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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2022

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India beats England, wins fifth title in Under-19 World Cup
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Chahal, Rohit script a win for India in its 1,000th ODI
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IN BRIEF

'Airport code 'GAY' for Gaya inappropriate'

NEW DELHI

The code name "GAY" for the airport at Gaya is "offensive, embarrassing and inappropriate" and the government must make all efforts to get it changed, a parliamentary panel has said in its report.

NEWS ▸ PAGE 8

Delhi schools, colleges prepare to reopen

NEW DELHI

As schools for higher classes and higher education institutions have been given the green light to open from Monday, teachers are gearing up to bridge the learning gap that has occurred due to prolonged closures.

CITY ▸ PAGE 2

Shahdara sexual assault: two more in police net

NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested two more persons in connection with the sexual assault of a woman in Shahdara, police officers said on Sunday.

CITY ▸ PAGE 2

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EDUCATION PLUS ▸ PAGE 2

Channi is CM face of Congress in Punjab

State needs a person who understands poverty, says Rahul

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Putting to rest all speculation, Congress leader and former party president Rahul Gandhi on Sunday announced that Charanjit Singh Channi would be the party's chief ministerial candidate for the 2022 Punjab Assembly election.

"It's the decision of Punjab. It's not Rahul Gandhi's decision. When you asked me to decide on CM face, I asked the people of Punjab, I asked party candidates, workers, the youth, and the working committee members. And the reply they all gave me, that decision I am sharing today," Mr. Gandhi said, addressing a rally in Ludhiana.

"My work is to listen to your voice, I may be having an opinion but the opinion of Punjab is more important than mine. People of Punjab said they want a Chief Minister from a poor family, one who understands poverty and the pain of the poor because Punjab needs such a person. I also have a similar opinion. It was a difficult decision [to choose] the chief ministerial candidate, but you [people] made it easy. The Congress's chief ministerial candidate will be Charanjit Singh Channi."

The two main contenders for leading the party in the election was Mr. Channi and State Congress president Navjot Singh Sidhu. With the Congress going with the incumbent Chief Minister, the Opposition parties said infighting would intensify in the party.

Asserting that the Congress was different from other parties, Mr. Gandhi said: "The Congress has a system of developing and nurturing leaders; it gradually makes a leader... people who think politics is an easy thing, they are mistaken, making a leader is not an easy job."

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

BJP REACTION ▸ PAGE 10

Rahul Gandhi with Navjot Singh Sidhu, Charanjit Singh Channi and Sunil Jakhar at a rally in Ludhiana on Sunday. ▪ PTI

Quitting active politics, says Sunil Jakhar

Hours before Charanjit Singh Channi was named the chief ministerial candidate, former Congress State president Sunil Jakhar said he was quitting active electoral politics. "There are some colleagues in the party with whom it has become difficult to go along, hence I am quitting. I had enough. But I am very much part and parcel of the Congress. Whatever duties the party gives me, I will perform," he said. ▸ PAGE 10

Nation mourns its 'nightingale'

Lata Mangeshkar passes away at 92; Centre announces 2-day national mourning

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Lata Mangeshkar, affectionately called a "Nightingale of India", who died on Sunday after a brief illness, was cremated with State honours in Shivaji Park here. She was 92.

The legendary singer, whose voice enthralled millions for nearly eight decades, died of multiple-organ failure at Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital, where she was admitted in early January after testing positive for COVID-19.

As a mark of respect, the Union government announced a two-day national mourning, while the Maharashtra government has declared a public holiday on Monday. The Rajya Sabha will be adjourned for an hour on Monday morning in honour of the singer who was a member of the House from 1999 to 2005.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, cricketing legend Sachin Tendulkar, actors Shah Rukh Khan and Aamir Khan were among the thousands of luminaries and fans who joined family members to bid adieu to the melody queen.

A veritable music institution, Lata sang thousands of songs in several Indian languages in a record-breaking career which began at the age of 13 in the 1942 Marathi film *Kiti Hasaal*. The much-loved playback singer was awarded the nation's highest honour, Bharat Ratna, in 2001, having earlier been awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1969, and the Padma Vibhushan in 1999. She was also given France's highest civilian award, *Officier de la Legion d'Honneur*, in 2009.

Voice unparalleled: Lata Mangeshkar leaves behind thousands of songs in several Indian languages from her record-breaking career of 73 years. ▪ GETTY IMAGES

Heartbreaking: Kovind

President Ram Nath Kovind said her death was heartbreaking for him. "...In her vast range of songs, rendering the essence and beauty of India, generations found expression of their innermost emotions. A Bharat Ratna, Lataji's accomplishments will remain incomparable," he said.

Mr. Modi tweeted, "I am anguished beyond words. The kind and caring Lata *didi* has left us. She leaves a void in our nation that cannot be filled. The coming generations will remember her as a stalwart of Indian culture, whose melodious voice had an unparalleled ability to mesmerise people." Mr. Modi cancelled his election engagements in Goa and Uttar Pradesh to attend the last rites.

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said India had lost a great daughter, who "through her songs, made an immense contribution to the cultural integration of the country".

Congress president Sonia Gandhi said: "An era has ended... Lata didi's soul-touching voice, songs of patriotism will always be an inspiration."

FULL COVERAGE ▸ PAGE 9

Centre to tweak no-build zone around monuments

Site-specific limits likely to be introduced post-amendments

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

The 100-metre radius around Centrally protected monuments where construction is prohibited could be replaced with site-specific limits to be decided by an expert committee, as the Union Culture Ministry was working on amendments to the relevant Act, officials say.

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958, was amended in 2010 to declare the 100-metre radius of protected monuments as prohibited areas and the next 300-metre radius as regulated areas.

However, according to Ministry officials as well as a recent Parliamentary Standing Committee report, there was no specific reason for the 100-metre and 300-metre limits.

The report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture on February 3 noted that the panel had taken "serious notice of the observation made by one of the experts that the 2010 amendment was brought about without any inputs from the Archaeological Survey of India". The report added that the Ministry was working on "a much-needed amendment" to the AMASR Act.

A senior official of the Culture Ministry said the proposed amendment would change Section 20A of the Act, which refers to the prohibited area, to rationalise the prohibited and regulated areas. Expert monument committees would decide the prohibited area around a monument.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

The 17th century Qutb Shahi tombs seen amid the urban landscape of Hyderabad. ▪ NAGARA GOPAL

Poll panel eases rules for public rallies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Sunday relaxed rules regarding public meetings for the Assembly elections in five States, allowing attendance of up to 50% of the capacity of an indoor venue and 30% of an open ground. However, the ban on roadshows and processions will continue.

The EC said the decision was taken after a meeting with the Union Health Secretary on Saturday and inputs from the Chief Secretaries of the poll-bound States. The Chief Secretaries had told the EC that there had been a "significant improvement" in the COVID-19 situation and a "considerable decrease" in cases and hospitalisation.

The EC said most of the Chief Secretaries and the special observers appointed for the polls had recommended easing the curbs.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

RLD chief Jayant Singh seeks blessings from BKU

Rakesh Tikait says farmers won't allow BJP to play Hindu-Muslim match in U.P.

ANUJ KUMAR
GHAZIABAD

Ahead of the first round of election in western Uttar Pradesh, Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) chief Jayant Singh visited the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) headquarters in Sisauli village, Muzaffarnagar, on Sunday and paid tribute to Mahendra Singh Tikait.

After offering ghee to the Amar Kisan Jyoti, he took the blessings of BKU president Naresh Tikait. Mr. Singh tweeted the images and said he visited the farmer capital to receive the blessing of *baba* [Mahendra Singh Tikait]. In the images, Mr. Naresh could be seen placing his hand on Mr. Singh's head.

Observers said the visit had a political meaning as it has been made to send a message to farmers that the BKU, which led the farmers' agitation in western U.P., was in support of the RLD.

This comes after Mr. Singh filed a police complaint against a fake tweet that said he was withdrawing the ticket of Baghpat candidate Ahmed Hameed because of the anti-Hindu stance of Mr. Hameed's family.

Jayant Singh with Naresh Tikait at the Amar Kisan Jyoti in Sisauli on Sunday. ▪ PTI

Vote against BJP, says SKM

Meanwhile in Meerut, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) held a press conference and reiterated its appeal to vote against the BJP as part of its "Mission U.P." campaign. "The BJP once again wants to play Hindu-Muslim match in western U.P. but farmers won't allow the divide and rule policy of the party to succeed," said Rakesh Tikait, the national spokesperson of the BKU.

For a month, he said, the BJP was targeting a particular community. "It doesn't go with the stature of the Chief Minister of a State. The public will not allow the BJP's old model to work. They are ready to throw a bucket of water on the BJP's plans," Mr. Tikait said.

SKM member Yogendra Yadav said the Centre had gone back on its promises to constitute a panel on MSP, withdraw cases against farmers and dismiss Cabinet Minister Ajay Mishra Teni.

Meanwhile, Sanjeev Balyan, the BJP's Jat face in the region, is holding meetings with the Jat community, where he is pitting himself as a common man who stood for Jat farmers after the Muzaffarnagar riots.

Schools, colleges prepare to welcome students back to class

Protests planned at DU against university's decision not to resume physical classes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

As schools for higher classes and higher education institutions have been given the green light to open from Monday, teachers are gearing up to bridge the learning gap that has occurred due to prolonged closures.

The Delhi government schools are ready to reopen with redesigned classroom configurations to ensure adherence to all COVID guidelines issued by the Directorate of Education. Private schools are busy getting permission slips signed by parents to gauge the expected number of students as classes will still be conducted in hybrid mode.

Higher education institutions like Jawaharlal Nehru University, IP University and Ambedkar University Delhi have decided to reopen campus for physical classes, while Delhi University and Jamia Millia Islama have not yet taken a call on allowing physical classes.

Students of DU who have been running a campaign to put pressure on the university administration to reopen the campus plan to organise protests on Monday and boycott online classes to ensure that colleges are open for students.

DU, in an official order, said though the university and colleges shall be fully functional, with teachers attending duties on campus, classes will be conducted online for all academic programmes as per the notified academic calendar.

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) said it will organise a massive movement for the reopening of DU colleges. It has planned programmes over the course of three days that include submitting a memorandum to principals of colleges, a full day sit-in protest in south campus and a day-long demonstration outside the academic council meeting in the North Campus.

ABVP's Delhi state secretary Sidharth Yadav said, "The guidelines of DDMA regarding opening of schools and colleges have been issued and now Delhi University should also decide to open the campus immediately. DU has been closed for almost two years and as a result the standard of education has gone down. The ABVP will not settle for anything other than opening of the campus immediately."

The Students' Federation of India, which too is planning protests, said the loss that DU students have had to face during this online phase is immense.

"Students have not had access to college infrastructure and online classes have been unrelatable and boring. This has been traumatic for students with several students dropping out of university and others facing mental health issues," the SFI said.

COVID challenges

For universities which are resuming physical classes, the biggest challenge is to ensure COVID-appropriate behavior in classrooms. A spokesperson of Ambedkar University said they will meet on Monday to decide how the infrastructure available on campus will be able to handle the number of students while following the COVID guidelines.

At JNU, which has issued an order for resumption at 100% strength, deans and chairpersons of various schools and centres have been asked to resume offline teaching with strict compliance to COVID-appropriate behavior.

Students being scanned before entering the college premises at Delhi University. ▪FILE PHOTO

DU offers chance to join discontinued course

Students can take remaining exams

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Delhi University will now give a "centenary" chance to students who had to discontinue their course midway for some reason to return to the campus and take their exams.

The proposal was approved at a special executive council meeting held on January 28 to discuss the centenary celebrations of the university. The celebrations to mark DU's centenary year will begin from May 1 and will see year-long events till May 1, 2023.

Explaining the details, DU Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh said two chances would be given to students who left their course midway between May 1, 2022 and March 1, 2023 – the first being around September and October, and the second, somewhere around March next year – wherein they can take their examinations.

Separate registration

"There will be separate registration for them, and students who could not take two-three papers can sit for their exams," Mr. Singh added.

Executive Council member Rajpal Singh Panwar said, "It doesn't mean that someone who left the course in their first year will be able to complete their remaining two years through this. It is for those who could not take a couple of papers; they will be given one chance to take those exams again."

Delhi University has allocated ₹10 crore for its centenary year celebrations.

Shahdara sexual assault case: 2 more in police net

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two more persons have been arrested by the Delhi police in connection with the abduction, sexual assault and public shaming of a 20-year-old woman in Shahdara's Kasturba Nagar on January 26, police officers said on Sunday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) R. Sathiyasundaram said both the accused were absconding since the incident was reported. The wife and two daughters of one of the accused have already been arrested and sent to judicial custody.

Auto owner held

The other accused, Darshan Singh, 41, is the owner of the autorickshaw, which was used to abduct the woman from outside her husband's flat. A total of 20 persons, including four minors, have been held in the case so far, the police said.

According to police, the victim was sexually assaulted and paraded by the accused, all members of the same family, on the streets of Kasturba Nagar with her hair chopped, face blackened and a shoe garland around her neck. The accused family blamed the woman for death of their minor son who killed himself in November last year.

On Thursday, Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana had said a chargesheet in connection with the incident will be filed in minimum possible time and the court will be urged to conduct a speedy trial.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had on Tuesday announced a financial aid of ₹10 lakh for the victim and said the government would appoint a lawyer to represent her in a fast-track court.

With inputs from PTI

All guns blazing

An anti-smog gun being used to tackle pollution in the Capital on Sunday. Delhi's air quality during the day was recorded in the 'poor' category with an AQI of 284 at 7 p.m., according to the Central Pollution Control Board data. ▪SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

AAP takes out marches against 'illegal' land transfer

'Delhiites will dislodge BJP in civic polls'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Sunday took out protest marches at various locations in Delhi against the alleged transfer of a civic body's land worth ₹50 crore for "free to an NGO with which a BJP councillor's husband is associated".

"All AAP councillors, including the party's leaders of opposition, led the 'padyatras' in their wards and apprised the people of the corruption in the BJP-ruled municipal corporations," the AAP said.

The party alleged that the North Delhi Municipal Corporation's BJP councillor Manju Khandelwal had got a piece of land, belonging to the civic body worth ₹50 crore, transferred to her husband's NGO for free in violation of the rules.

"We raised this issue in the North MCD session, but it was not paid any heed. We protested several times and demanded that the BJP return the land to the municipal corporation. But, instead of taking action, they stated there was no harm in doing so because the land was given to an NGO," AAP's Leader of Opposition in North civic body Vikas Goel said.

He termed the transfer of the civic body land to the NGO "illegal and criminal" and asserted that Delhiites will dislodge the BJP from power in the upcoming civic body elections.

The South Delhi Municipal Corporation's Leader of Opposition, Prem Chauhan, said AAP will continue its protest till action is not taken in the matter.

Fire breaks out at Karkardooma courtroom, no casualties

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A fire broke out in a Karkardooma couroom on Sunday morning, leading to several documents and furniture being gutted, Delhi Fire Service officers said. No casualties were reported.

The blaze was caused by a short-circuit, which occurred near the courtroom and later spread to the corridor, the officers said.

DFS Chief Atul Garg said they received a call around 3.25 a.m. about a fire in court number 52 at Karkardooma court in Shahdara. It was the courtroom of an Additional Sessions Judge on the second floor. Subsequently, 12 fire tenders were deployed and 50 firemen worked for over two hours to control the blaze.

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Learning in the Internet age

As Safer Internet Day falls tomorrow, a recap of what we have learnt from online education

R. W. ALEXANDER JESUDASAN

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

In the last decade, liberalisation and the Internet revolution have been among the important global developments. Education has been one of the key spheres to benefit from this.

The Internet's involvement in the growth of school and higher education cannot be underestimated. Though online education was in a nascent stage before COVID-19, the pandemic has seen it grow exponentially. If not for the digital sphere, the educational world would have come to a standstill.

Benefits

Today, with the advent of video-sharing social media platforms, many education-related activities are streamed and news viewed digitally for the benefit of students and educators.

Government and private bodies alike have embarked on developing suitable dashboards, Learning Managing Systems (LMS) and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, thus making availability and accessibility of data in a dynamic form.

Students, in particular, have benefited Internet-augmented education. Virtual practical classes are conducted wherever possible and young entrepreneurs are creating lucid and innovative virtual practical courses to supplement theoretical knowledge.

Research has gained a fillip, with online submission and publication of research papers, researcher-friendly apps, online conferences and webinars allowing experts from different fields to share their knowledge without being limited by geography.

E-learning has helped people learn anywhere, anytime. Those who wanted to upskill or reskill themselves have also benefited. Many people have been able to upgrade their qualifications and move up the corporate ladder thanks to completing online courses.

Visual learning is now enabling short video lessons that will keep students engaged, as will virtual field trips and walkthroughs ...

The flip side

However, there have also been some problem areas. Often, both teachers and students take online classes very casually. Punctuality and the formality have suffered. It is not uncommon for students to mark attendance and then disappear from class. Authenticating the veracity of assignments and project work has been a formidable task, as was dealing with malpractice during exams, despite remote proctoring being available. Hence many institutions are reverting to offline exams for the conduct of the final exams.

With the observance of Safer Internet Day tomorrow, we also need to understand the perils of Internet-mediated education.

Besides using the Internet for productive purposes, students also use it for entertainment purposes and to share things. However, this can lead to various problems, if they are not aware of safety measures. Scamsters lurk online to lure the unwary into trouble. Phishing, cyberbullying, fake news, exposure to inappropriate content, and scams are all issues that students must be made aware of, especially now when they are spending more time online.

While preparing for exams, students should be advised to turn off notifications or stay away from social media so that they can concentrate. Teachers and parents can set time limits on the use of the device to prevent addiction.

Another deficiency of e-learning is the lack of individual attention to learners' issues. Lack of connectivity and access to devices among the economically weaker sections. and inadequate exposure to digital tools both among the students and teachers need to be addressed. Apart from teacher training, continuous feedback from students is vital for quality assurance.

The future

With both teachers and students being familiar with the online mode, it is now possible to take advantage of the learnings from the past couple of years. Inclusion of lectures by global experts, conduct of conferences/webinars and viva voce, administrative and other meetings can now be moved online, unless physical presence is absolutely essential.

The government too is encouraging and promoting online, open and distance learning modes, which has been supported by the introduction of MOOCs, cloud-based learning, and flipped classrooms. Visual learning is now enabling short video lessons that will keep students engaged, as will virtual field trips and walkthroughs.

However, what is required is high-speed and constant Internet services, especially in rural areas. This will ensure that youth in those areas are not left behind in this process. Ensuring digital equity to all is vital for a nation's progress and to provide education for all, at any time, at any place and at any pace.

The writer is Pro Vice-Chancellor, Hindustan Institute of Technology & Science (A Deemed-to-be University), Chennai

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DELHI

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RISE	10:57	SET 00:00
TUESDAY, FEB. 08		
RISE	07:05	SET 18:06
RISE	11:29	SET 00:12
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 09		
RISE	07:05	SET 18:07
RISE	12:03	SET 01:08

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	24	05
Safdarjang	24	05
Palam	23	08

Delhi Palam Today
23°C A dry weather to continue. Shallow to moderate fog will occur during cold morning. Day will be pleasant. Night will be cold and hazy.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
23°C The weather will be dry. Shallow fog is expected in cold morning. Day will be pleasant. Night will be cold and hazy.

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2 years on, hope eludes riot victim's kin

Furkan was shot dead on Feb. 24, 2020; his brother is not pursuing case as he believes 'it's against police'

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

February marks two years of the communal riots that broke out in north-east Delhi in 2020. Among the many cases that remain unsolved is the death of Mohammad Furkan, 30, one of the many victims of the violence. His brother Mohammad Imran has given up on any hope for justice as he believes "the case is against the police".

In the last two years, he never pursued the case and he never officially heard from the police about the arrests being made, the chargesheet being filed or any development whatsoever.

He, however, has come to know from his friends in the force and local residents that four Muslim men, including a neighbour, have been arrested in connection with the murder.

When asked whether he attended any court hearing or was aware of the proceedings in the case, Mr. Imran's answer was a simple "no". "No police officer visited me after the murder and no one from the force ever officially told me about who was arrested in the case and what their role was," he said.

Policemen conducting a flag march in riot-affected north-east Delhi. ▪FILE PHOTO

Three women, he said, came forward and told him that they they saw policemen shooting Furkan - they also shared the names but Mr. Imran never hired a lawyer or pursued the matter. Why? "Because I knew nothing was going to happen," he said. "My case was against the police. There was no chance it would even be investigated. We all know who makes the rules and who suffers," he said.

"I am 200% sure that these four men [arrested in the case] didn't shoot my brother," Mr. Imran said.

The transfer of a Delhi judge – in October last year – who was hearing the riots cases also shook Mr. Imran. "When judges can be transferred overnight for asking the right questions from the police, what chance do I have?"

Mr. Imran, who runs a handicraft business, shifted his factory from the main road in Kardampuri to the lane inside because of the atmosphere, he said. "*Mahaul thik nahin rehta hai ab bhi. Kabhi bhi kuch bhi ho sakta hai... Isliye maine* factory shift *kar lia* (The atmosphere is still not normal. Anything can happen anytime... That's why I shifted my factory)," he said.

'Worried for family'

The only surviving son in the family now, Mr. Imran is always worried for the safety of his folks – another reason he did not want to pursue the matter in court. "Once you begin following the case, go for court hearings... you are troubled in different ways. I have spoken to my friends in the force who are not related to the riots cases and they tell me nothing will happen even if I pursue the matter. Instead, me and my family would be troubled," he said. "If something happens to me, what will happen to my family?"

On February 24, 2020, Furkan died of bullet injuries in Kardampuri. Videos of a wounded Fukran being rushed to an autorickshaw surfaced at that time in which locals could be heard saying that "policemen shot him". The Delhi police arrested four men - Mohammad Imran, 33, Anwar Hussain, 23, Khalid Ansari, 20 and Kasim, 20 –for his murder. The police, in the chargesheet, stated that Furkan was shot by rioters but videos showed that "no opposite group was present in the vicinity".

Furkan's wife and his two children – now aged 7 and 5 years – manage their household with the rental income from another house in the same building owned by the family.

HC rejects farmers' plea against DDA on Yamuna land

'Petition is an abuse of the law process'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The High Court has rejected a plea by a farmers' society seeking to restrain the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) from taking over a large tract of land on the Yamuna riverbank.

The court said the society has not been "able to establish any semblance of right on the property".

Justice Subramonium Prasad called the plea filed by Yamuna Bank Kishan Bachao Morcha a "mischievous petition", noting that "other than making a bald assertion that they are in possession of the area for the last 100 years, there is no document on record to establish the possession".

100 years claim

The petitioner society said its members are farmers who are living on the banks of the Yamuna for over the last 100 years and cultivating about 15,000 bighas of land. It said the members have proof of '*lagaan* (tax)' being paid by their forefathers from 1932 to 2012.

The petitioner stated that on November 08, 2020, DDA officials gathered at their land on the riverbanks for evicting them. The officials went with excavators and were accompanied by a police team and two battalions of CRPF and BSF.

The High Court, however, rejected the plea saying that the society has "cleverly not mentioned the place where they are carrying out their activities". The court also pointed out that the National Green Tribunal had on September 11, 2019 directed that a bio-diversity park be built in the area in order to cleanse the Yamuna.

No specific information

Advocate Prabhsahay Kaur, standing counsel for the DDA, said the entire floodplains of Yamuna is about 52 to 56 km, covering an area of 1,267 hectares but the society has not given any specific area.

She added that the society's petition was an abuse of the process of law as its members had given an undertaking to the Supreme Court that they will vacate the land.

Taking note of the submission, Justice Prasad said, "since the records show that the members of the petitioner/society are in unlawful occupation, the relief for compensation on the ground of DDA damaging the crop is not maintainable".

"This writ petition is nothing but an abuse of the process of law and another attempt by the members of the petitioner society to cling on to the land while they have already been held to be unauthorised occupants and encroachers," he added while dismissing the plea.

Capital reports 1,410 COVID cases, 14 deaths

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Capital reported 1,410 new COVID-19 cases and 14 deaths, a health bulletin released by the Delhi government said on Sunday.

The COVID positivity rate stood at 2.45% and over 57,549 tests were conducted. There are 8,869 active cases in the city out of which 6,401 are under home isolation.

Delhi had reported 1,604 cases, 17 deaths with a positivity rate at 2.87% on Saturday.

Haryana Board directive on Class VIII exam stirs row

CBSE schools, parents oppose decision

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

The Board of School Education Haryana (BSEH)'s directive to hold annual exams for all Class VIII students in government and private schools, irrespective of the education board they are affiliated to, has stirred a controversy.

The CBSE-affiliated school managements as well as parents of students have strongly opposed the directive.

A few private school associations have now decided to move the Punjab and Haryana High Court on the matter.

Haryana Progressive Schools' Conference (HPSC) president S.S. Gusain said the fresh communique by the BSEH is an attempt at "backdoor entry" to hold exams through the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT). He said that the HPSC would challenge the order in the court.

The Haryana government had in last November come out with directions to re-introduce board exams for Classes V and VIII in all schools to be conducted by the BSEH to improve the standard of education, but had withdrawn the order in January after a few associations of CBSE-affiliated schools moved the Punjab and Haryana High Court challenging the legal validity of the order.

RTE amendment

However, the government came out with a notification on January 18 to amend the Right to Education Act and appointed SCERT, Haryana, as the "Academic Authority" to hold exams for Classes V and VIII. The SCERT in turn entrusted the BSEH with the task of holding exams for the two classes through a letter on January 28.

The BSEH in its letter to district education officers on February 4 directed that all schools must register with the board by February 15 for holding of exams for Class VIII in March this year. The board decided not to conduct exams for Class V this year.

Col. K. Pratap Singh, who runs Colonel's Central Academy School in Gurugram, Sector-4, said the government seems adamant to conduct exams when the schools are finding it difficult to even conduct exams for Classes X and XII. "It is absolutely meaningless. The students of Class VIII are yet to return to school after the COVID third wave. We don't even know how long it might take for them to return to school," said Col. Singh. He added that CBSE schools had a well-settled evaluation system in place and there was no need for BSEH to hold exams for the students of these schools.

Several parents have also opposed the move saying that uncertainty regarding the format, syllabus and schedule of the exams for Class VIII students at the fag end of the session was not good and that the Haryana Board should have informed about it at the beginning of the session.

HC rejects student's plea to change category during NEET counselling

'Switching now would cause chaos in admission process'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has rejected a student's plea seeking to change her category from 'general' to 'OBC' during the counselling for admission to an undergraduate medical college based on the NEET-UG exam. It noted that allowing such changes at a belated stage could cause "chaos in the entire counselling process".

Justice Rekha Palli agreed with the submission of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) that, in case, such changes from unreserved category to OBC are permitted at such a belated stage, it is likely to result in the authorities "being inundated by a deluge of requests from other candidates in similar circumstances".

The judge said it would create chaos in the entire counselling process and "would inevitably cause grave hardship and inconvenience to the other students who have taken part in the NEET-UG".

> **Even though I can sympathise with the petitioner, I am unable to persuade myself to accept her claim**
>
> JUSTICE REKHA PALLI

According to the plea, Sharanya Kaja had in July last year filled out her form for appearing in the NEET-UG, in which she applied under the general category. When the result was declared in November 2021, she learnt that she had obtained an All India Rank of 18,917.

Caste certificate

At this stage, her father applied for issuance of an OBC certificate from his hometown in Andhra Pradesh in November 2021, which was issued on December 22, 2021. Armed with this OBC certificate, Ms. Kaja approached the Delhi government for issuance of a caste certificate in her favour, which was issued on January 4, 2022.

She then approached the Director General, National Testing Agency (NTA), on January 5, 2022, seeking permission to change her category from general to OBC. This request was denied, prompting her to approach the High Court.

The NTA further submitted that candidates were granted five opportunities before the declaration of the result, as late as on October 26, 2021, to seek any correction in the application form.

Justice Palli said, "Even though I can sympathise with the petitioner who is a young meritorious student, I am unable to persuade myself to accept her claim."

An oasis in the heart of a concrete jungle

Environmentalists and birders seek protection for Basai wetlands in Gurugram before it is too late

SOMA BASU

More than an address for fancy high-rise apartments, Sector 101 of Gurugram is a place of ecological importance. It is for the residents – and the authorities – to fathom the critical role the Basai wetlands here plays for nature and for people.

At a stone's throw from the glitzy malls of the Millennium City, the 250-acre shallow wetland has shrunk to a quarter of its original size over the years. Home to 300-plus species of rare, common and migratory birds, Basai is recognised as a key biodiversity area by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Wildlife Institute of India and the BirdLife International, a global network of NGOs that work to protect bird habitats.

