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by
Mr. Vibhas Jha

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Suvendu Adhikari quits
West Bengal Cabinet
page 9



Trump says he will
leave office if Biden
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over 100 mn Sputnik V
vaccine doses in India
page 12



Smith, Finch shine as
Australia outplays
India in first ODI
page 13

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NEARBY



DTC nod for procuring
1,250 low-floor buses

NEW DELHI
The Delhi Transport Corporation Board on Friday approved a proposal to procure 1,250 BS-VI compliant CNG low-floor buses. After induction, DTC's total fleet size will reach an all time high of 7,851. The board meeting was chaired by Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

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Farmers stay camped on Delhi border

After tense clashes with the police, who used tear gas and water cannons, barricades were opened

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
ASHOK KUMAR
NEW DELHI

Tens of thousands of farmers were still camped on the Delhi-Haryana border on Friday night on their way to the national capital for a protest against the Centre's three new farm laws.

After a morning of tense clashes with the police, who used tear gas and water cannons in an effort to disperse the crowd, the barricades were opened in the early afternoon, and farmers invited to enter the city limits and be escorted to a designated protest site in Burari.

By evening, however, most farmer groups had decided to stay put at the various border crossings overnight, and take a decision by Saturday morning on whether to head



No stopping them: Police blocking farmers at Tikri near New Delhi on Friday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

to the Burari grounds or demand a more visible and high-profile protest location.

The farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, have mobilised under the Samyukt Kisan Morcha banner for this 'Dilli Chalo' agitation.

They are demanding a repeal of three agricultural marketing reform laws, which they fear will affect the system of government procurement of crops at minimum support prices. They also want the Elec-

tricity Bill, 2020, which could remove free power for farmers, to be withdrawn.

On Friday, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar reiterated that the farm laws would create opportunities for farmers. He pleaded with

More Punjab farmers plan to reach Delhi

Hundreds of Punjab's farmers started gathering at Amritsar's 'Golden Gate' on Friday with a resolve to reach New Delhi. They said their battle had just begun and the Union government should not be under the impression that it would be over soon. ▶ PAGE 9

them to end their agitation in the light of the winter chill and the COVID-19 pandemic, and instead accept the invitation for talks on December 3.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

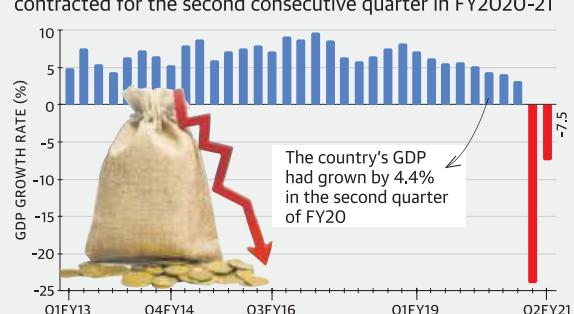
SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 2

GDP contracts 7.5% in second quarter

Country enters technical recession

Still in the red

At -7.5%, India's Gross Domestic Product at constant prices contracted for the second consecutive quarter in FY2020-21



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contracted 7.5% in the second quarter of 2020-21, following the record 23.9% decline recorded in the first quarter, as per estimates released by the National Statistical Office on Friday. The country has now entered a technical recession with two successive quarters of negative growth.

However, the economy's performance between July and September when lockdown restrictions were eased is better than most rating agencies and analysts anticipated. While most estimated a contraction of around 10%, the Reserve Bank of India projected a 8.6% decline in the second quarter. Agriculture, which was the only sector to record growth between April and June this year, grew at the same pace of 3.4% in the second quarter, while manufacturing gross value-added (GVA) staged a sharp recovery to record 0.6% growth between July and September after collapsing 39.3% in the first quarter.

Electricity, gas and other utility services saw 4.4% growth in the second quar-

ter from a 7% contraction in Q1. But it remained bleak for several sectors, including mining, services such as retail trade and hotels, and construction.

'Cautiously optimistic'
"We should be cautiously optimistic as the economic impact is primarily due to the pandemic and the sustainability of the recovery depends critically on the spread of the pandemic," said Chief Economic Adviser Krishnamurthy Subramanian.

"The government remains ready to come up with calibrated responses," said Mr. Subramanian, stressing that there could be neither too much exuberance nor excessive pessimism at this point. Citing the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, Mr. Subramanian said the 'V-shaped recovery' should continue but it is difficult to be sure about positive growth returning in the remaining two quarters of this year. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had earlier suggested that the economy could record near zero growth in 2020-21.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8
CORE SECTOR WOES ▶ PAGE 12

Protect right of ordinary people to bail, SC tells judges

'Those without
means languishing
as undertrials'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday gave a clarion call to judges to protect personal liberty and the right of ordinary people to bail, saying "liberty is not a gift for the few".

Common citizens without the means or resources

to move the High Courts or the Supreme Court were languishing in jails as undertrials, the Supreme Court reminded.

"Deprivation of liberty even for a single day is one day too many," a Bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and Indu Malhotra declared in a 55-page order pronounced on Friday.

On the top court's recent decision to grant bail to Republic TV Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami in an abetment to suicide case, the judgment said that prima facie, the FIR against Mr. Goswami did not establish the charges against him.

It is through the instrumentality of bail that our criminal justice system's primordial interest in preserving the presumption of innocence finds its most eloquent expression," Justice Chandrachud, who wrote the judgment, observed.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

The State should not be allowed to use criminal law as a ruse to harass citizens, he said.

Courts were the "first line of defence" against the deprivation of citizens' personal liberty. But reality, Justice Chandrachud pointed out, showed that undertrials remained behind bars while their bail applications were lobbed from one rung of courts to another.

Five COVID-19 patients die in Rajkot ICU fire

PM, Gujarat CM condole deaths

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

Five COVID-19 patients were killed and six others injured in a fire in the intensive care unit (ICU) of a hospital in Rajkot around 1 a.m. on Friday.

The fire at Uday Shivanand Hospital at Mavdi was apparently caused by a short-circuit.

Rupani orders probe
Chief Minister Vijay Rupani expressed grief over the incident and announced ex gratia compensation to the next of kin of the deceased.

He also ordered a probe by a senior Indian Administrative Service officer into the incident.

Prime Minister Narendra

Modi condoled the deaths.

The administration was ensuring all possible assistance to those affected, said PM Modi. "Extremely pained by the loss of lives due to a hospital fire in Rajkot. My thoughts are with those who lost their loved ones in this unfortunate tragedy. Praying for a quick recovery of the injured. The administration is ensuring all possible assistance to those affected," the Prime Minister's Office tweeted.

This is the second such tragedy in Gujarat.

In August, eight COVID-19 patients were killed in a fire at a private hospital in Ahmedabad.

SC TAKES COGNISANCE ▶ PAGE 10

Centre blames Kejriwal govt. for COVID-19 surge in Delhi

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday squarely blamed the Arvind Kejriwal government for the "massive increase" in COVID-19 infection and the escalating strain on medical infrastructure in Delhi's hospitals, during a hearing in the Supreme Court.

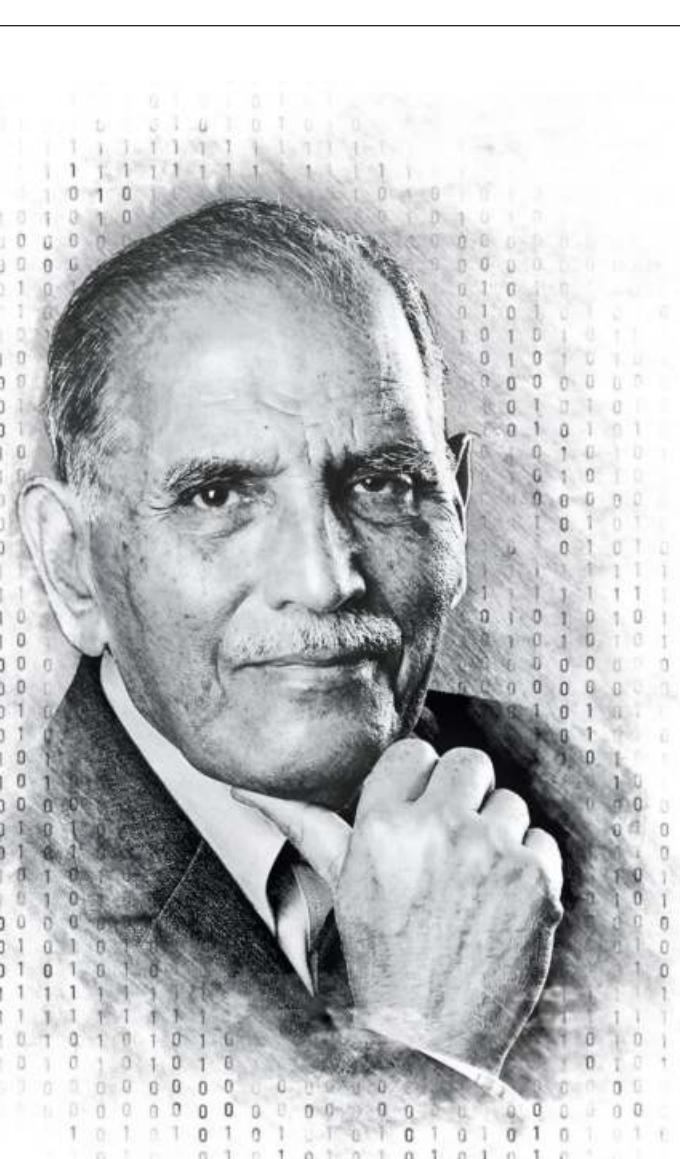
The top court agreed that "States should rise above politics and rise to the occasion".

A 170-page affidavit filed by the Ministry of Home Affairs contained a scathing testimony against the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government for not taking "effective preventive steps to contain the infection" in Delhi.

"The Delhi government was aware that the confluence of winter, festival season and pollution were likely to witness a surge in cases. This foreknowledge ought to have led to strict enforcement and IEC [information, education and communication] measures being instituted well in time. However, this was not done," the Centre informed a Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan. The Centre named Delhi as one of the 10 States that account for almost 77% of the active case-load in the country.

The court said masks and social distancing were the only preventive measures in the absence of vaccines.

SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 3



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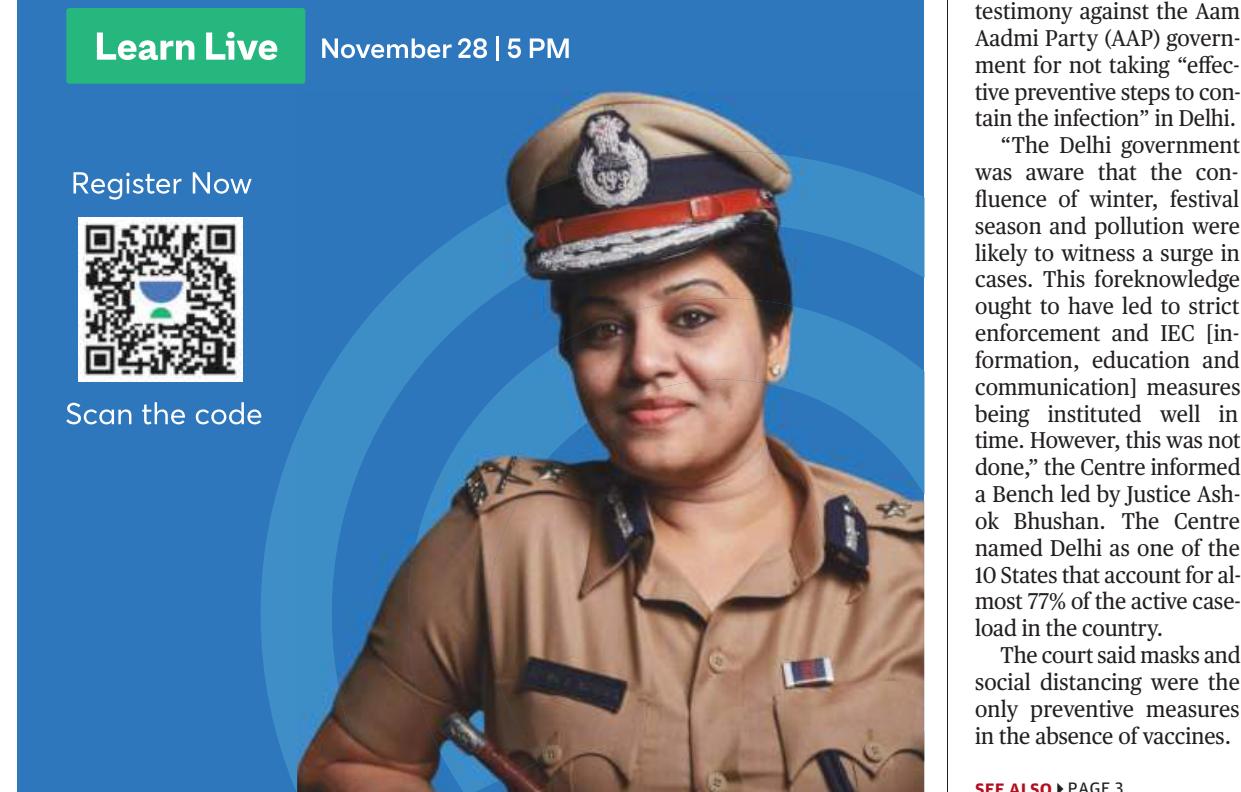
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Farmers have never been this angry with any govt. before'

Hundreds reach Tikri border in tractors and trolleys in response to 'Dilli Chalo' call

ASHOK KUMAR
BAHADURGARH

"Farmers have never been this angry with any government before. We are ready to take bullets, but won't return home till the time the three black laws are repealed. In fact, the farmers are already dead," says Mitthu Singh (52), reaching the Tikri border at the doorstep of Delhi with hundreds of farmers from Fatehabad in Haryana and parts of Punjab in tractors and trolleys on Friday in response to the call for 'Dilli Chalo' by farmers groups.

As he gears up to cook the first meal of the day with fellow farmers after a round of fierce face-off with Delhi Police, others join the conversation.

'Lost trust'

"It is the most dictatorial government. It is a government for the Ambanis and Adanis. They have sold everything – from railways to airports – to them," chips in Buta Singh, 32, also from Fatehabad. He says that people in many villages in Fatehabad had put banners outside their villages, asking political leaders not to enter. "We will groom our own people to contest elections next time," he says.



Farmers preparing lunch at the Tikri border in Delhi on Friday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Hakam Singh, 55, also part of the group, adds that his ancestors toiled hard on the land to make it fertile and they were engaged in agriculture for generations. "We cannot give our land to corporates on lease. We cannot be labourers on our own land," adds the elderly, donning a black turban with a flowing white beard.

Parked haphazardly for almost a kilometre from the Tikri border till Pandit Shree Ram Sharma metro station in Bahadurgarh and beyond, many tractors had green and red flags tied in the front bearing the names of different farmers' unions inscribed in Gurmukhi. Almost all trolleys were blanketed with tarpaulin or covers made of plastic fertiliser bags sewn together, keeping in view the falling mercury.

'Well-stocked'

To make their travel comfortable through the bumpy roads and keep themselves warm, many had their trolleys padded with rice straw before putting mattress on them. "We are carrying flour, potatoes, spices, utensils and cooking gas cylinders. A few trolleys carry woods to be used as a fuel and there is a water tanker with a capacity of around 5,000 litres," says Paramjit Pradhan, 60, adding that they could sustain

themselves for months. "I have fought for the farmers for four decades. I have been a communist," he proudly proclaims, holding a red flag. Many also carried small stairs to enable the elderly members to climb up and down the trolleys. Some cars were also part of the convoy that was first to reach Delhi.

Shringar Singh (70) says that they have been travelling for two days to reach Delhi from Moga in Punjab and broke through at least half-a-dozen barricades.

"The Haryana police tried to stop us with water cannons and tear gas. They had dug up roads, put barbed wires and parked punctured trucks to block our way. But we managed to overcome all hurdles. The Delhi police, however, were the most fierce in their attempt to stop us," says Sukhwant Singh (42).

Pyara Singh, 74, says that no one wants to leave the comfort of their home and step outside, especially at his age, but they were compelled to march to Delhi. "Agar phasal hi rul gayi toh kya bacheega [If our crops are ruined, nothing will be left]," says Pyara, summing it up.

November ferment



(Clockwise from top) Farmers and security personnel clash during a massive protest at the Tikri border on Friday; agitators push a barricade as they try to march to New Delhi; tear gas being sprayed to disperse the crowd. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA/AFP

Protesters enter Delhi after series of clashes with police

Delhi police use tear gas, water cannons to disperse them

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Farmers protesting at Delhi-Haryana borders were allowed to enter the national capital after rounds of clashes on Friday.

"After discussion with their leaders, the protesting farmers have been permitted inside Delhi to hold a peaceful protest at Nirankari ground in Burari. Delhi Police appeals to them to maintain peace," said Eish Singhal, Delhi Police PRO.

Security measures

In the morning, thousands of farmers marching towards Delhi were stopped at Tigris and Singhu border. The police had made elaborate security arrangements by placing layers of barricades and deployed water canons to stop the protesting farmers.

The Delhi police used tear gas shells to disperse a group



Clashes broke out between security personnel and farmers at the Tikri border in Delhi on Friday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

of farmers, who had reached the Singhu border, while at the Tigris border security personnel used water cannons to disperse farmers trying to enter the national capital. During the clash, three policemen sustained injuries.

Plumes of smoke were seen as security personnel used multiple rounds of tear gas to disperse the protesters in bordering areas.

