



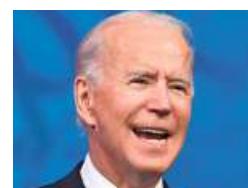
Police file chargesheet against Binoy Kodiyeri in rape case

Page 8



States asked to be ready for adverse reactions to vaccines

Page 10



Electoral College confirms Joe Biden as the next U.S. President

Page 11



Rahane says twilight period will be challenging in D-N Test

Page 13

PRINTED AT • CHENNAI • COIMBATORE • BENGALURU • HYDERABAD • MADURAI • NOIDA • VISAKHAPATNAM • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • KOCHI • VIJAYAWADA • MANGALURU • TIRUCHIRAPPALLI • KOLKATA • HUBBALLI • MOHALI • MALAPPURAM • MUMBAI • TIRUPATI • LUCKNOW • CUTTACK • PATNA

NEARBY



Spike in return of people to Bangladesh

NEW DELHI

In the past four years, nearly twice the number of illegal Bangladeshi migrants were caught leaving the country compared to those coming in illegally, according to data available with the Border Security Force and National Crime Records Bureau. Till December 14, as many as 3,173 illegal migrants were caught by the BSF while trying to cross the border.

NEWS • PAGE 9

Cold wave sweeps city, minimum drops to 4.1°C

NEW DELHI

The minimum temperature in the Capital on Tuesday fell to 4.1 degrees Celsius, which is the lowest this season, leading the Meteorological Department to declare a cold wave. The minimum temperature was five degrees lower than normal for this season. The Met Department said the cold wave is likely to continue till December 18.

CITY • PAGE 3

SMART SELF STUDY PLAN
by Amit Garg
(Ex-Faculty, Vajiram & Ravi)
16th Dec, 2020 Fee 2050/-
www.iasetu.com C 9630883727

OPPORTUNITIES • PAGE 5

Farmers' protest chokes units in Bahadurgarh's industrial cluster

Transport of raw material, finished goods affected

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

Hundreds of industrial units in Haryana's Bahadurgarh, the hub for India's non-leather footwear manufacturers, are bearing the brunt of the farmers' agitation at Tikri.

Though a majority of the industrial units in this satellite town of Delhi are now running at less than half of their capacity, many are temporarily shut, with the transportation of raw material and processed goods taking a hit.

Narinder Chhikara, senior vice-president, Bahadurgarh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, told *The Hindu* that 'Part B' of the Modern Industrial Estate (MIE), housing around 1,600 units, including footwear, electronics, plastic, auto-parts and chemicals, was the worst hit.

Bahadurgarh has around 10,000 small and big industrial units in different sectors and almost all have been hit, with the transportation of raw material and processed goods affected, but the 'Part B' of the MIE, surrounded by a drain, the protesters and Delhi, bears the brunt. The units in this part are either temporarily shut or running



Pitching in: Children who accompanied their parents to the farmers' protest help in collecting trash at Ghazipur on Tuesday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

Farmers being misled: Modi

On a day-long visit to Kutch, Prime Minister Narendra Modi once again stressed the importance of his government's farm laws and said "farmers were being misguided" by the Opposition and a few others. ■ PAGE 9

Protests go on, amid impasse

Protesting farmer leaders have threatened to close the Delhi-Noida border crossing at Chilla if the agricultural reform laws are not repealed. On the 20th day of protests, both the Centre and the protesters reiterated their stand. ■ PAGE 9

transport their finished products to the warehouses in Delhi's Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar and Punjabi Bagh areas via the Kundli-Manesar Expressway to be despatched further, transporters are not willing to accept the goods since their warehouses are full.

Mr. Chhikara said several internal roads connecting Delhi to Bahadurgarh were either shut or witnessed a huge rush of traffic.

CONTINUED ON ■ PAGE 8

MORE REPORTS ■ PAGES 3 & 9

Is govt. serious on a solution?

The Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ekta-Ugrahan), one of the largest outfits in Punjab, has questioned the intent of the Centre in resolving the stalemate. It said the government had been trying to malign the movement. ■ PAGE 9

Currently, eight institutions, including the Homi Bhabha National Institute and its constituent units, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Space Physics Laboratory and Indian Institute of Remote Sensing are on the list.



Speaking up: Pinky talking to mediapersons at Kanth.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020.

Mr. Rashid and Ms. Pinki had arrived at the marriage registration office in Kanth when they were handed over to the police, allegedly by members of a right-wing outfit that opposed their marriage and even heckled the woman.

The FIR against the brothers was lodged on a complaint by Ms. Pinki's mother, a Bijnor resident from the Scheduled Caste community, who alleged that Mr. Rashid induced and coerced her daughter into marriage and took her to Kanth to convert her.

Mr. Rashid had concealed his Muslim identity from Ms. Pinki, the woman's mother had alleged.

CONTINUED ON ■ PAGE 8

Scrap quotas for IIT faculty: Ministry panel

PON VASANTH B.A.
CHENNAI

A committee constituted by the Union Ministry of Education (MoE) to suggest measures for effective implementation of reservation policies in IITs has recommended that these institutions be exempted from following the policies in faculty recruitment.

The committee based its recommendations primarily on arguments claiming the need for IITs to maintain their academic excellence and the lack of candidates from the reserved categories who fulfil the qualification criteria.

IoEs exempt

In its report, obtained by an activist through a Right to Information Act application, the committee suggested that IITs be included in the list of Institutes of Excellence (IoE) that are exempted from reservation policies under the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act (CEI Act) of 2019.

Currently, eight institutions, including the Homi Bhabha National Institute and its constituent units, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Space Physics Laboratory and Indian Institute of Remote Sensing are on the list.

CONTINUED ON ■ PAGE 8

Return to normalcy



A sight to see: Tourists were back at the shore temple in Mamallapuram on Tuesday, a day after monuments were opened after a gap of eight months. ■ B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Tablighi case: court acquits 36 foreigners

They were booked for violating norms

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Tuesday acquitted 36 foreigners who were charged with attending a religious congregation at the Tablighi Jamaat centre in Nizamuddin here in alleged violation of visa norms and government guidelines issued in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Arun Kumar Garg acquitted the foreign nationals from 14 countries of all the charges levelled against them. The 36 foreigners were facing charges under Section 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), Section 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Section 3 (disobeying regulation) of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and Section 51 (obstruction) of Disaster Management Act, 2005.

Around 47 chargesheets have been filed until now against over 915 foreign nationals, belonging to 34 different countries, in relation to



The religious congregation held at Nizamuddin in March was attended by several foreign nationals. ■ FILE PHOTO

AIIMS Nurses Union suspends strike following High Court order

Guleria says 22 of 23 demands met, union claims it isn't so

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The AIIMS Nurses Union suspended its strike late on Tuesday evening after the Delhi High Court restrained it from continuing with its agitation against the hospital's alleged decision to hire nursing officers on contractual basis.

"The [AIIMS Nurses] union has decided to suspend the strike respecting the High Court order today," said AIIMS Nurses Union president Harish Kumar Kajla.

Justice Navin Chawla passed the order earlier in the day on a plea moved by the AIIMS administration against the protesting nurses who went on an indefinite strike from December 14 afternoon. AIIMS in its plea contended that the entire hospital had come to a standstill because of the strike.

The court ordered the nurses' union to discontinue the strike "till further order" after it was informed that the grievances of the agitating nurses were being considered by the authorities. The High Court also issued notice to the union while posting



Up in arms: Members of AIIMS Nurses Union raising slogans on the hospital premises in New Delhi on Tuesday. ■ R. V. MOORTHY

the case for hearing on January 18 next year.

Last month, the nurses' union had given a notice for strike from December 16 over an "anomaly" in their pay under the Sixth Central Pay Commission, because of which they are getting "paid less", and other demands.

On Monday, AIIMS director Randeep Guleria had appealed to the nurses to call off their agitation. He termed the strike "very inappropriate" and said that 22 out of 23 demands made by the union had been met.

The court ordered the nurses' union to discontinue the strike "till further order" after it was informed that the grievances of the agitating nurses were being considered by the authorities. The High Court also issued notice to the union while posting

'Forced to go on strike' On Tuesday morning, the nurses protested outside the director's office demanding

Six Haryana MLAs meet amid government-unions stand-off

Centre should speak to farmers, stress the legislators

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Five Independent MLAs of Haryana and Janayak Janta Party's Barwala legislator Jogi Ram Sihag held an informal meeting at Panchkula on Tuesday, demanding that the Centre should find an immediate solution to the ongoing farmers' agitation.

Besides Mr. Sihag, Badshahpur MLA Rakesh Daultabad, Pundri MLA Randhir Singh Gollen, Prithila MLA

Nayan Pal Rawat, Nilokheri MLA Dharam Pal Gonder and Dadri MLA Sombir Sangwan attended the meeting.

Mr. Sangwan said they met for lunch at Mr. Gollen's invitation but added that the government should immediately find a solution to the imbroglio. The Dadri MLA had earlier this month resigned as chairman of Haryana Livestock Development Board and withdrawn support to the BJP-JJP government.

Mr. Sihag, who refused to accept his appointment as chairman of Haryana Housing Board, said he always stands with the farmers, but added that it did not mean that they could make "unjustified" demands.

Mr. Sihag, who refused to accept his appointment as chairman of Haryana Housing Board, said he always stands with the farmers, but added that it did not mean that they could make "unjustified" demands.

CONTINUED ON ■ PAGE 8

Get Inspired listen to Ace Achievers

Learn About your partner in success - the Mentor

Gather Insights on Exam Preparation Strategies

REGISTRATION MANDATORY

Friday, 18 December

5:00 - 6:00 PM

Edukemy's New Launches for MAINS 2021

Geography Optional Advanced Enrichment Program + Test Series

Sociology Optional Advanced Enrichment Program + Test Series

Essay Online Classroom Program + Test Series

PSIR Optional Advanced Enrichment + Test Series

+91-98113 33782 / +91-98113 33783 | enquiry@edukemy.com

Law Ministry nod sought on postal ballots for NRIs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The proposal of the Election Commission of India (ECI) to extend the postal ballot option to overseas electors is pending with the Law Ministry, sources in the Commission said on Tuesday.

On November 27, the ECI had written to the Ministry proposing to extend the facility to non-resident Indians (NRIs), starting with the Assembly elections in Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

The ECI letter stated the

Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, would need to be amended to send postal ballots to NRIs electronically and then have them sent back via post.

The amendments should be made at the earliest to facilitate the right of overseas electors and boost "the image of the country internationally", it stated. The Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS), used to send ballots to Service electors, would be extended to overseas Indians if the proposal is adopted.

CONTINUED ON ■ PAGE 8

Success is a continuous process with MOHITA SHARMA

Shabbir A. Bashir Host (18+ yrs Experience)

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि संगं त्यक्त्वा धनंजय।
सिद्ध्य-सिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥



INTERNATIONAL GITA MAHOTSAV

17-25 December, 2020

(Margashirsha Shukla Paksha)
Kurukshetra, Haryana

Special Attractions

- 48 Kos Cultural Tour of Kurukshetra
- Legends of Ancient Kurukshetra
- What Gita has for Me
- Gita - A Philosophy of Life

Programme

Gita Maha Aarti
17-25 December, 5:30 PM
Aarti Sthal, Purushottampura Bagh,
Brahma Sarovar

Gita Recital, Gita Quiz, Acting-Dance, Seminar,
Declamations & other educational programme
17-25 December
Maharishi Valmiki Sanskrit University, Kaithal

Complete Gita Yajna
21 December, 10:30 AM
Purushottampura Bagh, Brahma Sarovar

Inauguration of International Gita
Webinar
21 December, 11:00 AM
Srimad Bhagavadgita Sadan
Kurukshetra University

International Gita Webinar
22-23 December, 10:00 AM

Complete Bhagavadgita Paath
21-25 December, 10:30 AM
Jyotisar and Sannihit Sarovar

Sant Sammelan
24 December, 02:00 PM
Srimad Bhagavadgita Sadan,
Kurukshetra University

Global Gita Chanting (Online)
25 December, 12:00 Noon
Purushottampura Bagh, Brahma Sarovar

Closing Ceremony - Deepotsav and
Maha Aarti
25 December, 06:00 PM
Brahma Sarovar & 48 Kos Pilgrimages of
Kurukshetra

Competitions based on Gita and Mahabharata for students (Online)
11-19 December, 2020 (District Level)
20-21 December, 2020 (State Level)

Quiz competition based on Gita and Mahabharata for students and general public (Online)
4-21 December, 2020

Keep yourself safe from Novel Coronavirus and Enjoy the Festival at Home

www.internationalgitamahotsav.in
www.kurukshetra.gov.in
www.48koskurukshetra.com



[f /internationalgitamahotsav2020](https://www.facebook.com/internationalgitamahotsav2020)
[i /internationalgitamahotsav](https://www.instagram.com/internationalgitamahotsav/)
[v /igmkkr2020](https://www.youtube.com/igmkkr2020)

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana  www.prharyana.gov.in

| Timings | |
|----------------------|--|
| DELHI | |
| WEDNESDAY, DEC. 16 | |
| RISE 07:07 SET 17:28 | |
| RISE 08:42 SET 19:10 | |
| THURSDAY, DEC. 17 | |
| RISE 07:08 SET 17:28 | |
| RISE 09:39 SET 20:13 | |
| FRIDAY, DEC. 18 | |
| RISE 07:09 SET 17:28 | |
| RISE 10:27 SET 21:16 | |

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 18 04
Safdarjang 18 04
Palam 17 06

Delhi Palam Today
19°C Cold wave condition with mist/shallow fog. Dry winds would continue. A cool day.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
18°C A cold morning and cool winds would prevail. Cold day condition may develop in parts.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019
All rights reserved.

THE HINDU

DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any published item in this newspaper. PUBLISHERS PVT LTD., Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or editorial content of any other publication or products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director, Employees of this newspaper/ company be held liable for any damage in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

'Mini Chandigarh' at Singhu border

Enclosure inspired by luxury cars at site

HEMANI BHANDARI NEW DELHI

Chandigarh's popular jazzy market," he says.

Rajdeep Singh Bains (31), from Fatehgarh Sahib, says that inside the enclosure where the tractor and trolleys are neatly parked facing each other with a small area in the middle where protesting farmers sit on roads and inside two camps installed next to each other.

Farmers from both Haryana and Punjab are lodged in this enclosure.

Why Sector 17?

"The reason why we named it Sector 17 is because of the kind of luxury cars parked right outside the enclosure with a street for walking in the middle. This gives 'Chandigarh feels,'" says Mr. Navjyot, adding that the area is as clean as the famous market. "We sweep it every few hours," he adds.

HEMANI BHANDARI NEW DELHI

Early morning temperature in the national capital on Tuesday dropped to a bone-chilling 4 degree Celsius, but the farmers protesting at the Singhu border were not just unperturbed by the dip in mercury but in fact their determination was at a peak.

"Back in our villages, we are immersed in water during the chilly months. Punjab is always colder than Delhi. This is nothing for us," said Gurbir Singh (40), resident of Patiala.

Explaining the use of water in this season, Mr. Gurbir said this is the time when the fields are watered every few days. "We get electricity in the fields around 10 p.m. and that's when we start watering the fields. The process usually lasts the entire night and we stay awake drenched in water all night," he said.

Back home, this is what



Protesters at the Singhu border in Delhi on Tuesday.

■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

the families are doing while the farmers hold fort in the Capital. "My 12-year-old son is now watering the fields. He and my wife also cut fodder for our cattle. They call and ask us not to come till we have won the battle," he said.

Jagtar Singh added that his three-year-old daughter also calls him every day and asks him: "Did [Prime Minister Narendra] Modi meet you? If not, should I come?"

The protesting farmers, including many elderly ones, beat the cold tucked in their blankets inside the tractors and trolleys at night. "We wear sweaters and jackets. Inside the tractor, there are layers of mattress and blanket," said Mr. Gurbir.

Sitting next to him, ex-

lying tucked inside a thick blanket. He has had a fever and a stomachache since Monday night. "A doctor has seen him and given medicines. He has caught a cold. It will take two days for him to go back home. We will wait and see if he gets better here," Mr. Karnail said.

Protesters use plastic sheets to cover the gap between the road and the edge of the truck to prevent any cold drafts.

Beating the cold

In addition to warm clothes and blankets, the farmers eat dry fruits and drink hot milk mixed with ghee, honey, dates and almonds.

"Punjabiyan ko zyada thand nahin lagti. Aur log AC rooms aur heaters main rehte hain, thand une lagti hai [Punjabis don't feel cold. Those who use ACs and heaters, feel cold]," said 76-year-old Maan Singh.

Cold wave sweeps the Capital

Minimum drops to 4.1°C; conditions to remain till Dec. 18

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The minimum temperature in the city on Tuesday fell to 4.1 degrees Celsius, which is the lowest this season, leading the Meteorological Department to declare a cold wave.

The minimum was five degrees colder than normal for this season, and a fall from the 8.4 degrees Celsius recorded on Monday.

A western disturbance brought light rain to the national capital over the weekend after which temperatures started falling. The first half of December was warmer than usual after October and November recorded colder than normal temperatures. The Met department said the cold wave is likely to continue as chilly winds are blowing to-



People sit around a bonfire on a cold Tuesday morning.

■ SANDEEP SAXENA

wards Delhi from the Himalayas where there has been fresh snowfall.

The maximum temperature on Tuesday dipped to 18.5 degrees Celsius, five degrees below normal and the coldest maximum temperature for the season.

In Delhi, the IMD declares a cold wave when the minimum temperature is 10

degrees Celsius or below and is 4.5 notches less than normal.

The Met department's forecast for Wednesday reads: "Mainly clear sky with cold day and cold wave conditions at few places. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to settle around 19 and 3 degrees Celsius, respectively. The cold wave is likely to continue till December 18 with clear sky and minimum temperatures under five degrees Celsius. After this, the skies are likely to become partly cloudy."

Last year, the mercury fell to 2.4 degrees Celsius on December 28.

The coldest ever minimum temperature recorded in Delhi was on December 27, 1930, when it touched 0 degrees Celsius.

Delhi Cong. protests for repeal of new farm laws

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Tuesday protested in front of the BJP HQ at DDU Marg, demanding the repeal of the three farm laws passed by the Central government.

Party workers detained

Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee chief Ch. Anil Kumar led the protest, which was stopped by the police. Party workers were also detained.

Mr. Kumar said the three

anti-farmer laws will crush the farming sector across

and was detrimental to the farmers' interest. He added that that the laws in their present form, will hand over the farm sector to PM Narendra Modi's rich corporate friends on a platter.

The insensitivity of the Modi government towards the farmers is clearly evident from the fact that despite the death of several farmers, the Centre was unmoved by their [farmers'] plaint," Mr. Kumar said.

Farmers thankful to PM for the laws, claims BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The farm laws against which lakhs of farmers are protesting across the country have been drafted in their interest but the political opposition is misleading them through propaganda, the BJP claimed at a Kisan Mahapanchayat here on Tuesday.

Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta, LoP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, BJP MP Pravesh Sabherwal and State Kisan Morcha president Vinod Sehrawat, who addressed

the Mahapanchayat in Najafgarh, said the farmers support the laws and also are thankful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the same.

"The Modi government has enacted the farm laws in the interests of farmers; it also implemented the suggestions of the Dr. Swaminathan Commission Report, brought Fasal Beema Yojana, Kisan Credit Card Yojana, Soil Health Card Yojana and others schemes for the development of farmers," Mr. Gupta said.

Chief Engineer, JSRDA, 3rd Floor, FFP Building, Dhurwa, Ranchi

Short-e-Procurement Notice

Retender (PR-No.-223230 dated 03.01.2020) The Government of India has received a loan/credit number "Ln 7995-IN/Cr.4848-IN/Cr-4848-IN" from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/International Development Association towards the cost of Rural Roads Project (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana) and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts for construction of works as detailed in the Invitation for Bids. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the bidding document.

The Chief Engineer, JSRDA, Ranchi, Jharkhand for J.S.R.D.A on behalf of Governor of Jharkhand, invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system for construction of Bridges, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana under XVIIth phase(Batch-II), in the district of Giridih-2Pk (2 Roads), Cost Rs. 338.33 Lakh, Khunti-1Pk (2 Roads), Cost Rs. 196.35 Lakh and Palamu-1Pk (1 Bridge), Cost Rs. 157.68 Lakh including their maintenance for five years, from the eligible contractors registered in appropriate classes with RCD/ RDD/ R.W.D. Jharkhand, Ranchi/ CPWD / MES/ in any other State Governments/ Central Government.*

Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 17.12.2020

Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid document will be available online from 17.12.2020 and should be submitted online in www.pmgstendersjhr.gov.in. The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities. The bidders are required to submit (a) Original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security in approved form and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (ii) of ITB with C.E. J.S.R.D.A. 3rd Floor, F.F.P. Building, H.E.C. Campus, Dhurwa, Ranchi, up to 22.12.2020 till 15.00 hours, either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive.

Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 22.12.2020 upto 15.00 hours (time).

For further details please log on to www.pmgstendersjhr.gov.in

Chief Engineer,

J.S.R.D.A., 3rd Floor

FFP Building, Dhurwa, Ranchi

* Non registered bidders may submit bids, however the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.

PR 237514 (Rural Work Department)20-21*D

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय

प्रेषण एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, मेदिनीनगर

ई-प्रोक्रामेंट निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

(1st Call)

दिनांक 15.12.2020

केन्द्र प्रशासित योजना "जल जीवन निष्पत्ति" के अन्तर्गत :- Detailed survey, designing and drawing, Construction of R.C.C. Intake Well cum Pump House, R.C.C. Gangway 310 M long and 3.0 M wide, 8.50 MLD capacity Conventional Water Treatment Plant, RCC Elevated Service Reservoir (i) 2.10 Lakh Litre capacity 15M Staging (ii) 2.00 Lakh Litre capacity 21M Staging (iii) 1.80 Lakh Litre capacity 15M Staging (iv) 7.75 Lakh Litre capacity 24M Staging, Staff Quarter, Compound wall, Approach road, Scada system, Supplying and laying Raw and Clear Water rising main and Distribution Network, House Connection, Supplying and Installation of v/T and Centrifugal pump motor and Five years operation & maintenance with allied works etc. all complete job for Satbarwa - Bakoriya Multi Village Rural Pipe Water Supply Scheme under D.W. & S. Division, Medinigar on turnkey basis. Year 2021-22.