But for the town planners, urbanisation is out of sync with environment and the Haryana government is yet to declare the site a protected refuge for birds.

Given the accelerated expansion of the city of the future, the wetland continues to disappear under newly laid roads, modern housing constructions and other infrastructure development. An upcoming expressway, cutting through the terrain here, has majorly impacted the flyway of thousands of migratory birds from Europe and Central Asia.

Till a decade ago, the Basai wetlands was a top birdwatching destination where the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) had documented 281 species of avian population. But the number of species has steadily declined with each passing year, according to Pankaj Gupta of Delhi Bird Foundation.

He led a few citizens the legal way to the National Green Tribunal when the installation of a construction and demolition waste processing and recycling plant added to the mess. But it continues to spew cement dust and gradually choke the area.

The Basai wetlands in Gurugram has shrunk to a quarter of its original size over the years. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Gajinder Bains has been bird watching at Basai since 1980s. He mentors amateur birdwatchers now and was at the site three months ago for the annual count. "Both species and population of birds have dwindled but they are still coming in hopeful numbers; the birding area has so far managed to co-exist with the ongoing destruction and pressures on the land," he told *The Hindu*. "But we need to prevent further encroachment with immediate action if we want to save Gurugram's bird paradise," he asserted.

'Lack of awareness'

"The problem is lack of awareness about the history and importance of wetlands among the people. The marshy wilderness is seen as wasteland to be dumped with garbage," said Neha Dara of Roundglass Sustain, an initiative of like-minded individuals creating awareness about India's biodiversity.

Ultimately, it would be to the peril of the residents when the threat of water scarcity, receding groundwater table, flash floods during heavy rains and the sight of depleting greenery from their high-rise windows turn into a bitter reality.

In an attempt to sensitise the local residents and build a citizens' movement, film and TV director-producer Chandramouli Basu made a short film – *Why We Must Save Basai's Bird Paradise*. Released in time to mark the World Wetlands Day on February 2, the six-minute film highlights the need to value Basai's waterbodies.

Mr. Basu made more than three dozen trips during different seasons to the Basai wetlands last year. "I parked myself for hours at different vantage points during different times of the day to capture the beautiful winged visitors. Birders and wildlife photographers who came to the site shared with me how the vital ecosystem was slowly getting destroyed with increased construction activity all around," he rued.

Compiling the annual sightings of individual birders, e-bird.org – the go-to repository of birds – has listed several varieties of birds, including the bar-headed goose, flamingos, grey-headed swamphen, cattle egret, black bittern, yellow-bellied prinia, grey-headed lapwing, watercock, white-rumped vulture, wood sandpiper, smoky warbler, water pipit, common crane, citrine wagtail and waders, spotted in Basai wetlands in 2020-21. Ornithologists note Basai shelters 60% of the total bird species seen in the National Capital Region.

"The Basai wetlands is like an oasis in the heart of a concrete jungle. We need a new appreciation of what wetlands provide to us if we want to reclaim the lost glory," said Mr. Basu, whose film was commissioned by Roundglass Sustain.

Man thrashed, robbed in road rage incident

Accused duo yet to be identified: police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 61-year-old man was allegedly thrashed and robbed after being pulled out of his car by two motorbike-borne men in a road rage incident in Rohini's Aman Vihar, the police said on Sunday.

The victim, identified as Harikesh Sharma, is a Delhi-based property dealer. The police are analysing CCTV footage to identify the accused persons.

An argument broke out between Mr. Sharma and the two accused after their vehicles came in each other's way.

The accused used verbal slurs against the victim, the police said. "They punched him and broke his spectacles. They also robbed him of his gold ring," a police officer said.

The accused fled the spot after locals gathered in the area. The police said Mr. Sharma was on his way to office when the scuffle happened.

He was rushed to SGM Hospital and was later referred to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Hospital for further treatment.

Mr. Sharma sustained minor injuries, the police said.

Doctors end strike at civic body hospital

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The East Delhi Municipal Corporation on Sunday announced that doctors at the civic body-run Swami Dayanand Hospital have called off their strike over non-payment of salaries since November and pending arrears.

The civic body said OPD services at the hospital will resume on Monday while emergency services resumed on Saturday after remaining shut since February 1. "We have convinced the doctors that their demands will be met," an EDMC official said.

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NEET new version of old conspiracy: Stalin

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said on Sunday that the DMK was opposing NEET not just for the sake of politics but because it was a new version of the conspiracy to deny education to people based on their social status.

"Education has been denied to people for centuries. They have had access to education in the last few decades as a result of many struggles. Education offers them a qualification and status. NEET is a new version of the conspiracy to deny education to people because of their status," he said, launching a virtual campaign for the urban local bodies elections.

"We are under no compulsion to politicise NEET. The BJP government at the Centre is pursuing a lot of anti-people policies and they need to be opposed. It is not just NEET. We will oppose all the policies and schemes that are against Tamil Nadu and its people," he said.

Mr. Stalin said the BJP had imposed NEET on the nation in 2016, and Tamil Nadu was exempted from it for a year because former CM Jayalalithaa had opposed it.

"Had the opposition continued, NEET would have come to an end. But the AIADMK government just nodded its head and paved the way for all the problems we have today. It could have adopted another resolution in the Assembly after the Union government returned the Bill against NEET. We have the courage to readopt the resolution, and we will send it back to the Governor. We will not go back on our resolve," he said.

Stray cattle might come in the way of BJP in western U.P.

Even as the SP makes it a poll plank, Adityanath calls them 'homeless cattle'

ANUJ KUMAR
GHAZIABAD

In the Gulaothi town of Bulandshahr, Puneet Chaudhary, a Jat farmer, is agitated about the rise of stray cattle in the region. "I caught a bull, neutered it, and used it in the cart. *Kuchh toh fayda mile* (At least I would get some benefit)," he said.

Wiring the farm, he said, was no solution. "Earlier, we could sell our old cows and ox in the monthly animal market but under the BJP rule that income is ruled out."

For Mohammed Ehtram of Sitapur district, spending nights on a *machan* has become a routine affair. "Except for potato and mustard crops, stray cattle spare nothing... they somehow enter the field."

In Aligarh, pharma executive Dinesh Kumar said driving from Aligarh to Mathura at night was fraught with danger. "There are hardly any street lights and you never know when you would find stray cattle on roads," he said.

Observers feel the issue of stray cattle is going to affect the outcome of the upcoming polls.

Stray cattle in a village in Hathras. ▪ ANUJ KUMAR

Responding to the noises from the ground, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav made bull attack a poll plank and promised ₹5 lakh to those killed by a rampaging bull. On Saturday, in Aligarh, Mr. Yadav said for four-and-a-half years, the public is being troubled by the bull. "We will remove both the bull and bulldozer," he said.

Viral memes

Memes of CM Yogi Adityanath as a bull are being shared by the IT Cell of the party. In the Chhata constituency of Mathura, Rashtriya Lok Dal chief Jayant Singh said under the BJP rule, farmers were left protecting their crops with a torch in one hand and a stick in another. Mr. Singh asks, "Who are those Jats whom the BJP is wooing as the Jat farmers are busy driving out bulls from farms."

On the other hand, CM Adityanath cites the closure of illegal slaughterhouses as one of his government's biggest achievements in his speeches. In his interactions with the media, he describes stray cattle as homeless cattle.

According to official reports, 1.03 lakh stray cows have been adopted by 56,853 people in U.P. The State gives ₹900 per month per cattle to those who have adopted cattle.

However, farmers say the cost of fodder is ₹1,400 per quintal in rural areas and up to ₹2,000 in urban areas and that most of the promises are on paper. Protection centres lack proper structures, and most importantly the cattle is let out at night, are some of the charges that one came across in the region.

In the Jat belt, the newly formed gaushalas have created a social tussle. A section of the community felt that it has become a revenue model for Brahmins and Vaishyas. They said cars and autos are hired by these gaushalas to collect ₹1 and food in the name of cows. "Jat farmers don't need any moral guidance on how to manage their cattle," said Mr. Singh.

The fear of strict implementation of law and the rise of gau rakshaks has made it difficult for Muslims to tend cows.

"Cows are less expensive than buffaloes... but you can't sell a cow or a calf. Most let them out because they cannot feed them. It is the same for all the small farmers but Muslim farmers are being targeted," said Akhtar Ali a farmer from Mathura.

Observers said the gau rakshaks have emerged as vigilantes who, in collusion with the local police, take a cut for providing safe passage to bovine-laden trucks. Even some MLAs of the ruling party faced the charge of patronising such elements.

Conman tries to bribe Tihar Jail staff member

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Alleged conman Sukesh Chandrashekhar has been shifted to another jail in Tihar and three prison staff transferred after it was found that he had tried to bribe one of them, officials said on Sunday.

Director General (Delhi Prisons) Sandeep Goel said information was received that Chandrashekhar allegedly tried to bribe one of the staff of jail number 4 where he was lodged. He allegedly got ₹1.25 lakh deposited into the bank account of an inmate's brother, the officials said. "We have transferred three staff," Mr. Goel added.

Tripura's Bru people will be resettled by March, says Minister

'43% of 6,950 families living in six relief camps rehabilitated'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AGARTALA

All the internally displaced Bru tribal people who are living in relief camps in Tripura for years will be rehabilitated permanently within the State by March 31, Union Minister of State for Social Empowerment & Justice Pratima Bhoumik said on Sunday.

The rehabilitation of these people, who are originally from neighbouring Mizoram, began in April last year and around 43% of the 6,950 Bru families living in six relief camps in North Tripura district have already been resettled, according to government data.

"Bru refugees have started going to the designated places and the resettlement process is expected to be completed by March 31," Ms. Bhoumik said after a review meeting on the issue at Kanchanpur in the district.

A Bru woman with children at the Naisingpara relief camp in Kanchanpur sub-division of Tripura. ▪ FILE PHOTO: RITU RAJ KONWAR

Finding a solution to their problem was apparently impossible but it is going to be solved under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, she claimed.

"We do meet once a month to review the progress. Today, we had a meeting with North Tripura District Magistrate Nagesh Kumar and SDMs of Kanchanpur and Panisagar to revisit the process," the Union Minister said.

Thousands of the Bru people have been living in relief camps in Kanchanpur and Panisagar sub-divisions since 1997.

They had fled their homeland Mizoram to reach the neighbouring State because of ethnic clashes.

Satkosia making fresh attempts to become a suitable tiger habitat

Forest dept. is relocating three villages from the core area

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

Fifteen years after declaration as a tiger reserve and failure of revival of big cat population through India's first inter-State tiger relocation programme, the Satkosia Tiger Reserve (STR) in Odisha has started making efforts afresh to re-establish it as a tiger habitat.

The State and Forest department are attempting to relocate inhabitants of three villages from its core area to create 500 sq km area of inviolate zone for tigers.

"At present, the STR has about 200 sq km area, which does not have any human presence. We need to expand the inviolate zone so that the reserve becomes suitable for tigers," said Akshaya Patnaik, Regional Chief Conservator of Forest, Angul.

Mr. Patnaik said, "We are persuading villagers of Rataranga, Asanbahal and Tulka so that they move out from the core area and make way for the tigers. The compensation is attractive and villagers will get a better life outside forest."

There were six villages in the STR core area and one of these falls under the administrative jurisdiction of Angul Wildlife Division while rest comes under Mahanadi Division. Raiguda comprising close to 200 villagers, which was under Angul, had already been shifted out of Satkosia's core area.

The tiger that was relocated from the Kanha Reserve Forest to the Satkosia Tiger Reserve in Odisha. ▪ FILE PHOTO

The STR was declared as tiger reserve in 2007. In 2017, the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) tried to rationalise STR boundary by excluding 104 villages from its STR's jurisdiction. The STR had 963.87 sq km where it was declared as a tiger reserve. Later, forest patches of 172 sq km were proposed to be added to the STR.

Dwindling population

During the past few years, the STR has been in news for all the wrong reasons. At the time of declaration Satkosia as a tiger reserve, it had about 12 tigers. Over the years, the big cat population dwindled. The STR is left with only one tigress. However, the lone big cat has been missing for past two months. STR field staff has been on its trail.

"We will install 400 cameras to trace footprints. Other evidences such as cattle kills are also being collected. In the past, a tiger from Satkosia had migrated to areas on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar," said Mr. Patnaik.

To revive tiger population in the STR, India's first inter-State tiger relocation programme was launched by way of import of a pair of tiger and tigress from Kanha Tiger Reserve and Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in 2018. But, the programme had failed primarily due to hostility of local communities and their intensive use of the tiger reserve resources for livelihoods. While the tiger died in a poacher's trap, villagers opposed tigress' presence after it strayed into human habitation. The tigress was finally sent back to Madhya Pradesh.

According to the National Tiger Conservation Authority, a total of 24 species of ungulates, carnivores, domestic animals, omnivores and galliformes were photo-captured in Satkosia.

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General public is hereby informed that I, Raman Kumar Sharma s/o Shreechand Sharma R/o Village Ladana post khanpur District Bulandshahr, is owner of the plot No 21, Area 111.06 sq yards, situated in the area of, Khasra no 482, Kamal Enclave Block B, Village Chipiyana Buzurg, Tehsil Dadri GB Nagar UP, through a Sale Deed dated on 10/12/2021, as DOC no 40720. The previous document i.e. original sale deed dated on 25/03/2004 as DOC no 2245 has been lost and the lost report has been logged on through online dated 27/01/2022 with L.A.R. no. 20220000053634. I am going to take loan against this property. If any person found the said document or having any objection against the said property, please contact to undersigned person along with the supporting documents within 7 days from the date of publication of this.Raman Kumar Sharma s/o Shreechand SharmaVillage Ladana post khanpur, district Bulandshahr UP 245405Mob 9717595800

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General Public that Management of **Sehgal Neo Hospital, Meera Bagh** will destroy the **patient's old record** uptill **31-12-2018.** Therefore, anyone who requires the said records may acquire the same from the Hospital record room on submission of an application within **15 days** from the date of publication of this notice. The management will not be responsible afterwards.
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17th June	DELHI (Vijay Nagar)	9717 380 832
17th June	DELHI (Rajender Nagar)	9811 293 743
20th June	BENGALURU (Koramangala)	7619 166 663
24th June	JAIPUR (Tonk Road)	8290 800 441
11th July	PATNA (Exhibition Road)	7463 950 774
22nd July	BHOPAL (M.P. Nagar)	7509 975 361
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PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of Axis Bank Ltd. that **Mr. Bhoop Singh Pal** intends to purchase/mortgage the **Prop No. KK/77,** admeasuring 201.66 sq. yds., Block- K, situated at **Sector- XVIII (G.M.P.), Kavi Nagar, Ghaziabad, U.P.** with our client Axis Bank Limited against the financial assistance. Whereas, Mr. Girdhari Lal Garg was the owner of above said property by way of Freehold Deed dated 22.05.2001. Unfortunately, **Mr. Girdhari Lal Garg** died and leaving behind **Mr. Ravinder Kumar Garg, Mr. Ashok Kumar Garg, Ms. Subhlesh Gupta, Mr. Sunil Kumar & Mr. Sushil Kumar as his Legal heirs (as per Surviving Member Certificate). Now, Mr. Ravinder Kumar Garg, Mr. Ashok Kumar Garg, Ms. Subhlesh Gupta, Mr. Sunil Kumar & Mr. Sushil Kumar** jointly intend to sell the same to **Mr. Bhoop Singh Pal.**
If any person(s) having objection with regard to ownership/mortgage of the Said Property is/are requested to intimate in writing to undersigned within 07 days from the date of issue of this notice at below address. In the event no information is received within 07 days from date hereof, our Client i.e. **Axis Bank Ltd.** will proceed with the mortgage process.
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A-13, LGF, South Extn-II, New Dehi-49 # 011-26262610, 11, 12

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

13th ANNIVERSARY
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W/O. Late Navalpakkam Rajagopalan
"You are living in our Hearts"
Fondly Remembered By
Raaghavan and Sudha
Krishnamurthy and Sandhya
Sampath and Jayshree
Radha and Selvakumar
Kalyani and Suryanarayan
Grand Children and Great Grand Children...

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TENDER-CUM-AUCTION SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002

The following property/ies mortgaged to **City Union Bank Limited** will be sold in Tender-cum-Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 8 (6) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of **Rs.1,86,93,367/- (Rupees One Crore Eighty Six Lakh Ninety Three Thousand Three Hundred and Sixty Seven only)** as on **18-01-2022** together with further interest to be charged from **19-01-2022** onwards and other expenses, any other dues to the Bank by the borrowers / guarantors **No.1) M/s. Mona Metals, Having its Registered Office at 3808, Gali Barna, Bara Tooti, Sadar Bazar, Near Heera Jewellers, Delhi - 110006. No.2) Mr. Prakash Daga, S/o. Mr. Harish Chand Daga, at Flat No.C-5, Plot No.11, Bandu Vihar, Sector - 10, Dwarka, New Delhi - 110075. Also at, Mr. Prakash Daga, S/o. Mr. Harish Chand Daga, at Flat No.E-3, Plot No.11, Bandu Vihar, Sector - 10, Dwarka, New Delhi - 110075. No.3) Mrs. Vijay Laxmi Daga, W/o. Prakash Daga, at Flat No.C-5, Plot No.11, Bandu Vihar, Sector - 10, Dwarka, New Delhi - 110075. Also at, Mrs. Vijay Laxmi Daga, W/o. Mr. Harish Chand Daga, at Flat No.E-3, Plot No.11, Bandu Vihar, Sector - 10, Dwarka, New Delhi - 110075.**
Note : That our **244 - New Delhi-Rohini Branch** has also extended Financial Assistance (FITL - ADHOC : 501912090016596) dated **01-09-2020** requested by No.1 of you represented by No.2 of you as Proprietor for which No.3 of you stood as Co-obligant and No.1 of you stood as Guarantor for the facility for a total amount of **Rs.7,58,000/-** at a ROI of **12.25%.** The same has been also classified as **NPA** on **22-12-2020** and the outstanding balance as on **18-01-2022** is **Rs.9,10,680/-** plus further interest and penal interest of **2.00%** with monthly rests to be charged from **19-01-2022** till the date of realization.
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All that piece and parcel of Property bearing No.3808, without Roof Rights on Ground Floor, One Room, Three Stores, One Verandah, Admeasuring 43 Sq.Yds. known as Gali Berna, Sadar Bazar, Delhi and bounded as under : North : Other Property, South : Common Passage, East : Other's Property, West : Other's Property.
Reserve Price: Rs.95,00,000/-
(Rupees Ninety Five Lakh Only)
AUCTION DETAILS

Date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale	Venue
17-03-2022	**City Union Bank Limited, New Delhi-Rohini Branch,** C-9/115, Sector 8, Rohini, New Delhi, Delhi -110085. Telephone No.011-27941336, Cell No:9350011173.

Terms and Conditions of Tender-cum-Auction Sale :
(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself / herself. **(2)** The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from **The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, New Delhi-Rohini Branch, C-9/115, Sector 8, Rohini, New Delhi, Delhi - 110085. (3)** The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to **The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd.,** together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of **10%** of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of **"City Union Bank Ltd.", on or before 12.00 Noon** on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. **(4)** For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact **Telephone No.011-27941336, Cell No.9350011173. (5)** The property/ies are sold on "As-is-where-is", "As-is-what-is" and "whatever-there is" basis. **(6)** The sealed tenders will be opened in the presence of the intending bidders at **01.00 p.m.** on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. Though in general the sale will be by way of closed tenders, the Authorised Officer may, at his sole discretion, conduct an Open Auction among the interested bidders who desire to quote a bid higher than the one received in the closed tender process, and in such an event, the sale shall be conferred on the person making highest bid. The sale, however, is subject to confirmation of City Union Bank Limited. **(7)** The successful bidder shall have to pay **25% (inclusive of EMD paid)** of the sale amount **immediately** on completion of sale and the balance amount of **75%** within **15 days** from the date of confirmation of sale, failing which the initial deposit of **25%** shall be forfeited. **(8)** The Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful purchaser only after receipt of the entire sale consideration within the time limit stipulated herein. **(9)** The successful purchaser shall bear the charges/fees payable for conveyance, such as stamp duty, registration fee etc., as applicable under law. **(10)** The successful bidder should pay the statutory dues (lawful house tax, electricity charges and other dues), TDS, GST if any, due to Government, Government Undertaking and local bodies. **(11)** The Authorised Officer shall have all the powers to accept or reject the bids or postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reason whatsoever.
Place : Kumbakonam, Date : 05-02-2022 **Authorised Officer**
Regd. Office : 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612 001, **CIN -** L65110TN1904PLC001287,
Telephone No. 0435-2402322, **Fax :** 0435-2431746, **Website :** www.cityunionbank.com

IN BRIEF

KCR failed to install Ambedkar statue: BJP

HYDERABAD

State BJP president Bandi Sanjay Kumar, on Sunday, castigated Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao for 'failing' to fulfil his promise of erecting a statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in Hyderabad even after six years. After inspecting the works of the proposed Ambedkar Memorial, he said that in 2016, Mr. Rao had announced installation of the 125-ft statue in the heart of the capital claiming to be the 'first of its kind in the country'.

18 JNTUA students suspended for 'ragging'

ANANTAPUR

The College Academic Council of Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University on Saturday night suspended 18 second-year students both from academics and hostel, for allegedly ragging first year students on the Anantapur Engineering College [Gurukula] hostel premises. While no FIR was lodged, SP Fakkeerappa Kaginelli said that he had taken *suo motu* cognisance and deputed a DSP-rank officer to probe the incident.

Notice served for calling Ayurveda 'pseudoscience'

KOZHIKODE

The Kerala State Medical Council for Indian Systems of Medicine has served a notice on a liver-specialist doctor, who has been accused of 'defaming' Ayurveda and calling the traditional branch of medicine a 'pseudoscience'. A letter dated January 31 pointed out that the council referred the issue of penal action against Cyriac Abby Philips, hepatologist at a Kochi-based private hospital, to the ethics committee of the Travancore-Cochin Medical Councils (TCMC).

Bommai's Delhi trip spurs talk of early Cabinet expansion

Main intention is to have meeting with MPs ahead of State Budget, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The two-day visit to Delhi by Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai from Monday has raised speculation about a possible Cabinet expansion or reshuffle though he is yet to receive confirmation for appointment with top party leaders.

While officially, the Chief Minister has announced that the main intention of his visit to Delhi was to have the customary meeting with MPs ahead of the Budget session and also to discuss pending issues before Karnataka, he has sought appointment from senior party leaders, including BJP president J.P. Nadda, government sources said.

In Delhi, as per the official travel itinerary, Mr. Bommai is scheduled to meet the MPs on Monday and discuss with the legal team dealing with inter-State river water issues where Karnataka is a party. He is set to discuss various projects with Parliament members during his meeting, which comes soon after the presentation of the Union Budget. Mr. Bommai, who holds the Finance portfolio, is set to present his first Budget in March.

Basavaraj Bommai

Government sources said the Chief Minister has sought appointment with the Union Finance Minister, Jal Shakthi and Energy Minister.

Appointment sought

"I will also meet the legal counsel who are representing the State in the water disputes. A few important decisions would be taken on the future course of action," he told presspersons here on Sunday. He said he had sought appointment with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman. "I intend to discuss the State Budget, financial condition, GST, and other issues," he said.

It may be noted that several ministerial aspirants are seeking an early expansion of the ministry as just over a year is left for the completion of the term of the present Assembly.

Meanwhile, Karnataka Minister for Primary and Secondary Education B.C. Nagesh downplayed the speculation over Cabinet expansion and said Chief Minister's visit was to hold discussions with leaders ahead of the State Budget.

Fielding reporters' queries in Mysuru, Mr. Nagesh said the proposed Cabinet expansion had not been discussed in the party. "It is being discussed only in the media," he said.

However, he said the Chief Minister and party's senior leaders will take an appropriate decision about the Cabinet expansion.

INTERVIEW | ASHISH SHELAR

'BJP is all set to get a clear majority in BMC elections'

Our party does not work in individual capacity, says MLA

SONAM SAIGAL

With India's richest municipal corporation, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), elections round the corner, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) member of the Maharashtra Assembly **Ashish Shelar** talks to *The Hindu* about its estranged relationship with the Shiv Sena and why it needs a reality check. He is confident of the BJP getting a clear majority this time and says the Sena has shown its defeat in the civic body polls by adding nine new wards. Excerpts:

You are appointed the head of the election management committee, how would you describe your role and responsibilities

■ The BJP does not work in individual capacity, our strength is in collective leadership. For the election, our face is Honourable Devendra Fadnavisji, organisationally our head is Mangal Prabhat Lodhaji and the election committee has many sub committees. I will play a key role to see that things go in the right direction as we want to take everyone along on the narrative which we have decided and the result we want is victory. Compared to the last elections, we know where we are weak. We have boosted our organisational strength more at the booth level in the city.

You talk about building a narrative, what exactly are you referring to?

■ Today the Sena is talking about environmental issues, but they haven't even been able to stop illegal burning of wires in Dharavi which generate poisonous gases.

They are busy painting a rosy picture about environmental issues of tomorrow but today humans have no access to proper medicines in the civic hospitals but they want to spend money on penguins (in the Byculla zoo). The narrative we are building is that Shiv Sena needs a reality check and voters need awareness.

Which issues will the BJP focus on?

■ We have seen and gathered the information that Mumbaikars have suffered a lot in the last 25 years. It is not a small period, we have seen one particular party (Sena) heading the Corporation, though they were with us for some time, still decision-making powers were always with the Shiv Sena. Every election they divert the attention of the Mumbaikars on issues that are not important to them. However, our concern is as tax payers - whether you are staying in slums, gaothan, chawls, buildings or bungalows - are you getting good roads, do you have enough water supply, is your garbage getting disposed of in the proper manner, what is the air quality around your house. It is our duty to focus on what you are paying the BMC and what you are getting in return.

In 2017, BJP was short of two seats and yet did not stake claim for the Mayor's post, what if history repeats itself, will you again hold the same stand?

■ I am confident that we will get clear majority this time. Last time also we could stake claim for the Mayor's post but Devendra Fadnavis was just being generous. And it is this generosity which is being misconstrued by the Shiv Sena. The fact remains, in the last 25 years, Shiv Sena has never got a majority. Their maximum was 103 seats and their minimum was 76 seats. So out of 227, they never crossed 114 alone only when we (BJP) were with them (Sena) they got the numbers.

You speak about Shiv Sena never getting a majority without BJP; however the Chief Minister recently made a scathing remark of, "25 years were wasted in the alliance"

■ The decision of having an alliance with us was taken by Late Balasaheb Thackerayji, Pramod Mahajan, Atal Bihari Vajpayeeji and we take a lot of pride in that decision. If Uddhav Thackerayji is regretting the decision taken by Balasahebji it is his personal remark. We think Balasahebji always stood by the ideology, we cherish that moment, therefore we do not curse that time.

Apex council to meet on water boards' purview

Telangana, A.P. yet to depute staff

B. CHANDRASHEKHAR
HYDERABAD

With no headway in sight on the implementation of the purview of the Krishna and Godavari River Management Boards, the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) has decided to hold a third meeting of the apex council soon to convince Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to hand over the management of all projects to the two river boards.

Although the gazette notification issued by the Ministry on the purview of river boards on July 15 last had come into force officially on October 14, 2021, the two member States are yet to depute the required staff and deposit the one-time seed money of ₹400 crore each besides not handing over the projects citing various reasons.

The two States have consensus on handing over only one Godavari Basin project - Peddavagu in Khammam district having ayacut in Telangana and A.P. On the other hand, A.P. has offered to hand over the management of Srisailam project, one of the two common reservoirs, with the pre-condition that Telangana should hand over its hydro-electric projects/units at Srisailam and Nagarjunasagar.

Dileep case: one more audio clip released

Actor submitted it to the High Court

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

A voice message on WhatsApp, which reportedly has film director P. Balachandrakumar requesting actor Dileep to make a video call to two people to whom the director owed over ₹18 lakh, has made it to the public domain. It was reportedly submitted by the actor to the High Court in a sealed cover.

In the message that reportedly dates back to April 14, 2021, a person is heard making this request to the actor and also to lie to the two persons to whom the director owes the money, that a movie directed by Mr. Balachandrakumar (and starring Dileep) would be released in four months' time, to assuage them.

Mr. Dileep had submitted to the court that he did not yield to the request in the audio message and hence the director (who later on released an audio clip of the actor and five others speaking of endangering the lives of five police officials who probed the sexual assault case in which Dileep is an accused) turned against him.

Later, the director claimed he had sought Dileep's help, having been a friend for seven years.

