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IN BRIEF



Not increasing curbs to protect jobs: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI

There is no plan to impose a lockdown in the Capital and the Delhi government is not increasing restrictions in order to protect the livelihood of people, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Sunday.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

CAA rules not notified as third deadline ends

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs did not notify the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, rules till Sunday, the third extended deadline after the Act was passed. The extension had been sought to frame the rules.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8



EDUCATION PLUS ▶ PAGE 2

NEET-PG counselling from January 12: Centre

Supreme Court order paves the way for process to begin

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Postgraduate) counselling will begin from January 12, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Sunday.

NEET-PG is a qualifying and ranking examination for postgraduate medical courses in government or private medical colleges. The Supreme Court on January 7, in an interim order, allowed resumption of counselling for NEET-PG admissions for 2021-22 while upholding the validity of 27% Other Backward Classes (OBC) and 10% Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) quota.

Results of the NEET-PG were declared in the last week of September 2021, following which students had been waiting for the counselling to begin for nearly 45,000 postgraduate seats. The process was stalled after the Health Ministry's proposal to reserve seats for EWS was challenged in court.

C The NEET-PG counselling is being started by the Medical Counselling Committee from January 12, 2022. This will give more strength to the country in the fight against Corona. My best wishes to all the candidates

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA,
Union Health Minister

Last month, resident doctors of various medical colleges held protests and boycotted work demanding speeding up of the counselling.

The Health Minister tweeted on Sunday: "As assured by the Ministry of Health to the resident doctors, following the order of the Supreme Court, the NEET-PG counselling is being started by the Medical Counselling Committee from January 12, 2022. This will give more strength to the country in the fight against Corona. My best wishes to all the candidates."

The NEET-PG was held on



September 11, 2021, after having been rescheduled twice in January and April last year. The counselling was postponed due to a petition in the Supreme Court. The plea challenged the new OBC and EWS reservation policy announced by the Central government and the Medical Counselling Committee (MCC).

Now, there will be 27% reservation in undergraduate and postgraduate medical seats of the all India quota. For the EWS, 10% reservation has been permitted for this year.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Amarinder Singh dismisses challenge from Congress, AAP

He blames Punjab govt. for security lapse during PM's visit

+ VIKAS VASUDEVKA
CHANDIGARH

With Punjab Assembly election scheduled for February 14, former Chief Minister and chief of nascent Punjab Lok Congress Captain Amarinder Singh (ret'd.), in an exclusive interview to *The Hindu* dismissed any challenge from opponents.

The political veteran of over five decades said while the key political parties are nowhere in the reckoning, the farmers, if they contest, will lose credibility.

Captain Singh asserted that while the Congress is in a state of continuous civil war, the Shiromani Akali Dal led by 'Badals' is nowhere in the picture, and the Aam



leadership is opposed to participating in elections," he added.

Alleging that the ruling Congress government in Punjab is scared of his alliance, he said the State government had sponsored protests and disruption during the recent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which was a grave security lapse.

"It was not actually the farmers' protest. It was the State government-sponsored disruption. They were quite wary of the Prime Minister's Ferozepur rally fearing that this will build up our campaign," he said.

INTRODUCTION ▶ PAGE 9

+

Bihar man who took 11 jabs booked

AMARNATH TEWARI
PATNA

Days after an octogenarian from Madhepura district of Bihar claimed to have taken 11 doses of COVID-19 vaccine, he was booked for cheating under various sections of the Indian Penal Code.

An FIR was filed against Brahmadeo Mandal, 84, at the Puraini police station in Madhepura district on Saturday on a complaint filed by District Medical Officer Vinay Krishna Prasad.

He was booked under Sections 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 419 (cheating by personation) and 420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal Code. "We are investigating the case. Mr. Mandal is likely to be arrested soon," Dipak Chandra Das, the Puraini police station in-charge, said.

Mr. Mandal earlier said he had taken the jabs in Madhepura, Khagaria and Bhagalpur districts using his Aadhaar and voter ID cards. "I benefited a lot from vaccines as I got relief from my back and waist pain. Everyone should get the vaccine," he said.



Together for a cause: The residents of 10 villages in eastern Assam's Charaideo district have joined hands to protect the Chala Reserve Forest. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

do something about it," Pyoseng Chowlu, secretary of Chala Village Sanctuary Conservation Society, told *The Hindu*.

The society was formed a month after that meeting, where the 683.173-hectare reserve forest under the Sivasagar Forest Division was declared as the Chala Village Sanctuary. A forest protection party comprising 22 members from the villages was also constituted to help the understaffed Forest Department keep loggers

and poachers off.

Forest protection party "We have only three staff to manage Chala and only one of them is permanent. The village sanctuary initiative, albeit non-notified, has yielded some green soldiers who are helping us check tree felling," Dhimangshu Saikia, the Forest Division's Ranger, said.

Each member of the forest protection party has been given an identity card to guard the green space

India adds 1.79 lakh COVID-19 cases

Infections surge in big cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Chennai

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The number of COVID-19 cases continued to rise on Sunday, with 1,79,339 new infections, taking the total number of active patients in India to over seven lakh. The steep rise in the past week was primarily due to the case surge in urban centres such as Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Chennai.

Between January 4 and 8, Mumbai recorded more than 86,000 cases, a 150% increase in infections compared to the week before. Delhi recorded about 68,000 new cases, a 350% rise. Bengaluru registered close to 24,000 cases, a 400% increase. In the same period, Chennai saw 17,247 infections, a 350% increase compared to the past week.

Notably, the test positivity rate crossed the 10% mark in the country. That is, every 100 tests now yield 10 positive cases.

The numbers are based on State bulletins released until 11.30 p.m. on Sunday. Ladakh, Lakshadweep and Tripura had not yet released

P1: Dec. 1-7, 2021, P2: Dec. 8-14, P3 to P5: Dec. 15 - Jan. 3, P6: Jan. 4-8, 2022

| City | P1 | P2 | P3 | P4 | P5 | P6 |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| Mumbai | 1,239 | 1,619 | 1,799 | 4,457 | 34,661 | 86,689 |
| Delhi | 464 | 350 | 540 | 1,395 | 14,537 | 68,759 |
| Kolkata | 999 | 1,248 | 1,227 | 1,398 | 12,359 | 32,319 |
| Thane | 292 | 817 | 748 | 1,236 | 8,130 | 35,268 |
| Bengaluru | 1,208 | 1,365 | 1,252 | 1,451 | 4,664 | 23,907 |
| Pune | 851 | 1,368 | 1,352 | 1,594 | 4,071 | 16,977 |
| Thiruvananthapuram | 4,715 | 4,874 | 4,352 | 3,360 | 3,364 | 4,628 |
| Chennai | 723 | 824 | 878 | 1,054 | 3,793 | 17,247 |
| Ernakulam | 4,238 | 4,547 | 3,715 | 2,679 | 3,147 | 4,950 |
| North 24 Parganas | 663 | 708 | 704 | 566 | 3,797 | 12,895 |

data for the day.

Andhra Pradesh reported 1,257 COVID-19 infections and two deaths in the 24 hours ending Sunday morning. The single-day tally crossed 1,000 for the first time in 101 days since October 1, 2021. At 3.27%, the positivity rate was also the highest in the past 180 days. The number of active cases tripled in just five days from 1,848 on January 5 to 4,774 on Sunday.

The numbers are based on State bulletins released until 11.30 p.m. on Sunday. Ladakh, Lakshadweep and Tripura had not yet released

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

PM for non-stop research to manage the pandemic

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while reviewing the measures being taken to counter the steep surge in COVID-19 infections, on Sunday stressed the importance of non-stop scientific research in testing, vaccines and pharmacological interventions, including

genome sequencing, to deal with the evolving virus.

At the meeting, Mr. Modi directed officials to ensure adequate health infrastructure at the district level; further accelerate the vaccination for adolescents; and leverage tele-medicine platforms to provide help to people in remote areas.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Partial relief for Air India in Devas case

JAGRITI CHANDRA

NEW DELHI

In partial relief for India, a court in Canada has said that investors of Devas Multimedia can seize only 50% of Air India's assets held by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). It has also quashed the order permitting seizure of funds belonging to the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

Earlier, in two separate orders on November 24 and December 21, Devas shareholders had received permission from the Quebec Superior Court to seize assets of AAI and AI held by IATA over two arbitration awards it won for wrongful cancellation of its deal with ISRO's arm, Antrix, in 2011.

FULL REPORT ▶ PAGE 8

Steering for action



Testing the waters: An indigenously built aircraft carrier heads for a new round of sea trials in Kochi on Sunday. It is scheduled to be commissioned as INS Vikrant later this year. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT (REPORT ON PAGE 10)

C The village sanctuary initiative, albeit non-notified, has yielded some green soldiers who are helping us check tree felling

DHIMANGSHU SAIKIA
Ranger, Sivasagar Forest Division

Prachurjya Shyam, the society's executive member, said.

The Chala Reserve Forest is about 100 metres above sea level. But it houses a few orchids that are usually found in higher altitudes.

Orchid altitude mystery "We are documenting the plants and herbs of our village sanctuary. They include the now rare *Gnetum gnemon*, a nutrient-rich plant locals have consumed for ages," Mr. Chowlu said.

But plant experts engaged by the society have found it intriguing that the sanctuary sustains the *Tainia penangiana*, an orchid found at altitudes beyond 500 metres.

The society has been conducting periodic awareness campaigns to underscore the need for conserving such orchids and the plants that yielded the villagers' dyes.

Their initiative has earned the sponsorship of organisations such as the World Wide Fund for Nature-India.

Indore techie behind 'Sulli Deals' app arrested

Accused sent to 4-day police custody

ARNABJIT SUR

NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Saturday arrested Aumkareshwar Thakur, a 25-year-old web designer from Madhya Pradesh's Indore, for being the alleged developer of the abusive 'Sulli Deals' app.

The arrest comes over five months after the app held an 'auction' of Muslim women online, using and morphing photographs without permission, and FIRs were lodged against those responsible in Delhi and Noida.

Police said Thakur, who has a BCA degree, created the app aimed at "defaming and trolling Muslim women". During preliminary interrogation, Thakur admitted that he was the member of a trad-group (Trad-mahasabha) on Twitter and an idea was shared on it to "defame and troll Muslim ladies", officials said.

Thakur was produced before a Delhi court late

Western disturbance brings more showers to the Capital

Air quality improves to 'satisfactory' category

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Capital continued to receive showers on Sunday under the influence of an intense western disturbance, bringing 5.4 mm of rainfall during the day.

The overcast conditions kept the maximum temperature in the city at 15 degrees Celsius, which is four degrees below normal. The minimum temperature settled at 13.8 degrees Celsius, which is seven degrees warmer than normal.

The IMD has forecast clear skies on Monday and a gradual fall in the minimum temperature. The forecast reads "mainly clear sky with moderate fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be around 17 and nine degrees respectively".

On Saturday, the Capital recorded its highest rainfall in a day for January in 22 years. The region has been



Biting cold: People warming up near a fire on a cold Sunday afternoon in the city. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

under the influence of two back-to-back western disturbances that have been active since January 5.

The air quality was in the "satisfactory" category with an average 24-hour AQI of 69. The AQI bulletin and forecast by the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Govt. of India, said good rainfall activity, relatively stronger winds and reduced vehicular emissions led to significant improvement in air quality.

Not upping curbs to protect livelihood: CM

DDMA meeting today to decide on action plan; COVID patients on ventilator support rise from 27 to 44 in 24 hours

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

There is no plan to impose a lockdown in the Capital and the Delhi government will not need to implement one if people wear masks and follow COVID protocols, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Sunday.

The statement came on a day when the Capital recorded 17 deaths and 22,751 new cases. However, a meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority will be held on Monday to review the COVID situation with experts deciding the next course of action.

Need to be responsible
In his first appearance after recovering from COVID-19, Mr. Kejriwal said, "We don't want to impose a lockdown. The restric-



Calm and quiet: Khan Market remains closed due to the weekend curfew on Sunday. ■ V.V. KRISHNAN

tions imposed are only to curb the spread. We are not heightening restrictions to protect livelihood of the masses." He added that there was no need to be scared of COVID but there

was a need to be responsible and always wear a mask and maintain social distancing.

According to Sunday's health bulletin, 96,678 tests were conducted with a test positivity rate

of 23.53%. The Capital has 60,733 active cases out of whom 35,714 are in home isolation and 1,618 are in hospitals.

The number of new cases reported on Sunday was the highest since May 1 last year when the city recorded 25,219 cases with a positivity rate of 31.61%.

The data also show the number of COVID-19 patients on ventilator rising from 27 to 44 over a period of 24 hours.

'Lower death rate'

Despite the rise in deaths from seven reported on Saturday to 17 on Sunday, Mr. Kejriwal said Delhi is seeing a lower death rate and lower hospitalisation rate than the last wave.

Drawing a comparison, he said on May 7 last year, 20,000 cases were recorded and 341

deaths were reported whereas on January 8 with the same number of cases, seven deaths were reported.

He said around 20,000 beds were occupied on May 7 but on Saturday, only 1,500 beds were occupied for the same number of cases.

"Our motive of illustrating the situation in terms of data is to reduce panic to a minimum but not to make people irresponsible. There is no need to be scared but you cannot stop wearing masks thinking it is mild," Mr. Kejriwal said.

Appealing to the people not to step out unless they have to, he said the government is looking to see the wave through with least number of curbs so that it does not hamper the earning of anyone's daily bread.

FIR cannot be quashed on the basis of settlement between parties: HC

Rape is not an act against individual but an offence against society'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

An FIR for rape cannot be quashed on the basis of settlement between the woman and the man and their subsequent marriage as the same does not waive the offence, the Delhi High Court has ruled.

"Act of rape is not an act against individual but an offence against society," Justice Rajnish Bhatnagar said, while rejecting the plea of a man, an officer in the Customs here. The plea sought to quash an FIR for rape registered against him as he has now married the victim.

"By simply entering into a compromise, charges cannot be said to have been mitigated or that the allegations levelled by the respondent no. 2 [woman] regarding the alleged offence lost its gravity by any means," Justice Bhatnagar said.

The case arises from a complaint filed by the woman in June last year at Patparganj police sta-



tion in which she stated that she came in contact with the accused through a popular matrimonial website.

She stated that the accused introduced himself as unmarried and an officer in the Customs, concealing the fact regarding his first love marriage and that his first wife ended her life for which a case was going on in the court.

She also gave history of sexual assault in the form of intercourse without her consent by the accused. She said her request to the accused to meet her parents was

turned down as he "asked for more time to understand each other".

The woman said the accused also told her that he would marry her in Arya Samaj Mandir, but later on made excuses that the mandir was closed. Later, the accused asked for one month's time to solemnise the marriage, but then he stopped attending the phone calls, the woman had complained.

On April 14 last year, the woman lodged a complaint against the accused at the National Commission for Women, which reached Mahila Thana in Faridabad. However, on June 21, 2021, the accused came to the police station and made a promise to marry her. Following this, she withdrew her complaint.

Four days later, when the woman went to the office of the accused to talk to him, he allegedly molested her, prompting her to register the current FIR at the local police station here.

Fill vacancies in consumer courts, HC tells Delhi govt.

It also asks for providing basic amenities

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The president submitted that for effective functioning of the consumer court, there was an urgent need to fill the existing vacancies of stenographers, data entry operators, senior assistant UDC and Class IV personnel. In addition, the president sought further staff and infrastructure requirements.

After perusing the report, Justice Singh said the huge backlog of cases in the consumer forum could be because of the unfilled vacancies.

The court also directed the Principal Secretary-cum-Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Affairs to coordinate with Justice Sangita Dhingra Sehgal (retd.) and president of the State Consumer Redressal Forum to ascertain the vacancies across the State and district consumer courts here.

| DETAILS OF VACANCIES | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----|-----|-----|-----|-------|--------------|--------------|------|--------------|--------------------|
| POST | Category | | | | | | | | | | |
| | UR | SC | ST | OBC | EWS | Total | Category (a) | Category (b) | PWD* | Category (c) | Category (d) & (e) |
| Stenographer Under Regional Office, Delhi | 02 | 01 | Nil | Nil | Nil | 03 | 01 | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Stenographer Under Directorate (Medical) Delhi | 05 | 01 | 01 | 02 | Nil | 09 | 01 | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil |

SCALE OF PAY
Stenographer Pay Level – 4 (Rs. 25,500-81,100) as per 7th Central Pay Commission.
In addition to Pay they will also be eligible for DA, HRA and Transport Allowance and other allowances as per rules in force from time to time.

ESSENTIAL EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER QUALIFICATIONS
1. 12th class pass or equivalent from a recognized Board or University.
2. Skill Test Norms:
Dictation: 10 Minutes @ 80 words per minute.
Transcription (Only on computers): 50 minutes (English), 65 minutes (Hindi).

AGE LIMIT
Stenographer Between 18 to 27 years as on the closing date for receipt of applications i.e. 15th February, 2022.

Note: Upper age limit is relaxable for persons belonging to reserved categories i.e. SC/ST/OBC/PWD/Ex-Servicemen, for ESIC Employees/Government Servants and for other categories of persons in accordance with the instructions and orders of Govt. of India issued from time to time.

The detailed advertisement is available on the website of the ESIC www.esic.nic.in/recruitment. The candidates willing to apply for above posts are advised to refer to the detailed advertisement regarding eligibility criteria, application fee etc. The link for submission of online application will be available on ESIC website www.esic.nic.in on 15th January, 2022.

The Closing Date for submission of Online Application through ESIC website www.esic.nic.in is 15th February, 2022.

Additional Commissioner & Regional Director

THE HINDU

EDUCATION PLUS

GET THE EDGE

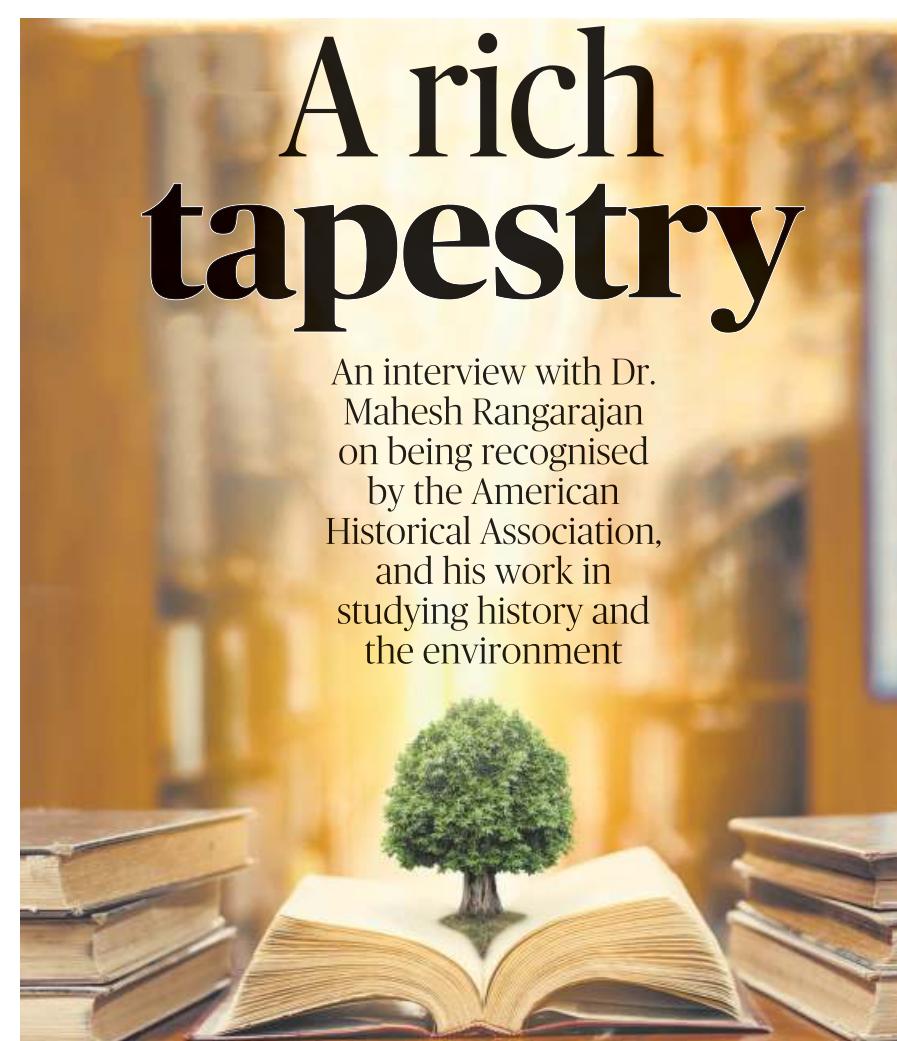
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were pioneers of environmental history as was Professor Ramachandra Guha.

I think, as is to be expected, my focus and sources and approach differ. As for U.S. historians, this is not recognition of an individual's work alone but much more of a distinctive contribution by an array of scholars working in India's rich tapestry of ecologies and histories.

Could you highlight aspects of your work, which have been focused upon by the American Historical Association?

I would imagine there are twin dimensions of the long-term British imperial impacts on waters and land, the living biota and many life forms. The other is how a democracy grapples not only with equity among humans but also a peace with nature. My work spans mostly the late 19th century to the present. Animals are central as icons but also in terms of everyday life. To put it in a line – from the heyday of tiger shikar and kheddahs to trap elephants to our own era of biosphere reserves. It is also a transition from mostly reviling to critically respecting those who hunt



An interview with Dr. Mahesh Rangarajan on being recognised by the American Historical Association, and his work in studying history and the environment

or fish or herd or farm for a living.

You have said that "the scholarship of history is not new in India, but environmental issues have gained momentum in the last few decades". Could you elaborate on this, especially in the context of your work?

The initial wave of work was on movements of the disadvantaged such as forest rights or the dam displaced. Over three de-

cades, the scope has grown from long histories such as Arupjyoti Saikia on the Brahmaputra to micro studies like Annu Jalais on the Sunderbans people who were displaced by a tiger reserve.

The story is not merely of the material environment but how that intertwines with how humans endow nature with multiple meanings. The fate of Chennai's wa-

terside, the scope has grown from long histories such as Arupjyoti Saikia on the Brahmaputra to micro studies like Annu Jalais on the Sunderbans people who were displaced by a tiger reserve.

For a student of history, the past is a vital resource to shape the future. What about the teaching of history, at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education in India?

My own experience is

where it should ideally go hand-in-hand with research. In Delhi University, our department helped design a historically sensitive course. I also edited *Environmental Issues in India: A Reader*. At Ashoka, we integrated new themes like animal histories as electives. In Krea, the very notion of environmental studies is informed by history or sociology as much as science.

In a nutshell, it is knowledge as if nature mattered and history as if the environment mattered. Ideas like the so-called conquest of nature arise at certain points of history. To transcend them, revisiting how we are trained to think is a good place to begin anew.

