



Disha Ravi case: Delhi Police deny leaking documents to media
page 9



'Conspiracy' against former CJI Gogoi can't be ruled out, says SC
page 9



Osaka stops Serena, meets Brady; Djokovic in final
page 13

NEARBY



Fresh norms issued for international travellers

NEW DELHI

The Centre has issued a fresh set of air travel guidelines, as the country has reported the presence of the U.K., South Africa and Brazil mutant variants of SARS-CoV-2 that have demonstrated increased transmissibility. The new SOP (standard operating procedure), which will come into effect at 11.59 p.m. on February 22, was released late on Wednesday night.

NEWS ► PAGE 10

Correcting historical mistakes in Assam: PM

GUWAHATI Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the Centre had taken up various development projects to correct the historical mistakes of neglecting Assam. He underlined the Centre's commitment to infrastructure development in the State while virtually launching 'Mahabahu Brahmaputra', a package of multimodal water connectivity projects.

NEWS ► PAGE 9



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'Rail roko' by farmers passes off peacefully

There was 'negligible' impact on running of trains: Railways

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Protesting farmers sat on railway tracks at hundreds of locations and stopped some trains during a four-hour 'rail roko' agitation on Thursday. The Railways said there was "negligible" impact on the running of trains across the country.

For a few passengers on trains stopped by the agitation, the 'rail roko' involved showering of petals and distribution of milk and jaggery by farmers. In other locations, tractors were brought on to the tracks.

Farm unions said thousands of protesters participated in the nationwide agitation, including protests at a large number of stations in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Telangana, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. Although protesters were detained at several locations, the unions and the Railways said the protest passed off peacefully, without any incidents of violence.

In Punjab, where farmers blocked rail lines and stations for several weeks last year, the core group of 32 protesting unions laid siege to tracks in at least 40 locations, according to Jagmohan Singh, general secretary of the Bharatiya Kisan Union-Dakunda. "Farmers peacefully sat on a dharna on railway tracks to convey their anguish," he said.



On track: Farmers protesting at the Modinagar railway station in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, on Thursday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

han Singh, general secretary of the Bharatiya Kisan Union-Dakunda. "Farmers peacefully sat on a dharna on railway tracks to convey their anguish," he said.

Women join protest

The BKU-Ekta Ugrahan, one of the largest farm unions in the State that is not part of the 32 unions, said its members blocked tracks at 22 locations, including Bathinda, Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Patiala districts.

The Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee, which had refused to lift the earlier blockade of passenger trains even when other unions relented, blocked tracks at more than 30 places, including Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Kapurthala.

Farmers, supported by khap panchayats, traders and workers' unions, blocked rail lines at 44 points across Haryana, with a large number of women taking part in Rohtak and Charkhi Dadri districts. Hisar, Sirsa, Jind and Rohtak accounted for more than half the protest sites.

In Bahadurgarh, one of the sites of the sit-in for the past two months, farmers blocked railway traffic at five points. Leading the agitation at Patuwash, farmer leader Raju Maan said they were ready to make any sacrifice to get the farm laws repealed.

In Rajasthan, farmers placed a tractor on the track near the Ajarka station in Alwar district to block the movement of trains.

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MORE REPORTS ► PAGES 2, 4 & 9

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

MORE REPORTS ► PAGES 2, 4 & 9

3 girls found unconscious in Unnao, 2 die

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

Two minor girls were declared dead at hospital and another was in a serious condition after they were found in an unconscious state in a field at a village in Unnao district of Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday, the police said.

The Dalit girls were found in the field in the evening by villagers when they did not return after leaving their house to collect fodder for cattle, sources said.

Director-General of Police H.C. Awasthi said the cause of deaths could not be ascertained in the post-mortem, and the viscera had been preserved for chemical examination. No injury mark was found on the bodies of the deceased in the autopsy, he said.

The officer said the third girl had been referred to a Kanpur hospital for better treatment. "According to the medical bulletin, it is a suspected case of poisoning and her condition is critical but stable," he said.

Six teams have been formed to investigate "all possible angles," he added.

Ramesh Chandra Prayankar, Circle Officer, Purwa, said an FIR had been registered against unidentified persons under IPC Sections 302 and 201.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

MORE REPORTS ► PAGES 2, 4 & 9

Morris IS IPL'S MOST EXPENSIVE BUY

Chris Morris became the costliest signing in Indian Premier League (IPL) history on a day when 57 players, including 22 overseas ones, were bought at the auction in Chennai on Thursday



MORRIS

The South African all-rounder was snapped up by Rajasthan Royals for a whopping ₹16.25 crore, surpassing Yuvraj Singh's ₹16 crore purchase by Delhi Daredevils for the 2015 season

GOWTHAM

Kyle Jamieson (NZ) | (RCB) ₹15 cr.

Glenn Maxwell (Aus) | (RCB) ₹14.25 cr.

Jhye Richardson (Aus) | (PBKS) ₹14 cr.

K. Gowtham (India) | (CSK) ₹9.25 cr.

TOP PICKS

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Quad meet: India, U.S. call for rule of law in Myanmar

Uphold rules-based international order, say members

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India on Thursday joined Australia, Japan and the United States for a ministerial meeting under the quadrilateral grouping during which key issues, including Myanmar as Burma, the name that Naypyitaw had stopped using since 1989 after a brutal crackdown against the democratic movement.

ment to "upholding rules-based international order" and "peaceful resolution of disputes".

Global good

"Our positive agenda underlines our shared commitment to global good. [We] discussed contemporary challenges, especially impact of COVID-19 and exchanged views on issues across the Indo-Pacific," Mr. Jaishankar said.

The leaders referred to the military crackdown in Myanmar, with the U.S. highlighting "the urgent need to

restore the democratically elected government in Burma, and the priority of strengthening democratic resilience in the broader region". Significantly, the U.S. statement referred to Myanmar as Burma, the name that Naypyitaw had stopped using since 1989 after a brutal crackdown against the democratic movement.

"In the discussion pertaining to developments in Myanmar, the upholding of rule of law and the democratic transition was reiterated by India," the Ministry of External Affairs said.

'Metroman' Sreedharan set to join BJP, may contest poll

He says his approach to politics in Kerala will be different

S. ANIL RADHAKRISHNAN
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Elattuvavalipil Sreedharan, Principal Adviser to the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation and popularly known as 'Metroman', is all set to join the BJP.

Kerala State BJP president K. Surendran said in Kozhikode on Thursday that Mr. Sreedharan, 88, would officially join the party during the inauguration of the State-wide Vijaya Yatra from Kasaragod on February 21. The party had already requested him to contest the polls, Mr. Surendran added.

Mr. Sreedharan, who was the chief of DMRC from 1997 to 2011, said his approach to politics would be different and that he was open to contesting the coming As-



E. Sreedharan

sembly election if the party wanted.

Formalities remain

"This has been communicated to the party's State leadership. Formalities like taking the membership remain," he told *The Hindu* over phone from his home-town Ponnani.

"Since I have settled down in Kerala, I have seen different governments and the United Democratic Front and the Left Democratic Front have not been able to do anything substantial for the people over the years. Projects are delayed and corruption is rampant. Only parties leading the coalition fronts had benefited. There is no rapport with the Union government and the State is the ultimate loser and the political parties the gainer. A BJP government can alter this scenario," he said.

He admitted that he was a "sympathiser" of the BJP since Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister.

(With inputs from Biju Govind in Kozhikode)

FB blocks access to news in Australia

ASSOCIATED PRESS
CANBERRA

Facebook on Thursday blocked Australians from sharing news stories, escalating a fight with the government over whether powerful tech companies should have to pay news organisations for content.

The digital platforms fear that what is happening in Australia will become an expensive precedent for other countries.

Facebook acted after the House of Representatives passed legislation that would make it and Google pay for Australian journalism, said Treasurer Josh Frydenberg. He said he was given no warning before Facebook acted. The legislation must be passed by the Senate to become law.

RELATED REPORT ON ► PAGE 11

Learn from the change-makers who paved the path



Jayesh Ranjan, IAS
Secretary, IT, Electronics & Communications Deptt., Govt. of Telangana



Durga Shakti Nagpal, IAS
Secretary, IT, Electronics & Communications Deptt., Govt. of Telangana



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Tamilsai Soundararajan interacting with V. Narayanasamy and his Cabinet colleagues at Raj Niwas on Thursday. ■ KUMAR S.S.

tered – the Congress and its allies were deadlocked with the Opposition, at 14 seats each.

The Congress has 10 seats and the DMK three. One Independent member supports the government. In the Opposition, the AIADMK has seven seats, the AIADMK four and the BJP three.

Dr. Soundararajan also di-

ty as per the rules. Talking to reporters after calling on the L-G, he said Dr. Soundararajan agreed to look into the demand. "She has agreed to act according to the provisions of the Constitution."

AIADMK leader A. Anbalagan, who was part of the delegation, said he requested the L-G to reopen public distribution outlets as soon as possible. He also requested Dr. Soundararajan to disburse the pending salaries of employees of cooperative societies and government-run boards.

Nominated legislator and BJP president V. Saminathan was also present.

In the morning, Dr. Soundararajan was sworn in as the Lieutenant-Governor. Chief Justice of the Madras High Court Sanjib Banerjee administered the oath of office to her.



Protest goes on: Security personnel deployed at the farmers' protest site at GT Karnal Road; farmers continue their protest against the farm laws at the Singhu border on Thursday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPKAR



DMRC shuts 4 metro stations for five hours

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

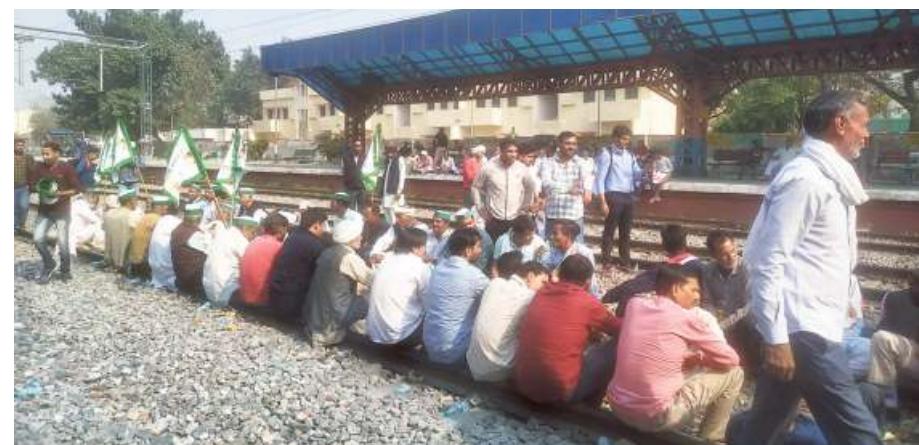
The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Thursday closed entry and exit gates of four stations for nearly five hours in view of the rail blockade called by the protesting farmers.

Tikri border, Pandit Shree Ram Sharma, Bahadurgarh City and Brigadier Hoshiar Singh metro stations on the Green Line were closed around 11.20 a.m. following security advisories. Services normalised around 4.20 p.m., said the DMRC.

Earlier in the day, the police tightened security in several parts of the national capital, especially near the railway tracks.

'Local meetings ensured huge turnout for rail roko stir'

Several people from neighbouring villages participated in the peaceful nationwide protest called by the farmers against the new farm laws



Farmers protesting against the new farm laws by blocking railway tracks at Modinagar station in Uttar Pradesh on Thursday. • SANDEEP SAXENA

Six held for illegal supply of ammunition

In one of the biggest hauls of cartridges in the Capital, 4,500 live bullets seized

Air quality of Delhi-NCR		
Delhi	302	Gurugram 296
Ghaziabad	325	Faridabad 307
Noida	315	Greater Noida 336
Good 0-50	Satisfactory 51-100	Moderate 101-200
Poor 201-300	Very poor 301-400	Severe >401
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) SOURCE: CPCB		

AQI expected to be 'very poor' today

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The air quality of Delhi and Noida continued to be in 'very poor' category and Gurugram's in 'poor' category on Thursday, according to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data.

Air pollution of 'very poor' level can cause respiratory illness on prolonged exposure, as per the CPCB. The AQI (Air Quality Index) of Delhi is expected to remain at the same level on Friday.

"Surface winds are low and forecast to stay low today [Friday] and tomorrow [Saturday]. Low ventilation is likely to influence the AQI negatively. The AQI is likely to marginally deteriorate and stay within the middle end of 'very poor' category on February 19. The AQI is likely to improve on February 20 and 21," said a statement by government-run monitoring agency, System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR).

The speed of surface-level winds was "low", which led to accumulation of pollutants near the surface.

Also, the "mixing layer height", which is the height from ground level up to which pollutants can be dispersed, was "moderate". This led to lesser accumulation of pollutants near the surface.

The AQI of Delhi was 302 on Thursday, as per the CPCB's 4 p.m. bulletins, which is an average of the past 24 hours. The values for Gurugram and Noida were 296 and 315.

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'.



The accused in police custody. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

3 held for demanding ₹1 cr. from businessman

They belong to Neeraj Bawana gang

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Three members of Neeraj Bawana gang were arrested for allegedly demanding ₹1 crore from a businessman, the police said on Thursday.

The accused have been identified as Vivek Dabas alias Rahul (23), a resident of Sultanpur Dabas village and Himanshu (20) and Ravi Dabala (25), both residents of Hiran Kundna village, they said.

On February 2, Jafapur Kalan police station received information that some unidentified men had fired outside a shop, the police said.

Interrogation revealed that the accused, all members of Neeraj Bawana gang, were planning a double murder to establish their clout.

Vivek and his accomplices had ₹1 crore from the businessman after they were told to do so by Sunny Issapur and Naveen Bali, the court said.

On December 4 last year, Begumpur police station al-

rived in a car and handed over a plastic bag to Deepanshu. Both of them were arrested after a brief chase and 4,000 illegal cartridges were recovered from them, the senior official said. At the instance of these two accused, the main source of supply of this syndicate, Amit, was arrested from Mansarovar Industrial Area in Jaipur on Tuesday, he said.

Following more raids the next day, Ikram was arrested from Panipat and Akram from Karnal and 500 cartridges were recovered from his possession. Manoj was arrested from Panchkula, he added. "During interrogation, all the accused disclosed that they are part of an illegal cartridges supply syndicate and received the

Delhi court seeks filing status of chargesheets forwarded in 3 years

'A time period must be fixed and IOs should comply with it'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Taking a strong note of non-filing of chargesheets by the Investigating Officers (IOs) despite being forwarded by a senior officer, a Delhi court has sought the filing status of chargesheets forwarded in the last three years and said it would definitely "unearth many hidden ghosts" (files) and "wake many souls" (IOs) from slumber".

Non-filing of chargesheets despite being forwarded by a senior officer amounted to undermining the hierarchy and discipline of service, the court said.

It added that late filing of chargesheets despite timely completion of the investigation shook the confidence of an ordinary citizen in the justice delivery system.

A time period be fixed for filing forwarded chargesheets and IOs should be asked to strictly comply with it, the court said, adding that such time should not be more

ammunition from Ramesh. They then supplied them to various people, including criminals in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh," Mr. Yadav said.

To earn quick buck

Investigations revealed that Ramesh had been working at Ambala Gun House since 2018 and earned ₹10,000 per month. But owing to his low income, he lured Amit, the owner of Ambala Gun House to sell cartridges illegally in the grey market so that they could earn a quick buck, the senior police officer said.

Amit used to buy cartridges from an ammunition company, but did not make proper entry in the record book. Ramesh and Amit then sold these cartridges at higher rates to various people, including Deepanshu and others at ₹125 per cartridge, he said.

Reopening of library

The students also demanded that they be allowed to choose between online and offline modes regarding the term-end examinations,

besides calling for the re-

ACPs concerned should prepare a list of chargesheets forwarded in the last three years [2018-2020] and seek status of filing from the IOs concerned

DELHI COURT

than 30 days from the date of forwarding of chargesheet by the ACP concerned.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Arvind Bansal directed the Additional Commissioners of Police (ACPs) concerned to prepare a list of the chargesheets forwarded in the last three years - 2018 to 2020 - and sought status report of filing from the IOs concerned.

It further directed the ACPs concerned to devise a mechanism under the guidance of DCP (South-East) to check and ensure that all the chargesheets signed/forwarded by them were duly

taken place over the last few weeks to increase awareness among the farmers and villagers in all districts. We also had discussions on the Food Safety Act, Labour Act and so on. We are attempting to have a larger discussion among villagers to highlight how these series of legislations will be detrimental to all," said Mr. Singh.

Action plans

Apart from mahapanchayats that are being organised across Haryana, Punjab and U.P., preparation for further action plans are also underway,

the farmers said.

Reiterating their demands for a complete re-

peal of the three laws, they said they would peacefully carry out directions of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha and their respective calls for protest.

Ramandeep Singh, a farmer from Punjab's Alloval village, said: "Around 15-20 people from our village have gone today [Thursday] for the protest. Whatever calls we get from the unions will be followed and we will ensure they are peaceful. We are not going to do anything that will affect the common citizens."

"All we can hope now is that the government accepts our demands. Nobody wants to live away from their homes. We are here out of sheer helplessness.

But what the government also needs to realise is that we will continue staying here till the laws are repealed, no matter how long it takes," added Mr. Singh.

Increased mobilisation
Manpreet Singh, another farmer from Punjab's Fatehgarh Sahib district, meanwhile, said, "Just like we observed the 'chakka jam' protest peacefully, farmers and villagers ensured that the rail roko protest is peaceful. We will continue registering our protest in a peaceful manner and with the increase in awareness we are seeing an increased mobilisation."

ABVP holds protest, calls for complete reopening of DU

Office-bearers' delegation presents memorandum of grievances

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad (ABVP) on Thursday organised a protest at Delhi University's North Campus calling for the complete reopening of the university and resumption of on-campus classes.

The students said that several universities have started a phased reopening as per the guidelines issued by the Central government, and the university authorities had issued guidelines for the commencement of physical classes.



pening of libraries, hostels and declaration of results.

The ABVP said that a delegation of office-bearers called on the Proctor and Dean, Students Welfare and presented a memorandum of grievances and were assured by the university that the phased reopening of the campus had already started and by the first week of March, several

facilities that are still unavailable would be made available to students.

Sidharth Yadav, State secretary, ABVP Delhi, said: "While we have pushed for an expeditious reopening of the varsity, we have not insisted on compulsory attendance. Post resumption, the university administration must ensure the continued availability of virtual classroom instructions and on-campus attendance for students should remain voluntary."

He added that the delegation's meeting with the officials of the varsity was promising and that the process of reopening the university campus would be set in motion without further delay to safeguard the interests of the student community.

Caste-based question in DSSSB exam: FIR ordered

File monthly report in the case: court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has directed the authority concerned to register an FIR under the provisions of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, in a case of caste-based question being allegedly asked in the primary teachers' recruitment exam by the Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board (DSSSB).

Additional Sessions Judge Ravinder Bedi said prima facie, the alleged words in questions papers of 2018 and 2019, as pointed out by complainant, disclose commission of various cognisable offences committed by the respondent/DSSSB and an investigation is required into these," the judge said in his order passed on February 17.

The court's directions came while allowing an application filed by advocate Satya Prakash Gautam, seeking action against the DSSSB Chairman and the erring officials of the examination committee under the Act.

The application claimed that a caste-based question was asked in the exam conducted on October 13, 2018, by the DSSSB.

The judge said that his attention has been drawn to the detailed report by the IO, filed in September 2019.

Timings
DELHI

FRIDAY, FEB. 19	
RISE 06:56	SET 18:15
RISE 11:18	SET 00:10
SATURDAY, FEB. 20	
RISE 06:55	SET 18:15
RISE 11:55	SET 01:04
SUNDAY, FEB. 21	
RISE 06:54	SET 18:16
RISE 12:36	SET 02:00

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 28 10
Safdarjung 28 10
Palam 26 13

Delhi Pilm Today
28°C A cool morning with shallow fog. A comfortable day with mainly sunny sky.

Delhi Pilm Tomorrow
29°C Dry weather mainly, marginal drop in morning temperatures likely. Light dry winds and haziness would prevail.

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Contactless ticketing trials begin in all DTC buses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Transport department has started trial of contactless ticketing system in all the DTC buses through the 'Chartr' app, said officials on Thursday.

The trial of contactless ticketing was launched first in cluster buses and then in a few Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) buses, amid the COVID-19 pandemic last year.

The decision to extend the trial to all the over 3,700 buses was taken in meetings of the Task Force constituted for the purpose by Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot, the official added.

Disha's police remand likely to get extended

Activist is cooperating, but need to probe larger conspiracy'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police is likely to seek an extension of remand for activist Disha Ravi to investigate the toolkit case and a "larger conspiracy" behind the Republic Day violence, said an officer on Thursday.

On Sunday, Ms. Ravi was sent to five-day police custody by a Delhi court. She was arrested from Bengaluru on Saturday. ■ FILE PHOTO



Disha Ravi was arrested from Bengaluru on Saturday. ■ FILE PHOTO

Meanwhile, their website was blocked and the people operating it were served a notice under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. But after facing backlash on social media, Delhi Police called it a 'clerical error' and withdrew the notice and served a new one under the IT Act, 2000. The website was unblocked later.

An officer said the website was unblocked after they rectified the error due to which the Environment Ministry was getting mass emails.

emails against the government's draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) rules. In the notice served to the FFF, Delhi Police had mentioned that the website depicts objectionable content and unlawful activities or terrorist acts, which are dangerous for the peace, tranquillity and sovereignty of India.

Meanwhile, their website was blocked and the people operating it were served a notice under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. But after facing backlash on social media, Delhi Police called it a 'clerical error' and withdrew the notice and served a new one under the IT Act, 2000. The website was unblocked later.

An officer said the website was unblocked after they rectified the error due to which the Environment Ministry was getting mass emails.

IIT-Delhi inaugurates centre to strengthen bond with alumni

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In an attempt to strengthen its bond with its alumni, IIT-Delhi on Thursday inaugurated an Endowment Centre and Management Foundation Office at its main administrative building.

