



Budget session of Kerala Assembly gets off to a stormy start
Page 8



Bird flu confirmed in 6 States; unusual deaths in Delhi being checked
Page 10



Trump says focus is on smooth transition, won't attend inauguration
Page 13



Smith returns to form with a fine century at the SCG
Page 15

PRINTED AT • CHENNAI • COIMBATORE • BENGALURU • HYDERABAD • MADURAI • NOIDA • VISAKHAPATNAM • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • KOCHI • VIJAYAWADA • MANGALURU • TIRUCHIRAPPALLI • KOLKATA • HUBBALLI • MOHALI • MALAPPURAM • MUMBAI • TIRUPATI • LUCKNOW • CUTTACK • PATNA

NEARBY



Decide on Rajoana mercy plea by R-Day: SC to govt.

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday pushed the government to take a decision on a mercy petition filed by Balwant Singh Rajoana, facing capital punishment for the assassination of former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh, before Republic Day.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

Four die after consuming spurious liquor in U.P.

LUCKNOW

Four people have died after consuming suspected spurious liquor at Jeetgadi village in Uttar Pradesh. Four Bulandshah policemen were suspended on Friday in connection with the deaths.

REGION ▶ PAGE 5

GUARANTEED crack IAS PRELIMS SELECTION FOR IAS 2021 OR GET 100% FEE BACK
10 Red Books cover WE PROMISE & WE DELIVERED
• All Old & New IAS's and 70+ Major Books Covered
• 3 years of current Affairs (Jan 2018 to Dec 2021)
• Synopsis of India Year Book & Eco Survey 2021
10,000/- Call - 921-7070707

Stones hurled during BJP rally in Nandigram

KOLKATA

A ruckus broke out at the mega rally of the BJP in Nandigram, West Bengal, on Friday. Stones were hurled and agitated supporters shouted slogans directed at the party leadership.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

Centre turns to SC as talks with farmers fail to break deadlock

Court has every right to examine policy: Tomar

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The eighth round of talks between the Centre and the farmer unions, which saw raised voices and increased tensions, ended without any resolution to the ongoing stalemate over the repeal of the three farm reform laws.

A ninth round of talks will be held on January 15, after the Supreme Court's next hearing on the issue which is likely to be held on January



Taking precautions: Fogging being done to deal with mosquitoes at the Singhu border on Friday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

11. According to union leaders, the Centre told them that the issue is best resolved by the Supreme Court, asking the farmers to appear at

the next hearing and suggesting that it would request daily hearings for speedy resolution of the case.

Union Agriculture Minis-

ter Narendra Singh Tomar would not confirm this.

Farmers unhappy

Farmer leaders said that policy issues should not be decided by the court, which is only examining the constitutional validity of the laws.

"In our democracy, it is Parliament which makes the laws. But the Supreme Court has every right to examine it," Mr. Tomar told journalists after the meeting. "Whatever decision the court gives, the government is committed to following it."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

'CENTRE RUTHLESS' ▶ PAGE 9

A plan to send 50K postcards signed by farmers to PM

If people can come here to support the protesters, they must'

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI



Muskan Jattana has come from Melbourne to join the farmers' protest in Delhi.
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

join the agitation.

"Postcards have been an important part of my life. I used to send postcards to my mother whenever I travelled. So, this idea clicked

with me," she said.

The 20-year-old said the idea was inspired by two girls from Maharashtra who had bought 100 postcards and asked people online to share messages on the farmers' protest, which they would then send to the PMO.

"I suggested that the girls get the messages written by the farmers but they did not have the means, so a couple of us thought of doing this," she said, adding that she shared the idea on a WhatsApp group which has youths from different countries.

"So far, we have printed

5,000 postcards for farmers and their supporters at the Singhu and Tikri borders to pen messages," she said. The goal is to reach 50,000 postcards, after which they will be sent to the PMO.

"Modi ji has karo. Let egos go. These farmers are ours. Let's be one and work for the progress of this great nation," read one postcard.

Whether the PM reads them or not is not important, she said. "It's about people writing in words what they are feeling."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

IMMUNOLOGIST DISAGREES WITH APPROVAL ▶ PAGE 10

Season's harvest



At work: Inmates of the Tiruchi Central Prison harvest sugarcane ahead of Pongal on the prison campus on Friday. ■ M. MOORTHY

Over half of Army personnel under severe stress, says study

More soldiers lost every year in non-combat situations than in response to enemy, terrorist activities



Endurance test: Prolonged counter-terrorism duty is cited as one of the reasons for increased stress levels.

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

More than half of Indian Army personnel seem to be under severe stress and the Army has been losing more personnel every year due to suicides, fratricides and untoward incidents than in response to any enemy or terrorist activities, according to the findings of a study by United Service Institution of India (USI), a Service think tank.

"There has been a significant increase in stress levels amongst Indian Army personnel during approximately last two decades due to operational and non-operational stressors," one of the findings states. "Prolonged exposure of Indian Army personnel to Counter Insurgency and Counter Terrorism (CI/CT) areas

environment has been one of the contributory factors for increased stress levels," the study notes.

The research was undertaken during 2019-20 by Col. AK Mor, Senior Research Fellow at the USI, and presented at a webinar titled "Prevailing Stress Levels in Indian Army due to Prolonged Exposure to

effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units too."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels, compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

The study observes that the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high amongst JCOs and ORs.

"It seems to be a growing matter of concern amongst Officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of government," it says.

rily... However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs demonstrate," it states.

Management measures

The study highlights that various management measures implemented by the Army and Defence Ministry in the last 15 years have not been able to achieve the desired results.

"Units and sub-units under stress are likely to witness an increased number of incidents of indiscipline, unsatisfactory state of training, inadequate maintenance of equipment and low morale, motivation and esprit-de-corps, thereby, adversely affecting their combat preparedness and operational performance," it says.

Supreme Court tells govt. to arm forest officers to fight poachers

Consider involving CBI for help, says the apex court

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday urged the government to arm forest officers and provide them with bullet-proof vests and vehicles when told that India recorded the "greatest number of mortal fatalities" among forest officials in the world.

Appearing before a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, senior advocate Shyam Divan said India accounted for 30% of fatalities among forest rangers in the world.

International crime. Recently, I was told that the pangolin skin trade extended to China," he noted.

The court said the Centre should consider involving premier organisations such as the CBI to help the forest staff. "There should even be a separate wing or wildlife division in the Enforcement Directorate with clean officials

to track and investigate crimes of the poachers and the proceeds of their crime... The amounts involved are huge and justify the formation of a separate wing by the ED," Chief Justice Bobde addressed Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre.

CJI Bobde pointed out how forest rangers in Assam were armed and "no one dares come near them".

"But in States like Madhya Pradesh, they roam around with lathis. In Karnataka, forest guards are in chappals and [carry] just lathis... In these States, forest guards are slapped around by poachers," the CJI said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

to track and investigate crimes of the poachers and the proceeds of their crime... The amounts involved are huge and justify the formation of a separate wing by the ED," Chief Justice Bobde addressed Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre.

CJI Bobde pointed out how forest rangers in Assam were armed and "no one dares come near them".

"But in States like Madhya Pradesh, they roam around with lathis. In Karnataka, forest guards are in chappals and [carry] just lathis... In these States, forest guards are slapped around by poachers," the CJI said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

to track and investigate crimes of the poachers and the proceeds of their crime... The amounts involved are huge and justify the formation of a separate wing by the ED," Chief Justice Bobde addressed Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre.

CJI Bobde pointed out how forest rangers in Assam were armed and "no one dares come near them".

"But in States like Madhya Pradesh, they roam around with lathis. In Karnataka, forest guards are in chappals and [carry] just lathis... In these States, forest guards are slapped around by poachers," the CJI said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Tractor trolley parade turnout unexpected, say protesting farmers

Families in Punjab, Haryana told to send at least one or two members for R-Day rally

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A day after the tractor trolley parade, protesting farmers said they had not expected huge turnout and challenged the government to imagine the scenario on January 26.

"We were expecting 50,000 tractors and trolleys for the march. But it reached 1 lakh vehicles. It was absolutely unexpected," said Santok Singh Sandhu, committee member, Kirti Kisan Union.

Mr. Sandhu said that he was sure that the government would not agree to their demands on Friday as well. "They will just go on to show everyone that they are bending and we are not. But we will not step back because these are not the laws we asked for," he said.

Mr. Sandhu said for the Re-



Farmers raising slogans at Delhi-Meerut expressway near the Ghazipur border on Friday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

public Day rally, they have asked families in every village of Punjab, Haryana and other States to send at least one or two members each along with their tractors. "If farmers won't be left with land, what will they do with the tractor?" he asked.

Amreek Singh, chief of Bharat Kisan Union Jalandhar, said that the government has "no brains". "They have

not agreed today [Friday] and it only means that the protest will get stronger. There could be dire consequences and they are not understanding this," he said.

Cleaning machine

In another development, at the protest site, as heavy rainfall led to accumulation of garbage and muck, a cleaning machine purportedly worth

₹35 lakh was hired and brought by a group of youths from Ludhiana under the banner Punjab Youth Force Organisation (PYFO).

"We thought the government will do something, but they did not. They will probably start blaming the farmers for dirtying the place and we will not take any chance. In fact, there's only one machine here, which is not enough for the entire place, and some help by the authorities would be appreciated," said Jagjit Singh Mangat, PYFO member and IT-wing head. The machine runs about 12-13 km a day collecting the garbage in a tanker using vacuum and then dumps it at a nearby yard.

A group from Sis Ganj Gurudwara also offered shoe cleaning service at the site.

For Gurwinder Singh, cycling 420 km to the Singhu border from Ferozepur turned out to be a blessing as the Good Samaritans in Italy and Canada reached out to him and bought him a bike, besides helping him to set up a tea kiosk in his village.

Gurwinder paid his gratitude by coming back to the Singhu border on his motorcycle.

The 29-year-old landless labourer from Ferozepur had come on his bicycle to mark his presence at the protest on December 22 because he believed that God and his Gurus reside where there is *sangat* and that the protest site is a place of worship.

The Hindu had reported his four-days three-nights journey while videos of him cycling his way to the protest site were shared on social media.



Gurwinder paid his gratitude by coming back to the Singhu border on his motorcycle. ■ HEMANI BHANDARI

hours on December 31 and spent the New Year with my farmer brothers," said Gurwinder, who returned home on January 6.

Call from Canada

In addition to the bike, a family from Canada also reached out to Gurwinder and offered to help him set up a tea kiosk in his village. They've sent ₹25,000 so far, he said.

"People from the village have been coming to my house to praise me. They say I've made them proud and made Ferozepur's name famous. One person gave me a pair of shoes and another provided me one month's ration," he said.

Gurwinder, father of 11-month-old twins, said he feels short of words to describe the feelings. "I believed the site to be a place of worship and for me, God has proved it to be."

Builder, accomplice arrested for false extortion complaint

Accused wanted police protection to get rid of creditors

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A builder, along with an accomplice, allegedly hatched a conspiracy to mislead investigators by registering a false complaint of extortion to gain police protection and get rid of creditors, officials said on Friday.

One of the accused, Ashok Yadav (37), who works as a POP contractor for the builder, has been arrested, they added.

Raids were conducted, following which the 40-year-old builder, identified as Gaurav Jain, was arrested on Friday. He cooked up a story and filed a false complaint at Preet Vihar police station in a bid to get rid of his creditors, a police officer said.

According to the police, Mr. Jain is a resident of Preet Vihar in east Delhi. He and

During sustained interrogation, the accomplice said he was following the builder's directions who had promised him big contracts in the future

DEEPAK YADAV
Deputy Commissioner of Police (East)

not paid, the police said. A case was registered, a database of around 40-45 suspects was prepared and their details were minutely analysed, Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Deepak Yadav said.

"During sustained interrogation, one of the suspects, Mr. Yadav, confessed to the crime. He said that he was following Mr. Jain's directions, who wanted police protection and get rid of his creditors. He also disclosed that Mr. Jain had assured him of big contracts in the future," he said.

Mr. Yadav had come in contact with the builder in 2011, became a POP contractor and started working for him since then, the police said, adding that a car used by Mr. Jain had been seized.

Mr. Yadav had approached the police with his complaint on December 29 last year, alleging that he had received a letter through courier with an extortion demand of ₹25 lakh and was threatened with life if the money was

seized from his possession. The police got a tip-off on Thursday that Mr. Pandey would come to Pitampura to deliver a consignment of illegal arms to his contact, a senior police officer said.

Mr. Pandey was apprehended, "A trap was laid and Mr. Pandey was apprehended," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said.

During investigation, Mr. Pandey disclosed that he

Illegal arms supplier lands in police net

35 pistols and 60 live bullets seized

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Special Cell of the Delhi Police has arrested a 24-year-old illegal arms supplier, officers said on Friday.

The accused has been identified as Ashish Kumar Pandey, a resident of Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, they said. A total of 35 semi-automatic pistols, 60 live bullets and a mobile phone were seized from his possession.

The police got a tip-off on Thursday that Mr. Pandey would come to Pitampura to deliver a consignment of illegal arms to his contact, a senior police officer said.

Mr. Pandey has been in this business for over two years. He used to procure illegal pistols from suppliers in M.P. and supply them to criminals of Delhi, U.P. and Haryana, the police said.

Mr. Pandey has been in this business for over two years. He used to procure illegal pistols from suppliers in M.P. and supply them to criminals of Delhi, U.P. and Haryana, the police said.



The accused used to procure illegal pistols from M.P. and supply those in Delhi, U.P. and Haryana.

Former DGP takes over as new CISF chief

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Former Maharashtra DGP Subodh Kumar Jaiswal on Friday took over as the new chief of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

The 1985-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer was accorded a ceremonial guard of honour before he took charge as the 28th chief of the force at the CISF headquarters at Lodhi Road in central Delhi.

Mr. Jaiswal (58), who was heading the Maharashtra Police since February 28, 2019, was appointed as the Director General of about 1.62 lakh CISF personnel by the Central government last month.

Mr. Jaiswal is set to retire from service in September, 2022.

He had earlier worked with Special Protection Group that secures the PM and with RAW.

Man, wife arrested for mortgaging father's property

Accused availed of ₹2.47 cr. home loan

the said property, a senior police officer said.

From the complainant, his wife Jayshree Jai-puria, son and daughter-in-law were shown as co-applicants in the loan, the officer said.

The complainant came to know that his son had fraudulently used his previous address - 6947/3, Kothapuri Road, Kamla Nagar, Delhi - in the alleged loan documents, which he had disposed of in 2011, the police said.

During investigation, it was found that signatures in the name of four persons were there on every loan document, while the complainant claimed that he and his wife Ms. Jayshree never signed any loan document and their signatures had been forged by his son and daughter-in-law, the police said.

BJP conducts signature campaign demanding release of arrears

It wants Delhi govt. to release ₹13,000 crore municipal funds

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday ran a signature campaign across the city in support of the party's demand for immediate release of arrears of around ₹13,000 crore of municipal corporations.

"Right since it came to power in 2015, the Delhi government has been politically prejudiced towards the municipal corporations. To defame the BJP-ruled civic bodies, the Delhi government has cut even the Delhi Finance Commission's recommended annual funds on one pretext or the other," Mr. Gupta added.

temple complexes and institutional areas.

'Corruption allegations'

"Right since it came to power in 2015, the Delhi government has been politically prejudiced towards the municipal corporations. To defame the BJP-ruled civic bodies, the Delhi government has cut even the Delhi Finance Commission's recommended annual funds on one pretext or the other," Mr. Gupta added.

their constitutionally allocated funds," Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta alleged.

"During the last five years, the Kejriwal government cut all plan head funds, stalling the development activities by the civic bodies. In the last two years, the Delhi government has cut even the Delhi Finance Commission's recommended annual funds on one pretext or the other," Mr. Gupta added.

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR,
SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, SOURA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL .**

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Gist of e-NIT NO. 59 OF 2020-21 Dated. 06.01.2021

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor U.T. of Jammu & Kashmir, Executive Engineer, Mechanical, SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar, invites online e-bids in two (02) cover system from OEM or his Authorized representatives / Authorised Dealers or Registered/reputed/experienced Firms having expertise as detailed in the tender document for the following works:

S.No	Name of the Work :-	Estimated Cost (in Lacs)
1	Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of hot and cold, Inverter technology based high wall mounted Split Type Air Conditioning Units at various areas of SKIMS, Soura.	Rs. 10,50,000/-

The complete tender document is available at website <http://jktdenders.gov.in>. Interested bidders/tenderers may view, download the e-bid document, seek clarifications and submit their bids online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below. Tender Document contains qualifying criteria for bidders. Specifications, Bills of Quantities, & Terms and conditions of the contract and other relevant details.

I) Date and time of downloading/Sale of tender documents (Starting Date).
ii) Date & Time of Bidding Queries/clarification/Pre-bid meet
iii) Last Date & Time of Bid Uploading
iv) Date of Submission of hard copies (only Original EMD/DD for Document Fee)
v) Date & Time of Commercial/technical Bid (Cover-I) opening
vi) Date & Time of Financial Bid(Cover-II) opening
vii) Cost of e-bid Document
viii) Amount of Earnest Money Deposit(CDR/FDR)
ix) Completion Time
x) Budget Head

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Mechanical, SKIMS

TENDER NOTICE
Attention Catering Contractors

Sealed tenders are invited for and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor UT of J&K by the Medical Superintendent District Hospital Pulwama for running a hospital canteen for staff, Students, Visitors & Patients on contract Basis.

Tender documents containing all details can be obtained from the office of the medical superintendent District Hospital Pulwama on working days from 10 am to 4 pm on the payment of Rs. 500/- (Rupees five hundred only) by cash against the proper GR (non refundable) at our registration section.Cash receipt needs to be submitted to the office of the Medical Superintendent District Hospital Pulwama for obtaining the tender documents.

Sealed envelope super scribed, tender for running a hospital canteen for staff, Students, Visitors & Patients for a period of 5 years addressed to the Medical Superintendent District Hospital Pulwama should be delivered at the office of the undersigned at District Hospital Pulwama by or before 14 days from the date of publication of this notice in the news papers. Tenders will be opened on the next working day of closing date of above mentioned notice in front of those tenders who wish to be present. In case the date happens to be an unscheduled holiday the next working day will be taken into account for purchase, submission and opening of tenders.

Medical Superintendent District Hospital Pulwama reserves right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons thereof.

Sd/- Medical Superintendent D. H. Pulwama

DIPK-11440/20

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED

Credit Recovery and Management Department

Administrative Office : No. 24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612 001. E-mail id : crmd@cityunionbank.in, Ph : 0435-2432322, Fax : 0435-2431746

TENDER-CUM-AUCTION SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002

The following properties mortgaged to City Union Bank Limited will be sold in Tender-cum-Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 8 (6) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of ₹14,10,65,266/- (Rupees Fourteen Crore Ten Lakhs Sixty Five Thousand Two Hundred and Sixty Six Only) as on 01-01-2021 together with further interest to be charged from 02-01-2021 onwards, other expenses and any other dues to the bank by the borrowers / guaritors Mr. Sunil Aggarwal, S/o. Madan Mohan Goyal, No.48, Block - 1, EROS Garden, Charwood Village, Faridabad - 121 009. No.2) Mr. Sunil Singh Bhati, S/o. Baya Singh, D-198, Sector-47, Goutam Buddha Nagar, Noida, U.P. - 201 301. No.3) M/s. M.G. Impex Private Limited, PKT A-82/5, Kalakji Extension, New Delhi - 110 019. Also at M/s. M.G. Impex Private Limited, F-466, Sector-63, Noida, Uttar Pradesh - 201 301. No.4) Mrs. Seema Aggarwal, W/o. Mr. Sunil Aggarwal, No.48, Block - 1, EROS Garden, Charwood Village, Faridabad - 121 009. No.5) Mrs. Kusum Singh, W/o. Mr. Sunil Singh Bhati, D-198, Sector-47, Goutam Buddha Nagar, Noida, U.P. - 201 301.

Also this notice is served to inform The Chief Executive Officer, New Okhla Industrial Development Authority, Administrative Block, Sector - 6, Goutam Buddha Nagar, Noida - 201 301, Uttar Pradesh, that the schedule mentioned in the notice is in the possession of City Union Bank Ltd. and that the Authorised officer is proceeding under Rule 8 (5) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to sell the lease hold right through Tender-Cum-Public Auction.

Immovable Property Mortgaged to our Bank

(Lease hold right holder/lessee Mr. Sunil Aggarwal, S/o. Madan Mohan Goyal)

Industrial lease hold rights Plot / Property No.224 (Two Hundred and Twenty Four) Block - D situated in Sector - 63 (Sixty three) within the layout of Noida District, Goutam Buddha Nagar, Noida, Land area addressing 1,800 (Eighteen Hundred) Square meters and having its industrial building covered area on all floors is 794.15 Square meters and bounded as under: On the North by - Plot No.D-223, On the East by : 18 Mts. Wide Road, On the West by: Plot No.D-217, On the South by: Plot No. D-225.

Reserve Price: Rs.6,75,00,000/-
(Rupees Six Crore Seventy Five Lakh Only)

AUCTION DETAILS

Date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale Venue

19-02-2021 City Union Bank Limited, Delhi-Chandini Chowk Branch, No.1917-18, 1st Floor, Opp. Gurudwara Sisganj Sahib, Chandni Chowk, Delhi - 110 006. Telephone No.011-23929803, Cell No.9350011163.

