

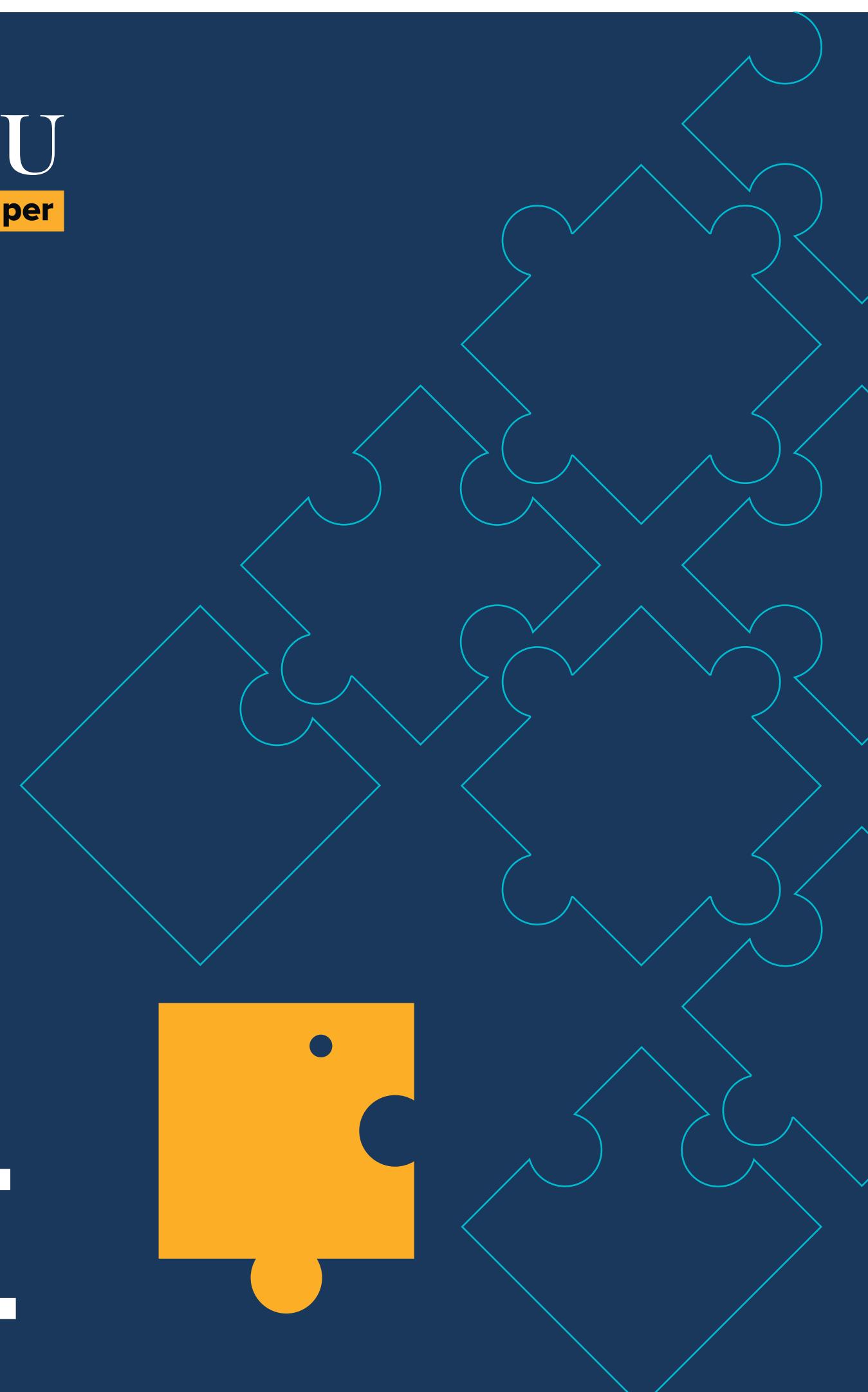
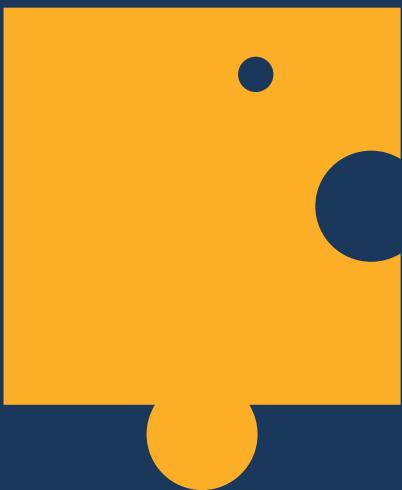
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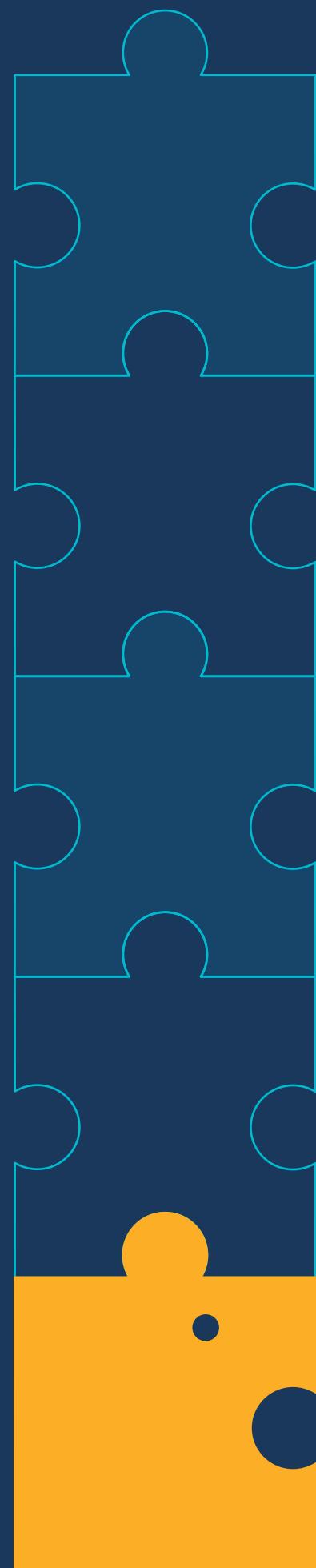
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page 9



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page 10



China Parliament to mull expanded drone use along border areas  
page 12



Donald Trump set to take spotlight with post-presidency speech  
page 12

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## NEARBY



'Farm laws are death warrants for farmers'

GAZIABAD  
Describing the contentious farm laws as "death warrants" for farmers, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday gave flight to the Aam Aadmi Party's political ambitions in Uttar Pradesh, and asked a well-attended kisan panchayat in Meerut to vote for a party with the 'right intent'.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Woman killed during snatching bid, two held

NEW DELHI  
A 25-year-old woman was stabbed to death while resisting a chain-snatching bid in north-west Delhi's Adarsh Nagar. Two men have been arrested in connection with the case. Simran Kaur was returning home along with her two-year-old daughter and mother when the incident occurred.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2



Over 50% voter turnout in municipal by-elections

NEW DELHI  
The by-elections to five civic wards in Delhi were held on Sunday with strict adherence to COVID-19 protocols. The State Election Commission said the overall voter turnout was 50.86%. The highest turnout was 59.19% in Kalyanpur, followed by 55.95% in Trilokpuri.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

EDUCATIONPLUS ▶ PAGE 5

## ISRO puts Brazil's Amazonia-1, 18 other satellites into orbit

First dedicated mission of the space agency's commercial arm NewSpace India Ltd.

T.K. ROHIT  
CHENNAI

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Sunday successfully launched Brazil's optical earth observation satellite, Amazonia-1, and 18 co-passenger satellites – five from India and 13 from the U.S. – from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota.

The satellites were carried on board the PSLV-C51, the 53rd flight of ISRO's launch vehicle and the first dedicated mission of its commercial arm, NewSpace India Ltd. The mission was undertaken under a commercial arrangement with Spaceflight Inc., U.S.

The PSLV-C51, equipped with two solid strap-on boosters, the third such launch of the PSLV-DL variant, lifted off at 10.24 a.m. from the first launch pad at Sriharikota.

Of the 13 satellites from the U.S., one is a technology demonstration satellite and the remaining are for two-way communications and data relay.

The satellites from India are the Satish Dhawan SAT (SDSAT) built by Space Kidz India, a nano-satellite intended to study the radiation levels, space weather and demonstrate long-range communication technologies; the UNITYsat, a combination of three satellites for providing radio relay services; and another satellite belonging to the DRDO.

The SDSAT has an engraving of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the top panel to show solidarity for the *aatmanirbhar* initiative and space privatisation, Space Kidz said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

### Blazing a trail

ISRO's first launch of 2021 in numbers

19 satellites, including Brazil's earth observation satellite Amazonia-1, were carried by the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C51

13 satellites were from the U.S.

5 satellites, including the Satish Dhawan Satellite from the Chennai-based Space Kidz India, were built by students

78 th mission from Sriharikota

■ ISRO has till date launched 342 foreign satellites from 34 countries

■ Amazonia-1, with a mission life of four years, will monitor deforestation in the Amazon region

■ The Satish Dhawan Satellite has an engraving of PM Narendra Modi on the top panel to show solidarity and gratitude for the *aatmanirbhar* initiative and space privatisation



Deep impact: PSLV-C51 lifting off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on Sunday. ■ PTI

## Satellite launch a high point in space ties, say India, Brazil

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

The successful launch of Brazil's Amazonia-1 satellite by the Indian Space Research Organisation marks a new high point in space cooperation between the two countries that began nearly two decades ago, officials say.

The launch was witnessed by the visiting Brazilian Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Marcos

Pontes, and the heads of the Brazilian Space Agency (AEB) and the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) at Sriharikota on Sunday.

"This confirms the infinite potential of the [India-Brazil] partnership to overcome our development challenges through high technology," Brazilian Ambassador Andre Aranha Correa do Lago told *The Hindu*, adding that the new satellite

would "open the door for multiple business and governmental opportunities" and help "fulfil the environmental commitments of the Brazilian government" towards the Amazon rainforest.

Welcoming the news of the launch, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called it a "historic moment" in India-Brazil space cooperation.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## In Nagaland, an itch to revive prickly cages for lawbreakers

They are meant for shaming offenders

RAHUL KARMAKAR  
GUWAHATI

Some villages in Nagaland are trying to revive a traditional form of punishment that seeks to check crime with an itch in time.

Social offenders or violators of Naga customary laws have over the ages dreaded a cramped, triangular cage made from the logs of an indigenous tree that irritates the skin.

The dread is more of humiliation or loss of face within the community or clan than of spending at least a day scratching furiously without any space to move.

Such itchy cages are referred to as *khuji ghar* in Nagamese – a pidgin lingua franca – but each Naga community has its own name. The Aos, one of the major tribes of Nagaland, call it

*Shi-ki* that means flesh-house.

A few villages where traditional practices are very strong still prescribe this form of punishment, a deterrent for offenders of various shades, including robbers and drug addicts. Many villages are trying to revive it," Sanen Pongen, the chairman of Chuchuyimlang village council in Mokokchung district, told *The Hindu*.

In full public view The cage is usually placed at a central spot in the village, usually in front of the *morung*, or bachelor's dormitory, for the inmate to be in full public view.

"The cage is made of the logs of Masang-fung, a local tree that people avoid because of the irritation it causes. It does not affect the palm but people who make the cages have to be careful," Mr. Pongen said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8



ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R KUMAR

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RAKESH VERMA

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## Woman raped by scribe records statement

Accused absconding since FIR filed against him, manhunt on: police

### STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 22-year-old woman, who was allegedly raped by a TV news anchor, recorded her statement before a Magistrate, the police said on Sunday. They have also obtained CCTV footage of the hotel where the crime happened.

A team of Delhi Police is in Mumbai to arrest the accused,

who is absconding since the FIR was filed against him. He is not at home and his mobile numbers are switched off, an officer said.

He said the victim reported the incident on the day it happened at the Chanakyapuri police station.

She was then taken to a hospital for medical examination. The next day, the victim had

recorded her statement under Section 164 of CrPC before a Magistrate.

"In the footage, the victim and the accused can be seen," said the officer.

On February 23, the man took her to the hotel and forced himself on her.

The victim is known to the 28-year-old accused for the past three years.

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR DEPARTMENT OF FOOD, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS.

#### Subject - Appointment of Member-1 in the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission-regarding.

Advertisement No. 01-FCS&CA of 2021 dated 26/02/2021

Last date for acceptance of Applications – 18/03/2021

Applications are hereby invited from suitable and interested candidates for being considered for appointment to the post of Member-1, District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (District Commission) in different Districts of Jammu & Kashmir in terms of Section 28 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, read with the rules framed there under issued vide G.S.R 452(E) dated 15-07-2020 against the available vacancies.

Total vacancies of Member-1: 20 (twenty) @ one in each District Commission. All genders are eligible to apply.

#### 1. Qualification:-

The applicant should-

- i) Not be less than 35 years of age on the date of notification of the advertisement;
- ii) Possess a Bachelor's degree from a recognized University;
- iii) Be of ability, integrity and standing, and having special knowledge and professional experience of not less than 15 years in Consumer Affairs, Law, Public Affairs, Administration, Economics, Commerce, Industries, Finance, Management, Engineering, Technology, Public Health or Medicine.

#### 2. Disqualification:-

The applicant shall be disqualified for appointment as a Member, if he/she

- i) has been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for an offence which involves moral turpitude; or
- ii) is adjudged to be insolvent, or
- iii) is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court, or
- iv) has been removed or dismissed from service of the State Government or the Central Government or a body corporate owned or controlled by such Government; or
- v) has, in the opinion of the State Government, such financial or other interest as is likely to affect prejudicially the discharge by him/her of his/her functions as a member.

#### 3. Term & Conditions:-

- i) The appointment is subject to submission of an undertaking by the candidate that he/she does not and will not have any such financial or other interest as are likely to affect prejudicially his functions as Member of the District Commission.
- ii) The Member shall receive salary and allowances and their terms and conditions of services shall be as per the rules notified by the Government in this regard.

- iii) The Member of a District Commission shall hold office for a term of four years or upto the age of 65 years whichever is earlier.
- iv) Every appointment of a Member shall be subject to submission of a certificate of Physical fitness signed by a Civil Surgeon or Chief Medical Officer to his/her medical fitness.

- 5. Declaration of Financial and other interest- A Member before entering upon his/her office shall declare his assets and liabilities.

- 6. No TA/DA is admissible for attending any test or interview in this connection, if conducted by the Selection Committee.

#### 7. Important instructions before applying:-

- a) Applications shall be submitted only digitally through an e-mail by attaching the duly filled application form in PDF format at the given e-mail address:- cdcrcorrik@gmail.com
- b) The Department of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Government of J&K, shall duly acknowledge the receipt of every application through a return mail.

- c) A fee of Rs. 2000/- (Two Thousand only) per application has to be deposited through Government of J&K's Treasury under scheme code 0408011010090383(under the classification Receipt Head- 0408, Sub Major Head- 01, Minor Head-101, Group Head- 0099 and Sub Head-0383). The receipt of Treasury Fee shall be the only enclosure to be attached with the duly filled application form in PDF.

- d) It is clarified that multiple applications have to be submitted in case a candidate wants to apply for multiple District Commissions. Separate Fee is to be submitted for each application.

- e) Candidates are not required to submit any document along with the Application Form, except for the receipt of Treasury Fee. Original documents/testimonials will be seen only when specifically called for Viva or interaction with the Selection Committee, at a later stage.

- f) The Selection Committee, constituted by the Government in terms of G.O. no. 14 – JK(FCS&CA) of 2021 dated 03-02-2021, may shortlist the applications as per the below mentioned criteria-matrix, only if required on account of receipt of a very large number of applications

S.No	Benchmark	Points to be awarded
1	For possessing at least 15 years of professional experience exclusively in Consumer Affairs or Law.	03
2.	For possessing professional experience in any of the prescribed fields beyond 15 years.	02 points for each additional year beyond 15 years.
3	For holding a Master's degree from a recognized university in any of the prescribed fields	02 points for each Master with at least 65 % marks.
4.	For holding a PhD degree from a recognized university in any of the prescribed fields.	03

- g) If shortlisting of candidates is resorted to, the Selection Committee may invite such number of candidates for Viva / interaction as it deems appropriate.

- h) The procedure for appointment shall be in consonance with Rule 6 (Procedure for appointment) of the Consumer Protection (Qualification for appointment, method of recruitment, procedure of appointment, term of office, resignation and removal of the President and members of the State and District Commission) Rules, 2020, the Selection Committee shall make its recommendations of suitable panel after taking into account the suitability, record of past performance, integrity and adjudicatory experience of the candidates.

- i) The above mentioned shortlisting criteria, however, shall not be binding upon the Selection Committee while recommending its panel of candidates to the government. As per rule 6(9) of the Consumer Protection (Qualification for appointment, method of recruitment, procedure of appointment, term of office, resignation and removal of the President and members of the State and District Commission) Rules, 2020, the Selection Committee shall make its recommendations of suitable panel after taking into account the suitability, record of past performance, integrity and adjudicatory experience of the candidates.

- 8. The Selection Committee reserves the right to issue any clarification at any later stage, if required.

(Jugal Kishore Anand, KAS)

Additional Secretary to the Government, Government of J&K

Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Affix your recent passport size photograph duly attested

Application Form

Advertisement No. 01 - JK(FCS&CA) of 2021 dated 26.02.2021

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Affix your recent passport size photograph duly attested

APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF MEMBER-1, DISTRICT CONSUMER DISPUTES REDRESSAL COMMISSION (DISTRICT COMMISSION)

Affix your recent passport size photograph duly attested

1. Name of the District for which applying :
2. Name of Applicant :
3. Gender :
4. Father's Name / Spouse's Name :
5. Permanent Address :
6. Address for Correspondence With PIN Code :
7. Contact details for correspondence Residence / Office landline - Mobile (mandatory) - E-mail (mandatory) -
8. Date of Birth :
9. Age as on date of Notification :
10. Present Occupation & Annual Income :
11. Qualification (Graduation and onwards) :

EXAMINATION PASSED	UNIVERSITY	YEAR OF PASSING	% OF MARKS/CGPA

#### 12. In case of in-service candidates:

- i. Date of joining of service
- ii. Present designation
- iii. Scale of pay & basic pay
- iv. Date of superannuation
- v. Government under which serving

#### 13. In case of retired candidates:-

- i. Date of joining of service
- ii. Last post held (on substantive basis)
- iii. Last Pay scale drawn
- iv. Date of retirement
- v. Government under which served

#### 14. Experience (which is considered necessary for current assignment) :

Name of category - \_\_\_\_\_ (whether in Consumer Affairs, Law, Public Affairs, Administration, Economics, Commerce, Industries, Finance, Management, Engineering, Technology, Public Health or Medicine)

S No	Position held	Name & Address of Organization	Nature of work handled	Period

#### DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all statements made in this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. In the event of any information being found false or incorrect or ineligibility being detected before, during or after the process of selection / appointment, my candidature will stand cancelled and all my claims to the appointment will stand forfeited.

Date:- \_\_\_\_\_

(SIGNATURE OF THE CANDIDATE)

NB:-1) All particulars should be filed in capital Letters.

2) Application without duly authenticated photograph and receipt of Fee would be treated as incomplete and void ab initio.

DIP/J-12492/20

## Kejriwal gives wings to his party's U.P. ambitions at kisan panchayat in Meerut

He promises to control erring sugar mills in State, ridicules State Chief Minister for not doing the same

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GAZIABAD

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday described the new farm laws as "death warrants" for farmers and gave flight to Aam Aadmi Party's political ambition to cross the Yamuna and enter Uttar Pradesh.

Promising to control the erring sugar mills in Uttar Pradesh on the lines of power distribution companies in Delhi, Mr. Kejriwal asked a kisan panchayat in Meerut to vote for his party with the right intent.

He said farmers were in pain for 70 years because they have been cheated by different governments and parties. Now, the three farm laws have made it a matter of life and death. "The farmers have been asking for right price of their produce," he said. Party manifestos, he said, promise the right price of their crops but when these parties come to power, they forget about



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal at the kisan panchayat in Meerut.

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

their commitment.

He said the BJP had left the Colonial government behind in tormenting the farmers. Mr. Kejriwal said farmers were sitting on the road in the cold because "these laws would reduce them to labourers on their own land. It has come down to a do or die kind of

situation."

He said that in 2014, BJP asked for votes by promising to implement the Swaminathan Committee Report. "However, within three years in power, it submitted an affidavit in the Supreme Court that said minimum support price could not be 50% more than the cost of

the produce. It amounts to backstabbing the farmers."

He charged the BJP government of planning the Red Fort incident. "As a Chief Minister, I meet different people. I have been told that farmers were deliberately guided towards the Red Fort. Our farmers can't be anti-national."

Responding to the PM's promise that MSP will remain, Mr. Kejriwal said he wanted to see a mandi in U.P. where the crop is being bought at MSP. He also ridiculed U.P. CM Yogi Adityanath for not being able to stand up to sugar mills. "Their Ministers say that guaranteeing MSP would cost ₹1 lakh crore to the exchequer. I say without spending a single extra penny, the government could buy 23 crops at the MSP. In return, the government would get the crops that it would sell in the market. It might lead to profit or loss but in the long run, it all evens out."

## Some protesters at Ghazipur border find shade under flyover, crowds thin

Farmers say movement is moving with 'full pace' and in rotational shifts

### SAURABH TRivedi

NEW DELHI

With the summer approaching and the temperatures rising, the protesters at Ghazipur border have started to move under the flyover at U.P. Gate for shade. The crowd at the main stage has thinned as the protesters are keeping to their tents.

An organiser, who did not wish to be named said many have gone back to their homes to finish pending work at farms.

#### 'Precautions in place'

"The movement is moving with full pace and strategically. Taking care of protesters, especially old age people, we have requested them to remain inside tents. The plastic sheet that was used in tents in winters has been replaced with bamboo blinds and jute pads," said the organiser.

A protester, Kamal Singh, said their leader is busy mobilising farmers in other States.