The centre provides a distinct showcase of how the contributions of alumni are

supporting the advancement and realisation of the institute's aspirations for the future.

Addressing global alumni on the occasion via live streaming of the event, IIT-D Director V. Ramgopal Rao said the office demonstrates the collaborative commitment between the institute and the alumni and hoped

that it would further strengthen the institute's bond with alumni.

IIT-D chairman of Endowment Management Foundation, Arun Duggal, said: "Within this smart modern, collaborative facility, advancement team will leverage our academic, industry and community connections in innovative ways."

"Today is a very happy day for AAP. Political leaders of various parties of Delhi have understood that AAP is the only political party which is working for the development of citizens. After getting influenced by the work and policies of the Kejriwal government, Mr. Dixit is joining AAP," said party leader Durgesh Pathak.

"I am also very happy to announce that Ms. Dixit of Anarkali ward is also joining AAP. I want to welcome all these newly joined leaders," he added.

Capital records highest turnout for jab

CM gives financial assistance of ₹1 crore each to kin of two corona warriors

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A total of 24,417 beneficiaries – healthcare and front-line workers – got the COVID-19 vaccination in the city on Thursday, the highest so far. There were 13 minor Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI), said a Delhi government spokesperson.

Of the total beneficiaries, 5,218 healthcare workers received the first dose and 3,537 their second dose. At least 15,662 front-line workers received the first dose of the vaccine.

There were 302 vaccination sites on Thursday, of which 212 were using Covishield and four from the first dose of Covaxin. There were no AEFI from the se-



CM Arvind Kejriwal meets the families of COVID-19 warriors on Thursday. ■ PTI

cond dose, according to government data.

In another development, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal provided financial assistance of ₹1 crore each to the families of deceased corona warriors – Ompal Singh and Raj Kumar. "The pain these families have faced is irre-

placeable, but I am hopeful that with this financial assistance these families will get some relief," the Chief Minister said.

130 new cases

The Capital witnessed 130 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 6,37,445, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Thursday.

Two deaths were reported in the past 24 hours and the total number of deaths stood at 10,896. A total of 60,441 tests were done in a day. Of the total cases, 6,25,496 people have recovered and there are 1,053 active cases.

Govt. grants ₹3.18 crore to workers

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has disbursed ₹3.18 crore to 488 construction workers under various welfare schemes on Thursday.

"The Labour Department has streamlined the way funds are disbursed. Disbursements and aid used to get stuck in pipelines. The Delhi government has expedited this entire process for the benefit of its people," said Deputy CM Manish Sisodia.

Meanwhile, Food and Supply Minister Imran Hussain laid the foundation stone of a office complex of the Legal Metrology Department which will be equipped with scientific labs.

BJP sitting councillor among leaders join AAP, says Pathak

Bypolls to 5 seats of corporations to be held on February 28

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday said many BJP leaders, including district general secretary Shrawan Dixit and sitting councillor Rekha Dixit, joined the party.



AAP leader Durgesh Pathak has welcomed all newly joined leaders. ■ FILE PHOTO

"Today is a very happy day for AAP. Political leaders of various parties of Delhi have understood that AAP is the only political party which is working for the development of citizens. After getting influenced by the work and policies of the Kejriwal government, Mr. Dixit is joining AAP," said party leader Durgesh Pathak.

"I am also very happy to announce that Ms. Dixit of Anarkali ward is also joining AAP. I want to welcome all these newly joined leaders," he added.

Mr. Dixit said now, the BJP is not how it was under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani.

'CM stood by farmers'

"Today, the BJP has become a political party of Adani and Ambani. Today, the farmers are protesting at the Delhi borders and Rekha ji also comes from a farmer family. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal stood beside the farmers and had also provided water, electricity and Wi-Fi," he said.

The by-election to five seats of the corporations is to be held on February 28.

Root of the matter



Farmers busy in a carrot field at Tikri village in Delhi on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

'Stress lower among yoga practitioners'

Study by IIT-D scientists map effect of yoga on emotional problems during lockdown

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A study by IIT-Delhi scientists has revealed that those who practised yoga during the pandemic-induced lockdown had lower stress, anxiety and depression, higher wellbeing and more peace of mind as compared to non-practitioners.

The study was undertaken by National Resource Centre for Value Education in Engineering (NRCVEE), an academic centre at IIT-Delhi.



Girls practice yoga at the lawn near India Gate in New Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

Study on over 600 adults
The institute said its researchers led by Pooja Sahni carried out the study on a total of 668 adults during lockdown between April 26 and June 8, 2020, and the participants were grouped as yoga practitioners, other spiritual practitioners, and non-practitioners based on their responses to daily practices that they follow.

Yoga practitioners were further examined based on

the duration of practice as long-term, mid-term, and beginners," the institute said. It added that general wellbeing was reported higher by the long-term and mid-term practitioners than the beginners group.

Further, the long-term practitioners were found to have the highest peace of mind, lowest depression and anxiety with no significant difference in the mid-term and the beginner group.

"While yoga has been re-

commended as one of the ways to manage stress during COVID-19, there was a lack of empirical evidence to support the claims. Our study has mapped the effect of yoga on the cognitive and emotional problems of COVID-19, besides showing beneficial effects of yoga on general wellbeing during adversity," Dr. Sahni said. She added that evidence supports that yoga was found as an effective self-management strategy to cope with stress, anxiety and depression, besides helping to maintain wellbeing during COVID-19 lockdown.

Kamlesh Singh, Associate Professor at Humanities and Social Sciences Department, IIT-Delhi and one of the authors of the study feel that evidence from this research can be used by the health care practitioners to include yoga as an alternate therapy for self-management of stress-related problems during conditions like COVID-19 pandemic.

Reference advertisement No. GMCH/Estate/DPR-III/19/4580 dated 01/02/2021, regarding Public Notice under the title "Publication of E-Tender Notice," appeared in the leading newspapers, it is added in the tender document of Cafeteria Block-E that the contractor is free to serve any other item (Veg) on the demand of faculty, students and staff, apart from the items mentioned in the tender document. It is also added that the timings for opening of Cafeteria Block-E is extended till 10.00 PM. The last date and time for uploading e-tenders is 09.03.2021 upto 5.00 P.M., the last date and time for depositing EMD in physical shape is 10.03.2021 upto 12.00 Noon and date and time for opening of tenders is 10.03.2021 at 3.00 P.M. in Procurement Branch-II, Block-D, GMCH, Chandigarh.

All other terms and conditions shall remain the same.

Sd/-
Director Principal

FORM-C
NOTICE INVITING QUOTATION NO. 3 of 2020-2021
Sealed Quotations are invited on behalf of the Governor of Mizoram by the Engineer-in-Chief, Public Health Engineering Department, Govt. of Mizoram for fixation of rates of Supply of complete set and spare parts of Hand Pump Tube Wells conforming to latest India Mark II & III Specifications. Quotations only from Manufacturers or Authorized Dealers of India Mark II & III Hand pump Tube Wells as on date of opening of NIQ will be entertained. All other bids will be considered invalid.

The last date of receipt of Quotations will be 4th March 2021 upto 12:00 pm and the same will be opened on the same day at 1:00 pm. The Quotation forms and other details may be obtained from Urban Cell in the Office of Engineer-in-Chief, PHED, Mizoram on all Working days between 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M. on payment of Rs. 500. The same can be downloaded from PHED website at www.phed.mizoram.gov.in.

Sd/-
C. LALREMSIAMA
Engineer-in-Chief: PHED
Mizoram: Aizawl

IPR-293-1

PATENT CAUTION NOTICE

Our client, Syngenta Participations AG, a company organized and existing in accordance with the laws of Switzerland, of Schwarzwaldallee 215 CH-4058 Basel, is a member of the Syngenta Group, which is a global enterprise with core competencies in the fields of agri-business and is involved in crop protection and seeds. Syngenta Participations AG has been granted patents in several countries covering the inventions:

- (i) a process for synthesis of the active ingredient thiamethoxam, starting from a determinate intermediate compound,
- (ii) a process for the preparation of this intermediate compound (2-chloro-5-chloromethylthiazole), (iii) certain formulation covering thiamethoxam, as well (iv) uses of thiamethoxam for improved growth and uses on certain crops.

In India, our client Syngenta has been granted a patent under number 206995 titled "PROCESS FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF THIAZOLE DERIVATIVES WITH PESTICIDAL ACTIVITY"

Our client has also been granted patents in other countries to certain uses, compositions and formulations of thiamethoxam including Brazil (PI 0114905-9, PI 0014763-0, PI9709181-2, PI9917838-9 and PI9907010-3) and US 7238645, US 6861522.

By virtue of the Indian patent, our client has exclusive rights, inter alia, to prevent third parties from the action of making, using, offering for sale, selling (including exporting), or importing products obtained by the patented processes in India.

Further by virtue of grants in other jurisdictions including Brazil and US, our client has the right to prevent third parties to manufacture, use, offer of sale, sell and import products obtained by the patented processes in the country where our client holds a patent.

Further, the use of the our client's patents in Brazil including the act of offering for sale, selling or importing for the said purposes thiamethoxam constitutes infringement of the rights conferred upon our client under the laws of the country where our client has a patent registration.

Our Client shall take stringent legal measures against any person infringing valuable right of our Client in the said patent.

Place: Delhi ANAND AND ANAND, (Advocates)

Date: 19.02.2021 B-41, Nizamuddin East, New Delhi -110013

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

Farmers block tracks in Haryana

Women participate in large numbers in the 'rail roko' programme at two places

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

Agitating farmers supported by khaps laid blockade at 44 points across Haryana on Thursday as part of Samyukt Kisan Morcha's "rail roko" programme, seeking the repeal of the three farm laws and legal guarantee for the Minimum Support Price. The women also participated in the protest in large numbers at Rohtak and Charkhi Dadri.

Of the 16 police stations of the Government Railway Police, Hisar, Sirsa, Jind and Rohtak accounted for 24 points – which is more than half the total number of blockades. The railway tracks were blocked at nine points in Hisar, followed by seven in Sirsa, and four each in Rohtak and Jind. In Bahadurgarh, one of the sites of sit-in agitation for the past two months, the farmers blocked the railway traffic at five points.

Sangeeta Kalia, Superintendent of Police, Haryana Railway Police, said the prot-



Women protesters block tracks at Patuwash Mehrana railway station in Charkhi Dadri on Thursday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ests went off peacefully.

Widespread support

Several khaps along with social, farmers, traders and employees organisations came out in support of the "rail roko" programme in Bhiwani to lay blockades at Bamla (Bhiwani-Rohtak), Sui (Hisar-Bhiwani), Siwani (Hisar-Rajgarh) and Loharu (Hisar-Jaipur). The women protesters turned up at large numbers to block the railway tracks on Rewari-Hisar route at Patuwash Mehrana railway station in Charkhi Dadri and

gramme was not meant to cause public inconvenience but to send across the message that the movement was not confined to Punjab and Haryana and had an all-India presence.

The call evoked lukewarm response in districts along the Delhi-Ambala Highway with two blockades reported under the Chandigarh railway police station and one each in the jurisdictions of Ambala Cantonment and Jagadhari railway police stations. The tracks were blocked at Kurukshetra railway station at two different points in Kaithal. Similarly, two blockades were reported in Panipat and one in Sonipat.

Led by former Haryana MLA Karan Dalal, several hundred farmers under the aegis of 52 Paals (or khaps) blocked the Delhi-Mumbai route near Atoha village in Palwal.

In Gurugram, the protesters blocked tracks at Patli railway station.

Ismaila railway station in Rohtak. Leading the agitation at Patuwash, farmer leader Raju Maan said the farmers had participated actively in all the protests programmes, including tractor parade and highway blockade, and were ready to make any sacrifice in support of their demands. All-India Democratic Women Association vice-president Jagmatti Sangwan addressed the women protesters at Ismaila.

All India Kisan Sabha state vice-president Inderjeet Singh said the "rail roko" pro-

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LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE MOTOR ACCIDENT CLAIMS TRIBUNAL-CUM-XIADDL. CHIEF JUDGE, CITY CIVIL COURT AT HYDERABAD O.P.No. 906 OF 2018 Between:- Gangi Rajitha & Others...Petitioners AND Himgiri Automobiles Pvt. Ltd., & Others ... Respondents To, HIMGIRI AUTOMOBILES PVT. LTD., # 117, Lakkarpur Road, Faridabad, Rep. by Predeep Kumar S/o. Mahinder Singh, aged : Not known, Occ: Owner of the Crime Vehicle HR 38W 3903, R/0-164, Gal No. 14, Swaroop Nagar, Tehri, Daulatpur, New Delhi – 110 042. ... R1 Please take notice that the above O.P.No. 906 of 2018 is filed against you and others for grant of compensation and the above case is posted for your appearance on 24-04-2021 at 10.30 a.m. in person or by an Advocate, failing which the case will be decided on merits in your absence.

II BY ORDER OF THE COURT // Sd/- G. GOPAL REDDY, Advocate # 202, Rahmath Complex, Amerpet, Hyderabad. Cell # 9908604545

LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE MOTOR ACCIDENT CLAIMS TRIBUNAL-CUM-XIADDL. CHIEF JUDGE, CITY CIVIL COURT AT HYDERABAD O.P. No. 906 OF 2018 Between:- Gangi Rajitha & Others...Petitioners AND Himgiri Automobiles Pvt. Ltd., & Others ... Respondents To, AKBAR, S/o. Asru, Aged 33 Years, Occ : Driver of the Crime Vehicle Lorry No.RH 38W 3903, R/o.Talab Waji Masjid Village, Nizampur Tq. Leh-Nuh, Mewat District, Haryana State – 1221107.

Please take notice that the above O.P.No. 906 of 2018 is filed against you and others for grant of compensation and the above case is posted for your appearance on 24-04-2021 at 10.30 a.m. in person or by an Advocate, failing which the case will be decided on merits in your absence.

II BY ORDER OF THE COURT // Sd/- G. GOPAL REDDY, Advocate # 202, Rahmath Complex, Amerpet, Hyderabad. Cell # 9908604545

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website: www.kpolice.gov.in

JAMMU AND KASHMIR POLICE HEAD QUARTERS
NIT NO 03 of 2021 Dated:- 13.02.2021

E-Tenders are hereby invited by Police Hqrs, JK, from Original Manufacturers or their authorized dealers having proper authorisation of the manufacturer to quote against the tender for the supply of Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) as indicated in the detailed SBD & BOQ. The download of NIT shall start on 04.02.2021 at 1100 hours (Tender shall be submitted online on J&K Government e-procurement Portal www.jktenders.gov.in before 20.02.2021 at 1800 hours).

The tenders (technical bids only) will be opened online on 02.03.2021 at 1100 hours at Police Headquarters, J&K, Jammu. Due to Covid 19, virtual pre bid meeting will be held through VC on 02.02.2021. However intending bidders shall furnish queries, if any within 07 days from date tender is published. Queries will be referred to the technical committee for examination and appropriate action based on the merit of each query will be taken. This Hqrs is not bound to issue reports on individual queries. Detailed tender documents with terms and conditions are available on J&K Government e-procurement Portal www.jktenders.gov.in.

Sgt.
Rayees Mohammad Bhat-IPS
AIG of Police (Provision / Transport)
For Director General of Police, J&K-Jammu.

DIP/J-11742/20

Himanta slams CAA critics

Minister says BJP to balance Hindu and Assamese interests

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma slammed the opponents of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) for separating Assamese nationalism from Hindu or Indian nationalism.



Himanta Biswa Sarma

munity. We don't have an iota of doubt this time. The credo of our manifesto will be staunch nationalism and positive regionalism," Dr. Sarma said.

Legal reality'
The Finance Minister said the government cannot implement the recommendations of a panel on Clause 6 of the 1985 Assam because they are "far from legal reality".

The clause seeks to guarantee constitutional safeguards for the Assamese or indigenous people.

"The committee's recommendations are far from the legal reality of the land. They go against many Supreme Court judgements. How can we implement them?" Dr. Sarma said.

The panel was set up by the Union Home Ministry in 2019. Headed by retired judge Biplob Kumar Sarma, it submitted its report to Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on February 25. The report is yet to be forwarded to the Centre.

Cong. invites architects for memorial

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Congress in poll-bound Assam has invited Assamese architects to design a memorial for the "martyrs" of the movement against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).

Five peers, including a 17-year-old school student, were killed in police firing during the violent anti-CAA protests in Assam in December 2019.

"We announced a grand memorial because we respect public sentiments. Taking a step further, we are inviting applications from architects in Assam to share their suggestions and designs for the memorial with us," State Congress chief Ripun Bora said on Thursday.

The party had a few days ago vowed to build the anti-CAA martyrs' memorial if it comes to power in April-May. Mr. Bora said the party has appealed to all Assamese architects based anywhere in the world.

'Treat cow slaughter on par with killing a human'

Sarangi seeks 15 years RI for offenders

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

to be slaughtered in abattoirs of Kolkata and Bangladesh."

Mr. Sarangi was speaking to Odia media persons at his official residence in New Delhi on Thursday.

Letter to Odisha CM
The Union Minister also wrote a letter to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik urging him to amend the Orissa Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act 1960. "As per the Act, there is provision of two years of jail term for those who kill cow and abet killing them. Nobody knows how many have been punished under this provision."

Expressing deep concern over the death of 28 cattle when the truck in which they were being transported overturned following an accident in Balasore district, Mr. Sarangi said, "When I was in Kolkata this morning, I heard the news. I have spoken to top officers in Odisha. I can without any doubts say the cattle were being taken

He demanded that the provision of 15 years RI be made for cow slaughter as done by Karnataka.

Madrasas seek aid to tide over pandemic impact

Gehlot govt. schemes not reaching us'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

All India Milli Council general secretary Abdul Qayoom Akhtar said the registered madrasas should be given a financial assistance of ₹5 lakh each in the upcoming State Budget, as they were finding it difficult to survive because of lack of funds and their students were dropping out.

Madrasas have stopped getting charities and are unable to pay salaries to their teachers," he said.

State Minority Affairs Minister Saleh Mohammed, who interacted with the representatives of seminaries in the conference, assured them of prompt steps for madrasa modernisation and promotion of education. He said some of the madrasas imparting high standard education would also be developed as model seminaries.

The National Small Industries Corporation Ltd.

(A Govt. of India Enterprises)
Livelihood Business Incubation Centre, Industrial Estate,
PO. Udyog Nagar, Naini, Prayagraj, U.P.
Ph.: 9459229455, 7754080059 Email: ibnaini@nsic.co.in

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The National Small Industries Corporation Limited (NSIC) invites sealed offers through Tender under two Bid system from eligible bidders for Supply and Installation of machine Tools & Equipment like Fashion Designing, Furniture & Fixtures, Mechanic Diesel, Electrician for their Naini LBI-Centre. Last date of submission of Tenders is 11.03.2021 up to 15:30 Hrs.

For details, please visit NSIC's website:
<https://www.nsic.co.in/tender/Current-Tenders.aspx>

Manager (Centre Head – Prayagraj)

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

The general public is hereby informed that an unidentified person about 35 years of age whose name, residence, and family is unknown had been found unconscious at Safdarjung Hospital and thereby admitted to Safdarjung Hospital. He was declared dead by the doctors. In this regard, a vide has been registered with DD No: 24A, dated 29.01.2021 at PS Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to identify the deceased person, but no clue has come to light so far.

The description of the UIDB is as under:

Sex: Male, **Age:** about 35 years, **Height:** 5'4", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Built:** Normal, **Face:** Oval.

If anyone has any information about his relatives, kindly inform the SHO/Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641

Fax : 011-24368639

DP/514/SW/2021

SHO
P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi

Ph. No. 011-24106345

Sl. No Name of Work Approx value of work (in Lakhs) EMD (in Rs.) Schedule available Date Tender Date

1. Construction of Faculty Building for School of Nursing and Hostel for Nurses (300 Students) in Government MohanKumaramangalam Medical College Hospital at Salem in Salem District. Rs.2385.60 Lakhs Rs.12,02,800/- 19.02.2021 to 22.03.2021 upto 5.45 PM 23.03.2021

2. Construction of Comprehensive Emergency Care Centre in Government Hospital at Thurayur in Trichy District. Rs.710.70 Lakhs Rs.3,65,400/- 19.02.2021 to 22.03.2021 upto 5.45 PM 23.03.2021

Note : 1. The evidences on the minimum qualification criteria mentioned in the Pre Qualification Application should be furnished in Cover- without any omission at the time of submission of prequalification tender itself. Any Omissions in this regard will be summarily rejected. 2. The tender notice & other details can be seen & downloaded from the website www.tntenders.gov.in (or) www.tenders.tn.gov.in.

DIPR/ 1249/TENDER/2021

Superintending Engineer, P.W.D.,

Buildings (C & M) Circle, Medical Works, Trichy.

NELLORE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

ROC No. 821/MAS/NMC/2020-21
Nellore Municipal Corporation hereby invites Expression of Interest (EoI) for the reputed consultants for the preparation of Project Report (DPR) for the development of Science Park in LP No:101/95 , Magna Layout (5 Acres 29 cents)*.

