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## IN BRIEF



Twitter war strains ties between Cong., Kishor  
NEW DELHI  
The Congress and election strategist Prashant Kishor's public sparring over the party's prospects of political revival triggered a war of words between Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and the TMC.  
NEWS ▶ PAGE 9

## Commuting to school a risky path for kids

NEW DELHI  
Over 500 million children below 18 years face a high degree of risk while commuting to and from school due to poor road planning, limited enforcement and poor traffic behaviour across 14 Indian cities, according to a study.

STATES ▶ PAGE 4

## Unvaccinated govt. staff can't work from Oct. 16

NEW DELHI  
Delhi government employees who have not received even a single dose of vaccine will not be allowed to work from October 16, stated an order.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

# After 68 years, Tatas win back Air India with ₹18,000 cr. bid

It will take 'considerable effort' to rebuild the debt-laden airline, says Ratan Tata

JAGRITI CHANDRA  
NEW DELHI

After 68 years, Air India is all set to return to the Tata fold. Tata Sons subsidiary Talace Pvt. Ltd. emerged as the winning bidder for the debt-laden national carrier after quoting an enterprise value of ₹18,000 crore. The government will take a hit of ₹28,844 crore.

The Tatas will own a 100% stake in Air India, as also 100% in its international low-cost arm Air India Express and 50% in the ground handling joint venture, Air India SATS. Apart from 141 aircraft and access to a network of 173 destinations, including 55 international ones, Tatas will also have the ownership of iconic brands such as Air India, Indian Airlines and the Maharajah.

### Handover by Dec.

The Group of Ministers led by Home Minister Amit Shah approved the winning bidder in its meeting on October 4. The government aims to complete the transaction by December 2021, when it will transfer its shares and

### Tata in the sky

Air India. The sale marks the return of Air India to the Tata group, a pioneer in aviation

1932: JRD Tata pilots Tata Airlines' inaugural flight from Karachi to Bombay

1946: Tata Airlines becomes a public company; renamed Air India Limited

1948: Govt. of India acquires a 49% stake in the carrier

1953: Government nationalises Air India

2007: Air India merges with Indian Airlines, that operates only domestic routes

2012: Govt. approves ₹30,000 crore bailout for Air India, which has over ₹67,000 crore in debt

May, 2018: Govt. attempts to sell 76% stake in Air India; attracts no bidders

Jan, 2020: Govt. launches a second attempt, this time offers 100% stake in Air India

Oct, 2020: Govt. confirms Tata Sons' subsidiary Talace Pvt. Ltd. as the winning bidder



hand over the airline to the new buyer.

Talace quoted an enterprise value of ₹18,000 crore. Of this, ₹15,300 crore is the debt component of Air India to be taken on by the winner, and the remaining ₹2,700 crore will be cash paid to the government," DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said at a press briefing.

"Tata will have the opportunity of regaining the image and reputation it enjoyed in earlier years. Mr. JRD Tata would have been overjoyed if he was in our midst today," Ratan Tata, Tata Group's Chairman Emeritus, said.

He added that it would

take "considerable effort" to rebuild Air India, though at the same time "it will provide a very strong market opportunity to the Tata Group's presence in the aviation industry". Tata Sons owns 84% share in Air Asia, which has a market share of 5.2%, and 51% stake in Vistaar, which has a market share of 8.3%. Together with Air India's market share of 13.2%, Tatas could be in control of 26.7% market share, and be the second biggest player after IndiGo.

The second bidder, a consortium led by Ajay Singh, had quoted an enterprise value of ₹15,100 crore. The re-

serve price fixed by the government before opening the bids on September 28 was ₹12,906 crore.

The government will absorb the balance debt of ₹46,262 crore, which will be transferred to a special purpose vehicle (SPV) set up by it – Air India Assets Holding Ltd. When adjusted against non-core assets such as land and buildings worth ₹14,718 crore that will also be parked in the SPV and the cash amount of ₹2,700 crore from Tatas, the net liability on the government comes to ₹28,844 crore.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## 'Centre didn't ask for oxygen deaths data'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The war of words between the Opposition and the government continues on whether there were COVID-19 deaths due to oxygen shortage in the second wave of the pandemic.

Pursuing his privilege motion against Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar, Rajya Sabha member and Congress general secretary K.C. Venugopal, in a letter to Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu, pointed out that the Centre never "categorically asked the States for reporting deaths due to oxygen shortage".

"Your seriousness is only in words and not in your actions," Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana addressed the government.

Justice Hima Kohli told the State, "There is an old adage which rings true in this situation – the proof of the pudding is in the eat-

ing..." The State is represented by senior advocate Harish Salve and State Additional Advocate-General Garima Parshad.

Justice Surya Kant told the State, "It is a case of brutal murder of eight persons, law must take its course against all the accused." The court stated that it was dissatisfied with the government's status report on the investigation.

CJI Ramana pointed out how even a special investigation team formed by the State was made of "local" police officers, inspectors, Superintendents and a DIG.

The court asked if the State has yet made a request

Panic-stricken Pandits go on leave in Valley

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

Scores of Kashmiri Pandits abstained from work with many going on a 10-day leave in the Valley on Friday, in the wake of the targeted killings of two community members and seven other civilians in the past week. Widespread protests were held in J&K against the killings.

The J&K administration and the regional political parties appealed to Pandits not to consider any idea of migration. Relief Commissioner A.K. Pandita assured them of "providing full security".

The District Commissioners have asked the Pandits living in designated enclaves of the Valley to restrict their movements for the now, and avoid travelling to volatile pockets.

"I am frightened... We are shifting some of our family members to Jammu for the time being," a Kashmiri Pandit teacher said.

Several schools, especially those located in volatile pockets, have offered Pandit employees 10 days of leave, an official said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

# India, China patrols face off in Tawang

Chinese soldiers detained, let off later



The stand-off comes ahead of Corps Commander-level talks on LAC in Ladakh. ▪ AFP

curred as the two sides are set to hold the 13th round of Corps Commander talks for disengagement and de-escalation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. The two sides have so far undertaken disengagement from the Pangong Tso and Gogra areas.

Defence sources said that whenever patrols of both sides physically met, the situation was managed according to established protocols and mechanisms agreed upon by both sides. "Physical engagement can last for a few hours prior to disengaging as per mutual understanding," one of the sources cited above said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Dazzling display



Lighting up the sky: Jaguar fighter jets put up a spectacular show during a parade to mark the 89th Indian Air Force Day at Hindon airbase in Ghaziabad on Friday. ▪ R.V. MOORTHY (REPORT ON PAGE 10)

## Suicide bomb attack kills 46 in Afghan mosque

REUTERS  
KABUL

A suicide bomber attacked a mosque in Afghanistan's northeastern Kunduz province on Friday, killing 46 people and wounding more than 140, the state-run Balkh news agency said.

Video footage showed bodies surrounded by debris inside the mosque that is used by people from the minority Shia community.

The Islamic State-Khorasan group claimed responsibility for the attack. They have repeatedly targeted Shias in a bid to stir up sectarian violence in Sunni-majority Afghanistan.

In a statement released on its Telegram channels, the jihadist group said that an IS suicide bomber "detonated an explosive vest amid a crowd" of Shiite worshippers who had gathered inside the mosque.

IS said the "perpetrator of the attack was an Uyghur Muslim".

The blast follows several attacks, including one at a mosque in Kabul, in recent weeks, also claimed by the Islamic State.

BLOODIEST ASSAULT ▶ PAGE 11

# SC flags consequences of growing digital divide

Court asks Centre, Delhi govt. to hold consultation

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The digital divide caused by online classes will defeat the fundamental right of every child to education, the Supreme Court warned on Friday. The court rued how the right to education now hinged on who could afford "gadgets" for online classes and who could not.

Little children whose parents are too poor to afford laptops, tablets or an "optimum" Internet package at home for online classes during the pandemic have dropped out of school and even run the danger of being drawn into child labour or worse, child trafficking, the court said.

"During the course of the pandemic, as schools increasingly turned to online education to avoid exposing the young children to the pandemic, the digital divide produced stark consequences... Children belonging to the Economically Weaker Sections [EWS]/Disadvantaged Groups [DG] had to suffer the consequence of not having to fully pursue



Skewed: Only a few students have been able to access online classes. ▪ FILE PHOTO

The court was hearing a petition filed by private school managements challenging a Delhi High Court order of September 2020, directing them to provide their 25% quota EWS/DG students online facilities free of cost. The High Court had said the schools could get reimbursement from the government.

"Cannot evade duty" The Delhi government had earlier appealed to the Supreme Court against the High Court order, saying it had no resources to reimburse the schools for the online gadgets. Though the Supreme Court had stayed the High Court order in February 2021, the Bench led by Justice Chandrachud said both the Centre and States such as Delhi could not bow out of their responsibilities towards children.

The Bench asked the Delhi government to come out with a plan to effectuate the "salutary object" upheld in the High Court decision. The court said the Centre should join in the consultation.

**'Give access to facilities'** The court said even though schools are now reopening gradually due to the receding curve of the pandemic, the "need to provide adequate computer-based equipment together with access to online facilities for children is of utmost importance".

## Ram Rahim, four others convicted

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

A special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court in Panchkula on Friday convicted the Sirsa-based Dera Sacha Sauda's chief, Gurmeet Ram Rahim, and four others in a case of murder of former Dera functionary Ranjit Singh in 2002. CBI court judge Sushil Garg pronounced the conviction.

CBI counsel H.P.S. Verma told press persons that the court made the conviction under Sections 302 (murder) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code. The other accused in the case are Krishan Lal, Jasbir Singh, Avtar Singh and Sabdil. One more accused passed away a year ago. The quantum of punishment would be announced on October 12.

Ranjit was shot dead at the behest of Gurmeet reportedly for his suspected role in the circulation of an anonymous letter, which narrated how women were being sexually exploited by the sect head at the Dera headquarters.

The Dera chief was sentenced to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment in 2017 on two counts of rape.

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**Timings****DELHI**

SATURDAY, OCT. 09
RISE 06:19 SET 17:58
RISE 09:13 SET 20:11
SUNDAY, OCT. 10
RISE 06:19 SET 17:57
RISE 10:23 SET 21:01
MONDAY, OCT. 11
RISE 06:20 SET 17:56
RISE 11:32 SET 21:56

**Delhi Weather** max min  
Delhi City 36 23  
Safdarjung 36 23  
Palam 36 25**Delhi Pilm Today**  
36°C The weather will be dry. A hazy morning turns warm day with uneasy afternoon. Night will be pleasant and hazy.**Delhi Pilm Tomorrow**  
36°C A dry weather to prevail. The morning will be hazy. Day will be very warm with uneasy afternoon. Night will be pleasant.© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019  
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A 30-year-old cab driver was stabbed to death on Thursday evening allegedly by two of his acquaintances following a quarrel over taking a lift in Bharat Nagar, the police said, adding that one accused has been held. DCP (North-West) said the deceased has been identified as Vipin Kumar.**Woman alleges gang rape; case registered**NEW DELHI  
A woman alleged that she had been gang-raped by two men in a flat in east Delhi's New Ashok Nagar area on October 6, the police said, adding that a case has been registered.

# Protests, counter protests rock DU campus

ABVP calls a halt to admission process; SFI, AISA, NSUI come out in support of Kerala board students

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI

Several students' organisations staged protests on the Delhi University campus, which is yet to fully open after the COVID-19 lockdown, against the admission policy being followed by the university. While some groups were in support of the policy, others alleged "unreasonable admissions".

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the RSS, demanded that the university's admission process be stopped immediately and the authorities act upon the "unreasonable hike in cut-offs to do inflated scores". The group sought that the university devise a mechanism of "moderation and normalisation" of marks for all State boards of the country.

The protests started after several candidates with perfect score from Kerala board

**Up in arms:** ABVP activists protesting against the admission policy at Delhi University on Friday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

sought admission to the university, filling seats at many colleges that released a cut-off score of 100%.

Countering the arguments of ABVP, the Students' Federation of India (SFI) said according to details shared by the university, only 5% of the total admissions after the first cut-offs constituted students from the Kerala board. "The

good performance of Kerala student is due to their hard work as well as the constant effort by the State government to provide access to education even during the pandemic," said Utkarsh, vice-president, SFI-Delhi.

The protesters condemned the statement by a professor at Kiroli Mal College, Rakesh Pandey – a member of RSS-affiliated NDTF – who, they alleged, has been instigating regionalism against students from Kerala by terming good scores "marks jihad".

The All India Students' Association and the National Students' Union of India also protested outside the Kiroli Mal College. While AISA demanded the suspension of Mr. Pandey, the NSUI said

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI

Professor Yogesh Singh took charge as the Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University on Friday and said that he would take all stakeholders of the university into account while charting the way forward for the university.

Mr. Singh said it would be premature to comment on

the admission policy of the university that some groups are protesting against as he had just stepped in and was yet to meet the students and the faculty. "If some reforms are needed in the policy, I will take suggestions from deans and principals of various colleges and students to arrive at it. We are open to all suggestions and will bring about changes if needed."

They had met the principal of Kiroli Mal College and handed over a memorandum demanding strict action against the professor. NSUI's national secretary Nitish Gaur said the students from Kerala board had worked hard to get 100% marks and were being dragged into a conspiracy being propagated by right-wing professors.

# No office for unvaccinated govt. workers from Oct. 16

They'll be treated 'on leave' till first dose

**STAFF REPORTER**

NEW DELHI

Delhi government employees, including teachers and front-line workers, who have not received even a single dose of COVID-19 vaccine will not be allowed to work from October 16, stated an order issued on Friday. Such employees will be treated as "on leave" till they take the vaccine.

"The aforesaid government employees/frontline workers/healthcare workers/teachers and other staff working in schools/colleges, who do not get vaccinated [at least first dose] by 15.10.2021 shall not be allowed to attend their respective offices/healthcare institutions/educational institutions with effect from 16.10.2021 till they have obtained the first dose vaccination," an order issued by Chief Secretary Vijay Dev

said. The order also said the Centre "may consider issuing similar directions" to its employees working in Delhi.

The heads of departments have been directed to verify through the Aarogya Setu app or government certificate that employees are vaccinated, it stated.

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority during a meeting on September 29, had decided to ensure 100% vaccination of all government workers, the order said.

When contacted, a district official said they have received the order and informed the employees about it.

"Last month, we surveyed our offices and about 25 employees had not taken even one dose. Then we asked them to take the vaccine and only three or four are left..." the official said.

# Fourfold rise in inspections in industrial areas'

**NIKHIL M BABU**

NEW DELHI

To control pollution in the city, the Delhi government is aiming to increase inspections in all 28 industrial areas by four times compared to last winter, an official said.

Following the directions of the erstwhile EPCA (Environment Pollution Prevention and Control Authority), the government has been working to control polluting activities in industrial areas since August last. "We have formed 30 teams of engineers for inspections in industrial areas. The drive will go on for four months," an official said.

## Uphaar fire tragedy: court convicts Ansal brothers

Both of them had tampered with evidence'

**STAFF REPORTER**

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday convicted Ansal brothers – Sushil and Gopal Ansal – in a case related to evidence tampering in the Uphaar fire tragedy case.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Pankaj Sharma passed the order, holding both the brothers, two of their employees, and a former court staff, Dinesh Chand Sharma, guilty under IPC Sections 201 (tampering of evidence), 120B and 409 (criminal breach of trust by public servant).

Further, the court asked for the financial records of

the convicts in order to pronounce the quantum of the sentence. The order on the sentence is likely to be announced on Monday.

In the chargesheet filed before the court, the police had said Sushil Ansal had misled the authorities by claiming that he had not been convicted in any criminal case in order to get his passport renewed.

Senior Advocate Vikas Pahwa, who represented the Association of Victims of Uphaar Tragedy, had argued on Thursday that the Ansal brothers had conspired and destroyed evidence collected by the CBI in the case.

For 28-year-old Zeeshan Nabi, member of a city-based band 'Ramooz', subsequent lockdowns have resulted in multiple live shows being cancelled. "In mid-2019, the band had moved to Kashmir to record its first studio album. However, they were stuck in the Valley due to restrictions imposed post the abrogation of Article 370. We returned to Delhi in November that year but managed to play only a couple of shows, with limited capacity, after the first and second lockdowns were lifted. This has affected the creative process

## Live music takes a hit amid pandemic

As lockdowns impact live shows, financial constraints push artistes to try other options

**MUNEEF KHAN**

NEW DELHI

With a looming threat of a possible third wave, social distancing norms and limited seating capacity, musicians and venue owners in the city are worried bunch.

Although live music is up and running, COVID-19 restrictions come as a roadblock for many.

For 28-year-old Zeeshan Nabi, member of a city-based band 'Ramooz', subsequent lockdowns have resulted in multiple live shows being cancelled. "In mid-2019, the band had moved to Kashmir to record its first studio album. However, they were stuck in the Valley due to restrictions imposed

posed post the abrogation of Article 370. We returned to Delhi in November that year but managed to play only a couple of shows, with limited capacity, after the first and second lockdowns were lifted. This has affected the creative process

of the band, especially due to the financial constraints that the lockdowns have brought along," said Mr. Nabi.

The band is now nearing completion of its first studio album. However, it faces a dilemma due to the restrictions imposed on live performances.

Sharing the same conundrum is 26-year-old Ahmad Hagroo, a city-based singer-songwriter, who has been struggling to secure five gigs.

This has further resulted in financial constraints for Mr. Hagroo who now runs a cloud kitchen from his residence to make ends meet.

"I have been performing since 2018 in and around

Delhi. I was earning well until the pandemic hit and everything has changed since then. I had to turn to other sources of income and have recently started a cloud kitchen. The idea is to also invite people to dine-in with me on weekends and enjoy a performance alongside," said Mr. Hagroo.

Prior to the pandemic, independent music scenario in the city and other parts of the country witnessed a regular flow of events with live performances on a weekly basis. However, since the pandemic, the situation for artistes and venue owners remains dire. Venue owners in the city have also voiced their concerns.

## FIR registered after fake DMRC website comes to fore

**STAFF REPORTER**

NEW DELHI

An FIR has been registered with the Delhi Police Cyber Cell by the Delhi Metro after a

fake website imitating the DMRC's official web page was created, which provided employment opportunities to applicants and extorted money

from them.

DMRC said the fake website – <https://dmrcareer.in> – is offering fake employment opportunities to respondents.

## DELHI POLLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE (DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT)

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Visit us at: <http://dpcc.delhigovt.nic.in>**PUBLIC NOTICE - E-WASTE MANAGEMENT**

• Maintain records in Form-2 of the e-waste handled as per the guidelines of the CPCB and make such records available for scrutiny by the CPCB and DPCC.

**DEALERS**

• Shall collect the e-waste by providing the consumer a box, bin or a demarcated area to deposit e-waste, or through take back system and send the e-waste so collected to collection centre or dismantler or recycler as designated by producer.

