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Bess spins England into a position of strength in first Test

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Djokovic seeks ninth title as Australian Open begins today

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NEARBY



Cong. wins 48 local body head posts in Rajasthan

JAIPUR

The ruling Congress on Sunday won the posts of chairpersons in 48 of the 90 urban local bodies in 20 districts of Rajasthan. The Opposition BJP formed the boards in 37 municipal bodies with its chairpersons declared elected, while Independent candidates were elected heads of three local bodies.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

HC refuses to recognise 'fake' marriage of couple

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has refused to recognise a marriage performed in an Arya Samaj Mandir according to the Hindu Vedic rites and customs between a Muslim man named Akhtar, who falsely represented himself as Shiva, and a Hindu woman. The incident of impersonation came to light after the woman made a complaint at a police station here in December last year.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

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7 killed after 'glacial burst' in Uttarakhand

Over 125 missing as hydel projects under construction on Rishiganga, Dhauliganga rivers are swept away

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Seven persons were killed and over 125 reported missing after a "glacial burst" on Nanda Devi triggered an avalanche and caused flash floods in Rishiganga and Dhauliganga rivers in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand on Sunday.

The number of missing persons could rise as details were still being ascertained, Uttarakhand Chief Minister T.S. Rawat said at a press conference in Dehradun in the evening.

Videos of gushing waters and rising dust went viral on social media as flood warnings were issued in downstream Uttar Pradesh, for what was described as a "glacial burst" by the Centre's National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC), headed by Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba.

Cause under study

Mr. Rawat, on his part, was more circumspect about the cause of the flooding in the eco-sensitive Himalayan region, where environmentalists have warned against the construction of dams for decades. "Experts will tell us about the cause behind the disaster," the Chief Minister told reporters.

At least 15 persons had been rescued till Sunday evening, Uttarakhand Director-General of Police Ashok Kumar said in a tweet. "Rescue operations are going on," he stated.

Mr. Kumar said seven bodies had been recovered so far and around 100 people were still missing. The missing persons include two policemen and five villagers, he said. He said work on the 900 m-long Tapovan project of the NTPC had to be halted due to a rise in water level.

"We were able to dig 150 m of the tunnel but after a rise in water level we had to halt the work. Most missing persons were working at the two projects; they came from across India. We expect to get a clear picture on their identities by Monday morning," Mr. Kumar told *The Hindu*.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Rawat said people along riverbanks were being evacuated. Dams in Srinagar and Rishikesh were emptied out, Mr. Rawat said as the raging waters made their way downstream. By late afternoon,

Narrow escape: A worker being rescued from a tunnel at the Tapovan hydel project, which was washed away after the glacial burst in Uttarakhand on Sunday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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Farmers attempting to break barricades in a bid to march towards Peeragarhi during the tractor rally on Republic Day; protesters during the rally.

FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR



HEMAMI BHANDARI

NEW DELHI

Dilshad Khan, 21, and Navjot Singh Jyoti, 26, who had come to Delhi to take part in the farmers' tractor rally on Republic Day, disappeared on January 29. Their friends and families had no idea where the two men were until, on February 1, the Delhi police released a list of people arrested in connection with incidents of violence.

The men were among 120 people arrested following clashes between protesters and 'locals' near the Singhu border on January 29. *The Hindu* spoke to the families and friends of four people who have been arrested.

Three friends

Dilshad and Navjot's friend Navdeep said they had all come from Mohali for the parade. But their group leader told them that the rally had been cancelled and so the friends made their way back to the Singhu border.

"We stayed together the whole time, but on January 29, they went to roam around and also to buy something from Narela. Then we didn't hear from them," he said.

"We kept trying their numbers but no one picked up, later the phones were switched off. We looked for them all across the protest site at Singhu border and also got announcements made. We then looked in Tikri border also. Then we went to a police station in Narela but we weren't gi-



Mass arrests harden resolve of farmers, supporters

For many, finding names of their loved ones on the police list of people arrested for the January violence was a relief, 'at least we got to know they are alive... they will be ok'

ven any information there either," he said.

On February 1, Delhi Police released a list of people arrested in connection with the clashes. Dilshad and Navjot's names were on the list. "We all heaved a sigh of relief. At least they are alive," he said, adding that no one told Navjot's parents that he had been missing.

Navjot comes from a family of small farmers, his father also works as driver and his mother is ill. The family does not regret

sending him to participate in the protest even though he is an only child. "If we get scared and don't go for the protest then how will we get the three laws repealed?" said Navjot's cousin Amarpreet Singh.

"It is worrying that he is arrested, but he is okay. He will be out in no time," added Amarpreet.

Navjot had given his mother medicine before he left for the protest on January 25. His father is uneducated and doesn't understand legal proceedings but his



1. Dilshad Khan, 2. Navjot Singh Jyoti, 3. Harvinder Singh, 4. Ankit Deswal

extended family is in touch with lawyers in Delhi.

Dilshad, a factory worker, had decided to come to the protest as Navjot was his best friend. "We are not farmers but he went with his friend," said Dilshad's elder brother Dilbar, who is in touch with Samyukt Kisan Morcha's legal team.

"He told us he was serving people at the protest. When we spoke to him after his arrest, he just asked me to hire a lawyer and get him out of jail," said Dilbar.

Wrong place, wrong time

Ankit Deswal, a 21-year-old national gold medalist wrestler from Haryana's Panipat, was arrested in Narela. His family believes he was detained as "police were angry on January 29 and there was a Kisan Union flag on Ankit's car".

His brother Manjeet, 24, said Ankit and his friend were on their way to an *akhada* in Sonipat and were crossing Narela when they were stopped and detained by the police.

"He called us and told us that they were randomly stopped because of the flag," Manjeet said.

The family was informed about the arrest the next morning when they received a call from the police station. "When we spoke to Ankit on the phone, all he said was that he wants to come out because he wants to go to the *akhada* and practice," said Manjeet.

Manjeet said Ankit participated

in the protest on a few occasions, but the "family was not actively participating".

"However, after Ankit's arrest, we are participating regularly. The police have arrested my brother for no reason. In our village, if you arrest one, five more will be ready to go behind the bars," said Manjeet.

Out for groceries

Harvinder Singh's family is sure that he will go back to the protest site once he is released from jail and that the arrest will not deter his spirit to fight.

The 56-year-old from Patiala had been camping at the protest site since November 26. On January 29, Harvinder had gone to Narela to buy groceries, said his cousin Mittarbir.

"I called him around 3.15 p.m. and asked him where he was. He told me he was going to Narela to buy some items. I told him I will come along and asked him to wait till I reached," he added.

Half an hour later, when Mittarbir tried to call Harvinder, his phone was switched off. For the next few hours, several calls were made to find him but to no avail.

Around 3.30 a.m., Harvinder's son received a WhatsApp message from his father's phone number informing him that he had been arrested and that he was at Alipur police station.

"We went to the station the next morning but were not allowed inside. Eventually, we were told that he had been sent to Tihar jail. Later, we were informed that he had been shifted to Rohini jail. I had a word with him over the phone. He said he was okay but needed clothes, so, a lawyer helped us with that," Mittarbir said, adding that the family has no regrets and the arrest doesn't change the way they feel about the farmers' struggle.

Police response

Responding to a detailed questionnaire sent by *The Hindu* on the arrest of the four persons, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer North) Rajeev Ranjan Singh said: "All relevant facts pertaining to these arrests are placed in the case file. After perusing the same, the Judge was pleased to send these accused to judicial custody. Since the matter is sub judice, it will be improper to comment on the version of family members".

Internet services back at Singhu, protesters dance to online music

Farmers say government attempted to suppress movement, but failed miserably

SAURABH TRIVEDI

NEW DELHI

The protesters stationed at the Singhu border on Sunday were a happy lot. Mobile Internet services were back after several days.

Harinder Happy, a media coordinator at the Singhu border said Net services have resumed, but due to a high density of mobile users (protesters), the speeds are slow in the area. The office-bearers of farmer units were using Wi-Fi services to avoid any congestion.

Mr. Happy said that during the period when Internet services were suspended, they switched to Wi-Fi, but they faced congestion while live-streaming. Now, things are back to normal and the YouTube channel of Kisan Ekta Morcha is functioning well.

Around 10 a.m., when Internet services resumed at the border, protesters re-



SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Farmers protest at the Singhu border in Delhi on Sunday.

— SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

joined the occasion by streaming songs on their mobile phones and danced to the tunes. "Many elderly people made video calls to their family members back in their villages in Punjab and Haryana. They informed about their well-being and other updates," said Shamsher Singh, a protester.

Seventy-year-old Kulwant

Singh, who has been protesting at the border for the past 30 days, said he is not used to the mobile phone. But he had to inform his family members concerned about him after they received the news of an elderly protester dying due to cardiac arrest at Singhu.

"A man, who is from my village in Patiala, helped me call my grandson after my fa-

mily made several calls to him regarding my health. I assured them that I will return soon after the government repeals the farm laws," said Mr. Singh.

Unstoppable movement

The protesters said the government attempted to suppress the movement but they failed miserably. "Now, the movement is unstoppable. Shutting down the Internet won't stop people from getting updates," said Badshah Pal, a protester. Internet services have also helped freelance journalists and YouTubers covering the movement and in sharing live updates on social media.

"We had to travel over 5km from the Singhu border to get Internet services. It was very tough, but now things are better and we can put up videos again," said Shashank Shekher, a freelance journalist.

A senior officer said Singh was allegedly leading the mob at the Red Fort on the day of incident. So far, 127 people have been arrested in connection with the case. Thousands of farmers protesting against the Centre's new farm laws had clashed with the police during the tractor parade on January 26. Many of the protesters, driving tractors, reached the Red Fort and entered the monument.

Elderly man arrested for R-Day violence

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A man was arrested from Chandigarh on Sunday in connection with the Red Fort incident on Republic Day, the police said. He was carrying a reward of ₹50,000 on his arrest, they said.

Sukhdev Singh, aged around 60, was arrested from Chandigarh by the Crime Branch team, which is probing the 13 cases in connection with the Republic Day tractor parade violence.

A senior officer said Singh was allegedly leading the mob at the Red Fort on the day of incident. So far, 127 people have been arrested in connection with the case. Thousands of farmers protesting against the Centre's new farm laws had clashed with the police during the tractor parade on January 26. Many of the protesters, driving tractors, reached the Red Fort and entered the monument.

Farmers from Sonipat plant flower saplings at protest site

'We will spread love even if the govt. uses force to suppress us'

SAURABH TRIVEDI

NEW DELHI

In response to the heavy police barricades at the Singhu border, protesting farmers on Sunday planted saplings of flowers like roses and marigolds in soil brought from their villages around Haryana's Sonipat.



Farmers planting saplings at the Singhu border.

— SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

policemen armed with guns and batons standing on the other side of the barricades are also sons of farmers. We have nothing against the police. Our fight is against the stubborn government," said Mr. Kumar.

A commotion ensued at the protest site after a small snake was spotted in the freshly dug-up soil brought for preparing the plant beds. One of the farmers killed the snake with a spade as it tried to wriggle out to safety. Some of the farmers

tried to stop the man from hitting the snake, but it was too late.

Protesters at Singhu said that they are identifying other vacant and dirty plots for planting. They wanted to convey to the government that farmers can turn waste land into beautiful nurseries. "We will send flowers from these nurseries to the government if they agree to repeal the farm laws. The kind of barricading they have put at the borders, and the restrictions on the movement of visitors, will only give more power to protesters," said Hardeep, a protester.

After the violence of January 26, the police erected concrete walls between barriers and multi-layer barricading, with lines upon lines of police personnel stationed at all three borders – Tikri, Singhu and Ghazipur.

'BJP members took trips at civic bodies' expense'

AAP calls for probe into use of public funds

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Sunday alleged that several Bharatiya Janata Party councillors, including its Delhi chief Adesh Gupta, Mayors and officials, have taken several trips inside and outside India at the civic bodies' expense.

'Employees starving' On one hand, employees of the civic bodies are starving and on the other, Bharatiya Janata Party

leaders are using its funds for their trips, alleged AAP leader Durgesh Pathak.

Declare within 48 hrs' He said AAP demands that the BJP-ruled civic bodies publish a white paper declaring all such trips taken by the BJP councillors or Mayors within 48 hours. The Aam Aadmi Party called for a probe into the use of public funds that were allegedly spent on tours.

CM YK

By-election will set the tone for 2022 polls'

All efforts must be made to secure win, Delhi Congress tells booth-level workers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Ahead of the upcoming by-election to five municipal corporations ward, the Delhi Congress held a meeting on Sunday. The booth-level workers were told that this by-election will set the tone and tenor for the civic body general elections due in 2022 and all efforts must be made to secure a win for the party.

Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar and AICC in-charge of Delhi Shakti Singh Golih told workers that they should reach out at the



grass-root level and expose before the people the corruption, failures, incompe-

tence and inaction of both the BJP and AAP governments.

Mr. Golih said the people of Delhi have been suffering for the past seven years as the BJP and the AAP governments have only been accusing each other of corruption, administrative failures and fund misuse without providing any development.

He said Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, also the Finance Minister, was canvassing in the local body elections in Ahmedabad, which proves the party's lopsided priority regarding Delhi where sanitation workers had to go on strike for their salaries.

40 shanties gutted in blaze in Okhla area

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Forty shanties were gutted and six animals died after a fire broke out near Hari-kesh Nagar metro station in south-east Delhi's Okhla Phase II in the early hours of Sunday, said officials.

A senior officer said the fire broke out at a *katran* [waste cloth cutting gow-down] and spread to the shanties. A truck present at the spot was also gutted. He said the cause of the fire was being ascertained.

Twenty-six fire tenders were deployed and the blaze was brought under control, the DFS said.

dent at Okhla. I am constantly in touch with the fire department and the district administration, people are being provided with all possible help," he said.

A senior officer said the fire broke out at a *katran* [waste cloth cutting gow-down] and spread to the shanties. A truck present at the spot was also gutted. He said the cause of the fire was being ascertained.

Twenty-six fire tenders were deployed and the blaze was brought under control, the DFS said.

Timings

DELHI

MONDAY, FEB. 08
RISE 07:05 SET 18:06
RISE 04:11 SET 14:38
TUESDAY, FEB. 09
RISE 07:05 SET 18:07
RISE 05:12 SET 15:39
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 10
RISE 07:04 SET 18:08
RISE 06:06 SET 16:41

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	23	07
Safdarjung	23	07
Palam	21	09

Delhi Palam Today
25°C A cold morning to prevail with shallow fog/mist. Light dry winds and comfortable day.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
26°C Dry comfortable weather during day and cold morning would prevail.

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IN BRIEF

Minimum temp. settles at 8.3 degrees Celsius

NEW DELHI
Delhiites woke up to shallow fog, with the minimum temperature settling at 8.3 degrees Celsius on Sunday, the India Meteorological Department said. The minimum temperature was one notch below the season's average, Met officials said. The weatherman has forecast mainly clear sky during the day time. The maximum temperature is likely to hover around 23°C Celsius. The minimum temperature is likely settle at 8°C on Monday.

HC refuses to recognise 'fake' marriage of couple

'Can't leave culprit only because dispute was settled amicably'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has refused to recognise a marriage performed in an Arya Samaj Mandir according to the Hindu Vedic rites and customs between a Muslim man named Akhtar, who falsely represented himself as Shiva, and a Hindu woman.

The incident of impersonation came to light after the woman made a complaint at a police station here in December last year that Akhtar concealed his identity and introduced himself as Shiva before they became intimate and started having a physical relationship.

The woman stated in the FIR that Akhtar took her to the Arya Samaj Mandir and got married there. She also stated that in the marriage certificate he has given his name as Akhtar.

The woman complained that soon after their marriage, Akhtar started demanding money and when she visited his parents, she was driven away by them.

Quash FIR
In January this year, Akhtar moved the High Court seeking to quash the FIR on the



ground that the parties have come to a compromise as the woman had pardoned him and they are willing to live as husband and wife.

Forged Aadhaar cards

In response to the plea, Delhi Police in its status report stated that Akhtar hid his identity and was sexually exploiting the woman for five years.

The status report mentioned that Akhtar has even forged Aadhaar cards and have two such cards, one in the name of Akhtar and the second in the name of Shiva.

The report also stated that the marriage certificate of Akhtar and the woman, was verified from the Trust concerned and the same was found to be a fake one.

Taking into consideration the facts of the case, Justice

Subramonium Prasad rejected Akhtar's plea to quash the FIR noting: "This is not a matrimonial dispute between the husband and wife for the reason that the petitioner [Akhtar] has not married the respondent No.2 [the woman]."

"The marriage certificate is found to be a fake one and in any event, the petitioner could not have married the respondent No.2/complainant in Arya Samaj Mandir according to the Hindu Vedic rites and customs," the court noted.

Societal interest

"A reading of the allegations in the FIR and the status report, it is evident that the petitioner has been accused of serious offences like rape and forgery, having a bearing on vital societal interest and these offences cannot be construed to be merely private or civil disputes but rather will have an effect on the society at large," the High Court ruled.

"In crimes which seriously endanger the well-being of the society, it is not safe to leave the crime doer only because he and the victim have settled the dispute amicably," it remarked.

IIT-D finds way for low-cost cleaner fuel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

which was the lowest in the last 10 months. The national capital had recorded 96 COVID-19 cases on January 27, the lowest in over nine months.

The total figures in the city since the pandemic began now stands at 6,36,035 cases and the death toll stands at 10,879 cases. The tally of active cases on Sunday dropped to 1,112 from 1,174 the previous day. There are 465 patients in home isolation.

The total figures in the city since the pandemic began now stands at 6,36,035 cases and the death toll stands at 10,879 cases. The tally of active cases on Sunday dropped to 1,112 from 1,174 the previous day. There are 465 patients in home isolation.

The Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, on Sunday said that its researchers have come up with a way to generate clean fuel hydrogen from water at a low-cost, which is a significant step towards efforts across the globe that are being made to look for cleaner and greener energy sources.

A group primarily from the Department of Chemical Engineering under the supervision of Sreedevi Upadhyayula had taken up the research for clean fuel production at low cost that was funded by the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Energy Centre (OEC).

Split water

"The researchers have successfully split water by a process known as Sulphur-Iodine (SI) thermochemical hydrogen cycle to generate low-cost, clean hydrogen fuel for industrial consumption. Hydrogen gas, a viable choice as a renewable substitute for fossil fuels, can help mitigate emissions," IIT Delhi said.

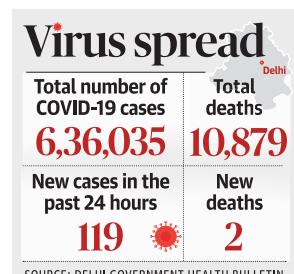
Professor Upadhyayula speaking about the achievement said that there is an imminent need to switch over to renewable energy sources such as water.

City records 119 new infections

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Capital on Sunday recorded 119 new COVID-19 cases along with two deaths and 179 recoveries over a 24-hour period.

The total number of tests conducted according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government over the past 24-hours was 54,247 with a positivity rate of 0.22%. Out of the total number of tests conducted, 34,102 were RT-PCR tests



and 20,145 rapid antigen tests, the bulletin said.

The fatality count was two on Sunday which was same as on February 2.

HC asks govt., AIIMS to facilitate free treatment of children with rare diseases

Plea states treatment is available and administered at AIIMS

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has asked the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to obtain instructions on how two minor brothers suffering from a rare disease could be provided free treatment.

Justice Prathiba M. Singh listed the case for further hearing on February 19 along with various other pleas filed on behalf of several children suffering from other rare diseases.

The two children, who are two and three years old respectively, are suffering from Mucopolysaccharidosis II or MPS II (Hunter Syndrome, Attenuated Type)

which is a rare disease that is passed on in families. It mostly affects boys and their bodies cannot break down a kind of sugar that builds bones, skin, tendons and other tissues.

Cost of treatment
They have approached the High Court seeking direction to the Centre and AIIMS to provide them uninterrupted treatment free of cost.

The two brothers, in their separate petitions filed through their father Ravi Jhawar, said they started facing difficulties and certain changes in their bodies in September and December 2019.

The plea said the children were examined by doctors at

the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital and AIIMS and after examination and tests, they were diagnosed with MPS II. It added that the treatment of the rare disease is available and administered at AIIMS.

The petition said the annual cost of treatment for one patient would be between ₹80 lakh to ₹1 crore and the income of their father is nominal and it would be impossible for him to bear the cost of treatment.

"Without the financial support of the respondent no. 1 [Centre], the petitioner cannot be medically treated in view of paucity of funds. The petitioner is only concerned with medicine and not with any direct financial help," the petition said.

The plea said the children were examined by doctors at

Nine-month-old Iraqi boy gets new lease of life at city hospital

He underwent liver transplant considered risky at his age

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A nine-month-old boy from Iraq got a new lease of life after undergoing liver transplant at a hospital in Delhi.

Such a transplant is considered risky among those aged less than one year. However, doctors of Manipal Hospitals here took up the challenge and performed the nine-hour-long surgery on Ali Hamad on January 3.

Hamad's mother donated a part of her liver to save her son's life.