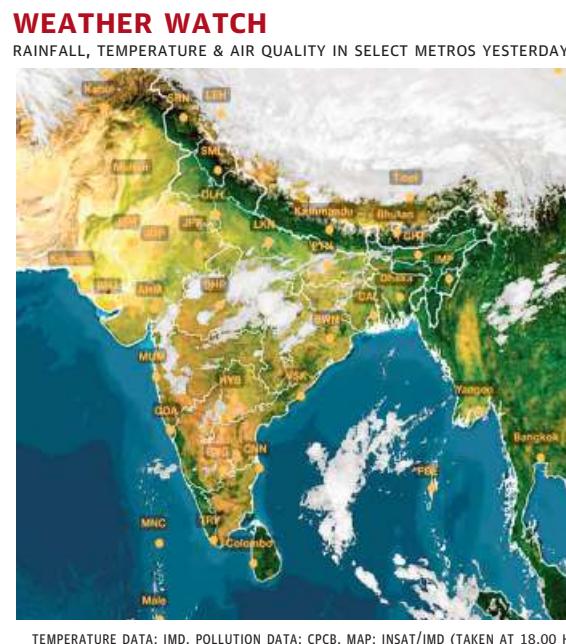
The Interested parties can collect the (EoI) Document from 19.02.2021 onwards from the O/o Commissioner, Nellore Municipal Corporation, Darigama, Nellore - 524003, Contact Nos : 9849908261, 913355518. The Bid documents should reach the O/o Commissioner, Nellore Municipal Corporation on or before 08.03.2021 by 3:00 PM. Sd/- K. Dinesh Kumar, I.A.S., Commissioner, Municipal Corporation, Nellore.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER SUB TRANSMISSION DIVISION DODA

(E-mail: sentidoa@gmail.com Tel, Fax: 0196-233076
CIN No. U40300JK2013SC003898

Subject: e-NIT No. 34 of 2020 dated:- 16.01.2021-II

Due to Nil response to e-NIT No. 34 of 2020 dated:- 16.01.2021 for the "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of new equipments / material and shifting of control room equipments from old control room to new control room building, and Electrification of New Control room Building at 33/11 KV receiving station Malipeth Kishwar". The last date of submission of bid is extended upto 24.02.2021 and date of opening is 26.02.2021.



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

Forecast for Friday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning likely at isolated places over Chhattisgarh, central Maharashtra, Vidarbha, Marathwada, interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe. Dense fog likely in isolated pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	...31.5	15.0	15.0	Kozhikode	...34.0	25.0	25.0
Ahmedabad	...33.2	17.8	17.8	Kurnool	...32.3	19.6	19.6
Aizawl	...26.0	7.7	7.7	Lucknow	...29.0	13.4	13.4
Allahabad	...31.0	13.0	13.0	Madurai	...31.7	23.5	23.5
Bengaluru	...29.3	18.0	18.0	Mangaluru	...34.5	23.7	23.7
Bhopal	...28.9	14.0	14.0	Mumbai	...32.7	20.4	20.4
Bhubaneswar	...33.7	18.0	18.0	Mysuru	...31.1	18.8	18.8
Chandigarh	...27.2	10.8	10.8	New Delhi	...27.8	9.6	9.6
Chennai	...30.5	23.7	23.7	Patna	...28.2	15.2	15.2
Coimbatore	...30.1	22.0	22.0	Port Blair	...30.3	26.1	26.1
Dehradun	...26.2	10.0	10.0	Puducherry	...31.0	21.0	21.0
Gangtok	...15.7	6.8	6.8	Pune	...31.2	18.5	18.5
Goa	...32.3	22.0	22.0	Raipur	...28.0	16.4	16.4
Guwahati	...30.5	15.0	15.0	Ranchi	...27.0	12.5	12.5
Hubballi	...31.0	19.0	19.0	Shillong	...24.5	10.0	10.0
Hyderabad	...29.7	19.6	19.6	Shimla	...15.6	5.6	5.6
Imphal	...28.3	8.5	8.5	Srinagar	...15.6	-0.3	-0.3
Jaipur	...29.0	14.2	14.2	Thiruvananthapuram	...0.3	33.0	25.1
Kochi	...31.8	25.2	25.2	Tiruchi	...32.4	22.0	22.0
Kohima	...21.0	6.0	6.0	Vijayawada	...31.2	21.0	21.0
Kolkata	...31.0	16.9	16.9	Visakhapatnam	...31.4	23.0	23.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	21	94	42	85	120	...
Bengaluru	..7	32	14	94	95	...
Chennai	11	16	41	87	71	...
Delhi	38	74	44	399	334	...
Hyderabad	.4	134	62	83	123	...
Kolkata	39	25	67	260	.226	...
Lucknow	11	96	44	.334	.328	...
Mumbai	16	121	51	.306	.262	...
Pune	..65	50	.131	.104	.104	...
Visakhapatnam	17	30	28	.108	.113	...

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

+ No action yet against Haffkine officials for flouting CVC norms

Inquiry report not in public domain

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

No action has been taken against errant officials of Haffkine Biopharmaceutical Corporation Ltd. though three years have passed since an inquiry committee submitted its report on the State government undertaking allegedly issuing tenders worth ₹150 crore in violation of Central Vigilance Commission guidelines.

On February 3 this year, former chief minister and Congress MLA Prithviraj Chavan wrote to Dr. Sandeep Rathod, managing director of Haffkine Biopharmaceutical Corporation Ltd., seeking information on the status of the report and if any action has been taken. However, Mr. Chavan did not receive a response.

Mr. Rathod said, "I am not aware of Mr. Chavan's letter. I will have to look into the report being talked

about. As of now, I have not come across the report."

The *Hindu* was first to report on the alleged violation of norms and it has now learnt that attempts to access the report through the Right to Information Act have been thwarted.

Following the allegations, the then State government on October 30, 2017, constituted a four-member inquiry committee and directed it to submit a report within a month. In the State Assembly's winter session in December 2017, Mr. Chavan had raised the issue and the then minister-in-charge of Haffkine, Girish Bapat, said the government was looking into the allegations.

The committee finally submitted its report in May 2018, but it has been kept under wraps since then. All attempts to bring the report into the public domain have been stonewalled.

Navi Mumbai corporation presents ₹4,825 cr. budget

More focus on health in view of pandemic

RAINA ASSAINAR

NAVI MUMBAI

Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) Commissioner Abhijit Bangar on Thursday presented a budget of ₹4,825 crore for the financial year 2021-22.

For the first time since 1995, the budget was presented without the elected representatives as the term of corporators ended in May 2020 and the election could not take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hence, this year, the budget was presented and accepted by Mr. Bangar himself in the capacity of an

administrator.

"The budget is citizen-focused, and we have given more importance to environment, education, and health," Mr. Bangar said.

The estimated expenditure for the next financial year is ₹4,822.30 crore.

In view of COVID-19, the health department has been allocated ₹100 crore more than what was earmarked last year. While ₹166.60 crore was allocated for 2020-21, the figure is ₹276.6 crore for 2021-22.

Of the ₹166.60 crore, ₹44.81 crore will be spent on setting up new hospitals.

Maharashtra records nearly 5,500 fresh cases

NCP leaders Jayant Patil, Eknath Khadse test positive; restrictions imposed in districts in Vidarbha; over 850 new cases in Pune

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

Maharashtra reported a spike of 5,427 COVID-19 cases on Thursday as the State's active case tally breached the 40,000 mark to reach 40,858. The total case tally now stands at 20,81,520.

With 38 fatalities, the total death toll has climbed to 51,669. Just 2,543 patients were discharged in the last 24 hours, taking the tally of recoveries to 19,85,261. While the recovery rate dipped to 95.5%, the case fatality rate stood at 2.48%.

Amid the surge, Nationalist Congress Party leaders Jayant Patil and Eknath Khadse became the latest politicians in the State to test positive for the virus. While both leaders took to Twitter to say they were "doing fine", Mr. Patil, the Water Resources Minister, said he would be "undertaking his duties via video-conferencing". Both leaders have urged people who have come in contact with them over the past few days to self-isolate and get tested.

The surge in cases has set



Safety protocol: Healthcare workers check the temperature of outstation passengers at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in Mumbai on Thursday. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

alarm bells ringing in districts in the Vidarbha region, which reported steep spikes in the past fortnight. District administrations in Amravati, Buldhana and Yavatmal imposed restrictions on gatherings, and the Buldhana District Collector issued orders for schools, colleges and private coaching classes to remain shut till February 28.

Weekly markets in Buldhana will remain closed after 4 p.m. and only 50 people will be allowed to attend religious processions and functions, including weddings. Pune reported more than 850 new cases to take its total case tally to 3,97,402. A single death took the death toll to 8,019. As per district authorities, the active case tally rose to 5,294, with a recovery rate of 96.36%.

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Dizzying climb

Inflation must not be allowed to pose a threat to macro-economic stability

The latest retail inflation readings should, on the face of it, offer monetary authorities a fair amount of comfort given that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 4.06% in January, marking a deceleration for a second straight month to a 16-month low. Inflation appears to have cooled after having stayed stubbornly stuck above the Reserve Bank of India's upper tolerance threshold of 6% for six months through November, helped by an appreciable softening in food prices. Specifically, the Consumer Food Price Index reflected a gain of a mere 1.89% last month as vegetable prices saw a disinflation of 15.8% and cereal prices eased considerably for a second month in the wake of *kharif* crop arrivals. The RBI in its monetary policy statement this month, cited "the bumper *kharif* crop, rising prospects of a good *rabi* harvest, larger winter arrivals of key vegetables and softer egg and poultry demand on avian flu fears" as factors that augured well for the months ahead. But the central bank was mindful of the risks too, especially with regard to food costs where the latest data had brought to the fore concerns over the prices of pulses and edible oils. While inflation in pulses and products was at 13.4%, that for oils and fats stood at 19.7%. Eggs and meat and fish – two other key sources of protein – both posted double-digit rates of 12.9% and 12.5%, respectively, with price gains in the former barely registering any telling impact from the avian flu outbreak.

Now, with the favourable base effect beginning to wane – inflation moderated by more than 100 basis points in February 2020 to 6.58% before slowing to 5.84% in March – the outlook is far from reassuring. Of particular worry is the trend in input costs for multiple sectors in the real economy, including manufacturing. From automobile manufacturers to builders, rising raw material costs are beginning to force them to pass on the impact to the end consumers, and this at a time when demand is still to gain a firm footing. The latest IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) points to the sharpest increase in purchasing costs for more than two years as 'a lingering supply-side squeeze' fanned inflationary pressures and manufacturers raised their product prices at the fastest pace in over a year. Add to the mix the unrelenting and dizzying climb in transportation fuel prices to newer and never record highs in recent days and the outlook for inflation becomes distinctly darker. Diesel, the main fuel for freight carriage, has now exceeded ₹80 per litre and is bound to feed into prices of almost everything being transported across distances – from fresh produce to intermediate and finished industrial goods. With banks still flush with liquidity, policymakers need to maintain a strict vigil to keep inflation from resurging and posing a threat to macro-economic stability.

End of an innings

Kiran Bedi's ouster is a result of her failure to stick to her constitutionally mandated role

The removal of Kiran Bedi as Puducherry's Lieutenant Governor has provided a sense of relief to the elected government, led by the Congress, in the Union Territory. Her acrimonious relationship with Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy over the last four and a half years, eventually led the Centre to being forced to act against its own nominee to enable smooth administration at a time when the announcement of the Assembly elections is just round the corner. Despite her laying emphasis on sanitation, rejuvenation of water bodies, and transparency and accountability in the administration, Ms. Bedi ended up, in the eyes of the public, being someone who was disrupting administration. Her many differences with the CM were well known. Be it the suspension of an official over obscenity on social media, the helmet rule for two-wheeler riders, the free rice scheme, the appointment of the State Election Commissioner, the quota for government students in medical admission, or even the manner of release of money from the CM's Fund, she was caught up in a war of words with the CM instead of being more discreet. She should have shown more restraint as a constitutional functionary and adopted a consensual approach on matters affecting the people directly, even though the Lt. Governor in a Union Territory, as the President's nominee, enjoys powers superior to those of the CM and the Council of Ministers. Though it was an amusing sight of the CM holding "dharnas", not once but twice in the last couple of years, the fault was not entirely his own. All along, he regarded the Lt. Governor as a political adversary, with his political activity centred around her. His demand for her ouster grew louder in recent months. It is likely that the Bharatiya Janata Party, which aims to build a base in Puducherry, concluded that her continuation in office in the backdrop of the Assembly elections could prove a political liability.

Her exit comes at a time when Puducherry is in the midst of political instability. The strength of the Congress-led coalition (including the Speaker) is now on a par with that of the Opposition, after four party MLAs, including two Ministers, quit the Assembly since January. On assuming charge as the officiating Lt. Governor on Thursday, Tamilisai Soundararajan, the Telangana Governor, ordered a floor test to be held on February 22. Dr. Soundararajan, who is perceived to be cordial towards political leaders of all hues, is expected to restore some measure of cohesion between Raj Nivas and the rest of the official machinery, irrespective of the outcome of the floor test. Ms. Bedi's innings in Puducherry should serve as a lesson to those in constitutional positions that however well meaning one's actions may be, one should not go beyond the mandated role.

The pressing need to adjudicate, not mediate

When fear is the new normal for the average Indian, the court's only role is to act as the guardian of the right to dissent



KALEESWARAM RAJ

The recent judgment of the Supreme Court that refused to review its earlier verdict on the Shaheen Bagh protest is inseparable from its political context. The verdict of October 7, 2020 declared that there is no absolute right to protest, and it could be subjected to the orders of the authority regarding the place and time. Apart from thinking about the legal and constitutional issues, it can also lead to a discourse on the moral authority of the top court in dealing with such fundamental questions related to freedom.

Protests, a political challenge
Both the judgments came out at the time of ongoing street agitations. Protest "at anytime and anywhere" has not been as simple as conceived in the judgments. The agitations against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the farm laws also brought out the immense agony and hardship that the protesters had to face. In the anti-farm laws struggle, they experienced suffering over almost the entire winter for a cause which they believe as one that concerns the whole nation. They had to pay a heavy price for their convictions. Many were subjected to malicious

prosecution by the state on serious charges of sedition and terrorist activities. Not only the protesters but also their supporters, including comedians and journalists, were not spared. All freedoms under Article 19 of the Constitution, from freedom of expression to that of peaceful association, were seriously impaired.

Even today, many languish in jail for the offence of dissent and the more serious offence of '*andolan*'. Disha Ravi, a 22-year-old climate activist, was booked recently for 'conspiracy against the government'. Such arrests continue because the protests are a political challenge to the existing regime, a theme which the Court did not even address with contextual details.

A problematic 'balancing'
There is a more significant question that a citizen could pose against the Court's pronouncements on the Shaheen Bagh protest. The agitations on the street became an imperative because the issues were not subjected to a timely judicial examination. The subject matter of almost all the major protests which have happened recently in India, be it over 'economic reservation', the CAA or the farms laws, involved legal and constitutional issues requiring immediate and effective adjudication in terms of their constitutional validity. The top court could not exercise its constitutional role and ensure judicial scrutiny on an aggrandising executive and an equally imposing Parliament by exercising



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

ing its counter-majoritarian function. Having failed to do so, the kind of 'balancing' which the Court now tries to attain by way of the Shaheen Bagh orders will pose more questions than it answers.

In the original judgment on Shaheen Bagh, the Court attempted to "mediate" the issue and admitted in the judgment that it "did not produce any solution". The Court's duty during the testing times is to adjudicate, and not to mediate. A reconciliatory approach is not a substitute for juridical assertion. The review petition provided the Supreme Court an opportunity to revisit its earlier folly where it merely acted as a judicial extension of the executive. It could have taken empirical lessons from a political situation that was almost proximate to an internal Emergency.

Constitutional morality is a philosophy that should primarily apply to the constitutional courts. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar used this idea in terms of institutions and not of individuals. Had there been a timely adjudication of the validity of the laws which was questioned by the process recognised by the law, the

tortment on the street could have been probably reduced.

Think fair and effective

A fair and effective adjudicative mechanism in constitutional matters can meaningfully sublimate the agitation on the street. Studies have shown that social movements could be less radical and less oppositional when the issues could be effectively sorted out by way of fair litigative means. Sociologist Luke Martell was of the opinion that the radical green movement in Britain has been at a slower pace when compared with other parts of western Europe, because the "public enquiry system" in the United Kingdom could "process ecological demands, integrate them into the political system and minimise radicalisation of the movement arising out of exclusion and marginalisation". The principle can have application across the constitutional democracies.

The textbook theory of "balancing" the right to protest and the right to move along the road does not need any reiteration in the constitutional climate of the present day. When fear is the new normal for the average Indian, the Court's only role is to act as the guardian of the right to dissent.

In the review petition, the petitioners rightly apprehended that the observations in the earlier judgment against the indefinite occupation of public space "may prove to be a license in the hands of the police to commit atrocities on legitimate voice of protest". The Court, by its present rejection

of the plea, has reinforced an illiberal state's intimidating stand during another unjust political situation. Its affirmation of the earlier view is not merely insensitive or surreal. It illustrates an instance of "abusive judicial review", as described by David Landau and Rosalind Dixon, where the Court not only refuses to act as the umpire of democracy but aids the executive in fulfilling its strategies. In the process, it legitimises very many illegitimate state actions.

State's intrusion is a worry

In the 2020 verdict, the Supreme Court has also failed to properly appreciate and contextualise the earlier Constitution Bench judgment in *Himat Lal K. Shah vs Commissioner of Police* (1972) even after referring to it. It is the state's intrusion into the realm of rights that should worry the Court. In *Himat Lal K. Shah*, the Court said that the rule framed by the Ahmedabad Police Commissioner conferred arbitrary power on the police officers in the matter of public meetings and, therefore, was liable to be struck down. Justice Kutty Kuri Mathe, in *Himat Lal K. Shah*, explained that "freedom of assembly is an essential element of a democratic system" and that "the public streets are the 'natural' places for expression of opinion and dissemination of ideas".

In the review petition, it was not the cause alone that was tried. It was also the Court.

Kaleshwaram Raj is a lawyer at the Supreme Court of India

Effecting a social rise, starting a political experiment

In the DKV issue, it is unique for a community to highlight the need for social advancement in order to be delisted



S. SURESH KUMAR

In a rare exercise last week, the Government of India tabled the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order (Amendment) Bill 2021 that seeks to give effect to a long-standing political demand to group seven Scheduled Caste subsects in Tamil Nadu under the heritage name 'Devendrakula Velalar' (DKV). The subsects include Devendrakulathan, Kadaiyan (excluding the coastal areas of Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Ramanathapuram, Pudukkottai, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts), Kalladi, Kudumban, Pallan, Pannai and Vathiriyam. These subsects have a predominant presence in south Tamil Nadu, which is a communally sensitive region.

The rationale

Caste-based political parties and organisations, spearheading the demand, feel that shedding individual Dalit caste tags would help in the social advancement of the community. Their argument is that existing caste names were being used more in a derogatory sense to belittle the community. The DKVs, they insist, were prosperous wetland owners, and not oppressed sections, socially or economically. Besides, these seven Scheduled Caste subsects share similarities, culturally.

The demand for such grouping has its genesis in latter day British India when these subsects were included under the Scheduled Castes on the basis of their economic conditions. However, the voices remained feeble for long, only gaining traction in the 1990s with the emergence of influential community leaders such as K. Krishnasamy (founder, Puthiya Tamilagam) and John Pandian (founder, Tamizhaga Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam). Caste clashes between

the Mukkulathors, an Other Backward Classes (OBC) community, and the Pallars, in the latter half of 1990s over the naming of districts and transport corporations after community leaders, led to a community consolidation.

By the turn of the millennium, the community leaders placed an unusual additional demand – to delist the seven subsects from the Scheduled Castes arguing that being in the Schedule, instead of being a facilitator, served as a detriment to social advancement. This was at a time when some OBC communities were vociferous in wanting to be socially devalued and included among the Most Backward Classes.

A political risk

Mr. Krishnasamy, as MLA, periodically raised the twin demands of grouping and exclusion from the Scheduled Castes list. Mainstream parties were cognisant of these demands but treaded cautiously given the sensitivity of the subject and the dissent among sections of the subsects over the 'delisting' proposal. Delisting and shuffling of castes from one reserved social class to another was fraught with political and administrative risks. It could not only disturb the internal sharing of the communal reservation quota pool by existing castes, but also invite objections from other communities or spur political demands for similar reclassification.

In February 2011, Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi (Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) responding to an appeal from senior Congress leader S. Peter Alphonse, constituted a one-man committee headed by Justice M.S. Janarthanam (retd.) to examine the grouping of the seven sub-castes. A change in regime in May 2011 halted progress.

However, in 2015 the issue drew national attention when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leadership, sensing a political opportunity to consolidate a vote bank in Tamil Nadu, a state where it has minimal presence, threw its weight behind the demand. As per Census 2011, the seven subsects constitute



about 17.07% of the Scheduled Castes. In the southern districts, the concentration of their population in many constituencies would be far greater.

Amit Shah, then BJP president, along with S. Gurumurthy, co-convenor of the Swadeshi Jagran Manch, at a public meeting organised by M. Thangaraj of the Thevendar Thannaar Arakkattalai, endorsed the demand. Mr. Krishnasamy, suspicious of Mr. Shah's intent then, has since veered toward the BJP. Mr. Shah took it forward by arranging a meeting between a delegation led by Mr. Thangaraj and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who instantly offered support if the State government submitted a report.

Steps to a review

But State Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami's All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) government was wary of being seen as hasty. It set up a committee headed by S. Sumathi, Professor of Anthropology, University of Madras, to study the issue. Her report, "Devendrakula Velalar - Cultural and Social Patterns of Seven Sub-Communities", was not made public, but it favoured a grouping of the subsects.

To win over the Puthiya Tamilagam ahead of the last parliamentary elections, Mr. Palaniswami constituted a committee headed by Hans Raj Verma, IAS, to make recommendations on the demand. Significantly, the government had eliminated the Vathiriyam caste from the purview of the panel as there was opposition from the community to being classified under DKV.

Claiming entitlement for the exclusive use of the 'Vellalar' title, they see the demand for use of the same title by the Dalit subsects as "identity theft" and "cultural mis-

appropriation". They claim that the use of the 'Vellalar' title by the subsects was a modern day inclusion by community leaders and not a historic practice. They have no objection to the social advancement of the seven subsects including their demand to be delisted from the Scheduled Castes. The Vellalars suggest that the subsects could be grouped under the title 'Devendrakulathars' or 'Deven-drakulars', but not 'Vellalar'; an electoral fallout cannot be ruled out.

In fact, some Vellalar representatives have argued that in the parliamentary elections, the AIADMK-BJP alliance was hurt in Vellalar-dominated western region, its traditional stronghold, due to their backing of the DKV classification demand. They claim that Mr. Palaniswami, a Kongu Vellala Gounder, was unable to consolidate the community's support. However, considering the anti-Modi sentiments prevalent then and in the absence of psephological evidence, it would be hard to judge if the community voted against the ruling alliance over the issue of using the Vellalar title.

