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Bhandara hospital blaze: Uddhav orders fire audit of all hospitals

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Black box, body parts found at Indonesian plane crash site

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Ajinkya Rahane's India faces an uphill task in SCG Test

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NEARBY



Delhi records 399 new COVID cases, 12 deaths

NEW DELHI
The Capital recorded 399 new COVID-19 cases on Sunday, even as the test positivity rate dipped to 0.51%. The case tally in the city has gone past 6.30 lakh and the death toll due to the viral disease has mounted to 10,678 after 12 more fatalities were reported in the past 24 hours.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2



EDUCATION PLUS ▶ PAGE 5

Q3 private investment in manufacturing jumps 102%

Funds crunch hits govt. spend on new projects

VIKAS DHOOT
NEW DELHI

A continued rise in private investments in the third quarter (Q3) of 2020-21, led by a 102% surge in manufacturing investments, helped India register a healthy 10.3% increase in fresh project spending in Q3 over the previous quarter.

However, new capital expenditure proposals from the government collapsed between October and December 2020, as funding constraints began to pinch the States, dragging their new project investments down nearly 25% from the

Capital inflow

Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh accounted for 30% of new project investments between October and December 2020

State	Project investments (₹ CRORE)
Maharashtra	54,714
A.P.	29,784
Gujarat	26,530
Tamil Nadu	24,124
Odisha	20,217
U.P.	15,981
Karnataka	14,038
Telangana	12,961
Punjab	10,661
Chhattisgarh	10,228
All India	2,76,483

1 A total of 2,085 projects were announced in Q3 FY 2020-21

2 Investments in manufacturing, utilities and mining sectors surged in Q3 as compared to Q2

3 Investments in irrigation and electricity projects fell in Q3 as compared to Q2

previous quarter.

The Q3 project investment numbers suggest a reversal from recent years' trend of government capital

expenditure propping up the economy while the private sector remained reluctant to invest due to flat consumer demand and weak

balance sheets, said Projects Today, an independent firm that tracks investment projects. "The fall in state-promoted investment in Q3 is not a good sign. We hope this will be a short-term phenomenon," said Shashikant Hegde, director and CEO of Projects Today. This has raised private sector's share in new projects from 40% to 49.5% in Q3, he added.

Mr. Hegde said the sequential increase registered in fresh projects by the private sector of 102.5% in the second quarter, and 36.5% in the third quarter, indicates willingness of private promoters to undertake capacity building in the future.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Protesters ransack venue of Haryana CM's meeting

Forces with vested interests using farmers, says Manohar Lal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

A crowd consisting largely of farmers protesting against the Centre's farm laws on Sunday ransacked a venue at Kaimla village in Haryana's Karnal, where Chief Minister Manohar Lal was scheduled to address a farmers' gathering (*kisan mahapanchayat*).

The CM condemned the incident and said "farmers don't have a violent temperament", and that the incident was the work of "forces that have vested interests and are using farmers".

The event was called off after several agitating farmers armed with sticks reached the venue, breaking through several layers of barricades. They ransacked



Tense situation: Farmers ransacking the venue of Haryana CM Manohar Lal's *kisan mahapanchayat* in Karnal on Sunday. ▶ PTI

Head of the event, the police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse agitating farmers after the latter attempted to break through the barricades.

Karnal is Mr. Lal's home Assembly constituency.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Ring of protest



Keen viewers: Farmers protesting against the agricultural laws at the Ghazipur border in Delhi watching a wrestling match organised for them on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway on Sunday. ▶ R.V. MOORTHY (FARMERS TO SET FIRE TO LAW COPIES PAGE 9)

Relax detention norms to prevent drop-outs, says govt.

States to conduct door-to-door surveys, prepare action plan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Schools must relax detention norms in order to prevent drop-outs in a year when COVID-19 has disrupted the teaching and learning process, according to an Education Ministry directive issued on Sunday.

The Ministry also told the States to conduct comprehensive door-to-door surveys to identify children out of school and migrant students, and prepare an action plan to prevent increased drop-outs, lower enrolments, loss of learning and deterioration in the gains made in providing universal access, quality and equity in

recent years.

Schools shut down in mid-March 2020, just before the COVID-19 lockdown. Some States have started reopening physical classes for high school students over the last two months, but most of India's 25 crore students have spent the last 10 months at home.

Guidelines have been prepared "in order to ensure that school-going children have access to education with quality and equity and to minimize the impact of the pandemic on school education across the country," said the statement.

No uniform access While some have access to online classes, the majority are making do with televised classes, WhatsApp teaching, and learning on their own.

Globally, the United Nations had estimated that almost 24 million school age children are at risk of drop-

ping-out from the educational system due to COVID-19 this year.

To determine the scope of the problem, the Education Ministry has directed the States to identify out-of-school children in the 6 to 18 years age group through a comprehensive door-to-door survey.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

SC Bench to study Aadhaar verdict today

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

A five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar will examine on Monday seven petitions, including one by Rajya Sabha MP Jaairam Ramesh, seeking a review of the court's verdict upholding the Aadhaar programme as a reasonable restriction on individual privacy to fulfil the government's "legitimate aim" to provide dignity to the poor.

The majority view held by the Constitution Bench declared Aadhaar an "unparalleled" identity proof that could not be duplicated unlike PAN, ration card, and passport.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Army official acted with 'eye on money'

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Army Captain Bhoopinder Singh, alias Major Basheer Khan, of the 62 Rashtriya Rifles, had taken a lead in engaging the three "militants", who turned out to be civilians later, in a "staged" gunfight in Shopian in July 2020, "with an eye on the prize money of ₹20 lakh".

According to the police charge sheet, four out of the 75 witnesses in the case in their statements recalled how the Captain "initiated a few bursts of live ammunition even before a cordon was laid".

SOP for immunisation emergencies issued

Delhi Police gets guide to probe, handle adverse events following vaccination

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (Immunisation Division) has issued a Standard Operating Procedure for the Ministry of Home Affairs in case of Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI).

Delhi Police has instructed all DCPs to educate the SHOs about the norms. "We held a meeting with SHOs and instructed them to read the guidelines and pass it on to other officers who will be the first to respond to any adverse situation during immunisation," said the officer.

The vaccination drive will start from January 16. The *Hindu* has a copy of

SOP that provides a step by step guide to the police and other response agencies.

The SOP is meant to help the investigator ensure appropriate handling of the vaccine, victim assistance as well as timely and effective law enforcement.

If post-mortem examination of the case is required, the Department of Health shall provide the necessary assistance, states the SOP.

Evidence collection

In case of an AEFI, the officer must ensure proper handling of the vaccine and diluent as evidence, and make sure the samples are preserved maintaining proper cold chain, reads the SOP.

The police officer must also ensure that the AEFI victims, and any witnesses, are provided assistance and appropriate protection, care

and attention.

"The police officer/investigator and the medical officer/district immunisation officer, investigating the case shall ensure that all serious AEFI cases are provided immediate assistance."

If post-mortem examination

of the case is required,

the Department of Health

shall provide the necessary

assistance, states the SOP.

Official stamp

Documentation and completed requisition form for

transportation of AEFI samples to a laboratory must

have same official stamp.

The seal will ensure the samples and details sent to the lab are

not tampered with during

transportation, it reads.

The SOP also provides for investigation/interrogation of the vaccinator, if needed.

This will help in monitoring immunisation safety, correcting unsafe immunisation practices, reducing negative impact of the event on health and contributing to the quality of immunisation.

While probing serious AEFIs, which has resulted in death, the police must "always keep the perspective that the event might be coincidental and/or reaction to the vaccine and it may not be criminal negligence of the vaccinator and/or other workers, for which causality assessment report by an expert is needed", it reads.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Shorter parade route, more tableaus this Republic Day

Parade will end at National Stadium instead of Red Fort; steps being taken to ensure social distancing

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

The Republic Day parade this year will see marching contingents terminate at the India Gate C-Hexagon instead of the Red Fort.

Earlier, the parade used to cover around 8 km but this year the distance has been reduced to roughly 3 km. The parade will now end at the National Stadium.

The new route and security arrangements were discussed during a meeting between Delhi Police and the Ministry of Defence.

The distance has been cut short in order to main-



The number of members in a marching contingent has been reduced from 144 to 96. ▶ R.V. MOORTHY

tain social distancing. The new plan was discussed at the meeting and the required security and logistic protocols will be done. The

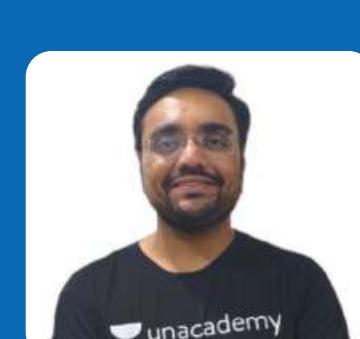
new plan was discussed at the meeting and the required security and logistic protocols will be done. The

Following social distancing guidelines, the six-day Bharat Parv event that is usually organised on Rajpath lawns from January 26-31 has been cancelled. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, only 25,000 visitors will be permitted to witness the Republic Day parade compared with the usual over one lakh. Children under the age of 15 will not be allowed at the event. The police officer added that security arrangements and restriction on the number of visitors for the Beating Retreat ceremony was also discussed at the meeting.

GLOBALISATION IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

COVID-19 might have brought the world to its knees, but nations have found a way to strike back and emerge from what might have been one of the biggest crises in recent times. The world is

TURN TO PAGE 9
TO READ MORE



PRATIK NAYAK

COVID-19 & Globalisation Impact & Challenges

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STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

In the wake of the Central government announcing roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine from January 16, Delhi government officials said that they are fully prepared for the vaccination drive.

The city has seen three dry runs, without anyone actually being vaccinated, to check the system and fix flaws. On January 2, it was conducted at three locations, while January 6 saw dry runs at 66 centres. January 8 clocked the highest, in 150 centres.

The vaccination booths have three rooms: waiting room, vaccination room, and observation room. A beneficiary's documents will be first checked and then allowed to wait in the waiting room. The person's details will be then entered in the CoWIN (COVID-19 Vaccine Intelligence Network) platform and then he will be taken to the vaccination room to be inoculated.

After getting the shot, he will have to wait in the observation room for about 30 minutes to see if there is any allergic reaction. All vaccination booths are also attached to a healthcare facility and have an area to deal with emergency.

CoWIN is a digital platform to provide real time information of vaccine stocks, their storage temperature and individualised tracking of beneficiaries of the vaccine. This platform will assist the programme managers across all levels through automated session allocation for pre-registered beneficiaries, their verification and for generating a digital certificate upon successful completion of the vaccine schedule.

Priority list

The vaccine will be provided first to healthcare and frontline workers, followed by those above 50 years of age and under 50 with comorbidities.

In December, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had said there are about 51 lakh



A health worker administering vaccine during the dry run at Srinivaspuri in New Delhi; a cold storage facility for keeping COVID-19 vaccines during the dry run. ■ R.V. MOORTHY



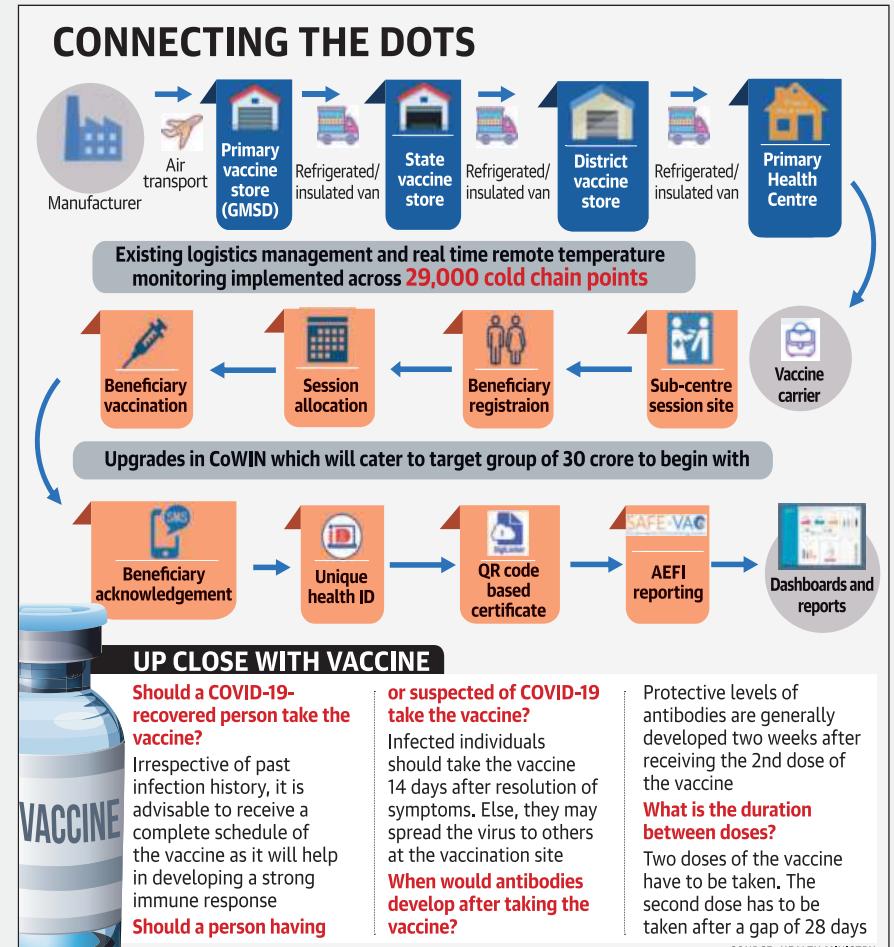
AFTER TRIAL RUN, REAL DRIVE SET TO KICK OFF

Having done three dry runs, the city readies itself for COVID-19 vaccine roll out

people in Delhi who fall into these categories. "Healthcare workers will be the first to be vaccinated, of whom there are around 3 lakh in the city. Then there are around 6 lakh frontline workers such as policemen and sanitation staff and 42 lakh people, either above 50 years of age and below 50 years of age, but with co-morbidities," the Chief Minister had said.

Two floors of a building in the Delhi government-run Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital (RGSSH) and an existing vaccine store in Battery Lane in Civil Lines will be used as the main storage facilities, as per the Delhi government spokesperson. "All work has been completed at the utility block and the vaccine store has been handed over to the government," said Chhavi Gupta, spokesperson of RGSSH.

From the airport, the vaccine will go to the main storage facility. From there it heads to 11 district vaccine stores, one in each dis-



Delhi Prisons Dept. tells 3,600 staffers to enrol for COVID-19 vaccination

'No jail inmate will get vaccine shot in first phase reserved for front-line workers'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Prisons Department has asked around 3,600 staffers, including security personnel, to enrol themselves for COVID-19 vaccine shots as the authorities gear up for the inoculation drive, officials said on Sunday.

According to a senior jail official, around 1,600 jail staffers, 1,000 Tamil Nadu Special Police personnel who carry out security duty at Tihar jail and 1,000 paramilitary personnel are being enrolled.

The date, time and place of vaccination will be sent to the staffers on their mobile number. ■ FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY



The date, time and place of vaccination will be sent to the staffers on their mobile number. ■ FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

shot in the first phase as it has been reserved for front-line workers.

"We appreciate the dedication and hardwork done by jail officials and security forces who were at a high risk of catching COVID-19

due to the nature of their job. The vaccination will help boost their morale and help them work fearlessly in this tough situation," Director General (Prisons) Sandeep Goel said.

A total of 292 prison staff-

ers have contracted the infection till Saturday and 289 of them have recovered, while three are still under treatment, officials said.

As for the inmates, 115 have tested positive for the virus so far, out of whom 113 have recovered and two died, the officials said.

No inmate has tested positive for COVID-19 since December 10 last year. The last case was detected on December 3 and the patient recovered on December 10, officials said.

Among the prisons, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Rohini jail on May 13 last. Two COVID-19-positive inmates of Mandoli jail died on June 15 and July 4. Both were senior citizens.

OPD at Rajiv Gandhi hospital to resume today

First surgery to be done after 10 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Doctors at the Delhi government-run Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital (RGSSH) are slated to conduct a heart bypass surgery on Monday, which will be the first operation to be done there since it was declared a dedicated COVID-19 facility nearly 10 months ago, officials said.

The national capital had reported its first COVID-19 case on March 1, when a businessman from east Delhi had tested positive.

Lok Nayak Hospital and RGSSH were among the hospitals to be converted into dedicated COVID-19 facilities soon after the cases began to rise.

"Our OPD is scheduled to resume from tomorrow [Monday], however, it will be only available on three days - Monday, Wednesday and Friday," said RGSSH spokesperson Chhavi Gupta.

The 650-bed RGSSH was a dedicated COVID-19 facility till recently when it was converted into a partially COVID-19 hospital, along with six other Delhi government-run hospitals, including Lok Nayak Hospital.

Services at Lok Nayak
The OPD services resumed at the 2000-bed Lok Nayak Hospital located in central Delhi, the largest facility under the city government, from January 4.

Clips of scuffle at Dwarka goes viral on social media

Fight broke out between late policeman's son and a shopkeeper on January 9

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Videos of scuffle between late Delhi Police Inspector Mohanlal Sharma's son Divyanshu and a mobile phone accessories shopkeeper in Dwarka have gone viral on the social media.

Mohanlal Sharma was martyred in Batla House encounter in Delhi on September 19, 2008.

The scuffle took place on January 9 around 3.30 p.m. According to the police, Mr. Divyanshu alleged that he, along with his cousin, had come to install temper glass on his mobile phone, but it got delayed. Following this, some argument ensued and the shopkeeper misbehaved with him.

However, it was observed

in the footage that both the shopkeeper, Sanjhit, and Mr. Divyanshu misbehaved with each other, a senior police officer said.

"After a while, Mr. Divyanshu came again with two personal security officers [PSOs]. Mr. Divyanshu had a stick and the PSOs had weapons with them. Mr. Divyanshu again had an altercation with the shopkeeper and the PSOs also indulged. Mr. Divyanshu also tried to slap the shopkeeper," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Santosh Kumar Meena said.

Suddenly, some unidentified persons started threatening Mr. Divyanshu and thrashed him. They ran away towards Karoor Society, around 300 metres from the spot, followed by the mob.

Mr. Divyanshu also alleged that during the scuffle, his mobile phone and gold chain were snatched or lost. The crowd also manhandled the two PSOs.

'Simple' injuries
Both the victims - Divyanshu and his cousin - underwent a medical test and the injuries were found "simple", the police said.

A written complaint was filed by Mr. Divyanshu, following which a case under Sections 323 (punishment for voluntarily causing hurt), 341 (punishment for wrongful restraint), 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation), 356 (assault or criminal force in attempt to commit theft of property carried by a person), 427 (mischief causing

damage to the amount of fifty rupees) and 34 (common intention) of the IPC was registered against unknown persons at Dwarka South police station and an investigation was taken up, the DCP said.

The shopkeeper, meanwhile, alleged that the complainant and the two policemen, who were in civil dress, misbehaved with him and slapped him. A Not Criminally Responsible (NCR) plaint under Sections 323 and 506 of the IPC has been lodged, the police said.

To verify the version of both the parties, the CCTV footage of nearby shops and Karoor Society are being analysed.

Further investigation is under progress, the police added.

During inspection of the

Domestic help found dead at employer's house

Incident happened in Dwarka; probe on

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 19-year-old house help was found dead inside a house in Dwarka's Sector-19 area, the police said on Sunday.

The deceased was a resident of Goyal Dairy, the police said.

According to the police, they received an information on Friday that a house help had ended life at Pocket 3, Akshardham Apartment, Dwarka Sector-19. After reaching the spot, it was found that the caller, identified as Ashish Thakur, has been living in the said flat along with his wife and two children on rent since the last four to five years.

A post-mortem was conducted at DDU Hospital after which the body has handed over to the family of the deceased, the police said, adding that further investigation is under way.

flat, the police team found the body. There was no external injury found on her body, the police also said.

She was working in the flat for the last four to five months and used to stay there. She occasionally used to visit her home and her parents would also come to visit her at times.

A post-mortem was conducted at DDU Hospital after which the body has handed over to the family of the deceased, the police said, adding that further investigation is under way.

Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday (10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.)

Delhi records 399 new COVID-19 cases, 12 deaths

There are currently 3,468 active cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Capital on Sunday recorded 399 new COVID-19 cases with a positivity rate of 0.51%, a government health bulletin stated. The number of deaths during the last 24 hours was 12 and 602 people recovered from the virus.

The health bulletin said that 77,600 tests were conducted during the same period, out of which 45,116 were RT-PCR tests and 32,484 were rapid antigen tests.

The cumulative number of cases in Delhi now stands at 6,30,200, with a positivity rate of 6.71% and the total number of deaths at 10,678. There are currently 3,468 active cases in the city.

At the Delhi airport, where all passengers arriving from the United Kingdom

dom are being screened before they begin a seven-day institutional quarantine and seven-day home quarantine even if they test negative on arrival, 166 passengers were screened. Gauri Agarwal of Genestrings Labs, which is conducting the tests at the airport, said that 161 passengers, two infants and six crew arrived at 6.30 a.m. on Sunday and all tested negative. There is one more flight scheduled to land from the U.K. late on Sunday.

Bird flu: Sanjay Lake declared 'alert zone'

17 more ducks were found dead at lake

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

of 27 ducks have died now. The park has been declared an alert zone by the rapid response team as per the directions of the animal husbandry department of the Delhi government," a senior DDA official said.

The rapid response team had visited the lake site on January 9 and 10, and samples were collected for suitable action. Meanwhile, requisite preventive measures are being taken," he said.

Three other recreational parks in Delhi – Hauz Khas Park, Dwarka Sector 9 Park, Hastal Park – were also closed on Saturday.

At least 24 crows have been found dead at a district park in south Delhi's Jasola over the past few days, according to officials.

For the birds



A worker spraying disinfectant at Ghazipur poultry market in Delhi on Sunday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

RGSSH defends decision to send its MS on leave

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital (RGSSH) has defended in the High Court the decision to send its Medical Superintendent on compulsory leave over allegations of sexual harassment, saying it was done to ensure he does not influence the inquiry or the witnesses.

The hospital also claimed that the MS had sought that he be allowed to go on leave as he felt threatened to come to work. The hospital stated this in its affidavit, filed through Delhi government additional standing counsel Sanjoy Ghose, in response to the doctor's plea challenging its decision to send him on compulsory leave.

"That pursuant to the requests for leave made by the petitioner (medical superintendent) and considering that he, being in a senior administrative position, could influence the enquiry and witnesses, therefore with a view that enquiry be conducted in an unprejudiced manner, order dated December 23, 2020 sending him on compulsory leave was issued," the affidavit said. The hospital has alleged that the doctor has concealed in his plea that he used "foul and abusive language" in a conversation with a female staff member.

He had made "scandalous and scurrilous allegations" against various other female staff members, the hospital has claimed. It said in the affidavit that it has received an email from the IMA "calling for strict action against the petitioner (MS) on account of the comments made against women employees by him".

HC upholds arrest provision in CGST Act for tax evasion

Move comes after man and firm facing action for fraud filed plea against sections of Act

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI



The Delhi High Court has upheld the controversial provisions in the Central Goods and Service Tax (CGST) Act that gives power to authorities to arrest any person if there is "reason to believe" that he has committed tax evasion.

A Bench of Justice Manmohan and Justice Sanjeev Narula gave the decision on a petition challenging the Sections 69 (power to arrest) and 132 (punishment for certain offences) of the CGST Act.

The petitioners here, a man and a firm facing action for allegedly availing fraudulent IGST refund and Input Tax Credits (ITC), had claimed that Section 69 being of criminal nature, it could not have been enacted under Article 246A of the Constitution. However, the High Court ruled "...the pith and substance of the CGST

Act is on a topic, upon which Parliament has power to legislate as the power to arrest and prosecute are ancillary and/or incidental to the power to levy and collect Goods and Services Tax".

It opined that both Sections 69 and 132 of the CGST Act are "constitutional and fall within the legislative competence of Parliament".

The court remarked that the scope of Article 246A is "significantly wide" as it not only empowers both Parliament and State Legislatures to levy or enact GST Act, but also grants the power to make all laws 'with respect to' GST.

Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju also informed the court that a person under the CGST Act can only be arrested, if the amount of tax evasion is more than ₹2 crore. He further stated that all offences in which tax evasion is less than ₹5 crore are bailable and only grave offences involving tax evasion of ₹5 crore and above are non-bailable and cognisable. Mr. Raju emphasised that the government has been hit with numerous cases involving non-functional and bogus firms that had fraudulently availed IGST refunds and ITC credits and had caused substantial loss to the exchequer.

Over ₹63 crore fraud

The ASG stated that the man in the present case had allegedly availed more than ₹63 crore of fraudulent IGST refund and the firm had obtained more than ₹6.35 crore of fraudulent ITC credits.

