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THE HINDU

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2022

INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

DELHI
CITY EDITION
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BJP pledges to increase jail term for unlawful conversion in U.P.
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Bodies of seven Army personnel missing after avalanche recovered
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India agrees to help Sri Lanka launch its version of Aadhaar
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Rohit's India looks to seal ODI series against West Indies
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IN BRIEF

JNU V-C denies Twitter account ownership

NEW DELHI

The newly appointed Vice-Chancellor of JNU Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit has distanced herself from a controversial Twitter account in her name. In a response to *The Hindu*'s query about whether the unverified handle @SantishreeD belonged to her, the V-C said "not mine".

NEWS ▸ PAGE 10

Restore 27% OBC quota, says Maharashtra panel

MUMBAI

The Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission interim report has recommended to the State government "to restore and grant 27% reservation (which is already prescribed by various enactments) to Other Backward Classes". The panel submitted the report to the government on February 7 and said, "The OBC population in the State is 38%."

STATES ▸ PAGE 7

Bihar plans census of those who quit drinking

PATNA

The Nitish Kumar government has decided to conduct a census of those who gave up drinking since Bihar became a dry State. "The previous survey said 1.64 crore people have quit drinking, but now we have decided to conduct census to find out the exact number of those who have given up the habit," the Chief Minister said.

STATES ▸ PAGE 7

OPPORTUNITIES ▸ PAGE 5

Haryana Cabinet nod for anti-conversion Bill

'Umpteen cases of religious conversions recorded'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The Haryana Cabinet on Tuesday approved the draft of the Haryana Prevention of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2022, which seeks to prohibit religious conversion effected through misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage or for marriage, by making it an offence.

According to the draft Bill, the burden of proof "lies on the accused". The draft Bill will now be tabled before the Assembly, an official statement said.

Higher punishment

The Bill, on the lines of recent anti-conversion laws passed in other States, proposes to make conversion by marriage an offence.

It also prescribes higher punishment for conversion of minors, women, and members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

The draft Bill's statements of objectives and reasons read, "The Constitution confers on each individual the fundamental right to profess, practise and propagate his religion. However, the individual right to freedom of conscience and religion cannot be extended to construe a collective right to proselytize; for the right to religious freedom belongs equally to the person converting and the individual sought to be converted."

'Hidden agenda'

It added that there have been umpteen cases of religious conversions, both mass and individual.

"Obviously, such incidents have been hotly debated, more so in a multi-religious society, such as ours. The presence of pseudo-social organisations with a hidden agenda to convert the vulnerable sections of other religions. There have been instances when gullible people have been converted by offering allurement or under undue influence. Some have been forced to convert to other religions."

It pointed out that in the recent past, there have been instances where to increase the strength of their own religion by getting people from other religions converted, people marry persons of other religion by either misrepresentation or concealment of their own religion and after getting married they force such other person to convert to their own religion.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 10

Legal code

A brief timeline of the developments leading to the drafting of the new Bill

Nov. 1, 2020: Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal says the State government was taking the 'love jihad' issue seriously

Nov. 17: Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij says a strict law will be enacted to control 'love jihad' cases in the State and a committee will be constituted to draft this law

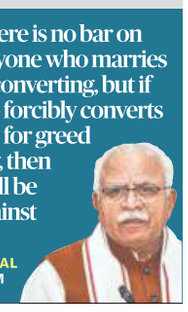
Nov-end: Govt. sets up a three-member committee to draft an anti-conversion law

Feb. 8, 2022: Haryana Cabinet approves the draft of the Haryana Prevention of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2022

■ The Bill is to be tabled during the Assembly session which begins on March 2

There is no bar on anyone who marries without converting, but if someone forcibly converts someone for greed of money, then action will be taken against them

MANOHAR LAL
HARYANA CM



'Rating firms have double standards'

VIKAS DHOOT
NEW DELHI

Taking on global rating agencies for terming India the most indebted emerging market and claiming that the Union Budget lacked clarity on fiscal consolidation plans, Finance Secretary T.V. Somanathan said they appear to adopt "double standards" in their assessments of emerging economies and developed markets.

"India, in fact, has one of the best debt-to-GDP ratios if compared against higher-rated countries like the U.S. and Japan, and has a natural tendency to grow faster than them even in the worst of times," he said.

He stressed there was no ambiguity in the Centre's fiscal glide path to attain the target deficit of 4.5% of GDP by 2025-26.

REPORT ON ▸ PAGE 14

Posts on Kashmir unacceptable: govt.

Jaishankar speaks to South Korean counterpart

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Terming as "unacceptable" social media posts calling for Kashmiri "freedom" by various multinational companies (MNCs) based in Pakistan, the government on Tuesday went on a diplomatic overdrive.

While External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar spoke to his South Korean counterpart Chung Eui-yong to protest against the posts put out by Hyundai Motor Company, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) conveyed to a number of other countries that it found the posts "offensive", Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal told Parliament.

Apart from South Korean companies Hyundai and Kia, the Pakistani branches of American MNCs KFC and Pizza Hut, Japanese companies Osaka batteries, Atlas Honda Ltd. and Isuzu as well as German pharmaceutical company Schwabe had carried posts expressing "solidarity" with "Kashmiri brothers and sisters", and "praying for the liberation" on February 5, which is marked as "Kashmir solidarity day" in Pakistan.

South Korean Ambassador Chang Jae Bok was summoned to South Block by the MEA, while Indian Ambassador to Seoul Sripriya Ranganathan sought an explanation from Hyundai and Kia for the posts. "The strong displeasure of the government on the unacceptable social media post by Hyundai Pakistan was conveyed to [the Korean Ambassador]," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said in a statement.

Mr. Bagchi said Mr. Chung, during his telephone conversation, "regretted the offence caused to the people and Government of India by the social media post".

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 10

The strong displeasure of the government on the unacceptable social media post by Hyundai Pakistan was conveyed to [the Korean Ambassador]. It was highlighted that this matter concerned India's territorial integrity on which there could be no compromise

ARINDAM BAGCHI, MEA spokesperson

Congress is in the grip of 'urban naxals', says Modi

PM slams Opposition party in RS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day after referring to the Congress as the leader of the *tukde tukde* (break-up) gang, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday continued his attack against the Opposition party by recalling its history of dismissing State governments in the past, intolerance towards any criticism against its leadership, and accused it of being in the grip of "urban naxals".

"It is being said that we are trying to change history. The Congress thinking seems to have been hijacked by urban naxals. We just want to improve the memory of some people. We are not changing history. Some people's history is limited to one family," he said in the Rajya Sabha, replying to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President for his Address to the joint session of Parliament.

In response to Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge's remarks about what would have been the fate of the nation if Congress was not there during Independence, Mr. Modi said, "I will tell you what would have happened – democracy would have been devoid of dynastic influence, we would be rid of foreign influence, there would be no Emergency."

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 10

PM skipped key issues: Rahul

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said the Prime Minister did not address the key issues raised by him in the Lok Sabha last week. He had spoken about the growing economic divide and the creation of two Indias, the attacks on independent institutions and a foreign policy that has brought Pakistan and China together. ▸ PAGE 10

PM's words on Telangana, Maharashtra trigger fury

TRS blames BJP for bifurcation delay

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD/ MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks during his reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President for his Address to Parliament drew sharp reactions from the main political parties in Telangana and Maharashtra on Tuesday.

In Telangana, the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) and the Congress took strong objection to Mr. Modi's remarks on the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, demanding an unconditional apology. State Finance and Health Minister T. Harish Rao criticised the Prime Minister for "spewing venom" against Telangana, saying that the Centre had denied the State its due.

The Centre was insisting on electricity meters for agricultural connections to release the grants, but the State government turned it down, he said.

State Congress chief A. Revanth Reddy said: "The comments on Telangana expose that the Prime Minister has no respect for elected bodies or Parliament."

He said the BJP had came up with the slogan "one vote, two States" in 1998, but deceived the people after coming to power the next year. "The party which ensured formation of three other States did not keep its commitment on Telangana. The lives of 1,200 plus people, who died for the cause of Telangana, could have been saved had the BJP kept its promise of bifurcation then," he said.

Responding to Mr. Modi's statement about the spread of COVID-19 during the first wave, all three major parties in Maharashtra demanded an apology from him and the BJP for making "snide" comments against the State. The Congress said it would hold protests outside the BJP offices on Wednesday.

MAHARASHTRA'S EFFORTS TO HELP POOR MOCKED ▸ PAGE 10

Violence in Karnataka colleges over dress code

State govt. declares three-day holiday

No let-up: Students donning saffron turbans staging a protest outside a college in Udupi district on Tuesday. ▪PTI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

With the row over dress code escalating in Karnataka, the State government on Tuesday ordered closure of high schools (Class IX and X) and colleges in the State for three days.

The Karnataka High Court, meanwhile, commenced hearing a batch of petitions questioning the ban on wearing hijab (head scarf) in colleges.

The controversy over Muslim girls wearing hijab and Hindu boys donning saffron shawls being denied entry into classrooms took a turn for the worse on Tuesday, with reports of violence on some college campuses in various parts of Karnataka.

There were instances of stone pelting, students being heckled and lathi-charge reported from college campuses.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who is in New Delhi, issued the order on closure of schools and colleges and tweeted, "I appeal to all students, teachers and managements of schools and colleges, as well as people of Karnataka, to maintain peace and harmony." He appealed to all those concerned, especially students, to patiently wait for the court's verdict.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 10

Students protest against DU closure

North and South campuses rocked by protests; agitation will intensify from Wednesday: students

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Protests demanding the reopening of Delhi University took place on North and South campuses with students blocking Chhatra Marg for several hours on Tuesday.

During the protest, a DU student tried to immolate himself by pouring petrol over his body. The student was not injured and is being counselled by professionals, a police officer said, adding that the incident took place around 1.45 p.m. "Our police team at the spot immediately stopped him. He was taken to hospital," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Sagar Singh Kalsi.

The protesting students said that many were considering dropping out due to prolonged closure of the university. Students said that on the first day of the protest they were brutally assaulted by the guards at the Vice-Chancellor's office. They also alleged that Delhi Police personnel assaulted female students.

DU students protesting for reopening of the campus on Tuesday ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"We are only protesting to demand reopening of our university so that we can continue to study. What wrong have we done? The world has gone back to normal but the university has not," said Stuti Gupta, a second-year student who has never attended a class on the campus.

"The DU V-C and the administration have repeatedly said that it will take them a lot of time to work on reopening, but their readiness to assault students and curb their voices is evident. If this can be done to curb the voices of the students, why can't the same be done to reopen our campuses," said Sachin Singal, a Students' Federation of India activist and student of Ramjas College.

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (APVP) held its protest at the South Campus during the day and shifted their protest later to North Campus, where six ABVP activists began a hunger strike along with DU Students' Union office-bearers.

"We are going to hold a strong demonstration on Wednesday so that the university administration can open its eyes. We plan to continue the fast and protest till the university is not completely opened," the ABVP said in a statement.

Lot of rhetoric in petition to probe 'anti-national forces': HC

Plea seeks probe under UAPA against anti-CAA protesters

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday said there was "a lot of rhetoric" in a petition seeking direction to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to find out "anti-national forces" behind the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in the Capital in 2020.

A Bench of Justice Siddharth Mridul and Justice Anup J. Bhambhani said, "This is just a lot of rhetoric. There are no substantial prayers in this [petition]. National security is the lookout of the government... This is not a platform for rhetoric. This is a serious platform".

"We have to look at hard criminality... If you have grievances in general nature about national security, you are free to agitate before whatever forum but I don't think we can help you here," the Bench said but agreed to hear the petition by Ajay Gautam next week.

Mr. Gautam, in his plea, contended that "anti national and anti-Hindu forces are behind these protests and some vested interests/parties/countries are funding these protesters". He sought a direction to the NIA to investigate the role of People's Front of India in the anti-CAA protests, which he claimed was allegedly "funding, motivating and backing these anti-national protests".

The plea also sought direction to register a case against AIMIM (All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen) party leaders Waris Pathan and Assuaddin Owaisi, Congress leader Salman Khurshid and other persons for allegedly provoking the citizens against CAA.

Mr. Gautam also claimed that "the pattern of protest is very suspicious. Old women and children are being used as main protesters and the men of their community stand behind them and they openly behave as if they are from Palestine or agents of Gulf countries". He sought an NIA probe under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) into the violence of February 2020.

HC seeks footage of court trial

Petitioner alleged obstruction in trial court proceedings

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked a retired district court Judge to submit CCTV footage of the proceedings before a trial court here, which had convicted Delhi High Court Bar Association's (DHCBA) president Rajiv Khosla for assaulting her.

Former Judge Sujata Kohli had filed the contempt case against Mr. Khosla for assaulting her in 1994. The High Court would be hearing the case on February 16.

Ms Kohli, in her plea, claimed that the trial court proceedings on the issue of sentencing were "obstructed" by Mr. Khosla and his supporters by shouting slogans.

A Bench of Justice Siddharth Mridul and Justice Anup J. Bhambhani at the High Court asked Ms. Kohli to place on record the CCTV footage within a week to form a prima facie opinion in the contempt case.

"If you place the CCTV footage on record, it will go a long way. We view contempt very seriously," the Bench said.

Ms. Kohli had alleged that in August 1994, Mr. Khosla had pulled her hair, twisted her arms and dragged her by hair, and threatened her. Ms. Kohli was then a lawyer. She retired as a District and Sessions Judge in 2020.

JNUTA asks new V-C to restore sanctity of statutory bodies

It demands non-partisan administration, financial scrutiny

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers' Association on Tuesday called upon the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor Santishree D. Pandit to restore the sanctity of statutory bodies and engage in transparent and dialogic processes for taking decisions.

The teachers had been at loggerheads with former Vice-Chancellor M. Jagadesh Kumar throughout his tenure for not letting them have a voice in the decision making process that had been the culture at JNU.

"The JNUTA on its part will present to the new administration demands for ensuring a non-partisan administration and restoring teaching-learning activities as per statutes and ordinances of the university," the JNUTA said in a statement.

The teachers added that they call upon the V-C to maintain rigorous financial scrutiny in all administrative matters and ensure implementation of robust regulatory mechanisms.

JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh said, "We wanted to meet the new V-C and hand over a charter of demands on behalf of the students' community. We here, however, denied entry despite the V-C's assurance to work along with students."

Anti-nationals prevented from escaping: police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

With the arrest of six persons, Delhi Police's Special Cell on Monday claimed to have prevented "anti-national elements" from escaping the country after committing crimes.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Sanjeev Yadav said that the accused have been identified as Sanjeev Kumar and Lakhwinder Singh, both residents of Punjab, and Rajveer Singh, Anil Paul, Dushyant, and Rajkumar – all residents of Delhi.

The police said for the past few months, a Special Cell team was working on identifying sleeper cells and operatives who had indulged in "anti-national activities" and had connections with various proscribed Sikh terror outfits.

Mr. Yadav said fake VISA stickers of different countries, including Canada, the United Kingdom, Russia, Spain, France, the Netherland and total 225 passports of different countries such as Nepal and Bangladesh were recovered from them.

GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF DEPARTMENT, NAGAR PARISHAD, BISHRAMPUR

E-PROCURMENT NOTICE (VERY SHORT TERM NOTICE) 2nd Call

SL.	WARD NO.	REFERENCE NO.	SCHEME NAME	ESTIMATE COST	EARNEST MONEY (2% OF ESTIMATE COST)	TENDER FEE	COMPLETION OF WORK
15वें वित मद							
1	5,8, & 9	UDD/NPB/31/2021-22	Construction of RCC Drain With Salab in Dandila Kala From House of Neyazuddin Ansari to Central Bank, Rehla Via N.H. 75(Both Side) and Chalia Nala to Kabrishatan Gate via Madarsha 2200 fit , Installation of Paver block & Grilling East Side of NH75 from madarsha rd. to house of sunil Pandey & Installation of Paver Block & Grilling west side of NH 75 from Madarsha rd. to Chalia Nala near Mahabir Mandir in ward no. 05,08 &09	118,67,929.00	2,37,400.00	10000.00	6 month

9	Date Of Publication Of Tender On Website	07.02.2022 02:00 pm
10	Date Start Of Submission Of Bids	07.02.2022 02:00 pm
11	Last Date/Time Of Submission Of Bids	15.02.2022 05:00 pm
12	Last Date/Time Of Submission At Office Cost of BOQ, Earnest Money And Tender Document	17.02.2022 Till 01:00 pm at Bishrampur Thana
13	Date Of Bid Opening	17.02.2022 3:30 pm
14	Name & Address Of Office Inviting Tender	Nagar parishad Bishrampur
15	Contact No. Of Procurement Officer	9525633383
16	Helpline Number Of E-Procurement Cell	9771761820

NOTE: - Only E-Tender will be accepted. Further details can be seen on website http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in & Notice Board office of the Nagar Praishad, Bishrmapur.

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नगर परिषद विश्रामपुर

PR 263439 Urban Development(21-22)#D

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• PUNCHKUIAN ROAD, Garwal Bhawan, (Near Jhandewalan, Gole Chkr.)
• WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
• JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
• NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
• LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

USFD TESTING FOR FLUSH BUTT WELDS

Tender Notice No.: 54-ENGG-RNY-2021-22, Dated: 04-02-2022; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; **Brief Description of Item** : USFD Testing for Flush Butt Welds (head, web & flange) using RDSO approved equipment's & operators under traffic condition in the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN-III/Rangiya. **Tender Value:** ₹ 1,03,88,907.44; **Earnest Money**: ₹ 2,02,000/-; Closing at **13:00** hrs. and opening at **15:00** hrs. on **18-02-2022**. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto**13:00** hrs. on **18-02-2022** in website **www.ireps.gov.in**

DRM(W), Rangiya
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NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERING

The Executive Engineer JSV Division Hamirpur invites following tenders on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work(s) through e- tendering Process:-

S. No. 1
Name of Work:- Providing House Hold connection by ministry of Jal Shakti " Har Ghar Nal se Jal" in LWSS Hathol in Tehsil Nadaun Distt. Hamirpur (sH:- Excavation, laying, jointing and testing of Rising main for Booster & 1st stage).

Estimated Cost: - Rs.10,60,176/-

Earnest Money: - Rs.21,204/-

Cost of Tender:- Rs. 400/-

Time:- 1 Year

Last date of filing/ uploading the tender through e- tendering **22.02.2022** upto **11.00 AM** The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be obtained from the website www.hptenders.gov.in.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
JS Division Hamirpur
HP / 6740/21-22

U.P. COOPERATIVE SUGAR FACTORIES FEDERATION LTD.
9-A, Rana Pratap Marg, Lucknow
Ph.No.: 0522 - 2200183, 2628310 Fax : 2627994
e-mail : upsugarfed@yahoo.co.in Website : www.upsugarfed.org

UPSUGARFED/MOL/2021-22/137 Date : 07/02/2022

Short Term e-Tender Notice

Online e-tenders are invited for sale of Levy, free, below grade and burnt molasses from co-operative sugar mills and distillery of U.P. to bonafide Consumers to whom license have been issued by the Excise Commissioner & Molasses Controller, Allahabad, U.P. E-Tender can be uploaded up to **09:00 A.M. on 14/02/2022** and Technical & Financial Bid will be opened on **14/02/2022 11:30 A.M. & 3:00 P.M.** respectively.

The e-bid EMD is Rs. 20 per quintal. Total quantity for sale of Levy sale 178000 quintals, free sale 463000 quintals, below grade 136850 quintals and burnt 100898.60 quintals.

The details for submission of e-bids will be available on the e-tender portal **http://eTender.up.nic.in** and also on Federation website **www.upsugarfed.org from 07/02/2022 at 6.00 P.M.** The Federation reserves the right to cancel any or all the e-Bids without assigning any reason. The decision of the Managing Director shall be the final and binding.

इस निविदा के सम्बन्ध में सभी संशोधन, स्पष्टीकरण, शुद्धिपत्र, परिशिष्ट, समय वृद्धि आदि को केवल **http://eTender.up.nic.in** एवं **www.upsugarfed.org** पर ही दिया जायेगा। निविदादाता अद्यतन जानकारी के लिए नियमित रूप से इन वेबसाइट्स को पढ़ते रहें।

MANAGING DIRECTOR

North Eastern Railway

E-Tendering Notice

Sr. Divisional Materials Manager, N.E. Railway, Varanasi for and on behalf of President of India, invites Tender through E-Procurement system "Open Tender" for the supply of the following item. Complete description of the item and other terms and conditions are available on website **www.ireps.gov.in**.

Sr. No. : 01, **E-Tender No. :** 50225076, **Due Date :** 01.03.22, **Description :** Supply of VHS set watts Walkie-Talkie Radio. RDSO Spec. No. RDSO/SPN/TC/107/2018 Rev. 0.0, **Quantity :** 240 Sets, **Earnest Money :** Rs. 75,550.00.

Note : The Firms, who desire to participate in e-tender are advised to electronically register themselves on the above website for which they would require to have a Class-III Digital Signature Certificate Authority Licensed by CCA of India. Manual offers against e-tenders will not be considered.

Sr. Divisional Materials Manager,
N.E. Railway, Varanasi

CPRO/S-99

About any Passenger Amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No. 09794845955

Do not travel with inflammable article in train

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person **Namely** : Unknown **S/o** Unknown **R/o** Unknown **Age** : about 25-26 years, **Height** : 5'7", **Complexion** : Wheatish, **Injury :** Head Injuary, **Identification** : A tattoo of Vinod and Praveen at right hand arm, **Wearing** : Blue colour jacket, Yellow colour jarsi, Brown Colour T-shirt & Grey colour jeans pant, Black colour under lower has been found dead between Km Pole No. 7/1-7/1B DN loop Railway Line Inderlok, near Zakhira, Delhi on 04.02.2022. In this regard a case vide DD No. 12A dated 04.02.2022 has been lodged at P.S. Sarai Rohilla Railway Station, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this dead found person may kindly inform to the following:-

SHO :
P.S. Sarai Rohilla
Railway Station, Delhi
Tel. No. 011-28711697

DP/31/RLY/2022

Appeal for Identification

General public is hereby informed that one person **Name:** Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** 45 Yrs., **Height:** 5'3", **Sex:** Male, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Normal, **Wearing:** Black Colour Rackeen Jacket and One Sweater Multi Colour and Pant Blue Colour, **Place of Recovery:** Found dead in the area of P.S. GTB Enclave, Delhi.

In this regard **DD No. 06A, Dated 18.01.2020** has been lodged at **Police Station, GTB Enclave, Delhi**. Any clue come to notice please inform undersign.

SHO
P.S. GTB Enclave, Delhi
Ph.: 011-22580947

DP/729/SHD/2022

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
(Tele-fax No: 0194-2496089, e-mail id: xenmhchdk@yahoo.in)

GIST of E -NIT NO: MHCHD/TS /2021-22/317/e-tendering
(Short-Term) Dated:05.02.2022.

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K State e-tenders are invited from registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:-

Name of work	Est. Cost (In Rs.)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	AAA	Time of Completion (days)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	TS No.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Providing and fitting of main header inside new oxygen plant at Govt. CD Hospital, Srinagar.	80,950/-	200	Mc/Plan/Covid-19 /Aug/1963 -72 Dt:-05.09.2020	05	1700	131 of 02/22 (AEE S/D 1st)
Shifting of ACs from Burn Ward to Cardiology Library 1st floor and OT Ophthalmology at Govt. SMHS Hospital, Srinagar.	47,500/-	100	48 GMCS of 2021, Dt: 13-09-2021	05	1000	115 of 12/21 (AEE S/D 1st)
Providing and fixing of rolling shutter to the Bio Medical Waste Management Plant room at LD Hospital, Srinagar.	51,900/-	200	47 GMCS of 2021, Dt: 13-09-2021	05	1100	100 of 01/22 (AEE S/D 1st)
Providing and fitting of Electric Panel and other allied works for 1000 LPM Oxygen Plant at old Oxygen Plant at Govt. SMHS Hospital, Srinagar.	98,500/-	200	MC/Plan/ Aug/ oxygenplant/1973-82, Dated: 05-09-2020	05	2000	105 of 12/21 (AEE S/D 1st)

1. The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from **05.02.2022 (18.00 hrs).**
2. The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from **06.02.2022(10:00hrs) to 11.02.2022(14:00 hrs) in two (02) cover.**
3. The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on **11.02.2022(16.00 hrs)** or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
MHCHD, Srinagar

DIP/K-17703/21

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice

The DRM (Commercial)/SEE for and on behalf of the President of India Invites open e-tender for the following work. The last date of online tendering is 08.03.2022 up to 15:00 hrs. All information and tender documents related to E-tender is available on Website: **www.ireps.gov.in** **1. Name of work:** Award of contract for Sole advertisement rights of Vinyl/sticker at exterior side of 1400 HP Rake of DEMU/MEMU trains for a period of three (03) years., **Approx cost (In Rs.):** 32,41,426, **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** 64, 900, **Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.):** 3,000, **2. Name of work:** Award of contract for Sole advertisement rights of Vinyl/sticker at exterior side of 1600 HP Rake of DEMU/MEMU trains for a period of three (03) years., **Approx cost (In Rs.):** 43,75,258, **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** 87,600, **Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.):** 3,000, **3. Name of work:** Award of contract for Sole advertisement rights of Vinyl/sticker at exterior side of Conventional Rake of DEMU/MEMU trains for a period of three (03) years., **Approx cost (In Rs.):** 5,60,247, **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** 11,300, **Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.):** 3,000 The above tender notice is available on website:-**www.ireps.gov.in** **RIGHT OF RAILWAY TO DEAL WITH TENDER:-** Railway administration reserves the right to postpone/modify or to cancel the above tender without assigning any reasons.

Divisional Railway Manager/Commercial
E.C. Railway, Sonpur

PR/01638/SEE/COML/T/21-22/44

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

Umesh Singh @ Topi Lal

General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male Namely Umesh Singh @ Topi Lal **S/o** Unknown, **R/o** Unknown **Age:** about 45-50 years, **Height:** 5'5", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Medium, **Wearing:** Blue coloured Track suit, black coloured shirt and black coloured pant, was found dead at Opp. MTNL Office Footpath, Near Labour Chowk, Ch. Chowk, Delhi. In this regard a **DD No.48A dated 26.01.2022 u/s 174 Cr.PC** has been lodged at P.S. Kotwali, Delhi.

If any one having any clue about deceased male may kindly inform the undersigned and contact on following numbers.

SHO
P.S. Kotwali, Delhi
Ph.: 011-23977100, 23921740
Mob.: 8750870121

DP/1980/N/2022

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(See Section 82 Cr.PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that **Avinash @ Joodi, S/o Birdi R/o 125, Priya Darshani Colony, Kashmiri Gate, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to has committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 62/21, u/s 395/412/34 IPC & 25/54/59 Arms Act., P.S. Kotwali, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Avinash @ Joodi** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Avinash @ Joodi** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Avinash @ Joodi** of **FIR No. 62/21, u/s 395/412/34 IPC & 25/54/59 Arms Act., P.S. Kotwali, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **22.03.2022.**

By Order,
MS. Prigya Gupta
Metropolitan Magistrate
Room No.272,Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

DP/1948/N/2022

Timings
DELHI

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 09		
RISE	07:05	SET 18:07
RISE	12:03	SET 01:08
THURSDAY, FEB. 10		
RISE	07:04	SET 18:08
RISE	12:41	SET 02:03
FRIDAY, FEB. 11		
RISE	07:03	SET 18:09
RISE	13:23	SET 02:58

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	26	11
Safdarjang	26	11
Palam	26	12

Delhi Palam Today
22°C Intermittent spells of rain and thundershower with gusty winds will occur over the city. Day temperature to decrease.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
22°C The weather will be dry. Moderate fog is expected in cold morning. Day will be pleasant. Night will be cold with fall in temperature.

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AAP, BJP trade barbs over COVID

Yogi's attack on Kejriwal unbecoming of a CM, says AAP MP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) continued to trade barbs a day after a war of words broke out between Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Uttar Pradesh counterpart Yogi Adityanath.

On Tuesday, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh took on the U.P. CM accusing him of taking a tone unbecoming of a Chief Minister against Mr. Kejriwal.

"Yogi is speaking the language of a roadside hooligan against the elected Chief Minister of Delhi. Has Yogi forgotten how the banks of the Ganges during Corona were full of bodies? And how the bodies were being hidden by covering the cremation ground in Lucknow?" Mr. Singh asked.

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta tweeted visuals of DTC buses ferrying migrants to the Delhi border asking whether Mr. Kejriwal had forgotten about the events following the imposition of the national lockdown.

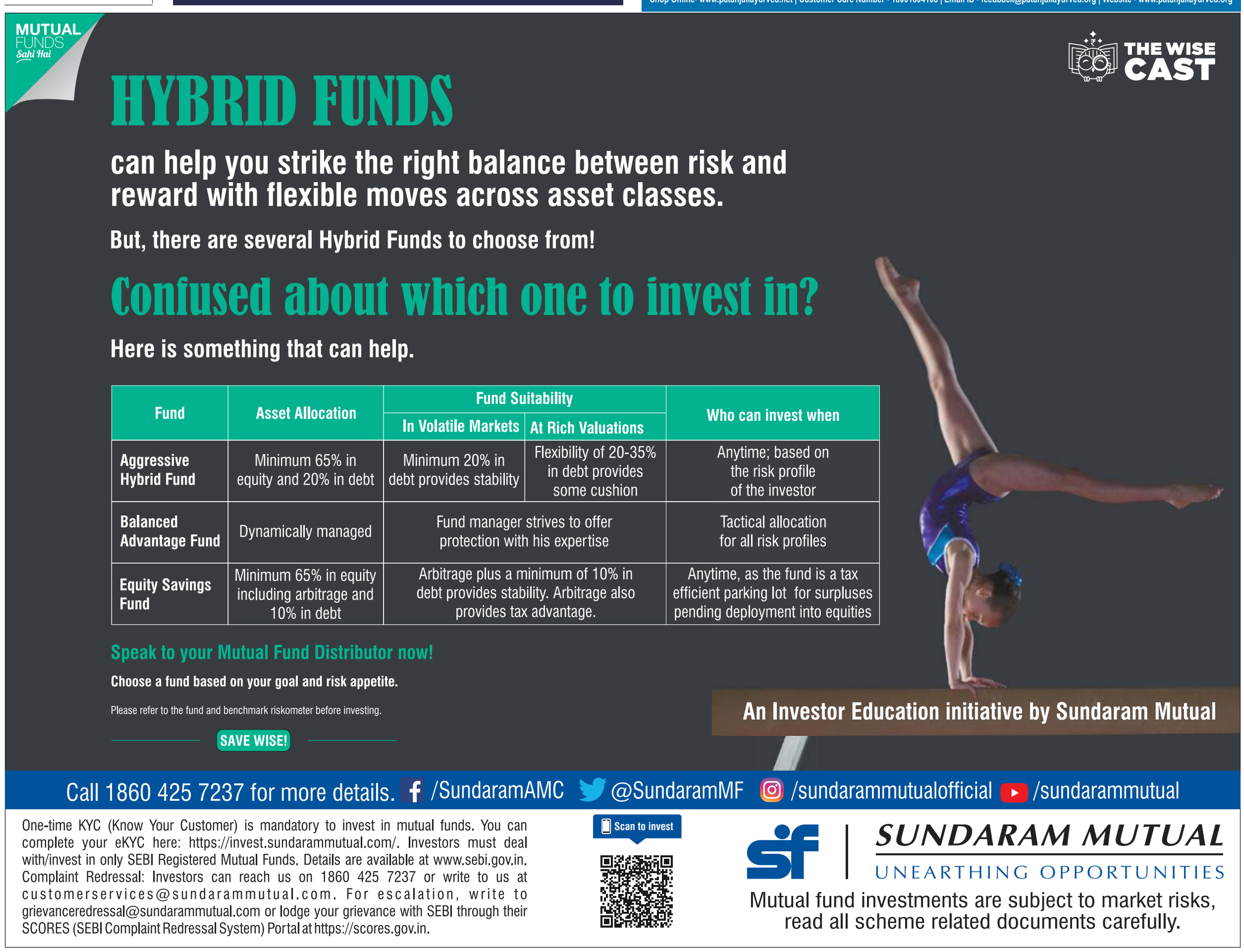
The war of words between the two parties was triggered after Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a speech in the Lok Sabha on Monday about the migrant exodus from Delhi following the 2020 national COVID lockdown.

