



SC dismisses U.P. govt.
plea on detention
of Kafeel Khan

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Suvendu Adhikari quits
Trinamool Congress,
others follow suit

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French President
Macron tests positive
for COVID-19

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Virat Kohli shines as
India makes slow
progress on day one

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NEARBY



Central Vista estimate
rises to ₹13,450 crore

NEW DELHI

The government's latest proposal for the redevelopment of Central Vista before an expert panel of the Ministry of Environment and Forest dropped the proposed new PM's Office from the plan, while revising the estimated cost from ₹11,794 crore to ₹13,450 crore.

NEWS ► PAGE 11

'Delhi not too happy with Centre's pollution panel'

NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde on Thursday orally remarked that the people of Delhi are not too happy with the Centre's Commission for Air Quality Management in the NCR and Adjoining Areas, set up to curb air pollution by preventing stubble-burning in Punjab, U.P. and Haryana.

CITY ► PAGE 3

Is Facebook lying to India, asks Rahul Gandhi

NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday asked if Facebook is "lying" to India and its Parliament about the contents posted by members of the Bajrang Dal. He took to Twitter to point out alleged contradictory positions taken by Facebook.

NEWS ► PAGE 11

Farmers have constitutional right to continue protest: SC

'But their purpose cannot be realised without talking'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said farmers have a constitutional right to continue with their "absolutely perfect" protest as long as their dissent against the controversial agricultural laws did not slip into violence.

"We clarify that this court will not interfere with the protest. Indeed the right to protest is part of a fundamental right and can as a matter of fact, be exercised subject to public order. There can certainly be no impediment in the exercise of such rights as long as it is non-violent and does not result in damage to the life and properties of other citizens... We are of the view at this stage that the protest should be allowed to continue without impediment and without any breach of peace by protesters or the police," a Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, observed in its order.

Court bats for panel

The court, however, said the purpose of the farmers would not be served if they continued to sit without en-



Grand entry: Farmers from Haryana arriving to join the protest against the new farm laws, at the Singhu border in Delhi on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

gaging in talks. "Yes, there is a protest that is going on... Yes, the protest is constitutional as long as it does not damage property and lives. It is an absolutely perfect protest. But their [farmers'] purpose cannot be realised if they continue to sit without talking," the CJI observed.

The court reiterated its suggestion of forming an "impartial and independent committee" of experts in agriculture to hear both the farmers and the Union government on the laws.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

MORE REPORTS ON ► PAGE 2, 5, 9

Delhi Assembly passes resolution rejecting laws

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Assembly on Thursday passed a resolution "rejecting" the farm laws, saying that they should be "repealed" by the Central government.

Attacking the BJP, AAP chief and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal appealed to the Central government to not become "worse than Britishers" who ruled India,

and said the farmer laws were made to "fund" the BJP's election campaigns.

"More than 20 farmers have been martyred in the protest. I want to ask the Centre, how many more lives will you take before you listen to the farmers of the country? Each farmer has become a Bhagat Singh at the protest site," he said.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

Mamata refuses to allow 3 IPS officers to go to Centre

Order is blatant misuse of emergency provision, she says

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

A fresh political row erupted in poll-bound West Bengal with the Union government on Thursday again demanding that the State relieve three serving IPS officers for Central deputation despite its strong reservations against the move.

Describing the Centre's order as a "colourable exercise of power and a blatant misuse of emergency provision of the IPS Cadre Rule, 1954," Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said West Bengal was "not going to cow down in front of an expansionist and undemocratic force".

Despite the objection of the State government, the Union government called the three IPS officers on central deputation. The officers were deployed for the security of BJP president J.P. Nadda when his convoy was attacked on December 10.

Mr. Nadda was visiting Diamond Harbour in the South 24 Parganas, the Lok Sabha constituency of Ms. Banerjee's nephew and MP Abhishek Banerjee. Several leaders were injured and many vehicles in the convoy of the BJP president were damaged in the attack after stones were hurled at them. Stones came flying from all

Rising tensions



A vehicle in J.P. Nadda's convoy which was damaged during the attack on Dec. 10. ■ FILE PHOTO

December 10: BJP chief J.P. Nadda's convoy attacked on way to Diamond Harbour. Party leaders hurt; several vehicles damaged. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee says BJP provoked the attack

December 11: Union Home Ministry summons State Chief Secretary and DGP for a meeting in New Delhi. Chief Secretary asks Centre to dispense with officers' presence in Delhi. Home Ministry calls for central deputation of three IPS officers responsible

ble for security to Mr. Nadda. Three FIRs registered; seven persons arrested

December 12: Kalyan Banerjee writes to Union Home Secretary, says order of central deputation for IPS officers was a tool to "coerce and terrorise" IPS and IAS officers in the State

December 17: Home Ministry allots central deputation to three IPS officers. Ms. Banerjee says she refuses to "cow down in front of expansionist and undemocratic forces"

sides at the convoy as people holding flags of the Trinamool Congress lined up on the road at several places.

Mr. Nadda said he escaped unhurt because he was in a bullet-proof car. BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvariga and vice-president Mukul Roy were among those who suffered injuries in the attack.

The Trinamool Congress leadership, including Ms. Banerjee, blamed the BJP for

the provocation which led to the attack. Three FIRs were registered and seven persons arrested.

The officers caught in the Central deputation row are Inspector General (South Bengal) Rajeev Mishra, Deputy Inspector General (Presidency Range) Praveen Kumar Tripathi, and Diamond Harbour Superintendent of Police Bholanath Pandey.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

Strengthening ties with Bangladesh a priority, says PM

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Bangladesh is a major pillar of India's 'neighbourhood first' policy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at the inauguration of summit-level talks held virtually on Thursday.

Bangladesh Prime Minister

Sheikh Hasina said many Indians were working in Bangladesh and enhancing bilateral economic ties.

The two leaders remotely launched the rail link between Chilahati (Bangladesh) and Haldibari (West Bengal), which is the fifth such link between the countries.

"Bangladesh is a major pillar of our 'neighbourhood first' policy and it has been a special priority for me from day one to strengthen our relations with Bangladesh. Today, I pay my respect to the martyrs of our both sides, who sacrificed their lives during the 1971 war, when the anti-liberation forces were defeated by us," Mr. Modi said in Hindi.

He greeted Bangladesh on the occasion of the centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. A joint statement issued at the end of the summit said that the filming of a biopic on Bangabandhu

would begin under the direction of Shyam Benegal in January 2021.

The document also pledged to name the road from Mujib Nagar to West Bengal's Nadia as "Shadhinota Shorok".

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

HC extends protection to U.P. interfaith couple

They feared action by vigilante groups

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

An interfaith couple from Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh, who were constrained to leave the State fearing harassment at the hands of vigilante groups, have found a safe haven in the Capital under the direction of the Delhi High Court.

Justice Anu Malhotra on Wednesday ordered the Delhi government and police to grant protection to the couple after they approached the court. Justice Malhotra also directed the Delhi government to provide a 'safe house' to the couple.



The court directed the Delhi government to provide a 'safe house' to the couple.

lodged is within the jurisdiction of the Mukherjee Nagar police station, the court was informed that the mobile numbers of the beat constable and the SHO of the area would also be provided to them.

In their plea filed through advocates Soutik Banerjee and Aakarsh Kamra, the 25-year-old Muslim man and 21-year-old Hindu woman said they fell in love after they met during coaching classes for competitive exams.

Advocate Vrinda Grover, appearing for the couple, argued that the couple being educated adults desire to marry each other under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, out of their own free will and volition, without any intention of converting from their religion. However, they were turned away by the DSW on December 14, 2020. They stated that the department did not even suggest an alternative location for their accommodation, thus "jeopardising the right to life, liberty and privacy".

During the hearing, the DSW stated that "adequate safe house in terms of the verdict of the Supreme Court in Shakti Vahini (Supra) would be made available to the petitioners today itself". As the safe house in which the couple would be

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Warmth all around: (From left) A farmer buys warm clothes; protesters sit near a bonfire; food being prepared at the Singhu border on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Protesters prepare for long haul after Supreme Court's directions

Some farmers at the Singhu border say they would wait for agitation leaders to take a decision

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Many of the farmers at the Singhu border on Thursday said they are prepared to continue the agitation for a longer period as they are not convinced with the recent Supreme Court directions.

However, several others said they would wait for their leaders to decide.

'Dictatorship in India'

A protester from Punjab, Daljit Singh Gill, said the farmers are ready for the long haul. He said the farmers were saying that the nation is facing "dictatorship" instead of democracy.

"The Prime Minister



A farmer blows a folk instrument during the protest at Ghazipur on Thursday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

should realise that this movement is no longer restricted to being a farmers' issue. It has become a *jan-andolan* [people's movement] now and has spread across the country and beyond. Senior citizens, women, chil-

We want the three farm laws to be repealed. Going by recent events, we cannot solely depend on the apex court and its decisions

DALJIT SINGH GILL
A protester from Punjab

dren and the youth are also braving the weather and fighting for their land," said Mr. Gill.

'Repeal the laws'

He added, "We want the three farm laws to be repealed. Going by recent events, we cannot solely depend on the apex court and

its decisions. It is unlikely that any kind of judgment will be in our favour. In the end, we have to accept what the court says but till then people will continue the fight." Taranjeet Singh, a resident of Fatehabad in Punjab, said: "This is no longer a democracy. In the recent past, we have also seen how retired Judges have been made members of the Parliament by the ruling government. How can we have faith in institutions after this?"

However, another protester Sabar Singh, said: "We are not well-versed with what the Supreme Court has said. So we will wait for our leaders to decide."

High Court declines petition seeking medical aid to farmers at the borders

Bench says similar issue being heard before apex court

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday declined to entertain a petition seeking medical aid and security to the farmers protesting on the borders of the Capital, noting that a similar issue was before the Supreme Court.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan also said its jurisdiction does not extend to areas outside the national capital territory. It said the same plea could have been filed in any

of the High Courts of Rajasthan, Punjab, or Uttar Pradesh.

Before dismissing it, the Bench observed that the plea was filed without doing any research or preparation. The court made the remarks after Delhi government additional standing counsel Sanjoy Ghose said a similar plea was being heard by the Supreme Court.

The plea also said there was a possibility that "violent anti-national groups may see the good opportunity to convert the peaceful protest by the farmers into violent riots and create communal tension among the people".

dication that they are not aware of their safety during the pandemic.

The plea said it will also create a difficult situation for the residents of Delhi, as they are more likely to be affected if there are a larger number of COVID-19 affected protesters.

The plea also said there was a possibility that "violent anti-national groups may see the good opportunity to convert the peaceful protest by the farmers into violent riots and create communal tension among the people".

'Will meet target date for road inauguration in Central Delhi'

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The government informed the Delhi High Court on Thursday that it will meet the target date of December 31 for inauguration of the stretch of road between Red Fort intersection and Fatehpuri Masjid in Chandni Chowk following its pedestrianisation.

Next date of hearing
Taking note of the submission, the court posted the case for further hearing on January 27, 2021.

A Bench was informed by Delhi government's additional standing counsel Naushad Ahmed Khan that most of the work relating to the stretch of road was complete.

Supply & Installation work

The Delhi University Teachers' Association said it was extremely unfortunate that the National Education Policy-2020 was being implemented by the Delhi University without proper consultation. DUTA president Rajib Ray on Thursday said that the association would be meeting

next week to discuss the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP).

"Teachers and students across the country have opposed NEP as the thrust remains on commercialisation of the education sector. It is extremely unfortunate that instead of focusing on how best to reach out to students during pandemic, policies

like the NEP are being bulldozed," the DUTA said. It added that rushed, mindless restructuring has compromised the quality and harmed students' time, with students being used as lab rats.

The Democratic Teachers' Front said that the NEP was being hastily implemented at the university without any deliberation with any of the stakeholders. "If the imposition of the farcical Open Book Exam was the first step in dismantling the credibility of the university system, the ongoing process of academic restructuring as per the dictats of the NEP is a great leap forward in fast-tracking the final dissolution of the university system," the DTF said.

It added that the NEP committee set up by the DU administration is attempting to implement it from the coming academic year (July 2021), which gives no time to teachers to deliberate on the recommendations.

Teachers opined that the NEP was nothing but four-year undergraduate programme, which was with-

drawn by the government in 2014 after a massive movement by the students and the teachers in a new form.

"Exit points after first and second year, leading to a certificate and diploma respectively, are yet another attempt to throw away students with a false notion of achievement," said Nandita Narain, former DUTA president.

NEP implementation draws widespread criticism from DU teachers

DUTA says policy brought in without deliberation with stakeholders; association will meet to discuss norms next week

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

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Sisodia inaugurates electrical substation

Facility will ensure stable power supply

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday inaugurated an electrical substation in Shashi Garden and also inspected an under construction underground reservoir (UGR) in Patparganj.

"With this substation, thousands of consumers of Shashi Garden and adjoining areas will have access to reliable power supply. It will also eliminate low voltage issues. Lakhs of citizens will get water from the underground reservoir with its 11 megalitre water storage capacity," Mr. Sisodia said.

This reservoir, which is

being built near Aster Public School, will double the existing water availability of this area.

Underground reservoir
Once completed, the underground reservoir will supply water to the residents of Patparganj Village, Shashi Garden, Pratap Nagar, Pandav Nagar, Mayur Vihar Phase One and Extension and other nearby areas, the Minister said.

During the inspection, the Minister said that providing better infrastructure in the form of electricity, water facilities, and quality schools and hospitals is the government's priority.

Tremors felt in Capital

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Tremors were felt in the national capital on Thursday night. However, the epicenter and the magnitude of the earthquake was not

known immediately. A medium-intensity earthquake of magnitude 4.2 hit Alwar district in Rajasthan too, the National Center for Seismology (NCS) said.

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY Auction Notice No. 08/2021-21

E-Auction Program for the Month of January-2021

All prospective bidders are invited to participate in the on-line public auctions being conducted for sale of scrap material.

E-Auction Dates **Jurisdiction of lots** **Contact No.**

12,21 & 30 January, 2021 Dy. CMM/GSD/Gorakhpur 0551-2283558

8,19 & 29 January, 2021 Dy. CMM/GSD/Izzatnagar 0581-2518138

8,20 & 29 January, 2021 Sr. DMM/Lucknow 0522-2233113

7,19 & 28 January, 2021 Sr. DMM/Varanasi 0542-2224819

6,15 & 28 January, 2021 Sr. DMM/Izzatnagar 0581-2518104

Type of Material: Scrap Rail, Cast Iron, Melting, MS, condemned Rolling Stock (Coaches, Wagons and Locomotives), Turning & Boring, Non-Ferrous such as copper, Aluminium, Batteries etc.

In the event of Auction not being completed on the same day, Auction January be continued on the subsequent days also.

Details of Auction catalogue, Procedure and Conditions of Sale are available at www.ner.gov.in. This auction programme is also available on North Eastern Railway website www.ner.indianrailways.gov.in.

CPO/R/S-41 Principal Chief Materials Manager, N.E. Railway, Gorakhpur

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- 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

Office of The Superintending Engineer
11th E/M Circle, P.W.D.,
107-Nehru Colony (Phase-II), Dharmpur, Dehradun
Phone/Fax: 0135-2669778
Tender Notice No. 2828 / 7 C.B.-11/2020 Date : 14-12-2020

SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE

The Superintending Engineer, 11th (E/M) Circle, PWD Dehradun on behalf of "Governor of Uttarakhand" invites e-tender for the following works. Tender related information will be available on web-site <https://www.uktenders.gov.in> from 19.12.2020 (5:00 PM Onward)

S.No.	Name of Work	Earnest Money	Tender Cost	Validity of Tender	Time of Completion	Category of Registration
1	Supply & Installation work of New Electric Cremation System in place of Old existing Electric Cremation System at Khadkadi, Haridwar	90,000/- (a) Cost of Tender Rs. 3000.00 (b) 18% GST of Rs. 540.00	60 Days	One Month	Original Equipment Manufacturer / Authorized Dealer	

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HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

e-Procurement Notice

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

1. The Executive Engineer, Bilaspur, Division No.1, HPPWD Bilaspur H.P. on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system, in 2 Cover System for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms registered with HPPWD Department.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	EMD	Cost of Tender	Time Limit	Eligible class of Contractor
1.	Construction of link road from Harizan Basti Massour to Matyal Km. 0/0 to 2/500. (SH:- Construction of formation cutting in Km. 0/0 to 2/500, R/Wall 0/195 to 0/240 and Construction of RCC hump culvert 900mm dia at RD. 0/040 and 0/185 with both side wing wall).	9,90,500/-	20,000/-	350/-	Three months	Class- C & D
2.	Construction of link road from Lower Amarsinghpura to Upper Amarsinghpura Km. 0/0 to 1/0. (SH:- Providing and laying M/T at RD. 0/0 to 0/500 (with cold bitumen) and C/o V-shape drain at RD. 0/0 to 0/500).	6,48,691/-	13,000/-	350/-	Three months	Class- A,B,C & D

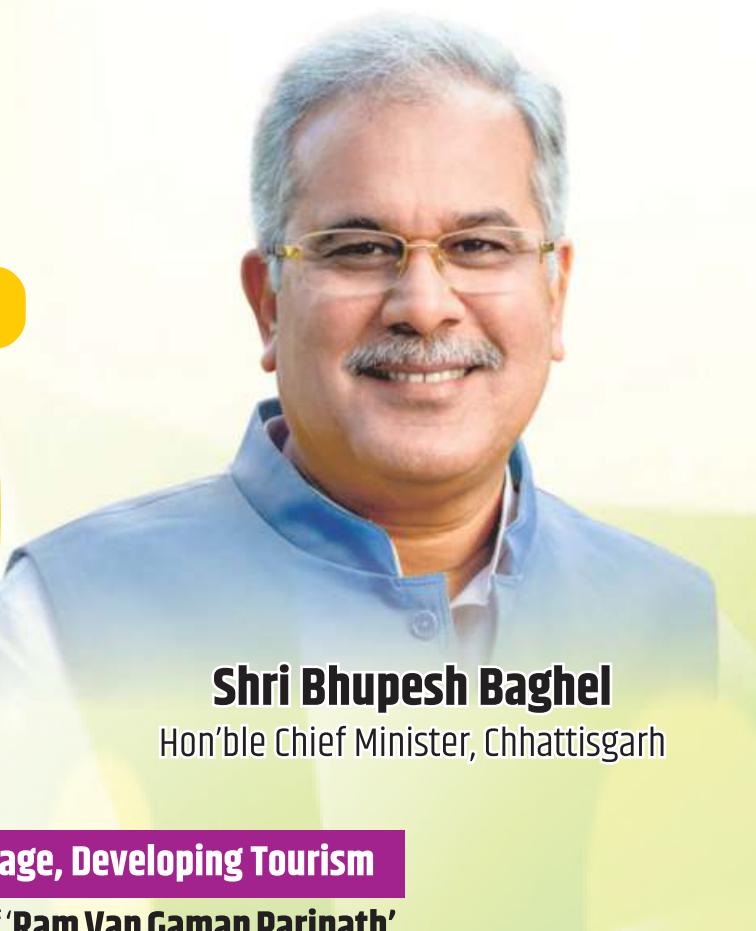
2. **Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission:** The Bid document is available online and bid should be submitted in online mode on website <https://htptenders.gov.in>. Bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). "Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPPWD may obtain the



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Shri Bhupesh Baghel

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh

NYAY For All

- **Rs. 5750 crore** transferred to the accounts of 19 lakh farmers under **Rajiv Gandhi Kisan NYAY Yojana**
- First state to buy cow dung from **cattle herders** under **Godhan NYAY Yojana**

Prosperous Farmers, Advanced Farming

- **Rs. 9,000 crore short term Agriculture loan offarmers waived off**
- 4,200 acres of agricultural land, returned to farmers, acquired for a proposed steel plant at Lohandiguda in Bastar region

Innovations in Education Sector

- **53 English Medium Schools** established under Swami Atmanand English Medium School Scheme
- **Schools re-opened** in Maoist hit areas, that were closed for more than a decade

Protecting Heritage, Developing Tourism

- Construction of '**Ram Van Gaman Paripath'**
- Development of **Sirpur Buddha Astha Centre**
- Re-establishing **Devgudi as a Cultural and Historic Centre**

Leading in giving Rights to Forest dwellers

- **51 Lakh acres of land** allotted through Forest Rights Certificates
- Leading in purchase of forest produce, highest remuneration for Tendupatta collection, **purchase of 52 minor forest produce at MSP**

Progressive in Industrial Development

- No.1 in maintaining economic activity during Lockdown
- **858 new industry launched with an investment of Rs. 15,000 crores**

Healthy Citizen, Better Treatment

- '**Dr. Khubchand Baghel Swasthya Sahayata Yojana**' provides facility of treatment upto **Rs. 5 Lakh to Priority Household and Antyodaya ration card holder** families and upto Rs. 50,000 for other ration card holder families
- Aid up to **Rs. 20 Lakh under Chief Minister Vishesh Swasthya Sahayata Yojana**

Health for All, Nutrition for Everyone, Cleanliness Everywhere

- 65% Declined in Malaria related cases In 1 year under '**Malaria Mukt Bastar Abhiyan**'
- Winning the war on Malnutrition, In 1 year malnutrition rate declines by **15.65%, 77000 children malnutrition free**
- **Free food grains provided to 56.32 lakh families**
- Cleanliness Survey 2020 - **won title of the cleanest state in the country**

Timings**DELHI**

FRIDAY, DEC. 18
● RISE 07:09 SET 17:28
● RISE 10:27 SET 21:16
SATURDAY, DEC. 19
● RISE 07:09 SET 17:29
● RISE 11:09 SET 22:15
SUNDAY, DEC. 20
● RISE 07:10 SET 17:29
● RISE 11:45 SET 23:12

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	15	05
Safdarjang	15	05
Palam	13	04

Delhi Palam Today
17°C Shallow fog during morning with cold wave condition. A cold day with sunny sky and dry winds.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
18°C Cold wave condition likely at some parts and marginal rise in day temperature with few clouds likely.

