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Ansari can be tried via videoconferencing, Punjab govt. tells SC
page 9



SC proposes fast-track courts to clear cheque bounce cases
page 10



Saab fighter jets tender ongoing, says Swedish envoy Klas Molin
page 10



Axar, Ashwin and Siraj bundle out England for 205
page 13

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NEARBY



Kejriwal, his parents get first dose of vaccine

NEW DELHI
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, along with his parents, received his first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at the Lok Nayak Hospital on Thursday and appealed to all eligible people to get vaccinated at the earliest.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Labour rights activist Shiv Kumar granted bail

GURUGRAM
Labour rights activist Shiv Kumar was on Thursday granted bail by the sessions court in Haryana's Sonipat in an attempt to murder case leading to his release from jail. He was granted bail in two more cases on Wednesday.

CITY ▶ PAGE 4

Man kills daughter for eloping with Dalit lover

JAIPUR
A man in Rajasthan's Dausa district allegedly abducted and murdered his 19-year-old married daughter on Thursday for eloping with her Dalit lover five days after her wedding.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

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20 from Myanmar seek refuge in India

Some of them are said to be security personnel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

At least 20 people, including some security personnel, have crossed into Mizoram from military coup-hit Myanmar and have sought refuge in India.

Border residents in Champa and Serchhip districts claimed that at least 50 people had crossed over since March 3.

Serchhip's SP Stephen



Smoke alarm: Protesters reacting to tear gas fired by security forces in Yangon, Myanmar, on Thursday. • AFP

Lalrinawma has been quoted as saying that some of those who sought refuge were security personnel who had escaped because of

their inability to follow certain instructions. "We cannot confirm right now whether or not they are policemen. Three people

crossed over yesterday [Wednesday] and some more came today. They have been put up at a community hall in Lungkawlh village after the mandatory COVID-19 tests," Serchhip's Deputy Commissioner Kumar Abhishek said.

His Champhai counterpart, Maria C.T. Zuali, said four people had crossed over into the district on Thursday afternoon. "I heard more people had crossed over to other districts but I don't have the details," she said.

MORE STORIES ON ▶ PAGE 11

Bangladesh border killings due to crime: Jaishankar

Minister in Dhaka ahead of Modi visit

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Criminal activities are responsible for the killings along the India-Bangladesh border, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Thursday.

At a joint press conference with his Bangladeshi counterpart A.K. Abdul Momen in Dhaka, he said India was partnering with the neighbouring country in economic and health-related recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Every death is regrettable but we also have to ask ourselves why there is a problem, and the problem is

'Include Chabahar on key corridor'

India wants Chabahar port to be included in the 13-North South Transport Corridor that extends from India to Russia, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Thursday.

because of crime. So our shared objective should be a no crime-no death border and I am sure if we can get it right, we can address this problem effectively."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Haryana's new job quota rule worries India Inc.

'It will hurt the interests of the State'

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

Warning that its move to reserve private sector jobs for locals "spells disaster" for industrial development and private investment in Haryana, India Inc. has asked the State to "relook" the legislation, highlighting the lack of adequate availability of skilled manpower.

Industry sources said this may force a rework of their expansion plans in the State, adding that it could also provide a shield to some firms indulging in unethical practices to retrench the existing workforce.

The Governor, earlier this

week, approved a Bill that reserves 75% of jobs in the private sector that pay less than ₹50,000 per month for candidates from the State.

"Investors and entrepreneurs need to source the best human resources available in the country to be competitive and successful. To force them into such a repressive straightjacket will force them to look beyond Haryana and this will ultimately hurt the interests of the State," Uday Shankar, president, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry, said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

EPFO retains annual rate of interest at 8.5%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation on Thursday decided to retain 8.5% annual rate of interest on provident fund deposits for 2020-21 for its more than five crore subscribers.

At a meeting in Srinagar, the Central Board of Trustees of the EPFO "recommended 8.5% annual rate of interest to be credited on EPF accumulations in members' accounts for the financial year 2020-21," the EPFO said. The meeting was chaired by Labour and Employment Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar.

"The interest rate would be officially notified in the government gazette following which EPFO would credit the rate of interest into the subscribers' accounts," it said.

The rate of 8.5% remains the lowest since 2012-2013.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8
NEGATIVE NARRATIVE ▶ PAGE 9

OTT platforms will not have to register: Centre

No govt. nominee in self-regulatory body, says Javadekar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has clarified that over-the-top (OTT) platforms will not have to register with the government, and no government nominee will be present in the self-regulatory body.

The Ministry statement followed an interaction between Minister Prakash Javadekar and representatives of OTT platforms. The Centre on February 25 had notified new rules and guidelines for OTT platforms and digital news media.

During the interaction, Mr. Javadekar said the Ministry was open to any clarification or queries from the industry. "The Minister said it merely requires them to disclose information and that there is no requirement of registration of any kind with the Ministry," the statement said, adding that the Ministry would soon release a form for the same.

The statement, quoting Mr. Javadekar, said "the rules focus on self-classification of content instead of any form of censorship". The platforms were expected to develop a grievance redressal mechanism to tackle complaints about content.

"Dispelling rumours, the Minister clarified that in the self-regulating body, no member will be appointed by the government," the statement said.

He informed the representatives that the government would create an inter-departmental committee to look at complaints that remain unresolved at the self-regulatory level.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8
NEGATIVE NARRATIVE ▶ PAGE 9

Under watch

On February 25, the government announced the new Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021, which introduced a 3-tier grievance redressal mechanism for OTT platforms

TIER 1 A grievance cell

TIER 2 A self-regulatory body of the OTT platforms

TIER 3 An inter-ministerial panel to look into complaints if they are not resolved at the first two levels



The OTT platforms will have to self-classify content into five age-based categories- U (Universal), U/A 7+, U/A 13+, U/A 16+ and A (Adult). Platforms would be required to implement parental locks for content classified as U/A 13+ or higher, and reliable age verification mechanisms for content classified as "A".

Content needs to be checked, says SC

Some even show pornography, it says

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday made it amply clear to over-the-top (OTT) platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video that it is in favour of "screening" the content shown by them.

It said some of the films hosted by the platforms were pornographic.

"Traditional film viewing has become extinct. Now, films and web series are viewed by the public on these platforms. Should there not be some screening? We feel there should be some screening... There is pornography on some films," Justice Ashok Bhushan, leading a Bench, also comprising Justice R. Subhash Reddy, observed.

Senior advocate Mukul

Rohatgi, appearing for Amazon producer Aparna Purohit's bail, said this "was not about pornography but the right to freedom of expression".

"But a balance has to be struck," Justice Bhushan retorted.

Solicitor-General Tushar

The hearing was based on a plea by Ms. Purohit, Amazon Prime's commercial head, against the Allahabad High Court decision to deny her pre-arrest bail in connection with the probe into *Tandav*, a web series hosted by the platform.

The FIR said the series ridiculed Hindu gods and the country's political power corridors.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Farmer death: U.P. police asked to give reports

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed the Uttar Pradesh police to submit the original X-ray plate and post-mortem video of the 25-year-

old farmer, who died during the tractor rally on Republic Day here, to the Delhi police by Friday.

Justice Yogesh Khanna gave the order after the Delhi police said the Chief Medical

Officer of District Hospital at Rampur and the local Superintendent of Police have refused to provide the reports without specific court order.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 2

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CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

DU to write to govt. over merger decision taken in Cabinet meeting

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI
Officials at Delhi University said the university will write to the government over its decision to merge the College of Arts with Ambedkar University.

The Delhi Cabinet on Tuesday had approved the merger of DU's College of Arts, functioning under the Directorate of Training and Technical Education, under the Directorate of Higher

Education and that it would now be a part of Ambedkar University. DU Registrar Vikas Gupta said: "The letter is being drafted at the moment and it will be sent to the government within a couple of days."

De-affiliation process
The officials said a letter will also be sent to the college principal stating that "due process" was required to be followed for de-affiliation

from the university. Balram Pani, Dean of Colleges in DU, said: "Due process was not followed in this case. Apart from the letter which will be sent to the Delhi government and the L-G, a letter will also be sent to the college principal. It has to be known that if the college indeed wants de-affiliation, then a proper procedure needs to be followed. We have asked the principal for his view."

We are taking all necessary COVID 19 Precautionary Measures

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• NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
• LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

Government of Jharkhand
Dr. Ram Dayal Munda Tribal Welfare Research Institute
Department of Schedule Tribe, Schedule Caste, Minorities, and Backward Classes Welfare Department, Morabadi, Ranchi - 834008
Tel: 0651-2551824 e-mail: tri.directorate@gmail.com /

Lt. No. 275 Ranchi, Dated:- 4.3.21

Corrigendum
P.R. No.241033
(Expression of Interest)

There are some minutes changes has been done in this Research Project. The last date of submission and opening of the 'Expression of Interest' has been rescheduled as given below:-

Sl. No.	Name of the Project	Date of Submission As per EoI	Rescheduled date of submission	Date of opening as per EoI	Rescheduled date of opening
1.	TOPIC: A Study of the Phonetics of Mundari Language With Pedagogical Implications. Ref:- Our Advertisement No- 122 Dated- 05/02/2021	02/03/2021	10/03/2021	03/03/2021	12/03/2021

***Note:**
I.Remaining all other mentioned terms and conditions in EOI will remain unchanged for details can be obtained from the office of the TRI on any working day during office hour to meet concerned Nodal person and the same can also be downloaded from the website www.tri.jharkhand.gov.in/ (<http://59.145.222.53/twri/tenders.php>) or through E-mail tri.directorate@gmail.com by specifying the topic & details of Institution/Organization Interested.
PR 243038 Schedule Tribe, Schedule Caste, Minority and Backward Class Welfare Department (20-21)_D
Sd/- Director

Farmer's death: U.P. Police told to give medical reports to Delhi counterpart

'Authorities refused to submit X-ray plate, post-mortem video without court orders'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed Uttar Pradesh Police to submit the original X-ray plate and post-mortem video of the 25-year-old farmer, who died during the tractor parade on Republic Day here, to Delhi Police by Friday.

Justice Yogesh Khanna gave the order after Delhi Police said the Chief Medical Officer of Rampur District Hospital and the local Superintendent of Police have refused to provide the original X-ray plate and post-mortem video without specific orders from the court.

Bullet injuries

The Delhi police said it has no objection in handing over a copy of the post-mortem video and inquest report to the deceased's grandfather, who has approached the High Court, seeking a court-monitored Special Investigating Team (SIT) probe into the incident.

"Our case is that there are



The farmers' tractor parade on Republic Day which turned violent. • FILE PHOTO

C Report based on the X-ray plate be prepared by medical institutes in the Capital, since it has not been done till now

VRINDA GROVER

Hardeep Singh's advocate

witness statements corroborated by medical opinion does not rule out that the petitioner's grandson was shot by policemen.

"Delhi Police has without any inquiry or investigation whatsoever, has hastily pre-judged the cause of death by declaring that the petitioner's grandson died in an accident and there were no bullets fired," the petition said. Advocate Grover had earlier argued that the way Delhi Police has conducted itself in the matter "does not inspire a shred of confidence".

The petition also said: "As per statements made by eyewitnesses as well as the opinion of two independent medical experts, Navreet Singh received firearm injuries [bullet wounds] before he lost control of his tractor and hit police barricades...As such, the petitioner's grandson is possibly a victim of police brutality and unwarranted use of force...the petitioner has a right to know the truth about his grandson's death."

R-Day case:
retd. Army officer among 2 granted bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday granted bail to a farmer and a retired Army officer in a case related to the violence on Republic Day during farmers' tractor parade against the Centre's three farm laws.

Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat granted the relief to Baljeet Singh and Harjinder Singh on furnishing a bail bond of ₹15,000 with one surety of like amount in the case of the violence in Seemapuri.

Baljeet is a farmer by profession and lives in Haldwani, Uttarakhand, and Harjinder is a retired Army Officer from 9 Sikh Light Infantry Battalion of the Indian Army and served for 17 years.

While granting them bail, the court said even as per the prosecution both the accused were not driving the tractor nor did they attempt to kill or hurt any police personnel themselves.

Phone No / Fax No. 0194-2443031/2443032 (Sgt)
Website: www.kpolice.gov.in

JAMMU AND KASHMIR POLICE HEADQUARTERS

Tender Extension Notice

Due to administrative reasons, date for tender submission and online opening of technical bids in respect of PHO J&K NIT No. 03 of 2021 dated 13.02.2021 floated for purchasing of Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) is rescheduled as per following details :-

I) Last date for tender submission : 06.03.2021
II) Date of online opening of technical bids: 08.03.2021

Other terms and conditions of the tender shall remain unchained.

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No. Prov-U/Sec-69/2019-20/12469-84
Dt:- 26.02.2021

DIP/J-12679/20 For Director General of Police, J&K-Jammu

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Rajpura

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Email-wss_xenrajpura@yahoo.in
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Ashok Gehlot

Chief Minister, Rajasthan



Commercial Taxes Amnesty Scheme, 2021

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Historic Initiatives in Rajasthan Budget 2021-22 to Strengthen the Economy affected by COVID 19



Government of Rajasthan



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Other Initiatives for Industries in State Budget 2021-22

- Concessions in Stamp Duty for Industries, Real Estate, Transport and Tourism Sector affected by COVID-19
- Transport Amnesty Scheme, 2021
- Special Package under RIPS-2019 for Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar SC/ST Investment Promotion
- Promoting the use of E-Vehicles
- Special Provisions for investment in Backward, Most Backward Regions and Tribal Areas
- For more information, visit: finance.rajasthan.gov.in

Timings

DELHI

FRIDAY, MAR. 05
RISE 06:42 SET 18:24
RISE 00:00 SET 10:51
SATURDAY, MAR. 06
RISE 06:41 SET 18:24
RISE 01:01 SET 11:40
SUNDAY, MAR. 07
RISE 06:40 SET 18:25
RISE 02:06 SET 12:33

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	34	12
Safdarjang	34	12
Palam	33	15

Delhi Palam Today
32°C A cool morning, largely comfortable day likely with mainly clear sky. Moderate winds likely during day.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
32°C Morning and day temperature likely to remain same, sunny slight warm afternoon with light winds.

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27,959 get vaccinated, 261 fresh cases reported in Delhi

Six minor adverse events following immunisation reported on Thursday

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A total of 27,959 beneficiaries took the COVID-19 vaccination in Delhi on Thursday and there were six minor adverse events following immunisation (AEFI), said a Delhi government spokesperson.

Of the total beneficiaries, 14,328 were people aged 60 and above and 2,175 people were between 45 and 59 years. This is the highest number of people vaccinated under both categories in a day, since their vaccination began on Monday.

The rest of the people vaccinated on Thursday were healthcare and front-line



There were 402 vaccination sites in the city as of Thursday.

■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

workers.

There were 402 vaccination sites on Thursday and the government plans to increase it, according to officials. Also, all AEFI were from the first dose of the vac-

cine.

The Capital, meanwhile, witnessed 261 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 6,40,182, according to a health bulletin released

Virus spread

Total number of COVID-19 cases	Total deaths
6,40,182	10,915
New cases in the past 24 hours	New deaths
261	1

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN

by the Delhi government on Thursday.

One death was reported in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of deaths to 10,915. A total of 66,432 tests were done in a day.

Of the total cases, 6,27,566 people have recovered and there are 1,701 active cases.

Air quality index recorded in 'poor' category

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The air quality of Delhi and Gurugram was in 'poor' category on Thursday and Noi-

da's was in 'very poor' category, according to CPCB data.

"The AQI is forecast to marginally deteriorate to 'very poor' category till Friday," said SAFAR.

INVITATION TO TENDER: PROVISION OF THE BELOW LISTED AGENCIES FOR SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

THE ORGANISATION AND OPPORTUNITY

South African Tourism is a statutory body whose main objective is to promote tourism to and within South Africa. Although accountable to Parliament in South Africa, South African Tourism is an independent and impartial organization that reports to the Government of the Republic of South Africa through the National Department of Tourism. As a South African Government agency operating in India, our organization is expected to operate within the confines of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) of The Republic of South Africa which have been established to ensure transparency, accountability and sound management of the revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities of all South African Government Agencies. Section 217 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, prescribes that goods and services must be contracted through a system that is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective, where every potential supplier is given the opportunity to offer goods and services to South African Tourism when needed.

South African Tourism based in India is extending an invitation to reputable agencies to submit presentations in a bid to be appointed, on a non-exclusive basis, to deliver their services to SA Tourism (India Office) **for a period of 3 years, on a project basis.**

The agencies that South African Tourism is tendering for are as below.

1 Creative Agency (RFP - SAT TENDER 002/20)	brief: Friday, 12 th March 2021 at 12:00 hrs IST.
2 Digital Agency (RFP - SAT TENDER 003/21)	brief: Monday, 15 th March 2021 at 12:00 hrs IST.
3 Media Buy Agency (RFP - SAT TENDER 004/21)	brief: Tuesday, 16 th March 2021 at 12:00 hrs IST.
4 Activations Agency (RFP - SAT TENDER 005/21)	brief: Wednesday, 17 th March 2021 at 12:00 hrs IST.

The detailed scope of services and tender requirements will be available on the below mentioned link from 5th March 2021

<https://www.southafrica.net/gl/en/corporate/page/tenders>

RSVP for the non-compulsory brief by sending an email to: ajay@southafrica.net with the below subject line:

RSVP "add agency name that you are applying for" – Brief

Final submission of bids and documents must be in a pdf format. All interested bidders must register and submit their bid proposals no later than 12:00 hrs IST time on 30th March 2021 using the below link.

<https://e-procurement.southafrica.net/account/login?returnUrl=%2F>

All inquiries for the tenders must be directed to
Mr. Ajay Shah, Finance Manager: ajay@southafrica.net



SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

Kejriwal gets vaccinated, says there is nothing to fear

He appeals to all to take COVID-19 jab

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday received his first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at Lok Nayak Hospital and appealed to all eligible people to get vaccinated at the earliest.

After being administered the vaccine, Mr. Kejriwal, who was accompanied by his parents, said that they were all feeling perfectly well after receiving the dose. "My parents and I have received our first dose of COVID-19 vaccine today. I want to appeal to everyone, who is eligible, to get the COVID-19 vaccination done," Mr. Kejriwal said. He added that there was noth-



Arvind Kejriwal arrived at Lok Nayak Hospital with his parents on Thursday.

■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

ing to fear and that everybody should get vaccinated.

"We are constantly in touch with the Central government and are working to increase the number of vaccination centres," he said.

Beneficiaries turn up without prior registration

Waiting hours increase due to crowding

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Long waiting hours marked the third day of inoculation for people aged 60 and above and those between 45-59 of age with co-morbidities on Thursday. An unexpected large number of people turned up at many vaccination centres in Gurugram without prior online registration.

Initially, the staffers faced difficulty in handling the crowd but the situation was brought under control later.

As per the district health department figures, 3,955 people, including 2,780 above 60 years, got the vaccine at more than 50 centres across the city at primary



Elderly people seen at a vaccination centre in Gurugram on Thursday. ■ ASHOK KUMAR

and community health centres and private hospitals. However, only 223 people in the 45-59 age bracket with co-morbidities turned up for the vaccination. Those vaccinated also included 526 healthcare workers and 426 front-line workers. It included 404 healthcare workers and three front-line workers receiving the second dose of the vaccine.