Hamad was discharged from the hospital on January

Published by N. Ravi at Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860, Anna Salai, Chennai-600002 and Printed by S. Ramanujam at HT Media Ltd. Plot No. 8, Udyog Vihar, Greater Noida Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201306, on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or representation made in respect of any products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director(s), or employee(s) of this newspaper/ company be held responsible in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

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CM YK

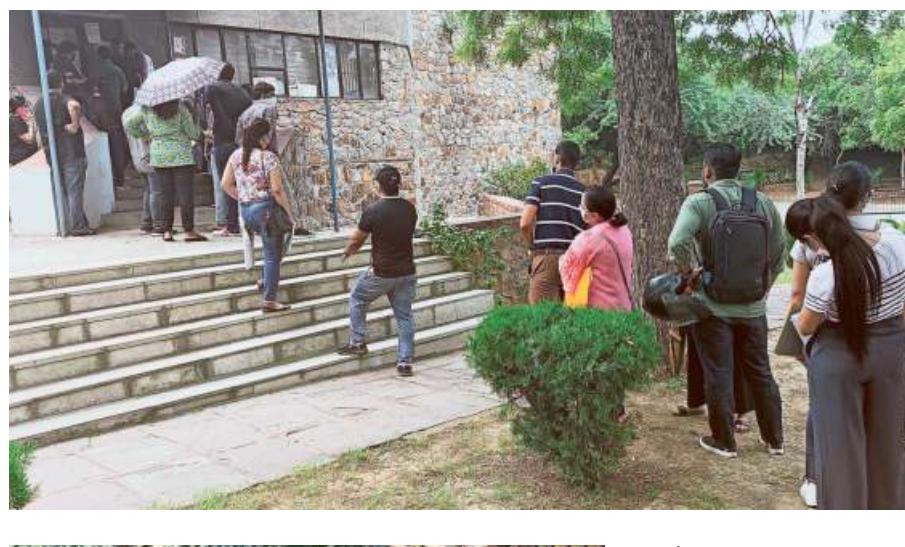
Getting transcripts no longer a hassle

As per the new measure, DU students can apply online and get it by post

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

Delhi University is set to introduce an online mode for the application of transcripts for students and alumni, a step designed to ease the rather tedious process. According to senior DU officials, the facility will be available by February 15.

In the past, the university had received several complaints from students pertaining to the lengthy process of procuring transcripts. With several students requiring transcripts to apply for jobs or joining universities abroad and their grievances mounting, the matter was brought to the notice of the university officials.



Students wait to get transcripts at the DU South Campus. With the introduction of the new system, they will be able to apply for their college transcripts on the online portal; students on the campus. ■ V.V. KRISHNAN AND SANDEEP SAXENA

my transcripts a while ago because there was no option for an online mode yet. I had to physically visit the examination branch. I need my college transcript so that I am able to provide it to my employers. It has become a task to keep tracking the process as I do not live in Delhi currently. Travelling to the city just to retrieve the transcript is not a viable option, especially under the current circumstances."

"There are people I know who had to visit campus multiple times over weeks before the transcript is ready. If the university is indeed planning to launch an online mode of application and even postal delivery, it will be a welcome change."

Shristi Dutt (name changed), who graduated from Delhi University in 2018 said: "I had applied for

"Once the transcript is ready, students can either collect it from the exam branch or they can request the branch to post it to their address. For this, they have to pay an additional fee for the postal charges. These steps are being taken by the examination department to streamline the entire process," Mr. Rawat said.

Mechanisms will be installed to restrict the number of applications from a particular IP address will be permitted. It will be restricted so that commercial centres, who apply on behalf of others and so on, are not involved. Students can directly apply.

The university will also provide the option of getting the transcripts delivered to the registered postal address, which was not the case before.

DO YOU WANT TO BECOME AN IAS / IPS OFFICER?



OPPORTUNITY FOR UPSC ASPIRANTS FROM DELHI SCHOOLS TO HAVE DIRECT CONVERSATION WITH YOUNG IAS / IPS OFFICERS

SECOND SESSION:

Meet two young officers in this session and have an open interaction with them

Monday, February 08, 2021 at 3 pm onwards

In conversation with

Sh. Udit Prakash (IAS – 2007)

Director Education, Delhi Govt.

Sh. Ingit Pratap Singh (IPS – 2011)

Deputy Commissioner of Police,

South West District, Delhi Police

Delhi government has initiated a program for the UPSC aspirants from Delhi schools to give them better insights about UPSC exam preparation. Under this program, every month young IAS/IPS officers interact with the students and share their life experiences and strategies for exam preparation. This session is second in series of this program.

For registration, interested students may send their name, class and full name of their school over WhatsApp to

8130266666

THE HINDU
India's National Newspaper

DIP/Shabdgarh/D/0105/20-21

प्रियंका सरकार अमृता अमृता

Directorate of Education, Government of NCT of Delhi



Two held for murder of elderly couple in Noida

Victims related to former CM of M.P.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NOIDA (U.P.)

With the arrest of two men, the Uttar Pradesh police on Sunday claimed to have solved the murder case of an elderly couple related to former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath in Greater Noida.

Four persons were allegedly involved in the killing of Narendra Nath, around 70, and his wife Suman, around 65, whose bodies were found at their home on Friday morning after a house party, according to the police.

Those held have been identified as Dev Sharma and Bishan Singh Bhaduriya, both natives of Madhya Pradesh, while those at large are Rohit Balmiki and Subhash Ahirwar, both from Uttar Pradesh, an officer said.

According to the police, Narendra Nath had loaned around ₹2 lakh on interest to Rohit, who did not intend to pay back and hence allegedly hatched a plan to eliminate the elderly couple with the help of his friends.

Notice Inviting Tender

PUNJAB STATE GRAINS PROCUREMENT CORPORATION (PUNGRAIN) Anaj Bhawan, Sector-39C, Chandigarh.

E-Tender for purchase of HDPE Monofilament Meshnets BMS 2021-22

Online bids under two bid system i.e. Technical Bid and Financial Bid are invited for supply of HDPE Monofilament Meshnets to State Procurement Agencies for storage of wheat during RMS 2021-22 in the State of Punjab. Bids can be submitted from 11:30 AM on 08.02.2021 till 10:00 AM on 09.03.2021 through e-tendering portal of Govt. of Punjab i.e. <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. The detailed terms and conditions are also available on the website www.foodsuppb.gov.in. The cost of tender form (non-refundable) is Rs 5900/- including 18% GST.

Technical bids will be opened on 09.03.2021 at 11:00 A.M. in the Committee Room, Anaj Bhawan, Sector-39C, Chandigarh in the presence of bidders who may wish to be present. The date and time of opening of financial bids will be notified online to technically eligible bidders.

Note: Tenders will be accepted through e-Tendering only. Any further communication will be done through e-Tendering site in the form of addendum/corrigendum.

DPR PB - NA/12/690/2021/1344

Managing Director PUNGRAIN

Notice Inviting Tender

PUNJAB STATE GRAINS PROCUREMENT CORPORATION (PUNGRAIN) Anaj Bhawan, Sector-39C, Chandigarh.

E-Tender for purchase of LDPE Black polythene Covers for RMS 2021-22

Online bids under two bid system i.e. Technical Bid and Financial Bid are invited for supply of LDPE Black Polythene Covers to State Procurement Agencies for storage of wheat during RMS 2021-22 in the State of Punjab. Bids can be submitted from 01:00 PM on 08.02.2021 till 10:30 AM on 09.03.2021 through e-tendering portal of Govt. of Punjab i.e. <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. The detailed terms and conditions are also available on the website www.foodsuppb.gov.in. The cost of tender form (non-refundable) is Rs 5900/- including 18% GST.

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DPR PB - NA/12/691/2021/1345

Managing Director PUNGRAIN

PLUCKING RIGHTS OF CASHEW

- It is intended to issue plucking rights of CASHEW from the trees standing on the defence land at Gopalpur Military Station for the period up to 01 Jul 2021.
- Interested parties may collect the Offer Form and details of Terms and Conditions from 'QMG' Branch, Headquarters Army Air Defence College between 0900 hours to 1300 hours on all working days from 01 Mar to 05 Mar 21 at the cost of Rs 500/- (Rupees five hundred only).
- Offer forms collected by interested parties during previous invitation of bids for the award of plucking rights, but not utilized by them, will not be acceptable for the current invitation of bids.
- Offer Forms should be deposited in a sealed envelope, "BID FOR PLUCKING RIGHTS OF CASHEW" duly marked on top addressed EC) QMG Branch, Headquarters Army Air Defence College, PIN 928992, C/O 99 APO.
- Offer Forms duly completed may be put in a sealed box in 'QMG' Branch, Headquarters Army Air Defence College between 0900h to 1300h from 08 Mar 21 to 09 Mar 21 or can be sent by registered post so as to reach Headquarters Army Air Defence College by 1300 hours on 09 Mar 21 along with Bank Draft only as security deposit.
- Security Deposit** Security Deposit in the form of bank draft only and as per Terms and Conditions will be enclosed along with the Offer Form before posting or putting the Offer Form in the sealed box in 'QMG' Branch, Headquarters Army Air Defence College.
- The Offer Forms will be opened at 0900 hours on 10 Mar 21 by a Board of Officers.

Colonel Q
Headquarters Army Air Defence College C/o 99 APO

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

1st year Remembrance

V.C. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN
D.O.B-05.08.1944 D.O.D-09.02.2020

We will miss you forever but cherish all the moments and the memories

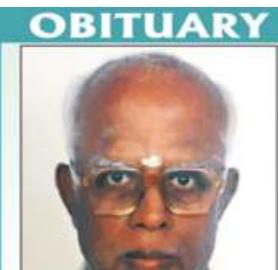
Dr Meera And Dr Ragavan

Mrs Vanitha and MR Balaji

Grand daughters and Grandsons

All of Sarma family and all Friends

DEATH OBITUARY



P. Balasubramanian

Rtd. Chief Manager, Bank of Baroda (fondly known as Palladam Balu, age 79), reached heavenly abode on 7th Feb. 2021.

Mourned by: Wife Radha Balan

Sons: B. Muralidharan, B. Kumaresan,

Daughters-in-law: Aruna Muralidharan, Srividya Kumaresan.

Grand Children: Keerthana Muralidharan, Srikrishna Kumaresan. Sister: R. Lalitha

Resl.: Flat F3, Block 2, Jain's Swarnakamal Apartments, 69 Arcot Road, Saligrama, Chennai-63.

Mobile No.: 9841047487, 9840847476, 9820457677

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PUBLIC NOTICE

General public are hereby informed at large

that my client Mrs. Meena Dalia Late Y.L.

Malik R/o D/31, Old Rajinder Nagar, New

Delhi-110060 is having some property

disputes with her elder sister Smt. Poonam

Gautam in respect of ground, first floor of

above mentioned property.

Therefore, I am sending notice to the above

mentioned both ground and first floors in

the above said property, the same shall be

done by the prospective buyers/tenant

under on the condition that the same

should be bought and responsible for any

kind of illegal deals and transaction

whatsoever is done by above named

Poonam Khatri regarding the above said

property.

Advocates Datti High Court Env. No. D/97/1987

Chamber No. C/105, C.J. Joseph Block, Tis Hazari Courts, Delh-110054

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that

I RAZA IQBAL S/O UMAR FARUK

residing at H.No-198 Shahpur Jat,

New Delhi-110049, declare that

name of mine and my mother has

been wrongly written as

RAJAUULLAH and SAYARA BANO

respectively, in my all educational

documents. The actual name of

mine and my mother are RAZA

IQBAL and SAIRAH BANO

respectively, which may be

amended accordingly.

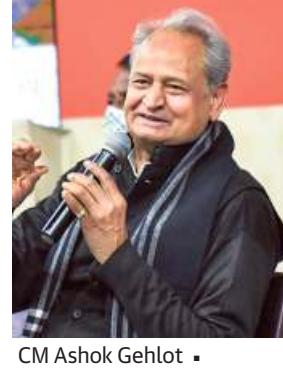
Congress wins majority of local body heads' posts in Rajasthan

It is because of welfare steps and hard work of party workers, says PCC chief

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT JAIPUR

The ruling Congress on Sunday won the posts of chairpersons in 48 of the 90 urban local bodies in 20 districts of Rajasthan, which went to polls recently. The Opposition BJP formed the boards in 37 municipal bodies with its chairpersons declared elected, while the independent candidates were elected heads of three local bodies.

As many as 197 candidates were in the fray for the municipal bodies where the boards were to be formed. The Congress was in a position of advantage after securing 1,194 of the 3,034 wards,



CM Ashok Gehlot ■

that went to polls, with the election of BJP's Brajendra Hada as the Mayor. Of the 80 wards in Ajmer, the Congress had won 18 and the BJP 48.

The urban local bodies for which the polling was held on January 28 included nine municipal councils and 80 municipalities. One candidate of Nationalist Congress Party and another of Rashtriya Loktantrik Party made it to the posts of chairpersons in Bikaner district's Nokha municipality and Nagaur district's Mundwa municipality, respectively.

Pradesh Congress Committee president Govind Singh Dotsara said the ruling

party had registered an "impressive victory" in the elections to the local bodies' heads as a result of its measures for public welfare and hard work of party workers at the grassroots.

'First of its kind'

AICC general secretary in charge of Rajasthan Ajay Makken said the Congress victory in the State's urban areas was the "first of its kind", as the party candidates had won in 120 of the 195 urban bodies where the chairpersons were elected in the polls since November 2019. He said the BJP had been restricted to just 74 chairpersons in these elections.

'Polls in H.P. may be on party symbols'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA DHARAMSALA

Elections in municipal corporations of Himachal Pradesh may be held on party symbols, and the government will amend the rules needed for this, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said on Sunday.

Station House Officer Sahaswan Pankaj Lavia said the postmortem was being conducted.

On reports that Mr. Harvir had left behind a note levelling corruption charges at the tehsil officials, the SHO said he was yet to see the alleged note but had heard about it being "viral" on social media.

Suspension sought BSP district president Lakhan Singh demanded the arrest and suspension of the SDM. An FIR should be registered against the officials, he demanded.

The police said Harvir was referred to a higher centre in Budaun for better treatment but he died. He died while he

tained patta in 2006. Harvir's brother alleged that despite paying a bribe to the officials, his work was not done and instead when Harvir went to the tehsil he was abused, insulted with casteist remarks and even slapped by an official. Aggrieved by this, he consumed poison, said Harvir's brother.

The brother of the deceased and the local BSP outfit demanded action against the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) concerned.

Harvir, BSP's booth in charge, consumed poison at the Sahaswan tehsil office. His brother told mediapersons that Harvir had gone to the local kanungo and the SDM regarding a transfer of land for which he had ob-

tained patta in 2006. Harvir's brother alleged that despite paying a bribe to the officials, his work was not done and instead when Harvir went to the tehsil he was abused, insulted with casteist remarks and even slapped by an official. Aggrieved by this, he consumed poison, said Harvir's brother.

Suspension sought BSP district president Lakhan Singh demanded the arrest and suspension of the SDM. An FIR should be registered against the officials, he demanded.

The police said Harvir was referred to a higher centre in Budaun for better treatment but he died. He died while he

Father of slain youth booked for 'demanding the body'

Class 11 student was buried in a far-off place

PEERZADA ASHIQ SRINAGAR

The father of a youth, who was killed in the alleged La-waypora fake encounter on December 30, is among seven booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act by the J&K Police for organising a protest on Friday, where they demanded the return of the body.

A police officer confirmed to *The Hindu* that Mushtaq Ahmad Wani, father of Athar Mushtaq Wani from Pulwama, who was among the three killed in the encounter, was booked for "organising illegal procession under criminal conspiracy and were abetting anti-national elements".



■ MADHUMITHA SRINIVASAN

The education sector was one of the first to react and respond to the pandemic by shutting down institutions to ensure the safety of the students. In mid-April 2020, at the peak of the pandemic, nearly 1.57 billion students – more than 90% of total enrolled learners – were affected as educational institutions closed across 200 countries. According to a report by UNESCO, in India, 28.6 crore children from pre-primary to secondary levels have been affected by the pandemic.

With regular education having been disrupted for close to a year due to the lockdown, the focus has largely been on learning loss. Experts feel that the mental health consequences, the resulting isolation and the socio-economic changes brought about by the pandemic have also to be addressed. This will help mitigate a larger men-

Time to establish emotional resilience

The pandemic-led disruption could be the opportunity to integrate SEL programmes into mainstream education, says Dr. Anantha Duraiappah, Director, UNESCO-MGIEP

tal health disaster in the making. This is where Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) can play a significant role.

Usually on the fringes of formal education, SEL is yet to earn its rightful place in the Indian education system. The New Delhi-based UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) sees this crisis as the right opportunity for SEL to establish its relevance. The institute's initiatives are designed to mainstream SEL in education systems, innovate digital pedagogies and to put youth as global

citizens at the centre of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development in order to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 4.7. In this context, Dr. Anantha Duraiappah, Director of the UNESCO MGIEP, shares his views.

What is the relevance of SEL in the context of the Indian education ecosystem?

SEL is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set, and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for the self and others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. SEL also helps build emotional resilience, which is the need of the hour today.

For long, SEL has been an unrecognised concept and missing from the Indian education system, until the recent National Education Policy was announced. This approach will help develop more resilience among individuals, while also inculcating empathy and compassion to help them live in peace with themselves by tackling stress, anxiety and depression and with each other by understanding the other better and with Nature.

How can SEL practices become a part of mainstream education?

There is a confluence of research from multiple studies showing that students who participate in SEL programmes demonstrate significantly improved social and emotional competencies, attitudes, and behavioural adjustment. In addition, research indicates that they also outperformed those who did not participate in on indices of academic achievement by 11 percentile points.

Integrating SEL activities within classroom lessons and as part of core subject areas can be a good starting point. SEL must be woven into all aspects of learning and teaching in schools and not as an independent subject; i.e. it must be practised when teaching mathematics, science, history, civics, geography ... are taught. In this way, we build the intellectual and emotional intelligence simultaneously.

Are SEL programmes gaining more prominence now, especially due to the pandemic?

People are gradually understanding the importance of adopting a holistic approach in education. This is particularly true during the pandemic that changed the way we func-

tioned. In this period of unprecedented challenges, social distancing, and uncertainty, children are likely in need of extra social and emotional support. The new-normal of learning has further increased their fear, anxiety, unease, and stress. As social distancing and learning at home continue, they may experience the negative impacts of isolation. This has further accelerated the need for SEL.

Is the digital space a suitable platform for the delivery of SEL programmes, considering that many beneficiaries are from the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)?

The digital divide is narrowing and, frankly, we must see a future where every individual is connected digitally. The possession of a digital device is a must just as printed books are a must today. It is the future and not including beneficiaries from EWS communities is further disempowering them. Rather than arguing that EWS communities are not able to access online learning systems, we must be arguing for programmes that ensure they have access to these options.

What are the lessons to be learnt from the pandemic in the context of SEL programmes?

The COVID-19 pandemic has alerted us to the importance of emotional resiliency. Experts have predicted that the frequency of such major disruptions will only increase. Turbulent times require us to not only hone our intellectual and rational skills but also our emotional resiliency skills. It is a necessary condition if we are to build peaceful and sustainable societies. Remember, just having an intellectual understanding of SEL is not sufficient. We must be given the tools to practice mindfulness, empathy and compassion.

SCHOLARSHIPS

IIT-Gandhinagar Department of Physics Post-Doctoral Fellowship

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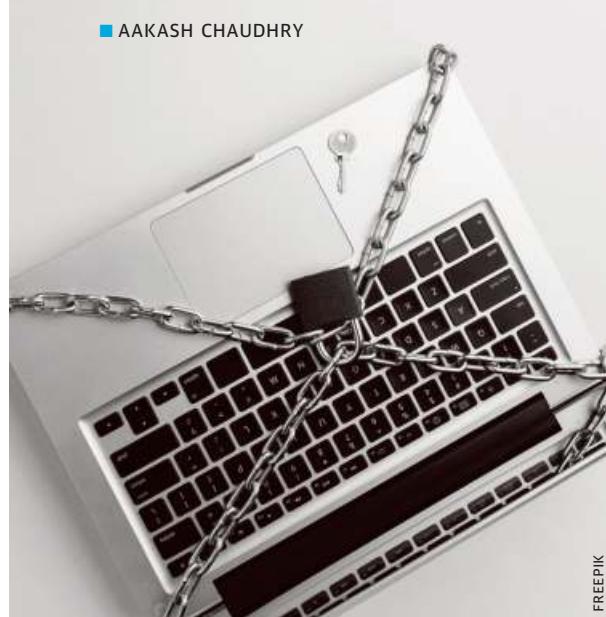
Courtesy: buddy4study.com

VALUE ADD

Safety first

With people depending on the Internet more than ever before, Safe Internet Day (February 9) has become even more important

■ AAKASH CHAUDHRY



With the entire world being practically shut down because of the Coronavirus pandemic since early 2020, most people ended up spending more of their lives online. Reports suggest, in 2020, India had nearly 700 million Internet users across the country.

Getting comfortable with working from home, seeking entertainment on streaming services, learning new skills online, indulging in online shopping, the lockdown made us adapt to changes which we never thought was possible.

Come 2021 and we find

ourselves thriving on the opportunities the Internet has to offer. However, like everything else, this too has its share of disadvantages. Online safety has become a matter of great concern, across the globe, especially given the number of younger people who are now using the Internet.