Pinarayi back in Kerala, faces tough challenges

Focus on Lok Ayukta ordinance

G. ANAND
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday returned from a 21-day sojourn abroad to find himself facing key challenges that could test his political and administrative skills in the coming days.

Mr. Vijayan made a beeline for the Raj Bhavan where he was closeted with Governor Arif Mohammed Khan. By some accounts, Mr. Vijayan hoped to persuade Mr. Khan to give his assent to the ordinance seeking to amend the Kerala Lok Ayukta Act, 1999.

The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) had petitioned Mr. Khan against giving gubernatorial consent to the executive order.

The UDF claimed the amendment ordinance aspired to relegate the ombudsman to a minor advisory role in cases of corruption and maladministration against public officials.

It alleged that the Cabinet had moved with undue haste to defang the Lok Ayukta to shield Mr. Vijayan from prosecution in a slew of nepotism and corruption charges. Mr. Vijayan reportedly hoped to convince Mr. Khan that the arguably harsh law was patently anti-democratic and required amendment. For one, it lacked an appeal provision.

The Chief Minster might weigh introducing the ordinance as a Bill in the budget session of the Assembly, if Mr. Khan demurred.

Importantly, Mr. Vijayan might attempt to mollify the Communist Party of India, which had expressed scepticism about "diluting" the powers of the Lok Ayukta.

Sea view

Weekend blues: A view of the beach which saw fewer visitors in the past few days in Visakhapatnam on Sunday. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

Karnataka to survey monuments in all taluks

13 taluks will be covered this year

R. KRISHNA KUMAR
MYSURU

The Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage has launched a major survey to update the inventory of cultural properties and monuments strewn across Karnataka.

Given the scope of the survey and the magnitude of the work involved, the project will be taken up in a phase-wise manner and 13 taluks across the State will be covered this year.

This is in addition to 5 taluks which have already been surveyed.

Karnataka has a treasure-trove of historical monuments and structures of which 844 are of State importance and declared as 'Protected' under the Karnataka Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1961.

In addition, there are 609 centrally protected monuments of national importance under the jurisdiction of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

B.R. Poornima, Commissioner, Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage, told *The Hindu* that the pilot project of the survey was taken up in Mysuru taluk last year and the report has been finalised.

In Mysuru taluk alone as many as 635 antiquities have been recorded. Scholars and experts will scrutinise if they fulfil the criteria of being elevated to the status of a monument of State importance, she added.

The government has released ₹50 lakh for surveying the 13 taluks. This is the first such survey which will entail covering every village at the taluk level.

Two persons booked ahead of PM's visit

STAFF REPORTER
HYDERABAD

Hours before Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived at Muchintal village near here to inaugurate the Statue of Equality on Saturday, the Telangana police reportedly picked up two persons from the venue.

Highly placed sources said the two, hailing from a northern State, were hired as guards by the *ashram* through a private security.

'Preventive measure'

"They were hired by the *ashram* as security guards through a private agency and their pick up was just a preventive measure to avoid any untoward incident during the VVIP's visit," a senior intelligence officer said.

Rare insect sighted in Seshachalam

A Tirupati photographer has clicked black percher, a dragon fly species, recently

A.D. RANGARAJAN
TIRUPATI

Black percher or black ground skimmer (*Diplacodes lefebvrii*), a species of dragon fly, was sighted for the first time in the Seshachalam Hill ranges recently. It belongs to the phylum arthropoda, class insecta and order odonata.

Keen interest

O. Inesh Siddhartha, a Tirupati-based wildlife photographer, clicked the species in the forest area abutting the city recently. The B.Sc. Microbiology graduate from Sree Vidyanikethan group started photography as a hobby, developed a keen interest towards macro photography and moved into the woods for an occasional click.

Up close: The dragonfly 'Black percher' sighted for the first time in the Seshachalam hill ranges. ■ O. INESH SIDDHARTHA

"I have seen many insects in the forest, but chose this black dragonfly as I somehow felt it was rare. It took four and a half hours for me to get a close view," Mr. Siddhartha told *The Hindu*.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Red List of threatened species, Black Ground Skimmer was labelled in 2016 as of 'least concern' in view of its wide prevalence in southern Eurasia and the whole of Africa.

The insect has been sighted in forest locations of Karnataka and coastal Andhra Pradesh, but this appears to be its maiden appearance in the Seshachalam ranges. It is known to move near forest streams.

Merit certificate

Mr. Siddhartha has received a merit certificate during the the recent Republic Day celebrations in Chittoor for having scored first in the wildlife photography in the district by capturing the image of a red dragonfly in the past.

Though the black percher is not a rarity, he feels this documentation will go a long way in aiding further research on the species.

Welfare societies in Rajasthan to get a boost

Land allotment at concessional rates

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Welfare societies in Rajasthan are set to get a boost with the State government approving a proposal for allotment of land at concessional prices for their activities.

The projects for promoting girls' education and social upliftment will get an impetus with the governments support after a decision of the State Cabinet.

The State Cabinet decided at a meeting presided over by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot here on Wednesday that various communities would get the land free-of-cost or at concessional rates for their welfare activities.

An order for allotment of land made earlier at a concessional rate of 5% in Jodhpur to Jatia Society for a girls' hostel was maintained at the meeting.

The Cabinet also gave its approval to the free allotment of 1,341.08 square yards of land to Jatt Patti Prajapat Samaj, Balotra, for construction of a community building at 50% of the prevailing reserve rate for land.

Along with this decision, the Cabinet approved a proposal to make 6.7 bigha land in Tonk district's Sevarampura village free from the government's acquisition.

The bank guarantee amount of ₹21.50 crore deposited for setting up a medical college in Sriganganagar was also released from forfeiture.

Self-defence training launched

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday said the Home Department had been instructed to use Police Training Schools to provide self-defence training for women.

He was speaking after launching the 'Obavva Art of Self-Defence Training' by the Social Welfare Department. He said the training will be offered to girl students in schools and colleges. Stating that self-confidence is an important component of self-defence, he said the Social Welfare department is launching the programme to provide training to 50,000 girls students in Backward Classes and Social Welfare Department hostels.

Fixing frequencies first

Policymakers must make sure that the 5G economic payoff will outweigh the high cost

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget announcement that the Government proposes to conduct the "required spectrum auctions" in 2022 to facilitate the roll-out of 5G mobile phone services in fiscal 2022-23 has understandably triggered speculation including about the feasibility of the timeline. The Government's keenness to expedite the roll-out was framed by Ms. Sitharaman as being propelled by an appreciation of the latest generation telecommunication technology's ability to serve as an enabler of economic growth and job creation. Commenting on the Budget announcement, Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said TRAI was expected to submit its recommendations on the spectrum to be set aside for 5G by March, adding that the auction for the airwaves would be held soon after. While last week's flurry of announcements have raised the possibility that the next auction of telecom spectrum may be held within the next few months, there is little clarity on the approach the Government plans to take with regard to the crucial issues surrounding the introduction of 5G services. Foremost are questions around the particular frequencies the regulator is likely to recommend, the Government's plans on pricing the spectrum, and most crucially, the very viability of the new technology, both for the telecom companies and the economy as a whole. With the financially stressed private telecom service provider industry now reduced to a near duopoly, as Vodafone Idea continues to bleed losses and subscribers and even plans to convert some of its outstanding interest dues to the DoT into an equity stake that will make the Union government the largest shareholder, the sector's appetite for the highly capital intensive 5G technology is unlikely to be substantial at the moment.

That 5G represents an exponential leap in technology is beyond doubt. However, most countries that have commercialised 5G so far largely find the technology still predominantly deployed as an upgraded replacement for 4G in terms of end use, with the industrial and public utility applications envisaged still at least a few years away. Also, for the new technology to work at its optimum potential the Government would need to not only offer the key operational frequencies including the below 1 GHz, the C-Band frequencies around 3.5 GHz, and the higher 26 GHz but also crucially enable the transport or backhaul of signals between the base stations and telecom operator's core network by offering no- to low-cost E-Band airwaves. With the COVID-19 pandemic having shown up the existing mobile networks' inadequacies in terms of reach, especially in enabling the delivery of education to remote and rural students, it may make the most sense to delay the introduction of 5G until policymakers are sure its economic payoff will outweigh the high cost.

Death of a terrorist

Geopolitical and sectarian faultlines in Iraq and Syria enhance the threat from the IS

The death of Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, the leader of the Islamic State (IS), has come at a time when the terrorist outfit has been trying to revive its fortunes in Iraq and Syria, its core region. A few weeks earlier, IS militants had carried out an ambitious attack – their largest since the death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, IS founder, in 2019 – on a prison in north-eastern Syria's Hasakah, to free thousands of jihadists. But it was a failure as American soldiers joined the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a Kurdish militia, to push back the militants. Qurayshi blew himself up along with his family, like his predecessor did three years ago, when U.S. special forces approached his hideout in Idlib, the province controlled by jihadists linked with al Qaeda. When he became the IS chief, the entity had transformed itself from a 'Caliphate', with control over some key cities in Iraq and Syria, into an underground insurgency with global branches. Under Qurayshi, the IS continued to operate like a loose confederation of autonomous networks. Its Afghan and West African branches expanded operations, while in Iraq and Syria, it staged occasional attacks – a reminder that it is only the physical Caliphate that has been destroyed.

It is more than a coincidence that both Baghdadi and Qurayshi were hiding in Syria's Idlib. The Syrian government's efforts to recapture the territory have not been successful as there is strong regional opposition, especially from Turkey which fears another refugee influx. The province is controlled by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a globally designated terrorist outfit that was formerly known as Jabhat al-Nusra, the Syrian branch of al Qaeda. Idlib is now run by Abu Mohammad al-Joulani, the al Qaeda militant who was sent to Syria by Baghdadi in 2013, in the early stages of the civil war, to open a branch of his outfit. If a lasting solution to the jihadist control of Idlib is not found, the future Baghdadis and Qurayshis would also take refuge in this region. Another important lesson the IS's recent attacks provides is that the Syrian Kurds remain a key ally in the fight against the IS, as the Hasakah incident has shown. The U.S. should not throw them at the mercy of Turkey – like the Trump administration once did – once the IS threat is minimised. They should be incorporated into a larger regional counter-terror strategy. Lastly, the IS has learned how to survive these occasional setbacks. It has lost its Caliphate and its top commanders but there are thousands of foot soldiers spread across Iraq and Syria, waiting to strike. The still open wounds of the civil war in Syria and the lingering sectarian sentiments in Iraq have let them survive so far. As long as these geopolitical and sectarian faultlines remain in Iraq and Syria, the IS threat will not vanish.

The interpretative answer to the hijab row

The courts will be called upon to protect an essential religious practice

SANJAY HEGDE

A number of Muslim girl students in my home town of Udupi, Karnataka, have been refused entry into their college. The administration objects to them covering their heads with a hijab. The girls invoke the protection of the Indian Constitution, whose preceptor Dr. B.R. Ambedkar once wrote, "the world owes much to rebels who would dare to argue in the face of the pontiff and insist that he is not infallible".

Udupi has a proud tradition of having rebels who have challenged established norms that have not stood the test of reason. In the 16th century, priests at the Krishna temple in Udupi prevented a lower caste devotee, Kanakadasa, from entering it. He refused to go away and began composing and singing *kirtans* from the courtyard outside, while waiting to secure a sight of the deity. Even after many days, the priests did not relent but a miracle intervened. The idol of the deity which until then faced eastwards, miraculously turned 180 degrees to face west, and then broke open a rear wall to create a window through which Kanakadasa could have his darshan. Even today all devotees have their first sight of the lord through Kanakadasa's window.

A focal point

Thus, it was only historically apt that one of the first great religious cases interpreted by the new Supreme Court, under the new Constitution, came from Udupi. In the Commissioner, Hindu Religious Endowments, Madras vs Sri Lakshmindra Thirtha Swamiar of Sri Shirur Mutt case, or *Shirur Mutt*, of 1954, the Court ruled, "....what constitutes the essential part of a religion is primarily to be ascertained with reference to the doctrines of that religion itself." Ever thereafter, the judgment in *Shirur Mutt* has remained the focal point of constitutional discussion on religious freedoms. The "essential religious practices" test appeased traditionalists by 'assuring them that the Court would be sympathetic to their respective religious faiths. It also supported state-sponsored reform by leaving one agency of the state – the judiciary – with the power to determine and pronounce upon (perhaps, transform) religious practice and belief'.

'Religious practice'

Since it was first propounded, the "essential religious practice" test has been problematic. How is the Court to determine what an 'essential practice' is? Should it 'rely on religious leaders'? Should it 'call for evidence'? Should judges 'pursue these questions on the basis of their own research'? Justice D.Y. Chandrachud in the Sabarimala case, bemoaned, "... compulsions nonetheless have led the court to don a theological mantle. The enquiry has moved from deciding what is essentially religious to what is an essential religious practice. Donning such a role is not an easy task when the Court is called upon to decide whether a practice does nor does not form an essential part of a religious belief. Scriptures and customs merge with bewildering complexity into superstition and dogma. Separating the grain from the chaff involves a complex adjudicatory function. Decisions of the Court have attempted to bring in a measure of objectivity by holding that the Court has been called upon to decide on the basis of the tenets of the religion itself. But even that is not a consistent norm."

In the case of the hijab, there is

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no doubt that an observant Muslim woman might insist that the following verses from the Koran mandate her to keep her head covered. Chapter 33, Verse 59 says " O Prophet! Enjoin your wives, your daughters, and the wives of true believers that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): That is most convenient, that they may be distinguished and not be harassed." Chapter 24, verse 31 is more explicit in decreeing, "And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze...; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their khimār ... and not display their beauty except to their husband, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women...."

A possible fallout

Questions of uniforms never troubled my five years of college in Udupi in the early 1980s. There was no requirement of uniforms. Subsequent administrators, in the 1990s, may have decreed uniforms to prevent competition amongst fashion-conscious teenagers. Today, there is no one uniform code which is mandated throughout the State. Individual colleges do decree uniforms, but not necessarily the manner of wearing them. An unfortunate side-effect of the current controversy may well be a State administrative order decreeing uniforms for all college students throughout the State of Karnataka. That to my mind would be a killjoy response of an administration that prioritises uniformity over diversity.

In the absence of a statutory uniform code, a court may well ask whether a head covering mandated by some religions, when worn in addition to the uniform, violates any legal tenet. Would the same standards that banish a female hijab apply to a turban worn by a male Sikh student? Can government colleges deny education to students who are seen to be violating a uniform code? Is the hijab or even a full covering in any manner violative of the process of imparting education? Can a government committed to female education deny education to those it deems improperly dressed? Should implementation of a dress code be prioritised over imparting education to all that seek it? These and other like questions will probably soon engage the attention of a constitutional court. That court may do well to heed Justice R.F. Nariman's dictum in the Sabarimala review which says, "... After all, in India's tryst with destiny, we have chosen to be wedded to the rule of law as laid down by the Constitution of India. Let every person remember that the "holy book" is the Constitution of India,... "

Competing rights

The interpretative answer to the hijab row, from the "holy book", might lie in another case from Udupi district. Three years after *Shirur Math*, in 1957, the Supreme Court, in *Sri Venkataramana Devaru vs State of Mysore*, had to examine whether the exclusion of a person from entering into a temple for worship is a matter of religion according to Hindu ceremonial law. The Court held "... that the right of a denomination to wholly exclude members of the public from worshipping in the temple, though comprised in Art. 26(b), must yield to the overriding right declared by Art. 25(2)(b) in favour of the public to enter into a temple for worship. But where the right claimed is not one of general and total exclusion of the public from worship in the temple at all times but of exclusion from certain religious services, they being limited by the rules of the foundation to the members of the denomination, then the question is not whether Art. 25(2)(b) overrides that right so as to extinguish it, but whether it is possible-so to regulate the rights of the persons protected by Art. 25(2)(b) as to give effect to both the rights" *Venkataramana Devaru* points to the Court's endeavour to harmonise competing rights in a way that both were given effect to. In the hijab case, the courts will be called upon to protect an essential religious practice, in a manner consistent with imparting education in an orderly fashion.

It is not the domain of this article to prophesy the ultimate outcome of the ensuing legal battle. The protesting girls may, however, take heart from another Kanakadasa-like episode from the late 1970s. Jon Higgins, an American scholar of music, was so proficient in Carnatic music that he was called Higgins Bhagvathar. When he visited the Udupi Shri Krishna temple, he was denied entry because of his white skin. He stood at the gate and sang in chaste Kannada the Vyasatirtha composition, '*Krishna nee begane baro*'. He was permitted entry immediately, possibly to avert another intervention from the deity. The moral I take from this episode is that unthinking enforcers of any kind of dogma will have to ultimately yield to a harmonious faith in a "holy book".

Sanjay Hegde is a Senior Advocate designated by the Supreme Court of India

Weighing in on a health data retention plan

A privacy-centric process is needed to determine what data to retain and for how long

RISHAB BAILEY, HARLEEN KAUR, BRINDA LASHKARI & AMEYA ASHOK NAIK

In a welcome development, the National Health Authority (NHA) – the body responsible for administering the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) – has initiated a consultation process on the retention of health data by health-care providers in India (https://bit.ly/3uK9buH). The consultation paper asks for feedback on what data is to be retained, and for how long.

A simple classification system, as suggested in the consultation paper, exposes individuals to harms arising from over-collection and retention of unnecessary data. At the same time, this kind of one-size-fits-all system can also lead to under-retention of data that is genuinely required for research or public policy needs. Instead, we should seek to classify data based on its use. In this system, health data not required for an identified purpose would be anonymised, or deleted.

The need for such a policy

Whether the state should mandate a retention period at all is an open question. Currently, service providers can compete on how they handle the data of individuals or health records; in theory, each of us can choose a provider whose data policies we are comfortable with. Given the landscape of health-care access in India, including through informal providers, many patients may not think about this factor in practice. Nonetheless, the decision to take choice out of the individual's hands should not be taken lightly.

The Supreme Court of India has clarified that privacy is a fundamental right, and any interference into the right must pass a four-part test: legality; legitimate aim; proportionality, and appropriate safeguards. The mandatory retention of health data is one such form of interference with the right to privacy.

In this context, the question of legality becomes a question about the legal standing and authority of the NHA. For instance, the consultation paper asks whether the health data retention policy should be made applicable only to health-care providers who are participating in the ABDM ecosystem, or to all health-care providers in general. We believe the answer can only be the former; since the NHA is not a sector-wide regulator, it has no legal basis for formulating guidelines for health-care providers in general.

Balancing benefits and risks

The aim of data retention is described in terms of benefits to the individual and the public at large. Individuals benefit through greater convenience and choice, created through portability of health records. The broader public benefits

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through research and innovation, driven by the availability of more and better data to analyse.

While these are important benefits, they do have to be weighed against the risks. Globally, legal systems consider health data particularly sensitive, and recognise that improper disclosure of this data can expose a person to a range of significant harms. These could include harms that would be very difficult to make whole, so it is not enough to have penalties for such breaches; every effort must be made to minimise the extent of data collected, and to hold it only for the amount of time needed so as to reduce the likelihood of any breach in the first place.

In particular, privacy risks should make us very hesitant about retaining an individual's entire health or medical record on the grounds that they might be useful for research someday. As per Indian law, if an individual's rights are to be curtailed due to anticipated benefits, such benefits cannot be potential or speculatory: they must be clearly defined and identifiable.

This is the difference between saying that data on patients with heart conditions will help us better understand cardiac health – a vague explanation – and being able to identify a specific study which will include data from that patient. It would further mean demonstrating that the study requires personally identifiable information, rather than just an anonymous record – the latter flowing from the principle of proportionality, which requires choosing the least intrusive option available.

In fact, standards for anonymisation are still developing. In a world of big data, the research community is still to arrive at consensus on what constitutes adequate anonymisation, or what might be considered best practices or methods for achieving it. We are not yet able to rule out the possibility of anonymised data still being linked back to specific individuals. In other words, even anonymisation may not be the least intrusive solution to safeguarding patients' rights in all scenarios.

Possible safeguards

Ultimately, the test for retaining data should be that a clear and specific case has been identified for such retention, following a rigorous process run by suitable authorities. A second safeguard would be to anonymise data that is being retained for research purposes – again, unless a specific case is made for keeping personally identifiable information. If neither of these is true, the data should be deleted.

An alternate basis for retaining data can be the express and informed consent of the individual in question. However, there are limits to how consent can apply in the context of health care in India; in general, health care is a field where patients rely on the expertise and advice of doctors, making the idea of informed consent complicated. Further, if consent is made necessary for accessing state-provided services, many people may agree simply because they lack any other way to access that care.

Finally, health-care service providers – and everyone else – will have to comply with the data protection law, once it is adopted by Parliament. The current Bill already requires purpose limitation for collecting, processing, sharing, or retaining data; a use-based classification process would thus bring the ABDM ecosystem actors in compliance with this law as well.

Rishab Bailey is a lawyer and technology policy researcher based in New Delhi. Harleen Kaur is a regulatory affairs and public policy lawyer practising in a Delhi-based law firm. Brinda Lashkari is a Policy Associate at eGovernments Foundation, Bengaluru. Ameya Ashok Naik is Head of Policy and Advocacy at eGovernments Foundation, Bengaluru

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Lata Mangeshkar

An era has ended. Lata Mangeshkar transcended four generations in her lifetime and her voice remains eternal. Every fan of hers would have loved to see her touch 100. In a way she led a full life and let us cherish the lovely moments she gave to this country. That she could rise to impossible heights in the world of music in those days when sound technology was at its nascent stage by dint of her hard work and sheer discipline sends a message to budding singers.

D. NAGARJUNA,
Hyderabad

■ Sadly, the greatest ever singing legend of the country – who was quoted to have said that "a singer must bring soul to the song" – is no more but the soul which she had deeply imbued to keep alive every one of her immortal songs certainly lives on. Her incredible, endless variety and genres of songs resonated pleasingly beyond different boundaries, languages and cultures. As a unique musical genius, she represented the very spirit of India – a true symbol of unity in our vast diversity.

A. MOHAN,
Chennai

■ Lata Mangeshkar is a rare gem bestowed with abundant knowledge of music which helped her to perform any intricate composition with elan and grace. The doyen of Hindustani classical music, Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, once remarked that her singing was never out of tune. Her achievements and awards sat lightly on her shoulders. Perhaps her best and ever spoken about songs were those sung under the baton of Madan Mohan.

BALAKRISHNAN NARAYANAN,
Bengaluru

■ Lataji's vast contributions to the field of music will always remain irreplaceable and unforgettable. She will keep inspiring us.

SOUMYA SHREEMAYEE,
Bargarh, Odisha

■ It was the Nightingale of India who made the western audience aware of the richness of Indian music. She was probably the last to sing in the slow-paced old style. It is said that she could not tolerate noisy instruments. One remembers the Ilaiyaraja evergreen hit song that Lataji sang with S.P. Balasubrahmanyam in the Tamil film *Satya*: '*Valai osai kala kala vena*'.

A.V. NARAYANAN,
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

■ I am anguished beyond words. '*Meri Awaaz Hi Pehchaan Hain Gar Yaad Rahe*' is just one of the soul-stirring songs of Lataji.

HIDAYATHULLA KHAN,
Bengaluru

■ The Nightingale has flown away to eternity. Lataji stood head and shoulders above all the other talent in the musical firmament. Generations to come will scarce believe that such a heavenly voice could emanate from any mortal.

AYYASSERI RAVEENDRANATH,
Aranmula, Kerala

■ One can only think of '*Achha To Hum Chalte Hain*'. '*Sayo Nara*', Lata Mangeshkar.

A.A.H.K. GHORI ,
Chennai

■ It is a huge loss to the entire music world and many of us will miss her captivating voice. Lata Mangeshkar was able to sing with ease any difficult note in any language.

ANNA MARY YVONNE,
Chennai

■ "After silence that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music," said Aldous Huxley. Lataji has exemplified this truth in her musical journey.

KELATH GOPAKUMAR MENON,
Mukkattukara, Thrissur, Kerala

■ Lataji's role in enriching Indian music is immense. She was a rare gem. May India's youngsters take note of her stellar contributions and her music and celebrate her Indianness.

PUSHPENDER,
Sersa, Sonepat, Haryana

■ Personally, I have to record my gratitude to Lataji for removing the prejudice I was induced to harbour against the wonderful language of Hindi. The magic wand was her mellifluous voice.

M.R. ANAND,
Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh

India's 'return' to Central Asia

While the gains from engaging Central Asia may be minimal, non-engagement could be costly

HAPPYMON JACOB

The inaugural India-Central Asia Summit, the India-Central Asia Dialogue, and the Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan in New Delhi – all held over the past four months – collectively indicate a renewed enthusiasm in New Delhi to engage the Central Asian region. India has limited economic and other stakes in the region, primarily due to lack of physical access. And yet, the region appears to have gained a great deal of significance in India's strategic thinking over the years, particularly in the recent past. India's mission Central Asia today reflects, and is responsive to, the new geopolitical, if not the geo-economic, realities in the region. More so, India's renewed engagement of Central Asia is in the right direction for the simple reason that while the gains from an engagement of Central Asia may be minimal, the disadvantages of non-engagement could be costly in the longer run.

Great power dynamics

One of the factors driving this engagement and shaping it is the great power dynamics there. The decline of American presence and power in the broader region (due primarily to the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan) has led to a reassertion by China and Russia seeking to fill the power vacuum. While China dominates the geo-economic landscape, Russia is the dominant politico-military power in the region. But in the end, geo-economics might gain more traction. A somewhat anxious Moscow considers India to be a useful partner in the region: it helps it to not only win back New Delhi, which is moving towards the U.S., but also to subtly checkmate the rising Chinese influence in its backyard.

For the U.S., while growing India-Russia relations is not a welcome development, it recognises the utility of Moscow-New Delhi relations in Central Asia to offset Beijing's ever-growing influence there.

As for China, India's engagement of the region and the growing warmth in India-Russia relations are not a cause for concern yet, but they could be eventually.

PTI

For New Delhi, it's about breaking out of a continental nutcracker situation it finds itself in. In the wake of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, New Delhi faces a major dilemma in the wider region, not just in the pre-existing theatres like the Line of Control and the Line of Actual Control. There are growing and legitimate concerns within the Indian strategic community that India in the region might get further hemmed in due to the combined efforts by China, Pakistan and Taliban-led Afghanistan. If so, it must ensure that there is no China-led strategic gang up with Pakistan and the Taliban against India in the region, which, if it becomes a reality, would severely damage Indian interests.

Focus on Afghanistan

India's engagement of Central Asia would also help it to consolidate its post-American Afghan policy. U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan has landed India in a major dilemma - it has very limited space to engage Taliban 2.0 despite the current relationship whose future depends on a number of variables. During the Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani governments, given their proximity to India and the presence of the U.S. forces in Afghanistan, India was able to engage Kabul without too much hardship, despite Pakistani resistance. Now that the Taliban have returned to Kabul, New Delhi is forced to devise new ways of engaging Afghanistan. That's where the Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Russia could be helpful. For instance, given its location bordering Afghanistan as well as its close geographical proximity to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, Tajikistan holds immense geopolitical significance for India (incidentally, India helps maintain an airbase in the country). One has to wait and see how far India will innovate to engage CARs in pursuit of its interests in Afghanistan. The announcement of a Joint Working Group on Afghanistan during the summit between India and the CARs is surely indicative of such interest.

In India's current vision for a regional security architecture, Russia appears prominent. President Vladimir Putin's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the earlier meeting between Russian National Security Adviser General Nikolai Patrushev and Mr. Modi are indications of the growing relationship. A cursory glance at the various issues being discussed between the two sides also indicates a new joint thinking on regional security. Of course, New Delhi expects the U.S. to understand that in the wake of the latter's withdrawal from the region leaving India in the lurch, New Delhi has no choice but to work with the Russians.

By courting Russia – its traditional partner, also close to China and getting closer to Pakistan – to help it re-establish its presence in the Central Asian region, India is seeking to work with one of the region's strongest powers and also potentially create a rift between China and Russia, to the extent possible. The two countries recently exchanged a 'non-paper' on how to increase their joint engagement in Central Asia. Both India and the CARs use Russian defence equipment, and the non-paper has reportedly explored the possibility of joint Indo-Russian defence production in some of the existing Soviet-era defence facilities in the CARs to meet local and Indian demands. The non-paper also reportedly discusses potential trilateral defence exercises among India, Russia and the CARs. In any case, joint defence production by India and Russia has been on the rise and the CARs could play a key role in it. This growing India-Russia partnership also explains India's non-critical stance on the developments in Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

Challenges

That said, India's 'return' to Central Asia is not going to be easy. For one, China, which shares a land border with the region, is already a major investor there. China is the region's most important economic partner, a reality that worries Russia and sharpens India's relative irrelevance in the region.