THE HINDU

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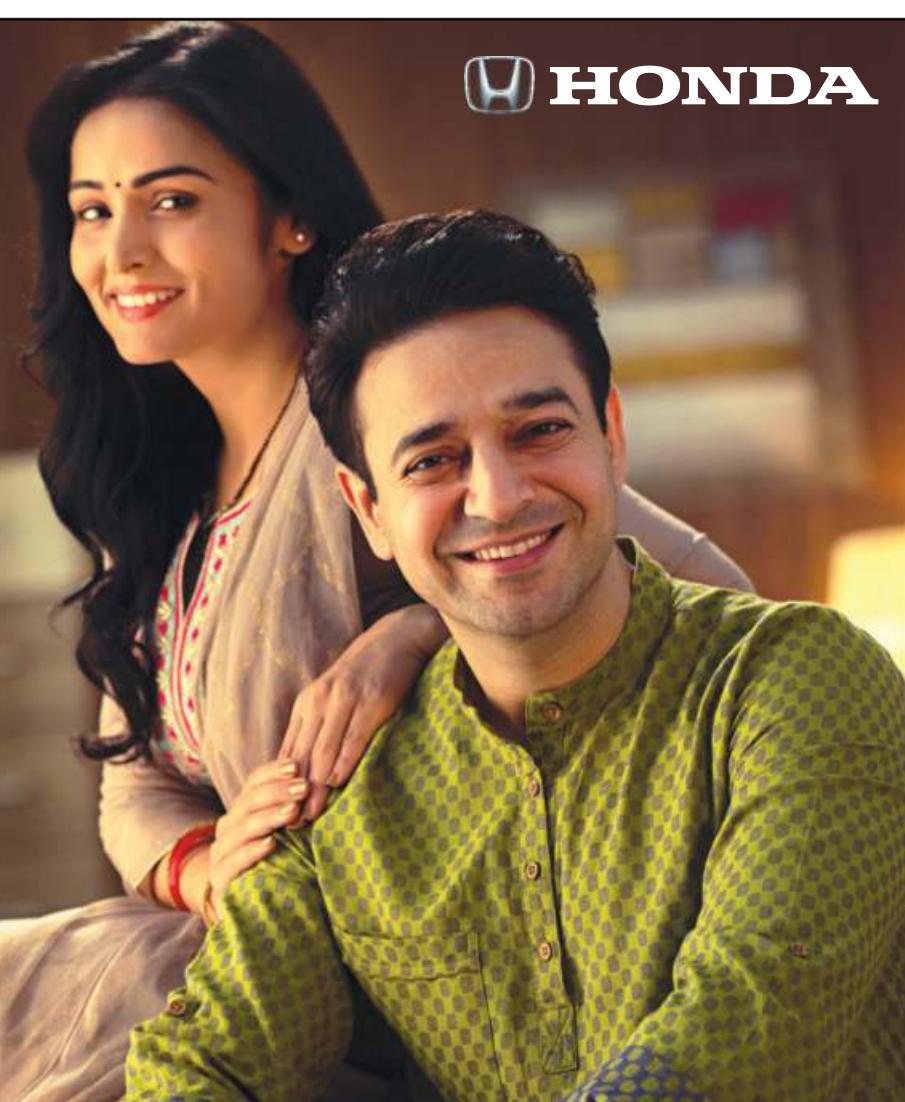
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BJP's vote share has decreased: Bharadwaj

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The AAP on Thursday alleged that people of Delhi are angry with BJP's "dirty politics" and BJP's vote share has decreased in all seats in the recent municipal by-elections.

"[Delhi BJP chief] Adesh Gupta did politics by not cleaning up the colonies and demanding money from CM Arvind Kejriwal daily, this also annoyed

BJP's traditional vote bank," AAP chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj said.

Shift in vote bank

He claimed that the business class, who are traditional voters of the BJP, have also "shifted from the BJP to the AAP". Mr. Bharadwaj said that the most shocking performance of the BJP has been in Rohini Sector 24 & 25 since it was a BJP stronghold.

Bidhuri for probe into pesticide purchase

He seeks inquiry into money spent by AAP govt. on publicity for anti-pollution steps

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri in a letter to Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal has called for a probe by a sitting judge of the High Court into the bungling of crore of taxpayer's money by the Delhi government so that all facts are made public and the misdeeds of this government are exposed," he said in his letter.

Mr. Bidhuri alleged that money spent on publicity of these measures from the taxpayer's money.

"It is requested of the L-G to order an immediate probe by a sitting judge of the High Court into the bungling of crore of taxpayer's money by the Kejriwal government so that all facts are made public and the misdeeds of this government are exposed," he said in his letter.

Mr. Bidhuri alleged that

pesticides worth ₹40,000 worth were purchased and nearly ₹13.20 lakh was shown as cost spent on transportation and distribution of these pesticides. After which, he alleged that the Delhi government spent around ₹7 crore on publicity and advertisements to showcase this as a big achievement.

The Delhi government did not reply to these allegations when asked for a comment.

"It is sad and unfortunate that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal not only misused taxpayers' funds for self-publicity and misled the people of Delhi but also, misled the country by making tall claims about having found a solution to the stubble burning issue and subsequent pollution," Mr. Bidhuri said.

He said that he would raise the matter in the coming Assembly session.

Labour rights activist Shiv Kumar granted bail

He was taken to hospital after release

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

High Court this past week and released from the jail.

Session Judge Yashvir Singh Rathor, in his bail order, observed that the co-accused Ms. Kaur, whose case was identical to that of applicant, was released on bail by the High Court and thus, applicant was entitled to be released on bail on the ground of parity.

Mr. Kumar, the district president of Mazdoor Adhikar Sangathan, a workers' rights group, was arrested by Haryana Police on January 23 in connection with the three FIRs registered at Kundli police station.

His fellow activist and co-accused in the three cases, Naudeep Kaur, was granted bail by Punjab and Haryana

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LEGAL NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

PROCLAMATION REQUIRED ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDENT IN THE COURT OF SH. GURVINDER PAL SINGH, DISTRICT T-20, ROOM NO. 25, PH. NDD NEW DELHI ROOM NO. 25, CASE NO. 100018, T-20, CS(COM) NO. 2742019 TITLE: TO THE CHIEF FINANCIAL SERVICES INDIA PVT. LTD VERSUS FATEH BHADUR & ANR.

To Mr. Fateh Bhadur Sir, Mr. Mukhtar R/o. House No. 5, Village-Pidra, Police Station & Tehsil-Rudrapur, District-Deoria, Uttar Pradesh-274204. Phone: 8855210000. It is hereby summoned to appear before this court by a pleader or through video conferencing on 30.03.2021 at 10:00 AM to answer the same. It is made clear that any unjustified denial of documents and delay in the time lines may lead to an order of costs against the concerned party. Take notice that, in default of your appearance that, in default of your appearance that, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence. Given under my hand and the seal of the court, this 09th day of February, 2021.

DISTRICT JUDGE (COMMERCIAL COURT-22 NEW DELHI DISTRICT)

ROOM NO. 25, ANNEXE BUILDING, Seal PATAHAL HOUSE COURTS, NEW DELHI

SITUATION VACANT

GENERAL

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LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE HONBLE IX ADDL. CHIEF JUDGE, AT CITY CIVIL COURT, HYDERABAD. O.S. No.71 OF 2021

Between :

Pilluda Durga Nagalaxmi Venkatesh, @ Pilluta Naga Durga Venkatesh, S/o, late Sri P. V. Subramanyam @ P.V. Subbu, Aged about 23 years, Occ : Student, H. No. 8-2-293/82/A/431/A, Plot No.431, Road No.21, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad - 500033 Telangana.

...Plaintiff

AND

...Defendants

NOTICE

To whom so ever it may concern the above case is filed by the Plaintiff to declare him as a sole legal heir of No.01 Late Sri. P.V. Subramanyam @ P.V. Subbu S/o, late P.V. Narasimham, No.02 late Sri.P.V. Narasimham, No.02 late Sri.P.V. Narasimham, No.03 late Smt. P. Venkata Laxmi W/o, late P.V. Narasimham, any person having any interest, right over the claim made above suit may approach the Hon'ble IX ACJ Court on 09.04.2021 at 10:30 AM either in person or through counsel otherwise the matter will be decided in accordance with law.

(By Order of the Court.)

M. Vijay Kumar Goud

Advocate (7018) Office : 4-71040,

Esmia Bazar, Koti, Hyderabad-500027, State of Telangana.

...Defendants

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WEATHER WATCH



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Friday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh. Thunderstorm with lightning/hail/squall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	32.4	18.2	Kozhikode	—	34.5	24.6
Ahmedabad	—	36.5	14.0	Kurnool	—	37.1	21.3
Aizawl	—	25.7	11.7	Lucknow	—	32.8	14.0
Allahabad	—	34.1	12.4	Madurai	—	34.0	20.6
Bengaluru	—	32.0	16.5	Mangaluru	—	36.1	23.5
Bhopal	—	37.2	14.7	Mumbai	—	38.1	20.6
Bhubaneswar	—	38.2	22.8	Mysuru	—	32.2	13.0
Chandigarh	—	30.9	11.6	New Delhi	—	33.9	12.2
Chennai	—	32.3	21.6	Patna	—	31.0	15.0
Coimbatore	—	32.9	20.1	Poil Blair	—	31.4	25.3
Dehradun	—	29.9	11.0	Puducherry	—	30.6	21.1
Gangtok	2	13.4	9.2	Pune	—	36.3	17.2
Goa	—	34.2	23.3	Raipur	—	36.5	17.5
Guwahati	—	31.0	15.1	Ranchi	—	32.0	14.5
Hubballi	—	34.0	21.0	Shillong	—	21.5	10.1
Hyderabad	—	35.0	19.0	Shimla	—	19.5	9.0
Imphal	—	28.2	11.7	Srinagar	—	19.6	3.9
Jaipur	—	34.0	15.8	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.5	21.1
Kochi	—	32.2	24.8	Tiruchi	—	34.2	21.2
Kohima	—	22.0	9.4	Vijayawada	—	35.4	21.4
Kolkata	—	34.0	19.0	Visakhapatnam	—	32.3	23.4

(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	44	123	49	170	169	...
Bengaluru	.9	.75	.25	.82	.106	...
Chennai	12	.18	44	.70	.68	...
Delhi	47	156	86	.316	.352	...
Hyderabad	20	.91	.25	.201
Kolkata	30	.25	.50	.306	.281	...
Lucknow	10	.176	.48	.239	.184	...
Mumbai	25	.85	.29	.239	.148	...
Pune	.6	.109	.87	.135	.106	...
Visakhapatnam	11	.73	.46	.93	.134	...

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

Pay MSP to farmers, Sidhu tells Punjab govt.

Honour aspirations of 3 cr. Punjabis'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH**

Even as he hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government at the Centre over the three farm laws, former Punjab Cabinet Minister and currently a legislator of the ruling Congress party in Punjab, Navjot Singh Sidhu, on Thursday asked his own Congress government in the State to use its power to legislate to ensure assured procurement of oilseeds and lentils at the Minimum Support Price (MSP).

Mr. Sidhu said the Centre's three farm laws were an infringement on the State's right to legislate and that the Centre could not scuttle the legislative sphere of the States. "Thus, we have enough grounds to completely deny the implementation of these black laws in Punjab. Yet why, in this case, are we just amending the Central laws and sending

them back, when we know very well that all these amendments will not be implemented until either approved by the President of India or if the Central laws are first withdrawn? By means of mere amendments, we are going to the Constitutional head, who may not choose to help us, and maybe is not a good position to be in at this decisive critical juncture. Instead, why not use the democratic power given to us by 3 crore Punjabis by honouring their aspirations?" he said.

Assured procurement

Mr. Sidhu, addressing a press conference here, said that to help farmers get MSP, there should be an expansion of procurement beyond wheat and rice in the State. He added farmers cannot diversify until MSP is provided and there's assured procurement.

Hiren Gohain resigns as chief adviser of Rajior Dal

Party chief's stand on AIUDF the reason

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI**

Noted academician Hiren Gohain has resigned as the chief adviser of the Rajior Dal over the political stand of its president, jailed rights activist Akhil Gogoi, involving the minority-based All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF). Noted academician Hiren Gohain has resigned as the chief adviser of the Rajior Dal over the political stand of its president, jailed rights activist Akhil Gogoi, involving the minority-based All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF).

Mr. Gogoi had in an open letter asked all Opposition parties to field consensus candidates across Assam's 126 Assembly seats in order to prevent the BJP from retaining power. But he wanted the AIUDF to be kept out of such an arrangement as he believed the party headed by Maulana Badruddin

Ajmal was as communal as the BJP.

The first of the three-phase Assembly elections in the State is on March 27.

"Akhil Gogoi's latest decision has gone against my long-term opinion. After this, I won't have the little responsibility for any of their actions," Dr. Gohain said while announcing his decision to dissociate with the Rajior Dal on Wednesday evening.

Mr. Gogoi has been in jail since December 2019 on charges of sedition and inciting violence during the movement against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in the State.

Dandi Path: Follow the Footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi

World has witnessed many freedom struggles, but none as unique as Dandi March. The year was 1930. Mahatma Gandhi decided to protest British Government's position of tax on salt. Mahatma Gandhi himself praised "Dandi as his Haridwar", a place of spiritual pilgrimage. They had reached this final destination after 24 days, along with 80 Marchers, visiting more than 21 places and walking about 390 Kilometres.

Dandi Path:



Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad to Dandi, at 21 Historic Places Mahatma Gandhi made his stay on the path to 'Dandi'. At each place, he met hundreds of people at some places he took afternoon rest while at some,

the night stay. He professed the use of Khadi, emphasized de-addiction & untouchability, met leading national figures, organized meetings and it was during the Dandi Path that long term national decisions were taken. It is the Dandi Path that carries with it the inspirational

Attraction of National Salt Satyagraha Memorial, Dandi

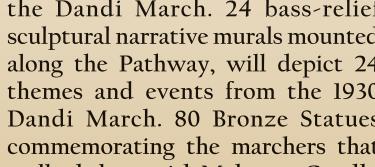
Welcome Centre: The Welcome Centre at the National Salt Satyagraha Memorial, Dandi houses a Library, a Book Shop, an Auditorium and an Activity Space.



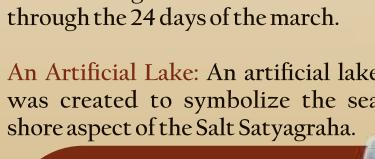
The Pathway & 24 Narrative Murals: The Pathway along the lake symbolizes the path of the Dandi March. 24 bass relief sculptural narrative murals mounted along the Pathway will depict 24 themes ad events from the 1930 Dandi march.



Statue of Mahatma Gandhi: The 5-metre high statue of the Mahatma projects the forceful forward march of a great leader leading the people to freedom from exploitation and injustice.



The Salt Marchers: 80 Bronze Statues commemorating the marchers that walked along with Mahatma Gandhi through the 24 days of the march.



An Artificial Lake: An artificial lake was created to symbolize the sea shore aspect of the Salt Satyagraha.



HOW TO GET THERE

By Road: Surat lies 234 km from Ahmedabad, 131 km from Vadodara and 297km from Mumbai. Bus stations, both ST and private, are on the eastern edge of the city.

By Train: Surat is on the main broad Gauge line between Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

By Air: Various domestic flights connecting metros and other major cities are operational from the Surat Airport.



lives two hands. To protect it from the humid weather at the sea coast, it is made up of a non-corroding material. At the apex of the monument, there is a 2.5-tonne glass cube representing salt crystals. The cube is illuminated by laser lights at night which creates the illusion of a pyramid. Under the illuminated canopy of the cube, inside the pyramid of light, this memorial also embraces a 5-metre high, life size statue of Gandhi projecting the forward march. The statue stands between two V shaped pillars. In 2014, the statue, sculpted by Sadashiv Sathe, was cast in a cluster of sixty separate pieces, assembled into one statue and transported to Dandi, taking more than two years to complete. The statue is a forceful image of the Mahatma, walking stick in hand, each crease and fold of his shawl detailed beautifully. It is a complete picture with a cloth on his head to protect himself against the harsh sun. There are life-size bronze cast sculptures of the 80 fellow marchers commemorating the marchers that walked along with Mahatma Gandhi through the 24 days of the march.

The memorial project is a Net Zero Energy project reflecting the ethos of self-sufficiency, the guiding tenet of Gandhi's teaching, the basis for the design of the monument. The monument takes the visitors step-by-step in order to visualise and understand the history of the Salt March and the methodology of Satyagraha, which finally led to India's Independence from the British colonial rule. The memorial celebrates the strategic brilliance of the Mahatma, who used the powerful metaphor of salt

to lead the nation towards independence. The Light Pyramid formed every evening, rises up in the sky and lights the salt crystal at the top. Visually and experientially, it is a unique phenomenon that expresses the energy of the Salt Satyagraha, where a small symbolic gesture lit up a new world of freedom.

The 81 life-size statues of the Salt Satyagraha marchers are the piece de resistance here. On view are 24 murals each with a plaque depicting several highlights and describing the stages of the march symbolising the number of days the march lasted; from Sabarmati to Dandi — small stories of kindness, inclusion, bravery and resilience. Forty Solar panels prettily designed to look like trees in sets of twelve power the memorial complex. The Salt Making facility at the National Salt Satyagraha Memorial Complex at Dandi enables visitors to make a pinch of salt using the electric salt-making pans developed especially for the Memorial that can be taken away as a memory of the visit.

The Welcome Centre at the National Salt Satyagraha Memorial, Dandi houses a Library, a Book Shop, an Auditorium and an Activity Space. NSSM also subsumes an artificial lake to symbolise the sea shore aspect of salt Satyagraha. Prarthana Mandir and Saifee Villa are also new tourist attractions. Facing the memorial is the historic Saifee Villa where Gandhi stayed for 10 days

after his march. He stayed here also at night prior to the historical event. The building, carefully restored in 2016, has been turned into a photography museum. The villa belonged to the then religious head of the Dawoodi Bohra community. Another iconic place in Dandi is the Prarthana Sabha square where Gandhi used to hold his morning prayers and had addressed a mammoth gathering.

The Salt March

The Salt Law, imposed by the British in 1857, right at the beginning of their rule in India, was one of the most exploitative and backbreaking rules in the context of the Indian masses. The famous Dandi march was an act of nonviolent civil disobedience in colonial India which was led by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930. The Salt March ended on 6 April 1930 and the British salt monopoly was broken by producing salt by boiling sea water. On April 6, 1930, Gandhi, upon reaching the salt marshes of Dandi, reached down and picked up a

fistful of salt, an act that became louder than words ever could. Even after 80 years, hundreds of people continue to march from Ahmedabad to Dandi covering the distance of 241 miles that Mahatma Gandhi and his followers covered during the historical march. The purpose of the Dandi March, also referred to as the Salt Satyagraha, was not only to defy the salt laws, but also to unite people for the common, larger goal of attaining Swaraj or self-rule.

The memorial is a fitting tribute to one of the great visionaries India has seen and a significant historical event in the fight for India's freedom.

Next to air and water, salt is perhaps the greatest necessity of life

— Mahatma Gandhi



Clearing a low bar

The govt. must revisit spectrum auction formats, unrealistic pricing, regulatory norms

India's latest auction of telecommunications spectrum is a qualified success from the Centre's perspective, mainly because the winning bids cumulatively exceeded the government's own low expectations for receipts from the sale of airwaves. A total of 855.6 megahertz was successfully bid for – out of the 2,308.8 MHz that was on offer – as the three largest telecom services providers sought to optimise their purchases of radio spectrum by seeking to acquire only what they deemed essential airwaves, either as renewal or for strengthening their network, while entirely avoiding costlier bandwidth offerings. The newest entrant to the industry, Reliance Jio, was also the most acquisitive, accounting for close to 60% of the spectrum bought at 488.35 MHz and contributed almost three-fourths of the ₹77,815 crore that the Department of Telecommunications garnered from the sale. That Jio's ₹57,123 crore by itself surpassed the government's estimate of ₹45,000-₹50,000 crore for takings from the auction where the reserve price for the entire spectrum on offer across seven bands amounted to about ₹3.92-lakh crore, tells its own tale. Clearly cognisant of the prevailing overall economic circumstances amid the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the high level of indebtedness in the industry, the government appears to have tempered its expectations to a more realistic level. Still, the Centre can hardly be sanguine about an outcome where a mere 37% of the airwaves on offer found takers.

