



Bangladesh contingent evokes spirit of 1971 at Republic Day Parade

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As pandemic rages on, Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte quits

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Cairn threatens Indian asset seizures abroad in tax award case

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Yasir spins out South Africa for 220, but visitors hit back

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NEARBY



Delhi records 157 new COVID cases, 7 deaths

NEW DELHI

Delhi recorded 157 fresh COVID-19 cases over 24 hours, taking the tally to 6,34,229, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday. Also, seven more deaths were reported, pushing the toll to 10,820.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Dhannipur mosque project launched in U.P.

AYODHYA

The Dhannipur mosque project was formally launched on Republic Day, with the unfurling of the Tricolour and a tree plantation drive at the five-acre plot here. The plot was allotted by the Uttar Pradesh government on the directions of the Supreme Court.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

Man arrested for 'rape, attempted conversion'

BALLIA (U.P.)

A 22-year-old man was arrested here on Tuesday for allegedly raping a 14-year-old girl, making obscene videos of her and attempting to pressure her into religious conversion for marriage, the police said. The man's father was also held. They have been charged with rape, unlawful conversion and under sections of the POCSO Act.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

Tractor rally turns violent as farmers enter Capital

■ Clashes erupt as police use tear gas, lathicharge to control rioters

■ Violence leaves one protester dead, 83 police personnel injured

■ Farmers swarm Red Fort, hoist flags inside national monument

■ MHA suspends Mobile Internet, deploys paramilitary forces

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Delhi witnessed chaotic scenes on Tuesday as groups of protesting farmers broke off from the planned Republic Day tractor parade routes and swarmed into the heart of the national capital, hoisting a union flag and a Sikh religious flag inside Red Fort.

Police used tear gas, water cannons and lathicharge to stop the farmers at several locations in the city, including at ITO, where one protester died.

The Delhi police said 83 personnel and one civilian were injured in the protests. By evening, the Home Ministry deployed additional paramilitary forces, and suspended mobile Internet services in several parts of the city.

In a statement issued late in the evening, the Delhi police said the protesting farmers had breached the agreement with the unions and began their march before the scheduled time.

"They chose the path of violence and vandalism, and seeing that the police had to take necessary steps to maintain law and order. This agitation led to damage of public property and many police personnel were also injured," they said.

The police have registered 11 FIRs against the protesters for damaging public property.

MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGES 2, 3, 4, 8, 9

ty and attacking personnel in east Delhi.

Farm union leaders condemned the violence, and distanced themselves from "anti-social elements" who, they claimed, had infiltrated the protest, insisting that the vast majority of protesters remained peaceful.

After intense negotiations, the Delhi police had given permission for three parade routes, staying near the border areas, scheduled to start from noon.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha, the joint front of all protesting unions, had agreed to their conditions.

Tensions on U.P. border

However, trouble started late on Monday night as hundreds of farmers on tractors from neighbouring Uttar Pradesh threatened to enter Delhi at the northeastern Loni border point, with the police saying they were "directionless and leaderless", but wanted to go to the Red Fort.

On Tuesday morning, even before the official contingents rolled down Rajpath, one defiant farm union from Punjab, the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee, broke through the barricades at the northwestern Singhu border with Haryana, and tractors drove out on the road to Delhi.

The police have registered 11 FIRs against the protesters for damaging public property.



Taking over: Farmers hoisting flags at the Red Fort after forcibly entering it, in New Delhi on Tuesday. ■ PTI

Farmer leaders blame 'anti-social elements'

They admit violence in the national capital will weaken their negotiating position

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
VIKAS VASUDEVA
NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

There was plenty of finger-pointing as farm union leaders rushed to distance themselves from the protesters who engaged in clashes with the police and rampaged the Red Fort on Tuesday. Several leaders admitted that the

violence could weaken their cause.

The Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee (KMSC), a defiant Punjab union which was the first to break from the agreed route, blamed KMSC general secretary Sarvan Singh Pandher.

"We strongly condemn the incident. It's an act of anti-social elements. We never

had any plan to go to the Red Fort and stage any kind of protest over there. The aim of these anti-social elements seems to weaken the ongoing farmers' movement," said

KMSC general secretary Sarvan Singh Pandher.

"We condemn such action. It is not that farmers are out of control," he said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Ready to continue talks, says Centre

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre is inclined to continue talks with agitating farmer leaders despite the violence and chaos in the capital on Republic Day, a top government source told *The Hindu*.

"We are, of course, waiting and watching how events will play out," the source told this writer, stressing that the government had been flexible in holding a dialogue with farm leaders.

With police deployed to deal with the continued law and order challenge from what appears to be a splinter element of the agitating farmers, the government has an open mind on continuing talks.

"We will be looking closely at all these issues on Wednesday," a Cabinet Minister told this correspondent. The Minister said the government has presented the agitating farmers with a compromise deal by agreeing to suspend the operation of the laws, but they had rejected it.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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Farmers and police personnel clash during a tractor rally near ITO Chowk; police use tear gas to disperse farmers attempting to break barricades near the Tikri border in Delhi on Tuesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY, SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR



Strong police resistance forces farmers to retreat
Protesters head back to border areas

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

NEW DELHI
The day-long parallel Republic Day parade of the farmers did not go as planned for most of them as their attempt to enter the heart of the Capital was met with strong resistance from Delhi police personnel.

Harish Chandra, 24, a wheat farmer from Hathras in Uttar Pradesh, said he and other members of his group have been forced to return to Ghazipur border, where they have been camping, as police had barricaded all entry points towards India Gate.

"We are heading back to Ghazipur, but not going back home. We will continue with the protest until the three farm laws are repealed," said Jhandha Singh, 62, a sugarcane farmer from Amroha in U.P., sitting at the back of a trailer fitted to a tractor.

When asked if the tractor parade was going to have any impact on the Centre, Mr. Singh said: "Yes, this should impact them. They should know by now that we are not going back until our demands are met."

The farmers who had been stationed at Singhu



RAF personnel fire tear gas at protesters near ITO Chowk on Tuesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

and Ghazipur border had started their parade early in the morning. By noon, there was over a kilometre-long traffic snarl on both sides of the road leading to ITO.

A group of farmers from Ghazipur side, who could not move any further towards ITO, decided to return back, while others decided to keep moving ahead.

By 4 p.m., the news of the death of a farmer at the ITO crossing had spread quickly. "The body is lying at the ITO crossing since 1 p.m.," said Sukhwant Singh, 45, a wheat farmer from Punjab, who was heading back to Singhu border.

On the way, some protesters damaged police barriers near the Old Delhi police headquarters.

Around seven tractors rammed a DTC bus parked at the ITO crossing and managed to push it away.

Around 1 p.m., police fired tear gas shells to stop

farmers from marching towards India Gate. The police action prompted violence from some farmers. Several police personnel as well as protesters suffered injuries during stone pelting and subsequent lathi-charge.

The police, however, managed to push the protesters back to the ITO crossing.



Police use tear gas to disperse farmers at ITO Chowk in Delhi on Tuesday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

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Around 1.30 p.m. a prot-

ester died after his tractor allegedly overturned at Minto Road, where the Delhi police had placed barricades to stop the protesters. The farmers, however, alleged that the man died in police firing.

A small group of protesters drove their tractors recklessly at the ITO crossing to clear a path through the police line. The police, however, managed to puncture the tyres of several tractors. Subsequently, many protesters moved towards the Red Fort.

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Around 1.30 p.m. a prot-

Artistes, children who participated in R-Day rescued from Red Fort

They were trapped during the violence



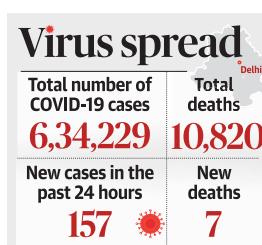
Protesters at the Red Fort in New Delhi on Tuesday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

ry excited to be in the city as this was her first trip, but she never imagined what she saw at the Red Fort.

"My parents got worried after seeing visuals of violence at Red Fort. A policeman took me and others in a police van to a safe building and talked to my parents and assured them that I am safe," said the girl.

A policeman, who along with other policemen rescued the artistes said that the children were scared as the protesting farmers entered the Red Fort and clashed with the police.

An artiste from Karnataka who wished not to be named said that she was ve-



Delhi records 157 new COVID cases, 7 deaths

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi recorded 157 fresh COVID-19 cases in 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 6,34,229, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday.

Also, seven more deaths have been reported in 24 hours, taking the total number of deaths to 10,820.

A total of 64,973 tests were done in a day. Of the total cases, 6,21,783 people have recovered and there are 1,626 active cases. The positivity rate of COVID-19 cases in the city was 0.24% on Tuesday and the overall positivity till now was 6.06%, the health bulletin stated.

Out of the total 8,949 beds available for COVID-19 treatment in the city, 91.6% beds were vacant.

There were only 703 people under home isolation and 746 in hospitals.

The Case Fatality Rate till now was 1.71%. Also, there were 1,653 containment zones in the city as of Tuesday.

CM YK

Faith gets ample play at R-Day parade

COVID-19 booths were set up in the area to run temperature checks on visitors

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

Ram, Shiva, Ayyappa, Allah and Guru Tegh Bahadur – all of them were mentioned at some point of the day during the Republic Day parade at Rajpath on Tuesday.

Achievements of India

Before the parade began at 9.30 a.m., an anchor while briefing about different achievements of the country, said: "The construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya commenced with Bhoomi Puja and laying of foundation stone by Prime Minister Narendra Modi."

At around 11 a.m., Ram was mentioned again when a tableau of Uttar Pradesh – Ayodhya: Cultural Heritage of Uttar Pradesh – was showcased. In the middle part of the tableau, there was a miniature model of Ram temple.

"The epitome of Ayodhya's cultural identity associated with mass sentiments and devotion, has been shown. The model of the temple in itself generates the feeling of devotion and reverence," a booklet by the Ministry of Defence on the parade read.

Communal harmony

Delhi's tableau, which is also a representation of communal harmony, opened with a song that started with "Allah Hu Akbar Allah".

The tableau of Punjab showcased the glory of the ninth Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, that of that



Top: BrahMos Missile System; the Delhi tableau rolls down Rajpath during the 72nd Republic Day parade in New Delhi on Tuesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

Uttarakhand showed a temple of Shiva. "The tableau also shows Nandi – the vehicle of Lord Shiva, travellers in Kedarnath Dham and devotees. The rear portion of the tableau shows temple of Lord Kedar, which is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas. Divya Shila, shown just behind the temple that stood in the way of the floods and saved the Kedarnath shrine in

disaster of 2013," the booklet about tableau of Uttarakhand read. When the BrahMos Weapon System was shown during the parade, the anchor mentioned that the war cry of the unit is "Swami Saranam Ayyappa".

Most of the people The Hindu spoke to was thrilled to watch a 'vertical charlie' by a single Rafale aircraft and many liked the tableau

Mixed feelings among parade viewers on Central Vista project

Some say 'it's need of the hour' while many believe otherwise

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

There was a mixed response among people, who had come to witness the Republic Day parade at Rajpath, about the Central Vista redevelopment project. Some said the government should have done it at some other place while others said it is the "need of the hour".

"We came by car. But we were stopped at 8 a.m. near Lodhi Garden area and we had to almost run for an hour to reach here. Rafale was brilliant. I am very happy to see it. It shows that Pakistan and China is not a competition for us. I am a Modi admirer," he said.

An UPSC aspirant from Kerala, Gokul Das (25), said: "When the Ram temple tableau came, many people sitting next to us were thrilled and shouting Jai Shri Ram. I liked the Rafale." He said the government should develop another area for people for the loss of public space.

Mr. Sharma, on the other hand, said: "We do not need a new parliament building. Even the U.S. Capitol is very old. The current parliament can be protected and renovated. We do not have to chop down hundreds of trees in the name of development in the heart of the city," he said.

Some get nostalgic

Raj Prajapati, 33, said people will miss the current Rajpath area. "There will be more security and entry for



This may be the last R-Day on Rajpath before work on the project begins.

the public will be restricted in a way. But we do not know the final plan yet. But the new buildings can be an attraction too," he said.

Nandakumar, 29, and his friend Agam Sharma, 26, were of different opinions about the project. "It's the need of the hour. Right now, our government offices are very crowded, and we need more space," Mr. Nandakumar said.

He said the government should develop another area for people for the loss of public space.

Mr. Sharma, on the other hand, said: "We do not need a new parliament building. Even the U.S. Capitol is very old. The current parliament can be protected and renovated. We do not have to chop down hundreds of trees in the name of development in the heart of the city," he said.

'Low economy'

Amol Gupta, 23, said this is not the right time to carry out the project as "the economy is down due to the pandemic". Her 20-year-old friend Ravi Kumar, an IIT-Delhi student, said a new parliament may not be actually needed. "Studies show that with time, the

population will not increase in our country after a point of time. So, the argument that we will need a bigger parliament to accommodate more representatives doesn't work," he said.

Outside the parade area

The thrill of watching the Rafale was there even outside the parade area. About 100 metres away from the parade route, a chaat seller, Ravi Yadav, said: "I couldn't leave all my stuff so I missed seeing the Rafale. But, I have seen it on my friend's phone. I really liked it."

The area also had "COVID-19 booths". At the gate, we were checking temperatures of people using thermal guns. We also had emergency medicine and doctors here," said Ashish Kumar, 25, a nursing officer.

"If anyone had a temperature of more than 100, then the person was not allowed inside," he added.

pite such difficult circumstances, displayed bravery and unity towards serving the nation on several occasions.

"The nation is celebrating the 72nd Republic Day today. In the last one year, we have witnessed glimpses of our great Republic and its strong unity on different occasions," he said in a video message.

'We saw glimpses of a great Republic'
CM marks occasion by unfurling National Flag at his residence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday unfurled the National Flag at his residence to mark the 72nd Republic Day.

In his address, Mr. Kejriwal lauded the contributions of the medical fraternity, soldiers, farmers and sanitation workers among others who, he said, des-

pite such difficult circumstances, displayed bravery and unity towards serving the nation on several occasions.

"The nation is celebrating the 72nd Republic Day today. In the last one year, we have witnessed glimpses of our great Republic and its strong unity on different occasions," he said in a video message.

CM YK

In the midst of the biggest epidemic that has hit humankind, we witnessed our doctors and nurses serving people by risking their own lives, we saw sanitation workers ensuring cleanliness, brave soldiers protecting the country and serving the people of this great Republic. We saw the dedication and struggle of our farmers," he added.



Farmers marching towards Delhi during their tractor parade; protesters make their way through Nangloi on their way to central Delhi on Tuesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA, SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR



Internet, traffic and metro services disrupted in the Capital

Entry and exit gates of at least 20 metro stations were closed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

As chaos ensued at several parts of the Capital due to protesting farmers breaking barricades and steering away from the pre-decided route of their tractor rally, Internet was suspended in several areas and over twenty entry and exit gates of the Delhi Metro were closed as a precautionary measure.

The Delhi Traffic Police curtailed the entry of vehicles into the city as well as parts of central Delhi, causing major traffic jams.

An order from the Home Ministry read: "In the interest of maintaining public sa-

fety and averting public emergency, it is necessary and expedient to order the temporary suspension of internet services in the areas of Singhu, Ghazipur, Tikri, Mukarba Chowk, Nangloi and their adjoining areas in the NCT of Delhi." However, people in parts of Central Delhi, Noida, Greater Noida and other areas also complained of poor internet connectivity.

Green Line affected

The entry and exit gates of at least 20 metro stations were also closed and the Delhi Metro took to Twitter to announce closures throughout the day. A majority of the metro stations on the Green Line were closed at various points of the day apart from stations that included Jama Masjid, Rohini Sector 18/19, Haiderpur Badli Mor, Jahan-

CHANGE OF PLAN

A section of protesting farmers broke off from the agreed-upon routes for the tractor rally and spread across the city

gir Puri, Adarsh Nagar, Azadpur, Model Town, GTB Nagar, Vishwavidyalaya, Vidhan Sabha, and Civil Lines among many others.

Trains stopped

Railway trains were also stopped as a precautionary measure for over two hours at the Tilak Bridge railway station after the protesters reached ITO and clashed with the police. According to a senior railway official, "trains were stopped for 2

hours between 12.30 p.m. and 2.30 p.m. as a precautionary measure at Tilak bridge station".

The traffic on the city roads, though thin due to the Republic Day holiday, was thrown completely out of gear. However, the traffic on most roads in the national capital was restored by around 9 p.m., according to the Delhi Traffic Police.

Delhi Police also took to Twitter to provide traffic updates throughout the day.

While traffic was heavy on GTK Road, Outer Ring Road, Badli Road, KN Katzu Marg, Madhuban Chowk, Kanjwala Road, Palla Road, Narela, DSIDC Narela, Wazirabad road, ISBT Road, GT Road, Pushpa Road, Vikas Marg, NH-24, Road no. 57, Noida Link Road among others in the afternoon. Main thoroughfares like Shankar Road, Talkatora Road and Minto Road were also closed by the police.

In the evening, traffic was affected from Punjabi Bagh underpass to Zakhira, Peeragarhi to Punjabi Bagh, Raja Garden Flyover to Dhaula Kuan among other areas.

The ITO junction that was one of the major points where the protests turned violent was blocked throughout the day, but traffic resumed in the evening at the busy intersection.

Locals perch on rooftops, balconies to witness farmers' tractor parade

They showered petals, offered food and greeted them

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

It was a never seen before moment for thousands of people who gathered at roadsides and perched on the rooftops and balconies

watching the tractor parade taken out by farmer unions on Tuesday in protest against the Centre's farm laws.

The parade taken out from Tikri, Singhu, Ghazipur and other border points of the national capital received a warm welcome with locals showering flower petals, offering food and water and

greeting them with slogans and cheers.

"I have never seen a tractor parade such as this. This is New India for me. I am recording this for my grandchildren who are too little to understand its importance now. I am sure they will thank me for this later," said Anita Batwal, 62, a retired school teacher.

Many bystanders who witnessed the parade termed the farmers their brothers and guests who were fighting for their rights. "My husband and I have come to welcome them. They are our

guests. We lost our land in U.P. in a court battle, we know their pain," said Kamla from Budhpur in Delhi.

A large number of people near Anand Vihar railway station lined the roadsides and recorded the tractor parade as farmers from Ghazipur drove past.

"It is bigger and better than what we expected. Locals cheering for us throughout the route has motivated us further. We will take what is ours. *Ab Delhi door nahi*," said 23-year-old Jaspal Singh from Gurdaspur in Punjab, taking part in the parade.

Sedate start



Locals welcoming farmers with flowers as protesters enter Delhi for their tractor parade on Tuesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

41 security personnel injured as violence erupts at Red Fort

They jumped from a height of 20 feet to save their lives

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Delhi Police and paramilitary personnel jumped from a height of 20 feet to save their lives when violence broke out in the Red Fort premises during farmers' tractor parade on Tuesday.

A senior police officer said that adequate number of security personnel were deployed to prevent entry of protesters at the Red Fort but they were outnumbered by protesters who turned violent.

A total 41 security personnel received injuries after they jumped from the height of 20 feet when cornered by protesters at the Red Fort. "We just prevented protesters from entering the Red Fort and they turned violent. Protesters attacked se-



Police officers and farmers during a protest at Red Fort in Delhi on Tuesday. ■ REUTERS

curity personnel with iron rods, sticks and pelted stones. Many received injuries after they jumped into a drain located in the periphery of the Red Fort. They were rushed to a hospital where they are undergoing treatment," said a police officer.

The officer added that after policemen fell into the

Centre trying to provoke farmers with sticks: Cong.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Commenting on the clash between protesting farmers and the police, Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Chaudhary on Tuesday said that the Central government was trying to provoke the farmers by hitting them with sticks and firing tear gas at them.

Mr. Kumar said: "The Modi government wants farmers to commit violence and is trying to provoke them so that it can be shown in the media that the farmers are behaving like goons."

He also added that the "Modi-Shah police" had raised stick on unarmed farmers coming to Delhi on Republic Day.

The Delhi Congress had on Monday said that it would support the tractor rally being organised by the farmers and would be stationed at the borders to welcome them as they enter the Capital.

Kisan Andolan no more in control of farmer unions'

BJP pins blame on Cong. and AAP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) State president Adesh Gupta said that hoisting "undesired flags" at the ramparts of the Red Fort and violence witnessed in the national capital showed that the Kisan Andolan was "no more in control" of farmers' associations.

Besides, he accused the Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) of being behind the incidents across Delhi and condemned them.

'Can't be farmers'

"Delhi BJP strongly condemns the violence and hopes the farmer leaders will call off Kisan Andolan siege of Delhi borders, which has inconvenienced people of Delhi and the entire North India," Mr. Gupta said.

"On Republic Day, people who create a fuss, crush the police with tractors, insult the tricolor, cannot be farmers... Farmer leaders themselves should consider what they did? [sic]" Mr. Tiwari tweeted.

"In fact, all along it has been supplemented by elements from the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party cadres from Punjab," Mr. Gupta alleged.

Condemns violence

"Delhi BJP strongly condemns the violence and hopes the farmer leaders will call off Kisan Andolan siege of Delhi borders, which has inconvenienced people of Delhi and the entire North India," Mr. Gupta said.

THE HINDU

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THE HINDU

India's National Newspaper

Yadav: I take responsibility, feel ashamed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Swaraj India president Yogenendra Yadav said he felt "ashamed" of the way the farmers' tractor parade turned out on Tuesday, Aam Aadmi Party stated that the incidents have "certainly weakened" the farmers' movement, which was going on peacefully.

"Being a part of the protest," he said, "I feel ashamed of the way things proceeded and I take responsibility of it."

"Violence impacts any kind of protest in a wrong way. I cannot say at the moment who did it and who did not, but prima facie it looks like it has been done by the people that we kept out of the farmers' protest," Mr. Yadav said.

"I appealed continuously that we stick to whatever route was decided and not deviate," said Mr. Yadav.

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 18 07
Safdarjang 18 07
Palam 16 08

Delhi Palam Today
18°C Dense fog likely to continue. Cold day type condition may prevail at few pockets. Moderate to dense fog would prevail with clear sky.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
17°C Cold wave at few places with cold day condition at few pockets. Moderate to dense fog would prevail with clear sky.

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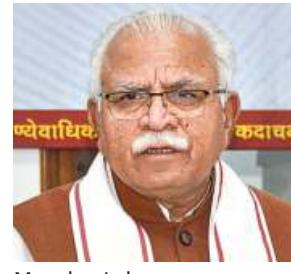
Punjab, Haryana on high alert after violence erupts in Delhi

Internet, SMS services suspended in 3 districts of Haryana to stop disinformation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Amid incidents of violence in Delhi during the farmers' tractor parade on Tuesday, the Punjab and Haryana governments have announced a high alert in their States to ensure that law and order is maintained.