The petitioners, on the other hand, contended that the procedure prescribed under the CGST Act was not fair and reasonable. They claimed that there had been many cases where an assessee had been arrested at initial stage of investigation but the department had subsequently failed to establish its case in adjudication proceedings and in the process, the assessee had suffered irreparable loss on account of it

Here, the court highlighted that when any person is arrested under the CGST Act, the said person has to be informed of the grounds of arrest and must necessarily be produced before a Magistrate within a period of 24 hours. "This ensures judicial scrutiny over the acts of executive and it cannot be termed as unreasonable and/or excessive, as sought to be contended by the petitioners," the court said.

Dhobi Ghat demolition: HC gives three weeks to outfit to seek relief

Court asks it to approach right forum

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has given three weeks to an organisation to approach an appropriate forum for relief against demolition of the Batla House 'Dhobi Ghat', which is used by washermen here to earn a living.

Court to DDA

The court, in the meanwhile, has ordered the Delhi Development Authority not to take any precipitate measure in connection with the 'Dhobi Ghat'.

The court's direction came while hearing a petition by Muslim Kassar Vikas Sangathan, seeking directions to DDA not to demolish the Batla House Dhobi Ghat

The organisation had also urged status quo be maintained as the site is still being used by washermen to earn a living, who otherwise face economic difficulties on account of the prolonged coronavirus pandemic.

is constructed.

The DDA informed the High Court that demolition work has already been carried out at the 'Dhobi Ghat' on December 24 last. It said the action was taken in pursuance to a National Green Tribunal (NGT) judgment, which ordered that encroachments at the Yamuna banks must be removed.

The organisation, however, submitted that the NGT's order in the Manoj Misra case deals with restoration of the river Yamuna and the floodplains, whereas the existing Dhobi Ghat is located 2.5 kilometres from the waters of the river. The DDA disputed this claim.

The organisation had also urged status quo be maintained as the site is still being used by washermen to earn a living, who otherwise face economic difficulties on account of the prolonged coronavirus pandemic.

Woman, auto driver held with heroin worth ₹50 lakh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A 35-year-old woman and an autorickshaw driver were arrested for allegedly selling drugs here, the police said on Sunday.

A total of 150g of heroin worth ₹50 lakh in the international market was recovered from them, they said. The drug was brought to the national capital from Bareilly in U.P.

The accused have been identified as Neema Khatoon (name changed) from Brijpuri and Waheed (38) from Karawal Nagar, they said. After receiving tip-off, the police laid a trap and the auto was intercepted. A woman, carrying a small bag, was found sitting inside the vehicle.

"The police checked the bag and found 800 small paper pouches containing 150g of heroin worth around ₹50 lakh in international market," said DCP (North) Anto Alphonse. During interrogation, Khatoon disclosed that she bought the heroin from a man named Sakir from U.P.

Court pulls up police for illegally arresting man

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A court here pulled up Delhi Police for allegedly arresting a man illegally in a theft case and demanding money from his sister for helping in bailing him out, saying the case appeared to have been solved "just to solve it".

Additional Sessions Judge Sonu Agnihotri directed the DCP (Dwarka) to inquire regarding the alleged demand of money from the sister of the accused on part of police officials and file a report on January 13.

The court further directed

the DCP to take action regarding the illegal detention of Ravi Nanda in the case and file an Action Taken Report (ATR) by January 13.

It also granted bail to Nanda on furnishing a bail bond of ₹20,000 with one surety of like amount in the case.

The court's observations came after the investigating officer (IO) said the man was arrested merely on the basis that his sister had a yellow motorcycle with red rims which matched the description as given by the complainant.

Citizens wake up to a sunny Sunday

Temperatures are likely to fall further in the next couple of days, forecasts Met

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

After a spell of rain and cloudy conditions, the Capital woke up to clear skies and bright sunshine on Sunday. However, the minimum and maximum temperatures saw a fall.

The clear skies brought down the minimum temperature to 7.8 degrees Celsius, which was one notch warmer than normal.

Cold winds from the Himalayas blew towards the city, causing a dip in the



The clear skies brought down min. temperature to 7.8 °C, which was one notch warmer than normal. ■ FILE PHOTO

maximum temperature that settled four degrees

Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	245	Gurugram	215
Ghaziabad	280	Faridabad	251
Noida	239	Greater Noida	311
Good	0-50	Satisfactory	51-100
Poor	101-200	Very poor	201-300
Moderate	101-200	Severe	301-400
	>401		

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

the morning. Strong surface winds during the day. Minimum and maximum temperatures will be around 17 and seven degrees Celsius respectively."

Air quality

The air quality in the city also improved with an AQI of 245, which falls in the "poor" category, according to data from the CPCB. With strong surface winds, the air quality is likely to remain in the "poor" and "moderate" category on January 11 and 12.

TO ADVERTISE
PLEASE CONTACT

Mr. N SELVA KUMAR

PH: 9820350726

selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in

THE HINDU

India's National Newspaper

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DELHI EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2021

11th-17th January 2021



07 DAYS 08 SESSIONS 22 EXPERTS

International conference where education experts from India, Germany, Singapore, England, Finland, Canada, Netherlands and US will join to share their ideas and strategies with teachers, parents and policy makers about an effective and equitable education system.

"Schooling and learning in post COVID era will no longer be business as usual"

-Arvind Kejriwal
Chief Minister, Delhi

- www.delhieducationconference.org
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- @DelhiEduConf



DIP/Shabdarth/D/0095/20-21

Timings

DELHI

MONDAY, JAN. 11
RISE 07:16 SET 17:44
RISE 05:18 SET 15:51
TUESDAY, JAN. 12
RISE 07:16 SET 17:45
RISE 06:23 SET 16:51
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 13
RISE 07:16 SET 17:45
RISE 07:23 SET 17:54

Delhi Weather

max min

Delhi City 16 08

Safdarjung 16 08

Palam 14 08

Delhi Palam Today

16°C A cold morning with shallow to moderate fog. A mainly sunny sky & cool winds likely. A cold day condition may develop at few areas.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

17°C Cold wave condition likely at some parts. Cold day condition may continue at some places with moderate winds.

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THE HINDU

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Umesh Kushwaha to head JD(U)'s Bihar unit

Party mulls over poor show in polls during two-day meet

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PATNA

On the second day of a two-day State executive committee meeting of the ruling Janta Dal-United (JD-U) in Bihar, on Sunday, former MLA Umesh Kushwaha was appointed new State party president.

Earlier, Basistha Narayan Singh, the incumbent State chief of the party, had expressed his inability to continue on health grounds.

Umesh Kushwaha was JD (U) MLA from Mahnar in Vaishali district from 2015 to 2020. He lost the last election, held in October-November 2020, to the Rashtriya Janta Dal's Veena Singh. Mr. Kushwaha comes from Kairi-Bujurg village of Vaishali.

The JD(U) had called a two-day State party executive committee meeting to mull over the party's dismal performance in the last Assem-

We failed to anticipate who our friends were and on whom we should have placed our trust in the elections

NITISH KUMAR

Chief Minister

JD(U) had to pay a heavy price. People voted for us wherever we asked them and there was no confusion from our side, but false propaganda was spread against me and my party," said Mr. Kumar, adding, "however, forget the election result and get back to work. Rest assured, we will emerge stronger."

Mr. Kumar asserted that his government would last the full five year term, adding, "there has been no problem in the NDA alliance."

On Saturday, party president and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, while addressing the meeting, had said, "We failed to anticipate who our friends were and on whom we should have placed our trust in the elections."

"The seat distribution within the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) should have been done five months before the elections. It was not done and as a result, the

BJP supports claim

Alliance partner Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in-charge for Bihar, Bhupendra Yadav, too, said on Sunday that the NDA government under Mr. Kumar would run for five years and "those who have been talking about a break in the NDA and the fall of the government should look into their own party's affairs".

BJP to kick off election campaign from Silchar

Nadda will address a public rally today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

A "tradition of gratitude" will make BJP national president Jagat Prasad Nadda kick off the party's campaign for the 2021 Assam Assembly election from Silchar on Monday.

Mr. Nadda is scheduled to address a public rally in the southern Assam town, the largest urban centre in the Bengali-dominated Barak Valley that gave the BJP its first electoral win in 1991.

The BJP had won 10 Assembly seats that year, nine of them in Barak Valley, which has a total of 15 constituencies across three districts.

The Valley was the main reason why the saffron party had garnered 16.68% of votes across the 48 seats it contested, a jump from the 3.56% of the votes across 37 seats contested in the 1985 polls.

"Starting an election campaign from Barak Valley, specifically Silchar, has been a party tradition to express



BJP chief J.P. Nadda.

gratitude to the people there for giving us a toehold," Assam BJP spokesperson Rupam Goswami said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had started the party's campaign in Assam for the 2019 Lok Sabha election from Silchar, he said. The BJP had won seven of the State's 14 parliamentary seats that year, including Silchar.

The tradition was maintained for the 2016 Assam Assembly election, in which the BJP won 60 of the 89 seats contested.

WEATHER WATCH



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.30 hrs)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places very likely over south Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Mahe; thunderstorm accompanied by lightning at isolated places very likely over Puducherry, Karaikal, and Lakshadweep

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... 28.2...	14.4	...	Kozhikode	... 5.8...	24.0	...
Ahmedabad	... 27.6...	17.3	...	Kurnool	... 32.0...	20.0	...
Aizawl	... 24.0...	11.5	...	Lucknow	... 25.3...	14.6	...
Allahabad	... 25.9...	16.2	...	Madurai	2.2...	28.8...	23.0
Bengaluru	... 26.9...	18.6	...	Mangaluru	... 33.0...	22.8	...
Bhopal	4.4...	22.9...	16.4	Mumbai	0.4...	31.6...	22.8
Bhubaneswar	... 34.0...	18.3	...	Mysuru	... 29.9...	20.0	...
Chandigarh	... 12.8...	11.0	...	New Delhi	... 16.2...	7.8	...
Chennai	... 30.3...	24.0	...	Patna	... 26.8...	15.9	...
Coimbatore	37.2...	28.8...	21.9	Port Blair	... 30.6...	26.5	...
Dehradun	... 25.0...	9.0	...	Puducherry	1...	28.2...	23.0
Gangtok	... 12.4...	8.9	...	Pune	... 31.5...	20.0	...
Goa	... 33.5...	25.0	...	Raipur	... 33.0...	19.0	...
Guwahati	... 26.2...	15.4	...	Ranchi	... 28.7...	17.6	...
Hubballi	... 28.0...	19.0	...	Shillong	... 17.3...	7.1	...
Hyderabad	0.2...	30.2...	19.8	Shimla	... 20.8...	8.4	...
Imphal	... 24.3...	6.7	...	Srinagar	... 4.1...	3.0	...
Jaipur	... 23.0...	13.4	...	Thiruvananthapuram	2.5...	29.9...	24.2
Kochi	5.2...	30.4...	24.2	Tiruchi	6...	28.6...	23.8
Kohima	... 14.8...	3.8	...	Vijayawada	... 31.2...	21.2	...
Kolkata	... 30.6...	19.6	...	Visakhapatnam	... 32.0...	20.4	...

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	17	86	56	154	127	...
Bengaluru	10	19	17	54	54	...
Chennai	28	16	24	264	—	...
Delhi	8	42	57	331	208	...
Hyderabad	—	68	20	79	99	...
Kolkata	30	29	47	310	201	...
Lucknow	13	65	64	319	236	...
Mumbai	5	59	20	322	—	...
Pune	17	22	53	55	43	...
Visakhapatnam	20	70	34	128	139	...

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Patnaik, Ministers make their assets public as per promise

STAFF REPORTER

BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik possesses properties worth close to ₹64.98 crore while his Cabinet colleague Health and Family Welfare Minister Naba Kishore Das has bought 80 vehicles since 2018.

Mr. Patnaik and his Ministers have made their property public as per the announcement made earlier.

Of the moveable and immovable properties, the Chief Minister's biggest asset is 50% share in the house built by his father and former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik at Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Road. The 50% share comes to around ₹43.36 crore. The worth of the house is likely to be much more than the value shown as the valuation

was done in 2014.

Mr. Patnaik owns 22.7 acres of farmland in the village Tikkrikhera along Sohna Road in Faridabad district in Haryana worth ₹10.75 crore as per the valuation made in 2017.

The Odisha Chief Minister has been given two-thirds share of 'Naveen Niwas' situated near the Biju Patnaik

International Airport, Bhubaneswar. The share has been valued at ₹9.52 crore.

Mr. Das, who joined the BJD before 2019 election, is a transporter. He has purchased 80 high-value vehicles since October 2018. One Mercedes Benz he owns was purchased for ₹1.96 crore in 2018.

In property details of many Ministers, spouses have substantial moveable and immovable properties in their names.

Kullu polls



Voters undergo thermal screening during the urban polls in Kullu on Sunday. ■ PTI

We will boycott session if it is truncated: Tejashwi

Ploy by govt. to avoid getting cornered'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PATNA

The Opposition grand alliance in Bihar on Sunday declared it would boycott the upcoming budget session of the State Assembly and lay siege to residences of the Chief Minister and his deputies if proceedings of the House were curtailed in the name of facilitating COVID-19 vaccination.

The announcement was made by RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav after a meeting with delegates of Congress, CPI(ML), CPI and CPI(M) which together constitute the opposition coalition helmed by his party.

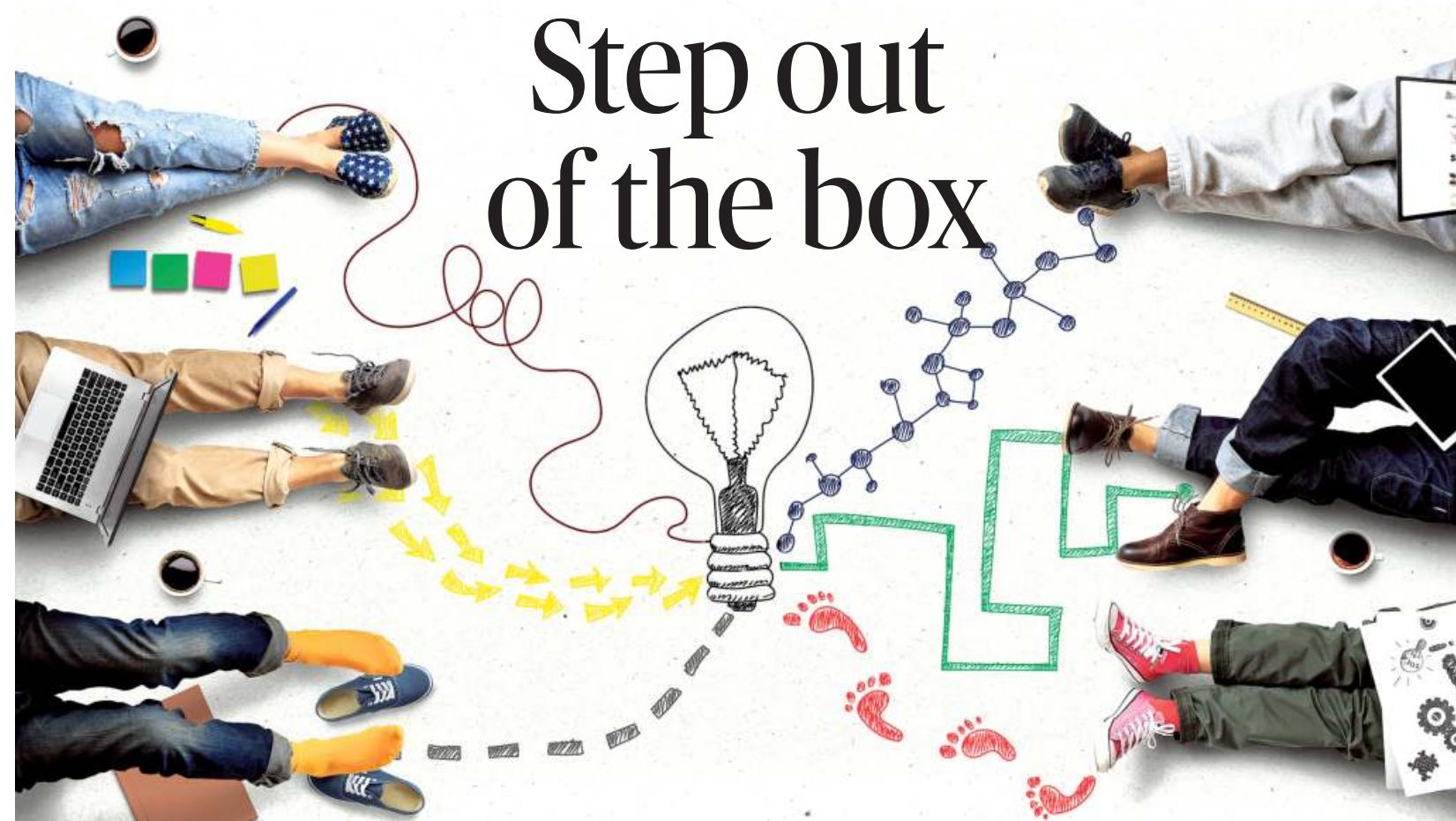
"We met the Speaker yesterday. He had suggested that the budget session, normally held in March, be advanced and the proceedings which often last for a month or so, be wrapped up in a few days. The reason stated by him was possible vaccination drive for COVID-19 in March," Mr. Yadav told reporters.

The former Deputy Chief Minister alleged that proposed shortening of the session was a "ploy by the Nit-

Bengal's active cases dip but deaths near 10,000

State reports 823 new cases

SHIV SA



An e-learning platform that offers a plethora of streams, MyCaptain is a gateway to more offbeat careers

■ JENNY VARGHESE

"O Captain, My Captain!" This phrase from Walt Whitman's famous poem was immortalised by *Dead Poets Society*, a film that spoke of seizing the day and finding your passion. And so a group of engineering students, who were inspired by the film and its themes,

named their start-up MyCaptain. The idea, explains CEO and co-founder Mohammed Zeeshan, was to encourage students to follow their dreams and pursue offbeat careers.

MyCaptain is a platform for students who wish to explore alternate careers such as comedy, writing, filmmaking, music production, entrepreneurship, digital marketing, photography, graphic design, and more. They offer over 35 different courses in varying fields that are taught live by mentors or 'captains' who are young professionals in that area.

"With these mentors, the aim is for the students to be comfortable with someone they can relate to and be in-

spired by them in their chosen fields," says Zeeshan.

The beginning

MyCaptain began in 2013 when Zeeshan and his friends – students themselves at that time – realised that they had all been forced into engineering, when they had other interests. "I wanted to be an astronomer, one friend wanted to be a writer/journalist, another an economist," recalls Zeeshan. They soon discovered that most of their college mates felt the same way. They also noticed that this was a problem that students across the country faced and that those who wanted to do something apart from engineering, medicine or law did not know where to go

or how to do it. Many struggled to find guidance and were unable to find a platform that would help them grow and acquire the required skills. So the group of 19 year olds decided to try to make a difference. MyCaptain works with about 250 mentors, most of whom are from organisations such as Apple, Google, Commune, Platform for Artists and others. "Apart from regular referrals or applicants, we partner with organisations where people can either sign up to be mentors or have courses ratified with them. We sit with their experts and design a suitable curriculum, ensuring students get a first-hand experience on what to expect from those industries," said Zeeshan. Mentors are selected on the basis of their achievements and passion for education. A new mentor shadows existing mentors to get a hang of the process. Lessons are also con-

Because of the readily available content, people have realised that there are opportunities in more creative fields as well.

ducted from remote locations that are suitable to the mentors.

Looking ahead

Like most e-learning platforms, MyCaptain has witnessed a surge in new users amid the pandemic, with enrollments more than doubling in the initial few months. "COVID began closer to the summer when most people were looking for new interests to focus on. This boosted our growth. However, post-July, we noticed that this began to flatten. Naturally, this meant that COVID alone cannot bring in the users and we would have to use this opportunity to build from here," Zeeshan adds. They hope to be able to add at least 90 courses in the year ahead and to shift from beginner courses to more advanced three- to six-month programmes that will not only facilitate internships but also placements for jobs. They have begun tying up with organisations from various sectors such as The Minimalist, Filter Copy and others to run the courses enabling them to partner directly with industries.

Zeeshan also points to the slowly decreasing number of students who are writing competitive exams over the past years. "There has been a large shift in the way students are looking at their careers today. Because of the readily available content seen through different forms of media, people have started to realise that there are opportunities in more creative fields as well. One of the most popular courses we offer is the psychology one, followed by writing. This shows that, although we offer business and technology courses, students come to MyCaptain to explore the more offbeat courses."

SCHOLARSHIPS

Fullerton India Scholarship Programme

Fullerton India invites applications from underprivileged students from Madhya Pradesh (Vidisha and Khanda), Rajasthan (Hanumangarh and Shi Gangangar) and West Bengal (Jalpaiguri and Haldia).

ELIGIBILITY: Those from Class IX to XII who have scored a minimum of 60% marks in their previous qualifying examinations. Annual family income must be less than ₹4 lakhs.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: ₹10,000

DEADLINE: January 31

APPLICATION: Online
b4s.in/EDGE/FUS2

Shiksha ki Udaan Scholarship Programme

Samasta Microfinance Limited, an IIFL Group Company, offers this scholarship to help meritorious girl students from financially weaker sections.

ELIGIBILITY: Open to girls who are residents of Bihar and Odisha and studying in Class XI with more than 60% marks in Class 10 board examination. Annual family income must be less than ₹3 lakhs. Candidates who are currently Samasta Microfinance customers or prospects can also apply.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: ₹5,000

DEADLINE: January 31

APPLICATION: Online
b4s.in/EDGE/SKU1

Nikon Scholarship Programme

Nikon India Private Limited invites applications from students facing financial problems in pursuing their photography programme.

ELIGIBILITY: Open to students who have passed Class XII and upwards pursuing photography courses with a duration of three months or more. Annual family income should be less than ₹6 lakhs per annum.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: Up to ₹1 lakh.

DEADLINE: January 15

APPLICATION: Online
b4s.in/EDGE/NSP3

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

EXPERT SPEAK

Secure the classrooms

In an e-learning ecosystem, security is and will continue to be a critical challenge that needs to be addressed constantly, says Velchamy Sankarlingam, President, Product and Engineering, Zoom



■ MADHUMITHA SRINIVASAN

Online learning, digital classrooms, and virtual collaborations are phrases we have come to associate with education in a pandemic setting. In a post-pandemic world, as educational institutions look to reopen, classrooms will transition into hybrid learning, without completely giving up on online classes.

Since, both educators and students have seen the benefits that online learning can offer, learning-communication platforms will continue to find relevance in education. As they continue to innovate and make the platforms more conducive for learning, it is also equally important that they address the new challenges that they bring with them – of security.

Velchamy Sankarlingam, President, Product and Engineering, Zoom, shares his tips for keeping the virtual classroom secure.

Why is security an important issue?

Security in a virtual world is as important as in the real world. To protect student privacy and maintain participant control, it is es-

sential for virtual platforms to have security features from signing-in to logging out.

A virtual platform should be managed the same way we run a physical classroom. People need permission to enter/exit, speak in the class, and the like. Similarly, virtual platforms have waiting rooms and controls for the teachers to manage their classes efficiently and securely.

There need to be controls to safeguard against unwanted incidents of disruption. Meeting disruptors search the Internet for publicly posted meeting IDs and passwords. So, it is important to avoid sharing meeting details on public platforms; or to change meeting IDs if the details have been shared publicly.

While choosing a platform for online teaching/meeting, what are the features one needs to check for?

Seamless and secure user experience. A platform must mandate waiting rooms and meeting passwords as default settings to ensure that user safety is not compromised. Other features like locking

the meeting, E2E encrypted calls, host controls, and more enhance user experience. It is advantageous if the platform can seamlessly integrate with Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Moodle, Canvas, Desire2Learn, Sakai, and Blackboard.

How can online learning platforms be used optimally to enhance learning outcomes?

With virtual and hybrid classrooms, micro-learning, education institutes can see increased student participation and learning retention. A hybrid class brings the benefits of blended learning, where educational institutes can utilise already available resources and hardware to expand capabilities and educational offerings.

What is the future you foresee for online learning platforms?

For us, the future is hybrid. We will see continued usage across sectors and industries. Employers have realised that employees are more productive and motivated.

There is a clear visible trend of frequent events being held on digital platforms. Businesses have become faster and smarter. As we inch closer to a post-pandemic world, this need for agility will only increase.

Security tips for online classes:

Lock your virtual classroom once class starts so no one else can enter.

Ensure that all new participants joining a meeting enter the Waiting Room (where you can admit them on an individual basis).

Enable or disable participants from sharing their screens.

Disable the chat feature to prevent participants from chatting with each other.