Terms and Conditions of Tender-cum-Auction Sale:

(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself / herself. (2) The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, Delhi-Chandini Chowk Branch, No.1917-18, 1st Floor, Opp. Gurudwara Sisganj Sahib, Chandni Chowk, Delhi - 110 006. (3) The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd., together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of 10% of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of "City Union Bank Ltd.", on or before 12.00 Noon on the date of Tender-cum-Auction. Sale hereby notified. (4) For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact Telephone: No.011-23929

Timings

DELHI

SATURDAY, JAN. 09	
RISE 07:16	SET 17:42
RISE 03:03	SET 14:10
SUNDAY, JAN. 10	
RISE 07:16	SET 17:43
RISE 04:10	SET 14:58
MONDAY, JAN. 11	
RISE 07:16	SET 17:44
RISE 05:18	SET 15:51

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	17	10
Safdarjung	17	10
Palam	16	11

Delhi Palam Today
18°C Moderate to dense fog at many places. A partly cloudy sky becoming clear. Light winds likely.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
17°C Moderate to dense fog would continue at many places. A pleasant day with light winds and sunny sky.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019
All rights reserved.

Fresh cases in Delhi stay under 500

Dry run for COVID-19 vaccination conducted at 150 centres, says govt. spokesperson

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The city recorded 444 fresh COVID-19 cases in 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 6,29,282, stated a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Friday.

This is the 15th day in a row that the number of new cases has been less than 1,000. Also, 10 more deaths have been reported in 24 hours, taking the total number of deaths to 10,654.

A total of 75,724 more tests were done in a day. Of the total cases, 6,14,849 people have recovered and there are 3,779 active cases.

Also, a dry run for the COVID-19 vaccination was conducted at about 150 centres here and there were no major problems, said a Delhi govern-



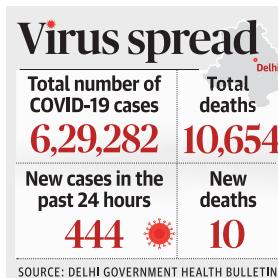
A healthcare worker injects vaccine during dry run at the Northern Railway Central Hospital in the city on Friday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

ment spokesperson.

The vaccination booths at all the centres have three rooms – waiting room, vaccination room, and observation room. During the dry run,

healthcare workers are registered and made to move from one room to another as a mock drill.

On January 2, a dry run was conducted at three healthcare



facilities and on Wednesday at 66 centres.

Positivity rate

The positivity rate of COVID-19 cases was 0.59% on Friday and the overall positivity till now was 6.81%, as per the bulletin.

Out of the total 12,380 beds available for COVID-19 treatment in the city, 88.11% were vacant. There were 2,965 containment zones in the city as of Friday.

Govt. starts talks with IIT on real-time sources of pollution

Decision taken to terminate same study being done by University of Washington; move to delay project

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has started talks with IIT-Kanpur to do a study to find what exactly the sources of pollutants in the city's air on a real-time basis are.

The move follows a decision by Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia last week to "terminate" the same study currently being done by University of Washington in St. Louis for the Delhi government, multiple officials told *The Hindu*.

This will further delay the project, which has already missed its deadline six months ago.

"The Deputy CM has terminated the study and directed to find a new agency to conduct the same," a Delhi government official said. IIT-Kanpur has expressed interest in the study and is in the process of submitting a proposal.

"The government is yet to make its decision of terminating the study public and also convey it to the Washington University. The legal depart-



The Delhi government has been stating that stubble burning is the major cause of air pollution during winters. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

ment will take a call on how to go forward," a second official said.

Red flags

In December, *The Hindu* had first reported that a three-member committee appointed by the Delhi government had raised red flags about the "real-time source appropriation study of air pollution in Delhi", which is being done by the University of Washington in St. Louis.

The study which was approved by the Delhi government in 2018, was a flagship project of the government to find a solution to the air pollution, by finding the sources causing air pollution in the city on a real time basis.

In December, Dr. Pratim Biswas, a professor at the university, who is part of the study, had said through an email, "We have responded to all questions [raised by the government]. Scientific aspects

are solid. It is up to policy-makers to implement."

The study, with a total cost of ₹1.2 crore, was allotted to the university without a tender and it was done on "nomination basis". The study was supposed to be completed by June, 2020.

Payments made

The government has paid more than ₹50 lakh for the study till now, which is the first two instalments of the total cost of the study, according to officials. Even if the study is now done by another agency, they can use a lot of data generated from the current study.

On July 3, 2018, the Delhi Cabinet, headed by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, had approved a proposal for the study. The study was important as the reason causing pollution in the city has been a matter of constant debate between the city and the Centre.

The Delhi government has been stating that stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana is the major cause of air pollution in Delhi during winters.

On the other hand, the Centre has multiple times pointed out that local pollutants in the city are also a main reason.

Shortly after the AAP government came to power, in February, 2020, Gopal Rai, who was given the Environment Minister's portfolio, visited a location near India Gate from where the study was being carried out.

Information gathering

"Obtaining real-time data is necessary to monitor the real sources of pollution at a particular point in time. Until we can gather information about the sources of pollution, we will not be able to devise any mechanism for reducing these sources. There are no generalised sources of this pollution, and so we cannot work on decreasing or eradicating it in a generalised manner. We need to obtain real-time data to devise an action plan on how to reduce pollution levels," Mr. Rai said on February 20, in a first statement from his office, after he became the Environment Minister.

Govt. to procure 18 advanced ventilators

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Cabinet, in a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday, decided to procure 18 advanced ventilators for the ICUs of the Neurosurgery Department at GB Pant Hospital. According to the government, the Cabinet also approved the setting up of a Konkani Academy to facilitate the growth and promotion of the Konkani language and culture here.

Air quality in 'poor' category in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The air quality of Delhi and Noida was in the "poor" category on Friday and Gurugram's in the "moderate" level, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data on Friday.

The national capital's air quality is expected to improve in the next few days.

"Poor to moderate AQI is forecast for tomorrow [Saturday]. The AQI is likely to marginally improve and in the 'moderate' category on January 10 and 11. No sudden deterioration of AQI is expected in the next few days," said government-run monitoring agency SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research).

The effect of stubble burning on the city's air quality remained low on Friday.

DPCC issues closure directions to 91 units

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has issued closure directions to 91 industries in Khyala Industrial Area and imposed a fine of ₹4.7 crore.

"The DPCC team inspected 113 units. Out of these, 40 units were found operating without effluent treatment plant and were engaged in washing/dyeing. Other 51 units were engaged in activities under orange and green category, but were operating without DPCC consent," an official statement said.

Published by N. Ravik at Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860, Anna Salai, Chennai-600002 and Printed by S. Ramanujam at HT Media Ltd. Plot No. 8, Udyog Vihar, Greater Noida Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201306, on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD, Chennai-600002. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act).

Regd. DL(ND)-11/6110/2006-07-08 • RNI No. UPENG/2012/4940 • ISSN 0971-751X • Vol. 11 • No. 8

CM YK

Karnataka Road Development Corporation Limited

(A Government of Karnataka Enterprise)
No.8, "Samparka Soudha", Dr. Rajkumar Road, Rajajinagar 1st Block, Bengaluru-560 010.
Telefax : 080-22024000 email : cekrdcl@gmail.com Website: http://www.krdcl.in

Date: 06.01.2021

INVITATION FOR TENDERS (on e-procurement basis)

Karnataka Road Development Corporation Limited [KRDCL] proposes to take up the work of **Upgradation & Maintenance of 12 High Traffic Density Corridors (HDC) in Bengaluru City** in the State of Karnataka on using two cover system.

1. The IFT notified earlier dated: 04.12.2020 is herewith modified as follows due to unavoidable reasons.

Sl. No.	Package Details	Approximate Length of the HDC corridor (in Km)	Amount put to tender (Rs. In Crore)		Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (Rs. in Lakhs)
			Initial Improvement Cost	First year Annual Maintenance Cost	
1	PACKAGE-I : Upgradation and Maintenance of High Traffic Density Corridors in Bengaluru Metropolitan Region for [HDC No.1 Bellary Road, HDC 2: Old Madras Road, HDC No.12B Outer Ring Road from Gouruntepalya to Old Madras Road] (KRDCL/2020-21/RD/WORK_INDENT352)	44.55	86.48	23.30	109.78
2	PACKAGE-II : Upgradation and Maintenance of High Traffic Density Corridors in Bengaluru Metropolitan Region for [HDC 3: Old Airport Road, HDC 4: Sarjapur Road, HDC 12C: Outer Ring Road – KR Puram to Silk Board] (KRDCL/2020-21/RD/WORK_INDENT357)	42.40	64.50	21.76	86.26
3	PACKAGE-III : Upgradation and Maintenance of High Traffic Density Corridors in Bengaluru Metropolitan Region for [HDC 5: Hosur Road, HDC 6: Bannerghatta Road, HDC 7: Kanakapura Road, HDC 12D: Outer Ring Road – from Silk Board to Mysore Road.] (KRDCL/2020-21/RD/WORK_INDENT355)	49.45	39.35	21.88	61.23
4	PACKAGE-IV : Upgradation and Maintenance of High Traffic Density Corridors in Bengaluru Metropolitan Region for [HDC 8: Mysore Road, HDC 9: Magadi Road, HDC 10: Turnkur Road, HDC 11: West of chord Road and HDC 12A: Outer Ring Road from Mysore Road to Gouruntepalya] (KRDCL/2020-21/RD/WORK_INDENT353)	54.60	82.34	26.72	109.06

- Interested applicants may access bidding documents from the e-procurement portal www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in
- The bid security as mentioned in above table shall be paid in the form as indicated in tender document.
- The Calendar of events for various activities are as follows:
 - Pre-bid meeting will be held at **15.00 Hrs. on 18th January 2021 at the Board Room of KRDCL**.
 - Deadline for submission of Bids is **up to 17.30 Hrs. on 8th February 2021**.
 - Date and Time of opening of Technical Bids is **on 10th February 2021 at 11.00 Hrs.**
- The initial improvement period will be 9 (Nine) months from the date of award of tender.
- The Road maintenance period is 5 years. First year Annual maintenance cost mentioned is as indicated in the above table and for subsequent years enhancement at the rate of 5% each year for the next 4 (four) financial years is considered.
- KRDCL reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tenders without assigning any reasons.
- Please note: henceforth, any changes in the schedule will not be published through News papers and further changes will be updated only on e-portal / KRDCL Website.

HAVE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19? CALL APATHAMTRA ON 14410



Wear Mask



Follow Physical Distancing



Maintain Hand Hygiene

DIPR/DDU/2334/2020-21

Sd/-
Chief Engineer, KRDCL

Flyers in a fix over change in quarantine rules at IGIA

Passengers arriving from London complain to Kejriwal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

There were unseemly scenes at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport after passengers arriving from London aboard Air India's AI 121 claimed they had no knowledge of the change in rule.

Another traveller Harpreet Takkar posted: "Just came from London AI 121, it's absolutely maniacal at Delhi Airport. Asking us to go to institutional quarantine even with negative PCR test. Didn't mention this on your SOP."

"Dear Arvind Kejriwal, I am one of the passengers of flight AI 122 from London with my 4.5-month-old daughter.

Government of Jharkhand
Urban Development & Housing Department
(Directorate of Municipal Administration)
FFP Building 3rd Floor, Dhurwa, Ranchi - 834004

Tender Notice

Date: 08-01/2021

1.	Name of the Work	Selection of Firm/Agencies/Consultant for 50 ULBs for providing SMART ID CARD and SMART VENDING CERTIFICATES and other work under Support to Urban Street Vendors component of DAY -NULM
2.	Tender Fee & EMD (In INR)	Tender Fee: Rs. 5000/- (Demand Draft - Non Refundable) EMD- Rs. 50,000/- (Demand Draft)
3.	Total time Period	6 Months (182 days)
4.	Mode of Submission of Bids	Online Tender http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in
5.	Date of Publication of Tender on website	09/01/2021 at 2:00 PM
6.	Last Date of submission of pre-bid queries	12/01/2021 till 05:00 PM, bidders must submit their queries through email only (director.ma.gov@gmail.com) in writing. Mail should contain Tender Reference no. and Tender Name in subject line.
7.	Date of Pre Bid Meeting	18/01/2021 at 03:00 PM (To address pre-bid queries submitted through email)
8.	Date and Time of Start of Submission of Bids	19/01/2021 From 11:00 AM
9.	Last Date/Time for submission of online Bids	27/01/2021 Up to 12:00 Noon
10.	Date of Technical Bid Opening (Online)	28/01/2021 at 12:00 Noon
11.	Tender Fee and EMD Submission Address	Director, Directorate of Municipal Administration, 3rd Floor FFP Building, Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004
12.	Helpline no.	Land line- 06512401955

Note: Only e-Tenders will be accepted.Further details can be seen on website <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in>

Sd/-
Director,
Directorate of Municipal Administration
PR 239045 (Urban Development and Housing)20-21#D

कार्यालय कार्यपालन यंत्री, लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकीय विभाग राष्ट्र-गुना (म.प्र.)

क्रांक 57 / व.ले.लि / 2020-21 / कार्ये/ लोक्यांत्रिकीय/ गुना,

दिनांक 05 / 01 / 2021

निविदा विपणि क्रमांक 43/व.ले.लि/2020-21

निम्नलिखित कार्य की निविदाएं ई-टेक्सिङ पब्लिक से <http://www.mptenders.gov.in/nicgcp/app>, पर मूला जिले के विभिन्न विभागों में जल जीवन विभाग के अंतर्गत आर-सी-जी, ओवर हेड ई-टेक्सिङ

लाइन, घरेलू नल केनेशन एवं विस्तृत संस्थान कार्य हेतु निविदा निम्नानुसार आमंत्रित है।

सं. क्र.	निविदा/ क्रमांक/क्रमांक	सिस्टम/ क्रमांक	विकासांग	याम	निविदा की प्रक्रिया (साथ में)	धर्महरा याचि (EMD) निविदा प्रक्रिया का भूम्य	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	टेक्सिङ दार की श्रेणी
1.	43/05/01/2021	2020- PHED- 122220_1	राधौगढ़	7	436.23	₹. 15000/-	६ माह वर्षीय काल छोड़कर	नवीन कैन्टीकूट पंजीयन प्रायां
2.	43/05/01/2021	2020- PHED- 122222_1	राधौगढ़	7	324.26	₹. 15000/-	६ माह वर्षीय काल छोड़कर	नवीन कैन्टीकूट पंजीयन प्रायां
3.	43/05/01/2021	2020- PHED- 122223_1	राधौगढ़	6	321.54	₹. 15000/-	६ माह वर्षीय काल छोड़कर	नवीन कैन्टीकूट पंजीयन प्रायां

निविदा में संशोधन की विधि पर ही संशोधन देखा जा सकता। विस्तृत निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना वा अन्य जानकारी उत्तर वेबसाइट पर देखी जा सकती है।

ऑनलाइन निविदा फार्म क्रय करने की अतिम तिथि : 18/01/2021 17:30 बजे

ऑनलाइन निविदा दर जालने की अतिम तिथि : 18/01/2021 17:30 बजे

ऑनलाइन निविदा दर खोलने की अतिम तिथि : 20/01/2021 11:00 बजे

निविदा फार्म ऊपर दर्शित वेबसाइट पर (online system) कोडिंग कार्ड या ऑनलाइन मुगलान कर ही क्रय किये जा सकते हैं। निविदा एवं उससे संबंधित जानकारी ऊपर वेबसाइट पर देखें।

सदस्य-संसद जिला एवं स्वच्छता विभाग तथा कार्यपालन यंत्री, लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकीय विभाग राष्ट्र-गुना (म.प्र.) जिला-गुना

G-17528

CLASSIFIEDS MART

TO ADVERTISE:

www.thehinduads.com

011-43579738 • 43579797

EDUCATIONAL

LAW AMBITION
LAW INSTITUTE
www.ambitionlawinstitute.com



Your Key to Success Requires Ambition

“ LAW IS NOTHING
BUT COMMON SENSE
AND LOGIC ,”
— Alok Kr. Ranjan

JUDICIARY
FOUNDATION : 11 JAN.
C 8800660301

CLAT
FOUNDATION : 11 JAN.
WEEKEND : 9 JAN.
C 8800660380

JUDICIARY
WEEKEND : 11 APRIL.
C 8800660301

न्यायिक सेवा
पाठ्य-शैक्षण : 19 FEB.
C 8800662130

IAS (LAW)
FOUNDATION : 15 JAN. 2021
C 8800662140

IAS (LAW MAINS)
TEST SERIES : 7 FEB.
C 8800662140

Toll Free : 180012000201

Watch FREE Lectures on YouTube Channel of Ambition Law Institute

SAMKALP
A socially committed organisation
(Jan Kalyan Shiksha Samiti)
Scheme of Free Coaching for SC and OBC Students
Authorized by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment,
Government of India for the year 2020-2021

**“FREE COACHING COURSE”
(FOR CIVIL SERVICES EXAM)**
will start from
1st March 2021

Minimum Qualification Graduation from
Recognized University. Students in the final year
graduation can also apply.

Students belonging to SC/OBC, having total family
income from all sources of Rupees 8 lakhs or less
per annum are eligible.

Application to be submitted by 31 JAN 2021 Online
or by Post.

Download Application Form and other details from
our Website

<http://Samkalpia.coaching.com>

CM YK

EDUCATIONAL

ONLINE LIVE CLASSES

VIDEO CLASSES ALSO AVAILABLE

TWO DAYS TRIAL CLASSES ON YOUTUBE
ALOK RANJAN'S IAS_DIGIMANI EDUCATIONSSHO P.S. Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station, Delhi
Ph.: 011-24366743, 24358593,
DP/42/RLY/2021Divisional Railway Manager
E.C.Railway, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Division
PR/1263/DDU/ ENGG/T/20/21/32

EDUCATIONAL

OPTIONAL

Geog./भूगोल

(English/Hindi Medium)

ALOK RANJAN

BATCH STARTS 11th JANUARY

ENGLISH MEDIUM 3:00 TO 5:00 PM HINDI MEDIUM 9:00 TO 11:00 AM

FEATURES

- ✓ 120 Classes (240hrs.) & Extra 60hrs. Session for Doubt Clearing
- ✓ 5 Days Classes in a Week
- ✓ 10 Year Previous Question Paper Discussion
- ✓ Prospective & Futuristic Question Analysis
- ✓ Geography & Environment Current Topics
- ✓ Regular Test
- ✓ Dispatched Hard Copy Updated Study Material

FOR GENERAL STUDIES

CONTACT US

DOWNLOAD APP

ALOK RANJAN'S CLASSES

011-45045836, 9311958007/08/09

www.digmanieducations.in

SITUATION VACANT

GENERAL

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all that my Client intends to purchase & mortgage the Property no. A-20, Block- A, area measuring 1005 sq. yds, situated at Kavi Nagar, Ghaziabad (UP) with our client Axis Bank Ltd. against the financial assistance. Whereas, Mr. Kanwal Krishna & Mr. Satish Kumar were the owner of said property by way of Sale Deed dt. 28.06.2003. After the death of Late Kanwal Krishna, his wife Mrs. Swami Late being a sole legal heir & Mr. Satish have sold the same to Mrs. Sunita Gupta W/o Addi Narayan Gupta by way of Sale Deed dt. 18.03.2013. Now Mrs. Sunita Gupta intends to sell the said property to Mr. Sunil Jindal. If any person(s) having objection regarding ownership of abovementioned claimants or regarding mortgage of the said property is/are requested to intimate in writing to undersigned within 15 days from the date of issue of this notice at below address. In the event no information is received within 15 days from date hereof, our Client i.e. Axis Bank Ltd. will proceed with the mortgage process.

PUBLIC NOTICE

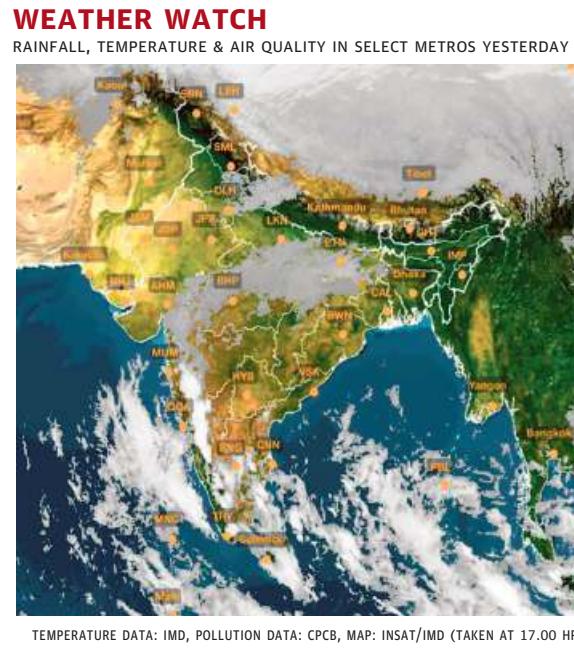
GENERAL

SITUATION VACANT

PUBLIC NOTICE

GENERAL

PUBLIC NOTICE



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Saturday: Heavy rainfall very likely at isolated places over coastal and south interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal; thunderstorm accompanied by lightning likely at isolated places over Goa, central Maharashtra, Kerala, Mahe and Lakshadweep

CITY **RAIN** **MAX** **MIN** **CITY** **RAIN** **MAX** **MIN**

Agartala	... -29.0	14.1	Kozhikode	14.9 ... 32.5	24.0
Ahmedabad	-25.9	16.1	Kurnool	... -32.0	21.3
Aizawl	-27.0	11.7	Lucknow	... -21.8	11.5
Allahabad	-24.9	15.2	Madurai	25.4 ... 27.7	23.5
Bengaluru	-27.0	20.0	Mangaluru	... -30.5	22.0
Bhopal	-27.6	15.8	Mumbai	0.2 ... 27.5	23.0
Bhubaneswar	-32.6	18.0	Mysuru	... -31.2	20.0
Chandigarh	-20.5	13.5	New Delhi	... -16.9	9.6
Chennai	0.8	27.8	Patna	... -27.2	14.8
Coimbatore	-29.1	23.0	Pond Blair	... -30.4	26.0
Dehradoon	-25.8	7.2	Puducherry	0.3 ... 29.0	23.6
Gangtok	-15.0	7.8	Pune	... -27.8	21.2
Goa	12.5	31.6	Raipur	... -28.5	20.5
Guwahati	-27.0	12.8	Ranchi	... -26.8	17.2
Hubballi	-28.0	20.0	Shillong	... -17.7	8.0
Hyderabad	0.2	30.0	Shimla	... -21.5	6.2
Imphal	-25.3	6.5	Srinagar	... -8.5	-1.3
Jaipur	-16.4	13.0	Thiruvananthapuram	... -31.7	24.2
Kochi	3.4	31.2	Tiruchi	0.6 ... 29.6	24.2
Kohima	-15.8	4.3	Vijayawada	... -30.6	23.4
Kolkata	-30.4	18.6	Visakhapatnam	... -30.2	21.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Vapi, Gujarat recorded an unhealthy AQI score of 234, indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Mangaluru, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 17

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

NO₂: 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.