EDMC scraps tax hike proposal

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

With the civic body polls due in April, the BJP-led East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) on Monday shot down the proposal to hike property tax rates during the finalisation of the cash-strapped civic body's budget estimates for the year 2022-23.

The EDMC had in November last year proposed a 2%-3% increase in tax rates on residential properties. For cinema theatres falling under class 1 and class 2, the EDMC had proposed a massive increase in theatre taxes – from ₹10 per show and ₹7 per show respectively to ₹1,000 per show. EDMC's Leader of the House Satyapal Singh (BJP) said the decision to do away with the proposed hikes was "for the benefit of the people".



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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

Change of Name
I, Varshni daughter of K Rohinikutty, Chand Nivas, West Fort, Mavelikara, Alappuzha District — 690 101 have changed my name as Varshni R Pillai vide affidavit dated 3rd February 2022 sworn before Notary N. Sivaraman Nair, Mavelikara.

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Fourth convict in Maruti violence case granted bail

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Another convict in the 2012 Manesar Maruti violence case was granted bail on Tuesday by the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Yogesh, one of the 13 Maruti workers sentenced to life imprisonment, is the fourth convict to get relief over the past three months. The bail pleas of the remaining convicts are also likely to come up for hearing over the next few months.

Anganwadi workers continue agitation

Protesters angry over 'faulty' govt. app

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

Over 800 anganwadi workers on Tuesday gathered near Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence on the ninth day of their protest.

Rising inflation, increased workload due to COVID-19 and a close monitoring of their daily activities through a tool called Poshan Tracker has forced the workers at anganwadis or child care centres in Delhi to once again go on an indefinite strike.

They have demanded that the government recognise them as its employees and pay them at least minimum wages.

Added responsibilities

"Since the COVID-19 pandemic, anganwadis have been shut. So, I have to carry out door-to-door delivery of take-home ration. Despite new responsibilities every now and then, our salary is less than ₹10,000 per month. How can we run a household with this much salary at a time when everything is only getting costlier," asked Kavita Rani.

There are nearly 13.2 lakh anganwadi workers and 11.8 lakh helpers who reach out to 9.06 crore beneficiaries across the country.

The Centre recognises them as "volunteers" who receive an "honorarium" instead of wages from the Centre as well as States.

The workers have demanded that they be recognised as government employees so that they are entitled to Provident Fund, pension, medical facilities and summer and winter breaks.

Since 2017, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has rolled out a mobile application called Poshan Tracker to record delivery of different anganwadi services and growth and nutrition indicators of the beneficiaries. But workers feel it is more of a tool to snoop on them. "The application is a nightmare. It often doesn't work," says Shabnam Bano.

Anganwadi workers protesting near CM Arvind Kejriwal's residence on Tuesday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT.OF NCT OF DELHI
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DELHI GATE STP PHASE-II,
OPPOSITE DELHI SECRETARIAT
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"STOP CORONA; Wear Masks, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"

NIT No.5 (2021-22)EE(C)Dr II (Tender ID:2022_DJB_216237_1)

S. No.	Name of Work	Amount put to tender (in Lakhs)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Non refundable Tender fee (in Rs.)	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date / time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1	Providing, laying 1626 MM dia (OD) MS rising main from ring road pumping station AT Maharani Bagh to Okhla WWTP through the alignment in Yamuna Flood Plane.	DBO Basis	Rs. 108,00,000/-	1500/-	05.02.2022	04.03.2022 up to 03:05 PM

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
ADVT. NO. J.S.V. 1104(2021-22)

(RAJIV SHARMA)
A. EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (C)DR-II

Govt. of Jharkhand
Jharkhand Combined Entrance Competitive Examination Board
Science & Technology Campus, Sirkha Toli, Namkum-Tupudana Road, Namkum, Ranchi – 834010
Advt. No. :–JCECEB/65/21 - 13 , Ranchi/Dated: 08 /02/2022
Website : https://jceceb.jharkhand.gov.in e-mail : jceceboard@gmail.com

Important Notice regarding Preparation of State Merit List based on the result of NEET (UG)-2021 Examination for 1st Round of Online Counselling for admission in M.B.B.S. course in Laxmi Chandravansi Medical College & Hospital, Bishrampur, Palamu

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

Health, Medical Education and Family Welfare Department, Ranchi has earmarked 75 M.B.B.S. course seats under Unreserved Category in Laxmi Chandravansi Medical College & Hospital, Bishrampur, Palamu for NEET (UG) - 2021 qualified candidates who are resident of any region of Indian Republic including local resident of Jharkhand state vide letter no. 9/Chi.Maha.- 07-13/2019- 55(9) dated 03.02.2022.

In pursuance of the above, online application forms are invited by the Board from such eligible candidates for preparation of merit list.

2. Interested candidates are requested to fill the **Application Form Online** on Board's website http://jceceb.jharkhand.gov.in by Clicking on "Click here for All Online Application Submission – JCECEB 2021" tab by following the given directions as per the schedule given below :-

Sl.No.	Activity	Date From	Date To
1.	Online Application Form Submission	10.02.2022	16.02.2022
2.	Publication of Merit List	17.02.2022	

3. 1st Round of Online Counselling will be conducted (Link- "Click here for M.B.B.S. Course in LCMC & H – JCECEB 2021") as per the schedule given below:-

Sl. No.	Activity	Date
1.	Starting date of Online Registration and Choice Filling for Seat Allotment	18.02.2022
2.	Last date of Online Registration & Choice Filling for Seat Allotment	22.02.2022
3.	Seat Allotment and Downloading of Provisional Seat Allotment Letter	23.02.2022 to 28.02.2022
4.	Documents Verification and Admission in the concerned institute	23.02.2022 to 28.02.2022

4. **It is mandatory for the candidate to upload Score Card of NEET (UG)-2021.**
5. **Registration/Application and Counselling Fee :-** Candidate will have to pay Registration/ Application & Counselling Fee by Credit Card/Debit Card/Net Banking/UPI through Payment Gateway as per below which will be non-refundable:-

Sl.No.	Category/Quota	Reg./App. Fee	Counselling Fee
1.	Unreserved/EWS/BC-I/BC-II/SC/ST (For Resident of any region of Indian Republic except Local Resident of Jharkhand)	Rs. 500.00	Rs. 1,000.00
2.	Unreserved/EWS/BC-I/BC-II (For Local Resident of Jharkhand)	Rs. 500.00	Rs. 1,000.00
3.	SC/ST (For Local Resident of Jharkhand)	Rs. 250.00	Rs. 500.00
4.	Female Candidate of all category (For Local Resident of Jharkhand & Resident of any region of Indian Republic)	Rs. 250.00	Rs. 500.00
5.	Divyang of any category ((For Local Resident of Jharkhand & Resident of any region of Indian Republic)	-	Rs. 500.00

By the order of Controller of Examination,
Sd/-
(Ranjeeta Hembrom, J.A.S.)
Deputy Controller of Examination

PR 263451 Jharkhand Combined Entrance Competitive Examination Board (21-22)_D

THE HINDU
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A Business Initiative

ITPO's FLAGSHIP EVENT 'AAHAR 2022' TO COMMENCE FROM APRIL 26

One of the most awaited B2B event of India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO), AAHAR 2022 - the International Food & Hospitality Fair will commence from April 26, 2022 at the newly build Halls (2,3,4,5 Ground & First floor) of the New Exhibition Complex in International Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre (IECC) and existing Hall (7 to 12 & 12A) at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. AAHAR has the distinction of being the largest expo of the food and hospitality industry in the South- Asia region and has completed 35 glorious years. The show has grown by leaps & bounds in recent years and has become the ultimate -destination for global vendors and sourcing professionals to visit. This fair is supported by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Development Authority (APEDA) and apex industry associations, Apex support trade bodies include: Association of Resource Companies for Hospitality Industry of India (ARCHII), Hotel and Restaurant Equipment Manufacturers Association of India (HOTREMAI), All India Food Processors Association (AIFPA), Food & Hospitality Support Association of India (FHSAI), Forum of Indian Food Importers (FIFI), Federation of Indian Food & Hospitality Industry (FIFHI) and Indore Confectionary Manufacturers Association (ICMA) etc. The broad display categories will include food and beverages, hospitality services, F&B equipment and allied sectors. AAHAR is the ideal platform for the food and hospitality industries to acquire new orders from the large numbers of buyers and sourcing executives visiting the expo. This year, AAHAR is also committed to providing a platform to the Indian food industry (organic, processed, frozen segments, farm produce, beverages & spirits, hospitality, décor, food & technology, marine products, nutraceuticals, dairy, and aquaculture). It seeks to support ventures to explore new markets and provides linkages with buyers. AAHAR has huge visitor base that includes senior sourcing professionals from the diverse sectors of F&B industries for whom the expo serves as the annual sourcing destination.

UPNEDA Simplify procedure for Rooftop Solar Program

A national portal for registering applications from the beneficiary, approval thereof and tracking progress will be developed. There will be a portal in the similar format at the level of the DISCOMs and both the portal will be linked.The household beneficiary, who wishes to install Rooftop Solar (RTS) under the new mechanism will apply on the national portal. The beneficiary will be required to submit necessary information including details of bank account where the subsidy amount will be transferred. At the time of application, the beneficiary will be informed about the complete process and subsidy amount that can be availed for installation of the RTS plant.The application will be forwarded online to the concerned DISCOM for issuance of technical feasibility approval within next 15 working days. After the application is transferred to the DISCOM it will also be displayed on the DISCOM portal.After obtaining technical feasibility, the bencficiary will install the RTS plant from any vendor of his choicc. The list of empanelled vendors will be provided on the portal. In order to ensure quality and post installation services, MNRE will issue standards and specifications for RTS plant and a format of agreement to be executed between beneficiary and the vendor. The agreement among other terms and conditions will have the provision to ensure that the RTS plant installed meets safety and performance standards and that the vendor would maintain the plant for next 5 years or higher period as per terms of the agreement. The beneficiary has to install ItTS plant within a specified period otherwise his application will be cancelled and he has to re-apply for installation of RTS plant. Upon installation of RTS plant, the beneficiary will apply for net-metering on the national portal, which will be forwarded online to the concernedDISCOM. The concerned DISCOM will either procure and install the net-meter or it will advise the beneficiary to procure the net-meter as per prescribed specifications and get it tested from the DISCOMauthorized lab. The decision of the DISCOM will be posted on the portal. After installation of the net-meter, the DISCOM officer will submit a commissioning and inspection report on the national portal, which will also be reflected on the DISCOM portal.It is expected that the national portal will be developed in about six to eight weeks. Till the national portal comes into operation, the existing procedure for availing subsidy for installation of rooftop solar plant through DISCOMs will continue and will be the only authorized procedure to avail subsidy from MNRE. After the National portal set up, the beneficiary will have the choice of installing RTS availing either of the options.

Uttar Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam to address grievances extensively

The Members of the Consumer Grievances Redressal Forum (CGRF) of Uttar Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam will make extensive visits in the month of February, 2022 for hearing grievances of the consumers and to entertain new complaints. A spokesman of the Nigam said here today that the proceedings of the CGRF will be held in OP Circle, Kaithal on February 02, OP Circle, Panipat on February 04, OP Circle, Yamuna Nagar on February 07,OP Circle, Karnal on February 09, OP Circle, Panchkula on February 11, OP Circle, Jhajjar on February 14, OP Circle, Rohtak on February 17, OP Circle, Kurukshetra on February 18, OP Circle, Sonipat on February 21, OP Circle, Ambala on February 23 and OP Sub Division, Barwala on February 25 from 11 AM to 4 PM respectively. Except on field visit CGRF shall be available at Head Quarter from 9 am to 5 pm to hear the grievances of consumers visiting office.The CGRF shall take all grievances/complaints of consumers like billing problem, voltage complaints, problems in metering, disconnection and reconnection of power supply, interruptions, failure of power supply, efficiency, safety, reliability, noncompliance of Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission orders etc. However, the cases of theft and unauthorized use of electricity, offences and penalties as specified under section 126 and section 135 to 139 of Electricity Act, accidents and inquiries as under section 161 of the Act would not be considered by the Forum.

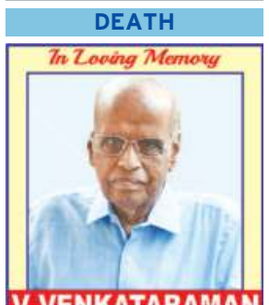
Govt of Rajasthan extends tenure of CMD, RVUN Sh. R K Sharma

The Rajasthan Government has extended the tenure of Chairman and Managing Director of Rajasthan Vidyut Utpadan Nigam, Shri R K Sharma for a period of one year till 28th January 2023. Sh. Sharma carries a vast experience of more than 38 years in the field of energy and power generation including more than 30 years of services in O&M, C & I and Commercial wings of State owned power stations viz Kota Super Thermal, Suratgarh Super Thermal, Chhabra Super Thermal and Kalisindh Super Thermal etc. while holding higher technical positions. After having been appointed as Director (Projects) in November 2020, he shown his unprecedented managerial & technical skills due to which the work of under construction 660 MW Suratgarh Supercritical Unit-7 could be speeded up by better synergy with expert engineers and BHEL. The vigorous efforts of the team brought this unit into commercial production stage on 1st December 2020 and thereafter was dedicated to the nation on 18th December 2020 by Hon'ble Chief Minister, Rajasthan.The responsibility of the post of CMD, RVUN was entrusted upon Shri R K Sharma in January 2021 last year by the State Government. Amidst the countrywide coal crisis in 2021 and increased power demand, the thermal units of the state which were facing shortage of coal, were not only been pulled out of the coal crisis by Shri Sharmas efficient management with the cooperation of the state government, but also 7080 MW capacity units out of the 7580 MW coal based units of RVUN could be operated. This is the best performance so far after RVUNs inception. At present, out of the above units, only 250 MW and 110 MW units are closed due to technical reasons and annual maintenance respectively. The remaining 7220 MW units are available for production. Sh. Sharma while showing his gratitude towards Hon'ble Chief Minister & Energy Minister stated that power from Nigam's generating units shall be produced using traditional system by means of state-of-the-art techniques with less investment and complying with emission norms according to international standards. The main goal is to ensure smooth operation of the generating corporation's power plants and to increase the efficiency of the employees for ensuring uninterrupted power supply to State's consumer.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

In Loving Memory



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SEVENTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

Dr. Kamala Anandaram
10-05-1943 09-02-2005
Professor of Forensic Medicine (Retd)
Madras Medical College & Thanjavur Medical College.
Dr. Kamala Lives On
In the morning mist,
watching the sun rise
On the balcony,
sipping the tea that cheers
Gulping down breakfast in hurry to go to work
Returning to your garden full of flowers & fruits
Enjoying the evening TV and making jokes
You are silently beside us
Always ENNOBLING OUR LIVES
We love you!
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Annapoorna Ogoti (Daughter)
Mukund Krishnaswami (Son-in-law)
Maanas & Yojan (Grandsons)
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Is the corporate needle pointing to hybrid work?

Employees seem to have discovered a more habitable Goldilocks zone between fully remote and fully office-based work

PRINCE FREDERICK

Human nature shrinks from extremes. At this moment in time, that is resoundingly true of work models. As organisations now firm up how – more precisely, where – sections of their workforce will work in a post-COVID scenario, human resource teams report that the hybrid work model is ahead of the competition by an 8 x 12 size cubicle. A majority of the employees view hybrid work as the more habitable Goldilocks zone, one lying between fully remote work and fully office-based work.

A recent survey by AscentHR – "Changing people practices and trends" – one that picked the brains of "over 360 senior executives (CXOs/SVPs/VPs/Sr Managers) from across industries and segments" – noted a pronounced bias towards the hybrid work model "with ITES (72%), IT (62%), and NBFC (70%) sectors leading the hybrid model bandwagon".

HR pundits feel the inclination for a hybrid work model is likely to beetle over the pandemic, and settle into a preferred work norm.

Serendipitous learning

Kissflow, a SaaS company based in Chennai but functions with a distributed workforce, adopted a heavily customised form of hybrid work model well over a year ago, and three months ago, they had an informal feedback process, one that had put its hybrid work model to the vote, which it won with a thumping majority.

ILLUSTRATION SATHEESH VELLINEZHI

Lalitha Yalamanchi, who heads Corporate Communications at Kissflow, remarks: "Some learning happens through serendipitous conversations and absorption through osmosis. We solely missed that during the fully remote phase. The best part of our Remote+ hybrid model is that it allows the entire business unit – that is anywhere between 15 - 80 folks – to come together for much needed face-time. We spend this week in the office celebrating, learning and brainstorming. We usually reserve the deep work for the other three weeks."

Kamal Karanth, cofounder, Xpheno, a specialist staffing company, who writes on organisational leadership and team dynamics, underlines the one overriding factor that causes fully-remote work to hole out tamely to the hybrid work model – "social facilitation", actually the lack of it. Kamal had in fact discussed this factor in an article he wrote for *The Hindu BusinessLine* – "The positive impact of peer presence and crowd pressure" – in October 2020. In a conversation with the *The Hindu Opportunities*, he notes that the pandemic has brought the idea of social facilitation down from the rarefied tower of sociology and caused it to be understood by alienated remotely-functioning workforces as a deeply experienced reality.

He points out how fully remote-working teams lost out on the benefits of two major building blocks of social facilitation: "co-action effect" and "audience effect". Both of them – particularly the latter – usually lead an employee to step up their performance when their peers are doing the same thing, standing alongside. There are any number of studies demonstrating how social facilitation improves performance, and Kamal uses the most popular one of how the mere presence of other ants caused a ant engaged in digging to magically increase its capacity for digging three-fold. The benefits of physical presence go beyond team performance and extends to leadership performance, notes Kamal. The presence builds the leader as much as it builds the team. Kamal explains: "Leadership comes from connection. The connection is experienced through the reciprocity the leader feels while in front of the team. Besides, most of the leaders have always worked in a template of physicality, where they are in front of their team. So, the team got the charisma and the best of the leadership impacts while working in person."

From all of these experiences, the hybrid work model seems to have emerged organically as a one-shot solution. If leaders use the office component of hybrid work for mentoring employees and capacity-building exercises – drawing upon dialogic and generative leadership models which thrive on non-judgemental communication and a flat-structured approach to brainstorming for ideas, within a team – they would be making the most of it. After all, there is always the home to do the regular work.

GENERAL

Banks Board Bureau
An Autonomous Body of Government of India
invites application for the position of
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The Institution: The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development was established in 2021 as the principal development financial institution and development bank for infrastructure financing in India.
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For details of the other eligibility terms and conditions, please see the advertisement on https://banksboardbureau.org.in/ under the "Vacancies" tab or on https://www.sidbi.in/en
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Last date of application: 5:00 pm on 07-Mar-2022
Note: All further announcements/details including corrigendum, if any, about this process will be published/provided on our official website http://banksboardbureau.org.in.

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PRINCIPAL

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UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
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"Enhancing Climate Resilience of India's Coastal Communities"
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*Vacancy to be announced in the week of 7 February 2022 on UNDP's website.
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Hijab-saffron row turns violent in Karnataka

Prohibitory orders in Shivamogga; tension in colleges across the State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Tension over the issue of dress code not only spread to more colleges but also took a violent turn on many campuses on Tuesday across Karnataka.

Protests and counter protests over wearing hijab or saffron shawl in classrooms continued, with instances of stone pelting, lathicharge, and detention as preventive measure reported.

At Shivamogga, the protests turned violent, forcing the district administration to clamp prohibitory orders until Wednesday evening in the city. Hundreds of students took part in the protests against hijab on college campuses, while those in support of hijab took out a march.

The protest turned violent as both the groups came face-to-face on B.H. Road near the Science Field.

A few protesters threw stones, leaving a couple of students injured. There was police force deployed on all college campuses in the district.

At Sagar town in the same district, as many as seven people suffered injuries during stone-pelting.

The protest and counter-protests took a violent turn in Banahatti town of Bagalkot district too, where few among the protesters allegedly pelted stones on the government college premises, forcing the police to use canes to disperse them. Trouble started after saffron shawl-clad students gained forceful entry on the college premises and staged protest while hijab-clad girl students accompanied by their parents sat on dharna on the Jamakhandi-Kudachi Road. One student was injured in the incident.

In another incident reported from Sindhanur in Raichur district, 12 students were taken into preventive custody after tension mounted outside government degree college as two groups entered into arguments. They were released later.

At Government PU College, Mannur in Afzalpur taluk, Kalaburagi district, the principal managed to convince students to attend classes after taking out shawls and hijabs. Of the seven hijab-clad girls, five attended classes after taking off hijabs, while two returned saying they required their parents' permission to do so.

Meanwhile, at Udupi district, where the row had its genesis, yet another college campus saw tension.

The Mahatma Gandhi Memorial PU College declared a holiday after some students turned up wearing saffron shawls with saffron *peta* and another lot turned up wearing hijab.

Oppn. walks out of LS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Opposition parties staged a walkout from the Lok Sabha on Tuesday after raising the hijab row in Karnataka, and only getting a BJP MP responding to their demands instead of a government statement as demanded by them.

During zero hour, Congress leader in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhary, raised the hijab row. BJP MP from Karnataka, Shivakumar Udasi, said the matter was a State subject and was also being heard in court and therefore there was no call for the Central government to make a statement.

At this, the Opposition parties staged a walkout from the Lok Sabha.

Cong. MP cut short in RS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress member L. Hanumanthaiah on Tuesday made a zero hour submission in Rajya Sabha on Muslim students being stopped from entering educational institutions in Karnataka for wearing the hijab. However, the MP from Karnataka could not complete his submission as he was interrupted by members of the treasury benches.

Later, Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu said the timing of the zero hour submissions was over. "Time is over... Let us not make allegations," he said.

'U.P. is a one-on-one fight between SP and BJP'

Mamata urges regional parties to unite

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The 2022 Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh would be a one-on-one contest between the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the BJP along the lines of the West Bengal polls, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Tuesday. She appealed to voters to beware of "vote-cutter koels" and ensure there was no division of anti-BJP votes.

Ms. Banerjee, addressing a press conference along with SP president Akhilesh Yadav, asked voters to ensure that "bhai Akhilesh" wins over 300 seats in the 403-Assembly. She explained to people the significance of defeating the BJP in U.P. at the national-level.

"If you want to save the country from the BJP, you must completely support the SP and Akhilesh. If the BJP goes from this State, it will go from the entire country," she stated.

In Bengal too, the BJP tried to use money power to divide votes but the contest was "one is to one." "U.P. will also be one-on-one," she observed, raising the slogan "khela hoga" in support of Mr. Yadav's anticipated triumph.

"The fight in U.P. is a fight for izzat [honour]," she said.

Though Ms. Banerjee did not take any names, she hinted at Congress general Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi, and asked voters to not "waste your vote on koels (a bird known for its distinctive loud calls)" who descend upon U.P. close to elections from Delhi and Hyderabad. She said that if Yogi Adityanath is elected to power again, he would "eat up" the people politically and financially.

If you want to save the country from the BJP, you must completely support the SP. If the BJP goes from this State, it will go from the entire country

MAMATA BANERJEE
TMC supremo

Mr. Yadav referred to the Bengal polls and hailed Ms. Banerjee for defeating "communal forces" and setting an example by challenging and defeating the saffron party despite it deploying various tactics and its "full army" in Bengal. "Not just defeat the BJP in Bengal, your victory increased the honour of 'nari shakti'," he said.

The former Chief Minister asserted that all regional parties would work together to remove the BJP from Delhi. "The BJP will be reminded of its defeat in Bengal."

Mr. Yadav also took a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the cancellation of his Bijnor rally due to bad weather. While Ms. Banerjee had arrived in Lucknow from West Bengal, "Dilliwale" could not come to U.P., he said.

"The BJP's clouds of crisis are getting darker. The weather is bad for the BJP. The BJP's plane of lies will not land in U.P. this time," he said. On March 3, Ms. Banerjee is expected to campaign in Varanasi.

IN BRIEF

Voice samples of Dileep, others collected

KOCHI

The Crime Branch on Tuesday collected the voice samples of actor Dileep and two others in connection with a case registered against them for allegedly conspiring to endanger the police officers involved in the investigation of the actor-assault case.

Jagan releases ₹285.35 crore for beneficiaries

GUNTUR

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy released ₹285.35 crore aid to self-employed tailors, dhobis and barbers on Tuesday.

An uphill task to rescue youth from cave

Operation is on; Kerala seeks help of defence forces

STAFF REPORTER
PALAKKAD

Efforts continued for the second day to rescue a youth trapped in a cave on a steep hill at Malampuzha near here on Tuesday. The Kerala government has sought the help of defence forces after attempts by the police, Fire and Rescue Services, and volunteers failed. Separate teams of the National Disaster Response Force are making desperate attempts to reach the trapped youth.

Para commandos of the Air Force were scheduled to reach Malampuzha after flying to Sulur in Tamil Nadu.

Tough job: Rescue operation in progress to save the youth trapped on Kurumbachi hill in Palakkad. ▪ K.K. MUSTAFAH

An Army team from Bengaluru with expertise in mountaineering was to reach the spot by Wednesday morning.

R. Babu, 23, a local youth who used to enjoy trekking along the hills of Malampuzha, had attempted to scale the rocky Cheradu hill along with two boys on Monday afternoon when he slipped and fell into a crevice. He got trapped in a cave on the steep rock from where he could not move out. He had reportedly broken his leg in the fall and was exhausted.

Although the police, Fire and Rescue Services personnel and some voluntary bodies tried to rescue him, none could reach near him because of the steepness of the terrain. Attempts to provide water and food to him using a drone also failed as he was stuck in an inaccessible area.

Extreme heat during the day and cold at night as well as the presence of wild animals had become a matter of concern as Mr. Babu lay in helplessness. With binoculars and zoom camera lenses he could be seen; but none could reach anywhere near him because of the terrain.

HC upholds Centre's ban on MediaOne

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday dismissed a writ petition filed by Madhyamam Broadcasting Limited, Kozhikode, which owns the MediaOne channel, challenging the order of the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting revoking the broadcasting licence of the channel.

Justice N. Nagaresh, while upholding the Centre's order, said it emerged from the files produced by the Centre that Union Ministry of Home Affairs had called for intelligence inputs. The inputs were serious in nature.

Kerala woman accuses film director of rape

Case against Balachandrakumar

STAFF REPORTER
KOCHI

The Elamakkara police on Tuesday recorded the statement of a woman who accused film director P. Balachandrakumar of rape.

The statement was recorded before the Ernakulam Judicial First Class Magistrate. The woman had petitioned the District Police Chief (Kochi City) last week and the petition was forwarded to the Elamakkara police, following which a case was registered against the director.

Balachandrakumar had been in the news ever since his revelations triggered a fresh probe against actor Dileep by the Crime Branch in the actor assault case.

The petitioner, a resident of Kannur, turned up at the Elamakkara police station with her lawyer to record her statement.

However, some confusion prevailed as the case had been handed over to the Thiruvananthapuram-based hi-tech cell considering that the incident leading to the case was more than a decade-old.

Later, a team led by an Assistant Sub-Inspector from the hi-tech cell completed the formalities and took her to the magistrate after medical examination.

Balachandrakumar is likely to be summoned soon for interrogation in the case. As per the petitioner, the director raped her at a house at Puthukkalavattom in 2010 and blackmailed her against lodging a police complaint using videos of the sexual assault. The petitioner identified Balachandrakumar after he appeared on television channels and chose to register the complaint belatedly.

Gear up to conduct full day classes: Kerala CM

STAFF REPORTER
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Schools and colleges in Kerala should gear up to conduct classes for all students from morning to evening by the last weekend of this month. The decision was taken at a COVID-19 review meeting here on Tuesday. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan directed schools to begin making arrangements to accommodate all students. Till then, classes will be held in batches.

Classes 10 to 12 have resumed normal school hours this week in batches. This, though, will change in the wake of the review meeting decision. For Classes 1 to 9, in-person classes will resume in batches, in the week beginning February 14.

Meanwhile, Minister for General Education V. Sivankutty said at a press conference here on Tuesday that additional guidelines would be brought out by the General Education Department before students from pre-primary level to Class 9 returned to school.

Meetings with department officials were under way to finalise the additional guidelines, the Minister said.

Discussions were on how to go about completing the portions for SSLC and higher secondary students who will appear for the public examinations, he said.

'Third wave of COVID-19 has ended in Telangana'

HYDERABAD

The director of Public Health G. Srinivasa Rao on Tuesday said the third wave of COVID-19 has come to an end in Telangana. He added that the wave lasted for around 45 days. Dr. Srinivasa Rao said COVID vaccination and precautions helped bring about an early end to the wave. He asked people to take vaccine shots if they are eligible.

Wind power

A woman winnowing horse gram at Katanayakanapura in Bengaluru on Tuesday. The legume is a great source of many nutrients, especially protein. ▪ K. MURALI KUMAR

Charminar to be freed from tangle of wires

ASI plans to make the wiring discreet and light up the monument in a better way

SERISH NANSETTI
HYDERABAD

Visitors and tourists will no longer have to see Charminar through a cobweb of tangled wires and cables. The Archaeological Survey of India is taking steps to make the wiring discreet and light up the national monument in a better way.

The improved system will also make the 430-year-old monument in Hyderabad more accessible with better lighting inside the minarets that take visitors to the upper storey, according to officials of ASI.

On Monday night, there was a tizzy near Charminar when a pneumatic drill was pressed into service for drilling a hole within the perimeter of the monument. "There were unnecessary rumours with videos being circulated. It was for installing the generator, being done by the ASI people," said a police official near the outpost on the eastern side of the iconic structure.

In a mess: Tangle of wires near the iconic Charminar in Hyderabad will soon become a thing of the past. ▪ NAGARA GOPAL

By afternoon, visitors were barred from taking photographs of the three holes that have been drilled beside the south-east minaret near the lattice.

"There is a generator near the ticketing counter which we are moving towards the eastern side. We are also installing lightning conductors on the minarets and earthing work for that is being done by the Central Public Works Department," said an ASI official.

While the wiring may be removed improving the aesthetic of the place, the monument is undergoing a fresh round of conservation work with scaffolding being erected on the western side, inside the monument.

In May 2019, a chunk of decorative stucco work on the south-west minaret fell to the ground in the night.