Threats
The Internet has truly transformed how young people learn, socialise and communicate today, but the pressure to share intimate images, rising cases of cyberbullying and cyber

scams, exposure to content that may promote self-harm, anorexia etc., make the youth more vulnerable and puts them at a greater risk.

The majority of young people today use smartphones for everything. Numerous apps are downloaded every day, thereby exposing sensitive personal information. With the boom in online shopping, financial information is knowingly or unknowingly shared to make online payments and thereby increasing the risk of sharing sensitive data.

Students, especially those in college, rely heavily on the Internet for their projects. Every time they open a link, pop-ups and links to unsafe websites appear. Clicking on these can lead to malware that can damage their devices and steal critical personal information.

Moreover, online scams in the form of contests, discounts, and free goodies, trick youngsters into sharing personal information, thereby leading to a risk of identity theft.

Apart from this, online grooming, cyberbullying and peer pressure, online social abuse and exploitation, and fatal online challenges such as the Blue Whale Challenge, which claimed over hundred lives across the world, are constant threats.

The writer is MD, Aakash Educational Services Limited.

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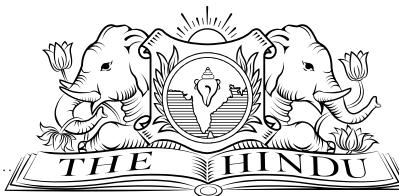
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Staying watchful

The RBI cannot afford to drop its guard on vigilance over prices with interest rates so low

The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has unexpectedly yet again left benchmark interest rates unchanged and reiterated that it will continue with its accommodative stance, at least into the next fiscal year, in order to secure a sustained economic recovery. The central bank's rate setting panel has reasoned that while there are promising signs in the welter of data that it has looked at, the ongoing recovery is "still to gather firm traction" making it crucial to provide continued policy support for restoring growth. The sharp deceleration in retail inflation in December, when headline CPI inflation eased to 4.6% after being stuck above the RBI's upper tolerance threshold of 6% for six straight months, clearly appears to have smoothed the brow for the six members of the committee and provided them the space to stay focused in the near term on prioritising growth. The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme as well as the Union Budget's proposals to give a boost to infrastructure, and innovation and research, among other things, have been recognised as factors likely to restore confidence and lend a fillip to the growth momentum, respectively. Rural demand's persistent resilience is what the MPC sees undergirding the demand recovery, aided, in its view, by good prospects for agriculture. And here, while overall rabi sowing has been 2.9% higher year-on-year as on January 29, the farmers' agitation involving cultivators from key crop-growing States including Punjab, Haryana and U.P. is a cause for concern as a protracted impasse has the potential to disrupt farm output threatening both growth and inflation dynamics.

The central bank has also understandably sought to privilege its role as the government's debt manager through a clutch of regulatory announcements accompanying the latest monetary policy. The two main measures involve extending the enhanced 'held-to-maturity' dispensation for banks buying debt issued by the Centre and States by a year up to March 31, 2023, and allowing retail investors to make direct online purchases of government securities via a 'Retail Direct' gilt securities account held with the RBI. With the Centre alone targeting to borrow as much as ₹12-lakh crore at the gross level in the coming financial year, the debt manager faces the unenviable task of ensuring that the flood of debt not only finds takers at a price that does not push up borrowing costs for the rest of the real economy but also of trying and preventing it from crowding out demand for private investment credit. With interest rates being held at near record lows and inflation still persisting above the RBI's benchmark repo rate of 4% resulting in negative real returns for savers, the RBI can ill afford to drop its guard on vigilance over prices.

A closed Open

Tennis begins a new season with caution and optimism in equal measure

Australian Open 2021, starting in Melbourne on Monday, will be one of sport's boldest experiments in the coronavirus era. It can indeed draw upon the experiences of the US Open and French Open, which were successfully held last year even as the pandemic raged in North America and Europe. But the backdrop Down Under is markedly different. Australia has been commended for its COVID-19 response, which has seen robust testing and contact-tracing strategies employed alongside severe lockdowns and border closures to limit the total number of cases to 28,850 and deaths to 909. To airlift more than 1,000 participants from across the world to such an environment has understandably raised hackles in Australian society. That there were eight positive cases among those associated with the tournament did not help, especially after Victoria – of which Melbourne is the most populous city – recently conjured a 61-day streak without a single locally acquired case. Tennis Australia has left no stone unturned, pushing the Major back by three weeks, spending a whopping \$40 million on players' quarantine, organising six warm-up events including the ATP Cup, keeping the overall prize purse same as previous year's nearly \$55 million and securing permission to allow up to 30,000 fans a day. But last week, one positive case at a tournament hotel was all it took to eliminate a full day's tennis and send 500-odd players and staff into isolation and testing, showing how tenuous things are.

However, once the first ball is struck, events leading up are unlikely to distract from the on-court excellence. Barring 20-time Major winner Roger Federer, who is recovering from a knee injury, the clear favourite having triumphed a record eight times here, will want to add to his 17 Slams, while Dominic Thiem, the reigning US Open champion and a losing finalist in Melbourne last year, will look to burnish his credentials as a regular title-contender. Among women, World No.1 and home favourite Ashleigh Barty returns after skipping most of 2020, while a fit-again Serena Williams targets a record-equalling 24th Major. Defending champion Sofia Kenin and the current leading lady of the sport, Naomi Osaka, are the other top draws. Surprise French Open winner Iga Swiatek, and the trio of Daniil Medvedev, Stefanos Tsitsipas and Alexander Zverev among men will be watched with interest. Sumit Nagal, the lone Indian in the singles draw, would like to ruffle a few feathers. But when the mood is of cautious optimism, nothing can be taken for granted.

Infrastructure push now, fiscal consolidation later

The Union Budget has provided reasonable stimulus to growth, but concerns remain about fiscal deficit



C. RANGARAJAN &
D.K. SRIVASTAVA

The fiscal year 2020-21 has been an extraordinary one, where India had to face an acute economic crisis triggered by a non-economic factor – a pandemic. The National Statistical Office has estimated that the economy would shrink by 7.7%. There are other estimates which put the shrinkage at an even higher level. Against this background, there were huge expectations from the Union Budget regarding stimulus to growth. The Budget, taken as a whole, has provided reasonable stimulus to growth through a change in the composition of expenditure and other measures to improve the climate for investment. But concerns remain about fiscal deficit.

Transparency versus stimulus
Proposed growth in central expenditure, both in 2020-21 Revised Estimates (RE) and in 2021-22 Budget Estimates (BE), indicates the extent of contemplated fiscal stimulus. Since three quarters of 2020-21 have already passed, the expenditure push in 2020-21 RE over actual expenditure in 2019-20 has to be implemented in the last quarter. Controller General of Accounts data for expenditures already incurred in the first nine months of 2020-21 indicate that for reaching the projected RE levels, the growth required in the last quarter of the current fiscal year over the corresponding period of the previous year would be 102.9% for total expenditure, 109.9% for revenue expenditure, and 60.3% for capital expenditure. These up-

surges appear extraordinary. This involves transferring on to the Budget, the accumulated food subsidies amounting to ₹2,54,600 crore given to the Food Corporation of India through National Small Savings Fund (NSSF) loans. The balance of subsidies amounting to ₹1,68,018 crore would be the food subsidy pertaining to 2020-21 (RE). This is a desirable change towards transparency. Taking revenue expenditure figures as budgeted, a contraction of 2.7% is seen in 2021-22 BE over 2020-21 (RE). However, after adjusting for the NSSF-accumulated food subsidy amount, the growth in revenue expenditure in 2021-22 (BE) is 6.7%. A good part of expenditure for the last quarter of 2020-21 may also pertain to clearing unpaid dues of various stakeholders including the private sector, autonomous bodies and government-aided institutions. Clearing these payments is desirable and would add to demand. It is these overdue expenditures which would enable the government to reach the high expenditure growth levels in the last quarter of this fiscal year. The main expenditure push comes through a budgeted growth of 26.2% in capital expenditure in 2021-22. Relative to GDP, capital expenditure is expected to increase from 1.6% in 2019-20 to 2.3% in 2020-21 RE and 2.5% in 2021-22 BE, signifying a significant change in priority.

Receipts augmentation
Budgeted increase in the Centre's gross tax revenues is dependent on nominal GDP growth of 14.4%, with a buoyancy of 1.6 for direct taxes and 0.8 for indirect taxes. The assumed high buoyancy of direct taxes appears optimistic although there would be a positive base effect. The nominal income growth projected may also be optimistic.

Significant increases are



planned in non-tax revenues and non-debt capital receipts. From a contraction of 35.6% in 2020-21 (RE), non-tax revenues are budgeted to grow by 15.4% in 2021-22. This increase is mainly predicated on higher dividends from non-departmental undertakings and spectrum sales. In the case of non-debt capital receipts, mainly covering disinvestment, a budgeted growth of 304.3% in 2021-22 stands in contrast with the contraction of 32.2% in 2020-21 (RE). Disinvestment initiatives have so far yielded minimal results.

An important initiative pertains to the launching of National Monetisation Pipeline. This would be the first practical step towards asset monetisation. The pipeline may eventually start yielding revenues, but the time lags involved remain unpredictable because of various potential disputes and claims associated particularly with government-owned land. A transparent auction process needs to be set up to facilitate suitable price discovery. Slippage in revenue estimates may not be ruled out on account of realisation of lower than anticipated increases in nominal GDP growth, direct tax buoyancy, and disinvestment targets.

Infrastructure and initiatives
The budgeted increase in capital outlay would provide the central government's share to the National Infrastructure Pipeline. However, success of the infrastructure ex-

pansion plan would depend on other stakeholders of the pipeline playing their due role. These include State governments and their public sector enterprises and the private sector. Some of the proposed Budget initiatives include setting up of a Development Finance Institution (DFI) with an initial capital of ₹20,000 crore, to serve as a catalyst for facilitating infrastructure investment. In order to manage non-performing assets of public sector banks, there is a proposal to set up an Asset Reconstruction Company and an Asset Management Company. These institutional initiatives may prove to be effective. Much depends upon the fine-tuning of the operations of these institutions.

In the action taken report, the Union government has accepted the recommended vertical share of 4% for the States in the shareable pool of central taxes. The government has accepted the Fifteenth Finance Commission's recommendation for revenue deficit grants, local body grants and disaster-related grants. The scope of revenue deficit grants has been extended to cover 17 States in the initial years. The determination of these grants is not based on equalisation principle although some norms have been used in the assessment exercise. However, the government has put on hold the consideration of State-specific and sector-specific grants including performance-based incentives. The substantive issue pertains to the mode of transfers in terms of general-purpose unconditional transfers *vis-à-vis* specific purpose and conditional transfers. States had shown a preference for the former mode and it is for this reason that the 14th Finance Commission had raised the States' share from 32% to 42%. The reduction from 42% to 41% is only on account of the consideration of 28 States excluding Jammu and Kashmir be-

cause of its new status. The increasing resort to the imposition of cesses which are almost permanent have reduced the shareable pool. In fact, the States' share in the Centre's gross tax revenues is only 30% in 2021-22 (BE).

A road map

The COVID-19 shock has fortified the sharp upsurge in fiscal deficits in 2020-21 and 2021-22. The Fifteenth Finance Commission has also proposed a revised fiscal consolidation road map for the Centre and States. The Fifteenth Finance Commission has recommended the setting up of a High-Powered Intergovernmental Group to re-examine the fiscal responsibility legislations of the Centre and States. In the context of COVID-19, some economists have gone to the extent of advocating almost giving up the prudential norms. This will be a wrong lesson to learn from the crisis. The Centre has indicated taking the fiscal deficit to 4.5% of GDP by 2025-26. The Finance Commission has also indicated a similar figure.

The issue of debt sustainability can be certainly re-examined by taking into account the evolving profiles of debt, interest payments, and primary deficits relative to GDP. Fiscal deficit must be related to household savings in financial assets and the interest payments to revenue receipts. It should not be forgotten that in fiscal 2021-22, interest payments to total revenue receipts will be 45.3%, pre-empting a significant proportion of revenue receipts. We must be conscious of the burden of the rising stock of debt.

C. Rangarajan is former Chairman, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council and former Governor, Reserve Bank of India. D.K. Srivastava is Chief Policy Adviser, EY India and former Director, Madras School of Economics. The views expressed are personal

An India-EU trade pact may still remain elusive

COVID-19, Brexit and international tensions have unsettled the European Union and exacerbated its internal discords



KRISHNAN SRINIVASAN

After its invitation to British Prime Minister and arch-Brexiteer Boris Johnson to visit India, New Delhi plans to start negotiations on investment and trade agreements with the European Union (EU). These are likely to run into the same problems as the discussions that began on a comprehensive free trade agreement in 2007 but were aborted due to differences on movement of professionals, labour, human rights and environmental issues and India's high tariffs, inconsistent tax regime and non-payment of arbitral awards. Before COVID-19 and Brexit, the EU had the same GDP as the United States and was one of India's major trade and investment partners. Being the largest democracies and unions of linguistically, culturally and ethnically diverse States, both the EU and India are well suited for a special relationship, but the reality is that the status is one without any spark of mutual chemistry.

The EU now finds itself in an un-

usually turbulent situation. COVID-19, Brexit and international tensions caused by former U.S. President Donald Trump have unsettled the EU and exacerbated internal discords. The crises of 2020 obfuscated the structural lack of unity in the EU, because despite its desire for greater integration, it faces obstacles from adherence to the rule of law to a strategy for dealing with China, Russia, Turkey and Iran. After months of tortuous negotiation over Hungary and Poland's objections, member States finally agreed on a long-term budget and a COVID-19 recovery package of \$2 trillion. The two countries had opposed anti-COVID-19 support being linked to good governance, in particular, accusations of suppression of human rights and lack of independence in the judiciary.

Shadow of Euroscepticism
The EU's attempt to condition its budget on the rule of law during the pandemic and recession only sharpened the emphasis on the veto power to which every member State is entitled. Apart from the two main defaulters, many others also resiled on civil liberties, making the option of approving COVID-19 recovery funds by excluding the dissenters a proposition that would have risked a danger-



ous controversy on how united the EU should be.

It was not only Britain that spawned a populist movement agitating to leave the EU. Europe's many Eurosceptic parties now focus on preventing closer unity, which has been lacking on the eurozone and migration crises and implementing COVID-19 lockdowns. Elections are due in many EU States, including Germany and the Netherlands, which both have strong Eurosceptic movements. The Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany) is the official opposition in Germany, while in the Netherlands, Geert Wilders leads the largest opposition party.

The fear of Eurosceptic parties forces mainstream politicians, as in Britain, to adopt populist rhetoric. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte and French President Emmanuel Macron have criticised Islam and anti-sectular immigrants, a pattern repeated in other EU countries including Germany, the

Czech Republic and Austria.

Trump and a recalibration

The Trump presidency forced Europe to reassess its relationship with America, which stimulated the EU's drive for greater self-reliance in security, economics, supply chains and climate change, and an attempt to emerge as a major global pillar alongside the United States and China. While there is relief that the U.S. may now be more predictable, Europe will resist taking sides in any U.S.-China tug of war. This is underlined by the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment concluded after minimal consultation with Washington.

A common security and defence policy also causes division. Mr. Macron would like to see Europe take greater control of its security, but Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and others are uncomfortable with the prospect of building larger military capabilities, and remain content with security being subsidised by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the U.S. while they continue to engage in profitable business with China and Russia.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to riots in the Netherlands for the first time in 40 years, and the resignation of the Italian Prime Mi-

nister. It also introduced divisive vaccine nationalism into the Union. The EU hoped that its central vaccination procurement would be a symbol of solidarity, although initially some members closed their borders. Germany and France restricted exports of personal protective equipment, and there was suspicion by some about the motives of others that were hosts to big vaccine producers. Those fissures are now overshadowed by the EU's procurement programme for the bloc from AstraZeneca, Moderna and Pfizer, which warn that vaccines cannot be delivered as scheduled due to production problems despite advance payment, and the anticipated shortfall will be up to 60% in the current year's quarter. Lately, it transpires that the German government, ostensibly a strong advocate of European solidarity, had negotiated a separate vaccine contract with Pfizer in September last year.

For the EU to resolve these innumerable and diverse problems without further widening existing ruptures will require enormous political will and adroit skill. Trade agreements with India will be the least of its problems.

Krishnan Srinivasan is a former Foreign Secretary

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.

Farmers' protests

The following aspects of the farm laws are most worrying to the farmers. The laws have exempted private traders from taxes while the APMC mandis will continue to pay the taxes levied by the respective State governments. As if this were not enough, the farm laws have also done away with the stock-holding limits of food grains such as wheat and rice. The farmers understand that with such munificence from the government side, the private traders would not mind paying the farmers a price higher than the MSP for some time. But, they also understand that in the long term, this will mean the APMC mandis going out of business and the market for their produce turning a "buyer's market" with all the attendant adverse implications for the farmers. It is this concern

which makes them insist on MSP being given a statutory basis and made binding on all buyers of their produce – which the government has so far seemed loath to consider. The other point is the denial of recourse to the normal legal mechanism in the case of disputes. That said, the educated among the farmers also realise that in view of the fast-depleting water table in the two States (Punjab and Haryana), a shift from wheat and rice to other crops and horticulture by more farmers has become necessary. But that cannot happen on its own. The government will have to incentivise such a shift; and in the case of horticulture, it will also have to ensure cold storage facilities to farmers and assure price stabilisation.

G.G. MENON,
Tripunithura, Kerala

■ When the farming community, the real stakeholders, finds the farm laws unpalatable to them, the attempt to force-feed them is not an edible proposition. Without attributing any ulterior motive in framing the laws, one would feel that the 'customer is never wrong' approach would be ideal to overcome the impasse.

AYYASERI RAVEENDRANATH,
Annamalai, Kerala

■ The government should either 'accede' to the farmers' demand to repealing the three farm laws or get all places of their ongoing protests vacated without any further delay. How long can it afford to continue with its extant 'hide and seek'

stance? It obviously comes at a huge economic cost to the nation apart from causing unimaginable inconvenience to the general masses. How long will this mega show of

strength continue? More importantly, where are we headed for? One wishes that the judiciary has a solution.

S.K. GUPTA,
New Delhi

■ The face-off between the government and farmers seems to be worsening. The net result is the collateral damage: the government's claim of a revival of the disruptive movements, conspiracy theories, and of some in the West meddling in India's affairs. The moribund Opposition is gleefully fishing in troubled waters and shedding crocodile tears for farmers. It is prudent for the Centre to repeal the farm laws before the core issue is besieged by other intractable issues.

DEEPAK SINGHAL,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

The 'guardian' of rights

It was amusing to read the Prime Minister's pat for the

judiciary for safeguarding rights and personal liberty at a time when the judiciary is facing flak for turning away from the pressing issues of the life and liberty of citizens.

The kind of public adulation showered on the Prime Minister by a sitting judge of the Supreme Court would have been unthinkable a few years ago. It may be a mistake to equate the government's interests with national interests. (Page 1, "PM lauds the judiciary for safeguarding people's

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In the story titled "Munawar Faruqui gets ad-interim bail" (Feb. 6, 2021), the second paragraph stated erroneously that a three-judge bench had heard the bail plea. Actually, it was a two-judge bench.

A front-page story titled "U.S. calls for dialogue, supports right to protest" (Feb. 6, 2021, some editions) had erroneously referred to the three farm laws of 2019. It should have been 2020.

It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by phone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-2852963; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. Personal visits. The Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor are on www.thehindu.com



rights", February

The question of race in Biden's America

A grossly unfair criminal justice system will further erode African-Americans' trust in U.S. agencies



R.K. RAGHAVAN

With the din and noise of Joe Biden's inauguration as the 46th U.S. President behind us, what was striking about the horde of analyses that greeted the occasion was their disproportionate focus on the need to quickly contain the COVID-19 pandemic and to pull the economy out of the current morass. This is unexceptionable under the current, extraordinarily harrowing times. It is slightly disappointing, however, that many observers have chosen to either underplay or ignore the January 6 attack by Trump supporters on the Capitol in Washington, and the symbolism it carries for citizens.

There is a persistent fear that the rampage will launch further strikes at unexpected places and against soft targets. The ease with which the mob gained entry into the Congress precinct is an index of its destructive might. These elements do not trust the Constitution and are not reconciled to a government that vows to heal a fractured society.

A fragmented agency

The Capitol attack also highlighted the chinks in the armour of the fragmented law enforcement agencies, especially the police at the grassroots. The U.S. has more than 15,000 standalone forces under local Mayors, each of whom belongs to a political party. How can one standardise law enforcement procedures and responses in desperate situations like the one on January 6?

Federalism can no longer be an excuse for inaction in a country that is growing increasingly divided, disorderly and violent. The 50 States in the country will have to rise together to strengthen the hands of the Biden government in its efforts to unify the police and make them a reliable tool to root out lawlessness. Mr. Biden's bipartisan approach alone can bring about this reform, which cuts across crass politics. Therefore, a huge challenge awaits the Biden administration in extirpating the kind of terrorism that was fuelled by white supremacists at the cusp of the shift



D.C. National Guard personnel stand on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington during protests against the killing of George Floyd. ■ AFP

in the power centre. Domestic terrorism seems to have gained roots, and it cannot be allowed to grow if the U.S. wants a respectable place within the comity of nations.

