

Last Chance for Students going to Class VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI & XII to start their training with FIITJEE at the earliest possible and get an edge over others

Admission Test : Sunday, 21st February 2021

Last Date to Register & Registration Fee : Till 16th February Rs. 500/-* ; from 17th to 19th February Rs. 700/-* (*including GST) | Register at <http://admissiontest.fiitjee.com> | Test will be conducted in proctored online mode (can be taken from home)

Studying at FIITJEE is a Must for every student till Class X irrespective of the choice of stream (Arts / Commerce / Engineering / Humanities / Medical)

- ✓ FIITJEE classroom programs for classes VI to X lay a strong academic foundation of the students through its unique pedagogy.
- ✓ These programs raise IQ of the students i.e. sharpen analytical skills & mental ability and evolve students' thinking process, making them capable of solving complex problems.
- ✓ These programs comprehensively prepare you for school, boards

- and all scholastic & competitive exams at city, state & national level, including NTSE, NSEJS / IJSO, Pre-RMO, RMO & Green Olympiad besides laying a strong foundation for competitive exams like NEET, JEE Main & JEE Advanced etc.
- ✓ These programs help students balance life with stress free studies.
- ✓ These programs help you acquire right examination temperament, ensuring optimum output in the exams.

Come, benefit from FIITJEE programs and transform your life & career

FIITJEE Classroom / Integrated School Programs

For Students going to Class VI, VII, VIII, IX & X having inclination towards any stream - Arts / Commerce / Engineering / Humanities / Medical

Class	Program	Goals
VI	LITTLE GENIE - One Year Foundation Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ These programs comprehensively prepare you for school and all scholastic & competitive exams at city, state & national level for your class, and lay a strong foundation for higher level scholastic & competitive exams like NTSE, NSEJS / IJSO, Pre-RMO, RMO & Green Olympiad by raising IQ of the students i.e. sharpen analytical skills & mental ability and evolve students' thinking process making them capable of solving complex problems.
VII	UDAYA - Two Year Classroom Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ These programs lay a strong foundation for competitive exams like NEET, JEE Main & JEE Advanced etc.
VIII	UDAYA - One Year Classroom Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Along with Physics, Chemistry & Mathematics, Biology is also taught in these programs. Mental ability is exhaustively taken up.
IX	ASCENT - Two Year Classroom Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ These programs comprehensively prepare you for school, boards and all scholastic & competitive exams at city, state & national level, including NTSE, NSEJS / IJSO, Pre-RMO & RMO by raising IQ of the students i.e. sharpen analytical skills & mental ability and evolve students' thinking process making them capable of solving complex problems.✓ These programs lay a strong foundation for competitive exams like NEET, JEE Main & JEE Advanced etc.
X	ASCENT - One Year Classroom Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ These programs help students to easily adapt to the exponential increase in the level of academics in Class XI & XII vis-a-vis those who wait till Class XI to join a coaching institute.✓ Along with Physics, Chemistry & Mathematics, Social Studies & Biology are also taught in these programs. Mental ability is exhaustively taken up.

For Students going to Class IX, X, XI, XII and XII studying Students aspiring to ace Engineering Entrance and other Competitive & Scholastic Exams

Class	Program	Goals
IX	Four Year Classroom Program for JEE Main & Advanced 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The long term goal of these programs is to help each & every student get an optimum Rank in JEE Main & Advanced.
	RAMANUJAN - Four Year Integrated Program for JEE Main & Advanced 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Besides this, students will be holistically trained to ace scholastic exams like NTSE, KVPY, Jr. & Sr. Olympiads etc.
	SUPREME - Four Year Integrated School Program for JEE Main & Advanced 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ These four / three years of intensive preparation works like ambrosia even in X & XII Board Exams.
X	Three Year Classroom Program for JEE Main & Advanced 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The long-term focus of these transformational programs is to enhance your analytical, logical & thinking ability, which will empower you to not only achieve best possible ranks in JEE Main & Advanced but also attain phenomenal success in XII Boards, Olympiads & KVPY.
XI	Two Year Classroom Program for JEE Main & Advanced 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The long-term focus of these transformational programs is to enhance your analytical, logical & thinking ability, which will empower you to not only achieve best possible ranks in JEE Main & Advanced but also attain phenomenal success in XII Boards, Olympiads & KVPY.
	PANINI - Two Year Integrated Program for JEE Main & Advanced 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Significant improvement in just one year in your preparation which will have positive impact in helping you get into an IIT with a desired Rank. You may be able to improve your JEE Main & Advanced Rank from below 5000 to Top 100. That's not all, this rigorous preparation will equip you to give a par-excellence performance in XII Boards too.
	PINNACLE - Two Year Integrated School Program for JEE Main & Advanced 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ This program will empower the preparation of those students who could not prepare well for JEE Main & Advanced 2021. These students will be nurtured under the guidance of the best faculty of the country who understand what academic inputs such students need at this stage.✓ Special emphasis is laid on plugging the loopholes, toning-up the skills and helping students build sound exam temperament which together consolidate their preparation and drive them to achieve optimum success in JEE Main & Advanced 2022.
XII	One Year Classroom Program for JEE Main & Advanced 2022	
XII Pass (presently in XII)	One Year Extended Classroom Program for JEE Main & Advanced 2022	

Legends : NTSE (National Talent Search Examination) ; NSEJS (National Standard Examination in Junior Science) ; IJSO (International Junior Science Olympiad) ; KVPY (Kishore Vaigyanik Protsahan Yojana) ; Pre-RMO (Pre-Regional Mathematical Olympiad) ; RMO (Regional Mathematical Olympiad) ; NEET (National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test for Medical)

Education with values...

FIITJEE

29 YEARS OF INNOVATION, SINCERITY, ETHICS, CONSISTENCY & HARD WORK

Please turn over...

The Premier Institute for JEE Main, JEE Advanced, Boards, various Olympiads, KVPY & NTSE

Admission Test Dates from March to August 2021

Admission Test Date	Eligibility
21st March 2021	For Students going to Class VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI & XII
4th April 2021	
18th April 2021	For Students going to Class VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII & XII appearing
2nd May 2021	
6th June 2021	For Students of Class IX, X, XII & XII appeared and Curate for Students of Class XI
20th June 2021	For Students of Class IX, X, XI & XII appeared

Admission Test Date	Eligibility
27th June 2021	For Students of Class IX, X, XI & XII appeared
11th July 2021	For Students of Class XI & FTRE for XII appeared / pass
25th July 2021	For Students of Class XI & XII pass
1st August 2021	Xtra Ray Edge Test for XII pass Students
8th August 2021	
22nd August 2021	For Students of Class XI & XII pass

Registration Fee for the Test : Rs. 500/- (including GST) | Last date to Register : Two days before the Test | Register at <http://admissiontest.fiitjee.com>

Free Live Online Coaching*

For Students going to Class VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI & XII and Students presently in XII

*Classes will be conducted by FIITJEE Delhi

These Free Live online classroom programs will be taught by the experienced & adept FIITJEE faculty.

Nothing compares with an in-person classroom experience. We are hopeful that in-person classes will commence soon. In case, you can join a FIITJEE Classroom Program in-person, please do not go for any online program

Limited seats are available | Students will be required to pay a token enrolment fee of Rs. 1000/- only | Selected Students of Class IX, X & XI are required to have their own tablet of desired specification & pay MDM Fee to our technology partner (Edfora)

Assessment Test for Admission

21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th & 28th March 2021

Take the Assessment Test for Admission on any of these days as per your convenience from your home (Test will be conducted in proctored online mode) | Registration Fee for the Test : Rs. 50/- (including GST) | Last date to Register : Two days before the Test | You can appear only once | For more details about our Live Online Classroom Programs & to Register, visit www.fiitjee.com/livelinecrp

Helpline : North & West Region : 9560021031, 9599597455, 9599282329 & 9205261239 | East Region : 6292236537 & 6292236538 | Andhra Pradesh & Telangana Region : 9885321526, 9966255597 & 9885337381 | Tamil Nadu, Kerala & Karnataka Region : 80 1089 1089 (Call us from 10 am to 7 pm)

JEE Advanced 2021 & 2022 Aspirants !

What is the importance of FIITJEE's All India Test Series in your success ?

Tremendous ! Unmatched !



This year being conducted online. Appear from the safety of your home.

With Live Online Concept Strengthening Classroom Program (CSCP) by FIITJEE Delhi Centres + Multidimensional Analysis of Performance + myPAT - Online Test Series* (*Marks for each test with analysis chart)

Program	Inclusions			Last Date to Enrol & Fee (including GST)
	Details of Computer Based* Tests	Details of myPAT Online Tests	Number of hours of Live Online Concept Strengthening Classroom Program (CSCP)	
All India Test Series for JEE Main & JEE Advanced 2021	5 (Main) + 6 (Advanced)	8 (Main) + 15 (Advanced)	66	25th February 2021 Rs. 10,900/-
	5 (Advanced)	4 (Main) + 10 (Advanced)	30	29th April 2021 Rs. 8,000/-
	4 (Advanced)	5 (Advanced)	24	31st May 2021 Rs. 5,400/-
For complete schedule, please visit https://fiitjeenonclassroomprograms.com/aitsschedule/				
All India Integrated (XI & XII) Test Series for JEE Main & JEE Advanced 2022	14 (Main) + 14 (Advanced)	29 (Main) + 32 (Advanced)	150	25th February 2021 Rs. 21,500/-
	13 (Main) + 14 (Advanced)	29 (Main) + 32 (Advanced)	144	22nd April 2021 Rs. 21,000/-
	12 (Main) + 12 (Advanced)	29 (Main) + 32 (Advanced)	126	27th May 2021 Rs. 20,500/-
For complete schedule, please visit https://fiitjeenonclassroomprograms.com/aitsschedule/				
All India Test Series for JEE Main & JEE Advanced 2022	12 (Main) + 10 (Advanced)	24 (Main) + 27 (Advanced)	114	31st March 2021 Rs. 15,000/-
				31st May 2021 Rs. 16,000/-
				31st July 2021 Rs. 18,200/-
				15th November 2021 Rs. 19,200/-
For complete schedule, please visit https://fiitjeenonclassroomprograms.com/aitsschedule/				

Enrol online at www.fiitjeenonclassroomprograms.com

FIITJEE Non-Classroom Programs Helpline : 9599597454, 9205261239 e-mail: query.ncrp@fiitjee.com

Come, study with the best.

Where winning is a habit !



29 YEARS OF INNOVATION, SINCERITY, ETHICS, CONSISTENCY & HARD WORK

National Admissions Office : FIITJEE House, 29-A, Kalu Sarai, Near Hauz Khas Metro Station, Sarvapriya Vihar, New Delhi - 110 016
Ph.: (South Delhi: 46106000 / 10/13/15 / 9599597455 / 852782585), (East Delhi: 9311828822 / 9311645577), (Punjabi Bagh: 45634000 / 45634003 / 8527664579), (Dwarka: 8527208022 / 8826116080), (Janak Puri: 45616600 / 9599183701), (Noida: 9871091470 / 9599596524 / 7042734422), (Greater Noida: 9871113448), (Gurgaon: 4628400 / 9871091545), (Faridabad: 971744015 / 9910059641), (Ghaziabad: 9717775340 / 9599333531 / 9311822133)

Web: www.fiitjee.com Buy books at www.megacosmcoitations.com www.facebook.com/fiitjeeindia123 www.twitter.com/fiitjee www.linkedin.com/company/fiitjee www.youtube.com/fiitjee1td www.instagram.com/fiitjee.india

The Premier Institute for JEE Main, JEE Advanced, Boards, various Olympiads, KVPY & NTSE

Can the Cost of Studying at IITs be Zero?

Please note that the present cost*

of pursuing a 4 Year Graduate /

5 Year Integrated Course at any IIT is

approximately Rupees 14 - 15 Lacs

(*including reasonable personal expenses)

Yes, it is possible

through



For Students presently in Class VIII, IX, X, XI & XII

(Aspiring for JEE Main & Advanced

2025, 2024, 2023, 2022 & 2021 respectively)

Test Date: 21st February 2021

FIITJEE being at the forefront of innovative excellence recognises and rewards extraordinary talent through IIT Genius Scholarships every year. 10 Students from each Class VIII, IX, X, XI & XII will be bestowed with the honour of IIT Genius title and will also get their education at IITs sponsored* by FIITJEE. The scholarship will cover all institutional expenses, including Hostel Fee, Tuition Fee, Books Fee, & reasonable personal expenses (Rs. 5000 per month). Selection of Students will be based on IIT Genius Test followed by an interview.

*Visit www.iitgenius.com for more details

One doesn't have to be a FIITJEE Student to avail this Scholarship & Award or even join a course at FIITJEE after being awarded

Who should appear ?

School Toppers | NTSE Scholars | Jr. Science Olympiad qualifiers | Qualifiers of any stage of Olympiads till Class XI | KVPY Stage-I Qualifiers & KVPY Fellows | JSTSE qualifiers (in case of Delhi) | Any State / City level Scholastic / Competitive exam qualifiers | Those who have the potential to become one of the Top Rankers in JEE Main / JEE Advanced.

Registration Fee : Rs. 100/- (including GST)

Last Date to Register : 19th February 2021

For more details, visit www.iitgenius.com

Breaking Financial Barriers,
FIITJEE promises to help Students from Underprivileged Sections to realise their dream.

FORTUNATE 40

A Social Initiative by FIITJEE to Help the Economically Deprived

For Students presently in Class VIII & X

(Aspirants of JEE Main & Advanced 2025 & 2023 respectively)

100% Scholarship on FIITJEE Programs & 100% Waiver on Hostel Fee

Selection Date: 21st February 2021

Last Date to Register & Registration Fee :

Till 16th February Rs. 50/- ; from 17th to 19th February Rs. 100/- (*including GST)

Eligibility : Student should be from a Central Government School or a State Government School for under privileged section of society, for example Students studying in Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti Schools. The total parental income should be less than Rs. 10,000/- per month.

Other Students (studying in public / private schools) may also apply, however their application will be considered on case to case basis and on the discretion of the management.

For more details, visit www.fiitjee.com/f40.htm

on Sunday

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



GUARANTEED PRELIMS SELECTION
OR GET 100% FEE BACK
**Read Only 10-Red Books
& Nothing Else**

WITH TOPIC-WISE & DAY-WISE GUIDED ACTION PLAN (GAP)
with GAP, you will be able to read these **Red Books** atleast Thrice..

Only English Medium

- We guarantee you Min 70 Qs or 20% more than cut off! in GS Prelims 2021 from our 10 RED BOOKS
- Else your 100% Fee will be back.
- 3 out of every 4 Qs IN UPSC QS Pre came from our RED BOOKS Since 2008

See Proof: www.crackias.com/proof

10 Red Books cover

- All Old & New NCERTs and 70+ Major Books Covered.
- 100 % Coverage of Current Affairs (Jan 2020-May 2021) Covering 14 sources- PIB, Hindu, HT, Mint, PRS, IE, UNO sites etc.
- Synopsis of India Year Book & Eco Survey 2021.

SAVE MORE WITH

PT TOPPERS' PACK

- 10 Red Books + Video Lectures +
- GS Pre Test Series: 25 Tests +
- Practice Online Last 40 Years UPSC QS (1978-2019): Topic wise

13700/-

OUR RECORD

Year of Exam	Cut-off Marks for General Category from UPSC website	Data from UPSC website	MARKS DELIVERED FROM OUR 10 RED BOOKLETS
2020	98 (Expected)	144	144
2019	98	154	154
2018	98	154	154
2017	105.34	154	154
2016	116	152	152
2015	107.34	168	168

crack
IAS
com

Arrow Education

Visit us

www.crackias.com

921-7070707

crackiasquery@gmail.com

NEARBY



Farmer unions for judicial probe into 'false' cases

NEW DELHI
Protesting farmer unions on Saturday demanded a high-level judicial inquiry into the violence during the tractor rally on January 26 and the alleged 'false' cases slapped on the protesters.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

SHUBHRA RANJAN
Always Ahead
CSAT COURSE
By AMIT GARG
BATCH STARTING 17 FEB 2021
₹9000/-/REGISTER NOW
9910812719@www.shubhraranjan.com

CLASSIFIEDS ▶ PAGES 2 & 4
MAGAZINE ▶ 8 PAGES

FinMin backs outlays for health, defence

Sitharaman strongly counters Oppn. charge of crony capitalism, says people are the govt's only cronies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday tore into the Opposition's charges that Budget 2021-22 paid inadequate attention to health, defence and rural employment distress, by stressing that allocations for these sectors were more abundant than they were under the United Progressive Alliance.

Presenting her defence of the Budget's proposals in the Lok Sabha, Ms. Sitharaman labelled former Congress president Rahul Gandhi "India's doomsday man" for stoking fears about issues such as the country's handling of the pandemic and the economy.

Crony capitalism is a tendency they have. They [the Congress] say they nationalised banks, but by using phone-banking at those banks, non-performing assets were left behind. This is their tendency – create institutions and misuse them for their own – *Hum Do Hamare Do* is useful for that – and keep accusing others at the end of the day

The Congress party gives birth to all these very good schemes but lacks the will to use them properly, openly and transparently. The moment such schemes are born, it misuses them to favour cronies

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN, FINANCE MINISTER

Taking on the Opposition's suggestions of crony capitalism driving the Budget's proposals, the Finance Minister said the only cronies that the government works for were the people of India, and questioned a former Congress-led State government's decision to invite a 'crony' to set up a port.

"Crony capitalism is a tendency they have. They [the Congress] say they nationalised banks, but by using phone-banking at those

banks, non-performing assets were left behind. This is their tendency – create institutions and misuse them for their own – *Hum Do Hamare Do* is useful for that – and keep accusing others at the end of the day," she said.

Minister slams Congress

"Their second tendency is to say what they feel like in Parliament, make allegations, use abusive language, but when as per the system, someone rises to respond point by point, they are not ready to listen. They will disrupt, shout or walk out. This is what happened in the Budget debate," the Finance Minister said.

"We should recognise

these two tendencies of the Congress and this makes it clear that their belief in democratically elected Parliamentary system is completely finished," she said, concluding her feisty response to the Budget debate.

She also accused Mr. Gandhi of persistently insulting constitutional authorities, be it former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (by tearing an ordinance in public during the UPA regime), President Ram Nath Kovind (by discussing his address to the Parliament during the Budget debate) and, recently, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla as well.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

YouTubers back to tickle Valley's funny bone

Spurred by return of 4G Internet



Back with a bang: Yawar Ahmad, front, who runs 'Kashmiri Kalkharabs', with his team. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

PEERZADA ASHQI

SRINAGAR

Kashmiri's comic YouTubers, who were rendered jobless and lost lakhs of followers after the August 5, 2019, decision to snap high-speed Internet in the Valley, are back with their humour and sense of fun.

months. It was tedious to upload a 2 GB file on a 2G Internet connection when it was restored last year. Uploading videos would take days," Yawar Ahmad, 20, whose five-member team started the 'Kashmiri Kalkharabs' channel in 2017, told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Ahmad, a student from Sumbal's Maloora area, saw the number of subscribers to the channel falling with each passing day, and with it his dream to become an actor.

SPECIAL

First video on 4G

In fact, the first funny video in many months was titled '4G Aaa Waapas', where a son is convincing his father to propitiate God by offering elaborate feasts to friends and relatives on the restoration of the 4G Internet services.

Mr. Shah was replying to a discussion on the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in Lok Sabha.

The Home Minister criticised some Opposition members for their claim that the proposed law negated the hopes of the region of getting back its statehood.

"The snapping of 4G Internet dashed our dreams, and the investments we had made on cameras and laptops in 2019. We were left home-bound. I developed depression for three

"In just eight months, we lost over 1 lakh subscribers and the once growing number of views came to naught," he said.

"My cousin, who is married with kids, was dependent on the channel to feed his family. We failed to switch to any other profession. We were living in utter frustration," Mr. Ahmad, who organised several street protests against the Internet ban last year, said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

'Incentivise States for disinvestment in PSEs'

Finance panel chief appreciates Centre

VIKAS DHOOT

NEW DELHI

The Centre should incentivise States to come clean on their fiscal deficit positions, bring off-Budget liabilities above board and take up their own strategic disinvestment programmes for State-owned public sector enterprises, Fifteenth Finance Commission Chairperson N.K. Singh mooted in an interview.

Terminating the Centre's decision to "transparently" acknowledge a fiscal deficit of 9.5% of GDP this year as "a very positive development", Mr. Singh said that the Centre could incentivise the States to adopt a similar practice to enhance the confidence of investors in India's overall debt and fiscal

deficit trajectory.

"There is a decisive case for State governments to take a leaf out of the Central government's book and drop opaque practices and off-Budget borrowings," Mr. Singh said.

INTERVIEW ▶ PAGE 10

Police perform the last rites of unidentified bodies in Chamoli

204 persons are listed as missing after avalanche

VIJAYA SINGH

NEW DELHI

The Uttarakhand police have performed the last rites of over a dozen unidentified bodies and 10 body parts a week after an avalanche hit Chamoli district and triggered a flash flood, which left 204 persons missing.

Director General of Police, Uttarakhand, Ashok Kumar said 38 bodies and 19 body parts had been recovered so far.

"The bodies and body



Efforts continue: A new machine brought to Tapovan tunnel in Joshimath on Saturday to carry out further drilling. ■ ANI

parts had started deteriorating. After waiting for 72 hours (for a family member to claim the body), the police performed the last rites after preserving the DNA samples. As and when fami-

Lockdown: SC allows 100% fee collection by Rajasthan schools

Consider pleas for inability to pay sympathetically on case-to-case basis, court tells managements

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has stayed a Rajasthan High Court order to schools affiliated to Central and State secondary education boards to collect only 60% of the tuition fee for the lockdown period.

A Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar allowed schools to collect the entire arrears in six monthly instalments from March to August 2021.

"The management/school may collect fees for the academic year 2019-2020 as well as 2020-2021 from the students, equivalent to fees amount notified for the academic year 2019-2020, in six monthly instalments commencing from March 5, 2021 and ending on August 5, 2021," the court directed on an appeal filed by parties, including some Catholic education-

It said students should not be debarred from attending classes on account of non-payment.

'Don't debar students'

"The management shall not debar any student from attending either online or physical classes on account of non-payment of arrears/fees," the court said on an appeal filed by parties, including some Catholic education-

al institutions, represented by advocate Romy Chacko.

In case parents have difficulty in paying the arrears, they should be allowed to approach the school authorities through individual representations. The managements would consider them on a "case-to-case basis sympathetically", the apex court said.

The managements were also directed not to withhold the name of any student for

Class 10 and 12 board exams because of non-payment of arrears. They should allow students to take the exams after obtaining an undertaking from the parents to pay up.

"The arrangement will not affect collection of fees for the academic year 2021-2022."

The court said the interim order would be subject to the final direction. It fixed the next hearing for February 15.

VISION IAS INSPIRING INNOVATION
LIVE/ONLINE Classes Available www.visionias.in

Heartiest Congratulations To All Successful Candidates

7 IN TOP 10 SELECTIONS IN CSE 2019 from various programs of VISION IAS

FOUNDATION COURSE GENERAL STUDIES PRELIMS CUM MAINS 2022

PREPARATION UNINTERRUPTED Organize all your lectures and study material effectively and access them from anywhere, anytime

LIVE / ONLINE cum Offline classes English Medium 11 Mar | 10 AM 11 Feb 5 PM हिन्दी माध्यम में २३ Mar | 1:30 PM 21 Jan 5 PM

To know more, get FREE Counseling or Register

ARE YOU "PRE" CAUTIOUS? FAST TRACK COURSE 2021 GENERAL STUDIES PRELIMS Admission Open

This course is designed to help aspirants prepare for and increase their scores in General Studies Paper I. It will not only include analysis of previous years' UPSC Prelims papers but also that of previous years' IAS Paper I Prelims papers along with practice and discussion of VISION IAS classroom tests and the Prelims All India Test Series.