"We have made a rotational shift to ensure 2,000 protesters are at the Ghazipur border at any time of the day. We are talking to Ghaziabad administration over power supply issue at the site. We will also arrange for fans and coolers...the protesters will not face any inconvenience," said Mr. Kamal.

The tents, which were earlier erected on the highway in the open, have now shifted to under the flyover.

However, due to space crisis, only a few tents could be accommodated under the flyover and the remaining have to be in open. "We have changed the pattern of our protest and all kinds of activities have been shifted to post 5 p.m. Staying under the sun is not a big deal for farmers because during sowing season, we work under direct sun for days. Keeping the health of elderly protesters in mind, we have moved their tents under the flyover or shades," said Kishore Singh, a protester.



## Timings

DELHI

MONDAY, MAR. 01
RISE 06:47 SET 18:21
RISE 20:36 SET 08:14
TUESDAY, MAR. 02
RISE 06:45 SET 18:22
RISE 21:42 SET 08:50
WEDNESDAY, MAR. 03
RISE 06:44 SET 18:23
RISE 22:47 SET 09:28

**Delhi Weather** max min  
Delhi City 32 16  
Safdarjung 32 16  
Palam 31 18

**Delhi Palam Today**  
30°C A cool morning with mist/haze and slight warm afternoon with light winds and bright sunny sky.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
29°C Weather will remain dry with cool haze morning. A comfortable breezy afternoon.

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**THE HINDU**

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## IN BRIEF



## Protest over metro trains 'skipping' stations

NEW DELHI  
Hundreds of people are suffering due to the Aqua Line metro "skipping" 10 stations during peak hours, office-bearers of residents' groups claimed on Sunday, as they held a protest against the Noida Metro Rail Corporation here. PTI



# A SURVIVAL STORY

A year on since the first case of COVID-19 was reported in the Capital, the city has fought back and lived to tell another tale

## Vaccine, the blessing

The vaccine is seen as light at the end of the tunnel and the government has shifted its focus to increase the coverage of vaccination.

Though the situation is currently more or less under control, it was not always like that. There were days when Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was worried and exhorted people to take extreme precautions. He even accepted the government's shortcomings, as the daily count shot up steeply in the months of June, September, and peaking in November. On November 11, 8,593 cases were reported in 24 hours. Soon after, the number of tests was increased, with the highest recorded on December 17, when 90,354 tests were done in 24 hours.

**Early planning**  
Even before the first case was reported, the government started reserving beds in hospitals for COVID-19 patients and eventually

ordered many hospitals to be reserved only for treating the infected.

In the initial months, there were complaints of insufficient PPE kits for healthcare workers, but the situation gradually evened out. In May and June, as cases started to mount, there were numerous complaints about people being forced to hop from one hospital to another in search of beds. Many said they were unable to find a bed, even as beds were available as per official data.

In a video statement on June 27, the Chief Minister had to accept the shortcomings. "In the first week of June, there was a shortage of beds in Delhi and there were fewer tests. Due to shortage of beds, some people did not get beds, and the number of deaths also started to increase," he said, adding that he used to get calls late in the night about the shortage.

To redress the scenario, the

government roped in more private hospitals and even hotels were attached to hospitals to increase the number of beds. But there was a hitch. Many private hospitals started demanding that patients deposit amounts ranging from ₹3 lakh to ₹8 lakh for admission. Apart from the deposits, there were numerous cases of "exorbitant" rates charged from COVID-19 patients.

In early June, the Chief Minister asserted that the government won't allow "black marketing" of beds in private hospitals. Then on June 20, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), headed by the Lt. Governor, accepted recommendations of a committee for fixing rates for COVID-19-related treatment in private hospitals.

In contrast to Delhi, the municipal corporation of Mumbai had capped the prices of isolation beds for COVID-19 patients in private hospitals in the city at

₹4,000 a day as early as mid-March.

## Controversies galore

There was no dearth of controversies either. On June 7, Mr. Kejriwal said government and private hospitals will be reserved for people of Delhi and Central government hospitals will be for anyone from across the country.

The decision came under flak, and on June 8, Lt. Governor Anil Baijal overruled the decision. This led to a confrontation between the Delhi and Central governments.

Following this, on June 14, Union Home Minister Amit Shah reviewed the condition of Delhi in a meeting with the L-G and the Chief Minister. Since then, the Central government has intervened in the COVID-19 management of the city. Both worked hand in hand and the situation improved.

Within days, based on the Central government directions,



(From left) A health worker collecting swab sample for testing at Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital in New Delhi; a beneficiary taking COVID-19 vaccine.

■ FILE PHOTOS: R.V. MOORTHY AND SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

the price of COVID-19 testing in Delhi was capped at ₹2,400.

## Gradual control

When asked about the toughest time during the pandemic, a health department official said: "Though we had the highest number of cases during the second surge in November, by then we were prepared. The systems were in place. But during the first surge in May-June, people were actually finding it difficult to find beds. It was the time when officials were leaving offices at 10 and 11 in the night. That was the toughest time."

Delhi was one of the worst affected cities of the country. The State government reasoned that the large number of flights, which brought back people stuck in other countries, landed at the Delhi airport and this was the reason behind the high number of cases.

Three Ministers of the AAP government – Satyendar Jain, Manish Sisodia, and Gopal Rai – tested positive and were admitted to a private hospital at some point of their treatment.

"Despite various challenges, Delhi fought the virus and brought down both the positive as well as the death rates," the Health Minister's office said in response to a query by *The Hindu*. "The Delhi government did not step back, we proactively

worked and adapted ourselves to the situation and came up with several initiatives that brought the cases down and our initiatives have been copied and followed widely by the entire nation and world," it added.

## The descent

After the peak in November, new cases decreased, despite an increase in testing. The daily new cases have been less than 1,000 for two months and have been staying below 200 cases for almost a month. But there has been a small rise in the past few days with four consecutive days recording 200 or more cases last week.

"There is nothing to worry about. Fluctuations of minor level will happen and the disease won't completely disappear like that. The virus will infect people, who have not been infected, till people have antibodies," said Dr. Jugal Kishore, head of the community medicine department at Safdarjung Hospital, adding that the current increase has to be observed over a longer period of time to draw any conclusions.

The Delhi government official said that the government was yet to find out any particular reason for the current slight increase in cases, but it was looking for possible reasons. The fight, meanwhile, is unceasing.

## 50.86% turnout for municipal corporation by-elections in city

Highest turnout was recorded at Kalyanpuri with 59.19%

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI  
The by-election to five municipal wards in Delhi were conducted on Sunday with strict adherence to COVID-19 protocols. The State Election Commission said that the turnout for the election was 50.86% by 5.30 p.m., when the polling ended.

The highest turnout was 59.19% in Kalyanpuri, followed by 55.95% in Trilokpuri, 55.60% in Chauhan Bangar, 44.58% in Rohini-C and 43.23% in Shalimar Bagh North wards.

Voters started lining up by 7.30 a.m. It adhered to COVID-19 checking norms, like thermal screening and compulsory sanitisation of hands before entering the polling booth. Those without a mask were provided one at some polling stations. There are 327 polling stations, with 26 candidates contesting in the five wards.

According to the State Election Commission, around 2.42 lakh people



People arrive to cast their votes at a polling station in north Delhi on Sunday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

were eligible to cast their votes in two wards under the North Delhi Municipal Corporation and three wards under the East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDM).

In the run-up to the election, AAP, the BJP and the Congress have been fighting it out with rallies and road shows. The parties launched a campaign with senior party leaders canvassing for their candidates, as the election is being seen as a semi-

final before the municipal election scheduled in 2022.

**AAP positive**  
The AAP, which has tasted victory in the Delhi Assembly election, is looking to fare well in the municipal polls as the BJP has been controlling all the three corporations since 2012.

The results of the election, scheduled to be announced on March 3, will set the tone for the run-up to the election next year.

## Two excise officers detained for helping exam candidates cheat

Kingpin and other members of the gang absconding

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM  
Two Haryana Excise Department employees have been detained by the Jind police for helping candidates cheat during Delhi courts exam on Sunday, the police said. The kingpin of the cheating racket is absconding, they said.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team from Uchana police station mounted raid at a farmhouse in the fields of Kakrod village around 3 p.m. and detained two persons who are in their early 30s. "We had a secret informa-

tion that a gang was involved in solving the exam papers, held for various posts in Delhi courts on Sunday, and helping the candidates to cheat using bluetooth. Acting on the information, we mounted a raid at a farmhouse in Kakrod village," said Station House Officer, Uchana, Ravinder Kumar.

The officer said that the kingpin of the gang was identified as Ashok, a resident of Kakrod village. He has previous criminal involvement in similar cases. "The investigation into the matter is being transferred to the crime unit," added Mr. Kumar.

## Plea seeks action over non-filling of vacancies at IHBAS

'Patients with psychiatric, psychological disorder suffering due to shortage of staff'

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A petition filed before the Delhi High Court has sought initiation of contempt proceedings over the non-filling of over 75% vacant posts of doctors and healthcare workers at the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS).

The petition filed by advocate Amit Sahni said that the

IHBAS, a premier mental health and neurosciences institute of the country, has been suffering from acute shortage of doctors and healthcare workers.

Mr. Sahni said that over 75% posts of doctors and health workers are vacant at the IHBAS and hence, patients with psychiatric and clinical psychological disorder have been suffering since long due to acute shortage of medical and other staffers.

"This post-pandemic landscape will be a breeding ground for an increase in chronic stress, anxiety, depression, alcohol dependence, and self-harm," Mr. Sahni had said.

"With such widespread rise in the number of cases of mental disorder patients, it is immensely crucial to have adequate psychiatrists and other staffers to deal with such kind of situation," he added.

He said that this vacancy has continued despite an order of the Delhi High Court in September last year directing the IHBAS to fill up vacancies of faculty and staffers as early as possible.

Mr. Sahni, also a social activist, said he made a representation to the government for tackling shortage of staffers at the IHBAS, but no action has been taken.

## TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT

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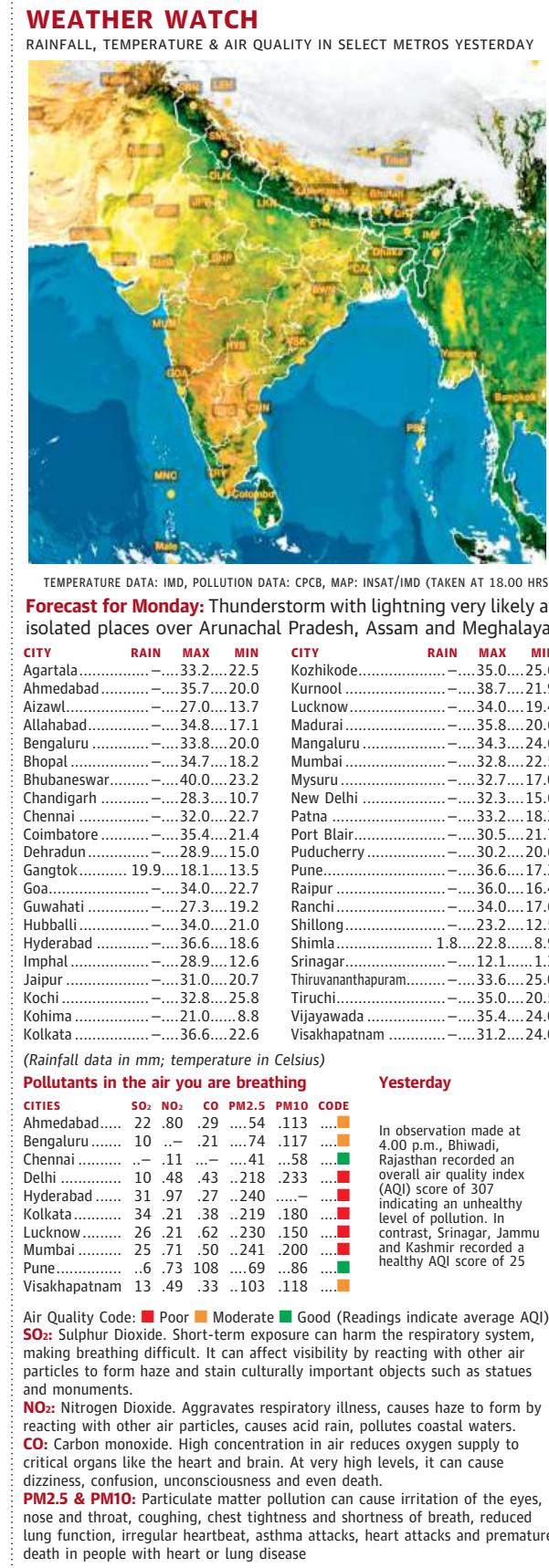
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# Rise above social barriers: Tikait

'Movement will be a success only when landowner joins hands with farm labour'

ANUJ KUMAR  
GHAZIABAD

Delivering a stirring speech in Saharanpur on Sunday, Rakesh Tikait, national spokesperson of Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), said 2021 has seen the rise of farmer as a religion and caste and asked peasants to rise above social barriers.

Underlining the importance of strengthening social ties, Mr. Tikait said the movement would be a success only when "the landowner joins hands with the farm labour."

"I appeal to you to worship the Valmiki community before entering any temple. You may build palaces and forts but without their support, you cannot keep them clean," he said.

At the Ghazipur protest site, a farmer with 50 bighas of land was sharing a tent with one who has only two bighas, he said. "This bonhomie should reflect in villages



BKU spokesperson Rakesh Tikait at a Kisan Mahapanchayat in U.P.'s Saharanpur district on Sunday. ■ PTI

as well. Those who are busy with the movement, their crop will be harvested by others in the villages," the BKU leader said, urging farmers to form committees in villages in this regard.

**Parties cautioned**  
Cautioning political parties not to harvest votes out of the non-political movement, Mr. Tikait said a weak Opposition was also dangerous for

the country. "If it had raised voice in the Parliament, these Bills would not have been passed."

On January 28, he said, the principles of Constitution were about to be violated as the goons of the ruling party were ready to attack and humiliate the farmers returning from the protest. "There was no Opposition party in sight," he remarked.

Giving hints of the road

ahead, Mr. Tikait said "political parties will not change the fortune of the farmer. Country's public will alter the fortune of the farmer, this non-political organisation will change the plight of the farmer."

**I will go to Bengal**  
Towards the end of the speech, he said he would go to the poll-bound West Bengal as well.

Addressing the massive gathering of farmers in Lakhnau village of Saharanpur, Mr. Tikait said after its tactics to divide farmers failed, the government was silent for the past 10 days. "I appeal to you stay united because I fear they might come up with new 'funda' (ploy)."

He reiterated that "camera aur kalam" (the media) were working under the shadow of the gun and farmers should not believe everything that was being shown and written in the name of news.

Eviction of prawn gherries restarts at Chilika Lake

SATYASUNDAR BARIK  
BHUBANESWAR

After a hiatus, the Odisha government has started evicting illegal prawn enclosures in Chilika Lake, which is likely to improve ecological health of Asia's largest brackish water lagoon.

The Chilika Development Authority (CDA), the regulatory body for the lake, has begun planned eviction of prawn gherries (enclosures) from Sunday.

"We are beginning eviction of illegal gherries from the Krushnaprasad block of Puri district. Three platoons of police and senior officials were deployed to ensure smooth eviction," said CDA Chief Executive Susanta Nanda.

In 2017, CDA had uprooted enclosures over 160 sq km. "This time we are going for eviction in 40 sq km area," said Mr. Nanda. A few years ago, satellite imagers had found 14,590 hectare of the lagoon under manmade gherries for illegal prawn cultivation.

During COVID-19 pandemic last year, a few net gherries had again come up, though in smaller numbers. District administrations of Puri, Ganjam and Khordha have been intimated of the exact status.

Endangered Irrawaddy dolphins were the first beneficiaries of the eviction drive. The mammals could move unhindered in Chilika Lake. In Rambha sector, dolphins were sighted for the first time in three decades. Besides, there was sudden increase in the population of ducks who prefer to dive in open water. Their population was noticed during the current season, particularly in the prawn gherries evicted areas.

## Grand alliance advised to target 70 seats

BPF chief Mohilary takes a swipe at BJP leader Himanta for his 'horse-trading traits'

RAHUL KARMAKAR  
GUWAHATI

Hours after severing ties with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and joining the Congress-led 'mahajath' or grand alliance, Bodoland People's Front (BPF) chief Hagrama Mohilary said it would be more realistic to target 70 seats to form the next government in Assam.

Before the BPF became its seventh constituent, the grand alliance had eyed more than 100 of Assam's 126 Assembly seats in response to the BJP's "Mission 100".

"We need to win 64 seats to form the government. Since it is unnecessary to win more seats, let's ensure 70 seats and let the others share

the remaining seats. It can be difficult to manage if we win more than necessary. I am sure we can attain simple majority," Mr. Mohilary told journalists on Sunday.

He had virtually taken centre-stage among leaders of the seven allies who addressed the media.

**RJD may join alliance**  
Apart from the BPF and the Congress, the grand alliance constituents are the minority-based All India United Democratic Front, Communist Party of India, CPI (Marxist), CPI (Marxist-Leninist) and the regional Anchalik Gana Morcha. The Rashtriya Janata Dal is expected to join the alliance.

Mr. Mohilary said countering BJP's slogans in their language would serve no purpose.

"Let us not repeat their absurd claims (of winning 100 seats). Unlike some parties, we will not have to buy support from others to form the government. We can form the government without bribes because people want the BJP's misrule to end," he said.

The BPF chief and former head of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) also panned Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for resorting to horse-trading in the December 2020 BTC polls.

"We don't want to form the government adopting the methods Himanta Biswa Sarma used after the BTC elections. He abducted elected representatives, kept them confined in hotels and formed the government there. As a consequence, they have already started fighting among themselves," Mr. Mohilary said.

**Single-largest party**  
The BPF, which ruled 40-member BTC for 17 years, had emerged as the single-largest party in the council polls with 17 seats. But its rival United People's Party Liberal (12 seats), the BJP (10, after an elected Congress member defected) and the Gana Suraksha Party (one) forged a post-poll alliance to form the council.

Nine killed in Rajasthan accidents

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
JAIPUR

Nine persons were killed and 12 others injured in three separate road accidents in Rajasthan, police said on Sunday.

Three persons were killed and nine others injured when an SUV collided with a truck.

Three men were killed when a motorcycle collided with a pick-up truck in Jalore district.

In the third incident, three persons died when a car hit a motorcycle in Dausa district.

## OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

### DEATH

**B.BABU** (78), Retired Foreman (Non-Supervisory) - Comp (Advt), THE HINDU, Chennai. Passed away on 28-02-2021. Address: 6/25, Ganeshapuram First Main Road, Thirumurugan - 602024. Mobile : 9043153184

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How can we enthuse, enable, and encourage teachers to ensure better learning outcomes?

■ VINEET NAYAR

Most successful transformations are pivoted around a single idea because they are easy to understand, focus and execute. Indian independence due to non-violence, and the Green Revolution which transformed India from a food-deficient country to one of the world's largest agricultural producers, are examples of this. What, then, is the single idea that can transform rural education?

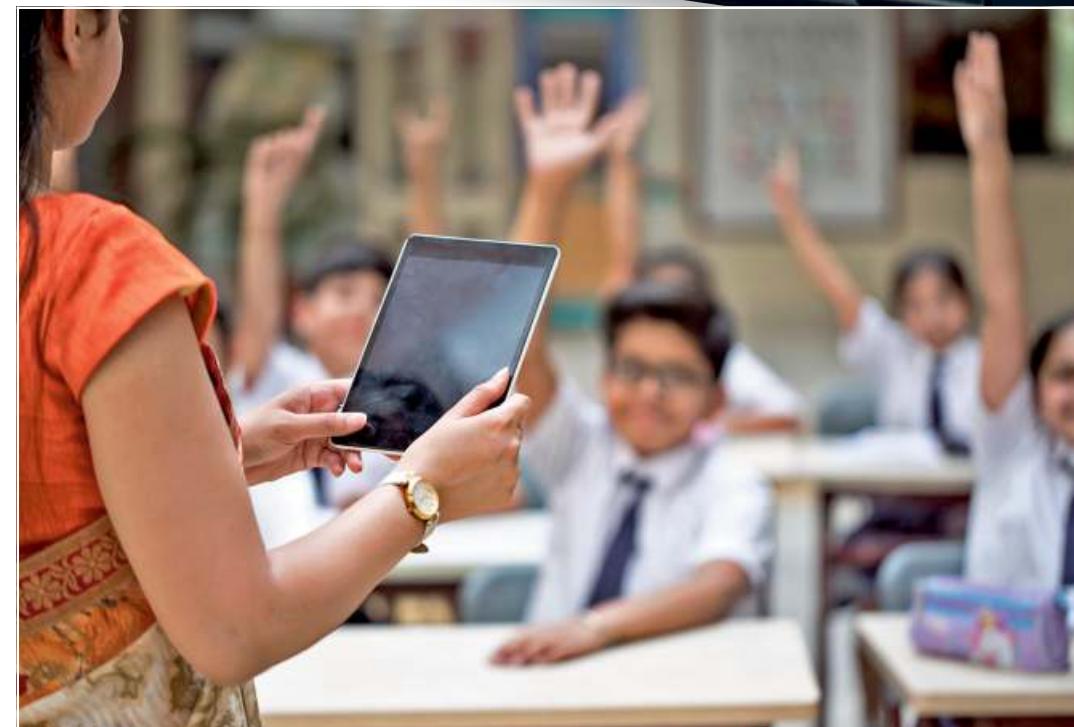
According to early and conservative estimates by UNESCO, the pandemic-related lockdowns have seen 290 million students out of school across the world. Earlier this year, India's school dropout rate was significantly low, but evidence suggests that the pandemic might undo that. Another issue is that, even when schools open, the problem of poor learning outcomes will continue to remain unsolved.

#### A lesson from Indian IT?

The Indian IT industry was built on an innovative idea that complex software can be developed by first mapping the product life-cycle, and then simplifying development by bringing in tools, technology and training such that, even a fresher can write zero-error high-quality code. Can the same be done in education, especially in government schools?

The process of design thinking and innovation starts with a few critical questions. First, where is the value zone where learning outcomes happen? The answer lies in the interface of the teacher and the child – in the classroom. Second, who creates the learning in this value zone? Again, the answer is the teacher. In that case, what should we do to enthuse, enable and encourage the teachers to do this and more?