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Air quality of Delhi-NCR		
Delhi	256	Gurugram 241
Ghaziabad	277	Faridabad 213
Noida	267	Greater Noida 283
Good	51-100	101-200
Poor	201-300	301-400 >401
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) SOURCE: CPCB		

Delhi reports 1,363 new virus cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Capital on Thursday recorded 1,363 new COVID-19 cases, taking the total number of cases to 6,13,357. In a 24-hour period, 35 deaths and 2,391 recoveries were also recorded, according to a health bulletin issued by the Delhi government.

The total number of deaths now stands at 10,182 and total recoveries at 5,90,977. There are 12,198 active cases in the city at present.

The number of containment zones now stands at 6,376.

The bulletin added that 90,354 tests had been conducted in the 24-hour period with a positivity rate of 1.51%, which is the lowest since August 31 when the Capital had recorded 1,358 cases. The death rate based on data of the past 10 days was 2.45%.

The positivity rate has stayed below 2% for the third consecutive day.

Delhi not too happy with Centre's panel to curb air pollution: CJI

Commission working in right earnest to prevent factors causing pollution: Centre

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde on Thursday orally remarked that the people of Delhi are not too happy with the Centre's Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas, set up to curb air pollution by preventing incidents of stubble-burning in neighbouring Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

"Our Commission is working in right earnest," Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre, submitted.

"We don't know what your Commission is doing, but people in Delhi are not happy," Chief Justice Bobde remarked.

The court was informed that stubble burning has considerably decreased as the season has come to an end for this year.

An affidavit filed by the



The court was informed that stubble burning has decreased as the season has come to an end for this year. ■ FILE PHOTO

Centre, however, claimed that there was a "marked improvement in air quality in the NCR region since 2016".

The affidavit said this was achieved through the "concerted efforts" of the various government agencies.

It said days marked "good", "satisfactory" and "moderate" pollution had increased to 182 in 2019 as against 108 in 2016.

"Continuous ambient air quality monitoring system

Commission chaired by former Delhi Chief Secretary M.M. Kutty, the affidavit said, it was functioning under the "overall supervision" of the Centre.

"In terms of the mandate of the Ordinance, the Commission has adopted a consolidated and conjoint approach in monitoring, tackling and research in air pollution, and specifically monitoring measures by States to prevent factors causing air pollution like stubble burning, industrial emissions, road dust, vehicular pollution, construction activities, biomass burning and other major sources," the affidavit said.

It said 50 teams were deployed in Delhi NCR in October this year.

The Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Ordinance of 2020 was promulgated by the Centre recently.

Maximum temperature settles at 7° below normal

Delhi records 'poor' AQI on Thursday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The maximum temperature in the Capital settled seven degrees below normal at 15.3 degrees Celsius on Thursday, making it the coldest day of the season despite there being clear skies and bright sunshine.

As was forecast, the cold wave and cold day conditions persisted in the Capital as cold winds continued to blow towards the plains from the Himalayas that have received fresh snowfall.

The minimum temperature was 4.6 degrees Celsius, which was three degrees below normal for the season. The weather stations at Palam, Lodhi Road Ridge and Ayanagar recorded even lower minimum temperatures at 4.5, 4.2, 3.5 and 3.8 degrees Celsius respectively.

The forecast for Friday reads "mainly clear sky with cold day conditions at most places and severe cold day conditions at isolated places and cold wave conditions at a few places. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to settle between 16 and 4 degrees. The cold is likely to persist till next week, the forecast shows.

Nod to protest in residential area can set wrong precedent: HC

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Expressing concern over the continuing protest outside Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence here, which has been going on for 11 days, the Delhi High Court on Thursday said per-

mitting such demonstrations in a residential area could set a wrong precedent.

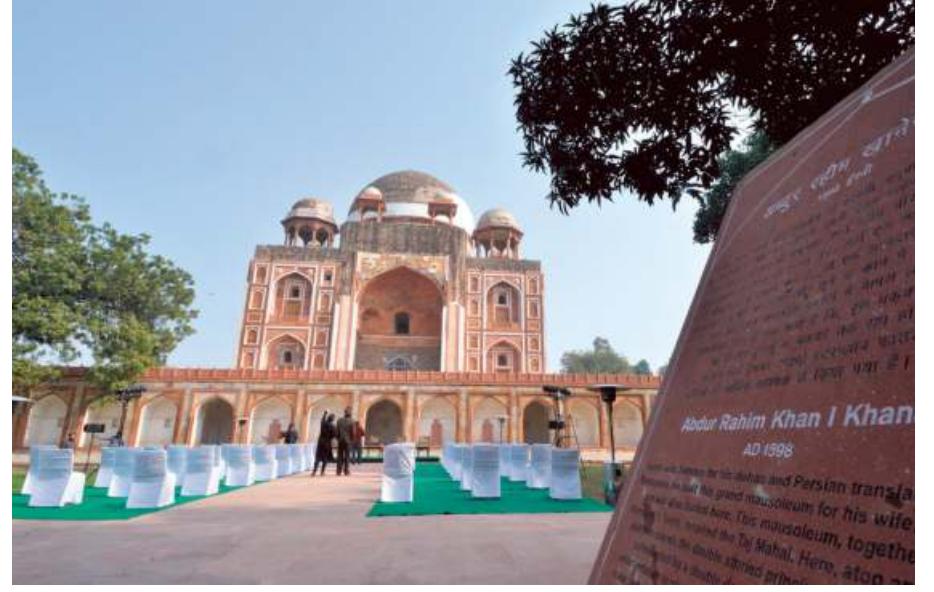
Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva said the protest may be peaceful, but if a precedent is set, then anyone would come and squat there as

they do in areas like Ramlila ground or Jantar Mantar here, which are designated spots for holding protests.

"There is no problem if you come, protest and then go away. But this has been going on for 11 days continuously. If this is permitted for

all time to come, then you know what is the state of certain areas like Ramlila ground and Jantar Mantar, where squatting and protests are permitted. We cannot have that kind of a situation in a residential colony," the court said.

Back to life



The mausoleum of Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, popularly known as Rahim, after a six-year conservation effort by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture with the InterGlobe Foundation. Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel visited the site and an exhibition on the poet's life in Nizamuddin on his birth anniversary on Thursday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

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NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER

OPENING DATE / CLOSING DATE

AMOUNT / END (APPROX.) IN RUPEES

WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT

MOBILE OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL

1 PANCHKULI RAIL BLOCK DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHKULI OFFICER/NAME

1. (CONST. OF PANCHKULI RAIL BLOCK & TENDER CONST. OF PANCHKULI RAIL BLOCK OF PANCHKULI RAIL BLOCK)

CLOSING DATE 31.12.2020

104 LAKHS

http://tenders.haryana.gov.in

PR No. 221469

PR 237696 Jharkhand Bijlee Vitran Nigam Ltd(20-21).D

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OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPARTMENT, DIVISION PULWAMA

email: xenphepulwama@gmail.com

از دفتر ایکریکٹینو انجینئرنگز شکنی (پی اچ اے) تیار نہت تو پڑن پڑا

E-NIT S. No. 89/PHE/Fresh of 2020-21

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor UT of J&K e-tenders Fresh(Two cover System) on Item Rate Basis including the maintenance cost for a period of Three Years which includes 12 months of DLP or Equivalent in CPWD/Railways and other State Governments for the following works, which should be uploaded on the Procurement web portal <http://jkttenders.gov.in> for the subject work(s) referred below to be received by the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Department, Division Pulwama and as per the details mentioned in this e-tender notification and to whom all the terms and conditions of detailed e-NIT/Tender Documents/PWD Form No.-25 documents are accepted. The detailed tender document and Specifications etc. can be downloaded on the e-procurement portal <http://jkttenders.gov.in>.

The cost of tender documents (Non-refundable/Non-Transferable) should be in the shape of e-Challan or Treasury Challan/Receipt in favour of Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Department, Division Pulwama

S. No. Name of Work Estimated Cost (in ₹) EMD (in ₹) Cost of TD (in ₹) Time of completion Class of Contract

1 Retrofitting of Water Supply Scheme Nickloora Chowdhribagh by way of providing, laying & fitting of GI pipes, construction of toilet block including installation of 70 NO. FHTCs for Nickloora Chowdhribagh including maintenance for a period of three years which includes DLP of 12 months (JMM).

Position of Funds: -Available; Major Head of Account: Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)

The Bidding documents consisting of eligibility criteria, specification, drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q) set of terms & conditions of contract and other details can be seen/ downloaded from the e-procurement Portal "<http://jkttenders.gov.in>" as per schedule of dates given below:-

S.No Description Date DD MM YY Time

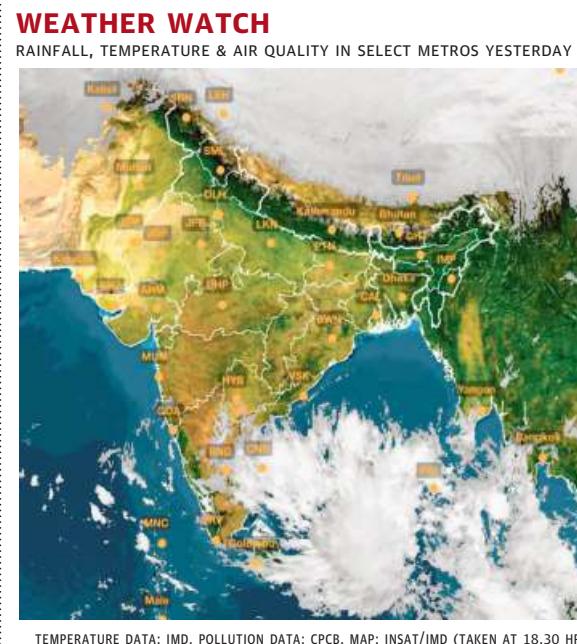
1 Publishing date of NIT 16 12 2020 1600 Hrs

2 Download start date 16 12 2020 1600 Hrs

3 Bid submission start date 16 12 2020 1600 Hrs

4 Bid submission end date 28 12 2020 1600 Hrs

5



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB; MAP: INSAT/MD (TAKEN ON 30TH HR)

Forecast for Friday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal and Kerala. Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning likely at isolated places over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Lakshadweep. Dense fog likely in isolated pockets over Assam, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	...-25.5	13.4	13.4	Kozhikode	...-31.7	24.6	24.6
Ahmedabad	...-25.6	14.1	14.1	Kurnool	...-31.1	20.6	20.6
Aizawl	...-22.6	9.1	9.1	Lucknow	...-20.6	7.8	7.8
Allahabad	...-21.6	10.6	10.6	Madurai	3.8	26.8	22.7
Bengaluru	...-25.0	19.5	19.5	Mangaluru	...-35.6	23.1	23.1
Bhopal	...-21.4	10.6	10.6	Mumbai	...-31.5	21.0	21.0
Dhubaneswar	...-29.9	17.8	17.8	Mysuru	...-29.0	20.4	20.4
Chandigarh	...-18.2	7.2	7.2	New Delhi	...-15.2	4.6	4.6
Chennai	7.9	30.2	24.1	Patna	...-23.4	12.6	12.6
Coimbatore	3.2	26.6	21.8	Port Blair	30.2	26.6	23.5
Dehradoon	...-20.7	3.6	3.6	Puducherry	148	25.8	22.4
Gangtok	...-13.2	6.7	6.7	Pune	...-30.5	16.7	16.7
Goa	...-34.6	21.4	21.4	Raipur	...-30.0	18.2	18.2
Guwahati	...-25.6	14.8	14.8	Ranchi	...-22.2	14.1	14.1
Hubballi	...-29.0	19.0	19.0	Shillong	...-17.4	7.1	7.1
Hyderabad	...-29.8	17.3	17.3	Shimla	...-16.0	3.6	3.6
Imphal	...-24.5	6.6	6.6	Srinagar	...-9.0	-6.4	-6.4
Jaipur	...-23.0	8.4	8.4	Thiruvananthapuram	4.4	33.5	23.8
Kochi	...-30.4	25.2	25.2	Tiruchi	7.6	26.4	22.5
Kohima	...-18.4	5.8	5.8	Vijayawada	...-31.0	21.5	21.5
Kolkata	...-26.0	17.5	17.5	Visakhapatnam	...-29.8	23.0	23.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	16	.61	30	.127	.132	...
Bengaluru	14	.65	.42	.81	.98	...
Chennai	.8	.8	41	.60
Delhi	9	62	.73	.358	.238	...
Hyderabad	.5	102	.14	.117	.130	...
Kolkata	23	.27	.29	.327	.237	...
Lucknow	10	101	.45	.214	.171	...
Mumbai	13	.44	.21	.358
Pune	.-59	.26	.137	.107
Visakhapatnam	11	.13	.53	.165	.123	...

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Accept farmers' demands, say Haryana Cong. leaders

'Centre should give up its obstinacy and show a big heart'

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

Congress leaders in Haryana on Thursday asked the BJP-led government at the Centre to accept farmers' demands to end the stalemate between the farmers and the government over the new farm laws, a day after a preacher allegedly died by suicide at the Singhu border.

Rajya Sabha MP Deepender Singh Hooda, who reached Karnal to pay last respects to the preacher, said farmers had been struggling for their demands in bone-chilling cold for past 22 days, but the Centre is not ready to give up its stubborn attitude. "The government should not look at accepting demand of farmers as a defeat. There had been six to seven rounds of talks between agitating farmers and Ministers, which did not yield any results. I urge the government to give up its obstinacy, show a big heart,



Farmers protesting at Singhu Border on Thursday.

■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

leave Rajhat (obstinacy) and follow Rajdhama (ruler's duties)," he said in Karnal.

Haryana Congress chief Kumari Selja said it is extremely shameful that on one hand the farmers are losing their lives and on the other hand the BJP government, instead of finding a solution, is constantly resorting to petty tricks to suppress the voice of the farmers. "How many more lives will this government take of the farmers. Nothing

can be more unfortunate today that in this biting winter weather the farmers are forced to sit on the streets," said Ms. Selja, adding that the BJP governments have no faith in democracy.

In Punjab, Aam Aadmi Party's in-charge of State affairs, Jarnail Singh, demanded the Centre government to immediately accept the demands of the farmers. "The government should immediately announce amendment of the agriculture Acts, by convening a special session of Parliament and to ensure legal guarantee of purchase of all crops at the MSP," he said.

'Listen to farmers'

Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal said the Centre government should shun inflexible attitude. "Prime Minister Narendra should listen to farmers and fulfill their demands," he told journalists.

U.P. CM links farmers' protest to Ram temple

'Oppn. upset with Ayodhya development'

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday accused the Opposition parties of "misleading" farmers and fueling unrest because they could not tolerate that a grand Ram temple was being built in Ayodhya.

Linking the ongoing farmer protests in and around Delhi to the Ram Mandir, Mr. Adityanath said those misleading the farmers were ones "who cannot tolerate that a grand temple of Lord Ram is being built in Ayodhya."

They are upset that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has even kickstarted the construction of the Ram Mandir, said the Chief Minister at a public event for farmers in Bareilly.

"Should a Ram Mandir be built in Ayodhya or not, I would ask my farmer brothers? Did Modiji do the right thing? Do you support it," he asked before urging the crowd to chant Jai Shri Ram

twice.

Mr. Adityanath also said that those who don't like India's progress were leaving no stones unturned in hatching conspiracies. He accused the Opposition parties of trying to fuel unrest and disorder in the country.

"The theory of communism will never hold true...that if you speak a lie 100 times, it would become the truth," he said.

"You must have seen there is a dharna going on at at one place. And what is the demand made at the dharna? They want guarantee of MSP," Mr. Adityanath said.

"The Central government said we are already providing MSP, there is no question of taking it back."

Dilution of Article 370

Apart from referring to the Ram Mandir and hitting out at Communism, Mr. Adityanath also said that those allegedly misleading the farmers were upset over the dilution of the Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir.

Online news channel owner beaten up

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

A man running his own online news channel was beaten up with rods by around half-a-dozen men in Karnal, causing serious injuries in an attack a week ago. Five persons have been arrested in this connection, said the police.

One of the accused, Gurmeet alias Ghelu, had allegedly threatened the victim, Akashan Uppal, six months ago for reporting about the arrest of his brother in a drug-peddling case.

Akashan and his colleague Rinku were returning from a reporting assignment on December 7 when Gurmeet and his accomplices, accosted the duo near a canal on Kaithal Road and allegedly attacked them.

The 16th Annual Convocation 2020 of SRM Institute of Science and Technology will be held at Dr. T.P. Ganeshan Auditorium, SRM Nagar, Kattankulathur - 603 203, on Saturday, 26th December, 2020 at 10.30 a.m.

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Controversy over hospital renaming

It has ulterior motives, say Haryana Opposition leaders

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
FARIDABAD

The Haryana government's proposal to rename the city's civil hospital after late Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has been mired in controversy with the Opposition leaders alleging that it had "communal motives".