ESSAY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM 2021

Practical and efficient approach to learn different parts of essay Regular practice and brainstorming sessions Interdisciplinary approaches

6th Feb | 5 PM

DELIJA • HEAD OFFICE: Apsara Arcade, Karol Bagh | CONTACT: 8468022022, 9019066066

JAIPOUR | CHANDIGARH | LUCKNOW | 17 Mar JAIPUR | CHANDIGARH | GUWAHATI 8468022022 | 8468022022

HYDERABAD | AHMEDABAD | 9000140133 | 99009447040

CM YK

Timings
DELHI

SUNDAY, FEB. 14
RISE 07:01 SET 18:11
RISE 08:44 SET 20:37
MONDAY, FEB. 15
RISE 07:00 SET 18:12
RISE 09:15 SET 21:32
TUESDAY, FEB. 16
RISE 06:59 SET 18:12
RISE 09:45 SET 22:24

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	27	11
Safdarjung	27	11
Palam	24	13

Delhi Palam Today
28°C A cool morning with dense fog at many places and comfortable day likely. Light winds with partly cloudy sky would prevail.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
28°C Moderate to dense fog during morning at many places. A comfortable day with mainly sunny sky.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019
All rights reserved.

THE HINDU
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify the matter appearing in this column before accepting its veracity or responding to any published in this newspaper. THG PUBLISHING LTD., The Publisher & Owner of this newspaper does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products or services. The publisher can be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

'In six months, 630 electric two-wheelers hit Delhi roads'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The first week of *Switch Delhi* campaign, focusing on promoting electric two-wheelers, has garnered enthusiastic support from the public and industry alike, the Delhi government said on Saturday.

Since the launch of the Delhi Electric Vehicles Policy in August 2020, 630 new electric two-wheelers have been registered and more are being registered every day, said the government.

Savings, subsidy
The campaign aims to generate awareness about benefits of electric vehicles (EV) and perks offered by the government. An individual can save around ₹20,000 a year switching from petrol scooter/bike to an electric one, the Transport Department said.

Dalbir Chand Kohli, a businessman and a third time EV owner, said: "Seven years ago, I was the first to purchase an EV in Delhi. After the EV policy, I purchased my third EV and got a subsidy of ₹7,700 and waiver of road tax and registration fee."

Air Quality of Delhi-NCR	
Delhi	354
Ghaziabad	388
Noida	348
Good	Satisfactory
0-50	51-100
Poor	Very Poor
201-300	301-400
Severe	>400

Air Quality Index at 4 p.m. yesterday (Average of past 24 hours) | Source: CPCB

Cloudy sky, dense fog likely today

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A thick blanket of fog enveloped Delhi on Saturday morning, with visibility dropping to 50 metres at Safdarjung and 250 metres at Palam at 8.30 am, Met department officials said.

The city recorded a minimum temperature of 10.8 degrees Celsius and a maximum temperature of 26.6 degrees Celsius.

A partly cloud sky with "dense to very dense fog" is forecast for Sunday.

"The maximum and minimum temperatures will be around 28 and 12 degrees Celsius, respectively," the official said.

The Air Quality Index in Delhi was 354 (very poor) on Saturday. Pollution monitoring agency SAFAR has predicted an AQI of 343 in the city on Sunday.

Over 1,800 healthcare workers get second jab

Low turnout due to beneficiaries not being notified: officials

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Roll out of the second and final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine started in the city on Saturday and 1,856 healthcare workers got the jab.

A total of 13,768 beneficiaries, healthcare and frontline workers, took the COVID-19 jab on Saturday and there were six Adverse Events Following Immunisation, said a Delhi government spokesperson.

Of the total beneficiaries, 3,530 healthcare workers received the first dose and 1,856 their second dose.

The vaccination of healthcare workers started on January 16 and front-line workers from the first week of February. The second dose of the vaccine is given 28 days after the first dose.

There were complaints that healthcare workers in some centres did not get a message from the government to take the second dose and thus the turnout was less, said officials.



A front-line worker gets the vaccine in Delhi on Saturday.
■ R.V. MOORTHY

The government did not share details about how many people were supposed to get the second dose of the vaccine on Saturday.

"I took the second dose of the vaccine on Saturday. There were no problems at all. I also got a certificate from the hospital that I have completed my vaccination," said Biji Tomy, 48, a nurse at Lok Nayak Hospital.

Mrs. Tomy had booked flight tickets, even before taking the second dose, to go back to her home town in Kerala on February 16 to meet her parents. Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital spokesperson Chhavi Gupta said no special

arrangements were made for the second dose.

Following directions from the Centre, the Delhi government also issued a notice that the first dose of vaccination of all healthcare workers must be "mandatorily completed" by February 20, and there will be a final mop-up round for healthcare workers from February 21-25. "All healthcare workers are advised to get vaccinated at designated sites," the notice read.

No deaths

Delhi witnessed 126 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 6,36,796, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Saturday.

No deaths were reported in the past 24 hours and the death toll stood at 10,889. This is the second time this week that no deaths were reported. A total of 60,876 tests were done in a day.

Of the total cases, 6,24,866 people have recovered and there are now 1,041 active cases.

Withdraw surveillance, TMC MP tells police chief

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra wrote a letter to Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Srivastava on Saturday asking him to withdraw "some sort of surveillance" at her residence on Barakhamba Road.

In the letter, which was also addressed to Station House Officer of Barakhamba Road police station, she stated that the SHO had come to meet her at her residence on February 12 and shortly thereafter, around three BSF personnel armed with assault rifles had been deputed outside my house. The conduct of these armed officers indicate that they are making notes of movements to and from my residence, it appears to me that I am under some sort of surveillance," she wrote.

"Upon making inquiries, I was informed that the armed officers had been deputed for my protection... I did not ask nor want such protection... kindly withdraw these officers".

Delhi Police refused to comment on the matter till time of going to press.

Crime Branch to probe Rinku Sharma murder; communal angle ruled out

The 25-year-old was stabbed by five men on February 9

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Saturday said that the Rinku Sharma murder case has been transferred to the Crime Branch.

The 25-year-old victim was allegedly stabbed by five men after a quarrel at a birthday party in Mangolpuri on February 9.

The police said the men had gone to Rinku's house and stabbed him with a knife. They allegedly had

some rivalry over an eatery business, which was shut due to financial losses.

Rinku was taken to a hospital where he succumbed to injuries. On February 11, the police arrested four accused: Nashruddin, Islam, Mehtab, Jahid. Tajuddin was arrested on Barakhamba Road.

The police have clarified there is no communal angle to the murder. "The quarrel started during a birthday party over shutting down of a restaurant. All persons are known to each other and live in the same locality. Any other motive alluded to this incident is factually wrong," the police said in a statement.

AAP demands Amit Shah's resignation

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Citing the murder of Rinku Sharma, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said that Hindus are "not safe" under the BJP and demanded Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation.

"Today, every Delhiite has to stand against the jihad mentality. What triggers sadness is that those who patronise this mentality are silent today. Where are Rahul Gandhi, Mamata Banerjee and Arvind Kejriwal?" Mr. Gupta demanded.

"I want to ask Arvind Kejriwal whether he is the Chief Minister of a particular community or all of Delhi. His silence on such incidents reflects his attachment to the jihadist mentality," he said.

Jihadist mentality'

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta alleged that Rinku's murder bore

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT RANCHI

invites applications for admission to the inaugural batch of its Integrated Programme in Management (Commencing in September 2021)

The Integrated Programme in Management (IPM) of IIM Ranchi is a full-time 5-year blended course of business studies from undergraduate to postgraduate level (Integrated BBA-MBA). Students will be awarded a Master of Business Administration degree at the end of the programme. Students that have passed the 10th standard and the 12th standard (or equivalent) with 60% (55% for candidates from SC/ST/DAP) or more marks or equivalent, from a recognised Educational Board/Institute/University, can apply for admission to the programme. The students who will obtain the aforementioned qualifications by August 31, 2021, can also apply.

Admission to the programme will be based on SAT exam scores, a written ability test, a personal interview, and overall academic performance at the secondary and the higher secondary levels.

For further details on admission, eligibility criteria and the application process, please visit: <https://iimranchi.ac.in/pipm>

Last date to apply: June 30, 2021

REIMAGINE THE WORLD AS YOU LEARN ENGINEERING

5200+ offers and still counting
with 1300 Super Dream and Dream Offers

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

NAAC "A++" Grade

MHRD Category 1 Institution
ARIIA - Second in India 2020

GLOBAL RECOGNITION

STARS
RATED FOR EXCELLENCE
2020

QS awarded 5 stars for Teaching,
Employability and Inclusiveness

THE
WORLD
UNIVERSITY
RANKINGS
1001+ Times Higher Education
(THE) World Universities Ranking 2021

Ranked No.1
Private University in India
in Nature Index 2020

nature INDEX

To apply online visit: www.srmist.edu.in
Email: admissions.india@srmist.edu.in
Helpline: 044 2745 5510, 044 47437500

Campuses at Kattankulathur (Chennai), Ramapuram (Chennai), Vadapalani (Chennai), Delhi NCR
Other Universities run by SRM Group: SRM University, Sonepat, Haryana & SRM University, AP - Andhra Pradesh

[SRMUniversityOfficial](https://www.facebook.com/SRMUniversityOfficial) [@SM_Uuniv](https://www.twitter.com/SM_Uuniv) [srmuniversityofficial](https://www.instagram.com/srmuniversityofficial/) [SRM IST Chennai](https://www.linkedin.com/company/srm-ist-chennai/)



Time to apply for
SRMJEE (B.Tech) 2021

MDI
GURGAON

Management
Development
Institute

Accreditations
AMBA EQUIS AACSB

(Ranked among top ten B-schools in India by NIRF-2020 and other surveys)

Applications invited for admissions in the following AICTE approved programmes:

- PGDM (National Management Programme), full-time residential Programme for executives/managers with minimum 5 years of post-qualification work experience

— Last date : 26th February, 2021

- Fellow/Executive Fellow Programme in Management (FPM/EFP) — *Last date : 31st March, 2021*

- PGDM (Executive Management Programme), part-time mode. Only for executives / working executives / managers from Delhi NCR region with minimum 3 years of post-qualification work experience — *Last date : 23rd April, 2021*

For more information, please visit www.mdi.ac.in or

Contact Admissions office
Phone: (+91 124) 4560000, 4560055, 4560666 Fax: (+91 124) 4560456
Email: admissions@mdi.ac.in

IIM
RANCHI

invites applications for admission to the inaugural batch of its Integrated Programme in Management (Commencing in September 2021)

The Integrated Programme in Management (IPM) of IIM Ranchi is a full-time 5-year blended course of business studies from undergraduate to postgraduate level (Integrated BBA-MBA). Students will be awarded a Master of Business Administration degree at the end of the programme.

Students that have passed the 10th standard and the 12th standard (or equivalent) with 60% (55% for candidates from SC/ST/DAP) or more marks or equivalent, from a recognised Educational Board/Institute/University, can apply for admission to the programme. The students who will obtain the aforementioned qualifications by August 31, 2021, can also apply.

Admission to the programme will be based on SAT exam scores, a written ability test, a personal interview, and overall academic performance at the secondary and the higher secondary levels.

For further details on admission, eligibility criteria and the application process, please visit: <https://iimranchi.ac.in/pipm>

CLASSIFIEDS

thehinduads.com

GENERAL**BUSINESS OFFER****BUSINESS**

WE UNDERTAKE Client's Digital Trading Account on a 50/50 profit Sharing basis pm. 6381095123

LONG TERM Individual Investors needed to financially Support Export Orders on PM Profit sharing. 8667706030

BUSINESS FOR SALE

CHENNAI 100FT Rd 30 Room Hotel running successfully No Phrs 7416622222

FACTORY JV/SALE suitable for Pharma Food/Agric Bio Products: 7338884439

FINANCE

LOAN FOR High Level Projects & Properties from 10 Cr to 1000 Cr R.O.I @ 3.5% to 8% with feasible Tenure No prepayment. Ct: 98843 27792, Email: hiriseventures@gmail.com

PARTNERSHIPS**WANTED FINANCIAL PARTNER**
A reputed educational group running several institutions based in Chennai is looking for Financial Partners for its Expansion Activities. Email your profile to: projectay2021@gmail.com**SHARES / INVESTMENTS****INVESTORS WANTED**
Wanted Direct Investors for a Chennai based Gold Whole Sale / Buying Company as Profit-Share basis (No Interest). Interested Direct Investors Contact. 98401 98786**SITUATIONS VACANT****GENERAL**ST. MICHAEL'S SR. SEC. SCHOOL 3, PUSA ROAD, NEW DELHI - 110005
Requires:- On Each
➤ PGT - Physical Education -Male
➤ TGT - Western Music -Male
➤ Librarian - Male / Female
➤ Front Desk Officer cum Office Asst. -Female (B.Com with Computer) Tally & letter drafting must)

Qualification, Age & Salary: As per Govt. Rules. Candidates should have Proficiency in English, Basic Computer knowledge and Two years' experience preferred. Application form available from 8th to 18th Feb. 2021 on working hours. Principal

VISIONIAS INSPIRING INNOVATION www.visionias.in
India's leading organization based in Delhi invites passionate individuals for the role ofCONTENT DEVELOPER for GS in English Medium • हिन्दी माध्यम • English-Hindi Translator (prior experience)
Skills Desired : ✓ Comfortable in translation (English to Hindi)
✓ Work Experience (at least 1 year)
✓ Have written Civil Services (Main) examination
Send your updated resume to recruitment@visionias.in

TAMIL MUSLIM 25 yrs/167 BE, CM, Thiruvananthapuram Seeks Doctor / Govt Officer Brndg Cntr: 9444225534

PARENTS OF good looking Obstetrician and Gynaecologist MBBS MS Naidoo 29 yrs looking for good natured well settled groom PG / Super specialty doctor /Business. Please mail BHP to doctorgm@gmail.com

SLIM BEAUTIFUL homely girl 31/165 final Yr MD, Anesthetist, Chennai. Father Keralai Nair, Mother Tamil. Doctors family. Looking for good MS MSDM MCh boys from good families in Keral & Tamil Nadu. Ct: 9840050381

TAMIL VISWAKARMA Govt Doctor Bride MD (GM) 30/167 Fair Vishagam. Seeks Doctors / Govt Officer Brndg Cntr: 94459 64285

GOLDSMITH GIRL Surgeon 28/MS seeks MD/MS Groom well settled from same/other equal caste. W-app 9444563880

ANGLO INDIAN, RC girl, 28, MBA, senior manager in leading MNC, 18 lakhs. Suitable well placed grooms send your details to: lsd74955@gmail.com or WhatsApp 9445027217

AUTOMOTIVE SELLING TOYOTA
2018 LAND-CRUISER Diesel TN Reg. Silver 43000Km White,A.G.S. 98411-2373**MATRIMONIAL****BRIDEGROOMS WANTED****INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL****BRIDEGROOMS WANTED****BRIDES WANTED****BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED****Classification common for Brides, Bridgrooms, Brides & Grooms****MALAYALAM****KANNADA****ASSAMESE****Awadhi****Bengali****Bhojpuri****Bihari****Chhattisgarhi****English****Gujarati****Haryanvi****Hindi****Kannada****Kashmiri****Konkani****Malayalam****Manipuri****Marathi****Marwari****Nepali****Oriya****Parsi****Punjabi****Saurashtra****Sindhi****Tamil****Telugu****Tulu****Urdu****Advocate****Business****Defence****Doctor****Engineer****Finance/ Banking****Government/ Quasi-Govt.****IAS/ Allied Services****Information Technology****MBA/ CA/ ICWA****NRI****Cosmopolitan****Divorcee****Physically Challenged****MARRIAGE BUREAUS****WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS****COSMOPOLITAN****ATTRACTIVE, KIND teacher, 43, 174cm, divorced (no kids), veg, loving family, seeks educated, compatible partner. jdsppt@gmail.com****PROPOSAL INVITED from professionally qualified youth for a Hindu Ezhava girl 30 yrs, 156 cm, slim hailing from Thrissur, Kerala presently employed in USA. Ct: 9345634365****CHENNAI SETTLER** Educated Lady 60Yrs. Seeks Educated Financial Independent Groom Age must be Single Legally Divorced / Widower, Fluent in English is Must. Chennai based Professionals Consultants can Call: 9884956170**DOCTOR****DOCTOR - PAEDIATRICIAN, 42, Chennai- Christian, 10yrs daughter, strong family n social values needs Brndg seekd 40-45yrs. Professionals, Doctors preferred. 9443711511****MARAVAR, GIRL** 25 yrs/ 153 cm, Thiruvananthapuram Seeks Doctor from Dever/ Mukkalathur. 9444225534**PARENTS** of good looking Obstetrician and Gynaecologist MBBS MS Naidoo 29 yrs looking for good natured well settled groom PG / Super specialty doctor /Business. Please mail BHP to doctorgm@gmail.com**SLIM BEAUTIFUL** homely girl 31/165 final Yr MD, Anesthetist, Chennai. Father Keralai Nair, Mother Tamil. Doctors family. Looking for good MS MSDM MCh boys from good families in Keral & Tamil Nadu. Ct: 9840050381**ENGLISH****HINDU DKY** Pallian Ashwini 24/157 Doctor, Seeks Doctor Groom. 944315045**ARCOT MUDALIYAR** (Thulav Velaiyal, 26/ 167 BE (CS), Magam 1st Padam, very fair, upper middle class seeks suitable Chennai based alliance. Sub-Sect welcome. 98402-8002**TAMIL VISWAKARMA** Govt Doctor Bride MD (GM) 30/167 Fair Vishagam. Seeks Doctors / Govt Officer Brndg Cntr: 94459 64285**GOLDSMITH GIRL** Surgeon 28/MS seeks MD/MS Groom well settled from same/other equal caste. W-app 9444563880**AUTOMOTIVE****SELLING****TOYOTA****2018 LAND-CRUISER Diesel TN Reg. Silver 43000Km White,A.G.S. 98411-2373****MEDICAL****COSMETOLOGY** / usg / echo/ ecg one course 5 days ct-73054 14194**AUTOMOTIVE****SELLING****TOYOTA****2018 LAND-CRUISER Diesel TN Reg. Silver 43000Km White,A.G.S. 98411-2373****LIFE MADE SIMPLE****TAMIL****SAIVAPPILAI** +2 widow No Kids Smart well settled Person Widower only age limit (50 to 60) 875085439**MUDALIYAR** PILAI NV (Bangalore), 35/165, MD, Medicine seeks educated highly qualified groom from decent family. 9444005518, 9444937763**HINDU** Senguntha Mudaliyar 25 / 153 Mithunam thiruvadral no dosam MBBS Gynaecology fair slim looking daughter of a Surgeon good family background seeks upsc, Ipcsc group 1 services groom. Contact : 75981 7528**HINDU NADAR** 22/165 cm BE Fair Rich Kumbar Poortartham No IPSG groom Wanted Chennai Contact: 984087788**GAVARA NAIDU** ME/26 Divorcee, No issues seeks suitable broad minded Groom born in1990s & well settled 9444049457/ vishyanacars@yahoo.co.in**HINDU** 29/167cm, Fair, B.Tech/ PGDM(IIM), Sr.Mgr, drawing above 18PLA studies well educated Groom. Caste No Bar. Ct: 90809 83174**ELITE MUDALIYAR** 29 / Own Engineering Colleges, Schools, Wind mills (All Over India) seeks groom. 9940284235**ELITE MUDALIYAR** 24 Own steel Factory, TMT Rod Company Rich Family Seeks groom. 9940284235**HINDU** 29/167cm, Fair, B.Tech/ PGDM(IIM), Sr.Mgr, drawing above 18PLA studies well educated Groom. Caste No Bar. Ct: 90809 83174**AGAMADUARY** MUDALIYAR 28/167cm BE (CS) working as developer a IT organization, earning 75K per month. Divorcee/ No issues) seeks Groom. Well educated & oriented person. Contact - 9884494909/ 97793750 WhatsApp**PRACTISING AND** successful Gynaecologist, 38 years, divorcee with a good family background seeks suitable groom, well educated and well placed in and around Kancheepuram. Contact : 9443357006**HINDU THUVARU** HINDU 24/165 cm BE Fair Rich Kumbar Poortartham No IPSG groom Wanted Chennai Contact: 984087788**NAIR GIRL** Poojam two dosham 167 MCA, 1979, HSBC, never married seeks professionally qualified employee Nair boy. Email: bhalaach@ gmail.com**MALAYALEE VISWAKARMA(G.S)** girl 37/167, Aiyom, Deputy Manager in MNC.Chennai. Seeks educated & employed family. 9446915238**NAIDU NAIDU** 24/165, B.E. seeks suitable Broad minded Groom born in1990s & well settled 9444049457/ vishyanacars@yahoo.co.in**HINDU** 29/167cm, Fair, B.Tech/ PGDM(IIM), Sr.Mgr, drawing above 18PLA studies well educated Groom. Caste No Bar. Ct: 90809 83174**AGAMADUARY** MUDALIYAR 28/167cm BE Fair Rich Kumbar Poortartham No IPSG groom Wanted Chennai Contact: 984087788**NAIDU NAIDU** 24/165, B.E. seeks suitable Broad minded Groom born in1990s & well settled 9444049457/ vishyanacars@yahoo.co.in**HINDU** 29/167cm, Fair, B.Tech/ PGDM(IIM), Sr.Mgr, drawing above 18PLA studies well educated Groom. Caste No Bar. Ct: 90809 83174**AGAMADUARY** MUDALIYAR 28/167cm BE Fair Rich Kumbar Poortartham No IPSG groom Wanted Chennai Contact: 984087788**NAIDU NAIDU** 24/165, B.E. seeks suitable Broad minded Groom born in1990s & well settled 9444049457/ vishyanacars@yahoo.co.in**HINDU** 29/167cm, Fair, B.Tech/ PGDM(IIM), Sr.Mgr, drawing above 18PLA studies well educated Groom. Caste No Bar. Ct: 90809 83174**AGAMADUARY** MUDALIYAR 28/167cm BE Fair Rich Kumbar Poortartham No IPSG groom Wanted Chennai Contact: 984087788**NAIDU NAIDU** 24/165, B.E. seeks suitable Broad minded Groom born in1990s & well settled 9444049457/ vishyanacars@yahoo.co.in**HINDU** 29/167cm, Fair, B.Tech/ PGDM(IIM), Sr.Mgr, drawing above 18PLA studies well educated Groom. Caste No Bar. Ct: 908

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Dense/very dense fog likely in many/isolated pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Gangetic West Bengal

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	...-29.5	13.2	...	Kozhikode	...-33.4	23.3	...
Ahmedabad	...-32.8	16.0	...	Kurnool	...-33.4	18.1	...
Aizawl	...-25.0	10.7	...	Lucknow	...-28.0	11.5	...
Allahabad	...-29.8	11.3	...	Madurai	...-32.9	19.6	...
Bengaluru	...-31.0	14.8	...	Mangaluru	...-34.2	20.5	...
Bhopal	...-31.2	12.4	...	Mumbai	...-31.3	17.5	...
Bhubaneswar	...-34.6	16.4	...	Mysuru	...-31.3	16.4	...
Chandigarh	...-23.6	10.6	...	New Delhi	...-26.6	10.8	...
Chennai	...-30.6	22.2	...	Patna	...-26.4	13.4	...
Coimbatore	...-32.8	18.0	...	Pond Blair	...-31.2	23.4	...
Dehradoon	...-24.1	10.6	...	Puducherry	...-31.8	19.0	...
Gangtok	...-13.7	8.9	...	Ranchi	...-32.7	15.2	...
Goa	...-33.7	19.9	...	Raipur	...-32.4	17.6	...
Guwahati	...-30.0	13.6	...	Shillong	...-28.8	12.0	...
Hubballi	...-31.0	18.0	...	Shimla	...-18.8	8.5	...
Hyderabad	...-31.2	16.9	...	Srinagar	...-15.1	6.4	...
Imphal	...-25.9	5.9	...	Tiruchi	...-32.7	18.7	...
Jaipur	...-28.0	12.5	...	Vijayawada	...-31.7	20.0	...
Kochi	...-31.0	22.8	...	Vishakhapatnam	...-30.6	21.0	...
Kohima	...-20.0	5.5	...				
Kolkata	...-30.0	16.0	...				