Dalit concerns

Among the Dalits too, opinion is divided on the grouping of subsects under a common title. There are apprehensions that over time, this could trigger arguments as to which of the larger groups is numerically stronger, thereby clouding the larger Dalit cause. This section argues that Dalits as such cannot be treated as a homogeneous group considering the differences within in terms of social status and geographical identity.

Whatever the outcome of the current move, it is indeed unique for a community to have placed social advancement as priority to be delisted from the Scheduled Castes forgo the concessions it offers. Also, this would be a precedent for using anthropological study for social grouping in Tamil Nadu. Politically, though, this would remain a trapeze walk.

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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.

Unsafe roads

Road safety campaigns conducted in a ritualistic mode neither improve the driving habits of motorists nor prick the society's collective conscience. The body count of accident victims – 1,51,113 for the year 2019 – is a mere statistical fact that has caused few ripples in the media, whether traditional or social (Editorial, "Slow on safety", February 18). While we talk about the three Es of road safety – engineering, education,

and enforcement – are there any missing links in our narratives? Are our driving habits egregiously bad? From each according to his whim and to each according to his luck? seems to be the key operating manual for Indian motorists that reveals a shocking insensitivity to the limbs and lives of those who share the roads with them. We, as a society, need to own up the unspoken tragedy of avoidable road accident fatalities and translate it into a habit of

disciplined driving with the grim realisation that any one of us could join the list of the nameless victims. V.N. MUKUNDARAJAN, Thiruvananthapuram

Workplace equality
The judgment of the Delhi High Court in the M.J. Akbar-Priya Ramani case would make women aware that they need not suffer in silence when it comes to sexual harassment at the workplace (Page 1, February 18). However, as long as films and serials

portray women as silent sufferers when it comes to the atrocities perpetrated on them in a patriarchal society like ours, it will be very difficult to put an end to gender-based violence. P.K. VARADARAJAN, Chennai

■ The judgment will encourage more and more women to come forward and speak up no matter how influential and powerful the perpetrator is. The court ruling is sure to result in better working conditions for

women at the workplace. RAUSHAN K. ARJUN, Patna, Bihar

■ Ms. Ramani's triumph seems like a massive step forward for women, but we take two steps back when we hear about the mysterious deaths of two minor Dalit girls in Uttar Pradesh. SARAH REBELLO, Bengaluru

Fuel dearer again
In the past, whenever fuel prices were hiked, albeit even by a small amount,

there used to be a hue and cry. What has happened now? The protest of the Opposition which is now in disarray, is too feeble and lacks conviction. The impact of rising fuel prices has a cascading effect on other commodities and is borne by the common man, the ultimate loser. One only hopes that people voice their concern in unison regardless of their political beliefs. SHABIR AHMED, Chennai

Is India criminalising comedy and entertainment?

PARLEY

Indian law unfortunately affords protection to the prickliest common denominator in society

Producers of entertainment content, especially stand-up comedians, are increasingly becoming the target of legal action. To take just two examples, while Kunal Kamra is facing contempt proceedings for remarks about the Supreme Court, fellow comedian Munawar Faruqui had to spend more than a month in jail on vague charges before getting bail. Are Indians so lacking in humour that their first response to a joke is to take offence and then file a case? In a discussion moderated by G. Sampath, Agrima Joshua and Arti Raghavan explore this question. Edited excerpts:

All of a sudden comedians seem to be offending everybody's feelings. What's going on?

Agrima Joshua: I don't think this is all of a sudden. The culture of taking offence started right around the time stand-up comedy began picking up an audience on the Internet.

Was this in 2011?

AJ: No, 2015. In 2011, comedy was still happening mostly in clubs. As soon as comedy began reaching out to the masses on YouTube, some mainstream comedians began attracting huge amounts of outrage. So, this culture of outrage and offence has been pretty standard.

What has changed since 2015?

AJ: The comedy scene has evolved. Initially, it was just people coming on stage and talking about their nagging wives, women drivers, and so on. But as a particular art form evolves, you start to explore different topics, the depth and richness of your material increases. Comedians began to have an impact. I remember AIB was able to do a successful campaign on net neutrality. As comedy as an art form began to gain traction, it led to people doing satire, making observations on society, questioning power structures. It was no longer limited to elites in a comedy club. It was picking up a mass audience and creating conversations online, which is why comedy started getting a lot of attention.

Do you mean any kind of political leaning? What about a pro-government comedian?

many that empower offence-takers.

Arti Raghavan: Yes, the offended members of society are spoilt for choice when it comes to legal provisions they can invoke in an attempt to criminalise creative expression. Under the IPC, there are provisions relating to offending religious sentiments, the criminal defamation law, the obscenity laws, and provisions for statements that amount to public mischief. If the objectionable content is available online, there are also implications under the Information Technology Act.

The problem is that the law affords protection to the prickliest common denominator in society. What's notable about these laws is that they don't only prohibit speech that harms vulnerable communities, or speech that reinforces historical prejudices against them, such as homophobic speech. Our speech laws are class agnostic and group agnostic. So, they lend themselves to powerful classes and communities, which may be quick to take offence, to use these laws even if they're not tangibly harmed and seek prosecution on that basis.

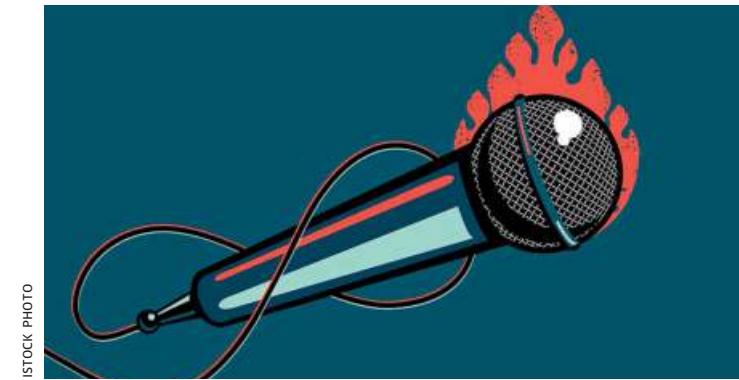
How is offending someone's 'sentiments' a crime when that person is not physically or otherwise materially harmed?

AR: Offending someone's sentiments is itself recognised as a harm under criminal law. This is unfortunate because the role of art and comedy is often to provoke and to offend. So, it's unsurprising that content that pushes the envelope has been sought to be criminalised.

How does such weaponisation of the law affect comedians?

AJ: Lots of brands and companies do not want to be associated with an artist who has a political background. I won't say any comedian has a political background as such, but if you have certain political leanings, or they assume that your jokes do, they immediately tag you as a 'controversial artist'.

Do you mean any kind of political leaning? What about a pro-government comedian?



STOCK PHOTO

AJ: There's no such thing as a pro-government comedian because the very essence of comedy is to be audacious, to make fun of the people in power. If you are making pro-government jokes, I don't know how anyone would find them funny.

Is Section 295A applicable only for official religions? Can I say that Sachin Tendulkar is my god and sue someone who has made fun of him, on the grounds that my religious sentiments have been hurt?

AR: There is no restrictive reading in the law as to what qualifies as a religion. It's not been defined under the IPC. The consequence is that it can be applied to, for instance, a self-proclaimed godman or a cult. While Tendulkar, I hope, is still a stretch, it could apply to situations where it was never meant to really apply, as there is no tight definition as to what could amount to religious feelings, which is what makes this provision so prone to misuse.

AJ: So, can I just declare Fawad Khan as my religion and file an FIR against whoever makes insulting remarks about him?

AR: I'm sure there would be a police officer who may privately agree with you that Fawad is a more godly figure than a lot of other establishment figures or gods. But this hasn't been tested in a court of law yet.

AJ: I can use the FIR as an intimidation tactic. If somebody makes a meme on Fawad Khan and I don't like it, I can take a screenshot of that FIR and go like, 'Buddy, I've done this for you. Now delete your tweet.'

AR: I wouldn't advise it.

Under what provision of law can a comedian be penalised

C There's no such thing as a pro-government comedian because the very essence of comedy is to make fun of the people in power.

AGRIMA JOSHUA

for making 'anti-national' jokes?

AR: It's irresponsible and wrong for a government to be going after 'anti-national' content, which is not a legal concept. Often, criticism of the government is elevated to the status of sedition. And that's what is used to prosecute individuals who criticise the government. Though the 'anti-national' label has no legal status, the labeling feeds into the prejudice that's created against these individuals through the media. This prejudice is eventually leveraged when there is an intention to prosecute them, so that some antipathy is created against these individuals.

There was a time when, say, only rape jokes were taboo. Has the list of subjects one can't joke about grown over time?

AJ: Are you really saying rape jokes are taboo? Please go through the so-called YouTube comedians and look at the kind of content they make. India is very okay with rape jokes, misogynistic jokes, casteist jokes, jokes that make fun of marginalised people. The limits to the topics that people can joke about have always been there. But they are only there to protect the already powerful. Tomorrow, they'll say you can't make jokes on Adani-Ambani also.

If something occurs to me as really funny, I will joke about it - it's as simple as that. If I was a Delhi guy with an ex that I obsessed about, and I wanted to write jokes only about her, I would do that, because that was something I would think about all the time. But that's not

what I think about all the time. When I wake up, I see the news a lot. What I see seems ridiculous to me, and I write about it. It's not that you sit with an agenda that I must make a joke on the establishment.

Is not having a sense of humour one of the eligibility criteria to become a lawyer or judge?

AR: As a lawyer, I should perhaps attempt a defence here, but I have to agree that the legal community in India takes itself too seriously. I don't know if you've had the misfortune of actually being in a courtroom, because what passes off as courtroom banter will just bear out the point that you made: lawyers and judges lack a sense of humour.

Indian society in general lacks a sense of humour. But why this is a uniquely problematic aspect of the legal community is that it is instrumental in shaping and giving effect to the laws that protect freedom of speech. So, its conservatism has a direct impact on how the law is applied. For instance, obscenity laws adopt a community standard test. The test is whether the material is offensive in the context of contemporary social mores and attitudes. In a country of over 1.3 billion people, determining this standard is impossible. So, what is applied is the social and cultural consciousness of judges and lawyers.

Is our justice system inherently biased in favour of tradition, making for an intangible but real conservative bias?

AR: The legal community clings to tradition. It has very rigid hierarchies, and an almost comical reverence for authority. There was this case where a young woman was jailed for reposting a meme about West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. When she was released on bail, the Supreme Court directed her - remember that this is the stage of bail, when she's not even been tried or convicted - to issue an apology to the Chief Minister. So, the serenity that is so common in this profession manifests itself in the outcomes in courtrooms. Also, when sitting judges of the Supreme Court hear praises on the Prime Minister, referring to him as a 'versatile genius' and 'visionary', this isn't the kind of judiciary that's going to be robust in protecting the acts of citizens who are thumbing their noses

at authority. As Agrima said, comedy, at its finest, is audacious. And that's not a sentiment that finds any currency in the legal community.

AJ: If our freedom fighters had had this much reverence for authority, I don't think we would have been able to get our freedom. If you have unquestionable reverence for authority, how are you going to fix systems that are broken? The problem with comedy is that because we are seeing things in such comical fashion, because it's technically comedy, people assume it's insulting rather than something that is supposed to make you think. So, people automatically assume the worst of us, they assume that we are just trying to offend people. I can write a 2,000-word essay to explain my point. But it won't be funny, and nobody will listen to that in a comedy show. To convey my point, I have to say it in a funny way. If it is funny, it is going to be a little disrespectful.

In India, many would consider it fair that if you're going to be disrespectful of authority, there will be consequences.

AR: You see this in contempt proceedings often. You have an institution that unfortunately suffers from a god complex - historically, judgments have had these self-serving, self-promoting notions of the majesty of justice coming from the courts of law, and how the Supreme Court is the temple of justice. A truly democratic institution will leave that to the people to judge and won't be claiming such titles for itself. But that institutional circumspection and humility hasn't happened yet.

So is it fair to say India is criminalising comedy?

AJ: Comedy has existed in India in other forms. Long before YouTube and stand-up, there used to be Haasya Kavi Sammelans, which are satirical poetry gatherings. I would encourage everybody who has a problem with stand-up comedy to check out the works of these Hindi poets. Surender Sharma, for example. They make allusions to gods and goddesses, to mythology. They use religion as an allegory to comment on inequalities. So I really want to know why we keep isolating stand-up comedy as something evil and immoral when this form of satire has existed for such a long time.



Agrima Joshua
is a Mumbai-based
stand-up comedian



Arti Raghavan
is an advocate
practising at the
Bombay High
Court. She is also
the counsel for
Kunal Kamra in the
criminal contempt
proceedings before
the Supreme Court



Scan the QR code to
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interview online

Make peace with nature now

This year can go down as the year when we set the planet on a path towards healing

INGER ANDERSEN

As COVID-19 upends our lives, a more persistent crisis demands urgent action on a global scale. Three environmental crises – climate change; nature loss; and the pollution of air, soil and water – add up to a planetary emergency that will cause far more pain than COVID-19 in the long-term.

For years, scientists have detailed how humanity is degrading nature. Yet the actions governments, financial institutions, businesses and individuals are taking fall short of what is needed to protect current and future generations from a hothouse Earth, beset by mass species extinctions and poisonous air and water.

In 2020, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) announced that, despite a dip in greenhouse gas emissions caused by the pandemic, the world is still headed for global warming of more than 3°C this century. This month, the Dasgupta Review reminded us of what UNEP has long warned: the per capita stock of natural capital (the resources and services nature provides to humanity) has fallen by 40% in just over two decades. We already know that a staggering nine out of 10 people worldwide breathe polluted air.

Towards a sustainable future
Finding answers to such daunting problems is complex. But experts have developed solutions. To guide decision-makers towards the action required, the UN has released the Making Peace with Nature report. The report pulls together all the evidence of environmental decline from major global scientific assessments, with the most advanced ideas on how to reverse it. The result is a blueprint for a sustainable future that can secure human well-being on a healthy planet.

Our environmental, social and economic challenges are interlinked. They must be tackled together. For example, we cannot achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 if climate change and ecosystem collapse are undermining food and water supplies in the world's poorest countries. We have no choice but to

transform our economies and societies by valuing nature and putting its health at the heart of all our decisions. If we did this, banks and investors would stop financing fossil fuels. Governments would shift trillions of dollars in subsidies to nature-positive farming and clean energy and water. People would prioritise health and well-being over consumption and shrink their environmental footprint.

What must be done?

There are signs of progress, but the problems are escalating faster than our responses. The number of countries promising to work towards net-zero emissions stands at 126. The ask is for all countries to deliver stretched nationally determined contributions ahead of the climate Conference of the Parties (COP) and immediately kickstart the transitions to net-zero. At the climate COP, governments must also finally agree on the rules for a global carbon trading market. The \$100 billion that developed countries promised to provide every year to help developing nations cope with the impacts of climate change must finally flow.

The ask is for us to feed the world without destroying nature, felling forests and emptying our oceans. We can create an amazing economy by moving to circular economic systems that reuse resources, reduce emissions and weed out the chemicals and toxins that are causing millions of premature deaths – all while creating jobs. Addressing our planetary emergency is a whole-of-society effort. But governments must take the lead, starting with a smart and sustainable recovery from the pandemic that invests in the right places. They must create opportunities for future industries that generate prosperity. They must ensure that transitions are fair and equitable, creating jobs for those who lose out. They must give citizens a voice in these far-reaching decisions. This year, we must make peace with nature and, in every subsequent year, we must make sure that this peace lasts.

Inger Andersen is Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme



Suvendu

NOTEBOOK

Talking the language of divide

How communal politics has come to take centre stage in West Bengal

SHIV SAHAY SINGH

Towards the end of the Left Front regime in West Bengal, a CPI(M) leader, Subhas Chakraborty, created a flutter in political circles by publicly participating in a Kali puja. He was asked by the party to distance himself from his statement that he was a "Hindu first and a Communist later". The Left not only discouraged its leaders and cadres from participating in public religious events, but also referred to communal tensions as "violence between two communities".

I remember the communal tensions in Murshidabad district in July 2009 that resulted in four deaths. The District Magistrate warned me against visiting the riot-affected areas and threatened to slap cases against me if I did so. That was the first time I saw how the harmonious relationship of Imams had caused resentment. Years later,

Hindus and Muslims in rural Bengal ran deep. Muslims in the riot-affected villages took me to an isolated Hindu household. They stood there guarding the women as the men in the family had all fled.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) regime also tried to push up communal flare-ups by referring to them as "minor incidents" till the violence that broke out during the Ram Navami processions in 2018 made it impossible to do so. There had been riots earlier too, triggered by local issues, but after 2018, communal divisions became visible. Riots began to take place at industrial centres where communities had lived together in harmony for centuries.

For journalists covering the TMC, it became evident that the party's policies such as giving an honorarium to Imams had caused resentment. Years later, the

State government announced an honorarium for priests too, to neutralise the negative impact, but the damage had already been done. Similarly, giving money to clubs for organising Durga Puja and allowing COVID-19 relaxations for certain festivals seemed to have precipitated the situation.

Today, communal polarisation in West Bengal has become normal in the political discourse. It is not only evident in aggressive sloganising of 'Jai Shri Ram', but also in political campaigning. For instance, when West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced her decision to contest from Nandigram in January 2021, BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari said she

mi. BJP leaders speak in hushed tones that they will make more political gains if their Rath Yatras (Parivaratan Yatras) in all the 294 Assembly constituencies are stopped at any place by the administration or people from any other party.

But amidst the divide,

there are also stories of hope. During the Basirhat riots of 1971, 65-year-old Kartik Ghosh was stabbed. His son, Prabhasish Ghosh, while rushing his father to a hospital in Kolkata, also took Fazlul Islam, another victim, in the same ambulance. While Ghosh died, Islam survived. Similarly, in the Asansol riots of 2018, Maulana Imdadullah Rashidi urged people from his community to exercise restraint even after the Imam's 16-year-old son was killed in the riots. "I will leave the city if members of the community target the other community," he said.

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 19, 1971

Nixon warns Hanoi

President Nixon yesterday [February 17, Washington] held out the threat of unlimited bombing of North Vietnam to protect the dwindling United States military presence in the South from a major Hanoi offensive. Mr. Nixon reaffirmed his readiness to blast communist military with the full might of U.S. air power if necessary to crush any North Vietnamese attempt to pour troops across the demilitarised zone. "I am not going to place any limitation on the use of air power, except of course, to rule out... the use of tactical nuclear weapons," he told a White House press conference. Mr. Nixon warned that time was running out for Hanoi to negotiate a settlement. But he declined to speculate about the possibility of a South Vietnamese invasion of the North as a follow up to the U.S. backed thrust into Laos. He told reporters in his first press conference since December 10: "I won't speculate on what South Vietnam may decide to do with regard to a possible incursion into North Vietnam in order to defend their national security." He emphasised that if South Vietnam's decision hinged on American co-operation "then of course it could not be undertaken without our approval."

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEB. 19, 1921

Ayurveda: Dr. Koman's Report

Dr. Koman's report on the indigenous system of medicine has just been published. Dr. Koman is of opinion that all the important medicinal plants have already been investigated by previous workers in the field from the days of Ainslie, that the theory of three humours, on which Ayurveda depends, is out-of-date, that "in vain have I attempted to find any drug or medicine whose reputed marvellous properties are shrouded in mystery or are

FROM PAGE ONE

'Rail roko' by farmers passes off peacefully

A large group gathered at the Gandhi Nagar station in Jaipur and climbed on the engine of a goods train. When Railway Protection Force personnel brought them down, they staged a sit-in on the tracks.

The Rewari-Sriganganagar special train was cancelled, while the Delhi-Mumbai railway line remained blocked for four hours, with farmers occupying the track near the Gudla station in Kota district. The Jaisalmer-Jammu Tawi Inter-city Express was stopped at Rajgarh in Alwar district and at least two other trains were halted at the Sawai Madhopur station.

In Khurja town in Bulandshahr district of Uttar Pradesh, the Gomti Express was stopped and farmers showered petals on the driver. "Passengers were offered jaggery and children were treated with milk," said Rajveer Singh of BKU-Tikait. It was about after one hour that the train was allowed to move towards Delhi. At Modinagar, railway authorities prevented the passage of passenger trains. "Only a goods train passed through and there was no point stopping it," Mr. Singh said.

Farmers sat on tracks and platforms across western Uttar Pradesh, including at Ghaziabad, Meerut, Shamli, Baghpat and Agra.

According to the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, the umbrella group of unions which issued the protest call, the Mumbai-Amritsar Paschim

Express was stopped at Panipat, the Bandra-Haridwar special was stopped at Meerut, and the Utkal Express running from Puri in Odisha to Haridwar in Uttarakhand was stopped at Ghaziabad, as farmers were sitting on the track at Modinagar.

Activists detained

About a hundred activists were detained at Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, while 500 were detained in Telangana, according to the All India Kisan Sabha. It also reported arrests in Bettiah in Bihar, and at Bangarpet in Kolar district of Karnataka. Protests took place at 77 stations in West Bengal, 65 in Jharkhand, 55 in Telangana, 30 in Odisha, 23 in Andhra Pradesh and 21 stations in Rajasthan, the AIKS said.

There was "negligible" or "minimal" impact on the running of trains, according to the Indian Railways.

On the bomb blast at the railway station in Nimbitala, West Bengal, in which about 25 people were injured, railway sources said, "This incident is prima facie a result of political rivalry between Trinamool and CPI, and may have some links to the internal feud among Trinamool cadre."

(Inputs from Vikas Vasudeva in Chandigarh, Ashok Kumar in Gurugram, Mohammed Iqbal in Jaipur, Anuj Kumar in Ghaziabad, and Yuthika Bhargava and Priscilla Jebaraj in New Delhi)

3 Unnao girls found unconscious, 2 die

"The girls were related to each other and were found in the mustard field of the family," he said.

He denied reports that the family members of the victims were detained at the police station and not allowed to talk to the media. "There is no such attempt. They were called to understand the sequence of events and now they have been sent home under police protection to conduct the last rites," he said. Later, he said that the last rites would be conducted on Friday morning. "As it had turned dark, the family wanted to conduct the last rites on Friday," he added.