Digital online resources have been seen as a way to increase the 'possibilities of historians'. Your comments in this context?

Astonishing sources are now available from the British Library and the Hermitage of Leningrad to our own National Archives and the amazing Bikarni archives of Rajasthan State. Material remains as shown by Kathleen Morrison or Shanti Pappu al-

so matter enormously. The question is how to draw on such materials and make coherent sense of them. Asking 'how', 'when' and 'why' are the core challenges of the serious student of history and this quest can be enriched and renewed. It does call for more critical faculty and rigour in enquiry. The horizons are set to broaden in new ways.

Read the full interview at www.thehindu.co.in/education

SCHOLARSHIPS

■ Aditya Birla Capital COVID Scholarship Programme

ELIGIBILITY: Open to Indian students who have lost their parent(s) due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are studying in school or undergraduate (general and professional) courses.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: Fixed one-time scholarship up to ₹60,000

DEADLINE: January 31

APPLICATION: Online

b4s.in/edge/ABCC1

■ DYSL-AI Bengaluru Junior Research Fellowship

ELIGIBILITY: Open to candidates below 28 years and

hold a B.E/B.Tech. degree in Computer Science/Computer Science Engineering/Information Technology with CSIR-UGC (NET)/ GATE qualification OR a postgraduate degree in professional course (M.E./M.Tech.) from AICTE accredited Institute/University.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: ₹31,000 per month plus HRA

DEADLINE: January 16

APPLICATION: Online and Offline application by post to The Director, DRDO Young Scientist Lab-Artificial Intelligence Agency Dr. Raja Ramanan Complex, Raj Bhavan Circle, High Grounds, Bengaluru-560001

b4s.in/edge/ABJ6

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

■ Ph.D. (Full-time/Part-time) Admission Notification

Online Applications are invited for April 2022 Session from eligible candidates for admission to Ph.D. (Full-time and Part-time). Complete details of 12 constituent Faculties and Departments which offer Ph.D. list of Guides etc., can be downloaded from www.sriramachandra.edu.in

Admission through Online Entrance Examination and Interview

a) Full-Time : Selected candidates will be awarded Founder-Chancellor Shri N.P.Ramasamy Udaya Research Stipendary Fellowship for Ph.D.
b) Part-Time : Internal and External candidates will be admitted on non-stipendary basis only.

Admission through Counselling

Full-Time : Candidates with UGC/CSIR/ICMR/DBT/DST/NET/JRF/AICTE-GATE/IAS/UGC/INSPIRE Fellowship or JRF/SRF fellows in ongoing funded research projects in this Deemed University will be called directly for counselling and admission.

Foreign Nationals / NRI Admissions

Foreign Nationals/NRI Candidates should submit Online Applications through International Relations Office - email: admissions.international@sriramachandra.edu.in

IMPORTANT DATES

Last date for submission of online application: 02.02.2022 (Wednesday)

Date & Time of Online Entrance Examination: 22.02.2022 (Tuesday) 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Date of Interview

Time slot details will be intimated by email in due course

For more details about eligibility, online application form, prospectus, entrance examination and interview: please visit www.sriramachandra.edu.in

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ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

Sectarian vigilantism in recent months has sullied Gurugram's reputation as one of the favoured Indian destinations for iconic global companies. The millennium city, known as Gurgaon until 2016, is changing, albeit not for everything good.

Its rise as the fastest growing Information Technology and financial hub after Bengaluru and Mumbai with the third highest per capita income in the country and hosting 250 Fortune 500 companies was impressive as its rising skyline. But roving vigilantes and partisan governance may be chipping away at its glory now.

Right-wing vigilantism

Of late, Gurugram has been making headlines for all the wrong reasons that include right-wing groups opposing Friday Namaz in open public spaces and a lingering threat of confrontation between the two communities every week. Disruption of a Christmas carnival in a private school in Pataudi area on Christmas eve by a Hindu mob was another low for the cosmopolitan city. The right-wing Hindu outfits also held a mahapanchayat in Pataudi last year and openly called for violence against the religious minority.

Based on a complaint by a BJP functionary last month and the back lash on social media, stand-up comedian Munawar Faruqui was dropped from a three-day event in December.

During Navaratri, the vigilante mobs roam the city forcing the meat shop owners to down their shutters. It has become an annual ritual while the civic authority has banned meat on Tuesdays. The local residents have accused the government of imposing its agenda on the citizens instead of taking appropriate action.

"Any confrontation sets back the industry and such incidents defile the city's image and hurt business sentiments," said Animesh Saxena, general-secretary, Garments Exporters and Manufacturers Association. The apparel industry is the largest in Gurugram in terms of manpower and more than half of the employees are Muslims. Mr. Saxena said, the confrontations wit-



Residents of Sector 47 holding placards and raising slogans against the offering of namaz in the open in their area. ■ FILE PHOTO ASHOK KUMAR

Millennium city losing its sheen

Gurugram's reputation as an investment destination is at stake over growing vigilantism, feel industry insiders

nessed recently has created a sense of "unease and unrest". He added the business community was not too worried yet because there were no major incidents of violence and the administration and the police kept the situation more or less under control. However, he was apprehensive about "undercurrents". "It might not be visible now but could have an impact in the long run," he added.

Indifferent authorities

Gurugram is not just the new business capital for start-ups. The city is integral to the industrial and financial growth of Haryana and its contribution to the State's tax collection has increased by 200 times over the past two decades. According to the statistics of District Industries Centre, Gurugram is home to 30 shopping malls, contributes to 20 per cent of the State's revenue, provides 32 per cent of employment in factories and shares 62 per cent of total exports.

"The auto sector, IT companies, apparel units and pharmaceutical have been generating employment both for the outsiders, and the state's youth. Businesses

cannot be run based on caste, creed and religion. If Gurugram's reputation is tarnished, it will be a major financial loss for the State," said H P Yadav, president, NCR Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He rued the government had not taken enough measures to curb such unwarranted incidents. "Those in authority are only concerned about grabbing power and not bothered as much about the industry's growth," he remarked.

Police inaction
The role of the local administration and the police have been repeatedly questioned by the communities at the receiving end.

They have accused the authorities of not initiating action against the organisers of "mahapanchayat" in Pataudi last year even though hate speech videos of the event went viral on social media. Only one speaker was arrested a few days after the event and appearing for him in the court, his advocate Kulbhushan Bhardwaj said his client was arrested because he was an "outsider" and had "no political connections in the state". He said the other orators gave

"We gave a complaint and submitted evidence against three right-wing leaders for creating communal tension but the police did not take any action. Instead, a case was registered against us without any evidence," said Mufti Mohammad Saleem Qasmi, president, Jamiat-Ulama-i-Hind, Gurugram.

Draft RP-2041 incomplete, inconsistent: environmentalists

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

A five-member group, comprising a retired Indian Forest Service official, an urban planner and an environment analyst, among others, has offered objections to the Draft Regional Plan-2041. They have expressed apprehensions that the proposed plan would "drastically reduce the forest cover, degrade wildlife habitat, increase air pollution

and open the floodgates of indiscriminate real estate in the Aravalis".

The National Capital Region Planning Board had sought objections and suggestions to the Draft RP-2041 from public till January 7.

Raising a dozen objections to the plan from the perspective of regional land use, conservation and forests, the group has strongly opposed to exclusion of the terms "Ara-

valli" and "forest areas" from the Natural Conservation Zone (NCZ). "The Aravalis were an integral part of the NCZ in the current Regional Plan-2021. The term 'Aravallis' has been deleted from the Draft RP-2041, leaving them open to unlimited real estate construction. Similarly, the phrase "forest areas" has been deleted from the NCZ also. This will drastically reduce the forest cover that is

eligible for NCZ zoning protection," said the group.

The group has also objected to the replacement of the term "Natural Conservation Zone" under RP-2021 with "Natural Zone" in the Draft.

Though the area under forest has declined from 4.02 % as reported in RP-2021 to 3.27% as per Draft RP-2041, the protection for forest has been further diluted in the draft plan.

Food delivery executive killed as 'drunk' police constable hits bike

Locals catch hold of accused; medical exam report awaited

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 38-year-old Zomato delivery executive was killed after a police constable, who was allegedly drunk while driving a car, hit his bike in Rohini on Saturday night.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) Pranav Tayal said the victim was identified as Sali Tripathi, a resident of Budh Vihar, and the accused, Jile Singh, was arrested.

A senior police officer said the constable appeared to be under the influence of alcohol. His medical examination was conducted and the report is awaited, he said.

The victim was rushed to a hospital by a local where he was declared brought dead. Meanwhile, locals caught hold of the policeman. Senior officers, including the DCP, visited the spot. A senior police officer said the accused constable also sustained injuries and has been admitted to a hospital. After hitting the bike, his car also hit a bus.

Sole breadwinner
Sali's brother Rahul said the victim was out for delivery when the incident occurred.

Those who witnessed the incident told us that he had just collected food and was outside Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital on the service road when a policeman in

Our father died of COVID-19 in April last year. His wife, 10-year-old son, and mother were dependent on him

RAHUL
Victim's brother

uniform driving a vehicle hit Sali's bike. He was flung in the air after which he hit the divider and died on the spot," the brother said.

The victim was rushed to a hospital by a local where he was declared brought dead. Meanwhile, locals caught hold of the policeman. Senior officers, including the DCP, visited the spot. A senior police officer said the accused constable also sustained injuries and has been admitted to a hospital. After hitting the bike, his car also hit a bus.

Sole breadwinner
Sali's family said he used to work as a manager in a res-

taurant but two months ago, he started working as a Zomato delivery executive as well to support his family. "Our father died of COVID-19 in April last year. His wife, 10-year-old son, and mother were dependent on him," Mr. Rahul said.

Online food delivery platform Zomato's spokesperson said they will provide the victim's family with life insurance cover and take care of the expenses, including funeral. "We will also provide assistance to the family."

The police said a case under Sections 279 (rash and negligent driving) and 304A (causing death by negligence) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered and further investigation is under way. The post-mortem was conducted and the body was handed over to the family who took the mortal remains to their home town in Ayodhya for last rites.

International syndicate busted; fake currency notes seized

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Special Cell has busted an international syndicate involved in circulation of fake Indian currency notes and arrest-

ed a 42-year-old man. Counterfeit notes of the face value of around ₹3 lakh were seized from his possession.

According to DCP (Special Cell) Jasmeet Singh, the

accused was identified as Raisul Aazam, a resident of East Champaran district in Bihar.

The police had received a tip-off in October about circulation of fake India

currency notes smuggled through the Indo-Nepal border at Raxaul in Bihar's Motihari district. The accused was traced and arrested near Sarai Kale Khan bus terminal on January 7.

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Kejriwal tells AAP volunteers to go for door-to-door campaign

'The drive is to eliminate corruption, implement a system of honesty'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) volunteers have been asked to take a month off from work to dedicate themselves to conducting door-to-door campaign ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections in the States where the party is contesting.

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal said the campaign was not to change the ruling party in the States or grab power.

He added that it was to create a change in society and the whole country by eliminating corruption from its roots and implementing a system of honesty and integrity.

Addressing party volunteers, Mr. Kejriwal said due to COVID-19, the Election Commission of India has imposed a variety of res-



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. ■ PTI

trictions over election campaigning but has allowed door-to-door campaigning.

'Commit to seva'

"Whenever you go to someone's house – first ask them how they're doing, how everyone's health is. Before asking for votes, if they need any help, first do that. Consider this to be an opportunity to commit yourselves to seva. Then

you should tell them about the AAP government of Delhi and what all we have done in the State," Mr. Kejriwal told the volunteers.

He added that AAP was competing against a corrupt system and age-old parties with endless treasures, but the party needs to surpass their wealth with "spirit" and "deshbhakti".

"You are going out to bring change in this coun-

try like a true deshbhakt. You are not campaigning with the purpose of an electoral win, but to eliminate a corrupt system. The AAP government has proved that governments can be run with honesty as well. The old parties told us that winning an election requires truckloads of cash and even more deceit. AAP proved that elections can be fought with honesty and can also be won with honesty," Mr. Kejriwal said.

Social media

Highlighting the role social media is going to play in the campaign, Mr. Kejriwal said AAP volunteers are "masters of social media" and asked them to manifest the power of social media to reach every voter in every household.

Narrow escape for bus passengers in Odisha

Tusker pushes vehicle from behind

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

Passengers of a bus had a narrow escape when a wild tusker was seen pushing the vehicle along a road in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district on Sunday.

The bus was on its way from Olamara in Balasore district to Rasgoindpur in Mayurbhanj district in the morning when the incident took place.

Incidentally, the bus was moving. The wild elephant came from behind at Tika-pada and started shoving the bus with its trunk and tusk. The animal chased the bus for quite a distance. The people urged the bus driver to speed away.

The passengers were already in a panic when they saw the elephant running after the vehicle. The rear windshield glass broke under the impact of the push.

Another incident
In another incident, the Odisha Forest and Environment Department rescued a wild elephant calf, which had fallen into an open pit at



People taking photos and making videos of the elephant pushing a bus. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Sureidihi village under Rasagobindpur forest division.

On Saturday night, a three-month-old calf accidentally fell into the pit with water. A group of four elephants refused to leave the place without the calf.

"Our forest staff made several attempts to go near the pit. But the elephants chased us away," said Santosh Joshi, Divisional Forest Officer, Baripada. He said, "We got an opportunity on Sunday morning when the elephants went to a nearby pond to drink water. We started pumping water into the pit so that the calf could float. It worked and the herd managed to pull it out."

Assembly election.

However, as all parties gear up for the 2022 Assembly election, observers say a lot has changed in the last five years and that the BJP's strategy of indiscriminate making and breaking could well boomerang on it.

'Once bitten, twice shy'
"Violating coalition dharma, the BJP had unceremoniously dumped the MGP once the latter served its purpose. It did the same with the Goa Forward Party, the other major regional party. It ruthlessly broke up with the Congress as well. Until now, a lack of unity among the Opposition has benefited the shrewd BJP.

But now, there is a serious feeling of 'once bitten, twice shy' amongst the big regional parties who are extremely chary about forming any future alliance with the BJP," says Goa-based academic and political analyst Manoj Kamat.

An indication of this comes in the form of the latest remarks made by the leaders of the MGP and the GFP.



GFP president Vijai Sardesai



MGP leader Sudin Dhavalikar

Earlier this week, GFP president Vijai Sardesai said the time had come for his party and all those opposed to the BJP to come together and form a broad 'anti-BJP' front for the upcoming Assembly election.

'Keep egos aside'

"The GFP, the Congress, the Trinamool Congress and the MGP should keep aside their egos and join hands as part of a broad coalition to take on the ruling BJP," he had said.

Mr. Sardesai added the BJP could "play dirty" with other parties during campaigning by using COVID-19 restrictions as a pretext.

Mr. Sardesai added the BJP could "play dirty" with other parties during campaigning by using COVID-19 restrictions as a pretext.

der Manohar Parrikar.

This time, however, the GFP has already announced a pre-poll tie-up with the Congress, while the MGP has allied itself with the TMC in spite of being on the opposite sides of the ideological fence.

While the lure of power makes for strange political bedfellows who often spurn 'ideology', observers say this time there appears to be a strong 'anti-BJP' feeling among regional parties who are disgruntled with the BJP's cynical exploitation of them.

'Understanding dangers'

"The BJP engineered defection within the MGP despite the latter being its closest ally. At the time, the GFP was

enjoying the show and gloating at the MGP's misfortune. However, the same fate soon befell the GFP. So, whether regional forces understand these dangers and have decided to wise up to the BJP's stratagems is something this election will tell.

Yet, despite his vehement remarks against the BJP now, it may be recalled that in 2017, it was Mr. Sardesai, along with two other GFP MLAs, who had helped the BJP form a government un-

der Manohar Parrikar.

The BJP is ranged against five opposing forces – the Congress, the TMC, the GFP, the MGP and the AAP.

"Today the BJP consists of 70% of ex-Congress leaders. Moreover, the voter base of the BJP and the MGP is the same. The latter is now extremely bitter against the former, so the MGP will be eating into the BJP's votes. The voter base of other parties is the same. So, even if these parties cut into each other's votes, the BJP stands to lose either way," says another analyst.

'Problems within BJP'

He adds that in the event of a fractured verdict, the regional parties are likely to group against the BJP," says Mr. Kamat.

The BJP is ranged against five opposing forces – the Congress, the TMC, the GFP, the MGP and the AAP.

"In the absence of Manohar Parrikar, it is highly unlikely the BJP will get a favourable response from Vijai Sardesai and Sudin Dhavalikar. There are problems within the BJP's ranks with MLAs like Michael Lobo speaking openly against the party," he says.

Congress says it backs Nitish on caste census

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA

The Congress in Bihar on Sunday asserted that it supported Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on the issue of caste census and urged him to hold a State-specific exercise without waiting for a nod from his ally BJP.

Congress Legislature Party leader Ajeept Sharma's statement came close on the heels of Lalu Prasad's RJD, the principal Opposition

party in the State.

"The Chief Minister wants to convene an all-party meeting... apparently the BJP does not want to be seen on the same page... Let Nitish Kumar go ahead, the Congress is fully with him on the issue," Mr. Sharma said.

The State BJP has in the past backed a caste census with its MLAs voting in favour of the resolutions passed twice by the legislature.

Warning by Karnataka govt. against curfew violation ignored

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Amid threat of COVID-19 spread and warning by the Karnataka government against violation of weekend curfew rules, the Congress on Sunday began its 11-day padayatra seeking early implementation of the Mekedatu drinking water project, drawing angry reactions from the government.

Despite the uncertainty over the participation of pe-



In solidarity: Congress cadre at the padayatra inauguration in Ramanagaram on Sunday. ■ PTI

ople and leaders following the government action in Ramanagaram, the padayatra started from the Sangama in Kanakapura taluk of Ramanagaram district, about 100 km from the State capital,

with thousands of Congress workers and hundreds of leaders, including KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Siddaramaiah, and party leader M. Mallikarjun Kharge, MP, taking part in it. Former KPCC presidents Allum Veerabhadrapurappa, G. Parameshwara and R.V. Deshpande were present along with the three current working presidents, legislators, and a host of leaders.

The nearly 170 km padayatra – 'Our water our right' – will pass through 15 Assembly constituencies before culminating at Basavangudi here on January 19. On the first day, the padayatra will stop at Doddalaahalli.

Symbolically, the padayatra was launched by Hindu, Muslim, and Christian religious leaders by watering plants on the stage while pol-

itical leaders marked the launch by beating a drum ('nagara').

The project has been opposed by Tamil Nadu, the lower riparian State in the Cauvery river basin.

Slamming the padayatra when there was a COVID-19 surge, Home Minister Araga Jnanendra said leaders who had congregated at the Sangama should apologise to the people for delaying the project. He also warned of action against those violating the COVID norms.

Questioning the intent of the padayatra, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai told reporters that the march was politically motivated.

Our primary task is to ensure BJP defeat: CPI(M)'s Yechuri

'EC should be vigilant as BJP may try to intimidate voters'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Asserting that it will continue its efforts to maximise pooling of votes against the Bharatiya Janata Party in the coming elections to five States, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) said on Sunday that its primary task is to ensure the defeat of the BJP in these States.

The party has requested the Election Commission of India to be vigilant as the BJP could resort to "all sorts of measures to pressurise and

intimidate people" for electoral gains.

The EC should strictly implement the Model Code of Conduct and bring to book everyone, including the Prime Minister, if found violating the code.

"The BJP is facing certain defeat in the major States that are going to polls. There is huge anti-incumbency in Uttarakhand and the situation is not better in Punjab. The party is resorting to rabid communal polarisation in Uttar Pradesh as it is prime contender against the BJP."

general secretary Sitaram Yechury said.

He was speaking to reporters after the conclusion of the party's three-day central committee meeting.

Asked about the CPI(M) plan for the poll-bound States, he said the party would adopt a stand-state-wise based on the level of influence exercised by the regional parties in the respective States. "We will support Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh as it is prime contender against the BJP."

Kerala police file new case against Dileep

'He threatened to harm probe team'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The Crime Branch of the Kerala Police has registered yet another case against actor Dileep and five others based on a statement by director Balachandran Kumar that the actor had threatened to endanger police officers who were probing the 2017 case of sexual assault on a woman actor, in which Dileep was arraigned as an accused.

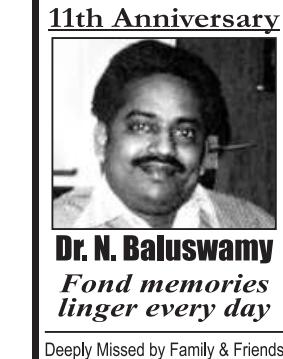
The accused in the new case include Dileep's brother Anoop and brother-in-law Sooraj. The development comes in the wake of a meeting on Saturday of the recently constituted Special Investigation Team that is probing the actor assault case.

An audio clip handed over by Balachandran Kumar to the probe team reportedly has details of the conversation Dileep had with the five others, in which the actor threatened to harm Deputy Superintendent of Police Baiju Paulose in a lorry accident.

Guru Purab



Decked up: Fireworks light up the night sky at the Golden Temple in Amritsar on Sunday on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the 10th Sikh Guru Gobind Singh. ■ PTI



IN Remembrance : Sri.T M Bashyam, who expired on 10/01/2010- Guru 09445954111

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Wear a mask properly
Wear your mask before
stepping out of the house.



Wash your hands frequently
Wash your hands regularly with
soap or use sanitizer for atleast
20 seconds.

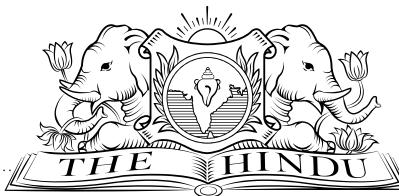


Practice social distancing
Avoid going to crowded places,
and remember to maintain a
minimum distance of 6 feet.

"According to experts, Omicron spreads very rapidly, but there is no need to panic. Continue to wear your mask and remember to follow all covid norms."

- Arvind Kejriwal





Unchanged

After much loss of time, SC allows EWS quota income norm to stay for this year

It is a matter of considerable relief that the Supreme Court has allowed the commencement of counselling for post-graduate medical admissions under the all-India quota at a time when the long delay has caused a shortage of junior residents in the midst of an ongoing public health crisis. The Court's decision to uphold the 27% quota for OBCs, with reasons to be adduced later, has also helped the cause of giving a push to the admission process, which was put on hold months ago. It is somewhat disappointing that despite several hearings and the deployment of an expert committee, the controversial criteria for the 10% Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) remain unchanged for admission for 2021-22. As early as October 25, the Union government offered to put on hold the admission process during the pendency of the challenge to the introduction of the OBC and EWS quotas by a July 29, 2021 notification. A month later, it informed the Court that it wanted to revisit the criteria for EWS. It was in response to the Court's questions about the rationale of keeping the annual income criterion for the EWS quota at ₹8 lakh, the same income ceiling for those belonging to the OBC category to be eligible for reservation benefits. The time taken by the committee to reconsider the criteria and submit a report seems to have been in vain, as it has returned a recommendation that the existing norms be retained for the current year's admissions.