• Shall ensure that no damage is

online application in Form-4 to DPCC.

• Maintain record of e-waste collected, dismantled, recycled and sent to authorised recyclers in Form-2 and make such records available for scrutiny by the CPCB and DPCC.

• File annual returns in Form-3 to DPCC on or before 30th June following the financial year to which that return relates.

**CONSUMERS/BULK CONSUMERS**

• Shall ensure that e-waste generated by them is channelised through collection centre or dealer of authorised producer or

• Shall ensure that no damage is

caused to the environment during storage and transportation of e-waste to authorised dismantlers or recyclers.

**REFURBISHERS**

• Apply for authorization by submitting an online application in Form-1 (a) to DPCC.

• Shall ensure compliance with the guidelines issued by CPCB available as shown above.

• Maintain records of e-waste handled in Form-2 and make such records available for scrutiny by the DPCC.

• File annual returns in Form-3, to DPCC on or before 30th June following the financial year to which that return relates.

Any violation of the provisions of the Rules and notified guidelines will attract penal action as per the provisions of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Please visit website of Delhi Pollution Control Committee (<http://dpcc.delhigovt.nic.in>) for more details.

**DISMANTLER AND RECYCLERS**

• Obtain authorization by submitting

dismantler or recycler or through the designated take back service provider of the producer to authorised dismantler or recycler.

• Maintain records of e-waste generated by them in Form-2 and make such records available for scrutiny by the DPCC.

• File annual returns in Form-3, to DPCC on or before 30th June following the financial year to which that return relates.

Any violation of the provisions of the Rules and notified guidelines will attract penal action as per the provisions of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Please visit website of Delhi Pollution Control Committee (<http://dpcc.delhigovt.nic.in>) for more details.

**Member Secretary**

• Shall ensure that facilities are in accordance with the standards or guidelines issued by CPCB time to time and store the e-waste collected by them in a secured manner till it is sent to authorised dismantler or recycler as the case may be.

• Ensure that the facilities are in accordance with the standards or guidelines issued by CPCB time to time and store the e-waste collected by them in a secured manner till it is sent to authorised dismantler

or recycler as the case may be.

• Shall ensure that facilities are in accordance with the standards or guidelines issued by CPCB time to time and store the e-waste collected by them in a secured manner till it is sent to authorised dismantler

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or recycler as the case may be.</

# When ration ran dry for Delhi schoolchildren

State government failed to pick up any mid-day meal grains for three months and North MCD for nine months last year

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

NEW DELHI

Before the pandemic struck, 9-year-old Anamika was used to eating *kadhi-chawal*, *aloopuri* or *sambhar-chawal* for lunch every day as part of the government's mid-day meal scheme at her Municipal Corporation of Delhi school in R.K. Puram. Since schools closed last March, however, regular meals have been hard to come by at her home in the nearby slum area of Motilal Nehru Camp.

Anamika's mother Prema trekked to the school several times, asking about the dry ration which had been promised in lieu of the mid-day meals, but received nothing for her daughter, who studies in Class V, or her son Arav, who studies in Class II, until July 2021, 15 months after schools were shut.

Their story is not unique. The Delhi government did not lift any foodgrains allocat-



Mid-day ordeal: People in large numbers waiting for free ration at a govt. school in Vishwas Nagar, Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO

ed for the scheme for an entire quarter during the pandemic, affecting 16 lakh students in more than 3,000 schools, according to data provided by Central and State governments. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi-North, which runs 721 primary schools with over three lakh students, did not lift foodgrains for nine months last year, according to the minutes of a meeting held on June 29, 2021, between State

and Central education department officials to consider the annual plan and budget for the mid-day meal scheme.

According to the minutes, School Education Secretary Anita Karwal expressed "shock" and "deep concern for the children who were deprived of the benefit for three quarters of 2020-21" and warned the Delhi government that "this is a clear violation of the directions of the Supreme Court of India and

amounts to contempt". She observed "a sheer lack of management and coordination issue among all the implementing agencies".

#### Cash transfer

Delhi government representatives informed the Centre that "after closure of schools due to pandemic, cost of foodgrains and cooking cost was transferred in the bank account of the beneficiaries [as a food security allowance] and later, dry ration kits were distributed. In North MCD though, tender of the suppliers had expired but still the dry ration kit was prepared with the help of Kendriya Bhandar and distributed in some schools, however, foodgrain could not be lifted," according to the minutes.

Data provided by the Delhi Directorate of Education in response to an RTI request filed by activist Anjali Bhadrwaj in January 2021 shows

that no foodgrains allocated for the mid-day meal scheme were lifted during April to June 2020. Another RTI shows that instead, a food security allowance of ₹5.22 per day for primary students and ₹7.83 for upper primary was transferred to children. From July to September 2020, Delhi picked up the full 10,454 tonnes of grains, but that dropped again to a deficit 2,913 tonnes for the next two quarters, the RTI showed.

Education Ministry officials say that despite extensions to allow the Delhi government to pick up the grains it failed to lift last year, it has not yet done so. "One of the problems in Delhi is that they do not have a system of school-wise preparation of mid-day meals as in many States. Instead, it is all outsourced to contractors who directly pick up the allocated grains from the Food Corporation of India godowns, add-

needed pulses and vegetables, prepare the food at centralised kitchens and distribute to the schools," explained a senior Ministry official. "During the pandemic, this system collapsed. But it is highly irresponsible that they have not managed to create an alternate system even after one year."

"There are also structural problems within the Delhi school system. The AAP government runs schools mostly for upper primary students [Class VI-VIII], while most primary schools are run by the MCDs which are run by the BJP. But irrespective of the political differences among themselves, they have been utterly callous towards the children, and deprived them of their rights at a difficult time," said the official.

The Delhi government spokesperson did not offer a comment despite multiple calls and messages.



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## Rush for PUCs as Transport Dept. starts anti-pollution drive

12 lakh text messages sent to vehicle owners

JATIN ANAND

NEW DELHI

Vehicle owners in the city have started to queue up to get Pollution Under Control (PUC) certificates. This comes after the Transport Department gradually stepped up enforcement against vehicles without PUCs and those causing visible pollution, in the run-up to winter.

Not having a valid PUC attracts a fine of ₹10,000, six months imprisonment or both.

According to the Transport Department, an average number of 10,000 PUCs were issued on a daily basis between August 10 and September 1 this year. This number jumped to a daily average of 15,000

per day between September 2 and 18 following news reports related to pollution.

"We have 56 dedicated enforcement teams which have been deployed to check PUCs of visibly polluting and overloaded vehicles. The department also started sending text messages to vehicle owners without valid PUCs to get them renewed," said Ashish Kundra, Secretary and Commissioner, Transport.

"As many as 12 lakh messages for renewal were sent to vehicle owners yesterday. In addition to continuing to send reminders, we will be intensifying our drive against invalid PUCs and polluting vehicles over the coming days," Mr. Kundra added.

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IN BRIEF



Telangana Assembly pitches for caste census

HYDERABAD  
The Telangana Assembly on Friday adopted a resolution urging the Central Government to conduct caste-wise census of all the Backward Classes while holding the general census 2021. The resolution was moved by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and adopted by voice vote subsequently. In order to take up various welfare measures for the poorer sections, it was necessary to maintain accurate statistics, the Chief Minister said.

Teenager accidentally shot at by father dies

MANGALURU  
The 16-year-old boy, who was hit by a bullet when his father Rajesh Prabhu opened fire at two of his employees on October 5, died at a hospital on Friday. His father was arrested on Thursday. Mr. Prabhu and his son had gone to his firm, Vaishnavi Xpress Cargo Private Limited, on learning that the two workers had had a heated exchange of words with Mr. Prabhu's wife over payment of ₹4,000. Mr. Prabhu then opened fire from his licenced pistol at them.

Youth arrested for selling child pornography videos

HYDERABAD  
A youth from Telangana's Karimnagar district was arrested on Thursday for allegedly circulating child pornography videos on social media to make money. The accused, Vangala Madhukar Reddy, 23, works in a tech firm. The Women Safety Wing received credible information while cyber patrolling that Mr. Reddy was circulating such videos and a special probe team was formed. The police said Mr. Reddy downloaded the videos and sold them via Telegram App.

# SC revives assets case against A.P. Minister

Preliminary probe not always mandatory in corruption cases against public servants, says Bench

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday revived a disproportionate assets case against Andhra Pradesh Education Minister Adimulapu Suresh and his wife while holding that the CBI need not always conduct a preliminary inquiry before registering an FIR against public servants in corruption cases.

A three-judge Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud set aside a decision of the Telangana High Court in February 2020 to quash the corruption/disproportionate assets case against Mr. Suresh and his wife, T.H. Vijayalakshmi, an Income Tax Commissioner.

## Girl's parents among 8 held for man's murder

Son killed for interfaith affair: mother

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BELAGAVI

The Belagavi police have arrested 10 persons on charges of murdering Arbaz Mulla, a 25-year-old from Khanapur here in Karnataka, allegedly over his interfaith relationship with a girl. Investigation has revealed that the parents of the girl had paid money to kill the man, said the police.

Apart from Eerappa Kumbar, 54, and Susheela Eerappa Kumbar, 42, the girl's parents, the arrested include Pundalik, alias Maharaj Nappa Mutagekar.

The youth's body with stab wounds was found on a railway track on September 28. His mother, Najeema Sheikh, complained to the railway police, saying that her son was killed for his relationship with a girl.

The High Court had reasoned that the CBI had straightaway filed the FIR without bothering to conduct a preliminary inquiry into the couple's "known sources of income" like income tax returns, election affidavits or information submitted to the Government under the Central Civil Services Rules. The High Court had found the corruption charges "prima facie unsustainable" after going through these sources of income on its own.

Differing with the High Court, Justice Chandrachud, in a 64-page judgment, held that a preliminary inquiry is not mandatory before registering an FIR against a public



Adimulapu Suresh

servant for corruption if the CBI felt that the information it has received discloses a cognisable offence.

"We hold that since the institution of a preliminary inquiry in cases of corruption is not made mandatory before the registration of an FIR under the Code of Crimi-

nal procedure, the Prevention of Corruption Act or even the CBI Manual, for this court to issue a direction to that effect will be tantamount to stepping into the legislative domain. Hence, we hold that in case the information received by the CBI, through a complaint or a 'source information', discloses the commission of a cognisable offence, it can directly register a Regular Case instead of conducting a preliminary enquiry, where the officer is satisfied that the information discloses the commission of a cognisable offence," the top court held.

The court did not, however,

take away the value of

conducting a preliminary en-

quiry in an appropriate case. "The need for a preliminary enquiry will depend on the facts and circumstances of each case. Even when it is conducted, the scope of a preliminary enquiry is not to ascertain the veracity of the information, but only whether it reveals the commission of a cognisable offence," Justice Chandrachud noted.

An accused cannot demand preliminary enquiry as a "matter of right", the court explained. "A preliminary enquiry is valuable in corruption cases not to vest a right in the accused but to ensure that there is no abuse of the process of law in order to target public servants," the court said.

## HC quashes detention of Swapna under COFEPOSA

No relief for co-accused as court upholds his detention

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOCHI

A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Friday quashed the preventive detention of Swapna Suresh, accused in the diplomatic channel gold smuggling case, under the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities (COFEPOSA) Act, 1974.

The Bench comprising Justices A.K. Jayasankaran Nambari and Mohammed Nias C.P. passed the verdict on a petition filed by Kumari Prabha, mother of Swapna, seeking to produce the detenu now in the Women's Prison and Correctional Home, Attakulangara, Thiruvananthapuram, challenging the preventive detention order.

Despite the High Court verdict, Ms. Suresh will continue



Swapna Suresh

to be in jail as she is yet to get bail in a case filed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) against her.

The NIA, the ED and the Customs conducted separate investigations into the seizure of gold worth ₹15 crore from the diplomatic baggage of the UAE Consulate at Thiruvananthapuram airport on July 5, 2020.

The Customs had invoked

provisions of the COFEPOSA against her later.

The court, however, dismissed the petition filed by the mother of P.S. Sarith, another accused, against the preventive detention order.

Upholding the detention order passed against Sarith, the court observed that the detention was not ordered on the mere ground that he was likely to be released on bail but also on the ground that the detaining authority was satisfied the detenu was likely to indulge in the same activity if he was released on bail.

Counsel for Ms. Suresh contended that the order of the NIA Special Court rejecting the bail plea of Ms. Suresh was not placed by the Customs before the detaining authority.

Ahead of bypolls, Rajasthan Cong. puts up united face

Gehlot, Pilot address rallies together

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

sage to his opponents by affirming that he was going to stay in politics for the next 15 to 20 years. On Thursday, Mr. Pilot said at a function in Jaipur, that he would be active for five years.

Ton MLA Mr. Pilot drove the car from the helipad at Vallabh Nagar to the venue of the election rally, with the Chief Minister accompanying him on the front seat. While Mr. Gehlot has put at rest all speculations about a change of guard in Rajasthan after the turmoil in Punjab, the focus on ensuring Congress' victory in the bypolls has indicated that the internal strife in the party might have reduced.

Party candidates Preeti Shaktawat in Udaipur's Vallabh Nagar and Nagr Meena in Pratapgarh's Dhariawad filed their nominations before the rallies started. Speakers at the rallies sought to convey a message that the party was not only united, but also capable of taking on the BJP.

## Dalit Sikhs to challenge eviction move in Shillong

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

Board residing at the Harijan Colony would be relocated to the staff quarters on the premises of the board's temporary office in another area of the city, he stated.

The 2-acre Harijan Colony, also known as Punjabi Lane or Sweepers' Lane, has about 350 families living in two-storey hovels flanking a 300-metre lane. Only a few families have members as employees of the municipal board.

The Harijan Colony was at the centre of a conflict following a quarrel between some locality women and a bus driver on May 31, 2018.

Consumer Connect Initiative

## Recalling Contributions of Dr Raut on his Birthday

I wish good health, long life to Dr Nitin Raut on his 69th birthday anniversary. He has lived a fruitful and meaningful life in the service of the marginalized people. He is a ray of hope for the oppressed people. He is committed to the cause of Babasaheb Ambedkar mission.

Now he is Energy Minister in the cabinet of the Mahavikas Aghadi Government in Maharashtra. He always remained humble and his unassuming character has struck me. His simple way of living has impressed me a lot. He is easily accessible to each and every one.

As a political person he has several achievements to his credit. Since the last forty years, he is active in politics and governance. Apart from a popular leader, he has multiple achievements to his credit. In his long political career and as an activist, he has largely contributed to the social and political life in Maharashtra as well as in the country.

Dr Raut has helped the Congress Party in preparing number of reports on important issues. As an MPCC member, he submitted reports on Khairlanji killings, Wani (Yeotmal) Cotton Issue, Power Crisis in Maharashtra, PM Package and farmers suicides in Vidarbha.

Dr Raut has always remained as an active member in the State Legislative Assembly. On

several occasions he raised important issues which included removing backlog of 'Vidarbha Region' as a strong supporter of separate Vidarbha Statehood.

He initiated Private Member bill on 'Reservation in Promotions Act' and 'Buddhist Marriage and Succession Act - 2007'. He insisted to fill up the backlog of SC/STs in the services of the government and semi-government organizations.

He demanded constitution of State SC/ST Commission in the State like National Commission for SC/ST. He demanded the state government to increase number of reserved seats for SC Community in Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies on the basis of the population. He played a very important role in probing Khairlanji killing incident that occurred in September 2006 in Bhandara District.

### Initiatives undertaken as Minister for Energy

After taking over the charge as Minister for Energy in January 2020, he found that the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company is incurring huge losses and is in dire financial straits. The arrears of Agriculture consumer (Ag) sector increased from Rs.13,362 Cr to Rs.45000 Cr during the rule of BJP



Government between 2014 to 2019. During the same period arrears of public water works, street lights and government offices were also a matter of great concern. Further due to the statewide lockdown during Covid pandemic, the revenue gap increased to more than Rs 17000 Cr. This is a great setback to the MSEDC and the state as well. The financial situation has been further aggravated by the Nisarg and Tauktae Cyclones that hit coastal parts of Kokan and Western Maharashtra.

During the BJP rule, releasing new service connections to agriculture consumers were completely stopped. The huge outstanding payments to generators and transmission companies by MSEDC is a matter of grave concern.

Hence it is imperative to take stock of the situation on urgent basis by taking appropriate remedial measures.

To provide immediate relief to farmers by releasing service connections at the earliest, a comprehensive Agriculture 2020 Policy is framed and recover the long outstanding arrears. He worked hard to frame the policy and viewed all the minor details of the policy. The farmers have been given waiver of Rs.10,420 Cr.

The MSEDC succeeded in providing uninterrupted power supply to agriculture pumps by augmenting its distribution networks. New transformers were added and failed ones were repaired in time.

The MSEDC provided uninterrupted power supply during COVID19 pandemic. Under the guidance of Dr Raut, a comprehensive Renewable Energy Policy 2020 has been framed to ensure day time power supply for 8 hours to agriculture consumers. The State would provide One Lakh solar agriculture pump per year for the next 5 years.

He monitored power production in the Maha-Genco plants to keep the generation costs within affordable limits. Therefore, most of generating units have been found place in the Merit Order Despatch.

Dr Raut is trying to bring the state economy on the right track by taking suitable measures like, reduction in distribution losses, operation and maintenance expenses, recovery of arrears and using austerity measures.

Sukhadeo Thorat  
Former chairman of University Grants Commission

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## Grim turn

While pursuing terrorists, the administration should also engage with civil society in J&K

The killings of seven civilians in Srinagar in six days mark a grim turn in the situation in the Kashmir Valley. This vicious, mindless violence against commoners, owned up by a group that calls itself the Resistance Front – believed to be a shadow organisation of the Pakistan-based LeT – is yet another reminder of the pathological hatred transnational radical Islamism inspires. The victims include local Muslims who were branded traitors, but the targeting of the Hindu Pandit and Sikh minority communities is unmistakable. Srinagar's prominent Kashmiri Pandit chemist, Makhan Lal Bindroo, whose decision to stay on through the violent 1990s was seen as a positive omen by the displaced community, was gunned down. The killers used epithets such as 'RSS stooge', 'police informer' and 'traitor' for the victims. Majid Ahmad Gojri and Mohammad Shafi Dar were killed on October 2. On October 7, a Sikh principal and a Kashmiri Pandit who had returned to the Valley after taking up a job under the Prime Minister's special job package for migrant Pandits, were gunned down. Islamist terrorists have sought an ethnic cleansing of the Valley for long. The Pandits had to leave in large numbers in 1990 following violence. After 1994, attacks on minorities became episodic, but not without periodical outrages such as the Wandhama massacre, when 23 Pandits were shot dead in January 1998 and the Chittisinghpura massacre, in which 35 Sikhs were killed in Anantnag in March 2000.