Chief Medical Superintendent of Unnao District Hospital Basant Bhatt said when the girl was brought in, she was in a serious condition. "Clinically, it appeared like a case of organo phosphorous poisoning. The chemical is used in insecticides. Froth was coming out of her mouth and she was gasping for breath. We have intubated her to take water out of lungs."

However, videos have emerged where family members can be heard making conflicting claims about the condition in which the girls were found in the field. In one video, the brother of the girl, who is struggling for her life, can be heard saying that the victims were found with their limbs tied

with their stoles. Locals questioned how the victims could have consumed poison if their hands were tied. In another video, the mother of the girl can be heard saying that the hands were not tied.

Police sources said policemen from nine stations were camping in the village. Enraged locals said they would dig the graves themselves and asked the administration not to use an earthmover for the purpose. Sources said officials had agreed to the demand.

The Opposition described it as yet another example of the deteriorating law and order situation.

Chandrashekhar Azad of the Bhim Army demanded that the survivor be referred to AIIMS, Delhi. Earlier, members of the Bhim Army protested in front of a private hospital in Kanpur.

A delegation of the Samajwadi Party met the family members of the victims. "First a daughter in Hathras, then a mother in Budaul and now sisters of Unnao - women are not safe in BJP rule," SP president Akhilesh Yadav tweeted.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directed the Director-General of Police to submit a detailed report on the incident. He directed officials to ensure the best possible treatment to the victim at government cost, a release said.

PM must explain sudden removal of Bedi: Alagiri

'Cong. had been complaining for years'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi must explain the reason behind the sudden removal of Lt. Governor Kiran Bedi when the Congress had been complaining against her for the past four-and-a-half years without any action being taken, said Tamil Nadu Congress Committee president K.S. Alagiri.

Kiran Bedi had said she would send Narayanasami [Chief Minister] out of the Cabinet and form the go-

vernment. But today she has been sent out. We don't know what is going to happen to Tamilsai. This is an anti-democratic act," he said.

Mr. Alagiri asked what issue had been found against Ms. Bedi now. "When we were complaining for the past four-and-a-half years that she was working against a democratically elected government, there was no action. But now the PM has removed her. What is the reason?"

PSC rank holders' protest turns violent in Kerala

At least 5 police personnel and several KSU activists injured in State capital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The 24-day-old PSC rank holders' agitation for government jobs in Kerala turned violent on Thursday.

In support of the striking rank holders, activists of the Kerala Students Union (KSU) – the student wing of the Congress – clashed with the police in front of the Secretariat. At least five law enforcers and several activists were injured.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan condemned the violence. "KSU workers had attacked the police. They had singled out an officer for assault. However, the police had exercised maximum restraint," he said.

A.P. rejects Odisha's claims

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Jagan Mohan Reddy government has rejected Odisha's contempt petition in the Supreme Court accusing Andhra Pradesh of "infringing" on disputed inter-State border villages to conduct gram panchayat elections.

The Andhra government said Odisha's claims were "grossly misconceived". "Andhra Pradesh has been duly administering its own territories and has not infringed upon the territory of the petitioner [Odisha]," the A.P. government, represented by advocate Mahfooz A. Nazki, said.

Odisha sought contempt action against A.P. for allegedly violating a status quo order of the Supreme Court in the dispute, which concerns the territorial jurisdiction over the 'Kotia group of villages'.

The court is scheduled to take up the case on February 19.

Elections to 7 MLC seats on March 15

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Thursday announced that elections to five Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council seats and by-elections to one seat each in the Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka Legislative Councils would be held on March 15. Votes will be counted the same day.

The bypolls are being held following the death of Challa Ramakrishna Reddy and S.L. Dharmegowda.

The terms of five AP Legislative Council members – Gundumala Thippe Swamy, Gummidi Sandhya Rani, Vattukuti Veera Venkanna Chowdary, Shaik Mohammed Iqbal and Subhaschandra Bose Pilli – end on March 29.

KSU State president K.M. Abhijith said Mr. Vijayan had tasked the police to unleash violence on KSU workers. Law enforcers without nameplates had targeted women activists.

Interview disrupted

The Congress appeared to have upped the ante in the conflict between the government and PSC rank holders.

Youth Congress workers stormed the Senate Hall and disrupted an interview for Class IV university office assistants.

In Palakkad, KSU workers locked in the staff at the local PSC office. The police later freed them.

The Congress seemed de-



Street battle: Police trying to disperse protesters in Thiruvananthapuram ■ S. MAHINSHA

termined to push the government to the negotiation table.

Former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said Mr. Vijayan should shed his vanity

and engage the job-seekers in talks.

The administration has not displayed an interest in reconciliatory talks so far.

However, DYFI leaders were in touch with the agitators to achieve detente.

The striking rank holders also found support from ath-

letes who had qualified in vain for State government employment by winning national medals. Women medallists sheared off their locks while men tonsured their heads in protest against the "employment denial". The sportspersons displayed their hard-won medals.

More support

The Secretariat witnessed a tide of marches in support of the protesters. They included BJP and Youth Congress activists and an organisation for ASHA workers.

The CPI(M) State secretariat said the PSC rankers' demand for reviving obsolete rank lists was legally untenable. Many had abandoned the unfeasible cause and allied with the government.

DYFI State president A. A. Rahim blamed the Youth Congress for the violence.

IN BRIEF



Court grants relief to A.P. Minister

VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Thursday allowed Civil Supplies Minister Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao (Nani) – who faces a pollution violation charge – to speak to the media but ordered that he should not pass any objectionable remarks on the State Election Commission headed by N. Ramesh Kumar, and the panchayat elections.

Journalist visits ailing mother in Kerala

MALAPPURAM

Siddique Kappan, a Delhi-based Malayali journalist incarcerated by the Uttar Pradesh police on charges of sedition, reached his home at Vengara, near here, on Thursday to visit his ailing mother. Mr. Kappan, who was arrested on October 5 while he was on his way to report on the Hathras gangrape and death, had been granted five-day bail by the Supreme Court.

RT-PCR tests mooted for catering workers

BENGALURU

In view of the recent COVID-19 cluster outbreaks in Karnataka, experts have suggested a slew of preventive measures. Apart from the compulsory RT-PCR negative tests for those coming from high-risk States, especially Kerala and Maharashtra, testing should be made mandatory for those who work in catering companies and serve food at events, they said.

Kerala HC dismisses NIA appeal against bail

KOCHI

A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Thursday dismissed appeals filed by the National Investigation Agency against the NIA special court orders granting bail to 13 accused in a case filed by it in connection with the diplomatic channel gold smuggling. The materials put before the court were insufficient to hold prima facie that the accused had committed a terrorist act, it said.

The Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court Hima Kohli issued suo motu notice to the State government on Thursday on the murder.

The Chief Justice instructed Advocate General B.S. Prasad to file a status report on the case and conduct the investigation properly.

The matter was posted to March 1 for the next hearing.

'Polluted air killed 54,000 in Delhi'

Damage is equally worrying in other Indian cities, says Greenpeace report

STAFF REPORTER

BENGALURU

Air pollution claimed approximately 54,000 lives in Delhi in 2020, according to a Greenpeace Southeast Asia analysis of cost to the economy due to air pollution.

Six Indian cities – Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad and Lucknow – feature in the global analysis. Globally, approximately 16,000 deaths have been attributed to PM (particulate matter) 2.5 air pollution in the five most populous cities – Delhi, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Shanghai and Tokyo.

The damage is "equally worrying" in other Indian cities, said the report, released on Thursday. "An estimated 25,000 avoidable deaths in Mumbai in 2020 have been attributed to air pollution. Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad estimated an approximate 12,000, 11,000, and 11,000 avoidable deaths respectively due to polluted air," it said.

According to the report, the 'Cost Estimator', an online tool that estimates the real-time health impact and economic cost from fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) air pollution in major world cities, was deployed in a collaboration between Greenpeace Southeast Asia, IQAir and the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). Using real-time ground-level PM 2.5 measurements collated in IQAir's database, the algorithm applies scientific risk models in combination with population and public health data to estimate the health and economic costs of air pollution exposure.

Cost to economy

To show the impact of air pollution-related deaths on the economy, the approach used by Greenpeace is called

ney by the amount that people are willing to pay in order to avoid this negative outcome, a release from Greenpeace said. The cost estimator also sustained the estimated air pollution-related economic losses of ₹1,23,65,15,40,000.

No time to lose

"Despite a temporary reprieve in air quality owing to the lockdown, the latest figures from the report underscore the need to act immediately. The need of the hour is to rapidly scale up renewable energy, bring an end to fossil fuel emissions and boost sustainable transport systems," said the report.

Last July, Greenpeace said that of the 28 global cities studied, Delhi bore the highest economic cost of air pollution with an estimated loss of 24,000 lives in the first half of 2020 despite a strict COVID-19 lockdown. In Mumbai, air pollution from PM 2.5 and NO₂ was responsible for the loss of an estimated 14,000 lives since January 1, 2020.

Three arrested for murder of lawyers



Community rattled: Advocates of the Telangana High Court staging a protest in Hyderabad on Thursday. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

presented in the court on Friday.

Kunta Srinivas, a leader of the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS), is a close follower of former Manthani MLA and Peddapalli Zilla Parishad chief Putta Madhu.

Another person, Bittu Sri-nu, nephew of a local TRS leader, emerged as one of the key conspirators. A hunt is on for him.

The TRS immediately suspended Kunta Srinivas.

Once friends, Kunta

Srinivas and Vaman Rao developed differences over matters relating to Kalvacherla village in the past five years. Srinivas, who was actively involved in the construction of a couple of temples in the village, bore a grudge against Rao believing that the latter was creating trouble for him by often filing petitions in the court and decided to eliminate Rao, the police statement said.

Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court Hima Kohli issued suo motu notice to the State government on Thursday on the murder.

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Hyderabad wins global 'Tree City' status

Urban forestry campaign gets global recognition from Arbor Day Foundation, FAO



Golden glow: A road with tree cover in Hyderabad on Thursday. ■ G. RAMAKRISHNA

Australia. The Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department applied for consideration with an online submission

statement said. The city was evaluated on five metrics: 'Establish Responsibility', 'Set the Rules', 'Know What You Have', '

Shift Unnao survivor to Delhi: Cong.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the Yogi Adityanath government after two Dalit girls died under "suspicious circumstances" in a village in Unnao district of Uttar Pradesh, and demanded that the third survivor be immediately airlifted to find out the truth about the incident.

Uttar Pradesh had become the "epicentre of violence against women" and the BJP's slogan of "Beti Bachao" was a warning to save the girl child from such crimes, the Congress said.

In a Facebook post, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who is in charge of Uttar Pradesh, alleged that the family of the victim had been put under house arrest that obstructed justice. "We request the UP government to listen to the family and take immediate steps to shift the third child to Delhi for treatment," she said.

IWPC hails verdict in Ramani case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Indian Women's Press Corps (IWPC) has welcomed the court verdict acquitting Priya Ramani in a defamation case filed by former Union Minister M.J. Akbar, whom she had accused of sexual harassment.

In a statement here, the IWPC commended the courage shown by Ms. Ramani and key defence witness and journalist Ghazala Wahab. "It is a vindication of us women journalists, who have forever protested sexual harassment and assault and shied away from unwelcome attention in the newsroom. All we want is a safe working space...; instead, we often find that the predators are within," the statement said.

Even at the height of the "Me Too" movement, only 20 women journalists decided to go public about their ordeal, it said.

Biometric authentication to benefit farmers: Centre

It will aid in tracking end-use beneficiaries: Piyush Goyal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In a bid to cut out the middleman and ensure greater transparency in the procurement of farm produce, the Centre is encouraging the States to deploy biometric authentication of farmers.

The practice, already adopted in Uttar Pradesh and set to be rolled out in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha this year, will aid in tracking the end-use beneficiary, Food Minister Piyush Goyal said at a press conference on Thursday.

The initiative comes at a time when farmers are agitating for a legal guarantee that all their crops will be procured at a minimum support price (MSP) and demanding the repeal of three farm reform laws that they believe will weaken the current system of procurement at State-run markets.

In States such as Punjab and Haryana, where the agitation has been the strongest, middlemen who act as commission agents or *arhatiyas* are a key part of the procurement process at these *mandis*.



Piyush Goyal

The Centre had already taken steps to roll out online payments to farmers who sell their produce to the government, said Food Ministry Additional Secretary Edwin Kulbhushan Majhi.

It had directed the State governments of Haryana and Punjab to ensure payments in e-mode from the upcoming season, and was expecting all the States to follow suit this year.

"We would like all payments released by the Central government to the farmers... that we are able to track them online. There should not be any intermediaries, farmers should not be

given cheques to be encashed. The money should go directly into the farmers' accounts," Mr. Majhi said.

The next step was the biometric authentication scheme that Uttar Pradesh had already rolled out.

"The entire process of procurement has to be made faster. Once you have data of farmers available and once they are bio-authenticated, the entire details are digitally available to the procurement machinery, the kind of crop he is cultivating, the kind of landholding he has, all the details are available," Mr. Majhi said.

This initiative reduced the need for extensive paperwork, prevented leakages and speeded up process of procurement, with payment settlement being completed within 72 hours, he said.

"The other advantage is that the farmer gets a receipt for his goods, showing the quantity and the MSP price, so nobody can cheat the farmer," said Mr. Goyal. He did not respond to a query whether bio authentication would be mandatory for farmers to participate in the procurement process.

"We would like all payments released by the Central government to the farmers... that we are able to track them online. There should not be any intermediaries, farmers should not be

Did not leak Disha Ravi case documents: Delhi Police to HC

Court issues notice to News Broadcasting Standards Authority, 3 media houses

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Thursday informed the Delhi High Court that they had not leaked any documents relating to the investigation into the FIR against climate change activist Disha Ravi, arrested in connection with the "toolkit" case.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta informed Justice Prathiba M. Singh that there was "no leakage" from the police.

Following the statement, the court asked the police to give an affidavit with the written submission that they had not leaked any information relating to the case to the media.

The court also issued notice to the News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA) and three media houses – News18, India Today and Times Now – named in the petition filed by Ms. Ravi.

Seeks action
The 22-year-old, in her plea, sought to restrain the police from leaking any investigation material relating to her case to the media.

She also pleaded for ac-



Silent rally: Activists staging a protest in Thane on Thursday demanding the release of Disha Ravi. •PTI

tion against News18, India Today and Times Now for publishing content or extracts of her private WhatsApp chats, alleging it to be "violative of fair trial rights and right to privacy".

Ms. Ravi, a permanent resident of Bengaluru, was arrested in connection with an FIR registered on February 4. The plea claimed that she was flown overnight to New Delhi without obtaining transit remain in flagrant violation of her constitutional rights.

The petition stated that Ms. Ravi "is severely aggrieved and prejudiced by the media trial surrounding her arrest and the ongoing

investigation, where she is being viscerally attacked by the Respondent No. 1 [Special Cell, Delhi Police] and several media houses... on the basis of leaked investigation and right to privacy".

The petition claimed that the police, on February 14, tweeted from their official Twitter handle that, "Disha Ravi, arrested by CyPAD Delhi Police, is an Editor of the Toolkit Google Doc & key conspirator in documents formulation & dissemination..."

'Direct violation'

This, she said, was in "direct violation of the Ministry of Home Affairs Office Memorandum dated 01.04.2010 Advisory on Media Policy of Police, because they outright prejudice the guilt of the petitioner and disclose confidential and prejudicial information about the status of investigation".

The High Court will hear the case on Friday.

Centre correcting historical mistakes of neglecting Assam

PM Modi virtually launches water connectivity projects

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the Centre had taken up various development projects to correct the historical mistakes of neglecting Assam.

He underlined the Centre's commitment to infrastructure development in the State while virtually launching 'Mahabahu Brahmaputra', a package of multi-modal water connectivity projects that includes a 19.282 km bridge which will be India's longest across a river.

"Assam was one of the States giving the highest revenues. Those days, petroleum products and tea used



Narendra Modi

to reach the Chittagong port (in present-day Bangladesh) and Kolkata via Brahmaputra, Padma and Meghna rivers and the railway. Connectivity was the reason behind Assam's prosperity. But af-

ter Independence, when this infrastructure was supposed to be modernised, Assam was left to its fate," Mr. Modi said.

He said negligence almost killed the waterways in Assam until former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee began correcting the mistakes. The State's development is the Centre's priority, he added.

"Connectivity remained a challenge because work on connectivity via the Brahmaputra did not happen. Now, work is being expedited. The double engines of Assam and Central government tried to reduce the geographical and cultural distances," Mr. Modi said.

Congress wins Mohali civic body election

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The ruling Congress in Punjab won the Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar (Mohali) Municipal Corporation election on Thursday.

The Congress won 37 of the 50 wards while 13 wards were won by Independents. The results were declared a day after results of the other seven municipal corporations were announced as the State Election Commission had directed re-polling in two wards of Mohali.

Nine independent councillors of the Moga Corporation, one from Pathankot and two from the Sujanpur Municipal Council joined the Congress in the presence of State Congress president Sunil Jakhar.

Initially, a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde issued notice to the authorities on a plea by a native of Kerala, K. Sathyam, represented by advocate Kalleswaram Raj, that electoral law required to be brought in tune with the modern times and technology.

When Mr. Raj argued that many people had left their home places to earn a livelihood and may not be able to return to participate in the electoral process, the Bench agreed to issue notice.

SC seeks response for plea on remote electronic voting system

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday sought a response from the Union government and the Election Commission of India on a petition seeking the setting up of a "secured remote electronic voting system" to allow citizens to cast their vote vir-

DELI JAL BOARD GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (C)DR-II DELHI GATE STP PHASE-II OPPOSITE DELHI SECRETARIAT IP ESTATE, NEW DELHI-110002 E-mail - eecdr2@mail.com "Wear Masks, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"					
NIT No. 5 (2020-21) EE(C)DR-II(R)-invited (Tender ID: 2021_DJB_200240_1)					
S. No. Name of work No. (In Lakhs)					
Amount put to tender (In Lakhs) DBQ basis					
Earnest Money (In Lakhs) 1500/-					
Tender Fees (In Rs.) 17.02.2021					
Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution 10.03.2021 up to 03.05 PM					
Last date/time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution					
ISSUED BY: P.R.O.(WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 422(2020-21)					
(K.U. Khan) Executive Engineer(C)DR-II					

HLL Medipark Limited, HLL Bhavan, #26/4, 2 nd Floor, Velachery-Tambaram Road, Palikaranai, Chennai - 600100. Ph: 044 29813732 Email: info@hllmedipark.com					
(A Govt of India Enterprise) CIN: U74999KL2016GOI47562					
1. Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Design & Build Contractor for Development of Physical Infrastructure and Construction of Administrative Block at Medipark in Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu.					
2. Selection of Consultant for Proof Checking and Construction Supervision Services for Medipark Project at Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu.					
The interested parties may please visit the websites www.hllmedipark.com & www.lifecarehll.com for further details and to download the tender documents. Amendments / Addendum / Corrigendum, if any, will only be published in the above websites.					
Chief Executive Officer (HML)					

Strengthening Public Financial Management Project, FD, GoR 4th Floor, C-Block, Villa Bhawan, Jan Path, Jyoti Nagar, Jaipur Phone No.0141-2744056, E-mail : jse@rajasthan.gov.in Date:09/02/2021 F-4(113)FD/EAD/SFPM-PMU/Proc./2020/4408-09 IN-DOF-218071-GO-REB(NCB)					
Electronic bids for Supply & Installation of End User Computing IT Hardware are invited from interested bidders on or before 18.03.2021 up to 15:00 Hours and bids received will be opened on 18.03.2021 at 15:30 Hours. Bid Document with detailed terms and conditions are available online on website https://pproj.rajasthan.gov.in seen on the procurement portal from 17.02.2021 to 17.03.2021 up to 12:00 Hours (noon).					

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Have you been scoffing at all fermented stuff? Stop. It's time to be seen with kombucha in your hand, as the brew evolves from virtuous health fad, to feisty summer cooler

PRABALIK M BORAH

Consider your drink game up-to-date if you have had kombucha and want it as your go-to summer drink this year. Those who have not tried it yet, even out of curiosity, better step up their beverage game.

Home brewers of kombucha like to call it their lockdown drink experiment, driven by an urge to try and brew something new and safe for all. Soon enough, its popularity blossomed and kombucha made its way into branded bottles in cafes and store shelves in many cities.

Home brewed brands like Kombucha of the Earth, Ombucha, Hydra Kombucha, Booch Please, CommBucha Happy Booch, Bhu Kombucha The Kombucha Co. etc are finding an increasing number of takers who want to experiment with newer drinks with or without health benefits.

Rohan Srivatsa who launched Ombucha in Hyderabad following his lockdown trials, feels the drink is closely associated with veganism because of the ingredients used.

He says, "Every ingredient used is natural and plant-based, so it is assumed to be vegan. As a kombucha brewer, I would call it a safe drink for everyone. I got hooked on to it in Goa and back in Hyderabad, I couldn't find a good kombucha. So, I started brewing it on my own. I started small and when I was confident of the flavours, I began sharing it with friends."

Dhanesh Sharma of Hyderabad-based Terrasen café explains that kombucha is an ancient Central Asian drink. "It started getting associated with vegan food because vegans, in their need to explore healthier alternatives, started exploring a food option that was less heard of," he adds.



Cha-cha with kombucha

In layman terms, kombucha is a fermented tea that is best enjoyed cold, and may or may not be flavoured. It is often made from green or black tea. Kombucha brewer Renuka Vijay Kumar says, "It is largely classified as a functional beverage, which means it is a non-alcoholic drink that contains vitamins, amino acids or other nutrients associated with health benefits."

HOW INDIANS LOVE TO FERMENT

Gundruk, fermented radish shoots

Shikanji made with winter black and red carrots and beets

Fermented cane shoot

Tungrumbai made by the Khasi tribe of Meghalaya

Apong, fermented rice beer

placed in a cooler environment to slow down the carbonation and fermentation processes," adds Rohan

Additionally, the anti-microbial properties of this process make its production sanitary, and safe for home-brewing.