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

Maharashtra's death count nudges 50,000

3,693 new COVID-19 cases take total tally to 19,61,975

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE

Cases continued to outpace recoveries as Maharashtra on Friday reported 3,693 new COVID-19 cases as opposed to 2,890 patients being discharged. The active case tally rose further to 51,838.

The total case tally has now reached 19,61,975. As many as 73 fatalities saw the death toll climb to 49,970.

The cumulative recoveries stand at 18,58,999 while the State's recovery rate is 94.75%.

"Of a total 1,32,67,917 laboratory samples tested thus far, 19,61,975 (with the case positivity rate down to

14.79%) have returned positive with over 68,000 samples being tested in the last 24 hours," State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate said, adding that the case fatality stood at 2.55%.

Pune reported a high surge of more than 650 new cases to take its total case tally to 3,77,265. As many as 13 deaths saw the toll go up to 7,818. As per the district administration figures, the active cases have increased further to 5,630 while the district's recovery rate stands at 96.08%.

Mumbai city recorded 654 fresh cases to take its total infections to 2,97,639 of whom just 7,927 are active.

As many as 11 fatalities saw the city's toll touch 11,173.

Nagpur district in Vidarbha registered more than 400 new cases, pushing the district's total tally to 1,28,791 of whom 5,063 are active. As many as 11 deaths saw the toll reach 3,253.

In western Maharashtra, Satara added no deaths as its toll stood at 1,780 while 52 fresh cases saw the total cases climb to 55,074 of whom only 749 are active.

Neighbouring Sangli logged 27 cases and no deaths as the district's reported cases went up to 50,379 of whom just 412 are active. Its death count remains at 1,770.

Kangana, sister record statements in sedition case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Actor Kangana Ranaut on Friday appeared before the Bandra police along with her sister Rangoli Chandel to record statements in a case of sedition and spreading communal hatred. The actor claimed in a video earlier in the day that she was being targeted for expressing her views on issues related to the country's welfare.

Ms. Ranaut, who has been provided Y-plus category security by CRPF personnel, and her sister arrived at the police station around 1 p.m. with their lawyer Rizwan Siddiqui amid heavy media presence. They left after nearly two hours. A senior police offi-



Actor Kangana Ranaut arrives at Bandra police station in Mumbai on Friday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGIN

cial said they could be called again for questioning after the next hearing in the magistrate's court. "As per the assurance given to the high court, she and her sister appeared before the police and recorded their statements today," Mr. Siddiqui Dutta to ensure implementation of the initiative.

Assam to gift khadi clothes to employees

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

The Assam government has decided to gift khadi shirt, endi shawl and endi stole to Grade IV male and female employees in a phased manner from January, an official statement said on Friday.

The decision to provide free khadi clothes would be implemented as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi and his movement for khadi besides paving the way for Assam to be self-reliant, CM Sarbananda Sonowal said. He instructed Handloom and Textile Minister Ranjit Dutta to ensure implementation of the initiative.

Four die after consuming spurious liquor in Bulandshahr

Four policemen suspended; CM tells officers to act tough

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

Four people died after consuming suspected spurious liquor at Jeetgadi village in Uttar Pradesh, and four policemen, including a Station House Officer, in Bulandshahr district were on Friday suspended in connection with the deaths.



Yogi Adityanath. ■ FILE PHOTO

rested and were being questioned, he added.

A departmental probe was initiated against Joint Excise Commissioner Meerut Zone Rajesh Mani Tripathi, Deputy Commissioner Suresh Chandra Patel and Bulandshahr district excise officer Sanjay Kumar Tripathi. Four other officers, including an excise inspector were suspended after being found lax in their duty, said Sanjay R. Bhoosreddy, additional chief secretary UP Excise Department.

District Magistrate Bulandshahr Senior Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar Singh said a search was on for the main accused, identified as Kuldeep, who allegedly sold the liquor. The police had detained people linked to him for questioning.

Bulandshahr Senior Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar Singh said a search was on for the main accused, identified as Kuldeep, who allegedly sold the liquor. The police had detained people linked to him for questioning.

SHO Sikandrabad, an outpost in-charge and two constables were suspended.

"Prima facie, after coming here, we got to know that

liquor was being sold for

Assam bans poultry import

Duck plague in Tripura adds to bird flu scare in Northeast

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

The Assam government on Friday temporarily banned the import of poultry ahead of the mid-January Bhogali Bihu, the festival of feasting where fowls are considered a must. The ban is in view of bird flu cases elsewhere in India and partly due to a scare after the report of a duck plague in Tripura.

An official notification said, "In view of the outbreak of avian influenza in some of the States, the Governor of Assam is pleased to impose temporary ban on entry of poultry as a pre-

cautionary measure through western border of the States in the interest of preventing escalation of the disease to Assam and other north-eastern States."

The Animal Husbandry and Veterinary department has also kept a watch on local fowls being sold in markets. Sellers usually stock up for sale at a premium during Bhogali Bihu.

"Assam or any other State in the Northeast has not recorded any bird flu case but our request to the government for a temporary ban on importing poultry from other States was die suddenly.

precautionary," department Director Ashok Barman said.

Nagaland's advisory

The Nagaland government has also issued an advisory for "preparedness, control and containment of the virus" that causes bird flu.

The State's Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department advised people to report any unusual sickness and death of poultry birds, ducks and pet birds and not to handle and consume the meat of such birds and ducks that die suddenly.

TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT
Mr. N SELVA KUMAR
PH: 9820350726
selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in

THE HINDU
India's National Newspaper

READ SPORTSTAR EVERY FORTNIGHT

No. JCSE 4/2018/Pt.I/69/
NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tender affixing non refundable Court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight and twenty five paisa) only are hereby invited from the Reputed Firms/ Authorised dealer/Contractor for the following works for Audio-Video Hub of Jyoti Chitraban and the same will be received upto 2.00 PM on 22-01-2021 and will be opened on 3.00 pm at the same Place & date at the office of the undersigned in presence of authorised representatives who wish to be present.

In the event of closure of office on the date due to any reason, the next working day of office will be the date and time of receiving and opening of the tender. Tender papers may be purchased with an application from the office of the undersigned on payment of Rs. 1000/- (Rupees one thousand) only in cash (non refundable) during office hours on all working days. Money receipt of the tender paper should be enclosed during submission of tender. Rates quoted should be inclusive of all taxes.

1. Name of work

(A) Dolby Sound for Preview Theatre Rs. 25.00 lakh

(B) IP Based Audio-Video Studio Rs. 15.00 Lakh

(C) CC Camera and Drinking water system Rs. 8.00 Lakh

2. Approximate tender value : Rs. 48.00 lakh (Rupees forty Eight lakh) only.

3. Bid Security deposit : Rs. 2% for General and 1% SC/ ST/OBC of favour of Secretary, Jyoti Chitraban, payable at Guwahati Demand Draft/NSC/Bankers Cheque alongwith attested copy of caste certificate.

The undersigned reserves the right to accept or to reject any all the offers without assigning any reason thereof.

Detail notice and Term & Conditions may be seen

jyotichitraban.assam.gov.in

Sd—
Secretary

Janasanyog No. CF/ 3781 /20

Office of Executive Engineer Drinking Water & Sanitation Division, Hazaribag

Short Tender e- Procurement Notice (1ST Call)

Tender reference:- PMJVVK(MSDP)/DWSD/GADOKHAR

KANCHANPUR/RPWSS/HZB/07/2020-21 (1ST Call) dt.: 07.01.2021

Sl. No.	Particulars	Estimated Cost (in Lakhs)	EMD Cost (in Lakhs)	Cost Of BOQ (in Rs.)	Time of Completion
1.	Detailed survey, designing and drawing, Construction of R.C.C. Intake Well cum Pump House, Infiltration gallery, R.C.C. Gangway 50 M long and 3.00 M wide, 2.5 MLD capacity Unconventional Water Treatment Plant, RCC Ground Service Reservoir, 470 Kilo Litre capacity, Staff Quarter, Compound wall, Supplying and laying Raw and Clear Water rising main and Distribution Network, House Connection, Supplying and Installation of VT and Centrifugal pump motor, Five years operation & maintenance with allied works etc. all complete job for Gadokhar, Kanchanpur & adjoining village Rural pipe Water Supply Scheme under D.W. & S. Division, Hazaribag on turnkey basis.*	1588.74	15.90</		



Optimism unbounded

NSO projections of GDP seem overly optimistic even as the economy rebounds

The first advanced estimates of economic output for the current financial year posit a picture of an economy rebounding robustly in the second half from the pandemic-induced slump of the preceding two quarters. The National Statistical Office on Thursday projected that GDP in the 12 months ending March would total almost ₹134.4-lakh crore in constant prices, reflecting a 7.7% contraction from the preceding year's figure. To reach that level, the NSO has assumed that output will recover vigorously in the third and fourth quarters. After contracting by almost 16% in the April-September period, it sees GDP being just a mere ₹10,400 crore short of the year-earlier second half's figure. It is this mathematical projection that is hard to square with the economic reality revealed in both the NSO's more detailed sectoral output forecasts as well as other emerging trends from ground-level activity. Both the expenditure side and gross value added (GVA) across various industries point to the high degree of optimism implicit in the NSO's assumptions. Private consumption expenditure – the single biggest component propelling GDP, at well over 50% – is estimated to shrink 9.5% in the full year, after contracting nearly 19% in the first half. This presupposes that consumers have largely shed their wariness to spend in the face of COVID-19 and have begun to set about consuming goods and services at close to pre-pandemic levels, the dampening impact of lost jobs and reduced incomes notwithstanding. GVA data for manufacturing and services, however, seem to belie this postulation.

While the NSO expects manufacturing to shrink 9.4% this fiscal, albeit narrowing from an almost 20% contraction in the first half, it sees the crucial GVA services component of trade, hotels, transport, communication and broadcasting contracting 21.4% (the most among all the GVA constituents) over the 12-month period. Clearly, with the mandated social distancing norms having taken the highest toll on high-risk indoor activities, it is this omnibus services sector which contributes almost a fifth to overall GVA that is bearing the brunt of the pandemic-related restrictions. The forecast for government spending also appears far too upbeat. The NSO sees government final consumption expenditure (GFCE) jumping 17% in the second half, erasing the first-half's contraction and buoying the annual figure to a growth of 5.8%. The end-November fiscal deficit data show the government lagging well behind its budgeted revenue and capital expenditure targets, and with just four months to go and revenue receipts continuing to underwhelm, it is hard to fathom how the GFCE can increase so appreciably in the second half. True, the NSO has furnished a caveat that its estimates are likely to undergo sharp revisions. The upcoming Economic Survey could move away from these overly optimistic assumptions with a more sober assessment of the economy.

Night and day

To expect women to stay indoors for their safety is to deny them their freedoms, rights

Unnao. Hathras. And now Badaun. The dirge continues as news of another horrific alleged rape and murder emerged from Uttar Pradesh on Sunday. A 50-year-old anganwadi worker, who visited a temple, was found brutally battered outside her home at a village in Badaun district. After she succumbed to the injuries, a depressingly similar pattern came to light: the police had dithered with both the post mortem and in registering an FIR. The culprits, a priest and his two associates, were arrested by Thursday night, with the State government saying that stern action would be taken. What came as a shocker, however, was the reaction of a senior member of the National Commission for Women who visited the family. Chandramukhi Devi was quoted as saying, "I tell women again and again that they should never go out at odd hours under anyone's influence... I think if she had not gone out in the evening or was accompanied by any child of the family perhaps this incident could have been avoided." Such remarks worsen the situation for women who have to battle against skewed societal gender conditioning. When insensitive utterances emanate from a national commission actually meant to uphold women's rights, it reeks of a primitive mindset wherein lawlessness is overlooked and responsibility pinned, perversely, on the woman for ensuring her own well-being.

All the hard work put in by women in all spheres including science and technology comes undone by such crude statements. The equal rights movement means nothing if women are stopped from going out whenever they want to or need to, day or night. But it is also imperative that with society steeped in gender prejudices, the government, police and family must step up to provide a safe environment. In 2019, the NCRB data show 88 rape cases were recorded every day in India with U.P. reporting the second-highest number at 3,065 cases. But records never tell the whole story for many rapes are not reported due to social stigma. Although after the Nirbhaya incident in 2012, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act laid down the rules for stringent punishment, crimes against women continue, pointing at other issues that should be addressed from patriarchal mindsets to poor policing. For gender parity, more women must join the workforce, but thereby hangs another sorry tale. According to Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy data, women accounted for 10.7% of the workforce in 2019-20 and many lost jobs due to the pandemic. By November 2020, the CMIE reported that men recovered most of their lost jobs but not women. It is a matter of shame that even in 2021, women are asked to stay indoors at night instead of reaching for the moon.

Beyond the Central Vista verdict, key questions

Public commitment in civic projects and procurement of professional services are areas that need definite improvement



A. SRIVATHSAN

The Supreme Court of India has cleared the decks for the intensely contested new Parliament and Central Vista projects in New Delhi. Limiting itself strictly to 'the procedures sanctioned by law', the majority judgment concluded that the government had followed all processes as stipulated by the regulations and could go ahead with the construction. This may have put an end to the litigation but it does not necessarily mean that such disputes and bitter situations would not recur. The critical questions on ensuring public commitment in civic projects, improving participatory processes in city-building, and effective procurement of professional services remain unanswered. Inadequate regulations that do not incorporate best practices will remain as they are. As judicial reviews are hesitant to direct changes to the mandated regulations, enduring solutions have to be found by improving them through political persuasion and public pressure.

Delhi as the most visible case
It would be erroneous and unproductive to think that redevelopment of the Central Vista is a unique case, *sui generis* as it was argued in the Supreme Court, and hence the issues. The Delhi project is only the most visible of instances, but the problem is widespread. The imprudent planning and reckless abandonment of Amaravati, the proposed capital for Andhra Pradesh, is but an example. In this project, confusion abounded: plans were erratically changed, the chosen architect was dropped when the project moved towards construction and a new

one appointed. After acquiring vast areas of land through a controversial method, the project was abandoned, leaving farmers and others agitated and in difficulty. Failure to effectively address such instances has cumulatively eroded the possibilities of course correction. It is not that there were no efforts to challenge them, but all attempts often hit the dead end of obsolescent regulations.

Though many issues demand attention, immediate regulatory improvement is needed in two critical areas: public participation and architectural services procurement. First, the point of the participatory process. As an elected body, the state has the mandate and authority to draft civic projects and urban policies. While there is no argument on this, citizens often challenge the claims that they are uninvolved in their public purpose. The flip flop over the Amaravati project, where two elected governments made reckless decisions, is a case in point.

Accountability factor

As political scientists have explained, most governments ensure that whimsical agendas do not drive public projects by institutionalising 'horizontal' and 'vertical' accountabilities. 'Horizontal accountability' is about creating interrelated state organisations such as heritage committees and environmental regulators to keep a check. 'Vertical accountability' concerns citizen oversight, which currently is limited to elections. The government often argues that horizontal accountability is in place and works well, while citizens, who are unconvinced given the poor track record, have argued for better and expanded vertical accountability such as an improved participatory process.

It is not that the provision for consultation is absent. In select areas such as master planning, regulations mandate stakeholder consultations. However, the processes are vague. They do not stip-



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

ulate clear objective measures to determine whether stakeholder discussions meet the test of public consultation. As a result, citizens are at the mercy of an official or judges' interpretation. This was on display in the case of the Central Vista. The majority and dissenting judgments used two different yardsticks to measure public participation and arrived at two contradicting conclusions. There is a lesson or two to learn from the Land Acquisition Act's abusive use and its subsequent changes. The Act was changed to reduce misuse by spelling out the consent required from a minimum number of landowners. Similarly, in urban projects, clear benchmarks such as the number of meetings, diversity of participants and response time have to determine whether a consultation is inclusive and effective. Regulations have to unambiguously state what prior disclosures are needed when meetings have to be held and insist on publicly listing reasons for accepting and declining suggestions.

Choosing the designer

A second regulatory change is required for choosing designers for public projects. Design is a complex service that requires a high level of creativity to meet functional, performative and aesthetic needs. It has a significant bearing on creating public assets and judicious use of taxpayer's money. Poor choices disastrously impact downstream construction activities, building use, city functioning,

and value for money. Though the majority and dissenting judgments in the Central Vista project did not find any fault in the manner architecture consultants were appointed, some of the issues raised remind us that the processes of procuring designs services could be improved.

Barring a few instances of open competition, which is an ideal way to choose from a larger pool of solutions, the state follows the alternative method of closed procurement. Here, select architects who meet a set of prerequisites are invited and choices made from the designs they have provided. To execute this, the government, from the methods recommended by the Ministry of Finance, adopts the Quality- and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS). The method allows for stipulating prerequisites for consultants, placing higher weightage on their technical competency and relatively lower weightage on financial proposals. This is meant to prioritise quality and not low price. However, two sets of issues undermine its professed advantage. The first set of problems arise from the range of weightages allowed between technical and financial proposals. It is observed that unless weightage on technical qualification exceeds 80%, firms that quote lower fees can outdo better design firms. The second and a more critical set of issues is related to steep prerequisites and a lack of clarity in evaluative criteria and standards for design assessors.

Reducing the entry barrier

Many public projects insist on steep turnover conditions for architecture firms to qualify. The assumption is that the more considerable the turnover, the better it is in terms of expertise. Those familiar with the design profession know that creative outcomes are not a function of the firm's scale. Steep entry requirements eliminate medium and small size firms and enable only a handful of large

firms to qualify. This detrimentally reduces the pool of choice.

Going forward, where open competitions are not possible, the next best alternative is to mandate a method that reduces the entry barrier. In this regard, one could take cues from the suggestions made by the Architects' Council of Europe when it faced a similar situation. It advocated dropping turnover requirements and laid an emphasis on qualitative selection criteria. Second, professional services could be disaggregated into design services and project development and management, thereby enabling better design focus. Third, weightage placed on design value has to be unambiguously clear and fixed. Given that more than 65% of the registered architects in India are below 35 years and many firms are medium sized, such procurement changes are all the more necessary.

On state capacity

Whenever a case for adopting better practices is made, policymakers argue that developing countries such as India have a relatively low state capacity. Hence, higher standards set in the matured economy and sustained by governments with higher capacity cannot be hastily implanted. The prevalent argument is that practices will improve as economic growth happens and as the country builds capabilities. On the face of it, such an incremental approach appears to make sense. However, it needs to be moderated in light of two facts. A comparison of responses to the novel coronavirus pandemic by India and the United States has shown that state capacity is not always directly proportional to wealth but more connected to will. Two, state capacity does not grow on its own as wealth increases. It improves only when the state is committed to doing better.

A. Srivathsan is a professor at CEPT University, Ahmedabad. The views expressed are personal

Grading India's counter-coercive strategy

It can only be fair to argue that the country has done well in countering Chinese moves in eastern Ladakh



ARJUN SUBRAMANIAM

In the murky and chameleonic world of contemporary geopolitics, adopting a sceptical approach to analyses and evaluation is often the best way forward. Nine months is a reasonable period to arrive at a holistic and reasonably acceptable evaluation of crises across domains. That the world was caught napping and brought to its knees by the COVID-19 pandemic is an undisputable proposition. In the grey zone at the global level is the absence of a definitive prognosis on the decline and rise of American and Chinese power, respectively.

Chance for middle powers
The two heavyweights are jabbing at one another without anyone of them being able to deliver that decisive knockout blow. The contest promises to be a long-drawn one that could last decades and result in several bouts across domains ranging from the traditional military and diplomatic spaces to new frontiers such as space, cyber and the cognitive domain. As the two powers engage in a strategy of exhaustion, middle powers such as India must see an opportunity to redefine their place in the world order.

Alexander L. George, a pioneering American political scientist who published several path-breaking works on deterrence and coercion in a career spanning over six decades, is best known for his work on coercive diplomacy. It is instructive to benchmark the happenings in eastern Ladakh against four of his variants of coercive diplomacy – a gradual turning of the screw, a try-and-see, a tacit ultimatum, or a full-fledged ultimatum. As the People's Liberation Army (PLA) engaged in unprovoked transgressions through May 2020 that sought to alter the existing *status quo* in eastern Ladakh, it did so in a progressive manner that much resembled the graduated turning of the screw and then waiting to see India's response. This was critical for the Chinese to decide whether it could replicate similar transgressions elsewhere along the Line of Actual Control.