Terminating the violence perpetrated by certain elements during the tractor rally in the Capital on Tuesday 'unacceptable', Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh urged all 'genuine' farmers to vacate Delhi and return to the borders, where they had been protesting peacefully for the past two months. He also ordered a high alert in Punjab and directed Director General of Police Dinkar Gupta



Manohar Lal. ■ FILE PHOTO

ensure law and order in the State.

The State government also suspended Internet services, all SMS services (excluding banking and mobile recharge) and all long-distance services provided on the mobile networks, except voice calls, in Sonipat, Palwal and Jhajjar districts for 24 hours till 5 p.m. on January 27, an official statement said.

Haryana Home Secretary Rajeev Arora said Internet services were snapped to "stop the spread of disinformation and rumours through various social media platforms" for mobilisation of antisocial elements who can disturb peace, cause loss of life and damage to property.

Mr. Lal said one has the

freedom to speech but one should not use this freedom to abuse others. "Also, one has the liberty to express but not to defame others. Similarly, people have the freedom to protest, but not to spread anarchy," he said, speaking during the Republic Day function in Panchkula.

The Shiromani Akali Dal has also condemned the incidents of violence in Delhi. In a statement, the party said it stands for peace and communal harmony and believes in democratic values. It has also appealed to the people to maintain peace and announced that an emergency meeting has been convened for January 27 to consider the situation.

(With inputs from PTI)

TMC issues show-cause notice to MLA

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Tuesday issued a show-cause notice to Uttarpara MLA Prabir Kumar Ghosal. Mr. Ghosal did not attend West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's meeting in Hooghly district on Monday.

On Tuesday morning, Mr. Ghosal resigned from two official party posts. He held a press conference saying there is a conspiracy to defeat him in the Assembly polls.

Mr. Ghosal said there were 'rotten fruits' in the party, and if they were not removed, the party will suffer. He said he has not resigned from the post of MLA and the party. Mr. Ghosal is one of the last of the Trinamool Congress leaders who has sounded dissent against the party.

Guarding the Republic



Border Security Force personnel patrolling snow-covered areas near the Line of Control in north Kashmir on Tuesday.

■ NISSAR AHMAD

Cong. advises restraint to AIUDF

'Opposition alliance must not come across as communal'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

As the political temperature rises in Assam ahead of the Assembly polls, the State Congress unit has advised one of its allies, the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), not to make any statements that come across as divisive.

Lok Sabha Member and AIUDF president Maulana Badruddin Ajmal had at a public meeting last week said that 3,500 mosques would be demolished if the BJP retained power after the 2024 Parliamentary polls. He had also said the BJP was trying to change the food habits of a section of Indians, which was unacceptable.

'Communal statements'
"Ajmal is trying to polarise the votes by making such communal statements. The voters in Assam are sensible and can see through such statements," BJP spokesperson Roopam Goswami said.

Referring to Mr. Ajmal's



Maulana Badruddin Ajmal.
■ FILE PHOTO

statement, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had said on January 23 that the Congress revealed its communal face by tying up with AIUDF in Assam and the Indian Union Muslim League in Kerala.

The Congress and AIUDF are the two major constituents of a pre-poll Opposition alliance of six parties. The other constituents are the Communist Party of India, CPI(Marxist), CPI(Marxist-Leninist) and the Anchalik Gana Morcha, led by journalist turned Raja Sabha Member Ajit Kumar Bhuyan.

Mr. Bora, meanwhile, slammed Mr. Shah for claiming to have made Assam "infiltration and flood-free".

"He (Mr. Shah) should

have known that the Indian Constitution has not declared either AIUDF or IJML as communal. AIUDF is not a communal party and Mr. Ajmal has not made any anti-Hindu remarks, unlike the BJP that incites hatred against Muslims," State Congress president Ripun Bora said.

He, however, said the constituents of the Grand Alliance have been asked to not make any provocative remarks and refrain from issuing statements that may hurt the sentiments of any community.

MP and State Congress vice-president Pradyut Borodoli said all constituents of the Grand Alliance will have to stick to some rules. "We think that AIUDF has not made any communal statements so far. But we will not tolerate any such statements in the future," he said.

The man's father was also arrested while they were reportedly attempting to flee.

POCSO Act

They have been charged with rape and unlawful religious conversion and under sections of the POCSO Act, they said.

The Muslim youth on January 11 entered the house of the 14-year-old girl and raped her. He made a video clip and exerted pressure on the girl, whom on January 13 narrated the incident to her parents. Since the accused were influential, the girl's fa-

mily members could not muster courage to lodge a complaint," Superintendent of Police Vipin Tada said.

A 22-year-old man was arrested here on Tuesday for allegedly raping a 14-year-old girl, making obscene videos of her and attempting to pressure her into religious conversion for marriage, the police said.

The man's father was also arrested while they were reportedly attempting to flee.

His father also held under new U.P. Act

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BALLIA (U.P.)

A 22-year-old man was arrested here on Tuesday for allegedly raping a 14-year-old girl, making obscene videos of her and attempting to pressure her into religious conversion for marriage, the police said.

The man's father was also arrested while they were reportedly attempting to flee.

Attempting to flee

"The youth and his father were arrested on Tuesday from near a railway station when they were trying to escape. Both were produced before a local court, which sent them to jail," the SP said.

Station House Officer of the local Kotwali police station Vipin Singh said the family members of the accused allegedly threatened the girl to convert for 'ni-kah' (marriage), following which charges under the anti-religious conversion legislation were pressed, and the duo arrested.

In her complaint, the woman narrated her ordeal to her family members. She was admitted to a private hospital on January 19 and was discharged the next day. An FIR was registered against the absconding accused, the SHO added.

Meghalaya govt. talks tough on illegal coal mining

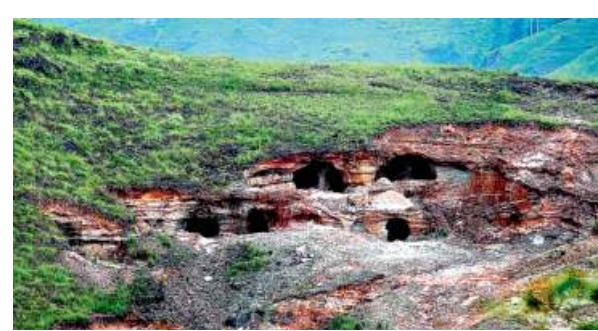
Ally BJP demands Home Minister's resignation after death of 6 workers on Jan. 21

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The National People's Party-led alliance government in Meghalaya has said it would crack down on illegal coal mining as constituent partner Bharatiya Janata Party demanded the State Home Minister's resignation for the death of six workers in a 180-foot coal pit on January 21.

State Home Minister Lakhmuni Rymbui represents the regional United Democratic Party.

"We do not know who is indulging in illegal coal mining... I am made to understand that the place where



Rat-hole mines in East Jaintia Hills in Meghalaya. ■ FILE PHOTO

the illegal activity took place is far away from the villages," Deputy Chief Minister Preston Tynsong had said in Shillong on Monday.

Six miners, all from As-

drowned in December 2018.

Insisting that action was being taken against illegal rat-hole coal mining, banned by the National Green Tribunal since April 2014, Mr. Tynsong said a few people have been picked up in connection with the mishap.

The government has been facing flak from the Opposition Congress and ally BJP for failing to stop illegal mining and transportation of coal.

While demanding Mr. Rymbui's resignation, BJP has been seeking an independent probe into the illegal mining activities.

In Jhargram district on Tuesday morning rescued an elephant calf that had fallen into a well. At 5.45 a.m., the villagers informed us that an elephant calf had fallen into a well. A tusker and a female elephant were guarding the place," Bijay Chakraborty, Additional Divisional Forest Officer of Medinipur Division, said.

The officials and the villagers managed to drive away the elephants and rescue the calf with a JCB machine. Videos of the ele-

BJP making strategies to counter Cong.

Former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje skips core group's first meeting in Jaipur

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

A 16-member core group of the Bharatiya Janata Party, formed to address infighting and factionalism in the party's Rajasthan unit, has started making strategies to counter the ruling Congress in the run-up to by-election in four State Assembly constituencies.

The core group held its first meeting here on Sunday.

The upcoming budget session of the Assembly, starting on February 10, is also likely to give an opportunity to BJP to raise some important issues. BJP has completed its initial round of election campaign by organising party workers' meetings in three of these constituencies.

BJP State president Satish Poonia said the State government's failure to fulfil the promises made in the Com-



BJP leaders Arun Singh and Satish Poonia at the party's core group meeting in Jaipur. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

gress manifesto, "mishandling" of the COVID-19 pandemic and the deteriorating law and order situation would be some of the issues to be raised in the Assembly.

"In the feedback received from the poll-bound Assembly seats, we have learnt that the people are angry with the government," he said.

The group members felt that the non-waiver of farm

loans, failure to disburse unemployment allowance and rising cases of crimes against women could create trouble for the government.

BJP national general secretary Arun Singh, who attended the meeting as a special invitee, sought to downplay factionalism in the party. He said at a press conference that the people are angry with the government.

The core group includes Union Ministers Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Arjun Ram Meghwal and Kailash Chaudhary, Rajya Sabha MPs Om Prakash Mathur and Rajendra Gehlot and Lok Sabha MPs Kanak Mal Katara and Chandra Prakash Joshi as its members.

history of AMU," said AMU Vice-Chancellor Tariq Mansoor. He said most modern methods of preservation of the documents have been used. Emphasising the need of keeping the records of the past for future, Prof. Mansoor pointed out that the line of demarcation between prehistoric and historical times is crossed when people cease to live only in the present, and become consciously interested both in their past and future.

Meanwhile, he also informed that a committee has been constituted to sort out the modalities for excavating a capsule buried on January 8, 1877, by Lord Lytton (the then Viceroy and Governor-General of India) during the foundation stone ceremony of the MAO College.

AMU buries 'time capsule' to mark its centenary year

It includes facets of the university's illustrious history: V-C

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GAZIABAD

A 1.5-ton 'time capsule', encapsulating the history of Aligarh Muslim University spanning over a century, was buried 30 feet deep on Tuesday in the park opposite the Victoria Gate to mark the Republic Day celebrations and the eventual centenary year of the university.

The historic cache of information built with high-tempered steel for the communication with future generations included a copy of Sir Syed Album (by Khalil Ahmad Nizami); essays and speeches relating to the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh from 1875 to 1919 (compiled by Nawab Mohsin ul Mulk) and History of MAO College, Aligarh by Theodore Morrison. It also



The time capsule being buried by the AMU V-C. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

included the speech of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Centenary celebrations on December 22, 2020.

"This time capsule is for the benefit of future generations and it includes the salient features of the glorious



Farmers hoist Tricolour at Azad Maidan

Elderly woman agitator unfurls the flag, thousands leave for their homes after attending ceremony

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Thousands of cultivators, who had arrived here from parts of Maharashtra to protest against the Centre's farm laws, left for their homes on Tuesday after an elderly woman agitator hoisted the Tricolour at the Azad Maidan in Mumbai.

The flag hoisting was held at the ground in south Mumbai around 9.30 a.m. following which the protesters headed towards their native places, the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) said.

The farmers held a rally at the Azad Maidan on Monday to express solidarity with the farmers agitating near Delhi borders against the Centre's three new farm laws.

NCP president Sharad Pa-



Farmers salute the national flag as they take part in a rally in support of their demands, in Mumbai on Tuesday. ■ AFP

war, Maharashtra Congress chief Balasaheb Thorat, Peasants and Workers Party leader Jayant Patil and various farmers' representatives attended the rally on Monday.

Around 15,000 farmers arrived in the State capital for the rally, the Maharashtra unit of the AIKS earlier said.

"The flag hoisting ceremony was held at the Azad Maidan on Tuesday morning. After that, the farmers headed towards their homes. The movement is in line with

what we had decided earlier," AIKS president Ashok Dhadwale said over phone.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha had given a nationwide call for a struggle from January 23 to 26, including rallies to Raj Bhavans in States. Accordingly, the protesters in Mumbai took out a march towards the Raj Bhavan here after the public meeting at Azad Maidan on Monday. However, police stopped the protesters mid-way.

'Missing' Governor

A delegation of farmers was to meet and submit a memorandum to Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari. But, after they learnt that the Governor was in Goa on Monday, the farmers' leaders accused Mr. Koshyari of not meeting them

despite giving an appointment himself.

The leaders charged the Governor with "running away" to Goa and "insulting" the farmers by not being in Raj Bhavan to accept their memorandum, copies of which they later tore to condemn the Governor's action.

The Raj Bhavan on Monday dismissed the claims and said Mr. Koshyari, who is also the Governor of Goa, left for the neighbouring coastal State to address its Assembly, the five-day session of which began on Monday.

The Raj Bhavan also said representatives of the Samyukt Shetkari Morcha were informed in advance that the Governor would not be able to meet the delegation as he would be in Goa.

School of Public Health launched in Rajasthan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

A new School of Public Health (SPH) has been launched here to make policy intervention for building public health capacity and skills and bridge gaps between education and practices in Rajasthan. The school is expected to play an important role in healthcare management in the post-COVID-19 scenario.

Named after Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) chairperson S.D. Gupta, the school will provide technical support to health systems and render help to the State government in harnessing new technologies.

IIHMR Dean (Research) D.K. Mangal said on Tuesday that the SPH has taken up a study on non-communicable diseases, climate change and antimicrobial resistance as its first project to identify priority areas in public healthcare. The study will examine the scope for data analytics and artificial intelligence as the key segments for the public health sector.

Dr. Mangal said the major thrust areas for the school would be digital health technology and evaluation of surveillance mechanisms that could help the policy makers in identifying the challenges and bringing changes to ensure "equity and inclusion" in public health.

Gehlot govt. brings M-sand policy for construction works

CM says it will prove to be a 'game changer' for the industry

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

The Rajasthan government on Monday brought the much-awaited policy on manufactured sand (M-sand), giving industry status to the units producing it for construction work and reducing the dependence on *bajri* (riverbed sand). The Supreme Court had banned illegal mining on riverbeds in 2017.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot launched the new policy at his official residence here, while affirming that it would prove to be a "game changer" for the construction industry. The policy would help



Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot

create employment opportunities through new units and resolve the issue of huge quantities of waste generated in the mining areas, he said.

"Sufficient quantity of sand [for construction] is not available in Rajasthan in the wake of judicial orders and

environment-related procedures. The new policy will ensure availability of M-sand as a long-term alternative to *bajri*," Mr. Gehlot said.

The policy will enable the investors to set up M-sand units by utilising the incentives offered by the State government. It will also help in environmental protection and generate faith among the public in the efficacy of M-sand for construction works. Mines Minister Pramod Bhaya said the demand for sand in the construction sector had touched 70 million tonnes, which would be met by the new policy.

Soren vows 75% jobs in private sector for locals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DUMKA (JHARKHAND)

Announcing a host of welfare measures on the Republic Day, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren said his government will soon formulate a new domicile policy and reserve 75% jobs in the private sector for the people of the State. He also said that the government will recruit schoolteachers and police personnel.

Unfurling the national flag at Dumka Police Lines, Mr. Soren said, "2021 will be the year of appointments... A new domicile policy will be formulated and 75% of the posts in the private sector will be reserved for local people."

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GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU TAMBARAM MUNICIPALITY

TAMILNADU SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENTPROJECT

INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

E-Procurement Notice

(One Envelope Bidding Process with e-Procurement)

Bid No.:1297/2020/E1

1. The Government of India has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost of Tamil Nadu Sustainable Urban Development Project and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts for construction of works as detailed below.
2. Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding procedures agreed with the World Bank. Bidding is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers, January 2021.
3. Bidders from India should, however, be registered with the Government of Tamilnadu or other State Governments/Union of India, or State/Central Government Undertakings. Bidders from India, who are not registered above, on the date of bidding, can participate if they get themselves registered by the time of contract signing, if they become successful bidders. Bidders are advised to note the clauses on eligibility (Section I Clause 4) and minimum qualification criteria (Section III – Evaluation and Qualification Criteria), to qualify for the award of the contract. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 of the World Bank's Guidelines setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.
4. The Commissioner invites online bids for the construction of works detailed in the table. The bidders may submit bids for any or all of the works indicated therein.
5. Bidding documents are available online on www.tenders.gov.in from 27.01.2021 to 18.02.2021 at free of cost.
6. For submission of the bid, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the Certifying Authorities authorised by Government of India for issuing DSC. Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-procurement in this Project, may obtain the same from the website: www.tenders.gov.in at free of cost.
7. All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security of the amount specified for the work in the table below, drawn in favour of The Commissioner, Gobichettipalayam Municipality Bid security will have to be in any one of the forms as specified in the bidding document and shall have to be valid for 45 days beyond the validity of the bid.
8. Bidders must submit online on www.tenders.gov.in or before 16:00 hours on 18.02.2021 and will be opened online on 22.02.2021 at 15:00 hours. Any bid or modifications to bid (including discount) received outside e-procurement system will not be considered. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time. The electronic bidding system would not allow any late submission of bids.
9. The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand drafts towards the cost of bid document and registration on e-procurement website (if not previously registered); (b) original bid security in approved form; and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document with The Commissioner, Gobichettipalayam Municipality, Cutchery Street, Gobichettipalayam 638452, Tamilnadu before the opening of the Bid i.e., before 19.02.2021, either by registered post speed post/courier or by hand, failing which the bids will be declared non-compliant.
10. A pre-bid meeting will be held on 10.02.2021 at 11:00hrs, at the office of The Commissioner, Gobichettipalayam Municipality to clarify the issues and to answer questions on any matter that may be raised at that stage as stated in ITB Clause 7.4 of Instructions to Bidders of the bidding document. Bidders are advised to download the bidding document prior to the pre-bid meeting in order for bidders to have a good understanding of the scope of work under this contract for discussion and clarification at the pre-bid meeting.
11. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The Employer shall not be liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to this bid.

TABLE

Package No	Name of Work	Bid Security * (Rs.)	Cost of Document (Rs.)	Period of Completion
1	2	3	4	5
I	Providing BT surface to Periyalur street Ward-12,MGR street,Ward-13,Nagammal street Muthuramalingam street Ward-16, Salomon street, Salomon street Extn, Rajarao street W-17 Thangal karai street, VGN avenue, Rajai Street, Eswar Nagar, Eswari Nagar extn, Kannan street, School street, Raja Iyer street, Kulakkarai street, Vengadasamy street, East Tambaram street Extn,Veerabharan street Ranganathan street ward-18 East Tambaram in Tambaram Municipality	1,95,141/-	Nil	6 Months
II	Providing BT surface to Dhanalakshmi street , Ganesh Nagar Pillaiyarkoil street, Sthipharam street, 100 Feet Road, Abirami street, Kannan Nagar, Gangai Amman Koil street, Ward -19 Ponniamman Koil street, Ambedkar Baru Ground Road ward -20 Ricky Garden Main road, Ricky Garden 1st, 2nd,street, 1st cross street, 2nd cross street, 3rd cross street, 4th cross street Ward -21 MES road Ward -24 East Tambaram area in Tambaram Municipality</td			



Taxing clunkers

Raising tax on older vehicles will help shift to cleaner ones, but some sections will need help

The Centre's proposed policy to raise road tax on vehicles of a certain age from April 1 next year has the potential to renew a big part of India's vehicular fleet, reducing air pollution, raising fuel efficiency, and improving safety standards. It has taken the government years to finalise a "tax on clunkers" proposal, under which commercial transport vehicles will have to pay 10%-25% extra on road tax after eight years when renewing the fitness certificate, and, similarly, personal vehicles after 15 years; public transport is given concessions, while hybrids, electrics and farm vehicles are exempt. A higher tax in the most polluted cities, and on diesel engines is also on the cards. States, which enforce motor vehicles law, now have to weigh in on the proposed changes. Unlike similar programmes, such as the post-2008 recession CARS rebate plan in the U.S., India's scheme relies on penal taxation to persuade owners to scrap their old vehicles, with no cash-for-trade-in arrangement. For this approach to work efficiently, the additional tax proposed should exceed the resale value of the polluting motor, making its disposal more attractive, with enough safeguards to ensure that it is indeed scrapped and recycled under a monitored system. Equity features can be built into the scheme, offering a discount to income-vetted marginal operators such as autorickshaw drivers, on the lines of the 2009 stimulus given under the JNNURM scheme for buses. This should ideally be part of a green post-pandemic recovery plan, with an emphasis on electric vehicles.

When the scrappage policy was on the drawing board last year, Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari envisioned a reduction in automobile prices of 20% to 30%, driven by recovery of scrap steel, aluminium and plastic, all of which would be recycled. Now that he has a better-scoped plan, the focus must be on building capacities in the organised sector to manage the task of efficient materials recovery. Provisions will have to be built in to see that the sudden demand stimulus available to the auto industry does not disadvantage consumers, particularly those selling junk vehicles. The vehicle registration database for all States also requires updating, to reflect true numbers of old vehicles on the road, eliminating those scrapped; a significant number, more than 15 years old, still run. Such data will help target scrappage policy benefits better. Moreover, many transport vehicles are operated by small entrepreneurs who lack the resources to transition to newer ones and need help as loans and grants. India's policy to eliminate polluting fuel guzzlers has had a long gestation, and States should see the value of operationalising it as planned. New vehicles and cleaner fuels should help clear the toxic air in cities and towns and make roads safer.

Many vulnerabilities

The robustness of blockchains in electronic voting is, as yet, suspect

The much discussed and debated Electronic Voting Machine in India has survived intense scrutiny over its use largely because of one strong reason – the fact that this standalone single-chip device is not connected to any network. This is besides several technological and administrative safeguards to ensure that the machine is not tampered with. With the addition of the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) to the EVM, "auditability" was added to the process even as the machine has suffered glitches, which the Election Commission of India (ECI) has managed to tackle reasonably well. The ECI should definitely seek solutions to make the EVM more robust even as it must reject calls for a return to paper balloting – which experienced malpractices such as ballot stuffing and booth capturing. That being said, the announcement by Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora that the ECI is commencing trials of a "remote voting project" is sure to bring back scrutiny. ECI officials have not elaborated or released any detailed document, but have mentioned that the system, being developed by IIT-Madras, uses the blockchain method for "two-way remote voting" at designated centres.

Remote voting, as an option, has gained some priority during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to address social distancing. In the U.S., the mail-in ballot system, where registered voters received ballots and returned it via post or dropped it off at secure "drop boxes" or voting centers, was widely used, but this was entirely paper based. The blockchain method implements an online public bulletin board that allows for a linear ordering of data to which a user can only further append data. The board itself is public and available for anyone to read and verify. The technology has been put in use for cryptocurrencies – the Bitcoin blockchain records a list of transactions that can be read to find out who owns which bitcoins without any centralised authority. In the case of a blockchain-based voting system, the voting authority will have to authenticate this bulletin board in which users sign in using cryptographic signatures to register their votes in a ledger. While this system, with its cryptographic features, promises data security and verifiability, the fact that it will depend upon a network and devices could introduce vulnerabilities that are present in any Internet-based system. A draft paper by MIT and Harvard researchers, in November 2020, has raised concerns about the designs of a remote block-chain-based voting system and pointed to serious vulnerabilities in some instances where it was tried out. The paper also points out that beyond the vulnerabilities faced by any Internet-based system, blockchains also introduce issues related to complexity and their management. The ECI would do well to exercise caution before deploying this method in elections, besides subjecting it to a rigorous public appraisal.