Rechristened as "Nagrik Haspatal" for the past four years along with all civil hospitals in the State, it was earlier known as "Badshah Khan Hospital" after prominent leader Abdul Ghaffar Khan. A letter from Director General

Health Services, Haryana, to the Chief Medical Officer, Faridabad, earlier this month says the Chief Minister has desired that Civil Hospital, Faridabad, be renamed to "Shri. Atal Behari Vajpayee Hospital, Faridabad".

It is officially known as "Nagrik Haspatal" for the past couple of years, but now it has been affiliated to Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee Medical College and thus being renamed. We have already renamed it in the official correspondence. Besides, we will soon change the name on the signboards as well," said Principal Medical Officer, Faridabad, Dr. Vinay Gupta.

Nuh MLA and Deputy Leader of Congress Legislative Party Aftab Ahmed objected to the move saying it was an insult to the great Muslim leader. "When all hospitals were renamed as "Nagarik Hospital" four years ago where is the need to rename Faridabad Hospital. It is a ploy and has communal motives. The Haryana government is only good at changing names," said Mr. Ahmed.

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Shackles and ties

India and the U.K. must not allow concerns of the moment to dominate their relationship

With the transition period of the U.K.'s exit from the EU (or Brexit) ending this month, the Boris Johnson government is beginning to firm up its partnerships outside its region, and British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab's Delhi visit came with a declaration of immediate and longer-term goals for the India-U.K. relationship. His visit was also to prepare the way for Prime Minister Johnson's India visit, as the chief guest at Republic Day, and to invite Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the U.K. to the G-7 and the Climate Change (COP26) summits next year. Mr. Johnson will be the first head of government to visit India after the spread of COVID-19; this will also be his first bilateral visit anywhere after Brexit, signalling the importance India and the U.K. give to this chapter in ties. In what he called a "ten-year" road map for relations, Mr. Raab discussed with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Mr. Modi the upgrading of the 2004 India-U.K. Strategic Partnership to a "Comprehensive" Strategic Partnership, which will envision closer military ties, cooperation in Indo-Pacific strategies, counter-terrorism and fighting climate change. Now out of the EU, Britain is on a mission to secure free trade partners, and after wrapping up nearly 20 trade deals, including most recently with the U.S., Japan, and Vietnam that will take effect from January 1, Mr. Johnson would hope to announce the start of talks on an India FTA during his visit. The highlight of India's relations in the next year will be closer cooperation on the coronavirus vaccine, with the Serum Institute set to produce and distribute the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine in India, and then as part of the COVAX project to other developing countries.

The turn of a new page in ties, stagnant for the past five years due to Britain's Brexit preoccupation, is welcome. The relationship has failed to progress in this time, despite visits by Mr. Modi and former British Prime Minister Theresa May. As a result, less important issues such as visas and the fate of fugitive Indian businessmen in the U.K. have been allowed to dominate the narrative. Over the past year, the MEA had responded sharply to protests at the Indian High Commission in London over the Article 370 move in Jammu and Kashmir, and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. This month it was Britain's concerns about the farmers' protests that sparked responses in New Delhi about interference in India's internal matters. Mr. Raab's explanation that, sometimes, intense interest from the British Indian diaspora makes Indian politics a factor in British politics is a reminder of how closely linked the two countries remain. A new chapter in their post-COVID-19, post-Brexit relationship would necessarily entail the U.K. to be more sensitive to India's concerns, and for India to be less sensitive when Britain expresses its concerns.

Sanctions overreach

The U.S. should realise it cannot dictate terms in a changed global order, with its new powers

The U.S.'s decision to impose sanctions on Turkey over its purchase of the S-400 missile defence system from Russia further complicates the already troubled relationship between the two NATO members. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said earlier this week that the Trump administration was obliged to impose sanctions on Turkey under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, passed in 2017 and aimed at discouraging third countries from buying weapons from Russia. Earlier, the U.S. had suspended Turkey from its F-35 fighter jet programme which Washington feared would be undermined by the Russian system. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has called the sanctions "an attack on Turkey's sovereignty". The U.S. decision will have implications for India as well, which has also ordered the S-400. The Trump administration has been non-committal on giving India a sanctions waiver. In the case of Turkey, Washington had said it would not invoke sanctions if Ankara did not activate the system. But why would Turkey have purchased this anti-missile system for billions of dollars if it did not want to activate it? In October, Turkey test-fired the system and in two months, sanctions are in place.

The U.S.'s decision to suspend Turkey from the F-35 programme was well within its rights. It is up to Washington who it should sell the weapons to. But punishing other countries with sanctions for their decision to buy weapons from a third party is transborder bullying, if not meddling with their sovereignty. Each country takes decisions on defence buys based on its requirements and security challenges. The S-400, which has been deployed by Russia in Syria, along its borders with Eastern Europe and in the Arctic Circle, is seen as a highly advanced aerial shield. It is hardly surprising that Turkey, China and India, which are rising, ambitious powers with daunting security challenges, opted for the S-400. Punishing them is coercion sans strategic thinking. From a geopolitical point of view, the U.S.'s actions could drive Turkey further into the hands of Russia, despite their serious disagreements over crises such as Syria, Libya, and now Nagorno-Karabakh. That Mr. Erdogan still chose to buy Russian weapons shows that there is a paradigm shift in Ankara's strategic thinking. The U.S.-Turkey tensions, coupled with the war of words between French President Emmanuel Macron and Mr. Erdogan and the Greece-Turkey spat over the Eastern Mediterranean region, point to cracks in NATO. The U.S. should ask itself whether it wants to widen these further or take a broader view of the changes that are under way in the global order. The 1990s unilateralism has already paved the way for a new multilateralism. There are many rising powers and their demands may no longer be dictated by the wishes of Washington.

In agri-reforms, go back to the drawing board

The intended beneficiaries often understand the realities of the systems better; policymakers need to build trust



ARUN MAIRA

The purpose of agriculture reforms is to increase farmers' incomes. Farmers want the laws (the Farm Bills) repealed. The Supreme Court of India has called for discussions between the government and farmers around the country. It is time to go back to the drawing board about the purpose and the process of agriculture reforms.

Economists say fewer people must work on farms for farm productivity and incomes to be improved. Which begs the question how the millions displaced from farms will earn incomes. Indian industry is not growing much. There too, according to economists, humans should be replaced by technology for improving productivity.

Flip side of productivity

Landholdings are too small for mechanisation to improve farm productivity, economists complain. Their solution is to 'scale up' farms. Since mechanisation requires standardisation of work, mechanised farming on scale requires monocropping. Large-scale specialisation upsets the ecological balance. Reduced diversity of flora enables pests to spread more easily; soil quality is reduced; water resources get depleted. Solutions to these new problems require more industrial inputs, with more costs for farmers. The deleterious side-effects of this approach to improve agriculture productivity are very visible in Punjab now. Farm incomes have grown there while water resources have depleted and soils have been damaged.

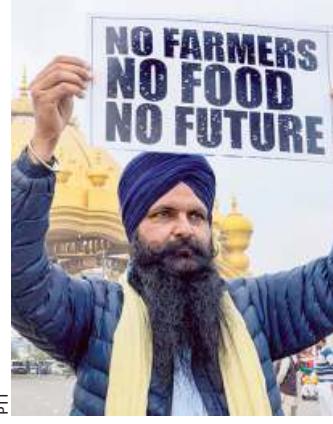
In *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, politi-

cal scientist James C. Scott documents the history of 'scientific forestry' in Germany. The clearing out of other vegetation to plant a single variety of commercially useful tree in neatly spaced rows enabled mechanisation of timber production. However, the ecological imbalance made the trees more vulnerable to pests, and over time, the quality of the timber also reduced. Nature is a complex 'self-adaptive' system. It knows how to take care of itself. When Man tries to overpower Nature with his science and industry, without understanding how Nature functions, he harms Nature – and ultimately himself.

Twenty-first century challenges of environmental degradation and increasing inequalities require that the economic calculus shifts from 'economics of scale with standardisation' to 'economics of scope for sustainability'. This will make large-scale mechanisation more difficult. However, it will require the use of more 'flexible' human labour. In the long run, not only will this be good for the ecology, it will also increase employment and incomes for people in the lower half of the economic pyramid.

Market access

Farm incomes can increase with access to wider markets for farm produce, which is an objective of the agricultural reforms. The fear of Indian farmers is that they will not have adequate pricing power when pushed into large supply systems and less regulated markets. Connections into global supply chains can increase volumes of sales. However, the terms of trade will always favour the larger players in the supply chains who have easier access to capital. In her book, *The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy: An Economist Examines the Markets, Power, and Politics of World Trade*, economist Pietra Rivoli reveals how small cotton farmers in Texas, unlike farmers in developing countries, became progressively richer



as well as politically powerful in setting the rules of global trade. Texan farmers formed collectives to own upstream processing and marketing linkages when they joined global supply chains. Thus, they could obtain larger margins in trade. And their collective voice swayed national politicians.

Strengthen cooperatives

Institutions for cooperative ownership and collective bargaining must be strengthened to give power to small farmers before opening markets to large corporations. The Indian dairy sector is a good example. Its 'per person productivity is much lower than New Zealand and Australian dairy producers'. However, it provides millions of tiny producers with reasonable incomes which large-scale industrial dairy producers do not. Moreover, with its cooperative aggregation, the Indian dairy sector has also acquired political clout. It has compelled the Indian government to withstand pressure from trade economists who are urging it to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (of which New Zealand and Australia are members) to connect the Indian economy with larger supply chains.

The problem of low incomes in India's agriculture sector is a complex systems problem which cannot be solved by agriculture experts alone. Experts from many disciplines must collaborate to find systemic solutions. Also,

intended beneficiaries of the new policies must be included in the designing of the new policies right at the beginning. Often they understand the realities of systems better than experts do with their abstractions in mathematical equations of inputs, outputs, and productivity. When policymakers say 'the people don't get it' after the policy is announced and the intended beneficiaries protest, it is an indication that the experts didn't get it.

The reforms of the 1990s

The stand-off in agriculture reforms, with farmers besieging the national capital demanding they be heard, has caused a flurry of discussions about democracy, consultation, and processes for economic reforms. Economists point, wistfully, to the firmness with which bold reforms were brought about in 1991, and how the government stood up to the 'Bombay Club' of industrialists who opposed them. They also complain that politics (and even democracy) comes in the way of good economics. This reveals an inadequate understanding of processes by which complex economic reforms are evolved.

The immediate beneficiaries of the 1991 reforms were all Indian consumers, rich and poor, who would benefit from access to better quality products from around the world. The principal opponents of the reforms were a few large industrialists whose products citizens were not satisfied with. Governments have more power over a few industrialists than they have over the masses.

With a stroke of the pen, policies could be changed in the early 1990s, the immediate benefits of which were clear to the masses. Hundreds of millions of citizens who hope to be beneficiaries of the 'big ticket' reforms, in agriculture, and in industry too, now want to earn better incomes, to earn enough to buy all the good stuff they have begun to aspire for, and even to make both ends meet.

They cannot see how the bold reforms being pushed through will result in improvement of their incomes. A trickle down is promised. When will that ever happen, they ask?

The 1991 reforms changed industrial licensing and trade policies – both subjects of the Union government. 'Factor market' reforms, in land, agriculture, and labour regulations, which are necessary to realise the full benefits of the 1991 reforms are State subjects in which States have jurisdiction too, and with good reason. They affect the lives of people on the ground, and differently, around the country. Therefore, the central government, no matter how strong it is, must not force these reforms onto the States.

Silo experts cannot help

India's policymakers must improve their expertise in solving complex, multi-disciplinary problems. They must apply the discipline of systems thinking, and not rely on siloed domain experts. Moreover, citizens around the country must be listened to at the very beginning, and throughout the evolution of policies; not communicated to at the end by experts who then complain that citizens are being misled by political forces.

Prof. Mark H. Moore says, in *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*, "We might think of (the process of making policy) as helping to define rather than create public value. But this activity also creates value since it satisfies the desire of citizens for a well-ordered society, in which fair, efficient, and accountable public institutions exist." Trust is essential for a well-governed society. The lesson for India's leaders is: good processes for making public policies build trust between citizens and their governments.

Arun Maira is a former Member, Planning Commission and the author of *Transforming Systems: Why the World Needs a New Ethical Toolkit*

Putting food at the centre of India's nutrition agenda

Reducing the burden of child undernutrition needs a policy goal — providing affordable access to quality food items



S.V. SUBRAMANIAN &
WILLIAM JOE

The provisional verdict from the fifth round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2019-20 fact-sheets (<https://bit.ly/3qZyC77>) on the burden of child undernutrition is not encouraging, with few exceptions. For the most part, this assessment has relied on the measure of a child's anthropometry, i.e., children are defined as stunted, underweight or wasted if their standardised height-for-age, weight-for-age or weight-for-height, respectively, is more than two standard deviations below the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards (<https://bit.ly/3rdIIA7>) median.

However, undernutrition can also be measured by observing the adequacy and sufficiency of food or dietary intake among children. So how do Indian children fare when we bring a food measure to tell us about their nutritional status?

Diet-related undernutrition

Across the 22 States/Union Territories for which the NFHS-5 has released the factsheets, the percentage of children (aged 6-23 months) who do not meet the minimum dietary adequacy (<https://bit.ly/3aoC4a7>) – as defined under the Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices by WHO – is 83.9%; a decline of just over 2 per-

centage points from what was observed in NFHS-4 (2015-16). Thus, eight out of 10 children appear to be experiencing a dietary shortfall. It would not be surprising if this situation has worsened (<https://bit.ly/3nrJl0>) with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing 2020 lockdown.

Although 17 of the 22 States/Union Territories did experience a decline, the percentage of children not meeting the dietary adequacy norms increased in five States/Union Territories. Goa experienced the largest percentage point decline (11.1%), and Jammu and Kashmir observed the highest increase in its percentage of children not meeting dietary adequacy over the last three years (76.5% to 86.4%). While there are some variations, in every State more than 75% of the children do not receive the minimum adequate diet.

Analysis (<https://bit.ly/3pdd7II>) based on NFHS-4 has shown that consumption of protein-rich food as well as fruit and vegetables were substantially low. Since the disaggregated child-level data on consumption of various food groups has not been released, we will have to wait to see what specific aspects are children experiencing a dietary shortfall.

Prevalence of anaemia

Fortunately, the factsheets provide the percentage of children who are anaemic – an indication of iron deficiency (<https://bit.ly/3nsPelf>) – and the trends should raise concern. Across the 22 States/Union Territories, anaemia prevalence among children increased by about eight percentage points from 51.8% to 60.2%. The prevalence of anaemia in child-



hood increased in 18 of the 22 States/Union Territories. In the majority of the States, two out of three children have possible iron-deficiency. The State-wise trends for adults are mixed, although it is clear that women are substantially at a far greater risk for anaemia than men.

The Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition (POSHAN) Abhiyaan and, particularly, the Anemia Mukti Bharat (<https://bit.ly/3r4pUEz>), or AMB, Strategy was launched in 2018 with efforts to improve Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) supplementation, behaviour change and anaemia-related care and treatment across six target groups including pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children, and the provisional verdict is mixed for women and concerning for children.

Diet-related measures

Viewing the burden of child undernutrition from a food or dietary lens is sobering, and raises serious concerns than what has been well-revealed by measures based on anthropometry. It is time that undernutrition is not only viewed simply through the measures of anthropometric failure, but is

complemented through explicit attention to diet-related measures.

A classification of nutritional status using a combined typology based on children who experience dietary failure and anthropometric failure is crucial. A recent NFHS-4 based study (<https://bit.ly/3r5dVGR>) using this typology found that 36.3% of children who experienced a dietary failure do not show anthropometric failure. Anthropometric-centric measures thus run the risk of omitting such children from policy discussions. A combined typology is also necessary to highlight groups that may need most immediate priority (e.g., children experiencing both dietary and anthropometric failures, 44%). Indeed, the prevalence of children who experience anthropometric failure only but no dietary failure was only 9.8%.

Dietary factors can clearly be a major determinant of stagnancy in the nutritional status of Indian children. The true burden of child undernutrition thus may well be underestimated by the sole reliance on anthropometric measures. Besides, a child's anthropometric status is a consequence of several complex factors, including inter-generational, which current policies and interventions cannot alter in the short term. Importantly, food and diet have an intrinsic importance, regardless of their impact on a child's anthropometry. Therefore the nutrition agenda needs to be considered from "food as a right" (<https://bit.ly/3qZA6hH>) perspective.

A disproportionate focus on anthropometric measures inadvertently precludes meaningful and direct engagement with strategies

and data necessary to address diet and food security concerns. Data, available in a timely manner and in public domain, is empowering, as the NFHS has demonstrated over the last 25-plus years. But systematic and quality data on what Indians eat remains largely unknown.

Data initiative needed

It is important to emphasise that India does not have a dedicated nationally representative survey on the dietary intake and nutritional status of children or adults. A modern data initiative leveraging and combining aspects of the NFHS, the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau and the National Sample Surveys that collected data on detailed household-level consumption and expenditure on various food items should be considered.

In summary, decluttering our current approach to reducing the burden of child undernutrition and keeping it simple with a policy goal to providing affordable (economic and physical) access to quality food items, particularly for lower socioeconomic populations groups, should be prioritised. This may serve well as India tries to realise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2 and 3) related to zero hunger and good health and well-being.

S.V. Subramanian is Professor of Population Health and Geography, Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, Cambridge, MA, U.S. William Joe is Assistant Professor, Population Research Centre, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi. Inputs by Abhishek Kumar, a doctoral candidate at the Central University of Gujarat



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untouched. In many ways the book would serve as a political guide.

BALASUBRAMANIAN PAVANI, Secunderabad

■ We have a right to read what Pranab Mukherjee has to say and it is appropriate that his memoir is published verbatim in its entirety. The sibling spat is unfortunate. C.G. KURIAKOSE, Kothamangalam, Kerala

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

No winter session

Citing COVID-19, the last Budget session of Parliament ended abruptly. The monsoon session was cut short with some pieces of legislation passed hurriedly. Even during this session, Question Hour was abolished. Now, Parliament is altogether to skip the winter session, the reason being COVID-19 again. Undoubtedly, the pandemic is still here and precautions are required to ensure the

safety of our honourable MPs. But, at the same time, there are many important issues confronting the nation: COVID-19 once again, the border situation, the farmers' agitation and the slowdown of the Indian economy. COVID-19 cannot be the pretext not to have the winter session especially when one sees political events being held without precautions being observed. Today's authoritarian leaders and

their enablers go by their own rules. Undermining the legitimacy of intuitions and norms to confuse the public is a tactical move to undermine democracy. The paradox is that the very institutions of democracy are being used to suppress democratic procedures. S.K. KHOSLA, Chandigarh

■ The government has taken the right decision not to have the winter session. Even if

the session had taken place, no useful proceedings would have resulted. The Opposition is sure to have raised the issue of the farmers' protest and rather than debate it in an articulate manner is bound to have crippled the proceedings. Adjournments would have been the order of the day and one would have been left wondering why there was a session in the first place. P.S. SUBRAHMANYAN, Chennai

What challenges do online classes pose?

PARLEY

Access, teaching skills and assessment are all challenging but there are ways they can be met

With the pandemic forcing the teaching and learning process to migrate to the online mode, the education system has faced an upheaval like never before. This has posed several challenges to teachers and students in India. V. Madhurima and Gurumurthy Kasinathan discuss the challenges and possible solutions in a conversation moderated by Shubashree Desikan. Edited excerpts:

What are the key issues that teachers and students face? Are there solutions to these issues?