Another challenge to the Hyderabad landmark has been a series of efforts to lay pipelines, sewerage lines and other utilities by digging near the site using pneumatic devices.

A V-Day wedding beyond gender barriers

Trans couple plan to register the marriage under their transgender identity

STAFF REPORTER
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

This Valentine's Day, trans couple Syama S. Prabha and Manu Karthika will affirm their love for each other and tie the knot in a traditional Hindu ceremony with the blessings of their family.

As they embark on a new chapter in their lives, the couple plan to register their marriage under their transgender identity. While there have been marriages between members of the transgender community, the couples chose to register them under their binary identities under the Special Marriage Act. However, Syama and Manu, both of whom identify as transgender in the transgender ID card of the Social Justice Department, plan to approach the High Court to get their marriage registered as one between transgender individuals under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.

Syama S. Prabha and Manu Karthika

Says Manu, "To our knowledge, this will be a first. There may be other people who want to get married under their transgender identity. We want to pave the way for their union. We are hopeful of a favourable decision."

Manu, a transman who works in human resources at Technopark here, says the decision to get married on Valentine's Day was not a deliberate one; it was the date that came up as per their horoscopes.

It was back in 2017 that Manu first approached Syama. Then, they had not had their sex reassignment surgeries, nor were their families keen on the union. They did not have permanent jobs either. As elder children of respective families, both were firm about taking care of their families. Syama, who works as State Project Officer in the Transgender Cell of the Social Justice department and an activist, agreed much later. In the meanwhile, they found steady jobs, and got their families to come around to the idea of the marriage. "We kept our relationship very low-key till all the wrinkles could be ironed out. Not many within the community knew of it."

The wedding will be solemnised at 9.30 a.m. on February 14 in the presence of family, friends, and community members who have supported them all the way.

Dasna temple priest gets bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DEHRADUN

A Haridwar court has granted bail to Dasna temple chief priest Yati Narsinghanand in the controversial Haridwar Dharma Sansad hate speech case.

Narsinghanand was arrested in connection with the case on January 15, nearly a month after he organised a Dharma Sansad in Haridwar where alleged provocative speeches were delivered against Muslims.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Bharat Bhushan Pandey granted conditional bail to Narsinghanand after a virtual hearing in the case on Monday. The court has asked him not to deliver any speech which can disrupt social harmony.

It has also restrained Narsinghanand from becoming part of any group or event with an aim to create discord among different communities. He will have to respond to summons by the IO and not intimidate the witnesses in the case, it said.

BJP candidates in Uttar Pradesh relying on brand 'Modi-Yogi'

Discontent against local leaders for lack of amenities and ignoring issues is offset by communal rhetoric, Ram temple and Article 370

ANUJ KUMAR
MATHURA

As the BJP's glittering, repurposed election auto drives into the labour chowk of Mathura, daily wage workers surround it with the hope that the party would recruit them for electioneering at ₹500 per person. But all they get is a BJP booklet titled "*Mero Brij*".

"*Ya ko kya karoon? ₹500 de do, saath le chalo din bhar ko* (What can I do with this? Pay me ₹500 and take me along for electioneering)," says a disappointed Chandan Singh from Goverdhan constituency, who has been standing at the cross-roads since early morning waiting for work.

There are hundreds like him. Most of them have e-Shram cards, but no work. "We paid ₹50 each to get them [e-Shram card] made with the hope that ₹2,000 will come into our account but we haven't received the instalment," said another worker Fateh Singh.

A kilometre further, in the Krishna Janmaboomi area, a song in the Braj dialect is playing from a repurposed auto. "*Ye vikas ka diwanon hai/ Ayodhya ke baad Mathura ka number aaono hai*. (He is crazy about development/ the turn of the Mathura temple will come after Ayodhya)," goes the song. The lyrics, while referring to sitting BJP MLA and Minister for Power Shrikant Sharma, actually succinctly describe the BJP's manifesto and its campaign focus in the Braj region.

Facing anti-incumbency here, BJP candidates are chanting the "Modi-Yogi" mantra to survive for another term.

Daily wage workers waiting for work at a labour chowk in Mathura. ▪ ANUJ KUMAR

'Inaccessible MLA'

There is palpable anger against Mr. Sharma. He is described as an inaccessible MLA, with the wealth of his close family having swelled manifold in the last five years. People also talk of a large number of FIRs lodged in the region for electricity theft during his tenure.

As Mathura has become a Nagar Nigam, the commercial taxes levied on shopkeepers have almost doubled. This has created extra pressure during the pandemic. "We may be better dressed but we are struggling as much as these daily wagers," says Darshan Kumar, a grocery store owner.

In neighbouring Chhata constituency, Minister Chaudhary Lakshmi Narayan Singh is charged with ignoring local issues and the people, while helping his nephew siphon foodgrain meant for the public distribution system.

But the brand 'Modi-Yogi' soon takes over conversations which turns to the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and the abrogation of Article 370.

"*Hinduon ki naak unchi kar dayi* (They have restored the prestige of Hindus)," says Net Ram, another daily wager, who till a few minutes before was criticising the government for inflation and the meagre PDS which doesn't meet the needs of the poor.

Even among the daily wagers, there is a reflection of caste identity. "Look at the larger picture," urges Nandan Pal, who runs a small confectionery shop. "Those who stole electricity during the previous governments are being punished. They used it as a symbol of pride that could take on the government," he points out.

Observers said the polarisation card played by the BJP is not finding traction. Recently, when an aide of Mr. Chaudhary was shot dead, CM Adityanath described it as the handiwork of Mewati criminals (a euphemism for Muslims from the Haryana's Mewat region). However, investigation has so far revealed the murder was related to money transaction and the alleged killer was a non-Muslim. "How would Yogiji know? Local officials and leaders must have misguided him," defends Kishan Singh, who is unhappy with his MLA.

Real issues

"The low percentage of the population of Muslims in Mathura ensures that it could not be polarised and real issues like pollution of Yamuna despite massive investment by the State government will shine through," says advocate Madhuvant Chaturvedi, convenor of Qaumi Ekta Manch, a leftist organisation supporting the Congress in the Mathura seat and the SP-RLD alliance in the six rural seats of the district where the farmer agitation is finding traction.

In Hatholi village of Baldev (reserved) constituency, the locals are enraged about the hard water. "We have to buy water from the tanker," said Ter Singh Baghel. Stuck on the fringes of so-called development, the villagers are not amused. "See, they have built the Yamuna Expressway but not even one single underpass has been cleared so that we and our animals have to walk long distances to go to our fields."

The village is not far from Deen Dayal Dham and the villagers said their identity was because of RSS ideologue Deen Dayal Upadhyay's birth place.

"The issue has been raised for decades but even the BJP MLA Pooran Prakash proved to be of no help," said Dungar Singh. But that doesn't seem to matter. "The vote will go to the BJP," said Pooran Chand, as their leader SPS Baghel, BJP's Agra MP, is contesting against Akhilesh Yadav. And, "only Modi and Yogi know what religion is. *Devta aadmi hain*," underlined Mr Chand.

T.N. Assembly readopts NEET Bill

Move marks a historic first; the Bill was earlier returned by Governor R.N. Ravi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

A special session of the Tamil Nadu Assembly on Tuesday 'unanimously' readopted a Bill that seeks to dispense with NEET for admission to undergraduate medical courses in the State. The Bill, previously adopted last September, was recently returned by Governor R.N. Ravi.

Battle over Bill: Chief Minister M.K. Stalin addressing the Tamil Nadu Assembly on Tuesday. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'Rights of T.N.'

Moving the Bill in the House, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said, "We have not gathered here only for discussing NEET. We have gathered here to protect the integrity and the rights of the Tamil Nadu legislature. The philosophy of cooperative federalism is to protect the many communities, languages and cultures. We have gathered here to protect cooperative federalism."

Except the four members of the BJP, who staged a walkout from the House, opposing the Tamil Nadu government's decision, all political parties, including the principal Opposition party, the AIADMK, supported the Bill moved by Mr. Stalin.

Since all legislators present during the voice vote supported the Bill, Speaker M. Appavu declared that it had been adopted unanimously. This is the first time that the House has readopted a Bill returned by the Governor.

The earlier Bill, titled 'Tamil Nadu Admission to Undergraduate Medical Degree Courses Bill, 2021', was adopted by the Assembly on September 13 last year, when Governor Banwarilal Purohit was in office. Mr. Ravi was sworn-in Governor on September 18.

During the special session, the Speaker expressed his displeasure over the release in the public domain of the operative portion of the contents of the Governor's letter returning the Bill to him [Raj Bhavan had issued a press release on the issue]. He questioned the time taken [by the Governor] for making a decision on a Bill that was adopted unanimously.

Governor's reasons

Health Minister Ma. Subramanian read out the reasons given by the Governor for returning the Bill and provided the government's responses to each of them.

Last week, the Governor returned the previous Bill, contending that the legislation was against the interests of students, especially those from rural areas and economically weaker sections.

In February 2017, a similar Bill against NEET was adopted by the House during the AIADMK regime. But a few months later, President Ram Nath Kovind withheld his assent to the Bill.

Poll watch

Uttar Pradesh police personnel checking vehicles at the Delhi border in Ghaziabad on Tuesday ahead of the first phase of U.P. Assembly election. ▪ R.V. MOORTHY

Stalin writes to Modi on fishermen's release

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Tuesday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting him to secure the release of 29 fishermen and their 79 fishing boats from Sri Lanka.

In the latest instance of high-handedness, the Sri Lankan Navy has arrested 11 Indian fishermen and were taken to Mayilatti Naval Base, Sri Lanka, Mr. Stalin said.

"The numerous instances of arrests of fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy warrant a strong and coordinated response by the Government of India at the highest level. The issue is an abrogation of their traditional fishing rights in the Palk Bay area," he wrote.

The arrests were not just a livelihood issue for fisherfolk but also a persistent threat to their lives and a challenge to the rights of fishermen to fish in the traditional waters, he said.

'Will conduct census of those who quit liquor drinking'

Continue action against liquor mafia: Nitish

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

The Nitish Kumar government has decided to conduct a census of those who gave up drinking since Bihar became a dry State.

It has also directed police and administrative officials to continue their action against liquor mafia with the help of drones, sniffer dogs, and motorboats.

"The previous survey said 1.64 crore people have quit drinking but now we have decided to conduct census to find out the exact number of those who have given up the habit," Mr. Kumar said at a meeting of the Prohibition and Excise Department.

Ban since 2016

Bihar was declared a dry State after the State Prohibition and Excise (Amendment) Act, 2016 came into effect in April 2016.

Recently, the police and prohibition department officials, with the help of drones, dismantled a number of illicit liquor manufacturing units set up in riverine areas in Vaishali, Saran, Patna and other districts. The district police have been using sniffer dogs to smoke out illegal country-made liquor brewing units in villages and remote areas. However, over 30 people died in recent months after consuming spurious liquor, while some lost eyesight.

The Nitish government has been criticised for deaths of poor people and the availability of illicit liquor. But, Mr. Kumar has been rigid and is unmoved over implementing the stringent law.

However, Mr. Kumar's ally Jitan Ram Manjhi of the Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular), while addressing a meeting in Gaya on Tuesday, said, "*Sharab pina buri baat hai, lekin doctors aur log kehte hain ki thodi thodi pina chahiye* [liquor drinking is a bad thing but doctors and others say it should be taken in small quantity]. Mr. Manjhi further said, "they do not dare to arrest the MLAs, IAS officers and big people who gulp liquor from large bottles every night but they catch hold of poor people".

Restore 27% OBC quota, says Maharashtra panel

State Backward Class Commission report puts OBC numbers at 38%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission interim report has recommended to the Maharashtra government, "to restore and grant 27% reservation (which is already prescribed by various enactments) to Other Backward Classes (OBC)".

The Commission headed by Justice (retd.) Anand Nirgude submitted the report to the Maha Vikas Aghadi government on February 7 and said, "The figure of OBC population in the State is 38%."

On January 19, the Supreme Court had directed the Commission to submit an interim report after the State had informed the court that it has some data on OBC which is relevant for the upcoming local polls.

The Hindu has a copy of the report that mentions, "The data extracted from SARAL (Rural and Urban) and UDISE (Rural and Urban) is found more reliable. SARAL indicates that there is 32.93% population belonging to OBCs in Maharashtra and the UDISE indicates that there are 38% population. The mean of these figures is more than 38%. The above sources indicate the percentage of OBC pupils that joined the schools, therefore, it endorses that the percentage of OBCs in Maharashtra may be much more than 38%."

The purpose of the interim report was to consider the data and recommend a workable solution, to provide political reservation for BCC/OBC as an interim arrangement for the upcoming elections of local bodies, in the absence of empirical study and research by this Commission.

Upper limit

The report reads, "Considering the data/documents submitted by the State government and upon analysing the same, this Commission thought it fit to recommend "to restore and grant 27% reservation (which is already prescribed by various enactments), excluding the areas notified by the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act and subject to permissible upper limit of 50% to BCC/OBC category in local self-government i.e. excluding statutory reservation meant for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST)."

"In case of SC and ST reservation as their population is relatively more, then the OBCs will get a lesser percentage than 27, if given. While recommending above, we are aware that the total reservation should not exceed the 50% upper limit. The State government and the Election Commission may jointly address the remaining task and have appropriate changes in existing Laws/Rules, if necessary, so as to enforce 27% reservation, as recommended, by this Commission, for upcoming elections," the report points out.

Nine years on, DDA's land pooling scheme yet to see development works

A total of 104 villages divided in six zones identified for the scheme; DDA says work about to start in two sectors

MUNEEF KHAN
NEW DELHI

Nine years since the Delhi Development Authority's (DDA) ambitious land pooling policy was first notified, the development works in areas notified under the policy are yet to take shape.

While land pooling involves the acquisition of land by the authorities which is followed by roping in developers to execute the projects, DDA's policy - which was notified twice, in 2013 and 2018 - allows the agency to steer away from the complex process of land acquisition.

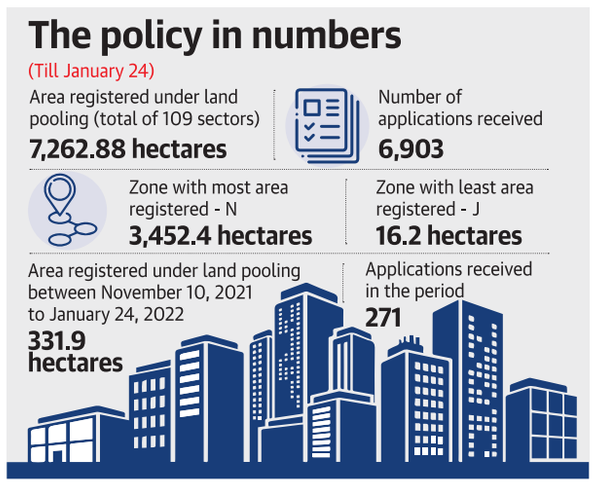
Facilitator, regulator

Instead, the DDA plays the role of a facilitator and regulator between the landowners who are invited to pool their land parcels and the developers who come onboard to execute the envisioned projects.

Currently, a total of 104 villages - that have been divided in six zones and further divided into sectors - have been identified for land pooling. According to a senior DDA official, the villages are located beyond the agency's projects in Rohini, Dwarka and Narela - falling in the north, north-west and south-west districts.

According to the policy, 60% of the land will be utilised by the owners or developer entity for the purpose of developing residential and commercial facilities. However, 40% of the land will be surrendered to service providing agencies, such as the DDA, for infrastructural developments - road networks, sewerage systems and parks.

Primarily, the policy is aimed at providing 17 lakh dwelling units for a population of roughly 80 lakh people, which include five lakh units for economically weaker sections (EWS) - as a solution to address the growing urbanisation and the issue of housing.



Speaking to *The Hindu*, a senior DDA official said, out of 104 villages that have been identified for land pooling, the agency has identified 16 high priority sectors - falling under zones L, N and P-II. He added, "Development works on at least two sectors will start this year."

In February 2019, the agency opened its portal for land pooling and a total of 7,262 hectares – falling under zones J, K-I, L, N, P-I and P-II – area was registered till January 24, 2022.

"This year, the high priority sectors will mostly see the commencement of development work with respect to the housing units. We have had meetings with the land owners who are coordinating with the developers. However, we are waiting for the eligibility criteria to be fulfilled. For that, we need at least 70% of the pooled land to be contiguous. These sectors are of priority because they are very close to fulfilling the eligibility criteria," the official said.

The official emphasised that the agency will issue a notice to form a consortium of land owners after the eligibility criteria is fulfilled.

He added, "The consortium will have to prepare a draft implementation plan, which will specify the distribution of land among the stakeholders and submit it to the DDA. We will approve it and issue the required licenses accordingly. Out of the total land, 16% will be used for recreation of green areas, while 12% will be used for roads."

With the DDA further extending the deadline for applications to February 28, the official said the development works on the remaining sectors will take shape "depending on the participation of land owners".

While the priority sectors in villages under zone N have seen a robust participation with a total area of 3,452 hectares being registered, a thin level of participation was observed in villages falling under zones P-1 and J with only 55.1 and 16.2 hectares of area being registered till January 24.

"The scheme is voluntary and for development work to begin, we need the sectors to meet the eligibility criteria. The sectors which are of high priority are moving faster in terms of the participation of land owners," the official said. He added that the agency is facing hurdles in convincing land owners to participate.

NEET and States

Governor should not delay assent to TN's Bill for exemption from mandatory admission test

With the Tamil Nadu Assembly passing once again its earlier Bill seeking to exempt government seats in undergraduate medical and dental courses from the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), the ball is once again in the court of Governor R.N. Ravi. The Governor had chosen to return to the House for reconsideration the Bill that was passed in September 2021, questioning the tenability of the Justice A.K. Rajan Committee Report that had given its findings in favour of the the passage of such a law. The DMK regime has thrown down the gauntlet as the Constitution is clear as far as the Governor's course of action is concerned. If the Bill is presented to him again, Mr. Ravi is constitutionally bound to grant assent. It is a matter of speculation whether the Bill will obtain presidential nod, but the episode raises a question whether the Governor could not have avoided the current situation by reserving the Bill for the President instead of returning it. After all, this is clearly a Bill that requires the President's acceptance – the exemption from NEET is in conflict with the central law that makes it mandatory and, therefore, can only be saved by the President's assent. Regardless of the Bill's merits, the Governor should delay the matter no further. The original intent of the Constitution makers was that the Governor, under Article 200, ought to have no discretion, save in the case of a law that undermines the position of the High Court, which he is bound to reserve for the President's consideration. However, the Governor's rare use of discretion to question the desirability or validity of a Bill, and ask for reconsideration is now a matter of constitutional practice.

Some parts of the Governor's communication to the Legislative Assembly Speaker seem to suggest that Mr. Ravi disagrees with the basis for the Bill, even though he is not wrong in highlighting a Supreme Court decision in favour of NEET. It is not generally desirable for the Governor to seek to match wits with the legislature's wisdom on social inputs that inform policy. It will be useful to recall that the Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations observed that the Governor should not act contrary to the advice of the Council of Ministers merely because he did not like the policy embodied in the Bill. The attention will now be on whether the NEET Exemption Bill will pass muster. For one thing, the exemption may not be a solution to the problem of government school students not making it to MBBS courses in sufficient numbers. The situation prior to the introduction of NEET was no better. However, the issue of NEET being a barrier to access is genuine. There is no doubt that the mandatory nature of NEET on a pan-India basis undermines the role of State governments in medical education. As the main deliverers of public health, the States cannot be denied a say in who joins medical courses in government colleges.

Football and nations

The best football is seen between heavyweight European clubs, but nationalism adds an edge

Senegal holding its nerve to beat Egypt via a penalty shoot-out (4-2) on Sunday at the Stade d'Olembe in Yaounde, Cameroon, to clinch its maiden Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) brought the curtains down on a drama-filled, and at the same time tumultuous, tournament. Egypt, led by the Liverpool talisman Mohamed Salah, came into the final with big-match pedigree, having won the title a record seven times. The North African heavyweight had also won its last six shoot-outs and had seen off fancied sides such as Ivory Coast, Morocco and the host Cameroon earlier in the competition. Senegal, on the other hand, had lost twice in the final, but found a hero in Sadio Mane, another of Liverpool's effervescent stars, who scored the decisive penalty. It was a redemption of sorts for the 29-year-old, for he had fluffed a spot-kick as early as the sixth minute. But the night ended in glory, capped by a celebratory lap of honour with his nation's flag draped around his shoulders. So it did for coach Aliou Cisse, who had missed the all-important penalty when Senegal first reached the final in 2002 and was the coach during the 2019 final defeat to Algeria. The quality of football in the final was largely dire and was marked by incessant fouling. But the lasting impression will be that of delirious Senegalese fans celebrating the moment their nation's name was etched in the history book.

But the tournament will forever be punctuated by unsavoury happenings off the field. The most tragic of these was the trampling to death of at least eight Cameroonians on January 24 at the Stade d'Olembe. COVID-19, which had already led to the postponement of the event by a year, played spoilsport again, scuppering many a side's best-laid plans and preparation time. It also did not help that certain European clubs and coaches were reluctant to release their players in the middle of their club seasons, with Liverpool coach Jurgen Klopp even terming AFCON a "little tournament". It is true that European football currently occupies an exalted position, with its crown jewel, the quadrennial tournament Euros, next only to the FIFA World Cup. But to deny other continental competitions their due would be a severe disservice. One just needs to look at what last year's Copa America win meant to Lionel Messi. Despite having won every trophy and every award at club level, the Argentine legend coveted success with the national team the most. It was a similar quest for Mane and Senegal, of overcoming doubts and barriers, to experience the purest form of sporting joy there is. Mane called it the best day of his life and it is impossible to disagree.

'NEET is discriminatory, against social justice'

The NEET Exemption Bill not only defends the right to education and social rights but also upholds Tamil Nadu's rights

M.K. STALIN

Hon'ble Speaker of the House. Elections were held in the Province of Madras when the electoral system was first established in India to elect people's representatives by the people. The Justice Party, pioneer of the Dravidian movement, formed the government in the first general election in 1920, when the country was under British rule.

All those who travelled to India from England to observe the working of the Madras Provincial Assembly remarked that the Madras Province is the only province in India governed by the rule of law and administrative protocols.

This is a significant day in the history of this House, which established such democratic values. We have assembled here to defend democracy, to preserve democracy's dignity, to uphold the principle of federalism, and to secure the right to education.

To defend federal philosophy

We are not only getting together to talk about the NEET Exam [the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test]. We have gathered to preserve the Tamil Nadu Legislature's sovereignty and rights. Federalism is a fundamental idea that truly safeguards the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of the Indian subcontinent! We have come together to ensure that the great federal philosophy remains intact.

I stand in this Assembly that has laid the foundation for success in upholding social justice, legal justice, oppressed people's rights, the greatness of Tamil ethnic community and its language. And I speak with the confidence that this Assembly can and will definitely eliminate the social injustice of NEET. Today, we are here in this Special Assembly to propose a policy of social justice in education for the entire country, having been trained in the footsteps of our leader Anna. To quench students' passion for medical education, we have all come together to work in solidarity and promote social justice.

NEET is not a system established by the Constitution. It was not made a part of the Constitution. The Medical Council of India mandated the creation of NEET. When such an examination was proposed in 2010, Muthamizharinar Kalaignar, the then-Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, vehemently opposed it.

Much opposed

It was also opposed by a number of Indian States. This examination has been challenged in 115 cases across India. Tamil Nadu is the State that is leading the charge in this direction. All of these cases were heard by the Supreme Court.

NEET was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court itself on July 18, 2013. The Chief Justice of India delivered the judgment. The exam was subsequently abolished across the Indian subcontinent.

However, after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won the election and formed the government, a private training institute reopened the issue. The Supreme Court heard the case of NEET. "Judgment is recalled" and "Hear this case afresh," the Supreme Court said on May 24, 2016 after hearing the case. On this basis, the BJP-led Union government issued an ordinance on April 11, 2016, which quickly implemented NEET across the country.

Private training institutes benefit from NEET. The NEET Exemption Bill is being introduced for the benefit of those who cannot afford to pay so much for training. NEET is an impediment to the entitlement of poor and needy children to education. In their dream of becoming doctors, a barrier wall has been placed in the name of NEET. "You can't be a doctor," says NEET. "You don't deserve it," it says, halting one's progress. That is why the NEET Exemption Bill has been introduced. I do not think I need to go into great detail about the abnormalities in that exam at this assembly.

So, to summarise, NEET is not a holy cow. It attempts to marginalise students from low-income families in the guise of merit. As a result, we oppose the examination and demand an exemption.

The question I would want to address in this forum is whether NEET, which has sent some students to the graveyard and others to jail, is really required. This is a question that has been raised by

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

the entire student community as well as parents.

A detailed review

On June 19, 2021, a committee led by retired High Court judge A.K. Rajan was formed to investigate the issues and submit a report on the effects of NEET on poor and backward students. The public was consulted. On July 14, 2021, the Committee submitted a 193-page report to the Government based on those comments. They claimed that Government school students were unable to follow their dreams of pursuing a medical education.

I have formed a committee under the leadership of the Chief Secretary to provide detailed recommendations on this report. After careful consideration, the Bill exempting Tamil Nadu from NEET was enacted by this Assembly. We did a lot of study and were able to pass this Bill, supported with factual information.

The NEET Exemption Bill was passed with the support of all members of this House, with the exception of four BJP members. The Bill reflected not only the sentiments of Tamil Nadu as a whole, but also the Assembly's notion of its sovereignty.

It had to be approved by the Hon'ble Governor, and he should have sent it to the Hon'ble President for his approval. Instead, he kept it pending for 142 days before reaching a decision – despite our numerous requests – and then returned it to us. In this Assembly, I must state unequivocally that the reasons he cited for rejecting the Bill were incorrect.

On June 10, 2021, the Justice A.K. Rajan Committee was set up under G.O. No.283, Department of Health and Family Welfare. The committee was made up of academics and government officials. The study's terms of reference were also made public by this high-level group.

The public was asked to provide feedback to the committee. Hundreds of thousands of people had expressed their opinions to the Commission by email, mail, and petition boxes put in various locations.

According to the recommendation, NEET has limited the diversity of community representation in MBBS and higher medical courses by impeding the desire of those underprivileged of receiving medical education and favouring the socio-economically rich sections. The statistics for this can be found in the report as well. According to the survey, government schoolchildren, those whose parents' annual income is less than ₹2.5 lakh, the backward (BC), the most backward (MBC), Scheduled Castes (SC), and Scheduled Tribes (ST) are the most affected.

The Governor criticised the study for claiming that NEET is "against merit". It is worth noting that the report of the Justice A.K. Rajan committee includes proven facts rejecting this. Among those chosen so far, rural poor students have been affected. According to the research, those who studied in the Tamil medium in government schools are also harmed. At this point, I strongly advise that no one mistakenly counts those who benefit from the Government of Tamil Nadu's 7.5% reservation as having profited from NEET.

The power to legislate

A five-judge Supreme Court Bench heard the matter of *Modern Dental College vs Madhya Pradesh government*. The Supreme Court verdict was clear: The State government has the power to legislate on student admissions to higher education institutions.

In a separate judgment delivered by Justice Banumathi in the same case, she also ruled that the law regulating student admission was within the jurisdiction of the State government. We passed the Bill against NEET solely using the legislative power of the State legislature.

The Governor has urged that NEET be made mandatory by the Constitution. According to the Constitution, any legal provision can be made, but only for the rights of the socially and economically disadvantaged. We are bringing this NEET Exemption Bill back on that basis. The Constitution is anti-discriminatory. However, NEET is inherently discriminatory. Social justice is emphasised in constitutional law. NEET, on the other hand, is opposed to social justice. The term "justice of the law" is used in constitutional law. But NEET favours the rich. The Indian Constitution is built on the principle of equality. NEET, on the other hand, is the polar opposite of equality. NEET is opposed to all of the Constitution's fundamental rights. That is why we are requesting NEET exemption.

My pain stems from having to debate for so long about a dreadful exam that disproportionately impacts poor and rural students.

The return of this Bill has also put into doubt the right of our State of Tamil Nadu. This legislature's sovereignty has been brought into question. The autonomy of States has been questioned. That is what concerns me. What will happen to the constitutionally mandated relationship between the Union and State governments? What are the rights and responsibilities of people of various races, languages, and cultures?

We passed a Bill on September 13, 2021 to exempt students from NEET based on the power we have. The Governor is required by law to reserve it to the President for approval. I expect the Governor to carry out his responsibilities correctly. That is the Governor's responsibility, which is limited by the legislative power of the legislature, which is elected by the people.

I hope that the Governor will respect the sentiments of the people of Tamil Nadu and act in the best interests of the students of Tamil Nadu by sending the NEET Exemption Bill to the President without delay, which will be reconsidered and passed under the power conferred on the people elected by the Legislature by the Constitution. I urge everyone to support this Bill in order to defend the right to education, which has been denied for a long time, as well as the State rights of Tamil Nadu and the social rights of Scheduled Castes, tribals, backward/most backward/the oppressed/the poor/the marginalised/and rural peoples.

Hail Tamil Nadu!

M.K. Stalin is the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and President of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). This article is an edited version of the Chief Minister's speech

Step up agri-spending, boost farm incomes

India's poor AOI is a stark reminder of the need to attain a key sustainable development goal of higher agri-growth

POORNIMA VARMA

While the overall budgetary allocation towards the agricultural sector has marginally increased by 4.4% in the Union Budget 2022-23, the rate of increase is lower than the current inflation rate of 5.5%-6%. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) report for 2001 to 2019 shows that, globally, India is among the top 10 countries in terms of government spending in agriculture, constituting a share of around 7.3% of its total government expenditure. However, India lags behind several low-income countries such as Malawi (18%), Mali (12.4%), Bhutan (12%), Nepal (8%), as well as upper middle-income countries such as Guyana (10.3%) and China (9.6%).

India is ranked low

The picture changes and rather looks disappointing when we look at the Agriculture Orientation Index (AOI) – an index which was developed as part of the Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 emphasises an increase in investment in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, development of technology to enhance agricultural productivity and eradication of poverty in middle- and lower-income countries. The AOI is calculated by dividing the agriculture share of government expenditure by the agriculture value added share of GDP. In other words, it measures the ratio between government spending towards the agricultural sector and the sector's contribution to GDP. India's index is one of the lowest, reflecting that the spending towards the agricultural sector is not commensurate with the sector's contribution towards GDP.

A comparison with Asia

Although the AOI has shown an improvement since the mid-2000s, as part of the general revival that took place in several middle-income countries, India's AOI (https://bit.ly/3rBSorH) is one of the lowest in Asia and among several other middle-income and upper-income countries. Asia as a whole performs much better, with a relatively higher performance by Eastern Asian countries. China has been doing remarkably well with an index steadily improving and crossing one.

Similarly, in countries such as the Republic of Korea, the value of AOI has been greater than one and greater than two since 2005-06 respectively. Even lower income African countries such as Zambia, have commendable spending in the agricultural sector despite being a landlocked country. India holds only the 38th rank in the world, despite being an agrarian

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economy wherein a huge population is dependent on the agricultural sector for its livelihood, and despite being among the largest producers of several crops produced and consumed in the world.