Pursuing national interests, at the UN high table

India's quest of its goals at the UNSC must have a clear agenda and also reflect its material and geopolitical limitations



HAPPYMON JACOB

India deserves a permanent seat at the high table of the United Nations, the UN Security Council (UNSC), but is almost sure not to have it anytime soon. Therefore, its two-year non-permanent stint at the UNSC should be viewed as a once-in-a-decade opportunity to clearly identify and pursue its national interests regionally and globally, rather than chase chimerical goals such as a permanent membership or to issue please-all platitudes.

The UNSC, unfortunately, is where the leading powers of the international system dictate terms, show less powerful countries their 'rightful' place, fight among themselves even as they negotiate deals outside the horseshoe-tabled room. This is not where the lofty ideals of the human race come to fruition; nor are the members of the elite body persuaded by moral and ethical considerations. Seated at the table for the eighth time, New Delhi knows the game. And yet, sometimes it becomes a victim of its own past rhetoric and forgets to play the game to its advantage.

Timing of membership

New Delhi's entry into the UNSC coincides with the emergence of a new world order, one marked by systemic uncertainty, little care for global commons, absence of global leadership, the steady division of the world into rival blocs, and an age marked by unabashed pursuit of narrow national interests, putting even the rhetoric about a

value-based global order on the backburner. Efforts by the newly-inaugurated Biden administration in the United States, especially to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement and, possibly, the Iran nuclear deal, may go on to ameliorate some of the harsh impact of this dog-eat-dog global disorder. However, the deep systemic malaise that has already set in will outlive the good 'intentions' of a democratic administration in Washington DC, delayed as they come.

The UNSC has also reached a point wherein its very relevance is in serious doubt, let alone serious expectations of it to live up to its primary objective: "the maintenance of international peace and security".

India is different too. It is no longer an ardent believer in the fantastical claims about a perfect world at harmony with itself, nor is it a timid bystander in global geopolitics. Contemporary India is more self-confident, resolute and wants to be a shaper of geopolitics even though it lacks the material wherewithal, economic heft, and domestic consensus, to action its ambitions. But at least its mindset has changed, from being satisfied on the margins to desiring to be at the centre stage. On the downside, however, its hard realism is not just a foreign policy attribute but reflective of and stems from its domestic political dynamics, worrying as it were.

New Delhi's pursuit of its interests at the UNSC should, therefore, reflect its material and geopolitical limitations, and its energies should be focused on a clearly identified agenda.

The China factor

New Delhi's tenure at the UNSC comes in the wake of its growing military rivalry with Beijing, the



impact of which has already started to be felt at the UNSC meetings in New York. China's opposition to having India chair the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) in 2022 was a precursor to the things to come on the high table. If the Biden administration were to continue with Donald Trump's policy of pushing back Chinese aggression including at the UNSC, New Delhi might find itself some useful allies in checking Chinese aggression in the region.

Greater Indian alignment with the West at the UNSC, an unavoidable outcome, could, however, widen the growing gulf between Moscow and New Delhi given Russia's increasing dependence on Beijing in more ways than one. However unfortunate that may be, it might not be possible for New Delhi to sit on the fence anymore; doing so would bring more harm than goodwill in an international system where battlelines are sharpening by the day.

India's seat at the UNSC is also significant vis-à-vis China because the next two years will be key to ensure checking further Chinese incursions along the Line of Actual Control and building up enough infrastructure and mobilising sufficient forces in the forward areas. Our experience from Doklam to Ladakh to now Arunachal Pradesh points in one direction – that Chinese land grab attempts will continue unabated and in pushing Beijing back, we would need all the

assistance we can get.

Focus on terror

Terror is likely to be a major focus for India at the UNSC. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's statement at the UNSC Ministerial Meeting on the 20th Anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1373 and the establishment of the Counter Terrorism Committee has set the stage for New Delhi's approach on the issue: "Terrorists are terrorists; there are no good and bad ones. Those who propagate this distinction have an agenda. And those who cover up for them are just as culpable".

New Delhi recently assumed the chair of the Taliban sanctions committee (<https://bit.ly/2Yt8STH>) which assumes significance given the fast-moving developments in Afghanistan and India's new-found desire to engage with the Taliban. The issue of terrorism has been a major theme in the country's national security and foreign policy discourse for decades now, more so of this government. India must, however, formulate its policy towards terrorism with far more diplomatic finesse and political nuance especially given that it is chairing the Taliban sanctions committee while courting the very same Taliban. More so, a nuanced policy towards the Taliban would be difficult to sustain without a similar treatment of domestic insurgencies. Put differently, if New Delhi wishes to make its mark on the global discourse and policy formulation on terrorism, it would need to approach them with far more clarity and intellectual coherence.

Yet another area New Delhi would want to focus on while seated at the high table would be to use the forum and its engagement there to build coalitions among like-minded states and set out its

priorities for the next decade – from climate change to non-proliferation. While these topics might only concern the UNSC in varying degrees, New Delhi should use its bargaining power at the UNSC to pursue its national interests in other forums and domains as well.

Perhaps more significantly, New Delhi's UNSC strategy should involve shaping the narrative and global policy engagement *vis-à-vis* perhaps one of the biggest grand strategic concepts of our time – the Indo-Pacific. Given India's centrality in the Indo-Pacific region and the growing global interest in the concept, New Delhi would do well to take it upon itself to shape the narrative around it. In doing so, it should, through the UNSC and other means, court Moscow once again and assuage its concerns about the Indo-Pacific.

Think beyond reforms

New Delhi's pursuit of its national interest at and through the UNSC must also be tempered by the sobering fact that the UNSC is unlikely to admit new members any time soon, if ever at all. India's past global engagements and efforts have often been contingent on the hope that it would one day be admitted to the UNSC given its irrefutable claim. But a cursory glance at the recent debates on UNSC reforms and the state of the international system today should tell us that bending over backwards to please the big five to gain entry into the UNSC will not make a difference. So New Delhi must focus its energies on what it can achieve during the short period that it would be in the UNSC rather than what it wishes happened.

Happymon Jacob teaches at Jawaharlal Nehru University and recently founded Council for Strategic and Defense Research, a New Delhi-based think tank

Roots to government-private thought partnerships

If capacity within government is lacking, it is necessary to leverage external expertise for better policy design and action



K.P. KRISHNAN & ROOPA KUDVA

On January 15, 2021, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 3.0. This is the third phase of the scheme which was launched in 2015 to give a boost to skilling in the country. In this third version, the government wants to focus on matching local skilling requirements with local job opportunities. The thrust of PMKVY 3.0 is on empowering States and districts to implement skilling schemes by making regional-level plans.

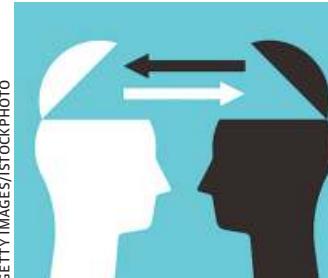
The scheme guidelines state that the scheme shall be implemented in two phases. The first is being implemented on a pilot basis during the 2020-21 fiscal year, while simultaneously initiating the creation of an implementation framework for the second phase (2021-2026).

Growing partnership

The foresight and planning evident in the scheme's guidelines signal the MSDE's thoughtful approach towards revamping the skilling ecosystem in the years ahead. However, any plan of this scale is seldom the work of a few individuals, a department or even a ministry. It requires multiple rounds of consultations and co-working with different entities, including collaboration between the government and external partners.

A key difference

It is important here to emphasise that thought partnerships are different from the recruitment of consultants to provide government officials additional manpower to manage routine tasks. Thought partnerships are a struc-



tured mechanism for private entities to lend relevant strategic expertise to the government on policy design, evaluation and implementation.

Issue of funding

From the government perspective, a practical question to be resolved in any such exercise which involves external partners, is funding. Normally, the government would be rightly wary of accepting funding from agencies which come with caveats, associated obligations or other agendas, both implicit and explicit. It is also not always feasible for the government itself to fund projects involving private partners, more so when such projects are unconventional thought partnerships. It is not the quantum of money required to fund a thought partnership that becomes a roadblock (in most cases it would be a fraction of the department or Ministry's budget), but the process of getting requisite approvals for funding external agencies.

Given this context, it is ideal if a committed external partner funds the thought partnership expeditiously without strings attached. The good news is that several domestic and international philanthropies and impact investing firms are already investing billions of dollars into critical sectors in developing countries including India. The not-

so-good news is that much of this funding goes into supporting projects or interventions that work in limited, contextual settings rather than systemic or sectoral transformation programmes. This is the difference between trying to improve learning levels in a district through direct classroom interventions versus rethinking how the government school system works in a State or the country. It is here that philanthropies and impact investing firms can make a huge difference.

Earlier programmes

In the past, systemic thought partnerships have been attempted sporadically across ministries.

In 2005, the Ashok Lohri Committee, constituted by the Ministry of Finance, came out with a report which stated that there was not enough knowledge about external capital flows and controls in India. The committee's recommendation resulted in the establishment of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, Department of Economic Affairs research programme. The programme led to the creation of a rich body of world-class research on capital controls and flows in India, developed by Indian researchers, that was used to inform government policy on the matter.

In 2015, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs constituted a research secretariat headed by the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, to support the Companies Law Committee to make "informed decisions...on the principles involved as well as international practices in the areas of insolvency, raising of capital, penalties, related party transactions and other areas".

The National Institute of Financial Management is working with

the Department of Economic Affairs to provide legal research and technical assistance on Indian and foreign financial markets, policy analysis, formulation as well as conduct of impact assessment studies on decisions taken by the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

In late-2018, the MSDE itself started engaging with multiple private firms such as Dalberg Global Development Advisors and Samagra-Transforming Governance to conceptualise and design its vision for 2025.

Pitfalls and solutions

These attempts at establishing thought partnerships between the government and private entities, while instructive, are largely disparate and episodic. They do not provide the definitive way forward on government-private collaboration. India faces a dearth of scholars and practitioners who are singularly focused on researching and solving India's problems. As such, policy choices made in isolation from the rigorous debate, research and questioning which thought partnerships facilitate, can produce suboptimal results. It is therefore in the public interest that more such partnerships are forged and funded to channel external expertise and skills towards finding scalable solutions to the pressing policy challenges the country faces.

K.P. Krishnan, a former Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India, is currently the IEFP Chair Professor in Regulatory Economics at the National Council of Applied Economic Research. **Roopa Kudva** is Managing Director, Omidyar Network India. The views expressed are personal

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.

Clash at Naku La

From Ladakh to Sikkim, India's border disputes with China only seem to be intensifying. China's 'claim' on Arunachal Pradesh and the recent 'formation' of a village in the area only make matters worse. It remains to be seen how the power dynamics between the Asian giants finds a level and affects the larger geopolitical scenario.

VIPASHA KAUSHAL,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

It is disturbing that the rest of India is getting to know details about clashes and

intrusions, from Galwan to Naku La, after much delay. There needs to be transparency on such issues as it concerns the security of the entire nation.

SIVAGANESH K.,
Cheyyar, Tamil Nadu

Course corrections
Elevated to a high pedestal, the Prime Minister has met little constructive criticism from within his party. Acquiring an animated following, a doting social media has eclipsed the professional print and visual genre, to render him too big to fail or appear vulnerable.

But increasing major agitations should underscore his need for upright men and institutions that alone would feed him corrective inputs. As it stands, the political Opposition will take quite a while to recuperate and refocus. But institutions manned by professionals will rebound quickly once they find themselves free to express and act. So would informed critique by an unfettered media, the Fourth estate. But then who contends with an unsubdued right-wing that promotes a vague brand of nationalism? The nation needs much more than a

Budget touted to be a "never before in 100 years" Budget. R. NARAYANAN, Mumbai

Budget touted to be a "never before in 100 years" Budget.

R. NARAYANAN,

Mumbai

A nexus

The incident, where a tourist lost her life after being attacked by a wild elephant, at a privately owned resort in Kerala's Wayanad, is shocking. It is sad that a life had to be lost in order to locate the 'unauthorised' resort and to order safety protocols. It looks like the whole blame is being thrown at the owner. Perhaps the authorities stand equally or more accused too. If the

statement by the Wayanad Prakruthi Samrakshana Samithi that 'there are ... private resorts functioning without the permission of the authorities concerned', is true, it points to suspicion of

some unholy nexus between the authorities and resort owners.

P.R.V. RAJA,
Pandalam, Kerala

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

Error in the Corrections and Clarifications column (Jan. 26, 2021): We had erroneously given the date of publication of the Open Page article titled "Burning bad" as February 24, 2021. It should have been January 24, 2021.

The TV Picks column on the Sports page (Jan. 26, 2021) erroneously called it the 2nd Test between Pakistan and South Africa. Actually, it is the 1st Test.

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 Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91

We're not all in the same boat

Fighting inequality must be at the heart of our economic rescue and recovery efforts



AMITABH BEHAR

One of the most incisive and hard-hitting comments on the real import of the COVID-19 crisis came from none other than the United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres. He said: "COVID-19 has been likened to an x-ray, revealing fractures in the fragile skeleton of the societies we have built. It is exposing fallacies and falsehoods everywhere: The lie that free markets can deliver healthcare for all; the fiction that unpaid care work is not work; the delusion that we live in a post-racist world; the myth that we are all in the same boat. While we are all floating on the same sea, it's clear that some are in super yachts, while others are clinging to the drifting debris."

Oxfam International's annual report on inequality for 2021, aptly titled 'The Inequality Virus', puts the uncomfortable but imperative spotlight on the obscene inequality between the few in "super yachts" and the overwhelming majority "clinging to the drifting debris". The report was published on the opening day of the World Economic Forum's 'Davos Dialogues'.

Over the decades, India has faced mammoth challenges including wars and hunger. But the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a migrant crisis, lockdowns, and serious contraction of the economy, and highlighted a crumbling health system, is an unprecedented test of the republic. This is the moment to use the 'COVID x-ray' to recognise the deep fissures caused by the growing inequality in the country; and for post-pandemic recovery, resolve to plan a fundamentally different economic model for ensuring an equal, just and sustainable future for all.

Uncomfortable truths
The Oxfam report highlights deeply uncomfortable truths of how the virus has exposed, fed off, and increased existing inequalities of wealth, gender and race. Over two million people have died, and hundreds of millions of people are being forced into poverty while many of



During the COVID-19-induced lockdown, migrant workers in Ghaziabad walk towards their home State, Bihar. ■REUTERS

the richest, both individuals and corporations, are thriving. Worldwide, billionaires saw their wealth increase by a staggering \$3.9 trillion between March 18 and December 31, 2020. Within nine months, the top 1,000 billionaires, mainly white men, had recovered all the wealth they had lost, while recovery for the world's poorest people according to most estimates could take over a decade.

The pandemic, which is the greatest economic shock since the Great Depression, saw hundreds of millions of people lose their jobs and face destitution and hunger. This shock is set to reverse the decline in global poverty we have witnessed over the past two decades. It is estimated that the total number of people living in poverty could have increased by between 200 million and 500 million in 2020.

Globally, women are over-represented in the sectors of the economy that are hardest hit by the pandemic. If women were represented at the same rate as men in those sectors, 112 million women would no longer be at high risk of losing their incomes or jobs. The unequal impact of the pandemic, in addition to this gender dimension, also has a race dimension. In Brazil, for example, people of Afro-descent have been 40% more likely to die of COVID-19 than white people. The virus has also led to an explosion in the amount of underpaid and unpaid care work, done predominantly by women, and in particular women from groups facing racial and ethnic marginalisation.

The rich and poor in India

Sadly, India is a case in point. The country introduced one of the ear-

liest and most stringent lockdowns in the face of the pandemic, whose enforcement brought its economy to a standstill triggering unemployment, hunger, distress migration and untold hardship.

The rich have been able to escape the pandemic's worst impact. White-collar workers have easily isolated themselves and have been working from home. The wealth of Indian billionaires increased by 35% during the lockdown and by 90% since 2009. This is despite the fact that most of India has faced a loss of livelihood and the economy has dipped into recession. The increase in the wealth of the top 11 billionaires during the pandemic can easily sustain the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme or the Health Ministry for the next 10 years. We have read astonishing stories of how Mukesh Ambani was making ₹90 crore per hour during the lockdown when 24% of the population was earning under ₹3,000 per month. According to the International Labour Organization, with almost 90% working in the informal economy in India, about 40 crore workers in the informal economy are at risk of falling deeper into poverty.

The Oxfam report undertook a survey of 295 economists from 79 countries. They included leading global economists such as Jayati Ghosh, Jeffrey Sachs and Gabriel Zucman. Of the respondents, 87% expected that income inequality in their country was going to significantly increase as a result of the pandemic. These levels of inequality are not viable and will have a deeply harmful impact.

Three, reintroduce wealth taxes and ensure financial transaction taxes while putting an end to tax dodging. Progressive taxation is the cornerstone of any equitable recovery, as it will enable investment in a green, equitable future. Argentina showed the way by adopting a temporary solidarity wealth tax on the extremely wealthy that could generate over \$3 billion.

Four, we need to invest in a green economy that prevents further degradation of our planet and preserves it for our children. The fight against inequality and the fight for climate justice are the same fight.

Amitabh Behar is the CEO of Oxfam India

World Bank, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The IMF Managing Director, Kristalina Georgieva, said, "The impact will be profound [...] with increased inequality leading to economic and social upheaval."

Fighting inequality

India just celebrated its 72nd Republic Day. We must recognise that a radical and sustained reduction in inequality is the indispensable foundation for a just India, as envisioned in the Constitution. The government must set concrete, time-bound targets to reduce inequality. We must move beyond the focus on GDP and start to value what really matters. Fighting inequality must be at the heart of economic rescue and recovery efforts. This must include gender and caste equality. Countries like South Korea, Sierra Leone and New Zealand have committed to reducing inequality as a national priority, showing what can be done.

Four things could be done on priority. One, invest in free universal healthcare, education, and other public services. Universal public services are the foundation of free and fair societies and have unparalleled power to reduce inequality, including gender and caste inequality. An immediate step could be delivering a free 'people's vaccine' to all citizens to tackle the pandemic.

Two, the virus has shown us that guaranteed income security is essential. For this to happen we need not just living wages but also far greater job security, with labour rights, sick pay, paid parental leave and unemployment benefits if people lose their jobs.

Three, reintroduce wealth taxes and ensure financial transaction taxes while putting an end to tax dodging. Progressive taxation is the cornerstone of any equitable recovery, as it will enable investment in a green, equitable future. Argentina showed the way by adopting a temporary solidarity wealth tax on the extremely wealthy that could generate over \$3 billion.

Four, we need to invest in a green economy that prevents further degradation of our planet and preserves it for our children. The fight against inequality and the fight for climate justice are the same fight.

Pallbearers of 'cow science'

Pseudoscientific claims are made by pliant researchers, supported by the state and believed by a section of society



ANIKET SULE

pliant academics. Take the example of the "cow dung chip". To prove its claim, the RKA has produced a letter from the Department of Physics of Saurashtra University which talks about an experiment conducted in its lab. This study is not published in any research journal, but on the RKA's request, the head of the department has issued a letter detailing the experiment. According to the letter, radiation count from a radioactive source gets halved when you introduce a cow dung chip between the source and the Geiger-Muller counter. The experiment lacks comparisons with control. The researchers did not test if the same effect is seen if the cow dung is replaced by any other substance such as wet mud. Without such comparison, they are not in position to claim that cow dung possesses any special property; still they do. They have written that cow dung chips of different shapes and sizes have yielded nearly the same fall in the radiation count, yet they are keen to accord significance to minor variations they observe within the readings.

This is a classic example of what happens when researchers decide the conclusions first and then start designing experiments to cherry-pick the data and justify the conclusions.

Bending intellectual honesty

This is just the tip of the iceberg. If you dig deeper, you will unearth many more of their ilk, including a few from the best Indian research institutes, who are happy to bend their intellectual honesty and produce carefully crafted research papers which are all but declarations of subjection to the ruling ideology. Why? It is true that some of these academics are ideologically driven and their religious bias clouds their scientific judgment. Unfortunately, some of them are truly unaware how cheesy their research appears to the wider scientific community. At the other end of the spectrum, there are also many who see publication of trashy but docile research as a short-cut to power and money. In our university sector, where all appointments are politicised and research grants are extremely hard to come by, this short-cut appears even more attractive.

Last, some blame must fall on those who believe such claims. If the majority of the educated class makes its displeasure towards anti-science rhetoric clear, there will be corrective measures from the government. Or have we descended to the level where the party matters more than truth? I hope not.

Aniket Sule is Associate Professor, Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, Mumbai

A chink in Kremlin's armour

Moscow's crackdown on Alexei Navalny's supporters has only galvanised opposition to Putin

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

The violent demonstrations last weekend in more than 100 cities across Russia in support of opposition politician Alexei Navalny were unlike any of the protests in the country under President Vladimir Putin's rule, say commentators. The rallies, in which thousands have been detained, have been compared with several weekends of public demonstrations since August in neighbouring Belarus calling for the president to resign. There is also a growing sense that the unrest in Russia represents as much support for the 44-year-old anti-corruption crusader as it does opposition to the ruling regime, stemming from falling living standards, compounded by the pandemic. Mr. Navalny himself has been held in detention since his return from Germany on January 17 after recovering from a nerve agent attack that took place last August. If the charges against him are confirmed by the Kremlin-backed judiciary, he could be incarcerated for years.

Reactions from the West

Western governments, which are at pains to formulate a unified position under the new U.S. administration, something that had proved elusive during the Trump presidency, have called for tough measures against Moscow. The U.S. Director of National Intelligence, Avril Haines, is to probe the chemical weapon attack on Mr. Navalny. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan has termed Moscow's crackdown on Mr. Navalny and the protesters as "a violation of human rights".

The European Union (EU)'s stance vis-à-vis Russia continues to reflect deep divisions that characterised its response to the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the subsequent conflict in Ukraine. Polish President Andrzej Duda deployed tough language as he called for sanctions against Russia's state-owned gas giant Gazprom. He even said that the visit of EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell, to the country next month would be a "mistake". Such a hard stance would be viewed in EU capitals as no more than echoing Warsaw's historic animosity with

Moscow. On the contrary, German Chancellor Angela Merkel's approach has reflected a concern for stability on the bloc's eastern flanks arising from Russia's regional ambitions, without jeopardising its energy dependence on Moscow.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin is doing everything to appear not unduly concerned over the unrest. Moscow was unfazed when there was large-scale opposition to Mr. Putin's return to the presidency in 2012, and when opposition candidates were banned from the 2019 elections for the Moscow City Duma.

