



M.P. Cabinet gives
nod to ordinance on
anti-conversion Bill
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Security forces now
have upper hand in
J&K: IGP Vijay Kumar
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Biden says Trump's
Pentagon team stalling
transition, posing risks
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Quinton de Kock-led
South Africa beats
Sri Lanka by an innings
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NEARBY



Capital records 703
new COVID-19 cases

NEW DELHI
The Capital recorded 703 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 6,24,118, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday. Also, 28 more deaths were reported in the past 24 hours, pushing the toll to 10,502. There are 6,122 active cases in the city at present.

CITY ▶ PAGE 4

City's air quality likely to deteriorate to 'very poor'

NEW DELHI
The air quality of Delhi, Noida and Gurugram was in the "poor" category on Tuesday, said the Central Pollution Control Board. The AQI of the Capital is expected to deteriorate to the "very poor" category on Wednesday and to "severe" on Thursday and Friday. The minimum temperature on Monday was 3.6 °C, three degrees lower than the season's average.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

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OPORTUNITIES ▶ PAGE 16

Centre,
farmers to
resume talks

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

As farmer leaders and Central Ministers sit down for the sixth round of talks at Vigyan Bhavan on Wednesday afternoon, neither side expects any immediate breakthrough.

Little has changed in terms of negotiating positions in the three weeks since talks broke down, according to farmer leaders, despite growing pressure on the ground. Farmers rallies were held in Bihar and Tamil Nadu on Tuesday, buttressing the claim that the agitation is not restricted to Punjab groups.

In their official response sent to the Agriculture Ministry on Tuesday, farmer groups reiterated that repeal of the three farm laws is the first point in their agenda for talks.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

6 U.K. returnees test positive for new coronavirus variant

Patients in Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Pune in single-room isolation facilities

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Samples of six persons returning from the U.K. have been found to contain the new variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

The Ministry said, of the samples, "3 [were tested] in NIMHANS, Bengaluru, 2 in CCMB, Hyderabad, and 1 in NIV, Pune".

These persons have been kept in single-room isolation in designated health care facilities by the respective State governments. "Their close contacts too have been put under quarantine. Comprehensive contact tracing has been initiated for co-travellers, family contacts and others. Genome sequencing on other specimens is going on," said the Ministry.

From November 25 to December 23 midnight, about 33,000 passengers disembarked at various Indian airports from the U.K. All these passengers are being tracked and subjected by the States/Union Territories to RT-PCR tests. So far, only 114 have been found positive.

These positive samples have been sent to 10 INSACOG labs for genome sequencing.

A U.K. returnee to Tamil Nadu, who tested positive for COVID-19 and was already in hospital isolation, test-



Caution in the air: Municipal staff escorting those arriving from the U.K. at the Mumbai airport last week. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

No increase in deaths: study

Preliminary results from a cohort study found no statistically significant difference in hospitalisation, number of fatalities and likelihood of reinfection between cases with the new variant and wild-type comparator cases. ▶ PAGE 10

Official allays efficacy fears

There is no evidence that current vaccines will fail to protect against COVID-19 variants reported from the U.K. or South Africa, Principal Scientific Adviser K. Vijay Raghavan said at a Health Ministry press meet on Tuesday. ▶ PAGE 10

U.K. flight ban may continue

The ban on flights from the U.K., imposed till December 31, is likely to be extended until the government gets a "fuller picture" of the new strain, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Hardeep Puri said on Tuesday. ▶ PAGE 10

ed positive for the new U.K. strain, State Health Secretary J. Radhakrishnan said on Tuesday. His sample was tested at NIV, Pune.

The three persons with the new variant in Bangalore

include a mother and her six-year-old daughter, who have been admitted in Trauma and Emergency Care Centre (TECC) on Victoria Hospital campus, and are asymptomatic. The third per-

SON, a 33-year-old male, is moderately symptomatic and is being monitored at a private hospital on Banerghatta Road in the city.

RELATED REPORTS ▶ PAGE 10

India rules at the MCG



Well-played, mate: Australian skipper Tim Paine congratulating his counterpart Ajinkya Rahane after India won the second Test by eight wickets in Melbourne on Tuesday. ■ REUTERS

JD(S) leader found dead on rail tracks

Deputy chief of Karnataka Council was heckled by MLCS in House recently

SATHISH G.T.
CHIKKAMAGALURU

Senior Janata Dal (Secular) leader and Deputy Chairman of the Karnataka Legislative Council, S.L. Dharmendra Gowda, 65, was found dead on the railway tracks at Guanasagar in Chikkamagaluru district late on Monday.

The police recovered a note from his person, and it apparently indicates that he ended his life.

Mr. Gowda, a low-profile politician with over three decades in public life, recently hit the headlines when he was heckled by some members of the Legislative Council on December 15 as he tried to conduct the House without authorisation from Council Chairman K. Pratapchandra Shetty, purportedly



to take up a no-confidence motion against the Chairman moved by the BJP.

The Council Chairman is learnt to have directed the formation of a Special Legislative Committee to probe the pandemonium on Monday, following a report by council secretary K.R. Mahan-

lakshmi that reportedly said Mr. Gowda occupied the Chair "spontaneously" and tried to conduct the House despite being reminded of the Rules of the House.

Mr. Gowda, who participated in a slew of public events in Chikkamagaluru on Monday, left his farmhouse near Sakharapatna in the evening in his private car with driver Dharmaraj.

Driver raised alarm

He enquired with one of his associates about train timings and around 6.15 p.m. he got off at Guanasagar, near a railway track, asking the driver to wait as he had some personal calls to make. The driver raised an alarm when he did not return after a long time and his mobile phone

was switched off. The police found his body on the track late in the night. The police recovered a note from the spot. D. Ashok, Deputy Superintendent, Railway Police refused to disclose its contents. The Railway Police filed an unnatural death report and launched a probe.

BJP national general secretary and Chikkamagaluru MLA C.T. Ravi, who shared the dais with Mr. Gowda on Monday, said he had, in the note, expressed disappointment at the recent incidents in the Legislative Council. *"Those in distress or those having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahayavani on phone 104 for help."*

A POLITICAL MURDER,
SAYS KUMARASWAMY ▶ PAGE 8

was switched off. The police found his body on the track late in the night. The police recovered a note from the spot. D. Ashok, Deputy Superintendent, Railway Police refused to disclose its contents. The Railway Police filed an unnatural death report and launched a probe.

Call it a sign of normalcy returning to the city or a depleted force trying to optimise the available human resource, leave requests that were being granted on this precautionary ground for the past few months will have to go through a stricter scrutiny now. Only those who are confirmed COVID-19 positive and have the documents declaring the same can take pandemic-related medical leave.

An order issued by the office of a senior police officer has instructed all police districts and other units to allow

tact with a COVID-19 positive person or were identified during contact tracing. But it was seen that many police personnel were misusing this provision and other police personnel who were regularly exposed during deployment were unable to get leave due to shortage of manpower," said the officer.

Drop in cases
The officer said cases of COVID-19 infection have also come down in the city. And because of the ongoing farmers' protest at Delhi borders, police personnel are already doing a 12-hour shift. "To keep the force motivated and healthy, instructions have been issued to all officers to ensure that all police personnel get leave and in case of

medical leave, only COVID-19 positive or other emergency situations are considered," added the officer.

The Delhi police have also rolled back the amount of ₹1 lakh given to policemen who get infected with COVID-19 while on duty.

A total of 7,393 Delhi police personnel have tested positive for COVID-19 so far. The recovery rate is good and 6,806 police personnel have recovered and resumed duty. Around 587 police personnel are undergoing treatment at hospitals or are under home quarantine.

"We have lost 30 men due to the COVID-19 infection. Most of them were carrying out their responsibilities to contain the spread of the virus," said a police officer.

No 'COVID leave' without proof in Delhi police

Only those who are confirmed COVID-19 positive can avail of medical leave

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

"Coming in contact with a COVID-positive patient" may no longer be a valid reason to avail of leave for Delhi police personnel.

Call it a sign of normalcy returning to the city or a depleted force trying to optimise the available human resource, leave requests that were being granted on this precautionary ground for the past few months will have to go through a stricter scrutiny now. Only those who are confirmed COVID-19 positive and have the documents declaring the same can take pandemic-related medical leave.

An order issued by the office of a senior police officer has instructed all police districts and other units to allow



Delhi police personnel, who recovered from COVID-19, donate plasma at Lok Nayak Hospital in Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO

leave only to those police personnel who have tested positive for COVID-19.

"Earlier during lockdown, many police personnel were allowed home quarantine leave after they came in con-

tact with a COVID-19 positive person or were identified during contact tracing. But it was seen that many police personnel were misusing this provision and other police personnel who were regularly exposed during deployment were unable to get leave due to shortage of manpower," said the officer.

"We have lost 30 men due to the COVID-19 infection. Most of them were carrying out their responsibilities to contain the spread of the virus," said a police officer.

A ND-NDE

Timings

DELHI

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 30
RISE 07:14 SET 17:35
RISE 17:46 SET 07:19
THURSDAY, DEC. 31
RISE 07:14 SET 17:36
RISE 18:43 SET 08:12
FRIDAY, JAN. 01
RISE 07:14 SET 17:36
RISE 19:44 SET 09:01

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	18	04
Safdarjung	18	04
Palam	16	05

Delhi Palam Today
18°C Moderate to dense fog with cold wave condition likely at many places. A cool day condition with cool winds and partly cloudy sky.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
19°C Dense fog during the morning with cold wave condition would prevail. Day would remain cool with mainly clear sky.

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IN BRIEF



Sisodia to look after Gopal Rai's portfolios

NEW DELHI Cabinet Minister Gopal Rai's allocated portfolios have been re-allocated to Deputy CM Manish Sisodia for the next few days, the govt. said in a statement. Mr. Rai has gone to Mumbai for treatment of his spinal injury.

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THE HINDU

India's National Newspaper

Teen's portraits of Karl Marx, Guru Gobind Singh win hearts at border

Class X student, a record holder for his artwork, shows solidarity with protesters

HEMANI BHANDARI

NEW DELHI

Adie Priya, a 16-year-old artist who has his name registered in India Book of Records 2019, has found his own way to express solidarity with the protesting farmers.

Standing in the middle of his giant portraits of Guru Gobind Singh, Karl Marx, and Nelson Mandela among others, Mr. Priya from Faridabad displayed his artworks with a placard that read: I support farmers.

"I am here to support the protesting farmers. My father was a farmer earlier but later got a private job but we still own land. Also, if not for farmers, we wouldn't be able to eat," he said.

Priya, who put up the exhibition on Tuesday morning, said he had started making portraits at the age of 13 and his first series was on Gods.

"The next series was on those who made a contribution to the world, including Karl Marx, Martin Luther



Class X student Adie Priya with his artwork at the Singhu border in Delhi. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

King, and others," he said, adding that the portrait of Guru Gobind Singh took him two months to make. "Older people can contribute in many ways. For me, my art is the only way I can support the protesters," he said. Priya is a Class X student of a private school. He is studying for his pre-boards scheduled in January. "I wanted to come ear-

lier but could not due to my studies and my father's work," he said.

Overwhelming response
The response for his art at the protest has been overwhelming, he said. A visitor asked him: "Why is Guru Gobind Singh's facial expression angry?" To this, he responded: "I had made and this is how it

turned out. I thought Guru Gobind Singh is angry at the situation."

Priya has put on display his certificates from India Book of Records 2019 and participation certificate from World Art Dubai. "We are very proud of him. He spends nights working on his portraits," said his mother, Sarita.

AAP to offer free Wi-Fi to protesters

This is to help farmers talk to loved ones back home in other States'

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Tuesday said the party will install free Wi-Fi hotspots at Singhu border in a phased manner.

"[CM] Arvind Kejriwal has done sewa of langar to blanket, drinking water to toilets, and now he is providing free Wi-Fi to the farmers at Singhu border so that they may stay connected to their loved ones. Each hotspot will cover a

radius of 100 metres," said AAP national spokesperson and MLA Raghav Chadha.

'Stand against fakenews'
He added that installing functional Wi-Fi hotspots is important to enable farmers to give a befitting answer to the BJP and will also help them take a stand against the fake news that is being spread about them.

"I think this is the least

we can do for those who are responsible for putting food on our plates," the AAP leader said.

He added that currently, the farmers cannot properly talk to their family members back in their home States due to poor network coverage and bad reception.

"We hope that with the Wi-Fi hotspots, our farmer brothers will be able to see their loved ones via video call," he said.

HC relief to JMI contract teachers

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ordered that services of various contractual teachers working with a school, being run under the aegis of Jamia Millia Islamia, shall not be discontinued till March next year.

Justice Jyoti Singh directed that "the services of the petitioners shall not be discontinued by Syed Abid Hussain Senior Secondary School, till the next date of hearing".

The court's order came while hearing pleas by several teachers seeking to regularise or confirm them as permanent employees and to restrain the management from illegally terminating their services. The teachers have also sought the authorities to pay them all the consequential benefits and allowances at par with other teachers working at the same post in any other school of JMI or Kendriya Vidyalaya School or Delhi government school.

They have also sought direction to the authorities to fix their Grade Pay and grant all the benefits in terms of the recommendations of Seventh Central Pay Commission with effect from the date of their joining the service and to pay the arrears of salary.

The court has posted the case for hearing on March 22, 2021.

In a notice issued to Delhi Police, the DCW said: "She [complainant] has alleged that her father did not want her divorce case to be settled and her husband had married someone else. The complainant wanted to start

Woman on wheelchair travels from Patiala to Singhu border

Physical pain has not bogged 74-year-old from joining protest

HEMANI BHANDARI

NEW DELHI

Jal Kaur, a 74-year-old resident of Patiala, has been wheelchair-bound for over a decade. Her knees hurt when she walks but the pain did not deter her from joining the anti-farm bill protest here at the Singhu border.

On December 12, a group of youngsters in her village helped her to board the bus to the protest site. Since then, she has been dependent on their support for moving around. Staying in one of the tents with other 20 elderly women, two of whom have trouble walking as well, her wheelchair is pulled by a youngster.

Back home, she wouldn't get up from the bed unless necessary, but here she roams in her wheelchair all day. She has to do everything, including bathing, sitting in a wheelchair. She wakes up early in the morning, and a youngster takes her out of the tent.

But she is willing to undergo the sufferings. For she



Jal Kaur with Malkit Kaur and others at the Singhu border on Tuesday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

says, she has to fight for her children. "Why doesn't Modi [Prime Minister Narendra Modi] understand that we won't leave until we win?" she asked.

Around 11 a.m., she leaves the tent and is helped towards the stage. She returns to the tent around 5 p.m. just before dusk. With her are friends Malkit Kaur (84) and Jaswinder Kaur (72), and both can't walk without a stick. They are unbothered about physical pain. "We don't care about our pains now.

Just about rights

"All we care about is our rights and our fields," said Ms. Jaswinder. Joining the protest on Tuesday were 55 people, including 25 children aged between 4 and 12, from a village in Chandigarh. "We have brought children here so that they know why their fathers and grandfathers are here," said Parminder Kaur (45), who had tagged her children along.

Former MLA's daughter reaches out to DCW over domestic violence

Women's panel said complainant had requested to rescue her

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ordered that services of various contractual teachers working with a school, being run under the aegis of Jamia Millia Islamia, shall not be discontinued till March next year.

Justice Jyoti Singh directed that "the services of the petitioners shall not be discontinued by Syed Abid Hussain Senior Secondary School, till the next date of hearing".

In a statement on Tuesday, the DCW said that the complainant had been shifted to a shelter home following requisite procedures, Delhi Police had not yet registered an FIR in the matter.

In a notice issued to Delhi Police, the DCW said: "She [complainant] has alleged that her father did not want her divorce case to be settled and her husband had married someone else. The complainant wanted to start

a new life but was unable to do so because of the family's prestige issues. She alleged that her father had illegally confined her to the house and would not allow her to go out of the house," a DCW official said.

Shifted to shelter home

The women's panel said that while the complainant

matter, steps taken by Delhi Police for safety and security of the complainant and her daughters and a detailed action taken report in the matter."

When contacted, Mr. Chauhan refused to comment on the matter.

The DCW has asked Delhi Police to respond to the notice by January 1.

Commenting on the issue, a senior police officer said: "Local enquiry revealed that she is living with her two daughters aged 20 years and 13 years on a separate floor in the house of her father. Allegations levelled by the complainant were denied by her daughters. Further enquiry is being conducted into the matter."

AQI may deteriorate to 'very poor' today

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The air quality of Delhi, Noida and Gurugram was in the "poor" category on Tuesday, said Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). The air quality of the national capital is expected to deteriorate to the "very poor" category on Wednesday.

The air quality is likely to be "severe" on Thursday and Friday. "AQI is likely to further deteriorate to the high-end of the 'very poor' category on December 31 and due to the low ventilated condition, it is

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	265	Gurugram	214
Ghaziabad	283	Faridabad	291
Noida	258	Greater Noida	272
Good	0-50	Satisfactory	51-100
Moderate	101-200	Mod	201-300
Poor	301-400	Very poor	401+
Severe	>401		

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

hover between upper end of "very poor" to "severe" category," said government-run monitoring agency, System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR).

The minimum temperature on Monday was 3.6 °C, which is lower than the season's average by three degrees and the maximum was 18.1 °C, which is two notches below the normal, according to the IMD.

The minimum temperature on Wednesday is predicted to be around 4°C.

'BSF officers cannot leave and come back as per wish'

HC dismisses plea of ex-Deputy Commandant of BSF to rejoin work in same capacity

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ruled that employment at the Border Security Force (BSF) is not a "hop-on and hop-off service" from which its members can leave and come back whenever they wish.

A Bench of Justice Rajiv Sahai Endlaw and Justice Asha Menon made the remarks while dismissing the plea of an Ex-Deputy Commandant of BSF – who took voluntary retirement but later wanted to rejoin the service in the same capacity as prior to the resignation.

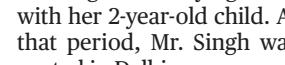
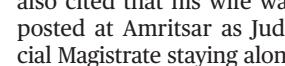
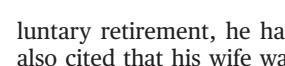
Ex-Deputy Commandant Mandeep Singh had opted for voluntary retirement as his mother was suffering from Parkinson disease since 2008 and was undergoing treatment. While seeking permission for the vo-

luntary retirement, he had also cited that his wife was posted at Amritsar as Judicial Magistrate staying along with her 2-year-old child. At that period, Mr. Singh was posted in Delhi.

Guard (NSG) left, paid scant regard to the same in the face of difficulties of his wife and small child and his mother "do not indeed show the petitioner [Mr. Singh] to have put the service before self".

The court further observed that "the personnel tendering resignation also tend to forget that we are a country of scarcities including scarcities of employment opportunities".

"Here, advertisements inviting application for a few hundred posts elicit applications from lakhs. Though, we are a country of scarcities, we are rich in human resource...Tendering of resignation from employment with the government by one, creates vacancy, for which hundreds if not lakhs await an opportunity," it said.