The enormous spending on the agricultural sector by East Asian countries is also reflected in their higher crop yield. For example, the total cereal yield in India is only around 3,282 kilograms per hectare compared to 4,225 kg per hectare in Asia. Within the Asian region, Eastern Asia has the highest cereal yield of 6,237 kg per hectare. In China, even with an average land holding size of 0.6 hectares, which is much lower than India's average land holding size, the performance of the sector in terms of crop yield is much higher than India. For example, the cereal yield is 6,296 kg per hectare, pulses yield is 1,815 kg per hectare and vegetable crops yield is 25,546 kg per hectare in China; the corresponding figures for India are 3,282 kg, 704 kg, and 15,451 kg, respectively. Both India and China are among the world's largest producers of wheat, rice, cotton and maize.

A closer look at the budgetary allocation towards the agricultural sector shows that there has been a drastic slashing of funds toward important schemes such as crop insurance and minimum support price (MSP). Even with an overall increase in budgetary outlays, the allocation towards Market Intervention Scheme and Price Support Scheme (MIS-PSS) was only ₹1,500 crore. This is 62% less than the previous allocation of ₹3,959.61 crore in revised estimates (RE) of FY 2021-22.

Other significant reductions

Similarly, the Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) experienced a significant reduction to only one crore as against the allocation of ₹400 crore in 2021-22. It was allocated just ₹1 crore for the year as against an expenditure of ₹400 crore in 2021-22. Both schemes are pertinent to ensure MSP-based procurement operations in the country, especially for pulses and oil seeds. Furthermore, the distribution of pulses to States for welfare schemes has also been reduced to ₹9 crore as compared to the ₹50 crore of FY 2021-22 (revised estimates) and the allocated amount of ₹300 crore in the year 2021-22. Additionally, there is an overall reduction in ₹718.8 crore in total central schemes/projects, which may have serious implications for the performance of the sector.

While one can still argue that the capital investment in the agricultural sector is more crucial than price support programmes, there has not been any considerable and commensurate increase in the allocation towards capital investment, especially for promotion of rural infrastructure and marketing facilities. Allocation for rural development was 5.59% in the previous Budget and it has been reduced to 5.23%. The allocation of funds towards schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM KISAN), Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana, though desirable, will not result in long run asset generation.

Measures to implement

The intensification in government spending towards the agricultural sector is the key to attain the sustainable development goals of higher agricultural growth and farm income. The focus on development of irrigation facilities, urban infrastructure and development of national highways must be complemented with an emphasis on the development of rural infrastructure and rural transportation facilities, along with an increase in the number of markets, as suggested by the National Commission on Farmers. These measures will play a crucial role in enhancing farmers' access to markets and integrating small and marginal farmers into the agricultural supply chain to a greater extent.

Poornima Varma is a faculty and chairperson at the Centre for Management in Agriculture, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad. The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Counter point

It is amusing that the nearly 100 minute long reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks for the President's Address in the Lok Sabha accuses the Opposition Congress party of promoting division in the country in addition to labelling it as the leader of '*tukde tukde* [break-up]' gang (Page 1, February 8). It is the Bharatiya Janata Party that is dividing the country on the basis of religion and language and pursuing divisive policies. It is the BJP government that is initiating steps to destroy the federal and democratic set-up of India. It would be pertinent to mention the speech made by Congress leader Anand Sharma in the Rajya Sabha: "... the country belongs to all". (Inside pages, February 8).

D. SETHURAMAN,
Chennai

■ The objective of the nearly 100 minute long speech seems to prove the age-old maxim of giving someone a bad name. From that exalted position that he holds, and in the 'Temple of Democracy', it does not behove the stature of a tall leader to 'pick and choose' extracts from Nehru's speeches out of context and try to make justifications. He should have refrained from stooping so low.

K. NEHRU PATNAIK,
Visakhapatnam

■ The pointed remarks against the Congress Party's subversive attempts in trying to capitalise on national woes for its survival are apt. The Congress must learn to take the Prime Minister's comments in the right spirit.

B. GURUMURTHY,
Madurai

Rights of the weak, duties of the powerful

A complaint of undue emphasis on rights creates the suspicion that citizens are being disempowered

RAJEEV BHARGAVA

ISTOCK

Rights and duties are conceptually linked to one another. There are no rights without duties. If a person has the right to something, it necessarily implies that someone else has a corresponding duty to ensure that it is not violated. For example, if an individual has a right to free speech, then it is the duty of the state to prevent its infringement. Or take the right to religious freedom of, say, American Hindus. Other groups, regardless of numbers or social power, have a duty not to infringe it. If they ever fall short of space for worship, the government should help fix that problem, facilitate its possession or use by Hindus. Isn't it a shame then that in Gurugram only the Sikhs felt duty-bound to help ordinary Muslims offer namaz?

If I have rights which impose duties on others, then others also have rights that enforce duties on me. Individuals have as many duties as rights. Any individual who demands a right and expects others to allow or facilitate its exercise must also expect that she is equally duty-bound to reciprocate. This is so simply because, like her, all others have rights too. We are all rights- as well as duties-bearing individuals.

I hope it is abundantly clear that rights entail duties, that rights cannot be exercised without the simultaneous performance of duties. Because of their grounding in rights, these (rights-based) duties cannot be pitted against rights. No opposition between them exists. To say here that we must focus on duties *rather than* on rights makes no sense. What then could be meant by the proposition that we must move away from a rights-based to a duty-based perspective?

Duties against rights

It should be obvious that the framework of rights and duties discussed above is grounded in egalitarian assumptions. However, the moment we drop this assumption, this whole picture of rights and duties is transformed. To be sure, the conceptual relation between rights and duties remains unbroken. Rights continue to entail duties, but in deeply hierarchical, inegalitarian societies, only a few people have rights, while the many have duties to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of these few.

In patriarchal families, the father alone has the right to take decisions. This puts all other members under a duty to abide by his decision. Remember Amrish Puri in *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*? He decides, without consultation, that Simran, played by Kajol, is to be married to the son of his friend in a Punjabi village. And Simran has no choice but to obey, to leave her home in London and settle in India. The mother, sympathetic to Simran, is also duty-bound not to object to the father's decision.

Much the same is true of caste-ridden societies. It is a misconception that the ancient Hindu *Varna Vyavastha* has only duties and no rights. The duties of Shudras and Ati-shudras to serve people of higher rank flow from rights possessed exclusively by upper castes. A hierarchical caste system distributes rights and duties unequally. Only a few have the most important rights – the right to be served, for instance; the larger population has corresponding duties to ensure that these rights are exercised without hindrance. Any infringement on the rights of the upper caste, especially the Brahmin, brings heavy penalties to the violator, sometimes even death. Similarly, in many Islamic societies, rights and duties are gender-specific, and unequal. It is the right of men to have their testimony in the court weigh twice as much as that of women who are duty-bound to comply.

In absolute monarchies, the King has unrestricted rights and all others have corresponding duties which increase as we go down the ladder of political hierarchy. Those at the bottom have the maximum number of duties towards the maximum number of people, all ranked higher than them. Talk of priority of duties over rights is rampant in inegalitarian societies. When people are asked to forget about rights and think more about duties, the subtext is that they should forget about caring for their *own* rights and concentrate on their duties to the few. In hierarchical, inegalitarian societies, where power is unevenly distributed, duties are often seen in opposition to rights.

Careful attention to the structure of rights and duties in inegalitarian societies reveals its deep connection to social and political power. Those in power have rights; those without it have duties. A transformation from a hierarchical to an egalitarian order does not produce a power-free order. Instead, at least in principle, such change generates a democratic distribution of power. It is this equality of power that ensures a system of equal rights and duties. Indeed, in egalitarian polities, more power means more duties. The powerless have rights, the powerful have duties. For example, it is the duty of the state to ensure that there is no poverty, disease or unemployment. In this context, any move to shift focus from rights to duties, to complain of undue emphasis on rights breeds the suspicion that democracy is being undermined and hierarchy reintroduced through the backdoor.

Duties beyond rights

However, one cannot altogether deny the importance of a moral discourse that asks people to attend to duties. For, quite simply, duties that do not oppose rights exist and they do not flow from rights but go beyond them. Let us take an example. A surgeon performs an operation. He does his job efficiently and believes that once done, he is under no obligation to be present in the hospital or talk to the family of the patient. Now, consider another surgeon who after performing the operation feels compelled to interact with the patient, placate the anxieties of his family. Abandoning an impersonal stance, he brings warmth to his interaction. His act flows from duties that are integral to his character, to the goodness of his heart, to his personal virtues, to his commitment to warm social relationships, and *does not flow from any right* of the patient. To be sure, the patient and the family have the right to the surgeon's full attention when he is performing the operation. A failure to do so would mean an obvious violation of the patient's right. But no right of the patient or his family is violated if the surgeon does not go that extra mile to personally reassure the patient and his family.

A society with people who take such virtue-based, solidarity-infused duties seriously is much better than one where such duties are not valued. If that is the case, it is good to ask people to go beyond rights and to think also of their duties to others, and more generally to society. We all have a duty to build a tolerant society, or to remain vigilant against potential wrongs of our elected rulers. These duties are not antagonistic to rights; they are moral, non-justiciable. Many such duties are mentioned in our Constitution: to preserve composite culture, not destroy natural environment, develop scientific temper, safeguard public property, protect India's sovereignty and integrity. None of them are legally enforceable but they impose an obligation on all citizens, especially on those who occupy public office, to go beyond the call of rights-based duties.

Rajeev Bhargava is a political philosopher and Director, Parekh Institute of Indian Thought, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies

Tax incentives for philanthropy

A systematic study of the impact of tax incentives on charitable donations is the need of the hour

PRIYADARSHINI SINGH

Do people donate money to charity to get a tax rebate? The answer for most donors is 'no'. They donate because they believe in the causes they support, or the quality of work that some NGOs are doing, or because they are committed citizens. Why then are tax incentives needed for the charity sector? Why should the government forgo revenue it can generate from taxing charitable donations? Do tax incentives have any impact on charitable donations? We don't know the answer to the last question, as a study on tax incentives across 12 countries, including India, by the Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP) at Ashoka University, in research partnership with the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, highlights. This is because the impact of tax incentives on charitable donations has not been systematically studied in the Indian context. The only publicly accessible study uses data from the 1970s-80s, when tax incentives for philanthropy were more appealing than they are now because the overall tax rates were much higher.

A poorly studied area

Raising taxes is a core attribute of statehood. But remarkably, tax incentives for charity also have a long history. They go all the way back to the 19th century in some of the countries studied, and are also provided in countries such as Brazil which have a restrictive tax incentives regime for civil society. Despite this, the role of tax incentives in supporting civil society is poorly studied in most countries, The best studies are from the U.S. and the U.K. These are primarily econometric studies which measure the increase (or decrease) in charitable donations due to changes in the tax incentives provisions. These studies depend on the availability of tax and donor data to researchers. But in these countries too, the non-monetary impact of tax incentives is not deeply examined. For example, does the legal relationship that tax incentives create between the state and the civil society as a sector impact its financial health and stability?

It does appear that in India, financial flows coming through tax incentives are not the mainstay of civil society (CSIP, 2021). However, given the overall nature of the sector, they may still be very critical. Many NGOs in India are small and operate with budgets of less than ₹15 lakh a year (CSIP, 2019). The distribution of NGOs is also skewed: they are concentrated in States like Uttar Pradesh (MOSPI, 2012). Most NGOs work in the areas of health and education. For small NGOs in remote areas or those working on areas that are less recognised, the tax incentives status may still be important for establishing legal recognition with the community, government entities and donors.

When examined from the perspective of the government, civil society organisations have historically played an irreplaceable role in social development. Many government programmes have emerged due to a harmonious relationship with NGOs that have implemented an innovative idea. Governments have provided the scale and state support while the NGOs have provided the ideational energy and community experience. The activity-based learning approach developed by Rishi Valley in Tamil Nadu during the early 2000s is an example.

The signalling effect

The most important role of tax incentives as the regulatory and legal link between the state and the civil society is that of the 'signalling effect'. It denotes that the state supports philanthropic activity and through its revenue forgone, actively encourages private actors to engage with public problems.

A systematic study of the impact of tax incentives is the need of the hour, particularly one on the various provisions in supporting philanthropic activity which highlight the many ways in which India's tax incentives regime can be made more responsive. For example, countries like France have a credit-based system, which is more equitable than the deduction-based system followed by India which privileges high-income donors. Studies in the U.S. and the U.K. suggest that high-income donors are more sensitive to tax incentives, and a carefully crafted regime can be used to target this category of donors. We also need to take a re-look at reinstating other categories of taxes such as wealth and inheritance tax so that charity-focused tax incentives can benefit the non-profit sector.

Our new tax regime dilutes the state-civil society relationship by giving donors the option to opt out of incentives for lower tax rates. Saving the revenue forgone from tax incentives may not increase the government coffers significantly, but this will impact the perception of the NGO sector for an average donor. And if this gets done, here's hoping that it is supported by research and rationale.

Priyadarshini Singh is a Senior Visiting Fellow at the CSIP at Ashoka University and Research Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research

STATE OF PLAY

An extreme proposition

Chandrasekhar Rao's idea of floating a new Constitution is not the solution to Centre-State issues

RAVI REDDY

Hours after the Budget was presented, Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao raised a heated debate by floating the idea of rewriting the Constitution. Mr. Rao has been angry at what he perceives to be "step-motherly" treatment meted out by the Centre to the States. He floated the idea of introducing a new Constitution to remedy the situation as the existing Constitution, according to him, has been unable to do so.

Addressing an unusually lengthy press conference, he said there is a Union List, State List, and Concurrent List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. But the party in power at the Centre, whether the Congress or the BJP, is trying to usurp the rights guaranteed to the States.

As expected, the idea attracted a lot of criticism. Mr. Rao's comments gave enough ammunition to the Opposition to project the TRS president and his party as "anti-Dalit". BJP and Congress leaders held separate demonstrations in support of the Constitution drafted by B.R. Ambedkar. BJP State President Bandi Sanjay Kumar said charges of sedition should be filed against the Chief Minister as his remarks had the potential of creating "social disorder". Telangana Congress President and MP A. Revanth Reddy said there seemed to be a nexus between the TRS and the BJP as the latter too has been working to change the Constitution for quite some time. There was scope for amending the Constitution, but the proposal to introduce an altogether new one showed Mr. Rao's disrespect for Ambedkar and the sections whose cause he championed, he said. BSP Telangana unit in-charge R.S. Praveen Kumar called the statement irresponsible. He said the formation of Telangana was possible only thanks to the Constitution.

The TRS leaders hit back at the Opposition claiming that the thinking was not new. State Planning Board vice-chairman B. Vinod Kumar said that former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had appointed a commission to review the Constitution. Commissions have been formed in the past to examine certain provisions of the Constitution, he said.

Former Central Information Commissioner Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu said there was nothing wrong with Mr. Rao's idea. Referring to the original draft of the Constitution, he said Ambedkar had made it clear that every Article can be replaced, added or amended. The Constitution drafted by Ambedkar has lost its shape as it has been amended many times. The Centre has been consistently trying to usurp the powers of the State, especially in the last seven years, he said. The gazette notifications issued by the Centre notifying the jurisdiction of the Godavari and Krishna rivers without consulting the riparian States is an example of how the Centre is trying to have its say in the State's affairs, he said.

Notwithstanding Mr. Rao's apparent anguish at what he perceives to be overreach by the Centre, it is hardly infrequent to witness Centre-State conflicts of this sort. In recent years, issues such as the 15th Finance Commission, the GST, land acquisition policies and more have emerged as flashpoints between the Centre and States ruled by Opposition parties.

The reality is that the Constitution has provided a mechanism for remedy of such conflicts in the form of Article 131, which accords to the Supreme Court original jurisdiction to deal with disputes between the Centre and any States. The application of Article 131 relates to the situation where the rights and power of a State or the Centre are in question.

Before reaching for profoundly deep-rooted reform proposals such as the re-writing of the Consititution, Mr. Rao may find it more politically expedient to apply for legal recourse already made available to his government under existing laws.

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DATA POINT

Opposition missing from parliamentary committees

The Data Point titled 'Poor turnout in parliamentary committees' published on Monday (February 7, 2022) showed that the attendance of MPs barely crossed 50% in parliamentary committees. Here we look at attendance data across political parties and States. While attendance was more than 50% for members of the BJP, it was only 30% for members of the Trinamool Congress. Among the States with the most representatives in parliamentary committees, members from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh had the highest attendance at 50%, whereas members from Tamil Nadu and West Bengal had the least. In the analysis, one 'possible member-sitting' is defined as one member attending one sitting of a committee. The % of actual member-sittings recorded is also listed. Only sittings in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 (till Jan. 10) are considered. By Jasmin Nihalani

PARTY-WISE ATTENDANCE | The table lists the total number of possible member-sittings and the % share of attendance among parties. For instance, if all members of the BJP had attended all the sittings, there would be 9,061 member-sittings during the period considered. However, only 4,736 (52%) member-sittings were recorded

Groups	Party	Possible member-sittings	% of actual member-sittings
Sittings > 800	Bharatiya Janata Party	9,061	52
	Indian National Congress	2,276	44
	All India Trinamool Congress	801	30
Sittings between 400 and 800	Biju Janata Dal	489	49
	Janata Dal-United	481	49
	Shiv Sena	479	45
	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	667	42
	Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Cong. Party	716	42
Sittings between 100 and 400	Bahujan Samaj Party	356	51
	Telugu Desam Party	131	44
	Telangana Rashtra Samithi	362	43
	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	276	40
	Communist Party of India (Marxist)	304	38
	Lok Janshakti Party	113	36
	Shiromani Akali Dal	131	36
	Rashtriya Janata Dal	152	35
	Samajwadi Party	353	27
	Nationalist Congress Party	186	25
	Indian Union Muslim League	108	20
Sittings below 100	Kerala Congress (M)	33	73
	Aam Aadmi Party	97	72
	Revolutionary Socialist Party	58	66
	Peoples Democratic Party	50	40
	Naga People's Front	62	39
	All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen	33	36
	Apna Dal (Sonelal)	68	35
	Janata Dal (Secular)	57	33
	Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi	31	32
	Mizo National Front	54	28
	National People's Party	56	27
	Jharkhand Mukti Morcha	62	24
	Jammu and Kashmir National Conference	80	23
	Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party	33	21
	Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	48	19
	Communist Party of India	61	15

STATE-WISE ATTENDANCE | The table lists the number of possible member-sittings and the % share of attendance among the States.
For instance, if all the members of Tamil Nadu had attended all the sittings, there would be 1,381 member-sittings. However, only 568 (41%) member-sittings were recorded

Groups	State	Possible member-sittings	% of actual member-sittings
Sittings >1,000	Bihar	1,188	53
	Uttar Pradesh	2,737	50
	Karnataka	1,120	45
	Maharashtra	1538	43
	Tamil Nadu	1,381	41
	West Bengal	1,297	34
Sittings between 500 and 1,000	Rajasthan	953	63
	Odisha	691	50
	M.P.	860	48
	Gujarat	839	45
	Kerala	718	44
	A.P.	987	43
	Telangana	558	42
	Punjab	516	42
	Assam	534	32
Sittings between 100 and 500	Uttarakhand	144	61
	Delhi	334	58
	Haryana	369	58
	Chhattisgarh	430	55
	Jharkhand	451	49
	Tripura	119	45
	Himachal	136	39
	J&K	209	32
Sittings below 100	Manipur	65	57
	Puducherry	54	43
	Mizoram	77	35
	Sikkim	26	35
	Arunachal	59	27
	Meghalaya	56	27
	Nagaland	62	16

WITH INPUTS FROM VIGNESH RADHAKRISHNAN
SOURCE: LOK SABHA

The Hindu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 9, 1972

Sir Alec on the region's security

New Delhi, Feb. 8: The British Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home said to-day that, as the most powerful nation in this part of the world, India could become the sort of "foundation and basis" for a collective security system in the Indian Ocean region. Addressing a crowded press conference, he expressed the view that with its increased authority and influence, India was now in a position to play such a role in this sensitive region to ensure that no power had the monopoly of the Indian Ocean. But this was entirely a matter for India to decide whether this concept of collective security in the Indian Ocean area was something that it could usefully undertake in the future. For the time being, the whole idea seemed a long way ahead, in spite of the fact that India was obviously interested in the security of the seas which border the sub-continent. The Soviet Union, he said, had doubled its naval power in the Indian Ocean in the last one year, while Britain had been progressively reducing its strength to the point that now it had only a minimal presence there. Though it was possible to avoid a naval arms race through an agreed balance of forces by the Big Powers in this region, the question of verification would be a difficult, if not an insuperable, problem in dealing with the Soviet Union, especially when it was known that it was in the midst of a mammoth naval expansion programme.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 9, 1922

Maharajah's speech

After the loyal toast the Maharajah in proposing the health of the Prince of Wales said his visit to Gwalior was an auspicious and unique event. The banqueting hall where they sat tonight was haloed with great traditions, for in the same room where the Prince sat tonight the revered father, the august father, and the Duke of Connaught once graced with their presence and the House in which the Prince was living to-day, His Majesty once made this abode. The Maharajah was happy to think that the relations between his House and that of the Emperor were no longer of a political nature, but had domestic complexion. He named his son and daughter after Their Majesties and the Maharajah was grateful for this touching Royal favour. This gracious act on Their Majesties' part made him (Scindhia) feel that he belonged to the Royal domestic House.

FROM PAGE ONE

Haryana Cabinet nod for anti-conversion Bill

"Such incidents not only infringe the freedom of religion of the persons so converted but also militate against the secular fabric of our society that conversion just for the purpose of marriage is unacceptable," the draft Bill said.

The burden of proof as to whether a conversion was not affected through misrepresentation, use of force, under threat, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage or for marriage for the purpose of carrying out conversion lies on the accused, it noted.

Every individual converting from one religion to another shall submit to the prescribed authority a declaration that the conversion effected through was not misrepresentation, use of force, under threat, undue influence, coercion or by any fraudulent means or by marriage or for marriage and such authority shall make an inquiry in such cases. Besides, the draft Bill provides for declaring marriages null and void, which were solemnized by concealment of religion.

Posts on Kashmir are unacceptable, says govt.

"It was highlighted that this matter concerned India's territorial integrity on which there could be no compromise," Mr. Bagchi added.

Mr. Jaishankar tweeted separately that he had received a call from his Korean counterpart, and discussed bilateral and multilateral issues "as also the Hyundai matter".

Some of the companies that had issued the Kashmir posts have subsequently withdrawn and deleted their posts, and a few such Hyundai and KFC expressed their apologies and "regretted the offence caused to the people of India".

"[Hyundai] has already issued a clarification. Yesterday, we have also asked them to be more forceful in their unequivocal apology on this issue," Mr. Goyal stated while responding to a zero-hour submission made on the subject by Shiv Sena's Priyanka Chaturvedi.

In its statement, the Hyundai Motor Company said that it "does not comment on political or religious issues in any specific region. Therefore, it is clearly against Hyundai Motor's policy that the independently-owned distributor in Pakistan made unauthorised Kashmir-related social media posts from their own accounts". In response to calls by Indian social media users to boycott Hyundai products, it also said that Hyundai Motors India was "not associated with the distributor in Pakistan".

Japanese auto giant Suzuki Motor Corporation, in a statement put up by Maruti Suzuki on its Twitter account, said that it aimed to be a company trusted and counted upon by all throughout the world.

"As a corporate policy, we do not align with any political or religious inclination in any part of the world. Such communication from our dealers or business associates on these topics represents neither our company position not authorised by us. We deeply regret the hurt to sentiments, that such insensitive communication has caused," it stated.

Congress is in grip of 'urban naxals', says PM

There would be "no caste and regional divide, no Sikh genocide would have taken place, Kashmir Pandits wouldn't have been displaced, daughters would not have been killed in *tandoor* [oven] and common man would not have had to wait for years to get basic amenities", he added.

The Prime Minister's repeated attack on the Congress during his 96-minute speech forced the party members to walk out in protest after an hour or so.

Without naming former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, Mr. Modi targeted his Lok Sabha speech in which Mr. Gandhi referred to India as a Union of States. "Congress has a problem with 'nation' also. If [the word] nation is unconstitutional, then why is your party's name Indian National Congress. Change it to Federation of Congress," he said.

Mr. Modi said the Congress's top leadership knew three ways of functioning – discredit, destabilise and dismiss.

"Tall statements were given on federalism, have we forgotten how Chief Ministers were removed on flimsy grounds, a PM's son did not like the arrangements at the airport so the then Andhra Chief Minister was removed, Karnataka's Virendra Patil was removed while he was unwell," he said.

The Prime Minister cited the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council and his 23 meetings with the Chief Minister during the pandemic as examples of cooperative federalism adopted by his government.

Mr. Modi also questioned the liberal credentials of the Congress by recalling the instances of Lata Mangeshkar's brother Hridaynath Mangeshkar being sacked from All India Radio for presenting a poetry on Veer Savarkar and lyricist Majrooh Sultanpuri being jailed for criticising former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

"This was your freedom of expression," he said.

Violence in Karnataka colleges over dress code

He reminded them that they have to sit together in colleges and carry on with educational activities, and hence, it was important to maintain harmony. He strongly defending the recent order of the government on dress code in colleges.

The Opposition has, meanwhile, lambasted the BJP government for escalation of the issue and "colleges turning into battlefield." Leader of Opposition Siddaramaiah in a series of tweets said, "Hijab-Kesari issue could have been resolved harmoniously at the local level. BJP in Karnataka, which politicized the issue, is now clueless on how to control the situation." He added that students were suffering because of "ulterior political motives of the BJP."

JDS leader H.D. Kumaraswamy said the controversy has diverted the focus of the State from many challenges it faces and vitiated the atmosphere in colleges. "I appeal to both communities not to encourage organizations that are fomenting trouble," he said.

Ministry renews FCRA nod for PHFI

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has renewed the FCRA (Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act) registration of Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), a public health advocacy group, the Lok Sabha was informed on Tuesday.

The move comes four years after the organisation was barred from receiving foreign funds for lobbying with parliamentarians, the media and the government on tobacco control issues.

The PHFI's FCRA registration was cancelled in 2017, days after Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM), the economic arm of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) brought out a 'white paper' on the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's (BMGF) influence in India's health sector.

Major contributor

The BMGF was a major contributor to the NGO, having transferred ₹183 crore to it between 2010 and 2015. The FCRA registration, renewed in 2017, was valid till 2021.

The latest move means that the PHFI could receive foreign funds in its designated bank account without the additional ring of check by the MHA.

In U.P., BJP pledges to increase jail term for unlawful conversion

Shah releases party's manifesto that also promises to double per capita income

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

The BJP has promised to double the per capita income in Uttar Pradesh, provide free electricity for irrigation to farmers, increase the minimum punishment for unlawful conversion to 10 years, and double the number of women in government jobs if it is voted back to power in the State.

Transforming U.P. into becoming the top economy in the country and welfare of women and farmers stood out among the top promises in the party's manifesto "Lok Kalyan Sankalp Patra" released here by Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Mr. Shah said that the Yogi Adityanath-led State Government had fulfilled 92% of the 212 *sankalps* (promises) made by the party in its 2017 election manifesto.

Apart from free electricity for irrigation, the BJP has promised to modernise sugarcane mills, establish new cooperative cane mills, support the purchase of wheat and paddy under the MSP and ensure that cane farmers whose dues are not settled within 14 days are paid the amount with an interest. Targeting the riverine OBC castes, the BJP also promised to bring in a Nishadraj Boat Subsidy Scheme, under which boats costing up to ₹1 lakh will be given a subsidy of 40%.

Campaign kick-off: Amit Shah and Yogi Adityanath releasing the BJP manifesto in Lucknow on Tuesday. ▪SANDEEP SAXENA

Support for women

For women, the BJP said it will increase the support amount provided to families with girl child under the Kanya Sumangala Yojana from ₹15,000 to ₹25,000; give two free LPG gas cylinders to beneficiaries of the Ujjwala Yojana during Holi and Deepawali; provide free transport for women above 60; double the number of women in public service and government jobs, and provide scooties to college-going women.

While the BJP government had already enforced a stringent law against unlawful conversions, it has now said it will increase the minimum punishment to 10 years of imprisonment and ₹1 lakh in fine.

The BJP also tried to attract the youth by promising to generate an employment or self-employment opportunity for one member in every family in the State over the next five years.

The BJP has also promised to double the per capita income and attract investments of ₹10 lakh crore, while vowing to fill all vacant government posts and distribute two crore tablets and smartphones.

The BJP also reached out to the backward castes and rural vote. If voted to power, the BJP would start a scheme named after OBC leader Kalyan Singh for overall development of villages, and run canteens to provide meals to the poor at minimum rates. It will set up centres to provide free coaching to OBC students preparing for competitive examinations.

Mr. Shah lauded Mr. Adityanath for freeing Uttar Pradesh's politics from criminalisation and the bureaucracy from politicisation. "It was five years of development and achievements in all areas of U.P," Mr. Shah said.

'Only BJP can provide stable government in Goa'

PUNE

Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said that only the BJP could give Goa a stable and development-oriented government. The Minister was speaking at the release of the party's manifesto for the State on Tuesday. The saffron party has made 22 resolutions (to chime with its stated aim of winning 22-plus seats in the 2022 election) for Goa's development. The resolutions include good quality housing for the poor.

SP vows to make farmers debt-free

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party has pledged to make every farmer in Uttar Pradesh debt-free by 2025, introduce a law to guarantee minimum employment in urban areas and reserve 33% of all government jobs, including the police, for women.

With a focus on the rural economy and workers, the SP has also promised to provide two bags of DAP and five bags of urea free of cost for farmers with less than two acres of land, create a corpus fund of ₹10,000 crore to ensure that sugarcane farmers are paid their dues within 15 days and provide ₹25 lakh each to the family of farmers who died in the farmers protest.

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav released his party's manifesto here with an eye on the unemployed youth and addressing costs of urban living. He said his party if voted to power would bring an urban employment guarantee act along the lines of MNREGA.

The SP manifesto also promised two free LPG cylinders per year for BPL families, one litre petrol every month to persons owning a two-wheeler and three litres of free petrol to every auto rickshaw driver.

Cong. speaking the truth has scared PM: Rahul

'Why are key issues not addressed?'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's attack on the Congress in his speeches in Parliament shows that he is "scared" of the Congress for telling the truth, Wayanad MP and former party president Rahul Gandhi said on Tuesday.

Rahul Gandhi

Responding to the strident attack by Mr. Modi on the Congress including India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Mr. Gandhi said the Prime Minister can keep 'abusing' them but he must discharge his prime ministerial duties well.

The Congress leader also said neither Pandit Nehru nor any other member of his family, who gave their entire life for the country, needed a certificate from anyone.

"...If you like abusing the Congress, if you like abusing Jawaharlal Nehru, be my guest, keep doing it, but do your job," Mr. Gandhi told the Prime Minister while speaking to reporters outside Parliament just hours after Mr. Modi's speech in the Rajya Sabha.

Mr Gandhi said the Prime Minister didn't address the three key issues raised by him in the Lok Sabha last week: the growing economic divide and the creation of two Indias; regular attacks on independent institutions and a foreign policy that has brought Pakistan and China together.

"There is a little bit of fear inside as the Congress speaks the truth. They [the BJP] have a network of friends who do their marketing and spread lies. But there is fear inside and it was visible in Parliament. His entire speech of him was on criticising Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru but Prime Minister did not say about the promises made by the BJP," Mr. Gandhi said.