The wave of violence is taking place against the backdrop of an uptick in tourist inflow to the Valley and the Centre's push to promote a raft of development schemes. The administration is also encouraging the Pandits to return. A nine-week-long outreach of the Centre in J&K where Union Ministers are visiting remote districts, including those closer to the LoC, is under way. Union Home Minister Amit Shah could make a visit later this month. Strict directives were issued to unfurl the national flag in all government buildings, including schools, on August 15. There is also a higher level of intolerance by the administration, which does not spare even the political activities of mainstream parties. There is an aggressive drive too to punish government staff suspected to be separatist sympathisers. Civilians are soft targets for the terrorists in this milieu. According to police figures, J&K saw 28 civilian killings, surpassing the 22 casualties of security personnel so far this year. Of the 28 killings, four were local Hindus, one Sikh, two non-local Hindu labourers and 21 local Muslims; 23 were political workers, with most from the BJP. No society can tolerate such violence. But while pursuing terrorists, the administration should also engage with political parties and civil society organisations.

## Simple, but brilliant

Great discoveries can come from simple ideas which are often overlooked

This year's Nobel Prize for Chemistry is for an efficient, "precise, cheap, fast and environmentally friendly" way to develop new molecules using a simple yet novel concept of catalysis – asymmetric organocatalysis. It was awarded to German scientist Benjamin List of the Max Planck Institute and Scotland-born scientist David W.C. MacMillan of Princeton University who independently developed the new way of catalysis in 2000. They came up with "a truly elegant tool for making molecules – simpler than one could ever imagine". Since then, the process they evolved has led to a "gold rush" in the catalysis field. The multitudes of new organocatalysts developed have helped drive a variety of chemical reactions, in turn accelerating pharmaceutical drug research. The asymmetric organocatalysts have allowed researchers to efficiently produce new molecules with complete certainty of the 3-D orientation or handedness. Molecules naturally present and those synthesised can exist in two forms – right-handed and left-handed, and their properties very often vary depending on their handedness. In the 1950-60s, thalidomide was widely used to treat nausea in pregnant women, but caused severe birth defects. It became clear that the right-handed molecule was highly toxic. But asymmetric organocatalysts allowed the production of molecules of the desired mirror image form. While using other catalysts that require isolation and purification of each intermediate product – leading to loss of substance at every stage – asymmetric organocatalysts allow several steps in molecule production to continue without interruption, minimising waste.

In 2001, the three scientists who first developed asymmetric catalysts won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. But such catalysts often use heavy metals, making them expensive and environmentally harmful. There were other challenges too – a high sensitivity to oxygen and water. This meant that industrial use made the process expensive. Many enzyme catalysts too are asymmetric and are not sensitive to oxygen and water. But they are very often much larger than the actual target medicine and can take a longer time to do their job. Instead of using enzymes which normally contain hundreds of amino acids, this year's laureates developed a carbon-based catalyst made from a single, circular amino acid. Since these catalysts are asymmetric, only molecules of a single handedness are produced. If Benjamin List used a single amino acid proline to perform a certain bond-forming chemical reaction, W.C. MacMillan demonstrated that many modified amino acids could asymmetrically produce another bond-forming reaction. The circular-shaped amino acid the laureates used ensured that only one mirror image of the molecule could be produced. This year's Prize underlines the often-ignored message – great discoveries can come even from simple ideas which are often overlooked.

# Reflections on the 'quasi-federal' democracy

Despite a basic structure, Indian federalism needs institutional amendment to be democratically federal



ASWINI K. RAY

Events coinciding with the jubilee of India's Independence draw attention to the federal structure of India's Constitution, which is a democratic imperative of multi-cultural India, where the constituent units of the sovereign state are based on language, against competing identities such as caste, tribe or religion. This built-in structural potential for conflict within and among the units, and that between them and the sovereign state, need imaginative federal craftsmanship and sensitive political management. The ability of the Indian Constitution to keep its wide-ranging diversity within one sovereign state, with a formal democratic framework is noteworthy. Possibly, with universal adult suffrage and free institutions of justice and governance it is nearly impossible to polarise its wide-ranging diversity within any single divisive identity, even Hindutva; so that, despite its operational flaws, the democratic structure and national integrity are dialectically interlinked. But its operational fault lines are increasingly denting liberal institutions, undermining the federal democratic structure as recent events have underscored.

### Some fault lines

First, the tempestuous Parliament session, where the Rajya Sabha Chairperson broke down (in August 2021), unable to conduct proceedings despite the use of marshals; yet, the House passed a record number of Bills amidst a record number of adjournments. Second, cross-border police firing by one constituent State against another, inflicting fatalities, which also resulted in retaliatory action in the form of an embargo on goods trade and travel links with

its land-locked neighbour.

Such unfamiliar events of federal democracy are recurrent in India, except their present manifest intensity. Legislative disruption was described by a Union Law Minister (while in Opposition) as a 'legitimate democratic right, and duty'. In the 1960s, the Troika around Lohia claimed its right to enter Parliament on the Janata's shoulders to exit on the Marshals; posters with labels such as 'CIA Agent' were displayed during debates; 'suitcases' were transferred publicly to save the government; occasionally, 'Honorable Members' emerged from debates with injuries. This time, in the 'federal chamber', 'Honorable Members' and Marshals are in physical contact – both claiming 'casualties' – official papers vandalised and chairpersons immobilised. Even inter-State conflict has assumed a new dimension.

### Key changes

Such empirical realities have led scholars to conceptualise India's "Post-colonial democracy", and federalism, differently from their liberal role-models. Rajni Kothari's "one party dominance" model of the "Congress system" has now been replaced by the Bharatiya Janata Party; Myrdall's "soft state" is reincarnated in the Pegasus era with fake videos and new instruments of mass distraction and coercion. Galbraith's "functioning anarchy", now has greater criminalisation in India's democracy, which includes over 30% legislators with criminal records, and courtrooms turning into gang war zones; it is now more anarchic, but still functioning, bypassing any "Dangerous Decade" or a "1984".

Federal theorist K.C. Wheare analyses India's "centralized state with some federal features" as "quasi-federal". He underscores the structural faultlines of Indian federalism not simply as operational. So, while many democratic distortions are amenable to mitigation by institutional professionalism, Indian federalism, to be democratically federal, needs institutional amendment despite



V.V. KRISHNAN  
being a "basic structure". Wheare's argument merits consideration.

### Many deficits

Democratic federalism presupposes institutions to ensure equality between and among the units and the Centre so that they coordinate with each other, and are subordinate to the sovereign constitution – their disputes adjudicated by an independent judiciary with impeccable professional and moral credibility. But India's federal structure is constitutionally hamstrung by deficits on all these counts, and operationally impaired by the institutional dents in the overall democratic process. Like popular voting behaviour, institutional preferences are based either on ethnic or kinship network, or like anti-incumbency, as the perceived lesser evil, on individual role-models: T.N. Seshan for the Election Commission of India, J.F. Ribeiro for the police or Justices Chandrachud or Nariman for the judiciary.

India's federal structure, underpinned on the colonial 1935 Act which initiated 'provincial autonomy', attempted democratising it by: renaming "Provinces" to autonomous "States"; transferring all "Reserved Powers" to popular governance; constitutionally dividing powers between the two tiers; inserting federalism in the Preamble, and Parts 3 and 4 containing citizens' "Fundamental Rights" and "Directive Principles"; but nothing about States' rights, not even their territorial boundaries.

This has enabled the Centre to unilaterally alter State boundaries and create new States. The Indian Constitution itself has been

amended 105 times in 70 years compared with 27 times in over 250 years in the United States.

With "nation-building" as priority, the constitutional division of power and resources remains heavily skewed in favour of the Centre; along with "Residual", "Concurrent" and "Implied" powers, it compromises on the elementary federal principle of equality among them, operationally reinforced by extra-constitutional accretion. While the judiciary is empowered to adjudicate on their conflicts, with higher judicial appointments (an estimated 41% lying vacant), promotion and transfers becoming a central prerogative, their operations are becoming increasingly controversial.

### Structural conflicts

The story is not different for the "all India services", including the State cadres. What is operationally most distorted is the role of Governors: appointed by the Centre, it is political patronage, transforming this constitutional authority of a federal "link" to one of a central "agent" in the States. Thus, the critical instruments of national governance have been either assigned or appropriated by the Centre, with the States left with politically controversial subjects such as law and order and land reforms. Thus, most of India's federal conflicts are structural, reinforced by operational abuses.

Yet, there is no federal chamber to politically resolve conflicts. The Rajya Sabha indirectly represents the States whose legislators elect it, but continue even after the electors are outvoted or dismissed; with no residential qualification, this House is a major source of political and financial patronage for all political parties, at the cost of the people of the State they "represent".

Possibly, this explains its continuity. Constituting roughly half the Lok Sabha, proportionately, it reinforces the representative deficit of Parliament, which, through the Westminster system of 'winner-take-all', continues to elect majority parties and governments

with a minority of electoral votes. The second chamber is not empowered to neutralise the demographic weight of the populous States with larger representation in the popular chamber; it cannot veto its legislations, unlike the U.S. Senate. It can only delay, which explains the disruptions. Joint sessions to resolve their differences are as predictable and comical as the "voice votes" in the Houses. India's bicameral legislature, without ensuring a Federal Chamber, lives up to the usual criticism: "when the second chamber agrees with the first, it is superfluous, when it disagrees, it is pernicious".

Historically, party compositions decide when they agree or disagree. Whenever any party with a massive majority in any state finds itself marginalised in the central legislature, it disrupts proceedings, just as popular issues not reflected in legislative proceedings provoke undemocratic expressions and reciprocal repression. Such examples abound in India's "quasi-federal" democracy till now.

### Lessons to learn

Empirical and scholarly evidence suggest Wheare's prefix about federalism arguably applies to other constitutional goals (largely operationally), while the federal flaws are structural, reinforcing conflicts and violence, endemic in the distorted democratic process. It is a threat to national security by incubating regional cultural challenges to national sovereignty, and reciprocal repression. We might learn from the mistakes of neighbouring Sri Lanka and Pakistan rather than be condemned to relive them. India's national security deserves a functional democratic federal alternative to its dysfunctional "quasi-federal" structure, which is neither federal nor democratic but a constitutional "basic structure".

Aswini K. Ray is a former Professor of Comparative Politics and International Relations, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

## Infusing public health into Indian medical education

A middle ground is to upgrade community medicine to 'community medicine and public health' in the curriculum



SOHAM D. BHADURI

The country has witnessed the menace of two COVID-19 waves and stares at a third. While COVID-19 has been presented as an overarching public health calamity, the influence of medical doctors in the health policy response to COVID-19 has been particularly profound. This is symptomatic of our long-standing tendency to confound medicine with public health which permeates even the highest policy-making echelons.

If anything, both the scope and consequence of medicine in the overall health of the population is significantly limited. COVID-19 entails that this fact leaves the libraries and academia, and manifests as tangible policy measures that help consolidate public health in the country.

**Distinct specialty, stagnation**  
In the 1950s, a global consensus and a concomitant national consensus on the importance of socially-oriented physicians in popu-

lation health resulted in the establishment of community medicine as a distinct medical specialty, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Vast swathes of the community medicine curriculum are devoted to tackling major public health challenges through a plethora of vertical disease control programmes which have always driven the national public health discourse. The larger medical curriculum has remained more or less stagnant since post-Independence.

Similarly, hardly any attempt has been made to reform the community medicine curriculum, from one that primarily provides technical inputs to technocratic health programmes – to one which can also take on the larger questions related to health policy and health systems, and inculcate critical thinking along lines that are divergent from clinical medicine.

**Multidisciplinary science**  
Some experts have advocated the establishment of public health departments in medical schools, inspired by the COVID-19 pandemic. Community medicine, while frequently equated with public health, fails to embrace multiple facets of the multidisciplinary assemblage of competencies that is

disciplinary public health thinking right since their formative days. Recent medical curricular reforms in India have laid a stress on inculcating clinical empathy, early clinical exposure, and at least ritually, on greater community exposure.

public health. Juxtapose the community medicine curriculum with that of any of the few bastions of socially-oriented public health courses, and the distinction becomes readily apparent. But proponents of community medicine have not been in denial of this essential distinction – eventually, community medicine is a medical specialty while public health is a multidisciplinary science. Since public health is a multidisciplinary science, why do we emphasise instilling public health competencies in medicine, and not so much for other allied fields such as engineering or anthropology?

The pragmatic answer is that medical doctors, *de facto*, are likely to continue to be the most influential players in public health policy at least in the foreseeable future. This makes it imperative that medical doctors imbibe multi-

disciplinary public health thinking right since their formative days. Recent medical curricular reforms in India have laid a stress on inculcating clinical empathy, early clinical exposure, and at least ritually, on greater community exposure.

### The Cuban example

However, none of these confers the competencies necessary to critically assess the larger public health and health systems landscape of the country. For a medical curriculum to be steeped in clinical medicine and not inculcate a broader public health orientation is least desirable where health policy is largely shaped by doctors. At the postgraduate level, re-emphasising multidisciplinary public health principles would be equally important to ensure that we create not just community medicine technocrats but also well-rounded advocates of health system reform. While health-care reform is a complex process with numerous interacting elements, the role of formative medical education in it is quite often underrated. Countries such as Cuba demonstrate how a medical curriculum attuned to public health can strongly influence the whole philosophy of health-care provision in a country.

Despite the considerable overlap between them, the non-substitutability of community medicine and public health cannot be ignored, at least in the current Indian context. Community medicine will always defend its exclusivity as being a fundamentally medical specialty meant only for doctors, and public health courses will rightfully need to be open to students from diverse backgrounds.

### Looking ahead

A middle ground can be struck by upgrading community medicine to 'community medicine and public health' both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This will involve revamping the community medicine curriculum through incorporation of or emphasising those areas of public health which are presently left out or under-emphasised, such as social health, health policy and health systems. At the same time, representation of experts other than doctors and from fields allied to public health will be essential in the refurbished 'community medicine and public health' departments.

Dr. Soham D. Bhaduri is a physician, health policy expert, and chief editor of 'The Indian Practitioner'

is the writer's fear that private financiers will profit and interest rates will go northward; there is even an erroneous example as an illustration. MFIs charge interest rate on a declining principal basis and the example given is erroneous as interest amount cannot be the same for 24 months; it will decline each month. NBFC-MFIs (only on whom interest rate prescription applies) make up for a mere 32% of market share. And the interest rates of major institutions are in the range of 19% to 21%, with a cost of funds of -12%. Anybody familiar with finance knows that interest rate is a function of cost of funds, transaction cost and risk cost is well understood.

And NBFC-MFIs in India have the lowest transaction cost when compared globally, while delivering doorstep services. On the writer's fear of rate deregulation and rates going up, besides the point of only 32% of market having cap, the example of banks in India comes to mind. Have the rates gone beyond the roof or actually fallen, post-deregulation in 1991, including private banks? The facts are there to see. Such things can happen under oligopolistic conditions but not in India where the microfinance market is fiercely competitive with nearly 200 lenders (banks, NBFCs and NBFC-MFIs) and which will be complemented by the RBI and SRO.

oversight. Global research shows that caps only create market inefficiencies and often defeat the policy objective of universal inclusion. To illustrate, in a margin-capped environment, institutions will shy away from far-flung areas as operational costs go up – which need the services the most. On the writer's point of "private" and "profit", MFIs have suffered losses for three years in the

### CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

A clarification: With reference to the report titled "People paid for treatment despite PM-JAY" (some editions, October 6, 2021), a mail from the Public Health Foundation of India said: "... the report incorrectly states that the study was technically supported and guided by the Public Health Foundation of India. ... The technical team of the foundation has neither contributed in the manner reported nor has it been associated with the study."

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

### Terror again

It is unfortunate that terrorism is showing its ugly head again in the Valley, with civilians as targets (Page 1, October 8). After making Jammu and Kashmir a Union Territory, the Centre seems to have slowed down in its initiative to instil confidence among the people and local leaders, and develop inclusiveness in government programmes and policies in the Valley. The all-party meet with the Prime Minister seemed promising, but there do not seem to be steps after this.

D. SETHURAMAN,  
Chennai

■ The targeted killings of Kashmir's religious

minorities revive the horrific memories of the orchestrated expulsion of the Pandits from the Valley in the 1990s. Pakistan's hidden hand in the murders is palpably visible. What is shocking is the inability and unwillingness of India's political class to condemn the targeting of minorities.

V.N. MUKUNDARAJAN,  
Thiruvananthapuram

**Microfinance, inclusion**  
I write this as the CEO of the Microfinance Institutions Network (MFIN). While it is good to have different perspectives, the article, "RBI microfinance proposals that are anti-poor" (Editorial page, October 6, 2021) is not entirely factually correct. One thing which stands out

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last five years due to extraneous reasons such as COVID-19. It is now well accepted by Indian policy that any institution (public or private) needs to be sustainable and not subsidy driven. Both public and private institutions have a role in meeting the challenge of exclusion, but sustainably.

ALOK MISRA,  
New Delhi

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

# An eye for an eye in southern Tamil Nadu

The rivalry between the gangs of Pasupathi Pandian and the Pannaiyars has spanned decades and claimed several lives in gruesome attacks, the latest being Nirmala Devi's in September. **L. Srikrishna, S. Vijay Kumar & P. Sudakar** report on the internecine feud that poses a perennial law-and-order problem in the State



(Clockwise from top): Devendrakula Vellalar Kootamaippu founder Pasupathi Pandian's funeral rally in Dindigul on January 11, 2012; Policemen inspect the spot where Nirmala Devi was murdered in Nandavanampatti village, Dindigul, on September 22, 2021; Pasupathi Pandian mourns the death of his wife Jascinta, outside the General Hospital, in 2006. ■ KARTHIKEYAN G.



Nirmala Devi had been living alone in Nandavanampatti for over a decade. Her elder son, aged about 45, is in the defence service and her younger son, about 40 years old, lives in another village.

Like any other Scheduled Caste inhabitant of Nandavanampatti, Nirmala Devi also depended on farm work for sustenance. The villagers described her as an active, dynamic woman. A former Panchayat ward councillor, she would travel everywhere on a two-wheeler. She would visit the Dindigul Collectorate to help people in her village apply for and receive pension and get other assistance from the government, said villagers.

Days after her killing, the tension was still palpable in Nandavanampatti, where Dalits and members of other communities live. The villagers seemed suspicious of strangers and refused to share their personal details, including their names.

"She would help us in times of need. It is horrible that her killers beheaded her and took away her head [as a trophy]," said one of Nirmala Devi's neighbours, a woman, who was unable to

come to terms with her death. One villager said Nirmala Devi's death had left a void in the village. She could be depended on during any emergency, he said.