According to health journals like *Science Direct*, kombucha originated in Northeast China (historically referred to as Manchuria) around 220 BC and was prized for its healing properties.

A question of roots

Some journals say its name is reportedly derived from Dr Kombu, a Korean physician who brought the fermented tea to Japan as a curative for Emperor Inkyo.



Sip by sip The drink is closely associated with veganism but has fans across the culinary spectrum

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Hydra Kombucha brewer Rahul S, based in Hyderabad, says he tasted his first kombucha in Gokarna while on holiday and soon began brewing it from his place in Manipal.

Rahul says, "I was a student at Manipal and wanted to drink kombucha once I was back from my holiday. When I couldn't find any, I decided to brew my own kombucha. I studied all about the brewing process on the Internet. After two or three trial batches, I had my drinks. When I first made kombucha three years ago, it took me six or seven months to make small batches and cater to smaller groups who appreciate the drink."

Rahul suggests fruity tropical flavours as the best ones to begin with. Rohan adds that a number of the followers of his brand are people who look for anything fizzy, non-alcoholic and "not sweet."

Those who want to avoid sugary fizzy drinks, happily pick up a kombucha".

But let us not be fooled: kombucha has sugar and Rohan suggests that to avoid excess intake of sugar we must pay attention to the label.

"A 250 ml bottle shouldn't contain more than 10 grams of sugar," she advises.

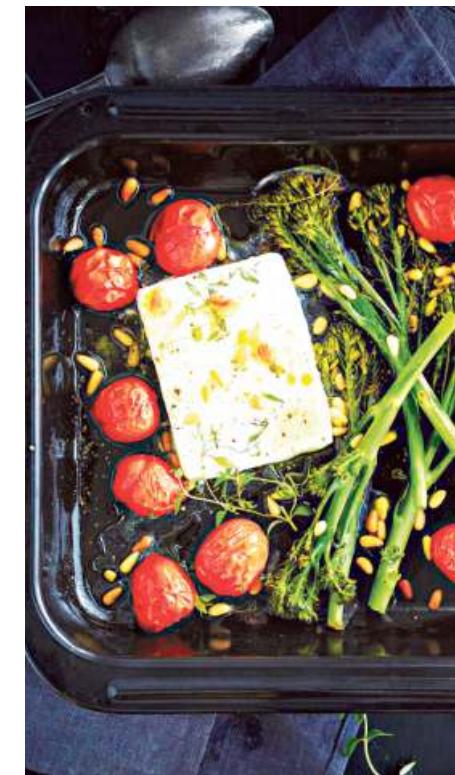
HORS D'OEUVRE

Does the Tik Tok pasta hack work?

Lets be honest. A little cheating is inevitable. Not just because we are skeptical about a viral Tik Tok recipe. But also remember, inevitably, locally grown cherry tomatoes, basil, *desi* feta cheese and grocery store olive oil will not taste the same as ingredients sourced from a European supermarket. The pasta that began it all was reportedly by Jenni Häyrynen from Finland, who calls herself a "food artist" on Instagram. She posted an alluring simple recipe on Tik Tok for *Uunifeta* pasta, or baked feta pasta: drizzle cherry tomatoes, basil, garlic and a block of feta with olive oil. Then bake, blend with a fork and toss with cooked pasta.

It quickly went viral. So viral, that in an interview Häyrynen said stores in Finland ran out of feta cheese. In an Instagram post, she says she had two followers when she posted the original *uunifeta* pasta, and now has "half a million views to date, not too shabby."

Does it work? That depends on how much of a food snob you are. It is a quick, easy, one bowl dinner that is morishly cheesy, with a pleasing, but not overwhelming, saltiness. However, the flavours are fairly basic, leaning heavily on ingredient quality. Which brings us back to the cheats. We drizzled honey to balance the saltiness of the feta, grated the garlic for a more even flavour and added a teaspoon of tomato paste to up the umami. Finally, we added a handful of fresh rocket, just before taking it out of the oven, to lighten the starchiness. Verdict: Delicious, but probably just a fun one-time experiment. This serves two, so although it does not feel heavy, you do end up eating half a block of feta in one sitting. Too many *Uunifeta* dinners could prove to be *Uunifatty*.



SWETA AKUNDI

When the pandemic forced Aaron Barboza and Arnav Sheth to stow away their passports, the travelbug-bitten friends brought the countries they missed to their homes in Mumbai – through food. A window into another city, another life.

Once every month at their nascent Instagram business Koi (@cookwithkoi), the 22-year-olds curate DIY meal kits featuring traditional food from faraway lands. Founded in July last year, the Koi box has brought customers, in Mumbai and Bengaluru, three-course meals from Thailand, Vietnam, Korea, Greece, and Spain. This month, Koi heads to Japan; the kit contains all ingredients needed to make Japan's *umeboshi onigiri* – seasoned sticky rice parcels wrapped in seaweed and stuffed with salty sweet plums; *miso nikomi udon* – a bowl of umami flavoured chewy noodles; and fluffy souffle pancakes.

"Aaron and I have known each other through college. Food and travel is what we bonded over," says Arnav. The duo has travelled across South-East Asia, to Singapore, Vietnam, and Thailand. Everywhere they went, "food was the first thing to make me feel at home in a new place," says Arnav.

"I remember talking to Aaron about a specific kind of noodles that you just don't get in Mumbai. You can probably Swiggy or Zomato it, but you have to really look for these niche places," adds Arnav. "We have such great memories of all these foods from different places and we just wanted to share them with our family and friends."

So while the travelling has paused, their experiments with cooking foreign dishes began. Arnav recalls the deep, happy slumber he fell into, 30 minutes after polishing off an indulgent treat of *loukoumades* – Greek fried doughnuts, served with honey and orange sauce – that he made from scratch. Aaron, on the

My mealbox, my plane ticket

This Mumbai duo is packing DIY meal kits that help lockdown-hit wanderers taste foreign cuisines once a month



February special Koi is going Japanese with seaweed-wrapped rice parcels, umami-flavoured noodles and a dessert ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

again for birthday parties." So now, Koi also offers meal kits for events. This year, expanding their original idea, Koi has started mid-monthly kits delivered every second Saturday. Called the Dive Bar Nostalgia kit, it was targeted at those missing student haunts next to colleges, and featured combinations like *chakkis* with Schezwan, cheese and popcorn, and butter garlic *naan* with chicken or *paneer* chilli.

People will pay for experiential dining, this they have zeroed in on. Meanwhile, they are choosing between Indonesia and Sri Lanka for the next month. Do they every worry they will run out of countries?

"We will go back and revisit every country; we have just made three out of the thousand dishes they have. So it is more a problem of plenty, and the world is very much our oyster," says Aaron.



Lessons from a lotus seed

How love for Bihar's staple *makhana* helped build an all-woman enterprise in a small hamlet in interior Karnataka

RUTH DHANARAJ

Raksha Shenoy remembers her first attempt at preparing *makhana* or lotus seeds, after reading about its nutritional value. This was about five or six years ago when this superfood had just begun to appear on supermarket shelves in South India.

"I had heard about *makhana* being eaten during days of fast in North India, and that it was good for health. I looked up a few tips and recipes online and prepared a snack. It took a couple of attempts to get the hang of roasting it," laughs Bengaluru-based Raksha.

"Though popped *makhana* is available, it has to be roasted and seasoned, and is not an attractive snack choice for most people who prefer ready-to-eat pro-

ducts," she adds.

The solution was in her own hands. Raksha had always wanted to get involved in rural women empowerment, so setting up a unit that would provide employment in a zero-opportunity locale to manufacture snacks seemed to be a good idea.

"South India is a fairly new

EARTHY NUGGETS

Makhana or lotus seeds are largely cultivated in Bihar, and some parts of North and North-eastern India

They are a premium product as they are still harvested manually from water bodies

Since the process is not mechanised, raw *makhana* is actually costlier than cashew

Strong start The initiative is less than a year old, but already delivers across the country ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

market for this superfood. I chose a rural area near Karkala in Udupi, which is my native place, to establish this unit because I knew there was a dearth of job opportunities there. Migrating was not a viable proposition for most women there," says Raksha, who had also moved to Bengaluru for work.

Raksha and her father Gopinath Shenoy, also an entrepreneur, decided to run their operations out of Miyar, a few kilometres from Karkala. And that is how Nummy (short for yummy) *makhana* was launched in August last year. In less than a year, this small-town business is already shipping its products across the country, as well as to retail outlets in Telangana, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

"We wanted to bring out a simple product; our flavours are just three basic ones – spicy, tangy and cheesy – that would appeal to most Indian palates," says Raksha. "We source seeds from Bihar and have roasting, seasoning and packing machines which a group of 10 women at the unit have learnt to operate."

"Initially, the women were hesitant as they did not know how to operate machines and most thought it was a man's job," she says, adding that it took her about a month to educate employees about the product. She explains, "Since lotus seeds were a completely new item here, we had to start from scratch. We showed them videos of how the seeds are harvested, how they look and how they pop once roasted."

The pandemic and the ensuing new normal, ironically, helped their operations. "There was an increased awareness of hygiene, with workers continuously washing hands. Other habits like donning caps and changing footwear at the factory were easier to inculcate."

Nummy is available online at eatnummy.com, Amazon and Big Basket.

other hand, took a deep dive into Asian fermented foods. "Kimchi was the first thing that I ever tried and it opened up a whole new world for me," he says.

Sourcing the exotic

Aaron explains that they select recipes of food they have tasted, or take extensive feedback from those familiar with the culture in question.

"Initially, we replicated the recipes with Indian ingredients, but now we also import certain ingredients," he says, "Take the Japanese box for example: it needs a combination of fresh and dry shiitake mushrooms, which we

get from a mushroom farmer in Lonavala. But others like matcha tea leaves, and *togarashi* (a mixture of seven Japanese spices), are easier to import."

Once the recipes are tried and tested, ingredients for a three-course meal (barring kitchen essentials such as sugar, salt, pepper, oil, milk) are packed into the kit. Orders are open until the 21st of every month, and on the last Saturday, the boxes are packed and dispatched with a recipe note.

"We will go back and revisit every country; we have just made three out of the thousand dishes they have. So it is more a problem of plenty, and the world is very much our oyster," says Aaron.

Art between the lines of prayer

A 24-year-old with a global presence and her teacher are among a few keeping the art of Arabic calligraphy alive in India

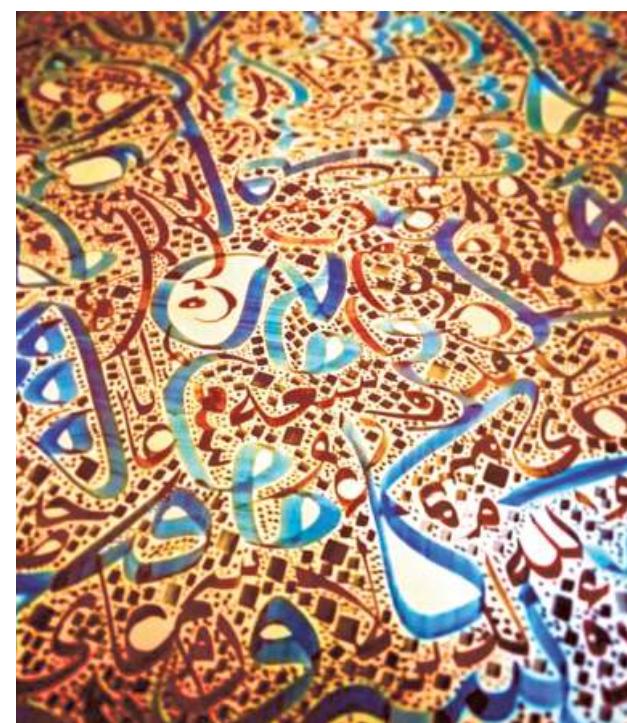
NAHLA NAINAR

Bee Bee Laisa, a final year Engineering student in Bengaluru, has a dream. The 24-year-old wants to transcribe a copy of the Quran in Arabic. "I have always been interested in art and drawing, but it was only when I started learning English calligraphy that I was introduced to the art form in Arabic, which would help me to transcribe the holy book," says Laisa.

And so began her journey in 2016, as a student of the Institute of Indo-Islamic Art and Culture (IIAC) at Richmond Street, Bengaluru, to learn Arabic calligraphy. Also known as 'Khat', this centuries-old art form is held in high regard by Muslims because of its association with the dissemination of the Holy Quran before the era of printing presses.

In the past five years, Laisa has mastered the decorative script 'Thuluth', considered one of the most difficult fonts, and 'Naskh' (used to write the Quran). Her talent has been recognised on several international and local platforms: her calligraphic artworks of Quranic verses and Islamic phrases have been exhibited in Japan, UAE, and Jaipur since 2017.

It is a huge leap forward for Laisa, whose father works as a banana delivery



vehicle driver in Bengaluru. Laisa says calligraphy has helped to improve her concentration and also use her drawing skills in her Civil Engineering classes.

"Calligraphers can't have any dot or line out of place; this has helped me to present spotless drawings for my coursework as well," she says. The school uses traditional materials to teach the art, including wooden or reed pens (*qalam*) and inks from plant-based resins. As per tradition, strands of raw silk are placed

inside the inkpot (*likka*), to help regulate the amount of ink on the *qalam* tip, and also to prevent spills onto the paper.

"We use a paper called *muqahar* for the final version. Though it is commercially available, calligraphers also learn how to prepare their own *muqahar* sheets," says Muqtar Ahmed, the principal and tutor at the IIAC.

Devoted to the art
Ahmed is the man guiding Laisa in her



Fine lines
(Anti-clockwise from left) Bee Bee Laisa and her artwork; Muqtar Ahmed and his creation
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



mission. He has the distinction of being the only Indian to have earned his *ijazah* (Masters diploma) in Arabic calligraphy from the Turkey-based Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), under the auspices of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). He has trained over 500 students through the school's weekly courses, and has started online classes during lockdown.

"Calligraphy takes a long time to learn, and one only gets better with con-



tinuous practice," says Ahmed.

His own encounter with the art form is a tribute to his tenacity. As an Intermediate school graduate in a small village in Telengana, he started learning Urdu and Arabic calligraphy and decided to make his career as a scribe for an Urdu publication in Bengaluru, in 1990.

"I used to write entire pages of articles in the column style, before the computers came in," he says.

Most of the commercial calligraphy that was done for Urdu and Arabic journals before automated printing lacked the aesthetic values of the original art form, he says.

"I'd like to revive Arabic calligraphy among young people and show them how this can not only be an art but also a way to remember the divine in our life," Ahmed says. When he lost his job in 1994, Ahmed decided to research how other calligraphers, especially those outside India, were sustaining their craft. He set up a small commercial press to keep his home fires burning, and kept looking out for masters in calligraphy.

"I realised that it is not a language transforming tool, but an art that has a different respect globally," he adds.

Among the people who helped him were Washington-based Syrian font designer and calligrapher Maamoun Sakal, and Mohamed Zakariya, the first Westerner to earn calligraphy diplomas

from IRCICA in Turkey. In what sounds like an incredible process today, Zakariya, who is based in Virginia and doesn't use electronic communication, tutored Ahmed over postal correspondence for three and a half years.

"I used to send my completed exercises from Bengaluru, and he would reply with his comments and corrections by post. Mr Zakariya didn't charge me any fees for the tuition, and I feel very fortunate to have been his student," says Ahmed.

Zakariya also introduced Ahmed to his own master Hasan Chalabi from IRCICA, who invited him to Turkey in 2008. After several visits to Istanbul to learn the art, Ahmed earned his Masters degree in 2013.

Paying it forward

"My professors advised me to start teaching calligraphy in India after I graduated, so that I could rekindle the old majesty of the art. When Mr. Syed Mohamed Beary [a local real estate developer] heard of this, he sponsored the establishment of the institute in Bengaluru, and put me in charge of it. I'm glad to see that though it is a very difficult field to excel in, at least 15 of our students are being recognised for their calligraphy," says Ahmed.

Ameerul Islam and Abdul Sattar, two of his students, have set up a branch of the institute in Hyderabad. IIAC's curriculum covers the Arabic scripts 'Riq'a' (for newcomers), 'Naskh' and 'Thuluth' and 'Nastaliq' in Urdu. Learning any two scripts thoroughly is ideal for a calligrapher, says Ahmed.

Bee Bee Laisa's aim of transcribing the Quran is shared by her teacher. "In fact it is the ultimate goal of every Arabic calligrapher," says Ahmed.

"But it is a huge project, because there are at least 600 pages to be transcribed. If we do something with our hands, it is priceless," he says.

REJI VARGHESE

When National award-winning music directors Aravind Murali and Jaishankar Iyer got together immediately after the lockdown, the one thing they wanted to do was write a song about their experience.

Aravind suggested they write about being under 'house arrest', while Jaishankar wanted to do a song about the plight of immigrant workers and sections of society that bore the brunt of lockdown. They could not agree on a common theme till they decided to turn the topic on its head – what the lockdown was *not* about, the simple things that people longed for.

Jaishankar says, "Both Aravind and I realised, what we missed most were the wide open spaces that Chennai has. We missed the Marina, Elliotts Beach, Mahabs and all the empty beaches on the ECR stretch." That is how *Me, the Ocean and the Sea* was born.

"Making music is our profession. So writing a song without an agenda and without an incentive to make money off it was in itself a step out of the 'stuck between four walls' attitude of making music for a living. It helped us step out into the open space of creative self-expression," says Aravind.

Being a scuba diver for ov-



Sea major

Two leading musicians have come out with a song that celebrates the spaces they had missed during lockdown

er a decade now, he connected with the theme. "During lockdown, I used to dream about the sea. I wanted to have the freedom of looking to the end of the horizon and not being obstructed by a wall."

The duo has composed over a thousand jingles, and worked on films like *Silent Screen*, *Oorukku Nooru Per*, and on Telugu and Tamil

hits. They are the musicians behind the 'Whistle Podu' anthem for IPL team Chennai Super Kings.

Aravind and Jaishankar shared the scratch version with a number of musician friends. Two of them, well-known playback singer Malgudi Subha and emerging star Amrit Ramnath, offered to sing. "I was very excited about it as the feel was right up my alley. It was a cute, funky song with sing-along lyrics," says Subha.

Chips in Amrit, "The song segues from Jazz to pop and every genre in between. If I had to invent a genre to fit the song into, I would call it 'acoustic beach pop'."

'Me, The Ocean And the Sea' will be released on February 19 on major music platforms

And we have lift off...

As season two of *For All Mankind* launches, actors Joel Kinnaman and Shantel vanSanten chat about playing an astronaut-civilian couple experiencing a sense of loss

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

We have always been fascinated with the personal lives and the mentality of astronauts, especially the 'overview effect' which marks a cognitive shift in awareness of how vast the universe can be. And, yes, we do wonder about their personal lives, and how they transition between two very different worlds.

For All Mankind, one of the first series announced for AppleTV+ addresses this through its 'alternate timeline' storytelling. Taking on the roles of astronaut-civilian couple Edward and Karen



Shantel vanSanten as Karen Baldwin
• APPLE TV+



Baldwin are Joel Kinnaman and Shantel vanSanten, whose son, at the end of season 1, passes away while Edward is on a mission. The actors share their experiences in returning for a second season that answers the question 'what if the US Space Race never ended?'

Over the years, Joel Kinnaman has been drawn to the futuristic science-fiction realm through projects such as *Altered Carbon*, *Hanna*, and *RoboCop*. But this is a different project for the Swedish-American actor, who likens the first season as "*Mad Men* in NASA." He recalls the first table read of season 2 as "pretty fascinating and very surprising." In regard to the trauma Edward and Karen experience, he says, "I found it interesting to portray that. In the beginning, he's seen as this all-American hero but he also goes through this devastating loss."

VanSanten looks on her role as Karen Baldwin to be "a daunting and beautiful responsibility I don't take lightly," but she later admits, "it's a very honourable role, requiring an incredible amount of sacrifice mirrored only in the sacrifices she knows her

husband is making. But it's more complex and relatable, as we've placed astronaut-wives on these pedestals," she elaborates. "It feels they have an image to uphold and have to live within certain parameters – even within their own feelings," explains vanSanten, "and one can crack under that pressure and fall apart."

He was surprised by the timeline jump, he admits, adding, "I was so ready to play that pain and loss, but the writers took it one step further [in the timeline] so we meet Ed when he's the happiest he's ever been! I found this provocative and wondered 'what is happening here?' Of course, those wounds have not healed and pain comes out in ways we did not expect."

VanSanten, once she realised that season 2 would be further down along the timeline, decided to journal in her character's voice. These journal entries in a 250-page book would help vanSanten mentally shape everything Karen might have gone through in between the seasons. The journal "doesn't ever leave me because there are things that spark creativity. I could be in the middle of a massage or cleaning the floor, and I'd have this idea of a 'memory' which helped connect the gaps between where we left off and where we begin. Fleshing out that time helps inform my decision-making."

Season 2 of For All Mankind streams from today on AppleTV+

POUCH CAFE



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



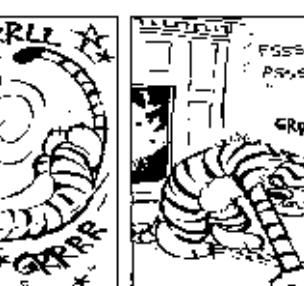
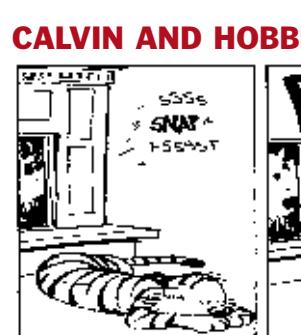
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



PEANUTS



TIGER



Facebook news goes dark in Australia

Social media giant blocked media content after dispute with govt. over payment to local publishers

REUTERS
SYDNEY

Australians woke to empty news feeds on their Facebook Inc pages on Thursday after the social media giant blocked all media content in a surprise and dramatic escalation of a dispute with the government over paying for content.

The move was swiftly criticised by news producers, politicians and human rights advocates, many of whom pointed out that official health and meteorology information had also been scrubbed during the coronavirus pandemic and at the height of Australia's summer bushfire season.