An immediate Indian military response in the form of a *quid-pro quo* was among the options that was demanded by shrill voices across constituencies of strategic watchers. This was correctly not subscribed to by India's strategic establishment, which decided instead to adopt the try-and-see approach. In this phase of the crisis, India sought to engage in mild forms of coercion that involved the building up of forces to achieve parity on the ground. It was also the first time ever that the Indian Air Force could display its capabilities in Ladakh in all its roles, giving an indication that a

serious demand was being made by India from the People's Liberation Army to restore *status quo* without an explicit threat or a time limit laid down by India.

The escalatory ladder

Interestingly, as India's defensive posture was strengthened militarily, so did the coercive content in its diplomacy and economic posturing *vis-à-vis* China. Having failed to coerce the People's Liberation Army to withdraw by mid-July, India had two options as per the escalatory ladder laid out by Alexander George. It could issue an indirect or tacit ultimatum that would involve an implicit and tightly controlled tactical action, thereby demonstrating resolve and intent. Or, it could issue a full-fledged ultimatum followed by multi-dimensional military action that could lead to a limited conflict. If avoidance of war and winning without fighting lies at the heart of both Kautilya and Sun Tzu's approach towards statecraft, the People's Liberation Army's initial moves and the deliberate Indian response conformed to a predictable journey up the escalation ladder

that stopped at a tacit ultimatum. Equally applicable to the eastern Ladakh crisis from Alexander George's repository of ideas are the psychological variables that impact the effectiveness of coercion, particularly the 'dangers of misperceptions and miscalculations under the stressful conditions of crises'. Ringing true is also his emphasis on the 'importance of political leaders having a good understanding of adversary leaders, their mind-sets and domestic constraints'.

Synergy in handling China

In eastern Ladakh, the People's Liberation Army unravelled its tactical plans with speed and transgressed with the requisite stealth. However, at the operational and strategic level, the Chinese engaged in significant overreach and did not expect the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force to mobilise in strength and slip into their operational roles at high altitude with ease. The comfort levels of the Indian Army with absorbing attrition and offering an impactful riposte like the one it did by occupying key heights overlooking People's Liberation Army positions, makes one wonder whether the People's Liberation Army has ceded the psychological high ground it had gained in May. At the strategic level, the refusal of India's political establishment to push the panic button in May, and the synergised politico-diplomatic-military strategy approach by the Indians during negotiations have been a

welcome departure from the past. If one looks at the crisis through the prism of a larger global and regional context, or even through the more focused lens of coercive diplomacy, there are several positives for Indian statecraft, particularly in the diplomatic and military realms. India is a *status quo* power and this is ingrained in its strategic DNA and associated strategies of deterrence and coercion. This implies, and history is testimony to the possibility, that when faced with adversaries who are either irrational or revisionist, there is every likelihood of India initially being rocked onto the back foot during a crisis that involves either the application or the show of force. Response strategies to such situations are where there is much ground still to be covered.

India has militarily recovered well, diplomatically played hardball and strategically postured deftly despite the constraints of the ongoing pandemic. While it is too early to predict the trajectory of events when the snows melt, the Chinese have bitten off more than they can chew and could be looking for a face-saving solution. When such a possibility emerges with the kind of power asymmetry that exists between the two countries, it can only be fair to argue that India has done well in countering Chinese coercion in Ladakh with its own brand of counter-coercion.

Arjun Subramaniam is a military historian and strategic commentator



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

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.

A dark day
The final days of Donald Trump's presidential tenure are turning out to be the most disgraceful. 'By the people, of the people, for the people' very nearly became 'demonstrations by Trump, for Trump and Trump'. His raging and near incitement of an insurrection is unpardonable action. Generally, in the U.S., one observes discipline whether it concerns change, handling natural calamities, obeying the rules, cleanliness and courtesy. But to have its President unable to handle failure in the key election and then

proceed to engage in shabby behaviour and hate policies are most condemnable.
A.J. RANGARAJAN, Chennai

- There have always been doubts over whether Mr. Trump would end his presidency with dignity. But nobody expected the manner in which his supporters stormed Capitol Hill, an act which will be remembered in history as one of the worst moments in America's democracy. With this, the U.S. has lost all moral authority to preach to other nations. One can almost visualise nations like

China and Iran enjoying the discomfiture of America. Single-handedly, Mr. Trump has destroyed the edifice on which America has been painstakingly built.
ANTHONY HENRIQUES, Mumbai

- The shock has still not dissipated. It is hard to describe this as anything short of an attempted coup. That such scenes should play out in the world's most powerful democracy spells bad news for democracies everywhere. And it will substantially damage Washington's position to speak on democratic deficit in the rest of the world.

also shows the deep fissures within the Republican party. All those who dismissed Mr. Trump as being merely idiosyncratic rather than a danger to democracy itself clearly underestimated his destructive instincts. He must be held accountable.
N. SADHASIVA REDDY, Bengaluru

- Mr. Trump is an incompetent leader who wrested power by stoking long smirking divisions in the American body politic. But what I cannot understand is why the media is praising Mr. Biden now without experiencing his governance. Public disillusionment with

this very same establishment is what paved the way for someone like Mr. Trump to emerge. I fear that if the media commits the same mistake of treating Mr. Biden as some kind of a messiah, it would only lead to further division and mistrust, ending in someone far cunning and worse than Mr. Trump gaining ascendancy.
DEEPAK DENNY, Thiruvananthapuram

- Who would have imagined that the frontrunners of democratic values would end up with a battered image. This is a representation of a highly polarised world and growing intolerance. And

that it affected a pillar of democracy is what sends a chill down the spine.
MADHUSREE GUHA, Kolkata

Avian flu
Bird flu has raised its head in Kerala again and the media is full of questions. The key issue concerns the safety of the person who is cooking poultry dishes. It is the same about eggs too. A high level of personal hygiene and observance of precautions while handling poultry products are a must.
Dr. TITUS JOHN, Eraviperoor, Thiruvalla, Kerala

To read more letters online, scan the QR code



On your marks, get help, go

After students were given the option to take the GRE exam from home due to the lockdown, allegations of fraud have surfaced, especially in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

R. Ravikanth Reddy, Sumit Bhattacharjee & P. Sujatha Varma report on the network of aspirants, ghostwriters and coaching institutes involved in the scam

During the COVID-19 lockdown, 22-year-old Nishita wanted to give the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE), an admission requirement for many graduate schools in the United States and Canada, one last shot. Nishita was dissatisfied with her previous scores of 300 or less out of a maximum score of 340 in the first two components of the exam: verbal reasoning and quantitative reasoning. Her dream was to secure admission to one of the prestigious Ivy League universities in the U.S., and an impressive score in the GRE was an important step towards that goal.

While she was preparing for the exam, Nishita got a call that gave her a flicker of hope but also made her uneasy. The caller, who had apparently got her number from the database of a coaching institute, told her that she would be guaranteed a score of 320 if she was willing to pay ₹60,000. This score, the caller said, would be facilitated by a 'helper' if Nishita chose to take the 'GRE at Home', a facility offered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), which administers the GRE, during the lockdown.

"I was stunned but I continued the conversation just to understand the mechanism. I gently rejected the offer as I thought it was a prank call," says Nishita, an engineering graduate and a native of Telangana. However, when she shared the conversation with a few friends and cousins, Nishita was surprised to learn that such a 'facility' was already in place and some test takers had already gained from ghostwriters. Nishita finally did not take the exam.

Soon after the ETS gave aspirants the option of taking the exam from home, Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Guntur, Krishna and a few other regions have apparently emerged as hubs of fraud. In some places, students and parents say they were charged as much as ₹90,000 by callers. These hubs are spread across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, fertile grounds for such dubious activities given the craze for emigration to the U.S. since the mid-1990s following the Information Technology boom.

A well-oiled mechanism

Rahul, 22, who is in his final year of engineering at a college in Vijayawada, says he found himself in a similar situation. An unknown caller promised to improve his scores in the verbal and quantitative reasoning papers. Rahul says an acquaintance, whom he refused to name, got a ghostwriter to do the test for him and got a score of 325/340.

Shravani, 23, from Visakhapatnam, says she too got a similar offer for the verbal and quantitative reasoning tests. The third component of the GRE exam, analytical writing, requires the candidate to write an essay. No ghostwriter would help her there, the caller told her. Shravani's friend, Karthika, was initially willing to take the risk as she was sure that she would not be able to score more than 300. However, having developed cold feet now, she has not decided whether she should allow a proxy to write the exam.

While candidates from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh narrated similar stories, GRE candidates in Tamil Nadu and Kerala say they have received no such calls offering them 'helpers' to secure good scores by hook or by crook. Mukunthan, an aspirant from Chennai, who is preparing for the exam through a coaching centre, says he has received messages from many institutes advertising their programmes, but none of them assured him high scores with assistance for the exam. Similarly, Daniel Varghese, Director of the Thiruvananthapuram-based Centre for American Studies, rules out the possibility of such groups finding takers in Kerala. A matter of concern, however, is that several GRE aspirants from Kerala usually make a beeline for coaching institutions in Hyderabad in spite of the high standards of training provided in their own State, says N.M. Babu, former senior faculty of English, University College, Thiruvananthapuram. "There have always been allegations that candidates who appear for such exams from or in Hyderabad have a high rate of success than those appearing elsewhere," he says.

When a reporter from *The Hindu* contacted an institute which has been in the business for years, the owner promised a good score for the "candidate" for a negotiated sum. He instructed the reporter, who said he was the father of a student, to travel to Guntur with two laptops a day before the exam. He assured the reporter that his "son" would score 320 if the "father" paid ₹55,000 in addition to the GRE's official fee of ₹213, which is about ₹15,800. The owner also said that the GRE score would depend on the amount that the parents or student was willing to pay, which could be anywhere between ₹55,000 and ₹85,000. He claimed that there is a full-fledged system in place with "experts" to handle the exam for candidates. The



owner said the student would have to choose to take the GRE from home but go to Guntur a day in advance and answer the exam from the institute.

A few teachers who take classes for the quantitative and verbal components of the exam say they have also been approached by those running the racket to write the exam for a huge sum, an offer which they say they turned down. "It is estimated that the business in the Krishna-Guntur region in the next three months can alone be worth about ₹30 crore," a teacher says.

Conversations with students and institutes revealed that there is a well-oiled machine in place that helps students cheat and secure good scores in the fiercely competitive exam taken by tens of thousands every year. The scam seems to involve a chain of participants ranging from aspirants to teachers to ghostwriters to coaching institutes. While the matter has been reported to ETS, the testing service is yet to take any specific action.

Modus operandi

Narsi Gayam, an MIT professional who promotes Promac, a company that trains about 3,000 students every year for competitive exams like the GRE in Hyderabad, explains the modus operandi. "Experts," he says, sit across the test taker at the centre. The questions on the screen are captured by a mobile phone camera placed at a certain angle so that the act is not caught by the computer camera monitoring the test takers constantly. Then the "expert" indicates the answers to the candidate either through a slip or a hand sign.

Another method involves "experts" operating from different locations. Candidates start the test and scroll through the 20 questions in each of the four sections by clicking the 'next' option. As the question rolls by, the image of the question is captured on a mobile phone camera and sent to a team of "experts" sitting at different locations. Since the time limit for each section is 30 minutes, the "experts" revert with the answers quickly. All the candidate has to do is scroll up and tick the correct answer. It is impossible for someone to solve the questions and send the answers to the candidate in such a short period," he says.

The software used by ETS, 'ProctorU', doesn't capture the sound in the room, says Narsi Reddy, contradicting what the Chennai students say. He thinks that this is being exploited by scammers. "ETS should take this scam seriously. Else, the GRE will lose its credibility just like the TOEFL did after a similar fraud was unearthed by the Hyderabad police in 2011. There are hardly any TOEFL takers now," he says.

In the earlier version of the GRE, a candidate could not move to the next question without answering the first. But in the updated system, a candidate can move up and down the 20 questions in each section. This has helped fraudsters, says a senior teacher at a coaching institute who has been approached by a few students for guidance on the issue.

ETS representatives dispute these claims. They say the test takers are asked to lock the door and show the room at a 360-degree angle before the test begins. This is done to ensure that no one is hiding in the room. Mohammed Samiuddin, a senior consultant at the India Resource Centre, a partner of ETS, says the software doesn't allow mirroring of the screen. A proctor monitors even the eye and facial movements of the test takers and any suspicious activity is reported immediately, he says.

Madhumitha from Chennai, who

took the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) from home corroborates Samiuddin's claims. She says she was asked to provide a 360-degree view of the room and was asked to sit straight facing the camera.

A student of the College of Engineering, Guindy, Chennai, also supports Samiuddin's argument. He says the monitoring is quite stringent. He was alerted a couple of times when there were ambient noises, he says. "I was taking the test from a closed room but the mic picked up the sound of an autorickshaw on the road," he says. He was immediately given warning alerts though he had not moved out of the vision of the camera, he says.

But Samiuddin agrees that there is fraud taking place, particularly in Hyderabad. "Some people seem to be exploiting certain shortcomings of the system after the test starts," he says. The ETS has been alerted about the scam, he adds. But no candidate has approached the ETS with facts that have been verified, he says.

Samiuddin says there can be no impersonation as the candidate's photograph is captured during the exam. The entire test session is recorded and the photo from the test session is made available in the ETS data manager.

Like students, some teachers also say cheating is extremely difficult. A. Jothikannan Vibedu, a GRE trainer who teaches the quantitative section in Coimbatore, says it is extremely difficult for the candidates to cheat as they have time to only solve the questions. "Students need time to understand the questions and then give the correct answer. It is impossible for someone to solve the questions and send the answers to the candidate in such a short period," he says.

The software used by ETS, 'ProctorU', doesn't capture the sound in the room, says Narsi Reddy, contradicting what the Chennai students say. He thinks that this is being exploited by scammers. "ETS should take this scam seriously. Else, the GRE will lose its credibility just like the TOEFL did after a similar fraud was unearthed by the Hyderabad police in 2011. There are hardly any TOEFL takers now," he says.

Over a month ago, some candidates and the Manya coaching centre informed ETS about the scam. After an initial complaint to ETS Support, Manya executives informed ETS's India partner, Learning Links Foundation (LLF), of the details of the scam in a phone call on

December 9. The LLF promised to escalate the issue at the ETS headquarters. On December 15, LLF reported that the head of the ETS Office of Testing Integrity would investigate the matter further.

On December 18, Manya Vice President Vandana Marda wrote again to LLF as well as to senior ETS officials, including John Kochanski, senior director of corporate strategy and business development at the company's headquarters in New Jersey. She suggested that ETS suspend home testing, noting that the scam endangered the credibility of the GRE.

There was an inkling that something was wrong when some candidates scored 167 and 168 in the verbal and quantitative sections but only about 2-2.5 out of 6 in the analytical section. The analytical component is difficult to copy as the language skills of candidates are tested through an essay, which the prompts can't improve given the time constraint. "Those who score 165 and more in the verbal and quantitative sections generally score well in the third section too, but this scenario was different," says Reddy.

Candidates apparently also tried their luck on a website called passpsychometric.com, which offers assistance on payment. A note on the website says, "You can pay PassPsychometric to pass your Numerical, Verbal, Logic, Diagrammatic, Inductive, Abstract, SJT, Personality and other psychometric tests - alleviating you from any unnecessary concerns of how to pass the daunting online reasoning psychometric tests!" ETS says it is aware of this website and is looking to take legal action. The website does not list any phone numbers. A query submitted by *The Hindu* through the 'contact us' section on the website did not elicit any response.

Samiuddin agrees that websites are openly advertising such facilities but because they use Virtual Private Networks (VPN), they remain untraceable. He also says candidates need to be wary of exploitation. "At least 80% of such fraudsters may be fooling students with false claims. They know students are afraid that their scores will be cancelled if they report that they were cheated," he says.

Informing ETS

Over a month ago, some candidates and the Manya coaching centre informed ETS about the scam. After an initial complaint to ETS Support, Manya executives informed ETS's India partner, Learning Links Foundation (LLF), of the details of the scam in a phone call on

December 9. The LLF promised to escalate the issue at the ETS headquarters. On December 15, LLF reported that the head of the ETS Office of Testing Integrity would investigate the matter further.

On December 18, Manya Vice President Vandana Marda wrote again to LLF as well as to senior ETS officials, including John Kochanski, senior director of corporate strategy and business development at the company's headquarters in New Jersey. She suggested that ETS suspend home testing, noting that the scam endangered the credibility of the GRE.

"Waiting anxiously to hear from ETS on resolving this. Perhaps ETS should close down GRE home testing immediately till such time you have found a foolproof method to conduct the test," read the email, seen by *The Hindu*. "Please keep us updated of the steps ETS is planning to take. Perhaps ETS should involve PR agencies to spread awareness about the fraudulent activities happening and should notify students to not become victims," the email said.

In a later email to ETS, Manya also threatened to report the scam to the police as a case of cybercrime, but has not yet done so, saying that would be the "last resort".

Manya says up to 80% of students who would normally enrol for GRE coaching are now only opting for IELTS (International English Language Testing System) coaching. The English language test, which is run by British Council, can only be taken at testing centres and not at home and is therefore not susceptible to fraud.

A question of credibility

Some students, desperate to secure admission to a good college, are willing to pay a substantial amount to cheat the system. Two months of GRE coaching classes cost about ₹18,000 while scammers charge about ₹60,000-₹70,000 depending on the score the student deserves.

Several universities and colleges have already waived test scores as requirements for admission this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Any indication that home testing scores are suspect could lead to lower use of GRE scores as a criterion for admission going forward. "We cannot have another U.K.-like incident," says another teacher in Visakhapatnam, who was approached by mid-level students. The teacher is referring to an incident from six years ago when candidates were caught having the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) exam faked for them. Back then, by the time the investigation was completed, the students had finished their courses and had taken up jobs only to be charged of this crime. Deportation notices were sent to them. These students in the U.K. have been fighting deportation for many years and their work visas have been revoked.

The revelations on 'GRE at Home' are similar. It is believed that this is happening not just in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana but may have spread to other States, though in lower numbers, as coaching institutes, through which op-

erations are channelised, are well-networked across the country.

"Students should not risk their future by falling into such traps. They may be jailed or deported if their scores are found to be acquired using dubious means," says Professor G.V.K. Reddy, Professor at the Thiruvallam College of Engineering, who also guides students on GRE and U.S. admissions.

Reddy recalls how actor Felicity Huffman was sentenced to imprisonment for paying thousands of dollars to have one of her daughter's SAT scores inflated.

K.H. Vasudev, Regional Manager for Manya's Andhra and Telangana business, says there must be more awareness. "In a few cases where blatant cheating was detected by the proctor, students are reporting that their exams got terminated, or that their scores got cancelled," he says. "If ETS is later forced to recognise the widespread cheating on home tests, say after six months when students have been admitted into colleges, we may even see students getting deported. This will cause embarrassment to the families and the country."

ETS responds

On January 7, a month after Manya flagged the issue with ETS, the head of the ETS Office of Testing Integrity thanked the coaching centre for sharing its concerns. There was no indication of specific action being taken, and Manya plans to respond to the email.

In response to queries from *The Hindu*, an ETS spokesperson said the company will investigate complaints and ban students connected to scammers, but will also continue to conduct at-home testing even after COVID-19 is no longer a threat.

"ETS is aware of this website [passpsychometric.com] and we are taking immediate legal action to have it taken down to protect the integrity of our tests," said a spokesperson. There was no mention of complaints going beyond this particular website.

Since the launch of home tests nine months ago, "tens of thousands" of test takers have registered for them in India alone. "The at-home offerings will continue to be part of ETS's product portfolio to provide students with as many testing options as possible even in a post-COVID world," said the spokesperson. The response further stated that "in our decades of experience, we know that no matter the format, there will always be a small number of individuals who will seek an unfair advantage. This is why ETS has an Office of Testing Integrity that constantly reviews, investigates and acts on these matters. As such, we continue to stand by the validity of our scores." The ETS spokesperson also warned that "test takers risk having their scores invalidated, and being banned from testing by ETS if found to be connected to these scams."

Names of candidates have been changed to protect their identity. Additional reporting by Priscilla Jebaraj (New Delhi), Sujatha R. and Pon Vasanth B.A. (Chennai), and Sarah Babu George (Thiruvananthapuram)



Country	Test takers	Mean score
U.S.	42,76,519	302.9
India	8,19,880	301.1
China	6,88,884	313.5
Canada	68,518	309.9
South Korea	63,244	311.6
Iran	54,376	301.9
Taiwan	46,185	310.7
Nigeria	38,018	291.2
Japan	36,920	305.9
U.K.	32,001	311.7

FROM PAGE ONE

Centre turns to SC as talks with farmers fail

Farmer leaders said policy issues should not be decided by the court, which is only examining the constitutional validity of the laws.

"It's a sad day for democracy when an elected government in the middle of talks takes resort in the Supreme Court and says that we should fall back on the Court," said Mahila Kisan Adhikar Manch leader Kavitha Kuruganti. "This is a matter of the livelihoods of millions of farmers. It is a policy decision which should be taken in consultation with farmers."

"No matter what the decision of the court is, if it is against farmers, we will not accept it. We will go to jail if needed. These laws are a death knell for farmers," said Hannan Mollah of the All India Kisan Sabha.

The meeting got off to a tense start, with the Centre saying it cannot and will not repeal the three laws, as it needs to look at the interests of the whole country, including other farmers groups which support the laws. Mr. Tomar blamed the unions for their failure to then."

LeT chief gets 5-year jail term for terror financing

"We welcome Pakistan's arrest of terrorist leader Zakir-Rehman Lakhvi as an important step in holding him responsible for his role in supporting terrorism and its financing," the South and Central Asia Bureau of the State Department said in a tweet. "We will follow his prosecution and sentencing closely and urge that he be held accountable for his involvement in the Mumbai attacks," it said on Tuesday.