In a repeat of the 2016 auction's outcome, the significantly more efficient 700 MHz was yet again shunned by all bidders given its prohibitive reserve price. It is a little hard to fathom the government's approach to pricing this nationally valuable resource, especially given its avowed intention of accelerating the digitisation of the economy including the broadening and deepening of the digital delivery of the multitude of public services to India's farthest reaches. The relatively low frequency 700 MHz, for instance, is considered as ideal for enhancing network availability and reach in the highly urbanised settings of large, densely built-up cities where the issue of poor signal penetration inside buildings is a perpetual bugbear for users and providers alike. For all the brave talk on the auction's outcome providing assurance, the nation's telecom authorities need to take a hard look at the entire policy framework that has contributed a fair share to the current precarity in the industry. From auction formats that may no longer be relevant given the sharply reduced number of players, to grossly unrealistic pricing of spectrum, and regulatory norms and tax practices that threaten to tip the sector into a fractious duopoly, the government has its task cut out. It must now act quickly to ensure it does not end up hurting the very sector that has become a key multiplier of economic empowerment and progress.

Efficacious too

The restricted emergency use approval of Covaxin should now be revised

Vaccine efficacy of 80.6% for Bharat Biotech's Covaxin at the first interim analysis of phase-3 trials in India is indeed promising, though it took two months for the data to become available after the vaccine was approved for 'restricted emergency use' by the Indian drug regulator. The vaccine efficacy was measured based on symptomatic COVID-19 disease – mild, moderate or severe – two weeks after the second dose. The interim analysis undertaken at the first endpoint of 43 COVID-19 cases in the phase-3 trial carried out across 26 sites in India found 36 cases in the placebo group while only seven COVID-19 cases in the arm that received two doses of the vaccine given 28 days apart. The phase-3 trial that began last November recruited 25,800 participants, with one half receiving the vaccine and the other, a placebo. While the phase-3 trial will continue till 130 participants in both groups put together develop COVID-19 disease, another interim analysis will be carried out when there are 87 cases. Covaxin's efficacy of 80.6% at first interim analysis is higher than AstraZeneca/Covishield vaccine efficacy of 55.1% when the second dose is administered less than six weeks after the first; in India, the second dose of Covishield is approved for four-six weeks after the first. Also, the phase-3 trial recruited 2,433 participants over the age of 60 and included 4,500 people with comorbidities. However, those with severe and/or uncontrolled comorbidities were not recruited.

As per the phase-I data published in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* and a preprint of the phase-2 trial, Covaxin appears to be safe and highly immunogenic, and has also been found to be effective against the B.1.1.7 variant first found in Britain. While Covaxin accounts for less than 10% of all COVID-19 vaccinations in India, the absolute number of vaccinations as on March 3 stands at over 1.6 crore. No deaths associated with this vaccine have been reported so far. Though the first interim analysis is based on 43 cases, which is smaller when compared with other vaccines that have been approved by other regulators, the vaccine appears safe and efficacious in phase-3 and early stages of human trials and animal studies. The Indian regulator should therefore revise the restricted emergency use approval such that Covaxin is treated on a par with Covishield and should no longer seek additional precautions in the form of signed consent before vaccination and also remove the label "clinical trial mode" from the approval; their continuation would send a wrong signal about its safety and efficacy. With a narrow window of opportunity available to vaccinate people before a second wave probably sets in or dangerous variants get established, India can ill afford to have roadblocks in the uptake of either vaccine.

Not so stellar in protecting personal liberty

The outcomes from the judiciary in the defence of liberty, free thought and speech seem to be far from routine



SUHRITH PARTHASARATHY

A pair of recent rulings gave us a glimmer of hope that the judiciary might yet serve as a tribune of people's rights. The first was the acquittal of the journalist, Priya Ramani, on charges of criminal defamation. A Delhi court, in discharging her of the accusations, recognised that a woman's right to dignity superseded any claims over reputation. The court also held that a survivor of sexual harassment had the freedom to place her grievance at any point of time after the occurrence of the event and on any platform of her choice.

The second was the grant of bail to Disha Ravi, a 22-year-old woman who was arrested in Bengaluru and taken to New Delhi on charges of sedition. Her alleged crime: helping edit, and sharing, a "toolkit" that was meant to lend support to protests against the Union government's new farm laws. In the order granting bail, the court of the additional sessions judge noted that the prosecution had failed to produce even an iota of evidence linking Ms. Ravi to an act of violence. It found the toolkit to be innocuous and the actions of the Delhi police, in restraining her liberty, to be based on "propitious anticipations". The judge was also constrained to state the obvious: that, in a democracy, the right to dissent is fundamental.

Now for another ruling
In a free republic, verdicts such as these will be seen as unexceptionable. If anything, they are at-

tempts at undoing, at least in part, injustices wrought by the processes of the criminal justice system. Ms. Ramani spent months on end participating in a trial, not for being a perpetrator of any crime but for speaking out about sexual harassment at the workplace. Ms. Ravi spent 10 days in custody on the basis of evidence that the court found, at best, "scanty and sketchy". But these rulings are now far from routine. Indeed, on February 25, the Allahabad High Court, in *Aparna Purohit v. State of U.P.*, gave us a scathing of the disdain with which the higher judiciary views issues of personal liberty.

In denying anticipatory bail to Ms. Purohit, who is the head of Amazon Prime Video's India Originals, which ran the web series *Tandav*, the High Court was effectively telling the applicant that she deserved to be interrogated in custody for running a show that was "bound to hurt the sentiments of the majority community". Not that *Tandav* necessarily does this, but it mattered little to the court that deriding a person's belief is not an offence, not even under India's draconian blasphemy laws.

Unconstitutional, but upheld
Free speech, we all recognise, is a condition of legitimate government. We also recognise that there are limits to this right. The Constitution permits reasonable restrictions on speech on a variety of stated grounds. Determining what is reasonable and what falls within the bounds of those permitted limitations can sometimes be an exercise fraught with difficulty. But India's Parliament has never grappled, with genuine seriousness, over these questions. It has either chosen to allow colonial-era laws to do the government's bidding or it has legislated new rules



that do not merely err on the side of restraint as much as they treat the restriction as their chief goal and purpose. The cases concerning Ms. Ramani, Ms. Ravi and Ms. Purohit each emanate out a law that is categorically unconstitutional, but that has nonetheless been upheld by the Supreme Court.

Tools of defamation, sedition

Consider first criminal defamation. It ought to be self-evident that the punishment, even the very idea of prosecution, for libellous speech is disproportionate to the offence. Criminal law does not exist to make prosecutable acts that are essentially private in nature. By making ostensibly slanderous talk a punishable offence, the state imposes a chilling effect on all manners of legitimate speech. It is for this reason that almost every democratic nation of the world has revoked laws criminalising defamation. But in India, it remains a tool for the powerful and is routinely invoked not just by individuals and governments in positions of authority but also by corporations looking to protect their commercial interests.

In the case of sedition, its colonial remnants are, again, plainly apparent. Although it was not a part of Macaulay's original draft, it was incorporated by the British government into the Indian Penal

Code with the explicit aim of repressing all forms of dissent against the regime.

The offence – which carries with it the prospect of life imprisonment – is defined as any act which "brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the Government established by law in India". The clause also contains an ominous explanation: the word "disaffection" includes disloyalty and all feelings of enmity.

In saving the provision from the Constitution's demands, the Supreme Court, in 1962, read down the offence and held that it was only seditious action that had the "tendency to disrupt public order" that was prosecutable. Since then, in other cases, the Court has held that speech can be criminalised only when it bears a proximate connection to disorder. But despite the imposition of these confines, the offence of sedition continues to be weaponised to restrict even the most inoffensive forms of dissent.

India's blasphemy laws, Section 153A, which deals with speech that seeks to promote enmity between different communities, and Section 295A, which criminalises speech that outrages religious feelings, are also vestiges of colonialism. Rather than aiding in dealing with genuine cases of hate speech, the laws permit governments to target acts that so much as offend a person's belief, dislodging, in the process, the very foundation of free expression.

Signals from the judiciary

That the Supreme Court has allowed these provisions to remain on India's books ought to tell us that its record in protecting personal liberty is acclaimed without reason. Every now and then, the

Court does bewail the state of affairs. In *Arnab Manoranjan Goswami vs State of Maharashtra*, decided in November last year, the Court warned against the use of the criminal law as "a ruse for targeted harassment". The judgment noted: "Our courts must ensure that they continue to remain the first line of defence against the deprivation of the liberty of citizens. Deprivation of liberty even for a single day is one day too many."

But any hope that the verdict would augur well for the many thousands who continue to languish in jail without trial was quickly quelled.

When those involved with the making of *Tandav* first approached the Supreme Court, weeks after the verdict in *Arnab Manoranjan Goswami*, the Court not only refused to quash the criminal charges against them but also offered them no interim protection against arrest.

What is more, when one of the show's actors pleaded that he had simply been contracted to play a part, he was told, "You cannot play the role of a character which hurts the religious sentiments of others."

To be sure, as the lawyer Abhinav Sekhri has repeatedly highlighted, India's bail jurisprudence suffers from a systemic malaise, where the manner in which offences are classified and the manner in which judicial discretion is vested invariably leads to arbitrary outcomes. But when this uncertainty is coupled with the prevailing distrust – which flows from the Supreme Court – in the values of personal liberty, of free thought and expression, what we get is a complete erasure of the rule of law.

Suhirth Parthasarathy is an advocate practising at the Madras High Court

With Biden, India may need a new template

Despite accumulated goodwill, New Delhi needs imaginative engagement to deal with the Democrat-controlled House



K.V. PRASAD

The new administration in the United States, of Joseph R. Biden, and the 117th U.S. Congress, two separate branches in the American system of governance, hit the road running with a sense of purpose to 'heal' the country and restore its leadership role in the world.

Now, with the Congress settling down to find its rhythm, it would turn attention to issues the Members are committed to and their constituents push for. While pursuing their agenda on The Hill, members tend to work together building support among colleagues as they move towards legislative action.

Early conversations between the leaderships in both countries offer an insight into the priorities of the Biden administration in furtherance of strategic bilateral ties amid early signs that the mood on Capitol Hill could be less favourable.

Message by the India Caucus
India does enjoy bipartisan support in the Congress but the first signal of a possible direction can be interpreted from the recent formal interaction that members of the India Caucus in the House of Representatives had with the In-

dian envoy in Washington DC. Founded in the early 1990s, it is the largest country-specific caucus on The Hill.

Caucus co-chair Brad Sherman (Democrat) and Steve Chabot (Republican), along with Vice Chair Rohit Ro' Khanna (Democrat), organised a meet with the Indian Ambassador to the United States, Tarun Singh Sandhu, with particular reference to the farmers' protest in India. Irrespective of who took the initiative for the meeting, the message delivered by the Caucus underscored its priority.

A formal statement by Mr. Sherman said the group urged the Government of India to make sure that the norms of democracy are maintained and that protesters are allowed to protest in a peaceful manner with access to the Internet and journalists. "All friends of India hope that the parties can reach an agreement," was the message as a few other Congressmen took to social media on the farmers' issue separately.

Rohit Ro' Khanna is one of the youngest among the four Indian-Americans in the current House of Representatives, the others being Dr. Ami Bera, Pramila Jayapal, and Raja Krishnamoorthi. He identifies with the progressives group that has more members in the current Democratic Party set-up and is a powerful voice. Mr. Khanna was associated with the campaign of Senator Bernie Sanders considered Left and keeping him company in the group is Ms. Jaypal (Democrat). It was her possible



presence in a meeting with members of the Congress, that led to India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar cancelling the engagement in December 2019 when he was in the U.S. This made then Senator Kamala Harris join issue.

Indian community is a force
While interaction between government officials is a regular exercise, there is another significant dimension to the growth of bilateral relations. It is the immense contribution of the Indian-Americans, the second largest immigrant community with a strength of four million plus people.

The massive effort by this highly educated and economically strong community makes it count as one of the most influential groups in the U.S. From the time when India came under sanctions following the Pokhran explosions, to the time the U.S. Congress voted on the civil nuclear deal, Indian-Americans have played a key role in transforming the relations.

Yet, over the past few years, there has been a divergence in the preferences of the community. A recent survey on attitudes of Indian Americans by Carnegie, Johns Hopkins and University of

Pennsylvania (<https://bit.ly/3kLfMhh>) offers an understanding into many facets.

The community today may be less willing to engage with lawmakers and their aides with the same sense of purpose it did earlier on account of differing perceptions of events in India. In addition, over the past decade-and-a-half, a number of Indian-Americans have found their way into various branches of the administration and the Congress.

Assessments and response
These second-generation members of Indian-Americans have their own individual assessment of developments in India, making it tougher for New Delhi to put forward a convincing argument from its perspective to counter perceptions. In America's way of working, the standpoint of aides go in as valuable inputs for hard-nosed policy drafters while preparing documents for the administration and the Congress.

The farmers' protests in India attracted attention across the world and found resonance in the U.S. too. The sharp reaction in India to comments on social media by Rihanna and Meena Harris came around the time when racial justice and the BLM (Black Lives Matter) movement remains strong in the current American political discourse.

India, of course, has stepped up its outreach on the Hill and New Delhi enjoys an advantage to the extent that both Mr. Jaishankar and the current Foreign Secretary,

Harsh Vardhan Shringla, served as Indian envoys in Washington DC. Both are well-versed with the way the city functions inside the Beltway.

Adding sinews to this effort is the pace of engagement by Indian missions. A leading Indian think-tank too opened its U.S. arm to supplement efforts in a city where the hiring of a professional lobby firm in Washington DC is well-accepted practice.

A direction pointer
A challenge in the current scenario would also be to translate the intent expressed at the last India-U.S. 2+2 meeting, in October 2019, of establishing an India-U.S.-Parliamentary Exchange for formal and reciprocal visits by parliamentarians (<https://bit.ly/3ecqFHB>). This is because opinion articulated by lawmakers has an amplifier effect and at times determines the path for the administration.

The accumulated reservoir of goodwill by Indians should help in defining the future course of bilateral ties; but it would require imaginative engagement to deal with the Democrat-controlled House, making it easier for the new administration to work on its India-centric plans. A test case waits in the form of CAATSA, or Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, as India moves ahead to procure the Russian S-400 missile defence system.

K.V. Prasad was a Fulbright-American Political Science Association Congressional Fellow

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.

Stepping aside
To many, whether V.K. Sasikala, aide of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, withdrew from politics on her own or was forced to, would remain a question mark in Tamil Nadu's politics. But there are ample hints in the report, "Sasikala announces decision to withdraw from politics" (Page 1, March 4), that the national party in question, the BJP, may have leaned on its alliance partner in Tamil Nadu, the AIADMK. Her situation is akin to that of Kamal Haasan in the Tamil film, *Mahanadi*. N. NAGARAJAN, Secunderabad

Ms. Sasikala may have sensed that the AIADMK may

not find the going easy this time – there is not only the anti-incumbency but also internal differences within the AIADMK. If this happens, she could get back all the power she once enjoyed. A.P. THIRUVADI, Chennai

Sale of national assets
Congress President Sonia Gandhi's criticism of the Modi government's

economic policies is likely to be dismissed as a case of the pot calling the kettle black. Measures such as disinvestment of public sector banks and a dynamic pricing of petroleum products were initiated under Congress rule; the BJP just picked up the thread of liberalisation from where it was left off (Editorial page, "The distress sale of national assets is unwise", March 4). It is hard to believe that the trajectory of economic policymaking under a Congress government would be any different. The UPA governments could not swerve further right because the Left parties acted as a check. As the BJP has been successfully using Hindutva politics to distract people from its multiple failures on

the economic front and has been winning elections despite its poor record, it may not be unduly worried about the criticism of its economic policies. Where the Congress Party could have made a difference was in upholding secular values. Unfortunately, it has fallen to the temptation of soft Hindutva; today, its image as an alternative to communal politics remains blurred. MANOHAR ALEMATH, Kannur, Kerala

Fading party
It is unfortunate that despite repeated signals, the Congress leadership seems to be on a path to destruction. If this indifference continues, the BJP's slogan of 'Congress-mukht Bharat' would soon

become a reality. It pains one that a national party which fought for Independence is begging for seats from regional parties. It is obvious that the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi has failed to impress not only their own partymen but also other Opposition parties. It is also possible that a more pliable leadership could even bring about a merger of many splinter groups such as the Nationalist Congress Party and the Trinamool Congress, into the Congress fold. India badly needs a strong Opposition. V. SUBRAMANIAN, Chennai

Lack of empathy
In a country where the patriarchal mindset is embedded so deep even

many years after Independence, it is clear that we still believe in tethering women to the same ideologies that existed back then. In such a situation, an insensitive statement from the highest court in the land indicates that we still lack the basic tenets of human rights. Asking a perpetrator of sexual abuse to marry the survivor or risk going to jail is a sign of a distressing lack of empathy despite there being competent laws. The emergence of such views from time to time once again highlights the dire need to have more women judges presiding over such cases. DEEPIKA TRIPATHI, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

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Will West Bengal tilt towards the right this election?

PARLEY

Anti-incumbency and identity politics, including Hindutva, will determine the outcome

The first phase of the West Bengal Assembly elections is only a few weeks away. While the BJP and Trinamool Congress (TMC) are locked in an intense battle, the Left-Congress alliance is attempting to win back voters. In a conversation moderated by Varghese K. George, Prasenjit Bose and Snigdhendu Bhattacharya discuss the issues dominating this election. Edited excerpts:

What issues do you think will be determining this West Bengal election? Prasenjit?

Prasenjit Bose: We should look at the BJP's surprise performance in the 2019 election in which, for the first time, it crossed the 40% vote share threshold and won 18 seats. Although one could see it coming up in a big way, the extent of its surge was not expected. You should start from there. Has the BJP gained further momentum since then? Or has the TMC been able to retrieve some ground, which it appeared to have lost in 2019? Or has anti-incumbency just continued to grow?

So, you have anti-incumbency, you have the BJP's attempt to create a hyper-nationalistic national narrative on questions like the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, and West Bengal has a history of class politics. Which of these issues could dominate this poll?

PB: I think anti-incumbency would be number one, because ultimately, it's an Assembly election. There are enough reasons for people to be extremely dissatisfied with the TMC government. But there have been some government initiatives which have helped the TMC retrieve some of those groups. Again, I think, borrowing a term coined by a political analyst, it was 'subaltern Hindutva' which enabled the BJP to cross the 40% vote share. Identity issues will have a very important role to play.

Snigdhendu, we have a larger frame of incumbency factors, and we have identity politics at play. There is a very strong pitch for religious

consolidation under the BJP. How would you characterise and explain the strength of each of these factors?

Snigdhendu Bhattacharya: The influence of caste politics died down long ago. In its last leg, the Left regime was no longer taking up caste issues as such. In 1977, the Left came to power and implemented Operation Barga, perhaps the largest government-backed land redistribution programme ensuring the hegemony of the farmers. In 2011, Mamata Banerjee came to power by hijacking the Left agenda...