Nine thousand teachers were surveyed about the one 'pain area' they would like to see solved, to do their job better when school opens. Almost 80% of the responses mentioned the word 'hard'. Teaching, managing a multi-grade classroom and multiple subjects, managing administrative tasks,



GETTY IMAGES/STOCK PHOTO

motivating children...all this and more were hard.

#### What we can do

What will it take to make the teaching easy and learning even easier? This is possible if we map the teaching and learning life-cycle and simplify each step by focusing on three aspects.

First, simplify the "how" of

teaching, not just the 'what'. Most teachers know what to teach, but do not know the most effective way. Thus, what we do not need is more videos that make teachers uninterested bystanders. Instead, mock classroom videos that explain 'how to teach' and are mapped to the syllabus are required. Teachers should be trained on 'how' and offered innovative teaching-learning material to make teaching easy and learning fun.

Second, simplify assessment. A teacher in a government school is teaching multi-grade classrooms without a tool to map an individual child's capabilities. In today's day and age, most entrance exams for higher education are conducted and reported digitally. So, why

not do the same for schools? What we need is a free, AI-based personalised assessment platform that enables a 10X reduction in assessment efforts and a 100X reduction in the time to publish report cards.

The platform should have gamified tests that makes the experience fun for children, once the teacher sends them the link over WhatsApp. This platform should also deliver graphical analytics to teachers on their mobile and simplify tracking the learning journey of each child.

Lastly, learning at home. Why should learning for these children stop once they leave school? Can we create a game-based digital platform that enables the teacher and child to stay connected through a virtual classroom, even after school? The free platform should not be used for teaching, but for sharing and ensuring that interest in learning continues even at home. The critical aspect of learning is to first ignite the desire to learn, and the rest will follow.

As we move into 2021, we are at the crossroads of a fantastic opportunity to make education easy.

The writer is the Founder-Chairman of Sampark Foundation and Former CEO, HCL Technologies.

#### STUDY ABROAD

##### ■ Study in the Netherlands

Beyon Education will host a free one-to-one counselling session on March 13 and March 14 from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. The session will focus on study opportunities in the Netherlands, application and admission procedures, and the various scholarship options to 10 universities in the country. Keeping the pandemic in mind, time slots have to be booked in advance to avoid a large gathering. Call +91-9500124679 or +91-9384880122 or e-mail abhinav.reddy@beyonducation.com or Nicholas.daniel@beyonducation.com to register.

##### ■ Ireland calling

The Government of Ireland has announced scholarships worth €1,500,000 for Indian students at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. To know more, visit: [https://www.educationinireland.com/en/](http://www.educationinireland.com/en/)

tion – social, emotional, developmental, linguistic, or academic. Up until class III, for example, students typically learn to read, but after that, they read to learn. This makes class IV a transition year. Transitions place enormous pressure and demands on children and are going to be especially challenging this academic year and the next, when the effects of the learning gap will start surfacing. So, the needs of students in transition grades such as classes IV, IX, and XII should be prioritised. Extra support should be offered through after-school, weekend or summer classes, which should focus on imparting foundational and critical concepts.

#### Provide focussed learning support

Some students have taken to online learning like fish to water. For others, it has been a struggle. Given that online learning is here to stay, teachers need to identify the latter group through continuous monitoring and provide them additional support to ensure they don't fall too far behind. There are many techniques teachers can adopt. Something as simple as pairing students with peer buddies who can complement their skills can help immensely. The goal should be to plan ahead and prevent cumulative learning loss for these students.

While the pandemic has instigated many wonderful steps forward in education, it has also simultaneously opened up a virtual Pandora's box. While various ways to bridge the learning gap, in the coming academic year, can be discussed assuming that things will go back to normal, we cannot expect the teaching-learning process to go back to status quo. The focus needs to be on keeping the learning process perpetual, while doing our best to address the gap.

The writer is co-founder and CMO at Learning Matters Pvt. Ltd.

#### INSIGHTS



## Mind the gap

The focus of educators has to be on recovering educational opportunities lost due to the pandemic-led online learning

■ SARASWATHY RAMAMOORTHY

The shift to online learning, due to the pandemic, brought various challenges for teachers and students, including inaccessibility to devices, no or limited Internet access, and other issues. Add to this the complex interplay of reduced instruction time, lack of direct contact and context with teachers, and myriad challenges with online learning.

The cumulative effect of all of this is a learning gap between what students would have typically learned and what they have actually learned.

While the full impact of this will be revealed in the forthcoming months, it is safe to say that it will be especially severe in college-bound students who are losing out on learning aspects critical to making a successful transition to post-secondary education.

In addition to the pressure of ensuring that their students are engaged and learning, educators are also entrusted with the Herculean responsibility of bridging the learning gap. Here are three decisive ways by which they can do so:

#### Extend the school year

Extending the school year or shortening the summer break, coupled with measures such as blended learning models, would be a viable option. In certain states such as Uttar Pradesh, innovative ideas such as harnessing Doordarshan, All India Radio and/or community radio networks are being considered to promote and use audio-based learning.

Extending the school year will provide relief to students, especially higher-grade students, who cannot afford to miss out on learning critical concepts and necessary skills.

#### Emphasis on transition-year classes

A 'transition class' is one in which children typically go through some major transi-

#### SCHOLARSHIPS

##### ■ IIM-Ahmedabad Research Assistantship (EPABA)

Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, invites applications for this year's edition of the EPABA.

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##### ■ SERB Core Research Grant (Individual Centric)

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**DEADLINE:** March 08

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##### ■ The JN Tata Endowment Loan Scholarship

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#### CAREERS

## Off-field goals

There's more to football than just playing the sport. Various job opportunities are available for those interested

■ KAUSHIK ANANDH

Football – a game played across the globe, with players ranging from professionals in stadiums to children in their backyard. It has the highest television audience of all sports, and involves physical fitness and stamina and mental stability, concentration and visualisation. For those interested in the sport but don't want to be players, there are various options ranging from sports management and administration to sports science and nutrition.

In India, the sport is governed by The All India Football Federation (AIFF), which is in charge of the national men's and women's team, and the different youth teams, and also oversees all competitive tournaments at the national and state levels; the latter through state associations. It also offers a variety of courses in all aspects of football, such as coaching modules, referee courses, scouting workshops, and football management, states Kushal Das, the General Secretary of AIFF. The organisation has recently partnered with Pearson Education Ltd to offer the BTEC International Level 3 qualification in India. Das describes the course, which has been crafted with the guidance of the English club Liverpool FC, as a roadmap for those who wish to chart a career in sport and football and a hands-on career-oriented diploma. He adds that it will be useful for

those who want to study abroad as it is recognised in over 40 countries by various sports organisations, institutes and governments.

#### Opening pathways

What the BTEC International Level 3 qualification does is to open pathways in fitness, coaching, sports business and management, and sports facilities operations and management along with short-term customised courses in sports psychology, nutrition and journalism. Apart from this, the AIFF has its own courses in various aspects related to football, such as coaching modules, referee courses, scouting workshops, and football management. Those who sign up for the BTEC International Level 3 do not have to join the AIFF's courses, he clarifies.

The course has a multi-campus format, but Das says that all classes will be conducted online in a flexible blended learning format, given the pandemic's impact on the industry. Resources and study material will be available through the week and the necessary practical assignments will be required to be completed towards the weekend.

"The idea," he concludes,

"is to cultivate a culture where we get individuals from different backgrounds together.

The common factor is the passion we share for the sport."

"91% of high school students know what they aspire to be, and for those who lean towards sport, this is a great opportunity. It opens up career pathways early on and provides required insight into the sport industry and makes it easier to move on to further studies within the realm of sport."

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The common factor is the passion we share for the sport."

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"The idea," he concludes,



## A wolf in watchdog's clothing

Instead of soft-touch monitoring, the government has opted for predatory new rules

The new rules introduced by the Centre last week to regulate all types of digital platforms, with the idea of redressing user grievances and ensuring compliance with the law, are deeply unsettling as they will end up giving the government a good deal of leverage over online news publishers and intermediaries. This holds troubling implications for freedom of expression and right to information. Electronics and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, while launching 'The Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021', presented it as a "soft-touch oversight mechanism". A government press note termed it "progressive" and "liberal". It also claimed the rules seek to "address people's varied concerns while removing any misapprehension about curbing creativity and freedom of speech and expression". The soft tone notwithstanding, these rules force digital news publishers and video streaming services to adhere to a cumbersome three-tier structure of regulation, with a government committee at its apex. This, in itself, is unprecedented in a country where the news media have been given the space all along to self-regulate, based on the mature understanding that any government presence could have a chilling effect on free speech and conversations. That the new rules pertain only to digital news media, and not to the whole of the news media, hardly provides comfort, as the former is increasingly becoming a prime source of news and views. Further, it is of significant concern that the purview of the IT Act, 2000, has been expanded to bring digital news media under its regulatory ambit without legislative action, which digital liberties organisations such as the Internet Freedom Foundation have flagged.

The three-tier regulatory mechanism will seek to redress complaints with respect to the digital platforms' adherence to a Code of Ethics, which among other things includes the 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct', compiled by the Press Council of India, the Programme Code of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, as also a negative list of content that shall not be published (essentially what one would encounter under law as reasonable restrictions to free speech). While there is not much that is wrong with the Code of Ethics *per se*, what is problematic is that it will take little to bring this regulatory mechanism to vicious life. According to the rules, "Any person having a grievance regarding content published by a publisher in relation to the Code of Ethics may furnish his grievance on the grievance mechanism established by the publisher." So, literally anyone could force a digital platform to take up any issue. It has to be taken up first, under the new rules, by the digital platform's grievance officer. If there is no resolution or if the complainant is dissatisfied, this can be escalated to a "self-regulating" body of publishers. This can then be escalated to the highest level, the government's Oversight Mechanism, according to which an inter-departmental committee will be set up to address the grievance. Apart from imposing a compliance burden on digital publishers – many are small entities – this also opens the floodgates for all kinds of interventions. The potential for misuse is enormous.

The new rules have increased the compliance burden for social media platforms too. The bigger of these platforms will have to appoint chief compliance officers, to ensure the rules and the laws are adhered to, and a nodal officer, with whom the law enforcement agencies will be coordinating, apart from a grievance officer. Such platforms in the messaging space will have to "enable the identification of the first originator of the information on its computer resource" based on a judicial order. Thus, the rules require messaging apps such as WhatsApp and Signal to trace problematic messages to the originator. While the triggers for a judicial order that require such an identification are serious offences, it raises uneasy questions about how such apps will be able to adhere to such orders, as their messages are encrypted end-to-end. There is no denying that there are problems with online content, which the government has rightly highlighted now. Its release has referred to a 2018 Supreme Court observation that the government "may frame necessary guidelines to eliminate child pornography, rape and gangrape imageries, videos and sites in content hosting platforms and other applications", besides making a mention of discussions in Parliament about social media misuse and fake news.

Some amount of tightening of policy is inevitable given new challenges. But it would be wrong to imagine that by implanting itself in the grievance redress process or by making platforms share more information, the government can solve these problems. It could prove counterproductive in a country where the citizens still do not have a data privacy law to guard themselves against excesses committed by any party. Regulation has an important place in the scheme of things, and no one advocates giving a free pass to the digital platforms. But then, as this newspaper argued earlier, the laws to combat unlawful content are already in place. What is required is their uniform application. It is also far from reassuring that this government has had an uneasy, sometimes unpleasant, relationship with media in general. The appetite for criticism, so vital in a democracy, is just not there. Some weeks ago, the government had a run-in with Twitter after it defied orders to ban certain hashtags and handles. And given an environment where people are sensitive to content, the regulatory mechanism could become an operational nightmare. Worse, the casualties could be creativity and freedom of expression. The government would like to see itself as a watchdog of digital content in the larger public interest, but it comes across as a predator.

# More about Big Government than Big Tech

Under the IT Act new rules, it appears that the interest is largely about trying to force technologists to fall in line



RAMAN JIT SINGH CHIMA

Last week, the Union Government issued a set of rules under the Information Technology Act, noting that it was superseding rules issued under Section 79 of that statute in 2011. Those earlier rules had specified the due diligence obligations that Internet intermediaries had to follow in order to qualify for the limited immunity for legal liability regarding user content, which Parliament had strengthened in 2008 when it amended that law.

### Without discussion

The notification of these new rules, however, do not merely represent the executive branch superseding previous subordinate rules under a law with newer regulation. They represent a dramatic, dangerous move by the Union Government towards cementing increased censorship of Internet content and mandating compliance with government demands regarding user data collection and policing of online services in India. This has happened in the absence of open and public discussion of the full swathe of regulatory powers the government has sought to exercise, and without any parliamentary study and scrutiny.

Indeed, these rules at the outset appear unlawful even with respect to whether they could have been

issued under the Information Technology Act in the manner chosen by the government, leave alone their constitutionality with respect to fundamental rights. The Union Government has chosen to pass these rules under the requirement to outline the due diligence that Internet intermediaries – ranging from telecom providers, search engines, Internet platforms hosting user generated content to cloud providers – have to follow in order to be able to claim their qualified legal immunity under Section 79 of the IT Act.

### Curious stand

The government's gazette notification has further claimed that the rules were also issued under the legal authority to specific procedure for blocking web content under Section 69A of the IT Act. This is curious, given that rules overseeing government web content blocking powers have already been issued for that section in 2009, and not superseded. Indeed, they form the core of the increasing number of web content censorship orders issued by the Union Government in recent years, including the most recent controversial stand-off with Twitter following the farmer protests.

The ability to issue rules under a statute – i.e. to frame subordinate legislation – is by its nature a limited, constrained power. When the Union Government issues subordinate rules, it is limited to the substantive provisions laid out by Parliament in the original act passed by the latter – the executive branch is subordinate to what Parliament has permitted it and cannot use its rule-making power



to seek to issue primary legislation by itself.

### Directives and mandates

Unfortunately, with the present Internet content and social media rules, the Union Government has done precisely that. Instead of specifying the basic due diligence requirements intermediaries had to perform in order to make use of the Section 79 safe harbour provision, the executive branch has created new rules that apply only to "significant social media intermediaries" – a term that appears nowhere in the Information Technology Act.

It has included mandates for retention of user data by such intermediaries for use by government agencies and clauses on how popular messaging services have to enable the tracing of the original creator of a message (which is regarded as not possible for end-to-end encrypted messaging services without introducing flaws in their systems) even though the sections in the law cited by the government do not give them that power.

The rules have grown to include a chapter on how digital news sites have to be registered before the

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and further laid out a mechanism by which streaming video sites featuring original content (which are generally not regarded as intermediaries for the purposes of Internet law) have to agree to a government-supervised "self regulatory system". This, even though digital news service registration is not required under the IT Act and streaming video content has not been included under the ambit of the Cinematograph Act. In any other situation, the package contained in this gazette notification last week would be instead included in a bill sent to Parliament for its consideration – and which would be regarded as ambitious and controversial for any administration.

### The message is clear

Why has the Union Government created this legally uncertain, sprawling house-of-cards-like regulatory instrument? To understand these new Internet content control rules – for that is what they essentially are – you need to not only see what they directly give to the government, but what the government is seeking to get done behind a shadow of regulatory pressure. It appears that the government wants to send a message to all Internet ecosystem players that they desire compliance with their desires – formal or informal – regarding what content should be taken down, along with a removal of any push back against over broad demands for user data and other surveillance orders by government agencies.

The Government of India already has significant legal powers,

with practically no institutionalised oversight or true checks and balances, to force censorship and surveillance on Internet platforms and other web services in India.

However, the increasing public discussion of concerns regarding the usage of these powers and challenges being made by firms and impacted individuals against their abuse is something that the Union Government would like to avoid. Why issue direct formal orders when one can instead force compliance in less visible, more institutionalised ways? Indicating that the government has made up its mind to force these mandates by notifying them, even with doubtful legal validity, is a key signalling effect to Internet ecosystem players, especially firms keen to avoid public battles and smaller entities who do not have the resources or political position to be able to contest overboard government directives.

The Union Government, when issuing these rules, made reference to increased global interest in regulating Big Tech. However, in advancing Internet content control interests and increased requirements around government demands for user data, while not advancing surveillance law reform or enacting a strong statutory data protection framework, it appears that the interest is more in advancing Big Government and trying to force technologists to fall in line, no matter the cost to our fundamental rights in our Internet age.

Raman Jit Singh Chima is Senior International Counsel and Asia Pacific Policy Director, Global Cybersecurity Lead, Access Now

## Spurring a reawakening with National Science Day

Collectively, Indians have a responsibility to take forward the country's rich and varied legacy of science



AMITABHA BHATTACHARYA

National Science Day, which fell on February 28, commemorates a path-breaking discovery at the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, Calcutta in 1928, that came to be known as the Raman Effect. Three more physicists from Calcutta, namely Jagadish Chandra Bose who was C.V. Raman's senior, Satyendra Nath Bose and Meghnad Saha, both of whom were Raman's juniors, had by then made major contributions that were globally acclaimed.

But Raman's discovery marks the pinnacle for which he would win the Nobel Prize in physics two years later, making him the most visible face of Indian science.

### Pursuing scientific truth

It seems very thoughtful and rational that our National Science Day celebrates a discovery and not the birthday of its discoverer. Raman, as a person, was not beyond criticism. The circumstances of his exit from Calcutta where he spent his most productive years, the reasons for his relinquishing the post of Director of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore before completion of his term, differences with Meghnad Saha, and non-share-

ing of credit for his discovery with K.S. Krishnan make him appear as arrogant, and not above common human foibles.

But none of these can diminish Raman's unquestioned scientific prowess and his life-long devotion to the pursuit of scientific truth (through physics).

### Objective assessment

It is thanks to the untiring efforts of Dr. Rajinder Singh, noted historian of science from the University of Oldenburg, Germany, who has authored six books and 28 essays on Raman, that a clear picture of Raman and his time emerges.

While Dr. Singh has dispelled with supporting evidence many myths such as Raman's breaking into tears while accepting the Nobel Prize because he felt humiliated as the honour had to be received under the British flag, or that Raman had worked with very little equipment and insufficient support, these books, read together, (most of which are available in digital version) provide an objective assessment of Raman, the man and the scientist. Two books in particular, *Nobel Laureate C.V. Raman's Work on Light Scattering* (Logos Verlag, Berlin, 2004) and *C.V. Raman's Laboratory and Discovery of the Raman Effect* (Shaker Verlag, Aachen, 2018) analyse the process, essence and significance of his work. Since history judges a person by the peaks of his achievement, Raman's standing as an outstanding physicist remains unscathed.

India has progressed a great deal in about a century after the major advances made by the Bose(s), Saha and Raman. Even though none so far, working in India, has personally scaled those heights, our achievements, on the whole, on the application of science and technology in fields such as atomic energy, space research, agriculture and biotechnology have been impressive. Noted historians of science and practising scientists have also been articulating their views on how India can develop as a hub for world-class scientific and technological innovation.

Two recent developments, namely the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) and the draft National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2020 (draft STIP), despite having limitations that characterise any government publication, underscore some of the pathways to this direction. The importance of languages has been highlighted in the NEP. S.N. Bose and others had been advocating from the 1940s for the use of the mother languages for science



teaching and popularisation. This is an area that requires serious attention. Similarly, the setting up of the National Research Foundation, for instance, to encourage and fund research and development activities, hopefully with much greater and intensive involvement of our university system than hitherto, seems to be a step in the right direction.

### Fostering research

The draft STIP has also mooted substantial ideas in order to promote research and innovation and develop a robust system for evidence and stakeholder-driven STI planning ... and policy research in India'. The proposal for a Research Excellence Framework for higher educational institutions, once reconciled with the relevant provisions of the NEP, can make a qualitative difference. Likewise, fostering science and technology-enabled entrepreneurship and mainstreaming grassroot innovation and traditional knowledge systems (validated by modern scientific methods of evaluation and assessment) are proposals worth pursuing. It is hoped that the final document would seriously take cognisance of the comments and criticisms on the draft STIP and facilitate India transforming itself to a forward-looking, science-enabled and science-respecting nation.

Though the state has a key role to play in this process, science requires to be handled with a light hand. The revised guidelines of

the Education Ministry this January, about prior permission to be taken, under certain circumstances, before conducting even online/virtual conferences, etc., caused anxiety among some scientists and academics who had voiced their displeasure. Fortunately, this revision has been withdrawn.

**Keeping the flame burning**  
The celebration of National Science Day with the basic objective of spreading the message of science and its importance in improving the lives of people, must be taken forward in the days ahead and should spur a national reawakening instead of being just a ritual. India has a long history of secular enquiry and free thoughts. From Aryabhata, Varāhamihira and Bhāskarācārya to the great scientists of modern India, the tradition of illuminating the world of science continues. Illustrious women like Janaki Ammal (botanist), Asima Chatterjee (chemist), Bibha Chowdhuri (physicist) and Gagandeep Kang (medical scientist) have kept this flame burning. Collectively, we have to take forward the legacy instead of wasting our time indulging in obscurantism, unscientific and unsubstantiated claims. It is only then that the purpose of observing the Day will be fulfilled and the spirit of Raman's unwavering dedication to science be honoured.

Amitabha Bhattacharya is a former IAS officer who has also worked in the private sector and with the UNDP

## 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.

### Going to polls

With the announcement of the dates for the Assembly elections, hectic political activities have begun, more so in Tamil Nadu, where it will face an election without the tall leaders in either side of the Dravidian parties. The field has become a free-for-all to forge alliances, and level all sorts of accusations. Money and muscle power have eroded the electoral system, with variations in only degrees. The declaration of assets has remained only an ornamental addition. What then is the choice before the electorate if it is to choose between either a corrupt A or unscrupulous B candidate? There needs to be an electoral reforms commission comprising eminent personalities to study the reforms needed on electoral donations received, multiplication of

parties, free gifts on the eve of the election, sanctity of election manifestos that are often changed to forge strange alliances by power-hungry political leaders, and, finally, a right to recall the choice.

V.N. RAMACHANDRAN,  
Brookfield, Wisconsin, U.S.