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	31	133	76	.151	209	...
Bengaluru	.9	67	32	.87	.98	...
Chennai	12	37	22	.57	.123	...
Delhi	11	131	95	.412	.349	...
Hyderabad	.8	48	15	.108	.113	...
Kolkata	52	.27	64	.358	.266	...
Lucknow	.3	88	56	.350	.318	...
Mumbai	10	51	.50	.249	.210	...
Pune	.6	89	72	.165	.120	...
Visakhapatnam	..-	14	-	-	-	...

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 400 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Vijayawada, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 45

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

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

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

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

Odisha makes property return filing must for all government employees

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government has made the submission of an annual property statement mandatory for public representatives and government servants of all ranks. The move is said to be the government's attempt to ensure a transparent and corruption-free administration.

A resolution to this effect was passed by the General Administration and Public Grievance Department here. The State government will now amend the Odisha Government Servants' Conduct Rules, 1959, to implement the latest decision.

From now on, all government servants will have to submit annual property returns as on January 1 of each year by January 31 of the year. Up-to-date filing of property return has been made a prerequisite for promotions. An enabling online facility will be created for easy filing of property returns.

At present, the State government employees are required to obtain prior permission for the purchase of movable assets with value more than two months' basic pay. "Now, the employees will intimate any such transaction immediately to the head of office, besides mentioning such transaction in the property return," say the modalities.

BJP blocks highways in Odisha to press for paddy procurement

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Saturday blocked the National Highways for three hours to protest against non-procurement of paddy lying stacked at different market yards across western Odisha. The party stopped vehicular movements on the highways passing through 37 Assembly constituencies under five Lok Sabha segments in these districts.

Tokens issued by the State government for procurement of paddy have lapsed. Farmers are facing a dire situation while the government is unable to procure the paddy," alleged Nauri Naik, BJP MLA from Rengali constituency in Sambalpur district. He said, "We had earlier protested in phases. The Revenue Divisional Commissioner (Northern) had assured us that farmers whose tokens would lapse would be listed again. However, no such list has so far been submitted to the government."

Jai Narayan Mishra, BJP MLA from Sambalpur, said, "The policy of the government is faulty. It helps millers instead of farmers. A situation is being created to force farmers to go for distress sale. At some market yards, farmers were asked to give away five to seven kg of paddy from a single bag."

CM YK

Wrestling coach held from Delhi

Sukhwinder had shot dead five people, injured two others in Rohtak

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

In a joint operation on Saturday, the Haryana and Delhi police arrested wrestling coach Sukhwinder, who had allegedly shot dead five people and injured two others in Rohtak late on Friday, the police said.

Rohat Superintendent of Police Rahul Sharma told *The Hindu* that Haryana Police shared information regarding his possible location with Delhi Police after which they arrested the accused from Samaypur Badli area in Del-

hi. "The accused is currently in the custody of Delhi Police. We will be taking his custody in a day or two," he added.

'Personal enmity suspected'

A Special Investigation Team was set up to investigate the matter earlier in the day and a reward of ₹1 lakh announced for any information on the main accused.

The police said personal enmity could be the reason behind the incident which took place at an 'akharā' [wrestling centre] of a private college. Those killed in-

cluded a wrestling coach Manoj Malik, his wife Sakshi Malik and three other wrestlers. The injured include a four-year-old son of Manoj and Sakshi. Two others are undergoing treatment, they said.

"Sukhwinder had been working as a wrestling coach at the college's gymnasium and was removed by Manoj from his job on a complaint against him. Apparently anguished, the accused opened fire at his colleagues at the akharā," Mr. Sharma said. "Once he is brought to Rohtak, other details will be unravelled," he said.

Rahul to kick off Cong. campaign today

His rally at Sivasagar follows a 'bus yatra' launched to 'Save Assam'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi is scheduled to kick off the party's campaign for the upcoming Assembly elections in Assam on Sunday. He would address a rally in eastern Assam's Sivasagar, close to a historic field from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched the Bharatiya Janata Party's poll campaign in Ja-

nuary.

"We are expecting a large turnout at the Sivasagar mega rally, the first of four the Assam Pra-

desh Congress Committee has planned in as many strategic places before starting the formal election campaign," State party president Ripun Bora said.

He said party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra would address some of the other rallies.

Mr. Gandhi's visit would follow a 'bus yatra' the State unit had launched on Friday to drum up support for its 'Axom Basaon Ahok (Come, let's save Assam)' campaign. The yatra, started from four regions, involves a two-week tour for senior leaders with

the objective of meeting voters and discussing their grievances and issues.

A yatra each would be led by MPs Pradyut Bordoloi and Gaurav Gogoi, MLA and Congress Legislature Party chief Debabrata Saikia and Mahila Congress president Sushmita Dev.

"Today, Assam is facing a grave crisis. The peace and prosperity are both under threat from BJP. We have to go to the people for a new imagination of our future and to save Assam," Mr. Bordoloi said.

Six killed in Rajasthan road accident

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

Six persons were killed and seven others injured when the jeep in which they were travelling collided with a trailer coming at a high speed from the opposite direction at Rajiyasar in Rajasthan's Sriganganagar district on Saturday.

The deceased, including four women, belonged to a single family. They were on their way to Ramdevra temple in Jaisalmer. Those injured were being treated.

Governor Kailaj Mishra and Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot expressed grief over the incident.

SEARCH FOR SUSPECTED PERSON



General Public is hereby informed that a male person Name and Address Unknown, Age: 35-40 years, Height: 5'5", Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Built: Medium, Hair: Black, who is Suspected to Commit Crime. In this regard Case FIR No. 352/2020, U/s 379 IPC dated 31.12.2020, registered at P.S. Tilak Marg, New Delhi.

If any Clue or Information has been emrged please informed the Undersigned.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.nic.in
Ph.: 011-24368638,24368641
Fax : 011-24368639
P.S. Tilak Marg, Delhi
Ph.: 23382100/23385571/DP/213/NDD/2021

HC notice on woman activist's arrest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has taken *suo motu* cognisance of a complaint through anonymous emails alleging illegal confinement of a woman labour rights activist by Haryana Police, who was arrested on January 12. Justice Arun Tyagi has issued notice of motion to the Haryana government, which has been accepted by Additional Advocate General Ranvir Singh Arya. The matter has

been listed for February 24.

Justice Tyagi pointed out that complaints on February 6 and 8 were received through emails regarding illegal confinement of the activist and under orders of Justice Jaswant Singh have been treated as criminal writ petition and ordered to be listed on judicial side.

The 23-year-old activist was arrested by the Sonipat police on January 12 on charges including attempt to murder.

EASTERN RAILWAY

Tender No. Secy-VIPDLI-2021-Vo15RT2

dated 11.02.2021. Open e-Tender is invited by Asstt. Secy(SW), Eastern Railway from reputed contractors with sufficient experience, financial capability and having proper and requisite resources and experience for the following works through e-tendering. **Name of Work:** Hiring of AC road vehicles for visiting SAG or above officers of Eastern Railway on official tour at New Delhi on the basis of open e-tender for 02 years. **Approx. Value :** Rs. 25,98,079/- **Date and time of opening :** 05.03.2021 at 15.00 hrs. **Date and time of closing :** 05.03.2021 at 15.00 hrs. The scope of work is indicative only, detail scope and specification has been described in Tender Document. However, Tender document can be downloaded from ireps portal www.ireps.gov.in MISC-199/2020-21

Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in

MISC-199/2020-21

TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT

Mr. N SELVA KUMAR

PH:

FROM PAGE ONE

FinMin defends outlays for health and defence

On criticism about allocations for the PM Kisan Yojana falling as per revised estimates for 2020-21, the Finance Minister said this was necessitated due to the West Bengal government's stance on the scheme and refusal to share details of an estimated 65 lakh farmers in the State.

The Centre was unable to pay farmers for whom provisions were made because of lack of details from the State, the Minister said.

"That is not cutting down of allocation. It is merely that the State for whom allocation was made, did not use it. It is important to highlight that a State should decide that its farmers should not be given the money, which the Prime Minister is giving all over the country. So shedding crocodile tears for farmers doesn't help; the money is lying there," the Finance Mi-

nister said.

On members' concerns about the healthcare Budget and the inclusion of water and sanitation under the same aegis, Ms. Sitharaman reiterated that including water and sanitation in health was not a 'figment of the government's imagination' and allocations to 'core health' spending have been raised.

"Even the WHO has said water and sanitation contribute to health," Ms. Sitharaman asserted, adding that the Budget is focused on preventive as well as curative health.

"Some members said Defence is getting no mention in the Speech, it has low allocations... why are we hiding details about Defence? Not at all," she said, before highlighting the increase in Defence Budget allocations compared to the last Budget of the UPA government.

YouTubers back to tickle Valley's funny bone

Mr. Ahmad and his five YouTube channel partners, who come from humble backgrounds, were earning between ₹10,000 to ₹15,000 each prior to the Internet ban.

"We used to upload five to six videos per month before August 5, but that came down to zero. It was like living in a bad dream. We pray it does not happen again. We have our fingers crossed though," said Mr. Ahmad, whose '4G Aad Waapas' video has already attracted 1.71 lakh views.

There are over 100 YouTubers in Kashmir, mainly from modest backgrounds, who earn a living by uploading comedic content.

Mr. Ahmad said the idea to start a YouTube channel

in 2018 was to spread laughter in Kashmir.

Mudasir Farooq runs another YouTube channel 'Koshur Kalakar' from Barumulla's volatile Sopore. "Our videos attracted 60,000 subscribers in just two months in 2018. There was a huge potential to tap. We planned to get 5 lakh subscribers by 2021. But we lost 40% of our subscribers, and the revenue too, due to the ban," he said.

He is hopeful that with the Internet speed improving, the coming months may have YouTube channels back in demand. "We are four persons associated with our channel. The idea is put across social messages while using gags as a medium," Mr. Farooq said.

Police perform last rites of unidentified bodies

The DGP said that so far all reports have suggested that a big piece of Trishul peak at an altitude of 19,000 feet broke away and the ensuing avalanche caused a flash flood in the downstream Rishiganga river.

"Not only the glacier, but a portion of the Trishul peak also broke with it and came down with mud, debris, stones and slush. Several studies by different government bodies have come to the same conclusion," Mr. Kumar said.

Chamoli police said in a tweet that 12 bodies have been identified so far. In all, 204 persons are missing after the February 7 incident when two hydel power projects on the Rishiganga and Dhauliganga rivers were

washed away. Around 35 workers are said to be trapped in the Tapovan hydel project tunnel on the Dhauliganga river where rescue work is still on.

The rescue teams are trying to drill a larger area, around 1 foot in width at the Tapovan tunnel. The drilling is to be done in a tunnel up to 12 feet lower than connects to another small tunnel. We plan to drop down a camera in the smaller tunnel to find out the status here," Mr. Kumar.

A team of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police force and the National Disaster Response Force have been extracting mud, slush and debris at the other end of the small tunnel where workers are said to be trapped.

Mr. Reddy said the hundi collection had increased from ₹30 lakh (per day) when the temple opened after the lockdown to an average of ₹2.75 crore in the last two months. The revenue deficit this fiscal was expected to be ₹650 crore.

Though there was a drastic fall in hundi collections, the main source of income, the TTD managed to sustain routine activities in education and healthcare services.

Mr. Reddy said the viewership of Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel had touched 8 crore. The TTD had introduced advertisement-free programmes following feedback from viewers.

Mr. Reddy said the viewership of Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel had touched 8 crore. The TTD had introduced advertisement-free programmes following feedback from viewers.

Mr. Reddy said the viewership of Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel had touched 8 crore. The TTD had introduced advertisement-free programmes following feedback from viewers.

In the review petition, Kazi Fatima and 11 others said the protesters were not even heard by the court. The petitioners asked how the court could restrict expressions of dissent to certain designated areas.

Restricting protests to designated areas upsets the very concept of dissent and protests... Protests are the only way for citizens to show their dissent," the review petition had said.

Though the judgment had upheld the right to

peaceful protest against a law, it unequivocally made it clear that public ways and public spaces cannot be occupied, and that too indefinitely. Fundamental rights do not live in isolation. The right of the protester has to be balanced with the right of the commuter. They have to co-exist in mutual respect, the court had explained in its judgment.

In the review petition, Kazi Fatima and 11 others said the protesters were not even heard by the court. The petitioners asked how the court could restrict expressions of dissent to certain designated areas.

Restricting protests to designated areas upsets the very concept of dissent and protests... Protests are the only way for citizens to show their dissent," the review petition had said.

In the review petition, Kazi Fatima and 11 others said the protesters were not even heard by the court. The petitioners asked how the court could restrict expressions of dissent to certain designated areas.

Though the judgment had upheld the right to

A.P. SEC orders action against Minister for poll code violation

'Tone, tenor and language of the Minister can be categorised as hate speech'

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh State Election Commissioner (SEC) N. Ramesh Kumar has directed the Krishna District Collector to book a case of violation of the Model Code of Conduct, which is in force for the gram panchayat elections, and the Superintendent of Police to initiate criminal proceedings against Civil Supplies Minister Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao (Naani) for "making vitriolic attacks on him," as a follow up to Friday's restraint order.

In his proceedings, Mr. Ramesh Kumar questioned whether the Minister, who had solemnly pledged to uphold the Constitution, has the legitimacy to attack the State Election Commissioner in the midst of the electoral process.

The Commission maintained great self-restraint even in the face of abusive attacks on the Commissioner by the Minister in the



Under watch: An image captured by a drone from a booth at Dharmavaram in Prakasam on Saturday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

past, Mr. Ramesh Kumar stated.

The SEC further said Mr. Venkateswara Rao had submitted his reply on Friday evening through his advocate in an attempt to justify his attacks, and he showed no remorse for his utterances.

Instead, the Minister had advised the Commission to see the video (in which he

made the comments at a press conference) in its true spirit, the SEC observed.

The Minister's remarks reflected his past history of vituperative discourse and attacks that were intended to malign the Commission, he said.

"The tone, tenor and language of the Minister can be categorised as hate speech, which has not been defined in any law in India," Mr. Ramesh Kumar asserted.

TDP alleges irregularities in elections

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA

Alleging large-scale violence and irregularities in the gram panchayat elections, the TDP has urged the State Election Commissioner (SEC) to "rein in the anarchic unleashed by the ruling YSRCP leaders and activists" and ensure that the process is free and fair.

In a representation submitted to Commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar on Saturday, TDP leaders Varla Ramaiyah and Bonda Umamaheswara Rao demanded fresh elections in Macherla (in Guntur district) Punganuru and Tamballapalle (both in Chittoor district, citing anomalies in the "unanimous" election of ruling party-backed candidates in many panchayats.

A.P. holds elections in disputed villages

Odisha objects strongly to move

This is illegal.
Odisha government conducted last Assembly elections in Kotia panchayat

BISHNUPADA SETHI
Odisha Revenue & Disaster Management Secretary

and Phagunseri in Kotia gram panchayat – by changing their names to Ganjeibadar, Pattuchennuru and Pagluchennuru, Odisha government officials said.

According to the Odisha government, the villages are part of Pottangi taluk of Koraput district. There are about 21 villages known as Kotia group of villages mired in dispute. A case is pending in the Supreme Court over the issue and the court had directed the two States to maintain status quo.

Earlier, Odisha Revenue and Disaster Management Secretary Bishnupada Sethi told *The Hindu*, "The election being held by Andhra Pradesh is illegal. Odisha government had already conducted last Assembly and general elections in Kotia."

TTD seeks vaccination for employees

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has written to the Union government seeking COVID-19 vaccination for its employees, who are managing thousands of devotees each day at Tirumala, its chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy said in Chennai on Saturday.

"We have written to the government of India to include our staff in the list of frontline corona warriors. We are also pursuing the matter with the State government to facilitate vaccinations at the earliest," Mr. Reddy told *The Hindu*.

He said 2,500 employees handling queues, counters, security, darshan, etc. were identified as "frontline warriors" since an average of 55,000 devotees were visiting the hill temple daily.

Mr. Reddy said the hundi collection had increased from ₹30 lakh (per day) when the temple opened after the lockdown to an average of ₹2.75 crore in the last two months. The court observed that the constructions violated coastal and environmental regulations.

Last week, Sub-collector Ilakkia, Cherthala Tahsildar P.G. Rajendra Babu and other officials visited the resort.

The officials said they were in the process of valuing various items at the resort.

Steps to demolish resort begins

SC upheld Kerala HC's ban on construction on island in Vembanad lake

STAFF REPORTER
ALAPPUZHA

Authorities have initiated preliminary steps to demolish the illegally constructed villas of Kapico Kerala Resorts Private Limited on Nediyathuruthu island in Vembanad Lake here.

The Supreme Court on January 10, 2020 dismissed appeals by Kapico Resorts against a Kerala High Court order banning the construction of resorts and removal of structures on the backwater island. The court observed that the constructions violated coastal and environmental regulations.

Last week, Sub-collector Ilakkia, Cherthala Tahsildar P.G. Rajendra Babu and other officials visited the resort.

The officials said they were in the process of valuing various items at the resort.

The resort has electrical and mechanical equipment, among other items. Its valuation should be carried out. We have conducted a preliminary inspection and experts will now conduct a detailed examination. Once the valuation is completed, a detailed action plan will be prepared for demolishing the structures in due time," said an official.

It would be a challenge to prevent debris, including hazardous waste, from falling into the lake during the demolition and transportation.

Kapico Resorts constructed 54 villas and a main block, among other facilities, over six years from 2007. In March 2013, the Kerala High Court ordered the demolition of the resort along with illegal structures constructed by Vaamika Island (Green Lagoon Resort) on Vettila Thuruthu, also on Vembanad Lake.

The High Court ordered the removal of the unauthorised structures within three months. Following this, Vaamika moved the Supreme Court. Their petitions were dismissed by the court, stating that Vembanad Lake was an ecologically sensitive area. While dismissing the appeals by Kapico Resorts, the court noted, "We do not know how this finding can be held to be applicable only to Vettila Thuruthu island."

Stating that it would not be easy for the BJP-led Union government to implement the CAA-NRC-NPR on the ground, Mr. Ram said there was plenty of resistance even from the State governments. "There is no need to get demoralised on this. Be-

cause this is an important struggle, which has to be constitutionally, politically and peacefully continued."

Pointing out that it's not just the BJP and its allies which have developed this authoritarian way of looking at citizenship, Mr. Ram said the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance and the Congress, in particular, has to bear a lot of responsibility for going along with this surveillance-oriented citizenship regime. "This is a point that is not often highlighted in public discourse. But it's clear that the Congress in power, not just in Opposition, was also party to enacting some of these changes."

Keep fighting CAA, NPR, NRC: N. Ram

Constitution undermined by the provisions'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The struggle against the Citizenship (Amendment Act), the National Register of Citizens and the National Population Register should continue as it is unacceptable to a secular, sovereign and democratic republic, said N. Ram, Director, The Hindu Group of Publications, and former Editor-in-Chief of *The Hindu* on Saturday.

"This will have consequences, implications not just for Muslims but for India's political system and Constitution. It's the Constitution that has been undermined. It's the right to equality, the rights to freedom that are being snatched away," Mr. Ram pointed out while speaking on 'Rights-bearing Citizenship in the time of Hindutva' as part of the K.R. Narayanan Birth Centenary lecture series, organised jointly by the Institute of Parliamentary Affairs and Kerala Institute of Local Administration, online.

Rights being subverted

Explaining that the freedom of speech and expression and equal protection to all guaranteed in the Constitu-

tion are being subverted, Mr. Ram stressed that there is still no room for complacency even if the Supreme Court strikes down the CAA as unconstitutional. "We will have to continue the struggle against NPR and NRC. Even if the Supreme Court finds CAA of 2019 to be constitutional, it does not make it right. These struggles should continue."

Stating that it would not be easy for the BJP-led Union government to implement the CAA-NRC-NPR on the ground, Mr. Ram said there was plenty of resistance even from the State governments. "There is no need to get demoralised on this. Be-

cause this is an important struggle, which has to be constitutionally, politically and peacefully continued."

Pointing out that it's not just the BJP and its allies which have developed this authoritarian way of looking at citizenship, Mr. Ram said the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance and the Congress, in particular, has to bear a lot of responsibility for going along with this surveillance-oriented citizenship regime. "This is a point that is not often highlighted in public discourse. But it's clear that the Congress in power, not just in Opposition, was also party to enacting some of these changes."

Bengaluru college turns virus hotspot

BBMP to test all nursing students in city for COVID-19, step up surveillance

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The Bengaluru civic body has decided to test all nursing students for COVID-19 after 40 students at the Manjushree College of Nursing in Kaval Byrasandra contracted the virus just days after the college reopened.

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Commissioner N. Manjunath Prasad said most of the students enrolled in nursing colleges across the city hailed from Kerala, where nearly 6,000 positive cases are being reported every day.

"Many students are returning to their hometowns during the weekend. Given the situation, officials have been directed to test all nursing students in the city," he said.

The nursing college, which has 210 students, reopened on January 25. All 40 affected students are asymptomatic. Students are now under quar-

antine in paying guest accommodations near the college. "The remaining 170 students have also been quarantined in the college hostel for 14 days," said Mr. Prasad.

The State's COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has recommended that surveillance be stepped

up in all colleges. "We have said that all the students in the college who have tested negative now should be compulsorily tested on the seventh day," a TAC member said.

Mr. Prasad pointed out that per directions from the Centre, there are no restrictions from people coming to the State from Kerala. "In light of the recent spike in cases, those from Kerala can join organisations/colleges only if they possess a negative RT-PCR report not older than 72 hours. If they have not been tested, they will have to be under mandatory quarantine for 14 days and later undergo a RT-PCR test. Stringent action will be initiated against institutions violating this," he said.

Two resident doctors from Telangana, who took the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine on February 12, which is 24 days after taking the first shot.

In the second case, a resident doctor from Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), Panjagutta, took the jab on January 22 and was

2 doctors test COVID-19 positive after vaccine jab

Both were set to receive second dose

K. SHIVA SHANK

Protest sites gear up for change in seasons

Refrigerators and coolers are to be installed

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

With the stalemate over farm laws continuing some of the protesting farmers at the Singhu border outside Delhi are preparing for a long haul, installing semi-permanent structures at the protest site.

Farmers have been protesting at the borders of the national capital for nearly three months now demanding a repeal of the three agriculture laws brought in by the Centre.

With the agitation set to continue for an indefinite period, a group of farmers from Patiala have procured bio-toilets, installed tin sheds and will be repairing the pavements along the highway as the protest continues, the group said.

Satnam Singh, one of the group, who has been at the Singhu border for over two months now, said, "We are around 100 people from different villages. While we first made the tin structure when it rained last month, we are preparing to install other amenities as well and will also cover the other side. We have already procured two bio-toilets for ourselves and will be installing two more



Age no bar: Family members of farmers arriving at the Singhu border protest site on Saturday to add strength to the ongoing agitation. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

so that it is easier for women as well."

The group of farmers said preparations were on in full swing to improve the living conditions at the protest site.

Jagdeep Singh, also a part of the same group said, "All these months we would have to use the shared facilities. So now we got the bio-toilets for ourselves. We will also repair the sidewalks near our trolleys to ensure that the area does not get too dirty if it rains again."