You are saying caste is not a factor. Is Hindutva a factor?

SB: Identity is a factor, but anti-incumbency is the main factor. With Hindutva, the BJP could have, at most, surpassed the 25% mark, but could not have touched the 40% mark [in 2019]. This anti-incumbency is essentially due to two reasons: one, corruption at the grassroots level and the arrogance of TMC leaders; and two, political violence. The turning point was the 2018 panchayat elections, which the TMC captured by violence. People just took revenge on the TMC in 2019.

Who will be the beneficiary of that anti-incumbency sentiment? There are two claimants: the BJP and the Congress-Left alliance.

PB: I think the BJP is going to benefit much more. As pointed out, the TMC won the 2018 panchayat elections in a visibly high-handed and violent manner. That created a tremendous amount of backlash, especially in the rural areas. The BJP has emerged as the strongest opposition, as it could face that onslaught in a more effective manner. It has been very aggressive in opposing the TMC government – in educating the public, street politics, etc. – much more than the Left and Congress have. The BJP is in the Central government; it occupies media space; the Governor appointed by the Centre has been running a parallel government... The BJP has already occupied the mind space of



the people as the key opposition. Though the Congress-Left alliance will try to leverage the organisational strength of both parties, it is perhaps too late for it to outrun the BJP.

Besides being the main beneficiary of the anti-incumbency sentiment, the BJP is also trying to rope in Dalits, tribal communities and backward classes under the Hindutva fold...

PB: The BJP is doing that with remarkable success. The 2019 results speak for themselves: the tribal-dominated areas of the State voted for the BJP. Within the Scheduled Caste (SC) communities, the two largest communities are the Rajbanshis and the Namasudras. And many of them are post-Partition refugees. Through the citizenship tripod of the CAA, National Register of Citizens (NRC) and National Population Register, the BJP said it was trying to champion the cause of these sections. The Left and Congress had absolutely no clue that this was happening until 2019. I would say that the TMC this time appears to have done some damage control.

Is there a sense among the subaltern sections that the non-BJP parties are controlled by urban elites?

SB: I don't think so. Because if you look at the construct of the Left parties, it might be true that the top brass in the Central Committee or within the State Committee consists mostly of Brahmins. But they have leaders from the SC, Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) at all other levels. So, that wasn't the issue. I think the major reason behind this switch of SC, ST and OBC votes is that the Rashtri-

Anti-incumbency is essentially due to two reasons: one, corruption at the grassroots level and the arrogance of TMC leaders; and two, political violence.

ya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has been consistently working on these communities. Throughout India there are RSS-backed organisations working tirelessly and quite silently among the tribal communities. The second point is about the corruption, high-handedness and malpractices of the TMC. These backward communities are the most affected by these, so, possibly, the anger was greater among them.

Some early intellectual arguments of Hindu nationalism began in Bengal. The State also went through communal partition more than once. How fertile is the West Bengal of today for Hindu nationalism?

SB: It is a very fertile ground for many kinds of identity politics, one of which is Hindutva. They (propagandists of Hindutva) have two-three main issues. One is demographic change. They say there has been an increase in the Muslim population over the last seven decades and they want to 'save' West Bengal from turning into Bangladesh. Then they speak about Ms. Banerjee's so-called 'Muslim appeasement'. Her policies have created a certain kind of Hindu backlash.

The ground was always fertile in Bengal. There was a kind of communal mindset among sections of Bengalis in the pre-Independence era. Two factors had kept them suppressed. One was the impact of the

Renaissance, which had triumphed over Hindu nationalism until the 1930s when communal politics surged across India. Bengal was one of the most volatile States during the communal clashes. From the 1940s rose the communists.

What is usually not a part of political discussions and consciousness is the fact that Bengal was divided on communal lines. How deep is the memory of Partition in West Bengal in the State's political consciousness? How is that being resurrected?

PB: Well, one way of directly not only reviving those memories but kind of utilising the dynamics of Partition politics and creating fresh polarisation is the promise of giving citizenship to post-Partition refugees. There was an influx of refugees between 1948 and, say, the early 1950s immediately after Partition. Then there was a huge refugee influx in 1971 when the war took place. Then we had several phases of influx... These are dominantly Hindus. What the BJP has been saying is that we will expel the Muslim Bangladeshi and give citizenship to Hindus. But the experience of the Assam NRC shows us that the vast number of those excluded were Hindus. In West Bengal, the proportion of excluded Hindus could be even higher. So, there is a fear of the NRC. And more the fear, the more the BJP could suffer electorally. I think that is why, after a point, the BJP put the NRC on the back burner. Whereas last year, before the pandemic, it almost seemed like that was its main game plan.

Do you foresee all the anti-incumbency votes congregating towards the BJP? What will the BJP do to enable that? And how will the Congress-Left alliance try to remain in play?

SB: The Left-Congress alliance is looking to at least do a better performance than in 2019 when the Left and Congress contested separately and managed to get only 12% of the votes. If they can increase their vote share by even a few percentage points, that would essentially take away from the BJP and weaken its prospects. But the fact that Abbas

Siddiqui (the Peerzada of Furfura Sharif) has allied with the Left-Congress alliance has started a new debate on the secular character of these parties. There is a possibility that this might help the Hindutva polarisation plan. So, in this case, Hindutva polarisation may help the anti-incumbency polarisation in favour of the BJP.

A bipolar contest rather than a triangular contest is increasingly the possibility. Do you agree, Prasenjit?

PB: West Bengal elections have been bipolar contests for a long time. I think the people had made up their mind about the BJP in 2019. I don't see any reason why they should change their mind this year. If the BJP fails to dislodge the TMC government, subsequent developments will take place where other options will be tried out. But in this election, I don't see those wanting to dislodge the TMC being very confused about who the principal opposition is. Whatever the Left and Congress are trying to do now is too close to the election. Abbas Siddiqui could turn out to be counterproductive, especially for the Left. He is a new player, so whatever he gets, he will gain, because he was not there earlier.

It is going to be a bipolar contest. There will be a few constituencies where the alliance will be in the contest. In the large bulk of the seats, it will be the BJP versus the TMC and the BJP will finish much closer to its 2019 vote share. At the margin, what will become decisive is social engineering or the subaltern Hindu experiment. Some of it might just unravel and that may become decisive. At the last moment, as we head towards the elections, I see the BJP losing some steam.

We haven't discussed in detail many other factors such as the defection question. What would be the overall impact of the large-scale defection from the TMC leadership? Also, the subaltern Hindutva point: if the BJP had been so confident, why is it that it is still – so late and so close to the election – hankering for recognition by the Bengali Hindu elite? I think there is something happening on the ground where things may not be panning out in the BJP's favour in the way it has drawn the script.



Snigdhendu Bhattacharya
is a Kolkata-based political commentator and author of 'Mission Bengal: A Saffron Experiment'



Prasenjit Bose
is an economist and political activist based in Kolkata



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Ending the war in Yemen

A ceasefire is in everybody's interest but the question is who will blink first

STANLY JOHNY

One of the first key foreign policy decisions that President Joe Biden took after assuming office was to end the U.S.'s support for Saudi Arabia's six-year-long war on Yemen. He halted weapons sales to Saudi Arabia, appointed a Special Envoy for Yemen, and removed the Shia Houthi rebels, who control the northwestern parts of the Arab country, from the list of foreign terrorist organisations. Both former Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump looked away from Yemen even as the country, amidst a multipolar civil war and Saudi bombing, descended into chaos and witnessed a humanitarian catastrophe. Can Mr. Biden be different?

The war in Yemen

The crisis in Yemen is not only about the Saudi-Houthi conflict. It has many more dimensions: humanitarian, civil, geopolitical and sectarian. When Saudi Arabia, the UAE and their allies went to Yemen in March 2015, they had a clearly defined objective: drive the Houthis, who are backed by Iran, out of the capital Sana'a and stabilise the country under the government of Abdurrahman Mansur Hadi that they support. The Saudi-led coalition imposed a blockade on Yemen, which they hoped would eventually weaken the Houthis, and started a bombing campaign aimed at wrecking the rebels militarily. This campaign was a failure as the Houthis entrenched themselves in the north-west despite the military and economic challenges.

The only success the Saudis can claim from a tactical point of view is that the Houthis were limited to the north-west. But the Saudi-backed government failed to consolidate its position even in the south. A separatist group, the Southern Transitional Council (STC), has established its rule in southern Yemen. The UAE, which backs the STC, has pulled out of the Saudi-led coalition. All this is happening while the humanitarian situation in Yemen is worsening by the day. The war has killed over 10,000 people and pushed the country to the brink of a famine. According to the UN, 50,000 Yemenis are starving to death and 16 million will go hungry this year. They are de-

pending on food assistance to survive, but the war is making it difficult for aid groups to operate in the country. Many more are dying due to preventable diseases as Yemen lacks proper health infrastructure and essential medicines.

Blockade and bombing
Finding a solution to such a vexed, multipolar conflict will not be easy. But that shouldn't prevent the international community from taking steps. Their immediate focus should be on tackling the humanitarian situation in Yemen. This week, the UN held a conference to raise up to \$2.41 billion for aid works in Yemen, but got pledges only for \$1.35 billion, which means the aid operations would be impacted further. Even the limited humanitarian work cannot be sustained if there is no reprieve in the fighting. The last six years of war prove that the Saudi strategy of blockade and bombing was a failure. The Houthis continued to amass weapons, even technologically advanced drones which they use to attack Saudi targets across the border, despite the blockade, while the Yemeni people continue to suffer.

The Saudis should ask themselves whether they should continue with a failed strategy while the situation in Yemen keeps worsening. Also, the continued Houthi rocket and drone attacks have left a hole in Saudi Arabia's national security umbrella. The Houthis are also under pressure. If they want international legitimacy, they should stop fighting and start talking with other stakeholders. A ceasefire is in everybody's interest but the question is who will blink first. The Biden administration should use its leverage to pressure Riyadh to lift the blockade, a key Houthi demand, as a confidence-building measure and push for talks for a lasting ceasefire. Once a ceasefire is achieved, the U.S. and its regional allies could call for a multilateral conference involving all stakeholders to discuss Yemen's future. Yemen can find a way out of the current crisis provided the war is brought to an immediate end and the country is given diplomatic assistance.

stanly.johny@thehindu.co.in



NOTEBOOK

A year of breathless coaching in science reporting

One virus and its vaccines have taught health journalists precious lessons

RAMYA KANNAN

In February, when the government revived its ritual, the universal immunisation programme, news of two infants dying in Coimbatore, in Tamil Nadu, 24 hours after vaccination, did not create as much noise as it would have, otherwise. This is possibly because people were distracted, even obsessed, with the COVID-19 vaccines. In a sense, the revenge of science is complete. Discussions about viruses and vaccines had been largely confined to closed-door deliberations in scientific institutions, hospital boardrooms, and among the health bureaucracy. Now, all of it has been dragged into drawing rooms, television debates, social media chatter, on to the roads, and on the lips of children too. It is not as if one could get away from talking about the COVID-19 pandemic; wherever you go, there it is. With India launching the

COVID-19 vaccine programme, which is probably the largest logistical exercise of its kind in the world, it is no wonder that vaccine talk is buzzing – people are exchanging side effects stories, comparing vaccination passports, and rolling up a sleeve showing off their deltoid muscle, where they got the shot. It has not always been like this. Health journalists have had to be at it though, even when vaccines were not attention grabbers. There has been enough vaccine news in this country to fuel several newspaper columns; and immunisation has been a key component of every State's public health programme. The oral polio vaccination drive, with the involvement of the Rotary Club, was among the flagship immunisation programmes in India. It was a resounding success, but not without blips and moments of anxiety, questions of efficacy, and vaccine hesitancy. Public health advocacy

has always put the media at the centre of any vaccine hesitancy debate. Panic reporting has often led to greater vaccine hesitancy in public immunisation programmes, studies show. But reporting on adverse effects following immunisation is like having to walk a high wire, with journalists trespassing into areas where independent verification of the causes of adverse incidents or even access to the key elements in the case is not possible. Pockets in the country have traditionally been suspicious of vaccines and the media has played a role in the massive awareness drives that were conducted across the country, to pull up coverage and achieve immunisation and pathogen eradication targets.

Vaccine-related severe adverse events and deaths have been reported from time to time diligently by the media – sometimes, not very responsibly. But children's immunisation has dominated the cover-

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 5, 1971

No vote without money

An old woman of Thanipad in Thandarampatu Assembly constituency in North Arcot district to-day [March 4] refused to vote saying "no money, no vote." It seems that she was not offered money for casting her vote in favour of any candidate.

At the Arattavadi polling centre in Chennamgam constituency many Lambadi women were seen eager to exercise their franchise. A large number of tribals also came to Chennamgam for casting their votes.

At Singarampalayam in Kinathukadavu Assembly constituency (of Coimbatore district), Karuppan, a 110-year-old blind peasant, refused to take his great grandson's help in casting his vote to-day. The great grandson carried the old man upto his polling booth. From there on, he flatly rejected the youth's assistance. Instead, he asked the official on duty to explain the order of the symbols on the ballot paper and then, walking into the booth, marked his preference carefully before dropping the paper into the box. Karuppan explained later that the ballot was secret and that he, as an old man, had set an example to younger people in maintaining this secrecy.

K. Thangavelu, stated to be a polling agent, was found snoring under the influence of liquor in a police station in Pollachi constituency.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 5, 1921

Hindu law

Mr. T.V. Seshagiri Aiyer B.A. B.L. Retired Judge and Member of the Legislative Assembly writes:- Sir - There is a general feeling among thoughtful men that portions of Hindu Law as administered by our Courts are not in keeping with the spirit of the times we live in. Excepting a few ultra conservative thinkers, every one recognises that it is no disrespect to the memory of the promulgators of the great system of law we have inherited that we should attempt to reform some parts of it. The Hindu Law which we follow is not wholly as Manu enjoined, nor as the latter Smriti writers have reproduced it. For the most part, what we follow to-day is what has been evolved out of the Smriti by great commentators who with a view to engraft new ideas in accordance with the custom they had grown up in their times have attributed to the language of Smriti meanings which, in some cases at least, neither logic nor grammar warrants.

FROM PAGE ONE

OTT platforms will not have to register: Centre

Representatives of Alt Balaji, Hotstar, Amazon Prime, Netflix, Jio, Zee5, Viacom18, Shemaroo and MXPlayer, among others, attended the virtual interaction. The Minister reasserted that the code of ethics had been brought in following representations from various cinema and TV bodies, stating

that while there were regulations for them, none existed for the OTT industry.

"Thus, it was decided that the government would come out with progressive institutional mechanism for OTT players and develop a level-playing field with the idea of self-regulation," the statement added.

OTT content needs to be checked, says SC

Justice Bhushan said the court wanted to consider Ms. Purohit's case in the light of the new guidelines notified by the government to hold social media and OTT platforms accountable for their content.

The Bench asked the guidelines to be placed on record and scheduled a hearing for March 5. The Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules of 2021 requires the streaming platforms to comply with a new three-

tier self-regulatory complaint redressal system.

Mr. Rohatgi said the case against Ms. Purohit was "shocking". The OTT platforms were like cinema halls where one had to pay to view a film. Mr. Rohatgi said the new guidelines were "like the Censor Board" but they would come into operation "after some time". "This lady [Purohit] is only an employee of a company. The company is not an accused... These cases are filed by publicity seekers," Mr. Rohatgi argued.

'Bangladesh border killings due to crime'

Mr. Jaishankar added that several of the reported deaths [of Bangladesh nationals] "are fairly deep inside India".

The Indian statement comes in the backdrop of increased incidents of killings of Bangladeshi nationals in 2020. *Dhaka Tribune*, in a report in last December, the said the incidents of killings was the highest in 2020 within a decade.

Mr. Jaishankar, however, highlighted the broader contours of India-Bangladesh relation, which witnessed India choosing Bangladesh for the largest consignment of COVID-19 vaccines that Delhi had sent abroad. He pointed out that 9 million doses of Covishield vaccine had reached Bangladesh from Pune's Serum Institute of India.

India's vaccine production found strong support from Mr. Momen. He said, "Around 135 countries in the world are yet to get the COVID-19 vaccine but there is our friend India and we have such a rock solid relationship that we got the vaccine and everyone is very happy."

Bangladesh has purchased the COVID vaccine from the Serum Institute of India and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government is implementing the nationwide vaccination programme free of cost very efficiently and effectively."

Mr. Momen said Bangabandhu-Bapu Digital Exhibition would be inaugurated in Dhaka in the coming days.

Modi visit

Mr. Jaishankar is paying a day-long visit to take stock of bilateral ties ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's planned March 26 visit, during which he will participate in the independence day celebrations in Dhaka that will mark the half century of the country's independent existence.

The issue of sharing of the waters of the Teesta came up during the joint press conference.

Mr. Jaishankar said, "We have meeting of our water resources secretaries very soon. The Government of India's position has not changed."

Haryana's new rule spells disaster, says India Inc.

Mr. Shankar added that the industry body believes the move was against the spirit of the Constitution, which gives citizens of India the freedom to work anywhere in the country.

Other industry bodies, including the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA), the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM), have requested the BJP-led government to reconsider the legislation while pitching for a consultation with the industry.

'Skilled hands lacking' Deepak Jain, president, ACMA, said, "Our industry requires skilled workforce to produce high quality products that are globally competitive. Hiring in our sector is done on the basis of merit and talent rather than the domicile of the candidates. The reason for the industry to employ candidates from outside the State is due to the shortage of adequately skilled and locally available manpower."

Mr. Jain also highlighted that the automotive industry, with investments of over ₹40,000 crore, accounts for

more than 25% of the State's GDP and creates employment for over 10 lakh people.

NASSCOM added that the move would impact the business friendly image of the State and be detrimental to Gurugram's growth trajectory as an Information Technology-Business Process Management hub.

In a representation to the State government, CII has stated that the industry should be consulted to understand the overall impact of the law on the State's economy and employment.

Noting that Haryana is facing tough competition from other States in terms of attracting investment, the CII said all major industrial houses felt the Bill was going to affect their businesses in a big way and they were now looking to rework their expansion plans in Haryana.

CII has recommended that the State may, after discussions, come out with a percentage and also the associated incentives to be offered to industry for employing local people. Job quota for locals could not be made mandatory for existing units as they could not lay off trained employees from other States to give those jobs to locals, it said.

Kerala takes on Central govt. over KIIFB

CEO and Deputy MD ignore summons issued by Enforcement Directorate

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

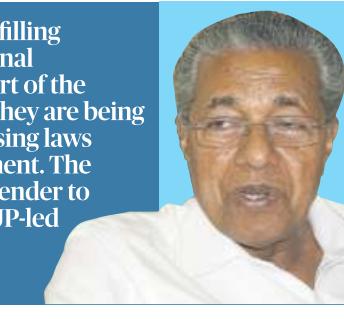
The Kerala government is in direct confrontation with the Centre over the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) probe into the "Masala Bonds" of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) and the decision to summon its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) K.M. Abraham and Deputy Managing Director Vikramjit Singh for questioning.



The ED is probing whether the KIIFB violated provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) in its external borrowings through the "Masala Bonds", which are specialized debt instruments issued outside India but denominated in Indian rupees.

Officials fulfilling Constitutional obligations are part of the government and they are being harassed by misusing laws passed by Parliament. The State will not surrender to such acts of the BJP-led government

**PINARAYI VIJAYAN,
KERALA CHIEF MINISTER**



The ED also took note of a CAG report on Kerala finances, tabled in the State Assembly in January, which had criticised KIIFB's borrowings through the bonds, saying these were not in accordance with the Constitutional provisions and lacked legislative approval.