A stronger opposition

The crackdown on the opposition is likely to intensify at least until parliamentary elections later this year. President Putin's ratings have steadily dipped in opinion polls, as has support for his United Russia party. This risks his present supermajority in the Duma. The regime has aptly picked another target, namely Mr. Navalny's so-called 'smart voting' initiative, which encourages the electorate to exercise their right to vote strategically to favour the opposition. The method yielded impressive gains for the opposition in the 2019 municipal polls across Russia, and also in the local elections in Siberia in September where Mr. Navalny was campaigning before he was poisoned.

The government has expanded the designation of "foreign agents," a label introduced in 2012 and aimed to stigmatise NGOs that received funding from overseas. The label now covers foreign-backed media houses, with stringent monitoring of their finances and other activities, and could include dissident contestants.

Irrespective of what happens to Mr. Navalny, his courage has galvanised opposition to the Kremlin, prompting a large band of activists to stake their lives to restore the rule of law and basic freedoms for all. Coinciding with his detention was another exposé linking Mr. Putin to an opulent £1 billion development on the Black Sea coast. An end to the uncertainty gripping Russia seems elusive.

Girimella Subramaniam is Director - Strategic Initiatives, AgnoShin Technologies



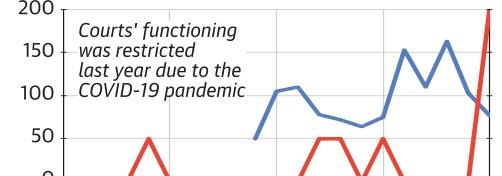
DATA POINT

State of the death penalty

While 2020 saw the highest number of executions in a year since at least the turn of the millennium in India, the number of death sentences imposed was significantly low, possibly due to the courts' limited functioning. However, the share of death sentences pronounced for sexual crimes peaked in 2020, after sharply rising over the past years. Nearly half of such sexual crimes in 2020 involved victims aged less than 12. Notably, India has consistently voted against UN resolutions calling for a moratorium on the death penalty. By The Hindu Data Team

FEWER SENTENCES, MORE EXECUTIONS | Courts imposed 77 death sentences in 2020, of which 62% were declared before the first lockdown. Four convicts of the Delhi gang-rape case were executed in 2020, the highest number of sentences carried out in recent years

— Sentences — Executions (right axis)



NATURE OF OFFENCE | Among death penalties, the share of those involving sexual offense cases shot up from 18% in 2016 to nearly 65% in 2020. More than 96% of death sentences in 2020 were pronounced for crimes involving sexual offenses or murder

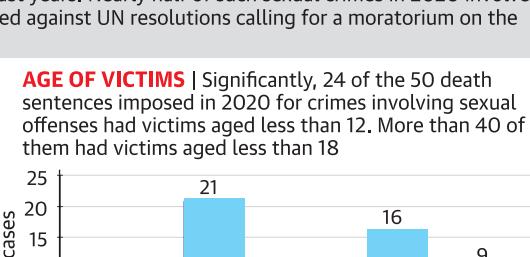
All figures in %

Year	Sexual offence	Murder	Terror	Abduction with murder	Rioting with murder
2016	18.0	32.7	3.3	15.3	26.0
2017	39.8	19.4	4.6	13.0	16.7
2018	41.4	22.2	3.1	11.7	9.9
2019	52.9	27.5	8.8	4.9	0.0
2020	64.9	31.2	0.0	2.6	0.0

Source: Project 39A, Amnesty International

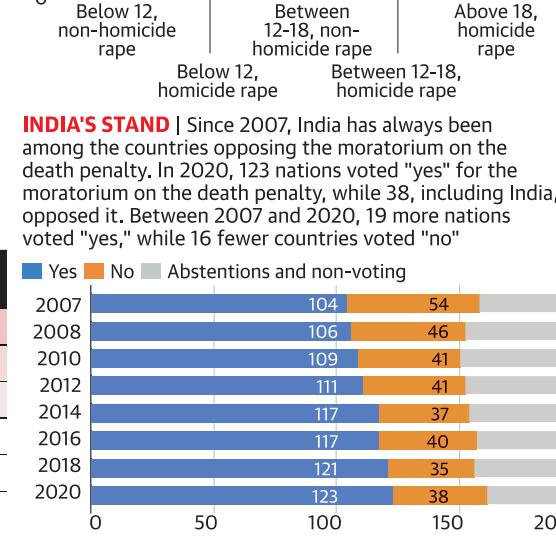
AGE OF VICTIMS

Significantly, 24 of the 50 death sentences imposed in 2020 for crimes involving sexual offenses had victims aged less than 12. More than 40 of them had victims aged less than 18



INDIA'S STAND | Since 2007, India has always been among the countries opposing the moratorium on the death penalty. In 2020, 123 nations voted "yes" for the moratorium on the death penalty, while 38, including India, opposed it. Between 2007 and 2020, 19 more nations voted "yes," while 16 fewer countries voted "no"

■ Yes ■ No ■ Abstentions and non-voting



A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 27, 1921

Church to be sold

A public meeting of the members of the combined parishes of San Thome and Good Shepherd was held yesterday evening in the Sullivan's Garden School, Teynampet, under the presidency of Mr. M. D. Devadoss, Barrister-at-Law, to protest against the sale of the Sam Thome Tamil Church and the Parsonage. The meeting was numerously attended. The Chairman in opening the meeting said that for some time past owing to the difficulty of raising money in the mother countries, the British and the American Missions had been cutting down their grants to the Indian Churches, as a result of which the Madras District Council had arrived at the decision to sell the Santhome Church and the Parsonage, which were in more or less dilapidated condition, and the Mission expressed inability to repair them. He knew that to sell away the Church was a most repugnant thing. He was also aware of the difficulty apart from sentiment they were asked to worship in the English Church. He then asked them to suggest means to tide over the difficulty.

FROM PAGE ONE

Farm leaders blame 'anti-social elements'

"Some rogue criminal elements are causing the problem. There is a conspiracy to give a bad name to farmers," Mr. Mollah told *The Hindu*, noting that protesting farmers have conducted a peaceful agitation for the last seven months since the three laws were initially brought in as ordinances.

The SKM noted that peaceful protests had been held in many parts of the country on Tuesday, including tractor parades in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Bihar. Even in Delhi, the majority of tractors stuck to the agreed routes, while thousands of others were not even able to leave the protest sites.

"If you look all across the country, there may be over a crore people on the streets. There are a few hundred who are breaking rules here. The Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee are not a main part of the movement," said Mr. Mollah.

"Someone who is breaking the rules like this, causing disturbance, actually helps the government to win, and they cannot be called part of the movement... Putting up a flag at

Red Fort was never the aim for farmers," he added.

BKU-Tikait leader Rakesh Tikait, who led the group on the Ghazipur border blamed the prolonged struggle for more than six months, and the protests of more than two months on the borders of Delhi as a reason for the situation. He also blamed the Delhi police for the farmers' initial deviation from the agreed route, saying that because barricades were not placed at the right locations, tractors got lost and accidentally wandered into Delhi. "As a result, undesirable elements and some organisations got a chance and tried their best to disrupt this parade. BKU disassociates itself from those involved in this act," he said.

At the Shahjahanpur border, where the parade ran smoothly, Swaraj Abhiyan leader Yogendra Yadav initially posted a video pleading with protesters in the city not to tarnish the movement. Later in the evening, he said he would take responsibility. "Being a part of the protest, I feel ashamed of the way things proceeded and I take responsibility of it," he told a television channel.

Protest rallies were organised in all panchayats, municipalities and corporations in Kerala, Samyuktha Karshaka Samithi chairman, Sathyam Mokeri, said. Farmers were protesting since November 26 to prevent a corporate invasion of the nation's farm sector, but the Modi government had done next to nothing to resolve the issue, he said at a public meeting.

"The protesting farmers have not raised any new demands. They want the minimum support price and the mandi system to be retained. Even wealthy farmers have realised that corporates are the common enemy," Mr. Mokeri said.

Police action slammed
At Khammam in Telangana, Left party cadres, the Con-



Loud and clear: (clockwise from top)
Farmers and supporters of various parties taking out rallies in Kalaburagi, Hyderabad, Thiruvananthapuram and Vijayawada. ■ ARUN KULKARNI, RAMAKRISHNA G., S. MAHINSHA & K.V.S. GIRI

We are ready to continue talks, says Centre

"It was a perfect opportunity that was rejected by the farmer unions," the top government source said, adding that the government had no issues in continuing a dialogue with the farmers' leadership.

"The laws would have

been suspended for a period of one-and-a-half years and after that we would have seen what would happen," the source added, hinting that the farm laws might remain non-operational beyond that period too.

gress and several farmers' organisations took out a bike rally on Tuesday.

Addressing a meeting at the Pavilion grounds, the leaders of the Rythu Sanghams condemned the alleged caning of farmers by the police in Delhi. They demanded that the Centre entirely scrap the three farm laws without further delay.

Thousands of farmers across Karnataka protested the farm laws at parallel Republic Day parades – in some cases with their tractors. They called the occa-

sion 'Jana Ganaraya Divasa', along the lines of the rally in New Delhi. Protests were held in Bengaluru, Mysuru, Mangaluru, Belagavi, Hubballi-Dharwad and Kalaburagi.

Police had set up hurdles

for tractor rallies in most cities, especially in Bengaluru and adjoining Chikkaballapur, Kolar and Ramanagara districts. The police stopped tractors as they moved towards Bengaluru, leading to altercations and sit-in protests.

Leaders alleged that the police had visited houses of farmers in Anekal and Dodaballapur, on the city's outskirts, warning them not to join the protest with their tractors. Police allowed less than a hundred tractors into Bengaluru.

Farmers held a symbolic tractor parade, entering the city through five entry points and congregating at Freedom Park in Bengaluru.

Farmer leader Kodihalli Chandrashekhar addressed a meeting at Freedom Park. Terming the protests across the country, especially in

Delhi, historic and a clear message to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said. "The violent turn the protest took is regrettable. But this is what happens when you test the patience of a community beyond limits. This country has fought hard to come out of the clutches of the East India Company, but now the Prime Minister seems keen to hand over the country to Ambani and Adani."

Opposing the recent stringent norms on cow slaughter, he said, "People from Basavanagudi and Jayanagar

need not teach us about cows. We worship them, but a complete ban on their slaughter would be a burden on farmers."

Another farmer leader Chamara Malipatil described the farmers' movement as a "second freedom movement".

Centenarian freedom fighter H.S. Doreswamy, who presided over the rally at Freedom Park, said the farmers' movement and the recent anti-CAA-NRC protests had instilled hope in him for the country.

He deserved the Param Vir Chakra: Galwan hero's kin

Col. Santosh Babu was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra

STAFF REPORTER
HYDERABAD

An alleged serial killer, whose primary victims were women, was apprehended in Hyderabad, police said on Tuesday.

The accused, Maina Ramulu, 45, is a stone cutter and resident of Borabanda. He was arrested in connection with 21 cases, of which 16 are under the 'murder for gain' category, according to Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Anjani Kumar.

His arrest led to the detection of two murders, that of Kaval Venkatamma, 50, a resident of Venkatagiri in Jubilee Hills, and of an unidentified woman aged between 35 and 45. "He was married at an early age and later his wife left him. It had some mental impact [on the accused]," Mr. Kumar said, adding all his victims were women. He was also involved in property offences.

Rubber estate owner held for electrocuting elephant

SARATH BABU GEORGE

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The tragic death of a wild elephant at Kallar in Kerala and her calf's grief, which evoked widespread sympathy a few days ago, took an unexpected turn on Tuesday when the owner of the rubber estate, where the carcass was found, confessed to having electrocuted the animal.

Officials of the Palode forest range office arrested Rajesh, 45, for "premeditated murder".

The accused purportedly confessed to hanging a metallic rope that he had connected to a switch board. The rope, which he used to hang rubber sheets during the day, would double up as

STAFF REPORTER
YADAVI-BHUVAAGIRI

Bikumalla Santoshi, wife of Galwan hero Col. Santosh Babu and Deputy Collector (Revenue), was honoured by officials and leaders at the 72nd Republic Day celebrations here in Telangana on Tuesday.

District Collector Anita Ramachandran, Bhongir MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and Alair legislator G. Sunitha joined to felicitate Ms. Santoshi, remembering her husband's martyrdom in the 2020 India-China skirmishes in the Galwan Valley in June, and the Centre's recognition of the sacrifice with Maha Vir Chakra, the second highest wartime gallantry award.

In an emotional address, Ms. Santoshi said it was a proud moment for everyone – for the family, for the Telangana State and the 16th Bihar Regiment. "I am sure

his sacrifice and the recognition will motivate many people. My children are young; they will always feel proud of their father, and we will continue to carry on with this inspiration," she said.

In Suryapet, parents of Col. Santosh Babu, retired bank officer Upender and home-maker Manjula, ex-

pressed a half-hearted welcome of the Maha Vir Chakra recognition. They said that their son deserved Param Vir Chakra, the highest wartime gallantry award, for the sacrifice.

"Param Vir Chakra would have been more appropriate," Mr. Upender said, adding, "Santosh Babu's team endured the harshest climate for some 13 months. They caused double the loss to Chinese troops, erased the opinion that India was inferior to China, and also inspired the youth of the country."

Ms. Manjula said she was sad about losing her only son, but proud that he died for the country. "As a mother, I will always want my son to bag the first place. I am a little sad now that he was only recognised with Maha Vir Chakra for his supreme sacrifice," she added.

Parents held for double murder in A.P. +

Madanapalle family was engaged in occult practices, say police

STAFF REPORTER
CHITTOR

High drama marked the arrest of the couple accused of murdering their two unmarried daughters, at their residence at Madanapalle in Andhra Pradesh's Chittor district on Tuesday.

A special police party posted at the house since Sunday night had to control the mob frenzy and resistance of the couple during the arrest.

Purushottam Naidu, 55, and Padmaja, 50, who allegedly hit and stabbed their daughters Alekhy, 27, and Sai Divya, 22, with dumbbells and a trident, were reportedly performing occult rituals.

Tense moments
Amidst tense moments, the police assisted the relatives of the deceased to perform the funeral rites on Monday evening, after conducting a post-mortem examination.

Deputy Superintendent of

Police A. Ravi Manohar Achari told *The Hindu* that the preliminary investigation pointed to the role of the couple in the twin murders.

"As per the couple's version, their two daughters had been unwell for a week and complained to their mother that they were experiencing breathlessness and had seen strange figures in the house. The youngest daughter had reportedly forced the mother to kill her as she could not bear the torment of some unseen forces. The girl had threatened to commit suicide if they did not kill her. Sai Divya was brutally done to death around afternoon [on Sunday]. A few hours later, eldest daughter Alekhy, also under the influence of occult, reportedly forced the parents to kill her. The contention was that her death would lead to the resurrection of her sibling. The couple followed through with

any outsiders, such as mendicants," the DSP said.

Circle inspector M. Srinivasulu said the couple was arrested only two days after the killings, due to the post-mortem procedure and funeral rites and the hysterical condition of the accused. The duo was produced in the Madanapalle court and sent to remand.

Strange claims
Meanwhile, Padmaja, while being taken for COVID-19 test, kept shouting in English: "I am Lord Shiva. Shiva is come. Work is done." She refused to take the test claiming that she had created coronavirus and she herself was coronavirus.

The police officer said the father and mother were booked as first and second accused respectively under IPC Section 302 for the murders.

"We have verified the CCTV footage in the vicinity of the house and there is no possibility of involvement of

the elder daughter's morbid suggestion around late evening," the DSP said.

The police officer said the father and mother were booked as first and second accused respectively under IPC Section 302 for the murders.

"We have verified the CCTV footage in the vicinity of the house and there is no possibility of involvement of

IN BRIEF



A.P. Governor bats for three capitals

VIJAYAWADA
The establishment of three capitals will lead to balanced development of all regions in Andhra Pradesh, Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandran said in his Republic Day address at the IGMC Stadium here on Tuesday.

Case filed against NRI for abusive comment

KOZHIKODE
Police have filed a case in Kozhikode district of Kerala against a non-resident Indian for writing abusive comments below a picture of BJP State president K. Surendran and his daughter, posted in the social media recently.

Waiting in vain: The calf refused to leave its dead mother for several hours and was later shifted to a rehabilitation centre.

Waiting in vain: The calf refused to leave its dead mother for several hours and was later shifted to a rehabilitation centre.

an electric fence at night to "eliminate the menace of incursions by wild elephants" on his property. While the death had initially been viewed as one due to a pulmonary disease, forest officials sensed so-

Kerala traders mourn passing of street dog

They put up posters condoling her death in a road accident in Pathanamthitta

STAFF REPORTER
PATHANAMTHITTA

Traders at the College Junction in Manakkala, Pathanamthitta, have been in mourning for the past few days. They lost a key member of their family in a road accident last Thursday – Remani, a street dog that had endeared itself to them over more than four years.

In an amazing display of man-animal bonding, they have now erected posters all across the street condoling her death. According to Aby K.P., who runs a book stall by the street, this was natural. People express grief when someone they love has passed away. "Remani deserved this display of affection as she was one among us," he explained.

The stray dog had been abandoned in the neighbourhood by officials of the Erathu Panchayat after its sterilisation. She quickly became friendly

with everyone. So much so that people used to compete with each other to feed her every day.

"Remani guarded our shops from anti-socials during the nights. She used to give me company whenever I had to work late hours," recalled Pradeep Palara, who runs a tyre workshop.

Having witnessed Remani's final moments, he is yet to recover from the shock of the beloved pet being run over by two vehicles back to back. "I only looked once and instantly turned away. We could not do anything to save her, and so decided to give her a farewell this way."

CM YK



A city under siege: (from left) Farmers venting their ire on police vehicles at Nangloi; a bus damaged during the protest; police personnel using tear gas to disperse farmers attempting to break barricades as they try to march from the Tikri border towards Peeragarhi; and a tractor that overturned, killing a farmer at ITO, in New Delhi on Tuesday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR, SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA & SANDEEP SAXENA



Law student flags SC on Red Fort event

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A Mumbai University law student on Tuesday wrote to Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde to take *suo motu* cognisance of certain persons flying a flag of a particular community at the Red Fort amid a rally organised by farmers on the Republic Day.

"On the occasion of the Republic Day, above the Red Fort of Delhi, the way the flag of another community has been waved in place of the national flag, hurting the honour and dignity of the country, is a shameful event," the letter by Ashish Rai said.

Mr. Rai wrote that the tractor rally event has been "terrorised by some antisocial elements". The letter said public property has been damaged. The heritage, Red Fort, has been "tampered with". The national flag has been insulted. The "country's devotional spirit has been hurt".

"The whole country is hurt by this incident," the letter said. Mr. Rai requested the CJI to form a Special Investigation Committee to conduct a "rigorous inquiry against the antisocial elements involved in the unconstitutional activity, so as to punish the accused".

Tractor parades swerve into capital chaos

Pitched battles between police and protesters break out in various parts of Delhi as the farm agitation goes berserk

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

By 10 a.m., at Singhu, farmers breached the barricades at the other two border protest sites as well – Tikri on the west and Ghazipur on the east.

Once tractors started deviating from the agreed routes and headed towards the capital's Outer Ring Road, however, they were met with tear gas, water cannons and lathis, in tense stand-offs with the police.

The road under the Nangloi flyover in western Delhi turned into a virtual battleground for much of the afternoon as the police resorted to several rounds of tear gas shelling in a futile attempt to stop the farmers, many armed with lathis, from violating the parade route.

'Lost way'

In eastern Delhi, some farmers claimed they lost their way and blundered into the high-security ITO area, where they engaged in a violent clash with police, with tear gas, stone-throwing and lathicharge resulting in injuries on both sides. A few farmers in tractors tried to run down police personnel, while others went on a rampage damaging buses and police vehicles.

One protester, 25-year-old Ranveet Singh, died after his tractor reportedly overturned, though other protesters alleged he was killed in police firing.

By early afternoon, protesters had swarmed into the Red Fort grounds and hoisted the Nishan Sahib, a flag that flies over Sikh gurdwaras, and the flag of one of the farm unions on an empty flag post, even while the tricolour flew above the ramparts of the Fort. Late at night, the police snapped power supply to the Red Fort to clear it of protesters.

Sukhdev Singh Korikala, general secretary of the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU)-Ekta Ugrahan, one of the largest farm unions in Punjab, told *The Hindu* that the hoisting of a religious flag seemed an "attempt to instigate sentiments" and was done "at the behest of the BJP-led Central government to defame the farmers' movement" with the "connivance of the police".

Flag hoisting
He said video clips revealed that the flag hoisting was done in the presence of Deep Sidhu, a Punjabi actor and activist who had campaigned for a BJP candidate in 2019. Mr. Korikala claimed this exposed the government and vowed to continue the movement until the three laws are repealed.



On the march: Farmers taking out a tractor parade during their protest in New Delhi on Tuesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Internet suspended under rarely used Act

VIJAYITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Tuesday issued orders to suspend Internet in some areas in Delhi under a rarely used provision of a British-era Act.

The order issued under the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety Rules 2017) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, had been issued only twice before – in Delhi on December 19 and 20, 2019, at the height of the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

The rules framed in 2017 empower the Union Home Secretary and a State's Home Secretary to pass directions to suspend the telecom services, including the Internet, "due to public emergency or public safety."

More forces in Delhi
Home Minister Amit Shah held a 90-minute meeting at his residence to discuss the law and order situation in the city. "It was decided that extra paramilitary forces will be deployed in Delhi," a senior official said. Mr. Shah skipped the at-home hosted by the President.

that any violation would hurt the movement," said the SKM statement, which also blamed the long struggle for the situation.

"Protesting farmers breached the agreement and began their tractor march before the scheduled time. They chose the path of violence and vandalism, and seeing that the police had to take necessary steps to maintain law and order," said a Delhi police statement.

One dead, 83 injured in clashes

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

One farmer died as his tractor overturned and 83 police personnel and many farmers were injured in clashes at several places during a tractor parade in the national capital on Tuesday.

Scores of tear gas shells were fired at the Delhi-Meerut Expressway, ITO, Singhu border, Nangloi, Peeragarhi, and near the Red Fort to disperse the crowds. The police appealed to them to stick to the designated route for the rally and not take the law into their hands.

Police Commissioner S.N. Srivastava said public property had been damaged and many policemen received injuries in the violence. He appealed to the farmers not to indulge in violence, maintain peace and return through the designated routes.

In a statement, the police said, "For today's rally, the Delhi police worked according to the agreement they had with farmers and accordingly made necessary arrangements. The police showed resistance till the very end but protesting farmers breached the agreement and began their tractor march before the scheduled time."