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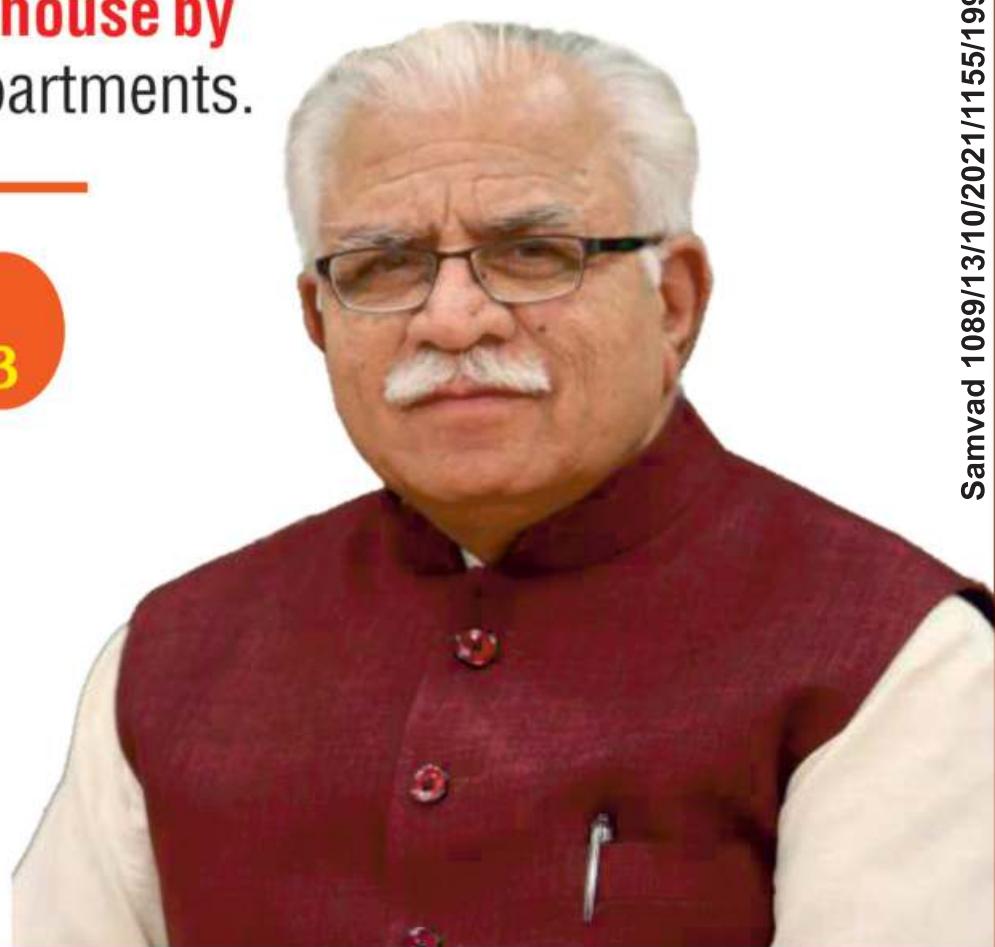
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Wear Mask and Maintain Social Distance*



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www.prharyana.gov.in

NDMC clears proposal to pay ₹200 to students

Council gives nod to 37 proposals

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) in a meeting on Tuesday approved 37 proposals placed before it.

The proposals included payment of ₹200 to Class X and XII students towards data package cost through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for attending online classes and redevelopment of Khan Market Community Centre.

The council, under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, has also approved sending a proposal to the Ministry of Home Affairs for considering regularisation of 63 contractual doctors by amending the existing recruitment

rules. It also approved the revision of remuneration of salary and allowances to contractual doctors in NDMC as per Seventh Central Pay Commission pay scales.

The Council has approved the proposal for Construction of 160 Type-III Flats at Sector-VI, Pushp Vihar, Saket. Also approved the construction of Jai Prakash Naryan Library at Mandir Marg," an official statement said.

Also, a resolution has been passed for declaring NDMC as a 7-star rated urban local body, paving way for applying for 7-Star rating city under Swachh Bharat Mission, the statement said.

Businessman arrested for tax fraud of ₹22 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM

The Central Goods and Services Tax, Commissionerate (CGST), Gurugram, has arrested a businessman for Input Tax Credit fraud to the tune of ₹22 crore on Monday.

The accused Rajesh Kumar Gupta of the firm M/s Deep Chand Rajesh Kumar,

Gurugram, had passed on Input Tax Credit fraudulently to the tune of ₹22.74 crore, involving invoice value of ₹26.11 crore, on the strength of invoices issued to 13 non-existent fake firms located in various States.

He was produced before the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Delhi and remanded to 14 days custody.

Tripura Renewable Energy Development Agency (TREDA),
(A Constituent Organization of Department of Power, Government of Tripura),
Vigyan Bhawan, Pandit Nehru Complex,
Gorkhakasti, Agartala, Tripura,
Ph: 0381-2325900 Fax 2326139,
email:- tredaagartala@gmail.com

No.F.6 (288)/TREDA/NCES/2020/9147 Date 28/12/2020

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

On behalf of Tripura Renewable Energy Development Agency, Joint Director invites tender for the work of Design, manufacture, supply, erection, testing and commissioning of HDPE / FRP with reinforced steel material based prefabricated Vegetable waste based KVIC Floating Design type Biogas Plants including Warranty / Guarantee and Post-installation Maintenance Contract for 5 (Five) years from the date of commissioning in the State of Tripura on turn-key basis vide DNle-T No. F.6(288)/TREDA/NCES/2020-21 /9145, dated 28/12/2020.

The Tender Paper may be downloaded from e-procurement portal <https://tripuratenders.gov.in> and the deadline for submission of e-bid is 19/01/2021 upto 3-30 p.m.

sd/-
(D.S. DAS)
Joint Director

TAMILNADU CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION
HEAD OFFICE : 12, THAMBUSAMY ROAD, KILPAUK, CHENNAI-10
NOTICE INVITING e - TENDERS
E tenders are invited from the eligible contractors for Assembly Announcement works for the year 2018-19.
e-Tender Notice No.: CED6/034386/2020, dt. 29.12.2020.
Last date and time for Online Submission: 28.01.2021 upto 2.00 P.M.
Downloading by Free of Cost: From 31.12.2020 to 28.01.2021 upto 2.00 P.M.
Pre - bid meeting:- 06.01.2021 3.00 P.M
Last Date for receiving Physical document:- 28.01.2021 upto 2.00 P.M.
Date of Opening of Online tender: 29.01.2021, at 2.30 P.M.
For further details please visit website: www.tntenders.gov.in

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Office of the Director General of Police, Uttarakhand
12-Subhash Road, Dehradun-248001
Re-E-Tender Notice
Bid Identification no: DG-3-2(1)-2020
1- Name of Item - Mobile Firing Rest
2- Specification - Available on our e-procurement portal
3- Tender Fee - Rs 3540.00
4- Earnest Money - Rs 80000.00
5- Last Date of Receipt of Tender - 02-01-2021 Time 10:00 hrs
6- Validity of offer - Financial year 2020-21
7- Delivery Period - 20 Days
8- Date of Opening of bid - 02-01-2021 Time 11:00 hrs
Further Details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in>

DIG
Provisioning & Modernization
Police H.Q., Uttarakhand
Dehradun.

DIPR/UK/14526

DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS SAMBA (J&K)
E-mails:- dposamba@kpolice.gov.in & sspssamba@kpolice.gov.in
Ph./Fax No:- 01923-246100

LOOK OUT NOTICE

One pedestrian namely not known age about 40 years S/o not known R/o not known injured due to accident and shifted to Govt. Hospital Vijaypur for treatment and later shifted to GMC Jammu where the said pedestrian succumbed to his injuries. On that a case FIR NO. 213/2020 U/S 279/304-A has been registered in Police Station at Vijaypur and the dead body of the deceased kept in Mortuary Room GMC for identification. During the course of investigation IO as well as Vijaypur Police made sincere efforts for identification deceased unknown person but no clue struck out about his location. As such, photograph of deceased person is being published for information of Police Establishments/General Public so that he could be identified. The description roll of deceased unknown person is as under:-

Description Roll of Deceased Person:-

Age:- about 40 years
Height:- 5'7"
Complexion:- Blackish

Any information related to the deceased person may be communicated on following contacts:-

1. PCR Samba :- 01923-246333, 9622071045.
2. SSP Samba's email ID :- sspssamba@kpolice.gov.in
3. SHO P/S Vijaypur :- 94191-17734.

Sd/-
Sr. Superintendent of Police,
Samba

DIP/J-9236/20

CM YK

Capital witnesses 703 fresh COVID-19 cases

87.3% of 18,727 beds available for treatment lie vacant

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Capital witnessed 703 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 6,24,118, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday.

Also, 28 more deaths have been reported in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of deaths to 10,502.

Of the total cases, 6,07,494 people have recovered and there are 6,122 active cases.

Positivity rate

The positivity of COVID-19 cases was 0.83% on Tuesday, very less than the average daily positivity in November, which was 11.65%.

The overall positivity till now was 7.35%, as per the



A rapid antigen test being conducted at Mahindra Park in north Delhi on Tuesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Virus spread

Total number of COVID-19 cases

6,24,118

Total deaths

10,502

New cases in the past 24 hours

703

New deaths

28

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN

bulletin.

Out of the total 18,727

beds available for COVID-19 treatment in the city, 87.3% were vacant, as per the bulletin.

About 2,360 people were admitted in hospitals and 2,976 patients were under home isolation. As per the bulletin, the death rate in the past 10 days was 3.06%.

There were 4,450 containment zones in the city as of Tuesday.

School students to get ration for six months under midday meal scheme

CM lauds teachers, students' hard work during pandemic

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal distributed dry ration kits to Delhi government school students on Tuesdays. Consisting of wheat, rice, pulses and oil, the kits were provided to all eligible students from Classes 1 to 8 in government schools under the midday meal scheme.

'Difficult phase'

During the distribution programme at SKV No. 3, Mandawali, Mr. Kejriwal said, the whole education system had undergone a change during this difficult period.

He said that he is extremely proud of the teachers for working so hard, and over 94% of students in Delhi who were taking online classes.

The Delhi government was starting ration distribution at the request of the parents of government school



Parents carry ration that was distributed by the Chief Minister in Delhi on Tuesday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

students, he said.

"Each student will be now provided an adequate ration

for a period of six months – July 2020 to December 2020

– so that there is no lack in

providing nutrition to children.

During the lockdown, the Delhi government provided dry ration to 1 crore people, or 50% of the Delhi's

population every day for three months," he said.

"This is a very difficult phase, especially for the children. Please take care of them and their nutrition, ensure they attend all online classes. I hope that the vaccine comes and ends our difficulty as soon as possible," he said.

Two held for killing 'thief'

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Two men were arrested for allegedly killing a 40-year-old man, whom they suspected to be a thief, in north-east Delhi's Sonia Vihar, the police said on Tuesday.

The accused have been identified as Manjeet and Parveen Kumar, they said.

On Saturday, information was received that an injured person was lying in an unconscious state on the fields near Bedi Gas Agency, the police said.

They took him to JPC Hospital where he was declared brought dead. There were multiple abrasions and deep bone head injury on the body, a senior police officer said.

Explore utilisation of fly ash in cement plants: NGT

Panel directs CPCB to monitor it

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

"This may be done by the CPCB within two months. The power plant in question may explore utilisation of the fly ash in cement plants, taking precautions and ensuring that no air pollution is caused during transportation and handling. This aspect may also be monitored by the CPCB," the Bench said.

Recommendation

In its report, the state pollution control board had recommended that installation work of solar power plant "must be expedited to avoid any possibility of air pollution."

The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by petitioner Chetram Choudhary alleging illegal disposal of fly ash by a power plant in Faridabad, which was causing health hazards.

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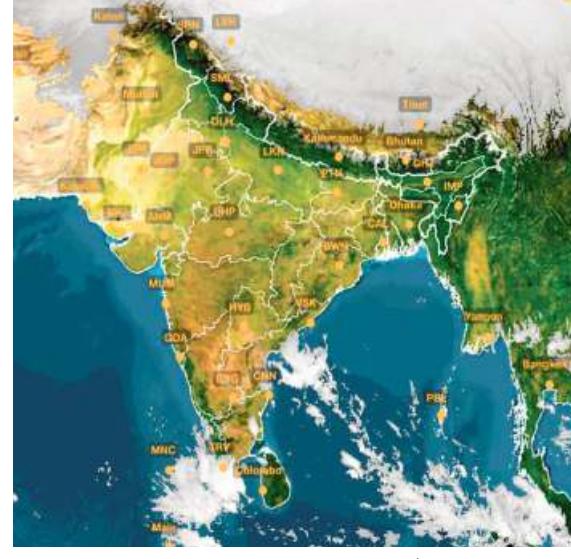
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WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Wednesday: Cold wave to severe cold wave conditions very likely in most pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, east and west Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, north Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Gangetic West Bengal and Odisha

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	24.9	10.4	Kozhikode	—	33.5	23.8
Ahmedabad	—	24.2	10.2	Kurnool	—	31.3	17.6
Aizawl	—	19.2	7.1	Lucknow	—	22.0	8.4
Allahabad	—	21.7	10.0	Madurai	—	29.4	23.5
Bengaluru	—	29.0	16.4	Mangaluru	—	33.0	21.6
Bhopal	—	19.3	7.8	Mumbai	—	28.5	17.0
Bhubaneswar	—	30.2	15.2	Mysuru	—	30.2	15.8
Chandigarh	—	14.0	2.8	Patna	—	18.1	3.6
Chennai	—	29.8	23.4	Pondicherry	—	30.9	25.7
Coimbatore	—	31.2	20.0	Raipur	—	30.0	12.0
Dehradun	—	21.5	5.1	Ranchi	—	25.2	11.2
Gangtok	—	12.1	5.8	Shillong	—	15.2	4.9
Goa	—	32.8	21.2	Shimla	—	11.1	4.2
Guwahati	—	25.5	11.4	Srinagar	—	9.1	0.5
Hubballi	—	29.0	17.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	32.8	24.6
Hyderabad	—	28.4	15.4	Tiruchi	—	29.6	22.8
Impal	—	21.9	2.0	Vijayawada	—	29.9	21.5
Jaipur	—	21.6	5.6	Visakhapatnam	—	28.6	20.4
Kochi	—	31.6	23.8				
Kolkata	—	17.0	5.2				
Kohima	—	26.1	11.7				

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES **SO₂** **NO_x** **CO** **PM_{2.5}** **PM₁₀** **CODE**

Ahmedabad	15	.79	22	.98	.128	orange
Bengaluru	.5	.35	22	.184	.117	orange
Chennai	.9	.8	44	.153	.120	orange
Delhi	9	.34	61	.364	.324	orange
Hyderabad	10	.64	37	.268	.160	orange
Kolkata	26	.34	87	.391	.341	orange
Lucknow	.9	.60	62	.393	.349	orange
Mumbai	.6	.81	25	.338	.284	orange
Pune	.23	.61	.161	.117	.109	orange
Visakhapatnam	12	.52	.57	.282	.219	orange

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Howrah, West Bengal recorded overall average quality index (AQI) score of 371 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 12

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

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravated respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Villagers want Dushyant to stand with farmers

Karsindhu village in Jind has voted overwhelmingly for the Chautalas for decades

ASHOK KUMAR
JIND

From former Haryana Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala to his grandson and Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala, Karsindhu, a village in Jind's Uchana Assembly segment, has voted overwhelmingly for the Chautalas for decades. Dushyant took the highest lead from this village both in Lok Sabha and Assembly elections last year. But a lot seems to have changed since, and more so over the past few weeks amid the ongoing farmers' agitation.

The voices of disenchantment and resentment against Dushyant, seen by many as true heir to his great grandfather and legendary farmer leader Chaudhary Devi Lal, have been growing louder and clearer.

"The entire village is angry with him. We were annoyed when he supported the Bharatiya Janata Party in government formation, but gradually accepted it hoping that he would work for the farmers being in the power. But now he has chosen power over the farmers, this is unpardonable," says Gurjeet Singh, sitting at a shop close to the village's school on Monday afternoon, without mincing words. "Karsindhu was the first village he visited after the victory in the Assembly election last year. But he has not come for months now. He does not even take our calls," grumbles Radhey Shyam, sitting next to

"Chautalas were invincible in this village, but not any more," chips in 65-year-old Jile Singh. Bala, 37, says she canvassed for Dushyant for days going from village to village, but now feels cheated.

On the outskirts, Shamsher Singh, engaged

Resignation sought

Sitting in a group of elderly, Mange Ram says that villagers want Dushyant to resign and stand with the farmers. "He made a mistake by supporting the BJP first. Now he should stand with the farmers," says the 62-year-old.

"Chautalas were invincible in this village, but not any more," chips in 65-year-old Jile Singh. Bala, 37, says she canvassed for Dushyant for days going from village to village, but now feels cheated.

On the outskirts, Shamsher Singh, engaged

at a site for digging of pond under the MGNREGS, says Dushyant was enjoying power because of the votes of the farmers and the workers and they had the right to be angry with him. "He can get many more chances at power, if the farmers support him. The Kheda Khap, comprising 40 villages, has also given a call to boycott MLAs and MPs," he says.

But many argue that it is wrong to blame MLAs for the law enacted by the Central government. Satbir Singh, a farmer, says the opposition to Dushyant is politically motivated and nothing can be achieved with his resignation.

The BJP government would continue to run with the support of the Independents, even if Dushyant withdraws support. He has done a lot for the village in one year, sanctioning funds for a library, a cremation ground and a community centre," argues Bittu Nambardar, 21.

Though divided over opposition to Dushyant, the villagers are united in their support to the farmers' agitation. "Many have left in tractors and trolleys to take part in the agitation. A few others contribute by supplying vegetables, milk and butter milk on alternate days," says Anoop.

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Caution pays

The Centre's surveillance guidelines should be taken seriously even as vaccination rolls out

On the threshold of a new year, the COVID-19 pandemic no longer seems terrifying to many, as overall cases maintain a downward trajectory and a massive vaccination programme is set to roll out. Normal life has resumed in substantial measure: there is a scaling up of long distance travel, elections have been held and mass protests are being organised. At the same time, critical activities such as on-campus education remain mostly suspended and many senior citizens are unable to access periodic health checks. Anecdotal evidence points to infections spreading in commercial centres and at workplaces. Therefore, there is a long way to go before people can really put the pandemic behind them. A large section of the population has been able to shelter from the coronavirus, particularly the elderly and people with morbidities. Relaxing the vigil now is bound to prove costly for them. It is essential, therefore, for States and all citizens to accord the Home Ministry's guidelines on "Surveillance, Containment and Caution" for January the highest importance. That the U.K. variant of the virus has now been found in India underscores the point that easing off on testing, tracing and containment could prove dangerous. This mutant is likely to have initially travelled to several locations before it was detected, and there is a likelihood that its footprint may cover third countries from which India continues to operate bubble flights.

The Home Ministry has recalled the orders of the Supreme Court in a *suo motu* writ petition on December 18, calling for strict adherence to COVID-19-appropriate behaviour, especially during the New Year celebrations. The Court wanted deployment of more police personnel at places where people are likely to gather, such as food courts, eateries, vegetable markets, and bus and train stations. It made the valid observation that careless people infringed other citizens' right to life by ignoring the use of masks and social distancing, while various protocols had failed to stop the virus spreading "like wildfire" due to lack of implementation. The government was also mandated by the Court, under Article 21, to ensure that it invests sufficiently in its hospitals and those of the local administration, acknowledging the right to health and affordable treatment for all. Now that the Court is seized of the issue, States can be asked to individually report their compliance when the Bench takes it up again in a month. Even with a steadily expanding base of vaccinated individuals, surveillance and caution are essential. Governments should seize the opportunity presented by the pandemic and set up a public health backbone in all States, in cities and rural areas, to do the monitoring. This will have the twin advantage of rapidly advancing universal health coverage through health and wellness centres.

Beleaguered Khan

Pakistan faces a prolonged crisis if the govt. continues to disregard Opposition's grievances

The joint rally called by Pakistan's Opposition parties at Larkana in Sindh on Sunday, on the 13th death anniversary of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, signals that the country's political crisis is not going to be resolved any time soon. Eleven Opposition parties, including Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), have formed a grand alliance, the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), which has been staging protests for months against Prime Minister Imran Khan's government. At Larkana, the PPP's Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and the PML-N's Maryam Nawaz Sharif gave Mr. Khan a January 31 ultimatum to quit and call fresh elections. If he does not do so, they have threatened to launch a "long march to Islamabad", which could shut down the capital city and worsen the crisis. After spending time dismissing and attacking the Opposition alliance, the government has finally invited the protesting leaders for talks, but with one rider: the exclusion of Ms. Nawaz and PDM chairman Maulana Fazlur Rehman as they are not parliamentarians. This shows Mr. Khan is still betting on the divisions within the Opposition rather than being ready to hold an open dialogue with the PDM.