Villagers said Nirmala Devi would mobilise workers from hamlets to do MGNREGS work. She would then get a commission from these workers from their earnings. She was called a *mesthi* - a supervisor or a person who coordinates with workers for a job. She would also lend money to villagers as soft loans. The interest she earned from this helped her live comfortably, they said.

Just a few hours before she was murdered, Nirmala Devi had listed the names of people who wanted to work under the rural employment scheme, a police officer said. These interested villagers had provided their thumb impressions or signatures on a piece of paper, to serve as proof of their working for wages. They will now be cited as prosecution witnesses in her murder trial, the officer said.

**Tit-for-tat killings**

The accused in Pasupathi Pandian's murder are supporters of Subash Pannaiyar, a Nadar, an intermediate caste in Tamil Nadu. The rivalry between Pasupathi Pandian and Subash Pannaiyar dates back to the early 1990s, to Thoothukudi district, located about 210 kilometres south of Nandavanampatti village in Dindigul.

Pannaiyars are traditionally landlords. Over two decades ago, Subash Pannaiyar's grandfather, Sivasubramanian Nadar alias Sivasubramanian Pannaiyar, was an influential landlord in Moolakkara in Thoothukudi. He owned hundreds of cultivable acres of land in the coastal district and enjoyed the following of the Nadar community.

It was a property dispute involving Sivasubramanian Pannaiyar and a bank manager named Rajagopal that led to the first clash between the Pannaiyars and Pasupathi Pandian. Pasupathi Pan-

dian, who was already facing criminal charges then, intervened on behalf of Rajagopal. The matter reached a flashpoint when the senior Pannaiyar's son, Asupathi Pannaiyar, was killed in January 1993. Following his father Asupathi's death, Subash Pannaiyar took over as landlord. He and his first cousin, N. Venkatesa Pannaiyar, the founder of the caste outfit Akhila India Nadar Pathukkappu Peravai, sought to take revenge on Pasupathi Pandian, but they were unsuccessful. Soon after surviving the attack by the Pannaiyars, Pasupathi Pandian and his supporters murdered Subash's grandfather Sivasubramanian Pannaiyar in 1990. They later killed two witnesses to this murder.

In 2003, Venkatesa Pannaiyar was shot dead by the police in an 'encounter' in Chennai, triggering a massive political row. His death led to anger among many Nadars. This prompted then Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam president M. Karunanidhi to field Venkatesa Pannaiyar's wife Radhika Selvi in the 2004 Lok Sabha election. Selvi went on to become Union Minister of State for Home in May 2007 in the Manmohan Singh government.

According to the police, Pasupathi Pandian fled Thoothukudi district in 2006 after the Pannaiyar gang killed his wife Jascinta Pandian, an advocate. She was accompanying Pasupathi Pandian, who was on his way to Thoothukudi along with his accomplices to appear before a court in connection with a case against him, when a bomb was hurled at the car. The gangster promptly took refuge in Dindigul after his wife's killing. There he met Nirmala Devi, who also belonged to a Scheduled Caste.

Nirmala Devi and a few others helped Pasupathi Pandian identify a housing plot in M.N. Nagar, Nandavanampatti, where he built a house. Pasupathi Pandian's patronage saw Nirmala Devi's fortunes improve. Thanks to this acquaintance, Nirmala Devi managed to build a modest house for herself. Others who

helped the Devendrakula Vellalar Kootamaippu founder also prospered.

In Dindigul, Pasupathi Pandian was always surrounded by his supporters. "Whenever he travelled, he was surrounded by his men who were always armed," said a retired police officer, who had served in the district till 2015. However, on the night of January 10, 2012, Pasupathi Pandian's men left him to go elsewhere on work. The gang leader met a gory end when armed men arrived at his house and slit his throat.

Soon after the police began their investigation into the murder of Pasupathi Pandian, Subash Pannaiyar and 17 others were named as the accused in the First Information Report. Nirmala Devi allegedly took money from the Pannaiyar gang to pass on information to them on Pasupathi Pandian's movements, which led to his death. Though caste bonds are strong in rural Tamil Nadu, in some cases such as this, currency helps forge a deeper bond.

Pasupathi Pandian's supporters have been thirsting for revenge since his death, said the police. They have been carefully planning and meticulously eliminating their targets, as Nirmala Devi's killing suggests. Subash Pannaiyar miraculously escaped an attempt on his life in March 2016 when country bombs were hurled at him by a gang of at least 50 members during a visit to his farm. At that time, Arumugam, a supporter of Subash Pannaiyar, was beheaded, and his head was placed under a roadside banner carrying Pasupathi Pandian's photo, on the Thoothukudi-Tirunelveli highway.

The police have arrested three persons in connection with Nirmala Devi's murder. Five others have surrendered before a judicial magistrate court in Tiruchi, 100 km from Dindigul.

#### The cycle of revenge murders

Leading psychiatrist C. Ramasubramanian explained that a lack of closure and the inability to accept the sudden and

planned death of a loved one leads to a thirst for revenge. When a person represses their anger, it is often impossible for them to deal with that emotion, he said. "Having seen or heard about the manner in which their loved ones died really affects the person," he said.

Even if the accused get arrested, it doesn't provide closure for the affected families if the murder was gruesome, he said. "And the act of revenge passes on sometime even to the next generation and beyond."

The police in southern Tamil Nadu have been updating their records to note down the multiple lives that have been claimed on either side of this gang rivalry. The conflict assumed a caste angle over the years between sections of the Nadars and the Devendrakula Vellalars. On many occasions, it ballooned into a law-and-order problem with supporters of these gangs taking to the streets and damaging public property. But unlike the other caste conflicts in southern Tamil Nadu, which are fanned by political parties representing one community or the other, this conflict between the Nadars and the Devendrakula Vellalars has largely played out due to the intense rivalry between the two gangs.

The police have been rattled by Nirmala Devi's murder and the string of unrelated killings that came on its heels. Director-General of Police C. Sylendra Babu has asked all district police and commissionerates to form special teams to deal with rowdy elements and gangsters. He asked them to follow murder cases as old as 10 years and prepare fresh dossiers on gangsters likely to be involved in retaliation. The details of such gangsters, with their photographs, will be uploaded in a special app, he said. The police force launched 'Operation Disarm' to conduct storming operations at caste-sensitive locations across the State. They did not lose sight of the fact that the gruesome crimes took place just as the State was preparing for its two-phase rural local body polls in nine districts, including two in the south. The second phase of polling is scheduled on Saturday. They arrested 3,325 suspects wanted in various murder cases and seized hundreds of lethal weapons including firearms. The officers have also been asked to closely follow murder cases pending in courts and work towards the conviction of perpetrators.

The police are unsure whether Nirmala Devi is the last victim of this gang rivalry between the Pannaiyar and Pandian clans. A retired Deputy Superintendent of Police, who had served in southern districts, said that her murder may not be the last in this bloody saga. In some instances, the revenge murder is executed decades later, he said. "Revenge murders," he said, "rarely cease."



FROM PAGE ONE

## Tatas win back Air India with ₹18,000 crore bid

"The taxpayers have put in ₹10,277 crore in Air India since 2009-10, which includes ₹54,584-crore cash support and ₹55,692 crore as guaranteed support for loans," Mr. Pandey said.

"There are no underlying assets as such. This is all loss being funded through the debt guaranteed by the government. AI has a loss of ₹20 crore a day," Mr. Pandey said on the government's decision to sell the airline for ₹18,000 crore.

"The government has addressed all the concerns of employees. The winning bidder will retain all employees for a period of one year. In the second year, if anyone has to be removed, they will be offered the Voluntary Retirement Scheme. They will be pro-

vided gratuity and provident fund as per the applicable law of the land. The post-retirement medical benefits of those who have retired and those who will be retiring will also be taken care of by the government," Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Rajiv Bansal said.

Air India and Air India Express have a total of 13,484 permanent employees.

"It is a great day for Indian aviation. The sale of Air India is one of the biggest reforms in the aviation sector. It is a win-win for all, though there is a long road ahead for rebuilding Air India which will require very long term and patient capital. Its turnaround will take time," said Kapil Kaul of CAPA India.

## India, China patrols face off in Tawang

Asked about the detention of Chinese soldiers by the Indian Army, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian replied, "I am not aware of the relevant information."

Peace and tranquillity in these areas of differing perceptions had been possible due to adherence to the existing agreements and protocols between the two countries, the source added. However, the effectiveness of these protocols has now come into question after the stand-off in eastern Ladakh last year following ingress by Chinese troops into Indian territory at multiple locations, which is still under way.

Last week, during a visit to the forward areas of eastern Ladakh, Army chief Gen. Manoj Naravane expressed the confidence

that through talks, the two sides would be able to reach a consensus on how disengagement could take place and all the friction points got resolved. At the same time, he said that China had deployed troops in considerable numbers all across eastern Ladakh and northern fronts right up to the Eastern Command.

"Definitely, there has been an increase in their deployment in the forward areas, which remains a matter of concern for us," he noted, adding that India was well poised to meet "any eventuality."

The Chinese have been undertaking such transgressions along the LAC. In August, over 100 Chinese troops transgressed 4-5 km into Indian territory at Barahoti in Uttarakhand and returned after few hours.

## Panic-stricken Pandits go on leave in Valley

Sanjay Tickoo, who heads the Kashmiri Pandit Sangharsh Samiti (KPSS), a body representing the voices of those who did not migrate from the Valley in the 1990s, said, "Neither those who stayed back since the 1990s or those who returned to the Valley are feeling secure."

Hundreds of Sikhs, including the relatives of the deceased principal Supinder Kaur, carried the mortal remains on a stretcher and marched on the city's streets for swift action against the perpetrators of the crime. They also held a sit-in front of the Civil Secretariat in Srinagar.

Jammu and Kashmir's regional parties made a collective appeal to the Pandits not to consider migration. The BJP and several Jammu-based parties also organised street protests against the killings in Jammu and demanded protection for the minorities.

National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah, who visited the victim's family, said, "We can't let

the perpetrators of these terror attacks succeed in their evil designs. The overwhelmingly majority of us don't want you to go. It is our prime responsibility, especially of the majority community, of the Valley to safeguard the lives of minorities."

**Gupkar alliance meets**  
Meanwhile, NC president Farooq Abdullah chaired a meeting of the Gupkar alliance, an amalgam of regional parties, which was attended by Peoples Democratic Party chief Mehbooba Mufti too.

Gupkar alliance spokesman M.Y. Tarigami said the onus to create a conducive security environment lay with the Centre. "We as responsible political parties will play our role to reduce the levels of suspicion and fear," he said.

Hurriyat chairman Mirwais Umar Farooq also condemned the killings. He reiterated that the Hurriyat was for "a just resolution through peaceful means of the Kashmir conflict".

## SC dissatisfied with UP's status report

Mr. Ashish is accused of shooting dead a farmer while trying to escape agitated farmers after vehicles in the Minister's convoy rammed into them. Mr. Salve said a notice had been issued to Mr. Ashish, asking him to appear before the police by 11 a.m. "tomorrow". "If the person does not come, the rigour of law will take its course," he said.

The senior lawyer urged the court to give some more time to the State to repair the shortfalls in the investigation.

The Bench posted the case for October 20.

He told Mr. Salve, "It is an extremely serious issue, you are not proceeding in the way you should be... Imagine, what is the message we are sending out? In normal circumstances, a case of Section 302 IPC will be registered. The police will go out and arrest that person."

The killing of the teachers took the number of civilians shot dead in the last five days in the Kashmir Valley

# Palk Bay scheme will be given a fillip: Murugan

Union Minister says the unit cost of deep-sea fishing vessels will be raised, making it more attractive to fisherfolk

T. RAMAKRISHNAN  
CHENNAI



**Charting a course:** Union Minister of State for Fisheries L. Murugan, right, and BJP State president K. Annamalai at The Hindu office on Friday. ■ RAGU R.

The Union Government is considering increasing the unit cost of deep-sea fishing vessels under the Palk Bay scheme to make it more attractive to fisherfolk, L. Murugan, Union Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Information and Broadcasting, said here on Friday.

In an interaction with senior journalists of The Hindu Group on Friday, the Union Minister, who was accompanied by K. Annamalai, president of the Tamil Nadu unit of the BJP, conceded that the original unit cost of ₹80 lakh was "inadequate" [to meet the requirements of the fisherfolk]. This was why the Union Ministry asked Cochin Shipyard Ltd., a company fully owned by the Union Government, to work out the revised cost.

"They [the Cochin Shipyard] have given their opinion. Now, the unit cost may touch ₹1.3 crore. Once the technical nod comes, we will

**Marine Fisheries Bill will protect our fishermen if there is any [illegal] activity by a foreign fishing vessel**

L. MURUGAN  
Union Minister  
go ahead," the Union Minister explained.

He was responding to a question whether the Centre would bring the Palk Bay scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), wherein the

unit cost of deep-sea fishing vessels had been fixed at ₹1.2 crore.

Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in July 2017, the Palk Bay scheme, being financed by the Union and the State Governments with beneficiary participation, envisaged the provision of 2,000 vessels in three years to the fishermen of the State and motivate them to abandon bottom trawling. The current year's Policy Note of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare Department of

Farm protests by vested interests'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Union Minister of State L. Murugan on Friday said "vested interests" in parts of a few northern States were behind the protests against the farm laws of the Centre.

Replying to a question on the protests, Mr. Murugan, in an interaction with senior journalists of The Hindu

Group, said the protests were "only in parts of western Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana". Do you see any agitation in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan? The answer is 'no'. In such a vast country, most people have accepted [the laws]," he said.

beyond 12 nautical miles from the shore. Up to 12 nm, the State laws were in place.

"The new legislation will protect our fishermen if there is any [illegal] activity by a foreign fishing vessel," Mr. Murugan said.

As for the proposed Marine Fisheries Bill, Mr. Murugan termed the opposition to it "politically motivated", and said the legislation would not "in any way affect our fishermen in any place". It had been mooted in the absence of any law to regulate fishing activity taking place

Regarding promotion of seaweed farming, he said Tamil Nadu would get a special economic park as a pilot project. The foundation stone for the park project was likely to be laid during the third week of November. Fisherwomen would be among the beneficiaries of this programme. The Kisan Credit Card would also be extended to the fisherfolk. Under the PMMSY, five fishing harbours would be modernised as per international standards and the idea was to encourage exports of fish products.

Answering a question on the issues concerning administration of temples by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department in Tamil Nadu, the Union Minister urged the State government to implement the directions given by a Bench of the Madras High Court in this regard. He also wanted the government to ensure that income generated from temples be used for proper maintenance of the temples concerned.

## Modi, Kishida commit to strengthening relations

They also review progress under Quad

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to new Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Friday evening, in their first conversation since the latter took charge this week, committing to strengthen bilateral relations and opposing the use of military and economic force in the Indo-Pacific region through the Quad with the U.S. and Australia.

"The leaders discussed the increasing alignment of perspectives, and robust cooperation, between India and Japan in the Indo-Pacific region. They reviewed the progress of cooperation under the Quad framework in this regard," said a Ministry of External Affairs statement, which gave details of the talks that lasted about 25 minutes. It stated that Mr. Modi invited Mr. Kishida to visit India for a summit.

A statement issued by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted, "Both leaders shared their strong opposition to any unilateral attempt to change the status quo by force and to economic coercion, while confirming that the two countries would deepen cooperation on economic security such as through resilience of supply chains".



The statements are significant as tensions have been rising in the South China Sea over a record number of Chinese jets being flown into Taiwan's Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ).

"The leaders discussed the increasing alignment of perspectives, and robust cooperation, between India and Japan in the Indo-Pacific region. They reviewed the progress of cooperation under the Quad framework in this regard," said a Ministry of External Affairs statement, which gave details of the talks that lasted about 25 minutes. It stated that Mr. Modi invited Mr. Kishida to visit India for a summit.

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## Union Govt. is misusing agencies: Sena

STAFF REPORTER  
PUNE

The BJP had left no stone unturned to defame the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena said, a day after the Income Tax (IT) Department conducted marathon raids on several firms and offices owned by relatives and persons close to Deputy Chief Minister and senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Ajit Pawar.

In an editorial in its mouthpiece *Saamana*, the Sena said the Union Government had flagrantly misused agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the IT Department and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in a bid to defame the MVA leadership. On Thursday, IT authorities raided several businesses and offices, including sugar factories in Pune, Satara, Ahmednagar, Nandurbar and Kolhapur among other places in Maharashtra. The IT Department later claimed to have detected ₹1,050 crore in alleged illicit transactions.

## 'Govt. has failed to protect J&K people'

Rahul condemns incidents of violence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Condemning the incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said terrorism had not stopped because of the removal of Article 370 or demonetisation.

In a tweet, soon after two government teachers (a Sikh and a Pandit) were shot dead by militants in the Eidgah area of Srinagar, Mr. Gandhi charged the Union Government with failing to provide security to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Incidents of violence are increasing in Kashmir. Terrorism has neither stopped due to demonetisation nor after the removal of Article 370. The Central Government has completely failed to provide security," Mr. Gandhi said in a tweet.

"We strongly condemn the attacks on our Kashmiri brothers and sisters," he added.

The killing of the teachers took the number of civilians shot dead in the last five days in the Kashmir Valley



Rahul Gandhi

to seven, including four from the minorities.

On Tuesday, the Kashmir Valley witnessed three targeted civilian killings in 90 minutes, which included a prominent Kashmiri Pandit businessman Makhan Lal Bindroo, who owned a well-known pharmacy in Srinagar, and a golgappla and belpuri seller from Bihar.

"The Modi government garners votes by promising to protect the Kashmiri Pandits, but has failed to provide them security. When will the pseudo-nationalist BJP government be able to control Pakistan-backed extremism?" asked Congress chief spokesperson Randhir Singh Surjewala.

Issuing a set of guidelines, Chief Secretary H.K. Dwivedi asked officials to ensure that communal harmony is maintained in the State. All puja panels were asked to engage an adequate number of volunteers in the pandals.

## CWC likely to meet next week

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) is likely to meet next week to discuss an organisational restructuring and give shape to changes in the party structure.

Sources told *The Hindu* that the meeting was likely to place within the auspicious period of Navaratri that ends on October 15.

In all such cases, terrorists have been using pistols. These acts are committed by newly recruited militants or those who are about to join the militant ranks," Inspector General of Police Vijay

Kumar said.

Mr. Kumar said the police were working hard to identify "part-time, hybrid militants".

"We have received several leads and are working on it. We appeal to the general public, especially minority communities, not to panic," he added.

Meanwhile, security has been beefed up outside business establishments owned by minority community members and areas in which non-local labourers stay in the Valley "as a precautionary measure".

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## 31 selected for lateral entry posts

Six of them will join Finance Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday recommended 31 candidates from private sector and public sector undertakings for appointment at senior and mid-level positions in various Union Ministries under the "lateral entry" programme on a "contract basis". The most number of such appointments – six – are to the Ministry of Finance.

