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PM gets emotional while bidding farewell to Ghulam Nabi Azad

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Cairn CEO expected to meet Nirmala Sitharaman next week

Page 12



Anderson, Leach bowl England to big win in first Test

Page 13



Nadal, Barty and Kenin advance at Australian Open; Nagal exits

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## NEARBY



Bill extending protection to illegal colonies passed

NEW DELHI  
The Rajya Sabha on Tuesday passed the National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which extends protection from punitive action to certain kinds of unauthorised constructions by three years. The Bill replaced an ordinance brought by the government in December 2020.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

## 197 still missing as Chamoli toll touches 32

Efforts on to save 35 labourers in NTPC dam tunnel

DEVESHK PANDEY  
VIJAYITA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

The operation to rescue about 35 workers trapped inside a 2.5 km NTPC hydel project tunnel in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand continued on Tuesday, while the death toll in the aftermath of what Union Home Minister Amit Shah described in Parliament as a snow avalanche rose to 32.

More than 197 people, including the trapped labourers, are still missing.

"It is observed from the satellite data (Planet Lab) of February 7, in the catchment of the Rishi Ganga river – at the terminus of the glacier at an altitude of 5,600 m – a landslide triggered a snow avalanche, covering approximately 14 sq km area, and



Digging in: ITBP personnel flashing torches inside a NTPC hydel project tunnel, where around 35 workers are trapped, in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand on Tuesday. ■ AP

caused a flash flood in the downstream of Rishi Ganga river," Mr. Shah said.

He said the avalanche led to a sudden rise in the water level that triggered a flash flood, destroying the functional Rishi Ganga small hydro project of 13.2 MW and

also affecting the under construction 520 MW NTPC hydro-power project, downstream in Tapovan on the Dhauliganga river.

While 12 persons were rescued by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police from a small tunnel at the NTPC site, 15

were saved at the Rishi Ganga project on Sunday.

Four more bodies were found close to the Rishi Ganga site on Tuesday morning. Only eight of the 32 victims have been identified so far.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Families await reunion with loved ones

Camping at Tapovan since the glacier tragedy struck on Sunday, the hope of being reunited with their kin brings them every morning to the banks of the Dhauliganga, where intense efforts are under way to trace those trapped. ■ PAGE 9

'Crashing rock mass may have caused floods'

A rock mass, weakened from years of freezing and thawing, may have led to a weak zone, that resulted in the flash floods in Chamoli, initial observations by scientists of the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology suggest. ■ PAGE 9

## SC relief from arrest for Tharoor, senior journalists

They are facing charges of sedition



Section 124A IPC (sedition) has been added for their tweets [in the FIRs]... Protect them  
KAPIL SIBAL, Senior Advocate



What wrong has been committed by them? No religious sentiments were hurt. The news was corrected  
MUKUL ROHATGI, Senior Advocate



Their tweets had a horrendous effect. They have a following in lakhs  
TUSHAR MEHTA, Solicitor General

earlier decisions to protect Republic TV chief Arnab Goswami from arrest in a separate case.

"What wrong has been committed by them? No religious sentiments were hurt. The news was corrected," senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, for Mr. Jose, submitted during the virtual hearing.

But Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the tweets had a "horrendous effect".

"They have followings in lakhs," said Mr. Mehta, appearing for the Delhi police.

Initially, during the hearing, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for Mr. Tharoor and some other petitioners, insisted on the court making it clear that there would be no coercive action against the petitioners.

"Section 124A IPC (Sedition) has been added for their tweets [in the FIRs]... Protect them during the period of the notice," Mr. Sibal urged the court.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Frequent raider



Target missed: A vet, trying to tranquilise elephant Shankar with a dart, missed the target at Nayakansolai, near Cherambadi in Tamil Nadu, late on Tuesday. The search for the elephant, which escaped into the forest, continues. ■ SATHYAMOORTHY M.

## Punjabi actor-activist Deep Sidhu arrested over Red Fort vandalism

Delhi court remands him in police custody for seven days

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Punjabi actor-activist Deep Sidhu, who was wanted in the Red Fort violence case, was arrested by the Delhi police on Tuesday. He was later produced in court and remanded in police custody for seven days.

Metroplitan magistrate Prigya Gupta gave the order after the police said Mr. Sidhu was one of the main instigators of the violence on



wever, claimed that his client had nothing to do with the violence, and he was at the wrong place at the wrong time.

**Instigated mob?** The police said Mr. Sidhu had instigated the mob to breach barricades with tractors and deviate from the approved tractor rally route.

On his way to the 'maha-panchayat', 72-year-old farmer Ujaghar Singh told *The*

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## ED searches offices of digital news platform

Homes of staff were also searched

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday conducted searches on the premises of digital news platform *Newclick* and several other places in connection with alleged receipt of about ₹30 crore from overseas in the past three years, said a senior agency official.

"Truth shall prevail. We have full faith in the legal system," said a brief statement by *Newclick* in the evening, adding that the raids were still under way and a full statement would be released only after the process was over.

Earlier, speaking briefly

on the issue to some reporters, *Newclick* Editor Pranjal, accompanied by two ED officials, said: "There has been an ongoing raid since morning. We were shown a notice. Right now, our documents are being checked. We are co-operating and will continue to co-operate."

The ED official said: "The searches have been carried out under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, based on an FIR registered by the Delhi police a few months ago. We have so far found evidence showing receipt of about ₹30 crore from abroad."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## In Kurukshetra, farmers resolve to continue agitation

Attempts being made to divide farmers on basis of region and religion, says BKU leader Rakesh Tikait

VIKAS VASUDEV  
GUMTHALA GARHU

With a resolve to not let the agitation against the Centre's farm laws lose its steam, scores of farmers, including women, elderly and youth, on Tuesday gathered at a 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' at Haryana's Gumthala Garhu village in Kurukshetra district. The farmers reiterated that they would continue their protests, be it at the borders of Delhi or across the State.

On his way to the 'maha-panchayat', 72-year-old farmer Ujaghar Singh told *The*

*Hindu* that the government at the Centre was "power drunk", but the unity of farmers would demolish their arrogance.

"We are going to the 'ma-

panchayat' to show our unity. We will not step back until the farm laws are repealed," said Mr. Singh, who owns two acres in Thol village.

Bharatiya Kisan Union

leader Rakesh Tikait, addressing the gathering, criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's jibe of "aandolan jevi".

"They are saying in Parliament that they [protesters] are *parjeevi*. I want to ask them was Bhagat Singh, who laid his life for the country, a *parjeevi*? Around 150 farmers have so far died during the ongoing agitation, were they *parjeevi*?" he asked.

Mr. Tikait said attempts were being made to divide farmers on the basis of region and religions.

"They will attempt to di-

vide you on Punjab-Haryana lines, as Sikh and non-Sikh, Hindus and Muslims. We have to be careful. When we stay united, I assure you we will win the battle," he said, adding that the agitation was nationwide and not limited to just Punjab or Haryana.

Mr. Tikait said all the 40 farmer unions spearheading the agitation were united and their leaders would together tour the country in the coming days to expose the government's "wrong" policies.

MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGES 2, 4, 5 & 9

## Army raises a specialist unit to 'sniff out' COVID-19

Casper and Jaya are the first dogs trained to detect the viral infection among personnel

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

Since November last, Casper and Jaya have been deployed in Chandigarh and Delhi to screen samples and detect COVID-19 among soldiers posted to forward areas of the Northern Command. The two are 'specialist' military dogs, Casper, a two-year-old male Cocker Spaniel, and Jaya, a one-year-old female Chippipari. They are the first two canines trained to detect COVID-19 cases from sweat and urine samples.

"From the trials and operational deployment, it has been inferred that COVID-19 volatile metabolic biomarkers are within the



On the scent: Casper, centre, and Jaya, right, have been deployed to detect COVID-19 among soldiers. ■ DINAKAR PERI

threshold limit of olfactory detection capability of trained dogs and can help in quick and real time detection of disease," said Lt. Col. Surender Saini, instructor at the Army's Remount Veterinary Corps (RVC), Meerut. They can detect COVID-19 with 95% accuracy, he said.

"They are not medically accepted. They are used to screen large numbers," Lt. Col. Saini said.

Samples identified as positive by the dogs are confirmed through the RT-PCR test.

Eight more military dogs are now being trained, and they will be equipped by March. These include two

Chippiparis, two Cocker Spaniels and four Labradors. From among the group in the Army, a foreign breed and a desi breed were selected first.

The sensitivity and specificity of results from the dogs based on screening of 279 urine and 267 sweat

samples during trials were found to be very high, an officer said.

The two dogs underwent 12 to 16 weeks of training with exposure to positive and negative samples. They were deployed on November 22 last at a transit camp in Delhi and a total of 806 transients were screened. They were also deployed in Chandigarh, where they screened over 300 samples. Of the over 3,800 samples screened, 22 positive cases were detected.

A dog can screen approximately 100 samples in an hour with a rest period of five minutes after every 15 minutes.

No new COVID-19 death reported in the Capital after nine months

100 new virus cases ; 12,717 beneficiaries get vaccine jab

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

For the first time in almost nine months, no new COVID-19-related death was reported in the national capital over 24 hours, a health bulletin issued by the Delhi government said on Tuesday.

The last time the city witnessed no COVID-19 death was on May 11, 2020.

The death toll stands at 10,882.

"Today, no death has been reported due to COVID infection. Delhi's collective will is gradually winning over the infection. I congratulate the people of Delhi for taking proper precautions and our healthcare and front-line

workers who have fought this battle tooth and nail," Health Minister Satyendar Jain said in a tweet.

Congratulating the people of Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted, "Not a single death occurred in Delhi due to corona. Congratulations to the people of Delhi. Corona cases have also reduced, the vaccine campaign is going fast. Delhites fought very hard against Corona. We still have to take complete precautions."

Hundred new COVID-19 cases were reported over 24 hours, taking the tally to 6,36,260. A total of 56,410 tests were conducted in the past 24 hours. There are

"A special drive was conducted for the police force and a large number of personnel got the vaccine jab," the spokesperson said.

CM YK

M ND-NDE

## 3 farmers die at protest sites

Two deaths attributed to natural causes, one due to injury

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM

Three farmers died at Tikri and Singhu border protest sites over the past 24 hours.

In two cases, deaths were caused due to natural reasons, however, the third person succumbed to injuries sustained in an accident this past week.

Nineteen farmers have died at the Singhu border over the past two months for various reasons during the ongoing agitation, the police said.

Harinder Singh, 39, a resident of Haryana's Panipat, and Darshan Singh, 71, from Punjab died at the Singhu border on Tuesday.

### Cardiac arrest

Harinder went to sleep after the evening meals on Monday, but did not wake up on Tuesday morning.

The fellow farmers called a doctor who declared him dead. Kundli Station House Officer, Inspector Ravi Kumar, said the death was



Family members of farmers participating in the protest at the Singhu border on Tuesday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

caused due to cardiac arrest. Harinder, survived by his wife and two children, had been present at the site for the past 12 days.

Darshan Singh from Punjab's Moga was taken to Civil Hospital in the evening after he complained of uneasiness. He died during treatment at 4.30 p.m.

A resident of Bensi village in Rohtak, Deepak had gone to supply fuel wood to the agitating farmers at Tikri border on February 5.

He accidentally slipped from the trolley while unloading the wood and sustained injuries on the neck.

seemed to have been caused due to natural reason.

Deepak Nehra, 27, died at Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences at Rohtak on Monday after two days of treatment.

A resident of Bensi village in Rohtak, Deepak had gone to supply fuel wood to the agitating farmers at Tikri border on February 5.

He accidentally slipped from the trolley while unloading the wood and sustained injuries on the neck.

However, all these free services have now disappeared.

"At the beginning, there was a lot of energy and many

## Free gym, salon disappear from Singhu

Food langars are still going strong at farmers' protest site

### HEMANI BHANDARI

NEW DELHI

The langar landscape at the Singhu border protest site has changed in the last few days with some of the free services disappearing while some getting stronger.

At the onset of the protest in late November and December, there was a host of langars being set up by various groups and individuals at the site. A group had started "pagdi" (turban) langar" where they were tying turbans to all those who wanted, an individual had started free salon service where haircuts were offered, a group had started giving free massages to protesters and even a gymnasium had been opened by a group of weightlifters.

However, all these free services have now disappeared.

"At the beginning, there was a lot of energy and many



**Essential service:** Farmers queue up for meals during their ongoing protest against the farm laws at the Singhu border on Tuesday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

people came here to offer their services. They all said that they were here to stay. However, talking about pagdi services, it could have been pointed out that not everyone who wears the pagdi once continues with it which amounts its disrespect. And even if one doesn't wish to continue wearing, it

needs to be kept with respect," said Avtar Singh who lodges in a trolley close to where the pagdi langar used to be set up.

Initially, there were many small langars set up for toothpaste, combs, medicines, libraries which also have now disappeared even as there are several bigger se-

was for medicines and at least two libraries still intact.

The food langars, apart from the usual chapatis and vegetables, at the site have been steady, including sarson ka saag, makki ki roti, kheer and jalebis, a hit at the site since the beginning, and some of the other ones as well including, free stitching

and alteration services.

The langar run by the Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee (DSGMC) has also seen a dip in people eating. "The primary reason is that a lot of langars have opened up at the back and also because less locals are now coming here," said Balvir Singh, DSGMC langar manager.

### Stitching stall

Dalbir Singh (38) from Barnala has been here since the last week of December and on January 2, he set up a free stitching stall and no event, including January 26 and 29 incidents have deterred him. "I had come with a man who fell out with and he told me that I couldn't have stayed without him. And I did. I am here for sewa and I will not leave till we win," he said.

Pizza langar is also among the ones that have continued every day. Inderpreet Singh who runs the langar said,

"Whoever we have interacted with, we have told him that we'll stay here till the end and we will".

## Youth invites people to share their opinion on ongoing stir

He forwards suggestions, issues to those managing protest

### HEMANI BHANDARI

NEW DELHI

A 25-year-old youth from Fatehgarh Sahib, who holds a Masters degree in commerce, sits right in front of the main stage at the Singhu border protest site and invites people to share their opinion about the protest which he further shares with the management.

So far, Manjot Singh has collected over 110 opinions in his register and on loose sheets by people from across the country – including Odisha, Kerala, Uttarakhand and other States – and

shared with the stage management committee for the first time on Tuesday.

He has been collecting these testimonials for the last seven days. "I do this so that those managing the protest know what people think about it and if there are any suggestions that can be taken note of," he said.



**PLEASE WRITE YOUR OPINION ABOUT THE FARMERS PROTEST**

Manjot Singh at the Singhu border on Tuesday.

■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Manjot came here about 10 days ago and asked at the Jangi library – right at the beginning of the protest site – how he could help.

He then came up with this idea and pitched it to those running the library who allowed him.

"So I set up a board with a message written in three languages – Punjabi, Hindi and English," he said, adding that people may face problems speaking but sometimes are more comfortable writing.

"Please write your opinion about the farmers protest" the message reads.

### Historical protest

A message from a Kerala man reads, "It's a historical thing. We are proud to be a part of this historical protest," along with a few lines in Malayalam.

Another message from a Delhi woman read, "I support farmers protest. Democracy is dead in our country. If you are protesting against the government, you are termed a terrorist. Every media channel is biased. No

body is showing how our farmers are protesting for more than two months at the Singhu border serving 24X7 langar, sanitation, medicamentation and we are here to support".

Suggestions like increasing vigil and to stop speeding cars at night also come in, he said.

## 'FIR lodged regarding missing farmer'

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The city police on Tuesday told the Delhi High Court that a missing person FIR has been registered about a Haryana-based farmer whose whereabouts are not

known since January 26 after he participated in a tractor rally in the national capital that turned violent.

The submission by the Delhi Police was made before a Bench of Justice Siddharth Mridul and Justice A.J.

Bhamhani during the hearing of a habeas corpus plea moved by the brother of the missing farmer.

The court asked the police to file a status report before the next date of hearing on February 17.

### CHENNAI METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

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2 CRRT - Phase-I - Package-49 - Supplying and Laying 900mm dia CI pumping main from Perambur SPS to Kodungaiyur STP and allied electrical works in Area VI - Tender No. CNT/SEW/CRRT/PHASE-I/082/2020-21 - Bid security Rs.8.70 lakhs

3 Availability and Cost of Bid document in the form of CD (in person) : Sl.No.1 - 11.02.2021 to 25.02.2021, Sl.No.2 - 11.02.2021 to 15.03.2021 - Greivances Redressal & Facilitation Officer, CMWSB Board, (Telephone-Extn. 217) for Rs 5,900/- (including GST) Through Website: www.chennaimetrowaternet.in & www.tenders.tn.gov.in

4 Date of Pre-Bid Meeting : Sl.No.1 : 18.02.2021 and Sl.No.2 : 24.02.2021 at 11.30 A.M.

5 Bids will be received upto 03.00 PM and opened after 3.30 PM on Sl.No.1 : 26.02.2021 and Sl.No.2 : 16.03.2021.

DIPR/64/Tender/2024

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (CONTRACTS & MONITORING)

### GOVERNMENT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

#### HOME DEPARTMENT : ITANAGAR

No. HMB(B)-02/2019

Dated Itanagar the 09<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

2021

NOTICE INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR THE TWO POSTS OF MEMBERS OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH STATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

1. Applications are invited from eligible candidates for recruitment for the two posts of Members of Arunachal Pradesh State Human Rights Commission.

2. Details regarding application forms, eligibility criteria, pay scale, procedure to apply etc are available on the State Portal www. arunachalpradesh.gov.in

3. Application complete in all respects must be addressed to the Commissioner to the Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Department of Home, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, A P Civil Secretariat, Block No.2, Itanagar and should reach latest by 5.00 PM on 22/03/2021.

Sd/- Commissioner (Home)

Government of Arunachal Pradesh

Itanagar

DIPR/ARN/16231-33/2020

GOVERNMENT OF DELHI

OFFICE OF DELHI AROGYA KOSH

3RD FLOOR, DGD BUILDING, S-1, SCHOOL BLOCK, SHAKARPUR, DELHI-110092

APPOINTMENT OF ACCOUNTS OFFICER

Applications are invited for the post of Accounts Officer on contractual basis for a period of one year, extendable upto 2 years based on work & conduct by Delhi Arogya Kosh, a registered society under Govt. of NCT of Delhi. The application form is available at www.health.delhi.gov.in

Essential Qualification & Experience

Age Limit

Remuneration

Must have worked as Accounts Officer / Assistant

Accounts Officer in Govt. of Delhi / Central

Government and retired from the said post

upto 65 years

As per existing government rules for post-retirement engagement

The interested candidates may send their application along with their bio-data and requisite documents through Speed Post / By Hand at the following address latest by 6 PM on 24.02.2021.

O/o Delhi Arogya Kosh

Room No. 304, 3rd Floor, DGD Building,

S-1, School Block, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092

Sd/-

Director General Health Services-cum-

member Secretary, Delhi Arogya Kosh

DIPR/SHABDARTH/0612/2021

SD/-

Director General Health Services-cum-

member Secretary, Delhi Arogya Kosh

DIPR/974/TENDER/2021

### GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

#### Buildings (C&M) Circle, Madurai - 625 002.

Notice Inviting Tenders Pre Qualification (Two cover system)

Tender Notice No: 24SE/Buildings (C&M) Circle / Madurai / 2020-2021 / Date: 09.02.2021.

For and on behalf of Governor of Tamil Nadu sealed Tenders are invited from the contractors registered in Public Works Department in the appropriate class to the office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD, Buildings (C&M) circle, Madurai.

Tender Schedule Available Date : Sl.No.01 to 07 - 11.02.2021

15.03.2021 Up to 5.45 PM.

Tender Schedule Receiving Date : Sl.No.01 to 07 - 16.03.2021

Up to 3.00 PM.

Tender Opening at : Sl.No.01 to 07 - 16.03.2021 -

Up to 3.30 PM.

Total No. of Works : 7(Seven)

Timings

DELHI

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 10
RISE 07:04 SET 18:08
RISE 06:06 SET 16:41
THURSDAY, FEB. 11
RISE 07:03 SET 18:09
RISE 06:53 SET 17:44
FRIDAY, FEB. 12
RISE 07:02 SET 18:09
RISE 07:35 SET 18:44

Delhi Weather

max min

Delhi City 27 08

Safdarjung 27 08

Palam 24 11

Delhi Palam Today

26°C Moderate and patchy

dense fog likely during

morning. Dry comfortable day,

haziness would continue.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

26°C A cold morning with

moderate fog and comfortable

day likely.

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THE HINDU

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Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi 305 Gurugram 313

Ghaziabad 374 Faridabad 322

Noida 347 Greater Noida 348

Good Satisfactory Moderate  
0-50 51-100 101-200  
Poor Very poor Severe  
201-300 301-400 >401

MR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY  
(AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) | SOURCE: CPCB

IN BRIEF

Second Jan Rasoi opened in New Ashok Nagar

NEW DELHI

BJP national vice president  
Bajayant Jay Panda on  
Tuesday inaugurated a Jan  
Rasoi in New Ashok Nagar,  
the second facility of its kind,  
as part of an initiative by east  
Delhi MP Gautam Gambhir  
here. The poor are provided  
meals at ₹1 at the facility.

Five rescued from debris of collapsed house

NEW DELHI

Five people were rescued  
from the debris of a house  
which collapsed in the Sadar  
Bazar area of north Delhi  
on Tuesday, fire brigade  
officials said. Out of the five,  
three are critical. The injured  
have been shifted to the Bara  
Hindu Rao hospital.

Govt. looks for new agency to do pollution source study

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government will  
work with researchers to  
"soon" launch a study to  
find sources of air pollution  
in the city on a real-time basis,  
the authorities said on  
Tuesday.

In December, Deputy  
Chief Minister Manish Sisodia had taken a decision to  
cancel a study, which was  
being done by the University  
of Washington in St.  
Louis for the Delhi government  
at a cost of ₹1.2 crore. The  
government had paid over ₹50 lakh to the university  
but decided to cancel the  
study as a government-  
appointed committee had  
raised red flags about the  
study, said officials.

In a bid to study and  
combat pollution sources in  
Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind  
Kejriwal on Tuesday held a  
meeting with researchers of  
IIT Kanpur, IIT Delhi, and  
TERI. During this meeting,  
it was decided that the Delhi  
government will work with  
teams of researchers and  
launch 'Real-time Source  
Apportionment' project in  
Delhi, along with setting up  
an advanced monitoring  
system of real-time pollution  
sources," an official  
statement read.

IIT Kanpur has submitted  
a proposal for a study that  
will cost about ₹11 crore. An  
expert panel is examining  
the proposal.

# Rajya Sabha passes Bill extending protection to illegal constructions

Legislation replaces ordinance promulgated by the Centre in December last year

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Tuesday passed the National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which extended the protections from punitive action for certain kinds of unauthorised constructions by three years.

The Bill replaced an ordinance brought by the government in December 2020, as the existing protections from sealing and demolition of illegal constructions, including unauthorised colonies, were set to end on December 31.

Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, who had introduced the Bill on Monday, addressed concerns by Opposition members that the government was using the ordinance route to bypass Parliament. He said he would have



A view of the illegal colonies in east Delhi. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

presented the Bill in the Winter Session had it been held.

Sealings, demolitions

"The urgency is that if we had not enacted the ordinance in the interim period, the process of sealings, demolitions, etc. would have started, and I am sure no member of this august House would like Delhi to be subjected to that kind of uncertainty and chaos," he said.

MP Jairam Ramesh.

Mr. Puri said the Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Act, 2006 had been enacted by Parliament "to protect certain forms of encroachment and unauthorised development from punitive action, namely, demolition, sealing, displacement, etc".

These protections were extended through ordinances and Acts in 2007, 2009, 2014 and 2017, he said.

During the discussion on

the Bill, Congress MP K.T.S. Tulsi said while he was not opposed to providing facilities to those living in unauthorised colonies, but that could not be an end in itself.

"There has to be an organised approach to provide houses for everybody. It is a matter of fact which is undisputable that Indian cities are virtually turning into slums and worst is that their boundaries are increasing with every passing day," he said.

## Congress says Bill a betrayal of people of Delhi

It provides protection for three more years; illegal colonies still not regularised

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Commenting on the passing of the National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2021, to regularise unauthorised colonies in Delhi in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, the Delhi Congress called it a betrayal of the people of Delhi.

Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar said that the Bill gives immunity from demolition to unauthorised colonies

for three more years. He said that this is betrayal of the poor people as the BJP had promised during the last polls that all the 1,799 unauthorised colonies would be regularised immediately.

He also said that the Modi government is all set to pass the National Capital Territory of Delhi Second (Amendment) Bill, 2021, in the current Budget session of Parliament, which would mean that all the important powers of the Delhi government will be usurped by the Modi government by making the L-G's office more powerful than the Chief Minister's office.

"The BJP-led Union go-

vernment, instead of delegating powers, is weakening the democratic institutions by concentrating all the powers in the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah to run an authoritarian government," he alleged.

Mr. Kumar said that AAP election manifesto had promised full Statehood for Delhi, but sadly, the powers already vested with the Delhi government are also being taken away by the Centre.