Mr. Khan deserves to be blamed for the political deadlock he is in now. His confrontational approach towards the Opposition has only harmed his government and Pakistan's democracy. His much-touted crusade against corruption, which overwhelmingly targeted Opposition leaders while overlooking leaders from his party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, raised questions about its real objectives. It is Mr. Khan's consolidation of more and more powers in his hands and the relentless pursuit of corruption cases against his rivals that brought the Opposition together. Granted, the PDM is not a coherent entity. Its constituents range from the secular PPP and the conservative PML-N to Maulana Rahman's Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F). But despite ideological differences, they have shown resolve and unity in their relentless campaign to send Mr. Khan home. The government could have been more flexible in its approach towards the Opposition. But the PTI, which is backed by the powerful military generals, has been reluctant to reach a compromise, pushing the country into a political deadlock at a time of economic challenges, from a COVID-19-triggered contraction to a mounting debt burden. Ideally, the government's priority should be in addressing them, but the prolonged face-off has practically paralysed governance. To get out of the impasse, the government should first give up its confrontational approach, open talks with all Opposition leaders and be ready to address their concerns. If it chooses to continue its hardline approach, Pakistan may be headed for a prolonged political and governmental paralysis.

The global angle to the farmer protests

It is not just domestic firms that are potential beneficiaries of the new farm laws; foreign agribusinesses are a danger too



UTSA PATNAIK

The farmers' movement for the repeal of the three farm laws which affect them closely but have been rammed through without consulting them, has now entered its second month. It is of historic significance. It is not just about minimum support prices but also about the survival of the entire system of public procurement and distribution of foodgrains. Without ensuring the economic viability of foodgrains production in North India – the grain basket of the country – no continuity can be ensured for the public procurement and distribution system, which, despite its drawbacks, continues to provide a modicum of food security to vast numbers of our population.

Recreation of colonial times

Northern industrial countries, namely the United States, Canada and the European Union (EU), cannot produce the tropical and sub-tropical crops in high demand by their own consumers while they have mountains of surplus grain and dairy products, the only goods their single-crop lands are capable of producing for climatic reasons. They must find export markets for these. For over two decades, they have put relentless pressure on developing countries to give up their own public procurement systems, insisting that they should buy their food grains from advanced countries, while diverting their food-crop-producing land to contract farming of export crops that these industrial coun-

tries want but cannot themselves produce. In short, they want a re-creation of the economic scenario of the colonial period.

Dozens of developing countries, ranging from the Philippines in the mid-1990s to Botswana (Africa) a decade later, succumbed to this pressure. They paid the price when with rapid diversion of grain to ethanol production in the U.S. and the EU, world grain prices trebled in a matter of months from end-2007. Thirty-seven newly import-dependent countries saw food riots, with urban populations being pushed into greater poverty.

Food security for the developing world is far too important a matter to be left to the global market, but the relentless attack on their public stocking of grain for ensuring food security continues. India had barely managed to pull back from the brink a decade ago: procurement prices were raised substantially after virtually stagnating during the six years preceding the 2008 price-spike, and grain output in Punjab grew again from near-stagnant levels as economic viability improved. But absorption of foodgrains did not improve as much owing to continued exclusion of many of the actually poor from 'Below Poverty Line' ration cards, while unemployment caused by the 2016 demonetisation followed by the 2020 pandemic has reduced aggregate demand by now to a historic low.

A case of unfair trade

Our farmers have been exposed for no rhyme or reason to unfair trade, and to the volatility of global prices that has plunged them into unrepayable debt and distress – in one village in Punjab, there were as many as 59 widows of farmers forced into suicide. Trade with the North is unfair, because the advanced countries in the mid-1990s, converted their own



price support measures to massive subsidies given as direct cash transfers to their own farmers, transfers that in a blatantly self-serving manner they wrote into the Agreement on Agriculture as 'not subject to reduction commitments'. India along with other developing countries signed the Agreement with very little idea of the implications of the small print. For the U.S., the direct cash transfers it gives to its 2.02 million farmers, amounting to a huge half or more of its annual farm output value, uses up only 1% of its budget. For India, over 50% of the entire central government annual Budget would be required to give even a quarter of annual farm output value to our 120 million farmers, which is an economic impossibility and an administrative nightmare.

It's about a reasonable price

The farmers have made it amply clear that they do not want petty cash handouts; all they want is a reasonable price for the vital crops they produce for the nation, so that they can cover costs and live at a modest standard. In Indian circumstances, the price support system is in fact the only feasible one. While depletion of groundwater in Punjab is a real problem, the solution lies in introducing improved agronomic practices such as the System of Rice Intensification which economises water, not in re-

ducing rice production. One does not cut off one's head because of a headache.

It is precisely the support prices for crops that had been deliberately put by advanced countries under completely arbitrary and absurd computation rules in the Agreement on Agriculture. The U.S. complained against India to the World Trade Organization in May 2018 that since the 'reference price' for calculating support was the 1986-88 average world price of a crop which they converted to rupees at the then prevailing ₹2.5 per dollar exchange rate, India's support price per quintal for rice and wheat in 2013-14 should have been at the most ₹235 and ₹354, respectively! The actual support prices were ₹1,348 and ₹1,386, and the difference, over ₹1,000 per quintal, was then multiplied by the entire 2013-14 output of rice and wheat, and came to 77% and 67% of their output values (<https://bit.ly/3mROAn>). This, the U.S. claimed, was support provided in gross violation of the permitted 10%!

Two months ago the U.S. sent fresh questions to India. Every kind of dishonest and absurd rule had been put into the Agreement on Agriculture to short-change gullible developing countries. Our farmers are among the lowest cost producers in the world, and the support prices in 2013-14 at the prevailing exchange rate of ₹60.5 per dollar were well below global prices, which means that actual support was negative.

Right assessment

Current compression of global demand means that wheat and rice prices are at historic lows, advanced country farm subsidies are at historic highs and their desperation to dump their grain on our markets has intensified. While our protesting farmers have correctly

identified domestic firms as potential beneficiaries of the new marketing laws that they oppose, foreign agribusinesses are a danger too

Farmers have already experienced contract farming with foreign agribusinesses in Punjab and Haryana. They say clearly that they do not wish to deal with powerful, faceless private corporations that renege on price and quantity contracts when it suits them. Despite all its inefficiency and payment delays, they prefer to sell to government agents at the stipulated minimum support prices. They are absolutely correct in thinking that deregulation of markets as mandated by the new laws, and the entry of business firms, which will be not only Indian but also foreign, mean a severe undermining of the entire system of public procurement and minimum support prices.

The 'green energy' push

There are many Indian intellectuals who argue that importing subsidised grain from the North will benefit poor consumers here.

They forget that there is an increasingly powerful opinion advocating 'green energy' in advanced countries, pushing for even greater conversion of grain to ethanol; hence initial low-priced grain imports, if permitted today, will not only destroy our farmers but will soon give way to a scenario of price spikes and to urban distress as experienced earlier by developing countries forced into import dependence. Anyone with a concern for our own hard-working farmers and poverty-stricken consumers, must support the farmers' demands against the machinations of both local and global business elites.

Utsa Patnaik is Professor Emeritus, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Resilient supply chains as a pandemic lesson

An economy such as India can ill-afford the shocks of disruption or be held hostage by an over-reliance on imports



SUJAN R. CHINOY

A key lesson learnt by the world during the COVID-19 pandemic has been the importance of creating resilient supply chains that can withstand disruptions and ensure reliability for the global economy.

Disruptions in supply chains can be natural or man-made. In Japan's case, the Great Tōhoku Earthquake of 2011, followed by the Tsunami, led to a nuclear disaster (Fukushima Daiichi), causing a sharp drop in Japanese automobile exports to the United States.

Examples that hit home

Man-made interruptions in supply chains are equally disruptive. Terrorist drone attacks on Aramco's oil refineries at Abqaiq and Khurais in Saudi Arabia in September 2019 resulted in a drop of 5.7 million barrels of oil per day, triggering a steep plunge in Saudi Arabia's stock market and a sharp spike in global oil prices.

China has long practised "supply chain politics". Japanese entrepreneurs learnt a hard lesson when the detention of a Chinese fishing trawler captain in 2010 near the disputed Senkaku Islands resulted in the Chinese government cutting off exports of rare earths to Japan.

When the novel coronavirus pandemic broke out, it had an immediate and telling effect on supply chains emanating from China. In India, several companies felt the disruption in the automotive, electronics and white goods sectors. India excels in the pharmaceuticals sector but the over-re-

liance on Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) from China still creates vulnerabilities in the value chain.

Tensions with China led the United States government to impose restrictions on export of microchips to China's biggest semiconductor manufacturer, Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation (SMIC), following assessment that there was an "unacceptable risk" that equipment supplied to it could be used for military purposes.

A new initiative

Greater weaponisation of trade and technology is here to stay. It is in this context that India, Japan and Australia initiated the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) in September this year, focusing on automobiles and parts, petroleum, steel, textiles, financial services and IT sectors. The SCRI may be bolstered by the future involvement of France, though this might depend on the European Union's position. The United Kingdom has also shown interest in the SCRI.

Geo-politics and geo-economics can never be truly separated. This is what Henry Kissinger called the "principle of linkage" in his analysis of U.S. relations with the Soviet Union. When the Nixon administration came to power in 1969, the Soviet Union wanted access to some key western technologies in computing. Yet, it was unwilling to accommodate U.S. concerns on strategic and military issues. Kissinger clearly pointed out that to "separate issues into distinct compartments would encourage the Soviet leaders to believe that they could use cooperation in one area as a safety valve while striving for unilateral advantages elsewhere."

China has resorted to similar tactics, of maintaining advantageous trade and economic engage-



ment, without relenting on strategic issues. China's calls for "normal relations" with India are unrealistic given the continuing face-off in Ladakh.

Moves by Australia, Japan

China has often used its economic leverage to weaken an opponent's resolve on contentious issues. Facing such a dilemma, Australia has demonstrated strong political will in countering arbitrary Chinese sanctions imposed on its key exports of grain, beef, wine, coal and much else. This is a price that a democracy such as Australia finds worth paying, for demanding an inquiry into the origins of the coronavirus and advocating a robust Indo-Pacific vision.

Since the normalisation of diplomatic ties in the 1970s, Japan has invested hundreds of billions of dollars in the Chinese economy. For many Japanese companies, global performance and profits are linked to manufacturing facilities and supply chains in China. Yet, they have shown an early capacity for risk mitigation through the "China Plus One" business strategy, aimed at diversification of investments to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), India and Bangladesh.

In Phase-I of Japan's \$2.2 billion Relocation Package announced this year, 89 Japanese companies availed subsidies to diversify out of

China. Of these, 57 companies relocated to Japan, 30 to Southeast Asia and two to India.

A sizeable number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) chose to relocate to Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia. That in itself is hardly surprising since Japanese entrepreneurs are far more familiar with the cultural and business environment in ASEAN countries as compared to South Asia.

However, companies in health care and medical devices, especially those manufacturing personal protective equipment (PPEs), would have benefited more by shifting to India which offers a much larger domestic market as well as lower manufacturing costs for global exports.

India's vulnerabilities

A large emerging economy such as India can ill-afford the shocks of disruption in supply chains. Nor can it allow itself to be held hostage due to an over-reliance on imports. For instance, the pandemic caused a breakdown in global supply chains in the automotive sector since most global manufacturers in China abruptly went offline.

For India, which imports 27% of its requirement of automotive parts from China, this quandary was a wake-up call, given the sudden shortage of braking components, electrical components, interiors and lighting fixtures.

What is noteworthy is that despite being the fourth largest market in Asia for medical devices, India has an import dependency of 80%. Among the biggest exporters to India in this field are China, the U.S., Germany, Singapore and Japan. This is clearly not sustainable. Given the renewed thrust in the health-care sector, this is the right time to fill gaps through local manufacturing.

India's electronics industry was

worth \$120 billion in 2018-2019 and is forecast to grow to \$400 billion by 2025. Today, India is seeking to enhance its presence substantially in the global supply chains by attracting investments in the semiconductor and packaging industry. The government is actively promoting domestic manufacture of printed circuit boards (PCBs), components and semiconductors, as the Indian electronics sector gradually shifts away from completely knocked down (CKD) assembly to high-value addition.

Defence beckons

Defence is among the key pillars of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' policy. The government is providing a big boost to defence manufacturing under the 'Make in India' programme. It has identified a negative import list of 101 items. There is a tremendous opportunity for foreign companies to enter into tie-ups with reputed Indian defence manufacturers to tap into the growing defence market in India.

The push for self-reliance through 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' is not an autarkic policy. It does not imply foreclosure of the Indian economy to foreign trade and participation in the global economy. On the contrary, it is aimed at strengthening India's capacities to participate more vigorously without being prey to supply chain disruptions.

India has the capacity and the potential to become one of the world's largest destinations for investments, and one of the world's largest manufacturing hubs, in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Sujan R. Chinoy is a former Ambassador and currently the Director General of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. 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.

Party's foundation day

In the absence of Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi at the Congress party's 136th Foundation Day event, it is good that senior leader A.K. Antony unfurled the flag. The Congress has several senior leaders who can run the organisation on expected lines. When will wisdom dawn on those who clamour for the party to be administered only by members of the Nehru-

Gandhi family?

P.G. MENON,
Chennai

At the MCG

Coming as that perfect New Year gift to the nation, India's fabulous win at the MCG assumes immense significance given the ignominy suffered by the team in the First Test at Adelaide. Undoubtedly one of the best ever authoritative and memorable performances

witnessed in recent times, the sparkling success can be attributed to the cohesiveness, commitment and team spirit coupled with that indomitable will to succeed led by the new Captain Cool and master strategist, Ajinkya Rahane who led from the front. The fact that the victory was achieved in the absence of the cricketing stalwarts, Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Mohammed Shami makes it even more

sweeter. Team India truly stamped its supremacy in all departments of the game.

B. SURESH KUMAR,
Coimbatore

The Indian cricket team which fared miserably in the first Test has verily shown Doubting Thomases their place. While the entire team deserves to be congratulated for the fine performance, it is the performance of stand-in captain Ajinkya Rahane, who

led from the front and whose deft field placement and handling of his bowlers

which should rank first in the list of honours. The poor show by mainstay Ch

The climate policy needs new ideas

It is not the rising prosperity of the poor that endangers the planet but the wasteful behaviour of the West



MUKUL SANWAL

2021 will be the year for a new global climate policy and India has the soft power to bring together the high and low emitters. Among the 'major economies', India will meet its Paris Agreement target for 2030. Its per capita emissions are one-third of the global average and it will remain within its share of ecological space.

In an urbanised world, two-third of emissions arise from the demand of the middle class for infrastructure, mobility, buildings and diet. Well-being in cities is reflected in saturation levels of infrastructure with consumption, not production, driving growth as well as high urban per capita emissions. Infrastructure worldwide has used half of total materials, mainly construction, cement and steel, which have no substitute, and will need half of the available carbon space before comparable levels of infrastructure are reached globally around 2050. Peaking of emissions comes some 20-30 years after saturation of infrastructure has been achieved, with related high levels of well-being, as in the case of the West, before net zero emissions are considered. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was justifiably cautious at the Climate Action Summit and avoided commitments to cap emissions.

Inequity is built into the climate treaty, which considers total emissions, size, and population, making India the fourth largest emitter, even though, according to the United Nations, the richest 1% of the global population emits more than two times the emissions of the bottom 50%. Clearly, net zero or carbon neutrality by 2050, and the cap on emissions it implies, applies only to countries with high per capita emissions, GDP and well-being.

Reversal in thinking

The focus on physical quantities indicates effects on nature whereas solutions require analysis of drivers, trends and patterns of resource use. This anomaly explains why the link



"India, with abundant reserves and per capita electricity use that is one-tenth that of the U.S., is under pressure to stop using coal, even as it aims to shift to electric vehicles and eliminate oil instead." Coal being loaded into a railway wagon in Khammam district, Telangana. ■ G.N. RAO

between well-being, energy use and emissions is not on the global agenda. New thinking must enable policies to acknowledge transformational social goals and the material boundaries of economic activity and not the latter without the former. Modifying unsustainable patterns of natural resource use and ensuring comparable levels of well-being are societal transformations and two sides of a coin interlinked with international cooperation to serve sustainable development.

The vaguely worded 'carbon neutrality', balancing emitting carbon with absorbing carbon from the atmosphere in forests, for example, is a triple whammy for latecomers like India. Such countries already have less energy-intensive pathways that will not encroach on others' ecological space, a young population, and are growing fast to reach comparable levels of well-being with those already urbanised and in the middle class.

Industrialisation and urbanisation are not the problem 'per se'; the problem is the way they were designed in the colonial context: keeping commodity prices low, overly resource-intensive, defining progress as material abundance, and assuming that technology would solve the ecological problem.

By 1950, the contribution of the U.S. to total emissions peaked at 40%. It has declined to approximately 26%, the largest in the world.

North America and Europe, with less than one-quarter of the world population, are responsible for almost half of global material use. The share decreased to one-fifth in 2010, when Asia with half the world population used its legitimate share of half of global resource use. But the ecological damage had already been done. China, with four times the population of the U.S., accounts for 12% of cumulative emissions, and India, with a population close to that of China's, for just 3% of cumulative emissions that lead to global warming.

Reconstruction in the West after World War II led to acceleration of material use, resulting emissions and sharp rise in global temperature around 1970, before growth commenced in Asia. Urban transformation requires huge amounts of iron and steel, cement, construction materials and energy for infrastructure. Before infrastructure reaches saturation levels and manufacturing stabilises, material use shapes ways in which countries build houses and transport infrastructure, and how they organise mobility and deliver manufactured goods, food and energy. With the population moving to cities, growth in per capita incomes drives consumption and vehicle emissions becomes the continuing driver of increasing levels of material use, far more significant than manufacturing.

In each sustainability benchmark

like housing size and density, public bicycle transport and eliminating food waste, India is doing better than the West. The rising prosperity of the world's poor does not endanger the planet; the challenge is to change wasteful behaviour in the West, and these changes occur at decadal scales.

Soft power

India must highlight its unique national circumstances. For example, the meat industry, especially beef, contributes to one-third of global emissions. Indians eat just 4 kg of meat a year compared to those in the European Union who eat about 65 kg and Americans who eat about 100 kg. Also to be noted is the fact that the average American household wastes nearly one-third of its food.

Transport emissions account for a quarter of global emissions. They are the fastest-growing emissions worldwide and have surpassed emissions from generation of electricity in the U.S. Transport emissions are the symbol of Western civilisation and are not on the global agenda.

Coal accounts for a quarter of energy use. It powered colonialism. Rising Asia uses three-quarters as coal drives industry and supports the renewable energy push into cities. India, with abundant reserves and per capita electricity use that is one-tenth that of the U.S., is under pressure to stop using coal, even as it aims to shift to electric vehicles and eliminate oil instead.

India has the credibility and legitimacy to push an alternate 2050 goal for countries currently with per capita emissions below the global average – for example, the goal of well-being within ecological limits, the frame of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as multilateral technological knowledge cooperation around electric vehicles, energy efficiency, building insulation and a less wasteful diet.

Emissions are the symptom, not the cause of the problem. India, in the UN Security Council, must push new ideas based on its civilisational and long-standing alternate values for the transition to sustainability.

Mukul Sanwal is former Director of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The tragedy of conservation

Isolating the indigenous people from their natural habitats in the Western Ghats to protect biodiversity is unproductive



MADHUSUDAN BANDI

constituted 17.5% of the claims and nearly all of them were settled, while other claims were rejected as they were not backed by valid evidence. This means that claims made by other traditional forest dwellers were treated as inconsequential.

The wrong approach

Assuming that denying tribals or other traditional forest dwellers their rights in the forest would serve the purpose of conservation is far from the truth. The Forest Rights Act is not about the indiscriminate distribution of forest land to anyone applying for it. As per the law, only those lands are recognised where people prove their occupation not later than December 13, 2005. Moreover, the combined stretch of land claimed by them is comparatively smaller by any account than what has been taken away for building dams, mining, laying railway lines and roads, power plants, etc. The government records also reveal that 43 lakh hectares of forestland were encroached both legally and illegally until 1980 when the Forest Conservation Act came into force. Sadly, there is no significant conservation even after this landmark law.