Reservation or caste-based quotas do not apply to these recruitments. As per norms, the posts of Joint Secretary, Director, and Deputy Secretary are filled by officers belonging to the All India Service 'Group A' services, which includes the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Indian Police Service (IPS) and the Indian Revenue Service (IRS). A Joint Secretary is the third highest ranking officer in the government.

Based on the online application forms, the UPSC shortlisted 231 candidates for the interviews. The interviews were conducted from September 27 to October 8, and 31 candidates were recommended.

A press statement issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) said that it had requested the Union Public

The CJI asked sharply, "Is it the same way you treat other accused too? Like sending notices, etc." The Bench posted the case for October 20.

The last such appointments were made in 2019, when nine candidates were selected.

Two resigned later.

# SKM calls for farmers' protest on Oct. 12

If demands are not met, 'rail roko' on Oct. 18 and Lucknow rally on Oct. 24, say protest leaders

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

NEW DELHI

Protesting farm unions have issued a call for farmers to gather again in strength at Tikonia in Uttar Pradesh on October 12, the "antim ardas" day when the last rites would be conducted for the farmers who died at Lakhimpur Kheri last Sunday. From there, the ashes of the victims would be taken to all the districts of Uttar Pradesh, to the gurdwaras of Punjab, and to all the States, to spread the message that "the BJP government was terrorising farmers", according to leaders of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), which held its general body meeting at the Singhu border on Friday.

"There was immense anger not just that such an incident had happened, but that the government is protecting the accused for so long," said Jagmohan Singh, general secretary of the Dakaunda fac-



tion of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), assessing the mood of those who attended the meeting.

If the prime accused, Ashish Mishra, was not arrested and his father, Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra, not removed from the Union Council of Ministers by October 11, the SKM vowed to intensify its protest with a nationwide "rail roko" between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on October 18, followed by a

on October 24 along the lines of the mass gathering in Muzaffarnagar last month. On Dasara, farm unions planned to burn effigies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

In a statement, the SKM rejected the Special Investigation Team (SIT) and the judicial inquiry set up by the Uttar Pradesh Government, noting that the Supreme Court had also said it was not satisfied. It also agreed with

the court that an investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) would not be a solution either, and "demanded an impartial investigation that will report directly to the Supreme Court", welcoming the court's order asking the police to keep all evidence intact.

**'Shaheed Kisan Diwas'** Declaring October 12 "Shaheed Kisan Diwas", the platform of unions protesting against the three farm reform laws appealed to farmers across Uttar Pradesh and the country to make their way to Tikonia on that day. "There would have been at least 20,000 people gathered in Tikonia last Sunday. At that time, the anger could have sparked off a riot between Hindus and Punjabi Sikhs, who [the latter] are major landowners in the area, so [BKU leader] Rakesh Tikait played a key role in

preventing that and dispersing the crowd," said All India Kisan Sabha general secretary Hannan Mollah, who was part of the SKM's core committee, alleging a conspiracy to provoke communal violence by Mr. Mishra and other BJP leaders. "Now, a big crowd will build up again, but the leaders will ensure that the anger is channelled into peaceful protest," he added, estimating that 15,000-20,000 people would gather. Senior Punjab farm leader Balbir Singh Rajewal said he was on his way to Lakhimpur Kheri on Friday, and other leaders planned to arrive over the weekend.

Mr. Mollah and other leaders confirmed the plans for a "kalash yatra" to disperse the ashes of the victims across the country over 10 days. "We want the message to go out as far as possible that the BJP is now actively killing farmers," he added.

# Ashish skips police questioning, Union Minister says he is unwell

'He will report to the police on the next date given by them'

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

Ashish Mishra, son of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra, did not turn up for questioning in Lakhimpur Kheri despite the summons issued to him by the police in connection with the Tikonia incident, in which he is accused of murder.

Mr. Ajay told presspersons in Lucknow that Mr. Ashish, alias Monu, did not go to the police as he was unwell. Responding to questions on whether his son was absconding, Mr. Ajay said Mr. Ashish had not gone anywhere, but was in his Shahpur Kothi residence.

The Union Minister said his son would report to the police on the next date given by them. Mr. Ajay also said Mr. Ashish had informed the



A policeman pasting a notice outside Minister Ajay Kumar Mishra's residence. • PTI

police that he was willing to provide them with evidence and his statement.

## New notice

Police in Lakhimpur Kheri pasted a new notice outside the Mishras' residence summoning Mr. Ashish to appear at the Crime Branch office in Police Lines at 11 a.m. on Saturday. Legal action would

be taken if he did not turn up, said the notice.

The Uttar Pradesh police had on Thursday arrested two persons and issued summons to Mr. Ashish for questioning in connection with the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, in which eight persons, including four farmers, were killed. Amid demands for Mr. Ashish's arrest in the murder case, the police issued him summons to appear at the Reserve Police Lines in Lakhimpur Kheri at 10 a.m. on Friday.

Mr. Ajay maintained that his son was not at the site of the incident or in any of the cars that mowed down the farmers. Mr. Ashish was in their ancestral village, Banveerpur, attending the annual wrestling event organised by their family, said the Union Minister.

## IN BRIEF



### Cong. reiterates demand to dismiss Union Minister

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday said a commission of two sitting judges should be set up to ensure that the farmers killed in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence get justice within 30 days. The party reiterated its demand for the dismissal of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra, and the arrest of his son Ashish Mishra. Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said, "It has become clear that the Narendra Modi and Yogi Adityanath governments are standing with criminals."

### 'Will take part in Maharashtra bandh'

MUMBAI

Three days after the three ruling parties in Maharashtra – the Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party and the Shiv Sena – called for a State bandh on October 11 against the killings of farmers at Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh, the Samyukt Shetkari Kamgar Morcha (SSKM) on Friday endorsed the call for a "Maharashtra bandh". The SSKM held a press conference in Mumbai to announce its support for the move.

## Twitter war strains ties between Congress, Kishor

Spat triggers war of words between Baghel and Trinamool

SANDEEP PHUKAN

NEW DELHI

The Congress and election strategist Prashant Kishor's public sparring over the grand old party's (GOP) prospects of political revival triggered a war of words between Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and the Trinamool Congress.

In a tweet, the Trinamool directly attacked former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi for his defeat in Amethi, without naming him.

"Rich words coming from a first-time CM. Punching

above your weight doesn't bring honour to you, Mr. @bhupeshbaghel. What a shoddy attempt to please the high command! By the way, is @INCIndia going to try to erase the historical defeat at Amethi through yet another Twitter Trend?" the Trinamool said on Twitter.

This was in response to Mr. Baghel's tweet that said, "People looking for a 'national' alternative based on poaching INC [Indian National Congress] functionaries who can't win even their own seats is in for a big disappointment. Unfortunately, to become a national al-



ternative deep-rooted and concerted efforts are needed and there are no quick-fix solutions."

The Twitter war was first triggered by Mr. Kishor, who said those who were hoping for a quick revival of the GOP on the basis of the Lakhimpur Kheri incident would be disappointed.

Hitting back, Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said, "It's a grave sin if anyone views Lakhimpur Kheri in terms of political gain or loss. I wouldn't like comment [on] a consultant's remarks."

Mr. Baghel's tweet and Mr. Surjewala's comments were a direct response to Mr. Kishor's tweet earlier in the day.

"People looking for a quick, spontaneous revival

of GOP led opposition based on #LakhimpurKheri incident are setting themselves up for a big disappointment. Unfortunately there are no quick fix solutions to the deep-rooted problems and structural weakness of GOP," Mr. Kishor had tweeted on Friday.

His tweet is significant as it comes in the midst of speculation that the election strategist could be joining the Congress as part of the "GOP's revival plan".

Mr. Kishor is now the principal political adviser to Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress.

Though he didn't name any leader in his tweet, the obvious reference is to the buzz that Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's arrest in Sitapur, bordering Lakhimpur Kheri district, created in the media.

But beyond the immediate context, Mr. Kishor's tweet indicates a falling out with the Congress. Sources told *The Hindu* that the Congress was divided over his parallel induction as a general secretary and as a member of the Congress Working Committee.

## Subramanian to return to academics

Will return to serving as a researcher after fulfilling three-year commitment: CEA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) Krishnamurthy Subramanian has decided to return to academia at the completion of his three-year tenure in early December.

"Being provided the opportunity to contribute during a period of tremendous uncertainty and epochal change has been the lucky icing on the cake. So, while being conscious of the enormous privilege bestowed on me, I will happily return back to serving the country as a researcher after fulfilling my three-year commitment," he said in a statement on Friday.

Mr. Subramanian is an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur, and Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Calcutta, alumnus. He was a Professor at the Indian School of Business before his appointment as the CEA in

December 2018. The CEA's post had been vacant at the time for a few months after his predecessor Arvind Subramanian left citing "personal reasons".

### 'Keen listener'

The CEA thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for being a "keen listener" with an intuitive understanding of economic policy.

An Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur, and Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Calcutta, alumnus, Mr. Subramanian was a Professor at the Indian School of Business before his appointment as the CEA in

cades of my professional life, I am yet to encounter a more inspiring leader than the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. His intuitive understanding of economic policy combines with an unmistakable determination to use the same to elevate the lives of common citizens," the CEA said.

"The momentous change in India's economic thinking post the pandemic - inter alia embracing ethical wealth creation by empowering the private sector and economic recovery driven by government capital expenditure - bears testimony to his leadership," he added.

## Low attendance in parliamentary panel meets

SOBHANA K. NAIR

NEW DELHI

Reacting to *The Hindu*'s report on the delay in the formation of Parliamentary Standing Committees (PSC), the Parliamentary Affairs Ministry, in a clarification, has attacked the Opposition for its low attendance in the meetings, specifically pointing at the Trinamool Congress.

The Ministry, in a statement here, said the "15-day

delay was due to the discussions that were going on whether to nominate MPs who have not attended even one meeting of the committees in the previous term and also whether they should be renominated to the same committees".

Specifically, pointing out the Trinamool's dismal record in participation in the PSCs, the Ministry said the party's leader in the Rajya Sabha, Derek O'Brien, had

attended only two of the 27 meetings of the Committee of Transport, Tourism and Culture, of which he is a member. Mr. O'Brien headed this committee in the last Lok Sabha and in 2019, based on the Trinamool's reduced strength, the party was given only one committee to chair – Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution. The Ministry said: "This is a very dismal performance of a leader of his [Mr. O'Brien]'s stature. Further, AITC's (Trinamool) Deputy Leader and Chief Whip in Rajya Sabha and 2 other members of AITC attended no sittings of DRSCs [Department-related Standing Committees] during 2020-21. Furthermore, average attendance of AITC Members in committee meetings is approximately 23%. This shows their seriousness towards Parliament and its instruments."

## Rajnath, Lalu pay tribute to Paswan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

On the first death anniversary of former Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) patriarch Lalu Prasad and former Congress president Rahul Gandhi paid their tributes at 12 Janpath here on Friday.

Mr. Singh's visit assumes significance in the context of the recent split in the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) into

**STATE INDUSTRIES PROMOTION CORPORATION OF TAMILNADU LIMITED (SIPCOT)**  
19-A, RUKMANI LAKSHMI PATH ROAD, EGMORE, CHENNAI-600 008.  
CIN U74999TN1971SC005967

Tender Notice NIT No. 35/CW/T.No.35/2021-22 dt. 4.10.2021  
**INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING**  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDER / INVITATION FOR BIDS**

State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Ltd (SIPCOT) invites bids under "TWO COVER SYSTEM" from eligible bidders having experience in similar nature of works, which are valid for a minimum period of 180 days from the date of submission of bids for the work of "DESIGN, BUILD 20 MLD CAPACITY TERTIARY TREATMENT REVERSE OSMOSIS (TTO) PLANT IN TWO PHASES (10 MLD EACH) FOR TREATING KELVARAPALLI DAM WATER AT HOSUR, TAMIL NADU AND OPERATE & MAINTAIN FOR 20 YEARS"

**Official dates are under:**

Date of Publication	09.10.2021
Bid document Download/Sale start date	11.10.2021
Last sale date	11.11.2021 up to 5:00 pm
Pre-Bid meeting	26.10.2021 at 11:30 am
Bid submission date	12.11.2021 upto 3:30 pm
Bid opening date	12.11.2021 at 4:00 pm

The bid documents, EMD details etc. may be downloaded from the following website [www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in) / [www.sipcot.tn.gov.in/pages/view/tenders](http://www.sipcot.tn.gov.in/pages/view/tenders).

DIPR/2896/Tender/2021

MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
SIPCOT, Chennai-8

**Government of Karnataka  
Office of the Executive Engineer,  
PWD Division, Mandya**  
No. 10/2021-2022  
Dated: 29.09.2021

**TENDER NOTIFICATION FOR  
CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDING WORKS IN  
MANDYA DISTRICT**

Tender in Two cover system is invited from qualified Eligible contractors for the following works through e-procurement portal as per Standard bid document **KW- 4**. Pre-bid Meeting will be held on **04.11.2021 at 11.00 am** in the Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Mandya. Documents may be downloaded from **08.10.2021** Last date for Queries **08.11.2021 upto 4.00 pm**, Last date for submission of tender **08.11.2021 upto 4.30 pm**, Date of opening Technical bid **09.11.2021 at 5.00 pm** onwards, Financial bid will be opened on **11.11.2021 at 11.00 am** or next Office working days. Tender Processing Fees as per E-Procurement & Duration including Monsoon 9 months No. of work: **CONSTRUCTION OF NEW COURT COMPLEX (FIRST FLOOR) AT K.R.PETE TALUK, MANDYA DISTRICT I.No.132864**. Amount put to tender Rs.476.00 Lakhs E.M.D as per E-Procurement Portal. For more information contact the above office during Office Hours.

**Sd/-Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Mandya**  
DIPR/AD-MDY/MCA/384/2021-22

**DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF N.C.T. DELHI  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (E&M)  
40 MGD WTP NANGLOI: NEW DELHI-110041**  
Email id:[ewtpnanglo@gmail.com](mailto:ewtpnanglo@gmail.com)  
Mobile No. 9650291163

**"STOP CORONA: WEAR MASK, FOLLOW PHYSICAL DISTANCING, MAINTAIN HAND HYGIENE"**

**RE-INVITE PRESS NIT. NO. 08 (2021-22)EE (E&M)WTP-NANGLOI**

S. No.	Name of Work	Estimate Cost	E/Money	Tender Fee	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date/time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	SITC of submersible pump sets along with allied E&M equipment at WTP Dwarika.	Rs. 60,06,227/-	Rs. 1,21,000/-	Rs. 1000/-	2021_DJB_209452_1	22.10.2021 at 2.30 P.M.

Further details in this regard can be seen at (<https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>)

ISSUED BY P.R.O.(WATER)  
Advt. No. J.S.V. 474(2021-22)

(K.G. Mishra)  
EE(E&M)WTP-Nanglo

**SOUTHERN RAILWAY**  
**MATERIALS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT**  
**AUCTION PROGRAMME**  
**NOTICE NO: 12 / 2021**

E-Auction will be conducted for disposal of Ferrous scrap, Non-Ferrous scrap, other Misc

# Supreme Court to conduct physical hearings twice a week

SOP released after feedback from lawyers, experts

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

In a decisive step towards the pre-pandemic routine, the Supreme Court has made physical hearings the norm twice a week.

"In view of the encouraging response from the Bar and with a view to further facilitate hearing through physical mode, all the matters listed on Wednesday and Thursday, as non-miscellaneous days, would be heard only in the physical presence of the counsel/parties in courtrooms," a court circular said.

The court released its modified standard operating procedure (SOP) after taking suggestions from the Bar and experts' advice to make access to the courtrooms less cumbersome.

Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana recently informed senior advocates



in for one case after the other. They could wait at the Bar lounges in the building for their cases to be called. This step had been added to avoid crowds in the corridors.

#### Working capacity

The court, however, added a rider to the physical hearings on non-miscellaneous days, saying a Bench could take a call to revert to virtual mode if it found that the number of lawyers in a particular case exceeded the working capacity of the courtroom as per the COVID-19 norms.

The circular said cases listed on Tuesday, as a non-miscellaneous day, would also be heard in physical mode. However, on prior application by the advocate-on-record (AOR) for the party, appearance through video-conferencing mode would also be facilitated.

Cases on Mondays and Fridays, which are miscellaneous days, would continue to be heard virtually for the present.

that the court was working on striking a balance between lawyers' access to courts and their safety and good health at the workplace. He had said the court was apprehensive about how crowded courtrooms would potentially expose lawyers and staff to infection.

**15-minute break**  
In the modified rules, the court stated that there would be a 15-minute break at the discretion of the Bench during physical hearings. The courtrooms have to be vacated during this interval in order to sanitise them.

Lawyers would be called

## Hybrid sessions can't be forever: SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday *prima facie* did not approve of hybrid court hearings, which is a combination of physical and virtual mode of court proceedings, as a permanent feature.

A Bench led by Justices L. Nageswara Rao and B.R. Gavai said hybrid options would have lawyers argue from exotic spots around the world while judges sit in courtrooms. "We want courts to be opened up to the public... For the past two months we have made physical hearings optional and we have not seen one advocate in court on most of the days," Justice Rao said. The court was hearing a plea filed by the National Federation of Societies For Fast Justice.

# Centre didn't specifically ask for oxygen deaths data: Cong.

K.C. Venugopal writes to Rajya Sabha Chairman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The war of words between the Opposition and the government continues on whether there were COVID-19 deaths due to oxygen shortage in the second wave of pandemic. Pursuing his privilege motion against Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar, Rajya Sabha member and Congress general secretary K.C. Venugopal, in a letter to Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu, pointed out that the Centre never "categorically asked the States for reporting COVID-19 deaths due to oxygen shortage".

Mr. Venugopal had moved a notice of breach of privilege against Ms. Pawar in July during the monsoon session on her written reply to a parliamentary question that there were "no deaths due to oxygen shortage reported by the States during the second wave of COVID-19".

In her response to Mr. Venugopal's notice, Ms. Pawar, on September 10, in a letter



Many hospitals ran out of oxygen supplies during the second wave of COVID-19.

to Mr. Naidu stated that she was "factually correct" and no "false statement had been laid on the table of the House".

Mr. Venugopal said Ms. Pawar's response was "misleading" since the "Centre never categorically asked the States for reporting COVID-19 deaths due to oxygen shortage". He also pointed out a comment by Rajasthan Health Minister Raghu Sharma that appeared in the media saying the same thing.

The Minister, though, has said that MPs had relied on

media reports as evidence and had not placed on record details of deaths reported by any State due to shortage of oxygen.

"The Minister has claimed and refuted a serious breach of privilege on the pretext that the Members of Parliament have relied on media reports as evidence". However, the Minister has not refused the reports quoted," Mr. Venugopal noted.