"It does not look like the

protest will end any time soon. We have enough raw materials and ration to help us survive for as long as required. The weather has already started changing. We will soon get coolers and even air-conditioners if required. We are also regularly getting reinforcements from our villages as well. The government should realise that we are not returning till the laws are repealed," said Mr. Singh.

Several others said that with the weather beginning to change, refrigerators and

coolers are also set to reach the protest site soon. Sarvan Singh, a farmer from Amritsar, who is part of a group providing langar services said, "No matter which big movement one looks at from the past, one will see that it has been a long drawn one. Even our agitation will be one such movement. With the change in the season, we will adapt ourselves accordingly at the border itself. We are in the process of procuring refrigerators to ensure that food items, especially milk doesn't get spoilt."

Rahul terms farm laws ploy to break India's backbone

Big enterprises will start hoarding food grains, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said the enactment of the agriculture sector laws by the Centre amounted to a ploy to break the country's backbone and give control over farming to the corporates. The process began with demonetisation, after which the Goods and Services Tax was brought in an arbitrary manner, he said.

"The main feature of the farmers' agitation against these three farm laws is that it has been peaceful right from day one," said Mr. Pawar, addressing a public meeting at Solapur district in western Maharashtra.

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief said that not even a lathicharge had to be ordered on the peaceful agitation. "It [violence] happened once. But when we went into details, we were told that no farmer was involved in that [violence]. Those who were involved in that was a group of people who wanted to defame the farmers' agitation and the ruling party was behind this," he said.

While accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of trying to hand over the entire agriculture business to his "two friends", Mr. Gandhi said 40% of the country's population had a stake in farming, which generated employment for farmers, labourers, traders, street vendors and small businessmen and shopkeepers.

"It is not just the issue of agriculturists... the entire



At the wheel: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during a rally to support farmers in Ajmer district, Rajasthan, on Saturday. ■ PTI

that he was giving options to farmers through new laws. In reality, these options are hunger, unemployment and suicide," Mr. Gandhi said.

A few big enterprises would hoard food grains, fruits and vegetables to expand their businesses and control 80% to 90% of the agriculture business, he said.

Youth will be affected' The former Congress president said the future of youth would be finished with the implementation of farm statutes, and the path to monopolistic practices would be cleared for a select group of businessmen.

"It is not just the issue of agriculturists... the entire

middle class will be affected and its livelihood snatched away," he said.

Mr. Gandhi, wearing a colourful Rajasthani turban, reached the venue at Roopangarh by driving a tractor. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and Pradesh Congress chief Govind Singh Datasra were sitting on either side.

As he addressed the *sabha* from a platform made of tractor trolleys, farmers on tractors listened in rapt attention. Mr. Gandhi rode on a camel cart before leaving for the "Kisan Mahapanchayat" organised by the ruling Congress in Makrana. He also offered prayers at a temple dedicated to folk deity Veer Tejaji in Ajmer's Sursara village.

Almost 100% productivity in two weeks of Budget session

Time lost due to protests compensated later, says Om Birla

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Overcoming a sluggish start due to protests by Opposition and frequent adjournments over the three contentious farm laws, the Lok Sabha managed to hit almost 100% in its productivity by working extra in the second week of the Budget session. The first part of the Budget session ended on Saturday, with the second part scheduled to start on March 8.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's office said that while productivity between February 2 and 5 was only around 10%, it shot up to 164% between February 8 and 11. On an average, the business productivity was 99.5%.

Mr. Birla said the Lok Sabha sat for 49 hours and 17 minutes against the stipulated time of 50 hours, adding that the first part of the Bud-



In session: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with some of his Cabinet colleagues in the Lok Sabha on Saturday. ■ PTI

get session was productive with business being transacted even beyond midnight.

"As part of the Motion of Thanks to the President, 130 MPs participated in the discussion which went on for 16 hours and 39 minutes," he said. The discussion had been allotted 10 hours by the business advisory committee of the Lok Sabha but

House panel on defence to visit LAC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence plans to visit the Galwan Valley and the Pangong lake in the eastern Ladakh which has witnessed a violent stand-off between the troops of India and China, sources said.

However, it may seek the permission of the government before visiting the strategically-located areas, they said.

The 30-member committee, chaired by senior BJP leader and former Union Minister Jual Oram and including Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, intends to visit the region in the last week of May or June, sources said. The decision was taken at the panel's latest meeting. The visit to the Line of Actual Control depends on the approval from the government, a source added.

Diaspora group shows solidarity

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A leading group of the Indian community, The Global Indian Progressive Diaspora (GIPD), has come out with "unwavering solidarity" with the farmers' protest.

"The international community of progressive Indians, from more than 12 diaspora organisations spread across the globe, extends their support to the farmers and their rightful demand to be heard, calls for the repeal of the farm laws and asks for shared governance in reformulating such laws," it has said in a statement.

The statement has called upon its supporters to send a social media message to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking for the repeal.

The groups said they are following the "foundational values" of India and are committed to "bringing together the people of Indian origin from across the world to contribute as a progressive alliance toward building progressive communities".

UT status for J&K is temporary: Amit Shah

Statehood will be restored at an appropriate time, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Home Minister Amit Shah told the Lok Sabha on Saturday that the government would restore full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir at an appropriate time, and claimed that the Modi government has done more for the Union Territory since Article 370 was read down in August 2019 than those who ruled it for generations.

Mr. Shah was replying to a

discussion on the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021, in the Lok Sabha. He criticised some Opposition members for their claim that the proposed law negated the hopes of the region of getting back its statehood.

"This legislation has nothing to do with statehood, and Jammu and Kashmir will be accorded the status at an appropriate time," Mr. Shah said.

The J&K Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill seeks to merge the all-India services J&K cadre with the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre. He said the region's Union Territory status is temporary just like Article

370 itself granting special status to Jammu and Kashmir was supposed to be.

Decentralisation and devolution of power have taken place in the UT following the revocation of Article 370, Mr. Shah said, noting that panchayat elections saw over 51% voting. "Panchayats have been given administrative and financial powers for local development, something they lacked earlier," he added.

National Conference MP

Hasmain Masoodi had, during the debate, advocated the restoration of statehood and advised the Centre to wait for the Supreme Court to deliver its verdict on the legal validity of the removal of special status from J&K before making massive administrative changes.

Work on two AIIMS in the

region had begun, and the Kashmir Valley would be connected to the Railways by 2022, the Minister said.

He assured the people of Jammu and Kashmir that "no one will lose their land", adding that the government had sufficient land for development. Mr. Shah said the government expects around 25,000 government jobs to be created by 2022.

Now, people chosen by the masses will rule Jammu and Kashmir, not those born to "kings and queens", he said, attacking dynastic parties in the region. "Even our rivals could not allege any wrongdoing in these polls, which were conducted fairly and peacefully," he added.

BSP praises Centre on J&K policy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In a significant development with regard to politics in Uttar Pradesh, set to go to polls next year, the Bahujan Samaj Party on Saturday heaped praise on the Union government on its Jammu and Kashmir policy while lashing out at the Congress.

BSP MP Malook Nagar, speaking during the debate on the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021, said backward communities like Gujjars and Backward

ing to visit the family of Athar Mushtaq killed allegedly in a fake encounter. His father was booked under UAPA for demanding his dead body. This is the normalcy the GOI wants to showcase to the EU delegation visiting Kashmir."

What is the harm if good officers from other parts of the country serve Jammu and Kashmir, he asked.

Mr. Nagar also criticised Congress leaders Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi, saying that they were not opposing the government but the poor.

He also mocked Mr. Rahul Gandhi for his speech during a discussion on the Union Budget, saying he delivered his address and then left as a professor does after giving a lecture to students.



Rapid check: Policemen stopping vehicles near the house of Mehbooba Mufti in Srinagar on Saturday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Not allowed to meet kin of slain youth: Mehbooba

Athar Wani was killed in an encounter

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti on Saturday said she was not allowed to visit south Kashmir's Pulwama to meet the father of Athar Wani, a youth who was killed in the controversial Lawaypora encounter in Srinagar in December last year.

The police team inspected the spot to ascertain and corroborate the route taken by the accused and their activities at Red Fort, which are suspected to have led to the violence.

Mr. Sidhu was carrying a reward of ₹1 lakh and Mr. Singh ₹50,000. So far, the two, along with Sukhdev Singh, have been arrested and raids are being conducted to arrest the other accused as well. Hundreds were injured in the clashes between the farmers and the police.

A party spokesman said Ms. Mufti had sought permission from the police to visit Mushtaq Ahmad Wani in Pulwama's Bellow area.

"However, a police vehicle

was parked before the gate and the main road is also blocked by the security forces," a party spokesman said.

The police have, however, not issued any statement on the detention of Ms. Mufti yet.

ing to visit the family of Athar Mushtaq killed allegedly in a fake encounter. His father was booked under UAPA for demanding his dead body. This is the normalcy the GOI wants to showcase to the EU delegation visiting Kashmir."

She said there was a reign of suppression and terror in Kashmir.

It's the unvarnished and unpalatable truth that the GOI wants to hide from the rest of the country. A 16-year-old is killed and then hurriedly buried, denying his family the right and chance to perform his last rites," Ms. Mufti alleged.

The police have, however, not issued any statement on the detention of Ms. Mufti yet.

CENTRAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION ECONOMIC OFFENCES-I, NEW DELHI PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that CBI is investigating a criminal case against M/s. MDML (Mizoram Direct Marketing Ltd.), M/s. MI Life Style Marketing Pvt. Ltd., M/s. Mizo Life Style Marketing Pvt. Ltd. and their employees/representatives/agents for the allegation of cheating the public by way of soliciting investment in multilevel marketing business on the pretext of MDML being a Government of Mizoram Company. However, Govt. of Mizoram through a public disclaimer published on 31.07.2013, in the official government website had disowned the incorporation and business of the said company.

The general public is thereby requested to come forward with any information/complaint relating to cheating by the aforesaid companies. They may provide the information/complaint to the Superintendent of Police, CBI, EO-I, CBI Headquarters, 5-B, 3rd Floor, A-Wing, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003 on email ID speou2del@cbi.gov.in, Tel: 011-24367688.

Superintendent of Police
Central Bureau of Investigation
Economic Offences-I, New Delhi

भारतीय विज्ञान शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान बरहमपुर
Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Berhampur
Established by the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India

Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Berhampur (IISER Berhampur) invites applications for positions of Post-Doctoral Research Fellow (PDFR) and Project Assistant in the department of Biological Sciences. For details visit: www.iiserbp.ac.in
Deputy Registrar

No:IIFPT/Admin/Projects/2021 Date:14.02.2021

RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATION

Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology (IIIFT) is inviting online applications from bright, dynamic and highly motivated candidates for the following time-bound and temporary positions.

S.No.	Name of the post	No. of Post
1	Adjunct Faculty	01
2	Research Associate	01
3	Senior Research Fellow /Junior Research Fellow	07
4	Project Assistant	05
5	Food Analyst (C) at IIIFT-Liaison office, Guwahati	01

Application Fee: Rs.500/- (exempted for SC/ST/PWD/Women Candidates). For online application and further details on Age, Educational qualification, Eligibility criteria, Emoluments, tenure and terms & conditions, visit our website: www.iifpt.edu.in. Commencement of online application is on 15th February 2021 @ 9.30 am onwards. Last date for the submission of ONLINE application is 8th March 2021 @ 6.00 pm.
DIRECTOR

Heavy Water Plant, Manuguru Notice Inviting e-Tenders

The General Manager, HWP (M), and on behalf of President of

IN BRIEF



Ex-professor Saibaba tests positive for COVID
CHENNAI

Former Delhi University professor G.N. Saibaba on Saturday tested positive for COVID-19. DIG Ramesh Kamble confirmed the development to *The Hindu*. The professor is 90% physically challenged and uses a wheelchair.

Comedian case: two released from jail

Following the M.P. High Court's order, the two men accused of organising a show of stand-up comedian Munawar Faruqui were released from jail on Saturday evening. The Indore Bench of the HC had on Friday granted interim bail to Prakhar Vyas and Adwin Anthony. PTI

U.P. to withdraw cases for lockdown violation

The U.P. government has decided to withdraw cases registered against people for violation of the COVID-19 lockdown guidelines, provided the complaints are not of 'serious' nature. The State has become the first in the country to do so, said an official spokesman on Saturday. PTI

New 11-hour boat ride across river Hooghly

The West Bengal Transport Corporation has started European Settlement Boat Ride once every week. The ride, both upstream and downstream the river running 11 hours has 90-minute stop at Serampore and Chandannagore and begins on February 14.

Chit fund scam accused gets seven years in jail

NEW DELHI
The Enforcement Directorate has secured the conviction of an accused named Arun Mukherjee in a chit-fund scam case involving Rose Valley Real Estates Construction Limited. He has been sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment.

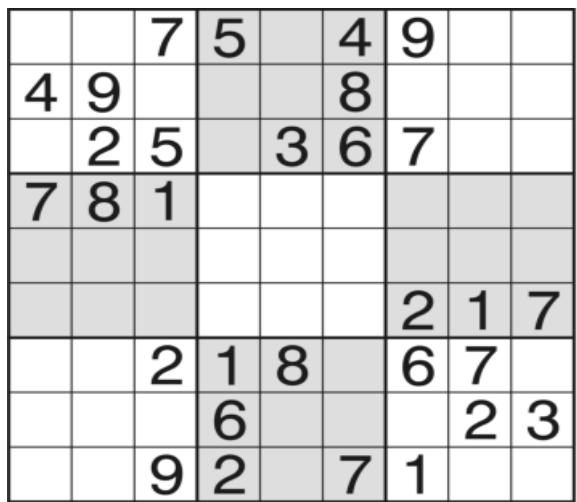
Drug operation on Punjab border busted

NEW DELHI
The Narcotics Control Bureau and the Border Security Force have seized 14.8 kg of heroin close to the Indo-Pakistan border in Punjab. A Pakistani national was killed in the operation. The Amritsar unit of the NCB had been working on an input for the past two months, leading to the operation on Friday near the Khalsa outpost.

'Trinamool will win 250 seats in West Bengal'

KOLKATA
Trinamool Congress leader and president of the youth wing Abhishek Banerjee on Saturday said the party would win 250 of the 294 Assembly seats in the State. He said the BJP could take away a few MLAs but West Bengal Chief Minister resided in the hearts of the people of the State.

SUDOKU



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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

CM YK

IIT-M Ph.D. entry tough for students from marginalised communities

The SC and ST communities have significantly poor acceptance rates although reservation-mandated seats for OBCs were filled

**PON VASANTH B.A.
CHENNAI**

Students from the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities have significantly poor representation and acceptance rate in Ph.D programmes at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, analysis of data obtained through the Right to Information (RTI) Act revealed.

The analysis was based on data provided by IIT Madras regarding 2,195 admissions made from 54,462 applicants in the five-year period from 2015 to 2019.

The data showed that SC students constituted only 7.6% and STs were just 1.2%. The reservation policy requires that 15% of seats be allocated to SCs and 7.5% to STs.

Moreover, the data showed a significant difference in the acceptance rate, which refers to the number of students admitted for every 100 applicants. While General Category (GC) students, which in the case of the IITs predominantly refers to those from privileged communities, had an accept-

ance rate of 4.4%, it was 2.9% for SCs and 2.7% for STs.

Only 167 of the 5,855 SC applicants and 27 of the 991 ST applicants were selected. Interestingly, the institution had filled the reservation-mandated seats for Other Backward Classes (OBCs), thanks to nine of the 16 departments that managed to fill the seats. As much as 29.8% of the seats went to OBC candidates against the 27% of minimum allocation to be done as per reservation norms. The remaining 61.6% seats went to the GC category.

Though IIT Madras had admitted 3,874 Ph.D. scholars from 2015 to 2019 according to the data submitted by the Ministry of Education in the Parliament last year, it provided community-wise data on applications and enrolments for only 2,195 admissions (57% of the total).

Despite appeals through RTI, a few of the 16 research departments in IIT Madras did not give data for some semesters. For the Mathematics Department, the administration said it had data

for only one semester. It can be noted, however, that the RTI data followed a fairly similar pattern to that of the data submitted to the Parliament in terms of seat allocation. Of the 3,874 admissions, 64.4% went to

GCs, 27.9% to OBCs, and only 6.4% to SCs and 1.3% to STs. The RTI data threw light on how the difference in acceptance rate was more pronounced in some departments.

For instance, in Aerospace

Engineering (AE), the acceptance rate was 6.6% for GCs and only 1.7% for SCs. In absolute numbers, only five of the 292 SC applicants were selected. In contrast, 100 applicants were selected from the 1,520 GC

pace Engineering (AE), the acceptance rate was 6.6% for GCs and only 1.7% for SCs. In absolute numbers, only five of the 292 SC applicants were selected. In contrast, 100 applicants were selected from the 1,520 GC

candidates. A stark difference in acceptance rate was also observed in Applied Mechanics, Electrical Engineering, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Management Studies, between GC and SC applicants.

The Department of Computer Science and Engineering had one of the highest number of applicants from SC and ST categories. From the 755 SC applicants, only four were selected and from 136 ST applicants, none were selected. While the overall acceptance rate was lower still for SC and ST applicants.

"Only 25 to 30% of those from SC/ST categories who are called attended the interview," he said. While the percentage selected among those interviewed was 24% overall, it was 16% for the reserved categories. "The acceptance rate for SC/ST is therefore not lower given that the calling rate is double," he said.

On how the institution filled the seats reserved for OBC with the acceptance rate being better, he said, "We do not know why, but are happy that this is so."

(This is the second of a 3-part series)

Tunnel rescue effort stepped up

Teams at Tapovan say they are working under a three-pronged strategy

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JOSHIMATH**

Rescue teams on Saturday began widening a hole drilled into an approach tunnel on the way to the possible location of over 30 people trapped inside a sludge-choked tunnel of the NTPC's Tapovan-Vishnugad hydel project after a flash flood ravaged the area on Sunday.

"We are working under a three-pronged strategy to reach those trapped. The hole we drilled on Friday is being widened to one foot to reach a camera and a pipe inside the silt flushing tunnel where the trapped are said to be located, General Manager of the NTPC project, R.P. Ahirwal, said.

The camera will ascertain their location and the pipe flushed accumulated water, he said.

The other two parts of the strategy are clearing the debris basin of the NTPC barrage through which muck is constantly flowing into the tunnels, and restoring the flow of the Dhauliganga to the right, which has tilted to the left after the flash flood hampering the sludge clearing operation, he said.

Describing the rescue of people as a priority, he said the NTPC has put more than 100 of its scientists on the job.



Helping hand: Locals assisting in rescue and restoration work at Raini village in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand on Saturday. ■ PTI

64 from Uttar Pradesh are still missing

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW**

Sixty-four persons belonging to Uttar Pradesh are still missing almost a week after the floods in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, a government official said on Saturday.

He said all resources and mechanical equipment required are available at the project site. However, citing the conditions inside the tunnel, he said, "We can operate only with a few machines at a time. Rest of them have to be kept on standby because our strategy is to keep the operations under way round the clock."

Commissioner. The majority of the missing people belong to Lakhimpur Kheri district (30), located on the India-Nepal border in the Terai region, followed by Saharanpur (10), Shrawasti (5) and Gorakhpur (4).

The dead were identified as Awadeshi, 19; Vimlesh, 22; and Suraj, 20, of Lakhimpur Kheri; Ajay Sharma, 32, of Aligarh and Vicky Kumar of Saharanpur.

SC to examine plea against CEC, parties

Court's order violated in Bihar poll'

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court has decided to examine a contempt petition filed by a lawyer against Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora and leaders of prominent political parties for not fully adhering to the Supreme court order against allowing "dreaded criminals" contest in the Bihar Assembly polls.

A Bench led by Justice Rohinton F. Nariman issued notice in the contempt case to Mr. Arora, Chief Electoral Officer for Bihar H.R. Srinivas, JDU general secretary K.C. Tyagi, Rashtriya Janata Dal's Bihar president Jagannath Singh, Lok Jan Shakti Party leader Abdul Khalik, Congress party leader R.S. Surjewala and B.L. Santosh of the BJP.

On February 11, the Bench allowed petitioner-advocate Brajesh Singh to argue his case in person. It scheduled the next hearing for March 9. The court said Mr. Arora and other political leaders, arraigned as respondents, need not be present during the hearing.

Mr. Singh said the Supreme Court on February 13, 2020 directed political parties to publish the criminal antecedents of their candidates in "widely circu-

lated newspapers," which was wilfully disobeyed by political parties in the elections.

The lawyer said the court had ordered parties to publish on their websites the reasons for selecting such candidates and why those without a criminal record were not found better-suited to contest the elections.

Mr. Singh said the parties published the details of their candidates in only one Hindi newspaper and gave similar reasons for their choice of candidates.

These reasons, the lawyer pointed out, invariably were "popularity of the person, social work, educational background, that cases were filed against them out of political vendetta by rival political parties, having shown a good effort in handling the COVID-19 crisis".

Punjab all set for civic body elections today

9,222 candidates in fray for 2,302 wards

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH**

All arrangements are in place for the civic body elections in Punjab on Sunday, an official spokesperson of the State Election Commission said.

The voting for eight municipal corporations of Abohar, Bathinda, Batala, Kapurthala, Mohali, Hoshiarpur, Pathankot and Moga and 109 municipal councils and Nagar panchayats in the State will be held on February 14 from 8 a.m. till 4 p.m.

As many as 9,222 candidates are in the fray for 2,302 wards. Of the total candidates, 2,832 are contesting as Independents, 2,037 are of the ruling Congress and 1,569 of the Shiromani Akali Dal. The number of candidates of the BJP, the AAP and the BSP are 1,003, 1,606 and 160 respectively.

The official spokesperson of the State Election Commission said it has set up

4,102 polling stations out of which, 1,708 have been declared sensitive and 861 as hypersensitive.

Dry days

The counting of votes will take place on February 17. The State Election Commission has announced February 14 and 17 as dry days.

Around 7,000 EVMs have been deployed for voting. A total of 25,010 employees have also been deputed. About 19,000 police personnel have been deputed to conduct free and fair elections, said the spokesperson.

There are 20,49,777 male, 18,65,354 female and 149 transgender voters, totalling 39,15,280 registered voters in Punjab.

A total of 30 IAS or PCS officers have been deputed as observers to conduct free and fair elections.

In these elections, 50 per cent of seats have been reserved for women.

'More fatalities likely among poor victims of road crashes'

Study highlights the socio-economic impact of accidents

**JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI**

There are more fatalities from road crashes among poor families rather than the rich, shows a new World Bank study that highlights the socio-economic impact of road accidents – from access to post-accident medical care to coping with the financial distress caused by a mishap.

In the study, low income households reported twice the numbers of deaths post-crash vis-à-vis high income households. The risk of a victim undergoing disability after a crash was also two times more likely among poor families.

Road accidents also led to a sharper decline in total household income among low-income households, where it was as high as 75%, as compared to high income households, where the de-

PLA paper offers clues to China's moves

It calls for putting a stop to 'nibbling' of territory and warns of India's expanding maritime reach

ANANTH KRISHNAN

As India and China on February 10 began the first steps of implementing a disengagement plan after more than nine months of a tense stand-off at multiple points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the causes of last year's border crisis still remain a mystery.

Top Indian officials, including External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, have said publicly that China was yet to offer "a credible explanation" for the deployment last summer of an unprecedented number of troops so close to the border, breaking decades of consensus on managing an undemarcated LAC.

A once-in-a-decade military strategy document released by the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) leading think tank in 2013 offers some clues to China's border moves, as it called for putting a stop to "nibbling" of territory as well as warned of India's expanding maritime reach as it looked to stabilise its land borders, a development it viewed as a threat to China's security interests.

'The Science of Military Strategy' released in 2013 by the Academy of Military Sciences was the third edition of the text, following previous versions in 1987 and 2001.