Invariably, an approach adopted to isolate the indigenous people from their natural habitats to protect biodiversity is the root cause of conflict between them and conservationists. The latter think that resources have to be controlled and managed. However, this theory is fast proving unproductive. The Global Environment Outlook Report 5 mentions that there is decreased biodiversity across the globe even as 'protected areas' have been expanding. People living in nature's surroundings are integral to conservation as they relate with it in a more integrated and spiritual way.

The way forward

Declaration of the Western Ghats as a World Heritage Site is as important in preserving the rich biodiversity of the region as the recognition of the rights of the people who depend on the forests. As confirmed internationally, preserving biodiversity requires the legal empowerment of the people living in those areas. The Forest Rights Act is an ideal instrument to push forward the objective. To realise it on the ground, the government must make an effort to build trust between its agencies in the area and the people who depend on these forests by treating them as equal citizens like everyone else in the country.

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The broken bonds of democracy

An unsettled law is as dangerous as bad law

MANURAJ SHUNMUGASUNDARAM

A recent order by the Central Information Commission (CIC) has again revealed the inherent problems surrounding the Electoral Bond Scheme (scheme) of 2018. This order passed in an appeal against the State Bank of India (SBI) has effectively shut the door to seek any details about donors and donees relating to electoral bonds under the Right to Information (RTI) Act. With no other recourse available, the Supreme Court is the only surviving arbiter on adjudicating the vices of electoral bonds.

An illegal scheme

The scheme creates banking instruments for donation of funds to political parties facilitated by the SBI. It conceals the identity of the donors and donees as well as the amount of donation. In effect, the scheme is not transparent, promotes arbitrariness and is therefore illegal.

The scheme facilitates undisclosed quid pro quo arrangements between donors, who are likely to be corporates, and political parties. Such an arrangement goes against best practices of electoral democracy and is repugnant to the freedom of speech and expression. In *People's Union for Civil Liberties v. Union of India* (2003), the Supreme Court held that the freedom of speech and expression also contained the fundamental right of a voter to secure information about the candidates who are contesting the election. When the voter is permitted to know if an electoral candidate is facing any cases, should she not be equally entitled to know who is financing the expenses of the party and its candidate?

The CIC order has upheld the contention of the SBI that it is not required to furnish the details of donors, donees and donations, under the RTI Act. In doing so, SBI has relied on two grounds provided under Section 8 of the RTI Act, which exempts disclosure of information: that the information sought has been held in fiduciary capacity and that there was no public interest involved in the application. Both grounds do not stand a bare scrutiny of law. It is also trite that any exemption provided under Section 8 should be read only in a very narrow sense. Section 8(2) directs that when public interest outweighs any harm to protected inter-

ests, the information sought for may be accessed. This Section begins with a non-obstante clause. Therefore, it overrides the grounds erroneously relied upon by the CIC.

The public interest in the present matter is undisputable. The CIC, in an earlier order, deemed political parties to be public authorities under the RTI Act. The funds received by parties from donors would naturally be of interest to voters in order to understand their financing and functioning. Donations by corporate entities would also be of interest to their shareholders and potential shareholders. Therefore, the failure of the CIC in appreciating the present issue as one of high public importance and resorting to technical objections defeats the objects of the RTI Act itself.

The final arbiter

The CIC order effectively shuts the door on any RTI requests with regard to electoral bonds and any concomitant information. There is no other recourse but for the Supreme Court to determine the law with regard to the scheme and the interpretation of the CIC. A batch of petitions filed by the Association for Democratic Reforms and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) are sub judice. Therefore, the CIC's decision, if carried to the Supreme Court on appeal, may also be tagged and heard altogether.

It is worth remembering that the writ petitions pending adjudication were filed over three years ago and that the respondents have also filed their pleadings. In its counter affidavit filed before the Supreme Court in 2017, the Election Commission argued the case for "declaration of donation received by political parties and also about the manner in which those funds are expended by them, for better transparency and accountability in the election process".

The public scrutiny of parties and political candidates is an essential and inalienable part of a free and fair democratic process. By suppressing knowledge of political financing, we are breaking the basic bonds of democracy holding the country together. An unsettled law is as dangerous as bad law. The Court must conclusively settle the questions around the constitutionality of electoral bonds.

Manuraj Shunmugasundaram is an advocate and spokesperson of the DMK



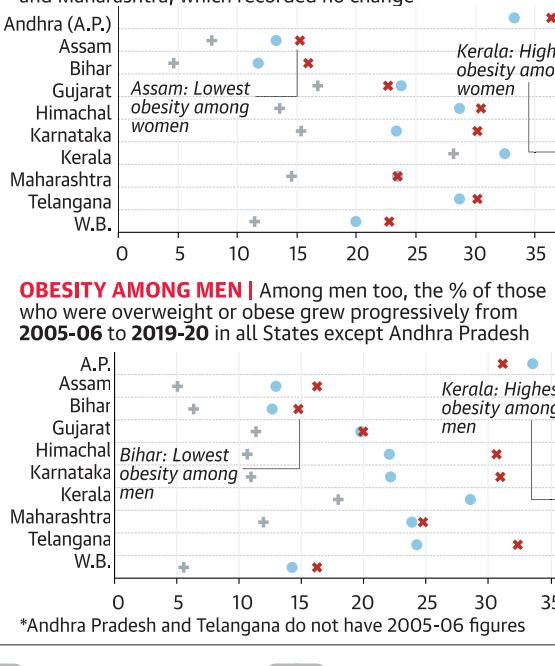
DATA POINT

Anaemia and obesity on the rise

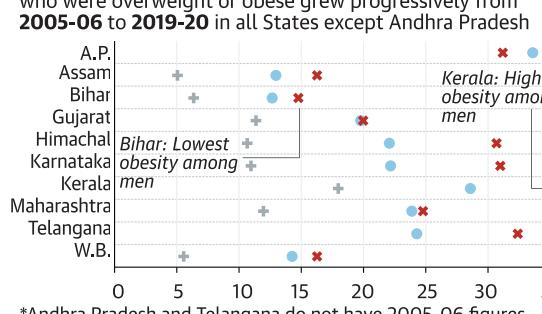
The share of women who are anaemic increased significantly in 2019-20 compared to 2015-16. Worryingly, in Maharashtra and West Bengal, the share of anaemic women surpassed levels recorded in 2005-06. Anaemia continued to affect a higher share of women than men. The share of women and men who are overweight also increased across States. Andhra Pradesh performed better than all the major States on most indicators. By Naresh Singaravelu and Sumant Sen

GRAPHS EXPLAINED | The charts plot the % of women and men who were anaemic and overweight or obese across 10 States in three time periods: 2019-20 (red cross), 2015-16 (blue circle) and 2005-06 (black plus). The higher the % of women and men in an indicator, the worse the performance of the State. The data are sourced from the three editions of the National Family Health Survey published by the Indian government. In the latest edition of the survey, limited data for 22 States and U.T.s were disseminated, of which the data of 10 major States were analysed.

OBESITY AMONG WOMEN | The % of women who were overweight or obese increased progressively from 2005-06 to 2019-20 in all States except Gujarat, where it improved, and Maharashtra, which recorded no change

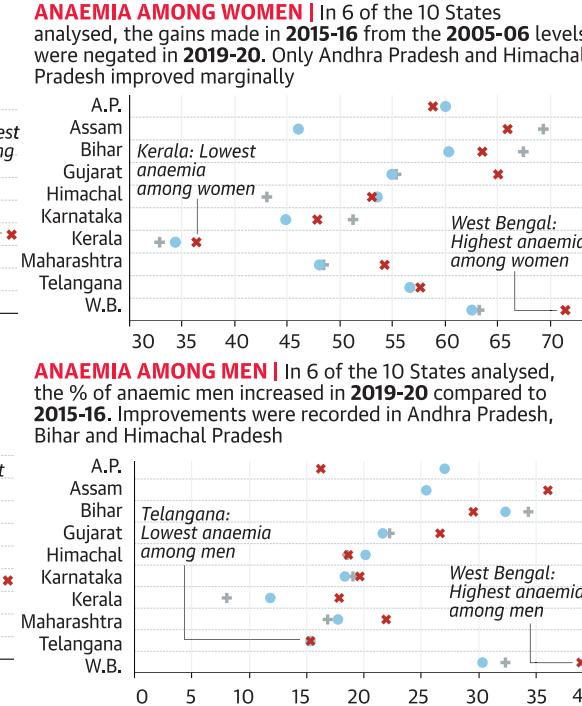


OBESITY AMONG MEN | Among men too, the % of those who were overweight or obese grew progressively from 2005-06 to 2019-20 in all States except Andhra Pradesh

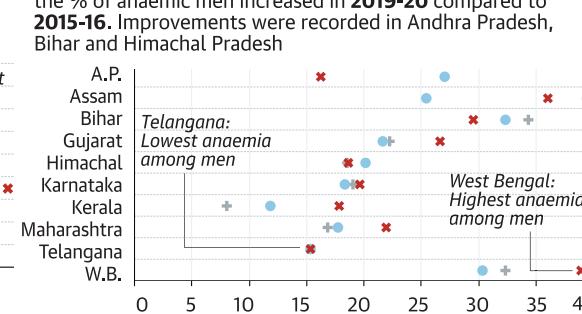


*Andhra Pradesh and Telangana do not have 2005-06 figures

ANAEMIA AMONG WOMEN | In 6 of the 10 States analysed, the gains made in 2015-16 from the 2005-06 levels were negated in 2019-20. Only Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh improved marginally



ANAEMIA AMONG MEN | In 6 of the 10 States analysed, the % of anaemic men increased in 2019-20 compared to 2015-16. Improvements were recorded in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Himachal Pradesh



A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DEC. 30, 1920

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FROM PAGE ONE

Centre, farmers to resume talks today

Accepting the invitation for the 2 p.m. meeting, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha said, "We remind you that we are coming to this dialogue on the following agenda given in our previous letter."

It then listed "Modalities to be adopted to repeal" three contentious agricultural reform laws as the first agenda point.

"A logical solution to the relevant issues" would require that our dialogue run according to this agenda," said the email, citing Agriculture Secretary Sanjay Agarwal's invitation letter, which had said the Centre was committed to a logical solution. With tens of thousands of farmers now on their 34th straight day of protest on the borders of Delhi, the Centre has been urging the agitation's leaders to return to the negotiation table through a series of letters this week.

"It is a good thing that the talks will resume. That itself is progress. Let us see what further progress can be made now," said a senior Agriculture Ministry official.

Krantikari Kisan Union president Darshan Pal, a senior leader among the Punjab groups which began the struggle and are now massed at the Singhu border point between Delhi and

Haryana, says the Centre must recognise the changes which have taken place on the ground in the last three weeks since talks were last held.

"The protests have grown in number and spread well beyond Punjab and Haryana, so the government can no longer claim it is a one State issue," he said, pointing to the five border points now entrenched with protesters, as well as the Patna and Thanjavur rallies. In the next two days, a tractor rally is expected to be held along the Kundli-Manesar Expressway. A boycott of Jio mobile services and prevention of toll collection in some States is also beginning to pinch.

"Farmers are resolved to stand fast, and I don't think the government is still in a mood to budge, so I don't expect any breakthrough [on Wednesday]," said Mr. Pal. He said the Centre is willing to offer concessions on the *parali* or stubble burning issue, agreeing to remove farmers from the penal provisions of the Commission for Air Quality. However, without any agreement on the repeal of the three laws, farmers are not willing to accept concessions on any other issue, he said.

Will not raise white flag: Mehbooba

'BJP-led regime is choking Kashmir'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR



Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday said the PDP-BJP alliance fell apart in 2018 "because she refused to accept the demands that slain militants' bodies would not be handed over to the families and opposed a crackdown on the Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI)."

The alliance fell apart after I was told by the BJP to accept a set of demands, including a move to stop handing over the militants' bodies to their families for the last rites and launch a crackdown against the JeI across Kashmir," the former Chief Minister told party workers in Srinagar.

The statement comes just days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks that the PDP's refusal to hold District Development Council (DDC) polls resulted

in the BJP's decision to end the coalition with the PDP.

She said her father, the late Mufti Muhammad Sayeed, joined hands with the BJP only to "cage a 'jinn' in a bottle" and "stop it from touching Article 370".

She alleged that the BJP-led regime was "choking Kashmir's economy and tarnishing the J&K's constitution". "We will fight for our rights. We are not the ones who would raise white flags. No matter how far BJP goes in choking Kashmir economy and making us dependent on all fronts, we will not bow," she stated.

Encounter on between militants, security forces

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

An encounter between trapped militants and security forces started on the outskirts of Srinagar on Tuesday evening during a search operation.

An official said two militants were said to be trapped at the encounter site at Hokarsar in the La-waypora area here.

"The militants were trapped during a search operation. The exchange of fire is on. Security forces are

closing in on the spot where militants are hiding," the police said.

The operation is carried out by a joint team of the police, the Army's 02 Rashtriya Rifles and the CRPF.

Police sources said there was a law and order issue during the operation, as some youth started throwing stones. However, the police have not officially confirmed it. Reinforcements have been rushed to the site to stop militants from escaping.

Centre must show flexible approach: Hooda

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Rajya Sabha MP Deepender Singh Hooda on Tuesday said the Union government must show flexible approach and open mind in its meeting with the farmers on Wednesday to accept their demands.

Speaking to the protesting farmers at Kittlana toll plaza holding indefinite dharna, Mr. Hooda said the

farmers were on the streets for 34 days in the bitter cold, but the rulers were resting in their heated rooms, indifferent to their sufferings.

"They have forgotten that it is the farmers and farm labourers who have elevated them to the position of power," he said.

Mr. Hooda advised the government that they still had the time to recover.

Gowda's death a political murder: Kumaraswamy

Direction to form panel may have pushed him to the brink'

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy, who shared a personal bond with Karnataka Legislative Council Deputy Chairperson S.L. Dharma Gowda, termed his death by suspected suicide "a political murder" by the "selfish, cut throat" politics of the State, and called for an introspection.

"He was a very sensitive man, who was deeply hurt by what happened in the Legislative Council recently. He felt humiliated and carried a guilt for no fault of his for the deterioration of the session's conduct on that day. Such people deserve better. All of us, including me, need to introspect," he said in a choked voice.



Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa paying respects to the mortal remains of S.L. Dharma Gowda. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"One party was keen on testing the secular credentials of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda and JD(S), while the other was keen on occupying the Council Chairman's post and ended up achieving this today. On December 15, our party MLCs told me how despite his protestations, Mr. Dharma Gowda was pressured to occupy the presid-

ing officer's seat before the stopping of quorum bell by one party. While they almost forced him to sit in the chair, the other party members dragged him out. A sensitive man that he was, he felt humiliated and was very upset over it. All of them should introspect on their role at least now," Mr. Kumaraswamy said, referring to the Congress and the BJP, without

taking names.

Mr. Kumaraswamy also re-

vealed that on being in-

formed by Mr. Dharma

Gowda's brother Bhoje

Gowda how upset he was, he spoke

to him for half an hour a

week ago trying to counsel

him.

"I told him that he had done no wrong and that he was only a victim of circum-

stances. I advised him to not take it personally. He said he

felt better after speaking to

me. But the Council Chair-

man directing the formation

of a legislative committee to

probe into the pandemo-

nium on Monday seems to

have pushed him over the

brink," he said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Deve Gowda recounted his personal rela-

tionship with the family

that dated back to 1972, to

the times of Mr. Dharma

Gowda's father Lakshmaia,

and said this was a "big per-

sonal blow to him in the fag

end of his political life that

had pained him deeply".

Special legislature panel to conduct probe

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Legislative Council Chairman K. Prathapchandra Shetty is on Tuesday learnt to have directed the formation of a special legislature committee, led by senior JD(S) MLC Maritibbe Gowda, to probe into the pandemo-

nium in the Council on Decem-

ber 15.

The formation of the com-

mittee follows Council Secre-

tary K.R. Mahalakshmi's report

to the Chairman, submitted three days ago,

that said S.L. Dharma Gowda, Deputy Chairman of the Council,

"spontaneously" occu-

ped the chair to conduct

the session, which wit-

nessed Mr. Dharma Gowda

being pulled from the Chair-

man's seat over a row relat-

ed to the no-confidence motion sought to be moved against the Council chairman.

The Secretary, said in her report, that she had informed the rules of the House to the Deputy Chairman. But Mr. Dharma Gowda occupied the chair and started conducting the business, sources said.

Mr. Shetty was reportedly locked out of the House during the pandemonium. Congress members had to force open the door of the House, after which the Chairman walked in and adjourned the House sine die, a few minutes later. Mr. Dharma Gowda had later expressed hurt at how he was pulled around when he was occupying the chair.

Protests mount over suicide by couple at Neyyattinkara

Police handling of the case comes under intense scrutiny

STAFF REPORTER
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Protests continued to mount over the suicide of a couple in Neyyattinkara even as the Kerala government offered on Tuesday to support their children.

The deaths of Rajan, 47, and his wife Ambili, 36, of Pongil in Nellimoodu during their move to thwart an attempt to evict the family from their house sparked protests in various parts of the State. The plight of their sons, Rahul and Renjith, prompted Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to take up the issue.

The handling of the case by the Neyyattinkara police also came under intense



The couple's son Renjith, sitting in front of the ambulance, joining the protest at Neyyattinkara on Tuesday.

scrutiny with various quarters faulting them for refusing to back down after Rajan threatened to commit suicide after dousing themselves in petrol.

Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala sought to put the blame for the couple's death squarely on the government and the police.

Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president Mullappally Ramachandran and Bharatiya Janata Party president K. Surendran also demanded stringent action.

Salary hike, increase in retirement age for govt. staff

About 9.37 lakh employees will benefit in Telangana

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has decided to enhance the salaries and retirement age of all categories of State government employees besides commencement of filling up vacancies in all departments as a New Year gift.

The salary hike will apply to about 9.37 lakh employees. A three-member committee headed by Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar will study the recommendations of the Pay Revision Commission for the purpose of fixing the quantum of hike, age of retirement and service rules.

A release of CMO said the hike will apply to regular



Happy moment: Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao being felicitated by employees and officers.

workers in the Road Transport Corporation will also get higher salaries. If needed, the financial burden on RTC will be borne by the State government.

Mr. Rao also announced that all service issues concerning employees will be addressed comprehensively by February.

Isaac appears before privileges committee

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala's Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac appeared on Tuesday before the Privileges and Ethics Committee of the Legislative Assembly in connection with the alleged leak of a CAG audit report on the Kerala Infrastructure and Investment Fund Board (KIIFB).

The nine-member committee is headed by A. Pradeep Kumar. Speaker P. Sreeramakrishnan had referred the breach of privilege notice moved by the Congress legislator V.D. Satheesan against the Finance Minister to it.

Mr. Satheesan, who is chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), said Mr. Isaac had infringed on the rights of the House by

prematurely disclosing the details of an audit report of the KIIFB for 2018-19 by the CAG at press conference before it was tabled in the Assembly.

This is the first time a breach of privilege notice against a Minister has been referred to the Privileges and Ethics Committee for scrutiny by the Speaker.

Night ride



Breathtaking view: Tourists enjoying a view of the city illuminated with lights from a cable car on the ropeway to Kailasagiri in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

INCOIS launches 'Digital Ocean'

One stop solution for all data for varied users opened by Harsh Vardhan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Union Minister for Science and Technology Harsh Vardhan launched the 'Digital Ocean' platform of Indian National Centre for Oceanic Information Services (INCOIS) here as a one-stop solution for all data related needs of a wide range of users, including research institutions, operational agencies, strategic users, academic community, maritime industry, and the public.

"Digital Ocean (www.do.incois.gov.in) is ex-

pected to bring a sea-change in how the oceanographic data is served for a better understanding of oceans surrounding us. It will play a central role in sustainable management of our oceans



Marine data: Union Minister for Science and Technology Harsh Vardhan launching the 'Digital Ocean' platform.

and expanding our 'Blue Economy' initiatives," informed INCOIS Director T. Srinivasa Kumar.

Dr. Harshvardhan virtually unveiled the web platform in the presence of secretary of Ministry of Earth Sciences M. Rajeevan, Joint Secretary Vipin Chandra and others from New Delhi.