The Bench, taking into account the fact that the admission process cannot be further delayed, has chosen to allow the admission to proceed based on the norms spelt out in the July notification. However, the validity of the expert panel's recommendations will be decided when the Court takes up the matter in March. It makes one wonder why the Government postponed the counselling and took more than a month to get a panel to revisit the criteria, if it was ultimately going to press for the current year's admission to be allowed without any change. The Court, on its part, felt compelled to defer to the Government on this point, considering the urgency of the situation, as the alternative was staying the EWS quota for this year's admission. Its original point – that there cannot be a common income limit for those coming from a background of social and educational backwardness and those who are members of privileged classes, but with inadequate economic means – still stands. The outcome is that this year's batch may suffer from 'over-inclusion' if the norms are revised downwards from next year onwards. While the norms for EWS quota may get tweaked over time, the question whether there ought to be any reservation for the advanced classes solely on the ground that they have insufficient means is still before the Constitution Bench. An early decision will be most welcome.

Growth concerns

NSO forecast has not factored in the impact of the ongoing Omicron-induced surge in cases

The National Statistical Office's first advance estimates for economic output in the current financial year is an optimistic forecast that flags some positive trends as well as areas of concern that have the potential to derail the growth momentum. The NSO has projected real GDP for the 12 months ending March 2022 at ₹147.54 lakh-crore, a 9.2% expansion from the provisional estimate of ₹135.13 lakh-crore for the last fiscal year, when the full fury of the COVID-19 pandemic had caused output to contract by 7.3%. At that pace, India's economy would regain its pre-eminence as the world's fastest growing major economy. A key pillar of this growth assumption is the upbeat outlook for net tax receipts on products, which the NSO sees expanding by a robust 16.2%, after shrinking by 18.4% in the preceding period. Gross Value Added, which aggregates output in the various sectors of the economy, is projected to grow by 8.6% year-on-year on the back of a continued healthy showing by the farm sector and a heartening double digit (12.5%) rebound in manufacturing. However, when compared with the pre-pandemic FY2020's GVA, the projected output of ₹135.2 lakh-crore is barely ₹2.5 lakh-crore, or 1.9%, higher, clearly pointing to the fact that the economy has a fair distance to travel before it can regain the growth momentum that is crucially required to create more jobs and help narrow the widening income inequality.

Tellingly, the NSO's forecast, which relies on varied data spanning the first six to eight months of the current fiscal, has not factored in the impact of the ongoing Omicron-induced surge in COVID-19 cases. After all, it is anyone's guess as to how much of a blow the current wave may deal to already fragile supply chains, consumption demand and contact-intensive services. In fact, private final consumption expenditure, which two years ago accounted for close to 60% of GDP, is still struggling to recover from the crushing compression it suffered in the first full year of the pandemic, when it shrank 9.1%. While the NSO posits consumer spending to grow by 6.9% this fiscal, the assumed figure is still a sizeable 2.9% shy of the FY2020 level. Equally significantly, the omnibus services category that spans trade, hotels, transport, communication and broadcasting and makes up a fifth of the GVA is estimated to post a mere 11.9% expansion after shrinking by 18.2% last fiscal. As a result, even without factoring in the impact of a third wave, this vital services sector would still be lagging behind its pre-pandemic output by 8.5%. With the Union Budget barely a few weeks away, policymakers have a clear choice to make: introduce consumption and investment supportive measures, even if it means loosening the fiscal purse strings, or risk seeing the growth momentum faltering for want of a fair wind.

Some Raj Bhavans are on the war path

The Governor must be mindful of being a friend and a guide to his government, more so in Opposition-ruled States



P.D.T. ACHARY

Recent media reports about the confrontation between the Governors and the State governments, in Maharashtra and Kerala, have turned the spotlight on the rather delicate relationship between the constitutional head of the State and the elected government. In Maharashtra, for example, the situation was indeed bizarre inasmuch as the Governor refusing to accept the date of election of the Speaker recommended by the State government. Consequently, the Assembly could not elect the Speaker.

The situation in Kerala has been no less bizarre. The State Governor having reappointed the Vice Chancellor of Kannur University in accordance with the law, made an allegation against the Kerala government that he was under pressure from the Government to reappoint the Vice Chancellor. The Governor confessed that he had done the wrong thing by yielding to governmental pressure. He has added that he does not want to remain the Chancellor any more, though he holds this position in an ex-officio capacity which means that he would have to remain the Chancellor as long as he is the Governor. But the Governor remains adamant.

The Governor levelling allegations against his own government is not a first-time development. In West Bengal this has been a regular feature. Similarly, non-acceptance of the advice of the Council of Ministers too has been witnessed in Rajasthan as well as Maharashtra again. Of course, there have been differences between Governors and Chief Ministers in the past too, but these have been rare occurrences. But the open confrontations now clearly cross the boundaries of what is

constitutionally permissible behaviour.

With discretionary powers

The relationship between the Governor and Chief Minister has, even at the best of times, not been absolutely simple and tension free. It has something to do with the whole idea of the office of the Governor and its past history. In the colonial era, the Governor was the absolute ruler of the province who was answerable ultimately to His Majesty, the King. A closer look at the debates in the Constituent Assembly on the Governor would reveal that there were divergent views on the powers to be given to the Governor. In fact, there were members in the Assembly who wanted the Governor to be as powerful as the colonial-era Governors. Though B.R. Ambedkar was clear that the Governor should only be a constitutional head and the executive power should vest entirely in the elected government, he promoted the idea of vesting certain discretionary powers in the Governor. In this respect he was guided by the thinking that the State governments are in subordination to the Union government and, therefore, the Governor should be given discretionary powers to ensure that they act so.

So, ultimately, the Governor who emerged from the Constituent Assembly was one with certain discretionary powers prescribed by or under the Constitution unlike the President of India who has not been given any such powers. Further, Article 163 (Article 143 in the draft Constitution) became a 'blind reproduction of Section 50 of the Government of India Act 1935' (H.V. Kamath). This exact reproduction of the provision in the Act of 1935 has, to a great extent, introduced a vagueness about the actual powers of the Governor *vis-à-vis* the elected government in democratic India which was corrected only with the Supreme Court of India stating the law in unambiguous terms in *Shamsher Singh* (1974).



From *Shamsher Singh* to *Nabam Rebia* (2016) the top court declared that the Governor can, in the exercise of executive power of the state, act only on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers "...save in a few well-known exceptional situations".

The Maharashtra case

The Maharashtra Governor's refusal to accept the date of election of the Speaker goes against the principles of constitutional government. It must be stated here that the Constitution has not assigned any role to the Governor in the election of the Speaker under Article 178, which is exclusively the job of the House. It is only the House rule which says that the Governor shall fix the date. The date as such has no great significance. Under the procedure followed in all Assemblies, the government fixes the date and conveys it to the Secretary of the Assembly who forwards it to the office of the Governor for his signature. After the date is formally approved by the Governor – which he is duty bound to do – the members are informed about it.

Now the question is if the Governor does not approve the date, can the election be held? Fixing the date by the Governor is not of any constitutional importance; election by the House is the important thing. So, if the Governor stands in the way of the election, the only way open to the House is to amend that particular rule which empowers the Governor to fix the date. It can provide that the Secretary on receiving the date from the government shall notify the members of the same. The

election can be held either through secret ballot or through a motion in the House as is done by the Lok Sabha. But it must be said that it could be for the first time in the history of free India that a Governor has refused to fix the date of election of the Speaker and, consequently, the election could not be held. The Maharashtra Assembly is now without a Speaker being in office.

In Kerala

The Kerala situation is even more curious. There, the controversy surrounds the reappointment of the incumbent Vice Chancellor of Kannur University. There was a suggestion from the State government routed through the Pro Chancellor who is the Minister for Higher Education for the reappointment of the incumbent Vice Chancellor. The Governor being the ex-officio Chancellor of the university and the appointing authority, accepted the suggestion and reappointed him. After some time, the Governor went public with a serious allegation that he had signed the order of appointment under pressure from the Government and that he had done the wrong thing by reappointing the Vice Chancellor under pressure.

It must be stated here that the Governor had acted perfectly in accordance with the law in reappointing the incumbent Vice Chancellor. Under the University Act, an incumbent Vice Chancellor is eligible for reappointment. Since the Act does not lay down any specific procedure for reappointment, the Chancellor was right in accepting the suggestion or the recommendation made from the Government. In fact, he or she can accept suggestions from any person including the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly. The point worth noting here is that the Governor as Chancellor is not required to act on the advice of the Council of Ministers in the matter of appointment of Vice Chancellor and others in the university. He can act absolutely independently. He could also have

rejected the suggestion from the Government.

The Kerala High Court has clarified this legal point in *Gopalakrishnan vs Chancellor, University of Kerala*. So the Governor of Kerala needs to apply his mind independently to the case of reappointment, evaluate the performance of the Vice Chancellor and fully satisfy himself about the merit of the appointee before signing the appointment order. It is presumed that he had done this. Therefore, it is baffling why he chose to go public and level serious allegations against the Government and incriminate himself in the process. Adding to the confusion, the Governor has divested himself of the ex-officio charge of Chancellor and declared that he will not be functioning as Chancellor. Needless to say, one cannot relinquish a charge which he holds in an ex-officio capacity unless he leaves his substantive post.

Detachment is the essence

These are very bizarre situations indeed. The Governor is a high constitutional authority. He needs to function within the four walls of the Constitution and be a friend, philosopher and guide to his government. The Constitution does not allow him to be a parallel government; nor does it make him personally responsible for his actions as Governor. That such confrontations take place only in Opposition-ruled States shows that political expediency has overtaken constitutional propriety. Wading through the Constituent Assembly debates, one comes across these wise words of Pandit Thakur Das Bhagava, a conscientious member of the Assembly: "He (Governor) will be a man above party and he will look at the minister and government from a detached stand point". Detachment is the essence of India's ancient culture. But Pandit Thakur Das's voice has ended up as a voice in the wilderness.

P.D.T. Achary is Former Secretary General, Lok Sabha

A Bill that could alter the mediation landscape

A spin-off from the Mediation Bill is its potential to help relieve some of the pressure on law enforcement agencies



R.K. VIJ

The Chief Justice of India (CJI), N.V. Ramana, while speaking at the India-Singapore Mediation Summit in July 2021 (<https://bit.ly/3F972Kt>) had said that mediation should be made mandatory as a first step in dispute resolution and that a law should be framed in this regard. The context was the huge pendency of cases in India. In his speech called "Mediation for everyone: Realizing mediation's potential in India", he emphasised the point that a movement needs to be launched to popularise mediation as it was a cheaper and faster dispute resolution mechanism. Months later in December 2021, the CJI, while addressing the Curtain Raiser and Stakeholders' Conclave of International Arbitration and Mediation Centre (IAMC) at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre, Hyderabad, said that courts should be the last resort for dispute resolution; therefore, one should explore the options of alternate dispute resolution.

Expressed in these laws

In India, though mediation finds legitimacy in some specific laws such as the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, the Companies Act, 2013, the Commercial Courts Act, 2015, and the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, there is no

standalone legislation as yet. The Tamil Nadu Mediation and Conciliation Centre, an initiative of the Madras High Court and India's first court-annexed facility with a mediation centre in every district, which was inaugurated in 2005 has significantly reduced the pendency of referred cases.

Bill scope

The Mediation Bill, 2021 (<https://bit.ly/3qZwEV8>), introduced in Parliament in December 2021, seeks to 'promote mediation (including online), and provide for enforcement of settlement agreements resulting from mediation'. In case of civil or commercial disputes, a person must try to settle the dispute by mediation before approaching a court or tribunal. Disputes not fit for mediation *inter alia* include those relating to prosecution for criminal offences, disputes involving allegation of serious and specific fraud, fabrication of documents, forgery, impersonation and coercion. However, there are certain provisions in the Bill which may help in improving the law and order situation in a locality and/or encourage compounding of criminal offences.

First, Section 7 of the Bill says that courts will be competent to refer any dispute to mediation relating to compoundable offences or matrimonial offences connected with or arising out of civil proceedings between the parties. Second, Section 44 of the Bill provides for 'any dispute likely to affect peace, harmony and tranquillity amongst the residents or families of any area or locality', to be settled through community me-



diation. Any settlement so arrived at, however, shall not be enforceable as a judgment or decree of a civil court. Third, the provisions of the Act shall not have overriding effect, *inter alia*, on the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizen Act, 2007 and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

It implies that if any dispute (as referred above) is resolved through mediation, it may lead to a compounding of criminal offence arising out of that civil or commercial dispute. Similarly, if any local dispute has the potential to create a law and order situation, and result in the registration of a criminal case or cases, those could be avoided through community mediation. It is true that many serious offences are the outcome of minor disputes which are either not tackled properly or left unattended.

Therefore, though the proposed law primarily intends to resolve civil and commercial disputes through mediation, it has ample scope to relieve some of the pressure on law enforcement agencies.

The law to prevent the sexual harassment of women at the workplace has probably been kept out of its scope so that an internal or local complaint committee

is able to take up conciliation and close the case locally without involving a third party and detailed procedure. The law on the maintenance and the welfare of parents and senior citizens has also been kept out of its scope as offences under it are cognisable offences.

Section 320 in the Code Of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) provides for the compounding of certain criminal offences which shall have the effect of acquittal of the accused. There are about 43 criminal offences, from body offences to property offences, which can be compounded by the victim, and about 13 offences (of comparative greater gravity) which can be compounded with the permission of the court. Here, the policy of the law is to promote friendliness between the parties so that peace between them is restored. A case may be compounded any time before the sentence is pronounced.

Court's view

The Supreme Court of India has held that if there is composition of an offence during investigation, the parties can either approach the court or the police. The police, on verification of the truth, genuineness and voluntariness of the composition, may record the statement of the victim and recommend to the Magistrate to accept the negative final report. The Magistrate after giving notice to the complainant can make an appropriate decision in the matter accepting the composition. In other cases, appropriate orders may be passed by the court, and leave granted to compound the offence. Thus, under both conditions, if a

dispute is resolved amicably, including through mediation, it may result in its compounding under the CrPC. The number of offences which can be compounded may also be increased – particularly property offences. Keeping in view the recommendations of the Law Commission in its 243rd report, Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, relating to cruelty by the husband or his relatives, can also be made compoundable. It may have far-reaching consequences in resolving matrimonial disputes.

The background

It is undisputed that many civil or commercial disputes are given the colour of a criminal offence and reported to the police so that they get resolved under the fear of arrest. Many criminal offences are a result of the fact that civil or commercial disputes could not be resolved amicably and in time. The police at times take minor cases lightly or reduce the seriousness of crime by converting a cognisable offence into a non-cognisable one. Some of these cases may become aggravated with time and assume serious consequences. Therefore, the proposed law of mediation, that has the mechanism of not only preventing the breakdown of law and order through community intervention but also the competence to smoothen the route to compounding of certain criminal offences, may ultimately relieve some of the pressure on the police also.

R.K. Vij is a former Special Director General of Police of Chhattisgarh. The views expressed are personal

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.

Election schedule

The announcement of the Assembly election schedule for five States amidst the Omicron-driven third wave in the country poses challenges despite assurances being made by the Election Commission of India (Page 1, January 9). The pace of vaccination has not reached the desired level. Given the bitter experience of the second COVID-19 wave, conducting risk-free elections is crucial.

It will indeed be a daunting task to ensure COVID-appropriate behaviour especially as the ECI has said that it will review the situation on January 15. The ECI should insist on the requisite undertakings in this regard from all the parties in the fray. Administering the booster dose to all staff on election duties should be ensured. All said and done, the ECI should have at least waited for the flattening of

the Omicron curve in India. G. RAMASUBRAMANYAM, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

■ The announcement seems to disregard the prevailing COVID-19 situation. With the country seeing the highest spike of new COVID-19 cases in 222 days, holding Assembly elections so soon seems unwise. As Omicron is highly contagious and has the propensity to infect vaccinated people also, our health-care systems could get

overwhelmed with staff shortages if a tsunami of infected cases occurs. Dr. THOMAS PALOCAREN, Vellore, Tamil Nadu

PM's convoy incident

The way the incident in which the convoy of the Prime Minister was stopped for 20 minutes or so in Punjab, mainly due to a sudden change in his travel mode, has been blown out of proportion is quite shocking. It is as if there was a dark

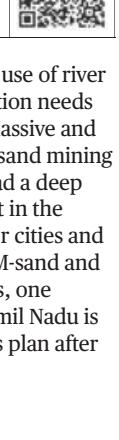
plan to deliberately endanger the life of the Prime Minister. While the security of tall leaders is paramount, it is unfortunate that it is being used by the ruling party to gain political mileage. Only a dispassionate inquiry into the entire incident will establish the real truth. THARCIUS S. FERNANDO, Chennai

River sand use

The decision by the Tamil Nadu government clearing

the decks for the use of river sand in construction needs to be revisited. Massive and unchecked river sand mining in the past has had a deep ecological impact in the State. When other cities and towns are using M-sand and other alternatives, one wonders why Tamil Nadu is going back to this plan after about a decade. S. RAMALINGAM, Vellore, Tamil Nadu

To read more letters online, scan the QR code



The best masks to ward off Omicron

Well-worn high-filtration masks such as N95 provide more protection than cloth and surgical masks



R. SUBRAMANIAN & MADHUKAR PAI

COVID-19 is an airborne disease, and Omicron is the most contagious variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far. It's more contagious than the Delta variant that swept India last year. But if we wear better-quality masks and wear them correctly, we can reduce the spread of this highly contagious virus.

All of us emit particles and tiny droplets while breathing, talking, singing, coughing and sneezing. When a person infected with COVID-19 interacts with another person who is uninfected, the virus can get transmitted as part of the particles and droplets exhaled by the infected person, which are then inhaled by the uninfected person.

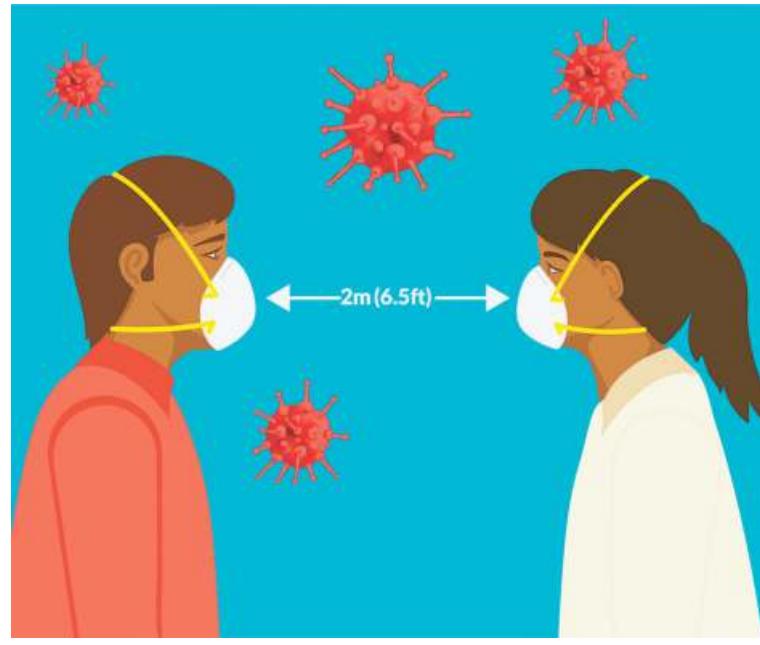
If the infected or sick person wears a good mask, that reduces the risk to those around them. If the uninfected person wears a mask, that reduces the total number of particles (including virus-carrying particles) that they inhale and therefore reduces the risk to them from the infected person. Masks also help with particulate air pollution.

Masks should be used in indoor spaces you share with other people such as the office, hospitals or doctor's offices, wedding halls, shops, classrooms, and places of worship. You should also wear your mask in crowded outdoor locations like the market or mall, and especially when taking the bus, taxi, airplane or train.

Types of masks

Over the last two years, most of us have worn masks of various types, including cloth masks, surgical or medical masks, and high-filtration masks with various designations – N95, KN95, KF94 and FFP2. What is the difference between these masks, and what works best against Omicron? Can they be reused? Where should masks be used?

A cloth mask reduces some emissions (especially larger droplets) from an infected person's nose and mouth but offers little protection for the uninfected wearer as the mate-



ISTOCK PHOTO

rial does not significantly filter small particles (unless it has a filter insert).

A surgical mask can be made of good, three-ply filtering material (though not all of them) but is not made to seal the face well. It leaves large gaps between the edges of the mask and the face, through which virus-carrying particles can be exhaled or inhaled. One way to improve the fit of a surgical mask is double-masking, i.e. wearing a cloth mask that can fit snugly on your face over a surgical mask, to reduce gaps.

But the best masks are those built to the American N95 standard or similar global standards (European FFP2, Chinese KN95, Korean KF94). When fitted properly, they filter out at least 95% (N95, KN95) or 94% (FFP2, KF94) of particles. It is best to avoid masks that have valves on them as they don't filter exhaled air, which is important when the wearer is unknowingly infected.

High-filtration masks give everyone more protection from the Omicron variant than cloth and surgical masks. Everyone who can use these masks should use them, especially healthcare workers who are at risk of exposure and others who are at risk of severe COVID-19 infection (the elderly, people with diabetes, heart disease, etc.). While there was a shortage of such masks in the initial stages of the pandemic, manufacturers are now making N95 or equivalent

masks in large quantities (for example, 3M has introduced the VFlex, a more affordable N95 mask than their popular Aura series, both of which are available on Amazon.in). Many other varieties are available with reputable online retailers. Reliable mask reviews can be found online.

A concern with high-filtration masks is their cost – the 3M VFlex is currently priced at ₹68 per mask (₹3,400 for a box of 50) on Amazon. While these masks can be used for a week with care, double-masking (a tight-fitting cloth mask over a three-ply surgical mask as described above) can be a good lower-cost alternative. Providing government subsidies to ensure that everyone can afford high-filtration masks would be the ideal solution.

Fit matters

But high-filtration masks by themselves are not enough. You need to make sure that the mask fits your face properly. In occupational health settings, an N95 mask is usually fit-tested, but this is not feasible for most people. But some simple rules can help improve fit.

The most common mask failure (other than not covering your nose or wearing it as a chin guard) is a loose or ill-fitting mask that lets virus-carrying particles escape outwards (for an infected person) or inwards (for the uninfected person). Cloth

and surgical masks that are used repeatedly become loose and ill-fitting.