The new regime would be assessed on its success in stemming the rot and in mending, at least partially, a criminal justice system that is widely perceived as lax and weighed against minorities, especially African-Americans. This is particularly so in the context of Mr. Biden's assurances that he will work to remove the glaring inequalities in American society. In his inaugural speech, he pulled no punches in referring to the burgeoning black-white divide.

Vice-President Kamala Harris, with her rich experience as a prosecutor and Attorney-General in California, and her multiracial identity, may be able to inject more fairness into the system. Incidentally, a few years ago, she also unveiled her own criminal justice reform measures that addressed the twin problems of mass incarceration and drug abuse.

What is predominant now in the country is the perception that African-Americans are unfairly treated by security agencies, especially the police. The healing process that Mr. Biden talks about cannot ignore the deep mistrust of most African-Americans over the alleged discriminatory treatment received by them at the hands of police and prison officials.

Disproportionate incarceration

The U.S. population is currently over 320 million. Of them, African-Americans account for around 45 million. Though they make up a large portion of the population, the crushing poverty within the community has a disturbingly negative impact on the criminal justice system. Crime is generally – if not always – believed to be proportional to economic status. Over the years, an impression, albeit not wholly supported by raw statistics, has therefore gained ground, that it is African-Americans who commit more crime per capita than the whites. This is often cited to explain the high number of African-Americans in prisons. According to

recent official statistics, although incarceration rates have been coming down, at the end of 2019, there were still 1,096 African-Americans in prisons for an aggregate of 100,000 black residents. The corresponding ratio for whites was just 214.

A similar phenomenon was witnessed decades ago, when the New York Police Department (NYPD), under its famous Chief William Bratton, introduced the controversial 'Stop-and-frisk' procedure to bring down crime. It got wide backlash from African-American leaders after it was found that more from the community were being searched than others. In the course of time, the practice had to be withdrawn for its blatant unfairness. This is another example of the lack of faith in the police's efforts to handle crime. African-Americans strongly believe that all anti-crime measures are aimed at them. This is the dilemma that faces those who believe in stern policing.

The Biden government will have to deal with this while handling disorder on the streets. While policing is essentially within the domain of States, the Federal government cannot be a mute spectator.

A non-inclusive force

There is another problem that both Federal and State governments face. Mr. Biden believes in diversity in governance. In this respect, there is no arm that needs greater attention than the police. Despite all efforts over the decades, the police remain a heavily white-dominated force. African-Americans are unwilling to join the police for several reasons, the most important of which is the fear of harassment at the hands of their white supervisors. A magical formula will have to be worked out to make police forces reflect the diversity of the country.

One can go on expanding on the list of reforms that are needed for criminal justice agencies in the U.S., but what is most urgently needed is restoring the police's credibility in the eyes of African-Americans. This is more easily said than done. A bipartisan approach alone can manage to achieve this.

The author is a graduate in criminal justice from Temple University, Philadelphia and a former visiting fellow at the Harvard Law School and Rutgers University

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

Debunking vs. prior restraint

The reductionist role of pre-censorship heavily undermines free speech and the core values of democracy



A.S. PANNEERSELVAM

been reduced to a throw of the dice.

AHA statement

One of the respected academic associations of the world, the American Historical Association (AHA), which was established in 1884, has pointed out the inherent contradictions in the approach of the Indian government. On February 5, it issued a statement against a recent policy guideline of the Centre that mandates obtaining prior approval from the Ministry of External Affairs if academics want to convene virtual international conferences, seminars, or training sessions on subjects that are "clearly related to India's internal matters".

The AHA statement said: "Because of the pandemic, many scholarly exchanges that in normal times would involve foreign travel now take place online. This new policy is likely to affect a wide range of scholarly exchanges that are critical to the free international expression of ideas. By monitoring and potentially censoring or cancelling the virtual and online communications of scholars in India, the Ministry of Education threatens the very foundation of those exchanges. The policy puts Indian scholars at a disadvantage in ongoing discussions among scholars in all disciplines, including history."

In this ironic reality, where there is a loud emphasis that all transactions – from literary to economics, from seeking judicial intervention to academic pursuits – be made digital, there is a deafening silence about the digital-access barrier. Pre-emptive strike is a military idea and it would be ruinous to bring its elements to a democratic space, where mediating contending ideas is essential to uphold fundamental rights and the norms of a civilised society.

News ombudsmen are wary of endorsing prior restraint, a term used to explain pre-censorship. Their apprehensions about the reductionist role of prior restraint have been vindicated not only with arbitrary Internet shutdowns and executive orders that insist on prior permissions, but also by the issue of tackling fake news.

A study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* reveals that "debunking was more effective than labeling, emphasizing the power of feedback in boosting memory." Hence, prior restraint in any form – be it governmental permissions to hold a symposium, or tagging an item for its questionable content – contributes to a democratic deficit.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

The cost of Internet shutdowns

Governments must find a way other than digital curbs to balance civil liberties and security

ANIL K. ANTONY

The movement led by farmers against the Central government's agricultural laws has become a part of our national and international discourse. Keeping aside the merits and demerits of the contentious legislation, the manner in which the Centre introduced the Bills and its actions towards countering the movement have raised plenty of concerns.

A principal concern among these has been the recurrent shutdowns, ordered by the Ministry of Home Affairs, of Internet services around many border areas of NCR since the unruly incidents on January 6. Unfortunately, these blockages are not new. India shuts down Internet services more than any other democracy in the world. The past four years have seen over 400 such shutdowns. Many parts of Jammu and Kashmir saw a partial restoration of digital services after a long period of 223 days – the longest Internet shutdown across the world – since the abrogation of Article 370 in the erstwhile State. Many, including UN rights groups, termed these shutdowns a form of collective punishment for people, and an overreach of governments on citizens' rights and liberties.

Currently, Indian laws have vague provisions for suspending telecommunication services, including the Internet, during times of public emergencies, or, if required, for protecting 'public interest'. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court had declared in January 2020 that the right to access the Internet is one of our fundamental rights, alongside the freedom to carry on any trade, business or occupation over the medium of Internet, under Article 19 of the Constitution.

The impact of shutdowns becomes even more pronounced during a pandemic. During the COVID-19 outbreak, the ones with good connectivity and know-how of digital tools were able to carry on with their lives with relatively fewer disruptions. Meanwhile, the ones without digital literacy or connectivity found themselves completely left out of all social and economic systems.

Blanket bans on digital connectivity during the COVID-19 crisis may breed deep-rooted societal difficul-

ties. The most vulnerable among us may be cut off from health and welfare alerts; there could be breaks in vital digital services, including those currently being used by hospitals to monitor the well-being of their patients at risk of infection, including the elderly, and pregnant women; students may lose access to avenues of learning as classes shift online; journalists may find it impossible to do ground-reporting from already volatile areas.

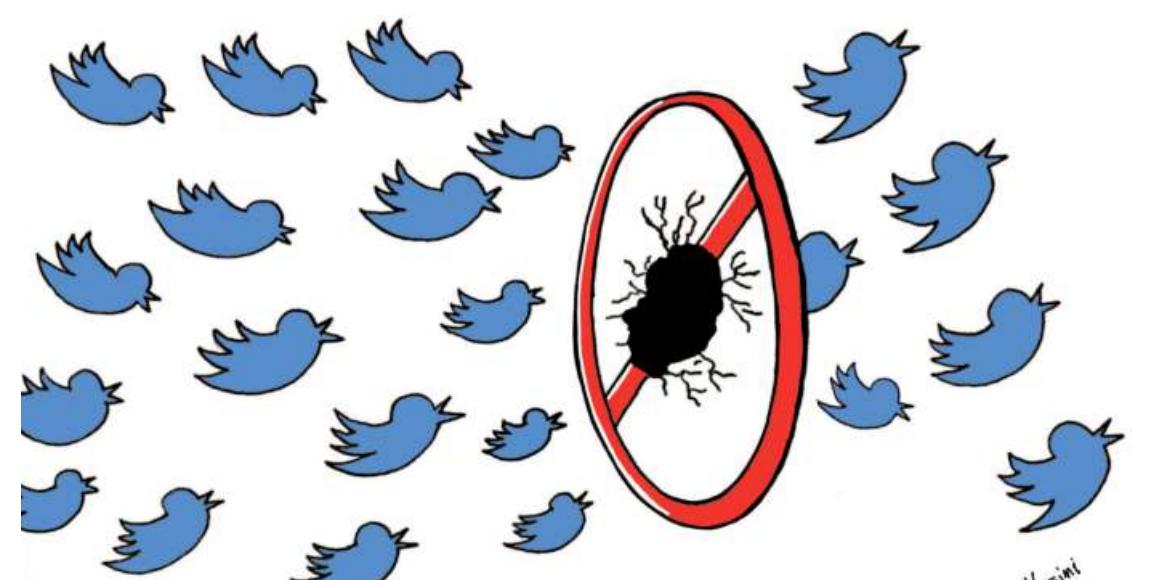
Massive losses

Today, almost all white-collar employment sectors, including IT, financial and consulting services, are encouraging their employees to work from home. Internet shutdowns will freeze economic activity in affected areas and cause large-scale disruptions in economic output. India is estimated to have lost over ₹20,000 crore in 2020 because of Internet shutdowns. Despite the costs and inconveniences involved, the shutdowns, on very rare occasions, do become necessary evils. However, it is hard to classify the ones initiated by the Central government in recent years under those categories.

Internet bans should be a last resort and must be enforced following well-formulated protocols. Emergency response and relief systems for the vulnerable have to their work in parallel. Upgrading cyber divisions of law enforcement agencies with new-age innovations may offer several alternatives. The use of some of these technologies, including mass surveillance systems and communication interceptors, also presents its own ethical dilemmas.

As the pace of globalisation, digitisation and connectivity accelerates, balancing civil liberties with security concerns will become an increasingly difficult task. Governments, especially in democracies, will have to create modern, independent institutions that have the authority and expertise to create frameworks that meet these challenges, without falling back on measures that result in state overreach.

Anil K. Antony is the national co-coordinator of AICC's social media department, and the national coordinator of PIIndia.org



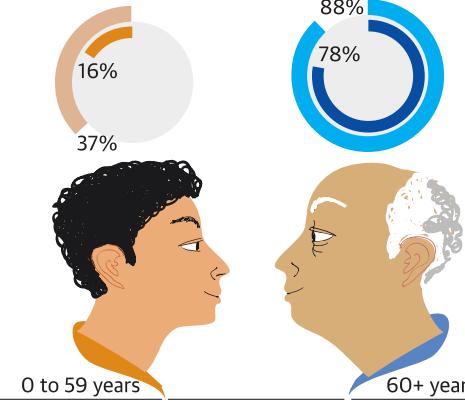
DATA POINT

A fine jab

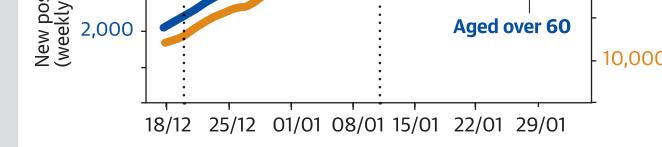
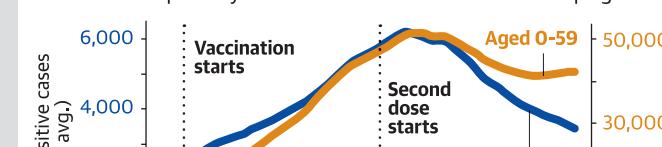
Israel administered 63 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for every 100 residents, the highest vaccination rate in the world as of February 6. The U.S. ranks a distant second at 12 doses per 100 residents, whereas India's rate was even lower at 0.4 per 100. On December 20, 2020, Israel began vaccinating and prioritised those aged 60 years and above. By mid-January, the number of new COVID-19 cases and related hospitalisations of those aged over 60 declined rapidly, possibly due to the vaccination drive, according to a research study by Israeli scientists*. Moreover, the study ruled out other factors such as lockdowns for the drop in cases, lending further credence to the positive impact of the vaccination campaign.

By The Hindu Data Team

PRIORITY GROUP | Over 88% of residents aged 60 or above received the first dose, and 78% got both doses, as of February 6. Among those aged 59 or below, 37% received the first dose while only 16% got both doses.



BENDING THE CURVE | About a week after Israel started administering the second dose, cases reduced among both age-groups, with the decline much sharper for those aged 60 years and above, who were prioritised for vaccination. Two weeks after the second dose, moderate or severe cases of COVID-19-related hospitalisation fell significantly for those aged 60 and above, while for those aged 59 and below, such hospitalisations increased. These results could possibly be attributed to the vaccination campaign



Negating other causes | The study compared the number of cases and hospitalisations during two time periods – following the second lockdown in Israel on September 18, 2020 and the third on January 8, 2021. A sharper decline in cases among those aged 60 or above, compared to younger residents, was observed only post the third lockdown, when the second dose was introduced. The study also found that the decline in cases among older residents occurred earlier in Israeli cities, where the vaccination drive kicked in earlier and later in cities where the campaign started later

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 8, 1971

Apollo-14 Returning After Successful Mission

[Houston, Feb. 7] Apollo 14 streaked earthwards to-day and astronauts Alan Shepard, Edgar Mitchell and Stuart Roosa relaxed after successfully completing man's third and by far most arduous moonlanding mission.

"Okay, we had a good burn, we're on our way home," the weary but elated Shepard told Mission Control after firing the spacecraft's main engine behind the moon to rocket out of lunar orbit and into the 250,000-mile (400,000 kms.) journey that ends with splashdown in the Pacific on Wednesday.

The Apollo-to-day fired two of its four jet thrusters in a course correction designed to place it right in the centre of its "entry corridor" for a splashdown in the Pacific.

Meanwhile, the Apollo-14 has begun picking up speed. The increase in speed came as the earth's field of gravity began to have its effect on the spacecraft, although there still was some effect from the moon's gravity.

At 3:56 p.m. I.S.T. to-morrow, earth's gravity will take over completely and the speed of Apollo-14 will increase even more.

The ten-hour rest period scheduled for the spacemen ended at 7:58 p.m. I.S.T.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 8, 1921

Foreign Banks.
(From an editorial)

The French Bill seeking to impose a special tax on foreign banks established in France, which is now under the consideration of the Finance Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, must be of considerable interest to us in India where by far the most important part of the banking business is in the hands of foreign banking corporations. The reasons which impelled the promoter of the Bill, M. Gerard, to bring in his measure are summarised in the British Press received by the last mail. The main reason is, of course, that such banks tend to exploit the country to its serious disadvantage.

Disadvantage, M. Gerard pointed out, resulted in many ways. In the first place, M. Gerard holds that these banks are serious rivals to French banking organisations. Upholders of the doctrine of unqualified *laissez faire* may point out that this attitude is unreasonable because the French public would not have resorted to these foreign banks, did they not in some special ways provide superior attraction to investors and the bank-using public generally.

FROM PAGE ONE

7 killed after 'glacial burst' in Uttarakhand

"There is also no threat to the neighbouring villages. At the same time, the concerned agencies of the Centre and the State were asked to keep a strict vigil on the situation, and a team from DRDO, who monitor avalanches, is being flown in for surveillance and reconnaissance," it added.

One motorable road and four suspension bridges connecting around eight villages in the area with the district headquarters have also been washed away by the avalanche.

In response to a question, Mr. Rawat said the authorities had not been able to assess the damage caused by the flash floods yet as the administration was busy with rescue operations. He announced compensation of ₹4 lakh each to the families

of those who perished in the disaster.

A tweet from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's official handle announced that a sum of ₹2 lakh would be given from the PM's Relief Fund to the families of the dead and ₹50,000 each to the families of the injured for the avalanche caused by the "glacial breach".

Mr. Modi, who was in Assam and Bengal, spoke to the Uttarakhand Chief Minister twice to review the situation. "Deeply worried about the glacier burst near Joshimath, Uttarakhand, that caused destruction in the region. Praying for well-being and safety of people. Am confident that rescue and relief operations on ground are progressing well," President Ram Nath Kovind said in a tweet.

Modi kicks off poll campaign in Bengal

Referring to the leaders defecting from the Trinamool Congress to the BJP, Mr. Modi said that those who want to do away with the "Bua-bhatija" (aunt-nephew) government had said "Ram-Ram" (goodbye) to them [the TMC] and joined us [the BJP] saying Jai Shri Ram".

During his 40-minute speech, the Prime Minister targeted the Trinamool Congress government on various fronts, accusing it of denying the benefits of the PM Kisan and Ayushman Bharat schemes to the people of the State. "I feel a lot of pain that even in the distressing times of corona, lakhs of farmers of the State have been deprived of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi. Not a single farmer got the benefit because the State government here refused to join the scheme. Now that the farmers here have decided to teach the Trinamool Congress government a lesson, the State government with little intent has sent a letter saying that they want to join the scheme," he said.

The Prime Minister promised that after the BJP government was formed in the State, the implementation of the PM Kisan scheme would

be approved and all the pending benefits that could not reach the farmers would be paid to them.

About 70 lakh farmers have not received seven instalments adding up to ₹14,000 under the PM Kisan scheme over two-and-a-half years, according to the BJP. The Trinamool Congress government had started the Krishak Bandhu scheme in which ₹5,000 is paid annually to farmers in the State.

Defaming nation' Mr. Modi also made a direct attack on Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. "In Bengal, if people ask Didi about their rights, she gets angry. Even if someone raises the slogan 'Bharat Mata ki Jai', she gets upset. But she remains silent when there is a conspiracy to defame the country," he said, making an oblique reference to the developments on January 23, when Ms. Banerjee was upset by the 'Jai Shri Ram' slogans raised at Victoria Memorial.

Mr. Modi said that those behind the "international conspiracy" to defame the country had become so desperate that they were targeting tea and Yoga.

Huge turnout of women at mahapanchayats

Farmer leader Raju Maan said the massive turnout at the mahapanchayat proved that not only the farmers but their children were also awakened, and they would not stop till the government bowed to their demands.

At Rajasthan's Bharatpur, Maulana Arshad of the Meel Kheda madrasa, presiding over the rally, said the Meewat region's people would fight to protect agriculture, which was the mainstay of their livelihood.

BKU leaders Gurnam Singh Chaduni and Yudhvir Singh affirmed that farmers were willing to talk to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government at the Centre if the latter had "genuine intentions".

Mr. Tikit's son Gaurav Tikit, his close aide Ghulam Mohammad Jola, and Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Ravan, also addressed the mahapanchayat. Mr. Jola said the farmers' agitation had strengthened the bonds

among different communities, which were earlier disturbed after the Muzaffarnagar violence of 2013.

Three Congress MLAs from Haryana – Aftab Ahmed (Nuh), Mamman Khan (Ferozepur Jhirkia) and Mohammad Ilyas (Punahana) – attended the mahapanchayat in a show of solidarity with the farmers' demands. Mr. Ahmed said his party would continue to support the farmers until the controversial legislation was withdrawn. Haryana Kisan Sabha vice-president Indjer Singh was also present. Earlier, a 50-year-old farmer from Haryana's Jind was found hanging from a tree on Sunday morning. Deputy Superintendent of Police, Bahadurgarh, Pawan Kumar said the farmer had left behind a note demanding the repeal of the three laws.

(With inputs from Mohammed Iqbal in Rajasthan)

Sasikala may be prevented from using AIADMK flag

The police are likely to prevent V.K. Sasikala from using the AIADMK flag in her vehicle soon after she enters the Tamil Nadu border on Monday.

A special team has been formed to intercept and insist on the removal of the party flag from Ms. Sasikala's vehicle. Senior Ministers

had already complained to the DGP about the misuse of the flag by her a week ago.

"Using the ruling party flag might create confusion and lead to a law and order problem. Huge police deployment has been planned along the route from the State border with Karnataka till Chennai to prevent any untoward incidents en route," a police officer said.

CM YK

Kerala saw more home deaths in 2020

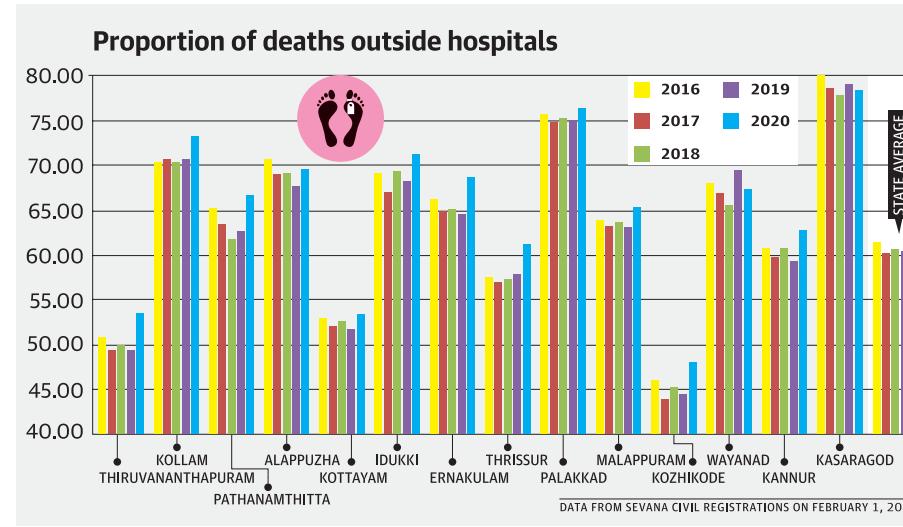
Elderly and terminally ill may not have received adequate medical care during pandemic, say experts

C. MAYA
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Even when the Kerala government has sought solace in the apparent reduction in all-cause mortality in the State in 2020 as an affirmation of the excellent COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 care provided during the pandemic, the civil registrations data does not tell the full story.