In response, Mr. Akbar

## SC protects AAP MP from arrest in hate speech case

Cannot prosecute without RS Chairman nod: Sanjay Singh

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday protected Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Rajya Sabha Member Sanjay Singh from arrest in a hate speech case registered against him in Lucknow by the Uttar Pradesh Police.

A Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan also issued notice to the Uttar Pradesh government on Mr. Singh's contention that permission of the Rajya Sabha Chairman need to be obtained under Section 196 of the CrPC before prosecuting him.

Senior advocate Vivek Tankha, for Mr. Singh, submitted that "the petitioner being Member of Parliament [Rajya Sabha], permission had

moved the apex court seeking quashing of multiple FIRs lodged against him in various districts of U.P. after the press conference, saying they have been "maliciously instituted to unleash political vendetta".

In a separate petition, Mr. Singh has also challenged a January 21 order of the Allahabad High Court, which had refused to quash the FIR in Lucknow.

In one of his pleas filed in the apex court seeking quashing of multiple FIRs, Mr. Singh stated, "In the press conference, the petitioner had merely raised certain social issues, namely neglect and apathy of the government towards a certain class of society."

In another, he sought

## Seven samples test positive for bird flu

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Seven serological samples of bird droppings from the National Zoological Park (NZP), commonly known as the Delhi zoo, were found positive for bird flu, officials said on Tuesday.

The zoo has been shut since a sample of a dead owl tested positive for bird flu in January. Authorities said the samples were collected from four different points and sent to the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases on February 3.

In an official statement, the zoo authorities said all safety measures are being taken and the zoo shall remain closed.

"All possible prophylactic measures and drills related to disinfection are regularly being taken," the NZP said in a statement.

## HC seeks AIIMS reply on sewage treatment plant

Petition says it poses a health hazard

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

STP near the residential area is very detrimental to the health of the residents living in the area and there is an increased possibility for respiratory and skin diseases.

There is also a risk of prevalence of pathogenic airborne microorganisms originating from the waste water treatment plant. So the installation of STP within such a close proximity to the residential area called Gautam Nagar as it will be a health hazard for the residents and lead to stench.

Justice Prithiba M. Singh asked AIIMS to file a detailed reply to the plea and listed the matter for hearing on April 27.

The High Court's order came on a plea by Gautam Nagar Residents' Association, challenging the installation of the sewage treatment plant situated just 30 feet away from the residential area. The plea said the installation of

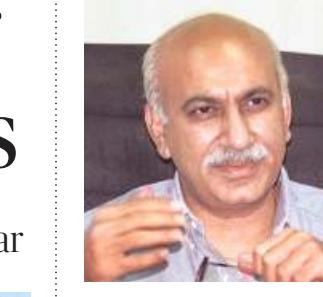
The Centre has objected to a petition seeking to discontinue with the provision of inviting objection from public while applying for marriage registration under the Special Marriage Act (SMA).

In an affidavit filed before the Delhi High Court, the Ministry of Law and Justice said that the intention behind the provision in SMA was to "keep adequate safeguards to the interest of various parties involved".

Gestation period

All marriages done under the SMA requires publication of the names of the couple for inviting objections. ■ FILE PHOTO

that it would contravene one or more of the conditions specified in section 4 of the SMA. Some of the conditions include neither party has a spouse living; either of them is of unsound mind, incapable of giving a valid consent; and the man has completed twenty-one years and the woman eight years.



Court to give verdict in Akbar-Ramani case today

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

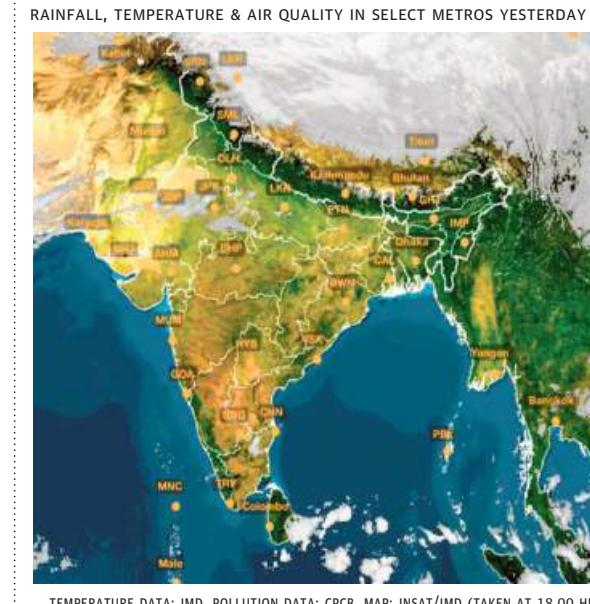
A Delhi court is set to pronounce its verdict in the former Union Minister M.J. Akbar's criminal defamation complaint against journalist Priya Ramani for her tweets accusing him of sexual harassment, on Wednesday.

The legal battle spanning over two years has been closely watched for its implications, primarily on the social movement #MeToo, where thousands of women have used social media platforms to share instances of sexual harassment they faced in the past.

At the height of the #MeToo movement in 2018, Ms. Ramani accused Mr. Akbar of sexual harassment. Following Ms. Ramani's accusation, about a dozen former colleagues of Mr. Akbar also came out with different allegations against him.

In response, Mr. Akbar filed a criminal defamation case against Ms. Ramani in October 2018, days before he resigned from his post of Minister of State for External Affairs. Mr. Akbar has claimed that Ms. Ramani's tweet and her article accusing him of sexual harassment were defamatory, and lowered his reputation.

WEATHER WATCH



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP; INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18:00 HRS)

Forecast for Wednesday: Dense fog likely in isolated pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttarakhand and west Uttar Pradesh

CITY RAIN MAX MIN CITY RAIN MAX MIN

Agartala ... 27.5 ... 11.2 Kozhikode ... 34.0 ... 22.0

Ahmedabad ... 32.4 ... 11.4 Kurnool ... 32.2 ... 17.7

Aizawl ... 23.0 ... 9.0 Lucknow ... 25.7 ... 10.5

Allahabad ... 26.9 ... 9.7 Madurai ... 31.7 ... 20.1

Bengaluru ... 28.6 ... 14.9 Mangaluru ... 35.6 ... 19.5

Bhopal ... 29.3 ... 9.8 Mumbai ... 35.2 ... 17.6

Bhubaneswar ... 31.7 ... 24.2 Mysuru ... 30.1 ... 13.2

Chandigarh ... 25.0 ... 8.7 Patna ... 25.4 ... 10.2

Chennai ... 30.6 ... 14.2 Port Blair ... 29.6 ... 22.5

Coimbatore ... 31.0 ... 18.1 Puducherry ... 31.0 ... 20.6

Dibrugarh ... 24.2 ...

## Odisha re-promulgates ordinance on APMCs

State govt. will set up and operate private market yards to enhance competition

SATYASUNDAR BARIK  
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government has proposed to set up and operate private market yards and farmer consumer market yards to enhance competition among different markets and market players for the agricultural produce.

The State Cabinet on Tuesday approved re-promulgation

of Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) for the third time.

The 'Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation)' has been drafted on the lines of a model law titled 'The Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2017' circulated

earlier by the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare. "Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the State government had brought the ordinance to give an immediate benefit to the farmers. Accordingly, the third ordinance has been drafted," the State government said.

The ordinance proposes to abolish fragmentation of market within the State by remov-

ing the concept of notified market area so far as enforcement of regulation by the Agricultural Produce and Livestock Market Committee is concerned. The government aims to declare warehouses or silos or cold storages and other structures or space as market sub-yard to provide better market access or linkage to the farmers.

### INDUSTRIAL PROMOTION AND INVESTMENT CORPORATION OF ODISHA LIMITED

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Tel: 0674-2542601; Fax: 0674-2543766

#### Preparation of Benchmark criteria for allotment of Land, Power and Water to various categories of Steel Plant, Beneficiation Plant and Pellet Plant

Proposals from eligible firms are invited for selection of a Consulting Agency. For tender details please visit [www.ipicolodisha.com](http://www.ipicolodisha.com). Last date for submission of proposals : 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 by 03:00 PM  
CADD-1223:  
OIPR-14005/11/0003/2021



### ENTERPRISE CONNECT

Delhi Govt holds interactions with market Trade associations on developments of GST & VAT.

GST and VAT constitute major revenue stream for Delhi Government. However the 7.7 lakh dealers/ taxpayers have experienced challenges in tax compliance in recent times and also Covid-19 related challenges. Hence to support all dealers, to understand their challenges and to boost revenue collection, the Department of Trade & Taxes reached out to the taxpayers. In a state-wide campaign in January 2021, the officers of Trade & Taxes Department, Government of NCT of Delhi interacted with about 200 Market Trade Associations of Delhi and made associations aware about the latest developments on GST/VAT provisions. Taxpayers were informed about process for filing of GSTR3 return before 20/24th of every month so as to avoid 3A notices. The market associations were sensitized that continuous non-filing of 38 returns for 2 months leads to blocking of e-way bill generation and GSTR-1 return filing. In this massive outreach effort, taxpayers were also made aware about provisions reg. non display of GSTIN number on board, alongwith promotion of invoicing and mandatory issuance of tax invoices.

**BPCCL Celebrates month long petroleum conservation campaign 'Saksham' through a car rally**

BPCCL celebrated Saksham, a month long Petroleum conservation campaign, through a car rally at one of its PFS Next Gen outlet, M/S B S Dwarka at Sector 11, Dwarka, Delhi on 07 th Feb'21. The rally was organized to imbibe best practices of driving leading to maximum fuel efficiency and minimum wastage. The market associations were sensitized that continuous non-filing of 38 returns for 2 months leads to blocking of e-way bill generation and GSTR-1 return filing. In this massive outreach effort, taxpayers were also made aware about provisions reg. non display of GSTIN number on board, alongwith promotion of invoicing and mandatory issuance of tax invoices.

Prior to joining Petronet LNG Limited, was working with Indian Oil Corporation Limited as Director (Pipelines). He had also served as an Executive Director in GAIL India Limited in Projects division before Indian Oil Corporation Limited. Shri Akshay Kumar Singh has vast experience in executing challenging, complex and large size Cross Country hydrocarbon pipeline networks of National importance and made significant contributions in the last 35 years to the Petroleum & Natural gas sector in India. Possesses extensive domain experience in the major business activities like hydrocarbon pipelines project development and execution, Q&M of Pipeline Installations, Gas Marketing, CGD Business, Gas processing plant including petrochemicals, LNG Sourcing & logistics and Corporate Risk Management.

**National Academy of Indian Railways confers Dr. Mangal Singh, MD DMRC with 'Distinguished Alumnus' award .**

The Managing Director of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), Dr. Mangal Singh, was conferred with the prestigious 'Distinguished Alumnus' Award by the National Academy of Indian Railways (NAIR) on the occasion of their 70th Foundation Day on 31st January, 2021. Prior to joining (DMRC), Dr. Singh had a long stint with the Indian Railways, where he served in various capacities across the country, including in the Kolkata Metro project. The National Academy of Indian Railways (NAIR) is the premier training institute for Indian Railways' officers.

**ITPO Offers AAHAR 2021 with considerable discount on participation to support the industry**

A five day - flagship event of the India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO), AAHAR2021 - the International Food & Hospitality Fair ( April 6-10,2021) is being hosted with discounted rate of 45 per cent on participation charges to support the Indian industry. The 36th edition of the fair features emergence of India in F&B as well as hospitality services including food processing, culinary tech, retail and news innovations at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. The fair assumes tremendous significance especially when there is a focus of the Union Government to promote agri-community as well as MICE sector which complements the hospitality segment.

This year too, AAHAR offers an ideal opportunity for brand expansion and business networking especially when the industry has been facing tremendous challenge due to Covid-19 pandemic. **The fortnight-long National Tribal Festival - Aadi Mahotsav at Dilli Haat gets off to a glorious start**

It was a riot of colours at the Dilli Haat, New Delhi last evening where the fortnight-long National Tribal Festival, the Aadi Mahotsav was kicked off. Showcasing the proud identity and culture of the tribal people, the place was abuzz with life and provided a glimpse into the rich, artistic tribal tradition. A fact acknowledged by the Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri Venkaiah Naidu, when he inaugurated the festival and went around the various stalls on display. Shri Arjun Munda, Union Minister for Tribal Affairs, Smt. Renuka Singh Saruta, Minister of State for Tribal

Affairs, Shri S. Subramanyam, Secretary, Tribal Affairs, Shri R.C. Meena, Chairman, TRIFED and Shri Pravir Krishna, Managing Director, TRIFED were among the dignitaries present on the occasion.

With more than 200 stalls from across the country and about 1000 artisans with their unique stories participating, the Aadi Mahotsav, an annual tribal festival organised by TRIFED is a way to draw the Adivasis into the mainstream and give them a chance to display their unique and range of products to a larger audience.

**Directorate of Tourism Jammu organizes one day trek from Sarain to Mansar**

Directorate of Tourism, Jammu organised one day Trek from Sarain to Mansar via Dhergarh in collaboration with Tawi Trekkers. A group of about 80 Trekkers was flagged off by Sh. Chander Mohan Gupta, Honble Mayor, Jammu Municipal Corporation and SMT Neelam Khajuria joint Director Tourism, Jammu from Kala Kendra, Jammu. Special attraction being oldest participant 76 years of age and youngest 11 years. Joint Director Tourism, Jammu, Ms. Neelam Khajuria KAS informed that the motive for organising this Trekking is exhaustive reconnaissance of Purmandal Surinsar area and also to explore the possibility of linking Purmandal Surinsar Mohergarh Bhupnergarh as Adventure and leisure circuit.

**FIPI awards BORL with 'Refinery of the year' & 'Sustainably growing corporate of the year' award**

Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry (FICI) instituted Oil & Gas Awards to recognize pioneers and leaders in petroleum industry. FIPI Oil & Gas Awards celebrate outstanding achievements of petroleum companies in various categories such as innovator of the year, service provider, environmental sustainability, refinery of the year, project management etc. Bharat Oman Refineries Limited (BORL) bagged "Refinery of the Year" award under the category of capacity up to 9.0 MMTPA for achieving significantly higher level of performance in production & operational efficiencies, energy conservation and refinery margin while complying with the norms of health, safety and environment protection. Bharat Oman Refineries also bagged FIPI prestigious award "Sustainably Growing - Corporate of the Year" which recognizes excellence in sustainability performance and benefits extended to the society and the environment. Managing Director, BORL Shri M B Pimpale and Sr. VP Shri A K Saxena, received both the prestigious awards from Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Minister for Petroleum Natural Gas and Steel in the presence of the Secretary, MoP&NG during the Awards ceremony which was held on January 27, 2021 at New Delhi.

**Shri Akshay Kumar Singh assumes charge of Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer at Petronet LNG Limited (PLL)**

Shri Akshay Kumar Singh took over charge of Petronet LNG Limited (PLL) as Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer (MD&CEO) w.e.f. 01.02.2021.

## Socio-political movements not against the country: RLD leader

Jayant Chaudhary upset over 'andolan jeevi, parjeevi' remarks by Prime Minister

ANUJ KUMAR  
GAZIABAD

Responding to the Prime Minister's address in Parliament where he cautioned people against 'andolan jeevis' (professional protesters), Rashtriya Lok Dal vice-president Jayant Chaudhary said on Tuesday that the country has seen many historic movements, but this was for the first time that in Parliament, the biggest panchayat has

seen many historic movements, but this was for the first time that in Parliament,



dered. "The people who are putting a question mark over farmers' protests seem to have forgotten that they themselves have come to power through movements and protests."

Mr. Chaudhary was addressing yet another mammoth panchayat of farmers organised by RLD in the Murbar Painth ground of Igias town of Aligarh. "Bhimrao Ambedkar has given us the right to protest. Chaudhary Charan Singh used to say that a farmer should keep one eye on his farm and the other on the seat of power... because he wanted the

"Get united"

He appealed to the farmers to "get united", forgetting "caste divisions". Invoking poet Jigar Moradabadi, Mr.

Chaudhary said, "Jo toofano main palte ja raha hain, woh duniya badalte ja raha hain". (Those who are thriving in storms are changing the world)"

He asked if the government was serious about the welfare of farmers, how did the 'ambitious'

PM ASHA scheme fail to achieve what it promised.

Mr. Chaudhary said people like him were not trying to take political mileage out of the farmers' protest, instead farmers were coming in big numbers to strengthen him, knowing the battle was long. He said farmers didn't believe in political calculations. "Today, those who are in power are showing arrogance towards farmers."

He said the big turnout at his rallies in U.P. should clear the misconception that the farmers' movement is of just one State. Over the next week, RLD has given a call for similar panchayats in Bulandshahr, Mathura, Hathras, and Bharatpur in neighbouring Rajasthan.

Meanwhile, party spokesperson Sunil Rohta said RLD would celebrate the birthday of party president Ajit Singh by holding a 'Chalo Gaon' programme.

### Cong. launches video contest on Assam issues

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The Congress in poll-bound Assam has launched a contest on social media, asking people to make a two-minute video on the biggest issues and problems facing the State.

The party announced awards ranging from cash to iPhones for the best videos. The most relevant issues, it said, would be incorporated into the party's manifesto. To participate in the contest, a person will have to post the video along with the hashtag #AssamBachao on any major social media platform and submit its link through www.AssamBachao.in. The contest will run till February 19.

Congress MP and head of the party's manifesto committee Gaurav Gogoi said the idea was to first acknowledge and understand a problem before trying to solve it. "The feedback will tell us what the most urgent issues are to be taken up in our manifesto. The Congress party's manifesto shall offer solutions to these very problems," he said.

Mr. Gogoi said by announcing the prizes, the Congress was trying to give incentives to creativity among the youth of the State. "It is time for the youth to take charge of their own future and save the State from the BJP's evil designs. From sky-high prices of essentials to implementing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act against the wishes of people, the BJP decided to ruin both peace and prosperity in Assam," he said.

### OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

#### DEATH



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Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. Vijay Kumar and Mrs. Jyoti Maggo who intend to transfer the Property No.K-1/27, area measuring 271.55 sq. yds. **Block-K-1, Model Town-II, Village Malikpur Chhatri, Delhi** with our client Axis Bank Ltd. against the financial assistance. Whereas, Mr. Sangat Singh had acquired the said property by way of Sale Deed dt. 28.03.1958 and after his death, his legal heirs i.e., Mr. Kirpal Singh Saluja (son), Mrs. Manjeet Kaur, Mrs. Bhuinder Kaur Munjal and Mrs. Amarjeet Kaur (daughters) claims ownership of said property on the basis of Regd. Will dated 11.07.2000 of Late Sangat Singh without obtaining Probate of said Will. Thereafter, his legal heirs have sold the same to Mr. Vijay Kumar and Mrs. Jyoti Maggo by way of Sale Deed dated 12.09.2016.

If any person(s) having objection regarding ownership or regarding mortgage of the said property is/are requested to intimation in writing to undersigned within 10 days from the date of issue of this notice at below address. In the event no information is received within 10 days from date of issue of this notice, our client i.e. Axis Bank Ltd. will proceed with the mortgage process.

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A-13, LGF, South Extn-II, New Delhi-49 # 011-262610, 11, 12

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

# 2,515 new cases, 2,554 more recoveries in Maharashtra

State records 35 deaths; active case tally stands at 34,640; cases surge in MMR

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Maharashtra reported 2,515 new COVID-19 cases on Tuesday, taking the total tally of cases to 20,48,802, said an official from the State Health Department.

As many as 35 people succumbed to the disease, taking the total death toll to 51,360. Of the latest deaths, 25 were from the past 48 hours, eight from the last week, and two deaths from an earlier period.

A total of 2,554 patients were discharged from hospitals on Tuesday, taking the overall number of recoveries in Maharashtra to 19,61,525, the official said. The State now has 34,640 active cases. The case recovery rate stands at 95.74%, while the case fatality rate is 2.51%.

### 375 cases in Mumbai

Mumbai reported 375 fresh cases during the day, while three people died in the State capital due to COVID-19. With this, the total tally of cases in Mumbai went up to 3,12,655 and the death toll to 11,398.

The Mumbai Metropolitan Region, which includes Mumbai city and its satellite



**Frontline warriors:** Healthcare workers administer the COVID-19 vaccine to police personnel at a vaccination centre in south Mumbai. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

towns, reported 693 new cases, taking the cumulative case load to 7,01,232 and the death toll to 19,640.

Nashik division's COVID-19 case tally is 2,79,158 and death toll is 5,147. The number of cases in the Pune division stands at 5,05,861 and death toll at 11,675.

Kolhapur division has re-

ported a total of 1,18,408 cases and 4,024 deaths till now, while Aurangabad division's case tally stands at 75,670 and death toll at 2,007.

Latur division has reported 83,302 cases until now and 2,482 fatalities. Akola division has reported 74,509 cases, while 1,620 people have succumbed to the virus

until now. Nagpur division has reported a total of 2,10,512 infections and 4,680 fatalities so far. With 48,958 tests conducted on Tuesday, the number of samples tested has reached 1,50,58,995.

As many as 1,67,694 people in the State are in home quarantine, while 1,805 are in institutional quarantine.



**Up in flames:** Smoke billows after a major fire erupted in a chemical factory at Taloja in Navi Mumbai on Tuesday. ■ PTI

## + Massive fire breaks out in Taloja industrial area

Two fire officials sustain minor injuries

### RAINA ASSAINAR

NAVI MUMBAI

A major fire broke out at a chemical company in Taloja industrial area in Navi Mumbai at 12 p.m. on Tuesday.

Two fire officials sustained minor injuries while dousing the fire, which erupted in Azeocryst Organic Pvt Ltd at plot number 34 and spread to the adjoining factories in the area.

"An organic chemical company caught fire. Prima facie, it seems that a short circuit caused the blaze," senior police inspector Kishinath Chavan from Taloja MIDC police station said.

The fire spread to Gauri Acids Pvt Ltd on plot number 32, and factories on plots 33 and 35.

Local residents said they heard loud blasts as chemical drums exploded in the factories. Around 14 fire ten-

ders, including those from the MIDC, CIDCO and NMMC, reached the spot.

At the time of going to press, the cooling process was in progress.

"The structures of two factories were completely damaged. When a fire rages for over four hours, the strength of steel used in construction weakens. The continuous radiant heat emitted by the chemicals is the biggest challenge in the fire-fighting operation. The chain reaction of chemicals stored in barrels poses another challenge," a fire officer from Taloja MIDC said.

"Though the incident was reported at Taloja MIDC police station, no FIR has been lodged yet. We are awaiting the report from the MIDC and other authorities to ascertain the cause of the fire," Mr. Chavan said.

## One held, minor detained for murdering 20-year-old

Victim had affair with girl accused liked

### RAINA ASSAINAR

NAVI MUMBAI

The Rabale police have arrested a 19-year-old boy from Nashik and detained a 17-year-old accomplice for allegedly killing a 20-year-old man from Rabale.

The police said Anil Jayaram Shinde went missing on the afternoon of February 5 and his brother, a resident of Talawali in Ghansoli, filed a missing person's complaint with the Rabale police. The police found that the last call the victim received was from an unknown number. The caller was tracked and he told the police that a stranger in Ghansoli had taken his phone to make a call.

"With the help of technical evidence, we traced the

accused, Ramesh Jadhav (19), and his minor friend to Nashik," police inspector Umesh Gavali said.

Mr. Jadhav confessed to the crime and said he killed Shinde because he was having an affair with a girl who was his distant relative. Mr. Jadhav liked the girl, but she revealed that she was in love with Shinde, whom she had met on Facebook.

A probe revealed that the two accused called the victim for a drink at 1.30 p.m. on February 5 in Ghansoli. They then attacked him with a sickle and dumped his body in a creek. "The accused have been remanded in police custody till February 12," senior police inspector Yogesh Gawade from Rabale police station said.

"With the help of technical

evidence, we traced the

## AMU students hold protest march, demand offline classes

University was closed in March 2020 because of pandemic

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GAZIABAD

A section of Aligarh Muslim University students took out a protest march on Sunday demanding the university to be reopened after the COVID 19 pandemic without delay. The university was closed in March 2020 after the government shut down educational institutions because of the pandemic.

In December 2019, AMU was shut down and students were asked to vacate the hostels after anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests on the campus turned violent. Later, students protest against the university administration for allowing the PG police to enter the campus.



Aligarh Muslim University.  
■ FILE PHOTO

possible or at least give us a timeline," she said.

Sources said around 1,000 to 1,200 students, mostly males, were staying in hostels without permission. As the women's hostels were strictly locked, they were forced to stay in PG accommodation.

Some teachers said if the Aligarh Numaish (exhibition), a popular annual event of the city, could be held, why a central university could not be opened in phases. Ali Nadeem Rezavi, professor of History, asked, "If cinema halls, political rallies, Numaish and absolutely anything could be allowed, why this obsession with having the doors of educational institutions closed."

Talha Mannan, a final year student of post-graduation, said, it seemed the university administration "de-

liberately" wanted to keep students out of the university.

"Ours is a different case as after the university was shut down in December, it opened only in February for a few days. At least other universities such as the BHU and JNU have come up with a schedule. The University administration can open the faculties and the hostels in a phase-wise manner."