A full-English translation of the 276-page Chinese document, which was first released a year into Xi Jinping's tenure in October 2013, was published on February 8 by the United States-based China Aerospace Studies Institute at Air University, based



Future planning: The text outlined four characteristics of India's strategy as seen by military planners in Beijing.

at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

The section evaluating India's military strategy described India as "a regional power in South Asia and the Indian Ocean... an emerging major country that is in the midst of arising" and a country whose "international status is improving every day".

Three stages

It outlined three stages of India's military strategy since 1947: a limited offensive strategy until the early 1960s, a period of "expansion on two fronts" from the 1960s to the early 1970s; a "maintain the land and control the sea" until the late 1980s, and "a major adjustment" after the end of the Cold War from "regional offence" to "regional deterrence" that stressed "the role of deterrence and not emphasising conquest and occupation of territory".

With India's economy taking off and its "overall national power continually strengthened", the paper noted that India's "economic and military power exceed-

ed the sum total of the various other countries in South Asia, and the other South Asian countries in actuality had no power to pose a major threat against India".

The text outlined four characteristics of India's strategy as seen by military planners in Beijing. The first viewed India "as the heart of Asia and that the Indian Ocean is India's ocean" and "treated the South Asian subcontinent as its sphere of influence and it has regarded some neighbouring countries as the main obstacles blocking it from achieving its geopolitical interests". India, in its view, "attempted to build the South Asian subcontinent into a strategic foundation with itself as the centre and to thus manage and control the Indian Ocean".

In the view of the PLA think tank, India carried on with some aspects of what it inherited from British India's military strategic thought, the core of which was "to treat Kashmir, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and Assam as

the internal lines of India's defence; to incorporate Tibet into its sphere of influence as a buffer state; and to treat the illegally concocted McMahon Line [which China doesn't recognise, on the eastern sector] and the Ardash-Johnson Line [in the western sector] as its security inner ring".

The text claimed that with the rise of India's national power, the "offensive" elements "have been increasing" but "restricted to the South Asian subcontinent and the Indian Ocean situation".

China strategy

"As regards its strategy against the People's Republic of China, India has adopted a defensive posture overall, but at the same time has also used offence as a defence to actively seek local superiority, and has also used its unrelenting nibbling away in peacetime to create conditions for switching from defence to offence in wartime," it said. "In regard to China, it has carried out 'dissuasive' deterrence, to deter China from using troops against India, and has restrained China from entering its sphere of influence. In regard to the small countries along the South Asian periphery, it has carried out 'punitive' deterrence, to ensure that they do not dare go against India's interests and to force them to humbly heed India's control."

For China, it noted that while "the possibility of a large-scale land invasion war occurring is fairly low nonetheless some border demarcation problems are hanging

in the balance, and some border-area nibbling and counter-nibbling, and frictional and counter-frictional struggles will be present for the long term". China has unresolved land borders with India and Bhutan.

The PLA strategy predicted that India would look to stabilise its land borders and pay more attention to the sea, a development it viewed as unfavourable for China's interests.

On the Quad

Written eight years ago, it foresaw deepening ties among the Quad - India, U.S., Japan and Australia - and noted

"against this backdrop, Japan's going southward and India's advancing eastward might intersect in the South China Sea, forming 'dual arcs' from the directions of both oceans, and Japan and Australia would constitute 'dual anchors' at the south and north ends of the Western Pacific".

It said "on the basis of ensuring its interests in the Indian Ocean", India would "attempt to realize a military presence in the South China Sea".

The PLA document calls to extend China's "strategic forward edge" from "the coastal and border regions" to a broader "limited arc shaped strategic zone that covers the western Pacific Ocean and the northern Indian Ocean". It sees what it calls a "two oceans region", outlining Beijing's own early version of an Indo-Pacific strategy, as "a crucial area in influencing our nation's strategic development and security in the future".

Trump impeachment trial reaches final stage

Former President's lawyers demand acquittal in 'unjust' trial

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The U.S. Senate began hearing final arguments on Saturday in the impeachment trial of Donald Trump as the top Republican Senator said he would vote to acquit the former President of inciting the deadly January 6 assault on the Capitol.

Republican Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell's decision means Mr. Trump is all but certain to be acquitted by the Senate of the charge of inciting an insurrection.

Before moving to final arguments, the proceedings were interrupted for a few hours after House prosecutors, in a surprise move, said they wanted to call witnesses at the trial. House impeachment manager Jamie Raskin said he wanted to call a Republican lawmaker as a witness but eventually agreed with Mr. Trump's defense lawyers just to have her testimony entered into evidence. Mr. Trump's lawyers had threatened to call witnesses of their own.

The Senate voted 55-45 to allow witnesses, but Senators, House prosecutors and defense lawyers then hammered out an agreement allowing the trial to proceed to closing arguments.

A vote on whether to acquit or convict the 74-year-old former Republican President is expected later on Saturday afternoon.

Mr. Raskin had wanted Representative Jamie Herrera Beutler to testify after she released a statement about



A January 6 photo of supporters of U.S. President Donald Trump in front of the U.S. Capitol Building. ■ REUTERS

the events of January 6. Ms. Herrera Beutler, a Republican from Washington State, was one of the 10 Republicans who voted to impeach Mr. Trump in the House of Representatives.

In her statement, she said Republican House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy had called Mr. Trump while the attack was ongoing and implored him to call off the rioters.

"When McCarthy finally reached the President on January 6 and asked him to publicly and forcefully call off the riot, the President initially repeated the falsehood that it was Antifa that had breached the Capitol," Ms. Herrera Beutler said.

"McCarthy refused that and told the President that these were Trump supporters," the Congresswoman said. "That's when, according to McCarthy, the President said: 'Well, Kevin, I guess these people are more upset about the election than you are,' she said.

Mr. Trump was impeached by the Democratic-controlled House on January 13 for inciting the attack on the U.S. Capitol by his supporters, who were seeking to block congressional certification of Democrat Joe Biden's November 3 election victory.

Mr. Trump's lawyers argued on Friday that the former President bore no responsibility for the attack on Congress. They called the impeachment unjust, unconstitutional and an "act of political vengeance".

They argued that Mr. Trump's rally speech near the White House that preceded the January 6 attack, when he told supporters to "fight", was merely rhetorical.

Seeking to turn the table on the Democrats' powerful use of video evidence, defense lawyers played their own compilations showing Democratic lawmakers at different times using the word "fight".

Draghi sworn in as new PM as Italy hopes to turn the page

Cabinet includes a mix of technocrats and politicians

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ROME

Former European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi was formally sworn in as Italy's new Prime Minister on Saturday, against the backdrop of the deadly coronavirus pandemic and a crippling recession.

The appointment of the 73-year-old known as "Super Mario" capped weeks of political instability for the country still in the grips of the health crisis that has killed more than 93,000 people.

"I swear to be loyal to the Republic," recited Mr. Draghi, as he stood before President Sergio Mattarella in the ornate presidential palace in a televised ceremony.

Members of his new Cabinet, who include technocrats, veteran politicians and Ministers held over from the previous government, each took the oath of office.



New path: Giuseppe Conte, Italy's outgoing PM, left, giving a bell to Mario Draghi during a handover ceremony in Rome.

Mr. Draghi was parachuted in by Mr. Mattarella after the previous centre-left coalition under premier Giu-

seppe Conte collapsed, leading Italy rudderless amid the worst recession since the Second World War. After assembling a broad-based coalition, on Friday night Mr. Draghi formally accepted the post of premier, publicly revealing the new Cabinet for the first time.

Oxford University to test its vaccine on children

It will be tested on 300 volunteers

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON

The University of Oxford plans to test its COVID-19 vaccine on children for the first time, becoming the latest vaccine developer to assess whether its coronavirus shot is effective in young people.

The trial announced on Saturday seeks to recruit 300 volunteers between the ages of 6 and 17, with up to 240 receiving the COVID-19 vaccine and the remainder a control meningitis vaccine.

Andrew Pollard, chief researcher on the Oxford vaccine trial, said that while most children don't get severely ill from COVID-19, "it is important to establish the safety and immune response to the vaccine in children and young people as some children may benefit

from vaccination".

Regulators in more than 50 countries have authorised widespread use of the Oxford vaccine, which is being produced and distributed by AstraZeneca, for use in people over the age of 18.

Other drug companies are also testing their COVID-19 vaccines in children. Pfizer, whose vaccine has already been authorised for use in people 16 and older, began testing its shot in children as young as 12.

Moderna in December began testing its vaccine on children as young as 12.

Mr. Pollard said the Oxford trial should help policymakers decide whether at some point in the future they want to extend mass vaccination programmes to children.

Tensions high as mass protests in Myanmar enter second week

Army suspends laws limiting forces, hunts protest backers

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
REUTERS
YANGON/NAYPYITAW

Opposition to Myanmar's new military regime intensified on Saturday as spontaneous neighbourhood watch groups mobilised to thwart arrests of anti-coup activists and the UN demanded the release of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The Army takeover that brought a decade-old democracy to an end has unleashed a storm of anger and defiance, with huge protests bringing urban centres around the country to a standstill. Since taking Suu Kyi and her allies into custody, troops have stepped up arrests of civil servants, doctors and others joining strikes calling on the General

ability to relinquish power.

The junta on Saturday suspended laws constraining security forces from detaining suspects or searching private property without court approval and ordered the arrest of well-known backers of mass protests.

The announcements bore echoes of the near half-century of military rule before reforms began. An order signed by military ruler General Min Aung Hlaing suspended three sections of laws "protecting the privacy and security of the citizens", which had been introduced during the gradual liberalisation.

More than 320 people have been arrested since last week, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners monitoring group.

Massive fuel tanker fire in Afghanistan

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

Dozens of oil and gas tankers carrying millions of dollars' worth of fuel caught fire on Saturday, creating an inferno at Afghanistan's biggest trade crossing with Iran, officials said.

The blaze broke out in the afternoon at Islam Qala port, some 120 km from Herat, engulfing the tankers that were parked nearby after crossing the border.

"There were between 200 and 300 fuel tankers there and we managed to save some, but most have been engulfed and the fire is so huge that nobody can get to within even a kilometre of it," said Younus Qazi Zada, head of the Herat Chamber of Commerce. "The initial estimate is of millions of dollars of losses."

At least 17 people have been taken to hospital, some of them with serious burns, said Ibrahim Mohammadi, head of the Herat ambulance service.

China did not give data on early COVID-19 cases

It only gave a summary: WHO expert

REUTERS
SHANGHAI

China refused to give raw data on early COVID-19 cases to a World Health Organization-led team probing the origins of the pandemic, one of the team's investigators

lied. "That's standard practice for an outbreak investigation," he said on Saturday via video call from Sydney, where he is currently undergoing quarantine.

He said that gaining access to the raw data was especially important since only half of the 174 cases had exposure to the Huanan market, the now-shuttered wholesale seafood centre in Wuhan where the virus was initially detected.

"That's why we've persisted to ask for that," he said. "Why that doesn't happen, I couldn't comment. Whether it's political or time or it's difficult ... But whether there are any other reasons why the data isn't available, I don't know. One would only speculate."

While the Chinese authorities provided a lot of material, he said the issue of access to the raw patient data would be mentioned in the team's final report, which he never succeeded in working out a compromise with Congress.

Biden wants to shut prison at Guantanamo

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Joe Biden wants to close the Guantanamo Bay prison for terror suspects before the end of his term, the White House said on Friday, echoing an unfulfilled campaign promise from Barack Obama's administration.

Asked at a press conference about a possible closure of the prison in Cuba during Mr. Biden's tenure, spokeswoman Jen Psaki said, "That certainly is our goal and our intention."

In his 2016 presidential campaign, Donald Trump expressed willingness to keep the Guantanamo prison open and "fill it with bad guys".

The Republican retained this position once elected. However, some detainees were promised their release from Guantanamo under his Democratic predecessor Obama, but he never succeeded in working out a compromise with Congress.

PARADIP PORT TRUST e-TENDER CALL NOTICE

Name for the work Upkeep of Railway yard inside Harbour area (from ATBK-II Level Crossing to Cargo Berth area) for the year 2021-22. Estimated cost : Rs. 86,43,162.37. Last Date & time of submission 03.03.2021 upto 17.00 Hrs.

Refer our website for details eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.

Executive Engineer, PRD, PPT

PPT/PR/403/2020-21, Dt.13.02.2021

PARADIP PORT TRUST e-TENDER CALL NOTICE

Name for the work "Upkeep of Railway yard outside Harbour area (from ECoR Boundary to Bauripalanda Level Crossing) for the year 2021-22". Estimated Cost : Rs.1,01,16,652.63. Last Date & time of submission : Dt.03.03.2021 upto 1700 Hrs.. Refer our Website for details : https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.

Executive Engineer (PRD)

PPT/PR/410/20-21, DT.13.02.2021

No. IIFPT/TOT/PO/20-21/01

Date: 14.02.2021

TENDER NOTIFICATION FOR EXCLUSIVE LICENSING AGREEMENT TO TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGIES DEVELOPED BY MoFPI-IIFPT

The MoFPI-Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology (I

INTERVIEW | N.K. SINGH

'Defence fund to tap Gross Revenue Receipts not tax revenue'

Finance Commission chief says besides ₹1.5 lakh crore over 5 years from the Consolidated Fund, monetisation of Defence land will also help generate resources

VIKAS DHOT

The Centre has accepted the Fifteenth Finance Commission's recommendation to share 41% of the divisible pool of revenues between the States and is examining the panel's views on creation of a non-lapsable Defence and Internal Security Modernisation Fund. Commission chairperson N.K. Singh explains the rationale behind the key recommendations: Edited excerpts:

What was the Commission's overall approach?

I would say the emphasis on continuity and stability. This is reflected in the continuity of the 41% share (factoring in J&K's change in status), giving revenue deficit grants.

One more component of stability is the horizontal formula and the percentages assigned to different weights at more or less what they were, with very marginal change by increasing the forest cover criteria. But the use of the 2011 Census would have

meant many of the States who have done better on demographic management might have suffered, if we had done no corrections.

Therefore, we introduced a new criteria of demographic management by assigning a 12.5% weightage, and if States still suffered, we have tried to mitigate by that a revenue deficit grant which covers many of the States like Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Telangana.

We have sought to therefore evenly balance, on the weightages side, the triple consideration of equity, need

and efficiency.

The second important thing is the reprioritisation of the expenditure pattern. With our current health infrastructure given the pandemic, we have assigned a very specific treatment of the resources to urban local bodies towards improving health infrastructure of primary health centres and district hospitals.

Unlike in the past, the fiscal consolidation roadmap for the Union and the States have been made somewhat flexible and introduce a range instead of a fixed point, recognising that the State finances may be in stress, even though State FRBM laws assigned a certain fiscal deficit target, we have given them one percentage point more - 4% instead of the 3% of GSDP, and an additional 0.5% for undertaking

power sector reforms. If any of the States have to undertake fresh borrowing on account of liabilities arising out of the GST compensation cess, that would be over and above the flexibility we have given now.

As far as the central government is concerned, we have given a certain roadmap over a medium term.

We have recommended that we need a new fiscal consolidation plan, a new debt trajectory, and the constitution of what I have called an inter-governmental body. In the action taken report, the ministry has said that they are going to examine this proposal separately.

Could you could provide us some clarity on the Defence and Internal

Security Modernisation fund for which you have suggested about ₹1.5 lakh crore be shifted from the Consolidated Fund of India over five years? Should States be concerned that this might shrink their share of the divisible pool?

■ None of this is coming from the Gross Tax Revenue, but the Gross Revenue Re-

ceipts. And we have already calibrated it without touching the GTR or the options of a cess or a surcharge or a defence tax.

But we stayed clear of that. I wanted to come clean on that.

We have taken this from the GRR but we were persuaded by the erudite legal opinion of Mr. K. Parasar on the indivisible obligation of every stakeholder to become a partner in strengthening the defence of this country.

Historically, there has been a mismatch between the procurement cycle and the fi-

nancial allocations on an annual basis.

We need to give a degree of stability on availability of resources for meeting capital expenditure for Defence is what we came to the conclusion given to us; that this would be the path forward.

While one component comes from the Consolidated Fund, there is a very significant part which will come from the monetisation of idle land assets – defence is the biggest holder of land.

They can use that for their own benefit and the proceeds of the disinvestment from the public sector defence enterprises. This is ₹51,000 crore per annum for defence and ₹10,000 crore for the Ministry of Home Affairs for strengthening the capital expenditure of forces like the ITBP and BSF, which

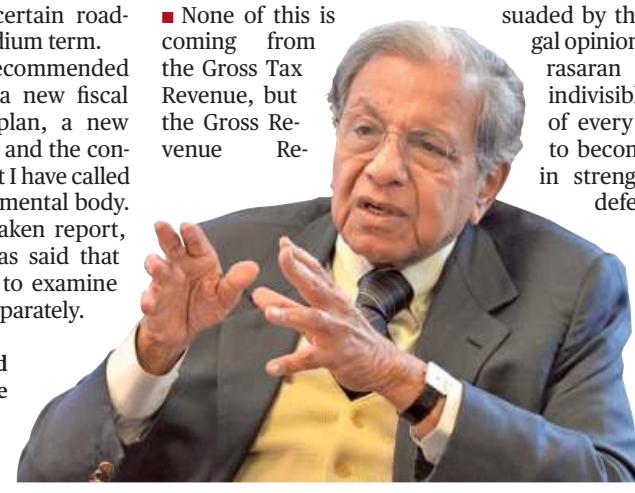
are also engaged in defence, and a small amount which we have given for the Jawans' Army Welfare fund.

We were the only Finance Commission to have had the opportunity to go to Leh and see the war memorial for the Kargil martyrs and were happy to be able to grant them something.

The Commission didn't make a particularly strong push for a Fiscal Council...

■ The 12th Commission had done it, the 13th did it, the 14th had done it. We have also done it, but we haven't written a lot of poetry on it.

Notwithstanding the wide-ranging recommendations, despite these exceptional times, the government has honoured [the panel's] recommendations and not rejected any recommendation.



Vodafone Idea loss narrows to ₹4,532 cr., to raise ₹25,000 cr.

Gain from sale of stake in Indus Towers buffers bottom line



agreement during the reported quarter.

Subscriber retention'

"In the third quarter, we improved subscriber retention and operating performance, supported by Vi GIGAnet," Vodafone Idea MD and CEO

Vodafone Idea Limited (VIL) sold 11.15% stake in Indus Towers on the completion of its merger with Bharti Infratel for ₹.760 crore and paid ₹2,400 crore to the merged entity as per its

ONGC profit dives 67% to ₹1,378 cr. as oil, gas slide

Board approves 35% interim dividend

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Debt-ridden Vodafone Idea on Saturday reported consolidated loss narrowed to ₹4,532.1 crore in the third quarter, mainly on account of a one-time gain from stake sale in Indus Towers.

The telecom firm posted a loss of ₹6,438.8 crore in the year-earlier quarter.

Vodafone Idea Limited (VIL) sold 11.15% stake in Indus Towers on the completion of its merger with Bharti Infratel for ₹.760 crore and paid ₹2,400 crore to the merged entity as per its

Ravinder Takkar said in a statement. "We remain focused on executing our strategy, and our cost optimisation plan remains on track to deliver the targeted savings," he added.

Revenue from operations fell 1.7% to ₹10,894 crore, from ₹1,089.4 crore.

"The Board has approved fundraising to support our strategic intent and we are in active discussions with potential investors," he said.

The board approved raising up to ₹25,000 crore through a mix of debt and equity, the company said.



realised in the same period a year back.

Government-mandated gas price dropped to \$1.79 per million British thermal unit from \$3.23 per mmBtu rate it got in October-December 2019. Turnover was down 28% at ₹17,024 crore.

The company board, at its meeting, approved an interim dividend of 35%.

C.K. Birla Group's HIL to hone focus on markets it just added

Firm to expand building solutions capacity: MD Choudhary

N. RAVI KUMAR HYDERABAD

C.K. Birla Group company HIL Ltd. benefited from a re-orientation of strategy amid the pandemic that saw it tap new markets for building materials especially in tier II and III cities, helping it perform well even as business from major cities slowed.

The building materials segment, consisting of AAC blocks, panels and boards, which was aligned 90% to construction projects in big cities moved to tier II and III locations as the government set up COVID centres and

drop of good rainfall, gave a fillip to HIL as it forayed into new markets, especially in east and south India. Roofing, building and polymer solutions are HIL's main businesses in India, while the acquisition of German flooring solutions firm Parador has given it access to many countries, especially in Europe.

HIL has 22 manufacturing facilities in India and two in Europe.

"We are full in our [building solutions] capacity," the MD said. "Now we will have to add new capacity to grow," he added.

Equirus Capital eyes double-digit growth

Strengthens teams across verticals



Ajay Garg

tutional equities, PMS and wealth management.

To support its growth, the firm has expanded its team by adding Venkatraghvan S., Vinay Pai and Bhavesh Shah who have expertise in making deals.

We are anticipating the next 12 months to be the best period for advisory and capital markets practices across the markets," added Mr. Garg.

Amara Raja Q3 net rises 18% on demand uptick

Firm to set up lead-recycling unit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD

Amara Raja Batteries (ARBL) consolidated net profit rose 18% to ₹193.69 crore for the quarter ended December, from the year-earlier period, following a revival in demand across key sectors of the business.

The increase in profit came on a more than 13% rise in total income to ₹1,995.63 crore. The company has declared an interim dividend of ₹5 per equity share (face value of ₹1).

The firm would set up a greenfield, lead-recycling unit with a capacity of one lakh tonnes. Total capital outlay is expected to be ₹280 crore, to be spent over the next 18 months.

The project would help the company comply with recycling standards while adopting advance technolo-

gy in the most environmentally-friendly manner.

A 50 MW solar power plant in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh with an outlay of ₹220 crore is being established by ARBL.

"The rebounding of the economy is improving the prospects of various market segments, especially those in which we are operating," said Jayadev Galla, vice-chairman and MD.

Petrol nears ₹95 a litre in Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Petrol price in Mumbai neared a record ₹95 per litre mark on Saturday as its rate as well as diesel prices were hiked for the fifth day in a row.

Petrol price was increased by 30 paise per litre and diesel by 36 paise a litre, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

This took petrol price to an all-time high of ₹88.41 a litre in Delhi while diesel rate climbed to ₹78.74.

In Mumbai, petrol price soared to ₹94.93 per litre and diesel to a record ₹85.70 a litre.

Renault India to sell 1.2 lakh units by 2023: Mamillapalle

Firm has enough stock of semiconductors for 4 weeks'



Venkatram Mamillapalle

raise it to 4.5% over the next 18 months through new products and upgraded models.

Last year, the company exported 10% of its total volume and hopes to maintain the same percentage for the current year as well.

He also said that the company's market share in the passenger vehicle segment had increased to 3.4% from 2.5%. Plans were afoot to

be a game changer. The price would be announced on February 15.

On the non-availability of semiconductors impacting the global automobile players, he said Renault had enough inventory for the next three-four weeks and they were monitoring the situation closely. Currently, Renault India makes Kwid, Triber and Duster vehicles at the Oragadam plant.

On the possibility of a price hike following a steep increase in metal and steel costs, he said, "There will not be a price hike at least for the next two months."

"But, there would be something, during the course of the year."

Training future leaders with 21st century communication skills

Introducing STEP LIVE Junior+

An interactive English learning course for kids from classes 4-7.

Coach your kids with 10 LIVE classes on present day aspects of communication.

