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28th Feb, 2022

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31st Jan, 2022

(6:00 PM - 8:30 PM)

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10th Feb, 2022

(11:30 AM - 2:00 PM)

Note : If COVID conditions do not allow to conduct offline classes, then candidates will get access to live/online classes, till the resumption of offline classes.

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T.N. CM Stalin to launch 'All India Federation for Social Justice'
page 5



Rahul Gandhi writes on free speech concerns to Twitter CEO
page 9



Medvedev claws back from the brink to beat Auger-Aliassime
page 13

IN BRIEF



Majithia to take on Sidhu in Amritsar East

CHANDIGARH
The Shiromani Akali Dal on Wednesday announced that former Minister Bikram Singh Majithia would contest from Amritsar East against Congress State president Navjot Singh Sidhu.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8

'A year on, no clarity on R-Day violence cases'

NEW DELHI
Over a month after farmer leaders were promised quashing of police complaints on the violence that erupted on Republic Day last year, no update has been received on that front, said a lawyer representing the farmers.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

In sync



Pride of the Republic: The Border Security Force's all-woman motorcycle team performing at the Republic Day parade in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ KAMAL NARANG (REPORTS: PAGE 9)

Curbs to restrict time slots for MP speeches

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

Detailed COVID protocol has been put in place for the upcoming Budget session of Parliament, which will involve time restrictions on parliamentary speeches and also restricting access to the central hall beyond the working hours.

The time restrictions have come in place because both Houses of Parliament are going to be working in shifts. Rajya Sabha will function

from 10 a.m. till 3 p.m. and Lok Sabha from 4 p.m. till adjournment.

Three minutes

As per the detailed guidelines issued by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, during the Zero Hour, when the parliamentarians are allowed to raise matters of national importance, the members can speak for only three minutes.

No member will be allowed to make a submission more than once a week.

A similar instruction has gone out to the Lok Sabha members too.

To maintain social distancing the members will be sitting spread out between both the chambers of the House. As per the sitting arrangement, out of 237 Rajya Sabha members (there are eight vacancies) only 111 members will be sitting in the chamber spread out in their usual seats and also the visitors' galleries. The remaining 129 members will have to sit in

the Lok Sabha chamber.

Instructions have also been issued to the Rajya Sabha members not to use the central hall beyond working hours. "It has been decided that during the 256th session, the Central Hall may be used by the sitting members of Rajya Sabha during the sitting hours of the Rajya Sabha only," a bulletin issued by the RS Secretariat read.

The first part of the Budget session will be held from January 31 to February 1.

Fewer hospitalisations in third wave, data from States show

Though active COVID cases are at 22.2 lakh, 95% of hospital beds remain vacant

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

With India continuing to be in the grip of the third wave of the coronavirus, hospitalisation trends from major States suggest it is so far less pernicious than previous waves.

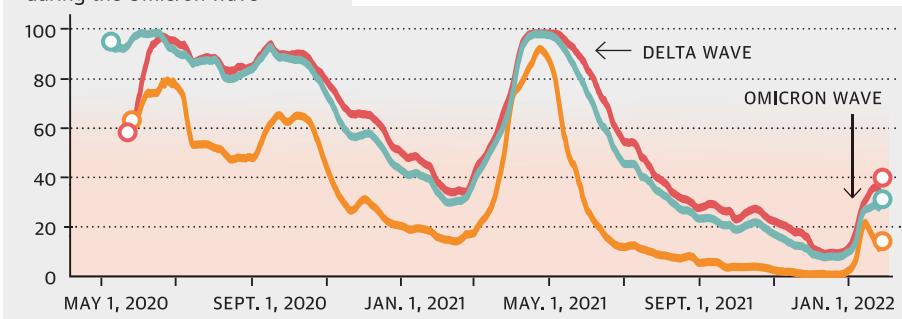
On Wednesday, India reported 2,82,371 fresh cases, taking the active caseload to over 22.2 lakh. States that account for a major chunk of these cases say that more than 95% of their available hospital beds are unoccupied, a far cry from the previous waves when people scrambled for elusive beds in hospitals across the country.

Rajasthan has around 90,000 active cases with 84,000 beds available for treating COVID-19 patients. Medical and Health Minister Parsadi Lal Meena said this week that only 2% of these beds were occupied. At the Rajasthan University for Health Sciences (RUHS) Hospital in Jaipur, which is the biggest government medical facility for COVID treatment in the State, 63 of the 895 oxygen-supported beds and 26 of the 305 ICU beds with ventilator were occupied as on January 25.

During the peak of the second wave in April-end in 2021, almost all the beds available in the government and private medical facilities

Milder variant

The graph shows the % share of oxygen beds (orange), ICU beds (teal) and ventilator beds (red) occupied in Mumbai, the city which contributed most cases in all the three COVID-19 waves. The share of beds occupied in each category is much lower during the Omicron wave.



Battle ready: A worker inside a COVID-19 care centre under development at the K.J. Somaiya ground, Sion in Mumbai on January 13. ■ PTI

Compiled by @shanahanalla

were occupied by COVID-19 patients.

Active cases in Kerala, which is reporting a massive spike in infections, have climbed to 2,60,000. However, around 3.5% have been admitted in hospitals and COVID first line/second line treatment centres. This is in stark contrast to the situation in the State during the Delta wave last April when around 22,726 – close to 8% – were hospitalised. The daily new admissions at the time was close to 4,500.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

ANOTHER REPORT ▶ PAGE 10

Omicron-hit may escape reinfection with Delta

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

An Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) study released on bioRxiv preprint server on Wednesday suggested that immune response induced by Omicron, which is currently the dominant COVID mutant in India, could make re-infection with Delta variant less likely.

The study was conducted on 39 individuals, of which

25 had taken both the doses of AstraZeneca COVID vaccine, eight people had taken double dose of Pfizer jab, while six were unvaccinated. Also, 28 of these 39 were mainly foreign returnees from the UAE, South/West/East Africa, Middle East, the U.S. and the U.K., and 11 people were their high-risk contacts.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Amit Shah reaches out to Jat leaders from western U.P.

Rashtriya Lok Dal chief has chosen the wrong house, he says and hints that the BJP is open to post-poll alliance

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday launched its big outreach programme to the Jat community of western Uttar Pradesh, with Union Home Minister Amit Shah promising to "keep in mind" demands from the community for timely payment of sugar cane dues and reservation in jobs, but more importantly, keeping a door open for the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) for a post-poll alliance.

A meeting with nearly 200 Jat influencers, panchayat and zilla-level leaders from western Uttar Pradesh was held at BJP MP Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma's residence in New Delhi, where Mr. Shah emphasised the BJP's "affinity" with the Jat community by stating that just as the "Jats fought Mughals for 650

years, so too was the BJP". Significantly, he told the Jat leaders that RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary had "picked the wrong house" (RLD is in alliance with the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh), but that possibilities could be explored after the polls. "Samaj ke log unhe samjhayein [people from the community should explain to him]," he said.

Ready to help farmers'

"I started national politics from Uttar Pradesh, and in the three polls I fought, the Jat community supported me wholeheartedly. I think it was because a Jat doesn't think for self, like the BJP, but for the nation. Jat thinks for the country's security, BJP too," he said. He said that it was the BJP which ensured that there were three Jat



Poll pitch: Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Jat leaders at the residence of BJP MP Parvesh Verma in New Delhi. ■ PTI

Governors and nine MPs.

"The Uttar Pradesh government cleared over ₹36,000 crore farm loans after it came to power, ₹1,35,000 crores was put into farmers' accounts,

₹1,48,000 crores to sugar-cane farmers. If there is anything missing, we will do it," he said. He also asked whether there was any riot in the State after 2014.

"If you get angry at me,

tar Pradesh that goes to the polls on February 10 and 14 and has more than 130 seats in the 403-seat Assembly. The BJP has commanded the support of the Jat community in the 2017 Assembly poll and in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections. This time around, the year-long agitation against the three contentious farm laws has queered the pitch for the BJP and Mr. Shah is anxious to make up that chasm.

After Mr. Shah's statement that the BJP was open to a post-poll tie-up with the RLD, Mr. Chaudhary tweeted: "The invitation should have gone out to those 700+ families of farmers who lost a loved one in the farmers agitation, not to me."

RLD REJECTS BJP'S OVERTURES

▶ PAGE 8

ture of their work and thinking did not change".

"The poor, Dalits, backwards and deprived sections of society have resolved to get together and uproot the BJP, teach them a lesson and form an SP government," Mr. Maurya said.

INTERVIEW ▶ PAGE 8

Govt. to recommend school reopening at DDMA meeting

Closures affecting children's studies, mental health: Sisodia

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government will recommend the reopening of schools in the Capital in the Delhi Disaster Management Authority meeting on Thursday. Pandemic-induced school closures have not only affected children's studies but also their mental health and it is important for the institutions to reopen, said Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday.

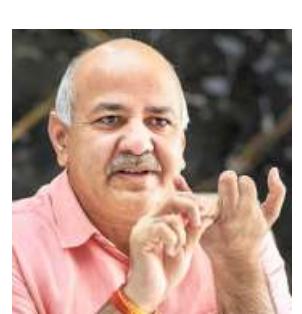
Physical classes needed He said that schools are being reopened in several countries and many Indian States. Stressing that online education can never replace physical classes, the Deputy CM said the government had

been confined to their rooms. Instead of going to schools and spending time in playgrounds, all their activities are now only on mobile phones. During COVID, our priority was children's safety. But since various researches have now found that COVID is not so harmful for kids, it is important to reopen the schools, as now is the time for exams and related preparations," Mr. Sisodia said.

The Deputy CM met a delegation of parents which handed over a memorandum signed by more than 1,600 parents seeking reopening of schools. "In the past two years, schoolchildren's lives have

been decided on easing

CURBS ▶ PAGE 2



closed schools when it was not safe for children, but excessive caution is now proving harmful. As COVID cases and positivity rate are on the decline in Delhi, he said it would not be prudent to keep children away from schools any longer.

"In the past two years,

schoolchildren's lives have been decided on easing

CURBS ▶ PAGE 2

Jahnu Barua's films as a window into cultures of Assam

New book analyses the works of the celebrated Assamese filmmaker

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A book by a teacher of a private university in Uttar Pradesh has brought forth the diverse culture of Assam portrayed in movies by Assamese filmmaker Jahnu Barua.

The book by Juhi P. Pathak, an academician from Assam working as an assistant professor with Sharda University, was released at a global education conclave recently. Barua has written and directed more than 15 films, mostly in Assamese, and has won 12 National Awards. His acclaimed films include *Halodhia Choraye Baodhan Khai* (1987) based on a book by the late Homon Borgohain, *Firingoti* (1992),

Xagorolo Bohu Door (1995), *Maine Gandhi Ko Nahin Mara* (2005) in Hindi, *Konikar Ramdhenu* (2003), *Baandhon* (2012), and *Ajeyo* (2014).

32-year span

"This book explores the man and his message through an in-depth analysis of his films from 1982 to 2014 spanning 32 years. I considered 12 of his Assamese feature films and excluded the Hindi feature films and other short films," Ms. Pathak said of her book *Film Appreciation on Cinemas (1980 to 1990) of Jahnu Barua: Social, Economic, Political and Cultural Perspectives*. The entire research was conducted under a project



A still from Jahnu Barua's 1992 movie *Firingoti*. ■ FILE PHOTO

of the Altruist Centre for Research, Training and Development, a wing of Captain Ayush Purusarth Foundation. She said the idea behind the book was to document and preserve Assamese culture and also help understand the various facets of the Assamese society in detail.

It has tried to bring out the macro-environmental factors such as the representation of social, economic, political and cultural aspects of Assamese society. Ms. Pathak has authored three other books – *Introduction to Media Laws and Ethics, Television Advertising Ethics and Human Rights and Contemporary Media Discourses: Trends, Issues and Prospects*.

ROAD MAP FOR CHANGE' Critics have said the book could generate content on

social and economic disparity and discrimination for becoming a guiding tool for policymakers to set the road map for change.

Mr. Barua appreciated Ms. Pathak's "comprehensive analysis" of his films.

"This book celebrated the rich customs and diverse culture of Assam. It will become a handbook for film students to understand how to appreciate films from multiple dimensions – not only from the perspective of cinema but also the rubrics of politics, economics, culture and society," he said. Ms. Pathak has authored three other books – *Introduction to Media Laws and Ethics, Television Advertising Ethics and Human Rights and Contemporary Media Discourses: Trends, Issues and Prospects*.

M ND-NDE

Timings

DELI	THURSDAY, JAN. 27
RISE	07:12 SET 17:57
RISE	02:04 SET 12:59
FRIDAY, JAN. 28	
RISE	07:12 SET 17:58
RISE	03:12 SET 13:48
SATURDAY, JAN. 29	
RISE	07:11 SET 17:58
RISE	04:21 SET 14:45

Delhi Weather

max min

Delhi City 16 06

Safdarjung 16 06

Palam 16 07

Delhi Palam Today
17°C The weather will be dry with cold winds. A cold and foggy morning turns cold day like conditions. Cold wave like conditions may occur.**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**
18°C A dry weather to prevail. Morning will be very cold. Day will be cool with moderate cold winds. Cold wave conditions is possible.© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019
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IN BRIEF**HC orders community service to landlord**

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ordered a landlord, who groped and kissed his tenant forcefully when she went to the bathroom, to do community service to "atone for his sins" and quashed the FIR against him. The Judge passed the order after the woman said she had forgiven the landlord and did not wish to proceed with the matter any further.

President's medal for Civil Defence volunteers**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**
NEW DELHI

On the eve of Republic Day, the President's Medal for Distinguished and Meritorious Service were awarded to officers for the commendable service rendered in Delhi Civil Defence Corps in the Directorate of Civil Defence Delhi.

The President's Home Guard and Civil Defence Medal for Distinguished Service was awarded to Satinder Puri, Chief Warden Honorary (West District).

The Home Guard and Civil Defence Medal for Meritorious Service was awarded to Hazi Sharif Ahmad, Chief Warden Honorary (East District), Ramesh Verma, Additional Chief Warden Honorary (East District) and Kamalakar Sharma, Divisional Warden Honorary (East District).

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CMYK

Mixed response to redeveloped Central Vista Avenue

Muddy entry points, crammed parking lots left many R-Day attendees fuming

MUNEEF KHAN
NEW DELHI

The redevelopment work for the much-anticipated Central Vista Avenue was completed just in time for the 73rd Republic Day celebrations, but spectators who attended the event on Wednesday expressed mixed reactions. The most common complaint was that portions within the redeveloped area were "in an unfinished state, causing inconvenience to public movement".

Noor Shams said he and his friends navigated with difficulty through muddy portions of barren land near the entry points leading to the seating area.

The work here is clearly unfinished. The surrounding areas are filled with mud due to the rains, and it has to be fixed. The mud is so loose that the foot gets stuck in it. Arrangements for such an event should be proper, especially when there is limited attendance due to COVID restrictions.

The vehicle parking designated to us was full and so were the seats at the venue," he said, adding that he has been a regular attendee at the annual Republic Day and Independence Day celebrations events for



All decked up: The redeveloped Central Vista Avenue ahead of the R-Day celebrations. ■ PTI

several years.

Another attendee said there was confusion over the parking of vehicles as "most of them reached their full capacity", adding that "better arrangements" were in place during events in previous years.

Expected inconvenience
Some were unhappy with the overall arrangements whereas a few expressed satisfaction with the redeveloped Rajpath stretch, where the annual Republic Day parade was held on Wednesday, adding that "small inconveniences" were expected.

According to the details shared by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, the redeveloped area, which spreads across 85.3 hectares, houses 16,500 metres of redeveloped cross pathways while the number of benches stand at 422.

The total number of trees in the area, which previously stood at 3,890, has been increased to 4,087 while storm water drains have been introduced along with granite pathways, according to the Ministry.

Apart from this, 114 signages showcasing a compact design and 915 light poles in the garden areas are part of

the redevelopment plan.

Pending work
The pending work includes a step-based garden set-up, eight amenity blocks and four underpasses for pedestrians, which is currently in progress.

"Most of the redeveloped area that I could see was on the Rajpath stretch, but there are portions surrounding this which are still with construction material and looks incomplete. It seems to be unfinished, so one can't look at the Rajpath and say that the whole area has been redeveloped completely," said a spectator.

Delhi celebrates Republic Day under tight security

Checkpoints heavily guarded, thorough frisking carried out

ARNABJIT SUR
NEW DELHI

Amid tight security at Rajpath due to threats, the 73rd Republic Day celebrations went off without a hitch in the Capital on Wednesday. Security personnel, including teams of Delhi Police and Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) jawans and commandos, guarded entry checkpoints set up outside Rajpath. Thorough frisking was carried out at several locations before entering the venue.

More than 20 entry gates were installed across the area, which were connected by bridges constructed as part of the Central Vista Redevelopment Plan, even as entry was restricted due to COVID-19 protocols.

"Strict COVID-19 protocols are being followed and several teams of Delhi Police and Central Forces have been stationed here to prevent any mishap. The situation has been smooth so far and there has been no breach in security proto-



Police personnel checking passengers at the Anand Vihar railway station. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

cols," an officer stationed at one of the checkpoints said.

The officer added that Delhi Police personnel were manning areas surrounding Vijay Chowk and India Gate since 2 a.m. "Invitation cards along with identity proofs are being checked and attendants wearing black garments are being directed to remove them as per rules," the officer said.

Database of suspects
Senior officers said that multiple CCTV cameras at around 30 locations consisting of a database of around 50,000 suspected

terrorists were installed in and around Rajpath in view of the "security threat".

Similarly, network jammers were installed to ensure airspace security.

"A total of 71 Delhi Police DCPS and 65 companies of CAPF were deployed to oversee the security situation," a senior police officer said.

Attendants said that all health protocols had been maintained, including socially distanced seating arrangements, sanitiser dispenser at every gate and temperature being checked before entry.

DDMA to decide on easing COVID-19 restrictions today

L-G, CM and experts will review the current situation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A few of the restrictions currently in place to break the chain of COVID infection are expected to be lifted following a meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) here on Thursday.

The DDMA meeting, to be chaired by Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal in the presence of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and experts, will be convened at 12.30 p.m.

Concerns remain
Sources said the continuing variation in the test positivity rate (TPR) noticed over the last week is still a matter of concern, while some relaxations in the restrictions currently in place are likely to be allowed. Apart from discussing the current

restrictions, Mr. Baijal will also preside over an assessment of the current trends related to COVID-19 infections and the ongoing vaccination drive in the city.

According to government sources, the positivity ratio, which was above 13% when the Delhi government had sent a proposal to convene a meeting of the DDMA, was being seen with concern.

Rise in TPR and cases
The TPR of COVID-19 increased slightly on Wednesday to 10.59% from 10.55% on Tuesday, according to a Delhi government bulletin. It had peaked on January 14 at 30.64% and remained at that level for the next day and has been on a decline since then.

The number of new COVID-19 cases in 24 hours

too increased to 7,498 from 6,028 a day earlier. This is also due to an increase in the number of tests. A total of 70,804 tests were done in 24 hours, up from 57,132 on Tuesday. Twenty-nine fresh fatalities were reported, taking the death toll to 25,710, as per the bulletin.

Of the total 15,420 hospital beds for COVID-19 patients, 86.14% were vacant as of Wednesday. On January 13, 28,867 fresh cases were reported in the city, the highest since the beginning of the pandemic.

Last week, the government had proposed to lift the night and weekend curfews and allow city markets to open without restrictions but it was rejected by the DDMA, which had, instead, advised a review of the situation before doing so.

A year on, no clarity on R-Day violence cases'

No communication received on quashing of complaints, says farmers' lawyer

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Over a month after farmer leaders were promised quashing of police complaints on the violence that erupted in the national capital on Republic Day last year, no update has been received on that front, said a lawyer representing the farmers.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, advocate Jasdeep Dhillon said those who were either arrested at that time or had received notices to join the investigation keep calling him for help. "About 200 protesters were arrested at that time and about 200 received notices. All arrested persons are now out on bail but they want to know the status of the cases. We have heard nothing from either the government or the police about what's happening with the FIRs," he said, adding that the Haryana government had initiated a move to withdraw the cases and sent

Protesting farmers turned violent at the Red Fort on January 26, 2021. ■ FILE PHOTO: SANDEEP SAXENA

letters to all District Magistrates and Superintendents of Police in regard.

A senior officer from the Crime Branch said they have not yet received any communication from the government regarding the withdrawal of prosecution.

Red Fort march
On January 26 last year, farmers protesting against the now-repealed farm laws had sought permission to

hold the tractor rally on a route specified by the police, but they marched to the Red Fort instead and hoisted the Nishan Sahib – a triangular flag sacred to the Sikhs – there leading to a clash between the security personnel and the protesters.

The same day, protesters also reached central Delhi and vandalised public property in the ITO area. The police had to use force to control the situation. A prot-

ester, Navreet Singh, died in the ruckus at ITO. His family said he was shot dead by the police but the security agency said he died after his tractor overturned. "His post-mortem report had stated that he died of a blunt force injury and not a bullet injury," a police officer said.

According to advocate Dhillon, over 50 cases were registered between January 26 and 29, including two cases on the Red Fort incident and one on the central Delhi violence. The remaining cases mostly pertained to the rioting reported on the day.

A senior police officer said about 14 cases were transferred to the Crime Branch at the time of the investigation and chargesheet has been framed in one case.

An officer said the Central government had sought details of the FIRs and the ongoing probe in the cases when talks were on between them and the farmers.

AAP, BJP spar over running of dispensaries

'Civic body illegally auctioning properties'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

the corporation.

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor called the allegations "white lies" and said that the North body had floated no such tender. He said the dispensaries were shut due to financial crunch faced by the civic body. So, the corporation has invited expression of interest from NGOs to maintain the buildings and run free-for-all charitable dispensaries but nothing had been finalised till date, he added.

I usually turn up at the centre at 5 a.m. and stay there from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. But the centre only entertains a limited number of people every day and turns down the remaining," said Ms. Kushma who lives with her daily wager-husband and two children.

Lack of clarity

In another jhuggi cluster in Moti Lal Nehru camp near Munirka here, 30-year-old Kisna said there was a lot of confusion over where ration will be provided for those who do not have a card. "I came to know only today that there is a centre in Ber Sarai. I will go there on Thursday," she said.

Like Ms. Kushma, her family too has been hit by the latest COVID-19 wave. "My husband, who is a plumber, has got work on 14 days so far this month. The free ration would be of great help," she said.

During the second wave of COVID-19 last year, the Delhi

Non-cardholders return empty-handed as ration runs dry

Government denies allegations, says Kejriwal is fully committed towards the underprivileged

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

For the past four days, Kushma, a resident of Jagdamba camp in south Delhi, has been lining up in front of a nearby school that is distributing free foodgrains to non-ration cardholders. But with no luck.

government formulated a policy to provide ration to people

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ADANI WILMAR LIMITED

Our Company was incorporated on January 22, 1999 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat as a public company under the Companies Act, 1956, as amended pursuant to a certificate of incorporation dated January 22, 1999 issued by Registrar of Companies, Gujarat ("RoC"). Our Company commenced its operations pursuant to the certificate of commencement of business dated January 25, 1999 issued by the RoC. For details of registered office of our Company, see "History and Certain Corporate Matters" beginning on page 170 of the Red Herring Prospectus dated January 19, 2022 ("RHP").

Registered and Corporate Office: Fortune House, Near Navrangpura Railway Crossing, Ahmedabad 380009, Gujarat, India. Contact Person: Darshil Lakha, Company Secretary and Compliance Officer;

Tel: +91-79-26455848; E-mail: investor.relations@adaniwilmar.in; Website: www.adaniwilmar.com, Corporate Identity Number: U15146GJ199PLC035320

OUR PROMOTERS: ADANI ENTERPRISES LIMITED, ADANI COMMODITIES LLP AND LENCE PTE. LTD.

INITIAL PUBLIC OFFER OF UP TO [•] EQUITY SHARES OF FACE VALUE OF ₹1 EACH ("EQUITY SHARES") OF ADANI WILMAR LIMITED ("COMPANY" OR "ISSUER") FOR CASH AT A PRICE OF ₹[•] PER EQUITY SHARE AGGRAGATING UP TO ₹36,000 MILLION ("ISSUE"). THE ISSUE INCLUDES A RESERVATION OF UP TO [•] EQUITY SHARES AGGRAGATING UP TO ₹1,070 MILLION (CONSTITUTING UP TO [•]% OF THE POST-ISSUE PAID-UP SHARE CAPITAL) FOR SUBSCRIPTION BY ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES ("EMPLOYEE RESERVATION PORTION") AND A RESERVATION OF UP TO [•] EQUITY SHARES AGGRAGATING UP TO ₹3,600 MILLION (CONSTITUTING UP TO [•]% OF THE POST-ISSUE PAID-UP SHARE CAPITAL) FOR SUBSCRIPTION BY ELIGIBLE AEL SHAREHOLDERS ("SHAREHOLDER RESERVATION PORTION"), IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE BOARD OF INDIA (ISSUE OF CAPITAL AND DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS) REGULATIONS, 2018, AS AMENDED (THE "SEBI ICDR REGULATIONS"). THE SHAREHOLDER RESERVATION PORTION SHALL NOT EXCEED 10% OF THE ISSUE SIZE. THE ISSUE LESS THE EMPLOYEE RESERVATION PORTION AND THE SHAREHOLDER RESERVATION PORTION IS HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS "NET ISSUE". THE ISSUE AND NET ISSUE SHALL CONSTITUTE [•]% AND [•]%, RESPECTIVELY, OF THE POST-ISSUE PAID-UP SHARE CAPITAL OF OUR COMPANY. THE DISCOUNT OFFERED TO THE ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS PART OF THE RHP AND SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE RHP.