■ It is welcome that the Model Code of Conduct for the governments concerned and competing political parties have come into force. Perhaps, a review of rules and practices, on the period of the model code – for increasing it to six months – would be ideal, for, government-financed election-oriented media advertisements, intended to advance the prospects of ruling parties, are a usual scenario in our democratic governance. An incidental advantage to voters is that they would be saved from such advertisements, most of the pieces being boring,

allergic and nearly breeding contempt. The savings to the state exchequer would really be huge. One hopes that the Election Commission of India would take up the matter at an appropriate time.

P.R.V RAJA,  
Pondalam, Kerala

■ Though the dates for the Assembly elections have been released, health aspects as far as polling officials are concerned, do not seem to have been considered. For example, in Kerala, the polling officials have been asked to get themselves vaccinated from February 25, which only gives them a maximum of 39 days before the polling date. The government, earlier, insisted on a minimum of 28 days plus 14 days, which is 42 days for immunity against the novel coronavirus to set in. This ill-planned move will not help the government's effort to flatten the peak, but

instead cause additional peaks in the infection curve.

ARAVIND B. MENON,  
Puthenchira, Thrissur, Kerala

■ With the dates having been announced, it calls for outmost vigil by the Election Commission of India. In Tamil Nadu, for instance, bribing voters has become habitual before and on polling day. The specified amount for defray in the election campaign should be spelt out and those found violating this should be taken to task, sans fear or favour. Hoardings and posters should not be used for campaigns. Strict observance of the timings allowed for the electioneering campaign is important.

MANI NATARAJAN,  
Chennai

**Dissent rumbles**  
The vacillating stand of the party bigwigs in naming a new president for the Congress party has obviously

not gone down well with the members of the dissenting 'G23' faction in the party, who have now obviously decided to up the ante. (Page 1, "Cong. rift in Congress widens with 'G23' meet in Jammu", February 28). If the meeting was to take stock of the situation, it was also an occasion for the speakers to remind the party brass that ignoring senior partymen would prove detrimental to the party's interests. There is no doubt that the 'G23' have the party's interests at heart, and that their intentions are bonafide, but their approach might only lead to their being isolated and

blackballed in the days to come.

C.V. ARAVIND,  
Bengaluru

■ The silence of the party leadership creates the perception that there is no interest in rejuvenating a shrivelling Congress. Rahul Gandhi, though reluctant to accept the president's post, is busy spearheading criticism against the government. Is there no one suitable in the grand old party to lead the way?

D. SETHURAMAN,  
Chennai

**CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:**  
In a front-page report titled "Cong. rift widens with 'G-23' meet" (Feb. 28, 2021), Mr. Bhupinder Singh Hooda has been referred to as the Chief Minister of Haryana. He is a former Chief Minister.

In the news report titled "Pandemic generation hit hard: CSE" (Feb. 26, 2020), there was a reference to 67 million deaths in India due to air pollution in 2019. The figure should have been 1.67 million.

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# Back to Parliament in Nepal

The new Constitution is being trampled upon due to the political ambition of key players



KANAK MANI DIXIT

On February 23, Nepal's Supreme Court reinstated the House of Representatives, which had been dissolved by Prime Minister K.P. Oli on December 20, responding to an attempt to unseat him from leadership of his own parliamentary party in the lower house. After hearing more than a hundred lawyers from both sides, amidst a polarised political environment, the five-judge Constitutional Bench led by Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher J.B. Rana delivered a verdict that throws the ball back to the House.

#### Dissolution of Parliament

Some hoped and others worried that the Bench would go along with the dissolution, allowing the general elections as had been called for in April-May by Mr. Oli. The Bench preferred a strict reading of the Constitution, which asserts that Parliament may not be dissolved until all options to form a government (by majority party, a coalition, a minority party, or by a member of the House trusted by the President) have been exhausted. These tight provisions were placed in the Constitution by the framers, including those in Mr. Oli's cohort who were then members of the Constituent Assembly, to ensure continuity in governance, especially given the quick and easy dissolutions in the past and ensuing instabilities.

The Constitution has other unique provisions to ensure political stability, including one that does not allow a vote of confidence to be brought for the first two years of a Prime Minister's five-year term. A no-confidence vote must include the name of the prime ministerial candidate, and if the vote fails, another motion may not be brought for a year.

Before the Bench, the Prime Minister's side argued that the Constitution's declaration of Nepal as a parliamentary democracy had no meaning if a Prime Minister commanding majority in the House did not have the right to disband it. In its unanimous judgment, the Bench maintained that Nepal did not need to look at the



REPORTERS OF PM OLI - AFP  
procedures of other parliamentary democracies in the instant case; that national experience and provisions of the Constitution should suffice.

Even though the Constitutional Bench did not censure him for mal-intent as demanded by the petitioners, Mr. Oli would be feeling out on a limb. While the healthy future of parliamentary practice may require constitutional amendment to allow a sitting Prime Minister to recommend dissolution and elections, for now, the Supreme Court has removed constitutional uncertainty.

It was method to what some might see as Mr. Oli's madness, and it has to do with his inability to manage the ambitions of his Nepal Communist Party (NCP) co-chairman, Pushpa Kamal Dahal ('Prachanda'). In 2017, during the Dasain (Dushhera) holidays, Mr. Oli had secretly reached out to Mr. Dahal to unify the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) with his Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist). It was a strange coming together of a communist party that had accepted multiparty democracy and the Maoists led by a sweet-talking demagogue. The unification was a windfall for Mr. Dahal and his fast-declining party. It also seemed an unworkable experiment that sooner or later would bring grief to the polity.

Even as Mr. Oli took the reins of power, Mr. Dahal initiated his two-pronged strategy of selective media capture and weaning away UML stalwarts by feeding their sense of grievance and powerlessness vis-a-vis the imperious Mr. Oli. In particular, Mr. Dahal worked on former Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, who had been defeated by Mr. Oli for the post of Chairman in the UML general convention. Mr. Dahal dangled the carrot of presidency before former Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal.

Mr. Dahal threatened a violent movement should the Justices decide to certify the dissolution and elections. A civil society stalwart warned that "the people would drag the Justices out on to the streets" if they approved Mr. Oli's recommendation.

Four former Chief Justices published a statement against dissolution in

what could be seen as an attempt to influence the Bench. Neither could former President Yadav hold back.

#### Only in Nepal

With the verdict given, it is not clear what the inter-party permutations and combinations will deliver in the days to come, or what fate awaits each of the topmost players. But without doubt, the role of Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba will be decisive because of the MPs he holds – whether to become Prime Minister himself, back the Dahal combine, or allow Mr. Oli to serve out the next two years.

The Supreme Court has ordered the House to convene before March 8, and rather than wait for a no-confidence motion to be brought by the Dahal group, Mr. Oli is likely to seek confidence of the House. However,

#### FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

## Big brother is watching you

The new guidelines to regulate digital content give the executive unbridled power without any checks and balances



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

The new governmental guidelines to regulate digital content raise a fundamental legal and ethical question: are they contra constitutional? For many advocates of the freedom of expression, the guidelines virtually undermine the enabling provisions of Article 19 of the Constitution and weaponise the restrictive clause of reasonable restriction, without really spelling out what constitutes reasonable restriction.

Under the guidelines, it appears as if the citizens have been empowered and that there is now a fair grievance redressal mechanism for users of digital platforms. The guidelines include social media sites, messaging apps, over-the-top streaming services (popularly known as OTT services), and digital news publishers.

#### Tricky new rule

Some tend to confuse the grievance redressal officers to be appointed under the new directive with a news ombudsman and argue that the government has come up with a "soft touch" self-regulatory mechanism. The idea of self-regulation is to have a visible mechanism to correct errors that creep into the public sphere despite the existence of a multi-tiered gate-keeping process. There is an accepted value system, defined in codes developed over a period of nearly a century.

However, while looking at the details of the Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021, it is clear that there is executive overreach and this is not an attempt to empower citizen's right to free speech and free expression. The tricky new rule states that big social media companies will have to take down unlawful content within a specific time frame of being served either a court order or notice by an appropriate government agency. There has been no satisfactory answer from the government on what basis it issues a takedown instruction, which is always euphemistically called a takedown request, to major social media platforms.

Since *Shreyo Singhal v. Union of India* (2015), the debate over the constitutionality of the content takedown regime under Section 69A of the IT Act (and the Blocking Rules issued under it) has been raging. For

instance, constitutional lawyer Gautam Bhatia has pointed out three important elements in the 'Blocking Rules'. One, the Rules do not provide for an appeals process. Two, there is a contradiction between Rule 15 that requires that Designated Officer to maintain records of blocking requests and actions taken and Rule 16 that stipulates that "strict confidentiality shall be maintained regarding all the requests and complaints received and actions taken thereof." Three, for the last five years, he has been arguing that there is need to file a review petition to seek clarity on a host of issues arising out of this judgment. The new rules pave the way for more opacity and secrecy rather than transparency and accountability.

#### Unbridled power for the executive

If the earlier regulatory framework was murky with many lines blurred and the onus of responsibility constantly oscillating between the originator and the intermediaries, the new guidelines give the executive unbridled power without any checks and balances. From arbitrary takedown notices to selective shutting down of Internet services, the executive has been arming itself against the citizens, and the two important estates of the democracy – the legislature and the judiciary – are not sufficiently reflecting on the question of overreach. In a polarised environment, an informed debate is restricted to some print and online organisations.

While presenting the guidelines, Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the guidelines constituted a "soft touch oversight" mechanism to deal with issues such as the persistent spread of fake news and other misinformation. He added: "Social media is welcome to do business in India... they have got good business and have also empowered ordinary Indians. But it is very important that crores of social media users be given a proper forum for resolution of their grievances in a time bound manner against the abuse and misuse of social media." This reminded me of the good old saying that 'the road to hell is paved with good intentions'.

For those who are working on issues relating to individual privacy, the introduction of end-to-end encryption was seen as a technical solution to a truly vexatious issue. However, under the new rule, social media intermediaries must enable tracing of the originator of information on their platform if required by a competent authority. This is indeed a new panopticon.

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# A murder, and business as usual

The CIA report on Khashoggi will not lead to a major reversal or even re-evaluation of U.S.-Saudi ties

MOHAMMED AYOOB

The case of the "smoking saw", to use U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham's phrase, is solved. The declassified version of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report on journalist Jamal Khashoggi's murder states in no uncertain terms that Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman approved [the] operation...to capture or kill Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi." It bases this conclusion on the evidence that the persons responsible for the crime were members of the security detail of the Crown Prince, who is popularly known as MBS, and reported to his close advisers. It argues that an operation of this nature could not have been conducted without his approval. Although the declassified version does not provide the gory details of the heinous act, it is common knowledge, thanks to revelations made by Turkish intelligence, that Khashoggi's body was dismembered with an electric saw before its final disposal.

#### Balancing act

These actions demonstrate that Mr. Biden is engaged in a balancing act aimed at assuaging domestic anger at the Saudi government's role in the murder of an American resident and a columnist for *The Washington Post* while preserving America's long-standing strategic and economic relationship with the Saudi regime. Saudi Arabia's strategic importance for Washington derives from the fact that it is America's principal regional partner in its efforts to contain Iranian influence in West Asia. Riyadh's strategic value has increased with the sequential normalisation of Israel's relations with Arab countries allied to it since the success of this process is heavily dependent upon Saudi approval. Such normalisation suits Washington, for it relieves pressure on it to address the Palestinian issue.

Furthermore, Mr. Biden cannot afford to alienate the Saudi regime beyond a point because this could intensify Riyadh's opposition to his stated intention of returning to the Iran nuclear deal. Saudi Arabia may decide to go public on this issue in conjunction with Israel, which also considers Iran its mortal enemy.

While the U.S. is no longer dependent on Gulf oil, the importance of Saudi Arabia as the swing producer of oil for the health of the global economy on which U.S. prosperity depends rules out any possibility of the Biden administration punishing the regime for its human rights transgressions. Once the brouhaha over the CIA report blows over, one can expect Washington and Riyadh to return to business as usual. Realpolitik will, as has always been the case, trump human rights concerns.

cording to the White House, Mr. Biden "discussed regional security, including the renewed diplomatic efforts led by the United Nations and the United States to end the war in Yemen, and the U.S. commitment to help Saudi Arabia defend its territory as it faces attacks from Iranian-aligned groups."

#### Moving on

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Mohammed Ayoob is University Distinguished Professor Emeritus of International Relations, Michigan State University



#### DATA POINT

### A rural surge

COVID-19 cases continue to rise steadily in India, with over 16,500 new infections being recorded for the fourth consecutive day on Saturday. Maharashtra and Punjab led the surge in cases, which began in the second half of February. A majority of the cases in the two States was recorded in the rural districts\*. The rural surge in Maharashtra was not confined to a particular region. More worryingly, both the States are lagging in vaccinations compared to the other major States. By Sumanth Sen, Naresh Singaravelu and Vignesh Radhakrishnan

**SPIKE |** Six States/UTs recorded a spike in cases in the second half of February. They accounted for nearly 60% of India's new cases between February 21 and 27. Between January 3 and 9 they had contributed 32.1% of overall cases

State	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8
J&K UT	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6
Haryana	1.5	1.3	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.7	1.0
M.P.	3.7	3.0	2.3	1.6	1.7	1.6	2.0	2.2
Gujarat	3.8	3.8	3.4	2.8	2.5	2.3	2.1	2.5
Punjab	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.7	2.1	2.4	3.3
Maharashtra	21.1	20.6	19.3	19.0	21.9	24.3	39.1	50.2
% of total	32.1	31.0	28.2	26.3	28.9	31.6	46.9	59.7

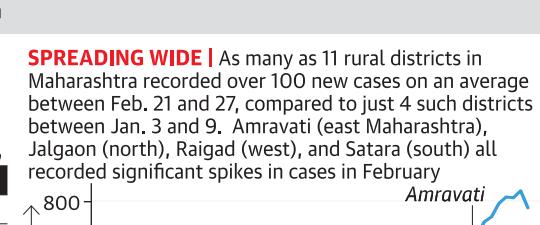
**MOSTLY RURAL |** A majority of the new cases in Maharashtra and Punjab that contributed to the spike in February was from the rural districts. Between January 3 and 9, Maharashtra's rural districts accounted for 36% of new cases. However, between February 21 and 27, they accounted for 49%. A similar bump in rural cases was observed in Punjab too

State	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8
Rural Maharashtra	36	40	41	41	44	49	48	49
Urban Maharashtra	64	60	59	59	56	51	52	51
Rural Punjab	47	48	43	50	47	61	56	58
Urban Punjab	53	52	57	50	53	39	44	42

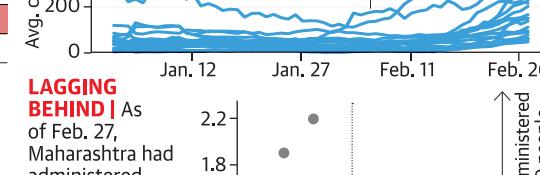
\* Districts where over 50% of the population resided in rural regions according to the Census 2011 are classified as rural districts

Source: covid19india.org

**SPREADING WIDE |** As many as 11 rural districts in Maharashtra recorded over 100 new cases on average between Feb. 21 and 27, compared to just 4 such districts between Jan. 3 and 9. Amravati (east Maharashtra), Jalgaon (north), Raigad (west), and Satara (south) all recorded significant spikes in cases in February



**LAGGING BEHIND |** As of Feb. 27, Maharashtra had administered only one dose for every 100 people, the fourth-lowest among 21 major States/UTs. At only 0.6 doses per 100 people, Punjab's vaccination rate was the second lowest



**Doses administered (in thousands)**

The question of repairs of the sacred shrine at Srirangam, dedicated to Sri Ranganathaswamy

FROM PAGE ONE

## ISRO puts Brazil's Amazonia-1 into orbit

The Bhagavad Gita was also sent on board an SD card to give the scripture, which teaches oneness as the highest form of humanity, the highest honour, it added.

The UNITYsat was designed and built as a joint development by the Jeppiar Institute of Technology, Sriperumbudur, G.H. Raisoni College of Engineering, Nagpur and Sri Shakthi Institute of Engineering and Technology, Coimbatore.

Roughly 16 minutes after lift-off, the PS-4 engine was cut-off and the Amazonia-1, weighing 637 kg, belonging to the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (INPE), was separated a minute later. The satellite will further strengthen the existing structure by providing

remote sensing data to users for monitoring deforestation in the Amazon region, according to ISRO. The Amazonia-1 was injected into its precise orbit of 758 km in a sun-synchronous polar orbit.

Thereafter the other 18 customer satellites were placed into their intended orbits. The entire operation took about 1 hour and 55 minutes to completion.

"This particular mission is special because these five Indian satellites are coming under the new space reform announced by the Government of India," ISRO Chairman, K. Sivan said. He said ISRO has 14 missions planned this year, including the first unmanned mission around the end of the year.

## Satellite launch a high point in space ties

Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro said the first fully Brazilian-made satellite, which would help to monitor the Amazon forests, was a mark of the "increasing investment" the country was making in science and technology.

The launch also marked the first dedicated mission of ISRO's commercial arm NewSpace India Ltd. (NSIL).

The unique relationship between both countries has ensured support for each other's satellites and the use of each other's ground stations, including tracking In-

dia's Chandrayaan-1&2 missions and the 2013 Mangalyaan Mars Orbiter Mission using Brazilian earth stations Alcantara and Cuiaba. Brazil and India first signed an MoU between the Department of Space and AEB in March 2002, followed by a Framework Agreement in 2004, that is reviewed by a Joint Working Group.

In 2007, they inked a special arrangement which allows Indian scientists access to Brazilian ground stations to remote sensing data from the Indian satellites.

## At least 18 dead in Myanmar protests

DVB counted five deaths in Yangon and two in Mandalay, the largest and second-largest cities.

It registered five deaths in Dawei, a much smaller city in southeastern Myanmar that has seen tens of thousands of protesters nearly every day since the coup. Witnesses said Sunday's march was also large and people were determined not to be driven off the streets.

## U.S. nod for J&J one-shot COVID-19 vaccine

The protection remained strong even in countries such as South Africa, where the variants of most concern are spreading.

"The more vaccines that have high efficacy that we can get into play, the better," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease expert, said ahead of the FDA's ruling.

(With PTI inputs)

China's Ad5-nCoV COVID-19 vaccine was rolled out on Friday, the state-run *Global Times* reported on Sunday.

Phase-I clinical trials of the vaccine started on March 16 last year, making it the world's first COVID-19 candidate vaccine that entered clinical trials, it said.

(With PTI inputs)

## An itch to revive prickly cages for lawbreakers

A prickly cage usually accommodates one offender – invariably a male – who barely has space to sit, for 24 hours or more than a week, depending on the gravity of the offence. He can be fed by relatives periodically and let out to answer nature's call during the punishment.

"Some local modifications aside, customary laws of all the Naga tribes are similar. The *khulji ghar* too used to be common until lock-ups came up in police stations to house the offenders and some forms of punishment began clashing with those prescribed by constitutional laws," said Hesheto Chishi, a customary law and Naga folklore researcher based in Dimapur.

The State also funds the customary courts in villages and towns where cases – mostly dealing with land litigation, money-lending and marital disputes – have a high rate of prompt disposal.

The vaccine is a highly purified, whole virion, inac-

tivated SARS-CoV-2. The vaccine has been formulated with 'Algel-IMDG', which contains chemically absorbed TLR7/8 as an agonist or an adjuvant onto aluminium hydroxide gel to generate the requisite type of immune responses without damaging the body.

The firm had approached the IICT to develop the synthetic route for the adjuvant molecule TLR 7/8 with indi-

cated SARS-CoV-2. The vaccine has been formulated with 'Algel-IMDG', which contains chemically absorbed TLR7/8 as an agonist or an adjuvant onto aluminium hydroxide gel to generate the requisite type of immune responses without damaging the body.

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## Long wait for kin of missing engineer

'DNA test to confirm identity of body found in Pak. to take three more months'

SANDEEP PHUKAN  
NEW DELHI

The wait for the family of Subhan Ali, a 27-year-old civil engineer posted with the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), who went missing after an accident on the Zozila-Kargil-Leh road last June, has been prolonged due to bureaucratic delays.

Son of a tailor from Balrampur in Uttar Pradesh, the Indian Engineering Service (IES) officer had been posted in Ladakh as part of the General Reserve Engineering Force (GREF) of the BRO. On June 22 last year, Mr. Ali, along with his driver, Palwinder Singh, went missing after their vehicle fell into the Drass river and got swept away by the fast-flowing waters. While the Gypsy and



Subhan Ali went missing after an accident.

the driver's body were recovered, the engineer's body remained untraceable.

Five days later on June 27, Pakistani authorities reported the finding of an unidentified body from the Shingo river close to the LoC. Following up the lead, the Army Headquarters coordinated with Pakistani authorities to

collect the DNA samples of the unidentified body.

### Sample in queue\*

The DNA samples were received by the Kargil police at Tangdar on August 22, 2020. Two months later, the DNA samples of his parents were also collected on October 28, 2020 and were forwarded to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), Chandigarh. However, the process of matching has not been completed.

Lok Sabha member and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader Kunwar Danish Ali had taken up the case with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in July last year. Now, eight months later, Mr. Singh has informed his Lok Sabha colleague that the DNA

matching process would need more time as "the sample is in a queue".

"It is learnt that DNA matching analysis at FSL, Chandigarh, is in queue and it may take 3-6 months before the report is received. Further action will be taken on receipt of report from FSL, Chandigarh," Mr. Singh said in his letter dated February 11.

"It has been a long wait for the family. They have been waiting for a sense of closure to this tragic chapter. Even now, they may have to wait for another six months. I would request the government to speed up the process of DNA sample matching and provide them some relief," the BSP MP told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

## CBDT Chairman's tenure extended again

This is the third extension granted to P.C. Mody, a 1982-batch IRS officer

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
AHMEDABAD

The Central government on Sunday extended the tenure of P.C. Mody, Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), for three months effective from March 1 till May 31.

This is the third extension granted to Mr. Mody, a 1982-batch Income Tax cadre officer of the Indian Revenue Service (IRS). Earlier, his tenure was extended by six months last August, and before that for one year in Au-

gust 2019. Interestingly, besides being chairman of the top tax policymaking body, Mr. Mody also holds charge of member-investigation, a prized assignment, in the CBDT.