An even bigger challenge for India may be Iran. India's best shot at reaching the CARs is by using a hybrid model - via sea to Chabahar and then by road/rail through Iran (and Afghanistan) to the CARs. So, for New Delhi, the ongoing re-negotiations on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (or the Iran nuclear deal) are of crucial importance. If there is a deal, it would bring Tehran back into the Western fold and away from China (and Russia), which will be favourable to India. While Iran getting close to the West is not preferred by Russia (but preferred by India), if and when it becomes a reality, India would be able to use it to its advantage and join Russia in engaging the CARs. India's ongoing outreach to Iran and the now-postponed visit of the Iranian foreign minister to New Delhi help repair some of the damage done to the relationship over the years.

But finally, perhaps most importantly, will India walk the talk on its commitments to Central Asia? Does it have the political will, material capability and diplomatic wherewithal to stay the course in the region?

Happymon Jacob is Associate Professor, Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

A new form of untouchability

India lacks a robust politico-legal framework to address the open calls to economically boycott Muslims

ANSHUL TRIVEDI

Recently, a video, purportedly showing villagers from Surguja district of Chhattisgarh taking an oath to implement an economic boycott of Muslims, went viral on social media. This was not a spontaneous reaction of the villagers to a brawl in the village but allegedly orchestrated by a Hindutva outfit.

The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) is known to distribute pamphlets calling for the economic boycott of those it labels "anti-national, anti-Hindu, love jihadists" – all convenient epithets to convey a communal message. These acts are not merely 'expressions of hate'; they can be characterised as the emergence of a new form of untouchability guided by the political imperatives of Hindutva rather than the religious dictates of Hinduism. A progressive re-articulation of the concept of untouchability or a re-reading of the anti-discrimination legislation is required to end this abomination.

The hierarchical caste-based Hindu social order was governed by the ideology of purity and pollution. The primary function of the ideology was to maintain ritual hierarchy. Untouchability was a mechanism through which power was exercised over the Dalits and the hierarchy reinforced. One of the most common forms of untouchability was the imposition of social and economic boycott of Dalits if they dared to transgress social norms or exercise their rights. In Ambedkar's opinion, the method of boycott was more effective than even open violence. Collective discrimination, marginalisation and disempowerment was justified as the right of the individual to choose freely in a marketplace. He argued that the boycott was effective for two reasons - one, the Dalits constituted a minority within the village; and two, they were economically weaker and hence, dependent on the 'upper' castes. Therefore, it was of paramount importance to outlaw this 'tyranny of the majority' for their uplift.

Limits of anti-boycott laws

During the freedom struggle, the struggle to eradicate untouchability gained momentum. This struggle found its highest expression in the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution under Articles 14, 15 and 17.

However, although untouchability was abolished, its definition remained vague. Even during the Constituent Assembly debates, it was argued that the scope of untouchability should be restricted to practices related to religion and caste, lest it be left open to unwarranted tinkering; however, the Assembly voted against such a circumscribed definition. Therefore, the limits of untouchability under Article 17 have been contested. While the conservatives restrict it to caste-based discrimination, the progressives argue that it includes other forms of untouchability as well. However, there is a consensus that only those acts which are motivated by the ideology of purity and pollution are considered within the ambit of untouchability. These include social and economic boycotts.

In India, mere provision of rights has proved to be insufficient to prevent marginalisation owing to the practice of untouchability and hence, the legislature and the judiciary have had to make and interpret special laws to that effect. Two laws which explicitly make social and economic boycotts punishable are The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and Maharashtra Protection of People from Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2016. However, the scope of both is restricted to criminalising caste-based discrimination and boycotts.

An ineffective approach

The tethering of anti-boycott or untouchability laws to the tenets of purity and pollution and restricting their scope to caste-centric boycotts makes them ineffective to counter the calls of economic boycott of Muslims. Hindutva is using pre-constitutional methods to disempower a community. It is not driven by the motive of maintaining ritual hierarchy but by the political imperatives of exclusion. Its ultimate objective is to ethnicise the Hindu identity. Such public calls for boycotts are means of constructing such an identity. The act of collectively resolving to boycott Muslims reinforces their 'othering' and re-emphasises the VHP's idea of 'Hinduness'; reconstituting Hinduism, based on caste hierarchy, into a unified, ethnic whole, where the figure of the Dalit is replaced by the Muslim as the significant 'other'.

These grave new developments need to be taken into cognisance and an urgent politico-legal response to such public calls for Muslim economic boycott is required as they militate against the principle of fraternity enshrined in the Constitution. This can be done by a progressive redefinition of untouchability or by expanding the scope of the anti-boycott laws to include discrimination against religious communities.

Anshul Trivedi is a member of the Congress. Twitter: @anshultrivedi47

STATE OF PLAY

Where guests demand permanency

Low salaries and lack of job security have caused unrest among guest lecturers in Karnataka

SATHISH G.T.

Academic activities in government degree colleges in Karnataka have been badly hit for over 50 days, with guest faculty going on strike demanding that they be absorbed into regular service.

With only a little over 5,100 permanent teaching staff in 430 colleges, the Department of Collegiate Education (DCE) has had a tough task at hand. There are no lecturers to teach many core subjects in hundreds of colleges, even as the State government has announced implementation of the new National Education Policy, advocating multi-disciplinary studies. The colleges are dependent on the 14,567 guest lecturers who have been recruited over the years. Meanwhile, universities to which the degree colleges are affiliated have announced their timetable for semester exams. The students are worried that the syllabus will not be completed on time.

Guest lecturers have been working for an honorarium: ₹13,000 for those with UGC-prescribed qualifications and ₹11,000 for those without. They are recruited for that academic year with no promise of job security. They have often complained about erratic payment of salaries.

The lecturers began their protest on December 10, 2021, demanding that the government absorb them into government service. They held a dharna at Belagavi, where the Karnataka Legislature was meeting for the winter session in December. They continued to boycott classes when the government constituted a team of officers to recommend measures to resolve the issue.

On January 14, the Higher Education Minister announced a hike in honorarium. The two slabs were expanded to four slabs varying from ₹26,000 to ₹32,000. Those who have more than five years of experience besides the UGC qualification will get the highest amount. However, an increase in honorarium was accompanied by an increase in working hours. The lecturers, who were recruited earlier for eight hours of duty a week were told to work for 15 hours. This also meant that at least half of them would lose their jobs due to no workload. The association of guest lecturers felt that the move was aimed at dividing the unity of lecturers.

Meanwhile, the government decided to recruit more guest faculty while considering their State-level ranking in work experience, and educational qualifications. According to the DCE, more than 60,000 people applied, of which 10,636 got jobs. From February 1, the lecturers selected through this process started reporting for duty. However, this may only be a reprieve as the issue of job security remains unaddressed. The guest faculty can lose their jobs whenever permanent faculty are recruited or deputed to their post. And so they have urged the government to absorb them to fill up the vacancies in various government departments. In the Education Department alone, more than 7,000 non-teaching posts are vacant.

The government has often said absorption of temporary employees into regular service is impossible, given the Supreme Court judgment in *State of Karnataka v. Umadevi and Others* (2006). When the guest lecturers were appointed earlier, there was no set procedure. They now want to be absorbed into permanent service just like doctors who have completed certain years of service.

At the heart of the problem is the failure of successive governments to fill up teaching posts even as they opened new colleges. Guest lecturers have always been seen as an ad-hoc arrangement. The last recruitment of permanent teachers was done in 2017 and before that, in 2009. At present, the process to recruit 1,242 lecturers is on. However, the number is insufficient given the vacancies.

Guest lecturers are seen as a financially less burdensome option. However, this alternative has proved too costly on other counts.

sathish.gt@thehindu.co.in

DATA POINT

Poll-bound States: Measuring delivery of justice

An analysis of justice-related indicators across three pillars - police, prisons, and the judiciary - in the poll-bound States shows that Goa and Manipur have a relatively better system of delivering justice effectively. The Uttar Pradesh system is the most inferior and the systems in Uttarakhand and Punjab lie in the middle. The analysis was done by The India Justice Report prepared by Tata Trusts. The tables list the latest value across various indicators in the five States. The States were assessed based on five themes — infrastructure, budgets, human resources, workload and diversity. Under each theme, the best (●) and the worst States (●) are highlighted

SOURCE: TATA TRUSTS' INDIA JUSTICE REPORT

BUDGET The table lists the amount spent towards the key pillars of justice — police, prison and judiciary — in the five poll-bound States

Indicator	Goa	Manipur	Punjab	U.P.	Uttarakhand
Spend on police per person (₹, 2017-18)	3,174	4,163	1,786	645	1,455
Spend per inmate (₹, 2019-20)	35,907	37,100	16,286	34,507	29,384
Per capita spend on judiciary (₹ 2017-18)	444	180	203	81	158

HUMAN RESOURCES The table lists the share of posts that are vacant in the justice delivery system among the five States. U.P. scored the lowest in three indicators

Indicator	Goa	Manipur	Punjab	U.P.	Uttarakhand
Constables, vacancy (%, Jan. 2020)	4.4	9.3	6.8	23.5	2.9
Police officers, vacancy (%, Jan. 2020)	30.6	30.7	18.9	40.4	8.6
Prison officers, vacancy (%, Dec. 2019)	14.8	44.8	41.2	43.1	75.3
Medical officers, vacancy (%, Dec. 2019)	83.3	22.2	-34.3	24.2	100
High Court judge vacancy (%, 2018-19)	25.8	35	39.1	37.7	25
Sub. Court judge vacancy (%, 2018-19)	18	27.3	19.2	38.5	21.1

DIVERSITY The table lists the share of women in the justice delivery system among the five States

Indicator	Goa	Manipur	Punjab	U.P.	Uttarakhand
Share of women in police (%, Jan. 2020)	10.6	9.1	8.5	9.6	12.2
Share of women in officers (%, Jan. 2020)	13.4	8.1	5.8	3.8	18.4
Women in prison staff (%, Dec. 2019)	1.6	12.8	6.8	6	3.3
Women High Court judges (%, Aug. 2020)	13.4	0	18.2	5.1	0
Women Sub. Court judges (%, Nov. 2019)	72	30.8	40.9	25.2	37.3

INFRASTRUCTURE | The table lists the five States' infrastructure capacity to deliver justice

Indicator	Goa	Manipur	Punjab	U.P.	Uttarakhand
Population served per police station (rural) (Jan. 2020)	21,750	39,481	70,134	1,73,736	72,176
Population served per police station (urban) (Jan. 2020)	1,38,500	57,588	94,727	1,02,312	76,440
Area served per police station (rural) (sq. km, Jan. 2020)	147	410	188	235	516
Area served per police station (urban) (sq. km, Jan. 2020)	96	11	20	15	18
Prison occupancy (%, Dec. 2019)	83	69	103	168	159
Courthall shortfall (%, 2018-19, Jan. 2020)	7	31	15.2	28.8	22.1

WORKLOAD The table lists the workload of the justice delivery system in the five poll-bound States

Indicator	Goa	Manipur	Punjab	U.P.	Uttarakhand
Population served per civil police (Jan. 2020)	263	202	462	1,094	696
Inmates per officer (Dec. 2019)	25	24	201	268	331
Average Sub. Court pendency (years, June 2020)	2.6	2.5	1.5	6.2	2.8

In 12 of the 23 justice-related indicators, Uttar Pradesh scored the lowest among all the poll-bound States analysed. It did not score the highest on any indicator

Manipur scored the highest in eight indicators out of 23, followed by Goa in seven, Uttarakhand in five of them and Punjab in three of them

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 7, 1972

Differences on river waters continue

Trivandrum, Feb. 1: Some progress was made in the inter-State river water talks between Tamil Nadu and Kerala officials, Mr. Ramunni Menon, Kerala Water and Power Secretary, told pressmen at the conclusion of the two-day talks here to-day. He said the technical details pertaining to the discussion were being worked out by the Chief Engineers of the two States. He, however, declined to elaborate stating that it was decided that the officials should report to their respective Governments. The trend of the discussions, it is gathered, has not shown any appreciable narrowing of the differences between the two sides. The Tamil Nadu team was headed by Mr. Sivasubramaniam, former P.W.D. Secretary, and the Kerala team by Mr. V. Ramachandran, Chairman, Kerala Electricity Board. The talks mainly related to follow-up action on the inter-State agreement reached in May 1969 for supply of Siruvani waters for drinking purposes in Coimbatore and on the accord of October 1965 in respect of the hydro-electric schemes of the two States in the Chaliyar basin.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 7, 1922

Lalaji's rearrest

Mahatma Gandhi writes in "Young India": The Punjab Government could not do even a simple act of penitence gracefully. They were advised that the Judge who convicted Lalaji and his companions did not know the law. They had therefore to release them. Instead of all being released together they were released separately and some at midnight. But that was by no means the most graceless part of the performance. Lalaji was rearrested immediately after his discharge. By this action the Punjab Government have shown themselves more vindictive than penitent. The release they could not help nor could they help their pettiness. They did not want Lalaji to be free for a single moment and therefore they rearrested him. Although an undertrial prisoner, his people including his son are not allowed to see him. They knew that Lalaji would not escape 'justice' if they served on him a summons. But such a natural and courteous step was too simple for the Punjab Government. I congratulate Lalaji on his rearrest and sympathise with Pandit Santanam, Mulik Lallahan and Dr. Gopichand for their premature discharge.

FROM PAGE ONE

Channi is CM face of Congress in Punjab

"You know about Mr. Channi, he is a son from a poor family, he deeply understands poverty, in his blood and heart it's all Punjab.. Even Navjot Singh Sidhu carries Punjab in his heart. Mr. Channi became the Chief Minister of Punjab; you must have noted that even though it's the top post, but did you (people) see any arrogance in him? No, not at all. He goes to the public with humbleness," Mr. Rahul said.

Hitting out at the BJP, Mr. Gandhi said, "There are other Chief Ministers as well and there's Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Yogi*ji* is Chief Minister, does he go among the people? Have you seen Modi*ji* going among people? Have you ever seen Modi*ji* helping anyone on the road? No. They will never do it because he is not Prime Minister, he is a 'king'. But Mr. Channi is a Chief Minister from a poor family and is the voice of the poor. And he [Mr. Channi] has not come to become a Chief Minister, but he is here to bring a change to Punjab. I am not talking just about Mr. Channi, all our team including Mr. Sidhu, Mr. Jakhar, are here to change Punjab.

Mr. Gandhi said that in Punjab the most important thing the Congress wanted is to work in partnership with its people. "We want people to tell us what should we do for them. Our doors are always open. That's the difference between Congress and other parties. You must be wondering that at times people in the Congress speak too much, but we accept it. Many people say the party should not tolerate indiscipline. Yes, discipline should be there, but we have flexibility, we want to listen to everyone's voice. We don't want the rule of any one person. You go to Delhi – be it Narendra Modi, be it Kejriwal, over there it's only one person who calls the shots. If 'king' has taken a decision, then everything ends over there. But Punjab can't be ruled like this, in Punjab, there are different voices and ideologies. It's only the Congress party that can take everyone along and take the State forward. Congress has a vision and it displayed it on several occasions."

Centre to tweak no-build zone around monuments

These areas could be as wide as 500 metres for some sites like the Taj Mahal, the official said.

The amendment would also enable the ASI to act against encroachment by holding the relevant authorities liable in case of illegal buildings at a protected site, the official said. This would be similar to the enforcement powers under the Indian Forest Act, the official said.

The proposed amendment was likely to be sent for Cabinet's approval soon for introduction in the second half of the Budget session of Parliament in March, the official said.

Poll commission eases rules for public rallies

It said the Health Secretary informed the commission that the number of cases were on the decline in the country and the maximum cases being reported were from non-poll-going States.

"The poll-going States are contributing a very small proportion of the total reported cases in the country. Union Health Secretary briefed the commission that the peak of COVID had been reached on January 21/22 after that all-India figures of COVID cases are fast receding from around 2.93 lakh to 1.72 lakh," the EC said.

In the poll-going States – Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand – the total number of cases fell from the peak of 32,000 on January 22 to around 7,000 on Saturday, the EC said. The Health Secretary also informed the commission that vaccination coverage was satisfactory.

"Commission noticed that relaxation decisions are being taken in various States like opening of schools/colleges and other institutions," the EC said.

While it eased restrictions on public meetings from the earlier cap of 1,000 people, the ban on roadshows and processions would continue. The limit of 20 people for door-to-door campaigning would also continue. In case the State disaster management authority has set lower limits for attendance at public meetings, the SDMA's guidelines would prevail, the EC said. All other rules set when the elections were announced on January 8 would continue, it said.

Sitharaman to discuss aviation fuel's inclusion in GST regime

'Keeping a close watch on U.S. Fed's decisions and global inflationary pressures'

VIKAS DHOOT
NEW DELHI

The government will take up the inclusion of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) system before the GST Council, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Sunday, noting that high global fuel prices are a cause for concern.

Ms. Sitharaman was responding to a plea from Spicejet chairman Ajay Singh to lower the excise duty on fuel at least temporarily, as global crude oil prices are hovering around $90 a barrel, and pursue the inclusion of ATF in the GST regime.

"Of course, just not for airlines, but the global price of fuel is now a concern for all of us. More so for airlines because it [the sector] has not yet picked up from the pandemic," the Minister said in a post-Budget interaction hosted by industry body Assocham.

New measures: Nirmala Sitharaman said she will discuss the aviation sector's concerns with banks. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The decision to include ATF in GST, she pointed out, was not hers alone to make. "It is for the GST Council [to decide]. The next time we meet at the Council, I will put it on the table for them to discuss it," she said, adding that she will also discuss the aviation sector's concerns with banks.

"The revival of the economy is very clear... it may not be equal everywhere across the board, but yet it is observable. I would call upon Indian industry to ensure that we don't miss the bus this time," the Minister said at an interaction with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI.

"We will be able to confidently say that we are fairly watchful of what is happening as regards the global strategic developments, the U.S. Fed's decisions and also the global inflationary pressures. And I can assure the leadership here that we shall not allow the Indian economy to suffer for want of preparations," she asserted.

Panel redraws all five J&K LS seats

Commission proposes to change complexion of most of the 90 Assembly seats

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

The J&K Delimitation Commission has changed the complexion of most of the 90 Assembly seats, while reconfiguring and renaming 28 new Assembly constituencies and deleting 19 Assembly segments in its interim report. Besides, it has proposed to redraw all the five Lok Sabha seats.

The interim report, shared with the associate members two days ago, suggested that the Kashmir division will get an additional seat in Kupwara, while the Jammu division will have one additional seat in Kathua district, one in Samba, one in Doda, one in Rajouri, one in Udhampur and one in Kishtwar. Of the six seats, three Assembly segments are from the Muslim-majority Chenab Valley and Pir Panjal valleys, while three are in the Hindu Jammu-Samba-Kathua belt.

Seventeen constituencies have been redrawn in the Jammu province while 11 have been reconfigured in the Kashmir division. Similarly, nine names of Assembly constituencies in the Jammu division have vanished due to the reconfiguration and 10 names disappear from the Kashmir division.

Reframing segments

The Commission has also proposed reframing of Lok Sabha constituencies, with J&K earlier having five which included three seats from Kashmir and two from Jammu. It has suggested to distribute 18 Assembly segments among the five Lok Sabha constituencies.

The Commission has advocated a Lok Sabha seat, disjointed geographically, by merging three districts (Kulgam, Anantnag, Shopian) of south Kashmir in the Valley and two districts of Rajouri and Poonch in the Pir Panjal valley in the Jammu province. It will be named Anantnag-Rajouri seat, which will comprise a significant population of non-Kashmiri speaking Scheduled Tribes.

The newly carved Lok Sabha seat will have six of the nine Assembly segments reserved for the STs. The Srinagar Lok Sabha seat will now comprise Assembly segments spread over five districts against the earlier three. North Kashmir's Baramulla Lok Sabha seat will be spread over four districts. The Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency is spread over five districts.

Reserved seats

The seats reserved for the Scheduled Tribes included Darhal, Thannamandi in Rajouri district; Surankote, Mendhar and Poonch Haveli in Poonch district; and Mahore in Reasi district in the Jammu province's Pir Panjal Valley. Larnoo in Anantnag, Kangan in Ganderbal, and Gurez are ST seats in the Kashmir province. The Commission has reserved nine seats for the STs and seven for the SCs.

Fishers issue to come up during Peiris's visit

He will hold talks with Jaishankar

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister G.L. Peiris will meet External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Monday, in his first visit to India since being appointed last August. Both sides are expected to discuss India's economic support to Sri Lanka, plans for new infrastructure projects and pending issues over fishermen's rights.

G.L. Peiris

Announcing Mr. Peiris' arrival in Delhi on Sunday, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla would call on him on Monday morning, and he would meet Mr. Jaishankar later in the day, and fly out on Tuesday.

BIMSTEC summit

Officials are also expected to discuss Sri Lanka's plans to hold the BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) summit on March 30 as the current Chair of the regional grouping that includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also been invited to attend.

The Foreign Minister arrived just days after the Export Import Bank (EXIM) of India and the Government of Sri Lanka signed a $500-million Line of Credit agreement which would help Sri Lanka cope with its current fuel shortages. Last month, India announced it would defer Sri Lankan debt repayment of $500 million by two months, and extended a $400 million currency swap arrangement, to give its neighbour some breathing space on a currency reserve crunch.

India and Sri Lanka have signed an MoU for the development of oil facilities in Trincomalee, after detailed talks with Sri Lankan Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa during his visit to Delhi in November. Both governments are in talks for another $1 billion in assistance from India, which will be reviewed during Mr. Peiris's visit.

However, long-drawn differences over fishermen's rights are expected to be on the agenda for talks, as Sri Lanka demands that Indian fishermen stop "bottom trawling" and overfishing of the Palk Straits. Tensions escalated last month after mid-sea clashes between Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen that led to the death of two Jaffna fishermen. Meanwhile, on January 25, Sri Lanka released more than 50 Indian fishermen who had been detained by the Sri Lankan navy in December. The foreign ministers are expected to discuss ways to defuse tensions over the issue.

Mr. Peris has met Mr. Jaishankar on two previous occasions in the past few months, including on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, and an Indian Ocean Region conference in Abu Dhabi in December. He was Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka from 2010-2015 under then-President Mahinda Rajapaksa who is now Prime Minister.

SC to weigh between 'national security', judicial scrutiny

The court will take a call on whether the Centre can expect a free pass on matters pertaining to national security

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The question whether the state can use 'national security' as a ground to limit judicial scrutiny has come up for scrutiny again in the *MediaOne* TV channel case barely weeks after the Supreme Court, in its Pegasus case order, observed that the Centre cannot expect a 'free pass' from the courts as soon as it raises the 'spectre of national security'.

The government has cited national security reasons in the Kerala High Court for cancelling telecast permission to the Malayalam news channel.

"It is a settled position of law that in matters pertaining to national security, the scope of judicial review is limited. However, this does not mean that the state gets a free pass every time the spectre of 'national security' is raised. National security cannot be the bugbear that the judiciary shies away from, by virtue of its mere mentioning. Although this court should be circumspect in encroaching upon the domain of national security, no omnibus prohibition can be called for against judicial review... The mere invocation of national security by the state does not render the court a mute spectator," a three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana observed in the Pegasus case order in October 2021.

> **Although this court should be circumspect in encroaching upon the domain of national security, no omnibus prohibition can be called for against judicial review... The mere invocation of national security by the state does not render the court a mute spectator**
> SUPREME COURT

The order is a significant one considering the oft-repeated refrain of the government, while banning or curtailing rights of citizens, that it is being done for the sake of 'national security'.

One of the major concerns raised by citizens recently is the "chilling effect" such state actions endure to have on free speech, especially in the media. The principle of 'chilling effect' is based on comparative harm.

"One possible test of chilling effect is comparative harm. In this framework, the court is required to see whether the restrictions, due to their broad based nature, have had a restrictive effect on similarly placed individuals during the period," the Supreme Court explained in the Anuradha Bhasin case, which concerned Internet restrictions in Jammu and Kashmir in the backdrop of the abrogation of Article 370. In short, the test is whether action of the state on one entity freezes others in their footsteps or deters them from following the same course.

Order backed by reasons

Any order of the state which restricts the fundamental rights of speech or expression should be backed by reasons. The courts should be convinced that the state acted in a responsible manner and did not take away rights in an "implied fashion or a casual or cavalier manner", the Supreme Court has said in its 130-page judgment in the Anuradha Bhasin case.

"Democracy entails free flow of information," the Supreme Court had declared.

"There is no dispute that freedom of speech and expression includes the right to disseminate information to as wide a section of the population as is possible. The wider range of circulation of information or its greater impact cannot restrict the content of the right nor can it justify its denial," the Supreme Court has observed in judgments like Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting Government of India v. Cricket Association of Bengal and Shreya Singhal v. Union of India.

Active COVID-19 case load in country crosses 11 lakh

84,474 new cases, 887 deaths recorded in last 24 hours

THE HINDU DATA TEAM

The country recorded 84,474 new COVID-19 cases on Sunday. The total number of infections has reached 4.22 crore, and the active cases have crossed the 11.5 lakh mark.

The figures are based on the State bulletins released until 10 p.m. on Sunday. However, Ladakh, Tripura, Jharkhand, and Lakshadweep had not yet released data for the day.

COVID-19

Kerala recorded 26,729 infections on Sunday, followed by Maharashtra (9,666) and Karnataka (8,425).

On Sunday, 887 deaths were recorded in India, considerably lower than the average levels recorded in the last week. The total number of recorded fatalities has reached 5,02,761.

Kerala reported the most deaths with 515 fatalities (378 were from a backlog), followed by Maharashtra (66) and Karnataka at 47 deaths.

On Saturday, 14.4 lakh tests were conducted (the results for which were made available on Sunday). The test positivity rate was 5.8%. As of Sunday, 93.4% of the eligible population has been vaccinated with at least one dose, while 71.7% received both doses. In the 15-17 age cohort, 74.6% have received their first dose.

Altogether, 95,11,78,621 first doses, 73,04,84,179 second doses, and 1,41,38,718 booster doses have been administered across India.

DCGI grants emergency use permission to Sputnik Light

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Drugs Controller General of India granted emergency use permission to single-dose Sputnik Light COVID vaccine, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said. This comes following recommendations of an expert panel of DCGI to grant restricted emergency use authorisation subject to regulatory provisions.

Parliamentary panel objects to airport code 'GAY' for Gaya

'YAG' suggested as alternative, terms original 'inappropriate'

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

The code name "GAY" for the airport at Gaya is "offensive, embarrassing and inappropriate" and the government must make all efforts to get it changed, a parliamentary panel has said in its report.

The Committee on Public Undertakings in its first report tabled in Parliament in January 2021 recommended changing the code name for Gaya airport, assigned by global trade body International Air Transport Association (IATA). It suggested that a more "appropriate" code like "YAG" may be assigned.

"The Committee have their apprehension that Gaya being a holy city, locals might be finding it offensive or embarrassing on their city being recognised in the international community with the code name 'GAY'. The Committee too finds it inappropriate and unsuitable," it had said. It asked the Government of India and Air India to complete "consultations and formalities in a time-bound manner" to get the name changed.

The IATA assigns a three character code to airports for easy identification.

A report of the Committee tabled last week recorded the reply of the Ministry of Civil Aviation on the matter, which informed it about IATA's response. "IATA stated that location codes are considered permanent and cannot be changed without strong justification primarily concerning air safety," said the Ministry.

The IATA assigns a two-character code name for airlines and a three-character code for airports for easy identification. These are also fundamental to the smooth running of hundreds of electronic applications.

The three-letter code are determined by first ensuring that it is unique and not in use by any other airport. These are assigned based on the name of the airport or the name of the city or any other relevant identifier.

Green bonds to have long tenure, says Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Asserting that the issuance of sovereign green bonds is part of the government's overall borrowing programme, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth has said these rupee-denominated papers will have long tenure to suit the requirement of green infrastructure projects.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech announced that the government proposes to issue sovereign green bonds to mobilise resources for green infrastructure. "The proceeds will be deployed in public sector projects which help in reducing the carbon intensity of the economy," she said. Mr. Seth said this was part of the overall borrowing for the next financial year.

APPEAL

Baby Sujith (18 months) diagnosed to have Anorectal Malformation (Imperforate Anus) is advised to undergo Posterior Sagittal Anorectoplasty(PSARP) at Pradeep Nursing Home, Kanyakumari Dist. His family condition is very poor and cannot afford his Hospitalisation & Surgery cost of **Rs.1,10,000/-** . He seeks your generous contribution for his surgery. The donations sent through Ch/D.D/NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY(Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No.60182010063310, IFSC No. CNRB0016018) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE are entitled for exemption under 80G IT. Please give us your e mail id.