### Tough SOPs

University spokesperson Shafey Kidwai said the government's COVID-19 SOPs stipulated that only 50% of students could attend offline classes and that only one student should stay in a hostel room. "It is not possible to conform to these SOPs in a residential university. We have four students in one hostel room. What would we say to the other three," he asked.

He admitted that the COVID cases had come down considerably in Aligarh and that there was no active case in the corona ward of the university hospital.

Prof. Kidwai said the University Academic Council had met and the administration would soon come out with a plan.

'Centre pushing farmers' future into darkness'

### MOHAMMED IQBAL

JAIPUR

Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Tuesday said the BJP-led government at the Centre was pushing the future of farmers into darkness by refusing to budge on the demand for withdrawal of agricultural sector laws. "Farmers are sitting at the Delhi borders in the cold, but the government is indifferent to their agony," he said.

Addressing a massive farmers' rally at Fateh Sagar Taal in Bharatpur district's Bayana region, the former Deputy CM said farm laws, which would destroy farming and the mandis, were not being discussed by BJP leaders in the Parliament despite the Budget session being in progress. Mr. Pilot said the Congress would continue to support farmers till the controversial statutes were repealed.

The rally was organised ahead of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's visit to Rajasthan on February 12 and 13. Mr. Pilot said Mr. Gandhi's presence in the State would strengthen the movement and help build pressure on the Centre to repeal the three laws. Mr. Gandhi will visit Hanumanagar, Sriganganagar and Nagaur districts.

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Advt. No. 2 / 2020-21

1. Applications are invited for recruitment to the following posts in the Reserve Bank of India.

Sr. No.	Post	Vacancies
Panel Year 2020		
1	Legal Officer in Grade 'B'	11
2	Manager (Tech - Civil)	01
3	Assistant Manager (Rajbhasha)	12
4	Assistant Manager (Protocol & Security)	05

2. For all other details such as eligibility criteria, reservation of vacancies, scheme of selection, submission of online application and other instructions, please refer to the detailed advertisement to be published on the Bank's website ([www.rbi.org.in](http://www.rbi.org.in)) on February 23, 2021 and in the Employment News/Rozgar Samachar issued dated February 27, 2021 (subsequent issue). Candidates can apply for these posts only by online mode through the Bank's website.

**3. IMPORTANT DATES:**

Website Link Open - for online Registration of Applications and Payment of Fees/ Intimation Charges	February 23, 2021 to March 10, 2021 (upto 6.00 pm)
Online/Written Examination	April 10, 2021

**NOTE:** Corrigendum, if any, issued on the above advertisement, will be published only on the Bank's website. (Hindi version of this advertisement will be available in Dainik Bhaskar, Dainik Jagran, Rajasthan Patrika and Navbharat Times)

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**Eligibilities:**

(A) Candidate, not be more than 57 years of age as on June 01, 2021 with a Post-graduate University degree preferably in specified subjects/ courses or a Graduate degree with specified professional qualifications; and having worked for more than 25 years in Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs)/ Financial Institutions (FIs)/ Other Public Sector Organisations in financial sector, with at least 3 years operational experience/ exposure in SCBs/ FIs or other public sector financial organisation; and at least 2 years of experience at level of Whole-time Director/ Directors in the board of SCBs/ FIs or other public sector financial organisations or as CEO in SIDBI/ IFCI Ltd/ IFCL/ EXIM Bank/ SBBI; or as GM in Nationalised Banks; or as Executive Director (ED) or IDBI or as Executive Director (ED) or equivalent in RBI.

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For details of the other eligibility terms and conditions, please see the advertisement on [www.banksboardbureau.org.in](http://www.banksboardbureau.org.in) under the "Vacancies" tab.

**How to apply :** Interested candidates can apply online through the link available on [www.banksboardbureau.org.in/](http://www.banksboardbureau.org.in/) under the "vacancies" tab or directly at [www.research.net/KDMNBL](http://www.research.net/KDMNBL).

Last date of application: 5:00 pm on 04-March-2021

Note: Further details including corrigendum, if any, shall be published only on the Bureau's website.



## Belated, but bold

Execution will be critical for the strategic disinvestment policy unveiled in the Budget

The government's spending plans for 2021-22 hinge on better compliance lifting tax collections, and an ambitious plan to raise non-tax revenue. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced large-scale monetisation of government sector assets, including vast tracts of land, and is banking on disinvestment receipts of ₹1.75-lakh crore. This includes likely inflows from the strategic sale of entities such as Air India and BPCL, carried forward from this year's plans. The listing of LIC could be completed as well, with necessary amendments in the Finance Bill, and that alone could bolster the revenue kitty. Most significant, however, is the new strategic disinvestment policy for public sector enterprises and the promise to privatise two public sector banks and a general insurance company in the year. The policy, promised as part of the Atma Nirbhav Bharat package, states the government will exit all businesses in non-strategic sectors, with only a 'bare minimum' presence in four broad sectors. These strategic sectors are – atomic energy, space and defence; transport and telecom; power, petroleum, coal and other minerals; and banking and financial services.

In India's brief but tortuous history of disinvestment since it began listing PSUs on the stock markets through minority stake sales in the 1990s, this is undoubtedly the boldest stance yet. On intent, it goes further than the A.B. Vajpayee government's sales of a dozen-odd PSUs, from hotels to bread makers. Some, including Balco and Hindustan Zinc, where the government still has residual minority stakes, have fared much better under private management. It can be no one's case that India's public sector remains at the 'commanding heights' of the economy. Apart from raising precious revenues, the sale or closure of such firms will help the exchequer stop throwing good money after bad, and funnel it into more productive endeavours. It is not clear why it took the Narendra Modi administration so long to articulate this plan or make headway on this front even without such a blueprint, as the PM had declared, back in 2014, that the government had no business being in business. Now that the policy is in place, tactful execution will be as critical as dealing with the usual pockets of resistance that would crop up. While stock markets are on a high, the financial capacity of potential bidders may not be optimal, thanks to the pandemic. Among its multiple challenges, the government will need to create confidence in the sale processes, ensure a semblance of fair valuations, give officers some cover from potential post-transaction witch-hunts by auditors and investigating agencies, sequence the sales so that the economy does not face shocks or create monopolies, and most of all, manage electoral pressures in jurisdictions where these units would be located. A single controversial transaction could scuttle the momentum behind such a plan and India can ill afford it.

## Cutting trans fat

Healthier substitutes without any change in the taste or cost of food are now available

Come January 1, 2022, India will join a select group of countries limiting industrial trans fat to 2% by mass of the total oils/fats present in the product. India would thus be achieving the WHO target a year in advance. In mid-2016, the trans fat content limit was halved from 10% to 5%, and in December 2020, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) capped it to 3% by 2021. While trans fat is naturally present in red meat and dairy products, the focus is on restricting the industrially produced trans fat used solely to prolong the shelf life of products at less cost. While the government's notification specifically mentions edible oils and fats that are used as ingredients, it also applies to emulsions such as margarines. Targeting these ingredients would in effect result in reducing the trans fat content to 2% in all food items as these two are the major sources of industrial trans fat. Also, even when the fat/oil contains less than 2% trans fat, repeated use at high temperature can increase the trans fat content. The focus on cutting down trans fat content in food arises from its proclivity to negatively alter the lipoprotein cholesterol profile by increasing the level of bad cholesterol (LDL) while decreasing the level of HDL or good cholesterol. These changes in the lipoprotein cholesterol profile increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

In 2004, when Denmark became the first country to limit industrially produced trans fat content in all foods to 2% of fats and oils, it faced resistance from much of Europe, including the European Commission. However, many countries have since adopted similar restrictions themselves. In fact, in April 2019, the European Union (EU) adopted a new regulation – from April 2021 – to limit the amount of industrially produced trans fat to 2% in all foods sold within the EU. According to a 2020 report of WHO, 32 countries already have some form of mandatory limits on trans fat. The benefits of reducing trans fat can become quickly apparent, as seen in Denmark; three years after the cap came into effect, it saw a reduction of about 14 deaths attributable to cardiovascular diseases per 1,00,000 population. It is now well known that trans fat can be completely eliminated and replaced with healthier substitutes without any change in the food taste or cost. According to WHO, a dozen large multinational food companies have already committed to eliminate industrially produced trans fat from all their products by 2023. With a year's notice, it should be possible for the multinational food companies to redouble their efforts to meet the FSSAI standard, while Indian companies that have earlier been able to cut the level of trans fat as in the FSSAI limit, should have no excuse not to meet the current capping.

# India must return to traditional diplomacy

The new combative strategy to 'push back' requires sober analysis, with the issue being how and against what and whom



VIVEK KATJU

**T**he target audiences of Indian diplomacy's public articulation and responses are changing radically as shown by the statement of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), of February 3 (<https://bit.ly/2M0lqlj>), on singer Rihanna's tweet. The direction of Indian diplomacy's external publicity is no longer confined to other governments, international organisations, external and domestic political and business elites, and conference halls and negotiating tables. It now extends to international 'celebrities', some of whose status is determined very largely by their pop star status. It also seeks to take into account apparent and latent sentiment on the Indian streets not only to clarify India's diplomatic positions or refute allegations and misperceptions but also to whip up sentiment on issues important to the government. Finally, it aims to forcefully convey to foreign audiences, India's unwillingness to accept perceived or real interference in the country's domestic affairs.

### New, assertive norms

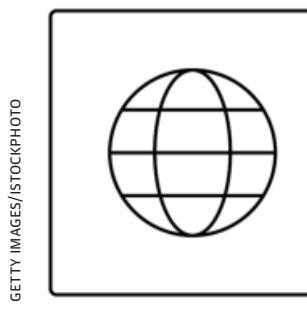
This development is part of the government's impatience with the norms of old-fashioned diplomacy. It is in keeping with the emphasis on establishing a personal rapport with global leaders and what has been often stressed by the External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar – the need to take risks to advance Indian positions and interests. Thus, new and assertive norms are being adopted which, at least till now, have demonstrated a

disdain for international liberal opinion. It is beyond dispute that new directions for Indian diplomacy, in form as well as in substance, should be constantly sought. But the test of innovation can only be one: is it more effective in advancing Indian objectives?

It is on this basis that the MEA statement and the widespread social media activity that followed need to be judged. While the statement's origin will not be authoritatively known, it can be legitimately surmised that it was/could not have been through the normal processes of the MEA. Hence, it would have been on the basis of a political decision. The hash tags attached to the statements lend credence to this view as also the intensely orchestrated social media response from Indian personalities to tweets by Ms. Rihanna and others. There is nothing intrinsically wrong in building public opinion; all governments as well as groups do so. It is part of the global political and diplomatic processes but must be part of a careful strategy to achieve objectives. Otherwise, it can be counter-productive.

Mr. Jaishankar tweeted after the MEA statement: "Motivated campaigns targeting India will never succeed. We have the self-confidence today to hold our own. This India will push back". These combative words require a sober analysis.

There is little doubt that Khalistani groups in western countries would have sensed an opportunity to fish in troubled waters of the farmers' agitation in the Punjab. There should also be no doubt that the Pakistani generals, who have continuously sought to keep the embers of the Khalistan movement warm, would be looking for opportunities to create trouble. This is notwithstanding that the patriotism of Indian Sikhs and their contributions to the nation



are beyond question. Thus, it would not be surprising at all if there are "motivated campaigns" against India under way on these issues.

### Self-assurance, past and now

Mr. Jaishankar's assertion that the India of today is self-confident to hold its own is of course true, but it can be argued that right from Independence, India has displayed the self-assurance not to take things lying down; only the methods may have been different. Again, there can be no quarrel with the External Affairs Minister's warning that India will "push back". The issue is not about should India "push back" but how and against what and whom. The answers to these questions hold the keys to the effectiveness of diplomacy whose ultimate target audience has to be not domestic sectional interests but global opinion and in the context of India's external interests.

In this context, a look at the way the Narendra Modi government handled criticism from liberal sections abroad, of the administrative steps taken in Jammu and Kashmir after the constitutional changes of August 2019 and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), and the protests that followed, are instructive. India then refused to purposefully engage its international liberal critics though it publicly asserted security concerns for the administrative steps and laid stress on the point that the CAA

did not impinge on the rights of the Indian minorities. Indeed, the government treated its global media critics with disdain, with Mr. Jaishankar emphasising that India's reputation was not decided by a 'newspaper in New York'. Certainly, there was no frenzied response on social media to the allegations against the government on human rights matters through all these episodes.

### Ponder over direction

On this occasion, was the severe response to Ms. Rihanna's tweet on account of her large social media following while the popular reach of global liberal opinion especially in the Trumpian era was limited? Was the object to deter foreign critics from lending their names to "manipulated campaigns"? Was it thought that if more celebrities joined, the farmers' protest would be energised? If these were the thoughts behind the decision then there is a need to check if it succeeded or gave an oxygen boost to the Rihanna tweet.

Also, it is difficult to imagine that foreign critics like Ms. Rihanna, or for that matter of the Greta Thunberg kind, would be deterred by a concerted Indian pushback of the nature that has been undertaken. In the days of conventional diplomacy, the Rihanna tweet would have perhaps been just ignored, at least officially. But now 'the times they are a-changin''. So, is what the MEA doing headed in the right direction? Perhaps, the erudite External Affairs Minister should ponder over this, and in doing so also take into account his earlier avatar, as a diplomat.

The Delhi police have filed a first information report (FIR) against unknown persons who prepared a 'toolkit' which was attached to the first tweet of Swedish teen climate activist Greta Thunberg. The FIR revealed that those undertaking "motivated cam-

paigns" were actively undertaking efforts to embarrass and even harm India through the farmers' protest. A benign view of their objectives can be dismissed.

India should of course press the governments concerned, especially of Canada, to take action against Khalistani elements. The fact though is that these countries, Canada in particular, have shown scant regard for Indian concerns on this account and it is unlikely that they will change course now. Through all this the question that still remains is whether the social storm unleashed in India after the Rihanna tweet would deter other foreign celebrities from pursuing the now amended 'toolkit'. And when have criminal cases based on this kind of an FIR ever reached fruition?

### The rise of liberal opinion

Finally, it is not the Rihanna-like celebrities who will pose the real challenge in the coming months to the Narendra Modi government, but liberal opinion in democratic western societies. And, it will have far more traction with the advent of the Joe Biden administration in the United States. A pointer is the interaction of top U.S. Congress members in the India Caucus had, recently; asking India to ensure that "norms of democracy are maintained and peaceful protests and demonstrations be allowed", with this being conveyed to India's Ambassador to the U.S., Tarun Singh Sandhu. The government would be now conscious of engaging international liberal opinion rather than merely dismissing it.

This does not imply coming under pressure on matters of critical importance to Indian interests. But it does mean taking recourse to traditional diplomacy even if it is stodgy and unappealing to sections of nationalist Indian opinion.

Vivek Katju is a retired diplomat

## Fine-tuning the State-of-the-app technology

Keener scrutiny of the technology platforms of India's States can lead to improved public services and user confidence



CARSTEN MAPLE & VENKAT GOLI

**O**n January 13 this year, subscribers of English newspapers in India woke up to full-page advertisements from WhatsApp on the front pages. Earlier in the week, WhatsApp had announced an upcoming change to its privacy policy, which led to growing concerns around privacy among many users, and who started switching over to other messaging services such as Signal and Telegram. This led WhatsApp to issue the advertisements, which committed to protecting the privacy of its users. This unprecedented move by the Facebook-owned company indicates that Indian consumers are becoming more aware and concerned about data protection and privacy – a trend that has become stronger in the recent past.

### Platforms and COVID-19

The issue of privacy is crucial for government technology platforms and services as governments typically have a monopoly in providing public services, unlike the private sector. Hence, "porting out" or "digital migration", as seen in the case of WhatsApp, is not an option. What is needed instead, is an examination of government technological platforms to create better awareness. We saw this in action in the case of Aadhaar (the Government of India's biometric digital identity platform) and Aarogya

Setu (the Government of India's contact tracing application during the novel coronavirus pandemic).

Since the announcement of the first lockdown on March 24, 2020, at least 35 mobile apps that specifically address COVID-19 were developed by 25 States and Union Territories of India. Of these, 27 mobile apps provide general information on COVID-19 and seven allow tracking of nearby COVID-19 cases. Of all the mobile apps, 15 have a quarantine tracking feature and at least four of these require prior registration with the State Health Department.

An assessment of the 35 mobile applications revealed that 17 mobile apps provide information on COVID-19 hospitals while only three apps provide information on isolation beds. Some of the mobile apps also facilitated the home delivery of essential items, such as groceries and medicines, while seven allowed users to apply for mobility passes.

### Still a case of digital exclusion

The development of COVID-19 mobile apps was well-received and perceived as a strong proactive initiative, especially by sections of the population that were digitally empowered. However, as of October, 2020, more than 40% of mobile phone subscribers in India lack access to Internet services. This includes those with feature phones that have no Internet and when added to those with no mobile phone at all, India's digitally excluded could be more than 50%. Hence, while the creation of mobile applications makes information readily available to those with the technology to access it, it does not solve the problem for individuals

Otherwise, Mother Nature will be the decider.

**G. PARAMESWARAN, Coimbatore**

**V.K. Sasikala returns**

It was a shock to read about and see the visuals of the sea of humanity waiting to greet and catch a glimpse of V.K. Sasikala, the former aide of late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, on her return to Chennai. In fact, it is very difficult to read the pulse of the people in this part of the country as far as politics is concerned. Be that as it may, the AIADMK's

duals and communities that remain excluded digitally.

### No consistency, privacy issues

The data above implies that the mobile applications developed have not benefited from the standardisation of information and a coordinated development approach. The analysis shows that the various mobile apps on COVID-19 operated by the different State governments lack consistency in terms of the features, functionalities, and frequency of information updates they offer. As information was being updated manually in many of the mobile applications, the data in the mobile application was different from the actual data, leading to multiple sources of truth. Hence, the governments should continue to set up functional helplines, auto-diallers, SMS text messages, and other channels to ensure that the digitally restricted have access to the same information as the digitally empowered – especially during crises such as the pandemic.

Coming back to privacy, most of these State mobile apps also differ significantly on the data privacy they provide, depending on the information or permissions they request from the user. We observed that 31 of the 35 mobile apps request access to location services, nine mobile apps request access to

device ID and call information, five mobile apps request access to Bluetooth settings, 15 mobile apps request access to the camera, three mobile apps request access to contact information, and three mobile apps even request access to the user accounts on the device.

It seems that these data requests may not meet the two commonly accepted principles of data privacy – necessity (is the data necessary for the mobile application to achieve its goal?) and proportionality (is the collection of data proportionate to the extent to which an individual's right to privacy is being infringed?). The mobile applications developed could have proactively followed established principles of privacy by design, such as minimal data collection and end-to-end data security. The redundant features of numerous mobile apps of States on COVID-19, duplication of efforts, non-uniformity in data privacy, and confusion among the end user point toward a larger need for an open, interoperable, application programming interface (API)-based microservices architecture that can integrate (or host) the State digital applications with the central government's application.

### Possible solutions

The adoption of an API-based microservices architecture and federated database structure with an appropriate governance framework could address these issues. It would allow, for instance, Aarogya Setu to integrate with the myriad of State mobile apps to offer both its standard services, that is, contact tracing and real-time information on cases as well as State-specific

customised services or sub-applications such as information on hospital beds and grocery shops, among others.

Many countries in Europe have considered moving from an information flow that is centralised to a decentralised information flow for contact-tracing applications. This was largely driven by concerns regarding privacy, as centralised databases can have a higher risk of data leaks and security breaches. Besides, a decentralised information flow, owing to information residing in many individual systems and not in a centralised system, increases the cost while reducing the reward of effecting a successful breach.

Several mobile apps of the State governments employ a centralised approach. Hence, in the future, design considerations of these mobile apps should evaluate the need for a centralised approach and ascertain whether the same goals can be achieved through a decentralised information flow.

Given the presence of structured audits that continuously put the spotlight on Government of India-backed technologies, extending the same level of scrutiny to technology platforms developed by the States brings the opportunity of improved public services overall, and the public confidence needed to encourage wider adoption.

**Carsten Maple** is a Turing Fellow and Professor of Cyber Systems Engineering in WMG at the University of Warwick, U.K. **Venkat Goli** leads the Centre for Responsible Technologies at MSc (formerly MicroSave Consulting). The article was produced as a part of the India Pandemic Technology Review Project



## 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.

**Disaster in Chamoli**  
Historian Ramachandra Guha writes about the fight to save the Himalayan habitat in his work, *The Unquiet Woods*, where he chronicles the 'tree hugging' Chipko movement. But currently, the pictures from the site of the disaster appear to be 'tree-bald'. The catastrophe must lead the government to review all infrastructure projects in the region. In addition, dam construction in India's mountain States must undergo a thorough environmental assessment by impartial experts.

Otherwise, Mother Nature will be the decider.

**G. PARAMESWARAN, Coimbatore**

**V.K. Sasikala returns**

It was a shock to read about and see the visuals of the sea of humanity waiting to greet and catch a glimpse of V.K. Sasikala, the former aide of late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, on her return to Chennai. In fact, it is very difficult to read the pulse of the people in this part of the country as far as politics is concerned. Be that as it may, the AIADMK's

Edappadi K. Palaniswami has his task cut out – to keep the party united and fight two enemies, the DMK's Stalin and Ms. Sasikala, successfully in the coming State Assembly elections.

**S. RAMAKRISHNASAYEE, Chennai**

**Even Kasturba Gandhi** when released from prison then was not given so rousing a reception as Ms. Sasikala. The mammoth welcome was astonishing and astounding. The entry of Ms. Sasikala into State politics will not make any

difference; there may only be some ripples. With the DMK-Congress on one side and the BJP-AIADMK on the other, one can forecast a hung Assembly.

**MANI NATARAJAN, Chennai**

**Ms. Sasikala's return** has certainly rattled the AIADMK and her political messaging can add drama to an already charged-up election battle. Using symbolism and statement, she has set the ball rolling for an interesting election season.

**R. SIVAKUMAR, Chennai**

I am quite uncomfortable with the media coverage given to someone jailed for corruption. Her return and the likelihood of disturbances within the AIADMK are internal affairs of that party.

**T. ANAND RAJ, Chennai**

It is disheartening that a person convicted on corruption charges was given a grand welcome. One shudders to think about the future and the new order of political evolution.

**P. RANGANATHAN, Chennai**

**LAC 'transgressions'**  
It was only natural for China to seize on comments by the Union Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways and former Army Chief, General V.K. Singh, on India transgressing the Line of Actual Control more times than China. It was an unexpected windfall for China. Isn't it fair to ask when will leaders like him in the government learn that there are times when speech is silver but silence is golden?

**C.G. KURIAKOSE, Kothamangalam, Kerala**

To read more letters online, scan the QR code

# Dangers of hard sovereignty

It may serve hyper-nationalism, but shutting the world out will hurt India's citizenry as well as national interest



ATUL MISHRA

The developments of February 3, 2021 marked the crystallisation and popular production of a new posture in India's engagement with the world – that of hard sovereignty. The posture delivers a firm message: outsiders have no stake in India's internal affairs, especially as it undergoes profound and rapid changes, some of which are deeply disturbing. The posture is unprecedented and dangerous; we will do disservice to ourselves if we endorse it. And policy informed by it will expose inconsistencies in our external relations.

**New posture**

Over the past 18 months or so, the establishment had been regularly fielding international criticism and expressions of concern on domestic developments such as the changes within Jammu and Kashmir, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)-National Register of Citizens protests and the ensuing Delhi riots. One of the elements in its reactions was the assertion that these were India's internal matters which its democratic polity was capable of resolving. The references to internal affairs conspicuously foregrounded the domestic dimension of the state's sovereignty.

Against this backdrop came the press statement by the External Affairs Ministry on February 3. It expressed official India's displeasure at social media remarks by well-known figures, including a global celebrity and an activist, on the response to the farmers' protests. Official facts were put forward. The claim was made that 'vested interests' had tried to derail the protests and sully India's international reputation. 'Celebrities and others' were advised to ascertain facts before commenting on the matter and to resist the temptation of sensationalising it.

This detailed and somewhat oddly phrased statement was measured in its operative part. However, it ended with two hashtags. One suggested that there was propaganda, presumably global, against India. The other sought to rally Indians against it.



Soon, celebrities, partisans of the regime at the Centre, and a large body of concerned Indians picked up where the statement had left off. The hashtags were extensively used as a multitude of statements containing expressions of respect for the farmers and the need to resolve the issue amicably while calling for Indians to stay united swirled about on Twitter.

From the intellectual churning arose the posture on hard sovereignty. Sachin Tendulkar's loaded tweet captured the underlying theory. The statements by outsiders threatened to compromise India's sovereignty. They could watch the internal goings on, but had no right to participate in them. Only Indians could 'decide' for India, and they had to remain united as a nation. Tendulkar had drawn the boundary line. The posture had been popularly produced.

India has jealously guarded its sovereignty since independence. However, its past sovereignty posture was deployed towards progressive goals. It was a bulwark against great power bullying and it asserted the autonomy of weaker nations. In contrast, the new posture seeks to fend off international criticism of unpleasant domestic developments. While this may suit hyper-nationalism, it will harm national interest.