'Smear campaign'

Close on seeking the Election Commission's intervention on the issue, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan lashed out at Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and the ED for "misusing" power, violating the model code of conduct, and attempts to create a smear campaign against the officials and the State govern-

ment. Reiterating that the State would not "surrender" to such acts of the BJP-led Central government for political gains, Mr. Vijayan said "officials fulfilling Constitutional obligations are part of the government and they are being harassed by misusing laws passed by Parliament".

The officials, including women, had been subjected to harassment and "intemperate behaviour", he said. "We are answerable to the

people. Our tradition is not to budge to those coming to prevent fulfilment of the responsibility towards the people. We have legally moved against the earlier attempts of the Central agencies," Mr. Vijayan said.

According to the decision taken at the highest level to confront the ED politically, Mr. Singh, an IPS officer of Kerala cadre, ignored the summons of the ED served on March 3 to be present at

the Kochi office on Thursday. Dr. Abraham, who is the CEO and Member Secretary, will also not appear before the ED on Friday.

The KIIFB has communicated to the ED that the top officials would not be appearing before the officials in Kochi. Official sources said the KIIFB had communicated that all they had to say on the "Masala Bond" had been conveyed to the ED sleuths in Kochi.

KIIFB officials on Thursday petitioned the Chief Minister, and Chief Secretary V.P. Joy, on their bad experience at the ED office in Kochi, sources added.

In a Facebook post, Finance Minister and KIIFB Vice Chairman T.M. Thomas Isaac said the BJP's efforts to destroy KIIFB and destabilise Kerala's development would get a strong reply.

IN BRIEF

Focus on mother tongue, says Vice-President

TIRUPATI
Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu has envisaged a day when modern education in engineering, medicine and law is imparted in Indian languages. Speaking at the Indian Institute of Technology Tirupati, he spoke on the importance of teaching in mother tongue up to high school level.

27 fall ill after dinner in Andhra Pradesh

KURNool
Twenty-seven persons, including five children, from A.P.'s Anantapur district fell ill on Wednesday night after having dinner at the temple town of Srisailam. The group of pilgrims is said to have brought food cooked in the morning. They complained of vomiting and diarrhoea after consuming lemon rice and were hospitalised. While 26 persons were discharged, one is still under observation.

ED likely to probe SNC-Lavalin case

KOCHI
The Enforcement Directorate is likely to examine the SNC-Lavalin case, from which Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had been discharged earlier. It has summoned journalist-activist T.P. Nandakumar, who had alleged irregularities in the contract between the Kerala State Electricity Board and Canadian firm, SNC-Lavalin for renovation of three hydel projects in Idukki.

Denotification of 260 acres of forest quashed

BENGALURU
In a setback to the State government, the High Court of Karnataka on Thursday quashed the notification issued in 2017 denotifying 260 acres of forest area in Shivamogga district for rehabilitating people affected from Linganamakki dam project area in 1960. The court noted that the State government cannot take the step without Centre's nod.

Kerala HC freezes regularisation orders

KOCHI
The Kerala High Court on Thursday ordered deferring all actions on the orders regularising temporary/contract employees in 10 government undertakings, including the C-DIT, LBS Centre for Science and Technology and the Kerala State Remote Sensing and Environmental Centre. It ordered that the status quo be maintained.



New path: E. Sreedharan inspecting the Palarivattom flyover in Kerala on Thursday. The DMRC rebuilt the flyover in a record time of five months and 10 days. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Metroman is BJP's CM candidate for Kerala

He will steer State out of stagnation, says Surendran

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

E. Sreedharan said on Thursday that it would be his last day in the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) uniform, a dress he wore first in 1997.

"I will tender my resignation as Principal Adviser to the DMRC before submitting the nomination

to contest the Assembly polls. I will still be available to oversee projects," he said, after inspecting the Palarivattom flyover here.

"I have not cited my preference for any constituency. The sole condition is that it should not be too far off from Ponnani [his place of residence]," he said.

jects such as the Kochi Metro and Palarivattom flyover, would change the face of Kerala forever.

Mr. Surendran also ac-

cused the Left Democratic Front and the United Democratic Front of not speaking up against the threat of "jihad".

Won't appear before police: complainant

He cites threats after Jarkiholi case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Dinesh Kallahalli, the activist who accused former Karnataka Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi of sexually exploiting a woman by assuring her a job, refused to appear before the police for questioning citing security reasons.

The Cubbon Park police had summoned Mr. Kallahalli to get more details on the case and the woman who was allegedly cheated.

Mr. Jarkiholi stepped down from the Cabinet on Wednesday, a day after purported video clips of him with the unidentified woman was aired by Kannada news channels.

'Security inadequate'

Mr. Kallahalli, a resident of Kanakapura, said he started receiving threats on his phone soon after he filed a complaint against Mr. Jarkiholi. He had noticed unidentified people around his house and had approached the Ramanagaram police seeking protection.

Though police have been deployed at his house, Mr. Kallahalli said the security was not adequate and that he could not come to the station. He said he would present himself before the police on March 9.

The police said they were yet to trace the woman and her family members, who had approached Mr. Kallahalli to get more details on the case and the woman who was allegedly cheated.

Meanwhile, a complaint was filed against Mr. Kallahalli on Thursday questioning his intention. Prashanth Kumar, social activist from Muneshwara Nagar, accused Mr. Kallahalli of blackmail and pressure tactics using fabricated videos.

Cong. member suspended for a week

Stormy start to Karnataka House Budget session



House in chaos: B.S. Yediyurappa speaking to Opposition MLAs at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

poll" initiated by the Speaker.

As soon as the Speaker started reading his introductory speech, Congress mem-

bers trooped into the well and began shouting slogans.

They demanded postponement of the discussion on the subject to the next ses-

sion. Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah questioned the Speaker's decision and dubbed it an attempt to further "RSS agenda".

Mr. Kageri said the issue was listed on the agenda as it was approved at the Business Advisory Committee meeting. He pointed out that the Congress had given 19 names who would speak on the subject.

During the dharna, Mr. Sangameshwara removed his shirt and raised slogans. Sensing that it could lead to trouble, Congress member D.K. Shivakumar put the shirt back on Mr. Sangameshwara.

Data generated in the latest seroprevalence study appeared to be robust considering there was not much variation in each of the divisions and a similar study done in the sewage systems for the prevalence of coronavirus among the population pointed out towards the same figure.

The Director reiterated that both vaccines cleared by government authorities were safe and people should not hesitate to vaccinate themselves when their slot is determined as it would only strengthen the immune response of the body. "Vaccine will help the body fight the infection better, but it may not prevent us from getting infected and we in turn could infect others," he cautioned.

Sero-surveillance survey conducted in GHMC limits

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

About 54% of the population in Hyderabad and Secunderabad within the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits has been found to be having antibodies against coronavirus in a latest sero-surveillance survey conducted by city-based scientific institutions.

The study conducted jointly by the Centre for Cel-

lular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL) on a sample size of about 9,000 participants, all of them older than 10 years, has indicated that half the population has either been infected or exposed to coronavirus.

"It is very exciting as we could be near the end of this pandemic. We have reached a critical stage of infection among the population. This is the right time to go for vaccination when the infection transmission is weak and



Virus fight: Collection of samples under way at a COVID-19 testing centre in Hyderabad. ■ AP

there are no cases of re-infection. This could take the antibody prevalence among

the population to 75-80% when the herd immunity may kick in," said CCMB Di-

rector Rakesh Mishra at a press conference on Thursday.

The above 10 years age group, chosen as the segment, has been venturing out and from the data, it was clear that the older genera-

GoM suggests steps to stem 'negative narrative'

They include tracking '50 negative and 50 positive influencers' and 'neutralising' those writing against govt. without facts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

In an effort to "neutralise" what it calls a "negative narrative", a Group of Ministers (GoM), formed to fine-tune "government communication", has come out with suggestions to track "50 negative and 50 positive influencers" on social media, "neutralise the people who are writing against the government without facts and set[ting] false narratives/spread[ing] fake news" and take other steps.

It emerges that the decisions on capping FDI (foreign direct investment) at 26% for digital news media and the new IT rules that have a separate section dealing with code of ethics for Over the Top (OTT) platforms such as Netflix were a result of the GoM's deliberations. The FDI cap was essential, the GoM felt, to constrict the "foreign influence" on Indian media.

Information Technology

(IT) Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani, Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Minister Prakash Javadekar, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju, Urban Development Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur and Minister of State for Environment Babul Supriyo were part of the GoM, which met six times between June 14 and July 9 last year.

The group's report quotes suggestions made by the Ministers.

Mr. Prasad suggested, "A list of media personnel and prominent persons, who are pro our line of thought – both nationally and globally, should be prepared. Few eminent academicians, Vice Chancellors, retired Indian Foreign Service officers etc, should be identified who can

Action	Responsible unit
Two major public outreach programmes by each Ministry to ensure year-round coverage of government events	All Ministries
Engagement with journalism schools to tap 'future journalists'	I&B Ministry
Curbing fake news through fact check unit to counter false narratives	Press Information Bureau under I&B Ministry
Identifying a pool of 'spin doctors' for better presentation of facts	I&B Ministry
Promoting and supporting online portals to counter existing critical news portals	I&B Ministry
Regular interaction with foreign media journalists to disseminate government perspective	I&B and External Affairs Ministries

write our achievements and project our viewpoint."

Ms. Irani, who held the I&B portfolio in the previous Modi government, recommended, "We should track 50 negative and 50 positive influencers."

The GoM accepted the suggestion and gave the I&B Ministry the responsibility to implement it.

Mr. Javadekar felt that the government overall should learn from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to communicate with the common man.

On the "negative narrative", he said, "The narrative is fuelled by around 20-30 people. The lines keep changing many times on a single day."

Direct action'

Mr. Naqvi suggested direct action against those writing against the government. "We should have a strategy to neutralise the people who are writing against the government without facts and set[ting] false narratives/spread[ing] fake news," he said.

The action points recommended by the GoM include enlarging the Prasar Bharati News Service into a "mainline news agency". The agreed long-term strategies include "coordination with schools of journalism as present students are the future journalists".

Mr. Puri told the GoM that the journalists who were supportive of the government, even if unemployed

now, should be roped in. The report says this suggestion would be acted upon.

Mr. Thakur wanted the BJP and the Modi government to reach out to right-wing parties across the world to arrive at a common ground.

The GoM's report was published by sections of the media. *The Hindu* has a copy of it. There is so far no official word on its contents. Attempts were made to speak to Mr. Javadekar, I&B Secretary Amit Khare and Prasar Bharati Chief Executive Officer Shashi Shekhar Vempati, Press Information Bureau Director-General Jaideep Bhattacharya, but till the time of going to press, there was no comment from them.

Mr. Naqvi, who was the only one willing to speak on the issue, however, expressed ignorance about the GoM's suggestions. "I do not know anything about the report," he said and refused to elaborate further.

writing against the government. It very categorically also seems to suggest that some of the suggestions made in this report have actually been turned into law. The IT rules 2021 announced a few days back by Ravi Shankar Prasad Ji and Prakash Javadekar Ji seem to have taken a lot of these suggestions on board," the Congress spokesperson said.

Legislating power

"So, this does raise question: will Parliament make laws or will laws be made by Ministers sitting in the drawing rooms with consultations and under guidance of pliant media persons ever willing to serve the Modi government?" asked Ms. Shrinate.

She said the Ministers should resign on moral grounds since their strategy to spin a positive narrative amounted to a "blatant attack on the free press."

Congress slams govt. over GoM report

It alleges encroachment on freedom

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday slammed the government for the purported report by a Group of Ministers (GoM) to "neutralise" negative narrative against the Narendra Modi government and "spin" a positive one.

At a press conference, party spokesperson Supriya Shrinate alleged that the government's recent regulations for digital media and OTT platforms had their origin in such a report to "control free views and spin the narrative in the government's favour".

Ms. Shrinate cited the latest report of Freedom House, a U.S.-based NGO, to argue that the Modi government had not just encroached on press freedom but freedom itself.

"... It [the GoM report] categorically mentions that there has to be a strategy to neutralise people who are

BJP and two allies finalise sharing of 86 Assam seats

In Bengal, Babul Supriyo may be fielded against Mamata

NISTULA HEBBAR

NEW DELHI

At a meeting that ran late into the night, the BJP and its two allies in Assam – the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) – finalised their seat-sharing agreement for 86 Assembly constituencies where polling will be held mostly in the first and second phases. BJP State unit chief Ranji Dass confirmed this after a meeting of the BJP Central Election Committee (CEC) in New Delhi on Thursday night.

Sources indicated that for the all-important contest in West Bengal, which was also discussed on Thursday, Union Minister Babul Supriyo may be fielded to take on Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Nandigram.

Assam has 126 Assembly constituencies where elections will be held in three phases, on March 27, April 1



Babul Supriyo

and April 6.

"The BJP and its allies have finalised the seat-sharing arrangements. I am not disclosing now the number of seats each party will contest as our alliance partners have to sort out some of their internal issues," Mr. Dass told presspersons.

He said the BJP would announce its own candidates for the first two phases soon. However, the party had not finalised candidates in 12 seats for the time being and

had kept them pending, he said.

Asked whether Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal would again be projected as the chief ministerial candidate for the election, the BJP State unit president said the party did not make such an announcement where it had its own government.

"We project a chief ministerial candidate where we don't have our own government. Where we have our own government, we don't make such an announcement," he said.

Sources said the CEC kept a rough calculation of 86-88 seats for the BJP, around 26 seats to the AGP and around six seats for the UPPL out of the 126 seats.

The committee of top leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi met on Thursday to approve the list of party candidates for Assam.

Major parties set to release candidate lists; Left-Cong. alliance seals deal with ISF

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

The major political parties in West Bengal are likely to announce on Friday the names of candidates for the Assembly election. The ruling Trinamool Congress may name candidates for all the 294 Assembly seats, while the Left-Congress alliance may do so for the 60 seats in the first two phases.

The BJP is also likely to reveal the names for the first two phases.

After days of discussions, the Left parties and the Congress on Thursday came to an agreement on sharing of seats with the Indian Secular Front (ISF), newly formed by Furfura Sharif peer Abbas Siddique.

Sources privy to the discussion said the Left parties, including the Communist Party of India (Marxist), Communist Party of India, Revolutionary Socialist Party and All India Forward Bloc, may contest 165 seats, the Congress 92 and the ISF 37.

Leaders of these parties confirmed the arrangement, and said the announcement would be made on Friday.

Nandigram fight

The Nandigram seat in Purba Medinipur is likely to witness the biggest contest in this election. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will fight the election in the constituency that witnessed a violent agitation against forcible

land acquisition during Left Front rule in 2007-08.

Trinamool sources said Ms. Banerjee would contest only the Nandigram seat, and not Bhawanipur. She announced her Nandigram candidature as early as January.

At a meeting of BJP office-bearers in Delhi on Thursday, Suvendu Adhikari, who joined the BJP in December 2020 after winning the seat

on Trinamool ticket in 2016, expressed his willingness to contest it again.

After the Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Samajwadi Party, the Shiv Sena on Thursday pledged its support to Ms. Banerjee and the Trinamool. Sanjay Raut, Sena leader and Rajya Sabha member, hailed Ms. Banerjee as the "real Bengal tigress".

"A lot of people are curious to know whether Shiv Sena is contesting West Bengal polls or not. So, here's the update after discussions with Party President Uddhav Thackeray. Looking at the present scenario, it appears like a 'Didi vs All' fight. All 'M's – money, muscle and media – are being used against 'M'amata Didi. Hence, Shiv Sena has decided not to contest West Bengal polls and stand in solidarity with her. We wish Mamata Didi a 'roaring' success, 'cos we believe she is the real Bengal Tigress,' Mr. Raut said on social media.

Ascertaining facts on use of PM's photo: EC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Election Commission is "ascertaining facts" regarding a complaint that the use of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's photo on COVID-19 vaccination certificates violated the Model Code of Conduct, a senior EC official said on Thursday.

The Trinamool Congress had on Wednesday filed a complaint regarding this.

Taj vacated after hoax call

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AGRA/DELHI

The Taj Mahal complex in Agra was vacated on Thursday following a hoax bomb call, police said.

Nothing suspicious was found during the checks at the monument. The caller has been identified and detained for questioning.

Police file inquiry report against Kangana, sister

They allegedly used hateful language

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Mumbai police on Thursday filed an inquiry report before the Andheri Court in a criminal complaint against actor Kangana Ranaut and her sister Rangoli Chandel for allegedly using hateful language against Muslims on social media to 'gain cheap publicity'.

Three summonses were issued against the sisters on November 17, January 8 and February 16. However, till date they have not appeared before the court. The complaint filed by advocate Ali

Appointment of regular CBI head sought

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A writ petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking the appointment of a regular CBI Director through the high-power selection committee of the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India and the Leader of the Opposition.

"The government has failed to appoint the Director of the CBI as per Section 4A of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946 on the expiry of the term of the last incumbent, Rishi Kumar Shukla, on February 2, 2021," NGO Common Cause said.

Criminal-turned-politician is now lodged in a Punjab jail

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh government scoffed at Punjab's argument in the Supreme Court that criminal-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari could be tried via videoconferencing, saying that fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya could also then demand a virtual trial.

Ansari is lodged in a jail in Punjab. U.P. wants him transferred.

A Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan reserved

Political talks back on table: NSCN(IM)

It blames Nagaland Governor R.N. Ravi for creating 'confusion'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

The Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, or NSCN (IM), has said the "Indo-Naga political talks are back on the table" and progressing.

The extremist group, which had declared ceasefire with Indian security forces in 1997, blamed Nagaland Governor R.N. Ravi for creating "unnecessary confusion" and almost derailing the peace process with his "reckless statements".

In a statement issued on Wednesday evening, the publicity wing of the NSCN (IM) said that the Framework Agreement signed on August 3, 2015, had been "brought back to life" for re-

moving any misinterpretation and hastening the signing of the Naga solution agreement.

"It is needless to say that in many points, his [Mr. Ravi's] statements and conclusions reflected his role as Nagaland Governor and not as interlocutor. It is a matter of regret that his role as interlocutor is nothing less than disparaging and dismal," the NSCN (IM) said.

It said that the New Delhi's confirmation of the status of the talks as being in an advanced stage "is the ground reality" of the peace process. The outfit was leaving no stone unturned to safeguard the political identity of the Naga people.

The NSCN (IM) said Mr. Ravi's "misleading statement before the

whole nation by blatantly contradicting" with the Government of India was "unfortunate" as the sensitive political negotiations had been going on for more than two decades.

"In the matter of the Naga political issue, he should be cautious of every single word he utters lest his credibility is damned," the group said, adding that the political dialogue was handled by both parties toward an honourable and acceptable solution.

Mr. Ravi had been critical of the NSCN (IM) and other Naga groups.

He had said armed gangs were running Nagaland, questioning the sovereignty and integrity of the nation and challenging the State government.

INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

File No. B-IV-H-(H&D)-52/2020 Lr No.- 8812

Bhubaneswar 25th Feb. 2021

CANCELLATION

The bid invited vide Bid Identification No. CE (B) – 14 / 2020-21 is here by cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

Sd/-

Engineer-in-Chief (Buildings), Odisha

OIPR-34117/11/0023/2021

Healthier ice creams, from low-carb and sugar-free to whey-based, are still riding a wave of health-conscious demand triggered by the pandemic

Scooping up treats and whey

MEGHNA MAZUMDAR

It has been over six months, but co-founder of Good Fettle ice creams, Ayush Gupta, still sounds surprised while discussing the glut of new customers over a phone call from Mumbai. "In our minds, we had always seen our target customer base as those between the ages of 14 to 35 years. But from September last year, we have seen a high demand from customers aged 45-plus," he says.