Prevent participants from renaming themselves.

Prevent participants from unmuting themselves.

Restrict annotation to prevent students from annotating on shared content or show the names of individuals annotating.

Disable "Join before host" so students can't join a meeting before you start it.

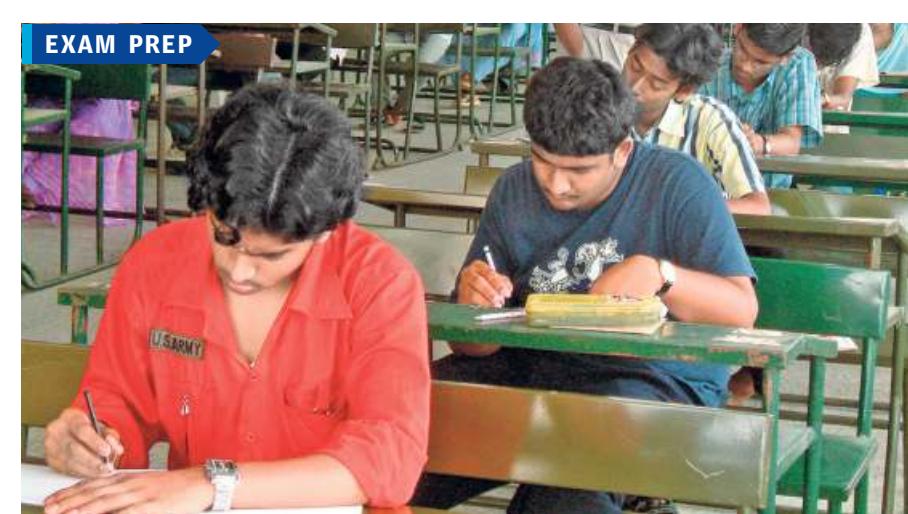
Require a meeting passcode to join.

Disable screen sharing for users (participants must ask for permission to share).

While choosing a platform for online teaching/meeting, what are the features one needs to check for?

Seamless and secure user experience. A platform must mandate waiting rooms and meeting passwords as default settings to ensure that user safety is not compromised. Other features like locking

EXAM PREP



R.M. RAJARATHINAM

Lose that exam fear

Tips to help prepare for the JEE Main and a look at how the test is different this year

■ RAMESH BATLIBI

The Joint Entrance Examination Main (JEE Main) will be conducted in four sessions this year in February, March, April and May. The dates for each can be found at jeemain.nta.nic.in. A candidate may appear in one or more sessions and his/her best performance will be considered for the final merit list.

Conducted in two shifts, morning and evening, the exams are being conducted in 13 languages (English, Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Marathi, Malayalam, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu) for the first time.

This year, under the new pattern, there will be no negative marking in the 15 alternative questions. The paper will have an option to attempt 75 questions out of 90 – 25 questions each in the chemistry, physics and maths sections.

However, there will be no change in the syllabus. This change is being introduced to accommodate school boards that have reduced classes XI and XII syllabus and those that haven't.

How to prepare

Here are some tips to successfully crack the exam. Start with subject-wise preparation and categorise the topics according to how well you know them. Analyse and work on weak areas. Revise topics that

you are confident about.

Maths and physics: Start with the basics of differentiation and work your way towards limits and associated concepts. Also, include revision of functions and concepts of application of derivatives. Work on properties of definite integration and revise concepts of differential equations. Start studying general topics such as trigonometry, coordinate geometry, differentiation and integration. Make chapterwise formulae and important-point sheets that can work as a revision sheet during the exam. Revise formulas in coordinate geometry and the applications of geometrical properties of conics. In Algebra, start with quadratic equations and work your way towards complex numbers (especially the geometrical properties). Focus on the properties of matrices and determinants as well as vector and 3D geometry. Keep a more problem-based approach towards permutations and combinations, probability, and progressions.

Chemistry: Pay special attention to chapters such as atomic structure, solid state, ionic equilibrium, electro-chemistry and thermo-chemistry. Jot down simple formulas while solving questions. Learn chemical equations and chemical properties by heart, as 50% of the questions are based on either of these. After completing every chapter, create a sheet for chemical equations and formulas to be used in solving the questions. In Organic Chemistry, focus on various name reactions that you have studied across classes XI and XII and their mechanisms. Practice questions related to Ozonolysis, Aidol and Cannizzaro reactions and acidity and basicity order, along with chemical tests for various functional groups. In Inorganic Chemistry, focus areas should be chapters such as chemical bonding, p-block elements, coordination

is no scope of any significant improvement, skip those topics and focus on those that you have good command over. Pay special attention to topics such as Semiconductor devices, Electromagnetic waves, Communication system, as questions based on these topics are often straightforward and simple. A thorough understanding of the information in NCERT textbooks is usually sufficient to solve questions.

Maths and physics: Start with the basics of differentiation and work your way towards limits and associated concepts. Also, include revision of functions and concepts of application of derivatives. Work on properties of definite integration and revise concepts of differential equations. Start studying general topics such as trigonometry, coordinate geometry, differentiation and integration. Make chapterwise formulae and important-point sheets that can work as a revision sheet during the exam. Revise formulas in coordinate geometry and the applications of geometrical properties of conics. In Algebra, start with quadratic equations and work your way towards complex numbers (especially the geometrical properties). Focus on the properties of matrices and determinants as well as vector and 3D geometry. Keep a more problem-based approach towards permutations and combinations, probability, and progressions.

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SAVE THE DATE

PGDM Programme opened

JK Business School (JKBS) has opened applications for PGDM programme 2021-23.

ELIGIBILITY: Minimum three-year Bachelor's degree or equivalent in any discipline with minimum 50% aggregate marks recognised by the Association of Indian Universities / University Grants Commission as eligible for post graduate studies in Management.

It is compulsory for students to appear in National Entrance Exams such as CAT/ MAT/ CMAT/ ATMA/ XLRI/ GMAT and their equivalent. The validity of such exams is for ONE year only.

FEES: ₹5, 99,100 and ₹10,000 as refundable security deposit.

DEADLINE: January 30
<https://bit.ly/3bhBVRE>

Masters in Design

JK Lakshmipt University has announced the opening of admissions for the Master's in Design for 2021. The two-year programme is split into smaller modules so that the students can not only get a qualification but also enhance career opportunities with each module.

ELIGIBILITY: Minimum 50% marks (45% for SC/ST Candidates) or equivalent CGPA in a three-year Bachelor's degree (10+2+3) or equivalent in any discipline from a recognised university. Students appearing in the final examination of Bachelor's degree can also apply. The candidates must have appeared in CEED or any other national level entrance test. In case the candidate has not appeared for any of the mentioned tests, they will have to appear in the JKLU Design Entrance Test (DET) to qualify for the programme.

DEADLINE: January 31
<https://bit.ly/3s2B3Gx>

M.Sc in Cognitive Science & M.A. in Society and Culture

IIT Gandhinagar invites applications for M.Sc. in Cognitive Science, an interdisciplinary field with cutting-edge applications in AI & ML. Applications for M.A. in Society and Culture are also open.

SCHOLARSHIP: Eligible candidates admitted to the M.Sc. in Cognitive Science and M.A. in Society and Culture programmes will receive a monthly scholarship of ₹5,000.

DEADLINE: January 31
<https://admissions.iitgn.ac.in/login/index.php>

The writer is a FIITJEE expert



Gearing up

As India starts on vaccination, the government must bolster public trust in the process

India now has a firm date to roll out the biggest vaccination programme in its history. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that from January 16, after the Makar Sankranti and Pongal festivities, doctors, nurses and sanitation workers, who are part of the priority group, would begin getting the vaccine. India has approved two vaccines in emergency-use mode – Covishield by the Serum Institute of India, Pune, and Covaxin by Bharat Biotech Ltd. While it still is unclear who gets which vaccine, there are more doses of Covishield available at present than Covaxin, almost five to one, and it could take a few months before the 30 million prioritised get one of their doses. Others, those in the 50-plus age group and those with comorbidities, will have to wait much longer, especially in a situation where vaccines such as those by Pfizer and Moderna are not made available for import by the private sector.

However, the vaccination begins under a cloud. Covaxin belongs to a league of vaccines that has been approved without establishing its efficacy, namely, the extent to which vaccination protects from COVID-19. There have been differences among scientists such as on the best testing strategy, treatment, extent of infection, but none more divisive than on the approval of Covaxin. Several experts have made the case that the declining rate of infections and low relative mortality meant that India was not in as dire a state of emergency that required it to approve an untested vaccine when more clarity would likely have come by March. Covaxin is best kept as a backup in the event of a sudden surge of cases till its efficacy data are available and acceptable. Also, reports have emerged of trials in Bhopal where volunteers were seemingly under the impression that they were getting a protective shot when some were likely getting a placebo. They also complain of no medical follow-up when some developed symptoms such as fever, body pain and loss of appetite. The vaccine may eventually prove protective and the adverse symptoms reported, seen as part of the variety of the human body's response – there are 28,500 volunteers after all. However, a vaccine that evokes distrust is self-defeating. With childhood immunisation, India has proven that it has the infrastructural backbone to inoculate millions. The dry runs to test the Co-WIN management software have reportedly given authorities valuable feedback on perfecting the prospective rollout. However, this could be undone if people do not turn up, and worse, if vaccine hesitancy rises. The pandemic gave India an opportunity to examine its dispensation of health care. Along with improving access, the government must seriously examine the conduct of vaccine trials and work hard to bolster public trust in it, and monitor the vaccination process for adverse reactions.

Felled by fire

To avert another Bhandara-like hospital inferno, govt must address underlying causes

The deadly fire that snuffed out the lives of 10 infants in the Bhandara District General Hospital in Maharashtra is a shocking reminder that safety norms in several medical facilities in India do not pass muster. The parents of the babies who perished in the sick new-born unit have been plunged into a lifetime of trauma. Some of the victims, a few just days old, had been brought to the hospital for better care from smaller health facilities; seven had a providential escape. There are reports of poorly trained staff failing to respond adequately. The terrible blaze joins the long list of such accidents recorded in government and private hospitals, underscoring a painful reality: safety protocols are yet to be institutionalised even in places where people legitimately expect a high degree of professionalism. Last year, there were devastating fires in COVID-19 facilities in Vijayawada and Ahmedabad, with several casualties, blamed on poor oversight by fire authorities or faulty electrical repairs. The Maharashtra government has ordered a probe into the Bhandara fire to be concluded in three days, and a fire audit of hospitals, but a perfunctory inquiry cannot effectively address the underlying causes. Hospital fires are a distinct entity, and research indicates that there are specific factors that trigger them off and aggravate their impact.

Intensive Care Units, neonatal ICUs and operating rooms are often the site of fires, implicating the presence of a high concentration of oxygen in a confined space. A review of Indian hospital fires published in the *Journal of Clinical Anesthesia* identified higher oxygen availability in intensive care facilities as the likely primary cause, with motors and electrical units in the room providing the ignition, and plastics fuelling it. It is worth considering, therefore, whether hospitals have been audited with such factors in mind, and to evaluate national building safety codes against international practice. Oxygen monitors for hospital rooms, to ensure that the ambient level is within safe norms – set at a maximum of 23.5% by the U.S. National Fire Protection Association – could help avert an accident. Locating electrical equipment for air-conditioners with sparking potential away from oxygen saturated areas may also reduce the risk. As the health sector expands, it is essential that all new infrastructure conforms to rigorous safety standards, a small premium to stop disasters such as the Bhandara carnage. If the government sets the bar high enough, ensuring full adherence to safety in its buildings, regulatory authorities can compel commercial structures to fall in line. The Centre should also create a public platform for insights gained from inquiries into hospital fires to be shared. Hospitals should mandatorily hold regular safety and evacuation drills which are key to saving lives when disaster strikes.

Central Vista, executive's caprice, and rule of law

Constitutional tradition requires the state's decisions to be just, fair and reasonable and adhere to procedure



SUHRIT PARTHASARATHY

There is a pattern that emerges out of the contemporary Supreme Court of India's most notable judgments. These rulings invariably begin with an homage to the ideas of the rule of law. But the opening tributes are left by the wayside when it comes time for the Court to apply those ideas to the case at hand. The invariable upshot: the executive government's caprice trumps due process, and the rule of law survives only in name. The judgment delivered on January 5 in *Rajeev Suri v. Delhi Development Authority*, in which a 2:1 majority of the Court granted its *imprimatur* to the proposed redevelopment of the Central Vista in the national capital, fits the trend.

Right to public participation
The majority's ruling begins in now-customary fashion. It holds that in a republic governed by the rule of law, the government's actions, "howsoever laudable" they might be, must stand the test of the Constitution. But when you read on from there, a shudder of *déjà vu* soon sets in. The early paean to the "high principles of democratic values" are enfeebled by the Court's refusal to acknowledge the existence of a right to public participation, a right, which ought to be seen as fundamental in a democracy, properly understood. What is more, a repudiation of basic environmental norms is condoned, because, according to the Court, "the principle of sustainable development and precautionary principle need to be understood in a proper context", one

in which "competing public interests" must be harmonised and balanced. As we know only too well, every time the Court uses the language of harmony and balance, development eclipses every other concern.

A state-people link
Delhi's Central Vista, originally conceived by Edwin Lutyens, stretches from India Gate to Rashtrapati Bhavan. Littered with sprawling parks and lawns, it houses not only an ensemble of landmark government buildings – from Parliament House to the Secretariats on the North and South Block – but also a number of other important public structures: among others, the National Archives of India, the National Museum and the National War Memorial. Its open spaces and the easy physical access that it affords to seats of power also mean that it has served in many ways as a link between the state and its people.

In 2009, the Central Vista was considered important enough to be designated, after extensive public consultation, as a Grade-I heritage precinct. This meant that any development inside the area had to be "regulated and controlled" in a manner that would leave its grandeur unscathed. But the proposal today, which portends enormous costs, is not any simple act of development within the boundaries of the area.

Instead, it seeks to remake the space. A new Parliament house will be erected next to the existing heritage building – it has been suggested, the central hall, where Nehru made his "Tryst with Destiny" speech, where the Constitution was adopted, would be converted into a "museum of democracy". A new secretariat and a new residence for the Prime Minister will be built, and a number of post-Independence buildings, including the National Mu-



seum, will be taken down.

Petitions and claims

Petitions originally filed in the Delhi High Court, and transferred later to the Supreme Court, alleged that the government had failed to follow due process in approving the project. Two claims stand out: first, that the state had sanctioned an alteration to the existing land use permitted under law without sufficient public consultation; second, that the environmental clearance for the project is unreasonable, and was, in any event, obtained by illegitimately carving the project into two.

In his judgment for the majority, Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, writing on behalf of himself and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari, holds that the project required no special judicial scrutiny. According to the Court, the petitioners' case was not predicated on the violation of any fundamental right, but only on the rigours prescribed by statute, in this case, the Delhi Development Act, 1957. That law, though, as Justice Sanjiv Khanna's dissenting opinion notes, does, in fact, mandate, among other things, the granting of an opportunity to the public to place on record its objections, and for those objections to be considered by hearing the objectors.

Here, although objections were invited from the public, a mere three-days' notice was given for the hearing on those complaints. The majority rules that the law

does not make personal hearings mandatory, and, therefore, it was irrelevant whether sufficient time was granted or not. There are, at least, two problems with this finding: one, the Court has consistently held in the past that arbitrary state action violates fundamental rights, in particular the equality clause of Article 14. This would mean that in a project such as this, where a transformational change is brought about to the Master Plan framed under the 1957 Act, the public ought to have been accorded a sufficient chance to place on record all its objections, and a sufficient chance to be heard personally on those complaints.

Two, any civic participation can be productive only if complete information is placed in the public domain. In this case, the Board of Enquiry and Hearing (BoEH) which was appointed to consider the objections raised on the change in the land use, recognised the merit in the objectors' plea that the full details of the project were not made available. "Among the respondents, majority of whom are Planners/Architects, there appears to be a feeling that authentic technical information on this iconic project of Central Vista is not available in public domain, which is leading to avoidable misgivings....," its report noted. Moreover, it also recommended that "impact assessment studies on traffic, environment and heritage" ought to be commissioned at the earliest. But despite these findings the Delhi Development Authority sanctioned the proposal.

Need for adequate disclosures
According to the majority, it was sufficient that the authority had the power to do so. The absence of a reasoned order overriding the BoEH's specific concerns was found to be of no value. As a result, the Court had effectively de-

termined that the Constitution guarantees no independent right to public participation. But, as the dissenting judgment shows us, the most basic principles of procedural fairness – doctrines that flow from an array of constitutional promises – require the state to make adequate and intelligible disclosures. This is especially so in this case, because, as Justice Khanwilkar identifies, the project, when executed, will have permanent and irreversible consequences.

Environmental scrutiny

The nature of the project ought to have also led to a more careful scrutiny on the environmental clearance granted to it by the Expert Appraisal Committee. Clearance had been sought not for the redevelopment of the Central Vista but only for the construction of a new Parliament building. This meant that the application was considered simply as a "Building and Construction Project" rather than as a "Township and Area Development Project", which would have enhanced the level of inspection. Again, as the dissent observes, the Expert Appraisal Committee's order granting sanction does not so much as render a finding on why the project was sliced into two.

These concerns over procedure, and over the denial of adequate public participation, might not strike us intuitively as matters of grave importance. But if the rule of law must mean something, we must regard the basic goals of our constitutional tradition with respect. That tradition, more than anything else, requires anything made by the state to be just, fair and reasonable, both in its substance, and, however tedious it might be, in its adherence to procedure.

Suhrit Parthasarathy is an advocate practising at the Madras High Court

Planning an exit out of the easy money regime

The RBI's main challenge would be in managing the tension between restraining inflation and supporting recovery



DUVVURI SUBBARAO

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) embarked on an extraordinary expansionary policy to manage the financial pressures unleashed by COVID-19. It slashed policy interest rates aggressively, flooded the market with an unprecedented amount of liquidity and instituted a slew of measures for targeted assistance to especially distressed sectors.

Must be a deliberative process
As we sight springshoots in the economy, the RBI must be planning for a non-disruptive exit out of the easy money regime. Crisis management is a percentage game. When the house is on fire, central banks do what they think has the best chance of dousing the flames, shedding their characteristic deliberation. In contrast, reversing a crisis-driven expansionary policy has to be a deliberative process, with the timing and sequencing carefully planned. Indeed, one of the big lessons of the global financial crisis is that any missteps on the exit path by way of commission, omission, or importantly communication, can be costly in macroeconomic terms.

So what are the challenges that the RBI will confront on the way out?

By far the biggest challenge will be to manage the tension between restraining inflation and supporting the recovery. This is a policy dilemma even when the macroeconomic situation is benign; the pandemic, shrouded in unusual uncertainty, has made the dilemma much sharper.

Consider the most recent Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) review in early December. Inflation remained above the RBI's target band for the past several months, and according to the RBI's own estimates, is expected to remain above the band for the next several months. Yet, the MPC decided against any rate action out of concerns for growth and financial stability. The MPC expects inflation to soften on its own in the weeks ahead as supply chains, disrupted by the lockdown, normalise, and the bumper winter crop comes in to the market.

Inflation and revival
That outcome is not inevitable. Inflation could be pressured upwards by several factors even though there could be some apparent softening purely because of base effects. There is the risk that persistent high inflation expectations would result in food inflation getting more generalised. Core inflation could firm up because of rising input prices. 'Excessive margins', among the factors cited by the MPC as one of the causes of high inflation, may not disappear if firms, regaining pricing power amid demand recovery, raise prices to mend their balance sheets.

Equally, there are concerns that the recovery, for all the positive signals, is still fragile. It has also been uneven and unequal, with large industries finding their foothold while small and medium enterprises and the entire informal sector continue to be in distress. And there is heightened concern about an aggravated unemployment problem caused by big firms retrenching labour to cut costs.

Plight of savers
Quite apart from the upside risks to inflation and downside risks to growth, the RBI should also be concerned about the plight of savers who are being shortchanged by low interest rates at time of high inflation. All these concerns taken together make a complex cocktail of dilemmas for the RBI as it seeks to normalise the policy rates.

A second and related challenge will be to withdraw the 'excess' liquidity in good time. Banks are routinely depositing trillions of rupees with the RBI every day, evidencing that all the money that the central bank unleashed into the system is not doing much good

anymore. For sure, there was a clear purpose behind the RBI joining the global central bank bandwagon of 'dash for cash' – to inspire confidence in the economy when confidence was at very low ebb. Hopefully, we are out of that abyss now and it is time to think of an exit.

Every financial crisis can be traced back to mispricing of risk, and mispricing of risk is what results when there is too much liquidity sloshing around the system for too long. It will drive investors into dodgy ventures and threaten financial stability.

Market reactions

As the RBI seeks to guard financial stability by normalising liquidity, it will have to contend with possible market tantrums. Remember the 'taper tantrums' that reverberated across global markets when Ben Bernanke, then chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve, announced in a routine statement in May 2013 that they were considering gradually tapering 'quantitative easing'. Any news like that, implying that the American economy, the epicentre of the global financial crisis, was showing signs of a robust recovery, should have been cheered by the financial markets; instead, the panic sell-off showed that investors, used to the ease of abundant liquidity, were unprepared for the 'punchbowl' being snatched away. The lesson from the taper tantrums clearly is that the RBI will have to manage its communication as carefully as it does the liquidity withdrawal.

It is better to be rough right, as Keynes said, than be precisely wrong. That should be the guiding principle for RBI as it navigates its way out of the crisis driven easy money policy.

Duvvuri Subbarao is a former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Hospital blaze

The gruesome and heart-wrenching fire accident in Mumbai involving infants has exposed the chinks in the fire safety programmes of hospitals in India (Page 1, "10 babies killed in Maharashtra hospital blaze", January 10). A safety audit of all hospitals and wards must begin immediately. The Health Ministry must monitor compliance in all hospitals, private and government. Hospital fire safety must take precedence over other public buildings.

A.V. NARAYANAN,
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

■ The central and State governments are ready to

spurge crores on vanity projects and programmes, but when it comes to safety and security in vulnerable places such as hospitals and schools, they almost always fall short of funds.

N. NAGARAJAN,
Secunderabad

■ Be it hospitals, hotels, movie halls or malls, people may not have the slightest idea about escape routes, layouts and other means of help in the event of a major fire. Staff of the establishments concerned should be prepared to rescue or at least guide guests to safety. Buildings should have a common way to an exit point so that any one, irrespective of age and

gender, should be able to identify it and escape immediately. Big buildings should have proper fire and electricity safety devices that must be checked every week. Staff in sensitive places such as hospitals, schools and hotels should take part in safety and evacuation drills.

M. PRADYU,
Thalikavu, Kannur, Kerala

■ The accident is shocking. What is appalling is the lack of a fire audit over the years. Awarding monetary

compensation to the victims' families is a poor consolation. There appears to be no accountability in government hospitals.

P.K. VARADARAJAN,
Chennai

■ The uncouth behaviour of a bunch of Americans with the blessings of Mr. Trump, has erased the image of an America nurtured by gallant Presidents such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Never in the annals of American history has a President masterminded such an obnoxious act and with an intent to instil fear in the minds of those who voted the President-elect.

MANI NATARAJAN,
Chennai

To read more letters online, scan the QR code

Wildlife crime

The incident of a group of men killing the endangered river dolphin in Uttar Pradesh makes one wonder whether we have forgotten our seventh fundamental duty, as Article 51A(g). We have encroached into and destroyed animal habitats with the result that man-animal conflicts have become the order of the day. The entry of wild elephants into agricultural land in Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh and a leopard getting into a medical institution in Karnataka are two recent examples.

PAVAN B.P.,
Nanjangud, Mysuru

A tale of two speeches at AMU

Modi's speech at the university showed a shift from Nehruvian candour to courteous commendation



NAJMUL HODA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the centenary celebrations of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) on December 22, 2020, via video conferencing.

AMU, given its chequered history, and being the site of a high density of modern, educated Muslims, has immense symbolic value for the Muslims of north India as well as for the rest of the country, for the narratives permeating the political atmosphere have emanated from the north.

Mr. Modi's address came as a surprise to many as his ideological vantage doesn't countenance AMU's historical significance and its symbolism. Therefore, this move must have been taken to signal the ruling dispensation's desire for a recalibration of the relationship with the Muslim minority.

Over the last five decades or so, no Prime Minister visited the AMU's campus though it is a fully funded government institution, a Central university, situated not far from the national capital. The last Prime Minister to visit AMU was Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1964. Before him, Jawaharlal Nehru gave the convocation address on January 24, 1948.