1 प्राकक्षित राशि लगभग (लाख में) 2725.46 (सतार्हाई करोड़ पच्चीस लाख छियालीस हजार रुपये मात्र)

2 अग्रधन की राशि (लाख में) 27.26 (सतार्हाई लाख छ्वाँस हजार रुपये मात्र)

3 पर्याप्त विपत्र का मूल्य 10,000/- (दस हजार रुपये मात्र)

4 विपत्र पूर्ण करने की विधि 24 (वीरीन) महीना + 3 (तीन) वर्षाना Trial & Run

5 वेबसाइट पर दिये गये विविध प्रक्रमान्वयन की विधि एवं समय 30/12/2020 / 12.30 बजे अपराह्न तक

6 प्रो शोर्ड की विधि एवं समय 04/01/2021 / 12.30 बजे अपराह्न से आमंत्रित प्रमुख का कार्यालय, येवजल एवं स्वच्छता विभाग, आरखंड, रांची, नेपाल हाउस

7 12/01/2021 / 05.00 बजे अपराह्न तक

8 13/01/2021 / 05.00 बजे अपराह्न तक (वीरी प्रब्रह्म रोपी, येवजल एवं स्वच्छता विभाग, आरखंड, रांची, नेपाल हाउस) मूल्य (हार्ड कॉर्टी) जमा करने की विधि एवं समय

9 निविदा खोलने की विधि एवं समय 15/01/2021 / 04.00 बजे अपराह्न में

10 निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी के कार्यालय का पता कार्यपालक अभियंता, येवजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, मेदिनीनगर।

11 निविदा खोलने वाले पदाधिकारी के सम्पर्क नं. कार्यपालक अभियंता, येवजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, मेदिनीनगर।

12 9835068475 निविदा का प्रकालित राशि घट-बढ़ सकती है। तथा स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, भौतिक अभियंता, येवजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, मेदिनीनगर।

Khalid's mother, sister among 14 detained

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A total of 14 persons, including the mother and sister of activist and former Jawaharlal Nehru University student Umar Khalid, were detained during a candle-light march on Tuesday.

December 15 marked the one-year anniversary of violence at Jamia Millia Islamia campus and a major clash between students and the police following anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests.

A student, who did not wish to be identified, said a call was given for a candle-light march to Batla House on Tuesday after which

about 25 people gathered at the meeting point.

"As soon as the people gathered, the police came and started detaining them," he said.

Those detained included Mr. Khalid's mother Sabiha Khanum and his 17-year-old sister, said sources.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South-East) R.P. Meena said, "The police team removed the agitators from the spot. Meanwhile, three women also accompanied the protesters. The protesters were then counselled regarding COVID-19 appropriate behaviour and were requested to return to their homes."

Active COVID-19 cases fall below 15,000 mark

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Delhi recorded 1,617 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 6,10,447, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday.

Moreover, 41 fatalities were reported in a single day, taking the death toll to 10,115 in the city.

Of the total cases, 5,85,852 people have recovered and there are 14,480 active cases. Also, a total of 8,516 patients were under home isolation.

The positivity of COVID-19 cases was 1.9% on Tuesday, lesser than the average daily positivity in No-

vember, which was 11.65%. The overall positivity till now was 8.28%, as per the bulletin.

COVID-19

Out of the total 18,807 beds available for COVID-19 treatment in the city, 14,770 are vacant, as per the bulletin. About 4,040 people were admitted in hospitals and 8,516 patients were under home isolation.

As per the bulletin, the death rate in the past 10 days was 2.59%. There are 6,420 containment zones in the city as on Tuesday.

Patients left in the lurch as AIIMS nurses strike work

Many of them had come from afar and were left stranded

NIKHIL M BABU

NEW DELHI

Around 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday, a few steps inside the main gate of AIIMS, 42-year-old Binti Devi was lying on a white stretcher. Cars and bikes were zooming past her without even noticing her.

For six hours, she has been in this state, waiting for chemotherapy.

"I have cancer in my stomach and was given today's [Tuesday] date. We came here around 8 a.m. and now they are saying there is a strike and have asked us to go home. We haven't eaten anything since morning," Ms. Devi said.

Ms. Devi's 15-year-old daughter, Shristi, said they had come to the hospital on Monday and was given Tuesday's date and no one told them about the strike. Ms. Devi told *The Hindu*.

As more than 3,000 nurses of the AIIMS went on a sudden indefinite strike from

Monday afternoon, families of several patients said they are left stranded without treatment at the hospital.

Around 6 a.m., Ms. Devi and her family had left their house in Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh for her chemotherapy. But they have been given the next available date of December 21. "We don't know whether it will happen on December 21, they might extend it again. There is no one to hear about poor people's problems," Ms. Devi said.

Ms. Devi's husband, an electrician, said they spent about

₹2,000 for one trip to the hospital as they had to hire a cab because of her condition.

Kishore Sisodia (23) was massaging his mother's legs. The latter was lying on the floor outside the Rajkumari OPD. "She had surgery in her stomach a couple of days ago, and since then she has been complaining of stomach pain. We came to the hospital around 9 a.m. The doctor admitted her and gave her some medicine. He then told us that there is a strike and discharged her. She is still unwell and we want to admit her," said Mr. Sisodia.

When asked whether if it still pains, Baby Sisodia, 43, lying on the floor, nodded her head and pointed her hand to her stomach.

AAP will fight U.P. Assembly polls: Kejriwal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will contest the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections to provide an honest political alternative to the people of the State, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, in his capacity as the AAP's national convener, said on Tuesday.

The development of the State, he alleged, had been held back due to the "dirty politics and corrupt leaders" of the State.

While the people of U.P. had reposed their trust and faith in every party, each had stabbed them in their backs, Mr. Kejriwal added.

"Today, there are only two things lacking in U.P. politics: honesty and intent. This is what AAP has. It is with this honesty that the AAP has transformed Delhi. We proved that the governments lack not money, but the intent," Mr. Kejriwal said.

"Why do the people of U.P. travel to Delhi for every major and minor facility," he asked.

Hours after Mr. Kejriwal's announcement, the U.P. government called him an inefficient administrator and a habitual liar".



Office of the Executive Engineer, Project Division, R.R. Nagar Zone, BBMP Office Building, 2nd Floor, Neharu Road, BMEL Layout, Bengaluru-560 098

No.: BBMP/EE/Proj/RRN/TEN/17/2020-2021 Date: 14.12.2020

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Two Cover System) (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only)
Tenders on item rate basis are invited by the Executive Engineer (Project Division) on behalf of Commissioner, BBMP for the work mentioned below under the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Rules 2000 in prescribed format from the registered Service provider / contractors of BBMP or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES or any State Government Organizations.

| Sl. No. | Name of the Work | Amount put to Tender (Rs. in Lakhs) | EMD (in Rs.) |
|---------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Construction of Shuttle Badminton Court at BBMP Layout in Hemmigepura Ward No. 198. | 200.00 | 3,00,000/- |

Calendar of Events: (1) Documents can be downloaded from e-Procurement website from: 17.12.2020 onwards. (2) Pre-bid meeting at the Office of Chief Engineer, R.R.Nagar Zone, Ideal Homes: 19.12.2020 at 4:00 p.m. (3) Last date for submission of Tender document: 28.12.2020 upto 4:00 p.m. (4) Opening of Technical Bid: 29.12.2020 at 11:00 a.m. (5) Opening of Financial Bid: Will be intimated to the Technically Qualified Contractors. In the event of the specified date of tender opening being declared a holiday for the employer, the tenders will be opened at the appointed time and location on the next working day. Further details may be obtained from the above office, during office hours or website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Project Division, R.R. Nagar Zone, BBMP

COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC, BE AWARE



ENTERPRISE CONNECT

SJVN signs MoU with IREDA for Green Energy Projects

SJVN Limited has entered an MoU with Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA). IREDA will provide its services to SJVN for Green Energy projects. The MoU was signed by Shri Nand Lal Sharma, CMD, SJVN and Shri Pradip Kumar Das, CMD, IREDA in the presence of Shri Akhileshwar Singh, Director (Finance), SJVN, Shri Surinder Pal Bansal, Director (Civil), SJVN, Shri Chintan Shah, Director (Technical), IREDA, and other senior officials today through virtual mode. On the occasion Sh. Nand Lal Sharma, Chairman & Managing Director told that as per MoU, IREDA will undertake Techno-Financial due diligence of Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency & Conservation Projects for SJVN. Under the MoU, IREDA will also assist SJVN in developing an action plan to create and acquire Renewable Energy projects for the next 5 years. Sh. Sharma said that, SJVN is committed to contribute in realizing the renewable energy target of 175 GW by 2022. The steps in this direction have already been taken and presently SJVN is developing 100 MW Dholera Solar Power Project & 100 MW Raghanseda Solar Power Project in Gujarat. He also emphasized that partnership of SJVN & IREDA will be long lasting and fruitful for both.

Power Grid signs MoU with SGPGIMS for establishing Powergrid-SGPGIMS Tele-ICU in Uttar Pradesh

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) signed an MoU with Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS), in the presence of Shri Yogi Adityanath, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh for establishing POWERGRID-SGPGIMS Tele-ICU in the state of Uttar Pradesh on 14th of December 2020. As per the MoU, a Command Centre will be established at Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Lucknow and Spoke Centres at Gorakhpur, Kanpur, Prayagraj, Agra, Meerut and Jhansi. The MoU was signed by Shri V.K. Singh, Director (Personnel) on behalf of POWERGRID and Dr. R.K. Dhiman, Director on behalf of Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences.

Minister Of Petroleum & Natural Gas to explore convergences to drive tribal empowerment

As a part of its continuing, ongoing efforts to improve the lives and livelihoods of the tribals and work towards tribal empowerment, TRIFED is exploring convergences and partnerships with government departments and like-minded organisations to create synergies together. In this regard, Shri Arjun Munda, the Hon'ble Minister of Tribal Affairs and Shri Pravir

Krishna, Managing Director, TRIFED had a meeting with Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas on December 10, 2020. During this discussion, several aspects of collaboration were discussed with the aim of moving towards tribal livelihood development while harnessing the common strengths and expertise to the maximum benefit. The key initiatives that came up during the discussion included promoting tribal development entrepreneurship programmes through Van Dhan Kendras,

CMD- PSPCL urges pledge to save electricity

Chairman cum Managing Director of Punjab State Power Corporation Limited Shri A. Venu Prasad has called upon the people of Punjab to take pledge to save electrical energy for a brighter and progressive future for the coming generations. In a message to the people of Punjab on national energy conservation day, he said that Punjab State Power Corporation Limited has taken various steps to save electricity, which includes replacement with as many as 42,582 LED tubes of 20 watt and 4,137 LED lamps of 9 watt in various office buildings of the corporation.

PSPCL also had initiated the distribution of 15.73 lakh 9 Watt LED lamps among SC/BC and BPL consumers at subsidized rates out of which 16,200 number of LED lamps have already been distributed.

Himachal Pradesh Public Work Department Corrigendum

The tenders invited through e-Procurement for the by the under signed vide this Office letter No- PW/IN/2020/11712-16, Dated: 18.11.2020 which were scheduled to be opened on 23-12-2020 already published in Giriraj (vide your office Release Order No. 4450/2020-2021(Classified)) are hereby postponed due to some administrative reason and will now be online publication and opened as dates shown as under:-

| S. No. | Name of work | Estimated cost(Rs) | Starting Date for downloading Bid and end date | Ernest Money | Deadline for submission of Bid | Time |
|--------|--|--------------------|--|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | Construction Pucca link road from Belli to Deoli km 0/0 to 2/00/c Bridge over Kalyanpur Deoli Khad at RD 0/1/85 in Tehsil Nalagar RIDF-XXVI. | 2,03,86,448/- | 28-12-2020 at 3:00 P.M. to 18-01-2021 up to 11:00 A.M. | 2,37,000/- | 18-01-2021 up to 11:00 A.M. | Eighteen Month |
| 2. | Construction Pucca link road Panoh Barian Allyon Danoghat km 3/0 to 15/730/c Bridge over Allyon Khad RIDF-XXVI. | 5,30,88,891/- | 28-12-2020 at 3:00 P.M. to 18-01-2021 up to 11:00 A.M. | 5,64,000/- | 18-01-2021 up to 11:00 A.M. | Twenty four Month |

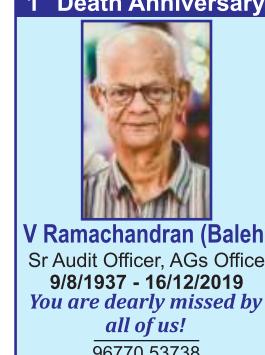
Executive Engineer Nalagarh Division HP PWD Nalagarh

HP / 5011/20-21

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

TENTH ANNIVERSARY



V Ramachandran (Baleh)
Sr Audit Officer, AGS Office
9/8/1937 - 16/12/2019
You are dearly missed by all of us!
96770 53738



Born:04.12.1960 - Died: 16.12.2010
Mr.G.PADMANABHAN
Managing Director
Pay our homage with thanks.
Family Members & Employees of INDELECT TECHNOLOGIES PVT.LTD, CHENNAI
Ct: 93802 43402 / 93825 43299

In memory of your loved ones
To dedicate a space in this section, Please contact:

011-43579797

from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. &

For Placing Advertisements Online log on to

www.thehinduads.com

DONATE EYES-GIFT SIGHT

EDUCATIONAL

ANTHROPOLOGY

Learn from India's best teacher

SOSIN MADAM

OFFLINE

Batch Starting : 16-12-2020

* Direct interaction with teacher

* Tests in UPSC environment

* Learn in the best ecosystem of Hyderabad

* Affordable quality stay

* Get the hold of concepts and sharpen writing skills in anthropology

* Completely Overhauled material

* Intensive writing sessions with personal care

TARGET 340+

SosinClasses **99899 66744/90000 66690**

INSTITUTE FOR IAS EXAMINATION (IAS, IPS, IRS, IRMS, IFPS & Other Civil Services)

1-10-196, Ashok Nagar X Roads, Hyderabad, Telangana - 500 020.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE FAMILY COURT AT VELLORE, VELLORE DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Wednesday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Thunderstorms accompanied with lightning likely at isolated places over Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Dense fog likely at isolated places over sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim.

| CITY | RAIN | MAX | MIN | CITY | RAIN | MAX | MIN |
|-------------|-----------|------|------|----------------|---------|------|------|
| Agartala | ...23.5 | 15.3 | 12.1 | Kozhikode | ...33.0 | 23.6 | 11.1 |
| Ahmedabad | ...27.4 | 17.1 | 11.1 | Kurnool | ...31.1 | 17.1 | 10.9 |
| Aizawl | ...23.2 | 7.7 | 1.1 | Lucknow | ...22.8 | 10.9 | 1.1 |
| Allahabad | ...21.9 | 15.2 | 10.1 | Madurai | ...31.1 | 20.1 | 10.1 |
| Bengaluru | ...27.0 | 16.4 | 10.1 | Mangaluru | ...34.0 | 22.9 | 10.1 |
| Bhopal | ...4.22.3 | 15.1 | 10.1 | Mumbai | ...26.9 | 20.8 | 10.1 |
| Bhubaneswar | ...30.5 | 19.2 | 10.1 | Mysuru | ...29.1 | 17.2 | 10.1 |
| Chandigarh | ...18.1 | 9.9 | 4.1 | Patna | ...23.4 | 15.2 | 10.1 |
| Coimbatore | ...30.0 | 18.8 | 10.1 | Pond Blair | ...6.2 | 29.7 | 25.5 |
| Dehradun | ...21.5 | 7.7 | 1.1 | Puducherry | ...30.2 | 20.6 | 10.1 |
| Gangtok | ...14.2 | 7.1 | 1.1 | Pune | ...4.5 | 30.3 | 17.1 |
| Goa | ...33.0 | 22.9 | 10.1 | Raipur | ...28.4 | 19.8 | 10.1 |
| Guwahati | ...25.9 | 15.4 | 10.1 | Ranchi | ...1.8 | 21.6 | 13.4 |
| Hubballi | ...29.0 | 18.0 | 10.1 | Shillong | ...17.1 | 5.5 | 10.1 |
| Hyderabad | ...29.2 | 16.4 | 10.1 | Shimla | ...14.8 | 5.7 | 10.1 |
| Impal | ...23.4 | 5.5 | 1.1 | Srinagar | ...9.1 | 2.0 | 10.1 |
| Jaipur | ...21.4 | 9.8 | 1.1 | Tiruchirapalli | ...32.7 | 21.4 | 10.1 |
| Kochi | ...31.4 | 23.0 | 10.1 | Vijayawada | ...29.7 | 21.0 | 10.1 |
| Kohima | ...18.4 | 5.8 | 1.1 | Visakhapatnam | ...29.2 | 19.8 | 10.1 |
| Kolkata | ...27.1 | 17.8 | 10.1 | | | | |

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

| CITIES | SO ₂ | NO _x | CO | PM _{2.5} | PM ₁₀ | CODE |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|------|-------------------|------------------|-------|
| Ahmedabad | 23 | 60 | .135 | 121 | 121 | ■■■■■ |
| Bengaluru | 19 | 67 | .32 | 104 | .107 | ■■■■■ |
| Chennai | 13 | .87 | .91 | 14.8 | 14.8 | ■■■■■ |
| Delhi | 16 | 68 | .344 | .226 | 10.1 | ■■■■■ |
| Hyderabad | 5.102 | 13 | .109 | .128 | 10.1 | ■■■■■ |
| Kolkata | 15 | .26 | .43 | .315 | .197 | ■■■■■ |
| Lucknow | 12 | .80 | .54 | .343 | .237 | ■■■■■ |
| Mumbai | 17 | .47 | .23 | .340 | 10.1 | ■■■■■ |
| Pune | .6 | .74 | .92 | .186 | .146 | ■■■■■ |
| Visakhapatnam | 12 | .15 | .55 | .206 | .131 | ■■■■■ |

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

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

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

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

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Guwahati, Assam recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 325 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 39.

GENERAL



Make the power move in your mining career

NTPC Limited is India's largest Integrated Energy Company with an installed capacity of 62,918 MW. Commensurate with our country's growth challenges, NTPC has embarked upon an ambitious plan to attain a total installed capacity of 130 GW by 2032. NTPC has been allocated 10 coal mine blocks which are expected to produce more than 100 million tons per annum.

To fuel its ambitious growth plan, NTPC is looking for experienced professionals in the area of Mining on fixed term basis for a period of 03 years & details are as under:

| Name of the Posts/ No. of posts | No. of years of Exp. | Monthly Emoluments (Rs.) |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Executive (Excavation)/ 01 | 10 | ₹ 1,70,000/- |
| Executive (Mine Planning-RQP)/ 02 | 14 | ₹ 1,89,000/- |
| Head of Mine Surveyor/ 01 | 20 | ₹ 1,89,000/- |
| Asst. Mine Surveyor/ Mine Surveyor/ 15 | 5/10 | ₹ 57,000/- ₹ 76,000/- |

Upper Age limit for all Posts: 56 years

HOW TO APPLY For details regarding eligibility criteria, qualification, experience, job profile, monthly compensation/ benefits, applying online etc., candidate may visit www.ntpcareers.net

Commencement of online registration of application: 16.12.2020.

Last date for on-line registration of application: 30.12.2020.

Advt No. 0720

Registered Office :
NTPC Bhawan, Cor-7, SCOPC Complex,
7 Institutional Area, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110 003
Website: www.ntpc.co.in CIN: L40101DL1975G0007966
Follow us at: [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Instagram](#) [YouTube](#)

NTPC Limited
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)
Leading the Power Sector

FINANCE/ACCOUNTS



(A WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARY OF COCHIN SHIPYARD LIMITED)
KOLKATA - 700017

HCSL/PROJ/HR/02/19-20 Vol II (A) 10 December 2020

NEEDS
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
ON CONTRACT BASIS

Applications are to be submitted through online.
For details, please visit CSL website www.cochinshipyard.com (Careers page).

Start date of online application is 16 December 2020.

Last date of receipt of online application is 31 December 2020.

"Hindi version of detailed advertisement is published in the website (www.cochinshipyard.com) of CSL" Sd/-
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, HCSL

M F P I



Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology

Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India
Pudukkottai Road, Thanjavur - 613 005, Tamil Nadu

Phone: +91-4362-228155 ■ director@iifpt.edu.in ■ www.iifpt.edu.in

No: IIFPT/ADMIN/PM-FME/2020

Date: 16.12.2020

Implementation of PM Scheme for Formalization of Micro-Food Processing Enterprises

Posts to be recruited for Project Management Unit (PMU)

MoFPI-IIFPT invites applications for the following positions on contract basis.

| Name of the Post | No. of Post | Remuneration |
|------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Team Leader | 1 | Rs.1,75,000/- p.m. |
| Consultant | 1 | Rs.1,10,000/- p.m. |

An online written exam followed by online interview, will be conducted for the eligible candidates. The appointment will be on contract basis with probation of 6 months. Performance of the appointed person will be evaluated every year for extension.

For further details on qualifications, upper age limit, experience, roles and responsibility of above posts, may please visit www.iifpt.edu.in.

Director

+



- We value your Dream

Repco Home Finance Limited

Invites applications from dynamic, growth oriented persons fulfilling the eligibility criteria for the position of

DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER (Legal) for CHENNAI

For further details, visit our website: www.repcohome.com

Last date for receipt of application is on 30.12.2020

+



MALABAR CEMENTS LIMITED
(A Government of Kerala Undertaking)
An ISO 9001:2015, 14001:2015 Company
Walayar Post, Palakkad-67862-Kerala

PA/2/RE-13/2020

16 December 2020

Applications are invited for the following posts :

- Chief Chemist, Gr.M3
- Dy. Manager (Production & Quality Control), Gr.M4
- Foreman (Mechanical), Gr.VII
- Asst.Foreman (Mechanical), Gr.VI
- Lab Assistant, Gr.VI
- Burner, Gr.V

For further details visit: www.malabarcemts.co.in/en/careers

Sd/-
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Saptha, the first and finest 7 star hospitality project coming up in Wayanad, Keala is on the lookout for the following personnel with experience in hospitality industry, preferably in 5 Star Hotels.

