-off playoff matches in March to maintain its record of qualifying for every major tournament since the 1998 World Cup.

The results:

Group A: Portugal 1 (Renato Sanches 2) lost to Serbia 2 (Tadic 32, A. Mitrovic 90); Luxembourg 0 lost to Ireland 3 (Duffy 67, Ogbene 75, Robinson 88).

Group B: Greece 1 (Masouras 44) drew with Kosovo 1 (Rahmani 76); Spain 1 (Morata 86) bt Sweden 0.

Group C: Croatia 1 (Kudryashov 81-0g) bt Russia 0; Malta 0 lost to Slovakia 6 (Rusnak 6, 16, Duda 8, 69, 80, De Marco 72); Slovenia 2 (Zajc 48, Gnezda Cerin 84) bt Cyprus 1 (Kakoulli 89).

Group D: Armenia 1 (Mkhitarian 59-pen) lost to Germany 4 (Havertz 15, Gundogan 45+4-pen, 50, J. Hofmann 64); Liechtenstein 0 lost to Romania 2 (Man 8, Bancu 87); North Macedonia 3 (Alioski 7, Elmas 65, 86) bt Iceland 1 (Thorsteinsson 54).

Mohit storms into compound semifinals

Abhishek too in last four assuring India of a place in the final

ARCHERY

SPORTS BUREAU DHAKA

Mohit Deswal stunned two World championship medallists, top-ranked Yong-hee Choi of Korea and No. 8 Amir Kazempour of Iran, on his way to the compound individual men's semifinals at the Asian archery championships here on Monday.

India was assured of a spot in the compound individual men's final as the experienced Abhishek Verma

set up a semifinal clash with Mohit.

In the recurve women's individual event, three Indians went down to their Korean rivals in the quarterfinals. World youth champion Komalika Bari, Madhu Vedwan and Ridhi lost to Su Jung Ryoo (6-4), Haejin Lim (6-0) and Yejin Oh (6-0) respectively.

Olympian Pravin Jadhav and National champion Parth Salunkhe also lost to Koreans Woo Tack Han (6-4) and Pil-Joong Kim (6-4) respectively in the recurve men's individual quarterfinals.

last-four.

Rishabh Yadav was edged out (145-145, 9-9) by Kazakh archer Sergey Khristich in the quarterfinals.

In the compound women's individual men's final as the experienced Abhishek Verma

set up a semifinal clash with Mohit.

Priya Gurjar lost to Korean Youohn Oh of Korea 145-144 in the quarters.

In the recurve women's individual event, three Indians went down to their Korean rivals in the quarterfinals. World youth champion Komalika Bari, Madhu Vedwan and Ridhi lost to Su Jung Ryoo (6-4), Haejin Lim (6-0) and Yejin Oh (6-0) respectively.

Olympian Pravin Jadhav and National champion Parth Salunkhe also lost to Koreans Woo Tack Han (6-4) and Pil-Joong Kim (6-4) respectively in the recurve men's individual quarterfinals.

Abhishek also showed his good form to get past Vietnamese Van Duc Trinh (149-146), compatriot Aman Saini (150-143) and Iranian Mohammad Saleh Palizban (149-147) to make it to the

Lalremrhami to lead in junior World Cup

Salima, Sharmila also named in squad

HOCKEY

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA

Forward Lalremrhami, who was part of the Indian women's hockey team that earned a creditable fourth place finish in the Tokyo Olympics, will lead an 18-member Indian side in the Junior World Cup to be held in Potchefstroom, South Africa, from December 5.

Two other Olympians, midfielder Salima Tete and forward Sharmila Devi, were also named in the squad, announced by Hockey India on Monday.

Preeti and Prabhleen Kaur have been chosen as alternate players who will get a chance if someone is ruled out due to an injury or COVID-19.

"With the experience from the senior team and some great young talent we will show the best. The team is excited as it has waited a long time to compete at the world stage," said chief coach Janneke Schopman.

India, placed in Pool C, begins its campaign on De-



Lalremrhami. ■ FILE PHOTO: AFP

cember 6 against Russia. It will take on defending champion Argentina on December 7 and Japan on December 9.