Nehru's speech

Aware of the university's symbolic value, Nehru used AMU as a platform to address Indian Muslims. Nehru had been among the very few to sympathetically look at founder Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's strategic antipathy towards the Congress and the national movement. Sir Syed feared that his *qaum* (community) was not ready for the political plunge which could invite British wrath and sabotage his mission of spreading modern education among Muslims. Nehru opened his speech bemoaning how he had not been allowed in AMU for many years. The plaint had added poignancy as someone else had been visiting the campus in the years when he couldn't: Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Despite the "convulsions and heartbreaks" of Partition, Nehru



wanted to ascertain afresh "where we stand and what we stand for". He had come for a frank conversation with a people who, in his view, needed to revise their understanding of India and redefine their cultural moorings and political orientation.

In his earnestness to leave behind the "doubts and disillusionment" of the recent past, and in his hope that "if we are wise and strong enough to think and act rightly even now, we might succeed in erasing that mark," he wanted to meet everyone and "probe somewhat into your minds, and to let you have a glimpse of my own mind." It was an imperative for Nehru to "build up a free India of high ideals and noble endeavour where there is equality of opportunity for all."

However, he was clear in his mind that equality, or any other right for that matter, flowed from the acceptance of duties and obligations. He situated the dyad of rights and duties in the context of belonging and ownership of the country's history and culture. Therefore, he raised the question which was at the root of the recently experienced "catastrophe and disaster". Having stated that "I am proud of our inheritance and our ancestors who gave an intellectual and cultural pre-eminence to India," he posed a soul-searching query: "How do you feel about this past? Do you feel that you are also sharers in it and inheritors of it and, therefore, proud of something that belongs to you as much as to me? Or do you feel alien to it and pass it by without understanding it or feeling that strange thrill which comes from the realisation that we are the trustees and inheritors of this vast treasure?" His emphasis on a shared past was for the sake of a common future. He

considered that politics dangerous which attempts to "change the spirit of India" and "reverse the historic process through which we had been passing for long ages past".

Therefore, in the spirit of compassionate candour, he talked to his Muslim audience about the country which they had helped bring into existence and deeply cared for. Although he considered Pakistan to have come into being "rather unnatural", he reassured them that India didn't want to undo Pakistan, wished it well, and wanted good neighbourly relations with it.

Nehru wore his heart on his sleeve and spoke in a cathartic manner. He neither harangued his audience nor displayed the presumption to think on their behalf. Instead, he urged them to work all this out in their own heads. He concluded with the words, "Do not think that you are outsiders here, for you are as much flesh and blood of India as anyone else, and you have every right to share in what India has to offer. But those who seek rights must share in the obligations also... I invite you as free citizens of free India to play your role in the building up of this great country and to be sharers, in common with others, in the triumphs and setbacks alike that may come our way."

Modi's speech

Mr. Modi's speech gave the impression that time has come a full circle. He discounted all of Nehru's apprehensions and vindicated his optimism. Nehru had asked: "Do we believe in a national State which includes people of all religions and shades of opinions and is essentially a secular State?" Mr. Modi's speech provided an affirmative answer to this question based on the presumption that his audience agreed with him and that they clearly understood what he wanted to convey.

At first, Mr. Modi's address seemed like a routine speech made to just any university. It was free from the urgency and predicament of an extraordinary situation which many perceive to foretell a fundamental shift in the contours of our polity. But his polite platitudes before a sceptical audience may have a profound impact, for such utterances signify a reaffirmation of shared normative principles.

Nehru had flagged some basic ideological and political issues. Mr. Modi treated them as settled and, therefore, no longer relevant. Mr. Modi's speech was an improvement on, and a departure from, Nehruvian concerns. Unlike Nehru, he credited AMU for playing a sterling role in the freedom struggle – sometimes rewriting of history and amnesia can be socially therapeutic too.

There was a shift from Nehruvian candour to courteous commendation. The statements that "jo desh ka hai wo har deshwasi ka hai" (that which is the country's belongs to every citizen), and that "no one should be left behind because of his religion" were made to reassure the audience that no one needed to worry about their constitutional rights. Coming as they did after the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register of Citizens, they renewed Nehru's assurance that "you are as much flesh and blood of India as anyone else..."

Mr. Modi might have said, "Society mein siyasat ke ilawa bhi doosre masle hain" (society has many other concerns beside politics), to invoke rising above politics in matters of national importance. Muslims would do themselves a favour by focusing on social upliftment rather than the politics of identity which is divisive in spirit. For this they need to define their relationship with the country in cultural, not political, terms.

All the right words that needed to be spoken have been spoken. Their loyal translation into action would depend on absolute congruence between the intent of the message and actual decoding of the same by the intended audience.

Najmul Hoda is an IPS officer. Views are personal

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

Due process is not partisan politics

The media must ask questions on whether due diligence was followed in approving the COVID-19 vaccines



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

Media scholars have systematically documented the perils of this false equivalence. V. Kurup, a reader, wrote: "There is a compelling reason for squeezing the approval process as we cannot afford to have a second lockdown like Europe. Evaluation of any vaccine will take years if we want to satisfy the arguments of these experts. We have entrusted the task to an expert group and they are giving their approval after weighing the pros and cons of fast-tracking the evaluation process and the experience of other nations. It is not fair to cast aspersions on their decisions. Mr. Prasad's statement that India has 'squandered an opportunity to build trust in vaccines' is not logical."

Questions in public interest

The key question is not about quick roll-out of vaccines but finding an effective vaccine with proven efficacy to contain the pandemic. Everyone agrees that we cannot afford a second lockdown. There are many disturbing questions about the roll-out plan announced by the Government of India. The regulatory authority for medical products, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), on January 2, gave "restricted emergency approval" to two vaccines – Covishield, manufactured by Serum Institute of India with technology transfer from Oxford University-AstraZeneca, and Covaxin, developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research and the National Institute of Virology.

Covishield has been approved without waiting for the results of the ongoing Phase-III trials that are taking place in India. Many health experts feel that the approval for this vaccine, based on the Phase-III trials in the U.K. and Brazil, without establishing bio-equivalence in India, may be permitted for emergency use. But they are worried about the short-circuiting of the process for Covaxin. Experts point out that the CDSCO's statement clearly indicates that approval was granted based on Phase-I and Phase-II data on safety and immune response, but without any efficacy data from Phase-III trials.

Newspapers, which are mandated to articulate public good, should raise questions about due process and due diligence when it comes to providing vaccines to control a pandemic that has taken a massive toll on lives and livelihoods everywhere. Not doing so would amount to dereliction of duty.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

The front seat in electric mobility

The lithium and cobalt industry are likely to grow domestically to support the switch to electric vehicles

SYED ALI

The progression to electric vehicles is important for India because such vehicles are sustainable and profitable in the long term. Reducing dependence on crude oil will save the government money, reduce carbon emissions, and build domestic energy independence. Besides being an economically and environmentally viable option, India's transition to electric vehicles will allow us to fine-tune our infrastructure. This will also influence India's foreign policy as our energy security dependence will shift from West Asia to Latin America. India imported 228.6 MT of crude oil worth \$120 billion in 2018-19, which made it the third-largest oil importer in the world in terms of value.

Shift to electric vehicles

In order to reduce dependence on crude, the government has drafted policies that may act as catalysts in propelling the acceptance of electric vehicles. Under the 'Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles' and its updated (Fame 2) version, the government has allocated \$1.3 billion in incentives for electric buses, three-wheelers and four-wheelers to be used for commercial purposes till 2022, and earmarked another \$135 million for charging stations. Besides these incentives, a proposal for a \$4.6 billion subsidy for battery makers has also been proposed by the NITI Aayog. These policies are embedded with the vision to have 30% electric vehicles plying the roads by 2030. In September 2019, Japanese automobile major Suzuki Motor formed a consortium with Japanese automotive component manufacturer Denso and multinational conglomerate Toshiba to set up a manufacturing unit in Gujarat to venture into the production of lithium-ion batteries and electrodes.

Developing domestic battery manufacturing capacity may fundamentally change India's relationship with resource-rich Latin America as the government plans to buy overseas lithium reserves. Latin America's famous lithium triangle that encompasses lithium deposits under the salt flats of northwest Argentina, northern Chile, and southwest Bolí-

via holds about 80% of the explored lithium of the world. In Latin America, most of the production comes from Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia.

Scouting for mineral assets

In 2019, India's National Aluminum Company (NALCO), Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) and Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd (MECL) formally signed a joint venture agreement to form Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) to scout for strategic mineral assets like lithium and cobalt abroad for commercial use and for supplying to meet the domestic requirement for battery manufacturers. At present, India's lithium-ion battery demand is fulfilled by imports from China, Vietnam, and Hong Kong. In the last two years, India has had a growing appetite for lithium-ion batteries, and so, lithium imports have tripled from \$384 mn to \$1.2 bn. Notably, the government has intercepted this growing demand from its incipience. With its policy intervention to support battery manufacturers by supplying lithium and cobalt, this industry is more likely to grow domestically to support India's goal to switch to electric mobility.

Interestingly, lithium is also used as a drug to treat bipolar disorder and is soon becoming the metal to treat a world polluted by excessive carbon emissions. Currently, India's biggest trading partners in Latin America are Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela, and majority of trade is concentrated on crude oil which includes 14%-20% of India's total crude oil imports.

However, this may soon shift to lithium and cobalt. The Indian government's initiation to take the front seat in electric mobility and preemptive action to send a high-level delegation to have a precise understanding of the availability of lithium and possibilities of joint ventures will supply domestic markets and drive international markets. Most importantly, this will be a long-term solution to clean our cities, build new markets, and skill people for new jobs towards an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

Syed Ali is an independent analyst on India-Latin America affairs. Twitter: @Alinyst

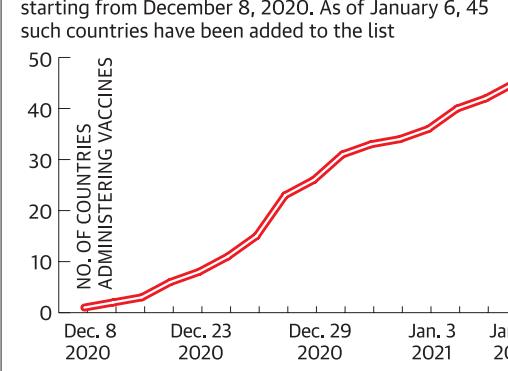
DATA POINT

Calling the shots

1. Vaccine policy | The table classifies countries based on which of the three groups - essential workers, the elderly, and clinically vulnerable - were chosen to receive the vaccine first. While in Singapore, vaccination is available for only one group, in India, all three groups have been chosen. In the UAE, select members outside the three groups are also eligible

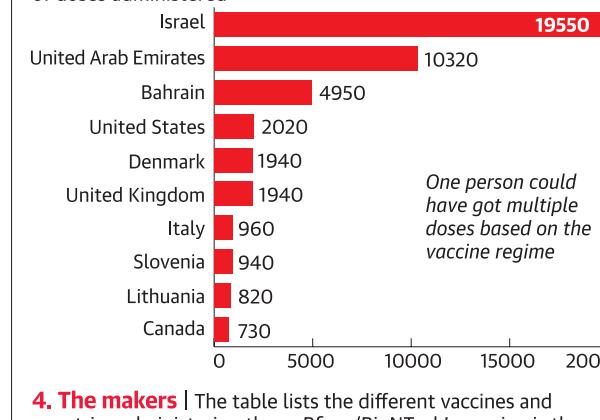
Policy	Countries
One	Argentina, Costa Rica, Cyprus, France, Hungary, Norway, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Sweden
Two	Belgium, Belarus, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Guinea, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Malta, Oman, Poland, Qatar, U.S.
Three	Canada, U.K., Israel, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, India*
Three+	United Arab Emirates
Universal	Bahrain

2. Steady climb | The chart shows the number of countries where at least one person was vaccinated, starting from December 8, 2020. As of January 6, 45 such countries have been added to the list



At least 45 countries have begun administering COVID-19 vaccines as of January 6, a rapid rise from only eight nations a fortnight ago. While most of the nations that began vaccination drives have prioritised front-line workers, many have included the elderly and clinically vulnerable groups. Bahrain has adopted a universal vaccination policy. After Israel and the UAE, Bahrain has administered the highest number of doses relative to its population. The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine is the most popular among the list of approved candidates. By **The Hindu Data Team**

3. Doses administered | The chart depicts the number of vaccine doses administered per 1 lakh people in a country. The graph does not represent the number of people, but the number of doses administered



4. The makers | The table lists the different vaccines and countries administering them. Pfizer/BioNTech's vaccine is the most widely administered, with more than 30 countries using it. India will be the second country after the U.K. to use the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, produced here as Covishield

Vaccine	Countries
CNGB	China
Moderna	U.S., Canada
Pfizer/BioNTech	U.S., U.K., Israel, Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Chile, Mexico, Oman, Saudi Arabia and more
Sinopharm	Bahrain, UAE
Sinovac	China
Sputnik V	Argentina, Russia
Oxford-AstraZeneca	U.K.

*According to the Centre, vaccination will begin on Jan. 16 | Source: Policy data sourced from Oxford Coronavirus Government Response Tracker; Our World in Data



The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 11, 1971

Indo-UK ties must be on realistic basis

The Prime Ministers of India and the United Kingdom have emphasised the significant expansion of Indo-British co-operation since Independence. Speaking at a lunch given in honour of the British Prime Minister, Mr. Heath, here [New Delhi] to-day [January 10], Mrs. Indira Gandhi said that in some sectors of India's economy the progress had been considerably helped by Britain's enlightened and understanding assistance. The lunch, which was held in the gardens of Rashtrapati Bhavan was attended among others by Lord Hailsham, Lord Chancellor of UK. She said it was a good time for Mr. Heath to visit India. "You will see how your country has influenced many aspects of our national life. You are here on the eve of our fifth general elections, when, apart from other hectic activities, there is the usual forecasting of results in the press, an exercise in which I believe you have little confidence." Referring to the relations between the two countries, Mrs. Gandhi said, "Our relations with your country are extensive and involved and have been able to survive because they have constantly evolved and adjusted to changed circumstances. As you yourself said yesterday, our relations can be meaningful only so long as they are relevant to the contemporary situation and pass the test of public evaluation."

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 11, 1921

Jingo fury

From our Special Correspondent in Bristol, January 7: The opposition to Lord Reading's appointment is practically dead. It emanates from anti-Jewish and military circles which fear Lord Reading with his legal and judicial experience would rule India constitutionally and not with an iron hand as they desire. Major-General Pilcher wrote in yesterday's "Morning Post" that Lord Reading's appointment would be disastrous to India. Quoting the "Times" suggestion that Lord Reading would temper justice with extreme clemency and forbearance even under provocation the "Morning Post" emphasised the British went to India as conquerors, remained as Sashis and cannot abide as servants. That explains in a nutshell the militarist and Imperialist attitude towards Indians. As Lord Reading's appointment will not displease the city I don't believe the anti-Jew and militarist opposition will sway the Premier. Some doubt is expressed as to the ability of Lord Reading's health to bear the Indian climate.

FROM PAGE ONE

Q3 private investment in manufacturing up

Overall fresh project expenditure between April and December 2020 remained 26.1% lower than the same period a year ago, indicating that "we are still far away from the normal project (project expenditure) activities registered in the pre-COVID 19 period," the firm's latest "Survey of Project Investments in India" noted.

With interest rates expected to remain low and COVID-19 vaccination to gain traction in Q4/FY21, Projects Today expects project activities to return to normalcy by the first quarter of 2021-22.

A total of 2,085 projects, entailing investments of ₹2,76,482.7 crore, were announced in the third quarter of 2020-21, as against 2,326 projects worth ₹2,50,697.5 crore between July-September 2020.

While manufacturing sector investments surged 102.2% in Q3 over Q2, utilities (11.25%) and mining (1.12%) were the others to record growth. Investments in electricity projects collapsed by 35.2% over the previous quarter, and fell by a sharper 66.9% in irrigation.

Maharashtra received the highest investment projects in Q3, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. Tamil

Nadu, came in a close fourth with 156 projects worth over ₹24,100 crore in Q3.

New project investment intentions from the government declined by 7.21% in terms of project expenditure and 19.32% in terms of projects, compared to the previous quarter.

"Within this segment, the fall was steeper at the State government level. After recording a steep fall of 175.1% increase in fresh investment intentions in Q2, the segment registered a steep fall of 24.5% in Q3. The fall in revenues has been cited as one of the main reasons forcing State-controlled agencies to prune investment intentions," the report said, adding that infrastructure spending, critical for reviving growth, has suffered.

The number of project investments announced by the Centre fell from 473 in Q2 to 381 in Q3, but the outlay on the projects rose 22.8% quarter-on-quarter from ₹54,900-odd crore in Q2 to ₹67,475 crore in Q3.

Projects Today also recorded improvements in the implementation ratio of existing projects, and saw more projects shifting from the drawing board to the execution stage between October and December 2020.

Protesters ransack venue of Haryana CM's meeting

Hundreds of agitating farmers, waving black flags against the Centre's agriculture sector laws, were stopped by the police, which had erected barricades at all entry points to the village. The protesters, however, broke through the barricades and reached the venue.

"There was no clash with farmers. To maintain the law-and-order situation, we had to use water cannons and tear gas after the agitators broke the barricades that were erected on roads leading to the event site," Ganga Ram Punia, Superintendent of Police, Karnal, told *The Hindu*.

"So far, no case has been

registered against anyone," he said.

'Farmers defamed'

Mr. Lal, condemning the episode, said the incident took place at the behest of people who were trying to use farmers for their vested interests.

"A video of Gurram Singh Chaduni (president of the Bharatiya Kisan Union) had been circulating in which he could be heard instigating farmers against today's event and they stand exposed now. Such people are defaming farmers. Farmers don't have such nature or temperament," Mr. Yediyurappa said at a press conference in Chandigarh.

The much-awaited expansion of the Karnataka Cabinet would take place on January 13, and the list of seven legislators to be inducted would be released on Monday, Chief Minister Amit Shah, party general secretary Arun Singh in New Delhi.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

All clear: B.S. Yediyurappa with BJP national president J. P. Nadda, Home Minister Amit Shah and party general secretary Arun Singh in New Delhi. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

BJP president J.P. Nadda and BJP general secretary in charge of Karnataka Arun Singh were also present when Mr. Yediyurappa met Mr. Shah at the latter's residence.

The sudden visit of Mr. Yediyurappa, accompanied by his son B.Y. Vijayendra, to Delhi had raised eyebrows in the political circles as it had come close on the heels of the Karnataka High Court

not providing relief to the Chief Minister in denotification cases, and amid the rising dissent among legislators over his style of functioning.

There was speculation that the issue of leadership change could be broached at the meeting. Indeed, BJP leaders, who are identified with the anti-Yediyurappa camp, continued to claim that leadership issue was also discussed in Delhi.

New officer to probe POCSO case in Kerala

STAFF REPORTER

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A.P. HC ruling on elections likely today

State opposes panchayat poll schedule citing pandemic, vaccination drive

STAFF REPORTER

VIJAYAWADA

Election Commissioner (SEC) N. Ramesh Kumar's decision to conduct elections to the gram panchayats on February 5, 9, 13 and 17.

Chief Secretary Adityanath Das had earlier made the government's stand clear on the dangers involved in conducting the elections in February.

The government's argument had been that the COVID-19 pandemic continued

to pose a serious threat and the election schedule clashed with the vaccination drive that was round the corner.

In an affidavit submitted to the court in December, the government had stated that though the number of COVID-19 cases had come down drastically, the severity of the threat to lives could not be overlooked due to the likelihood of a second wave

of the pandemic between December and March.

The surge of the second wave was imminent and the situation in Andhra Pradesh was incomparable with that of other States, it said.

In his election proceedings, Mr. Ramesh Kumar said the second wave and a winter spike cited by the government as the reasons for postponing the elections did not materialise.

Organisers of cockfights warned of penal action

STAFF REPORTER

CHITTOR

Chittor Superintendent of Police S. Senthil Kumar on Sunday warned that cases would be booked against those organising and taking part in rooster fights and bull races under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and in gambling under the A.P. Gaming Act.

He warned that those who give their farmland and residential and commercial premises for holding the events would be liable for legal ac-

tion. The SP asked the personnel in Madanapalle, Palamaner, Chittoor and Puttur sub-divisions to conduct regular searches to identify any violation.

Speaking to mediapersons here, the SP said that special parties would be sent to the villages known for hosting the events.

Mr. Kumar also urged the public to confine Sankranti festivities to their households and avoid congregations in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Telangana may face a shortfall in registration revenue

At 6.12 lakh, the number of registrations is less than a third of the target

M. RAJEEV
HYDERABAD

The Telangana government is likely to face an uphill task in achieving the targeted ₹10,000 crore through the Registration and Stamps Department, notwithstanding the resumption of registration of non-agricultural lands more than a month ago.

The revenue from the Registration and Stamps Department stood at ₹2,414.96 crore by the end of December and the number of documents registered during the period was around 6.12 lakh.

This is less than a third of the target set for the current fiscal and less than half the revenue achieved during the corresponding period in last financial year.

Hit by the pandemic

Revenue through registrations is ₹2,414 cr, less than one-third of estimated ₹10,000 cr.

Over ₹1,500 cr. revenue through registrations till August-end

Registrations stopped from September 8 after passage of Bills on reforms in Revenue administration

Number of registered documents till December-end is 6.12 lakh

12.66 lakh documents registered till December-end the last fiscal

Revenue worst hit in April with only ₹21.01 cr. as compared to ₹524.95 cr. in April the previous fiscal

Revenue through registrations picks up in December reaching ₹583 cr.

achieved during the next three months left for the completion of the financial year. However, the coronavirus pandemic played spoilsport bringing down the quantum of registrations to a large extent.

Reforms and after

Interestingly, the State witnessed revenue of over ₹1,300 crore during the months of June (₹457 crore), July (₹440.59 crore) and August (₹455 crore) in spite of the lockdown restrictions.

There was a downturn in registrations as expected after the government brought in major reforms in the Revenue Department including introduction of Dharani, a one-stop portal for land transactions.

Treasure hunters' gang busted, 11 held

A.P. police searching for 2 more men

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR

The Anantapur police, who have tightened vigil at places of worship following the reports of desecration of idols elsewhere in Andhra Pradesh, have busted a gang of treasure hunters and arrested 11 persons. Two more men are on the run.



The articles seized from the gang in Anantapur on Sunday. ■ R.V.S. PRASAD

perintendent of Police B. Satya Yesu Babu told the media here on Sunday.

"The gang had heard from the elderly in their families that many had searched for treasure at that place. Pots filled with precious jewels were believed to have been hidden there. The gang conducted a survey for three days after a cattle-rearer told them about the spot and then they started digging," he said.

Cabinet expansion on Jan. 13, says Yediyurappa

Decision comes after he meets leaders in Delhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU



All clear: B.S. Yediyurappa with BJP national president J. P. Nadda, Home Minister Amit Shah and party general secretary Arun Singh in New Delhi. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Wayanad forest officer injured in tiger attack

It had killed three domestic animals

STAFF REPORTER

KALPATTI

A Range Forest Officer (RFO) who was on duty at Kolavally, near Pulpally, on the Kerala-Karnataka border was attacked by a tiger on Sunday afternoon.



Range Forest Officer T. Sasikumar at a hospital in Meppadi in Wayanad.

T. Sasikumar, 55, RFO, Chethalayat forest range of the South Wayanad forest division, came under attack around 2.30 p.m. at a private plantation at Kolavally while a Forest Department team led by him was on a search operation for the tiger. He has been hospitalised with serious injuries on his left shoulder.

Three months ago, Mr. Sasikumar had been injured in a tiger attack at Anappara, near Pulpally.

Panic in villages

The animal had triggered panic among villagers at Seetha Mount, Parakkaval.

IN BRIEF



'Chandanakkudam' celebrated sans frenzy

KOTTAYAM Keeping with tradition, the unique bonhomie between Lord Ayyappa and his trusted Muslim lieutenant Vavar was relived on Sunday at Erumeli here in Kerala, though on a smaller scale. Marking the final phase of this edition of the annual Sabarimala pilgrimage season, the 'Chandanakkudam' celebrations were held at the Nainar mosque.

Welfare Party to contest Kerala poll on its own

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM The Welfare Party of India (WPI), the political arm of the Jamaat-e-Islami, said the party would have no truck with the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) in the Kerala Assembly poll. WPI State president Hameed Vaniyambalam said the WPI had worked to the advantage of the UDF in the local body polls. However, the Congress had forsaken the understanding despite having benefited from the compact. WPI would contest the poll alone, he said.

Won't interfere in Youth Congress poll: PCC chief

BENGALURU There will be no interference in the election to select the Youth Congress office-bearers and the process should throw up good leaders capable of organising the party, Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president D.K. Shivakumar said here on Sunday. "I will not interfere, and will let the elections be transparent," he told presspersons.

Unseasonal rain showers woes on Karnataka farmers

STAFF REPORTER

VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court is likely to pass a ruling on Monday on the State government's plea against holding of local body elections.