In view of the march, the Delhi Police has sought permission from the AAP government to use nine stadiums as temporary jails.

Mr. Husain also said that the mosques were roped in and the group members had

and also tried to remove a truck, which was placed as a barricade, by tying it to a tractor with the help of a chain.

Drones are also being used by security personnel to keep a strict vigil on the movement of protesters in bordering areas.

Mr. Husain also said that the mosques were roped in and the group members had

Mosque, NGO come to farmers' rescue

They will provide 3 meals, essentials

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Several mosques in the Capital and United Against Hate, a campaign founded by a group, tied up to provide food to the protesting farmers at the Sant Nirankari Samagam Ground in north Delhi's Burari. This was after the Delhi Police allowed the farmers to enter the Capital and stage a peaceful protest.

Timely support

UAH members said they will provide three meals and essentials such as water. "We stand with the farmers and their demands. We eat our meals because of them and they need to be heard by the government. The least we can do is support them and feed them at this hour," said UAH member Shariq Hussain.

Mr. Husain also said that the mosques were roped in and the group members had

spoken to the Imams of significant mosques in the city, especially the ones close to protest sites, to facilitate food for the farmers before Delhi Police allowed the protest at a designated place. "We had spoken to mosques in south and central Delhi because we weren't sure if they'll be allowed to protest at a particular place. We thought the mosques will provide food wherever required," Mr. Husain said.

UAH's co-founder Khalid Saifi is lodged in jail under sections of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act registered in connection with communal riots, which broke out in the Capital in February this year.

Farmers have been protesting against the three new bills passed by the government in June and demanding guarantee of a Minimum Support Price for their produce.

AAP govt. denies permission to use stadiums as temporary jails

To protest peacefully is constitutional right of every Indian'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The AAP-led Delhi government on Friday denied permission to the Delhi police to use nine city stadiums as temporary jails to detain protesting farmers, as per an order issued by Delhi Home Minister Satyendar Jain.

The Delhi police is under the ambit of the Central government and AAP and the BJP often spar over issues related to law and order in the city.

The Delhi police had sought permission from the Delhi government to use nine stadiums as temporary jails for farmers expected to be arrested during protests, according to a senior police officer.

"The demands of farmers are justified. Putting farmers in jail is not the solution. Their protest is completely non-violent. To protest peacefully is the constitutional right of every Indian citizen. And people cannot be jailed for it. So, the Delhi government dismisses Delhi Police's request to use stadiums as jails," Mr. Jain said in the order.

Earlier in the day, before the government had announced that the request had been rejected, multiple AAP leaders attacked the BJP over the plan to detain the farmers.

"I think it's the most inhu-

man thing we can do to our farmers. Delhi Police should stop calling themselves 'Dil wali police,' AAP chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj said in a tweet.

Delhi Jal Board Vice-Chairman Raghav Chadha on Friday said that the DJB has appointed nodal officers to ensure proper supply and arrangement of drinking water for the peaceful protesters who have assembled at Burari grounds.

"All possible arrangements with respect to food and shelter have been made. In addition, every AAP MLA will take steps to help our farmers. The Arvind Kejriwal government is in support of the protesting farmers and we want to assure them that arrangements of food, shelter and drinking water shall be made for them at Nirankari grounds," Mr. Chadha said.

Farmers' stir: six stations closed on Green Line

Normal services expected on Saturday

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Friday closed entry and exit at six stations on the Green Line in view of the farmers' protests.

"Entry and exit gates of Brigadier Hoshai Singh, Bahadurgarh City, Pandit Shree Ram Sharma, Tikri Border, Tikri Kalan and Ghewra stations on the Green Line are now closed," the DMRC had said in a tweet around 10 a.m.

DMRC officials said that normal operations across all lines were resumed only after 5.30 p.m.

Earlier on Thursday, the DMRC had announced that metro services from the NCR to the Capital will remain suspended due to the agitation.

"As advised by Delhi Police, metro services will be available only from Delhi towards the NCR sections. However, services from the NCR stations towards Delhi will not be available due to security reasons till further notice," the DMRC had said in a statement.

Officials added that as of Friday evening, metro services are scheduled to operate according to normal timings on Saturday.

Majority of protesters refuse to enter Capital

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police have deployed security personnel at borders and at the protest site. Liquor shops located around border areas have been shut till further orders. Delhi government have made other arrangements like tents, washrooms and water facility at the protest site.

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4.	Date / Time of Publication of Tender on Website	01.12.2020, 17:00 Hrs
5.	Date of Pre-bid meeting	08.12.2020, 16:00 Hrs
6.	Last Date / Time of Bid Submission	22.12.2020, 17:00 Hrs
7.	Last Date / Time of Submission of Tender Fee & EMD	23.12.2020, 17:00 Hrs
8.	Date of Bid Opening	23.12.2020, 17:30 Hrs
9.	Bid Submission Address	Jharkhand Urban Infrastructure Development Company Limited, 3 rd Floor, Pragati Sadan, Kutchery Road, Ranchi - 834001 +91 651 2225878
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Delhi Palam Today
24°C Mist and haze likely during cool morning. Dry weather with light cool winds and sunny sky. Pollution level to improve.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
24°C Cold morning and pleasant day with partly cloudy sky. Pollution level may remain moderate.

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IN BRIEF

BJP to protest against 'Gupkar Gang' today

NEW DELHI

The BJP will stage a sit-in protest at Jantar Mantar against the 'Gupkar Gang' on Saturday. It will be led by former Rajya Sabha MP Vijay Goel. Mr. Goel said the protest would be against the "anti-national activities" of the Gupkar alliance.

Court grants custody parole to Jamia student

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has granted three day custody parole to Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) student Asif Iqbal Tanha, arrested in a case related to the north-east Delhi riots earlier this year, to appear in examination due in December. The parole has been granted to the student for December 4, 5 and 7 to appear in compartment/supplementary exams of BA Persian (Hons). The court also directed the jail superintendent to provide necessary assistance in terms of the teaching material for the examinations of the accused.

+ DTC approves proposal to procure 1,250 low-floor buses

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) Board on Friday approved a proposal to procure 1,250 BS-VI compliant, AC CNG propelled low-floor buses.

With the induction of these buses, the government said, the total fleet size of public-run buses in Delhi will reach an all-time high of 7,851. The board meeting of DTC was chaired by Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot.

The government said these BS-VI compliant AC buses would be equipped with state-of-the-art facilities like real-time passenger information system, CCTVs, panic buttons, GPS and other facilities, along with being differently abled friendly. Bharat Stage (BS) standards are emission standards that regulate the output of air pollutants from motor vehicles.

Currently, the DTC runs 3,762 buses and both DTC and Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System (DIMTS) together operate a fleet of 6,601 buses in the city.

In the last 2 years, 1,681 new buses had been added to Delhi's fleet, the government said. The induction of the low-floor AC buses will begin after it receives approval from the Council of Ministers.

THE HINDU
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Glaring shortcomings forced Shah to intervene, says Centre

AAP counters Home Ministry on COVID-19 measures, decries 'dirty politics'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Centre, in an affidavit submitted in the Supreme Court on Friday, stated that glaring shortcomings in the Capital on the COVID-19 front led Union Home Minister Amit Shah to call a review meeting on November 15. "While there were regular advertisements on achievements of the Delhi government, including on dengue prevention and control, no ads on COVID-appropriate behaviour were to be seen," stated the MHA affidavit.

Reacting to affidavit, AAP said it is extremely unfortunate that the Centre has chosen to play "dirty politics" at this critical hour. "The affidavit seems to have been drafted by a BJP spokesperson rather than by Union government, which is meant to work in collaboration with the States at the time of a pandemic. The affidavit is also factually incorrect," the party said. The Centre said a Ministry of Home Affairs survey held in November of 114 private hospitals in Delhi found that the observance of discharge policy and prescribed Clinical Management Protocol was "very lax," thus leading to a large number of patients not being given proper treatment. Even patients who were under home isolation were not properly traced. The Delhi government has now been asked to strictly comply with the prescribed protocols, the affidavit said.



"The report of a high-power committee headed by V.K. Paul, Member of NITI Aayog, had recommended that Delhi should plan for a surge of around 15,000 cases per day and accordingly provide for about 6,500 ICU beds. Against this recommendation, GNCTD did not take any timely measures to increase ICU beds from the present level of around 3,500, thus causing a sudden pressure to come on the health and medical infrastructure in Delhi," the affidavit said. The Centre said despite promising to increase the ICU (non-ventilator) beds by around 2,680, the Delhi Chief Minister, in a letter on November 19 to the Home Minister, expressed inability to enhance the beds by more than 912. The letter, the affidavit said, requested the Centre to create the additional 1,700 ICU beds.

AAP, however, countered that Mr. Shah had promised to provide 750 ICU beds within 72 hours in the meeting on

November 15. "Till date, only 200 beds have been provided. We hope the Centre will provide the rest of the beds soon," it said.

RT-PCR tests

One of the shortcomings listed by the Centre against the Delhi government was that despite repeated exhortations in the wake of rising COVID-19 cases, the latter had not taken steps to enhance testing capacity, particularly for RT-PCR, which remained static at 20,000-odd daily tests for a long time.

"It is only after the review meeting of Mr. Shah on November 15, that it was decided that RT-PCR tests would be enhanced to around 60,000 daily and RAT tests to around 60,000 – both by November end, thus leading to a doubling of the total tests being conducted in Delhi," the affidavit said.

(With inputs from Staff Reporter)

In a few weeks, all of the Capital can be inoculated'

Work to start in Rajiv Gandhi hospital for storage, says Jain

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

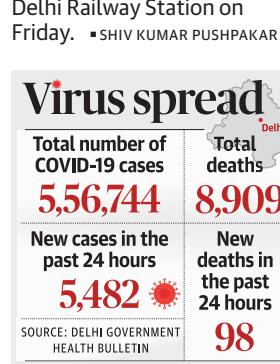
The city witnessed 5,482 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 5,56,744, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Friday.

Also, 98 more deaths have been reported in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of deaths to 8,909. Of the total cases, 5,09,654 people have recovered and there are 38,181 active cases.

Also, out of the total 18,287 beds available for COVID-19 treatment, 9,372 were vacant. There were 5,229 containment zones on Friday.

Health Minister Satyendar Jain said the entire population of Delhi can be inoculated in a "few weeks" once the government gets the vaccine.

"In Delhi, three times more testing is being done as compared to the rest of the country... We have the infrastructure and system to inoculate the entire population of Delhi in a few



Also, the positivity of the Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) has gone down from 8.39% to 2.61% and the overall positivity has fallen by 45%, he added.

The government is expected to start civil and electrical works on two floors of government-run Rajiv Gandhi Superspecialty Hospital, which will be used as a storage facility for the COVID-19 vaccine, once the vaccine is available.

"We have given the ground and first floor of the utility block to the Delhi State Health Mission (DSHM) for using it as a vaccine store. The DSHM will start civil and electrical work in one or two days. Currently, it is an empty space," said Chhavi Gupta, spokesperson of Rajiv Gandhi Hospital.

She said the DSHM had surveyed the location last month and the process has been going on for the last one to one-and-a-half months. When asked about the storage facility in Rajiv Gandhi Hospital, the Minister said there will be many storage facilities.

IGNCA may shut for 3 months to shift to temporary location

New campus to be near Jamnagar House

DAMINI NATH

NEW DELHI

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) is likely to be closed for three months as it shifts from its current location on Janpath to the Janpath Hotel while its new campus near Jamnagar House is constructed as a part of the Central Vista redevelopment, an official said.

According to the redevelopment plan, IGNCA would be demolished to make way for new government offices as a part of the proposed Common Central Secretariat. IGNCA would get a permanent home near Jamnagar House. A total of 10 office complexes have been proposed along the Central Vista after demolishing most of the existing office buildings.

"IGNCA will be given a very prominent place. The new campus is likely to be completed by December 2023, so it is a matter of two years that we will be at Janpath Hotel. The new campus being created will be as per our requirements and will be at par with any world-class arts centre," he said.

Regular activities at IGNCA, including outdoor exhibitions and performances, would be re-started by March 31, he said. "The hotel is being refurbished as

BJP conducts organisational meeting

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

An organisational meeting was held at the BJP State headquarters by national general secretary Dushyant Gautam and BJP national vice-president and newly-appointed Delhi in-charge Baijayant Panda here on Friday.

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta, State organisation general secretary Siddharthan, LoP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri and other senior party leaders discussed matters related to the party's State unit.

Mr. Panda urged party men to move forward with the objective of reaching out to and expanding the ideological base of the BJP in Delhi. Mr. Gupta said a detailed discussion was held about the expansion of the organisation during the meeting where special emphasis was laid on the topic of going among public to "expose" the Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government and its failures in controlling "lethal problems like corona and pollution".

He also said 28 new departments will be created.

Capital's air improves to 'moderate' category owing to fast surface winds

AQI predicted to remain same or dip to 'poor' levels today

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The air quality of Delhi, Gurugram and Noida improved to "moderate" category on Friday, as per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data. The air quality of the national capital is predicted to stay in "moderate" to "poor" levels on Saturday.

Rainfall too helped

The air quality improved on Friday as the surface winds were fast and there was rainfall in the surrounding regions.

The last time Delhi's air quality was in the "moderate" category was just a day on November 17. For the rest of the month, the air quality has been worse than it.

"The AQI is forecast to stay in the moderate to 'poor' category for the next two days. Surface winds are forecast to decrease by November 30 and AQI will be in the 'poor' to the lower end of 'very poor' category likely," said

(With inputs from Staff Reporter)



Children make chapatis in shanties near the Yamuna on Friday morning. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

Air quality of Delhi-NCR				
Delhi	137	Gurugram	107	
Ghaziabad	166	Faridabad	134	
Noida	125	Greater Noida	129	
Good 0-50	51-100	Moderate 101-200		
Poor 201-300	301-400	Very poor 401-500	Severe 501-600	>600

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

Thursday, as per CPCB's 4 p.m. bulletin, which is an average of the past 24 hours. The values for Gurugram and Noida were 107 and 125 respectively. Delhi's AQI was 171 on November 17.

The contribution of stubble burning in neighbouring states to PM2.5, a chief pollutant, in Delhi was estimated to be only 2% on Thursday. Also, the number of fire counts in neighbouring States were only 136, said SAFAR.

agency, System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR).

The AQI of Delhi was 137 on Friday, better than 302 on

Sisodia felicitates students who excelled in vocational subjects in Class XII boards

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

You should be proud of your achievements," the Minister said.

He also spoke about the plans of the government to open a Skills and Entrepreneurship University. "Once vocational subjects in schools open the way to university degrees, the importance of these subjects will increase significantly. This change in the perception will greatly benefit the students," he added.

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Nitish, Tejashwi spar in Bihar Assembly

Chief Minister has rare angry outburst after Rashtriya Janata Dal leader's series of allegations against him

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PATNA

The Bihar Assembly Friday plunged into turmoil following an uncharacteristically angry outburst by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar after having stoically listened to barbs and allegations by opposition leader Tejashwi Yadav.

Mr. Kumar, who is known for his composure and impeccable manners all through his four terms in office, was seen standing up and screaming *jhoot bol ra ha hai yeh* (he is speaking a lie).

The Chief Minister, who chose not to react when the 31-year-old RJD leader made a series of personal attacks



CM Nitish Kumar



RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav

and allegations in his nearly an hour-long speech, erupted in anger when the latter sought to interject during a statement made by JD(U) leader and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary.

Mr. Chaudhary had voiced his disapproval of references

which is being investigated by the CBI.

Mr. Yadav rose in his chair and said, "It was a serious matter that I raised on the basis of facts. Is it not true that the Chief Minister had to pay a fine in connection with the murder case?"

The interjection by the young leader proved to be the proverbial last straw for the Chief Minister, who got up and screamed "He is speaking a lie. I challenge the Chair to get the veracity of his statement examined and take necessary action. I have been listening to his diatribe simply because he is the son of a friend whom I treat like a brother."

"Does he know how his

father (Lalu Prasad) became the Chief Minister? Has he forgotten who made him the Deputy CM? I had to part ways simply because he did not heed my advice to explain things," Mr. Kumar said trembling with anger.

Support to Lalu

Notably Mr. Kumar was among the leaders of the erstwhile Janata Dal who had supported Lalu Prasad in the election for the legislature party leader in 1990 wherein the latter's victory against veteran leaders Ram Sundar Das and Raghu Nath Jha had enabled the then Chhahap MP to become the Chief Minister of Bihar and script a political success story.

Highway tragedy



Three persons were killed and six others injured when a private bus travelling from Delhi to Jaipur caught fire after coming in contact with a high-tension power line. ▪PTI

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Enr.No. D/45330214.

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Nitin Garg (Advocate),
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(Mob): 7838865967
E-mail: gargnitin.adv1310@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society, Bengaluru
(A Government of Karnataka Institutions)

O/o The Assistant Executive Engineer, Morarji Desai Residential School, Jagat Circle, Kalaburagi District.
No.: KREIS/AEE/Tender-29/2020-21 Date: 26.11.2020

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through E-Tendering Only)

The tenders have been invited for Construction of Pre Metric/ Post Metric Girls & Boys Hostels in Bidar District (**Tender Indent No. 2829, Package Indent No. 2828**) through e-Portal vide website: <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> on 27.11.2020 & 30.11.2020. The last date for receipt of tender is 29.12.2020. The details may be viewed at above website.