QIB PORTION: NOT MORE THAN 50% OF THE NET ISSUE

RETAIL PORTION: NOT LESS THAN 35% OF THE NET ISSUE

NON-INSTITUTIONAL PORTION: NOT LESS THAN 15% OF THE NET ISSUE

EMPLOYEE RESERVATION PORTION : [•] EQUITY SHARES AGGRAGATING UP TO ₹1,070 MILLION

SHAREHOLDER RESERVATION PORTION: [•] EQUITY SHARES AGGRAGATING UP TO ₹3,600 MILLION

PRICE BAND: ₹ 218 TO ₹ 230 PER EQUITY SHARE OF FACE VALUE OF ₹1 EACH.

A DISCOUNT OF ₹ 21 PER EQUITY SHARE IS BEING OFFERED TO ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES BIDDING IN THE EMPLOYEE RESERVATION PORTION.

**THE FLOOR PRICE IS 218 TIMES THE FACE VALUE OF THE EQUITY SHARES AND
THE CAP PRICE IS 230 TIMES THE FACE VALUE OF THE EQUITY SHARES.**

BIDS CAN BE MADE FOR A MINIMUM OF 65 EQUITY SHARES AND IN MULTIPLES OF 65 EQUITY SHARES THEREAFTER.

Risks to Investors

- Our business is subject to risks associated with commodities such as price fluctuations in international market, seasonality variations and foreign currency risks.
- Average cost of acquisition of Equity Shares for the Promoters ranges from ₹ 6.156 per Equity Share to ₹ 12.675 per Equity Share and Issue Price at upper end of the Price Band is ₹ 230 per Equity Share.
- Weighted Average Return on Net Worth for Fiscals 2021, 2020, 2019 is 19.97%.
- Out of our 19 refineries, our refinery in Mundra has the highest capacity (30%), making our operations proportionately dependent upon it.
- The Seven Book Running Lead Managers associated with the Issue have handled 50 public issues in the past 18 months out of which 16 issues closed below the issue price on listing date.

BID/ISSUE PROGRAMME

BID/ISSUE OPENS TODAY

BID/ISSUE CLOSES ON : MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 2022 #

"UPI mandate end time and date shall be at 12:00 pm on Tuesday, February 1, 2022.

In case of any revision in the Price Band, the Bid/Issue Period will be extended by at least three additional Working Days after such revision in the Price Band, subject to the Bid/Issue Period not exceeding 10 Working Days. In cases of force majeure, banking strike or similar circumstances, our Company may, for reasons to be recorded in writing, extend the Bid/Issue Period for a minimum of three Working Days, subject to the Bid/Issue Period not exceeding 10 Working Days. Any revision in the Price Band and the revised Bid/Issue Period, if applicable, shall be widely disseminated by notification to the Stock Exchanges, by issuing a public notice, and also by indicating the change on the respective websites of the Managers and at the terminals of the Syndicate Members and by intimation to Designated Intermediaries and the Sponsor Banks, as applicable.

The Issue is being made through the Book Building Process, in terms of Rule 19(2)(b) of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules, 1957, as amended ("SCRR") read with Regulation 31 of the SEBI ICDR Regulations and in compliance with Regulation 6(1) of the SEBI ICDR Regulations, wherein not more than 50% of the Net Issue shall be allocated on a proportionate basis to Qualified Institutional Buyers ("QIBs", the "QIB Portion"), provided that our Company may, in consultation with the Managers, allocate up to 60% of the QIB Portion to Anchor Investors on a discretionary basis in accordance with the SEBI ICDR Regulations ("Anchor Investor Portion"), of which one-third shall be reserved for domestic Mutual Funds, subject to valid bids being received from domestic Mutual Funds at or above the Anchor Investor Allocation Price. In the event of under-subscription, or non-allocation in the Anchor Investor Portion, the balance Equity Shares shall be added to the Net QIB Portion. Further, 5% of the Net QIB Portion shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis only to Mutual Funds, and the remainder of the Net QIB Portion shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis to all QIBs, including Mutual Funds, subject to valid bids being received at or above the Issue Price. Further, not less than 15% of the Net Issue shall be available for allocation to RIBs in accordance with the SEBI ICDR Regulations, subject to valid bids being received at or above the Issue Price. All potential Bidders (except Anchor Investors) are required to mandatorily utilise the Application Supported by Blocked Amount ("ASBA") process providing details of Issue specific ASBA amounts, and UPI ID in case of RIBs using the UPI Mechanism, if applicable, in which the corresponding Bid Amounts will be blocked by the ASBA or under the UPI Mechanism, as the case may be, to the extent of respective Bid Amounts. Anchor Investors are not permitted to participate in the Issue through the ASBA process. For details, see "Issue Procedure" beginning on page 362 of the RHP.

Bidders/ Applicants should ensure that DP ID, PAN, Client ID and UPI ID (for RIBs bidding through the UPI mechanism) are correctly filled in the Bid cum Application Form. The DP ID, PAN and Client ID provided in the Bid cum Application Form should match with the DP ID, PAN, Client ID available in the Depository database, otherwise, the Bid cum Application Form is liable to be rejected. **Bidders/ Applicants should ensure that the beneficiary account provided in the Bid cum Application Form is active.** Bidders/Applicants should note that on the basis of the PAN, DP ID, Client ID and UPI ID (for RIBs bidding through the UPI mechanism) as provided in the Bid cum Application Form, the Bidder/Applicant may be deemed to have authorised the Depositories to provide to the Registrar the Issue, any requested Demographic Details of the Bidder/Applicant as available on the records of the depositories. These Demographic Details may be used, among other things, for giving Allotment Advice or unblocking of ASBA Account or for other correspondence(s) related to the Issue. **Bidders/Applicants are advised to update any changes to their Demographic Details as available in the records of the Depository Participant to ensure accuracy of records.** Any delay resulting from failure to update the Demographic Details would be at the Bidders/Applicants' sole risk. Investors must ensure that their PAN is linked with Aadhaar and are in compliance with CBDT notification dated Feb 13, 2020 and press release dated June 25, 2021 read with press release dated September 17, 2021.

Contents of the Memorandum of Association of the Company as regards its objects: For information on the main objects of the Company, please see the section "History

CORRIGENDUM – NOTICE TO INVESTORS

The ISIN of the Company has been inadvertently mentioned as INE699H01014 in the bid cum application forms. We request you to please read the ISIN of the Company as INE699H01024, instead of INE699H01014. The Company will reflect the ISIN as INE699H01024 in allotment advice cum refund intimation to Bidders.

ASBA[#]

Simple, Safe, Smart way of Application!!!

Applications supported by blocked amount (ASBA) is a better way of applying to issues by simply blocking the fund in the bank account. For further details, check section on ASBA below.

Mandatory in public issues. No cheque will be accepted.



UPI-Now available in ASBA for Retail Individual Investors ("RIs") applying through Registered Brokers, DPs and RTAs. RIls also have the option to submit the application directly to the ASBA Bank (SCSBs) or to use the facility of linked online trading, demat and bank account. Investors are required to ensure that the bank account used for bidding is linked to their PAN. Bidders must ensure that their PAN is linked with Aadhaar and are in compliance with CBDT notification dated February 13, 2020 and press release dated June 25, 2021 read with

press release dated September 17, 2021.

ASBA has to be availed by all the investors except anchor investors. UPI may be availed by Retail Individual Bidders. For details on the ASBA and UPI process, please refer to the details given in ASBA form and abridged prospectus and also please refer to the section "Issue Procedure" on page 362 of the RHP. The process is also available on the website of Association of Investment Bankers of India ("AIBI") and Stock Exchanges and in the General Information Document. ASBA bid-cum-application forms can be downloaded from the websites of BSE Limited ("BSE") and National Stock Exchange of India Limited ("NSE"), and together with BSE, the "Stock Exchanges") and can be obtained from the list of banks that is displayed on the website of SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in. For the list of UPI apps and banks live on PO, please refer to the link www.sebi.gov.in. RIBs Bidding using the UPI mechanism may apply through the SCBS and mobile applications whose names appear on the website of SEBI at <https://www.sebi.gov.in/sebiweb/OtherAction.do?doRecognize=yes&id=43>, respectively as updated from time to time. HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank Limited have been appointed as Sponsor Banks for the Issue, in accordance with the requirements of the SEBI Circular dated November 1, 2018 as amended. For other related queries, please contact the Book Running Lead Managers ("BRLMs") on their respective email IDs as mentioned below. For UPI related queries, investors can contact NPCI at the toll free number: 1800 1201740 and mail id: ipo_ipu@npci.org.in. Sponsor Banks: HDFC Bank Limited, Tel: +91 22 3075 2927 / 2928 / 2914, Email: tushar.gavankar@hdfcbank.com; siddharth.jadhav@hdfcbank.com, prasanna.uchil@hdfcbank.com, neerav.desai@hdfcbank.com, and ICICI Bank Limited, tel: 022 6631 9311 / 23 / 24, E-mail: sagar.welekar@icicibank.com and Registrar: Link Intime India Private Limited, tel: 022 4918 6200, E-mail: adaniwilmar.ipo@linkintime.co.in.

Kotak [®] Investment Banking	J.P.Morgan	BofA SECURITIES	CREDIT SUISSE	ICICI Securities	HDFC BANK We understand your world	BNP PARIBAS	LINK Intime	COMPANY SECRETARY AND COMPLIANCE OFFICER
Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Limited 1 st Floor, 27 BKC, Plot No. 27, 'G' Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai - 400 051, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 4336 0000 E-mail: adaniwilmar.ipo@kotak.com Website: https://investmentbank.kotak.com Investor Grievance ID: kmcrcdresa@kotak.com Contact Person: Ganesh Rane SEBI Registration Number: INM0000008704	J.P. Morgan India Private Limited J.P. Morgan Tower, Off. C.S.T. Road, Kalinja, Santacruz (East), Mumbai - 400 090, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 6157 3000 E-mail: jpm@jpmorgan.com Website: www.jpmorgan.com Investor Grievance ID: investorsnb.jpm@jpmorgan.com Contact Person: Saarthak K Soni SEBI Registration Number: INM00000011625	BofA Securities India Limited Ground Floor, "A" Wing, One BKC, Kalinja, Santacruz (East), Mumbai - 400 090, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 6632 8000 E-mail: dg.adani.wilmar.ipo@bofa.com Website: www.ml-india.com Investor Grievance ID: dg.india.merchantbanking@bofa.com Contact Person: Abhishek Joshi SEBI Registration Number: INM0000001161	Credit Suisse Securities (India) Private Limited Ground Floor, "A" Wing, One BKC, Kalinja, Santacruz (East), Mumbai - 400 090, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 6777 3885 E-mail: list.adaniwilmarpo@credit-suisse.com Website: www.credit-suisse.com/en/investment-banking-apac/investment-banking-in-india/ipo.html Investor Grievance ID: list.gcm@credit-suisse.com Contact Person: list.gcm@credit-suisse.com	ICICI Securities Limited ICICI Venture House, Appasheb Marathe Marg, Prabhadevi, Mumbai - 400 018, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 6807 7100 E-mail: adaniwilmar.ipo@icicisecurities.com Website: www.icicisecurities.com/investor-grievance-id Investor Grievance ID: customercare@icicisecurities.com Contact Person: Sunit Singh SEBI Registration Number: INN0000011179	HDFC Bank Limited Investment Banking Group, Unit 401 & 402, 4th Floor, Tower B, Peninsula Business Park, Lower Parel, Mumbai - 400 013, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 3395 8233 E-mail: adaniwilmar.ipo@hdfcbank.com Website: www.hdfcbank.com Investor Grievance ID: investor.redressal@hdfcbank.com Contact Person: Ravi Sharma / Harsh Thakkar SEBI Registration Number: INN0000011252	BNP Paribas 1-North Avenue, Maker Maxity, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai - 400 051 Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 4918 6200 E-mail: adaniwilmar.ipo@linkintime.co.in Website: www.bnpparibas.co.in Investor Grievance ID: investor.grievance@bnpparibas.co.in Contact Person: Shanti Gopal Krishnan SEBI Registration Number: INR000004058	Darshil Lakha Fortune House, Near Navrangpura Railway Crossing, Ahmedabad - 380 009, Gujarat, India. Tel: +91 22 2645 5848 E-mail: investor.relations@adaniwilmar.in	
Availability of the RHP: Investors are advised to refer to the RHP and the "Risk Factors" beginning on page 21 of the RHP before applying in the Issue. Full copy of the RHP is available on website of SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in , website of the BRLMs, i.e. Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Limited, J.P. Morgan India Private Limited, BofA Securities India Limited, Credit Suisse Securities (India) Private Limited, ICICI Securities Limited, HDFC Bank Limited and BNP Paribas at investmentbank.kotak.com , www.jpmorgan.com , www.bnpparibas.co.in , respectively and on the websites of BSE and NSE at www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com , respectively.	Availability of Bid Cum Application Forms: Bid cum Application Forms can be obtained from the Registered Office of ADANI WILMAR LIMITED, Tel: +91 22 4918 6200; BOOK RUNNING LEAD MANAGERS ("BRLMs") : Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Limited, Tel: +91 22 4336 0000, J.P. Morgan India Private Limited, Tel: +91 22 6157 3000; BofA Securities India Limited, Tel: +91 22 6632 8000 and Credit Suisse Securities (India) Private Limited, Tel: +91 22 6777 3885, ICICI Securities Limited, Tel: +91 22 6807 7100, HDFC Bank Limited, Tel: +91 22 3395 8233 and BNP Paribas, Tel: +91 22 3370 4000 and Syndicate Members : Kotak Securities Limited, Telephone: +91 22 6218 5470; HDFC Securities Limited, Telephone: +91 22 3075 3400 and Sharekhan Limited, Telephone: +91 22 6115 0000 at the selected locations of the Sub-syndicate Members (as given below). ASBA Forms will also be available on the websites of BSE and NSE and the Designated Branches of SCBS, the list of which is available at websites of the Stock Exchanges and SEBI.	Sub-Syndicate Members: Almond Global Securities Ltd, Amrapali Capital & Finance Services Ltd, Anand Rathri Share & Stock Brokers Ltd, Ashika Stock Broking Ltd, Asit C Mehta Investment Intermediates Ltd, Axis Capital Limited, Bajaj Financial Ltd, Centrum Broking Limited, Centrum Wealth Management Ltd, Choice Equity Broking Private Limited, Dalal & Broacha Stock Broking Private Limited, DB International Stock Brokers Ltd, Edelweiss Broking Limited, Eureka Stock & Share Broking Services Ltd, Hem Securities Ltd, ICICI Securities Limited, IDBI Capital Markets & Securities Limited, IFIL Securities Ltd, JM Financial Services Limited, Jobanputra Fiscal Services Private Limited, Kantilal Chhaganlal Securities Pvt Limited, Keynote Capitals Limited, KJMC Capital Market Services Limited, LKP Securities Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd, Marwadi Shares & Finance, Monarch Network Capital Ltd, Motilal Oswal Securities Limited, Nirmal Bang Securities Pvt. Ltd., Nitin Parikh & Co, Prabhudas Lalithadar Pvt Ltd, Pravin Ratilal Share & Stock Brokers Limited, Reliance Securities Ltd, Religare Broking Limited, Rikshaw Securities Ltd, RR Equity Brokers Private Limited, SBICap Securities Limited, SMC Global Securities Ltd, Systemax Shares & Stocks (India) Limited, Trade Bulls Securities (P) Ltd, Viren M Shah, Way2Wealth Brokers Private Limited and						

Three-fourth injured auto workers lost two fingers on an average, says report

Victims claim that safety steps are bypassed by companies to ensure increased production and safety gears provided only during audit inspections

ASHOK KUMAR
GURGAON

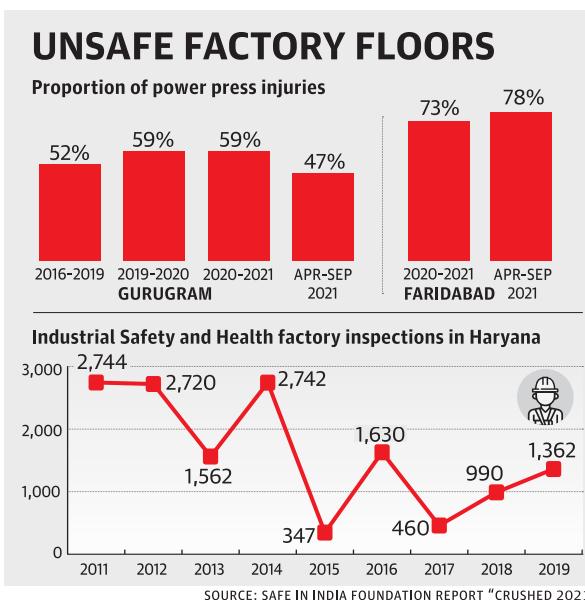
Around three-fourth of the auto-sector workers who sustained injuries over the past five years have lost almost two fingers on an average to crush injuries, according to a Safe In India (SII) Foundation annual report. It is based on data of around 2,500 workers who suffered non-fatal injuries at factories in Faridabad-Gurugram-Neemrana auto belt.

Almost 80% of them were employed in the supply chains of some of the largest auto-sector brands.

Titled "Crushed 2021", the report, third in a series on the state of auto sector workers safety in India, claimed that over 50% of the injuries reported to the SII occurred on power press machines with 2.04 fingers lost on an average and many losing whole hands.

"A majority of the workers injured on power presses are inadequately trained and have low education levels. Young and old workers lose fingers equally on power presses. A majority of the crush injuries were on power presses that should have had safety sensors but did not. Most factories violate many extant regulations; potential criminal offences," said the report released during a two-hour-long online event on Wednesday.

'Safety steps bypassed'
More than a hundred auto workers who suffered the injuries also joined the event from 11 locations in Gurugram and Faridabad to share their experiences. They claimed that safety measures were bypassed by the companies to ensure increased production and also that they were not provided



any safety gears such as ear plugs and helmets, except during audit inspections.

Most of them conceded that they were not given any formal training in operating

the machines and had learnt it from their seniors.

Unfortunately, the proportion of workers with severe injuries – loss of body parts and bone fractures –

has not reduced in the past five years indicating continuing underlying dangerous working conditions, the report said.

Maruti-Suzuki, Hero, Honda suppliers remain largest contributors to accidents in Gurugram (93%) and Faridabad (75%), as per the report with Bajaj, Eicher, JCB, Tata Motors, TVS, Yamaha suppliers are also significant contributors in Gurugram, Faridabad, Rudrapur and Neemrana.

Almost one-fifth of the member companies of the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India also reported accidents, stressing the fact that the problem was not confined to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, the report claimed.

Quoting the report, Sandeep Sachdeva, Co-founder and CEO, SII, said the lower

the salary and the education, the worse was the injury received.

As many as 92% of those injured were migrants, 81% educated only up to grade 10 and 71% earned less than ₹10,000 a month with no overtime pay for many despite a 12-hour shift, said Mr. Sachdeva. The injured workers had not received their ESIC e-Pehchaan Card on the day of joining their jobs, as per ESIC regulations requirement. Interestingly, all the injured workers did receive their card a few days after the accident.

The report claimed the government data had grossly under-reported factory injuries, inspections had come down and the new Labour Occupational Safety, Health And Working Conditions Code might make matters worse.

Kamal Jaswal, IAS (retd.),

FIR against Google CEO, 5 others

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

A First Information Report (FIR) has been registered here on court orders against Google, its CEO Sunder Pichai and five other employees of the company in an alleged copyright violation case, city police said on Wednesday.

The search engine giant said in its reaction that it has a set mechanism which copyright owners can use to protect their content on platforms such as YouTube.

As per a police officer, the case was registered at the MIDC Police Station in suburban Andheri on the orders of a magistrate's court on Tuesday evening.

Film director Suneel Darshan had approached the court seeking registration of a case against Google and its top officials over alleged copyright infringement, he said, without giving more information about the nature of the copyright violation.

BJP names six more for Goa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANAJI

The BJP on Wednesday announced its second and final list of six candidates for the February 14 Goa Assembly elections.

It included Assembly Speaker Rajesh Patnekar, who will contest from his current constituency of Bicholim.

But Siddhesh Naik, son of Union Minister Shripad Naik who was reportedly seeking a ticket from Cumbharjua, does not figure in the list.

Jainita, former State Minister and sitting MLA Pandurang Madkaikar's wife, has been fielded from this constituency.

Rampant human trafficking from Gujarat in the spotlight

The death of a family from Gujarat on the U.S.-Canada border has prompted the State police to launch a probe into the activities of local agents

MAHESH LANGA
AHMEDABAD

The death of a family of four across the U.S.-Canada border while trying to get into the U.S. illegally has once again brought to the surface the rampant human trafficking rackets operating in parts of Gujarat where going to the U.S. or Canada at any cost remains a craze.

The death of Jagdish Patel, his wife Vaishali, their children Gopi and Dharmik who froze in extreme cold has prompted the Gujarat police to launch a probe into the activities of local agents who illegally send families to the U.S. and Canada charging huge sums from them.

Gujarat Police chief Ashish Bhatia has now asked CID (Crime) anti-human traffick-

ing branch to investigate the networks of agents operating in the State.

The family belonged to the Dingucha village in north Gujarat, a region where migrating to U.S. or Canada is a first priority among the Patel community.

According to sources, the family was apparently from a larger group of Indians who were allegedly sent to Canada by the local agents who would then have smuggled them to the U.S. illegally.

Though the Gujarat government has not yet made any official comment on the family, the police has started the probe in the area where the local agents have been luring families to send them abroad.

Accordingly, this family



Police search the area where the family of four froze to death in Manitoba, Canada.
• FILE PHOTO

had, as per the local sources, left for Canada in January first week and from there they were to be taken into the U.S. by international agents who operate the trafficking network.

The police believe that probably a large group of people had walked for hours in extremely cold conditions with temperatures hovering around -35°C to the U.S.-Canada border. The Patel family might have lost their way and separated from the large group during the night.

Subsequently, their bodies were found just 10m from the U.S. border on the Canadian side.

No complaints

"Since the craze is high to go abroad without a valid visa, there are network of agents who promise them illegal entry by charging huge sums. Unfortunately, no one comes forward to file the complaint since it's entirely illegal," a police official said.

Police also quoted their relatives to deny any abduction angle.

The six members became untraceable after reaching Turkey on visitor visa earlier this month, a senior police

'Untraceable' families in Turkey found

Gujarat police deny any abduction angle citing their kin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AHMEDABAD

officer said.

Though there were reports that the two families, comprising two couples and two children, were abducted in Istanbul by human traffickers, their parents back here denied the abduction angle, said a senior police officer of the Ahmedabad crime branch who had questioned the agent through whom the two families had acquired visitor visas.

"These two families have already been found. They are staying at a hotel in Turkey and are coming back in the next two-three days. They

went to Turkey on a valid visitor visa with the help of an agent," the officer said.

"Once they land here, we will talk to them and find out what exactly happened to them and what were their plans after landing in Turkey," said the officer.

The matter came to light after the crime branch launched the preliminary probe into the alleged involvement of local agents following the death of four members of a family while attempting to cross into the US through the US-Canada border illegally a week back.

Tamil Nadu showcases tableau rejected by Centre

with VVS Iyer, Quaid-e-Milath and others.

However, the tableau with Periyar drew the most amount of attention of the participants. He was the leading figure of the tableau showcasing Tirupur Kumaran, who continued to hold the flag even after he fell prey to the lathis of the British police.

Earlier, Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi unfurled the National Flag in the presence of Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, Chief Secretary Irai Anbu and other dignitaries.

In his message, Mr. Stalin said,

"Let us reaffirm the upholding of the secular ethos of the Constitution on this Republic Day and be proud of the great achievements to uplift the people of our nation in all spheres."

Maharashtra has done remarkable work'

Governor praises State govt.'s Mumbai model to combat COVID-19 pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI



Governor Kshyoshi unfurls the Tricolour in Mumbai on Wednesday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

preciated the efforts taken by Maharashtra on this front," he said. "We did not let our economy collapse or come to a standstill in the last two years (during the pandemic)," the Governor said.

Highlighting industrial growth, the Governor said, "In the last two years, 96 Memoranda of Understanding worth ₹1.88 lakh crore had been signed. Between October 2019 to March 21, FDI to the tune of ₹1.71 lakh crore has been made. The hospitality sector is now recognised as an industry by the State with facilities (being given) in terms of tax concessions," he said.