Analysis of the State's birth and death registrations for 2020 shows that except in two districts, there is an unusual increase in the proportion of the people who died at home during 2020, both in urban and rural areas.

The data throws open the question of whether COVID-19 led to the denial of medical care to the elderly and terminally ill in the pandemic year. The attention of the public health system had veered towards COVID-19 care all through 2020 and it's probably the other side of



DATA FROM SEVANA CIVIL REGISTRATIONS ON FEBRUARY 1, 2021

the story that is being revealed.

"It is true that the fear of COVID-19 kept people from visiting hospitals even when they were sick. Also, government medical colleges, general hospitals, and district hospitals in all districts were converted to exclusive COVID hospitals," a public

health expert says.

Many doctors have highlighted how the follow-up treatment of many with chronic kidney diseases and cancer was compromised during the pandemic. "It is possible that because of the COVID situation, a lot of chronically ill patients were not given adequate medical

attention. We should introspect on whether preoccupation with COVID and our failure to create alternative systems of care have led to this increase in home deaths," he says.

In the U.S. and Europe, nearly half of the COVID-19 casualties were in care homes. But in Kerala, there

were few such deaths. Given the high health-seeking behaviour in the State, if the proportion of those who died outside hospitals is higher in 2020, it indicates that the deaths occurred at home probably due to delay in decision-making. The fear of family members contracting COVID-19 from hospitals too could have influenced their decision to not move the elderly to hospitals.

"We need more transparency in data management. Everything surrounding COVID has assumed political overtones, and this has prevented an honest appraisal," says V. Ramankutty, a public health specialist.

Former Director General of Police Jacob Punnoose said on Facebook that it might be too early to draw conclusions on the 2020 mortality figures. "Lockdown and containment zone regulations would have affected prompt reporting of deaths," he said.

IN BRIEF



Telangana CM lashes out at Ministers, TRS leaders

HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Sunday lashed out at TRS leaders for their "mindless remarks" that he was planning to step down and pass on the mantle to his son and IT Minister K.T. Rama Rao. At a party meeting, he told Ministers and MLAs that he would suspend those making such remarks. He said he would be at the helm for 10 more years as he was fit.

27 doctors get notice for unauthorised leave

HYDERABAD

Show cause notices were issued to 27 government doctors, who were posted as assistant professors and tutors in various hospitals in Telangana, seeking explanation why action should not be taken against them for unauthorised absence from duties. State's Director of Medical Education Dr. K. Ramesh Reddy said that in all, around 90 doctors were under the radar.

Jacobite members hold prayers at cemeteries

KOCHI

Prayers were held by members of the Jacobite Syrian Church at cemeteries of all churches in Kerala's Ernakulam district on Sunday, to reiterate their demand for handing over of churches where the faction is in majority.

At Piravom, the police filed a case after members of the Orthodox faction complained that a priest 'illegally' entered the church cemetery, along with believers, for prayers.

Govt. panel to probe college student's suicide

VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Education Minister A. Suresh on Sunday said a three-member committee had been constituted to probe the circumstances that led to the suicide of Papisetty Tejasree, an engineering second year student of QIS College in Ongole in Prakasam district.

The girl took the extreme step on Saturday as she was reportedly unable to pay her college fee.

Kerala BJP wants law against 'love jihad'

BJP chief promises U.P.-type legislation

STAFF REPORTER
KOZHIKODE

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) State president K. Surendran has said that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) will bring in legislation against 'love jihad' similar to what was done in Uttar Pradesh, if the coalition comes to power in Kerala.

He told the media on Sunday that all the Devaswom boards (that manage temples) in the State would be dissolved once they came to power.

Mr. Surendran demanded that both the Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) clarify their stand on the 'love jihad' issue. He accused them of maintaining silence even after Christian congregations had raised concerns.

women boards. The BJP would try to free temples from political interference. "We will hand over the temples to devotees," Mr. Surendran said.

He alleged that both the LDF and the UDF were trying to fool the people in the name of Sabarimala in view of the upcoming Assembly election. Both changed their stand on women's entry following the devotees' protests.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi had positioned himself against the devotees. None of the Congress leaders had sought protection of customs, he added.

APPEAL



I am Premkumar aged 10 years suffering from single Verticle Physiology with Pulmonary Atresia. Kindly help me to combat this disease as I require Rs. 3.60,000/- towards Cardiac Catheterization followed by Palliative surgery at MOP Hospital, Chennai. Donations sent by Ch/D.D. favouring MOT Hospitals Private Limited will be acknowledged.

Branch, A/C No: 6018201063310, IFSC No: CNRB0016018, favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under 80G IT. (Please do not mention patient's name on the Cheque).

All Correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. GF 1, Corridor Apartments, O.N.O. 13, N.No. 29, Pyrofly Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401 / 28235224. E-mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org

Premkumar

Coconut climber wins Kerala govt. award

K. Sasi is among the 15 labourers who got the 'Thozhilali Sreshta' honour

SAM PAUL A.
ALAPPUZHA

Forty years ago, K. Sasi chose to become a coconut plucker. He has never looked back. Now 60, Mr. Sasi is on cloud nine after bagging the 'Thozhilali Sreshta' award of the Kerala government last week.

"I am a coconut tree climber and never expected to win an award. It is a great gesture on the part of the government to recognise people like me," says Mr. Sasi, a resident of Mampuzhakari in Kuttanad. Instituted by the Department of Labour and Skills, the award comprises a cash prize of ₹1 lakh and citation.



K. Sasi says the award will change the mindset of youth to such jobs.

Mr. Sasi started climbing coconut trees at the age of 20 with a machete tucked to his back and using two small loops of rope – one around his feet gripping the front of the tree and the other he carries to hold on to the trunk. The sexagenarian still practises the traditional method with relative ease, which helped him win the laurel. "I am happy that I chose coconut plucking as my job. It helped me build a house and educate my two children. The award is a cherry on the cake," he says.

his feet gripping the front of the tree and the other he carries to hold on to the trunk. The sexagenarian still practises the traditional method with relative ease, which helped him win the laurel. "I am happy that I chose coconut plucking as my job. It helped me build a house and educate my two children. The award is a cherry on the cake," he adds.

From 20 paise to ₹50

"When I began work, I would get 20 paise a tree. Nowadays I receive ₹50 a tree," he says. Mr. Sasi climbs around 30 trees daily and gets ₹1,500. He says that despite the good pay, the educated

younger generation, including his own children, is not keen on considering it a career. "An award like this will help change the perspective of society towards jobs like tree climbing and attract youngsters to the profession," he adds.

In a first-of-its-kind initiative in the country, 15 labourers from the private sector were given the 'Thozhilali Sreshta' award by the government based on their skills. The winners were selected from various sectors, including security guard, headload worker, construction worker, toddy tapper, housemaid and salesman/woman.

Sasikala may be prevented from using AIADMK flag

The police are likely to prevent V.K. Sasikala from using the AIADMK flag in her vehicle soon after she enters the Tamil Nadu border on Monday.

A special team has been formed to intercept and insist on the removal of the party flag from Ms. Sasikala's vehicle. Senior Ministers



In a flash: More than 100 labourers working on the Rishiganga power project in Uttarakhand are missing following the massive flooding on Sunday. ■ PTI

Glacier collapse brings back memory of 2013 flash floods

Dhauliganga river turns into a deathly torrent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
Originating from Vasudhara Tal, perhaps the largest glacial lake in Uttarakhand, the Dhauliganga flows in a meandering course, which takes it through the Nanda Devi National Park.

Known for its spectacularly beautiful route and white-water rafting, the river turned into a deathly torrent on Sunday after a part of the Nanda Devi glacier broke off and collapsed into it.

The Dhauliganga, which merges with the Alaknanda, is one of the several tributaries of the Ganga, as the river flows down from the Himalayas and snakes its way through the plains. The tributaries intersect, flow into one another or meander away passing through several towns in five States.

In Uttarakhand, the Gan-

ga and its tributaries pass through important tourist places such as Rishikesh, Haridwar, Rudraprayag and Karnaprayag. Sunday's collapse of the glacier led to rippling flash floods in the Dhauliganga and the Rishiganga and also impacted the Alaknanda.

This also brought the spotlight on the 2013 flash floods in the hill States that wiped out settlements and killed over 5,000 people.

Dhauliganga is joined by Rishiganga river at Raini, where the disaster at the power project dam took place.

The river takes a V-turn and continues to flow in the opposite direction, toward north, as the Dhauliganga for another 30-odd km, through Tapovan, until it is joined by the Alaknanda at Vishnuprayag near

Joshimath.

There it loses its identity and the Alaknanda flows southwest – through Chamoli, Maithana, Nandaprayag, Karnaprayag until it meets the Mandakini river, coming from the north at Rudraprayag.

After subsuming Mandakini, the Alaknanda carries on past Srinagar, before joining the Ganga at Devprayag near Kedarnath.

Alaknanda then disappears and the mighty Ganga carries on its journey, first flowing south then west through important pilgrimage centres such as Rishikesh and finally descending into the Indo-Gangetic plains at Haridwar.

Still on a southern course, the Ganga goes past Bijnor when it loops back on an easterly course toward Kanpur.

200 MW of power supply to grid hit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Around 200 MW of power supply to the national grid was affected due to the avalanche in Uttarakhand as the local administration shut down two plants, Tehri and Koteshwar, as a precautionary measure.

The hydro power plants in the affected area are mostly under-construction or fall in the small hydro project category, which are of up to 25 MW. These small hydro projects are mainly state-owned.

An official, on condition of anonymity, told PTI, "The local authorities have shut two power plants, Tehri and Koteshwar, as a precautionary measure in view of the disaster. This has affected the overall power supply of not more than 200 MW to the national grid."

The official added that all big hydro projects (of over 25 MW capacity) are mostly under-construction, and there was no point of power supply disruption due to those.

Financial loss
However, it is feared that there could be financial loss of crores of rupees due to the disaster as one of the dams at a big hydro power project of the state-run NTPC was breached.

The Tehri (1,000 MW) and Koteshwar (400 MW) projects are operated by THDC India Ltd, which is a subsidiary of the NTPC.

The beginning of a pandemic era

"We have entered a pandemic era", states a recent study in the journal 'Cell'.



Hima Bindu
Top Unacademy Educator

The Age of Delayed Degenerative Diseases: Where life expectancy increases despite the presence of chronic diseases; the stage was described by Olshansky et al.

The Age of Re-emerging Infectious Diseases: Where re-emergence of old diseases will have a significant impact on health; the stage was described by Martens.

Reasons for disease re-emergence

Population density: Increasing population density makes the spread of flu-like diseases easier.

Epidemiological transition: As the planet heats up, some animals on land and in the sea try to move towards the poles to find cooler places. In this process, the migratory animals encounter other animals, which creates an opportunity for pathogens to jump into new hosts.

The Age of Pestilence and Famine: Where most of the deaths were due to infectious diseases and famine. E.g. Spanish flu pandemic and subsequent famine in 1918.

The Age of Receding Pandemics: Where the frequency of epidemics decreases due to medical advancement.

The Age of Degenerative and Man-Made Diseases: Where most of the deaths are due to chronic man-made diseases like diabetes, hypertension, respiratory system diseases, cardiovascular disease, and cancer.



is an important reason behind the higher rate of emergence of new infectious diseases in recent decades, most of which have entered into human populations from animals, especially wild animals.

Global warming: As the planet heats up, some animals on land and in the sea try to move towards the poles to find cooler places. In this process, the migratory animals encounter other animals, which creates an opportunity for pathogens to jump into new hosts.

Mutations and natural selection: Viruses mutate rapidly and natural selection tends to give such mutations a direction of increased adaptability to new hosts. This results in the creation of new strains of viruses which makes the research on vaccines and drugs more challenging.

The COVID-19 outbreak has exposed the risks of interaction of newly emerging

infectious disease with already existing chronic diseases as co-morbidities. The chronic diseases make the population more vulnerable to new epidemics and pandemics. This situation can be viewed as a lap over between the stages 4 and 5 (The Age of Delayed Degenerative Diseases and The Age of Re-emerging Infectious Diseases).

It is now time for us to set long-term goals in our combat against infectious diseases – decreasing the level of air pollution, delaying the progress of global warming, and making lifestyle changes at a collective level.

This weekly column for civil services aspirants is brought to you by Unacademy. Send your subject specific queries to upsccsepreparation@unacademy.com

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



Scan the code to watch the free live class on 'COVID-19 and Emerging Pandemics' on Feb 9 at 8 PM. Use code UPSCSE.

Experts point to climate change impact

Glacier retreat, permafrost thaw are projected to decrease the stability of mountain slopes, say reports

JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI

A deluge that resulted from a glacial melt on Nanda Devi flooded Rishiganga river in Uttarakhand and washed away at least two hydroelectric power projects – the 13.2 MW Rishiganga hydroelectric power project and the Tapovan project on Dhauliganga river, a tributary of the Alakananda.

There were also concerns that the excess water would further travel downstream to river Alaknanda and threaten villages as well as hydro projects on the river.

However, the India Meteorological Department said that no rain is forecast.

Officials of the Central Water Commission, meanwhile, said the flooding from the glacial burst had been contained.

Environmental experts attributed the Nanda Devi glacial melt to global warming. Glacier retreat and permafrost thaw are projected to decrease the stability of the mountain slopes and increase the number and area

When the hills shake

Major natural disasters in the region over the past three decades:



Nature's fury: Part of a glacier broke off in Joshimath in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district on Sunday, causing a massive flood in the Dhauliganga river. ■ PTI

1991: Uttarkashi earthquake – An earthquake of 6.8 magnitude hit the undivided state of Uttar Pradesh in October 1991. At least 768 people were killed and thousands of homes destroyed

1998: Malpa landslip – The small village of Malpa was wiped out in a landslip in which nearly 255 people, including 55 Kailash Mansarovar pilgrims, were killed. The resulting debris partially blocked Sharda river

1999: Chamoli earthquake – An earthquake of 6.8 magnitude hit Chamoli district killing over 100 people. The adjoining Rudraprayag district was also heavily affected. Several ground deformations were reported as a result of the earthquake, and landslides and changes in water flow were recorded. Cracks were observed on roads and on the ground

2013: North India floods – In June 2013, a multi-day cloudburst in Uttarakhand caused devastating floods and landslides. According to the State government, more than 5,700 people were presumed dead in the disaster. As bridges and roads were destroyed, more than 3 lakh people were trapped in the valleys leading to the Char Dham pilgrimage sites

of glacier lakes, according to the latest assessment reports of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

There is also high confidence that the number and area of glacier lakes will continue to increase in most regions in the coming decades, and new lakes will develop closer to steep and potential

ly unstable mountain walls, where lake outbursts can be more easily triggered.

Farooq Azam, assistant professor, Glaciology and Hydrology division, IIT Indore, said such a glacial burst was an "extremely rare event". "Satellite and Google Earth images do not show a glacial lake near the region,

but there's a possibility that there may be a water pocket in the region. Water pockets are lakes inside glaciers, which may have erupted leading to this event. We need further analysis, weather reports and data to confirm if this indeed was the case," he said.

Climate change has driven

erratic weather patterns like increased snowfall and rainfall, and warmer winters had led to the melting of a lot of snow. The thermal profile of ice, said experts, was increasing. Earlier the temperature of ice ranged from -6 to -20 degree Celsius; it is now -2 making it more susceptible to melting.

'Dhauliganga's water level breaches records'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The water level of Dhauliganga river at Joshimath flowed at a perilously high level, breaching all records, Central Water Commission officials said after a part of the Nanda Devi glacier broke off in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district leading to massive floods.

The glacial burst triggered an avalanche and a deluge in the Alaknanda river system that washed away hydroelectric stations and trapped more than 100 labourers who are feared dead.

The intensity of the river's flow in a short span of time was such that it engulfed whatever came in its way.

This was a grim reminder of the Kedarnath deluge of 2013, which led to widespread devastation in the ecologically fragile Himalayan region.

Tapovan hydel project entirely washed away

12 workers rescued from one dam tunnel, several others still trapped, says ITBP Commanding Officer

VIJAYA SINGH

NEW DELHI

Venudhar Nayak, Commanding Officer of the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) who led the rescue operation at the tunnel of the NTPC's Tapovan hydel project, where 12 workers were rescued after a seven-hour operation on Sunday, said the project was completely washed away, and the few houses that remain undamaged on the site were covered in slush up to 20 feet deep.

Over hundred persons are missing after the flash flood, caused by the splintering of a glacier, washed away two hydel power projects – the Rishiganga small hydro project and the National Thermal Power Corporation's Tapovan project on the banks of the Dhauliganga river in north Uttarakhand.

Mr. Nayak, whose team of 250 personnel were the first to reach the Tapovan pro-

ject, said it took them seven hours to unblock the tunnel where 12 persons were stuck.

"At least eight persons were able to escape after the flood occurred and before the tunnel was blocked. We reached here at 11.30 a.m. and by 6.30 p.m., we were able to rescue all the 12 persons," Mr. Nayak told The

Hindu over the phone from the accident site. He said the team was now rushing to another tunnel, four kilometres away where 50 people are said to be trapped.

Mr. Nayak's unit is posted 15 km from Tapovan. He said as the ITBP was a mountain force, they had all the equipment to carry out

the rescue work. Explaining the ground conditions, he said the two tunnels, where workers were still stuck, are part of the dam structure and used to dispose waste water from the power plant.

"When the gush of water came, around 20 people were working in one tunnel and 50-60 workers in the se-

cond tunnel. Eight workers managed to escape from the first tunnel and remaining 12 were rescued by the ITBP team. 12 people could escape from the second tunnel and around 50 are still trapped, here the Army is working and we are on way to help them," he said.

Mr. Nayak said that of the 12 rescued, three were critical and had been rushed to the ITBP's hospital nearby.

He said the night could prove to be challenging but they were geared to work through the night.

"We have dragon lights to help us navigate and we also have powerful lights connected to gensets. Phone and electricity connection is working fine. We are glad that we could save lives," he said.

Mr. Nayak said the Rishiganga power project uphill that was the first one to be hit due to "glacial burst" was completely washed away.

Glaciologists to visit Joshimath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Two teams of glaciologists will head to Joshimath-Tapovan on Monday to study the causes of the massive flood caused after a part of the Nanda Devi glacier broke off in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, the director of the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology said.

Kalachand Sain said two teams of glaciologists – one with two members and other with three members – will leave Dehradun on Monday morning.

"The teams will study the reasons behind the incident. Our teams will be looking into different aspects of glaciology," Mr. Sain said, adding that it is too early to comment on the development.

Mr. Sain added that the Sunday's incident was quite "peculiar" as there was no rain or melting of snow.



Tough task: ITBP personnel carrying out search and rescue operations at the Tapovan tunnel after a glacier broke off at Joshimath on Sunday. ■ PTI

the rescue work. Explaining the ground conditions, he said the two tunnels, where workers were still stuck, are part of the dam structure and used to dispose waste water from the power plant.

"When the gush of water came, around 20 people were working in one tunnel and 50-60 workers in the se-

'Disinvestment will be squeaky clean'

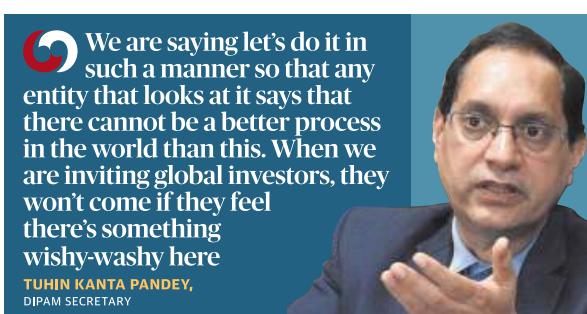
Finance Ministry official says exercise will be done in such a way that its credibility is beyond doubt

VIKAS DHOOT
NEW DELHI

The government will adopt a 'squeaky clean process' for the privatisation of public sector enterprises as per the new policy unveiled in the Budget, said Tuhin Kanta Pandey, the top Finance Ministry official entrusted with steering the disinvestment process.

"For the first time after 2004, you will have a set of privatisations starting with Air India and BPCL as the large ones... We are very clear this has to be squeaky clean process so that no one can question its credibility," Mr. Pandey told *The Hindu* on the execution plan for the disinvestment policy that envisages the government exiting a large chunk of the 439 central public sector enterprises (PSEs) in the country.

"We want it to be abso-



We are saying let's do it in such a manner so that any entity that looks at it says that there cannot be a better process in the world than this. When we are inviting global investors, they won't come if they feel there's something wishy-washy here.

**TUHIN KANTA PANDEY,
DIPAM SECRETARY**

lutely squeaky clean and for that, even I won't know the names of the bidders. We won't even fix the reserve value till the time financial bids are locked. If someone gets some information on the reserve price somehow, it would make it an unfair advantage for that bidder," said Mr. Pandey, who is the Secretary for the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM).

Some of the strategic sales

of public sector enterprises, sold in the early 2000s during the Atal Bihari Vajpeyi administration, had faced post-deal scrutiny from investigative agencies and auditors for several years.