Sales of Good Fettle, which sells low-sugar and non-sugar ice creams in 10 flavours in Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Bengaluru, have gone up by three times in that period, adds Ayush. He is not alone — Minus 30 co-founder Shivani Mirchandani also speaks of a spurt in demand for her vegan and sugar-free range. "We saw a huge increase as soon as the lockdown first began, and thankfully managed to get an operating license within 10 to 12 days," she says over call from Delhi, adding, "Our vegan and sugar-free range usually sells well, either outperforming or staying on a par with our regular gelatos. But we have received customer feedback asking for more flavours in that range, and have some under testing now."

Business post-lockdown has been good enough for Minus 30 to begin 2021 on a positive note, opening up a Mumbai office in January to deliver directly to consumers across the city. The company already has two manu-



Low on guilt
(Clockwise from far left)
Good Fettle's range of flavours;
(below) offerings by Minus 30
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ing that most of Good Fettle's marketing is digital, he surmises: "I am assuming that they [his new customer base] have been spending more time on Facebook than usual, and so noticed more of these desserts that are in keeping with their health concerns. People of that age group are less wary of online marketing gimmicks than millennials or Gen Z, and more likely to try out new things they see online."

His theory is backed up by the involvement levels that Good Fettle has noticed on its social media ads. "They don't explore much; don't bother downloading our menu or visiting our website," says Ayush, "They see the ad, hit the call button, and just place their order."

Click here for dessert
Convenience was another factor that helped boost sales, especially in the months when most consumers were either too scared or not allowed to step out of home. Ice cream, after all, is a thing of whims, cravings and fancies. Shivani says, "We offer same-day delivery in Delhi, and though we do state 'next-day delivery' for Chennai and Mumbai, those orders usually reach on the same day as well." Adds Ayush, "Now that small meetings and home get-togethers are happening again, we see a lot of orders for our 500 ml family packs. Many people who still prefer cooking their meals at home, don't mind ordering desserts from outside, especially if you can have cartons of ice cream delivered to your home within 30 or 40 minutes."



factoring units, one in Delhi and a second in Chennai where it entered in 2019, and also distributes to select retail stores in parts of Gujarat, Punjab and Chhattisgarh. "Our base is stronger in Delhi, but just because we have been here for longer," adds Shivani.

And then there is Get-A-Whey, the Mumbai-based whey ice cream brand that has steadily been making inroads into Tier I and Tier II cities for years, 2020's lockdown notwithstanding. Good Fettle too, plans to expand more in Bengaluru and Delhi this year, and also enter the Pune market. The brand already has an exclusive partnership with Cult.Fit, which operates 10 cloud kitchens within Bengaluru alone.

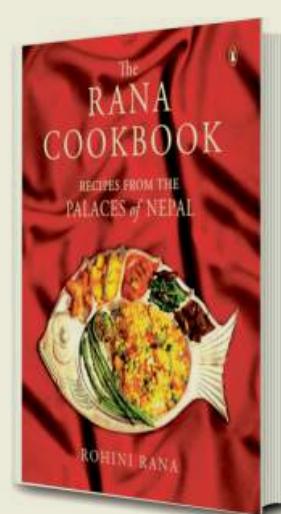
The spike in popularity of these health-based ice cream brands, however, cannot be chalked up to pandemic-triggered health consciousness alone. Ayush, for instance, is more inclined to thank the lockdowns and how they changed the social media behaviour of people above the age of 45. Stat-

Good Fettle plans to expand more in Bengaluru and Delhi this year, and also enter the Pune market



Regal REPASTS

Rohini Rana documents rare recipes from the royal kitchens of Nepal's erstwhile rulers



Redolent of royalty Rohini (below) has dedicated an entire section of the book to dishes made with the meat of wild boar
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

into sections: Rice, Mutton, Wild Game, Fish, Pickles, Herbs and Spices and more. Each section gets a little introductory note stating its place in the Rana cuisine. Main dishes and snacks made with the meat of the wild boar get one section, as it "occupied a very prestigious position in the Rana cuisine." In the section on fish, readers are informed that it was eaten only during the day, so that the bones could be detected easily.

Rohini describes the process of gathering these as "a labour of love. "My husband's nanny, Chimanya Champa Didi, taught me everything I know about Nepali cooking." She also got members of her extended family to contribute recipes. Since most people cooked from instinct and practice, rather than from written recipes, she had to keep asking them to measure the spices and ingredients. "I documented the recipes while the dish was being cooked, measuring each ingredient, trying the dish multiple times till it tasted just right," writes Rana.

Though she started work on this book quite early, Rohini took 25 years to publish it as family responsibilities took precedence. She feels it is important to preserve and document old recipes and practices before they are lost with the passing of the older generation of Rana ladies and retainers.

She even offers suggestions on adapting the cookery for today's methods and gadgets. However, she insists on authenticity, "since one is trying to retain old flavours." Deviations from the original would mean loss of the authentic flavour, she says.



R KRITHIKA

"I don't measure a thing when I cook... I just sprinkle and add stuff until I hear the spirit of my ancestors' whisper, 'That's enough, child.'"

This statement, which appears early in Rohini Rana's *The Rana Cookbook: Recipes from the Palaces of Nepal*, is not attributed, but resonates with someone who has grown up watching magic being turned out in the kitchen.

The book itself is redolent of another time: an opulent, grand era that does not exist anymore. Rohini, the wife of General Gaurav SJB Rana (former chief of army staff, Nepalese Army), recalls her "maternal uncle sitting in the verandah, ceremoniously cooking one dish for Sunday lunch, with a line of retainers waiting eagerly to hand him a ladle or some errant ingredient that had escaped his

notice. My mother and brother followed the same ritual and the execution would be full of excitement and fun."

Another fond memory is of the family sitting around the dining table, after finishing lunch and planning the dinner. She admits to still getting excited and very involved in planning menus for occasions or family gatherings".

Before diving into the recipes, Rohini gives the reader a quick peek into the history of Nepal and the Ranans in particular. She does not shy away from talking about problematic issues like the casteist nature of certain practices, or hunting. As she says, "It belonged to 'THAT' time and should remain 'THERE'." She also points out that the lifestyle of the Ranans was feudal and that both nobles and commoners hunted for the table.

The recipes are divided

MISMAS TARKARI (Mixed Vegetables)

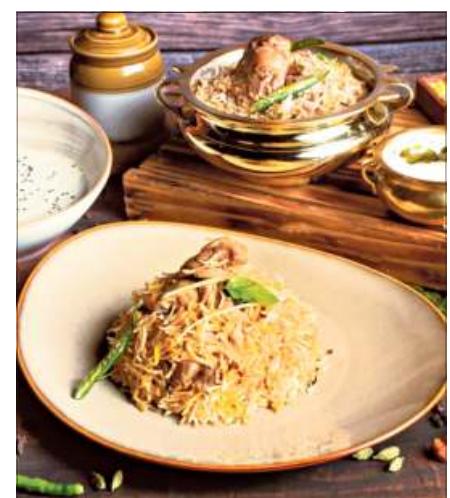
INGREDIENTS

- 4 potatoes
- 1 capsicum
- 3 green onions
- 7 small tomatoes
- 1 sliced onion
- 1 cup peas
- 6 sliced garlic cloves
- 2 sliced green chillies
- 1 heaped tsp garlic paste
- 1 heaped tsp ginger paste
- 1 heaped tsp onion paste
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tbsp mustard oil
- 1 tbsp ghee
- 1/4 tsp carom/thyme seeds
- 1/2 tsp cumin seeds
- 1/2 tsp jeera cumin powder
- 1/4 tsp coriander powder
- 1/2 tsp red chilli powder
- Salt to taste

METHOD

Cut the potatoes and capsicum into one-inch cubes. Cut a small cross on top of the tomatoes. Heat the mustard and vegetable oils till they smoke. Add the cumin and carom seeds and cook for a minute. Add the sliced garlic and onions and stir till they are golden brown. Add the potatoes, stir and cook covered till they are golden and cooked. Next, put in the green onions and, after two minutes, the tomatoes. Stir for two minutes and add the onion, garlic, ginger paste and the dry spices and salt. Cook for two minutes and add the capsicum and the peas and 1 1/2 cups water and simmer on a low fire for 3-5 minutes. Add the ghee and the green chillies and serve hot. If served immediately, the green peas retain their colour and the dish looks nice and colourful.

HORS D'OEUVRES



Eating with the eyes

Indian food has become the third-most popular cuisine on Instagram, with 8.589 million tags, according to a recent survey by the international food magazine *Chef's Pencil*. The survey, conducted in February, ranks Japanese food as the first (with 15.523 million tags), followed by Italian with 14.720 million tags.

Online surveys suggest that over 1,000 Instagram accounts run by chefs, media influencers and restaurants are making an impact on how food is consumed in India. The top food hashtags of 2020 were #Food, #FoodPorn, #Yummy, #Foodie, and #Delicious.

Instagram has become a leading source for food-related information, says the *Chef's Pencil* report by Caroline Williams.

"Instagram is the place to be to showcase food. As of February 2021, #Food alone accounted for 430 million Instagram posts. And restaurateurs recognise the power of the media, designing photo-worthy menus and even redecorating interiors for more pleasing photo backdrops," she writes.

The popularity of Japanese and Indian food reflects positively on Asian cuisine as a whole, says the report. "Whether Instagram is driving the trend or reflecting it, the scores show a clear preference for all foods Asian. Supermarkets are seeing this trend too, with Asian-inspired foods their highest growth category as people get tired of sriracha and pho and look for new flavours from the continent. Thai food has become the most popular international cuisine in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, US and South Africa," says Williams.

Asian cuisine is also perceived to be healthier than that of the West, especially among the younger generation. "Health-conscious millennials and Gen Zs love to take to Instagram to brag about their healthy food choices, which not only looks great, but also makes them look better and healthier," says the report.

That's food for thought, even if we are only eating with our eyes.



Shape of you

Breast cancer survivors all over India live a more comfortable life, thanks to the efforts of volunteers from the Saaisha India Foundation

RUTH DHANARAJ

No matter how well endowed they are, or even if they are not, most women are conscious of their breasts and the contour it adds to their silhouette. Women with breast cancer struggle with their sense of self, harrowed by a life-changing diagnosis, its treatment and ensuing side effects.

Whenever Jayshree Ratan was in the US, she would volunteer with the Knitted Knockers, donating the knockers (breast prosthetics) she had crocheted. "Back in India, when a relative underwent a mastectomy, I offered to make them for her. She was so pleased with them, she asked if we could do something like this here too. That chance ques-

tion is how we started out," says Mumbai-based Jayshree.

"A couple of us were crocheting and knitting friends got together and began working on knockers. We registered with the Knitted Knockers and the Saaisha India Foundation came into being in March 2018. Initially, we didn't know how many pairs were needed and finding people who required them was difficult."

Even as word about these knitted knockers began to spread, Jayshree began talking to doctors and patients to create awareness about them. "Surprisingly, not many doctors were aware of or handled this area of patient care. It was usually the radiologist or counsellor who instructed breast cancer patients in

post-surgery care."

A majority of doctors in India and their patients were unaware of skin-friendly breast prosthetics. The only options seemed to be silicon or foam padded bras. "The foam bras in Mumbai were not even washable, they could only be aired out – yet those were the only options even the doctors knew of," she says.

"We got our first break from Dr Selvi Radhakrishna of the Chennai Breast Centre. She approached us after seeing the site and took some knockers for her patients," says Jayshree. "Now, it works both ways for us. Sometimes I meet doctors and tell them about the product; sometimes when a person approaches me for knockers, I get her doc-

tors details and then connect with them."

Jayshree's husband Kumar Ratan, a former banker, is an integral part of the foundation's work. "This job can be quite tough. Meeting doctors, following up on orders and posting them, talking to support groups, the admin work... I wouldn't be able to do it without him," she says.

Voluntary in every sense

Today, the Saaisha India Foundation has around 230 volunteers in different parts of the country, with about 40% of them contributing on a regular basis. The work is voluntary in every sense of the word – volunteers buy their own mercerised cotton yarn, make knockers at their own pace and send them to Jayshree in Mumbai.

"Once the knockers get here, we send them directly to the patients free of cost via registered India Post. We don't use a courier service as they don't deliver to interior parts of the country."

"I personally interview volunteers because I want to make it very clear that this is a voluntary service without remuneration. Though patterns are available on the net, we provide training for the volunteers to ensure the knockers are up to standard."

Some volunteers train newcomers, handle social media accounts, maintain the database and generally pitch in wherever they can. Saaisha also has Indian expat volunteers in West Asia who bring back the knockers they have made to benefit the needy in India.

"Once a volunteer with Saaisha, always a volunteer. We have no targets and we encourage people to work on knockers whenever they can, wherever they can." Though the lockdown has seen Jayshree and Kumar take on a bulk of the work, there has been no lull in operations.

[Log on to www.saaishaindia.org](http://www.saaishaindia.org) for more details.



On the ball (Left) Afshan Ashiq with Bangalore United FC; and Anjali Shah ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Kicking off with hope

PRAVEEN SUDEVAN

Afshan Ashiq, 26, was among the many athletes and fitness influencers who interacted with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Fit India Dialogue last September. "You have done very well in football. Mostly, football fans say 'Bend it like Beckham', but now they will say 'Ace it like Afshan,'" the Prime Minister told her.

Afshan might not be the most successful women's footballer in

India. But her story is remarkable; it is even being made into a film, titled *Hope Solo*.

Afshan, who is from Jammu and Kashmir, had never played football until seven years ago. She wanted to be a cricketer. Mahendra Singh Dhoni is one of her favourite athletes – there is a similarity in their stories. Dhoni was a footballer who started cricket in school at his coach's suggestion. And, Afshan moved from cricket to football after her coach's persuasion in college.

"My family, especially my father, was not too happy with my decision," she says, "He feared I would not have a career

playing football." The fear was not unfounded. "When I started there were no girls who played football in J&K," she says.

But Afshan wanted to play the game at all costs. She could not find a girls' team to join. So, she scouted around in schools and colleges, putting together a team. She found no women coaches. So, she took coaching courses and became one. She found no challenge in Jammu and Kashmir, and wanted to move out. When her father declined, she ran away from home to Mumbai.

Anjali Shah, the owner of PIFA (Premier India Football Academy) Sports FC, picked Afshan to play in her team when she spotted her in a tryout. Afshan has not looked back since. Already a well-known name, she is currently on loan, playing for Bangalore United FC.

general manager of Tottenham Hotspur FC Women, journalist Faye D'Souza, sports lawyer Aahna Mehrotra, Dan Woods, the founder of World Freestyle Football, among others.

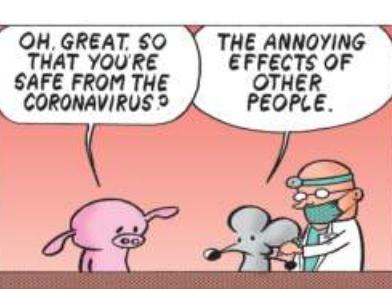
On March 6 (two days before Women's Day), IWFA will kick off its first event, Girls-3Goals Cup, a 10-team tournament in Bandra (Mumbai) to highlight societal obstacles women face. Players apart, coaches, referees, physiotherapists and other officials will be women. "Five of the 10 teams represent the underprivileged sections via NGOs," says Anjali. "Each team is aligned to a cause and will wear the message on their jerseys. The messages include 'Dowry kills Dignity', 'No doesn't mean Maybe', 'Beti is Best' and so on."

The event, she hopes, will be the beginning of a movement of women empowerment through football in the country.

POOCH CAFE



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



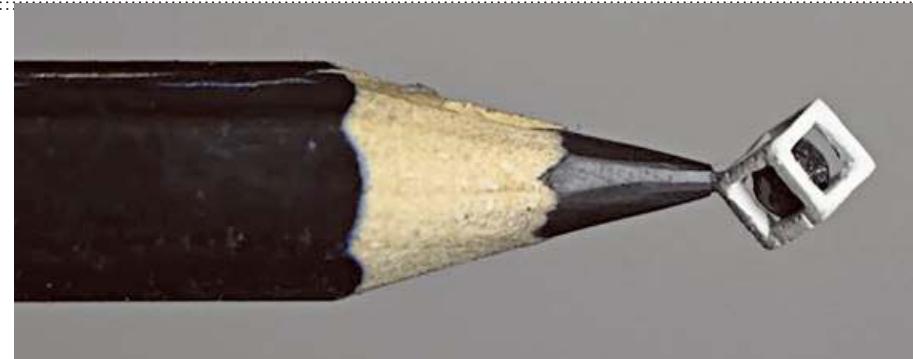
PEANUTS



TIGER



CALVIN AND HOBBES



Meet artist Rajkumar P who has been creating figurines, alphabets and mythological characters out of pencil lead

It's all in the LEAD



SUSAN JOE PHILIP

Rajkumar P was 19 when he first fashioned a heart out of a pencil lead. It took him 30 minutes to chisel the pencil. "I was doing my graduation in architecture and did it as part of a challenge given by my friends. I never thought it would come out well," explains the 26-year-old artist from Chennai.

Rajkumar works as an architect and now has around 450 micro art works to his credit. He has sculpted alphabets, DNA, World Cup,

snowflake, the dancing god Nataraja and many more on lead with diameters ranging from 0.5 mm to 4 mm with the help of a detailing knife. "I started with a pocket knife. When my friends saw my interest they gifted me a professional set. It is sharp and helps me make precise cuts," he explains.

It takes him anything between 15 minutes to six hours to finish a piece. "Alphabets are easy for me. But when it comes to creating figurines of people, it gets harder," he says. The first figurines he sculptured was of Buddha. "I failed in my first attempt and now this work is close to my heart. I will never sell it," he says.

Rajkumar says that pencil lead art is not very difficult if one has an interest in it. "All you need is patience. I had to discard more than 400 pencils in this process but that should not stop one from trying." Rajkumar sells most of his works through his Instagram page. "I also often get messages requesting me to teach. I have taken eight workshops in Chennai." Other than pencil lead art he also does paper cutting art. "I am new in it and still have a long way to go," he concludes.

Visit www.instagram.com/lead_leads_for_his_works

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Biden govt. to deepen global alliances

The U.S. will strengthen ties with India & compete with an 'assertive' China, says a strategy document

SIRIRAM LAKSHMAN

U.S. President Joe Biden released an interim government strategy document on Wednesday that called for America to re-engage with the world while strengthening itself at home. The document warns that democracies are under siege around the world, including in the U.S., and makes numerous references to strategic competition with an increasingly assertive China, which it said was the only competitor who could effectively challenge an open international system.

Invest in democracy

In addition to reaffirming its alliances with NATO, Australia, Japan and South Korea, Mr. Biden said in the document, 'Renewing America's Advantages: Interim National Security Strategic Guidance', that his administra-



Fresh steps: The document states that the U.S. will re-engage with the world while strengthening itself at home. ■ AP

tion would deepen its partnership with India and work alongside New Zealand, Singapore, Vietnam and other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members to advance its objectives. The document, which serves to guide the agendas of U.S. government departments and agencies, said America would recommit to its al-

liances and invest in its own democracy and economy.

"...Because our strength is multiplied when we combine efforts to address common challenges, share costs, and widen the circle of cooperation. As we do, we will recognise that our vital national interests compel the deepest connection to the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and the Western Hemisphere.