Earlier, in the day, the Congress accused Mr. Modi of lowering the dignity of the President's Address and accused him of using Parliament as a platform to make an election speech.

Maharashtra leaders say PM has mocked efforts to help the poor

BJP, Modi were busy lighting lamps, banging *thalis*: Patole

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD/MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has mocked the Maharashtra government's initiative to help the poor during the pandemic, the Congress party said on Tuesday.

"The Congress party and our State government took steps to help people in distress during the first wave of COVID. We provided them food, shelter and tickets to take them to their home so they can live with their loved ones. The BJP and Modi were busy lighting lamps and banging thalis at that time. The PM has made fun of workers and their poverty. He has made fun of Maharashtra's efforts to help the poor...," State Congress president Nana Patole said, adding that even the BJP leaders in the State should protest.

Mr. Modi's remarks during his reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address to both Houses of Parliament drew sharp reactions.

NCP Lok Sabha MP Supriya Sule in Delhi said: "Mentioning Maharashtra as a super spreader of Corona was not only unfortunate but an insult of voters who had voted BJP in Lok Sabha polls to make you (Modi) Prime Minister." She said the PM's speech should have provided direction to the country for future, but instead he had insulted Maharashtra.

Act of protest: Mallikarjun Kharge and others staging a walk-out during Narendra Modi's speech in Rajya Sabha. ▪PTI

Stating that Railways came under the Central government, Ms. Sule said: "It was the Centre's decision to arrange trains. The then Railway Minister Piyush Goyal and former CM Devendra Fadnavis have been praising the Railways for the same."

"When Shramik Trains started, can the nation forget how these poor labourers who were left with no income were being charged for ticket? The State government stepped in to pay their fare," tweeted Shiv Sena Rajya Sabha MP Priyanka Chaturvedi earlier on Monday.

Defending Mr. Modi, BJP MLA Ashish Shelar accused the three other parties of being instrumental in spreading the coronavirus in the entire country.

"These three parties are real anti-Maharashtra. These three parties brought the poor on road and made them go to their homes despite the COVID situation," he said.

IN BRIEF

'NDA govt. is a no data available government'

NEW DELHI

Former Finance Minister and Rajya Sabha MP P. Chidambaram said in Rajya Sabha on Tuesday that the NDA government was a "no data available" government, citing government replies mentioning lack of data on deaths due to oxygen shortage and bodies floating in the rivers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Referring to Mr. Modi's speech mentioning jobs, Mr. Chidambaram said he should use the statistic of nearly 8 lakh government job vacancies in his next speech.

Social media accounts of Army unit blocked

NEW DELHI

Social media accounts of the Army's Srinagar based 15 Corps, popularly known as Chinar Corps, on Facebook and Instagram have been blocked for over 10 days now, officials said on Tuesday. "The accounts have been blocked since January 28 and the bot [automated] reply only says they have not followed the guidelines. But there has been no official communication as to why they have been blocked," an Army official said.

New JNU V-C denies ownership of controversial Twitter account

Previous tweets spark outrage after her appointment to post

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

The newly appointed Vice-Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit has distanced herself from a controversial Twitter account in her name a day after her appointment. In a response on Tuesday to *The Hindu*'s query about whether the unverified handle @SantishreeD belonged to her, she said "Not mine".

After Dr. Pandit's appointment was announced on Monday, the account, which used her full name and description as a professor, caused widespread outrage on Twitter. Screenshots of tweets using communal language and name-calling students, farmers, politicians and activists went viral on social media.

Santishree Pandit

Dr. Pandit did not respond to further queries from *The Hindu* on whether she was aware of who was using the account and whether she had requested its deletion.

The account included tweets referring to a section of JNU teachers and students as "losers" and "extremist naxal groups" who should be banned from campuses.

Tweets termed so-called "love jihad" a "terror by other means", Sunni Islam radical.

In domestic politics, Congress leader Sonia Gandhi was repeatedly referred to as an "Italian remote control".

Varun Gandhi terms appointment 'mediocre'

NEW DELHI

BJP MP Varun Gandhi on Tuesday termed the choice of the new Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University Santishree Pandit a "mediocre appointment" that would "serve to damage our human capital and youth's future." In a tweet, he also pointed out errors in a press release issued by the new Vice Chancellor.

'Futurescapes' painting contest calls students to showcase art

Competition is open to those from Classes 3 to 12

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

JSW PAINTS, in association with *The Hindu* Young World, has announced the Futurescapes Painting Competition 2022, where students of Classes 3 to 12 can showcase their artistic abilities across a range of themes.

The competition will have a preliminary round, zonal round and a final round. For the sub-junior category comprising students of Classes 3 to 5, the topics for the prelims are 'Tourism in India' or 'Save Nature'

The junior category with students of Classes 6 to 8 can present artwork on the topics 'India - the land of culture' or 'Gender Equality'. For senior classes, students of Classes 9 to 12 have been given the topics 'My vision for India in 2050' or 'Preserve our Wildlife'.

To register and for instructions regarding the competition, students can log on to ywc.thehindu.com/jswpaints and complete it by uploading a clear scanned copy of their painting and generating a Unique Registration Number.

This should be written on the drawing sheet with other details and the physical drawing should be sent to the nearest office of *The Hindu*, as chosen during the online registration process. On the front of the sheet, the Unique Registration Number and topic should be written and on the other side, participant's name, class, school name (with branch), city, State, category of participation, parent's name, and registered email ID and mobile number should be written.

The last date for online registration and submission is February 28. The painting should reach *The Hindu* office on or before March 3. If a participant qualifies for the finale, the date and details will be intimated through the registered email ID.

In case of any queries or clarifications, students or parents may call the toll-free number 1800 102 1878 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

People who left BJP are now changing the constituency from where they are fighting, but they will lose

KESHAV PRASAD MAURYA
U.P. Deputy CM

We want to partner with the people of Punjab. We want people to tell us what should we do for them

RAHUL GANDHI
Congress leader

UTTAR PRADESH

Jat, Gurjar voters hold the key to western U.P.

While the agrarian communities overwhelmingly supported the BJP in 2017, their confidence in the party seems to be waning

ANUJ KUMAR
BULANDSHAHR/HAPUR

The relentless focus of the BJP leaders on the Jat and Gurjar vote bank suggests that the agrarian communities are shifting from the party that they overwhelmingly supported in 2017.

The swing away is providing fodder to the campaign of the Samajwadi Party-Rashtriya Lok Dal alliance that is relying on the same communities to turn the tide in its favour in western Uttar Pradesh that will go to polls in the first two phases.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who till a few days back was wooing the RLD's Jayant Singh to the BJP, predicted dire consequences for the SP-RLD alliance, in a bid to drive a wedge between the partners.

Speaking at an election meeting in Anoopshahr, Mr. Shah raised the communal pitch, saying: "Within days, Mr. Singh will be replaced by Azam Khan [SP leader who is at present languishing in jail]. The one who doesn't listen to his father and uncle won't listen to you, Jayant *babu*." A spate of social media messages are being circulated pointing out that on the SP campaign bus there is no photo of Chaudhary Charan Singh and no space for the RLD's symbol.

The BJP's concerns are not misplaced. In at least five of seven constituencies in Bulandshahr district, Jat and Muslim unity could hurt the interests of the party. However, the focus on Mr. Jayant Singh, has given Jats the confidence that their leader has arrived on the political scene. Mr. Singh also tweeted that he must be doing something right to receive such attention from the BJP leaders.

"It is better to become the moustache of Jats rather than being the tail of the BJP," Om Pal Singh, a Jat farmer in Bulandshahr, pithily puts it.

Turning tides: Farmers carrying the flags of the Samajwadi Party and the Rashtriya Lok Dal at Bulandshahr district of Uttar Pradesh on February 03, 2022. ▪ R.V. MOORTHY

Growing clout

Jat BJP leaders, who felt ignored during the past five years of the Yogi Adityanath regime, have suddenly found a voice. "Many of those who represented the community in Delhi during the meeting with Mr. Shah could not even win a panchayat election. Also, we have seen the treatment meted out to former Minister Birender Singh who hosted a similar meeting for Mr. Shah before the 2017 poll," said another disgruntled BJP leader from Modinagar. The BJP's Jat face from Haryana was unceremoniously dumped from the national executive of the party in December after he extended support to the farm laws.

"The BJP takes credit for making Satyapal Malik Governor but he has already been shifted three times despite doing a good job in Jammu & Kashmir. Even IAS and IPS officers have more job stability," he added.

In the Loni rally in Ghaziabad, Mr. Shah invoked Gurjar icons Rampyari Gurjari and Mihir Bhoj and claimed it was a Gurjar who made invader Timur pack his bags. The incumbent BJP MLA Nand Kishore Gurjar is facing a tough contest from another Gurjar heavyweight Madan Bhaiyya from the RLD and the Bahujan Samaj Party's Haji Aqil in a constituency dominated by Muslims, Gurjars and Jats. Further Ranjita Dhama, the Jat hopeful from the BJP, has filed her nomination as an Independent.

Mr. Gurjar had repeatedly embarrassed the Yogi government and local BJP leadership was surprised when his ticket was retained. In fact, observers could make out the source of the BJP candidate's ticket by looking at the leader who turns up to address the rally in the constituency.

A BJP ticket aspirant in Hapur said there was little difference between the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the BJP in terms of ticket distribution.

"Both have stopped giving priority to the local candidate. While the BSP wants to fight the election in the name of Mayawati, the BJP wants Modi, Shah, and Yogi to win the seats for them."

He said this attitude was hurting the BJP because a large number of candidates who won just because of the Modi wave in 2017 are facing anti-incumbency. "Perhaps, that is why top leaders are going door-to-door and chewing sugarcane with farmers while the candidates are facing the anguish of farmers," he said. In all three seats of the district, he said, the BJP was hoping that the BSP candidate would save the day for the party.

Assiduously wooed

In a surprise move, the SP-RLD alliance has given tickets to 12 Gurjar candidates, the most among the leading parties. The community is said to vote for the candidates of its caste, irrespective of party affiliation. In the prestigious Jewar seat, RLD's Gujrar candidate Avtar Singh Bhadana is locked in a tough fight with the BJP's Dhirendra Singh. Gurjars have been protesting against the BJP over the Mihir Bhoj statue controversy in neighbouring Dadri.

Observers said there were no surprises left in the BJP's arsenal. The party is concerned about the eroding Jat and Gurjar vote bank and is not being able to find a suitable replacement for those crucial votes.

"It could be Dalits who have benefited from the free ration and the PM Housing scheme," suggests Ramesh Chand, a tea stall owner and a committed BJP supporter in Bulandshahr.

A staunch BJP supporter, Sandeep Kansal, the manager at Sneha Farms in Bulandshahr where the SP-RLD hosted their press conference, says Mr. Shah also hosted his meeting in the banquet hall. "We know that the SP-RLD workers are a little rustic but can't take a chance by refusing them. The contest is tough in two to three seats in the district."

On the divisive communal tone of the BJP leaders, he says, "Perhaps, this is what the masses want during elections. Otherwise, the BJP has done a lot for the poor." He lists out that "the government has provided free ration to the lower-income group. Otherwise, they would have looked up to us. It is the corrupt middlemen who are miffed with the BJP because of the direct benefit transfer".

In Sikandrabad, the youth were agitated that the BJP was busy with the Hindu-Muslim rhetoric when the real issue is unemployment. "There has been no *bharti* (recruitment) in armed forces in the last two years. Elections and rallies are on time but youth can't converge for employment. Many of us have become overage," Sandeep Yadav, a job aspirant, says.

On Friday, Muzaffarnagar MP Sanjeev Balyan wrote to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who also faced anger during his visit to the region, to extend the age of entry into armed forces from 21 to 23 to help the boys who lost the opportunity because of the pandemic. However, in Shikarpur, supporters of the BJP candidate were confident. "There is some shift but we are hoping Yogi*ji* will set the narrative right just before the polling date," says Ramraj Singh, a fertilizer shop owner. "He has provided us a secure atmosphere to run our business."

POLLPOURRI

Desperate attempt: Mayawati

CHANDIGARH
Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) president Mayawati on Tuesday termed the Congress party's decision to declare Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi its chief ministerial face for Punjab, a desperate attempt to revive its sinking fortunes in the State. The BSP supremo, who addressed a gathering in Nawansheher along with Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal, said, "The Congress party only remembers Dalits at the time of elections. Once the elections are over, they will sideline Mr. Channi who is even now being remote controlled from Delhi."

Michael's gold

PANAJI
Ex-BJP Minister-turned-Congressman Michael Lobo has been charged by rival candidates of distributing money during poll campaigning. Mr. Lobo, the former two-time MLA of Calangute who left the BJP last month for the Congress, accused the BJP and other party candidates of spreading "fake news" and said that he was distributing Congress party stickers. He said his voters did not need money and always supported him wholeheartedly. That may be so, but with Mr. Lobo and his wife Delilah emerging as the richest candidates in Goa (with assets of ₹93 crore each, according to a report by the Association of Democratic Reforms), it's easy for anyone - let alone political rivals - to mistake stickers for cash.

No bail for Azam Khan

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined interim bail to Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan for campaigning in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls. A Bench led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao granted him liberty to move the court concerned for expeditious disposal of bail pleas. "How can you file 32 petitions to seek bail? Do not bring politics to court," the court observed. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Mr. Khan, submitted that 87 FIRs had been filed against the leader and he had got bail in 84 cases. "I am inside prison for nothing. Where do I go? I am not bringing any politics into it," he said.

Ball in your court

Poll game: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with the Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav during *Khela Hobe* gesture at a joint press conference in Lucknow on Tuesday. ▪ SANDEEP SAXENA

Punjab's colour-coded politics

Traditional Sikh turbans mark political affiliation in State

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

As electioneering intensifies in Punjab in the run-up to the Assembly election on February 20, a new factor has emerged, adding colour to the political rivalry. The distinct colours of turbans, an intrinsic part of the Sikh religion and culture, are setting the tone for the elections as they are seen as symbols of political affiliation.

The century-old Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) is associated with the blue colour, the Aam Aadmi Party connects with yellow, while the Congressmen favour white or light blue turbans.

The colour of turbans at political rallies are a way of signifying the political narrative, besides a show of strength and display of alignment by the supporters of political parties.

The SAD cadre initially were associated with black turbans as a mark of protest against the British during the 'Morcha Chabian', a campaign for the recovery of the keys of the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) treasury in the early 1920s.

Colour of turbans at political rallies are a way of signifying political narrative.

In the later years, the SAD inclined towards the blue and orange (*kesari*), which is allied with the 'Panthic' (Sikhism) ideology.

Bhagwant Mann, State president of the AAP and Lok Sabha member, who has been announced as the party's chief ministerial candidate, has led the party's association with yellow, which members said symbolises 'revolution'.

According to the party members, the colour is associated with *basant*, or spring, the season of renewal after winter.

Congress leaders and cadre have been traditionally sported white turbans to differentiate themselves from the Akali Dal. Congress leaders, including former President Giani Zail Singh, former Chief Ministers Partap Singh Kairon and Beant Singh, were mostly seen donning the white turban. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, however, was among those who wore a distinct light blue turban.

TONGUE IN CHEEK

INTERVIEW | VIVEK BANSAL

'Will catch people's imagination'

Former Aligarh MLA is upbeat about the Congress' chances in Uttar Pradesh

ANUJ KUMAR
ALIGARH

Vivek Bansal, *the Congress candidate from the Koil seat of Aligarh, in many ways, is an example of what is wrong with the party in Uttar Pradesh and tells us a thing or two about electoral politics. Immensely popular, the All India Congress Committee in charge of Haryana won the Aligarh seat in 2002 but since then he has been losing at the hustings from Koil. The war horse is at it again, appealing to people to rise above polarisation in one of the most educated constituencies that will go to the polls on February 10. Edited excerpts:*

Why have you not been able to sail through despite popularity across party lines?

■ The city gets polarised before the voting. It's unfortunate that education doesn't broaden the horizon. Muslims are in substantive numbers on this seat. As they constitute 1,23,000 people in a constituency of around four lakh votes, here, the minority is always under an impression that it can make an MLA on its own and flock together.

What do you tell them?

■ A section of Muslims believes they can get anything done by claiming persecution. This feeling of persecution has to go. The BJP cashes on it. I keep on telling them why do you keep blaming the government for issues related to faith. Sikhs were displaced but they came up very fast.

What is the role of the Congress party's eroding base in it?

...the minority is always under an impression that it can make an MLA on its own and flock together

■ The party is definitely weak in Uttar Pradesh. Priyanka*ji* is working hard. There are times when things don't click for a party but I think it will change very fast and we will be able to catch the imagination of the people. In 2012, I lost by 500 votes. You can call it a quirk of fate or maybe overconfidence on my part.

Is the idea of giving 40% tickets to female candidates working?

■ On the face of it, it was a very revolutionary step but the groundwork for it should have been done earlier. My understanding is at some places a candidate has been put up just because she belongs to a particular gender. It could not catch the imagination of the public.

Do you think an alliance would have been a better bet?

■ No, the party is looking at a long-term perspective. It could further erode the base.

To read full interview, visit https://bit.ly/VivekBansal

An uphill task for Pramod Sawant

Seeking re-election from Sanquelim, the 'accidental CM' faces strong challenges

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

His political detractors have dubbed him Goa's 'accidental Chief Minister', a 'puppet' of the BJP central leadership and 'property Sawant'. He has faced opposition within his own party while political commentators have found him insipid.

For all the harsh epithets hurled at him, Goa's Chief Minister has remained unfazed as the party goes to the polls on February 14 for the first time without Manohar Parrikar. Seeking re-election from Sanquelim for a third time, he has chosen to exhibit his government's efforts at building the State's infrastructure, be it the bridge under construction on the Zuari river, the bypass at Canacona or the greenfield airport at Mopa.

While his electoral career began with a crash after he lost a 2008 bypoll from Pale, Mr. Sawant nonetheless rallied to win the 2012 election with a comfortable margin of nearly 7,000 votes from Sanquelim.

In 2017, he won a stiff contest with the Congress's Dharmesh Saglani. His victory margin was much less than in 2012 - a little over 2,000 votes, with his vote share plummeting by nearly 23%. Mr. Sawant again faces off with Mr. Saglani, as well as potential vote-cutters from the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) and the Revolutionary Goans (RG) in the rural parts of Sanquelim, which constitutes Mr. Sawant's primary base.

Mr. Sawant took over in March 2019 following Mr. Parrikar's untimely demise. The contrast between both could not have been starker: Though both are from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Mr. Sawant, an ayurvedic practitioner, is viewed as a docile 'yes-man' of the BJP top brass in Delhi.

Pramod Sawant

While Parrikar commanded respect from opponents and his own partymen as well as from all social sections of society as a leader capable of acting independently.

Others see Mr. Sawant as a 'grey eminence', crediting him for engineering the defection of Congress and MGP legislators.

Through it all, Mr. Sawant has maintained that his government's development works over a decade in power will see the BJP through and win absolute majority in this election.

Strong challenger

In his own constituency, Mr. Saglani has emerged as a strong challenger after dealing a jolt to the Chief Minister when the former managed to win the Sankhali Municipal Council.

But for Mr. Sawant, the most serious challenge is from within the BJP ranks in the form of his Cabinet colleague Vishwajit Rane – veteran Congressman Pratapsingh Rane's son and Health Minister – who switched over from the Congress.

Mr. Rane's chief ministerial ambitions are no secret. The two leaders have frequently clashed over a number of issues at Cabinet meetings – a clash threatened to split the party on the government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

IN BRIEF

ICMR receives royalty from Covaxin sale

NEW DELHI

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has received royalty of ₹171.74 crore till 31st January, 2022 from Bharat Biotech from the sales of COVID vaccine Covaxin. The Council has spent around ₹35 crore in research and development of Covaxin.

NITI Aayog, USAID to collaborate in healthcare

NEW DELHI

The Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, and the U.S. Agency for International Development announced a new partnership under the Sustainable Access to Markets and Resources for Innovative Delivery of Healthcare initiative, which aims to improve access to affordable and quality healthcare for vulnerable populations in cities, rural and tribal regions.

Active COVID-19 cases hover around 10 lakh

Country records 71,550 new cases; total cases reach 4.23 cr.

THE HINDU DATA TEAM
CHENNAI

The country recorded 71,550 new COVID-19 cases on Tuesday. The total number of infections has reached 4.23 crore, and the active cases have crossed the 10 lakh mark.

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

Kerala recorded 29,471 infections on Tuesday, followed by Maharashtra (6,107) and Tamil Nadu (4,519).

On Tuesday, 1,200 deaths were recorded in India, considerably higher than the average levels recorded in the last week. The total number of recorded fatalities has reached 5,04,097. Kerala also reported the most deaths with 824 fatalities (591 were from a backlog), followed by Maharashtra (57) and Karnataka recorded 51 deaths.

On Monday, 13.4 lakh tests were conducted (the results for which were made available on Tuesday). The test positivity rate (the number of cases detected per 100 tests) was 5.3%.

As of Tuesday, 93.6% of the eligible population has been vaccinated with at least one dose, while 72.6% have received both doses.

Back to school: A student being vaccinated on the school reopening day in Lucknow on Monday. ▪ SANDEEP SAXENA

COVID-19

Manoj Ahuja is now Secretary of Agriculture

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Manoj Ahuja, currently Chairman of the CBSE, will take over as Agriculture Secretary when the incumbent Sanjay Agarwal retires at the end of March, according to a decision by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) on Tuesday. For now, he has been appointed an Officer on Special Duty at the Agriculture Ministry.

The ACC also approved the appointment of REC chairman Sanjay Malhotra as the new Secretary, Department of Financial Services. Health Ministry Additional Secretary Arti Ahuja has been appointed as the new Secretary, Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals. Commerce Special Secretary S. Kishore has been appointed Chairman of the Staff Selection Commission.

SC declines to intervene in NEET-internship issue

Court asks aspirants to urge the govt. to extend deadline

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked doctors, mostly final year medical students who had served as frontline workers in COVID-19 wards, to approach the government with a request to extend the deadline fixed for completion of their internship programme.

The completion of internship is a prerequisite for taking the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test - Post Graduate (NEET-PG) 2022.

These doctors, who risked their lives during the pandemic, want more time to complete their internship and take the NEET-PG exam. The deadline for completing the internship is May 31.

However, COVID-19 duties and the fact that different States follow different timelines for their internship programmes have made it impossible for the petitioner-doctors to finish up in time for the exam on May 31.

A Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud agreed to the seriousness of the issue but said the court would not intervene in such matter of policy. The Bench instead gave the petitioners liberty to directly write to the Health Ministry.

"Since the issue which has been raised by the petitioners require some element of determining facts as well as aspects of policy, we are of the view that the ends of justice will be met by permitting the petitioners to submit a representation to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare [MoHFW], setting out the nature of the hardship," the court said in the order. The Bench then asked the Ministry to take a decision on the representation by the petitioners, if they ever get around to file it, within a week's time.

Police detain NSUI activists in a protest supporting students of NEET-PG.

Bodies of 7 missing soldiers recovered

They were found at 14,500 feet

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A search and rescue team on Tuesday recovered the bodies of seven soldiers who went missing on February 6 after an avalanche near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Eastern Himalayas.

Lt. Col. Harsh Wardhan Pande, the Defence spokesperson based in central Assam's Tezpur, said the bodies of the Army personnel from the 19 Jammu and Kashmir Rifles were located at an altitude of 14,500 ft above sea level.

"The area had been witnessing inclement weather with heavy snowfall since the last few days. The bodies of the soldiers are currently being transferred from the avalanche site to the nearest Army medical facility for further formalities," he said.

Search and rescue operations, including airlifting specialised teams, had been launched immediately after the avalanche struck the Mummy Head area in the Tawang district where the soldiers were patrolling in sub-zero conditions.

Mummy Head is about 35 km from Jangda Basti, the nearest village under the Jang police station. A local police team had also helped in the search and rescue operations.

Congress joins Meghalaya alliance

The coalition government in the State now has rivals Congress and the BJP in it

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

More than two months after losing 12 MLAs, the Congress in Meghalaya has joined the National People's Party-led Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA) government. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is a minor constituent of the alliance.

The five remaining Congress MLAs on Tuesday met Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma and submitted a letter for formally joining the coalition government. The Chief Minister welcomed the MLAs into the alliance in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong.

"We wish to support you and the MDA to strengthen the government's arms and decision-making so as to ensure that our joined efforts will take the State forward, in the general interest of its citizens," read the letter signed by the five MLAs, underlining their decision to join the government from February 8. The five MLAs are M. Ampareen Lyngdoh, P.T. Sawkmie, Mayralborn Syiem, Kimfa S. Marbaniang and Mohendro Rapsang.

Ms. Lyngdoh, leader of the Congress Legislature Party, defended the move. "In this day and age, you can only save yourselves. The five of us are protecting each other," she said.

She also deflected questions on the Congress becoming an ally of the BJP by virtue of joining the alliance.

Along with Nagaland and Tripura, Assembly elections in Meghalaya are due by February 2023.

The Congress had won 21 constituencies in the 2018 Assembly elections in Meghalaya but its seat count went down to 17, of whom 12 joined the Trinamool Congress in November 2021.

This is not the first time that the Congress and the BJP have come together, directly or indirectly, in the northeast.

Congress MLAs with their letter of support to the government headed by CM Conrad K. Sangma (centre). ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

49 held guilty in serial blasts case

28 accused acquitted by special court

MAHESH LANGA
AHMEDABAD

After a protracted trial that lasted almost 13 years, a special court has delivered its verdict, holding 49 accused guilty in the 2008 serial blasts case in which Ahmedabad was rocked by a series of bomb blasts that left 56 dead and leaving 200 injured.

The court acquitted 28 accused in the case. As many as 77 accused are facing trial in the case. The special court to hear quantum of punishment on Wednesday.

In the verdict, the Court held guilty included Safdar Nagori, Javed Ahmed and Atikur Rehman. Among those acquitted were Mohammad Irfan, Nasir Ahmad and Shakeel Ahmed.

The 49 accused were convicted under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Explosive Substances Act and the Damage to Public Property Act.

One accused was also convicted under the Arms Act. The accused were convicted under IPC sections 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder), 121 (a) (attempt to wage war against the nation) and 124 (a) (sedition), and section 16(1)(a)(b) of the UAPA, which are acts of terrorism.

Go by compromise terms in GUVNL-Adani row, says SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday disposed of a curative petition concerning the row between Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Ltd. (GUVNL), the State's power utility, and Adani Group's power company after noting that both parties had reached an amicable out-of-court settlement and their relationship would be governed by the terms of the compromise.

A Special Bench led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana passed the order in a curative petition filed by the GUVNL against a July 2019 judgment of the Supreme Court upholding the termination of a power purchase agreement by Adani Power (Mundra) Limited.

In September last year, the Curative Bench led by CJI Ramana had, in a rare move, issued notice to the Adani group and decided to hear the case in open court.

However, both the GUVNL and Adani reached an amicable settlement of the 1000 MW power purchase agreement in January 2022. It was reported that the Adani group had decided to waive the ₹12,000 crore compensation that the GUVNL was ordered by the Supreme Court to pay in 2019. Following the settlement, the GUVNL and Adani moved the Supreme Court jointly, seeking modification of the 2019 judgment.

Prior to the case reaching the SC, the GUVNL had won its challenge against the termination in the Gujarat State Electricity Regulatory Commission.

Panel questions Budget quota for MGNREGA

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

A week after the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme received a Budget allocation 25% lower than the previous year's revised estimates, a Parliamentary panel has pulled up the government, noting that Budget estimates for the Centre's flagship rural jobs scheme have failed to keep up with proven demand for the last four to five years.

"Budgetary Allocation of a scheme of such enormous magnitude should be done in a more pragmatic manner so that there is no dearth of funds in mid-year, and flow of funds for payment of wages, material share, etc. is maintained seamlessly," said a critical evaluation of the scheme presented to the Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development spotlighted the failure to pay unemployment allowances and also recommended a hike in wage rates and in the number of days of guaranteed work, and a revision of the 60:40 wage-material ratio under the scheme. The panel, chaired by Shiv Sena MP Prataprao Jadhav, adopted the report at its last meeting on February 4.

Bhima Koregaon: phones to be sent to Pegasus committee

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

A special court in Mumbai on Tuesday allowed the National Investigation Agency (NIA)'s plea to send phones of seven accused in the Bhima Koregaon caste violence case of 2018 to the Supreme Court appointed committee looking into the allegations of unauthorised surveillance of Pegasus.

On October 27, 2021, the Supreme Court had constituted a technical committee comprising of Prof. Naveen Chaudhary, Prof. P Prabhakaran and Prof. Ashwin Gumaste overseen by Justice R.V. Raveendran, former judge of the Supreme Court.

The technical committee requested the director general of the NIA on January 30, 2022 to arrange for mobile phones of accused - Sudha Bharadwaj, Rona Wilson, Hany Babu, Shoma Sen, Anand Teltumbde, Vernon Gonsalves and Varavara Rao as it was informed to the committee that their phones have been allegedly infected by the Pegasus spyware.

Digital copies

The NIA's application mentions, "The committee will make the digital copies in the presence of the officer producing the same and return the instruments immediately thereafter a set of copies of the digital images will also be made available to the officer producing the mobile instruments. The digital copies of the said mobiles will also be furnished to the advocates for the purpose in custody."

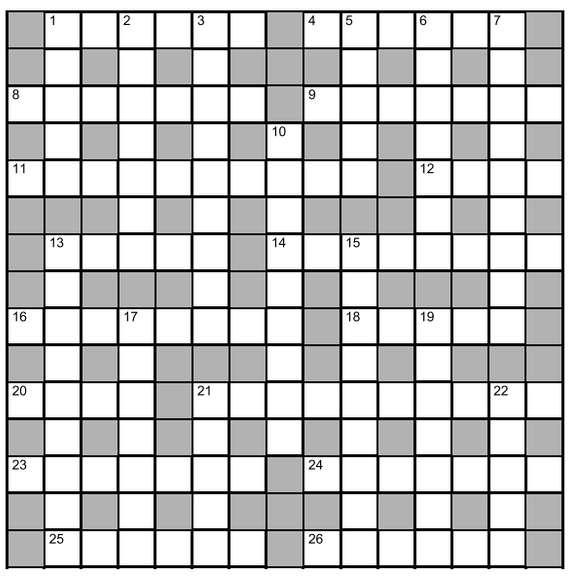
On December 17, 2021, a report was released by the U.S. forensic investigation firm Arsenal Consultancy that revealed that accused Mr. Wilson's cell phone was attacked by the Pegasus spyware 49 different times and was successful in infecting his phone before his arrest on June 6, 2018, in the case.