"The Supreme Court has hailed the Mumbai model for successful planning to combat against the coronavirus pandemic. The NITI Aayog and the WHO have also ap-

preciated the efforts taken by Maharashtra on this front," he said. "We did not let our economy collapse or come to a standstill in the last two years (during the pandemic)," the Governor said.

The Governor also spoke of newly-launched initiatives like the WhatsApp Chatbot facility of the Mumbai civic corporation and the "e-peek Pahan" in the agriculture sector for farmers to register their crops using the mobile application.

CM greets citizens

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray unfurled the Tri-colour at his official residence in south Mumbai to mark the 73rd Republic Day. In a message, Mr. Thackeray greeted citizens on the occasion expressing confidence that the united country can tackle any challenges that come in its way.

Khadi discount utilised for clothes bank

Woollen garments are being distributed to the poor from it in Rajasthan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

In a unique initiative, a public service institution in Rajasthan's Bharatpur town has utilised the discount offered by the State government on the khadi fabric for creation of a clothes bank, from which woollen clothes are being distributed to the poor and needy people. The garments were procured from Khadi Gramodaya Samitis for donating them during winter.

The State government had announced 50% discount on khadi products on Gandhi Jayanti, which was applicable till December 31. The Samridh Bharat Abhiyan Sansthan requested Tourism Minister Vishvendra Singh, representing Bharatpur district's Deep-Kumher Assembly constituency, to get the discount extended by at least one month to facilitate the

creation of a clothes bank. Sansthan's convener Sita Ram Gupta told *The Hindu* here on Monday that while the discount was extended till January 30, the institution approached the Khadi Gramodaya Samitis with the offer to purchase their entire stocks if they gave 65% discount.

"We have procured khadi woollen garments worth ₹1

lakh for just ₹4.20 lakh, clearing the stocks of Samitis, and started distributing them in the regular camps organised in Bharatpur, Alwar and Dholpur districts," Mr. Gupta said.

Women's rights activist and recipient of an award for women's empowerment Reenu Sikarwar has joined hands with the Sansthan to strengthen

then the clothes bank. Mr. Gupta said the initiative had also struck at the market in the rural areas, where the shopkeepers were making enormous profits by selling the woollens at exorbitant prices. Besides, it will promote khadi products in the villages.

Attention needed

Mr. Gupta, an electrical engineer-turned corporate executive, said though the government was taking a number of steps for meeting the food and housing needs of the poor, it was paying little attention to arranging clothes for them.

The Sansthan has approached the Chief Minister's Offices in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka for launching similar clothes banks for the benefit of the needy people.

Protect federal character of Constitution: Mamata

CM salutes freedom fighters, jawans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

on the Republic Day. On this day, let us once again take pledge to protect the basic structure of the Indian Constitution, including and particularly its federal character," she tweeted.

"Let us strive to protect, preserve and follow the ideals of Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, as enshrined in our Constitution, which, among other things, gives us our inalienable rights," Ms. Banerjee said in another Twitter post.

A short programme was held on the Red Road in the heart of Kolkata to celebrate the day with strict adherence to COVID-19 protocols, amid the presence of Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, the Chief Minister and Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee.

"Heartiest greetings to all

IN BRIEF



KCR appoints party chiefs for all districts

HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao appointed presidents for all the 33 district units of the TRS party. The appointment not only revived the post in the party for the first time after formation of Telangana but also filled it for the first time in the new districts, except Hyderabad, created in October 2016.

Pregnant woman denied entry; doctors suspended

HYDERABAD

The superintendent and duty doctor of a Community Health Centre (CHC) in Achampet of Telangana were suspended with immediate effect on Wednesday for denying admission to a COVID positive pregnant woman on Tuesday. Health Minister Harish Rao had directed officials to take action against the staff. Denying admission is an act of gross negligence and violation of rules by the staff concerned, said commissioner of Telangana Vaidya Vidhana Parishad Dr. K. Ramesh Reddy.

Slain tribesman Madhu's kin can select prosecutor

KOCHI

The family members of the slain Palakkad tribesman Madhu have been given the choice of selecting the special prosecutor to conduct the trial in the case. The decision comes in the wake of the complaints that the special prosecutor, V.T. Raghunath, who was handpicked by Madhu's mother, had failed to turn up at the trial court when the case was considered. T.A. Shaji, the Director General of Prosecution, said the family can decide on whether to retain Mr. Raghunath or have a new lawyer.

A.P. to create 13 new districts

No mention of three Capitals, abolition of Council during Governor's speech

STAFF REPORTER

VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government announced the formation of 13 districts at the Republic Day celebrations on Wednesday. The new districts will come into force from Ugadi, Telugu New Year.

Secondly, in an apparent manner, the government has hinted that there is no scope for upward revision of fitment. Strikingly, there was no mention of three Capitals issues in the Governor's speech at the Republic Day celebrations. Neither, was there a mention of abolition of the Legislative Council.

PM Kisan

The government also chose to drop the "PM Kisan" words from Rythu Bharosa financial assistance. The Central government has categorically stated that PM Kisan being a Central govern-



Ceremonial guard: Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan inspecting Republic Day parade in Vijayawada. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

ment scheme, it cannot be clubbed with the State government schemes.

Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan unfurled the Tricolour flag at IGMC Stadium Complex here. On the occasion, the Governor said that in line with the election manifesto promise made by the government for delivery of more efficient services to

people and for good governance, 13 more districts in the State of Andhra Pradesh on the auspicious day of Ugadi were being created. Two districts would be exclusively for Tribal population, with this, the total tally of districts in the State would go up to 26, he said.

The Governor, referring to the employees welfare, said

the government had given the best possible Pay Revision Commission (PRC) possible in the present circumstances. "Let nothing come between the government and its employees. Together, we should work towards serving the people of this State," he said in the backdrop of the indefinite strike call given by the State employees, teachers and pensioners over implementation of the new scales of pay.

The Governor said in a first-of-its-kind initiative in the country, the government was extending YSR Rythu Bharosa assistance of ₹1,500 per year to each farmer.

The Governor said, as step towards the New Education Policy, the government was introducing a six-level school system.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and others were present.

KCR stays away from R-Day celebrations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

The 73rd Republic Day celebrations in Telangana continued to be a low key affair for the second consecutive year.

Governor Tamilisai Soundarajan hoisted the Tricolour at Raj Bhavan lawns amidst limited attendance at the venue.

Neither Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao nor any of his Cabinet colleagues were present on the occasion.

The State government was represented by the Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, Director General of Police M. Mahender Reddy and a few senior bureaucrats.

Pandemic was said to be the reason behind the low key celebrations.

Mr. Rao hoisted the national flag at his camp ofice separately.

'Hold Punjab govt. accountable for violating HC order'

Majithia urges EC to take action

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

Former Punjab Minister and senior Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Bikram Singh Majithia, who has been booked for allegedly allowing illicit drugs smuggling, on Wednesday urged the Election Commission to hold the Congress government in the State accountable for violating High Court directives and conducting raids on his residence.

Mr. Majithia said his legal team was considering moving a contempt petition against Congress government.

The Akali leader also demanded a NIA inquiry into the purported audio tape expose of Director-General of Police S. Chattopadhyay saying the security breach during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Punjab could have even resulted in an assassination bid.

The Akali leader said, "It seems the law is different for me and the same rules are not applied to Congressmen, be it Sukhpal Khaira, who is accused of drug smuggling, or Sidhu Moosewala, who is accused of firing an AK-47. No raids have been conducted at either of their houses."

Mr. Majithia said his legal team was considering moving a contempt petition against Congress government.

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Removal of Ambedkar portrait leads to protest in Raichur



Bone of contention: Ambedkar portrait being removed during the Republic Day celebrations in Raichur. ■ SANTOSH SAGAR

It is said that the Principal District and Sessions Judge directed his subordinates to remove the photo and the tricolour was unfurled later.



Keeping faith

People-to-people initiatives can help build goodwill between India and Pakistan

At a time when most other India-Pakistan exchanges are suspended, even a simple proposal by the Pakistan Hindu Council, forwarded by Pakistan to India, to allow pilgrims of both countries to travel by air to avoid cumbersome journeys seems a leap. Islamabad-Delhi ties now are possibly at their worst ever in peace times, with no political dialogue at a bilateral or multilateral level for over five years. After many terror attacks, India has stopped normal communications and cultural exchanges, and after the Government's moves on Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan stopped all trade ties. Both sides have downsized their diplomatic missions. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has ensured that the borders have been virtually sealed for two years, with few direct routes operating between them. Even the movement of pilgrims may have been cancelled but for the conscious attempt by the two governments to make an exception for faith-based travel – as was done for the Kartarpur corridor that came up in 2019, the same year the two countries nearly went to war over the Pulwama attack. Religious exchanges, of mainly Muslim pilgrims from Pakistan, and Hindus and Sikhs from India, are governed by a protocol signed in 1974, and allowed to continue.

While the routes for Sikh pilgrims, from Indian Punjab to the Pakistani Punjab province, are relatively easy, hundreds of Indian and Pakistani pilgrims crossing over at the Wagah/Atari border to travel further to the Hinglaj Mata Mandir in Balochistan, the Paramhans Mandir in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Ajmer Sharif dargah in Rajasthan, the Nizamuddin Aulia in Delhi and other such shrines, face more circuitous routes. To avoid the extra time in travel, the Pakistan Hindu Council, which has now signed an MoU with Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) to facilitate faith-based tour groups, has asked that PIA charters from Karachi and Lahore be allowed to fly direct to Indian cities this week, with a view to also allowing reciprocal air charters from India. This would be the first time such air travel has taken place in years, and the first time ever that pilgrimages would be accorded this facility. As pilgrim groups on both sides are vetted before being allowed to travel, the precedent is unlikely to pose any additional security threat. In an atmosphere fraught with tensions, such people-to-people initiatives can only help build some modicum of goodwill. No evident harm to national interests has come from other such recent moves embarked on by the two governments, such as the LoC ceasefire announcement in February, or the decision to reopen the Kartarpur corridor in November, or the Government's nod for cricket under the T20 World Cup as well as other sporting events. While the Government's reflex position may be to deny the request, it may prove wiser to give the proposal some deliberate consideration.

Taxing drama

The Centre must conclude the retroactive tax disputes and ensure policy predictability

In what should be the last act of a long and winding tax dispute drama, British firm Cairn Energy has said it has concluded all steps prescribed by the Indian government in order to be eligible for the refund of a contentious retroactive tax levy. The firm, now rechristened as Capricorn Energy, expects to get back ₹7,900 crore. Cairn Energy was the second major firm pursued by the I-T Department for taxes it believed had accrued in the past, using retro-active legislative changes introduced in the 2012 Budget by then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee. The original target for this move, that has sharply dented India's credibility, was Vodafone, which had secured a Supreme Court verdict against the tax department's demands for past transactions. Empowered to dig up similar transactions, involving the indirect transfer of assets situated in India, the I-T Department had, since 2014, pursued Cairn over a group restructuring undertaken in 2006, culminating in a tax demand of as much as ₹24,500 crore. Cairn and Vodafone had initiated arbitration proceedings against the Indian tax authorities' actions, and won in late 2020. But in Cairn's case, the taxman had recovered part of its 'dues' by forcibly selling its shares even as arbitration proceedings were pending – an action that led to The Hague awarding it penal damages of \$1.2 billion.

As part of the Government's compromise formula worked out belatedly last August through amendments in the tax law, Cairn had to drop all legal proceedings seeking to enforce the arbitration award against India, forgo the damages and indemnify the Government against all future claims or liabilities. Last month, Vodafone also availed these provisions. The Government should, on its part, work swiftly to process their paperwork and preferably remit their dues before the financial year concludes. While this will be a necessary first step towards restoring some of the damage caused to Brand India, it may not be immediately sufficient – from labelling it as tax terrorism while in the Opposition, this government dithered on corrective action till its eighth year in office. Even in the eight months following the loss of the Cairn arbitration, it shuffled its feet, from denial and obfuscation to working out legal amendments to fix the mess. The only ostensible trigger for the change was global courts approving seizure of Indian assets as Cairn sought to enforce the arbitration award. Whether this was an outcome of bureaucratic bravado, official obstinacy, political paralysis or a combination of all three, India needs to abandon such fickleness and demonstrate greater certainty and predictability across economic policy, be it about GST or global trade engagement, in order to bolster its credentials as an ideal investment destination.

The substance of the U.P. elections

Smoke signals from Uttar Pradesh could pose a challenge to Hindutva politics beyond the State



SEEMA CHISHTI

di's Bharatiya Janata Party, which was three percentage points above the overall support for the party. It appeared they were willing to give up the hard-earned material benefits of 'social justice' for the emotional succour of 'accommodation' under the saffron umbrella. Mr. Modi, and then Mr. Adityanath, had been able to fold everyone into the 'Kamandal'.

Historically, the land economy of Uttar Pradesh was centred on the exploitative and unreformed zamindari system. The thick overlap between land ownership, economic strength and social hierarchy made social reform next to impossible, unlike Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, which saw vibrant social movements led by the likes of Sree Narayana Guru, Periyar and Jyotiba Phule, respectively, leavening the soil for a more egalitarian order. What Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has recently termed the 'Dravidian model', where social reform was successfully welded into economic uplift, or what Kerala saw in terms of multiple initiatives such as the People's Plan, focussing on a bottom-up or capabilities approach, never made it to Uttar Pradesh.

There is economic distress
The downturn in the economy since 2016 has led to desperation in Uttar Pradesh; while not shown on television or most newspapers, a rapid fall in living standards has led to a churn being triggered off. Uttar Pradesh may have been BI-MARU (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, a term to describe backwardness) but it has done successively worse and that has added to the misery. Labour force data has established that U.P.'s total working-age population has increased by over 2 crore over the past five years, but the total number of people with jobs shrunk by over 16 lakh. Youth unemployment has increased five times since 2012.

The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of U.P. grew at a compound growth rate of only 1.95% over 2017-21. In contrast, the rate was 6.92% over 2012-17 during the previous State government. Inflation, especially food inflation, has



hurt the poorest who form the bulk of U.P.'s population. NITIAayog's first Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index ratings have U.P. in the bottom three, with 37.79% being poor, far higher than the national average. The Aayog's Health Index showed U.P. to be continuing to be the worst performer. This was for data before the novel coronavirus pandemic struck. The state of affairs of pandemic management in the State was made clear by bodies seen afloat in the Ganga, and later buried in shallow graves on the river banks.

The context

There is a clear social component to the economic slide, as demonetisation, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and then the mishandling of COVID-19 have disproportionately affected the informal economy, which for a State like U.P. is in effect its only economy. This informal economy is where the majority of the population finds work and sustenance, and comprises, not by coincidence, the socially backward. There was no relief as far as the crisis in agriculture was concerned and farmers in U.P. became more anxious with the enactment of the new farm laws; this is why the farmers' agitation has been able to strike a deep chord in the State. Unease with a Chief Minister running a caste-conscious administration got full expression. The failing economy has fuelled the feel-bad sentiment in the State.

The refusal of the BJP to conduct a caste census or declare the numbers of the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) conducted in 2011, has provoked more anger among numerically smaller castes and their leaders, who had

so far subsumed themselves in the Hindutva tent. This has been exacerbated by upper caste dominance which has played out in five years. In 2017, the Vidhan Sabha in Lucknow consisted of 44.3% upper caste MLAs, their highest share in the State's Assembly since 1980. The BJP set up a commission headed by Justice (retired) G. Rohini to sub-categorise castes to apportion reservation more fairly to under-represented castes. This commission was to submit its report in 2018, but is expecting to get its twelfth extension, according to a media report. A social justice committee headed by Allahabad High Court judge Justice (retired) Raghavendra Kumar in October 2018 submitted a report to the State government, but it is still being studied.

For a new model

The stage seems set for a change – of discourse and the all-important narrative – as voices from within the BJP fort are beginning to air radically different sentiments from what Hindutva proponents would want them to. Added to backward class angst and thwarted desires, along with the ruined economy, is the experience of Dalits in the State. Apart from being hit economically, by virtue of being at the bottom of the social hierarchy, they have also been at the receiving end of crimes in the State.

Last year, according to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, crimes against them in U.P. constituted 25% of all crimes recorded against Dalits in India. The Bahujan Samaj Party has gone into virtual silent mode and this has allowed the Samajwadi Party to try and extend its reach and construct a broader coalition encompassing Dalits too in a way that Rashtriya Janata Dal Lalu Prasad Yadav managed to in Bihar in the early 1990s.

This could be a time when U.P. sees itself emerging into its own, with its own version of Dravidian modelling, finally being able to hardwire politics with a call for real social and economic change. It would be a moment for U.P. to savor if it can make true the Socialist Lohiaite call for 'Picchde

'paanve sau mein saath' (Backwards must get 60%, as they are 60% of the population) widening the definition of backwards into non-forwards. This 60% is not just about reservation in government jobs but about their due share in the economy, politics and other institutions of the State. It is not caste assertion but about their rights, both constitutional and socio-economic.

The BJP's idea is of benefaction from the Leader, while the clear desire which is being expressed now is to accord them what is theirs by right. Devising its own comprehensive model may be the answer to U.P.'s ferment, one where economics, participation and representation is driven by people-propelled policies; not those diverted by demonising "internal enemies", or in the name of ancient India, a respect for the 'status quo' caste hierarchy which has served its people very poorly. These tremors, the counter-cry of 85 versus 15 (referring to the national Backward and Forward numbers) challenging the 80 versus 20 Hindutva discourse and the politics of one-leader, one-nation, call for politics in India's most populated State, and therefore India, to move into another gear.

These are noises which no conch shell sounds can drown out. It will haunt whoever comes to power in March. Uttar Pradesh is on the cusp of change. There seems to be a clamour for real change, real power and empowerment. As Mr. Rajbhar's slogan puts it pithily, it is about no 'ghulami', or no slavery; backwards not being content with playing the *Kevat* or *Shabari* to Lord Ram on a saffron stage, but wanting to write their own Epic. Like the farmers' stir provided a road map to all sections of society by making sure they do not get steam-rolled, voices gathering in India's most populated State, may well provide a grammar and a vocabulary to resist the national discourse in place since 2014. That is the significance of the U.P. elections; not necessarily its result.

Seema Chishti is a journalist-writer based in New Delhi

Unlock India's food processing potential

Growing populations and unrestricted use of natural resources must push nations to have an efficient food value chain



HARSH VARDHAN

What's for dinner? The answer concerns every living being. Food connects us all and is tied to our community, traditions, our past and our future. The challenge to feed the 10 billion population by mid-century is therefore being deliberated on several fronts. It demands efficient ways of production that are both economically viable and ecologically sustainable. Fortunately, technologies are emerging that revamp the traditional approach of farm to fork and with a lower environmental footprint. One of the largest producers of fruits and vegetables in the world to boost processed food in large quantities, India has formulated a unique Production-Linked Incentive Scheme (PLIS) which aims to incentivise incremental sales.

Progress so far
A sum of ₹10,900 crore has been earmarked for the scheme and to date, 60 applicants have already been selected under Category 1

(<https://bit.ly/3rMdqTc>) which incentivises firms for incremental sales and branding/marketing initiatives taken abroad. Beneficiaries have been obliged to commit a minimum investment while applying for the scheme. Assuming the committed investment as a fixed ratio of their sales and undertaking execution of at least 75% of the projects, the sector is likely to witness at least ₹6,500 crore worth of investment over the next two years.

A study in the United States concluded that a 1% increase in public infrastructure increased the food manufacturing output by 0.06% in the longer run (<https://bit.ly/3rOeE0l>). This correlation holds good for India too as a higher investment is being concentrated in States such as Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. These States as reported by the Good Governance Index 2020-21, ranked among the highest in the 'Public Infrastructure and Utilities' parameter with 'Connectivity to Rural Habitations' showing the highest improvement (<https://bit.ly/3nZ9X8z>). For the exports market, it is now established that sales promotion is positively related to increased sales volume, but inversely related to profitability. To bridge this gap,



of the 13 key sectors announced under the PLIS, the 'Food Processing PLIS' earmarks a dedicated Category 3 for supporting branding and marketing activities in foreign markets. This ensures that India's share of value-added products in the exports basket is improved, and it may leverage on its unique geographical proximity to the untapped markets of Europe, the Middle East/West Asia, Africa, Oceania and Japan.

Easing access to credit

As a result of the novel coronavirus pandemic, the past two years have been witnessing a significant number of people working from home. This has accelerated the demand for products from the ready-to-eat market which saw a rise of approximately 170% in sales volume between March-June 2020, as stated by Netscribes (global data and insights firm). The pandemic has bolstered consumer aware-

ness of functional foods, which is expected to provide a launchpad for health-oriented start-ups and micro-food processing units. However, the access of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to finance is a perennial problem in the country, predominating due to a lack of proper credit history mechanism for MSMEs.

Smart financing alternatives such as peer-to-peer (P2P) lending hold potential for micro-food processors as can be observed by the United Kingdom Government-owned British Business Bank (akin to India's MUDRA Bank, or Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency Bank) which has helped more than 1,18,000 small businesses get access to more than U.S.\$17.88 billion (<https://bit.ly/3Aziz4T>). Access to working capital has in theory been addressed by the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS), a platform for facilitating the financing/discounting of trade receivables of MSMEs through multiple financiers.

However, the platform requires considerable scaling-up and simultaneous enforcement of stringent measures for corporates to comply with. Integrating the TReDS platform with the Goods and Service Tax Network's e-invoicing portal will make TReDS more attractive and give relief to finan-

ciers.

A sustainable food ecosystem

With growing populations, changing food habits and unrestricted use of natural resources, nations must come together and lay out a road map for a common efficient food value chain. New alternatives are being explored which have immense potential in replacing the staples of rice and wheat in the form of Nutri-cereals, plant-based proteins, fermented foods, health bars and even fresh fortified foods for pets. By welcoming the new brands in the category, PLIS aims

to create an enabling ecosystem for innovation in both food products and processes. Post the 1929 Great Depression, timelines of a skirt were indexed to predict the financial state. Almost a century later, luminosity and night lights data obtained from satellites indicate the extent of economic progress. No wonder, 50 years hence, the progress of nations will be benchmarked to their ability to sustainably feed their populations.

Harsh Vardhan, an IIM-Ahmedabad graduate, is a thought leader for Invest India (under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India)



they meet their peers, interact with their teachers, participate in a little fun and frolic and learn subjects 'on the go'. The gadget invasion has, undoubtedly, turned the world topsy-turvy for children, giving them a false sense of learning. It is time we set the clock back and reenergise the conventional method of imparting wisdom to avoid the curse of posterity. Within the parameters of hygiene and safety, let us give our children a fresh breath of life and start.

R.K. CHAKRAVARTI,
Chennai

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

IAS cadre rules

The Central government's stand seems logical (Page 1, 'Centre to remind States again of IAS cadre rules', January 26). The fact is that the number of officers being deputed to the Central government is reducing. Thus, it is necessary to ensure that there is the required number of officers deputed for effective governance. However, the Odisha government's statement provides another dimension. It has asked the Central government to find out why many officers are not opting for central

deputation. The reason, as opined by the Central government, is political patronage at the State level. However, that may be a simplistic view. Personal reasons such as a reluctance to shift one's family frequently and other grounds such as a reluctance to learn a new language, besides rules and work conditions may have to be considered as well. The short-term solution could lie in the implementation of new rules while also working out a long-term solution, or incentives, keeping cadre requirements in mind.

L.T. CHANDRAN,
Hyderabad

Padma awards
This is not the first time that offers of Padma awards have been turned down (Inside pages, 'Buddhadeb refuses Padma Bhushan award', January 26). E.M.S. Namboodiripad rejected the Padma Vibhushan. P.N. Haksar and Swami Ranganathananda cited personal inhibitions. Parkash Singh Badal returned the award in protest against the farm laws. The family of the late Chief Justice of India, Justice J.S. Verma, refused to accept the award conferred to him posthumously by saying that accepting it would be against his principles. In a

way, individuals refusing to accept or returning (in protest) the high-profile Padma awards appears to be an act of contempt of the nation. At least, it is for the Government to treat the awards as valuable and to definitely ensure avoiding such contemptuous situations. Perhaps Governments must withdraw from the job of instituting and offering awards; vested political and personal interests could play a role in the process.

P.R.V. RAJA,
Pandalam, Kerala

Back to school

I was looking for an escape from the stranglehold of the

novel coronavirus pandemic especially as it has affected children. I was buried under a plethora of medical evidence, mostly speculative, to stay away from any adventurous step that might harm my family or community. Closely following these protocols and submitting myself to the herd mentality, I have crossed two and a half years of my post-retirement life only to find my children and grandchildren facing enormous trauma in terms of managing online learning mandated by the school authorities. We, parents, owe it to our children to give them holistic education – where

The Dravidian model of public health

The practices followed by Tamil Nadu can be replicated throughout India to facilitate social advancement



SAKTHIRAJAN RAMANATHAN &
SUNDARESAN CHELLAMUTHU

The recent Supreme Court judgement upholding the constitutionality of reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBC) in National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET)'s All-India Quota (AIQ) seats for undergraduate and postgraduate medical and dental courses is a landmark in the history of social justice in the country. "The propriety of actions and dedication to public service should also be seen as markers of merit, which cannot be assessed in a competitive examination," observed the bench comprising Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and Justice A.S. Bopanna. In the light of these crucial observations, it is high time that we demystify the narrow definitions of merit. "Merit should be socially contextualised and reconceptualised as an instrument that advances social goods like equality that we as a society value," the apex court said. In this regard, the practices followed by Tamil Nadu, where the notion of merit has taken into account the role of historical privileges instead of an illusory inborn ability, can be replicated to facilitate social advancement throughout India.