Police retreat as barricades fall

Protesters clash with police but residents line roads, flyovers to cheer farmers

ASHOK KUMAR
NEW DELHI

Hundreds of farmers riding tractors and marching on foot broke away from the pre-set route for the "tractor parade" from the Tikri border to enter central Delhi on Tuesday, after several hours of pitched battle with the police.

The road under the Nangloi flyover turned into a virtual battleground, witnessing clashes between farmers and the police for a large part of the day. The police resorted to several rounds of tear gas shelling to stop the farmers from deviating from the parade route before giving up after several hours of effort.

Tensions began to build up around noon after a handful of youth riding tractors refused to turn right from the Nangloi



Out of control: Tear gas was used to disperse farmers attempting to break barricades at Nangloi. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

flyover towards Baprola village on the pre-approved route and insisted on going towards the Peeragarhi Chowk.

Initially, a dozen tractors in ones and twos managed to break through the barricades but by evening, the farmers threw open all barriers to march ahead in large numbers.

As the evening wore on, a few farmers in tractors began returning to the Tikri border, turning Peeragarhi Chowk into a complete traffic mess.

A large number of people, including women and children, were lined on both sides of the road leading to Peeragarhi Chowk from the Tikri border as well as the flyover over the junction to witness the parade, cheer the farmers and capture the moment on their mobile phones. "It is historic. So I brought both my children along to see it," said Rakesh Bhardwaj, one of the onlookers.

The crowd on the flyover waved and cheered the farmers as they went past the intersection. Many stopped the farmers to garland them, shower rose petals and give water bottles.

How the farmers' protest lost its way

The jury is out on whether the protesters reached the Red Fort by mistake

ANUJ KUMAR
GAZIABAD

There are different interpretations of the chaotic events that unfolded in parts of Delhi on Republic Day as farmers who have been camped at the Ghazipur border for over two months now entered the city, apparently in violation of the agreements between the police and farm union leaders.

While some observers said the young farmers lost their way on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway in the absence of any barricades, others said the idea of going to the Red Fort has been brewing for some time among the younger protesters who grabbed the chance presented to them. Others also point out that a section of farmers, tired and restless of waiting at the border for more than 60 days now, wanted to



Breaking barriers: Farmers removing barricades erected on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway on Tuesday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

make a larger point which the leadership failed to take into account.

Senior sources in the Bhartiya Kisan Union felt hoisting the flag of a particular faith at the Red Fort was against the spirit of the protest movement and it would bring the farmers down from the high moral ground they had held vis-a-vis the government.

The events have also raised questions on the leadership in charge of the protest at the Ghazipur border. He added many of them were not well versed with the exits on the expressway and in the absence of any police, kept driving and once they reached the ITO cut, realised it was an opportunity to drive to the Red Fort.

Delhi police head constable Pradeep Kumar, posted at the Ghazipur post, said they didn't have orders to stop tractors on Tuesday. "But the leaders failed to keep them on the route they agreed upon on Monday night," he said.

Protests at Red Fort condemned

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Union Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel on Tuesday condemned the actions of protesting farmers at the Red Fort, after they entered the monument and hoisted the flag of their movement and the Sikh flag Nishan Sahib.

In a tweet, Mr. Patel said the Red Fort was a symbol of dignity of our democracy and that the protesters should have stayed away from it.

Terminating the incidents sad and unfortunate, he said he condemned the violation of dignity.

Opposition leaders flay violence

They blame Centre for 'ignoring' farmers' 65-day peaceful protest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Opposition leaders condemned the violent turn the farmers' movement took on Tuesday but blamed the Union government for "ignoring" the peaceful protest that went on for 65 days.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee tweeted that she was deeply disturbed by the "worrying and painful developments" in Delhi. "Centre's insensitive attitude and indifference towards our farmer brothers & sisters has to be blamed for this situation," she said.

She urged the Centre to engage with farmers and to

repeal the laws.

In a long tweet thread, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury reiterated the demand for the immediate repeal of the three laws.

"The situation has been brought to this pass by the Modi government. Farmers have been protesting peacefully in the cold for more than 60 days, not allowed to come into Delhi and more than 100 kisans are dead," he said.

"The protests are for a legitimate demand of millions of our farmers from various States across the country. That remains the issue at hand, and must be resolved.

The solution is clear – repeal these farm laws," he added.

Pawar's appeal

NCP patriarch Sharad Pawar told presspersons that while nobody could support what happened on Tuesday, the reason for the events could not be ignored either.

"The way the agitation was handled today is regrettable." He appealed to the farmers to return to their villages to keep the dignity of the protest.

CPI general secretary D. Raja said the violence was avoidable and had been condemned by farmers' groups.

Government should be reasonable and realistic.

Rashtriya Janata Dal spokesperson and Rajya Sabha member Manoj K. Jha hinted at possible sabotage. "There should be a proper investigation. I do not buy the fact that those who braved Delhi's harsh winters for 65 days would resort to such hooliganism," he said.

CPI(M) general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya condemned the "police repression" against farmers during the tractor rally. "The Modi regime must not be allowed to spin a narrative blaming the Union government to withdraw the three farm laws."

In an official statement, the Congress said the confrontation between farmers and the government had been on for 61 days and it was not 'healthy' for democracy.

Violence is not a solution to any problem, says Congress

'Confrontation between farmers and govt. is not healthy'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

As farmers' tractor rally turned violent in Delhi on Tuesday, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said violence is not a solution to any issue and urged the Union government to withdraw the three farm laws.

In an official statement, the Congress said the confrontation between farmers and the government had been on for 61 days and it was not 'healthy' for democracy.

Congress communication

chief Randeep Surjewala said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi will have to leave 'rajdhani' [royal stubbornness] and walk on the path of 'rajdharma' [national duty]. This is the true message of the 72nd Republic Day. All three anti-farming black laws have to be withdrawn without any delay."

Mr. Gandhi tweeted, "Violence is not a solution to any problem. If anyone is injured, the damage gets done to the country. In the interest of the nation, the farm laws should be taken back".

Party leader and Lok Sabha member Manish Tewari said, "What happened today in Delhi is most unfortunate & deserves to be condemned..."

Posting a video of a protester trying to hoist a religious flag at one place within the Red Fort, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said, "Most unfortunate. I have supported the farmers' protests from the start but I cannot condone lawlessness. And on #RepublicDay no flag but the sacred tiranga should fly aloft the Red Fort".

Masks, military might, mayhem outside: a parade for the times

IN BRIEF



Modi dons royal turban from Jamnagar

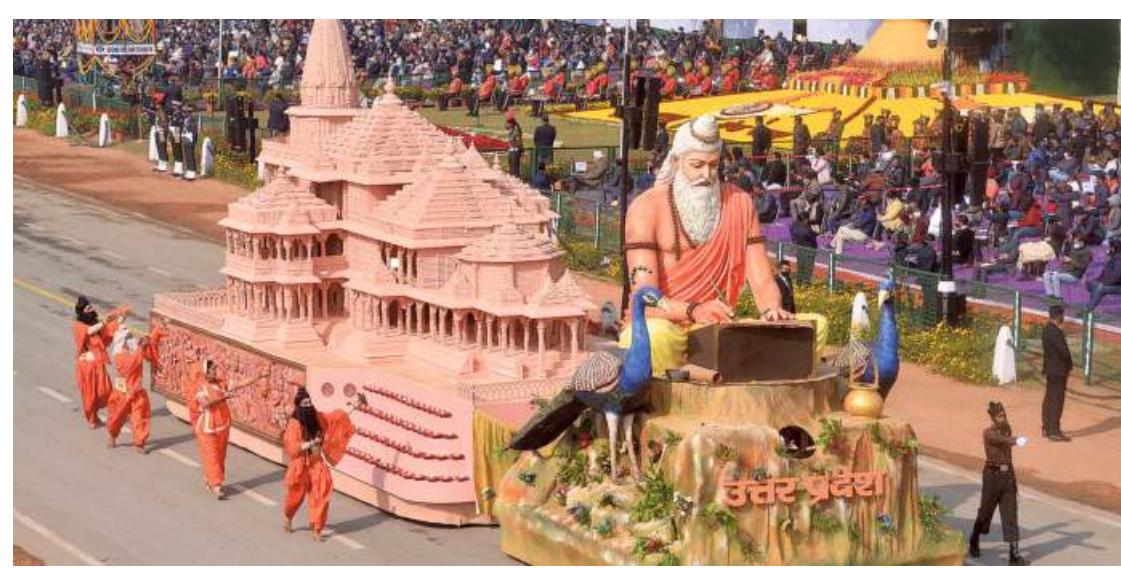
NEW DELHI Prime Minister Narendra Modi wore a special turban from Gujarat's Jamnagar at the 72nd Republic Day parade at Rajpath, continuing his tradition of donning unique headgears. The 'halari pagdi' (royal turban) in shades of red with yellow dots was gifted to the Prime Minister by the royal family of Jamnagar. Mr. Modi paired the turban with a traditional kurta, pyjama, grey jacket along with a face mask. PTI

Nagaland Governor takes a swipe at NSCN faction

GUWAHATI Nagaland Governor R.N. Ravi on Tuesday said "unrealistic intransigence of some people, who are unwilling to forsake the politics by gun", has undermined the Centre's political initiatives to resolve the Naga issue. Mr. Ravi, also the Centre's interlocutor for the Naga peace talks, said in his Republic Day speech that the people of Nagaland have not been able to reap optimum benefit of various progressive government schemes as "some extra constitutional entities in the guise of espousing the Naga national cause" have kept peace and progress at bay.

Republic Day celebrated in Odisha's Maoist bastion

Bhubaneswar The 72nd Republic Day was a double delight for the people in Odisha's Malkangiri district. For the first time in five decades, Republic Day was celebrated in two panchayats in Swabhiman Anchal (previously known as Cut-Off area), which was earlier controlled by the outlawed CPI (Maoist). In the past one year, security forces have strengthened their presence in Swabhiman Anchal by laying roads despite stiff resistance from the left wing extremists. The Jadambu area was sort of a capital for them in Swabhiman Anchal.



Saluting the nation: An Army team marching on Rajpath; Flight Lieutenant Bhawana Kanth, who became the first woman fighter pilot to take part in the parade; a Rafale fighter jet; and the Uttar Pradesh tableau showing the Ram Mandir. ■ R.V. MOORTHY, PTI

In the footsteps of the legendary Muktiyoddhas

Bangladesh team evokes 1971 spirit

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

As New Delhi and Dhaka celebrate the 50th anniversary of the 1971 Liberation War, a 122-member tri-service contingent of Bangladesh marched on Rajpath at the Republic Day parade. It had soldiers drawn from the units of that year.

"The majority of the soldiers in this contingent hail from the most distinguished units of the Bangladesh Army comprising 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10 and 11 East Bengal Regiment and 1, 2 and 3 Field Artillery Regiment. These units have the distinct honour of fighting and winning the Liberation War," an official said.

The contingent, led by Lt. Col. Abu Mohammed Shahnoor Shawon and his deputies, Lieutenant Farhan Ishraq and Flight Lieutenant Sibat Rahman, carried with it the legacy of the legendary Muktiyoddhas of Bangladesh, their forefathers who fought against oppression, mass atrocities by tyrannical forces and for the freedom of Bangladesh, the official stated.

The Bangladesh Navy had successfully conducted "Operation Jackpot" during the war, destroying 26 enemy ships in sea ports and river ports. The Bangladesh Air Force conducted 50 successful strikes on the enemy targets as part of "Kilo Flight" from the base in Dimapur, India.

The contingent arrived in Delhi on an Indian Air Force aircraft on January 12 and was quarantined till January 19, after which they began practising for the parade.

The contingent is scheduled to visit places of historic significance in Agra tanks, bridge laying tank T-72, Pinaka multi-rocket systems and Samvijay electronic warfare system.

(With inputs from Saurabh Trivedi and Dinakar Peri)



The Bangladesh contingent marching on Rajpath on Tuesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

Delhi and Dhaka have agreed to hold a series of commemorative events throughout the year.

It is these fraternal ties between the two countries that make the relations transcend even a strategic partnership.

Evocative moment

As a decorated veteran, many of whose colleagues' blood is mixed with the soil and waters of Bangladesh, seeing a contingent of an independent Bangladesh Army marching down Rajpath was a very emotional and evocative moment for Maj. Chandrakant Singh, VrC and author of *Cavalier in the Sky* (biography of war icon Air Vice Marshal Chandran Singh).

"For me to see the Bangladesh Army leading our Republic Day parade on Rajpath was a heart-warming experience, because 50 years ago, my battalion, 4 Guards, paraded before 'Bangabandhu' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 12, 1972, to commemorate the return to Indians after the successful completion of our mission," Maj. Singh said.

In 2017, when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina honoured Indian soldiers who took part in the war during her visit to India, Maj. Singh said, he presented a photograph of 'Bangabandhu' taking the salute of their unit's parade in Dhaka in 1972.

A 'vertical charlie' that wowed Rajpath spectators

A Rafale steals the show at the event with a breathtaking manoeuvre at a speed of 900 kmph

NIKHIL M. BABU
NEW DELHI

The 72nd Republic Day parade happened in Rajpath in New Delhi with fewer people, adhering to social distancing norms, and even marching contingents wearing masks, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A major attraction was a "vertical charlie" manoeuvre by a single Rafale aircraft flying at a speed of 900 kmph, as part of the fly past, towards the end of the parade.

People watched in awe as the aircraft flying horizontally from the Rashtrapati Bhavan side went vertical, while carrying out a series of rolls,

and disappeared in the blue skies. In the past, the manoeuvre was performed by an SU-30MKI aircraft.

The parade, which happened with multi-layer security due to the ongoing farmers' agitation, was shorter in both length and duration. Unlike previous years, the parade ended at National Stadium instead of going till the Red Fort.

Stunts missing

Stunts by motorcycle-borne men were missing and a parade of children who received bravery awards was also not held. The spectator size was reduced to about 25,000 from nearly 1.25 lakh

last year. Marching contingents of the Army, Navy and Air Force were on display, but the numbers were less.

The tableau section started with one from the newly formed Union Territory of Ladakh, which highlighted the "Vision for Ladakh".

The parade started around 10 a.m. and ended at 11.45 a.m.

On Tuesday, the Rafale omni-role fighter jet inducted into the Indian Air Force last year made its debut at the fly past.

One Rafale aircraft flew in formation with two Jaguar deep penetration strike aircraft and two MiG-29 air superiority fighters in "Vic"

formation at the height of 300 metres and a speed of 780 kmph.

Various formations

Another interesting aspect of the fly past was the flying together of Russian and American origin equipment in various formations.

For instance, the Rakshak attack helicopter formation consisted of one Russian Mi-35 helicopter and four AH-64 Apache helicopters from the U.S. in "Vic" formation.

Similarly, the "Sudarshan" formation consisted of one U.S.-origin Chinook heavy lift helicopter and two Russian Mi-17 IV helicopters.

In another, the "Garuda" formation comprised one C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft with two MiG-29s and two Su-30 MKI aircraft Russian fighter jets.

At the end of the fly past, the Rafale, piloted by Group Captain Harkirat Singh, Commanding Officer of 17 Squadron, with Squadron Leader Kislaykant, did the "Vertical Charlie" manoeuvre.

The Army showcased T-90 tanks, bridge laying tank T-72, Pinaka multi-rocket systems and Samvijay electronic warfare system.

(With inputs from Saurabh Trivedi and Dinakar Peri)

Padma awards and the political messaging

A large number of awardees this year are from the poll-bound States of T.N., Assam, Bengal and Kerala

NISTULA HEBBAR
SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI

The Padma awards are not only an acknowledgement of achievers in many fields but also capture the zeitgeist of public life. This year's awards list, peopled with performers, also has the shadow of coming Assembly polls hanging over it – a large number of awardees are from Tamil Nadu (11), Assam (nine), West Bengal (seven) and Kerala (six).

Among those from Assam, the choice of Congress stalwart and former Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi stands out.

The posthumous honour is being interpreted as the BJP's attempt to reach out to the influential Ahom community in the politically crucial

cial region of Upper Assam, which has 56 of the 126 Assembly seats.

Known for its traditional support to the Congress, the Ahom community had endorsed the BJP in the 2016 Assembly election. But political equations have changed after the passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in 2019, and the BJP may be worried about the prospect of an angry Upper Assam voter.

So from distributing free land patta (title) by Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently in Upper Assam to honouring one of the tallest leaders from the region, the BJP is reaching out.

Reacting to the honour for his father, Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi tweeted that even



The award to Tarun Gogoi could be an attempt to reach out to the Ahom community.

the harshest critics had to acknowledge him as an architect of modern Assam.

"In the times to come, his legacy will be carried forward by lakhs of women and men. The people of Assam will always choose for harmony over hate, diversity over uniformity and prosperity

over inequality. That would be the best tribute to Jana Neta Tarun Gogoi," he said.

In T.N., Bengal

In both Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, the Modi government and the BJP are facing the charge of being a largely Delhi-based north Indian party, which is culturally not attuned to either the deep south or the east. These parts of the country take great pride in their cultural ethos.

The selection of 11 awardees from Tamil Nadu, ranging from music artists to social workers and entrepreneurs such as Sridhar Vembu, is a subtle pointer that the Modi dispensation has the State firmly in mind.

On the list from West Bengal, where the "outsider vs local" narrative is very much a part of the poll rhetoric, the awardees include Bengali cartoonist and illustrator Narayan Debnath, who holds the record for the longest running comics by an individual cartoonist, the *Handa Bhonda* series.

The selection of cultural icons who are part of Bengal's cultural life but not so much across the State lines is a reminder that the Modi government and the BJP are attuned to even parochial-level cultural. The political efficacy of such acknowledgement via state honours is always a question mark but it does demonstrate the political thinking and priorities of a particular time.

The plot was allotted by the Uttar Pradesh government on the directions of the Supreme Court in the Babri Masjid Ram Janmabhoomi title suit. The members of the Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation (IICF), which is overseeing the construction of the mosque, assembled at the place around 8.30 a.m. After a brief Republic Day ceremony, conducted in the presence of police personnel, IICF chief trustee Zafar Faruqi planted a tamarind sapling, followed by other members to mark the symbolic and low-key start to the project in one-third area of the plot.

"practicality" as an old shrine already existed on one portion of the plot and the area around it would be developed as a green patch. The other reason was to send a message of environmental awareness. "We have serious concern for climate change," Mr. Hussain told *The Hindu*. As the river Ghagra flows close to the village, soil samples were collected for testing.

The organisers were awaiting 12-A and 80-G clearance of the Income Tax Act and permission for opening an FCRA (Foreign Contributions Regulation Act) account and the necessary green light for the plan from the local development authority before the actual construction began, Mr. Hussain said.

The project would take around 30 months to be completed, he added.

The project comprises three parts: a mosque based on a modern design; a multi-specialty 200-bed hospital and community kitchen; and an Indo-Islamic Cultural Research Centre.

It was moved from Parliament campus

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A statue of freedom fighter Govind Ballabh Pant that was removed from the Parliament premises recently would be unveiled at its new location, a roundabout opposite Gurdwara Rakab Ganj on Pandit Pant Marg here on Wednesday, officials said on Tuesday.

As part of the project to construct a new Parliament building, the Central Public Works Department is relocating the statues of prominent leaders from the current Parliament building. Recently, the iconic statue

Statue of Govind Ballabh Pant gets a new home

Notices issued to Centre and Press Council, among others

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has decided to examine a petition seeking the framing of guidelines outlining the broad regulatory paradigm within which the right to free speech of broadcasters and electronic media can be judicially regulated.

The plea filed by Pune residents Niles Navalakha and Nitin Memane has also sought the setting up of an independent Media Tribunal to hear and expeditiously adjudicate complaints

against "media businesses" filed by viewers and citizens.

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde, has issued notices to the Centre, Press Council of India, News Broadcasters Federation, News Broadcasters Standards Authority and Press Trust of India.

The plea wants the court to consider substantial questions of law, including whether the electronic media enjoys greater freedom than ordinary citizens and whether they could only be subject to self-regulation.

The plea said right to life and dignity envisaged the right of citizens to "free, fair and proportionate media reporting".

has questioned whether free speech entails misinformation, fake news, hate speech, propaganda, paid news, communal and derogatory reportage, incitement and so on. It has asked whether regulation will amount to curtailment of the Press if done within the parameters specified under "reasonable restrictions" of Article 19(2) of the Constitution.

The plea said right to life and dignity envisaged the right of citizens to "free, fair and proportionate media reporting".

'Green inauguration' IICF secretary Athar Hussain said the "green inauguration" was chosen due to

Violence under check in J&K, says L-G

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Security forces had "effectively controlled violence" in Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha said in his Republic Day speech in Jammu on Tuesday.

Mobile Internet service was snapped as a "security measure" and Republic Day celebrated under tight security across the Kashmir Valley.

"Those who were trying to fulfil their political motives with the help of the proxy war are being given a befitting reply. We want to assure all citizens that the political conspiracies and nefarious designs of a neighbouring country will never be allowed to succeed in this land of great persons and warriors," Mr. Sinha said.

He termed the "successful and violence-free" District Development Council polls "one of the biggest achievements of the government".

"For a long time, the citizens of J&K were denied grassroots democracy. We have been successful in conducting a violence free, free and fair DDC elections. The high turnout of voters broke the records of many previous elections," he said.

"We assure all the elected representatives that with your support, the J&K administration will bring the fruits of development".

In Srinagar, Baseer Ahmed Khan, adviser to the Lt. Governor, presided over the function at the Sher-i-Kashmir Cricket Stadium.



Special moment: People taking part in the R-Day celebrations before the launch of the mosque project at Dhannipur. ■ PTI

Dhannipur mosque project launched in UP.

It is to be completed in 30 months

OMAR RASHID
AYODHYA

The Dhannipur mosque project was formally launched on Republic Day, with the unfurling of the tricolour and a tree plantation drive at the five-acre plot in Dhannipur village here.

The plot was allotted by the Uttar Pradesh government on the directions of the Supreme Court in the Babri Masjid Ram Janmabhoomi title suit.

The members of the Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation (IICF), which is overseeing the construction of the mosque, assembled at the place around 8.30 a.m. After a brief Republic Day ceremony, conducted in the presence of police personnel, IICF chief trustee Zafar Faruqi planted a tamarind sapling, followed by other members to mark the symbolic and low-key start to the project in one-third area of the plot.

Despite the long wheelbase, the 3 Series Gran Limousine is fairly agile and well-mannered at high speeds

SHAPUR KOTWAL

The 3 Series has long been regarded one of the best driver's cars out there. However with this, the long-wheelbase 3 Series Gran Limousine, BMW has also focussed on improved rear seat comfort for the chauffeur driven. So can the 3 Series Gran Limousine deliver the best of both worlds?