Mr. Mody had taken over as the new Chairman of the CBDT on February 15, 2019. Before being elevated, he was the member-administration of the CBDT, the apex policymaking body of the Income Tax Department. He had succeeded Sushil Chandra, who was appointed

nathan will be playing crucial roles as the government is struggling to revive a pandemic-battered economy. Mr. Somnathan has also had a stint in the PMO.

Moreover, there are several vacancies in the policymaking body and the government is in the process of making appointments.

Now, Mr. Bajaj, a veteran bureaucrat with a stint in the PMO before moving to the Finance Ministry as Economic Affairs Secretary, and Expenditure Secretary T.V. Som-

Electron Commissioner.

### Other appointments

On Saturday, Finance Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey superannuated from service and the additional charge of Secretary, Department of Revenue, has been handed over to Economic Affairs Secretary Tarun Bajaj.

According to sources, the government has already held two rounds of interviews of shortlisted candidates to be appointed as members in the CBDT.

Punjab Cong chief takes a dig at G-23

## Modi does not hide his past: Ghulam Nabi Azad

His remarks come a day after the G-23 leaders' meeting

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A day after the group of 23 dissenting Congress leaders staged a show of strength in Jammu, Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar on Sunday invited them to join the party's protest against fuel and cooking gas prices on March 1.

Mr. Jakhar said for these senior leaders, the demonstration could prove to be a "refresher course for the beginning of people-related politics".

He said right now, the time was to do the politics of struggle instead of the politics of policy and invited them to the State unit's programme to gherao the Raj Bhavan.

Senior leaders like Ghulam Nabi Azad, Kapil Sibal, Anand Sharma and Raj Babbar should take to the streets and raise people's issues, he said.

Though the All India Congress Committee was cautious in not precipitating the rift, Mr. Jakhar's statement is seen as the central leadership's counter to the Jammu show. Mr. Jakhar said former party chief Rahul Gandhi had raised awareness of agriculture laws from Punjab.

Convoy of AJP chief attacked, BJP blamed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

BJP supporters on Sunday allegedly attacked the convoy of Lurinjyoti Gogoi, president of the newly-formed Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) that rode the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act wave in the State.

The AJP has blamed local BJP legislator Narayan Deka for the assault at Banjhani in Nalbari district and named at least six BJP workers. Condemning the incident, the AJP informed the State's Home Commissioner and the Director-General of Police about it. "The incident reflects the BJP's frustration," said AJP's publicity secretary Ziaur Rahman.



Ghulam Nabi Azad being felicitated by members of Gujjar Desh Charitable Trust, in Jammu on Sunday. ■ PTI

smells different," Mr. Azad added.

Mr. Azad's remarks come at a time when the group of 23 dissenting leaders from the Congress, known as the G-23, held a grand meeting in Jammu on Saturday, with many leaders pitching for him to lead the party.

Many saw the G-23 meeting here as an open rebellion against the top leadership of the Congress. Dr. Abdul Lah said, in Jammu.

Meanwhile, National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Sunday said the Congress must unite to fight against divisive forces.

"All must unite to fight against the divisive forces of the country. The Congress must also unite, must become strong. People look up to the Congress to sort things out. It's an over 130-years-old party," Dr. Abdullah said, in Jammu.

## PM calls for water conservation drive

Modi regrets he could not make effort to learn Tamil, a 'beautiful language'



Since it was National Science Day on Sunday, Mr. Modi said the youth should learn about the history of science in India and scientists.

### 'Self-reliant India'

"Friends, when we talk of science, many a time people restrict it to physics, chemistry or labs, but the spread of science is much more than that. And there is a lot of contribution of the power of science to the Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign. We have to move science forward with the mantra of 'Lab to Land.'

said the Prime Minister.

For making India more self-reliant, Mr. Modi said it was not just "bigger things", such as missiles, aircraft, tanks and Metro trains, that would achieve the goal. He cited the example of a farmer in Uttar Pradesh who has started growing chia seeds.

"Friends, nowadays you must be hearing a lot about chia seeds. People connected to health awareness give a lot of importance to it and it has a lot of demand too in the world. In India, it is mostly sourced from abroad, but now people are taking

## COVID-19: The great global divide

As countries work to vaccinate their populations in their fight against the pandemic, there is an emerging fault line in the way nations address their priorities



Rakesh Verma  
Top Unacademy Educator  
Ex IAS Officer



LET'S CRACK CSE

In association with  
THE HINDU GROUP



women will never be able to return to work; and undoubtedly date of many more lives goes unreported. Efforts spanning 25 years to reduce poverty have been jeopardized by one pandemic.

If we are to rise together and do our bit to save our planet, there is a higher need for morals and ethics in the way we shape our policies hereon.

*This weekly column for civil services aspirants is brought to you by Unacademy. Send your subject specific queries to [upsccepreparation@unacademy.com](mailto:upsccepreparation@unacademy.com)*

*The opinions, beliefs, and viewpoints expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs, viewpoints, or official policies of Unacademy or The Hindu.*

Register Now



Scan the code to watch the free live class on 'COVID-19 & The Global Divide' on March 2 at 11 AM. Use code UPSCCSE.

While the fact that money cannot buy everything might be true, it is equally true, the lack of it does deprive us of a few priceless things. This has become even more evident since the beginning of this year when the rush for the COVID-19 vaccination began. With some countries acquiring as many as five doses per person under the pretext of 'vaccine nationalism', there is a serious shortage of vaccines in the poorer countries. The developing and least developed countries are being left behind in the race to fight against the virus that brought the world to its knees.

Moreover, there are several vacancies in the policymaking body and the government is in the process of making appointments.

According to sources, the

government has already held two rounds of interviews of shortlisted candidates to be appointed as members in the CBDT.

Amidst this distress, China's vaccine diplomacy comes with terms and conditions that countries are forced to comply with. China is selling its vaccine to fill the gap created by the West and increase its foothold to create its 5G infrastructure, roads,

bridges under BRI. For some, times of distress have become an opportunity to maximise profits and interests. The gap is widening in the world between have and have nots.

The economic, social, health, and moral crisis caused by COVID-19 is likely to worsen in the post-COVID world. The tall claims of enhancing security, safety, trust, transparency as global public good by the superpowers seems to have taken a back seat on the global platform. Even the serious event of watching Arctic glaciers melting in front of us, is seen as an opportunity by the rich countries to increase their footprints to explore the natural resources rather than to avert global warming. The race to acquire more and more is causing irreparable damage to humanity.

Last year, extreme poverty rose to 1 billion people and 25% of those living under multidimensional poverty (who were not undernourished) became undernourished. While we are entering into an age where machines will work for us and humans will rest, there are still countries like South Sudan which depend

## Modi, Mamata of same political DNA

Defeat Trinamool to stop the BJP, say leaders of the Left, Congress and ISF

SHIV SAHAY SINGH  
KOLKATA

Leaders of the Left and the Congress, who addressed a historic joint rally at the Brigade Parade ground in Kolkata on Sunday, said it was necessary to defeat the ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal to stop the BJP.

Joining the Left and Congress leaders at the dais was Abbas Siddique, the peer of the iconic Furfura Shareef and founder of the Indian Secular Front (ISF), a recent member of the opposition alliance in the State.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said without removing the Trinamool Congress, it was difficult to defeat the BJP; West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said Narendra Modi and Mamata Banerjee have the "same political DNA".

"It is difficult to differentiate between Modi and Mamata. Both are stifling democracy. While Modi says Congress Mukt Bharat (Con-

gress-free India), Didi here says opposition-less Bengal," Mr. Chowdhury said.

Highlighting the association of the Trinamool with the BJP both in terms of contesting the polls and joining the government, Mr. Yechury said people of the State do not want a government that indulges in loot and divides people on caste and religion.

Both Mr. Yechury and Mr. Chowdhury exuded confidence that the people of the

State want "change (parivaratan)".

Senior Congress leaders, including Jitin Prasad, and Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Bhupesh Baghel, were present at the rally, as were leaders of the Communist Party of India (CPI), Revolutionary Socialist Party and All India Forward Bloc.

Responding to the rally, senior Trinamool Congress leader Subrata Mukherjee said it is a matter of regret that the Left and the Congress have allied with ISF, which is a "communal force".

## Furfura peer targets ally Congress at joint rally

ISF founder flays party for delay in decision on seat-sharing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

The grand alliance of the Left parties, the Congress and the Indian Secular Front (ISF) on Sunday showed signs of cracks even before a final seat adjustment has been sealed.

Answering a question from a listener about the one thing he felt he "missed", Mr. Modi said, "I pondered this over and told myself that one of my shortcomings was that I could not make much effort to learn Tamil, the oldest language in the world."

"I could not make myself learn Tamil! It is such a beautiful language, which is popular all over the world. Many people have told me a lot about the quality of Tamil literature and the depth of the poems written in it. India is a land of many languages, which symbolises our culture and pride," the Prime Minister said.

A few minutes later, Mr. Siddique, 34, spoke and heaped praise on the Left Front leadership but target-

ed the Congress saying the ISF was not willing to appease anyone in the seat-sharing arrangement. "The Left, understanding the mood of the people, has agreed to most of our terms and so I will tell my followers ... to forget the history and extend their support whenever there is a Left candidate, so we can oust the BJP and the government's teammate Trinamool from Bengal," Mr. Siddique said.

According to sources, the Congress leadership is averse to part with seats from Malda and Murshidabad districts. Targeting the Congress, he said, "You may wonder why I did not mention Congress's name when I pledged my support to the Left ... If somebody wants to be my friend, the door is open and in the coming elections Siddique will fight for them." He said Congress president Sonia Gandhi is in favour of the alliance but some in the State are delaying the process.

Mr. Chowdhury said the Congress does not care about Mr. Siddique's threats. "Our seat sharing with the Left parties has not been finalised ... How can we talk about the ISF?"

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Civilian dies of bullet injuries in Srinagar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

The son of the owner of a popular eatery Krishna Dhaba, who was shot at by militants 11 days ago in Srinagar, died of injuries in a hospital on Sunday. Political parties which expressed their condolences said the root cause of violence had to be addressed.

An official said Aakash Mehra, son of Ramesh Kumar Mehra, had a bullet perforation in his abdomen and died at the Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital here.

Aakash, from the Janipur area of Jammu, was critically wounded on February 17 near his shop.

The police said the three attackers were arrested within 48 hours of the incident, which took place when foreign envoys were touring Jammu and Kashmir.

National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah, who described the death as "tragic," asked the Centre to address the root cause of the violence.

Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti said she was shocked and saddened to know about Mehra's death.

## Phase 2 of vaccination begins today amid a COVID-19 surge

Over 16,000 infections for the fourth day; six States account for the spike

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A day before India opens up vaccination for senior citizens and those above 45 with comorbidities, fresh daily COVID-19 infections were above 16,000 for the fourth consecutive day. Excluding Sunday, the figures for which are not yet available, the number of fresh weekly infections was close to 1,20,000.

Only on January 28 did India record 18,000 new infections, after which daily cases never touched 15,000 until February 23, when cases have consistently been above 16,000.

Six States — Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat — have shown a surge in new cases in the 24 hours up to 8 a.m. on Sunday, with about 86% of the cases emerging from these States.

Maharashtra reported the highest daily new cases at 8,623, followed by Kerala with 3,792 and Punjab with 593.

Nearly 1.07 crore people have recovered so far with 11,718 patients discharged in

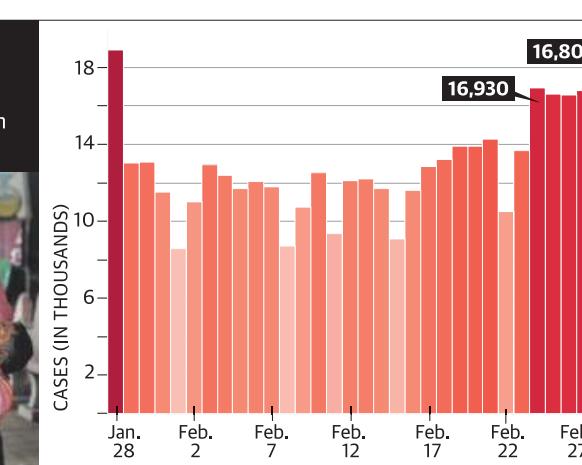
### Steady rise

India has been recording more than 16,500 COVID-19 cases in the last four days



the 24 hours. The recoveries continue to be high in States that are posting an increase in number of cases. Nearly 85% of the new recovered cases were in six States, with Kerala reporting the highest single-day recoveries of 4,650. As many as 3,648 recovered in Maharashtra, followed by 491 in Tamil Nadu.

As of Saturday for which the latest figures are available, 1,43,01,266 vaccine doses have been administered through 2,92,312 sessions. These include vaccination for 6.6 million healthcare workers who have got one



dose; 2.4 million with a second dose; and 5.1 million frontline workers with a second dose.

The Centre has also deputed high-level multi-disciplinary teams to Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Jammu and Kashmir, to ascertain the reasons for the surge and coordinate with the State Health Departments in COVID-19 control and containment measures.

To ramp up vaccination, nearly 10,000 private hospitals under Ayushman Bharat PMJAY and more than 600 private hospitals under the Central Government Health Scheme will be utilised with prospective beneficiaries having the option to pre-register via the CoWin 2.0 or Arogya Setu app, or walk in at any of the registered vaccination sites. Those over 60 and above 50 with comorbidities total at least 270 million Indians.

Those with comorbidities are expected to get a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner detailing their condition.

## Suryakiran, Sarang teams to dazzle Colombo skies

23 aircraft from IAF, Navy to participate in the display

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

The Suryakiran Aerobatic Team (SKAT) and the Sarang helicopter display team, along with the light combat aircraft, of the Indian Air Force will perform at an airshow at the Galle Face in Colombo from March 3 to 5 as part of the 70th anniversary celebrations of the Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF).

In all, 23 aircraft of the IAF and the Indian Navy will take part in the show and have begun arriving at the airbase in Katunayake on Saturday, the Indian High Commission in Colombo said on Twitter. The teams are in Colombo on an invitation from Air Marshal Sudarshana Pathirana, Commander of the SLAF, an IAF statement said.

This will be the first performance for the SKAT team outside India since it was resurrected in 2015 with the Hawk advanced jet trainers. Earlier, the SKAT team had toured Sri Lanka during the 50th anniversary of the SLAF in 2001.

**1971 commemoration**  
Marking the golden jubilee year of the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh, the SKAT team has been flying different formations over landmarks across the coun-



Going international: The Suryakiran and Sarang teams performing at the Aero India 2021 in Bengaluru. ■ FILE PHOTO

try starting from Kanyakumari in the south. The team has already flown over some of the southern cities and more demonstrations are in the pipeline, the official added.

The SKAT team, also known as 52 Squadron or The Sharks, is based in Bidar. The team was formed in 1996 with Kiran Mk-II aircraft and had enthralled spectators across the country till 2011. It was revived in 2015 with Hawk trainers initially with four aircraft and grew to the nine-aircraft formation.

Since its inception, the SKAT team has carried out over 600 displays all around the country. It has also represented India across southeast Asia including China.

JuH says it kept gelatin near Ambani home

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

An organisation named Jaish-ul-Hind (JuH) has claimed responsibility for placing an explosives-laden SUV near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's house in south Mumbai, police said on Sunday.

A senior police official said all possible angles were being investigated in this connection.

The outfit claimed responsibility by posting a message on social messaging app Telegram, which went viral on social media and came to the notice of the Mumbai police, the official said.

A Scorpio with gelatin sticks was found parked on Carmichael Road near 'Antilia', the multi-storey residence of Mr. Ambani, chairman of Reliance Industries, on Thursday.

## Rural engg. colleges to lose 1,200 teachers

Project for quality improvement in technical education to end in March

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ  
NEW DELHI

A World Bank-funded project to take graduates from elite institutions to rural and remote engineering colleges in poorer States is coming to an end in March, leaving more than 1,200 assistant professors out of a job and some rural colleges bereft of half their faculty.

The Centre is preparing its own MERITE project with some similar objectives to improve technical education, but that may be too late for the faculty employed under the current project.

Tanmay Rath holds a Ph.D. in polymer chemistry from IIT, Kharagpur, with post-doctoral experience in nanomaterials research in eastern Asia. However, for the past three years, he has been engaged in a project teaching chemistry to undergraduate engineering stu-



Faculty hired under TEQIP teach at rural and remote engineering colleges. ■ PICTURE FOR REPRESENTATION

dents in Motihari, a small town in East Champaran district of Bihar.

"I was hired under the TEQIP [Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme] project along with other NIT and IIT graduates and recruited to teach in some of the poorest and most remote areas. In Moti-

hari Engineering College, there are 52 faculty but 20 are from TEQIP," he said.

"We have transformed the teaching system here. There were no practical lab classes being conducted at all until we came," he said. "I don't know how they will manage to teach the classes once our contract ends on March 31. In the Chemistry Department, the only other faculty is also retiring at the end of the month. We have been appealing to the State and Central governments, but no one is willing to take the responsibility for the fate of these faculty or the students."

Three phases of the ₹3,600-crore TEQIP project have been completed since it was launched in December 2002. The third phase focused on improving quality and equity in engineering institutions in seven low-income, eight northeastern

and three hilly States. Among the initiatives was a bid to recruit more than 1,500 faculty from top institutions and send them to colleges that could never have afforded them. They were paid salaries in accordance with the Seventh Pay Commission. Now, neither the States nor the Centre is willing to commit to funding.

"What is the government talking about a new National Education Policy when it cannot even sustain the gains of an existing project," asked Rabel Guharay, a computer science faculty hired under TEQIP at the University College of Engineering and Technology in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand.

About 300 faculty have already quit TEQIP for other jobs, but 250 of those remaining have filed cases in the Delhi High Court. The next hearing is on March 15.

## Need to reset India-China trade ties: Foreign Secretary

Focus is on ensuring resilient supply chain, says Shringla

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

Remarking that a normal bilateral trade relationship with China was contingent on peace and tranquillity on other fronts, Indian Foreign Secretary H.V. Shringla on Sunday said the country was looking to diversify its trade dependencies.

"The current bilateral trade with China at \$78 billion is heavily tilted in the latter's favour and that will need a reset. India on its part is simultaneously working on diversifying its sourcing to ensure a more resilient supply chain in the future," said the Foreign Secretary.

Mr. Shringla was speaking during the penultimate panel discussion titled 'India as Global Partner' at the fifth Asia Economic Dialogue (AED) 2021, jointly hosted by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Pune International Centre (PIC).

Commenting on future relations with the United States in wake of new Joe Biden administration, Mr. Shringla said India had "an element of continuity" with the U.S. and that Prime



H.V. Shringla

Minister Modi had had close personal relationships with both former presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

"While China continues to be one of India's most important trade partners, the balance of trade is skewed in favour of the former. With recent disturbances in eastern Ladakh and the ongoing process of disengagement, there is introspection on our part in making our supply chain more resilient... a normal bilateral relationship with China is calibrated on peace and tranquillity on other fronts," he said.

Mr. Shringla said the Indian government was trying to work out details of new proposals with the Biden administration to make the

supply chain more resilient in the Indo-Pacific region.

Observing that the Prime Minister had had close relationships with both Mr. Obama and Mr. Trump, Mr. Shringla said that Mr. Modi also shared a good rapport with Mr. Biden.

"They have had a series of good conversations. So, we have a sense of priorities with the new U.S. administration. New elements like climate change and technology have been introduced by the Biden administration. There is a range of areas to collaborate," said the Foreign Secretary.

Stating that the Indian government's first priority was to fulfil its domestic vaccine needs, he said the country would not compromise on its commitment to meet international vaccine requirements as well.

Noting that India's vaccine diplomacy had been a "huge success", he said that India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy in the context of supplying vaccines to its neighbours has significantly raised New Delhi's stature among people of these countries.

## Low-key bidding likely at spectrum auctions

Bands valued at ₹3.92 lakh crore at stake; 5G airwaves not put up for bidding in this round

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA  
NEW DELHI

While the much-awaited telecom spectrum auctions kick-off from Monday, analysts do not anticipate large-scale bidding and expect operators to bid conservatively for minimum quantities with a focus on renewal of expiry spectrum.

A total of 2251.25 MHz of airwaves, across 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz and 2500 MHz frequency bands, with a total value of ₹3.92 lakh crore at reserve price, will be put up for bidding. The 5G airwaves have not been put up for bidding.

In a recent note, IIFL Securities said it sees only 24% of the total spectrum getting

sold. "Telcos will likely bid conservatively for minimum quantities, needed to satisfy the immediate 2-3 quarter capacity requirement, and await prices of regular bands to be cut in subsequent auctions as well as wait for 5G spectrum... We do not see any bids in the 700, 1800, 2100 and 2500 MHz bands," the note said.

In the last spectrum auctions, which were held in 2016, about 40% of the 2,355 MHz of spectrum (worth ₹5.6 lakh crore) put on auction was sold, generating ₹65,789 crore revenue for the government. There were no takers for the 700 MHz spectrum due to the high reserve prices as well as for the 900 MHz band.

In the three private operators — Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio and Vodafone Idea — have submitted an EMD of ₹10,000 crore. ■ FILE PHOTO

The three private operators — Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio and Vodafone Idea — have submitted earnest money deposit of ₹3,000 crore, ₹10,000 crore and ₹475 crore, respectively. According to spectrum auction

rules, a firm can bid for spectrum only as per eligibility point allocated based on its deposit.

As per ICICI Securities, operators can buy spectrum worth 5-7 times their EMD, meaning Bharti Airtel's spectrum payout could be capped at about ₹15,000-21,000 crore, Reliance Jio's at about ₹50,000-70,000 crore and for Vodafone Idea at about ₹2,400-3,300 crore.

Likewise, Jefferies in its research note pointed out that with the 5G spectrum not being auctioned, telcos will focus on 2021-24 renewals and boosting capacity by buying 1800/2100/2300MHz bands.

"We don't expect operators to bid for 700MHz band due to its high price as well as

ample availability of spectrum in 800MHz," it said.