A tectonic shift

Successive Dravidian governments in Tamil Nadu have had a broad and an inclusive understanding of 'merit' and its social implications. Hence, affirmative action to provide reservation for in-service doctors has stood the test of time for well over four decades. The introduction of the scheme reserving 50% of the post-graduate and super-specialty medical seats for government doctors ushered in a tectonic shift in providing tertiary health care in government hospitals. It resulted in the expansion of public health infrastructure in the State. This progressive reform paved the way for ensuring the availability of specialists in multiple disciplines such as gynaecology, anaesthesia, general medicine, paediatrics, general surgery and orthopedics, which were scarce in almost every district headquarters



hospital across the State 40 years ago. This was complemented by super-specialty departments like Urology, Nephrology, Cardiology and Neurology in the Madras Medical College (MMC) in the 1960s and 1970s. The provision of reservation for government doctors in super-specialty courses contributed to a steady rise in the availability of multi-specialty experts not only in metropolitan cities like Chennai, Coimbatore and Madurai, but also Tier-2 cities as early as the 1990s. Today, the public health sector in Tamil Nadu has 900 super-specialists in different disciplines, a number comparable only to a few European countries.

The unique scheme had a dual effect. It encouraged young MBBS graduates to serve in rural areas, as serving for three years in Primary Health Centres (PHCs) in rural areas is an eligibility criterion for graduates to avail themselves of the reservation policy. As a consequence, State PHCs and government hospitals never witnessed a shortage of doctors and people got better health-care facilities at their doorsteps.

The healthcare managers in the Tamil Nadu government were not short-sighted while formulating the policy. They unveiled a unique superannuation bond for these government doctors to ensure that those who secure postgraduate or super-specialty seats by availing themselves of in-service reservation will serve the government till their retirement. This legal binding has ensured that a vast majority of the specialists continues their service in the government sector throughout their career. The main aim of this superannuation bond was to prevent the brain drain either to the private sector or to places abroad. It has proved to be a win-win situation for doctors and the go-

vernment. This unique scheme is present nowhere in the country.

If one attempts an objective analysis of the contribution of two prestigious institutions – MMC and IIT-Madras – where 'bright' and 'meritorious' students land, in societal advancement and regional development, MMC would shine largely due to its adoption of reformatory policies that are consistent with the societal needs of Tamil Nadu.

A myopic view

However, with the introduction of NEET and Regulation 9 by the Medical Council of India (MCI), the admission policy has undergone a sea change.

The weightage for government doctors who serve in rural areas has reduced. The MCI has framed a policy of giving only 50% of postgraduate diploma seats to service doctors, exempting postgraduate degrees. Besides lack of consultation with stakeholders, the policymakers in Delhi are yet to put forth their rationale for this myopic view in the public domain.

Shockingly, the Union government went to the extent of filing affidavits opposing in-service reservation before the Madras High Court and Supreme Court when the new rule was challenged by the Tamil Nadu Medical Officers Association. While the State government rightly says that dismantling incentives to serving doctors would jeopardise healthcare delivery system in the State, the Union government is opposing the very idea by hiding behind the nebulous regulations of MCI, a regulatory watchdog without any legal teeth to formulate policy. With this move, the Union government has put the rural healthcare delivery system in peril and pushed young doctors, who find it difficult to

compete with their urban counterparts who have access to niche coaching institutes, out of the system to prepare for competitive exams instead of serving the poor in rural areas.

It is unfortunate that the affidavits filed by the Centre on both the OBC reservation and the government in-service doctors reservation cases in the court are based on a narrow reading of what constitutes merit rather than an inclusive prism called public health. Instead of trying to widen the scope of a time-tested practice, which would ensure robust supply of specialist and super-specialist doctors to strengthen public health care, the Union government is hell bent on unleashing misery. Its lament about the unwillingness of doctors to work in rural areas and its attempt to push them to take up compulsory rural service after MBBS or to introduce a bridge course for AYUSH doctors to incarnate them as rural physicians is purely rhetorical.

In continuation of the maladies of NEET, from 2017, it became compulsory for individual States to surrender all the seats of super-specialty courses to the central pool for common counselling, forgoing the domiciliary needs (15% of MBBS seats, 50% of postgraduate seats but 100% of super-specialty seats are surrendered to Centre, which is known as AIQ) and also abolishing government doctors' reservation. Disposing of a case filed in the Madras High Court by members of the Service Doctors and Postgraduates Association for the reintroduction of 50% service doctors' reservation in super-specialty courses, the court has directed the Centre to provide reservation for service doctors in super-specialty courses. Will the Union government act in accordance with the recent judgement of the Supreme Court, which has advocated a broader definition of the concept of merit by facilitating a smooth reintroduction of in-service doctors and domiciliary reservation for respective States in super-specialty courses from the current academic admission year?

Sakthirajan Ramanathan is Assistant Professor of Nephrology, MMC; Sundaresan Chellamuthu is Associate Professor of Radiation Oncology, Tamil Nadu Government Multi Super Specialty Hospital and State president, Government All Doctors Association

Remembering the Holocaust

It is imperative that the Indian youth are empowered with knowledge to remember the painful history of the Holocaust

NAOR GILON, WALTER J. LINDNER & ERIC FALT

Marked by the United Nations each year on the 27th of January, International Holocaust Remembrance Day provides an opportunity to recount the atrocities of the Holocaust that resulted in the death of an estimated 6 million Jews. The day marks the anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi German concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau in January 1945. The aphorism for Holocaust remembrance remains unchanged: Never Again. A turning point in history, the Holocaust is one of the most visible acts of violence and discrimination. Yet, lessons of the past seem to fade in the mists of time. Are those who do not remember the past condemned to repeat it?

Holocaust distortion and denial

As the Holocaust recedes in time, the forces of antisemitism, racial and religious intolerance, and discrimination and hate speech pose new challenges to global civilisational values, thereby running the risk of repetition of the crimes of the past. Holocaust ignorance, distortion and denial are growing at an alarming rate. The Anti-Defamation League Global 100, an index on antisemitism, found that antisemitic sentiments are disturbingly pervasive, with more than a quarter of the people surveyed, an estimated 1.09 billion people, harbouring antisemitic attitudes around the world. Across Asia, only 23% of persons surveyed had heard of the Holocaust and believe the historical account. Data from North America and Europe show that younger people are less likely to be aware of the historical accounts of the Holocaust, with less than half of those surveyed under the age of 35 having ever heard of the Holocaust. Considering India's youthful demography, these statistics are important. The youth proved to be particularly vulnerable to the techniques employed by extremists to spread hateful and racist ideologies, which underscores the importance of empowering the youth with the knowledge, capacities, and agency to reject hate.

Engaging the youth with the painful history of the Holocaust and the ethical and moral issues it highlights has contemporary relevance as a tool to help fight hatred and prompt discussion of the societal contexts that enable exclusionary policies to divide communities. With an ever more globalised young generation, capitalising on the power of education, communication and connectivity is important as they are effective tools to galvanise people into action.

India's growing global influence and efforts towards digitisation provide further impetus to expand youth networks so that

young people across the world can connect, share experiences, and negate extremist mindsets, ultimately strengthening efforts to disavow violence and discrimination. However, this needs to be carefully monitored as the lack of critical skills to filter out or navigate misinformation or disinformation on social media can leave the youth vulnerable to hate speech online. According to a publication by the Center for Countering Digital Hatred, antisemitism can be found on all social media platforms. The situation is worse in languages other than English, as social media companies including Facebook and YouTube lack global content moderation teams. This is important to note especially in the Indian context, as the youth make up a greater portion of the Internet user base.

Malicious words have the power to spark a wildfire, for it is words that started the Holocaust. Therefore, to prevent Indian youth from disseminating various forms of hate speech, both online and offline, we must educate them about the Holocaust and antisemitism today to deepen reflection about contemporary issues that affect societies around the world, such as the power of extremist ideologies, propaganda, the abuse of official power, and group-targeted hate and violence.

Addressing antisemitism

India's vision to create inclusive and equitable education that includes more detailed knowledge of various cultures, religions, languages, and gender identities to develop respect for diversity through the National Educational Policy 2020 already creates a fertile ground for working on Holocaust education programmes. To further this vision and strengthen the resilience of Indian society against antisemitic discourses, the Embassies of Israel and Germany, with the support of UNESCO, are organising a workshop on antisemitism for policymakers, school principals and educators this February. Using existing training resources, experts from UNESCO, Israel and Germany will equip educators with the knowledge and approaches needed to use the history of the Holocaust to make 'Never Again' an actionable promise emanating from our classrooms.

With the community of Holocaust survivors dwindling, we need the youth to take forward the lessons of the past. It is imperative that they are empowered with knowledge to combat myths and falsehoods, and to be able to withstand influence from violent extremism and hate speech.

Naor Gilon is Ambassador of Israel to India, Walter J. Lindner is Ambassador of Germany to India and Eric Falt is Director, UNESCO, New Delhi

STATE OF PLAY

The endless row over SCCL

Despite clarity on SCCL in the Reorganisation Act, Telangana and Andhra continue to spar over the issue

M. RAJEEV

Differences over the apportionment of the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), the public sector miner, continue to affect Telangana and Andhra Pradesh more than seven-and-a-half years after the bifurcation of erstwhile united Andhra Pradesh. The vexatious issue continues to figure in the agenda of high-level meetings convened by the Union Home Ministry. Division of SCCL and its subsidiary APHAMEL figured in the agenda of the recent meeting of Chief Secretaries of the two States convened by Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla. There was no discussion on the issue though, as the meeting focused more on financial issues such as power dues between the two States.



The Andhra Pradesh government insists on apportioning SCCL and its subsidiary Andhra Pradesh Heavy Machinery and Engineering Limited (APHAMEL) on the basis of the population ratio (58:42), as incorporated in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act of 2014. But the Twelfth Schedule of the Act categorically states that of the total equity of SCCL, 51% should be with Telangana and 49% with the Government of India. Section 92 of the Act states that the successor States should follow the principles and guidelines issued by the Central government on and from the appointed day (June 2, 2014), on matters relating to coal, oil and natural gas among other things. Moreover, the Act made it mandatory to bifurcate institutions that have operational jurisdiction in both the successor States. Andhra Pradesh cannot claim exclusive rights over the institution which had operational jurisdiction in both the States, officials assert.

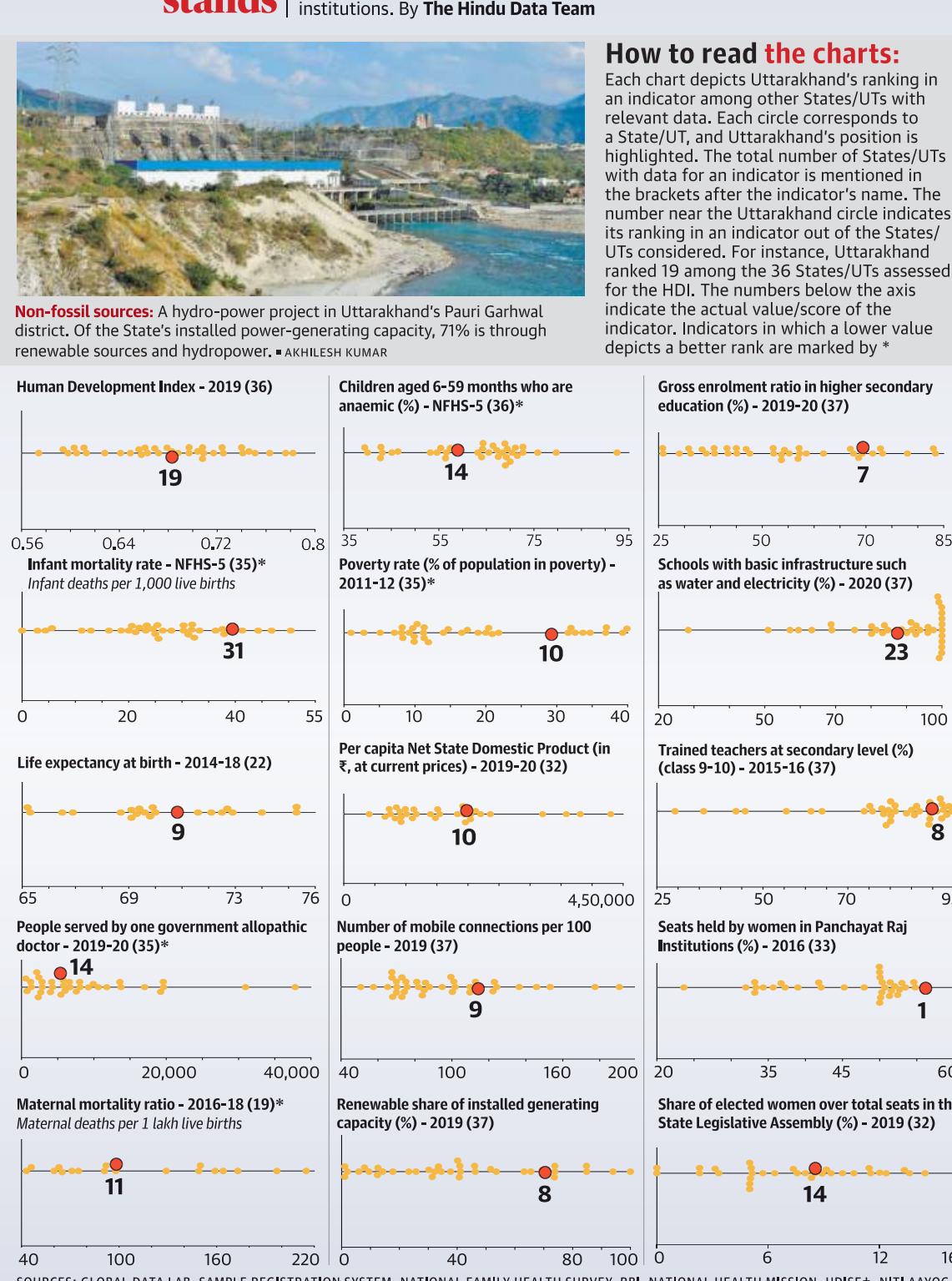
The matter was settled when a circular was issued by the SCCL board approving the change of 51% shareholding of the Andhra Pradesh government in the name of the Telangana government in line with the provisions contained in the Twelfth Schedule of the Act from June 2, 2014. The SCCL board comprises representatives from the Central government. However, the Centre continues to entertain requests from Andhra Pradesh. It allows the issue in the agenda of discussions between the two States despite repeated representations made by Telangana. It is time for the Centre to put an end to the controversy. Doing so would help shift focus to other issues between the two States.

rajeev.madabushi@thehindu.co.in

DATA POINT

Assembly polls 2022: Where Uttarakhand stands

Uttarakhand, which will go to the polls on February 14, ranks somewhere in the middle on the Human Development Index (HDI) among all the Indian States/UTs. It stood at the 19th position out of 36 States/UTs. Among key health indicators, the State ranks relatively low on infant mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio. While its poverty rate is relatively high, Uttarakhand ranks relatively high in mobile phone penetration and installed renewable energy generation capacity. Among all the States/UTs, it had the highest share of seats held by women in Panchayat Raj institutions. By **The Hindu Data Team**



How to read the charts:

Each chart depicts Uttarakhand's ranking in an indicator among other States/UTs with relevant data. Each circle corresponds to a State/UT, and Uttarakhand's position is highlighted. The total number of States/UTs with data for an indicator is mentioned in the brackets after the indicator's name. The number near the Uttarakhand circle indicates its ranking in an indicator out of the States/UTs considered. For instance, Uttarakhand ranked 19 among the 36 States/UTs assessed for the HDI. The numbers below the axis indicate the actual value/score of the indicator. Indicators in which a lower value depicts a better rank are marked by *

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 27, 1972

Cheering heroes at Delhi parade

New Delhi, Jan. 26: A grateful nation to-day paid homage to its valiant soldiers, sailors and airmen who laid down their lives and honoured those who displayed exemplary valour in defence of the country during the recent war with Pakistan. The Republic Day this year was turned into a day of commemoration with the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, laying a wreath at a specially erected memorial under the arcade of the India Gate, where a four foot-high flame was lit on top of the historic monument. The simple memorial consisted of a small pedestal placed on a platform with a reversed rifle and a steel helmet on top symbolising the sacrifice of the unknown warrior who laid down his life so that his countrymen might live in freedom, dignity and peace. The solemn ceremony which lasted only a few minutes was conducted with splendid simplicity befitting the poignant occasion. As the buglers drawn from the three Services sounded the Last Post – and the guard of honour reversed arms – the Prime Minister laid the wreath and stood in silence for two minutes. Before the customary Republic Day parade began, the President, Mr. V.V. Giri, presented four Param Vir Chakras and two Ashok Chakras to the winners after detailed citations were read out of their conspicuous gallantry and supreme heroism.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 27, 1922

Mines strike

Johannesburg, Jan. 22: The Conference regarding the mines dispute has up to the present achieved no result. Only two thousand most of whom were Dutch were present at a mass meeting which passed a resolution urging a sympathetic strike and appealing for Government which would uphold the white standard in South Africa. Sir Abe Bailey in course of a vigorous speech to the West Rand strike Committee suggested that nationalist politicians were using miners for their own political purposes with the object of causing the downfall of Gen. Smut's Government. Sir Evelyn Wallers, President of the Chamber of Mines, in a statement he made to Reuter's representative emphatically denied that the gold industry proposed to abolish the colour bar and he declared that he desired to see the gold industry preserved on the largest possible scale and able to provide a maximum field of employment for the white population.

INTERVIEW | SWAMI PRASAD MAURYA

'BJP tampering with reservation, bypassing the constitutional system'

The party follows the policy of divide and rule; it is trying to make backward castes and Dalits fight each other by tearing them into two parts, says former U.P. Minister

OMAR RASHID

Swami Prasad Maurya, senior OBC leader who recently quit the BJP and joined the SP, slams the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh for tampering with the reservation policy, and says they have gathered all the scattered forces under the SP to wipe out the BJP, which has become an enemy of the Dalit, the poor, the backward classes and workers. Excerpts:

Why have you raised the '85 vs 15' slogan in this U.P. election?

■ In public meetings, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed pain that he had been called *neech* (lowly) because he was born in a *pichdi jati* (backward caste). This was the biggest reason for me to join the BJP.

But when the government was formed and I got a chance to be a part of it, I found that the BJP does exactly the opposite of what it claims.

They crossed all limits when they started tampering with reservation and started filling seats meant for reserved categories with people from general categories, bypassing the constitutional system and arbitrarily. In the

appointment of 69,000 teachers, in 19,000 reserved seats they handed appointment letters to applicants from the general category.

What happened in the BJP government over the past five years that you had to resort to this formulation?

■ This government did not run a special campaign to fill the backlog of reserved posts but of the general category. On many instances, I asked them that you talk of '80 vs 20' but tamper with the reservation of the OBCs, the SCs and the STs, who voted for you in large numbers, don't you consider them as Hindus? They did not have any reply to this.

Whenever someone tries to hurt the interests of the

Dalits and the OBCs, I not only oppose it, but with a feeling of vengeance, I also try to wipe out their existence.

You say you have ideological differences with the BJP and despite this you worked as a Minister for five years. Your conflict is between Hindutva and Bahujan politics or Amedkarite and RSS politics?

■ You (BJP) cannot destroy the constitutional rights of reservation for the SC, ST and OBC sections, by raising a slogan of Hindu, Muslim. You cannot tamper with and mock the constitutional arrangement. You cannot bury the 85% weaker sections and do politics over their body. This is why I exposed their wrong policies. And whatever allegations I have levelled against them, no BJP leader, big or small, could rebut. Because they are at fault.

But the BJP claims that it is the best party for the interests of backward caste people...



They want to make a brunch out of society and swallow the rights of those standing at the end of society, just like a python

■ Even the backward castes were taken over by this fallacy. When Modiji stated that people considered him *neech* (lowly) because he was born in *pichdi jati* (backward caste), I thought their *chehra* (face) and *charitra* (character) may have changed. But after working for five years, I felt that their face may have definitely changed but the nature of their work and thinking did not. They want

to make a brunch out of society and swallow the rights of those standing at the end of society, just like a python (*Bharatiya Angrez*). They follow the policy of divide and rule. They want to make backward castes and Dalits fight each other by tearing them into two parts. But the response to their manipulations is the '85-15'. And about the '80 vs 20', I want to ask BJP leaders, didn't Ashfaqullah face the gallows for this country? Didn't Veer Abdul Hamid destroy dozens of Pakistani tanks and achieve martyrdom? So why Hindu-Muslim, when Muslims have sacrificed their lives for the nation?

■ A public mandate is given for every five years. I honoured the public mandate. When the time for a new mandate came, I exposed their black deeds.

■ The BJP sometimes also talks about the '60 vs 40' formula. It mobilises the rest of the Hindu communities against Jatavs, Yadavs and Muslims. Will this equation work again?

■ BJP is the Indian British

BJP, which has become an enemy of the Dalit, the poor, the backwards and workers. Everybody is suffering.

■ U.P. Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, who hails from the same community, says you have quit the BJP to jump into a sinking boat.

■ Am I in a sinking boat or he is, we will find out on March 10

You have taken a dig at his situation in the BJP government...

■ My fight is not personal with anyone.

I mean he was made the BJP's OBC face...

■ He has been created. One who is created lives on mercy and grace. And the one who is made through struggles, not just thousands but even lakhs of Keshavs cannot compete with him.

Sometimes politics of

Hindutva and social justice go hand-in-hand. Isn't this a big ideological contradiction?

■ Sometimes it happens that even an Ambedkarite person like me joined the BJP. I didn't join the BJP on their call but on the cry of the backward castes thinking that Modi's heart would carry the pain suffered by the backward castes, poor and Dalits. But I saw that this face is cosmetic, it is a mask. There is something else inside. The training of the RSS speaks aloud.

Your daughter and Lok Sabha MP Sanghamitra Maurya is still the BJP. Why didn't she resign?

■ I was a Minister in U.P. It was my personal decision. I welcomed those who resigned. I did not pressure those who did not. Every MLA or MP has the discretion to take their own decisions.

(For full interview, visit <https://bit.ly/SPMaurya>)

FROM PAGE ONE

Fewer hospitalisations, data from States show

"The focus is firmly on home care, unlike last time. We do not want mild cases to flood our hospitals, occupying the beds which should be kept free for those who develop serious disease. Most of the patients who are rushing to the emergency wing demanding admissions are being examined and then counselled to remain home and seek tele-consultation if required," said a State official.

However, as far as COVID deaths are concerned, the State's pattern is not very different from previous waves, with 30-35 deaths reported daily.

In Karnataka, a comparison revealed, analysis by the Health Department found that COVID-19 hospitalisation in the State stood at 21% during the peak of the second wave while it was 16% during the corresponding period in the first wave. In the third wave, so far, the rate of hospitalisation has not crossed 5%.

During the first and second waves, the highest number of active cases was recorded on October 10, 2020, (1,20,929) and May 15, 2021, (6,05,494) respectively. In the third wave, the State saw 3,62,487 active cases, the highest so far. A total of 25,992 COVID-19 patients died during the second wave while the first claimed 12,331 lives.

In the third, 333 fatalities have been recorded till January 25. Karnataka had around 3,50,000 active cases, of which around 2% are hospitalised.

In Telangana too, the current COVID-19 admissions at government and private hospitals in Telangana are fewer than that observed during the peak or decline of the second wave. The second wave in the State peaked in April 2021, at around 10,000 cases a day, with around 4,000 requiring

treatment in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Presently around 4,000 are detected with COVID in a day. The ICU beds occupancy was 832 as of Monday.

In Tamil Nadu, when hospitalisations as on January 24 was compared with that on May 15, 2021, the percentage of active cases that were hospitalised was only 5.1% compared to 31.8%. On both days, the State had around 200,000 active cases. The State has also reported far fewer deaths during the third wave so far compared to the second wave.

Between March 19, 2021 (when the cases reported daily crossed the 1,000 mark during the second wave) and May 21, 2021 (when the cases peaked), the State reported 9,08 lakh cases and 7,025 deaths.

In comparison, between December 31, 2021 and Monday, the State reported 4.17 lakh cases, which is 46% of the cases reported during the period taken for comparison. However, it reported 499 deaths, which is only 7% of the deaths reported in the compared period.

On January 23, Maharashtra – that has historically recorded among the highest COVID-19 cases during all three waves – registered 40,805 new COVID patients in the State and 44 deaths with close to 300,000 active cases. Maharashtra's peak in Ludhiana – and 2,720 of them were found to be correct.