All correspondence is done through **WWS,** Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No.GF 1, Corddel Apartments, O.No.13, N.No.29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai - 600006. Ph: 044-42137401/28235324/7338978027 E Mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org

WWS

A great void has been created in the subcontinent's musical arena with the demise of the *Sur Samraggi* (empress of music)

SHEIKH HASINA
BANGLADESH PM

Rest In Peace Srimathi #LataMangeshkar, India's Queen of Music who touched billions of hearts through her golden and unparalleled voice

GOTABAYA RAJAPAKSA
SRI LANKA PRESIDENT

Rest In Peace Nightingale of #India. Thank you for the decades of entertainment that transcended borders & gave life to the phrase 'music is a universal language'

MAHINDA RAJAPAKSA, SRI LANKA PM

The subcontinent has lost one of the truly great singers the world has known. Listening to her songs has given so much pleasure to so many people all over the world

IMRAN KHAN, PAKISTAN PM

Soundtrack of a billion people and more

From the blissful melody of a nation just out of colonial yoke to the rising music of seven decades, Lata Mangeshkar's songs have been a staple

Lata consistently struck that divine *sur*

No one could match the purity and clarity of her voice

ANUJ KUMAR

The nation of more than a billion lost its most popular voice, as Lata Mangeshkar (1929-2022) transcended to the heavenly stage on Sunday. More than just a name, over the years, the Bharat Ratna award winner became an adjective, an emotion that got so deeply ingrained in the Indian consciousness that her voice became the benchmark of excellence and purity.

Usually, film personalities have fans, Lata has devotees for if the melody is the link that connects man to almighty, Lata consistently struck that divine *sur*.

Ephemeral phrases such as singing sensation were not for her. She was always the voice of virtue. No wonder, her voice inspired Raj Kapoor to mount *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*. Or the way Gulzar simply put for her in the *Kinara song*, *Meri Awaaz Hi Meri Pehchan Hai* (my voice is my identity).

She fought for giving playback singers their space under the sun. Before Lata, the line between actor and singer was a blur. The discs featured the name of the character rather than the singer. She along with Mohammed Rafi gave shape to the culture of playback singing in Hindi cinema. Just as Noor Jehan and Suraiya, Lata too was offered acting parts but she wanted only her voice to be heard. And she did become the *prima donna* of playback singing in no time. From Madhubala to Kajol and Preity Zinta, women actors were considered to have arrived on the scene when they got an opportunity to lip-sync to Lata's voice.

Post-independence, when Dilip Kumar emerged as the Nehruvian hero, Lata's voice echoed the soul of India that was exuberant and plaintive at the same time.

Born in a conservative Marathi musical household, her training started early when she eavesdropped on her father Dinanath Mangeshkar's training sessions. A stern taskmaster, the noted classical singer and theatre veteran one day discovered a young Lata correcting one of his students, telling him how her father renders a particular raga, in his absence. He promptly took her under his wings and a five or six-year-old Lata would sing alongside her father and sleep on his lap.

Sweet start: Lata Mangeshkar rendering the theme song of the National Games in Pune on January 16, 1994. • THE HINDU ARCHIVES

But for the fate that reduced her to the sole breadwinner in the family of five siblings at a very young age, Lata would have shone on the firmament of classical music. It was something that she regretted all her life. It also meant that singing became her life. She would starve through the day so that she could save every single penny for the family.

In the recording studio, none could match the purity and clarity of her voice and the control over the pitch. After listening to *Ye Zindagi Usi Ki Hai*, the poignant number from *Anarkali in raga Bhimplasi*, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan remarked *Kambakth Kabhi Besuri Nahin Hoti* (The wretched girl never goes out of tune). It was 1953 and the best of Lata was yet to come.

Her mentor Ghulam Haider instilled in a young Lata the importance of feeling the joys and pain of the character. Anil Biswas taught her the value of breath control and Naushad and Salil Chowdhury tested how high she could go with notes. Her sweet voice quickly displaced the robust nasal voices like Shamshad Begum and Geeta Dutt.

Outside the studio, in white saris and side parting hairstyle, she carefully crafted an image where even the film media, which thrives on gossip, presented her as a sisterly figure who loved to tie *rakhis* on the industry's big wigs.

However, beneath that benign half-smile and muted silks, the resilient Lata was all steel. When producer Shashadhar Mukherjee termed her voice too thin, she worked on her timbre. When Dilip Kumar offhandedly remarked that her voice smelt of *dal bhaat*, she made sure that she got the nuances of Urdu right. *Beqas Pe Karam*, the naat in *Mughal-e-Azam* is a testimony to her command over the language, and Khayyam's serene *Ae Dil e Nadan* (Razia Sultan) remained her favourite song.

She did not budge an inch over royalty rights even if it meant a cold war with Rafi. When S.D. Burman made an uncharitable remark, she did not work with the master composer for five years. She refused to perform in film award functions until a separate category was created for playback singers in 1959.

Melody Queen

- Born in Indore on September 28, 1929, to Dinanath Mangeshkar, a classical singer and theatre personality, and Shevanti
- Lata was named Hema at birth but her parents later renamed her after a woman character named Latika, from her father's play *Bhaaw Bandhan*
- Lata made her debut on stage at the age of five in a play *Soubhadra*. Nine-year-old Lata played Narad
- In 1942, Lata sang a song in the Marathi movie *Kiti Hasaal* but it was dropped from the final cut
- In 1945, she moved to Mumbai
- She got her first major break with the song *Dil Mera Toda, Mujhe Kahin Ka Na Chhora* in the movie *Majboor* (1948)
- *Aayega Aanewaala* from *Mahal* (1949), picturised on actor Madhubala, became her first major hit

Awards

- She received multiple National Film Awards
- Padma Bhushan: 1969
- Padma Vibhushan: 1999
- Bharat Ratna: 2001

- Dadasaheb Phalke Award- 1989
- France's highest civilian award- 2009

Playlist

(Some memorable songs)

- *Hawa Mein Udtaa Jaaye Mora Laal Dupatta Malmal Ka* (*Barsaat*, 1949)
- *Ajeeb Dastan Hai Yeh* (*Dil Apna Aur Preet Parai*, 1960)
- *Pyar Kiya To Darna Kya* (*Mughal-E-Azam*, 1960)
- *Lag ja gale*(*Woh Kaun Thi?*, 1964)
- *Ye Sama* (*Jab Jab Phool Khile*, 1965)
- *Aaj Phir Jeene Ki Tamanna* (*Guide*,1965)
- *Chalte Chalte Yun Hi Koi* (*Pakeezah*, 1972)
- *Ek Pyar Ka Naghma Hai* (*Shor*, 1972)
- *Dekha Ek Khwaab* (*Silsila*, 1981)
- *Tujhe Dekha To* (*DDLJ*, 1995)
- *Dil hoom hoom kare* (*Rudaali*, 1993)
- *Luka Chuppi* (*Rang de Basanti*, 2006)

She communicated through music

From dawn to dusk, her voice accompanied the citizens of a new country

ANURADHA RAMAN

How does one capture a lifetime of music in a few words? Well, the un-Indian nightingale comes to mind. A title bestowed on her early on – when in a voice described as sweet as a nightingale, her rendition of a song on the Indian soldier after a bruising defeat at the hands of a neighbour moved the Prime Minister to tears.

Lata Mangeshkar meant several things to people. To composers she was a singer whose unblemished voice could not strike an off-key note even if she willed it to. To young girls her voice was the holy grail whose pursuit began in infancy.

Lata's early struggle when money was hard to come by after her father's death, mirrored the woes of a young country struggling to shake off its colonial yoke.

The sheer drudgery of the early years stood in sharp contrast to the moods her songs evoked in a voice honed by years of training in Indian classical music.

Final salute: Prime Minister Narendra Modi paying tribute to Lata Mangeshkar in Mumbai on Sunday. • EMMANUAL YOGINI

Her voice trailed people after a new country found its voice in freedom. From dawn to dusk, her voice accompanied the citizens of a new country as they went about their daily chores and defined the nation's mood.

As *India Today* wrote a few years ago, "It is the voice to which the roadside vendor in Delhi has transacted his business, the long-distance trucker has sped along the highway, the Army jawan in Ladakh has kept guard at his frontier bunker, or the glittering elite of Bombay have dined in luxury hotels." To this, add hospitals where to this day, Lata's bhajans offers solace to the hopeless. Yet, if her early struggles steeled her to face adversity and challenges, it also ensured a fiercely competitive spirit which could brook no competition.

In the era of black and white, her diamonds shone as she soared sometimes on a solo flight hitting all the high notes with clarity, gliding low to swoop on the low notes in a gentle arc, many a times in the company of singers who have passed on.

One-woman industry

When India transitioned to colour, her diamonds glittered just as bright as she burnished her credentials as a one-woman industry. Her fight for the rightful recognition of playback singers on records and on programmes aired helped future generation of singers who are now known, recognised and feted for their songs.

Though she has hobnobbed with politicians, lavishing praise on some, her politics was a closely guarded secret just like her silence which was loud enough for people to hear when Mumbai burnt once too often in a communal cauldron. Wedded to music, it was music that was her language of communication.

Her voice never became old

Through the decades, Lata Mangeshkar gave musical life to every syllable she sang

T.M. KRISHNA

We prayed for her immortality. Her voice registered our strengths and frailties. She soothed us when everything was lost, her aural sensuality was present in our first kiss, and her pleading for unity cut through a sharply divided society. Each one of us created an unbreakable personal bond with her.

We often associate playback singers with specific actors. The singer becomes the musical expression – an extension – of the actor. This is so well established that when an actor completes a dialogue and the scene segues into a song, we do not notice a difference; the voices merge. Lata Mangeshkar's voice did not belong to any one actor; she was every actor's voice. It would be appropriate to say her voice was theirs! She did not hide her presence behind the actors; you always knew it was her. The actor became Lata's expressive moving picture. Yet, her personality never mediated our relationship with the story. It was as if her voice worked for any one, any situation and any era. Hence, there was no need for that illusionary trick. This seems contradictory, even impossible, but it did happen.

Rehearsal session: Lata Mangeshkar with Mohammed Rafi, right, and music director Shankar. • THE HINDU ARCHIVES

We speak of playback singers being influenced by the voice, mannerisms and accent of actors they represented. In Lata's case, I would argue that every actor's acting improved when they heard her track being played for a song they were filming. How could it not? Watch any scene of a song she rendered and it is as if she coaxed the actors to come up to her standards of emotivity.

Emotion in music is spoken of in esoteric terms, or as something that happens through experience and maturity. Otherwise, we are told, internalise the meaning, understand the context, the melody and involve yourself in the singing and emotionality will be transferred into the song. We may feel the song in our bones but our rendition can still lack the needed emotive layering. Emotional communication in music is a technique. It exists in the way we use our voice; we enunciate each syllable and our treatment of the melodic and rhythmic cadences in the song. With Lata, every second oozed emotion; it was in the way she sang. The minor shifts in tonality, the timbral and decibel control over a musical phrase and the way the words were enunciated.

Reading a line of poetry has little to do with singing it. When I say *mohabbat*, I am speaking of love; when I sing, it is the essence of love. That inner resonance appears because the word is not tightly bound by its own construction. It spreads its wings inviting us to romance its every consonant and vowel. Lata gave musical life to every syllable she sang. The meaning of the word was felt even before the word was completed. And then there

TRIBUTE

was the last note! That tantalising drop at the end of a musical turn, curve, statement or question. The line was over but Lata's voice remained for just that extra micro-second, gifting that last note a memory. The next line began from its silent listening. I can still hear that dissolving note, it was magic.

Supersonic phrases

Speed is often overglorified. Singers deliberately direct our attention towards it, and the felicity of their voice. But the brilliance of speed is when the rush, the adrenaline, is not known. Lata sang supersonic phrases without bravado. When you watched the song sequence, you did not even know that she had executed something demanding. It seemed as easy as the actor's mime. The sheer control behind these renditions should not be categorised just as technical proviso. The complexity of the melody never came in the way of her emotive power. In the case of other singers, emotion would wane and wax within one song. There would be moments when their hearts were present in the music, and times when they were only aiming for musical accuracy. That was never the case with Lata. She did not make her vocal virtuosity obvious. She just made us smile, cry, love and celebrate, unaware of the musical brilliance.

Through the decades, Lata's voice aged and all of us recognised that. But the voice never became old! Another paradox. There are voices that do not age; there are those that become old. But to age yet remain young is rare. The ageing was physical, her vocal cords did tire, there was a perceptible tremble in the voice, but she did not sound old. Her musical expression was young. By young, I am not referring to youthfulness, but rather the quality of being alive. This spirit gave her voice bloom.

Lata had her detractors. Some complained that her voice was too shrill; just as they said of M.S. Subbulakshmi, the nightingale from the South. Lata is not versatile enough, they complained. But all this did not matter because, she was the song. If there was one criticism that took the sheen off the Lata enigma, it was that she suppressed other talents from emerging during her reign. I am certain there are many truths to this and no single one will give us the whole picture.

I think of Lata and a mystical land comes to my mind. She exists in my dream sequence and her voice emanates from an unseen person. I search for her knowing fully well we will never meet. She flits in and then vanishes. And I wait patiently for the next time. But unlike that dreamland voice, Lata was always present. As far as I am concerned, she has not moved on; she remains with us, our celestial voice.

(T.M. Krishna is a musician and author)

A collaboration most melodious

When Lata Mangeshkar sang for Madan Mohan

P.K. AJITH KUMAR

She had a voice from heaven. He could conjure up tunes that were out of this world.

When they joined hands – which, fortunately, was very often – the result was sheer magic. Lata Mangeshkar and Madan Mohan together gave Hindi cinema some of its sweetest songs ever.

We have had fruitful partnerships like Naushad-Mohammed Rafi, R.D. Burman-Kishore Kumar, O.P. Nayyar-Asha Bhosle, Ilaiyaraaja-S.P. Balasubrahmanyam, M.S. Viswanathan-P. Susheela, M.S. Baburaj-S. Janaki, G. Devarajan-Yesudas, Raveendran-Yesudas and A.R. Rahman-Hariharan. Yet, there have been few collaborations as melodious and consistent as the one between Lata and Madan Mohan.

Take *Lag jaa gale...*, for instance. It is perhaps the most popular of all their songs. And there aren't too many Lata songs – of any composer – that is as universally liked. Its YouTube video has been viewed more than 22 crore times since it was posted in 2010. Remember, the song is from a film released in 1964 (*Woh Kaun Thi?*). The tune is hauntingly beautiful and the way Lata has sung it, right from the humming at the beginning, hooks the listener for life.

But is this their finest song? Maybe not. Two gems, *Woh chup rahe to...* (*Jahan Ara*) and *Naghma o sher ki...* (*Gazal*), come readily to the mind as contenders. And there are several other great compositions like *Nainon mein badra...* (*Mera Saaya*), *Aap ki nazron ne...* (*Anpadh*), *Mai ri...* and *Baiyan na dharo...* (*Dastak*), *Naina barse...* (*Woh Kaun Thi?*), *Yun hasraton ke...* (*Adaalat*) and *Teri aankhon ke siva...* (*Chirag*).

ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

INTERVIEW | ANUPRIYA PATEL

'Voters know that poll-eve defections are guided by political benefits'

Apna Dal(Sonelal) leader and Union Minister says such movements are likely due to doubts about retaining seats and to increase the chances of winning

NISTULA HEBBAR

Apna Dal leader and Union Minister **Anupriya Patel** *speaks on the Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh and related issues.*

How are you looking at this election, especially after the exit of 10 MLAs from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to the Samajwadi Party (SP)? Do you think the caste combination that propelled the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to power in the 2014, 2017 and 2019 election is still intact?

■ I don't want to deny the fact that leaders like Swamy Prasad Maurya-*ji* and Dara Singh Chauhan-*ji* are prominent faces, they are influential people. However, I always maintain that the movement of MLAs and Ministers from one party to another right before the elections is not taken very well by common voters. Voters understand that such switchovers are guided more by political benefits rather than issue-based politics.

If there was a serious issue with the party where they [those who left] served as Minister or MLA, they could have made the move much before polls. If you do it on the brink of the polls, then it's more likely that you have doubts about retaining your own seats and you go to another party to increase your chances of winning. That's how I see it.

You have been a steady ally of the BJP since 2014. How do you negotiate this relationship with a much larger, stronger party?

■ When we are in an alliance, both partners have to adjust with each other. It cannot be one-sided. We are the smaller party to the BJP but there is no occasion where we have refrained from raising issues which pertain to the ideology of social justice followed by the Apna Dal. These concerns

We don't refrain from articulating our concerns with the BJP, and there is a mutual adjustment

have been attended to and resolved periodically.

For example, the issue of OBC (Other Backward Class) reservations in NEET (National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test), I raised it in the NDA meeting and spoke to the BJP's top leadership. Serious attention was paid to it by the honourable Prime Minister and the matter was resolved.

The All India Judicial Services is an issue we keep raising with our alliance partners, and we see there is an intent [there] too. Let's see what happens.

We have also been raising the demand for a separate OBC Ministry, and of raising the 'creamy layer' limit in OBC reservations to up to ₹15 lakh per annum income, as per the recommendation of the parliamentary committee on this. We don't refrain from articulating our concerns, and there is a mutual adjustment.

You are facing a familial issue with the Apna Dal(K) led by your mother with the SP. Isn't it awkward for you?

■ Not at all, not at all. After my father passed away, I was given the reins of my party by my party men only. I wasn't somebody who claimed it on my own. And I think the party has had a beautiful journey since the time I have been at the helm. My people have stood behind me. Yes, there is a slight disturbance, but every time the election results have shown, and you will also appreciate that, the Apna Dal voter has stuck with me. I don't want to make any tall claims but in this election also, you will see that the voter will be with me.

What is your view on your sister Pallavi Patel contesting against Keshav Maurya in Sirathu?

■ That's between the Apna Dal(K) and the SP, I have nothing to say. All I can say is that the NDA will win.

This time, you have also fielded a candidate in western Uttar Pradesh as part of seat adjustment, from Suar, where Haidar Ali, grandson of Congress veteran Begum Noor Bano, is coming up against SP's Azam Khan. Did the BJP ask you to take that seat or was it your preference?

■ It was my preference. I want to expand Apna Dal across the the State and we asked for the seat. We found a suitable candidate, a young face, absolutely clean image, and coming from a family that has a political legacy. People in Suar love him.

It is good to give opportunities to youngsters like him who are promising and can change the way things are in a place like Rampur, where we have seen what has been happening in the past few years. I have confidence in my candidate.

Trouble in CPI rocks Cong. Manipur plans

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Congress-led Manipur Progressive Secular Alliance has made light of the resignation of 48 members of ally CPI. The CPI, too, brushed it aside as a "local issue".

Peeved about the alliance, 48 CPI members in the Wangjing-Tentha Assembly constituency resigned from the party. This was announced on February 4 at the residence of CPI State executive member Haobam Robindro.

He accused the Congress of taking advantage of the CPI while condemning the latter's State council for forming the alliance despite stiff opposition by most of the local council members.

Ticket denial

"The formation of the alliance was undemocratic and the CPI's Manipur State council deceived the supporters of communism," Mr. Robindro said, also accusing the CPI leaders of preparing to vote for some corrupt Congress candidates.

Former Manipur Minister and CPI's national executive member M. Nara said differences over the denial of ticket to a party leader had led to the mass resignation.

State Congress spokesperson K. Debabrata said the issue was nothing to be worried about. He did not rule out the possibility of the "disgruntled" CPI members being supporters of the BJP.

The allies of the Congress are the CPI, the CPI (M), the Janata Dal(S), the Republican Party of India, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and the Forward Bloc.

Sunil Jakhar says he has quit active politics

Decision comes on day Cong. named Punjab CM candidate

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

Hours before former Congress president Rahul Gandhi announced incumbent Charanjit Singh Channi as the party's chief ministerial candidate for the Punjab Assembly election on Sunday, the party's former State president Sunil Jakhar announced his quitting from active electoral politics.

Mr. Jakhar told *The Hindu* on Sunday that he had decided to quit active electoral politics, but would continue to serve the Congress.

"There are some colleagues in the party with whom it has become difficult to go along, and hence I am quitting. I had enough. But I am very much part and parcel of the Congress party. Whatever duties the party gives me, I will perform. It's

There are some colleagues in the party with whom it has become difficult to go along, and hence I am quitting

only active electoral politics that I am quitting," said Mr. Jakhar.

Mr. Gandhi announced the party's Chief Ministerial face at a rally in Ludhiana.

Party's State president Navjot Singh Sidhu and Mr. Charanjit Singh Channi were the front runners in the race for the chief ministerial candidate.

Notably, Mr. Jakhar was seen as a contender for the post of Chief Minister before Mr. Channi's name was announced after the exit of Captain Amarinder Singh.

Recently addressing a gathering, Mr. Jakhar made a statement about the Chief Minister selection and said 42 MLAs agreed on his [Jakhar's] name at the Congress legislators' meeting held after the removal of Captain Singh.

Mr. Jakhar added that Deputy Chief Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa had the support of 16, Preneet Kaur 12, and Navjot Sidhu six, but Mr. Channi had the support of only two MLAs.

'First-phase polling will be eye-opener'

Farmers, youngsters have made up their mind, says SP chief Akhilesh Yadav

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KARHAL (MAINPURI)/ AGRA

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday attacked the Uttar Pradesh government, saying the "eyes and ears of the government will open in the first-phase itself" as farmers and youngsters have "made up their mind" to defeat the BJP.

It was Mr. Yadav's first meeting in Karhal after he filed his nomination papers from the Assembly seat in the Mainpuri district.

Karhal goes to the polls in the third phase on February 20.

'People threatened'

"The way the wind is blowing and seeing the atmosphere, it seems the eyes and ears of the (BJP) government will open in the first-phase itself," he said.

Speaking in Agra earlier, he alleged that people are being threatened over the phone against voting for his

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav at a rally in Bah near Agra on Sunday. ▪ PTI

party after it has emerged as a powerful contender in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election. He also asked people to record such threatening calls so that based on them, FIRs could be lodged after his government comes to power.

Mr. Yadav made the allegations while addressing a workers' meet in the Bah Assembly constituency of Agra. He said the polls in the State are for the future of Uttar Pradesh and to save theConstitution.

"This election is for the future of U.P. and to save the Constitution. The BJP can do anything and nobody knows till they do it. Did anyone know demonetisation was going to be announced?"

Mr. Yadav also mocked Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath who in a recent statement had said he would "cool down" after March 10 those heightening passions.

"The CM is talking about cooling down. But we will only talk about announcing recruitments in the police for youngsters of the State."

Free power

The SP chief reiterated that his party will give 300 units of electricity free to domestic consumers and also give old pension to the government employees.

"The electricity bill gives an electric shock (to consumers). The BJP government has not set up a single power plant and we are forced to pay exorbitant rates. The transformer of the BJP will be fused by the anger of voters," he said.

Attacking the BJP, he said, "The BJP people speak lies that development has only been done in Mainpuri. I want to assure you that we will make the development of Etawah and Karhal an example of the development in the State."

Not even a miracle can save Cong.: BJP

Nomination of Channi is a victory for sand mafia, says Sukhbir Singh Badal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

With the Congress announcing Charanjit Singh Channi as its chief ministerial candidate for the Punjab Assembly election, the Opposition parties on Sunday took a swipe at the party.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said the announcement will not make any difference to the fate of the party that is already doomed.

Union Minister for Jal Shakti and BJP in-charge for Punjab Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said the party is in a state of ruins owing to misgovernance, rampant corruption and internal squabbling

Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

and not even a miracle can save it now.

"The Congress is doomed beyond redemption and announcing someone as the CM face can never redeem its fate." He said the infighting will intensify after the announcement.

"Not only the Opposition parties but also some Congress leaders are openly talking of the corruption in the government", he said. "Nominating one person as the CM face is not going to wash off the party's sins of omission and commission during all these years."

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal said the nomination of Mr. Channi was a victory for the sand mafia.

"It is shocking but true that the sand mafia has even prevailed over the Congress high command and foisted its candidate on the party. However, the people have seen through Mr. Channi and will see this move as a bid to strengthen loot and corruption in Punjab. They will definitely give a befitting response to the party on February 20," he said in Patiala.

Aam Aadmi Party Punjab affairs co-in-charge Raghav Chadha said: "It is indeed sad that out of 3 crore Punjabis, the Congress chose a person who is accused of illegal sand mining and transfer posting scam as their CM candidate," he said in a tweet.

Congress is not serious about taking on BJP, says RJD

'Campaign in Bihar Assembly polls left much to be desired'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA

The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) on Sunday charged the Congress with "lack of seriousness" in posing a credible challenge to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), citing its failure to get its act together in Punjab, which it rules, and the party's insistence on punching above its weight in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

RJD national vice president Shivanand Tiwary, a key aide of party supremo Lalu Prasad, also blamed the junior ally for his party's inability to form a government in Bihar despite winning the maximum number of seats in the 2020 Assembly elections.

Complete absence

Mr. Tiwary said the Congress initially wanted to contest 100 seats of the 243-strong Assembly, but settled for 70, "a number, we were given to understand, [which] was approved by Sonia Gandhi herself".

He alleged that the Congress' campaign, however, left much to be desired, pointing out Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's "complete absence" and Rahul Gandhi taking time off for "not more than half a dozen rallies" in the standalone elections.

Notably, the Congress finished with a tally of less than 20 seats, clocking the worst strike rate among constituents of the 'Grand Alliance' which is helmed by the RJD, and includes the CPI, CPI(M) and CPI(ML).

TH CROSSWORD + 13473

(set by Bruno)

Display keystrokes of genius. Type your answers in our online grids. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY

ACROSS

6 Luxurious, soft, and green (5)
7 Westernised holy man embracing scoundrel's feet (8)
10 June, Bill, and Leah partly ushering in English party (7)
11 Bang! Queen fired Uzi as a test (3,4)
12 Magazine featured John playing game (7)
13 Mood as European Commission embraced local language? Repulsed! (7)
14 13Ac observed here, perhaps tracked – wee high, basically (7,4)
19 Raid found two rupees and a piece of underwear hidden in kitchen appliance (7)
21 America's universal friend – often... (7)
23 ... covered in money, conducted war with business (3,4)
25 Note – flying gull putting end of anchovy on victim (4,3)
26 Inconvenient accommodation for Eastern queen trapped in area (8)
27 Unknown, operated by Unit and reversed gives a kind of operator (5)

DOWN

1 Part of play when mud's flung on boy, who's dancing (8)
2 Avoiding AA, sot finally in allopathy treatment? That's kinda flaky... (6)
3 Rest, perhaps – no good after that workout (10)
4 Wear out in all directions (4)
5 Lacking experience mainly, exercising amateur got serious injury (6)
6 Jean regularly wearing parents' nightwear (6)
8 Part of ship requiring work during high tides (7)
9 Old Mexican alphabet ends with T – these days, it's reversed (5)
13 Mark's merciful action in empty complex (10)
15 It may carry signal from one in war, perhaps, with audiovisual message, ultimately (7)
16 Lightweight metalworking complex went bust – was abandoned (8)
17 Cold-set cake's bottom is sweet (5)
18 Limits of seismology, zoology, geneology, and heavenly alignment (6)
20 Royal banned rare art work for mistakes (6)
22 Sign of mutual exchanges? (6)
24 Boss of the administration somewhat (4)

SUDOKU

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

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 13472

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Reflections on dharma

Sastras state that it is not easy to define or understand dharma. But it is also a fact that the stories and characters in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata act as magnifying glass to vividly illustrate the nuances of dharma and its practice, pointed out Sri B. Sundarkumar in a discourse. It is a great fortune that these epics continue to influence and make a strong impact on many generations in varying degrees and intensity.

Many sections in the Mahabharata such as the Yaksha Prashna, the Vidura Neethi, the Sanat Sujatiya, the Bhagavad Gita, Vishnu Sahasranama, etc, are in the form of discussions and dissertations on dharma and righteousness. Among these, Vidura Neethi is hailed as a handbook of excellent advice on virtue, vice and ethics. With the Lord's grace, the Pandavas had successfully completed their period of exile, including the one year of incognito life. After their return, their hopes to get back their kingdom look distant as Duryodhana refused and Dhritarashtra toed his line. The instinct to follow the path of dharma is in the core of every being but the bold step to uphold it when caught in situations of moral dilemma is taken only by few who have the grace of the divine. It is a fact that adharma has existed in all the yugas but it is prominent in Kali Yuga, says Krishna to Uddhava in the Bhagavata Purana. People willingly engage in acts of adharma instead of trying to follow dharma.