First, India's global game of status seeking and strategic influence plays out on the turf of liberal democracies. The Prime Minister's claim of having enhanced India's international prestige has had as its ace reference point the recognition offered to him, and by extension India, by principally conservative forces within western democracies. Remove the spectacles of bonhomie with former U.S. President Donald Trump, warm relations with former U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron, the tactical use of the 'Ab ki baar' slogan, the

events of Madison Square Garden (2014), Wembley Stadium (2015), the London townhall (2018), 'Howdy, Modi' (2019), 'Namaste, Trump' (2020) as well as the New Delhi tea with former U.S. President Barack Obama and the claim weakens.

On the strategic front, five of India's key partners in the Indo-Pacific context are democracies: Japan, Australia, the U.S., the U.K., and France. Four of these are liberal and western. A special understanding exists among liberal democracies because they share common norms and beliefs. That human rights are universal and inviolable is one of them, and this gives governments and the civil society within liberal democracies the moral authority to nudge, criticise or rebuke a partner that doesn't match up. Democracies measure each other by higher standards. This explains the pushback of varying degrees from German Chancellor Angela Merkel, U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and even Mr. Trump in the past two years. It also explains the concerns expressed by western legislators and human rights bodies. If the establishment adopts a hard sovereignty posture soaring on the wings of strident domestic sentiments, it would encounter greater diplomatic friction. India's global game would also be adversely impacted.

**Siege mentality**

Second, hard sovereignty invariably tends towards national isolationism and siege mentality. Chances are high it would further strengthen the national-scale parochialism being encouraged by the rhetoric of Aatmanirbharata (self-reliance). Such trends have an uneven impact. Those who championed hard sovereignty would soon be at an elite sporting event in a western capital. But they would have

left their fellow citizens beleaguered. At a time when public sympathy for dissenters is at a discount, critics are being labelled, and institutions are falling short on their constitutional obligations, hard sovereignty falls like an axe on the sapping morale of non-violent social movements. Social movements do not follow the dictats and rhythms of sovereign states. They draw energy through transnational solidarities and bring about important policy corrections within and across states. Case in point: Black Lives Matter, which our celebrities supported. Imagine the consequences of being further marooned for social struggles hitherto considered indispensable to the health of Indian democracy.

Finally, it would increase the susceptibility of our neighbourhood policy to criticism on the grounds of inconsistency. Consider the CAA, 2019. Although the letter of the amendment doesn't state it, the accompanying public discourse has carried an indictment of India's Muslim-majority neighbours insofar as their treatment of minorities is concerned. Is it unlikely that we will hear governments and others within our neighbourhood decry us for interfering in their internal affairs? Indeed, the Pakistan Foreign Office took this line in December 2019 as the CAA was passing parliamentary process. It won't be surprising if others followed, especially if equations turned sour, as they periodically do on the subcontinent. Consider also how it would undercut the effectiveness of what is principally a tactical arsenal even if it is grounded in facts: pointing out the dismal human rights situation in Balochistan to the liberal democratic world. If we are discomfited at expressions of solidarity with protesting farmers, why should the international liberals offer us traction?

India's reputation had long been the soft power capital it deployed to meet its hard power shortfall as it pursued its international ambitions. As that reputation suffers, the country's options lessen and effectiveness shrinks. Scarcely a welcome development for a 'leading power'. We must counter interventionist remarks coming from vested interests. But we must be discerning as well, for some critics may mean well.

*Atul Mishra teaches international relations at Shiv Nadar University. Views are personal*

## POCSO doesn't brook dilution

The law must be interpreted to provide additional protection to children against sexual assault

## R.K.VIJ

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act was enacted in 2012 especially to protect children (aged less than 18) from sexual assault. The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Act admitted that a number of sexual offences against children were neither specifically provided for in extant laws nor adequately penalised. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by India in 1992, also requires sexual exploitation and sexual abuse to be addressed as heinous crimes. It was therefore felt that offences against children be defined explicitly and also countered through commensurate penalties as an effective deterrence.

It was in this backdrop that the recent judgment of the Bombay High Court, in *Satish Ragde v. State of Maharashtra*, in which the accused was acquitted under the POCSO Act, came under massive criticism. The Bench acquitted a man found guilty of assault on the grounds that he groped his victim over her clothes and there was no skin-to-skin contact between them. As this judgment was likely to set a dangerous precedent, the apex court stayed the acquittal.

Section 7 of the POCSO Act, inter alia, says that whoever with sexual intent touches the breast of the child is said to commit sexual assault. Whereas Section 8 of the Act provides minimum imprisonment of three years for sexual assault, Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) lays down a minimum of one year imprisonment for outraging the modesty of a woman.

**IPC and POCSO: Differences**

The difference between POCSO and IPC, as far as the offence of sexual assault is concerned, is two-fold. One, the definition of 'assault' or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty given in the IPC is generic whereas in POCSO, the acts of sexual assault are explicitly mentioned such as touching various private parts or doing any other act which involves physical contact without penetration. 'Sexual assault' in POCSO specifically excludes rape which requires penetration; other

wise the scope of 'sexual assault' under POCSO and 'outraging modesty of a woman' under the IPC is the same. Two, whereas the IPC provides punishment for the offence irrespective of any age of the victim, POCSO is specific for the protection of children. Higher punishment is provided under POCSO not because more 'serious allegations' of sexual assault are required but because the legislature wanted punishment to be more deterrent if the victims are children. Therefore, once the act of 'outraging modesty with the use of assault or criminal force', which is nothing but 'sexual assault', is proved, the requisite punishment must be slapped under POCSO if the victim is a child.

The essence of a woman's modesty is her sex and the culpable intention of the accused is the crux of the matter in the cases of sexual assault. In *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* (1997), the Supreme Court held that the offence relating to modesty of woman cannot be treated as trivial. In *Pappu v. State of Chhattisgarh* (2015), the High Court of Chhattisgarh, though it acquitted the accused under Section 354 of the IPC as the offence was found lacking in use of 'criminal force or assault', convicted him for sexual harassment under Section 354A which requires 'physical contact' and advances as a necessary element. This case also pertained to squeezing the limbs and breasts of a 13-year-old girl but the High Court did not venture into the area of skin-to-skin contact.

It will not be out of place to mention here that the Sexual Offences Act 2003 of the U.K. says that touching (with sexual intent) includes touching with any part of the body, with anything else or through anything. The POCSO Act might be silent on such niceties; it is the bodily integrity of a woman that needs to be protected. Therefore, in the absence of any specific provision in the POCSO Act which requires skin-to-skin touch as a mandatory element of an offence, any interpretation which dilutes protection to children must be declared *ultra vires*.

*R.K. Vij is a senior IPS officer in Chhattisgarh. Views are personal*

# Dams and damages

The Uttarakhand government continues to ignore evidence that hydropower projects in the fragile region exacerbate disasters



KAVITA UPADHYAY

In 2018, while travelling through the villages near the India-China border in Niti Valley in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, I stopped at Reni village, the birthplace of the iconic Chipko movement. The way to Reni was dotted with hydropower projects that were marred by controversy. The villagers complained about the rampant flouting of norms by the hydropower developers, which forced them to protest against such projects.

**Flouting all norms**

On February 7, two such hydropower projects located close to Reni suffered damages from flash floods that left 31 dead and 175 people missing. The barrages of the 13.2 MW Rishiganga hydropower project, which is located on the river Rishiganga, only a few metres from Reni, and NTPC's 520 MW Tapovan-Vishnugad hydropower project, on the River Dhauliganga, about 4 km from Reni, were completely damaged. It is important to note here though that dams are not victims of disasters; they, in fact, exacerbate disasters.

While the actual cause of the February 7 floods is under investigation, pegging it as a natural disaster may be incorrect. A June 26, 2019 order of the Uttarakhand High Court questioned the use of explosives on the Rishiganga site – that too for illegal mining in the name of dam construction. The use of explosives has repeatedly been questioned for dam construction, and the construction of other infrastructure projects, such as roads, in the fragile Himalayan State.

Other than this, deforestation takes place when dams are constructed. While compensatory afforestation is the norm, it is often floated. The construction material that is supposed to be dumped on separate land is often dumped into the rivers. It would be naïve to assume that a disaster in Uttarakhand that involves dams was 'natural'.

The Chopra Committee report of 2014 brings more clarity on how dams exacerbate a disaster such as floods. The committee was formed in October 2013 after the Supreme Court ordered the Union Environment Ministry to constitute an expert body to assess whether dams exacerbated the 2013 floods in the State where over 4,000 people were killed, mainly in the Kedarnath Valley. The committee was headed by environmentalist Ravi Chopra and comprised 10 other mem-

bers including geologists and biodiversity experts. Its report mentions how dams exacerbated the 2013 deluge, mainly as riverbeds were already raised from the disposed muck at the dam construction sites, and could not contain the sudden increased flow from floodwaters. The report presents evidence to prove that dams are not only damaged in floods, they also cause immense damage in downstream areas. This is because as floodwaters damage a barrage, they increase the destructive capacity of the water that flows downstream of the barrage. The Chopra Committee suggested that 23 of the 24 proposed dam projects it reviewed be cancelled for the potential damage they could do. However, even after all these years, the matter remains pending in the Supreme Court, and environmental norms for dam construction continue to be flouted in Uttarakhand.

In an affidavit submitted on December 5, 2014 in the Supreme Court, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change acknowledged the adverse impact of dams in the 2013 floods, but to no effect.

**Impact of climate change**

To make matters worse, Himalayan glaciers are receding and disintegrating as a result of climate change, and the snow cover in the Himalayas is also thinning. Research also shows how an increased number and volume of glacial lakes should be expected as a direct impact of increased temperatures. For dams, this means rapid increase or decrease in the reservoir water level. It also means that the projections on the life of a dam reservoir may not stand due to erratic events, such as floods, that could rapidly fill a reservoir with muck and boulders brought along with the floods.

There is also the threat of earthquakes. In terms of earthquake risk, Uttarakhand lies in Seismic Zone-IV (severe intensity) and Seismic Zone-V (very severe intensity). Ignoring this, many dams have been constructed in zones that are under high risk of witnessing severe earthquakes.

Irrespective of the evidence, the Uttarakhand government plans on continuing to build dams as a source of revenue. The State plans to construct up to 450 hydropower projects of 27,039 MW installed capacity. Clearly, the Uttarakhand government has chosen to ignore the disastrous impacts of rampant dam-building. It is clear that dams worsen disasters, and for this to be ignored by the State authorities is unfortunate.

*Kavita Upadhyay is a journalist from Uttarakhand, who has extensively reported on the State's environmental disasters. She's a graduate in Water Science, Policy and Management from the University of Oxford*



## DATA POINT

## A dirty truth

**RISING FATALITIES**

Compared to the five years preceding it, the latest five years recorded a nearly 28% increase in persons dying while cleaning sewers or septic tanks

**IDENTIFIED WORKERS**

Nearly 57% of the 62,334 manual scavengers identified as of January 2020 were from U.P. The chart shows the number of manual scavengers identified in the 17 States where data were available

**2011-2015**

266 deaths

**2016-2020**

340 deaths



Despite being outlawed, the dehumanising work of manual scavenging persists in India and has claimed the lives of 340 workers in the last five years, according to the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry. As of January 2020, most of the identified manual scavengers worked in Uttar Pradesh, which also reported the most sewer cleaning deaths in the last five years. About one in three sewer cleaning-related deaths did not result in the victim's family being compensated.

By Naresh Singaravelu and Vignesh Radhakrishnan

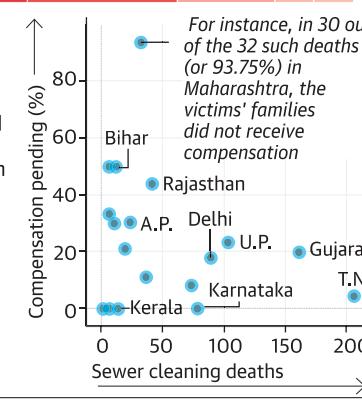
**SEWER DEATHS**

Of the 340 workers who died while or because of cleaning sewers and septic tanks in the last five years ending December 31, 2020, 52 were from U.P., the highest among all States. The chart depicts the State-wise number of such deaths reported in the last five years

U.P. 52	Maharashtra 34	Karnataka 24	
T.N. 43	Gujarat 31	Punjab 17	A.P. 16
Delhi 36	Haryana 31	W.B. 13	Bihar 8
			Kerala 3

**PENDING COMPENSATION**

The chart plots the number of manual scavengers who died cleaning sewers or septic tanks between 1993 and January 2020 against the share of the victims' families who did not receive monetary compensation as per a 2014 Supreme Court directive



Source: National Commission for Safai Karamcharis, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

**A HUNDRED YEARS AGO** FEBRUARY 10, 1921**The Great Illusion**

(From an Editorial)

His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught yesterday performed the most important of the functions which comprised his mission and nothing brings out the true character of that mission more clearly than the message that he conveyed to the members of the Legislative Assembly from His Majesty the King-Emperor as well as the speech in which he amplified that message. We have time and again insisted that the object of the mission was the apotheosis of the Reforms and if tireless beating of the big drum could be accepted in evidence of accomplishment then has the Duke's mission achieved its purpose. The people of India, outside that circle with whom Dukes and especially Royal Dukes are *ipso facto* on the righteous side, will view with a boredom not unmixed with amusement this last supreme effort in that gentle art of window-dressing which has attained such a tremendous development since the advent of a Premier and a Secretary of State who have been quick to realise the value of advertisement in politics. They know what the Reforms are worth and how far short they fall of what they consider their due and they refuse to be bamboozled into translating the magnificence of the bringer of the gift into the gift itself.

FROM PAGE ONE

## 197 still missing in Chamoli avalanche

The rescue work in the longer Tapovan tunnel is under way. An ITBP official said a 60-metre patch filled with sludge and debris had to be cleared before they could establish contact with the trapped workers.

"The tunnel is up to 15 feet high and the height of the debris is 13-14 feet. We have cleared up to 120 metres so far. It is this 60 metres that is proving to be extremely challenging to clear. There is a gap beyond this mound where this tunnel meets the other and we are hopeful of finding the trapped people there," the official said.

The official said no contact had been established

with the workers so far. "We are hopeful because beyond 60 metres, we do not expect any debris. The more debris we are extricating, the more of it is flowing out on its own," he said.

Another official said: "Some people working here have told us that they had complained of the tunnel getting inundated in the past but no action was taken. The floor is marshy, making it difficult to walk. Only heavy vehicles and machines can extricate the debris." An Unmanned Aerial Vehicle was also flown into the tunnel to collect clues but it did not get enough headroom for manoeuvring.

## SC protects Tharoor, journalists from arrest

"What is the danger?" Chief Justice Bobde asked him the reason for his apprehension of arrests.

"The investigation agency is in Delhi..." Mr. Sibal replied.

"So, are you going to arrest by the time we hear you?" Chief Justice Bobde asked Mr. Mehta.

Mr. Mehta said he was only appearing for one State. The FIRs were registered in multiple States, including Uttar Pradesh. This led the CJI to go ahead and indicate that a stay on arrest would be necessary.

However, Mr. Mehta indicated that, in time, in the case, he would be appearing for all the authorities concerned. "But what is the prejudice caused if such a statement is made [by the court]?" Mr. Sibal asked.

"We have stayed arrest," the CJI concluded the discussion.

Mr. Tharoor and others had moved the Supreme Court against charges of sedition, promotion of enmity and criminal conspiracy levelled against them for posting "malafide, defamatory, false and misleading" tweets accusing the Delhi Police of killing a farmer during the tractor rally on Republic Day.

"This was clearly done with an intent to engineer large-scale riots and religious tension among different communities," the Gurugram Police FIR read.

## ED searches offices of digital news platform

"The funds also came from a U.S.-based company, which had already been liquidated. Another U.S. firm, said to be a shareholder, is under the scanner," the ED official said.

According to the agency, the company running NewsClick allegedly showed exports from a premises, which was closed for the past about two years.

The searches started around 10 a.m. at the Saidulajab office of NewsClick in South Delhi.

The ED team, which was carrying a notice authorising the search, sought certain documents from the new organisation's repre-

sentatives for scrutiny. The agency officials also visited the residential premises of its directors, including the portal's editor-in-chief Prabir Purkayastha, and editor Pranjal.

DIGIPUB News India Foundation issued a statement, strongly condemning the searches "at the office of NewsClick and the homes of its directors and editor Prabir Purkayastha".

DIGIPUB News India Foundation believes that the ED raids on NewsClick, its editor and directors, is a clear attempt to suppress journalism critical of the government and its allies," it said.

## Deep Sidhu arrested over Red Fort vandalism

His custody was required to identify other accused in the case. The police had announced a cash reward of ₹1 lakh for information leading to Mr. Sidhu's arrest.

On February 7, the police said pictures of over 70 people involved in the violence had been released, and 126 persons arrested so far.

A senior police officer said Mr. Sidhu was seen in several videos and CCTV recordings of the Red Fort violence obtained from various sources. An FIR was registered at the Kotwali police station and it was later transferred to the Crime Branch for further investigation. In mobile footages, he and others were seen instigating and provoking mob to enter Red Fort and hoist a religious flag.

Police said he was detained from the Karnal Highway in Haryana on Monday when he was about to board a car to escape to Bihar, where his wife is staying. He claimed that he was hiding at various locations in Ha-

ryana and Punjab after January 26. After he was named in the violence case, he recorded video messages with the help of his friends and the videos were uploaded on social media sites through his friend who is in the U.S.

Sanjeev Yadav, DCP (Special Cell) said, "He first came to Singhu border on November 25 where he took a room on rent and arranged a tent for himself. He claimed that he entered in the movement after he got carried away by the farmers' protest during initial days of the protest back in Punjab. He was in touch with farmers' leaders but he detached himself from them when he found leaders were soft with the police.

Thereafter, he addressed a group of like-minded protesters and planned to take a tractor parade to India Gate but due to heavy police deployment he moved to the Red Fort. On January 27, he was seen running away from the Singhu border.

## I want to bring back my father's rule: Sharmila

Andhra Pradesh CM's sister hints at political entry in Telangana

RAVI REDDY  
HYDERABAD

Dropping enough hints about her intention to take the plunge into active politics in Telangana, Y.S. Sharmila, daughter of former (undivided) Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister late Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy and sister of present Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, on Tuesday said she was determined to bring back "the golden rule" of her father in Telangana.

"My father always strove to bring back the smile on the faces of farmers. They used to live like kings, the poor had pucca houses, Arogyasri health scheme benefited many and students got the best education," Ms. Sharmila told reporters outside the Lotus Pond residence where a meeting of YSR's followers and well-wishers was organised on Tuesday.

The meeting coincided



New terrain: Supporters of Y.S. Sharmila, sister of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, in front of her Lotus Pond residence in Hyderabad. ■ NAGARA GOPAL



STAFF REPORTER  
GUNTUR

With Y.S. Sharmila, sister of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, hinting at floating a party in Telangana, adviser to the A.P. government (Public Affairs) Sajala Ramakrishna Reddy on Tuesday said the YSR Congress Party had taken a clear stand against expanding it in the neighbouring Telugu State.

The decision was taken by Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy in the interests of the party and the people of the State, he said.

## Jagan not for forming a new party: govt. adviser

the speculation of the 'differences' in the YSR family. "I can assure you that there are no personal differences between Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy and Ms. Sharmila. But yes, there is difference of opinion over setting up a new party in Telangana. Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy is of the view that it would be prudent that both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana governments work in harmony in the larger interests of the people of the two States. He does not support the idea of floating a new party in Telangana," Mr. Ramakrishna Reddy told the media here.

"Ms. Sharmila, however, has a different view on it and we respect it. Everyone knows that Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy speaks straight from his heart," he said.

Mr. Ramakrishna Reddy said it was not an easy task to run a political party and the leader should be always ready to take many blows.

with the 50th wedding anniversary of YSR and Vijayamma on Tuesday.

**Brother doing good job'** Stating that Mr. Reddy was at the helm of affairs in Andhra Pradesh and was doing a good job, Ms. Sharmila said she too wanted to focus on Telangana.

"There is a void left behind by the untimely death of my father. I am overwhelmed by the love and affection shown by the people today," she said reiterating

her commitment to bring back "Rajanna Rajyam".

"Before I make any political announcement, I want to interact with well-wishers and loyalists. I am here only to listen to what the ground reality is in the districts," Ms. Sharmila earlier told a meeting of people from Nalgonda.

Over 100 select leaders from old Nalgonda district and the Chevella parliamentary constituency attended the meeting and aired their opinion. They wholeheartedly welcomed her decision to play an active role in Telangana.

## SC stays curbs on activist Rehana

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed a blanket ban imposed by the Kerala High Court on activist Rehana Fathima using any kind of media to express or share her views.

However, a Bench led by Justice Rohinton F. Nariman retained a condition imposed by the High Court that Ms. Fathima should not use the media to hurt religious feelings.

The December 2018 and November 2020 orders of the High Court concerned bail granted to Ms. Fathima in a case of committing "deliberate and malicious acts" to hurt religious feelings under Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code.

The case was registered by the Kerala police against Ms. Fathima for her Facebook posts concerning the top court's judgment allowing entry of women into the Sabarimala temple.

Pay 50% of interim compensation'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday indicated that builders of the demolished and illegal high-rise apartment complexes at Maradu in Kerala ought to pay 50% of the interim compensation to residents in a time-bound manner or face revenue recovery proceedings.

As the Bench led by Justice Navin Sinha expressed its mind that builders should cough up the compensation, senior advocate Kapil Sibal and advocate A. Karthik, representing the builders, sought time to get instructions from their clients. The court scheduled a hearing on February 17.

Four complexes were demolished at Maradu in Kochi in January 2020 following a Supreme Court order, for violation of coastal zone regulations.

An October 28 report



The site where the 16-storey Jain Coral Cove Apartments stood at Maradu in Kochi. ■ THULASI KAKKAT

filed by the apex court-appointed committee led by Justice K. Balakrishnan Nair had said the builders were responsible for the constructions and had to pay the compensation.

The builders had opposed this recommendation, saying the entire liability for the illegal constructions could not fall upon them.

## Protest against 'backdoor' postings gains momentum

Congress backs movement; agitators attempt suicide

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The controversy created by the alleged backdoor appointments has threatened to ignite a youth backlash against the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in Kerala. The Congress on Tuesday attempted to capitalise on the outrage at reports of widespread favouritism and corruption in appointments.

The allegations seemed to spark discontent among hundreds waiting for appointment letters after having cleared the Kerala Public Service Commission (PSC) tests for government jobs.

### Audio clip row

A "leaked" audio clip of a solar investment case suspect seeking cash for backdoor appointments, allegedly at the behest of CPI(M) leaders, added a new twist to the dispute.

The ongoing agitation by the PSC rank holders in front of the Secretariat took a worrying turn



Job woes: PSC rank holders staging a protest at the Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday. ■ S. MAHINSHA

for the second consecutive day on Tuesday.

A few youths who had cleared the PSC examination for appointment to the post of civil police officer (CPO) climbed a tall building nearby and threatened to jump down. The police thwarted the attempt.

put, PSC rank holders agitated across the State against the rampant "nepotism" in job placement. The protesters transcended party lines.

The ongoing agitation by the PSC rank holders in front of the Secretariat took a worrying turn



KERALA

IN BRIEF



Panchayat elections begin in Andhra Pradesh

GUNTUR  
Barring a few incidents, the first phase of polling to elect sarpanches and ward members across Andhra Pradesh went on peacefully on Tuesday. Elections were held for 2,723 gram panchayats to elect sarpanches and 20,157 ward members. An overall polling percentage of 81.67 was recorded, with Krishna district recording the highest of 85.06.

Sunny Leone moves HC for anticipatory bail

KOCHI  
Bollywood actor Sunny Leone on Tuesday approached the Kerala High Court seeking anticipatory bail in a cheating case filed by a coordinator of stage shows. The complainant alleged that the actor and other accused had taken ₹39 lakh for stage shows in Kerala and abroad but did not attend them or return the money.

Horatti is Karnataka Council Chairman

BENGALURU  
Janata Dal (Secular) leader Basavaraj Horatti on Tuesday elected Chairman of Karnataka Legislative Council amid a protest by the Congress over the passage of the anti-cow slaughter Bill. The election was necessitated by the resignation of K.

Prathapchandra Shetty. He quit after a no-confidence motion was moved by the BJP and the JD(S).

## Four held in Hyderabad for human trafficking

Owner, MD of travel agency at large

STAFF REPORTER  
HYDERABAD

The Special Operations Team of L.B. Nagar on Tuesday raided the office of a travel agency in Malakpet here in Telangana, and busted a human trafficking racket.

Four persons were arrested from Al Hayat Tours and Travels.

According to police, the accused are Shaik Mohammed Imtiyaz, 35, from Khajipet; Nune Subba, 27, a resident of Kadapa; G. Subba Rayudu, 38, also from Kadapa; and Md. Haider, 52, an office assistant of the travel agency. Sumaiyah Fathima, 23, owner of the tra-

vel agency; her father Md. Naseer, MD of the agency; and one Sayeed, 45, are absconding.