V. Madhurima: For most teachers, shifting to online classes was rather sudden. With that move came a plethora of problems for which, for the most part, they had to find solutions by themselves. Ram Ramaswamy, Professor at IIT Delhi, mooted the idea of building a discussion forum for online teaching, which we have done. This acts as a virtual platform for teachers across India to interact and discuss specific issues. We conduct panel discussions and we have daily interactions through channels like Slack and Telegram. We conducted an anonymised pan-India survey among teachers. The respondents were primarily college teachers teaching undergraduate and postgraduate courses, but we did have some school teachers.

The first point to come up was the lack of appropriate devices such as graphics tablets and webcams for conducting classes online. The second was the lack of adequate Internet bandwidth. The third was the fact that [you had to] basically bring your own device and software, which meant that in order to ensure that the quality of education that they were imparting was consistent, the teachers had to invest their own personal money to create that ambience through online teaching. Also, the lack of copyrighted material that could be easily dispersed to all the students [came up as an issue].

Gurumurthy Kasinathan: Infrastructure such as computer or Internet is expensive, and even a mobile phone costs ₹10,000 to ₹15,000. If you're talking about a solution for 1.6 million schools across the coun-

try, you are talking about something that is unaffordable. So, what we must understand is that it might work for only a very small percentage of elite institutions and communities. Research says this is around 10% or less. If the country believes that online education is the way forward, then 90% of the children are not a part of it. If education is a fundamental right, then the right to devices is included in that. On the one hand, we can't rely on [online education] at this point in time. On the other, we must double up our efforts at making sure that it's accessible to all.

What problems do students face?

VM: I agree that only about 10% of the students are able to access education on a larger screen [laptop]. Nearly 70% of the students are typically attending classes on their mobile phones. It's nearly impossible for them to stay attentive. Also, if, for example, the screen should break, they cannot even afford to mend it since family incomes have gone down. The mental stress that they're undergoing because of this is very high. The tendency to drift off is high. And this is something that affects teaching on both sides – the students drift off, and the lack of audio-visual feedback from the students is problematic for the teacher. The home environment is not always conducive for students to learn – either because it's very noisy or because it is sensitive: not all students can switch on their video, even if they have the bandwidth, as the domestic circumstances might not be something that they want to show.

There are also some advantages. Shy students, those who wouldn't respond in the classroom, are responding much better through non-verbal communication such as through chat.

GK: If we think that education is a fundamental right, public provision is necessary. In this aspect, Kerala is a trailblazer, and other States can follow. Provisioning of hardware and connectivity are both very critical. But when it comes to school



SUDHAKARA JAIN

education, the common system predominantly caters to the marginalised groups and the poor in society. It is absolutely essential that we have to look beyond online education. At 'IT for Change', we are also trying to persuade governments that some limited opening [of schools] has to be there. If you can unlock shopping malls and temples, and allow celebrations of festivals and weddings, but are completely closing down schools...

I think the school system will need a hybrid solution. Online education cannot replicate the chalk-and-talk methodologies that teachers follow. Innovation in pedagogy is key. The innovations required now have already been discussed in the National Curriculum Framework of 2005. They emphasised a change of pedagogy even before the pandemic, which is to make learning more meaningful for the children, engage them in the process of learning, give them ideas which they can apply to real life, and not let the classroom become completely cut off from reality.

How does digital education impact women and girls?

GK: We are now changing our gaze from online education to digital education, which is a much broader canvas. In the last 15 years, we have worked with rural women from Dalit and other marginalised groups. We find that digital technologies can be greatly empowering, because one of the key things that they need is an empowering space. Empowerment happens when they come together and work together for a common interest. We started a community radio programme recently. We can actually have committed programmes because the connectivity requirements of those

C Many of us can learn from theatre when it comes to communicating over a smaller screen. Small tips like dressing well go a long way. Speak loudly, articulate clearly. Voice modulation is something that none of us have learned.

V. MADHURIMA

are fewer compared to online programmes.

On the other hand, the digital space can be very dangerous. Our research shows that cybercrimes in terms of trolling, hate speech, cyberstalking and deceiving women are becoming extremely common. Public infrastructure in terms of regulatory frameworks is going to be absolutely essential in making sure that women feel safe to participate on social media. We are very far away from creating safe online spaces for women.

VM: I agree completely. Though the fact that education can be done through mobile phones has been beneficial for many women, it is essential that we create a safe space. In homes where digital resources are scarce, girls are getting the short end of the stick. If a parent has to make a choice between giving the mobile phone to a son or a daughter, they seem to prefer giving it to the son. Also, for many women, hostels have been a safe haven from their sometimes violent homes. With the abrupt shutting down of colleges, they have lost that safety.

The third thing that I'm seeing is that a few but not insignificant number of girls, especially from rural areas, since they are at home, are now being asked to get married and have children because teaching and learning is online. And I would add that in addition to women, I think

the needs of the differently abled also have to be thought about. That's something that has not been really given enough attention.

How do you make online education interesting?

VM: I think I would replace the word 'interesting' with 'effective' to start with because 'interesting' is three or four steps down the lane. How do we effectively communicate? The first thing is to have a multi-channel communication: in addition to having a video conference call, typically, it's good to have WhatsApp or a second means kept open, so that if a student does not have bandwidth, he or she can still participate without feeling left out of the class. The second is a multimodal dispersal of learning material. We have to give them audios and videos and written texts, so that they can download it at a later stage. We need to necessarily balance between a synchronous and asynchronous class. The online class should not be more than, say, 30-40 minutes. You must give back material to the students so that they actually feel that they're sitting down and learning, but that hand-holding has to happen. From being in control of the class, the teacher's role has to go to being a facilitator for the transfer of knowledge.

Teachers also need to have a lot of flexibility and empathy. They have to remember that the students are going through a lot to attend these classes. And I feel that the benefit of doubt should always be given to the students. If they say that they can't attend classes for some reason, believe them.

Many of us can learn from theatre when it comes to communicating over a smaller screen. Small tips like dressing well go a long way. Speak loudly, articulate clearly. Voice modulation is something that none of us have learned. A monotonous voice can kill a colossal 20 minutes.

Speaking of colossal issues, there is the challenge of online assessment. How do you tackle that?

GK: Portfolio assessment is one of the best ways of assessing students because when students are creating something based on their learning and understanding, it will give you a

good sense of where their learning levels are. Whether it's school or college, we encourage them to make things. Another important thing that we've been doing is teacher training. We teach a software that converts our computer to a graphing calculator, called GeoGebra. It works across school and colleges.

VM: Before that, there are some points that have been raised that I want to re-emphasise. One is change in pedagogy, which is crucial. Also, training needs to be imparted both to teachers and students on how to handle an online platform. An online platform necessarily requires the students to be adult learners. So, training to be an adult learner is something that we have to impart to them. This also requires a change in syllabus – toning it down rather than focussing on completing it – and this is something we really need to pay attention to and as soon as possible.

Online assessment is typically skill-based. So, it lends itself very easily to science subjects where you can have multiple choice questions or ask students to solve a problem and feed in a number. But online assessment for the humanities and social sciences, especially at the secondary and tertiary education levels, become very, very difficult. I don't think we have a solution to this problem.

Online assessment is conducive for formative assessment – when you're checking whether the student has understood or not, it is okay. They are not conducive for summative as much as they are for formative assessment, which means we need to have a policy change where if we are going to be on online mode, we need to give more marks for continuous formative assessment. Also, how do you assess lab-based courses and fieldwork-based courses? I don't think we have an answer to any of these questions.

Online education has had a differentiated impact across educational levels and institutes, and between various student communities. We see that students are handling the situation with maturity and keeping up with their learning. If anybody had a doubt about how dedicated Indian teachers are, I think this is the time to look around. You will realise that they are there for the cause of teaching.



V. Madhurima
is Professor of Physics at Central University of Tamil Nadu, Thiruvananthapuram



Gurumurthy Kasinathan
is the founder and director of IT for Change



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Converting waste to energy

The new plant at Bidadi has several advantages but also some operational challenges

PUSHKARA S.V.

On December 2, Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa laid the foundation stone for a 11.5 MW waste-to-energy plant near Bidadi. This plant is expected to process 600 tonnes per day of inorganic waste. Bengaluru generates close to 5,000 tonnes of waste daily, of which about 2,500 tonnes is organic, about 1,000 tonnes inert material (sweeping waste) and 1,500 tonnes inorganic. This inorganic material, which consists of bad quality plastics and used cloth pieces, can be processed as Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF). This material has a calorific value of more than 2,500 kJ/kg, and can be used to generate steam energy, which can be converted into electric energy instead of burning coal and other materials used in traditional waste-to-energy plants.

A well-planned plant

The waste-to-energy plants usually accept the RDF material generated in organic composting plants. They also segregate the wet and inorganic material near the plant, convert organic waste to compost, and inorganic waste to energy. Typically, about 50 tonnes of RDF generate 1 MW of power, which indicates that the plant at Bidadi has been appropriately designed. Eight organic waste processing plants are operational within the city in Kannanahalli, Seegehalli, Chikk Nagamangala, Doddabidarakallu, KCDC, MSGP, Lingadeeranahalli and Subbarayanapalya, and they receive more than 2,000 tonnes of waste collected by households, commercial establishments and markets. Although about 30%-40% of the material received is segregated organic waste and the remainder is mixed waste, the latter consists of about 40% inorganic waste which can be converted into RDF.

Handling inorganic waste that is not fit for recycling has always been a challenge. At present, these high-calorific materials are landfilled or left unhandled in waste plants and cause fire accidents. Attempts to send this material to cement kilns have not fructified. The proposed plant can source 600 tonnes per day of this RDF and generate 11.5 MW of power

equivalent to 2.4 lakh units of power per day. This will reduce the city's dependency on unscientific landfills, reduce fire accidents, and provide a permanent solution to recover value from inorganic waste. However, there are some challenges.

Challenges

Over the last decade, several Indian cities have been trying to set up such plants but a good demonstration model is yet to be established. Technology suppliers are international organisations who struggle with the change in quality and nature of waste generated in Indian cities. A few plants in India have stopped operations for this reason. The quality of waste generated in Bengaluru itself could be a hurdle. The plants require fine inorganic material with less than 5% moisture and less than 5% silt and soil contents, whereas the moisture and inert content in the mixed waste generated in the city is more than 15%-20%. Since segregation at source doesn't happen in the city, the collected waste material needs to be sieved using 80mm-100 mm sieving machines, which lets through organic material with more than 80mm-100 mm particle sizes into the inorganic waste. In addition, the sticky silt and soil particles can also reduce the calorific value. The other big challenge for this plant is the power tariff. Generally, the tariff at which the power is purchased by such plants across the country is around ₹7-8 kWh which is higher than the ₹3-4 per kWh generated through coal and other means. This could be a serious challenge to KPTCL as the selling price of power cannot be increased corresponding to the purchasing price.

If the plant eases the challenge of handling inorganic waste, the efficiency of organic waste processing/composting plants would become better. If it is successful, the city would require three more waste-to-energy plants of similar size or six plants of smaller size considering the potential to recover 2,500-3,000 tonnes per day RDF in the coming years.

Pushkara S.V. is a practitioner at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Bengaluru



NOTEBOOK

A concert is more than just music

COVID-19 has taken away all the finer aspects of the music season

B. KOLAPPAN

In the 1970s, when reports about civil strife in Sri Lanka raising its ugly head were published, vocalist M.L. Vasantha Kumar was touring that country. I remember accompanying my father to the house of his friend, Chandramouleeswara Iyer then. As we entered the house, Iyer's wife rushed to us and said, "I hope nothing will happen to MLV!"

One could question her priorities. But such was M.L. Vasantha Kumar's reach and popularity that Iyer's wife could only think of the singer's safety.

My basic lessons in Carnatic music and politics began at their residence. They had subscribed to *Vaanoli* – a magazine covering the programmes of All India Radio (AIR) – and that was where I came across names such as Alathur Brothers, G.N. Balasubramanian, Madurai Mani

Iyer, Madurai Somu, Palghat Mani Iyer, Palani Subramania Pillai, Vilvadili Iyer and the present generation of musicians. She also kept a veena, shorn of all adornments.

Again, it was at their residence that I first heard the word *Isai Vizha*, or the December Music Season, and listened to concerts broadcast by the AIR. My father kept a transistor in case of a power shutdown. The music, the name of the musicians, and the anecdotes about them stayed with me and came handy when I started my career as a journalist. Music critic Subbudu's tongue-in-cheek writings were both amusing and educative.

Visiting sabha after sabha to cover inaugural functions as a junior reporter (only rookies would be sent) and seeing in blood and flesh the musicians I had heard and read about offered boundless joy. After the functions, I would meet

Bhatkavatsalam? Kokka? (He is Bhatkavatsalam

and not a person to be taken for granted," I remember a woman rasika saying when mridhangist Thiruvanur Bhaktavatsalam played a brilliant thani during the violin concert of Ganesh and Kumersh.

Then of course there was the food. The taste of a crisp dosa that I ate with white vegetable kurma instead of sambar and chutney in one of the canteens still lingers in my mouth.

But COVID-19 has taken away from rasikas all the finer aspects of the music season. Even though modern technology has made it possible to switch over to virtual concerts, the immediate rapport that a musician shares with a rasika during a physical concert is not available online. The only solace is that Chennai is able to uphold the tradition without a break. But this December will be remembered as a cruel month in the history of Carnatic music.

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 18, 1970

Dismal population outlook

(From an Editorial)

The concern expressed by a Rajya Sabha member over the failure of the Government to face the growing population problem and fight it on a war footing will be shared by many. With even the original targets for lowering the birth rate in the Seventies too low to stem the tide of the fast rising population, scaling them down every now and then does invite the charge that the Government is treating light-heartedly the most explosive challenge of the times. As against the official claim of a fall in the birth-rate from 41.7 per thousand in the Fifties to 38.3 in 1969-70 is the frightening rise in the rate of increase of the population from 2.1 per cent in 1951 to 2.5 per cent at the end of this decade – which suggests that the problem is getting worse rather than better with each passing year. That is because the death rate is falling fast, while the fall in the birth rate is only marginal.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DEC. 18, 1920

The light of history

(From an editorial)

It is natural that after an exhausting world-struggle which has had no parallel in the past, thinkers and writers should speculate upon the goal of humanity, its future organisation and the trend of its development. History has been appealed to in the past to throw light upon the future of the world's races and the directions in which the development of humanity may be expected. When Buckle wrote his "History of Civilisation" which aroused immense interest at the time, he did so to read partly the future of the races, in the light of the past development, interpreted with the aid of the generalisations based on environment and physical laws – generalisations whose validity, in the light of other facts, were seriously open to question. Buckle's interpretation of history, were it true, would have made the East despair of its future; for, it was his view that placed as the tropics were nearer the Sun, the population of these vast areas were ultimately doomed to comparative weakness, languor and stagnation, although in the beginning of the world, the tropics were bound to be the cradle of early civilisations. Buckle, however, is not seriously considered now as a great historian; and his claim to memory is now chiefly that of a man of letters.

FROM PAGE ONE

Farmers have the right to continue protest: SC

"If their [farmers] protest has a purpose other than just to sit in protest, we are thinking of an independent committee before whom both sides can state their case while the protest goes on... The committee can give its opinion after hearing them. We expect parties [farmers and government] to follow the committee's opinion. Meanwhile, the protest will continue without causing violence or damage," the CJI suggested.

The court cautioned the government against trying to "instigate" violence. The CJI stressed that as fellow Indians, the judges too understood the farmers' problems. But Attorney General K.K. Venugopal strongly objected to the farmers' conduct. He said the farmers

cannot corner the government into a 'yes or no' to their demand to repeal the laws. The government was ready for a clause by clause discussion on the laws.

Senior advocate P. Chidambaram, for Punjab, where most of the protesting farmers hail from, said the farmers actually wanted Parliament to discuss amendments to the three laws. "Farmers have not blocked the roads. Farmers wanted to march to Delhi. Who has stopped them and blocked them? The police have blocked them," Mr. Chidambaram said.

The nearly hour-long virtual court hearing ended on an inconclusive note when the court found that many of the protesting farmer bodies were not present.

Delhi Assembly passes resolution rejecting laws

"These [agricultural] laws are not made for farmers, but for funding for the BJP to fight elections," Mr. Kejriwal added, and later tore up copies of the farm laws inside the Assembly.

Meanwhile, BJP MLAs opposed the resolution and Leader of Opposition and BJP MLA Ramvir Bidhuri said that the BJP had won multiple elections after the farm laws were notified, which was because of the laws. He also attacked the Delhi government for notifying one of the three farm laws in Delhi.

"Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's government on November 23, 2020 notified one of the three farm laws [in Delhi]. And said that they will discuss the other

two. If it's a black law, then why did you notify it? We request a clarification on this from the Chief Minister," Mr. Bidhuri said in the Assembly. The point was raised later in the day by BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi, who called Mr. Kejriwal a "chameleon", and indulging in "opportunistic politics".

The special one-day session of the Assembly on Thursday was extended to Friday as Speaker Ram Niwas Goel had to adjourn the Assembly early because of protests by AAP MLAs inside the house demanding "repeal of the black laws".

The resolution to repeal the laws was introduced in the Assembly by AAP leader and Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot.

+ Mamata refuses to allow officers to go to Centre

Ms. Banerjee said such a move before the elections was against "the basic tenets of the federal structure".

"This act is nothing but a deliberate attempt to encroach upon the State's jurisdiction and demoralise the serving officers in WB. This move, particularly before the elections is against the basic tenets of the federal structure. It's unconstitutional & completely unacceptable," Ms. Banerjee tweeted.

The Union Home Ministry had on December 11 asked for the central deployment of the three IPS officers who were responsible for Mr. Nadda's security on December 10. The State government refused to give its consent, following which the Union Home Ministry came out with an order sending the three officers on central deployment.

Strengthening ties with Bangladesh a priority: PM

It was in Mujib Nagar that a government in exile was formed in 1971.

Mr. Modi accepted an invitation from Dhaka to be present at the 50th anniversary of independence of Bangladesh in March. He reiterated that removal of obstacles to land connectivity and growing trade had changed the texture of India-Bangladesh relationship.

The Chilahati-Haldibari rail link was last operational in 1965. Upgrade of the old lines was carried out before the inauguration.

Seven agreements

The two sides also concluded seven agreements covering areas such as hydrocarbon, High Impact Community Development Projects, elephant conservation, solid waste management,

Bengal Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police (DGP) to participate in a meeting on the law and order situation in the State in New Delhi on December 14. The Chief Secretary wrote back to the Centre seeking an exemption from attending the meeting. Political parties in the Opposition, particularly the BJP, have been raising the issue of political violence, including killing of party workers regularly.

The Union Home Ministry

had on December 11 asked for the central deployment of the three IPS officers who were responsible for Mr. Nadda's security on December 10. The State government refused to give its consent, following which the Union Home Ministry came out with an order sending the three officers on central deployment.

Deputy SP found dead in Bengaluru house

A complaint was filed by her father

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

A Deputy Superintendent of Police with the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) was found dead at a friend's house in Annapoorneeshwari Nagar in Bengaluru on Wednesday night.

The deceased, Lakshmi V., had gone to her friend's house for dinner. The friend, Manu, who is a BBMP contractor, told the police that there were two other guests in the flat when the incident occurred.

Based on a complaint filed by Lakshmi's father Venkatesh, the police registered a case of suspicious death.

"There are contradictory statements from her

friends. We have seized their mobile phones for analysis while a team is conducting a spot investigation to ascertain the cause of her death. We will wait for the post-mortem report," said a police officer.

Taken for questioning

The trio have been taken into custody for questioning. Senior officials visited Victoria Hospital to supervise the post-mortem examination. "The body was taken to her home in Kolar for the last rites," said a source.