According to the decision to send samples to NIHSD was taken after tests conducted at a virology lab in Thiruvananthapuram was inconclusive.

Officials said that necropsy had found bacterial, fungal infections, ascites, and liver, heart and lung diseases in ducks.</p

'Put development above politics'

PM slams previous govt. for delaying work on dedicated freight corridor project

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said infrastructure development should be kept away from politics, alleging that the previous government had not shown the required seriousness and urgency to communicate with the States, resulting in delays in the implementation of projects.

Mr. Modi was speaking after flagging off the first train to run on the 351 km New Bhaupur-New Khurja section (both in Uttar Pradesh) of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC). He also inaugurated the operation control centre for the EDFC at Prayagraj via videoconference.

The section, built at a cost of ₹ 5,750 crore, covers the important industrial areas of Aligarh, Khurja, Firozabad and Agra. The entire eastern corridor is more than 1,800 km long and will run from Ludhiana in Punjab to Dankuni near Kolkata.

Gehlot calls for farm loan waiver

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

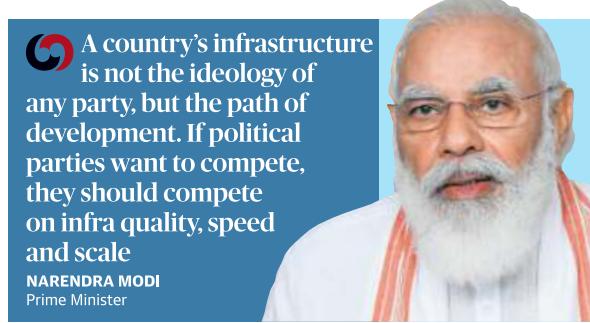
JAIPUR
Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Tuesday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take an urgent action for waiving off farmers' loans from nationalised, commercial and land development banks coming under the Centre's purview.

He said the Modi government, which wrote off industrialists' loans worth ₹7.95 lakh crore in its first tenure, had not provided any relief to farmers.

In a letter addressed to Mr. Modi, Mr. Gehlot said the Congress government in Rajasthan had enforced a loan waiver of ₹4,000 crore, including ₹6,000 crore announced by the previous BJP regime, by which over 20.56 lakh farmers had benefited.

Mr. Gehlot refuted Mr. Modi's recent charge that the farmers in the State were still waiting for debt relief.

The Prime Minister had made the claim while addressing a farmers' meeting in Madhya Pradesh virtually from December 18 to defend the three new agriculture sector laws and attacked the Congress for not fulfilling its promise for loan waiver.



A country's infrastructure is not the ideology of any party, but the path of development. If political parties want to compete, they should compete on infra quality, speed and scale

NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister

The Prime Minister blamed the "work culture" of the previous government for the delays in the implementation of the freight corridor project that was approved in 2006.

"Till 2014, not even one km of the track was laid. Even the money allotted for this was not used properly. After 2014, when the project was relooked at, the budget increased by 11 times or by more than ₹45,000 crore," he said.

After the formation of the NDA government in 2014, as a result of constant monitoring and meeting with the sta-

keholders, about 1,100 km of the work got completed in a few months, he claimed.

'It will reduce cost'

"Be it our farms, industries or markets, they are dependent on freight movement and the Railways have always played a huge role in this," he said.

Dedicated freight corridors were needed as currently passenger and freight trains run on the same track, leading to increase in the waiting period.

"With these corridors, we can improve the punctuality

of passenger trains. In addition, freight trains can run three times faster, and will be able to transport twice the amount of freight. Since freight trains will reach on time, this will bring down the transportation costs, leading to reduction in cost of various goods," he said.

Winning votes

Mr. Modi said earlier the focus was just on increasing the number of trains to get votes and no investment was made on tracks.

"A country's infrastructure is not the ideology of any party, but the path of development. If political parties want to compete, they should compete on infra quality, speed and scale."

He also appealed to people to not damage infrastructure and property during protests.

"We should remember that this infrastructure does not belong to any politician or a party, but to the country and its citizens."

The amendments proposed by the government to the farm laws must be passed in Parliament by bringing in a fresh Bill, it said.

Addressing a joint press conference with former Union Minister Rajeev Shukla, Rajasthan Congress chief Govind Singh Dostara said farmers in his State were waiting for the outcome of Wednesday's meeting as many of them planned to march to Delhi if issues remained unresolved.

Mr. Shukla, who was a ju-

ment can change it," he said.

"If the government is sympathetic to farmers, they should accept their suggestions, repeat the laws and bring another Bill in Parliament," he added.

Mr. Dostara said there was an attempt to "malign" the farmers' agitation instead of addressing their concerns.

"If you don't even admit that there is something wrong, how can you rectify your problems," he said.

The disruption of tele-

com services was causing immense inconvenience to the common man for whom the mobile services were so essential, he said.

More than 1,500 tele-

com towers, largely be-

longing to Reliance Jio,

have been damaged by

farmers protesting against

the farm laws.

Pakistan is a pawn in Chinese policy: IAF chief

Most important security challenge is understanding China'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Pakistan had increasingly become a pawn in Chinese policy, and under an increasing China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)-related debt trap, further military dependencies in the future would happen, according to Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria.

"Our most important national security challenge is firstly to understand China, their possible game plan and the deepening and evolving Sino-Pakistan relationship. We are all well aware that China's aspirations are on the global front and regional domination is a part to global leadership that they aspire," he said speaking at a webinar by the Vivekananda International Foundation on Tuesday.

Any Sino-Indian conflict was not good for China at the global front, he asserted. "If the Chinese aspirations are global, then it does not fit in their grand plans, and, therefore, what is the Chinese objective of their actions in eastern Ladakh?" he asked.

To a question on the role played by the Indian Air



Air warriors: A file photo of an IAF aircraft over Leh amid the ongoing stand-off with China. •PTI

Force in the ongoing stand-off in eastern Ladakh, he said that it could also be a totally "military dominated misadventure" that escalated, given the rapid decrease in trust deficit post COVID-19, the Chinese state position and possibly a loss of faith in the action later.

Talking of the borders, the air chief said that on the northern borders, the Himalayan barrier, which separated South Asia with China, has been "literally flattened" by the massive infrastructure development and the time it took to travel large distances had rapidly shrunk. The western border had become active the day Pakistan was created, he stated.

Listing out a series of like-ly causes of the Chinese ac-

tions in eastern Ladakh, he said that it could also be a totally "military dominated misadventure" that escalated, given the rapid decrease in trust deficit post COVID-19, the Chinese state position and possibly a loss of faith in the action later.

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For further details and free download of tender documents visit www.tenderword.com/IISERB/. Complete detail and the tender document is available on Institute website i.e. <http://www.iiserbp.ac.in/tender.php> and <https://eprocure.gov.in>. Any corrigendum etc will be notified on the above websites only.

'Written assurances' on MSP have no meaning: Congress

They should be backed by statutory provisions, says party

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Ahead of the next round of talks between the Centre and the farmer unions, the Congress on Tuesday said the government's "written assurances" on the minimum support price (MSP) had no meaning unless they were backed by statutory provisions.

The amendments proposed by the government to the farm laws must be passed in Parliament by bringing in a fresh Bill, it said.



Listen to us: Farmers protesting against the new laws at the Singhu border in Delhi on Tuesday. •SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

nior Minister in the UPA government, said: "Once the government brings in new amendments, the earlier version of the Bill will stand withdrawn."

Addressing a joint press conference with former Union Minister Rajeev Shukla, Rajasthan Congress chief Govind Singh Dostara said farmers in his State were waiting for the outcome of Wednesday's meeting as many of them planned to march to Delhi if issues remained unresolved.

Mr. Shukla, who was a ju-

ment can change it," he said.

"If the government is sympathetic to farmers, they should accept their suggestions, repeat the laws and bring another Bill in Parliament," he added.

Mr. Dostara said there was an attempt to "malign" the farmers' agitation instead of addressing their concerns.

"If you don't even admit that there is something wrong, how can you rectify your problems," he said.

The disruption of tele-

com services was causing immense inconvenience to the common man for whom the mobile services were so essential, he said.

While we respect people's right to protest on any issue, sabotaging the tele-

com network infrastructure and disrupting telecom services in Punjab due to the damage to telecom infrastructure by protesters.

"While we respect people's right to protest on any issue, sabotaging the tele-

com network infrastructure and disrupting telecom services as a form of protest by anyone is strongly condemned," COAI director-general S.P. Kochhar said in a statement.

The disruption of tele-

com services was causing immense inconvenience to the common man for whom the mobile services were so essential, he said.

More than 1,500 tele-

com towers, largely be-

longing to Reliance Jio,

have been damaged by

farmers protesting against

the farm laws.

Rajini decision leaves BJP jolted in T.N.

Saffron party was banking on the actor's fan following to break into State politics

NISTULA HEBBAR

NEW DELHI

The announcement by actor Rajinikanth on Tuesday that he would not be launching a political party took many by surprise, with the BJP hoping that even if not through a formal political party, the superstar would throw his influence behind the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Tamil Nadu ahead of the Assembly poll early next year.

As to why Rajinikanthji decided not to float his own political party, is a personal decision by him, but, I very much hope and expect that in the interest of the country and Tamil Nadu he will extend support to the NDA. As

general secretary in charge of Tamil Nadu, said Mr. Rajinikanth's decision was his private affair but that the NDA was still hoping for a declaration of support from the latter.

Support to NDA

"As to why Rajinikanthji decided not to float his own political party, is a personal decision by him, but, I very much hope and expect that in the interest of the country and Tamil Nadu he will extend support to the NDA. As

a member of the BJP it is my hope that his considerable influence is with us," Mr. Ravai said.

Mr. Rajinikanth had, a few weeks ago, said that he would be announcing the launch of a political party on December 31.

But cutting his sudden hospitalisation last week following a health scare and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the actor released a statement that he had decided to go back on that decision.

The BJP had hoped that

the charismatic actor would add his considerable popularity to its efforts, while many in the rally camps questioned his political moorings and ideological leanings.

The party has tied up with the ruling AIADMK for the upcoming Assembly poll, and while it hasn't on its own managed much traction on the ground, it was counting on Mr. Rajinikanth's massive fan following to introduce a third element in the largely bipolar polity of the State. That hope is now over.

NIA files chargesheet against five NSCN (IM) members

Case pertains to extortion, intimidation of firms in Manipur

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) filed a chargesheet against five NSCN (IM) members for alleged extortion and criminal intimidation of various companies undertaking road construction projects in Manipur.

The case relates to the recovery of ₹1,58,72,800 along with illegal arms, ammunition, explosives, and incriminating documents, from the residential premises of SS Col. Rayilung Nsa-rangba of NSCN (IM) and his wife Ruth Chawang," the

engaged in negotiation with the Intelligence Bureau.

The NIA filed the chargesheet in a Dimapur court in a case the agency registered on July 5 under various Sections of the IPC and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

"The developmental funds of the government have been illegally diverted in an organised manner and collected by NSCN(IM) operatives through extortion by committing a terrorist act punishable under UAP(A) Act."

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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

TENDER NOTICE NO. 22/CE/TEC/2020-21 Dated: 29/12/2020

Name of Project: Package 1:SR & maintenance to building in 2 Govt. Polytechnic & 2 Govt. Engg. College under the Jurisdiction of Techin. Edn. Division: Comptabre. Appx Value Rs.393,193. Iahks EMD: Rs.20500/- Pledged in favour of EE, TED, Vellore. Period of completion: 3 months (1 Package with 4 slices)

Package 2: SR & maintenance to building in 6 Govt. Polytechnic & 2 Govt. Engg. College under the Jurisdiction of Techin. Edn. Division, Vellore. Appx Value Rs.393,193. Iahks EMD: Rs.20500/- Pledged in favour of EE, TED, Vellore. Period of completion: 3 months (1 Package with 6 slices)

Date of Availability of documents : 31.12.2020 to 01.01.2021 5.45PM

Last date of receipt of tenders : 02.02.2021 upto 3.00PM

Date of opening of tenders : 02.02.2021 at 3.30PM

Registration : Class I above 75 lakhs

For further details and free download of tender documents visit www.tenders.tn.gov.in If the date of receipt of tenders happens to be a holiday the tender will be received on the next working day.

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

CAD-989

Online Tenders are invited for following services:-

'No evidence that vaccines will be ineffective against variants'

Principal Scientific Adviser says a wide range of antibodies will be produced

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

There is no evidence that current vaccines will fail to protect against COVID-19 variants reported from the U.K. or South Africa, Principal Scientific Adviser K. Vijay Raghavan said at a Health Ministry press conference on Tuesday.

Stating that while most vaccines do target the spike protein, in which there are changes in the variants, Professor Raghavan noted that the vaccine also stimulated the immune system to produce a wide range of protective antibodies and the mutations were not sufficient to make the vaccine ineffective.

He added that the increased transmissibility of the U.K. variant was a matter of concern and advocated that public health measures be scrupulously followed.

"A vaccine should be available soon but we have to reduce transmission through physical distancing and amplifying testing, tracking and



Practice shot: A dummy dose is given during a mock drill ahead of the COVID-19 vaccination drive in Adalaj, Gujarat. • AFP

isolating," he said. Also addressing the press, Director-General of the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) Balram Bhargava cautioned against the non-judicious use of unestablished therapies to fight the virus which he said would put pressure on the virus to mutate more.

"It's important that we do not put too much immune pressure on virus. We have to maintain judicious use of therapies which are going to benefit. If benefit isn't established, we shouldn't use those therapies otherwise it will put pressure on virus and it will tend to mutate more," Dr. Bhargava said.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said that prior to news of the U.K. variant, India had done genome sequencing of nearly 5,000 samples.

This number will now increase significantly with 10

government labs starting genome sequencing of the SARS-CoV-2 variant, he noted.

"An important development is the establishment of INSACOG, a consortium of 10 government labs across the country to do genome sequencing of COVID-19 as well as any variant of that virus. These labs belong to ICMR, BioTech India, CSIR and Health Ministry," Mr. Bhushan said.

He added that the active COVID cases in the country now stand at fewer than 2.7 lakh.

"This number along with death rate is on the decline and positivity rate in the country during the last week stood at only 2.25%. Daily new COVID cases are less than 17,000 after 6 months now, while daily deaths are also less than 300 after 6 months. 55% deaths are found to have occurred in those above 60 years and 70% of the deaths have occurred in males," he said.

The median age of variant cases was 36 years and 35 for the wild-type cases. Over 51% of both the variant cases wild-type comparator cases

Mutated virus does not cause more fatalities: report

'No big differences when compared with wild-type cases'

R. PRASAD
CHENNAI

Preliminary results from a cohort study found no statistically significant difference in hospitalisation and 28-day case fatality between cases with the new variant (VOC 201212/01) and wild-type comparator cases. There was also no significant difference in the likelihood of reinfection between variant cases and the comparator group, says a second technical briefing report by the Public Health England.

The preliminary assessment of outcomes of hospitalisation and case fatality caused by the new variant was performed by using a matched cohort study. In this, 1,769 genome-sequenced variant cases were matched with the same number of cases which are distinctly different from the new variant.

The study found that 12 of 1,340 (0.89%) people infected with the new variant died within 28 days compared with 10 of 1,360 (0.73%) people



Care and caution: A view of the Sardar Patel COVID-19 hospital in New Delhi. • AP

were female. Fewer variant cases (16 cases) were admitted to hospital compared to wild-type comparator cases (26 cases) but the difference is not significant, the report says.

Scientists also studied whether the new variant caused increased reinfection rates. A possible case of reinfection was considered if a PCR test was positive before 90 days of a previous infection with SARS-CoV-2 virus. While only two reinfections were caused by the new variant, there were three reinfections in the other group.

Harsh Vardhan made member of GAVI Board

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has been nominated by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) as a member on the GAVI Board, said a release by the Ministry on Tuesday.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan will be representing the South East Asia Regional Office (SEARO)/ Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) constituency on the GAVI Board. The seat is currently held by Myint Htwe of Myanmar. Dr. Harsh Vardhan will be representing India from January 1, 2021 till December 31, 2023.

The GAVI Board is responsible for strategic direction and policymaking, oversees the operations of the Vaccine Alliance and monitors programme implementation. With membership drawn from a range of partner organisations, as well as experts from the private sector, the Board provides a forum for balanced strategic decision making, innovation and partner collaboration.

IN BRIEF



Visva-Bharati pulled into hateful politics: Mamata Banerjee

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday once again raised the 'outsider' pitch, saying Visva-Bharati University was being dragged into narrow hateful politics. Ms. Banerjee was addressing people in Birbhum district where Union Home Minister Amit Shah held a road show on December 20.

2 expelled Assam Congress MLAs join BJP

Two Assam MLAs expelled by the Congress joined the BJP on Tuesday, about five months ahead of Assembly elections. Ajanta Neog, who represents the Golaghat Assembly constituency, is a three-time former minister, while Lakhipur MLA Rajdeep Goalai is an influential "Tea Tribes" leader in southern Assam.

Probe into alleged rape bid by judicial officer

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken *suo motu* cognisance of the alleged attempted rape and abuse of a woman employee by a judicial officer of the commercial court in Jhansi, U.P. "The victim is traumatised by the incident, and has submitted a written complaint on 19.12.2020 to the in-charge Inspector, PS Navaband, Jhansi, to register an FIR, but no FIR has been registered. The allegations are very grave," the NHRC observed.

Mansukh Vasava, Bharuch MP, quits BJP

Gujarat BJP's most senior parliamentarian and former Union Minister Mansukh Vasava on Tuesday resigned from the party over a MoECC (Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change) notification declaring 121 villages of Narmada district as 'eco-sensitive zone' in his constituency, Bharuch. The prominent tribal leader said he would resign from the Lok Sabha in the budget session of Parliament.

U.P. Cong. leader shot at by bike-borne assailants

A local Congress leader was injured when he was allegedly shot at by unidentified assailants in Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, on Monday night. Vinod Tomar was returning home when the two bike-borne assailants fired at him. "One bullet hit him. He was admitted to a private hospital and was later referred to Meerut," said an official. Uttar Pradesh Congress tweeted that Mr. Tomar was the district Kisan Congress president.

Airlines still following fare bands

We will monitor situation and decide, says Puri

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

More than six months after the government barred airlines from pricing their passenger seats and mandated them to follow fare bands fixed by it as a temporary measure during COVID-19, there is no sign of a return to free market pricing for domestic carriers yet. "We will monitor the situation, and then decide whether they will stay or not. Everyone is happy," Minister of State for Civil Aviation Hardeep Puri said at a press conference on Tuesday.



93% relief flights by AI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Air India Group operated 93% of the total 6,500 flights under the Vande Bharat Mission and ferried more than 10 lakh passengers, according to

prescribed by the government on the basis of flight duration.

Airlines with deep pockets like IndiGo, and those with strong promoters like Vistara, have publicly criticised the move as one that is antithetical to the interest of passengers because airlines can't offer fares lower than

the floor pricing in order to entice people to fly.

It is a widely held view within the industry that the move is meant to support airlines with weak financials like SpiceJet, GoAir and Air India, which would have perished when demand plummeted after the lockdown due to COVID-19.

Ban on U.K. flights may be extended, says Hardeep Puri

Govt. waiting for a fuller picture of new virus strain

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The ban on Indian and British airlines providing services to the U.K. until the government gets a "fuller picture" of the new strain confirmed from as many as six passengers who arrived in India last week, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Hardeep Puri said on Tuesday.

"Once we have genome sequencing completed and a fuller extent of the picture, that will give us the confidence to open up flights again," Mr. Puri said at a press conference.

The ban on Indian and British airlines providing services to the U.K. was imposed last week and is in force till December 31.

On whether there would be a similar ban on flights from other countries such as South Africa where the strain has been confirmed, the Minister said the government was "monitoring" the situation.

Meanwhile, the Civil Aviation Ministry is working with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on maintaining the vitality of the vaccine through temperature regulation. Stakeholders have to ensure that the integrity of the entire cold chain from the place of manufacture to the place of consumption," the official stated.