The mask should cover your mouth and nose. It should fit your face snugly at the edges, so the air you exhale or inhale only passes through the filtering material. The mask should also be moulded to the nose bridge – a plastic or metal clip is usually provided or built into the mask for this purpose.

The fitted mask is held in place usually with ear loops or headbands. Dual headbands are highly recommended as they allow a proper fit – one band below the ears around the neck and one above the ears at the crown of the head. Ear loops don't provide a tight seal without straining your ears, unless you secure the loops behind your head with a clip or tight extension band. Once you wear the mask, the easiest test is to blow air outwards (perhaps after putting a mint in your mouth). If you feel the air on your face outside the mask edges, press that edge towards your face. Use the headbands or ear loops/clip to ensure that the mask fits snugly against your face.

Reusing masks

Can you reuse the mask? With some care, yes. N95 masks, in particular, are rated for their ability to filter a lot of dust as they are designed to be worn at places like construction sites. The mask will not get saturated even after a few days of normal (non-dusty) use, so it can be reused after it dries. A good routine might be to wear a high-filtration mask for a day, keep it aside in a dust-free, dry environment for 2-3 days (maybe inside a paper bag) and then use it again. And if the band or ear loop breaks or any part of the mask no longer seals properly, use a fresh mask.

All of us can do our bit to reduce the spread of the Omicron variant. Masking and vaccination are simple steps that can contribute to the overall pandemic response. So, if you can, please upgrade to high-filtration masks, get fully vaccinated, and stay safe out there.

Dr. R. Subramanian (@subu_caps), senior scientist at the Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute, Doha, has worked on air quality research for over 20 years; Dr. Madhukar Pai (@paimadhu) is a physician and professor of epidemiology and global health at McGill University, Montreal

Control rather than privacy

The Joint Committee report on the Personal Data Protection Bill has raised more questions than it has solved



JAIVEER SHERGILL

In India, where the personal data of citizens are at the mercy of companies and government and where is no privacy law, the *Puttaswamy* judgment and the Justice B.N. Srikrishna committee report that led to the Personal Data Protection Bill of 2019 came as a ray of hope. But the Joint Committee report on the Bill has failed to provide a robust draft legislation ensuring the privacy of citizens. Instead, it has carved out an architecture for a surveillance state.

Infallibility of state

Under the Constitution, fundamental rights are enforced against the state and its instrumentalities and not against private bodies. The *Puttaswamy* judgment held that the right to privacy is a fundamental right. However, the report has divided the digital world into two domains – government and private – and is based on the presumption that the question of right to privacy emerges only where operations and activities of private entities are concerned. Clause 12 of the Bill provides exemptions for the government and government agencies and Clause 35 exempts government agencies from the entire Act itself. Clause 12, which says personal data can be processed without consent for the performance of any function of the state, is an umbrella clause that does not specify which ministries or departments will be covered. Further, the Bill says, "harm includes any observation or surveillance that is not reasonably expected by the data principal". This means if you install any software in your computer and the software violates the principle of privacy and data get leaked, the complaint of the data principal will not be legally tenable as the defence will be that 'once you have installed the software, you should have reasonably expected this level of surveillance'. The government can use these provisions as a means of control and surveillance.

If private entities can be given a transition time to comply with the Act, why should the same not be extended to government entities? Why should they be given blanket exemption instead? The Committee has failed to provide formidable firewalls to protect the privacy of individuals and has also carved out a mechanism for government control over personal data. The provisions are ultra vires of the judgment on privacy.

For compliance with the provisions of the Act, a data protection authority (DPA) has to be appointed. The Bill elaborates on the functions and duties of the DPA. It is doubtful whether a single authority will be able to discharge so many functions in an efficient manner. The terms and conditions of appointment of the DPA also raise concerns. Unlike the Justice Srikrishna committee report which provided for a judicial oversight in the appointments of the DPA, the Bill entrusts the executive with the appointments. Although the report expanded the committee, the power to appoint the panelists vests with the Central government. While ensuring the protection of citizens' fundamental right, it is necessary that the authority entrusted with the responsibility should work independently. Clause 86 says, "Authority should be bound by the directions of the Central Government under all cases and not just on questions of policy". This makes the DPA duty-bound to follow the orders of the government. This weakens its independence and gives the government excessive control. Further, the appointment of the authority violates the principle of federalism. There is internal data flow and the States are key stakeholders in the process. Even if the proposed central authority issues directions to allow processing of data on the grounds of 'public order', it is important to note that 'public order' is an entry in the State List. If the pith and substance of the legislation are related to the State, then it has to be monitored by the State Data Protection Authority.

Economic cost of non-personal data

One of the objectives of the Bill is to promote the digital economy. But by including non-personal data within the ambit of the Bill, the Joint Committee has put a huge compliance burden on the economy. This will hit the MSME sector and small businesses harder as technical processes involving data-sharing are very expensive. The government-constituted panel headed by S. Gopalkrishnan also opposed the idea of including non-personal data in the Bill. Mandatory data localisation, it is estimated, will squeeze the economy by 0.7-1.7%. This may also invite similar measures by other sovereign countries which will hamper smooth cross-border flow of data.

The report has raised more questions than it has solved. In its present avatar, the Bill is more about surveillance and control than privacy. At the time of passage of the Bill, loopholes must be plugged so that India can have a robust data protection law.

Jaiveer Shergill is a Supreme Court lawyer and National Spokesperson, the Indian National Congress

STATE OF PLAY

Who should be the Chancellor?

A Governor can discharge the allotted functions as a Chancellor in a detached manner

T. RAMAKRISHNAN

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's announcement last week that his government was exploring options to empower itself to make the appointment of vice chancellors of universities, taking the powers away from the Governor-Chancellor, was not unexpected. Though no major issue has erupted in the area of higher education between the State government and Governor R.N. Ravi, the equations between the two have not been good. Even three months after the Assembly adopted a Bill to scrap the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test as the sole guiding factor for admission to undergraduate medical courses, Mr. Ravi has not yet forwarded it to the President. Mr. Stalin has complained that even after he met and requested Mr. Ravi to take this up, the Governor has not taken any action. It was against this backdrop that Mr. Stalin made the announcement.

The move appears to be in line with developments in some other States. In December, the Maharashtra legislature adopted a Bill curtailing the powers of the Governor in the appointment of vice chancellors in State universities. Around the same time came a statement from the West Bengal government that it was considering a proposal to make the Chief Minister Chancellor of all State universities. In the light of a controversy over the selection of vice chancellors for two universities, Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan had even suggested that a special session of the Assembly be held to divest him of the charge of Chancellor of universities in the State.

In case the Tamil Nadu Assembly adopts a Bill replacing the Governor with the Chief Minister as Chancellor of universities, this will be the second such instance in the State. In January 1994, when the AIADMK was in power, the House passed the Universities Bill, making the Chief Minister Chan-



DATA POINT

Mohammed Shami: An Indian all-time pace great

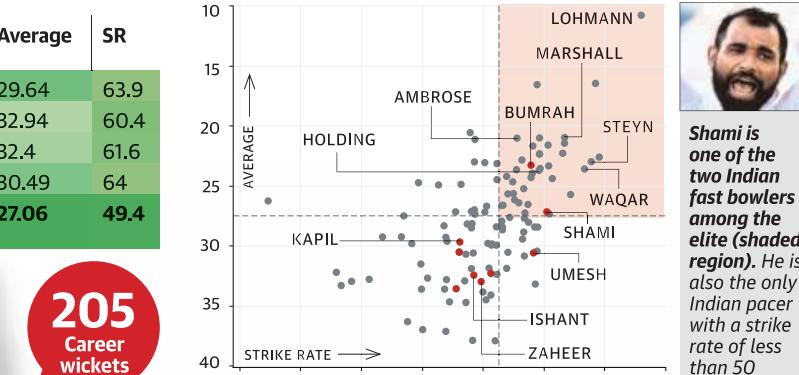
Mohammed Shami became only the fifth Indian men's fast bowler to pick up 200 Test wickets after getting Kagiso Rabada out in the first innings of the first Test in the ongoing series against South Africa. The numbers show that he is among the five best Test pacers currently playing and is also among the best to have ever played the game. Interestingly, among the best pacers currently in the game, Shami forces batters to commit errors. Recent ball-by-ball data, obtained from analytics firm Cricket-21, show that more than one in five of his deliveries cause the batters to make a mistake which leads to greater chances of a wicket. He has been a vital cog in the team's pace arsenal in both home and away games in the past three years. By Sumanth Sen

1. THE 200 CLUB | The table shows the average rate (runs conceded per wicket) and strike rate (balls per wicket) of Indian pacers who have picked up 200 Test wickets

| Player | Career wickets | Average | SR |
|-----------------|----------------|---------|------|
| Kapil Dev | 434 | 29.64 | 63.9 |
| Zaheer Khan | 311 | 32.94 | 60.4 |
| Ishant Sharma | 311 | 32.4 | 61.6 |
| Javagal Srinath | 236 | 30.49 | 64 |
| Mohammed Shami | 205 | 27.06 | 49.4 |

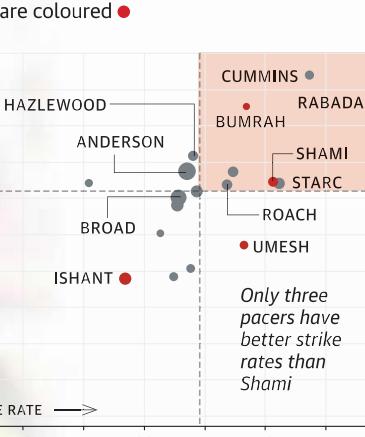
205 Career wickets

2. WHERE SHAMI STANDS | The chart plots the bowling strike rate of a pacer with at least 100 wickets in Tests against his bowling average. Indian players are coloured



3. AMONG ACTIVE PACERS

The chart plots the bowling strike rate of an active pacer with at least 100 wickets in Tests against his bowling average. Indian players are coloured



5. KEY PLAYER

| Player | AWAY | | HOME | |
|---------|---------|------|---------|------|
| | Wickets | SR | Wickets | SR |
| Bumrah | 55 | 54.9 | 4 | 72 |
| Shami | 42 | 48.9 | 22 | 33.3 |
| Siraj | 30 | 62 | 6 | 35 |
| Ishant | 24 | 40 | 20 | 50.1 |
| Shardul | 24 | 35.4 | - | - |
| Umesh | 12 | 54.5 | 25 | 30.8 |

Since 2019, Shami has been a key performer for India in home and away conditions. The table shows the performance of Indian pacers since 2019

NOTES: THE DATA ON FALSE SHOT PERCENTAGES AND INDIAN BOWLERS' PERFORMANCE IN HOME AND AWAY CONDITIONS SINCE 2019 HAVE BEEN OBTAINED FROM CRICKET-21. DATA HAVE ALSO BEEN SOURCED FROM ESPNRCLINFO

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 10, 1972

President's rule for Bihar

Patna, January 9: Bihar came under President's rule-to-day for the third time since the 1967 general election with the President, Mr. V.V. Giri, issuing a proclamation taking over the State administration under Article 356 of the Constitution.

The State Governor, Mr. D.K. Barooah, had in his report to the President late last month recommended Central rule and dissolution of the State Assembly following the resignation of the 216-day-old Progressive Vidhayak Dal Ministry on December 27. At the time a Presidential proclamation could not be issued immediately because of a constitutional hitch and so, Mr. Barooah dissolved the Assembly under Article 174 on December 29.

A Raj Bhavan communique announcing dissolution for the State Assembly had said that the outgoing Chief Minister, Mr. Bholanath Paswan Shastri, and his Deputy, Mr. Ram Jaipal Singh Yadav, had been asked to continue as a caretaker government while the resignation of the other members of the Council of Ministers were "individually" accepted.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 10, 1922

Railway murder case

James Goddin Morris, aged 24 years, who was sentenced to be hanged at the Criminal Sessions of Bombay High Court, by Justice Martin, for the murder of G.I.P. Railway pay clerk Shantaram Vagal and his peon Mahadeo in a train between Igatpuri and Bhusaval on the night of the 20th July suffered extreme penalty of the law at the gallows in the prison yard of Oomerkhad this morning [Bombay, January 9].

Since his conviction, Morris had appealed to the Bombay Government for mercy, which being rejected he appealed to the Vice-roy praying for mitigation of the death sentence. Memorials were also sent by friends and relations of the deceased praying for clemency on the ground of youth and inexperience, but the Government saw no reason to interfere with the sentence.

During his incarceration, Morris continued to take his meal regularly and went up to the gallows with firm steps. On being questioned if he had anything to say, the prisoner made no reply. Execution was carried out at 5 a.m. this morning.

FROM PAGE ONE

NEET-PG counselling from Jan. 12: Centre

For the upcoming years, the criteria of the quota will be decided at the next court hearing scheduled for March this year.

The decision by the Supreme Court and the announcement by the Health Minister come as a relief for the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA), which had recently protested over the delay in NEET-PG counselling. Every year, about 45,000 candidates are selected as post-graduate (PG) doctors through the NEET-PG and the delay in counselling has led to a situation where no junior doctors have been in-

ducted by 2021. "Second and third year PG doctors are facing increased workload due to the COVID-19 pandemic," the FORDA said. The Federation had called off its strike recently after the government assured that its demands would be looked into.

The FORDA also welcomed the Supreme Court order allowing NEET-PG counselling for 2021-2022 based on the existing EWS/OBC reservation and said: "It's a relief for us. When the country is suffering from the third wave of COVID such a decision is extremely valuable for all the doctors."

India adds 1.79 lakh COVID-19 cases

The number of active cases in Bihar until January 8 was 12,311, with over 7,000 in Patna district. More than 350 doctors and medical staff in the state have tested positive, most of whom were from Nalanda Medical College and Hospital. In addition, some staff of a private airline working at the Patna airport was also tested positive.

In Gujarat, the case count increased by 6,275, while 1,263 patients recovered. As a result, active cases neared the 28,000-mark, of which 26 patients were on ventilator support.

Kerala's COVID-19 graph was on a slow rise and on Sunday, the State reported 6,238 new cases with 54,108 samples tested in the

past 24 hours. The number of patients in the State's active case pool has risen to 34,902, of whom, 2,538 persons are being treated for moderate or severe COVID in hospitals across the State. Between January 2-8, new cases went up by 82% in comparison to the previous week.

New hospitalisations in Kerala on Sunday was 261, while 2,390 persons were reported to have recovered from the disease on the day. Current ICU occupancy of COVID patients in both public and private hospitals in the State showed a nominal increase and stands at 435 cases, while the number of patients requiring ventilator support showed a slight increase to 157 on Sunday.

'Non-stop research to manage the pandemic'

"A meeting with Chief Ministers [should] be convened to discuss State-specific scenarios, best practices, and the public health response," he said at the meeting during which the Health Secretary gave a presentation on the surge in cases being reported globally.

The Prime Minister was apprised of the steps being taken to support the States for an upgrade of health infrastructure, testing capacity, availability of oxygen and ICU beds, and buffer stock of COVID-19 essential drugs under the emergency COVID-19 response package. "The presentation brought attention to India's consistent efforts towards the vaccination campaign, with 31%

adolescents aged 15-18 years having been administered with the 1st dose so far within seven days," a press release said.

Mr. Modi directed that intensive containment and active surveillance should continue in clusters reporting higher cases and the required technical support be provided to the States concerned. "While conveying his gratitude for the relentless services provided by healthcare workers in managing COVID-19 so far, he suggested to ensure that the vaccination coverage through precaution dose for healthcare workers and frontline workers should also be taken up in mission mode," the statement said.

Drafted by a team of the Indian Institute of Technology-Roorkee and the National Institute of Urban Affairs of the MoHUA, the revised guidelines aim to give a holistic approach.

"Earlier, the guidelines were for creating a barrier-free environment, but now we are focusing on universal accessibility," Prof. Gaurav Raheja, principal investigator and consultant of the project, told *The Hindu*.

The guidelines say ramps are extremely crucial for providing an accessible mobility option, but it is equally important to understand that ramps have to adhere to given guidelines. The guide-

lines provide the gradient and length of ramps – for example, for a length of six metres, the gradient should be 1:12. The minimum clear width of a ramp should be 1,200 mm, the guidelines say.

The guidelines are not just for persons with disabilities (PWD), but for those involved in planning projects, from the construction of government buildings to master-planning cities, Prof. Raheja said.

While making public buildings and transport fully accessible for wheelchair users is covered in the guidelines, other users who may experience temporary problems have also been considered. For instance, a parent pushing a child's pram while carrying groceries or other bags, and women wearing saris.

Indore techie arrested for offensive app

application.

Speaking to *The Hindu* from Indore, Thakur's father, Akhilesh Thakur, however, said his son was being "framed" and had nothing to do with the co-accused arrested. "He was an introvert and didn't have a lot of friends and mostly kept to himself," he said.

Some police officials came to my house while I was out ... my son told me over phone that he is being taken to Delhi for interrogation. I only asked him if he had done anything wrong and he said he didn't... I believe him," Mr. Thakur added.

Periyar statue found defaced in Coimbatore

Kazhagam workers who informed the Podanur police station and a team of personnel reached the spot.

The police and DK workers removed the slippers and cleaned the statue. The DK workers staged a protest demanding the police arrest those involved in the desecration. They withdrew the protest after the police assurance.

WILSON THOMAS
COIMBATORE

A statue of social reformer Periyar E.V. Ramasamy at Vellalore in Coimbatore was found defaced on Sunday morning. The statue in front of the Periyar study centre was found garlanded with a pair of slippers. The head was splashed with a saffron-coloured powder. People in the locality alerted Dravidar

Devas can seize only 50% of Air India's assets, says Canada court

It quashes order permitting seizure of funds belonging to Airports Authority of India

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

In partial relief for India, a court in Canada has said that investors of Devas Multimedia can seize only 50% of Air India's assets held by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). It also quashed the order permitting seizure of funds belonging to the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

Earlier, in two separate orders on November 24 and December 21, Devas shareholders had received permission from the Quebec Superior Court to seize assets of the AAI and Air India held by the IATA in connection with the two arbitration awards it won for wrongful cancellation of its deal with ISRO's arm, Antrix, in 2011. Subsequently, Devas shareholders moved to freeze \$30 million belonging to the two entities, including \$17.3 million of ticketing fees collected on behalf of Air India.

Both Air India and the AAI then moved the court seeking quashing of its orders.

On January 8, the Quebec



Devas Multimedia Private Limited office at 'Prema Gardenia' complex in Bangalore in 2011. • V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

Superior Court rejected Air India's plea for quashing, but amended its earlier order and reduced seizure amounts to 50% of the funds held by the IATA retrospectively and prospectively. The relief came after Air India argued that its operation would be put in jeopardy especially given the global interruptions to the airline industry due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the court granted the AAI its motion to quash the November 24 or-

der after it said that it was an entity of the Indian state, enjoyed state immunity and that navigational charges and aerodrome charges collected by the IATA on behalf of the AAI were related to sovereign functions and not commercial functions. Queries sent to the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Air India on the future course of action remained unanswered till the time of going to print.

"Without going into detail into the extensive factual allegations aiming to establish the latter one.

India's wrongful and abusive conduct towards Plaintiffs, the many actions, direct or indirect, of India within its country's boundaries to attack, inter alia, the Treaty Awards and to prevent their execution by Plaintiffs is simply mind-boggling to say the very least," the court observed. The setback for Air India comes weeks before it is to be handed over to Tata Sons as part of the airline's privatisation, though the new buyers enjoy indemnity from past legal claims.

The three Devas shareholders (Devas Mauritius Ltd., Devas Employees Mauritius Private Limited and Telcom Devas Mauritius Limited), who moved the Canada court, won two international arbitration awards for wrongful termination of its deal with Antrix – \$563.5 million from the International Chamber of Commerce in September 2015 and \$111 million from the Permanent Court of Arbitration in October 2020. Shareholders are seeking to enforce the latter one.



Caught red-handed: Indian Coast Guard personnel with 10 crew members of the Pakistani boat 'Yaseen'. • PTI

Pak. boat with 10 crew caught off Gujarat coast

2,000 kg fish, 600 litre diesel seized

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) apprehended a Pakistani fishing boat with 10 crew members in Indian territorial waters in the Arabian Sea off the Gujarat coast, it said on Sunday.

The boat was intercepted by the ICG vessel, *Ankit*, during an operational patrol on Saturday night, the ICG said in a statement.

On being intercepted and questioned, the crew members of the fishing boat, *Yaseen*, failed to justify their presence in Indian waters. Moreover, the crew mem-

bers tried to flee, heading the trawler towards Pakistani waters, but they were cornered and apprehended due to the quick response by the ICG ship.

During a search of the boat, ICG personnel found around 2,000 kg of fish and 600 litres of diesel, which was seized. The boat is registered at Keti Bandar in Pakistan.

The apprehended boat with its 10 crew members is presently being towed to Porbandar for detailed investigation and joint interrogation of its crew, the ICG said.

20 fishermen handed over to Bangladesh

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) repatriated 20 Bangladeshi fishermen, who were drifting without food in their fishing boat in the Bay of Bengal for a week, before being rescued by Odisha fisherfolk near the Indo-Bangladesh International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) on Sunday.

The 20 fishermen set out for fishing in the Bay of Bengal by a boat on December 7 from the Bangladesh coast. Around December 11, the boat developed technical snag in the engine. Adding to their misfortune, the batteries of their walkie-talkie and mobile phones got drained without any power back-up, disconnecting their communication with the outside world.

The ICG said here: "The ICG ship Sarojini Naidu undertook successful repatriation of one Bangladeshi fishing boat 'Allahar Daan' along with 20 Bangladeshi fishermen at INDO-Bangladesh IMBL. They were formally handed over Bangladesh Coast Guard Ship Shadhin Bangla."

"The Indian fishermen displaying humanity provided necessary assistance to the boat and towed the distressed boat to Paradip on December 26," it said.

Govt. issues revised plans of universal accessibility

Focus shifts to more holistic approach

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI



Construction of a universally accessible ramp in progress at a school in Kerala.

lines provide the gradient and length of ramps – for example, for a length of six metres, the gradient should be 1:12. The minimum clear width of a ramp should be 1,200 mm, the guidelines say.

The guidelines are not just for persons with disabilities (PWD), but for those involved in planning projects, from the construction of government buildings to master-planning cities, Prof. Raheja said.

While making public buildings and transport fully accessible for wheelchair users is covered in the guidelines, other users who may experience temporary problems have also been considered. For instance, a parent pushing a child's pram while carrying groceries or other bags, and women wearing saris.

Centre yet to notify rules of Citizenship Amendment Act

January 9 was the last day of the third extended deadline

VIIJITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) did not notify the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 rules till Sunday, the third extended deadline after the Act was passed. January 9 was the last day of an extension it sought from the two parliamentary committees in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha to frame the rules.