Dhritarashtra is fully aware that what his sons are doing is wrong and of the moral strength of the Pandavas. His mind is disturbed and seeks the advice of the wise Vidura. Vidura is loyal as a true friend, philosopher and guide to him. His advice reflects his impartial stance on many issues of dharma which he offers in his own blunt and outspoken manner.

Russia 70% combat-ready for invasion: U.S.

National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan says Russia could invade Ukraine within days or weeks

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

Russia has in place about 70% of the combat power it believes it would need for a full-scale invasion of Ukraine and is sending more battalion tactical groups to the border with its neighbour, two U.S. officials said on Saturday.

In the last two weeks, the number of battalion tactical groups (BTG) in the border region has risen to 83 from 60 as of Friday and 14 more are in transit, the officials said.

As to the timing of an invasion, the ground is expected to reach peak freeze around February 15, the officials said, allowing for off-road mechanised transit by Russian military units. Such conditions would continue until the end of March.

Air dominance: Two Russian bombers during a joint exercise with Belarusian Air Force on Saturday. ▪ REUTERS

That timeline and the growing number and capability of Russian forces close to Ukraine could suggest the window for diplomacy is shutting.

Meanwhile, White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan also hinted at a similar timeline, saying Russia could invade Ukraine within days or weeks but could still opt for a diplomatic path forward.

"We are in the window. Any day now, Russia could take military action against Ukraine, or it could be a couple of weeks from now, or Russia could choose to take the diplomatic path instead," Mr. Sullivan told Fox News.

Any possible Russian action could include annexing Ukraine's Donbass region, cyberattacks or a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Mr. Sullivan told ABC, adding that Russia could act as soon as on Monday though it could also be weeks.

As Russia masses more than 1,00,000 troops near the border, it has said it is not planning an invasion but could take unspecified military action if its security demands are not met. Those include a promise that NATO will never admit Ukraine, a demand the U.S. and NATO have said is unacceptable.

U.S. reinforcement

Meanwhile, a plane carrying U.S. troops landed in Poland on Sunday, as Washington reinforces its NATO allies in Eastern Europe amid a Russian military build-up on Ukraine's border.

U.S. President Joe Biden on Wednesday ordered nearly 3,000 extra troops to Poland and Romania, as Washington moves to reassure jittery NATO allies.

China, Pakistan hit out at 'unilateral' Kashmir moves

Both sides reaffirm support for each other's 'core interests'

ANANTH KRISHNAN
HONG KONG

China and Pakistan on Sunday said they opposed "unilateral actions that complicate" the Kashmir issue, as they pledged closer ties following a meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Closer ties: Xi Jinping, right, and Imran Khan at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Sunday. ▪ AP

A joint statement released following their meeting in Beijing said "both sides reiterated their support on issues concerning each other's core interests" and "underscored that stronger defence and security cooperation between Pakistan and China was an important factor of peace and stability in the region."

Mr. Khan attended the opening of the Winter Olympics on Friday, which India has boycotted following the use of a PLA commander in the torch relay, and also held talks with Premier and second-ranked leader Li Keqiang prior to his meeting with Mr. Xi.

The joint statement following Sunday's talks said Pakistan was committed to a "One-China Policy and support for China on Taiwan, South China Sea, Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet." China, for its part, "reaffirmed its support for Pakistan in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence and security, as well as promoting its socio-economic development and prosperity."

"Both sides reiterated that a peaceful and prosperous South Asia is in the common interest of all parties," the statement said, adding that "they emphasised the importance of pursuit of dialogue and resolution of all outstanding disputes to promote regional cooperation and advance the goals of lasting peace, stability and shared prosperity in the region."

On Kashmir, the statement said Mr. Khan "briefed the Chinese side on the latest developments on the situation in Jammu & Kashmir, including its concerns, position and pressing issues at the moment."

China repeated its official stance that the issue "should be properly and peacefully resolved based on the UN Charter, relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements" and said it "opposes any unilateral actions that complicate the situation". Beijing had in 2019 voiced opposition to India's reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir and creation of Ladakh union territory calling it a "unilateral action".

A readout from Islamabad on Mr. Khan's remarks to Mr. Xi, published by the official Associated Press of Pakistan, quoted the Pakistani leader as hitting out at India. He claimed that "the persecution of minorities in India in advancing the Hindutva mindset of RSS-BJP, was a threat to regional peace and stability" and "that the rapid militarisation of India was undermining regional stability."

Those comments and references to India were not mentioned in the Chinese readout, which quoted Mr. Xi as saying "the strategic significance of China-Pakistan relations is getting more prominent since the world has entered a period of turbulence and transformation."

Mr. Xi said China "firmly supports Pakistan in safeguarding national independence, sovereignty, dignity and fighting terrorism" and would continue supporting the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Both sides on Friday signed an agreement to boost industrial cooperation as part of the second phase of CPEC.

The joint statement said the two sides discussed the situation in Afghanistan and the need to expedite humanitarian aid, and said both sides were "ready to discuss with Afghanistan the extension of CPEC to Afghanistan."

African Union slams 'wave' of coups, dodges Israel vote

Four putsches in a calender year unprecedented: AU chief

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ADDIS ABABA

The African Union has condemned a recent "wave" of military coups that has seen an unprecedented number of member states suspended from the bloc, a senior official said Sunday, the last day of its annual summit.

The putsches were among the main issues expected to be discussed at the summit, along with the AU's ties to Israel and its response to a grinding war in the north of host country Ethiopia.

String of suspensions

Less than two weeks before the summit began on Saturday, Burkina Faso became the fourth country to be suspended by the AU after disgruntled soldiers toppled President Roch Marc Christian Kabore.

Guinea, Mali and Sudan are also currently suspended.

"Every African leader in the assembly has condemned unequivocally... the wave of unconstitutional changes of government," Bankole Adeoye, head of the AU's Peace and Security Council, told a press conference Sunday.

Bankole Adeoye

"Do your research: At no time in the history of the African Union have we had four countries in one calendar year, in 12 months, been suspended," Mr. Adeoye said.

Addressing African Foreign Ministers ahead of the summit, Moussa Faki Mahamat, chair of the African Union Commission, denounced a "worrying resurgence" of such military coups.

But the AU has been accused of an inconsistent response, notably by not suspending Chad after a military council took over following the death of long-time President Idriss Deby Itno on the battlefield last April.

And while Mr. Adeoye touted the AU's use of suspensions to punish coup leaders, analysts say the body must be more proactive to prevent putsches.

"It is only when crisis hits that we say, 'Gosh, how come this country is falling apart like this so quickly?'" Solomon Dersso, founder of the AU-focused Amani Africa think-tank, said.

Also on Sunday, leaders agreed to suspend debate on Mr. Faki's controversial decision to accept the accreditation of Israel, postponing a potentially divisive vote.

N. Korea is continuing its nuclear programmes: UN

'DPRK is seeking material, technology'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NEW YORK

North Korea pressed ahead with the development of its nuclear and missile programmes last year despite international sanctions, according to a confidential United Nations report.

Pyongyang is under major sanctions over its weapons programmes, including a ban on exports of coal, iron, lead, textiles, seafood and other products.

While no nuclear tests or launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles were reported last year, North Korea kept developing "its capability for production of nuclear fissile materials," according to the report, which was compiled by sanctions monitors and shared with the 15 UN Security Council members.

"Maintenance and development of DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile infrastructure continued, and DPRK continued to seek material, technology and know-how for these programmes overseas, including through cyber-means and joint scientific research," said the report, using the initials of North Korea's official name.

Cyberattacks

The document also said North Korea resorted to cyberattacks, especially on cryptocurrency assets, as an important source of government revenue.

The UN experts noted a sharp increase in the quality of illicit refined petroleum imports last year, "but at a level much lower than that of previous years."

While Western countries have steadily pushed for more pressure on Pyongyang, Beijing and Moscow have called for easing sanctions on humanitarian grounds.

Pyongyang conducted an unprecedented seven weapons tests in January, including launching its most powerful missile since 2017 as it hinted it could restart nuclear missile tests.

TTP attack kills five Pak. soldiers

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ISLAMABAD

At least five Pakistan soldiers were killed by firing from neighbouring Afghanistan, Islamabad said on Sunday, in an attack claimed by the Pakistani Taliban.

It comes just days after Baloch separatists in the southwest killed nine Pakistan troops in a series of brazen attacks that officials said involved planners from Afghanistan as well as India.

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) said it killed six Pakistani troops, but the Pakistan military's public relations wing said five Frontier Corps members had died.

ELSEWHERE

Iran tries U.S.-based 'militant' group's leader

DUBAI

Iran on Sunday put on trial the alleged leader of a U.S.-based "terrorist group" accused of being behind a deadly mosque bombing in 2008. Iran, which does not recognise dual nationality for citizens, announced Jamshid Sharmahd's arrest in August 2020 in a "complex operation", without specifying how, where or when he was seized. AFP

Russia reports record daily COVID-19 cases

MOSCOW

Russia reported a record daily count of 1,80,071 COVID-19 cases, a tenfold spike from a month ago as the Omicron variant surges across the country. During the entire pandemic, the coronavirus task force has reported 12.8 million infections and 3,35,414 deaths. AFP

Canada protests against COVID curbs gain steam

Counter-protesters gather in Ottawa

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
OTTAWA

More demonstrators poured onto the streets of Ottawa and other Canadian cities on Saturday demanding an end to COVID-19 vaccine mandates, as protests against pandemic restrictions entered their second week.

In the capital, demonstrators huddled around campfires in bone-chilling temperatures and erected portable saunas and bouncy castles for kids outside Parliament, while waving Canadian flags and shouting anti-government slogans.

Their chants of "freedom" were met with cries of "go home" by a smaller group of counter-protestors fed up with the week-long occupation of the capital.

The atmosphere, however, appeared more festive – with dancing and fireworks – than a week earlier, when several protesters waved Confederate flags and Nazi symbols and clashed with locals.

The demonstrations, which started out as protests by truckers angry with vaccine requirements when crossing the U.S.-Canadian border, have morphed into broader protests against COVID-19 health restrictions.

Police were out in force and put up barriers to limit vehicle access to the city center, as many thousands of protestors joined truckers already jamming Ottawa streets.

Similar protests were happening in almost every major Canadian city, including Toronto – where a man was charged with assault after throwing a smoke bomb into a crowd.

In Winnipeg, a driver was arrested for slamming his SUV into demonstrators, injuring four people.

Queen marks 7 decades of reign

Elizabeth II says she wants Camilla to be Queen Consort

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Queen Elizabeth II on Sunday became the first British monarch to reign for seven decades, announcing her "sincere wish" that Camilla, the wife of her heir Prince Charles, should ultimately be known as Queen Consort.

Britain's longest-serving monarch acceded to the throne aged 25 on February 6, 1952, following the death of her father King George VI.

She marked the historic date quietly at Sandringham, her estate in eastern England where her father died.

Queen Elizabeth II

But in a major statement on the future of the royal family, the 95-year-old released a message to the nation, saying "it is my sincere wish that, when that time comes, Camilla will be known as Queen Consort".

This means Camilla, now 74, would be crowned alongside Prince Charles, now 73, and known to the public as Queen Camilla, royal experts said.

Camilla was long vilified for her role in the break-up of Charles' marriage to Princess Diana.

Prince Charles praised Camilla, saying: "my darling wife has been my own steadfast support throughout".

CIBA
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Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
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Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Govt. of India, 75, Santhome High Road, Raja Annamalai Puram, Chennai – 600 028, Tamilnadu, India
F.No. 5-33/21-22/ST Date: 07.02.2022
TENDER NOTICE
E-Tenders (Two-Bid) are invited from reputed firms for Supply and Installation of Gas "Chromatograph for Simultaneous Analysis of Greenhouse Gases" at ICAR-CIBA, Chennai-600028. For details visit: www.ciba.res.in and CPPP site https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.
Last date for submission of tender is 17th February, 2022, at 15.00 hrs.
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Office of Additional Chief Engineer PHED, Region Bharatpur
Telephone No 05644-222731, 221500, Email: rj_acebha@nic.in
Notice Inviting Bid. 224/ 2021-22
Online bids for NIT No. 224/2021-22 (1 work), Costing Rs. 1444.50 Lacs is invited on behalf of the Governor of Rajasthan from eligible enlisted in appropriate class contractors of PHED, Rajasthan and meeting eligibility criteria. Contractors enlisted with other departments of Government of Rajasthan and enlisted with CPWD/ Postal/ Telecom/ Railways/ MES/ other State Government/ Central Government undertakings/ organization in class equivalent to "AA" class of Rajasthan (as applicable) and meeting prescribed eligibility criteria may also apply. Details of this Bid notification and pre-qualification criteria can be seen on web site www.dipr.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in and http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in. Bids are to be submitted online in electronic format on web site http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in from 31-01-2022 to 03-03-2022 (6PM) & Bids are to be opened at 11:00 AM on 04-03-2022 in presence of willing bidders/their authorized representative.
NIB Code:- PHE2122A5730 (Jagat Tiwari)
UBN No:- PHE2122WLOB12748 Addl. Chief Engineer
DIPR/C/1295 PHED, Region Bharatpur

GUJARAT METRO RAIL CORPORATION (GMRC) LIMITED
(SPV of Govt. of India and Govt. of Gujarat)
Block No.1, First Floor, Karmayogi Bhavan, Sector 10/A, Gandhinagar: 382010, Gujarat. (CIN): U60200GJ2010SGC059407
આપણી મેટ્રો
IFB No.: GMRC/CONS/VDCT+STNS/PKG-C3/Ph-2/2022
Date: 07.02.2022
Bids are invited from reputed and experienced Contractor for the following tender:

Tender Name	Tender Fees
"Construction of 7.553 kms Elevated Viaduct and 7 Nos. of Stations (Incl. E&M, Architectural Finishing, Roofing, Plumbing, Signage, Etc.) From Sector-1 to Mahatma Mandir (Ch. 31945.443m to 39498.302m, Package C3) in Connection with Ahmedabad Metro Rail Project, Phase-2	INR 50,000/-

Interested bidders are requested to visit https://gmrc.nprocure.com, www.gujaratmetrorail.com, http://afd.dgmarket.com and GTAI for eligibility criteria, applying/ downloading the Bid document. Last date and time for Bid Submissions is 15:00 Hrs. on 24.03.2022.
Any alterations in Eligibility Criteria cum Qualification Requirements, and terms of the Tender Document, or any amendment to the Tender Document, etc, will be uploaded on https://gmrc.nprocure.com and GMRC's Website www.gujaratmetrorail.com without any obligation or press notification or other proclamation.
Sd/-
Managing Director,
GMRC, Gandhinagar

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मुहरबंद निविदाएं निम्नलिखित वस्तु(ओं)/सेवाओं की प्राप्ति के लिए पात्र और योग्य निविदाकर्ताओं से आमंत्रित किये जाते : Sealed tenders are invited from eligible and qualified tenderers for the following Items :
निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना /Notice Inviting Tender (NIT)

क्र.सं./ Sl. No.	माल/सेवाएँ का संक्षिप्त विवरण Brief Description of Goods / Services.	निविदा सं. Tender no.	मात्रा Quantity	निविदाओं की प्राप्ति के लिए तारीख और बंद करने का समय/ Closing date and time for receipt of tenders
1.	Procurement of Maplitho with Hotmelt Adhesive 50CM Width	6000017193	1,70,000 Kgs	18-02-2022 At 10:45 AM (IST)
2.	Supply and Installation of Work Stations and Furniture	6000017154	1 Job	08-03-2022 At 10:45 AM (IST)
3.	Renovation of Building Terrace and Construction of conference hall	6000017202	1 Job	

आगे विवरण हेतु, कृपया हमारा वेबसाईटः http://spphyderabad.spmcil.com. देखें और किसी संशोधन/शुद्धि–पत्र वेबसाईट पर ही प्रकाशित किया जाएगा/For further details, please visit our website at http://spphyderabad.spmcil.com & amendment / corrigendum if any, will be published on website only.
हस्ता/Sd/-
M (TO) & CPSO(For Chief General Manager)

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
INVITATION FOR TENDER (Only Through e-Procurement Portal)
BWSSB invites tenders from Registered Agencies for the following works.
Office of the Chief Engineer (WWM), 5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru – 560009

Name of work	Amount put to tender / EMD
No. BWSSB/CE(WWM)/ACE(WWM)-2/TA-2/1900/2021-22 Date: 03.02.2022	
Providing & laying of 500/700mm dia sewer from Venkataramana Temple to 10th Cross Road, Srinagar.	Rs. 107.31 Lakhs / Rs. 2.00 Lakhs
No. BWSSB/CE(WWM)/ACE(WWM)-2/TA-2/1902/2021-22 Date: 03.02.2022	
Providing & laying of 600mm dia RCC NP-3 class sewer pipeline from Avalahalli Bus stand and linking to work No. 13B, Mysore Road.	Rs. 127.90 Lakhs / Rs. 2.00 Lakhs

Last date and time for receipt of tenders will be on 21.02.2022 upto 17:30 hrs. Date of opening of technical bid will be on 23.02.2022 at 16:00 hrs.
Sd/-
Chief Engineer (WWM)
Office of the Chief Engineer (West), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru – 560009
No. BWSSB/EIC/CE(W)/ACE(W)-1/DCE(M)-1/TA(M)-1/6008/2021-22 Date: 05.02.2022
Providing & laying of 100mm dia DI water supply pipelines along with HSC in Ward 66 (Subramanyanagar) Ward-76 (Gayatrinagar) of Malleshawaram Assembly constituency coming under Ketamaranhalli Service Station under NW1 Sub Division — Rs. 393.35 Lakhs / Rs. 5.901 Lakhs
Last date and time for receipt of tenders will be on 23.02.2022 upto 16:00 hrs. Date of opening of technical bid will be on 25.02.2022 after 16:00 hrs.
Sd/-
Chief Engineer (West)
The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in. For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours.
DIPR/DDU/MIA/3238/2021-22
STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.
Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

ASK US

N. SREE KANTH

Q. I am planning to gift my wife listed equity shares worth ₹10 lakh. Assuming she sells the shares after a year, what will be the cost of acquiring the shares ?

SAMPATH BALAJI

A. The Cost of Acquisition (COA) in the hands of your wife in case of gift received by her which are in the nature of capital assets is the cost of acquisition incurred by the donor (that is yourself) when they were acquired by him.

Q. I had incurred long-term capital loss (LTCL) of ₹1.80 lakh in FY20 and had shown the same while filing ITR. In FY21, my long-term capital gain (LTCG) is ₹75,000. As it is below ₹1 lakh, it is exempted from tax for FY21. I would like to know if I would be able to carry forward the LTCL of ₹1.80 lakh from FY20 to next year?

SRILAL

A. The LTCG of FY21 will be set off against the LTCL brought forward from FY20. The taxable LTCG for FY21 will be zero and the amount carried forward with regard to the LTCL in FY20 will be ₹1.05 lakh to future years.

Q. I am a 48-year-old lady. I sold a piece of property two years ago that was gifted to me by my mother. I am a homemaker and have no other income. Am I liable to pay tax on long-term capital gains or may I claim exemption, given my age and quantum of income being less than ₹2.5 lakh p.a.?

LATHA RAMANUJAN

A. Since the transaction is two years ago, the due date for filing the Income Tax (I-T) return is over. However, you can determine whether there was any tax involved in your transaction in the following manner.

Sale of immovable property land will be termed a "Capital Asset" and the ensuing gain/loss from the sale transaction is termed as "Long Term Capital Gain/Loss" if the period of holding is above 24 months. The holding period must be computed from the day the property was purchased by your mother to the day of sale. Capital gains is computed as follows: the first limb will consist of selling price less brokerage. Also, if the selling price is lower than the guideline value, then the guideline value will replace the selling price. Kindly check with the registrar's office in order to ascertain the guideline value of the property for the corresponding address/survey number.

The second limb will consist of purchase cost plus registration costs which is to be adjusted with inflation (indexation). This is to be done with the aid of Cost Inflation Index (CII) released by the I-T department every assessment year. If you have incurred any cost of improvement, then the same can also be added along with the purchase cost (adjusted with CII, if applicable).

The difference between the first and second limbs is capital gains, if it is positive; if not, it is capital loss. Long Term Capital Gains attract 20% tax plus applicable surcharge and cess. In case of loss, the same can be carried forward for eight assessment years and be adjusted with any future Long Term Capital Gains.

Only on computation of the LTCG as per the aforementioned, will you be in a position to ascertain whether your total income for the LTCG is lower than the basic exemption limit or not. As you have mentioned that you are a homemaker and assuming you were a resident of India at the time of sale, if the capital gains as above is less than the basic exemption limit, there will be no tax.

Q. I am 80. I recently sold some shares and the long term capital gain is ₹45,000 as per my demat provider, through whom I purchased and sold the shares.
My total income for FY22 will be ₹4.50 lakh without the capital gains. Kindly advise whether the capital gains is to be included in the total income. In addition, I may get a total dividend of ₹6,000 from the shares I am holding as I received ₹6,000 last year. I would also like to know whether I have to pay advance tax for the capital gains. If so, when and what will be the amount payable?

N.K. RAJAGOPALAN

A. Long-Term Capital Gains (LTCG) from listed equity securities for which STT has been paid is exempt from tax up to the limit of₹1,00,000. In your case, the LTCG earned will not be taxable. Kindly check if the shares sold by you were held by you for more than one year in order for it to be treated as LTCG. Dividends received from companies as a result of shares held by you is taxable under "Income from Other Sources"; the same is to be included in your total income. As you are a senior citizen, advance tax is not applicable to you provided you are not having income from the head "Profits or Gains from Business and Profession".

Q. I am a 22-year-old unemployed person. Recently, I successfully applied for share allotment in the Zomato IPO. I sold the shares and booked a profit of ₹10,000. Should I pay any tax for this profit ?

ALLEN IYPE P. CHERIAN

A. Profits from sale of listed equity shares (STT paid) held for less than one year would qualify as Short-Term Capital Gain and tax on the same is payable at a special rate of 15%. However, if you do not have any other income or in other words, if your total income is less than the basic exemption limit, then there is no incidence of taxability of profit (STCG) mentioned by you.

(The adviser is partner, GSS Associates, Chartered Accountants, Chennai)

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

Borrowing money to make an investment may not always be a good idea

Leveraging can lead to a bitter domino effect

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

GAURAV MASHRUWALA

Whenever equity markets have been on an upward swing over an extended period, queries from TV viewers and print media readers tend to rise, too.

Some of them seek advice on leveraging. What is leveraging? Setting aside the dictionary meaning, leveraging, for a common man, means borrowing money to make an investment.

When equity markets show a rising trend, very often people borrow money and invest those funds in the stock market. Here, the thought process is that they will get to generate more returns than the interest they have to pay on borrowed funds.

Let us try and understand this with an example: Mr. Shah was approached by his bank relationship manager.

The manager offered Mr. Shah a loan against various shares, mutual funds and other investments held in his demat account.

The manager said, "We will charge you interest at the rate of 12% p.a." Mr. Shah calculated, in his mind, that if he was able to generate returns of 22% on his investment in equity, after paying interest at 12% on his loan, he would make a net return of 10%. This was a good deal, again in his mind.

Always be prudent and repay your loan, lay down the burden of equated monthly instalments and invest an amount equivalent to your EMI in SIPs

Illustration

Now, let us take a look at the same illustration with actual numbers. Firstly, a payment of 12% interest is certain. This is payment due to the bank, whether or not any return is generated from invested funds.

On the other hand, the return from the equity market is uncertain. If Mr. Shah is able to generate a return of 22% from his investment in equity, he will get a net return of about 10% in hand. This means that when other investors are enjoying a return of 22%, Mr. Shah will get only 10% returns. On the other hand, if the markets were to fall by 22%, Mr. Shah would lose 34% (the market loss of 22% + 12% interest).

When everyone loses 22%, Mr. Shah ends up losing 34%. So, his loss is more than everyone else's and his gain is less than that of others.

Don't get starry-eyed

Leveraging risk is extremely dangerous. Many a time, we unknowingly leverage risk in our portfolio. Here's how: assume you have a home loan and pay your EMIs on time. When we have a surplus, instead of paying back more of the loan, we invest the funds.

Unknowingly, we are leveraging. In our balance sheet, on one side there is a loan and on the other side, there is a new investment. Often, people continue with their home loan thinking that they are gaining from tax benefits.

This is also wrong. As far as possible, repay the loan at the earliest. In 2008, when equity markets were on the rise, I remember advising many people to prepay their home loans. Most of them did, but a few who did not repay their loans repented in 2009. In 2009, the rate of interest on home loans went up, equity markets crashed and many had to face either pay cuts or a job loss.

Similarly, a situation occurred in the recent past at the beginning of the pandemic. Individuals with loans who faced pay cuts or who lost their jobs were more in stress than peers who were debt-free.

Luckily, this time, there is a simultaneous drop in the rate of interest on various kinds of borrowings but in any case, a loan is a loan.

Review balance sheet

Once you take on any kind of loan, look at your balance sheet. Are there any investments that can be liquidated to pay back the loan quickly? Particularly follow this advice if you have an outstanding home loan. Ensure that the house where your family lives is debt-free at the earliest.

Someone has rightly said, "Home life ceases to be free and beautiful when it is founded on borrowing and debt."

Don't ever leverage in life. Borrowing to meet basic responsibilities is understandable but borrowing to invest is a complete 'No-No'.

Always be prudent and repay your loan, lay down the EMI burden and invest an amount equivalent to EMI in systematic investment plans (SIPs).

An equated monthly instalment (EMI) has an interest component, no matter how small. That interest contributes to someone else's income. SIP is wealth creation for ourselves. We must use our hard-earned money for our wealth creation and not to boost anyone else's income.

(The writer is a financial planner and author of Yogic Wealth)

COVER NOTE: A LITTLE DILIGENCE

Don't rush into buying a policy

Before signing on the dotted line, know what your plan gives you

K. NITYA KALYANI

Erroneous buying of insurance policies – whether you are misled by the seller or managed it on your very own by being less than diligent –leads to hardship. You have paid for some perceived protection and find it is not all there at the worst possible moment, when a loss occurs.

Many readers' queries at this time of the year are about which policy to buy so that the premium can be paid before the financial year to avail of tax benefits. Such purchases, driven by deadlines or by benefits not related to insurance, can turn out to be poorly-thought through.

A typical, rushed decision is when your vehicle policy is urgently due for renewal. Much has been written about remembering your insurance renewal date. Yet, this often becomes a sudden emergency in the one week, or even the one day, before your policy expires.

A straight renewal of what you already have may be safe and that is what any intermediary will push for with a tight deadline because the fact is, that is the simplest way to get the renewal done.

You don't have the time to pay attention to whether the insurer is offering you an appropriate insured's estimated value (IEV), the sum insured for your vehicle policy or the optimal cover you should have. Moreover, you may be missing out on opportunities to fine-tune your cover. You may want to add a breakdown towage cover or no-depreciation cover which are becoming popular, but there would not be time to get a quote through the system with only a day to spare.

Haste makes waste: Deadline-driven insurance purchases can turn out to be poorly thought through. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

You may want to opt out of some extra covers that you find are no longer meaningful. Believe me, there is a long list of interesting options you can choose from and you should be reviewing these at each renewal.

If you have a payment constraint, you may wind up opting for a third-party-liability-only policy, thus leaving yourself wide open to own damage losses. TP liability cover premium is fixed by a tariff but own-damage cover has some bargaining leeway and you can shop around among companies, even using the Internet, for better rates.

Home insurance

Home insurance policies also have important decisions you should apply your mind to. In your drive for better premium rates, be wary of intermediaries who offer discounts by cutting out covers. This used to happen with home fire policies, with flood cover being dropped to present a lower premium. Luckily, now flood cover is an integral part of fire cover.

Here, too, there are interesting add-ons. You should neither ignore nor allow them to be included without your express approval. I found a public liability cover that made sense because I was remodeling a home a while ago.

Home insurance as a part of a home loan package also deserves attention. The policy is usually co-terminus with your loan. Check what the value covered is. Is it the value of the property or only the loan? How this policy works is it will be assigned to the lender to the extent of the loan and, should there be a fire, on assessment of the loss, the claim will be paid first to the lender to the extent of the outstanding loan and only the reminder to you. Which is appropriate because your home loan will be extinguished at least in the face of a fire loss.

An important part of home insurance for you will be cover for contents against fire and burglary, and the policy that the home loan company will arrange is unlikely to cover this.

Please do talk to your lender and the insurer for getting this cover added on. If it's not possible, ask if you can get a different policy with fire and burglary cover for contents. You should be able to, because this is available even to tenants. You can get this policy from a different insurer too, disclosing the existence of the fire cover on the building, related to your home loan.