Police said Imtiyaz, Subba, Rayudu and Sayeed have been working as travel agents. Subba worked in Muscat as a domestic help and speaks Arabic fluently. She is acquainted with manpower recruitment agencies in Qatar, Oman and Kuwait. Subba and Rayudu used to send gullible people looking for a job to these countries on a visa instead of a work visa.

The move to renominate Mr. Azad comes at a time when he has fallen out with the Central leadership after writing a letter recently, as part of a group of 23 leaders, to Congress president Sonia Gandhi asking to fix the leadership issue in the party.

Under the current dispensation, Kerala is the only State from where the Congress-led United Democratic Front will be able to send

## Congress divided over RS seat from Kerala for Azad

Tenure of Leader of the Opposition ends on February 15

BIJU GOVIND  
KOZHIKODE

A section of the Congress Central and State leaderships are against offering a Rajya Sabha seat from Kerala to the Leader of the Opposition in the Upper House, Ghulam Nabi Azad, whose tenure ends on February 15.

Simultaneously, the Con-

gress is on the horns of a dilemma, having to scout for a new Leader of the Opposition, a post which Mr. Azad has been holding since 2014.

However, a few leaders believe that Mr. Azad who has remained steadfastly loyal to the Gandhis would possibly get a chance from Kerala where three Rajya Sabha seats will fall vacant by April.

Under the current dispen-

sation, Kerala is the only State from where the Congress-led United Democratic Front will be able to send

him to the Rajya Sabha.

The three members who will retire from the Upper House are senior Congress leader Vayalar Ravi, Indian Union Muslim League leader P.V. Abdul Wahab and CPI(M) nominee K.K. Ragesh.

A senior functionary of the party said it was for the high command to take a call on Mr. Azad's renomination from Kerala. Leaders from the State are not keen on the candidature of Mr. Azad.

Also, the ECI has not decided on the Assembly elections scheduled to be held

IN BRIEF



Supreme Court holds order on UPSC aspirants

NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Tuesday reserved its judgment on a plea filed by UPSC aspirants, whose last attempt to crack the civil services exam was dampened by pandemic restrictions last year, for another chance. Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju said the judiciary should intervene only if the government policy was "arbitrary, uninformed and capricious".

Shutdown in Kashmir on Afzal Guru's anniversary

Srinagar  
A shutdown was observed in Kashmir valley on Tuesday, the eighth death anniversary of Afzal Guru, the 2001 Parliament attack convict who was hanged in 2013. Most markets and commercial hubs remained closed in the Valley. Lal Chowk, the main commercial hub, saw most shops and offices closed. There was skeletal traffic on the roads.

BJP will bring 'asal parivartan', says Nadda

KOLKATA  
Bharatiya Janata Party president J.P. Nadda on Tuesday flagged off the party's second "parivartan yatra" in West Bengal, and claimed that only the BJP can usher in "asal parivartan (real development)" in the State. Mr. Nadda, who was visiting the poll-bound State the second time this month, said real change not only meant bringing in development but also restoring the culture of the State.

# MPs target govt. on farm laws

Harsimrat Badal of the Shiromani Akali Dal says it has become inhuman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Opposition members in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday targeted the Modi government over the farm laws, with former Union Minister and Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Harsimrat Kaur Badal accusing the government of becoming 'inhuman' not to see the plight of farmers. The House was discussing the Motion of Thanks on the President's address to the joint session of Parliament.

Defending the farm laws, BJP Meenakshi Lekhi said they were brought in to end farmers' suicides in India. The fact that the world is now discussing the protests in India over the farm laws instead of the coronavirus indicates that there is an international conspiracy to defame India, she added.

Ms. Lekhi alleged that the farmers' protest was "a Molotov cocktail of Khalistanis, PFI [Popular Front of India] and ISI [Inter Services Intelligence] agendas at the behest



SAD MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal showing a photograph while speaking in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. • PTI

of masters sitting in Beijing."

Ms. Badal of SAD, who was the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) over the farm laws, said that when the laws were first brought in as ordinances by the Modi government, she had urged her Cabinet colleagues to have wider consultation. "We were told that it [consultations] will happen when we bring a law," she recalled.

The SAD leader also claimed that she had submitted a letter to the Agriculture Minister against the farm

laws after she had ascertained the views of the farmers. Ms. Badal said while the farmers were braving the biting cold of Delhi for over 70 days at the borders of Delhi, the government had shut its eyes and ears.

"Yes, I was in the government for the past six years but when the government becomes inhuman, what's the point of staying in such a government," Ms. Badal said. She also questioned the intelligence failure in preventing the January 26 violence and pointed out that it

was known a day before (January 25) that there was call to deviate from the laid down route and move towards the Red Fort.

Another former NDA ally, Hanuman Beniwal of the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party, said the BJP would pay a price for its arrogance in the 2024 Lok Sabha poll.

Trinamool's Saugata Roy accused Union Ministers of resorting to "political tourism" in West Bengal and accused the BJP of following a divisive agenda. Referring to Prime Minister Modi getting emotional in the Rajya Sabha while giving a farewell speech for Ghulam Nabi Azad, he urged Mr. Modi to also shed a few tears for the farmers who died in the protests. Countering Mr. Modi's *aandolan jivi* [professional protester] jibe, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen MP Asaduddin Owaisi said, "Yes, there will be *andolans* as Narendra Modi is not the emperor, and those days are gone."

# Joe Biden and Modi talk of democratic institutions, norms

Language of the White House readout significant

SIRIRAM LAKSHMAN

U.S. President Joe Biden discussed democratic institutions and norms with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as per a White House readout of the call between the two leaders.

The White House said they talked about a "free and open Indo-Pacific" and that Mr. Biden underscored "his desire to defend democratic institutions and norms around the world".

He "noted that a shared commitment to democratic values is the bedrock for the U.S.-India relationship".

This is suggestive of an added emphasis on the bilateral relationship, relative to the Trump administration, which had focused on the security aspect, driven in large measure by growing Chinese aggression and assertiveness.

The language of the readout is significant in the context of the farmers' protest



Joe Biden

dia Caucus, and some of his colleagues discussed the "norms of democracy" in the context of the farmers' protest with Indian Ambassador Tarun Singh Sandhu, according to Mr. Sherman.

On the Indo-Pacific, the White House readout of the Biden-Modi call mentioned freedom of navigation, "territorial integrity" (presumably a reference to China's aggression along the Line of Control) and strengthening the Quad - India, the U.S., Australia and Japan.

dom of navigation, territorial integrity, and a stronger regional architecture through the Quad," it said.

There was also a discussion on the military takeover in Myanmar and Mr. Modi and Mr. Biden resolved "that the rule of law and the democratic process must be upheld in Burma," according to the White House.

"The leaders agreed to stay in close touch on a range of global challenges and look forward to what the United States and India will achieve together for their people and for their nations," it stated.

Mr. Biden has already spoken with a number of world leaders since he took office, including traditional allies from Europe (the U.K., France, Germany, NATO), Asia and the Pacific (Japan, Australia, South Korea) and the Americas.

**Jaishankar, Blinken talk**

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said he had spoken with his American counterpart, Antony Blinken, on Wednesday, a day after the Modi-Biden call. Their discussion included Quad cooperation and Myanmar, as per Mr. Jaishankar.

"Welcomed the comprehensive discussion today with @SecBlinken. Reviewed Indo-Pacific developments and the Quad cooperation. Exchanged views on the situation in Myanmar. Look forward to remaining in touch," Mr. Jaishankar wrote on Twitter.

# SC panel meets agribusinesses

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court-appointed panel to examine the three contentious farm reform laws met representatives of 18 agribusinesses on Tuesday, as part of its consultations with stakeholders.

It has previously met some farmers' associations and farmer-producer organisations, which are largely in

favour of reforms but has yet to meet any of the unions that have been protesting on Delhi's borders for two and a half months, demanding the repeal of the laws.

At its sixth round of consultations on Tuesday, the panel met representatives of Amul, ITC, Suguna Foods and Venkateshwara Hatcheries, as well as industry lobby groups such as the CII and

the FICCI. Other stakeholders who gave their views on the farm laws included associations representing seafood exporters, rice millers and exporters, poultry feed makers, grain and pulses traders, cotton mills and traders, and manufacturers of tractors and fertilizers.

State-run bodies such as the FCI was also asked to give its views on the laws.

# YouTube takes down songs of protest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

YouTube has removed a couple of Punjabi songs related to the farmers' protest from its platform, including a song called *Ailaan*, following government orders, a source confirmed.

# Families await reunion with loved ones

30-35 people are trapped in a tunnel



Relatives waiting to receive recovered bodies at Raini village in Tapovan. • AFP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
TAPOVAN  
They stand ashen-faced in small clusters near the devastated barrage of the NTPC's Tapovan-Vishnugad hydel project, waiting for some news about their missing relatives.

Camping at Tapovan since the glacier tragedy struck in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district on Sunday, the hope of being reunited with their missing kin brings them every morning to the banks of the Dhauliganga where intense efforts are under way to trace around 30-35 people trapped inside a tunnel.

One of the glum-faced bystanders is Dipak Nagwala of Kanchula village, whose sister's husband Sateshwar Singh, a contractual mechanic, was at work inside the tunnel at the time of the avalanche.

Three men of Chamoli's kimana village are also stuck inside the tunnel. Over 40 people from the village have been camping at Tapovan.

# 71 from U.P. remain untraced

Migrant workers are hoping that their missing colleagues will be rescued

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

Shyamu Kumar, 22, from Uttar Pradesh had joined work at the hydro project at Tapovan in the neighbouring Uttarakhand barely three weeks ago, but the damage caused to the project by the sudden floods in the tributaries of the Ganga has already thrown his life into uncertainty.

However, for now, he is more than glad to be alive.

Kumar, a construction labourer from Lakhimpur Kheri district of U.P., was on night duty on Sunday and sleeping in one of the designated tin rooms for labourers at a safe height above the devastation. In recent days, he was engaged in construction work at a barrage.

"When the flood submerged everything, my nephew woke me up saying, 'Uncle, the glaciers have cracked, we need to get away from here.' The barrages were all submerged," Mr. Kumar told *The Hindu* on the phone from Tapovan

on Tuesday. He is still haunted by the spectacle of the mammoth and violent waves of water gushing down the mountains. But he is more worried about the well-being of his colleagues and friends from back home. Are they still trapped in the tunnels? Will they be rescued or have they been washed away? Ramu, 20, his neighbour from Lakhimpur Kheri - Kumar is from Tikonia village - was working inside one of the

tunnels when the waters struck. "He used to call me mama [maternal uncle]. We came here together to work. I am saddened... I have little hope that he will be found alive," Mr. Kumar said.

Like thousands of young men from the region, Kumar and his colleagues had come here in search of a better livelihood. At the Tapovan project, he was recruited on a salary of ₹4,000, more than thrice the amount he could hope

to get back in his village or nearby kasba. "There are not many opportunities there," he said.

Three days after the incident, U.P. has identified 71 persons belonging to the State who are still untraceable after the tragedy from various sites. State Relief Commissioner Sanjay Goyal told *The Hindu*. The numbers could still go up, he said. Most of these persons (34) belong to Lakhimpur Kheri, followed by Saharanpur (10), Shravasti (5), Gorakhpur (4), Amroha (2), Deoria (2) and Bijnor (2). The list includes labourers, fitters and site engineers, said the official. The details, he said, were yet to be confirmed by their kin.

One of those declared dead was reportedly identified as being from U.P. but confirmation was still awaited from the Uttarakhand officials, said Mr. Goyal. Acknowledging the grim situation, he said the chances of tracing missing persons alive after three days were "remote."

**Efforts on:** Floodlights lit around the Tapovan tunnel area, where a search is on for the trapped workers. • AFP

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**Like thousands of young men from the region, Kumar and his colleagues had come here in search of a better livelihood. At the Tapovan project, he was recruited on a salary of ₹4,000, more than thrice the amount he could hope**

# 'Crashing rock mass may have caused flash floods'

Scientists blame a weak zone for collapse

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Scientists from the institute conducted a helicopter survey to find clues what led to the deadly flash floods that swept everything in its way.

Kalachand Sain, Director of the WIHG, said the glaciers where the incident occurred feed the Rishiganga river that ultimately joins the Dhauliganga.

"This region has a very steep gradient. Our observations suggest that the rock mass also brought earth and mounds of snow with it. The friction may have weakened due to freezing and thawing. This sometimes leads to the development of a weak zone and fractures," he said.

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**Invites application for the post of Managing Director in Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Limited (OHPC).**

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The Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) is seeking qualified candidates for the post of **Managing Director, Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Limited (OHPC)** in its corporate office located at Bhubaneswar in the Scale of Pay of Rs.1,35,100 - 2,16,800/- (level-17 of the Pay Matrix under the ORSP rules,2017). The post carries DA, HRA, Medical allowance and perks as per Rules of the Corporation.

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## IN BRIEF



## Cong. seeks discussion on V.K. Singh's remark

NEW DELHI Adhir Ranjan Chowdhary, Leader of the Congress' legislative party in the Lok Sabha, said on Tuesday that the House needed to discuss the controversy created by Minister of State for Road Transport Gen. V.K. Singh (retd.) with his statement that the India-China border had not been clearly demarcated, and while China had transgressed the LAC, India had "done the same" possibly more times than China, without the government announcing it.

## DMK MP calls for release of convicts in Rajiv case

NEW DELHI DMK MP Jagatrakshan on Tuesday demanded that the convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, who had served more than 20 years, should be set free. He made this demand during the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address to both the Houses.

## Akhilesh hits back over PM's jibe at protesters

NEW DELHI The Prime Minister's usage of the term 'andolan jeevi' for professional agitators, while responding to the debate on the President's address in the Rajya Sabha, got a twist in the Lower House a day later. Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav decried the reference to protesters, especially farmers, saying they were "better than being 'chanda jeevi' [creatures who collected donations]", a reference to the collection of funds for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya. Union Minister Sadhu Niranjan Joshi objected to Mr. Akhilesh's remark.

## Centre subverting democracy: Farooq

NC leader takes on govt. over DDC poll process in J&K and the prolonged farmers' agitation

NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI

National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah made an impassioned speech in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, warning the government of not just the perils of pushing farmers groups too hard on the contentious farm laws but also what he termed as attempts to subvert democracy in Jammu and Kashmir by influencing the process of elections of District Development Council (DDC) chairpersons via bureaucratic and police pressure.



Impassioned speech: MP Farooq Abdullah addressing the Lok Sabha in New Delhi on Tuesday. ■ PTI

task of electing chairpersons to these bodies was being subverted by officials under some kind of instructions.

"The DDC polls were conducted fairly but now your district collectors and officials are pressurising people to elect other chairpersons,"

he said. Dr Abdullah's party, the National Conference won a large number of seats as part of the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) and was expecting to head many DDCs especially in the Valley. However, the newly formed Apni Party,

considered close to Delhi, has won Srinagar and these processes were raising concern, he said.

The National Conference leader warned that efforts to subvert democracy never have a good effect.

"Do not snatch the mandate. Many years ago another mandate was stolen from the NC, and the replacement government didn't last two years and created much ill feeling among the people," he said.

## 'Not set in stone'

Taking the point further, he also advocated passionately for farmers unions protesting contentious agriculture reform laws. "These laws are not set in stone by God; talk to the farmers, do not stand on prestige," he urged the government.

He said that what was happening with the farmers was reminiscent of what hap-

pened with Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019 when Article 370 was read down and 35A removed.

"You could have taken us into confidence. Our party lost 1,500 people defending the Tricolour and now you are calling us Pakistani and Chinese agents! I am a Muslim and I am an Indian Muslim," Dr. Abdullah declared.

He asked for the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, stating, "You broke the State that was the crown of India into two just to show Muslims their place."

He also said that constant criticism of past prime ministers by BJP leaders was not the tradition of India.

"My father was imprisoned by Pandit Nehru but they never had bitterness, they wept when they met each other," he added. "I appeal with folded hands therefore, do not be arrogant but talk to the farmers."

RS term of three others also ends

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday gave a tearful farewell to Congress' Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad.

"We have been very close, there has not been an occasion when we have not been in touch," he said.

Mr. Modi choked as he recalled a terror attack when Mr. Azad was the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, and eight tourists from Gujarat were killed.

"The first call I received was from Ghulam Nabiji. That call was not only to inform me of the incident, but one of concern, like a family member. His tears were not stopping on the phone. That time, Pranab Mukherjee was the Defence Minister. I asked if an aircraft could be provided to get the bodies back home. Mukherjee Saab ensured that it was provided. Ghulam Nabiji called again in the night; he was at the airport," the Prime Minister reminisced, trying to stop his tears.

Other than Mr. Azad, Meen Mohammad Fayaz and Nazir Ahmad Laway, both from the Peoples Democratic Party, and Shamsher Singh Manhas of the BJP were given a farewell by the House. With their tenures getting over, the newly created Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir will not have a single representative in the Rajya Sabha.

"Not a single session has gone by when Mir Mohammad and Nazir Ahmed have not discussed issues with me in my chamber. Sometimes, they came with their families. The kind of information and insight they provided was unique, their commitment and ability will be useful for the country and to J&K," Mr. Modi said.

Mr. Azad, in an emotional speech, said he is a proud Indian. He recalled that during his college days in Kashmir, where both August 14 and 15 were celebrated, he was among the minority who participated in the Indian Independence Day celebrations.

Mr. Azad also said he was proud that he is an "Indian Muslim". "I am among those fortunate people who never went to Pakistan. When I read about circumstances in Pakistan, I feel proud to be a Hindustani Muslim." The Indian Muslim believed in peaceful existence unlike strife and war in Muslim nations, he said.

At the same time, he sounded a word of caution for the majority community, asking them to be two steps ahead in maintaining peace.

There were only a few instances when he cried out loud and these were when Sanjay Gandhi, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi died. Referring to the massacre of the Gujarati pilgrims, recalled by Mr. Modi, he said it was a time when he could not hold back his tears.

## Teary-eyed PM bids farewell to Azad

RS term of three others also ends



Ghulam Nabi Azad

## Did not sit on Tagore's chair: Amit Shah

Minister counters Congress MP's allegation, produces letter from Visva-Bharati Vice-Chancellor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah tabled a clarification in Lok Sabha on Tuesday saying he did not occupy the chair set aside as Rabindranath Tagore's at the museum dedicated to the latter at Visva-Bharati University as alleged by Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhary in the House on Monday.

Mr. Shah produced a letter from Vice-Chancellor Bidyut Chakrabarty, addressed to Mr. Chowdhary, clarifying that the Union Home Minister also invited Mr. Chowdhary to Visva-Bharati to verify the same in person.

Used by Presidents The seating arrangement, according to Mr. Chakrabarty, has been used by former Presidents Pratibha Patil and Pranab Mukherjee when they visited Visva-Bharati and it was no different for Mr. Shah. The Vice-Chancellor also invited Mr. Chowdhary to Visva-Bharati to verify the same in person.

In his speech, while making a larger point of BJP leaders not respecting national

leaders of the past, Mr. Chowdhary had stated that Mr. Shah had occupied Gurudev Tagore's seat.

## Shows photographs

"Certain allegations were made against me which are factually untrue and I want to table the clarification before the House so that the record may reflect it," said Mr. Shah. He also produced photographs of former presidents Patil and Mukherjee occupying the same seat.

In fact, said Mr. Shah, there were pictures that showed that it was former

Amid the ongoing tussle between the government and Twitter over blocking of content and accounts related to the farmers' protest, Union Ministers and government departments are setting up accounts on Koo, a Made-in-India alternative to Twitter.

Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday announced on Twitter, "I am now on Koo. Connect with me on this Indian micro-blogging platform for real-time, exciting and exclusive updates. Let us exchange our thoughts and ideas on Koo." Sanjeev Sanyal, Principal Economic Adviser, Finance Ministry, responded to it, stating "See you there shortly....."

Electronics and IT Minis-

ters of the government's AtmaNirbhar App Innovation Challenge last year. The platform recently raised \$4.1 million from a clutch of investors, including an entity backed by former Infosys CEO Mohandas Pai, Accel Partners, Kalaari Capital, Blume Ventures and Dream Incubator.

Twitter Ravi Shankar Prasad already has a verified handle on Koo, and so do the departments he handles, including Telecom, IT, India Post.

Other government departments such as the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, and MyGovIndia, are also present on Koo. Koo, which is similar to Twitter, was among the winners of the AatmaNirbhar App Innovation Challenge.

Koo was among the winners of the AatmaNirbhar App Innovation Challenge.

In his speech, while making a larger point of BJP leaders not respecting national

problems of terrorism and extremism. India supports a peace process that is Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled," Mr. Modi said.

The Prime Minister's remarks came as clashes between the Taliban and the Afghan military continued in different parts of Afghanistan.

In the latest incident, four security personnel were killed in Tuesday in a roadside bomb blast in Herat in western Afghanistan.

## Clashes in Afghanistan must end, says Modi

India supports immediate ceasefire

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

India supports "immediate comprehensive ceasefire" in Afghanistan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday. He was speaking at a ceremony to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for the construction of the Shatoot dam to provide drinking water to Kabul.

"We are concerned about the increasing violence in Afghanistan. Innocent citizens, journalists and workers are being targeted in a cowardly manner. We have called for an immediate end for violence and we support an immediate comprehensive ceasefire. Violence and peace counteract each other and both cannot co-exist.

"We continue to be engaged with the Government of India from a position of respect and have reached out to the Honourable Minister, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology," a spokesperson said.

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In his speech, while making a larger point of BJP leaders not respecting national

India and Afghanistan both want to see our region free from the problems of terrorism and extremism

NARENDRA MODI  
Prime Minister

problems of terrorism and extremism. India supports a peace process that is Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled," Mr. Modi said.

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## Asthana gets clean chit in bribery case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
AHMEDABAD

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has given a clean chit to Border Security Force chief Rakesh Asthana, in the Vadodara-based Sterling Biotech bribery case.

Mr. Asthana, a front-runner for the post of CBI Director, was under the scanner for certain entries in the diaries maintained by the Sandesara brothers, in which he was allegedly shown to be the "beneficiary" of unaccounted-for money.

The Sandesara brothers and other directors of Sterling Biotech are fugitives. The case was among those that former CBI chief Alok Verma had listed against Mr. Asthana, his No. 2 in the organisation, during an open and ugly fight between the two in 2018.

## Lokpal panel minutes need not be disclosed

CIC upholds Centre's view

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Centre has refused to disclose the minutes of the Lokpal selection committee's meetings, and its decision has now been upheld by the Central Information Commission (CIC). Right to Information (RTI) activist Anjali Bhardwaj intends to appeal against the CIC's order in court, pointing out the irony that the Lokpal itself is a body meant to augment transparency in governance.

A CIC hearing was held in January 2021, more than two years after the RTI query was filed, and the CIC's final order was published last week. At the hearing, the DoPT argued that "the confidentiality of the said record can be gauged by the fact that the averred minutes of the Selection Com-

## Phase 1 trial of nasal vaccine gets the nod

CDSCO approves revised protocol

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

A subject expert committee of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has given approval to Bharat Biotech to launch the first phase of clinical trial of an intranasal vaccine candidate for COVID-19.

After detailed deliberation, the committee recommended for conduct of proposed phase I clinical trial," read the minutes of the SEC meeting held earlier this month. The approval followed the Hyderabad-based vaccine maker presenting its proposal along with revised phase I clinical trial protocol of the Chimpanzee Adenovirus Vectored COVID-19 Vaccine (BBV154) (intranasal) as sought by the committee, at its meeting in January.

Effectively, no banking is likely for four days from March 13 (second Saturday). The committee had then

advised the firm to generate safety and immunogenicity data in Phase-I clinical trial, with 75 subjects, in the proposed doses as per the protocol.

Bharat Biotech and the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis had announced a licensing agreement in September for the nasal vaccine candidate, under which the firm bagged the distribution rights in all markets except the U.S., Japan and Europe.

Founder and CMD Krishna Ella had been highlighting that the single dose nasal vaccine would be easy to administer and reduce the cost of vaccination since medical consumables such as syringes and needles would not be required. The company has plans to manufacture the nasal vaccine at its facility in Genome Valley here.

## Actor Rajiv Kapoor passes away

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

Actor-director Rajiv Kapoor, son of celebrated filmmaker-actor Raj Kapoor, died on Tuesday after a heart attack. He was 58. His brother Randhir Kapoor passed away around 1.30 p.m.

Rajiv Kapoor made his acting debut with 1983 film *Ek Jaan Hain Hum*, but made his first appearance as a leading man in blockbuster *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*, which was Raj Kapoor's last directorial venture.

"It would be a very nice

## Poland pitches for PM's visit to Warsaw

Envoy seeks resumption of flights from Delhi

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

As the planning for two trips by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Europe this summer get underway, Poland is pitching for a visit to Warsaw. It is also negotiating with India for a travel bubble arrangement to resume direct flights which have been suspended for nearly a year due to COVID regulations, said its envoy.

While Prime Minister Modi's first trip abroad after the pandemic is scheduled for Bangladesh next month, he has accepted invitations to Brussels for March 13 last year was cancelled due to the sudden spike in cases.

At the top of the agenda for the Prime Minister's visit this year will be to salvage free trade negotiations for the EU-India Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA), which has failed to make headway since talks

were suspended in 2014 over a number of issues including market access for automobiles, dairy products, wines and the movement of professionals.