FRONT OFFICE : Front Office Director ■ Lobby Manager ■ Front Office Associates ■ GRE ■ Bell Desk Associates ■ Transportation Associates (Drivers)</p



Vaccine drive

Assurances of safety, efficacy and long-term follow-up are essential

Fine theories and good policies are often frustrated in their encounter with facts and implementation processes in the field. India's COVID-19 vaccine policy, recently unveiled, must take care not to head that way, and make adequate allowances for ground realities that could render naught well-laid plans. With a definitive cure not yet available for COVID-19, vaccines present the world with the best strategy to slow the virus down in its tracks along with a measure of vested herd immunity, as SARS-CoV-2 rampages on. While it may not be the magic wand, vaccinating people will be the only known way of slowing the march of the virus, and every country, down to each county, must prepare for this massive exercise. As the U.K. and the U.S. began vaccinating their people, India has announced its plan and proposed line-up for COVID-19 vaccination, shortly after the Union Health Minister denied that the government had ever committed to COVID vaccination for all in the country. As per the government's strategy, the vaccination is to be given first to health-care workers and then to people over the age of 50, with those over 60 given priority, based on the situation. This will amount to about 30 crore people. The voters' list for the Lok Sabha and Assembly election polls has been set as the verifying document for the process. A new digital platform, Co-WIN, will be used for COVID-19 vaccination delivery, and about 1.54 lakh Auxiliary Nurse Midwives working on Universal Immunisation Programmes will be roped in as vaccinators, with more such field staff to be mobilised in collaboration with the States. Cold chain systems are to be strengthened across the country to deliver multiple doses.

As governments beef up the vaccination drive, they need to clear the fog on vaccine safety and efficacy among the people. With passing days, it will not be too much to expect from the government a detailed plan for vaccinating children and a break down of tasks down to the lowest governance rung, as counties in the U.S. have been doing. Unless the latter is done, a proper estimate of the true challenges of administering vaccines in the field will not be available, and being unprepared is a guarantee to coming undone. Vaccine hesitancy is a reality and the only way to counter that is to be open and honest about adverse effects and post-vaccination sequelae, if any, and make available relevant information in the public realm. In the past, in some States, vaccination programmes have suffered temporarily because of misinformation about adverse events following shots. In addition, in this case, long-term follow up of all who receive the vaccine is absolutely essential. For, therein lies the assurance that every one in the global line list is waiting for.

Mild moderation

Inflation, if unchecked, can hamper the nascent economic recovery

Retail inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is estimated to have moderated in November to a provisional 6.93%, from the previous month's 7.61%, official data released on Monday showed. On the face of it, the moderation in price gains ought to be welcome news. A closer look shows that the 68 basis points easing in the headline level of inflation has been helped largely by a 140 basis points slowing in price gains in the food and beverages basket, which with a weight of almost 46 is the single biggest index constituent and driver of retail inflation. The RBI had in its monetary policy announcement earlier this month flagged an expected softening in the prices of perishables in the winter months. Predictably, increased market arrivals of vegetables – the third-largest weight within the basket – led to a sharp deceleration in price gains for this key food item. Inflation for vegetables slid 688 basis points to 15.63% last month, from 22.51% in October. Cereals, the food category with the largest weight, saw inflation slow to 2.32%, from 3.39%, reflecting the bumper *kharif* harvests and confirming the trend that the central bank had spoken of. And though the prices of other food categories too softened in November, out of the basket of 12 items, inflation still remained in the double digits in the case of six, excluding vegetables. Key protein sources including pulses, eggs and meat and fish continued to register worryingly high levels of inflation that surely cannot bode well for the wider population's nutritional well-being.

Disconcertingly, inflation in the key transport and communication category that includes petrol and diesel eased by a marginal 10 basis points to 11.06%. With oil marketing companies continuing to raise pump prices of these crucial transportation fuels, as crude oil extends its recovery from April's pandemic-induced lows, it is hard to foresee any further appreciable softening in food prices in December given the high costs of transporting farm produce from the agrarian hinterland. This would, in turn, put the RBI's forecast for average fiscal third-quarter inflation of 6.8% in jeopardy, as the headline figure would now need to moderate by at least 107 basis points to about 5.86% for this month. Its November survey of households' inflation expectations also offers little room for comfort. With more households expecting general prices to rise over the 'next three months' and 'one year ahead' horizons than the number of respondents concerned about such a price trend in the September survey, policymakers must guard against easing vigilance on prices while considering growth-supportive measures. Price stability, for all the growing calls to downplay its centrality in the RBI's policy mandate, must remain the monetary authority's primary target: unchecked inflation poses manifold risks to the nascent economic recovery.

Punjab, Haryana need to look beyond MSP crops

In tackling agri-crises, these core Green Revolution States must shift to high value crops and promote non-farm activities



RAMESH CHAND & JASPAL SINGH

The region comprising Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, was an early adopter of Green Revolution technology. It was also a major beneficiary of various policies adopted to spread modern agriculture technology in the country. The package of technology and policies produced quick results which enabled India to move from a country facing a severe shortage of staple food to becoming a nation close to self-sufficiency in just 15 years.

The rice and wheat focus

Procurement of marketed surplus of paddy (rice) and wheat at Minimum Support Price (MSP) completely insulated farmers against any price or market risks. And, at the same time, it ensured a reasonably stable flow of income from these two crops. Over time, the technological advantage of rice and wheat over other competing crops further increased as public sector agriculture research and development allocated their best resources and scientific manpower to these two crops. Other public and private investments in water and land and input subsidies were the other favourable factors.

Thus, wheat in *rabi* and paddy in *kharif* turned out to be the best in terms of productivity, income, price and yield risk and ease of cultivation among all the field crops (cereals, pulses, oilseeds). It is no surprise then that the area share of rice and wheat in the total cropped area rose from 48% in Punjab and 29% in Haryana in the early 1970s to 84% and 60%, respectively in recent years. While wheat was being cultivated in this region since long, paddy cultivation was totally new for most farmers in Punjab and Haryana. The

progress and specialisation towards these two crops served the great national goal of securing the food security of the country.

During the mid-1980s, some inimical trends related to the rice-wheat crop system in general and paddy cultivation in particular surfaced followed by serious second generation problems of the Green Revolution. Some experts foresaw the serious consequences of continuation of paddy cultivation in the region and suggested diversification away from the rice-wheat system in the mid-1980s.

Since then a large number of reports and policy documents have been prepared to develop alternative options to reduce the area under paddy – necessitated by its adverse effect on natural resources, the ecology, the environment, and fiscal resources. Serious concerns have also been expressed about plateauing productivity and stagnant income from rice-wheat cultivation. However, the area under these two crops has only increased rather than fallen. In order to develop viable options to infuse dynamism in the agriculture economy of this Green Revolution belt, there is a need to understand: what attracts farmers to rice-wheat crops, why it needs to be changed, and how it can be changed.

Punjab, Haryana vs. States

High productivity, assured MSP which is often above open market price, free power, and fertilizer subsidy underlie the higher income per unit area from wheat and paddy cultivation. Land-labour ratio is also very favourable in Punjab when compared to other States; on an average a farmer owns and cultivates 2.14 hectares net sown area as against 1.42 hectares in Haryana and 1.17 hectares at the national level.

An estimate of income (derived from National Accounts Statistics) shows that all agriculture activities taken together generate an annual net income of ₹5.31 lakh per cultivator in Punjab; it is ₹3.44 lakh in Haryana while the all-India average is ₹1.7 lakh (reference year,



2017-18). A question often asked is that if per farmer agriculture incomes in Haryana and Punjab are two to three times more than the national average, then why is there so much talk of farmers' distress in these two States?

The reasons seem to be the loss of growth momentum in the income from the agriculture sector, which has fallen to 1% in Haryana and 0.6% in Punjab after 2011-12. This is quite low by any standard and not keeping in pace with an increase in households' expenditure. The prospects of further growth in agricultural income from the crop sector dominated by rice and wheat are very dim.

With the productivity of rice and wheat reaching a plateau, there is pressure to seek an increase in MSP to increase income. However, demand and supply do not favour an increase in MSP in real terms. In India, the per capita intake of rice and wheat is declining and consumers' preference is shifting towards other foods. It may look strange that the average spending by urban consumers is more on beverage and spices than on all cereals. On the supply side, rice production is rising at the rate of 14% per year in Madhya Pradesh, 10% in Jharkhand and 7% in Bihar.

Obviously, the advantage of rice production is shifting towards these States. This will further increase pressure on the procurement and buffer stock of rice. Rice and wheat procurement in the country has more than doubled after 2006-07 and buffer stocks have swelled to an all time high. The country does not find an easy way to dispose of such large stocks and they are creating stress on the fisc-

al resources of the government. The implication of all these changes is that farmers in the region will find it difficult to increase their income from rice-wheat cultivation and they must be provided alternative choices to keep their income growing.

Procurement of almost the entire market arrivals of rice and wheat at MSP for more than 50 years has affected the entrepreneurial skills of farmers to sell their produce in a competitive market where prices are determined by demand and supply and competition. Thus, to enable Punjab and Haryana farmers to move toward high-paying horticulture crops requires institutional arrangements on price assurance such as contract farming.

Environmental issues, jobs

The biggest casualty of paddy cultivation and the policy of free power for pumping out groundwater for irrigation is this: the depletion of groundwater resources. In the last decade, the water table has shown a decline in 84% observation wells in Punjab and 75% in Haryana. It is feared that Punjab and Haryana will run out of groundwater after some years if the current rate of overexploitation of water is not reversed. In the last couple of years, the burning of paddy stubble and straw has become another serious environmental and health hazard in the whole region.

Another rather more serious challenge for the two States is to provide attractive employment to rural youths. As it is well known, most of the farm work in these States is undertaken by migrant labour. The younger generation is not willing to do manual work in agriculture and looks for better paying salaried jobs in non-farm occupations. Government jobs are few and far less than the number of job seekers.

Thus, the option left is to create jobs in the private industry and the services sector. This requires private investments in suitable areas. Punjab has witnessed a flight of private capital from the State during the rise of militancy

which hurt the State economy, employment and the revenues of the State. This setback has pushed the rank of the State in per capita income from number one in the 1970s and the early 1980s to number 13 among the major States of the country. For further progress and to meet the aspirations of rural youth to get satisfactory employment, the State needs large-scale private investments in modern industry, services, and commerce besides agriculture.

The solution to the ecological, environmental and economic challenges facing agriculture in the traditional Green Revolution States is not in legalising MSP but to shift from MSP crops to high value crops and in the promotion of non-farm activities. Rather than focusing on a few enterprises, Punjab and Haryana should look at a large number of area-specific enterprises to avoid gluts. This will require a mechanism to cover price and market risks. Farmers' groups and farmer producer organisations can play a significant role in the direct marketing of their produce.

Agricultural specificities

Both Punjab and Haryana need to promote economic activities with strong links with agriculture tailored to State specificities. Some options for this are: promotion of food processing in formal and informal sectors; a big push to post-harvest value addition and modern value chains; a network of agro- and agri-input industries; high-tech agriculture; and a direct link of production and producers to consumption and consumers without involving intermediaries.

The traditional Green Revolution States of Punjab and Haryana would need to shed "business as usual" approach and embrace an innovative development strategy in agriculture and non-agriculture to secure and improve the future of farming and rural youth.

Ramesh Chand and Jaspal Singh are with NITI Aayog, New Delhi as Member and Consultant, respectively. The views expressed are personal

From a digital India to a digital Bharat

The PM-WANI project seems to fit within the framework of an evolving decentralised concept to bridge the e-divide



SUMEYSH SRIVASTAVA

The term 'game changer' is sometimes used too freely in the context of conversations related to policy, especially when it comes to government policy initiatives. It is not always true, and can come across as hyperbole, and a marketing term to make the potential impact of certain initiatives seem larger than they actually are.

However, there are times when the term is appropriate, and can be seen as an accurate reflection of the capability of an initiative to change the *status quo*. The Prime Minister's Wi-Fi Access Network Interface, or PM WANI (<https://bit.ly/3nrxtDe>) announced on December 9 fits the 'game changer' tag. This provides for "Public Wi-Fi Networks by Public Data Office Aggregators (PDOAs) to provide public Wi-Fi service through Public Data Offices (PDOs) spread across [the] length and breadth of the country to accelerate proliferation of Broadband Internet services through Public Wi-Fi network in the country".

What the data shows

Essentially, this would mean the ability to connect to a Wi-Fi broadband connection almost anywhere. This can help to bridge the increasing digital divide in India.

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.

MSP determination

The M.S. Swaminathan Commission recommended improvement in implementation of Minimum Support Price (MSP) and also in arrangements for the MSP to be in place for crops other than paddy and wheat. The Commission recommended millets and other nutritious cereals be permanently included in the Public Distribution System. A key proposal was

that the MSP should be at least 50% more than the weighted average cost of production. While recommending price policy of various commodities under its mandate, the Commission for Agricultural Cost and Prices keeps in mind the various terms of reference given to the CACP in 2009. Accordingly, it analyses demand and supply; cost of production; price trends in the market, both domestic



mobile Internet in India. Going back to the India Internet report, it shows that 99% of all users in India access the Internet on mobile, and about 88% are connected on the 4G network. This leads to a situation where everyone is connected to a limited network, which is getting overloaded and resulting in bad speed and quality of Internet access.

Key links

There are three important actors here. First is the Public Data Office (PDO). The PDO can be anyone, and it is clear that along with Internet infrastructure, the government also sees this as a way to generate revenue for individuals and small shopkeepers. It is important to note that PDOs will not require registration of any kind, thus easing the regulatory burden on them. Next, is the PDOA, who is basically the aggregator who will buy bandwidth from Internet service provider (ISPs) and telecom companies and sell it to PDOs, while also accounting for data used by all PDOs. Finally, you have the app provider, who will create an app through which users can access and discover the Wi-Fi access points.

Further details can be found in the report by TRAI on a public

open Wi-Fi (<https://bit.ly/2ITLHO4>). Two pillars have been given as a baseline for public Wi-Fi.

The first is interoperability, where the user will be required to login only once and stay connected across access points. The second is multiple payment options, allowing the user to pay both online and offline. The report also talks about how products should start from low denominations, starting with ₹2. It is suggested in the report that the requirement of authentication through a one-time password for each instance of access may be cumbersome and automatic authentication through stored e-know your customer (KYC) is encouraged, which inevitably means a linking with Aadhaar.

Aiding rural connectivity

The PM-WANI has the potential to change the fortunes of Bharat Net as well.

Bharat Net envisions broadband connectivity in all villages in India.

The project has missed

multiple deadlines, and even

where the infrastructure has been created, usage data is not enough to incentivise ISPs to use Bharat Net infra to provide services.

One of the reasons for the lack of demand is the deficit in digital literacy in India.

The other reason is simply the lack of last mile availability of the Internet.

In terms of digital literacy, it is not enough to look at digital literacy as a set of specific skills,

because the skills required to navigate technology keep changing.

A more appropriate framework

(<https://bit.ly/3h16jAJ>) is to see it as an evolving decentralised con-

cept, which depends on how people interact with technology in other aspects of their life, and is influenced by local social and cultural factors.

The PM-WANI seems to fit within this framework, simply because it seeks to make accessing the Internet as easy as having tea at a *chai* shop. This is not a substitute for the abysmal digital literacy efforts of the government, but will definitely help.

Security, privacy issues

There are some concerns, mainly with respect to security and privacy. A large-scale study (<https://bit.ly/3oXTJVB>) conducted at public Wi-Fi spots in 15 airports across the United States, Germany, Australia, and India discovered that two thirds of users leak private information whilst accessing the Internet. Further, the TRAI report recommends that 'community interest' data be stored locally, raising questions about data protection in a scenario where the country currently does not have a data protection law in place. These are however, problems of regulation, state capacity and awareness and do not directly affect the framework for this scheme.

With the PM-WANI, the state is expanding the reach of digital transformation to those who have been excluded till now. It is a game-changer because it has the potential to move Digital India to Digital Bharat.

Sumeysh Srivastava is an Internet access researcher working at Nyaya, an open-access platform that provides simple and actionable legal information

To read more letters online, scan the QR code



wonder if the post-liberalisation trend of a retreat by the state and public sector from the social sector and the market is responsible for the present crisis. Are we sacrificing too much in actual progress of the many disadvantaged to seek a land of unbridled economic growth benefiting a few? KANNAN K., Meloor, Chalakudy, Kerala

protests does not augur well for India's democracy. M. JAYARAM, Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

Cost of 'progress'

It was not long ago that progress in metrics such as child nutrition was a certainty and we, as a nation, only had to debate how the pace of our progress could be improved. On the contrary, we are moving backwards. One cannot help but

Why Jawaharlal Nehru University matters

It is a lively national space, a microcosm of India with all its beauty and warts



RAJEEV BHARGAVA



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS CC 3.0 - GANGA SAHAY MEENA

A nation is a people in continuing conversation. I'm sure there are other places in the country where the Indian nation is forged daily. But for me, JNU was the pre-eminent site where this happened.

A microcosm of India

In my early education in Delhi, I encountered students and teachers largely from Punjab and U.P. and occasionally from West Bengal, Tamil Nadu or Maharashtra. But in JNU, every living minute of my years as a teacher between 1980 and 2005, I encountered scores of people from every nook and cranny of India. A university, by definition, is an ecumenical, all-inclusive institution but how many universities manage to attain this ideal? JNU was able to do this by being hospitable to women and minorities and because of its sensitive admission policy that induced candidates from virtually every region of India, aspiring men and women from economically deprived areas, and those historically disadvantaged by their place in the caste hierarchy. JNU was a microcosm of India with all its beauty and warts.

An equally attractive feature of JNU was its democratic culture. Where in India would you find a university in which student union elections were held with only hand painted posters, and no money power? Political talk from one side was countered with more talk from the other. These often turned into verbal duels and intellectualistic fistfights but never physically violent. JNU elections were a lively festival of discussion, argument, polemic and discursive contestation that harvested alert, engaged citizens many of whom found a home in national politics and went on to become public officials committed to the Constitution.

But perhaps the most enticing feature of the university was its academic programme. Teaching was a serious undertaking; no teacher dared miss a class. Classrooms overflowed with students, many of whom came voluntarily from multiple depart-

ments, across disciplines. Large M.A. classes could last up to two hours with students concentrating on every word uttered by the teacher. Yet, if a point needed clarification or an argument some elaboration, a raised hand could gently, uninhibitedly interrupt the lecture. Then the class would join in an exciting, unexpected conversation. The art of listening, conversing, discussing and debating would be taken to new heights. In smaller M.Phil classes, neither the teacher nor students would want to leave the classroom until the caretaker arrived to lock up the building. Even as some discussants left for home or the hostel, others would trundle down to a nearby dhoba to try and unravel the mysteries of the social and political universe. I reckon most teachers earned the respect and affection of their students who, without being overawed, looked up to them for intellectual guidance.

Perhaps I am overstating my case and should nuance it. Undeniably, many students in their first semester were intimidated by students from metropolitan cities, fluent in English and with superior academic preparation. How much more anxious and daunted they must be in the presence of highly qualified teachers? This must be particularly true for Dalits and students from 'backward regions' who barely spoke English and when they did, spoke with a heavy local tint. These students, struggling to keep their head above water, could manage a grade no higher than B Minus. However, by the end of the second semester they grew in confidence, spoke up in class and improved their grades. Their transformation was exhilarating, a teacher's triumph no doubt, but also a victory of the culture of the university that encouraged learning from peers.

In the school and college where I

studied, the brightest students were seen to produce results without hard work, as if by innate ideas or else by tuning into a satellite of knowledge from which ideas beamed directly to their brain at the speed of light! But in reality, knowledge production and acquisition are qualitatively different. Real ideas grow and are learnt with patience, hard work and commitment. Books and journal articles have to be read over and over again. One has to sweat it out in the library. The engagement with ideas has to move beyond the library and the classroom into small, intensive, friendly groups. Then, a retreat into monkish solitude is needed for transcribing research, and to learn to throw away more words than one eventually keeps. A coherent piece of writing emerges after years of arduous labour. In the best universities of the world, scholars win respect and admiration by this dedicated effort. JNU competed with the best in the world because it taught everyone the value of such intellectual toil.

Original ideas germinate when research and teaching are creatively connected, when teachers test their burgeoning ideas on young productive minds that, untamed by disciplinary protocols, raise adventurous, hitherto unasked questions. For this cutting-edge research, teachers need the freedom to design and restructure their courses every other year. JNU gave us this opportunity. Moreover, impartiality was not conflated with impersonality. Anonymity was set aside and question papers were set and marked by the same teacher who taught the course – a new form taken by the *guru-shishya parampara*. In JNU, learning occurred in creative in-between spaces where a complex dialectic was at play between formality and informality, equality and legitimate hierarchy, friendship

and civility, unilateral instruction and unregulated discussion.

Shortcomings

Of course, JNU had its share of weaknesses too. First, an unwholesome reliance by some on jargon, abstraction, and ideology. Theoretical abstraction counted for more than lived experience; seductive ideologies mattered more than what the eyes could see and the ears could hear. What I say might ring untrue in the face of stories by JNU students on how they learnt the tools to grasp the social, political, economic and historical reality of their country. Yet, a tearing hurry to connect ideas to interests of social groups, as if they are born to serve only one or another class, marred their understanding. Very often this led, on the one hand, to a failure to detect multiple possibilities in ideas and on the other, to a disconnection from the real world.

To be sure, good academic research requires a degree of disconnection from the world – at least in phases. But eventually researchers must find a way to reconnect. This is one of the big mysteries of JNU: how could this happen simultaneously – the connect and disconnect with reality? And while the production of knowledge is accompanied with intellectual waste, to have grounded a painfully self-righteous and incestuous politics on this undigested excess of abstractions was self-indulgent, delusional and exclusionary, unworthy of a great centre of learning.

My second issue is with the mindset behind a glaring omission. It took JNU 40 years to launch a Department of Philosophy, usually the mainstay of universities around the world. I guess this was due to the pervasive social scientism in the 1960s, when JNU was established. Equally disturbing is the absence of a deeper collective study of Indian religions. We may more easily omit the teaching of what is called religion in the West but not what is 'religion' in India. For good or for bad, multiple religious cultures partly constitute social reality in India. A refusal to engage with them is to get a partial, distorted picture of Indian reality. This only plays into the hands of those who wilfully manipulate these profoundly plural religious experiences for their own nefarious political benefit.

Rajeev Bhargava is Professor, CSDS

Law and disorder

Several inadequacies in the justice delivery system lie hidden as disproportionate attention is given to the Supreme Court



N.L. RAJAH

In the TV series, *The Crown*, a dismayed Queen Elizabeth II seeks to understand from Prime Minister Harold Wilson why the public has such a negative perception of the royalty. She points out that the royalty is composed of normal people leading normal lives and doing normal jobs. Wilson haltingly says that the people don't expect the royalty to be normal, but to be "ideal". "But," the Queen bleats, "nobody is ideal."