Sd/- Assistant Executive Engineer
KREIS, Kalaburagi

COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC, BE AWARE



HC stays Nagaland ban on dog meat sale

Traders had challenged govt's move

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

The Kohima Bench of the Gauhati High Court has stayed the Nagaland government's decision to ban the commercial import and trading of dogs, dog markets and also the sale of dog meat, both cooked and uncooked".

The court, hearing a petition by licensed dog meat traders, passed the interim stay on November 25. Justice S. Hukato Swu said the court was of the view that the ban order "may be stayed until the next return-

nable date".

On July 3, Nagaland Chief Secretary Temjen Toy announced the government's decision to ban "commercial import and trading of dogs, dog markets and also the sale of dog meat, both cooked and uncooked". The ban came into effect from July 4 across the State, four months after Mizoram took a similar step.

Dog meat is a delicacy among certain communities in the two Northeastern States.

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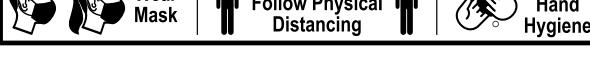
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The tenders have been invited for Construction of Pre Metric/ Post Metric Girls & Boys Hostels in Belgaum & Dharwad Districts. (**Tender Indent Nos. 2850, 2851 Package Indent No. 2864**) through e-Portal vide website: <http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> on 27.11.2020 & 29.11.2020. The last date for receipt of tender is 29.12.2020. The details may be viewed at above website.

Sd/- Assistant Executive Engineer
KREIS, Belgaum

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Sr. No.	Tender No.	Description of items	Estimated Cost (In Lacs)	EMD fixed (In ₹)	Tender document fee fixed (Non-refundable) inclusive GST (In ₹)	Last date & Time of offline sale of tender	Last date & Time of Submission of tender offline	Due date & Time of opening of bids
1	CE(MM)-10/2020	Tender Enquiry for the hiring of Service provider for e-procurement portal services providing various e-bidding services including e-Reverse Auctions at HPSEBL.	20.80	45,000/-	1000 + GST	07.12.2020 (upto 4:00 p.m.)	08.12.2020 (upto 4:00 p.m.)	09.12.2020 (at 11:30 a.m.)

Sd/-
(M.K. Upreti)
Chief Engineer (MM), HPSEB Ltd., Shimla-4

Dog nibbles at 'unattended' girl's body in U.P. government hospital

Two staffers suspended, CMO promises action against guilty

ANUJ KUMAR GAZIABAD

busy getting him referred to Moradabad. When I went to see my daughter's body, a stray dog was feeding on it. Her body was lying unattended. It is clear negligence by the staff," he told reporters.

Chief Medical Superintendent Dr. Sushil Kumar admitted that it was the work of one of the stray dogs that roamed the hospital premises. "We had written to the municipal corporation many times but no action has been taken," he said.

Dr. Kumar said two staffers, a sweeper and a ward boy, had been suspended for negligence and a probe was ordered. "The body was handed over to the father as he refused a post-mortem. It seems the incident happened when the body remained unattended for a few minutes".

'Rodents kill newborn'
In another incident of alleged medical negligence, a private hospital was sealed in Aligarh's Atrauli area on

Thursday after the father of a newborn alleged that his daughter died after she was bitten by rodents.

Rajesh Kumar told reporters that his wife gave birth to a baby girl in Kirti Hospital on November 22. He alleged that the staff put his daughter in the newborn kit. "After an hour, we were told that the baby has died. When the body was shown to us, it had animal bite marks on the face," he said.

Irregularities found

Taking cognisance of his complaint, District Magistrate Chandra Bhushan Singh ordered an inquiry that found irregularities in the hospital. "The hospital is authorised to have five beds but we found 11 beds in operation during the investigation. Two rooms are mysteriously locked. We have revoked the licence of the hospital and it has been sealed," said Dr Durgesh Kumar, Assistant Chief Medical Officer, Aligarh. Investigation was on, he added.

Forest officer, son held for alleged graft

STAFF REPORTER BHUBANESWAR

An Odisha cadre Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer, who was found to have amassed assets vastly disproportionate to his known sources of income, and his son, were arrested on Friday.

The officer, Abhay Kant Pathak, who was the State's Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest-Plan, Programme and Afforestation, and his son, Akash Pathak, had been forwarded to the court, Superintendent of Police-Vigilance M. Radhakrishna said here.

Mr. Radhakrishna said that about ₹9.35 crore of cash had been deposited in the son's account, but there had been no satisfactory answer as to the source of the cash.

Though the officer said the allegations were false, officials of the State Vigilance Directorate officials said they had "never come across the ownership of such massive property and lavish lifestyle by a government employee".

Ready for SIT probe into child's murder: Odisha CM

Alleging inaction, Oppn. parties have been demanding Minister's resignation

SATYASUNDAR BARIK BHUBANESWAR

With Opposition parties training gun for ouster of Odisha Agriculture Minister Arun Kumar Sahu, the Odisha Government on Friday said it was ready for a probe by Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the murder of a five-year-old girl, Pari.

Parents of Pari had on Tuesday (November 24) attempted self-immolation in front of the State Assembly. They had alleged that Nayagarh district police were reluctant to arrest the main accused, Babuli Nayak, as he was a close confidant of Mr. Sahu.

Audio clips in which the Minister was purportedly heard instructing a man not to raise the issue had made



the matter worse. Member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress has started demanding resignation of Mr. Sahu both inside and outside the House.

As the Assembly witnessed persistent disruptions due to vociferous demand for the Minister's resignation, Speaker Surya Narayan Patro had directed Minister of State for Home Dibyashankar Mishra to give

a statement.

Subsequently, the State government ordered an investigation into the murder in Nayagarh district on July 14. Parents, Ashok and Soudamini Sahu, alleged that one Babuli Nayak who was involved in organ trade had committed the crime.

<p

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 Saturday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Thunderstorm/thundersquall with lightning likely at isolated places over Rayalaseema, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Kerala, Mahe and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	29.4	15.8	Kozhikode	—	33.6	25.5
Ahmedabad	—	29.5	18.3	Kurnool	10.7	23.1	19.6
Aizawl	—	23.1	12.3	Lucknow	—	28.0	12.2
Allahabad	—	27.9	14.5	Madurai	2.2	33.0	23.1
Bangalore	13.2	23.7	17.8	Mangaluru	—	34.0	22.9
Bhopal	—	25.6	12.8	Mumbai	—	33.8	20.2
Bhubaneswar	—	29.7	18.2	Mysuru	—	28.0	19.2
Chandigarh	—	25.8	9.1	New Delhi	—	27.0	10.2
Chennai	5.6	35.0	19.0	Patna	—	21.2	15.8
Coimbatore	—	32.2	22.4	Pond Blair	0.3	29.8	26.8
Dehradun	—	26.7	8.8	Puducherry	—	31.0	21.3
Gangtok	—	14.0	10.5	Pune	—	28.6	14.1
Goa	—	33.6	23.0	Raipur	—	25.8	17.5
Guwahati	—	26.5	17.2	Ranchi	—	21.0	15.8
Hubballi	—	28.0	19.0	Shillong	—	20.2	12.0
Hyderabad	2.8	22.4	18.1	Shimla	3.2	17.4	5.0
Imphal	—	25.3	7.7	Srinagar	—	12.6	1.5
Jaipur	—	25.9	14.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	32.8	23.3
Kochi	48.6	32.4	23.2	Tiruchi	2	33.4	23.4
Kohima	—	21.8	6.2	Vijayawada	111.1	24.0	20.6
Kolkata	—	28.0	19.4	Visakhapatnam	70.2	27.0	20.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

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Chennai	.6	.11	.30	.52	.51	...
Delhi	11	61	.51	224	178	...
Hyderabad	.8	.69	.34	.123	.110	...
Kolkata	20	.20	.7	.250	.160	...
Lucknow	.7	.110	.89	.359	.237	...
Mumbai	17	.34	.33	.257	.164	...
Pune	.7	.79	.110	.146	.101	...
Visakhapatnam	—	—	—	—	—	...

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 330 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 15

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.

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

Maharashtra's active cases near 88,000

6,185 new cases recorded as opposed to 4,089 recoveries

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

COVID-19 cases outpaced recoveries yet again with Maharashtra reporting 6,185 new cases on Friday as opposed to just 4,089 recoveries.

The total case tally now stands at 18,08,550, with the number of active cases continuing its upward rise to reach 87,969. The cumulative recoveries have reached 16,72,627, with the recovery rate decreasing to 92.48%. As many as 85 deaths were reported, taking the total death toll to 46,898.

"Of a total of 1,06,35,600 laboratory samples tested thus far, 18,08,550 (case positivity rate of 17%) have returned positive, with over 88,000 samples being tested in the last 24 hours," said State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate, adding that the State's case fatality rate stands at 2.59%.

1,074 cases in Mumbai

Pune district reported another big surge of 1,198 new cases to take its total case tally to 3,50,689, while nine deaths saw its total death toll reach 7,322. As per district administration figures, the active case figure has risen further to 10,883, while its recovery rate incrementally dipped to 94.36%.

Mumbai city, too, reported a big spike of 1,074 cases



Tough times: A woman reacts after taking a COVID-19 test at a testing centre in Dadar on Friday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

to take its total case tally to 2,80,818, of which 14,185 are active. 17 fatalities saw the city's death toll rise to 10,757.

Nagpur district in Vidarbha reported 370 new cases, taking the district's total case tally to 1,12,350, of which just 3,839 are currently active. Six deaths took the total death toll to 2,935.

In western Maharashtra, Satara district reported five deaths to take its cumulative death toll to 1,631. A heightened spike of 257 fresh cases saw the total case tally rise to 52,042, of which 2,234 are currently active.

Neighbouring Sangli reported 66 cases and two deaths as the district's reported cases reached 48,521, of which just 955 are active. Its death toll stands at 1,716.

Kolhapur reported a mere 12 cases and a single death as its total case tally reached 48,451. Its active case tally has now come down to 207. The total death toll remained at 1,672.

In north Maharashtra, Nashik district reported 370 cases and two deaths as its total case tally reached 104,061, of which 1,872 are active. Its death toll stands at 1,686. Neighbouring Jalgaon reported just 29 cases and one death as its total case tally reached 54,842, of which only 1,111 are active, while its death toll stood at 1,384.

Dr. Awate informed that currently a total of 5,28,395 people across the State were in home quarantine and 7,248 were in institutional quarantine facilities.

Gehlot flays BJP for 'negative politics'

Party leaders' remarks smack of their anti-democratic mindset'

MOHAMMED IQBAL

JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Friday lambasted the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party for indulging in "negative politics" by raising doubts about the COVID-19 management and making "senseless remarks" about the future of the Congress government. Mr. Gehlot said the people in the State were agitated over the BJP's politics.

'Destabilising govt'

Reacting to a series of statements, allegations and remarks made by some senior BJP leaders during the last few days, Mr. Gehlot said the Opposition party was trying to destabilise the State government by using "money and muscle pow-



Ashok Gehlot. ■ FILE PHOTO

Meghwal and Jaskaur Meena.

The senior Congress leader said the BJP had utterly failed to play the role of a responsible Opposition during the pandemic and was creating fear among the public at the instance of its central leaders.

Battle against COVID-19

"The people will never accept such immoral acts and will give a befitting reply to them... We will win the battle against COVID-19," Mr. Gehlot said. The Chief Minister pointed out that even the BJP leaders, who had recovered from infection, had praised the State government's COVID-19 management. Despite the virus spreading fast in the winter season after festivals and wedding events, the Congress government had succeeded in restricting the death rate to less than 1% and made excellent arrangements of oxygen beds, ICU beds and ventilators for the patients, he said.

The leaders included Gulab Chand Kataria, Arun Chaturvedi, Arjun Ram

"money and muscle pow-

er". He said the BJP was frustrated ever since it failed to topple the government here after forming the governments through horse-trading in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.

"The recent remarks of BJP leaders claiming that the State government will fall, mid-term elections will be held and the MLAs could leave the ruling party any time smack of their anti-democratic mindset," Mr. Gehlot said.

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with the Pune-based National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA), to the IEEE early this year after an initial review of the history and accomplishments of the GMRT by a team from IEEE India.

Following a review process, which included appraisal by international experts, the proposal was first put up to the History Committee of the IEEE, which cleared it for approval in October. It was then submitted to the IEEE Board of Directors for final

approval, which was granted on November 23.

Professor Toshio Fukuda, president and CEO of IEEE, said: "IEEE milestones recognise important landmarks in the global pursuit of excellence in Science and Engineering, which have significantly advanced technology for the benefit of humanity. I am pleased that the GMRT programme of India has been recognised as an IEEE Milestone, acknowledging its contributions to the important work of exploring the universe through radio astronomy. I also congratulate all of the scientists and engineers who have developed and operated GMRT with such great distinction."

Harish Mysore, senior director, IEEE India Operations, said the IEEE has so far recognised 212 milestones for their scientific and engineering contributions. "The GMRT is the third IEEE Milestone in India. This IEEE milestone not only recognises the contributions of scientists and engineers of India, it also helps to demonstrate the generation and reception of radio

waves in 1895 (recognised in 2012), and for the Nobel Prize-winning (in 1930) 'scattering of light' phenomenon observed by Sir C.V. Raman in 1928.

Considering the global impact of GMRT with users from over 40 countries and the fact that it was designed and built entirely in India, the IEEE's India office and its Pune branch had initiated the proposal to nominate GMRT for this recognition.

The formal proposal was submitted in cooperation



Rare honour: The GMRT is an array of thirty parabolic radio telescopes of 45-metre diameter in Pune. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE

The Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) has been selected as a 'Milestone' facility by the U.S.-based Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), which is the world's largest technical professional organisation dedicated to advancing technology in all areas related to electrical and electronics engineering.

The IEEE Milestones programme honours significant technical achievements which have global or regional impact. This is only the third such IEEE 'Milestone' recognition for an Indian contribution. The previous two Indian IEEE Milestones were for the pioneering work done by Sir J.C. Bose to demonstrate the generation and reception of radio

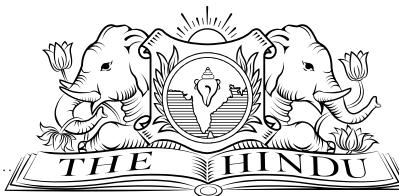
NORTH & WEST 5

BKU to march towards Delhi

Farmers plan to spend Friday night at toll plaza in Meerut

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

After a day-long protest in support of farmers of Punjab and Haryana, hundreds of farmers, led by senior Bhartiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait, moved in tractors and other vehicles from Muzaffarnagar to Meerut via the Delhi-Delhi highway



Tech tact

India must stick to a rules-based approach in regulating the Internet

India's decision on Tuesday to block another 43 Chinese mobile applications hardly comes as a surprise. Since June, following escalation of tensions with China at the border, India has blocked over 250 Chinese mobile apps, a bunch at a time, on the grounds that they have been engaging in activities "which are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order". The latest instance of app blocking has come at a time when the two sides, while still talking, are struggling to come up with an agreement for disengagement along the Line of Actual Control. With the immensely popular TikTok and PUBG already blocked, this time it was the turn of the likes of Alipay Cashier, Snack Video, Chinese Social, Adore App, and Alibaba Workbench to meet the same fate. China, not for the first time either, has charged India with using national security as an excuse to target Chinese apps. Zhao Lijian, spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, has asked India to "correct its discriminatory approach and avoid causing further damage to bilateral cooperation". China crying discrimination is ironical – its version of the Internet is tightly controlled and heavily censored, and has been so for years. There may not be much to argue against decisions made on the grounds of national security. But the question to ask is: would this have come about if all was hunky-dory between the two countries?

In the short run, it may be useful for India to use its vast market for Internet services as a leverage in its attempts to keep China in check at the border. Indian app alternatives may also find the much-needed space to grow now, and initial reports indicate as much. But there are a few risks with this approach, especially given India's global ambitions in technology. First, this approach runs the risk of triggering an unconventional battle between the two countries in the larger technology realm, if not in the larger business space. China, being an important player in the technology global supply chain, will be hard, if not impossible, to sideline. Second, there is a risk that moves such as blocking apps would be perceived adversely by global investors and Internet companies. While it is true that there has been some push back against Chinese companies and technology globally, India must stick to a rules-based approach in regulating the Internet. There is a need to implement the long-pending data protection law. It is also important to engage with the ecosystem and provide clarity on these issues as India has to win the technology battle as well.

A vial half full

Haste and opacity will delay the availability of a safe and efficacious vaccine

After a spate of successes in the vaccines being tested in human trials, there is now a blip: a manufacturing defect in some batches of the trial vaccine being tested and marketed by AstraZeneca, which has partnered with the Oxford University vaccine group to test and market the ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 vaccine. Some volunteers, who were supposed to get two doses of vaccine a month apart, got only half the required dose in one of the injections. Intriguingly, the data suggested that the efficacy was 90% in the half-dose/full dose sub-group than the 62% in the regular full dose group. The manufacturing snafu was disclosed by neither Oxford nor AstraZeneca, but came to light after the head of the United States vaccine programme disclosed it on Twitter. The company maintains that this was not a 'mistake' as the manufacturing discrepancy was discovered, and disclosed to the United Kingdom regulators. It was with their approval that the batches with the reduced doses were allowed to progress. However, the company is reportedly looking at an additional trial to properly test the half-dose/full-dose regime. A reduced dosage turning out to significantly improve efficacy could mean that more vaccine can be made and distributed to the world quickly. India is among those countries that is dependent on the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine because some of those doses will be administered to a high-priority group of 30 crore people already identified by the government.