From the front, it is almost impossible to tell the Gran Limousine apart from the standard 3 Series. Some versions have more bling on the nose and others get a blacked-out centre section in the lower bumper, but these apart, the two are near identical when viewed head-on.

The longer wheelbase and longer rear doors are evident when viewed from the side, but their integration into the car's design is commendable.

The now flatter roof blends nicely with the C-pillar, the long doors don't look out of place, and even the car's overall stance works well. If anything, the extra length adds a dash of elegance to the design and there is no interruption to the natural flow of lines.

At the rear, the biggest giveaway that this is the long wheelbase car are the rectangular exhaust tips and the L badge on the boot lid.

Moving to the cabin, we start with the back seat. The long rear door and 43mm of additional legroom, make the rear of the Gran Limousine immediately more welcoming.

Seat comfort is a bit softer, more filled out and more contoured to hold you in place better. Thigh support is good, as is the seat height and the backrest seems to be set at just the right angle.

The new headrests and re-aligned elbow rest also aid in improving comfort.

The large side windows and sunroof add to the feeling of space and airiness in the cabin though the large central tunnel does limit room for the middle passenger. The air-conditioning also had to work hard to cool the cabin despite this being the coolest time of the year.

Up front, the supportive front seats are powered, you get extendable thigh support and finding the ideal driving position is easy.



Fit for a king With a smooth accelerator response, the Gran Limousine is a delight on the roads • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

An elegant DRIVING experience



The Series 3 Gran Limousine delivers plenty of space, comfort in the rear and a smooth driving experience

The iDrive system remains the best and the easiest to use in the segment and the digital instrument panel is sharp and bright. The latter isn't easy to read, however, and quality on the panel that surrounds the gear lever isn't great either.

Moving to the engine, BMW's familiar 2.0-litre diesel mill – with

When it comes to kit, the Gran Limo packs in stuff like three-zone climate control, full LED headlamps, wireless charging, wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, a 16 speaker Harman Kardon sound system and BMW's parking assistant.

The Comfort Package also includes an iPad AIR for your rear seat entertainment needs. However, there are no cooled or massaging seats and there are no semi-autonomous driving modes either.

Moving to the engine, BMW's familiar 2.0-litre diesel mill – with



SPECIFICATIONS

LENGTH	4819mm
WIDTH	1827mm
HEIGHT	1441mm
WHEELBASE	2961mm
ENGINE	1995cc, 4-cyls, twin-turbo diesel
POWER	190hp at 4000rpm
TORQUE	400Nm at 1750-2500rpm
GEARBOX	8-speed automatic
TYRE SIZE	225/50 R17

angle. As a result, the suspension is less busy at low speeds, there is a suppleness to the ride similar to on larger, more comfort-oriented cars and bump absorption is impressive too. The car also pitches very little on a bad road, and the 225/50 R17 tyres round out small surface imperfections nicely. Straight line stability too is very impressive.

The Gran Limousine, however, isn't as agile as the standard 3 Series in the corners and there is more body roll too. That said, it still feels more agile and on the ball than the 3 Series GT – the car it replaces – and it even drives better than many rivals. In fact, drive it in isolation, and it even feels playful and confident enough to enjoy a spirited drive. That feeling of driving a long wheelbase car, that's a bit reluctant to turn in, is just not there.

So can BMW's 3 Series Gran Limousine deliver the best of both worlds and dominate its class? It certainly delivers plenty of space and comfort in the rear, it drives well and BMW has also focused on making sure the car rides well too. Despite the long wheelbase, it is fairly agile in corners, it is well-mannered at high speeds, and steer it in a neat and tidy manner and it will even entertain you.

It's not as sharp as a regular 3 Series, it could have been better equipped and at a price of ₹ 51.50-53.90 lakh (ex-showroom), the extra legroom comes at a premium.

What will work in BMW's favour is that the Gran Limousine is likely to appeal to a vast majority of predominantly chauffeur-driven buyers, owners who also drive themselves, and most importantly, those who look forward to enjoying the driving experience.

This BMW clearly has the potential to be a best-seller.

AUTO SNIPS

Updated Lexus LS 500h launched



Lexus has launched the updated LS 500h in India at a price of ₹ 1.91 crore (ex-showroom, India). Aside from getting a few updates, the brand's flagship luxury sedan also gets a new range-topping Nishijin variant. The updated LS 500h gets styling tweaks such as a redesigned front bumper, black inserts below the headlamps and tail-lamps, and a new 'Gin-ei-Luster' paint shade, which Lexus says has a mirror-like texture. The range-topping Nishijin gets further visual changes over the standard LS 500h, highlighting traditional Japanese crafts. On the performance front, the Lexus LS 500h features a hybrid powertrain, with a 3.5-litre V6 petrol engine assisted by two electric motors for a total power output of 354hp. Power is transmitted to the rear wheels via a 10-speed automatic gearbox.



Maruti Suzuki commences export of the Jimny from India

Maruti Suzuki has started exporting the locally manufactured Suzuki Jimny SUV, with the first batch of 184 units headed for Latin America. Manufactured at the company's Gurugram facility, the units were shipped from the Mundra port. The Jimny model being exported to international markets is identical to the one made in Suzuki's Kosai plant in Japan, both mechanically and in terms of size. The 3-door SUV is powered by a 1.5-litre petrol engine that comes with 5-speed manual and 4-speed torque converter gearbox options. While the first batch is bound for Peru and Colombia, the made-in-India Jimny will also be exported to African markets and countries in the Middle-East.

Skoda re-introduces Rapid Rider



Skoda has quietly re-introduced the entry-level Rapid Rider at a price of ₹ 7.79 lakh (ex-showroom). Skoda had temporarily halted bookings for this variant of its midsize sedan in

mid-2020 owing to the stronger than anticipated demand and the variant being sold out for the year. The Rapid Rider is now ₹ 30,000 dearer than the price at which it was launched, though there is no change to the equipment list. Skoda has also revised prices for select variants of the Rapid as well. The Rapid Rider Plus manual and automatic are now priced at ₹ 8.19 lakh and ₹ 9.69 lakh, respectively. Similarly, the Rapid Ambition automatic and Rapid Onyx automatic, too, see prices hiked to ₹ 11.49 lakh and ₹ 11.69 lakh, respectively (all prices, ex-showroom, India).

WHEN LESS IS MORE

Check out the five most fuel-efficient diesel cars on sale in India now

RIVAN RS

Although erstwhile and frugal diesel engines such as Fiat's Multijet unit are no longer available, Hyundai and Tata are among the carmakers that still offer oil-burners. Here's a quick look at the five most fuel-efficient diesel cars currently on sale. Do note that these figures are a result of testing in ideal conditions, and are unlikely to be achieved in real-life driving scenarios



2. Hyundai i20 25.2kpl

With an ARAI-rated 25.2kpl, the third-gen Hyundai i20 is one of the most frugal hatchbacks currently on sale. It shares its 100hp, 1.5-litre diesel engine, which is known for its flexibility and efficiency, with Hyundai's Venue. Our review of the i20 diesel showed that this premium hatchback is easy to live with, both in town and on the highway. It may be expensive but if you're in the market for a feature-rich, comfortable and frugal hatchback, the new i20 is your best bet.

Engine: 1.5-litre, 4 cyl, turbo-diesel

Power: 100hp

Torque: 240Nm

Gearbox: 6-speed manual

ARAI mileage: (MT) 25.2kpl

Price range: ₹ 8.20-10.75 lakh (ex-showroom, India)



4. Hyundai Grand i10 Nios 25.1kpl

Hyundai's 1.2-litre U2 CRDi unit is the smallest diesel engine currently available in India. In the Grand i10 Nios, this three-cylinder unit makes 75hp and comes with the 5-speed manual and AMT gearbox options. The petrol-manual Nios has a fuel-efficiency figure of 25.1kpl. While the Nios diesel-AMT's ARAI figure is yet unknown, one can expect it to be close to the manual's. Although the Hyundai Grand i10 Nios diesel is the most frugal diesel hatchback in its class, it is the third most frugal hatchback in India.

Engine: 1.2-litre, three-cylinder, turbo-diesel

Power: 75hp

Torque: 190Nm

Gearbox: 5-speed/ 5-speed AMT

ARAI mileage: 25.1kpl (MT)

Price range: ₹ 7.06-8.35 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi)



5. Hyundai Verna 25kpl

The Hyundai Verna is the only mid-size sedan that makes the top five list. It was just last year that Hyundai launched the updated 2020 Verna with a new 115hp, 1.5-litre diesel engine; this unit is shared with the Creta. Thanks to the new diesel unit, the Verna appeals to buyers who spend a lot of time on the road, especially long-distance drives. In manual form, the Verna diesel delivers 25kpl, while the version equipped with the smooth torque converter auto is good for 21.3kpl.

Engine: 1.5-litre, four-cylinder, turbo-diesel

Power: 115hp

Torque: 250Nm

Gearbox: 6-speed manual/ 6-speed torque converter

ARAI mileage: 25kpl (MT)/ 21.3kpl (AT)

Price range: ₹ 10.73-15.18 lakh (ex-showroom, India)

1. Hyundai Aura 25.40kpl
Aside from the Nios, Hyundai's 1.2-litre diesel engine also does duty in the Aura, the hatchback's compact sedan sibling, and it is at its most frugal here. Interestingly, the Hyundai Aura diesel-AMT has an ARAI-certified fuel economy of 25.40kpl, stretching each litre of diesel the farthest, which makes it the most fuel-efficient diesel car in India right now. The diesel-manual also impresses with its 25.35kpl figure.

Engine: 1.2-litre, three-cylinder, turbo-diesel

Power: 75hp

Torque: 190Nm

Gearbox: 5-speed manual/ 5-speed AMT

ARAI mileage: 25.35kpl (MT)/ 25.40kpl (AMT)

Price range: ₹ 7.80-9.28 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi)



3. Tata Altroz 25.11kpl

Tata's all-new premium hatchback was, for a time, the most efficient diesel hatchback available in India, with an ARAI-rated economy of 25.11kpl. Available in a single engine-gearbox version, the Tata Altroz diesel uses a 90hp version of Tata Motor's 1.5-litre Revotorq engine mated to a 5-speed manual gearbox. The Altroz loses the title of 'most efficient diesel hatchback in India' to the only other premium hatchback with a diesel engine – the new i20 – by a 0.9kpl margin.

Engine: 1.5-litre, four-cylinder, turbo-diesel

Power: 90hp

Torque: 200Nm

Gearbox: 5-speed manual

ARAI mileage: (MT) 25.11kpl

Price range: ₹ 6.99-9.09 lakh (ex-showroom, India)



Q AND A WITH HORMAZD
Tyre Talk
I am buying a KIA Seltos GTx+ diesel automatic, which has factory tyres of size 215/60 R17. Can I upsize to 255/60 R17?
Kalingarayar, via email
• 255/60 R17 tyres will be very large for the Seltos and may foul with the suspension and body. You can safely upsize to the 225/55 R17, or subject to the body clearance you can fit 225/60 R17s. Both the sizes are readily available from Indian and foreign brands.

I have a 2010 Ford Figo and now I need to upsize the car tyre (175/65 R14), since its ground clearance is an issue with bad roads around my place. What is the best I can upsize my Figo tyre to?
Sudhir, Thane
• You could fit 185/65 R14s as an upgrade option for the Ford Figo. It would increase the ride height and ground clearance, and the increased width would give better road-holding and ride comfort.

Hormazd Sorabjee is the editor of Autocar India. Mail your feedback and queries to roadshow@thehindu.co.in

A rare sighting
(Clockwise from right)
Cantor's giant soft shell turtle; Ayushi;
and the awareness workshop conducted at Kasargode
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



:: PRIYADERSHINI S

In May 2019, Ayushi Jain moved to Kanathur village, Kerala, in search of the rare Cantor's giant softshell turtle. Seven months later, the conservation biologist got a call that sent her hopes soaring. The caller reported sighting "a big head" in a pool where large-scale death of fish had occurred. Was this the reptile she had been looking for? The turtle had been last sighted in 2010 by Muhammed Jafer Palot, Zoological Assistant, Zoological Survey of India.

As Ayushi, who hails from Uttar Pradesh, set off for the pool in the Chandragiri river (also called Payaswini), she was elated that her network of informers, painstakingly built since November 2018, was yielding information. As she travelled, she also contacted her mentors and experts to decide on her next move. When she reached the spot, the Kerala Forest Department officials were investigating the cause for the death of the fish. "As I waited, an entire day passed," recalls Ayushi, adding, "This is an unknown species and so far few studies have been done on it. The turtle is shy and large – it can grow up to one metre in length."

This reptile is found in 11 South-east Asian countries and is also called the Asian giant softshell turtle. Ayushi's turtle connection goes back to 2016, when she interned at the Turtle Survival Alliance in Lucknow. She joined Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru to do a course in Herpetology and thereafter developed her project on studying the distribution and mapping of turtles across India at Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bengaluru. Alongside, she pursued her Master's in Ecology and Environmental Sciences in Puducherry. An early career conservationist, she was se-

Chasing the Cantor's giant softshell TURTLE



lected in 2018 as a Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE) Fellow, by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL). Deepak Veerappan, her mentor at IISc and now affiliated with the National History Museum in London, advised her to submit a proposal on the conservation of Cantor's giant softshell turtle under EDGE. And thus began her search for this rare species.

As Ayushi waited for the "big head" to pop again, she began interacting with the crowd that had gathered there due to the death of the fish. "Many mentioned having seen a huge turtle but said it was seen once in two years," she remembers. She also wondered if the locals were talking about the endemic Leith's softshell turtle com-

monly found in Indian rivers. However, Balakrishnan, a local journalist, confirmed that he had seen the Cantor's species in 2015 and had a few photographs.

On day two, the "big head" popped up for a few seconds. "I recognised the snout of the Cantor turtle," says Ayushi.

Her success encouraged her to build a wider network of informers among communities along the Kuttiyadi and Valapattanam rivers in Kasargode district. "Social science is

Durga Jasraj, music producer and television personality and founder of Art And Artistes, said, "We see this as a great opportunity in spreading Indian music across the globe thus greatly enhance the reach and penetration to a whole new level. We have been showcasing this rich diversity and variety of genres of Indian music and dance in a contemporary manner that will make for a highly engaged and loyal fan base. The programme has helped spread hope, positivity and cheer in challenging times."

According to a statement by Art and Artistes, Utsaah as a concept was conceived during the lockdown and started on March 22, 2020, to enable real-time interaction

between artistes and audiences, on Instagram live for chat and Facebook lives for performance. Utsaah has completed over 225 episodes so far. AAA claims to have produced more than 500 live concerts worldwide, and 35 television shows for networks like Star, Sony, Zee and DD, in addition to providing music content for in-flight entertainment on 17 international airlines. The brand has worked with more than 16,000 musicians across 250 genres.

The live stream will begin at 8 pm IST

on January 27 and 29, on the Facebook pages of Durga Jasraj and Art and Artistes, and the YouTube channel of Art and Artistes.

A festival of Indian music

Utsaah Maha Ustav, a three-part live music festival presented by LIC of India and organised by the Mumbai-based multimedia music company Art and Artistes (AAA), enters its second leg today. The festival, that began on January 25, continues through Facebook Live on January 27 with a flute duet featuring maestros Shashank Subramiam and Pravin Godkhindi, with Ojas Adhiya on the tabla. On January 29 will be a Sufi recital by the prodigy Sneha Shankar. The performances will follow an initial live conversation with Durga Jasraj, founder of Art and Artsites.



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POOCH CAFE



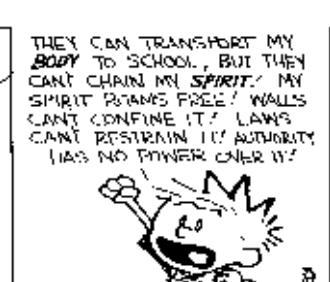
PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



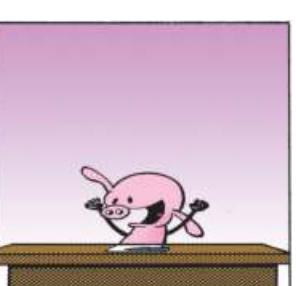
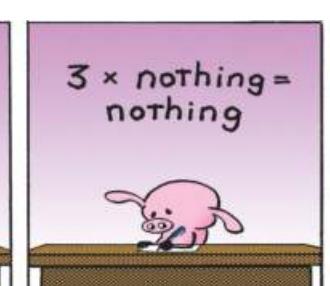
CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



Tales from the knight bus



From elephants that demand a toll to manoeuvring risky hairpin bends, Rupam Dutta shares his onroad experiences in the book *Life Of A Driver - Cabinor Ipare*

Vignettes from the roadside
(Left) Rupam Dutta in the bus
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

:: PRABALIKA M BORAH

Rupam Dutta of Upper Assam suddenly feels like a star. His phone rings constantly and he receives messages on every platform he is on. This Night Super (buses that ply at night in Upper Assam) driver says he had no idea that his experiences would intrigue so many readers. His experiences were recently published in a 480-page book: *Life Of A Driver - Cabinor Ipare* (From The Other Side Of The Cabin).

Rupam says, "I am so busy with phone calls, enquiries and congratulatory messages that I am not getting time for my everyday work. To be honest, I never thought of converting my experiences into a book. I used to share them regularly on Facebook and feel happy that I have not lost touch with my writing."

Hailing from Tinsukia in Assam, Rupam pursued an undergraduate course in Commerce from Commerce College in Guwahati after completing school in 1992. He discontinued that to join Assam Engineering Institute to get a diploma in Electrical Works.

"I wanted to get a degree to migrate to Canada. My sister and brother live abroad and they suggested that a degree would help in getting a work visa."

When things did not work out the way he planned, he decided to face facts and started a vegetable business. "From there I started selling farm-fresh pork and looked at other ways of earning. One was to drive night buses. After driving for a couple of years, I started jotting down my experiences on Facebook, in Assamese. I intended to tell the stories of drivers who have a tough life and are often misunderstood. Since I

had not started off as a driver, I could see things from a different perspective. A night driver's life is hard and they face many risks to ferry passengers. Road conditions are never good and the highways are not lit. The line (routes) from Upper Assam to Arunachal and Nagaland, with hairpin bends, is not easy even for sea-

RUPAM DUTTA

sioned drivers."

A few years after he started driving, Rupam bought his first bus, with the help of his friend and the school headmaster's family. Within a few years, Rupam bought a fleet of buses and also continued to drive when needed.

Anil Baruah, who had designed Saarathi (DTP keyboard) and Ramdhenu (Assamese online dictionary), read Rupam's posts and coaxed him to publish his experiences in the form of a book. Rupam was, however, sceptical and unsure of what to include and what to leave out.

"The highways of Northeast are always beautiful; one gets to see the most fascinating wildlife. I have spotted tigers who probably came out to the road for a walk after a meal. They are not scared of us but even from inside bus, my hair stands on end each time I spot them – not out fear, but out of admiration. I see

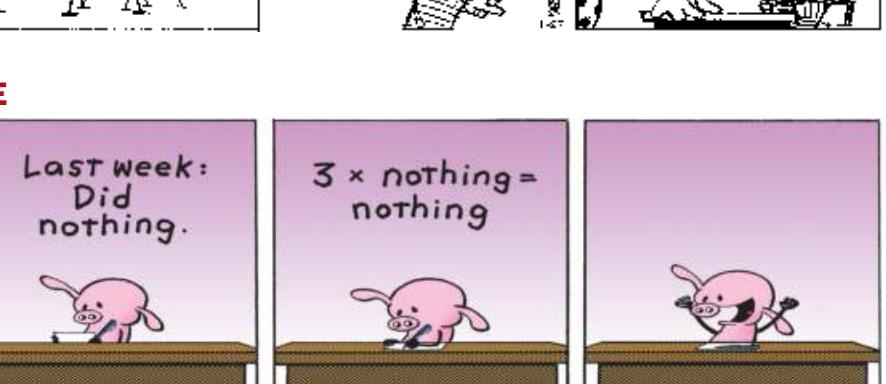
sprinting deer, bulky bisons, intimidating rhinos and all that the Northeast is famous for. On the Karbi Anglong range, if the elephant herd decides to show up on the road, one has to stop for a few hours until they decide to give way," he adds.

The only elephant that made him freeze in fear was a gigantic alpha tusker that usually roams alone. "It was so tall, its eyes were level with the driver's window. If annoyed, the elephant would not give way without hurting someone. I have carried bundles of bananas and sugarcane to pay the animals the toll for using their path. If one forgot about the toll, one had to wait for a sugarcane truck to come to their rescue."

What about the Assamese 'ghosts' on the highway? Rupam laughs, "You mean the lady in a white sari who asks for a lift or the bura jona (the respectful name for the old legendary ghost)? I have driven on so many highways, I never encountered any."

These are stories to make the highway driver cautious at night." His book has other stories of loss and friendship, and happy stories as well.

Life of a driver - Cabinor Ipare (Saarathi.in) is available for ₹300 across major e-tailers.



Trump impeachment goes to Senate

A minimum of 17 GOP votes are required to convict the ex-President; trial is likely to begin on Feb. 8

SIRIAM LAKSHMAN

Democrats of the U.S. House of Representatives delivered charges of "incitement of insurrection" against former President Donald Trump to their Senate colleagues, clearing the way for his trial by the upper chamber of the U.S. Congress. With enthusiasm waning among the GOP Senators, it is far from clear that Senate Democrats will get the required minimum of 17 GOP Senate votes to convict the former President of inciting his supporters to attack the U.S. Capitol on January 6.

Earlier this month, Mr. Trump became the first President in history to be impeached twice – on January 13 this year and in December 2019, when he was impeached on charges of abuse of power with regard to leveraging the relationship with Ukraine to gain political favours and the obstruction of Congress in the ensuing investigation.

On Monday, a group of Democratic Representatives who will act as prosecutors in the trial, participated in a ceremonial walk across to



Final step: Donald Trump and Melania departing from the White House on January 20. ■ REUTERS

the Senate to hand over the charges. Representative Jamie Raskin addressed the Senate, saying, "Donald John Trump had engaged in high crimes and misdemeanors by inciting violence against the government of the United States."

Chief Justice John Roberts will not preside over Mr. Trump's trial as he had done last year, because Mr. Trump is no longer in office. Instead, the senior most Democrat in the Senate, Patrick Leahy of Vermont, will preside over the impeachment.

If Mr. Trump is convicted

by the Senate, he could be barred from holding public office again – ending the possibility of a 2024 run.

A total of 27 GOP Senators had opposed charging Mr. Trump, 16 said they were undecided and seven did not respond, according to a survey by the *New York Times*. This is in contrast to early last year when the Senate was almost fully split along party lines in the final vote on conviction.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell – who had initially rallied behind Mr. Trump in his quest to chal-

lenge the election results – has expressed an openness to convicting the former President this time. Other Republican Senators, however, questioned the constitutionality of impeaching an ex-President.