During the last set of Assembly elections in 2021 (Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala), the Commission had announced seizures of cash, drugs, liquor, precious metals and other freebies worth over ₹1,000 crore. In a statement in April 2021, the EC said the value of the seizures had crossed ₹1,000 crore for the first time in any Assembly election process.

Inducements worth ₹200 cr. seized in five States

DAMINI NATH

NEW DELHI

Authorities in the five poll-bound States of Punjab, Goa, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand have seized cash, drugs, liquor and other inducements worth more than ₹200 crore so far, a senior Election Commission official said. The official said Punjab and Manipur accounted for a large amount of the seized drugs and Uttar Pradesh for cash.

According to the Uttarakhand government on Tuesday, drugs worth ₹2.81 crore and ₹1.74 crore cash had been seized starting January 10. Three FIRs had also been lodged in connection with the "inducements".

Authorities in Goa had seized cash, drugs and alcohol worth ₹2,93 crore so far, Chief Electoral Officer Kunal said on Wednesday. He said enforcement by the authorities had been good on all fronts and most cases lodged pertained to violation of COVID-19 norms.

In Punjab, the Chief Electoral Officer's Twitter handle on Wednesday said 3,675 complaints of model code of conduct violation had been received through the Election Commission's eVigil app till Tuesday.

All of them had been disposed – the highest being in Ludhiana – and 2,720 of them were found to be correct.

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In a statement in April 2021, the EC said the value of the seizures had crossed ₹1,000 crore for the first time in any Assembly election process.

RLD rejects BJP's overtures

Leaders say it is a move to wean away Muslims from party

ANUJ KUMAR

GHAZIABAD

Responding to the Bharatiya Janata Party's renewed overtures towards the Rashtriya Lok Dal, the party leadership said it was a move to create a wedge between Jats and Muslims and it would backfire.

Of the 403 seats in Uttar Pradesh, 136 are influenced by Jats and the renewed Jat-Muslim unity after the farmers' agitation has forced the BJP to have a re-look at its strategy in western U.P. The RLD is contesting the polls in alliance with the Samajwadi Party.

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Rashtriya Lok Dal chief Jayant Chaudhary. •FILE

open for the RLD, post polls. "For, now Jayant Singh has chosen a wrong party. People of the Jat community will speak to Jayant. BJP's doors are always open for him," Mr. Verma quoted Mr. Shah.

Union Minister and Muzaffarnagar MP Sanjeev Balyan told reporters that the Jats had not forgotten Muzaffarnagar and western U.P. didn't want to see Akhilesh Yadav as Chief Minister.

Responding to the news,

Mr. Singh tweeted he didn't want to be invited. "If you want to invite, invite families of 700 plus farmers whose families were destroyed [during farmers' agitation]."

Senior RLD leader and candidate from Chhaprauli Ajay Kumar told *The Hindu* BJP specialised in creating confusion among the electorate before polls. "They are rattled by the ground situation," he said.

Local sources said the move meant that the BJP had accepted Mr. Chaudhary's popularity in the region before polls and that its candidates were on a sticky wicket.

"The BJP's central leadership wants to create an impression among Muslims, who are with the SP, that the RLD/Jats could not be trusted and that they could move to BJP after polls," said a farmer leader.

T.N. urban local bodies polls on February 19

Indirect poll for Mayor on March 4

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu State Election Commissioner V. Palanikumar on Wednesday announced that the urban local bodies polls for 21 municipal corporations, including Chennai, 138 municipalities and 490 town panchayats, will be held in a single phase on February 19.

The elections are being conducted as per the directions of the Supreme Court.

In Chennai, there are a total of 61,18,734 voters, including 30,93,355 female, 30,23,803 male, and 1,576 transpersons.

As per the schedule released by Mr. Palanikumar, the elections will be notified on January 28. The filing of nominations will start from January 28 and continue till February 4.

The polling will be held, by following COVID-19 protocol, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and in the last one hour, those infected with COVID-19 alone will be allowed to cast their votes, he told reporters.

In Chennai, there will be 5,794 polling booths.

The counting of votes will start from 8 a.m. on February 22

and the process will be withdrawn on February 7.

IN BRIEF



It doesn't matter if someone leaves: Gehlot

JAIPUR

Congress is a movement having a history of 135 years and some leaders leaving the party does not make any difference, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said on Wednesday.

All those leaders who are leaving or joining the Congress are welcome and there should not be much discussion on this, he said. PTI

Azad's party reaching out to Gorakhpur voters

GORAKHPUR

The Azad Samaj Party is mobilising the youth to hold "nukkad sabhas" in every ward of the Gorakhpur Urban constituency, from where its chief Chandra Shekhar Azad is set to contest against CM Yogi Adityanath. The party said it has drawn inspiration from Dalit icon Kanshi Ram. A Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader termed it a "marketing" gimmick. PTI

Congress's anti-Dalit face exposed, says AAP

CHANDIGARH

A day after the second list of Congress candidates for the Punjab election was released, the Am Aadmi Party on Wednesday said the 'anti-Dalit' face of the Congress had been exposed. Punjab affairs co-in-charge Raghav Chadha said the Congress 'high command' had given tickets to close aides and relatives of the big Congress leaders, but the brother of Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi was denied ticket even after he clearly expressed his desire to contest the election.

Omicron-hit may escape reinfection with Delta

All these individuals were infected with the Omicron variant.

The study assessed the IgG antibody and Neutralising Antibody (NAb) response in the people with breakthrough and natural COVID-19 infections.

"Our study demonstrated a substantial immune response in the individuals infected with Omicron. The neutralising antibodies could effectively neutralise

Cong. changes Harish Rawat's constituency

He will now contest from Lalku



Dazzling display: Armed forces marching at the Republic Day parade in Bengaluru; women from the Home Guard participating in Lucknow; dancers swaying to music in Srinagar and autorickshaw driver Mohd. Amanullah and his family celebrating with their vehicle in Hyderabad on Wednesday. • K. MURALI KUMAR, SANDEEP SAXENA, NISSAR AHMAD, NAGARA GOPAL



IN BRIEF



Bangladesh shares vision of peace, says Hasina

DHAKA
Bangladesh is keen to work with India towards realising the shared vision of building a peaceful and prosperous region, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on Wednesday as she extended greetings to her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi and the people of India on the country's 73rd Republic Day. In a letter written to Mr. Modi, Ms. Hasina said the year 2021 was a "historic one" for the Bangladesh-India relationship.

British PM appreciates vaccine bond with India

LONDON
British Prime Minister Boris Johnson extended greetings to the people of India on Republic Day as he focused his message on the launch of free trade agreement (FTA) talks and the India-UK partnership on manufacturing the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine. Mr. Johnson said he was proud of the friendship shared by the two "diverse democracies" and looked forward to fortifying the strong bond over the next 75 years and beyond.

Flypast and State tableaux mark R-Day celebration at Rajpath

First woman Rafale fighter jet pilot Shivangi Singh part of IAF turnout



Patriotic colours: Illumination at Central Vista as part of the Republic Day celebrations. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

ARNABJIT SUR
MUNEEF KHAN
NEW DELHI
India celebrated its 73rd Republic Day across the country on Wednesday with the annual parade held at Rajpath here showcasing the nation's cultural diversity and military might with a series of tableaux and cultural performances.

For the second consecutive year, the celebrations were held without a chief guest due to the pandemic, which has seen a surge in cases of the Omicron variant.

This year's parade witnessed a half-hour delay to ensure better visibility, while the biggest fly-past comprising 75 aircraft was a scene to witness for the spectators. Only those who are fully vaccinated were allowed in limited numbers due to the COVID-19 restrictions in place. Compared to a turnout of nearly 25,000 spectators witnessed last year, around 6,000 people attended this year's event due to the ongoing pandemic restrictions.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to the armed personnel who lost their lives, at the National War Memorial, following which the celebrations kicked off with the unfurling of the national flag and by a 21-gun salute.

The number of tableaux at this year's event had been reduced to 21 with States including the poll-bound Uttar Pradesh, Goa and Uttarakhand featuring 12 while nine were featured by Ministries and Departments including the Defence Research and

Development Organisation (DRDO). Like every year, the tableaux of the Navy and the Air Force were also showcased.

Last year's celebrations witnessed 32 tableaux with 17 featured by Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, that were left out of this year's event, raising strong opposition from State leaders.

After conferring the Param Vir Chakra and Ashok Chakra, two of the highest gallantry awards, to their recipients, the much-awaited march past began with sev-

eral Army contingents and indigenous-developed battle tanks charging the atmosphere at Rajpath.

This was followed by a fly-past performed by Advanced Light Helicopters developed by the Army Aviation Corps.

Military might

Thereafter, several marching contingents showed their prowess with the famed Rajput Regiment, led by Lieutenant Varun Pratap Singh of 17 Rajput Regiment, carrying a weapon that was used during the Indo-Pakistani war of 1947-48.

Amidst this, what caught the public's eye was the Parachute Regiment, the paratroopers of the Army, dancing to the tunes of 'Kadam Badaye Jao Kadam Milaye Jao'. They were sporting new combat uniform of the Army. In another first at the parade, the country's first woman Rafale fighter jet pilot Shivangi Singh, was part of the Indian Air Force tableau, becoming the second woman fighter jet pilot to achieve the feat.

Some people continue to instigate Kashmiris: L-G

Join path of progress, he urges youth

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said there were persons still instigating people in J&K even as the Union Territory was put on the path of "everlasting peace, progress and development".

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, all efforts are being made to take J&K to new heights. J&K is already on the path of peace, progress and development," he said in his address at the Republic Day function at Jammu's Maulana Azad Stadium.

He, however, cautioned against "some persons who continue to instigate people as they aren't happy with the J&K's development", without naming any party or leader.

Investment boost

Urging the youth of J&K to join the process of development and participate in shaping their future, Mr. Sinha said: "J&K is expecting ₹18,000 crore plus investment boost in February in the real estate sector." The Lt. Governor said the



Manoj Sinha

land use change policy, which was a major impediment to the industrial development of the region, had been simplified to attract more investment. "However, the people are being misled on this issue too."

He also pledged to eradicate terrorism and terror ecosystem perpetuated by the neighbouring country in J&K.

Stringent security measures were in place in the Valley. Mobile Internet services were blocked till 3 p.m. "as part of the precautionary measures". The administration had decided not to impose a curfew or restrictions in the Valley. However, people preferred to stay indoors all day.

Kin of Mon victims will get justice: Rio

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio said justice will be delivered to the families of the people who were gunned down by the security forces in the Mon district in December 2021.

"My fellow citizens, as we celebrate the Republic Day, we also take note of the unfortunate firing incidents that occurred in December last year in Oting-Tiru village area and Mon town, which led to the unfortunate death of 14 innocent civilians, and serious injuries to many others. We are taking every measure to lessen the pain of the family members, who lost their near and dear ones, and of all those who suffered injuries," Mr. Rio said.

He said the Special Investigation Team constituted by the State government to probe the incident has made good progress. The Army, too, constituted a court of inquiry which is said to be completing its investigation at a fast pace, he said.

"We are sure that justice will be delivered to the families," he said.

India Post showcases women empowerment

Part of R-Day parade after 17 years

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

At the Republic Day parade on Wednesday, India Post showcased its service to the nation, with a focus on women empowerment, through its uniquely designed thematic tableau.

India Post got a chance to participate in the parade after 17 and the tableau had a strong Mumbai element. It previously participated in 2005 on completion of 150 years of Department of Posts.

The theme of women empowerment was picked up because nearly 50% of the account holders of India Post Payments Bank and Post Office Savings Bank are women. The tableau was conceptualised and designed under the guidance of the Secretary of Posts Vineet Pandey, by Postmaster General, Mumbai Region, Swati Pandey. "Ms. Pandey had worked on the creative grittiness of the tableau and had been associated with it since day one," a pos-

tal department official said. The image of the model postwoman standing in the front of the tableau is that of Namrata Khote who works in Mumbai GPO. "She symbolises the power of youth and women empowerment by breaking the stereotypes," the official added.

Besides this, the anthem of India Post 'Aaya aapka daakiya' has been sung by Mumbai-based rock singer Tirthankar Poddar aka To-Blue and composed by Orchida Mukherjee, an India Post, Mumbai Region official.

The front of the two-part tableau featured a young post woman with a digital device in one hand and a postman's bag in the other, thus conveying the message of blending of technology with tradition.

By her side was the red-letter box which reflects people's faith in India Post, over the 167 years. The image of the post woman was juxtaposed with that of the 'harkara' – the Dak messenger or runner of yesteryears.

30% vacancies in Central offices as promotions on hold

Employees have sent petitions to Personnel Dept.

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

Nearly 30% positions are vacant in middle to senior management rank in various Central government Ministries as the Union government has not promoted officials of the Central Secretariat Service (CSS) in the past six years.

The employees have petitioned the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) to issue promotion

orders as many officials have retired in these years, losing out on enhanced salary and pension benefits. The Forum has even tried to catch the attention of the government through a Twitter storm last week.

According to CSS Forum, an association of government officers, there are 6,210 officers in the rank of section officer, Under Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Director and Joint Secretaries with 1,839 positions of them lying vacant.

The CSS officers are the backbone of the offices as files, documents and orders are processed by them.

A CSS official said the promotions are stuck on the pretext of pending court cases. In October 2021, the Supreme Court reserved its judgement on the grant of reservation in promotion to the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs) in government jobs.

A contempt petition was filed against the promotions issued by the DoPT and that matter was tagged with the case pertaining to the reservation in promotion to the SC/STs in government jobs.

Manmohan Verma, General Secretary of the CSS Forum, said that in June 2018, the DoPT had issued instruc-

tions to all Departments and Ministries to effect promotions according to the judgement of the apex court in Jarnail Singh Vs Union of India and others.

"Accordingly, all Departments are issuing regular promotion orders of all Central government employees but only the DoPT which is the cadre controlling authority of the CSS officers has not issued orders for regular promotions for more than six years on the pretext of pending court cases," Mr. Verma said.

A five-judge Bench judgment in the Jarnail Singh case in 2018 had provided for

"accelerated promotion with consequential seniority" for SC/ST members in government services. In 2018, the Supreme Court said it was up to the State governments to find ways and means of implementing the court's June 2018 judgment.

To tide over the crisis, the DoPT promoted 2,770 officials on an ad hoc basis since 2020.

"There are more than 1,800 vacancies that needs to be filled through promotions on an immediate basis... further out of the 4,400 officers, more than 60% are working on an ad hoc promotion," said a CSS official.

India slams Pakistan at UN Security Council

Islamabad supporting terrorists, it says

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
UNITED NATIONS

Perpetrators of the heinous 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks continue to enjoy Pakistan's patronage, India has told the UN Security Council, saying that most terrorist attacks around the world have their origin, in some form or the other, in that country.

India hit back at Pakistan after Islamabad's envoy to the UN Munir Akram brought up the issue of Jammu and Kashmir during an UNSC Open Debate on 'Pro-

tection of civilians in armed conflict: Wars in cities - protection of civilians in urban settings' on Tuesday.

"Member States are well aware that Pakistan has an established history of harbouring, aiding and actively supporting terrorists. This is a country which has been globally recognised as a sponsor of terrorism," Counsellor in India's Permanent Mission to the UN R. Madhu Sudan said. He said Pakistan's envoy was only trying to divert scrutiny.

Two jawans injured in Shopian firing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

A gunfight is on between militants trapped in a residential area in south Kashmir's Shopian and the security forces since Wednesday evening, according to police sources.

Preliminary reports suggested that at least two jawans were injured in the initial exchange of fire at the Check Nowgam area of Shopian.

The injured were shifted to the Army's base hospital in Srinagar.

PM to hold Central Asia summit today

Trade, connectivity on the agenda for the conference; Afghanistan situation also to be taken up

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold the first India-Central Asia summit on Thursday, in a videoconference with five Presidents from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Government officials said the major areas of focus for the conference would be trade and connectivity, building development partnerships and enhancing cultural and people-to-people contacts, but it is clear that a number of global and regional developments will also form a large part of the discussions, set to begin around 4.30 p.m. IST.

During the conference, the countries are expected to propose ways to increase trade between India and the region, which is only about \$2 billion at present, most of which comes from energy imports from Kazakhstan. India extended a \$1 billion



Strategic meet: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon. ■ FILE PHOTO

Line of Credit (LOC) for development projects in the areas of energy, healthcare, connectivity, IT, and agriculture in 2020 and proposes to increase the number of educational opportunities for students from Central Asian countries. In addition, India hopes to build on its trilateral working group on Chabahar with Iran and Uzbekistan to strengthen connectivity to the region.

Meanwhile, other deve-

Tajikistan's Emomali Rahmon, Turkmenistan's Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and Uzbekistan's Shavkat Mirziyoyev were due to be chief guests at the Republic Day parade in Delhi on Wednesday, but their visits were cancelled due to the current wave of coronavirus cases in India.

The growing tensions between Russia and NATO countries over the troop build-up on the Ukraine-Russia border, which Moscow says is in response to plans for NATO expansion in East Europe, will cast a shadow over the meeting as well, given the close strategic ties between Russia and the five former Soviet States, as well as Russian ties with India. During the recent uprising in Kazakhstan, President Tokayev had received support from Russian President Vladimir Putin, who dispatched Russian Army soldiers to help restore the situation.

The situation in Afghanistan, which was discussed at length at the SCO, and in November by National Security Advisers at an India-Central Asia meet hosted by NSA Ajit Doval, as well as at the meeting of India-Central Asia Foreign Ministers in December will also come up.

Despite statements from several multilateral groupings, the Taliban regime in Kabul is yet to agree to forming an inclusive government, restoring education for girls of all ages, and giving concrete guarantees on preventing terrorist groups from operating in Afghanistan. Not all Central Asian countries are on the same page as India on dealing with the Taliban, and with the exception of Tajikistan, all have exchanged high level diplomatic visits with Kabul, while at least two, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have reopened their missions in Afghanistan.

As part of developing and revitalising the Khukri Memorial, the Diu administration had approached the Defence Ministry in 2019 for gifting it, for public display, a decommissioned naval vessel, the Navy said.

"The ship commenced her last journey under tow by Navy ships from Visakhapatnam and arrived at Diu on January 14," it stated.

Built by Mazagon Dock

The ship is planned to be developed as a full-scale museum, the Navy said in a statement.

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The Navy vessel handed over to Diu administration



INS Khukri being decommissioned in Visakhapatnam on December 23, 2021. ■ FILE PHOTO

Shipbuilders, Khukri was commissioned on August 23, 1989 in Mumbai by the then Defence Minister Krishna Chandra Pant and Ms. Sudha Mulla, wife of late Capt. Mahendra Nath Mulla, MVC.

After over 32 years of service and having participated in all forms of naval operations, the ship was decom-

missioned in a solemn ceremony on December 23, 2021 when the national flag, naval ensign and decommissioning pennant were lowered at sunset in the presence of Vice-Admiral Biswajit Dasgupta, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, the statement said.

Integrity Pact: CVC modifies criteria

DEVESHE PANDEY
NEW DELHI

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has again modified the criteria for the nomination of Independent External Monitors (IEM) in government bodies, months after it had issued a revised standard operating procedure for adoption and implementation of the 'Integrity Pact' clause, which is meant to prevent corruption in public procurement.

Andhra Pradesh reported nine more deaths due to COVID-19 and 13,618 fresh infections in the 24 hours ending Wednesday morning. The cumulative toll and tally increased to 14,570 and 22,22,573 respectively.

The number of recoveries increased to 21,01,685 as 8,687 patients have recovered in the past day. The recovery rate remains at 94.56%. The daily test positivity rate of the 49,143 samples tested in the past day was 27.71%. The daily test positivity rate has come down from 36% on Monday to 29.3% on Tuesday and 27.7% on Wednesday contrary to the increase in the number of samples tested.

In June 2021, the Commission had issued the revised guidelines. Following feedback and suggestions from the Chief Vigilance Officers and other individuals, the CVC decided to modify the criteria. The zone of consideration now includes officers who have held the post of Additional Secretary to the Government of India; were in equivalent or higher pay scale at the time of retirement, whether at the Centre or in any State; and those who were Chairman-cum-Managing Directors (CMD) of Schedule 'A' public sector enterprises or were equivalent/higher to Additional Secretary to the Central government at the time of retirement.

CMDs/MDs and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of public sector banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions at the time of retirement and officers of the armed forces who were in a pay scale equivalent to or higher than that of Additional Secretary at the time of retirement, are also eligible.

India's total case tally reaches 4 cr.

Country records 2.82 lakh new COVID cases; active cases surpass 22.2 lakh mark



Protective jab: A COVID-19 vaccination drive under way at a centre in New Delhi ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

talities has reached 4,91,180.

Kerala reported the most deaths with 140 fatalities (77 were from a backlog), followed by Maharashtra (79) and Tamil Nadu recorded 47 deaths.

On Wednesday, 568 deaths were recorded in India, considerably higher than the average levels recorded in the last week. The total number of recorded fa-

93,50,02,197 first doses, 69,38,17,114 second doses, and 92,46,213 booster doses have been administered across India.

As of Wednesday, 91.8% of the eligible population has been vaccinated with at least

COVID-19

one dose, while 68.1% have received both doses. In the 15-17 age cohort, 59% of the population have received their first dose. Altogether,

Drunk driving cannot be treated leniently, says SC

'It amounts to playing with lives'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Drunken driving cannot be treated leniently even if the accident turned out to be a minor one, the Supreme Court has said in a judgment.

Driving under the influence of alcohol is an offence. It amounts to playing with the lives of others, a Bench of Justices M.R. Shah and B.V. Nagarathna observed in a recent verdict.

The case concerned a truck driver with the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) who rammed into a jeep while ferrying personnel to Allahabad on Kumbh Mela duty in February 2000. He was found to have been drunk while driving the truck.

The man was subsequently dismissed from ser-



vice. His plea that the punishment was disproportionate to his deed was rejected by the lower courts. Dealing with his appeal, Justice Shah said that, "Merely because there was no major loss and it was a minor accident cannot be a ground to show leniency. It was sheer good luck that the accident was not a fatal accident. It could have been a fatal accident."

Amid protests, Railways sets up committee

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Railway Ministry on Wednesday announced a high power committee, chaired by Deepak Peter, Principal Executive Director (Industrial Relation), Railway Board, to look into the concerns and doubts raised by job aspirants.

These actions come a day after the Ministry of Railways



A train set on fire by job aspirants during the protest over alleged anomalies in Railway recruitment exams in Bihar. ■ PTI

warned that job aspirants found indulging in unlawful activities may face lifetime debarment from obtaining a Railway job and that videos

of such activities will be examined with the help of specialised agencies.

According to PTI, a train was set on fire and demon-

strations were staged at a couple of stations on Wednesday, marking the third day of unrest in Bihar against alleged anomalies in the tests conducted by the Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) for the NTPC category.

At a press conference, Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw said, "We are listening to the students... They should not destroy their own property... we have followed all processes according to the notice... We will handle the issue with sensitivity."

"The notice invit-

ing for exams has a legal sanctity... Now that we have some grievances, we will have to find a solution in a manner that people who have been shortlisted, their career doesn't get affected, but at the same time, grievances raised by students are addressed."

The Railways had received about 1.25 crore applications for 3,528 vacancies, of which 7,05,446 candidates were shortlisted. He also invited the students to formally put forth their grievances in the next three weeks, which will

be examined by the committee and then submit recommendations by March 4.

In a statement, it said the Committee will look into issues raised by candidates, including results of the 1st Stage Computer Based Tests (CBT) of Centralised Employment Notice (CEN) 01/2019 (NTPC) and methodology used for shortlisting candidates for 2nd Stage CBT without affecting existing shortlisted candidates, introduction of 2nd Stage CBT in CEN RRC 01/2019, and give recommendations.

FAITH

In Bharata's absence

Citizens of Ayodhya rejoiced over Dasaratha's choice of Rama as his successor. Dasaratha said to Rama, that since He (Rama) was the son of his (Dasaratha's) first wife, He had been chosen to be the future king of Ayodhya. So Dasaratha referred to Rama being the eldest of his sons and also the son of his senior-most queen. The rule regarding succession was that the eldest son should be king after his father, said Naupalkam Vasudevachariar, in a discourse.

It was possible that someone might raise a question about whether this meant that the first son should be king, or the son born to the chief queen should be king. So to keep people from asking such questions, Dasaratha referred to Rama as his eldest son, and as the son of his chief queen. Dasaratha told Rama that he wanted to celebrate Rama's anointment when Bharata was away. Not that Bharata would be jealous of Rama. Bharata was devoted to Rama, besides being a virtuous man himself. But when it came to power, there was always the possibility that even a righteous person might do something regrettable.

There was another reason for Dasaratha wanting to celebrate Rama's coronation soon. When he had married Kaikeyi, Dasaratha told her father Asvapathi that Kaikeyi's son would be made king of Ayodhya. Dasaratha had not made a promise but mentioned such a possibility. At that time, Kausalya had no sons. So Dasaratha might have thought that in case Kaikeyi should have a son first, he could become king. But Rama was born to Kausalya before Bharata was born to Kaikeyi. However, what if Dasaratha's words were taken as an assurance by Asvapathi's family? In that case, there could be obstacles to Rama ascending the throne. So Dasaratha wisely wanted Rama to be anointed while Bharata was away.