## EU-India summit

"We have high expectations for the EU-India Summit that will take place in May this year. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic we shall enhance our relations and take them to higher level. BTIA is much needed to significantly improve our trade exchange and to reduce the barriers that unfortunately are still there," Mr. Burakowski said.

"Full restoration is much needed to give a new impulse to economic and people-to-people relations. I am reading in the newspapers that India soon plans to be more open to international air traffic and I hope that Warsaw-Delhi flights will be on the list," said Mr. Burakowski. He pointed out that LOT ran at 90% capacity before flights were cancelled.

Among the issues that Poland hopes will be resolved soon is the resumption of Polish airlines LOT.

The direct flights from Delhi-Warsaw had only been started in September 2019 after a gap of 25 years, when they were cancelled along with all other flights as part of the government's lockdown measures in March 2020. Subsequently, the Ministry of Civil Aviation established "travel bubble" arrangements with 25 countries but no agreement has been reached with Poland.

"Full restoration is much needed to give a new impulse to

Inspired by *Mission: Impossible 2*, we give wheelies a try and discover they can be safe and fun too

# For a shot of adrenaline

FIROZE IRANI

There are some movie scenes you can never forget. For me, it is the iconic chase sequence in *Mission: Impossible 2*; the highlight of this scene is where Tom Cruise wheelies a Triumph Speed Triple which then goes on to explode mid-air. For years, there was no one cooler to me than Tom Cruise just because of that scene. That is exactly the point about wheelies, they look cool as heck.

Wheelies are not all drama though and mastering them can help you improve as a rider, especially if you do not have a lot of experience with powerful machines. When you have got over 100hp and not a lot of electronics, front wheels on motorcycles like going up. This feeling can be a bit scary, but knowing what it's like and learning how to control it can help you be a better, and yes, a safer rider.

Learning wheelies used to come at the cost of having a few tumbles. But there are wheelie training rigs now and Ajmera IndiKarting and Sachin (aka Riderboy the instructor) invited us over to give their set-up a go. My



colleagues Vishal Venugopal and Rishabh Bhaskar joined me and our class began with Sachin explaining how the rig worked, followed by a simple up and down ride of the course to get familiar with it.

As a safety measure, we were also asked not to use the front brake or take our legs off the pegs under any circumstances. After that, we were positioned in the centre of the track, instructed about body posi-

tioning and told to give it a shot. Sachin observed what mistakes each one of us made and kept correcting us along the way. Despite being one of India's top stunters, he is a pleasantly frank and down-to-earth teacher. In the beginning, I found myself giving it too little throttle, but after I got that right, I

pulled my first proper wheelie. Keep in mind, even with the rig and the professional by our side, it was still scary. We only began gaining confidence after half an hour of attempts. This is also when he asked us to touch the wheelie bar on the back of the Pulsar to the styrofoam on the rig, at which point we would be pulling a 70-degree wheelie.

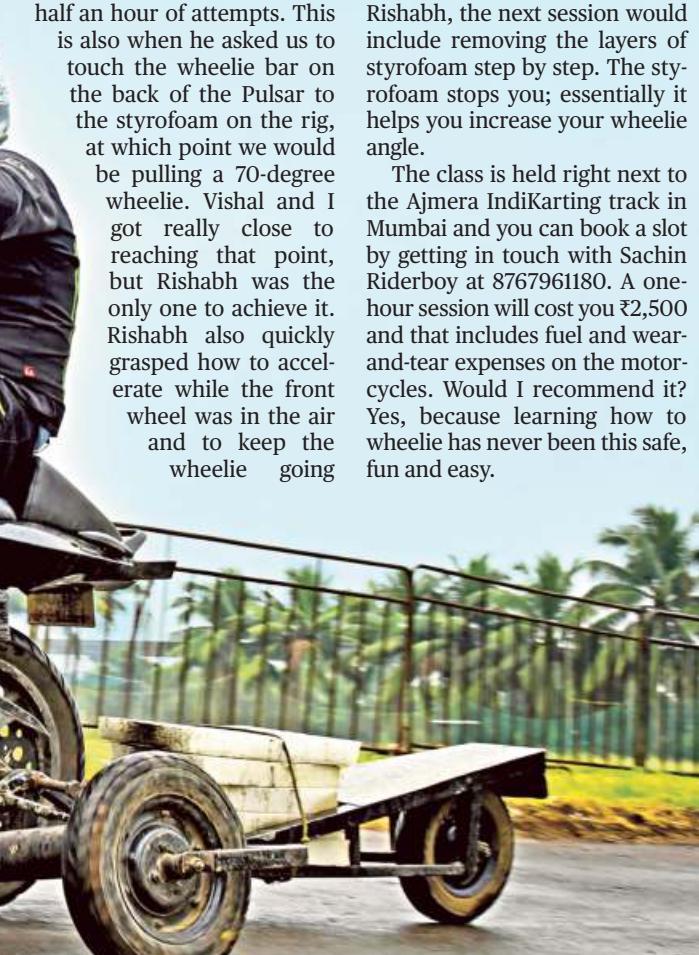
Vishal and I got really close to reaching that point, but Rishabh was the only one to achieve it. Rishabh also quickly grasped how to accelerate while the front wheel was in the air and to keep the wheelie going

for more than 20 feet. At this point, our session was over, but there is still so much one can learn. If Vishal and I had also reached the same stage as Rishabh, the next session would include removing the layers of styrofoam step by step. The styrofoam stops you; essentially it helps you increase your wheelie angle.

The class is held right next to the Ajmera IndiKarting track in Mumbai and you can book a slot by getting in touch with Sachin Riderboy at 8767961180. A one-hour session will cost you ₹2,500 and that includes fuel and wear-and-tear expenses on the motorcycles. Would I recommend it? Yes, because learning how to wheelie has never been this safe, fun and easy.



Calling thrill seekers One can now learn wheelies from professionals ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Calling thrill seekers One can now learn wheelies from professionals ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## AUTO SNIPPETS



### Citroen C5 Aircross to launch in two variants

Citroen will launch its first model for India, the C5 Aircross in a choice of two variants and with a single diesel engine. The C5 Aircross also stands out for its unique rear seat configuration. The rear bench comprises three individual seats, each of which can be individually adjusted or folded as per the requirement. Powering the SUV will be a 2.0-litre diesel engine putting out 177hp and 400Nm of torque paired to an 8-speed automatic gearbox. The C5 Aircross is expected to launch in India in March 2021.



### TVS Jupiter with start-stop technology launched

The TVS Jupiter has become the bike maker's first model to receive the company's new TVS intelliGO stop-start technology. The system has been introduced on the Jupiter ZX Disc variant, priced at ₹ 72,347 (ex-showroom, Delhi). The intelliGO system works much like the silent-start-stop systems seen on some Honda and Hero two-wheeler offerings. However, the introduction of this technology on the Jupiter makes it the first 110cc scooter to get the feature. It is powered by a 110cc engine developing 7.5hp at 7,000rpm and 8.4Nm at 5500rpm. The Jupiter's system targets fuel economy and the company claims that it is 15% more efficient than the model it replaces.



### Tata Safari launch on February 22; bookings open

Tata has commenced bookings for its flagship SUV, the new Safari ahead of its launch on February 22. Buyers can book the SUV at their nearest Tata dealership or online via the carmaker's Click to Drive platform against a payment of ₹30,000. Power comes from a 2.0-litre diesel engine putting out 170hp and 350Nm of torque paired with either a 6-speed manual or 6-speed torque-converter automatic gearbox. In terms of kit, the top-spec Safari will come with 6 airbags, hill-descent control, terrain response modes, an electronic parking brake, 18-inch alloy wheels, HID projector headlights and more.

## Q AND A WITH HORMAZD



### Dealing with noise

I test drove a Tata Harrier and want to buy one, but a diesel one feels noisy. I looked up information on 3M acoustic solutions and want to know if it is advisable to use this to insulate a new car? Will it reduce engine noise inside and will it impact the warranty?

Abhijit Pathak, Pune

Coming from a petrol car, you would find diesel a bit noisy. In case of the Harrier, while Tata has taken care to curb the engine noise by putting an insulation sheet under the bonnet, as well as using damping material on the firewall, the 2.0-litre diesel is inherently noisy at higher RPMs. Unfortunately, the pack of 3M acoustic solutions won't help, as it means to absorb vibrations produced by the car's stereo speakers at high volume. The damping sheets get installed in all the four doors and since the application process only requires opening of the door pads without any wires getting spliced, it will not impact the vehicle's warranty.

The Harrier is a capable product and since you are inclined towards purchasing one, we recommend that you opt for the automatic variant, as the overall NVH is better controlled than the manual counterpart.

### Rural road choice

We want to buy a new car, but are confused between the base Honda City V and the top-end Hyundai Venue SX(O), both in petrol manual guise. We live in a rural area, but the roads are decent. Could you suggest which one to get?

Prasanna Kumar, Tadepalligudem

We would pick the Honda City over the Venue as it offers far more space, has a plusher cabin and comes with enough ground clearance to tackle speed breakers and bad roads. The Venue is more nimble and easier to park, but the City feels more premium and is a clear segment higher.

Hormazd Sorabjee is the editor of Autocar India. Mail your feedback and queries to [roadshow@thehindu.co.in](mailto:roadshow@thehindu.co.in)

# Donning a stylish new avatar

Four years after launching the Compass in India, the Jeep's SUV is back with a comprehensive makeover



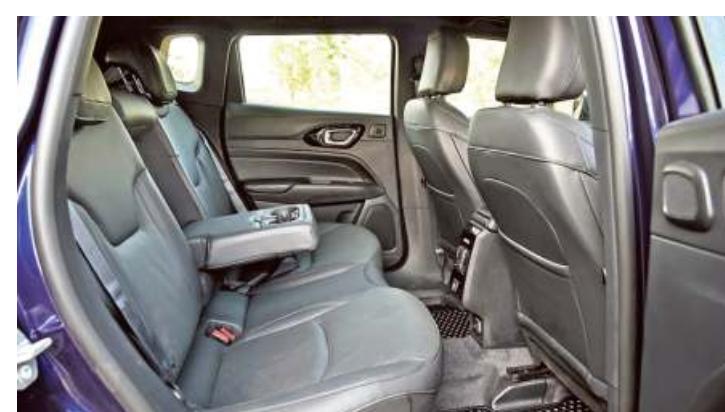
SHAPUR KOTWAL

Jeep has given its made-in-India SUV a facelift. The update brings with it a host of cosmetic changes. So do the updates improve the experience?

On the outside, a majority of the changes are to the nose. The front bumper is new while the seven-slat Jeep grille and LED headlamps get revised styling. Interestingly, the nose is free of chrome, with even the Jeep logo and trim inserts on the grille all done in an anodised gun-metal grey. The grille also houses a 360-degree camera.

Around the side, you get new diamond-cut alloy wheels and, this car gets a contrast roof in an interesting shade of grey while at the rear just the tail-lights are new.

The biggest change, however, is inside the cabin with an overriding theme of sophistication and luxury. You get a new dashboard, new door pads, a massive new free-standing touch-screen, a new digital instrument panel, a new steering and even a new centre console.



#### JEEP COMPASS MODEL S 2.0D 4X4 AT SPECIFICATIONS

L/W/H 4405/1818/1640mm

WHEELBASE 2636mm

ENGINE 4 cyls, 1956cc, diesel

POWER 170hp at 3750rpm

TORQUE 350Nm at 1750-2500rpm

GEARBOX 9-speed automatic

KERB WEIGHT 1778kg

Style and substance Changes to the Jeep Compass are more than skin deep ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

erb. The new digital instrument panel gives you the choice of what you want to have displayed and even the new steering wheel feels appropriately upmarket.

Also new is the central console that is a bit higher, a bit wider and houses a wireless charging pad up front. The four-wheel-drive system is now controlled via a metal toggle switch while functions like 4WD low, hill decent control and 4WD lock have been

shifted to a row of buttons behind the gear lever.

The driver's seat also gets a memory function and there is plenty of space in the back. You get a good amount of legroom and headroom, and there is plenty of shoulder room too.

Boot capacity, however, remains unchanged at 438 litres.

Not much has changed mechanically, and the Compass still is one of the best driving SUVs around. There is a hint of stiffness in the springs and you do feel some of the sharp-edged bumps at low speeds but the SUV simply smoothes any sort of rough surface.

Also, unlike other diesels, pulling this engine hard yields plenty of dividends though it does get noisy at high rpms. It is also quick; 0-100kph takes just 10.3sec, not bad for a heavy SUV like this.

The 9-speed auto gearbox now feels quicker on the draw, though it is still a bit too relaxed, especially when you want to execute a quick down-shift. There are no paddles behind the steering wheel either.

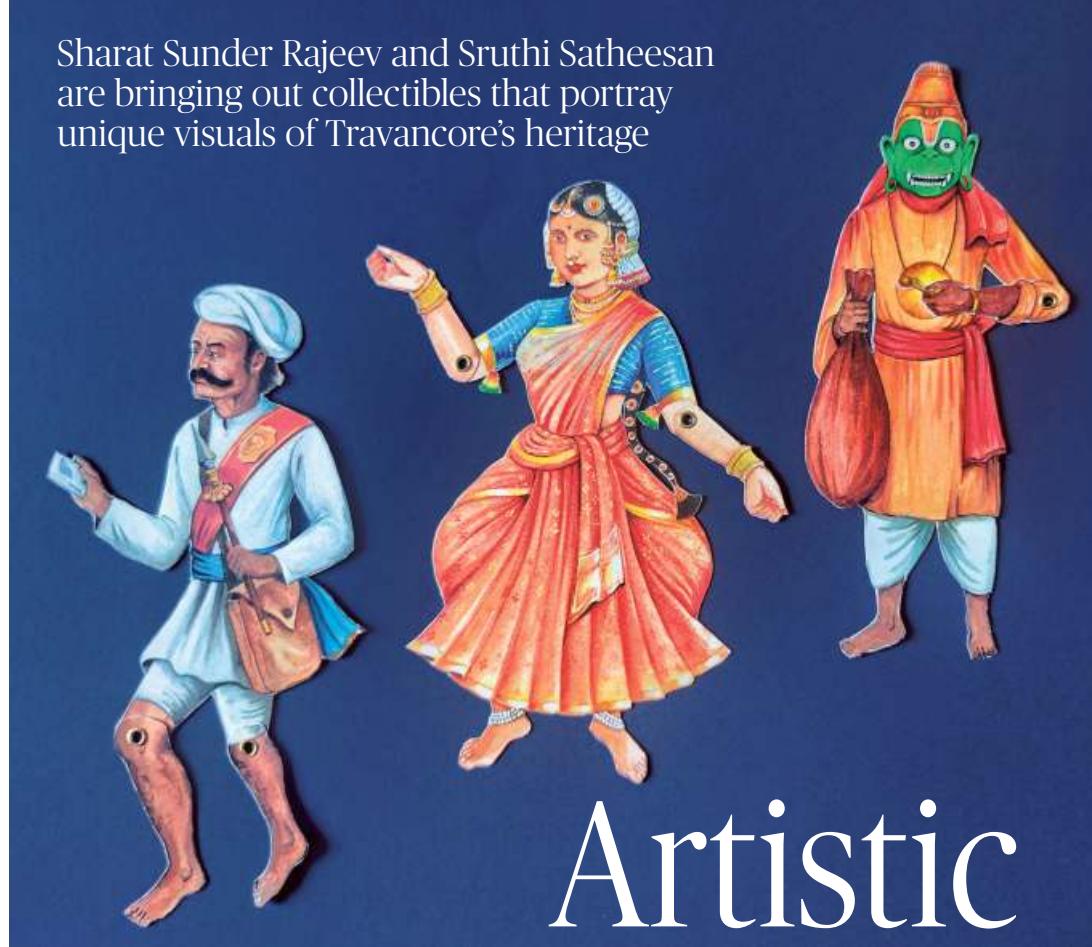
The best bit, however, is that the Compass remains an absolute joy to drive. It is light and easy to drive at low speeds and is confidence-inspiring around corners too.

Priced between ₹16,99,28,29 lakh (ex-showroom, India, except Kerala), the Compass facelift is expensive. This is especially true of the fully-loaded Model S trim, which is around a lakh dearer than rivals like the Hyundai Tucson. It isn't too large on the inside, the 9-speed automatic gearbox isn't the quickest and engine refinement isn't great. Still, performance is strong, it has the best ride-handling balance in its class and it comes with a high-spec four-wheel-drive system.

Want one SUV to do it all? The expensive but very capable 2021 Compass deserves to be on your shortlist.



Sharat Sunder Rajeev and Sruthi Satheesan are bringing out collectibles that portray unique visuals of Travancore's heritage



## Artistic paper trail



SARASWATHY NAGARAJAN

Architect-couple Sharat Sunder Rajeev and Sruthi Satheesan have married craft and art with their interest in Travancore history to come up with a range of collectibles that showcase what is unique to Thiruvananthapuram.

Sharat, a conservation architect, and Sruthi, an urban designer, had always nursed a dream to develop their artistic pursuits to make artefacts and art prints. Since November-December 2019, they have been choosing the themes, experimenting and designing. While Sruthi says she is more of a craftsman, Sharat's forte is sketching and painting.

For their first lot of collectibles (in A3 and A4 sizes), they focussed on images from the capital city. So, perhaps for the first time, one can buy souvenirs of the Pandava effigies put up at Sree Padmanabha Swamy temple, Velakali warriors, Anchal Ottakaaran (postal employee who used to deliver mail and missives), Hanuman Pandaram and Bharatanatyam dancers

from Thanjavur.

Sharat and Sruthi call the souvenirs articulated dolls, as the figures can be moved. The Ottakaaran, for instance, has been designed to move his legs while the Pandava prince can move the hand carrying the mace.

"Each articulated doll comes with a bookmark, which is an image that is connected to the doll. So the Pandava prince and the Velakali warrior is one set, while the Anchal Ottakaaran and the green post box is another," says Sruthi.

### The times that were

Each image has a story behind it. During the 10-day Painguni festival every April, huge effigies of the five Pandavas are put up at the eastern entrance of the Sree Padmanabha Swamy temple in the city.

On the seventh day of the fete, Velakali, a colourful mix of martial moves and dance representing the battle between the Pandavas and Kauravas, are conducted at the same place. Sharat's and Sruthi's paper-cut figures of one of the Pan-

dava princes and bookmarks in the shape of a Velakali warrior bring home the colourful pageantry of the festival.

The Anchal Ottakaaran delivered messages and valuables during the last part of the 19th Century, before the arrival of the green *anchal petti* (post boxes) in Travancore. However, we were unable to find any pictures of a typical postal employee of those days. That is when I was told that there was a mural in Suchindram temple in Ka-

lakumari district that had a picture of the Ottakaaran. It was painted by Vaikkathu Paachu Moothathu, royal physician during the reign of Ayilyam Thirunal (1832-1880)," says Sharat.

He travelled to Suchindram, once a part of the erstwhile Travancore kingdom, and made sketches of the Ottakaaran's attire. "He is depicted as wearing a cap and a white garment with a red sash, and carrying a spear with bells and a bag. The spear was to defend himself against miscreants while the bell announced that the royal messenger was on the move," explains Sharat.

The Hanuman Pandaram, once a quaint feature of daily life in the city, has also been brought alive by the duo. "Many old-timers in the city talk of the Hanuman Pandaram. He used to frequent houses to collect alms. Apparently, he used to wear a green-coloured mask that resembled Hanuman's visage and carry a sack. Elders used to scare children by saying that he would spirit away disobedient children," laughs Sharat.

The last Hanuman Pandaram was seen in the city in the early 1970s. Sharat depended on a photograph clicked by his uncle to make the image.

**Perhaps for the first time, one can buy souvenirs of the Pandava effigies put up at Sree Padmanabha Swamy temple, Velakali warriors, and more**

### More to offer

Sharat has also added art prints in black and white, sketches that portray life in Travancore in the last century, and a reproduction of a Ravi Varma painting. The art prints come in A3 and A4 sizes. Sruthi plans to add handmade journals

(made with handmade paper and bound with vegan leather) to their range.

"In fact, that is how the idea of such a collection took shape. I had picked up book binding from my father. He used to make miniature books for me. After my marriage, I saw Sharat's leather-bound journals, embellished with sketches and his articles. I decided to make those kind of journals with vegan leather sourced from a producer in Kerala," says Sruthi.

During the lockdown, it became difficult to get the right kind of paper and vegan leather, so they had put it on the backburner. Sharat says that eventually, they plan to enhance their range with collectibles relevant to places all around Kerala.

Contact the duo on their Instagram handle @owls.awl for details; prices from ₹250 to ₹750.



**Visual history** (Clockwise from far left) An Anchal Ottakaaran aka postman of yore, Bharatanatyam dancer, and masked Hanuman Pandaram; Sharat; a Pandava effigy and Velakali warrior bookmark as a set; Shruthi ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



During the lockdown, ophthalmologist Dr. Haemoglobin followed the vocals and visuals of the winged visitors in Madurai

communion with Nature, you receive far more than you expect, she says.

"Not many in the hospital are aware of my hobby and neither do they know about the wondrous bird habitat right in front of them," says Dr. Haemoglobin. Dr. Natchiar encouraged her to build a portfolio of the birds she sighted. Over the weekend she gave a presentation on the avian friends of Eurofarm, taking the audience by surprise as the screen showcased some amazing shots of hawk cuckoo, sandpiper, cormorant, purple heron, black headed ibis, red vented bulbul, Indian paradise flycatcher, red wattled lapwing, black rumped flameback, golden oriole, rock pigeon, spotted dove, rose-ringed parakeet and more.

"Birds are everywhere, we just need to be sensitised," she says and adds, "When you spend hours watching their behaviour and activities, you will find that they have a different story to tell each time you zoom in." Dr. Haemoglobin says while bird watching requires a bit of luck and teaches you patience and to respect Nature, it is the best excuse to be outdoors and travel.

"To be on a bird trail is a good exercise for the body, you get your dose of Vitamin D, cardiovascular health improves and so does your mental well-being," she says.



**Following the flock**  
(From top left) Indian Roller, Rufous Treepie, Golden Oriole and Dr Haemoglobin

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the lockdown forced her to remain confined to her hostel room last year. As she sat for hours looking out of the window, much to her delight she spotted the Asian koel, shikra and the rufous treepie in the backyard. "I started using bird detecting mobile apps to identify more avian visitors and became alert to the bird calls," she says.

Last September, Dr. Haemoglobin had a ligament tear in her ankle and started spending more time at Eurofarm, spotting different birds on each visit. "It instilled a sense of calm and peace in me," she says and the idea to document birds struck her. So far her list includes 37 different species and the number is increasing. When you are in

### A safer environment

Dating and networking app Bumble has announced that "it has banned body shaming" as per a recently released statement. The app is updating its terms and conditions to explicitly ban unsolicited and derogatory comments made about someone's appearance, body shape, size or health. The includes language that can be deemed ableist, fat-phobic, racist, colourist, homophobic or transphobic, according to a

statement put out by Bumble on January 28. The app uses automated safeguards to detect comments and images that go against its guidelines which can then be escalated to a human moderator for review. People who don't comply to these guidelines will receive a warning and repeated incidents will result in a ban. Bumble moderators also have the ability to share resources that are intended to help the reported individual learn how to be more informed.

### POOCH CAFE



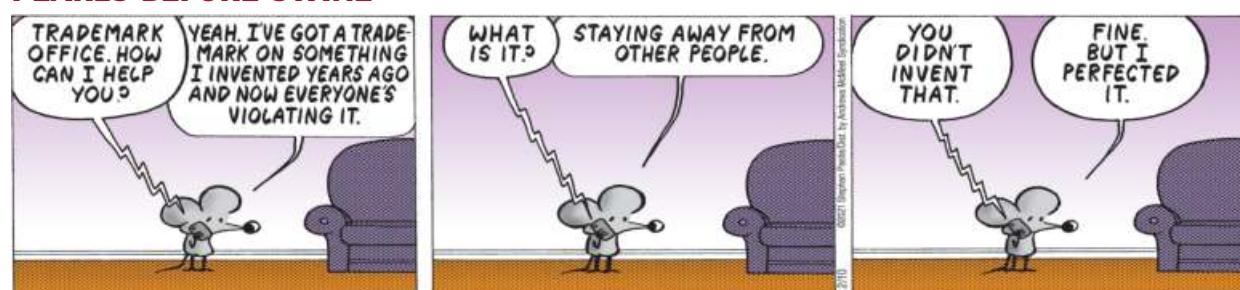
### HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



### TIGER



### PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBES



# 'Virus unlikely to have leaked from lab'

No indication of SARS-CoV-2 having spread among people in Wuhan prior to Dec. 2019: WHO team

ANANTH KRISHNAN

The virus responsible for COVID-19 was unlikely to have leaked from a laboratory in Wuhan, and the evidence pointed to natural origins, according to a World Health Organization (WHO) and China joint expert team that concluded a visit to Wuhan, where the pandemic began.

The team also concluded that there was no indication of SARS-CoV-2 having spread among the population there prior to December 2019, when Wuhan's hospitals first began reporting a pneumonia outbreak. The authorities first confirmed human-to-human transmission in mid-January.