As per the government, successful bidders may pay entire bid amount in one go or may exercise the option to pay a certain amount (25% for spectrum won in 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz bands or 50% for spectrum won in 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2500 MHz bands) upfront and remaining amount in a maximum up to 16 equal annual instalments, after a moratorium of two years.

In addition to the bid amount, successful bidders will also have to pay 3% of the Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) excluding wireline services as spectrum usage charges.

## Sullying reputation a ground for divorce: SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Allegations of an estranged spouse which has the effect of sullying the other's reputation and career amounts to "mental cruelty" and forms a ground for divorce, the Supreme Court said in a recent judgment.

The result of this 'mental cruelty' must be such that continuation of a marital relationship is impossible. In other words, the wronged person can hardly be expect-

ed to condone the other.

"The degree of tolerance will vary from one couple to another and the court will have to bear in mind the background, the level of education and also the status of the parties, in order to determine whether the cruelty alleged is sufficient to justify dissolution of marriage," a three-judge Bench led by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul observed in a judgement.

The judgment came in an appeal filed by an Army offic-

er whose estranged wife had filed a series of complaints against him with his superiors, even the Army chief.

A Family Court had accepted his plea for dissolution of marriage on the ground of mental cruelty on her part. The court had rubbed her claim of adultery against him and refused to accept her plea for restitution of conjugal rights.

However, the Uttarakhand High Court, on her appeal, dismissed the trouble bet-

ween the couple as "squabbles in an ordinary middle-class marriage". It set aside the lower court's finding of mental cruelty.

Do not simply tolerate pain but understand headache syndromes for better management

**Coping with pain**  
Slight modifications in lifestyle could help contain headache trigger; below, Dr. Pravin Thomas

• GETTY IMAGES/  
ISTOCK AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ANASUYA MENON

A searing pain around the eye and on one side of the head wakes up Nirajan on most nights. It lasts between 15 minutes to an hour and on some days returns after short periods of respite.

It took Nirajan seven years, multiple doctor visits, a battery of tests and hours of internet research to figure out that he has a condition called cluster headache.

Considered to be one of the worst headaches (affecting one out of 1,000 individuals), it is also called suicide headache. "Some people end their lives because they cannot bear it anymore," says Dr Pravin Thomas, founder and chairman of the World Headache Society (WHS) and Consultant Neurologist and Chief of Headache Medicine, Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals, NHS Foundation Trust, UK.

The cluster is apparently one among 300 different types of headaches, based on the classification by the International Headache Society (a London-based organisation that helps people suffering from headaches). The WHS, that promotes headache science through a network of medical practitioners across the globe, has launched a first-of-its-kind certification course in headache medicine in collaboration with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi.

Excerpts from an interview with Dr Pravin Thomas:

**Why do we need a certification course in headache medicine?**



## Why does your head hurt?

• The World Health Organization and the Global Burden of Diseases mention from time to time, that migraine is not only the most common neurological illness but also the most misdiagnosed and mismanaged condition. The disability of chronic migraine is compared to that of paralysis and schizophrenia. Data from around the world shows headache neurology is a minuscule part of MBBS and Post Graduate syllabus.

The course is meant for MBBS and BDS doctors and soon in the future will also be open to AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) doctors, specialist nurses, physiotherapists, and clinical pharmacologists.

**What are the dangers of self-medication or the excess use of over-the-counter-drugs to treat headaches?**

• It depends on the type of headache. In case of migraine, overuse of painkillers can lead to perpetuation of headaches

and chronic migraine. For other types of headache, the danger of over-the-counter medications can lead to missing the diagnosis and may even cost the life of the individual, along with other medication side effects and costs.

**What are the most common types of headaches?**

• The most type, of course, is migraine. Then there are those which mimic migraine, but are more life-threatening. It is important to diagnose, classify and treat head aches properly.

Headaches are broadly classified as primary – those with normal brain scans and other tests, and secondary – with an abnormality that can account for the headache. A

common cause of primary headache is the cluster headache while viral infections, including COVID-19 can cause secondary headaches. This apart, neck and face pain could also be reasons.

### Can altering lifestyle/food choices help in preventing/managing headaches?

• To some extent, yes, if we are able to control our regular eating and sleeping habits. Certain compounds like monosodium glutamate found as additives in food, or consumption of alcohol can trigger migraines. Some individuals have specific food triggers but more often than not, it is the deviation from the routine that causes headaches. Then there are the uncontrollable factors as well, such as the weather or the work environment. Sometimes slight modifications and adjustments help to contain the trigger.

### Does Yoga help in managing headaches?

• The traditional way of doing yoga does help to some extent. There is no evidence yet if modern day variants such as power or gym yoga are beneficial. A study done at the AIIMS using a series of yogasanas and breathing practices (Pranayams) found it beneficial when done along with the conventional treatment. There are several wellness practices which have gone into oblivion in many of the countries represented in the World Headache Society. Our aim is to also revive the forgotten wellness practices in other countries and couple them under headache treatment, if found effective.

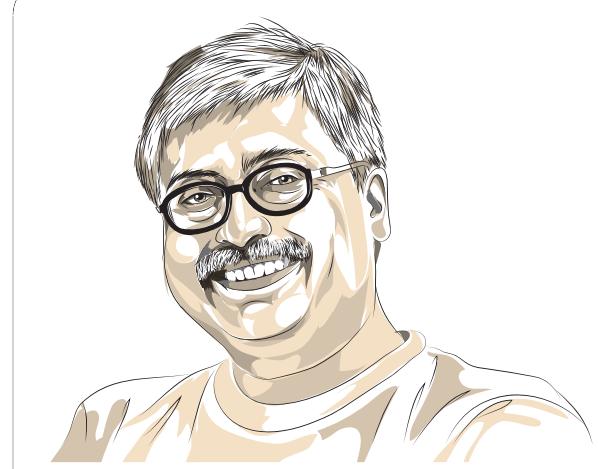
### Are headaches common among children? What should parents do to help them cope?

• Headaches are common in children but their symptoms for migraines can be unique and different. They may not actually get a headache but have abdominal pain, vertigo, loss of consciousness and vomiting and are usually made to undergo tests for the alimentary tract. When the tests come negative, unfortunately, they are blamed for malingering their illness out of laziness to go to school. Or it is treated as a psychological problem. It is important to be sensitised about headache syndromes in children so that they do not suffer loss of education and are not subjected to unnecessary tests.

### Are women more prone to headaches than men?

• Yes, migraine is more common in women. Genetics and hormones play a role in some migraines, which account for some of the gender differences.

*Those in distress or having suicidal tendencies could seek help and counselling by calling 044 24640050*



## In remembrance

**O**n February 26, we lost Shovon Chowdhury, who wrote The Creaking Tree column for the Health section of this newspaper, to pancreatic cancer.

Back in May of 2020, when he started making hospital rounds for treatment, he sent us a two-chapter piece on his experience with the words, "Laughing through the tears. They dry up faster that way."

Titled 'Pancreatic Diaries', the columns that month were among his funniest ones. Humour, Shovon had found, was the best way to deal with the surreal and the tragic – a principle he would apply while writing about both his personal grief and his dismay at the state of national affairs.

When he further caught COVID-19, it was, he said, "for investigative reasons". In his self-effacing manner, he called himself a 'valued customer' of the hospital, and remarked that the lack of return of investment in health insurance no longer rankled him deeply. Through all the needles, scans and bandages, Shovon found the energy in him to make us laugh about the nurses' accents, the chatty 'enema man', and the sponge baths.

At the Health team of MetroPlus, we sometimes worry that our page may be bit serious for a Monday morning. Which is why we were lucky to have Shovon lighten up the mood since

2017. He would take our piece on screen addiction, and joke that it was a sinister plot by this newspaper against more convenient digital alternatives to reading the news.

No topic was off-limits for him, and so we would tussle over specifics as writers and sub-editors are wont to do, but in the end he would always make us laugh. Today, he would have written on the many types of headaches he has endured over the years, most likely delving into a stream-of-consciousness anecdote about his distant Bengali relatives.

We found out more about the peculiarities of people in his life than strangers are expected to know. But that is how it goes with writers; they get to choose what part of their lives you see. He may not have told us his cancer was worsening, but we did find out that he had always been proud of his luxuriant hair; that when he was in college, he had a cat named Stone who gave birth to kittens named Pebbles; that he escaped swimming lessons by thrashing water on his mother; that Shaun the Sheep doing a thumbs up was one of his favourite GIFs.

Shovon made sure that we, and all his readers, chuckled throughout a grim year. Making someone laugh is one of the kindest things a person can do, and for that we remain thankful.

*Sweta Akundi*

## WELLNESS ON SHELF

### Natural and soft

Superbottoms has launched comfortwear for babies and toddlers. The product is unisex and a set comprises a pair of shorts and a top made of printed organic cotton fabric. It is designed with no seams or tags. The comfortwear is available in four different sizes for ages six months to six years.

*Price starts at ₹349 at superbottoms.com*



### Supple skin

Pamper your skin with Gua Sha, the recently launched beauty tool by Nykaa. It is designed to massage the face to help improve blood circulation, decrease puffiness and promote collagen production.

The product is available in two variants: Jade Green and Rose Quartz. According to Nykaa, the Jade Green variant made of natural jade stone has a soap bar like texture and helps in relaxing the nervous system. The Rose Quartz made of jade stone, rose quartz, magnesium and titanium reduces skin tension.

*Available online on Nykaa.com for ₹1799 and ₹1999 respectively.*



### For your feet

Sketchers has introduced a new range of Arch Fit shoes designed in consultation with podiatrists to provide comfort and support for the feet. The insole provides better foot guidance and helps distribute arch pressure thereby offering better balance and stability. It can be machine washed.

*Price starts from ₹5799 at www.skechers.in*



### So why does this happen?

Not all video games throw up – pun intended – simulator sickness; video games with verticality are often the culprits. Rooted in physics, verticality is all about the scale of spaces in a given game as well as the player's ability and freedom to traverse them. It implies that a player has freedom of movement that extends to vertical planes through abilities, vehicles, or level design.

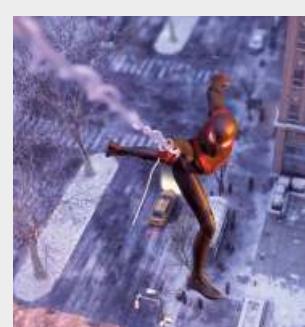
Motion parallax, another culprit, sees the apparent displacement of an observed object due to a change in the position of the observer. Racing games such as Need For Speed and Asphalt 9 leverage this and it, unfortunately, tends to induce eye strain, fatigue, and general discomfort over time.

### The doc explains

Dr Vamsi Chalasani, a consulting neurologist at Vennela Hospital, Vijayawada, is a fan of video games himself and explains the effects of such play-time on the mind. "Screens with a lot of glare push this cybersickness along, as these can induce persistent cluster headaches and migraines, which can inhibit appetite, leading to a host of other issues," he explains.

He also points out those with anxiety and other stress-relevant mental health issues need to pace themselves while gaming. "The immersive and overwhelming nature

of video games can further a lot of anxiety," he elaborates, "especially with the swinging camera angles and some open-world settings where there's a lot to take in, not just visually but audio-wise."



Feeling unsettled and nauseous during a session of Need For Speed or Assassin's Creed? We break down why, and how you can alleviate your symptoms

## Rollercoaster gaming ride

*DIVYA KALA BHAVANI*

The lockdown and the launches of gaming smartphones and the new Xbox and PlayStation consoles saw a groundswell of new and/or returning gamers. The immersive pastime became an outlet for many in a time of loneliness and distancing but it also brought an unhealthy product of its own: simulation or simulator sickness, a type of 'cybersickness'.

Often coming in around 30 minutes into focussed game-play, the symptoms are similar to that of motion sickness: fatigue, uneasiness, dizziness, headaches and, if it gets worse, vomiting and subsequent weakness. The irony here is that unlike motion sickness, you are very much in one stationary position while playing.



### Can it be avoided?

Dr Vamsi also advises how to alleviate the symptoms. "Do not do to your mind what you would not do to your body. Take breaks periodically, and make sure you are well-rested before and after gaming sessions. Also, what you eat before and after you play video games is extremely important; an acid-heavy diet with carbonated drinks is not advisable as that may exacerbate nausea. Stay hydrated with water and keep healthy snacks, such as nuts or fruit, on hand which slowly release energy." It also helps if the room you are playing in is cool and has proper ventilation, he adds.

Game designers are now migrating towards higher frame refresh rates – the smoother things run, the lesser chance of a 'frame drop' that is jarring to the eye. As users, we too can pitch in. Andre Rodrigues, a gamer and UX designer, recommends, "Essentially you want to adapt the visual of the game to the comfort of the human eye, so go into the game's settings and tweak parameters such as field of view and camera bounce (this depends on game to game), chromatic aberration with lighting and shadow quality. It also helps to reduce details; some gamers favour a fully-detailed visual but this tanks the refresh rate which then induces the uneasiness – and be sure to check your monitor's sharpness level too. That said, hardware with high refresh rates of 60 frames per second and above are advisable for a more natural motion; they tend to be more expensive but they are worth it."

*CM YK*

# Fresh air, with FRILLS

The new age Indian traveller is taking to glamping as it guarantees a much-needed post lockdown break in the grip of nature whilst affording the luxuries of a hotel

ANASUYA MENON

Beside a crackling bonfire under a starlit sky, listening to the orchestra of the cicadas and the gurgle of the forest stream, one couldn't possibly want anything more from life. Except, perhaps, a hot tub, WiFi, and a soft bed with sweet smelling sheets, and not to mention soul-satisfying food. Luxury, even in the middle of a jungle, is not too much to ask for.

Glamorous camping – more popularly known as glamping – is catching on in India. After many months of lockdown, in a country that is still in the grip of a pandemic, restless travellers looking for a break from 'Work from Home' routine, household chores and crowded cities, are increasingly picking glamping over touristy places, says Akshay Kusmade, owner of The Triangle Glamping, a camping site 16 kilometres from Pune. "People are tired of being

cooped up in their city homes and are longing to go out into forests and open spaces. Glamping is an option for them as they can have a hotel-like experience in a natural setting," says Akshay.

Akshay comprising his property comprising five tents, which have exclusive bonfire areas and gardens, on a half acre space in January 2021 in Solu village, Maharashtra, and he has already received enquiries to set up similar sites in Satara (Maharashtra) and Uttar Pradesh.

#### Sound of music

Glamping sites gently push the boundaries, offering perks that include temperature controlled private pools, air-conditioning, heaters for rooms, mini fridges and spacious bathrooms in a semi-wild setting. It works for those who crave the adventure of camping, but also need small luxuries for a truly relaxing holiday. "One

gets the best of both worlds. It is essentially camping, but you could have proper beds, comforters, pillows and blankets. Basically, you don't have to sleep on a yo-yo mat," says Akshay.

Most glamping sites offer tailored activities as well. For instance, a walk in the spice, tea or coffee plantation, bird watching expeditions, wellness spas, chef-curated menus with champagne or even a bath in a forest stream.

The rich bird life around the Chhatrasagar lake in Pali district, Rajasthan, is an added attraction to those who go glamping at RAAS Chhatrasagar. The luxury campsite, open throughout the year, sits on a privately-owned dam on the Chhatrasagar lake and offers a panoramic view.

"There are over 260 species of migratory birds that visit the lake, a bonus for our glampers," says Saurajit Nanda, camp manager, adding, "The only sounds you

hear around here are bird calls." Soaking in the serenity of the environment, glampers at Chhatrasagar can go on bird-watching nature walks, boat rides, wildlife safaris and a bush lunch – which involves a drive into the wilder-

ness around the camp for a lunch set in a natural environment. The camp site, which sprawls over 1,500 acres of jungle area, has tents that are permanent structures with chic interiors. Each tent has a private verandah, which



**Luxury outdoors** (Clockwise from top left) glampers on a bird watching tour at RAAS Chhatrasagar, Rajasthan; tents and a close-up view at The Triangle Glamping, Pune ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



overlooks the lake on the east and the wilderness on the other side. Here, you could have a sundowner with a curated menu, watching the evening paint the sky in hues of orange. The nights are even better – you could lie in bed and watch the stars through the skylight.

**Thrilling experience**  
Down South in rain-drenched Western Ghats, monsoons usually interfere with campers' plans. Glamping sites such as Grassroots in Wayanad, however, covers the risk. Open throughout the year, the property has specially-made Swiss tents, which have one concrete wall.

Set on a hillock in Penangode on the road towards Banasura Dam from Kalpetta in Wayanad, the property overlooks a tributary of the Kabani river. It affords a view of coffee and spice planta-

tions as well. The tents have a porch, colonial-style bathrooms, air-conditioning, television and a mini fridge. Opened in 2012, Grassroots was among the first properties in South India to popularise glamping, according to Aditya Raman, founder of Red Earth Resorts, which owns Grassroots. "There were few takers in the initial years, but now people are aware of the concept and love camping with frills," he says, adding, "Post lockdown, there have been more enquiries from domestic tourists, who probably never considered glamping as an option earlier."

Stream hiking is part of the activities at Wild Vibes, a glamping site off Mepadi in Wayanad. Started by a group of naturalists trying to create programmes for people to reconnect with nature, Wild Vibes lays the stress on appreciating the forest. "For many of our visitors, a bath in the forest stream is a thrilling experience," says Hijaz Mohammed, working partner. They have chic log cabins set amid the tall trees and hobbit houses (small dome-shaped tents).

Businessman Balram Menon says one of his recent glamping experiences at Wild Vibes, Wayanad, helped him bond with nature. Having travelled to 29 countries, glamping was a first-of-its-kind experience for him at home in Kerala.

"The average Indian traveller has evolved; he or she now appreciates exclusivity and sustainability. After the pandemic, we have learnt the importance of travelling responsibly," he adds.



The Congress leader's adventures at sea was shot by fishing vlogger Sebin Cyriac for his YouTube channel Fishing Freaks



**Seafarer** (From left)  
Rahul Gandhi with  
Sebin Cyriac, Jobin  
James and Jino  
Cyriac  
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ATHIRA M

Rahul Gandhi is trending, yet again. His adventure in the deep sea, off the coast at Thangassery harbour in Kollam, Kerala, is winning the Internet; the highlight being his jumping into the sea with fishermen. And basking in the moment is Kerala-based vlogger Sebin Cyriac, who shot the video for his YouTube channel, Fishing Freaks. The video clocked over 10 lakh views within 24 hours of its upload.

"I am still in a state of disbelief. It hasn't sunk in yet," says Sebin, adding that Rahul left the group "shell-shocked" when he dove into the sea. "Although he had told me that he swims and was a diving instructor during his student days, I didn't expect him to actually do it," Sebin remarks.

It was a few weeks ago that Rahul's team in Delhi had contacted Sebin to discuss about the trip. "I got the confirmation a week ago. Perhaps, the subscriber base

men on the boat and you should have seen their reaction when they saw him. They were worried when he took the plunge into the water. He also had bread and tuna curry, which the fishermen had taken with them for breakfast," says Sebin.

They set sail in the wee hours of February 24 and returned by 8 am. "By that time the harbour had known about his arrival and it was packed with local residents and media," Sebin adds. He is ecstatic that Rahul has appreciated the video. "I had my apprehensions because the video is of 23 minutes. However, he is happy with how it has turned out," he says.

Sebin claims that outside of his team – which comprised his brother, Jino Cyriac, and friend-cum-cameraman, Jobin James – at the harbour or on the boat knew about Rahul's arrival. "I was excited about the surprise factor. There were 22 fisher-

## The spotlight is on

Coimbatore-based filmmaker Amudhavanan's *Quota* is on a winning spree at the festival circuit

K JESHI

"Forty eight awards, 13 mentions and still counting," says director Amudhavanan, overjoyed with the appreciation coming his way for *Quota* at the festival circuit in India and internationally. "We have also made it to the official selection at the upcoming film festival in Nepal from May 6 to 10. For the panorama section, they have short listed nine films from entries received from 63 countries. *Quota* is one among them," says Amudhavanan.

It was at the Calcutta International Cult Film Festival, that the film began its dream run. Besides winning awards at Indian film festivals, it also featured in the official selection and special mentions at international film festivals in Venice, Japan, Canada. "What really clicked is an engaging content that asks relevant questions," he explains.

The film showcases how a talented tribal boy misses out on an opportunity to become a gymnast because of his underprivileged background. "When director Subramania Siva (who made films like



**Go for your dreams**  
A still from  
*Quota*  
■ SPECIAL  
ARRANGEMENT

*Thiruda Thirudi*) saw the film, he was moved, especially with the ending. His eyes welled up and he was the one who pushed us to take the film to festivals."

*Quota* was filmed at Mannarkad in Kerala and on the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border. "The tribal hamlet Uthukuli in Mannarkad is cut off from the bustle of the city. We went with the slow pace of the life there while filming. All the characters speak Tamil with a smattering of Malayalam. We retained a native flavour as we took the audience on a journey to this tribal hamlet."

Though the film begins with a tribute to the tribal freedom fighter-leader Birsa Munda, it does not focus on a particular caste or tribe. The spotlight is primarily on how children from underprivileged backgrounds continue to struggle in achieving their dreams. "Children in tribal hamlets are unstoppable. They crawl on parapet walls, leap from one roof to another,

and dive into lakes. They are always outdoors. A sense of balance, flexibility and agility comes naturally to them. But they need a platform to express. Are these children getting their due for their talent? is what the film sets you thinking," says Amudhavanan.

Child actor Bhavaz who plays the lead got an opportunity in *Master* and will also be seen in the upcoming *Annathey* starring Rajini Kanth. Actor Chelli of Nakkalites fame who plays the role of father has signed up for a number of films. "It has given a boost to their careers. Our sound engineer A. Sathish Kumar, who has worked in a spate of commercial films, walked with his first award from the Bhutan Film Festival. He spent a few days at Uthukuli to understand its rhythm. Our colourist Sri Ram Balakrishnan was also appreciated for lending a subtle tone to the film. Music by Allan Sebastian was also highlighted."

### POOCH CAFE



## Rahul's day out

(16.6 lakh) of the channel was a reason why they selected me. The conditions were that I have to translate his conversations with the fishermen and that the entire episode should be kept real," he adds.