TH CROSSWORD + 13464

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ACROSS

- 8 Refuse processing by computer, in short, and dance with nothing on? (4)
- 9 Instrument turns tuneful, after peacekeepers left (5)
- 10 The King of Spades went back south to get slippery creatures (4)
- 11 Setter got into automobile with a photographic contraption (6)
- 12 Pods bearing edible seeds for insane people (8)
- 13 Escort Argentinian president after tea (8)

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13463

B</td

Xi offers Central Asian nations \$500 mn

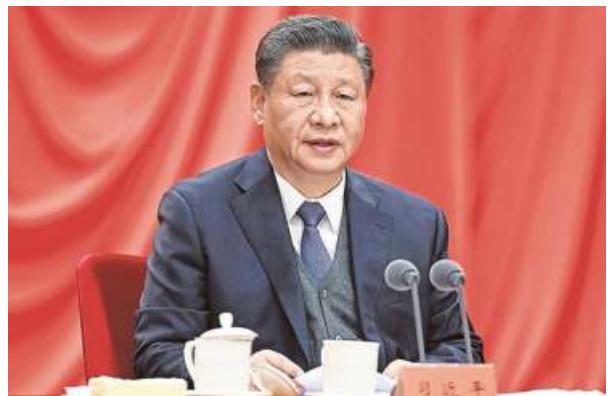
He chaired a virtual summit with regional leaders, two days before India's virtual summit with them

ANANTH KRISHNAN
HONG KONG

Two days before Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Thursday, hosts India's first virtual summit with Central Asian leaders, China's President Xi Jinping offered \$500 million in assistance to the region and pledged to ramp up trade.

Mr. Xi on Tuesday chaired his own virtual summit with Central Asian leaders, two days ahead of Mr. Modi hosting a first-of-its-kind virtual summit with the leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Mr. Xi's virtual summit with the same five countries was held "to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations", the Chinese Foreign Ministry said.



Aid incentives: Xi Jinping has announced a trade target of \$70 billion by 2030 for both sides. ■ AP/FILE

The Chinese President pledged to "import more quality goods and agricultural products from countries in the region" and "strive to increase the trade between the two sides to \$70 billion by 2030." China's trade with the five countries crossed

\$40 billion in 2018, roughly 20 times India's trade with the region that year.

Much of that trade has been driven by Chinese appetite for energy resources, and Mr. Xi on Tuesday flagged "several big projects of strategic importance" in-

cluding the China-Central Asia natural gas pipeline, the China-Kazakhstan crude oil pipeline, the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan highway, and the China-Tajikistan expressway.

Rapid growth

He said the China-Europe Railway Express which runs through Central Asia "has seen rapid growth" since the launch of his Belt and Road Initiative, which was first announced by Mr. Xi during an official visit to Kazakhstan in 2013. Mr. Xi announced China would "provide a grant assistance of US\$500 million to Central Asian countries in support of livelihood programs".

He repeated his backing, already voiced earlier this month, to the embattled Kazakhstan government in the

"As a friend and neighbour, China has firmly supported Kazakhstan in its effort to maintain stability and stop violence, and will continue to support and help Kazakhstan to the best of our ability," he said.

In the virtual summit, Mr. Xi also announced that China would provide 50 million doses of vaccines to the five countries.

U.S. House Speaker Pelosi announces re-election bid

She is currently serving her 18th term from San Francisco

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

With the fragile majority of the Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives under threat, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, 81, announced that she will seek re-election in this autumn for another two-year term. Ms. Pelosi, elected from San Francisco, is currently in her 18th term.

"While we have made progress much more needs to be done to improve people's lives. This election is crucial: nothing less is at stake than our Democracy. But we don't agonise – we organise," Ms. Pelosi said on Twitter, where she posted a video announcing her run. Democracy in the U.S. was under assault, she said, because of an "assault on truth," an assault on the U.S. Capitol (a reference to a mob



Nancy Pelosi

attack in January 2021) and "a state by state assault on voting rights."

Multiple challenges

Ms. Pelosi's announcement comes as Democrats are struggling to get their infrastructure Bill passed by the Senate due to differences with the conservative members of their own party. The country also faces rising in-

flation as it battles an Omicron wave. President Joe Biden's approval ratings have slipped from the high fifties around the middle of last year to the low forties last week.

Democrats currently have a wafer thin 222-212 majority in the House. Twenty nine of them are not seeking re-election, as per the Associated Press, compared to 13 Republicans who will step down.

Ms. Pelosi did not indicate whether she would run for party leadership in the House again – a topic of contention when she reclaimed the leadership for the fourth time in 2021.

Progressive Democrats such as Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez (New York) had said in 2020 that the Democrats needed new leadership in Congress.

U.K.'s Johnson defiant as 'partygate' report looms

Labour Party calls for his resignation

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday defended his government's record, vowing to fight on as he braced for a potentially damning report into lockdown-breaching parties.

The final report from an investigation by senior civil servant Sue Gray has not yet been submitted to Downing Street, the government said.

The dramatic confirmation that London's Metropolitan Police force has started its own investigation could complicate the release of Ms. Gray's report, but Opposition insisted on its publication in full.

Mr. Johnson, in a heated session of weekly questions in Parliament, said he could not comment further on the "partygate" revelations pending the investigations.

But he said the govern-

ment – from its pandemic response to economic recovery, and "bringing the West together" against Russia's threats to Ukraine – was not going anywhere.

"We've taken the tough decisions, we've got the big calls right, and we -- and in particular I -- are getting on with the job," the prime minister said.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said Ms. Gray's report was "fairly imminent", and the Opposition Labour Party anticipated that Mr. Johnson would give a statement in response later Wednesday or Thursday.

But regardless of its findings, Labour leader Keir Starmer said Mr. Johnson had already "shown nothing but contempt for the decency, honesty and respect that define this country", and called anew for his resignation.

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

The U.S. should give legally binding guarantees to Russia to stop eastward expansion of NATO, said a senior Russian official here on Wednesday. Roman Babushkin, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Russian Embassy, described NATO as the "mechanism of confrontation" and emphasised that Russia is not planning to invade Ukraine.

"First of all, we expect a written response by the U.S. to the Russian proposals regarding security guarantees and official commitments for non-expansion of NATO eastwards coming back to the implementation of multilateral decisions of 1997 and 1999 in this regard as well as in regard of the principle of undivided security,"

said Mr. Babushkin in a statement to *The Hindu*, stressing that "any security arrangement should take into account the security interests of other states."

Russian officials are barred from holding assets abroad.

But such a move, he said, would do serious damage to diplomatic efforts to ease tensions over Ukraine. "Politically, it's not painful, it's destructive," Mr. Peskov said. The Kremlin has previously said any U.S. sanctions personally targeting Mr. Putin would be akin to crossing a red line.

U.S. President Joe Biden said on Tuesday that any Russian attack on Ukraine would trigger "enormous consequences" and could even "change the world".

U.S. should give legal security guarantees on NATO: Russia

Envoy says Moscow expects a written response from U.S.

media outlets amount to curbing freedom of expression.

Mr. Babushkin blamed NATO's increased presence in the region for prompting Russian military build up, saying "Russia has absolutely no reason and, consequently no plans to invade Ukraine. Our troops at the border are deployed on our own territory and only for defence purposes due to escalated NATO military activities in Ukraine." The Russian envoy described NATO as the "mechanism of confrontation" that is suffering from an identity crisis since the end of the Cold War.

"It is not true that NATO is ensuring the European security – it is impossible without Russia and mutually respectful dialogue based on the principle of undivided security, meaning that no one should build up security arrangements at the expense of security interests of other states."



Vladimir Putin

said there could be sanctions personally targeting Putin.

Reacting to the news, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov dismissed the threats as worthless because senior

Record weekly COVID cases: WHO

Over 21 million new cases reported globally, number of deaths remain unchanged

ASSOCIATED PRESS
GENEVA

The World Health Organization said there were 21 million new coronavirus cases reported globally last week, the highest weekly number of COVID-19 cases recorded since the pandemic began. The number of deaths was largely unchanged, at more than 50,000.

In its weekly assessment of the pandemic, issued late Tuesday, the UN health agency said the number of new coronavirus infections rose by 5% and that the rate of incidence appears to be slowing; only half of regions reported an increase in COVID-19. Earlier this month, the previous highest number of cases – 9.5 million – was recorded amid a 71% spike from the week before, as the hugely contagious omicron variant swept the world.

WHO said the biggest increase in cases was seen in the Middle East, with a 39% rise, followed by a 36% jump in Southeast Asia. Deaths increased in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and the Americas, but fell in other regions.

On Monday, WHO's director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus cautioned

against talk that the pandemic might be entering its "end-game," warning that conditions remain ripe for new variants to emerge, with vast swathes of unvaccinated people in some countries amid rapid virus transmission.

Still, Mr. Tedros said it might be possible for the world to exit the acute phase of the pandemic, if goals like

against talk that the pandemic might be entering its "end-game," warning that conditions remain ripe for new variants to emerge, with vast swathes of unvaccinated people in some countries amid rapid virus transmission.

Still, Mr. Tedros said it might be possible for the world to exit the acute phase of the pandemic, if goals like

immunising at least 70% of each country's population are met later this year.

In Britain, researchers at Imperial College London recorded the highest-ever prevalence rate of COVID-19 in England earlier this month, estimating that about one in every 23 people tested had the virus. The scientists said there were indications the massive spike caused by Omicron had started to level off but that infection rates remained high.

Sweden on Wednesday announced that several restrictions will be extended for another two weeks.

South Korea on Wednesday began enforcing new COVID-19 response measures, including reduced quarantine periods and expanded rapid testing, as its new cases jumped nearly 50% in a day.

Government forces and the Giants retook the dis-

Yemen govt. forces sweep through Marib

Houthi rebels expelled from Harib dist.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
CAIRO

Forces of Yemen's internationally recognised government and their United Arab Emirates-backed allies swept through a strategic central province, forcing Houthi rebels out of its second largest district, officials said on Wednesday.

The development in Marib province is another setback for the Iranian-backed Houthi, who for a year attempted to take control of the oil-rich province. Their offensive crumbled when the UAE-backed Giants Brigades helped reclaim the nearby Shabwa province earlier this month before advancing in Marib under air cover from the Saudi-led coalition.

Government forces and the Giants retook the dis-

trict of Harib and its center south of Marib city after nearly two weeks of fighting, pushing their way to the nearby district of Juba, said Brig. Abdou Megali, a military spokesman. The Houthi had taken the two districts last year, part of their offensive on Marib.

Fighting also raged between government forces and the Houthis elsewhere including in the provinces of Jawf and Taiz, he added.

The Giants posted footage purportedly showing their forces roaming through what they said was the center of Harib.

Two other military officials from inside the coalition also said the district had been taken. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to media.

U.S. varsity votes to add caste as a 'protected category'

The California State University system's board unanimously ratifies agreement with its faculty union

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

The California State University (CSU) system's board of trustees voted unanimously on Tuesday to ratify a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with its faculty union that adds caste to the list of categories that are protected against discrimination. The move comes after a few hundred individuals allied with trade coalitions and rights groups as well as faculty

rights groups as well as faculty wrote in support of the move, which was opposed by a smaller group of 80-plus faculty that said it would target Indian and South Asian origin individuals for special scrutiny.

The addition of caste as a 'protected category' to the CBA with the union (the California Faculty Association or CFA), follows from an earlier move by the campus system to bring caste into the purview of its anti-discrimination policy.

The addition of caste as a 'protected category' to the CBA with the union (the California Faculty Association or CFA), follows from an earlier move by the campus system to bring caste into the purview of its anti-discrimination policy.

Thenmozhi Soundararajan, executive director of Equality Labs, a Dalit rights organisation that works for institutional recognition of caste discrimination, said the "undemocratic efforts of opponents who are opposed to caste equity" could not derail things – a reference to the opposition from a faculty group that opposed the change. The group had the

backing of the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) that had written to oppose the move.

Denial of rights

"Neither the CFA nor the CSU has the right to negotiate a denial of constitutional rights to equal protection and due process," Suhag Shukla, executive director of HAF, said in a statement to the trustees that she posted to her Twitter account.

Ms. Shukla said she was not given the opportunity to provide testimony but the statement contained what she had planned to say.

"Combatting discrimination of all kinds is a shared

lution," she said in the statement.

"This agreement includes the inclusion of caste as a protected category. We strongly support the inclusion of caste. It is about non-discrimination, not discrimination," CFA President Charles Toombs said as per a statement posted on the Equality Labs website.

'Will defend our win'

"We have already won and we will defend our win even if we have to go to the highest court in the United States. Justice will not be denied. We now look forward to implementing these policies," Ms. Soundararajan said.



Students at one of the campuses of California State University. ■ GETTY IMAGES

The recognition of caste as a dimension of discrimination is gaining institutional support in the U.S. For instance, in December, Harvard University ratified an agreement with its Graduate Student Union in December which included caste as a protected category.

Among those who sent letters and statements of support for the inclusion of caste in the Cal State CBA were the California Trade Justice Coalition – an alliance of unions and rights groups and APA-LA AFL-CIO, an Asian American workers alliance affiliated with the AFL-CIO, the country's largest federation of unions.

Oil rises towards \$89 on Russia tension

Biden threatens sanctions on Putin over any invasion of Ukraine; West Asia adds to supply worries

REUTERS
LONDON

Oil rose towards \$89 a barrel on Wednesday, within sight of a seven-year high, supported by tight supply and geopolitical tensions in Europe and West Asia that raise concerns about further disruptions.

U.S. President Joe Biden said on Tuesday he would consider personal sanctions on President Vladimir Putin if Russia invades Ukraine. On Monday, Yemen's Houthi movement launched a missile attack on a United Arab Emirates base.

"Anxiety over potential supply disruptions in the Middle East and Russia is providing bullish fodder for the oil market," said Stephen Brennock of oil broker PVM.

Brent crude rose 61 cents, or 0.7%, to \$88.81 at 0917



Fanning fears: Heightened tensions over Ukraine and the threat to oil infrastructure in the UAE cloud the outlook. ■AP

GMT. On Jan. 20 it reached \$89.50, the highest since October 2014. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude

was up 25 cents, or 0.3%, to \$85.85.

"The market downside is limited due to heightened

• Anxiety over potential supply disruptions... is providing bullish fodder for the oil market

Stephen Brennock, PVM

tensions between Russia and Ukraine and the threat to infrastructure in the UAE," said Hiroyuki Kikukawa, general manager of research at Nissan Securities.

Underlining a tight supply and demand balance, the weekly U.S. inventory report from the American Petroleum Institute on Tuesday showed crude stocks fell by 8,72,000 barrels, market sources said.

Investors across the markets are also awaiting the update from the U.S. Federal Reserve. The Fed is expected to signal plans to raise interest rates in March as it focuses on fighting inflation.

OPEC+ to meet

In another key development, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies, known as OPEC+, meets on Feb. 2 to consider another output increase.

OPEC+ has been gradually unwinding 2020's record output cuts, raising its monthly target by 4,00,000 barrels per day, though the actual increase in supply has fallen short of that as some countries struggle to raise production.

OPEC+ will probably stick with a planned increase in output target for March, several sources from the group said, as it sees demand recovering despite downside risks from the pandemic and looming interest rate rises.

India probes China, Vietnam over 'dumping' of vinyl tiles

DGTR opens investigation on plaint from Welspun group

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India has initiated an anti-dumping probe against imports of a certain type of tiles, used for covering the floors in residential and commercial buildings, from China, Taiwan and Vietnam following a complaint by domestic players.

The Commerce Ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) is probing the alleged dumping of "vinyl tiles other than in roll or sheet form".

Welspun India Ltd., Welspun Flooring Ltd. and Welspun Global Brands Ltd. had filed a petition to impose anti-dumping duty on the imports from China, Taiwan and Vietnam, according to a notification of the DGTR.



ing satisfied itself, on the basis of the prima facie evidence submitted by the industry about the dumping... the authority hereby initiates an investigation," the directorate said.

If it is established that the dumping has caused material injury to the domestic players, the DGTR would recommend an anti-dumping duty on these imports.

Countries start anti-dumping probes to determine whether their domestic industries have been hurt because of a surge in cheap imports.

As a countermeasure, they impose these duties under the multilateral regime of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Capital expenditure by coal CPSEs climbs 28.3%

Units meet 75% of annual target

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday said the Ministry of Coal, through its CPSEs, has registered a 28.3% year-on-year growth in capital expenditure (capex) to ₹2,605.75 crore for the period ended December.

The Ministry of Coal, through its Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), had registered capex of ₹9,822.28 crore a year earlier.

This capex achievement is also 75% of the Ministry of Coal's annual target, the ministry said in a statement.

Coal India (CIL) is one of the CPSEs under the Coal Ministry. CIL had earlier said its capital expenditure



jumped more than two-fold to ₹1,840 crore in the first quarter of this fiscal, compared with ₹844 crore a year earlier. It said the jump was a reflection of its stepping up investments in evacuation infrastructure, land acquisition and procurement of heavy equipment.

CIL has achieved 94% of the target of ₹1,960 crore, set for April-June quarter of the ongoing fiscal.

Vedanta demerger details to become clear by March-end, says Agarwal

Market is good, production is going well; having separate firms will create value'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Metals and mining group Vedanta Ltd. will announce the contours of a proposal to spin off key businesses into separate listed companies by March-end, chairman Anil Agarwal said.

While the zinc business is already housed in a listed subsidiary, the plan is to demerge the aluminum, iron and steel, and oil and gas businesses into standalone, listed entities.

This will 'unlock value for all stakeholders' as well as create businesses that are positioned better to capitalise on their distinct market



positions and deliver long-term growth and enable strategic partnerships, he told PTI in an interview. It will also help tailor the capital structure and capital allocation policies based on busi-

ness-specific dynamics, as also create distinct investment profiles to attract deeper and broader investor bases.

Natural progression'

"It (demerger) is a natural thing to do. Market is very good and production (at different divisions of Vedanta) is going well. And so we think having separate companies will create valuation," he said. "Maybe in a month and a half, sometime before March-end we will announce the full (contours)."

Vedanta Ltd. had in November announced that its board of directors had formed a sub-committee to

evaluate a potential spin-off of its aluminum, iron and steel, and oil and gas businesses into separate listed units. Following the sub-committee's evaluation, the board could also consider other alternatives such as strategic partnerships.

The spin-off will result in three new listed entities with shareholding mirroring that of Vedanta Ltd. After this, London-based parent Vedanta Resources group will comprise five listed entities – Vedanta Ltd., the three newly listed firms and the listed zinc subsidiary, Hindustan Zinc, in which Vedanta Ltd. holds 64.9%.

Loan demand to rise in Feb., March: Shriram unit CV financier says collections 'normal'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI

Signalling a return to normalcy, India's largest truck finance firm, Shriram Transport Finance Company, on Wednesday said its collection efficiency had returned to 100% in the second half of January after undergoing a brief blip in the first fortnight.

Shriram Transport Finance Company vice-chairman and MD, Umesh Revankar said collection rates would rise in February and March as more people get vaccinated and the Omicron variant becomes less impactful on business than originally feared.

Collections rates reflect confidence levels in borrow-



ers, often seen as a proxy of economic activity.

"Third wave (of COVID-19) was only temporary... people have come out of fear and business has returned to normal. Some States imposed some restrictions but later reversed them," he told PTI. Disbursements could reach pre-COVID-19 levels, demand could "shoot up" in the coming months, STFC said.

Kinetic to set up e-bike unit for ₹100 crore

Take a 'balanced' approach to fiscal deficit, says Toyota JV

'Govt. must continue to strengthen revenue collection steps'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The Union government has to take a 'balanced' approach to tackle the growing fiscal deficit while continuing to nurture the economy, Toyota Kirloskar Motor said in a pre-Budget expectation statement.

Constrained by the unprecedented scale of the COVID-19 crisis, the government had to make several unplanned expenditures towards healthcare and social sectors in addition to taking other measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the economy.

"Going forward, the government has to take a balanced approach to tackle the growing fiscal deficit while continuing to nurture the economy," the Japanese carmaker's unit said.



Faceless assessment
The government's focus on a faceless tax assessment scheme, aimed at enhancing transparency and building confidence in the system, would improve revenue collection and add to the ease of doing business, it noted.

"We feel the government should further continue to strengthen these measures for lasting benefits," it said.

PLI scheme

Through Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) for several key identified sectors, the government had sought to transform the economy by attracting investments, especially in import-dependent industries.

"These measures will help create a vibrant and competitive local manufacturing ecosystem for advanced and green technologies at global scales.

"We hope these benefits will also trickle down the entire supply chain thereby boosting the growth of our MSMEs," the company said.

Jio-bp expands with Delhi EV charging hub

Reliance BP Mobility JV scales up fuel-retail network by offering multiple choices

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A joint venture of billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) and energy major BP has opened one of the country's largest EV charging hubs in Delhi, as the duo scale up the fuel-retail network, offering multiple fuel choices, including EV charging infrastructure.

Reliance BP Mobility Limited, operating under the brand name Jio-bp, is working with multiple demand aggregators, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and technology partners with a vision of being the leading EV charging infrastructure player in India, RIL had said last week.

"Jio-bp has constructed and launched one of the country's largest EV charging hubs in Dwarka, Delhi with BluSmart as its primary



Fuelling growth: India is expected to be the fastest-growing fuels market in the world over the next 20 years. ■REUTERS

customer," it had said.

Jio-bp had introduced its first Jio-bp branded mobility station at Navde, Navi Mumbai in October last year. And since then, it has been scaling up the network.

In 2019, BP had bought a 49% stake in more than 1,400 petrol pumps and 31

aviation turbine fuel (ATF) stations owned by Reliance for \$1 billion. The existing petrol pumps of Reliance had since been transferred to the joint venture, which plans to scale them up to 5,500 by 2025.

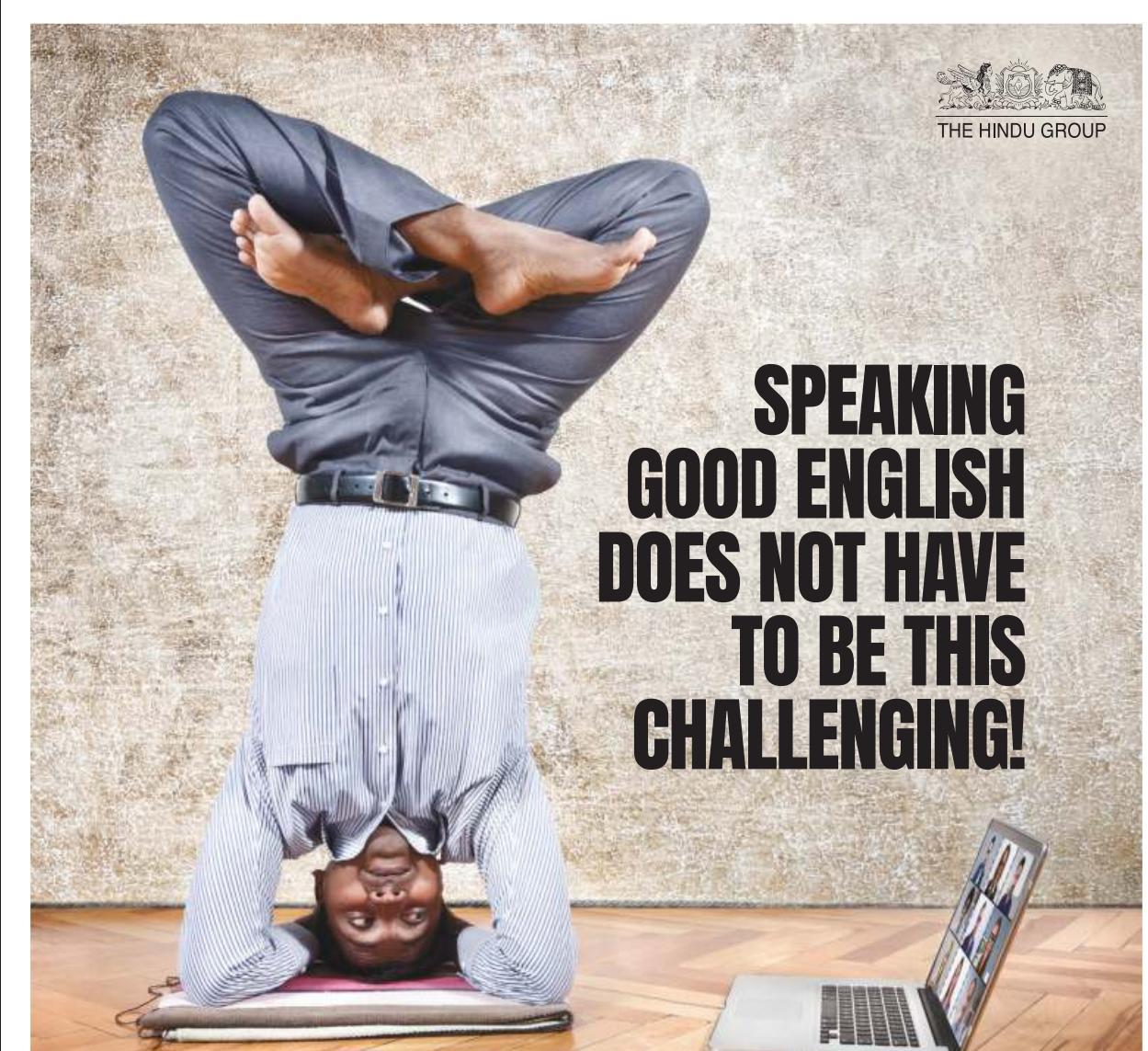
Reliance holds the remaining 51% stake in Reliance BP Mobility Limited (RBML). RBML has already received the marketing authorisation for transportation fuels.