In September last year, a special CBI court had asked the agency to file criminal cases against former Union minister Arun Shourie and former Disinvestment Secretary over the sale of a luxury public sector hotel in 2002.

"We are saying let's do it in such a manner so that any entity that looks at it says that there cannot be a better process in the world than this. When we are inviting global investors, they won't come if they feel there's something wishy-washy here," Mr. Pandey said.

Top bids

"We want wholehearted bids, with whoever is willing to pay more winning. Our focus is maximisation and we are not keeping too many entry barriers, including technical criteria, as it creates a problem if you say only a particular industry player can come. That will restrict value and allow existing groups to dominate. That's not how it works anymore as companies with capital can hire professional experts and CEOs," he pointed out.

"Capitalism is full of upsets and such upsets should occur here too," he underlined.

The new disinvestment policy goes further than the past case-by-case approach, and straightforward allows the sale or closure of nearly 151 PSUs (83 holding companies and 68 subsidiaries) in non-strategic sectors, he said. It also covers banks and insurers for the first time, with two public sector banks and one general insurer proposed to be sold in 2021-22.

"Some of them will be closed if nobody's interested in them. If they can't fend for themselves, then I think they might as well close. Certainly, the government is not supporting them anymore," he said, citing the decision to close Scooters India after no one evinced interest in buying it.

Selling family silver is a lazy allegation, says Sitharaman

All previous governments have also done disinvestment'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday rejected the Opposition's charge of "selling family assets" through the Budget stress on privatisation, terming it a "lazy allegation".



Nirmala Sitharaman

by parties from the Opposition.

"It is not what the Opposition says about selling family silver, it's not at all," she said addressing a meeting of business people here.

"Family silver should be strengthened, it should be our *takat* (strength)... because you've spread it so thinly, there are many of them (PSUs) who are not able to survive and the few who can perform do not get

the due attention. Our aim is to prime them through this policy. You need them, you need them to scale up so that they meet the aspirations of growing India," she said.

Ms. Sitharaman said despite reforms of the past, "socialist baggage" hindered businesses, and many State-run companies have been lacking professional expertise to grow.

For many years, taxpayer money has been spent on recapitalising inefficient State-run companies and it is the government's intent to ensure that the available resources are spent in the best possible manner, which can be done only by reducing the number of such enterprises, she said.

78 new fatalities due to COVID-19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India's tally of COVID-19 cases rose to 1,08,26,363 with 12,059 new infections being reported in a day, while the daily deaths fell below 100 for the third time this month, according to Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday.

The death toll increased to 1,54,996 with 78 daily new fatalities, the lowest recorded after nine months, the data updated at 8 a.m. showed. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,05,22,601, pushing the national COVID-19 recovery rate to 97.2%, while the case fatality rate stands at 1.43%.

Samples tested
According to ICMR, over 20 crore samples have been tested up to February 6 with 6,95,789 samples being tested on Saturday.

The COVID-19 active caseload remained below 2 lakh. There are 1,48,766 active cases in the country which comprises 1.37% of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16, 2020.

It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one crore mark on December 19.

Will protect image of Indian tea, says Modi

PM says there is a conspiracy to defame country

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said some forces abroad were conspiring to tarnish the image of Indian tea.

The focus of his speech in poll-bound Assam's Dhekiajuli, a tea-growing area, was on the tea plantation workers, a major chunk of voters that the Bharatiya Janata Party had weaned away from the Congress ahead of the 2016 Assembly election.

"I want to tell you about a conspiracy hatched to defame the country. The conspirators have not even spared Indian tea. They are saying the image of Indian tea has to be defamed worldwide, systematically," Mr. Modi said.

He was addressing a



Cultural icon: Prime Minister Modi being welcomed with a traditional "Japi" by Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal during a public rally at Dhekiajuli on Sunday. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

crowd of largely tea plantation workers after remotely inaugurating and laying the foundation stones of a medical college each in eastern

Assam's Biswanath and Chiraiideo and Assam Mala, an expansive road project.

"The evidence that we have suggests the forces are

seated abroad, ready to launch an attack on India's tea-based identity," the Prime Minister said.

He added the tea planta-

tion workers and every individual who drank tea would seek an explanation from the political parties for maintaining silence on it.

"But I want to tell the conspirators that the country won't allow you to succeed, however much you try. The tea workers will win this battle. Those who are conspiring to launch an attack on Indian tea are not strong enough to confront the strength of our tea workers," Mr. Modi said, without naming the forces.

The Prime Minister underlined the steps being taken by the BJP-led Assam government to improve the lives of the tea workers.

He referred to the Cha Bagicha Dhan Puraskar Mela (cash award fair for tea workers organised on Saturday) during which the State government had been increasing expenditure unlike them who would cut at the Revised Estimate stage.

Giving an example, he

said that against the Budget Estimate of ₹60,000 crore in 2019-20, the spending was raised to ₹71,001.81 crore under the MGNREGA head as there was an increase in demand.

In the current fiscal, it had been raised massively from ₹61,500 crore to ₹11,500 crore to create additional jobs in the rural areas for those who had lost employment due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"During the lockdown, most of the workers had gone home. So, it was more important to provide jobs in rural areas. With unlocking taking place, workers are returning back to their work. So the requirements may not be that huge. However, we may increase if there is demand," he said.

Afghanistan gets Covishield doses

India-made vaccine is the first to reach the country, emergency approval sought

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Afghanistan received a large consignment of COVID-19 vaccines from India on Sunday.

A special Indian aircraft carrying 500,000 doses of the Covishield vaccine from Mumbai reached Kabul, where officials of Afghanistan's Health Ministry took charge of the consignment.

The India-made vaccine is the first to reach Afghanistan

as the country battles the pandemic.

"Made in India vaccines reach Afghanistan. (We) stand with our friends, always," External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said in a social media message.

The vaccine, made by the Serum Institute of India, has already been supplied to Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and the Maldives in South Asia.

Gulam Dastagir Nazari,

head of the immunisation programme at the Health Ministry in Kabul, said the vaccines will be kept in storage till the country receives emergency approval from the World Health Organization (WHO).

"The [WHO] certification is under way and hopefully, it will be done in a week and we will start the vaccination process in all 34 provinces," Mr. Nazari said, according to news agency Reuters.

India has already carried out capacity building workshops with Afghan health workers. "This will profoundly strengthen our efforts to tackle the spread of COVID-19. I express my deepest gratitude to our Indian allies for this timely, vital initiative, exemplifying a unique bond," said Tahir Qadri, Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of Afghanistan in India after Kabul received the vaccine.

Speaking to the media in Madurai, the former Army chief said the border with China had never been demarcated.

China had transgressed many times over the years with its own perception of the LAC. "Similarly, none of you come to know how many times we have transgressed as per our perception. Chinese media does not cover it," Gen. Singh (retd.) said.

India has transgressed LAC more often than China: Singh

Government does not announce it, says Union Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MADRASI

India has transgressed more times than China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), but the government does not announce it, Union Minister of State for State Transport and Highways V. K. Singh said on Sunday.

General V.K. Singh (retd.) does not happen," he added.

Stating that China had transgressed in Eastern Ladakh in 2020, Mr. Singh said India had warned it with equal measures.

"Today, China is under pressure, since we are sitting at places (along the border), where it does not like," he said. China has realised that it was not easy any more to hit back at India.

The Minister said India has hit Beijing economically by banning its apps and boycotting its goods. "All these affect them," he added.

Stating that things are very well under control in the border, Mr. Singh said, "The Chinese do understand that if something goes wrong, India is in a position to hit back."

Ukraine looking at defence purchases from India

Four agreements worth \$70 mn signed at Aero India

DINAKAR PERI
BENGALURU

Ukraine is looking to procure some military hardware from India in addition to efforts to deepen its presence in the Indian defence market, said Yuriv Husyev, General Director of Ukrboronprom, the umbrella corporation of Ukrainian state defence companies.

The court also issued notices to the president of the Sunni Waqf Board, Lucknow and the managing trustees of Sri Krishna Janmabhumi Trust, Katra Keshav Dev temple and Sri Krishna Seva Sansthan, Katra Keshav Dev temple.

It sought the stand of the four respondents by March 8, the next date of hearing, Mr. Gaur said.

their Deputy Defence Minister.

"Yes, we had some discussions about cooperation in Navy and Air Force. I guess we have a lot of work to do... We have some ideas and will discuss these ideas in Ukraine in Ministry of Defence and armed forces of Ukraine," Mr. Husyev said, speaking to *The Hindu* at the Aero India on Ukraine's interest in acquiring military equipment from India.

Ukraine has signed four agreements worth \$70 million which includes sale of new weapons as well as maintenance and upgrades

Men access mental health helpline more

The 'Kiran' service was set up by the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

Seventy per cent of callers to a mental health rehabilitation helpline launched, in September 2020 by the Social Justice and Empowerment (SJE) Ministry, were men according to an internal report of the Ministry accessed by *The Hindu*. About 32% of those who reached out were students.

The Kiran helpline (1800-599-0019) of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD) of the Ministry was launched on September 7 by SJE Minister Thawarchand Gehlot. From September 16, 2020 to January 15, the helpline received 13,550 new calls, of which 70.5% were from males and 29.5% from females, the report said.

A total of 1,618 follow-up calls were fielded by the mental health professionals of the helpline, it said.

The majority of callers (75.5%) were in the age group of 15 to 40 years, while 18.1% were older, in the 41 to 60 age group, it said.

Categorising the callers,



the report said, 65.9% had "milder nature of distress", while 26.5% were "moderately distressed" and 7.6% were "severely distressed". The report said 32.3% of the callers were students, 15.2% were self-employed, 27.1% were employed, 23.3% were unemployed, 1.4% were home-makers and 0.7% did not reveal the information.

While most of the callers (78.2%) sought help for themselves, others reached out for their parents, siblings, spouse and others.

"Majorly the challenges faced by the callers were related to anxiety (28.5%) and depression (25.5%); while

few others included pandemic-related challenges (7.8%), suicidal tendency (2.8%), substance abuse (3.4%) and miscellaneous (3.2%)," the report said.

Most of the calls were from the North zone (40.32%), followed by West (27.08%), South (16.99%), East (11.28%) and North East (4.33%), the report said.

The 24/7 helpline offers early screening, psychological first-aid, psychological support, distress management, mental well-being, psychological crisis management services and referrals to mental health experts and is operated by 81 front-line professionals, apart from volunteer psychiatrists, clinical and rehabilitation psychologists, the Ministry report said.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Dev Kant Shukla on Saturday issued the notices after admitting the plea, ruling that the suit is "maintainable and hence admissible" for detailed hearing, district government counsel (civil) Sanjai Gaur said.

The two sides will discuss a range of proposals to take forward bilateral cooperation at the Bilateral Working Group meeting between the two Defence Ministries in

Coffee and conversation

Priyanka Deo Jain (32), Editor-Anchor and Ankit Jain (29), Officer on Special Duty (Communications)
Rashtrapati Bhavan, Delhi

"The lockdown was the best thing that happened in our lives," says Priyanka Deo Jain. She met Ankit Jain at Delhi's Mughal Gardens in February 2020 and married him on June 29. "It feels unreal now! He had first messaged me on Twitter in December 2019 saying he liked my work on my YouTube channel New India Junction where some stories were going viral. The sceptic in me thought he was hitting on me like other guys," laughs Priyanka, who had returned from the US after completing her studies at Harvard and was new to Delhi.

A couple of coffee meetings, and two months later, Priyanka, was invited for a media tour of the Mughal Gardens. Her second cameraperson did not turn up. It took her an extra three hours to get the footage, during which time Ankit came to check on the reporter who had stayed on for so long. The conversation was brief and formal.

A week later they met again over coffee. "I found her charming and intelligent and masked my feelings because I did not want to spoil my chances," he says. A month later, they crossed paths in the Bengaluru airport and dined together. Awkwardly, he'd forgotten his wallet at home and it made her wonder about him. Back in Delhi, he did take her out for dinner and repair her. What changed their lives was a three-hour walk around India Gate holding hands and talking endlessly. When the lockdown intensified in April-May, they dated virtually. Once it was lifted, Ankit visited her often at her home in Gulmohar Park. The duo went for walks in the neighbourhood park and slowly grew into a couple.

When she injured her ankle, he tended to her and that set them both wondering about commitment. "We soon realised we were on the same page," says Ankit. "We did not even say the three magical words to each other before marriage as everything was so seamless and we were so sure of us," she says. The wedding was held in the lawns of Ankit's house with just four people - their parents. "It was very relaxing and peaceful and saved us time, money, and stress," says Ankit. Their extended families and friends did not have a whiff about the wedding till Priyanka announced it on her Twitter post a month later.



LOVE under lockdown

SOMA BASU

Rekindling romance

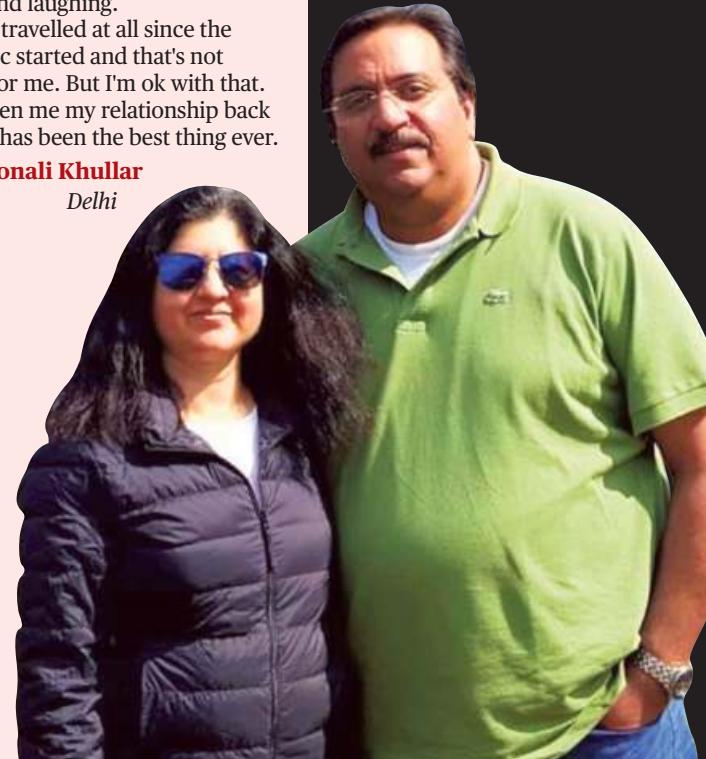
This pandemic and subsequent lockdown has been hard on everyone, but it has had some positives. For a housewife like me, life was a series of mundane activities punctuated with travel that I love. Being married to a workaholic didn't help. Vikas and I fell in love in college. Two kids and 28 years later we had fallen into a rut. Everything was adjusted for work including our vacations. I don't remember a time when it was only us talking and having fun. We even had a third 'person' on our 25th anniversary celebrations - his work. With the lockdown we were suddenly home all the time - no distractions, no visitors, nowhere to go and most importantly, no work. With four adults in the house, work was relatively easy and soon both of us gravitated towards what we loved: food and drink. The day was spent planning what to cook and which cocktail to make. Having a background in Hotel Management made it easier. Cocktail hour was at 5 pm, with videos being made and even appearances by my elusive introvert son.

The next couple of hours were spent on the balcony talking. We started to

rediscover each other and enjoy our time together. Vikas was never very expressive about feelings and I had long given up planning special dates. It was nice to realise that our love was still strong. We had shifted houses in the last couple of months and though the office is back four days a week, we still follow the routine of sitting on the balcony, talking and laughing.

I haven't travelled at all since the pandemic started and that's not normal for me. But I'm ok with that. It has given me my relationship back and that has been the best thing ever.

Sonali Khullar
Delhi



Couples who connected despite social distancing and pandemic stress, some forging new bonds, some strengthening relationships, and some rekindling romances



Patience and passion
Rupali Shinde (32), Journalist and Hrishikesh Shinde (33), Freelance Photographer Mumbai

Just before the lockdown Rupali and Hrishikesh met on dating app Aisle. Both were divorced and were on the lookout for a serious relationship. After celebrating her birthday on March 7, the lockdown caught him off-guard. Hrishikesh had no projects and the next three months were tough, he says. While he was constantly worrying about earning, Rupali says she was sure about him even though many times it appeared they were on the verge of a break-up. He is reticent and dislikes long chats over phone and the inability to meet him in person and comfort him was frustrating, she says. The day lockdown was lifted, Rupali took a cab to his house in Pune. "His parents were very warm and kind. They reminded me he did not have a permanent job and I left after saying, 'I love you' to him. He did not answer," she says. When he got back to Mumbai, they went out to dinner, and Rupali gave the bartender a ring to put it in his cocktail. Back home they decided on a simple court wedding on December 7. "We complete each other," she says. "Silence and long distance held us together; the pandemic taught us true love lasts," he says.

Similarities and surprises

Saurav Sahoo (26), IT professional at Accenture and Raunak Sharma (27), PhD in BITS Hyderabad

"I wanted a serious relationship and downloaded the Aisle app, liked his profile and he replied to my ice breaker question," says Raunak Sharma. Before they knew, they were constantly texting each other over the next 10 days and made the first video call on July 17. "There was a tremendous comfort level from the start" says Saurav Sahoo, "and we started conversing four-five hours daily." For their first date on August 2, she sneaked out of her campus with a friend's help and they spent the entire day talking, laughing, eating and riding around on his bike. While dropping her back, he gave her a necklace that he had purchased long ago to give his first girlfriend. Next he asked whether she would like to follow the app's tagline: "Delete it forever together." Raunak took a week to process the thoughts and realised she was madly in love with him. "Everything felt so right and we told our parents in September," she says. She likes his sense of humour and he is in awe of her accomplishments as an academician, athlete, and a dancer. Both describe themselves as two sides of the same personality. "He is calm, I am short-tempered; we are extroverts and ambitious about our careers but not materialistic," she says. "We constantly surprise and motivate each other," he says. The couple is getting engaged on March 19 and marrying in November.



WHAT IS IT?

Skin Hunger



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

SUSAN JOE PHILIP

Arya M did not touch another person for three months after the country went into lockdown last year. She isolated herself in her home in Coimbatore and worked remotely. "I have been living alone for the past three years and did not find it a big deal," she says. But things changed after two months. "Over time, I missed the feeling of human touch; shaking hands, getting a pat and so on," she recalls. Finally, unable to stand the loneliness, she left her home and moved in with her parents. "It was such a relief. I still remember my mother's hug when we met," she says.

The human body is meant to touch and be touched. "When there is a deprivation of skin-to-skin touch for a prolonged period, we tend to develop a desire for it from other living beings. This is called skin hunger and is a topic much discussed now due to the pandemic," explains Vaishnaruby Shanmugaraj, senior clinical psychologist, Vazhikatti Mental Health Centre and Research Institute, Coimbatore. From the time a baby is born, it depends on touch for physical and emotional wellbeing.

"It helps to decrease stress and improves sleep." Getting a pet is also a good option. "Hugging an animal will be good for you. Use a heavy blanket that puts a little pressure on your body thereby giving a feeling of being enveloped in a hug. But make sure to seek medical help if you think it is needed," she says.

contact with their child right after birth," she explains. Human touch has many benefits.

It helps calm the nervous system, boost the immune system, activate the hormone oxytocin that is critical for bonding, reduce the production of the stress hormone called cortisol, lower blood pressure and heart rate.

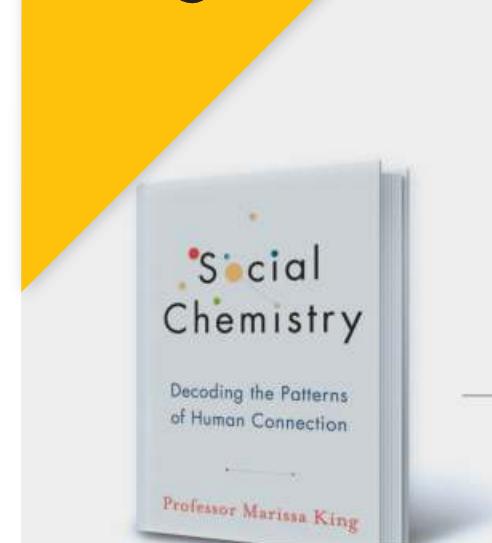
Sugami Ramesh, senior consultant, Clinical Psychology, Apollo Hospitals, Bengaluru says, "A lack of touch can cause loneliness, sleep disturbance, depression and anxiety but it also varies from person to person."

While there isn't a replacement for human touch, there are still things that can help. Vaishnaruby recommends hugging a body pillow and massaging the back of our neck to stimulate the nerves. Sugami suggests exercise.

"It helps to decrease stress and improves sleep." Getting a pet is also a good option. "Hugging an animal will be good for you. Use a heavy blanket that puts a little pressure on your body thereby giving a feeling of being enveloped in a hug. But make sure to seek medical help if you think it is needed," she says.

In this column, we demystify the buzzwords in wellness.