Interestingly, Lakhvi was presented before the Lahore ATC on Friday and was convicted the same day in

come up with any alternative proposal apart from repeal.

At this point, Balbir Singh Rajewal who heads his own faction of the Bharatiya Kisan Union, raised his voice, accusing the government of being adamant. Union leaders vowed that they would not return home until the laws were repealed, repeating slogans such as, "Ya jitenge, ya marenge" (We will win or die in the attempt), and thumping their desks.

The farmers refused to budge from the conference room while the government delegation left for an hour-long break.

"I do not have any hope for the next meeting. The government is only repeating the same thing, they are not listening to us at all. But we will not be responsible for the breakdown of talks. That is why we will come back on January 15," said Gurnam Singh Chadhani, who heads a Haryana faction of the BKU. "We will all come into Delhi with our tractors on Republic Day. Perhaps they will listen to us then."

PM to chair meeting on vaccine roll-out

Kerala Assembly Budget session off to a stormy start

'Handover of power should be peaceful'

Unlawful protests can't damage process of democracy: MEA spokesperson

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Handover of power to the Biden-Harris administration in the United States should be conducted in an "organised and peaceful" manner, India said on Friday. Official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs Anurag Srivastava said that the violent incidents in the American capital will not succeed in subverting the democratic process.

"Indian position on this issue has been expressed clearly in the tweet of the Prime Minister. It was expressed that he was hurt by the incident of rioting and violence in Washington DC. Handover of political power should take place in an organised and peaceful man-

ner. Unlawful protests of this nature cannot damage the process of democracy," Mr. Srivastava said in response to a question during the weekly press briefing.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said on Thursday that the mob attack on the U.S. Congress had left him "distressed". "The democratic process cannot be allowed to be subverted through unlawful protests," Mr. Modi had said. The statements from the Indian side came even as some Indian flags carried by Indian-American supporters of President Trump were spotted among the crowd that attacked the U.S. Congress. Mr. Srivastava, however, did not elaborate on that in his response.

India, like other coun-



On alert: National Guard personnel who were deployed at the U.S. Capitol, in Washington DC, on Friday. • AFP

tries, is gearing up for the transition of power from the Trump administration to the Biden-Harris team, which will take over on January 20. An immediate issue of bilateral concern is likely to be India's purchase of a \$400 million missile defence system from Russia despite the

U.S.' objection. Outgoing U.S. ambassador to India Kenneth Juster on January 5 spoke about the choices that India would have to make in going ahead with the deal, saying that punitive measures under CAATSA – Countering of America's Adversaries

Through Sanctions Act – were not aimed at the friends and allies of the United States. "India seeks to keep its options open and purchase from any country. But there are also limitations that imposes, and choices that might ultimately need to be made," Mr. Juster had said.

In response to the envoy's remarks, Mr. Srivastava said that India conducts its foreign policy on the basis of choices made to safeguard its "national security interest". "India and the U.S. have a Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership. India has a special and privileged strategic partnership with Russia. We pursue an independent foreign policy. This also applies to our defence acquisitions and supplies, which are guided by our national security interest," said Mr. Srivastava.

Delhi asks Beijing to allow crew change for stranded sailors

The issue raised with China's Vice Foreign Minister

ANANTH KRISHNAN

Indian Ambassador Vikram Misri has raised with China the issue of stranded Indian sailors in ships off Chinese ports, asking the authorities to allow an early approval for a crew change.

Mr. Misri took up the issue with China's Vice Foreign Minister, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday, with details for changing the crew still being worked out.

Two ships, MV Jag Anand and MV Anastasia, are among several carrying Australian coal that have been unable to offload their cargo after China essentially banned coal imports amid deteriorating relations with Australia. There are 23 Indian sailors on the bulk carrier



Staying put: Sixteen Indian sailors are stuck on MV Anastasia, off the port of Caofeidian since September. • GETTY IMAGES

nies for resolving the impasse. The companies neither want to incur the costs of the cargo nor lose their waiting spots, leaving the sailors caught in the middle.

"In view of China's strict COVID-19 pandemic control and prevention measures as well as various travel restrictions in place, the Chinese authorities have outlined detailed steps to ensure the smooth movement of new crew to China to effect crew change," MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said on Friday.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

On the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Mr. Srivastava said both sides had maintained communication at the ground level "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Two ships, MV Jag Anand and MV Anastasia, are among several carrying Australian coal that have been unable to offload their cargo after China essentially banned coal imports amid deteriorating relations with Australia. There are 23 Indian sailors on the bulk carrier

MV Jag Anand which has been stuck off the Jingtang port on the Bohai Sea in northern China since June, and 16 others on MV Anastasia, which has been off the port of Caofeidian, also in Hebei, since September.

New outbreak

Complicating the situation is a new outbreak of COVID-19 cases in Hebei province, which has gone into "wartime" mode after more than 100 cases were reported this week and 11 million people in the city of Shijiazhuang have been put under lockdown.

The Sydney Morning Herald reported this week there are about 70 ships waiting, caught in between China not allowing them to unload and "importers and ship charterers [that] are demanding the ships wait regardless."

China has said the ships are free to leave and has placed the responsibility on freight forwarding companies to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the crew are taken care of and that crew changes can

be effected at the earliest.

On the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Mr. Srivastava said both sides had maintained communication at the ground level "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

On the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Mr. Srivastava said both sides had maintained communication at the ground level "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Two ships, MV Jag Anand and MV Anastasia, are among several carrying Australian coal that have been unable to offload their cargo after China essentially banned coal imports amid deteriorating relations with Australia. There are 23 Indian sailors on the bulk carrier

MV Jag Anand which has been stuck off the Jingtang port on the Bohai Sea in northern China since June, and 16 others on MV Anastasia, which has been off the port of Caofeidian, also in Hebei, since September.

Speaker cites strength of Indian system

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

ing in Civil Engineering from the Government Engineering College, Thrissur.

A member of the State Central Committee of the Republican Party in Virginia, he said the Trump Supporters were expecting the Congress to hold serious debate on the election fraud by making this unprecedented move at the Capitol. "We had expected about 12 hours of discussion, where all the proof on the rigged elections could have been presented. All that was thwarted because of the violence. After it, the Republican people did not support Trump as they feared losing their name," he added.

"Some criminals had infiltrated our event and incited the violence. It was a peaceful protest by one million people. All Trump rallies are fun. I do not regret the decision to take the Indian flag to the protest. I am a very proud Indo-American, who had supported Trump. Violence is not part of us," he told *The Hindu*. Mr. Palathingal has been settled in the U.S. since 1992 after graduat-

ing in Civil Engineering from the Government Engineering College, Thrissur.

Mr. Birla's remarks came a day after the U.S. witnessed ugly scenes as supporters of President Donald Trump stormed and vandalised Capitol Hill in an attempt to stop House proceedings.

"The smooth transition of power through 17 general elections and over 300 Assembly elections is our strength," Mr. Birla said, adding, "since Independence, India is among the strongest and most empowered democracies."

"The smooth transition of power through 17 general elections and over 300 Assembly elections is our strength," Mr. Birla said, adding, "since Independence, India is among the strongest and most empowered democracies."

China has said the ships are free to leave and has placed the responsibility on freight forwarding companies to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the crew are taken care of and that crew changes can

Keralite waved tricolour at Capitol storming

S.R. PRAVEEN
G. KRISHNAKUMAR
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/KOCHI

A video of someone waving the Indian tricolour amid the violent storming of the United States Capitol by supporters of U.S. President Donald Trump two days ago had led to much debate ever since. Now, it has emerged that one of the persons waving the tricolour was Vincent Xavier Palathingal, a Kerala native, hailing from Kochi.

Mr. Palathingal had put a detailed post on Facebook on Thursday, claiming that he was there to protest against a 'stolen election'. The post, in which he claimed that he was not part of the violence, has now been taken down following widespread criticism from people inside and outside



Vincent Xavier Palathingal said that he did not regret taking the Indian flag to the protest.

Kerala against him for insulting the country by carrying the tricolour to a violent protest in which five people have died.

"Trump rallies are always a lot of fun. And today was

not an exception. About 50 or so lawless people who breached the U.S. Capitol perimeter by climbing the walls, breaking the windows and attacking police inside this sacred temple to America... By playing a game of holding meetings, the Centre is trying to wear them out."

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi tweeted, "those whose intentions are not clear, their strategy is to give date after date". The party also launched a social media campaign *Bole Bharat* to rally behind farmers.

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said he was "saddened that the government remains adamant and refuses to relent".

Separately, party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, while meeting MPs and MLAs from Punjab, asserted that there was no other solution than repealing the laws. "We have always stood by farmers and will continue to do so. The only solution is to repeal the laws," she said.

Congress chief spokes-

person Randeep Surjewala tweeted, "The Modi government has proved to be the most inhuman, egotistical and ruthless in the history of India... By playing a game of holding meetings, the Centre is trying to wear them out."

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi tweeted, "those whose intentions are not clear, their strategy is to give date after date". The party also launched a social media campaign *Bole Bharat* to rally behind farmers.

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said he was "saddened that the government remains adamant and refuses to relent".

Hours after a Pakistan court convicted Lashkar-e-Taiba operations commander Zaki Ur Rahman Lakhvi in a terror financing case, sentencing him to three five-year prison sentences, India called the process "farcical", and accused Pakistan of carrying out quick prosecutions of various UN sanctioned terrorist leaders to avoid punitive action at the upcoming Financial Action Task Force (FATF) meetings, where it has been greylisted.

"UN proscribed entities and designated terrorists act as proxies for Pakistani establishment to fulfil its anti-India agenda. It is for the international community to hold Pakistan to account and en-

sure that it takes credible action against terror groups, terror infrastructure and individual terrorists," said MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava.

"The timing of these actions clearly suggests the intention of conveying a sense of compliance ahead of the APG (Asia Pacific Joint

Group) meeting and next FATF plenary meeting in February 2021. It has become routine for Pakistan to come up with such farcical actions prior to important meetings," he added in response to a question from *The Hindu* on a spate of action from Pakistan. In December 2020, LeT chief Hafiz Saeed

was given a second conviction on terror charges in cases involving terror financing. Lakhvi, who had been arrested on January 2 this year, five years after he was given bail in the Mumbai 26/11 terror attacks case in Pakistan, was also charged with terror financing.

Thus far, Pakistan has cleared 21 of the 27 markers according to the FATF, and the APG will submit its report on whether it has made progress on the remaining six. The FATF plenary session in February will then decide whether Pakistan should remain on the greylist, be downgraded to the "blacklist" of sanctioned "high-risk" countries like Iran and North Korea, or let off the list.

China has said the ships are free to leave and has placed the responsibility on freight forwarding companies to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the crew are taken care of and that crew changes can

be effected at the earliest.

On the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Mr. Srivastava said both sides had maintained communication at the ground level "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

On the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Mr. Srivastava said both sides had maintained communication at the ground level "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

Both sides had agreed on December 18, following a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs, to hold "to avoid any misunderstandings and misjudgments" but did not say when the next round of talks between Corps Commanders would be held.

INTERVIEW | VINEETA BAL

'Use of a vaccine without knowing its protection potential is unethical'

Noted immunologist says emergency use approval granted for COVID-19 vaccine over fears of mutant strains is not reasonable on a scientific basis

JACOB KOSHY

Dr. Vineeta Bal, immunologist and Faculty, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune, and former scientist, National Institute of Immunology, New Delhi, disagrees with the emergency use approval given to Covaxin, the COVID-19 vaccine by Bharat Biotech, on the grounds that there was no evidence yet on if and how it provided protection. Excerpts:

Two vaccine candidates have been given emergency use approval in India – Covishield and Covaxin. Both have weaknesses in terms of what is known about them. Two full doses of Covishield in overseas trials showed 62% efficacy, but we don't know how safe and immunogenic it is in Indians. Covaxin has some safety and immunogenicity data but absolutely no

efficacy data. From what's publicly known, are both these vaccines at least comparably safe? Is one 'safer' than the other?

■ Both have undergone safety testing in experimental animals as well as in Phase-1 human trials. They appear as safe as most of the vaccines currently in use – both childhood vaccines as well as adult vaccines. It is not possi-

ble to compare safety between the two vaccine candidates in further minute detail based on data currently available in the public domain.

However, while Covishield is based on clinical trials in more than one country, and is above the statutory limit put in by the Central Drugs and Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO) for emergency approval, there are no such data on Covaxin.

The Indian Council of Medical Research and several scientists in the government have justified the roll-out of Covaxin in clinical trial mode because of the potential transmissibility of the U.K.



What is needed is clinical trial data where native and mutant strains are spreading

strain of the virus. Is that reasonable?

■ The justification provided is lame. It is not reasonable on a scientific basis. It has al-

so violated norms set up for vaccine/drug approval for emergency use by the same CDSCO which has granted the permission. The sanctity of due process is violated. Since the Covaxin trial has not reached a stage where it can show protection from the existing strains of the virus, there is no reason to believe that it will do so for a mutant [strain].

In the context of COVID-19 in India, is any vaccine that's at least not harmful but shows promise in animal studies and limited human trials, better than no vaccine at all?

■ No. There are ethical concerns for the use of drugs, devices, vaccines, etc., and

they need to be followed. Otherwise, we are losing out on what we have achieved as a civilised society over the years – we go back to a Hitlerian era. Experimenting on Jews, on prisoners, on blacks without consent was practised then and is not acceptable now. Providing a vaccine to a healthy person without knowing the statistical probability of protection is unethical.

Besides, COVID-19 is not a highly dangerous disease, unlike some of viral diseases with very high mortality, such as Ebola. That kind of justification also cannot be invoked for such an approval. In fact, in India, the number of cases is steadily falling over the past many weeks.

Thus, the so-called emergency-like situation, when infrastructure shortage was a major concern in September 2020, does not exist any longer. In such a scenario, why flout the rules set by authorities keeping safety and efficacy concerns in mind?

From the perspective of immunology, is it true that a whole, inactivated virus could provide better protection against mutated strains, such as the B.1.1.7 'U.K.' strain? Have we seen that happen with other viruses in history?

■ We have come a long way in vaccine development during this pandemic. In the history of vaccines, each [vac-

cine] took roughly 5-20 years to complete clinical trials and reach the mass vaccination stage. And it was rare that more than one type of vaccine for the same disease was getting developed in parallel, unlike the present situation. What is needed is clinical trial data where native and mutant strains are spreading, and two vaccines are being tested – one with a small portion of the virus, such as the Receptor Binding Domain [RBD, or the part that latches on to the body's cell to gain entry] as a vaccine, and the other with the whole virus. This is too hypothetical and unethical/impractical.

(For full interview, log on to bit.ly/VineetaBal)

Bird flu now confirmed in six States

Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana & Gujarat asked to contain disease

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Bird flu cases were confirmed in Haryana and Gujarat on Friday, in addition to Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana where the disease has already been confirmed. Further, at least 16 unusual bird deaths in parts of Delhi are also being investigated, according to a statement from the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

The Ministry said it is also taking steps to restore consumer confidence in poultry products such as eggs and chicken meat, enlisting the support of the Health Ministry in this regard.

Positive samples for avian influenza were confirmed from two poultry farms in Haryana's Panchkula dis-



Taking precautions: A worker spraying disinfectant at a poultry farm in Makarba village, near Ahmedabad. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

trict, as well as among migratory birds in Gujarat's Junagadh district. Positive samples were also reported among crows in four districts of Rajasthan.

"Unusual mortality of 16 birds has also been reported in DDA park Hastings Village, Delhi. The AH (animal husbandry) Department of NCT of Delhi has reportedly taken

precautionary measures and sent samples to ICAR-NIH-SAD and a test report is awaited," the statement said.

Affected States have been directed to follow the avian influenza action plan to contain the disease. Culling operations have been completed in both affected districts in Kerala, and the disinfection process is underway. Central teams have been dispatched to Kerala, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh for monitoring and epidemiological investigation, said the statement.

Increased vigilance

Unaffected States have been requested to keep a look out for and immediately report unusual bird mortality, so containment measures can be implemented quickly. In

the Delhi cases, samples have been sent to ICAR-NIH-SAD for testing.

"Awareness among poultry farmers and the general public (consumers of eggs and chicken) about the disease is of foremost importance," said the statement, adding that the Animal Husbandry Secretary has written to the Health Ministry on the issue.

"Appropriate advisories have been requested to be issued from the Health Ministry in this regard so that consumer confidence affected by rumours is put to rest. Also, States have been requested to increase awareness regarding safety of poultry or poultry products that were safe for consumption following boiling or cooking procedures," it added.

Decide on Rajoana mercy plea by R-Day, SC tells govt.

Convict's petition has been pending for eight years

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday pushed the government to take a decision on a mercy petition filed by Balwant Singh Rajoana, facing capital punishment for the assassination of former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh, before Republic Day.

Appearing before a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, for Rajoana, said it should be possible for the government to spare time for the mercy petition, which had been pending for the past eight years, as there was no foreign guest coming on January 26 for the Republic Day



Balwant Singh Rajoana

celebrations. Additional Solicitor General K.M. Nataraj informed the court that the mercy plea file was being processed and had been submitted before the competent authority within the government.

The President is empowered to take the final decision on whether Rajoana should live or not.

Mr. Rohatgi said the petition was filed in 2012. The death penalty should be commuted on the sole ground of the delay on the part of the government to decide on the clemency petition.

Chief Justice Bobde said the government was merely asking for another week or two before taking a call.

"He has been in prison for 25 years," Mr. Rohatgi said.

"Another week or two will not change anything," the Bench said. It was then that Mr. Rohatgi pressed for a decision on the mercy plea before January 26. The court agreed, even as the government said the file would be processed at the earliest.

DGCA issues norms for vaccine cargo

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The DGCA on Friday issued guidelines for safe carriage of COVID-19 vaccines, allowing airlines to pack them in dry ice in order to maintain temperatures ranging from -7 degree Celsius and -70 degree Celsius.

The aviation safety regulator has allowed airlines to carry dry ice as a refrigerant material in aircraft belly and the passenger cabin. The special permission was necessary as dry ice is classified among dangerous goods as it turns into carbon dioxide under low pressure situations.

Airlines are not allowed to fly travellers when dry ice is being transported in passenger cabin. In order to ensure the safety of cabin crew, the regulator has mandated that airlines take steps to protect them from carbon dioxide intoxication as well as train them in handling of hazardous items.

Further, the aircraft must compulsorily have active oxygen systems for the crew before it is permitted to take off.

India, Pak. repatriate two youths who crossed LoC

Chakkani-Da-Bagh point opened briefly

IN BRIEF



ED attaches FDs firm in graft case

NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has provisionally attached assets, in the form of fixed deposits, worth ₹20.26 crore of Crystal Crop Protection P. Limited in a money laundering case. Among the accused in the case were A.K. Singh, the then Joint Director with the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) in Ahmedabad; Nand Kishore Agarwal, Ankur Agarwal and Mohit Kumar Goel, directors of Crystal Crop Protection.

Police quiz accused priest in Budaun case

BUDAUN

A priest was quizzed for his alleged role in the gangrape of an anganwadi worker in Budaun district of Uttar Pradesh after his arrest in the early hours of Friday, police said. "Mahant" Satya Narayan, the main accused in the case, was hiding in a forest area near the house of one of his followers in Mewali village under the Ughai police station, from where he was picked up in a late-night crackdown, the police said, adding that he was on the run for five days. The priest, who is in his 50s, was immediately arrested. PTI

'Act against those not vacating govt. quarters'

BHUBANESWAR

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the Odisha government to take action against employees who have been occupying government quarters after retirement. Akhand, a human rights activist, had moved the Commission stating that due such illegal occupation of quarters at Bhubaneswar, many government employees were deprived of accommodation. In his petition, Mr. Akhand said as many as 308 retired officers and employees had illegally occupied government quarters in Bhubaneswar.



On January 3, the Army made a request with the Pakistani authorities to repatriate him.

An official said the Chakkani-Da-Bagh crossing point was opened for 20 minutes to allow the two youths to cross into their home territories. "The exchange took place between 12:40 p.m.," officials said.

The spokesman said Haider had "inadvertently" crossed over to India in Poonch district on December 31, 2020. "The boy seemed innocent and was immediately provided with clothing, food and shelter," the Army said.

The spokesman said Haider had "inadvertently" crossed over to India in Poonch district on December 31, 2020. "The boy seemed innocent and was immediately provided with clothing, food and shelter," the Army said.

The spokesman said Haider had "inadvertently" crossed over to India in Poonch district on December 31, 2020. "The boy seemed innocent and was immediately provided with clothing, food and shelter," the Army said.

The spokesman said Haider had "inadvertently" crossed over to India in Poonch district on December 31, 2020. "The boy seemed innocent and was immediately provided with clothing, food and shelter," the Army said.

The spokesman said Haider had "inadvertently" crossed over to India in Poonch district on December 31, 2020. "The boy seemed innocent and was immediately provided with clothing, food and shelter," the Army said.

The spokesman said Haider had "inadvertently" crossed over to India in Poonch district on December 31, 2020. "The boy seemed innocent and was immediately provided with clothing, food and shelter," the Army said.

The spokesman said Haider had "inadvertently" crossed over to India in Poonch district on December 31, 2020. "The boy seemed innocent and was immediately provided with clothing, food and shelter," the Army said.

The spokesman said Haider had "inadvertently" crossed over to India in Poonch district on December 31, 2020. "The boy seemed innocent and was immediately provided with clothing, food and shelter," the Army said.

The spokesman said Haider had "inadvertently" crossed over to India in Poonch district on December 31, 2020. "The boy seemed innocent and was immediately provided with clothing, food and shelter," the Army said.

The spokesman said Haider had "inadvertently" crossed over to India in Poonch district on December 31, 2020. "The boy seemed innocent and was immediately provided with clothing, food and shelter," the Army said.