Mr. Trump, who won close to 75 million votes in the presidential election – a record for any incumbent, has the potential to remain a powerful force in the Republican party. Over the weekend, one of Mr. Trump's aides told some Republican Senators that the former President intended to stay within the GOP and not float a new party, *Politico* reported. Going against Mr. Trump by voting to convict, could result in tough primary (intra-party) elections for Senators if Mr. Trump backs their challengers.

Trump launches office
Also on Monday, Mr. Trump's team announced the establishment of the 'Office of the Former President' to manage Mr. Trump's "correspondence, public statements, appearances, and official activities to advance the interests of the U.S. and

Dutch police detain over 180 in third night of curfew

Rioters looted stores, set fires in protest over COVID-19 curbs

REUTERS
AMSTERDAM

Dutch police detained more than 180 people in a third night of unrest in cities across the Netherlands, where roaming groups of rioters set fires, threw rocks and looted stores in violence triggered by a night curfew aimed at curbing the coronavirus.

The first curfew since the Second World War followed a warning by the National Institute for Health (RIVM) over a new wave of infections due to the "British variant" of the virus, and was imposed on Saturday despite weeks of declines in new infections.

"We have had riots in the past, but it's rare to have this for several nights across the entire country," said National Police spokeswoman Suzanne van de Graaf. "It's not only in known problem areas, but much more widespread."

Riot police with shields and batons were called out in more than 10 cities, many



Street clashes: The police dispersing demonstrators during a protest against COVID-19 restrictions in Amsterdam. ■ REUTERS

of which had issued emergency ordnance to provide officers with greater powers to conduct searches.

Police scuffled with rioters in several cities late into the night, chasing them down narrow streets with vans or on foot as helicopters hovered overhead.

In the capital Amsterdam, groups of youths threw fireworks, broke store windows and attacked a police truck, but were broken up by massive police presence.

Ten police were injured in Rotterdam, where 60 rioters were detained overnight af-

ter widespread looting and destruction in the city centre, a police spokeswoman said. Supermarkets in the port city were emptied, while rubbish bins and vehicles were set ablaze. Two photographers were hurt after being targeted by rock-throwing gangs, police said.

The Dutch government said it will not back down on its curfew. "You don't capitulate to people who smash shop windows. That is not the case," Finance Minister Wopke Hoekstra was quoted as saying by Dutch news agency ANP.

ELSEWHERE



Senate confirms Blinken as Secretary of State

WASHINGTON

The U.S. Senate on Tuesday confirmed Antony Blinken as Secretary of State, with key members of the Republican Party backing him. Mr. Blinken, a longtime adviser to President Joe Biden, was approved by 78-22 vote. His easy approval is in contrast with former President Donald Trump's two Secretaries of State, Mike Pompeo and Rex Tillerson, who both scraped by with most Democrats opposed. The stepson of a Holocaust survivor, Mr. Blinken, 58, is known for his passion for humanitarian causes and his calm demeanour. AFP

As pandemic rages on, Italy PM Conte quits

Crisis triggered by Viva party's withdrawal from coalition over his handling of the outbreak

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ROME

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte resigned on Tuesday in the hope of forming a new government after weeks of turmoil in his ruling coalition, leaving Italyudderless as it battles the deadly coronavirus pandemic.

He tendered his resignation to President Sergio Mattarella, the ultimate arbiter of Italian political crises, who invited him to stay on in a caretaker capacity pending discussions on what happens next.

The uneasy coalition that has led Italy since September 2019 was fatally weakened earlier this month by the withdrawal of former premier Matteo Renzi's small but crucial Italia Viva party.

Ahead of a key vote in Parliament this week that he looked set to lose, Mr. Conte informed his Ca-



Giuseppe Conte

binet on Tuesday that he would quit if what supporters said was a move to form a new government.

After the meeting with Mr. Mattarella, a spokesman for the President said he "reserves the right to decide (what to do next) and invited the government to stay in office in a caretaker capacity".

Mr. Mattarella will open discussions with party leaders on Wednesday afternoon.

Italy was the first European country to face the full force of the COVID-19 pandemic and has since suffered badly, with the economy plunged into recession and deaths still rising by around 400 a day.

Parts of the country remain under partial lockdown, the vaccination programme has slowed and a deadline is looming to agree plans to spend billions of euros in European Union recovery funds.

Seeking a new mandate

Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio, one of the leaders of the populist Five Star Movement (M5S), the largest in Parliament, earlier said it was time to rally around Mr. Conte.

"The country is going through one of its worst ever periods due to

the pandemic," he tweeted. "Now we need unity, we all have to gather around Giuseppe Conte."

Mr. Conte's government had been on the verge of collapse since Mr. Renzi pulled out on January 13 in a row over the premier's handling of the pandemic.

The Prime Minister survived a vote of confidence in Parliament last week but failed to secure an overall majority in the upper house, the Senate.

"Conte's calculation is that by moving early, and thereby avoiding a humiliating defeat in the Senate later this week, he would increase his chances of securing a mandate from Mattarella to form a new government," noted Wolfgang Piccoli of the Teneo consultancy.

Democratic Party (PD), the other main partner in the coalition, is so far as backing Mr. Conte.

U.S. announces restoration of relations with Palestinians

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK

U.S. President Joe Biden's administration announced Tuesday it was restoring relations with the Palestinians and renewing aid to Palestinian refugees, a reversal of the Donald Trump administration's cutoff and a key element of its new support for a two-state solution to the decades-old conflict agreed to by Israelis and Palestinians.

"In order to advance these objectives the Biden administration will restore credible U.S. engagement with Palestinians as well as Israelis," Mr. Mills said.

"This will involve renewing U.S. relations with the Palestinian leadership and Palestinian people," he said.

Myanmar Army raises prospect of coup after voter-fraud claims

Suu Kyi's NLD won last year's poll, which the Army disputes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NAYPYIDAW

Myanmar's powerful military on Tuesday raised the spectre of staging a coup as it ramped up demands for an investigation into alleged voter fraud during last year's election, swept by Aung San Suu Kyi's ruling party.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) won November's poll in a landslide, but has been much criticised by rights groups for its disenfranchisement of voters in conflict-wracked regions.

The military-aligned opposition disputed the results, while the Army has for weeks alleged widespread voter irregularities, claiming to have found 8.6 million cases of fraud.

Military spokesman Major General Zaw Min Tun on Tuesday renewed calls for the country's embattled Election Commission to provide final voter lists for cross-checking – a demand that so far has not been met.

Mr. Zaw Min Tun said that military chief Min Aung Hla-

ing – arguably Myanmar's most powerful individual – has already pointed out "dishonesty and unfairness" during the election.

When pressed on the possibility of a coup, the spokesman refused to be drawn, but did not rule it out. "We do not say the Tatmadaw will take power. We do not say it will not as well," he said, using the Burmese name for the military. "What we can say is we will follow current existing laws, including the Constitution."

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Cairn threatens Indian asset seizures abroad in tax case

U.K. energy major assures Centre it will only move to freeze assets if India fails to discuss payment of amount awarded by tribunal

SUHASINI HAIDAR
VIKAS DHOOT
NEW DELHI

A month after it won an international tribunal award of \$1.2 billion in damages against India in the retrospective taxation case, U.K.-based Cairn Energy Plc has threatened that it may be forced to begin attaching Indian assets including bank accounts in different world capitals, unless the government resolves the issue.

In a letter to the Indian High Commission in London, which was also sent to the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of External Affairs and the Finance Ministry this week, Cairn's top leadership has said that the "necessary preparations have been put in place" for the tribunal verdict to be "enforced against Indian as-

sets in numerous jurisdictions around the world" if India fails to discuss paying the amount awarded.

Attaching planes, ships

According to sources, the assets already under consideration could include Embassy bank accounts, non-diplomatic premises, Air India planes and state-owned ships in several places including the U.K., Holland, France, Canada and the U.S. The move would be akin to similar action against a Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) plane that was seized in Malaysia earlier this month over a dispute with an Irish company, or the seizure of a Venezuelan ship ordered by a court in favour of U.S. company ConocoPhillips in 2018.

However, Cairn stressed in the letter, which *The Hindu*



Course of law: Cairn cited the U.K.-India bilateral treaty and the New York Convention, while urging action. ■REUTERS

has seen, that it would only consider this extreme option if the Indian government did not respond, as it was under pressure from its shareholders who "expect early resolution". Cairn also cited

clauses in the U.K.-India Bilateral Investment Treaty, the UNCITRAL arbitration rules, and the New York Convention to which India is a signatory, that would be breached if India fails to pay

the dues, which reportedly include about \$220 million in accrued interest in addition to the \$1.2 billion award.

'Severely damaged'

Cairn Energy CEO Simon Thomson said that the company's legacy and partnership in India had been "severely damaged over the last seven years as a result of the retrospective tax dispute."

"The Government of India has stated on multiple occasions that it would respect the legal process – our international shareholders now expect India to honour the award," he said in a written response to *The Hindu*.

The three-member tribunal at the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) at The Hague that had delivered its verdict on December 21, 2020 had held unanimously

in favour of Cairn and against the Indian government, ruling that the tax levied fell afoul of the bilateral investment pact, and also awarded Cairn \$1.2 billion in damages for the tax authorities' decision to take by force and subsequently sell the company's shares, and freeze dividend payments as well as tax refunds, to recover the disputed tax dues.

Despite several representations to the NDA government, Cairn had been unable to have the penalties reversed and had decided to go to The Hague.

'Under consideration'

The MEA did not respond to a request for a comment, but the government is understood to have conveyed to Cairn officials that the "matter is under consideration".

Reacting to the PCA verdict in December, the Finance Ministry had said the government would study the award and all its aspects carefully in consultation with its counsel and 'take a decision on further course of action, including legal remedies before appropriate'.

In a similar arbitration case it lost against Vodafone, the government has filed an appeal in a Singapore court to defend the retrospective tax demand on the telecom firm, and officials have stressed that the government's sovereign right to levy taxes cannot be questioned under bilateral pacts.

However, sources said that under the arbitral rules, Cairn Energy could proceed to enforce the award even while India mounts a legal challenge to the ruling.

Budget may set higher agri credit target at ₹19 lakh crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

With the aim of doubling farmers' income by 2022, the government is likely to raise farm credit target to about ₹19 lakh crore in Budget 2021-22 to be presented on February 1, according to sources. For the current fiscal, the government has set a farm credit target of ₹15 lakh crore.

The government has been raising credit target for the farm sector every year and this time too, the target is likely to be increased to around ₹19 lakh crore for 2021-22, sources said.

"Non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) and co-operatives are active in the agriculture credit space. The Nabard refinance scheme will be further expanded. Agriculture credit target for the year 2020-21 has been set up at ₹18 lakh crore," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said while presenting Budget 2020-21.

The agricultural credit flow has increased consistently over the years, exceeding the target set for each fiscal. For instance, credit worth ₹11.68 lakh crore was given to farmers in 2017-18, higher than the ₹10 lakh crore target set for that year, they added. Similarly, crop loans worth ₹10.66 lakh crore were disbursed in 2016-17, higher than the credit target of ₹9 lakh crore.

Credit is a critical input in achieving higher farm output. Institutional credit will also help delink farmers from non-institutional sources where they are compelled to borrow at usurious rates of interest, sources said.

'Overseas investment by Indian firms dipped to \$1.45 bn in Dec'

RBI data shows a 42% drop from \$2.5 bn a year earlier

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Overseas investment by domestic firms fell by over 42% to \$1.45 billion in December 2020, according to Reserve Bank data.

In the year earlier period, companies in India had invested \$2.51 billion in their foreign firms (joint ventures / wholly owned units).

In November 2020, the total outward foreign direct investment (OFDI) was of \$1.06 billion, down by 27% from a month earlier.

Of the total FDI investment by the Indian companies during the month under review, \$775.41 million



was in the form of equity infusion and \$382.91 million was in the form of loan.

Investment of \$287.63 million was in the form of issuance of guarantee, as per the data.

Among major investors, ONGC Videsh Ltd. invested a total of \$131.85 million

Among major investors, ONGC Videsh Ltd. invested a total of \$131.85 million in joint ventures and wholly owned subsidiaries in Myanmar, Russia, Vietnam, Colombia, British Virgin Islands among others.

Intas Pharmaceuticals invested \$75.22 million in a wholly owned subsidiary in the U.K. and Tata Consultancy Services invested \$27.77 million in a wholly owned unit in Ireland.

India set to grow 11.5% in 2021: IMF

By 2022 end, GDP is expected to be 9% below its pre-pandemic projected level

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON

The IMF on Tuesday projected an 11.5% growth rate for India in 2021, making the country the only major economy to register double-digit growth this year amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The International Monetary Fund's growth projections for India reflected a rebound in the economy, which is estimated to have contracted by 8% in 2020 due to the pandemic.

China is next with 8.1% growth in 2021 followed by Spain (5.9%) and France (5.5%). The IMF said that in 2020 China is the only major country which registered a positive growth rate of 2.3%.

India's economy, the IMF said, is projected to grow



Regaining ground: The IMF said activity and mobility came back much faster than expected in India. ■AP

6.8% in 2022 and that of China by 5.6%.

IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath, during a virtual press conference to release the update, said that India had a somewhat faster pace of recovery, but cumulatively by the end of 2022, its GDP

is expected to be 9% below its pre-pandemic projected level. "We are seeing India come back to its 2019 levels, but it's still below... Why do we have these upgrades (in IMF's growth projections for India)... because the activity and mobility particularly

came back much faster than expected in India. We have not seen another wave," Ms. Gopinath said.

'Faster pace of recovery'

"In fact, we are seeing a very strong decline in cases, which is again a bit different from other parts of the world. So, these factors, including what we're seeing in terms of high frequency indicators, point to [a] somewhat faster pace of recovery. But again, there is still some distance to go," she added.

Earlier this month, IMF MD Kristalina Georgieva had said India "actually has taken very decisive action, very decisive steps to deal with the pandemic and to deal with the economic consequences of it".

hospitality, entertainment, education, and health sector are yet to see normalcy.

"The quarterly median forecasts indicate GDP growth to contract by 1.3% in the third quarter of 2020-21. The growth is expected to be in the positive terrain by the fourth quarter with a projection of 0.5% growth," estimates the survey.

GDP to contract 8% in FY21, FICCI survey shows

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India's GDP is expected to contract by 8% in 2020-21, according to the latest round of FICCI's Economic Outlook Survey.

The annual median growth forecast by the industry body is based on responses from leading economists representing industry, banking

and financial services sectors. The survey was conducted in January.

The median growth forecast for agriculture and allied activities has been pegged at 3.5% for 2020-21.

"Agriculture sector has exhibited significant resilience in the face of the pandemic. Higher rabi acreage, good monsoons, higher reservoir

levels and strong growth in tractor sales indicate continued buoyancy in the sector," FICCI stated on the survey findings. However, industry and services sector, which were most severely hit due to the pandemic induced economic fallout, are expected to contract by 10% and 9.2% respectively during 2020-21. The industrial re-

covery is gaining traction, but the growth is still not broad based. The consumption activity did spur during the festive season as a result of pent-up demand built during the lockdown but sustaining it is important going forward, the survey said.

Besides, it observed that some of the contact intensive service sectors like tourism,

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

TENDER FORM : LUMPSUM CONTRACT - TWO COVER SYSTEM - ITEM WISE RATE

TENDER NOTICE No. 30 CE/TEC/2020-21 Dated: 25.01.2021

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu sealed tenders will be received from the Registered Contractors of Public Works Department of T.N., for the works noted below by the Chief Engineer , PWD, Technical Education Circle, Chennai - 25

Name of Work **Period of Completion** **Apprx. Value of work (Rs. In lakhs)** **EMD Amount in Rs.**

Construction of Tamil Nadu Open University Zonal Centre Building at Periyankali village in Karimangalam taluk of Dharmapuri District.	9 months	408.00	214000
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Contractor Class: Last Date for receipt of tenders: Upto 3.00PM on 02.03.2021. Date of opening of tenders: 03.03.2021. Cost of tender schedule and GST: Re 15000/- 1800/- EMD to be remitted in favour of Executive Engineer, PWD, Technical Education Division, Villercote. Tender documents & other details are available in www.tenders.tn.gov.in. Any other details can be had from the office of the Chief Engineer, PWD, Technical Education circle, Chennai 25 during working hours. If the date of receipt of tenders happens to a holiday the tender will be received on the next working day.

Chief Engineer, PWD, Technical Education Circle, Chennai - 25



TAMIL NADU STATE TRANSPORT CORPORATION (KUMBAKONAM) LIMITED, KUMBAKONAM.

Tender Notice Ref No.TNSTC/KUM/CIVIL-CORP/621-2/2021 Dated:25.01.2021

Sealed Tenders are invited by the Managing Director, Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (Kumbakonam) Limited, Kumbakonam from the Registered Contractors of Government Departments like PWD, Municipal Corporation etc. for the following works upto 02.00 pm on 26.02.2021. The tenders will be opened by the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (Kumbakonam) Limited, Kumbakonam (or) his authorized official in the corporation office on the same day at 3.00 p.m. If the office happens to be closed on the date of receipt of tender specified, the tender will be open on next working day. The contractor who fails to submit the tender mentioned above will be liable to pay a fine of Rs. 1000/- per tender. The tenders should be submitted on or before 26.02.2021 upto 04.00 pm. All the relevant informations may be obtained from the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (Kumbakonam) Limited, Kumbakonam at the above office during office hours. The Managing Director, Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (Kumbakonam) Limited, Kumbakonam has every right to cancel / postpone the tender in view of Administrative reasons. The tender schedule may also be obtained on payment of cost of Tender schedule along with Postal charges Rs 50 from the Deputy Manager (Civil-Corp) Tamil Nadu State Corporation (Kumbakonam) Limited, Kumbakonam, No.27, Railway Station New Road, Kumbakonam-612 001.

Name of the Work : Construction of Bus Stand cum Passengers Refreshments Centre at Pungambadi Male Palai Village, Aravakurichi By-Pass (NH-44).

Estimate Cost (Rs. In Crore) 4.20 Earnest Money Deposit (Rs. In Lakhs) 4.20

Cost of Tender Schedule (Rs. In. 15,000/-+ GST 18%. Contactor Class : I Class

Managing Director, Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation, (Kumbakonam) Limited, Kumbakonam

Sheenlac Paints eyeing ₹1,000 cr. revenue: MD Peter

Firm plans to double market share in decorative segment

N. ANAND

CHENNAI
Sheenlac Paints Ltd. has drawn up a two-pronged strategy to double market share and revenue over the next few years, according to a top official.

"Over a period of three years, we are planning to double our market share in decorative paints from 30% to 60% in the southern States and more than double our revenue to ₹1,000 crore in five years," said Sudhir Peter, managing director.

Of the total portfolio, decorative paints account for 30% of revenue, wood coatings 40%, industrial coatings 10% and floor coating, 4%.

"An increase in the market share of decorative



Sudhir Peter

paints to 60% will not bring down the revenue of wood coatings or other products. We will achieve the target well before schedule as we are growing at 15% to 16% year-on-year," he added.

On IPO plans, he said Sheenlac would enter the market only after achieving ₹1,000 crore revenue.

"We also plan to take the inorganic route for growth and are reviewing takeover offers from a few small players. At this point, we don't need funds and we are not in a hurry," he said.

CPLC

Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited

(A group company of IndianOil)

Regd. Office: 536, Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai-600 018

Website : www.cplc.co.in ; Email id: shankarp@cplc.co.in

Tel: 044-24349833 / 24346807

CIN - L40101TN1965GOI005389



EXTRACT OF THE STATEMENT OF UNAUDITED STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

South Africa bowlers strike back

Reduce Pakistan to 33 for four after Yasir and Nauman spin out visitors for 220

SA IN PAKISTAN

REUTERS

KARACHI

Pakistan spinners Yasir Shah and Nauman Ali took five wickets between them as South Africa was bowled out for 220. However, South Africa fought back to have Pakistan in trouble at 33 for four at close on the first day of their first Test here on Tuesday.

Azhar Ali and Fawad Alam were both unbeaten on five and will resume on the second morning on a wicket already producing both turn and variable bounce, suggesting the visitors' modest first innings score could be par.

Big blow

In a major blow for the home side, captain Babar Azam (7) was trapped leg-before by spinner Keshav Maharaj just before stumps.

South African fast bowler Kagiso Rabada (two for eight) sent back the Pakistan openers when he bowled Abid Ali (4) and then had debutant Imran Butt (9) caught at short-leg from a vicious rising delivery.

Anrich Nortje then picked up the wicket of Shaheen

SCOREBOARD

South Africa – 1st innings:

Dean Elgar c Azam b Nauman 58, Aiden Markram c Butt b Shaheen 13, Rassie van der Dussen run out 17, Faf du Plessis c Rizwan b Yasir 23, Quinton de Kock c Butt b Nauman 15, Temba Bavuma run out 17, George Linde c sub b Hasan 35, Keshav Maharaj b Yasir 0, Kagiso Rabada (not out) 21, Anrich Nortje b Yasir 0, Lungi Ngidi lbw b Shaheen 8; Extras (b-5, lb-1, nb-7); 13; Total (in 69.2 overs): 220.

Fall of wickets: 1-30, 2-63, 3-108, 4-133, 5-136, 6-179, 7-179, 8-194, 9-195.

Shah Afridi (0) with a full delivery, only the fourth ball the hapless night-watchman had faced.

Architect of the downfall

South Africa was in many ways the architect of its own downfall with the bat, having won the toss in its first Test

in Pakistan since 2007.

There were two run outs in the top six, while captain Quinton de Kock (15) gave his wicket away with a wild swing across the line to left-arm spinner Nauman (two for 38), who is playing in his first Test at the age of 34.

Opener Dean Elgar (58) was the top-scorer and looked in control until he drove at a wide delivery from Nauman and was caught at slip.

Rassie van der Dussen and Temba Bavuma were both run out, while Yasir (three for 54) picked up the key wicket of Faf du Plessis (23), who edged to wicket-keeper Mohammad Rizwan.

Elgar and du Plessis had steadied the innings during their 45-run stand for the third wicket after Aiden Markram and van der Dussen were dismissed in the first session.