It was not imminently clear if the Ministry had sought more time from the committee on subordinate legislation in the two Houses of Parliament to notify rules that will govern the CAA. Without rules, the Act cannot be implemented. Earlier, it had sought time till April 9, 2021 and then July 9, 2021 from the committees to notify the rules which are to be published in the Gazette of India.

The MHA did not respond if an extension has been sought from the committees. On November 30 last, Minister of State for Home Nitin Jayant Rai informed the Lok Sabha: "The persons covered under the CAA may apply for citizenship after the rules are notified under the CAA."

Earlier on August 4, the

Minister had informed the Rajya Sabha that, "Eligible person covered by this Amendment Act may submit applications for grant of citizenship after appropriate rules are notified by the Central government."

As per the Manual on Parliamentary Work, in case the ministries/departments are not able to frame the rules within the prescribed period of six months after legislation is passed, "they should seek extension of time from the committee stating reasons" which cannot be more than for a period of three months at a time.

The CAA was passed by Parliament on December 11, 2019 and the Act was notified within 24 hours on December 12. In January 2020, the Ministry notified that the

rules will come into force from January 10, 2020.

The CAA provides citizenship on the basis of religion to six undocumented non-Muslim communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who entered India on or before December 31, 2014. It exempts the members of the six communities from any criminal case under the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport Act, 1920. The two Acts specify punishment for entering the country illegally and staying here on expired visas and permits.

83 killed

As many as 83 persons were killed in protests and riots from December 2019-March 2020 in Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Meghalaya and Delhi after the CAA was passed.

There are apprehensions that the CAA, followed by a country-wide compilation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), will benefit non-Muslims excluded from the proposed citizens' register, while excluded Muslims will have to prove their citizenship. The government has informed Parliament that "till now it has not taken any decision to prepare the NRC at national level."

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The CAA was passed by Parliament on December 11,

INTERVIEW | AMARINDER SINGH

'Congress is in a state of continuous civil war, it is no longer the party I headed'

Ahead of Assembly election, the former Chief Minister dismisses any challenge to his recent alliance with BJP, says protests during PM's visit were State-sponsored

VIKAS VASUDEVA

Ahead of the Assembly election, former Chief Minister and chief of the nascent Punjab Lok Congress Amarinder Singh, who has tied up with the BJP and the Shiromani Akali Dal (Sanyukt), is confident that the people of Punjab will vote for his alliance because people identify more with the leader than with the party. It is the leader who has to own up to whatever it is, success or failure, he says. Excerpts:

What would be your party's key agenda to seek votes in the upcoming Assembly election?

■ I have already spelt out that national security and revival of Punjab's economy will be our top most priorities. Punjab is a border State, bordering a perpetually hostile neighbour.

Pakistan and its deep state will never rest and they are in continuous pursuit of creating trouble and turmoil in Punjab. They are sending across weapons using sophisticated technology.

Recently, our security personnel found a Pakistani boat in the Sutluj river. These are all ominous signs. Plus, there are anti-India propagandists being supported and patronized by the ISI.

Second, the economy. Punjab has a cumulative debt burden of about ₹5 lakh crore. How will you repay that? It is a vicious cycle we will have to get out of and it is a tall order. And for all this, we need complete peace, as peace is the prerequisite for progress and prosperity.

You have been claiming that once the model code of conduct is in place, several Congress leaders will join you. When can we expect that to happen?

■ Wait and watch. I can't tell you the specific numbers. We are in regular touch with not only Congress leaders and legislators, but also those from other parties. You will get to know very soon. The time has come.

You are fighting polls in alliance with the BJP [but] the farmers have been angry with the BJP over the three farm laws, which were eventually repealed. Do you think the anger will mellow down?

■ Of course, the farmers have mellowed down. Their main demand was repealing the three laws, which stand repealed. There is already a committee in place to look into the issue of legal guarantee for the minimum support price (MSP). The Prime Minister has shown magnanimity, and I am sure the farmers will also reciprocate.

How do you react to farmers' protest in the backdrop of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent Ferozepur rally and the security lapse?

■ It was a grave security lapse. It was not actually the farmers' protest. It was a State government-sponsored protest and disruption. They were quite wary of the Prime Minister's Ferozepur rally,



People identify more with the leader than with the party

The Congress and other Opposition parties accuse you of being hand in glove with the Badals and hence not acting against former Minister Bikram Singh Majithia in the drugs-related case. After your removal from CM post, the Channi government has filed an FIR against Mr. Majithia. What do you have to say?

■ Just because they have nothing against me, they are saying, I was hand in glove with the Badals. Because, it does not cost them anything to say that. Anyway, I really don't care.

Regarding Majithia's case, there was an investigation carried out by the Special Task Force.

The investigation report is pending in a closed envelope in the Punjab and Haryana High Court. Till the time you don't open it, how do you know how a case can be made against Majithia, or for that matter against anyone else? Justice should not only be done, it should seem to have been done. Just because they would say I am hand in

glove with the Badals, does not mean I would have jumped the due process of law to appease them. Law of this country does not work according to the whims and fancies of anyone. There is a due process that has to be followed.

Which according to you is a greater challenge for your alliance in the poll – the Congress, the Shiromani Akali Dal-BSP or the Aam Aadmi Party? Also, what do you think would be the political fallout of 22 farmers unions contesting the polls?

■ Honestly, I do not see any contest with anyone. I will tell you why.

Take the Congress. It is in a state of continuous civil war. The Punjab Congress president Navjot Singh Sidhu cannot see eye to eye with Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi. The PCC president is behaving like a pampered child, putting forth one demand after another, and he will never be satisfied. Now he wants himself to

be declared as the chief ministerial candidate. If the Congress does that, it loses the strong Scheduled Castes (SC) vote base and if it does not, Sidhu will run away.

Alakis are nowhere in the picture. People have not forgiven them for the way they handled the sacrilege cases and the subsequent protests by people. I don't see them reaching even the last time figure of 13 or so.

The AAP bubble was blasted in the 2019 parliamentary election. Their vote share tumbled down to a mere 7% from 25% in 2017. They may not even cross the double-figure mark this time.

Farmers, if they contest, will lose credibility as the majority of their leadership is opposed to participating in elections. Moreover, they had maintained an apolitical character all through the agitation. If and when they join the electoral process, they will face tough questions.

You have been claiming that as the Congress Chief Minister you fulfilled around 90% of election

promises of Congress party. If that is the case then why should people not vote for the Congress again in the upcoming polls?

■ People identify more with the leader than with the party. It is no longer the same Congress that I headed. Navjot Singh Sidhu has been in the party for not even five years and Mr. Channi joined the party in 2012. They cannot claim the credit. It is the leader who has to own up to whatever it is, success or failure.

When is your alliance expected to announce the candidates? What would be the seat arrangement?

■ We have held a few rounds of talks already. This is an ongoing process. I have said it many times, numbers do not matter for us as who contests how many. Our sole criterion is winnability of the candidates no matter which party he or she may be from, whether the PLC, the BJP or the Shiromani Akali Dal (San-sukta).

'Trinamool's presence will only help BJP in Goa Assembly poll'

Shiv Sena MP Raut hits out at the Mamata-led party for trying to split Congress

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

Eschewing the recent bonhomie with the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress, the Shiv Sena on Sunday lashed out at the party, alleging that it was trying to split the Congress in poll-bound Goa by poaching its leaders.

In his weekly column *Rokhthok* in the Sena mouthpiece *Saamana*, party leader and MP Sanjay Raut criticised Ms. Banerjee's "resolve" to finish off the Congress in Goa.

He also hit out at the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), alleging that both the Trinamool and the AAP were using money to woo voters and poach established leaders. "The state of affairs in Goa is such that all parties have made it a 'political laboratory,'" the Sena's chief spokesperson said.



New frontier: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during a public meeting at Benaulim in Goa on December 13.

Mr. Raut said while uprooting the Congress could be the BJP's dream, it did not behove of someone like Ms. Banerjee, who too was fighting the BJP, to adopt such a stance. The Sena leader said the Trinamool's politics would ultimately benefit the BJP. "The lack of a strong leadership in Goa has led to the Congress coming down to a mere two MLAs from its strength of 17 after the 2017 Assembly election...moreov-

er, as Goa has never had much relevance in Delhi politics, there is not much overseeing of the Congress at the national level. As a result, 'outside parties' like the Trinamool and the AAP are now suddenly talking about the welfare of Goans and are eyeing Christian votes," he said. The Goans would nonetheless stand by the Congress, Mr. Raut added.

Ms. Banerjee, in her attempts to project the Trina-

mool as a national party and stitch-up an anti-BJP coalition, had met Mr. Raut and Minister Aadyita Thackeray in Mumbai and also Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) supremo Sharad Pawar but conspicuously snubbed the Congress leadership. The Sena, the NCP and the Congress share power in the 'Mahavikas Aghadi' coalition in Maharashtra.

Questioning the Trinamool's source of funds used in the Goa election, Mr. Raut also hit out at the ruling BJP for freely misusing money to cling to power in the coastal State. "The BJP, which has ruled Goa for the last decade, has been 'buying out' legislators from other parties with abandon as it had failed to secure majority in the 2017 election...but this time, people whom I met [in Goa] say the BJP will not get a majority even this time."

Do not view Trinamool as a threat in Meghalaya, says BJP

Backdoor entry by Mamata-led party will hurt Cong. most'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

The Meghalaya unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party has said the "backdoor entry" of the Trinamool Congress may harm the Congress and other political parties in the hill State.

The BJP has also sniffed an opportunity in the 2023 Assembly election because of the possibility of the Trinamool adding to the dilemma of the people in choosing a party that would best serve their interests.

"We don't view Trinamool as a threat. It may threaten the prospects of the Congress and others in Meghalaya," State BJP president Ernest Mawrie said.

Among the "others" is the National People's Party, which is the largest constituent of Meghalaya's ruling alliance. The BJP is a minor partner in this alliance.

Insisting that the Trina-

join the Trinamool. "I came to know that many of them will not remain in the party. Some of them are set to join the AITC," he said, claiming that the BJP's central leadership was happy with his performance and banking on him to lead the party in the 2023 Assembly poll.

"We are optimistic about doing well in the elections this time unlike in 2018. We have already started our groundwork and have reconstituted 26 of the 60 Assembly constituency-based committees," Mr. Mawrie said.

The Trinamool became Meghalaya's principal opposition party overnight after former Chief Minister Mukul M. Sangma and 11 other MLAs switched over to the Congress while the remaining dissidents would

join the Congress.

Former CM Mukul Sangma and 11 Congress MLAs had switched over to Trinamool.

mool would not make much of a mark beyond West Bengal, he said the Mamata Banerjee-led party's performance in the Tripura civic body poll last year was a case in point.

Mr. Mawrie had earlier said many within the State BJP who campaigned for his removal as the Meghalaya unit president have joined the Congress while the remaining dissidents would

Reach out to Goa voters, Kejriwal tells AAP workers

Party releases second list of candidates

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PUNE

Urging the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) workers to practise "positive campaigning", Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said that the party's objective in the Goa Assembly election was to usher in a systemic change in the State.

In a video address to AAP volunteers, Mr. Kejriwal ex-

BJP MLA held in Bengal for flouting norms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KOLKATA

Five BJP members, including Purushottam MLA Biman Ghosh, were arrested on Sunday on the charge of violating State Election Commission guidelines during campaigning for civic polls in West Bengal's Hooghly district.

Elections to municipal corporations of Chandannagar, Bidhannagar, Siliguri and Asansol are to be held on February 22.

APPOINTMENT OF JUDICIAL MEMBER FOR TAMIL NADU LOKAYUKTA

The Government of Tamil Nadu, vide G.O.(Ms.) No.149, Human Resources Management (N-Spl.) Department, dated 24.12.2021, has constituted a Search Committee under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Thiru. Justice G.M. Akbar Ali (Retd.), Thiru. Mohan Pyare, I.A.S.(Retd.) and Thiru. R.S.Nallasivam, I.P.S.(Retd.), as Members, for the purpose of submitting the names for consideration for the post of one Judicial Member of the Tamil Nadu Lokayukta.

The Search Committee invites applications for the post of one Judicial Member of Lokayukta from interested persons, who is or has been a Judge of the High Court or has put in 25 years of experience in State Judiciary with impeccable record. The qualification, disqualification, term of office and other criteria may be verified from Tamil Nadu Lokayukta Act, 2018 and the Rules thereunder.

Interested persons, shall send their application by Speed Post / Registered Post, so as to reach the Chairperson in the given address, on or before 5.00 pm of 28.01.2022. Application received after the closing date shall not be entertained.

The applications already sent, if any, either to the Chairman of the Search Committee or to any other authority before publication of this news item shall not be considered as a valid application. The applications received on or after the publication made in the newspaper alone will be considered.

Address:

Hon'ble Thiru. Justice G.M. Akbar Ali (Retd.)

Chairman of the Search Committee,

Second Floor, Catholic Center, No.108, Armenian Street,

Parrys, Chennai-600 001.

Nodal Officer

Search Committee

DIPR/ 10 /Display/2022

horted them to take election campaigning as "an opportunity to serve people". Speaking of the need to change the entire political system in Goa, Mr. Kejriwal said that the AAP was contesting the polls to root out "a corrupt party" and install an "honest one". The party on Sunday released its second list of 10 candidates for the 40-seat Goa Assembly election slated to be held on February 22.

Similar step

Similar changes were carried out during the Assembly elections in Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala last year, after the Election Commission wrote to the Health Ministry reminding it of its standing instructions against the use of photos of political leaders on government advertisements during elections.

The sources said. The Election Commission of India had announced the poll schedule for the five States on Saturday. Polling would

take place in seven phases from February 10 to March 7 and counting would be on March 10.

Health Ministry to apply filters on the CoWIN platform

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's name and photo will be removed from the COVID-19 vaccination certificates issued in the five poll-bound States since the model code of conduct has come into force there, official sources said on Sunday.

The Union Health Ministry would apply the necessary filters on the CoWIN platform to remove Mr. Modi's photo from the certificates issued to people in Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh,



Narendra Modi

CM

Bidders can download the EOI from e-tendering website <https://tenders.nic.in> and the same will also be through the same website only. Corrigendum/addendum, if any, shall be published in the above website only.

IndianOil

CIN - L2301MH1995G0011388

Expression of Interest (EOI)

Indian Oil Corporation plans to develop customer-oriented highway facilities as Wayside Amenities at new IOCL Outlets on important existing and upcoming highways/expressways pan India. Indian Oil proposes to form a panel of parties to develop, operate & maintain these non-fuel/commercial facilities.

Interested Parties may refer to the detailed Indian Oil EOI EOI 2022_MKTHO_145830_1 which is available at our website www.ioctenders.nic.in. Last date for submission of application is 27.01.2022 at 15:00 HRS.

DIPR/ 10 /Display/2022

The National Small Industries Corporation Ltd.

(A Govt. of India Enterprise)

Technical Services Centre,

A-1, Industrial Estate, Aligarh-202001, U.P.

NSIC Ph. 6290392624, 999498636. Email: ntsecalg@nsic.co.in**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

The National Small Industries Corporation Limited (NSIC) invites sealed offers through Tender under two Bid system from eligible bidders for Supply and Installation of machineries like DM Water Plant, Spot Welding Machine, Surface Grinding Machine & Tool & Accessories (Cutting Tools) for their Aligarh Technical Centre. Last date of submission of Tenders is 31.01.2022 up to 15:00 Hrs.

For details, please visit NSIC's website: [https://www.nsic.co.in/tender/Current-Tenders.aspx](http://www.nsic.co.in/tender/Current-Tenders.aspx)

General Manager (Centre Head – Aligarh)

Karyalay Atmikriti Murtu Anjaneya, Samanag-Veeranagar, Samanag-Veeranagar

क्रायले अट्मिक्रिति मृतु अंजनेया, सामनग-वीरानगर

Jallikattu banned in Vellore, nearby districts in T.N. ahead of Pongal

Teams deployed in Jallikattu hotspots; move follows surge in COVID-19 cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT VELLORE

With a steep rise in the daily cases of COVID-19, the district administration in Vellore, Tiruvannamalai, Ranipet and Tirupattur, have banned the conduct of Jallikattu events, ahead of Pongal festival, as part of safety measures. A large group of Jallikattu enthusiasts gheraoed the Vellore Collectorate a few days ago, seeking permission from Collector P. Kumaravel Pandian, to organise the event during the festival.

As the daily cases touched 295 in Vellore on Sunday, the administration has banned

the event by directing revenue officials and police to prevent any such activities, especially in remote villages of the district.

“During the pandemic, such large public events are automatically banned. Special health and police teams were formed to check any violations on COVID-19 norms,” Ranipet Collector D. Bhaskara Pandian told *The Hindu*.

Team deployed

Special revenue and police teams were also deployed in Jallikattu hotspots like Arani, Polur, Chengam, Cheyyar

and Vandavasi to prevent the conduct of the event in remote villages, especially along Jawadhu Hills in Tiruvannamalai during the festival. After meeting with the event organisers, the revenue divisional officers (RDOs) also got a written undertaking from the organisers in these areas that they will not hold such events due to the pandemic.

Shops at crowded towns in the Ranipet district, including Arcot, Walajah, Arakkonam, Ranipet town and Sholingur, are allowed to operate with adequate social distancing.

On an average, a 20-30 feet distance between each shop in these markets, with social distancing circles at



Ban on conduct: As the daily cases touched 295 in Vellore on Sunday, the administration cancelled Jallikattu and directed revenue officials and police to prevent the holding of the event, especially in remote villages of the district. ■c.

VENKATACHALAPATHY

of Tiruvannamalai, the largest among the four, had a series of meetings with traders and small businessmen on relocating the existing market to the outskirts of the temple town.

Accordingly, the common market for flowers and vegetables will start functioning from two playgrounds from Monday, with one opposite to the Municipal office and another near the Gandhi Nagar Bypass Road in the town. Tiruvannamalai Collector B. Murugesu inspected these temporary markets, which will accommodate 340 shops, including 150 flower shops.

“Basic amenities like water, toilets, bus services and public addressing systems,

were provided in these markets. From Monday (January 10), devotees will be allowed to visit Arunchalaeswarar temple, only after showing two doses of vaccination certificate,” said Tiruvannamalai SP A. Pavan Kumar Reddy.

Meanwhile, the complete lockdown in all the four districts on Sunday was peaceful. Around 2,750 police personnel were deployed for enforcing restrictions. Each barricaded checkpoints had a team of four policemen in these districts. Only emergency services and competitive examinations, with valid documents, were allowed.

Essential services like milk, food delivery by online portals, parcels from hotels and pharmacies were allowed to operate. A total of 253 patrolling teams were involved in ensuring zero violation on lockdown restrictions in Vellore.

“Travellers, except for medical services, were asked to return at six border checkpoints in the districts. Drones were also roared in to ensure 100% compliance,” said Vellore SP S. Rajesh Kannan.

Helplines for issues related to COVID-19, including availability of beds, were also introduced in Tirupattur and Ranipet. The helpline numbers for Ranipet are 04172-273188; 04172-273166; 9489668833; 9443093916 and the ones for Tirupattur are 04179-222111; 04179-220020; 04179-226666; 04179-229008; 04179-1077.

IN BRIEF



Amazon moves tribunal against CCI order

NEW DELHI

Amazon has filed an appeal in the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) against the Competition Commission of India (CCI) order that suspended the over two-year-old approval for its deal with Future Coupons Pvt Ltd, according to sources. The NCLAT is an appellate authority for the orders passed by the CCI. ■PTI

Global Surya Namaskar event on Makar Sankranti

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of AYUSH will be organising a global Surya Namaskar demonstration programme for 75 lakh people on January 14, the day of Makar Sankranti. The mass Surya Namaskar demonstration programme also intends to carry the message of climate change and global warming, the AYUSH Ministry said in a statement. ■PTI

M.P. constable suspended for not trimming hair

BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh Police have suspended a constable for indiscipline as he grew his hair and moustache despite being told to trim it, an official said. The suspension order issued on Friday to constable Rakesh Rana, posted as a driver in the motor transport wing, surfaced on various social media platforms. ■PTI

SKOCH Award for Assam mission on malnutrition

GUWAHATI

A mission to combat malnourishment among children aged six months to 5 years has earned the SKOCH Award for southern Assam's Cachar district. The SKOCH Award recognises people, projects and institutions that go the extra mile to make India a better nation.

400 Parliament staffers test positive for COVID

Budget session is scheduled to begin in last week of January

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Nearly 400 personnel working at Parliament tested positive for COVID-19 between January 4 and 8, sources said on Sunday.

The crucial Budget Session of Parliament is scheduled to begin in the last week of January.

Out of these, 65 are from the Rajya Sabha secretariat, 200 from the Lok Sabha Secretariat and 133 belong to allied services.

New measures

As a precautionary measure, the Rajya Sabha Secretariat has introduced a host of measures, including restricting the physical attendance of its staff. As per the latest directions, 50% of officials



Virus control: Physical attendance has been restricted and work from home has been introduced for officials. ■PTI

and staff below the rank of Under Secretary are required to work from home till end of the month. They constitute about 65% of the total employees.

The decision was taken at a meeting of Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu with Secretary General P.C. Modi and Adviser P.P.K. Ramacharyulu.

Those with disabilities and pregnant women are exempted from attending office. The starting and closing timings of the Secretariat are staggered to avoid crowding. All official meetings will be held virtually.

Vikrant heads out for next set of sea trials

Readings on performance to be taken

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI

Indigenous aircraft carrier *Vikrant* headed out for the next set of sea trials on Sunday, shortly after two high-profile visits – by the President and the Vice-President of India within a span of about two weeks.

The maiden sea trials in August 2021 were to establish propulsion, navigational suite and basic operations, while the second sea trial in October-November saw the ship being put through various machinery trials and flight trials. The ship was out for 10 days, proving its sustenance in the very second sortie. Various seamanship evolutions were

also successfully cleared during the second sortie.

Vikrant now sails to undertake complex manoeuvres to establish specific readings of how the ship performs in various conditions. Various sensor suites of the ship too would be tested. Scientists from the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory – a DRDO laboratory based at Visakhapatnam – would embark the vessel during the trials, the Navy said.

Despite surging COVID cases in the country and the resultant challenges, the combined teams from multiple organisations associated with the project are committed to meet the timelines. These trials are part of de-

Omicron effect: IndiGo to cancel 20% of its flights

It waives rescheduling fee till Jan. 31

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

IndiGo on Sunday announced that it would withdraw 20% of its flights as the surge in COVID-19 cases had hit travel demand.

The airline will also offer free changes for all new and existing bookings made before January 31 for travel until March 31.

“Where possible, cancellations of flights will be done at least 72 hours in advance and customers will be moved to the next available flight and will also be able to change their travel through the use of Plan B on our website,” said the airline, which normally operates 1,500 flights per day.