SC to hear plea against confession

Compulsory practice violates right to privacy, says plea by a group of women

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to consider after three weeks a petition filed by a group of women against the compulsory nature of sacred confessions to priests in Christianity.

Appearing before a Bench led by Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, for the petitioners, said "confessions are being abused".

But Chief Justice Bobde said the veracity of such allegations would depend on the individual facts in every case.

"There cannot be a rule to impose confessions on a worshipper... Ladies are forced to confess before the priest... The court has to see whether confessions are an integral part of the religion," Mr. Rohatgi went on to submit.

He said forced confessions violated the right to privacy.



When asked by the court why it should intervene in an obviously ecclesiastical issue like this, he reminded the court about its interventions in questions concerning the personal laws and customs of communities like the Bohra Muslims and Parsis.

Legal ambit
He said the court could examine the issues in the petition as they came within the ambit of the questions of faith, rights of women and equality referred to a nine-judge Constitution Bench in the Sabarimala case.

Mr. Rohatgi then sought more time to amend the petition and add more facts.

Attorney General K.K. Venugopal, when asked for an opinion by the court, said the whole issue stemmed from the Jacobite-Orthodox dispute. The Supreme Court had upheld the validity of the 1934 Constitution of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church to govern the parishioners under the church.

He suggested that the Kerala High Court should hear it. "The Kerala High Court knows the entire case history," he said.

Earlier, the court had agreed to examine a separate but similar plea by members of the Malankara Syrian Church in Kerala seeking a declaration that forced confessions were unconstitutional.

The petition had said

such confessions may involve sexual exploitation of women and blackmailing,

the petition, filed by Mathew T. Mathavan and two others, had said.

It had sought a judicial declaration that mandatory confession is a violation of the right to privacy, liberty and dignity of the parishioners.

"Church is forcing the members to mandatorily confess and mandatorily

make payment of monies/dues and the said practices indulged in by the church are of public nature, affecting human dignity and liberty of thought and that the believers have been forced to remain meek and quiet out of fear of removal from parish membership, social ostracisation, etc," it had stated.

He suggested that the Kerala High Court should hear it. "The Kerala High Court knows the entire case history," he said.

Earlier, the court had agreed to examine a separate but similar plea by members of the Malankara Syrian Church in Kerala seeking a declaration that forced confessions were unconstitutional.

The petition had said

such confessions may involve sexual exploitation of women and blackmailing,

the petition, filed by Mathew T. Mathavan and two others, had said.

It had sought a judicial declaration that mandatory confession is a violation of the right to privacy, liberty and dignity of the parishioners.

"Church is forcing the members to mandatorily confess and mandatorily

make payment of monies/dues and the said practices indulged in by the church are of public nature, affecting human dignity and liberty of thought and that the believers have been forced

Skiing & safaris



After a year full of holidays that invariably fell on Saturday or Sunday, 2021 has around 18 long weekends to plan quick getaways. For Pongal/Makar Sankranti (January 14 to 17) head to Lambasingi near Visakhapatnam for strawberry picking. Also, **Gulmarg** is this year's alternative to international skiing holidays. The Khyber Resort and Spa is the town's only five-star resort, so make your bookings well in advance. **Manali**, **Kufri** and **Auli** (especially the Ski & Snowboard School there) are other options.



Or, like Alia Bhatt, set out on a safari. **Aman-i-Khas** in Ranthambore was her choice. Details: aman.com. For leopard spotting, there is **Jawai Bera Safaris**, led by Thakur Baljeet Singh and his son, Yaduveer Singh, of **Castle Bera** in Rajasthan. +7259641076. **Evolve Back** at Kabini is known for its boat safari to spot herds of Asiatic elephants. Details: evolveback.com. **Jungle Lodges & Resorts** has multiple options across the country, including Bandipur and Dubare. Details: jungleglodges.com. Looking for a deal? Try **Niramaya Retreats Cardamom Club**, Thekkady. Details: niramaya.com

SPIT TAKE

YouTube may have skipped a Rewind 2020, but here's a recap of what actually happened

KRISHNA SHASTRI DEVULAPALLI

JANUARY

Rangoli sends legal notice to *Forbes* for ranking Kangana 70th on the Celebrity 100 List. Rajinikanth shoots for an episode of *Man Vs Wild* with Bear Grylls at Bandipur Tiger Reserve. Sonam Kapoor wears a sari tuxedo. The Gujarati edition of *Sapiens* is released.

FEBRUARY

Rakhi Sawant says she will go to China and kill coronavirus with medicine given to her by NASA. Rangoli says the similarities between Marlon Brando and Kangana give her goosebumps. Dharmendra launches a new restaurant called 'He-Man'. Men and women who drink daily have increased chance of living to 90, says study. Harappans ate non-vegetarian food but museum takes them off the menu of Ancient Food Exhibition.

MARCH

Dharmendra's 'He-Man' restaurant is sealed for building law violations. In Noida, a man stops his BMW to urinate. Thieves flee with the car, ₹40 lakh loan pending. Priyanka Chopra co-writes a coronavirus song with Nick Jonas that you can sing while washing your hands.



■ SREEJITH R KUMAR

Highlights of the year gone by

APRIL

Malaika Arora makes *besan laddoo*. Priyanka Chopra thanks the PM for acknowledging her donation. 'We are strongest together,' she says.

Kerala becomes first state to open liquor stores during lockdown. Rangoli Chandel's Twitter account is suspended. Arnab Goswami resigns from editors' guild citing their lack of ethics.

MAY

Human urine could be used to make concrete on the moon in the future. My mother can pull off Meryl

Streep's role in *The Devil Wears Prada*, says Esha Deol. Kent apologizes for its ad of Kent Atta & Bread Maker. Baba Ramdev launches clinical trials for 'Coronil'.

JUNE

On World Environment Day, Salman Khan and Iulia Vantur sweep their Panvel farmhouse. As #BoycottChina trends on Twitter, One Plus 8 Pro sells out in minutes. 'I feel jealous of Pakistanis and Filipinos who went home for free,' says NRI on social media, after paying a high price for Vande Bharat flight.

JULY

Wedding called off in TN after bride and groom fight over PM. India orders 5.5 lakh *biryani*s and 129K lava cakes during lockdown. Sale of sex toys goes up by 65% during lockdown. Twinkle Khanna spots snake, rat and butterflies in her house. 'Is there any hope?' Kangana asks PM as she shares Resul Pookutty's bullying story.

AUGUST

'I have more Indians than she has,' says President Trump about Kamala Harris. 'Act of God' situation may res-

ult in economic contraction, says FM. Philippine government official gets caught having sex with secretary during Zoom meeting.

SEPTEMBER

PM Modi hails Indian media. Kangana Ranaut's father compares her to Lord Krishna. Akshay Kumar says he drinks cow urine.

OCTOBER

Madurai smugglers caught hiding gold worth ₹52 lakh in their rectums. Taimur Ali Khan learns Spanish to beat lockdown blues. Sadhguru rides across America on a BMW 1600 GT. The air in India is filthy, says Trump. Biden scolds Trump. A man sells his car and steals it later using duplicate keys.

NOVEMBER

Women in TN perform *pooja* for Kamala Harris. Spent my childhood listening to *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, says Barack Obama. Karachi will be part of India one day, says Devendra Fadnavis. COVID may have originated in India, say Chinese scientists.

DECEMBER

Kangana Ranaut expresses desire to build temple, says Maa Durga chose her. Akshay Kumar earns ₹365 crore. Kangana's sister-in-law makes *makki ki roti*. Nirav's brother Nehal Modi is charged with committing fraud of \$2.6 mil in NY. Sports Ministry formally recognises yogasana as sport. Seaplane in Gujarat refuses to take off. Akshay Kumar shares pic of a frog.

Krishna Shastri Devulapalli is a satirist. He has written four books and edited an anthology.

Pick of the week

Concerts, stand-up and other events you just can't miss.



Mark the date

The **Blue Cross of India**'s 2021 calendar showcases Alamelu Annamalai's artwork of rescued animals. Meet Ashey the cat, Vellaiyan the piggy, and Cinnabun the rabbit. At ₹499 @blue_cross_rescues on Instagram. Sunil Menon's calendar for **Sahodaran**, a Chennai-based organisation working for LGBTQ rights, was shot in and around Irinjalakuda, Kerala and ECR. At ₹1,500. Call to order: +91 23740486 There's also the 19th edition of the **Kingfisher calendar**, shot by Atul Kasbekar along the Kerala coast.

Dressed for the occasion

Delhi gets a new multi-designer store, **Bageecha**, at Paschim Vihar. It is a platform for indie designers to showcase their collections, like Isha Mittal's western couture, Neha & Kriti's floral lehengas, and mother-of-pearl clutches from Naziya Couture. +9999991215 The festive edit at Bengaluru's **Angadi Heritage** features gifting options, including accessories from Kesyara, bar essentials from Nappa Dori and fragrances by Scentsido. Or pick up a lehenga by Akaroa and kurta sets from SWGT. Details: angadiheritage.com

Cheers to 2021

The liquor brands from Goa keep coming, the latest being **Maka Zai** from Stilldistilling Spirits. The Gold Tribute Edition and white Bartender's Edition will launch in Goa on January 16. @makazai.rum on Instagram. In Noida, 21-year-old Vatsal Goel has launched **Vogue - Modern Thela and Kitchen**. The Greek-themed cafe is part of his premium liquor store. There is a ₹500 cover charge, fully redeemable on food. Guests can consume wine, beer or spirits purchased along with their meal in a BYOB concept. +97906515281

Thinking about art

At the upcoming edition of **Mumbai Gallery Weekend '21**, catch *Reincarnate: We Meet Here in the Afterlife*, a solo exhibition by contemporary artist **Shilo Shiv Suleman**. 'As we meet in the afterlife, what fulfilment will our reincarnating stories find?' asks the artist. Till January 17, at **Art Musings**, Colaba. +91 22 22163339 **Emami Art** is showcasing drawings and linocuts by **Partha Pratim Deb**. In his largely monochromatic works, he uses shapes and lines for their own sake, emphasising their graphic quality. Till January 30 on emamiaart.com

Piecing together identity

My Queer Blackness, My Black Queerness is a digital project exploring multiple facets of black queer identity. For their latest, they teamed up with visual artists Kwesti Botchway and Ggggrimes, and were sponsored by Gucci. **The Black Jigsaw Project** is a limited edition of 100 jigsaw puzzles featuring their take on black queer identity. Priced at ₹163.93 (approximately ₹15,000) each, on mqmbq.com. 100% of proceeds go to Italy's trans-centred organisation, Movimento Identità Trans.

Stage on your screen

Mumbai-based theatre group, **Akvarious Productions**, will stage **The Hound of the Baskervilles**, adapted by Steven Cann and John Nicholson. Directed by Akash Khurana, this will be a comic tribute to the classic murder mystery by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. On January 9, 16 and 17, at 6.50 pm. Tickets from ₹399 on insider.in. Prefer a regional art form? **Tholu Bommalata** features comedy, drama, music and folk tales using leather puppets hand-crafted in Andhra Pradesh. From today. Tickets at ₹199 on in.bookmyshow.com

If you want to give the vegan lifestyle a shot this **Veganuary**, sign up for Chennai-based organisation, **Sharan**'s six-week 'Health Gain' programme. This includes recipes and cooking techniques as well as fun activities. From ₹5,310 on sharan-india.org. For something more indulgent, check out chef **Poja Dhangra**'s virtual workshops on macaron baking (₹2,360 on January 16), choux pastry (₹1,770 on January 23) and eggless cheesecake (₹1,770 on January 30). All classes at 4 pm. Tickets on insider.in.

Satya Paul: The sari shaper

Be it with the contemporary drape or neckties, this legendary designer created a brand that wasn't afraid to experiment

SUJATA ASSOMULL

"He lived his life with totality, not leaving anything unfinished," begins Puneet Nanda about his father, Satya Paul, who passed away on Wednesday at the Isha Yoga Centre in Coimbatore. He was 79. Nanda had posted a few details on Facebook about Paul's "inner journey" to spirituality and his last five years at Jaggi Vasudev or Sadhguru's *ashram*. As the tributes poured in, designers, Paul's former clients, and the media referenced his legacy and contribution to Indian fashion.

Paul, originally born in Layyah, Pakistan, established his eponymous brand in 1985 with his then 17-year-old son. This was five years after he had launched L'Affaire in Delhi, reportedly the country's first sari boutique. Their mission with Satya Paul was to be an Indian fashion brand that had mass appeal. "The choice of working with a sari was deliberate, as at that point 90% of women wore a sari and we wanted this to be a brand that was relevant to every Indian woman," recalls Nanda.



52. Paul soon came to be known for his prints and vivid colours, and by the end of the 1980s, the label produced more than 50,000 units. At the time, many designers were struggling to produce even 100 pieces a year.

Their print-forward designs were often inspired by wildlife, art and music. When



they were bought over by Genesis Colors in 2001, Nanda had taken over as creative director of the brand. In the early 2000s, no other homegrown brand had a retail footprint even close to Satya Paul's, with 30 exclusive stores across India. This brand stood for freewheeling experimentation, which included a limited edi-

tion of silk scarves that featured SH Raza's paintings. A tie made of silk and white gold, studded with 261 diamonds, made headlines when actor Salman Khan wore it at a charity event.

Questioning norms

"The brand played a large role in supporting the weaving crafts," Nanda adds, referring to the saris that were categorised under four collections every season. He says that they had a clear vision with the creative process. "This was at a time when there was no designer brand, no fashion awareness," he continues, explaining how the Museum collection came from master weavers and that "it often took years to convince them to work on special designs". Renaissance was a print collection with global influences, while Signature had exuberant florals and optical illusions that were described as "pieces of kinetic art" back then by *The New York Times*.

Popularly known as cocktail saris today, they are synonymous with the brand.

Meanwhile, with the Avant Garde collection, "everything that was the norm in a sari was questioned", according to

Nanda. "We stitched it like a dress, or down the middle as a trouser, or a Grecian drape. We made it out of various materials, with metallic fibre weaving, or printed graffiti or cartoons, and used it as a billboard for social messaging." These drapes were a precursor of today's concept saris. "The brand that [Satya Paul] set up had so much foresight. He was the first person to take the sari, a staple in every woman's wardrobe, and turn it into a ready-to-wear piece," says leading fashion stylist Anaita Shroff Adajania (who was behind a

successful Satya Paul campaign with celebrities a couple of years ago). "I met him a few times at fashion shows. He was very elusive, but always very warm," she adds.

Not lost legacy

Since Nanda left the label a decade ago, several other designers took over the creative helm, including Masaba Gupta. "As a fashion student, I remember not being taught at all about Indian fashion," says Gupta. "His passing has reminded us that young Indian designers must know about the resources that came before them. Satya Paul is and was one of India's few brands that was both creative and had a retail footprint, and this is an important story for Indian fashion."

Today, Satya Paul is owned by Reliance Brands, India's largest player in the luxury market, operating close to 50 brand partnerships (including Tiffany & Co, Giorgio Armani and Bottega Veneta). Last June, renowned fashion designer and India's master of minimalism, Rajesh Pratap Singh, was named Satya Paul's creative director. "Satya Paul took textiles and turned them into something very modern and relevant. I hope to take that emotion and spirit forward," he tells me. Having first interacted with Paul when he had his final submission as a student at NIFT, Singh has, in the past, referred to Paul's impeccable dressing, his interest in textile innovation, and his attention to detail at his many showrooms.

The recent Satya Paul collection under Singh, Valley of Flowers, clearly references the bold colour and design language of the label's founder. Nanda has big hopes for Singh, who is leading the brand that bears his father's name. Paul was a seeker all his life, Nanda had observed in his recent Facebook post. But in many ways he was also the man who set India's contemporary fashion grammar.



RAJEEV SETHI

The Indian fashion industry is built around the wedding trousseau, which is why it put itself into a 'no activity zone' during the pandemic.

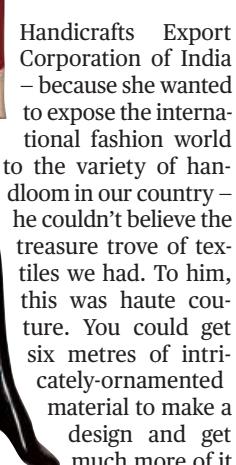
What our designers need to embrace is the everyday prêt-à-porter that Italian-born French designer Pierre Cardin (who passed away on December 29, 2020, at the age of 98) pioneered. In the '60s, he coined the term India Modern and showed us how bespoke Indian fabrics could be used to create prêt.

When in India

When Cardin visited the country in 1967, at the invitation of Pupul Jayakar of Handloom and

Pierre Cardin and an Indian prêt story

The Italian-born Frenchman was the first international designer to hold a fashion show in India. He showed us prêt, but are we taking it forward the way we should be?



Handicrafts Export Corporation of India – because she wanted to expose the international fashion world to the variety of handloom in our country – he couldn't believe the treasure trove of textiles we had. To him, this was haute couture. You could get six metres of intricately-ornamented material to make a design and get much more of it

if required (you didn't have to order hundreds of metres from machine manufacturers in Como for a homogenised design).

This was a time when Indian fashion was a collection of garage boutiques and trunk shows. I have black-and-white photos of a cousin of mine turning embassy dining rooms into spaces for selling *salwar kameezes* and 'maxis' to a cosmopolitan crowd! Into this scenario, Cardin brought back the swathes of textiles he had ta-

ken with him – which he had designed and tailored as globally-relevant clothing – and showcased them at his seminal show at the Ashoka Hotel in Delhi. He highlighted the real strength of our textiles in a way that nobody till then had understood.

Needless to say, the audiences, which included then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, were spellbound. It not only brought us traction in the short term (we shipped a lot of textiles subsequent to that), but also inspired many

designers like Ritu Kumar and the late Rohit Khosla, as well as India's first models, Anjali Phyllis Mendes and Kirat Rabier.

Right place, right time
I met Cardin in India while volunteering to model for his show. But I'd actually wanted to show him my fashion sketches. Two years later, when I went to Paris on a scholarship from the French government to study graphics at Stanley William Hayter's Atelier 17, Pupul Jayakar

arranged another meeting for me with Cardin. That's when he took me into his fold. I was lucky to be at the right place at the right time.

I remember my first time in his studio, waiting in his antechamber with actress Jeanne Moreau, while he finished his work. We then went to Maxim's restaurant (which he later bought), where we talked about how food, cinema, and fashion aesthetics were linked. He was always talking about transdisciplinary connections.

From 1969 to 1971, I set up Cardin's Laboratoire des Idées that explored transdisciplinary experiences and markets. So, one day I would be asked to do the car interiors for Renault, on another, I would be flown to Seattle to look at fitting out a Boeing jet.

Or I would go to Milan to look at furniture, or to Belgium to do chocolate boxes.

For a 19-year-old, this was heady. It was in my studio, which was just above Cardin's office on the sixth floor of 59, Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, that I created the

Boudin, a six-metre chair that could be tied into knots. It was part of India Modern, the exhibition that he sent me back to India later to do.

Yes, Cardin was criticised black and blue for his decisions – for looking at prêt, for his licensing. But he thought big and gave to ideas that caught his fancy.

Prints and pedagogy

Cardin believed that India, with all its skills, could be the leader of the world. But we aren't there yet. How can we leverage our textiles? We have to stay a step ahead of what the machines can make, by thinking in terms of original content. Our designers who are working with artisan clusters today don't encompass even 5% of the subsets of talent in India.

Though I am happy they are doing this, I wonder if, while we have won a few battles, we are losing the war?

If you really want to make handloom work in scale, so that they can merit the idea of prêt, designers have to understand the innate structure of weaves, and even create

the fabrics. Cardin was an expert in this. He could make the cloth yield to a silhouette. He created fabulous forms by understanding its architecture. After his show in 1967, he asked us to look at blending wool and tussar to create a thicker fabric, and to work with asymmetry in design.

I have seen the knowledge, the desire – designers like Rajesh Pratap Singh and Shanti Himanshu (of 11.11/eleven eleven) understand structure better than most – but I have not yet seen action. That will happen only when there is solid money behind a brand. This is where I squarely accuse corporate India. They have not understood the real wealth of the fashion industry.

Designers also have to understand that they need partners with business savvy. Manish Arora, on his own steam, set up a place in Paris, but today he has no investors to take it forward. Design schools don't teach business sense to survive.

Cardin had an uncanny sense of picking what worked. When he saw something, I don't think the form excited him as much as its potential for money. He understood China much before anybody else did (he was the first western designer to hold a fashion show in the mainland, in 1979, shortly after the country started its Open Door Policy).

For us to achieve this, pedagogy is important. Our pedagogy lacks structural design. Unless we address that, we won't have designers who are able to work with the materials we have. What we should take away from Cardin are the five Cs: common sense (to turn something on its head and grab eyeballs), compassion (an emphasis on teamwork and sharing, right down the pyramid), couture (an understanding of cut, structure and silhouette), critique (or pedagogy), and commerce.

Rajeev Sethi is one of India's foremost design gurus, and the founder of Asian Heritage Foundation. As told to Surya Praphulla Kumar



(Clockwise from top left) A file photo of Pierre Cardin; Rajeev Sethi sitting on the Boudin, a six-metre chair that could be tied into knots, and Sethi and Cardin at their last meeting in Paris ■ RAJEEV SETHI COLLECTION, ASIAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION

FOOD SPOT

And the saag from Singla Sweets and Baa Bistro in Delhi, is so delightful

When the weather outside is frightful...