The squad: Bichu Devi Kharbam (GK), Khushboo (GK), Akshata Abaso Dhekale, Ishika Chaudhury (v-c), Priyanka, Marina Lalramnguihaki, Ajmina Kujur, Baljeet Kaur, Reet, Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, Salima Tete, Sharmila Devi, Lalremrhami (captain), Beauty Dungdung, Deepika, Mumtaz Khan, Sangita Kumari, Jiwan Kishori Toppo.

Anirudh to lead CFC

SPORTS REPORTER CHENNAI

Chennaiyin FC on Monday announced that Indian player Anirudh Thapa will be the captain of the two-time ISL champion for the 2021-22 season.

"I think not much has changed for me after being appointed the captain. I have been here for six years now and so it's not hard to understand what the club wants," said Thapa.

"I will still be a boy who loves football but I will also ensure that the team stays together on and off the field."

"And I will always protect my team and my players," he added.

Bhavani Devi receives Rafiq's accusation



Bhavani Devi. ■ GETTY IMAGES

team but I can confirm Azeem Rafiq's recollection of Michael Vaughan's comments to a group of us Asian players," Rashid said, according to ESPNcricinfo.

"I wanted to concentrate as much as possible on my cricket and to avoid distractions to the detriment of the

Competition intensifies on the circuit

Indore champion Manish Sureshkumar seeded fourth

TENNIS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The \$15,000 ITF tennis circuit's move to the DLTA Complex here comes as relief from all the travel for players.

The champion of the last

Text & Context

NEWS IN NUMBERS



Soaring high

12.54 % The pace at which India's wholesale price-based inflation rose in October on the back of rising fuel and manufacturing prices. Wholesale fuel prices rose 37.18% in October year-on-year compared with 24.81% in September, while manufactured product prices rose 12.04% compared with 11.41% in the previous month. Wholesale prices of food accelerated at a 3.06% pace in October from a year earlier compared with 1.14% in the previous month. REUTERS

Record seizures

1,900

cr, the value of drugs seized by the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) since 2016. This year's drug bust includes the contraband valued at ₹600 crore recovered during a single raid on Sunday in Morbi district. Since 2016, various drugs, including heroin, Mandrax, methamphetamine (or MD), charas and brown sugar, collectively weighing 2,242 kg and worth ₹1,923 crore in the global market, were seized. The ATS arrested more than 70 people during this period. PTI

Reopening skies

18

months after which India has allowed fully vaccinated foreign tourists to enter the country on regular commercial flights. This is the first time India has allowed tourists to enter on commercial flights since the lockdown was enforced on March 20. The move comes as new infections fall significantly and daily infections hover around 10,000. To boost the tourism and hospitality sector, which was affected by the pandemic, the government has planned to issue 500,000 free visas through next March. AP

Moving ahead

85

The number of spots jumped by Indian chess player Arjun Erigasi in the player rankings based on the ELO rating in Blitz chess between November 8 and 15. The 18-year old Grandmaster from Telangana is currently ranked 31st in the world in the format. He beat world number three Fabiano Caruana of the U.S. in one of his games last week. Among juniors (players aged 20 or less), he is currently ranked fifth in the world in the Blitz format, and he is placed 11th overall. He is the 54th grandmaster from India.

Freedom at last

6

the number of months American journalist Danny Fenster spent in jail in military-ruled Myanmar before he was freed on Monday. He is one of more than 100 journalists, media officials or publishers who have been detained since the military ousted the elected government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi in February. According to the United Nations, at least 126 journalists, media officials or publishers have been detained by the military since the takeover and 47 remain in custody, though not all have been charged. AP

EXPLAINER

Assessing the digital gap and learning losses

What are the losses faced by the students who have not been able to access remote education?

THE GIST

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

■ As the new academic year got underway in June and July 2020, schools were forced to begin remote education and the Centre promoted its digital education platform DIKSHA.

■ Over the last few months, independent surveys have shown that in 15 States only 8% of students in rural India were able to access online education, while at least 37% completely dropped out.

■ With 22 States and UTs having completely opened their schools, teachers and students are now grappling with the new ground reality of learning gaps.

The story so far: Schools are reopening for physical classes after 18 months of closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although a variety of efforts were taken by many schools and governments to reach them through remote education, surveys are now showing that only a minority of students was able to access lessons of any sort during the lockdown, and that widespread learning losses are likely.