A 2014-batch officer of the Karnataka State Police Service, Lakshmi was appointed Deputy Superintendent of Police in 2017. This was her first posting.

G. ANAND
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Political Affairs Committee (PAC) of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) met here on Thursday amidst rumblings of discontent in the party with its current leadership for the poor showing in the local body elections.

KPCC working president K. Sudhakaran, MP, said the culture of nominating office-bearers from block-level and upwards had hollowed out the Congress and weakened its organisational structure.

The Congress had become a loose federation of group satraps who were committed solely to preserving their clout. It lacked leadership with commanding



Time to reflect: KPCC leaders during the PAC meeting on Thursday. ■ S. MAHINSHA

power, he said.

Mr. Sudhakaran hinted that only a leadership change would help turn the Congress around and transform it into a formidable fighting machine ahead of the Assembly election.

Nevertheless, K.C. Venugopal, general secretary, All India Congress Committee (AICC), denied rumours of a leadership change.

With Assembly election around the corner, the national leadership of the Congress did not want its rank and file to indulge in a protracted and essentially self-defeating blame game over the debacle in the polls.

Mr. Venugopal's words seemed to reflect the determination of the AICC to move forward.

By one account, the PAC would debate whether the Congress had given voters an alternative vision of policy and credible governance alongside its anti-corruption election platform.

Hold referendum on three capitals: Naidu

Says he will quit politics if people voted against location of capital at Amaravati

STAFF REPORTER
GUNTUR

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) national president N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday challenged Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to hold a referendum on the idea of the three capitals.

Both sides agreed to hold an early meeting of the Joint Boundary Conference to prepare a new set of strip maps along the stretch of the Ichhamati, Kalindi, Raigandol and Hariabhangha rivers from Main Pillar 1 to Land Boundary terminus. This exercise will help in fixing the international boundary on that stretch.

Addressing a public meeting to mark one year of the launch of a protest against the government's plan to shift the capital, Mr. Naidu alleged that ever since Mr. Reddy had come to power,



In veneration: TDP chief N. Chandrababu Naidu at the site where the foundation stone for Amaravati was laid.

he had been making moves to shift the capital out of Amaravati; later, he came up with an idea of three capitals. "Mr. Reddy says insider trading has taken place in Amaravati. What has he done in the last 19 months?

Why did he fail to prove his allegations? Everyone knows that farmers have voluntarily given 34,000 acres as part of the land pooling scheme, of which 8,274 acres will be with the government. Had Mr. Reddy continued the

capital works, 130 firms would have set up offices in Amaravati, making it like Cyberabad," said Mr. Naidu.

'Rescind decision'

Stating that Amaravati would become a centre for growth, Mr. Naidu demanded that the Chief Minister rescind his decision on the three capitals and resume all activities related to construction in Amaravati.

The TDP chief said his vision had helped Cyberabad become a global destination for major IT and ITeS companies, which were providing employment to 13 lakh people and netting exports worth ₹1 lakh crore.

Protesters vandalise A.P. pharma project site

The facility is 'hazardous', they claim

STAFF REPORTER
KAKINADA

A few hundred protesters, led by women, on Thursday allegedly damaged property, machinery and the protection wall on the 498-acre site proposed for a pharma company by Divi's Laboratories Limited at Vontimamidi village of Thondangi mandal in East Godavari district.

The people affected by the pharma project and members of Left organisations reached the project site from different directions. The company was engaged in the ground levelling work for the proposed ₹390 crore project.

East Godavari Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayem Asmi said that at least 300 protesters were suspected to be involved in incident.

They demolished a portion of the protection wall before setting fire to the machinery, including a generator and three motorcycles. However, no one was hurt.

Irate protesters were agitating against the "hazardous project".

Andhra Pradesh

THE HINDU
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2020

SSLC, Class 12 exams from March 17 in Kerala

Final year UG, PG classes to begin on January 1

STAFF REPORTER

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The SSLC and Class 12 higher secondary and vocational higher secondary examinations will be held from March 17 to 30 in Kerala.

The decision was taken at an online meeting attended by the Education, Higher Education, Health, and Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers and the Education and Health Secretaries. The meeting was presided over by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan here on Thursday.

There was concern among Class 10 and Class 12 students regarding the date for the examinations in the wake of online classes being held for them since the start of the academic year owing to COVID-19.



Recap of lessons: From January 1, steps will be taken to begin revision of online classes. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Final year undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate classes (PG) will also get underway on January 1. The classes will be held with half the student strength. If necessary, classes will be scheduled on a shift basis in the morning and in the evening.

Limited students

Classes in the fisheries and agricultural universities will begin on January 1 with a limited number of students.

Classes will also begin in medical colleges for students from second year upwards.

The General Education Department will soon make arrangements for the public examination for Classes 10 and 12 (Plus Two), a statement from the Chief Minister's Office said. Classes for students who need to prepare for practical examinations as part of the year-end

examinations will begin in schools on January 1.

From January 1, steps will also be taken in schools to begin revision of the online classes that are being broadcast for students and to clear their doubts, as concerns have been expressed over how much students have really been able to grasp during the online classes.

Model exams

Model examinations will be held ahead of the public examinations. Students will be provided with counselling in schools to reduce anxiety or stress they may be experiencing. For this, students of Classes 10 and 12 may go to schools with the permission of their parents. The services of teachers will be used to provide these services.

The online sessions for the students of other classes will continue.

Karnataka to reopen schools for Classes 10, 12

STAFF REPORTER

BENGALURU

Schools in Karnataka are likely to resume classes on January 1 for students in Classes 10 and 12. This was the recommendation of the COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), whose members met with officials from the Department of Health and Family Welfare and the Department of Primary and Secondary Education on Thursday to discuss the reopening of schools.

Under the new format, applicable to government, private and aided schools, students can come to campus in small batches and attend classes. However, the committee said that Vidya-gama can be conducted for students from Classes 6 to 9 from January 1.

Primary and Secondary Education Minister S.uresh Kumar in a press release said a decision would be taken after consulting Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa. The new format, applicable to government, private and aided schools, students can come to campus in small batches and attend classes. However, the committee said that Vidya-gama can be conducted for students from Classes 6 to 9 from January 1.

IN BRIEF

Ensure all those eligible get welfare schemes: CM VIJAYAWADA

The newly sworn-in chairmen and directors of various BC corporations have to keep in mind that their post is a responsibility, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has said. Addressing them at a programme here on Thursday, Mr. Reddy said, "They must ensure that the welfare schemes reached all the eligible beneficiaries".

Karnataka CM launches Bengaluru Mission 2022

The projects taken up under Bengaluru Mission 2022 for upgrading the city's infrastructure to address the growing population and number of vehicles will receive budgetary allocation, Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa said on Thursday. "Adequate provisions will be made in the ensuing Budget," he said after launching Bengaluru Mission 2022.

Second Japan Industrial Township in Chittoor

VIJAYAWADA The Andhra Pradesh government proposes to develop a second Japan Industrial Township (JIT) in Chittoor, which is one of the nodes in the Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor, Minister for Industries M. Goutham Reddy has said. As on date, 25 Japanese companies are operating in the State.

Raveendran appears for questioning before ED

KOCHI C.M. Raveendran, additional private secretary to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, appeared at the Kochi office of the Enforcement Directorate for questioning on Thursday, after having avoided it on "health grounds". Meanwhile, the Kerala High Court dismissed Mr. Raveendran's petition challenging the summons issued by the ED directing him to appear on December 17 before it.

Protesters vandalise A.P. pharma project site

The facility is 'hazardous', they claim

STAFF REPORTER

KAKINADA

A few hundred protesters, led by women, on Thursday allegedly damaged property, machinery and the protection wall on the 498-acre site proposed for a pharma company by Divi's Laboratories Limited at Vontimamidi village of Thondangi mandal in East Godavari district.

East Godavari Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayem Asmi said that at least 300 protesters were suspected to be involved in incident. They demolished a portion of the protection wall before setting fire to the machinery, including a generator and three motorcycles. However, no one was hurt.

Irate protesters were agitating against the "hazardous project".

THE HINDU
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2020

Farmers to seek legal opinion

'Not in favour of impleading themselves in case'

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

Protesting farmer leaders will seek legal opinion on Friday before taking any position in the Supreme Court case on their agitation seeking repeal of three contentious agricultural reform laws. Most of them are not in favour of impleading themselves in the case, they said.

"After a meeting of the committee plus the Punjab leaders this afternoon, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha has decided to consult with four senior Supreme Court lawyers – Dushyant Dave, Prashant Bhushan, Colin Gonsalves, and H.S. Phoolka – before taking any position on the Supreme Court case," said K.V. Biju, national coordinator of the Rashtriya Kisan Mahasangh. The seven farm organisations mentioned in the case were a part of their movement have not yet received any communication from the court, Mr. Biju said.

Kisan Krantikari Union president Darshan Pal said, "The leaders are not in favour of impleading them-



Loud and clear: Farmers gathered before a new stage erected at the Singhu border on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

selves into the case, but we have decided to seek legal opinion first... It is the BJP which is behind this case, so why should we play into their hands?"

Farm leaders are worried about the legal precedent set during the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) earlier this year. When a PIL was filed on the anti-CAA protests, the court gave the order to vacate them. If the same thing happens, that will damage our movement," said a leader, who did not wish to be named.

Farmer groups also argued that this issue was the domain of the executive, not the judiciary. "The grammar of democratic governance must be articulated by the government. Constitutional institutions like courts exist for checks and balances, not

Tomar pens letter

Mr. Tomar also issued an eight-page open letter addressed to farmers. Drawing on his own credentials as the son of a farmer, he made an emotional appeal to farmers not to be misled by the protesters, accusing them of

as replacement of the obligations to be performed by the political executive," said a statement from the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee.

At Krishi Bhavan, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar met members of the Federation of Indian Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and aggregators, representing 500 FPOs in 15 States, who said the three laws had created an enabling environment to benefit small and marginal farmers.

Protester dies at Bahadurgarh border

CHANDIGARH
A farmer from Tungwali village in Punjab died on Thursday during the agitation against the new farm laws at Tikri on the Delhi-Bahadurgarh border. Jai Singh, 37, was declared "brought dead" at the Bahadurgarh civil hospital.

harmful political motivations. In the last six years, a group of people have attempted to bring discontent and anarchy into the country, by hiding behind different groups, whether Dalits, women or minorities, said the letter. "Today, these people once again sneak up behind the farmers of the country for their political cause," it added.

A letter was sent to Mr. Tomar from 10 senior academics and experts in agricultural economics arguing that the three laws are harmful to small farmers.

"We do believe that improvements and changes are required in the agricultural marketing system for the benefit of millions of small farmers, but the reforms brought by these Acts do not serve that purpose," the letter said.

Sonia convenes meeting of senior leaders on Dec. 19

First gathering at her residence since the lockdown

SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi has convened a meeting of senior leaders, including some members from the group of 23 (G-23) dissenters, at her residence on December 19 to discuss the upcoming Assembly elections, ongoing farmers' agitation and the government skipping the winter session of Parliament, a senior leader of the party said on Thursday.



Sonia Gandhi

members to the Congress Working Committee.

Among the dissenters, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, Deputy Leader Anand Sharma, former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, former Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan and former Union Minister Shashi Tharoor are likely to be part of the strategy meeting.

The senior leader said the meeting could stretch to Sunday as the top leadership would brainstorm on a range of issues, including a revision plan for the party.

In August, G-23 leaders had written to Ms. Gandhi, pitching for a "full-time and active leadership", organisational revamp and elected

seats across several States, the performance in the local bodies' elections in Rajasthan, Hyderabad, Kerala and the council elections in Bodoland Territorial Region of Assam.

Key issues
The Congress chief will also discuss the ongoing farmers' agitation and the Centre's decision not to hold the winter session of Parliament.

The timing of the meeting is significant as it comes amidst a churn in the party over the leadership issue.

Following the letter by the G-23, the party's central election authority is gearing up to hold organisational polls, including election for a party president by the first week of February.

"The A320s, which are already ready with us, will be converted by Airbus based on the requirements, and this will save on overall cost of the project," the source stated.

The project was expected to be completed in six years. These platforms would be much more capable than the existing Netra AEW&C aircraft, offering 360 degree coverage, the source added.

Nod for six early warning IAF aircraft

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) on Thursday approved procurements worth ₹28,000 crore, which include six additional Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) aircraft for the Indian Air Force to be designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation.

"An earlier proposal to develop two bigger early warning aircraft based on Airbus A330 aircraft has now been converted to six AEW&C platforms mounted on Airbus A-320 aircraft which will be procured from Air India," a defence source said.

"The A320s, which are already ready with us, will be converted by Airbus based on the requirements, and this will save on overall cost of the project," the source stated.

The project was expected to be completed in six years. These platforms would be much more capable than the existing Netra AEW&C aircraft, offering 360 degree coverage, the source added.

Elected MP's right to speak must be protected'

Rahul writes a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day after walking out of a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC) on Defence, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to express "dismay" at the manner in which the meeting was conducted and asked Mr. Birla "to protect an elected MP's right to speak freely".



Amit Shah

hya Pradesh via video link on Friday.

"Amit Shahji took a review of the progress of the programmes so far and spoke about the need to intensify it," a senior leader said.

The shadow of the now scrapped land acquisition ordinance also lies heavy on this issue. It had to be scrapped after several notifications as the Opposition had made it untenable politically.

"This, however, is something that parties like the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party have advocated in the past. The Aam Aadmi Party too had this in their Punjab polls manifesto and the Hooda Committee that advocated for such reforms had a senior Akali Dal as member. So it's not the same situation," said a senior leader.

All this points to the government not having any intention of suspending executive action on the laws as suggested by the Supreme Court. After a big day in the top court, it seems both sides, government and farmers groups are sticking to their stands.

Giving his version of Wednesday's events, Mr. Gandhi said he was "repeatedly prevented" from speaking by the Chairman of the PSC on Defence, the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Jual Oram, forcing him to walk out in protest.

"Sir, as Speaker of the Lok Sabha and custodian of the House, I urge you to intervene and ensure that the

discussion and presentations held in the defence committee are in consonance with the role and objective of the institution and that the right of elected MPs to speak freely is protected," Mr. Gandhi is learnt to have said in his letter.

The Congress leader also expressed surprise that the panel chose to "discuss uniforms in the current military situation" and mentioned that he had given in writing that the Committee discuss India's "strategy against China's aggressive posture on the northern border in coordination with Pakistan; response to China's reusable autonomous armed drones and unmanned systems strategy, its approach to information warfare... and the inter-governmental agreement on the purchase of Rafale war planes".

HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD

DIRECT RECRUITMENT TO THE UTTAR PRADESH HIGHER JUDICIAL SERVICE-2020

ADVERTISEMENT

Online applications are invited from eligible Advocates to fill up 98 vacancies i.e. 87 current vacancies (SC-18, ST-01, OBC-23 and Unreserved-45) + 11 unfilled vacancies of reserved category of the recruitment year 2009 (SC-07 and OBC-04) in pursuance of the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court passed in Civil Appeal Nos. 1956-1957 of 2015-Naval Kishore Mishra & Others Vs. High Court of Judicature at Allahabad through its Registrar General & Ors. Etc., of Direct Recruitment to Uttar Pradesh Higher Judicial Service-2020, in the Pay Scale of Rs. 51550-1230-58930-1380-63070.

1. Practice : A candidate must be an Advocate of not less than 07 years' continuous practice as an Advocate on the last date fixed for the submission of application forms.

2. Age : A candidate must have attained the age of 35 years and must not have attained the age of 45 years as on 01.01.2021, i.e. the candidate must have been born on or after 02.01.1976 and not later than 01.01.1986. Age limit shall be higher by 03 years in case of SC/ST/OBC category candidates belonging to the State of U.P. only (a candidate of SC/ST/OBC category must have attained the age of 35 years and must not have attained the age of 48 years as on 01.01.2021, i.e. the candidate must have been born on or after 02.01.1973 and not later than 01.01.1986).

3. Reservation : There shall be 20% horizontal reservation for women subject to final decision of the Court in Special Appeal No. 675 of 2019 and its connected Special Appeal, filed against the order dated 16.01.2019 of this Court passed in Writ Petition No. 11039/2018-Vipin Kumar Maurya & Ors. Vs. State of U.P. & Ors. and its connected Writ Petitions, wherein Clause (4) of G.O. dated 09.01.2007 was declared ultra vires. Reservation for SC/ST/OBC categories will be applicable for the candidates belonging to State of U.P. only.

4. Submission of Application Form : The application shall be filled online from 20th January, 2021 to 19th February, 2021 till 23:59 hours after which the link will be disabled.

Applications received through any other mode will not be accepted. The hard copy of the online submitted application forms may be downloaded/printed upto 22nd February, 2021 till 23:59 hours. (Official website: www.allahabadhighcourt.in).

In addition to submission of on-line application, the downloaded hard copy of the application form along with requisite documents, as mentioned in the instructions are to be submitted as follows:

(i) The Advocates practising within the State of U.P.- Before the District & Sessions Judge of the District or the Registrar General, High Court Allahabad or the Senior Registrar, Lucknow Bench, Lucknow, as the case may be, after obtaining requisite forwarding on or before 27th February, 2021.

(ii) The Advocates practising outside the State of U.P. - The candidates shall obtain requisite forwarding by the District and Sessions Judge of the District/Registrar General/Registrar of the High Courts/Secretary General of the Supreme Court, as the case may be. Fully filled in and forwarded application forms are to be sent directly by the candidate through Registered Post / Speed Post / Courier to the Registrar (J), (Selection & Appointment/Seniority), High Court of Judicature at Allahabad, so as to reach on or before 08th March, 2021.

5. Preliminary Examination : The tentative date of Preliminary Examination (Objective Type) is 04th April, 2021 (Sunday) and the same will be held at Prayagraj and only those candidates shall be called appear in the Main Written Examination who secure 45% or more marks in the Preliminary Examination, provided that candidates not more than 20 times the number of vacancies category-wise i.e. separately for General, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes shall be admitted to the Main Written Examination.

6. Fee : Examination Fee for General/OBC candidates is Rs. 1250/- and Rs. 1000/- for S.C./S.T. candidates belonging to State of U.P. only. (Rs. 1250/- for all the candidates belonging to States other than U.P.).

7. Other Instructions : The detailed instructions for the candidates/how to apply, application form, syllabus, mode of submission of fee and other details will be made available on the official website of High Court, Allahabad (www.allahabadhighcourt.in) later on.

Note-I: The number of vacancies of Direct Recruitment to U.P. Higher Judicial Service-2020, so advertised, are provisional and may vary (increase or decrease).

Note-II: No application regarding inspection of answer scripts of Preliminary and Main Written Examination, will be entertained after one year from the date of declaration of final result of that recruitment year.

Note-III: (i) An Advocate must possess a period of 07 years' continuous practice as on the last date fixed for submission of the application form.

(ii) Prosecuting Officers/Assistant Prosecuting Officers are treated to be an Advocate and are eligible as per the Judgement of Hon'ble Supreme Court in Civil Appeal No. 561 of 2013-Deepak Agarwal Vs. Keshav Kaushik & Others.

Note-IV: The candidates will be issued admit card online which will be made available only on the official website for downloading at an appropriate time. No admit card will be sent through post.