"Our initial findings suggest that the introduction through an intermediary host species is the most likely pathway and one that will require more studies and more specific, targeted research," WHO scientist Peter Ben Embarek, who led the international team, told reporters on Tuesday.

The team of 17 interna-



**Virus trackers:** WHO scientist Peter Ben Embarek, right, with Liang Wannian, head of the Chinese team, in Wuhan. • AFP

tional experts and 17 Chinese scientists spent the past two weeks visiting hospitals, a seafood market that was one of the earliest clusters, and laboratories in Wuhan.

#### Four possibilities

The location of the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) in the city had led to theories suggesting the virus may have leaked from a laboratory, but Mr. Embarek said, "the findings suggest that the laboratory incidents hypothesis is extremely unlikely to

explain the introduction of the virus to the human population".

The team examined four pathways: direct transmission from wildlife, transmission through intermediate hosts, transmission via cold chain products, and a laboratory leak.

Officials in China have been strongly pushing back against the laboratory leak theory, while recently also suggesting that the virus may have come to China via cold chain products from outside

the country, a prospect that is being examined but also considered unlikely.

Reports from Wuhan said the team spent around an hour at the market and four hours at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, and met scientists there, including China's leading bat coronavirus expert, Shi Zhengli, who has been researching bat coronaviruses in the laboratory. There was no evidence that SARS-CoV-2 was being studied at any of the laboratories in the city, the team said.

Mr. Embarek's comments suggested transmission through an intermediate host was the most likely scenario, and the evidence pointed "towards natural reservoirs of the virus" considering similar viruses in the bat population.

"Since Wuhan is not a city or environment close to bat environments, a direct jump from bats to the city of Wuhan is not very likely," he said.

"Therefore, we have tried to find what other animal species were introduced and

moving in and out of the city that could have potentially introduced the virus, in particular at the Huanan seafood market (the site of the first major cluster)."

While so far the intermediate host has not been identified, samples of some animals known to be susceptible to coronaviruses were identified at the market and some of those traced back to farms or parts of China that harboured bat environments. "The joint team in their study have identified the vendors who were trading these type of products, the suppliers of these vendors, the farms from where the products were coming from," Mr. Embarek said.

Liang Wannian, head of the China team of experts, said there was no indication that the virus was being spread in the population before December 2019. He also said there was no evidence to suggest the Huanan market was the source, as the earliest case in Wuhan, reported on December 8, 2019, was not linked to the market.

# A march to register protest, forge a new alliance

Thousands march across Sri Lanka's north and east to assert their rights

MEERA SRINIVASAN

COLOMBO

The five-day march for justice held across Sri Lanka's north and east last week drew attention for more than one reason. After months of restricted movement due to the pandemic, it was the first instance of several thousand people taking to the streets to assert their rights.

The 'Pothuvil to Polikandy' rally, or P2P, began in the eastern Ampara district and ended in Jaffna in the Northern Province, covering several towns en route. Prominent Tamil and Muslim politicians, activists, students, and residents took part in the march.

Departing from past struggles in the north and the east that focussed on grievances specific to war-affected Tamils, the rally included key concerns of the Muslim community and Malaiyaha [Hill Country] Tamils working in the tea estates, in the list of 10 demands put together by



The five-day rally began in Ampara district and ended in Jaffna. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

our rights, and we decided to do that in a democratic manner," said Shanakyan Rasamickam, a legislator from

#### NEWS ANALYSIS

the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), from the eastern Batticaloa district.

Social media was flooded with images of scores of people, wearing masks and black headbands saying "#P2P", as they marched braving heavy rains in some

areas and large police presence everywhere. The large turnout reflected the widely shared concern about how the Rajapaksa government is treating the country's Tamil-speaking people, according to S.C.C. Elankovan, civil society activist and one of the organisers.

**Inensitive government'** "The government is being extremely insensitive, very unreasonable, and is shutting out any space there is for dialogue. A totalitarian government like this endangers the rights and freedoms of not just minority communities. It will also threaten the Sinhalese majority," he said.

It was also "reassuring", Mr. Elankovan said, to meet many Tamil youth, who "sincerely appreciate" the need to work with the Muslims and Malaiyaha [Hill Country] Tamils.

During last week's rally, some participants chose to remember those who died during the war, including LTTE leaders, setting off a tense social media debate. The LTTE that fought the

armed forces until 2009 is popular among Tamils from the north and the east, including those living abroad, even though some from the Tamil community remain fiercely critical of the organisation. On the other hand, for Sri Lanka's southern polity and much of the Sinhala Buddhist constituency, the organisation is anathema.

For organisers, the rally was an attempt at bringing together diverse issues and voices. After years of strained Tamil-Muslim relations since the 1990s – when the LTTE forcibly evicted northern Muslims – recent parliamentary interventions by Tamil legislators M.A. Sumanthiran and G.G. Ponambalam, challenging the government's mandatory cremation policy for COVID-19 victims, was seen as a welcome shift. Organisers of the rally hope that the inclusion of the contentious issue, along with the demand for a fair wage for estate Tamils, marks the beginning of a concerted resistance from the country's minority communities.

# Indian Americans divided on India's trajectory, says survey

They oppose crackdowns on media and peaceful protesters

SIRIRAM LAKSHMAN

Indian Americans are divided on their views about India's trajectory, while the most popular political party in the country is the BJP, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi being supported by almost half of Indian Americans, a new survey report has found. It also found that most Indian Americans oppose government crackdowns on the media and the use of police force on peaceful protesters.

Respondents are also more liberal on U.S. issues while holding more conservative positions on Indian matters.

The survey report, "How Do Indian Americans View India? Results from the 2020 Indian American Attitudes Survey (IAAS)," is based on the 2020 Indian American Attitudes Survey of 1,200 Indian American adults (+/- 2.8% margin of error) from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Johns Hopkins-SAIS, and the University of Pennsylvania in partnership with YouGov. The survey report, co-authored by Sumitra Badrinathan, Devesh Kapur and Milan Vaishnav, is the second of a set of two studies of the political attitudes of Indian Americans done by the IAAS.

Thirty-nine per cent of In-

dian Americans feel India is moving in the wrong direction, while 36% feel it is on the right track. As a comparator, 67% of the IAAS respondents felt the U.S. was on the wrong track (data were collected in September 2020). A larger share of Indian Americans born outside America felt that India was on the right track.

Most (65%) Indian Americans either strongly or somewhat oppose the use of police force against individuals peacefully opposing the government's citizenship laws (CAA and NRC). Most (69%) also oppose the government's use of defamation and sedition laws to silence reporters critical of the Modi administration. However, over half support the NRC (55%) and a wafer-thin majority supports the CAA (51%).

Indian American views on issues also vary according to context and the results are indicative of respondents taking more liberal positions in the U.S. context. Studying positions across similar issues in the India and U.S. contexts, the survey finds that generally 90% of Indian Americans support the notion of equal treatment of people belonging to different religions but this number is 60% for a specific U.S. context (the 'Muslim ban') and drops further to 49% in

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Tender No.	Material Description	Due date
202113 004648	Optical Brightening Agent for Paper M/c #1,2&3 a) Wet End OBA b) Surface OBA	24.02.2021
202113 004650	Alkaline Sizing Chemicals with Alkyl Ketene Dimer (AKD) for Paper M/c 1,2&3	10.03.2021

Detail requirements, quantity, period, terms & conditions, tender fee, EMD are available in Tender document at our websites: [www.tnpl.com/www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://www.tnpl.com/www.tenders.tn.gov.in)

DIPR/917/Tender/2021

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(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)  
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CIN: U85110KA1947SGC001321

**NOTICE INVITING GLOBAL TENDER FOR SALE OF BULLION (Gold & Silver-Dore Bars) Short-Term-Notification No.54/20-21, Dt: 10.02.2021 HGML/2020-21/SALE OF BULLION/03**  
(Through Govt. of Karnataka e-Procurement Portal only)

**(Two Cover System)**

The Hutt Gold Mines is engaged in the business of mining and extraction of Bullion/Dore Bars (Gold & Silver) at Hutt, Raichur Dist, Karnataka. HGML is desirous to select individuals/firms/companies/others to sell its product i.e. Bullion for a period of one year based on **lowest competitive discount rate** to the gold price as per the terms and conditions of the tender document.

The interested bidders may participate through e-Portal. The tender is a two cover system comprising of Part-I as Technical Bid (Bid 'A' & Bid 'B') and Part-II as Financial (% Discount Rate) Bid. The Part-II Bid Financial (% Discount Rate) Bid has to be uploaded in the Dash Board in the e-Portal. The tender forms have to be submitted through e-Portal of Govt. of Karnataka i.e. [www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in](http://www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in)

The calendar of events of this tender are as under: (1) Uploading of tender document [www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in](http://www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in): 10.02.2021 (12.00 hrs). (2) Pre-bid virtual meeting (Zoom): 18.02.2021 (12.00 hrs). (3) Last date & time for receipt of tenders: 24.02.2021 (17.00 hrs). (4) Date & time for opening of technical bid: 26.02.2021 (12.00 hrs). (5) Date & time for opening of financial bid: 01.03.2021 (11.00 hrs).

Sd/- I/c Dy.General Manager (Materials)

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# Myanmar police fire rubber bullets at anti-coup protesters

Ban on gatherings imposed along with curfew, restrictions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
YANGON

Security forces fired rubber bullets and tear gas at anti-coup protesters in Myanmar on Tuesday as demonstrators around the country defied a military ban on rallies.

Protests erupted for a fourth straight day against last week's coup to oust civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi, as international condemnation of the putsch grew.

The rallies came despite a warning from the junta that it would take action against demonstrations that threatened "stability", and a new ban on gatherings of more than five people.

It remained unclear how many people were hurt, as a hospital in Naypyidaw would not allow relatives in to see their family members, said Tun Wai, who rushed there when he heard his 23-year-old son was in the operating room.

"My son was shot when he tried to use the megaphone to ask people to protest."

The first of a series of bans on gatherings in protest hotspots was also an-



**Stiff resistance:** Protesters using plastic sheets to protect themselves from water cannons in Yangon. • GETTY IMAGES

nounced on Monday, as was a night-time curfew.

But on Tuesday, fresh protests emerged in various parts of Yangon. The protesters carried placards some of which read "We want our leader", in reference to Ms. Suu Kyi – who is currently detained by the military – and "No dictatorship".

The General insisted that the military would abide by its promises and reinstall democracy. "After the tasks of the emergency period are completed, free and fair multi-party general elections will be held according to the Constitution," he said.

But those pledges were accompanied by threats.

In a statement read on state media, the Army said "action must be taken" against activities that threaten stability and public order.

#### ELSEWHERE



**Second impeachment trial of Donald Trump begins**

WASHINGTON  
The U.S. Senate on Tuesday opened the second impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump, who stands accused of inciting an insurrection on January 6, when his supporters stormed Congress. Mr. Trump is the first President to face two impeachment trials – he was acquitted in 2020 – as well as the first to be tried after leaving office. AFP

**TNRDC TAMIL NADU ROAD DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LTD.**  
Tender Notice No.:TNRDC/CD/006/2021 INVITATION FOR BIDS Date: 08.02.2021  
Bids are invited by M/s.Tamil Nadu Road Development Company Ltd. (TNRDC) for implementation of the following deviation works in the formation of Chennai Peripheral Ring Road (CPRR) Section-I, Tamil Nadu on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 upto 3.00 PM.

No.	Description of Work	Indicative value of work (Rs.) inclusive of GST.	EMD/Bid Security Value (Rs.)	Bid Document Cost(Rs) inclusive of GST	Period of Completion
1	Design, Manufacture, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 400 KV Towers with Twin Moose conductors for deviation of the existing overhead towers for formation of Northern Port Access Road (NPAR) section I of Chennai Peripheral Ring Road(CPRR)	4563.88 Lakhs	45,64,000/-	56,000/-	12 months
2	Design, Manufacture, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 230 KV Towers with Zebra conductors for deviation of the existing overhead towers for formation of Northern Port Access Road (NPAR) section I of Chennai Peripheral Ring Road(CPRR)	2941.50 Lakhs	29,42,000/-	56,000/-	12 months
3	Design, Manufacture, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 110 KV Towers with Panther conductors for deviation of the existing overhead towers for formation of Northern Port Access Road (NPAR) section I of Chennai Peripheral Ring Road(CPRR)	1098.98 Lakhs	10,99,000/-	28,000/-	12 months

The Bid documents and other details for the mode of remittance of EMD/Bid Security and cost of Tender Document, last date for the issue of tender document, opening of tender etc., are available in the website [www.tnrdc.com](http://www.tnrdc.com). In case of any changes/ corrections etc on the above, the same will be published in the above website only.

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CMRL invites digitally signed tenders through e-procurement portal from reputed, experienced, financially sound, eligible applicants, who fulfil the qualification criteria as mentioned in the tender through International Competitive Bidding under Single Stage Two Envelope (Technical & Financial) system for the works as detailed below:

S.No	NIT No.	DESCRIPTION
1	CMRL/CON/PHASE-II/CORRIDOR3/CP08-EV-01/2021	Tender No:CMRL/CON/PHASE-II/CORRIDOR3/CP08-EV-01/2021: "CONSTRUCTION OF ELEVATED VIADUCT (APPROXIMATE LENGTH -10KM) INCLUDING ELEVATED RAMPS AND TEN (10) ELEVATED METRO STATIONS AT NEHRU NAGAR, KANDANCHAVADI, PERUNGUDI, THORAIPACKAM, METTUKUPAM, PTC COLONY, OKKIYAMET, KARAPAKKAM, OKKIYAM THORAIPACKAM AND SHOLINGANALLUR".
2	CMRL/CON/PHASE-II/CORRIDORS/CP10-EV-03/2021	Tender No:CMRL/CON/PHASE-II/CORRIDORS/CP10-EV-03/2021: "CONSTRUCTION OF APPROX.10.2 KMS OF ELEVATED RAMPS AND CUT AND COVER SECTION, DEPOT APPROACH OF APPROX.1.5 KMS AND VENUGOPAL NAGAR UNDERGROUND STATION WITH VERIFICATION OF DESIGN SUITABILITY FOR CONSTRUCTION INCLUDING ARCHITECTURAL FINISHES, PLUMBING WORKS, SIGNAGES AND ALL ASSOCIATED WORKS CORRIDOR-5".

Tender Documents can be downloaded from

## MARKET WATCH

	09-02-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	51,329	-0.04
US Dollar	72.87	0.14
Gold	47,559	1.45
Brent oil	60.32	0.60

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	581.95	-0.10
Asian Paints	2506.85	9.00
Axis Bank	742.50	6.35
Bajaj Auto	4154.90	-82.55
Bajaj Finserv	9941.65	-79.40
Bajaj Finance	5400.30	-97.40
Bharti Airtel	598.95	1.65
BPCL	419.35	-0.70
Britannia Ind	3462.40	-11.30
Cipla	841.75	-5.50
Coal India	139.25	-2.30
Divis Lab	3722.75	-59.10
Dr Reddys Lab	4844.10	-15.70
Eicher Motors	2947.65	-22.75
GAIL (India)	131.05	-0.35
Giasin Ind	1217.95	7.15
HCL Tech.	951.60	-6.15
HDFC	2747.05	13.70
HDFC Bank	1611.85	6.60
HDFC Life	704.90	20.85
Hero MotoCorp	3499.45	4.45
Hindalco	278.05	-0.90
Hind Unilever	2216.25	-20.40
ICICI Bank	633.35	3.75
IndusInd Bank	1025.80	-9.30
Infosys	1305.55	2.00
Indian Oil Corp	97.70	-6.40
ITC	229.00	-4.10
JSW Steel	406.45	-11.20
Kotak Bank	1949.15	-8.00
L&T	1566.45	14.65
M&M	895.00	-33.40
Maruti Suzuki	7627.05	52.45
Nestle India Ltd.	17318.95	100.75
NTPC	99.95	-0.35
ONGC	101.00	1.35
PowerGrid Corp	210.75	-1.80
Reliance Ind	1956.15	4.70
SBI Life	888.70	29.60
State Bank	394.80	-2.25
Shree Cement	28165.80	143.60
Sun Pharma	623.60	-11.05
Tata Motors	325.05	-10.90
Tata Steel	699.20	-3.75
TCS	3176.90	-37.20
Tech Mahindra	975.10	-7.45
Titan	1559.90	18.20
UltraTech Cement	6420.40	52.25
UPL	538.60	0.30
Wipro	439.35	4.05

## EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	72.69	73.01
Euro	87.94	88.36
British Pound	100.04	100.49
Japanese Yen (100)	69.43	69.74
Chinese Yuan	11.29	11.34
Swiss Franc	81.30	81.70
Singapore Dollar	54.74	54.99
Canadian Dollar	57.05	57.31
Malaysian Ringgit	17.94	18.04

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



## January fuel demand falls as oil prices rise

India's fuel consumption in January registered its first month-on-month decline in five months, as an uptick in global oil prices posed a roadblock to a gradual recovery in demand. Consumption fell to 18.01 MT in January, which was 3.2% below last month, official data showed. REUTERS

## Alembic partner's cancer drug gets U.S. FDA nod

MUMBAI Rhizen Pharmaceuticals AG, a clinical-stage, oncology-focused biopharma company, with 50% stake owned by Alembic Pharmaceuticals, has announced that its novel, next generation PI3K-delta inhibitor Umbralisib (Ukoniq) has secured U.S. FDA accelerated approval for the treatment of blood cancer.

## Govt. to clarify e-com FDI rules

Platforms can only act as service provider, not be part of the trade, warns Goyal

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Centre plans to issue a clarification on the foreign direct investment (FDI) policy for the e-commerce sector in the wake of investigations into some foreign players' operations following complaints about malpractices, according to Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.

The government had sought information from the online marketplaces as part of a probe into 'certain complaints from consumers and small retailers about certain practices of e-commerce companies', Mr. Goyal said on Tuesday. Stressing that e-commerce platforms could only act as a service provider, the minister warned players 'who break the law' that they would have to cor-



Those who break the law would have to correct their business practices at the earliest, warned Mr. Goyal. ■PTI

## rect their business practices at the earliest.

## 'Agnostic platform'

'We are also considering certain clarifications to ensure that the e-commerce sector works in the true spirit of the law, of the rules that have

been laid down,' he said, adding the caveat that the e-commerce policy *per se* would, however, not be changed as it was 'robust, well-designed and operating in India in several sectors'. "To reiterate, e-commerce is supposed to pro-

vide an agnostic platform so that buyers and sellers can trade with each other, the platform should not become a part of the trading transaction, neither should it be funding it or having algorithms that give preference to one or the other... They should neither be promoting their own products, but provide all data required to make a rational choice and the choice should be the free choice of the consumers," Mr. Goyal explained.

"We believe that buyers and sellers should be given an opportunity to trade with each other; the platform is only a service provider," the minister said. "And those who break that law will certainly have to respond to our concerns and correct their business practices at the earliest," he added.

## Don't sell vehicles low on safety: Govt. to auto firms

Such a practice is unpardonable

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The government on Tuesday expressed concern over reports that manufacturers are selling vehicles with purposefully downgraded safety standards in India and asked them to stop the 'unpardonable' practice.

Speaking at a seminar organised by auto industry body SIAM, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) Secretary Giridhar Aramane also noted that only a few manufacturers had adopted vehicle safety ratings system and only for their high-end models.

"I am deeply perturbed by some news items that Indian models are purposeful-

ly downgraded by auto manufacturers' safety standards in India. This practice needs to be stopped," he said.

Over the past few years, vehicle safety group Global NCAP, under its safer cars for India campaign, had found in various tests that some models sold in India were found to have inferior safety ratings as compared to the export version of the same model sold in developed markets, he said.

As per data from FADA, passenger vehicle sales fell 4.46% to 2.81 lakh units, sales of two-wheelers declined close to 9% to 11.63 lakh, three-wheeler sales slumped 51% to 31,059 and

commercial vehicle sales slipped 25% to 55,835 units. Retail tractor sales, however, continued to post growth, rising 11.1% to 60,754 units.

"After witnessing one-off growth in December, January auto registrations fell once again by 10% year-on-year," said FADA president Vinkesh Gulati. "Auto industry clearly misjudged the demand which returned post lockdown."

He added chipmakers prioritising higher-volume and more lucrative consumer electronics over the auto industry had resulted in supply shortages, especially for passenger vehicles, though enquiry levels and bookings remained high. On the outlook for the current quarter, he pointed to the high base from a year earlier. The transition to BS-VI during Q4 of FY20 had resulted in 'huge' discounts leading to higher sales and registrations.

## Tata Steel posts profit of ₹4,011 cr. in Q3

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Tata Steel swung back into the black in the October-December quarter with a consolidated profit of ₹4,010.94 crore on the back of increased income.

The company had clocked a loss of ₹1,228.53 crore a year earlier, Tata Steel said in a BSE filing on Tuesday. Total income rose to ₹39,809.05 crore from ₹35,613.34. Production rose 3% to 4.6 million tonnes (mt) of crude steel.

Domestic sales climbed 4% to 4.16 mt. On its business in Europe, Tata Steel said the process to separate the Netherlands and U.K. arms was currently under way.

## CUB to restructure 1,326 pre-COVID accounts: MD

Time not right to push credit growth'

## N. ANAND

CHENNAI

Private sector lender City Union Bank (CUB) has identified 1,326 borrower accounts (pre-COVID) for restructuring during the fourth quarter, CEO and MD N. Kamakodi said. He added that the time was not right to push credit growth.

"We are waiting for a better general economic environment, expecting better growth and lower non-performing assets," he said.

To bring down NPAs, the bank has identified 102 accounts of ₹517 crore under MSME category and 1,224 accounts of ₹520 crore in the non-MSME category for

restructuring in the fourth quarter. "Overall the total restructuring will be around 5-6%, which is well within range. As the regulatory instructions prohibit restructuring of stressed accounts during the pandemic period, we hope these would improve as we move forward," Mr. Kamakodi said.

"We bring down NPAs, the bank has identified 102 accounts of ₹517 crore under MSME category and 1,224 accounts of ₹520 crore in the non-MSME category for

## IOB returns to profit with ₹213 cr. Q3 net

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Public sector lender Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) has reported a standalone net profit of ₹212.87 crore for the third quarter ended December against a loss of ₹6,075 crore in the year-earlier period.

"For the last four quarters, we have now been making profit consistently. When compared with Q3 performances of FY20, there is a marked improvement in all key parameters," said P.P. Sengupta, MD & CEO. Gross non-performing assets (GNPA) fell 12.19% to ₹16,753 crore, while net NPAs declined 3.13% to ₹3,905 crore.

Standalone revenue from operations rose 1.4% to ₹86,580 crore from ₹85,368 crore in the year-earlier.

Domestic sales of petroleum products increased to 11.10 million metric tonnes (MMT) from 11.02 MMT in the same period last year.

"The quarter has been the strongest in terms of re-

## Wistron may restart factory next week'

## REUTERS

NEW DELHI

Apple Inc. supplier Wistron Corp. could restart operations as early as next week at its factory in Karnataka which was damaged during staff protests in December, three government officials said on Tuesday.

Apple put Wistron on probation after its audit of the plant found violations of 'Supplier Code of Conduct'.

"Wistron reconstruction is nearing completion... and iPhone production will very likely begin next week," one source said. All sources declined to be named as they are not authorised to speak to the media. Apple did not respond to a request for comment.

## Cairn Energy urges Centre to 'swiftly' honour tax verdict

CEO says set to meet FM next week

VIKAS DHOTU  
SUHASINI HAIDAR

NEW DELHI

Cairn Energy Plc CEO Simon Thomson on Tuesday said he expects to meet Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman next week, a likely meeting that comes amid speculation that the Centre is considering an appeal against a \$1.2-billion arbitration award granted to Cairn over a retrospective tax levy.

"Looking forward to meeting the Government of India Finance Minister in Delhi next week," Mr. Thomson said in a statement, requesting the government to adhere to the international arbitration tribunal's ruling in his company's favour.

"The arbitration is now finalised and the award has been given and we would request, along with others, that the Indian government moves swiftly to adhere to the award that has been given," Mr. Thomson said in a video statement issued by Cairn. "It's important for our shareholders, who are global financial institutions and who want to see a positive investment climate in India," he added.

"I'm sure that in working together with the government, we can swiftly draw this to a conclusion, and reassure our global institutional investors about the positive investment climate that India offers," he said.

The Finance Ministry did not immediately respond to queries on the government's position in the matter or to a request to confirm any scheduled meeting between the Finance Minister and Mr. Thomson.



Nirmala Sitharaman

## India messed up their first; Anderson brilliant in the second

## BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MEN

# Anderson, Leach send India hurtling to rare home defeat

Indian batsmen unable to negotiate paceman's craft and spinner's guile on a deteriorating fifth-day pitch; only Gill and Kohli put up a fight

## ENGLAND IN INDIA

S. DINAKAR  
CHENNAI

James Anderson is 38 but runs with the intensity and hunger of someone who is 22. And he is a sorcerer with the ball.

On a sluggish pitch, he sent the off-stump cartwheeling on two occasions, operating with exceptional craft.