Lotus will bloom in my family: Suvendu

His father, brother are Trinamool MPs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari on Tuesday dropped clear hints that his father Sisir Adhikari and brother Dibyendu Adhikari would join the saffron party soon.



Suvendu Adhikari

"There is still a lot of time to come. Ram Navami has not been celebrated and the lotus will certainly bloom in my family."

In a significant development, the State Urban Development Department on Tuesday removed Soumendu Adhikari, another member of the Adhikari family, from the post of Chairman of Kanthi municipality.

Responding to a jibe made by Trinamool MP Abhishek Banerjee, Mr. Adhikari, who was addressing a public rally at Khardah in North 24 Parganas, said:

INTERVIEW | VIJAY KUMAR

'Security forces now have the upper hand'

Burying militants in remote places ended glamourisation, says Inspector-General Vijay Kumar

PEERZADA ASHIQ

With the past year being extremely challenging for the security forces in Kashmir after the decision to end J&K's special status, Inspector General of Police, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar points to a paradigm shift in the approach to tackling which has paid dividends on the ground

The beginning of year 2020 saw very few operations and then a major push against militants in J&K?

■ From zero kills in December 2019, we managed to turn it into 14 kills in January this year. The killing of chief of Jaish-e-Muhammad Qari Yasir, Hizbul Mujahideen commander Hamad Khan and arrest of Hizb's Naveed Babu along with Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Devender Singh was the result of a new strategy.

Gathering human intelligence at district level was re-oriented in a new strategy

aren't battle hardened and rather high on motivation, but their hiding capabilities amongst population is high. Though there were cases where youths went to Pakistan on visa in 2017 and 2018. Of 50 such terrorists, 25 were killed in encounters, 9 arrested and rest are still on the run. The killing of Naikoo reduced recruitment. However, availability of arms and radicalisation by several Pakistan-based portals are factors to be monitored.

Are civilian houses where militants take shelter blown up by explosives during encounters?

■ Terrorists have advantage in residential areas compared to orchards and jungles. The in-going troops mostly are not aware of the houses because terrorists can hide in any random house. This puts the life of our troops at extreme risk. Explosives are used to soften the target houses and expose vulnerable areas to target terrorists. In most cases, houses have caught fire due to explosives carried by terrorists.

Also, several measures have been put in place during anti-terrorist operations to win the hearts and minds of the public, like maintaining sanctity of religious places and use of less-lethal weapons during law and order situations. For e.g., in south Kashmir's Meej area in Pampore on June 18, three terror-

ists of the LeT were killed without entering into a mosque.

Over a dozen local terrorists were made to surrender during live encounters. It has been a game-changer.

The police have prior details of terrorists trapped in encounters and the families are allowed to make appeals. Parents have shown great trust in the police.

But recruitment of militants continues?

■ It remains a serious concern. Compared to 152 terrorists killed in 2019, 206 were killed in 2020, as 140 and 167 youths were recruited. Of 167 recruits, 73 were killed, 46 arrested and 48 are active.

So the situation isn't alarming. These youth were radicalised by Pakistani agencies through social media and blogs.

Parental control over children has diminished in Kashmir and peer pressure has increased.

The police have been identifying potential and radicalised youths. More than three dozen youths returned to nor-



Gathering human intelligence at district level was re-oriented in a new strategy

mal life. Other stakeholders like education, welfare, sports and information departments have to work in this direction. A comprehensive surrender policy is also needed.

Are militants also changing tack?

■ Terrorists have changed their modus operandi this year and adopted guerrilla warfare, hit-and-run tactics. Over two dozen colleagues were killed in over a dozen such attacks. Due to tactical changes, many such attacks were converted into encounters and forces managed to kill the attackers. Frequent grenade throwing also remains a reality. It's not a new trend though. Compared to 132 persons injured in such attacks in 2018, 118 in 2019, we just saw 69 such injuries in 2020.

This year, militants were not allowed burial in their ancestral graveyards.

■ After COVID-19 pandemic in March, burial of militants participated in Kargil and Sopore. Either we had to stop anti-terrorist operation temporarily or not hand over bodies of terrorists to the families. We opted for the second option. Initially, miscreants and anti-social elements tried to spread false propaganda and terrorists abducted some policemen and even killed one policeman but we didn't lose our patience.

People realised our intention and supported us.

So far, 158 terrorists have been buried at isolated locations in Baramulla, Ganderbal and Handwara in presence of magistrates and families.

We have not only stopped spreading of COVID infections but also stopped glamourising terrorists and potential law and order problems. This action is historical.

Have many policemen been recruited by militants?

■ In a force of more than one lakh personnel, six or seven such instances is negligible. This year, one policeman deserted and was arrested. The J&K policemen are the most loyal in this country. Even if someone has any connections, the supervisory officer keeps him on surveillance and doesn't post him at sensitive assignment. Many a times, such connections convert into anti-terrorist operations in our favour.

Is the tough phase of militancy over?

■ The tough phase of militancy in Kashmir is not over till terrorists are there on the ground. As far as domination and the upper hand of security forces is concerned, yes, we have been successful. As of now, several terrorist outfits are headless. The security forces are more capable of handling the challenges at hand.

This year saw restrictions on certain kinds of reportage, especially of banned organisations...

■ Since these associations have been declared banned, any coverage of their statements would attract penal action under UAPA. However, the press can report any news relating to the banned associations in case the reporting is confined to carrying news only and not to investigate the public.

Congress panel on 50th anniversary of 1971 war

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Monday announced a committee of senior leaders to plan and coordinate different activities to commemorate the anniversary of the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971.

2021 will mark the 50th year of the 1971 war during which former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was instrumental in the creation of Bangladesh

Despite 2020 being an uneventful year all around and fraught with uncertainty, a lot seems to have transpired in the world of automobiles. Read on...

Auto Expo 2020

While news of the COVID-19 outbreak spreading to other countries had already made headlines by then, Auto Expo 2020 went ahead as planned. Brands such as Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Tata, Mahindra, Kia, Renault and Mercedes-Benz were out in full force, as were Volkswagen and Skoda who made their return to the event after a hiatus. The show also featured sprawling stalls from MG and Great Wall Motor (GWM) displaying a range of models. However, notable names such as Honda, Toyota, BMW, Audi and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles chose to skip the 2020 edition.



Hanging in the balance

Border skirmishes between the armed forces of India and China damaged relations between the two nations, and as a direct result, Great Wall Motor's India plans, too. The carmaker – which was set to acquire General Motors' Taloja plant and launch its first model in 2021 – now finds its plans hanging in the balance as all investments from Chinese companies have been put on hold. The company had previously signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Maharashtra Government, promising to invest over ₹7,600 crore in the country in a phased manner. Prevailing anti-China sentiments have also compelled other Chinese carmakers aspiring to set up shop in India to adopt a wait-and-watch strategy.



BS6 emission norms set in

The switch to BS6 was no small feat, with most carmakers successfully making the transition well in time to meet the April 1 deadline. The transition to the more stringent norms saw a number of diesel engines get axed, the most notable of which was Fiat's long serving 1.3-litre Multijet diesel, often referred to as the 'national' diesel engine. Additionally, big names such as Maruti Suzuki, Volkswagen and Renault quit the diesel segment altogether. BS6 norms also resulted in the proliferation of the small turbo-petrol engine, with brands such as Hyundai, Kia, Mahindra, Tata, Volkswagen, Skoda and Nissan offering it with a number of their models.

Lexus, Mercedes-AMG begin local assembly

2020 saw Lexus and Mercedes-AMG begin the local assembly of some of their products in India. Lexus rolled out the locally assembled ES sedan early in the year, while Mercedes started local assembly of the AMG GLC 43 Coupe – the first AMG to be 'made' in India – closer to the end of the year. It is safe to expect other models from Lexus and Mercedes-AMG to also be assembled in India in the future.



COVID-19 – From cars to PPE and back

By the following month, the COVID-19 outbreak had been declared a pandemic, and by the end of March, India went into full lockdown, meaning production facilities ground to a complete halt. For the first time ever, manufacturers across the board reported zero sales in the month of April as the entire country stayed indoors. But as it always does, the automotive industry found a way out. Manufacturers donated generously in the fight against the pandemic, and many even assisted in the production of much-needed personal protective equipment and ventilators. Once the lockdown was lifted, the industry was quick to get back on its feet.

2020: A look back

AMAAN AHMED AND RISHAAD MODY

From high-profile launches and alliances to a complete production shutdown due to COVID-19, 2020 was a year of extremes for the automotive industry. Here's a look at the highlights.



The highs of 2020

While it's fair to say 2020 was a deflating year in many ways, it also brought some highs worth remembering. Market recovery was aided by several big-ticket launches, including the second-gen Hyundai Creta, Kia Sonet, fifth-gen Honda City, new Hyundai i20 and the second-gen Mahindra Thar. The year also witnessed the launch of three all-electric vehicles – the Tata Nexon EV, MG ZS EV and the Mercedes-Benz EQC – with more to follow in 2021.

Bikes

2020: yes, this happened



What we lost in 2020

This year also necessitated a fair few goodbyes. After six successful editions, Cartier pulled the plug on the Concours d'Elegance in India due to budget constraints and changing market priorities. The BS6 emission norms saw models such as the Toyota Corolla, Etios range, Honda BR-V and Renault Captur bow out, and Tata shuttered its performance-oriented JTP division, marking the end for the short-lived Tiago JTP and Tigor JTP. The automotive world also lost some eminent personalities, including racing legend Sir Stirling Moss and renowned Porsche engineer Hans Mezger – the creator of the 911's signature flat-six engine. The Indian auto industry, meanwhile, received a shock with the untimely demise of BMW India head Rudeej Singh.

Cars

Big names roll out EVs

2020 saw Bajaj and TVS enter the electric scooter segment with the launch of the Chetak and the iQube, respectively. Both have been designed and developed in-house, but unfortunately sales of both have limited availability so far. Furthermore COVID-19 has created production issues for the Bajaj. Meanwhile, Ather Energy gained

momentum this year with the launch of the impressive 450X. The company also commenced expanding its network with the aim of selling its products in 27 cities by Q1 2021.

New alliances forged

In January, Bajaj and Triumph formalised an alliance to co-develop a range of mid-capacity motorcycles ranging from 200-700cc.

In April, TVS acquired the British company, Norton and a month later Ola Electric bought out a Netherlands-based EV start-up Etergo. Last but not the least, was Hero's deal with Harley-Davidson to take over its India operations. Hero will take over the Harley sales and service network.

Q AND A WITH HORMAZD



What is a good seven-seat SUV?

I am looking for a seven-seat SUV that is fun to drive, has good steering feedback, a peppy engine, and an auto gearbox. It should also be spacious enough for a family and have good boot space as well. My budget is ₹40 lakh, but I can stretch it up to ₹75 lakh.

Nishant, via email

For your budget, the only seven-seaters are body-on-frame SUVs like the Fortuner, Endeavour, Alturas and now the MG Gloster. For sheer power, there is nothing to beat the Fortuner, though the Gloster is better overall, offering more space, a superb steering and a huge boot. All these cars will fit your ₹40 lakh budget. There are no other seven-seat SUVs in the ₹75 lakh bracket. Spacious seven-seat SUVs like the BMW X7 and Mercedes GLS will cost upwards of a crore.

Replacing the tyres

What are the replacement options for the tyres (235/55 R17) of my 2012 Audi Q3 2.0 TDI Quattro? I need them to be rugged, puncture-resistant on my farms and good for the occasional mild off-roading as well as on highways. What is your opinion on the Maxxis S-pro (V rated)?

My existing tyres are Continental Sport Contact 2, which have run 70,000km already.

Ajay, Bengaluru
Both the Pirelli and the Maxxis are good choices as replacement tyres for your Continentals. The Scorpion Verde are primarily for highway use, hence the off-road capabilities might suffer a bit. You can consider the Michelin Latitude Sport. The Maxxis S Sport seem to be more for highway use, with good grip in dry and wet conditions, while in off-road conditions, it may suffer with wear and grip.

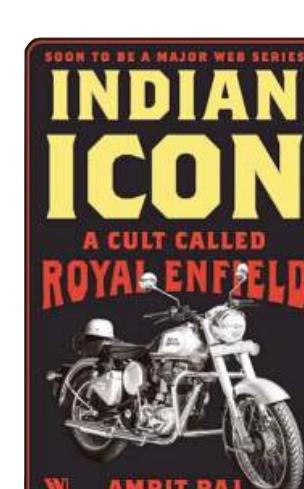
The book delves into the history of British Royal Enfield, how it came to India and then ended up with the Lal family

Today, Royal Enfield bikes are not an uncommon sight on Indian roads, but there was a time when they came close to disappearing...

RISHAAD MODY

It doesn't take more than a couple of pages of his book to recognise that Amrit Raj is not a hardcore motorcycle enthusiast. Sure enough, he confesses to being a casual motorcyclist who heads out for a ride now and then, but Amrit admits that he prefers his car. Typically, motorcyclists tend to respect only fellow motorcyclists' opinions on subjects like this, something made painfully clear in the section of the book that discusses the company's leadership from 2014-18. But this book is not about motorcycles, and it is nice to read the story of the Royal Enfield brand by someone who isn't enamoured by the motorcycle.

"I was fascinated by the story of the brand," Amrit Raj says, when asked what led him to write this book, his first. "The idea came to me when I was working with a newspaper and during our bureau meetings, we



would often discuss all kinds of Indian brands that had the potential to become global. We made a list of four or five brands and Royal Enfield was the one that came out on top in my mind. "Typically for a brand to develop a fan or cult following, it needs to give back something to the consumer, right? If you look at Hero or Maruti, you get good mileage and decent cost of ownership. The Land Rovers give luxury, durability and reliability. And then I looked at Royal Enfield, and wondered, 'If you buy a Royal Enfield, what do you get?' It does not give you great mileage, it is a heavy bike to manoeuvre, service is not great... So, what does it have that people are so mad about?"

Amrit adds, "I came to the

conclusion that it was the whole swag and charisma – something that was possibly more enhanced with the older generation of Bullets. All these things led me into exploring the brand, talking to people, looking into its history and how it survived over a period of time. I could recall at least four occasions when it was about to shut down. From being on the brink of closing down and then making a comeback – it was quite a story. That's the reason why I thought I should pen it down."

The book delves into the history of British Royal Enfield, how it made its way to India and how it ended up in the hands of the Lal family that owned Eicher, eventually coming under the control of young and dynamic Siddhartha Lal. It is common knowledge that Royal Enfield's survival, and

nificant roles, but Lal is always at the centre.

Amrit says Siddhartha met him for one interview for this book in 2015, but since then, neither the Lal family nor Royal Enfield participated. The majority of this book is put together after speaking with multiple people connected with the brand, including a couple of present-day Royal Enfield employees

who were surprisingly candid.

This book tells the tale of what businesses used to be like in India in the pre-liberalisation days and takes you through the unique journey of a brand that defeated the odds to grow into an almost unimaginable phenomenon.

(*Indian Icon: A Cult Called Royal Enfield* is available as a hardcover or e-book on Amazon India)



Glorious comeback
Indian Icon documents the rise, fall and subsequent rise of the Enfield brand

▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Legacy in fragrances (Clockwise)
Attars sold by Sugandh Co in Lucknow; the essential oil extraction process; and Hassan Siddiqui ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

NAHLA NAINAR

For several years now, Hassan Siddiqui has never had a day that did not include perfumes in it. "I have around 600-700 bottles of *attars* and around 300 Western scents. The costliest one in my collection is a 10-ml bottle of pure *Oudh attar* that costs ₹46,000. Yes, it's like an addiction, but of the good kind," he laughs, over a phone interview.

The 26-year-old Siddiqui is one of many aroma enthusiasts trying to highlight India's thriving indigenous fragrance industry through social media. Though he is based in Bahraich, a small town near Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh, Siddiqui reaches a global audience through his YouTube channel Perfume Review India. It offers a mix of product trials, interviews with perfumers and explainers on fragrance usage and terminology in Hindi/Urdu, to its 17,800-plus subscribers.

Siddiqui wants to increase awareness about the role natural fragrances play in Indian culture. His focus is on *attar* or *ittar*, a broad term that refers to scents using essential oils derived from botanical sources via steam or hydro-distillation, a method credited to the Persian physician Ibn Sina (also known as Avicenna in Europe).

Many of India's traditional *attar* manufacturers rely on Ibn Sina's extraction techniques, and are masters at creating not just floral scents, but also edible flavouring from natural sources.

Over a thousand enterprises are reportedly involved in the Indian perfume industry, estimated to be worth 500 million USD in a global market of \$24 billion. Besides natural plant extracts, perfume manufacturers use chemicals and synthetic additives.

Even though imported alcohol-based perfumes have a more visible

When the nose knows best

presence in the Indian market, *attars* too are holding their own. As India grows 31 of the 300 naturally fragrant raw materials required for perfume manufacture, it is an important supplier of essential oils like mint, jasmine, sandalwood, tuberose and spices in the global market.

Traditional production

The domestic natural fragrance market is dominated by Kannauj, a town in Uttar Pradesh known as the perfume capital of India. "We have been using the same hydro-distillation technique since 1896, when my great grandfather Sheikh Mohamed Ayub established the perfumery," says Saad Akhir, of Kannauj's family-run business Syed Mohamed Ayub Mohamed Yaqub Perfumers. The ancient technique starts with the plucking of flowers early in the day. The petals alone are mixed with water and poured into copper stills known as 'deg' and sealed with a mixture of clay and cotton. A bamboo pipe doubling as a condenser ('chonga') connects the deg to the copper receiver (whose mouth has been covered with cloth or 'bhapka') placed in a cooling chamber filled with water.

An earthen oven ('bhatti') fuelled by wood and dung cakes 'cooks' the petals until the distillate is obtained from the vapour in two separate rounds. Both the *bhatti* and the water in the cooling tank are constantly monitored to maintain an even temperature.

We can recreate French, Italian and American scents with the help of the ingredients here

MOHAMED SADATHULLAH

Kannauj is known for *attar* shama, a dense, woody scent said to be invented by Sheikh Mohamed Ayub, that is used in the base of most perfume blends by designer houses in France and UK. "Ironically," says Siddiqui, "they are sold back to India, at a considerably high price, and our people are unaware of this."

Patronised by the Mughals and the other princely states with Turkish links, *attar* makers and sellers were once an integral part of the Indian cityscape, as can be seen from the remnants of street names like 'Attar Mohalla' and 'Gandhaakaar Thera' in southern India.

"The credit for patronising perfumes in Lucknow goes to the Nawabs of Oudh, particularly to Nawab Wajid Ali Shah," says Vishwas Vijayvergiya, whose family runs Sugandh Co in Lucknow. Apart from distillate extracts of agarwood, sandalwood and flowers, India also pioneered

Natural fragrances or *attars* have a cult following that seems to defy their low-profile marketing

the art and science of making incense, an elixir that perfumes spaces through the combustion of fragrant materials with aromas permeating through smoke, he adds.

Keeping it natural
The lockdown briefly affected production of base oils until restrictions were eased in September. "Even though our exports have stopped due to the pandemic regulations, we are still manufacturing for our domestic customers," says Mohamed Sadathullah of Hameed and Co Perfumers in Hyderabad.

"We make perfumes with a sandalwood base, and also blends from attars bought from Kannauj, like henna, rose, and amber. We make *oudh* from the wood (agarwood, aloe wood) that grows in Assam. The wood chips are cooked to extract the oil from it. All our sandal-based perfumes are made without chemical additives and alcohol," he says.

Cities like Delhi, Hyderabad and Lucknow are also popular for *attar* shopping tours, which give visitors a whiff of history with an *ittar-saaz* or perfumier creating a customised *attar* using different compounds.

"We can recreate most of the French, Italian and American scents with the help of the ingredients here, because the base note is more or less the same," claims Sadathullah.

Measured in tolas (12 ml = 1 tola), the *attar* is sold in quaint craft glass bottles that add to the Oriental mystique of the perfume.

YouTuber Siddiqui, who launched his own perfume brand recently, says that he has come across some expert aroma replicators on his tours. In one of his videos on unusual *attars*, Siddiqui reviews products that smell like 'Johnson's Baby', mud, and Lucknowi *biryani*. "I feel we should do more to showcase our *attars* effectively. The manufacturers have not even entered into influencer marketing, though this industry is thriving," he says.