THE CROSSWORD + 13475

(set by Dreamer)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



ACROSS

1 Chop bird outside dilapidated old vehicle (6)
4 Present king left for distant part of the sea (6)
8 Campaign by politicians to introduce uniform for preparatory activities (4-3)
9 Looked after a child in club, overcoming calamity, briefly (7)
11 Key ancestors of humans primarily transformed mechanism used in timepieces (10)
12 Place for hiding withdrawn currency of Oman (4)
13 Shot violent ordinary dogs pitilessly in the beginning (5)
14 Charlie discarding old mobile angrily over frozen water? Put back! (8)
16 Engineer made tiny explosive (8)
18 State manipulates demands (5)
20 Leaders from women are reliable, motivated and enthusiastic (4)
21 Conquering rocky hill in dangerous surroundings (10)
23 Importance of old city in country? (7)
24 A very small living thing found in rodents bites Rob (7)
25 Bank backs artist infrequently (6)
26 "Introduction to poems" by a mediocre poet becomes an elementary textbook for children (6)

DOWN

1 Tailor Raj needs to get rid of red trousers (5)
2 Lower back pain resulting from powerless slap on back... (7)
3 ... very quietly consumes a slice of eggplant with Italian beer and sausage of beef and pork (9)
5 Spread ironlike metal, essentially (5)
6 Masala idli with drained chutney and a piece of laddu? That's heavenly! (7)
7 Gardener's first kid promises to pay around end of April for flowering plant (9)
10 Religious education wing at new church house (9)
13 Team prays desperately for officer in charge of managing wages (9)
15 Used black lead and iron to make cartridge belt (9)
17 Instrument for measuring current and amplitude modulation encountered base resistance (7)
19 Saw European hog with a male sheep (7)
21 Kohli gives up captaincy in Tests for Rahul at last, becomes an Internet sensation (5)
22 Finally, you can grab sofa cover and open (5)

SUDOKU

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

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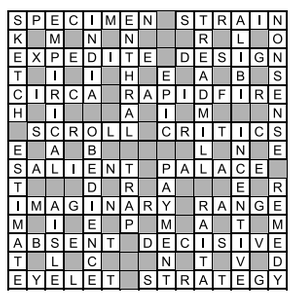
Solution to puzzle 13474



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Visvarupa in Kaurava court

Krishna arrives in the Kaurava court as a messenger of the Pandavas, said P.T. Seshadri, in a discourse. Krishna says to Duryodhana, "Give the Pandavas their share. You will get lasting prosperity." Duryodhana replies, "The Pandavas played chess with Sakuni and lost. Where is my fault in this? I will give them nothing." Bhishma then tells Dhritarashtra that the entire Kshatriya community is going to get killed because of Duryodhana's adamant stand.

Bhishma says, "You, as his father, must advise him. Sastras say that for the welfare of the community we can ignore an individual. For the welfare of a nation, we can give up a village. Make peace with the Pandavas. Do not be responsible for bloodshed in the world." Gandhari also tells Duryodhana not to wage war with the Pandavas. Duryodhana says, "I will do only what Karna and Sakuni advise. Krishna is trying to block my efforts through Bhishma, my father and my mother."

He then thinks that the only way to weaken the Pandavas is to tie up Krishna. Satyaki has the power to read a person's thoughts and guesses what Duryodhana is thinking. He tells Krishna what Duryodhana is planning. Krishna then says to Duroydhana, "You think I am alone and you can capture Me. But it is not so. The Pandavas, Vrishnis and sages are all here, all around Me." Krishna then laughs and shows Duryodhana His Visvarupa form.

Krishna's body has all the devas on it. Duroydhana sees Brahma on His forehead, Siva on His chest and Lokapalas on His shoulders. Apart from Duryodhana, Bhishma, Drona, Vidura and sages see the Cosmic form of the Lord. Krishna enables Dhritarashtra also to see this form. This is one of the Visvarupas of Lord Krishna in the Mahabharata.

Macron sees path to ease Russia crisis

In Kiev, the French leader says Putin told him that Russia 'would not be the source of an escalation'

AGENCY FRANCE-PRESSE
KIEV

French President Emmanuel Macron said on Tuesday he saw a path forward on easing tensions with Russia over Ukraine, after conducting an urgent round of shuttle diplomacy between Moscow and Kiev.

Mr. Macron held talks with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kiev a day after a five-hour meeting at the Kremlin with Russia's Vladimir Putin, as the West scrambles to defuse fears Moscow could invade its ex-Soviet neighbour.

The French leader said he now saw the "possibility" for talks involving Moscow and Kiev over the festering conflict in the east of the country to move forward, and "concrete, practical solutions" to lower tensions between Russia and the West.

"We cannot underestimate the moment of tension that we are living through," Mr. Macron said at a joint press conference after meeting Mr. Zelensky.

"We cannot resolve this crisis in a few hours of talks," he said. "It will be the day and the weeks and the months to come that will allow us to progress."

Balancing act: Volodymyr Zelenskiy, right, and Emmanuel Macron during a news briefing in Kiev, on Tuesday. • REUTERS

Summit talks

Mr. Macron – who now heads to Berlin for talks with the leaders of Germany and Poland – said Mr. Putin had told him that Russia "would not be the source of an escalation", in the situation, despite amassing more than 1,00,000 troops and military hardware on Ukraine's border. Mr. Zelensky said he hoped a meeting of high-ranking officials on Thursday in Berlin could pave the way for a summit with the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany aimed at reviving the stalled peace plan for Kiev's conflict with Moscow-backed separatists.

Mr. Putin – who has demanded sweeping security guarantees from NATO and the United States – said after his talks with Mr. Macron that Moscow would "do everything to find compromises that suit everyone".

He said several proposals put forward by Mr. Macron could "form a basis for further steps" on easing the crisis over Ukraine, but did not give any details.

French proposals

At the same time as sending its military hardware to Ukraine's borders, Mr. Putin has issued demands the West says are unacceptable, including barring Ukraine from joining NATO and rolling back alliance forces in eastern Europe.

The French presidency said Mr. Macron's counter proposals included an engagement from both sides not to take any new military action, the launching of a strategic dialogue and efforts to revive the peace process for Ukraine's conflict.

It also said an agreement would ensure the withdrawal of some 30,000 Russian soldiers from Belarus at the end of joint military exercises later this month.

The Kremlin insisted that it never had any intention of leaving the troops permanently on Belarusian territory. The West faces a tough task trying to convince a wary Mr. Zelensky to accept any compromises.

Kiev has laid out three "red lines" that it says it will not cross to find a solution – no compromise over Ukraine's territorial integrity, no direct talks with the separatists and no interference in its foreign policy.

As Mr. Macron sought a diplomatic solution with Kiev, U.S. President Joe Biden ramped up the pressure on Moscow on Monday by warning he would "end" the controversial new Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia to Europe if tanks rolled into Ukraine. Mr. Biden's declaration at a press conference with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz was the bluntest so far on the fate of the massive pipeline, which is complete but has yet to begin funnelling natural gas.

EU joins chips race with €43-billion bid to rival Asia

Bloc aims for 20% of global market by quadrupling efforts

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRUSSELS

The EU on Tuesday unveiled a plan to quadruple the supply of semiconductors in Europe by 2030, hoping to limit the bloc's dependence on Asia for a key component used in electric cars and smartphones.

The production of chips has become a strategic priority in Europe as well as the United States, after the shock of the pandemic choked off supply, bringing factories to a standstill and emptying stores of products.

The manufacturing of semiconductors overwhelmingly takes place in Taiwan, China and South Korea and the European Union wants factories and companies inside the bloc to take on a bigger role.

Chips Act

The highly anticipated EU Chips Act will "mobilise more than €43 billion ($49.1 billion) of public and private investments" and "enable the EU to reach its ambition to double its current market share to 20% in 2030", the European Commission said.

Ursula von der Leyen

"We've set ourselves the goal to have 20% of the global market share of chips production here in Europe," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. Getting to that level "means basically quadrupling our efforts" given the huge increase in global demand, she said.

If approved, the EU plans could generate a total of €43 billion via existing EU budget money as well as by loosening existing rules on public subsidy from member states.

Approval of members

The proposal will need the approval of the EU member states and European Parliament, where opinions will vary between the ambitions of industrial heavyweights such as Germany, France and Italy and those of smaller states that are worried about closing off valuable supply chains with Asia.

Some member states, led by the Netherlands and Nordic nations, will also resist any plan to widen the scope for state aid, with the commission planning to make it easier for EU governments to pump money to chip-makers.

"We don't want to end up in a position with a huge U.S. company getting a bunch of EU money to open a factory in one big member state," an EU diplomat said.

Sri Lankans recognise India as a true, reliable friend: Peiris

Economic aid, fisheries conflict figure in New Delhi talks

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

The people of Sri Lanka "increasingly recognise" that India is a true friend that Sri Lanka can rely on at all times, Foreign Minister G.L. Peiris has said, thanking India for the $2.4 billion assistance at a "critical juncture" for the island nation in the midst of an economic crisis.

Mr. Peiris on Tuesday concluded his two-day visit to New Delhi, where he met External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, and Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla. His visit coincides with India releasing urgent financial assistance to Sri Lanka since the beginning of this year, including a $400 million currency swap, a $500 million loan deferment, a Line of Credit for $500 million for fuel imports and another $1 billion currently under negotiation. Particular attention was drawn to the energy security of Sri Lanka, a statement issued by Sri Lanka's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, referring to the recently signed Trincomalee Oil Tank Farm deal, that Mr. Peiris said, signalled "a closer integration between the two countries, resulting in substantial benefits; a win-win situation for both".

Harsh Vardhan Shringla, left, and G. L. Peiris in New Delhi on Tuesday.

The Foreign Ministers discussed the Palk Bay fisheries conflict and reiterated the longstanding consensus to handle fishermen issue through "humanitarian approach and refrain from the use of violence". They agreed that bilateral mechanisms should meet early, starting with the Joint Working Group on Fisheries, the India's Ministry of External Affairs said. The statement from the Sri Lankan side said Mr. Peiris, in his meetings, termed it a "flashpoint" and "a recurring issue" assuming a "different complexion", alluding to recent clashes between fishermen of both countries.

Sri Lanka to launch its own 'Aadhaar'

India agrees to provide a grant to implement the 'digital identity framework'

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

India has agreed to provide a grant to Sri Lanka to implement a 'Unitary Digital Identity framework', apparently modelled on the Aadhaar card. The Rajapaksa government will "prioritise" the implementation of the Framework as a national level programme, Sri Lanka's Cabinet decided on Monday.

"Under the proposed Unitary Digital Identity Framework, it is expected to introduce a personal identity verification device based on biometric data, a digital tool that can represent the identities of individuals in cyberspace, and the identification of individual identities that can be accurately verified in digital and physical environments by combining the two devices," according to a statement released by the Department of Government Information on Tuesday.

Helping hand: The initiative follows bilateral talks between Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Narendra Modi in 2019. • FILE PHOTO

The initiative follows bilateral talks between President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in December 2019.

Sri Lanka's Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal made by Mr. Rajapaksa, in his capacity as the Minister of Technology, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with India, in order to obtain the grant and take the project forward.

It also comes amid substantive economic assistance from India – totalling $ 1.4 billion since the beginning of this year – to Sri Lanka, to help the island nation cope with its dollar crunch, and import food, medicines and fuel amid frequent shortages.

While India has confirmed support for Sri Lanka's effort to transition to a digital identity system, there is no official information yet on the value of the grant, and whether it would include technological support or training. Queried on the specifics of the agreement, Colombo-based official sources said the terms of the agreement are "being worked out".

This is not the first time that Sri Lanka is attempting to digitise its citizens' identities. Just a few years ago, the predecessor Maithripala Sirisena-Ranil Wickremesinghe administration, in power from 2015 to 2019, mooted a similar Electronic-National Identity Card – or E-NIC –that privacy advocates opposed on grounds that the state would have full access to citizens' personal data in a central database.

The former Mahinda Rajapaksa government tried initiating the project as early as 2011. Neither project was implemented.

U.S. approves upgrade for Taiwan missile

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

The United States has approved a possible $100 million sale of equipment and services to Taiwan to "sustain, maintain, and improve" the Patriot missile defence system used by the self-ruled island claimed by China, the Pentagon said.

Upgrades to the Patriot Air Defense System would "help improve the security of the recipient and assist in maintaining political stability, military balance and progress in the region," the U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency said.

The main contractors would be Raytheon Technologies and Lockheed Martin.

Taiwan's Foreign Ministry said it "highly welcomed" the decision.

The deal was expected to "come into effect" within one month.

ELSEWHERE

Top U.S. scientist resigns over treatment of staff

WASHINGTON

The U.S. President's top science adviser Eric Lander resigned, hours after the White House confirmed that an internal probe found evidence that he mistreated his staff. Mr. Lander, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy, bullied staffers and treated them disrespectfully. AP

Taliban in Geneva to attend talks with NGOs

GENEVA

A Taliban delegation is in Geneva for talks with Swiss officials and NGOs on human rights. The delegation is due to hold talks with the Red Cross and other non-governmental organisations. AFP

13 million face severe hunger in Africa: UN

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KAMPALA

Drought conditions have left an estimated 13 million people facing severe hunger in the Horn of Africa, according to the United Nations World Food Program.

People in a region including Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya face the driest conditions recorded since 1981, the agency reported on Tuesday, calling for immediate assistance to forestall a major humanitarian crisis.

Drought conditions are affecting pastoral and farming communities. Malnutrition rates are high in the region.

WFP said it needs $327 million to look after the urgent needs of 4.5 million people over the next six months.

New COVID-19 test with shorter result duration

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

Chinese scientists say they have developed a new coronavirus test that is accurate as a PCR lab test but gives results within four minutes.

In a peer-reviewed article published on Monday in the journal *Nature Biomedical Engineering*, the team said their sensor – which uses microelectronics to analyse genetic material from swabs – can reduce the need for time-consuming Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests conducted in COVID labs.

The researchers said their method offers speed, ease of operation, high sensitivity and portability.

Their trial involved taking samples from 33 people in Shanghai who were infected with the coronavirus, with PCR tests conducted in parallel.

The results from their method were a "perfect" match with the PCR tests.

LOOKOUT NOTICE

Sri.Murukesan, age 40, S/O Sethu, Kollelil, Kokkothamangalam PO, Thannermukkam P/W-3, Cherthala, Alappuzha District who is the accused in Cr.621/21 u/s 143, 147, 148, 149, 324, 302 IPC of Mannancherry Police Station, he is absconding after the commission of the crime. If any clue or information is obtained about him that may be intimated immediately to Mannancherry station **SHO, Deputy Superintendent of Police Alappuzha, District Police Chief Alappuzha.**

Inspector of Police, Mannancherry PS: 949790997
DySP Alappuzha: 9497990041
District Police Chief, Alappuzha: 94979 96982

(270/F2/2022/I&PRD)

TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD
E-TENDER NOTICE :TANGEDCO/SHORT/ PP-18/2022

TANGEDCO invites E-Tender for procurement of 1000 MW RTC power and 1000 MW power during evening peak hours from **1st March 2022 to 20th May 2022**. Bidding will be done as per the revised guidelines for short term procurement of power notified by the Ministry of Power vide resolution dated **30.03.2016**, through e-Bidding portal (DEEP) only. The link for the e-Bidding portal is **www.mstcecommerce.com**, and is also available on the website of Ministry of Power **(www.powermin.nic.in)** and PFC Consulting Ltd **(www.pfcclindia.com).** Specification is available in TANGEDCO website and **MSTC DEEP E-Bidding portal**. Chief Engineer/PPP/TANGEDCO

சோதனை கடந்து சுதந்திரம் அடைந்தோம். சாதனை புரிந்து சரித்திரம் படைப்போம். | DIPR/658/TENDER/2022

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Institute of Technology
Paghargaon, Port Blair
Andaman & Nicobar Administration

VACANCY NOTICE

Applications are invited from the eligible candidates for the post of 01 No. Associate Professor in the discipline of Civil on contract basis in a consolidated pay of Rs. 1,31,400 /- plus DA per month in the Establishment of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Institute of Technology, Paghargaon, Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Administration. The last date for the receipt of applications is 08.03.2022. For more details regarding eligibility criteria, age limit etc may kindly visit the official website of Andaman & Nicobar Administration. **Url: https://erecruitment.andaman.gov.in**

Administrative Officer
10-190/DBRAIT/2015

कार्यालय परियोजना निदेशक (आवासन)
राजस्थान शहरी पेयजल, सीवरेज एवं आधारभूत संरचना निगम लिमिटेड
(राजस्थान सरकार का उपक्रम)

पत्र क्रमांक :– रूडसिको/पी.डी. (हा)/जयपुर/2021–22/158 दिनांक :– 03.02.2022

ई–निविदा सूचना संख्या – 14/2021–22
NIB Code - RDP2122A0029
UBN : RDP2122WLOB00050
UBN : RDP2122WLOB00051
UBN : RDP2122WLOB00052

प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना (सबके लिए आवास)– शहरी के अन्तर्गत मुख्यमंत्री जन आवास योजना–2015 के तहत 3 शहरों के लिये निविदाऐं

''मुख्यमंत्री जन आवास योजना–2015'' के प्रावधान 4 ए (i) के अन्तर्गत राजस्थान के 3 शहरों – भीनमाल, छबड़ा एवं करौली में EWS & LIG फ्लैटस् (G + 3) की योजनाऐं Turnkey Basis पर निर्माण हेतु अनुभवी एवं सक्षम विकासकर्त्ता/भवन निर्माता/संवेदकों से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में द्विबोली पद्धति द्वारा ई–प्रोक्योरमेंट प्रक्रिया अनुसार ऑनलाइन निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती है। (सभी योजनाओं की अनुमानित कुल लागत रूपये 15780.74 लाख)।

निविदा से संबंधित समस्त विवरण वेब साईट :– http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, www.urban.rajasthan.gov.in/rudsico व http://www.sppp.raj.nic.in से डाउनलोड किया जाना सकता है।

परियोजना निदेशक (आवासन)
रूडसिको, जयपुर

राज.संवाद/सी/21/11412

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE COASTAL MANAGEMENT (NCSCM)
(Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India)
Anna University Campus, Chennai 600025.
Ph: (+91) 44 22200600, Fax: (+91) 44 22200700, email:careers@ncscm.res.in

Advt. No:HR01/2022
Advertisement for the selection of Project Staff

NCSCM requires Project Staff in various projects on contractual basis. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online on or before 23/02/2022. Further details relating to application procedure, eligibility criteria, interview dates, etc., may be obtained from the website

http://www.ncscm.res.in/cms/careers/careers.php.

Director, NCSCM

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, (Ele),
Yalahanka Zone, Bengaluru.

No: BBMP/EE/ELE/YZ/TND/07/2021-22 **Date: 08.02.2022**

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)
(TWO COVER) (Through **GOK e-Procurement Portal** only) 2nd Call

The Executive Engineer (Elect), Yalahanka Zone, Invites tenders in accordance With KTPP rules 2000, from eligible contractors registered in Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike /KPWD/CPWD/Railways/MES/National Highway or any other equivalent Central/State Government Organisations for Electrical work as detailed in the table.

Sl. No.	Name of the Works	Est Cost (₹. in Lakhs)	EMD (₹. in Lakhs)
1.	Providing LED Street Lights/ Control Switches/control wires at Dark/Vulnerable places in Ward No-05. (2nd Call)	200	3.000
2.	Providing LED Street Lights/ Control Switches/control wires at Dark/Vulnerable places in Ward No-06,07 & 08. (2nd Call)	133	2.0
3.	Providing LED Street Lights/ Control Switches/control wires at Dark/Vulnerable places in Ward No-09, 10 & 11. (2nd Call)	160	2.400

Calendar of Events : (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from the e-procurement portal of from **09.02.2022** onwards. (2) Bids must be submitted online through e-procurement portal on or before **17.02.2022** by **4:00** pm. (3) The Technical bids will be opened on **18.02.2022** at **4:00** pm. (4) The Financial bids will be opened on **23.02.2022** at **4:00** pm. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours on working days or from website: **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, (Elec.)
Yalahanka Zone

STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.
Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

MISSING

The person shown in the photo named Jose age 40/21 S/o Abraham, Thottumkara House, Illithodu, Malayattoor, Kalady, Ernakulam Rural, Aluva, Ernakulam Dist,, KERALA has been missing from his house since 19.12.2021. In this regard a case Cr. 1486/2021 U/s of KP Act was registered at Kalady Police Station. If any information is received about the missing person please inform the following.

1. DySP, C- Branch, Aluva: 9497990075
2. C-Branch Aluva: 0484 2623122, 8075922194
3. DMPTU Team, C-Branch: 7306546695, 9744400415

IDENTIFICATION MARKS: Height - 5.8", Colour Fair skin, Black Hair, fat body.

(256/F2/2022/I&PRD)

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE
Bangalore - 560012.

Invites online applications for the post of **DEPUTY REGISTRAR, ASSISTANT REGISTRAR and ADMIN OFFICER (CHALLAKERE)**. The detailed advertisement is available on the Institute's website.

Please visit the website: **https://iisc.ac.in/positions-open/**

The last date for receipt of applications is **20.02.2022.**

Sd/-,
Date: 31.01.2022 **REGISTRAR**

CENTRE FOR MATERIALS FOR ELECTRONICS TECHNOLOGY (C-MET)
(Scientific Society, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, MeitY, Govt. of India) Panchawati, Off. Dr. Homi Bhabha Road, Pashan, Pune- 411 008, INDIA

TENDER NOTICE
Advt. No. PN/ADM/TEN/001/2021

Sealed Tenders are invited under Two Bid System (Part I -TECHNO-COMMERCIAL BID & Part II- PRICE BID) from reputed Indian Manufacturers / Indian Agent of Foreign Equipment Manufacturer for the "supply, installation, demonstration and training" of the Scientific Equipments.

Tender Reference No.	Brief Description of Stores	Qty.	Cost of Tender Fee (In Indian Rs.)
PN/ADM/ PUR/072/2020	DLP Light Engine (As per Specifications)	1 No.	2,000.00
PN/ADM/ PUR/014/2021	Jet 3D Printer Machine (As per Specifications)	1 No.	2,000.00

Last Date of Issue of Tender Document : 09.03.2022
Last Date for Submission of Tenders : 10.03.2022 up to 14.00 Hrs.
Date of Opening of Technical Bids of Tender : 10.03.2022 at 15.00 Hrs.

For details, please visit our website http://www.cmet.gov.in. The Tender document can be obtained either from the Administrative Officer, C-MET, Pune on payment of requisite tender fee by way of DD drawn in favour of '**Centre for Materials for Electronics Technology, Pune**' OR may be downloaded from our website. In this regard, tender document fees to be deposited in the form of Demand Draft at the time of submitting technical bid. Tenders submitted as per the terms & conditions mentioned in the Tender Document only will be accepted. C-MET will not be responsible for postal or any other delay and reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons.

(Sd/-) Administrative Officer

MARKET WATCH

	08-02-2022	% CHANGE
Sensex	57,809	0.33
US Dollar	74.74	-0.06
Gold	48,167	0.35
Brent oil	90.51	-2.83

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	717.80	2.65
Asian Paints	3216.35	41.65
Axis Bank	798.55	8.95
Bajaj Auto	3458.65	-17.35
Bajaj Finserv	15989.15	277.80
Bajaj Finance	7055.00	124.40
Bharti Airtel	708.90	2.40
BPCL	377.40	4.95
Britannia Ind	3473.45	24.85
Cipla	948.05	14.75
Coal India	159.95	-1.00
Divis Lab	4277.55	76.05
Dr Reddys Lab	4321.95	12.75
Eicher Motors	2589.15	-12.20
Grasim Ind	1717.80	5.45
HCL Tech	1161.95	4.60
HDFC	2414.60	-13.55
HDFC Bank	1461.85	-6.30
HDFC Life	600.45	-2.80
Hero MotoCorp	2671.95	23.90
Hindalco	526.80	4.20
Hind Unilever	2264.35	6.75
ICICI Bank	792.50	6.10
IndusInd Bank	937.70	4.65
Infosys	1717.30	2.30
Indian OilCorp	121.35	-1.55
ITC	231.25	1.05
JSW Steel	660.10	8.95
Kotak Bank	1817.80	-10.65
L&T	1875.60	-8.90
M&M	832.05	2.55
Maruti Suzuki	8599.45	87.80
Nestle India Ltd.	18087.15	14.40
NTPC	135.00	-0.15
ONGC	166.95	-5.15
PowerGrid Corp	210.05	-3.60
Reliance Ind	2356.05	38.95
SBI Life	1131.15	-12.85
State Bank	531.35	-1.90
Shree Cement	24764.00	-101.55
Sun Pharma	894.10	7.05
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	697.10	-7.70
Tata Motors	492.75	-1.85
Tata Steel	1219.60	36.60
TCS	3743.45	-35.55
Tech Mahindra	1434.20	-10.10
Titan	2443.65	34.45
UltraTech Cement	7421.35	-48.00
UPL	758.65	2.05
Wipro	560.25	3.25

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on February 08

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.55	74.87
Euro	85.05	85.45
British Pound	100.93	101.4
Japanese Yen (100)	64.66	64.96
Chinese Yuan	11.71	11.76
Swiss Franc	80.73	81.08
Singapore Dollar	55.42	55.67
Canadian Dollar	58.7	58.96
Malaysian Ringitt	17.8	17.9
Australian Dollar	53.12	53.35

Source:Indian Bank

Bharti Airtel Q3 net slips 2.8% as network, finance costs rise

Telecom operator logs ₹830 crore profit as revenue rises 12.6% to ₹29,867 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Bharti Airtel on Tuesday reported third-quarter consolidated net profit slid 2.8% to ₹830 crore, after network operating expenses and finance costs rose from a year earlier and the company prepaid ₹15,519 crore to the government to clear past dues.

The telecom operator's revenues, however, rose 12.6% to ₹29,867 crore. Network operating expenses jumped 17% to ₹6,499 crore, while finance costs increased almost 10% to ₹4,367 crore.

"We have delivered another quarter of sustained performance across all our business segments," Gopal Vittal, MD and CEO, India & South Asia, said in a release. "Overall sequential revenue growth was at 5.4% and EBITDA margins came in at 49.9%," he added.

Clearing dues: Bharti said it prepaid ₹15,519 crore to clear all deferred liabilities for spectrum acquired in 2014. • REUTERS

Observing that a recent tariff revision for mobile services had gone down well and the firm's ARPU (average revenue per user) had increased to ₹163, Mr. Vittal said: "The full impact of the revised mobile tariffs, however, will be visible in the fourth quarter".

"Our balance sheet is robust and we are now generating healthy free cash flows. This has enabled us to recently prepay some of our spectrum liabilities to the Government thereby reducing the interest burden," the CEO added.

Bharti said it prepaid ₹15,519 crore to clear all deferred liabilities for spectrum acquired in 2014.

The company, which serves about 485 million customers across 16 countries including in Africa, said its India mobile services business continues to garner a strong share of 4G customers. 4G data customers climbed 18.1% to 195.5 million, with average data usage per user at 18.3 GBs/month.

India's debt-to-GDP better than of U.S., official's riposte

Somanathan questions rating agencies' 'double standards'

VIKAS DHOOT
NEW DELHI

Finance Secretary T.V. Somanathan hit out at global rating agencies' comments about India being the most indebted emerging market and about the lack of clarity on a fiscal consolidation path in the Union Budget, arguing they appeared to adopt 'double standards' in their assessments of emerging economies and developed markets.

"I say this with a sense of seriousness and responsibility, not in a flippant way, that rating agencies do have double standards between emerging and non-emerging countries. Fitch [Ratings] has said that we have one of the highest debt-to-GDP ratios in emerging market countries," Mr. Somanathan said, asserting that India had 'one of the best' debt-to-GDP ratios when compared with higher-rated countries.

"Our debt-to-GDP ratio is far lower than the United States, Japan, and other such highly-rated countries in Europe. Our denominator in terms of GDP has a natural tendency, even in the worst of times, to grow faster than those AAA-rated countries. Even if you forget India's inherent fundamentals and go by pure mathematics, with a nominal growth rate of 10% to 12% and a 4% inflation rate, our deficits are far less worrying than some of the deficits of much higher-rated countries," the Finance Secretary told *The Hindu*.

T.V. Somanathan

'Ratio will decline'

"Ultimately it boils down to the debt dynamics, the numerical dynamics... We are very clear that the debt-to-GDP ratio must decline and it will decline," he asserted.

Fitch, which maintains a negative outlook on India, had said the country had limited fiscal space to respond to shocks, with the highest general government debt ratio of any 'BBB'-rated emerging market sovereign at just under 90% of GDP'. The Budget, offered 'less clarity' on the medium-term fiscal outlook and 'few details' on how the 4.5% of GDP fiscal deficit target would be achieved by 2025-26, it said.

Moody's Investors Service, which termed the Budget a 'credit positive' for India's sovereign rating, said the path towards the medium-term deficit target was undefined, even as government debt would increase to about 91% of GDP next year. Mr. Somanathan, however, pointed out there was no need to assume 'ambiguity' on this front.

"The glide path has already been provided in last year's Budget, that we will reach a deficit of 4.5% of GDP in FY26 with an approximately even path of consolidation, and this Budget reiterated we are committed to that path," he said, asserting that a statement by the Finance Minister in Parliament was as visible a glide path as one could get. To get from 6.9% in 2021-22 to 4.5% by '25-26, entails an approximately 60-basis points reduction a year on average.

"In 2022-23, we are consolidating by 0.5%. So we may be 0.1% off that trajectory... but marginal adjustments have been made that seem to be desirable in terms of promoting growth now," he said. "So, there is a path that is stated, is feasible and we are on course to meeting it," he underlined.

The Finance Secretary said bond yields spiking was a 'normal response' to an expanded borrowing programme in a 'well-run and efficient' market, but emphasised that part of the spike in yields had happened even ahead of the Budget in response to global conditions such as high oil prices, inflation and the U.S. Federal Reserve's taper programme to replace quantitative easing.

"Yes, an additional supply of bonds will affect yields... but the balance that the government had to strike was at the margin," he said, referring to the dilemma between fretting about a small increase in yields and tightening fiscally at a juncture where some more expenditure is desirable to promote growth.

'Savers will be happy'

While the Centre's borrowing costs would rise sharply in FY23, the Finance Secretary said this was not at unprecedented levels. "Of course, we would like them to be as low as possible. But let me also remind you savers will be very happy when these rates go up. So everything has a positive side."

'Air passenger traffic fell 43% in January'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The third wave of COVID-19 led to an almost 43% decline in domestic passenger traffic in January compared with the previous month, according to credit rating agency ICRA.

The domestic air passenger traffic in January was at 64 lakh as compared with 112 lakh in December 2021. "For January 2022, the average daily departures were at almost 2,032, significantly lower than nearly 2,790 departures in December 2021," said Suprio Banerjee, VP and Sector Head, ICRA.

"The average number of passengers per flight in January 2022 was at 102, against 129 per flight in December 2021," he added.

TRAI starts consultations ahead of 5G auction

'Bring best practices with suggestions'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

TRAI Chairman P.D. Vaghela on Tuesday termed the consultation paper on 5G spectrum auction as a 'watershed in the history of telecom' as the regulator began industry-wide deliberation via open-house discussions, ahead of finalising views on aspects such as spectrum pricing.

The government expects the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) to give recommendations on 5G spectrum by March. Spectrum auctions will be conducted in 2022, to facilitate the roll out of 5G mobile services within 2022-23.

The industry has made an aggressive pitch for lowering of spectrum pricing.

At the virtual TRAI Open House Discussion on Tuesday, Mr. Vaghela urged stakeholders to support their suggestions with evidence and best practices. TRAI had in November released a consultation paper to discuss modalities for auction of spectrum, including pricing and quantum.

'Central Electronics LoI put on hold'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The issuance of the Letter of Intent (LoI) to the successful bidder of Central Electronics Ltd. (CEL) has been put on hold, pending examination of specific allegations regarding the bidder, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Tuesday.