Petrol pumps with RBML have since increased to 1,448, according to latest information available from the Petroleum Ministry. RBML had 1,427 outlets at the end of September 2021.

India's auto fuel retailing is dominated by public sector oil companies that own a majority of the 81,099 petrol pumps in the country.

Rosneft-backed Nayara Energy is the largest private fuel retailer with 6,496 pumps. Shell has 310 petrol pumps.

India's market for fuels and mobility is rapidly growing. It is expected to be the fastest-growing fuels market in the world over the next 20 years.



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M ND-NDE

Medvedev fights back from the brink; Swiatek rallies to beat Kanepi

Tsitsipas eases past Sinner in straight sets; the Pole sets up a semifinal clash with Collins who put an end to Cornet's remarkable campaign in the quarterfinals



AUS OPEN

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MELBOURNE

Daniil Medvedev rallied from two sets down and saved a match point before beating No. 9 Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-7(4), 3-6, 7-6(2), 7-5, 6-4 on Wednesday to move into the Australian Open semifinals.

The U.S. Open champion's bid to become the first man in the Open era to win his second Grand Slam title in the next major tournament is still on track after the 4-hour, 42-minute comeback victory.

Medvedev will play French Open runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas on Friday in a rematch of last year's semifinals at Melbourne Park. Medvedev won at the same stage last year, but lost the final to Novak Djokovic.

Tsitsipas beat No. 11 Jannik Sinner 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.

Facing defeat Wednesday, Medvedev got a break. A six-minute delay in the third-set tiebreaker for the roof on Rod Laver Arena to be closed during a rain shower swung the momentum mostly his way.

Auger-Aliassime won only one of the last six points in the tiebreaker after dominating for the first two sets. He missed a match point on Medvedev's serve in the 10th game of the fourth set.

Medvedev saved it with a big first serve out wide and then held with an overhead winner.

'What would Novak do?'

"I was not playing my best, and Felix was playing unbelievable, serving unbelievable – he was all over me," Medvedev said. "I didn't know what to do so I (asked) myself, 'What would Novak do?'

"And I just thought, OK, I'm going to make him work. If he wants to win it, he has to... fight to the last point."

The temperature dropped for the men's quarterfinals from the highs of the afternoon, when Iga Swiatek beat 36-year-old Kaia Kanepi 4-6, 7-6(2), 6-3, with the payoff being a spot in the semifinals against Danielle Collins.

"This match was crazy," the 20-year-old 2020 French Open champion said. "First set I think my mistake was I had so many break points, I felt like I missed my chances. In the second set... I felt like she's playing so fast that I can't be tight, I had to finish my forehands."

The temperature reached 36 degrees Celsius on Day 10, continuing a week of hot weather.

Collins won the opening match before the heat peaked, swinging it in her favor.

your with a key service break in the final game of the opening set on her way to a 7-5, 6-1 victory over Alize Cornet.

The 115th-ranked Kanepi was coming off a three-set win over second-ranked Aryna Sabalenka and took the match to Swiatek, who saved nine set points before losing the first set.

Swiatek rallied in the second and third sets. And, after being broken while serving for the match the first time, she eventually clinched it on Kanepi's serve.

After the first three quarterfinals were decided in straight sets – Ash Barty beat Jessica Pegula and Madison Keys beat Barbora Krejčíková on Tuesday – the last one went all the way.

As she left the court, Swiatek wrote on the TV camera lens: "Thank you for the support. # Tired."

Collins' win means there are two Americans in the semifinals. Keys will play Wimbledon champion Barty.

THE RESULTS

Quarterfinals: Men: 4-Tsitsipas (Gre) bt 11-Sinner (Ita) 6-3, 6-4, 6-2; 2-Medvedev (Rus) bt 9-Auger-Aliassime (Can) 6-7(4), 3-6, 7-6(2), 7-5, 6-4.

Women: 27-Collins (USA) bt Alize Cornet (Fra) 7-5, 6-1; 7-Swiatek (Pol) bt Kanepi (Est) 4-6, 7-6(2), 6-3.

Collins is now fitter, stronger and pain-free



In the best shape: Focusing on strength and conditioning after surgery has paid dividends for Collins. • GETTY IMAGES

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
MELBOURNE

A resurgent Danielle Collins said feeling herself again after difficult surgery, coupled with improved strength and stamina, helped power her into the last four of the Australian Open.

Collins underwent surgery last year for endometriosis – where tissue similar to the lining of the womb starts to grow elsewhere – and said being pain-free had made a huge difference.

"I think I've gotten a lot stronger physically over the last couple of years. My

strength and conditioning and my fitness... they have been the important areas of my training.

"That has transferred over to my tennis, the way that I'm able to play physically. My stamina on court has also improved tremendously. I think the power and speed have improved too."

"To be able to get back to this level and be as physical as I have been so rewarding," said Collins. "Especially playing against the girls I've played against in the last couple of matches... really good competitors, great athletes."

1 This is the first time that neither draw has a debutant Slam semifinalist since the 2013 French Open

1 First Australian Open semifinal for Swiatek

2 Medvedev reaches his second consecutive semifinal at Melbourne Park

5 Both Tsitsipas and Medvedev have made it to five Grand Slam semifinals. The two also have five wins against Top 10 players at Majors

THURSDAY'S PICKS

WOMEN'S SEMIFINALS

1-Barty vs. Keys

7-Swiatek vs. 27-Collins

C The last two matches have shown me that even in tough moments I can come back
SWIATEK on winning her second straight match after being a set down

C I worked at this every day. I gave up so much as a kid to get to where I am now
COLLINS

C I'm going to leave Australia with my head held high and go into the rest of the season knowing I can play well against the best
AUGER-ALIASIME

Bishnoi gets a call-up; Kuldeep and Hooda recalled for ODIs

Rohit clears fitness test, returns to lead the side; Washington in both squads; Bumrah, Shami rested

WI IN INDIA

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Kuldeep Yadav and Deepak Hooda have been recalled for the ODIs while rookie spinner Ravi Bishnoi received a maiden call-up for India's limited-overs series against the West Indies.

While Rohit Sharma, who passed a fitness test earlier in the day, will lead the side, the selectors have given key pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami a break with an eye on the T20 World Cup later this year.

Ravindra Jadeja is undergoing his final stage of recovery post his knee injury and will not be available. Axar Patel will be available for the T20Is," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a statement.

While the BCCI statement made no reference to R. Ashwin,

win, *The Hindu* understands that the veteran off-spinner has been given a three-week break to recover from a niggle and will recover well in time for the Test series against Sri Lanka, scheduled to start on February 25.

The selectors have also recalled Kuldeep while Bishnoi's selection was on expected lines as he has been on the selectors' radar for a while. The duo will lead India's spin attack along with Washington Sundar, who has recovered from COVID-19.

Shahrukh misses out
Hooda emerged as the surprise pick as he was preferred over M. Shahrkhan Khan. It is understood that besides Hooda's prolific form for Rajasthan, his adopted home, in the domestic arena, the fact that he fulfills the need for an all-

The schedule: ODIs: Feb. 6, 9 and 11. All matches at Ahmedabad (1.30 p.m. start).

T20Is: Feb. 16, 18 and 20. All games at Kolkata (7.30 p.m.).

rounder and a big-hitter down the order worked in his favour.

The squads: ODIs: Rohit Sharma (Capt.), K.L. Rahul (Vice-capt.), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shikhar Dhawan, Virat Kohli, Surya Kumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Deepak Hooda, Rishabh Pant (wk), Deepak Chahar, Shardul Thakur, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Axar Patel, Yuzvendra Chahal, Washington Sundar, Mohd. Siraj, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Avesh Khan, and Harshal Patel.

The schedule: ODIs: Feb. 6, 9 and 11. All matches at Ahmedabad (1.30 p.m. start).

T20Is: Feb. 16, 18 and 20. All games at Kolkata (7.30 p.m.).

Lacking form, fitness
Not long ago, Neha Pandit, Ruthvika Shivan and R.M. V. Gurusaidutt were among the champions in the National-ranking events. But, on this day, the trio exited lacking form, fitness and the

necessary drive.

Neha, a replacement for Saina Nehwal at the top of the draw, ran out of steam and lost in 55 minutes to Smit Toshniwal 20-22, 21-18, 10-21.

Ruthvi, the 2016 South Asian Games champion, lasted just 22 minutes on the court against Ananya Praveen, losing 12-21, 8-21.

Gurusaidutt lasted only 22 minutes against Kaushal Dharmamer, who raced to a 21-13, 21-17 victory.

Siddharth knocks out Sheng

Neha, Ruthvi and Gurusaidutt exit

ODISHA OPEN

RAKESH RAO

Little-known Siddharth Pratap Singh seized the opportunity to create a flutter and knocked out sixth seed Xiangdong Sheng in straight games for a place in the men's singles pre-quarterfinals of the \$75,000 Odisha Open badminton at Cuttack on Wednesday.

On a day when some of the more illustrious players

saw their comeback end in the second round, Siddharth performed far better than his World ranking of 138. He ousted the 72nd-ranked Canadian citizen 21-17, 21-4 in 27 minutes.

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In his retirement letter written to Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), Dilruwan said he will continue playing domestic Cricket. He scored 1,456 runs and scalped 177 wickets during his international career across formats.

"Dilruwan Perera announced his retirement from all forms of international cricket. SLC wishes him the very best for his future endeavours," a statement from SLC said.

Perera hangs up his boots

Ani COLOMBO
Sri Lanka all-rounder Dilruwan Perera has announced his retirement from all forms of international cricket with immediate effect.

In his retirement letter written to Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), Dilruwan said he will continue playing domestic Cricket. He scored 1,456 runs and scalped 177 wickets during his international career across formats.

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U Mumba too strong for Bulls

Says they are 'truly special ambassadors of strong relations'

GENERAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BENGALURU

U Mumba thrashed Bengaluru Bulls 45-34 in a ProKabaddi League (PKL) match here on Wednesday.

Abhishek Singh scored

11 raid points for Mumba

and was ably supported by

Ajith Kumar with eight.

But it was the defence that won

it the encounter with Rahul Sethpal clinching a High 5 (7 tackle points plus a bonus point).

Modi writes to Gayle, Rhodes

letter Rhodes shared said.

"Thank you Narendra Modi for the very kind words. I have indeed grown so much as an individual on every visit to India," Gayle tweeted.

Says they are 'truly special ambassadors of strong relations'

GENERAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

As India celebrated its 73rd Republic Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has written to celebrated cricketers Jonty Rhodes and Chris Gayle, acknowledging their "profound connection" with the country.

Modi, in his letter to Rhodes, wrote: "Over the years, you have developed a profound connection with India and its culture. This is truly reflected when you named your daughter India after this great nation. You truly are a special ambassador of the strong relations between our nations," the

letter Rhodes shared said.

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TV PICKS

Australian Open: Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. & 2 p.m.
U-19 Cricket WC: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 6.15 pm.
Legends League Cricket: Sony Ten 1 & 3 (SD & HD), 8 p.m.
PKL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.15 p.m.
ISL: SS Select 1HD, 7.15 p.m.

IN BRIEF

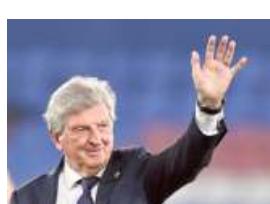


James and Davis star in Lakers' victory
LeBron James welcomed Anthony Davis back with a lob pass for the game's first basket, then turned to his own offence to score 33 points in Los Angeles Lakers' 106-96 victory over the Brooklyn Nets on Tuesday night.

The results: Lakers 106 bt Nets 96; Clippers 116 bt Wizards 115; 76ers 117 bt Pelicans 107; Warriors 130 bt Mavericks 92; Timberwolves 109 bt Trail Blazers 107; Raptors 125 bt Hornets 113; Celtics 128 bt Kings 75; Spurs 134 bt Rockets 104; Nuggets 110 bt Pistons 105. AP



Eriksen trains with Ajax to regain fitness
AMSTERDAM
Denmark playmaker Christian Eriksen trained with Ajax's reserves to regain fitness while seeking a new team, his former club said. The 29-year-old Eriksen has not played since suffering a cardiac arrest during Denmark's opening match at the European Championship against Finland in June. Eriksen began his senior career at Ajax, making his debut in 2010 as an 18-year-old. AP



Roy Hodgson takes charge at Watford

LONDON
Watford appointed former England boss Roy Hodgson as its third manager of the season on Tuesday following the dismissal of Claudio Ranieri. Hodgson arrived at Vicarage Road just 24 hours after Ranieri was sacked on Monday following Watford's slump into the Premier League relegation zone last weekend. AP

Ritvik enters quarterfinals

SPORTS BUREAU
INDORE
Ritvik Nadikude got past fourth seed Vineeth Mutiyala in the pre-quarterfinals of the ITF grade-5 junior tennis tournament here on Wednesday. Ritvik led 6-2, 2-1 when Vineeth retired.

Ritvik will face seventh seed Krish Tyagi in the quarterfinals.

Second seed Saheb Sodhi gave a walkover to qualifier Tarun Korwar.

The results (pre-quarterfinals): Boys: Denim Yadav bt Lakshya Chugh 6-1 (retired); Akash Gaonkar bt Jason David 6-4, 6-1; Ritvik Nadikude bt Vineeth Mutiyala 6-2, 2-1 (retired); Krish Tyagi bt Prajwal Tewari 6-3, 6-2; Deep Munim bt Arnav Paparkar 6-3, 6-1; Daksh Agarwal bt Shivam Kadamb 6-1, 6-3; Azmeer Shaikh bt Suresh Keerthivassan 6-1, 6-1; Tarun Korwar w/o Saheb Sodhi.

Girls: Sonal Patil bt Priyanka Rana 6-1, 6-2; Gauri Mangaoankar bt Durganshi 6-1, 7-5; Nandini Dixit bt Sajayani Banerjee 6-1, 6-1; Harshini Nagaraj bt Diva Bhatia 6-3, 6-4; Sree Tanvi Dasari bt Aanya Choubey 6-2, 6-1; Chahana Budhbihati bt Sreenidhi Reddy 6-0, 6-1; Amishi Shukla bt Matihili Mothe 6-4, 6-3; Kashish Bote bt Shakshi Thakkar 6-2, 6-4.

Senegal bests 9-man Cape Verde

Hakimi's stunning free-kick seals Morocco's berth in the next round

CUP OF NATIONS

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BAFOUSSAM (CAMEROON)

Sadio Mane got up from a horrible clash of heads that left him dazed on the ground, possibly with a concussion, to score a goal and help put Senegal into the quarterfinals of the African Cup of Nations on Tuesday.

Senegal won 2-0 against Cape Verde, which had two players sent off in the last 16 game in Cameroon's western city of Bafoussam. The Liverpool star didn't finish the match and later was taken to the hospital, though he said on social media that he was OK.

Magical
Morocco followed Senegal into the last eight by coming from behind to beat Malawi 2-1. The Moroccan comeback was completed by a magical free kick by Paris Saint-Germain's Achraf Hakimi, who curled the ball over the wall and into the top corner for the winner in the 70th minute.

In the Senegal-Cape Verde game, Cape Verde's second red card was dished out to goalkeeper Vozinha when he



Talking point: Senegal's Sadio Mane lies on the pitch following a collision with Cape Verde keeper Vozinha. AP

raced out of his area and tried to head a ball clear with Mane chasing it down.

Bad clash
The players' heads clashed badly as they leapt in the air and Vozinha clearly sustained a concussion as he

tried to get up and ended up staggering around.

Vozinha left on a stretcher and wasn't around to see the red card referee Lahou Benbraham held up for him.

But questions will be raised over Mane being allowed to continue after he

hit the ground face first following the collision, rolled over and lay still on his back for a moment, clearly dazed.

The results (last-16): Senegal 2 (Mane 63, Dieng 90+2) bt Cape Verde 0; Morocco 2 (En-Nesyri 45+2, Hakimi 70) bt Malawi 1 (Mhang'o 7).

Gunathilaka returns; Malinga bowling coach

AUS IN SL

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Danushka Gunathilaka will return to international cricket after a ban for breaching COVID rules with his inclusion for next month's Twenty20 tour of Australia, selectors announced on Wednesday.

The all-rounder and two others were sanctioned after they admitted breaching a bio-secure bubble in Durham during a tour of England last June.

Legendary pacer Lasith Malinga was appointed specialist bowling coach of the team while Rumesha Ratnayake has been named as the interim coach.

The squad: Dasun Shanaka



(Capt.), Charith Asalanka (vice-captain), Avishka Fernando, Pathum Nissanka, Danushka Gunathilaka, Kusal Mendis, Dinesh Chandimal, Chamika Karunaratne, Janith Liyanage, Kamal Mishara, Ramesh Mendis, Wanindu Hasaranga, Lahiru Kumara, Nuwan Thushara, Dushmantha Chameera, Binura Fernando, Maheesh Theekshana, Jeffrey Vandersay, Praveen Jayawickrama, Shiran Fernando.

A proud moment as women umpires make history of sorts

An entire men's cricket tournament is being officiated by five of them

LEGENDS LEAGUE

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
MUSCAT

The appeal is loud and confident from the bowlers, the keeper and the close-in fielders. But the umpire's dreaded finger doesn't go up. The decision is reviewed, but it still isn't lbw: the replays show the ball is going down the leg-side.

A couple of days later, Humaira Farah recalls the incident with pride. She is not proud just because she got it right, but also because she, along with four other women, made history of sorts at the Legends League Cricket. It is not every day that you see only women officiating in an entire men's tournament.

Besides the four umpires,



Path-breakers: Shubhda Bhosle Gaikwad, Lauren Agenbag, Renee Montgomery and Humaira Farah. P.K. AJITH KUMAR

the match referee is also a woman. "The organisers need to be congratulated on their decision to have female

umpires for all the matches," says Shubhda Bhosle Gaikwad, who hails from Gwalior. "For me this is nothing less

than a dream."

It could also make many girls dream of a career in umpiring. These are good times for women's cricket anyway.

Its popularity is increasing rapidly, the MCC has made a woman its president, for the first time in more than two centuries, and has turned batsmen into batters. Women have also broken through the glass ceiling of commentary.

"Yes, we should have more female umpires, too," says Renee Montgomery, the Mumbai-born Hong Kong-based flight attendant whose passion has flown her down here. "It's been a great experience."

South African Lauren Agenbag nods in agreement. "I grew up watching cricke-

ters like Morne Morkel and Kevin Pietersen, so it's amazing that I get to officiate in matches featuring them," she says.

Most experienced
Humaira, the first female umpire of Pakistan, is the most experienced of the lot. "Now we have some 15 women umpires back home," she says.

"I have been an umpire in over 150 matches, and I am so happy to be here for this tournament."

Match referee Shandré Fritz, a former South Africa all-rounder, completes the fabulous five of female officials.

(The writer is in Muscat at the invitation of Legends League Cricket)

Kohli stays in second spot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DUBAI

India stalwart Virat Kohli retained his second spot in the ICC men's ODI batting rankings on the back of his decent performance in the recently-concluded South Africa series.

Another India senior player Rohit Sharma also maintained his third place despite not playing in the South Africa series as he was recovering from an injury.

Kohli has 836 rating points, while Rohit has 801. Pakistan captain Babar Azam leads the ODI batting rankings with 873 points.



South Africa's Rassie van der Dussen broke into the top 10 after a brilliant outing in the series against India. He went up 10 places to be at

No. 10 spot with 750 rating points.

In the bowling rankings, Lungi Ngidi and Keshav Maharaj made big leaps. Ngidi went up four places to occupy the No. 20 spot.

India pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who had an ordinary ODI series, meanwhile dropped four places to lie at no. 22. Maharaj, who impressed with his economy rate, went up 18 places to occupy the No. 33 spot. There wasn't too much movement in the top 10 with Kiwi Trent Boult and Australian Josh Hazlewood in the top two positions.

Mooney set for Ashes test nine days after surgery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CANBERRA

Three metal plates in her face, a wire on her bottom teeth and on liquid diet after a surgery to fix her broken jaw just over a week ago, Australia keeper-batter Beth Mooney is geared up to make the playing XI for the one-off women's Ashes Test against England starting here on Thursday.

Mooney was injured while batting in nets nine days ago and while speaking to 'SEN Radio'



ahead of the one off Test in the multi-format series, spoke about how she

coped with the massive setback.

"(The medical staff) were pretty adamant to me not long after we got the diagnosis that we could aim for the Test match," Mooney said.

"We went and got a 3D CT scan of my skull, and there were two clear breaks pretty much straight down my chin, and then where the ball hit the side of my face, there was another clear break down the side there."

"I've got two plates in my chin and one near my ear and a few screws. I don't think you can speed up a broken bone, it's going to be broken for five more weeks, but it's certainly a lot more comfortable now than it was a week or so ago," she added. The only worry for Mooney is how she would keep up with the physical intensity of the match given her diet right now is made up entirely of soups, ice creams and milk-shakes.

Draw keeps Vedit in the third spot

Arjun Erigaisi leads by two points

CHESS

SPORTS BUREAU

Vedit Gujrathi drew with Hungary's Richard Rapport to hang on to the tied third spot in the Masters section after nine rounds of Tata Steel chess tournament at Wijk aan Zee, near Amsterdam, on Monday.

A fifth draw took Vedit's tally to 5.5 points and he joined Shakhriyar Mamedyarov who lost to leader Magnus Carlsen (6.5). Anish Giri (Ned, 6) bt Sam Shankland (USA, 3.5); Nils Grandelius (Swe, 2) lost to Fabiano Caruana (USA, 5); Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 4.5) drew with Daniil Dubov (Rus, 3.5); Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Pol, 4) drew with Andrey Esipenko (Rus, 4.5).

Challengers (involving Indians): Arjun Erigaisi (8) bt Zhu Jiner (Chn, 2.5); Jonas Buhl Bjerre (Den, 5.5) bt Surya Sekhar Ganguly (4).

Zuccarelli claims Kingfisher Ultra Derby Bangalore



A winning moment: A.S. Narielwala, D.R. Thacker, Mukul A. Sonawala, Z.K. Dhunjibhoy, jockey P. Trevor, Rishi Pardal, MD United Breweries Ltd., K.N. Dhunjibhoy, BTC chairman K. Uday Eswaran, and trainer P. Shroff at the Bangalore Turf Club on Wednesday. MURALI KUMAR

Court and Setareh. 15-1/4, 1 and 1-2m, 31.24s, ₹13 (w), 12 and 21 (p), SHP: 35, THP: 42, FP: 52, Q: 52, Trinella: 389 and 129. Exacta: 837 and 255. Favourite: Zuccarelli. Owners: Five Star Shipping Co. Pvt Ltd rep by Mr. K.N. Dhunjibhoy & Mr. Z.K. Dhunjibhoy, M/S DT Racing & Breeding LLP rep by Mr. D.R. Thacker, Mr. Mukul A. Sonawala & Mr. A.S. Narielwala. Trainer: P. Shroff.

7. T.B. HANUMANTHARAJA MEMORIAL TROPHY (1,200m), rated 40 to 65, 5yo & over: MICHIGAN MELODY (Arshad), 1, Lucky Chance (Akshay) 2, Silver Dew (C.S. Jodha) 3 and Schafenber (Shreyas Singh) 4. Lnk, 3/4 and 2-3/4, Im 26.44s, ₹24 (w), 14, 11 and 22 (p), SHP: 34, THP: 34, FP: 104, Q: 58, Trinella: 138 and 49. Exacta: 417 and 200. Favourite: Wild Emperor.

Owner: United Racing & Bloodstock Breeders Ltd. Trainer: Faraz Arshad.

6. KINGFISHER ULTRA DERBY BANGALORE (2,400m), 4yo-5yo (Terms): ZUCCARELLI (Western Aristocrat - Circle of Bliss) Trevor Arshad. 1, All Attractive (Excellent Art - Balmoral Castle) Suraj 2, Silverwings (Multidimensional - Silverwing) Sripath 3 and Eternal Blaze (Multidimensional - Majestic Opinion) C.S. Jodha 4. Not run: Kensington

Jackpot: ₹16,826 (seven tkt); Runner-up: 233 (217tkt); Treble (5): 1,058 (eight tkt); (ii): 2,557 (nine tkt).