And we will be mindful of both our values and our interests as we engage partner nations," the document said. Critics have argued that the Trump administration prioritised interest – including in its relationship with India – over values.

Multilateral groups

The U.S. will also move to "earn back" its position of leadership in multilateral organisations to tackle shared challenges like climate change, as per the strategy.

"Because the United Nations and other international organisations, however imperfect, remain essential for advancing our interests, we will re-engage as a full participant and work to meet our financial obligations, in full and on time," Mr. Biden said. The U.S. and some other democracies (including India) have been concerned about Chinese government-in-

spired language finding its way into documents and resolutions of the UN and its agencies. Mr. Biden's interim strategy highlighted this concern, without naming China, and said the U.S. would not cede ground on it. "It is also critical that these institutions continue to reflect the universal values, aspirations, and norms that have underpinned the UN system since its founding 75 years ago, rather than an authoritarian agenda. In a world of deepening rivalry, we will not cede this vital terrain."

"The most effective way for America to outcompete a more assertive and authoritarian China over the long-term is to invest in our people, our economy, and our democracy," the document said, adding that the U.S. would support China's neighbours and trading partners to defend their rights.

Ahead of Floyd murder trial, U.S. House clears police reforms

The Bill was blocked in the Republican-led Senate last year

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

A sweeping police reform package was cleared by the U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday, five days before the trial of a white officer charged with murdering African-American George Floyd.

The Bill is named after Floyd, who died last May when then-Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin, pressed his knee on the victim's neck for over eight minutes.

The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act cleared the House last year but was blocked in the Republican-led Senate. With President Joe Biden in office since January, and the Senate narrowly controlled by Democrats, the Bill was

reintroduced last week and it was passed on Wednesday largely along party lines, 220 to 212.

Before the vote, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said the "legislation will not erase centuries of systemic racism and excessive policing in America", but it takes a "tremendous step" towards stopping the violence and improving relations between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

House Republican Debbie Lesko warned that the Bill "leaves police unequipped to deal with dangerous or life-threatening situations and limits the tools that police can use in the field".

Floyd's family heralded the Bill's House passage in a statement from their lawyers on Wednesday evening.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

The U.S. House of Representatives session was cancelled and security was high on Thursday after officials warned of an attack plot by QAnon conspiracists, two months after supporters of former President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol building.

Lawmakers and staff were advised to stay away after the FBI and Homeland Security Department warned that violent militia groups and QAnon followers had discussed attacking the legislature on or around March 4.

The FBI-Homeland Security bulletin said extremists are still motivated by unfounded Republican claims of widespread voter fraud in the November presidential election won by Democrat Joe Biden.

Also driving the possible

not on full lockdown, as the warnings said the threats were more "aspirational" than developed.

The Senate was to continue meeting and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was planning a press conference in the building.

In the morning hours of Thursday, there were no signs of significant protests outside the buildings of the sprawling Capitol complex.

Capitol Police and the National Guard were on high alert and the Capitol grounds are fenced off. In addition, there was no sign of the many thousands of Trump supporters who were in Washington during the January 6 breach. But security officials warned that the most violent groups have also spoken of using explosives, with Mr. Biden's yet-to-be-scheduled plan to address Congress a possible target.

Seven ethnic Hazaras killed in Afghanistan

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

JALALABAD

At least seven members of Afghanistan's persecuted Hazara ethnic group were brutally murdered in the country's restive east, officials said on Thursday, in the latest attack to target the largely Shiite minority.

The migrant Hazara workers had their hands bound behind their backs and were shot to death on Wednesday, according to Nangarhar provincial council member Ajmal Omar. Juma Gul Hemat, Nangarhar's provincial police chief, confirmed the killings and said four people were arrested as part of an ongoing investigation.

The incident occurred roughly 20 kilometres from Jalalabad, near the Pakistan border. No group has claimed responsibility for the murders.

Yemen's Houthis claim missile strike on oil plant

The group hit a Saudi Aramco facility

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

DUBAI

Yemen's Houthi rebels claimed a missile strike on Thursday on a plant of energy giant Saudi Aramco in the western Saudi Arabian city of Jiddah, amid an escalation in cross-border attacks on the country.

There was no immediate confirmation of an attack by the oil giant or the country's authorities.

Houthi spokesman Yahya Saree on Twitter claimed that the rebels hit an Aramco facility in Jiddah with a Quds-2 missile at dawn on Thursday in retaliation for a six-year military campaign led by Saudi Arabia in Yemen. The Iran-aligned rebels have struck Aramco fa-



The strike on the Jiddah plant comes amid escalating cross-border attacks.

cilities in the past, underscoring the vulnerability of Saudi Arabia's expensive oil infrastructure.

The rebels' latest claim comes after the U.S. on Tuesday imposed sanctions on two Houthi commanders, blaming them for civilian deaths and denouncing their ties with Iran.

Nepal govt. signs peace pact with rebel group

Govt. agrees to lift ban, drop cases

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KATHMANDU

The Nepal government signed a peace agreement on Thursday with a small communist rebel group that is widely feared because they were known for violent attacks, extortion and bombings.

While the government agreed to lift a ban on the group, release all their party members and supporters in jail and drop all legal cases against them, the rebel group agreed to give up all violence and resolve any issues through peaceful dialogue, the government said in a statement after the peace talks.

Details of the agreement would be made public at a

joint ceremony on Friday with Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli and the leader of the rebel group Netra Bikram Chand, who is better known by his guerrilla name Biplav. The rebels also call themselves the Nepal Communist Party.

Split from party

The group had split from the Maoist Communist party, which fought government troops between 1996 and 2006, when it gave up its armed revolt, agreed to United Nations-monitored peace talks and joined mainstream politics.

The Maoist fighting had left 17,000 people dead, hundreds missing and many more injured.

Pak. PM to seek trust vote tomorrow

In address to nation, Imran Khan lashes out at Opposition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday said he will seek a vote of confidence on March 6.

The trust vote was necessitated after the defeat of Finance Minister Abdul Hafeez Shaikh in hotly-contested Senate elections on Wednesday. Pakistan Democratic Movement candidate and former Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani defeated Mr. Shaikh, from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), giving a major blow to the Prime Minister who had personally campaigned for his Cabinet colleague.

In an address to the nation on Thursday, Mr. Khan lashed out at the Opposition



Imran Khan

alliance for "making a mockery of democracy" and said he will never let the corrupt off the hook.

"If I am out of the government, I will go to the people and bring them out to continue my struggle for the country. I will not let these traitors sit in peace. I call them traitors because they are looters," Mr. Khan said.

Mr. Khan also hit out at

the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and said it failed to stop corruption in polls. "You [the ECP] discredited democracy ... you damaged the morality of the nation by doing nothing to stop vote-buying." He added that the Opposition parties tried to blackmail him to get concessions in their corruption cases. "They used money to win Senate elections to put pressure on me in the parliament," he said.

Mr. Khan claimed that his party members were offered ₹200 crores to buy votes and 15-16 members of his party sold themselves. He said it was important to stop corruption at the top before expecting the people to be honest.

Regional police chief Malena Grann said the police were working closely with the Swedish intelligence service Sapo.

Afghan man behind Sweden attack: reports

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

STOCKHOLM

The suspect in the stabbing that left eight people injured in Sweden is a 22-year-old Afghan, who arrived in the Nordic country in 2018, media reported on Thursday.

The incident occurred in the city of Vetlanda on Wednesday.

Speaking to AFP, police said that details had emerged that led them to probe whether there was a terror motive behind the incident.

Regional police chief Malena Grann said the police were working closely with the Swedish intelligence service Sapo.

ANDHRA PRADESH POWER GENERATION CORPORATION LIMITED VIDYUTH SUDHA :: VIJAYAWADA TENDER NOTICE

NIT.No.610000757 APPGENCO invites Tenders for the work of "Dr.NTPPS - Providing Man Power for Routine Maintenance of Railway Siding and Marshalling Yard for the year 2021-22 at Dr.NTPPS" through A.P e-Procurement platform. Estimated value of work : Rs.2,02,92,007.94. Tender Schedule available Time & Date : From 05.03.2021 on 5:00 PM. Bid Submission Closing Date & Time : Up to 3:00 PM on 15.03.2021. For further details visit website : www.appgenco.gov.in or <https://etender.appgenco.gov.in>

ODISHA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED

(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)

Regd. Office: Janpath, Bhubaneswar-751022

CIN: U40102OR2004SGC07553

Notice Inviting Tenders

Bids invited for procurement of sub-station equipment and materials and station transformers as follows.

Sl. No.	Tender Notice No.	Item Description
1	CPC-15/2020-21	Different Ratings of Capacitive voltage Transformer and potential transformers
2	CPC-17/2020-21	Different types of insulators
3	CPC-22/2020-21	Different Ratings of Surge arresters
4	CPC-23/2020-21	Battery and Battery chargers
5	CPC-24/2020-21	AC/DC Panther and Zebra Conductor
6	CPC-31/2020-21	400kV,220kV,132kV & 33kV C.T.
7	CPC-32/2020-21	Numerical & electro-mechanical relays
8	CPC-34/2020-21	Hardware fitting and accessories
9	CPC-40/2020-21	Control & Power Cable
10	CPC-41/2020-21	250kVA 33/0.433kV Station Transformer
11	CPC-42/2020-21	245kV,145kV SF6 Circuit Breakers & 36kV VCB
12	CPC-43/2020-21	132kV & 33kV Isolators and spares

For details please visit: www.tenderwizard.com/OPTCL & www.optcl.co.in HPR-38/2020-21 CAD-1457

HPR-38/2020-21 CAD-1457

OIPR-04011/11/0115/2021

Sd/- CGM(CPC)

OIPR-04011/11/0115/2021

Sd/- Adminstrative Officer, NAAC

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION COUNCIL(NAAC)

(An Autonomous Institution of the University Grants Commission)

P.O.Box No. 1075, Nagarbhavi, Bengaluru-560027

No. NAAC/Admin/Admin matter/2021 Date: 05.03.2021

PUBLIC NOTICE

It has come to the notice of this office that many private companies/agencies and individuals have posted on many private websites and are contacting institutions offering their assistance for applying to NAAC's assessment and accreditation process. It is also learnt that they are trying to lure such institutions with claims that the institutions will secure better grades if they approach such agencies or individuals for assistance. It has also been learnt that some of these agencies/ individuals also claim to be well-versed and knowledgeable about the internal working of NAAC.

In this regard, NAAC would like to inform all HEIs that it is neither associated with such agencies/individuals nor does it encourage association with the same. It may be noted that NAAC's process is completely ICT driven mechanism and transparent.

NAAC is a quality organisation and any queries regarding Assessment and Accreditation can be directly addressed to it by the institution via help desk and its issue management system, which will be promptly answered and resolved. NAAC does not, in any form directly or indirectly, encourage such agencies or persons. It is hereby appealed to all HEI's to be aware of such agencies/ individuals and not to approach such institutions or persons.

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	50846	-1.16
US Dollar	72.83	-0.15
Gold	44372	-1.34
Brent oil	65.28	2.6

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	752.45	+2.60
Asian Paints	2417.10	+15.00
Axist Bank	736.80	-17.15
Bajaj Auto	3879.05	-22.05
Bajaj Finserv	10129.95	-65.65
Bajaj Finance	5485.90	-57.00
Bharti Airtel	539.60	-6.70
BPCL	463.90	-2.45
Britannia Ind	3501.90	+20.75
Cipla	806.75	-5.75
Coal India	152.05	-2.85
Divis Lab	3553.45	-11.70
Dr Reddys Lab	4575.05	+72.50
Eicher Motors	2593.20	-5.85
GAIL (India)	144.45	-2.50
Grasim Ind	1350.40	+32.30
HCL Tech.	958.00	-7.25
HDFC	2582.95	-71.95
HDFC Bank	1552.05	+34.80
HDFC Life	720.50	-7.00
Hero MotoCorp	3419.85	-4.50
Hindalco	349.45	-9.90
Hind Unilever	2196.90	+3.40
ICICI Bank	620.75	-11.35
IndusInd Bank	1091.95	-7.80
Infosys	1330.35	-13.20
Indian Oil Corp	101.45	-1.15
ITC	209.70	-0.25
JSW Steel	414.10	-14.05
Kotak Bank	1897.70	-1.80
L.T.	1462.60	-34.30
M&M	845.25	-6.80
Maruti Suzuki	7131.60	+6.90
Nestle India Ltd.	16661.80	-37.45
NTPC	110.80	-1.90
ONGC	112.70	-1.30
PowerGrid Corp	225.15	-2.35
Reliance Ind	2175.85	-26.25
SBI Life	915.90	-9.45
State Bank	395.65	-9.40
Shree Cement	28676.60	981.35
Sun Pharma	618.95	-5.40
Tata Motors	339.20	-9.30
Tata Steel	757.95	-19.20
TCS	3049.70	-9.40
Tech Mahindra	968.05	-7.95
Titan	1470.50	-4.10
UltraTech Cement	6775.55	275.05
UPL	615.45	1.85
Wipro	438.80	3.30

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	72.63	72.95
Euro	87.43	87.82
British Pound	101.30	101.76
Japanese Yen (100)	67.66	67.96
Chinese Yuan	11.23	11.28
Swiss Franc	78.58	78.93
Singapore Dollar	54.53	54.78
Canadian Dollar	57.42	57.67
Malaysian Ringgit	17.89	17.99

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Isuzu to raise prices of pick-up vehicles

CHENNAI Isuzu Motors India has announced an increase in prices of its commercial pick-up range with effect from April 1 due to the rising costs of production, transportation and logistics. The company said that the increase would be ₹1 lakh from the current ex-showroom price on D-Max regular Cab and D-Max S-Cab.

TVS Srichakra back to pre-Covid levels

CHENNAI TVS Srichakra Ltd., one of the flagship companies of the ₹8.5 billion TVS Group, has returned to its pre-Covid levels of production of more than three million tyres and tubes per month, said P. Madhavan, EVP - Sales & Marketing. On Thursday, the company announced the introduction of eight new high-performance tyres under the Sportq, Jumbo GT, Conta, Durapro and e-Durapro product series.

Laurus Lab promoters sell 70 lakh shares

HYDERABAD Laurus Labs founder and CEO Satyanarayana Chava on Thursday sold 52 lakh equity shares of the company in the stock market at an average price of ₹368.59 per share, aggregating to ₹191.67 crore. His wife Nagarani Chava, one of the promoters, sold 18 lakh shares at an average price of ₹366.91 per share, for an aggregate value of ₹66.04 crore.

Cognizant announces bonus, promotions

NEW DELHI IT services major Cognizant on Thursday said it is offering bonuses that are "substantially higher than 2019" and has promoted more than 24,000 employees across levels. The step, aimed at helping the firm retain attrition, will also see Cognizant moving to a quarterly promotion cycle for billable employees at the senior associate level and below, starting the June quarter of 2021. PTI

Fuel prices to drop if brought under GST, says SBI Research

'Centre, States could lose as little as ₹1 lakh crore in annual revenue'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI Bringing petrol and diesel under the GST regime could lead to a loss of as little as ₹1 lakh crore in annual revenue for the Centre and States while bringing pan-India prices of the fuels to ₹75 and ₹68 a litre, respectively, as per an SBI Research report.



Switch in time: Under GST, a litre of petrol could cost ₹75 and diesel ₹68, according to the report. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

taxes as they were a major source of tax revenue.

Assuming a GST rate of 28%, cess of ₹30 and ₹20 for a litre of petrol and diesel respectively (shared equally between the Centre and the States), crude oil price of ₹60 per barrel and a rupee-dollar exchange rate of 73, SBI Research has reckoned the

Centre and States would, together, face a revenue deviation from Budget estimates of only ₹1 lakh crore, or 0.4% of the GDP, in FY22.

The report has adjusted for a rise in consumption if the fuel prices are reduced and assumed a 10% growth in petrol and 15% rise in diesel consumption in 2021-22.

Tax revenue

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said last week that the Centre and States needed to discuss fuel

'PSU banks' bad-loan additions may moderate'

'Structural issues to cap stock returns'

REUTERS

BENGALURU Indian state-owned lenders are expected to see additions to bad loans moderate, but structural issues at the banks could cap returns on their stocks, Morgan Stanley said on Thursday.

Some of the country's state-owned banks have long struggled with a pile of bad loans, prompting the government to pump in more funds to shore up their balance sheets.

"Over the past few years, state-owned enterprise banks have seen significant capital infusion by the government, lower risk-weighted assets' density,

higher provisioning and some large recoveries," the brokerage said in a report, adding that as slippages moderate, fresh additions to bad loans, credit costs will also moderate over the next few years. The Nifty public sector bank index was down 0.4% on Thursday.

Exporters are avoiding dealing with Iran since payments are getting delayed for months," said a dealer with a global trading house.

Iran's rupee reserves in India's UCO and IDBI Bank, the two lenders authorised

REUTERS

MUMBAI/ DUBAI

Indian merchants have almost entirely stopped signing new export contracts with Iranian buyers for commodities such as rice, sugar and tea, due to caution about Tehran's dwindling rupee reserves with Indian banks, six industry officials told Reuters.

Exporters are avoiding dealing with Iran since payments are getting delayed for months," said a dealer with a global trading house.

Under U.S. sanctions, Tehran is unable to use U.S.

'Lower fiscal deficit likely for FY21'

The 2020-21 fiscal deficit may turn out to be lower than the revised estimate of 9.5% of GDP, at about 8.7%, and the government might lower its borrowings, SBI Research said.

This could help push down bond yields by the end of March, it added. Tax receipts had been bolstered by indirect taxes, including excise duty, SBI Research said.

U.S. sanctions end Tehran's oil sales to India impacting trade

REUTERS

MUMBAI/ DUBAI

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Wipro to buy U.K. consulting firm Capco for \$1.45 billion

Deal to bolster IT firm's presence in European BFSI sector

MINI TEJASWI

BENGALURU

Wipro Ltd. on Thursday announced that it had agreed to acquire Capco, a London-based technology consultancy, for \$1.45 billion. The deal, once completed, is expected to help the Indian IT services provider gain a firmer foothold and presence in the European market, especially in the financial services industry where the U.K. firm has an established clientele.



Thierry Delaporte

The Capco purchase, which will be the Indian company's biggest-ever acquisition, comes barely eight months after Wipro hired

Mr. Delaporte from Capgemini to help the company recover its erstwhile position among India's top three IT services providers.

Capco immediately fills Wipro's need to raise the profile of its financial services

es in Europe, observed Phil Fersht, chief technology analyst and CEO of U.K.-based HFS Research. "This is exactly the type of acquisition I expected Thierry to make and expect more to follow as he looks to attack the BFSI sector," he added.

Capco has more than 5,000 consultants and offers digital and technology services to banking and financial institutions across the U.S. Europe and Asia Pacific. The acquisition is expected to close by June 30, subject to regulatory approvals.

"Under Thierry, Wipro is taking an acquisitive posture and is likely to be adding more scale and capability through acquisitions over the next year or two," said Peter Bendor-Samuel, CEO, Everest Group, a Dallas-based research firm.

Rival telcos' moves may worsen VIL woes: report

It bought only 11.80 MHz in auction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The positioning of Vodafone Idea (VIL) – which picked up a modest 11.80 MHz spectrum – could potentially 'worsen' as rival telcos will be able to boost their coverage and capacity after buying additional radiowaves in the just-concluded auctions, according to a report.

VIL has bought spectrum to cover minor gaps in five circles for ₹1,993.4 crore, while Bharti Airtel shelled out nearly ₹18,700 crore for 355.45 MHz radio waves and Reliance Jio ₹57,123 crore for 488.35 MHz spectrum.