Vaccine makers and immunologists are aware of the 'prime boost' technique where a limited dose of a vaccine is administered that prepares the immune system and a later shot then improves the overall production of protective antibodies. The results could even cause other vaccine manufacturers to test similar strategies. However, sober reflection leads to the ineluctable conclusion that this might not be one of the 'lucky accidents' of science lore. The fraction of people who got the reduced doses were under 55, and so it is not known if the dosage works for people in the older, more vulnerable group who have already been included in the high priority groups of several countries including India. Also, the number of volunteers who got the accidental dose were statistically insignificant to draw the conclusion of increased protection. Though the overall assessment, that the vaccine works, and is safe, holds, the events cloud trust in the process of scientific public communication. Companies that are otherwise jostling to prematurely announce vaccine results before scientific publication are opaque about full public disclosure. This when they have already been given a free pass in terms of accelerated regulatory processes, combining results from early trials and guaranteed government procurement. Haste and opacity will only delay the availability of a safe and efficacious vaccine as India prepares for possibly the largest immunisation programme in history.

The global epidemic of alternative truths

Untroubled by factuality and diversity, privilege and power are fashioning public opinion in troubled democracies



SUKUMAR MURALIDHARAN

Truth is often regarded as a metaphysical construct, though it has a more pragmatic dimension as a process of accurately recording perceptions, and ensuring they become part of an agreed social record. The latter understanding is serviceable in a practical sense, but opens the door to a certain troubling relativism. Perceptions are moulded by culture, and observation statements are conditioned by language. Is truth then culturally determined?

The U.S. and social fractures

In the United States, a defeated President sulks in his lair insisting that he really won. Defeat brings sorrow and remorse in its wake, but this election has revealed an anxiety to wallow in untruth. Earlier in the year, as the novel coronavirus pandemic began its lethal spread across the United States, the political leadership sought salvation in denial and then in division. By a calculus of costs and benefits, that may have been smart. The worst hit, at least in the early phase of the pandemic, were people of the minorities and lower income groups, unable by their very identity to impose a serious punishment on political delinquency.

Fractures of race and class in the U.S. are now overlaid with profound differences in culture. At just the time the death toll in America crossed a grim milestone, the journalist, Talia Lavin, observed that the "culture wars" had

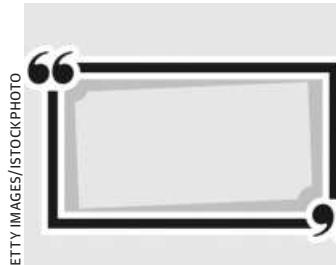
reached a stage at which 100,000 dead was "a matter of political opinion". It was, she bemoaned, a telling symptom that the U.S. was "an utter failure of a country", a lament that brought to mind Hannah Arendt's classic 1967 essay, titled "Truth and Politics".

Truth and politics

Arendt was drawn to the theme by the response to her landmark 1963 book on the trial in Jerusalem of the Nazi killer, Adolf Eichmann. That book, written from eyewitness observation, spoke what she thought were undisputable truths. But the response ranged from puzzlement at her motivations, to outright mendacity in discrediting the facts she relied on. Thinking back, Arendt made what seemed a vital distinction. "Factual truths" for her, bore reference to observations by living subjects of constantly changing reality. "Formal truths" on the contrary, were part of the received wisdom. Few could question the latter, such as the proposition that two and two made four. But factual truth was always prone to challenge as being no more than opinion.

Truth and politics, Arendt conceded, had always been "on rather bad terms with each other" and "truthfulness" was never counted "among the political virtues". This was a reality with a profound bearing on the practice of politics, since "facts and events", the outcome of the collective life of humanity, were the "very texture of the political realm".

James Madison, one among seven "founding fathers" of the U.S. Constitution, said about governments, that finally, they all "rest on opinion". Yet, an individual's opinion tended to be "timid and cautious" in its expression, and only acquired "firmness and confi-



dence in proportion to the number with which it is associated". Numbers could be a guarantee of strength, though not of authenticity. Indeed, the whole procedure for Arendt seemed thoroughly unsatisfactory, since there was nothing that prevented a majority "from being false witnesses". Rather, "the feeling of belonging to a majority may even encourage false testimony". There is no wisdom in crowds – like all forms of power, majoritarianism could threaten the truth.

War and deception

In 1971, soon after the Pentagon Papers (officially called the Report of the Secretary of Defense Vietnam Task Force) were published in *The New York Times*, exposing a long trail of official deception on the U.S. war in Vietnam, Arendt wrote about how the lie in normal circumstances, is "defeated by reality". However large the tissue of falsehood, even when spun with the help of computers, it would be inadequate to "cover the immensity of factuality". A fact could be removed from the world if a sufficient number of people "believe in its non-existence". But this would require a process of "radical destruction", an experiment that totalitarian regimes had undertaken with frightening consequences, though without the intended result of "lasting deception". The lessons from the

Pentagon Papers, and the "extraordinarily strong" opposition that had emerged to the U.S. war in Vietnam, was that a government intent on intimidation to secure its ends, was unlikely to succeed.

The role of social media

A readily identifiable aspect in which things have changed since, is the sheer ubiquity of the computer, which Arendt believed, even with all its prowess, could not quite conceal factuality. Earlier modes of harvesting attention and securing assent for a particular perception of reality, have been transformed in this intensely networked milieu. And since the events of 2016 – notably the United Kingdom's Brexit referendum and Donald Trump's election as the U.S. President – social media has come in for intense scrutiny for its ability to create bubbles of political misinformation.

It is difficult though, to imagine social media as an autonomous force that works to similar effect irrespective of the soil it falls upon. The U.S. in this regard, is fertile soil, segregated by class and credentials into ghettos of privilege and deprivation by four decades of neoliberal economics. The economist, Raghu Rajan, and the philosopher, Michael Sandel, have in recent times pointed out how daily lives in the U.S. today are increasingly about sameness, less about exposure to diversities of culture and social perception. It is a context that enables particular population cohorts to pretend that other worlds do not exist, that their perceptions, fortified in regular "check ins" with social media, are all that matter.

India, a social milieu with its own modes of sorting by class, caste and community, affords new means of campaigning and exer-

cising political power through connectivity. Customary deliberative processes have been dispensed with: Parliament sessions conclude without the Question Hour and consultative meetings across party lines over significant legislative initiatives have been scrapped. Political leaders, beginning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, speak from high pedestals but rarely put themselves under scrutiny in media conferences or interviews.

Still to be neutralised

In his first address to party representatives after securing a decisive win in the general election last year, Mr. Modi issued several explicit warnings about the media. Print media and TV may seem a good way to project ideas onto the public stage, he said, but there is a risk of falling victim to their "magnetic power". These remarks were in spirit congruent with his instructions in 2014. Soon after taking office then, Mr. Modi signalled his enthusiasm for social media at a meeting with Facebook's Chief Operating Officer, Sheryl Sandberg. Immediately afterwards, he instructed colleagues in the party and government, to use social media to get the word out, but to stay clear of direct interactions with traditional news media.

Public opinion in democracies is now fashioned within cocoons of privilege and power, untroubled by factuality or diversities in perception. If the U.S. seems, at least for now, to have tapped the sources of countervailing power to neutralise this drift towards a world of alternative truths, the challenge remains unmet in India.

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Stepping out of the shadow of India's malnutrition

An immediate universalisation of the PDS, distribution of quality food items and community kitchens are a few solutions



AMARTYA PAUL & UPASAK DAS

School-er prarthana sabhar somoy hotat matha ghure pore jaaro ghotona hamessai ghote dekhi amra. Beshirbhag khetrei ora mid-day-meal khete chaay naa, jiggesh korle bole pete byatha hochhe, Sir (There have been numerous instances during the prayer session in schools where we often observe students feeling sick and falling down out of dizziness. Most of the times they do not want to take mid-day meals and when asked, they complain of stomach ache.)

These words were echoed during a telephonic survey which we conducted in the Burdwan district of West Bengal in September 2020, with schoolteachers on the health conditions of students. Apart from our academic interest, the survey had been largely motivated by a report in the Bengali daily, *Anandabazar Patrika*, on February 10, 2020 (<https://bit.ly/3meN6wX>).

In this report, a schoolteacher had highlighted how girl students, who took admission in Standard five were relatively shorter in height than the previous year's batch of students. This, the teacher inferred, was largely integrated with malnutrition that is burgeoning not only in the State but also in rest of the country. In line with

what repeatedly restated in our survey, she had reported children from impoverished households not being able to have the mid-day meal many a time because of stomach-related problems, which, according to her, was a result of the children skipping breakfast. If this is found to be the general trend across India, such anecdotal evidence can have larger consequences that can very well lead to different manifestations of malnutrition.

Global reports, measures

Two recent reports – the annual report on "The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020" by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (<https://bit.ly/33mgGtf>) and the 2020 Hunger report, "Better Nutrition, Better Tomorrow" by the Bread for the World Institute (<https://bit.ly/39gRxDX>) – document staggering facts about Indian food insecurity and malnutrition.

Using two globally recognised indicators, namely, the Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU) and the Prevalence of Moderate or Severe Food Insecurity (PMSFI), these two reports indicate India to be one of the most food-insecure countries, with the highest rates of stunting and wasting among other South Asian countries.

Using two globally recognised indicators, namely, the Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU) and the Prevalence of Moderate or Severe Food Insecurity (PMSFI), these two reports indicate India to be one of the most food-insecure countries, with the highest rates of stunting and wasting among other South Asian countries. The PoU measures the percentage of people who are consuming insufficient calories than their required minimum dietary energy requirement, while the PMSFI identifies the percentage of people who live in households that are severely or moderately food insecure.



The reduction in poverty has been substantial going by official estimates available till 2011-12. However, malnutrition has not declined as much as the decline has occurred in terms of poverty. On the contrary, the reduction is found to be much lower than in neighbouring China, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh. Except China, these are countries which had somewhat similar levels of PoU in and around the year 2000. In terms of percentages, the PoU has declined 24.7% between 2001 and 2018 for India; other data are China (76.4%), Nepal (74%), Pakistan (42%), Afghanistan (37.4%) and Bangladesh (18.9%). It must be noted that the decline in China is way higher than that of India, even though it had started with lower levels of PoU in 2000.

In contrast, Afghanistan (47.8%) that started with a higher base than India (18.6%) had experienced higher rates of decline. Of note is the fact that, economically, while Afghanistan is relatively much poorer and has gone through several prolonged conflicts in last two decades, it has been more successful in reducing malnutrition than India. Further, Pakistan and Nepal which had almost similar (slightly higher to be

precise) levels of PoU in the initial years, have also successfully reduced malnourishment at a rate that is much faster than India. Therefore, irrespective of the base level of PoU, most of these countries have done better than India on this dimension.

These findings also get substantiated through Food Insecurity Experience Scale survey (<https://bit.ly/2Jh0m5X>), which covers almost 90% of the world's population. Because it is not allowed to be conducted in India, direct estimates are not available. Instead, three-year moving average figures are given separately for the whole of South Asia and South Asia, excluding India. A difference between these two would roughly give us a sense about the extent and broad direction of the prevalence of food insecurity here. Our estimates indicate that between 2014-16, about 29.1% of the total population was food insecure, which rose up to 32.9% in 2017-19. In terms of absolute number, about 375 million of the total population was moderately or severely food insecure in 2014, which went to about 450 million in 2019.

Crucial elements excluded
Despite the National Food Security Act - 2013 ensuring every citizen "access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices", two crucial elements that still got left out are the non-inclusion of nutritious food items such as pulses and exclusion of potential beneficiaries. Because of this, there is little to disagree that the current COVID-19 pandemic would make

the situation worse in general, more so for vulnerable groups.

In fact the recently initiated "Hunger Watch" by the Right to Food Campaign (<https://bit.ly/2VeBoGf>) presents a very grim situation, with close to one out of every three respondents reporting low food consumption and massive compromise on food quality. Though States have temporarily expanded their coverage in the wake of the crisis, the problem of malnutrition is likely to deepen in the coming years with rising unemployment and the deep economic slump.

Hence, a major shift in policy has to encompass the immediate universalisation of the Public Distribution System which should definitely not be temporary in nature, along with the distribution of quality food items and innovative interventions such as the setting up of community kitchens among other things.

This year's Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the United Nations World Food Programme, which should bring some of the focus back on these pressing issues of undernourishment and hunger in India. The need of the hour remains the right utilisation and expansion of existing programmes to ensure that we arrest at least some part of this burgeoning malnutrition in the country.

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balance fame with peace of mind and good health.

M. ANAND RAM SESU, Bengaluru

The passing of the soccer legend is an irreparable loss. Though his wayward lifestyle was jarring, Maradona will be remembered for his magic with the soccer ball.

R. SIVAKUMAR, Chennai

Diego Maradona came to earth to hold us enthralled with his magical skills. His sublime football craft can almost never be replicated. He lived his life on his own terms, and will be sorely missed.

DEVADAS V., Kannur, Kerala

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Urban overhaul

While it is positive that weather warning systems have taken giant strides in helping to save lives, what is worrying is the largely, man-determined destruction on the ground. Compensation is just to gain brownie points. Natural calamities are not new to India. It is civic management that needs a major overhaul.

BALASUBRAMANIAM PAVANI, Secunderabad

Vaccine equity

It is essential that COVID-19 vaccines are made available at an affordable cost and equitably across the globe. At the same time, it is doubtful whether the World Health Organization is powerful enough to rein in

powerful interests in the medical industry and make them see reason rather than their balance sheets. The reaction of the CEO of Pfizer does not offer much comfort that the tiger will change its stripes (Editorial page, "Rein in the vaccine nationalism, the profiteering", November 27).

V. SUBRAMANIAN, Chennai

The anchor lies in how effectively and at what price the vaccine is available to the lowest strata of society as they are the ones who need to be concerned about especially in a country like India. If possible, there should be a health insurance cover over the vaccine as the poor might not be in

position to pay for it; incomes in many households are low and they have every right to be protected from market forces.

C.M. SRIVATSAV, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

I write this as an elderly, retired and chronic patient. Elderly and chronic patients, except for the rich and the influential, have so far received little or no preferential care or attention in government hospitals or health-care centres as far as COVID-19 management is concerned. This is why, left to fend for themselves, many of them prefer to stay at home and face the consequences. The government should learn lessons from countries such as Spain, which have

announced in advance that health workers and the elderly will move up the line in COVID-19 vaccination.

ITTY VARGHESE, Pariyaram, Kerala

From underworld to broad daylight

Three related murders in less than a month in Karnataka have confounded the State police, who have caught the murderers but are yet to ascertain their motives. **K. V. Aditya Bharadwaj and Raghava M.** report on gang rivalries in sectors such as real estate and port that have spilled onto the streets

On the night of October 15, business began to slowly pick up at the Duet Bar and Restaurant off the busy Brigade Road in the central business hub of Bengaluru. The bar owner, Manish Shetty, 41, as was his routine, left his flat in Bhoopasandra in North Bengaluru in his SUV and reached Brigade Road at around 9:30 p.m. As he got down from his car and walked up to his bar, a bullet from a single-barrel breech-loading gun pierced his back. Assailants surrounded him and rained blows on his head with machetes, killing him on the spot before fleeing from the scene.

It did not take long for the police to conclude that what happened that Thursday was an underworld hit job. It had all the hallmarks of one: the firearms and the bike were abandoned a short distance away, a known modus operandi in such cases. Moreover, the deceased was a jailbird, with known links to underworld gangs in coastal Karnataka, associated with Ravi Pujari, Bannanje Raja and Muthappa Rai, at various points of time. The first two were arrested and the third died recently. Shetty had seven criminal cases including robbery and extortion against him.

Hours later, their suspicions were confirmed when a person who identified himself as Vikki Shetty, 47, an underworld operative from the coastal city of Mangaluru and now suspected to be based out of Southeast Asia, called up multiple media outlets and claimed he "got Manish Shetty killed, to avenge the murder of Kishan Hegde", a realtor with a criminal background, who was hacked to death in Hiriyadka, Udupi on September 24.

A shoot-out in the heart of the city coupled with the brazenness of an underworld operative calling up media houses claiming "he got it done" sent shockwaves across Bengaluru, not used to such crimes. The last such shoot-outs were in 2007 and 2010 when Ravi Pujari attacked the offices of Shabnam Developers, killing two employees, and Mantri Developers, for extortion. "But this was different. It was not a builder or a business that was targeted, it seemed like gang rivals were spilling blood on the streets," said a senior police official handling the case. But the police were left flummoxed as the Udupi Police had already 'cracked' the Kishan Hegde murder case. They had arrested nine men including the alleged kingpin Manoj Kodikere, another history-sheeter and moneylender. Contrary to Vikki Shetty's claims, Manish Shetty's name had not figured in the investigation.

The murder that started it all

Kishan Hegde, 35, a realtor and moneylender associated with Hindu right-wing organisations, was a history-sheeter accused of murder and assault. Related by marriage to a Shiv Sena corporator in Mumbai's Kalyan Dombivali Municipality, he served as 'Madipu', a translator of utterances of 'Daiva' (holy spirit) at Inna village. He and his brother Kiran, both with careers in crime, were arrested for murder and assaults. Kishan Hegde was allegedly linked to Vikki Shetty.