Today, the Supreme Court finds itself in a similar predicament. The citizens of the country expect the institution and its constituents to be ideal, and the challenge of the Supreme Court is to come to terms with that reality. However, it is not the Supreme Court alone that matters in the justice delivery system. As a result of the unrelenting focus on the anguished knocks at the doors of the highest court, the other inadequacies of the system don't get as much public attention. A few important ones are dealt with below.

Spending on judiciary

Most often, the issue of spending on judiciary is equated with a call for increasing the salaries of judges and providing better court infrastructure. Such perceptions are unfortunate. India has one of the most comprehensive legal aid programmes in the world, the Legal Services Authority Act of 1987. Under this law, all women, irrespective of their financial status, are entitled to free legal aid. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and children too are entitled to free legal aid. This means that a significant proportion of the population falls – or is supposed to fall – under a free legal aid regime. However, in reality, this law is a dead letter. There has been little effort on the part of successive governments to provide a task force of carefully selected, well-trained and reasonably paid advocates to provide these services. In comparison, the system of legal aid in the U.K. identifies and funds several independent solicitor offices to provide such services. If support is withdrawn, many solicitor offices that provide these invaluable services would collapse and with that, the rule of law. India is yet to put in place anything similar to this.

Poor judge-population ratio

The judge-population ratio provides one of the most important yardsticks to measure the health of the legal system. The U.S. has about 100 judges per million population. Canada has about 75 and the U.K. has about 50. India, on the other hand, has only 19 judges per million population. Of these, at any given point, at least one-fourth is always vacant. While much is written on vacancies to the Supreme Court and the High Courts, hardly any attention is focused on this gaping inadequacy in lower courts which is where the common man first comes into contact (or at least should) with the justice delivery system. These inadequacies are far more important to the common man than the issues relating to the apex court that are frequently highlighted in the public space. In *All India Judges Association v. Union of India* (2001), the Supreme Court had directed the Government of India to increase the judge-population ratio to at least 50 per million population within five years from the date of the judgment. This has not been implemented.

Access to justice

Though 'access to justice' has not been specifically spelt out as a fundamental right in the Constitution, it has always been treated as such by Indian courts. In *Anita Kushwaha v. Pushpa Sadan* (2016), the Supreme Court held unambiguously that if "life" implies not only life in the physical sense but a bundle of rights that make life worth living, there is no justice or other basis for holding that denial of "access to justice" will not affect the quality of human life. It was for the first time that the Supreme Court had attempted a near-exhaustive definition of what "access to justice" actually means. Further, the court pointed out four important components of access to justice. It pointed out the need for adjudicatory mechanisms. It said that the mechanism must be conveniently accessible in terms of distance and that the process of adjudication must be speedy and affordable to the disputants. It is of course a paradox that this judgment, which emphasises the concept of speedy justice, was passed in 2016 in a batch of transfer petitions that were filed between 2008 to 2014.

The state in all its glorious manifestations – the executive, judiciary and the legislature – is yet to draw out a national policy and road map for clearing backlog and making these concepts real. These are just a few of the issues crying for attention. A disproportionate amount of attention that is given to the functioning of the Supreme Court, important as it is, distracts from these and similar issues. Let us assume that the apex court achieves the distinction of being "ideal" in the near future, of being all things to all people. Still, a fine mind alone is of little avail if the rest of the body lies disabled, as the justice delivery system is today.

N.L. Rajah is Senior Advocate, Madras High Court

A test for Ghana

For the second time in recent times, a candidate has challenged the outcome of a closely contested poll

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

Ghana, which has just concluded its eighth successive general election since the end of military rule in 1992, is regarded a kind of gold standard for political stability in the region. The election commission took justified pride when it announced that this would be the first election that would be financed without external assistance. The country was the earliest in Sub-Saharan Africa to win freedom from colonial rule in 1957, when the nation's first Prime Minister and President Kwame Nkrumah championed the cause of pan-African unity. That vision has since enlarged into the current African Union of 55 member states, which recently launched a fledgling free trade area across the continent. The heralding of multi-party democracy in the country, alongside other nations in the continent in more recent years, has been described as Africa's second liberation.

Shift in the landscape

There are few indications that the current dispute could escalate into a full-blown controversy. All the same, Mr. Mahama's stance and the previous legal tangle show signs of an apparent shift in the landscape of Ghanaian politics. Former military leader and two-term President Jerry Rawlings, who passed away in November, voluntarily relinquished office in 2000. Another instance of a smooth and seamless succession is the one which followed the sudden demise in 2012 of former President John Evans Atta Mills. Mr. Mahama, then Vice-President, was elevated to the presidency and subsequently confirmed in the elections later that year.

Observers point to strains in Ghana's two-party system – in part from the competition for control of oil revenues from 2010, in addition to the country's traditional dominance in cocoa and gold. For a leader whose main plank in the 2016 election was to combat the rampant corruption of the previous government, Mr. Akufo-Addo's jumbo-sized cabinet was criticised as one intended to reward loyalists. The ex-foreign minister will begin his second term by attempting to redeem his pledge to build a factory for each of Ghana's 216 districts, a dam in every village in the country's north, and provide a million dollars for every electoral constituency. That is a tall order at the best of times. During the current pandemic, it seems rather unrealistic.

Accusations of foul play, even if they did not descend into bitter and bloody acrimony earlier, are not entirely absent in Ghanaian elections. The difference on this occasion is that the two leaders who signed a pledge to abjure violence right

through the electoral process were both, paradoxically, involved in a stand-off following the 2012 polls. Back then, as opposition leader, Mr. Akufo-Addo had alleged fraud and the NPP had boycotted Mr. Mahama's inauguration in January 2013. The widely televised legal battle dragged on for nearly eight months until the Supreme Court upheld the original result. At the time, there was huge relief that the country was spared the kind of bloody mayhem witnessed in the aftermath of the 2007 Kenyan polls, besides more blatant attempts to circumvent the electoral process in a few other African states.

Smooth handover of power

The largely peaceful general election, held on December 7, could, however, begin to test Accra's growing reputation for a free and fair poll and a smooth handover of power. President Nana Akufo-Addo Akufo-Addo, who was lucky in the 2016 race after contesting unsuccessfully twice earlier, won a re-election in a high turnout contest, heading the centre-right New Patriotic Party (NPP).

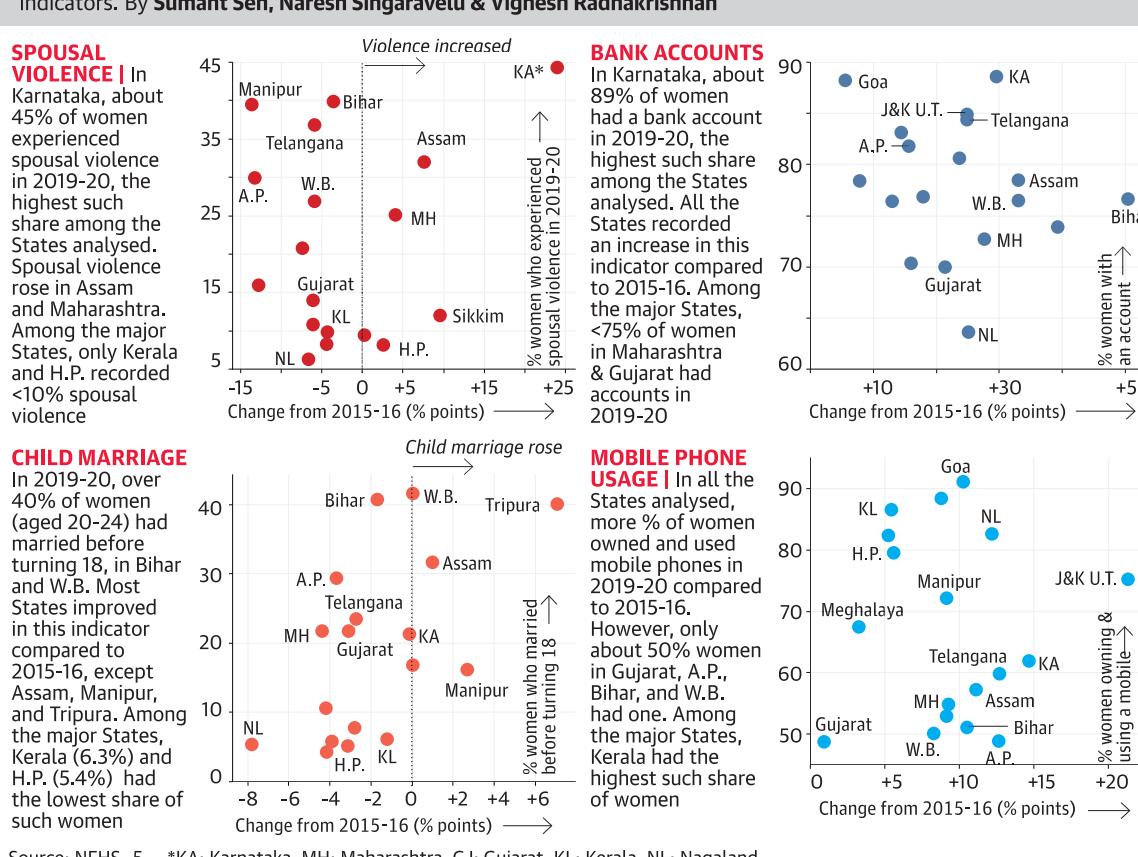
In a similarly narrow race, the parliamentary polls have produced a hung legislature, with the National Democratic Congress (NDC), which has its roots in the military-backed Provisional National Defence Council in the 1980s, within touching distance of the NPP. The NDC leader, John Dramani Mahama, who, before the results were declared, had alleged that the vote was rigged, has vowed to mount a legal challenge over the outcome.

Accusations of foul play, even if they did not descend into bitter and bloody acrimony earlier, are not entirely absent in Ghanaian elections. The difference on this occasion is that the two leaders who signed a pledge to abjure violence right



DATA POINT

How women fare | In 2019-20, indicators relating to women's financial independence, empowerment, and rights improved in general across many States. However, some States recorded reversals in specific indicators compared to the levels in 2015-16. Spousal violence in Karnataka almost doubled between 2015-16 and 2019-20. Also, despite marginal improvement, more than 40% of women continued to marry before turning 18, in W.B. and Bihar, in 2019-20. Kerala and Himachal Pradesh recorded relatively better figures across many indicators. By Sumanth Sen, Naresh Singaravelu & Vignesh Radhakrishnan



garimella.subramanian@thehindu.co.in

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 16, 1970

President's order on princes illegal

A Special Bench of the Supreme Court, by a majority of nine to two, to-day [New Delhi, Dec. 15] held that the order issued by the President on September 6, recognising the rulers as ultra vires of the Constitution and hence illegal and imperious. Allowing a batch of eight writ petitions filed by some ex-rulers with costs, the three majority judgments declared that "the petitioners will be entitled to all their pre-existing rights and privileges, including the right to privy purse, as if the order had not been made." The Special Bench delivered five separate judgments – three judgments declaring the impugned Presidential order ultra vires, and two dissenting judgments dismissing the writ petitions. The majority judgment was given by Mr. Justice Shah, with whom Mr. Justice Sikri, Mr. Justice Shelat, Mr. Justice Bhargava, Mr. Justice Vaidyalingam, Mr. Justice Grover and Mr. Justice Dua agreed. The Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Hidayatullah and Mr. Justice Hegde delivered separate judgments holding the impugned Presidential order unconstitutional. Mr. Justice Mitter and Mr. Justice Ray, however, delivered separate dissenting judgments dismissing the writ petitions.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DEC. 16, 1920

Police shooting

Under the auspices of the Provincial Congress Committee, a public meeting of the citizens of Madras was held last evening [Dec. 15] at 5-45 at the Beach opposite the Presidency College to protest against the unjustifiable police shooting on the 9th December 1920 at Perambur on defenceless crowds without notice or warning while the police were helping the Buckingham mill authorities by taking workmen to the mills, which shooting resulted in the death of two innocent boys and seriously injured many others. The meeting was very largely attended. Among those present were Messrs. S. Kasturiranga Aiyangar, B.P. Wadia, S. Guruswami Chetti, T.V. Gopalaswamy Mudaliar, Dr. N. Subramania Iyer, E.L. Aiyar, C.S. Govindaraja Mudaliar, A. Kumaraswamy Chetti, C. Rajagopalachari, V.L. Sastri, V. Venkateswarulu, S. Duraiswamy Iyer and Dewan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai. Many labourers were also present. Mr. Gopalaswamy Mudaliar proposed Mr. Kasturiranga Aiyangar to the Chair. Mr. C.S. Govindaraja Mudaliar seconded the motion which was carried by acclamation.

FROM PAGE ONE

Farmers' protest chokes units in Bahadurgarh

Spread across the industrial areas of Bahadurgarh, including the 'Footwear Park', around 1,000 footwear manufacturing units employ over 2 lakh workers, most of them migrant. Though Agra and Kanpur remain the hub for leather footwear, Bahadurgarh footwear manufacturers have around 50% share in the country's non-leather footwear industry.

Rajesh Chug, owner of Sunflag Chemicals Private Limited, a manufacturer of paint drier, said both his units in MIE's 'Part B' were running at almost one-third capacity. "We are running the units with a lot of effort, though many in our neighbourhood are now temporarily shut. The agitators have left a narrow passage, making it difficult for heavy vehicles to cross during the day-time. So the trucks carrying goods mostly ply at night."

'Caste, community don't matter, love isn't a crime'

However, Ms. Pinki refuted all the allegations against her husband and maintained that she married him of her own free will on July 24 at Dehradun, where the two were working before moving to Mr. Rashid's home in Kanth. Ms. Pinki said they performed a *ni-kaah* ceremony and that she even recited the Quran. She dismissed her mother's charge that Mr. Rashid had tricked her into marriage.

"I know the boy and what caste [community or religion] he belongs to. I know everything about him," Ms. Pinki told this newspaper.

Ms. Pinki said that her husband and brother-in-law were innocent and demanded that they be immediately released.

On December 5 evening, Ms. Pinki was brought to a Nari Niketan women's shelter home. However, on December 11, she was admitted to a government hospital after complaining of pain in her abdomen. Ms. Pinki alleged that it was only after three days, when her health worsened, that she was taken to a hospital.

Scrap quotas for faculty in IITs, says MoE panel

"Being established and recognised as institutions of national importance under an Act of Parliament, IITs ought to be listed under the Schedule to the above CEI Act, 2019, for exemption from reservations," the report said.

In its reply to the RTI request, the MoE said the report was under the examination of the government.

To address diversity issues, the report argued that a "system emphasising targeted goals over a period of time" and not "specific quotas" be followed so that IITs can "compete with other top institutions in the world in terms of excellence, output, research and teaching."

The Committee was constituted in April 2020 with Director of IIT Delhi, V. Ramgopal Rao, as its Chairperson and the Director of IIT Kanpur, Registrars of IIT Bombay and IIT Madras, and representatives from Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Department of Personnel and Training and Department of Persons with Disabilities as members.

It was asked to suggest measures on effective implementation of reservation policies not only in recruitment, but also for admissions. The committee met twice in May and submitted its report on June 17, 2020.

The report said that the expectations on the faculty from IITs were very high due to the quality and stan-

The export of our goods is also hit. We are unable to get fresh orders due to delays in despatch," said Mr. Chugh. He added the workers also had difficulty in reaching the factory from Delhi and that attendance was almost 20% down.

Rajesh, a worker at a wood adhesive factory, said the unit had a dozen workers but it was temporarily shut for the past few days. "The owner has assured the payment of dues, but if the agitation continues, it might become difficult for him to pay without work for long. Earlier, he paid us during the lockdown as well," said Mr. Rajesh, a resident of Chhotu Ram Nagar. He said the unit had taken a long time to recover after the lockdown induced by COVID-19, and now the agitation had led to a similar situation.

Police file chargesheet against Binoy Kodiyeri in rape case

A 30-year-old Mumbai woman said he had abandoned her and her son in 2018

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Mumbai police on Tuesday filed a chargesheet against Binoy Kodiyeri, elder son of former Kerala CPI(M) secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan, in an alleged rape case.

"The chargesheet runs into 345 pages. Four witnesses were examined and their statements included in the chargesheet, along with the DNA report of the complainant's son," Dayanand Bangar, senior officer in the Oshiwara police station, told *The Hindu*.

A 30-year-old woman had accused Mr. Kodiyeri of cheating her and coercing her into a long-term relationship on the promise of marriage.



Binoy Kodiyeri

She said they had a child from the union and that Mr. Kodiyeri had abandoned them in 2018, saying he would not be able to provide maintenance.

He has been charged under Sections 376 (punishment for rape), 420 (cheating and dishonesty inducing

delivery of property) and 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code.

Paternity test

On July 3, 2019, the Dindoshi sessions court granted him anticipatory bail and directed him to submit his blood sample to the Oshiwara police for a paternity test.

Mr. Kodiyeri had to pay ₹25,000 as personal bond and one or two sureties of a similar amount. Judge M.H. Shaikh had directed him to be present before the Oshiwara police station every Monday for a month.

The anticipatory bail conditions were that Mr. Kodiyeri would not threaten the prosecution witnesses and

would not tamper with prosecution evidence. He would not leave the country without the prior permission of the trial court and would take part in the investigation whenever the police officer called him. "The chargesheet has been filed by the police before the Andheri magistrate court but we haven't received it," advocate A.Z. Mookhtiar, representing the complainant, told *The Hindu*.

Binoy Kodiyeri's younger brother Bineesh had been recently arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a drug racket case. Mr. Balakrishnan had stepped down as party State secretary citing ill-health, a day after his younger son's arrest.

PFI received over ₹100 crore, says ED

It seeks custody of general secretary

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The Popular Front of India (PFI) has received over ₹100 crore in its accounts over the years, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has said.

A large part of the deposits is in cash and the source and disbursal of these funds are under scanner in another case of money laundering during the Delhi riots of February 2020. Several PFI members/activists/officer-bearers were arrested in connection with the riots, it said.

There are also indications that the PFI has links with the recent violence in Bengaluru in which its political wing, the Social Democratic Party of India, has been found to be involved. The principal sessions court, Ernakulam, will consider the case on Wednesday.

Money transfers and cash deposits had gone up significantly after 2014. Investigations revealed that the PFI was involved in the anti-CAA [Citizenship (Amendment) Act] protests and funds re-

Ruckus in Karnataka Council, Dy. Chairman pulled around

Members hurl abuse, clash over no-confidence motion

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The Karnataka Legislative Council on Tuesday witnessed unprecedented scenes, with members clashing with each other and hurling abuse over the issue of a no-confidence motion against Chairman K. Prathapchandra Shetty.

While Mr. Shetty was physically prevented from entering the House on Tuesday morning, Deputy Chairman Dharmendra Gowda, who had occupied the chair before the opening bell stopped, was dragged out by Congress members. The turn of events at the House of Elders was described by senior members as "a blot on the Council's dignity and tradition".

On Monday, Nirmala Pathak, senior consultant at the district women's hospital in Moradabad said the Ms. Pinki was referred to the Meerut Medical College for further tests like a TVS (trans vaginal scan). While the foetus was visible in the ultrasound, the heartbeat could not be observed clearly, Dr. Pathak had said.

Ms. Pinki is yet to get tested and says she preferred to visit a private hospital.

On Tuesday, Dr. Pathak dismissed Ms. Pinki's allegations on the injections allegedly causing her suspected miscarriage. "The patient reported light spotting (bleeding) (with abdominal pain) and was given injections and pills to stop bleeding and relieve her pain," said Dr. Pathak.

A couple of BJP and Con-



Free for all: Members creating a ruckus at the Karnataka Legislative Council in Bengaluru on Tuesday. ■ MURALI KUMAR

gress members nearly came to blows even as a glass frame, fitted to protect members from COVID-19, broke.

The session, which was re-

convened after being adjourned *sine die* last Thursday, was expected to be stormy as the agenda released on Monday night did not have the no-confidence motion listed, much to the chagrin of the BJP. This, Se-

cretariat sources pointed out, was because the Chair-

man had rejected the motion since there was "no specific charge" against him.

However, the BJP insisted that the Chairman had lost the confidence of the House and that he had to step aside to enable the motion to be taken up. The agenda listed discussion on the Karnataka Cow Protection Bill, which also needed to be passed by the Council, along with other discussions and question hour.

Handiwork of BJP, JD(S), says Cong.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Terming Tuesday's incidents at the Karnataka Legislative Council a "black mark in India's parliamentary democracy", Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah on Tuesday accused the BJP and the JD(S) of engineering a "planned conspiracy" in which the rules of the House were violated and Constitutional norms thrown to the wind.

"The Chairman was locked in his office, and without his permission the Deputy Chairman was asked to chair the session. Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa and Law Minister J.C. Madhuswamy have to tell the people which of the House rules were followed today," he told presspersons.

"The rules state that if the Chairman cannot officiate the House because of foreign travel, health grounds or any other specific rea-



Siddaramaiah

sons, he can allow the Deputy Chairman to officiate. The no-confidence motion was not on the House agenda since it had been rejected for not being in order. If the motion comes into the agenda, 10 members should support the motion without any discussion. Based on this, the Chairman has to fix a day for taking up the motion within five days. Has this rule been followed?" he asked, reading from the rulebook.

Council chief should go, says Yediyurappa

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Tuesday demanded that Legislative Council Chairman Prathapchandra Shetty resign immediately.

Expressing concern over the manner in which the Upper House had to be adjourned amid unruly scenes, Mr. Yediyurappa said: "The Congress should ask the Chairman to resign." He said that after the JD(S) publicly stated that it would stand with the BJP on the matter of no-confidence motion against the Chairman, it was the responsibility of the Congress to ensure that he resigned.

"As per the opinion of legal experts, the Chairman lacks the eligibility to sit on his chair as we had initiated the process of no-confidence motion against him in the previous session itself," Mr. Yediyurappa said.

IN BRIEF



Telangana Minister tests COVID-19 positive

HYDERABAD
Telangana Transport Minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar has tested positive for COVID-19. The Minister tweeted that his RT-PCR test report showed he was positive and that he was now in home isolation. He advised those who had met him in the recent past to also get tested. He urged his friends and well-wishers not to contact him.