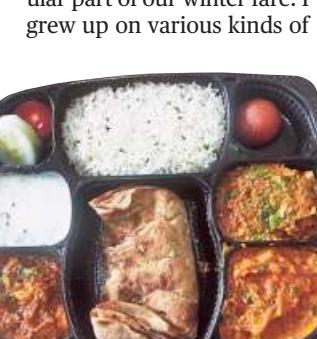
Singla's makkey ki roti and malai kofta; Baa Bistro's Rajasthani thhali ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

rotis, prepared with millet, maize and gram. There were all kinds of greens too: mustard, fenugreek, and bathua, to name just a few. In the village, of course, a dollop of white butter went on top of the rotis, while the saag was topped with large quantities of ghee. Bliss.

Sweets which had fed me little hillocks of bedmi sabzi in kinder times. Singla had sarson ka saag and makkey ki roti, and was delivering (Ph: 9697828888, 011-22232323).

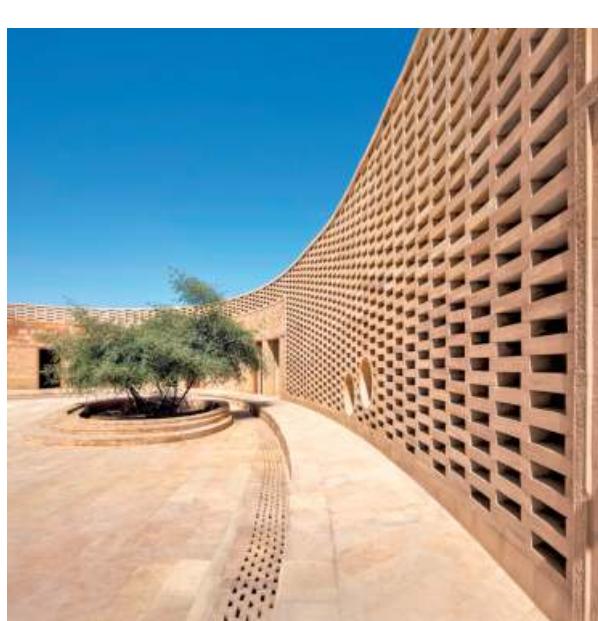
The food arrived. And it was so good that I called the owner of the shop to find out about the fare. The trick in the greens was that it was simply cooked – it had neither onions, nor garlic or ginger. It merely had a tempering of ghee and whole red chillies. The roti, again, was surprisingly soft. It was not soaked in ghee, but was nicely moist.

I dipped a piece into the saag and popped it into my mouth, and went back to my village, where this was a regular part of our winter fare. I grew up on various kinds of



On a cold winter's day, saag and roti warm up the heart. And a hot and squishy gulab jamun is like the icing – or rather the warm syrup – on top.

The writer is a seasoned food critic



Ovals in the sand

How a girls' school in Jaisalmer has brought together an architect from New York, local stoneworkers, and the opportunity for a new economic avenue

AATISH NATH

Rising out of the desert in Jaisalmer is an oval-shaped oasis. Even as sunlight filters through its *jalis*, it blends into the dunes surrounding it, almost as if it grew out of the shifting sands.

Soon it will be ringing with the voices of 400 girls – ranging from kindergarten to class 10 – as the Rajkumari Ratnavati Girls School opens its doors.

Designed by Diana Kellogg Architects, the school is funded by CITA, an international non-profit founded by Michael Daube. As the New York-based artist, who has close ties to the 'Golden City' (known so because of the yellow sandstone used in its buildings), told *The Guardian* recently, the school is the first of a trio that will collectively become the Gyaan Centre. The other buildings will house a women's cooperative and



Shots of the school, and (above) Kellogg ■ BHARATH RAMARUTHAM/AD, CONDENAST INDIA

an exhibition-cum-performance hall, and a textile museum. "I realised that through an economic avenue, I could entice the [local] communities to send their girls to school," he said, sharing how the centre will have craftspeople to impart skills such as weaving and printing to the students' mothers and aunts, and a marketplace to exhibit and sell their goods.

Trusting the local

For Diana Kellogg, the project came at a time when, as she told *Architectural Digest*, she wanted her work "to affect a larger audience, to have a sense of nurturing, comfort and healing". The architect, with over 25 years of experience, is well-known for her tasteful renovations and luxury residences in Manhattan. She has recently expanded her horizons, with work on education institutes in Nepal's Limi

Using the local sandstone and recreating the curved walls of the Jaisalmer Fort, or Sone ka Quila, the scale of Kellogg's design is sweeping: from the curved terrace and winding corridors, to the walls topped with latticed screens. "At one of the first meet-

ings, we were discussing materials to use. Of course I wanted to use the beautiful local sandstone, but I thought it would be too expensive. However, to every suggestion of an alternate option, the response was the same... stone. 'We can carve anything out of it,' they said. And they did," she states, adding how skilled local artisans made everything from individual bricks to sculptural water-cooler openings in the yellow stone. "When we couldn't find the right sized sinks for the washrooms, they carved them out of solid stone."

Plans in motion

Having never worked in a desert landscape, or with stone artisans for that matter, she had challenges a plenty.

"The issues concerning climate and technique were completely different than anything I was familiar with," she says, underlining their commitment to values of sustainability.

Phase two of the project will soon get underway. "We are planning the central building, which will be an arts centre incorporating dance and performance spaces, along with a library and computer facilities. There will also be gallery space for visiting artists. This building will mostly exhibit the textiles of the region, which we've been buying from the villagers to help support them during the pandemic. This way, their work will remain in Jaisalmer, for them to visit," she concludes.

The weather whispered a little word into my ears: saag. And not just any kind of saag, but a dish of mustard leaves. Winter, as we know in the north, is the time for sarson ka saag – that creamy dish that so delightfully complements makkey ki roti – or rotis prepared with maize.

I studied the menus of the little eateries in and around my neighbourhood to see if anyone was known for its saag and roti. Turned out there was one, Baa Bistro, which had the dish on the menu, along with a Rajasthani thhali. I am fond of Rajasthani food, and gatte ki sabzi – a spicy dish of lentil cakes in gravy – is a particular favourite. So I licked my chops and got ready to place my order.

Life is full of little disappointments: It was a rainy night, the delivery agents had called it a day, and I was told that I was not going to get my saag and roti. But, quite like a good

hound, once I am on the trail of something, I don't give up easily. I went back to my research, and zeroed in on an old favourite: a small restaurant called Singla

Sweets which had fed me little hillocks of bedmi sabzi in kinder times. Singla had sarson ka saag and makkey ki roti, and was delivering (Ph: 9697828888, 011-22232323).

The food arrived. And it was so good that I called the owner of the shop to find out about the fare. The trick in the greens was that it was simply cooked – it had neither onions, nor garlic or ginger. It merely had a tempering of ghee and whole red chillies. The roti, again, was surprisingly soft. It was not soaked in ghee, but was nicely moist.

I dipped a piece into the saag and popped it into my mouth, and went back to my village, where this was a regular part of our winter fare. I grew up on various kinds of

On a cold winter's day, saag and roti warm up the heart. And a hot and squishy gulab jamun is like the icing – or rather the warm syrup – on top.

The writer is a seasoned food critic

My focus is on smooth transition: Trump

In a sharp U-turn, he says perpetrators of violence on Capitol have defiled the seat of U.S. democracy

SIRIRAM LAKSHMAN

A day after U.S. President Donald Trump's supporters, charged by listening to their leader's words at a Washington DC rally, stormed the U.S. Capitol, Mr. Trump condemned the violence and acknowledged that a new administration would be sworn in on January 20. Mr. Trump's remarks were made in a video released on his Twitter account, which was earlier suspended to prevent the President from inciting further violence.

"Like all Americans I am outraged by the violence, lawlessness and mayhem," Mr. Trump said. Five people died as a result of the attack on the Capitol including one police officer.

"The demonstrators who infiltrated the Capitol have defiled the seat of American democracy," Mr. Trump said as calls for removing him via impeachment or the U.S. Constitution's 25th Amendment grew louder. Several prominent GOP lawmakers had criticised Wednesday's violence and in the aftermath more administration officials handed in their resignation.

Mr. Trump addressed the rioters in his video message, saying they did not represent the country.

'Great patriots'

"To those who broke the law, you will pay," he said. This was in sharp contrast to Wednesday, when Mr. Trump had called the rioters "very special" in another video message, in which he also asked them to retreat. In a tweet he had called the rioters "great patriots" even as some of them were inside the Capitol.

Mr. Trump said that while emotions were high following an "intense election", tempers "must be cooled" now.

"We must get on with the business of America," he said. Mr. Trump has consistently claimed that the elections were fraudulent and he – and not Democratic candidate Joe Biden – was the actual winner of the contest without providing adequate evidence to back up his claims.

"Now Congress has certified the results. A new administration will be inaugurated on Jan. 20. My focus now turns to ensuring a smooth orderly and seamless transition of power. This moment



Safeguarding democracy: Workers installing heavy-duty security fencing around the Capitol on Thursday. •REUTERS

President says he will not attend Biden inauguration

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump said on Friday he would not attend President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on January 20 amid demands that he step aside for the remaining 12 days in office.

Mr. Trump offered no clues for how he would spend his final hours in office, and will be the first incumbent President since Andrew Johnson to skip his successor's swearing-in.

Traditionally, the incoming and outgoing Presidents ride to the U.S. Capitol together for the ceremony, as a symbol of the nation's peaceful transition.

"To all of those who have asked, I will not be going to the Inauguration on January 20th," Mr. Trump said on Twitter. The move had been widely expected, as Trump for months falsely claimed victory in the election and promulgated baseless claims of voter fraud. His own administration said the election had been fairly run.

Vice-President Mike Pence was expected to travel to his Florida resort.

calls for healing and reconciliation," Mr. Trump said without mentioning Mr. Biden by name or offering congratulations, as is the norm.

Call for electoral reforms

Mr. Trump, who has over the years floated the idea of being 'President for life', said in his video message that his "only goal" was to ensure the integrity of the election.

"I continue to strongly believe that we must reform our election laws to verify the identify and eligibility of

attend the inauguration, according to one person close to him and one familiar with the inauguration planning. But Mr. Pence's spokesman Devin Malley said in a statement on Friday that he and the second lady "have yet to make a decision regarding their attendance."

Mr. Biden's transition team had no immediate comment on Mr. Trump's announcement. But Jen Psaki, the President-elect's incoming White House press secretary, said last month that whether Mr. Trump attended the inauguration was not top of mind for Mr. Biden.

On Thursday, with 12 days left in his term, Mr. Trump finally bent to reality amid talk of trying to force him out early, acknowledging he'll peacefully leave after Congress affirmed his defeat. There have been discussions at the White House about Mr. Trump leaving Washington on January 19, a source told Reuters. He is expected to travel to his Florida resort.

all voters," he said. Democrats and civil rights activists have accused Republicans of wanting to disenfranchise minorities by making it harder for them to vote or otherwise invalidating their ballots.

Mr. Trump's comments got applause from some of his allies on Capitol Hill, including Lindsey Graham, a Senator from South Carolina, who had said "enough is enough" when reacting to the violence on Wednesday. Yet Mr. Graham was one of

Council and, prior to that, in the Secretary of State's Policy Planning Staff with responsibility for South Asia.

The transition team also announced other NSC appointments and roles, as part of Mr. Biden's restructuring of the Council, which will be headed by Jake Sullivan, who said Mr. Biden had asked him to "reimagine" national security. The new positions include Coordinator for democracy and human rights (Shanthi Kalathil) and Senior Director for technology and national security (Tarun Chhabra).

been a senior vice-president since mid-2018 at the Albright Stonebridge Group, whose chair is former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. She has also worked at the U.S.-India Business

firms to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

The next H-1B visa filing season is slated to start on April 1. The notification is the latest effort to bar the entry of immigrants to the U.S.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows U.S.

Preventing nuclear launch

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on Friday she spoke with the nation's top military leader about ensuring that an "unhinged" President Donald Trump does not launch a nuclear attack in his final days in office.

Ms. Pelosi said she talked with Chairman of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley to discuss precautions for preventing an unstable President from initiating military hostilities or accessing launch codes and ordering a nuclear strike".

The acknowledgement came in a letter to her Democratic colleagues, and highlight the tensions in the U.S. over Mr. Trump's last days in the White House.

show for America," she said.

A group of Democrats began circulating articles of impeachment.

Mr. Trump was impeached by the House of Representatives just over a year ago but was acquitted at his Senate trial. It is far from clear whether either plan to remove the President from office will gain sufficient traction at this point. Mr. Pence is reportedly against invoking the 25th Amendment. However, at least two Republican leaders, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan and Representative Adam Kinzinger, have openly come out in support of it.

Dozens involved in the attack have been arrested and charged (examples of charges include unlawfully entering public property, possessing a military style automatic weapon).

Mr. Trump's role in the violence is also being looked at by the Justice Department.

"We are looking at all actors, not only the people who went into the building," U.S. attorney Michael Sherwin told reporters in response to a question on whether investigators were looking into the President's role in Wednesday's chaos.

"Yesterday, the President of the United States incited an armed insurrection against America," House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi told reporters at the Capitol.

Push for impeachment

Ms. Pelosi said she was joining Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer in calling for Vice President Mike Pence to remove Mr. Trump from office by invoking the 25th Amendment. If this fails, the Congress "may be prepared to move forward with impeachment," she said.

"While it's only 13 days left [for Mr. Trump to leave office], any day can be a horror

There is no mistaking the impact your rhetoric had on the situation, and it is the inflection point for me," said Ms. Devos, whose resignation was first reported by the *Wall Street Journal*.

Ms. Devos – a Trump loyalist and controversial Education Secretary herself – had issued a statement condemning the violence on Wednesday. American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten reacted to Ms. Devos' resignation with a short statement: "Good Riddance."

China holds third edition of South Asia multilateral meet

India, Bhutan and the Maldives gave the virtual event a skip

ANANTH KRISHNAN

China has held its third multilateral dialogue with countries from South Asia to take forward closer cooperation on fighting COVID-19 and coordinating their economic agendas, reflecting a new approach in Beijing's outreach to the region.

The third dialogue, held virtually on January 6, brought together every country in the region barring India, Bhutan and the Maldives, and was aimed at "anti-epidemic cooperation and poverty reduction cooperation", China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said.

All three dialogues have been attended by Pakistan and Nepal, which are emerging as two lynchpins in China's regional strategy. The first such meeting was convened by China in July, and was attended by Pakistan, Nepal and Afghanistan. This was followed by a grouping in November attended by China, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

The January 6 meeting was attended by all five countries that have taken part in these dialogues – Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh –



Hua Chunying

and was a follow-up to the two earlier meetings, Ms. Hua said.

"In this meeting, the representatives shared their experience on anti-epidemic

and poverty relief," she said. "They talked about dealing with the impact of the pandemic, resuming economic and trade cooperation, dealing with non-traditional security challenges and advancing sustainable development, and reached an initial consensus. It shows our strong will and confidence in dealing with challenges together and achieving cooperation. China would like to work with all sides in implementing our consensus and to make greater contribution to building a regional community with shared future for health."

In the previous two rounds, the countries also discussed how to work more closely together under China's Belt and Road Initiative to boost their post-COVID-19 economic recovery and agreed that countries linked by land ports should establish joint response mechanisms in border areas, apart from committing to greater information sharing and international cooperation.

CPEC extension

At the July quadrilateral dialogue with Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi proposed extending the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan, as well as taking forward an economic corridor plan with Nepal, called the Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional Connectivity Network.

Mr. Wang told the conference the four countries were "connected by mountains and rivers", and also offered to share China's expertise and capacities on COVID-19 vaccines. The Foreign Minister also hit out at countries that had "politicised" the pandemic and "undermined cooperation for their own political needs", saying they would be "nailed to history's pillar of shame forever".

'Pfizer vaccine works against virus variants'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New research suggests that Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine can protect against a mutation found in two easier-to-spread variants of the coronavirus that erupted in Britain and South Africa.

Pfizer, along with researchers from the University of Texas Medical Branch, found that antibodies from vaccine recipients fended off the virus in lab dishes. The preliminary study is yet to be reviewed by experts.

Indonesian cleric linked to Bali bombings freed

200 people were killed in 2002 attack

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JAKARTA

A radical cleric linked to the Bali nightclub bombings was freed from prison on Friday, stirring grief and anger among victims nearly two decades after more than 200 people, mostly foreign tourists, were killed in the terror attack.

Abu Bakar Bashir, 82, is seen as the spiritual leader of Islamist terror network Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which was responsible for

the massive blasts that ripped through a pair of packed bars in October 2002.

He was released after completing an unrelated jail term for helping fund militant training. But he has long been suspected of involvement in the horrific holiday island bombings.

Sentenced to 15 years in 2011, his term was later cut due to sentencing reductions handed to most prisoners in Indonesia.

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
Tata Institute of Fundamental Research
GKVK, Bellary Road, Bengaluru - 560 065.

Joint Graduate Entrance Examination in Biology and Interdisciplinary Life Sciences [JGEELBLS]

JGEELBLS is a common entrance examination in biology and interdisciplinary life sciences, coordinated by the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. Each participating institution operates an independent admissions process using the JGEELBLS result together with other inputs.

Students must apply separately to each participating institution. Please refer to the website of each institution for details of its admissions process and degree requirements.

Participating Institutions

ACTREC: Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research and Education in Cancer, Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai (www.actrec.gov.in)

Ashoka Institute: (www.ashoka.edu.in)

Bose Institute: Bose Institute, Kolkata (www.jcb.bose.ac.in)

CCMB: Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad (www.ccmb.res.in)

CDPD: Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics, Hyderabad (www.cdfd.org.in)

CHG: Centre for Human Genetics, Bangalore (www.chg.res.in)

IISER: Indian Institute of Science Education and Research

ISER-Bp, Bhopal (www.iserbpr.ac.in)

ISER-K, Kolkata (www.iiserkol.ac.in)

ISER-P, Pune (www.iiserpune.ac.in)

ISER-TVM, Thiruvananthapuram (www.iisertvm.ac.in)

ISER-T, Tirupati (www.iisertirupati.ac.in)

IMSc: Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Chennai (www.imsc.res.in)

InStem: Institute for Stem Cell Science and Regenerative Medicine, Bengaluru (www.instem.res.in)

MSL: Manipal School of Life Sciences, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal (https://www.manipal.edu/sls)

NBRC: National Brain Research Centre, Manesar (www.nbrc.ac.in)

NCCS: National Centre for Cell Science, Pune (www.nccs.res.in)

NIBMG: National Institute of Biomedical Genomics, Kalyani (www.nibmg.ac.in)

NII: National Institute of Immunology, New Delhi (www.nii.res.in)

NISER: National Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhubaneswar (www.niser.ac.in)

SINP: Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Kolkata (www.saha.ac.in)

TIFR: Tata Institute of Fundamental Research

DBS-TIFR: Department of Biological Sciences, Mumbai (www.tifr.res.in/~dbs)

NCBS-TIFR: National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru (www.ncbs.res.in)

TCI-TIFR: Centre for Interdisciplinary Sciences, Hyderabad (www.tifr.res.in)

Programmes offered at each institution: PhD at all the listed institutions, except NIBMG. Integrated MSc-PhD at TIFR (all Centres), IISER (all locations), Bose Institute and NIBMG. MSc at NBRC. MSc by Research at DBS-TIFR.

Test date and venues: The online test will be held on Sunday, March 7th, 2021 in the following cities: Agartala, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneshwar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Cochin, Coimbatore, Delhi, Guwahati, Haldwani, Hyderabad, Indore, Jaipur, Jalandhar, Jammu, Jamshedpur, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Kolkata, Kozhikode, Lucknow, Madurai, Mandi, Mangalore, Mumbai, Nagpur, Patna, Pune, Varanasi, Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam.

Applications for JGEELBLS: Submit online applications at <http://univ.tifr.res.in>

Application fee: Male Applicants - Rs 1,200/- Female Applicants - Rs 600/- Payment can be made online by Netbanking/Credit/Debit cards/UPI etc. as per modes available for the payment gateway. Hall tickets will be available for download only after successful payment.

Fee waivers: A waiver of application fee on grounds of financial distress may be requested by a letter from the Principal or the Head of the Department justifying the request. Students may apply online and send the waiver letter/request from the Principal/HOD (on their letter head duly signed and stamped) by post to "The Asstt. Registrar (Academic), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Homi Bhabha Road, Colaba, Mumbai 400005". Alternatively, the recommendation letter can be scanned and uploaded profile. These requests would be considered depending on availability of seats and cannot be guaranteed.