Text & Context

NEWS IN NUMBERS



COVID-19 tally

4 In crore, the number of cumulative COVID-19 cases recorded in India since the beginning of the pandemic. The country crossed the four crore number on January 25 and its cumulative case load stood at 4,00,83,405. The U.S. has registered the most infections in the world with 7.2 crore recorded cases. Until January 25, India has recorded a total of 4.91 lakh fatalities due to the virus, the second highest in the world. The U.S. has registered a total of 8.7 lakh deaths attributed to COVID-19, the highest in the world.

Padma awards

50 In percentage, the share of all Padma Awards received by people from the Arts, Literature and Education disciplines. A total of 128 Padma Awards were announced this year. From the Arts field, there were 33 awardees while 32 were from the Literature and Education disciplines. A total of 12 awardees were from the discipline of Social Work and 10 from the field of Medicine. Among the States, 13 of the awardees were from Uttar Pradesh, 10 from Maharashtra and seven each from Tamil Nadu and Gujarat.

Growth affected

4.4 In percentage, the world GDP forecast for 2022 according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Omicron variant of COVID-19 is creating an obstacle course for the global economy, which will slow growth this year, notably in the world's two largest economies, the IMF said. It cut its forecast by half a point lower than the October estimate, due to the "impediments" caused by the latest outbreak, although those are expected to begin to fade in the second quarter of the year. AFP

Climate threat

100 Nearly 100% of the venues for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics are constructed using artificial snow and this edition will be the first to have such venues, according to a study. The event is scheduled to start from February 4. Research by the Sport Ecology Group at Britain's Loughborough University and the Protect Our Winters campaign group warned that climate change is threatening the future of the Winter Olympics, reducing the number of suitable venues for the event around the globe. AFP

WT20I rankings

1 The ranking of Indian batter Shafali Verma in the ICC Women's T20I rankings for batters. Her opening partner Smriti Mandhana dropped a spot and is ranked fourth. Among the bowlers, right-arm off spinner Deepi Sharma was the top-ranked Indian at the fourth place. The slow left-arm orthodox bowler Rajeshwari Gayakwad was at the 10th spot. England's Sophie Ecclestone and Sarah Glenn occupied the first and second spots, respectively. Deepi also gained one spot and stood at the third spot among all-rounders. New Zealand's Sophie Devine held the first rank. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

EXPLAINER

The 'racial profiling' of the Chakmas and Hajongs

When did these migrant communities arrive in Arunachal Pradesh? Where did they settle? Why does the State want to relocate them?

THE GIST

RAHUL KARMAKAR

■ The Chakmas and Hajongs are migrants from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of erstwhile East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. They were settled in relief camps in the southern and south-eastern parts of Arunachal Pradesh as they were displaced by the Kaptai dam on the Karnaphuli River in the 1960s.

■ In November 2021, a letter was issued for a "special census" to be conducted in all the Chakma- and Hajong-inhabited areas from December 11-31. Chakma organisations said the census was nothing but racial profiling of the two communities and violated Article 14 of the Constitution of India and Article 1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, ratified by India.

■ Chief Minister Pema Khandu said His Government was serious about rehabilitating the Chakma-Hajongs to other States. However, the Supreme Court had in January 1996 prohibited any move to evict or expel the Chakma-Hajongs and directed the Central and State governments to process their citizenship.

■ The Chakmas and Hajongs are migrants from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of erstwhile East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. They were settled in relief camps in the southern and south-eastern parts of Arunachal Pradesh as they were displaced by the Kaptai dam on the Karnaphuli River in the 1960s.

Who are the Chakmas and Hajongs? Mizoram and Tripura have a sizeable population of the Buddhist Chakmas while the Hindu Hajongs mostly inhabit the Garo Hills of Meghalaya and adjoining areas of Assam. The Chakmas and Hajongs of Arunachal Pradesh are migrants from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of erstwhile East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. Displaced by the Kaptai dam on the Karnaphuli River in the 1960s, they sought asylum in India and were settled in relief camps in the southern and south-eastern parts of Arunachal Pradesh from 1964 to 1969. A majority of them live in the Changlang district of the State today.

Why was a special census of the two communities planned in Changlang? On November 26, 2021, a letter was issued to the officials in Miao, Bordumsa, Khasang and Diyun circles of the Changlang district for a "special census" to be conducted in all the Chakma- and Hajong-inhabited areas from December 11 to 31. Chakma organisations said the census was nothing but racial profiling of the two communities because of their ethnic origin and violated Article 14 of the Indian Constitution and Article 1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, ratified by India. The census plan was dropped after the Chakma Development Foundation of India petitioned the Prime Minister's Office and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat. Changlang Deputy Commissioner Devansh Yadav reacted by saying an "unnecessary controversy" was being created when similar exercises happened in 2010 and



Mizoram and Tripura have a sizeable population of the Buddhist Chakmas while the Hindu Hajongs mostly inhabit the Garo Hills of Meghalaya and adjoining areas of Assam

2015. Later, Chief Minister Pema Khandu said his Government was serious about resolving the protracted issue and will rehabilitate the Chakma-Hajongs in other States. The Union Minister for Law and Justice made a similar statement.

Can the Chakma-Hajongs be relocated outside Arunachal Pradesh? Organisations such as the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union say the Centre did not consult the local communities before settling the Chakma-Hajongs and that the State has been carrying their "burden" for too long. Members of the two communities have allegedly been victims of hate crime, police atrocities and denial of rights and beneficiary programmes. Based on a complaint lodged with the National Human

Rights Commission, the Supreme Court had in January 1996 prohibited any move to evict or expel the Chakma-Hajongs and directed the Central and State governments to process their citizenship. The Supreme Court pronounced a similar judgment in September 2015 after a Chakma organisation sought implementation of the 1996 order. It was also pointed out that Arunachal Pradesh cannot expect other States to share its burden of migrants.

What is the citizenship status of the Chakma-Hajongs in Arunachal Pradesh?

Members of the two communities had been settled in Arunachal Pradesh six decades ago with a rehabilitation plan, allotted land and provided with financial aid depending on the size of their families. Although local tribes claim the population of the migrants has increased alarmingly, the 2011 census says there are 47,471 Chakmas and Hajongs in the State. According to the New Delhi-based Chakma Development Foundation of India, the migrants are about 65,000 today and

60,500 of them are citizens by birth under Section 3 of the Citizenship Act, 1955, after having been born before July 1, 1987, or as descendants of those who were born before this date. The applications of the remaining 4,500 surviving migrants following the 1996 Supreme Court order have not been processed to date. Organisations of the migrants said the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019, which amended two sections of the 1955 Act, has nothing to do with the Chakma-Hajongs since they were permanently settled by the Union of India in the 1960s. Since 95% of the migrants were born in the North-East Frontier Agency or Arunachal Pradesh, the Inner Line Permit mandatory under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873, for outsiders seeking to visit the State, also does not apply to them. They say the solution to the decades-old issue lies in the State respecting the rule of law and the judgments of the Supreme Court. There has to be an end to politicians and political aspirants deriving mileage from the Chakma-Hajong issue, they say.

On the margins: Life inside the Chakma refugee camps in Southern Tripura back in 1988 • THE HINDU ARCHIVES

EXPLAINER

Clubhouse chatrooms of hate and misogyny

Are social intermediaries responsible for the content posted on their platforms?

P.J. GEORGE

The story so far: "Muslims Gals are More Beautiful Than Hindu Gals (Gals Opinion)". This was the name of a discussion forum that was opened on the social audio app Clubhouse on January 17 – communal, but relatively mild words which the moderator even tagged as 'opinion'. However, going by a recording that went viral on Twitter later, what transpired in that forum was anything but mild. As the language used is not fit to be reproduced here, we will paraphrase it as misogyny in the extreme, communalism, communal targeting Muslim women in particular, misogyny targeting Hindu women, the promotion of rape, incest, and more. Two moderators of this session went under the username 'Kira XD'. Kira XD and several others from the session were also involved in another Clubhouse discussion on the same day named "Girls don't have privilege to marry upper caste boys" where similar misogynistic remarks were recorded.

What are the police cases?

The recordings from the two sessions resulted in an outcry and police cases.



The Mumbai Police have arrested three men from Karnal in Haryana, including Akash Suyal (19) a.k.a. Kira XD. The arrest was based on a complaint from a Mumbai woman who stated that one of the arrested had hosted a Clubhouse session in November last year in which a female friend of hers was "auctioned."

The Delhi Police have also gotten into the act after the Delhi Commission for

Women issued a notice demanding action. They have filed an FIR against unknown persons and have questioned an 18-year-old from Uttar Pradesh who went by the username 'Bismillah'. According to Delhi Police, he is the creator of the communal session and was present in the casteist session on Clubhouse.

The FIRs by the Delhi and Mumbai police involve IPC sections such as 153A (promoting enmity between two groups on grounds of religion, race); 295A (deliberate, malicious acts to outrage religious feelings); 354A (sexual harassment including making sexually coloured remarks); 354D (stalking, including online); 500 (defamation), 509 (words, gestures to insult the modesty of a woman). The charges also include those under Section 67 of the Information Technology Act (IT Act) of 2000, which covers transmission of obscene material in electronic form.

Is Clubhouse culpable?

Clubhouse was all the rage in 2021, becoming an early player in the social audio space. The U.S.-based app created a wave with its by-invitation-only launch but soon fell down the ranks as more

established social media players such as Twitter incorporated audio into their platforms. In recent months, there have been several reports of extremely problematic chatrooms on the app that deal in communal and misogynist content.

Under India's IT Act, Clubhouse is an 'intermediary' that hosts third-party content online. Such intermediaries enjoy the 'safe harbour' provided by Section 79 of the IT Act, which says that they cannot be held liable for the content on their platforms as long as they don't initiate, choose the recipient, or moderate it. Facebook, Twitter and Google are all beneficiaries of this rule.

As per reports, Clubhouse also doesn't qualify as a 'significant social media intermediary' in India. According to the new rules for intermediaries that came into effect on May 26, 2021, significant social media intermediaries who have over 50 lakh registered users in India need to appoint compliance officers and grievance redressal officers based in the country.

Clubhouse's response to the current issue has been statements to various media outlets stating that there is no place for hate or abuse on its platform

and that it takes swift action against those who violate its terms and conditions.

How is hate being facilitated by technology?

The Clubhouse 'chat' cases come at a time when the atmosphere has already been vitiated by the recent 'Bulli Bai' app case. This case also involves several young persons, who allegedly created the app that 'auctioned' Muslim women, some of whom are prominent on social media. These mock auctions were channelled to social media, harassing the women. This case barked back to last year when a similar 'Sulli Deals' app made the rounds. The chatroom cases also come amid reports of a 'Tek Fog' that enables possibly politically linked right-wing players to amplify communal messages online and automate trolling of individuals.

This intersection of technology and extreme ideology seems to be happening in what are being called "trad" groups. Many of those arrested in these cases have been linked to social media groups that propagate an extreme form of Hindutva ideology that propounds religious and racial superiority and violence.

THE GIST

A discussion forum opened on the social audio app Clubhouse on January 17 hosted communal conversations targeting Muslim women, misogynistic tirades against Hindu women, promotion of rape and more. Following multiple complaints, three young participants from the forum have been arrested.

Clubhouse is an 'intermediary' that hosts third-party content online. According to Section 79 of the IT Act, it cannot be held liable for the content on its platforms as long as it doesn't initiate, choose the recipient, or moderate it.

This intersection of technology and extreme ideology seems to be happening in many social media groups.



• BUSINESS LINE

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Invention and reinvention of ethnicity

Many tribal communities in the Northeast have reinvented themselves by assuming new nomenclatures, though the reinvention has not meant any substantial change in their social status

M. S. PRABHAKARA

Based on a complaint filed by the Chakma Development Foundation of India, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has ordered the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Arunachal Pradesh government to submit an 'action taken' report against the racial profiling and relocation of people belonging to the Chakma and Hajong communities. The complaint was filed by the foundation following the scheduling of an 'illegal census' of the Chakma and Hajong-dominated areas. These people have also been victims of alleged hate crimes and discrimination due to their ethnicity. In this article dated January 4, 2010, M. S. Prabhakara details how ethnicity reinvents itself against an 'Other'.

The word "ethnic" (with its derivative, ethnicity), like "colonial," has acquired a soft focus patina permeated with quaintness and romance, something beautiful to long for. The other side of this idealised image is its successful marketing. Thus, one finds that ethnic food, ethnic clothes and ethnic jewellery are among the most assiduously marketed, and hawked after by those with the wherewithal in metropolitan areas – for, these things do not come cheap. Similar is the love and nostalgia for things colonial, especially on the part of those who have no memories of colonial rule.

Just as colonialism in action was one of the cruellest and most rapacious commercial enterprises that profoundly damaged its victims, ethnicity in action, and the uses to which it has been put, have their ugly side. This is certainly so in Assam and its environs where ethnicity has gone beyond being merely an idea and a word used to describe things strange and exotic, once viewed as supposedly unique to the tribal people on the margins. One nowadays speaks routinely of "ethnic Assamese." "Ethnic Assamese" restaurants are a thriving business. Traditional Assamese attire worn by women is sold at "ethnic Assamese boutiques" at very high prices which few "ethnic Assamese" can afford.

Questions about ethnicity and ethnic identity are now a constant in any discussion of the ferment as much among different sections of the tribal and non-tribal people in Assam and its neighbourhood as among the people of the Brahmaputra Valley, the "ethnic Assamese." The idea as much as the word has become part of a new political vocabulary of power, whose defining elements in their more extreme forms of expression are exclusion and hatred of the 'Other.'

This is perhaps natural since underlying the present exclusionary ideologies whose other side is hatred of the 'Other' is the historic reality that those presently driving such exclusionist agendas were themselves despised, excluded and marginalised by communities that have always viewed themselves as part of society's mainstream.

Ethnicity and ethnic consciousness are, however, a universal phenomenon. Every people possess specific identity markers, though in

popular usage ethnicity is considered a unique feature of tribal societies. The family, the home, the kinship group, gender, caste, religion, language, race, even the physical space that a people occupy – any and each one of these could be and indeed is a coordinate of a people's identity. These identity markers of their nature criss cross, with the result that every people have multiple identities.

And yet, identity politics and ethnic, now ethno-nationalistic, assertions articulated in singular and exclusive terms have taken some of the most violent forms not merely in Assam and its neighbourhood but worldwide. There is hardly any country, from the economically most advanced to the most backward, where such ethno-nationalistic mobilisations have not taken place with a political agenda of separatism whose objective is to carve out an exclusive territorial and political space, excluding the 'Other' who has historically been part of the same territorial and political space, and has shared the same or similar ethnic identity. Often, the 'Other' is indistinguishable from the self, as in civil wars whose key component is ethnic cleansing, the other side of violent ethnic assertion.

There may be an element of subjectivity in such ethnic identity assertions. One is not merely what one is, one is also what one thinks and feels one is; and no one, certainly no know-all journalist or even better qualified scholars can dismiss even the most subjectively held perceptions of a people as merely reductionism. The problem arises when such assertions seek to deny, diminish and, if possible, destroy the 'Other,' who is very often of one's kind but in this process of exclusionary mobilisation is cast beyond the pale.

A most curious feature of such ethnic mobilisations is the plasticity of identities in whose name such mobilisations are done, with such identities constantly invented and reinvented. When an element of fabrication enters this process of construction and invention, one has to question the very authenticity of such rigid identity assertions. One recalls that a key element in the destruction of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was the invention, in addition to the Serb, the Croat and Bosnian nationalities (the Montenegrins and the Slovenes were still in the making, in political and territorial terms, during those fraught years) of the Muslim as a 'nationality,' virtually replacing the Bosnian, though historically there were (and are) Serbian Christians, Croatian Muslims and Bosnian Muslims.

This phenomenon of invention and reinvention of identities is widespread in Assam and the northeast. In Assam, the process where a tribal person by going through some simple and nominal ritualistic processes would become part of the caste Hindu Assamese society, albeit at its lower levels, has been well documented. Many tribal communities have reinvented themselves by assuming new nomenclatures, though the reinvention has not meant any substantial change in their social status, but only the restoration of a nomenclature replacing the old that had

pejorative connotations. There has also been a singular case of a tribal identity being 'fabricated,' a creation out of airy nothing both a name and a local habitation (see Manufactured identities, Frontline, 7 October 2005).

Manipur presents some of the most striking examples of such invention and reinvention of identities. Thirty-two tribal communities (till recently 29), broadly classified under two heads, the Kuki and the Naga, are recognised in the State. However, the exact number of those classified under the two heads has never been clear because of an element of fluidity in this categorisation. What is clear is that while there are few instances of a Naga tribe switching its identity to Kuki, traffic in the reverse direction is not uncommon. A well documented case is that of the Anal, a tribal people inhabiting Chandel district, who were once classified as Kuki and are now classified as Naga.

One of the most interesting cases of such plasticity is the Monsang, once considered a Kuki tribe and now identified as a Naga tribe. In a conversation with this correspondent in Imphal recently, Professor Gangmumei Kamei, historian of Manipur, referred to Ng Mono, former MLA and leading person from the Monsang community who was at one time the general secretary of the Kuki National Assembly, and who later became a leading member of the Naga Integration Council, which wants the integration of contiguous Naga-inhabited areas under one political and administrative set-up – in short, the break-up of Manipur. Professor Kamei himself presents a most interesting transition. Once known as Gangmumei Kabui, he is now the leading ideologue of the Zeliangrong movement that seeks a homeland for the Zeliangrong community, which is literally a construct made up from the names of three Naga communities of Manipur (and Nagaland) – ZEMe, LIANGmei and RONGmei. There have been similar constructs in the region.

During the Kuki-Naga clashes in parts of the State in 1993-94, the Chiru and Kom tribes who did not see themselves as part of either of the two broad categories, nevertheless chose to identify themselves as Kuki or Naga depending on the vicinity they lived in. When the clashes abated, they reverted to their original status. However such strategies of survival have not always worked. The clashes that broke out on July 24, 1997 in Churachandpur (Lamka), headquarters of the district of the same name in southwest Manipur, and persisted for nearly a year involved, both as perpetrators and victims, two of the major communities of the town and the district, the Thadou Kuki and the Paite, both part of the great Kuki-Chin family, and virtually indistinguishable from each other. These clashes were one of the most extreme examples of the 'Other' and the self becoming indistinguishable.

One may well ask, in the words of Shakespeare: Hark in thine ear. Change places and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief?

Who is the self, who is the Other?



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

"Good evening Sir."

"Good evening."

"Sir, I notice a change in your room. Have you bought new furnitures?"

"Yes, I have. You have a keen observation. I wish I had your sharp eyes. Yes, I bought a new set of furniture yesterday. Chairs, tables, beds, desks, etc. in a house or room are referred to as 'furniture.' 'Furniture' has no plural form and is not used with the indefinite article 'a'. You don't talk about 'a furniture.' You refer to a 'piece of furniture.' Words like advice, information, bread and luggage behave in the same way. These too have no plural form and are not used with the indefinite article."

He sought some advice.

Please give me some information regarding steel production in the country.

Bread is available in plenty.

He gave me a piece of advice.

I'd like to have a piece of information.

A piece of bread will do.

"Sir, what is the difference between 'luggage' and 'baggage'?"

"None. 'Baggage' is American in origin. I feel that 'baggage' is trying to supplant 'luggage'. People who fly refer to their 'baggage' and those who travel by train and bus refer to their 'luggage'! In airports, 'luggage' is hardly used. 'Baggage' flies high, 'luggage' lies low!"

"Thank you sir. Sir, I saw one man in the market. He looked like your brother."

"Did he? Did you talk to him? When you use 'one', you want to specify the number. But that was not your intention. Your intention was to convey that you saw some unknown person resembling my brother. So you should have said *I saw a man in the street*. Here the indefinite article 'a' means 'some man', not a 'known man'. When you say *He gave me one book*, you want to emphasise the number of books given to you. *We planted one tree*. *We planted a tree*. When you say you planted a tree, you want to say that you planted some sort of tree. When you say you planted one tree, you mean that you did not plant two or more, but just one. Is this clear?"

"Yes, sir. I understand it good."

"Well, someone must have told you that 'good' means 'well' and 'well' means 'good.' But they are not always interchangeable. I will give some examples."

He speaks well, but his speech is good.

He writes well.

His writing is good. How does he write? He writes well. How is his writing? His writing is good.

Some more examples;

He has got good marks in the examination.

He talks well.

He reads well.

He teaches well.

His talk is good.

His teaching is good.

I hope you understand the difference."

"Yes, sir. So long, sir."

"So long? Do you know that 'so long' is from *Salam*? It is a colloquial term for 'goodbye.' So long."

THE GIST

Ethnicity and ethnic consciousness are a universal phenomenon. Every people possess specific identity markers, though in popular usage ethnicity is considered a unique feature of tribal societies. The defining elements which mark our identity in their more extreme forms of expression are exclusion and hatred of the 'Other.'

Ethno-nationalistic mobilisations have taken place all over the world with a political agenda of separation where the objective is to carve out an exclusive territorial and political space, excluding the 'Other' who has historically been part of the same territorial and political space, and has shared the same or similar ethnic identity.

A most curious feature of such ethnic mobilisations is the plasticity of identities in whose name such mobilisations are done, with such identities constantly invented and reinvented. When an element of fabrication enters this process of construction and invention, one has to question the very authenticity of such rigid identity assertions.

Questions about ethnicity and ethnic identity are now a constant in any discussion of the ferment as much among different sections of the tribal and non-tribal people in Assam and its neighbourhood as among the people of the Brahmaputra Valley, the "ethnic Assamese."

The idea as much as the word has become part of a new political vocabulary of power, whose defining elements in their more extreme forms of expression are exclusion and hatred of the 'Other.'

This is perhaps natural since underlying the present exclusionary ideologies whose other side is hatred of the 'Other' is the historic reality that those presently driving such exclusionist agendas were themselves despised, excluded and marginalised by communities that have always viewed themselves as part of society's mainstream.

Ethnicity and ethnic consciousness are, however, a universal phenomenon. Every people possess specific identity markers, though in

the master of music to be, what was the first instrument that young Mozart learned to play?

As a child, during a visit to the Sistine Chapel, Mozart listened to this difficult piece twice and then proceeded to write it down from memory. Name the work and its composer.

What is the significance of the opera Apollo and Hyacinthus, K. 38?

Which singspiel was allegedly commissioned by 'maginetist' Dr. Franz Mesmer, who himself was parodied in 'Così fan tutte'?

Name the opera, composed for the Vienna Opera and first performed at the Burgtheater on May 1, 1786, that got the composer the most success while he was alive.

Compiled by: V. V. Ramanan

CM YK

THE DAILY QUIZ

A quiz on the life and works of Wolfgang Mozart, one of the greatest composers born on January 27, 1756.

1 The master of music to be, what was the first instrument that young Mozart learned to play?

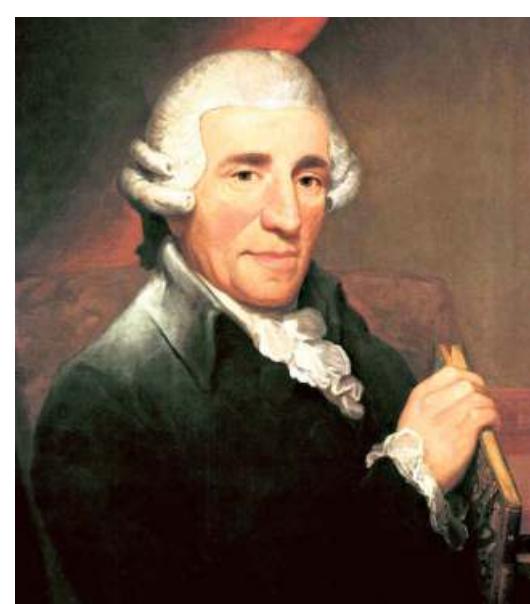
6 By what common names are these two symphonies known: Symphony No. 38 in D major, K. 504, and Symphony No. 41 in C major, K. 551?

7 One would have noticed the alphabet K followed by a number after each of Mozart's works. What does it mean?

8 Name the composer who was antipathetic to Mozart and according to some, was said to have poisoned the latter.

9 Who wrote the play 'Amadeus' which was made into a multi-Oscar winning film in the early 1980s?

10 Salil Chowdhury's 'Itna Na Mujhe Tu Pyaar Badaa' is adapted from which of Mozart's works?



◀ Mozart dedicated a set of six string quartets to this person, who once told Leopold Mozart "...your son is the greatest composer known to me". Name this man of music. • WIKIPEDIA

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

Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. January 24, 1950, 2. France, 3. Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Feroze Gandhi, 4. His name is on every page of the Constitution and on the last page his name is along with his grandfather's, 5. In special helium-filled cases in the library of Parliament, 6. Buddha's Enlightenment and drawing of Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana, respectively, 7. Reduce the voting age to 18 (from 21), 8. The judiciary (Supreme Court), 9. Nandalal Bose. He led the team of artists from Shantiniketan who decorated the hand-written document.

Early Birds: Riya Sahal Anmol Goel| Sriraam Kalingarayar| Pooja Khyaljal Mahmood Lebbai

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