He points out the image problem *attars* seem to have, in general. "Expensive *attars*, which typically sell for ₹1,000 per 10ml, are packaged in ₹3 glass bottles with cheaper applicator sticks. Besides this, customers need to be educated on the right time of the year, and day, to use these natural scents. A winter-time perfume like musk can turn out to be very smelly in summer."



The world in primary colours

Seven-year-old Rithun Kunal in Madurai sells his paintings for ₹50,000; his parents donate it to charity



SOMA BASU

skill but I found his fondness for shapes and patterns and the way he colours them in contrasting shades too good for his age," she says.

That her son utilised the lockdown months productively rather than getting hooked to gadgets is what makes Preethika happy. Between March and November, Rithun spent approximately 200 hours with his canvases and colours.

The parents decided to hold a sale-cum-exhibition of his artworks in acrylic and it sprang a surprise when the two most expensive paintings with a price tag of ₹2,000 each were the first to go. A visitor from UK fell in love with a colourful doodle while a city doctor picked up a painting of two giraffes done in unusual colours. The possibility of donating the money to sponsor the education expenses of children from disadvantaged backgrounds emerged.

"I randomly priced the paintings from upwards of ₹250 depending on the size of the canvas and the time he spent to complete them," says Preethika, an ophthalmologist with Aravind Eye Hospital, who herself paints for relaxation. She says she did not expect all the paintings to sell. The exhibition was mainly to showcase how children can be encouraged to spend quality time at home.

Ask the Class II student of Lakshmi School about his favourite painting and prompt comes the reply: the one on the pandemic.

The frame is a collage – one half shows the virus with spikes on a dark night with dead vegetation around; it merges with the other painting of the virus decimated by a bright sun and greenery coming alive.

Appealing to the eye, it reflects the thought process of a sensitive little boy.



Young talent Rithun Kunal (with his mother Preethika Gandhi in the top picture) ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

To an easier time

Feel like you are functioning on autopilot, going through the motions of life without time to savour it? Knit-a-Tale organises a Share Your Story event where participants can reconnect with themselves and form bonds with others

through simple activities. Revisit your childhood memories and find common shared experiences. Roll back to a child-like mindset, through an hour of play, art and storytelling.

To be held via Zoom, on January 3, 7 pm to 8 pm. Tickets cost ₹200, available on instamojo.com/backyard. Contact 7358458177 for more details



POOCH CAFE



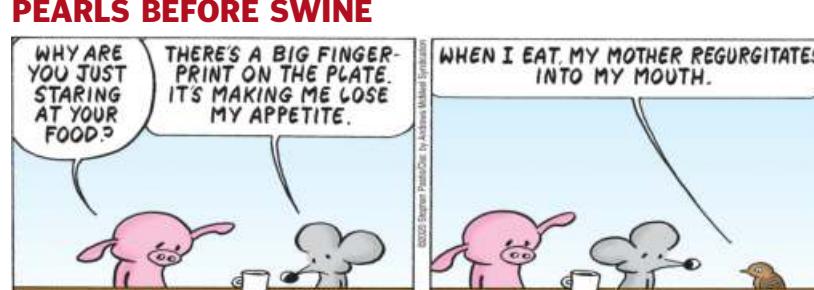
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



TIGER



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



'Trump's Pentagon appointees stalling transition, posing risks'

We aren't getting all the information on key national security areas, says Biden

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WILMINGTON

President-elect Joe Biden said on Monday that Donald Trump's appointees at the Pentagon were stalling on the transition and warned that the United States faces security risks as a result.

After he and Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris were briefed by their transition teams on national security, Mr. Biden said that political appointees at the Pentagon as well as the Office of Management and Budget had put up "roadblocks."

"Right now, we just aren't getting all the information that we need from the outgoing administration in key national security area(s)," Mr. Biden said after the briefing.

"It is nothing short, in my view, of irresponsibility."

Mr. Biden said he was seeking a "clear picture" from the outgoing administration on the force posture of U.S. troops around the



Rising tensions: Joe Biden speaking as Kamala Harris looks on at his transition headquarters in Wilmington. ■REUTERS

world. "We need full visibility into the budget planning under way at the Defense Department and other agencies in order to avoid any window of confusion or catch-up that our adversaries may try to exploit," Mr. Biden said.

Mr. Trump has refused to concede the November 3 election, which Mr. Biden won by some seven million votes and by 306-232 in the state-by-state Electoral College. The President has

made unsubstantiated claims of widespread fraud.

The Trump administration has drawn concern by shaking up the leadership of the Pentagon since the election, including firing Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who had distanced himself from the President's use of force against unarmed anti-racism demonstrators earlier this year.

Mr. Trump's new acting Defense Secretary Chris Miller has said that the outgoing

administration had agreed with Mr. Biden's people to pause briefings for the holiday season, an assertion that the incoming team called untrue.

Mr. Miller released a statement on Monday saying the Pentagon's coordination efforts with the transition team "already surpass those of recent administrations with over three weeks to go."

Tensions with Iran

He added that Department of Defense officials would continue working in a "transparent and collegial manner" to support the transition.

Mr. Trump's last-minute installation of loyalists at the Pentagon comes amid high tensions with Iran, which Mr. Trump blamed for a rocket attack on the U.S. Embassy in Iraq ahead of the January anniversary of the U.S. killing in Baghdad of a top Iranian general.

House votes to override Trump's veto of Defence Bill

109 Republicans supported Democrats, showing Trump's weakening grip on party

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

The Democratic-controlled House voted overwhelmingly to override President Donald Trump's veto of a Defence Bill, setting the stage for what would be the first veto override of his presidency.

The veto override was supported by 212 Democrats, 109 Republicans and an independent. Twenty Democrats opposed the override, along with 66 Republicans



Donald Trump

and an independent. The Senate, which is expected to vote on the override this week, also needs to approve it by a two-thirds majority.

Mr. Trump rejected the Defence Bill last week, saying it failed to limit social media companies he claims were biased against him during his failed reelection campaign.

Mr. Trump also opposes language that allows for the renaming of military bases that honour Confederate leaders.

construction.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Democrat from California, said after the vote that the House had done its part to ensure the NDAA becomes law "despite the President's dangerous sabotage efforts".

'Reckless veto'

"Trump's reckless veto would have denied our service members hazard-duty pay by blocking overwhelmingly bipartisan action to rename military bases," Ms. Pelosi said.

Senator Jim Inhofe, R-Oklahoma, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Com-

South Africa imposes new virus curbs

It announces ban on alcohol and makes wearing of masks mandatory in public

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

JOHANNESBURG

South Africa banned alcohol sales and made masks mandatory in public from Tuesday after a surge in coronavirus cases as the World Health Organisation warned that pandemics far more deadly than COVID-19 may lie ahead.

Nations around the world are struggling with winter spikes in infections that have pushed the global caseload close to 81 million, even as the rollout of vaccines gathers pace in North America and Europe.

'Lack of vigilance'

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa on Monday announced a ban on sale of alcohol and said face masks would be compulsory in public after his nation became the first in Africa to record one million cases.

"We have let down our guard, and unfortunately we are now paying the price," said Mr. Ramaphosa, blaming "super-spreader" social events and an "extreme lack



Battle continues: A health worker monitoring patients in a COVID-19 ward at a hospital near Cape Town. ■AFP

of vigilance over the holiday period" for the spike.

Mr. Ramaphosa said data showed "excessive alcohol consumption" leads to an increase in trauma cases reported at hospitals, causing an "unnecessary" strain on public health facilities.

Surging cases also forced authorities in Spain and other EU countries started over the weekend, and authorities fear vaccine hesitancy and rejection could hamper those efforts, especially because of misinformation campaigns on social media.

And in Spain, where the

vastated lives and economies across the globe, but the WHO warned on Monday that worse pandemics could lie ahead, urging the world to get serious about preparedness.

"This is a wakeup call," WHO emergencies chief Michael Ryan told reporters at a briefing marking a year since the UN agency first learned of the new virus spreading in China. "This pandemic ... has spread around the world extremely quickly and it has affected every corner of this planet, but this is not necessarily the big one," Mr. Ryan added.

"We need to get ready for something that may even be more severe in the future."

The warnings were backed up by the worrying trends reported worldwide.

South Korea on Tuesday logged its highest daily death toll since the beginning of the pandemic as it battled a third wave of infections. The U.S. has started vaccinating its troops, numbering around 28,000, based in South Korea.

COVID-19 patients in British hospitals surpass April peak

U.K. is back in the eye of the coronavirus storm: NHS chief

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LONDON

England is "back in the eye" of the coronavirus storm, health chiefs warned on Tuesday, with as many patients in hospital as during the initial peak in April.

The number of positive tests recorded over a 24-hour period also hit a new high of 41,385 on Monday. However, case figures do not include Scotland and Northern Ireland, which did not report over the Christmas

period. "Many of us have lost family, friends, colleagues and – at a time of year when we would normally be celebrating – a lot of people are understandably feeling anxious, frustrated and tired," said NHS England CEO Simon Stevens.

And now again we are back in the eye of the storm with a second wave of coronavirus sweeping Europe and, indeed, this country."

EU seeks release of citizen journalist in China prison

Zhang was jailed for Wuhan reporting

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BRUSSELS

The European Union on Tuesday demanded that China release citizen journalist Zhang Zhan and several other jailed reporters, lawyers and human rights champions.

Ms. Zhang was jailed on Monday for four years over allegations of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" during her coverage of the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak in epicentre Wuhan, her lawyer said.

"Prior to her detention, Ms. Zhang Zhan had been reporting about the coronavirus pandemic in Wuhan," EU foreign policy spokes-



An activist showing his support for Zhang Zhan in Hong Kong. ■GETTY IMAGES

man Peter Stano said in a statement. According to credible sources, Ms. Zhang has been subjected to torture and ill-treatment during her detention and her health condition had seriously deteriorated.

Islamist groups from Gaza fire rockets into sea

Event marks conflict with Israel in 2008

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

GAZA CITY

Palestinian armed groups staged military exercises in Gaza on Tuesday, including firing rockets into the sea, to mark the anniversary of the start of the 2008 conflict with Israel.

The demonstrations were scheduled to last several hours and involve about 10 groups in the Israeli-blockaded Palestinian enclave, said a spokesman for the Al-Quds Brigade forces, the armed wing of Islamic Jihad.

The goal of the exercise, the first of its kind, is to "strengthen the skills of combatants" and demonstrate the "unity" of armed groups in Gaza, added the spokesman, whose face was almost entirely covered by a traditional headscarf.

Hamas, the Islamist group that has controlled Gaza since 2007, was also taking part. Hamas's Al-Aqsa TV showed rockets being fired from the strip on Tuesday into the Mediterranean Sea.

Israel's Army said a projectile device was launched from Gaza overnight Monday to Tuesday, but that it did not cross into Israeli territory. Israel did not immediately retaliate to that launch with airstrikes, as it typically does when rockets fired from Gaza enter Israel.

Bangladesh sends 1,804 refugees to remote island

Some were forced to relocate: activists

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DHAKA

Seven Bangladesh Navy ships carrying 1,804 Rohingya refugees arrived on Tuesday at an isolated island where they will be relocated despite concerns among human rights groups about their safety.

They reached Bhawan Char island, 34 km from the mainland, after a four-hour naval journey from the port city of Chittagong, government official Mohammed Khurshed Alam Khan said.

He said authorities at the island received 433 men, 523 women and 848 children. Authorities insist all were willing to be relocated and no pressure was placed on them. But several human rights and activist groups say some were forced to go.

It was the second group of Rohingya refugees transferred from crowded, squalid camps in Cox's Bazar district to the island.

Five die after strong quake strikes Croatia

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

PETRINJA

A powerful earthquake killed at least five people as it tore down buildings in central Croatia on Tuesday, leaving a town near the epicentre without electricity as rescuers combed rubble in the dark.

The tremors were felt as far as Vienna while the damage was concentrated in and around Petrinja, a town some 50 km south of Croatia's capital Zagreb.

At least five people died, including a young girl in Petrinja and four in the nearby town of Glina, officials told local media.

Earlier, Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic said containers would be brought in to house those whose homes remained risky, while military barracks could also take in residents. The tremors reverberated across neighbouring countries, including Serbia and Slovenia.

50 journalists killed in 2020: watchdog

PARIS

Fifty journalists and media workers were killed in connection with their work in 2020, the majority in countries that are not at war, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said on Tuesday. The figure shows an increase in the targeting of reporters investigating organised crime, corruption. It highlighted murders in Mexico, India and Pakistan. ■AFP

CMYK



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AN-NOE

MARKET WATCH

	29-12-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	47,613	0.55
US Dollar	73.42	0.10
Gold	49,610	-0.30
Brent oil	51.40	-0.16

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	483.40	-0.15
Asian Paints	2696.80	12.90
Axis Bank	630.20	12.55
Bajaj Auto	3431.55	16.85
Bajaj Finserv	8976.05	-19.00
Bajaj Finance	5200.50	-3.60
Bharti Airtel	520.25	-1.35
BPCL	381.50	-1.25
Britannia Ind	3593.30	-10.25
Cipla	827.95	-2.20
Coal India	135.10	-2.55
Divis Lab	3784.20	18.20
Drd Reddys Lab	5165.60	-36.20
Eicher Motors	2460.55	9.20
GAIL (India)	123.75	1.10
Grasim Ind	909.50	2.85
HCL Tech	935.90	14.10
HDPC	2518.95	42.50
HDPC Bank	1427.20	14.35
HDPC Life	673.20	-5.50
Hero MotoCorp	3074.00	-8.60
Hindalco	235.60	-4.30
Hind Unilever	2384.30	-4.60
ICICI Bank	528.80	8.70
IndusInd Bank	912.90	45.95
Infosys	1250.30	10.00
Indian Oil Corp	91.20	-0.50
ITC	211.55	2.05
JSW Steel	381.80	-4.80
Kotak Bank	1999.30	10.40
L&T	1284.85	-4.55
M&M	707.05	-3.90
Maruti Suzuki	7452.35	30.65
Nestle India Ltd.	18262.65	-334.70
NTPC	98.60	-1.85
ONGC	93.15	-0.65
PowerGrid Corp	189.70	-1.85
Reliance Ind	1990.05	-13.25
SBI Life	899.30	-2.35
State Bank	277.90	2.70
Shree Cement	23839.65	124.10
Sun Pharma	590.60	3.65
Tata Motors	183.45	-2.90
Tata Steel	632.20	-0.45
TCS	2930.50	1.10
Tech Mahindra	965.65	18.55
Titan	1540.10	-3.45
UltraTech Cement	5146.75	4.60
UPL	454.70	1.30
Wipro	385.00	2.10

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.23	73.55
Euro	89.69	90.11
British Pound	98.74	99.18
Japanese Yen (100)	70.61	70.95
Chinese Yuan	11.21	11.26
Swiss Franc	82.72	83.09
Singapore Dollar	55.14	55.39
Canadian Dollar	57.16	57.41
Malaysian Ringgit	18.08	18.18
Australian Dollar	55.65	55.90

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Skoda to raise vehicle prices as costs surge

MUMBAI Skoda Auto India said it would increase vehicle prices by up to 2.5% from January 1. "There has been a surge in the cost of inputs for production due to significant volatility in the global commodity prices and foreign exchange rates. Skoda Auto India is now considering a price increase of up to 2.5% from January 1, 2021 across its model range," the company said.

Vedanta promoters raise \$1.4 billion to retire debt

NEW DELHI Promoters of Vedanta Ltd. have pledged their holding in the company to raise \$1.4 billion, mostly for repaying the debt coming up for maturity. In a filing, Vedanta said its promoters raised \$1 billion debt by issuing equivalent notes to Citicorp International Ltd. Separately, a unit of Vedanta Resources, will issue \$400 million in notes to an entity under Oaktree Capital Group.

Govt. mops up ₹8,965 cr. till Nov. from coal blocks

NEW DELHI The government mopped up ₹8,964.75 crore till last month from auctioned and allotted mines, according to the Coal Ministry. These revenue figures consist of upfront amount and monthly premium only, while royalty and taxes or cess are payable over and above these payments. Till date, 11 coal blocks under the MMDR Act have been allotted to various government firms, it said.

Port cargo shows volume growth: ICRA

MUMBAI Cargo volumes at Indian ports have shown growth – for the first time after 7 months of decline – in October and November, rising 3% and 1% year-on-year, respectively, an ICRA Ratings report said. "For the 8 months of FY21, cargo has declined 12%. However, the same is an improvement from the 22% decline in Q1 FY21..., indicating signs of recovery," it said.

CM YK

Policy roll-back may dent banks' health'

Profitability of NBFCs may be 'dampened' due to loan impairment, lower credit demand: RBI report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

In 2020-21, as policy support is rolled back, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may dent the health of the banks and non-banks, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in its Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India.

To mitigate the impact of COVID-19, the RBI allowed lending institutions to grant a moratorium on payment of instalments of term loans due between March 1, and May 31, which was later extended till August 31. The report said as at end-August, borrowers accounting for about 40% of outstanding loans in the financial system (ie banks and NBFCs) had availed of the moratorium.

"The data on gross non-performing assets (GNPA) of banks are yet to reflect the



Mounting anxiety: Data on bank NPAs are yet to reflect the stress, given the asset quality standstill. ■ PAUL NORONHA

stress, obscured under the asset quality standstill with attendant financial stability implications. An analysis of published quarterly results of a sample of banks indicates that their GNPA ratios would have been higher, in the range of 0.10% to 0.66%, at end-September 2020," it said in the report, which de-

scribes emanating stress to a certain extent, it said.

The report said preliminary estimates suggested that potential recapitalisation requirements for meeting regulatory purposes as well as for growth capital may be to the extent of 150 basis points (bps) of the common equity tier I (CET 1) ratio for the banking system.

It said while the government had earmarked ₹20,000 crore in the first supplementary demands for grants for capital infusion in public sector banks (PSBs), they may raise more resources from the market as an optimal capital raising strategy.

Specifically on NBFCs, the report said profitability of non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) may be 'dampened' going ahead due to the loan impairment and

lower credit demand. Due to the moratorium and asset classification standstill, asset quality shored up. However, many NBFCs had made additional provisioning as per the expected credit loss norm; and bolstered their capital position by ploughing back dividends, it said.

As on August 31, about 26.6% of the total customers of NBFCs had availed of the moratorium and 44.9% of their total loan outstanding was under moratorium, it added. The report said a study of the distribution of TLTRO funds revealed that ₹76,843 crore had been requested by NBFCs and housing finance firms, four-fifths of which had been disbursed. NBFCs garnered 60% of the total disbursement, it added.

(With PTI inputs)

India can build on rural push, federalism, consumer base'

MNREGA, transfer payments helped spur demand: Subbarao

CV-shaped recovery in growth does not reflect absolute output. Output in FY22 will be lower than that in FY20

households too enjoying the benefits. "The expanded MNREGA provided a lifeline when most needed, and the frontloaded transfer payments to women, pensioners and farmers have... helped revive demand."

"Brisk procurement by the FCI (Food Corporation of India) has buttressed farmers' incomes while it helped the government extend the food security programme until end November."

Stating that the Indian economy was already in a troubled shape even before the COVID-19 crisis, he said a 'V' shaped recovery in growth rate did not mean a 'V' shaped recovery in absolute output and that the level of output in FY22 will be lower than that seen in FY20.

As part of the transaction, there will be a call option in respect of AAII's remaining 16.33% stake in AAII, exercised by Tata Sons at any time the transaction is completed," AirAsia Group Berhad said in a filing.

With this, the Tatas' stake in AirAsia India has risen from 51% to 83.67%. The Tatas did not offer comment.

"As part of the transaction, there will be a call option in respect of AAII's remaining 16.33% stake in AAII, exercised by Tata Sons at any time the transaction is completed," AirAsia Group Berhad said in a filing.

And for the Tatas, it is a sound decision as they are bidding for AAII."



In his comments, Jitender Bhargava, ex-ED of Air India (AI), said, "It is a win-win situation for both."