When he was released on bail in connection with a murder case, Kishan Hegde focused on real-estate and money lending. "He had borrowed money from Manoj Kodikere and in turn lent it at a higher rate of interest. Kodikere had recently assaulted Kishan's friend Rakesh Shetty over non-payment of loan to the tune of ₹55 lakh. This angered Kishan and he complained to Vikki Shetty, who reportedly asked him to not repay Kodikere," said senior police officials in Udupi. The decision had a domino effect and many debtors stopped repayment. "To send out a message, Kodikere and his associates killed Kishan Hegde in the busy Hiriyadka market in broad daylight," the Udupi police added.

Nowhere had the name of Manish Shetty figured in the probe. But the two were acquaintances when they were in prison together in 2010 – Manish Shetty in a jewellery store robbery case and Kishan Hegde in a case related to an attempt to murder a Karkala businessman case, it has now emerged.

In an interview to *Daijiworld*, a coastal Karnataka-based news portal, Vikki Shetty said: "It was Manish Shetty who organised boys for the murder of Kishan Hegde. He held meetings and was the force behind Manoj Kodikere. Kishan Hegde was with my boys, and came from a respectable family. Should all financial disputes end in murder? This is wrong. I can't let people who hit at my boys go. So I had to take down Manish Shetty".

Meanwhile, the Bengaluru Police arrested four men in connection with the case, on October 17 – Shashikiran, 45, a history-sheeter who led the gang in the case and has three cases of murder against him; Ganesh, 39; Akshay, 32, who worked at a bar near Manish Shetty's bar on Brigade Road; and Nitya, 29, the shooter with no criminal antecedents. All of them hail from coastal Karnataka.

"CCTV footage of the crime led to the



According to the police, elements from the underworld dominate the black market in import/export of bitumen, naphtha, and timber in many ports along coastal Karnataka. A fishing harbour in Mangaluru. (Below): Duet Bar off Brigade road in Bengaluru where Manish Shetty was shot dead. ■ H. S. MANJUNATH; K. MURALI KUMAR



identity of two of them – Shashikiran and Akshay. We got a tip-off on their location and arrested them from a lodge in the city. The four have confessed to the murder. They said Vikki Shetty gave the orders to carry out the hit," said M. N. Anucheth, DCP (Central Zone), Bengaluru.

The police took them to Barlane Cemetery, Hosur Road, to recover the machete used in the murder and then disposed of. Shashikiran and Akshay allegedly attacked the escort police in a bid to escape. "The police warned them and later fired at their legs to stop them from fleeing," said an senior police officer.

The interrogation of the accused revealed more contradictory information.

"The gang had carried out a recce of Manish Shetty's movements as early as February 2020, when Kishan Hegde was still alive," a senior police officer said, adding that the murder of Kishan Hegde had definitely acted as a catalyst but was not the only motive.

'More than what meets the eye'

As the Bengaluru Police were trying to cut through this haze, another gory murder was reported from Bantwal, from the coastal district of Dakshina Kannada. Financier-turned-actor Surendra Bhandary, 39, who was associated with Hindu right-wing outfits but had recently fallen out with them, was found hacked to death in his flat on October 20.

Two days later, his long-time associate Satish Kulal sent an audio clip to the police and the media, owning up to the murder. "I had forbidden Surendra from giving financial aid for the murder of Kishan Hegde and his killers later. But he threatened to kill me. So, I, along with Kishan Hegde's associates, killed him," the audio said.

The Bantwal police have arrested Satish Kulal and 10 others, including close associates of Kishan Hegde and Akashbhan Sharan, a notorious rowdy-sheeter and a close associate of Vikki Shetty. Sharan is presently in jail for the rape of a minor girl and organised resources for the murder of Bhandary from jail, pol-

ice said. "A photo of the crime scene with Bhandary dead was sent to Sharan," said an investigating officer.

In this case too, the police are not buying the narrative that Surendra Bhandary was killed only to avenge the murder of Kishan Hegde. His name too had not figured in the Udupi murder investigation earlier. "Satish Kulal owed Surendra Bhandary money, and so did another accused in the case. They have put together a team convincing associates of Kishan Hegde that Bhandary helped his murderers. Akashbhan Sharan held a grudge against Bhandary for the role Bhandary played in his arrest in the rape case. Many who held a grudge against him came together," a senior police officer probing the case said.

In fact, in his call to *Daijiworld*, Vikki Shetty said: "Manish Shetty is just a robber but was talking big. I had warned him a year or two ago, but he did not mend his ways." This indicates that their rivalry is older.

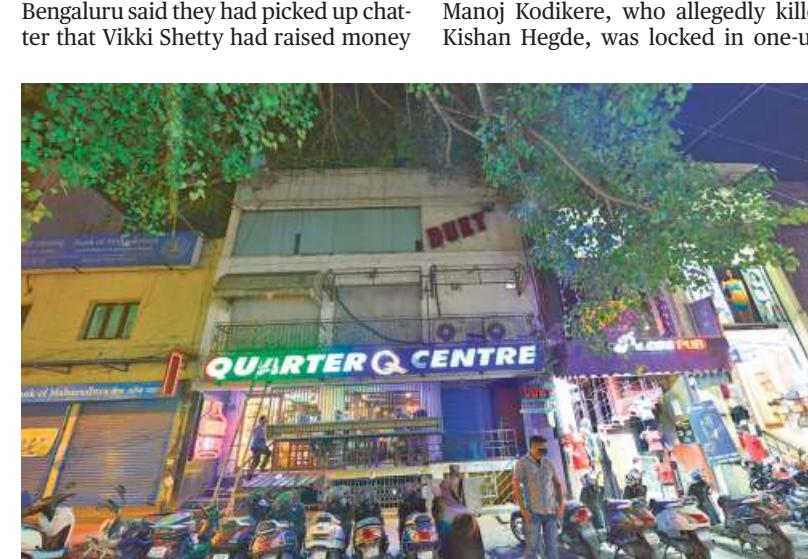
Given that multiple underworld operatives hailing from coastal Karnataka have taken a hit recently, Vikki Shetty may be trying to emerge as a new player, a senior police officer from Mangaluru said.

What's at stake?

The underworld in Karnataka's coastal districts is closely associated with and is modelled on the mafia in Mumbai. While smuggling and labour unions were at the root of the mafia in Mumbai, so is it in Mangaluru, but real estate has been a new addition in recent years.

Starting from Karwar, the State's coast is dotted with several ports in Mangaluru and Belekeri, to name a few. "Elements from the underworld dominate the black market in import/export of bitumen, naphtha, and timber in many of these ports," a senior police official in Mangaluru said. While customs officials and sources in the shipping industry said operations at New Mangalore Port Trust (NMPT) had largely been corporatised putting a check on smuggling, the police said post this phenomenon, black market operations at other smaller ports had only gone up. Queries to NMPT did not elicit a response.

Various factions of the underworld have had stakes in the logistics of the cargo business like in the transport sector, contracts for toll collection and also in labour unions at multiple ports and docks, said police sources. For instance, Manoj Kodikere, who allegedly killed Kishan Hegde, was locked in one-up-



manship with a friend-turned-foe associated with Kishan Hegde, on control over logistics at the old Mangaluru port, sources said. A section of the police in Mangaluru suspect that the murder of Kishan Hegde may also be a fallout of this turf war.

Meanwhile, at present, Congress leader Rakesh Malli, a former aide of Muthappa Rai who fell out with him during his last years, and who is now leading a "reformed life", leads the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) in the region. He is credited with the recent INTUC victory in the union elections at NMPT, consolidating his grip over the labour force in the region, and thereby over logistics at these ports.

"The ports of the Karnataka coast and real estate in Mangaluru are a lucrative business. Muthappa Rai did exercise considerable influence over these spheres until he came down with cancer and eventually died in May this year. Many are trying to take a share in the pie. Vikki Shetty may be just one of them," a senior police official said.

Hindu right and the underworld

Mimicking Mumbai, the underworld in Karnataka's coast has also been divided along religious lines. All the three killed and most of the accused in the three cases have had associations with Hindu right-wing organisations in the coastal districts.

Acknowledging this, office bearers of the Hindu Jagaran Vedike, Bajrang Dal and Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) came together and appealed to the youth, especially those associated with either the victims or the perpetrators of these murders, to "end the cycle of revenge". VHP Mangaluru Divisional Secretary Sharan Pumpwell said: "Those who were murdered and those arrested have been associated with Hindu outfits. We cannot be silent spectators when both victims and the accused are from the Hindu community. We are making efforts to reform such youths."

But he was quick to add that none of those arrested in the Kishan Hegde and Surendra Bhandary murder cases were, at present, associated with Sangh Parivar outfits.

Hindu right-wing organisations have worked as front organisations for underworld operatives to not only acquire a veneer of acceptability in the garb of religious polarisation, but also to recruit youths, said the police. Many of the accused in cases of cattle vigilantism and moral policing are also history-sheeters with links to the underworld, they said.

Various factions within these organisations have now been at each other, the recent spate of murders show, they said. In his interview with *Daijiworld*, Vikki Shetty lashed out at Manoj Kodikere, who allegedly killed Kishan Hegde, for targeting "other Hindus". He said, "Community organisations must help the poor, not keep people who target others from the same community. It is they who give the organisations a bad name."

Vikki Shetty has also often used his

'Hindu identity' over the years, for instance, in making threat calls to Karachi Bakery over their name. "Avenging the murder of Kishan Hegde who had a large following in Hindu right-wing organisations will fetch Vikki Shetty boys to work for him," a senior police official said.

Rumblings in Bengaluru

Bengaluru police are worked up that members of the underworld could carry out a daring hit in the heart of the city and make brazen calls to media houses. "At this juncture, our analysis says that the gang rivalries in Mangaluru have spilled over into our streets. But we have increased surveillance and are keeping tabs on any activity in the city," a senior Central Crime Branch official from the Bengaluru City Police said. He added that stringent action would be taken to nip it in the bud. However, as it stands today, after Manish Shetty's murder, Vikki Shetty has not made any calls to businessmen in the city. The police have learnt that he has raised money in Mumbai and Mangaluru, sources said.

Not being a port city like Mumbai, and with no strong labour unions, Bengaluru is not big on the narcotics map either. Real estate is the only parallel economy that can sustain a mafia in the city. Ravi Pujari and others operating from abroad have earlier made futile attempts to gain a foothold in the city's realty sector. "Ravi Pujari carried out two shoot-outs on leading builders in the city in 2007 and 2010. But he failed to gain a foothold in the city," said a senior police officer in the city. Multiple sources in the realty sector of the city said it has been at least three years since any of them received a threat call for extortion that had become a menace when Ravi Pujari was active.

Local underworld operatives in Bengaluru are involved in "dispute settlement" between various parties over properties or end up buying disputed properties, settle disputes by the threat of violence and sell them for a windfall. "The real estate market in the city is dominated by the local politicians who use local rowdies and the police as a muscle. The police are also an active part of dispute settlement in the real estate market of the city," said a retired top police officer, who did not want to be named. The Karnataka Police has in fact issued multiple circulars over the last decade explicitly barring the police from intervening in "civil disputes". The set-up in the city doesn't allow outsiders so easily, police said. Historically, underworlds of Bengaluru and Mangaluru have never converged, they added.

A senior official in the State police leadership said Karnataka had demonstrated a success streak in tracking down underworld fugitives – Muthappa Rai, Bannanje Raja and Ravi Pujari – and successfully extraditing them to the State to stand trial for their offences. "We think it is time to concentrate our efforts to nab Vikki Shetty, before he grows any bigger. Our teams are working on the same," the official said.

FROM PAGE ONE

Farmers stay camped on Delhi border

The day started with hundreds of farmers from Punjab and Haryana engaged in a fierce face-off with the Delhi police at the Tikri crossing. Deployed in large numbers, the police had three layers of security in place. Huge cement blocks formed the first line of defence, followed by barricades with barbed wires, and parked trucks, trailers and small commercial vehicles forming the final security layer.

The border turned into a virtual war zone with police personnel lobbing tear gas shells and aiming water canons at farmers trying to cross over. After an hour of tense confrontation, however, the farmers stepped back to return to their vehicles to wait for more convoys to join them. At the Singhu border crossing, farmers pelted stones and broke barricades, while the police used multiple rounds of teargas against them.

In the meanwhile, the Delhi Police, which comes under the Union Home Ministry, requested the Delhi State government for permission to convert nine city stadiums into temporary jails to restrain protesting

farmers. The Aam Aadmi Party-led Delhi government refused permission early in the afternoon. "To protest peacefully is a constitutional right" and the "Central government should accept farmers' demands immediately," said the order issued by Delhi Home Minister Satyendar Jain.

Soon after, negotiations were held between the Delhi Police, the Delhi government, and farmer leaders at the border point, with some Punjab farmer unions joining in via telephone as they were still travelling on the Haryana highways. By 2.30 p.m., they had reached a compromise, with Delhi Police spokesperson Eish Singh saying the protesters would be escorted to the Niranjan ground in Burari on the condition that the protest remained peaceful.

A faction of young farmers argued that it was better to stay parked on the highway than be shunted off to the Burari grounds. Others wanted to wait for the larger convoys to arrive before making a decision.

(With inputs from Saurob Trivedi and Nikhil M. Babu)

GDP contracts 7.5% in second quarter

"The economic indicators and the industrial output numbers indicate that the recovery is happening very well. But because the effect is primarily from the pandemic, we should keep that in mind especially with the winter months ahead," Mr. Subramanian told *The Hindu*.

"The recovery is clearly very encouraging but this is

still a period of uncertainty, and is reflected in the fact that the actuals are more encouraging than the estimates of several commentators," he said. Rating agency Crisil attributed the better-than-expected growth to pent-up demand, support from agriculture and select export sectors, cost savings for corporates and a 'learning to live' attitude.

Protect right of ordinary people to bail, says SC

To buttress this point, Justice Chandrachud highlighted that 91,568 bail pleas were pending in High Courts, while 1.96 lakh bail applications continued to wait for a hearing in the district courts.

The judgment focused on the importance of the district judiciary. Justice Chandrachud said the district judiciary was only "subordinate" in hierarchy. It was less to none when it came to saving the lives of citizens or doing justice for them. The district judiciary "must be alive to the situation as it prevails on the ground - in the jails and police stations where human dignity has

no protector". The verdict gave detailed reasons for the top court's decision to grant bail to Republic TV editor-in-chief Arvind Goswami in an abetment to suicide case on November 11.

The judgment said a "prima facie evaluation" of the FIR against Mr. Goswami did not establish the ingredients of the offence of abetment of suicide against him. It declared that the "doors of the Supreme Court cannot be closed to a citizen who is able to establish prima facie that the instrumentality of the State is being weaponised for using the force of criminal law".

Now, dial M.P. Information Commission helpline for RTI

The helpline will be operational round-the-clock

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh Information Commission has set up a grievance redressal forum in a bid to bring greater transparency to its functioning and spread awareness on the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, arguably the country's first such initiative.

Applicants would be able to know about the status of their appeals and cases through the forum, said Rahul Singh, Information Commissioner for the Rewa Division who set it up on Constitution day on Thursday.

"They can call or WhatsApp a helpline requesting to know the status," he said.

A team of handlers will relay back the information requested for on the helpline, operational round-

the-clock, within 24 hours. Information such as registration details, the next date of hearing, proceedings of previous hearings and copies of orders or directions can be sought by applicants both in Hindi and English.

Further, the helpline will admit queries regarding applications under the Act, including requests for guidance on drafting applications or the appeal process, sections of the Act and functions of different bodies set up under it.

"The forum will bolster our efforts in expanding the Commission outreach to people, initiate a discourse on the RTI and help in boosting applications," said Mr. Singh.

In addition to the live streaming of hearings, he added, the forum would enable equitable access to the Commission. Applicants and prospective applicants can call up the forum on 94250-14008 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on working days or drop messages any time.

"They can call or WhatsApp a helpline requesting to know the status," he said.

A team of handlers will relay back the information requested for on the helpline, operational round-

Karnataka defers decision on inclusion of Lingayats in OBC

Issue needs to be discussed with party central leaders, says Yediyurappa

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The Karnataka Cabinet on Friday deferred a decision on recommending to the Centre inclusion of the Veerashaiva-Lingayat community in the Union list of Other Backward Classes (OBC), apparently under pressure from the Centre as well as some Ministers.

Ahead of the Cabinet meeting, Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa announced that the decision on including the Veerashaiva-Lingayat community in the Central OBC list would be taken after discussions with central leaders of the party.

"The decision on Veerashaiva-Lingayat will be taken after visiting Delhi. Today, we will not make a decision. Even my Cabinet colleagues



No decision yet: Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa leaving Vidhana Soudha on Friday. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

expressed a similar view. This is an important decision that will need further discussion," the Chief Minister told presspersons before the Cabinet met.

Shah's intervention?
It is learnt that Union Home Minister Amit Shah told the Chief Minister that the pro-

posal on recommending the OBC status for the Veerashaiva-Lingayat community needed discussions within the party before the Cabinet took a decision.

Earlier, it was on the Cabinet agenda.

Briefing presspersons, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister J.C. Madhuswa-

my said the State Cabinet had to formally recommend its decision on inclusion of the community to the National Commission for Backward Classes for inclusion in the OBC list.

Currently, the entire Veerashaiva-Lingayat community, politically dominant in the State, is included in the Karnataka OBC list under Category 3B with a 5% reservation based on income.

The State government had proposed to recommend inclusion of the entire community in the Central OBC list to get benefits in Central government jobs and educational institutions. Currently, only 16 sub-sects of Veerashaiva-Lingayats were considered in the Central list of the OBCs, "which is wrong," the Minister said.