4 children killed as van ploughs into procession

KURNool
Four minors were killed on the spot and 10 others were injured when a goods van ploughed into a religious procession at Terranguntla in Andhra Pradesh's Kurnool district on Tuesday.

About 40 persons were taking out a pre-Christmas procession on Kadapa-Ranipet National Highway-40 when the accident occurred, the police said. The driver has been arrested.

Teacher beaten up for assaulting five girls

BHADRADRI-KOTHAGUDAM
A teacher of the Mandal Parishad Primary School at Chintavare village in Laxmidipalli mandal here in Telangana allegedly sexually assaulted five girl students of the school on the pretext of taking classes, despite closure of the school due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The incident came to light on Tuesday when the parents of a victim thrashed the teacher, identified as D. Sunil Kumar, at the school. He has been placed under suspension.

No change of court in actor assault case

Allegations of bias unwarranted: SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed a plea made by the Kerala government for transferring the trial of the case relating to the abduction and sexual abuse of a female actor in which actor Dileep is an accused.

A Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar agreed with the Kerala High Court that allegations of bias against the trial judge were unwarranted.

The State government, represented by advocate G. Prakash, had said the trial was marred by incidents of bias towards the prosecution and harassment of the

survivor. "During the trial, while the examination of PWI/survivor was going on in-camera, the fifth accused took pictures inside the court hall using his mobile phone," the State's appeal said.

"The trial court has remained a mute spectator despite the prosecution bringing these aspects to the notice of the trial court," the State had emphasised.

The police version of the case said that the actor was held captive and assaulted by some of the accused while on her way to Kochi. They had also taken a video of the incident. The allegation is that Dileep had masterminded the conspiracy.

OCI students eligible for govt. quota, says Karnataka HC

"They have to be treated as Indian citizens for admission"

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Declaring that students under the Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) category are to be considered as "citizens of India" for admission to professional courses, the High Court of Karnataka has directed the State government to admit them to undergraduate professional courses, including engineering, medical and dental, even under the government and institutional quotas, and not to restrict their admission only under the NRI quota.

A Division Bench comprising Justice B.V. Nagarathna and Justice N.S. Sanjay Gowda delivered the verdict while dismissing an appeal filed by the government against the April 2019 single-judge verdict, which had also allowed OCI students to seek admission to professional courses in the regular quota of seats.

The Division Bench allowed the petitions filed by OCI student Pranav Bajpe and several others.

While confirming admission given to the students in 2019-20 based on the court's directions, the Division Bench directed the government to admit all eligible OCI students to professional courses, through the Karnataka CET and the NEET admission process from the academic year 2020-21 by allowing them to participate in counselling for selection of seats in government and private aided or unaided colleges.

The Division Bench has quashed Section 2(1)(n) of the Karnataka Professional Educational Institutions (Regulation of Admission and Determination of Fee) Act, 2006, as amended in 2017 to include the 'OCI' cardholders within the definition of "Non-resident Indian".

A do-or-die battle for Amaravati farmers: leaders



Protest continues: Members of the Amaravati Parirakshan Samithi taking out a rally in Vijayawada on Tuesday. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

Rally marks one year of stir against shifting of capital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA

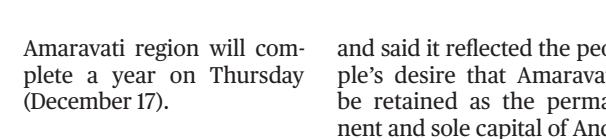
Hundreds of people participated in the Praja Pada Yatra held on Monday to mark the completion of 365 days of agitation against the shifting of the Andhra Pradesh capital from Amaravati.

The Yatra was spearheaded jointly by the Amaravati Parirakshan Samithi Joint Action Committee (JAC) and the United Farmers' Action Committee. A number of people from different fields took active part in the mas-

marathon region will complete a year on Thursday (December 17).

'People's mood clear'
To mark the 'milestone' in their fight against the government's plan to shift the capital out of Amaravati to Visakhapatnam, the JAC and farmers' organisations have coordinated a series of protest programmes that will culminate in a massive public meeting at Uddandarayuni-palem.

JAC conveners A. Sivarday and Gaddi Tirupati Rao pointed to the huge public response to the protest call



ANDHRA PRADESH

ANNA

ANNA

ANNA

ANNA

ANNA

Amid impasse over new laws, protests continue

Govt. asserts 'no repeal' stand, says no legal support for MSP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Protesting farmer leaders have threatened to close the Delhi-Noida border crossing at Chilla on Wednesday if the three contentious agricultural reform laws are not repealed. On the 20th day of protests, both the protesters and the Centre reiterated their positions and dialed up the rhetoric, but made no concrete efforts to resume negotiations.

At a press conference on the Singhu border on Tuesday, farmer leaders said they were "determined to win, no matter what".

"The government is saying they will not repeal these laws but we say that we will make them do it," said Jagjeet Singh Dallewal of the Bharatiya Kisan Union-Ekta, a Punjab farmers group.

The Delhi-Noida border crossing at Chilla will be closed at 11 a.m. on Wednesday if the Centre continues to close the door for farmers, he said.

BKU-Tikat group general secretary Yudhvir Singh had harsh words for Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself.

"We voted for this Prime Minister but now he is not willing to hear us or talk to



United front: Farmer leaders addressing a press conference at the Singhu border on Tuesday. PTI

us... All farmers now recognise that we made a mistake in voting for him," he said.

Responding to the PM's allegation that the protests were being funded by foreign money, Mr. Singh asked how the hard-earned money sent by the children of farmers who are abroad could be counted as foreign money. The Prime Minister himself came to power using Gujarati NRI money, he said.

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar met again with farmers of the BKU (Kisan) faction who support the farm laws, and claimed that most of the agricultural community recognised the benefits of the laws. He said the government was willing to continue

its dialogue with "genuine farm unions" and is willing to find a solution with an open mind.

However, dashing the hopes of those demanding a legal guarantee for minimum support prices, the Minister added that MSP is an "administrative decision and will continue as it is".

Noting that 20 farmers participating in the agitation had died of various causes so far, protestors said a Shradhanjali Diwas, or homage day, would be observed in honour of these "martyrs" on December 20. Two farmers were killed and one sustained injuries in a hit-and-run case on the Delhi-Ambala Highway early on Tuesday.

Mr. Singh alleged that the BJP-led Central government was finding ways to discredit it.

Mr. Singh alleged that the BJP-led Central government was finding ways to target

It's BJP versus others in Punjab

VIKAS VASUDEVA
NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI / CHANDIGARH

The Punjab unit of the BJP is awaiting some kind of resolution to the face-off between farmers' groups and the Union government over the three agriculture related laws in order to politically address the impact of not just parting ways with long time ally – the Akali Dal – but also the protests.

Anxious partymen made a beeline to Delhi this week, holding meetings with Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and Narendra Singh Tomar, asking about the prospects of any kind of resolution to the impasse.

The Centre is prepared to resolve all grievances of farmers to end the deadlock.

This assurance was given by Union Home Minister Amit Shah to our delegation, which met him and Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar in Delhi recently," Punjab BJP president Ashwani Sharma told *The Hindu*.

Significantly, Mr. Sharma said the delegation also discussed the political scene in Punjab in view of the upcoming municipal elections in the State, the first since the partition of ways with the Akali Dal. He had earlier announced that the BJP would be fighting all 117 Assembly seats in the State in 2022, a big jump from the 23 seats it usually fought within the NDA.

Party leaders conceded that the situation on the

ground was very much a case of all versus the BJP but drew sustenance from the case in Haryana, where the party formed a government twice by appealing counter intuitively to a non-Jat support base. "It's a challenge and we need to convert it into an opportunity... Earlier, there were times when it was the Congress versus all. Now in Punjab – in fact, across the country – it is BJP versus all. In neighbouring Haryana, same thing happened; the BJP decided to go it all alone and that opportunity was converted into an achievement," said Manoranjan Kalia, a former Minister and ex-BJP State president.

For now though, it's mostly a wait and watch game for State leaders.

Medical staff need a break, SC tells govt.

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the government to consider giving a 'break' to medical staffers in the forefront of the battle against the pandemic, saying working in the COVID-19 wards continuously for months may take a toll on their mental health.

"For the last seven-eight months, doctors have not been given any break and are continuously working. You take instruction and think over giving them some break. It must be very painful and might be affecting their mental health," a three-judge Bench, led by Justice Ashok Bhushan, told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre.

The Bench was shocked to hear that Gujarat had collected around ₹90 crore from people who violated the norm to wear face masks in public. The court said that despite the collection of a huge amount as fine, violations continued in the State.

Perusing an affidavit filed by Gujarat on fire safety in hospitals and public places, the court said it did not specify the hospitals which have fire clearance certificates. The information cited was of 2006.

The Bench had taken *suo motu* cognisance of the recent blaze in a COVID hospital in Rajkot, where several patients died.

3,173 caught leaving in 2020: BSF data

VIAJITA SINGH

NEW DELHI

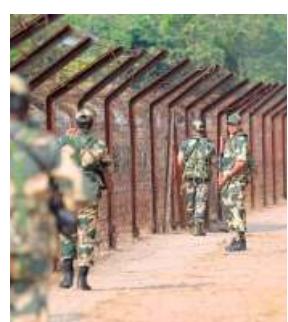
In the past four years, nearly twice the number of illegal Bangladeshi migrants were caught leaving the country compared to those coming in illegally, according to data available with the Border Security Force (BSF) and the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB).

Till December 14 this year, as many as 3,173 illegal migrants were apprehended by the BSF when they were attempting to cross over to Bangladesh, three times more than the 1,115 caught while trying to enter India through illegal means.

In 2019, 2018 and 2017, the numbers of Bangladeshis leaving the country stood at 2,638, 2,971 and 821 respectively, compared to the 1,351, 1,118 and 871 persons respectively who entered illegally.

In 2017, as many as 892 Indians were caught while crossing over to Bangladesh and 276 while entering the country without any documents. However, such data is not available for subsequent years in the NCRB's annual report.

A senior government official said the number of persons leaving the country could be more as there are instructions to avoid paper-work and documentation for out-migrants. Another official added that there had been a surge in numbers of



Exit mode: A 3-fold rise was seen by BSF in number of returnees caught this year.

illegal Bangladeshi leaving the country due to the lack of work following the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown.

"If they are apprehended, we let them go back. If they are arrested, it leads to lengthy legal procedures and the illegal migrants then have to be placed in a shelter or detention home till their nationality is proved," the official said on condition of anonymity.

On November 29, 2017, former BSF Director General K.K. Sharma had told a press conference in Delhi that they had instructions to push back the Rohingya to Bangladesh as they become a "liability" once they are arrested. Mr. Sharma said it was difficult to distinguish between the Rohingya and Bangladeshis and the BSF personnel were not equipped to differentiate between the two on the basis of dialect.

Perusing an affidavit filed by Gujarat on fire safety in hospitals and public places, the court said it did not specify the hospitals which have fire clearance certificates. The information cited was of 2006.

The Bench had taken *suo motu* cognisance of the recent blaze in a COVID hospital in Rajkot, where several patients died.

You are being misled, PM tells farmers

Modi assures them that his government accords top priority to their interests

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has once again stressed the importance of his government's farm sector laws, which have been opposed by farmers fearing adverse impact and entry of the private sector. The farmers have been demanding repeal of the laws for the last 20 days.

On a day-long visit to Kutch in his home State Gujarat, Mr. Modi said "farmers were being misguided" by the Opposition and a few others. He assured the farmers that their concerns were being addressed by his government, which accorded

top priority to their interests.

"The agriculture reforms are exactly what farmer bodies and even the Opposition have been asking for years," the PM said, as he hinted that there was no going back on them.

PM cites Gujarat model

"The Government of India is always committed to the welfare of the farmers, and we will keep addressing their concerns," Mr. Modi said at a ceremony to lay the foundation for development projects in Kutch. He used the opportunity to interact with a group of Sikh farmers, who



Narendra Modi

have settled in Gujarat for decades.

To convince the farmers about the benefits the agriculture reforms would bring to them, the Prime Minister used the example of Gujarat,

where many farm-friendly schemes were introduced during his tenure as Chief Minister. These initiatives minimised government intervention in agriculture, he said.

"I want to ask you, did the dairy owner take your animal because you are selling milk to him? Has anyone taken your land or property for entering into a contract to sell your fruits and vegetables?" the Prime Minister asked. "The country is asking why the freedom enjoyed by dairy farmers is not being provided to small and marginal farmers growing cereals and lentils."

Govt. stand is shocking, says Chidambaram

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Tuesday termed the the Modi government's "no repeal" stand over the farm laws as "shocking". He urged the government to reach an agreement with the agitating farmers by "climbing down from its high horse".

In a series of tweets, Mr. Chidambaram said it is "obvious" that any agreement between the farmers and the Centre will need a new Bill. "It is shocking that after 20 days of farmers' protests in the bitter winter of Delhi, the government continues to stick to the "no repeal" stand. It is obvious that any agreement between farmers and government will necessarily require a new Bill to be passed in Parliament," he said.

In a separate tweet, former party chief Rahul Gandhi attacked the Modi government, saying only "crony capitalists are its best friends".

"For Modi Govt: Dissenting students are anti-nationals. Concerned citizens are urban naxals. Migrant labourers are Covid carriers. Rape victims are nobody. Protesting farmers are Khalistani. And crony capitalists are best friends," he said.

'Govt. is targeting us in all possible ways'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

As the farmers' agitation over the Centre's new farm laws continues, the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ekta-Ugrahan), one of the largest outfits in Punjab, has questioned the intent of the Central government in resolving the stalemate.

BKU(U) president Jodin Singh told *The Hindu* that since the agitation started the government has been repeatedly trying to malign the movement with the sole aim of discrediting it.

Mr. Singh alleged that the BJP-led Central government was finding ways to target

He said there was nothing wrong in waving photos of jailed activists on Human Rights Day from the outfit's platform at Tikri (the Delhi-Bahadurgarh border).

"Raising our voice demanding the release of activists and intellectuals, who we feel have been wrongly put behind bars, is not something new... On December 10 to observe the Human Rights Day, we again raised the demand from our stage. What's wrong in that?"

Mr. Singh accused the government of targeting the movement in all possible manners.

"They are trying to bring to the fore the farm unions which they claim are backing our unity and therefore they want to divide us at any cost. I urge all the unions to stick together," he said.

Sukhbir says BJP is the real 'tukde tukde gang'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Tuesday said the BJP was the real "tukde tukde gang" in the country and accused it of attempting to split the nation by setting one community against another.

"So desperate is the BJP for power that it has no scruples about taking the communal polarisation route and setting the country on communal flames," Mr. Badal said.

Talking to journalists in Bathinda, he said, "the BJP is conspiring to set our peace-loving Hindu brethren in Punjab against their Sikh brethren with whom they

have shared strong bonds of blood for centuries."

"The BJP has been resorting to dangerous conspiracies to sabotage the hard-earned atmosphere of peace and communal harmony. The BJP leadership must realise that their party today has become the most powerful divisive force," Mr. Badal alleged.

In a tweet, Mr. Ramesh said no such consultation had happened. "The Leader of the Opposition in the Ra-

ja Sabha was NOT consulted.

Mr. Pralhad Joshi is as usual departing from the truth," Mr. Ramesh tweeted.

Congress chief whip in the

Rajya Sabha Jairam Ramesh

refuted the government's

claim that informal discussions had been held with Op-

position leaders before de-

ciding against holding the

winter session of Parlia-

ment.

In a tweet, Mr. Ramesh said no such consultation had happened. "The Leader of the Opposition in the Ra-

ja Sabha was NOT consulted.

Mr. Pralhad Joshi is as usual departing from the truth," Mr. Ramesh tweeted.

Congress's Ghulam Nabi

Azad is the Leader of Oppo-

sition in the Rajya Sabha.

Mr. Ramesh was reacting

to the letter sent by Parlia-

mentary Affairs Minister

Pralhad Joshi to Congress's

Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ran-

jan Chaudhary in reply to

the latter's demand for a

special session of Parliament

to discuss the three farm

laws and the ongoing farm-

ers' protest against it.

In his response, Mr. Joshi said "I have informally contacted floor leaders of various political parties and they have expressed concerns about the ongoing pandemic and opined of doing away with winter ses-

son."

This was the first comment from the government on skipping the session.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FASHION TECHNOLOGY

An Institute of Design, Management & Technology
A statutory institute governed by the NIFT Act 2006
Ministry of Textiles, Government of India

Admissions - 2021

Online Registration Open from
14th December, 2020 to 21st January, 2021

Bachelor Programmes (B.Des.)

Accessory Design

Fashion Communication

Fashion Design

Knitwear Design

Leather Design

Textile Design

Bachelor Programme (B.F.Tech)

Block-level monitoring hubs planned

Side-effects of vaccines to be closely tracked

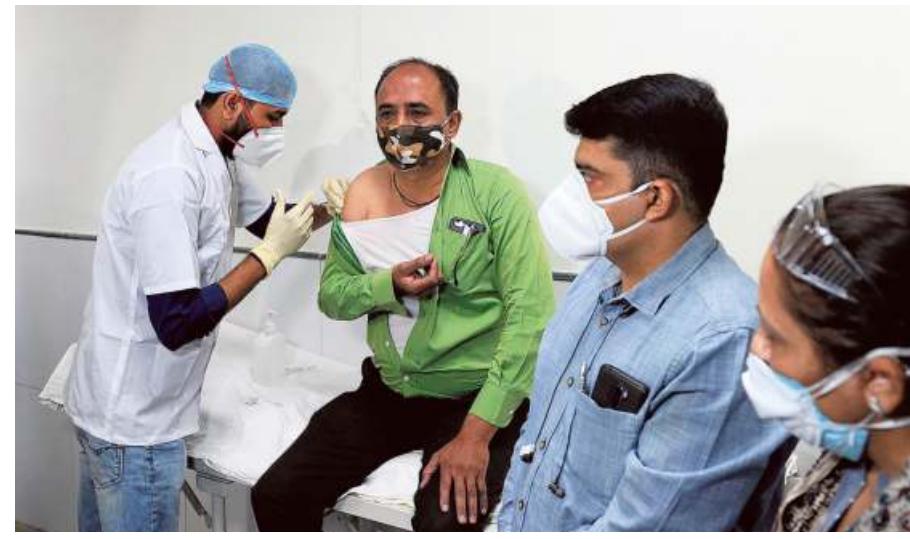
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

State governments have been directed to identify at least one Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI) management centre in each block to ensure that any adverse reaction or side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine could be rapidly contained, Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said at a press conference on Tuesday.

"The countries where vaccination has already begun, especially in the UK, adverse events took place on the very first day. So, it is essential that the States and UTs [Union Territories] prepare for this too," he said.

NITI Aayog member (health) Dr. V.K. Paul said this was an adult vaccine, which would be administered at such a large scale for the first time and didn't begin from the hospital setting. "This will need extra caution," he noted.

India has six proposed COVID-19 vaccines undergoing clinical trials and three are seeking emergency use



Extra caution: India has six proposed COVID-19 vaccines undergoing clinical trials and three are seeking emergency use authorisation. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

authorisation. "Also the Drugs Controller General of India granted clearance for clinical trials for one more candidate vaccine from India – the novel mRNA vaccine candidate, HGC019, which has been developed by Gennova, Pune, and is supported by the government. The vaccines will be stable at 2-8°C for two months and thus enable us to use our available cold chains," he stated.

In India, though case mortality is declining, the situation should not be taken for

granted. "Most of us are still susceptible. Uttarakhand, Himachal, and Nagaland are States where the situation is a matter of concern. This is a devastating disease. It could cause a mild disease but can also take a serious turn as we have seen in the case of reported fungal infection at a hospital in Delhi. The infection caused patients to lose eyesight," Dr. Paul pointed out.

Mr. Bhushan said adequate cold chain infrastructure had been made available across India.

Homeopaths can offer only supplements'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday clarified that homeopaths could prescribe government approved add-ons and mixtures to supplement conventional treatment for COVID-19 but could not advertise any cures.

A Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan, in a judgment, endorsed a March 6 advisory of the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) that homeopaths could not prescribe medicines for COVID-19 treatment but could provide prophylactic interventions for improving the immunity of patients.

The verdict came on a petition that challenged the Kerala High Court order of August 21 that said AYUSH practitioners could prescribe government approved mixtures and tablets only as immunity boosters.

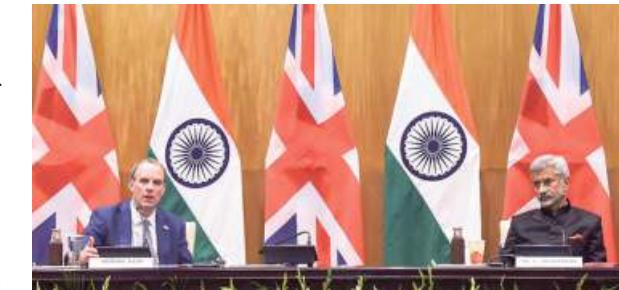
British PM to be chief guest at Republic Day celebration

Trade ties with India to be increased: U.K. Foreign Secretary

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will be the chief guest of India's Republic Day celebrations, U.K. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said here on Tuesday. He stressed that the Indo-Pacific region was one of the "highest" focus areas of the U.K.'s foreign policy.

Addressing a press conference with the visiting dignitary, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, right, with British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab on Tuesday. ■ PTI



Key talks: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, right, with British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab on Tuesday. ■ PTI

stepping stone for a free trade agreement (FTA) between the two sides, covering a vast array of activities from information technology to lifestyle. The future FTA with India was expected to be a part of the post-Brexit British economic plans.

Mr. Raab said both nations would build a new generation of partnership in the Indo-Pacific region, which was one of the "highest" foreign policy priorities" of the Boris Johnson government.

He confirmed that HMS Queen Elizabeth Carrier Strike Group would visit the Indo-Pacific region in 2021.

Mr. Jaishankar pointed at

areas of bilateral convergence in Afghanistan and the Indo-Pacific region. India looked forward to work with the U.K. as it began its non-permanent stint at the UN Security Council in January 2021, he said.

Mr. Raab said, "We are committed to building a stronger defence and security partnership with our Indian friends. That will help us tackle shared issues of concern like terrorism, maritime security, including things like piracy in the western Indian Ocean. It will also help us to respond to the new and emerging challenges like space and cyber security."