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

TECH TRAIL: PRECIOUS METALS

Gold, silver lose sheen

B. KRISHNAKUMAR

Precious metals did not have a particularly positive start to 2022. After a recovery in mid-January, both gold and silver dropped sharply towards the end of the month. News flow associated with the U.S. Federal Reserve's decision on an increase in interest rates and attendant impact on the U.S. dollar played a key role in influencing precious metals prices.

Comex gold lost 1.8% to close at $1,796.4 an ounce at the end of January. Comex silver saw a deeper cut of 4.1% to settle at $22.39 an ounce.

In the domestic market, MCX gold futures dropped 1.1% to close at ₹47,632 per 10 gm. MCX silver futures closed 2.7% lower at ₹60,976 per kg, at the end of January.

Tight range

As observed in earlier months, the price of Comex gold is still coiling in a tight range, suggesting a contraction in volatility. Such volatility-contraction is a precursor to a sharp move in price. The price is still stuck between the positive and negative trigger levels of $1,880 and $1,720, respectively.

A violation of either of these levels would set the tone for the next big move in Comex gold. Until then, the volatile,range-bound action is likely to persist. It would not be appropriate to discuss short-term targets until either of the two levels mentioned above is breached.

Comex silver moved in line with last month's expectations. The price achieved the target of $24.5-25 mentioned earlier. The short-term outlook for silver is positive and the price could head to the immediate target-cum-resistance zone of $25.5-26. This view would be invalidated if the price falls below $21.

MCX gold price too was confined to a trading range in January. Either a move above ₹49,500 or a fall below ₹45,500 would set the tone for the next significant move in MCX gold.

Until either of these levels are breached, expect the recent volatile and range-bound price action to persist. Above ₹49,500, MCX gold could head towards the upside target of ₹51,500-52,500. Below ₹45,500, the price could slide to the next downside target at ₹43,500-44,500.

MCX silver price too is consolidating in a tight range. The short-term trend would depend on either a move above ₹67,500 or a fall below ₹58,300. As observed, it would be premature to predict the direction of the breakout and would be prudent to wait for the price to display its intent.

To summarise, precious metals are still consolidating in a range. Though a big directional move is round the corner, it would be prudent to wait for confirmation from the price action. Until then, it would be advisable to stay light and avoid big exposures in precious metals.

(The author is a Chennai based analyst / trader. This is not meant to be trading or investment advice)

Life insurance term plan premium

Male: 30 Years, Sum Insured - ₹1 crore, Cover up to - 70 Years

Insurance company	Plan name	Maximum cover up to (Years)	Annual premium ₹
LIC OF INDIA	Tech Term^	80	14,122
Aditya Birla Capital	Life Shield Plan	85	12,998
Aegon Life	iTerm Insurance Plan	100	9,114
Bajaj Allianz	Smart Protect Goal	85	10911
Bharti AXA	Premier Protect Plan	75	11,092**
Canara HSBC OBC	iSelect Star Term Plan	99	11,605
HDFC Life	Click2Protect Plus	85	12,601
ICICI Prudential	iProtect Smart	99	15,628
India First Life	e-Term Plan	80	8,260
Kotak Life Insurance	Kotak e-Term Plan	75	9,558
Max Life insurance	Smart Term Plan	85	11,800***
PNB Met Life	Mera Term Plan Plus	99	12,272
Reliance Nippon Life	Digi Term	80	11,012
SBI Life	eShield	80	15,070
TATA AIA Life	Maha Raksha Supreme	100	12,980

*^Maximum policy term is 40 years | **Bharti AXA coverage up to 65 years for age 30 years*
****Max Life offers additional 5% discount for first year*

Health insurance premium

Insurer name	Key features	Plan names	Premium (₹)
Care Health	Day Care Treatments Family Floater option Health Checkups No claim bonus Restoration of cover Pre and Post HospitalisationCoverage	NCB Super Premium Care Care with unlimited recharge Care plus Care Heart NCB Super Premium with UAR	9,092 8,265 8,885 11,755 14,195 9,712
Niva Bupa Health	Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home Family Floater option Alternate Medicine	Health ReAssure Health Pulse Enhanced Health Companion Go Active	9,590 10,161 9,862 11,747
Star Health	Family Floater option Restoration of cover Wellness Benefits Existing illness cover Free health checkup	Medi Classic Star Comprehensive Young Star Gold Plan Diabetes Safe Plan-B Young Star Silver Plan	9,661 11,476 8,389 19,122 7,133
Aditya Birla Health	Cashless hospitals Day Care Treatments Day 1 coverage Day 1 coverage Day 1 coverage Day 1 coverage Day 1 coverage Day 1 coverage	Activ assure Diamond Activ Health Platinum Enhanced Activ Health Enhance (Diabetes) Activ Health Enhance (Asthma) Activ Health Enhance (Hypertension) Activ Health Platinum Essential Activ Health Essential (Diabetes) Activ Health Enhance (Asthma) Activ Health Enhance (Hypertension)	7,919 9,074 17,912 13,170 19,889 7,474 15,072 11,240 16,587
Kotak General	Hospital Room Eligibility Pre and Post Hospitalisation Coverage Day Care Treatments	Kotak Health Care-Premium (incl optional pack 1)	8,738
Chola MS General	Day Care Treatments Hospital Room Eligibility Hospitalization at Home Alternate Medicine	Flexi Health	7,807
Digit Healthcare Plus	Hospital Room Eligibility Day Care Treatments Family Floater Option	Option 1 - Maxima Restore Super Option 2 - Early Cover Option 3 - Super care Option 4 - OPD Cover	8,861 8,064 7,616 11,806
Bajaj Allianz General	Hospital Room Eligibility Wellness Benefits Family Floater Option	Individual Health Guard	12,213
SBI General Insurance	Pre and Post Hospitalisation Coverage Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home Free health checkup	Arogya Premier Arogya Supreme	11,074 13,181
Royal Sundaram General	Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home Hospital Room Eligibility Alternate Medicine	Lifeline supreme	**8,578**
TATA AIG	Pre and Post Hospitalisation Coverage Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home Free health checkup	Medicare Medicare Premier	9,820 12,176
Universal Sompo General	Hospitalization at Home Hospital Room Eligibility Alternate Medicine	Complete Healthcare Priviledge	12,241
Raheja QBE	Hospitalization at Home Restoration of Cover Hospital Room Eligibility	Health QuBE Basic Health QuBE SuperSaver Health QuBE Comprehensive	4,947 4,011 5,787
Edelweiss General	Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home Hospital Room Eligibility Alternate Medicine	Edelweiss Health Insurance- Gold (Health 241 Add-on) Edelweiss Health Insurance Gold	10,916 8,733
Liberty General	Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home Hospital Room Eligibility	Basic Elite Supreme	9,579 10,777 11,337
Oriental Insurance	Pre and Post Hospitalisation Coverage Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home	Individual Mediclaim Policy	12,684

Data as on February 2, 2022

Source: LIC of India, www.policybazaar.com

For a 30-year-old male, non-smoker, for sum insured of ₹10 lakh living in a metro city

Dominant India beats England, makes it high-five at the pinnacle

Puts aside all off-field troubles to remain undaunted throughout an extraordinary campaign; Bawa's allround show fetches him Player-of-the-Final award

On top of the world: Dhull's boys remained unbeaten in the 14th edition of the tournament. ▪TWITTER#U19CWC

U-19 WORLD CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

An absolutely dominant India won a record-extending fifth Under-19 World Cup title here on Saturday, beating England by four wickets in the final of an extraordinary campaign that was almost derailed by a COVID-19 outbreak.

The triumph bore resemblance to the exploits of world-class Indian U-19 teams of the past.

Finishing with a flourish

In a reflection of India's dominance, wicketkeeper Dinesh Bana finished the chase of 190 with two sixes, and 14 balls to spare.

After England captain Tom Prest chose to bat, India did the next best thing: bowl out the opposition for a low total – 189 in this case, in 44.5 overs.

Medium-pacer Raj Bawa (5/31) ran through the middle-order and left-arm seamer Ravi Kumar (4/34) added to the opposition's woes.

In the chase, India lost Angkrish Raghuvanshi without a run on the board, but vice-captain Shaik Rasheed shone with a composed 50 off 84 balls.

Coming off his magnificent century in the semifinal against Australia, India skipper Yash Dhull fell for 17.

But the duo of Nishant Sindhu (50 not out) and Bawa (35) took the team within striking distance of victory with a 67-run partnership for the fifth wicket.

It was an extremely challenging ride for the Indian team in this edition of the tournament as several players were infected by coronavirus and at one stage even struggled to field eleven fit personnel.

SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND

George Thomas c Dhull b Bawa 27 *(30b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Jacob Bethell lbw b Ravi Kumar 2 *(5b)*, Tom Prest b Ravi Kumar 0 *(4b)*, James Rew c Tambe b Ravi Kumar 95 *(116b, 12x4)*, William Luxton c Bana b Bawa 4 *(8b)*, George Bell c Bana b Bawa 0 *(1b)*, Rehan Ahmed c Tambe b Bawa 10 *(12b, 1x4)*, Alex Horton c Dhull b Tambe 10 *(21b, 2x4)*, James Sales (not out) 34 *(65b, 2x4)*, Thomas Aspinwall c Bana b Ravi Kumar 0 *(2b)*, Joshua Boyden c Bana b Bawa 1 *(5b)*; Extras (lb-1, w-5): 6; Total (in 44.5 overs): 189.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-4 (Bethell, 1.5 overs), 2-18 (Prest, 3.3), 3-37 (Thomas, 10.1), 4-47 (Luxton, 12.5), 5-47 (Bell, 12.6), 6-61 (Rehan, 16.2), 7-91 (Horton, 24.3), 8-184 (Rew, 43.1), 9-185 (Aspinwall, 43.4).

INDIA BOWLING

Hangargekar 7-1-36-0, Ravi Kumar 9-1-34-4, Bawa 9.5-1-31-5, Nishant 6-1-19-0, Ostwal 6-0-31-0, Tambe 5-0-29-1, Angkrish 2-0-8-0.

INDIA

Angkrish Raghuvanshi c Horton b Boyden 0 *(2b)*, Harnoor Singh c Horton b Aspinwall 21 *(46b, 3x4)*, Shaik Rasheed c Rew b Sales 50 *(84b, 6x4)*, Yash Dhull c Bell b Sales 17 *(32b, 1x4)*, Nishant Sindhu (not out) 50 *(54b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Raj Bawa c Prest b Boyden 35 *(54b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Kaushal Tambe c Rehan b Aspinwall 1 *(9b)*, Dinesh Bana (not out) 13 *(5b, 2x6)*; Extras (w-8): 8; Total (for six wkts. in 47.4 overs): 195.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-0 (Angkrish, 0.2), 2-49 (Harnoor, 17.3), 3-95 (Rasheed, 26.6), 4-97 (Dhull, 28.2), 5-164 (Bawa, 42.6), 6-176 (Tambe, 46.2).

ENGLAND BOWLING

Boyden 7-1-24-2, Sales 7.4-0-51-2, Prest 10-1-29-0, Rehan 10-2-32-0, Aspinwall 9-0-42-2, Bethell 4-0-17-0.

Toss: England.

Player-of-the-Match: Raj Bawa; **Player-of-the-Series:** Dewald Brevis (South Africa).

India won by four wickets with 14 balls remaining to clinch the World Cup.

Self-belief was our strength, says Dhull

Never lost confidence despite the struggles, reveals the skipper

S. DIPAK RAGAV

India under-19 skipper Yash Dhull said the self-belief of the players helped the team stay unbeaten through the tournament and clinch the title.

"Despite the struggles, we stayed strong and the boys remained confident. We achieved what we did because we were strong and believed in ourselves," Dhull said.

The match was set up by medium-pacers Raj Bawa (5/31) and Ravi Kumar (4/34) before the former made a useful 35 runs.

"Raj Bawa has an important role as an all-rounder. He takes the batter by surprise with his bouncers. He is very strong mentally and knows what to do in crunch situations," said the skipper.

"The medium-pacers have been doing well since the Asia Cup, giving us good starts with the ball, and that has made it easier for the spinners when they bowl to the middle-order. Ravi and Bawa gave us a good start today, and (Rajvardhan) Hangargekar has been doing well all along," he added.

Speaking about the chase, the 19-year-old from Delhi said the team was confident it could chase down the target despite two quick wickets during a crucial phase of the match, when Shaik Rasheed and Dhull were dismissed in quick succession.

"We have several all-rounders, so we were confident that things were under control. The pitch had improved, so we knew that if we batted deep, we would get there," Dhull explained.

Ruling the world

India clinched its fifth under-19 World Cup to extend its record of most titles. Australia, with three, is second

- India's previous triumphs had come in 2000, 2008, 2012 and 2018
- The Boys in Blue remained unbeaten during four of their five title wins (2000, 2008, 2018, 2022)
- This was the fourth time the Indians had won the World Cup chasing a total in a summit clash. The only occasion they won while defending a total was against South Africa in the 2008 final
- Dhull joined a select band of captains who have lifted the trophy for India (Kaif, Kohli, Unmukt, Shaw)
- India registered the biggest win of the tournament (by runs), swamping Uganda by a whopping margin of 326
- India's 405 for five in 50 overs against Uganda was the highest total in the 14th edition
- Bawa's unbeaten 162 versus Uganda was the best individual score of the tournament

THE ARCHITECTS

Batting	Inns	Runs	HS	SR	50s/100s
Angkrish	6	278	144	89.38	1/1
Bawa	5	252	162 n.o.	100.80	0/1
Dhull	4	229	110	85.44	1/1

Bowling	Inns	Wkts	BBI	Econ	4W/5W
Ostwal	6	12	5/28	3.63	0/1
Ravi Kumar	6	10	4/34	3.66	1/0
Bawa	6	9	5/31	4.50	1/1

SOURCE: ESPNCRICINFO

BCCI to reward team, support staff

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The BCCI on Sunday announced cash rewards of ₹40 lakh for each member of the victorious U-19 team. The support staff will be paid ₹25 lakh each.

The triumphant India U-19 squad will be felicitated by the BCCI in Ahmedabad upon its arrival in India.

Dhull is skipper of ICC's 'Most Valuable Team'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NORTH SOUND

India's Yash Dhull has been chosen captain of ICC's 'Most Valuable Team' of the Under-19 World Cup. Raj Bawa and Vicky Ostwal also found a place in the squad.

The team (in batting order): Haseebullah Khan (wk, Pak.), Teague Wyllie (Aus), Dewald Brevis (SA), Yash Dhull (Capt.), Tom Prest (Eng), Dunith Wellalage (SL), Raj Bawa, Vicky Ostwal, Ripon Mondol (Ban) Awais Ali (Pak), Josh Boyden (Eng), Noor Ahmad (Afg).

Dhull. ▪TWITTER#U19CWC

Lauding the Boys in Blue

Congratulations India. You have been brilliant throughout and deserved the silverware
VIV RICHARDS

Fantastic contributions from everyone and a deserved title. Enjoy the moment, boys
VIRENDER SEHWAG

What was most impressive about this team was that there was always a new hero either with bat or ball whenever it needed
PARTHIV PATEL

Despite several challenges, the boys showed amazing resilience, temperament and guts to win the Cup in grand style. Fantastic achievement
VENKATESH PRASAD

Well played, India!
MOHD. KAIF

Congratulations Team India for winning the U-19 World Cup. Proud of you!
HARBHAJAN SINGH

Our future stars are shining bright! Congratulations to Team India for winning the U-19 World Cup
MITHALI RAJ

Amazing spells by Ravi Kumar & Raj Bawa. The future of Indian cricket looks bright. Well played boys. Super proud!
YUVRAJ SINGH

A six to seal the deal! So happy for all of you... you all have made us proud
DINESH KARTHIK

An outstanding team effort. Cheers to the whole team
SURESH RAINA

Laxman all praise for youngsters' resilience

S. DIPAK RAGAV

The head of the National Cricket Academy and former India player V.V.S. Laxman praised the resilience of the Under-19 squad given that several players, including skipper Yash Dhull, had tested COVID positive during the tournament.

"In the middle of this tournament, we all know what happened to the boys. To test positive, but to show that kind of resilience and positive attitude was just exemplary," said Laxman after India's World Cup triumph.

While congratulating the team, Laxman also insisted, "this is just the start of the journey. Everyone in this group understands that because this is about their development as players, as persons.

"It's great to see the way they have developed, the way they've evolved over the last couple of months and it's very exciting times for all of them."

Perfect outing for India in landmark 1000th ODI

Chahal, Washington choke the West Indies batters; Rohit leads the chase with fluent fifty

WINDIES IN INDIA

AMOL KARHADKAR
AHMEDABAD

Washington Sundar returned to international cricket in style, Yuzvendra Chahal proved his worth with his wrist-spin and Rohit Sharma marked his first hit as full-time ODI captain with a quickfire fifty to ensure India had a perfect outing in its 1000th ODI on Sunday.

Washington and Chahal broke the backbone of the middle-order on a helpful Narendra Modi Stadium strip. And, despite Jason Holder playing a trademark innings in the latter half, West Indies could manage only 176 in 43.5 overs.

In aggressive mode

Rohit's initial onslaught on the pacers meant the proceedings came to an early end.

Despite losing quick wickets in succession twice, with the pressure of the scoreboard non-existent, Suryakumar Yadav and debutant Deepak Hooda's unbroken 62-run partnership led India to a six-wicket win in the series-opener.

Rohit put West Indies in and Mohammed Siraj and Washington had it reeling at 45 for three. The onus was then on Shamarh Brooks and Nicholas Pooran to build the innings.

Chahal's 100th

Chahal, who had been kept waiting by the early successes, struck off successive balls in his first over. Pooran becoming his 100th ODI wicket.

The next ball, Chahal knocked back Pollard's off-stump with a perfect googly.

Holder then showcased his ability to bat with the tail, tonking four sixes even while attempting to stretch the innings deep. Despite his sensible batting, the early damage had been too much to overcome.

Once Rohit flicked Kemar Roach off his legs in the first over of the chase, the signs were ominous. Rohit built on it, driving and pulling the pacers with panache to race to fifty. With the captain at his destructive best, Ishan Kishan played second fiddle.

But Alzarri Joseph's introduction paved the way for a double delight. He earned the prize scalps of Rohit (missed a straight ball that rapped his pads) and Virat Kohli (top-edged hook to long-leg) in the same over.

Despite Ishan and Rishabh Pant also perishing quickly to give West Indies a glimmer of hope at 116 for four, Suryakumar and Hooda batted sensibly to help India cross the line without any more hiccups.

Spinning a web: Chahal kept the West Indies on a leash. ▪PTI

SCOREBOARD

WEST INDIES

Shai Hope b Siraj 8 *(10b, 2x4)*, Brandon King c Suryakumar b Washington 13 *(26b, 2x4)*, Darren Bravo lbw b Washington 18 *(34b, 3x4)*, Shamarh Brooks c Pant b Chahal 12 *(26b)*, Nicholas Pooran lbw b Chahal 18 *(25b, 3x4)*, Kieron Pollard b Chahal 0 *(1b)*, Jason Holder c Pant b Prasidh 57 *(71b, 4x6)*, Akeal Hosein c Pant b Prasidh 0 *(3b)*, Fabian Allen c & b Washington 29 *(43b, 2x4)*, Alzarri Joseph c Suryakumar b Chahal 13 *(16b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Kemar Roach (not out) 0 *(8b)*; Extras (lb-4, w-4): 8; Total (in 43.5 overs): 176.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-13 (Hope, 2.4 overs), 2-44 (King, 11.2), 3-45 (Bravo, 11.6), 4-71 (Pooran, 19.3), 5-71 (Pollard, 19.4), 6-78 (Brooks, 21.5), 7-79 (Hosein, 22.5), 8-157 (Allen, 37.6), 9-167 (Holder, 40.4).

INDIA BOWLING

Siraj 8-2-26-1, Prasidh 10-0-29-2, Washington 9-1-30-3, Shardul 7-0-38-0, Chahal 9.5-0-49-4.

INDIA

Rohit Sharma lbw b Joseph 60 *(51b, 10x4, 1x6)*, Ishan Kishan c Allen b Hosein 28 *(36b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Virat Kohli c Roach b Joseph 8 *(4b, 2x4)*, Rishabh Pant run out 11 *(9b, 2x4)*, Suryakumar Yadav (not out) 34 *(36b, 5x4)*, Deepak Hooda (not out) 26 *(32b, 2x4)*; Extras (b-1, lb-2, w-8): 11; Total (for four wkts. in 28 overs): 178.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-84 (Rohit, 13.1), 2-93 (Kohli, 13.5), 3-115 (Ishan, 16.4), 4-116 (Pant, 17.3).

WEST INDIES BOWLING

Roach 5-0-41-0, Holder 5-0-29-0, Joseph 7-0-45-2, Hosein 9-0-46-1, Allen 2-0-14-0.

Toss: India; **MoM:** Chahal.

India won by six wickets with 22 overs to spare and took a 1-0 lead in three-match series.

Second ODI: February 9, Ahmedabad, 1.30 p.m.

Bopanna-Ramkumar duo reigns; Sousa wins title

TATA OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUNE

India's Rohan Bopanna and Ramkumar Ramanathan won their second ATP World Tour title together after pipping the top-seeded Australian pair of Luke Saville and John-Patrick Smith in the final of the Tata Open Maharashtra here on Sunday.

The Indians erased a first-set deficit to win 6-7(10), 6-3, [10-6] in one hour and 44 minutes.

For Bopanna, it was his 21st ATP doubles title while it was the second trophy for Ramkumar at this level and will push him into the doubles top-100 for the first time in his career. They split $16,370 as prize money and earned 250 ranking points each. After winning a marathon tie-breaker in the first set, the Indians lost the second before recovering to clinch the match tiebreak 10-6.

In singles, Portugal's Joao Sousa prevailed over Emil Ruusuvuori of Finland 7-6 (9), 4-6, 6-1 in a final that lasted two hours and 43 minutes. It was the 137th-ranked Sousa's first singles title since May 2018, and fourth overall.

The Portuguese's perseverance was the key in countering the solid strokes and fighting spirit of the 22-year-old Finn.

The results (finals): Singles: Joao Sousa (Por) bt Emil Ruusuvuori (Fin) 7-6(9), 4-6, 6-1.

Doubles: Rohan Bopanna & Ramkumar Ramanathan (Ind) bt Luke Saville & John-Patrick Smith (Aus) 6-7(10), 6-3, [10-6].

Perfect finish: Bopanna and Ramkumar kept their nerve to pull through after losing the second set. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

IN BRIEF

Sadowski Synnott creates history

BEIJING

Snowboarder Zoi Sadowski Synnott made history on Sunday after winning New Zealand's first ever Winter Olympic gold. The main event of the day, the men's downhill – one of the most closely watched events at the Winter Olympics –was postponed until Monday because of gusty winds.

Barcelona wins six-goal thriller against Atletico

BARCELONA

Jordi Alba scored off an extraordinary volley while Gavi, Ronald Araujo and Dani Alves were the others to find the target as Barcelona won a six-goal thriller against Atletico Madrid and moved into the top four of LaLiga. Yannick Carrasco and Luis Suarez netted for Atletico. In the Bundesliga, Borussia Dortmund, missing Erling Haaland, was shocked 2-5 by Bayer Leverkusen. AFP

Pirates prove too good for Warriors

BENGALURU

Sachin produced an impressive performance to help Patna Pirates beat defending champion Bengal Warriors 38-29 in their ProKabaddi League match here on Sunday. Sachin scored a Super 10 (11 points) and was ably supported by Guman Singh (7 points) in the raiding unit. Gujarat Giants defeated Bengaluru Bulls 40-36. PTI

TV PICKS

PVL: Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 7 p.m.
ISL: Star Sports 3, 7.30 p.m.
Pro Kabaddi: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m. onwards

IN BRIEF

James, Lakers claw out victory over Knicks

LOS ANGELES

LeBron James returned from a five-game injury absence with a triple-double on Saturday fuelling Los Angeles Lakers' thrilling 122-115 come-from-behind overtime triumph over New York Knicks on Saturday.

The results: Magic 115 lost to Grizzlies 135; Hornets 86 lost to Heat 104; Wizards 80 lost to Suns 95; Lakers 122 bt Knicks 115 (OT); Kings 113 bt Thunder 103; Trail Blazers 108 lost to Bucks 137. AFP

Aditi's career-best round shoots her up to T-15

MIAMI

Aditi Ashok produced a career-best nine-under 63 in the final round to finish tied 15th at the LPGA Drive On Championship, after having just made the cut. Aditi returned 10-under 206 with four others, including Nelly Korda. Ireland's Leona Maguire captured her first LPGA title firing a five-under 67 for an 18-under total. AFP

Aman Dahiya loses in final

SPORTS BUREAU
KATHMANDU

Top seed Aman Dahiya was beaten 6-3, 7-5 by fifth seeded Kim Min-Jae of Korea in the final of the ITF grade-4 junior tennis tournament here on Sunday.

The results:
Boys: Kim Min-Jae (Kor) bt Aman Dahiya 6-3, 7-5.
Girls: Jang Gaeul (Kor) bt Monika Stankiewicz (Pol) 6-7(6), 6-4, 6-4.

Doughty Defenders overcome Blitz

Ahmedabad pips Chennai in five sets

PVL

SPORTS BUREAU

Ahmedabad Defenders registered a 15-13, 15-11, 11-15, 15-13, 11-15 win over Chennai Blitz in the Ruypay Prime Volleyball league championship at GMC Balayogi Stadium (Gachibowli), Hyderabad on Sunday.

The contest began on even terms with both teams trading the lead till 9-all before Ahmedabad took charge through the combination of Shon, Angamuthu, Manoj and A. Muthusamy.

Importantly, Ahmedabad won the super point at 10-11 and then saw Bruno Da Silva of Chennai serve out on a super point.

In the second set, the power and precision Ahmedabad duo Ryan Meehan and Rodrigo Villalboa were to the fore.

In the third set, Chennai rediscovered its form with Fernando David and G.S. Akhin coming up with big smashes and G.R. Vaishnav and Bruno excelling in defence.

With Ahmedabad leading at 12-11, Ryan served out to Chennai's delight on a super point. With the second super point also going Chennai's way, it won the third set to stay in the game.

In the fourth set, Naveen Raja Jacob led a spirited Chennai fightback, ably supported by teammates, which saw the team win the two super points to take the issue to 14-12. But, the brilliant combination of Angamuthu, who was player-of-the-match, Shon T. John and Ryan, saw Ahmedabad clinch the set and the match.

Chennai won the fifth set to ensure a more respectable scoreline at the end.

The result: Ahmedabad Defenders bt Chennai Blitz 15-13, 15-11, 11-15, 15-13, 11-15.

Monday's match: Calicut Heroes v Kolkata Thunderbolts, 7 p.m.

In good touch: Defenders, led by Ryan Meehan, put up a good show. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Harikrishna draws with So

SPORTS BUREAU
NEW DELHI

P. Harikrishna drew with Wesley So in 49 moves and Vidit Gujrathi opened his account by holding teenager Vincent Keymer in 38 moves in the second round of the FIDE Grand Prix chess in Berlin on Saturday.

Harikrishna (1) and Gujrathi (0.5) are aiming to top their four-player groups to qualify for the knockout stage.

Second round results:
Group A: Etienne Bacrot (Fra. 1) drew with Alexander Grischuk (Rus, 1); Hikaru Nakamura (USA, 1.5) bt Andrey Esipenko (Rus, 0.5). **Group B:** Radoslaw Wojtaszek (Pol, 1.5) drew with Grigoriy Oparin (Rus, 0.5); Richard Rapport (Hun, 1) bt Vladimir Fedoseev (Rus, 1).
Group C: Vincent Keymer (Ger, 1) drew with Vidit Gujrathi (0.5); Daniil Dubov (Rus, 1) drew with Levon Aronian (USA, 1.5). **Group D:** Alexei Shirov (Esp, 0.5) lost to Leinier Dominguez Perez (USA, 1.5); P. Harikrishna (1) drew with Wesley So (USA, 1).

Mumbai ends win drought

Vikram Singh's late strike sinks Chennaiyin FC

ISL 2021-22

SPORTS BUREAU

Mumbai City ended its nearly two-month win drought with a 1-0 victory over Chennaiyin FC in the Indian Super League match at Fatorda on Sunday.

Very much like its last win – incidentally against Chennaiyin FC (1-0) – Sunday's also came with a late solitary goal, this time from Vikram Singh in the 85th minute.

It was a well-deserved three points for the holder after dominating the play for most of the match.