What happened to India's schoolchildren when schools were shut down?

Almost 26 crore children were affected when 15 lakh schools across the country were shut down in mid-March 2020 as part of measures to curb the spread of COVID-19. At the time, most students were at the end of the academic year, in the middle of year-end

In August 2021, the Centre told the Lok Sabha that over three crore children across the country did not have any access to digital devices for education

examinations. During the summer, the government took steps to provide dry grain in lieu of the mid-day meals that 11 crore children would normally get at school, and to find a way to assess Class 10 and 12 students whose board examinations had been interrupted.

As the new academic year got underway in June and July, schools were forced to begin remote education with some schools jumping on the digital bandwagon. The Centre promoted its digital education platform DIKSHA, adding content for a variety of age groups and languages, and the NCERT prepared calendars to help teachers and parents cope with the new reality of education from home. Given that education is a State subject, there was no national road map for remote education. An Education Ministry report in mid-July said that DIKSHA had then scored 200 crore page hits and 60 lakh course completions since the lockdown. It added that in 25 States and UTs, non-interactive teaching methods such as TV



and radio lessons were prevalent. Only a small minority of children, mostly in affluent private schools, benefited from live, synchronous online classes.

Were children able to access remote education?

The Centre is yet to carry out any comprehensive assessment of the digital divide or its impact on remote education across the country. In August 2020, an initial survey of older students in Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas and a sample of CBSE-affiliated schools found that 80-90% of students depended on mobile phones, while the rest used laptops. Half the students did not even have access to textbooks. After a year without physical schooling, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education asked the Centre to compile a similar assessment of State government-run schools, but no report was made public. In August 2021, the Centre told the Lok Sabha that over three crore children

across the country did not have any access to digital devices for education, although the data was incomplete with reporting only from 24 States and Union Territories.

Over the last few months, independent surveys have shown that the ground situation is significantly worse. In September, a survey of almost 1,400 households in 15 States found that only 8% of students in rural India were able to access online education, while at least 37% have completely dropped out. The School Children's Online and Offline Learning (SCHOOL) survey by researchers working in coordination with economist Jean Drèze found that half the students did not have any access to their teachers. Among Dalit and Adivasi children, only 5% had access to online classes.

What learning losses have been caused by this lack of access to remote education?

With 22 States and UTs having completely

opened their schools, and partial reopening in 12 other States, teachers and students are now grappling with the new ground reality of learning gaps. Local surveys such as the National Coalition on the Education Emergency's survey in Karnataka show that more than three-fourths of teachers say their students are not at grade level.

The National Achievement Survey held last week, testing over a lakh students in their language, mathematics and environmental science competencies, is likely to provide a more comprehensive glimpse into the consequences of the learning interruptions of the last year and a half. Reports from test centres suggest that many Class 3 students were incapable of completing the test without support from teachers.

The Annual State of Education Report, conducted by Pratham, is also due to release the results of its own nationwide survey of rural education and learning outcomes this Wednesday.

Back to school: With schools reopening, a student being given sanitiser before boarding the school vehicle in Salem in Tamil Nadu on Monday, November 1, 2021. ■ THE HINDU

EXPLAINER

Building a multi-tier air defence system

What is the S-400 Triumf long-range air defence system? What are its capabilities that make it so important for India?

DINAKAR PERI

The story so far: India has contracted five S-400 Triumf (NATO designation SA-21 Growler) regiments from Russia under a \$5.43 billion deal signed in October 2018. Delivery was to begin in 24 months by the end of 2020 but was slightly delayed due to late payments as well as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eventually, both sides worked out a Rupee-Rouble exchange for payments, following which India paid a 15% advance amount, triggering the delivery cycle. The delivery is likely to be completed by April 2023 but the final timeline has not been stated.

What is the S-400 system?

S-400 Triumf is considered one of the world's most advanced air defence systems that can simultaneously track and neutralise a range of incoming objects spanning aircraft, missiles and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) over very long ranges.

As per the manufacturer Almaz-Antey State Corporation of Russia, the system can provide air interception against early warning aircraft, airborne missile strategic carriers, tactical and theatre ballistic missiles, medium-range ballistic



missiles, among others, in a dense radio countermeasure scenario. Given their capabilities, the S-400s have emerged as one of the most controversial arms exports of Russia and a major point of contention between Washington and Moscow.