The Minister, in her response, has said that the States were asked to send in reports according to globally accepted WHO and ICMR guidelines. But in her reply, she does not clearly answer the question on whether these guidelines also included questions on oxygen shortage.

Hitting out at the government, Mr. Venugopal observed that instead of taking *suo motu* cognisance of the incidents, the Minister was "deliberately misleading" and was "convolutedly trying to find an alibi".

Giloy is safe to use, says Ayush Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Giloy or *guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*), a herb used in Ayurvedic medicine. All its parts are thought to have health benefits. People have long used it to treat a wide range of ailments such as fever, infections, diarrhoea and diabetes.

In a statement, the Ministry said it had recently noticed safety concerns on use of giloy that were published in social media and in some scientific journals. The Ministry noted in an advisory that there were a good number of studies published in peer-reviewed indexed journals to substantiate the safety and efficacy of giloy. It explained that giloy's hepatoprotective properties were well-established. It was known for its immense therapeutic applications.

# Prompt action proved IAF's combat readiness: IAF chief

Three units that were deployed on the front during the stand-off with China get citations on 89th Air Force Day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The prompt actions in response to developments in eastern Ladakh were a testament to the Indian Air Force's combat readiness, the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal (ACM) V.R. Chaudhari, said on Friday.

Three units that were deployed on the front during the stand-off with China last year and had also participated in the Balakot air strike on February 26, 2019, were presented unit citations on the occasion of 89th Air Force Day. The units include a fighter squadron, a helicopter unit and a surface-to-air missile (SAM) squadron.

"When I look at the security scenario we face today, I am acutely conscious that I have assumed command at a crucial time. We must demonstrate to the nation that external forces will not be allowed to violate our territory," ACM Chaudhari said addressing the ranks at the Air Force Day parade. "Our efforts in completing all COVID-related tasks were also a major achievement in support of the national efforts," he added.

Coinciding with the celebrations of the 75th year of Independence, 75 aircraft and helicopters took part in the Air Force Day parade and fly-past with several formations showcasing some of the key air operations of the 1971 Liberation War of



Flying high: (Clockwise from left) Rafale fighter planes, C-17 Globemaster followed by Hawk aircraft, Sarang Advance Light Helicopters and the Surya Kiran aerobatics team at the 89th Air Force Day parade at Hindon Air Base on Friday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY



Force, the citation said. The squadron was formed on December 18, 1959.

The second unit citation went to the 116 Helicopter Unit, formed on August 1, 1967. It is now equipped with the indigenous Advanced Light Helicopter Mark IV (ALH Mk IV) Rudra. After Balakot, the unit was deployed at the forward bases of the South Western Air Command Area of Responsibility (AOR) to counter threats of slow-moving aerial platforms, the citation said.

**Day and night operations**  
In May 2020, after the Galwan skirmish, the unit was deployed for offensive operations at a high-altitude airfield in the Ladakh area. "The unit quickly established the first-ever high-altitude attack helicopter detachment in the region and executed day-and-night operations, including air to ground weapons delivery at high altitudes," the citation read.

The third unit citation was given to 2255 Squadron Detachment Air Force, a frontline OSA-AK-M, SAM-guided weapon squadron in the Kashmir AOR. "The squadron was mobilised for air defence activation in Ladakh in response to the Galwan stand-off in the last week of June 2020. Since then, the squadron has undertaken various innovations to sustain serviceability and reliability of its equipment," it said.

# Air quality panel expects reduced stubble burning

It will be aided by dip in paddy crop

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A reduction in the area under paddy cultivation in Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, as well as a shift away from paddy varieties that take long to mature, could see a reduction in stubble burning this year, the Centre-constituted Commission for Air Quality Management said in a statement on Friday.

The total paddy area in Haryana, Punjab and the eight NCR (National Capital Region) districts of Uttar Pradesh has reduced by 7.72% during the current year as compared to last year. Similarly, total paddy straw generation from the non-basmati variety of rice is likely to be reduced by 12.42% during the current year as compared to the previous year. It's the non-basmati variety of rice, whose stalk remains, that is usually burnt off by farmers ahead of sowing wheat.

The Commission said: "Both Central and State Governments of Haryana, Punjab and U.P. have been taking measures to diversify crops as well as to reduce the use of PUSA-44 variety of paddy. Burning of paddy straw from the non-basmati variety of crops is the prime concern. Crop diversification and moving away from PUSA-44 variety with short duration High Yielding Va-

rieties are part of the framework and action plan for control of stubble burning."

Data from Haryana, Punjab and U.P. suggests total paddy straw generation is likely to come down by 1.31 million tonnes (from 20.05 million tonnes in 2020 to 18.74 million tonnes in 2021) in Punjab; by 0.8 million tonnes (from 7.6 million tonnes in 2020 to 6.8 million tonnes in 2021) in Haryana; and by 0.09 million tonnes (from 0.75 million tonnes in 2020 to 0.67 million tonnes in 2021) in the eight NCR districts of U.P. this year.

The total quantity of straw generated by the respective States was 28.4 million tonnes in 2020, which is now expected to come down to 26.21 million tonnes in 2021. The decrease in non-basmati varieties is expected to be even higher.

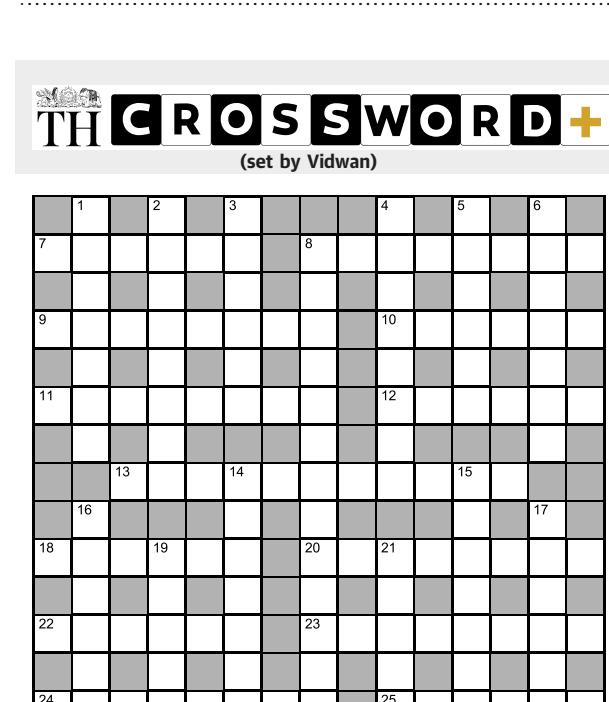
## FAITH

### Always there for bhakthas

Parvathi, Ambika, Tripurasundari, Kamakshi, Visalakshi, Durga, Adi Parasakti – many are the names Lord Siva's Consort is known by, said M.A. Manickavelu, in a discourse. Lalitha Sahasranama gives us thousand names of the Goddess. Each devotee may have a favourite name by which he addresses Her and prays to Her. No matter by what name Her devotees call out to Her, She is always there for them. She even helps when we have not explicitly asked Her for assistance, for She knows our needs.

There is a story about an old woman who went to have darshan of the Goddess in Kanyakumari. It was dark, and she did not know the way. Ambika came in the form of a little girl bearing a lamp, and guided the old woman. Kamban who wrote Kamba Ramayana and Ottakoothar who wrote Thakka Yaga parani, would write at night. Ambika would hold a lamp, in whose light they would write.

The Nayamar Sundarar married Sangili Nachiar in Thiruvottiyur with Lord Siva as witness. Sundarar promised Sangili that he would never be separated from her. But he wanted to have darshan of the deity of Thiruvallur – Tyagarajswami. So he broke his promise to her, and as a result he lost his eyesight. But his bhakti towards Lord Siva and his attachment to the Lord were legendary. Neither the Lord nor His consort would let him down. He had been punished for not keeping his word to Sangili Nachiar, but he was not totally forsaken by the Lord or the Goddess. From Thiruvottiyur to Thiruvenpakkam, near Kanchipuram, the Goddess of Thiruvenpakkam, known as Minnal Oli Ambikai, guided Sundarar. He regained vision in his left eye in the Ekambareswar temple in Kanchi, and then proceeded to Thiruvallur, where he got back his vision in the other eye too.



- Display keystrokes of genius.  
Type your answers in our online grids:  
<https://rgo.page.link/jjpTn>
- ACROSS**
- 7 It could be little stiff in German stores (6)
  - 8 Spoken originally, it ranks about 3rd oldest language in the world (8)
  - 9 Street fellow, tender at heart, becomes a fall guy (5,3)
  - 10 Hesitatingly claim ownership for fur (6)
  - 11 He is sex worker? Not sure (8)
  - 12 Daily routine of cold prostitutes without work (6)
  - 13 Playing well and not opening? Local guy has so much to offer (11)
  - 14 Most certain way to restrict abusive user (6)
  - 15 Origin of pessimism for example is discounted (8)
  - 16 Some American choreography show host (6)
  - 17 Summary: 6 balls and 6 extras (wides) at start (8)
  - 18 Trump's gone! Excellent! (8)
  - 19 Easy to deal with the Italian on the inside (6)
  - 20 Flew extensively and maintained a constant vigil to ensure that there were no misadventures by adversaries, the IAF said.
  - 21 The citation said, "In May 2020, the squadron was deployed for air defence as well as air-to-ground operations in the northern sector and carried out extensive operations at high altitude."
  - 22 Sarang Advance Light Helicopters and the Surya Kiran aerobatics team at the 89th Air Force Day parade at Hindon Air Base on Friday.
  - 23 Hawk aircraft, Sarang Advance Light Helicopters and the Surya Kiran aerobatics team at the 89th Air Force Day parade at Hindon Air Base on Friday.
  - 24 Daily routine of cold prostitutes without work (6)
  - 25 Interview West Indian cricketing legend with a voice, one nowhere to be seen (4,4)
  - 26 Spectacular kind of physics (7)
  - 27 Moor's heart is filled with tension and torment – that's a tragedy (7)
  - 28 Spooner's fight, scrape results in spasms (8)
  - 29 Heart of Goethian codes – empty morals (6)
  - 30 Shuffling of feet! That's how you start a golf game! (3,3)

## SUDOKU

6	2		5				7	3
1			8	7	5			
1	4	9		6				
8	4		3				1	
	8		1	9	5			
5						8	1	2
	7							
1	6	4			5			

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

### Solution to puzzle 13372

### Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

5	9	3	4	6	7	1	8	2
6	7	1	8	5	2	9	4	3
4	8	2	3	1	9	7	6	5
3	5	8	6	4	1	2	7	9
2	4	9	7	3	8	6	5	1
1	6	7	9	2	5	4	3	8
9	3	4	2	8	6	5	1	7
7	1	6	5	9	3	8	2	4
8	2	5	1	7	4	3	9	6

# IS claims suicide attack in Kunduz

At least 46 killed and dozens injured in a blast masterminded by IS at a Shia mosque in Afghanistan

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

KUNDUZ

A suicide bomb attack on worshippers at a Shia mosque in the Afghan city of Kunduz killed at least 46 people on Friday, in the bloodiest assault since the Taliban government was formed. Scores more victims from the minority community were wounded.

The Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) group claimed responsibility for the attack. They have repeatedly targeted Shias in a bid to stir up sectarian violence in Sunnism-majority Afghanistan.

In a statement released on its Telegram channels, the jihadist group said that an IS suicide bomber "detonated an explosive vest amid a crowd" of Shiite worshippers who had gathered inside the mosque.

In a second statement, IS said the "perpetrator of the attack was an Uyghur Muslim", a minority that the Taliban had vowed to expel" from Afghanistan.

A medical source at the Kunduz Provincial Hospital



Mangled remains: A man filming inside the mosque in Kunduz, Afghanistan, after the explosion on Friday. ■ REUTERS

said that 35 dead and more than 55 wounded had been taken there, while Doctors Without Borders (MSF) hospital said 20 were dead and scores more wounded.

Matiullah Rohani, director of culture and information in Kunduz for Afghanistan's new Taliban government, confirmed that the deadly incident was a suicide attack and that 46 people had died and 143 were wounded.

Taliban spokesman Zabi-

ullah Mujahid had earlier said "an explosion took place in a mosque of our Shia compatriots" in Kunduz.

#### Blast timing

Residents of Kunduz, the capital of a province of the same name, said the blast hit a Shia mosque during Friday prayers, the most important of the week for Muslims.

An international aid worker at the MSF hospital in the city said there were fears the

death toll could rise even further.

"Hundreds of people are gathered at the main gate of the hospital and crying for their relatives but armed Taliban guys are trying to prevent gatherings in case another explosion is planned," he said.

"Many of our neighbours have been killed and wounded. A 16-year-old neighbour was killed. They couldn't find half of his body. Another

# 'U.S. special forces quietly training Taiwanese troops'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

U.S. special operations forces have been quietly training Taiwanese troops for months, a move which China warned on Friday could cause "serious harm" to relations between Washington and Beijing.

A contingent of around 20 special operations and conventional forces has been conducting the training for less than a year, the Penta-

gon official, who declined to be identified, said on Thursday, adding that some of the trainers rotate in and out.

#### High sensitivity

Beijing opposes self-ruled Taiwan – which it views as its own territory to be seized one day, by force if necessary – having any official diplomatic exchanges and has aggressively tried to dissuade politicians from visiting in recent years.

China reacted angrily to the report on Friday, with the foreign ministry warning that the U.S. should recognise the "high sensitivity" of the Taiwan situation and "serious harm" of its actions.

Taiwan's Defense Ministry declined to comment, but Pentagon spokesman John Supple said that generally speaking, U.S. support for Taiwan's military is gauged on its defense needs.

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
ISLAMABAD

United States and Pakistani officials are meeting on Friday amid a worsening relationship between the two countries as each nation searches for a way forward in Afghanistan under Taliban rule.

Pakistan has been pressing for greater engagement with the all-male, all-Taliban Cabinet in Kabul even as it shies away from any unilateral formal recognition. The

South Asian country has urged Washington to release billions of dollars to the Taliban so that Afghanistan's new rulers can pay salaries and avoid an economic meltdown.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman is meeting with the country's Army chief, Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa. Ms. Sherman also met Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and is to meet Prime Minister Imran Khan.

# Some EU rules go against Constitution: Poland top court

Brussels body acting beyond scope of competences

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WARSAW

Poland's top court on Thursday said that some EU treaty articles were "incompatible" with the Polish Constitution in a landmark ruling that could threaten the country's EU funding and even put in question its membership of the bloc.

The ruling is the latest twist in a long stand-off between Poland and the EU over controversial judicial reforms introduced by Poland's governing right-wing Law and Justice (PiS) party.

In her ruling, Constitutional Court president Julia Przyłębska listed several EU treaty articles that she said were incompatible and also said that the EU institutions "act beyond the scope of their competences" in the treaties.

"Shame!", "Traitors!" and

People protesting against the new ruling in front of the Tribunal building.

"Welcome to Belarus!" shouted a group of around 30 protesters outside the court after hearing the ruling, some of whom waved European Union flags.

"They're taking us out of the European Union!" said Anna Labus, a pensioner who was in tears.

But government spokesman Piotr Müller welcomed the ruling, saying that it con-

firmed "the primacy of constitutional law over other sources of law". He added, however, that the ruling "does not affect any areas where the EU has competences delegated in the treaties" such as competition rules, trade and consumer protection.

The dispute with Brussels has focused in particular on a new system for disciplining judges which the EU says is a serious threat to the independence of the judiciary in Poland.

But there are other bones of contention, including the appointment of judges and the transfer of judges between different courts or divisions of the same court.

Poland has said that the reforms are needed to root out corruption and has ignored an interim order from the EU court to suspend the judge disciplining system.

#### China orders mines to ramp up coal production

BEIJING

Chinese authorities have ordered dozens of coal mines to expand production amid a nationwide energy crunch, state media reported on Friday. Dozens of mines were instructed to increase their capacity by more than 98 million tonnes in a notice not released to the public, the state media reported. AFP

#### Rohingya refugees to be sent to island

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

COX'S BAZAR

Bangladesh wants to send more than 80,000 Rohingya refugees to a remote island in the Bay of Bengal after sealing an agreement for the United Nations to provide help, officials said on Friday.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said the deployment of two high-ranking commanders represented a worrying escalation in the situation.

Alarming reports indicate that there has been substantial deployment of heavy weapons and troops by the Myanmar military over the past few weeks," spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani told reporters in Geneva.

# Myanmar military's actions alarm UN

Troops deployed in townships

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

GENEVA

The United Nations voiced alarm on Friday at Myanmar's military junta deploying heavy weapons and troops to particular townships, fearing for the civilian population.

The internet has also been shut down, she added.

Myanmar has been mired in crisis since the army ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's government in February, sparking mass protests and a bloody crackdown.

The deployments have been to Kanpetlet and Hakha townships in Chin State; Kani and Monywa townships in the central Sagaing region; and Gangaw township in Magway region, she said.

The internet has also been shut down, she added.

Myanmar has been mired in crisis since the army ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's government in February, sparking mass protests and a bloody crackdown.

"We are gravely concerned by these developments, particularly given the intensifying attacks by the military that we have documented over the past month in these areas," Ms. Shamdasani said.

# Google to ban climate denial ads

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON

Google will ban digital ads promoting false climate change claims from appearing next to other content, hoping to limit revenue for climate change deniers and stop the spread of misinformation on its platforms.

The company said on Thursday in a blog post that the new policy will also apply to YouTube, which last week announced a sweeping crackdown of vaccine misinformation.

The restrictions "will prohibit ads for content that contradicts well-established scientific consensus around climate change," the blog post said.

neighbour who was 24 was killed as well," a resident said.

Another video showed men herding people, including women and children, away from the scene. Frightened crowds thronged the streets.

#### Important location

Kunduz's location makes it a key transit point for economic and trade exchanges with Tajikistan. It was the scene of fierce battles as the Taliban fought their way back into power this year.

Often targeted by Sunni

extremists who view them as heretics, Shia Muslims have suffered some of Afghanistan's most violent assaults.

Shias make up roughly 20% of the Afghan population. Many of them are Hazara, an ethnic group that has been heavily persecuted in Afghanistan for decades.

The United Nations in Afghanistan said it was "deeply concerned by reports of very high casualties", calling it a "part of a disturbing pattern of violence".

# Journalists from Philippines, Russia win Peace Nobel

Committee hails the winners' fight for press freedom

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANILA

Journalists Maria Ressa of the Philippines and Dmitry Muratov of Russia won the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for their fight for freedom of expression in countries where reporters have faced persistent attacks, harassment and even murder.

"Free, independent and fact-based journalism serves to protect against abuse of power, lies and war propaganda," said Berit Reiss-Andersen, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, explaining why the prize went to two journalists.