Note-V: The candidates are also advised to visit the official website of this Court from time to time for Instructions/How to apply with regard to filling up of the application form and other notifications issued by this Court, for further information.

sd/-
REGISTRAR GENERAL



Protection from nature: The windproof tents on the Singhu border. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Finding warmth in the big tent, a city within a city

Shelter set up to shield protesters from the biting cold

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

With the mercury dipping in the national capital, a "tent city" has come up inside a petrol filling station at the Singhu border to provide accommodation to the farmers who are protesting against the three controversial agriculture laws.

Rows of green and grey tents have been set up to provide relief from the cold wave to hundreds of farmers who are reaching Delhi each day. Currently, around 150 waterproof and windproof tents with the capacity to accommodate nearly 500 people have been installed.

The insulated tents were brought in when several farmers got drenched in rain

last Saturday, said Jatin Singh, one of the managing team members for the arrangements.

Varying capacity
"Blankets and mattresses come with the tents itself. While some of the tents can accommodate up to five people, there are a few others which can accommodate around 2-3 people," Mr. Singh said.

While a "check-in" time of 6 p.m. has been set, women and children can take up the accommodation at any point of time, Mr. Singh said.

Volunteer Suresh Dhaka said, "Some people are sending wheat and milk, others have sent medicines."

Mr. Singh, the tents are being provided by an NGO, Hemkunt Foundation, which is supported by the sangat (community).

Lovedeep Singh, a student of Patiala University, who has begun volunteering at the tent city said, "I reached the border five days back with my mother and sister and we have been camping here since then. All kinds of facilities, including water and sanitation, have been provided here."

Residents of two villages in Sirsa – Gudiakheda and Dhukra – have arranged for blankets and quilts.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also set to address farmers in Madras

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also set to address farmers in Madras

Tender Schedules are as below

Sl. No.	Tender Name & Number	Date Floating Tender on e-Procurement Portal	Date and Time of pre-bid meeting	Last date and Time for bidding through e-procurement portal.	Date and time for opening of Technical bids on e-Procurement Portal

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India's recovery rate high: govt.

The country has registered 33,291 recoveries in the last 24 hours, it says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

India's COVID-19 recovery rate is among the highest in the world, the Health Ministry said on Thursday. While the global figure is 70.27%, India's is 95.31%, it said. The U.S., Brazil, Russia, and Italy are reporting lower rates.

"India has registered 33,291 recoveries in the last 24 hours. About 75.63% of these new recovered cases are contributed by 10 States/Union Territories. With 5,728 persons recovering from COVID-19, Kerala has recorded maximum number of recoveries, Maharashtra registered 3,887 recoveries, while West Bengal registered 2,767 recoveries," noted the data released by the Ministry.

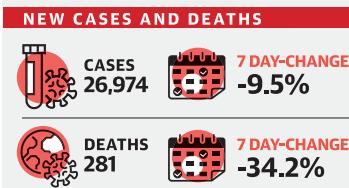
24,010 new cases

India has registered 24,010 new cases in the 24 hours with 10 States and Union Territories contributing 78.27% of them.

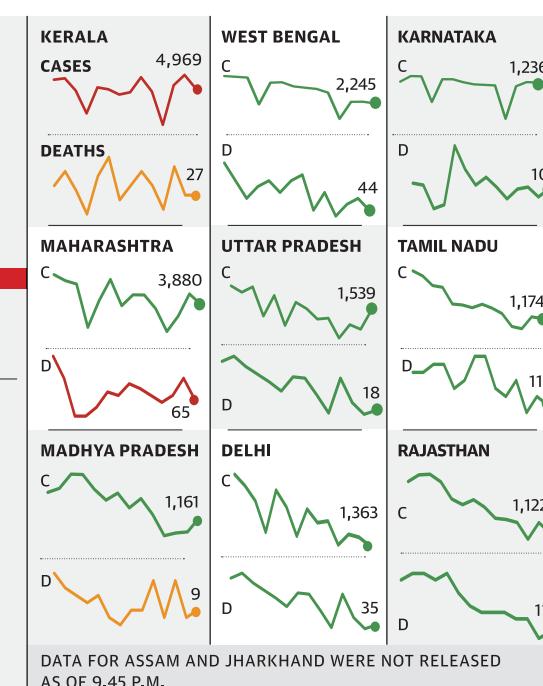
Kerala reported 6,185 cases in the 24 hours, West Ben-

Viral tracker

With 26,974 new COVID-19 cases recorded on Thursday, India's tally inched towards the 1 crore mark with 99,77,372 cases. As many as 281 deaths were added. A total of 15,78 crore samples were tested as of December 16, according to the ICMR



The graphs depict the new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. If average cases and deaths in the last seven days are higher than the previous seven days, then the cases and deaths are rising; if they are lower, then dropping; if they are similar, then cases and deaths are flatlining.



gal recorded 2,293, while Chhattisgarh registered 1,661. Also 79.15% of the 355 case fatalities reported in the past 24 hours are from 10 States and Union Territories. Of the new fatalities, 95

(26.76%) were reported from Maharashtra. West Bengal recorded a fatality count of 46, while Delhi reported 32 deaths.

"India has registered a steady decline in the number

of daily deaths. The case fatality rate is sustained at 1.45% and is consistently decreasing. India's fatality rate is one of the lowest in the world," the Health Ministry added.

House panel members want free grain scheme extended

The COVID-19 package scheme ended on November 30

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

At a meeting of a parliamentary committee held on Tuesday, members demanded the extension of the free foodgrain scheme started by the government as part of the COVID-19 relief package. The scheme ended on November 30.

The issue was raised at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution headed by Trinamool Congress leader Sudip Bandhopadhyay. The members were of the view that till a vaccine was approved and distributed to the public, the scheme should be extended.

The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana was announced in March by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as part of the package. The scheme covers 80 crore ration card holders. Each household gets five kg

of rice or wheat each month and one kg of pulses. The scheme was announced only for three months in the first round till June 30 and later it was extended till November 30.



Till the time we are really through with this pandemic, the scheme should continue

STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBER

of rice and wheat each month and one kg of pulses. The scheme was announced only for three months in the first round till June 30 and later it was extended till November 30.

"We are a country with a huge buffer stock, so it is absolutely illogical to leave these stocks for rodents to feed on rather than giving it to the hungry," a member said.

Reetika Khera, Associate Professor of Economics, IIT, Delhi, who has been involved with food security issues, said the FCI website showed that the buffer stock in October should be 307 lakh tonnes, whereas it was more than 700 lakh tonnes in September. Since then, the data were not available.

"The pandemic is not over yet and the number of cases are also rising. Our view is that till the time we are really through with this pandemic the scheme should continue," a member said on condition of anonymity. The officials depositing in front of the committee only said that the suggestions would be considered.



According to informed sources, a few States have demanded an extension. Senior officials at the Depart-

'Absolute distress due to pandemic'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Business and industry sectors, seeking an extension of moratorium or even waiver of interest on loans, told the Supreme Court on Thursday that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) must collect empirical data on the financial stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Appearing before a Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan, senior advocate Ravindra Shrivastava, representing one of the petitioners, said there was a need for a calibrated policy to be implemented under the Disaster Management Act.

Resolution of financial debts cannot be left solely in the hands of individual banks and their policies, he submitted. Absolute distress was prevailing at the moment... Huge profits being made by banks, he submitted. The court reserved the case for judgment.

IN BRIEF



SC decision today in Kunal Kamra case

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Thursday said it would pass orders on Friday on pleas to initiate contempt proceedings against stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra and cartoonist Rachita Taneja for scandalising the court.

Modi mourns Nawaz Sharif's mother

NEW DELHI
Prime Minister Narendra Modi has condoled the death of Shamima Akhtar, mother of former Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif. In a letter on December 11 to Maryam Nawaz, Mr. Modi expressed his "heartfelt condolences".

India to help out sailors stranded in China

NEW DELHI
The Indian Embassy in Beijing is in contact with the Chinese authorities on the condition of the Indian sailors on board bulk cargo vessel m.v. Jag Anand and m.v. Anastasia, stranded in the Jingtan and Caofeidian ports for several months.

India ranks 111 out of 162 nations in freedom index

NEW DELHI
A global ranking of personal, civil and economic freedom released on Thursday placed India at 111 out of 162 countries. The Human Freedom Index 2020 ranked India 110 in terms of personal freedom and 105 on economic freedom, with an overall score coming to 6.43 out of 10.

Five parties spent ₹34 cr. on Delhi polls: ADR

Report says other parties, including the BJP, are yet to make expenses public

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Five political parties, including the ruling Aam Aadmi Party, collected ₹49.99 crore and spent ₹34.32 crore in the Delhi Assembly election campaign this year, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said in a report on Thursday.

Many parties, including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), that contested the polls in February have

failed to make their expenditure statements public even after 230 days, it noted.

The parties are required to submit their reports to the Election Commission of India (ECI) within 75 days of completion of polls.

Violation of SC order
The report said this delay was in violation of a 1996 judgment of the Supreme Court in the Common

Cause vs. Union of India case, where it directed the ECI to create a format for recognised parties to submit their statements.

Details unavailable
The statements of the BJP, the Nationalist Congress Party, the Communist Party of India and the Janata Dal (United) are among those unavailable on the ECI's website, the ADR said.

A total of 62.2% of the ex-

pendediture by the five parties – the Aam Aadmi Party, the Congress, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Lok Janshakti Party – whose statements are available went towards "publicity", the report said.

The LJP submitted that it had zero collections and expenditure for the Delhi Assembly elections. Of the total expenditure, 51% was by the Aam Aadmi Party.

ISRO launches satellite for communications

CMS-01 rides aboard a PSLV from Sriharikota

T.K. ROHIT

CHENNAI

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully placed into a transfer orbit India's 42nd communications satellite, CMS-01, carried on board the PSLV-C50, from the second launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota Range, on Thursday.



Blasting off: The PSLV C-50 carrying the CMS-01 satellite taking off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre. ■ PTI

Meditate on this: yogasana is now a sport

Centre readies rules and regulations for championships; plans to take them global

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI



Game, set, match: Schoolchildren performing yoga at a public event in Ahmedabad. ■ FILE PHOTO

Homoeopathy (AYUSH), said at a press conference.

He said an exhaustive document containing rules, regulations and syllabus for yogasana competitions had been prepared, and the technical committee had made a list of the asanas after exhaustive research.

"Work for automation of the scoring system to introduce objectivity in marking has

been initiated and district, State and national and world championships in yogasana are proposed in 2021. A pilot national individual yogasana sports championship (virtual mode) is proposed for February 2021," he said.

Minister of State for Sports Kiren Rijiju said India had brought to the world the beauty and usefulness of this ancient tradition, which had evolved into a sport with the final aim of making it to the Olympics.

Minister of Ayush Sripad Yesso Naik said an Olympic

event was currently on to develop a patented electronic scoring system for yogasana

championships in India and globally, along with courses and certification.

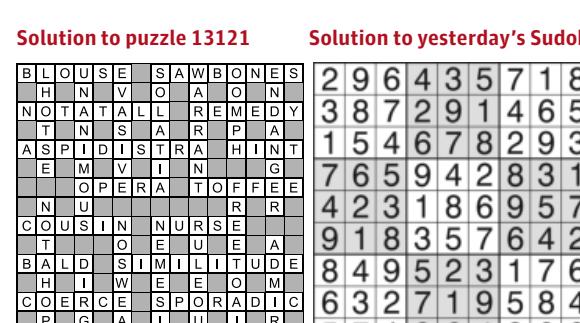
SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13121

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

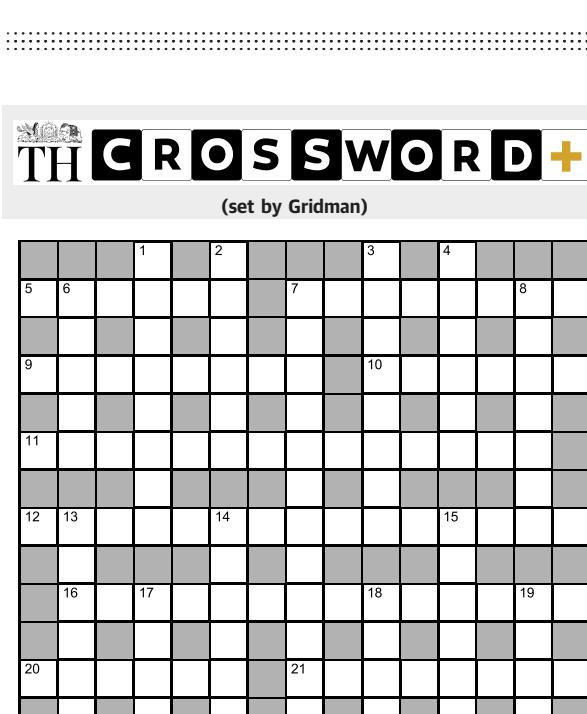


FAITH

Siva reads our thoughts

Saint Thirumoolar refers to Lord Siva as Nandi in many verses of his Thirumantiram. His verses are part of the sacred Saivite literature known as Thirumurai. In the first thantram of his work, Thirumoolar establishes the supremacy of Lord Siva, said R. Narayanan in discourse. Siva knows all the thoughts that arise in our minds. Nothing can be kept secret from Him. Yet there are many in this world who do not think of Him. While they do not focus their thoughts on Him, they are quick to complain that He has withheld His grace. The truth is that Siva is always with those who think of Him. To them, His grace is guaranteed, assures Thirumoolar. The hearts of His devotees are the temples where He likes to reside. It is wrong to say that He does not exist. One should have no doubts about His existence. Look at the marvels of the world. How can one explain them?

The waves of the ocean dash against the shore, but they do not go beyond that. Who marked this as their boundary? It is none other than Siva. The mind misleads us, and we take the wrong path as a result. Keep the mind unwavering. This then will automatically lead us towards the right path. Thirumoolar says that he has no relative but Lord Siva. He calls out to the Lord to come to him. He says he will not hesitate to embrace Him when He arrives. Thirumoolar says that Siva is as indispensable to him as the lynchpin is to a wheel. Siva has no birth. He is also deathless. He never turns away those who approach Him. If one worships Him, then one can get rid of ajnana. Forgetting Him is ajnana. Such a fate will never befall one who is devoted to Him. If one worships Siva, who is known as Nandi, He will walk into that person's heart and reside there gladly.



- 12 Agent with a leaning to be a violin player, perhaps (15)
16 The banian manufacturer's personal stake (6,8)
20 Roof worker is the one criticising (6)
21 Streaking nude wily – difficult to manage (8)
22 What you may do on a chess board – what a pupil may have to study (3,5)
23 Game's to fix colour (6)
- DOWN
- 1 Good relative has hired out a piece of armour (8)
2 Obtained primarily hoary Indian classic typeface (6)
3 Half of sect involved in secret compact (5-3)
4 Bird's extremely efficient food passage (6)
6 Yes, all but head cover goes to make up coarse fellow (5)
7 Grumpier tone I adopted, yielding to the eldest his right to succeed (13)
8 Strip is in this manner hiding a bit of muck (7)
13 No level ground in a type of Italian fiction (7)
14 One doesn't know the source of such income (8)
15 Big and small uses found no end – that's liberality! (8)
17 No stand-downs on a kind of exercise (3-3)
18 Check the never-ending rough growth (6)
19 Look around! By the grace of God, you might spot the plant (5)



SUNALINI MATHEW

Rev Mohit Hitter, presbyter-in-charge of the Cathedral Church of the Redemption, in Delhi, is amused when he thinks back to the time when drinking at a restaurant or bar was not the norm. "People would ask for Christmas cake because it had rum, not realising that the amount we put in is very little," he says. He draws upon the fact that people from different cultures often come together out of curiosity and a willingness to taste each other's food.

Different strokes for different forks

It is also true that people go out of their way to make guests feel at home with the food they offer. At a Christian or Muslim wedding feast in Tamil Nadu, where the celebratory food is mutton biryani and chicken 65 with the only 'vegetable' being pachadi and enna kathrika, there is always vegetarian food served separately, ordered from a different supplier who specialises in just that.

"We are usually mixed groups at a large function in India, and when the ecosystem is mixed, we are used to catering to different beliefs," says Gurugram-based Ekta Rohra Jafri, who is herself a Hindu married to a Muslim. She gives the example of her sister-in-law who lays out an Eid spread with kebabs and

FOOD for the faithful

During a celebration, how families and communities turn what could have been culinary clashes based on religion, into meeting points — provided people come to the table

kormas, and also with dahi bhalla and papri-chaat so everyone can come to the table.

It is the reason there is vegetable haleem at Hyderabad-based photographer and writer Nishat Fatima's house for Eid. Or that Ekta's in-laws who may eat a tehri (vegetable rice dish) on its own understand her parents would like it with a gravy side. Or that Rev Hitter's family always makes an eggless, alcohol-free fruit cake for family that does not eat either.

While the Jewish community in India has strict rules around kosher — milk, animals with cloven hooves and scales are not allowed, and ideally anything else needs to be slaughtered by a priest — Rabbi Ezekiel Isaac Ma-

lekar is mostly vegetarian especially when he goes out. "We like to take part in Diwali, for example, so it's the easy option," he says. As the person in-charge of the Interfaith Study Centre at the Judah Hyam Synagogue in Delhi he says, "What is common to all nine major religions is that they all believe the food they prescribe is for the good of the body, mind, and soul."

At the same table

Every Friday evening at Delhi's Press Club of India, scores of journalists gather to drink and eat at throwaway prices, the shared space a symbol of an urban tribe bound together by work. At many tables, people may place their orders and pay

separately, but will huddle together for winter warmth, gossip, and a few laughs.

This "brotherhood around breaking bread" has a great deal to do with a tribal instinct, says Dr Ennapadam S Krishnamoorthy, drawing from his work as a neuro-psychiatrist in Chennai. "In rural India, for instance, the whole village is invited to a ceremony, with food as the centrepiece. Even in an urban Indian setting, a celebration will be dominated by the

community of the host and their particular food," he says. This does not make it discriminatory; it just means "we don't let go of our core". He adds that in city life our tribes are our social circles that may be interfaith, international, intercultural.

Why does food draw us together more than separate? "Because food satiates." He says our most primal memory is that of smell, so just the aroma of certain spices can conjure up a feeling of anticipation. "The emotion you get at the end of a good meal is a certain sense of satisfaction, and your brain is wired to feel this."

He speaks of what is now urban legend — of actor-politician

MGR insisting that anyone who was at home when lunch was served, had to eat. "So at one time he would have 50 or 100 people eating in his house. Finding people's affections through the stomach is universal to humankind."

The stork-fox conundrum

Segregation is a bad word in the rest of the world; in India, food segregation has been normalised, with the 'non-veg' sometimes placed on a separate table, though this practice is being seen less, says Dr Krishnamoorthy, who belongs to the Kerala Iyer community. He feels travel and a wide range of experiences have helped people with a strict vegetarian upbringing be open to

Bringing people together Sharing food at the same table is a part of any celebration, even if what we eat is different • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

meat-like textures and gravies.

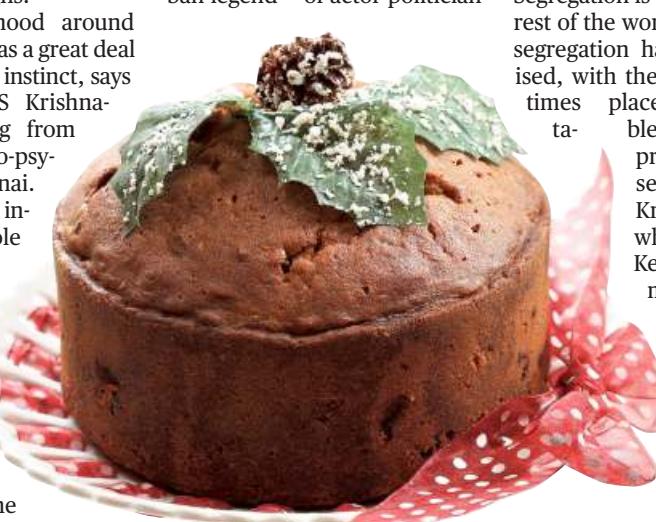
Delhi historian Sohail Hashmi talks of how he sends sevaiya every year to his neighbours on Eid, but other than a couple of people most do not respond or reciprocate. "Even when we invite people home, we invite a certain kind, once we suss out who we'd like at our table," he says of most of us. There may be religion, caste, or class barriers.