The matter is listed to be heard by Justice M. Ganga Rao.

The government filed a petition on January 9 taking strong objection to State

Commissioner (SEC) N. Ramesh Kumar's decision to conduct elections to the gram panchayats on February 5, 9, 13 and 17.

Chief Secretary Adityanath Das had earlier made the government's stand clear on the dangers involved in conducting the elections in February.

The government's argument had been that the COVID-19 pandemic continued

to pose a serious threat and the election schedule clashed with the vaccination drive that was round the corner.

In an affidavit submitted to the court in December, the government had stated that though the number of COVID-19 cases had come down drastically, the severity of the threat to lives could not be overlooked due to the likelihood of a second wave

of the pandemic between December and March.

The surge of the second wave was imminent and the situation in Andhra Pradesh was incomparable with that of other States, it said.

In his election proceedings, Mr. Ramesh Kumar said the second wave and a winter spike cited by the government as the reasons for postponing the elections did not materialise.



In distress: A.B. Krishne Gowda picking up coffee beans that fell in the recent rain in Mudigere taluk. ■ SATHISH GT

Coffee, paddy and arecanut growers badly hit

SATHISH G.T.
KOTTIGEHARA

"My year-long hard work has gone in vain," says A.B. Krishne Gowda from Karnataka's Chikkmagalur district, as he picks coffee berries that dropped from the trees following the unseasonal rain.

The issue turned murkier on Sunday when Thiruvananthapuram Child Welfare Committee (CWC) chairperson N. Sunanda alleged lapses on the part of the police in including her in the First Information Report registered on December 18, as the informant in the case. She said the CWC had neither provided any information nor directed the police to investigate the one's income statement.

Despite a clear legislative mandate to the contrary, Section 139AA of the Income Tax Act, 1961, made it compulsory to ensure that PAN card is linked with one's Aadhaar details, the petition said.

The Kadakkavoor police refuted the CWC chairperson's comments and stuck to its stance.

in Mudigere have already gone through difficult times in last two years. The area witnessed heavy rains and landslides in 2019 and 2020.

Bhaktesh, a paddy grower, had spread the harvested paddy on the ground for drying a week ago. "A day after, rain started," he said. He was expecting a yield of at least 15 quintals. "I will hardly get three-four

Chinese build-up at LAC clearly visible, says Ladakh councillor

Locals have seen several Chinese tents, bunkers and vehicles near border villages

VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

Konchok Stanzin, a councillor from Chushul in Eastern Ladakh, says Chinese infrastructure that could not be seen from border villages earlier is now clearly visible as China continues to hold positions in areas within India's perception of the Line of Actual Control.

In an interview to *The Hindu*, Mr. Stanzin said residents had witnessed a large number of Chinese tents, bunkers and vehicles very close to the border villages in Chushul, Merak and Khakted, in a clear departure from the past.

Pastures cut-off

Mr. Stanzin said nomads who lived in villages close to Pangong Tso (lake), one of the multiple locations where Indian and Chinese troops have been engaged in a stand-off since April-May 2020, have not been able to access the winter grazing grounds this year due to heavy troop deployment.

Mr. Stanzin, who won as an independent in the recently concluded Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council election, is part of a delegation from the Union Territory that has been camping in Delhi for the past one week to get their various demands heard by the Union government. They have met Union Home



Clear danger: Chinese tents in South Pangong, clicked by local people in Chushul district in December 2020.

Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Ladakh was declared a Union Territory without legislature after the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir was downgraded and bifurcated into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019 by Parliament.

"At Black Top in South Pangong, where in 2018, only a camera existed on the Chinese side, today we regularly see Chinese vehicles and tents. While in other areas where they could reach the top in their vehicles, we cannot even take our horses and porters due to unfavourable terrain," Mr.

the south bank of Pangong lake. Mr. Stanzin said China had been nibbling away Indian territory since May 2018.

"As a strategy, the Chinese encourage their nomads and provide facilities so that they can come with their livestock and mark the territory as their own. On our side, we have to take several clearances, have to show our I-cards, our livestock are counted, even then sometimes we are not permitted," he said. He had requested the Defence Minister to permit the nomads to go in the Finger area for winter grazing.

"The months of December, January and February are crucial for livestock. We applied for permission for winter grazing more than a month ago. The area for winter grazing has anyway shrunk due to heavy troop deployment," he said.

Referring to poor communication facilities, Mr. Stanzin said the border villages got only 2G mobile connectivity and power supply from solar panels for not more than two or three hours a day.

"The porters who helped the Army have not been paid for two or three months. The border population considers themselves soldiers without uniforms. We have taken up the issue with the Defence Minister," he said.

Globalisation in the time of a pandemic

COVID-19 might have brought the world to its knees, but nations have found a way to strike back and emerge from what might have been one of the biggest crises in recent times



Pratik Nayak
Top Unacademy Educator

2020).² However, not everything is dismal; trade of medical goods has increased. With the manufacturing of COVID-19 vaccines, Indian pharma export may cross \$25 billion.³

Free flow of capital: The pandemic has had a profound impact on the movement of capital. Cross-border movement was halted due to the lockdown. This lack of capital movement resulted in the depreciation of the Rupee. Despite the initial hesitation about reviving the global economy, data shows that things might be looking up. With investors looking towards emerging markets the FPI and FDI in India has gone up. The Government's reforms to attract investors seem to be working. FDI between April to September 2020, showed a 15% growth.⁴

Transfer of technology: COVID-19 has widened the gap between nations with technological advancements and those lacking in it. Transfer of goods, particularly capital goods has been impacted. This was inherently felt in the field of modern medical equipment which is required to treat coronavirus. Nevertheless, technology such as big data and artificial intelligence, stepped in to gauge the spread of the infection in China and ways to prevent it. Data sharing facilitated the process



of developing a vaccine and mapping the mutation of the virus.

Free movement of people: Pre COVID-19, mass movement used to take place in the form of business, tourism and travel. The restrictions imposed due to the contagious nature of the virus has crippled the idea of globalisation. In the first few months of the crisis the number of international travellers reduced to 56%.⁵

A single international arrival contributes in multiple ways by creating demand in the local market and local vendors sell their services resulting in an increase of foreign exchange. Countries dependent on tourism have taken a beating due to the restrictions put in place.

While the pandemic might have left some deep scars

on the world economy, joint efforts by various nations has also enabled them to emerge from the crisis. Right from sharing data, to the development of a vaccine, intergovernmental cooperation has been successful.

Footnotes: 1. World Trade Organization, 2020; 2&3. The Hindustan Business Line, 2020; 4. PIB Delhi, 2020; 5. UNWTO, 2020

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Scan the code to watch the free live class on 'COVID-19 & Globalisation – Impact & Challenges' on Jan 12 at 9 PM. Use code UPSCSE.

Security of Fadnavis, Raj Thackeray scaled down

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

The Uddhav Thackeray government in Maharashtra has downgraded the security cover of a number of prominent Opposition leaders, including BJP Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Devendra Fadnavis and his family, former Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray.

It has also withdrawn the security cover of BJP State president Chandrakant Patel. BJP leaders condemned the decision, terming it "vendetta politics".

According to a government notification, Mr. Fadnavis would now get a 'Y-plus security with escort' instead of his earlier 'Z-plus' cover, which included a bulletproof vehicle.

The security cover for MNS chief Raj Thackeray was downgraded from 'Z' to 'Y-plus with escort'.

Farmers to set fire to law copies

They say they will express their anger and pain on Lohri at the Singhu border

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

Farmers will express their anger and pain by burning copies of the three new farm laws during Lohri at the protest site at the Singhu border.

On Sunday, protesters said the death of the farmer Amarinder Singh would not go in vain, and they would intensify their agitation. Before consuming a poisonous substance at the protest site, Amarinder had told friends that he was forced to take this step because the government had refused to listen to their demands.

"The death of more than 60 farmers during the farmers' protest won't go in vain, and we will continue to fight for our rights. The government is testing the patience of farmers by organising meetings that never bring any result," Jas Kiran, a farmer, said.

Sukhvinder Singh, who walked to the protest site from his native village in Ludhiana, said that after go-



Strong pitch: Ex-servicemen raising slogans during a demonstration against the farm laws in New Delhi on Sunday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

ing through reports on social media he took leave from his office and planned to join the protest.

"During my three-day journey, I met a lot of farmers and their families who were working in the fields and all of them want these farm laws rolled back. It feels good that a lot of people who are not farmers have also come here in support," Mr. Singh said.

Speakers on the stage, before starting their address, observed a two-minute silence in respect for the farmers who died during the protest.

Cries of 'Sadda Haq, Aithe Rakhi' and 'Jo Bole So Nihal' echoed at the protest site. A request was made from the stage to all speakers and protesters to be restrained in the words they use in public platform.

"Attempts have been made to defame the protest through references like Khalistani or terrorist, but the government failed miserably. We will hold a parade on Rajpath on January 26. The New Year will surely bring new hope for farmers. We request everyone to come and join the protest and contribute two days of your life for the farmers," said Lakhwinder Pal, a farmer.

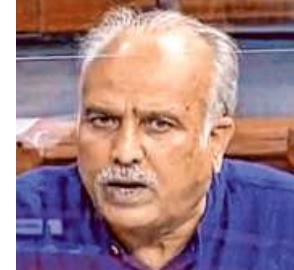
He said the national-level trade bodies, which welcomed the Jammu and Kashmir industrial policy, must

'No industrial policy will work without peace effort'

NC MP calls for peace initiative to address political aspirations

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Senior National Conference leader and Member of Parliament Hasnain Masoodi on Sunday said "no policy would fetch any result without taking into cognisance political aspirations" of people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, while referring to recently introduced ₹28,400-crore industrial policy in Jammu and Kash-



Hasnain Masoodi

not changed anything on the ground."

He said the alienation, despite such announcements, had been ever increasing in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The unconstitutional measures of August 5, 2019, nothing less than a misadventure, have further widened the gulf. Hundreds of lives have been lost in about a hundred encounters, quite a few in urban areas of Srinagar and Jammu. The preventive detention law, an anathema to the Constitution, continues to be invoked with impunity and young and old detained hundreds of miles away from their homes," Mr. Masoodi said.

He asked the government to "undo the August 5, 2019 decisions, restore autonomy provided under the Delhi Agreement 1952, initiate dialogue with all the stakeholders for lasting peace."

Experts are in favour of simultaneous elections: BJP

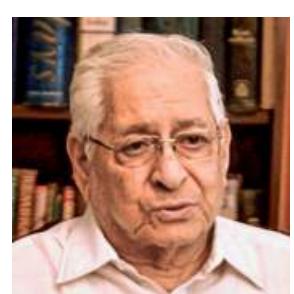
Legal luminaries say the concept is not new to the country

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Sunday said legal luminaries Soli Sorabjee and Mahesh Jethmalani spoke in favour of holding simultaneous elections, during a webinar organised by the party.

In a statement, the BJP said the webinar on Sunday was part of a series of such discussions organised by the party after Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for "one nation, one election" in November 2020.

Mr. Sorabjee, a former Attorney-General, said: "I think simultaneous elections... to my mind is a good practice. The fact that it was abused in some cases is no reason for doing away with it... just check the abuse, not delay the provision. Simultaneous election was there be-



fore, wasn't it? Just because of political reasons, there was abuse... but the point is to check the abuse, don't delete the provision."

Former Lok Sabha Secretary-General Subhash C. Kashyap, who had contributed to the Law Commission's 2018 draft report on simultaneous elections, said there had been many committees and seminars on the need for concurrent elec-

Gyawali to discuss border dispute

Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli says Nepal wants 'equality-based friendship'

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Nepal wants "equality-based friendship" with India, Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli said on Sunday. Addressing an extraordinary session of the Upper House of Parliament, Mr. Oli said Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali would visit India on January 14 to discuss the dispute related to the border and several other issues. He maintained that dissolution of the Lower House, Pratinidhi Sabha, was necessary and that the government under his leadership would seek a fresh political mandate to ensure stability.

"We have made great progress in the arena of international relations. I want to be a real friend of India. Nepal wants equality-based friendship with India and take it to a new height..." Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali will travel to India on January 14 to discuss the issue related to our boundary, and

We have made great progress in the arena of international relations. I want to be a real friend of India. Nepal wants equality-based friendship with India and take it to a new height... K.P. SHARMA OLI, NEPAL PRIME MINISTER

several other matters as we want good bilateral prosperity in a sea of pain and agony. The new industrial policy would not fetch any result without taking into cognisance political aspirations of people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, while referring to recently introduced ₹28,400-crore industrial policy in Jammu and Kash-

He said there was a section in Nepal that attempted to overthrow his government and bring instability as they were votaries of the feudal system.

"They want to send their own children to St. Joseph's school in Darjeeling and to Oxford but do not want the boys and girls of poor Nepalese to be educated and become powerful. They continue to believe in the old feudal system as they do not want children of the economically disadvantaged people to become members of our Parliament."

The Pratinidhi Sabha was dissolved in a lawful manner and as per the laid down procedure, he said. He said the Opposition and sections of the media were organising big political rallies against the decision but they could not intimidate the Supreme Court which is deliberating on the writ petitions that challenged the December 20 decision.

Explosives defused in Poonch

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAMMU

Security forces defused explosives fitted to a two-wheeler in Poonch district of the Pir Panjal Valley on Sunday.

An official said an abandoned two-wheeler was spotted near the Pankha area in Mendhar. Later, a bomb disposal squad rushed to the area and the Mendhar-Gohlad road was closed.

"The security agencies successfully defused the locally made improvised explosive device," the police said.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan Army violated ceasefire agreement along the Line of Control in Rajouri and Poonch districts. Pakistan Army targeted the Indian positions in the Balakote area of Poonch district and the Nowshera area of Rajouri district," officials said.

There were no reports of any casualty.

West Bengal CM announces free vaccines

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

A fresh controversy erupted after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's letter to healthcare workers in the State – in which she said her government would provide the COVID-19 vaccine free of cost to the people – became available in the public domain. The BJP leadership alleged that the Trinamool Congress was trying to take credit for the vaccine roll-out.

"The State government will make the vaccine available free of cost to every person of the State," Ms. Banerjee said in the letter.

"Now that the center has announced free priority vaccination for 3 crore frontline workers across the country, Pishi [aunt, referring to Ms. Banerjee] is rushing to take credit," BJP IT cell chief and co-in-charge for West Bengal Amit Malviya tweeted.

Ministry meets State officials on CoWIN use

'Real-time capture of vaccination data is non-negotiable'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare held an online conference on Sunday with administrators from States and Union Territories on the CoWIN software, which forms the backbone of the last-mile COVID-19 vaccine administration.

The meeting was chaired by Ram Sewak Sharma, Chairman of the Empowered Group on Technology and Data Management to combat COVID-19 and a member of the national expert group on the vaccine administration of COVID-19.

Participants included State Principal Secretaries, Directors of the National Health Mission, State immunisation officers and senior officers of the Health Ministry.

All vaccine-related infor-



Work underway to construct a vaccine storage facility in Mumbai. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

mation on when beneficiaries were inoculated, their experiences and their schedules for subsequent doses had to be captured in "real time" and was "non-negotiable", it was stressed.

Aadhaar cards

Officials would have to ensure that there were "no proxies" at all, and all beneficiaries would have to be un-

iquely and undeniably identified. Beneficiaries would have to be sending in their Aadhaar numbers as well as their mobile numbers to access their vaccination-related communication.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the country would be gearing up for a roll-out from January 16. The first beneficiaries would be 3 crore healthcare workers and sanitation workers, followed by those above 50 years, and those younger with co-morbidities. The plan is to have 30 crore people inoculated by July. The government has approved, under emergency use, two vaccine candidates – Covishield and Covaxin. The former is based on the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine and the latter has been developed by the Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech.

We were in the dark, say volunteers

Covaxin test subjects in Bhopal assumed they were getting vaccine to prevent virus

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Several persons in Bhopal who had volunteered for Bharat Biotech's ongoing trial of Covaxin, one of the two COVID-19 vaccine candidates approved in India, have alleged that the medical managers of the trial did not inform them that they were test subjects.

At an online press conference on Sunday, the volunteers said they were led to believe that they were getting vaccines as part of a government vaccination drive and were also promised ₹750 each for participating.

The trial is being conducted at the People's Medical College (PMC), where on Friday there were reports that a 42-year-old volunteer, who had been part of the trial, had died. His post-mortem report, however, said the cause of death was "cardio-respiratory failure due to suspected poisoning". On Saturday, Bharat Biotech de-



Trial and error: A health worker administering the vaccine during a trial at the People's Medical College in Bhopal. ■ PTI

nied that his death was due to the vaccine. It is not known whether he got the actual vaccine and some a dummy shot.

Covaxin, inactivated SARS-CoV-2 virus repurposed as a vaccine, is being tested on 28,500 volunteers across the country.

1,700 subjects

At the PMC, 1,700 persons were recruited in the trial between November 28 and December 31. The trial was planned as a double-blind,

placebo-controlled trial in which some participants got the actual vaccine and some a dummy shot.

Mansingh Parikh, 70, a mason, said at the press conference that he was not aware of the nature of the trial and though he signed consent forms, he did not understand them fully.

"I had no illnesses. I was fine for two days after I got one shot but then fell very sick and was acutely breathless," he said.

32 cases booked, 17 arrested for GST fraud

Cases involve multiple bogus or non-existent entities allegedly found to be claiming input tax credits

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

At least 32 fresh cases were booked and 17 persons, including the managing director and accountant of a Chennai-based firm, have been arrested over the past two days for frauds related to the Goods and Services Tax (GST), Revenue Department sources said on Sunday.

These cases involve multiple bogus or non-existent entities across the country, allegedly found to be claiming input tax credits (ITCs) worth at least ₹384 crore, for supplies of goods ranging from medicines to coal and cement, and even services such as providing manpower.

In Chennai, the Director-



The widening probe into GST evasion and fraud has now led to 215 arrests.

rate General of GST Intelligence (DGII) zonal unit arrested M. Ashokan, managing director of Sri-marg Human Resource Pvt. Ltd., along with the firm's accountant, for availing and passing on fraudulent ITCs of ₹22 crore on fake invoices of ₹20 crore for manpower services.

"This case is similar to that of food delivery chain Swiggy and that of Instakart, a subsidiary of e-commerce firm Flipkart," a Revenue official said, referring to a probe that found that both firms allegedly used fake invoices for manpower supplies from non-existent firms.

Swiggy has recently deposited ₹27.5 crore with the tax authorities, the amount authorities alleged that the firm had availed fraudulently as ITC. The Instakart case similarly involves ₹21 crore of credits.

In Gujarat, 14 firms have been booked, eight of which were found to be non-existent, but had availed or utilized

passing of ITC to the tune of ₹113 crore through fake invoices. Cases were filed against five firms in Bengaluru, while four firms were booked in Indore for incorrectly passing credits worth ₹6.82 crore to soyabean traders.

Fake invoices

Three persons were arrested and cases filed against their firms on the basis of intelligence received from the Maharashtra GST Department for fraudulent availing of ITC and inter-State GST refund of ₹33 crore, using fake invoices for footwear.

GST fraud amounting to ₹164 crore has been unearthed in two new cases detected in Delhi. "A case of fraudulent availing and

passing of ITC to the tune of ₹150 crore was detected at a firm dealing in LED TVs and scrap, and its director was arrested for setting up over 12 bogus firms," the source said.

The widening probe into GST evasion and fraud, for which the Income Tax Department has also been roped in along with other agencies, over the past two months has now led to 215 persons' arrest, including six chartered accountants, a company secretary and two women.

In all, 2,200 cases have been booked after busting over 6,600 fake GSTIN (GST Identification Number) entities. Over ₹700 crore has been recovered so far, the official said.

Army official led operation with 'eye on ₹20 lakh prize money'

They destroyed evidence of the crime, says chargesheet

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Army Captain Bhoopinder Singh, alias Major Basheer Khan, of the 62 Rashtriya Rifles, had taken a lead in engaging the three "militants", who turned out to be civilians later, in a "staged" gunfight in Shopian in July 2020, "with an eye on the prize money of ₹20 lakh".

According to the police chargesheet, four out of the 75 witnesses in the case in their statements recalled how the Captain "initiated a few bursts of live ammunition even before a cordon was laid". The others joined him very late in engaging the

suspected militants.

Two civilians – Tabish Ahmad, a resident of Shopian, and Bilal Ahmad, a resident of Pulwama – who acted as sources for the Army in providing the tip-off, were also part of the operation and provided a cover to the Captain, the chargesheet said.

"They [Captain and two civilians] purposefully destroyed evidence of real crime that they have committed and also have been purposefully projecting false information as part of a criminal conspiracy hatched between them with motive to grab prize money of ₹20 lakh," the chargesheet said.

Two flight surgeons to train in Russia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Two flight surgeons will soon fly to Russia where they will get a hands-on experience in space medicine from their Russian counterparts for the Gaganyaan mission, an Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) official said on Sunday. The flight surgeons are doctors from the Indian Air Force (IAF) who have specialised in aerospace medicine.

Flight surgeons are responsible for the astronauts' health before, during and after a flight. The flight surgeons will also get to train with the prospective astronauts, the official said. The four test pilots of the IAF, chosen for India's first manned mission to space, have been undergoing training at the Yu. A. Gagarin Research and Test Cosmonaut Training Centre near Moscow since February last year.

Named after Yuri Gagarin, the first human to journey into outer space, the centre was built to support manned space programmes, space exploration activities, space engineering, cosmonauts' training as well as ensuring their safety in space, and providing post-flight rehabilitation programmes for cosmonauts. The training of the Indian astronauts has been affected due to the COVID-19-induced lockdown in Russia, and they are expected to be back in the country by March.

The flight surgeons will also travel to France for training. "The French module of the space surgeons training will be more theoretical," the official added.

France has a well-established mechanism for space medicine.

Slippery slope



Long and winding road: Trucks moving slowly on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway after snowfall at Qazigund in south Kashmir on Sunday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Hospital fire: Uddhav warns of stern action

CM meets the parents of the victims

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

In the wake of the horrific tragedy in which 10 newborn babies died in a hospital fire at Bhandara district in Maharashtra, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said orders had been given for conducting a safety and fire audit of all government hospitals across the State.

Mr. Thackeray visited Bhandara and met the grief-stricken parents who lost their babies in the accident, which occurred on Saturday. He also spoke with hospital and health officials in the district.

Promising that stern action would be taken against those found guilty of negligence, Mr. Thackeray said a committee had been formed

by the administration to conduct a comprehensive probe into the tragedy.

"I approached the parents of the deceased children with folded hands... I have no words to console them... Certainly, there will be an inquiry. The probe we have announced will also check if the fire was indeed an accident or a cause of ignoring an earlier safety report," Mr. Thackeray said.

The committee would be headed by the Divisional Commissioner and would also include a senior member of the Fire Department of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), Mr. Thackeray said.

Arunachal harbours a vanadium source

GSI specialist says it's the first report of a primary deposit of the metal in India

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Arunachal Pradesh, considered a sleeping hydropower giant, is likely to become India's prime producer of vanadium, a high-value metal used in strengthening steel and titanium.

Exploration being carried out by the Geological Survey of India (GSI) has placed the eastern Himalayan State on the vanadium map of the country, and geologists are confident of identifying a deposit soon. India is a significant consumer of vanadium, but is not a primary producer of the strategic metal. It is recovered as a by-product from the slag collected from the processing of vanadiferous magnetite ores (iron ore), GSI officials said.



Vanadium is a high-value metal used in strengthening steel and titanium.

According to data provided by the GSI, India consumed 4% of about 84,000 tonnes of vanadium produced across the globe in 2017. China, which produces 57% of the world's vanadium, consumed 44% of the metal. "We found promising concentrations of vanadium

in the palaeo-proterozoic carbonaceous phyllite rocks in the Depo and Tamang areas of Papum Pare district in Arunachal Pradesh. This was the first report of a primary deposit of vanadium in India, with an average grade of 0.76% V2O5 [vanadium pentoxide]," a GSI specialist said.

Vanadium mineralisation in Arunachal Pradesh is geologically similar to the "stone coal" vanadium deposits of China hosted in carbonaceous shale. This high vanadium content is associated with graphite, with a fixed carbon content of up to 16%.

Geologists discovered two bands of about 7-metre thick carbonaceous phyllite for a length of more than 6 km in the Depo area. This prompt-

ed the GSI to extend its search to other areas of the State.

"Good prospects" of vanadium for a cumulative length of 15.5 km and an average thickness of 7 m were found in the Deed, Saia and Phop areas of Lower Subansiri district. Vanadium content was also found in the Pakro area of Pakro-Kesang district, Pa-

lin-Sangram in Kra Daadi, Kalamati in West Siang, Kalaktang in West Kameng and Kaying in Siang district.