"Without freedom of expression and freedom of the press, it will be difficult to successfully promote fraternity between nations, disarmament and a better world order to succeed in our time," she said.

The Nobel committee noted that Ms. Ressa in 2012 co-founded Rappler, a news website that has focused critical attention on President Rodrigo Duterte's "controversial, murderous anti-drug campaign" in a decision seen as a major blow to press freedom.

She said she hopes the award will bolster investigative journalism "that will hold power to account."

**Relentless campaign**  
"This relentless campaign of harassment and intimidation against me and my fellow journalists in the Philippines is a stark example of a global trend that journalists and freedom of the press facing increasingly adverse conditions," she told The Associated Press.

She also pointed to social media giants like Facebook as a serious threat to democracy, saying "they actually prioritised the spread of lies laced with anger and hate over facts."

"I didn't think that what

we are going through would get that attention. But the fact that it did also shows you how important the battles we face are, right?" she said.

Ms. Ressa, the first Filipino to win the peace prize and the first woman to be honoured this year with an award by the Nobel committee, was convicted last year of libel and sentenced to jail in a decision seen as a major blow to press freedom.

"We will use it to shore up Russian journalism that has faced repressions," he said in comments carried by a Russian messaging app channel. "We will try to help the people who have been designated as agents, have faced persecution and have been forced out of the country."

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 17 media workers were killed in the Philippines in the last decade and 23 in Russia.



Fresh laurels: Dmitry Muratov, left, and Maria Ressa, who won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday. ■ AP

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Brussels body acting beyond scope of competences

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

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firmed "the primacy of constitutional law over other sources of law". He added, however, that the ruling "does not affect any areas where the EU has competences delegated in the treaties" such as competition rules, trade and consumer protection.

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But there are other bones of contention, including the appointment of judges and the transfer of judges between different courts or divisions of the same court.

Poland has said that the reforms are needed to root out corruption and has ignored an interim order from the EU court to suspend the judge disciplining system.

# Kishida vows to lead with 'trust'

I'm determined to defend our land, territorial seas and air space, says Japan's PM

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOKYO

In his first policy speech, new Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida promised on Friday to strengthen the country's response to the coronavirus pandemic in case of another resurgence and revive its battered economy while bolstering defences against threats from China and North Korea.

Mr. Kishida also spoke on Friday by telephone with Chinese President Xi Jinping and raised concerns about China's escalating activities in disputed maritime territories and human rights problems in Hong Kong and the

sue politics of "trust and empathy". He was elected by Parliament and sworn in Monday as Japan's 100th Prime Minister, succeeding Yoshihide Suga, who left after only a year in office. Mr. Suga's perceived high-handed approach in dealing with the coronavirus and insistence on holding the Tokyo Olympics despite rising cases angered the public and hurt the governing Liberal Democrats.

"I will devote my body and soul to overcome the national crisis together with the people to pioneer a new era so we can pass a bountiful Japan to the next generation," Mr. Kishida said.

He promised to be more attentive to public concerns and needs, and prepare virus measures based on "a worst-case scenario".

That includes taking advantage of a drop in infections to improve crisis management before the weather turns cold, approving drugs for treatment of COVID-19 by the end of December and the digitalisation of vaccine certificates, Mr. Kishida said.

"I'm determined to defend our land, territorial seas and air space, and the people's lives and assets, no matter what," Mr. Kishida added.



For further details please visit [www.cus.ac.in](http://www.cus.ac.in)

# SIKKIM UNIVERSITY

(A Central University est. by an Act of Parliament of India in 2007)

RFP no. SU/REG/ENGG

## MARKET WATCH

	08-10-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	60,059	-0.64
US Dollar	74.99	-0.26
Gold	45,959	-0.11
Brent oil	83.26	-1.38

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	739.90	3.75
Asian Paints	3306.90	16.05
Axis Bank	781.95	4.85
Bajaj Auto	3815.55	-13.00
Bajaj Finserv	17549.45	79.20
Bajaj Finance	7732.20	-15.70
Bharti Airtel	695.50	3.00
BPCL	449.45	0.25
Britannia Ind	3883.30	-17.30
Cipla	917.10	1.05
Coal India	188.45	-2.25
Divis Lab	5071.30	-26.55
D Dr Reddys Lab	4849.20	-41.90
Eicher Motors	2817.95	-3.00
Grasim Ind	1598.80	6.80
HCL Tech	1322.15	15.85
HDFC	2720.65	-6.35
HDFC Bank	1602.65	-7.85
HDFC Life	722.10	-3.25
Hero MotoCorp	2842.10	0.45
Hindalco	473.65	-3.85
Hind Unilever	2640.05	-29.35
ICICI Bank	703.40	1.20
IndusInd Bank	1174.40	7.70
Infosys	1723.85	32.85
Indian Oil Corp	131.80	-0.45
ITC	231.70	-1.25
JSW Steel	665.85	-0.70
Kotak Bank	1936.35	-16.10
L&T	1726.90	14.45
M&M	877.80	-0.45
Maruti Suzuki	7430.00	-62.50
Nestle India Ltd.	18986.45	-59.20
NTPC	141.10	-1.70
ONGC	160.95	0.55
PowerGrid Corp	187.70	-0.60
Reliance Ind	2671.25	98.85
SBI Life	1196.15	-18.60
State Bank	458.00	0.10
Shree Cement	27757.15	-302.20
Sun Pharma	821.40	-1.85
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	818.75	-5.80
Tata Motors	382.95	6.45
Tata Steel	1301.15	11.95
TCS	3935.65	42.75
Tech Mahindra	1439.95	22.75
Titan	2358.20	-17.15
UltraTech Cement	7335.75	-18.85
UPL	738.00	10.50
Wipro	661.15	18.20

## EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on October 8

## CURRENCY

## TT BUY TT SELL

US Dollar: 74.79 75.11

Euro: 86.42 86.79

British Pound: 101.92 102.36

Japanese Yen (100): 66.91 67.20

Chinese Yuan: 11.60 11.65

Swiss Franc: 80.47 80.86

Singapore Dollar: 55.15 55.39

Canadian Dollar: 59.62 59.88

Malaysian Ringgit: 17.89 17.98

Source: Indian Bank

## Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF

## ZEE TV

NCLT tells Zee to reply to Invesco plea by Oct. 22

MUMBAI

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) gave Zee Entertainment Enterprises time till October 22 to file its reply to a plea by its minority shareholder Invesco, after appellate body NCLAT ordered it to give the media major reasonable opportunity to do the same. PTI

## Dr. Agarwals plans to double hospital count

CHENNAI

Dr. Agarwals Eye Hospital Ltd. plans to more than double its pan-India and global footprint to 250 hospitals over the next three years, said chairman Dr. Amar Agarwal. He added that the hospital chain aimed to invest ₹1,000 crore to help fund these plans. "Currently, we have 100 centres in India, with the acquisition of Mumbai-based Aditya Jyoti Eye hospital in an all-cash deal," he said.

## Thailand tops the second stage of qualification with 376, six points ahead of India.

The women's rifle 3-position team of Nischal, Prasiddhi Mahant and Ayushi Podder lost the gold by three points to USA after having been consistently on top in the first and second stages of qualification.

Anish Bhanwala and Tejaswini, who made the No.1 team for India, took bronze after finishing fourth in the second stage of qualification.

The men's 50-metre rifle

Bang on target: Rhythm and Vijayveer who tasted success in the rapid fire mixed team event. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## SHOOTING

## SPORTS BUREAU

LIMA

Vijayveer Sidhu and Rhythm Sangwan helped India to yet another gold as they won the rapid fire mixed team event in the junior World Championships here.

Thailand, the only other country in the event, won silver after losing 9-1 in the gold medal match, while the second Indian team took bronze.

Thailand topped the second stage of qualification with 376, six points ahead of India.

The women's rifle 3-position team of Nischal, Prasiddhi Mahant and Ayushi Podder lost the gold by three points to USA after having been consistently on top in the first and second stages of qualification.

India stayed on top of the medals table with 10 gold, eight silver and four bronze.

The men's 50-metre rifle

Bang on target: Rhythm and Vijayveer who tasted success in the rapid fire mixed team event. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## RBI suspends GSAP, holds interest rates

Governor Das cites strengthening growth impulses, ample liquidity for decision to halt bond buying

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday said it was halting its bond buying under the G-Sec Acquisition Programme (GSAP) for now, with Governor Shaktikanta Das stressing that the measure had succeeded in ensuring adequate liquidity and stabilising financial markets.

"Coupled with other liquidity measures, it facilitated congenial and orderly financing conditions and a conducive environment for the recovery," Mr. Das said after announcing the Monetary Policy Committee's decision to keep interest rates unchanged and retain an 'accommodative' policy stance.

"The total liquidity injected into the system during the first six months of the current financial year through open market operations (OMOs), including GSAP,



Reaching for reset: The RBI is signalling a gradual move towards 'normalising' policy, says Crisil Research. ■ AFP

was ₹2.37 lakh crore, as against an injection of ₹3.1 lakh crore over the full financial year 2020-21," he noted.

"Given the existing liquidity overhang, the absence of a need for additional borrowing for GST compensation and the expected expansion of liquidity in the system as Government spending in-

creases in line with budget estimates, the need for undertaking further GSAP operations at this juncture does not arise," Mr. Das added.

The RBI, however, remained ready to undertake GSAP as and when warranted by liquidity conditions, and would also continue to flexibly conduct other liquid-

ity management operations including Operation Twist (OT) and regular open market ket operations (OMOs).

Stating that the growth impulses seemed to be strengthening, supported by ebbing of infections, the robust pace of vaccination, expected record kharif foodgrains production, the government's focus on capital expenditure and buoyant external demand, Mr. Das said the inflation trajectory was also turning out to be more favourable than anticipated.

## Lowers inflation outlook

The RBI retained its growth forecast for this fiscal at 9.5% and cut its projection for average inflation for the full year to 5.3%, from 5.7% earlier, even as it flagged core inflation that 'remains sticky'.

Elevated global crude oil and other commodity prices combined with an acute

shortage of key industrial components and high logistics costs, were adding to input cost pressures, it added.

"Headline inflation continues to be significantly influenced by very high inflation in select items such as edible oils, petrol and diesel, LPG and medicines," the RBI Governor said.

## Rate hike by FY22-end?

"Like many other central banks, the RBI is signalling a gradual move towards 'normalising' its monetary policy as the economy emerges from the shadow of the second wave," Crisil Research said in a report.

"We expect this normalisation to continue in the coming months and a hike in the repo rate by 25 basis points by fiscal 2022-end, assuming strengthening economic recovery and elevated inflation risks," it added.

## TCS Q2 net rises 29% to ₹96.2 bn on COVID-led digitisation demand

Profit tops estimates on BFSI boost

## REUTERS

BENGALURU

Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. reported second-quarter profit that beat estimates on Friday, boosted by growth in its key banking and financial services segment and strong demand for digital services during the COVID-19 pandemic.



emand environment was a 'once-in-a-decade' opportunity to position the company as the preferred growth and transformation partner for its customers.

We are using the growth tailwind to invest in strengthening relevant capabilities and building out a comprehensive portfolio of offerings that caters to a broader set of stakeholders in the enterprise across business cycles, strengthening our brand, and making our business more resilient.

"We believe this is the most sustainable pathway to create longer-term value for all our stakeholders," the CEO added.

The company also announced an interim dividend of ₹7 per share.

Strong growth and disciplined execution helped us overcome headwinds from currency and supply-side inflation and deliver expanded margins," said Chief Financial Officer Samir Seksaria.

"Our industry-leading profitability and strong cash conversion give us the wherewithal to make the... investments needed to build out the business of the future," he added.

The IT services company added a net of 19,690 people, taking its total headcount to 5,28,748 people.

(With PTI inputs)

## Google, Amazon deposit acceptance under review

Studying regulatory issues: RBI's Rao

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

RBI Deputy Governor M. Rajeshwar Rao on Friday said the central bank is examining whether deposit acceptance by Google and Amazon is within the prescribed laws and regulations, at a time when concerns about big tech firms' play in the financial space are at a heightened level.

Both Google Pay and Amazon have announced partnerships with lenders to accept deposits in the country through their mobile phone apps.

"We are examining the issue regarding the regulatory implications, having regard to the applicable laws and



the regulations that are prescribed for the thing. So, we are examining it," Mr. Rao told reporters.

In its last financial stability report in June this year, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had warned against allowing big technology companies into the financial services sector.

## Reserve Bank raises IMPS limit to ₹5 lakh

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

In a bid to promote digital transactions, the Reserve Bank proposed to increase the per transaction limit through Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) from ₹2 lakh to ₹5 lakh.

IMPS is an important payment system providing 24x7 instant domestic funds transfer facility and is accessible through various channels such as Internet and mobile banking.

The increase in limit will lead to further rise in digital payments and provide an additional facility to customers for making digital payments beyond ₹2 lakh, said RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das.

## Goyal pushes for a reset of India-ASEAN FTA

Must prevent misuse by third parties'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has called for a renegotiation of the India-ASEAN free trade agreement (FTA), to prevent its misuse by 'third parties' and remove trade restrictions as well as non-tariff barriers that he said had hurt Indian exports disproportionately since the pact was operationalised in 2010.

It is unfortunate that in

the recent past, we had to deal with several restrictive barriers on our exports in the ASEAN region, particularly in the agriculture and auto sectors," Mr. Goyal said at a session with ASEAN trade and finance ministers

hosted by CII on Friday.

The focus needed to be on new rules to eliminate misuse by third parties outside ASEAN, the minister said, hinting at China. Both sides also needed to bring down non-tariff barriers to boost confidence, he added.

## States suffer power cuts as coal stocks shrink

50% units left with below 3-day stocks

## REUTERS

CHENNAI

North Indian states have suffered electricity cuts and face further outages because of a lack of coal, an analysis of government data and interviews with residents found

# MI fails to make it despite Ishan and Suryakumar's blitzkrieg

Hit their fastest fifties in the IPL as Rohit's men rattle up 235 and emerge victorious by 42 runs against SRH; KKR becomes the fourth team to qualify

## IPL 2021

### SPORTS BUREAU

Ishan Kishan (84, 32b, 11x4, 4x6) and Suryakumar Yadav (82, 40b, 13x4, 3x6) smashed their fastest fifties – in 16 and 24 balls, respectively – in the Indian Premier League to set up Mumbai Indians' 42-run win against Sunrisers Hyderabad in their last league game.

However, the win wasn't enough to keep its title campaign alive as Mumbai Indians failed to make it to the playoffs. Kolkata Knight Riders qualified as the fourth team on net run rate.

MI knew that it was virtually a mission impossible to progress as it had to bat first and win by at least 170 runs. While Rohit Sharma won the toss to achieve the first objective, Ishan and Suryakumar's whirlwind knocks ensured Mumbai piled up 235 for nine, the highest total of IPL 2021.

### Near-impossible task

However, despite the torrid season SRH has had, restricting it to below 64 was a near-impossible task for MI. Once Jason Roy and Abhishek Sharma got off to a quick start, the writing was on the wall for MI.

The Sunrisers' start was nowhere close to the opening flurry by Ishan, with Rohit awestruck at the other end. The PowerPlay saw 14 fours and two sixes, with Rohit contributing only three of them.

While Ishan, who ensured that his fifty versus Rajasthan Royals three nights ago



**Top shows:** Kishan and Suryakumar tore apart the Sunrisers attack before Neesham put the skids on the chase. ■ SPORTZPICS/IPL

wasn't a fluke, dominated the first half of the innings with audacious strokeplay, Suryakumar took over the mantle in the latter half.

Despite the loss, Sunrisers also entered the record books. Manish Pandey (69 n.o., 41b, 7x4, 2x6) became the first cricketer to have captained an IPL team after having played 100-plus games.

He also showed acumen as a leader by placing Jason Roy bang behind the umpire for

Kieron Pollard and saw the batsman hitting straight to him.

Mohammad Nabi then became the first fielder in the IPL to take five catches.

### Top of the charts

#### ORANGE CAP

K.L. RAHUL (PBKS)

Matches: 13 | Runs: 626

HS: 98 n.o. | SR: 138.80

#### PURPLE CAP

HARSHAL PATEL (RCB)

Matches: 14 | Wickets: 30

BB: 5/27 | Econ: 8.40

AFTER THE LEAGUE STAGE

### FINAL POINTS TABLE

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Delhi Capitals (Q)	14	10	4	20	0.481
Chennai Super Kings (Q)	14	9	5	18	0.455
Royal Challengers (Q)	14	9	5	18	-0.140
Kolkata Knight Riders (Q)	14	7	7	14	0.587
Mumbai Indians	14	7	7	14	0.116
Punjab Kings	14	6	8	12	-0.001
Rajasthan Royals	14	5	9	10	-0.993
Sunrisers Hyderabad	14	3	11	6	-0.545

Q: Qualified

### The Playoffs schedule

#### QUALIFIER 1

October 10  
DC (1) vs CSK (2), Dubai

#### ELIMINATOR

October 11  
RCB (3) vs KKR (4), Sharjah

#### QUALIFIER 2

October 13  
Winner of Qualifier 1 vs Winner of Eliminator, Sharjah

#### FINAL

October 15  
Winner of Qualifier 1 vs Winner of Qualifier 2, Dubai

ALL MATCHES START AT 7.30 P.M. IST.

### SCOREBOARD

#### MUMBAI INDIANS

Rohit Sharma c Nabi b Rashid 18 (13b, 3x4), Ishan Kishan c Saha b Umran 84 (32b, 11x4, 4x6), Hardik Pandya c Roy b Holder 10 (8b, 1x6), Kieron Pollard c Roy b Abhishek 13 (12b, 1x4), Suryakumar Yadav c Nabi b Holder 82 (40b, 13x4, 3x6), James Neesham c Nabi b Abhishek 0 (1b), Krunal Pandya c Nabi b Rashid 9 (7b, 1x4), Nathan Coulter-Nile c Nabi b Holder 3 (3b), Piyush Chawla c Samad b Holder 0 (2b), Jasprit Bumrah (not out) 5 (2b, 1x4), Trent Boult (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (b-1, lb-1, w-9): 11; Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 193.

#### FALL OF WICKETS

1-64 (Roy, 5.2), 2-79 (Abhishek, 6.6), 3-97 (Nabi, 8.3), 4-100 (Samad, 9.1), 5-156 (Garg, 15.1), 6-166 (Holder, 16.1), 7-177 (Rashid, 17.2), 8-182 (Saha, 18.4).

#### MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING

Boult 4-0-30-1, Umrah 4-0-39-2, Chawla 4-0-38-1, Coulter-Nile 4-0-40-2, Neesham 3-0-28-2, Krunal 1-0-16-0.

Toss: MI; MoM: Ishan.

MI won by 42 runs.