Rattled: Abid Ali is beaten for pace by a Rabada delivery. ■ AFP

QUICK SINGLES

Rahane, Rohit and Shardul land in Chennai

CHENNAI

India vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane, in pic, senior batsman Rohit Sharma and seamer Shardul Thakur arrived here on Tuesday for the first two Tests against England. The three flew in from Mumbai. The other Indian players, including skipper Virat Kohli, are expected to reach in batches on Wednesday. While some England players – Ben Stokes, Jofra Archer and Moeen Ali – are already in the city, the others will arrive on Wednesday. PTI



Not easy for Bess, Leach in India: Jayawardene

LONDON

Former Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene feels that England spinners Dom Bess and Jack Leach won't have it easy in India. "It will be a bigger challenge in India," he said. PTI



Kohli has made India a tough side, says Hussain

LONDON

Former England captain Nasser Hussain feels Virat Kohli has instilled a fighting attitude in the current Indian team, which does not get bullied by adversities, whether on or off the field. "India is a tough side. I think Kohli has instilled that. Make no mistake, at home, they are a formidable outfit." PTI



Punjab dethrones Karnataka

Aparajith, Shahrkhan pilot Tamil Nadu past Himachal



To hot to handle: The Punjab bowlers ripped through the Karnataka line-up. ■ TWITTER/BCCI

MUSHTAQ ALI

SPORTS BUREAU

A horror batting show saw Karnataka crash to an embarrassing nine-wicket loss against Punjab in its Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy quarterfinal clash at Ahmedabad on Tuesday.

Karnataka, the defending champion, was bundled out for a paltry 87. Punjab had little trouble chasing it down, reaching home with 7.2 overs to spare.

Karnataka did only marginally better than its lowest ever total in the tournament – 66 against Goa at Visakhapatnam in 2014.

Poor shot selection brought Karnataka's swift downfall. Skipper Karun Nair (12) was the first to go, getting a leading edge to mid-off. Much depended on Devdutt Padikkal (11), but the southpaw let the side down with an ugly swipe at fast bowler Siddharth Kaul.

A smart catch by Mayank Markande, in the same over, removed Pavan Deshpande for a duck. B.R. Sharath (2) and Shreyas Gopal (13)

edged deliveries outside off, while J. Suchith (8) glanced one down leg to the wicketkeeper.

Aniruddha Joshi (27, 34b, 2x4) hung around, before attempting a wild slog and losing his stumps to spinner Markande.

The Punjab bowling attack stuck to a good line and reaped the rewards. Kaul, who took a hat-trick when the two sides met in the group stage, returned figures of three for 15. Fellow pacers Sandeep Sharma, Arshdeep Singh and Rameend Singh took two wickets each. Markande (one for 12) impressed with his control and flight variations.

Punjab overcame a mild stutter when opener Abhishek Sharma's cut was pouched by Padikkal in the first over. Prabhhsimran Singh (49 n.o., 37b, 2x4, 3x6) and captain Mandeep Singh (35 n.o., 33b, 1x4, 1x6) took over, ensuring smooth passage to the semifinal round.

Turning it around
B. Aparajith (52 n.o., 45b, 3x4, 2x6) and M. Shahrkhan Khan (40 n.o., 19b, 5x4, 2x6)

powered Tamil Nadu to a five-wicket win over Himachal Pradesh in the second quarterfinal.

Chasing 136 for victory, Tamil Nadu was struggling at 66 for five in the 13th over when Aparajith and Shahrkhan turned things around.

Sonu strikes
Earlier, asked to bat first, Himachal could only muster 135 for nine, thanks to an impressive bowling effort from young medium-pacer Sonu Yadav (3/14). Only skipper Rishi Dhawan, with an unbeaten 35, made a meaningful contribution.

The scores: Karnataka 87 in 17.2 overs (Siddarth Kaul 3/15) lost to Punjab 89/1 in 12.4 overs (Prabhhsimran Singh 49 n.o., Mandeep Singh 35 n.o.)

Himachal 135/9 in 20 overs (Rishi Dhawan 35 n.o., Sonu Yadav 3/14) lost to Tamil Nadu 141/5 in 17.5 overs (B. Aparajith 52 n.o., Shahrkhan Khan 40 n.o., Vaibhav Arora 3/30).

Wednesday's matches

■ Haryana vs. Baroda, noon
■ Bihar vs. Rajasthan, 7 p.m.

Motivation comes from what cannot be measured



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESHP MENON

The first man to play 100 Test matches, Colin Cowdrey, was 41 when he was recalled to a struggling England team to take on Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thomson, that most dangerous pair of fast bowlers.

Cowdrey's reputation was long established, he had nothing left to prove, and chances were he would only succeed in chipping away at the wall of greatness he was encased in. Why did he agree to tour?

According to the writer Simon Barnes, "Cowdrey had clearly been asked the question many times, but his reply came as fresh-minted, his eyes lighting up: 'The challenge! I couldn't resist it! But that's the thing about sport – you have to be perpetually two years old.'

"That's how great athletes think," says Barnes, "They know there will always be a last dragon, but they never recognise him when they meet. They just say good morning and carry on."

Saying good morning and carrying

on in Chennai as India take on England will be the most experienced and successful fast bowler in the game; Jimmy Anderson. He is 38, and this is his 18th year as a Test match bowler.

In Sri Lanka a few days ago he claimed six for 40 in an innings where the rest of England's bowlers took four wickets for 339. What he has dropped in pace he has gained in subtlety and cunning. "You give him a coconut," said Michael Holding who knows a thing or two about bowling, "he'll swing it."

Anderson comes to India as the only fast bowler with over 600 Test wickets, and the only one to have played as many as 157 Tests. One of the highlights of the home series is likely to be the sight (sadly, only on television as of now) of a great fast bowler unveiling his craft for yet another generation of hopefuls.

Sachin Tendulkar spoke recently of a "reverse reverse swing" that Anderson has added to his armoury. If that confuses the reader, imagine what it will do to the batsman!

England's policy of rotation means that we might not see him in all the Tests; he might alternate with Stuart Broad. In the 120 Tests they have played together, this pair has claimed over 900 wickets.

Anderson's greatness is not in

doubt, nor is his focus; he remains fiercely competitive. After taking his 600th wicket, he was already looking to the 700th. That's how great athletes think. The next wicket, the next hurdle, the next race, that's the important one. Everything appears impossible till it is actually done.

Still, to look forward when you could be forgiven for relaxing and repeating stories of the past to willing listeners takes something special. You have to be perpetually two years old.

How does Anderson do it? How does he keep his motivation strong through injuries, loss of form, selectorial mishaps, fatigue, realisation that there is more to life and the temptations of the comfort of a family life?

What motivates a sportsman is a question often asked, especially towards the end of an illustrious career when greatness is behind the performer and (usually) what lies ahead cannot match what went before. Love for what you do is a motivator, as is public adulation. But you can tire of love while adulation can get on your nerves.

At a dinner on the eve of Sachin Tendulkar's 200th Test match, I asked the legend what had made him carry on playing when he had nothing to prove. His answer, although

along expected lines, was still a peep into the mind of a competitor. "Playing for India is the greatest motivation," he said.

Most players are happy to say on the occasion of their 100th Test that it is "an honour." The latest to join the list, Australian off spinner Nathan Lyon said, "It is very humbling."

Some self-aware athletes speak of that "one talent which is death to hide" (to borrow from the poet Milton), the one thing they know to the exclusion of everything else. After all, not all (potentially) great players have the figures to show for it.

Longevity

Longevity is an important element in bestowing that title on a sportsman. Any player can be 'great' for one series, one Test, one day, or even one incident, but it takes someone special to perform at the highest level for close to two decades.

Great performers know that enduring motivation comes from what cannot be measured. They do, therefore they are. It is what separates them from others.

One of the pictures I have at my table is that of the artist Matisse late in life sitting up on his bed, working on a sculpture. He doesn't need to do it, but he has to. I look at it and I understand Jimmy Anderson a little better.

Sindhu, Srikanth look to turn the tide

NEUFC stuns ATKMB

SPORTS BUREAU

NorthEast United FC stunned ATK Mohun Bagan 2-1 in an ISL match at the Fatorda Stadium on Tuesday. NEUFC climbed to fifth with 18 points from 13 matches while ATKMB remained second with 24 points.

The result: NEUFC 2 (Machado 60, Gallego 81) bt ATK Mohun Bagan 1 (Roy Krishna 72).

Wednesday's match: Kerala Blasters vs Jamshedpur FC.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA BANGKOK

P.V. Sindhu and K. Srikanth will hope to shrug off the disappointments of the last two weeks as they gear up for the highly-competitive HSBC BWF World Tour Finals, beginning here on Wednesday.

Srikanth had pulled out of the first Thailand Open and ahead of the second round due to a calf muscle pull, while he was forced to withdraw after the opening round last week after his roommate B. Sai Praneeth tested positive for COVID-19.

Sindhu's comeback after the coronavirus-induced

break was not as good as she hoped.

Srikanth, meanwhile, has been clubbed in Group-B with Denmark's Anders Antonsen, Chinese Taipei's Wang Tzu Wei and Hong Kong's NG Ka Long Angus.

Srikanth had pulled out of the first Thailand Open and ahead of the second round due to a calf muscle pull, while he was forced to withdraw after the opening round last week after his roommate B. Sai Praneeth tested positive for COVID-19.

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TV PICKS

Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), noon & 7 p.m.
ISL: Star Sports 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.
BWF World Tour Finals: Star Sports 2 HD & 3, 9.30 a.m.
Premier League: SS Select 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 11.30 p.m. & 1.45 a.m. (Thursday)
FA Cup: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Thursday)
Pakistan vs South Africa: 1st Test, Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 10.30 a.m.

IN BRIEF



Shakib doubtful for New Zealand tour

DHAKA
 Shakib Al Hasan is a major doubt for Bangladesh's tour of New Zealand next month because of injury and personal reasons. Shakib, who limped off the field during Monday's win over West Indies with a groin problem, said "it doesn't look very good at the moment". AFP

Manas ousts Denim

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM
 Qualifier Manas Dhamne knocked out the sixth seed Denim Yadav 6-2, 3-6, 6-2 in the first round of the ITF grade-4 junior tennis tournament at the Tennis Project, Ballawas, on Monday. Top seed Nishant Dabas made light work of beating Yuvan Nandal.
The scores (first round):
Boys: Nishant Dabas bt Yuvan Nandal 6-1, 6-4; Nikhil Nirajan (USA) bt Aryan Shah 6-1, 6-1; Manas Dhamne bt Denim Yadav 6-2, 3-6, 6-2; Bushan Haobam bt Ronin Lotlikar 4-6, 6-2, 6-2.
Girls: Tanushri Pandey bt Siddhi Khot 6-2, 6-2; Suhrita Maruri bt Sanvi Ahluwalia 6-0, 6-0; Lakshmi Prabha bt Mirthula Mahalakshmi 6-1, 7-5; Kavya Khrirwar bt Suhani Gaur 6-3, 6-4.

AROUND THE CITY

Narrow win for Rann Star
 NEW DELHI: Rann Star Club beat Sapience Academy by two wickets in the Rikhi Ram memorial tournament.

The scores: Sapience Academy 208 in 40 overs (Pawan Ahlawat 80, Abhijeet Sharma 41, Tejas Baroka 3/42) lost to RSC 211/8 in 39.2 overs (Sarthak Ranjan 48, Sombir Sheokand 41 n.o., Anish Alvi 3/31).
Moksh bowls RRG to victory

Moksh Jain picked up four wickets as Rohtak Road Gymkhana beat LB Shastri Club by 12 runs in the Turf Youth Cup under-19 tournament.

The scores: RRG 190 in 39.1 overs (Kartik Datta 66, Yuraj Singh 38, Shahan Rawat 4/31) bt LBSC 178/9 in 40 overs (Avijit Tyagi 45, Abhinav Chaurasia 34 n.o., Moksh Jain 4/24).

Easy for RCC Club
 RCC defeated Endurance Academy by nine wickets in the Endurance under-15 League.

The scores: Endurance Academy 99 in 33.4 overs (Zaynul Khan 3/17) lost to RCC 100/1 in 16.5 overs (Saksham Sharma 61 n.o.).

Pioneer enters semifinals
 Pioneer Club beat Swasthik Sports Management by 28 runs to enter the semifinals of the Swasthik Cup Under-17 tournament.

The scores: Pioneer Club 217 in 38 overs (Rushal Saini 62 n.o., Trinav Kumar 42) bt SSM 189 in 38.4 overs (Karan Garg 37, Shekar Verma 3/32).

Aryan shines
 Aryan Rana top-scored with 90 as Rohtak Road Gymkhana beat Trikash Academy by five wickets in the Swastik Ghevra League.

The scores: Trikash Academy 231/5 in 40 overs (Sandeept Saini 79 n.o., Bharat Sindhwani 58) lost to RRG 232/5 in 39.2 overs (Aryan Rana 90, Harshit Bish 56, Ankush Bains 34).

SN Dubej Academy advances
 SN Dubej Academy defeated WCL by 144 runs to enter the

Reshma walks to a new record

Rewrites the 10000m mark; Vikas sets a new time in 110m hurdles

ATHLETICS

SPORTS BUREAU

BHOPAL
 Reshma Patel set a new junior National record on debut, winning the 10000m race walk in 48 minutes 25.90 seconds on the second day of the 18th National Federation Cup junior (under-20) athletics championships here on Tuesday.

The 16-year old from Uttarakhand outpaced the more experienced Munita Prajapati and Baljeet Kaur Bajwa in an exciting event that saw all the podium finishers improve on the existing National record of 49:16.51 set by Priyanka Goswami in 2014.

In fact, the top-five finishers clocked a better time than the 2015 meet record of 50:41.29, also held by Priyanka. In the 110m hurdles, Vikas Khodke set a new meet record of 14s, two-hundredths of a second ahead of UP's Usaid Khan.

The results:
Men: 400m: 1. Parveen Kumar (Har, 48.87s), 2. Ansh (Del, 49.32), 3. Lavish Sharma (UP, 49.63); **110m hurdles:** 1. Vikas Khodke (Mah, 14.00s), 2. Usaid Khan (UP, 14.02), 3. Nishanthra Singh (MP, 50.78m); **Pole vault:** 1. Sunny (Har, 4.60m), 2.



Leading pack: Reshma, left, outpaced more experienced walkers to finish on top. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

1. Jeswin Aldrin (TN, 7.51m), 2. Bhupender Singh (Har, 7.44m), 3. Arya (Kar, 7.19m).
High jump: 1. Piyush Singh Panwar (Har, 2.05m), 2. Abhar Datta (Mah, 2.03m), 3. Dev Karthick (TN, 1.99m); **Discus:** 1. Ann Rose Tomy (Kar, 14.45s), 2. Mounti Mondal (WB, 14.56), 3. S. Srireshma (TN, 14.80); **10000m walk:** 1. Reshma Patel (Utk, 48:25.90), 2. Baljeet Kaur Bajwa (Pun, 49:00.27), 3. Mun-

Sandeep Kumar (MP, 4.50m).
Women: 400m: 1. Deepanshi (Har, 56.02s), 2. Payal Vohra (Del, 56.44), Himanshi Malik (Har, 57.90); **100m hurdles:** 1. Ann Rose Tomy (Kar, 14.45s), 2. Mounti Mondal (WB, 14.56), 3. S. Srireshma (TN, 14.80); **Pole vault:** 1. Pooja (Har, 3.40m), 2. Jyoti (Har, 3.00m), 3. Maisuri Timbadiya (Guj, 3.00m).

ita Prajapati (UP, 49:13.86); **Long jump:** 1. Ancy Sojan (Kar, 6.12m), 2. Sharvari Parulekar (Mah, 5.75m), 3. Keisha Modi (5.73m); **Discus:** 1. Garima (Har, 45.91m), 2. Pooja (Har, 45.42m), 3. Siddhi Shailendra Karan (Mah, 40.49m); **Pole vault:** 1. Pooja (Har, 3.40m), 2. Jyoti (Har, 3.00m), 3. Maisuri Timbadiya (Guj, 3.00m).

Radoslaw Witaszek (Pol, 3.5) vs Fabiano Caruana (USA, 5); Anish Gir (Ned, 5) vs Maxime Vacher-Lagrave (Fra, 3); Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 5) vs Alexander Donchenko (Ger, 2.5); Aryan Tari (Nor, 3) vs Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Pol, 3).

Harikrishna takes on Anton

TATA STEEL CHESS

RAKESH RAO

NEW DELHI

P. Harikrishna and Magnus Carlsen will look to redeem their reputation in the ninth round when action resumes after a day's rest in the Tata Steel Masters chess tournament.

Following his loss to tournament leader Alireza Firouzja (5.5 points), Harikrishna (4) plays with black pieces against Spain's David Anton Guijar.

On the other hand, 17-year-old Firouzja faces 16-year-old Russian sensation Andrey Esipenko (Rus, 5); Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 4) vs Nils Grandelius (Swe, 4.5).

Radoslaw Witaszek (Pol, 3.5) vs Fabiano Caruana (USA, 5); Anish Gir (Ned, 5) vs Maxime Vacher-Lagrave (Fra, 3); Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 5) vs Alexander Donchenko (Ger, 2.5); Aryan Tari (Nor, 3) vs Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Pol, 3).

Former India goalie Prasanta passes away

Loses battle with a rare blood disease

FOOTBALL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

Former India goalkeeper Prasanta Dora, who also played for the big three clubs of Kolkata football, passed away on Tuesday after losing the battle with 'Hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis', a rare blood disease.

Prasanta was 45 and is survived by wife and a son.

The whole football fraternity of the city came together to help out the ailing footballer, who developed the condition sometime in November, according to his family.

Prasanta's problem was diagnosed late and his condition became critical earlier in the month when he was shifted to Tata Medical Centre, that specialises in cancer treatment, informed his elder brother and his predecessor in the national team, Hemanta Dora.

Prasanta made his national debut in 1999 against Thailand in the Olympic qualifiers.

He donned the national



Prasanta Dora.

colours again in tournaments like SAFF Cup and SAFF Games and earned a total of five international caps.

Representing top clubs

Prasanta also represented Bengal in the Santosh Trophy. After turning out for clubs like Tollygunge Agra-gami and Calcutta Port Trust, the big break came in 1999 when he joined East Bengal.

In later years he played with the other city giants Mohun Bagan and Mohammedan Sporting.

He took to coaching youngsters after his retirement.

Bilbao routs Getafe

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MADRID

Raul Garcia scored twice as Athletic Bilbao maintained its recent impressive run by routing Getafe 5-1 in the La Liga on Monday.

Yeray Alvarez, Alex Berenguer and Oscar de Marcos also scored for Athletic, which a week ago celebrated the Spanish Super Cup title after beating Barcelona in the final and Real Madrid in the semifinals.

The home victory left Athletic in ninth place.

The result: Athletic Bilbao 5 (Raul Garcia 12, 61, Yeray 50, Berenguer 75, De Marcos 82) bt Getafe 1 (Cucurella 1).



Hungry for more: Coach Pundreek Chaturvedi, right, says Shruti Ahlawat's discipline and motivation make her stand apart. ■ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

Mirana fancied for Thunder Plate

Coach Pundreek Chaturvedi says she has tremendous potential

"Shruti has tremendous potential. She has the calibre to play tennis at the highest international level. I hope she starts playing grade-A events and junior Grand Slams soon," said Chaturvedi, who runs a coaching centre at the New Era Public School in Dwarka.

Dictating points
 Shruti is a tough player and strokes with authority, dictating the points. After being with her on the European circuit about a year ago, coach Namita Bal had observed that Shruti was "arguably the most versatile player in her

age category" with an insatiable "hunger to win".

"Her discipline and motivation in each session make her stand apart. Her desire and hunger to improve her game day by day is incredible," said Chaturvedi.

Chaturvedi has trained two-time National champion Riya Bhatia and has also worked with another quality player, Bhuvana Kalva, among the women.

Conceding that it was a long journey ahead, Chaturvedi said that Shruti would continue to improve her "skill, shot making and fitness levels", to keep getting

better.

Europe stints

Together with his brother Parantap in Germany, Chaturvedi also arranges practice and training sessions for players in Europe, giving them a chance to compete in the European tennis league. Shruti will definitely stand to gain from all the exposure that she can get.

The opening of competitions, both at the national and international level is the best thing to happen to players of the calibre of Shruti, who offer a bright ray of hope for Indian tennis.

Shruti has the calibre to play tennis at the highest international level. I hope she starts playing grade-A events and junior Grand Slams soon," said Chaturvedi, who runs a coaching centre at the New Era Public School in Dwarka.

Beautiful LUV,
STAR DANCER

4. **OLYMPIC PLATE** (1,100m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 2. 45. 1. Celeritas (I) Akshay Kumar 60, 2. Guiding Force (III), 2.10: 1. Beautiful Luv (5) Akshay Kumar 60, 2. Team Player (4) B.R. Kumar 59, 3. Lightning Pearl (10) Ajeeth Kumar 55, 4. Look Of Love (6) Trevor 57.5, 5. Belle Springs (I) Afroz Khan 56.5, 6. Star Dancer (II) Neeraj 56.5, 7. Kappel Bruke (9) A. A. Vikrant 56, 8. Lorena (2) R. Manish 56, 9. Detonator (8) Ashad Asbar 55.5, 10. Southern Saffron (3) Gopal Singh 55 and 11. Sugar An Spice (7) R. S. Jodha 55.

1. **ADVANCE GUARD**, 2. N R 1 TOUCH, 3. LET IT BE ME

8. **TRAIL PLATE** (DIV. I)

(1,400m), 5-y-o & upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 3.20: 1. Unstopable (7) Deepak Singh 60, 2. Advance Guard (3) Suraj Narredu 58.5, 3. N R 1 Touch (1) Akshay Kumar 57.5, 4. Berkeley (2) Afroz Khan 56.5, 5. Viking Sun (11) Mukesh Kumar 56.5, 6. Melting Ice (8) Nakhhat Singh 55.5, 7. Thunder Road (10) Trevor 55.5, 8. Queen Blossom (6) Santosh Raj N R 55.5, 9. Mukeesh Kumar 56.5, 10. Glendale (9) Afroz Khan 55.5, 11. Let It Be (7) G. Naresh 50.5 and 12. Secret Command (2) Santosh Raj N R 50.5.

1. **MARVELL**, 2. **GLENDALE**, 3. **LET IT BE ME**

6. **THUNDER PLATE** (1,600m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 3.55: 1. Egyptian Prince (I) Surya Prakash 60, 2. Guiding Force (III) Santosh Raj N R 55.5, 3. Spicy Star (7) Mukesh Kumar 56.5, 4. That's My Magic (I) B.R. Kumar 56, 5. Red Snapper (2) A.A. Vikrant 55, 6. Call of The Blue (4) Koushik 54.5, 7. Rythm Selection (5) Afroz Khan 54.5, 8. Lockhart (12) Ashad Asbar 54.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (14) G. Naresh 53.5, 10. Super Angel (12) Mukesh Kumar 53.5, 11. Cincia Azzura (3) Kuldip Singh 52, 12. Mirana (6) Trevor 51.5, 13. The Special One (9) Abbah Singh 51.5 and 14. Down Town Gal (8) Neeraj 51.

1. **MIRANA**, 2. **SUPER ANGEL**, 3. **DOWNTOWN GAL**

7. **TRAIL PLATE** (DIV. II)