The expected grade of vanadium mineralisation in Arunachal Pradesh is comparable to the important vanadium deposits of the world. The largest deposits are in China, followed by Russia and South Africa," the specialist said.

They repeated the actor's slogan "Now or never".

Several fans said they had come together in the hope

Rajini's fans want him to reverse his decision

Fans hold demonstration in Chennai

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

Despite Rajini Makkal Mandram urging fans not to organise protests, fans of actor Rajinikanth held an agitation, in Valluvar Kottam, Chennai, appealing him to reverse his decision not to enter politics.

Having managed to mobilise fans from across Tamil Nadu, protesters appealed to the actor to consider the importance of the upcoming Assembly election, and the need for him to enter politics to "save Tamil Na-

dru".

A well known politician,

who had supported the actor since he announced in

December 2017 that he would enter politics, said the crowd could force a rethink in the actor.

"Mr. Rajinikanth should realise the pull he has among the people. I think he will rethink his decision," he said.

of changing Mr. Rajinikanth's stance, without any expectation.

"We have come from across the State. Thousands have gathered here, despite the fact that RMM warned its office-bearers not to support the initiatives," said a fan, who had come from Coimbatore.

A well known politician, who had supported the actor since he announced in December 2017 that he would enter politics, said the crowd could force a rethink in the actor.

The flight surgeons will also travel to France for training. "The French module of the space surgeons training will be more theoretical," the official added.

France has a well-established mechanism for space medicine.



SUNALINI MATHEW

In a departure from raucous partying, 10,000 people spent New Year's Eve across HealthifyMe's social media channels, celebrating in a 'Digital Dance Party' with DJ GoApu. The event was meant to kick off the diet-fitness platform's FitFest 21, an app-only festival to promote the ecosystem of healthy living.

Last year, HealthifyMe helped people collectively lose two million kilograms in nine months, against the previous year's one million kilograms, according to co-founder and CEO Tushar Vashisth. They are not the only ones operating in the tech-driven diet-fitness space that claim to have benefited from 2020's home-bound, immunity-chasing, fear-ridden India.

Akshay Verma, co-founder, Fitpass that offers access to over 4,000 gyms across 17 cities through a single pass, and also has fitness and diet solutions, says that during October to December last year, business grew by 25-30% compared to the same time in 2019.

Sarvesh Shashi, founder of SARVA that focusses on yoga-based wellness, says the platform recorded 1,440 hours of yoga and meditation videos over the last year. Their 60+ on-ground studios were shut, and the app took precedence, requiring them to do a pivot to a digital-only model.

Pandemic push

The tech-driven fitness and diet space is growing in the wake of people like you and me becoming proactive about pre-

ventive health and needing tools to measure progress. At a time of paycuts, reduced mobility, and anxiety about the future, we wanted something affordable, accessible, and fun. Technology gave us that, beaming live workouts into our homes, some of which just had space for a yoga mat on a balcony.

Internationally, technology became a diet and fitness enabler about 15 years ago, going from calorie recorders to GPS-led fitness trackers, aggregators of studio classes, wearables, and now, AR screens that monitor training.

In India though, we are still tracking steps and food intake at the most basic level. Startups want to capitalise on this, moving across geographies, lapping up and retaining as many 'users' as possible. This is different from the West, where brands are going deeper into a handful of homes with more involved tech. During the pandemic, online ads were cheaper, and people were online a lot, so targeted advertising was easier. This resulted in a drop in the cost of acquisition per person.

Despite the fact that we are playing catch-up, what makes it exciting is that the technology amps up efficiency: HealthifyMe's AI dietician Ria has brought in 30% of their business during the past year, while Fitpass' AI trainer Arya did well too with gyms being shut for about seven months.

We consumers are easily bored, lack discipline, and simply must have dessert at the end of the meal (hello rewards and recognition). StepSetGo, a winner in the Aatmanirbhar Bharat App Inno-

UNICORNS FOR REAL

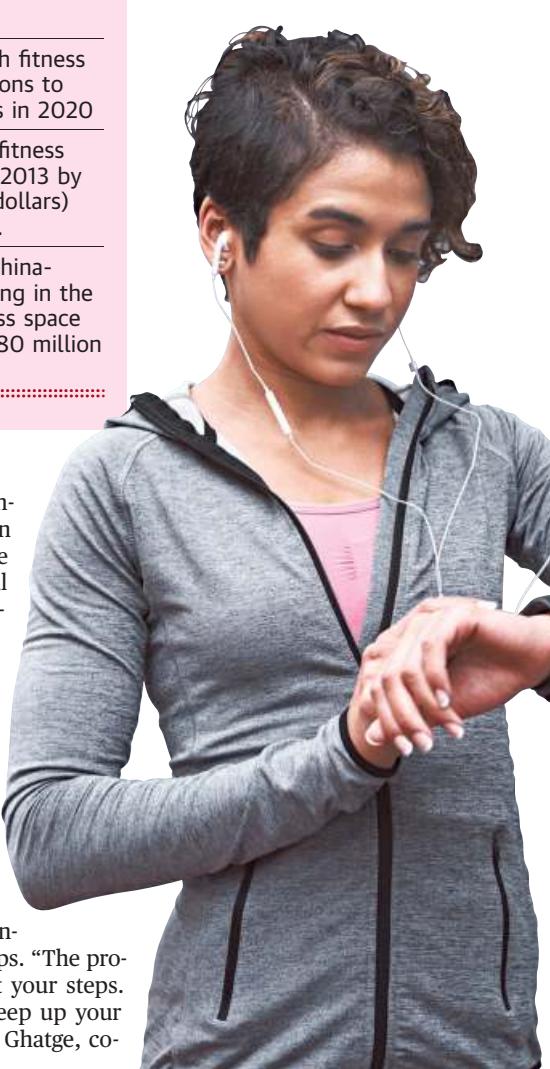
These international tech fitness companies took valuations to beyond a billion dollars in 2020

Classpass, a US-based fitness aggregator founded in 2013 by Payal Kadakia, raised (dollars) 285 million, in January.

Keep, a five-year-old China-based company operating in the online and offline fitness space announced an (dollar) 80 million investment, in May.

vation Challenge, for instance, found a drop in steps taken and an increase in screentime, in the initial days of lockdown. The platform uses a simple pedometer coupled with gamification (a leaderboard, coins earned, and levels achieved) and gratification (through rewards) to get people to move more.

They introduced the FitGames challenge, where online games on their app locked you out until you had taken a few steps. "The problem is not how to count your steps. The problem is how to keep up your motivation," says Shivjeet Ghatge, co-founder and CEO.



*GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

One of StepSetGo's key features is social engagement, important in a year we were all physically distant, and suddenly realised the importance of community.

Muscle and sinew

Founders breathed tech, and as they came up with newer offerings, their appreciation for it went up. "It's the reason we were able to do what we did," says Verma, who says they quickly got trainers online, linking them with people who could not go to the gym. What has not changed is that most of these companies, with tech-trained leaders at the helm, continue to say that tech is the foundation of the business.

Sanil Sachar, Founding Partner, Huddle, a startup accelerator based in Gurugram, says he keeps reminding founders that technology is just an enabler.

He also makes a difference between true tech and a placebo. A device that prompts you to wash hands and speaks to you about washing for less than 20 seconds is placebo, he says, of the many services that came up in response to handwashing guidelines. "Unless it is tracking progress – that's tech."

STRONG START

A brief history of international tech-forward forerunners

International tech-driven startups operating in the fitness and diet space captured our imagination, but never went mass in India. "They were too expensive, we weren't used to paying for apps, internet connectivity was sketchy, and the fitness community itself was very small so people just never got to know about them," says Gagan Dhillon Khullar, who worked with Women's Health magazine in India heading the fitness vertical. People with minimal body fat that seemed too hard to achieve and foods that were alien, were other reasons. What these companies did was to make tech associated with fitness and diet attractive.



Wearables

2009: Fitbit was the first wearable device we all coveted, though Garmin had released the first wrist-based GPS trainer in 2003. Suddenly, taking 10k steps became a movement, and the company went on to be listed in 2015. Alphabet, Google's holding company, is acquiring it for USD 2.1 billion, though it has had to commit to Europe not to use Fitbit's huge data for ad targeting for 10 years. The Apple Watch came into being only in 2015.



Connected home fitness equipment

2013: Peloton, the at-home stationary bike fitted with a touchscreen to stream live sessions (through subscriptions) was built on the popularity of New York's cult in-studio SoulCycle and Flywheel. Forbes reports that it was recently added to the NASDAQ 100 stock index. Mirror, a full length reflective glass that turns into an at-home interactive fitness device with a studio-like experience, was started in 2018, and was acquired by fitness apparel brand Lululemon for 500 million dollars last year. Hydrow, launched in 2019, markets itself as a "live outdoor reality" connected equipment. (You are pictured rowing on the water).

WHAT IS IT?

Friluftsliv



*GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

SWETA AKUNDI

"Friluftsliv? It doesn't really have a direct translation." Oslo-resident Mikael Ravndal ponders over the Norwegian word for the concept of embracing the outdoors, that rose to prominence globally in the past year as we were forced to remain indoors for months on end. He ventures a guess: hiking? No, skiing? And then says, "It is just about spending time in Nature and not being in a rush."

According to Norway Tourism, the expression *friluftsliv* was invented by the famous Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen in the 1850s, who used the term to describe the value of spending time in remote locations for spiritual and physical wellbeing. But the concept of being in Nature for purely recreational purposes, has been part of Norwegian culture for centuries.

As a philosophy, *friluftsliv* promotes a simple life in Nature without destroying or disturbing it. It proved helpful for Sadiya Showkat when she had to spend the past year in Oslo, away from her family in Kashmir. She soon understood the idea that Norwegians around her subscribe to: 'There is no bad weather, just bad clothing.'

"Sometimes, when there is enough snow, my group leader skis to work," she says. A lake near where she lives, Lake Sognsvann is a popular spot for outdoor recreation. "Even in winter, when the lake starts to freeze, there are people who enjoy diving in for a swim. I don't have the courage for that!" she says.

But back in summer when the days were longer, Sadiya, like many of her neighbours, bought a hammock to lie on, overlooking Sognsvann. "We take our hammocks outside to tie it wherever we find trees," she says. Embracing the outdoors also brings a shift in dietary schedule: early lunches and dinners, to be in sync with the sun.

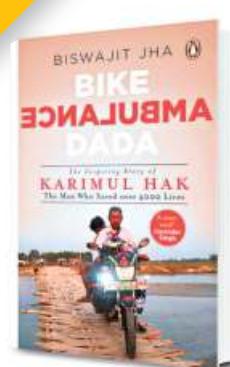
When the climate is not ideal, you learn to appreciate what you have and adapt to it, believes Mohit Batra of Scandinavian Tourism Board. "Little children are taught that when the sun is shining, you need to be out, whatever you are doing, even if you are studying, go outdoors and do so," says Mohit. In fact, Norway has several outdoor kindergartens (*friluftsbarnehager*), where children spend 80% of the time outdoors.

None is perhaps a better example than Mina Florian (@minaogmeg). At just the age of four, Mina has already slept a total of 300 nights in a tent and climbed five peaks over 2,000 metres, with her outdoor enthusiast father Alexander Read and her faithful companion doll Laura.

The 'right to roam' is well protected in Norway. Norsk Friluftsliv, an umbrella organisation for 18 Norwegian outdoor organisations, has 9.5 lakh members. The organisation promotes the right of public access to Nature to show that it increases the understanding of conservation, and improves physical and mental health.

In this column, we dissect the buzzwords in health and wellness.

WORDS OF WISDOM



BIKE AMBULANCE DADA: The Inspiring Story of Karimul Hak, the Man Who Saved over 4000 Lives

By Biswajit Jha, Penguin Random House

Tea estate worker Karimul Hak's heartwarming life story is about his free bike ambulance service in West Bengal. He ferries patients across 45 kilometres from 20 villages in and around Dhalabari to the nearest district hospital in Malbazar in Jalpaiguri district and has saved thousands of lives over the last two decades. His bike, bought with a bank loan, is modified with a cot attached to it.

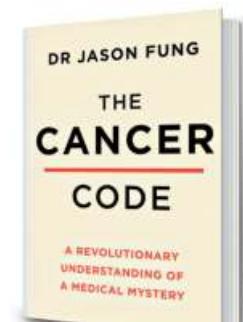
In 1995, Hak lost his mother after she suffered a heart attack in the middle of the night. He could not take her to hospital because there was no transport. A year later when a co-worker collapsed, Hak tied him to his back and drove him to the hospital on his manager's bike. His colleague recovered and the idea of a bike ambulance was born. His work won him the Padmashri in 2017.

THE CANCER CODE: A Revolutionary New Understanding of a Medical Mystery

By Dr Jason Fung, HarperCollins

With the development of more effective treatments, cancer mortality rate may have declined, but the war on the feared disease is yet to be won. Dr Jason Fung demystifies the challenges in treating it and sheds new light on how we can help our healthy cells take control of the disease.

The author says the medical community's cancer research is largely stuck on genetics instead of the conditions under which it flourishes. According to him, dysregulation of insulin, obesity and type 2 diabetes significantly increase an individual's risk of cancer. In his book, he talks about a paradigm shift for tackling cancer and recommends intermittent fasting as it helps to reduce blood glucose and lowers insulin levels. He also suggests stopping the intake of insulin-stimulating foods, such as sugar and refined carbohydrates.



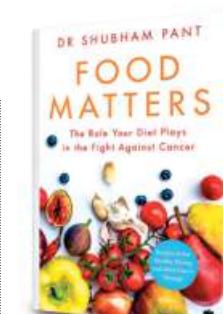
A REVOLUTIONARY UNDERSTANDING OF A MEDICAL MYSTERY

SOMA BASU

THE TAKE-OFF AND OTHER TRUE STORIES BY INDIAN CYCLISTS

Edited by Neera Jain

One of India's largest online cycling communities, Cyclop has compiled 37 stories of challenges faced by cyclists across the country during their journeys during the pandemic, when cycling was picking up across the globe as a recreational sporting activity. From champions to those from diverse backgrounds such as an IT engineer, a retired army officer, a graphic designer, a home-maker, a doctor, these are stories of regular people who pushed their limits. It is a book to pick up when motivation ebbs and you need a message of perseverance.

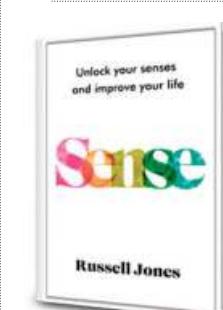


FOOD MATTERS: The Role Your Diet Plays in the Fight Against Cancer

By Dr Shubham Pant, HarperCollins India

Oncologist at the MD Anderson Cancer Center, Texas, Dr Shubham Pant recommends a good diet, healthy weight, and lifestyle interventions to keep cancer at bay. Nutrition is the lifeline for patients diagnosed with and recovering from cancer and they alone can best manage their nutritional needs, he says in his easy-to-read guide on how to eat right during treatment.

Dr Pant provides critical nutritional tips that make a timely read about a disease on the rise and the fourth leading cause of death. The book features simple recipes with readily available ingredients. For instance, the commonly used *toor dal* is nutritiously dense and high in fibre, complex carbohydrates, folic acid and protein. He recommends vegetable *dal* soup for those undergoing chemotherapy and experiencing mouth sores, a dry mouth, nausea and vomiting. Or, the chickpea *chilla* with avocado masala because both are packed with vitamins, minerals, fibre and healthy fats.



SENSE: Unlock Your Senses and Improve Your Mind

By Russell Jones, HarperCollins India Have you ever given a thought to what kind of music could help you fall asleep? Or how colour can prime you for creative thinking? It is human tendency to underuse the five senses to their full potential, says Russell Jones, as he tells us how we can tap our senses to the optimum for improved thinking, behaviour, and feelings.

The multisensory marketing expert uses the science of the senses to design products, brands and retail environments that awaken our senses in multiple ways. He delves into the fields of neurosciences and experimental and behavioural psychology and shows how to live more multi-sensorially. It means paying attention to sounds, smelling fragrances, looking out for colours, feeling the shapes and textures of objects. It is well within our ability to live a life of mindfulness by being alive to our surroundings, is the core message.

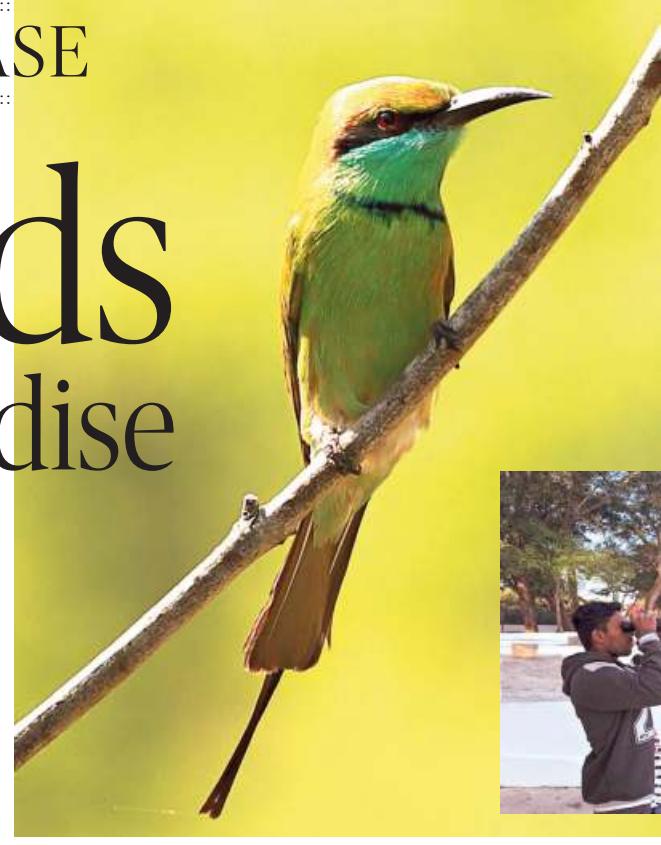
Birds of paradise

This Pongal, people are being encouraged to go birding for at least 15 minutes, list and count all the species, and contribute to scientific data

K JESHI

Birding enthusiasts in Puducherry hope that the rarely spotted red-necked falcon keeps its date during the annual Pongal Bird Count (PBC) that is on from January 14 to 17. "We have been seeing the bird regularly for the last five years. We hope to see a breeding pair this time," says Surendhar Boobalan, a Government school teacher in Puducherry, who has been into bird watching for over eight years.

The PBC is an annual bird monitoring programme where people across Tamil Nadu observe birds for a minimum of 15 minutes and upload the sightings, listings and documentation on an online platform (ebird). The event is coordinated by Tamil Birders Net-



HOW TO GET STARTED ?

From January 14 to 17, look for birds around you for 15 minutes from anywhere, be it the banks of a pond or a lake, on the terrace or the balcony of your home.

List all the birds you spot on ebird.org/india/home. You can also download the ebird app on your phone and submit your list there.

To know more, visit the Tamil Birders Network YouTube page.

Lesson in conservation

(Clockwise from left) Bird watchers at Oussudu Lake near Puducherry, a pod of spot-billed pelicans and the green bee-eater
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Count in Kerala that inspired us to do something similar for Pongal in Tamil Nadu."

The citizen science initiative has now encouraged birders in Assam to organise the Bihu Bird Count (BBC). It happens around the same time and documents the diversity of birds in Assam. "It is an excellent opportunity for people to understand birds in a systematic manner," says Jaydev Mandal, an Assam-based birder as he gears up for the BBC's second edition this year.

"Bihu is an important harvest festival for Assam. It is that time of the year when the land hosts several migratory bird species from across the globe. Last year, we recorded over 300 species. The spotted dove was the most commonly-sighted species. We also observed the lesser white-fronted goose after several decades. We want to promote the association of the festival with Nature."

Jeganathan, who spearheads the activity across Tamil Nadu, says the objective is to encourage scientific inquiry among the public. "It builds interest and sets the tone for the forthcoming Global Backyard Bird Count in February. Eventually, it makes them aware of conservation," he adds.

work and Bird Count India. It was during the first annual PBC, six years ago, that Surendhar and his team first spotted the falcons at Bahour Lake, the second largest lake in Puducherry. "We have documented the bird's nesting on Palmyra trees. Ospreys can also be seen wintering here now," he says.

They plan to cover 40 lakes (of the total 86 lakes in Puducherry) in four days. "We club it with the Asian Waterbird Census, and visit as many wetlands as possible where we also assess the health of wetlands and the threat they face from plastic waste, encroachment, poaching, and pollution. We record migratory birds like gannets, ducks, northern shovellers, godwits and terns, as well as resident birds like

Naturalists say the bird count is a great way to encourage beginners in bird-

ing. The final data provides valuable information on distribution and abundance of the birds of Tamil Nadu. It also covers a variety of habitats including coastal regions, hilly terrain, as well as urban areas.

P Jeganathan, wildlife biologist at Valparai-based Nature Conservation Foundation, draws a parallel to the holiday tradition of annual Christmas Bird Count in the USA, where birders start counting birds in the neighbourhood. "It was started in the early 70s in the US. The information gathered by citizens helped track and study the population of the Eurasian collared doves that were nowhere to be found in the early 1990s. Such regular monitoring always contributes to scientific data. It was the Onam Bird

Collaboration between the two organisations provides a parallel to the Global Backyard Bird Count in February. Eventually, it makes them aware of conservation," he adds.



Careful curation

Lionsgate Play, the streaming platform with Hollywood content launches their campaign 'Play More Browse Less' in India with a digital film featuring actors Tiger Shroff and Ananya Panday. The digital film is developed on the insight that millennials spend too much time today trying to find what to watch, and the app with its curated line-up, looks into solving this problem. The integrated campaign will be extended across impact properties on digital and social media. The film showcases Tiger Shroff prank Ananya Panday. The app hopes to introduce Indian audiences to shows like Normal People, Manhunt: Deadly games, Romulus and No Man's Land to name a few. Lionsgate Play has a widely-distributed network and partnerships spanning across Vodafone Idea, Bharti Airtel, Jio FTTH, Apple TV+, Amazon Firestick.



Tiger in my lens

VD Photography holds its next photography workshop at Ranthambore National Park, home to tigers, deer, and over 200 species of birds. Ranthambore offers numerous visual opportunities for capturing images of elusive wild species in their natural habitat. As one of the original 'Project Tiger' reserves, it affords the rare opportunity of tiger-sighting. For those also interested in structural photography, at the centre of the park lie the ruins of the 10th to 16th Century Ranthambore Fort. This workshop is directed at both amateurs and professionals. Participants will get photography tips and guidance from ace Nature and wildlife photographers. Participants have to assemble in Delhi. Price of transport from Delhi to Ranthambore and back, three nights' accommodation, safari and all meals are included in the package.

The workshop extends from January 12 to January 15. Visit vivekdeepak.com.

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

Welcome to my side hustle

Shop talk for 2021 is moving online. Here is what first-time business owners looking to pair up with an e-commerce platform need to know

A glance at Statista's June 2019 report on e-commerce projections reveals that global retail e-commerce sales are expected to reach \$6.5 trillion in 2021. Currently, two main categories of e-commerce platforms exist – hosted and self-hosted. We have seen hosted platforms such as Amazon, Shopify and Etsy offering ready-made solutions (such as inventory management, sales pro-

cessing, basic marketing and reporting features) that take care of hosting and server maintenance for the business owner. Self-hosted is for those ready to craft their own site or work with a developer to be independent.

Etsy India says that the pandemic pushed sellers in the arts and design industry to create an online home for themselves with-

in their platform; as many as 83% of the sellers on the platform are women while 90% of the businesses are one-member companies. The reason for the pull towards the platform is perhaps the transparency offered to first-time business owners on the site. They should be vigilant of the costs required to run an e-commerce business because of the additional



expenses such as packaging and shipping.

Himanshu Wardhan, CEO, Etsy India, advises that whatever platform one is inclined to team up with, terms and conditions should be read thoroughly. "My

advice to any small seller would be to read the terms and conditions carefully before signing up on any platform and select one that they can identify with, and one which has outlined the terms and conditions clearly so that

Jumping ship More sellers are moving to e-commerce platforms; Himanshu Wardhan ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT AND GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK



there are no surprises later," he adds. "Online retail is a much more democratic way to build a business – especially for small sellers."

In fact, New York-based author and entrepreneur Neil Patel has a

blog post on this very topic, explaining that setting up an e-commerce business takes time. "If you are not strategic about how you run your e-commerce side hustle, it can actually feel restricting. Growing an online business is no simple task... the key to a side hustle is getting revenue off the ground. So you need to set the end goal or target and work backward," he writes.