In November, the government approved the highest price bid of ₹210 crore by the Delhi-based Nandal Finance and Leasing Pvt. Ltd. for the sale of 100% shareholding of the government in CEL. Incorporated in 1974, CEL is a pioneer in the field of solar photovoltaics. It has also developed axle counter systems being used in Railway signalling systems for the safe running of trains.

IN BRIEF

NMDC declares ₹5.73 interim dividend

HYDERABAD

Public sector mining major NMDC has posted a consolidated net profit of ₹2,048.4 crore for the quarter ended December from ₹2,108.05 crore in the year earlier. Revenue from operations increased almost 35% to ₹5,873.77 crore (₹4,355.10 crore). NMDC has declared an interim dividend of ₹5.73 per equity share of face value of ₹1 each.

Granules net falls 31% on higher freight cost

HYDERABAD

Drugmaker Granules India reported consolidated net profit declined 31% to ₹101 crore for the December quarter on the back of increase in freight cost and lower gross margins. The lower net profit, compared with ₹147 crore in the year earlier, came on an 18% increase in income from operations to ₹997 crore (₹845 crore). The company has declared an interim dividend of 25 paise per equity share of ₹1 each.

Sun TV holders vote to reappoint Maran, Kavery

86% institutional investors oppose move

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Sun TV Executive Chairman Kalanithi Maran and Executive Director Kavery Kalanithi were reappointed by shareholders through a postal ballot last month, regulatory filings made to the stock exchanges show.

While 99.97% of public non-institutional shareholders voted for the special resolutions on reappointment of Mr. Maran and his wife, 86.24% of public institutional investors voted against the resolution. The promoter group, which holds 75% stake, voted 100% in favour.

Institutional Investor Advisory Services had earlier recommended voting against the resolutions citing governance and transparency issues. The advisory firm said it opposed the resolutions as the remuneration of Mr. Maran and Ms. Kalanithi was high given the company's size. "As a good practice, the company must disclose the basis for performance pay," it said.

Kalanithi Maran

EID Parry Q3 net shrinks 95% to ₹18 cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

EID Parry (India) Ltd. reported third-quarter standalone net profit shrank 95% to ₹18 crore, from ₹339 crore a year earlier, after a one-time loss from the sale of a unit.

Revenue from operations rose 56% to ₹686 crore. The results included an exceptional item of ₹13.73 crore as loss on sale of plant and equipment at the Puducherry factory of the holding company, EID Parry said in a filing.

"The company performed better than the corresponding quarter... on account of better realisation and higher volume of exports and alcohol sales," said MD S. Suresh.

Life insurers' new premium income rises 3%, LIC's dips 1.6%

23 private sector players record 9.4% increase in January

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The new business premium income of all the life insurance companies grew 2.65% to ₹21,957 crore in January 2022, data from IRDAI showed. The 24 life insurance companies had collected ₹21,389.70 crore as the first-year or the new-business premium in January.

India's largest and only state-owned insurer Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) registered a dip of 1.58% in new premium income to ₹12,936.28 crore. The remaining 23 players saw 9.39% growth in their collective new business premium to ₹9,020.75 crore. On a cumulative basis, new premium income for all 24 life insurers during the April-January period of FY22 grew 6.94% to ₹2,27,188.89 crore.

LIC's cumulative new business income during this period showed a decline of 2.93% to ₹1,38,951.30 crore.

Private players saw a 27.4% jump in collective cumulative new business income in April-January to ₹88,237.60 crore. In market share terms, LIC held 61.2%.

'No dividend for FY20'

Separately, in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad said on Tuesday that LIC had not paid any dividend to the Centre in FY21 and used the free reserves to increase its paid-up capital, which has now risen to ₹6,325 crore.

The insurance regulator had instructed insurers to refrain from dividend payouts from profits pertaining to FY20.

Cost of State debt jumps 41 bps to 7.24%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

States on Tuesday had to pay a higher price to bond investors as the weighted average cut-off rate jumped by a hefty 41 basis points to 7.24%. In the previous auction of State Development Loans (SDLs) last Tuesday, the cut-off was only 6.8%.

However, the weighted average cut-off for the 10-year state debt issuance hit a record 7.29% on Tuesday. This is 8 basis points (bps) higher than 7.21% seen last week and the spread between the 10-year G-secs yield and SDLs widened to 48 bps from 38 bps.

On Tuesday, the 10-year G-secs yield eased to 6.81% compared with the 6.83% last week.

Of captains and coaches: leading from the front and leading from behind

Dravid can be a tough taskmaster and can set the team's agenda and settle its culture just as Langer — or Kumble in his brief spell — had done

BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

When a coach or captain is fired (or pushed to resign, which is the same thing), one of two reasons dominate. Either the team has had poor results or the players are unhappy, whatever the results. England's coach Chris Silverwood lost his job following a 0-4 result in the Ashes.

Ironically, the successful coach on the other side, Justin Langer, lost his job too – in his case largely because he lost the support of the senior players

In India, Virat Kohli, their most successful captain was pushed into resigning when he read the signs and decided they were not in his favour.

This tells us something about coaches, player power and the lifespan of coaches and captains. Langer, who took over at a difficult time in Australian cricket following the sandpaper scandal in South Africa, managed to clean up some of the stains on the team reputation. He modified the team culture after the obsession with winning had pushed it over the edge.

Job done

More recently, his team won both the World T20 and the Ashes, so he could feel he had done his job.

Perhaps that is where the problem lay. Langer had done his job, and it was time for change. What pushed things to the point of resignation was the opinion of the senior players that he was a tough taskmaster and that he did not enjoy their confidence anymore. New skipper Pat Cummins concurred, and so it became a matter of priorities for the cricket board. The deciding body reckoned that Australian cricket needed Cummins more than it needed Langer, and that meant there could be only one conclusion to the drama.

Not unusual

This is not unusual. Some years ago the Indian cricket board decided that skipper Kohli was more valuable to it than coach Anil Kumble and threw in its lot with Kohli when the captain expressed his displeasure. Whatever the ethical issues involved, it boiled down to a practical one. The captain and coach cannot be at loggerheads. It is theoretically possible for a strong coach to push the captain out, but that happens less frequently. Then too the senior Indian players had felt that Kumble was a tough taskmaster. Ravi Shastri was recalled, did well, and continued till he reached the age-limit at which point Rahul Dravid, the current coach came into the picture.

Dravid can be a tough taskmaster too and can set the team's agenda and settle its culture just as Langer – or Kumble in his brief spell – had done. His advantage is that India will have a new captain while most of the players passed through the junior ranks when he was the coach there.

Some captains and coaches work well together. This has more to do with man management than with cricketing expertise. The Greg Chappell-Sourav Ganguly partnership is an example of how quickly things can go wrong, despite a promising start. The captain led from the front, the coach from behind, and everybody else lined up behind one or the other.

In cricket, as in most professions, the coach or captain is chosen for specific skills. In different phases, sometimes these skills become irrelevant and other skills maybe required. When teams are at a low ebb, they need a rebuilder.

Once they have settled down, they need a consolidator. If a slide begins, they need someone who can turn things around quickly, and stand as a bulwark against erosion in team spirit and spiralling failures.

Some excellent rebuilders may not be sound consolidators while a captain who is the boy on the burning deck might lack the skills to put out the fire.

Sometimes captains and coaches are terrifically good at one of the three jobs, or two of them. Most companies – and cricket teams are often run like professional companies – are unemotional about a sacking here or a replacement there that they think will make the difference. Sometimes a change for the sake of a change works too.

Few CEOs or coaches resign of their own volition because they think that is best for their company or their team. The signs are clearer when seen from the outside. Not all teams go through the three phases requiring three different sets of skills to set them right again nor are the phases so clear-cut.

That is what makes change so difficult to accept for one group of supporters while appearing inevitable to another. As always, whether with top companies or cricket teams, there is only one measure of success: the results.

The coach-captain relationship is a crucial one, but not one that has been studied in any great detail. When things are going well, no one wants to rock the boat; when things begin to appear shaky one or the other has usually compromised.

India starts favourite to seal ODI series

Rahul, Shreyas and Dhawan's return poses a problem of plenty; Pollard's men will look to put up a fight

Time to kick on: Kohli will be keen to convert his starts into a big innings soon. ▪PTI

WI IN INDIA

AMOL KARHADKAR
AHMEDABAD

A problem of plenty. It is one of the grand old cliches that sport outfits have thrown around for years. In a pandemic-struck world, with the squad size much larger than usual, this has turned into reality.

When India takes on the West Indies at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Wednesday in the second ODI in an attempt to seal the three-match series, Rohit Sharma and Co. will certainly have that problem when finalising its combination.

K.L. Rahul (personal reasons), Shreyas Iyer, Shikhar Dhawan and Ruturaj Gaikwad (COVID-19 affected) were unavailable for Sunday's series opener. Since then, Rahul has had two hits in the nets, including Tuesday evening's training, while Shreyas and Dhawan were out of isolation and had a light workout with the squad.

Dhawan and Shreyas though are highly unlikely to be considered for selection on Wednesday. Still, Rahul's availability means India has plenty to ponder before the toss. At the time being named in the squad, Rahul was expected to bat in the middle order, as he has done frequently in the last two years in ODIs.

Kishan or Hooda?

With Dhawan's unavailability, the team management will have to decide whether to use Rahul at the top along with Rohit or continue to let him play the finisher's role. Depending on Rahul's batting position it will be decided whether Ishan Kishan, who opened on Sunday, or Deepak Hooda, who batted sensibly on his ODI debut, will make way for the vice-captain.

Despite being drafted in as a possible batting all-rounder, Hooda was not required to bowl on Sunday. With the team struggling to find a reliable bowling option among the top six batters, it will be interesting to see if Hooda is persisted with at the cost of Kishan.

In the bowling department, with all five bowlers, especially the spin duo of Yuzvendra Chahal and Washington Sundar, putting up an impressive show, it's unlikely that there will be a change in the line-up. Unless, of course, the management feels the need to rotate the pacers.

While India will be gunning to spin its web around the Windies, Kieron Pollard and Co. will be hoping to raise the bar and stretch India after a lacklustre opener. Pollard will hope the West Indies batters withstand the constant pressure applied by India's bowlers so that he and Jason Holder can accelerate in the latter half.

Besides, the youngsters in the squad will obviously be looking to make a case for themselves ahead of the Indian Premier League auction set for the weekend. But if the conditions at the Motera continue to be as spin-friendly as they were on Sunday, the writing will in all likelihood be on the wall for the visiting outfit.

The teams (from): India: Rohit Sharma (Capt.), K.L. Rahul (Vice-capt.), Ishan Kishan, Mayank Agarwal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Deepak Hooda, Rishabh Pant, Deepak Chahar, Shardul Thakur, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Washington Sundar, Shikhar Dhawan, Shreyas Iyer, Ravi Bishnoi, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, and Avesh Khan.

West Indies: Kieron Pollard (Capt.), Nicholas Pooran (Vice-capt.), Fabian Allen, Darren Bravo, Roston Chase, Sheldon Cottrell, Dominic Drakes, Jason Holder, Shai Hope, Akeal Hosein, Brandon King, Kyle Mayers, Rovman Powell, Romario Shepherd, Odean Smith, and Hayden Walsh Jr.

Match starts at 1.30 p.m.

'Let me be Suryakumar Yadav'

Batter lightens up interaction with his witty replies

AMOL KARHADKAR
AHMEDABAD

Suryakumar Yadav has a knack of enlivening the mood around him. Often, during his decade-long stint in First Class cricket, the batter has been seen cheering up his teammates, sometimes even the opposition, with his jovial comments.

On Tuesday, his wit converted a mundane media session into an entertaining one with the batter and all those attending it virtually ending up in splits frequently during the interaction.

"Let me be Suryakumar Yadav," was his witty response when he was compared with Michael Bevan, the great Australian finisher.

Be fearless

"With great difficulty, I have barely played five-seven games for India... but yes I am trying... whichever number I get to bat, I try and win the game for the team. Even if we bat first, I will do the same things. I will continue to express myself and be fearless as I always am."

When asked about possible changes in India's combination, he responded with a chuckle, saying "you have chosen the wrong person to ask."

Later he was asked about sledging Kieron Pollard, the West Indies captain who is Suryakumar's IPL teammate. The question took everyone back with Pollard having lasted just a ball on Sunday. "There wasn't any time on Sunday since he was in a hurry to head back, I guess," he said.

So what was the takeaway from the interaction? Suryakumar stressed that the Indian team will not get complacent and will be keen to the seal the series come Wednesday.

"We almost ticked all the boxes. It's is a challenge to repeat what we did in the first game... let's see, really looking forward to it," he said.

Ready for an encore: Suryakumar says India almost ticked all boxes in the first ODI and will look to do it again. ▪PTI

> It's just about working up the ladder and, hopefully, the world can see that I am a genuine all-rounder
>
> AKEAL HOSEIN
> WI left-arm spinner

IN BRIEF

Gu and Mayer in the spotlight

YANQING

Eileen Gu won gold for China, earning victory in the inaugural women's freeski Big Air, with a stunning jump she had never tried before, at the Winter Olympics on Tuesday. Austria's Matthias Mayer defended his Olympic super-G title on Tuesday to make history as the first male alpine skier to win gold medals in three consecutive Games. AFP

Anderson and Broad dropped for WI Tests

LONDON

James Anderson and Stuart Broad have been dropped for the three-Test tour against the West Indies, ECB announced on Tuesday. Dom Bess, Sam Billings, Rory Burns, Jos Buttler, Haseeb Hameed and Dawid Malan, who played in the Ashes, have also been omitted.

The squad: Joe Root (Capt.), Jonny Bairstow, Zak Crawley, Matthew Fisher, Ben Foakes, Dan Lawrence, Jack Leach, Alex Lees, Saqib Mahmood, Craig Overton, Matthew Parkinson, Ollie Pope, Ollie Robinson, Ben Stokes, Chris Woakes, and Mark Wood.
REUTERS

Brevis, Petersen, Hossain shortlisted for ICC award

DUBAI

Two South Africans — batter Keegan Petersen and record-breaking U-19 World Cup star Dewald Brevis — along with Ebadot Hossain of Bangladesh were on Tuesday nominated for the ICC Player of the Month Award following their stellar performances in January. PTI

Bilbao inches up the LaLiga table

MADRID

Athletic Bilbao moved closer to the European qualification places in the Spanish league after beating Espanyol 2-1 on Monday. Oihan Sancet and Inigo Martinez scored in the first half to lead Bilbao to one point behind seventh-placed Real Sociedad.

The results: LaLiga: Athletic Bilbao 2 (Sancet 5, Martinez 16) bt Espanyol 1 (Vilhena 3).
Serie A: Salernitana 2 (Verdi 3, 16) drew with Spezia 2 (Manaj 12-pen, Verde 31-pen).
AP

Ashish stars for Steelers, Pirates beat Mumba

BENGALURU

Ashish (16 points) was the star for Haryana Steelers as it beat Tamil Thalaivas 37-29 in the ProKabaddi League here on Tuesday. In the second match, Patna Pirates beat U Mumba 47-36. PTI

Women in Blue begin tour with one-off T20I

The team will also play five ODIs as part of its preparation for the World Cup

INDIA IN NZ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
QUEENSTOWN

The Indian women's cricket team will get to fine tune its ODI World Cup preparations in a six-game limited overs series against hosts New Zealand, beginning with the one off T20 here on Wednesday.

The one off T20 is scheduled ahead of the five ODIs starting February 12. Though the team will be looking to win, it will also be approaching the 20-over game to get used to the conditions with the bigger goal for World Cup in mind.

ODI skipper Mithali Raj, who won't be playing the T20I, said on Tuesday all the six games will be used to figure out the core players who will feature in the ICC event in March-April.

"It is a different format. The team will be looking forward to wining the game. Having said that, this T20 will also give a fair idea about the wickets, how the players are coping with an open ground," Mithali said at a virtual media interaction referring to the windy conditions.

T20I skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who ended her lean run with the bat with a successful Women's Big Bash League, will look to lead from the front on Wednesday. Though workload management has gained significance in COVID times, Mithali made it clear that it will be a secondary issue for them in the six games as it is important for fast bowlers to get used to the conditions.

"It will take them at least two or three games to get used to the conditions," she said.

"We play to win but I look forward to giving some game time to the core players. It is important they find their rhythm before the World Cup," Mithali added.

New Zealand skipper Sophie Devine also stressed on testing out a few players in the series against India. Both teams are sailing in the same boat as far as finalising their combinations are concerned.

On the eve of the game, Devine called India the "sleeping giants" of women's cricket and said playing them will be an ideal preparation for the ICC showpiece.

The teams (from): India: Harmanpreet Kaur (Capt.), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Yastika Bhatia, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh, Sneh Rana, Pooja Vastrakar, Meghna Singh, Renuka Singh, Taniya Bhatia, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Poonam Yadav, Ekta Bisht, Simran Bahadur, Sabbhineni Meghana.

New Zealand: Sophie Devine (Capt.), Amy Satterthwaite (Vice-capt.), Suzie Bates, Lauren Down, Maddy Green, Brooke Halliday, Hayley Jensen, Fran Jonas, Jess Kerr, Melie Kerr, Frankie Mackay, Rosemary Mair, Katey Martin, Hannah Rowe, Lea Tahuhu.

Match begins at 5.30 a.m. IST.

Best foot forward: Harmanpreet, who ended her lean patch by running into form in the WBBL, will look to lead by example.

Sports psychologist's presence vital: Mithali

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
QUEENSTOWN

India ODI captain Mithali Raj says the team is benefiting immensely from the presence of sports psychologist Mughda Bavare during its ongoing tour of New Zealand.

Mithali had earlier also spoken on the need for a psychologist to deal with pressure of knockout games but with tours now being played in bubbles, the professional help is needed all the more.

"In today's times, it is even more important to have them around with the team with the longer duration of tour and quarantine and bubbles," said Mithali.

"It is an extended tour of two months with the ODI series and the World Cup. It does help to have one-on-one sessions with (sports psychologist).

"You see things in a different way and it helps you to understand your own self, to find your own ways to deal with pressure and quarantine. To have somebody is always helpful," she added.

Asked what she does during quarantine, Mithali said: "I read books, try to solve puzzles. Off the field, I try and divert my mind to other things."

Mithali. ▪FILE PHOTO

> It does help to have one-on-one sessions with a sports psychologist

Indian colts back home

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The India U-19 squad returned homeon Tuesday after winning a record-extending fifth World Cup trophy.

The squad took the long flight back from the Caribbean with connections in Amsterdam and Dubai before reaching Bengaluru.

The players are to be felicitated by the BCCI, most likely on Wednesday, at Ahmedabad.

Since the ICC makes travel arrangements for all participating teams, the Indian contingent flew economy class, which is the norm, but it made travel all the more tedious.

NCA chief V.V.S. Laxman, who was also part of the squad in the West Indies, travelled separately with the selectors and five reserve players who were rushed to the Caribbean after a COVID-19 outbreak in the Indian camp before the second league game against Ireland.

India had beaten England in the final.

India begins with a bang

Thrashes France 5-0 in its opener

FIH PRO LEAGUE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
POTCHEFSTROOM

Olympic bronze medallist India began its FIH Pro League Hockey campaign with a bang as it thrashed France 5-0 in a thoroughly dominant display here on Tuesday.

After a barren first quarter, India slammed home three goals in the second before finding the target twice in the third.

India got four penalty corners in the match from which it scored two. France got three PCs but wasted all of them.

Harmanpreet Singh and Varun Kumar scored from penalty corners in the 21st and 24th minutes before Shamsher Singh made it 3-0 in the 28th minute with a field goal.

Mandeep Singh (32nd) and Akashdeep Singh (41st) completed the tally for India.

Playing in its first match of the year, World No. 3 India took some time to settle down in the first quarter.

But once it got a measure of its opponent, the Manpreet Singh-led side upped the ante and dominated the remaining three quarters.

India faces host South Africa in its second match on Wednesday.

The result:

India 5 (Harmanpreet 21-pc, Varun 24-pc, Shamsher 28, Mandeep 32, Akashdeep 41) bt France 0.

On the move: The Manpreet-led Indian side was unstoppable in its match against France. ▪TWITTER@THEHOCKEYINDIA

Exciting victory for Torpedoes

Come back from two sets down to beat Blue Spikers

PVL

SPORTS BUREAU

Bengaluru Torpedoes notched up an exciting 14-15, 12-15, 15-13, 15-9, 15-14 win over Kochi Blue Spikers in the Rupay Prime Volleyball League (PVL) at the G.M.C. Balayogi Stadium here on Tuesday.

The first set saw Blue Spikers stage a terrific fightback after being down 7-14 and claim the next eight points, thanks to substitute T.R. Sethu's splendid show.

He not only came up with big, powerful serves but also excelled at the net in the company of experienced captain A. Karthik and Colton Cowell.

In the second, Blue Spikers took charge after breaking away at 8-8 as Sethu continued to excel. Deepesh, Cody Caldwel and Cowell worked in tandem at the net to nullify the striking prowess of the opposition.

However, Torpedoes fought back in the third set thanks to the brilliance of captain Ranjit Singh, who was declared the player-of-the-match, Lavmeet Katariya, Pankaj Sharma and G.S. Varun.

The team took a comfortable 6-2 lead in the fourth before Deepesh Kumar Sinha and Cody scripted a fightback for Blue Spikers.

But, Varun and Pankaj's power game and Ranjit's wonderful display at the net saw Torpedoes win the set and take the contest into the decider.

It was anybody's game in the final set before the consistent Deepesh of Blue Spikers had to limp off with a left ankle injury with the score reading 5-3 in his team's favour.

Torpedoes rode on some fine work from Lovemeet and Pankaj to clinch the set and the match as the Kochi outfit suffered its second straight defeat.

The result:

Bengaluru Torpedoes bt Kochi Blue Spikers 14-15, 12-15, 15-13, 15-9, 15-14.

Wednesday's match: Calicut Heroes vs Ahmedabad Defenders, 7 p.m.

Escape to victory: Torpedoes rode on Pankaj and Lovemeet's brilliance in the final set to seal the issue. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ATK MB stuns leader HFC

ISL 2021-22

SPORTS BUREAU

ATK Mohun Bagan ended the winning run of leader Hyderabad FC with a 2-1 victory in an ISL-8 fixture at Bambolim on Tuesday.

In a keenly contested match, ATK MB scored through Liston Colaco and Manvir Singh in the space of three minutes while HFC pulled one back through Australian forward Joel Chianese.

In the opening period, ATK MB grabbed the initiative, making a few forays into the HFC box and forcing goalkeeper Laxmikant Kattimani to pull off a couple of desperate saves.

ATK MB's first opportunity came in the 18th minute when a pass reached an unmarked Boumous, but he shot wide.

In the next minute, David Williams' snap shot was cleared by Kattimani.

The ATK MB attack suffered a double blow as it lost two of its key players – Boumous and defensive midfielder Carl McHugh – to injuries in the opening half.

Colaco fetched the lead in the 56th minute, latching on to a pinpoint cross from Williams. The Kolkata side immediately scored the next one when Manvir was set up by a lovely chip from Finland midfielder Joni Kauko. Though Chianese scored for HFC in the 67th minute, the ATK MB defence held on firmly after that.

The result: Hyderabad FC 1 (Chianese 67) lost to ATK Mohun Bagan 2 (Colaco 56, Manvir 59).

Toast of his mates: Manvir, on the ground, struck the second goal for ATK MB. ▪FOCUS SPORTS/ISL

TV PICKS

India vs West Indies: 2nd ODI, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 1.30 p.m.
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
FIH Pro League: South Africa vs India, SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 1.15 a.m. (Thursday)

IN BRIEF

Khawaja included in Australian Test squad

BRISBANE

Pakistan-born Usman Khawaja has been included in an 18-man squad for Australia's first Test tour to Pakistan since 1998.

The squad: Pat Cummins (Captain), Ashton Agar, Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Cameron Green, Marcus Harris, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Mitchell Marsh, Michael Neser, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Mitchell Swepson and David Warner.

Mitchell stars in Jazz's comeback win

SALT LAKE CITY

Donovan Mitchell scored 32 points as Utah Jazz erased a double-digit, second-half deficit to defeat New York Knicks 113-104 on Monday. Devin Booker scored 38 points as Phoenix Suns topped Chicago Bulls 127-124 for its 13th win in 14 games.

The results: Toronto 116 bt Charlotte 101; Miami 121 bt Washington 100; Phoenix 127 bt Chicago 124; Golden State 110 bt Oklahoma City 98; Utah 113 bt New York 104.

REUTERS

Prajnesh lone Indian in the fray

Ramkumar Ramanathan and other home players bow out in singles first round

BENGALURU OPEN

N. SUDARSHAN
BENGALURU

India's singles hopes at the Bengaluru Open ATP Challenger tournament rests solely in the hands of Prajnesh Gunneswaran, as all the other remaining home players, including Ramkumar Ramanathan, crashed out in the first round on Tuesday.

Prajnesh defeated Frenchman Mathias Bourgue 7-6(4), 6-2 to set up a second-round meeting with top seed Jiri Vesely, who overcame a stiff challenge from Swiss qualifier Antoine Bellier 6-3, 6-7 (2), 6-2.

Ramkumar, however, disappointed. In the last singles match of the day, he was beaten 3-6, 6-0, 7-5 by Aussie Max Purcell.

Take that! Except for the first set tie-breaker, it was all smooth sailing for Prajnesh. ▪ SUDHAKARA JAIN

The results (first round): Singles: Gabriel Decamps (Bra) bt Federico Gaio (Ita) 6-3, 6-3; Altug Celikbilek (Tur) bt Arjun Kadhe 6-1, 6-2; Borna Gojo (Cro) bt Rio Noguchi (Jpn) 3-6, 6-1, 6-2; Alexandre Muller (Fra) bt Stefano Travaglia (Ita) 6-1, 7-6(2); Jiri Vesely (Cze) bt Antoine Bellier (Sui) 6-3, 6-7(2), 6-2; Cem Ilkel (Tur) bt Steven Diez (Can) 6-2, 6-3; Prajnesh Gunneswaran bt Mathias Bourgue (Fra) bt 7-6 (4), 6-2; Dimitar Kuzmanov (Bul) bt S.D. Prajwal Dev 6-2, 6-2; Evgeny Donskoy (Rus) bt Malek Jaziri (Tun) 7-6(10), 6-4; 6-Enzo Couacaud (Fra) bt Rishi Reddy 6-1, 6-3; Max Purcell (Aus) bt Ramkumar Ramanathan 3-6, 6-0, 7-5.

Doubles: Yuki Bhambri & Divij Sharan bt Celikbilek & Ilkel (Tur) 3-1 (retd.); Jay Clarke (GBR) & Marc Polmans (Aus) bt Arjun Kadhe & Chun-hsin Tseng (Tpe) 2-6, 6-4, [10-7]; Alexander Erler (Aut) & Vit Kopriva (Cze) bt Adil Kalyanpur & Mukund Sasikumar 6-4, 7-5.

Services men in last eight

NATL. VOLLEYBALL

SPORTS BUREAU
BHUBANESWAR

Services defeated Kerala 3-2 in a thriller and entered the men's quarterfinal after its second win in Group B in the 70th National senior volleyball on Tuesday.

The results (league):

Men: Services bt Kerala 25-23, 22-25, 25-22, 22-25, 17-15; TN bt Assam 25-23, 19-25, 23-25, 25-23, 15-5; AP bt Madhya Pradesh 25-16, 25-18, 25-21.

Chandigarh bt Puducherry 25-20, 25-21, 25-11; Delhi bt WB 25-21, 26-24, 25-15; Punjab bt Chhattisgarh 25-15, 25-20, 25-22.

Women: TN bt Chhattisgarh 25-11, 25-16, 25-7; Railways bt Maharashtra 25-13, 25-10, 25-6.

Odisha bt Uttaranchal 25-12, 25-13, 25-14; UP bt AP 25-15, 22-25, 25-18, 27-25.

Praveen Kumar, Asiad medallist, passes away

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) on Tuesday expressed deep shock on the demise of former Asian Games gold medallist Praveen Kumar Sobti, who passed away after suffering a cardiac arrest here.

Praveen Kumar, who played 'Bheem' in the TV series "Mahabharat", breathed his last on Monday evening. He was 74 and is survived by wife, daughter, two younger brothers and a sister.

"AFI family is in deep shock on the passing away of Olympian & Asian Games medalist Shri Praveen Kumar Sobti ji,74,today," the governing body said in a tweet.

Praveen Kumar. ▪ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

Praveen Kumar represented the country in hammer and discus throw and won four medals at the Asian Games, including two gold medals in 1966 and 1970.

Humera beats Saumya

ITF TENNIS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JHAJJAR

Humera Baharmus fought hard, especially in the end, to beat free stroking left-hander Saumya Vig 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 in the first round of the $15,000 ITF women's tennis tournament on Tuesday.

Firing seven aces, the 20-year-old Humera called the shots in the climax as she dropped three points in all in winning the last three games from 3-3 in the decider.

Arthi Muniyan also battled well before being beaten 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 by Elena Jamshidi of Denmark.

Shruti Ahlawat warmed up nicely on the clay courts with a 6-1, 6-2 win over Shreya Tatavarthy.

The results (first round): Elena Jamshidi (Den) bt Arthi Muniyan 3-6, 6-3, 6-2; Shruti Ahlawat bt Shreya Tatavarthy 6-1, 6-2; Sai Samhitha bt Farhat Aleen Qamar 6-1, 6-0; Jagmeet Kaur Grewal bt Sai Dedeepya 6-3, 6-1; Mihika Yadav bt Saniya Sarfaraz Patel 6-0, 6-0; Vaidehi Chaudhari bt Pooja Ingale 6-1, 6-4; Humera Baharmus bt Saumya Vig 6-1, 3-6, 6-3; Nidhi Chilumula bt Himadri Kashyap 6-1, 6-4.

Humera. ▪ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Punnin Kovapitukted (Tha) & Anna Ureke (Rus) bt Shria Atturu (US) & Avishka Gupta 6-1, 6-0; Ishwari Matere & Shreya Tatavarthy bt Himadri Kashyap & Himaanshika Singh 6-3, 7-6 (3); Yubarani Banerjee & Jagmeet Kaur Grewal bt Sahaja Yamalapalli & Sai Dedeepya 6-2, 6-2; Smriti Bhasin & Pooja Ingale bt Ritu Ohlyan & Saniya Sarfaraz 6-0, 6-0.

Vidit, Hari play out contrasting draws

CHESS

SPORTS BUREAU

Vidit Gujrathi drew with group leader Levon Aronian and P. Harikrishna fell well short of proving his superiority over veteran Alexei Shirov in the fourth round of the FIDE Grand Prix chess in Berlin on Monday.

With two rounds remaining in the league, Vidit and Harikrishna have two points each. They need to strike big when the action resumes after a day's rest. Only the group leaders from the four four-player groups will advance to the semifinals.

Vidit needed 38 moves to hold Aronian for the second time in four days. Hari could not break Shirov's defence in their marathon lasting 76 moves.

Wesley So (3 points) appeared the best-placed aspirant to reach the semifinals.

He posted his second win after facing fellow American Leinier Dominguez Perez. Vladimir Fedoseev and Daniil Dubov were the other winners.

At present, Hikaru Nakamura (Group A), Fedoseev, Radoslaw Wojtaszek (Group B), Aronian (Group C) and So (Group D) are the front-runners to advance to the knockout phase.