Perarivalan's parole extended by a week

No more extensions, says SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday extended the parole of Rajiv Gandhi assassination case convict A.G. Perarivalan by a week.

A Bench, led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao, recorded that the Supreme Court would not entertain any further application for extension of parole.

On November 23, the court had similarly extended the parole of Perarivalan by a week.



A.G. Perarivalan

Tamil Nadu Additional Advocate General Balaji Srivivasan, however, objected to the application.

He submitted that the Madras High Court had already disposed of an application for extension of parole on November 6.

The High Court, on November 6, had allowed Perarivalan two weeks' extension but had directed him to not seek any further time.

Yediyurappa's aide admitted to hospital

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

N.R. Santosh, political secretary to Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, and also his grand nephew, has been admitted to the M.S. Ramaiah Hospital here.

He was found unconscious at his residence late on Friday and is suspected to have taken sleeping pills, sources in the Chief Minister's office said.

In Intensive Care Unit
Mr. Yediyurappa rushed to the hospital and enquired about his health. Mr. Santosh is being treated in the Intensive Care Unit, sources said. "I will enquire as to why he took such a step. I will speak with him and the family once he is better," the Chief Minister told reporters.

(Those in distress or those having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahayavani on phone number 104 for help.)

No quota for admission in super specialty medical courses: SC

We cannot allow reservation as process is in final stages'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday directed the counselling for super-specialty medical courses in Tamil Nadu and Kerala to be held for the academic year 2020-2021 without providing reservations for in-service doctors.

"As the admission process is at the final stages, we cannot permit reservation for in-service doctors for this year," a Bench led by Justice L. Nageswar Rao ordered.

The Bench, however, did not express any opinion on the validity of a Tamil Nadu government order of November 7, which allowed 50% in-service quota in super-specialty medical courses at government colleges in the State. Some NEET-qualified doctors had challenged the government order when the Madras High Court chose not to intervene.

The Tamil Nadu government, represented by senior



Reserving 50% seats for in-service doctors will be detrimental to meritorious doctors, the SC said.

Advocate C.S. Vaidyanathan, had explained that there were 369 super specialty medical seats in the State. However, 70% of the doctors who qualified left the State, he said, "At least, in-service doctors would serve in Tamil Nadu till their retirement." Senior advocate P. Wilson argued that the law in the matter had been settled time and again.

The judgment did not delve on the question of law,

saying it would hear it in detail in February 2021. Meanwhile, it said the admission process, which was in its final stages, would proceed this year without in-service reservation.

"The process for admissions to super specialty medical courses started on August 3. It was made clear to all the competing candidates that there shall be no reservation. The government order reserving 50% seats for in-service doctors would be detrimental to the interests of the meritorious doctors..." the Supreme Court observed in the case of Tamil Nadu.

On Kerala, the court said the State government was unable to implement the Kerala Medical Officers Admission to Postgraduate Courses under Service Quota Act of 2008, which provides for 40% reservation for in-service doctors in super-specialty courses.

Channel extension
The PADMPCL comprises among other things the extension of Guntur channel and the Vedadri lift irrigation scheme.

Briefing the media about the Cabinet decisions, Agricul-

ture Minister K. Kannababu said the land survey was aimed at streamlining the land records management system and digitising the records to eliminate any scope for manipulation.

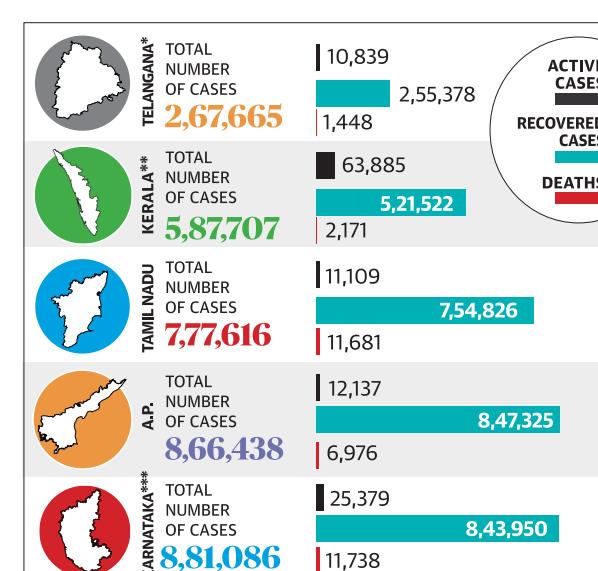
The survey would be done from December 21 with the help of drones and rovers and base stations across the State.

The Cabinet decided to increase the Dearness Allowance for pensioners by 3.144% with effect from July 2018 and to make the payments from January 2021 and another 3.144% DA hike with effect from January 2019 and pay the same from July 2021 and an extra 5.24% with effect from July 2019 and make payments from January 2022.

The Cabinet decided to make similar DA increase for the employees and pay them as per the same timeline as above.

Kerala's positivity over 10%, with no rise in testing

State adds 23 deaths to virus toll; low test positivity of 1.27% in A.P. and 1.34% in Karnataka



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala on Friday reported testing 39,108 samples, despite claims by the State government that testing would be raised to at least 70,000 per day. New cases reported on Friday stood at 3,966,

COVID-19

with a test positivity rate of 10.14%.

The Health department added 23 deaths from COVID-19 on Friday. Samples tested in the State totalled 99,13,068, and in the past day, 57,752 were tested with a positivity rate of 1.27%.

Karnataka on Friday reported 1,526 new cases and 12 deaths. The positivity rate for the day stood at 1.34%.

Bengaluru Urban district reported 808 cases, and six deaths. Also, 1,13,591 tests were conducted, including 97,246 RT-PCR tests.

A total of 1,442 persons tested positive on Friday for COVID-19, including six passengers who returned from other States, taking the tally to 7,77,616 persons infected so far. The number of active cases in Tamil Nadu was 11,109. At the same time 1,494 persons were discharged, bringing the number of those discharged post-treatment to 7,54,826 persons. Fatalities recorded in a day stood at 12.

(With inputs from Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Bengaluru and Chennai bureaus)

'Sea sparkle' has affected marine food chain: CMFRI

The bloom of *Noctiluca Scintillans* on the Karnataka coast has displaced microscopic algae

ANIL KUMAR SASTRY
MANGALURU

The bloom of *Noctiluca Scintillans*, commonly known as "sea sparkle" that the Karnataka coast has been witnessing since about a month, has displaced microscopic algae called diatoms, which form the basis of the marine food chain. This has deprived food for the planktivorous fish, scientists from the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Mangaluru, have said.

The bioluminescent *Noctiluca Scintillans* also brightened the sea water during night. CMFRI's Principal Scientist and Mangaluru Centre Head Prathibha Rohit, Mangaluru, have said.



Cause for concern: The Karnataka coast has been witnessing 'sea sparkle' for the past month. ■ H.S. MANJUNATH

prey on it. *N. Scintillans* grazes on other micro-organisms such as larvae, fish eggs, and diatoms. But the unicellular phytoplankton that live inside it can photosynthesise, turning sunlight into energy. They help their host cell survive even when food was scarce. Thus, *N. Scintillans* acts as both a plant and an animal, Dr. Rohit said.

She said field studies by the CMFRI in the Arabian Sea off the Karnataka coast since a decade showed widespread blooms of the green dinoflagellate, *N. Scintillans*. Blooms were witnessed on September 8 this year while in September 2018 too such biolumines-

cence was witnessed along the Someshwara beach in Dakshina Kannada and Mattu in Udupi. This year, however, the intensity and vastness of the bloom close to the shore was observed by many.

Plankton bloom

Punjab farmers in no mood to relent

'It's a fight not just for ourselves but for our children'

VIKAS VASUDEVA

AMRITSAR/HARIKE

Braving the morning winter chill, hundreds of Punjab's farmers on Friday started gathering at Amritsar's 'Golden Gate' with resolve to reach New Delhi to strengthen the agitation against Centre's new agriculture laws.

Agitated over the Centre's "indifferent" attitude towards their demand of revoking the laws, and the Haryana government's restrictions imposed on entry from Punjab, farmers here are in no mood to relent as they believe that their ongoing agitation is not just for themselves but for future generations.

The farmers say their battle has just begun and the government at the Centre should be under no false impression that it will be over soon. Clad in a typical Punjabi *kurt-pyjama* set with a green turban adorning his head, 67-year-old Sukhwinder Singh is anguished over the BJP-led Centre not listening to farmers' concerns.

"Our fellow farmers have reached Delhi and we are on the way. The Haryana go-



Dilli Chalo: Farmers raising slogans on the outskirts of Amritsar. • AFP

vernment is trying to stop us with force. Let them try whatever they can, we are even ready to face bullets. We will reach Delhi no matter what happens," he says.

Sexagenarian Balkar Singh of Manga Sarai village says, "Until our voice is heard we will continue to lay siege to Delhi. It's a fight not just for ourselves but for future generations. If I don't put a fight today, I won't be able to face my kids and their kids. We will ensure that our 'dharna' continues without fail. For this 20-25 people from one village will go in

batches to spend around 20 days in Delhi. Once they come back, another set of farmers will go."

Undeterred by the restrictions imposed by the Haryana government on entering the State, scores of farmers from the Majha region of the State have started to move towards Delhi on tractor-trolleys, cars and two-wheelers and are expecting to enter Haryana by Saturday morning even as Haryana police have deployed heavy security and barricaded the key highways.

The enthusiasm to partici-

pate in the protest is alike among the elders and the youth, who are prepared to fight 'a long battle' against the Centre.

Navtej Singh, a 15-year-old school student, says he is going with his father to Delhi as he strongly believes that the new laws are against the farming community. "I'll stay in Delhi as long as it's required.. When my school opens I'll come back but will go again if needed. I am with my family and farmers in their battle. If I don't fight for our cause today, then who will?" he asks.

The enthusiasm to partici-

NIA claims progress in Rana extradition plan

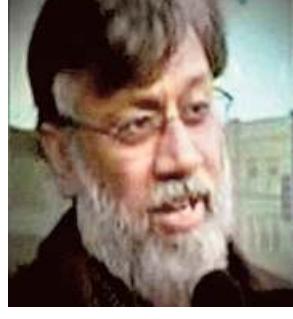
U.S. court pushes proceedings to February 2021

VIJAYA SINGH

NEW DELHI

There was some "progress" in the extradition proceedings of Tahawwur Rana, key accused in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, a senior NIA official said on Friday, even though a U.S court postponed the extradition hearing to February 12, 2021. The hearings were earlier slated to begin on January 8.

On September 28, the federal prosecutors of the U.S. filed a fresh "extradition memorandum" in the district court of California regarding Rana's extradition



Tahawwur Rana

for "conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists" and other sections such as "conspiracy to kill, kidnap, maim or injure persons or damage property in a foreign country" and "damaging a building by using explosives."

The 56-page plea filed by Attorney Nicola T. Hanna said the extradition proceedings were "sui generis (unique)" in nature.

The plea filed by India says Rana is wanted for "conspiracy to wage war" and "cheating".

The Pakistani-Canadian citizen has challenged the extradition and filed a plea in the U.S court on November 25, court records show.

Rana, who is currently

lodged in a jail in the U.S., was arrested in 2009 for providing material support to Pakistan based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) that planned and executed the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, which claimed 166 lives, including 36 Americans.

He is serving a 14-year im-

prisonment after he was convicted for providing material support to the LeT in 2013 and since he has been imprisoned since 2009, the jail term would also include the period he had served in prison.

Rana, a Chicago-based businessman, helped David Coleman Headley, the prime suspect in the Mumbai attacks, to open an immigration firm in Mumbai that was used as a cover to conduct reconnaissance on possible targets that were attacked on November 26, 2008.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA), which was raised after the 26/11 attacks, has registered a case of forgery, criminal conspiracy, murder and various sections

under the anti- terror UAPA in the case.

As the 'double jeopardy' clause in the U.S. law prohibits punishment for the same crime twice, India had tweaked its request to seek Rana's custody on the ground that he was actively involved in planning an attack on the National Defence College in Delhi and Chabad Houses (Jewish religious centres) in several Indian cities in 2009.

In June, the U.S authorities informed their Indian counterparts about the provisional arrest of Rana. He was released from prison in the U.S on June 10 after he was granted bail on compassionate grounds on testing positive for COVID-19.

Congress Working Committee pays tribute to Patel, Gogoi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Ahmed Patel had no personal interest and the interest of the party was his only interest," the Congress Working Committee (CWC) on Friday said in a resolution and talked about going forward with a sense of unity and discipline.

The highest decision-making body of the Congress, along with the office-bearers of frontal organisations, held a virtual meeting to condole the death of Patel and former Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi.

In a separate condolence resolution for Gogoi, the CWC lauded his role in Assam. It noted that the departed leader in recent months had campaigned vigorously to ensure the Congress' return to power in Assam and urged party leaders in the State to fulfil Gogoi's desire.

In the backdrop of recent statements by senior leaders like Ghulam Nabi Azad and Kapil Sibal on "Congress structures collapsing and the party not being a viable alternative", the CWC seems to have sent a subtle message by stressing on "a sense of unity and discipline" in the resolution for Patel.

Though the meeting was a closed one, the resolutions were made public. Party insiders said former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and former Union Minister Mukul Wasnik read out the resolutions at the meeting.

The CWC resolution also recalled Patel's ability "to reconcile competing aspirations and forge unity and comradeship". A senior leader said Ms. Gandhi, in a sombre mood, talked about the contributions of both leaders and stated that "no one can ever replace Ahmed Patel ji".

West Bengal Transport Minister Suvendu Adhikari quits Cabinet

SHIV SAHAY SINGH

KOLKATA

In what could be an indication of severance of his ties with the Trinamool Congress, West Bengal Transport Minister Suvendu Adhikari (in photo) on Friday resigned from the Cabinet led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Mr. Adhikari, also holds the portfolio of Irrigation. He has sent his resignation both to the Chief Minister and the Governor.

According to sources close to the leader, he has also given up the security cover provided by the government.

Party sources said the Chief Minister had not accepted the resignation.

West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh said Mr. Adhikari had given ample hints about his decision. "Our doors are open to him. Senior leaders like Mukul Roy have come and are working with us," he noted.

Today at 1.05 p.m. a resignation letter of Mr. Suvendu Adhikari from office as Minister has been forwarded to me. The issue will be addressed from constitutional perspective," Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar tweeted, sharing the screen shot of the resig-

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE

Office of the Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division, RR Nagar Zone, No. 144, 2nd Main, Jagajyothi Layout, Bengaluru - 560 056

No.: EE/KEN/TEND/23/2020-21

Date: 27.11.2020

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT)

(Tender Notification) (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only)

The Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division invites tenders on behalf of the Commissioner, BBMP, Bengaluru from eligible tenderers for the construction of works detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Approximate Value of Work (in Lakhs)	Amount Put to Tender (in Lakhs)	EMD (in Rs.)
1	Construction of Ground and Upper Floor to BBMP Complex at Kengeri, Ward No. 159, Kengeri.	200.00	166.65	2,60,000/-
2	Development and Improvements of Parks and allied works in Ward No. 130, Ullal.	200.00	166.65	2,60,000/-
3	Construction of RCC Drains with covering slabs and other development works in Ward No. 130, Ullal.	200.00	166.62	2,60,000/-
4	Development and Improvements of Praks and allied works in Ward No. 159, Kengeri.	200.00	166.64	2,60,000/-
5	Construction of RCC Drains with covering slabs and other development works in Ward No. 159, Kengeri.	200.00	166.65	2,60,000/-
6	Development and Improvements of Parks and Out Door Gym and allied work in Ward No. 198.	200.00	166.64	2,60,000/-
7	Improvements to Road and Drains in Mariyappanapalya Surrounding area in Ward No. 130.	150.00	126.25	2,00,000/-
8	Improvements to D Group Layout Main Road from Arch to NICE Road in Ward No. 40.	200.00	166.64	2,60,000/-
9	Improvements to D Group to Hosahalli Main Road and Connecting Road in Ward No. 40.	200.00	166.65	2,60,000/-
10	Improvements and Development of Dwarakavasa Road from Magadi Main Road to BEL Layout in Ward No. 72.	200.00	166.65	2,60,000/-
11	Improvements to Muddinapalya Main Road from Circle to Vidyankethana School Road in Ward No. 72.	100.00	84.18	1,70,000/-
12	Improvements and Development of Dwarakavasa Road from BEL Layout to Muddinapalya Circle in Ward No. 72.	200.00	166.65	2,60,000/-

Calender of events: (1) Tender Documents may be downloaded from the e-Procurement portal of the Government of Karnataka from 04.12.2020. (2) Pre-bid meeting: 14.12.2020 at 4:00 p.m., Venue: Office of the Chief Engineer, RR Nagar Zone, RR Nagar. (3) Tenders must be submitted online through e-procurement portal on or before 4:00 p.m. on 19.12.2020 and the opening of tenders will be as per the e-procurement portal guidelines. (4) Opening of bids: 21.12.2020 at 4:00 p.m. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours or website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division, BBMP

HAVE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19? CALL APATHAMITRA ON 14410



Have been put under house arrest again, says Mehbooba

However, police deny charge, cite security concerns

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

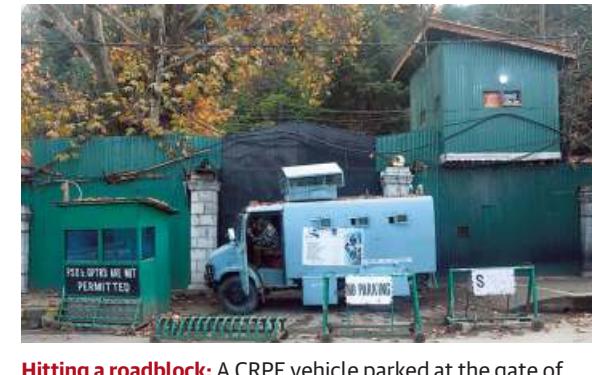
SRINAGAR

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti alleged on Friday that she and her daughter had been placed under house arrest and stopped from meeting the family of incarcerated youth leader Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra in south Kashmir.