Date and time of JGEELBLS: Sunday, March 7, 2021, 2:30

MARKET WATCH

	08-01-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	48,783	1.43
US Dollar	73.24	0.10
Gold	49,763	-1.14
Brent oil	55.28	1.90

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	517.00	3.15
Asian Paints	2844.70	52.45
Axis Bank	672.70	1.60
Bajaj Auto	3529.15	91.20
Bajaj Finserv	9171.60	183.60
Bajaj Finance	5082.00	1.00
Bharti Airtel	540.25	-5.00
BPCL	400.15	7.95
Britannia Ind	3575.25	22.45
Cipla	838.70	12.15
Coal India	139.70	3.20
Divis Lab	3859.15	56.10
Dr Reddy's Lab	5338.25	67.35
Eicher Motors	2760.85	111.05
GAIL (India)	132.75	-0.70
Grasim Ind	1004.30	10.45
HCL Tech.	994.65	32.10
HDFC	2657.50	-3.85
HDFC Bank	1431.65	15.40
HDFC Life	717.00	12.70
Hero MotoCorp	3161.10	105.85
Hindalco	268.20	-4.70
Hind Unilever	2391.20	22.35
ICICI Bank	542.05	0.95
IndusInd Bank	939.80	-12.25
Infosys	1312.10	49.95
Indian Oil Corp	96.15	1.65
ITC	201.50	-1.30
JSW Steel	402.85	-2.55
Kotak Bank	1970.70	18.30
L&T	1373.40	34.45
M&M	770.50	26.10
Maruti Suzuki	8014.90	448.85
Nestle India Ltd.	18306.25	178.95
NTPC	100.15	3.15
ONGC	100.65	2.75
PowerGrid Corp	203.55	6.50
Reliance Ind	1933.70	22.55
SBI Life	935.50	21.35
State Bank	286.00	-1.70
Shree Cement	25812.40	811.25
Sun Pharma	620.80	18.90
Tata Motors	198.15	1.40
Tata Steel	713.15	-9.65
TCS	3120.90	88.10
Tech Mahindra	1051.10	56.35
Titan	1548.60	6.25
UltraTech Cement	5591.75	193.80
UPL	503.65	21.15
Wipro	430.20	23.45

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.04	73.36
Euro	89.46	89.86
British Pound	99.26	99.70
Japanese Yen (100)	70.32	70.64
Chinese Yuan	11.30	11.35
Swiss Franc	82.55	82.96
Singapore Dollar	55.15	55.40
Canadian Dollar	57.60	57.85
Malaysian Ringgit	18.12	18.21

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Ex-HDFC Bank MD Puri to advise Strides Group
NEW DELHI
Former HDFC Bank managing director Aditya Puri has joined global pharma major Strides Group as an advisor and will also serve as a director of its associate company Stelis Biopharma. "Eminent corporate doyen Aditya Puri joins the Strides Group as an advisor and also will be a director of its associate company, Stelis Biopharma," Strides Pharma Science Ltd. said. PTI

SBI offers concession on home loan rates

MUMBAI
State Bank of India (SBI) on Friday announced an interest concession of up to 30 basis points (bps) on home loans and a 100% waiver on processing fees. The new home loan interest rates are linked to CIBIL score and start from 6.80% for loans up to ₹30 lakh and 6.95% per cent for loans above ₹30 lakh, a bank release said. Women borrowers will get a concession of 5 bps. PTI

'Find solution for public stockholding of food'

NEW DELHI
India urged the members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to work on finding a permanent solution to the issue of public stock holding for food security purposes. Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan said the COVID-19 pandemic has again brought to the fore the importance of food and livelihood security. Mr. Wadhawan also said that India had a stable policy environment. PTI

RBI to phase in normal liquidity management

MUMBAI
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday said it had decided to restore normal liquidity management operations in a phased manner and would conduct variable rate reverse repo auction of ₹2 lakh crore on January 15. In February, RBI had announced a revised Liquidity Management Framework, but had temporarily suspended it in view of the COVID-19 outbreak. PTI

TCS profit climbs 7.2% on cloud services

Revenue rises 5.4%; CEO calls it 'one of our best' Q3 performances, eyes double-digit growth in FY22

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI
Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. (TCS) on Friday reported third-quarter consolidated net profit rose 7.2% from a year earlier to ₹8,701 crore.

The information technology services provider said the increase was backed by broad-based growth across segments especially in cloud-based services.

Revenue grew 5.4% to ₹42,015 crore. The operating margin in the quarter stood at 26.6%.

The board announced an interim dividend of ₹6 per share.

"Growing demand for core transformation services and strong revenue conversion from earlier deals have driven a powerful momentum that helped us overcome seasonal headwinds



Wind in the sails: Strong revenue conversion from earlier deals helped drive momentum, said the CEO. ■ JIGNESH MISTRY

and post one of our best performances in a December quarter," said Rajesh Gopinathan, CEO & MD.

"We are entering the new year on an optimistic note, our market position stronger than ever before, and our confidence reinforced by the

continued strength in our order book and deal pipeline.

Q4 to enjoy tailwind'
"We will enjoy the tail wind for the next quarter. The momentum is very strong and sustainable. We are expecting to return to double-digit

growth in FY22," he added.

Mr. Gopinathan said cloud was enabling a new class of boundary-less organisations that can 'seamlessly partner and collaborate within larger ecosystems to create innovative purpose-driven offerings to customers'.

"It is a beat [in performance] across the board," said Urmil Shah, Research Analyst and VP, IDBI Capital. "I am particularly impressed with margins. The icing on the cake is that TCS is confident of attaining double-digit growth in FY22."

Highest in 5 years'
"Strong growth across all our verticals, and operational benefits from our SBWS model allowed us to post the highest operating margin in the last five years, even after rolling out a salary increase

this quarter," said V. Ramakrishnan, Chief Financial Officer. "We also had an all-time high cash conversion in [the last quarter]," he added. All verticals showed positive sequential growth, led by manufacturing (+7.1%), BFSI (+2%), life sciences and healthcare (+5.2%), communications & media (+5.4%) and retail and CPG (+3%).

"On a year-on-year, constant currency basis, Life Sciences and Healthcare continued to grow at 18.2%. BFSI (+2.4%) and Technology & Services (+2.4%) also moved into positive territory," the company said in a regulatory filing.

Sequential growth for regions was led by North America (+3.3%), India (+18.1%), the U.K. (+4.5%), and Continental Europe (+2.5%), TCS added.

"Our on-going focus is to

SEBI eases norms for follow-on public offers

No minimum promoter contribution

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
Capital markets watchdog SEBI relaxed the framework for follow-on public offers (FPOs), a move that will help promoters of companies to raise funds more easily through this route.

The applicability of minimum promoters' contribution norm and the subsequent lock-in requirements for the issuers making the FPO have been done away with by the regulator, as per a notification.

Earlier, promoters were mandated to contribute 20% towards a FPO.

Besides, in case of any issue of capital to the public, the minimum promoters'

Equity MFs log ₹10,147-cr. outflow in Dec.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
Equity mutual funds (MFs) witnessed a massive outflow of ₹10,147 crore in December, making it the sixth consecutive monthly withdrawal, even as the industry's asset base surged to an all-time high of over ₹31 lakh crore.

However, investors put in ₹13,863 crore in debt MFs last month as compared to ₹44,984 crore in November, data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India showed.

Overall, the MF industry saw a net inflow of ₹2,968 crore across segments during the period under review, much lower than ₹27,194 crore inflow seen in November.

M&M, Mercedes-Benz vehicles to cost more

Prices to go up by 1.9%, 5% respectively

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI
Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. (M&M) has announced an increase in the prices of its personal and commercial vehicle ranges by about 1.9% effective January 8. The revision will result in an increase of ₹4,500 to ₹40,000, depending on the model and variant.

"In the case of the All New Thar, the current price increase will be effective for all bookings done between December 1, 2020 and January 7, 2021. All fresh bookings for the All New Thar, effective January 8, 2021, will have prices as applicable on the date of delivery," M&M said in a statement.

Luxury car brand Mercedes-Benz India has announced a 5% increase in prices across models effective January 15. With this revision, the price of a C-Class will increase approximately by ₹2 lakh, while the price of an AMG GT 63 S 4-Door Coupe will go up by ₹15 lakh.

The officials from the Income Tax department have contacted us," said a Flipkart spokesperson. "We are providing them all the required information and are extending our full cooperation.

DHFL NCD/FD holders urged to file claims

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI
63 Moons Technologies has asked non-convertible debenture (NCD) and fixed deposit holders of Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (DHFL) to file separate applications in the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) Mumbai to seek 'fraudulent transaction recovery benefits'.

Failing to do so will cause them to face huge haircuts, the firm said.

The promoters of DHFL have siphoned off approximately ₹30,000 crore, which has been traced by Grant Thornton forensic audit report itself," the company said in a statement.

"63 Moons Technologies, which holds about ₹200 crore of NCD of DHFL, has already filed an application in the NCLT Mumbai," it added.

U.S. sheds 1.4 lakh jobs as COVID-19 cases surge

Dec.'s job losses first in eight months

REUTERS
WASHINGTON
The U.S. economy shed jobs for the first time in eight months in December as the country buckled under an onslaught of COVID-19 infections, suggesting a significant loss of momentum that could temporarily stall recovery from the pandemic.

Non-farm payrolls decreased by 140,000 jobs last month, the Labor Department said on Friday. Data for November was revised up to show 3,36,000 jobs added instead of 2,45,000 as previously reported.

Backstop buffer
The economy has recovered just over half of the 22.2 million jobs lost in March and April.

The unemployment rate was at 6.7% in December.

Despite the labour market weakness, the economy

Hyundai 'in talks' with Apple on EVs

REUTERS

SEOUL
Hyundai Motor Co. said it was in early stage discussions with Apple Inc. after the *Korea Economic Daily* reported that the two were in talks to cooperate on electric cars and batteries, sending its shares surging some 20%.

"Apple and Hyundai are in discussions but they are at an early stage and nothing has been decided," Hyundai Motor said. Apple declined to comment.

In December, *Reuters* reported that Apple is moving forward with self-driving car technology and is targeting as early as 2024 to produce a passenger vehicle that could include its own breakthrough battery technology.



Employees braving risks, says AIBEA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI
The All India Bank Employees Association (AIBEA) has urged the Centre to include bank employees and officers in the 'prioritised category' along with other COVID-19 warriors at the time of vaccination.

In a letter addressed to the Prime Minister,

Smith returns to form with fine century

Though Jadeja's strikes keep Australia in check, India has work to do after losing openers

INDIA IN AUS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SYDNEY

Australia snapped up two wickets in the final session on Friday to leave India with work to do in the third Test as it chases 338 following Steve Smith's first century in more than a year.

Pace spearheads Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins got the breakthroughs, dismissing openers Rohit Sharma (26) and Shubman Gill (50) as India reached stumps at 96 for two, 242 adrift.

The dogged Cheteshwar Pujara was batting on nine and captain Ajinkya Rahane, who scored a century in the last Test at Melbourne, was on five.

Fightback

Australia resumed its first innings at the SCG on 166 for two, but only managed another 172 in the face of India's spirited fightback led by spinner Ravindra Jadeja who took four for 62.

Smith, though, was the star attraction, smacking 131 – his 27th Test century, and first since the 2019 Ashes in England – before being the last man to fall. Marnus Labuschagne made 91.

India's openers negotiated a tricky nine overs before tea to be 26 without loss, and they put on another 44 be-



Caught short! Steve Smith's desperate dive is not enough to beat Jadeja's throw and a superb innings comes to an end. ■ REUTERS

fore Hazlewood struck, removing Rohit for 26.

Rohit hit a big six off Nathan Lyon before surviving a scare on 24, when he was given out before the decision was reversed on review. His reprieve proved shortlived,

however, as he made just two more before being caught and bowled.

At the other end, Gill, who made 45 and 35 not out on debut in Melbourne, showed composure and skill, reinforcing his status as a potential long-term opener. Just 21,

he brought up a maiden Test half-century before edging to Cameron Green at gully off Cummins.

Earlier, Smith roared back to life on his home ground, reaching his century off 201 balls. He survived the stumps of Tim Paine (1). Cummins was then bowled by Jadeja for nought as Smith began running out of partners.

Smith then added a quick-fire 31 before being run out by Jadeja's fabulous direct hit.

After Labuschagne left with the score on 206, Mat-

thew Wade was undone by his natural aggression, recklessly skying a Jadeja ball to Bumrah.

The slide

Green went without scoring, trapped lbw by Bumrah who then clattered the stumps of Tim Paine (1). Cummins was then bowled by Jadeja for nought as Smith began running out of partners.

He found an ally briefly in Mitchell Starc to ensure he made his century, before the tailenders were mopped up.

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA – 1ST INNINGS

Will Pucovski lbw b Saini 62 (110b, 4x4), David Warner c Pujara b Siraj 5 (8b), Marnus Labuschagne c Rahane b Jadeja 91 (196b, 11x4), Steve Smith run out 131 (226b, 16x4), Matthew Wade c Bumrah b Jadeja 13 (16b, 2x4), Cameron Green lbw b Bumrah 0 (21b), Tim Paine b Bumrah 1 (10b), Pat Cummins b Jadeja 0 (13b), Mitchell Starc c Gill b Saini 24 (30b, 2x4, 1x6), Nathan Lyon lbw b Jadeja 0 (3b), Josh Hazlewood (not out) 1 (6b); Extras (b-4, w-1, nb-5); 10; Total (in 105.4 overs): 338.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-6 (Warner, 3.3 overs), 2-106 (Pucovski, 34.2), 3-206 (Labuschagne, 70.5), 4-232 (Wade, 76.5), 5-249 (Green, 84.5), 6-255 (Paine, 88.5), 7-278 (Cummins, 94.4), 8-310 (Starc, 101.5), 9-315 (Lyon, 102.4).

INDIA BOWLING

Bumrah 25.4-7-66-2, Siraj 25-4-67-1, Ashwin 24-17-4-0, Saini 13-0-65-2, Jadeja 18-3-62-4.

INDIA – 1ST INNINGS

Rohit Sharma c & b Hazlewood 26 (77b, 3x4, 1x6), Shubman Gill c Green b Cummins 50 (101b, 8x4), Cheteshwar Pujara (batting) 9 (53b), Ajinkya Rahane (batting) 5 (40b); Extras (w-5, nb-1); 6; Total (for two wkts. in 45 overs): 96.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-70 (Rohit, 26.6), 2-85 (Gill, 32.1).

AUSTRALIA BOWLING

Starc 7-4-19-0, Hazlewood 10-5-23-1, Cummins 12-6-19-1, Lyon 16-7-35-0.

A run-out to cherish for Jadeja

All-rounder says the 'rewind and play moment' his best yet



Man with the golden arm: Four wickets and a fantastic run-out, Ravindra Jadeja's day went like a dream. ■ AFP

AMOL KARHADKAR

Despite being India's most successful bowler on Friday, Ravindra Jadeja picked his astonishing fielding effort to run out centurion Steve Smith as the most memorable moment from the second day's play of the third Test.

Most favourite

"For me, the run-out will be the 'rewind and play' moment. It was one of my best run-outs. Having got the direct hit from outside the 30-yard circle, I would say it's my most favourite, in fact the best," Jadeja said.

Having bowled just three overs on the first day, Jadeja yet again displayed his utility as an all-rounder.

Asked whether he was increasingly looking at himself

as a genuine all-rounder in Test cricket over the last year or year-and-a-half, Jadeja said: "It's not about the last 12 or 18 months, but whenever I get an opportunity, I am keen on contributing with the bat and the ball. Ever since I started playing, that's been my role."

Converting the chances

"Whenever presented with an opportunity, I have delivered as an all-rounder. When you score runs overseas, it gets highlighted more. I don't think too much about the past but am focused on converting whatever opportunities I get."

New lockdown in Brisbane

REUTERS

SYDNEY
Brisbane will go into three days of strict lockdown as the government tries to contain a more contagious variant of COVID-19, raising more doubts about the Gabba hosting next week's fourth Test between Australia and India.

The city's two million residents will be barred from leaving their homes for anything but essential business after a worker at a quarantine hotel in the city tested positive for the new strain of the virus first detected in Britain.



Busy again: Steve Smith found his touch after a poor run in the previous two Tests. ■ AFP

I decided to be a bit more aggressive against Ashwin, says Smith

'Hit him over his head to put pressure on him, to make him bowl where I wanted'

S. DIPAK RAGAV

Steve Smith credited a more positive and aggressive approach in Sydney as the key to getting his form back after he notched up his 27th Test hundred on day two of the third Test on Friday.

No technical changes

When asked if he had to make any technical changes, Smith said, "Not really. I just tried to be a bit faster on my feet, especially against the spinners. I tried to come down the wicket and play off

the back foot a bit better, but nothing different against the quicks."

The former Australia captain said he made a concerted effort to be more aggressive against R. Ashwin, particularly after being dismissed by the off-spinner twice in the series.

"I decided to be a bit more positive. Early on, I hit him over his head to put pressure on him, to make him bowl where I wanted to. It was a concerted effort to do that, so happy with the way I played him," Smith added.

Over the last few years,

teams have come up with specific plans to keep Smith quiet, with India using a heavy leg-side field in the first two matches. When asked about it, the 31-year-old conceded that he has had to work hard to score runs in recent years.

"I think the plans have been different. I feel in a way less likely to get out but harder to score. That's probably shown in a few games over the last few years. With the fields they are setting and the way they are bowling, I have had to work hard for my runs. But this game I was aggressive early and tried to put it back on the bowlers a bit more. I got close to a run a ball for my first 20 runs and got myself going. After that, it was just about absorbing the pressure and putting the pressure when you need to," Smith added.

"I think it is a decent total. The wicket is a bit up and down as we have seen. Hopefully, we can start well in the morning and build some pressure."

India vs Australia third Test live (5 a.m. onwards) on Sony Ten 1, 3 and Sony Six.

Hyderabad FC rides on Liston's double strike, climbs to third

ISL 2020-21

SPORTS BUREAU

Liston Colaco's lightning pace and terrific brace powered Hyderabad FC to a 4-2 win over NorthEast United FC in the Indian Super League at the Tilak Maidan Stadium, Vasco, on Friday.

The victory helped HFC climb to third with 15 points from 10 games while NEUFC remained seventh with 11 points from 10 outings.

HFC got off to a flying

start, breaking the deadlock in the third minute. Joel Chianese stormed down the right, cut in through two defenders and passed to Aridane Santana, who made no mistake. It was Santana's sixth goal of the season.

Chianese himself struck in the 36th minute when he latched on to Akash Mishra's pass on the left, got past four defenders and slotted home.

Colaco came off the bench in the 64th minute to turn things around for HFC. The 22-year-old's first strike came in the 85th minute. With a

sprint, Ashutosh Mehta won a penalty which was coolly converted by captain Federico Gallego.

Lambot equalises

A couple of minutes later, it was Benjamin Lambot who netted the equaliser after five NEUFC players, unchallenged, tried to knock the ball over the line.

Interestingly, all of Liston's four goals in the ISL have come against NEUFC.

The result: NEUFC 2 (Gallego 45+pen, Lambot 45+2) lost to Hyderabad FC 4 (Santana 3, Chianese 36, Liston 86 & 90+4).

Saturday's match: Bengaluru FC vs SC East Bengal.

sprint, Liston took on three defenders before unleashing a curling left-footer. The Goan scored his second goal in stoppage time to round off a thumping victory for his side.

Interestingly, all of Liston's four goals in the ISL have come against NEUFC.

The result: NEUFC 2 (Gallego 45+pen, Lambot 45+2) lost to Hyderabad FC 4 (Santana 3, Chianese 36, Liston 86 & 90+4).

Saturday's match: Bengaluru FC vs SC East Bengal.

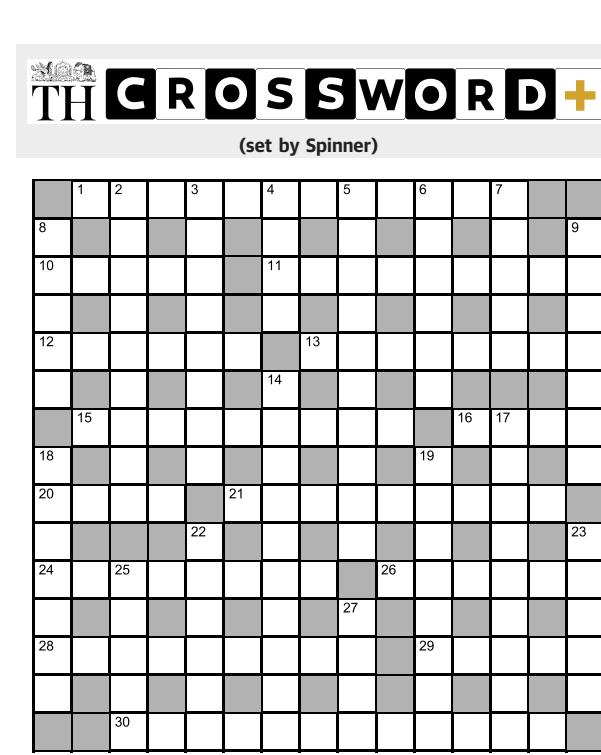


Favourite opponent! All of Liston's four goals in the ISL have come against NEUFC, including two on Friday. ■ ISL/SPORTZPICS

Back in the mix



Keenly watched: Kerala's S. Sreesanth gears up for the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy in Mumbai on Friday. ■ VIVEK BENDRE



ACROSS
1 River boats arranged by sailor for contractors, perhaps? (12)
10 Payment initiated before ceiling verification (5)
11 Former partner criticises setter regarding development (9)
12 As expected, batting on day five at the end, extremely exhausted (6)
13 Overturning umpire's decision finally with know-how on movement (8)
15 Tying things together, building one's body up, avoiding some treats (12)

Never go off the grid.
We are digital now. Come solve online.
<https://www.ergo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCAN TO PLAY

QR CODE

– for fitness ultimately! (9)

16 Line about seizing opportunity (4)

20 Involved with Spinner? Precisely not! (4)

21 Georgia election, in retrospect, basically impacts new government's running (9)

24 Momentous first over replayed in Chinnappampatti primarily, after he's introduced! (8)

26 Sheds tears about man's sins (6)

28 Height of happiness: Getting frontline of employees vaccinated! (9)

29 Selectively tighten security under pressure (5)

30 She owns media, buries extraordinary report involving Indian leader! (12)

DOWN

2 Extensive list of actors for TV show (9)

3 With captain involved, umpire allows reviews (8)

4 Contest wife's opinion (4)

5 'A' layer gets raise, so it seems! (10)

6 Admitting to going under in doctor's absence (6)

7 Small difference of opinion remains (5)

8 Dust settles around origin of pandemic – sabotage! (5)

9 Attempts to go after English records (7)

14 Foreign animal fur processed with Iodine (10)

17 Incomplete remnants of damaged accessories (9)

18 Weaker one starts a fire (7)

19 Worker essentially proper at orchestrating (8)

22 Depot at Ooty stocks vegetable (6)

23 Hats off! A sincere husband ethically skips Test series involving Australia (5)