### Deadly over

Anderson's twin strikes in an over, bamboozling the smooth-stroking Shubman Gill – he drove with timing and grace for his 50 – and a newly arrived Ajinkya Rahane, sent India hurtling towards a rare home defeat in the first Test at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium here on Tuesday.

Anderson is a wizard with the ball. After he reverse-swung two deliveries with extreme precision to fire the ball between the bat and pad of Gill and Rahane, he sent down an off-cutter to find the leading edge of the in-form Rishabh Pant.

His three-wicket burst in the morning settled the issue as England outplayed India, dismissed for 192, by 227 runs to take a 1-0 lead in the four-Test series. Skipper Kohli's high-class 72 went in vain.

Even as Anderson tormented India, the admirable

Jack Leach's left-arm spin gave the host little respite. He was getting the ball to spin away sharply from the right-hander and the deliveries were laced with bounce.

Like his spin partner Dom Bess, Leach is technically sound. He pivots well, possesses an ideal hip-drive, imparts revs on the ball and has an easy, natural release.

Leach spun one away from Cheteshwar Pujara in the morning to have the tenacious batsman picked up at slip. It was a major strike.

On a wearing fifth-day pitch, Leach was always a threat even if the inconsistent Bess had an off-day. But then, Bess got Washington Sundar to nick a delivery that spun past the southpaw.

Washington erred in not stretching fully forward to make use of his height and kill the spin. Bess' appeal was negated and even as the third umpire took his time to come up with a verdict, Washington 'walked.'

### Kohli in his element

As wickets fell around him, Kohli batted with skill and application. His bat appeared as broad as his heart, as he struck Bess for three successive fours, between long-on and deep mid-wicket.

A straight drive off Archer was a top shot. So was a



**Uprooted:** Ajinkya Rahane is cleaned up by James Anderson. ■ BCCI

scorching cover-drive off Stokes, Kohli's weight was beautifully distributed as he executed the stroke. And Leach was timed between the bowler and the non-striker.

He is such an organised batsman, with ideal footwork, both in offence and de-

fence. Before he was consumed by a Stokes delivery that kept low on this uneven fifth-day pitch, Kohli had made a statement.

**Extra bounce**  
Leach got one to bounce extra to snare Ashwin on the cut, and after Kohli's dismis-

sal, it was only a matter of time.

Incredibly, this is England's sixth straight away Test victory. India now needs to win at least two of the remaining Tests and draw one to make the World Test Championship final.

This will take some doing.

## First-innings batting made the difference, says Kohli

Defends playing Nadeem, reiterates trust in Rahane

S. DIPAK RAGAV  
CHENNAI

Virat Kohli bemoaned the lack of application by the batsmen, especially in the first innings, for the loss of the first Test.

"I think the Test probably shifted in their favour when we batted in the first innings. I don't think there was enough application shown by us as a batting unit," said Kohli at the post-match press conference.

"From a batting point of view, if we could have scored 70-80 runs more, the contest would have been on an even keel. We need to continuously put pressure on them. If we do that, we are confident we will get the results. The batting of both teams in the second innings was pretty similar. The first innings made the difference," he said.

The skipper also felt the bowling unit did not exert enough pressure in the first innings.

"As a bowling unit, we did not bowl well collectively. The pacers and Ashwin bowled in good areas. But if [Shahbaz] Nadeem and Washi [Sundar] were equally



Kohli. ■ SPORTZPICS/BCCI

economical, there would have been more pressure on England," said Kohli.

However, he pointed out there was not enough help for the bowlers on the first two days, allowing the English batsmen to rotate the strike easily.

"The wicket was flat and

slow. I am not saying that that is an excuse that we will hold onto as a team, but you have to understand the reality of what went on. When you get big runs on the board, even when the wicket is flat, the opposition is invariably put under pressure."

When asked about the decision to play Shahbaz Nadeem ahead of Kuldeep Yadav, Kohli said, "When playing two off-spinners, Kuldeep more or less becomes a similar kind of spinner taking the ball away [from the left-hander]. We will think of combinations which bring us variety as a bowling attack."

### Impact player

The captain also backed Ajinkya Rahane to come good despite a string of low scores in the last three Tests since his century in Melbourne against Australia.

"Ajinkya, I have said many times in the past as well, along with Pujara, is our most important Test batsman and he is going to continue to be. We believe in his abilities, have believed in his abilities for a long time now and he's an impact player."

## 'We must stay ruthless'

This is just a start, says Root



Leach and Root... architects of the win. ■ SPORTZPICS/BCCI

### SPORTS REPORTER

CHENNAI  
Savouring a famous win over India, England captain Joe Root urged his team to be ruthless and not let its guard down after drawing first blood in the four-Test series.

"It certainly is a very good victory, but in the scheme of the series, it's just a start. To stay one-nil up is a good thing," said Root when asked to rate the win.

### Hurting right now

"We know that India is an extremely good team, especially in these conditions. They have got some wonderful individual players who would be hurting right now, and they would be looking to prove a point when they come to play again."

"So, if we get the opportunity to go ahead of the

game in the second Test, we have to grab it with both hands, we have to be ruthless. We have to make sure that we do everything that we did well in this game again and get better," he said.

Root also said the toss played a crucial role, with the visitors posting a mammoth 578, led by the skipper's double hundred.

"The toss was always going to be important, but from that point on, it was crucial that we exploited and made the most of the opportunity. We controlled the game the whole way through. And the guys were exceptional, today [Tuesday] in particular, to bowl in that manner was fabulous. It fills us with confidence going into the rest of the series."

## Gopinath relives first Test win

Hazare's men got the better of England on Feb. 10, 1952

AYAN ACHARYA  
CHENNAI

In many ways, the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai is Indian cricket's spiritual home. It was here, 20 years and 24 Tests after its debut, India registered its first-ever Test win, defeating England on Feb. 10, 1952.

Coimbatore Doraikannu Gopinath, the only surviving member of that Indian team, has vivid memories of the victory. "Probably for the first time, we said we can beat teams stronger than us. There was a new way of thinking," Gopinath says.

The 90-year-old recollects the events of that Test in minute detail. "We made some 400-odd (457/9 decl.). I was No. 8. By the time I went in to bat, we were 340 or something (320). The captain (Vijay Hazare) very clearly

told me 'I am planning to declare soon. Go there and score as fast as you can.'"

"When I got out, I had made only 35 runs. But I was delighted because my favourite shots were the cover-drive and square-cut, and every time I hit a four playing those strokes, my home crowd erupted. Polly Umrigar and I had a partnership of 93... in forcing the pace, I got out. But I was okay with it because I was following my captain's instructions."

"Umrigar's innings just went on and on, and I said to myself: 'Why did I play like that?' (laughs)... I could've taken my time and scored a few more runs. But didn't matter in the end because we won the match and that's what we all cherish now."

Fifteen minutes before the tea interval on the fourth



C.D. Gopinath. ■ K. PICHUMANI

day, Gopinath, the youngest member of the team, caught Brian Statham off Vino Mankad to 'usher in' the victory. The ball used in that Test finds a place in Gopinath's Coonoor residence.

"I got all my teammates to sign it," he reminisces. "But it has been a long time... the signatures have worn off."

**Subdued celebrations**  
According to Gopinath, the victory celebrations were 'unbelievably' subdued by today's standards. "We won the match, went back to the dressing room and everybody said 'well done'. After that, we all went back home!" he says.

Nearly seven decades down the line, the win continues to evoke memories, both emotional and sweet for Gopinath.

## SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

## Solution to puzzle 13167

BOUNCERS	TENANT		
R S H E	N G E		
E L E V A T E S	F R E E Z E		
A F R N A O N N	N		
C O U P D E T A T	L Y C I A T		
H L R O M I G			
J O E Y P R E C E D E			
S Q C C I N S R			
C O U N C I L C I T E			
O E A A O W C			
T E S T S Y N D I C A T E			
L T I T S B X M			
A M I G O S S O L S T I C E			
N O N L E E N N			
D A N I S H H E N N I G H T			

## Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

## FAITH

### Neglecting the good

Having a good memory is an advantage in life. While not all of us are blessed with excellent memory power, we all can remember our duties. But we often forget to carry out important tasks, forget to pass on messages and so on. While one cannot be blamed for little incidents of forgetfulness, we must ask ourselves the question, isn't some of this due to certain negative traits we have? Thiruvalluvar lists four qualities as posing a danger to a person, said Malayaman in a discourse. Not doing something in the stipulated time, forgetting all about it, laziness and excessive sleep – these characteristics will destroy a person, Thiruvalluvar warns. Of all kinds of forgetfulness, the worst is to forget to do good, says Thiruvalluvar. Nothing benefits a man more than acts of goodness, and nothing harms him more than neglecting to do good deeds.

Kamban in his Ramayana shows us the value of dharma, through the words of Vibhishana. Vibhishana says that he who forgets dharma cannot have a peaceful life. Thiruvalluvar says that one must never forget one's connections with blemished people. Nor should one forget those who have helped him in times of need. Avvaiyar said "Nandri maraval." So, she is here advising us that we should never forget to be grateful for help rendered to us. Thiruvalluvar says that it is not right to forget those who helped us. But he adds in the next line, that whatever is unpleasant must be forgotten.

Indeed, we should help those who have helped us. But if this is not possible, the least we can do is to remember their timely help, says the Tamil work Perunkathai. Thiruvalluvar says that wise men know that the body is prone to diseases. And therefore, they never worry about bodily afflictions.

Kohli echoes Ashwin's criticism of the SG ball

S. DIPAK RAGAV  
CHENNAI

Virat Kohli joined teammate R. Ashwin in criticising the quality of the SG ball that was used during the first Test here.

"Honestly, the quality of the ball was not something that we were pleased about because that has been an issue in the past as well," said Kohli on Tuesday.

"Just for the ball's seam to completely be destroyed after 60 overs is not something that you experience as a Test side and something that any Test side could be prepared for," he added.

"In this game, the ball was pretty bizarre because I have never seen an SG ball tear through the seam like that," Ashwin had said after the fourth day's play.

"It could well be a combination of how hard the pitch was on the first two days. Even in the second innings, after the 35th-40th over, the seam started to sort of peel off. I have not seen an SG ball like that in the last so many years," he had.

Pacer Jasprit Bumrah

had earlier said that due to the saliva ban, it was difficult to get reverse swing once the ball became soft.

# Barty and Nadal breeze through

Women's defending champion Kenin made to sweat; ailing Azarenka falls; Nagal bows out

## AUSTRALIAN OPEN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MELBOURNE

Rafael Nadal's injured back didn't slow down his bid for a record 21st Grand Slam title on Tuesday, as women's World No. 1 Ashleigh Barty romped to a 6-0, 6-0 'double bagel' at the Australian Open.

On a day when women's champion Sofia Kenin also reached round two, but two-time winner Victoria Azarenka lost after breathing problems, Nadal and Barty were the headline acts.

Spanish great Nadal, who pulled out of the ATP Cup with a back problem, beat Serbia's Laslo Djere 6-3, 6-4, 6-1.

Russia's Daniil Medvedev, meanwhile, extended his winning streak to 15 matches with an emphatic 6-2, 6-2, 6-4 victory over Canada's Vasek Pospisil.

### Just having fun

Barty later outclassed Montenegro's Danka Kovinic, losing only 10 points as she raced into round two in just 44 minutes. With the win Barty, last year's semifinalist who sat out most of the 2020 season, ramped up hopes of



**Cashing in:** Jessica made the most of Azarenka's indisposition to make it to the next round. ■ AP

a first Australian women's winner in 43 years.

Women's champion Kenin was less convincing during her 7-5, 6-4 win against Australian Maddison Inglis.

But there were distressing scenes as an ailing Azarenka, the 2012 and 2013 champion, went out to Jessica Pegula.

Azarenka, who was one of the players locked down in hard quarantine pre-tournament and not allowed out of her room for 14 days, began to suffer in the second set.

The 2020 US Open runner-up was seen gasping and using an inhaler, and then looked close to collapse on court. After a medical timeout she played on but lost 7-5, 6-4.

PTI adds

### Too hot to handle

India's Sumit Nagal, meanwhile, exited with a first-round defeat, struggling to cope with the power-packed game of Lithuanian Ricardas Berankis.

Nagal's challenge deflated as Berankis' powerful groundstrokes proved too good for the Indian. The verdict 6-2, 7-5, 6-3 in two hours and 10 minutes. Nagal had lost to the World No. 72 in last week's tune-up event too.

## The day in numbers

**1** Mayar Sherif became the first Egyptian woman to win a Grand Slam main draw match

**1** At 17 years and 280 days, Carlos Alcaraz is the youngest to win a main draw Grand Slam singles match since Thanasi Kokkinakis at the 2014 Australian Open (17 years and 279 days)

**6** First time in six years Australians Kokkinakis and Stosur (former US Open champion) have reached the second round of their home Slam

**15** Medvedev has now won 15 straight matches, stretching back to the Paris Masters in 2020. Ten of the 15 have come against top-10 players

**Former Grand Slam champions who lost in the first round - Azarenka, Stephens, Ostapenko, Kerber, Clijc**

**WEDNESDAY'S PICKS**  
Men: 1-Djokovic vs Tiafoe | 3-Thiem vs Koepfer | 6-Zverev vs Cressy | 8-Schwartzman vs Muller | 17-Wawrinka vs Fucsovics | 18-Dimitrov vs Bolt  
Women: 2-Halep vs Tomljanovic | 3-Osaka vs Garcia | 7-Sabalenka vs Kastakina | 8-Andrescu vs Su-wei | 9-Kvitova vs Cirstea | 10-Serena vs Stojanovic

## THE RESULTS

**Men: First round:** 7-Andrey Rublev (Rus) bt Yannick Hanfmann (Ger) 6-3, 6-4; 31-Lorenzo Sonego (Ita) bt Sam Querry (USA) 7-5, 6-4, 6-4; 24-Casper Ruud (Nor) bt Jordan Thompson (Aus) 6-3, 6-3, 2-1 (retd.); Radu Albot (Mda) bt 12-Roberto Bautista (Esp) 6-7(1), 6-0, 6-4, 6-7(5); Alexei Popyrin (Aus) bt 13-David Goffin (Bel) 3-6, 6-4, 6-7(4), 6-6, 3-2; 22-Borna Coric (Cro) bt Guido Pella (Arg) 6-3, 7-6(5), 7-5.

28-Philip Krajinovic (Srb) bt Robin Haase (Ned) 7-6(4), 6-3, 4-6, 6-2; 4-Daniil Medvedev (Rus) bt Vasek Pospisil (Can) 6-2, 6-2, 6-4; 5-Stefanos Tsitsipas (Gre) bt Gilles Simon (Fra) 6-1, 6-2, 6-1; Mihai Ymer (Swe) bt 26-Hubert Hurkacz (Pol) 3-6, 6-3, 3-6, 7-5, 6-3; 19-Karen Khachanov (Rus) bt Aleksandar Vukic (Aus) 6-3, 6-7(4), 7-6(2), 6-4.

Ricardas Berankis (Ltu) bt Sumit Nagal (Ind) 6-2, 7-5, 6-3; 9-Matteo Berrettini (Ita) bt Kevin Anderson (RSA) 7-6(9), 7-5, 6-3; 16-Fabio Fognini (Ita) bt Pierre-Hugues Herbert (Fra) 6-4, 6-2, 6-3; 21-Alex De Minaur (Aus) bt Tenny Sandgren (USA) 7-5, 6-1, 6-1; Cameron Norrie (Grb) bt 30-Daniel Evans (Gbr) 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, 7-5; 2-Rafael Nadal (Esp) bt Laslo Djere (Srb) 6-3, 6-4, 6-1.

**Women: First round:** 1-Ashleigh Barty (Aus) bt Danka Kovinic (Mne) 6-0, 6-0; 29-Ekataterina Alexandrova (Rus) bt Martina Trevisan (Ita) 6-3, 6-4; 21-Anett Kontaveit (Est) bt Aliksandra Sasnovich (Blr) 7-5, 6-2; Olga Danilovic (Srb) bt 16-Petra Martic (Cro) 7-5, 3-6, 6-4; 11-Belinda Bencic (Sui) bt Lauren Davis (USA) 6-3, 4-6, 6-1; Svetlana Kuznetsova (Rus) bt Barbora Strycova (Cze) 6-2, 6-2; 18-Elise Mertens (Bel) bt Leylah Fernan-

dez (Can) 6-1, 6-3; 25-Karolina Muchova (Cze) bt Jelena Ostapenko (Lat) 7-5, 6-2; 6-Karolina Pliskova (Cze) bt Jasmine Paolini (Ita) 6-0, 6-2.

4-Sofia Kenin (USA) bt Madison Inglis (Aus) 7-5, 6-4; 28-Donna Vekic (Croatia) bt Wang Yafan (Chn) 4-6, 6-3, 6-4; 22-Jennifer Brady (USA) bt Aliona Bolsova (Esp) 6-1, 6-3; Kaja Juvan (Slo) bt 13-Johanna Konta (Gbr) 4-6, 2-0 (retd.); Jessica Pegula (USA) bt 12-Victoria Azarenka (Blr) 7-5, 6-4; Kristina Mladenovic (Fra) bt 20-Maria Sakkari (Gre) 6-2, 0-6, 6-3; 26-Yulia Putintseva (Kaz) bt Sloane Stephens (USA) 4-6, 6-2, 6-3; Coco Gauff (USA) bt Jil Teichmann (Sui) 6-3, 6-2; 5-Elena Svitolina (Ukr) 6-3, 6-1; 11-Adriana Domínguez (Cze) 6-3, 7-6(5), 14-Garbine Muguruza (Esp) bt Margarita Gasparyan (Rus) 6-4, 6-0; Ann Li (USA) bt 31-Shuai Zhang (Chn) 6-2, 6-0.

**ATKMB puts it past BFC**

Win takes Habas' side to within a point of MCFC

**ISL 2020-21**  
SPORTS BUREAU

ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB) cut Mumbai City FC's lead to one point and set-up a tantalising end-game in the race for the AFC Champions League spot with a 2-0 win over Bengaluru FC (BFC) at the Fatorda Stadium in Goa on Tuesday.

Roy Krishna and Marcelinho scored in the first half to help ATKMB climb to 33 points from 16 matches. BFC, on the other hand, remain stuck in sixth position on 19 points, with a play-off berth increasingly looking distant.

**Gurpreet stands firm**  
Antonio Habas set up his side to play on the break,

The pressure finally told when defender Pratik Chaudhari lost the ball, and then to compensate clumsily brought down Krishna inside the penalty area.

The ATKMB star sent Gurpreet the wrong way for his 12th goal of the season.

Just before the break, Marcelinho doubled the lead with an expertly taken free-kick after Harmanjot Khabra's wild challenge brought David Williams down in the inside-right channel.

**The result:** Bengaluru FC 0 lost to ATK Mohun Bagan 2 (Krishna 37, Marcelinho 44).

**Wednesday's match:** Chennaiyin FC v Jamshedpur FC, 7.30 p.m.

## IN BRIEF

### Lakers best Thunder

LOS ANGELES  
Los Angeles Lakers bagged a fifth consecutive win on Monday in a 119-112 defeat of Oklahoma City Thunder.

**Other results:** Grizzlies 113 lost to Raptors; 128; Mavericks 127 bt Timberwolves 122; Spurs 105 bt Warriors 100; Suns 119 bt Cavaliers 113; Nuggets 112 lost to Bucks 125.

### CCFC posts win

KOLKATA  
Chennai City FC (CCFC) produced attacking football to beat a 10-man NEROCA FC 2-1 in the I-League on Tuesday.

**The results:** NEROCA FC 1 (Subash Singh 79) lost to Chennai City FC 2 (Vineeth Kumar 6, Demir Avdic 68); Indian Arrows 1 (Vellington Fernandes 87) lost to RoundGlass Punjab FC 2 (Papa Babacar Diawara 35, 56); TRAU 1 (Tursonov 5) bt Aizawl FC 0.

## DELHI ROUND-UP

**TNM Academy in final**

Mohammad Amaan (4/10) helped TNM Academy beat Push Academy by 23 runs and enter the final of the Turf Youth Cup under-15 tournament.

**The scores:** TNM Academy 129 in 40 overs (Bhavi Sharma 33) bt Push Academy 106 in 36 overs (Mohammad Amaan 4/10).

**Sumit, Harsh shine**

Sumit Jangra picked up four wickets and Harsh Kumar made 55 as Telefunken Club defeated Ace Academy by 195 runs in the Unique under-17 tournament.

**The scores:** M-10 Academy 171 in 39.2 overs (Dhrav Sharma 48, Harman Singh 35) lost to Haryana Academy 173/4 in 24.1 overs (Kushal Pal 59, Jayant Lakhan 49).

**No sweat for Turf Academy**

Manav Rajpoot (4/10) and Ram Vaishnav (3/6) helped Turf Academy beat Friends Academy by nine wickets in the Endurance under-15 League.

**The scores:** Friends Academy 120 in 30 overs (Vanesh Sharma 59, Manav Rajput 4/10, Ram Vaishnav 3/6) lost to Turf Academy 122/1 in 14.5 overs (Dhrav Khatri 61 n.o.).

**Delhi Colts in title round**

Dharmender Sharma's 66 and Deepak Dhillon's 3/23 helped Delhi Colts beat RKB Academy by 64 runs and enter the final of the Swastik Chevra Cup tournament.

**The scores:** Delhi Colts 203 in

38.5 overs (Dharmender Sharma 66, Mohit Jangra 3/35) bt RKB Academy 137 in 34 overs (Deepak Dhillon 3/23).

**Shlok, Pranav hog the limelight**

Leg-spinner Shlok Singh picked up five wickets and Pranav scored an unbeaten half-century as West Delhi Academy (Dwarka) defeated West Delhi Academy (Paschim Vihar) by four wickets in the u-17 Endurance League.

**The scores:** WDCA (Paschim Vihar) 135 in 33.3 overs (Samarth Ahuja 54, Shlok Singh 5/42) lost to WDCA (Dwarka) 138/6 in 33.3 overs (Pranav 50 n.o., Manoj Thwal 3/26).

**Both the schemes bring security to your family's future**

## Celta halts Atletico's run

REUTERS

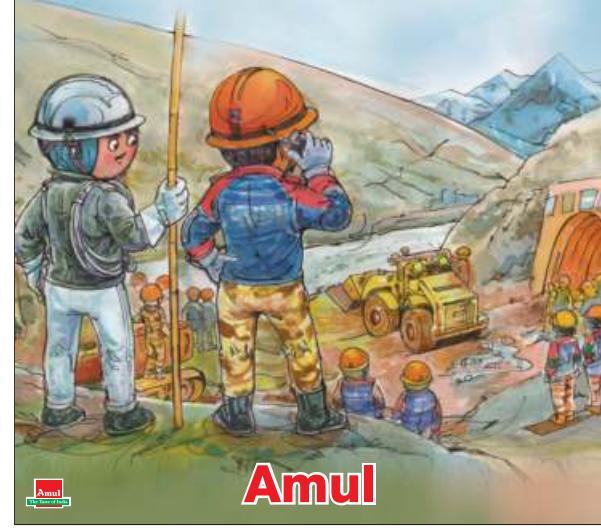
MADRID

Atletico Madrid striker Luis Suarez continued his deadly run of form by scoring twice at home to Celta Vigo on Monday but could not prevent the LaLiga leader drawing 2-2 as its eight-game winning streak ended.

The draw interrupted Atletico's winning run since its loss to Real Madrid on Dec. 12 but it still holds a comfortable advantage at the top, leading Barcelona by eight points with a game in hand.

**The result:** Atletico 2 (Suarez 45, 50) drew with Celta Vigo 2 (Santi Mina 13, Ferreyra 89).

## Saathi heart badhana saathi re!



Amul

dacunha/AB726

## Shiva on top in 10m air pistol

Chinki prevails over Rahi and Manu

## SHOOTING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Shiva Narwal beat Asian Games gold medallist Saurob Chaudhary to the top position in men's 10m air pistol in the third National shooting selection trials on Tuesday.

In the boys' section, Jai Rana outplayed sixth seed Vanish Nandal 6-1, 6-2.

The results

(pre-quarterfinals): Under-16 Boys: Daksh Prasad bt Mayank Sharma 6-1, 6-3; Jai Rana bt Vanish Nandal 6-1, 6-2; Manish Yadav bt Dhruv Ganghas 6-3, 6-4; Bhavya Singhmar bt Shafaa Ali Asghar 6-3, 7-5; Aryan Arora bt Dhruv Kumar 4-6, 6-1, 6-1; Aryan Deshwal bt Nishant Kumar 6-4, 3-6, 7-5; Dhruv Sachdeva bt Debasish Sahoo 6-3, 6-4; Rushil Khosla bt Venkat Rishi Batlalki 7-6 (2), 6-3.

Girls:

Hannah Nagpal

bt Sowkhya Gaddam

6-1, 6-2;

Tamanna Takhoria

bt Rubani

Kaur Sidhu

6-1, 6-3;

Srivalley

Medhishetty

bt Ananya Kal

pesh Bhatia

6-1, 7-6(1); Ikaraju

Kanumuri

bt Mahika Khan</p