The revision in capacity from the airline that caters to every six in 10 domestic passengers comes at a time airlines are being forced to



The surge in COVID-19 cases has reduced the number of domestic travellers.

fly relatively emptier aircrafts. The surge in cases has also brought down the number of domestic travellers – from above three lakh daily passengers to 2.6 lakh passengers on January 7. Passenger traffic in the first seven days of January had dropped by 16% compared to the same period last month.

Complete lockdown in T.N. passes off peacefully

People stay indoors, essential services function

TAMIL NADU BUREAU

The first complete lockdown in the city was expected to reduce the number of cases because 70% of the infections were contracted outside home, at social gatherings and public spaces. Chennai Corporation officials did not collect fine from violators as there was fewer persons on the roads.

Most of the one lakh commercial establishments along 40,000 streets in Chennai remained closed, except pharmacies and Aavin outlets.

A few commuters who were stranded in areas like Koyambedu were offered food at Corporation shelters for the homeless.

“We have 2,000 beds to accommodate the stranded persons in shelters,” said an official.

ration Gagandeep Singh Bedi, along with senior police officers, visited the vehicle checkpoint at Saidapet.

Mr. Bedi said the lockdown in the city was expected to reduce the number of cases because 70% of the infections were contracted outside home, at social gatherings and public spaces. Chennai Corporation officials did not collect fine from violators as there was fewer persons on the roads.

Since food delivery and other such services were allowed to function, people could receive their essentials at home. Those who headed to bus-stands, railway stations and airports were asked to produce a copy of their tickets.

In

Chennai, Health Minister Ma. Subramanian, Health Secretary J. Radhakrishnan, Commissioner of the Greater Chennai Corpo-

Rafale-M compatibility with aircraft carrier to be tested +

It will take place at the Indian Navy's Shore Based Test Facility in Goa; Boeing to also take part in trials

DINAKAR PERI

NEW DELHI

Beginning Monday, French aircraft maker Dassault Aviation will fly its Rafale-M fighter jet from the Indian Navy's Shore Based Test Facility (SBTF) in Goa to demonstrate compatibility and suitability to operate from the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier *Vikrant*'s deck.

The Rafale-M arrived in Goa last Thursday and the demonstration starting from Monday is expected to go up to February 1, two Defence officials independently said. Boeing will also demonstrate the compatibility of its F/A-18 Super Hornet on the SBTF likely in March, it has been learnt.

Both the Rafale-M and F/A-18 are originally designed to operate from carriers with



Flight test: The Rafale-M demonstration is expected to go on till February 1 at the test facility in Goa. ■FILE PHOTO

demonstrations by aircraft manufacturers to showcase the compatibility of their aircraft to fly from Indian Navy's aircraft carriers which use a ski-jump to launch aircraft, one official explained.

Boeing has taken a lead in

the race having already demonstrated the ability of F/A-18 to take off from a similar shore based facility at Naval Air Station Patuxent River in Maryland, U.S. in December 2020.

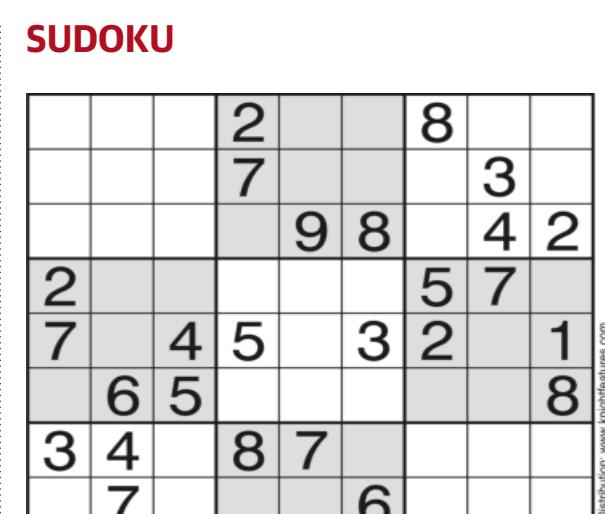
However, each fighter brings certain advantages while having some limitations. For instance, Rafale-M does not have a twin seater while its acquisition would mean commonality with the Indian Air Force which will soon complete inducting the 36 Rafale jets contracted in 2016. On the other hand, the F/A-18 is a much widely employed platform with a twin seater trainer and also has an electronic warfare version which might be of interest to the Navy. There is also the is-

sue of the size of the aircraft and their fit on the carrier and its lifts which would also be factored in the final evaluation.

In 2017, the Navy had floated Request For Information (RFI) to procure 57 twin-engine carrier fighters which is now set to be downsized to around 26, including few twin-seater trainer variants. The revision is in the backdrop of a new indigenous Twin Engine Carrier Based Deck Fighter (TEBDF) being designed and developed by the DRDO and Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA).

However, the procurement has now gained urgency as the Navy is short of aircraft to operate from both the carriers.

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13449

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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Sri Lanka asks China to restructure debt

Gotabaya Rajapaksa meets Chinese Foreign Minister, flags economic crisis arising out of pandemic

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Sunday sought Chinese assistance to restructure the debt owed by the island nation to the Asian giant.

"The President pointed out that it would be a great relief to the country if the attention could be paid on restructuring the debt repayments as a solution to the economic crisis that has arisen in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic," the Presidential Media Division said in a statement on Mr. Gotabaya's meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Colombo. Mr. Wang concluded his five-nation tour of littoral countries in the Indian Ocean Region, with a one-day visit to Colombo on Sunday, following a visit to the Maldives.

Sri Lanka owes China over \$5 billion, amounting to about 10 % of the country's total foreign debt. Mr. Gotabaya's request to Beijing to restructure it comes during an unprecedented economic meltdown in Sri Lanka, with the country's foreign reserves rapidly declining following the devastating impact of the pandemic on its crucial export and tourism sectors over the last two years.



Striking a deal: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi with Sri Lankan PM Mahinda Rajapaksa. •@TWITTER/PRESRAJAPAKSA

In November, Sri Lanka's foreign reserves stood at \$1.6 billion, triggering widespread concern about how Colombo might pay its high imports bill, especially when the Sri Lankan rupee has considerably weakened.

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa made a similar request to New Delhi in February 2020 for a debt moratorium, but there has been no

response since. "If India agrees to postpone debt by three years, we can convince others too," Mr. Mahinda then told *The Hindu* in New Delhi.

Requests to India

New Delhi is also yet to respond to more recent requests from Colombo for emergency Lines of Credit for import of food, fuel and medicines, and a currency swap to boost reserves, although External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has assured Colombo of support "in difficult times".

"Greeted FM G.L. Peiris of Sri Lanka in the New Year. A reliable friend, India will support Sri Lanka in these difficult times. Agreed to remain in close touch," Mr. Jaishankar said in a tweet recently.

While it remains to be seen when and how much assistance comes Colombo's way in the coming weeks, the country must prepare to

meet its daunting foreign debt obligations for 2022, totalling over \$7 billion, including bond repayments of \$500 million in January and \$1 billion in July.

Besides requesting China to help Sri Lanka attract Chinese tourists, President Gotabaya said that if a concessional trade credit scheme could be initiated for imports from China, it would enable industries to operate smoothly. China is Sri Lanka's largest partner for imports, with 22 % of the island nation's imports originating from China.

Foreign Minister Wang also met PM Mahinda for talks. "Had a very pleasant meeting with the Foreign Min of #China. Discussions centered around the logistics of facilitating the return of the many #lka med students to China. Also discussed were a host of issues inc Tourism, investments, #COVID19SL relief & post Covid preparedness," Mr. Mahinda tweeted.

164 dead, nearly 6,000 held after Kazakhstan protests

Detainees include 'substantial number of foreign nationals'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ALMATY

More than 150 people have died and almost 6,000 have been arrested in Kazakhstan following violent riots in Central Asia's largest country this week, media reported on Sunday citing the Health Ministry.

At least 164 people were killed in the riots, including 103 in the largest city Almaty, which saw some of the fiercest clashes between protesters and security forces.

The figures included "a substantial number of foreign nationals", it said without elaborating.

The situation has stabilized in all regions of the country," even if security forces were continuing "clean-up" operations, the statement added after President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev held a crisis meeting.

The figures included "a substantial number of foreign nationals", it said without elaborating.

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The

ASK US

Q. It had been reported that accrual of interest in EPF accounts in excess of ₹2.50 lakh during FY22 is taxable income. Kindly clarify the following:
 a) Is accrued interest in excess of ₹2.50 lakh taxable income in respect of GPF account holders, also considering that there will be no employer contribution to GPF accounts of their employees.
 b) Is accrued interest in excess of ₹2.50 lakh in relation to the employee portion of EPF or both employee and employer portions of EPF?
 c) Also, please clarify if any methodology has been designed for computation of the accrued interest during 2021-22 since the individual EPF or GPF account slips will be issued to employees at some time after completion of the FY. But, individual Income Tax liabilities are to be assessed, recovered and remitted by the employers by April 4 every year.

V. RAVINDRA KUMAR

N. Sree Kanth: With effect from April 1, 2021, interest accrued on contribution by an employee in excess of ₹2,50,000 (EPF and Voluntary PF) will be taxable in the hands of the employee.

Point-wise replies are as follows:

- a) In case of GPF (usually for government employees) wherein there would be no contribution from the employer, then the threshold limit for contribution by employees on which interest accrued is taxable is ₹5,00,000
- b) Interest accrued for contribution in excess of ₹2,50,000 is only for the employee's contribution and not applicable for the employer's contribution
- c) CBDT released a notification dated August 31, 2021, inserting Rule 9D, which throws light upon the mechanism as to the methodology to compute the taxable portion of the interest accrued on the excess contribution over the aforementioned threshold.

Two separate provident fund accounts are to be maintained wherein the first account will be for the non-taxable contribution, this account shall have the balance as on March 31, 2021, including the interest accrued thus far and is to be added with employee contribution up to the threshold limits and the interest accrued on such contributions under the threshold limit and the interest accrued on the balance prior to March 31, 2021, minus any withdrawals.

The second account will be for the taxable contributions. This account shall have the excess contribution over the threshold plus the interest accrued on such excess contribution minus any withdrawals.

Q. I am a salaried individual earning ₹10 lakh per annum. I plan to buy my first car at a budget of ₹5-6 lakh by saving money. My time horizon for corpus building is 2-3 years. I am investing

₹25,000 a month in MFs. How do I buy my first car by saving money?

ASHWIN KUMAR V.A.

Vidya Bala: It is good to know that you prefer to save and buy a car than go for an EMI. You should be able to comfortably reach your target corpus in 24 months if your current investment of ₹25,000 per month is able to deliver just 6% per annum.

This is assuming that you have no other use for the monthly savings of ₹25,000. Please note that given the short time frame, going excessively on equity funds can be very risky. If you hold more than 20-30% in equity funds, book out some profits and invest in debt funds or simply put in large bank FDs. This way whatever you earned in an extraordinary market like 2021 will be preserved and you will ensure that your corpus does not take any sudden hit due to market declines closer to your goal.

I had invested ₹56,000 in June 2017 in an ELSS with dividend option. After three years, the amount was switched over to growth option in June 2020. When can I redeem the amount without any exit load?

RAMESH

Vidya Bala: There are two aspects here. One the lock-in period for an ELSS and two, the exit load applicable for any fund if redeemed before a minimum holding period. We think you are referring to the lock-in period. Since you have moved to growth from dividend, it is considered as fresh investment (eligible for Section 80C tax benefit) and the lock-in of 3 years again applies.

That means you can redeem post June 2023. Exit load is the amount you pay as a fee for exiting a fund before a certain period of holding. In your case, since this is an ELSS fund already subject to lock-in, there will be no exit load when you are eligible for redemption.

Q. My father-in-law has ₹18 lakh and wants to distribute it among five of his daughters – all senior citizens – by means of FDs or any such savings funds or pension plans. Which scheme suits us best?

MOHAMMED IKRAMULLA

Vidya Bala: Since all the daughters are senior citizens, they can consider Senior Citizens' Savings Scheme available in major banks and post office. It is government backed and will also provide superior returns than most options today.

Another option is an LIC pension scheme for senior citizens called Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana.

(K. Sree Kanth is partner, GSS Associates Chartered Accountants, Chennai and Vidya Bala is co-founder Primeinvestor.in)

Readers can e-mail queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. The experts on personal finance will answer select queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

Keep an eye on the portfolio

When taking buy/sell investment calls, investors must understand that the market is not under their control

JOYDEEP SEN

Certain basics do not change. In investments, you have to always go by your investment objectives, risk appetite, time horizon, and the risk profile of the investment asset. Having said that, let us discuss some perspectives in the context of the new year.

Equity

Calling the market level on equities i.e. trying to predict the level of Nifty or Sensex is a futile exercise. Over a long investment horizon, equity provides decent returns, significantly higher than inflation. However, over the short term, it can be volatile. In this context, one year is short horizon and 10 or 15 years is long horizon; five years or so is medium term.

Hence, do not look at daily levels of Nifty or Sensex or individual stocks, and think of tinkering with your equity exposures. Decide the extent of your equity exposure on the basis of the portfolio compo-

nent that (a) is for the keeps, say 10 or 15 years, and (b) the daily price fluctuations of which will not bother you.

On the economy and corporate performance, which is the basis for equity investments, our GDP is on the path of recovery; corporate performance, particularly large corporates in whose stocks you invest, has been sanguine though MSMEs are challenged by the pandemic.

Market valuation, measured by parameters such as price-to-earnings ratio or price-to-book value ratio or market capitalisation-to-GDP ratio and the like, is not cheap. That is why a long horizon is required; do not break your head over valuation levels or timing the entry, as volatility is par for the course.

For existing equity investments, as long as it is for the long term, you need not worry. Some investors are looking at booking partial profits; if the equity exposure in your portfolio is high-

er than your comfort level, you may do that. As an example, if you are comfortable with 60% equity and it has moved up to 70% driven by the market rally, you may exit 10% and move to 'defensives' such as debt or hybrid funds.

Debt MFs

In debt mutual funds, returns have been muted in the recent past, and will remain muted next year as well. The RBI is expected to increase interest



Better avoid the crypto craze if the lure of high returns is the only reason you are keen on the asset class

rates next year. As and when interest rates move up, your returns from debt mutual funds are not good, as interest rates and bond prices move inversely. At the end of it, things improve as the accrual level i.e. the rate of return earned by the portfolio, improves.

To reiterate, this should not encourage you to tweak the debt mutual fund allocation of your portfolio. This is the relatively stable component of your portfolio, less volatile than equity. This component is anyway not expected to outperform equity over a long horizon. Your investments for near term or medium term cash-flow requirements and the long-term stability-preferred component, should be in debt mutual funds.

Deposits

Deposits such as bank deposits and corporate deposits are different from debt mutual funds.

Returns are defined, not dependent upon interest rate movements in the market. Gradually, as and when the RBI raises interest rates, deposit rates are expected to move up.

However, it will be gradual and banks have had surplus funds lying with them in the pandemic phase; they will not be in a hurry to increase rates. As and when rates improve, you may book fresh deposits or even churn the earlier ones at lower rates.

Small Savings Schemes

Popularly known as Post Office Schemes, rates here are defined by the Centre and revised quarterly, as per a formula where the base rate is that of govern-

ment security traded yields in the secondary market, plus a mark-up. For quite some time, the Centre has given a rate higher than the formula rate. This is good for the public.

The question that has been floating around is: is it going to remain as high, given that the government has allowed rates higher than the formula rates? It is likely that these rates will sustain, because in the interest rate downward cycle, the rates have been maintained and in the upward cycle, which is likely to commence now, it will be easier to sustain. Upward revision is unlikely, at least in the initial phase of rate increases, as small savings rates are already on the higher side.

Siren call: crypto

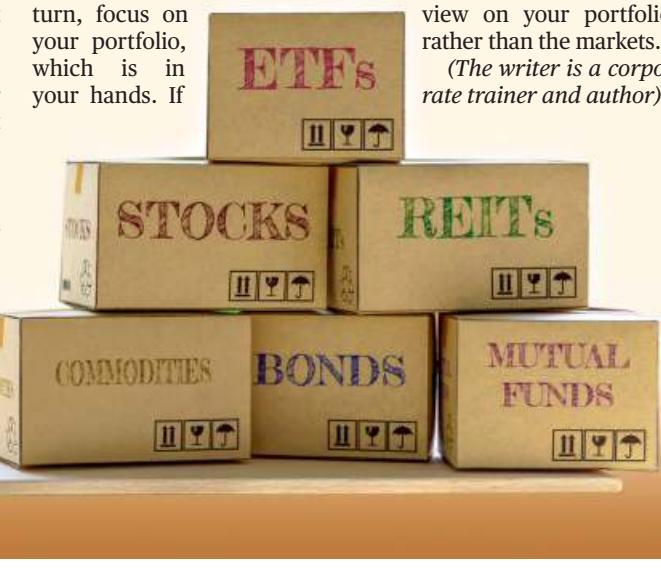
Your investments should be in assets that you understand and about which you are convinced. It is better to avoid the crypto craze, if the basis of your investment is the lure of the high returns.

Conclusion

The market is not in your hands; what you can control is your portfolio. Do it judiciously, not falling for the noise around you. If cryptocurrency prices are rallying and you are not participating, it is okay; you cannot catch everything. If the market price of one of your investments is falling, you need not sell immediately as long as the fundamentals are intact. Let the new year resolu-

tion be, to have a clearer view on your portfolio rather than the markets.

(The writer is a corporate trainer and author)



COVER NOTE: MIS-SELLING OF PLANS

Half-truths and promises galore

Before buying a policy do your homework and read the document before affixing signature

K. NITYA KALYANI

This is the season when insurance selling reaches its higher pitches, the last quarter of the financial year. The season to project tax-planning for buying insurance and also the season for insurance companies and their sales network to chase down targets.

Watch out especially if it is your first year in employment. You are flush with money and good intentions of putting it to good use to secure your future, but have no clue yet about taxes or investing.

Your friendly neighbourhood insurance agent, usually a family friend or even a relative, has you in his sights!

No doubt you will be flooded with pesky phone calls, SMS messages, e-mails and ads popping up on whichever social media you frequent, badgering you to buy life insurance and health insurance. You may even feel a bit flattered by all the



Grace period: The insured has 15 days from the date of receipt of policy bond to return it and claim a refund. ■ GETTYIMAGES/ISTOCK

Is it a bad thing to buy insurance? NO! Far from it. It is a very good thing provided you buy the right policy and for the right purpose. The right policy here means right for you.

'Right policy'

Without sounding very harsh, I have to say that most sellers will pitch you the right policy, the right policy for them. Which

will add to their target premium collection and remuneration in the form of commission or brokerage.

Mis-selling has added to the general discontent with the concept of insurance not just in our country, but around the world and this is evidenced by regulations and laws aiming to limit it.

Misrepresenting a policy's

terms and conditions or cost during the sale process is mis-selling. You buy a product that does not suit you fully or partially, or it costs much more than it is made out to seem.

Single premium plans

Examples abound. In life insurance, regular premium policies are mis-sold as single premium policies. That is, you are led to think your premium is ₹50,000 one time, for a coverage of, say, ₹10 lakh.

Even basic internet searches will show you that this single premium can get you just about ₹3 lakh life coverage. Yet, people have signed on in a hurry - very like to avail the tax benefit in the fag end of the financial year - only to find that the next year there is a premium demand for ₹50,000 again and the obligation would be for the term of the policy, of about 15 years.

When the second premium becomes due, you either continue

in the trap or abandon your policy to cut your losses.

Another, equally damaging misrepresentation is not explaining that a unit-linked policy, while it may have a (small) life cover component, is largely a market investment and the returns are dependent on the vagaries of the market. In other words, you think that the policy pays out a defined sum assured but that depends on the capital markets and the fund you choose.

Taking safeguards

What are the safeguards against being mis-sold to?

First ensure you are not 'mis-buying.' Never be railroaded into a quick decision under pressure, be it a tax deadline or just hard-sell. It is not unknown for the marketers to appeal to your sense of a good deal or even greed and say that the policy will be withdrawn in a few days or that the premiums are going to be revised upwards

and returns will drop.

Do your homework, ask questions and convince yourself that what you are paying for is what you will be getting.

As part of your proposal form you have to sign a declaration stating that you have read or have been explained the nature of the policy, coverage, terms and premium at the point of sale. So, please ensure that this is true when you sign.

If the deed is done and you are regretting it, you have 15 days from the date you receive the policy bond to return it and claim a refund.

Called the free-look period, it helps you undo a potentially disastrous financial mistake, one that will come back to haunt your loved ones you meant to protect.

In the next instalment of Cover Note we will see how to spot mis-selling in health insurance.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

PERSONAL LOAN - RATES AND CHARGES

| Name of Lender | Interest rate (%) | EMI (Rs 5 lakh) | EMI (Rs 10 lakh) | Processing fee (% of loan amount) |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|--|
| HDFC Bank | 10.25-21.00 | 10,685-13,527 | 2,149-2,705 | Upto 2.5% (Max Rs 25,000) |
| Tata Capital | 10.99 onwards | 10,869 onwards | 2,174 onwards | Upto 2.75% |
| ICICI Bank | 10.50-19.00 | 10,747-12,970 | 2,149-2,594 | Upto 2.50% |
| State Bank of India | 9.60-13.85 | 10,525-11,595 | 2,105-2,319 | Nil across all channels till 31st Jan 2022 |
| Axis Bank | 10.25 onwards | 10,685-14,384 | 2,137-2,877 | 1.5%-2% |
| Kotak Mahindra Bank | 10.25 onwards | 10,685 onwards | 2,137 onwards | Upto 2.5% |
| Canara Bank | 10.20-13.90 | 10,673-11,608 | 2,135-2,322 | Upto 1% |
| Punjab National Bank | 7.90-14.45 | 10,114-11,751 | 2,022-2,350 | Upto 1% |
| Federal Bank | 10.49-17.99 | 10,744-12,694 | 2,149-2,539 | Upto 3% |
| Punjab & Sind Bank | 9.50-11.50 | 10,501-10,996 | 2,100-2,199 | Upto 1% |
| South Indian Bank | 10.30-18.05 | 10,697-12,710 | 2,139-2,542 | 2% |
| Bank of Maharashtra | 8.45-12.80 | 10,246-11,325 | 2,098-2,265 | Upto 1% |
| Indian Overseas Bank | 11.30-12.05 | 10,946-11,135 | 2,189-2,227 | Upto 0.75% |
| Indian Bank* | 9.05-13.65 | 10,391- | | |

Team India's blueprint to conquer the Final Frontier

The visitors need to treat the decider like any other Test and play with greater freedom in the city of sunshine and sea

INDIA IN SA

S. DINAKAR
CAPE TOWN

The trick is in the mind. The decider at the Newlands here will be one of the most significant matches for India in its Test history.

A win here and it will accomplish what no other Indian team has managed to achieve. Win a Test series in South Africa.