According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) missile defence project, development of the S-400 began in 1993 but was delayed due to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Eventually, testing of the system began in 1999 and early 2000. It entered operational service in 2007 and in 2015, it was deployed in Syria by Russia to

protect its military assets and has also been deployed in Crimea.

The S-400 is fully mobile and each system has a 3D phased array acquisition radar that can track around 300 targets up to 600 km, has a command and control centre, automatic tracking and targeting systems, launchers and support vehicles. Each system has four different types of missiles for up to 40 km, 120 km, 250 km and maximum range of 400 km and up to 30 km altitude. The different ranges and varying altitudes create a layered air defence net. An S-400 battalion has eight missile launchers, typically with four missiles each.

Why is the S-400 important for India?

The S-400 fills important gaps in India's national air defence network and would complement India's indigenous Ballistic Missile Defence system developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation and create a multi-tier air defence over the country.

Indian Air Force (IAF) officials have stated that the S-400 would be seamlessly integrated into the country's existing air defence network. Given its long range, it means that if deployed towards the Western borders, the system can track movements of Pakistan Air Force aircraft as soon as they take off from their bases. For the IAF, the high-end technology S-400 would give a fillip and make up for its failing fighter aircraft squadrons in the medium term. Former IAF chief Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa had on several occasions termed the S-400 air defence systems and Rafale fighter jets as "game-changers" for the IAF.

What is the way forward?

The S-400 has emerged as a major flashpoint between Russia and the U.S., and Washington has repeatedly conveyed its displeasure to New Delhi and on several occasions asked India to cancel it,

offering advanced U.S. air defence systems instead. With delivery beginning, India faces the prospect of U.S. sanctions under CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act), on which the Biden administration has not conveyed a clear signal that it would give a waiver. The issue is expected to top discussions at the India-U.S. 2+2 ministerial dialogue scheduled to be held in early December.

India has a series of big-ticket high-tech deals lined up with both Russia and the U.S. and it will be a tightrope walk for New Delhi to balance the two.

Last month, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy R. Sherman warned of a hard decision in case India took delivery of the S-400. Referring to the S-400 as "dangerous", Ms. Sherman indicated that a decision on imposing sanctions under CAATSA would be taken by Mr. Biden. However, later, three Republican Senators moved a Bill to exempt India from possible sanctions.

Defence trade apart, India and the U.S. are members of the Quad grouping and regional efforts, which would also weigh in on any decision to impose sanctions.

Russia is also developing an advanced S-500 air defence system, and has stated that it would be offered to India.

THE GIST

■ Developed by Russia, the S-400 Triumf is considered one of the world's most advanced air defence systems that can simultaneously track and neutralise a range of incoming objects spanning aircraft, missiles and UAVs over very long ranges.

■ The S-400 will complement India's indigenous Ballistic Missile Defence system developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation.

■ However, with the delivery of this system, India faces the prospect of U.S. sanctions under CAATSA as it is a major flashpoint between Russia and the U.S.

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Larger than life: Liverpool's Mohamed Salah celebrates a goal with Sadio Mane on November 3, 2021. ■ ACTION IMAGES VIA REUTERS



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Through the smog screen

Delhi's residents must take the blame for the city's alarming pollution levels

AMITANGSHU ACHARYA &
SUNDERRAJAN KRISHNAN

On Monday, the Supreme court stated that urban factors such as construction activities, industry, vehicular exhaust and road dust were actually the major causes of pollution in the capital and not farmers' stubble burning. In this article from December 2017, Amitangshu Acharya and Sunderajan Krishnan argue how Delhi's excessive consumption habits are the root cause for the receding air quality. Edited excerpts:

In Delhi, the desolation of smog plays out every year with immaculate regularity. Anti-corruption rallies in 2011 may have brought thousands of people out on the streets of Delhi but anti-pollution activism has largely been home-based. WhatsApp has been preferred over popular venues like Ramlila Maidan or Jantar Mantar.