WORDS OF WISDOM



SOCIAL CHEMISTRY: DECODING PATTERNS OF HUMAN CONNECTION

By Marissa King, Hodder & Stoughton-Hachette UK

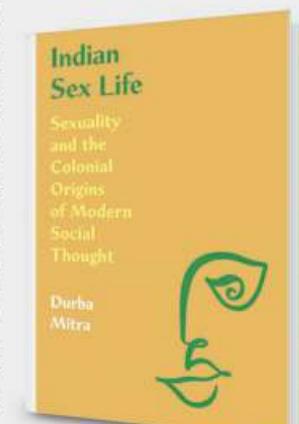
While conventional wisdom tells us to mingle and connect to expand our social network as much as possible, the author argues otherwise in her book based on social science research. She says the quality and structure of our relationships have greater impact on our personal and professional lives. Our relationships with friends, family, co-workers, neighbours, and collaborators are our greatest asset and yet we leave them to chance. The professor of Organizational Behaviour at Yale says everyone needs a science-based strategy to alter or build meaningful and productive relationships for a happier and more fulfilling life.

INDIAN SEX LIFE: SEXUALITY AND THE COLONIAL ORIGINS OF MODERN SOCIAL THOUGHT

By Durba Mitra, Princeton University Press and distributed by Penguin Random House India

During the colonial period in India, scholars, intellectuals, philologists, administrators, doctors, ethnologists, sociologists, and social critics deployed ideas about sexuality to apparently understand modern Indian society. In the book, Durba Mitra tells how

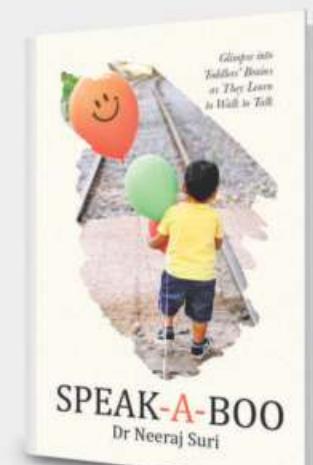
'deviant female sexuality', particularly the concept of the prostitute, became the foundation upon which Indian society was thought and written about. The Harvard professor puts together archival material from diverse disciplines and overturns long-established notions and opens up new approaches for the global history of sexuality.



UKEIRERU: HAPPINESS AND ACCEPTANCE THROUGH JAPANESE WISDOM

By Scott Haas, Hachette India

Massachusetts-based clinical psychologist Scott Haas' practical guide to finding happiness and reducing stress and anxiety is based on the Japanese concept Ukeireru, meaning acceptance. Haas says by learning and practising some basic tenets, you can increase your overall wellbeing. Some of his important suggestions include developing the skill of listening and learning to pause. Scott says if we learn to talk less and focus on listening, we can profoundly improve our relationships, which has a calming effect on life. To be able to show respect to ourselves and others and find our own peace in doing simple things at our own pace, helps to reframe our lives and deal with anger, fear, tension and arguments.



SPEAK-A-BOO
By Dr Neeraj Suri, The Writer's Place
The 50,000 word book, is an attempt to decode a toddler's brain as they learn to talk, throwing up insights on how the brain of a new born achieves the milestone of being able to communicate through words. ENT surgeon Dr Neeraj Suri has worked extensively with children in the 0-3 years age group to put out what she's learnt. A

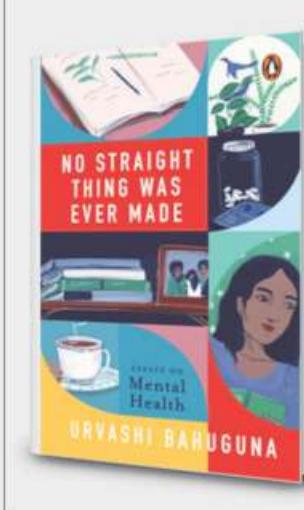
child, says the author, uses words as building blocks. The words come from the base of their respective cognitive development and innovative skills. At a time when personal connections have taken a backseat and conversations have mostly gone digital, the author says the book will remind everyone of the importance of communicating, especially with children. It is a part of her long term campaign #Talktoyourchild

NO STRAIGHT THING WAS EVER MADE: ESSAYS ON MENTAL HEALTH

By Urvashi Bahuguna, Penguin Random House

Having survived the struggles of the teen years and boldly seeking help for a mental illness, Urvashi Bahuguna is candid in sharing her life story through this book. In this compilation of essays on mental health, she talks about her challenges and setbacks and the opportunities that came her way after she

told her family about her condition. Their reaction impacted her life, her interpersonal relationships, both romantic and familial, and everything else around her. That is when she connected with several things new - from art, literature, poetry to popular culture. As she discovered her talent, she also gathered the courage to bravely discuss her experiences. Her narrative is based on anecdotes, conversations and research, and may help others undergoing similar trauma.





In a league of their own
(Clockwise from left) LFC squad celebrating Premier League title win, Jürgen Klopp, Virgil van Dijk and John Barnes
• GETTY IMAGES, AP AND REUTERS

Liverpool FC legend John Barnes discusses the club's Premier League misfortunes this season, manager Jürgen Klopp's legacy, and the documentary on their 2019-20 title win

PRADEEP KUMAR

The unbeaten record stood for nearly four years, beginning April 23, 2017, and at one point it seemed as if the walls around Anfield, the home of Liverpool FC (LFC), got fortified each time a team tried to do the unthinkable: beat LFC on its home ground. The team has taught opponents – which includes the likes of FC Barcelona, Manchester United (Man Utd), Manchester City (Man City) and Chelsea – respect and humility along the way. And then came the end.

On the night of January 21, 2021, a stubborn Burnley FC shattered the fortress' walls from within, ending a 68-game unbeaten home run.

The wound had yet to heal when Brighton & Hove Albion FC came by, on February 4, and inflicted more damage; LFC succumbing to a second straight home loss.

Injury troubles

LFC legend John Barnes, connecting over Zoom from his home in Merseyside, UK, to promote a documentary, *The End of the Storm*, on the club's title-winning run in 2019-20, does not want to be dragged into a conversation about whether his former team is out of the title picture as a result of recent unfavourable results at home. "It depends on Man City," he says, as a matter-of-fact.

"All the teams are being inconsistent this season. Man Utd, Leicester

The stormbreakers



City have all dropped points. So, it is just a question of whether Man City would continue to do what they would do," he adds.

It has not helped LFC that the club and its high profile manager, Jürgen Klopp has had to deal with significant

injuries to many key players in the squad during the season. The club has lost the services of its three first-choice centre-backs: Virgil van Dijk, Joel Matip and Joe Gomez to season-ending injuries.

Ask Barnes if Klopp could have signed a new centre-back during the summer and he says, "Well, hindsight is a wonderful thing. At the start of the season, we had all our centre halves fit. I wouldn't say we were a bit unlucky [with injuries], we have been very unlucky, especially in terms of the influence those particular players have on the team. I don't think there is any team that could have coped with such a situation."

And he is willing to attribute LFC's misfortunes to the injuries alone. "I would have expected Liverpool to continue to do what they did [last season] without the injuries," he adds.

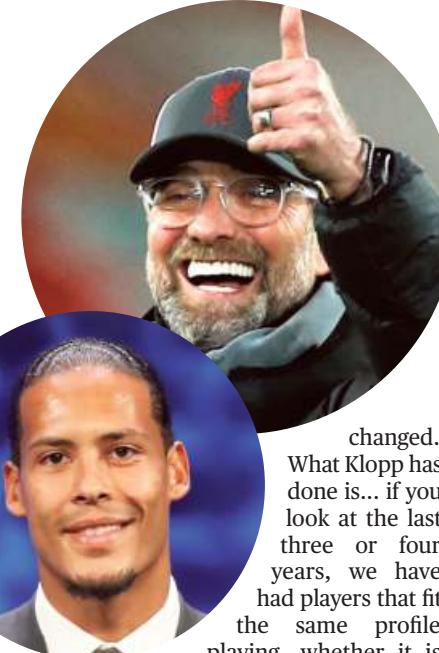
Deserved winners

In 2019-20, LFC ended a 30-year wait to finally lay its hands on the coveted domestic league trophy, becoming champions for the first time in the

Premier League era. Barnes, who was a part of the last Liverpool squad to have won the domestic title prior to this event, in 1990, says it "was exciting" to watch his former club clinch top honours from the sidelines. "In every single game, we played with determination, humility, commitment and desire. That is how you win the league. Not only did we beat everybody else [in the league] but we also played with the old Liverpool adage which is 'You play the game and not the occasion,'" he says.

Barnes points out what Klopp did differently to the managers prior to him, bringing in consistency that had been missing since the end of the club's glory days in the '80s.

"The imprint of the team was preserved [during the transition of managerial reign] from Bill Shankly to Bob Paisley and to Kenny Dalglish. Then all of a sudden, when the Premier League began, [the club] looked for new players [every year] and the team



changed. What Klopp has done is... if you look at the last three or four years, we have had players that fit the same profile playing, whether it is

Jordan Henderson, Georginio Wijnaldum, Fabinho or James Milner. Now that Thiago [Alcântara] has come in, we are changing a bit," he says.

But what happens when Klopp does eventually depart? Barnes says it will be up to the club to decide whether or not to stick with the 'Klopp model', and points at a familiar face to explain how a wrong call can affect the team. "Man Utd has been unsuccessful since Alex Ferguson left because they have had managers like [Louis] van Gaal and [José] Mourinho who said, 'I'm going to do it my way', but the club wanted them to do it Fergie's way. So

Liverpool, when Klopp leaves, has to decide whether they want the incoming manager to stick to what Klopp would leave behind, or if they bring in the best manager in the world they will have to let him have his own way of changing things," he says.

Decoding an enigma

Through the many major victories he has achieved at the club, LFC's German manager has established his legacy. Whilst football clubs are now readily opening up their previously sacrosanct spaces to fly-on-the-wall style documentaries, Klopp remains staunchly against such things. *The End of the Storm* is as close an inside look as anyone can get about a man who is adamant in protecting his players from the prying eyes of the outside world.

Barnes, however, says that the documentary manages to capture the spirit of Liverpool. "Watching the documentary, it could have been made about any era of Liverpool. The relationship the players have with fans, the love, humility and togetherness... it is different from other clubs. Others have superstar players who are separated from its fan base, but Liverpool from the time of Shankly has been a socialist club. When the Premier League started, all clubs moved away from such values but Klopp has brought it back to Liverpool," he concludes.

The End of the Storm is streaming on Discovery Plus

Going with the FLOW

RANJANI GOVIND

Pranitha Subhash is back at work, albeit in Maharashtra where she is set to make her Bollywood debut with the historical war drama *Bhuj: The Pride of India*. Connecting over phone, the Bengaluru-based actor says the film's director, Abhishek Duddhaiya, is "hoping to make up for lost time" following months of inactivity due to the pandemic.

Set in the backdrop of the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, *Bhuj* tells the story of an

Indian Air Force officer, Vijay Karnik (played by Ajay Devgn), who reconstructed an Air Force base using the help of 300 women from Madhapar village. The film, which is set to premiere on Disney+ Hotstar later this year, also stars Sanjay Dutt and Sonakshi Sinha.

"I am sure audiences will connect with the realistic script. Content-driven films are what people watch these days," says Pranitha. Pranitha, who has around 25 films to her credit in Kannada, Telugu and Tamil, is known

for her glamorous roles; however, *Bhuj* will see her in a non-glam role. "I would call it a traditional role..." the actor says, adding, "...like the one I played in the Tamil film *Udhayan*."

Born to a doctor couple in Banashankari, Bengaluru, the 28-year-old runs a charitable foundation in her name. She has adopted schools to help provide them with better infrastructure, and was recently picked

alongside former cricketer Rahul Dravid as ambassadors by the Election Commission to spread awareness on voting in Karnataka. Pranitha, who took up acting when she was 18, after she completed her Class XII exams, says she has not defined a career path and that she prefers to "go with the flow".

"I have acted opposite some of the most successful actors. It was after my Class XII exams, during my vacation, that my father gave me permission to work in one film. That was 10 years ago and I am still acting, modelling and doing social work," she says.

Besides *Bhuj*, the actor is also busy filming her second Hindi film *Hungama 2*, directed by Priyadarshan. She will also be seen in a Kannada film titled *Ramana Avatara* opposite Danish Sait, Raj B Shetty and Rishi.



Content oriented
Pranitha Subhash
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

POOCH CAFE



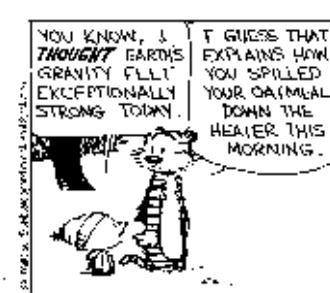
PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



Protests sweep across Myanmar, Internet access restored partially

Despite state of emergency, tens of thousands join biggest anti-coup rally yet

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
YANGON

Tens of thousands of protesters poured onto the streets across Myanmar on Sunday in the biggest anti-coup rallies yet, as an Internet blackout failed to stifle growing outrage at the military's ouster of elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Some estimates put the number of protesters in Yangon at 1,00,000 and there were reports of large demonstrations in other cities condemning the coup that brought Myanmar's 10-year experiment with democracy to a crashing halt.

Backed by a din of car horns, chanting protesters in Yangon held up banners saying "Justice for Myanmar", while others waved the signature red flags of Ms. Suu



Mounting resistance: A protester holding a portrait of Aung San Suu Kyi during a demonstration in Yangon on Sunday. ■ AFP

Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party as they marched to City Hall.

Protests planned

"I completely despise the military coup and I am not afraid of a crackdown," said Kyi Phy Yu Kyaw, a 20-year-old university student.

"I will join every day until

servants and people employed in other industries to not go to work and join the protests.

Many flashed the three-finger salute inspired by the *Hunger Games* films, which became a symbol of resistance during the pro-democracy protests in Thailand last year.

"We will fight until the end," said Ye Kyaw, an 18-year-old economics student.

There were also demonstrations in Mawlamyine city and the Magway region.

Monitoring service Net-Blocks said Internet access was partially restored on some mobile networks in Myanmar Sunday afternoon, but social media platforms remained blocked and it was unclear how long the connectivity would last.

Amay Suu (Mother Suu) is freed."

Protesters announced that they would return to the streets at 10 a.m. local time on Monday, defying the state of emergency imposed by the military and indicating no let-up in their resistance to the coup.

They also called on civil

Biden refuses to halt sanctions till Tehran meets commitments

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEHRAN

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Sunday the U.S. must "completely lift" sanctions first, followed by verification by Tehran, before the Islamic republic returns to its nuclear deal commitments.

"If they want Iran to return to its commitments... America must completely lift sanctions, and not just in words or on paper," Mr. Kha-

menei said in a televised speech.

"They must be lifted in action, and then we will verify and see if they have been properly lifted, and then return," he added.

The 2015 landmark deal has been hanging by a thread since former U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from it in 2018 and reimpose sanctions on Tehran.

Tehran a year later sus-

pended its compliance with most key nuclear commitments to the deal.

Mr. Biden said he won't lift sanctions against Iran as long as the Islamic republic is not adhering to its nuclear deal commitments.

When asked whether he would halt sanctions to convince Iran to return to the bargaining table, Mr. Biden offered a clear reply in a CBS interview aired on Sunday: "No."

Teheran a year later sus-

Arab world's first probe nears Mars

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DUBAI

The first Arab interplanetary mission is expected to reach Mars' orbit on Tuesday in what is considered the most critical part of the journey to unravel the secrets of weather on the Red Planet.

The unmanned space probe – named "Al-Amal", Arabic for "Hope" – blasted off from Japan last year, marking the next step in the United Arab Emirates' ambitious space programme.

It could also be "some time" before they determine its effectiveness for older people in fighting the strain, which is a growing presence in U.K., she said.

Researchers are currently working to update the vaccine, and "have a version with the South African spike sequence in the works" that they would "very much like" to be ready for the autumn, said Ms. Gilbert.

The UAE has plans to launch an unmanned rover to the moon by 2024 and is also eyeing future mining projects beyond Earth, as well as space tourism.

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ASK US

N. SREE KANTH

Q. I am planning to sell my ancestral property. With the corpus generated, I am going to close my housing loan. Do the capital gains qualify for I-T exemption?

NETAJI RAJAGOPAL

A. Selling of property and utilising the proceeds to close a housing loan are two different things altogether. Capital gains arise on selling of property and exemption for such capital gains can be availed of only on making certain investments such as purchase of another house property or deposit on capital gains bonds. Sale of ancestral property and closing of loans do not qualify for exemption of capital gains. However, repayment of the principal portion of the loan qualifies for deduction under Section 80C (up to ₹1.5 lakh depending on your use of the limits under Section 80C, 80CCC and 80CCD(1)) provided it satisfies all conditions laid down in the section.

Q. I am a senior citizen aged 72 years. I have not been filing any income tax returns for the past 10 years. I have a PAN and my total income is ₹80,000 only by fixed deposit interest and my total fixed deposit is ₹10,00,000. Deposited in Tamil Nadu Power Finance Corporation is ₹7.5 lakh and in City Union Bank, ₹2.5 lakh. Should I file returns?

K.V. KRISHNAMURTHY

A. Under Section 139(1) of the Income Tax Act, an individual has to file their income tax returns (ITR) if the total income exceeds the maximum amount not chargeable to tax. As your income is not exceeding the basic exemption limits set for senior citizens, you need not file the respective returns applicable to you.

Q. My father is aged 77 years and is not covered by medical insurance. I have spent ₹4.5 lakh for his hospitalisation due to septic shock. Can I show expenses spent on my father under 80D (medical expenses) up to ₹50,000 for the assessment year FY21?

VATHSALA

A. Under Section 80D of the Income Tax Act, if no amount is being paid to keep in force a medical insurance with respect to a senior citizen, then medical expenditure incurred is eligible for deduction for an amount up to ₹50,000 for such senior citizen. In your case, medical expenditure incurred towards your father can be claimed as deduction in your hands for an amount up to ₹50,000.

Q. I own two flats purchased with bank loans. Repayment for one of the flats is over, whereas about ₹16-lakh loan repayment is due for the second. I wish to sell the first flat and clear off the balance loan amount of the second flat. I wish to spend the leftover sum for my daughter's wedding. In such a situation, would I have to pay any capital gains tax? If I do, what are the guidelines? Kindly advise.

MVS KUMAR

A. Capital gains tax is computed in the following manner: the first limb will consist of selling price less brokerage. Also, if the selling price is lesser than the area's guideline value, then the guideline value is to be replaced with the selling price.

The second limb will consist of purchase cost plus registration costs which is to be adjusted with the capital gains index. This is to be done with the aid of Cost Inflation Index (CII) released by the I-T department every assessment year. If you have incurred any cost of improvement, then the same can also be added along with the purchase cost (adjusted with CII, if applicable).

The difference between the first and second limbs, if positive, is capital gains and if not, it is capital loss. For properties held for more than two years, it is long-term capital gains/loss. Long-term capital gains attract 20% tax plus applicable cess and surcharge, while short-term capital gains depend on slab rates. Further, please note that capital gains indexation does not apply for short-term capital gains. Neither of the ends use of proceeds from the sale of your first flat mentioned by you qualifies for exemption from capital gains tax. You may claim deduction under Section 80C for the principal repayment if the conditions laid down in the section are satisfied depending on your utilisation of your Section 80C limits.

(The writer is 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.



VIDYA BALA

For most of us, unless we are super rich or super frugal, there is a remarkably high chance that our corpus will evaporate long before we do. The reason is simple. Even a 3-4% inflation annually (if not in living costs, then definitely medical and support costs) will raise the asking rate from your corpus.

A 6.7% return requirement (on your corpus) today can go up to 12% in less than 20 years. That's not the kind of return any fixed income plan can generate for you.

Result – your corpus depletes, and sometimes rapidly with the occurrence of even a single hospitalisation event without medical cover. This is the primary reason why you need something that still compounds your money suffi-

Equities post retirement may be WORTH THE LEAP

A cautious approach could help multiply your money sufficiently

ciently post retirement. Cut to the chase, you need equity post retirement.

Before we start, please note that I am not suggesting that you start equities in your 60s. It is not impossible to do this, but ridiculously hard to deal with the volatility of equities at a time when your income stream stops. And, the current stock market is not for newbies in their 60s!

If you already invest in equities, you need not exit entirely simply because you are retiring. You may need to rejig the risk profile of your investments, though.

Income stream
Before making the decision of continuing with equities, you should be sure of the following: one, you have 7-10 years of your income needs (with inflation) tucked away in 'income generating' debt (traditional instruments such as deposits, post office or annuity, or market-

linked). Only if you have surplus post this should you venture into equities.

Two, of the above, you must have at least 1-2 years' of income-generating corpus in the most liquid and safe (read low-yielding) options set aside for emergencies. If you don't satisfy the above and you still have some years to retire – increase your savings, please.

How much equity?
You will likely hear advisers suggest a certain percentage of income that can be invested in equity based on your age. But this really should not be ruled-based. The surplus left after you set aside corpus for income generation as indicated above, is what you can afford to deploy in equities.

If your surplus is limited, then you should be careful with equity investments. But here's the key point – at all times, you need to have some liquid

component – yes, even in the corpus earmarked for equity. This could be 10% or 50%. You'll know why later in this article.

Now, for the channels to equity investing.

Unless you have a good adviser, the best option is to stick to passive index funds or index ETFs. They are simple and easy to maintain and leave you more time to focus on better things in life!

If you have active funds, consider slowly shifting the equity component to a good mix of large and multi-cap index funds closer to retirement.