Can India conquer the Final Frontier?

Immense pressure

The pressure on the Indian team, with the series 1-1, will be immense. This is indeed an opportunity to tick a big box.

But then, Indians will do well to take the Final Frontier element out of their minds and treat the decider, beginning January 11, like any other Test match.

They will, this way, be able to play with greater freedom in this city of sunshine and sea. This said, the

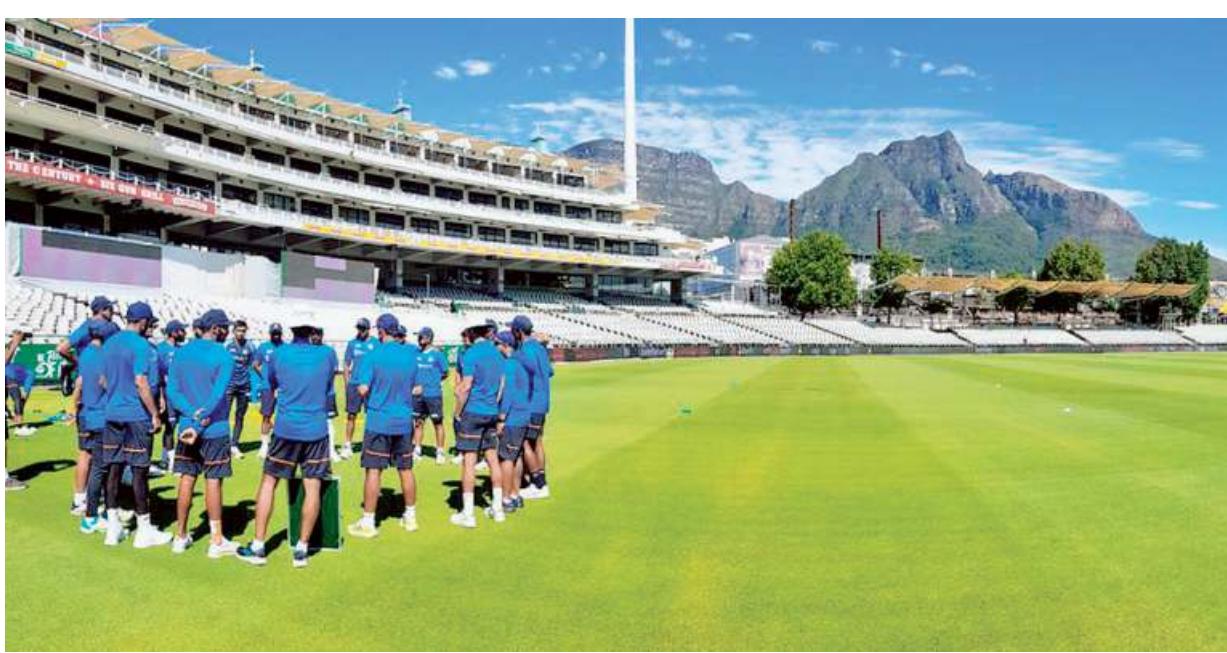
Indian obsession with taller pacemen and citing this as a reason for its seamers getting less purchase from the pitch in the second Test at the Wanderers, is nothing more than a cleverly camouflaged excuse.

If height indeed was a factor, then how did Shardul Thakur, the shortest of the Indian pacemen along with Mohammed Shami, run through the South African line-up in the first innings, scalping seven?

And no Proteas bowler, whatever be his height, got a seven-for in the Test, or bowled a more destructive spell.

Forget about the height. It is about the areas you bowl in. If the Indian pacemen, irrespective of their height, had consistently hit the cracks, like Shardul did in the South African first innings, India would have won.

And the outfield had dried up considerably by the time the Test resumed on day four. In any case the ball was



Perfect setting: The picturesque Newlands will host the third and final Test between India and South Africa. ■TWITTER/BCCI

wiped clean and dry before every delivery with a towel.

If the ball was indeed slippery then how did the Indian pacemen manage to hit the South African batters so many times on the body?

Can you do this with a slippery ball?

Logic and common sense go out of the window when you search for excuses for a defeat from a winning position.

In any case, past is past, and looking ahead, zeroing in on the decider at Newlands, India needs to pick a replacement for Mohammed Siraj.

A hamstring injury, par-

ticularly for a paceman, can come back and India is certain not to risk Siraj in the decider.

So it boils down to choosing between Ishant Sharma and Umesh Yadav.

Ishant is down on pace, is not getting any younger and has not been in the best of forms lately.

Yet, when he finds his rhythm, he can still bowl a compelling off-stump line with bounce.

And going by India's current line of thinking - wanting taller pacemen - Ishant could get the nod.

The Umesh case

This said, Umesh has done little wrong in the opportunities given to him. He is the more versatile paceman, has a lovely outswinger, can bring the ball back and is decidedly quicker than Ishant.

In fact, when he received a rare opportunity, against England at the Oval last year, Umesh, bowling with fire, scalped three batsmen in each innings, playing a key role in the Indian victory.

He opened up the Test for India with wickets of Joe Root and Dawid Malan.

But then, Umesh is likely to sit out again.

Kohli likely to play third Test

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CAPE TOWN

India captain Virat Kohli, who missed the second Test because of an upper back spasm, had nets with the rest of the Indian team at Newlands on Sunday.

The Indian team arrived in Cape Town, the venue for the decider, on Saturday. According to reports, Kohli played without any discomfort.

The chances of Kohli leading India in the third Test appear bright.



Virat Kohli.
■TWITTER/BCCI

England digs in to salvage heart-pumping draw

The last pair of Broad and Anderson negotiates the final two overs to deny Australia

THE ASHES

AGENCE-FRANCE-PRESSE
SYDNEY

Battle-weary England dug deep for a gripping draw with just one wicket left to deny dominant Australia a 4-0 series lead in the fourth Ashes Test here on Sunday.

Pressure

Number 11 James Anderson doggedly played out a tense 102nd and final over from Steve Smith in deteriorating evening light as England ended on 270 for nine chasing a 388-run target in a heart-pumping finish.

It all came down to the last six balls at the Sydney Cricket Ground with eight fielders crowding around the bat as Anderson fended off Smith's final test leg-spin.

Australia had looked set to win the day-long battle and pull off a thrilling victory when it claimed the ninth wicket of Jack Leach, caught in the slips by David Warner off Smith for 26.

But Anderson and long-



Tense moment! Anderson sees off the final delivery to England's relief. ■AFP

time pace partner Stuart Broad played out the remaining two nail-bitingly tense overs to give the beleaguered tourists a morale-boosting draw.

Ben Stokes with a gutsy 60, his second half-century of the match, and first-innings centurion Jonny Bairstow (41) defied the Australians. But both departed after tea.

Bairstow's brave effort

came to an end with 10.4 overs left when he was caught close in by Marnus Labuschagne off Scott Boland. Nathan Lyon dismissed Stokes, who faced 123 balls for his 16th wicket of the series.

Cummins produced a big in-swinger to trap Jos Buttler lbw for 11, confirmed on a review. Mark Wood lasted just two balls before Cummins snared him lbw.

Earlier, Boland had removed Root caught behind off a tantalising out-swinger for 24 to break up his stubborn 60-run partnership with Stokes.

Cameron Green grabbed the biggest breakthrough of the morning with the wicket of Zak Crawley, who had made 77, just as the English opener was looking like he would score a hundred in a flowing performance.

SCOREBOARD

Australia — 1st innings: 416/8 decl.

England — 1st innings: 294.

Australia — 2nd innings: 265/6 decl.

England — 2nd innings: Zak

Crawley lbw b Green 77, Haseeb

Hameed c Carey b Boland 9, Da-

wid Malan b Lyon 4, Joe Root c

Carey b Boland 24, Ben Stokes c

Smith b Lyon 60, Jonny Bair-

stow c Labuschagne b Boland

41, Jos Buttler lbw b Cummings

11, Mark Wood lbw b Cummings

11, Jack Leach c Warner b Smith

26, Stuart Broad (not out) 8,

James Anderson (not out) 0;

Extras (lb-7, nb-3): 10; Total

(for nine wkts. in 102 overs):

270.

Fall of wickets: 1-46, 2-74, 3-

96, 4-156, 5-193, 6-21, 7-218,

8-237, 9-270.

Australia bowling: Starc 18-2-

68-0, Cummins 22-5-80-2, Bol-

and 24-11-30-3, Lyon 22-10-

28-2, Green 10-1-38-1, Labu-

schagne 2-0-9-0, Smith

4-10-1.

Player-of-the-Match: Khawaja.

Match drawn; Australia leads

5-match series 3-0.

Fifth and Final Test (day-night):

January 14 to 18, Hobart. Match

starts at 9.30 a.m. IST.

Latham eyes double hundred

Conway on cusp of century as Bangladesh bowlers toil

NZ-BAN SERIES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CHRISTCHURCH

Tom Latham was closing in on a double century as New Zealand reached 349 for one at stumps to defy Hagley Oval's grim reputation for batters on the first day of the second Test against Bangladesh here on Sunday.

The New Zealand captain was unbeaten on 186 with Devon Conway on 99 as the Black Caps scored at will on a ground reputed to be a bowler's paradise on day one.

Latham and Conway put on an unbroken 201 for the second wicket after Latham and Will Young, who made 54, produced a 148-run opening stand.

Latham's unbeaten 186 includes 28 fours, while Conway has 10 fours and a six in his 99.

After toiling fruitlessly through the morning session, Bangladesh missed a chance for a wicket in the first over after lunch in what



Milestone calling: Latham ended day one just 14 short of a double century. ■AFP

turned out to be a seven-run farce.

A young edge off Ebadot was dropped by Liton Das at third slip allowing three runs.

As the bowler and fielders expressed their frustration, the return throw went to the bowler's end where no one was backing up and the ball raced through to the boundary.

SCOREBOARD

New Zealand — 1st innings: Tom Latham (batting) 186, Will Young c Naim b Shariful 54, Devon Conway (batting) 99; Extras (lb-7, w-3): 10; Total (one wkts. in 90 overs): 349.

Fall of wicket: 1-148.

Bangladesh bowling: Taskin 22-5-68-0, Shariful 18-6-50-1, Ebadot 21-1-114-0, Mehidy 25-1-95-0, Shanto 4-0-15-0.

Toss: Bangladesh.

Aboubakar stars for Cameroon

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
YAOUNDE

Captain Vincent Aboubakar scored two penalties as hosts Cameroun beat Burkina Faso 2-1 in the opening game of the Africa Cup of Nations on Sunday.

Gustavo Sangare had put Burkina Faso in front at the Olembe Stadium but Aboubakar's double turned the game around before half-time and there were celebratory fireworks at full-time in the stadium, where Cameroonian President Paul Biya and FIFA chief Gianni Infantino were in attendance.

The Cup of Nations, delayed by a year because of the pandemic, runs until February 6.



Rakesh Rao
NEW DELHI

With a day to go for the BWF season-opener \$400,000 India Open badminton tournament here, the fresh wave of COVID-19 cases has not spared some of the players.

B. Sai Praneeth, bronze medallist in the 2019 World Championship, became the first to withdraw from the country's flagship event after testing positive.

Besides Praneeth, doubles player Dhruv Rawat, too, tested positive and pulled out of the tournament.

share their negative test report before reporting for the event. Doubles specialists Chirag Shetty and Manu Attri are among the five players hoping for a negative

With the England contingent pulling out two days ago in response to the COVID scare, the tournament with an overwhelming Indian flavour, lost some more sheen.

Canada earned its place in the final after stunning defending champion Russia on Saturday. The Canadians all showed their class to down 19th-ranked Bautista Agut 7-6(3), 6-3 and seal the tournament for Canada.

Both Spanish players had been in red-hot form, each

so beat Zverev's Germany

and Britain in group matches,

bouncing back after

crashing to the United States

in their opening tie of the tournament.

Memorable maiden: Team Canada with the ATP Cup. ■GETTY IMAGES

winning all four of singles encounters so far.

The results: Final: Canada bt Spain 2-0 {Denis Shapovalov bt Pablo Carreno Busta 6-4, 6-3; Felix Auger-Aliassime bt Roberto Bautista Agut 7-6(3), 6-3}.

Mukund loses to Nardi in the final:

FORLI (ITALY)

Italy's Luca Nardi eased past qualifier Sasikumar Mukund 6-3, 6-1 in the final of the €32,160 Challenger tennis tournament on Sunday. The Indian had shocked seventh seed Zsombor Piros of Hungary 6-3, 7-6(4) in the semifinal while Nardi had received a walkover from second seed Cedrik-Marcel Stebe of Germany.

Vazquez blasts Kerala to the top

ISL 2021-22

SPORTS BUREAU

Kerala Blasters found itself in unfamiliar territory on Sunday night – at the top of the ISL table. A 1-0 win against Hyderabad FC at Vasco's Tilak Maidan Stadium took it there. The winner was netted by Alvaro Vazquez late in the opening half. And it was a stunning goal too.

TV PICKS

Pro Kabaddi: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m. onwards
ISL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Star Sports 3, 7.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Herro's star turn helps Heat burn Suns

WASHINGTON

Tyler Herro scored a game-high and season-high 33 points as Miami Heat knocked off host Phoenix Suns 123-100 on Saturday. **The results:** Clippers 108 lost to Grizzlies 123; Hornets 114 bt Bucks 106; Pistons 97 bt Magic 92; Pacers 125 bt Jazz 113; Celtics 99 bt Knicks 75; Suns 100 lost to Heat 123. REUTERS

Brooks stars for Windies

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KINGSTON (JAMAICA)

Shamar Brooks, making his One-Day International debut at the age of 33, top scored with 93 as West Indies defeated Ireland by 24 runs in the first match of a three-game series at Sabina Park here on Saturday. The West Indies made 269 after being put in, before Ireland collapsed from 165 for one to 245 all out. Brooks hit nine boundaries and three sixes in his 89-ball stay. **The scores:**

West Indies 269 in 48.5 overs (Shai Hope 29, Shamar Brooks 93, Kieron Pollard 69; Mark Adair 3/38, Craig Young 3/56) bt Ireland 245 in 49.1 overs (Andy Balbirnie 71, Andy McBride 34, Harry Tector 53; Alzarri Joseph 3/55, Romario Shepherd 3/50).

Debasis stuns Aarav

SPORTS BUREAU
CHANDIGARH

Wild card Debasis Sahoo beat third seed Aarav Samrat Hada of Nepal 6-3, 7-5 in the boys' first qualifying round of the ITF grade-2 junior tennis tournament at the CLTA Complex. Owing to heavy rain, the qualifying schedule was disrupted and will continue on Monday.

The results (qualifying singles first round): Boys: Manas Dhamne bt Prajwal Tewari 6-3, 6-0; Adhirit Awal bt Nikhil Dosuza 7-5, 6-4; Chandan Shivaraj bt Rushikesh Sonawane 6-2, 6-4; Rethin Pranav bt Shanker Heisnam 6-1, 7-6 (4); Vineeth Mutiyala bt Lakshya Chugh 6-2, 3-6, [1-11]; Tarun Korwar bt Pratyaksh 6-1, 6-2; Raghav Sundaraman bt Yashvardhan Singh 6-2, 4-6, [10-7]; Debasis Sahoo bt Arav Samrat Hada (Nep) 6-3, 7-5; Kriish Tyagi bt Arnav Bishnoi 7-5, 6-2; Monil Lotlikar bt Vansh Nandal 6-3, 6-3; Bushan Haobam bt Siddhant Sharma 6-4, 6-2; Deep Munim bt Siddarth Madhavan 6-1, 6-2.

Girls: Chahana Budhbhatti bt Rhea Arora 6-1, 6-1; Kotisha Modak bt Millee Chug 6-1, 6-0.

Rajasthan girls meet Punjab

SPORTS BUREAU
INDORE

Rajasthan will meet Punjab in the girls' final of the National Junior basketball championships here on Monday.

In the semifinals held at the Basketball complex, Race Course Road on Sunday, Rajasthan beat Chhattisgarh 73-59, while Punjab trounced defending champion Kerala 80-59.

The results:

Boys: Semifinals: Chandigarh 88 (Rohan Roy 25, Amendar Singh 22, Harkirat Singh Siddhu 10) bt Uttar Pradesh 85 (Kushal Singh 33, Robin Banerjee 11, Aman Kaushik 11, Sumit Diwakar 10).

Girls: Semifinals: Rajasthan 73 (Rasi Kotani 27, Ankita Kumar 19) bt Chhattisgarh 59 (Riya Kunghadkar 18, D. Kirithi 15); Punjab 80 (Manmeet Kaur 24, Kanishka Dhir 22, Kavya Singla 15, Ishra Rani 11) bt Kerala 59 (Sreelakshmi 18, P.J. Shilpa 10).

Bopanna-Ramkumar win

Surprise top seeds Dodig and Melo in the final



Perfect combo: Bopanna's experience and Ramkumar's powerful serves were instrumental in the Indians' success. ■ GETTY IMAGES

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU
ADELAIDE

The unseeded pair of Rohan Bopanna and Ramkumar Ramanathan beat the top seeds, Ivan Dodig and Marcelo Melo 7-6(6), 6-1 in the doubles final of the \$521,000 ATP tennis tournament here on Sunday.

It was the first professional tournament together as a pair for Bopanna and Ramkumar, who had partnered each other in the last Davis Cup tie against Finland.

In five matches, the Indian pair dropped one set and did not drop even one service game, to collect the winner's share of 250 ATP points and \$18,700.

While it was the maiden Tour title for Ramkumar, it was the 21st Tour doubles title for the former World No. 3 Bopanna, ranked 41 now. It was only the fourth doubles title with an Indian partner for Bopanna after the ones with Mahesh Bhupathi and

Divij Sharan.

"Amazing feeling to win my first ATP title with Boppy! A great week ended on a high note. Always lived for these moments and thankful to Almighty for all the blessings," said Ramkumar.

Chance pairing

Interestingly, it was a chance pairing as Bopanna was scheduled to play with Edouard Roger-Vasselin, who subsequently got into the ATP Cup in Sydney. Since both were in the same flight from Dubai, Bopanna asked Ramkumar to travel to Adelaide for the doubles, as the latter was only scheduled to train in advance for the Australian Open qualifying event.

"I think it worked well for both of us. He got into the singles here as well. He got five doubles matches. Couldn't have asked for a better week for both of us," said Bopanna.

Bopanna has watched Ramkumar grow in the pro-

fessional circuit and has guided him at every opportunity.

"I have seen Ram grow as a player. He has got tremendous potential. His serve is his biggest weapon. Every time I play with somebody serving that big, makes it easy for me at the net. I really felt Ram's serve today in my ear. So I know how hard it comes through," he said.

New-found confidence

Ramkumar has grown in stature as the current India No. 1, and has the new-found confidence as part of his arsenal. "I think what has changed is the belief in himself. That has really changed from last year. Ram was playing some good tennis by the end of the season. He is serving well, volleying well. Now, he is starting to believe he can do well at tournaments. It is just a matter of time for him to string a few matches together and break back into the top-150, 100," observed Bopanna.

Own Voice could deliver in Golconda Oaks

HYDERABAD: Trainer S.K. Sunderji's ward Own Voice who finished a good second on her debut to the champion filly Miracle in the 1000 Guineas, may amends in the Golconda Oaks (Gr. 2), the main attraction of Monday's (Jan.10) races.

1 ARISTOCRAT PLATE (DIV. II) (1,400m), 2:25.1: Gregor Clegane (4 Cat. II), 1.15 p.m.: 1. Ashwa Shirwali (8) B.R. Kumar 56, 2. AYR (5) Kiran Naidu 56, 3. Everglades (3) Kuldeep Singh 56, 4. London Bell (1) Nakhat Singh 56, 5. Sergeant Reckless (7) Mukesh Kumar 56, 6. Superstar (2) Antony Raj 56, 7. Galway Bay (4) R. Ajinkya 54.5 and 8. White Roses (6) Akshay Kumar 54.5.

1. WHITE ROSES, 2. GALWAY BAY, 3. LONDON BELL

2 STORM TROOPER PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200m) Maidens, 4-y-o & upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 1.25 p.m.: 1. Once More (9) Nakhat Singh 54.5, 2. Star Dancer (1) Santosh Gaddam 55.5, 3. Big Brave (3) S.S. Tanwar 54.5, 6. Explosive (3) Afroz Khan 54, 7. Pedro Planet (8) Md. Ismail 54, 8. Prime Gardener (7) B. Nikhil 53, 9. Story Teller (2) R.S. Jodha 53 and 10. Bedazzled (6) S.J. Sunil 51.5, 9. Dillon (1) B. Nikhil 51, 10. Thee's Choice (3) B.R. Kumar 51 and 11. Sputnik (4) G. Naresh 50.5.

1. GENERAL ATLANTIC, 2. GREGOR CLEGANE, 3. PRIME GARDENIA

4 DECCAN PRINCE PLATE (Gr. II) (2,000m), 3:00: 1. Francis Bacon (4 Cat. II), 3.00: 1. Star Dancer (1) Kiran Naidu 60, 2. Ashwa Raudee (8) Mukesh Kumar 59, 3. Southern Act (2) Suraj Narredu 58.5, 4. Just Incredible (5) R. Ajinkya 58.5, 5. Icicle (2) Ashad Asbar 57, 6. Miss Marvelous (7) N.B. Kuldeep 56.5, 7. Painted Apache (10) S.A. Gray 56.5, 8. Mark My Word (9) Nakhat Singh 56, 9. Cheltenham (1) Afroz Khan 55 and 10. Fire Power (1) Akshay Kumar 54.5.

1. OWN VOICE, 2. RULING GODDESS, 3. ICICLE

5 GANGOTRI PLATE (DIV. I) (1,400m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 3:25: 1. Lockhart (II) Ajeeth Kumar 60, 2. Once More (9) Nakhat Singh 59.5, 3. Paladino (1) Santosh Gaddam 55.5, 4. Big Brave (3) S.S. Tanwar 54.5, 6. Explosive (3) Afroz Khan 54, 7. Pedro Planet (8) Md. Ismail 52.5, 8. Art In Motion (2) Md. Ismail 52, 9. Truth And Dare (6) S.J. Sunil 51.5, 9. Dillon (1) B. Nikhil 51, 10. Thee's Choice (3) B.R. Kumar 51 and 11. Sputnik (4) G. Naresh 50.5.

1. HOT SEAT, 2. DOE A DEER, 3. NARAKAMICIE

6 GOLCONDA OAKS (Gr. II) (2,400m), (Terms) Fillies, 4-y-o only, 4:10: 1. Aretha (6) S.A. Gray 57, 2. Faith Of Success (1) Neeraj 57, 3. Icicle (2) Ashad Asbar 57, 4. Keystone (7) Mukesh Kumar 57, 5. Maximum Glamour (5) Suraj Narredu 57, 6. Own Voice (8) Ajeeth Kumar 56.5.