Police said Ms. Mufti was not under house arrest. "She was requested to postpone her visit to Pulwama purely for security reasons," a police spokesman said.

Ms. Mufti said she had been illegally detained yet again. "In the last two days, the J&K administration has refused to allow me to visit Parra's family in Pulwama. Even my daughter Iltija has been placed under house arrest. The BJP Ministers and their puppets are allowed to move around in every corner of Kashmir, but security forces are manning the gate of my house in the video.

The move comes just a day ahead of the first phase of the District Development



Hitting a roadblock: A CRPF vehicle parked at the gate of Mehbooba Mufti's residence in Srinagar. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Council (DDC) elections in J&K. "We are one day away from DDC polling and it's evident that the administration here is using fear and intimidation in tandem to muzzle any form of opposition," the former Chief Minister said.

Meanwhile, PDP youth leader Parra was produced before the National Investigation Agency court in Jammu on Friday and was remanded in custody for 15 days.

Two soldiers killed in Pak. firing in Rajouri

Responded immediately, says Army

PEERZADA ASHIQ

JAMMU

Two soldiers were killed in fresh ceasefire violations by Pakistan along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Pir Panjal valley's Rajouri district on Friday.

The Pakistan Army resorted to an unprovoked ceasefire violation on the LoC in Sunderbal sector of Rajouri on Friday. Two soldiers were injured in the firing and they died of their injuries later," Jammu-based Army spokesman Lt. Col. Devender Anand said.

The Army responded immediately to the enemy fire, he added. The deceased jawans were identified as naik Prem Bahadur Khatri and rifleman Sukhbir Singh.

"They were brave, highly motivated and sincere soldiers. The nation will always

remain indebted to them for their supreme sacrifice and devotion to duty," the Army said.

The latest ceasefire violations came just a day after a Junior Commissioned Officer was killed in Pakistan's firing in Poonch.

The Army on Friday paid tributes to deceased sepoy Rattan Singh of 163 Infantry Battalion (Territorial Army) and sepoy Deshmukh Yash of 101 Infantry Battalion (Territorial Army), who were killed in a militant attack on the Srinagar-Baramulla highway on Thursday.

Lt. Gen. B.S. Raju, Chinbar Corps Commander, paid homage to the soldiers.

"The mortal remains of the bravehearts were taken for last rites to their native places," an Army spokesman said.

THE ODISHA MINING CORPORATION LIMITED
OMC House, Bhubaneswar -751001, Odisha
CIN: U13100OR1956SGC00031, www.omcltd.in

ADVERTISEMENT FOR ENGAGEMENT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (COAL) FOR BAITARANI WEST COAL MINES ON FULL TIME CONTRACT BASIS IN OMC LTD
No. 53/1.1.2020

OMC, a Gold category and largest State PSU in Mining Sector in the Country, undertakes exploration, mining and trading of iron, chrome & bauxite ores. The Corporation has achieved an annual turnover of Rs. 3975 crores in the FY 2019-20. Inspired by the vision to emerge as the market leader and to play a catalytic role in the growth of industrialization, OMC caters to the requirements of mineral based industries.

OMC has been allotted Baitarani West Coal Mine in the district of Angul, Odisha for production of & sale of 15 MTPA of Coal.

OMC intends to engage one Executive Director (Coal) to head the Baitarani West Coal Project with negotiable monthly consolidated remuneration, for which applications are invited from dynamic & competent professionals for filling up the Post.

Sl. No.	Name of the post	No of post to be filled-up on contract basis	Basic eligibility	Monthly consolidated remuneration
1.	Executive Director (Coal)	01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree in Mining Engineering from a reputed Institute like IIT / ISM / NIT with 	

INTERVIEW | UDDHAV THACKERAY

'What the BJP claims to be practising is not Hindutva but deceit'

Maharashtra Chief Minister says listening to his alliance partners does not amount to 'coming under pressure'

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

On November 28, 2019, Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra after a dramatic turn of events. As he completes a year in office, Mr. Thackeray speaks on the subject of his inexperience, the BJP's constant attacks, attempts to destabilise his government, and whether he will complete his term of five years. Edited excerpts from the interview:

The tripartite MVA government completes one year in office today. From an unlikely alliance with the Congress and the NCP to entering legislature for the first time, how did this year go?

■ Today, we complete one year in this government which was formed unexpectedly. Nobody had imagined its formation, and once formed, there were doubts as to whether it would run.

Moreover, many had reservations about me since I had no experience of running an administration. Thanks to my colleagues – Sharad Pawarji, Sonia Gandhi ji – we did run it. People overwhelmingly welcomed this experiment. Irrespective of the pandemic, it was as a collective effort that this government performed its duties.

You mentioned you lacked administrative experience. How difficult was it to run

the alliance government?

■ I may not have been in the chair [of Chief Minister] before, but I did know what power means and how it functions. The only difference for me is that I now sit in this chair, and instead of asking or demanding from someone, I take the decisions. I always believe in team work. This will continue in future as well. It was alleged that I buckle under pressure from my two allies. They are my colleagues in the government. Listening to them does not amount to coming under pressure. I also heard the criticism that a coterie of IAS officials has surrounded me. What are they for, if they don't surround me? We need to take their [civil servants'] cooper-



C I wonder how we [the Shiv Sena] remained allies for 25 years with someone [the BJP] who shows such perverseness

ation in running the government and the administration [bureaucracy] has supported me from Day 1.

You are subjected to continuous attacks from the opposition BJP, both in your capacity as CM and as the Shiv Sena chief. Your Minister son Aaditya

Thackeray, and wife Rashmi, have also come under attack. How do you respond?

■ We never played the politics of perverseness; never launched personal attacks against the families, sons and wives of Opposition members; never attempted to destroy their lives. I targeted [PM Narendra] Modi and [Union Home Minister] Shah on policy and not on personal issues. This is not my Hindutva. My Hindutva is cultured. The party which

allows such perverseness should never talk about Hindutva. I follow the Hindutva of my father and grandfather. What they [the BJP] claim to be practising is not Hindutva but deceit...

Does that mean you have permanently cut-off ties with the BJP?

■ You are asking me about what will happen after four years. I always wonder how we [the Shiv Sena] remained allies for 25 years with someone [the BJP] who shows such perverseness. How can there be an alliance if their civility is replaced by perversity?

Will the MVA remain united in the upcoming Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) polls?

■ Yes. We will be fighting the polls as an alliance. We suc-

cessfully formed the alliance after the poll in 2019. We stand together today.

The BJP has already begun preparations to dethrone the Shiv Sena in the BMC. What about your preparations?

■ It seems the BJP desperately needs to win Mumbai to stand on its feet once again. After all, the greed to win Mumbai will continue to remain, no matter how many States you win ... They tried last time as well. This time, it will be three of us [the MVA partners]. Mumbai stands with the Shiv Sena, will remain so.

BJP MLAs have been openly claiming that the government will fall in the next two months. Is your government in danger?

■ The BJP has no option but

to say this, to keep its flock together. This hope will keep BJP MLAs going. There is no other reason.

COVID-19 covered almost 70% of your first year in office. Did you have any plans which could not materialise because of it?

■ The Assembly budget session had to be curtailed due to the pandemic. We had to rush for relief work immediately, followed by the entire focus shifting to enhancing health facilities. It is clear that [we] will have to focus more on building health infrastructure, improve the present condition of hospitals, ensure supply of medicines, and appoint experts. This will definitely reflect in the next budget, but we have also started implementing many of these projects...

(Read the full interview at bit.ly/UddhavInterview)

IN BRIEF



BJP nominates Sushil Modi as RS candidate

NEW DELHI
The BJP on Friday nominated Sushil Kumar Modi, former Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, as its nominee for the Rajya Sabha bypoll necessitated by the death of former minister and Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) leader Ram Vilas Paswan. Polls are scheduled for December 27 for that seat.

Accused in killing of Dalit pradhan shot dead: police

LUCKNOW
Over three months after a Dalit pradhan was shot dead in Azamgarh district, which triggered vandalism by locals, the Uttar Pradesh police said on Thursday that they shot dead an accused in the case in an alleged exchange of fire. Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order), Prashant Kumar, said the accused, Suryansh Dubey, was shot dead in a "police encounter" by a team led by the Deputy Inspector General and SP, Azamgarh.

Navy MiG-29K crashes into sea, pilot missing

NEW DELHI
A twin-seater MiG-29K fighter jet of the Navy on Thursday crashed into the Arabian Sea off Goa. One pilot has been rescued, while search is on for the other. "A MiG-29K trainer aircraft operating at sea ditched at about 1700 hrs on November 26. One pilot has been recovered and search by air and surface units is in progress for the second pilot," the Navy said in a statement on Friday. An inquiry has been ordered into the crash, it stated.

Form a commission to monitor tribunals: SC

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court ordered the Centre on Friday to constitute a National Tribunals Commission to act as an independent body to supervise the appointments and functioning of Tribunals. A Bench led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao said it was high time tribunals were freed loose from the grapple-hold of the Executive. They need to attain independence both in appointments and judicial functioning, it said.

₹4,300 crore collected as compound interest returned'

Payments made under a government payback scheme, SC notes in judgment

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court recorded in a judgment on Friday that lending institutions have returned over ₹4,300 crore in compound interest collected from small borrowers during the moratorium period.

The ex-gratia payments have been made into 13.12 crore bank accounts across the country as of November 13, 2020, the court noted the submission made by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta for the government.

The payments were made in compliance of a government payback scheme introduced on October 23 to waive the difference in the compound interest and sim-



The payment has been made to over 13.12 crore accounts of borrowers covered under the scheme, the SBI said. ■ FILE PHOTO

ple interest charged between March 1 and August 31 (moratorium period) for eight categories of loans worth up to ₹2 crore.

"Shri Mehta submits that in pursuance of circular dated October 23, 2020, the

gate exceeding ₹4,300 crore in over 13.12 crore accounts of borrowers covered under the scheme," a Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan noted in a 24-page judgment.

The order disposed of a petition filed by individual borrower Gajendra Sharma, who expressed his satisfaction with the government's payback scheme.

Mr. Sharma had argued that the charging of compound interest during the moratorium period was against the principle of natural justice.

"The government on one hand ceased the working of the individuals and on other hand asking to pay the loan interest during moratorium," he had complained.

The Centre said the 77% of active cases include Maharashtra (18.9%), Kerala (14.7%), Delhi (8.5%), West Bengal (5.7%), Karnataka (5.6%), Uttar Pradesh (5.4%), Rajasthan (5.5%), Chhattisgarh (5.0%), Haryana (4.7%). "Currently, only two States have more than 50,000 cases and they con-

'10 States account for 77% of active COVID-19 cases'

Things are going from bad to worse: SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Ten States are responsible for almost 77% of active COVID-19 cases in the country, the Centre told the Supreme Court on Friday.

A Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan wondered aloud whether any concrete steps were being taken by the Centre and the States to arrest the alarming rate of infection. "Things are going from bad to worse," the Bench observed.

The Centre said the 77% of active cases include Maharashtra (18.9%), Kerala (14.7%), Delhi (8.5%), West Bengal (5.7%), Karnataka (5.6%), Uttar Pradesh (5.4%), Rajasthan (5.5%), Chhattisgarh (5.0%), Haryana (4.7%). "Currently, only two States have more than 50,000 cases and they con-

"This is shocking ... This is not the first incident. We will take suo motu cognizance of the incident. Some measures need to be taken to prevent fires in hospitals," Justice M.R. Shah, who is part of a three-judge Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan, told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta.

The court directed the Centre to place on record steps to prevent fires in hospitals. The Gujarat government has been asked to submit a report.

SC takes cognisance of Rajkot fire

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday took *suo motu* cognizance of the circumstances that led to a fire at a private hospital in Rajkot, Gujarat, which killed five COVID-19 patients and left six others injured.

"This is shocking ... This is not the first incident. We will take *suo motu* cognizance of the incident. Some measures need to be taken to prevent fires in hospitals," Justice M.R. Shah, who is part of a three-judge Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan, told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta.

The court directed the Centre to place on record steps to prevent fires in hospitals. The Gujarat government has been asked to submit a report.

Science Ministry recruitment notice highlights bigamy clause

Prominent mention akin to moral policing, says bureaucrat

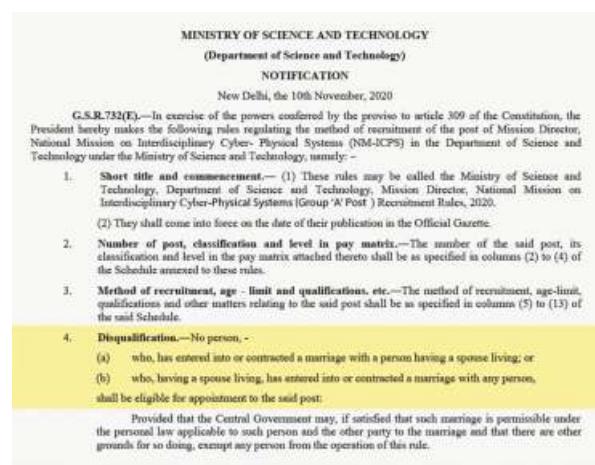
JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI

A notification by the Department of Science and Technology, prescribing the recruitment method and selection criteria for appointing a 'Mission Director' for one of its programmes highlights a disqualification clause on marital grounds very prominently and even before listing out the actual eligibility criteria. The said clause highlights governmental disapproval of bigamy.

The clause is not unusual in itself and is part of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules that apply to all government employees since 1964. However, it is never explicitly mentioned in government recruitment notices or notifications.

"For it to be prominently highlighted looks like moral policing," a serving bureaucrat of over two decades told *The Hindu* on condition of anonymity. "There are several such clauses which are



The clause is never explicitly mentioned in government recruitment notices or notifications. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

implicit, like being a citizen of India [to apply for a post] or not having criminal cases but I've never seen it explicitly cited in any government recruitment notice."

Other rules include strictures against government servants from consuming "intoxicating drink or drug" in public places or using their influence to secure jobs for relatives in companies or

firms. Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary, DST, did not explain why this clause was highlighted, but said officers from the department told him it was a "standard clause followed by all departments of government".

The post in question is that of Mission Director, National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems.

Developed by an in-house research team, it will help the authorities scale up test-

ing at a fraction of the current cost of conventional RT-PCR tests and also give results more quickly.

Successful trial runs

The ICMR issued an advisory permitting "the use of CSIR-CCMB dry swab method, considering its lesser cost and quick turn-around time after evaluating and finding an overall concordance of 96.9%".

The CCMB sought the ICMR's nod after finding the trial runs successful in ass-

ociation with the Telangana health authorities in July.

In the conventional testing method, nasopharyngeal – nose or oropharyngeal – throat swab samples are collected from suspected COVID-19 patients. These are transported to testing centres, sometimes even hundreds of kilometres away. The samples are generally placed in a liquid called Viral Transport Medium (VTM), and to avoid leakage, they are packed heavily, which adds to sample pro-

cessing times. Researchers found that the 'VTM' can be avoided. The dry swab technique also does not require the RNA-extraction process, and can be directly used for RT-PCR testing with sensitivity and specificity similar to the current gold standard.

CSIR Director General Shekhar C. Mande said the dry-swab direct RT-PCR method is easy to implement with no requirement of new kits, and existing manpower can perform this with no additional training.

HC quashes BMC notice to Kangana

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Friday quashed and set aside an order by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to demolish actor Kangana Ranaut's bungalow, and held that she is entitled for compensation due to *mala fide* action in law by the civic body.

The court said, "We have come to a clear conclusion that the notice (demolition) and the action of demolition following it, are actuated by malafides, involve a clear malice in law, causing a substantial injury to the Petitioner, we would be perfectly justified, to order compensation against responsible authorities."

On the tweets by Ms. Ranaut, the court said, "She should be better advised to exercise restraint when 'as a public spirited person', she 'airs her views regarding issues of public importance on social media platforms...'"

Sparkling stone sparks frenzy in Nagaland

Farmer's discovery triggers 'diamond' rush in village, geologists to investigate site

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

A farmer's accidental discovery of a sparkling stone has triggered a 'diamond' rush in Nagaland's Mon district.

A resident of the district's Wanching village found the stone while farming on November 25.

More stones found

Word spread that he had discovered a diamond and people from neighbouring areas



One of the few crystals found buried in a village in Mon district.

visit the site next week to conduct an investigation.

Tongyei Angh, chairman

of Wanching village, said the crystal-like stones, found in the partly private and partly community-owned land, were unlikely to be diamonds.

"The farmer who found the stone sparked off an excitement among the villagers when he told the tale of his discovery. That it may not be a diamond became apparent when used a hammer and it broke into pieces easily," said Mr. Angh.

The disqualification was

on the ground that Mr. Lalduhoma had declared himself as a representative of the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) despite being elected as an independent candidate from the Serchhip constituency. "He lost the character of an independent legislator because of the disqualification," Mr. Sailo said.

The disqualification made

Mr. Lalduhoma, 71, earn the dubious distinction of meeting the same fate in Parliament and an Assembly.