"Facebook was wrong, Facebook's actions were unnecessary, they were heavy-handed, and they will damage its reputation here in Australia," Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said.

Mr. Frydenberg said Face-



Access denied: The FB changes wiped clean pages of news outlets and removed posts by users sharing the news ■ REUTERS

book Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg gave no warning of the news shutdown when the pair spoke over the weekend about looming laws that will force them to pay local publishers for content.

The two had a subsequent conversation on Thursday morning which was "constructive", Mr. Frydenberg

campaign against the laws.

Both had threatened to cancel services in Australia, but Google has instead sealed deals with several outlets in recent days.

Rupert Murdoch's News Corp was the latest to announce a deal, in which it will receive "significant payments" from Google in return for providing content for the search engine's News Showcase account.

The Australian law would require Facebook and Google to reach commercial deals with news outlets, whose links drive traffic to their platforms, or be subjected to forced arbitration to agree a price.

Facebook said in its statement that the law, which is expected to be passed by Parliament within days, "fundamentally misunderstands" the relationship between itself and publishers and it faced a stark choice of

attempting to comply or banning news content.

Blank pages

The changes made by Facebook both wiped clean pages operated by news outlets and removed posts by individual users sharing Australian news.

Lisa Davies, editor of daily *The Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper, tweeted: "Facebook has exponentially increased the opportunity for misinformation, dangerous radicalism and conspiracy theories to abound on its platform."

The pages of the Queensland and South Australia State Health Departments, where a quarter of the country's 25 million population are directed for information about COVID-19, were similarly stripped of content.

"This is an alarming and dangerous turn of events," said Human Rights Watch.

Texas shivers amid power outages, water shortages

NWS warns of deadly winter storm pushing into eastern U.S.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HOUSTON

Power was gradually being restored but hundreds of thousands of households remained without electricity on Thursday across Texas, the oil and gas capital of the U.S., with some facing water shortages as a deadly winter cold spell that pummeled the southeastern part of the country headed east.

The National Weather Service (NWS) issued a winter storm warning. It said the storm would bring ice, sleet and heavy snow to parts of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Mississippi as it tracks to



In cold grip: People waiting in line to fill propane tanks in Houston, U.S., on Wednesday. ■ AP

the northeast, causing power outages, tree damage and making driving hazardous.

Even though the Arctic air mass was beginning to lose its grip on an area of the

country not used to such extreme cold, the frigid temperatures would continue, the NWS said. More than 30 storm-related deaths have been reported.

Democrats set to unveil Biden's immigration Bill

11 mn immigrants to benefit from law

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Joe Biden's immigration Bill, which aims to create a path to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants, will be unveiled on Thursday to begin its legislative process, senior White House officials said.

Two Democratic legislators, California Congresswoman Linda Sanchez and New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez, will present the initiative in the House of Representatives and the Senate, respectively.

The Bill aims to create a path to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immi-

grants who can prove they were in the U.S. on January 1. The legislation will benefit the so-called Dreamers, people who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children and grew up there.

Former President Barack Obama issued an executive order in 2012 which offered protection for Dreamers at renewable two-year periods, including authorisation to work.

His successor Donald Trump attempted to end the programme in 2017. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the administration had not followed proper administrative procedures to end the policy.

The support for Mr. Trump has featured a coalition of eclectic voices – non-college educated white voters, including working class people who bought into his strident talk of trade protectionism, white supremacists across several class segments, social conservatives who were buoyed by his packing of courts with conservative judges, and conspiracy theorists who have traditionally shared a deep distrust of the U.S. state or its "government".

Mr. Trump's recourse to repeated disinformation and his questionable way of governance have never been an impediment to his core support base for whom "politics

China steps up online control over bloggers

Govt.-approved credentials a must

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TAIPEI

a government-approved credential before they can publish on a wide range of subjects. Some fear that only state media and official propaganda accounts will get permission. While permits have been needed since at least 2017 to write about topics such as political and military affairs, enforcement has not been widespread. The new rules expand that requirement to health, economics, education and judicial matters.

"It looks like I can only go the route of entertainment, food and beverage now," the international relations professor wrote on January 31.

Beginning next week, the Cyberspace Administration of China will require bloggers and influencers to have

11 mn immigrants to benefit from law

Anti-coup hackers target Myanmar government sites

Junta continues with Internet blockade, troop deployment

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
YANGON

Hackers targeted Myanmar government websites on Thursday to protest against the military coup, as the junta pressed on with its attempts to stymie nationwide opposition with Internet blockades and troop deployments.

The cyberattacks came a day after tens of thousands of people rallied across the country to protest against the generals toppling Aung San Suu Kyi's civilian government earlier this month.

A group called Myanmar



Drug Administration. "We are fighting for justice in Myanmar," the group said on its Facebook page.

"It is like mass protesting of people in front of government websites."

State-run newspaper *New Light of Myanmar* also confirmed that military websites were "under attack", with delays on Wednesday.

For a second day, motorists in Yangon blockaded roads with vehicles, leaving their bonnets up and pretending they were broken down to stop security forces from moving around.

Bhutan General, 2 judges held for 'overthrow' bid

'Plot against Army chief, Chief Justice'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
THIMPU

Police in Bhutan have detained a top General and two judges over an alleged plot to overthrow the country's top military officer and Chief Justice.

Former Royal Bodyguard Commandant Brigadier Thinley Tobgay, Supreme Court judge Kuenley Tshering and top district court judge Yeshey Dorji appeared in court on Wednesday after being detained at their homes.

The three have been accused of plotting to overthrow the country's top military officer, Lieutenant

General Batsoo Tshering, by implicating him in a corruption scandal.

All were denied bail by the Thimphu district court and remanded in custody until a first formal hearing on February 27.

According to reports, Brigadier Tobgay was alleged to have illegally obtained military documents on the procurement of vehicles from the United Nations.

The *Bhutanese* newspaper said that while the tender was handled publicly and fairly, the documents were to be used to undermine the position of the military number one.

SUDOKU

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

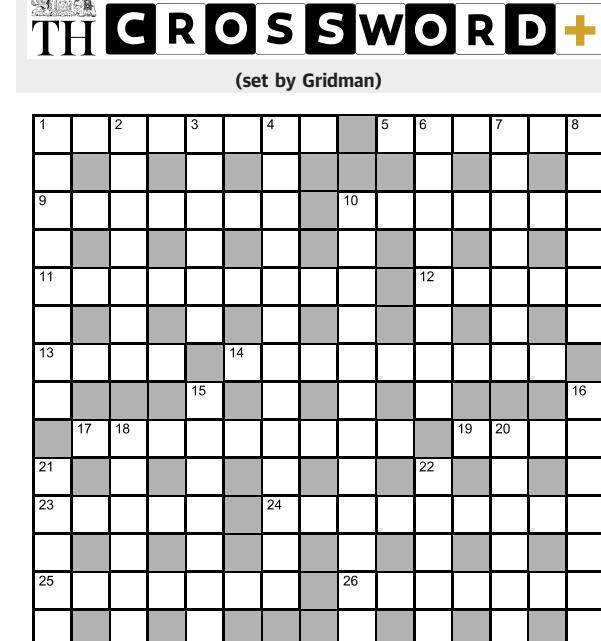
DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13174

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

TH CROSSWORD + 13175
(set by Gridman)



ACROSS

- 1 Boy lover's primarily defective command that cannot be obeyed (3,5)
- 5 Go to sort out mixed-up socks (6)
- 9 Too well established on place (7)
- 10 Coax daughter in revolution to end game (7)
- 11 I, with saint, right in local - relocated and isolated (9)
- 12 Brief section of winter setting (5)

- 13 First start, then finish and transmit (4)
- 14 Scheming chap's beginning to recommend chaps' model paper (9)
- 17 Logic a heavy drinker won't like, apparently (9)
- 19 Reject short needle (4)
- 23 Some worried over old animal (5)
- 24 Been looking over chef cutting up right plant (5,4)
- 25 Inigo left the middle with totally opposite result (7)
- 26 Quick redound: visa served to the sage (7)
- 27 Agreement calls for celebration by party at last (6)
- 28 I had oldies pampered over and held dear (8)
- DOWN
- 1 What policemen might do in a furniture showroom (4,4)
- 2 Yearn to have a drink and fade away (3,4)
- 3 Among others, one's up to oppose (6)
- 4 Such a person can indeed be amused by a show (13)
- 6 Sprinting contest I'm beginning to explore (8)
- 7 Woman embracing girl right in front of firedog (7)
- 8 Reportedly did - did smell badly (6)
- 10 We will be calm - such specimens are sure to be in a good museum (4-9)
- 15 Eliminated with one dope administered just regularly (5,3)
- 16 French denizen (not new) is excited, wildly excited (8)
- 18 A piece of advice by the French teacher (7)
- 20 Urges newspapers (7)
- 21 I am left with what's brought in (6)
- 22 By hope all keep certain heads up at this disaster site (6)

FAITH

The way of tradition

The Vaishnava tradition upholds the pristine truths enshrined in the Vedas and the Upanishads through the hymns of the azhwars and the lineage of acharyas for the benefit of the jivatmas. The Divya Prabandha hymns of the Azhwars were brought to light through the efforts of Nathamuni, who is held to be the foremost acharya. Nathamuni was directly inspired by Nammazhwar and he codified the Prabandha hymns.

In a discourse, Vanamaalai Sri Padmanabha Swamy drew attention to an oft-quoted analogy that expresses how the tradition has evolved and has been preserved by the lineage. The Azhwars are compared to the rain bearing clouds and have drawn from the boundless ocean of grace of Lord Ranganatha to pour the essence on to the hill of Nathamuni. The waterfalls from this source refer to the teachings of Nathamuni's immediate disciples, the Poorvacharyas like Alavandar who have been immersed in the hymns of azhwars. They have also been blessed to intuitively grasp their inner thoughts. To continue the analogy, just as the water from the falls collects as ponds and pools, their explanations, interpretations, discourses, etc, reach Ramanuja and his disciples. From here it further trickles as rivulets to reach the many jivatmas struggling to get out of samsara.

The tradition has thus been preserved in the Eedu, the valuable commentaries of the acharyas. The disciples down the line have tried to re-state and consolidate the teachings of the masters as further commentaries. The main message is one of hope that the Lord's feet can be attained by every jivatma who longs for it. The determined jiva has to wait for the Lord's grace once he has surrendered to His feet. Azhwars have displayed this patient wait in their hymns.

A ND-NDE

MARKET WATCH

	18-02-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	51,325	-0.73
US Dollar	72.65	0.12
Gold	45,867	-0.51
Brent oil	64.34	-0.87

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	664.05	8.30
Asian Paints	2470.75	82.60
Axis Bank	777.00	-0.75
Bajaj Auto	4115.45	-50.25
Bajaj Finserv	10198.95	13.30
Bajaj Finance	5563.35	-141.80
Bharti Airtel	589.05	-4.80
BPCL	432.20	20.50
Britannia Ind	3359.45	-4.55
Cipla	825.45	-10.25
Coal India	139.95	4.75
Divis Lab	3587.65	-27.60
D Dr Reddy's Lab	4616.95	16.40
Eicher Motors	2650.20	-45.30
GAIL (India)	143.10	8.70
Grasim Ind	1229.65	-8.80
HCL Tech.	948.10	4.90
HDPC	2745.15	-60.20
HDPC Bank	1554.30	-32.20
HDPC Life	713.45	10.35
Hero MotoCorp	3522.85	-61.15
Hindalco	309.90	6.00
Hind Unilever	2146.85	-17.05
ICICI Bank	644.65	-12.70
IndusInd Bank	1046.05	12.85
Infosys	1292.45	11.15
Indian Oil Corp	99.00	4.00
ITC	218.85	1.10
JSW Steel	407.65	-1.05
Kotak Bank	1945.45	-44.00
L&T	1524.60	-23.75
M&M	894.45	-20.50
Maruti Suzuki	7497.55	-5.65
Nestle India Ltd.	16364.70	-376.50
NTPC	103.40	4.05
ONGC	110.70	8.45
PowerGrid Corp	236.50	6.45
Reliance Ind	2067.70	-15.55
SBF Life	893.50	16.35
State Bank	415.20	3.45
Shree Cement	27623.35	-645.15
Sun Pharma	616.05	-5.20
Tata Motors	323.85	-6.30
Tata Steel	697.65	-0.95
TCS	3057.35	-15.75
Tech Mahindra	1016.60	30.15
Titan	1433.00	-27.40
UltraTech Cement	6325.85	-93.35
UPL	541.05	2.05
Wipro	432.95	2.75

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	72.45	72.77
Euro	87.47	87.86
British Pound	101.05	101.49
Japanese Yen (100)	68.56	68.87
Chinese Yuan	11.20	11.25
Swiss Franc	80.77	81.13
Singapore Dollar	54.59	54.84
Canadian Dollar	57.09	57.37
Malaysian Ringgit	17.91	18.01

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



OIL, EIL to jointly bid for BPCL's Numaligarh stake
HYDERABAD
Oil India (OIL) and Engineers India (EIL) will bid as a consortium for the 61.65% stake of Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) in Numaligarh Refinery (NRL). The exact percentage of the stake of OIL and EIL will depend on the extent of right of first offer to be exercised by the Assam Government, that already holds a 12.35% stake in NRL.

IndusInd Bank gets ₹2,021-cr. capital boost
NEW DELHI
IndusInd Bank has received ₹2,021 crore equity from promoters after conversion of preferential warrants into equity shares. "The promoter entities had paid ₹673 crore at the time of subscription to the warrants and the balance amount of ₹2,021 crore was paid today," IndusInd Bank said in a BSE filing. PTI

Apple eyes sops for local iPad assembly

U.S. firm said to be lobbying for an enlarged ₹200-billion outlay for PLI scheme for IT products

REUTERS

NEW DELHI

Apple Inc. is angling to participate in a new scheme to boost India's exports of computer products, part of what government and industry sources say are plans to bring iPad tablet manufacturing to the country.

India unveiled a \$6.7 billion plan to boost smartphone exports last year, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi stepped up efforts to promote electronics manufacturing and create jobs.

Apple, which has steadily raised production of iPhones in India to lessen its dependence on Chinese manufacturing, took part in that scheme via its contract manufacturers.

Now the government is preparing to unveil another incentive to drive local manufacturing of IT products



Bigger bite: In India, Apple will likely have iPads assembled by one of its existing suppliers as early as this year. • AFP

including tablets, laptops and servers, three sources closely involved in the drafting of the plan told Reuters.

Bigger outlay
The new performance-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, which offers cash

back to manufacturers for exports, will have a budget of up to ₹70 billion over five years, the sources said.

It's expected to be launched by the end of February.

Apple, along with others, is lobbying for a bigger bud-

getary outlay of ₹200 billion before that plan is finalised, as India doesn't yet have the scale or the supply chain for making IT products and competes with duty-free imports of tech products, two of the sources said.

Apple's push comes at a time when its iPhone supplier Wistron is just restarting operations at a southern Indian plant after angry workers went on a rampage last year. Apple is yet to take the Taiwanese manufacturer off probation.

Apple declined to com-

ment for this story.

New Delhi is also planning another PLI, at a budget of about ₹50 billion over five years, to boost domestic manufacturing of wearable devices such as smartwatches, the sources said, adding the plan could be announced within two months.

All the sources declined to be named as the plans are not public.

India-made iPad

Apple assembles most of its iPads in China, but is fast diversifying production.

Top supplier Foxconn is building assembly lines for iPads and MacBook laptops in Vietnam.

Other iPad assemblers include Taiwan's Compal Electronics and China's BYD Electronic International.

In India, Apple will likely have iPads assembled by one of its existing suppliers in the country as early as this year, two of the sources said.

"The government is asking Apple to get iPads assembled by its contract manufacturers here, the non-Chinese companies" one of the sources, a government official, said.



Lending a hand: Vaccinating the workforce can help quicken India's economic revival, says T.V. Narendran. • AFP

Let industry help with vaccine roll-out: CII

'Expiry of vaccines is a concern'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Worried about India's vaccine stockpile expiring if the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out is not ramped up quickly, industry association CII has urged the government to allow private sector health providers to administer vaccines and let businesses inoculate their employees' and communities around their operations.

This could help vaccinate 100 million people and allow the Centre to reach identified target priority groups quicker, that would be critical to get the workforce back to work and the economy back on track, the apex chamber said.

Stressing that the second phase of the vaccination programme to cover those over 50 years will be a particularly challenging task, CII has recommended that the government consider industry participation to speed up the roll-out.

Permitting firms to vaccinate employees and immediate family members and help surrounding communities as part of their corporate social responsibility could help an additional 100 million get the vaccine.

Private health providers must also be allowed to vaccinate people, with appropriate checks and balances, CII said.

Piramal group gets RBI nod for DHFL acquisition

Stressed firm owes lenders ₹87,031 cr.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Piramal Group said the Reserve Bank is understood to have approved the acquisition of debt-ridden DHFL by the group's subsidiary as part of resolution process.

The Committee of Creditors (CoC) had approved a resolution plan submitted by a Piramal Group company, Piramal Capital and Housing Finance Limited, last month.

"We understand that the RBI has approved the DHFL resolution plan from Piramal Capital and Housing Finance, submitted by the CoC," Piramal Group said.

Piramal Group and the U.S.-based Oaktree Capital submitted their bids in the

REUTERS

NEW DELHI

Domestic air traffic grew 5% in January over the preceding month with carriers ferrying a total of 77.34 lakh passengers, according to DGCA's monthly report.

IndiGo increased its market share to 54.3% from 53.9% in the previous month. It was followed by SpiceJet with a share of 12.8% and Air India at 10.3%. SpiceJet continued to record the highest passenger load factor (average seat occupancy) at 76.6%, followed by Vistara (70%) and IndiGo (69.3%).

In the pandemic-hit 2020, airlines ferried a total of 6.3 crore passengers, marking a decline of 56% from 2019's 14.41 crore.

Russia's Kalashnikov may make AK-203 rifle in India

Woos gadget lovers with hi-tech shotgun

REUTERS

MOSCOW

Russian arms manufacturer Kalashnikov plans to start making its AK-203 assault rifle in India this year and wants to attract a wider audience with a hi-tech shotgun, chief executive Dmitry Tarasov said.

Named after the designer of the AK-47 assault rifle that has been used for decades in wars around the world, Kalashnikov has been seeking new business and markets after being hit by U.S. and EU sanctions over Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

It is targeting a 60% increase in annual revenue to more than 50 billion roubles (\$675.33 million) by 2025,



Tarasov told Reuters. Featurig a built-in computer, the Ultima shotgun envisages Wi-Fi and bluetooth connectivity and can synchronise with smartphones.

Also central to Kalashnikov's growth plans is India, where it aims to produce 6.7 lakh AK-203 rifles in the next decade together with the Indian Defence Ministry.

Industry can supple-

NMDC restarts work at mine in Donimalai

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Public sector mining major NMDC on Thursday said it has resumed operations at the Donimalai iron ore mine in Karnataka.

This follows the Karnataka Government extending the lease on the mine for 20 years with effect from November 2018.

"This is to inform that after obtaining the lease extension of Donimalai Iron Ore Mine for 20 years with effect from November 3, 2018 from the Government of Karnataka, the mine was restarted on February 18," the firm said in a filing.

The richest player Reliance Jio with net worth of

Telcos deposit ₹13,475 cr. for spectrum auction

Jio submits EMD of ₹10,000 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea have submitted a total earnest money deposit (EMD) of ₹13,475 crore for the spectrum auction scheduled to start from March 1, according to information disclosed by the Department of Telecom on Thursday.

The total EMD amount is close to one-fourth of the amount required to be eligible for buying all spectrum, worth a base price of ₹3.92 lakh crore, put on the block.

The richest player Reliance Jio with net worth of



₹1.79 lakh crore has

Royals break the bank for Morris; PBKS, RCB spend big

Gowtham (CSK) and Meredith (Punjab Kings) enjoy record pay-day for uncapped Indian and foreign cricketers; Richardson, Maxwell strike it rich

IPL AUCTION

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

An IPL auction without a record-breaking buy is much like a pizza without topping.

This time it was South African Chris Morris' turn to break the all-time mark in the IPL for the highest successful bid.

Indeed, at the drama-filled IPL auction here on Thursday, where there were prolonged duels with franchises unwilling to let go of the player they had set their eyes on, Morris was bought by Rajasthan Royals for a record-setting ₹16.25 crore.

Fierce battle

After a fierce battle involving four franchises, Rajasthan Royals, Royal Challengers Bangalore, Mumbai Indians and Punjab Kings, the South African pace bowling all-rounder went to the Jaipur outfit.

There were other big buys. Royal Challengers Bangalore shelled out ₹15 crore for the young New Zealand fast bowler Kyle Jamieson, and ₹14.25 crore for the brutal but inconsistent Glenn Maxwell.

In fact, Royal Challengers and Chennai Super Kings were locked in an intense duel for Maxwell – CSK was seeking an off-spinner with batting credentials – but the Bengaluru side had the final

say. CSK, eventually was successful in seeking the kind of player it wanted after it released Harbhajan Singh. The Chennai franchise withheld a spirited bid by Punjab Kings to land England off-spinning all-rounder Moeen Ali for ₹7 crore.

And as an insurance, CSK also purchased domestic off-spinning all-rounder K. Gowtham for ₹9.25 crore, the highest amount ever for an Indian uncapped player. Keeping in mind CSK's conservative ways in the past, these were big money buys.

Among the happy news of the evening was old soldier Cheteshwar Pujara being bought by CSK for ₹50 lakh. For the first time since 2014, Pujara will be seen in an IPL.

Punjab Kings was the franchise with most money to spend at the start of the auction – over ₹50 crore – and it did splurge ₹14 crore on Australian fast bowler Jhye Richardson.

Punjab also spent ₹8 crore – the highest paid to an uncapped overseas player – for speedy Aussie paceman Riley Meredith, whose base price was just ₹40 lakh.

Smart buy

Punjab also had a smart buy in batsman David Malan, who was a 'steal' at ₹1.50 crore.