"AirAsia Berhad had to take a conscious decision as it is facing fund constraints in its core markets and will deploy the capital there. And for the Tatas, it is a sound decision as they are bidding for AAII."

Deference to those with influence fuels money laundering'

SBI compliance chief flags lax culture

VIKAS DHOTI
NEW DELHI

Banks' deferential treatment towards powerful and influential people is one of the reasons money laundering has risen in the country in recent years, India's largest bank's compliance chief said on Tuesday.

State Bank of India's Group Compliance Officer Soma Sankar Prasad also stressed that India 'unfortunately' had no distinct norms in place for 'politically exposed persons' opening bank accounts.

"There are certain powerful and influential customers... In India, we still have this hierarchy in terms of power and influence with the result that you treat different people differently."

"That also happens in banks... so when certain important people come into the bank for opening an account, you don't ask for all the details and you open the account. So that is again one of the reasons that things can go wrong," he said.

Responding to a query on how banks should treat politically exposed persons, the senior SBI official said: "Unfortunately, we don't have this concept to check for 'politically exposed persons' in India. We can open accounts for them, but extra details must be called for and transactions must also be monitored closely because there is a possibility that this person might use the account for money laundering by diverting money which is earned through illegal means."

Several countries impose tougher monitoring norms on bank accounts operated



by politically exposed persons, defined as those holding an important position in government, bureaucracy or is a relative of someone holding such a position.

The surge in digitisation, increasing complexity of banking transactions and fierce competition among banks has also created money-laundering opportunities, while the cores of transactions that take place in the system daily makes it tougher to detect suspicious transactions, Mr. Prasad said at an Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism conference hosted by the Global Counter Terrorism Council.

Mr. Prasad, also deputy MD at SBI, said a 'misplaced sense of loyalty' towards customers and their interests also affects full disclosure at the time of opening accounts, with frontline staff also fretting about loss of business to other banks.

"The lax implementation of Know-Your-Customer norms... So when accounts are being opened, you don't interview the customer properly, with the result that sometimes the occupation or the income level is not entered correctly," he said, adding that this makes it difficult to tag suspicious transactions.

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India buries the ghosts of Adelaide at the MCG

Rahane's steady influence and bowlers' magnificent efforts lead to eight-wicket win; Test debutants Gill and Siraj impress

INDIA IN AUS

REUTERS
MELBOURNE

A rejuvenated India, sans Virat Kohli, turned the tables on Australia to claim the second Test at the MCG with a rousing eight-wicket win within four days and breathe life into the series.

Needing only 70 for victory after bowling Australia out for 200 by lunch, opener Shubman Gill (35 not out) and captain Ajinkya Rahane (27 not out) guided India home to square the series 1-1.

Youthful exuberance

Having bowled India out for 36 in the crushing eight-wicket win in Adelaide, Australia's pacemen steamed in with their usual vigour but were repelled by a belligerent Gill, who enjoyed a fine debut as Test opener.

The match belonged to Rahane, however, who took over the captaincy after Adelaide when regular skipper Kohli returned to India for the birth of his first child.



Beginning of the end: The last Australian wicket falls — Josh Hazlewood shouldering arms to Ashwin — leaving India a meagre target to chase. ■ AFP

STATOSPHERE



0 India has not lost a Test when Rahane scored a century, winning nine and drawing three

1 Rahane is the first Indian captain to score a Test century on Australian soil in a winning cause

1 First time no Australian batsman reached 50 in a home Test since 1988-89 (vs West Indies, MCG)

1 Siraj is the first visiting player to bag 5-plus wickets on debut in a Boxing Day Test

2 Rahane has become the second Indian captain to win his first three Tests after Dhoni, who won his first four

3 Jadeja is the third Indian after Dhoni and Kohli to play at least 50 matches in all three formats

4 India has won its fourth Test in Melbourne (1978, 1981, 2018, 2020), the most at an away venue.

It has emerged victorious thrice each in Port of Spain, Kingston and SSC, Colombo

21 Number of wins India has registered in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy since 1996. It has 19 losses and 10 draws in 50 Tests

52 Number of overseas Test wins for India, the eighth victory in Australia in 50 games and 29th against the opponent in 100 matches between the two

192 Number of left-handers Ashwin has dismissed, the most in Test cricket, surpassing Muralitharan's 191

Rahane lauds team's character and intent

Praises debutant duo of Gill and Siraj

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE

India skipper Ajinkya Rahane on Tuesday singled out the debutant duo of Shubman Gill and Mohammed Siraj while commanding the tremendous character shown by his side to turn it around in the second Test.

Gill scored 45 and 35 not out while Siraj returned with five wickets, including three in Australia's second innings.

"I am really proud of all the players. I want to give credit to the debutants Siraj and Gill, the character they showed after the Adelaide loss was great to see," Rahane said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

Disciplined

Rahane said it is never easy for debutants to be consistently disciplined in their game but Gill and Siraj showed how it is done.

"Shubman, we all know his First Class career and in this game, he showed composure and the intent to play his shots at this level."

"Siraj has shown that he can bowl with discipline. It's really difficult for debutants to bowl with discipline but that's where I think the First Class experience comes in handy," said Rahane.



Drawing plaudits: Shubman Gill's temperament has come in for appreciation from skipper Rahane and coach Shastri. ■ AP

Extremely frustrating, says Paine

S. DIPAK RAGAV

Australian skipper Tim Paine expressed his frustration over the Decision Review System (DRS) and the third umpire after he was adjudged caught behind in the second innings off Ravindra Jadeja's bowling.

Paine was initially given not out by the on-field umpire before India reviewed the decision during the third day's play. There was a spike shown on Real Time Snicko (RTS) when the ball went past his bat though there was no mark on his bat

when seen through the Hot Spot camera.

Paine was adamant he did not hit the ball, adding that his dismissal at a crucial time was not ideal for his side. "It was extremely frustrating, no doubt about that. It was a crucial part of the game," said Paine.

Paine revealed that he had had a chat with the umpires and match officials, but admitted that it was not "very productive".

"My concern yesterday [Monday] was not with the technology, it was with the precedent that was set in the

first innings (with Cheteshwar Pujara) and the fact I just think the decision was made too quickly.

"He (Paul Wilson, third umpire) did not look at enough replays to see the full evidence, that there was probably a gap between bat and ball. The line itself had started before it went past my bat and it finished again. So there were just lots of things that did not marry up for me."

The third Test will be telecast live from January 7 on Sony Six, Sony Ten 1 and Sony Ten 3

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SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13131

D	I	S	S	E	R	T	A	T	I	O	N	
B	N	E	O	L	M	U	T					
O	R	D	I	N	A	L	B	U	L	A		
R	I	T	T	L	I	U	L	A				
U	T	T	E	S	T	E	T	E				
A	R	E	S	T	E	T	E	E				
G	R	A	T	S	T	R	E					
A	R	T	E	S	T	R	E					
S	T	E	T	E	T	E	E					
T	E	T	E	E	T	E	E					
R	E	T	E	E	T	E	E					
E	T	E	E	E	T	E	E					
T	E	E	E	E	T	E	E					

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

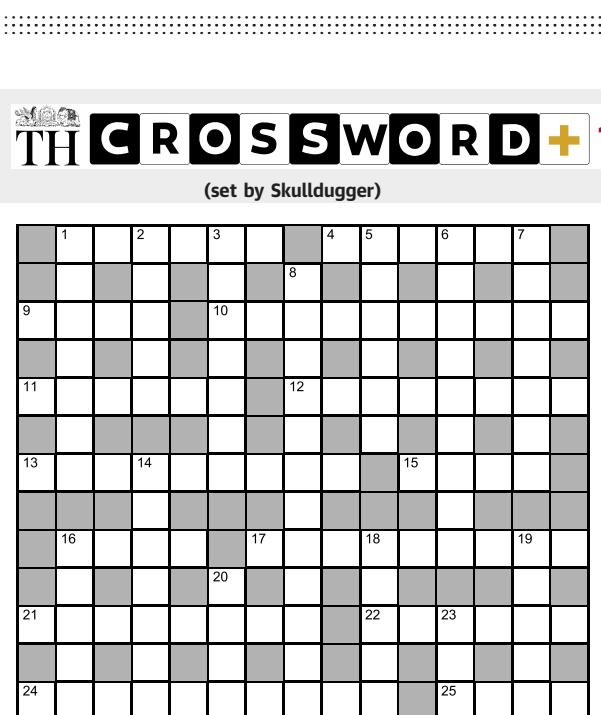
FAITH

Wealth given to bhaktas

Vishnu Sahasranama has bhashyas (commentaries) written by the Advaita, Visishtadvaita and Dvaita schools of philosophy. The Advaita commentary was written by Sankara Bhagavatpad; the Visishtadvaitic commentary titled Bhagavad Gita Darpana, was written by Parasara Bhatta; the Dvaita commentary was by Satyasyandareetha.

In the Vishnu Sahasranama, some names are repeated, said M.A. Venkatakrishnan in a discourse. Parasara Bhatta specifically attributes some names to specific vibhava avatars. References to Lord Krishna begin with the name Vasurata, according to Parasara Bhatta. This name is like a prelude or introduction to Krishna, the poornam avatar. Vasurata means His tejas is responsible for His birth. After this come many names, all referring to Krishna. Interestingly, in the same verse, the name Vasupradaha occurs twice, and the occurrence is not spaced out; but the name is repeated in succession. Vasu means wealth, and Sankara Bhagavatpad interprets the first Vasupradaha as meaning He who gives wealth to all, including Kubera.

The second time the name occurs, he says it means He who gives moksha to His bhaktas. But Parasara Bhatta says the first time Vasupradaha occurs, it means He gave a great wealth, namely Himself, to Devaki and Vasudeva. Namazhvar describes Him as a Kalpaka vriksha. This tree gives whatever one asks of it. But even this tree will not give itself. But the Lord gives Himself to His devotees. According to Parasara Bhatta, the second Vasupradaha means He who gave Devaki and Vasudeva the great good fortune of being His parents. He was born with all the features Devaki desired.



ACROSS

- 1 Issue involving 101 heirs (6)
- 4 Lawrence to support uprising for sure (3,3)
- 9 Small-scale criticism (4)
- 10 Chemical weapon Territorial Army guards misused in Mississippi (7,3)
- 11 Frank is able and accomplished (6)
- 12 Institute's new member (8)

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA — 1ST INNINGS: 195.
INDIA — 1ST INNINGS: 326.

AUSTRALIA — 2ND INNINGS: Matthew Wade lbw b Jadeja 40 (137b, 3x4), Joe Burns c Pant b Umesh 4 (10b), Marnus Labuschagne c Rahane b Ashwin 28 (49b, 1x4), Steve Smith b Umrah 8 (30b), Travis Head c Mayank b Siraj 17 (46b), Cameron Green c Jadeja b Siraj 45 (146b, 5x4), Tim Paine c Pant b Jadeja 1 (9b), Pat Cummins c Mayank b Umrah 22 (103b, 1x4), Mitchell Starc (not out) 14 (56b), Nathan Lyon c Pant b Siraj 3 (15b), Josh Hazlewood b Ashwin 10 (21b); Extras (lb, nb-3): 8; Total (in 103.1 overs): 200.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-4 (Burns, 3.1 overs), 2-42 (Labuschagne, 17.5), 3-71 (Smith, 32.2), 4-98 (Head, 46.1), 6-99 (Paine, 47.4), 7-156 (Cummins, 51-9.5).

AUSTRALIA BOWLING: Starc 4-0-20-1, Cummins 5-0-22-1, Hazlewood 3-1-14-0, Lyon 2.5-0-5-0, Labuschagne 1-0-9-0.

Man-of-the-Match: Rahane. India won by eight wickets to level series 1-1.

Third Test: January 7-11 (Sydney).

True to potential: The Jasprit Bumrah-led attack rose to the occasion to help India script a great win. ■ AP

Rahane for his all-round performance and the century in the first innings that proved pivotal.

The discipline he showed on a big stage in a massive arena as captain of the team batting at number four! When he went in, we were (61 for two) and to bat six hours on probably the toughest day to bat. It was overcast the whole day and, the sun did not come out at all. Unbelievable concentration! Shastri said.

SA registers thumping win

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

CENTURION

South Africa wrapped up victory by an innings and 45 runs shortly after lunch on the fourth day of the first Test against Sri Lanka here on Tuesday. The visitors, needing 225 runs to avoid an innings defeat, were bowled

out for 180.

Dinesh Chandimal, who appeared to suffer a groin injury towards the end of Monday's play, resumed his innings on Tuesday and survived for 40 minutes before being bowled for 25 by a ball from the medium-paced Mulder which cut back off



Demolition job: South African players leave the field after the massive victory on Tuesday. ■ GETTY IMAGES

IN BRIEF

Aston Villa holds Chelsea

LONDON

Chelsea, overhauled by coach Frank Lampard after a weekend loss to Arsenal, drew 1-1 draw at home to Aston Villa on Monday. The result: Chelsea 1 (Giroud 34) drew with Aston Villa 1 (El Ghazi 50).

CFC-ATKMB match drawn

BAMBOLOM

Chennaiyin FC (CFC) and ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB) played out a goalless draw in a match where both teams preferred to sit back and hold their fort in the Indian Super League at the GMC Stadium in Bambolim on Tuesday.

Wednesday's match: Hyderabad FC vs FC Goa, 7.30 p.m.

Southee has Pakistan on the ropes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MOUNT MAUNGANAU

Swing king Tim Southee celebrated his milestone 300th wicket as New Zealand sensed victory over Pakistan at stumps on day four of the first cricket Test here on Tuesday.

New Zealand declared its second innings at 180 for five and Pakistan, set an unlikely target of 373, will go into the final day at 71 for three. Azhar Ali will resume on 34 with Fawad Alam on 21.

The Black Caps need to sweep the two-Test series if they are to be in contention to make the World Test Championship final at Lords in June.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MOUNT MAUNGANAU

In New Zealand's second innings, the Pakistan quicks struggled to get any assistance from the fourth-day

wicket, but Southee and Trent Boult immediately had the ball dancing to their tune.

SCOREBOARD

New Zealand – 1st innings: 431.

Pakistan – 1st innings: 239.

New Zealand – 2nd innings: T.

Latham c Abid b Naseem 53, T.

Blundell b Abbas 6, K. Williamson c Rizwan b Naseem 21,

R. Taylor (not out) 12, H. Nicholls c Abbas b Naseem 11, B.J.

Watling run out 5, M. Santner (not out) 6; Extras (lb-2, w-1,

nb-5); Total (for five wkts. decl. in 45.3 overs): 180.

Fall of wickets: 1-111, 2-139, 3-

147, 4-165, 5-170.

Pakistan bowling: Afridi 11-0

47-0, Abbas 11-2-33-1, Naseem

12.3-1-55-3, Ashraf 4-1-18-0,

Yasir 6-0-21-0, Masood 1-0-4-0.

Pakistan – 2nd innings: S.

Masood c Taylor b Southee 0,

Abid Ali c Watling b Boult 0,

Azhar Ali (batting) 34, H. Sohail c Santner b Southee 9, F. Alami (batting) 21; Extras (b-4, lb-2,

w-1); Total (for three wkts. in 38 overs): 71.

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-0, 3-37.

New Zealand bowling: Southee

9-5-15-2, Boult 10-4-24-1,

Jameson 7-6-3-0, Wagner 6-3-

4-0, Santner 6-1-19-0.

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9-5-15-2, Boult 10-4-24-1,

Jameson 7-6-3-0, Wagner 6-3-

4-0, Santner 6-1-19-0.

SCOREBOARD

New Zealand – 1st innings: 431.

Pakistan – 1st innings: 239.

New Zealand – 2nd innings: T.

Latham c Abid b Naseem 53, T.

Blundell b Abbas 6, K. Williamson c Rizwan b Naseem 21,

R. Taylor (not out) 12, H. Nicholls c Abbas b Naseem 11, B.J.

Watling run out 5, M. Santner (not out) 6; Extras (lb-2, w-1,

nb-5); Total (for five wkts. decl. in 45.3 overs): 180.

Fall of wickets: Afridi 11-0

47-0, Abbas 11-2-33-1, Naseem

12.3-1-55-3, Ashraf 4-1-18-0,

Yasir 6-0-21-0, Masood 1-0-4-0.

Pakistan – 2nd innings: S.

Masood c Taylor b Southee 0,

Abid Ali c Watling b Boult 0,

Azhar Ali (batting) 34, H. Sohail c Santner b Southee 9, F. Alami (batting) 21; Extras (b-4, lb-2,

w-1); Total (for three wkts. in 38 overs): 71.

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-0, 3-37.

New Zealand bowling: Southee

9-5-15-2, Boult 10-4-24-1,

Jameson 7-6-3-0, Wagner 6-3-

4-0, Santner 6-1-19-0.

Ajinkya Rahane ensures that the real India stands up



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

that fetched him his 12th and most important century. In 2014, when he made a century at Lord's, he evoked another calm batsman, Gundappa Viswanath. There is no violence in anything they do. India have not lost a Test where either of them has scored a century.

Calmness

But it wasn't the batting alone. There was a calmness about Rahane's captaincy and an assurance about his moves on the field that communicated itself to his team. He was aggressive, positive, and set attacking fields. All this calmly, almost with a smile. It was confirmation of another theory – that you can be a successful captain either in the assertive Virat Kohli manner or in the composed Rahane manner. To be calm and more importantly, the cause of calmness in others is just as important as being aggressive and the cause of aggression in

others. It showed too just how important Rahane is as vice-captain to Kohli – vice-captains play important roles, usually behind the scenes.

Ravichandran Ashwin, who has been having a good tour said in an interview, "Jinks" (Rahane's) calmness in the dressing room provided us that stability to go out there and express ourselves in this game." I am not sure if he was speaking for the whole team, but perhaps after that 36 everyone was aware that the only way to go was up. It was a more relaxed team that played in Melbourne. Further confirmation, I think, that cricket teams tend to reflect the temperament of their captains.

Next big thing

That India were able to win despite missing four frontline players – Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Mohammed Shami and Ishant

Sharma – is tribute to a system where graduation from the 'A' side is natural and players arrive ready for battle. Shubman Gill and Mohammed Siraj have come through the system and both had memorable debuts. Gill, standing upright and driving the fast bowlers displayed a disposition that usually develops with experience – the ability to clear the mind of a mistake and focus on the next delivery. He could well be the next big thing in Indian cricket. Siraj, who lost his father recently but decided to stay on in Australia, gave the impression he belonged too.

India made some bold choices, playing Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja. Pant's uncertainty keeping to spin continues, but he is a gifted batsman who can throw bowlers off their length. Jadeja, playing his 50th Test has made nearly two thousand runs and taken over 200 wickets. Both his runs and wickets were

important in Melbourne.

The Kohlis and the Gills will garner attention wherever they play and in whatever format. But there is an important lesson for India here. No Test team can afford to compete without its Cheteshwar Pujaras and Ajinkya Rahanes. Yet, the latter duo has to often fight harder than the others; the axe, or at least talk of the axe is never far when the middle order batting is discussed. Strike rates assume undue importance; the ability to grind it out is seldom given its importance.

Pujara was the hero of the last tour when India won the series for the first time in Australia. He made 43 in the first Test here, but another failure in the third Test would start the talk. Just as it did when Rahane missed out in South Africa. In his last 44 innings before this Test, he had two centuries; not enough by modern, impatient standards.

Yet, Rahane's strike rate of 50 compares well with Steve Smith's 55, Kane Williamson's 52 and Kohli's 57.

There was another battle India had to fight – bubble fatigue. Since the IPL quarantine in August, players have been in the bubble, cut off from family and friends. That's a long time for active sportsmen to be shut away (so to speak), with little to do outside the matches. Yet India have coped well, without the kind of breaches seen with other teams. That is quite remarkable too.

Was this India's finest away victory in this century? Perhaps. The only competition might be Perth after the 'Monkey-gate' controversy in 2007-08. Australia did an India (of the previous Test) here – dropped catches, discovered cracks in the batting order, and found it difficult to score enough runs quickly enough to apply pressure. Now India will have to deal with the pressure of winning!

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