At all times, it is good to have some cash component like a fund manager – say 10-30% – via liquid funds or your savings account too. Check annually to see if your equity has grown or reduced. E.g., if you had an 80:20 equity : liquid component and if equity is now 90%, then sweep some equity into low-risk debt options to

bring your original allocation back.

If a correction causes equity to fall to say 70-75% from 80%, then shift the cash you hold into equity. This you can do without following the market, simply based on your own equity allocation. This will help two things: reduce portfolio hits and provide chances to average.

Follow the rebalancing that we suggested earlier. When you do this, remove the dud stocks first and not the compounders.

Lastly, if you have been trading for years, and your itch for trading hasn't left you, then keep a small sum say 2-5% as 'play money' and indulge yourself without touching your core equity portfolio.

(The writer is co-founder, Primeinvestor.in)



IMAGING: J.A. PREMKUMAR

THINK INVESTOR: MUTUAL FUNDS OFFER COMFORT

Hazards of investing directly in stocks

It hurts less when your MF holdings fall 10% compared with a similar decline in stock assets

VENKATESH BANGARUSWAMY

The sharp increase in asset prices since March last has made many wonder whether investing directly in the stock market is better than buying mutual funds. In this article, we discuss why mutual funds are preferable for goal-based investments.

Beyond diversification

We are not going to argue that diversification is the important reason to choose mutual funds. Just because a fund holds 30-40 stocks does not mean it is diversified. It is the relationship that these securities have with each other in the portfolio that will determine whether the fund is truly diversified or not. You have no way of knowing the constituents of the portfolio, leave alone how they were created; equity funds disclose their holdings only once every month as per SEBI guidelines. Our arguments are, therefore, based on operational efficiency and behavioural factors.

Consider operational efficiency. Your day job could make it difficult for you to track the market on a continual basis. By this, we mean keeping an eye on corporate developments and macroeconomic variables, all of which drive stock prices. And even if you are able to do this, how will you decide how many stocks to buy for your portfolio?

This leads to behavioural aspect of investing. You may have



All in the game: Some of the stocks that you exclude from your portfolio may outperform the ones you invest in. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

hand-picked 20 stocks for your portfolio. And then some of the stocks that you excluded from your portfolio may outperform the ones you invested in. So, the regret from missing out on the prominent ones (in hindsight) will subtract the happiness that you experience because of the positive returns you earn on the investments you made. And there is more.

Moderating regret

It hurts less when your mutual fund investment declines 10% compared to your direct investment losing the same value! Why? You outsource your investment decision to a professional money manager when you invest in a mutual fund. So, you can blame the money manager if the fund performs poorly. Of course,

your chances of achieving your goals will be affected whether the loss is because of mutual fund investments or direct investments. Nevertheless, outsourcing the decision helps alleviate regret.

But choosing a mutual fund is also a decision that could lead to regret, you may argue. True, but only if you invest in active funds – funds that expect to beat their benchmark indices. Such funds have to actively choose stocks to create portfolios. So, returns may vary across funds within the same category (say large-cap funds). Indeed, your regret would be high if the fund you invested in is not within the five best performing funds in that category.

You could, therefore, buy index funds. All large-cap index

funds would be benchmarked to either the NSE 50 Index or the BSE Sensex. The difference in their return is a function of how much cash they hold to meet redemption requests and the fees they charge to manage the fund. Both these factors are stable. So, you can simply pick an index fund with the lowest tracking error.

Conclusion

There are other benefits of investing in mutual funds. For one, your initial investment can be as low as ₹5,000. You cannot buy a lot of shares with that money in today's market. For another, managing your investment is easier because you have just one fund to consider – not 20 or 25 stocks as in the case of direct investing. Both these factors are stable. So, you can simply pick an index fund with the lowest tracking error.

A caveat is in order. Luck plays a dominant role in investment success. And this factor is more evident when you make direct investments. Also, your level of happiness is relative to your peers. So, if you compare yourself to a colleague or friend who made direct investments and became rich, you are likely to regret – even if you invest in index funds.

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

PRECIOUS METALS: A PAUSE

Sober start to the year

B. KRISHNAKUMAR

Precious metals had a sober start to 2021, with the price of Comex gold and silver ruling weak for the best part of January. A stronger U.S. dollar played a key role in keeping the prices of precious metals subdued.

While the Comex gold price remained weak all of January, there was a late flourish in silver towards the month-end.

Silver prices spiked by more than 7% towards the end of January on reports of a GameStop-style squeeze driven by the retail investors. So, Comex silver managed to close with a marginal gain of 1.94% in January to settle at \$26.91 an ounce.

Comex gold, however, closed on a weak note, falling 2.4% to \$1,850.3 an ounce. In India, MCX gold futures declined 1.7% to ₹49,337 per 10 gm.

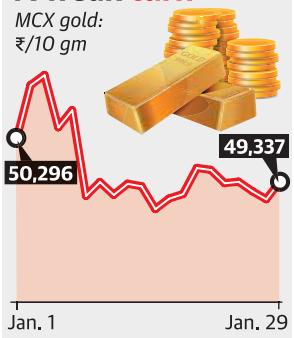
MCX silver futures closed 2.4% higher at ₹69,706 per kg. The short-term outlook for Comex gold is negative.

The price struggled to get past the key \$1,940-\$1,950 zone, which is not a healthy sign. Downside targets now work out to \$1,730-\$1,750.

The negative outlook for gold would be under threat if the price closes above the \$1,870-\$1,880 zone.

Till then, there would be a strong case for a slide to \$1,740 or lower. Comex silver achieved the target of \$29.5-\$30 mentioned last

A weak turn



LOOSE CHANGE

RAVIKANTH



"Since it seems to be doing so well on its own, do you really think the stock market really needs my money?"

PERSONAL LOAN - RATES AND CHARGES

Name of Lender	Interest rate (%)	EMI (₹)	Loan amount- 5 years	EMI (₹)	Loan amount- 1 lakh	Processing fee (% of loan amount)
HDFC Bank	10.50-21.00	10,747-13,527	2,149-2,705	₹2,999-25,000		
State Bank of India	9.60-13.85	10,525-11,595	2,105-2,319	Up to 1.5% (Maximum ₹15,000)		
Bank of Baroda	10.10-15.45	10,648-12,013	2,130-2,403	₹1,000-10,000		
ICICI Bank	10.50-19.00	10,747-12,970	2,149-2,594	Up to 2.25%</		

Bess has the Indians in a spin, puts England in the driver's seat

Archer packs off the openers early; a calm Pujara and flamboyant Pant fall after a good partnership; India has a tough job on hand to save the Test

ENGLAND IN INDIA

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

A natural riding on his skills, he shimmied down and struck the ball with brutal force. It was a thrill ride while it lasted. Actually, it seemed Rishabh Pant was batting without a care in the world.

But then, cricket is a many-layered game. It is deeply tactical and a batsman's seemingly reckless ways could actually be a thoughtful yet brave response to a challenge.

Distinct threat

Left-arm spinner Jack Leach was a distinct threat to the left-handers, getting the ball to jump into the batsman from the developing rough outside the off-stump from over the wicket.

And how did the explosive Pant respond? He danced down to Leach, took the rough out of the equation, and blasted the ball for sixes between long-on and mid-wicket.

Indeed, Pant's 88-ball 91 was the highlight of the third day's play even as England, led by off-spinner Dom Bess' four-wicket haul, took a firm grip on the first Test at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium on Sunday.

Replying to England's mammoth 578, India was 257 for six at stumps. Washington Sundar, stroking the ball with a left-hander's elegance and grace, was batting on 33, along with R. Ashwin, on eight. Earlier, Cheteshwar Pujara's well-made 73 – he drove crisply through covers and mid-wicket – was ended by a stroke of ill-luck when his full-blooded pull off Bess bounced off Ollie Pope to Rory Burns at short mid-wicket.

With the pitch expected to deteriorate, India will have a demanding job saving this Test.

Bess will be a distinct threat. The off-spinner was impressive on day three imparting revs on the ball and getting it to dip, drift and turn. He consumed Virat Kohli with a beautiful deliv-



On a string: Dom Bess spun a web around the Indian batsmen, picking up four wickets and helping England seize the advantage on day three. ■ SPORTZPICS/BCCI

ery that drifted and turned. The Indian captain pushed forward and was picked up smartly by Pope at short-leg. It was a classic off-spinner's

dismissal. The loop in Bess' delivery was the principal reason Ajinkya Rahane miscued a low full toss and Joe Root, diving to his left, much

like a goalkeeper, held a sensational catch at short-cover.

Pant also was done in by the dip, as he charged Bess,

could not get to the pitch of

BESS It has started to spin and it is only going to do more. We are pretty close to the new ball. We are in a great seat at the moment

Archer struck twice in a red hot opening burst. Rohit Sharma, playing away from his body, nicked one that left him. And Shubman Gill (29), after an innings that oozed class, checked his shot and was well held by a sprawling James Anderson at mid-on.

As the day wore on, Washington batted with style, conjuring two flowing cover-drives, off Ben Stokes and Leach. However, he could have fallen to Leach when on 25 had Archer held on to a skier running back from mid-on.

The lasting image of the day was Pant dancing down to Leach. But then, him fluffing a stumping to reprieve Leach off Ashwin in the morning reopened another debate.

SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND – 1ST INNINGS

Rory Burns c Pant b Ashwin 33 (60b, 2x4), Dom Sibley lbw b Bumrah 87 (286b, 12x4), Dan Lawrence lbw b Bumrah 0 (5b), Joe Root lbw b Nadeem 218 (37b, 19x4, 2x6), Ben Stokes c Pujara b Nadeem 82 (118b, 10x4, 3x6), Ollie Pope lbw b Ashwin 34 (89b, 3x4), Jos Buttler c Ishant 30 (51b, 5x4), Dom Bess lbw b Bumrah 34 (105b, 6x4), Jofra Archer b Ishant 0 (1b), Jack Leach (not out) 14 (57b, 2x4), James Anderson b Ashwin 1 (12b); Extras (b-7, lb-17, nb-20, w-1); Total (in 190.1 overs): 578.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-19 (Burns, 23.5), 2-63 (Lawrence, 25.4), 3-263 (Sibley, 89.3), 4-387 (Stokes, 126.1), 5-473 (Pope, 152.2), 6-477 (Root, 153.6), 7-525 (Buttler, 169.2), 8-525 (Archer, 169.3), 9-567 (Bess, 185.3).

INDIA BOWLING

Anderson 11-3-34-0, Archer 16-3-52-2, Stokes 6-1-16-0, Leach 17-2-94-0, Bess 23-5-55-4, Root 1-0-1-0.

INDIA BOWLING

Ishant 27-7-52-2, Bumrah 36-7-

the ball, and holed out to deep cover.

Before his fourth dismissal in the 90s in Tests, Pant delighted with his terrific bat

84-3, Ashwin 55.1-5-146-3, Nadeem 44-4-167-2, Washington 26-2-98-0, Rohit 2-0-7-0.

INDIA – 1ST INNINGS

Rohit Sharma c Buttler b Archer 6 (9b, 1x4), Shubman Gill c Anderson b Archer 29 (28b, 5x4), Cheteshwar Pujara c Burns b Bess 73 (143b, 11x4), Virat Kohli c Pope b Bess 11 (48b), Ajinkya Rahane c Root b Bess 1 (6b), Rishabh Pant c Leach b Bess 91 (88b, 9x4, 5x6), Washington Sundar (batting) 33 (68b, 5x4), R. Ashwin (batting) 8 (54b); Extras (b-4, lb-1, nb-20, w-1); Total (for six wkts. in 74 overs): 257.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-19 (Rohit, 3.3), 2-63 (Gill, 9.2), 3-71 (Kohli, 24.4), 4-73 (Rahane, 26.3), 5-192 (Pujara, 50.4), 6-225 (Pant, 56.4).

ENGLAND BOWLING

Anderson 11-3-34-0, Archer 16-3-52-2, Stokes 6-1-16-0, Leach 17-2-94-0, Bess 23-5-55-4, Root 1-0-1-0.

INDIA BOWLING

Ishant 27-7-52-2, Bumrah 36-7-

Mayers' incredible knock takes Windies to extraordinary win

S. DIPAK RAGAV
CHENNAI

On a day when England seized the advantage, Cheteshwar Pujara conceded that the Indian batsmen could have done better.

"We could have batted better. There were some soft dismissals which didn't go in our favour," said Pujara.

Freak dismissal

The Saurashtra batsman was looking solid on 73 when his pull shot deflected off the short-leg fielder and went straight into the hands of the midwicket fielder.

"It was just unlucky. That was the only way I was going to get out," said Pujara about his dismissal. "The way I was playing my shots and seeing the ball, everything was going perfect. It was a bad ball and I tried to put it away, but it hit



Daredevil: Pant earned the admiration of his opponents with his fine effort. ■ SPORTZPICS/BCCI

the short-leg fielder."

While praising Rishabh Pant's knock, the 33-year-old felt that the wicketkeeper

needed to be smarter with his approach.

"I love batting with him and hope our partnerships

can continue. I am happy with the way he is playing overall, but he still has to learn a few more things. "He has to

look to put the team in a commanding position because he is capable of that. He is missing out on hundreds. I am sure he will learn from this."

Still a good pitch

About the match, Pujara said, "There is more spin now, but it is still a good pitch to bat on. The first two days, it was flat. We would like to bat as long as possible in this pitch and we are confident because Washington and Ashwin are battoning well."



Dream debut: Kyle Mayers presented his credentials as the new kid on the block with some superlative batting. ■ AFP

**Second Test:
tickets to be sold online from today**

**SPORTS REPORTER
CHENNAI**

Tickets for the second Test between India and England, to be held here from Feb. 13 to 17, will go on sale from Monday. The tickets will be sold only through online www.paytm.com & www.insider.in, Paytm app and Paytm Insider app from 10 a.m.

Man City ends 18-year hoodoo at Anfield

**REUTERS
LIVERPOOL**

Manchester City opened up a commanding five-point lead at the top of the Premier League as Ilkay Gundogan scored twice in a 4-1 victory at Liverpool for whom 'keeper Alisson endured a Sunday afternoon to forget.

An emphatic win, City's 10th in a row in the league and the first at Anfield since 2003, moved Pep Guardiola's side to 50 points from 22 games.

The results:

Premier League: Tottenham 2 (Kane 54, Son 58) bt West Brom 0; Wolves 0 drew with Leicester 0; Liverpool 1 (Salah 63pen) lost to Manchester City 4



Hammer blow: Ilkay Gundogan more than makes up for a penalty miss with his second goal. ■ REUTERS

(Gundogan 49, 73, Sterling 76, Foden 83).
Serie A: AC Milan 4 (Ibrahimovic 30, 66, Rebic 69, 70) bt Crotone 0; Udinese 2 (Silvestri 83-

og, Deulofeu 90+1) bt Verona 0.

LaLiga: Real Sociedad 4 (Oyarzabal 26-pen, 35, Isak 54, 59)

bt Cadiz 1 (Izquierdo 65); Ath-

leti Bilbao 1 (Guillamon 43-og) drew with Valencia 1 (Gabriel Paulista 66).

Bundesliga: Hoffenheim 1 (Beibou 47) lost to Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Kostic 15, Ndicka 62, Silva 64).

Saturday: Premier League: Fulham 0 drew with West Ham 0; Manchester United 3 (Cavani 24, Fernandes 45, McTomney 70) drew with Everton 3 (Doucoure 49, James 52, Calvert-Lewin 90+5).

Bundesliga: Borussia M'Gladbach 1 (Neuhau 16) lost to Cologne 2 (Rehbein 3, 55).

Serie A: Juventus 2 (Cristiano Ronaldo 13, Roger 70-og) bt Roma 0; Genoa 2 (Pandev 11, 26) bt Napoli 1 (Politano 79).

LaLiga: Sevilla 3 (Munir 67, Gomez 87, En-Nesyri 89) bt Getafe 0.

SOURCE: ESPNCRICINFO

SUDOKU

9				8		3	1
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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13164

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TV PICKS

India vs England: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 9.15 a.m.
Pakistan vs South Africa: Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 10 a.m.
Australian Open: Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m.; Sony Ten 3 (SD & HD), 1.30 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)
ISL: Star Sports 1, 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

NBA



Mavericks hold off Warriors

New York Luka Doncic equalled a career-high 42 points to fend off a 57-point performance from Stephen Curry as Dallas Mavericks avoided back-to-back losses to Golden State Warriors with a thrilling 134-132 win on Saturday. **Top results:** Philadelphia 76ers 124 bt Brooklyn Nets 108; Atlanta Hawks 132 bt Toronto Raptors 121; Dallas Mavericks 134 bt Golden State Warriors 132; LA Lakers 135 bt Detroit Pistons 129 (2OT); Houston Rockets 106 lost to San Antonio Spurs 111; Sacramento Kings 119 bt Denver Nuggets 114.



Ex-West Indies pacer Moseley dies in mishap

KINGSTON Former West Indies pacer Ezra Moseley has died after his bicycle was hit by a car. He was 63 years old. Moseley played two Tests in 1990 and also nine ODIs between 1990 and 1991. He was banned following the rebel tour of South Africa in 1982-83. He was the assistant coach when the West Indies women's team won the T20 World Cup in India in 2016. PTI

Mixed day for Vidit; Carlsen in the lead

NEW DELHI Vidit Gujrathi (two points) experienced a day of mixed results – with a win, two losses and two draws – to share the 11th spot, with two others, after five rounds in the 16-man Opera Euro rapid online chess tournament on Saturday. Magnus Carlsen leads with four points. World champion Magnus Carlsen (4) got over the loss of the opening game to Wesley and won four games on the trot to take the lead.

The results: Fifth round: Anish Giri (3) bt Vidit Gujrathi (2); Leinier Dominguez Perez (USA, 1) lost to Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 4); Matthias Bluebaum (Ger, 1.5) lost to Wesley So (USA, 3.5); Ian Nepomniachtchi (Rus, 3.5) bt Hikaru Nakamura (USA, 2.5); Sam Shankland (USA, 2.5) drew with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 3); Alexander Grischuk (Rus, 2) drew with Teimour Radjabov (Aze, 3) Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Pol, 2.5) bt Ding Liren (Chn, 1.5); Levon Aronian (Arm, 2.5) lost to Daniil Dubov (Rus, 2).

Ali's conqueror Leon Spinks passes away

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LAS VEGAS

Leon Spinks, who won Olympic gold and then shocked the boxing world by beating Muhammad Ali to win the heavyweight title in only his eighth pro fight, has died. He was 67.

Spinks died on Friday after a long battle against prostate and other cancers.

A loveable heavyweight with a drinking problem, Spinks beat Ali by decision in a 15-round fight in 1978 to win the title.



Leon Spinks. • AFP

All set for the 'Nervous Slam'

Djokovic, Thiem, Halep, Osaka and Serena will be in action on opening day

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

REUTERS
MELBOURNE

After a three-week delay, a massive logistical mission and a handful of health scares, a very different Australian Open gets underway on Monday with pandemic protocols providing a backdrop of caution to the action on court.

Serena Williams begins her latest campaign to win a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title on Day One while Novak Djokovic is also in action, the Serb seeking a record-extending ninth Australian Open crown.

Once dubbed the 'Happy Slam' by Roger Federer, this year's edition might be remembered as the 'Nervous Slam' after struggling to build enthusiasm in a wary host nation, but organisers hope the anxious buildup will be forgotten when the action begins.

Herculean effort

Tennis Australia (TA) has made a Herculean effort to try to stage it safely and spent a fortune on biosecurity measures in a country where community transmission of the novel coronavirus has become rare.

It will be the third Grand Slam of the pandemic, with

The AO guide As the Australian Open (AO) is all set to begin in Melbourne on Monday, a look at some records and facts from the tournament.

MEN: Most titles:

Novak Djokovic (8)

Oldest champion:

Ken Rosewall, 37, in 1972

Youngest champion:

Mats Wilander, 19, in 1983

Most match wins:

Roger Federer (102)

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

Novak Djokovic (8)

SERENA WILLIAMS

Serena Williams (7)

WOMEN: Most titles:

Serena Williams (7)

Oldest champion:

Serena, 35, in 2017

Youngest champion:

Martina Hingis, 16, in 1997

Most match wins:

Serena (87)

PRIZEMONEY FOR 2021

Total prize pot A\$71 million

Singles winners A\$2.75 million

MONDAY'S PICKS

MEN: 1-Djokovic vs Chardy | 3-Thiem vs Kukushkin | 6-Zverev vs Giron | 11-Shapovalov vs Sinner

WOMEN: 2-Halep vs Cabrera | 3-Osaka vs Pavlyuchenkova | 8-Andreeescu vs Buzarnescu | 9-Kvitova vs Minnen | 10-Serena vs Siegemund

the U.S. and French Opens passing safely enough.

Yet many in Melbourne regard it a pointless risk to the freedoms they earned after spending nearly four months in a brutal lockdown to crush an outbreak last year.

Melbourne Park is usually heaving with fans but

crowds will be capped at 30,000 per day during the Grand Slam, about half normal capacity.

The onus now shifts to the players to put on a good show, and most sound thrilled about competing in a country where the virus is effectively at bay. "We are also entertainers. We like to

exchange that vibe and energy with the crowd," said defending champion Djokovic.

Ankita Raina became the fifth Indian woman to secure a place in the main draw of a Grand Slam as she made the cut for the women's doubles event

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