Similarly, Delhi Capitals got a great deal when it got

India fast bowler Umesh Yadav for just ₹1 crore.

Among the domestic players, Tamil Nadu's Shahrukh Khan – his base price was just ₹20 lakh – grabbed attention when he was snapped up by Punjab Kings for ₹5.25 crore.

Another big-ticket domestic buy was Shivam Dube, who went to Rajasthan Royals for ₹4.40 crore.

Surprise pick

In a surprise pick for someone who was in his late 30s, Daniel Christian was pencilled in by Royal Challengers for ₹4.80 crore. Contrast this with giant Steve Smith, secured by Delhi Capitals for ₹2.20 crore.

England all-rounder Tom Curran went to Delhi Capitals for ₹5.25 crore, while another pace-bowling all-rounder, Aussie Moises Henriques, went to Punjab Kings for ₹2.20 crore. Paceman Arjun Tendulkar was signed by Mumbai Indians for his base price of ₹20 lakh.

Among the players who went unsold were big-hitters Alex Hales, Jason Roy, Evin Lewis, Aaron Finch and Alex Carey.

■ Pujara was bought by CSK for ₹50 lakh and he will be seen in the IPL for the first time since 2014

Auction 2021 at a glance



PLAYERS SOLD:

57 (22 overseas, 35 Indians)

TOTAL MONEY SPENT:

₹145.30 crore

MOST EXPENSIVE BUYS

- **Chris Morris (RR)**: ₹16.25 crore (RR, 2021)
- **Kyle Jamieson (RCB)**: ₹15 crore (Delhi Daredevils, 2015)
- **Glenn Maxwell (RCB)**: ₹14.25 crore (RCB, 2020)
- **Jhye Richardson (PBKS)**: ₹14 crore; Base price: ₹1.5 crore
- **K. Gowtham (CSK)**: ₹9.25 crore (CSK, 2021)

HIGHEST BIDS FOR UNCAPPED OVERSEAS CRICKETERS

Riley Meredith (Australia): ₹8 crore (PBKS, 2021)

Jofra Archer (England): ₹7.20 crore (RR, 2018)

HIGHEST BIDS FOR UNCAPPED INDIAN CRICKETERS

K. Gowtham: ₹9.25 crore (2021, CSK)

Ben Stokes: ₹14.5 crore (Rising Pune Supergiant, 2017)

Glenn Maxwell: ₹14.25 crore (RCB, 2021)

Varun Chakravarthy:

₹8.4 crore (KKR, 2018)

PROMINENT UNSOLD PLAYERS (2021)

Alex Hales (England): Base price: ₹1.5 crore

Jason Roy (England): Base price: ₹2 crore

Evin Lewis (West Indies): Base price: ₹1 crore

Aaron Finch (Australia): Base price: ₹1 crore

Hanuma Vihari (India): Base price: ₹1 crore

Sheldon Cottrell (West Indies): Base price: ₹1 crore

Gowtham sets a new high in IPL

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

K. Gowtham became the most expensive uncapped player in IPL history when he was signed by Chennai Super Kings (CSK) for ₹9.25 crore at the auction on Thursday.

Gowtham was picked up after a bidding war between Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) and CSK.

KKR and SRH initially pushed the bids up to ₹7.50 crore, before CSK entered the mix and beat out SRH to secure the deal.

Gowtham is thrilled to get the chance to play under CSK superstar and skipper M.S. Dhoni. "I'm very happy to play for CSK. It is a dream come true for me – to play under 'Thala' (Dhoni) and with (Suresh) Raina bhai."

"I'm very excited; I'm still nervous and shivering. I'm very pleased that CSK has so much faith in me. I will try to win as many games as possible," Gowtham said in a video posted on CSK's Twitter handle.

IPL 2021 DUGOUTS

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS



Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Kuldeep Yadav, Lockie Ferguson, Pat Cummins, Prasidh Krishna, Sandeep Warrier, Shivan Mavi, Vaibhav Arora, Varun Chakravarthy.

ALL-ROUNDERS: Andre Russell, Ben Cutting, Pawan Negi, Shakib Al Hasan, Sunil Narine, Venkatesh Iyer.

MUMBAI INDIANS



BATSMEN: Rohit Sharma (Capt.), Aditya Tare (wk), Anmolpreet Singh, Chris Lynn, Ishan Kishan (wk), Quinton de Kock (wk), Saurabh Tiwary, Suryakumar Yadav.

ALL-ROUNDERS: Ben Stokes, Chris Morris, Jofra Archer, Liam Livingstone, Mahipal Lomror, Shivan Dube.

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE



BATSMEN: Virat Kohli (Capt.), AB de Villiers (wk), Devdutt Padikkal, Josh Philippe (wk), K.S. Bharat (wk), Mohammed Azharuddin (wk), Rajat Patidar, Sachin Baby.

ALL-ROUNDERS: Adam Milne, Dhawal Kulkarni, Jasprit Bumrah, Jayant Yadav, Mohsin Khan, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Piyush Chawla, Rahul Chahar, Trent Boult.

ALL-ROUNDERS: Anukul Roy, Arjun Tendulkar, Hardik Pandya, James Neesham, Kieron Pollard, Krinal Pandya, Marco Jansen, Yuvendra Chahal.

PUNJAB KINGS



BATSMEN: K.L. Rahul (Capt. & wk), Chris Gayle, Deepak Hooda, Mandeep Singh, Mayank Agarwal, Nicholas Pooran (wk), Prabhsimran Singh (wk), Sarfaraz Khan.

ALL-ROUNDERS: Arshdeep Singh, Chris Jordan, Darshan Nalkarni, Harpreet Brar, Ishan Porel, Jhye Richardson, Mohammed Shami, M. Ashwin, Ravi Bishnoi, Riley Meredith, Saurabh Kumar.

ALL-ROUNDERS: Dawid Malan, Fabian Allen, Jalaj Saxena, Moises Henriques, Shahrukh Khan, Utkarsh Singh.

ALL-ROUNDERS: Abhishek Sharma, Abdul Samad, Jason Holder, Kedar Jadhav, Mitchell Marsh, Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan, Vijay Shankar, Virat Singh.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS



BATSMEN: Sanju Samson (Capt. &

Mega bucks at the mini-auction

A look at the players who made waves at the auction on Thursday:

Chris Morris (RR, ₹16.25 crore)

The South African all-rounder, representing RCB in IPL 2020, missed a large part of the tournament due to a stomach muscle injury. This led to Morris being released by RCB, but the heavy bidding in Thursday's auction showed that he was still in high demand.

Kyle Jamieson (RCB, ₹15 crore): A tall speedster, Jamieson can bowl at good pace and extract awkward bounce off the surface. The Kiwi can also make useful lower middle-order contributions with the bat.

Glenn Maxwell (RCB, ₹14.25 crore): It came as no surprise that RCB and CSK bid heavily for Maxwell, gi-



ven that both teams were in desperate need of a middle-order finisher. Maxwell will hope to erase his sub-par run of form in IPL 2020 with a big show this time around.

Jhye Richardson (Punjab Kings, ₹14 crore): The Australian pacer finished as the highest wicket-taker in the recent Big Bash T20 League

(BBL), which no doubt boosted his IPL auction stock. Richardson is also capable of hitting a few lusty blows with the bat in the death overs.

K. Gowtham (CSK, ₹9.25 crore)

The Karnataka all-rounder may have played only two matches for KXIP last season, but there was no doubt his match-winning T20 abilities. Gowtham can keep it tight with his flat off-spinners, or come to the party with devastating sixes as a middle-order finisher.

Riley Meredith (Punjab Kings, ₹8 crore): The 24-year-old fast bowler was bought for a surprisingly high price, given that he has no international experience. Meredith did have a good T20 campaign, finishing with 16 wickets.

Compiled by Ashwin Achal

Meet the new Shahrukh Khan

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI



Perhaps it is in the name. Shahrukh Khan was meant to be a celebrity.

The heavy-hitter was back in the team bus after completing Tamil Nadu practice session in Indore ahead of the Vijay Hazare Trophy when he followed the IPL auction on his mobile.

When the 25-year-old Shahrukh's name came up, there was hectic bidding at the end of which Punjab Kings secured him for ₹5.25 crore (base price: ₹20 lakh).

Shahrukh said to *The Hindu*, "No, I was not nervous when my name came on. Finally when I went for over ₹5 crore, it was a nice feeling."

Also in the bus was leg-spinner M. Ashwin who too plays for Punjab Kings. "He was very pleased. Finally, he had a teammate from Tamil Nadu in the franchise."

Then his family from back home in Chennai called and Shahrukh said, "They were all very happy."

Shahrukh overcame a difficult phase last year when he was ignored at the IPL auction. Then he underwent a surgery on his finger but came back strongly in the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament where he came up with a match-winning knock against Himachal Pradesh.

Now he is among the big buys in the IPL. This Shahrukh is meant for stardom.

WHO WENT WHERE

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS:

Money spent: ₹17.35 crore

Players bought: 6

K. Gowtham (₹9.25 crore), Moeen Ali (₹7 crore), Cheteshwar Pujara (₹50 lakh), K. Bhagath Varma (₹20 lakh), C. Hari Nishaanth (₹20 lakh), M. Harishankar Reddy (₹20 lakh).

DELHI CAPITALS:

Money spent: ₹11.25 crore

Players bought: 8

Tom Curran (₹5.25 crore), Steven Smith (₹2.2 crore), Sam Billings (₹2 crore), Umesh Yadav (₹1 crore), Ripl Patel (₹20 lakh), Vishnu Vinod (₹20 lakh), Lukman Meriwala (₹20 lakh), M. SiddhARTH (₹20 lakh).

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS:

Money spent: ₹7.55 crore

Players bought: 8

Shakib Al Hasan (₹3.2 crore), Harbhajan Singh (₹2 crore), Ben Cutting (₹75 lakh), Karun Nair (₹50 lakh), Pawan Negi (₹50 lakh), Venkatesh Iyer (₹20 lakh), Sheldon Jackson (₹20 lakh), Vaibhav Arora (₹20 lakh).

MUMBAI INDIANS:

Money spent: ₹11.7 crore

Players bought: 7

Nathan Coulter-Nile (₹5 crore), Adam Milne (₹3.2 crore), Piyush Chawla (₹2.4 crore), James Neesham (₹50 lakh), Yuvraj Singh (₹20 lakh), Marco Jansen (₹20 lakh), Arjun Tendulkar (₹20 lakh).

NEUFC holds Chennaiyin

SPORTS BUREAU

BAMBOLIM

A stoppage-time penalty helped NorthEast United FC (NEUFC) pull off a 3-3 draw against Chennaiyin FC (CFC) in an Indian Super League contest in Bambolim on Thursday.

Luka Majcen produced a goal in the last minute of the added time to help Churchill Brothers down Chennai City FC (CCFC) 2-1 in the I-League on Thursday.

The results: ISL: Chennaiyin 3 (L. Chhantge 8, 52, Manuel Lanzarote 50+pen) drew with NEUFC 3 (Imran Khan 14, Deshorn Brown 43, Luis Machado 90+pen).

Friday's match: ATK Mohun Bagan v SC East Bengal, 7.30 p.m.

I-League: Aizawl 3 (Mal-sawmluanga 16, Lalremsinga 64, Lalliansinga 67) bt Mohammedan SC 0; Real Kashmir 1 (Dicka 72) drew with RoundGlass Punjab 1 (Beitia 67+pen); CCFC 1 (Skrijet 64+pen) lost to Churchill 2 (Majcen 49, 90+4).

Ankita in doubles final

SPORTS BUREAU

MELBOURNE

Ankita Raina and Kamilla Rakhimova of Russia beat Francesca Jons and Nadia Podoroska 4-6, 6-4, [11-9] in the Phillip Island Trophy WTA 250 tennis doubles semi.

Other results:

\$52,080 Challenger, Potchefstroom: First round: Teymuraz Gabashvili (Rus) & Mark Vervoot (Ned) bt Benjamin Lock (Zim) & Arjun Kadhe 7-5, 5-7, [10-7].

\$15,000 ITF, Sharm El Sheikh: Women, quarters: Raphaelle Lacasse (Can) & Ashmira Easwaramurthi bt Lucie Havlickova & Barbora Palicova (Cze) 6-2, 6-3. Men, second round: Erik Cepaldi (Ita) bt Sasi Kumar Mukund 7-6(7), 6-2.

City pulls further ahead

Atletico suffers a slight wobble with draw away to Levante

EURO LEAGUES

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LIVERPOOL



Unstoppable: Mahrez fires in Manchester City's second past Everton's flailing defence. • AFP

Manchester City moved 10 points clear in the Premier League as second-half goals from Riyad Mahrez and Bernardo Silva powered Pep Guardiola's team to a 3-1 win at Everton on Wednesday.

A 17th straight win in all competitions – including 12 in a row in the league – wasn't looking so clear-cut after Richarlison cancelled out Phil Foden's opener for City before halftime. It was only the second time in the last nine league games City has failed to keep a clean sheet. However, Mahrez regained the lead for City in the 63rd minute as he cut in from the right and bent the ball in off the far post. Silva scored with a similar strike in the 77th.

With City becoming the

six points clear of second-placed Real Madrid and have a game in hand, but have seen their control of the title race slip slightly after two draws in three matches.

The results: Premier League: Burnley 1 (Barnes 52) drew with Fulham 1 (Aina 49); Everton 1 (Richarlison 37) lost to Manchester City 3 (Foden 32, Mahrez 63, Silva 77).

LaLiga: Levante 1 (Bardhi 17) drew with Atletico Madrid 1 (Llorente 37).

Diego Simeone's men sit

NEW DELHI ROUND-UP

Easy for Youth XI

The scores: Sporting Club 206/7 in 40 overs (Raman Rana 65, Archit Malik 44) bt M-10 Academy 179 in 37.2 overs (Dhruv Kumar 56, Ravi Yadav 4/40).

Mridul scores century

Mridul Surroch's 112 and all-round performance by Ashutosh Aggarwal saw Crescent Academy defeat York Club by eight runs in the SH Sports u-19 tourney.

The scores:

Crescent Academy 255/7 in 40 overs (Mridul Surroch 112, Ashutosh Aggarwal 46, Harshil Jain 37) bt York Club 247 in 39.5 overs (Vansh Mehra 67, Hitesh Kumar 49, Ashutosh Aggarwal 3/29, Amanpreet Singh 3/44).

Badal, Sampoorn shine

Badal Viswali picked up four wickets and Sampoorn

TV PICKS

Australian Open: Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 10.30 a.m.

Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Saturday)

Serie A: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 11 p.m. & 1.15 a.m. (Saturday)

ISL: Star Sports 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

Final ODI may be moved to Mumbai

AMOL KARHADKAR

MUMBAI

The concluding game of England's tour of India – the third ODI on March 28 – is likely to be shifted from Pune to Mumbai in order to ensure a safe passage back home for the visiting contingent.

By the time England reaches Pune for the ODI series, it would have spent almost two months in India. The side is scheduled to depart from Mumbai early on March 29.

It is learnt that the BCCI is considering acceding to a "soft request" by the ECB in this regard.

The Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA), the host for the ODI series, confirmed the development on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the India and England teams landed in Ahmedabad on Thursday for the final two Tests.

Curry turns on the heat

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SAN FRANCISCO

Stephen Curry sealed a stunning late fightback to help Golden State Warriors to a 120-112 overtime victory over Miami Heat on Wednesday.

Curry scored eight of the final 11

points to finish with a 25-point haul.

The results:

Wizards 130 bt Nuggets 128; Bulls 105 bt Pistons 102; Pelicans 124 lost to Trail Blazers 126; Grizzlies 122 bt Thunder 113; Warriors 120 bt Heat 112 (OT); Clippers 96 lost to Jazz 114.

icmr **ICMR - NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EPIDEMIOLOGY**
R-127, Second Main Road, TNHB,
Ayapakkam, Chennai – 600077.

WALK-IN INTERVIEW / WRITTEN TEST

Candidates are invited for Walk-in Interview / Written Test on 08th March 2021 for the Post of **PROJECT CONSULTANT (Non-Medical Lab)** on Contract basis under "CoDenChik" project.

For Application Proforma and other details regarding qualification, experience, etc., please refer to www.nie.gov.in

Director

ODISHA CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION LIMITED
(Govt. of Odisha Undertaking)
UNIT-VIII, BHUBANESWAR.
e-mail: theoccld@odishaconstruction.com
GSTIN - 21AAACO2571K22M

e-Procurement Notice No. 29 /OCCL-2020-21 (on-line)

1st CORRIGENDUM

* The availability of tender (on-line) for the aforesaid tender is hereby extended up to 22.02.2021, 5.30 P.M.

* The Opening of Technical Bid of the above tender is hereby postponed to dtd.23.02.2021, 12.00 P.M.

All other Terms & Conditions of the above tender remain unaltered.

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website (www.tendersodisha.gov.in)

Managing Director

OPR-34120/11/0008/2021

CAD-1283

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
CENTRAL CIRCLE, RURAL WORKS, BHUBANESWAR
No. _____ / Date:- 11.02.2021

e Procurement Notice for Building Work for the year 2020-21

1. Name of the Work	: Building Works			
2. Total No. of Packages	: 1 No. of Building Work			
3. Estimated Cost of the Package	: Rs.129.82 lakhs			
4. Class of Contractor	: Estimated cost more than Rs.40.00 lakhs & up to Rs. 3.00 Crores. B Class & A class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authorities			
5. Period of Completion	: As mentioned in Column-6 of the Annexure			
6. Offered rates by bidder	: The offered rate by the contractor shall be excluding GST.			
7. Other details				
Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding	Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender
		From To		Technical Bid Financial Bid
1	2	3 4	5	6 7
Superintending Engineer, Central Circle, Rural Works, Bhubaneswar	Tender-Online-C.C.-04 of 2021	22.02.2021 at 11.00 A.M.	Up to 5.00 P.M.	08.03.2021 up to 3.00 PM, at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the web site www.tendersodisha.gov.in

O-1101: Superintending Engineer, Central Circle, Rural Works, Bhubaneswar, OPR-25082/11/0011/2021

Memorial service for



Dr. V. SHANTA

CHAIRMAN, CANCER INSTITUTE (WIA), ADYAR

11 MARCH 1927 - 19 JANUARY 2021

Please join us for a virtual
memorial service at

4:00 pm, 20 February, 2021

as we celebrate
the life of Dr. Shanta

Link to join: www.aurastreams.com/drвшантамемориал

You may also visit the link to leave
your tributes to Dr. Shanta

GOVERNING COUNCIL, MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF CANCER INSTITUTE (WIA)

PARADIP PORT TRUST
SAGARMALA

No: AD/RSC-II-25/407/2021/409 Dt.17th Feb, 2021

ADVERTISEMENT

Applications are invited from Indian Nationals for filling up 03(three) posts of **Traffic Officer**, on **contract basis** in Paradip Port Trust. For further details, visit to our website: www.paradipport.gov.in.

Sr. Dy. Secretary
PPT/PR/412/20-21, Dt.18.02.2021

भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
अंतरिक्ष विभाग / DEPARTMENT OF SPACE

विक्रम साराभाई अंतरिक्ष केंद्र / VIKRAM SARABHAJAN SPACE CENTRE

नियमण एवं अनुसंधान ग्रुप / CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GROUP

तिरुवनंतपुरम् / THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695 022 (फोन नं / Ph. No. 0471 – 2564568 / 2564537)

ई-निविदा सूचना नं. (1) वीएसएससी / सीएमजी / सिविल / 12/2020-21 दिनांक 17-02-2021 तथा
(2) वीएसएससी / सीएमजी/सिविल / 13/2020-21 दिनांक 17-02-2021

E-Tender Notice Nos. (1) VSSC/CMG/CIVIL/12/2020-21 Dt. 17.02.2021 and
(2) VSSC/CMG/CIVIL/13/2020-21 Dt. 17.02.2021

ई-निविदा आमंत्रित करते हुए संक्षिप्त सूचना / BRIEF NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

I) भारत के राज्यपात्रों की ओर से, समिति श्रृंगी के अधीन निम्नलिखित कार्य के लिए ई-टेंडरिंग द्वारा आमंत्रित की जाती है।
On behalf of the President of India, online item-rate tenders are invited through e-tendering for the following works under composite category.

क्रम सं Sl.No.	विवरण / Description	ब्यौरे / Details (1)	ब्यौरे / Details (2)
1	कार्य का शीर्षक / Title of work	उल्लिखित के लिए टर्म्स, वीएसएससी, तुंबा में विविध भवनों का निर्माण (1) पाइरो युक्ति समुच्चय सूचिया, (2) एस्पीएस सूचिया, (3) एप्सोर्ड बैंडर, सूचिया तथा (4) प्रोटो संविरचन शॉप (एस्पीएससी सूचियाएँ) / Construction of various Buildings for (1) Pyro Devices Assembly Facility, (2) LBS Production Facility, (3) ASOE Storage Facility and (4) Proto Fabrication Shop (SPARC Facilities) at TERLS, VSSC, Thumba (Civil, PH, Mech. & Electrical works)	टर्म्स, वीएसएससी, तुंबा में तकनीकी सुविधा व्यौरों का निर्माण सूचिया संरचना (स्पार्क सूचियाएँ) के लिए भवनों का निर्माण (सिविल, पीएच, यांत्रिक तथा विद्युत कार्य) / Construction of Buildings for Technical Facility Block and Inspection Facility Augmentation (SPARC Facilities) at TERLS, VSSC, Thumba (Civil, PH, Mech. & Electrical works)
2	नियमा में दी गई अनुमानित लागत / Estimate cost put to tender	कुल/Total - ₹/Rs. 1911.65 लाख/Lakhs प्रति विविध भवनों का निर्माण (1) पाइरो युक्ति समुच्चय सूचिया, (2) एस्पीएस सूचिया, (3) एप्सोर्ड बैंडर, सूचिया तथा (4) प्रोटो संविरचन शॉप (एस्पीएससी सूचियाएँ)	कुल/Total - ₹/Rs. 1515.60 लाख/Lakhs प्रति विविध भवनों का निर्माण (1) पाइरो युक्ति समुच्चय सूचिया, (2) एस्पीएस सूच