Significant sections of recent reportage on Delhi's air pollution have trained their guns on paddy stalk burning in Punjab and Haryana, positioning it as a key contributor to the crisis. Some have pinned the blame on the Green Revolution and the rampant use of tubewells which converted Punjab to a paddy-growing landscape. Others have pointed at the recent success of the Punjab Preservation of Subsoil Water Act, 2009. Actions of farmers are often a reaction to state policy, indicating lack of choice rather than a wilful act of environmental vandalism.

An IIT report

But the same cannot be said about the denizens of Delhi. A 334-page India Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur report published in 2016 cites municipal solid waste burning and vehicular pollution as critical contributors of air pollution apart from crop residue burning. The report clearly states that if municipal solid waste burning was stopped and waste management upgraded, it would improve Delhi's air quality by 100%. Delhi's air remains polluted throughout the year because of municipal solid waste burning and vehicular pollution. Crop residue burning only tips the scales in favour of a catastrophe.

Delhi, a city of 18.6 million, has approximately 10 million cars on its streets, owned by only 15%-20% of its population. Moreover, approximately 190-246 tonnes of municipal solid waste is burnt every day in Delhi. However, Delhites and civic authorities have both assiduously avoided segregating waste at source. Choice-less farmers in Punjab are being asked to manage 15 million tonnes of paddy stalk sustainably. But no one is asking residents of Delhi to do the simple thing of keeping two separate waste bins at home. On the contrary, in an effort to protect themselves from a pollution crisis, Delhites have tried to buy their way out of it. The sale of household air purifiers and steroid inhalers has skyrocketed. The urban elite of Delhi has always succeeded in keeping attention away from their consumption.

Radical measures needed

In the first leg of Delhi's clean air struggle almost two decades ago, the Supreme Court forced the government to introduce new standards for fuel and emissions, but the successful shift to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) was restricted to auto-rickshaws and public transport buses.

In a paradox that truly defines India, farmers are being goaded by policies to provide food security, ensure groundwater conservation, and now, protect Delhi from pollution, while Delhi elites are required to do nothing. Delhi needs radical policies – increased taxation on sale of private vehicles, clampdown on illegal parking and making a garage a pre-requisite for car purchase.

ABSTRACT

An impact beyond the football pitch

How Mohamed Salah is influencing public perceptions about Muslims and Islam in general

THE GIST

SRINIVASAN RAMANI

■ In a paper in the *APSR*, Alrababa'h et al argues that Salah's heroics for Liverpool had not just an impact on the club's footballing fortunes but also reduced hate crimes in the Liverpool area by an estimated 16%.

■ The findings from the paper went on to support the "parasocial contact hypothesis" which means that mediated contact with celebrities or characters from out-groups has the potential to reduce prejudice toward the out-group as a whole.

This is how a popular chant from Liverpool F.C. fans went during February 2018. During that season, the club made its march towards success. Mohamed Salah, the 'inside forward' who plays for the club and has used his stupendous dribbling, finishing and speed skills to score goals by the bountiful, was a key component of the squad and his performance was a major reason for the club's extended success. Salah is an Egyptian footballer (he captains their national team) and his talent flowered in a prior stint at Serie A club Roma before entrenching himself as the lynchpin of Liverpool and a favourite of the scousers.

Reducing hate crimes

Now, a paper in the *American Political Science Review (APSR)* by Alrababa'h et al goes on to argue that Salah's heroics for Liverpool had an impact not just on the club's footballing fortunes but reduced hate crimes in the Liverpool area by an estimated 16% compared to a situation where he had not been signed by the club. The paper based these estimations on data from hate crime reports throughout England. The authors also looked at 15 million tweets from British football fans and found that Liverpool F.C. fans halved their rates (from 7.3% to 3.8% of tweets) of posting anti-Muslim tweets relative to other top-flight clubs' fans.

The authors also carried out a survey of 8,060 Liverpool F.C. fans to clearly test how and

whether exposure to Mohamed Salah, who portrays himself as a visibly Muslim player by performing the Muslim prayer (sujood) after scoring goals, might lead to tolerance towards Muslims. Their results suggest that Salah's Muslim identity and its reckoning for the fans reduced prejudice for Muslims in general. Specifically, the authors also found that "priming respondents with information about Salah's religious practices boosted the belief that Islam is compatible with British values by about 5 percentage points, compared to the baseline rate of 18% among [a] control group".