1. HOT SEAT, 2. TRUTH AND DARE, 3. THEO'S CHOICE

7 STORM TROOPER PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200m) Maidens, 4-y-o & upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 4:45: 1. Quality Warrior (10) Kiran Naidu 60, 2. Narakamicie (3) Mukesh Kumar 59, 3. Zaganosh Pasha (9) Deepak Singh 58.5, 4. Hot Seat (5) Akshay Kumar 58, 5. Charmer (2) P. Gaddam 57, 6. Doe A Deer (8) Suraj Narredu 57, 7. Ambitious Star (1) Nakhat Singh 56.5, 8. Asturias (6) Santosh Raj 56, 9. Stark (4) Gaurav Singh 55.5 and 10. Amaliftana (7) Surya Prakash 53.5.

1. HOT SEAT, 2. DOE A DEER, 3. NARAKAMICIE

Day's Best: OK BOSS

Jackpot: 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Treble: (i) 2, 3 & 4. (ii) 5, 6 & 7.

Mini Jackpot: (i) 1, 2, 3 & 4. (ii) 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Tanala: All races.

Nadal's preparations for Oz Open on track

Barty, Halep, Anisimova and Monfils also claim titles



Back with a bang: Rafael Nadal celebrates his victory in Melbourne. ■ AFP

to win the other. It was the 20-year-old American's second WTA Tour crown.

In Adelaide
World No. 1 Ashleigh Barty won her second Adelaide International title in three

years with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over Elena Rybakina.

Frenchman Gael Monfils claimed the men's title, the 11th of his career and his first in almost two years, beating Russia's Karen Khachanov 6-4, 6-4.

Nadal is now the first male player in the Open Era to win at least one title in 19 different seasons, surpassing Federer and Agassi (18 seasons)

Bharath Subramaniyam is India's 73rd GM

Achieves the final norm in Italy



Bharath Subramaniyam.

■ TWITTER/CHESSTCOM.IN

cluding top-seed Anton Korobov (Ukraine).

Bharath had achieved his first GM norm after securing 11th place at the Aeroflot Open in Moscow in February 2020 and the second by placing 4th in the junior Round Table Under 21 tournament in Bulgaria in October 2021.

Bharath Subramaniyam had also made the Challenger final.

When queried about the system not producing many Indian tennis champions, Bham bri said that it was individual effort by the players and that the administrators should be asked the question.

Bham bri said that he was looking forward to playing in the Pune ATP event and the Challengers in Bengaluru, apart from Davis Cup.

"It will be a good opportunity, if we play to potential on grass, as the teams are balanced. If I get selected, I can help India pull through," said Bham bri, about beating Belgium in the next Davis Cup tie scheduled on grass at the Gymkhana Club in Delhi in March.

(Watch Australian Open 2022 live from January 17 on Sony Six, Sony Ten 3 and Ten 4 channels).

Lalith Babu wins
Fellow Indian M.R. Lalith Babu emerged the winner with seven points, winning the title on the basis of a better tie-break score after he tied with three others in

wickets in Madhapur.

"I remember the early days when Purnima Rao (former India captain) who, as Andhra coach, insisted I should work on my batting since I had the ability to hit even good-length deliveries," she said.

"And, there is Nooshin (al Khadeer) who has always given invaluable tips along with Mithali akka. They played a big role in me being more consistent," Meghana said.

Meghana, who learned her basics from coach Srinivas Reddy of ACA and Krishna Rao in Vijayawada, said she had made some minor adjustments to her technique.

The SCR cricketer admires Mithali "having grown up watching her" and legend Sachin Tendulkar and feels that the New Zealand tour could well be the turning point of her career.

Djokovic's hearing looms large

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MELBOURNE

After four nights in an Australian immigration detention hotel, Novak Djokovic will get his day in court on Monday in a deportation case that has polarised opinions and elicited heartfelt support for the top-ranked tennis star in his native Serbia.

Djokovic had his visa cancelled after arriving at Melbourne airport last week when Australian border officials ruled that he didn't meet the criteria for an exemption to an entry requirement that all non-citizens be fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

His lawyers have since filed court papers in his challenge against deportation from Australia that show Djokovic tested positive for COVID-19 last month and recovered.

He used that as grounds in applying for a medical exemption to Australia's strict



Judgement day: Djokovic will know on Monday whether he will play in the Australian Open or return home. ■ FILE PHOTO

vaccination rules.
The case is scheduled for a virtual hearing to appeal the visa cancellation

Text & Context

NEWS IN NUMBERS



Coastal arrest

10 The number of crew members in a Pakistan boat which was apprehended by the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) off the Gujarat coast on Sunday. The boat, named 'Vaseen', was caught by an ICG ship during an operation on the night of January 8. State Defence spokesperson said. On December 20, 2021, a Pakistan fishing boat with six crew members and carrying 77 kg of heroin worth around ₹400 crore was apprehended in the Indian waters off the Gujarat coast by the ICG in a joint operation with the state Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS). PTI

Parliament cluster

398 The number of personnel working at the Parliament who have tested positive for COVID-19 between January 4 and 8. The Budget Session of Parliament begins in the last week of January. Out of these, 65 are from the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, 200 from the Lok Sabha Secretariat and 133 belong to allied services. As a precaution, the Rajya Sabha Secretariat has restricted the physical attendance of its staff. Those with disabilities and pregnant women are exempted from attending office. THE HINDU BUREAU

Kazakhstan unrest

164 The number of people killed in riots in Kazakhstan that ensued after fierce clashes between protesters and police. Fuel price rises sparked the unrest that broke out a week ago in western provincial areas but quickly spread to large cities, including the economic hub Almaty, where riots erupted and police opened fire using live rounds. As many as 103 people have been killed in Almaty alone. Nearly 6,000 persons, including foreigners have been detained in the unrest. AFP

Soaring prices

5 In per cent, the value of inflation in December 2021 compared to December 2020 in the 19 countries that use the euro currency, according to Eurostat, the EU's statistical office. This is the highest level in the eurozone since recordkeeping began in 1997, breaking the record of 4.9% only just set in November 2021. Energy costs spiked again in December, jumping at an annual rate of 26%, though that was a bit lower than the previous month, according to Eurostat's data. A stronger rise in food costs contributed to the increase in overall inflation. AP

Bagging titles

20 The number of ATP doubles titles won by Rohan Bopanna, after he and Ramkumar Ramanathan, won the Adelaide International doubles trophy in Melbourne on Sunday. This was Ramkumar's first doubles title. The duo, teaming up for the first time on the ATP Tour, beat the top seeds Ivan Dodig and Marcelo Melo in straight sets 7-6 6-1 in the final. Bopanna's excellent service returns at crucial times and Ramkumar's all-round game tilted the match in their favour. Ramkumar will also play the Australian Open Qualifiers. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

EXPLAINER

The Light Combat Aircraft programme

What is the LCA development project? What other fighter jet aircraft programmes are being envisaged?

THE GIST

DINAKAR PERI

The story so far: According to the Chief Managing Director of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), R Madhavan, HAL expects to deliver all Final Operational Clearance (FOC) variant aircraft to the Indian Air Force (IAF) in 2022 pending some systems from Israel, while the LCA-MKIA is expected to take flight in June this year. There are another 20 to 24 months of testing after which deliveries would begin with manufacturing activities going parallel to the testing.

The Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)-Tejas was conceptualised in the year 1984. Since the first flight of the LCA technology demonstrator in January 2001, the indigenous single engine 4.5 generation multi-role fighter jet christened as 'Tejas' by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in May 2003, has come a long way both in terms of the maturity of the platform as well as the overall aircraft development programme despite repeated delays and cost overruns. In all, 123 LCA aircraft of various configurations are on order so far.

What is the status of the LCA programme?

Two decades since the first flight, in February 2021, the Defence Ministry signed a ₹48,000 crore deal with HAL to supply 83 LCA-MkIA to the IAF. This includes 73 LCA Tejas Mk-IA fighter aircraft and 10 LCA Mk-1 trainer aircraft at the cost of ₹45,696 crore along with design and development of infrastructure sanctions worth ₹1,202 crore.

The MK-IA will have over 40 modifications over the MKI variant including some major ones like a new Electronic Warfare system, Advanced Electronically Scanning Array (AESAs) radar, Beyond Visual Range (BVR) missiles and network warfare system including Software Defined Radio (SDR).

LCA achieved Initial Operation Clearance (IOC) in December 2013 and FOC in February 2019. The IAF had earlier signed two contracts with HAL, for 20 IOC configuration aircraft including four IOC trainers on March 31, 2006 and for 20 FOC configuration aircraft including four FOC trainers on December 23, 2010. Both the deliveries have been delayed due to delays in the certification process.

The first IOC fighter aircraft was delivered in 2016 and the first LCA squadron No. 45 "Flying Daggers" in the IAF was formed in July 2016 with two aircraft. The first squadron is now complete and the second



LCA squadron No. 18 'Flying Bullets' was operationalised in May 2020.

What is the cost of the LCA development programme?

The Government had originally sanctioned ₹2,188 crore for Full Scale Engineering Development (FSED) -Phase-I programme to design and develop two Technology Demonstrators (TDs), and ₹5,777.56 crore for FSED -Phase-II Programme.

The objectives of Phase-II are fabrication of three Prototype Vehicles (PVs), establishment of production facility at HAL for production of eight aircraft per year and manufacturing and delivery of eight Limited Series Production (LSP) aircraft.

On the overall project cost, the Government informed Parliament in March 2020 that a total of ₹11,096 crore has been spent till date on the indigenous LCA and the Kaveri jet engine (now shelved) development programmes. Of the total amount, ₹9,063.96 crore was spent on LCA and ₹2,032 crore on the Kaveri Engine.

What is the way forward?

As per the contract, HAL has to deliver the first three MKIA aircraft to IAF in 2024 followed by 16 aircraft per year for the next five years, according to the Defence Ministry. To ramp up production, HAL has already set up two additional assembly lines which are operational. Some back end activities are also being finished at the moment, according to HAL.

The indigenous content in LCA is currently about 52% and HAL said it is looking at ways to increase it to 65%.

In addition, the LCA-MK2, a larger aircraft with a more capable engine is expected to roll out by year end or early 2023 following which it would take a year for its first flight. The LCA-MK2 brings significant capability enhancement to the LCA programme featuring new technologies, ability to carry heavy stand off weapons like Scalp, Crystal Maze and Spice-2000. It can also carry significantly higher payload, 6,500kg compared to 3,500kg by the LCA.

An ambitious fifth generation fighter aircraft Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), and a new Twin Engine Deck Based Fighter (TEDBF) to operate from the Navy's aircraft carriers are being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA).

The AMCA is envisaged as a 25 tonne aircraft with internal carriage of 1,500kg of payload and 5,500kg external payload with 6,500kg of internal fuel with the roll out planned in 2024 and first flight planned in 2025, according to ADA officials.

The TEDBF is being designed based on lessons learnt from the Naval LCA programme and the first flight is planned in 2026. In addition to supplying to the IAF, HAL is aggressively pitching its helicopters and Tejas to countries in South East Asia and West Asia and LCA is in the contest in Malaysia. Stating that the price is competitive, Mr. Madhavan had earlier stated that each LCA MKIA jet would cost ₹309 crore.

To the skies: Final Operational Clearance version of LCA Tejas Mk-1 which the Indian Air Force added to its armory in 2020.

FILE PHOTO

EXPLAINER

The new microchip infused e-passports

What is the latest agreement between the MEA and TCS about Indian passports? What can be expected from PSP-V2.0?

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE

The story so far: The Ministry of External Affairs on January 7 signed an agreement with Tata Consultancy Services Limited for the second phase of the Passport Seva Programme (PSP), one of the several Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) of the Government of India. The latest agreement will facilitate the next phase of the PSP termed PSP-V2.0. The \$1 billion agreement will focus on faster delivery of passports to the citizens and create a more effective integration between various wings of the Government like the MEA and the local police network that can work in harmony for verification of applicants and quick tracing in case of emergency situations.

What are the features of the new passport initiative programme?

The present passport application and processing continues to involve manual sections and these are expected to go digital in the new phase. The Ministry of External Affairs said that the PSP-V2.0 is a "continuation and enhancement" of PSP-V1.0. An official statement said that the new initiative is aimed at creating a digital platform that would be



transparent, more accessible and reliable" and that it would be backed by a trained workforce. This will create a state-of-the-art digital ecosystem, overhaul existing processes and integrate various wings of Government that are involved in issuance of passports. The issue of training of the employees in the new process is however, yet to begin which is expected to take some time.

What will be the nature of partnership with TCS?

Tata Consultancy Services according to

the MEA will ensure "support functions" like "citizen interface, technology backbone, call centres, training and change management". The Government will exercise "all sovereign and security related functions" in the process of issuing of passports. Strategic assets like Data Centres, Database and the application software will be owned by the Government and access would be controlled through biometrics. The programme also plans to have a Data Centre, Disaster Recovery Centre and Government Secure Repository which would be networked with all the Passport Seva Kendras and the Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK). The overall system would be connected to all the Indian diplomatic missions abroad and will allow monitoring and supervision through state-of-the-art Network Operation Centre, and Security Operation Centre. "The programme has recently been connected to more than 176 Indian Missions/Posts through Global Passport Seva Programme (GPSP), providing seamless delivery of passport services to Indian diaspora," said the MEA in a statement.

The public private partnership however, is required to address the issue

What will be the new features of PSP-V2.0?

The new programme is expected to have technology upgrade including the use of latest biometrics technology, Artificial Intelligence, Advance Data Analytics, Chat-Bot, Auto-response, Natural Language Processing, Cloud Enablement. The newest feature under the PSP-V2.0 will be the issuance of the new generation of passports called e-passports. Under this, new and renewed passports will be fitted with a microchip that will hold all biometric

information regarding the applicants. Sanjay Bhattacharyya, Secretary in MEA in charge of passport services, said in a social media message that the next gen e-passports will ease immigration process across the world and will also increase digital safety for the passport holders.

How different will e-passports be from the current passports?

Current passports are scanned at the immigration counters to reveal the travel record of the citizen using the same document and the e-passport is also expected to perform the same function. However, unlike the current passports, the e-passport users will have physical storage of their biometric data in a chip which will reduce risk of data leakage.

Is the public private partnership without any shortcoming?

The MEA-TCS collaboration has been a part of the passport process since 2008 and has helped in increasing digitisation of the complex process that requires multiple stakeholders across the spectrum of the vast Government network. However, it is understood that more harmony between them will help citizens acquire passports without delays.

THE GIST

The MEA on January 7 signed an agreement with TCS for the second phase of the Passport Seva Programme (PSP), termed PSP-V2.0.

Under this phase, new and renewed passports will be fitted with a microchip that will hold all biometric information regarding the applicants. The programme also plans to have a Data Centre, Disaster Recovery Centre and Government Secure Repository which would be networked with all the PSKs and POPSks.

The public private partnership however, should address the issue of shortfall of Government employees in the passport offices across the country.



CACHE

Following the trail of crumbs

Cookies are important to websites, but they are a threat to user privacy

JOHN XAVIER

On January 6, Google and Facebook were hit with a combined 210 million Euros fine for not complying with France's data privacy law. The country's data protection authority, CNIL, said that Facebook, Google's French homepage and YouTube websites failed to provide its users a 'disable' cookies option similar to the enable button.

The authority said these websites made it hard for users to refuse cookies and nudged them to accept it. They required users to make several clicks and take a circuitous route to disable cookies, which affects the website visitor's freedom of consent on the Internet.

A user expects to be able to quickly check a website, and the fact that they can't refuse cookies as easily as they can accept them influences their choice in favour of consent, the data privacy watchdog noted.

Digital trackers

Cookies and web beacons are electronic placeholders that are kept on your device by websites to track your specific movements on that website over time. While most cookies are perfectly safe, some are highly intrusive.

The CNIL's judgment is based on the ePrivacy Directive of the GDPR. It used Article 82 of the French Data Protection Act which is informed by Article 6 of GDPR, to levy a heavy fine on big tech firms which made it hard for users to disable cookies.

In India, the draft Personal Data Protection Bill (PDP), 2019, is not up to the mark on regulating cookies. The Bill defines 'personal data' as any information about a natural person who can be directly or indirectly identified. This means, businesses that use cookies can argue that their web trackers cannot inherently spot a 'natural' person.

sell their products online.

Most cookies are perfectly safe, and are generated by the websites themselves to enhance their page's performance. These are usually harmless, and are commonly called necessary cookies.

Using cookies, websites remember you, your login credentials, browsing history, and sometimes peep into your e-commerce shopping carts

Third-party cookies are more troubling as they are placed by companies that do not own the website the user is accessing. For example, a student may be surfing an educational website that contains advertisements of various other companies. These advertisers can deploy relevant cookies to track the user's digital footprint.

France's creative legal framework

But what happened in the case of Google and Facebook is related to first-party cookies. And it was also a matter of how large platforms make it hard for its users to deny tracking. This was at the heart of the 210 million Euros CNIL fine.

While complaints against Facebook and Google over similarly problematic consent issues continue to languish at the Irish Data Protection Commission (DPC), France has taken a step forward and set a precedent.

The CNIL's action is based on a piece of EU legislation, the ePrivacy Directive, which gives France a creative way to apply General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) standards within its borders. According to Article 82 of the French Data Protection Act, any subscriber or user who uses Internet-based service must be informed in a clear and comprehensive manner by the controller or their representative of the purpose of any action to access information already stored in the user's electronic device. They should also

seek consent from the user to record information in such a device. The controller is also obligated to provide means to oppose such interference. Under Article 6 of GDPR, if consent is the legal basis for claiming to process users' data, then it must be informed, specific and freely given in order for it to be obtained legally.

For Google, this is the second time the company is fined by CNIL in less than a month. In December 2020, the search giant was fined 100 million Euros by the French regulator for dropping tracking cookies without getting consent from users.

Need for cookie law

India, like France, should draft rules to protect its citizens from being stalked by large tech firms, which control a significant part of the digital space. But, the country has no comprehensive personal data protection at the moment.

While some experts note that the use of cookies without the user's consent could be subsumed under Section 43 of the Information Technology Act, in the absence of any explicit legislation, companies can circumvent the law by finding technical loopholes. For instance, the Section deals with a 'computer virus' that can potentially contaminate an electronic device. But cookies don't harm the computer like the malware.

The draft Personal Data Protection Bill (PDP), 2019, which is likely to be passed by the Parliament during the Budget session is also not up to the mark on regulating cookies.

The Bill defines 'personal data' as any information about a natural person who can be directly or indirectly identified. This means, businesses that use cookies can argue that their web trackers inherently cannot spot a 'natural' person.

Perhaps where the PDP Bill can help is with its definition of 'personal information', which can be used to trace a natural person. And this is what cookies do for the businesses that deploy them.



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Be an entrepreneur of language!

Learning English does not have to be donkey work anymore

S. UPENDRAN

What is the difference in meaning between 'any more' and 'anymore'? (R Jagdeep, Mysore)

Till the early twentieth century, these two words were spelt the same - as two words. This continues to be true in British English even today. It is mostly the Americans who spell the word differently depending on the function. When spelt as one word, 'anymore' means 'no longer'; it is usually used to refer to time. For example, when you say, 'The doctor has ordered me not to eat sweets anymore', what you mean is that the doctor has asked you to stop eating sweets; not just for now, but for the rest of your life. You are no longer allowed to eat sweets. Similarly, when you say, 'I won't lend you books anymore', you are telling the person that he can no longer borrow books from you. You will no longer lend him books. 'Anymore' usually occurs at the end of a sentence. While 'anymore' is used to refer to time, 'any more' is mostly used to refer to quantity. When you say, 'I can't eat any more gulab jamuns', what you are implying is that you cannot eat another gulab jamun; you have had enough for now. You may have some more, later on. 'Any more' usually occurs in the middle of a sentence.

I don't want to do any more interviews this morning.

Do you have any more gulab jamuns in the fridge?

Janani doesn't eat gulab jamuns anymore.

How is the word 'entrepreneur' pronounced? (C Vineet, Chennai)

The first syllable is pronounced like the word 'on', and the 'e' in the second and third syllable sounds like the 'a' in 'china'. The final 'eur' sounds like the 'er' in 'herd' and 'nerd'. The word is pronounced 'on-tre-pre-NER' with the stress on the final syllable. The word was borrowed from French, and when it was first used in English, it meant 'to undertake'. Nowadays, the term is mostly used to refer to people who are willing to start something new - despite the financial risks involved. Many people who do not wish to work for others, start their own company; such people who are willing to start something new, and invest their own money in the business are usually referred to as entrepreneurs. Bill Gates is an entrepreneur.

Ever since she was a kid, Sailaja wanted to be an entrepreneur.

The young entrepreneur had no real social life.

Is it okay to say, "Why do I have to do all the donkey's work?" (S Chethan, Chennai)

The expression is frequently heard in India; native speakers of English, however, would say 'donkey work' and not 'donkey's work'. It is frequently used in British English in informal contexts. When you say that you do not enjoy doing the donkey work, what you are implying is that you do not like doing the boring part of any job. You find it laborious and rather monotonous - but it is something which needs to be done.

The professor got two of his students to do all the donkey work.

Why is it that I always end up doing the donkey work?

Life is like the stock market. Some days you're up. Some days you're down. And some days you feel like something the bull left behind."

Paula Wall
upendrankye@gmail.com

THE DAILY QUIZ

On January 10, 92 years ago, one of the most beloved comic book characters made his debut. Let's see how well you know Tintin, his creator, the characters, and the various adventures.

1 What is the real name of the creator and how did he get the pen name?

6 In which adventure do Tintin and Haddock come to India and visit Qutub Minar and Red Fort?

2 24 official albums were published between 1930 and 186. Which are the first and last (by date of publication)?

7 In which Tintin adventure do Asterix and Obelix feature in a carnival scene?

3 What is the contribution of Palle Huld, a Danish actor and writer, to the Tintin legend?

8 Can you name Castafiore's maid and Jolyon Wagg's insurance company?

4 In which adventure(s) do we get introduced to Captain Haddock and Cuthbert Calculus?

9 In 2006, which Nobel Laureate honoured Tintin by presenting the Light of Truth Award to the Herge Foundation?

5 What physical feature helps one differentiate the bumbling detectives Thomson and Thompson?



◀ Name this individual. In which adventure is he a key figure? • AP FILE PHOTO

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

Answers to the January 7 edition of the daily quiz:

1 Baba Budan and Mocha, 2. Johann Sebastian Bach, 3. Cappuccino, 4. Excelsa and Liberica, 5. Melitta, 6. Webcam, 7. Black Ivory Coffee from elephants in Thailand, 8. Siren (mermaid) and Moby Dick.

Early Birds: Mohd. Kiron Karim | Mahmood Lebbai | Sagar Sakalley | Jayanth Anantha Raman | Deepa