Then there are those who may visit during a festival, but may not want to touch food or water at the hosts'. "We can't force food down people, and we don't need to have them eat to make ourselves feel happy," says Nishat. "It's nice enough that they have come home to wish us."

BR Srihari who works with an investment banking firm in Chennai, is one of the few who doesn't eat anything outside of home. In fact, his community that practises Vaishnavism, some of whom still follow very strict norms, cook their food on a kummiti adupu (coal-fired iron stove) with guidelines on what to eat on what day. When he meets his friends, "they eat whatever they want. We talk and laugh together, but they know I won't be eating or even drinking water," he says.

Food for the heart

The recent naughty and nice Zomato ad made most of us smile. It featured a young woman and man from different faiths ordering from the app and offering food to each other across the landing of an apartment block, while pretending their mothers have cooked it. The theme that runs through is of urbanisation, and serves to remind us that food sometimes bridges the long corridors of loneliness. In the end, it's not what is in the bowl that matters as much as the reason why we invite people to partake.



Annual ritual Jeemol Koruth Varghese's rich plum cake • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

cranberries and even candied kiwi. Some even add cocoa powder for the colour," she says. "While I stick to my old recipe, I do add more fruits now. I draw a line at cocoa powder though," she adds.

The recipe is delightfully nuanced too, says Melissa Correia Pink, an HR professional based in Bengaluru, who baked a Christmas plum cake for the first time this year. "Every family has its own secret ingredient that it does not want to part with. I tried my own rich plum cake this time, which turned out surprisingly well," says Melissa.

Baker, entrepreneur and founder of Eva's Healthy Bakes in Kochi, Jeemol Koruth Varghese, believes the quantity of fruits defines the cake. Her cakes contain 800 gram fruits and 180 gram flour. Jeemol says she uses a blend of rum and brandy for soaking the fruits, but alcohol-free plum cakes too are in demand.

In their early years, plum cakes at Kunju's home bakery did not contain alcohol. The home bakery based in Kanjirapally, Kottayam, which is known for its jam rolls, has been baking plum cakes since 1931. "It is only recently that we started soaking fruits in rum," says Jayan Kunju, the CEO. The cakes are made using locally-sourced butter and ghee, and contain raisins, sultanas, black berries, dates, candied orange, ginger and cherries. They are glazed with honey.

It is the nostalgia that makes the plum cake special to Nimmy Paul, a professional cookery instructor based in Kochi. She associates Christmas with the scent of freshly baked cake that filled her mother's home. For over 10 years, Nimmy sold rich plum cakes that were baked at her home in Punallur. The mixing, soaking and baking was helmed by her mother. "It has yellow and black raisins, black currants, orange peel, ginger flavouring and has brandy too. It involves slow baking. It is left to cool on a clean muslin cloth for at least 24 hours, and then some more brandy is poured over it. The cake brings back memories of my mother," Nimmy says.

Baking the good old Christmas cake is a family affair, filled with memories and laughter



RUM, RAISINS AND OODLES OF LOVE

ANASUYA MENON

Two weeks before Christmas, Annu John's home smells like heaven. It is the aroma of the season's first cake, loaded with spices and fruits soaked in brandy.

Every year, for the past 40 years, Christmas baking has been a ritual at Annu's home. Living in the plantations of Munnar ensured she got a fresh supply of fruits for the cake. "I would invite my friends over and there would be laughter, snacks and conversation while the cake baked," she says, adding, "It brought Christmas alive." Annu is now based in Kochi, and this year, for the first time, celebrations are low key owing to the pandemic. A cake, however, will be baked.

The concept of a traditional Christmas cake remains unaffected by time. Even as entire cake revolutions took place around it — gluten-free, eggless, fusion, whole wheat, artisanal and experimental — the classic plum cake is still at the heart of celebrations. Most Christian households have a precious family recipe, usually handed down by a grandmother or a great aunt. By the end of October or early November, preparations are on to soak the

fruits in fine spirit.

Food is inextricably linked to culture and identity, and certain traditions do not change when associated with religion, says author Tanya Abraham. Her 2019 book *Eating With History: Ancient Trade Influenced Cuisines of Kerala* traces the culinary practices that evolved out of Kerala kitchens. "The plum cake came from the Europeans, but it also mingled with local culinary habits. Ingredients were added or taken off based on availability, and versions of it were created," she adds.

Thus a European fruit cake found its roots here and came to be known as the plum cake. "In parts of northern India, it is even known as the Kerala plum cake," says Nalini Verma, who has been a culinary instructor for the past 38 years. Despite the obvious absence of plums, the cake is fondly called 'plum', perhaps a colloquial interpretation of raisins and currants.

The classic plum cake, however, has undergone minor embellishments, says Nalini. "I learnt baking 45 years ago, and in those days we didn't soak the fruits a month ahead. We also did not have as many fruits as today. Now you find everything from raisins to candied apricots,

Here is how you can still be home and not miss clinking your glasses to add some extra cheer to the festive mood

Smoke Vodka

Headquartered in New Delhi, Smoke Lab, founded by Varun Jain, presents two Indian grain basmati rice distilled vodkas. Six state-of-the-art distilleries in Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Goa and Maharashtra

produce a homegrown brand that is distilled five times using charcoal filtration. Launched in 2019, the Smoke Classic is a purists delight while the Smoke Aniseed is an aromatic spirit with the distinct flavor of saunf, and saffron notes of fennel and liquorice, suitable for layered cocktails.

Raise the spirit for the festive season



ANISHA MENEZES

Whether you are raising a toast to the festive season or just thankful to bid 2020 adieu, spirit brands across India are tailoring a drink for you. As families and friends plan small gatherings or quiet celebrations, in the midst of a pandemic, here is a round up of what is available so you can stock your bar for the party season, even if it is just a Zoom party!

Fratelli Wines

A Christmas table is incomplete without wine. Abhishek Naik, senior manager, marketing, at Fratelli Wines says their Vintage 2020 is an interesting product.

"The whites initially were affected due to rains, but later on they developed beautiful primary aromas and refreshing acidity, specifically our whites like Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay and the Sauvignon Blanc had mineral notes," he says, adding, "The reds ripened very well with good colour and tannins, and are sweet because of uniform maturity in the red grapes."



Perry Road Peru

If you are travelling to Mumbai or have visitors from the city, try a bottle of the elusive Perry Road Peru. Hailed as India's only distilled cocktail offering, it is the first collaboration between a restaurant, The Bombay Canteen, and gin brand Stranger & Sons, Goa. "The finest perus/guavas were handpicked at their peak from a cart on Perry Road, Mumbai, ferried over to the Third Eye Distillery in Goa, and slowly macerated in the sun till every drop was flush with freshness. A bit like the spirit of the city — sweet, sour, spicy and salty all captured in this bottle," says Yash Bhanage, partner at Hunger Inc Hospitality, The Bombay Canteen. The cocktail has a limited seasonal release in MumbaiSpirits.



Paul John Christmas Edition 2020

Master distiller Michael Dsouza says his 2020 single malt is a new interpretation of Christmas. "Created from a blend of single malts from virgin oak, ex-bourbon and Oloroso casks, our limited release proffers deep flavours of creamy dark chocolate tinged with barley and soft spices, culminating in a rich, lightly peated and memorable finish," he says. The single malt pairs well with Christmas staples such as a good roast or a hearty stew. Available only in Goa and Karnataka.

If you are travelling to Mumbai or have visitors from the city, try a bottle of the elusive Perry Road Peru. Hailed as India's only distilled cocktail offering, it is the first collaboration between a restaurant, The Bombay Canteen, and gin brand Stranger & Sons, Goa. "The finest perus/guavas were handpicked at their peak from a cart on Perry Road, Mumbai, ferried over to the Third Eye Distillery in Goa, and slowly macerated in the sun till every drop was flush with freshness. A bit like the spirit of the city — sweet, sour, spicy and salty all captured in this bottle," says Yash Bhanage, partner at Hunger Inc Hospitality, The Bombay Canteen. The cocktail has a limited seasonal release in MumbaiSpirits.

Running past the Hurdles

Ahead of the TCS World 10K in Bengaluru, we look at how the long-distance running community coped with the pandemic, foregoing faraway nature trails for city neighbourhoods



PRAVEEN SUDEVAN

On a July morning this year, Taher Merchant, with a backpack containing food and water, set out for a run from his home in Jayanagar, Bengaluru. He ran many laps, amidst traffic, on the lane near his house. He had to be back home before the 8 pm pandemic curfew. In the evening, when he was about to complete the day's run, a bemused local cop stationed near his house told Taher, "I saw you running when I was having my morning tea. Then, I saw you running when I was having lunch in the afternoon. It's evening now and you are still running. I hope everything is all right."

Taher was taking part in the two-day 100-km Oxfam Trailwalker charity challenger to help migrant labourers affected by COVID-19 pandemic. On the first day, he covered 85 km; on the second, he completed the remaining 15 km. The annual charity event is usually held in nature trails in Mumbai and Bengaluru. Due to the pandemic, however, people from many cities walked or ran in their neighbourhoods.

According to Indiarunning.com, a website that tracks running events across the country,



2019 had 1,579 races; the two preceding years also witnessed 1,000-plus races. This year, however, most races were cancelled or postponed. Taher, over the last 10 years, has signed up for some of the most gruelling races in the world like the Tenzing Hillary Everest Extreme Ultra Marathon in 2018. This year, his schedule was disrupted. "I usually train in Ladakh during September-October. But I couldn't travel this year," he says.

The cancellation of events even impacted the livelihoods of some runners, like Coimbatore-based Vinoth Kumar, 30, who aspires to compete at the national level. "The prize money I get (from events), around three lakh rupees, is a substantial source of income for me to train and buy shoes and other things," he says. He has not run since February this year. "Had I known earlier, I would have saved up more last year."

Businesses associated with running events also experienced cash burns. Vasanthan K, director of My Race Timing Solutions in Chennai, which provides time-keeping services, says, "We managed to keep ourselves afloat only because of our good business in the last five years."

Not tied down
The first few months of the pandemic were the most challenging for runners. They hardly stepped out due to strict curfew measures and a heightened fear of contracting the virus. Yet they found a way to keep themselves active.

The story of an Australian ultra-marathoner clocking 50 kilo-

metres in 16 hours while isolating himself in a hotel room became popular in May. Sundreysh Sarup, 50, knows a few people from his running group in Delhi who adopted similar indoor routines. "Some apartment societies here weren't allowing people to run even within the compound. So, people were doing laps from one room to another," he says.

Being part of a running community also helped, says Rajesh Vetcha, 49, founder of the Hyderabad Running Group that organises the Airtel Hyderabad Marathon. "We took our activities online to make sure we were pushing each other," he adds. The running community organised webinars, online workout sessions and others.

Ankita Gaur, 36, has been running for the past nine years, having participated in the Boston Marathon and Berlin Marathon. The Bengaluru-based runner did not stop this year despite the pandemic and her pregnancy. "I changed my routine, of course. I am extra careful when I run outdoors. I try and go for early morning runs when there aren't many people



Ready, set, go (Clockwise from top) Ethiopia's Amdework Walelegn winning the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon 2020, Taher Merchant, and Ankita Gaur

• SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

around. I don't do high intensity runs as I used to. But overall, running has made me feel good," she says.

Going digital

As the number of cases surged since February, some race organisers around the world employed technology to conduct virtual marathons, wherein participants ran from different places and recorded the times through an app.

The Airtel Delhi Half Marathon, organised by sporting event managers Procram International, allowed only the elite runners to compete within a spectator-less, bio-secure environment. The rest of the competitors ran the virtual event. Despite the reduction in participation – about 40,000 in 2019 to less than 14,000 this year – Vivek Singh, managing director of Procram, is satisfied with the numbers: "At the beginning of the year, it looked like we weren't going to have the marathon at all. Considering that, I think this is a good number." Procram is now preparing its other high-profile event, TCS World 10K Bengaluru, via the TCSW10K app from December 20 to 27.

Many charities also count on these virtual events. Rekha Sudarshan, race director of the Dream Runners Half Marathon (which was also a virtual event this year), says, "We got 3,500 registrations this year compared to the 5,000 we get usually. Since it was a virtual event, we had to reduce the registration fee from ₹1,000 to ₹300. But we still managed to raise funds for frontline workers and beneficiaries in need of artificial limbs."

Vivek of Procram does not see the virtual marathon as a mere stopgap measure. "It is a top-up. Even after things are normal, we can use this to increase our participation," he says.

Runners, however, miss the track. "Though running is considered a solo sport, events offer gratification," says Sundreysh. "You get a high when you meet and compete with fellow runners. Virtual events can't recreate that experience." Several agree that long-distance running helped them cope with the pandemic. "The sport itself is such that it makes you mentally stronger," says Taher. Adds Rajesh, "A lot of people were likening the pandemic to an apocalypse. It's not true," says Rajesh, adding, "When you run a long-distance race, three or four kilometres might be bad in between. That doesn't mean you have to stop running. Once you endure the bad phase, you are good to go again. So, it's never the end of the world."

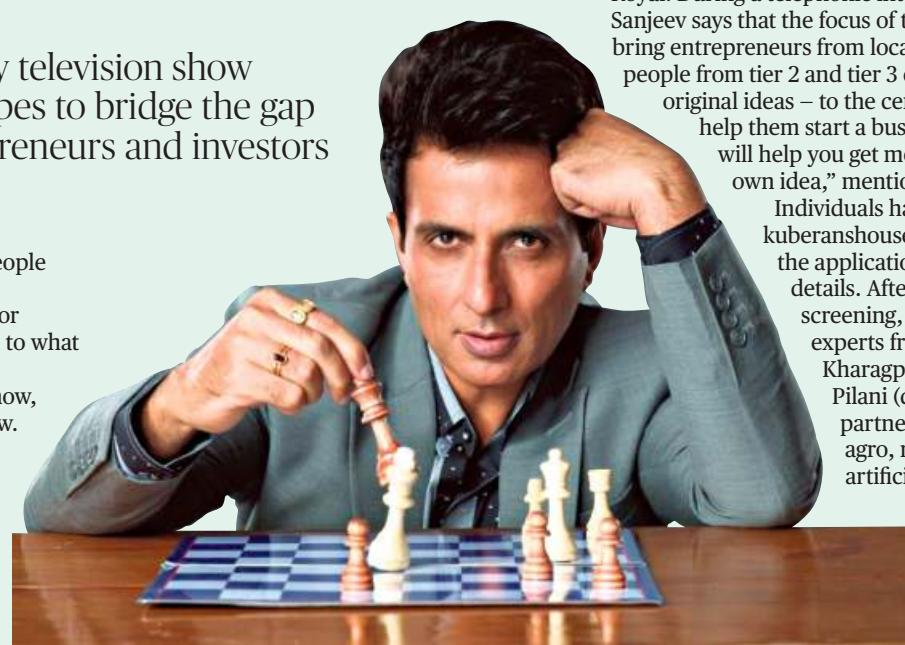
In pursuit of ideas

Kuberan's House, a reality television show featuring Sonu Sood, hopes to bridge the gap between aspiring entrepreneurs and investors

NEERAJA MURTHY

We have seen social media posts on people inventing hacks to create business opportunities and survive. Now director Sanjeev K Kumar is set to pay a tribute to what he calls the 'great Indian jugaad' phenomenon with a reality start-up show, which incidentally is his 100th TV show. Sanjeev, the only director to have worked in Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, Gujarati, Bengali and Odia television, makes his Hindi small screen debut.

With Sonu Sood as the *sutradhar* (narrator), *Kuberan's House*



(tentative name for the show) was conceptualised by Sanjeev along with his longtime associates Ram Gowda and Ranjith Royal. During a telephonic interaction, Sanjeev says that the focus of the show is to bring entrepreneurs from local forums – people from tier 2 and tier 3 cities with original ideas – to the centre stage and help them start a business venture. "I will help you get money out of your own idea," mentions Sanjeev.

Individuals have to log on to kuberanshouse.com and fill in the application form with details. After an initial screening, a panel of experts from IIT Kharagpur and BITS Pilani (domain partners) evaluates agro, robotics and artificial intelligence ideas on their uniqueness, and also whether they can be

converted into a business model.

While the channel modalities are still under wraps, the company has received 15,000 applications (till December 8) from across India. The final 60 individuals will be part of a 15-episode series with three ideas being pitched in every episode. Unlike a typical reality show with a winner and loser, this series is about pitching and convincing one's entrepreneurial idea to four investors as judges.

While Sonu Sood acts as a bridge between the contestants and judges (introducing contestants with recaps) the show combines entertainment (expect celebrity guests), games and negotiations. The secret room (to discuss money offered by investors) will see family discussions too. "It is often seen that in India an individual consults his family members while discussing deals. We want to bring in the human element and let the television audience discover the person and the family behind him," adds Sanjeev.

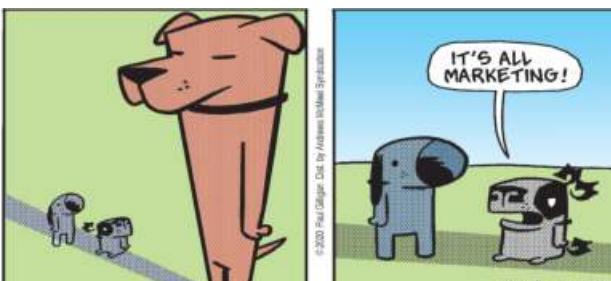
The idea is to take this concept further in its Tamil, Telugu and Kannada versions. "If an applicant doesn't make it to the national platform, he will be featured in our regional



Negotiations (Above) Sanjeev Kumar, (left) Sonu Sood • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

shows," he says. "It is easy to fulfill entrepreneurship dreams in this digital world, but many people are not aware of the financial process. We want to simplify that and show that if your idea is good enough, the investor will come to you."