He stated that the U.K. and India were working on an "Enhanced Trade Partnership" that would be a

SC collegium moots transfer of HC judges

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court collegium has recommended the transfer of judges of several High Courts, including the transfer of Justice J.K. Maheshwari of the Andhra Pradesh High Court to Sikkim and the elevation of Punjab and Haryana HC judge, S. Muralidhar, as the Chief Justice of Orissa, a source familiar with the developments said on Tuesday.

Justice S. Muralidhar, who is currently a judge of Punjab and Haryana High Court, is being recommended for elevation as the Chief Justice of Orissa High Court.

Justice Pankaj Mital with the Allahabad High Court, is being recommended as the next Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir.

Justice Hima Kohli of the Delhi HC is being recommended for elevation as the Chief Justice of Telangana High Court.

Pranab's son asks for memoir manuscript

Abhijit Mukherjee has objected to the publication of the last volume of his father's work

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Abhijit Mukherjee, former Lok Sabha member and son of the former President of India Pranab Mukherjee, on Tuesday objected to the publication of the final volume of his father's memoir, *The Presidential Years*, and has demanded to see the manuscript before its release.

Mr. Mukherjee's objection, however, drew a sharp reaction from his sister, Sharmistha Mukherjee, who asserted that the manuscripts were cleared by her father and "none should stop it for cheap publicity".

The excerpt also has a portion in which he describes Prime Minister Narendra Modi's functioning as "autocratic" in his first term.

"I, the Son of the author of the Memoir 'The Presiden-



tial Memoirs' request you to kindly stop the publication of the memoir as well as motivated excerpts which is already floating in certain me-

dia platforms without my written consent," Mr. Abhijit Mukherjee tweeted and tagged the publishers as well as its head, Kapish Mehra.

Formal letter sent

"Since my father is no more, I being his son want to go through the contents of the final copy of the book before its publication as I believe, had my father been alive today, he too would have done the same. Therefore, I being son request You to immediately stop its publication without my written consent till I go through its contents!", he said and men-

tioned that he had also sent a formal letter.

"The final draft contains my dad's handwritten notes & comments that have been strictly adhered to. The views expressed by him are his own & no one should try to stop it from being published for any cheap publicity. That would be the greatest disservice to our departed father," Ms. Mukherjee tweeted, tagging her brother and asking him not to create hurdles.

She also corrected him that the memoir was called *The Presidential Years* and not *The Presidential Memoir*.

Vice Admiral Srikant passes away in Delhi

He had COVID-19 related complications

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Navy's most senior submariner, Vice Admiral Srikant, died in the early hours of Tuesday due to COVID-19 related complications at the Base hospital in the national capital.

The 'grey dolphin', as he is referred to, was the Director General of Project Seabird in Karwar, Karnataka. He was due to retire on December 31.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh expressed his condolences in a message on Twitter. "Deeply pained at the untimely and sudden demise of DG Seabird, Vice Admiral Srikant. The MoD and the Indian Navy will always remember his stellar contributions and remarkable service to the nation. My deep-



Vice Admiral Srikant

est condolences to his bereaved family and friends. Om Shanti!" he said. Vice Adm Srikant had held appointments such as the Commandant of the National Defence College and the Inspector General of Nuclear Safety. He had also served as Defence Advisor in the Indian High Commission in Islamabad.

Stop salaries of top officials if pension dues are not paid: HC

Employee who retired 22 years ago yet to receive sum

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha High Court has ordered that the salary of Odisha Finance and Law Secretaries be withheld if the pension of a person, who retired from service 22 years ago, is not regularised by next week.

A division bench comprising Justice S. Panda and Justice S.K. Panigrahi took the stringent view after noting that the pension had not been regularised despite the HC order to do so a year ago.

Mithuram Bhoi (80), who was a work-charged employee in the Hirakud Dam Project, had retired on June 30, 1998. As he was not paid the pension benefit, he had moved the State Administra-

tive Tribunal (SAT) to get his dues. The SAT had ordered payment of basic minimum pension after regularising his service in 2015.

The Department of Irrigation had moved the High Court against the SAT's order. The Odisha HC had, however, upheld the SAT order in December 2019.

A division bench comprising Justice S. Panda and Justice S.K. Panigrahi took the stringent view after noting that the pension had not been regularised despite the HC order to do so a year ago.

Mithuram Bhoi (80), who was a work-charged employee in the Hirakud Dam Project, had retired on June 30, 1998. As he was not paid the pension benefit, he had moved the State Administra-

The HC had then directed payment of actual pension from February 1, 2020 and arrears. It even made it clear that if the amount was not paid, the employee should be paid 9% interest from the date of his entitlement.

As the government failed to carry out the HC order, Mr. Bhoi filed a contempt of court case.

The HC Bench comprising Justice S. Panda and Justice S.K. Panigrahi said: "Since the court has passed an order on December 12, 2019 and in the meantime, one year has elapsed and for non-compliance of the order, contempt application has been filed, copy of the same has been served on the State government."

To implement this, the king could use the concept of 'danda', the ability of the State to punish the guilty."

Mr. Reddy was addressing the inaugural session of a conference on best practices in crime and criminal tracking. "Crime does not follow jurisdictional boundaries. Hence, our response to crime should also not be restricted by boundaries. Immediate recording of crime and the access of the information to all stakeholders is undoubtedly a key aspect of any effective law enforcement operation," he observed.

He stated, "Our great epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have emphasised the protection of the 'praja' [people] as the most important and basic duty of the king.

Man declared 'foreigner' dies at 104

'His wish was to die recognised as an Indian'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A bedridden man who was sent to a detention centre for foreigners at the age of 102 has died at his residence in southern Assam's Barak Valley. He was 104.

News portals based out of Cachar district reported on December 14 that Chandradhar Das died close to midnight on December 13 before he could prove his citizenship.

His daughter, Niyati Das, said the centenarian was not keeping well and unable to eat properly for months. "He



Long struggle: File photo of Chandradhar Das with his nonagenarian wife. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

could barely speak but had one last wish – to die as a recognised Indian," she said from their residence at Amraghat near district headquarters Silchar.

"Sad to know [of his death]," said Lakshmanan

S., Mission Director of National Health Mission, Assam, who was the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar district when a Foreigners' Tribunal (FT) declared Das a foreigner in an ex parte judgement.

Mr. Lakshmanan had ensured bail for Das on humanitarian grounds after his condition came to light.

Detention centre

The centenarian was lodged at the Silchar Central Jail – one of six that doubles up as a detention centre for "illegal foreigners" – in January 2018 after an FT in Silchar declared him a non-citizen.

Das's claim of citizenship was based on a refugee registration certificate issued in 1956 in Tripura capital Agartala, which said he was born in Comilla district of erstwhile East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. His case had been pending as the authorities in Tripura have not verified the document.

Netaji museum planned in Kolkata for 125th anniversary

Union Culture Ministry proposes a slew of celebrations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

As a part of the commemoration of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's 125th birth anniversary in 2022, the Union Culture Ministry is planning a museum in Kolkata, an exhibition at the Victoria Memorial and cultural performances in West Bengal, the Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel held a meeting that was attended by family members of the freedom fighter to discuss the preparation

for the programme. Mr. Patel said the programme would start from January 23, 2021, a year ahead of the 125th birth anniversary. Historical documents, photos and other materials would be brought together at one place for display.

A museum on Bose was proposed to be set up in Kolkata as a part of commemorations and that the current museum at Red Fort, New Delhi is also proposed to be expanded", the statement said. Culture Secretary Raghvendra Singh

said the Victoria Memorial in Kolkata would host a grand exhibition and an "eminent personality" would deliver the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Memorial lecture, it said.

"The celebrations would also include cultural programmes in West Bengal under the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' programme, especially in partnership with paired State of West Bengal i.e. Rajasthan," the statement said, referring to the Centre's initiative for interaction between States.

Winning hearts Toyota brings its family look with the Urban Cruiser
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



SAUMIL SHAH

In 2019, Toyota re-entered the hatchback segment with the Glanza, a rebadged Maruti Baleno. For its entry into the compact SUV space, Toyota has taken things a bit further with the facelifted Maruti Brezza which it calls the Urban Cruiser.

Toyota has redesigned the front of the Urban Cruiser to give it a distinct identity rather cleverly. While the headlamps and bonnet are shared with the Vitara Brezza, its front grille looks like it has been lifted off a Fortuner, and the styling of its fog lamp housings in the bumper makes it unmistakably a Toyota. And wearing a 'Spunk Blue' paint shade, this Toyota comes across as one handsome SUV.

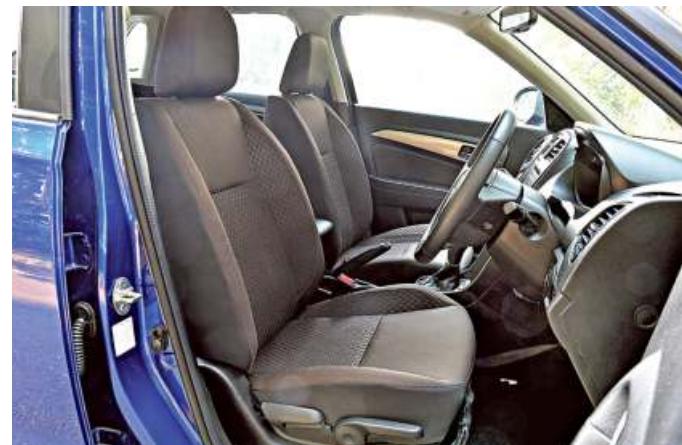
Its boxy side profile is identical to the Maruti, and it is difficult to tell them apart save for their respective brand logos on the wheel hub caps. Logos aside, the chrome bar above the number plate housing reads Urban Cruiser, and even the cladding on the bumper is different.

What is it like on the inside?
The interiors of the Urban Cruiser are identical to the Brezza's; the only change here is the seat colour and the fabric inserts on the door pads, which are brown in colour compared to the Brezza's grey. The front seats are comfortable and the ergonomics are spot on. The layout is practical with several storage areas. However, the dashboard design appears a bit dated. Rear space is good with ample knee and headroom even for tall passengers. At 328 litres, the boot is quite big and the rear seat can be folded to carry more cargo.

The Toyota comes only in higher trims and has equipment like automatic LED headlamps, LED fog lamps, 16-inch wheels, 7-inch touchscreen with Android and Apple connectivity and climate control. On the topic of safety, although the Brezza has a 4-star safety rating in Global NCAP crash test,

A family affair

Spacious interiors, a user-friendly package and good ride make the Urban Cruiser a compact SUV one cannot go wrong with



SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE (EX-SHOWROOM, DELHI)
₹8.40-₹11.30 lakh

L/W/H 3995/1790/1640mm

WHEELBASE 2500mm

BOOT CAPACITY 328 litres

KERB WEIGHT 1115-1150kg

ENGINE 1462cc, four-cylinder, petrol*

POWER 105hp at 6000rpm

TORQUE 138Nm at 4400rpm

GEARBOX 5-speed MT/ 4-speed AT

*Engine gets mild-hybrid system with automatic gearbox option

But this petrol engine holds a distinct advantage compared to its smaller capacity turbo petrol rivals when it comes to on-tap responses. It feels pretty zippy around town and does its commuter duties very well. The light, well-judged clutch, the smooth 5-speed gearbox and light steering add to the ease of driving.

Respectable on the highway
The mid-range performance is quite flat, and you will miss the strong surge usually felt in a turbo-petrol SUV. With its short gearing and crisp throttle responses however, the drivability as well as its highway performance is very respectable.

In a sprint to 100kph, the Urban Cruiser is neck and neck with the more powerful 120hp Hyundai Venue turbo, and it is even quicker than the Hyundai from 20-80kph in third gear by a full second. This petrol engine is silent

and vibration free, but while cruising at 100kph in fifth gear, it is fairly audible as it is spinning at 3,000rpm and working a lot harder than rivals which have six gears. Handling is very predictable too. However, for keen drivers its steering feels a bit too light and isn't as sharp or direct as the Ford Ecosport or the Tata Nexon.

Priced around ₹5,000 - 15,000 over a comparable Vitara Brezza, the Toyota Urban Cruiser doesn't

enjoy a price advantage over the Maruti. However, prospective buyers will find value in its longer three year/1,00,000 kilometre standard warranty – compared to Maruti's two year/40,000 kilometre period – and better service experience. There will also be the lure of the Toyota badge; spacious and comfortable interiors, user-friendly package and the good ride means this is one compact SUV you can't go wrong with.



Q AND A WITH HORMAZD



Brezza or Creta?

Which one should I buy, between the Maruti Brezza petrol-automatic and Hyundai Creta diesel-automatic?

Rajendra Singh Panwar, Muzaffarnagar

Go for the Brezza if budget is a concern. It is value for money and quite spacious. But if you have the budget for a Creta diesel, it is much better – bigger, better equipped and powered by a smooth and efficient 1.5L diesel, which will give you good economy and low running costs.

Diesel or petrol MG Hector Plus hybrid?

Should I buy a petrol or diesel MG Hector Plus hybrid variant? My daily use is approximately 50 kilometres.

Ajaykumar Ramachandran, Ahmedabad

The Hector is a user-friendly SUV that the carmaker has backed with huge support in its eagerness to establish the MG brand in India. So, in terms of running costs and after-sales service, you don't have to worry. The petrol hybrid isn't very fuel efficient, so it's best for short runs, but for 50 kilometres and above, we would recommend the MG Hector Plus diesel, which delivers good performance and efficiency.

A rally for resilience

RUMAN DEVMANE

It is not every day that Mumbai wakes up to the sight of automotive royalty with India's best yesteryear Mercedes' cruising down its coastline; the seventh edition of Mercedes-Benz Classic Car Rally (MBCCR) was not only a celebration of the finest Mercs, but also a toast to the dedication



A sight to behold The Mercedes-Benz car rally was a majestic display of automobile royalty

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

AUTO SNIPS



Andhra Pradesh to host India's longest racetrack

A new racetrack in Andhra Pradesh will be the longest one in India yet. The brainchild of Anush Chakravarthi (director of the Marque One Motor Club), the Marque One racetrack, located within a two-hour drive from the Bengaluru International Airport, was originally intended to measure 3.2 kilometres. The aim is to qualify for an FIA Grade 2 certification for international racing championships like F2 along with a Grade B licence from the FIM, the global governing body for motorcycle racing.



Updated KTM 125 Duke launched

KTM has updated its most-affordable offering, the 125 Duke for 2021, and launched it at an introductory price of ₹1.5 lakh. The entry-level Duke now features a design that is identical to the one you will find on the 200, 250 and 390 Duke. A big change on the 2021 KTM 125 Duke comes in the form of the updated frame. It now uses the trellis frame with a bolt-on subframe. The wheels, brakes, USD front fork and monoshock are the same as before. The design changes have resulted in an increased fuel capacity at 13.5 litres. These changes have also resulted in a weight increase; at 159 kilograms, the bike now weighs 7 kilograms more.



Ather 450X e-scooter to be available in more cities

Ather Energy has announced that the company will launch the Ather 450X in 16 more cities – Mysore, Hubli, Jaipur, Indore, Panaji, Bhubaneshwar, Nasik, Surat, Chandigarh, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Guwahati, Nagpur, Noida, Lucknow and Siliguri. The EV maker will open retail presence in these cities by Q1 2021 and will set up test rides for consumers. It has already begun locating spaces to set up its fast EV charging network, Ather Grid.



and perseverance of Maharashtra's COVID-19 frontline workers.

A total of 46 cars took part in the rally held recently. From a 1929 W08 Nurburg, the oldest car at the event belonging to The Indian Express group's Vivech Goenka, to younger models such as the R129 500SL, it was a bedazzling mix of automotive nostalgia contrasted judiciously by the Mercedes-Benz EQC electric SUV. Industrialist Gautam Singhania drove in his impeccable 190SL while fellow business magnate Yashvardhan Ruia brought his W136 170V. Every classic generation of the E-Class, SL-Class and S-Class too was represented at the event.

A high-

light of this edition was the felicitation of frontline COVID-19 warriors, especially the women of Maharashtra State Police, who were recognised and lauded by the event's chief guest, the State's Home Minister Anil Deshmukh. "For the last nine to ten months, we have all been fighting against the pandemic. Mumbai police are not going to give up, and the fight will go on for as long as it takes. I'm extremely happy to see events such as these recognising their service to society in this unprecedented time," said Deshmukh.

Mercedes-Benz vice-president (sales & marketing), Santosh Iyer, who flagged off the event along with Deshmukh, was impressed by Mercedes' fan following in India. "It's a pleasure to see so many 'car-proud' participants who have taken great pains to keep their cars immaculately maintained," he said.

Perseus Bandawala, curator, MBCCR, said that the Rally for Resilience was best represented by the classic Mercs, which have remained resilient against the test of time. The rally was held following social distancing measures.

American democracy proved to be resilient, says Joe Biden

After the Electoral College affirms his win, the President-elect calls for unity

SRI RAM LAKSHMAN

Speaking at Wilmington, Delaware, after the Electoral College had officially given him enough votes to be declared President, Democratic candidate Joe Biden said American democracy had been tested and had proved to be strong. He described at length the Trump campaign's legal challenges to the November 3 presidential election results and criticised Republican lawmakers and officials who had joined a Texas lawsuit to overturn the results of the vote in key battleground States that he had won.

"And once again in America, the rule of law, our Constitution, and the will of the people have prevailed. Our democracy – pushed, tested, threatened – proved to be resilient, true, and strong," Mr. Biden said. "In America, politicians don't take power. People grant power to them. The flame of democracy was lit in this nation a long time ago. We now know nothing – not even a pandemic or an abuse of power – can extinguish that flame."

Mr. Biden called "unconscionable" the threats made to those overseeing the election process.

"While we all wish that our fellow Americans in these positions will always show such courage and commitment to free and fair elections, it is my sincere hope that we never again see anyone subjected to the kind of threats and abuse we saw in this election," Mr. Biden said. "It is unconscionable."

The President-elect said Mr. Trump had called his 2016 victory – where the



Victory lap: U.S. President-elect Joe Biden and wife Jill at the Queen Theatre in Wilmington, Delaware. • AFP

Ready for collaboration: Putin

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday congratulated Joe Biden on winning the U.S. presidential election, saying he hoped the countries could set aside their differences to promote global security.

Mr. Putin wished the U.S. president-elect every success and said that, "for my part, I am ready for

collaboration and contacts with you," according to a Kremlin statement.

Mr. Putin said that their countries "bear special responsibility for global security and stability."

He said he was confident that Russia and the U.S. could, "despite their differences, really contribute to solving many problems and challenges that the world is currently facing."

President had won 306 votes – a landslide and the same applied to Mr. Biden's own victory this year. "By his own standards, these numbers represent a clear victory then and I respectfully suggest they do so now."

"In America, when questions are raised about the legitimacy of any election, those questions are resolved through a legal process. And that is precisely what hap-

pened here. The Trump campaign brought dozens and dozens and dozens of legal challenges to test the results. They were heard. And they were found to be without merit," Mr. Biden said.

On GOP Attorneys General and lawmakers joining the Texas lawsuit that sought to reject vote counts in key battleground States, he said: "It's a position so extreme we've never seen it before. A

number of GOP Senators who had refrained from acknowledging Mr. Biden's win and calling out Mr. Trump's attempts to overturn the results of the election changed tack after the Electoral College results came in. "I am convinced we can work together for the good of the nation," Mr. Biden said of these GOP Senators.

Time to unite'

"The integrity of our elections remains intact. Now it is time to turn the page as we've done throughout our history. To unite. To heal. As I said through this campaign, I will be a President for all Americans," Mr. Biden said.

The President-elect said urgent work had to be done in getting people vaccinated and delivering economic relief so the economy could be built back.

He noted that the U.S. death toll from the pandemic had crossed the 300,000 mark. "My heart goes out to all of you in this dark winter of the pandemic about to spend the holidays and the new year with a black hole in your hearts and without the ones you love by your side," he said, adding the country will get through its current difficulties.

Trump says Barr has quit, will leave by Christmas

ASSOCIATED PRESS WASHINGTON

Attorney General William Barr, one of President Donald Trump's staunchest allies, is departing amid lingering tension over the President's baseless claims of election fraud and the investigation into President-elect Joe Biden's son.

Mr. Barr went on Monday to the White House, where Mr. Trump said the Attorney General submitted his letter of resignation. "As per letter, Bill will be leaving just before Christmas to spend the holidays with his family," Mr. Trump tweeted.

Mr. Trump has publicly expressed his anger about Mr. Barr's statement earlier this month that the Justice Department had found no widespread fraud that would change the outcome of the election. Mr. Trump has also been angry that the Justice Department did not publicly announce it was investigating Hunter Biden ahead of the election, despite department policy against such a pronouncement.

Sanctions were imposed on Turkey's main defence procurement agency, the Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB) for "knowingly engaging in a significant transaction with Rosoboronexport (ROE), Russia's main arms export entity" the office of the U.S. State Department spokesperson said in a statement.

U.S. imposes CAATSA sanctions on Turkey over S-400 purchase

'We won't tolerate big deals with Russia's defence sector'

SRI RAM LAKSHMAN

The U.S. has imposed sanctions on NATO-ally Turkey for its purchase of Russia's S-400 missile defence system, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on Monday.

The issue of sanctions under Section 231 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) for purchase of Russian arms is of particular interest to New Delhi, which is also in the process of buying the S-400 from Moscow.

"Today's action sends a clear signal that the United States will fully implement CAATSA Section 231 and will not tolerate significant transactions with Russia's defense and intelligence sectors," Mr. Pompeo said on Monday.

Mr. Trump has publicly expressed his anger about Mr. Barr's statement earlier this month that the Justice Department had found no widespread fraud that would change the outcome of the election. Mr. Trump has also been angry that the Justice Department did not publicly announce it was investigating Hunter Biden ahead of the election, despite department policy against such a pronouncement.

Mr. Barr's resignation throws into question Justice Department investigations, especially the probe into Hunter Biden's taxes.

In his resignation letter, Mr. Barr said he updated Mr. Trump on the department's "review of voter fraud allegations in the 2020 election and how these allegations will continue to be pursued". He added that his last day on the job would be December 23.

Mr. Trump said Deputy Attorney General Jeff Rosen, whom he labeled "an outstanding person", will become the acting Attorney General.



Huge deal: Parts of the S-400 air defence systems being unloaded from a Russian transport aircraft in Ankara. • AP/FILE

sanctions and visa restrictions on SSB president Ismail Demir and other officials.

and pending removal from the global F-35 Joint Strike Fighter partnership," he said.