Sebin claims that outside of his team – which comprised his brother, Jino Cyriac, and friend-cum-cameraman, Jobin James – at the harbour or on the boat knew about Rahul's arrival. "I was excited about the surprise factor. There were 22 fisher-

men on the boat and you should have seen their reaction when they saw him. They were worried when he took the plunge into the water. He also had bread and tuna curry, which the fishermen had taken with them for breakfast," says Sebin.

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The 29-year-old, a native of Arpookkara in Kottayam district, started the channel two years ago. It was last month that the Congress leader was featured in a popular Tamil YouTube food channel, Village Cooking Channel, run by a group of farmers from Chinna Veeramangalam in Pudukkottai district of Tamil Nadu.

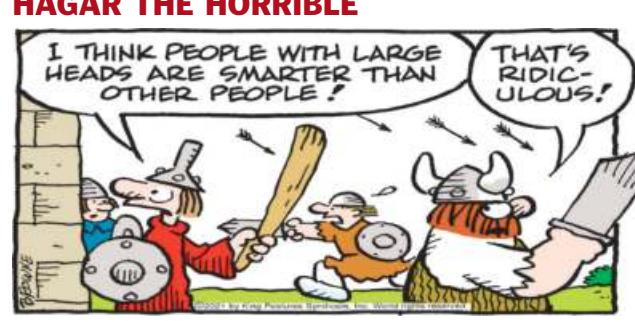
### CALVIN AND HOBBES



AND IF ANYTHING DOES,  
BY GOLLY, I'M GOING TO  
BL. BLAH. FOR IT.



### HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



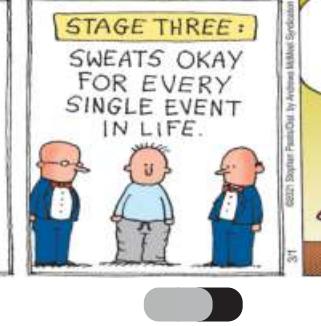
### PEANUTS



### TIGER



### PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



ASK US

**Q.** I am a government employee and my parents are senior citizens. The upper limit for medical expenditure/insurance in respect of senior-citizen parents is ₹50,000. Further, for individuals, the limit is ₹25,000.

**1.** Kindly help clarify whether one can claim the benefit of ₹50,000 deduction for medical expenditure under 80D for parents only for certain specified illnesses or for any regular treatment from a recognised hospital or medical practitioner.

**2.** Since I am covered under government and private insurance, can I claim deduction for my medical expenditure (for which I have not claimed benefits either from the government or from the private insurer) apart from the insurance premium? If yes, then why doesn't the ITR page provide space for the filling up of personal expenditure details? Kindly also suggest further reading to have in-depth idea of benefits under 80D.

AYODHYA SAHU

**N. Sree Kanth replies:**

**A.** For non-senior citizens, deduction is available only for medical health insurance premium paid for themselves and dependent family up to ₹25,000. However, you may claim expenses incurred for preventive health check-up up to ₹5,000 for yourself and dependent family subject to the overall limit of ₹25,000.

You may refer Section 80D of the Income Tax Act, 1961 for an in-depth idea.

(N. Sree Kanth is partner, GSS Associates, Chartered Accountants, Chennai)

**Q.** My mother is a beneficiary of family pension. Her 80C & 80D are full and I was looking to invest in NPS to get benefits under 80CCD. Please advise whether beginning investments into NPS at age 58 is advisable. Are there other investment options to save on tax?

VIVEK KESHTI

**Vidya Bala answers:**

**A.** While NPS investment is allowed till the age of 65, we think liquidity is more

important for her at this stage than saving tax. Consider investing in a mix of short-term FDs and low-risk, short-term debt mutual funds from which she can withdraw money when she wants to. With debt funds, tax efficiency will kick in after three years when it becomes long term in nature and she can get long-term capital gain indexation benefit.

However, if you are still keen that she enters NPS, make sure you invest only in the corporate bond and gilt options instead of equity. Also note that there will be compulsory part-annuity conversion requirement. You



cannot fully withdraw the amount.

**Q.** I am a retired senior citizen, aged 71. I have invested about 50% of the retirement corpus (along with my wife) in major PSBs and NBFCs. The balance is distributed among SCSS (maximum limit reached), LIC Vaya Vandana scheme (earlier scheme), PPF, RBI (7.75%) bonds, and debt funds. Some of our bank and NBFC FDs will mature soon. Bank and NBFC interest rates are coming down sharply. Kindly advise on other secure investment options available (regular income) with better returns, as we are dependent on our interest income.

(Name withheld on request)  
**A.** In the current rate scenario, RBI Floating Rate Bond 2020 is a superior option. And if rates do go up, you will see this bond paying you higher rates as it is a floating-rate instrument. So, lock more into this. Next,

lock into 6-12-month bank fixed deposits, low rates notwithstanding. When they mature, chances are that rates will be up. You can lock into longer duration, then. Some near-term income sacrifice may be necessary to ensure your capital is safe. You will benefit once the rate cycle moves up.

**Q.** I am 38 years old, currently working with a private company and earning ₹54,000 per month. I am paying ₹1,10,936 as LIC premium. I pay ₹24,000 annually towards PPF, Sukanya Samridhi scheme ₹36,000 and SIP ₹2,000 per month. I have three daughters. Kindly advise whether my existing financial plan is good, or if I need to change anything to get better returns in future. (A majority of my existing LIC policies will be maturing by 2025).

SAJAN

**A.** On your investments, you have chosen quality government schemes, but they account for less than 10% of your earnings.

A good chunk goes towards traditional policies. While we will be unable to comment on the policies without knowing the details, in general traditional policies earn low returns. Hence, if there are policies where you can discontinue premiums (check on the repercussions), please do that, and focus on increasing your investments to at least 15% of your income. PPF and Sukanya Samridhi are good. If you can take risks, then add in equity mutual funds. Keep it simple by using passive index funds such as the Nifty 50 and small sums in passive international index funds (Nasdaq 100 or S&P 500).

(Vidya Bala is Co-founder, Primeinvestor.in )

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# BETTER TIMES await fixed-income seekers

With interest rates bottoming out and the economy picking up, opportunities for higher returns may open up

AARATI KRISHNAN

The spotlight has been on stock markets since the Budget presentation and subsequent stock swings have given palpitations to the adventurous. But this Budget had some significant signals for fixed income investors too, which have flown under the radar. If you're a safety-seeking investor, you may have to rethink your choices.

## What's changed

If the last six years have been good to Indian equity investors, they've been very unkind to investors looking for assured returns. Between January 2015 and May 2020, Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) steadily pruned its policy rate from 8% to 4%.

In the past year, the RBI has pumped ample liquidity into the system to keep interest rates low in a bid to revive the sluggish economy.

This has meant three things for fixed income investors. Investors in bank fixed deposits (FDs) have seen a sharp decline in interest rates over the six-year period. Rates on 1-3-year FDs, which hovered at 8.5-8.75% in 2014-15, are now at 4.9-5.5%.

Interest rates on small savings schemes (SSS), which are pegged to market yields and reset at the beginning of every quarter, have seen a decline too, but not to the same extent as bank FDs.

Rates on 1-5-year post office time deposits were at 8.4-8.5% in April 2015 and are at 5.5-6.7% now.

Debt mutual fund (MF) investors have pocketed handsome returns in the last six years because such funds make returns from bond price gains and not just from interest receipts.

When interest rates in the economy fall, prices of older bonds with higher rates soar in the market because they are much in demand.

For debt MF holders, bond-price gains have more than made up for lower interest accruals. As long-term bonds react more to rate changes, categories such as gilt, long-duration and dynamic bond funds delivered CAGRs of 8-10% in the five years from FY15 to FY21.

## Set for reversal

But, with interest rates falling to their lowest levels in more than two decades over the past year, there are signs that the rate cycle may be due for a reversal.

Rising consumer price inflation since April 2020 has made it tough for the MPC to cut rates further, since May 2020. With the economy recovering faster-than-expected from COVID-19, there's pressure on RBI to normalise the excess liquidity it has been pumping into the markets. While these factors set the stage for interest rates to bottom out, the Budget may have provided the trigger for them to finally move up.

In a marked shift from the past, the government, in this Budget, has announced that it would allow the fiscal deficit

to shoot up to 9.5% in FY21 and remain at 6.8% in FY22. It also plans to continue with deficits above 4.5% until FY26, to stimulate the economy. It has indicated that it would review the 3% fiscal deficit target set in the FRBM Act, too.

The elevated deficits signal the market supply of government bonds will remain quite high for the foreseeable future. This has had bond investors banks for slightly better rates. The yield on the 10-year government security, the key benchmark for the Indian bond market, has shot up from 5.95% just before the Budget to 6.2% as of February 22. The 5-year government security has seen yields move up from 5.28 to 5.75%.

The 10-year AAA-rated corporate bonds are now at 6.8% against 6.4% just before the Budget, and could see further gains. While the RBI is still trying its best to keep government borrowing costs low by managing gilt auctions and buying gilts directly, the tug-of-war between the RBI and the markets is spiking sharp, two-way moves in bond prices.

All this affects choices for fixed income investors in four ways.

## Bank fixed deposits

If you've been fretting over rock-bottom interest rates from leading banks for your FDs, hang on just a few months more, as the rates may begin to move up. As

economic activity picks up post-COVID-19, banks will have greater need of deposits to fuel lending and may offer better rates. SBI recently raised its 1-year FD rate marginally (4.9 to 5%). Other banks may follow suit.

If you've been thinking of switching to riskier deposits from NBFCs, small finance banks or smaller private sector banks for slightly better rates, don't do it now. A few months down the line, leading banks and post office schemes may offer you those rates with less risk. If you wish to initiate new deposits, stick with the shortest possible tenure.

## Small savings schemes

Interest rates on small savings schemes, reset every quarter, are officially supposed to be pegged to market yields on government securities (g-secs). Rates on the 5-year time deposit, National Savings Certificate and PPF are supposed to be 25 basis points (bps) higher than the 5-year g-sec and the Senior Citizens Savings Scheme is supposed to offer 100 bps or low-duration funds with an average maturity of up to six months.

## Bonds and NCDs

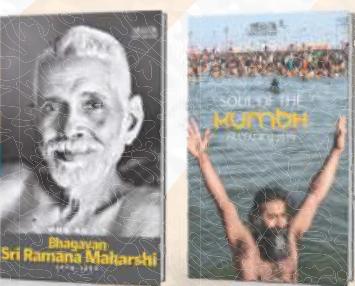
Rising rates make it a bad time to buy long-term NCDs from PSUs or private firms in the secondary market or invest in new issues with 5/10/15 year lock-ins.

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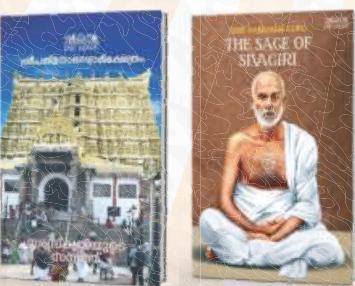


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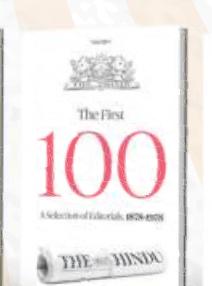


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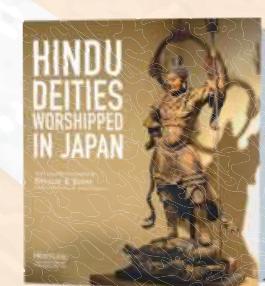
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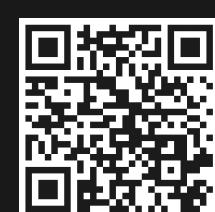


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# China Parliament to mull expanded border drone use

PLA representative at National People's Congress to submit plan on deployment of advanced, bigger drones in the wake of Galwan clash

**ANANTH KRISHNAN**

The annual convening of China's National People's Congress (NPC), or Parliament, on March 5 will hear a proposal for the wider deployment of more advanced drones along border areas, with a legislator proposing the move in the wake of last year's clash between Indian and Chinese troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The proposal is being submitted by one of the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) representatives at the NPC, which is widely regarded as ceremonial legislature that usually approves most of the proposals it receives. The Communist Party of China exercises control over all

branches of state, including the legislature. The NPC convenes every year and approves policies, including government work report that sets the policy agenda, and the defence budget for the military.

**Limitations exposed'** Hou Yun, commander of a border defence regiment with the PLA Tibet Military Command who is among the military's NPC delegates, told State media he will submit a proposal "suggesting that China should enhance border management and control by deploying more smart equipment like drones, as his experience and research indicate huge room for improvement despite the wide use of such devices"



**Eye on border:** Soldiers using a drone for reconnaissance in Xinjiang, China, on Feb. 12, 2021. ■ BACROFT MEDIA/GETTY IMAGES

by the military.

Last year's clash in the Galwan Valley, he suggested, had exposed limitations in the current deployment of drones. "To tackle current issues, which include the short endurance, high dependence on weather conditions and insufficient

payload capacity resulting from the initial commissioning of only easy-to-use, small drones, the PLA could use more sophisticated, larger drones in its arsenal," the Party-run *Global Times* reported, adding that "the proposal comes after a months-long border

standoff" with India.

He said the goal was "to resolve three key problems: to see where people can't see, hear where people can't hear and go where people can't go." The report said he had "recently led a patrol team to a valley at an elevation of 4,000 meters" and while drones were in wide use, they faced limitations, including short endurance and vulnerability to harsh weather conditions.

To address those problems, the military is pitching for the use of "larger, fixed-wing drones like the GJ-1 and GJ-2 armed reconnaissance drones" which "can stay in the air for dozens of hours and are equipped with more sophisticated payloads".

The report said the PLA

had used drones for reconnaissance during the Galwan Valley clash last year. Chinese media reported last week that one Shenzhen-based private drone manufacturer had honoured two of its employees who had been deployed to assist the PLA in the Galwan Valley by carrying out drone reconnaissance missions on India's deployments.

## Public sentiment

While the PLA would not necessarily require the NPC to approve the deployment of drones, the proposal comes amid renewed public attention in China on last year's border clash.

The June 15, 2020, clash in the Galwan Valley has been among the most wide-

ly discussed subjects in the lead-up to this year's Congress, having received belated attention in the wake of the PLA, on February 19, honouring five soldiers, four of them posthumously. Twenty Indian soldiers died in the clash, that marked the worst violence along the border since 1967.

The PLA announcement,

eight months after the clash

and a week after India and China announced disengagement along some areas of the LAC, triggered an outpouring of sentiment on Chinese social media.

Some NPC proposals in the past have often grappled with topics in the public spotlight, with the broader aim of underlining how the government was addressing those issues.

## 47 HK activists charged with subversion

Police had detained 55 pro-democracy campaigners in last month's raids

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**

HONG KONG

Dozens of Hong Kong dissidents were charged with subversion on Sunday in the largest use yet of Beijing's sweeping new national security law, as authorities seek to cripple the finance hub's democracy movement.

Police arrested 55 of the city's best-known pro-democracy campaigners in a series of dawn raids last month.

On Sunday, 47 were charged with one count each of "conspiracy to commit subversion" – one of the new national security crimes – with police saying the group would appear in court on Monday morning.

Democracy supporters described the move as a body blow.

"Every prominent voice of the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong now is either jailed, in ex-



**Mounting pressure:** Pro-democracy activist Mike Lam, centre, outside a police station in Hong Kong. ■ AFP

ile, or charged for subversion of state power," activist Sophie Mak wrote on Twitter.

The EU's office in Hong Kong said the charges were of "great concern". "The nature of these charges makes clear that legitimate political pluralism will no longer be tolerated in Hong Kong," the office added.

Beijing is battling to stamp out dissent in semi-autonomous Hong Kong af-

ter swathes of the population hit the streets in 2019 in huge and sometimes violent democracy protests.

The security law, imposed on the city last June, criminalises any act deemed to be subversion, secession, terrorism or collusion with foreign forces.

Those charged are routinely denied bail until trial and face up to life in prison if convicted.

The activists charged on

Sunday represent a broad cross-section of Hong Kong's opposition.

On Tuesday, authorities also unveiled a new law that will vet the political views of all public office holders.

Joshua Wong, one of the city's most recognisable pro-democracy figures, was among those charged.

### 'Defiant note'

John Clancey, an American lawyer and long-time Hong Kong resident who was with the initial group arrested, was one of the few not charged on Sunday.

Many struck a defiant tone as they prepared to report to police on Sunday to hear the charges.

"Democracy is never a gift from heaven. It must be earned by many with strong will," Jimmy Sham, a key organiser of 2019's huge protests, told reporters outside a police station.

The 74-year-old will address the Conservative Political Action Conference in Orlando in a highly-anticipated speech during which he is expected to tease attendees about his political future – including the possibility of another presidential run.

**A hero's welcome**  
He is sure to be greeted like a returning hero by a loyal crowd as he calls for party unity – and perhaps rips some of his critics – on the

## Trump set to take spotlight with post-presidency speech

He may indicate future plans in conservative gathering

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**

ORLANDO

Donald Trump returns to the political spotlight on Sunday, determined to regain control of a Republican party that is out of power and pondering whether the flawed former President can win again in 2024.

The 74-year-old will address the Conservative Political Action Conference in Orlando in a highly-anticipated speech during which he is expected to tease attendees about his political future – including the possibility of another presidential run.

**A hero's welcome**  
He is sure to be greeted like a returning hero by a loyal crowd as he calls for party unity – and perhaps rips some of his critics – on the

final day of the nation's largest conservative gathering. "We are not starting new parties, and we will not be dividing our power and our strength," Mr. Trump will say, according to Fox News. "Instead, we will be united and strong like never before."

U.S. political parties usually face a reckoning after a string of losses such as those the Republican Party saw under Mr. Trump in 2020: losing the White House, ceding the Senate and failing to take back the House of Representatives.

The party is also marked with Mr. Trump's repeated lies about his election loss to Joe Biden, his impeachment for inciting an insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, and the extraordinary faultline his actions have caused between establishment Republicans and pro-Trump populists.

But, instead of jettisoning its failed leader and charting a new path to relevance, much of the Republican party still sees Mr. Trump as retaining a vice-like grip on its future. It is a perception he has encouraged, setting himself up as a Republican kingmaker. On Friday, he endorsed an ex-aide against an Ohio Congressman who voted to impeach him.

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I. N. RAVI, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

N. RAVI  
Signature of the Publisher

## Clashes in Dhaka over writer's death

Mushtaq Ahmed, who was detained 10 months ago, collapsed and died in a jail

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**

DHAKA

Dozens were injured on Sunday as Bangladeshi police fired rubber bullets and tear gas in a third day of protests sparked by the death of a prominent writer and government critic in jail.

Mushtaq Ahmed, 53, collapsed in a high-security prison and died late on Thursday, 10 months after being arrested under a "digital security" law that critics say is being used to silence dissent in the country of 168 million people.

Live footage on Sunday from television station Channel 24 showed a road and footpath in front of the National Press Club turning into a battleground as police beat protesters with batons to disperse them.



**Anger to the fore:** Policemen clash with the BNP cadres during the third day of protests in Dhaka on Sunday. ■ AFP

Student activists from the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) hurled rocks and attacked officers with bamboo and plastic pipes, prompting police to retaliate by firing rubber bullets and tear gas, Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka said.

International and local rights groups have demanded a swift probe into the death of the writer, police said.

who was arrested over comments posted on social media criticising the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ambassadors from 13 countries, including the U.S., France, Britain, Canada and Germany, expressed "grave concern" over the case.

He had been detained under the Digital Security Act, passed in 2018, which rights groups say has been used to silence critics with hefty fines and lengthy prison sentences. Ahmed was denied bail at least six times.

Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina on Saturday shrugged off concern over the Internet law, Ahmed's death and criticism of her government's rights record.

Iran-backed Houthi fighters have intensified operations against the kingdom as air strikes by the Saudi-led military coalition pound rebel positions in the north of Yemen, in a bid to stop their offensive to seize the government's last northern stronghold of Marib.

Saudi Arabia said on Saturday it thwarted a Houthi missile that targeted Riyadh.

The killing took place in the Bhara Kahu when Mufti Ikramur Rehman was heading toward his car with his 13-year-old son and a seminary student on Saturday night, police said.

Ikramur Rehman was affiliated with the party of firebrand cleric Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who heads an 11-party Opposition alliance to topple the government.

Both films are fuelled by their timely themes of protest and joblessness. "I think that it's likeliest between them," said The Hollywood Reporter's awards columnist Scott Feinberg. "And then the spoiler, if something were to come out of left field, would probably be *Promising Young Woman*, which is just unlike anything else in recent memory."

The killing took place in the Bhara Kahu when Mufti Ikramur Rehman was heading toward his car with his 13-year-old son and a seminary student on Saturday night, police said.

Ikramur Rehman was affiliated with the party of firebrand cleric Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who heads an 11-party Opposition alliance to topple the government.

Both films are fuelled by their timely themes of protest and joblessness. "I think that it

# Rohit has proved himself in tougher home conditions

The India opener has emerged as a reliable batsman in overseas Tests as well, as evidenced in his performance Down Under

## ENGLAND IN INDIA

AMOL KARHADKAR  
AHMEDABAD

Despite making his India debut 13 years ago, Rohit Sharma is still not perceived to be a reliable Test batsman. In fact, thanks to the huge gap between his batting average at home (81.05) and overseas (27.00), he is referred to by some as a flat-track bully in Test cricket.

### Consistent showing

In the last two months, however, the Mumbai maverick has evolved into a reliable opening batsman in challenging conditions. While he gave India a start in three of the four innings he played in Australia last month, February has seen Rohit consistently making a mockery of the England bowlers on spin-friendly tracks.

His 161 in Chennai in the

second Test and 66 in the first innings of the pink-ball Test here have been instrumental in India making a strong comeback in the ongoing series and being on the cusp of qualifying for the World Test Championship final.

While a majority of batsmen from both the teams struggled to get their act together on excessively spin-friendly surfaces in the second and third Tests, Rohit appeared to be at his dominating best. Besides his aggressive mindset, his defensive technique against spinners has also been a standout feature of his performances.