"VIL's positioning may possibly worsen as other op-

erators will be able to enhance their coverage and capacity further post acquisition of additional spectrum in the recent round," a note by Kotak Institutional Equities said.

The deft moves by Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio in shoring up their spectrum holding will allow the two telcos to enhance their user experience further, "compounding woes for VIL."

As per the Telecom Department, VIL has bought 5.8 MHz spectrum in 900-band and 6 MHz in the 1800-band. It has acquired spectrum in 900 band for ₹1,274 crore and 1800 band for ₹719 crore.

AM/NS, Odisha ink ₹50,000-cr. steel plant pact

STAFF REPORTER

BHUABANESWAR

The Odisha government on Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel (AM/NS) for setting up a 12 million tonne (MT) per annum capacity steel project at an estimated investment of ₹50,000 crore in Kendrapara district.

The MoU was signed in the presence of CM Naveen Patnaik and the executive chairman of ArcelorMittal Lakshmi N. Mittal.

ArcelorMittal had signed an MoU with the Odisha government 2006 for establishing a 12-MT integrated steel plant and a captive power plant, at an estimated cost of ₹40,000 crore.

The project, however,

WESTERN RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM

England's batting comes unstuck against quality spin yet again

Axar, Ashwin and Washington share eight, pacer Siraj gets main man Root, with only Stokes registering a half-century; replying to 205, India ends on 24 for one

ENGLAND IN INDIA

AMOL KARHADKAR
AHMEDABAD

The nature of the pitch changed drastically from last week's dust-bowl. The colour of the ball returned to conventional cherry red from experimental pink. The turnout was more modest than the 40,000-plus spectators who thronged Motera on the opening day of the third Test.

Despite the changing trends on all these counts, England's lacklustre show against quality spin remained a constant. In spite of winning the toss in the series-concluding fourth Test, the touring side folded for 205 on the opening day. The spin trio of R. Ashwin, Axar Patel and Washington Sundar shared eight wickets to put India in a commanding position at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

James Anderson – the lone specialist pacer in England's attack, with Stuart Broad making way for off-

spinner Dom Bess and Jofra Archer unavailable due to a recurrence of his elbow injury – trapped Shubman Gill lbw for a bloop in the opening over. He also bowled five maidens on the trot.

But Rohit Sharma and Cheteshwar Pujara saw the day out without further damage, India ending on 24 for one. If the home batsmen ensure, on day two, that they don't repeat the mistakes their counterparts made on Thursday, they will put their side in a strong position to seal a spot in the final of the World Test Championship.

England did not fare well against the spin onslaught. If Axar had struck with his first ball after being introduced into the attack last week, it took the lanky left-arm spinner two deliveries to make inroads this time around, after Virat Kohli threw the ball to him at the start of the sixth over. Dom Sibley yet again had no answers to a straight one that took the inside edge and crashed into the stumps.



Breaking through: Axar struck in his very first over, removing Sibley with a straighter one. ■ AFP & SPORTZPICS/BCCI

In his next over, Axar beat Zak Crawley in flight, and it seemed to have stabilised the innings, Siraj struck, soon after lunch, juggling one back into Bairstow to win another lbw decision. The spinners then took over, with Washington finding Stokes in no-man's land in the last half

seemed to have stabilised the innings, Siraj struck, soon after lunch, juggling one back into Bairstow to win another lbw decision. The spinners then took over, with Washington finding Stokes in no-man's land in the last half

hour of the second session.

Before committing the fatal error, Stokes not only raised his fifty but also played some delightful strokes. While the left-handed batsman welcomed Ashwin into the attack with a six

Just when the partnership

had bowed away-going deliveries to Root in my previous over. When I was coming for the fresh over, I decided to try an incoming ball. It came out as I planned and I was able to hit Root's pads. It gave me a lot of joy."

Soon after lunch, Siraj

broke the partnership between Ben Stokes and Bairstow by getting a quick delivery to move in a little bit and rap the latter's pads.

"I had seen some of his videos and gathered that he is troubled by incoming balls. So when I got a chance to bowl to him after the inter-

val, I decided to try that. The ball tailed in as planned and I had the wicket," he said.

Besides earning the

prized scalps, Siraj was also

involved in a verbal duel

with Stokes after a well-di-

rected bouncer in the morn-

ing session.

The bouncer was followed

by Stokes retorting with

pleasantries, but Siraj tried

his best to downplay the

exchange.

"Stokes exchanged few

words with me but it hap-

pens on the ground. I told

[Virat] Kohli and he took

care of the issue."

"I think we will look back

on that and be disappointed

by some of the batting. We

are more than capable of

scoring at least 300 on a

wicket like that out here. [It

is] frustrating but we can't

dwell on it too much and it

was nice to get a wicket at

the end of the day," he said.

When asked if it was hard

to shake off the impact of the

SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND – 1ST INNINGS

Zak Crawley c Siraj b Axar 9 (30b, 1x4), Dom Sibley b Axar 2 (8b), Jonny Bairstow lbw b Siraj 28 (67b, 6x4), Joe Root lbw b Siraj 5 (9b, 1x4), Ben Stokes lbw b Washington 55 (121b, 6x4, 2x6), Ollie Pope c Gill b Ashwin 29 (87b, 2x4), Dan Lawrence st. Pant b Axar 46 (74b, 8x4), Ben Foakes c Rahane b Ashwin 1 (72b), Dom Bess lbw b Axar 3 (16b), Jack Leach lbw b Ashwin 7 (17b, 1x4), James Anderson (not out) 10 (15b, 1x4); Extras (b-3, lb-5, nb-1, w-1); Total: Total (in 75.5 overs): 205.

188 (Lawrence, 70.1), 9-189 (Bess, 70.4).

INDIA BOWLING

Ishant 9-2-23-0, Siraj 14-2-45-2, Axar 26-7-68-4, Ashwin 19.5-4-47-3, Washington 7-1-14-1.

INDIA – 1ST INNINGS

Shubman Gill lbw b Anderson 0 (3b), Rohit Sharma (batting) 8 (34b, 1x4), Cheteshwar Pujara (batting) 15 (36b, 1x4); Extras (nb-1); Total (for one wkt. in 12 overs): 24.

FALL OF WICKET

1-O (Gill, 0.3).

ENGLAND BOWLING

Anderson 5-5-0-1, Stokes 2-1-4-0, Leach 4-0-16-0, Bess 1-0-4-0.

Toss: England.

India would bat on the opening day itself. Axar and Ashwin shared the remaining five wickets, as England crossed the 200-run mark before being dismissed about 75 minutes into the evening session.

Siraj delighted with Root 'set-up'

AMOL KARHADKAR
AHMEDABAD

He may have been playing only his fifth Test, but with the rich experience at domestic and India-A level over the last five years, Mohammed Siraj has appeared a mature pacer ever since his debut in Australia.

This maturity – and no little skill – was amply evident on Thursday in the manner in which he dismissed Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow.

Siraj enjoyed both wickets, especially that of the England captain. "I thought it was a nice set-up," he said. "I

had bowled away-going deliveries to Root in my previous over. When I was coming for the fresh over, I decided to try an incoming ball. It came out as I planned and I was able to hit Root's pads. It gave me a lot of joy."

Soon after lunch, Siraj broke the partnership between Ben Stokes and Bairstow by getting a quick delivery to move in a little bit and rap the latter's pads.

"I had seen some of his videos and gathered that he is troubled by incoming balls. So when I got a chance to bowl to him after the inter-

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the end of the day," he said.

When asked if it was hard

to shake off the impact of the

'Disappointed not to still be batting'

S. DIPAK RAGAV

Ben Stokes conceded

that England was dis-

appointed not to put up

a better batting display

on day one, after being bowled out for 205.

"I think we will look back

on that and be disappointed

by some of the batting. We

are more than capable of

scoring at least 300 on a

wicket like that out here. [It

is] frustrating but we can't

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Stokes... a fighting knock. ■ AFP

Sania & Klepac fall short

SPORTS BUREAU

DOHA

Sania Mirza and Andreja Klepac of Slovenia lost to second seeds Nicole Melichar and Demi Schuur 7-5, 2-6, [10-5] in the doubles semifinals of the WTA 500 Qatar Total Open here on Thursday.

Other results: \$156,240 Challenger, Nur Sultan, Kazakhstan; First round: Nathaniel Pasha & Max Schnur (USA) bt Frederico Ferreira Silva (Por) & Ramkumar Ramanathan 6-4, 6-3; Grigoriy Lomakin (Kaz) & Vladislav Manafov (Ukr) w/o Blaz Rola (Slo) & Srimant Balaji.

\$36,680 Challenger, St. Petersburg, Russia; Quarterfinals: Benjamin Hassan (Ger) & Alexey Vatutin (Rus) bt Benjamin Lock (Zim) & Arjun Kadhe 7-5, 7-5.

\$15,000 ITF men, Sharjah El Sheikh: Second round: Sasi-kumar Mukund bt Gabriele Bosio (Ita) 6-0, 6-2.

Pollard's 666666 ruins hat-trick man Dananjaya's night



SIX SIXES IN AN OVER

INTERNATIONAL CRICKET: ODIs

BATSMAN	BOWLER	MATCH	VENUE	YEAR
Herschelle Gibbs	Daan van Bunge	South Africa v Netherlands	St. Kitts	2007

T20Is

BATSMAN	BOWLER	MATCH	VENUE	YEAR
Yuvraj Singh	Stuart Broad	India v England	Durban	2007

Kieron Pollard	Akila Dananjaya	West Indies v Sri Lanka	Antigua	2021
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DOMESTIC CRICKET: FIRST CLASS

BATSMAN	BOWLER	MATCH	VENUE	YEAR
Sir Garfield Sobers	Malcolm Nash	Nottinghamshire v Glamorgan	Swansea	1968

Ravi Shastri	Tilak Raj	Bombay v Baroda	Bombay	1985
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T20s

BATSMAN	BOWLER	MATCH</th
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TV PICKS

India vs England: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.
ISL: Semifinal, Star Sports 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.
ATP 250: Argentina Open, Eurosport (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF

Harden leads Nets past Houston

LOS ANGELES
James Harden's triple-double led Brooklyn Nets to a 123-114 victory over Houston Rockets on Wednesday. T.J. McConnell was the star in Pacers' 114-111 victory over the Cavaliers.
The results: Magic 112 lost to Hawks 115; Mavericks 87 bt Thunder 78; Trail Blazers 108 bt Warriors 106; Kings 123 bt Lakers 120; Timberwolves 102 lost to Hornets 135; Pelicans 124 lost to Bulls 128; Raptors 105 lost to Pistons 129; Cavaliers 111 lost to Pacers 114; 76ers 131 bt Jazz 123 (OT); Rockets 114 lost to Nets 132.

Bavuma is limited-overs skipper, Elgar Test captain

JOHANNESBURG
Cricket South Africa on Thursday appointed Temba Bavuma, *in pic*, and Dean Elgar as the captains for limited-overs and Tests respectively. South Africa will tour Ireland in July for three ODIs and as many as T20Is. PTI

Stirring fightback takes Barca into Copa final

MADRID
Barcelona needed extra-time to reach the Copa del Rey final on Wednesday with a 3-2 aggregate win over Sevilla.
The result: Barcelona 3 (Dembele 12, Pique 90+4; Braithwaite 95) bt Sevilla 0; Barcelona advances 3-2 on aggregate. AFP

India ends German tour with another loss

DUSSELDORF
The Indian women's hockey team ended its tour of Germany with yet another defeat, going down 2-1 in the fourth and final match here on Thursday. Naomi Heyn (29th) Charlotte Stabenhorst (37th) scored for the world number three side before Laremsmaai (51st) pulled one back for the visitors late in the game. PTI

Nagal stuns Garin, enters quarters

The upset of the World No. 22 is the biggest singles win of the Indian's career

ARGENTINA OPEN

N. SUDARSHAN
BENGALURU

India's Sumit Nagal registered the biggest singles win of his career, beating World No. 22 and clay specialist Cristian Garin 6-4, 6-3, to enter the last eight of the Argentina Open ATP 250 tournament in Buenos Aires

In what will be his maiden quarterfinal appearance at the ATP Tour level, Nagal will play Spain's Albert Ramos-Vinolas.

"The win means a lot," Nagal told *The Hindu* on Thursday, after the win over



Superb show: Sumit Nagal was at his best as he took out second-seeded Cristian Garin in straight sets. ■ ARGENTINAOPENTENNIS.COM

Garin, the tournament's second seed.

"I am very happy that I

am getting to play a lot of matches. Playing against my friend Garin was fun today."

"I played a good match, followed my gameplan and came out on top."

"I am enjoying being back on clay and looking forward for my next match."

Clay-lover

Ramos-Vinolas is another clay-lover and is currently ranked 46 in the world, 104 places above Nagal.

The Spaniard's only two ATP Tour titles have both come on the dirt and he also has to his name an appearance in the final of the ATP Monte Carlo Masters in 2017, which he lost to Rafael Nadal.

Jennifer stuns top seed Riya

Humera eases past Sowjanya; Rutuja clinical against Sravya

ITF WOMEN

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Jennifer Luikham beat the top seed and India No. 2 Riya Bhatia 6-1, 1-6, 6-3 with a gutsy show in the pre-quarterfinals of the \$15,000 ITF women's tennis here on Thursday.

A trainee of coach Aditya Sachdeva, the 21-year-old Jennifer plays firebrand tennis, attacking the ball all the time. Together with her high levels of physical fitness and athleticism, Jennifer proved a thorn in the flesh for Riya.

In the quarterfinals, Jennifer will play seventh seed Pia Lovric of Slovenia.

Humera Baharmus beat the sixth seed and National champion Sowjanya Bavisetti for the loss of just three games. She will challenge the fourth seed Zeel Desai.

Rutuja Bhosale was clinical in her victory over the versatile Sravya Shivani.

She will play Adrienn Nagy of Hungary who ousted Prerna Bhambri for the loss



Big scalp: Humera Baharmus shocked Sowjanya Bavisetti on Thursday. ■ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

of two games.

The results: Singles: Pre-quar-

terinals: Jennifer Luikham bt Riya Bhatia 6-1, 1-6, 6-3; Pia Lovric (Slo) bt Elena Jamshidi (Den) 6-1, 6-2; Zeel Desai bt Ashmita Eswaramurthy 6-1, 6-2; Humera Baharmus bt Sowjanya Bavisetti 6-0, 6-3; Adrienn Nagy (Hung) bt Prerna Bhambri 6-2, 6-0; Rutuja Bhosale bt Sravya Shivani 6-2, 6-2; Irina Khromacheva (Rus) bt Farhat Aleen Qamar 6-0, 6-3; Miriam Bianca Bulgari (Rou) bt

Sai Samitha 6-2, 6-2.

Doubles: Quarterfinals: Mirian

Bianca Bulgari (Rou) & Irina Khromacheva (Rus) bt Nikolka Breckova & Lucie Petruzelova (Cze) 6-4, 6-4; Pia Lovric (Slo) & Adrienn Nagy (Hung) bt Sai Samitha & Soha Sadiq 6-0, 6-1; Sowjanya Bavisetti & Prarthana Thombare bt Sharmada Balu & Prerna Bhambri 6-3, 6-4; Yubarani Banerjee & Vaidehi Chaudhari bt Jennifer Luikham & Mihiika Yadav 4-6, 6-3, [10-5].

United and Leicester stumble again

EURO LEAGUES

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON

Manchester United and Leicester stumbling again in the Premier League on Wednesday.

United was held goalless at Crystal Palace while, Leicester escaped with a 1-1 draw at Burnley.

AC Milan's Franck Kessie scored a penalty with the last kick of the game to rescue a 1-1 draw against Udinese on Wednesday, a result that hands Inter Milan a big opportunity to gain ground in the Serie A title race.

The results: Premier League:

Burnley 1 (Vydra 4) drew with Leicester 1 (Iheanacho 34); Sheffield United 1 (McGoldrick 30) bt Aston Villa 0; Crystal Palace 0 drew with Manchester United 0.

Serie A: Sassuolo 3 (Maksimovic 36-og, Berardi 45+1-pen, Caputo 90+5-pen) drew with Napoli 3 (Zielinski 38, Di Lorenzo 72, Insigne 90-pen).

Good day for Maruri sisters

SPORTS BUREAU
CHANDIGARH

Eighth seed Suhitha Maruri beat top seed Sarah Dev 6-3, 6-2 to make the final of the ITF grade-4 junior tennis on Thursday. In the final, Suhitha will play her sister and third seed Reshma. The Maruri sisters also made the doubles final.

The results: (semifinals):

Boys: Nishant Dabas bt Dhruv Tangri 6-0, 6-0; Aman Dahiya bt Yuvan Nandal 6-2, 6-0.

Doubles: Dabas & Chirag Duhhan bt Ayush Bhat & Anargha Ganguly 6-3, 6-2; Bushan Haobam & Nandal bt Albert Segura Onichtchenko (Esp) & Daksh Agarwal 6-4, 7-5.

Girls: Suhitha Maruri bt Sarah Dev 6-3, 6-2; Reshma Maruri bt Riya Uboveja 6-2, 6-4.

Doubles: Flo Helsen & Mirtha Moens (Bel) bt Sarah Dev & Riya Uboveja 6-2, 6-4; Reshma & Suhitha bt Hetveet Chaudhari & Pavitra Parikh 4-6, 6-3, [10-5].

Sharath's loss ends India's challenge

WTT CONTENDER

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

World No 7 Yun-Ji Lun defeated Sharath Kamal 11-6, 11-4, 11-8 in the second round to end India's campaign in the World Table Tennis Contender event in Doha on Thursday.

"I just could not get any rhythm today and he simply out-hit me," was Sharath's candid admission to *The Hindu* after the match against the Chinese Taipei No 1.

"The only chance I got to get close came in the third game but he was simply superior today."

The day also saw an injured G. Sathiyan and Sutirtha Mukherjee give a walkover in the mixed doubles first round to the French

pair Emmanuel Lebesson and Jia Nan Yuan.

Late on Wednesday, Sathyian and Sharath lost the men's doubles first round to the Argentine pair of Horacio Cifuentes and Gaston Alvarado 14-12, 11-7, 11-3.

After the match Sathyian said, "I just could not get my shots in because of an injured shoulder."

"I suffered the injury in the recent National championship final (against Sharath Kamal). I took injections and painkillers but they did not help."

To recover faster for the bigger matches ahead, including the Olympic qualifiers, Sathyian was contemplating pulling out from the men's doubles and mixed doubles events of the WTT Star Contender, beginning on Friday.

Indian women's trap team in final

KAMESH SRINIVASAN

NEW DELHI

The Indian women's trap team of Manisha Keer, Rajeshwari Kumari and Kirti Gupta qualified for the gold medal match against top-seeded Russia in the Shotgun World Cup in Cairo, Egypt, on Thursday.

With Manisha shooting 158 in seven rounds and the other two contributing 143 each, the Indian trio had a total of 444. Russia topped with 463, while Egypt and Kazakhstan made it to the bronze medal match.

The Indian men's team, with an aggregate of 469, was placed sixth. Prithviraj Tondaiman (158), Kynan Chennai (156) and Lakshay Sheoran (155) missed the chance to battle it out for a medal by seven points.

MARUTI SUZUKI ARENA

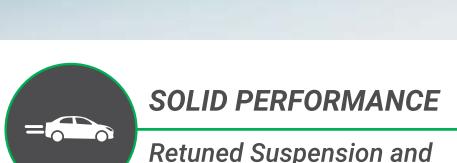
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