POOCH CAFE



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



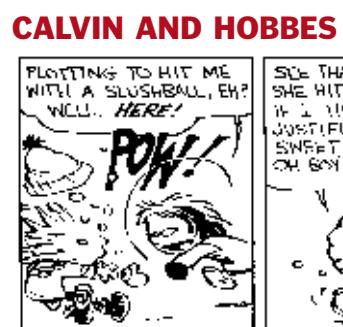
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



PEANUTS



TIGER



CALVIN AND HOBBES



MARKET WATCH

	17-12-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	46,890	0.48
US Dollar	73.59	0.00
Gold	49,455	0.81
Brent oil	51.56	0.04

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	467.75	-7.80
Asian Paints	2575.05	7.48
Axis Bank	605.40	-0.70
Bajaj Auto	3270.45	-33.05
Bajaj Finserv	9294.10	36.40
Bajaj Finance	5286.70	140.10
Bharti Airtel	515.10	-1.10
BPCL	395.40	-4.20
Britannia Ind	3729.75	-22.85
Cipla	783.20	-3.60
Coal India	143.45	-2.05
Divis Lab	3824.70	106.80
Dr Reddys Lab	5072.85	33.90
Eicher Motors	2466.60	-3.50
GAIL (India)	123.90	-0.50
Grasim Ind	912.70	-2.10
HCL Tech	879.35	-5.70
HDFC	2494.60	69.95
HDFC Bank	1441.80	31.10
HDFC Life	654.55	5.85
Hero MotoCorp	3112.65	-4.85
Hindalco	245.85	-5.60
Hind Unilever	2315.30	-28.65
ICICI Bank	510.40	-2.05
IndusInd Bank	935.80	14.00
Infosys	1159.20	-6.50
Indian Oil Corp	95.40	-0.95
ITC	213.05	-0.95
JSW Steel	366.20	-4.40
Kotak Bank	1965.45	12.90
L&T	1278.80	10.55
M&M	730.65	-1.30
Maruti Suzuki	7694.00	-102.35
Nestle India Ltd.	18305.35	-18.10
NTPC	104.45	-0.45
ONGC	101.50	-1.40
PowerGrid Corp	193.30	-2.90
Reliance Ind	1985.60	9.05
SBI Life	856.35	-1.15
State Bank	267.70	-1.70
Shree Cement	24510.40	251.30
Sun Pharma	571.35	-5.25
Tata Motors	181.70	-0.85
Tata Steel	635.30	-8.10
TCS	2838.20	24.00
Tech Mahindra	930.10	8.55
Titan	1501.95	-2.50
UltraTech Cement	5171.80	58.80
UPL	455.40	-4.25
Wipro	356.90	-1.50

EXCHANGE RATES		
	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.40	73.72
Euro	89.74	90.16
British Pound	99.68	100.11
Japanese Yen (100)	71.19	71.50
Chinese Yuan	11.23	11.28
Swiss Franc	83.12	83.49
Singapore Dollar	55.35	55.60
Canadian Dollar	57.76	58.02
Malaysian Ringgit	18.19	18.27
Australian Dollar	56.02	56.27

Source: Indian Bank

Mrs. Bectors IPO subscribed 197 times

NEW DELHI		
Mirroring a massive investor response, Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties IPO was subscribed 197.34 times on the last day of subscription on Thursday. PTI		

Govt. plans \$60-bn investment to bolster gas infrastructure

Centre aims to raise natural gas's share from 6% to 15% by 2030, says Pradhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Thursday said the government had planned a \$60-billion investment for creating gas infrastructure in the country till 2024, and that gas's share in the energy mix is expected to rise to 15% by 2030.

Currently, gas accounts for 6% in the country's total energy mix. Speaking at the Assocham Foundation Day Week 2020, he said, "We have envisaged a spend of \$60 billion in creating gas infrastructure till 2024, including for pipelines, LNG terminals and city distribution networks," says Mr. Pradhan.

He further said, "We are ushering a gas-based econo-



Energy boost: The plan will cover pipelines, LNG terminals and city distribution networks, says Mr. Pradhan

my by increasing the share of natural gas in India's primary energy mix from 6.2% to 15% by 2030."

India's first automated national-level gas trading platform was unveiled in June this year to promote and sus-

tain an efficient and robust gas market and foster gas trading in the country.

Coverage of CGD projects is being expanded to 232 geographical areas spread over 400 districts, with potential to cover about 53% of the

country's geography and 70% of population, Mr. Pradhan added.

He also said, "We are adopting clean mobility solutions with greater use of LNG (liquefied natural gas) as a transportation fuel, including long-haul trucking. We plan to have 1,000 LNG fuel stations across the country."

This year, the country was able to fully fill all petroleum reserves with capacity of 5.33 million tonnes constructed at Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru and Padur.

"We have [begun] the process of establishing another 6.5 MT commercial-cum-strategic petroleum storage facilities at Chandikol and Padur, under public-private partnership," he added.

Retail NPAs will be higher in second half of FY21: Axis Bank

'Situation to improve, reach pre-Covid levels in new fiscal'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Retail non-performing assets (NPAs) will be higher in the third and fourth quarter of FY21 and will go back to the pre-COVID-19 levels only in the new fiscal year, Axis Bank said on Thursday.

The third-largest private sector lender, however, said that the asset quality situation was much better than what was feared initially, and stressed that it had adequate provisions to take care of the reverses.

It may be noted that the damage to the economy because of the pandemic resulted in job losses or salary cuts, in turn impacting the loan repayment abilities in the otherwise resilient retail segment.

"Given the fact that a lot of people lost their jobs, some had to take salary cuts and some industries were badly affected, it will have some impact on delinquency and portfolio collections."

"But these numbers are much lower than what we had anticipated," head of retail lending Sumit Bali told reporters.



Given the fact that a lot of people lost their jobs, some had to take salary cuts and some industries were badly affected, it will have some impact on delinquency and portfolio collections.

On the restructuring introduced to take care of loan stress after the end of the moratorium, the bank had seen very few applications running into low triple digits, Mr. Bali said.

He said loan repayments

were improving every month, and the stock of sour debt from the past would lead to higher NPAs in the December and March quarters, before the situation improved to go back to the pre-COVID-19 levels in the new fiscal starting April 2021.

In September, when the six-month moratorium on loan repayments ended, the bank had been experiencing higher bouncing on electronic fund collection mandates, but it was much lower than the industry's averages, officials explained.

The restructuring introduced to take care of loan stress after the end of the moratorium, the bank had seen very few applications running into low triple digits, Mr. Bali said.

Brazil's Marcopolo to exit bus body making JV with Tatas

Tata Motors to buy out partner for ₹99.96 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Brazil's Marcopolo S.A., one of the world's largest bus and coach manufacturers, has agreed to sell its 49% shareholding in Tata Marcopolo Motors Ltd. (TMML) to joint venture partner Tata Motors Ltd. for ₹99.96 crore in cash.

"After a successful venture in India, and as a consequence of its refreshed business strategy, Marcopolo S.A. has decided to exit from the JV and offered to sell its 49% shareholding in the JV to the company," Tata Motors said in a statement.

Post the purchase, TMML



will become a wholly owned subsidiary of Tata Motors and all technologies pertaining to existing bus body products will continue to vest with TMML.

As part of the transition, Marcopolo will continue to license the 'Marcopolo' tra-

marks to TMML for a minimum of three years with a non-compete provision in India for a corresponding period, Tata Motors said.

"The transaction will not result in any impact on TMML's operations or the continued sales and service of Tata Motors' customers. The company, Marcopolo S.A. and TMML intend to maintain an open channel for future collaboration opportunities around bus body designs and technical consulting services," it added.

TMML's plants in Dharwad and Lucknow build bus bodies on chassis supplied by Tata Motors.

GDP to contract 7.8% in FY21: ICRA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

ICRA on Thursday forecast India's GDP would contract 7.8% in FY21.

Rising raw material and wage costs would partly counteract the positive impact of a modest rise in volumes in the industrial sector, resulting in a small 1.0% contraction, the rating agency said.

"The recovery under way in the Indian economy in Q3 FY2021 is fragile, and appears prone to risks related to rising costs, as well as a reappearance of supply-side disruptions in some States," said Aditi Nayar, principal economist, ICRA.

'Advance corporate tax inflows jump 49% in Q3'

Last year's low base bolsters increase

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Advance tax payments by companies has grown by 49% to ₹1,09,506 crore in the third quarter this fiscal, a CBDT source has said.

The increase can be attributed primarily to the low base last fiscal, when the government had slashed corporate advance tax rates to a record low of 25% in Q3, leading to lower tax payout by companies.

During the same quarter last fiscal, corporate advance tax stood at ₹73,126 crore. Gross tax collection stood at ₹7,33,715 crore, while net mop-up was ₹5,87,605 crore in the quarter, the source told PTI.

During the quarter, the

department had refunded ₹1,46,109 crore, or 8.1% lower from a year earlier.

Overall advance corporate tax so far for the year had fallen 4.9% to ₹2,39,125 crore.

Experts from the industry will provide advice on mutual funds.

The webinar will be a conversation between Abhijit Shah, Head of Marketing, Digital & Customer Experience, ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company, and Aarati Krishnan, Editorial Consultant, The Hindu BusinessLine.

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Kohli's run out triggers a mini-collapse

Opting to bat, India makes sedate progress against a disciplined Australian attack

INDIA IN AUS

REUTERS

ADELAIDE

India captain Virat Kohli forged two half-century partnerships to rescue his side against Australia before falling victim to a big mix-up on an attritional opening day of the day-night first Test at Adelaide Oval on Thursday.

The right-hander sacrificed flair for efficiency in his industrious 74 as the tourists reached 233 for six at stumps after opting to bat in the series-opener.

Wriddhiman Saha (9) and R. Ashwin (15) will return on Friday hoping to continue India's march towards the 300-mark.

Early setback

Earlier, Mitchell Starc removed Prithvi Shaw with the second delivery of the day for a duck and Pat Cummins castled fellow-opener Mayank Agarwal (17) in the opening session to give the host a strong start to the four-match series.

Cheteshwar Pujara, Australia's nemesis when India won its first series Down Under



Horrible mix-up: Nathan Lyon runs out a stranded Virat Kohli after Ajinkya Rahane, who called for a run, sent back the Indian skipper. ■ GETTY IMAGES

der two years ago, proved more difficult to dislodge and eked out 43 runs from 160 deliveries before falling to Nathan Lyon.

The usually aggressive Kohli proved he could be an excellent accumulator too as he followed his 68-run part-

nship with the obdurate Pujara with an 88-run collaboration with deputy Rahane before being sold down the river.

Rahane's indecision over a single resulted in Kohli being run out after a resolute knock which included eight

fours. On a day when boundaries were scarce against Australia's disciplined bowling, Kohli had looked determined to make his mark on the series in his only Test before he returns to India for the birth of his first child. It triggered a mini-col-

SCOREBOARD

INDIA – 1st innings

Prithvi Shaw b Starc 0 (2b), Mayank Agarwal b Cummins c (40b, 2x4), Cheteshwar Pujara c Labuschagne b Lyon 43 (160b, 2x4), Virat Kohli run out 74 (180b, 8x4), Ajinkya Rahane lbw b Starc 42 (92b, 3x4, 1x6), Hanuma Vihari lbw b Hazlewood 16 (25b, 2x4), Wriddhiman Saha (batting) 9 (25b, 1x4), R. Ashwin (batting) 15 (17b, 1x4); Extras (b-2, lb-7, nb-7, w-1); 17; Total (for six wkts. in 89 overs): 233.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-0 (Shaw, 0.2 overs), 2-32 (Mayank, 18.1), 3-100 (Pujara, 49.4), 4-188 (Kohli, 76.6), 5-196 (Rahane, 80.4), 6-206 (Vihari, 83.2).

AUSTRALIA BOWLING

Starc 19-4-49-2, Hazlewood 20-6-47-1, Cummins 19-7-42-1, Green 9-15-0, Lyon 21-2-68-1, Labuschagne 1-0-3-0.

Toss:

India.

Losing Virat and Ajinkya was crucial, says Pujara

Expects the lower-order to contribute



Steering the ship: Kohli was involved in two useful partnerships with Pujara and Rahane. ■ AFP

AMOL KARHADKAR

"There was a stage where we were in a dominant position but after losing Virat and Ajinkya, they (Australia) have a little bit of an advantage. I still feel we are evenly placed in this Test."

"When I had a partnership with Virat and then Ajinkya came in, both of them were cruising. There was a time when we were 190 for three," Pujara said.

"But this is what Test cricket is all about. When you lose a couple of wickets, the opposition has an advantage. But if we score runs on Friday, we will be in a commanding position."

TV PICKS

Australia vs India: Sony Ten 1, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.
ISL: Star Sports 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

Fed up with 'PCB torture', Amir quits

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KARACHI

Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Amir on Thursday announced a dramatic end to his international career, alleging he has been "mentally tortured" by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

The 28-year-old left-arm pacer made the surprise announcement in a video interview released by Pakistani website *Khel-Shel*.

"I am quitting cricket this time because I have been mentally tortured. I can't bear this torture. I had faced torture from 2010 to 2015, I remained outside cricket for whatever reason," said Amir, who is currently in Sri Lanka, referring to the ban he served for his involvement in spot-fixing.

Amir claimed 119 wickets from 36 Tests after making his debut in 2009.



No Tata Open in February

SPORTS REPORTER

BENGALURU

The Tata Open Maharashtra, India's lone ATP 250 event, will not be staged in its original early February slot, the ATP confirmed on Thursday.

Tournament director Prashant Sutar said a request had now been made for a window in the second half of the year. "If the dates suit us, we will hold the tournament. If not, we will skip this year," he said.

The Maharashtra government's strict 14-day quarantine rule for international arrivals was not agreeable to the ATP, hence the decision to defer the tournament. "We could have created a bio-secure bubble. But it came down to the quarantine rules," he said.

If the tournament misses its date in 2021, it will snap a 25-year run of India hosting an annual big-ticket tennis tournament.

Chirag in last four

SPORTS BUREAU

SONEPAT

SONEPAT: Top seed Chirag Duhan beat Aayush Gurnani 6-3, 6-3 to move into the semifinals of the ₹100,000 AITA-ranking tennis tournament.

The results: At Sonepat (men's ranking): Quarterfinals: Chirag Duhan bt Aayush Gurnani 6-3, 6-3; Amit Dahiya bt Shivam Dalmia 6-4, 6-3; Fardeen Qamar bt Dhananjay Singh 6-1, 6-1; Sandesh Dattay bt Amandeep Singh 6-4, 6-2.

At Chandigarh (Under-16 championship series): Finals:

Boys: Navya Verma bt Aryan Thakur 6-3, 6-3; **Girls:** Radhika Vasudeva bt Harleen Kaur Dhanda 6-4, 6-2, 6-3.

At Karnal (Under-14 championship series): Finals: **Boys:** Daksh Khokhar bt Pratyushraj Goel 5-7, 6-2, 6-3.

Girls: Bhavika Proacha bt Inaya Mittal 6-2, 6-3.

Rajeev Shukla set to be BCCI vice-president

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Rajiv Shukla is set to be elected unopposed as BCCI vice-president while Brijesh Patel and Khairul Majumdar are set to be retained as IPL Governing Council members on Thursday during its AGM on December 24. Thursday was the deadline for filing nominations for all the three posts.

With BCCI members agreeing mutually for posts, only one application was submitted to the Electoral Officer for each post.

The appointment will be formalised on Friday upon scrutiny of applications and will be stamped in Ahmedabad.

Anshu Malik grabs silver

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BELGRADE

Anshu Malik won a silver in the 57kg category of the wrestling World Cup on Wednesday. She lost the gold medal bout 5-1 to Moldova's Anastasia Nichita. Anshu beat Azerbaijan's Alyona Kolesnik 4-2, Germany's Laura Mertens 3-1 and Russia's Veronika Chumikova by fall in semifinals.

Amandeep maintains lead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

GURUGRAM

Amandeep Drall carded an even par to take sole lead at the end of the second day in the 9th leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour here on Thursday.

Amandeep is now one-under 143 and a shot clear of Hitaashee Bakshi, who was the only player with an under par round at 71.

Gill begins campaign with a bang



Topping the charts: Even a flat tyre on the final stage couldn't stop Gill, left, and Sherif. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ahmedabad to host domestic T20 knockouts

League stage from Jan. 10 in six cities

AMOL KARHADKAR

MUMBAI

Ahmedabad will host the knockouts of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, the only tournament announced for the domestic season so far, from January 25 to 31.

The inter-state T20 champions' league stage will be played in Bengaluru, Kolkata, Vadodara, Indore, Mumbai and Chennai from January 10 to 19.

The schedule was circulated to all 38 participating teams by BCCI secretary Jay Shah on Thursday.

The itinerary also details the COVID-19 related protocols that each squad will have to undertake ahead of the tournament.

All teams are expected to

reach their respective destinations by January 2 and will be tested thrice in six nights of isolation.

The pools: Elite Group A (Bengaluru): Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Railways, Tripura.

Elite Group B (Kolkata): Odisha, Bengal, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Hyderabad.

Elite Group C (Vadodara): Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Baroda, Uttarakhand.

Elite Group D (Indore): Services, Saurashtra, Vidarbha, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Goa.

Elite Group E (Mumbai): Maharashtra, Andhra, Delhi, Mumbai, Kerala, Puducherry.

Plate Group (Chennai): Chandigarh, Meghalaya, Bihar, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh.

Russia banned from Olympics, FIFA WC

REUTERS

MOSCOW

The Court of Arbitration for Sport on Thursday upheld doping sanctions that will prevent Russian athletes from competing at major international events under the country's flag, but halved the period of the ban to two from four years.

The ruling will leave Russian athletes without their flag and national anthem at next year's Tokyo Olympics and at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, a severe blow to Russian sport which has been tarnished in recent years by a string of doping scandals. Russians will still be allowed to compete in the Olympics, but only as

neutrals. The Lausanne-based court said sanctions, which also bar Russia from hosting or bidding for major sporting events during a two-year period, would come into force on Thursday and end on December 16, 2022.

Russian government officials or representatives will be banned from attending events such as the Olympics and World championships in major sports for a two-year period. Russians will also not be able to be appointed to or sit on committees or serve as board members at organisations that must abide by the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) code.

That will be followed by a period of about two-and-a-half weeks for travel to Melbourne and a 14-day quarantine period for players, coaches and support staff.

There also will be an early January tournament in Antalya, Turkey.

More 2021 calendar plans for later weeks will be announced separately.

That event was contested in February this year, shortly before the coronavirus pandemic took hold.

More 2021 calendar plans for later weeks will be announced separately.

Tournament director Prashant Sutar said a request had now been made for a window in the second half of the year. "If the dates suit us, we will hold the tournament. If not, we will skip this year," he said.

The Maharashtra government's strict 14-day quarantine rule for international arrivals was not agreeable to the ATP, hence the decision to defer the tournament. "We could have created a bio-secure bubble. But it came down to the quarantine rules," he said.

If the tournament misses its date in 2021, it will snap a 25-year run of India hosting an annual big-ticket tennis tournament.

Firmino heads Liverpool to the top

Alba leads Barcelona fightback

EURO LEAGUES

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LIVERPOOL

Roberto Firmino scored a 90th-minute header as Liverpool beat Tottenham 2-1 to climb to the top of the Premier League.

Liverpool's relentlessness was rewarded when the Brazil striker powered home a header from Andy Robertson's corner with the clock ticking toward stoppage time on Wednesday.

Earlier Mohamed Salah's 26th-minute goal was cancelled out by Son Heung-min's effort.

Barcelona defender Jordi Alba scored one goal and set up another to spark a 2-1 victory over Real Sociedad.

Important results: Premier League: Arsenal 1 (Auba-

meyang 52) drew with Southampton 1 (Walcott 18); Fulham 0 drew with Brighton 0; Leeds 5 (Bamford 35, Rodrigo 61, Dalidas 77, Alioski 85, Harrison 88) bt Newcastle 2 (Hendrick 26, Clark 65); Leicester 0 lost to Everton 2 (Richarlison 21, Holgate 72); Liverpool 2 (Salah 26, Firmino 90) bt Tottenham 1 (Son 33).

LaLiga: Barcelona 2 (Alba 32, De Jong 44) bt Real Sociedad 1 (Willian Jose 28).

Series A: Juventus 1 (Chiesa 29) drew with Atalanta 1 (Freuler 57); Inter Milan 1 (Lukaku 73-pen) bt Napoli 0; Genoa 2 (Desistro 47, 60) drew with AC Milan 2 (Calabria 52, Kalulu Kyatengwa 83).

Bundesliga: Bayern Munich 2 (Lewandowski 45+1, 50+) bt