- Speaking**: Strategies to improve public speaking skills with focus on aspects such as persuasion, expression of emotions, etc.
- Writing**: Best practices to improve writing structure and introduction to using tools like PowerPoint
- Listening**: Engaging exercises and activities to actively develop listening skills
- Practice**: Practical tips and guidance to continue developing communication skills

To develop your child's overall communication skills, visit BIT.LY/JUNIORPLUS

Scan the QR code



THE HINDU GROUP



M ND-NDE

SNAPSHOTS



Black hole cluster
NGC 6397 is a cluster of stars, which at 7,800 light years lies in the Ara constellation and is among the closest globular clusters to the earth. Hubble space telescope looked at this expecting to see an intermediate mass black hole at its centre but instead found that there were many small black holes there. This is the first measurement of the extent of such a collection in a core-collapsed globular cluster.



Virus and climate change
A study published in *Science of the Total Environment* gives a mechanism linking climate change and emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus which gave rise to the pandemic. Global greenhouse gas emissions have made southern China a hotspot of bat-borne coronaviruses by driving forest habitats liked by bats. The study found that 40 new species of bats had moved to the Yunnan province in the last century.



Small difference
Researchers have discovered that alteration of a single gene may have made all the difference for the cognitive variation between modern humans and our predecessors - such as the neanderthals and denisovans. Using this information they have grown neanderthal-like brain organoids in the lab, according to a paper in *Science*. Using human stem cells, they effected a change in the NOVA1 gene and then formed the organoids.



Water on Mars
Researchers observed water vapour in the thin atmosphere of Mars, offering new clues as to whether it could have once hosted life. The traces of ancient valleys and river channels suggest liquid water once flowed across its surface. Today, the water is mostly locked up as ice. But some of it is vapourising, in the form of hydrogen leaking from the atmosphere, according to the study published in the journal *Science Advances*.

With two vaccines already approved, can placebos be used in trials?

From an ethical perspective, all persons in a control arm should at least receive the standard of care

R. PRASAD

On February 3, 2021, the Subject Expert Committee of the Indian drug regulator approved Pune-based Serum Institute to conduct a phase-2/3 trial of CovaVax COVID-19 vaccine that was originally developed by Novavax Inc. headquartered in the U.S. Novavax's vaccine was found to have over 89% efficacy in a phase-3 trial carried out in the U.K. In mid-January Dr. Reddy's lab was allowed to carry out a phase-3 trial of Sputnik V vaccine. There are other vaccines which too will begin human clinical trials in India.

In both cases, the SEC allowed the vaccine manufacturers to use a placebo in the control arm even as two vaccines - Covishield and Covaxin - have been granted restricted use approval. Though the two vaccines have only a restricted use approval, it is correct to test the efficacy of new COVID-19 vaccines by comparing them with a placebo and not use either Covishield or Covaxin in the control arm?

"There are two ways to think about this," Dr. Gagandeep Kang, Professor of Microbiology at CMC Vellore says in an email to *The Hindu*. "Usually, 'restricted use' or 'emergency use' is not considered as equivalent to licensure. Taking a regulatory point of view, if a product is not licensed and available for use, then the availability of a product for 'restricted use' does not preclude any standard study design, including the use of placebo."

Dr. Kang then adds: "We can also think about this from an ethical perspective. All persons in a control arm should receive, at a minimum, the standard of care. If the vaccine under 'restricted use' is considered



Ensuing trial: For CovaVax, the drug regulator has allowed Serum Institute to use a placebo if participants on the placebo arm could be unblinded 60 days after the second dose upon their request and offered the candidate vaccine. ■ GETTY IMAGES

the standard of care, then all controls will need to be given the 'restricted use' vaccine."

Dr. Anant Bhan, a Bhopal-based researcher in global health and bioethics, says in an email: "The regulator should have specified their criteria for allowing placebo-controlled trials to still be given permissions, and whether a revised standard of care will only apply when full licensure is given (and not just approved for restricted use). It circles back to the need for more transparency and clear detailed justifications with regards to regulatory decisions in the country."

No clear guidance
But at the moment, we do not have any written guidance on the path that will be taken by the regulatory authorities, says Dr. Kang. But in the case of CovaVax, the drug regulator has allowed Serum Institute to use a placebo in the control group. "When the standard of care is available only to a section of the population, the 'priority groups' at the moment, then it is not standard of care for the rest of the population. Therefore, it is ethical to continue with a placebo in the population outside the priority groups, as long as that non-priority status is maintained," she explains. Dr. Kang highlights further subtleties in this: "If

pant and offered the candidate vaccine.

"Ethically, all clinical trial participants, both in the current trials and future studies have to be informed about the availability of vaccines for priority populations in the country after restricted use approval from the regulator," emphasises Dr. Bhan. "What would be the ethical obligation to minimise risk in those receiving a placebo? What kind of information would be provided to them so that they make an informed decision about participation?"

Dr. Kang sees one more reason why the drug regulator might not be wrong in allowing companies to use a placebo in the control group. "When the standard of care for the rest of the population. Therefore, it is ethical to continue with a placebo in the population outside the priority groups, as long as that non-priority status is maintained," she explains. Dr. Kang highlights further subtleties in this: "If

the regulators had insisted on using any of the restricted use vaccines, that would create another complication - how would the company with the new vaccine get access to the 'restricted use' vaccine since it is not approved for sale in the open market?" she wonders.

Difficult to recruit

While the U.S., with less than one-fourth of India's population, conducted at least six clinical trials with more than 30,000 participants each, Bharat Biotech faced difficulty in recruiting nearly 26,000 participants for the phase-3 trial of Covaxin. The use of a placebo in the control arm might make volunteer recruitment even more difficult especially when vaccination of the remaining priority groups - those older than 50 years, and younger people with comorbidities - begins soon.

Given the larger sample size requirements when an approved vaccine is used in the control arm, and also because the concerns around seriousness of COVID-19 seems to have gone down in public perception given the

falling number of COVID-19 cases in India, recruitment of the numbers required could be challenging. These trials could also take longer and be costlier, Dr. Bhan says.

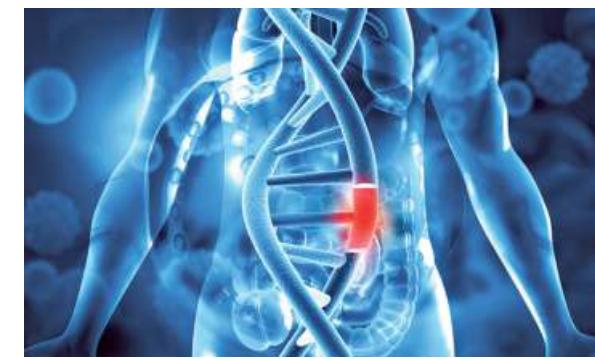
"I think volunteer recruitment might become more difficult unless younger people, who stand no chance of getting a vaccine in the near future, opt in," says virologist Dr. Shahid Jameel Director of the Trivedi School of Biosciences at Ashoka University. "But that would raise the issue of the vaccine trial population skewed towards a younger population. Since younger people predominantly get asymptomatic infection, they may also not volunteer."

Role of communication

Acknowledging the challenges faced by vaccine companies in recruiting volunteers even before restricted use approval was granted to the two vaccines, Dr. Kang is optimistic that volunteer recruitment is not insurmountable. "I think recruitment of volunteers is always about clear communication. With the right kind of communication, a lot of people are willing to participate in advancing science, as long as they understand the study process, risk and benefit and know that the study staff are always available to them," she says.

Testing the efficacy of a new vaccine by comparing it with an already approved vaccine in the control arm is called a non-inferiority trial.

"If a comparator is to be used among vaccines with restricted use approval, it should be ideally the vaccine for which safety, immunogenicity and efficacy data is available, at least globally, if not in India," says Dr. Bhan.



New revelation: Mutations in the novel regions do have physiological consequences, says Sudhakaran Prabakaran ■ GETTY IMAGES

Plumbing the 'dark' genome for new genes

This can aid diagnosis, cure diseases

ASWATHI PACHA

On June 26, 2000, former U.S. President, Bill Clinton, announced the completion of a draft sequence of the human genome, a historic landmark for genetic research. The Human Genome Project helped map our genes, strengthened the study of human diseases and aided new drug discovery. But even after two decades, the number of 'known' genes - encoding around 20,000 'known' proteins - has remained constant. It is also a conundrum why only 1.5% of the entire human genome codes for proteins.

A team from the University of Cambridge set out to find whether new genes emerge in the genome of living organisms, and if they do, how they do.

In the last seven years, the team extensively studied the human genome and has now catalogued 1,94,000 novel regions. The results were published in *Genome Research*.

Novel regions

"These 'novel' genomic regions cannot be defined by our current 'definition' of a gene. Hence, we call these novel regions - novel Open Reading Frames or nORFs. We show that the mutations in nORFs do have physiological consequences and a majority of mutations that are often annotated as benign have to be re-interpreted," explains lead author Sudhakaran Prabakaran from the Laboratory of Non-coding genome and Data Science at the University.

The researchers also identified these nORFs in *Plasmodium falciparum*, the parasite which causes the deadliest form of malaria. The results were published last week in *Malaria Journal*.

This shows that there is an urgent need to redesign our existing drugs that target only the known proteins in the parasite.

you were to look at a mountain range from the top, you will only see the peaks. But as the resolution of the technology improves, you will see things that are present in the lower peaks and you can see the valleys. So, new genomic and proteomic technologies, algorithms have enabled us to see the complete landscape of everything that is being made from the human genome," he explains.

Connected to disease

The team found that these regions are also broadly involved in diseases. The nORFs were seen as dysregulated in 22 cancer types.

Dysregulated is a term which means that they could either be mutated, upregulated, or downregulated, or they could be uniquely present.

A paper published last month by the team in *npj Genomic Medicine* noted that these regions were uniquely present in the cancer tissues and not present in the control tissue. They found that some nORF disruptions strongly correlated with the survival of patients. "More importantly, we show that nORFs proteins can form structures, can undergo biochemical regulation like known proteins and be targeted by drugs in case they are disrupted in diseases," adds Dr. Prabakaran.

The researchers also identified these nORFs in *Plasmodium falciparum*, the parasite which causes the deadliest form of malaria. The results were published last week in *Malaria Journal*.

This shows that there is an urgent need to redesign our existing drugs that target only the known proteins in the parasite.



Question Corner

Elephant tail

Can tail hair reveal stress levels in elephants?

The tuft of hair at the end of an elephant's tail helps as a fly swatter to protect itself from insect bites. Researchers have now found that elephant tail hair can be used to study the health of elephants.

In a paper published in a journal (*PeerJ*),

researchers show that the tail hair can be used to assess stress in the life of the animal. The tail hair growth rate and levels of immunoreactive cortisol in hair (hC) were studied. The cortisol hormone has been previously studied in various animals to decode the 'stressful' past events.

Hair cortisol levels are considered to be an effective measure to understand the cumulative concentrations of systemic cortisol exposure over a longer period.

Conditions such as housing, grouping, diet, disease have affected the animal. Further, analysing hair cortisol levels along with other biomarkers (such as reproductive hormones) can facilitate more meaningful biological interpretations of an animal's life', concludes the paper.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

Detailed genome map of malaria vector



mosquitoes.
CRISPR technology is a gene-editing tool which allows researchers to easily alter DNA sequences and modify gene function.

Mahul Chakraborty, a project scientist at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) in the U.S. and colleagues produced a new reference genome for the Asian malaria vector mosquito *Anopheles stephensi*.

In order to engineer advanced forms of defence against malaria transmission, the team unearthed more than 3,000 genes that previously evaded scrutiny and which offer fresh gene-drive targets, play key roles in blood feeding and the metabolism of ingested blood



In depth: To engineer advanced forms of defence against malaria transmission, scientists require intricate knowledge of the genomes of vector mosquitoes. ■ GETTY IMAGES

meal, reproduction and immunity against microbial parasites. The research was published in *BMC Biology*.

"This reference genome and its excellent quality should help malaria biologists in India and the rest of

the world, particularly in view of the national goal of malaria elimination in India by 2030," said TIGS Global Director Suresh Subramani, a distinguished professor in the Division of Biological Sciences at UC San Diego.

The discoveries include 29 formerly undetected genes that play crucial roles in resistance to chemical insecticides, a development that can help address the growing Asian and African *An. stephensi* populations with insecticide-resistant mutations, the researchers said. The findings also offer clues suggesting that the molecular basis of insecticide resistance may differ between sexes, they said.

py to manipulate them. The research collaboration extends to several countries: Germany, UAE, Spain and India. As Prof. Chandrasekar explains: "We receive the macro-sized samples from our collaborators, we grow microcrystals suitable for mechanical manipulation with atomic force microscopy, and investigate the photonic properties in our Hyderabad lab. We have also been making these crystals in our labs."

The field is in its infancy and the results are qualitative. The group next plans to fabricate high-density photonic circuits using organic passive, active and energy-transfer mechanisms. "We believe that this futuristic area will gain momentum with the arrival of new molecular materials with exciting mechanical and optical attributes and improvement of the micro-spectroscopy techniques," says Prof. Chandrasekar.

Usually photonic integrated circuits are made using silicon, silicon-based and metallic materials using electron beam lithography. This group on the other hand uses organic materials and atomic force micro-

Nanophotonics: Hyderabad scientists manipulate tiny crystals

The researchers can move, bend, lift micron-sized crystals using atomic force microscopy

SHUBHASHREE DESIKAN
Crystals are normally rigid, stiff structures, but researchers from University of Hyderabad have shown how crystals can be sliced and even bent using atomic force microscopy. Manipulating them with precision and control comes in very useful in the field of nanophotonics, a qualitative, emerging field where the aim is to go beyond electronics and build up circuits driven entirely by photons (light). If the technique can be successfully developed, this can achieve an unprecedented level of miniaturisation and pave the way to all-optical-technology such as pliable, wearable devices operated by light entirely.

Bending light path

Light, when left to itself moves along straight paths, so it is crucial to develop materials and technology that can cause its path to bend

with precision and control using atomic force microscopy.

They published the results in *Angewandte Chemie*. "We figured out that the atomic force microscopy (AFM) cantilever tip could be used to lift a crystal, as crystals tend to stick to the tip due to tip-crystal attractive forces. Subsequently, we demonstrated the real



Bending light: The researchers add a crucial piece to the puzzle by building an 'organic photonic integrated circuit' or OPIC. ■ M. ANNADHASAN

waveguiding character of the crystal lifted with a cantilever tip," explains Prof. Chandrasekar in an email to *The Hindu*.

Microresonators

Recently, the group has extended the atomic force microscopy technique to deliberately move, bend, slice or cleave and transfer (from one substrate to another)

micro-sized waveguiding crystals, and the results were published in *Angewandte Chemie*. Not stopping with this, they have also shown how other crucial elements needed for nanophotonics can be developed using this technique. "Not only crystals but also polymer microcavities or microresonators (light-trapping elements) can be precisely manipulated to create photonic structures," says Prof. Chandrasekar.

The researchers have named this technique "mechanophotonics" as this method can be used to generate the basic elements needed to build up a photonic integrated circuit.

Usually photonic integrated circuits are made using silicon, silicon-based and metallic materials using electron beam lithography.

This group on the other hand uses organic materials and atomic force micro-



FILE PHOTO

Bait, plant and control

What has Arsenal Consulting found about an attacker using a malware to infiltrate a laptop?

SRIRAM SRINIVASAN

The story so far: On Wednesday, activist Rona Wilson, who has been imprisoned since June 2018 in connection with the Bhima Koregaon violence case, filed a petition in the Bombay High Court seeking a stay on proceedings against him and others who are co-accused. His petition referred to a report brought out by Arsenal Consulting, a digital forensics consulting company based in Massachusetts, which was hired by Mr. Wilson's defence team. The Arsenal Consulting report states that for 22 months, Mr. Wilson's computer was controlled by an attacker whose goal was to deliver incriminating documents onto his computer, which formed the basis of the case against him.

What was Arsenal Consulting's analysis based on? Arsenal Consulting says its analysis was based "largely on a forensic image obtained from the Toshiba hard drive within Mr. Wilson's Hewlett-Packard Pavilion dv5 Notebook computer and a thumb drive which has been attached to the computer". A forensic image is often described as a bit-by-bit copy of any electronic device that can store memory. Such an image will include even deleted data or data that were inaccessible to the user. It is considered an important part of digital evidence-gathering during investigations.

How was the computer infiltrated? What is being conveyed by the report is that Mr. Wilson's computer got infiltrated by a malware that enabled his system to be remote-controlled. Over the course of 22 months, it says, the attacker not only created a hidden folder in his system, but also created incriminating documents inside that folder. These, it says, were never opened but ended up being used in the case against him and others.

The report says his computer got compromised on June 13, 2016 after a series of "suspicious mails" from "someone using Varavara Rao's email account". Mr. Rao is a co-accused in the case. This person is said to have made repeated attempts to get Mr. Wilson to open a document, which he finally did. This was a bait, and it triggered the installation of the NetWire remote access trojan on his computer. The bait was delivered via an RAR file, which usually contains one or many files in a compressed format. The report says while "Mr. Wilson thought he was opening a link to Dropbox" in the email sent to him, he was actually opening a link to "a malicious command and control server".

NetWire, which first surfaced in 2012, is a well-known malware and one of the most active ones around. It is a remote access trojan, or RAT, which gives an attacker control of the infected system

Before we come to Netwire and command and control server, why were the mails from Mr. Rao's accounts considered suspicious? How was his computer compromised?
The first part is not clear from the report. But in its footnotes, Arsenal Consulting says the suspicious mails were recovered from Mr.

Wilson's computer. It also says, "Our understanding of how Varavara Rao was compromised will improve once we have access to Varavara Rao's electronic devices and the contents of his online accounts."

What is NetWire? NetWire, which first surfaced in 2012, is a well-known malware. It is also one of the most active ones around. It is a remote access trojan, or RAT, which gives control of the infected system to an attacker. Such malware can log keystrokes and compromise passwords.

Malware, according to cybersecurity experts, essentially do two things. One is data exfiltration, which means stealing data. Most anti-virus software are equipped to prevent this. The other involves infiltrating a system, and this has proven to be far more challenging for anti-virus software. NetWire is described as an off-the-shelf malware, while something like Pegasus, which used a bug in WhatsApp to infiltrate users' phones in 2019, is custom-made and sold to nations.

What is a command and control server? The commands emerging from this server is what the infected system will carry out.

How did Arsenal Consulting figure out that the incriminating documents were never opened on Mr. Wilson's computer?

Arsenal Consulting says it reviewed the NTFS file system, which can be found on any Windows system. This is a system of storing and organising files. It keeps a log of the files – whether they are created, modified, or deleted. Object identifiers are assigned to files when they are either created or first opened. Arsenal Consulting says none of the "top ten documents" have any such identifiers.

Also, it says, it studied the Windows Registry to check the version of Word program that Mr. Wilson had. It found that he had a 2007 version, but the incriminating documents were saved from the 2010 or 2013 version of Word. It also says that Mr. Wilson's pen drive was also synchronised with the command and control server.

Spotlight on dams after Chamoli disaster

Why are geologists worried about a slew of hydroelectric projects and environmental stress in Uttarakhand?

G. ANANTHAKRISHNAN

The story so far: A snow avalanche triggered possibly by a landslide caused a flash flood in the Rishi Ganga river, a tributary of the Alaknanda in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, on a sunny morning on February 7, washing away a functional small hydroelectric project and destroying the under-construction 520 MW Tapovan Vishnugad project of the NTPC on the Dhauliganga river. The death toll from the disaster was 38 as of Friday. Rescue teams were straining to locate scores of people who remained missing. These were mostly workers in the two power projects, besides some local residents.

Why did it happen?

Union Home Minister Amit Shah told Parliament that satellite imagery from Planet Labs indicated that the landslide-avalanche event at an altitude of 5,600 metres occurred in a glacier in the Rishi Ganga catchment, and covered an area of 14 sq. km, causing the flood. In the initial rescue, 12 people trapped in a tunnel in the NTPC project and 15 from the Rishi Ganga project were saved. While a fuller picture of the loss of life and destruction will emerge only after rescue operation and inquiry is complete, the disaster that struck Chamoli has turned the spotlight on several ongoing dam-based hydroelectric projects, rampant road building, tree felling for projects, and also construction practices in the State.

Why is the Chamoli incident of concern?

Uttarakhand, which gained a distinct identity in the year 2000 as a separate State carved out from Uttar Pradesh, is geologically unique. As a part of the lesser Himalaya, in the populated terrane – a region bounded by earth faults – it remains active in terms of deep movement of rock assemblages. In an article in *Current Science* in 2014, geologist K.S. Valdiya pointed to the fragility of the entire landscape from a geological point of view: "As the northward moving peninsular India presses on, the lesser Himalaya rock assemblages are compressed and are pushed under the huge pile of the Great Himalayan rocks, the latter riding southwards onto and over the lesser Himalaya. The movement has been going on since the MCT [the Main Central Thrust] was formed 20-22 million years ago." The MCT, running east-west along the Himalaya, is where the Indian and Eurasian plates connect. The result of these geological stresses, scientists say, is weakening of rocks, making the development of large dam projects in the region unwise.

There are several researchers who refer to other characteristics that call into question the wisdom of committing vast resources to large dam-building in Uttarakhand. A key concern is the active nature of rock fractures, known as faults, which respond to earthquakes, creating enormous instability, especially along slopes. In an assessment of the proposed 315-metre-high India-Nepal Pancheshwar dam project across the Kali river in the Kumaon region, with a drainage area of 12,000 sq. km, Shubhra Sharma and colleagues wrote in *Current Science* in 2019 that the chosen site could witness a strong earthquake in the Nepal area from the Rangunkhola Fault, perhaps of a magnitude of 7.4, with a potentially serious fallout.

Prof. Valdiya, who advocated small low-impact dams of less than 5 megawatts as an alternative, pointed out that investigations done along rivers Kali, Dharma, Gori, Western Dhauliganga, Alaknanda, Mandakini and Bhagirathi, which offer the bounty of hydropower, have been found to be tectonically active in recent times across the area of the MCT. In fact, many locations in a 50-km area within the MCT zone have witnessed several earthquakes of varying intensity, including those with magnitudes of over 5. Although dam builders assert that their structures can withstand even high-intensity earthquakes, researchers say lessons from large structures, such as the Tehri dam, should also be studied, since there are



An aerial view of the ravaged Tapovan hydropower project in Chamoli on Friday. • PTI

The result of geological stresses, scientists say, is weakening of rocks, making the location of large dam projects in the region unwise. Large dams, according to environmentalists, will alter the 'health of the hills'

natural processes across time and are vulnerable to intense rainfall as well as human interference, in the form of house-building and road construction. The careless disposal of enormous debris from mining and construction projects has added to the problem, blocking flow paths and providing additional debris. In fact, researchers from IIT Roorkee writing in the *Indian Geotechnical Journal* (2018) estimate that various tourist locations such as Gopeshwar, Joshimath, and Badrinath fall within high-hazard and very high-hazard zones for landslides, as does Chamoli town, calling for preventive and protective measures.

Should Uttarakhand worry about the effects of climate change?

The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate found that in the Himalayan ranges, there could be variations in overall water availability, but floods, avalanches and landslides were all forecast to increase. Changes in monsoonal precipitation could also bring more frequent disasters.

In 2013, catastrophic loss of lives was seen in the floods that swept Kedarnath. They were triggered by heavy rainfall over a short period in June, first destroying a river training wall, and then triggering a landslide that led to the breaching of the Chorabari moraine-dammed lake, devastating Kedarnath town.

What this means is that aberrations in the Indian summer monsoon caused by changes to long-term climate could produce even greater damage, by bringing

debris and silt down the river courses, destroying physical structures, reducing dam life, and causing enormous losses. These problems are also aggravated by the erosion of mountain slopes and the instability of glacial lakes in upper elevations. On the other hand, as the IPCC Special Report points out, the retreat of glaciers in the high mountains has produced a different kind of loss – of aesthetic and cultural values, declines in tourism and local agriculture.

Are expensive hydroelectric projects worth the investment today?