Concerns over system

Last year, the U.S. had removed Turkey from its F-35 jet programme over concerns that sensitive information could be accessed by Russia if Turkey used Russian systems along with U.S. jets.

U.S. President Donald Trump and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan have an apparently close relationship and Mr. Trump has pushed back on congressional demands for sanctions against Turkey.

The administration has now had to face a \$740 million National Defense Authorization Bill (NDAA) 2021 from the U.S. Congress, which mandates sanctions against Turkey within 30 days of the Bill's passage (December 11). Mr. Trump has threatened to veto the Bill.

"The biggest winner of our new defense Bill is China! I will veto!" Mr. Trump had tweeted days ago.

ELSEWHERE



11 people killed in fire at nursing home in Russia

MOSCOW
Fire erupted in a retirement home in central Russia overnight, killing 11 people who were trapped as the blaze swept through the small wooden building, investigators said on Tuesday. A probe into possible negligence has begun. AFP

Boko Haram claims kidnapping

Over 300 students were abducted in Nigeria's Katsina State

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE KANO

Boko Haram on Tuesday claimed it was behind the abduction of hundreds of students in northwestern Nigeria, in what appears to be a major expansion of the jihadist group's activities into new areas.

At least 333 students are still missing since the attack late on Friday on the all-boys Government Science Secondary School in Katsina State

– hundreds of kilometres from Boko Haram's stronghold in northeastern Nigeria.

"I am Abubakar Shekau and our brothers are behind the kidnapping in Katsina, the leader of Boko Haram said in a voice message.

More than 100 gunmen on motorcycles stormed the rural school, forcing students to flee and hide in the surrounding bush. A number of boys were able to es-

cape, but many were captured, split into groups and taken away, residents said.

#BringBackOurBoys has been trending on social media since the weekend in reference to a similar hashtag used after Boko Haram abducted 276 girls in 2014 in Chibok, in northeastern Nigeria.

The army said it has located the hideout of the "bandits", and that a military operation was under way.

Bomb kills Deputy Governor in Kabul

Violence has raged across the country since the beginning of the peace talks

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE KABUL

A Deputy Governor of Kabul province and his aide were killed on Tuesday by a bomb in the Afghan capital, officials said, the latest in a wave of targeted killings in the country.

Mahbullah Mohebi died when a bomb attached to his vehicle detonated while he was on his way to his office, the Interior Ministry said.

Mr. Akshan was killed and his two bodyguards were wounded when a "sticky bomb" attached to his vehicle detonated in the city.

Mr. Mohebi's secretary, who was travelling with him, was also killed, and two bodyguards were wounded.

Another official killed

Hours later, in the central province of Ghor, a similar bomb killed Abdul Rahman Akshan, the deputy chief of the provincial council.

Mr. Akshan was killed and his two bodyguards were wounded when a "sticky bomb" attached to his vehicle detonated in the city.

cle detonated in the city of Feroz Koh, an official said.

Violence has raged across the country since the Taliban and the Afghan government launched peace talks in Qatar in September.

Afghanistan – and especially Kabul – has seen a spate of murders of prominent figures, including journalists, clerics, politicians and rights activists.

Last week a woman news anchor was shot dead in the eastern city of Jalalabad, the second journalist to be murdered in less than a month.

Kabul has been hit by rockets twice this month and recently battled major attacks on educational centres, including a massacre of students on a university campus. In a separate attack in Kabul on Tuesday, a policeman was killed and two others wounded when gunmen attacked their checkpoint, officials said.

Riyadh announces three-phase roll-out of COVID-19 vaccine

People aged over 65, those with chronic illness to get jab first

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE RIYADH

Saudi Arabia on Tuesday announced a three-phase COVID-19 vaccination programme as it began registering citizens and foreign residents after approving the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

People aged over 65 as well as those with chronic ailments or those at a high risk of infection will receive the vaccine in the first stage,

and those aged over 50 in the second, the official Saudi Press Agency said.

Everyone else will be vaccinated in the third stage, SPA said citing the Health Ministry, without specifying the dates for each phase or how long the mass campaign would take.

Online registration
The Gulf kingdom has a population of more than 34 million, according to official fi-

gures. The Ministry opened registration for the vaccination campaign through an online application called "Sehaty", and said the vaccine would be "free for all citizens and residents".

Last week, Saudi Arabia became the second Gulf country after Bahrain to green-light the vaccine. It has recorded more than 3,60,000 COVID-19 cases and more than 6,000 deaths – the highest in the Gulf.

Japan's 'Twitter killer' sentenced to death for nine murders

He met his victims on the social media platform

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE TOKYO

A Japanese man dubbed the "Twitter killer" was sentenced to death by a Tokyo court on Tuesday for murdering and dismembering nine people he met on the social media platform.

Takahiro Shiraishi, 30, admitted killing and butchering his young victims, all but one of whom were women.

Shiraishi targeted social media users who posted about taking their own lives, telling them he could help them in their plans – or

even die alongside them. His lawyers argued that he should receive a prison sentence rather than be executed because his victims, aged between 15 and 26, had expressed suicidal thoughts on social media and so had consented to die.

But a judge dismissed that argument and handed down the death penalty over the 2017 crimes, which he called "cunning and cruel", public broadcaster NHK said. "None of the nine victims consented to be killed, including silent consent," NHK quoted the judge as saying.

Participants were heavily surveilled by the police, with point-to-point transfers, "military-style management" and ideological training.

"It is clear that labour transfers for cotton-picking involve a very high risk of forced labour," Adrian Zenz, who uncovered the documents, wrote.

Responding to the report, Beijing on Tuesday said workers "of all ethnicities in Xinjiang sign labour contracts with enterprises based on their own voluntary choice of occupation."

'Over 5 lakh Uighurs involved in Xinjiang cotton coerced labour'

Around a fifth of the yarn used in America comes from the region

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BEIJING

Hundreds of thousands of ethnic minority labourers in China's northwestern Xinjiang region are being forced to pick cotton through a coercive state-run scheme, a report has said.

The research published on Monday by Washington-based think tank the Center for Global Policy is likely to heap more pressure on global brands

such as Nike, Gap and Adidas, which have been accused of using Uighur forced labour in their textile supply chains.

Rights activists have said Xinjiang is home to a vast network of extrajudicial internment camps that have imprisoned at least one million people, which China has defended as vocational training centres to counter extremism.

The report – which re-



Under restriction: A guard tower and barbed wire fences seen around a facility in the Xinjiang region. • AP/FILE

ferenced online government documents – said the total number involved in three majority-Uighur regions exceeds a 2018 estimate of 5,17,000 people

forced to pick cotton as part of the scheme by hundreds of thousands.

Researchers warned of the "potentially drastic consequences" for global

cotton supply chains, with Xinjiang producing more than 20% of the world's cotton and around a fifth of the yarn used in the United States coming from the region.

Strict surveillance
Beijing said that all detainees have "graduated" from the centres, but reports have suggested that many former inmates have been transferred to low-skilled manufacturing factories, often linked to the camps.

But the report said labour transfer scheme par-

ticipants were heavily surveilled by the police, with point-to-point transfers, "military-style management" and ideological training.

"It is clear that labour transfers for cotton-picking involve a very high risk of forced labour," Adrian Zenz, who uncovered the documents, wrote.

Responding to the report, Beijing on Tuesday said workers "of all ethnicities in Xinjiang sign labour contracts with enterprises based on their own voluntary choice of occupation."

| Tender Call Notice for Purchase of HDPE made Packing Materials for Packing of Seeds No-OSSC/Proc.&QC/20/2020</th | | |
| --- | --- | --- |

MARKET WATCH

| | 15-12-2020 | % CHANGE |
|-----------|------------|----------|
| Sensex | 46,263 | 0.02 |
| US Dollar | 73.63 | -0.11 |
| Gold | 48,847 | 0.98 |
| Brent oil | 50.40 | 0.76 |

NIFTY 50

| | PRICE | CHANGE |
|-------------------|----------|---------|
| Adani Ports | 475.75 | 8.75 |
| Asian Paints | 2527.45 | -20.70 |
| Axist Bank | 607.10 | -8.80 |
| Bajaj Auto | 3271.65 | -17.35 |
| Bajaj Finserv | 9296.95 | 363.45 |
| Bajaj Finance | 5122.50 | 223.85 |
| Bharti Airtel | 504.20 | 1.15 |
| BPCL | 398.60 | -6.85 |
| Britannia Ind | 3765.55 | -11.40 |
| Cipla | 781.65 | -7.65 |
| Coal India | 143.10 | -0.25 |
| Divis Lab | 3628.40 | 28.60 |
| Drd Reddys Lab | 5031.35 | 8.55 |
| Eicher Motors | 2475.20 | 74.75 |
| GAIL (India) | 125.25 | -0.20 |
| Grasim Ind | 912.00 | 0.55 |
| HCL Tech. | 886.00 | 13.00 |
| HDFC | 2350.35 | 47.70 |
| HDFC Bank | 1391.30 | 19.15 |
| HDFC Life | 651.45 | -4.30 |
| Hero MotoCorp | 3112.35 | -1.30 |
| Hindalco | 244.55 | -1.80 |
| Hind Unilever | 2320.05 | -50.70 |
| ICICI Bank | 518.05 | -7.75 |
| IndusInd Bank | 926.75 | 5.50 |
| Infosys | 1154.60 | -9.95 |
| Indian Oil Corp | 95.45 | -0.75 |
| ITC | 213.55 | -2.35 |
| JSW Steel | 365.90 | 8.40 |
| Kotak Bank | 1951.15 | 11.80 |
| L&T | 1246.25 | -3.40 |
| M&M | 717.95 | 6.25 |
| Maruti Suzuki | 7765.25 | 68.45 |
| Nestle India Ltd. | 18189.90 | -401.90 |
| NTPC | 105.85 | 1.25 |
| ONGC | 100.45 | -1.05 |
| PowerGrid Corp | 192.80 | -1.50 |
| Reliance Ind | 1974.35 | -16.95 |
| SBI Life | 856.20 | 6.00 |
| State Bank | 270.65 | -3.55 |
| Shree Cement | 24259.65 | 537.45 |
| Sun Pharma | 571.65 | -4.60 |
| Tata Motors | 178.90 | 1.25 |
| Tata Steel | 635.35 | -8.60 |
| TCS | 2761.55 | -36.15 |
| Tech Mahindra | 927.05 | 17.65 |
| Titan | 1468.75 | 5.30 |
| UltraTech Cement | 5156.85 | 83.10 |
| UPL | 448.80 | 6.65 |
| Wipro | 352.70 | 3.35 |

EXCHANGE RATES

| CURRENCY | TT BUY | TT SELL |
|--------------------|--------|---------|
| US Dollar | 73.44 | 73.76 |
| Euro | 89.29 | 89.68 |
| British Pound | 97.84 | 98.31 |
| Japanese Yen (100) | 70.57 | 70.90 |
| Chinese Yuan | 11.22 | 11.27 |
| Swiss Franc | 82.85 | 83.21 |
| Singapore Dollar | 55.04 | 55.29 |
| Canadian Dollar | 57.61 | 57.86 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 18.11 | 18.20 |
| Australian Dollar | 55.26 | 55.54 |

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Mahindra to increase prices from January

NEW DELHI
Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) on Tuesday said it will raise prices of its entire range of passenger and commercial vehicles from next month in order to partially offset the impact of rise in input costs. Effective January 1, the company will increase the price of its range of passenger and commercial vehicles, across models, the Mumbai-based automaker said in a statement. PTI

Flipkart Internet loss widens to ₹1,951 crore

NEW DELHI
Flipkart Internet, which operates the online marketplace, saw its consolidated loss widen to ₹1,950.5 crore for the year ended March 2020. Revenue grew 32% to ₹6,318.7 crore, as per regulatory documents. The firm's consolidated loss had stood at ₹1,625.7 crore in FY19, according to an ROC filing, shared by market intelligence firm Tofter. PTI

SAT stays SEBI's ₹6-crore fine on NSE

NEW DELHI
The Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) has stayed the ₹6-crore penalty that markets regulator SEBI had imposed on NSE for allegedly investing in firms unrelated to the stock exchange business. The six entities are: CAMS, Power Exchange India Ltd., NESEIT Ltd., NSDL E-Governance Infrastructure Ltd., Market Simplified India Ltd. and Receivables Exchange of India Ltd. PTI

BPCL to mull buying out Oman Oil in Bina project

NEW DELHI
Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL) said that on Thursday its board would consider buying out Oman Oil Company in the Bina refinery project in Madhya Pradesh. It would also consider merging Bharat Gas Resources with itself, the company said in a filing on Tuesday. BPCL holds 63.68% in Bharat Oman Refineries which operates the 7.8 MT oil refinery at Bina in M.P. PTI

CM YK

Insurers, pension funds must be tapped for infra, says Khara

SBI chief says two sectors should be encouraged to invest in lower-rated debt

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India needs to direct more insurance and pension savings into bond markets and encourage greater foreign participation in debt in order to finance its infrastructure building plans, said State Bank of India chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara.

"The long-term liabilities with the insurance and pension sector can be channelised into the capital markets," he said. "As of now, they are [investing] only in 'AA' and AAA-grade paper. But they can also be made available to lower-grade paper," Mr. Khara added.

"That should make the



Way forward: Funding ₹100 lakh cr. for infra can be met only if capital markets are opened up, says Mr. Khara. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

debt market more vibrant and is perhaps the need of the hour. If at all we have to create infrastructure, we have to make sure this money flows into infrastruc-

ture," he said, adding that the funding requirements of the economy, including ₹100 lakh crore of infrastructure investments, can only be met if capital markets are

opened up further.

"We have started seeing some foreign participation in debt instruments in the current year as a lot of steps were taken to shore up international investors' confidence. But this is a beginning and we have a long way to cover," the SBI chief said at a CII event on Tuesday.

Also, even a new development finance institution (DFI) would need more international funds, Mr. Khara said.

The earlier avatar of DFIs, got most funds from government... it was essentially domestic savings, he said, adding that alone would be inadequate now.

Exports fall 8.7%; trade deficit shrinks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Declining for the second straight month, India's exports dipped 8.7% in November to \$23.52 billion on account of contraction in shipments at key sectors like petroleum, engineering, chemicals and gems and jewellery, even as the trade deficit narrowed to \$9.87 billion.

Imports declined for the ninth month in a row, slipping 13.3% to \$33.39 billion, government data showed.

Although the trade deficit narrowed from \$12.75 billion in November 2019, the deficit widened from \$8.78 billion in October.

In its report on 'Downturn in Automobile Sector - Its Impact and Measures for Revival' submitted on Tuesday, the committee headed by Rajya Sabha MP K. Kesava Rao, pointed out that the cost of BS-VI vehicles was expected to be 10-15% higher due to upgraded technology, which could be mitigated by reducing the GST rate to 18% from 28%.

"The increased sale due to the reduction in GST rate, will cover up the loss in GST revenue," the committee noted, adding that a similar

reduction in the GST levied on used car sales from 12%-18% to a flat 4% would help make the segment become more organised.

"Further, the committee recommends that the government may consider rationalisation in GST rates on internal combustion engine vehicles based on their size, CC, price brackets, seating capacity, etc., rather than having a fixed slab on all categories without distinction of standard, popular, luxury etc., in order to raise the demand for newer vehicles," the committee said.

While the stimulus package announced by the Centre had 'infused a fresh lease of life amid the gloom', the committee stressed that it fell short of addressing the auto industry's concerns as the measures were aimed at boosting only the supply side of the economy.

Allow BS-IV sales'

The panel also suggested that the government request the Supreme Court to allow sales of BS-IV vehicles that couldn't be sold due to the pandemic and lockdown.

The committee suggested that the Department of Heavy Industries must impress upon the SC that the scrapage policy for the NCR, applicable on diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than 15 years, must be revisited.

SEARCH FOR MISSING

SUNILA DEVI
General public is here informed that this girl (depicted in the photo) namely: **Sunila Devi D/o Shashi Nath Lal R/o H. No. 275, Ambedkar Colony, Bijnor, New Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped since **27.02.2016**. In this regard FIR No. **295/2016** dated **18.10.2016** has been registered at **PS. Kapashera, New Delhi**. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far.

Her physical description is as under:-
Sex: Female, **Age:** 44 years, **Height:** 5' ft., **Face:** Round, **Complexion:** Fair, **Hair:** Long and Black, **Wearing:** Red Printed Saree and Blouse.

Any person is having information or clue about this missing/kidnapped girl may kindly inform to the following:-
SHO Website: http://cbi.nic.in
E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Tel. No.: 011-2436838/24368641
Fax No.: 011-24368639
DP/432/SW/2020

Govt. of Jharkhand Energy Department Jharkhand Renewable Energy Development Agency (JREDA)

3rd Floor, S.L.D.C. Building, Kusai Colony, Doranda, Ranchi-834002.

Ph.: 0651-2491161, Fax: 0651-2491165,

E-mail: info@jreda.com; Website: www.jreda.com

e-Procurement Notice

Tender reference no.: 13/JREDA/SCSS/20-21

Dated: 14.12.2020

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1 | Name of the work | Design, Supply, Installation, and Testing & Commissioning of Solar Cold Storage unit including five years Comprehensive Maintenance Contract (CMC) on Turnkey basis in the state of Jharkhand. |
| 2 | Total quantity (Nos.) | 24 Nos. |
| 3 | Estimated cost (Rs.) | 3,00,00,000/- |
| 4 | Period of contract | 12 (Twelve) Months |
| 5 | Period of Completion | 04 (Four) Months |
| 6 | Date of publication of NIT on website: | http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in |
| 7 | Date & time of Pre-bid meeting | 05.01.2020 (Tuesday) at 1.00 P.M. |
| 8 | Last date & time for receipt of online bids | 11.01.2021 (Monday) upto 05:00 PM |
| 9 | Submission of original copies of Bid fee & EMD (Offline) | 11.01.2021 and 12.01.2021 up to 5.00 P.M. |
| 10 | Technical Bid Opening Date | 13.01.2021 (Wednesday) at 3.00 P.M. |
| 11 | Name & address of office inviting tender | Director, Jharkhand Renewable Energy Development Agency (JREDA), 3rd Floor, SLDC Building, Kusai, Doranda, Ranchi- 834002 (Jharkhand) |
| 12 | Contact no. of procurement officer | 0651-2491163/67/61 |
| 13 | Helpline no. of e-procurement | 0651-2491163/67/61 |

Any corrigendum/addendum can be seen on website: <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in> & www.jreda.com.

Further details can be seen on website: <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in> & www.jreda.com.

SD/- Director, JREDA, Ranchi

PR 237509 (Energy) 20-21(D)

Rahane mindful of the perils of twilight zone in series-opener



Ideal preparation: The Indians ticked most boxes in the pink ball warm-up game against Australia-A. ■ TWITTER/BCCI

QUICK SINGLES

Steve Smith misses net session due to sore back

ADELAIDE
Steve Smith missed Australia's net session on Tuesday due to a sore back. After warming up for around 10 minutes, he skipped the football session and returned to the dressing room in some discomfort after tweaking his back while bending down to pick up a ball. A team spokesman, however, said the 31-year-old will bat at the nets on Wednesday and there was no doubt about his availability for the first Test. PTI



Pink ball zips around more, says Cummins

ADELAIDE
Australia pace spearhead Pat Cummins feels that the pink ball zips around more under lights. "After dinner, when the light takes effect, for whatever reason it seems like the ball zips around a bit more. It's just another dynamic of the game. It's a tactic that the captains have to manage – when to bat and when to bowl," Cummins told kkr.in. PTI

Kohli moves to second in ICC rankings

DUBAI
Virat Kohli (886 rating points) jumped one spot to second in the ICC Test rankings for batsmen, which also features Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane at the seventh and 10th positions. Steve Smith (911) leads the table. Jasprit Bumrah (779) and R. Ashwin (756) were eighth and 10th in the bowlers' list headed by Pat Cummins (904). PTI

Have our plans in place for Kohli: Langer

Coach calls Australia versus India 'a great rivalry and a great series'

AYAN ACHARYA

Australia coach Justin Langer on Tuesday hailed the compelling rivalry between India and Australia, while explaining why it has always had allure and sparked the best games.

"This is a great series, a great rivalry that has been built up for a long time between Australia and India... a great rivalry for world cricket I think," Langer said at a virtual media interaction on Tuesday.

Langer alluded to the 2-1 Test series win in India in 2004 as a watershed moment of his playing career. "I've said many times, beating India in India in 2004 was Mount Everest of my career because we knew how hard it was!" Langer said.

"In the past, India has found it hard to win over here (Australia). I guess I've never heard Virat (Kohli) say it but beating us over here last time... (2018-19) – these



Class act: Virat Kohli is a great player and the Aussies know the importance of his wicket. ■ FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

moments are very important in each of our cricket, whether as individuals or as a collective experience."

Langer credited the In-

dian Premier League (IPL) for promoting a sense of camaraderie and sportsmanship among the players. "We will play tough cricket, but in

the spirit it's meant to be played. That's one of the benefits of the IPL, I think. The guys get to know each other. There's a good relationship... All things said I can't wait... Bring it on, Thursday!"

The Virat showdown

Asked about Australia's plans against Kohli the batsman, and whether the side will engage him if he gets fired up, Langer said, "What we talk about is how to get Virat out. He is such a great player, we don't talk about whether we taunt him or not. That's rubbish... We play on the skill, not on emotions, at least we try to," Langer said.

"He is a great player and a great leader. I have got so much respect for him but we are going to be really well planned for him because we know how important he is for India as a leader and as a batsman. So, we will have our plans in place."

C If we focus hard during the twilight period, it can get slightly easy again.

"If we focus hard during this period, it can get slightly easy again. It behaves differently during the day and behaves differently once the lights are on, so that is a challenge.

"As a batsman, focus will be the key. As long as you can focus and concentrate, communication will be the key among the two batsmen. Batting in twilight, those 40-50 minutes is the key. If you bat well in that period, it becomes really good."

Although Rahane will not be leading the side in Adelaide, it will hold him and the team in good stead were he to see off the twilight zone, especially since he is expected to assume the mantle of captaincy from Virat Kohli after the first Test.

Bowlers can win Tests if we get big totals: Kapil

'Pace attack has the ability to succeed'

SPORTS BUREAU



Kapil Dev believes India's batsmen will have to play a big role in the Test series in Australia and give the bowlers enough runs to work with.