The results (fourth round):

Group A: Alexander Grischuk (Rus, 2) drew with Andrey Esipenko (Rus, 2); Hikaru Nakamura (USA, 2.5) drew with Etienne Bacrot (Fra, 1.5).

Group B: Grigoriy Oparin (Rus, 1) lost to Vladimir Fedoseev (Rus, 2.5); Richard Rapport (Hun, 2) drew with Radoslaw Wojtaszek (Pol, 2.5).

Group C: Daniil Dubov (Rus, 2) bt Vincent Keymer (Ger, 1); Vidit Gujrathi (2) drew with Levon Aronian (USA, 2.5).

Group D: Leinier Dominguez Perez (USA, 2) lost to Wesley So (USA, 3); P. Harikrishna (2) drew with Alexei Shirov (Esp, 1).

DELHI ROUND-UP

Sparsh takes a five-for

Sparsh picked up five wickets conceding just three runs as Push Cricket Academy beat Rajeev Rathore Cricket Academy by eight wickets to enter the final of the 1st DR Sharma memorial tournament.

The scores: RRCA 103 in 19.3 overs (Bhavesh Tongaria 35, Sparsh 5/3, Lakshat Sehrawat 3/21) lost to PCA 106/2 in 15.3 overs (Jayant Lakhlan 54, Rakesh Pandit 44).

Vaibhav scores match-winning ton

Man of the match Vaibhav Sood scored a 99-ball 119 as M-10 Cricket Academy beat PK Sports Academy by 126 runs in the Kragbuzz under-19 tournament.

The scores: M-10 Academy 284/8 in 40 overs (Vaibhav Sood 119, Dhruv Raj Singh 48, Prince Rana 3/54) bt PK Sports Academy 158 in 30.3 overs (Rishabh Charak 3/43).

Subhania Club in semifinals

Ankit Chouhan took three wickets as Subhania Club beat DC Bal Bhawan by 91 runs to enter the semifinals of the All India Captain Dharam Pal Under-19 tournament.

The scores: Subhania Club 238/6 in 40 overs (Sangeet 48, Yashvardhan Dalal 44, Jasmeet Nain 37, Sombir Sheokand 35) bt DCBB 147/8 in 40 overs (Aditya Choudhary 67, Ankit Chouhan 3/12).

Easy win for Sethi Sports

Nirbhay Dagar and Mohit Yadav took two wickets each as Sethi Sports beat We Create Leaders by 59 runs in the RV Sports tournament.

The scores: Sethi Sports 237/7 in 40 overs (Madhav Yadav 60, Sarthak 3/44) bt WCL 178 in 36 overs.

MAC, JNNYC register wins

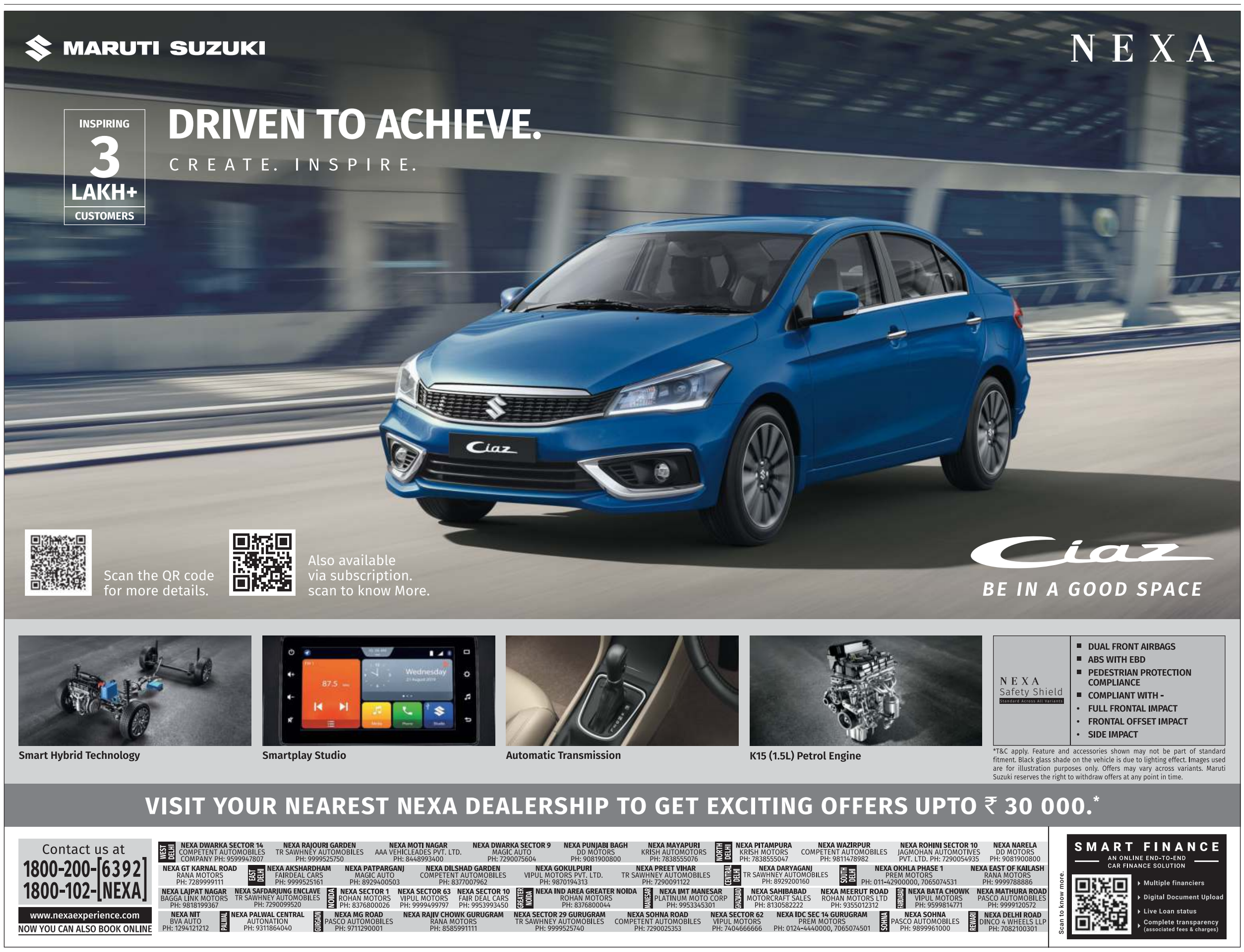
Dhananjai Singh top-scored with 69 runs and Kshitij Sharma took four wickets as Maulana Azad Club beat RPL Cricket Club by four wickets in the 1st Pushpa under-17 tournament. In another match, JNNYC Academy beat Amar Singh Cricket Academy by 37 runs.

The scores: RPL 121 in 34 overs (Kshitij Sharma 4/25) lost to MAC 122/6 in 31 overs (Dhanajai Singh 69, Aditya 3/13); JNNYC 240/7 in 40 overs (Jai Singh 71, Arnav Dhawan 43) bt ASCA 203 in 39 overs (Utkarsh Sharma 66, Shatrughan 54, Hardik 3/28, Shikhar Aggarwal 3/32).

Harshit and Abhishek among wickets

Harshit Choudhary picked up five wickets and Abhishek Rathi took three as Global Cricket Academy beat SB Youth Club by two wickets in the 1st Bindi Devi Dhoundiyal tournament.

The scores: SBYC 156 in 34 overs (Harshit Aneja 86, Harshit Choudhary 5/25, Abhishek Rathi 3/17) lost to GCA 157/8 in 33 overs (Saparsh Dhankar 96, Dhruv 3/30, Subhash Yadav 3/20).



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THE HINDU

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2022

Text & Context

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NEWS IN NUMBERS

Bank frauds

1,45,309 The number of fraud complaints registered by the RBI under the various ombudsman schemes in 2020-21. In FY20, 1,35,448 complaints were recorded, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman informed the Rajya Sabha. She said that the RBI stated that on comparing the complaints against ATM/debit cards, credit cards, and mobile/electronic banking of these two periods, there is a decline of 13% with regard to complaints in ATM/debit cards while there is an increase of 12% and 53% with regard to mobile/electronic banking and credit cards. PTI

Severe hunger in Africa

13 In million, the number of people facing severe hunger in the Horn of Africa due to drought conditions, according to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). Countries in the region, including Somalia and Kenya, face the driest conditions recorded since 1981, the agency reported on Tuesday, calling for immediate assistance to forestall a major humanitarian crisis. The WFP said it needs $327 million over the next six months for the urgent needs of 4.5 million people and to help communities become more resilient to extreme climate shocks. PTI

Airtel's revenue rise

12.60 Is the percentage rise in the third-quarter revenue reported by Indian telecom operator Bharti Airtel owing to the recent tariff hikes and subscriber additions. The company's consolidated revenue from operations for the quarter climbed to ₹298.67 billion ($4 billion) from ₹265.18 billion a year ago. The tariff hikes by telecom operators in November played a significant role in increasing the average revenue per user. This is a measure of how much an average consumer on the network spends in a month. REUTERS

Insurance coverage paid

808 In ₹ crore, the amount paid to the families of 1,616 deceased healthcare workers in India who were involved in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya informed the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. Mandaviya complemented all doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers for doing exemplary work during the pandemic. He said the Government launched the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP) scheme to provide an insurance cover of ₹50 lakh to eligible beneficiaries. PTI

Criminal candidates

26 In percent, the share of candidates contesting the Goa Assembly elections with criminal cases against them. About 8% have been booked for serious crimes. The figures were part of a report released by the Association of Democratic Reforms on Tuesday. The highest number of candidates with criminal cases are with the Congress, followed by the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party and the BJP. Of the total 301 candidates contesting the polls, 77 have declared in their affidavits that criminal cases are pending against them. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

EXPLAINER

The Governor's role in approving a Bill

Can the Governor over-ride the decision of the Legislative Houses? Under what circumstances does the President step in?

THE GIST

- The Tamil Nadu Assembly has once again adopted a Bill on the exemption of the NEET exams that was earlier returned by Governor R.N. Ravi. The Governor returned the bill stating that it was against the interests of rural and poor students.
- The Governor will now have to grant his assent to the Bill as mandated by Article 200 of the Constitution. The first proviso of the article enables the Governor to return a Bill for reconsideration. If the Bill is passed again and presented for assent, "the Governor shall not withhold assent therefrom".
- The Governor does not have discretion on matters of the Assembly and is bound to follow the advice of the ministerial Council even on matters where he/she might be withholding assent.

K. VENKATRAMANAN

The story so far: The Tamil Nadu Assembly has once again adopted a Bill that was earlier returned by Governor R.N. Ravi. The Bill seeks to grant exemption from the mandatory National Entrance-cum-Eligibility Test (NEET) for seats allotted by the Government in undergraduate medical and dental courses in Tamil Nadu. Last week, the Governor returned the Bill, contending that it was against the interests of rural and poor students.

What comes next?

There is no doubt that the Governor will now have to grant his assent to the Bill. Under Article 200 of the Constitution, which deals with grant of assent to Bills passed by the Assembly, the first proviso enables the Governor to return a Bill, that is not a Money Bill, with a message requesting the House, or Houses, if there is an upper chamber, to reconsider the Bill, or any provisions, and also consider introducing amendments he may recommend. The House will have to reconsider as suggested. If the Bill is passed again, with or without changes, and presented for assent, "the Governor shall not withhold assent therefrom".

In the present case, the Bill will have to be sent to the President for his assent, as it is enacted under an entry in the Concurrent List on a subject that is covered by a central law

In the present case, the Bill will have to be sent to the President for his assent, as it is enacted under an entry in the Concurrent List on a subject that is covered by a central law. NEET is mandatory under Section 10D of the Indian Medical Council of India Act, an amendment introduced in 2016. Therefore, the State law can be in force only if the President grants his assent. This will cure the 'repugnancy' between the central and State laws.

What is the Governor's function in passing a Bill?

Under Article 200, the Governor may (a) grant assent (b) withhold assent (c) return for reconsideration by the Legislature or (b) reserve for the consideration of the President any Bill passed by the State legislature and presented to him for assent.

There is no timeframe fixed in the Constitution for any of these functions. The Constitution makes it mandatory that the Governor should reserve for the President's consideration if, in his opinion (a phrase that means he exercises his own discretion in this), a Bill that "so derogates from the powers of the High Court as to endanger the position which that Court is by this Constitution designed to fill". In other words, any Bill that seems to clip the wings of the High Court or undermine its functioning will not become law without the President's assent.

What happens when the President considers the Bill?

Once again, there is no timeframe. Article 201 says when a Bill is reserved by a Governor for his consideration, "the President shall declare either that he assents to the Bill, or that he withholds assent therefrom". He may also direct the Governor to return the Bill, if it is not a Money Bill, to the Legislature along with a message. The House or Houses will have to reconsider the Bill within a period of six months from receiving it. It may pass the Bill again with or without any change. The Bill shall again be presented to the President for his consideration. The article ends with that. This means that the Bill will become law if the assent is given, but nothing can be done if the Bill is denied assent by the President or if he makes no decision.

Does the Governor have any discretion in this regard?

Section 75 of the Government of India Act, 1935, contained the words 'in his discretion' while referring to the Governor's grant of assent to Bills. The phrase was consciously omitted when Article 175 in the draft Constitution (later renumbered as the present Article 200) was enacted. Commentators generally agree that the Governor, who normally functions on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, is bound to go by the advice in the matter of granting assent. It may seem unusual to say the Governor should act on ministerial advice even when withholding assent and returning a Bill for reconsideration. However, a reading of the Constituent Assembly debates shows that this was indeed what the framers of the Constitution intended. It was explained on behalf of the drafting committee that there may be a situation when the Council of Ministers feels that a Bill has been hastily adopted or that it requires changes.

In such a situation, the Constitution must provide for the possibility that the Council may want to recall its Bill, and accordingly advise the Governor to return it.

While analysing the provision, the Sarkaria Commission on Union-State Relations points out that the Constitutional Adviser's note said there could be occasions for even withholding assent on the advice of the Ministers.

For instance, if after a Bill is passed the Ministers resign before the Bill gets the Governor's assent, the new Ministry may not want to go ahead with the Bill and might advise against assent being given. These examples suggest that no discretion was ever envisaged for the Governor in dealing with Bills.

Pass the Bill: Students hold placards as they stage a protest against Tamil Nadu Governor's stand on the anti-NEET Bill, at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on February 8, 2022. PTI

EXPLAINER

Renewing Indo-Lanka relations after a period of strain

What were the causes of tension between the two neighbouring countries?

MEERA SRINIVASAN

The story so far: Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister G.L. Peiris on Monday met his counterpart S. Jaishankar in New Delhi, as part of the ongoing high-level, and increasingly frequent, bilateral engagement between the neighbours. New Delhi's economic assistance to Colombo in recent weeks has made a "world of difference", he told The Hindu in an interview. After a year marked by strain and a trust deficit, recent developments signal a "fresh energy" in Indo-Lanka ties, according to Mr. Peiris.

How is India helping?

Beginning January 2022, India has been providing crucial economic support to the island nation in the grip of a severe dollar crisis that, many fear, might lead to a sovereign default, and a severe shortage of essentials in the import-reliant country.

The relief extended by India from the beginning of this year totals over $1.4 billion –a $400 currency swap, a $500 loan deferment and a $500 Line of Credit for fuel imports. Sri Lanka is further negotiating a $1 billion assistance from India to help the near 22 million-strong country as it faces an unprecedented economic crisis.

A container vessel is offloaded at the East Terminal of the Colombo port. AFP

Why India?

Before the pandemic struck, and soon after, it was India that the ruling Rajapaksas first approached with requests for a debt freeze and currency swap. However, for about two years there was no response from Delhi. Meanwhile, Colombo also sought and obtained financial assistance from China through the pandemic years, by way of new loans and a currency swap. China also provided about 80% of the vaccines administered by Sri Lanka, where about 65% of the population is fully vaccinated. Colombo also received some assistance from other countries, such as Bangladesh.

Is there a shift?

The last year saw a dramatic turn in Indo-Lanka relations, beginning with Colombo's sudden decision in February 2021, to unilaterally cancel a 2019 agreement to jointly develop a strategic port (East Container) terminal in Colombo with India and Japan.

New Delhi and Tokyo were shocked. They expressed their displeasure at the Rajapaksa government's decision unambiguously. However, Colombo soon offered what it called a "compromise deal" to India, roping in the Adani Group as the main investor in a neighbouring, West Container Terminal.

India quickly took the offer but its concerns over a long-pending agreement on the joint development of the World War II-era oil tanks in the strategically located, eastern Trincomalee district remained. It was a key talking point during Sri Lankan Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa's visit to New Delhi end of last year, when he discussed a "four-pronged" approach with India to address Sri Lanka's food and energy security. Mr. Basil sort emergency assistance from India when Sri Lanka's foreign reserves dropped to $1.6 billion in November 2021, leaving no dollars for importing essentials, or meeting debt obligations.

New Delhi's assistance, diplomatic sources indicated, was contingent on Colombo firming up the Trincomalee project agreement. Sure enough, Sri Lanka soon announced that it would sign the Trincomalee oil tank farm deal with India. On January 6, 2022, the two sides inked the agreement, marking a major milestone in the long-dragging project. A week later, India confirmed a $400 million currency swap for Sri Lanka, while deferring another $500 million due for settlement to the Asian Clearing Union (ACU). On February 2, 2022, the Export Import Bank (EXIM) of India and the Government of Sri Lanka signed a $500- million Line of Credit agreement to ease Sri Lanka's fuel imports.

Are there other sources of tension?

Yes. The Palk Bay fisheries conflict, involving fishermen of Tamil Nadu and their counterparts in war-affected northern Sri Lanka has escalated in recent weeks, following mid-sea clashes between fishermen from both sides.

Two fishermen from Sri Lanka's northern Jaffna district were found dead after one such clash, triggering massive protests. The Sri Lankan fishermen protested Indian fishermen's use of the destructive bottom trawling fishing method along their coast, despite their voicing concern over its impact on marine resources and their post-war livelihoods for years now. Bilateral talks between governments and fisher leaders have proved unsuccessful so far, with Tamil Nadu fishermen reluctant to move away from the practice of bottom trawling that yields high profits.

Another aspect in bilateral engagement is the pending political solution to Sri Lanka's Tamil question. Arguably, India's emphasis on the rights of Tamils has come down in recent years, with a growing China pre-occupation dominating its Sri Lanka policy.

India and Sri Lanka's Tamil leadership continue to engage on this aspect. Prominent Tamil leaders recently wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking India's intervention in ensuring a durable political solution to Sri Lanka's historic ethnic question. However, it remains to be seen if India has the leverage to influence the Rajapaksa administration to decisively address the Tamils' long-pending concerns, in the new Constitution promised by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

THE GIST

- India from the beginning of this year has given Sri Lanka economic relief worth over $1.4 billion. Sri Lanka is further negotiating a $1 billion assistance from India as it faces an unprecedented economic crisis.
- The main sources of tension between the countries include the sudden cancellation of the 2019 agreement to jointly develop the East Container terminal in Colombo along with Japan as well as the the Palk Bay fisheries conflict and the Tamil question.
- India extended generous financial assistance to the island nation following the latter's announcement of signing the Trincomalee oil tank farm deal with India.

For dignity: Hijab clad women staging a protest in Raichur on Monday against the 'dress codes' being imposed in schools and colleges of coastal Karnataka. ▪ SANTOSH SAGAR

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Coasting towards trouble

The communalism being mounted in coastal Karnataka attempts to sever ties between communities

VALERIAN RODRIGUES

This piece by Valerian Rodrigues dated August 3, 2017, gives us a history of the communally sensitive regions of coastal Karnataka which is now witnessing escalating tensions over the hijab row wherein Muslim women wearing the headscarf are not allowed entry into colleges and other educational institutions.

The regional media in Karnataka has resorted to highly suggestive terms to describe the recurrent pattern of communal outburst in coastal Karnataka, particularly in the outlying areas of Mangaluru city, in recent months. One such term is the 'Republic of coastal Karnataka', where communal bands rule the roost and the State enjoys little clout as sovereign, in the same way as in the 'Republic of Bellary' where, a few years ago, the writ of the mining barons ran. While such an analogy may not capture the everyday social dynamics of coastal Karnataka, the term does indicate an emerging social sensibility in the region where wanton and brutal killing of an ideological adversary is increasingly seen as normal and displayed as a public spectacle to reinforce community boundaries.

It is important to distinguish between ideological and social communalism mounted in coastal Karnataka on the one hand and political communalism elsewhere in the State, largely occasioned by the electoral calculations at work, on the other. Political communalism employs an event, a monument, a syncretic space or a social cleavage to pit a large group of people against the other. It does not sever all ties of people forged around social division of labour, linguistic affinities, folklore. But social and ideological communalism as in coastal Karnataka attempts to sever communities from all social ties and employs every possible resource to subserve this end. At the same time, such communalism operates in a context of growing sociality. It marks off a people from the rest when their adherents are akin to one another by invoking religious divide as its justification.

Community enclosures

Coastal Karnataka, comprising Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and a large part of Uttara Kannada district, has always been peripheral to the larger dynamics at work in the rest of Karnataka. During the national movement, a numerically significant section of Brahmins from this region aligned itself with sections of backward castes to form the main plank of the Congress, while the local landed gentry and Muslims tended to favour the non-Brahmin movement. There were other castes and communities such as Billavas and Christians who devoted themselves primarily to self-help and self-improvement. Following Independence, electoral politics drew the landed gentry, Muslims, Christians and a little later the Billavas into the Congress fold. Communists and socialists too became an important political presence in the region with their social base among the tile, cashew, beedi and handloom workers as well as the tenants. Communal skirmishes have always erupted in this region from the late 1940s and were also employed to target the radical politics of socialists and communists. However, such conflicts remained primarily local.

Several developments in the 1970s and '80s led to a distinct dynamics in this region. The oil boom after 1973 gave a boost to migration of Muslims and Christians to the Gulf region. The Catholic Church, with 8% of the local population as its adherents, regrouped itself, following Vatican Council II, by embracing Konkani as its ritual language. The access to West Asia helped Muslims of the region as a whole, including communities with old roots such as the Bearys and the Navayats, to augment their entrepreneurial abilities and explore new avenues of employment, while bringing them face to face with the chilling developments in the Islamic world, particularly in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini.

In recent years, given the economic toll that communal riots exact in the context of thick social interactions, they tend to be localised or erupt for a day or two before they subside, as reconnaissance exercises.

Diverse Brahmin castes, that form about 10% of the local population, have always enjoyed wider contacts across India particularly given the legacies of association with the Advaita and Dwaita traditions, as represented by Sringeri and Udupi, respectively, and the age-old hold of Gaud-Saraswats on trade in the western coast. While sections of Brahmins and backward castes along the coast came under the influence of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Sangh Parivar in this region early, it was in the late 1970s and early 1980s that this influence was to prove decisive. Calls came to be issued from different platforms for Hindu unity and pitting this unity against that of the Christians and Muslims. At the same time, land reforms and preferential measures to Backward Classes initiated by Devaraj Urs in the 1970s made the landed gentry desert the Congress fold, while tenants and backward castes flocked to it in strength. It also led to the precipitous decline of the socialists and communists in this region.

This rupture of community affinities was accompanied by the expansion of private education in this region, particularly under the aegis of upper-caste entrepreneurs. Christians were already a strong presence in this field, and Muslim entrepreneurship too registered a steady advance in this sector from the 1980s. In certain other domains too such as land deals, construction, transport, and professions, there was a visible presence of members drawn from different communities. But such diversification of the market was invariably riven by religious belonging. While the goods and services sought were the same across the community divide, the associated members approached them as members of their respective communities.

Communal flare-ups

Communal riots in this region began to assume a mass character in the 1980s. Following the demolition of Babri mosque in 1992, several parts of this region erupted and the Army had to be called in to Mangaluru to restore law and order. From the early 1990s, Bhatkal in Uttar Kannada district blazed a distinct trail of its own when a few youths of this town came under the influence of political Islam. After 1992 communal riots have constantly erupted in this region, a major one being at Surathkal on the outskirts of Mangaluru in 1998, which resulted in eight deaths. Following the Surathkal riot, social vigilantism became a major social phenomenon in the district, every community leader playing the role of disciplining its members while gangs in the streets enforced it. Local gangs in the name of Sri Ram Sene and Hindu Yuva Sene policed social intimacies, often beating up members of other communities, while similar gangs guarded the boundaries of their own communities.

Politics in the region has largely traversed the fault lines of community divide. However, in recent years, given the economic toll that communal riots exact in the context of thick social interactions, they tend to be localised or erupt for a day or two before they subside, as reconnaissance exercises. But there is a new pattern that has become common, i.e. killing a political activist belonging to one of the militant communal groups and taking over the streets either to condemn such killings or to draw political mileage out of it. It serves the interests of those who want to benefit from generalised social interactions without considering the bond of fellow-feeling cutting across communities.

The State government has largely followed a strategy of using the law and order machinery to deal with communal flare-ups in this region. Media reportage and local gossip tend to blame politicians for stoking communal passions for electoral gains. But the issue demands a much more complex response if a shared public life is to be enabled in the context of generalised social interactions deeply marked by community affiliations.

Valerian Rodrigues is a former Professor at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

THE GIST

- The social and ideological communalism in coastal Karnataka attempts to sever communities from all social ties and employs every possible resource to subserve this end. At the same time, such communalism operates in a context of growing sociality. It marks off a people from the rest by invoking religious divide as its justification.
- Coastal Karnataka has always been peripheral to the larger dynamics at work in the rest of of the State. Several developments in the 1970s and '80s led to a distinct dynamics in this region. The oil boom after 1973 gave a boost to migration of Muslims and Christians to the Gulf region while sections of Brahmins and backward castes along the coast came under the influence of the RSS and the Sangh Parivar.
- Communal riots in this region began to assume a mass character in the 1980s. Following the demolition of the Babri mosque in 1992, communal riots have constantly erupted in this region, a major one being at Surathkal in 1998. While in recent years, communal riots tend to be localised there is a new pattern that has become common, i.e. killing a political activist belonging to one of the militant communal groups and drawing political mileage out of it. It serves the interests of those who want to benefit from generalised social interactions without considering the bond of fellow-feeling cutting across communities.

THE DAILY QUIZ

The Davis Cup, the premier international team event in men's tennis, was started on this date in 1900. A quiz on the 122-year-old competition.

1 What was the name of the event when it started and which two countries competed for honours?

2 We know the tournament is named after Dwight Davis, who led the champion team in 1900 and donated the trophy. But what is the lasting contribution of William Durgin and Rowland Rhodes to the event's history?

3 Apart from the U.S. (32 titles) and Australia (28), which countries have won the event at least 10 times?

4 India has been competing for many decades in the event and reached the title round/finals on three occasions (1966, 1974, and 1987). In 1974, this country became the fifth nation to triumph because India did not play. Which country and why did India do so?

5 Name the Australian, holder of 28 Grand Slam titles, who was a member of a record eight Davis Cup-winning teams between 1959 and 1967?

6 India's pride Leander Paes is the winningest doubles player in the competition with 45 wins across 58 ties. Name the European, who holds the mark for most singles and overall wins, whose record Paes overhauled?

7 Asif Ismail, Karan Rastogi, and Mark Ferreira are the only three Indians to achieve what rare feat?

8 Which World Cup champion in another sport is now part of the firm that runs the Davis Cup on behalf of the International Tennis Federation?

◀ Identify this Cup legend seen with R. Krishnan. What record does he hold? ▪ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

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

Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. Rochester, Kent, 2. Blacking factory, 3. Boz, 4. Mark Twain, 5. *The Dark Knight Rises*, 6. *Barnaby Rudge*, 7. It is where the tombstone of his second son, Walter Landor Dickens, is located, 8. *David Copperfield*, 9. *A Christmas Carol*, an adaptation of Dicken's novel by the same name. It won the Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film in 1972

Early Birds: Keerthi Purushothaman| Anna Krishna| Dipankar Baidya

Compiled by: V.V. Ramanan

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Living, breathing Northeast

Books which take us to a region often cut off from the mainland's imagination

ANUSUA MUKHERJEE

Achingmori. The name is on everybody's lips when Sahitya Akademi winning author Mamang Dai's latest novel, *Escaping the Land* (Speaking Tiger), begins. If it is an unfamiliar name for most readers, so it is for the characters of the novel, all of whom belong to Arunachal Pradesh, where the village of Achingmori is. But there was no Arunachal Pradesh in its present form when Achingmori hit the headlines back in the fifties. "In October 1953, a party of 165 men accompanied by an armed platoon of Assam Rifles had been attacked in a small village called Achingmori in the remote valley of the Subansiri river somewhere deep in the mountains beyond Assam. Forty-seven people including the commandant and twenty-seven Assam Rifles jawans had been killed." The massacre sets off a chain of events which will eventually lead to the formation of Arunachal Pradesh in 1987.

In *Escaping the Land*, some characters shape the course of history of the State, others are caught unwittingly in its turbulent waves. You are taken right inside their home and hearth so that by the end of the novel, you feel your perspective has subtly shifted - like the characters, you are looking at, say, Delhi, from Pasighat or Itanagar rather than the other way around. The hills of Arunachal Pradesh are no longer just a holiday destination but a place where real people lead real lives. Yes, it has magical forests but it also has moneyed timber merchants who are cutting off those forests and controlling political power. Some of them are in cahoots with insurgent groups, who make their presence felt through random acts of violence, which mar families forever. Like everywhere in the world, while kings and kingmakers fight over their own interests, common people pay the price with their lands, food reserves and lives.

Escaping the Land joins the ranks of novels which are making the northeastern States, including their gateway - North Bengal - living, breathing places riven with conflicts. Last year, Kynpham Singh Nongkynrih's *Funeral Nights* (Context) took readers to the remote West Khasi Hills, which hum not just with ritualistic chants in the novel but also with the daily chitchat of resilient women, raconteurs, pranksters, drunkards, politicians, conmen and taxi-drivers. Nongkynrih, born and brought up in Sohra (or Cherrapunjee), Meghalaya, writes about felt realities, as does Dai, who lives in Itanagar. *Funeral Nights* is as much about corrupt officials who go to villages "only to loot" as it is about the many names Khasis have for rain.

Veio Pou, another writer from the Northeast who has now moved to Delhi, writes about the unending skirmishes between Naga underground organisations and the armed forces that leave common people in a quagmire in his 2020 novel, *Waiting for the Dust to Settle* (Speaking Tiger). In the introduction, Pou quotes Temsula Ao, one of Nagaland's most well-known writers: "Nagaland's story of the struggle for self-determination started with high idealism and romantic notions of fervent nationalism, but it somehow got re-written into one of disappointment and disillusionment because it became the very thing it sought to overcome."

The tendency of revolutions to lose the plot midway is brought out startlingly in *Song of the Soil* (Rachna Books) by Chuden Kabimo, a Yuva Puraskar winning writer from Darjeeling, West Bengal. Translated from Nepali by Ajit Baral, this novel about the Gorkhaland agitation of the 80s, which claimed hundreds of lives and displaced thousands in the Darjeeling hills, is told chiefly from the point of view of adolescents, who join the rebellion without even realising what they are fighting for. But as they get separated from their families and witness dear ones die, they feel the consequences in their bones and shiver: "The fight with an enemy will come to an end, you will either win or lose. But can a war against your own people ever end? You neither win nor lose."

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