In reply to a question in the Lok Sabha in September 2020, the Power Ministry stated that in the 25 MW-plus category, there are projects with a combined capacity of 12,973.50 MW under installation. Of this, eight projects totalling 2,490 MW are in Uttarakhand, most of them by the Central government. The Ministry describes this source of power as "highly capital-intensive" but without recurring cost, renewable and cheaper compared to coal and gas plants. But a response it gave earlier this month in the Lok Sabha indicates that it has been offering incentives since March 2019 to make hydropower attractive. These include classification of large hydropower projects as Renewable Energy sources, creating a separate category for hydropower within Non-Solar Renewable Purchase Obligation, tariff rationalisation to bring down tariff, and budgetary support for putting up enabling infrastructure such as roads and bridges.

The International Renewable Energy Agency estimated that in 2019, the average levelised cost of electricity in India was \$0.060 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for small hydropower projects added over the last decade. In comparison, the global cost for solar power was \$0.068 per kWh in 2019 for utility-scale projects. Though hydropower has been reliable where suitable dam capacity exists, in places such as Uttarakhand, the net benefit of big dams is controversial because of the collateral and unquantified damage in terms of loss of lives, livelihoods and destruction of ecology. Chipko movement activist Sunderlal Bahuguna argued that large dams with an expected life of about 100 years, that involve deforestation and destruction, massively and permanently alter the character and health of the hills.

Probing the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic

What has the World Health Organization team's field visit to China thrown up regarding the spread of SARS-CoV-2?

R. PRASAD

The story so far: After several months of delay, concerns over access, and bickering between China and the U.S., a 17-member team from the World Health Organization began a field visit on January 29, 2021, to unearth the origin of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that has so far spread to over 108 million people and killed nearly 2.4 million people across the globe. According to the WHO, the field visits included the Wuhan Institute of Virology, the Huanan market, and the Wuhan CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) laboratory. It said the team was "limited to visits organised by Chinese hosts and had no contact with community members, because of health restrictions", Reuters reported.

What are the four scenarios of virus origin that were investigated?

The WHO team undertook scientific investigations to look at four main scenarios for the origin of the virus. The first possibility is that a single individual had got infected with the virus through direct contact with bats and then spread it to others before the virus made its way to Wuhan. The second scenario is of the virus crossing the species barrier from bats to humans through an intermediary species, which has still not been found. The third possibility is that the virus originated outside China and spread to Wuhan through imported frozen food, and the last scenario is that the virus leaked from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, which has been studying coronaviruses.

When and where did the outbreak begin in China? Though the first cluster of cases was reported from Wuhan in December, early data suggest that the virus could have been circulating in the Chinese city for several weeks before it was identified. According to the WHO, there have not been any large-scale outbreaks in the Chinese city or outside before December 2019. But the team has not ruled out the possibility of the virus circulating in other regions well before December 2019.

What role did the Huanan wet market play?

Though the first cluster of cases reported in Wuhan had links to the wet market, it soon became apparent that several infected people did not have any link to it. There



is not enough evidence to determine how the virus entered the wet market, but there are two likely possibilities – the virus was introduced into the market either through one or more infected people or through frozen food.

Has the possibility of a lab-leak been ruled out?

The WHO fact-finding team had initially rejected the possibility of a lab-leak saying it is "extremely unlikely" and that further investigation into it was not required. However, at a press briefing on February 12, WHO Chief Tedros A. Ghebreyesus appeared to backpedal, saying that upon discussing with a few team members "all hypotheses [including the lab-leak] remain open and require further analysis and studies".

Did the virus directly jump from bats to humans?

The investigation by the WHO team strongly suggests that though bats were the reservoirs of the virus, it is unlikely that the virus jumped directly from bats to humans. The virus may have crossed from bats to another animal species and finally to humans. The direct spillover of the virus from bats to humans is unlikely as Wuhan is miles away from any natural bat habitat. The team has not been able to find the intermediary host.

The role of an intermediary host gains currency as previous coronavirus outbreaks – SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) and MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome) – have occurred through civets and camels, respectively. The SARS-CoV-2 virus, with its distinctive spike protein that allows it to bind to human receptors and enter cells, may have either evolved in the

intermediate host itself, making the virus spread readily from one person to another, or it may have gained the ability for human-to-human transmission in humans after jumping from an intermediate host. In the latter case, the virus may have evolved certain characteristics in the intermediate host and then gained other features within a human host. The virus may have been silently spreading among humans in a limited fashion before gaining the ability to cause a large outbreak, and then the pandemic.

What do the genome sequence data reveal about the virus origin?

Based on the analysis of public genome sequence data from SARS-CoV-2 and related viruses, scientists have not found any evidence that the virus was made in a laboratory or engineered by humans.

Dr. David Robertson, Professor, Viral Genomics and Bioinformatics at MRC-University of Glasgow Centre for Virus Research, in an email to *The Hindu* says based on genome sequence data, there are no signatures of the virus being altered or manipulated in a lab. "Although showing differences in sequence similarity, SARS-CoV-2 looks very much like a natural virus transferred from the same horseshoe bat species as the first SARS virus, and is now evolving as would be expected in the human population," Dr. Robertson writes.

According to him, there is substantial proof that the virus has not been engineered in a lab. "First, if one was to engineer a SARS-like virus, you would copy SARS-CoV-1 more closely. This new virus is highly divergent to SARS-CoV-1. There are lots of these viruses in bats and evidence that some could use human cells. So, the emergence of this new virus isn't all that surprising," says Dr. Robertson. He also says genome sequencing would detect any genetic changes made to the virus.

Dr. Koen Van Rompay from the California National Primate Research Center, University of California, told *The Hindu*: "Our understanding of how to manipulate certain gene sequences to change in vivo virulence and pathogenesis is still very limited, and would be mostly trial and error. It would be very difficult to predict the outcome especially when introducing multiple mutations that can interact with each other." Dr. Rompay adds: "When viruses replicate in vivo and transmit, that is the most efficient way to get selection for more replication-competent mutants that can continue to evolve."

V.K. SASIKALA

A shadow in search of eminence

The return of Jayalalithaa's associate and friend to Tamil Nadu after a four-year jail term heats up the battle for control of the ruling AIADMK

K. VENKATARAMAN

There was a time when no one bothered to find out who V.K. Sasikala exactly was. There was enough information for the public to know that she lived in a penumbra of secrecy in the Poes Garden residence of the late Jayalalithaa, her friend and associate. Not yet considered a public figure, Ms. Sasikala was known vaguely by the growing body of anecdotal evidence about her land-buying spree, her unwholesome influence over the life and fortunes of Jayalalithaa, and the unexplained power and control she wielded in the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK).

Now, fresh from a four-year term in prison, following her conviction for her role in the amassing of unexplained wealth during Jayalalithaa's first term as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister between 1991 and 1996, Ms. Sasikala's personality, her motivations and aspirations draw attention and analysis.

Besides her proximity to Jayalalithaa, she may have owed her political clout to her husband, M. Natarajan, a former government public relations officer who fancied himself to be a political king-maker and was even seen by many as the handler of a large body of party legislators.

Outside party affairs, especially whenever Jayalalithaa was Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, she is believed to have exercised effective control over the bureaucracy and the police force. Many members of her Thevar community were appointed to key positions. Over the years, she was selecting party candidates in elections and making key party appointments.

Turning point

Ms. Sasikala is one of the daughters of C. Vivekanandan, a medical compounder at Thiruthuraipoondi, an agrarian town in central Tamil Nadu. Her

marriage to Natarajan in 1973 was a turning point. A video rental agency that she ran in the 1980s also got some assignments for video-graphing public events. She was in-

troduced to Jayalalithaa, then an emerging leader in the AIADMK after party founder M.G. Ramachandran inducted her into politics. Ms. Sasikala's firm was engaged to record Jayalalithaa's political meetings, and this relationship turned into a lasting bond. Over the next 30 years, Ms. Sasikala was to emerge the country's best known extra-constitutional authority in any regime. Natarajan and Ms. Sasikala were Jayalalithaa's close confidants after MGR's death in 1987. However, when Natarajan was cast away by Jayalalithaa and asked never to enter her household, Sasikala chose to stay back with her friend rather than go with her husband.

It was her relationship with Jayalalithaa that has kept Tamil Nadu politics in a welter of

curiosity for decades. It was an unbreakable, yet turbulent bond. In 1995, Jayalalithaa declared that V.N. Sudhakaran, a nephew of Ms. Sasikala, was her 'foster son'. She arranged a wedding for him with a bride drawn from the family of legendary actor Sivaji Ganesan, an event that was possibly the single biggest reason for her party's cataclysmic defeat in 1996. The ostentatious wedding took place in Chennai roads with a massive and opulent display of jewellery, and drew thousands of people to a feast that took place on several acres of land. The expenditure on the occasion was part of the evidence in the 'wealth' case against the duo.

Arrests of nephews

Soon after the 1996 electoral debacle, when even Jayalalithaa could not win her own seat, there was a clamour from party cadre for the leader to distance herself from Ms. Sasikala. Jayalalithaa obliged them by publicly disowning her, as well as Mr. Sudhakaran.

The disowned foster son was later to go to jail as an abettor in the 'disproportionate assets' case.

Meanwhile, the family's fortunes plummeted. V. Bhaskaran and T.T. Dhinakaran, other nephews of Ms. Sasikala, were arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in different cases of foreign exchange violations. The 1996 disassociation did not last long, and Ms. Sasikala was reinstated in the Poes Garden residence soon.

However, several leaders, including Ministers, pleaded with her to take over the reins. She was declared party general secretary, until a formal election was held as per the party's constitution. She was also elected leader of the AIADMK legislature party, a move that would displace stand-in Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam, who was sworn in at midnight hours after the party's leaders died.

Events after Jayalalithaa's death pitchforked Ms. Sasikala into the limelight. The

public had not even heard her voice before, even though she was known to hold alliance and seat-sharing talks on behalf of the AIADMK for long. An emotional speech followed by television interviews gave the first clue to her aspirations. It was clear that she wanted to step into Jayalalithaa's shoes both in the party and the government. She had claimed that as Chief Minister, she would act exactly as Jayalalithaa did. She never got a shot at the post, as the then Governor did not invite her to form the government until the court verdict was out. She got Edappadi K. Palaniswami to lead the legislature party, and he was sworn in CM days after she went to prison.

Sasikala was convicted for her role in the amassing of unexplained wealth during Jayalalithaa's first term as the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister between 1991 and 1996

relatives of the couple. This time, party leaders were certain that the disassociation with Ms. Sasikala was permanent, and there was no chance of a rapprochement. However, this too turned out to be a sham, as Ms. Sasikala was rehabilitated after a little over three months.

It was no surprise then that much of the party turned to Ms. Sasikala for leadership not long after Jayalalithaa's demise in December 2016. Whether it was orchestrated by her family is unclear.

Whether they would give up the considerable freedom they had enjoyed over the last few years in the absence of any overbearing leader or firm up their political careers by paying obeisance to Ms. Sasikala is a key question. While only an election can determine how far her presence will make a difference – she is disqualified from contest for six years – few will forget that she was widely seen as a negative force that cast a shadow on the Jayalalithaa governments.

Not all those who crave recognition as a leader's legatees achieve it. Would one so closely associated in the public imagination with amassing wealth and power make the cut?



ILLUSTRATION: R.RAJESH

PANGONG TSO

The heights of constant friction

For India, Pangong positions are critical to maintaining a hold on Chushul Valley

DINAKAR PERI

I am happy to inform the House today that as a result of our well-thought-out approach and sustained talks with the Chinese side, we have now been able to reach an agreement on disengagement on the north and south banks of Pangong Tso, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, announcing the disengagement of Indian and Chinese troops to end the nine-month-long stand-off in eastern Ladakh.

Pangong Tso, which caught the fascination of the country with the Aamir Khan starrer *3 Idiots*, has been an area of constant friction between India and China. The name is of mixed heritage, Pangong in Ladakhi language means extensive concavity and Tso means lake in Tibetan. India holds one third of the 135-km-long boomerang-shaped lake located at an altitude of more than 14,000 feet. The lake, a glacial melt, has mountain spurs of the Chang Chenmo range jutting out, referred to as "Fingers", and the brackish water freezes in winter.

India has always held till Finger 4, while it claims till Finger 8, which is where the Indian perception of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) lies, as reiterated by a Defence Ministry statement on Friday. The north bank, which has much higher differences in perception of the LAC than the south bank, had been the initial



site of clashes in early May last year. The Indian Army has a permanent position near Finger 3, the Dhan Singh Thapa post, named after Major Dhan Singh Thapa who was awarded the Param Vir Chakra, the highest gallantry award in the country. The Chinese have a base east of Finger 8.

Face-offs in lake

The Indian Army sends patrols from Finger 3 to Finger 8 on foot, while the Chinese have built a road for their vehicular movement. Both sides also patrol the water on speed boats which also results in face-offs. However, the face-offs are usually resolved as per the protocols agreed to for maintaining peace and tranquillity on the border.

The south bank of Pangong leads to the Kailash range and to the Chushul sector. The Chushul sector is critical as it lends room for tank manoeuvres owing to its flat terrain. This was the

site of pitched battles during the 1962 war and the heroic battle by 13 Kumaon, led by Major Shaitan Singh at Rezang La, the mountain pass on the southeastern approach to the Chushul Valley. Over the years, India has strengthened its defences on the south bank in addition to deployment of tanks. For India, Pangong is critical to maintain hold on the Chushul Valley.

As per the current agreement, both sides will cease their forward deployments in a "phased, coordinated and verified manner" and will move back to their permanent bases. "A similar action would be taken in the south bank area by both sides," the Indian Defence Minister said.

"These are mutual and reciprocal steps and any structures that had been built by both sides since April 2020 in both north and south bank area will be removed and the landforms will be restored." The PLA

has built extensive defences between Finger 8 and Finger 4 and also mounted gun positions on the ridgelines of Finger 4, overlooking Indian positions.

The Army gained tactical advantage over the PLA on the south bank in August by occupying several peaks lying vacant since 1962, gaining a dominating view of the Moldo area. On the north bank too, Indian troops set up posts facing PLA positions on Finger 4. Both sides are now in the process of clearing these positions, and the process is being jointly monitored. Last September, shots were fired in the air on the south bank, the first time since 1975 on the LAC.

Both sides have also been agreed to a "temporary moratorium" on military activities on the north bank, including patrolling to the traditional areas, which will be resumed only when an agreement is reached in diplomatic and military talks between the two countries.

While Pangong has emerged as the focal point of the stand-off, the disengagement here is the first step in a long process.

The Defence Ministry said that Mr. Singh's statement had also made it clear that there are outstanding problems to be addressed, including at "Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang". The outstanding issues are to be taken up within 48 hours of the completion of the Pangong Tso disengagement, it said.

CLUBHOUSE

The new network on the block

The voice-based app, started last year, already has 2 mn users and is worth \$1 bn

SIRRAM SRINIVASAN

It is being touted as the next big thing in social media. It is yet to turn one, having launched last March just as the world was going into a pandemic-induced lockdown, but already has 2 million users and is reportedly worth \$1 billion. It is funded by one of the most prominent venture capital firms in the world, Andreessen Horowitz. And, it is being promoted by the biggies of Silicon Valley.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

At a time when much of the social media conversation is driven by pithy text updates, filtered photos, snappy videos, and memes, the San Francisco-based Clubhouse app is centred around people talking real-time, no cameras on. "Voice is so universal but in the world of social networking, it's relatively new," Paul Davison, Clubhouse's co-founder, told CNBC recently.

The Defence Ministry said that Mr. Singh's statement had also made it clear that there are outstanding problems to be addressed, including at "Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang". The outstanding issues are to be taken up within 48 hours of the completion of the Pangong Tso disengagement, it said.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

At a time when much of the social media conversation is driven by pithy text updates, filtered photos, snappy videos, and memes, the San Francisco-based Clubhouse app is centred around people talking real-time, no cameras on. "Voice is so universal but in the world of social networking, it's relatively new," Paul Davison, Clubhouse's co-founder, told CNBC recently.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "a new type of network based on voice", has generated a lot of buzz in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Tesla founder Elon Musk made his debut on the platform. And this week, China blocked Clubhouse but not before a rare few days of uncensored conversations on topics it considers touchy.

Clubhouse, the app that describes itself as "

Rohit puts his stamp of authority as India thrives on day one

On a pitch assisting the spinners, the opener's 161 and his 162-run partnership with Rahane power the home team to 300 for six; Axar makes his debut

ENGLAND IN INDIA

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

You could see puffs of dust from a first-day pitch. The top soil appeared loose. Batting was demanding.

But then, gifted batsmen make their own rules. And the surface becomes seemingly easy. Rohit Sharma is one such player.

When timing combines with dexterous wrists, an attacking mindset, and audacious front-footed batsmanship, you get Rohit. He innovates and creates.

Brutal batting

Rohit is brutal when he goes after the bowling, slicing open the gaps, altering lengths, scattering the field and changing the bowlers' mindset from picking wickets to arresting the flow of runs.

Just consider this. When players walked off for lunch – it was a crucial toss for the host to win – on the opening day of the second Test at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium on Saturday, India was 106 for three.

Out of this, the dominant Rohit was unbeaten on a roll,



Sweeping success: Rohit Sharma was completely at ease as he scattered the England bowling around. ■ SPORTZPICS/BCCI

licking 80 showcasing the extent of his influence.

And India finished the day on 300 for six with opener Rohit conjuring 161, his seventh Test hundred.

Rishabh Pant, playing with typical bravado, was batting on 33 at stumps. Just before close, Joe Root accounted for R. Ashwin with extra bounce. The mode of dismissal would

have pleased India.

Earlier, Rohit, the marauder from Mumbai, inflicted considerable damage on England before sweeping left-arm Jack Leach into deep square-leg's hands.

Someone with a measured back-lift, Rohit launched into the new ball with a cover-drive and a straight hit off Stuart Broad. And the goodly

crowd roared.

When the ball was short, Rohit cut or pulled. And anything on his leg was whipped ruthlessly.

He used his feet to spinners. Rohit has this rare ability to change the direction of his shot with his flexible wrists to fire the ball through the gaps. Setting fields for him becomes hard.

If Rohit was dominant with the front foot, we saw some delicate shots off the back foot from Ajinkya Rahane. The Indian vice-captain was in need of runs and he responded with a fine 67, adding 162 runs for the fourth wicket with Rohit.

The manner Rahane travels back, shortens length, creates room and scores runs past or behind point is about quality.

Stone is an interesting bowler. He has a nice load-up, a quick-arm action and a good release. But then, the Englishmen should have attacked the stumps more.



Statosphere

1 Rohit has become the first player to score hundreds in each of the three formats against four different countries – Sri Lanka, West Indies, South Africa and England. No other player has done it against more than two opponents

4 Rohit registered the fourth fastest Test fifty (47b) by an Indian opener against England

32b (Chennai, 2008) **39b** (Mohali, 2016) **45b** (Ahmedabad, 2012)

7 Number of Test centuries for Rohit. He is the fourth Indian to score at least 400 hundreds in international cricket after Sachin Tendulkar (100), Virat Kohli (70) and Rahul Dravid (48)

11 Number of Test ducks for Kohli after Saturday's dismissal. Moeen Ali has become the first spinner to dismiss the Indian captain for zero

SCOREBOARD

INDIA – 1ST INNINGS
Rohit Sharma c Moeen b Leach 161 (231b, 18x4, 2x6), Shubman Gill lbw b Stone 0 (3b), Cheteshwar Pujara c Stokes b Leach 21 (58b, 2x4), Virat Kohli b Moeen 0 (5b), Ajinkya Rahane b Moeen 67 (149b, 9x4), Rishabh Pant (batting) 33 (56b, 5x4, 1x6), R. Ashwin c Pope b Root 13 (7b, 1x4), Axar Patel (batting) 5 (7b, 1x4); Total (for six wkts. in 88 overs): 300.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-0 (Gill, 1.3 overs), 2-85 (Pujara, 20.2), 3-86 (Kohli, 21.2), 4-248 (Rohit, 72.6), 5-249 (Rahane, 75.2), 6-284 (Ashwin, 82.3).

ENGLAND BOWLING
Broad 11-2-37-0, Stone 15-5-42-1, Leach 26-2-78-2, Stokes 2-0-16-0, Moeen 26-3-112-2, Root 8-2-15-1.

Toss: India.

ii. However, Moeen lacked consistency.

Earlier, the impressive Leach got a delivery to drift into Cheteshwar Pujara and then turn away to find the edge. India – which rested Jasprit Bumrah, included Mohammed Siraj and gave a Test cap to Axar Patel – has a distinct advantage going into the second day.

Have to be proactive on turning tracks, says Rohit

Opener offers an insight into his decision to employ the sweep and the preparation involved

S. DIPAK RAGAV

CHENNAI

Joe Root had highlighted the effectiveness of the sweep shot in Sri Lanka and in the previous Test here when he made a double century.

On Saturday, Rohit Sharma, who struck a brilliant 161, said he had decided to employ the sweep against England because of the assistance on offer for the spinners.

"When you play on turning pitches, you have got to be proactive. You cannot be reactive. We wanted to make sure we used our feet a lot more and made sure we swept the ball," said Rohit on the adjustments he made to his game.

"Getting on top of the bowler and making sure you

are ahead of him was very crucial. The preparation helped. We knew how the pitch was prepared and it was going to turn. We had a few good training sessions before the game and practised according to what we were going to expect in the middle," he added.

Elaborating on his decision to sweep, Rohit said, "Moeen [Ali] was trying to bowl in the rough outside the off-stump. So there was very little chance of being out lbw when you are sweeping from outside off."

Safe area

"With two fielders on the boundary line, even if I top-edged it, I knew it was going to land in a safe area. Against Leach, I wanted to make sure I played with an angled bat with the turn."

In the first session, the opener was in sublime touch, scoring 80 of the 106 India made. "When you play on a pitch like that which might do something every ball, you have to look to score runs by rotating the strike and using your feet," said Rohit on his brisk pace of scoring.

Commenting on the state

of the match, Rohit said 350 will be a good first-innings total. "It is going to start turning more as the days go by. We still have four wickets in hand and if [Rishabh] Pant and Axar [Patel] can get as many as possible tomorrow [Sunday] that would be good as there are already rough patches on the pitch."



Gone! Kohli is bowled by a Moeen beauty. ■ SPORTZPICS/BCCI

The fans are back!



Ready to cheer: Enthusiastic supporters returned to action as the second Test between India and England began in Chennai on Saturday. ■ R. RAGU

Barmy Army finds voice in Chennai

S. DIPAK RAGAV

CHENNAI

The opening day of the second Test marked the return of fans at a stadium in India for the first time in over a year.

While India had played before a crowd in Australia, for England it was the first time in front of an audience in over a year.

However, amid a largely partisan crowd, there was a pocket of support for the visitors, with a contingent of six from the Barmy Army – the England cricket team's official fan club – present at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium on Saturday.

Joe Phelan, an expat from England living in Delhi, said, "I am part of the Barmy Army and the six of us are the Barmy Army for this Test match, making as much



Fans' day out: The Barmy Army made its presence felt at the MAC Stadium on Saturday. ■ S. DIPAK RAGAV

noise as possible. There are four from England, one Australian and one American."

First visit

For Matthew Christensen, an American engineer from Delhi, it is his first visit to a cricket match and he had read up

on the game before shifting to India. "When I moved, learning cricket was easier than learning Hindi for me as it is the language of the country to connect with the people here."

In Sri Lanka, a Barmy Army fan named Rob Lewis is

came a sensation as the lone English supporter atop the Galle Fort. His efforts were appreciated by the English players with skipper Joe Root even talking to him over the phone from the ground.

Though Lewis couldn't make it here, the six Barmy Army fans have his image from top of the fort on their t-shirts.

Phelan said, "We would love to meet the England players, but with the COVID protocols, it is hard to do so. The players know we are here and we were able to get the attention of Moeen Ali and Jack Leach today. People are braving cold weather in England and a hard lockdown. They are seeing the sunshine in India and hoping that numbers can come down and some normalcy can return."