Last year, Etsy saw big business for artists such as miniaturist Shital Patel of Smallideashirali, blockprint accessory maker Kriti Jindal of Kari by Kriti, and Shashank of Mianzi. Shashank points out the financing of a studio during a lockdown would not make any sense compared to the physical distancing-friendly studio of an online marketplace that already has lakhs of willing and waiting buyers who are looking for something new. He concludes, "You have to have confidence in your business or product."

POOCH CAFE



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



PEANUTS



TIGER



CALVIN AND HOBBES



Indonesia locates black boxes of plane

Flight recorders could help explain why the 26-year-old plane crashed just 4 minutes after take-off

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

JAKARTA

Body parts, twisted wreckage and clothing were plucked from waters off the Indonesian capital on Sunday after a passenger jet with 62 people aboard crashed shortly after take-off a day earlier.

Authorities have yet to say why the Sriwijaya Air Boeing 737-500 went into a steep dive about four minutes after it left Soekarno-Hatta international airport on Saturday afternoon.

But, on Sunday, they said that they had pinpointed the location of its black boxes – cockpit voice and flight data recorders – that could be key to explaining why the plane slammed into the Java Sea off the sprawling city's coast.

A military vessel picked up the plane's signal, and divers recovered wreckage from around 23 m below the water's surface, the Transport Ministry said.

Indonesia's President Joko Widodo expressed his "deep condolences", and called upon citizens to "pray together so that victims can be found".

But the frantic search in-



Retrieval effort: Investigators sorting debris found on the waters off Java Island at Tanjung Priok Port in Jakarta. ■ AP

volving helicopters and warships appeared to offer no hope of finding any survivors.

The search and rescue agency said it had so far collected five body bags with human remains as well as debris from the crash site.

Passengers Ihsan Adhlan Hakim and his new bride Putri were headed to Pontianak, the city on Indonesia's section of Borneo island, about 90 minutes away.

"He called me to say that the flight was delayed due to bad weather," Mr. Hakim's brother Arwin said from Pontianak, where a wedding

celebration had been planned for the newly weds. Beben Sofian, 59, and her husband, Dan Razanah, 58, were also on the doomed flight. "They took a selfie and sent it to their kids before taking off," the couple's nephew, Hendra, told AFP.

DNA from relatives will be compared with discovered remains for identification.

All 62 passengers and crew aboard the half-full flight were Indonesian. The count included 10 children.

Distraught relatives waited nervously for news at Pontianak airport.

"I have four family mem-

bers on the flight – my wife and three children," said a sobbing Yaman Zai. "(My wife) sent me a picture of the baby... How could my heart not be torn into pieces?"

Data from FlightRadar24 indicated that the airliner reached an altitude of 3,350 m before dropping suddenly to 250 feet. It then lost contact with air traffic control.

Final moments

Transport Minister Budi Karya Sumadi said on Saturday that the jet appeared to deviate from its intended course just before it disappeared from radar.

"The aircraft's final moments are... very concerning as the speed that (it) was flying at that altitude was much lower than expected," said Stephen Wright, professor of aircraft systems at Finland's Tampere University.

"The last seconds saw the aircraft rapidly descend from 10,000 feet to the sea in a matter of 20 seconds, which implies a catastrophic event or something deliberate."

But Mr. Wright added that the crash can "only be fully explained once the black

boxes and wreckage can be properly analysed".

Sriwijaya Air, which operates flights to destinations in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, has said little so far about the 26-year-old plane, which was previously flown by U.S.-based Continental Airlines and United Airlines.

The Indonesian carrier has not recorded a fatal crash since it started operations in 2003, but this accident is the latest in a string of disasters for the country's aviation sector.

Indonesia's aviation sector has long been marred by safety concerns, and its airlines were once banned from entering U.S. and European airspace.

Safety concerns

In October 2018, 189 people were killed when a Lion Air Boeing 737 MAX jet crashed near Jakarta. That accident – and another in Ethiopia – saw Boeing hit with \$2.5 billion in fines over claims it defrauded regulators overseeing the 737 MAX model, grounded worldwide following the accidents. The 737 that went down on Saturday was not a MAX variant.

U.S. removes restrictions on diplomatic contact with Taiwan

No more appeasement of Communist regime: Pompeo

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on Saturday that the State Department is voiding longstanding restrictions on how U.S. diplomats and others have contact with their counterparts in Taiwan, another move that is expected to upset China as the Trump administration winds to an end.

The Trump administration has sought to strengthen bilateral relations with Taiwan. It announced on Thursday that UN Ambassador Kelly Craft would go to Taiwan, a move that sparked sharp criticism from Beijing and a warning that the U.S.

would pay a heavy price. In August, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar became the first Cabinet member to visit Taiwan since 2014.

Mr. Pompeo said that the State Department has created complex restrictions when it comes to contacts between the two parties. He said those actions were taken to appease the Commu-



Mike Pompeo

nist regime in Beijing.

"No more," Mr. Pompeo declared in a statement. "Today I am announcing that I am lifting all of these self-imposed restrictions."

Mr. Pompeo said the U.S. maintains relationships with unofficial partners around the world, and Taiwan is no exception.

"Our two democracies share common values of individual freedom, the rule of law, and a respect for human dignity," Pompeo said. "Today's statement recognizes that the U.S.-Taiwan relationship need not, and should not, be shackled by self-imposed restrictions of

our permanent bureaucracy."

Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu welcomed the move.

"I'm grateful to @SecPompeo & @StateDept for lifting restrictions unnecessarily limiting our engagements these past years," Wu said in a tweet of a Pompeo tweet about the announcement.

China hits back at U.S.

China's state media lashed out at Mr. Pompeo, accusing the Secretary of State of "seeking to maliciously inflict a long-lasting scar on China-U.S. ties."

The Chinese government maintains that mainland China and Taiwan are parts of "one China." China has been stepping up its threats to bring the self-governing island under its control by military force with frequent war games and aerial patrols. It has been using its diplomatic clout to stop Taiwan from joining any organisations that require statehood for membership.

Bomb claims three in Kabul

Former journalist among those killed; Ghani blames Taliban

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

KABUL

An Afghan journalist-turned spokesman for the country's public protection force was killed along with two colleagues on Sunday by a bomb targeting their vehicle, officials said.

The murder of Zia Wadan, who previously worked for several media networks, appeared to be the latest in a series of targeted killings that have rocked Afghanistan, especially Kabul.

Wadan and his colleagues were killed in morning rush-hour traffic in an eastern

part of the capital, Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian told reporters.

"A vehicle carrying Zia Wadan was targeted with an IED... As a result, Wadan and two of his colleagues were killed," Mr. Arian said, adding that another person was wounded.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but President Ashraf Ghani blamed it on the Taliban.

"The spike in violence by the Taliban is against (the) spirit of commitment for peace and indicates the group still pursues their

hawkish attitude to take innocent lives and damage public facilities," the presidential palace said on Twitter, quoting Ghani.

Wadan was spokesman for the National Public Protection Force, a security service under the Interior Ministry that deploys guards to international organisations across Afghanistan.

High-profile figures including journalists, politicians and activists have increasingly been targeted despite peace talks between the government and Taliban.

According to a statement from the President's office,

Mr. Rajapaksa speaking in the eastern Ampara district on Saturday, said: "People

Ready to don former role: Gotabaya

Opposition accuses the President of threatening its legislator

MEERA SRINIVASAN

COLOMBO

and Maha Sangha [Buddhist clergy] expect from me the role played by me as the Defence Secretary before I assumed Presidency. LTTE terrorists carried out a suicide bomb attack... targeting me. People are aware of the fate of the terrorist leader who led this attack," referring to Velupillai Prabhakaran, who was killed by the Sri Lankan armed forces in 2009.

Stating that he was ready to play "either role", President Rajapaksa said he would not "entertain lumpen politics". His remarks



Gotabaya Rajapaksa

come amid growing criticism from the country's political opposition, over his government's policies, especially its management of COVID-19.

The main Opposition par-

ty, the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB or United People's Front), has termed the President's remarks "a threat" to its parliamentarian Harin Fernando, who recently made a scathing attack on the government in Parliament, blaming the President. Leader of Opposition Sajith Premadasa has said: "I will not let a strand of hair on Harin Fernando be harmed. From this day onwards, the President and the government should be responsible for his safety."

Parliamentarian Mr. Fernando on Sunday sought police protection for his life, following President Rajapaksa's remarks.

Republican Senator says Trump should resign

REUTERS

WASHINGTON

Democratic-led efforts to impeach U.S. President Donald Trump for a historic second time gained momentum over the weekend, although it looked far from certain whether enough Republicans would back the move.

Democratic members of the House of Representatives will introduce articles of impeachment on Monday after Mr. Trump encouraged his supporters to storm the

U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, Representative Ted Lieu said on Twitter.

The California Democrat said the articles had drawn 190 co-sponsors by Saturday night. "We have videos of the speech where (Trump) incites the mob. We have videos of the mob violently attacking the Capitol. This isn't a close call," Mr. Lieu said on Twitter.

A small but growing number of Republican lawmakers have joined calls for Mr.

Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska said on Friday that Mr. Trump should resign immediately.

U.S. Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska, a frequent Trump critic, told CBS News he would "definitely consider" impeachment.

However, other key Trump allies, including Senator Lindsey Graham and House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy, have urged Democrats to shelf any impeachment effort.

Mitch McConnell, the Republican Senate majority leader, has suggested any trial would likely occur after Mr. Trump's term ends, when Democrats will take control of the Senate, thanks to victories in two Georgia runoff elections last week.

If found guilty after leaving office, Mr. Trump would lose benefits enjoyed by former Presidents, such as security and pension, and the Senate could vote to bar him from running again.

Qataris head to Saudi Arabia after reopening of border

UAE, Bahrain and Egypt too agree to lift travel curbs

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SAO PAULO

Qataris celebrated crossing their border with Saudi Arabia on Sunday, calling the Kingdom "our second country", as Doha relaxed its strict coronavirus measures for Saudis to enter following a Gulf diplomatic thaw.

Drivers arrived at the Salwa border crossing in Saudi Arabia, 500 km east of the capital Riyadh, from the Qatari land crossing at Abu Samrah for the second day following its re-opening, AFP correspondents reported.

Saudi Arabia shut its side of Qatar's only land border in June 2017 as part of a package of sanctions it said was a response to Doha's backing of radical Islamist groups and closeness to Iran.

Qatar always denied the charges.

Saudi Arabia, along with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt, all of which had al-



Ready to roll: Qataris showing their documents to Saudi customs officials at a check point on Sunday. ■ AFP

so imposed embargoes on travel and trade, agreed to lift the restrictions at a Gulf Cooperation Council summit in the kingdom on Tuesday.

'Our second country' "Coming from Qatar is like coming to our second country, where there's no difference between them and us in their traditions and us," said Mohammed al-Marri, a Qatari who had travelled into Saudi Arabia.

Qatar Airways and Saudi Airlines said on Saturday on Twitter that they would begin resuming flights between their countries from Monday.

Pakistan hit by nationwide power outage

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

ISLAMABAD

Power was gradually being restored to major cities across Pakistan on Sunday after it was hit by a massive electricity blackout, officials said.

The electricity distribution system in the nation of more than 210 million people is a complex and delicate web, and a problem in one section of the grid can lead to cascading breakdowns countrywide.

The latest blackout was caused by "an engineering fault" in southern Pakistan at 11:41 p.m. local time on Saturday (1841 GMT), which tripped the system and caused power plants to shut down, Power Minister Omar Ayub Khan said.

"Our experts are trying to determine the exact location of the fault."

Mr. Khan said that will take "another few hours as the area is still covered in dense fog", but that power had been partially restored in most areas of Punjab, the most populous province, as well as the economic hub Karachi.

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ASK US

N. SREE KANTH

Q. I went into joint development with a builder in Chennai where the land belonged to me and the builder got a pre-agreed number of flats in lieu of undertaking the construction. I want to sell one of my flats as soon as it is handed over, so I want to know if it will attract capital gains, especially because the current guideline value is the same as when I entered the joint agreement.

S. GOPALAN

A. Joint Development Agreements (JDA) are taxed in the following manner:

At the time of handover of flats from the developer, Capital Gains shall be charged as income in the previous year in which a competent authority issues a Completion Certificate (CC) provided the JDA is registered. Full Value Consideration shall include guideline value as on CC date for the area surrendered and any monetary consideration received by you. However, in case of premature transfer of flats prior to receipt of CC, the taxable event occurs at the time of transfer of such flat.

At the time of sale of flats received by land owner from the developer to a third party, Capital Gains shall be charged at the time of transfer of flat received by the landlord from the developer to a third party. Full Value Consideration will be the monetary consideration received from the third party read with section 50C while the cost of acquisition for constructed portion of flat will be the proportionate guideline value at the time of receipt of CC calculated in the ratio - (constructed area sold divided by total constructed area received) multiplied by the guideline value of the area surrendered at the time of CC and cost of UDS transferred shall be the proportionate purchase cost of the land area retained multiplied by UDS transferred to the prospective buyer divided by total area retained in the JDU. Kindly consider other aspects such as direct costs involved in transfer of property and also long term and short term based on the period of holding.

Q. My spouse and I jointly own a house. The EMI of the home loan is entirely paid by me. My wife is employed but her income is below the taxable limit. Can I claim the tax exemption for the entire amount of home loan interest or should I limit it to 50% as the house is jointly owned?

VIJESH KUMAR

A. If both husband and wife are co-borrowers to the housing loan and only you are servicing the entire repayment obligation, you are eligible to claim deduction for the principal and the interest portions under Sections 80C and 24 respectively for the entire amount borne by you. You may claim the same as long as your co-borrower is not doing so. Be sure to request from your lender a Certificate of Interest in order to claim the benefits.

Q. I retired from government service in April 2017 from an Autonomous Council of Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India. Leave encashment amount was paid to me after TDS on amount exceeding ₹3 lakh. The amount has been added to my income and I paid the Income Tax on amount exceeding ₹3 lakh and filed the return for Assessment Year 2018-2019. But now some of my colleagues have claimed and received the refund of tax on the whole amount of leave encashment paid to them. I want to know whether I can claim the tax refund for the leave encashment amount added to my income in excess of ₹3 lakh for the Assessment Year 2018-2019?

DR. N.S.K. HARSH

A. Leave encashment received by a Central/State government employee at the time of retirement is fully exempt. The window to revise your ITR is now closed and there is no possibility of rectifying the ITR as rectification of ITR does not allow this type of a rectification. You cannot claim any refund of the tax paid on account of the amount received towards leave encashment now.

(The writer is a partner, GSS Associates, Chartered Accountants, Chennai)

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to moneywise@thehindu.co.in. Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

Where there is a WILL

It will allow your kin to access the wealth you bequeath to them, without any hassles



GAURAV MASHRUWALA

"What is the right age according to you to make a will?" asked a member of an audience during an investor awareness programme. My standard answer is, "[The] day you opened your first bank account." While this might be a little exaggerated because if a bank account was opened while an individual was minor, then the need to make a will may not arise. The thought process behind the answer is the moment there is a bank account, wealth creation begins. The moment there is wealth, there will be a need to pass on the wealth to near and dear ones upon death and hence a will should be made.

Stages of passing on wealth

Let us discuss two stages of passing on wealth.

The first stage is to ensure that upon death, all forms of assets are in the custody of someone near and dear. This can happen with the help of a nomination.

"For the last few months, I have been running from pillar to post. My father had a huge fixed deposit in the bank, but he did not update the nomination information. Initially, it was in the name of my mother but after she passed away, my father did not take any action. The bank is helping me with formalities, but it is taking time" – this was a conversation I overheard between two of my co-passengers on my journey from Mumbai to Ahmedabad.

Nomination ensures the nominee gets control of the asset. However, keep in mind that the nominee is only a trustee of that asset and the eventual owner of the asset will be as per the will. If there is no will, then there are different Acts under the law which will prevail.

The second stage is to make a will. A will is the document that will ensure who would eventually own the property. It is very easy to make a will. It can be made on a simple piece of paper. There is no need to type it. Even a hand-written one is accepted by the court. In fact, sometimes it carries more weight. It is called a hologram will.

There is no need to make a will on a stamp paper. Making a list of assets that are owned and to whom an individual wishes to bequeath each one of those assets, written on a simple piece of paper, is sufficient.

Absence of will

In the absence of a will, there are several Acts of law that will prevail such as the Indian Succession Act, Hindu Law and Muslim Law. Howev-

C The easiest way to pass on your assets to your loved ones would be to have both a nomination and a will in place. This will ensure smooth transition of assets

er, the process and time taken will be longer. Also, if there are assets that require court orders, then your near and dear ones would end up spending on lawyers and court fees to get control over the assets created by you and bequeathed to them.

The easiest way to pass on your assets to your loved ones would be to have both a nomination and a will in place. This will ensure smooth transition of assets.

A will is not a death warrant. In fact, dying without making a will would make the life of your near and dear ones difficult. Therefore, do

not delay making a will.

"Gaurav, today I was going through a will of one of my clients. He belongs to a royal family and has massive real estate and other jewels. His will is so complicated that I felt instead of making such a complicated will, it is better not to have any assets," one of the financial planners said during a conference.

Please do not make your will very complicated. That is a sign that an individual who, even after death, is not willing to pass on control. Let go of your insecurities, before you die.

There was another interesting incident. A leading doctor had a large amount of wealth. In his will, he had bequeathed a sum of ₹2 lakh to a caretaker. I urged him to give the sum to the caretaker right away. "No point waiting till your death." In many instances, it is prudent to pass on the wealth while we are alive.

There was another instance where an individual was insisting on the order of the bequeathal. Once again, the servant of the family was a part beneficiary. The woman wanted the bequeathal to be mentioned right on the top.

When I questioned her for the need, she replied, "Let everyone know I have been fair and loving." I asked her "do you want your executor to share a copy of your will with the whole world?"

Please make a will, but keep it simple and straight.

Going ahead, instead of discussing what is WPI (wholesale price index) in the economy, think of 'My WPI - my wealth passing instruments'. Whether WPI moves up or down, our wealth will have to be passed on to the next generation in a smooth manner.

(The writer is a financial planner and author of *Yogic Wealth*)

THINK INVESTOR: PASSION ASSETS

Investments you can consume

Possessing passion assets can help generate both income returns, capital appreciation

VENKATESH BANGARUSWAMY

There is something about real assets that makes them interesting. We are not referring to only real estate and gold. Consider art, paintings and antiques, collectively referred to as passion assets.

In the last 10 years, mass-affluent investors (middle class if you are an economist) have increased their allocation to these assets. In this article, we discuss why we should consider allocating some proportion of total investments to such assets and the risks associated with such investments.

Value drivers

An investment in an asset can generate two sources of returns – income returns and capital appreciation. For instance, if you invest in equity, you can earn dividend income and then capital appreciation when you sell your investments. Similarly, you can derive value (again, utility if you are an economist) on your investments from two sources – monetary returns and consumption.

Financial assets provide only monetary returns; you cannot consume such assets.

On the other hand, you can derive value from both sources on real assets. That is one reason why real assets are preferred investments for many.

Consider antiques. Suppose you successfully bid for a piece of antique furniture (more than 100 years old) at an auction. You may have bought the furniture because you collect antiques. But you can consider the cost of the furniture as an investment. Why? Typically, the price of such assets increases with age. So, in the event you want to sell the asset, you may be able to generate profits from your investment.

You can consume (derive value by displaying) the asset as long as you have it in your possession. It becomes an investment when you are ready to part with it for a profit. The question is: will you be able to sell such assets?

If you collect antiques, it is

natural to buy such assets, but difficult to sell some of your existing collections. Behavioural psychologists refer to this as the endowment effect. Simply put, you are reluctant to part with such assets because you overvalue your possession.

But the endowment effect could diminish with time as the value (ie, the emotional satisfaction) you derive from owning such asset declines over a period. That means if you have a chance to buy, say, a rare eighteenth-century desk, you may be less reluctant to sell your rosewood desk.

That said, investing in passion assets has its issues. For one, such assets require lumpy investments.

For another, buying and



Pain factor: If you collect antiques, it is natural to buy such assets, but difficult to sell some existing collections. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

maintaining some of those assets could require skill and effort. For instance, antique furniture may not require high maintenance, but keeping your rare painting in pristine condition does. So, you may want to consider the kind of passion assets that you want to invest in.

Importantly, if you are collecting paintings, you have to develop the ability to spot artists whose paintings may sell for higher prices in the future.

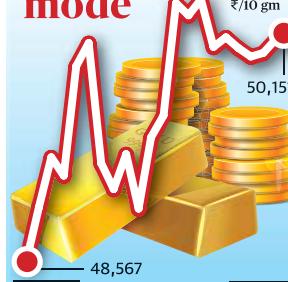
Investments later in life'

It is best to invest in passion assets after five years into your career. Why? Moving from one job to another is likely to be more frequent during an early career than in the later years. Therefore, your investment portfolio should consist of financial assets during the early part of your career; it is difficult to move physical assets (read passion assets) when you move places.

Finally, it is optimal to allocate not more than 20% to passion assets. Remember, it is not easy to sell such assets. Importantly, the value is based on perception and your ability to find knowledgeable buyers. So, you cannot invest in such assets for your goal-based portfolios.

(The writer offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

In cruise mode



A move above \$28.2 would confirm the positive outlook. Below \$22, the trend would turn negative and Comex silver could then slide to \$19.19.5.

Mirroring the global trend, MCX gold too ruled strong in December and sailed past the target of ₹49,500-50,900 mentioned earlier. The short-term trend is positive, and the price could rise to ₹53,000-53,500. A move past ₹51,700 would confirm the positive outlook. A fall below ₹47,500 would invalidate the positive outlook. A breach of ₹47,500 could push MCX gold to ₹45,250-45,000.

MCX silver too ruled firm in December and also moved past the then mentioned target of ₹66,300-67,000. The short-term outlook is positive and a rise to ₹75,000-75,500 appears likely. A move past ₹71,700 would strengthen this positive outlook. A fall below ₹58,500 would be a sign of weakness and could push MCX silver to lower levels of ₹52,000-52,500.

(The writer is a Chennai-based analyst and trader)

TECH TRAIL: PRECIOUS METALS

Gold regains sheen in Dec.

B. KRISHNAKUMAR

After losing sheen in November, precious metals regained their lustre in December. Comex gold has wrapped up 2020 in style, with the yellow metal gaining about 24% for the year. This marks the best performance of Comex gold in a decade. The expectation of a fresh stimulus package in the U.S. played a key role in bolstering sentiment for precious metals. The weakness in the U.S. dollar also helped.

Comex gold closed 6.4% higher in December at \$1,895.1 an ounce. Comex silver gained 17.2% to settle at \$26.4 an ounce at the end of December.

In the domestic market, MCX gold futures gained 4.7% to close at ₹50,151 per 10 gm. MCX silver futures closed 13.1% higher to settle at ₹68,051 per kg at the end of December. As observed earlier, Comex gold ruled firm and achieved the target of \$1,865-1,870 mentioned last month. The short-term outlook for gold remains positive and a breakout past \$1,965 would help Comex gold reach the next target of \$2,025-2,040.

The positive outlook would be under threat if the price falls below \$1,760. With a close below this level, the price could then slide to \$1,650-1,670.

The gain in Comex silver was more pronounced in December. Silver price hit the earlier mentioned target of \$25.6-25.9. The short-term outlook for Comex silver remains positive and a rise to \$29.5-30 appears likely.

LOOSE CHANGE

RAVIKANTH



"I don't know if I can get you a job, son. But as a father, I can start you off with a retirement plan."

PERSONAL LOAN - RATES AND CHARGES

Name of Lender	Interest rate (%)	EMI (Rs) Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure - 5 years	EMI (Rs) Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure - 5 years	Processing fee (% of loan amount)
State Bank of India*	9.60-13.85	10,525-11,595	2,105-2,319	Upto 1.5% (Max Rs 15,000)
Citi Bank	9.99-16.49	10,621-12,290	2,124-2,458	Upto 3%
HDFC Bank	10.75-21.30	10,809-13,611	2,162-2,722	Rs 2,999-25,000
Bank of Baroda	10.10-15.45	10,648-12,013	2,130-2,403	Rs 1,000-10,000
Axis Bank	12.00-24.00	11,122-14,384	2,224-2,877	1.5%-2%
ICICI Bank	11.25-21.00	10,934-13,527	2,187-2,705	Upto 2.25%
Indian Bank	9.05-13.65	10,391-11,544	2,078-2,309	As applicable time to time
Tata Capital	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Upto 2.75%
Canara Bank	10.20-13.90	10,673-11,608	2,135-2,322	Upto 1%
Punjab National Bank**	8.95-14.00	10,367-11,634	2,073-2,327	Upto 1%
HSBC Bank	9.99-14.00	10,621-11,634	2,124-2,327	Upto 1%
Federal Bank	10.49-17.99	10,744-12,6		

Dominant Australia leaves India with a mountain to climb



Strike one! Josh Hazlewood induces a snick from Shubman Gill and Tim Paine does the rest. • GETTY IMAGES

Visitors need 309 more runs with eight wickets in hand on the final day

INDIA IN AUS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SYDNEY

India will go into the final day with a battle on its hands after having lost two wickets by close of play on Sunday in the third Test, marred by allegations of racist abuse from the Sydney crowd.