Innings scan

MI	SRH
33	Dots
30	Fours
8	Sixes
83/1	PP
11.75	RR

# Bharat smashes a last-ball six as Royal Challengers leave Capitals stunned

With six needed off the final delivery, Avesh bowls a wide before the RCB batter settles the issue; DC loses its way in the last five overs of its innings

### SPORTS BUREAU

Srikar Bharat sealed a last-ball thriller with a six as Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Delhi Capitals by seven wickets in an IPL encounter in Dubai on Friday.

With 19 needed from 12, Anrich Nortje bowled a sensational 19th over, going for just four. RCB needed 15 off Avesh Khan's final over and Bharat took RCB over the line with an unbeaten 52-ball 78. He was ably supported by Glenn Maxwell, who got his fourth fifty in five innings.

The RCB chase got off to the worst possible start when Nortje removed Devdutt Padikkal and Virat Kohli early. With RCB 11 for two after three overs, AB de Villiers was promoted to No. 4. But the South African couldn't make the most of the move, falling for a run-a-ball 26 to

Axar Patel and leaving RCB 104 to get from the last 10.

With the asking rate climbing past 11, Maxwell was dropped twice, by Shreyas Iyer and R. Ashwin, off Axar. Meanwhile, No. 3 Bharat reached his 50 off 37 as RCB brought the equation down to 46 in 24 balls. Maxwell and Bharat scored 15 and 12 off Rabada and Khan in the 17th and 18th overs. It was a timely assault.

Earlier, Kohli won the toss and inserted Delhi. Maxwell got the new ball, probably to get the better of left-hander Shikhar Dhawan. But the move did not reap the desired results as Dhawan took 15 off his eight balls. Maxwell's three overs in the PowerPlay went for 29.

The DC openers did not let the tempo drop after the PowerPlay, going after Yuzvendra Chahal and collecting 20

off his first two overs. RCB's wait for a breakthrough ended in the 11th over when Harshal Patel had Shikhar Dhawan caught. Harshal is now two wickets short of the highest tally for an edition – 32 by Dwayne Bravo (2013).

At the other end, Shaw fell two short of his fifty, caught off Chahal. Rishabh Pant followed suit, caught behind off Dan Christian.

Shimron Hetmyer and Shreyas took 16 off the 15th over – bowled by Christian – with two fours and a maximum to give the innings a necessary impetus.

However, RCB kept up the pressure as Mohammed Siraj removed Shreyas for an 18-ball 18. Hetmyer's 22-ball 29 took his team to a fighting score but it wasn't enough in the end on a night when DC was left to rue squandered chances and sloppy fielding.



**Incredible finish:** Bharat is gung-ho after sealing it with a stunning shot. ■ SPORTZPICS/IPL

# India looks to fire on all cylinders

### INDIA IN AUS

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CARRARA  
Bolstered by Jemimah Rodrigues' return to form, India will look to come out all guns blazing in the second women's T20 International against Australia on Saturday after rain played spoilsport in the opening game here.

Criticised for regular failures and after losing her place in the 50-over side, Jemimah made a sensational comeback with an unbeaten 49 off 36 balls in the first T20I.

Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma have been in good form, having played pivotal roles in the drawn Test and given India a rollicking start in the first T20I.

Harmanpreet Kaur also joined the team in the first game after missing the ODI leg and the Day/Night Test owing to a thumb injury. Her presence makes India a formidable batting unit.

Thursday's game was washed out and Harmanpreet & Co. will look to win the next two T20s to end the tour on a high. It's also a fine



**Up for the challenge:** Rodrigues' return to form and Yastika's growing talent augurs well for India. ■ TWITTER/BCCIWOMEN

opportunity for the young duo of Yastika Bhatia and Richa Ghosh to shine in the middle order.

Veteran seamer Shikha Pandey will bear the onus of getting early wickets.

Australia, on the other hand, boasts of a number of quality all-rounders. Captain Meg Lanning (Capt.), Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepthi Sharma, Sneh Rana, Yastika Bhatia, Shikha Pandey, Meghna Singh, Pooya Vastrakar, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Poonam Yadav, Richa Ghosh (wk), Harleen Deol, Arundhati Reddy, Radha Yadav and Renuka Singh.

**Australia:** Meg Lanning (Capt.), Darci Brown, Maitlan Brown, Stella Campbell, Nicola Carey, Hannah Darlington, Ashleigh Gardner, Alyssa Healy, Tahlia McGrath, Sophie Molineux, Beth Mooney, Elyse Perry, Georgia Redmayne, Molly Strano, Annabel Sutherland, Tayla Vlaeminck and Georgia Wareham.

Match starts at 1.40 p.m. IST.

# England gets conditional approval for Ashes

### ASSOCIATED PRESS

#### London

England confirmed it will go to Australia for the Ashes series later this year after its officials gave a conditional approval for the tour on Friday.

England cast doubt on the seven-week tour while negotiating for easier health and travel restrictions in the pandemic, especially for visiting family members.

However, on Friday, the England and Wales Cricket Board said "excellent

progress" had been made in talks with Cricket Australia.

"To facilitate further progress and allow a squad to be selected, the ECB board has met and given its approval for the tour to go ahead," it said in a statement.

"This decision is subject to several critical conditions being met before we travel. We look forward to the ongoing assistance from Cricket Australia in resolving these matters in the coming days."

# M.P. and Haryana triumph

### ARCHERY

#### Y.B. SARANGI

#### JAMSHEDPUR

A young Madhya Pradesh side pipped an accomplished Jharkhand outfit 5-4 via shoot-off to claim its maiden recurve women's team title at the 40th NTPC National archery championships here on Friday.

Madhya Pradesh, consisting of Amey Rai, Vitasha Thakur and Soniya Thakur, shot closer to the centre in a 28-28 shoot-off score line after tying 4-4 with the host, comprising India team regulars Komalika Bari and Ankita Bhakat and Dipu Kumar, in the final.

Tense victories via shoot-offs over Punjab (5-4, 26-24) in the quarterfinals and Rajasthan (5-4, 26-25) in the semifinals prepared the Madhya Pradesh archers – who are products of the Madhya Pradesh Archery Academy in Jabalpur – to hold their nerve in the most crucial moment of the final.

"It is a proud moment for us. All these girls are between 16 and 20 years of age and have proved themselves at junior level events. This is



**We did it!** The Madhya Pradesh team celebrates its maiden recurve title. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

their first big win at the elite level," said M.P. coach Richpal Singh Salaria.

Haryana, consisting of Akash Malik, Sachin Gupta and Basant Kumar, defeated a talented Maharashtra side, including World youth championships team gold winner Parth Salunkhe, Yashdeep Bhole and Om Vithalkar, 5-1 in the final to take the recurve men's team crown.

In the individual ranking round, Jayanta Talukdar, returning to a competition after recovering from COVID

# Madappa pips Joshi at the post

Holds his nerve to carve out a memorable one-stroke victory

## GOLF

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

When it mattered, Viraj Madappa held his nerve and holed the birdie-putt to carve out a memorable one-stroke victory over fellow overnight leader and practice-partner Khalin Joshi in the ₹70-lakh Tata Steel PGTI MP Cup golf tournament at the Delhi Golf Club course here on Friday.

The thrilling win was worth ₹11,31,550 for Madappa who moved to the third place on the Order of Merit, behind leader Karandeep Kochar and S. Chikkarangappa.

Joshi, who started the day with an 'eagle' and led for the better part of the final round, received ₹7,81,550.

Rashid Khan, playing a group ahead of the final group, shared the lead with Khalin at 14-under after the latter's bogey on the 14th hole.

Soon thereafter, Rashid dropped his first stroke of



**Triumphant:** Viraj Madappa receiving the winner's cheque in the TATA Steel PGTI MP Cup golf tournament. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the day on the 15th followed by a double-bogey on the final hole and eventually took the third place that fetched him ₹4,38,550.

For the second successive round, Madappa stole Joshi's thunder. After Joshi broke away with an 'eagle' on the 515-yard par-5 opening hole and found pars on the rest of the holes on the front nine, he was wary of Rashid's birdie blitz. All this while, Madappa had two bogeys and two birdies on the first nine.

The drama unfold on the back nine, leader Joshi (-15) and Madappa (-13) birdied the 10th hole. Then came Joshi's first bogey, on the 13th and Madappa's par closed the gap between them.

The turning point proved to the par-5 14th hole where the lead changed hands as Madappa's birdie coincided with Joshi's second successive bogey.

In fact, both hit the bushes but Madappa was lucky to get a free-drop since his stance was on the cart-path.

On the last two holes, Madappa and Joshi found a bogey and a birdie that meant the title was decided without a playoff.

**Final scores:** **274:** Viraj Madappa (71, 67, 66, 70); **275:** Khalin Joshi (69, 66, 69, 71); **277:** Rashid Khan (67, 73, 68, 69); **279:** Yuvraj Singh Sandhu (69, 75, 66, 69); **280:** M. Dharma (71, 68, 70, 71), Angad Cheema (71, 68, 67, 74); **281:** Kartik Sharma (70, 68, 69, 74); **282:** Manu Gandas (67, 70, 73, 73); **283:** S. Chikkarangappa (67, 70, 73, 73) and N. Thangaraja (70, 67, 71, 75).

## DELHI ROUND-UP

**Ankit hits unbeaten ton**  
Ankit Partap Singh's unbeaten 114 and Ishant's four-wicket haul helped Hemant Ratan Academy bt Cricket Institute of India by five wickets in the 2nd D.

Force tournament.

**The scores:** Cricket Institute of India 189 in 35.2 overs (Anurag Sanjay 38, Ishant 4/36) lost to H. R. Academy 190/5 in 28.5 overs (Ankit Partap Singh 114 n.o.).

### Soni, Awana hit half-centuries

Half-centuries from Karan Soni and Krisharth Awana laid the foundation of New Balaji Academy's 94-run victory over West Delhi Academy in the 1st Birma Devi memorial (u-13).

day-night tournament.  
**The scores:** New Balaji Academy 229/4 in 30 overs (Karan Soni 79, Krisharth Awana 51) bt West Delhi Academy 135 in 28 overs (Dhanya Nakra 50, Krisharth 3/20).

**Gulshan Yadav to the fore**  
Gulshan Yadav (49) guided Arihant Mount Club to an easy five-wicket victory over V.S. Academy in the Ratan Lal Saini (u-16) tournament.

**The scores:** V.S. Academy 108 in 30 overs (Ankit Pandey 38) lost to Arihant Mount Club 109/5 in 22.5 overs (Gulshan Yadav 49, Dikshant 31).

**Digvish strikes**  
Digvish (4/27) helped Delhi Colts Club beat Youth Club Delhi by 120 runs in the 1st A. S. memorial tournament.

**The scores:** Delhi Colts Club 263 in 38 overs (Abhay Chauhan 55, Raj Gupta 45, Hitesh Mehra 3/48) bt Youth Club Delhi 143 in 30.2 overs (Hitesh Mehra 64, Aditya Dubey 41, Digvish 4/27).

**Daksh excels**

Daksh scored 65 and took two wickets to guide Sporty Cricket to a 72-run victory over Mahesh Academy in the Push Academy (u-13) league.

In another match, Ankush Singh (4/35 and 43) was the star of Bhagwati Academy's two-wicket win over Rajnish Gautam Academy.

**The scores:** Sporty Cricket 219 in 38.2 overs (Daksh 65, Aditya Goenka 45, Dhruv Sharma 3/17) bt Mahesh

Academy 147 in 35.4 overs. Rajnish Gautam Academy 166/7 in 40 overs (Sarthak Mahlawat 33, Ankush Singh 4/35) lost to Bhagwati Academy 168/8 in 37.3 overs (Ankush Singh 43, Aryan Suri 36).

### Sahil, Abhishek show the way

Sahil Sharma (55 n.o.) and Abhishek (42) showed the way as Uday Bhan Club beat St. Angel Academy by seven wickets in the Swastik Cup tournament.

**The scores:** St. Angel Academy 170/9 in 40 overs (Vinay Kumar 51, Manan Bhardwaj 3/14) lost to Uday Bhan Club 172/3 in 17 overs (Sahil Sharma 55 n.o., Abhishek Kaushik 42).

# Sania and Shuai lose a tough first round

## INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU  
INDIAN WELLS

Sania Mirza and Shuai Zhang of China went down fighting 4-6, 6-3, [15-13] to the third seeds from Japan, Shuko Aoyama and Ena Shibahara in the doubles first round of the \$8,150,470 WTA tennis tournament here on Friday.

The pair collected 10 WTA points and \$16,870.

**The results:** \$8,150,470 WTA, Indian Wells, USA: First round: Shuko Aoyama & Ena Shibahara (Jpn) bt Shuai Zhang (Chn) & Sania Mirza 4-6, 6-3, [15-13].

\$25,000 ITF men, Setubal, Portugal: Quarterfinals: Pedro Araujo & Fabio Coelho (Por) bt Anirudh Chandrasekar & Vijay Sundar Prashanth 5-7, 6-0, [10-8].

\$15,000 ITF, Monastir, Tunisia: Men: Semifinals: Grigoriy Lomakin (Kaz) & Nikita Poonacha bt Kazuki Nishiawaki & Kosuke Ogura (Jpn) 7-6(4), 4-6, [10-7].

Women: Doubles: Semifinals:

Ma YeXin & Ni Ma Zhuoma (Chn) bt Sharmada Balu & Sravya Shivani 7-6(4), 4-6, [10-4]; Quarterfinals: Sharmada &

Shivani 7-6(4), 4-6, [10-4].

\$25,000 ITF women, Loule, Portugal: Quarterfinals: Marina Bassols Ribera & Olga Parres Azcoita (Esp) bt Arkivel Parazinskaite (Ltu) & Sathwika Sama 6-3, 6-0; Francisca Jorge & Matilde Jorge (Por) bt Ganna Poznikhirenko (Ukr) & Prarthana Thombare 4-6, 6-0, [10-7].

Women: Doubles: Semifinals:

Ma YeXin & Ni Ma Zhuoma (Chn) bt Sharmada Balu & Sravya Shivani 7-6(4), 4-6, [10-4]; Quarterfinals: Sharmada &

Shivani 7-6(4), 4-6, [10-4].

\$25,000 ITF women, Redding, USA: Second round: Y. Pranjala &

Sharmada & Shuai Zhang 6-3.

## SHORT TAKES

### France rallies to make Nations League final

TURIN

World champion France recovered from two goals down to beat Belgium 3-2 in a thrilling Nations League semifinal on Thursday with a last minute strike from Theo Hernandez securing a place in Sunday's showpiece match against Spain.

**The result:** Belgium 2 (Carrasco 37, Lukaku 40) lost to France 3 (Benzema 62, Mbappe 69-pen, T. Hernandez 90).

### Sarthak wins boys' title; double joy for Janani

JHAJJAR

Sarthak Sharma and Janani Ramesh won the boys and girls titles in the AITA National series under-18 tennis tournament at the Joygaon Academy on Friday.

### The results (finals):

**Boys:** Sarthak Sharma bt Vineeth Mutyala 6-4, 3-6, 6-3; **Doubles:** Anshu Kundu &

Tushar Mittal bt Adith Amarnath & Vineeth Mutyala 7-5, 6-1.

**Girls:** Janani Ramesh bt

Hannah Nagpal 6-3, 6-4; **Doubles:** Janani Ramesh & Shrichandrakala Tentu bt Kristi Boro & Hannah Nagpal 6-2, 6-3.

### Hamilton sizzles after grid penalty

ISTANBUL

Reigning Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton was fastest in both of Friday's practice sessions for the Turkish GP but has to take a 10-place grid penalty for using too many engine parts. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc ended the day second ahead of Hamilton's Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas.

## TV PICKS

**Badminton:** Thomas & Uber Cup: Star Sports 3, 12.30 p.m.

**Australia Women vs India Women:** 2nd T20I, Sony Ten 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 2.10 p.m.

**FI:** Turkish GP: (Qualifying), SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 5.30 p.m.

**European WC Qualifiers:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m., 9.30 p.m.; Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Sunday).

# Daksh Prasad to meet Rushil Khosla in final

Sonal Patil to take on Suhitha Maruri in the girls' summit clash

## TENNIS

KAMESH SRINIVASAN  
NEW DELHI

Top seed Daksh Prasad set up a title clash with second seed Rushil Khosla in the under-16 boys' event of the National sub-junior tennis championship at the DLTA Complex here on Friday.

It was as much a test of endurance for the players as a test of skill, as the successful players had to play both the quarterfinals and semifinals the same day.

In the under-16 girls' event, Sonal Patil beat Mad-

hiruma Sawant 7-5, 6-0 in the semifinals after outplaying Riya Sachdeva for the loss of three games in the quarterfinals.

In the final, Sonal will challenge second seed Suhitha Maruri who has dropped only 14 games in all in four rounds.

**The results:** Under-16: Boys:

**Semifinals:** Daksh Prasad bt Navya Verma 6-3, 3-6, 6-3; Rushil Khosla bt Suresh Keerthivassan 6-1, 6-2; **Quarterfinals:** Daksh bt Jaishnav Shinde 6-3, 7-6(9); Navya bt Tejas Ahuja 6-2, 3-6, 6-2; Suresh bt Reethi 7-5, 6-4; Rushil bt Tarun 6-3, 6-2.

**Girls:** **Semifinals:** Mahika Khan na bt Ikaraju Kanumuri 6-2, 7-5; Harithashree Venkatesh bt Sree Tanvi Dasari 6-3, 6-4; **Quarterfinals:** Ikaraju bt Riya Sachdeva 2-6, 6-1, 7-5; Mahika bt Maaya

Madhurima Sawant 7-5, 6-0; Suhitha Maruri bt Ruma Gaikwari 6-4, 6-1; **Quarterfinals:**

Sonal bt Riya 6-3, 6-0; Madhurima bt Apurva 6-3, 6-2; Ruma bt Saumya Ronde 6-4, 6-1; Suhitha bt Tamanna Takoria 6-1, 6-0.

**Under-14: Boys:** **Semifinals:**

Rayan Sajid bt Sehaj Singh Pawar 6-1, 6-1; **Quarterfinals:** Rayan bt Siddhanti Sharma 6-2, 6-3; Sehaj bt Samprit Sharma 6-1, 6-2; Tejas bt Dhruv Sachdeva 7-6(8), 7-6(2); Venkat bt Krish Tyagi 6-3, 6-2.

**Girls:** **Semifinals:** Mahika Khan na bt Ikaraju Kanumuri 6-2, 7-5; Harithashree Venkatesh bt Sree Tanvi Dasari 6-3, 6-4; **Quarterfinals:** Ikaraju bt Riya Sachdeva 2-6, 6-1, 7-5; Mahika bt Maaya



Daksh..busy day on the court. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Rajesh 6-4, 6-3; Harithashree bt Sajayani Banerjee 4-6, 6-3, 6-4; Sree Tanvi bt Nemha Kispotta 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.

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