The parasocial contact hypothesis

The findings went on to support the 'parasocial contact hypothesis' – the idea that mediated contact with celebrities or characters from out-groups has the potential to reduce prejudice towards the out-group as a whole. While most prior research has tried to test this thesis in

Results from the survey suggest that Salah's Muslim identity and its reckoning for the fans reduced prejudice for Muslims in general.

laboratory and survey-based experiments, the authors claim that their attempt in testing this hypothesis was done in a real-world test with "causal purchase". 'Parasocial contact' is a different concept than just 'inter-group contact' and its impact on prejudice. The 'contact hypothesis' argues that personal contact across social/ community divides can reduce prejudice if "that contact is positive, endorsed by communal authorities, egalitarian, and involves cooperating to achieve a common goal". The authors quote several studies that justify this thesis.

In the case of India, a recent paper in the journal *Studies in Indian Politics* by Asha Venugopalan titled, 'The Effect of Affect: Friendship, Education and Prejudice in India' (November 2020), used a survey to indicate that among Hindus, having a Muslim friend is

significantly correlated with a more positive outlook towards the Muslim community, but education does not reduce prejudice.

The authors of the *APSR* paper argue that the potential of intergroup contact, while promising, is "limited by a lack of opportunities for such contact", a finding that is seen in Venugopalan's work as well.

Positive media coverage

Schiappa et al in 2005 in a paper titled 'The Parasocial Contact Hypothesis', in *Communication Monographs*, argued that "mediated contact with members of minority groups has the potential to reduce prejudice toward that group". Alrababa'h et al chose to test this hypothesis with Mo Salah's impact because "Salah meets the three hypothesized criteria for parasocial contact to reduce prejudice - positivity, repeated exposure, and salient out-group identity".

The results of the statistical exercise that tests the impact of Salah's fame on hate crimes in Liverpool compel the authors to find evidence for the 'parasocial contact hypothesis'. The main takeaway is that "positive and sustained exposure to celebrities should reduce prejudice when the celebrity's group identity is salient". This is incumbent upon positive media coverage – something that characterised Salah's coverage in the British press and his success as a footballer (and his team's success). Besides, the authors argue that the fact that Salah, while wearing his identity on his sleeve, also chooses to be relatively silent on political issues could be a factor for his broad-based appeal.

This is an important paper because it emphasises, conditionally, that positive coverage of a well-known public figure from a minority group and the abilities of that individual can go a long way in establishing tolerance for the belief systems of that minority group in general. Considering that in India, mass 'group contact' and socialisation remain largely elusive 'parasocial contact' by effective media coverage could be one way to reduce prejudice.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Last month, Tanzanian novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah won the Nobel Prize for Literature. How well do you know the Literature Laureates?

1 This winner first accepted the Prize he was awarded in 1958 but was later forced to decline it by the Soviet authorities. Name him.

2 Between 1945 and 1953, this person was nominated 21 times for the Literature Prize and twice for the Peace Prize. Who was he and what did he finally win?

3 This winner aroused controversy for his support of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, who was accused of war crimes. He even attended the President's funeral. Who is he?

4 Two people have won the Nobel Prize for Literature as well as an Academy Award. One is Bob Dylan. Name the other.

5 This winner's reaction to being awarded the Prize recently went viral on social media. She said, "I've won all the bloody prizes in Europe, every bloody one, so I'm delighted to win them all. It's a royal flush." Name this person who is also the oldest winner of the Literature Prize.

6 In 2004, this Prize winner's citation and medal were stolen and never recovered. Who is he?



◀ This Literature Prize winner was jailed twice for his political activism – first for opposing U.S. entry into World War I and later for taking part in an anti-nuclear demonstration. He is often compared to Voltaire. His grandfather was the Prime Minister of the U.K. Who is the man in this commemorative stamp of 1972? ▶

Please send in your answers to the dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1.Intel 4004, 2.Mohamed M. Atalla, 3.Vinod Dham, 4.Bedabrata Pain, Chittagong, 5.Moore's Law (after Gordon Moore), 6.Jack Kilby

Early Birds: Mohammad Kiron Karim| Mahmood Lebbai| Sidhant Saurav| Gayathri BJ Qaiser Mobin

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