"The bowlers will get used to the line and length [needed on Australian wickets]. But the batsmen will have to play a bigger role. If they get a big total, our bowlers are ready to save the match or win it," the legendary all-rounder said on the Tissot Presents Sportstar Extras T20 Time show.

Kapil is happy with the way the pacers have shaped up. "Speed-wise, all the three fast bowlers – Mohammed Shami, Navdeep Saini, Jasprit Bumrah – bowl regularly at 145kmph; that's the strength. We had this previously, too, but it was not so consistent as a unit."

He also felt that Rohit Sharma will be a big asset in Australia. "He is a great cricketer... in Australia, he will be very useful. Rohit has the right approach."

Watch full interview on www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOBPOiURP8Y

Bumrah and company will hope history repeats itself Down Under



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESHP MENON

In Johannesburg three years ago, India did something that was so startling, so historically unexpected that for many it overshadowed the result of the Test match. India beat South Africa, but what stood out was their bowling line-up.

They went into the match with five fast bowlers, and nary a spinner in sight. Jasprit Bumrah, the spearhead then (as now) turned 27 this month, and might wonder what the fuss is all about. After all, he leads an attack capable of crossing the 140kmph mark consistent-

ly. But consider this: India's 'tearaways' who have opened the bowling include Sunil Gavaskar, Aji Wadekar, Tiger Pataudi, and even wicketkeeper Budhi Kunderan. There is a generation in India who will find it difficult to believe that India's fast bowling attack, if not the best in the world, can match the best.

Up against Pat Cummings, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazelwood are Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, and possibly Umesh Yadav. Except for the fact that one set is playing at home, there isn't much to choose between them.

When India won the last series there, Bumrah, Shami, Ishant Sharma claimed 48 wickets. They finished 2018 with 130 wickets together, equalling the record of Holding-Marshall-Garner in 1984 when the West Indies ruled the world.

As another series begins, the question is, can the Indian bowlers repeat their success?

A larger question is, how did India,

for so long the land of spin and gentle surprises become home to some of the fastest men in the business? Why, for years did Kapil Dev, Javagal Srinath and Zaheer Khan (who had 981 Test wickets among them over three generations) have to go it largely alone?

It wasn't always like this. India went into their inaugural Test in 1932 with Mohammed Nissar, as quick as Harold Larwood of Bodyline fame, and Amar Singh who, in the words of the English batsman Walter Hammond, "came off the pitch like the crack of doom."

Birth of spin tradition

In the first post-War series, left arm spinner Vinoo Mankad made his debut; he was joined a couple of seasons later by off spinner Ghulam Ahmed and then by leg spinner Subhash Gupte. The first great Indian spin trio was born, as was an Indian tradition (although individual spinners had made their mark earlier).

The affinity between Indians and slow bowling has been commented on for decades. Perhaps it had something to do with the climate and a certain philosophical detachment. Perhaps it was a manifestation of a non-violent form of attack. Whatever the reason (and there were many theories), spin was seen as India's thing, to use a modern idiom.

Nearly six decades ago, when Tiger Pataudi took over as captain, he soon had some of the greatest spinners – Prasanna, Chandrasekhar, Venkatraghavan, Bedi – in his side, and looked no further for bowling resources. The odd medium pacer who came along, Subroto Guha for example, was seen as an anomaly.

Pataudi was a pragmatic man, and it is possible that he destroyed pace bowling in India, convinced it could not, in fact, need not grow in the shadow of spin. He didn't think there could be a bowler here like England's John Snow,

whom he captained at Sussex. Or maybe it was an idea whose time hadn't come.

"Pick your best bowlers, and if they are all spinners, so be it," he said. Indian bowling attacks were lopsided for years.

The theory was successful at home on helpful wickets, but failed in England and Australia. Even as recently as the 2014 series in those countries the familiar cry was articulated after India lost: We must find fast bowlers. We must prepare wickets for them in domestic competitions.

Soon after, the Board of Control for Cricket in India told its curators to leave grass on the pitch (between 3mm and 8mm) to aid fast bowling. It helped. As did the general level of fitness and bowler-specific regimen developed by professional fitness men attached to the teams. Playing alongside some of the finest fast bowlers year after year in the IPL – Bumrah and Lasith Malinga were

teammates at Mumbai Indians – ensured that free education was available on tap.

The Arun influence

The coming together of a whole set of circumstances meant that India has enviable bench strength. Bowling coach Bharati Arun has been the quiet strength behind the scenes – a difference that means he has not been given the credit he deserves for developing India's bowlers. His contribution is significant. Lead spinner R. Ashwin has acknowledged that.

In Australia, India will miss Ishant Sharma's experience – he is just three short of 300 Test wickets – but it might mean, as the series progresses, a call up for Navdeep Saini or Mohammed Siraj.

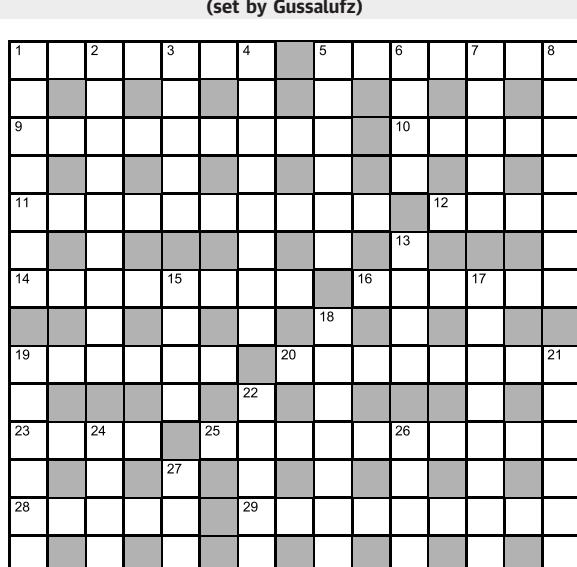
The return of Steve Smith (and later, David Warner) will keep the spotlight trained on Bumrah and the heroes of 2018-19.

TH CROSSWORD + 13120

(set by Gussalufz)

Never go off the grid.
We are digital. Come solve online.
<https://rgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCAN TO PLAY

ACROSS

- Spiritual gatherings ending in drama, surrounded by chaotic scenes (7)
- Crash badly, sustaining extremely traumatic wound (7)
- Solve: F times F (6,3)
- Ultimately, one putting on three increasingly larger sizes before "Large" makes sense (5)
- Regularly valued his tutor Daniel's record (5,5)
- Inclination to live with books (4)

- Contains forged permit (8)
- Bird known to harass smaller birds and jeer after catching one and seizing a portion of grain (6)
- Must relax about ringing alarms! (6)
- Somehow pardon inspiring setter's talk about personal connection with Ximenes, perhaps? (4-4)
- Crack in rotten, hollow fruit (4)
- Wife's cramming Token Ring, perhaps, for this computer science subject (10)
- Squirrel's tree behind road (5)
- Painful to include drunk robot in a game (9)
- Musicians of Year featured in records (7)
- Hapless resonators releasing bits of after-hours over-the-top tumult? (7)
- Walks with swagger and insolence after consuming grass (7)
- One's rock and roll getting traded for wealth (9)
- Wine left out as a sign of change? (5)
- Essentially assessing the way to fix up a sales display (8)
- Sequence of letters that often follows right after some unwelcome flirtatious overtures (6)
- Deception of one on drugs, cycling (4)
- Essence of an herb bringing energy for playboy, essentially (5)
- Case lost after misrepresentation is admitted by the woman (7)
- Crop no one's seen in jungle? (4)
- Bear ate honey, stripping beehive, taking only seconds (4)
- Short drink after spraying grimy disinfectant? (9)
- Wanders across fence and ducks (8)
- Can a god go evil, ultimately? (7)
- Baby hogs pies, stuffing a couple of globs and some toppings (7)
- In conflict with lover, suspicious to some extent (6)
- Weak to switch sides for gift (5)
- Correspondence regularly rejected by soviet cadre? (5)
- So hot, getting cuddled by model, you, me! (4)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13119 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | I | S | S | U | S | T | A | Y | S | P | U | T |
| E | O | M | E | A | A | E | | | | | | |
| T | R | I | Y | A | R | M | E | R | S | T | | |
| E | L | R | E | E | E | T | T | | | | | |
| G | L | I | R | T | R | U | | | | | | |
| T | E | O | L | O | G | I | A | N | K | E | R | B |
| A | A | A | H | T | F | E | | | | | | |
| I | M | A | V | O | I | D | A | N | C | E | | |
| L | D | L | O | B | O | O | | | | | | |
| O | B | J | E | L | A | G | | | | | | |
| R | U | D | T | L | E | A | | | | | | |
| I | N | C | V | G | U | C | | | | | | |
| G | O | T | S | E | D | E | | | | | | |

BCCI AGM at Ahmedabad on Dec. 24

AMOL KARHADKAR

MUMBAI
Ahmedabad will host the BCCI Annual General Meeting (AGM) on December 24. The decision was notified to the affiliates on Tuesday. The notice for the meeting had not specified the agenda as the BCCI was in consultation with the Maharashtra government on whether the AGM could be organised at its headquarters in Mumbai. Once it failed to get permission, Ahmedabad was decided as the venue.

The election officer, A.K. Joti, has released the final electoral roll of 28 member representatives for the election of the vice-president and two IPL Governing Council members. 10 affiliates have been barred – Punjab, Rajasthan, Odisha, Tripura, Jammu & Kashmir, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Railways, Services and All India Universities – from attending the AGM.

IN BRIEF



SRH appoints Moody as director of cricket

NEW DELHI
Tom Moody was on Tuesday appointed as the director of cricket by Sunrisers Hyderabad. The 55-year-old Australian was in charge of SRH for seven years till the 2019 season, guiding the team to the title in 2016 before he was replaced by England's World Cup-winning coach Trevor Bayliss in July last year. PTI

Maiden Major victory for Kim A-Lim

HOUSTON
South Korea's Kim A-Lim produced a stunning finish to snatch her maiden Major victory with a one-shot win in the delayed finale to the US Women's Open golf on Monday. The 25-year-old rattled in three consecutive birdies on the 16th, 17th and 18th holes to finish with a four-under-par 67. AFP

Aditya loses in final
NEW DELHI: Aditya Vashistha lost 6-3, 6-2 to Christian Rodriguez Sanchez of Colombia in the final of the \$10,000 UTR Pro men's tennis tournament on clay in Hollywood, Florida.



Sreesanth named in Kerala probables' list

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
The Kerala Cricket Association (KCA) has named S. Sreesanth as one of the probables for Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2021. The selectors have named 26 probables who will undergo a preparatory camp.

Santana on song for HFC

SPORTS BUREAU

In the first half gave way to clinical finishing in the second as Hyderabad FC maintained its unbeaten run in the ISL with a 3-2 comeback win over SC East Bengal at the Tilak Maidan, Vasco, on Tuesday.

Skipper Aridane Santana, who missed a spot-kick, netted two goals in one minute.

The result: Hyderabad FC 3 (Santana 56 & 56, Narzary 68) bt SC East Bengal 2 (Maghoma 26 & 81).

Wednesday's match: ATK Mohun Bagan vs FC Goa, 7.30 p.m.

2022 women's WC dates announced

India meets a qualifier in its opener in the eight-team round-robin event

CRICKET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI

India will open its campaign in the rescheduled women's ODI World Cup against a qualifier on March 6 at Tauranga's Bay Oval in New Zealand, according to the 31-match schedule announced by the ICC on Tuesday.

India has two more matches against qualifiers on March 12 and March 22 at Seddon Park, Hamilton, in the eight-team round-robin format event.

The tournament, which was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic from its original window in February-March 2021, will be held between March 4 and April 3, 2022, at the same six host cities and venues as planned earlier.

"We have all been through a very difficult year and are happy to be getting back at

playing the game we all love," India captain Mithali Raj said in an ICC release.

"India has been doing very well at ICC tournaments in the past three or four years, whether you talk about the (ODI) World Cup or the T20 World Cup."

"If we manage to win the tournament in 2022, it will be a massive inspiration for the next generation of girls, as the 50-over format, is considered the pinnacle for any cricketer. I can assure you that the team and I are looking forward to it," added Mithali.

New Zealand, Australia, England and South Africa have qualified for the World Cup apart from India. The three remaining teams will emerge from the ICC qualifying tournament which will be held from June 26 to July 10 in Sri Lanka next year. The prize money for the event will be NZ\$ 5.5 million.

India's schedule

March 6: vs Qualifier, Tauranga

March 10: vs New Zealand, Hamilton

March 12: vs Qualifier, Hamilton

March 16: vs England, Tauranga

March 19: vs Australia, Auckland

March 22: vs Qualifier, Hamilton

March 27: vs South Africa, Christchurch

All India matches will be day-night

SECOND PHASE

March 30:
First semifinal, Wellington

March 31:
Second semifinal, Christchurch

April 3:
Final, Christchurch

All India matches will be day-night

Mathur's century fashions Shraddhanand's big win

Sumit Mathur's 101 laid the foundation for Swami Shraddhanand College's resounding 69-run victory over Hari Singh Academy, Ghaziabad, in the quarterfinals of the 30th All India Sperry Om Nath Sood memorial cricket tournament at the RSKP ground here on Tuesday.

The scores: Swami Shraddhanand College 238 in 38.3 overs (Sumit Mathur 101, Lakshay Thareja 40, Ankush Bains 36, Rohan Rana 3/22, Ravi Tewatia 3/38) beat Hari Singh Academy 169 in 37.2 overs (Salil Malhotra 45, Dev Khanna 30, Aman Sehrawat 4/37).

Lakshay, Naman help RVs win title
Lakshay Sharma (4/18) and Naman Bisht (55) played leading roles in R.V.S. Academy's seven-wicket win over Ganga International Academy (GIS) in the final of the first Winter (under-13) cricket tournament at the Rohini ground, Karala.

The scores: GIS Academy 147/9 in 40 overs (Harsh Aggarwal 46, Aaina Taak 45, Lakshay Sharma 4/18) lost to R.V.S. Academy 151/3 in 33 overs (Naman Bisht 55, Ridhaan 40, Rohit Kumar 33).

Krish and Badal power Sporting into semifinals
Krish Chahar (55) and Badal Rai (3/34) helped Sporting Club beat R.C.C. Club by 21 runs and enter the semifinals of the first Backyard RCC (under-14) cricket tournament at the Greenfield ground, Mundka.

The scores: Sporting Club 130/4 in 39 overs (Anchit Yadav 77, Aaradhy Yadav 55 not out, Siddarth Yadav 28 not out).
Abhimanyu stars for Telefunken
Abhimanyu Singh's 102 and

DELHI ROUND-UP



half-centuries from Yash Dabas and Bharat Sindhwani contributed to Telefunkens 168-run win over Gross Sporting in 31.4 overs (Saksham Singh 44, Jagdev Bhati 37, Siddhart Bansal 4/13).

Neeraj and Ankit excel for Youth XI
Neeraj Yadav (4/26) and Ankit Chouhan (3/1) joined hands to script Youth XI's massive 187-run victory over G.K. Club in the first Tripathi Premier League at the Tripathi Sports Complex.

The scores: Youth XI 262/7 in 40 overs (Vipul Choudhary 68, Shubham Sehrawat 53, Jatin Gehlot 35, Kaushal Suman 35) beat G.K. Club 75 in 27.5 overs (Neeraj Yadav 4/26, Ankit Chouhan 3/1).

Aakash hammers an unbeaten 105
Aakash Kumar (105 not out) and Shaffin Kumar (58) were the main architects of Harbhajan Institute of Cricket's 27-run win over Uday Gupta Academy in the Hari Ballabh Sharma memorial (under-14) cricket tournament at the St. Stephen's ground.

The scores: Harbhajan Institute Of Cricket 240/8 in 40 overs (Aakash Kumar 105 not out, Shaffin Kumar 58, Aman Chaudhary 26) beat Uday Gupta Academy 213/8 in 40

overs (Ayan Kumar 63, Sameer Jayant 47, Aditya Kumar 33).

All-round show by Dipesh
Dipesh Balyan (27 and 3/11) contributed the most to Lal Bahadur Shastri Club's 54-run win over Rohtak Road Gymkhana in the first Bhola Singh memorial (under-17) cricket tournament at the Chattar Singh ground.

The scores: L.B. Shastri 162/9 in 40 overs (Garvit Grover 36, Aditya 31, Dipesh Balyan 27, Abhishek Kumar 3/26, Anshul Sehrawat 3/37) beat Rohtak Road Gymkhana 108 in 34 overs (Lakshay Goyal 27, Dipesh Balyan 3/11).

Tarun Bisht performs well
Tarun Bisht (46 and 3/39) helped Uttaran Boys Academy beat RPL Academy by 40 runs in the seventh S. N. memorial cricket tournament at the Pioneer ground.

The scores: Uttaran Boys Academy 231/8 in 40 overs (Ayush Kumar 61, Rushal Saini 55, Tarun Bisht 46, Gautam Saxena 4/30, Aaditya Kumar 4/45) beat RPL Academy 191 in 36.2 overs (Aaditya Kumar 69, Kavya Kumar 27, Tarun Bisht 4/39).

Kapish, Aryan help Achievers
Kapish Gehlot (3/15) and Aryan Gehlot (45) enabled Achievers Academy beat Aardin Academy by three wickets in the first Airliner Winter cricket tournament at the Bharti College ground.

The scores: Aardin Academy 133 in 26 overs (Lakshya 45, Kapish Gehlot 3/15) lost to Achievers Academy 137/7 in 22 overs (Aryan Gehlot 45, Aditya Madan 41, Aarush Kumar 4/23).

Harikrishna gains a wildcard

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Former Asian champion P. Harikrishna has gained a wildcard to be part of the \$200,000 Airthings Masters online chess tournament beginning on December 26.

Harikrishna joins World champion Magnus Carlsen, current Champions Chess Tour leader Wesley So, World No. 1 blitz player Hikaru Nakamura and eight others in the 12-player elite field.

Dutch No. 1 Anish Giri, Russia No. 1 Ian Nepomniachtchi, Spanish champion David Anton Guijarro, Armenia's No. 1 Levon Aronian, French No. 1 Maxime Vachier Lagrave and former World Cup winner Azerbaijan's Teimour Radjabov made it after being among the top-eight finishers in the previous event on the Tour.

After three days of round-robin league, the top eight will advance to the knockout quarterfinals.

The event, second on the \$1.5 million Tour, a 10-tournament circuit of rapid online chess will end on Jan. 3.

Celta blows away Cadiz

ASSOCIATED PRESS
VIGO (SPAIN)

Celta Vigo earned its biggest win since June when it beat Cadiz 4-0 in the Spanish league.

Cadiz was coming off beating Barcelona 2-1 at home but started badly and by halftime, was down 4-0.

The result: Celta Vigo 4 (Nolito 6, Aspas 31-pen, Beltran 43, Mendez 45+1) bt Cadiz 0.

Yuvraj Singh all set to pad up again



Yuvraj Singh. ■ FILE PHOTO

Former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh is set to come out of retirement and play domestic cricket again after being named in Punjab's 30-strong list of probables for next month's Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament.

Yuvraj, the star of India's 2011 World Cup-winning campaign, had announced his retirement last June, but decided to resume playing for his home state after being approached by Punjab Cricket Association secretary Puneet Bali.

The 39-year-old left-handed batsman, who has played

304 ODIs, 40 Tests and 58 T20Is for India, has been training at the PCA stadium in Mohali and also posted a video of his preparations on social media.

Yuvraj had participated in the Global T20 league in Canada after his retirement.

The BCCI plans to conduct the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, the national T20 championship, from January 10, the venues for which will be declared later. The teams will have to assemble at their respective bases by January 2.

Aayush gets past Vaibhav

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SONEPAT

Aayush Sharma pipped Vaibhav Kundu 6-3, 6(6)-7, 6(6)-4 in the first round of the ₹100,000 AITA men's ranking tennis tournament here on Tuesday. Second seed Siddharth Arya had to sweat it out 7-6(2), 7-6(3) against Utkarsh Tiwari.

The results:
At Sonepat (₹100,000 men's ranking):

First round: Chirag Duan 6-1, 6-0; Tanik Gupta 6-4, 6-2; Vaibhav Kundu 6-3, 6(6)-7, 6(6)-4; Sandesh Dattaray 6-2, Ayoque Ahmed 6-7(6), 7-5; Gajender Singh 6-3, 6-1;

Second round: Siddharth Arya 6-3, 6-2; Aayush Sharma 6-3, 6-2; Vaibhav Kundu 6-3, 6(6)-7, 6(6)-4; Sandesh Dattaray 6-2, Ayoque Ahmed 6-7(6), 7-5; Gajender Singh 6-3, 6-1;

Third round: Chirag Duan 6-1, 6-0; Tanik Gupta 6-4, 6-2; Vaibhav Kundu 6-3, 6(6)-7, 6(6)-4; Sandesh Dattaray 6-2, Ayoque Ahmed 6-7(6), 7-5; Gajender Singh 6-3, 6-1;

Fourth round: Siddharth Arya 6-3, 6-2; Aayush Sharma 6-3, 6-2; Vaibhav Kundu 6-3, 6(6)-7, 6(6)-4; Sandesh Dattaray 6-2, Ayoque Ahmed 6-7(6), 7-5; Gajender Singh 6-3, 6-1;

Final: Siddharth Arya 6-3, 6-2; Aayush Sharma 6-3, 6-2;

Consolation: Chirag Duan 6-1, 6-0; Tanik Gupta 6-4, 6-2; Vaibhav Kundu 6-3, 6(6)-7, 6(6)-4; Sandesh Dattaray 6-2, Ayoque Ahmed 6-7(6), 7-5; Gajender Singh 6-3, 6-1;

Consolation final: Chirag Duan 6-1, 6-0; Tanik Gupta 6-4, 6-2; Vaibhav Kundu 6-3, 6(6)-7, 6(6)-4; Sandesh Dattaray 6-2, Ayoque Ahmed 6-7(6), 7-5; Gajender Singh 6-3, 6-1;

Consolation third place: Siddharth Arya 6-3, 6-2; Aayush Sharma 6-3, 6-2; Vaibhav Kundu 6-3, 6(6)-7, 6(6)-4; Sandesh Dattaray 6-2, Ayoque Ahmed 6-7(6), 7-5; Gajender Singh 6-3, 6-1;

Consolation fourth place: Siddharth Arya 6-3, 6-2; Aayush Sharma 6-3, 6-2; Vaibhav Kundu 6-3, 6(6)-7, 6(6)-4; Sandesh Dattaray 6-2, Ayoque