The Axar file



Age: 27 | Place of birth: Anand, Gujarat

Major teams: India, Gujarat, Kings XI Punjab, Delhi Capitals

	M	Inns	Runs	HS	Avg.	SR	50s	100s
ODIs	38	20	181	38	12.92	95.26	0	0
T20Is	11	7	68	20*	17.00	125.92	0	0
First Class	39	55	1665	110*	35.42	62.54	13	1
List A	133	92	2036	98*	30.38	97.04	9	0
T20s	151	114	1695	70*	21.73	130.58	2	0
IPL	97	72	913	44	18.26	127.69	0	0

	M	Inns	Wkts.	BBI	Avg.	Econ.	SR	5W
ODIs	38	35	45	3/34	31.31	4.43	42.4	0
T20Is	11	11	9	3/17	29.44	6.79	26.0	0
First Class	39	68	134	7/54	27.38	2.50	65.4	6
List A	133	128	169	6/43	29.12	4.26	40.9	1
T20s	151	150	127	4/21	28.68	6.83	25.1	0
IPL	97	96	80	4/21	30.70	7.30	25.2	0

In the 2020 edition, he took nine wickets (15 innings) and scored 117 runs (nine innings) for DC Was in the Mumbai Indians (2013) squad



Jack Leach. ■ SPORTZPICS/BCCI

Bangladesh concedes big lead but hits back

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DHAKA

Bangladesh's spinners shared the early wickets to stop West Indies taking complete control of the second and final Test on Saturday.

West Indies was 41 for three in its second innings at stumps on day three for a lead of 154 runs. Nkrumah Bonner (8) and night-watchman Jomel Warriican (2) were at the crease.

The scores: West Indies 409 & 41/3 vs Bangladesh 296 in 96.5 overs (Tamim Iqbal 44, Mushfiqur Rahim 54, Liton Das 71, Mehidy Hasan 57, Shannon Gabriel 3/70, Rahkeem Cornwall 5/74).

South Africa pulls level with easy win

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LAHORE

South Africa beat Pakistan by six wickets in the second T20I on Saturday, levelling the three-match series at 1-1.

Pite van Biljon and Reeza Hendricks both scored 42 as South Africa chased down a modest 145-4 run target in just 16.2 overs.

Fast bowler Dwaine Pretorius took five for 17.

The scores: Pakistan 144/7 in 20 overs (Mohammad Rizwan 51, Dwaine Pretorius 5/17) lost to South Africa 145/4 in 16.2 overs (Pite van Biljon 42, Reeza Hendricks 42).

Nadal overcomes injury concerns and Norrie

Barty keeps Aussie hopes on track with easy win; racquet-smashing Pliskova falls to Muchova; Bopanna also bows out

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

Rafael Nadal stayed on course for a record 21st Grand Slam title at a fan-free Australian Open on Saturday as Ashleigh Barty gave locked-down Melbourne something to cheer.

As Victoria State went into a snap, five-day lockdown to curb a coronavirus outbreak, Daniil Medvedev, Stefanos Tsitsipas and Andrey Rublev all reached the last 16 at an eerily empty Melbourne Park.

But World No. 1 Novak Djokovic, the defending champion and holder of a record eight Australian Open titles, faced a race to be fit for his third-round clash on Sunday.

The loss of Djokovic, 33, would be another blow for the tournament, reducing the men's 'Big Three' to just one – Nadal – with Roger Federer already sidelined by injury.

Nadal, who has his own injury concerns with a stiff lower back, faced down his toughest test so far with a 7-5, 6-2, 7-5 win over British leftie Cameron Norrie.

Barty, the women's top seed, also said it was "very strange" to play behind closed doors, a day after more than 22,000 fans visited Melbourne Park.

Barty's straightforward 6-2, 6-4 win over Russia's Ekaterina Alexandrova put her into the fourth round without dropping a set as she bids to become the first Australian winner since Chris

O'Neil in 1978.

Into a bubble

Players were ordered into a obscure "bubble" during the lockdown, just the latest coronavirus disruption for a tournament that was pushed back three weeks to allow for quarantines.

As play unfolded in the empty arenas, former World No. 1 Karolina Pliskova had a racquet-smashing tantrum en route to a 7-5, 7-5 defeat by fellow Czech Karolina Muchova.

"It's a different atmosphere, different vibe," said

Greek World No. 6 Tsitsipas, after his 6-4, 6-1, 6-1 win over Mikael Ymer.

Tsitsipas beat Ymer in a silent John Cain Arena – which had been packed with thousands of noisy fans late on Friday for Australian player Nick Kyrgios' defeat by Dominic Thiem.

Indian campaign ends

Meanwhile, Rohan Bopanna and his Chinese partner Yingying Duan lost 4-6, 4-6 to American Bethanie Mattek-Sands and UK's Jamie Murray.

THE RESULTS

Men (third round): 7-Andre Rublev (Rus) bt Feliciano Lopez (Esp) 7-5, 6-2, 6-3.
24-Casper Ruud (Nor) bt Radu Albot (Mda) 6-1, 5-7, 6-4, 6-4; Mackenzie McDonald (USA) bt Lloyd Harris (RSA) 7-6(7), 6-1, 6-4; 4-Daniil Medvedev (Rus) bt 28-Filip Krajinovic (Srb) 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 3-6, 6-0; 5-Stefanos Tsitsipas (Gre) bt Mikael Ymer (Swe) 6-4, 6-1, 6-1; 9-Matteo Berrettini (Ita) bt 19-Karen Khachanov (Rus) 7-6(1), 7-6(5), 7-6(5); 16-Fabio Fognini (Ita) bt 21-Alex De Minaur (Aus) 6-4, 6-3, 6-4; 2-Rafael Nadal (Esp) bt Cameron Norrie (Gbr) 7-5, 6-2, 7-5.

Women (third round): 1-Ashleigh Barty (Aus) bt 29-Ekaterina Alexandrova (Rus) 6-2, 6-4; Shelly Rogers (USA) bt 21-Anett Kontaveit (Est) 6-4, 6-3; 18-Elise Mertens (Bel) bt 11-Belinda Bencic (Sui) 6-2, 6-1; 25-Karolina Muchova (Cze) bt 6-Karolina Pliskova (Cze) 7-5, 7-5; 28-Donna Vekic (Cro) bt Kaja Juvan (Slo) 6-1, 6-3; Jessica Pegula (USA) bt Kristina Mladenovic (Fra) 6-2, 6-1; 5-Elena Svitolina (Ukr) bt 26-Yulia Putintseva (Kaz) 6-4, 6-0.

Mixed doubles (first round): Bethanie Mattek-Sands (USA) & Jamie Murray (Gbr) bt Rohan Bopanna (Ind) & Yingying Duan (Chn) lost 6-4, 6-4.

Pliskova (Cze) 7-5, 7-5; 28-Donna Vekic (Cro) bt Kaja Juvan (Slo) 6-1, 6-3; Jessica Pegula (USA) bt Kristina Mladenovic (Fra) 6-2, 6-1; 5-Elena Svitolina (Ukr) bt 26-Yulia Putintseva (Kaz) 6-4, 6-0.

Mixed doubles (first round): Bethanie Mattek-Sands (USA) & Jamie Murray (Gbr) bt Rohan Bopanna (Ind) & Yingying Duan (Chn) lost 6-4, 6-4.

The day in numbers

1 For the first time in his career, Daniil Medvedev won a five-setter, defeating Filip Krajinovic

2 Casper Ruud is only the second Norwegian to reach Round 4 of a Slam, the first being his father Christian Ruud at the 1997 Australian Open

4 Four American women made it to the fourth round as Rogers, Brady and Pegula joined Serena

75 Feliciano Lopez, playing in his 75th consecutive Major, the longest streak of all time, lost to Andrey Rublev

C I might watch them a little bit if the right channel is on. Otherwise I just switch to History Channel. **TSITSIPAS, WHEN ASKED IF HE PLANS TO WATCH DJOKOVIC AND NADAL IN ACTION**

C Nobody wants this, but it's time to be responsible. **NADAL, ON PLAYING WITHOUT CROWDS**

FALLEN SEEDS

MEN: 19-Khachanov | 21-de Minaur | 28-Krajinovic. **WOMEN:** 6-Pliskova | 11-Bencic | 21-Kontaveit | 26-Putintseva | 29-Alexandrova

We are very good friends, but it's a game. So I am definitely happy I made it through in two sets. **MUCHOVA, AFTER ELIMINATING SIXTH SEED PLISKOVA**

MUCHOVA, AFTER ELIMINATING SIXTH SEED PLISKOVA

49 Rafael Nadal is into the second week of a Slam for the 49th time

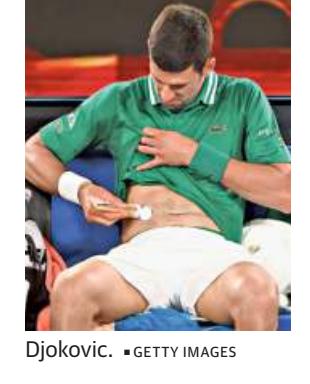
SUNDAY'S PICKS
Men: 1-Djokovic vs 14-Raonic | 3-Thiem vs 18-Dimitrov | 20-Auger-Aliassime vs Karatsev
Women: 2-Halep vs 15-Swiatek | 3-Osaka vs 14-Muguruza | 7-Sabalenka vs 10-Serenia

Djokovic opts for rest

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MELBOURNE

Novak Djokovic skipped practice on Saturday. With his title defence in doubt because of a side muscle issue, at least he'll get the maximum possible rest before having to play: he is scheduled to face 2016 Wimbledon runner-up Milos Raonic in the last match on Sunday.

Djokovic showed up at Melbourne Park on Saturday but did not swing a racquet. He planned to have medical tests done to "understand what's really going on" after hurting himself while losing his footing.



Djokovic. ■ GETTY IMAGES

India claims four more gold medals



Spearing success: Sandeep Chaudhary on his way to the gold in the javelin (F44) category. ■ FAZZA LOC MEDIA

Sandeep, Priyanka qualify for Tokyo

Both win 20km walk with National records at Ranchi

RACE WALKING

**UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI**

Four years ago, Sandeep Kumar stamped his dominance in the 50km race walk with a National record that still stands.

On Saturday, the 34-year-old added the 20km to his kitty, winning the 8th National/4th International race walking championships in Ranchi with a new National record that also saw him qualify for the Tokyo Olympics and the World Championships next year.

Second-placed Rahul, who finished in 1:20:26, also qualified for Olympics and Worlds. The qualification time for both events for men is 1:21:00. Irfan, who has already qualified for the Olympics, did not finish the race.

Among women, 24-year-old Priyanka Goswami from Uttar Pradesh also set a National record and qualified for both Olympics and the Worlds with a timing of 1:28:45s, more than a minute quicker than erstwhile holder and runner-up here Bhawana Jat.

Bhawana, already qualified for Tokyo, finished in 1:32:59.

The results: Men 20km: 1. Sandeep Kumar (Har) 1:20:16; 2. Rahul (Har) 1:20:26; 3. Hardeep (Har) 1:24:41.

Women 20km: 1. Priyanka Goswami (UP) 1:28:45; 2. Bhawana Jat (Raj) 1:32:59; 3. Sonal Sukhwal (Raj) 1:36:05.

Punjab FC downs Chennai City FC

Gokulam Kerala outplays TRAU, now closer to top-six finish

I-LEAGUE

**SPORTS BUREAU
KOLKATA**

RoundGlass Punjab FC produced a goal in each half to down Chennai City FC 2-0 in the I-League at the Kalyani Municipal Stadium on Saturday.

Papa Babacar Diawara found the target late in the first half before Rupert Nongrum came in as a substitute to double the lead for Punjab FC.

The victory helped it move to the top with 14 points from eight outings.



Benny. ■@GOKULAMKERALAFC

went in the hunt early as Chennai City was forced to substitute dependable midfielder Mohamed Iqbal owing to an injury in the 10th minute.

In another match at the Kishore Bharati Stadium, Gokulam Kerala FC outplayed TRAU FC 3-1 to better its chances of finishing among the top-six.

The results:

TRAU 1 (Komron Tursunov 87) lost to Gokulam Kerala 3 (Emil Benny 16, Sharif Mohamad 57, Zodingiana Ralte 86).

Punjab FC 2 (Papa Babacar Diawara 43, Rupert Nongrum 88) bt Chennai City 0.

Liverpool in freefall

Leicester leapfrogs to second

EURO LEAGUES

**AGENCIES
LEICESTER**

Slumping champion Liverpool fell to a third straight loss in the Premier League after a dramatic late collapse against Leicester, conceding three goals in seven minutes in a 3-1 defeat at King Power Stadium on Saturday.

Leading 1-0 through Mohamed Salah's league-high 17th goal of the season, Liverpool was pegged back in the 78th when James Maddison's low free kick crept in and then went behind after another blunder by goalkeeper Alisson Becker.

Harvey Barnes then capped Leicester's stunning fightback. Fourth-place Liverpool dropped six points behind Leicester, which climbed above Manchester United into second place.

LaLiga leader Atletico Madrid overcame conceding a second-half equaliser



Blunder punished: Jamie Vardy, right, capitalises on another Alisson howler to put Leicester ahead. ■ AP

TV PICKS

India vs England: 2nd Test, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 9:15 a.m.

Pakistan vs South Africa: 3rd T20I, Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 6:30 p.m.

Australian Open: Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 5:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.; Sony Ten 3 (SD & HD), 1:30 p.m.

Premier League: Star Sports 3 (SD & HD), 10 p.m.; SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 5:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m., 10 p.m. & 12:30 a.m. (Monday)

LaLiga: Granada 1 (Herrera 66) lost to Atletico 2 (Llorente 63, Correa 74).

Serie A: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 10:30 p.m. & 1:15 a.m. (Monday)

ISL: Star Sports 1, 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 5 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

PGA Tour: Eurosport (SD & HD), 1:30 a.m. (Monday).

Goa shares points with last-gasp effort

SPORTS BUREAU
Chennaiyin FC's inability to hold on to an advantage came to the fore again as FC Goa fought back in style to hold the former champion to a 2-2 draw in an Indian Super League (ISL) match at the GMC Stadium, Bambolim, on Saturday.

Goa improved its chances of making it to the playoffs, moving to the third position with 24 points, while Chennaiyin remained in eighth place with 18 points.

Pandita to the rescue

After his superb show at the death against Mumbai City FC the other day, super-sub Ishan Pandita did the star turn again for Goa by scoring in the nick of time to hold the two-time champion.

The result: Chennaiyin 2 (Jakkub Sylvestr 13, Lallianzuala Chhangte 60) drew with FC Goa 2 (Igor Angulo 19-pen, Ishan Pandita 90).

Sunday's matches: NorthEast United FC v Odisha FC, 5 p.m.; ATK Mohun Bagan v Jamshedpur FC, 7:30 p.m.

Sixth straight win for Jazz

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LOS ANGELES**

Rudy Gobert and Joe Ingles scored 27 points each as league-leading Utah Jazz beat Milwaukee Bucks 129-115 in the NBA on Friday.

The results: Boston Celtics 102 lost to Detroit Pistons 108; Atlanta Hawks 112 lost to San Antonio Spurs 125; LA Lakers 115 bt Memphis Grizzlies 105; Portland Trail Blazers 129 bt Cleveland Cavaliers 110; Sacramento Kings 112 lost to the Golden State Warriors 108; Denver Nuggets 97 bt Oklahoma City Thunder 95; Utah Jazz 129 bt Milwaukee Bucks 115; Chicago Bulls 106 lost to LA Clippers 125; Charlotte Hornets 120 bt Minnesota Timberwolves 114; Washington Wizards 91 lost to New York Knicks 109; Dallas Mavericks 143 bt New Orleans Pelicans 130.

Carlsen to play So in final

RACING

It's Lombardy vs. Ashwa Bravo in Derby Stakes

**RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI**
Magnus Carlsen's inconsistency returned to haunt him before he managed to beat Maxime Vachier-Lagrave in the deciding Armageddon game and move into the final of the \$100,000 Opera Euro rapid online chess tournament on Friday.

After two drawn rapid games in the second set, Vachier delivered back-to-back blows to force the tie-breaker. In the blitz games, both won from the white side. In the Armageddon, Carlsen played white and won in 40 moves.

In the final, Carlsen will take on Wesley So.

Having won the first set, So needed only two points from the best-of

Russian track president steps aside

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW

The Russian track federation's president stepped aside on Saturday after taking a job with a government agency, bringing more leadership churn to a body which is already suspended from World Athletics over doping.

The federation, known as RusAF, said that Pyotr Ivanov would officially remain president but relinquish his authority until December 2022. That's when restrictions imposed on Russian sports by a Court of Arbitration for Sport ruling expire.

Irina Privalova, gold medallist in the 400m hurdles at the 2000 Olympics, will take temporary charge at RusAF.

The CAS ruling blocks Russian government representatives from sitting on the boards of a range of sports bodies. The Russian cabinet appointed Ivanov as deputy director of a government anti-trust body last month, one month after the CAS ruling.

I can change like the wind: Kyrgios

The Australian says he is in no rush to play again this year

TENNIS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

Big-ticket Australian Nick Kyrgios cast doubt over how much he will play this year, maintaining he doesn't miss tennis and will not "force myself around the world" while COVID-19 continues to rage.

The volatile 25-year-old missed virtually the entire 2020 season through injury and COVID-19 fears but returned for the opening Grand Slam of the year and lit up the tournament.

Poor shot choices

He played two epic five-setters in heaving arenas before a heartbreaking loss to third seed Dominic Thiem on Friday, throwing away a two-set lead as the ice-cool Austrian pounced on poor shot choices from the 25-year-old.

"I don't know, man. I can change like the wind," Kyrgios said about his plans. "Depending on what happens with COVID-19 in Australia, you know. For me personally, I'm used to playing



Blithe spirit: Kyrgios says he is not going to force himself around the world when the time is not right. • AP

in front of packed stadiums.

"I'm not gonna force myself around the world when the time is not right where I have to quarantine for a week and then play. I don't particularly care, either."

Any Kyrgios absence will be a blow for the ATP Tour,

with the polarising Australian showman a major drawcard, despite only being ranked 47.

Igniting the Open

He ignited the pandemic-hit Australian Open when saving match points in his five-

set epic against Frenchman Ugo Humbert on the third day.

He again pulled in the punters on Friday to create a rollicking party atmosphere against Thiem, one of the last matches before fans were shut out after Melbourne went into new five-day lockdown.

Amazed

Kyrgios said he was amazed his body had held up so well and was proud of himself.

"You know, I took 13 months away from the game, and to produce that level and go toe-to-toe with one of the best players in the world, I'm pretty proud," he said.

"I left it all out there. I actually physically felt pretty good... couple points in it. I'm not disappointed at all."

Despite the loss, Kyrgios said he was at the stage of his career where he didn't plan to dwell on it, with his time away from the sport reinforcing that there was more to life than tennis.

"As I said, I haven't missed the sport at all. I don't miss much about it," he said.

Silence of the fans



Eerie emptiness: After five days of bustling activity in the stands, players struggled to adjust to the 'strange atmosphere' at the Australian Open in Melbourne on Saturday. • GETTY IMAGES

Aman claims second straight title

SPORTS BUREAU
KATHMANDU

Second seed Aman Dahiya defeated top seed Nishant Dabas 6-2, 6-4 to clinch his second successive singles title in the ITF grade-4 junior tennis tournament here on Saturday.

Aman who trains at the Altevol Academy in Ahmedabad, did not drop a set in two weeks while winning his 10 singles matches.

In the doubles final, Aman and Nishant lost 10-7 in the super tie-break to Anargha Ganguly and Karan Singh.

The results:

Boys (final): Aman Dahiya bt Nishant Dabas 6-2, 6-4; **Semi-finals:** Nishant bt Yuvan Nandal 6-2, 6-2; Aman bt Tomas Que-sada Perez (Esp) 6-3, 6-0.

Doubles (final): Anargha Ganguly & Karan Singh bt Nishant & Aman 3-6, 6-3, [10-7].



Aman Dahiya

Bielsa testifies before French court

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LILLE (FRANCE)

Leeds manager Marcelo Bielsa testified before a French court on Friday to make his case for millions of euros in damages over his firing from Lille more than three years ago.

Bielsa lasted just six months at Lille before the French club fired him for "serious misconduct" in December 2017 following poor results.

French media has widely reported that Bielsa is seeking €19 million for damages

and the remainder of the two-year contract that he had.

Bielsa told the court, via videoconference, that he was subjected to "harassment" in the months before he was fired, according to *La Voix du Nord* newspaper.

A decision is expected on July 2. The club has previously described Bielsa's claims as "totally baseless."

Bielsa spent six years leading Argentina, which included Olympic gold in 2004, and four years with Chile.

Bold Spieth pulls ahead on a day of Pacific breeze

Shoots a five-under 67 to take a one-shot lead; Berger in second spot and Norlander third



Swinging away: Spieth was in fine form and had a lone bogey in the second round. • AFP

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PEBBLE BEACH (USA)

Jordan Spieth took on a bold tee shot and pulled it off perfectly to set up birdie. He hit a poor 3-wood that went off a tree and back into the fairway that led to another.

Whether it's good golf or good breaks, it's making him feel a lot better about his game at the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am. He shot a 5-under 67 at Spyglass Hill on Friday for a one-shot lead over Daniel Berger going into the weekend.

"I like where things are

at," Spieth said, referring to more than his name atop the leaderboard on the weekend for the second straight week.

There was a 45-foot birdie putt he holed on the tough par-3 fifth. He also missed a few inside 10 feet, and his lone bogey was a three-putt from seven feet on the par-5 first after he made the turn. Spieth was at 12-under 132, his first 36-hole lead since Birkdale.

Berger shot a 66 at Pebble Beach by going 2-3-2 along the ocean on a day filled with sunshine and a Pacific

breeze. He holed 15-foot birdie putts on the par-3 fifth and par-3 seventh, and in between chipped in for eagle from about 20 feet on the par-5 sixth. Henrik Norlander had a 70 and was 10-under, while the group at 9-under 135 included Patrick Cantlay, whose record-tying 62 at Pebble Beach on Thursday was quickly forgotten.

Top scores: 132 (65-67) Jordan Spieth; 133 (67-66) Daniel Berger; 134 (64-70) Henrik Norlander; 135 (62-73) Patrick Cantlay; Tom Lewis (66-69), Paul Casey (68-67).

Tejaswani on top

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Tejaswani of Haryana topped the women's 25-metre rapid fire pistol event with a score of 551 in the third National shooting selection trials at the Dr. Karan Singh Range on Saturday.

She was comfortably ahead of Niveditha Nair (TN) and Neeraj Kaur (BSF) in a field which had Anisa Sayeed, Abhidnya Patil and Annu Raj Singh.

The results: **Women: 25m rapid fire pistol:** 1. Tejaswani 551; 2. Niveditha Nair 538; 3. Neeraj Kaur 534.

MARUTI SUZUKI

PEOPLE TECHNOLOGY IS THE EVERYDAY REIMAGINED.

At Maruti Suzuki, we focus on relevant solutions that enhance the everyday lives of real people.

We don't just make cars, we design People Technology.

EXPERIENCE MARUTI SUZUKI TECHNOLOGIES

- SUZUKI CONNECT ➤ SMART HYBRID ➤ SMARTPLAY STUDIO
- K-SERIES ENGINE ➤ AUTO GEAR SHIFT ➤ HEARTECT ➤ S-CNG



TO KNOW
MORE, SCAN:



OR VISIT
www.marutisuzuki.com

Terms and Conditions apply. Features and accessories shown may not be part of the standard fitment. Black Glass Shade on the vehicle is due to lighting effect. Images used are for illustration purposes only.