"I knew once I finished the quarantine, I had just five-six days to get ready for the Test. It wasn't the first time I would've had that much time to get ready for a game, so I knew what exactly had to be done."

"It's not easy but a lot of people helped me get there. It was a good journey with a lot of learning personally," Rohit said ahead of the third Test. The learnings have reflected on the ground, in far more challenging conditions

League Playoffs, Rohit missed the limited-over leg and the first two Tests in Australia.

Ever since landing in Australia after undergoing a rigorous rehab at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru and serving a 14-night quarantine Down Under, Rohit ensured he was back in shape in time for the New Year's Test in Sydney.

"I knew once I finished the quarantine, I had just five-six days to get ready for the Test. It wasn't the first time I would've had that much time to get ready for a game, so I knew what exactly had to be done."

that he has faced earlier in whites at home.

Thanks to his consistent outings – only two of his last 10 innings have been single-digit scores – Rohit has emerged as India's highest run-getter at the start of the



## Rohit as Test opener

In 2019	In 2021
5 Mat	5
6 Innings	10
556 Runs	425
92.66 Avg	47.22
0/3 50s/100s	2/1
212 Highest	161

■ Rohit's tally of 425 runs is the highest by an India batsman in 2021, 11 more than Rishabh Pant's 414

■ Rohit is among only three India batsmen to have averaged more than 40 this year. While Rohit averages 47.22, the other two are Rishabh Pant (59.14) and Washington Sundar (42.25)



**Smooth operator:** Rohit Sharma was completely at ease on spinner-friendly wickets against England, even as most other batsmen from either side appeared to be all at sea. • SPORTZPICS/BCCI

## Rohit moves to career-high eighth spot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
DUBAI

Rohit Sharma touched a career-best eighth position in the ICC Test batsmen's rankings on Sunday with a six-place jump after his impressive show in India's 10-wicket win over England in the third Test in Ahmedabad.

**Ashwin jumps to third**  
Player-of-the-match Axar Patel and R. Ashwin also made solid gains. Left-arm spinner Axar's 11-wicket match haul helped him gain 30 slots to reach 38th position, while off-spinner Ashwin's seven wickets lifted him four places to third.

## Turning pitch likely for final Test

AMOL KARHADKAR  
AHMEDABAD

The colour of the ball will change from pink to red but the nature of the pitch at Motera for the last Test between India and England is set to be similar to the controversial strip for the third Test that finished is less than two days.

*The Hindu* understands that Ashish Bhowmick, the Board of Control for Cricket in India chief curator who has been overseeing the preparation of the pitch at the new stadium, is set to offer a spinning track yet again.

## Luus to lead SA women

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LUCKNOW

According to a BCCI insider, despite the uproar over the third Test pitch, which led to England captain Joe Root saying it was up to International Cricket Council to determine the quality of the pitch and India's camp defending the track to the hilt, the India camp doesn't want to "take any chances by offering a flatbed and risk its chances of progressing to the World Test Championship".

India will be out of the race for WTC final only if it suffers a loss in the series-deciding rubber, starting on March 4.

**The squad:**

Sune Luus (Capt.), Ayabonga Khaka, Shabnim Ismail, Laura Wolvaardt, Trisha Chetty, Sinalo Jafta, Tasmin Britz, Marizanne Kapp, Nondumiso Shangase, Lizelle Lee, Anneke Bosch, Faye Tunnicliffe, Nonkululeko Mlaba, Mignon du Preez, Nadine de Klerk, Lara Goodall and Tumi Sekhukhune.

## Dull Chelsea-United draw

### EURO LEAGUES

REUTERS  
LONDON

Chelsea dominated Manchester United but had to be content with a 0-0 draw in the Premier League on Sunday.

**The results:** Premier League: Crystal Palace 0 drew with Fulham 0; Leicester 1 (Tiemuids 7) lost to Arsenal 3 (Luis 39, Lacazette 45-pen, Pepe 52); Tottenham 4 (Bale 2, 55, Kane 15, Moura 31) bt Burnley 0; Chelsea 0 drew with Manchester United 0.

**LaLiga:** Celta Vigo 1 (Murillo 90+4) drew with Real Valladolid 1 (Orellana 70); Cadiz 0 lost to Real Betis 1 (Juanmi 84).

**Serie A:** Sampdoria 0 lost to Atalanta 0 (Malinovski 40, Gosen 70); Crotone 0 lost to Cagliari 2 (Pavoletti 56, Joao Pedro 60-pen); Udinese 1

## Sporting earns top-six spot

### I-LEAGUE

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

Mohammedan Sporting and TRAU assured themselves of a top-six spot after posting a 2-0 and 3-2 win over Real Kashmir FC and Sudeva Delhi 17, Paul 41; Alizawl FC (Lalmuanzova 6, Malsawmtluanga 37, Lalremranga 51) bt Chennai City FC 0.

Aizawl FC stayed safe from relegation by beating Chennai City FC 3-0.

**The results:** Mohd. Sporting 2 (Manzi 74, 79) bt Real Kashmir 0; TRAU 3 (Bidya Singh 36, Phalguni 55, Olaleye 82) bt Sudeva Delhi FC 2 (Pauliankhum 17, Paul 41); Alizawl FC (Lalmuanzova 6, Malsawmtluanga 37, Lalremranga 51) bt Chennai City FC 0.

## Big win for Indian men

### HOCKEY

SPORTS BUREAU  
KREFELD (GERMANY)

The Indian men's team returned to action in style, winning 6-1 against Germany 1 (Constantin Staib). **Women:** Germany 1 (Amelie Wortmann 24) bt India 0.

seldor, the women lost 1-0 in their second tour game.

**The results:**

**Men:** India 6 (Vivek Sagar Prasad 2, Nilakanta Sharma, Lalit Upadhyay, Akashdeep Singh, Harmanpreet Singh) bt Germany 1 (Constantin Staib).

**Women:** Germany 1 (Amelie Wortmann 24) bt India 0.

## Smashing Blue primed to deliver in feature

HYDERABAD: Trainer R.H. Sequeira's Smashing Blue, who is in good form, should score over her rivals in the Beacon Plate, the main event of Monday's (Mar. 1) races. Rails will be announced one hour before the first race.

**1. DREAM GIRL PLATE (DIV. 1)** (1,200m), (Terms) Maiden 3-y-o only (Cat. II), 1.20 p.m.: 1. All Time Legend (2) A.A. Virkant 56, 2. Campania (8) Trevor 56, 3. Pedro Planet (1) Afroz Khan 56, 4. Sorrento (9) B.R. Kumar 56, 5. Goldrun (1) Koushik 54.5, 6. Goodwood (7) Ashad Asbar 54.5, 7. Hot Seat (3) Arshad Alam 54.5, 8. Inside Story (5) Nakhat Singh 54.5, 9. Key To Time (4) Suraj Narredu 54.5, 10. Rivadavia (8) Akshay Kumar 54.5 and II, Sally (10) R. Manish 54.5.

**1. KEY TO TIME, 2. INSIDE STORY, 3. CAMPANIA**

**2. BALLERINA STAR PLATE (DIV. 1)** (1,200m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 1.50 p.m., Warrior Supreme (5) Gaurav Singh 60, 2. Ashwa Yashobali (4) Surya Prakash 59, 3. House Of Diamonds (10) Akshay Kumar 56.5, 4. Lagos (7) Suraj Narredu 56, 5. Zamora (8) Gopal Singh 55.6, 6. Certificate (3) Trevor 53, 7. Rhythm Selection (9) R. Manish 53, 8. Amrya (2) Afroz Khan 52.5, 9. Dunkirk (1) Ajeth Kumar 52.5 and M. Readner (6) B.R. Kumar 52.5.

**1. HOUSE OF DIAMONDS, 2. LAGOS, 3. CELERITAS**

**5. RED KNIGHT PLATE (1,600m)**

rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 3.30 p.m.: 1. Her Legacy (1) Suraj Narredu 56, 2. Wah Ms Zara (4) Suraj Narredu 56, 5. Prince Valiant (6) Surya Prakash 56, 6. Happy Together (4) Nakhat Singh 54.5, 7. Incredulous (3) A. A. Virkant 54.5, 8. Long Range (7) Ajeeth Kumar 53, 9. N.R.T Super King (2) R. Manish 52.5, 10. Smashing Blue (3) Akshay Kumar 55.5 and II, Mark My Word (5) C.P. Bopanna 51.

**1. WAH MS ZARA, 2. HER LEGACY, 3. PRINCE VALIANT**

**7. SIR BRUCE PLATE (1,200m)**

rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 4.40 p.m.: 1. Flamingo Fame (10) Santosh Raj N 60, 2. Gusty Note (13) Suraj Narredu 59.5, 3. Green Turf (5) Ashok Kumar 59, 4. Blissful (1) Akshay Kumar 58.5, 5. Look Of Love (2) Gaurav Singh 58.5, 6. Aibak (3) Nakhat Singh 56.5, 7. Elmira (6) G.

Naresh 54.5, 6. Always Success (10) Trevor 53.5, 7. Belle Springs (2) Afroz Khan 53.5, 8. Fashion Universe (13) Akshay Kumar 53.5, 9. N.R.I Touch (6) Koushik 53.5, 10. Castlerock (9) Ashad Asbar 53, 11. Astro-naut (11) P. Gaddam 52.5, 12. Lamha (7) Abhay Singh 52.5, 13. Lightning Fairy (14) Md. Ismail 51.5 and 14. That's My Star (4) Arshad Alam 51.5.

**1. QUEEN DAENERYS, 2. ALWAYS SUCCESS, 3. THAT'S MY STAR**

**6. BEACON PLATE (1,200m)**, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 4.05 p.m.: 1. Trump Girl (8) Abhay Singh 60, 2. Pontius Pilate (1) Trevor 59, 3. Years Forever (1) P. Gaddam 58.5, 4. Agni (9) Suraj Narredu 56, 5. Prince Valiant (6) Surya Prakash 56, 6. Happy Together (4) Nakhat Singh 54.5, 7. Incredulous (3) A. A. Virkant 54.5, 8. Long Range (7) Ajeeth Kumar 53, 9. N.R.T Super King (2) R. Manish 52.5, 10. Smashing Blue (3) Akshay Kumar 55.5 and II, Mark My Word (5) C.P. Bopanna 51.

**1. SMASHING BLUE, 2. AGNI, 3. PON-TUS PILATE**

**8. BUSINESS TYCOON PLATE** (1,400m), rated up to 25 (Cat. III), 5.15 p.m.: 1. Bravo (10) Ajeeth Kumar 60, 2. Destined To Be (9) Akshay Kumar 60, 3. Forever Bond (13) Suraj Narredu 60, 4. Detonator (14) Abhay Singh 59.5, 5. N.R.I Gift (2) A.A. Virkant 59.5, 6. Kapell Bruke (3) Deepak Singh 58.5, 7. Minnelli (1) Surya Prakash 58.5, 8. Southern Saffron (1) Kiran Naidu 58.5, 9. Princess Shana (12) P. Gaddam 57.5, 10. Hip (5) Nakhat Singh 57, 11. Cephalonia (8) G. Naresh 56.5, 12. A. Hundred Echoes (4) Trevor 54.5, 13. Hopscotch (7) B.R. Kumar 53 and 14. Moment Of Silence (6) Afroz Khan 50.5.

**1. DESTINED TO BE, 2. FOREVER BOND, 3. A HUNDRED ECHOES**

Day's best: GREGOR CLEGANE

Jackpot: (i) 2, 3, 4 & 5; (ii) 5, 6, 7 & 8.

Mini jackpot: (i) 2, 3, 4 & 5; (ii) 5, 6, 7 & 8.

Treble: (i) 2, 3, 4 & 5; (ii) 3, 4 & 5; (iii) 6, 7 & 8.

Tanala: All races.

## SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13182

F	A	B	R	I	C	A	T	I	N	G	
F	U	A	G	R	T	E	U				
E	N	O	C	I	A	M	A	S			
N	O	N	D	A	I	R	Y	G	A	S	P
D	E	G	O	F	R	A</					

## DELHI ROUND-UP

## National deaf cricket from today

The National championship by the Deaf Cricket Association will be held in Delhi from March 1-5. Teams from five zones – North, South, West, East and Central – will play each other in 50-over games. This will be the selection trials for the India team at the Asia Cup in Oct. and the World Cup in Feb. 2022.

## Youth XI lifts title

Sanat Sangwan's unbeaten 98 and Neel Nani Kumar's hat-trick saw Youth XI beat IPCA by 88 runs and lift the all-India Waryam Singh memorial T20 title.

**The results:** Youth XI 188/6 in 20 overs (Sanat Sangwan 98 n.o., Vipul Choudhary 50, Prerit Dutta 2/13) bt IPCA Mohali 100 in 16.3 overs (Neel Nani Kumar 3/22).

## Mavericks halt Nets' run

Depleted Cavaliers still too good for Sixers

## NBA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LOS ANGELES

Luka Doncic scored 27 points to lead Dallas Mavericks to a 115-98 NBA victory in Brooklyn on Saturday, snapping the short-handed Nets' eight-game winning streak.

James Harden scored 29 points for the Nets but ran out of steam late as he carried the load in the absence of Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving.

Meanwhile, Eastern Conference leader Philadelphia 76ers fell to a 112-109 defeat to Cleveland Cavaliers.

Guard Collin Sexton scored 28 points and Darius



**Breaking away:** Mavericks' Luka Doncic dribbles past Nets' James Harden. ■ AFP

Garland added 25 with nine assists for the Cavaliers.

**The results:** Nets 98 lost to Mavericks 115; Knicks 110 bt Pacers 107; Magic 109 lost to

Jazz 124; Spurs 117 bt Pelicans 114; Thunder 96 lost to Nuggets 126; 76ers 109 lost to Cavaliers 112 (OT); Wizards 128 bt Timberwolves 112.

## Parinaaz-Mairaj pair misses out

SPORTS BUREAU  
CAIRO

Parinaaz Dhaliwal and Mairaj Ahmad Khan shot 137 out of 150 and missed making the medal round by one point in the mixed skeet competition of the Shotgun World Cup in Cairo. Mairaj shot 73, while Parinaaz contributed 64.

The other Indian team of Angad Vir Singh Bajwa (66) and Ganemath Sekhon (68) placed 10th with a total of 134.

**The results:** Mixed skeet: 1. Russia-2 35 (144); 2. Poland 31 (143); 3. Czech Republic 32 (138); 4. Russia 28 (138); 7. India-2 (Parinaaz Dhaliwal, Mairaj Ahmad Khan) 137; 10. India-1 (Ganemath Sekhon, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa) 134.

## SUNDAY'S HAZARE TROPHY SCORES

**Elite A (Surat):** Gujarat 277/7 in 50 overs (Dhruv Raval 102, Het Patel 82) bt Baroda 237/9 in 50 overs (Smit Patel 73). **Gujarat qualified.**

Hyderabad 345/6 in 50 overs (Tamay Agarwal 150, Tilak Varma 128) bt Goa 343/5 in 50 overs (Eknath Kerkar 169 n.o., Snehal Kauthankar 101 n.o.).

Tripura 230 in 48.4 overs (Samrat Singha 102, Milind Kumar 55) lost to Chhattisgarh 233/5 in 47.1 overs (Amandeep Khare 101 n.o.).

**Final standings:** Gujarat 5-5-0-20 (+1.278); Baroda 5-4-1-16 (+0.399); Hyderabad 5-3-2-12 (+0.186); Chhattisgarh 5-2-3-8 (+0.069); Goa 5-1-4-4 (-0.778); Tripura 5-0-5-0 (-1.198). (Read as Played, Won, Lost, Points and NRR).

**Elite B (Indore):** Vidarbha 150 in 41 overs lost to Tamil Nadu 152/5 in 11.2 overs (N. Jagadeesan 48).

Jharkhand 139 in 46.2 overs (Harishankar Reddy 4/30) lost to Andhra 140/3 in 9.5 overs (Ashwin Hebbar 44, Ricky Bhui 57 n.o.). **Andhra qualified.**

Madhya Pradesh 402/3 in 50 overs (Venkatesh Iyer 198, Rajat Patidar 54, Aditya Shrivastava 88 n.o.) bt Punjab 297 in 42.3 overs (Abhishek Sharma 104, Mihir Hirwani 4/62).

**Final standings:** Andhra 5-3-2-12 (+0.732); Tamil Nadu 5-3-2-(-3.494).

## TENNIS ROUND-UP

## Interesting

## week ahead

CHANDIGARH: The presence of three Indian players who are knocking on the doors of the top-100 in world junior rankings, Nishant Dabas (I23), Chirag Duhau (I35) and Aman Dahiya (154) should make for a lively week of tennis in the ITF grade-4 junior tennis tournament here.

**The results (qualifying singles, third and final round): Boys:** Rushil Khosla bt Vishal Gautam 6-4, 6-2; Manish Yadav bt Aditya Balda 4-6, 7-6(2), [10-8]; Saheb Sodhi bt Aryan Arora 6-1, 6-1; Deep Muntra bt Lakshya Batwara 7-6(2), 6-3.

**Girls:** Navya Vadlamudi (US) bt Parvi Singh 7-6(3), 6-4; Pavitra Parikh bt Naga Rosline 6-3, 7-6(3); Nandini Dixit bt Steisha Buddhabala 6-7(2), 6-4, [10-4];

Deepshika Sriram bt Sanjivani Kutwal 6-2, 6-2.

## Akanksha Nitture knocks out Shreya

NEW DELHI: Akanksha Nitture knocked out seventh seed Shreya Tatavarthy 7-5, 6-4 in the first qualifying round of the \$15,000 ITF women's tennis tournament here on Sunday.

Some of the leading Indian players, Nidhi Chilumbla, Sai Samitha, Arthi Muniyari, Sharmada Balu and Rishika Sunkara also cruised into the second qualifying round.

**The results: (qualifying, first round):** Bela Tamhankar bt Vanshita Pathania 6-4, 6-2; Smriti Hasin bt Sane Bhat 6-0, 6-0; Prapti Soni bt Kriti Tomar 6-2, 6-2; Aditi Sinha (US) bt Anu Moor 6-1, 6-1; Ayushi Singh bt Ehsa Singh 6-1, 6-1; Farhat Aleen Qamar bt Madhavi Bidhan 6-4, 5-7, [10-5].

Singh 6-0, 6-0; Pooja Ingale bt Priyam Kumar 6-1, 6-3; Snehal Mane bt Radhika Yadav 4-6, 6-0, [10-3]; Priyansh Bhandari bt Shilpi Swarupa Das 6-1, 6-0; Sanya Yadav bt Anupriya Baudh 7-6(7), 6-0; Akanksha Nitture bt Shreya Tatavarthy 7-5, 6-4; Nidhi Chilumbla bt Niyati Kukreti 6-1, 6-3.

Jigyasa Narsinghani bt Pragathi Prasad 2-6, 6-2, [10-7]; Anaam Almas bt Amrita Yadav 6-2, 6-4; Arthi Muniyari bt Renne Singla 6-3, 6-2; Sai Samitha bt Ananya Yadav 6-0, 6-2; Sai Dedeepya bt Aashi Kapoor 6-1, 6-0.

Aayushi Tanwar bt Shefali Arora 6-1, 6-1; Rishika Sunkara bt Prathiba Prasad 6-2, 6-4; Prathyusha Rachapudi bt Adithi Are 6-2, 6-3; Kashish Bhateria bt Vidhi Jani 6-4, 6-2; Sharmada Balu bt Lalitya Kalluri 6-1, 6-2; Sonashe Bhatnagar bt Lagan Bidhan 6-4, 5-7, [10-5].

## IN BRIEF

Atharva Sharma bt Jagmeet Singh 6-4, 6-4; Oscar O'Hoisin (Irl) bt Henry Patten (GBR) 3-6, 7-6(5), [10-8]; Leonardo Catanil (Ita) bt Anand Prakash Gupta 6-4, 6-1; Dalwinder Singh bt Vishnu Vardhan 6-2, 6-7(6), [10-5]; Jonathan Binding (GBR) bt Gunjan Jadhav 7-6(5), 6-3; Kaza Vinayak Sharma bt Alex Solanki 2-6, 6-3, [10-6].

Yash Chaurasia bt Arnav Alok Goel 6-2, 7-6(7); Rishi Reddy bt Ashutosh Tiwari 6-2, 6-2;

Dmitri Baskov (Mda) bt Jatin Dahiya 6-2, 6-0; Vijay Sundar Prashanth bt Tarun Anirudh Chikalapudi 6-3, 6-1; Suraj Prabodh bt Ajay Malik 6-3, 6-4; Sai Kartek REDdy Ganta bt Muthu Aadhiya Senthilkumar 7-5, 6-2; Ishqae Eqbal bt Tushar Madan 6-1, 6-4; Lakshit Sood bt Kunal Anand 6-4, 7-5; Chandril Sood bt P.C. Vignesh 7-5, 6-2.

**Popper wins first ATP title in Singapore**

SINGAPORE

Australia's Alexei Popirin came back from a set down to beat Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik 4-6, 6-0, 6-2 at the Singapore Open on Sunday and win his first ATP Tour title. The 21-year-old had stunned former World No. 3 Marin Cilic in the semifinals. AFP

**Para archers felicitated**

KOLKATA

The Indian para archers, who secured two gold and three silver medals in the seventh Fazza World-ranking tournament in Dubai, were felicitated by the Archery Association of India president and Union Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda in Delhi on Sunday.

**The medalists: Gold:**

**Compound: Men:** Rakesh Kumar; **Mixed team recurve:** Harvinder Singh & Pooja.

**Silver: Compound: Men:** Shyam Sunder; **Women:** Jyoti Balyan; **Compound mixed:** Shyam & Jyoti.

**TV PICKS**

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

**Vinesh wins gold on return to competition**

KIEV

Vinesh Phogat beat Vanesa Kaladzinskaya of Belarus to grab the 53kg gold at the Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial tournament here on Sunday. Vinesh was returning to competition after a long COVID-forced break. PTI

**Odisha to host IWL**

NEW DELHI

The 2020-21 Hero-Indian Women's League (IWL) football will be held in Odisha, dates for which will be announced later. With the AFC Women's Asian Cup followed by the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup to be held next year, the event will be an opportunity for scouts to unearth new talent.

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