The winner came through a small defensive error from Narayan Das that allowed Bradden Inman to get a run on the right flank. Despite his first cross into the box being blocked, Inman managed to get on to the rebound and sent in the perfect assist for Vikram who volleyed into the back of the net.

Mumbai City dominated the first 30 minutes and its best chance came when Cassio Gabriel found Igor Angulo in a good position but the latter could just hit it straight to the keeper.

The result: Chennaiyin FC 0 lost to Mumbai City FC 1 (Vikram Singh 85).

Monday's match: SC East Bengal vs Odisha FC, 7.30 p.m.

On target: Vikram celebrates scoring the winner. ▪ FOCUS SPORTS/ ISL

SC East Bengal faces Odisha FC challenge

SPORTS BUREAU

SC East Bengal will continue its search for winning form as it hosts Odisha FC in an ISL-8 fixture at the Tilak Maidan Stadium on Monday. The red and gold outfit will draw inspiration from its second half performance against former champion Chennaiyin FC, which it held to 2-2 draw after conceding two early goals in the previous outing.

The result cheered up the slackening spirits of the side as it moved to 10th spot, after a long stay at the bottom of the table, with 10 points from 15 games. The Kolkata giant would be looking to continue the fight with renewed vigour and bag the second win. "The performance against Chennaiyin in the second half was one of our best. It will be right up the list, along with the first half of the last Kolkata derby. The players are professional and are hungry to win every match," East Bengal coach Mario Rivera said.

Odisha FC, which has not won a game in the last three matches, will be hoping to get back to winning ways to keep the semifinal hopes alive. Odisha are currently placed eighth with 18 points from 14 outings.

"There are still a lot of points to play for and we certainly have our chances," coach Kino Garcia said ahead of the clash.

National Federation Cup in Kozhikode in April

ATHLETICS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

Kerala will host four National athletics meets this year, including the Federation Cup in Kozhikode in April.

The Athletics Federation of India (AFI)'s 2022 competition season opens in New Delhi on February 26 with the first Indian Open throws meet and this will be followed by four meets in Kerala – Indian Open jumps meet, Indian Grand Prix 1 and 2 (all in Thiruvananthapuram) and Federation Cup in Kozhikode.

"The annual calendar has been designed to give our athletes every chance to qualify and prepare for international events like the World championships, Commonwealth Games and Asian Games," said AFI president Adille Sumariwalla while releasing the competition calendar.

2022 competition calendar:

1st Indian Open throws meet (Delhi, Feb. 26), 1st Indian Open jumps meet (Thiruvananthapuram, March 1), Indian GP-1 (Tvm, March 13), Indian GP-2 (Tvm, March 23), 25th National Federation Cup (Kozhikode, April 2-6), 9th Indian Open race-walking championship (Ranchi, April 16-17), 4th Indian Open javelin meet (Jamshedpur, April 23-24), Indian GP-3 (Madurai, May 18), Indian GP-4 (Madurai, May 25), 20th National u-20 Federation Cup (Gujarat, June 2-4), 61st inter-State Nationals (Chennai, June 10-14).

1st National javelin championship (to celebrate Neeraj Chopra's Olympic gold, in all State & Union Terr., Aug. 7); Indian GP-5 (Bengaluru, Aug. 10).

Indian GP-6 (Bengaluru, Aug. 20), Junior East Zone meet (Patna, Sept. 2-4), Jr. North Zone (Karnal, Haryana, Sept. 2-4), Jr. South Zone (Guntur, AP, Sept. 9-11), Jr. West Zone (Raipur, Sept. 9-11).

17th Youth Nationals (Bhopal, Sept. 23-25), 4th Indian Open 400m meet (Jamshedpur, Oct. 1-2), 61st National Open (Jamshedpur, Oct. 15-19), 2nd U-23 Indian Open (Bilaspur, Oct. 29-31), 37th Jr. Nationals (Guwahati, Nov. 11-15), 18th Jr. inter-district Nationals (Maharashtra or MP, Nov. 25-27).

Slots for other meets: District meets (between March 1-31); State meets (April 1-May 25), Board meets (Aug. 1-30).

Remarkable comeback gives China the title

This is the Steel Roses' record-extending ninth WAC crown

ASIAN CUP

LAVANYA LAKSHMI NARAYANAN
MUMBAI

China PR scripted a remarkable comeback after being two goals down at half-time to beat Korea Republic 3-2 in the final of the AFC Women's Asian Cup on Sunday.

This is the Steel Roses' record-extending ninth WAC title and their first since 2006. China's triumph is doubly special for head coach Shui Qingxia, a five-time winner of this tournament as a player, who becomes the first former player to win this title as coach.

China pressed the Korean defence early with Wang Shuang leading the charge. This strategy worked perfectly as the girls in red controlled possession.

On a high: The Chinese contingent is cock-a-hoop after its triumph. ▪ GETTY IMAGES

Korea tried to counter the stronghold by playing the ball long, but China's physicality helped it make timely interceptions and even attempt some shots at goal to frustrate the Koreans.

Set up perfectly

Despite the early momentum, it was the Chinese who conceded first in the 12th minute. Choe Yuri was set up perfectly with a clean cross from Lee Geummin. Neither was marked adequately and the Koreans took the lead.

Korea doubled its lead in the 44th minute when Ji converted from the spot after her side won a handball appeal when a Chinese defender unintentionally handled the ball in the box.

The Steel Roses came into the second half with a few changes in personnel but were unable to rattle the Korean defence.

China made a comeback when it was also awarded a penalty for a handball appeal. Tang Jiali made no mistake as she slotted this through Kim Jung Mi's fingertips.

China levelled scores in the 71st minute when the Korean defence was caught napping. Jiali once again got hold of the ball, sent in a lifted cross for substitute Zhang Linyan who headed it to the back of the net, with Shui roaring in the dugout.

The now nine-time champion put the game to bed in the 93rd minute when Jiali supplied Xiao Yuyi, another substitute, who kept her cool to bury the ball in the far corner.

Happy with my decision: Langer

Says his respect for values might have been taken as being 'too intense'

CRICKET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE

Justin Langer has said that his respect for values might have been taken by some as being "too intense" during his tenure as Australia head coach after he opted to quit from the top job instead of agreeing to a short-term contract extension.

In his resignation letter to Cricket Australia (CA) officials, Langer offered his apology but stressed that he values "honesty, respect, trust, truth and performance" but some people might have taken it as being "too intense" in his working style.

"My life has been built on values of honesty, respect, trust, truth, and performance and if that comes across as 'too intense' at times, I apologise," wrote Langer in his resignation letter, according to *abc.net.au*.

> **I hope Australians respect what has been achieved over the last four years**

"It is said that in any venture, if you leave things in a better place than when you started then you have done your job. Whilst it is not up to me to judge, I hope Australians respect what has been achieved over the last four years in Australian cricket."

"I want people to know I am happy with my decision and proud of what I have achieved," the former Australia opening batter said.

Dakshata beats Srinidhi

SPORTS BUREAU
JHAJJAR

Dakshata Patel defeated Srinidhi Sridhar 6-2, 0-6, 17-15 in the first qualifying round of the $15,000 ITF women's tennis tournament at the Joygaon Academy on Sunday. Dakshata will play Jane Haeusler of Australia in the second round.

Yubarani Banerjee beat USA's Emira Stafford US 6-1, 4-6, [10-6] and will face Sachi Sharma in the second round.

Sandeepti Singh Rao was at home on the clay courts as she blanked 11th seed Maria Antoniuk of Ukraine to set up a second round against Riya Uboveja. Kavya Khirwar downed Sydney Stone of Australia and will face Sudipta Kumar.

If the weather holds good, the players will go through two rounds of qualifying event on Monday to decide six players making the main draw.

The results:
Qualifying (first round): Siena Jensen (Aus) bt Kriti Tomar 3-6, 6-2, [11-9]; Shanu Agarwal bt Priyanka Rodricks 1-6, 6-1, [10-7]; Ishwari Matere bt Richa Chougule 6-3, 6-2; Renee Singh w/o Riddhi Kakarlamudi; Riya Uboveja bt Himaanshika Singh 6-4, 6-2; Sandeepti Singh Rao bt Marika Antoniuk (Ukr) 6-0, 6-0; Ritu Ohlyan bt Kanika Rapria 6-1, 6-3; Jane Haeusler (Aus) bt Ananya Yadav 6-1, 6-3; Dakshata Patel bt Srinidhi Sridhar 6-2, 0-6, [17-15].

Sonashe Bhatnagar bt Radhika Yadav 6-3, 3-6, [10-4]; Shefali Arora bt Anupriya Bauddh 6-2, 6-3; Sanya Yadav bt Kaashvi Thapliyal 6-2, 4-6, [12-10]; Avishka Gupta bt Kiran Kalkal 6-1, 6-0.

Yubarani Banerjee bt Emira Stafford (USA) 6-1, 4-6, [10-6]; Sachi Sharma bt Priyanshi Bhandari 6-3, 6-4; Kavya Khirwar bt Sydney Stone (Aus) 6-4, 6-3; Sudipta Kumar bt Pragathi Prasad 6-2, 6-1; Kashish Bhatia bt Ananya Dhankhar 6-2, 6-2; Vanshika Choudhary bt Veda Vanshita Ranabothu 6-2, 6-1; Sameeksha Shroff bt Isha Budwal 7-6(7), 6-4; Anjali Rathi bt Chandana Potugari 6-4, 6-1.

THE HINDU

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2022

Text & Context

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NEWS IN NUMBERS

A profitable venture

82 In percent, is the return on investment given by IPO-bound national insurer Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) in 2020, according to a Crisil report. LIC is also the world's largest when it comes to the home-market share, with over 64.1% of the total gross written premium as of 2020. While for LIC, the market share has been steadily declining—from 100% in the pre-2000 era to 71.8% in 2016 and further down in 2020, for SBI Life, which is the second-largest in the country, the same was only 5% in 2016 and 8% in 2020. PTI

Plugging leakage

4.28 In crore, the number of ration cards cancelled by States and Union Territories from 2014 to 2021, according to a reply in the Rajya Sabha. As per the list, Uttar Pradesh has cancelled 1.7 crore bogus ration cards, followed by Maharashtra (41.65 lakh), West Bengal (41.09 lakh), Madhya Pradesh (23.53 lakh), Rajasthan (22.66 lakh) and Karnataka (21.54 lakh). The operational responsibilities of the public distribution system, which include identification of eligible beneficiaries, rest with the States. PTI

70-year rule

70 In years is the reign of Queen Elizabeth II as she became on Sunday the first British monarch to reign for seven decades. Queen Elizabeth II acceded to the throne aged 25 on February 6, 1952, following the death of her father King George VI. In a message addressed to the public signed "Your servant, Elizabeth R", the Queen said late Saturday she wished "to express my thanks to you all for your support". She said she wanted to renew a pledge she gave on her 21st birthday "that my life will always be devoted to your service". AGENCIES

Wave of military coups

>100 The number of military power grabs in West Africa since 1946. West Africa's new wave of coups kicked off in Mali in 2020, followed by another in Guinea the following year, and then Burkina Faso last month. Just a week later, gunmen tried to overthrow the president of Guinea-Bissau in a machine-gun attack. It's a pattern becoming all too common again in West Africa wherein mutinous soldiers detain a president, then seize control of the state broadcaster to announce their victory. AP

Cases surge in Russia

180,071 The number of COVID-19 infections reported by Russia on Sunday, the highest single-day rise ever and a tenfold spike from a month ago. Although the number of infections has increased dramatically in recent weeks, daily deaths are holding steady or marginally declining. 661 deaths were recorded over the past 24 hours, compared with 796 on Jan. 6. The Government is considering loosening restrictions, despite the infections. AP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

EXPLAINER

The tumbling of Meta platforms' shares

What was the trigger for the sheer drop in shares? Is the Metaverse not profitable?

THE GIST

- The shares of Meta Platforms crashed by as much as 25% on Thursday, wiping out over $200 billion from the company's market value. This was triggered after Meta released its quarterly earnings statement last week informing investors that Facebook lost half a million active users during the fourth quarter.
- Meta earns most of its revenues through advertising and the fall in the number of active users of Facebook is seen as a huge red flag. In addition, changes to Apple's privacy policy have given iPhone users the choice to opt out of being tracked by sites like Facebook. This has made it harder for Facebook to show users targeted ads. It is expected that Meta will lose about $10 billion in revenue in 2022 due to Apple's new privacy policy.
- Investors have also been uncertain about the future of Meta as the company tries to reinvent itself. In fact, it was only last year that Facebook renamed itself as Meta Platforms to highlight its new immersive virtual experience through the metaverse. However, the success of the company's new pivot is far from certain and is expected to take years to come into fruition and will cost billions of dollars.

PRASHANTH PERUMAL

The story so far: The shares of Meta Platforms, the parent company of social media giant Facebook, crashed by as much as 25% on Thursday, wiping out over $200 billion from the company's market value. The crash came after Meta on Wednesday announced its earnings results for the fourth quarter of 2021 which did not impress investors. The 25% crash in Meta shares is its biggest fall since its debut in 2012.

Why do shares move up or down?
The price of a share generally reflects the expectations of investors regarding the future cash flow that they can earn from the share. This is the reason why shares of even loss-making companies can appreciate significantly if investors expect these companies to earn significant profits in the future. At the same time, established companies earning billions in profits for their shareholders can still see their stock prices tank if investor expectations regarding the future earnings of these companies begin to sour. Since expectations about the future earnings of a share can change within a matter of just a few seconds or less, share prices are prone to sudden jumps or falls, as in the case of Meta's stock last week.

This is the first time that Facebook has witnessed a drop in its active user base, leading analysts to believe that its long growth story may be over.

Why exactly are investors concerned about Meta's future earnings?
Meta's quarterly earnings statement last week informed investors that Facebook lost half a million active users during the fourth quarter. This is the first time that Facebook has witnessed a drop in its active user base, leading analysts to believe that its long growth story may be over. Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who lost around $20 billion of his personal wealth due to the crash, noted that the company's rival TikTok was a growing threat to its business. There have also been concerns around the demography of Facebook users as younger users prefer other competing platforms over Facebook.

Meta earns most of its revenues through advertising and the fall in the number of active users of Facebook is seen as a huge red flag. It should be noted that Meta reported an overall increase in active users, thanks to the popularity of its other platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp. But analysts believe that it will be much harder for Meta to monetise its user base through these new platforms.

Another area of concern for investors has been the sustainability of Meta's advertising revenues. Of late, changes to Apple's privacy policy have given iPhone users the choice to opt out of being tracked by sites like Facebook. This has made it harder for Facebook to learn more about what its users do online and make money using this information by showing them targeted ads for which advertisers want to pay. It is expected that Meta will lose about $10 billion in revenue in 2022 due to Apple's new privacy policy.

Investors have also been uncertain about the future of Meta as the company tries to reinvent itself. In fact, it was only last year that Facebook renamed itself as Meta Platforms to highlight its change in focus, from offering users the traditional social media experience to offering them a new immersive virtual experience through the metaverse. However, the success of the company's new pivot is far from certain and is expected to take years to come into fruition and will cost billions of dollars. The shaky confidence of investors, some say, was reflected in Meta's stock price even before Thursday's crash. Meta's shares have fallen by almost 40% since the peak that they hit in September last year.

What lies ahead?
No one knows for sure what lies ahead for the company. Meta invested over $10 billion in developing the metaverse last year and only time will tell whether this investment is justified.

As the company adjusts this investment as an expense against its current revenues, its profits are likely to be adversely affected in the short-term and weigh on the price of its share.

It should also be noted that the technology business with its low barriers to entry has traditionally witnessed a lot of churn with giant companies which once seemed to enjoy a strong monopoly getting uprooted by new, more agile entrants.

Facebook, for instance, came to be the most popular social networking site by killing Orkut which was once very popular among internet users.

Google's complete obliteration of Yahoo! from the search engine business is another example of creative destruction that is widespread in the technology market.

Gyrations in the price of Meta shares will likely reflect all these uncertainties in the coming days.

EXPLAINER

Redrawing the electoral map of the Union Territory of J&K

How have the constituencies of Jammu and Kashmir been reframed? What has been the response from local leaders?

PEERZADA ASHIQ

The story so far: The three-member J&K delimitation commission, headed by retired Supreme Court (SC) judge Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai, has submitted its interim report to its five associate members, which included three Members of Parliament (MP) of the National Conference (NC) and two MPs of the BJP.

This paves way for the winding up of the exercise and likely announcement of elections in J&K, directly ruled by the Centre since the BJP withdrew from the coalition Government with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in 2018.

What is the role of the delimitation commission?
The delimitation commission is an independent body constituted under Article 82 after the Parliament enacted a Delimitation Act after every census.

Interestingly, the J&K delimitation commission has not been clear to the associate members about the census report that was made as a base to carve out new constituencies in the Union Territory (UT).

Members of the NC protest against the proposal of the delimitation commission. PTI

How many seats have been added?
The Commission has, as per the mandate granted under the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019, added seven assembly constituencies to J&K, increasing its strength from 87 to 90. The interim report proposes an increase of six seats for the Jammu province, taking the number of constituencies to 43, and an increase of one seat in the Kashmir province, taking the seat strength to 47, almost bringing the two regions at par with each other. In Kashmir, Kupwara district has been granted an additional seat and in the Jammu region Kathua district gets one additional seat, Samba gets one, Doda gets one, Rajouri gets one, Kisthwar gets one and Udhampur gets one. Of six seats, three assembly segments are from the Muslim-majority Chenab Valley and Pir Panjal valley, while three are in the Hindu Jammu-Samba-Kathua belt. The Commission has also proposed to reserve seven seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) Hindus that mainly populate the Samba-Kathua-Jammu-Udhampur belt and nine seats for Schedule Tribes (STs) which will help Gujjar and Bakerwals, mostly non-Kashmiri speaking Muslims inhabiting the Rajouri-Poonch belt in the Jammu province.

Prior to the Centre's move to end J&K's special constitutional position on August 5, 2019, the erstwhile State had an 87-member assembly, with 37 constituencies in the Jammu region and 46 in the Kashmir division and four in Ladakh . Besides, 24 seats are reserved and vacant for Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Have the constituencies been reconfigured?
The Commission has suggested redrawing of boundaries of most of the Assembly segments in J&K. It has named and reconfigured 28 new constituencies and deleted 19 assembly segments.

The Commission has also proposed reframing of Lok Sabha constituencies, with J&K having five parliamentary constituencies, which included three seats from Kashmir and two from Jammu. It has proposed a Lok Sabha seat, disjointed geographically, by merging three districts of south Kashmir and two districts of Rajouri and Poonch in the Pir Panjal valley. It will be named Anantnag-Rajouri seat, which will comprise a significant population of the non-Kashmiri speaking Schedule Tribe assembly segments.

What has been the response from regional actors?
This seat sharing was criticised by regional parties in Kashmir, including the NC and the PDP, on the grounds that the Kashmir province has more population at 68.88 lakhs against 53.50 lakhs in the Jammu province. However, the commission argued that it has taken into account the topography, means of communication and convenience available and not just the population size.

According to the NC, whose MPs first boycotted and later joined the delimitation exercise, none of the suggestions made to the commission had been respected. It has maintained that the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019 was "palpably unconstitutional" and has already challenged the J&K Reorganisation Act in the Supreme Court. The party reiterated that the delimitation be carried out after 2026, as ordered by the Supreme court, after the relevant figures of the census were published. It also questioned the formula applied in case of J&K by the commission. CPI(M) leader Mohamad Yousuf Tarigami termed the Commission's report "an arbitrary overhaul, with no regard for even the terrain, let alone the population that tends to be a basic parameter for redrawing the boundaries of assembly and parliamentary segments.

THE GIST

- The three-member J&K delimitation commission has submitted its interim report to its five associate members, which included three MPs of the National Conference and two MPs of the BJP.
- The Commission has added seven assembly constituencies to J&K. The interim report proposes an increase of six seats for the Jammu province and of one seat in the Kashmir province, almost bringing the two regions at par with each other.
- The Commission has suggested redrawing of boundaries of most of the Assembly segments in J&K. It has reconfigured 28 new constituencies and deleted 19 assembly segments.

CACHE

Understanding Artificial Neural Networks

Through ANNs and the backpropagation method, artificial intelligence has become more powerful

S. VARAHASIMHAN

THE GIST

- The concept behind an Artificial Neural Network is to define inputs and outputs, feed pieces of inputs to computer programs that function like neurons and make inferences or calculations, then forward those results to another layer of computer programs and so on, until a result is obtained. As part of this neural network, a difference between intended output and input is computed at each layer and this difference is used to tune the parameters to each program. This method is called backpropagation and is an essential component to the Neural Network.
- It was also observed that instead of CPUs, Graphic Processing Units (GPU) which are good at performing massive parallel tasks can be used for setting up ANNs.
- A few free ANN frameworks are TensorFlow, Keras, PyTorch and Theano. These can be used for both normal Machine Learning tasks like classification or clustering and for Deep Learning/ANN tasks.

Does the term "neuron" ring a bell in your mind? It is the building block of the brain and it inspired computer scientists from the 1950s– how to make a computer perform tasks like a brain does? It is not a simple problem and the clue to its complexity is in the brain structure. We need billions of artificial neurons if we were to build an artificial brain. With the increase in computing power, mimicking billions of neurons is now possible. The concept behind an Artificial Neural Network is to define inputs and outputs, feed pieces of inputs to computer programs that function like neurons and make inferences or calculations, then forward those results to another layer of computer programs and so on, until a result is obtained. As part of this neural network, a feedback or difference between intended output and the input is computed at each layer and this difference is used to tune the parameters to each program. This method is called backpropagation and it is an essential component to the Neural Network.

The popularity of ANNs

A few more technical phrases will clear up our understanding of this space. Data Science, used interchangeably with Machine Learning, is the computer technology that uses data to detect patterns. Hand-written digit recognition is a good example of machine learning. However, in order for the computer to do this task, large amounts of sample data need to be manually labelled as examples of images of digits. Manual sampling at this scale is not going to be enough. Can there be a technology that can avoid human involvement to label data but can automatically detect patterns in sample data and tune its parameters to an algorithm so that the algorithm is ready to perform automatic tasks? The Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) mentioned above with its backpropagation does exactly this. This is why ANNs have become hugely popular in the past decade. This approach of using neural networks of many layers to automatically detect patterns and parameters is called Deep Learning.

A couple of key developments in the past two decades helped ANNs mature. Cloud computing provided enormous computing resources that are needed for ANNs to "work through" massive volumes of data. Along with this, it was observed that instead of the CPU in a computer, Graphic Processing Unit (GPU) which is good at performing massive parallel tasks can be used for setting up ANNs. In the last two decades, the software for neural networks matured and backpropagation techniques became robust. Combining these concepts, if thousands of GPUs are available that can take up chunks of data and can execute programs on those chunks, then ANNs can be made available for a variety of tasks. Many commercial and free software have become available which use GPUs and Cloud and offer readily available ANNs. A few popular free neural network frameworks are TensorFlow, Keras, PyTorch and Theano.

Cloud computing provided enormous computing resources that are needed for ANNs to "work through" massive volumes of data

Free neural networks

TensorFlow was developed by Google. It uses a specific hardware that is optimised to work with GPU and divides the neural network operations and the corresponding data into units called Tensors. It has an architecture that sets up neural network and uses it on our input data to make it "flow" from one state to another and gives options to choose and operate states that are relevant to us. Keras is a software that can be used on top of TensorFlow so that software developers can interact with just the relevant parameters instead of lower-level details that need to be provided to TensorFlow. Popular implementations of TensorFlow are Google's search algorithm RankBrain and Twitter's tweet ranking.

The ANN frameworks or software mentioned above can be used for both normal Machine Learning tasks like classification or clustering and for Deep Learning/ANN tasks. Are there tasks that cannot be done with good accuracy by normal Machine Learning and hence need Deep Learning? The answer is yes. Automatic Image Recognition of rich images (instead of only simple hand-written digits) and Speech Recognition are two popular uses of Deep Learning. Convolution Neural Network (CNN), a special type of ANN, is good at Image Recognition. It connects a neuron in a layer to all neurons in the next layer but uses optimisation techniques to weed out unwanted signals from neurons. For Speech Recognition, Recurrent Neural Network (RNN) is used because it is good at handling inputs of variable length like speech.

Deep Learning has progressed to the next level and instead of only working on input data and detections, it can now actually generate creative output like music or paintings. A special type of ANN called Generative Adversarial Network achieves this.

Deep Learning made news in 2016 when an ANN-based product called AlphaGo defeated a player in a game of "Go".

ANNs are present in many smartphone applications that we use, like voice to type, Siri and Alexa.

If you want to play with neural networks, you can hop on to one of the free frameworks and build a software program. The Cambrian explosion of artificial intelligence is here!

S. Varahasimhan is a senior employee at a software product MNC in Chennai

THE DAILY QUIZ

Here is a quiz on the life and career of Lata Mangeshkar, the legendary singer who passed away on Sunday.

1 Lata Mangeshkar's family has roots in a village in Goa. What is the name of that village?

2 Who was the composer that mentored a young Lata Mangeshkar and whom she called her godfather?

3 Who is the composer of *Aayega aanewala...*, the song that catapulted Lata Mangeshkar to stardom?

4 *Ae mere watan ke logon...* is one of Lata Mangeshkar's most loved songs. But it is not a film song. Who wrote this patriotic song?

5 Lata Mangeshkar is not the female playback singer with the highest number of National Awards. How many did she win? And who is the female playback singer with the highest number of National Awards?

◄ There is something remarkably common between these two musical legends, M.S. Subbulakshmi and Lata Mangeshkar. What is that?

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

Answers to the February 4 edition of the daily quiz: 1. Serendipity (from Serendib), 2. Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, 3. Mahinda and Sanghamitra, 4. The Muslim and Tamil minorities, 5. It is run by Muttiah Muralitharan's family, 6. Sri Pada, 7. Cinnamon, 8. Assassination of Solomon Bandaranaike, the fourth PM of Sri Lanka

Early Birds: Sriraam Kalingarayar| Pooja Khyalia| Lucky Maurya| Srijan Patra| Akhil Katiyar

Compiled by: Ajith Kumar P. K.

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Listen and learn

Let your hair down and learn some new phrases!

S. UPENDRAN

What is the difference between 'listen' and 'hear'? (Alyepriya Sabui, Hoogly)

Hearing is an unconscious act. As you are reading this, you may hear the sound of the fan in the room, or the sound of traffic. You may not be paying attention to the sound of the fan, but it comes and strikes your ears – there is nothing you can do to block the sound. As a result, you register or 'hear' the sound; it may or may not have any meaning. 'Listening', on the other hand, is an intentional or a conscious act. When you listen to someone, you pay attention to what they are saying, and try to make sense of it. In school, our teachers frequently pleaded with us to 'listen' to what they were saying. They did not want us to 'hear', but 'listen'. This didn't always happen, of course. When we were daydreaming in class, we merely heard the teacher's voice; we were not listening to her.

I heard a strange noise in the middle of the night.

Would you stop reading the paper and listen to what I'm saying?

What is the meaning and origin of 'let one's hair down'? (K Jaiprakash, Kochi)

When you tell someone to let his hair down, what you are requesting him to do is relax. You would like him to enjoy himself; in the given situation, he doesn't have to be careful and behave politely. The idiom, which has been part of the English language for several hundred years, is mostly used in informal contexts.

I need to go to a place where I don't know anyone. Only then, will I be able to let my hair down.

Our boss will be accompanying us on the trip. No question of letting our hair down, I'm afraid.

When it was first used, the idiom applied mostly to the members of the gentler sex. In the past, it was fashionable among women, especially those belonging to the upper class, to grow their hair long. Before they stepped out of their house, these women spent a lot of their time putting their hair up. Using an assortment of pins and feathers they came up with elaborate hairdos. The only time these ladies actually let their hair down was in the privacy of their home –and that too mostly before retiring to bed. This was the only time when the ladies could be themselves. In the past, this act of letting the hair down was called 'dishevelling'. Nowadays, the word 'dishevel' has a very different meaning!

Is it okay to say, 'We went trekking despite of the rain'? (SV Kunthala, Nellore)

No, it is not. Although the two words, 'despite' and 'in spite' have more or less the same meaning, 'despite' is never followed by 'of'. It is always 'despite something'.

The children went swimming despite the heavy downpour.

Despite her illness, Deepa always has a smile on her face.

'In spite', on the other hand, is always followed by 'of'.

The children went swimming in spite of the heavy downpour.

In spite of her illness, Deepa always has a smile on her face.

"One advantage of talking to yourself is that you know at least somebody's listening."
-Franklin P Jones

upendrankye@gmail.com

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