Australia declared its second innings at tea on day four at 312 for six, leaving India needing a mammoth 407 to win. India reached 98 for two at stumps, needing a further 309 runs.

Previous best
No team has bettered 288 to clinch victory in the fourth innings at the Sydney Cricket Ground, with Australia achieving that mark against South Africa in 2006.

India's chase started steadily before losing openers Shubman Gill for 31 and Rohit Sharma for 52. Rohit and

Gill lived dangerously against some torrid bowling by Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins. But they settled in during a 71-run stand to begin playing their shots, with the graceful Rohit bringing up an

11th Test 50 before being caught at deep backward square-leg hooking a Cummins short ball.

Gill again looked at home until he nicked a Hazlewood delivery to Tim Paine behind

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA — 1ST INNINGS

338.
INDIA — 1ST INNINGS

244.
AUSTRALIA — 2ND INNINGS
David Warner lbw b Ashwin 13 (29b, 1x4), Will Pucovski c sub (Saha) b Siraj 10 (16b, 2x4), Marnus Labuschagne c sub (Saha) b Saini 73 (17b, 9x4), Steve Smith lbw b Ashwin 81 (167b, 8x4, 1x6), Matthew Wade c sub (Saha) b Saini 4 (17b, 1x4), Cameron Green c sub (Saha) b Umrah 84 (132b, 8x4, 4x6), Tim Paine (not out) 39 (52b, 6x4); Extras (b-1, lb-4, nb-3): 8; Total (for six wkts, decl. in 87 overs): 312.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-16 (Pucovski, 5.5 overs), 2-35 (Warner, 9.2), 3-138 (Labuschagne, 46.1), 4-148

(Wade, 48.6), 5-208 (Smith, 67.4), 6-312 (Green, 86.6).
INDIA BOWLING

Bumrah 21-4-68-1, Siraj 25-5-90-1, Saini 16-2-54-2, Ashwin 25-1-95-2.

INDIA — 2ND INNINGS
(Target: 407)

Rohit Sharma c Starc b Cummins 52 (98b, 5x4, 7x6), Shubman Gill c Paine b Hazlewood 31 (64b, 4x4), Cheteshwar Pujara (batting) 9 (29b, 1x4), Ajinkya Rahane (batting) 4 (14b); Extras (lb-1, nb-1): 2; Total (for two wkts, in 34 overs): 98.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-71 (Gill, 22.1), 2-92 (Rohit, 30.2).

AUSTRALIA BOWLING

Starc 6-0-27-0, Hazlewood 8-3-11-1, Cummins 9-1-25-1, Lyon 9-3-22-0, Green 2-0-12-0.

the stumps.

Australia's declaration came after Cameron Green fell on the stroke of tea for an entertaining 84, his maiden Test half-century, with captain Tim Paine unbeaten on 39. Steve Smith made 81 and Marnus Labuschagne 73, with Ashwin and Navdeep Saini grabbing two wickets each.

"We are good to go. It is a victory for cricket," said a CA insider.

On Thursday morning, Queensland premier Anastacia Palaszczuk had announced a 72-hour restriction in Brisbane following a positive COVID-19 case that was confirmed as the UK variant of the coronavirus.

Queensland's chief health officer has approved CA's COVID safety and quarantine management plans to conduct the fourth Test.

The Indian contingent underwent two weeks of strict quarantine upon their arrival Down Under.

Brisbane Test to go ahead

SPORTS REPORTER
CHENNAI

The fourth Test between India and Australia, scheduled to be held in Brisbane from January 15 to 19, is set to go ahead as planned. After almost a week of confusion, an agreement was reached between BCCI and CA on Sunday.

"We are good to go. It is a victory for cricket," said a CA insider.

On Thursday morning, Queensland premier Anastacia Palaszczuk had announced a 72-hour restriction in Brisbane following a positive COVID-19 case that was confirmed as the UK variant of the coronavirus.

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Ashwin calls for iron-fisted action

Crowd abuse not a new experience, says veteran off-spinner

AMOL KARHADKAR

Not one for mincing words, India star R. Ashwin decried the unsavoury incidents at the Sydney Cricket Ground as nasty.

"This is my fourth tour of Australia and, in Sydney especially, we have had a few experiences even in the past. They have been quite nasty, they have been hurling abuses. But, this is the time they have gone one step ahead and used racial abuse," he said.

When the official complaint had been lodged on Saturday, the umpires insisted on being informed "as soon as it happens" on the field," Ashwin said. "This



Off you go! Policemen evict those identified as responsible for the racial abuse from the crowd. • AFP

must be definitely dealt with an iron fist. And we must make sure that it doesn't happen again."

He harked back to his first tour in 2011-12, when he had no clue what racial abuse was. "You can be made to

feel small in front of so many people. And, people actually laugh at you when you get abused. There is another set of people just enjoying it. I had no idea what this was at all," he said.

Better awareness
Now the players are aware and find such incidents absolutely unacceptable, he stated.

"Even yesterday when Siraj brought it up, Ajinkya, myself and Rohit got together and went to the umpire and did report it.

"Nowadays the boys are better equipped and aware. Even Siraj, who is new, does know that this is a line you cannot cross," he said.

Langer decries events as shameful

Upsetting, disappointing and I have hated it as a player too: Aussie coach

S. DIPAK RAGAV

Australia coach Justin Langer has termed the racist abuses hurled at India pacer Mohammed Siraj from the crowd a 'shame'.

"It is upsetting, it is disappointing. I have hated it as a player, I have hated it as a coach. We have seen in different parts of the world, it is really sad to see this happen in Australia," said Langer.

Right spirit

"Our series so far has been played in such great spirit, it has been incredible cricket on the field.

"It is a shame that it has been marred by incidents like we are hearing, today and last night.



Interruption: The umpires, Indian players and Paine watch the developments in the stands as play is held up. • GETTY IMAGES

money and think that they can abuse or say whatever they like," said Langer.

Commenting on the state of the match, Langer said Ro-

It was nice to have Tim [Paine] out there when that incident happened. He's a class act

hit Sharma's wicket towards the end of the day had come at the right moment.

"He is a world-class player. It was a huge wicket for us. If he was out there, he was going to keep scoring quickly.

"There is very little in this wicket, so we have to squeeze hard and keep the pressure. Hopefully, it spins a bit more for (Nathan) Lyon. There is a little bit of invariable bounce and, hopefully, that plays a part for us as well," he added.

ICC probes racist abuse charges

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

NEW DELHI
The International Cricket Council (ICC) has launched an investigation into the Indian team's allegations of racist abuse from sections of the crowd in the third Test.

The probe comes in the wake of Mohammed Siraj and Jasprit Bumrah "being targeted" while fielding near the boundary on Saturday and a second incident when play was halted just before tea on Sunday when Siraj made a similar complaint to the umpires.

CA issued an apology to India and said anyone found guilty of abuse would face consequences.

The peak of rowdy behaviour: Kohli

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
"The absolute peak of rowdy behaviour" was Virat Kohli's reaction to the Indian team having to face racial slurs in Sydney.

Kohli himself was at the receiving end of abuse during the 2011-12 Test series.

"Racial abuse is absolutely unacceptable. Having gone through many incidents of really pathetic things said on the boundary line, this is the absolute peak of rowdy behaviour. It's sad to see this happen on the field," Kohli tweeted.

"The incident needs to be looked at with absolute urgency and seriousness and strict action against the offenders should set things



Virat Kohli. • AP

Discrimination will not be tolerated: BCCI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
BCCI secretary Jay Shah, on Sunday, reacted strongly to the racist slurs hurled at Indian cricketers during the third Test in Australia.

"Racism has no place in our great sport or in any walk of society. I've spoken to @CricketAus and they have ensured strict action against the offenders. @BCCI and Cricket Australia stand together. These acts of discrimination will not be tolerated," he tweeted.

Meanwhile, it was announced that Shah will attend the ICC Board meeting later this month in place of BCCI president Sourav Ganguly.

straight for once," Kohli said.

Veteran spinner Harbhajan Singh also shared a similar experience. "I personally have heard many things on the field while playing in Australia about me, my religion, my colour and much more... this isn't the first time the crowd is doing this nonsense. How do you stop them?" he tweeted.

Messi, Griezmann star in Barcelona masterclass

Milan back to winning ways; Dortmund does one over Leipzig

EURO LEAGUES

REUTERS

GRANADA (SPAIN)

Lionel Messi and Antoine Griezmann each scored twice as Barcelona thrashed Granada 4-0 away on Saturday to win a third consecutive LaLiga game for the first time this season.

Griezmann opened the scoring in the 12th minute while Messi struck twice before the break to make it four goals in his last two matches and go top of the league's scoring charts with 11 goals.

French forward Griezmann scored a classy second goal after half-time. The victory took Barca back into third place in the standings.

Atletico Madrid's game

with Athletic Bilbao was postponed due to heavy snow in the Spanish capital.

AC Milan went four points clear at the top of Serie A with a comfortable 2-0 home win over Torino on Saturday to win a third consecutive LaLiga game for the first time this season.

Griezmann opened the scoring in the 12th minute while Messi struck twice before the break to make it four goals in his last two matches and go top of the league's scoring charts with 11 goals.

French forward Griezmann scored a classy second goal after half-time. The victory took Barca back into third place in the standings.

Atletico Madrid's game

Ibrahimovic made his comeback from injury.

Borussia Dortmund scored three times in the second half to beat hosts RB Leipzig 3-1 on Saturday and close the gap to the top spots in the Bundesliga.



Hemmed in? No problem: Messi finds a way to score Barca's second through a maze of Granada defenders. • REUTERS

The results: Serie A: Roma 2 (Pellegrini 17, Mancini 86) drew with Inter Milan 2 (Skrinari 56, Hakimi 63).

LaLiga: Levante 2 (Melero Manzanares 65, Morales 76) bt Eibar 1 (Inui 51).

Saturday: LaLiga: Granada 0 lost to Barcelona 4 (Griezmann 12, 63, Messi 35, 42); Osasuna 0 drew with Real Madrid 0; Atletico Madrid v Athletic Bilbao postponed.

Bundesliga: Schalke 04 (Hopp 42, 57, 63, Harit 80) bt Hoffenheim 0; Mainz 0 lost to Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Silva 24-pen, 72-pen); RB Leipzig 1 (Sorloth 89) lost to Borussia Dortmund 3 (Sancho 55, Haaland 71, 84).

Serie A: Benevento 1 (Sau 50) lost to Atalanta 4 (Ilicic 30, Toloi 69, Zapata 71, Muriel 86); Genoa 2 (Zajc 44, Destro 55) bt Bologna 0; AC Milan 2 (Leao 25, Kessie 36-pen) bt Torino 0.

SUDOKU

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

TV PICKS

Australia v India: Third Test, fifth day, Sony Ten 1, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 5 a.m.

Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), Noon & 7 p.m.

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

IN BRIEF

Nuggets beat Sixers

WASHINGTON Philadelphia 76ers, badly depleted by COVID-19 protocols and injuries, was routed 115-103 by visiting Denver Nuggets in the NBA on Saturday. The short-handed Sixers were down to just seven healthy players.

The results: Denver bt Philadelphia 115-103; Charlotte bt Atlanta 113-105; Dallas bt Orlando 112-98; Phoenix bt Indiana 125-117; Miami bt Washington 128-124; Milwaukee bt Cleveland 100-90; San Antonio bt Minnesota 125-122; Portland bt Sacramento 125-99.

80% want Tokyo Games cancelled or delayed

TOKYO About 80% of people in Japan say this year's Tokyo Olympics should be cancelled or delayed as worries mount about a record surge in COVID-19 cases across the country, a Kyodo News poll showed on Sunday. REUTERS

Zeel loses in final

NEW DELHI Fourth seed Zeel Desai was beaten 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 by fifth seed Salma Djoubri of France in the final of the \$15,000 ITF women's tennis in Monastir, Tunisia, on Sunday.

TN Memorial and RPL game ends in a tie

NEW DELHI The match between TN Memorial and RPL Academy ended in a tie in the S.N. Dubey memorial u-16 cricket tournament. Batting first, TN Memorial scored 155 for seven in 35 overs and in reply, RPL Academy matched not only the score but also the number of wickets lost.

The scores:

TN Memorial 155/7 in 35 overs (Aaradhy Yadav 61, Devansh Chauhan 55) tied with RPL 155/7 in 35 overs (Shubham Chaudhary 44).

Ishant set to play

Delhi takes on Mumbai today

MUSHTAQ ALI

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI



Ishant Sharma. ■ FILE PHOTO

While a host of IPL franchises' talent scouts will be preparing for February's Player Auction by watching the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, the national selectors will be keeping a close eye on Delhi's matches in the league stage, to be held over the next nine days, starting with a face-off against Mumbai on Monday.

After all, the league stage is going to be a sort of final fitness test for Ishant Sharma ahead of India's forthcoming series against England.

Delhi chief coach Rajkumar Sharma was confident of Ishant coming good, beginning with the game against Mumbai at the Wankhede Stadium.

"He is raring to go. He has been bowling at his best

right through the preparatory camp. I am sure he will be a big boost to the team, with his bowling and experience," said Rajkumar to *The Hindu* on Sunday.

SUNDAY'S SCORES

Elite A (Bengaluru): Karnataka 150/5 in 20 overs (K.L. Shrijith 48 n.o.) bt J & K 107 in 18.4 overs (Abdul Samad 30, Prasidh Krishna 34).

Punjab 134/7 in 20 overs (Prabhjot Singh 34, Anmolpreet Singh 35, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 3/22) bt U.P. 123/5 in 20 overs (Suresh Raina 56 n.o.).

Tripura 170/3 in 20 overs (Bishal Ghosh 36, Arkaprabha Sinha 31, Milind Kumar 61 n.o.) lost to Railways 173/4 in 19.3 overs (Mrunal Devdar 61 n.o., Karin Sharma 45, Harsh Tyagi 38 n.o., Sankar Paul 3/17).

Elite B (Kolkata): Odisha 113 in 20 overs (Rajesh Dhuher 37, Ankit Yadav 32, Ishan Porel 4/26) lost to Bengal 114/1 in 12.2 overs (Vivek Singh 54 n.o., Suvankar Bal 34 n.o.).

Tamil Nadu 189/5 in 20 overs (C. Hari Nishaanth 92 n.o., Dinesh Karthik 46) bt Jharkhand 123/7 in 20 overs (Sonu Yadav 3/31).

Assam 159/5 in 20 overs (Riyam Parag 51 n.o., Saahil Jain 31, Rajkuddin Ahmed 31 n.o., Kartikeya Kak 3/42) bt Hyderabad 157/8 in 20 overs (Pritam Das 3/30).

Elite C (Vadodara): Gujarat 157/8 in 20 overs (Axar Patel

Monday's matches

Elite D (Indore): Services vs Saurashtra; Vidarbha vs Rajasthan, both noon; MP vs Goa, 7 p.m.

Elite E (Mumbai): Haryana vs Andhra; Delhi vs Mumbai, both noon; Kerala vs Pondicherry, 7 p.m.

Plate (Chennai): Chandigarh vs Nagaland; Meghalaya vs Manipur; Bihar vs Arunachal Pradesh; Mizoram vs Sikkim, all at noon.

30, Mukesh Choudhary 3/33) bt Maharashtra 128 in 19.3 overs (Naushad Shaikh 31, Arzan Nagwaswalla 6/19).

Himachal 173/5 in 20 overs (Ravi Thakur 53, Ekan Sen 38 n.o., Vishal Kushwah 3/18) bt Chhattisgarh 141/8 in 20 overs (Amandeep Khare 87 n.o., Rishi Dhawan 3/29); Baroda 168/7 in 20 overs (Krunal Pandya 76, Smit Patel 41, Akash Madhwal 3/16, Girish Rauturi 3/34) bt Uttarakhand 163/6 in 20 overs (Dikshanshu Neogi 77 n.o., Kunal Chandela 48).

Blasters pip Jamshedpur

SPORTS BUREAU

It was all about excellence during set-pieces and goalkeeper errors on Sunday as 10-man Kerala Blasters defeated Jamshedpur FC 3-2 in an Indian Super League match at the Tilak Maidan in Vasco.

With teammate Lalruatthara sent off after receiving a second yellow in the 67th minute, Kerala forward Jordan Murray completed a brace within three minutes.

He scored in the 79th and 82nd, to swing the contest in his side's favour after Jamshedpur custodian T.P. Rehenesh made some costly mistakes.

The results:

Chennaiyin FC 0 drew with Odisha FC 0.

Jamshedpur FC 2 (Nerius Valskis 36, 84) lost to Kerala Blasters 3 (Costa Nhamoinesu 22, Jordan Murray 79, 82).

Monday's match: ATK Mohun Bagan vs Mumbai City.

Tursunov nets fastest goal of the I-League

SPORTS BUREAU

KOLKATA Tajikistan forward Komron Tursunov scored the fastest goal of the I-League when he found the target in the ninth second for TRAU FC against Real Kashmir on Sunday.

He eclipsed the record of Katsumi Yusa who scored in

the 13th second for Neroca FC against Churchill in the 2018-19 season.

The results: TRAU 1 (Tursunov 1) drew with Real Kashmir 1 (Robertson 70). Churchill Brothers 5 (Majcen 2, 75, Bernadez 35, 59, 70) bt Indian Arrows 2 (Thlacheu 9, Gurkiran 22).

Srinivas in blazing form

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI World online challenge champion K. Srinivas was in outstanding form as he completed eight boards with 10 misses in the third champions league, and closed the gap on leader Mohd. Ghufran to three points, in the Indian online carrom challenge.

Ghufran himself was in fine form as he swept the third round with 15 points. Second round leader Mohammed Arif was breathing down the neck of the leader, four points away.

In the women's section, Rashmi Kumari surged to the lead following the best show in the champions league with 31 points. She was eight points better than Nagajothi Kathavarayan, while Kajal Kumari, S. Apporwa, Shainy, Aisha Khokhawala, Deepa Naik and Kavya Shree followed in the top eight.

Lombardy for HRC Golconda 1000 Guineas

HYDERABAD: The four-year-old filly Lombardy, who is in good shape, should win the HRC Golconda 1000 Guineas (Gr. 2), the main attraction of Monday's (Jan. 11) races.

1. TOTAL DARC, 2. CATALINA, 3. MUASER

5 PALAMPET PLATE (DIV. 1) (1,800m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. II), 12.55 pm: 1. Explosive (I) Mukesh Kumar 61.5, 2. Soul Empress (3) Ashad Asbar 61.5, 3. Mind Reader (7) Nakhath Singh 61, 4. Hurricane (8) Amandeep Khare 87 n.o., Rishi Dhawan 3/29); Baroda 168/7 in 20 overs (Krunal Pandya 76, Smit Patel 41, Akash Madhwal 3/16, Girish Rauturi 3/34) bt Uttarakhand 163/6 in 20 overs (Dikshanshu Neogi 77 n.o., Kunal Chandela 48).

3 MALVALDO PLATE (DIV. 1) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 1.55: 1.

1. THE ROYAL PLATE (DIV. 1) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 12.55 pm: 1. Explosive (I) Mukesh Kumar 61.5, 2. Soul Empress (3) Ashad Asbar 61.5, 3. Mind Reader (7) Nakhath Singh 61, 4. Hurricane (8) Amandeep Khare 87 n.o., Rishi Dhawan 3/29); Baroda 168/7 in 20 overs (Krunal Pandya 76, Smit Patel 41, Akash Madhwal 3/16, Girish Rauturi 3/34) bt Uttarakhand 163/6 in 20 overs (Dikshanshu Neogi 77 n.o., Kunal Chandela 48).

1. N R I MAGIC, 2. EXPLOSIVE, 3. MINNELLI

2 BAKRANAGAL PLATE (DIV. 1) (1,100m), Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II), 1.25: 1. Bruno (2) Ashad Asbar 56, 2. Charmer (5) Kuldeep Singh 56, 3. Allah Rakhi (1) Koushik 54.5, 4. Catalina (10) Suraj Narredu 54.5, 5. Golden Amaris (6) A.A. Vikrant 54.5, 6. Golden Lady (8) Kiran Naidu 54.5, 7. Inside Story (3) Nakhath Singh 54.5, 8. Mehrmoosh (4) Gaurav Singh 54.5, 9. Muaser (9) Afroz Singh 54.5, 10. Ashwa Arjun (4) Gaurav Singh 53.5 and 11. Mr. Neeraj 52.5.

1. BLAZER, 2. RAPID FIRE, 3. DUNKIRK

4 MALVADO PLATE (DIV. 1) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 2.30: 1. Sitara (10) Rohit Kumar 62.5, 2. Her Legacy (8) Suraj Narredu 60.5, 3. Palace On Wheels (11) Gopal Singh 59, 4. Marina Del Rey (7) Ajit Singh 57.5, 5. King Maker (1) Surya Prakash 57, 6. Max (2) Afroz Khan 57, 7. Rhythm Selection (6) B.R. Kumar 55.5, 8. Golden Amaris (6) A.A. Vikrant 54.5, 9. Honorable Guest (11) Jodha R S 53, 10. Prime Gardena (10) B.R. Kumar 55.5, 9. Star Racer (7) Mukesh Kumar 55.5, 10. Wood Bridge (8) Surya Prakash 56, 7. Kimberly Cruise (3) A.A. Vikrant 55, 8. Brush The Sky (2) Afroz Khan 53.5, 9. Blazing Jupiter (1) Akshay Kumar 53, 10. Flying Queen (4) Kuldeep Singh 52 and 11. Machismo (11) Ajit Singh 51.5.

1. BLAZING JUPITER, 2. MEHRZAD, 3. KIMBERLEY CRUISE

5 GUINEAS (Gr. 2) (1,600m), Filies, 4-y-o only, 3.40: 1. Downtown Gal (4) Neeraj 57, 2. Good Connection (3) Chouhan 57, 3. Lacrosse (5) Suraj Narredu 57, 4. Lombardy (6) Trevor 57, 5. Mirana (2) Akshay Kumar 57 and 6. Night Secret (1) Srinath 57.

1. LOMBARDY, 2. LACROSSE

6 HRC GOLCONDA 1000 GUINEAS (Gr. 2) (1,600m), Fillies, 4-y-o only, 3.40: 1. Downtown Gal (4) Neeraj 57, 2. Good Connection (3) Chouhan 57, 3. Lacrosse (5) Suraj Narredu 57, 4. Lombardy (6) Trevor 57, 5. Mirana (2) Akshay Kumar 57 and 6. Night Secret (1) Srinath 57.

7 PALAMPET PLATE (DIV. II) (1,800m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 4.15: 1. Peaky Blinders (9) Akshay Kumar 60.5, 2. Golden Hope (3) Mukesh Kumar 60, 3. Stud Poker (7) Trevor 59, 4. Platinum

Clasas (8) Santosh Raj N R 57, 5. Sweet Melody (1) B.R. Kumar 56.5, 6. Eagle Bluff (1) Abhay Singh 55.5, 7. Forever Bond (4) Chouhan 54, 8. Grand Finale (6) Suraj Narredu 54, 9. Sun Dancer (2) Afroz Khan 52, 10. Dillon (10) Ajit Singh 51 and 11. Halo's Princess (5) Jodha R S 50.5.

1. STUD POKER, 2. SWEET MELODY, 3. PEAKY BLINDERS

8 ROYAL PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 4.50: 1.

1. Gazebo (9) Santosh Raj N R 61.5, 2. Mehrzad (6) Gaurav Singh 59.5, 3. New State (5) Ashad Asbar 59.5, 4. Solo Winner (10) Abhay Singh 59, 5. Star Racer (1) Mukesh Kumar 55.5, 6. Wood Bridge (8) Surya Prakash 56, 7. Kimberly Cruise (3) A.A. Vikrant 55, 8. Brush The Sky (2) Afroz Khan 53.5, 9. Blazing Jupiter (1) Akshay Kumar 53, 10. Flying Queen (4) Kuldeep Singh 52 and 11. Machismo (11) Ajit Singh 51.5.

1. BLAZING JUPITER, 2. MEHRZAD, 3. KIMBERLEY CRUISE

Day's best: LOMBARDY Double; N R I MAGIC — HER LEGACY

Jackpot 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.

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

Treble: (i) 1, 2 & 3; (ii) 3, 4 & 5; (iii) 6, 7 & 8.

Tanala: All races.

MARUTI SUZUKI

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