In 1988, the former police officer became the first MP to have been disqualified under the Anti-Defection Law for giving up membership of the Congress (I). He was elected to the Lok Sabha uncontested in 1984 as the Congress candidate but fell out with the party leadership.

He formed the Mizo National Union,

which later merged with the



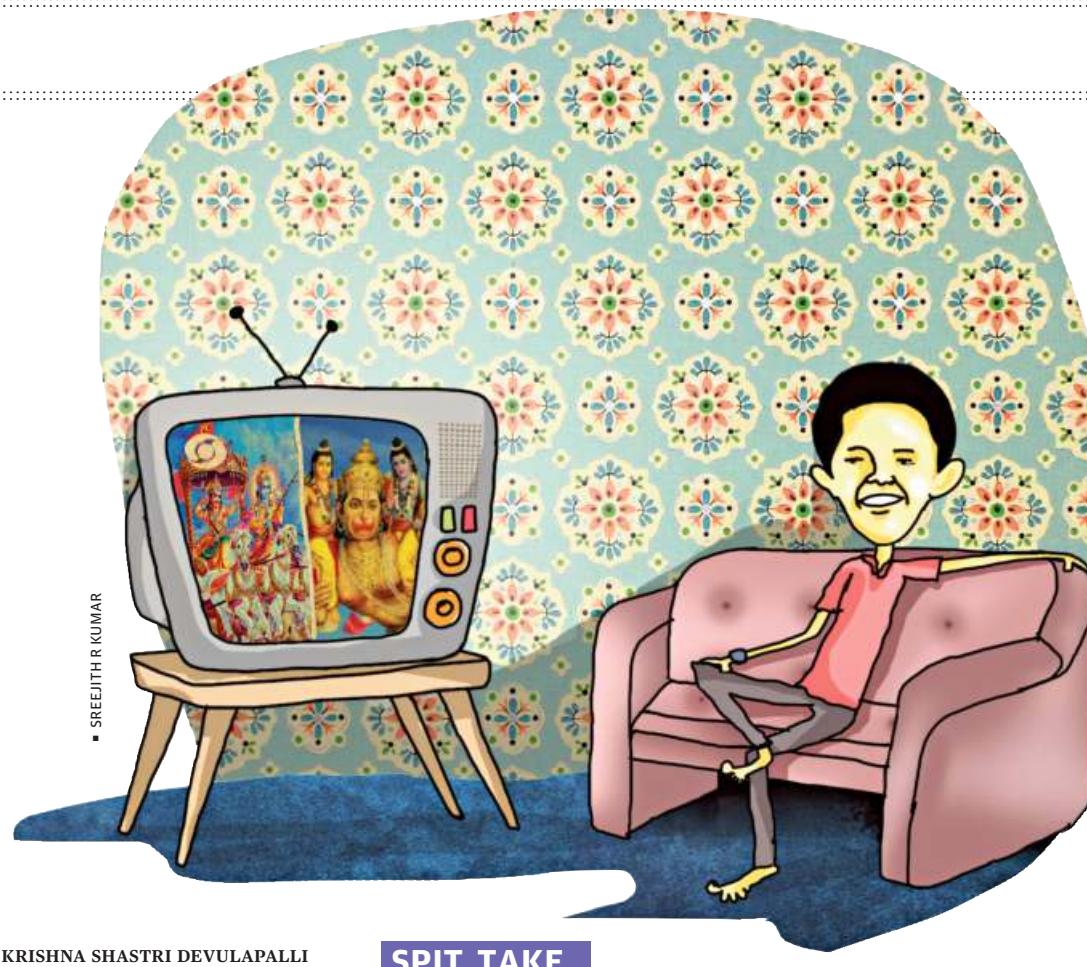
Instapick

SA Virtual: The annual Serendipity Arts Festival, like most others this year, has been postponed to a later date. In its place is SA Virtual, a new digital experience that is on from December 4 to 21. Their Instagram feed is a curation of mini-series that introduce the sessions while being informative. The theme focusses on the internet and how it connects people. @serendipityartsfestival on Instagram



Talking point

Heroes of New York: Robin Hood (a poverty-fighting organisation) and iHeartRadio take this annual event online. The stellar lineup includes Al Pacino, Tina Fey, John McEnroe, Jon Stewart, and musical performances by Mariah Carey, Andra Day and Tony Bennett. Watch the hour-long show for inspirational stories of innovative people. On December 2, at 5.30 am IST. robinhood.org



■ SREEJITH KUMAR

SPIT TAKE

OTTs wrong with you?

and sipping chilled *thandai*, it has now turned into a fragmented affair with family members slinking off one by one to watch the content in

bathrooms on their mobile phones on the sly.

Rumour has it that, thanks to this development, families are being

Pick of the week

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



Deck the halls

It is never too early to put up that tree. Oh Scrap! has introduced a range of upcycled ornaments made of fabric waste. Choose from snowmen, stars and bunting, as well as wreaths made from pressure cooker gaskets and fabric scraps at brownliving.in. For DIY enthusiasts, **Lavender Green Flowers**, the London store behind Pippa Middleton's peony and rose themed wedding decor, is organising virtual workshops to make your own wreath. Classes start today, at approximately ₹7,400 per person on lavendergreen.co.uk.



What's up with cat?

"Feed me." "I'm angry." "Resting." Find out what mood your cat is in with **Meow Talk**, a new app from a former Amazon Alexa engineer. Cat parents can also label the translation, which helps the AI software learn. Thirteen phrases are included in the beta version. Users can also create profiles to keep track of each pet's unique language. On iOS and Android. Meanwhile, Google has announced the launch of **Task Mate** in India, which will pay users to do random tasks. The app, on Play Store, will only be accessible through a referral code.



Mike Tyson returns

Boxer **Mike Tyson** (54) steps back into the ring after 15 years for an exhibition match against **Roy Jones Jr** (51). No knockouts are allowed. The pay-per-view event, produced by Triller, broke pre-sale records for the decade. The undercards include YouTuber Jake Paul and former NBA star Nate Robinson, Badou Jack vs Blake McKernon, and Vidal Riley vs Rashad Coulter, as well as musical performances from Lil Wayne, French Montana, Wiz Khalifa, YG and Ne-Yo. On November 29; from 7.30 am IST. Tickets at ₹129 on in.bookmyshow.com. From 7.30 am IST. Tickets at ₹129 on in.bookmyshow.com. From 7.30 am IST. Tickets at ₹129 on in.bookmyshow.com.



Some auto, some art

Automobiles and art meet in this virtual edition of The **Cartist Festival**, with over 100 artists presenting live paintings and more than 20 design workshops. Founder Himanshu Jangid adds that music performances and talks are on the cards. Register at ₹100 on in.bookmyshow.com. Till November 30. Forum Art Gallery presents **'A State of Oneness'**, an online show featuring works by **Sarla Chandra**. The paintings are inspired by the **Vedas**. View on forumartgallery.com. #8778726960



Big screen bonus

Tune into the ongoing **International Kids Film Festival**, with over 150 movies from 40 countries, being hosted on the **Krayon** app. Along with curated collections that cover topics like conflict and LGBTQ+ issues, there are also masterclasses and a filmmaking competition. Till December 20. Details: myikff.com. The **Japan Film Festival** also goes virtual, starting December 4. Organised by the Delhi-based Japan Foundation. Register for free on jff.jpf.go.jp to watch 30 films (including animated features) over 10 days.



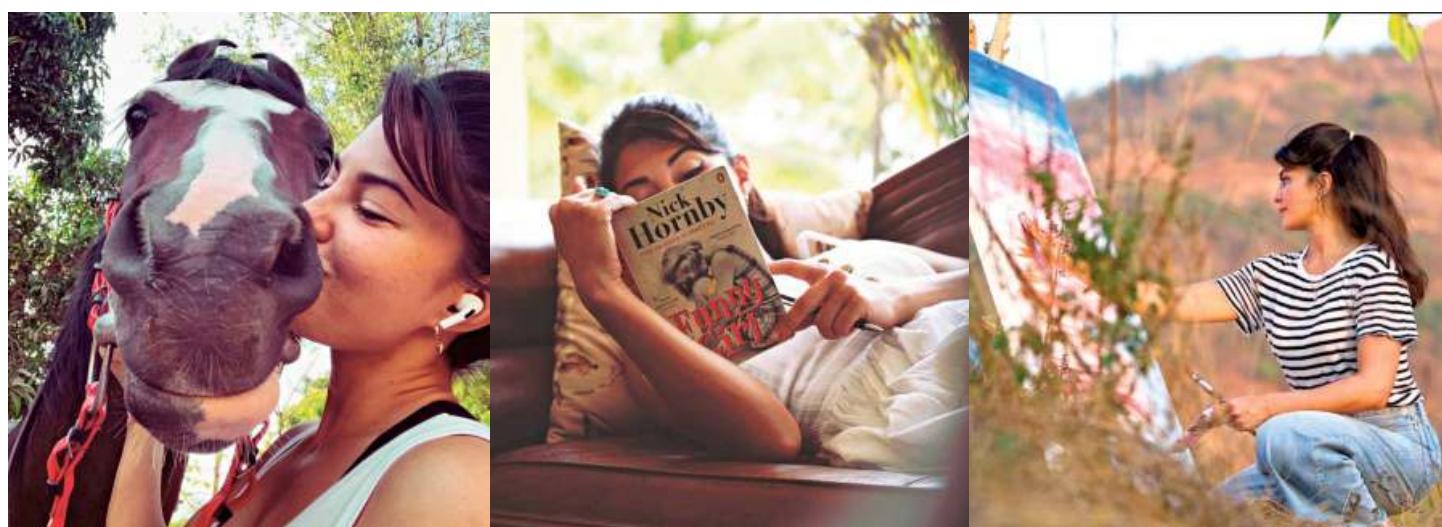
Let's talk design

India Design Forum begins a series of virtual debates on the future of architectural design. Titled **'Building Blocks'**, the four sessions, to be held over four Saturdays starting today, have been curated by industrialist and founder of IDF, **Rajshree Pathy**, and architect **Minralini Ghadiok**. Topics range from what is 'good' architecture to how design can address the dangers posed by contagious diseases. The lineup includes Brinda Somaya, Sanjay Puri and Niels Schoenfelder, among others. Details: indiadesignforum.com



In store

Understated brand **Buna**, a **homegrown label** that focuses on sustainable and slow fashion with an emphasis on classic, comfortable pieces with hints of bohemian, now has a Delhi store. Launches online in 2017, expect to find their latest collections **Fura**, **Fura** and **Meraki**, along with the collections from the past two years at the brick-and-mortar. **Fura** has pastel tie-dye and marbling, while **Meraki** is made in sheer fabrics. At Ground Floor, 62-63, New Mangalpuri, Mehrauli



With over 46 million followers on Instagram, the actor talks about her social media strategy and her criteria to endorse any product

Building brand Jacqueline

SUSANNA MYRTLE LAZARUS

An avid reader, Fernandez recommends *Funny Girl*, a 2014 novel by British writer Nick Hornby. Set in 1960s London, it follows the adventures of Barbara Parker, briefly the winner of Miss Blackpool 1964, as she pursues bigger ambitions on screen.

Jacqueline Fernandez spent several months of the lockdown in a Panvel farmhouse, reading, practising yoga and riding horses. In October, she crossed 46 million followers on Instagram (@jacquelinel14), making her one of the top 10 Indian celebrities on the photo sharing app. Amidst this, the actor also managed to find time

to work on endorsements; she is the new face of Colorbar cosmetics.

Incidentally, with limitations on filming during lockdown, many of her sponsored campaigns have taken on a personal angle. A Samsung phone ad focused on health, while Listerine shared her morning routine, and Drools 'sponsored' pet food for the strays she feeds outside her home. Brands have consistently tied in with the actor's interests in fashion, fitness and animal welfare to utilise her massive reach on social media (14.8

million on Twitter and 22 million on Facebook).

As most influencers will tell you, content creation isn't easy. Yet Fernandez confirms on email that she is very involved in the process. "I think it is important when you are endorsing and representing a brand. You need to be 100% truthful... so you need to be sure that it is trustworthy. I deeply believe in environmental conservation and I pick brands that are against animal testing," she says, adding that Colorbar's cruelty-free tag was a big factor in signing on for their 'Be who you want to be' campaign. For fans of mask-friendly makeup, she has a tip: the brand's Flawless Full Cover Concealer for under eyes and finish with their Sheer Mattifying Loose Powder.

Getting personal on social media

Even being a mid-level influencer is a taxing job, requiring a dedicated team to coordinate campaigns and schedule shoots for different platforms. Add filming on

Lockdown habits

"This pandemic has helped me realise that life is too short. We need to value each day to the fullest and make the most of each day we are living," writes Fernandez, backing up this somewhat clichéd response with what she has put into practise:

- I like to start my day with a round of oil pulling using organic coconut oil
- Dahi and honey face pack once a week is my go-to home remedy for an instant glow
- Add a Vitamin C-enriched serum to your basic skincare routine
- I try to find interesting ways to make my meals skin and hair-friendly – like incorporating flax seeds, prunes, oats and bananas

location and movie promotions to the mix, and it becomes more complicated. So, it is surprising when Fernandez says, "I manage my Instagram account all by myself. I feel I'm able to engage with followers on a personal level and that is what makes me keep it as real and natural as possible." In an earlier interview with *Deccan Chronicle*, she has mentioned the presence of a social media team that "transforms [my] thoughts or vision on the page and helps with content creation". She also turns to professionals for her



I think the pandemic taught us how to embrace our flaws and work on them at the same time, be it our routine, body, skin, hair, health, mental and physical fitness. I love to be in my workout gear all the time. A pair of snug leggings and tank tops are what I love!



YouTube videos and her new podcast, *Feels Good*, which she co-hosts with American vlogger, Amanda Cerny.

While the 35-year-old is comfortable with her online persona, she isn't blind to its negative aspects, where people measure a celebrity's success by their following. Fernandez is irked by the fact that if they don't have a good following, it is taken as a factor to judge one's success. She may have had a rough few years professionally – *Race 3*, her last big-screen appearance in 2018, was a box office hit but was panned by critics, as was the more recent Netflix film, *Mrs Serial Killer* (May 2020) – but it hasn't diminished her popularity online. Trolls are an unfortunate by-product of this. How does she deal with them? She'd rather not waste time on people who "do not make a valid point or even express an opinion".

And she does have enough to keep herself busy this year and the next. The Sri Lankan actor will be seen in yet another sequel, Salman Khan-starrer *Kick 2* directed by Sajid Nadiadwala, as well as Ranveer Singh-Rohit Shetty's *Cirkus*. "I am currently shooting for *Bhoot Police* in Himachal Pradesh [alongside Saif Ali Khan] and we had a lovely Diwali here with the cast and crew," she concludes.

Fernandez has teased an upcoming collab with Kayali, Huda Beauty's fragrance line. She had earlier collaborated with the brand for their signature product, false lashes.



When you can't build any more bathrooms to watch your shows in, make the content fit for family viewing

forced to build extra bathrooms in their *havelis*. And that Akshay Kumar's next Independence Day release, *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha - Part 2*, could well deal with this burning issue.

What's the matter with us? When Barack Obama – a great role model, not to mention, dear, dear friend of our leader's – himself has openly admitted to watching *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* on DD in his formative years, why should we, proud citizens of the land of ancient plastic surgery, watch such corrupting fare?

How can our future generations aspire to be President of the United States if they continue watching *Mirzapur* 1 and 2?

It is such a relief that the all-knowing authorities are considering putting a stop to the rampant nonsense on these channels. A timely move considering we are on the threshold of greatness. The bullet train, Ayurvedic surgery, bullock-tricity, and big, big statues of our valorous kings are in the offing, and we just can't afford to lose our way in this manner.

As a patriotic, god-fearing Indian who constantly worries about the way things could go, I humbly submit a few suggestions to the regulatory authorities.

Alternative words and phrases
If characters must use strong language, let it not be vulgar. For instance, if a character uses the 'f' word followed by the word 'off' or its Hindi equivalent, the more acceptable phrase 'go to Pakistan'

could be dubbed over. Similarly, if cuss words that no cultured Indian would be caught dead uttering are used by a character, we could dub over them with, say, 'urban naxal', 'libtard', 'Italian', 'Mughal', etc, depending on the intent, intensity and gender of the original word.

Commentary
When we watch cricket matches with running commentary, why not make that a regular feature for shows, too? Imagine there is a show with questionable content. We could introduce an inset featuring a role model like, say, Kangana Ranaut, popping up and explaining (in her soothing voice) what is wrong with what the characters are saying, and how they would be punished if they did it in real life.

Intimate scenes
We are a land so cultured that kissing scenes are done using SFX. If you don't believe me, check out the YouTube clip of Kajal Aggarwal kissing a balloon against a green screen. Why not go back to the old way of flowers caressing each other in a gentle breeze to denote kissing? And, when characters... er... take it further, it could be a soda bottle being opened or steam engine tooting. At which point, an animated version of Kangana Ranaut could pop up and beat the errant couple with a comic sledgehammer.

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

Bringing 2020's upcycling trend to menswear

Making a case for a trans-seasonal wardrobe for men at a time when ethical design is key

RINA SINGH

You could say that 2020 is when 'upcycling' joined the luxury vocabulary. Last month, when Miu Miu announced a capsule collection of dresses made from refashioned vintage clothing, they were joining a growing list of international luxury brands that were either making sense of excess inventory or sharing plans to be less wasteful.

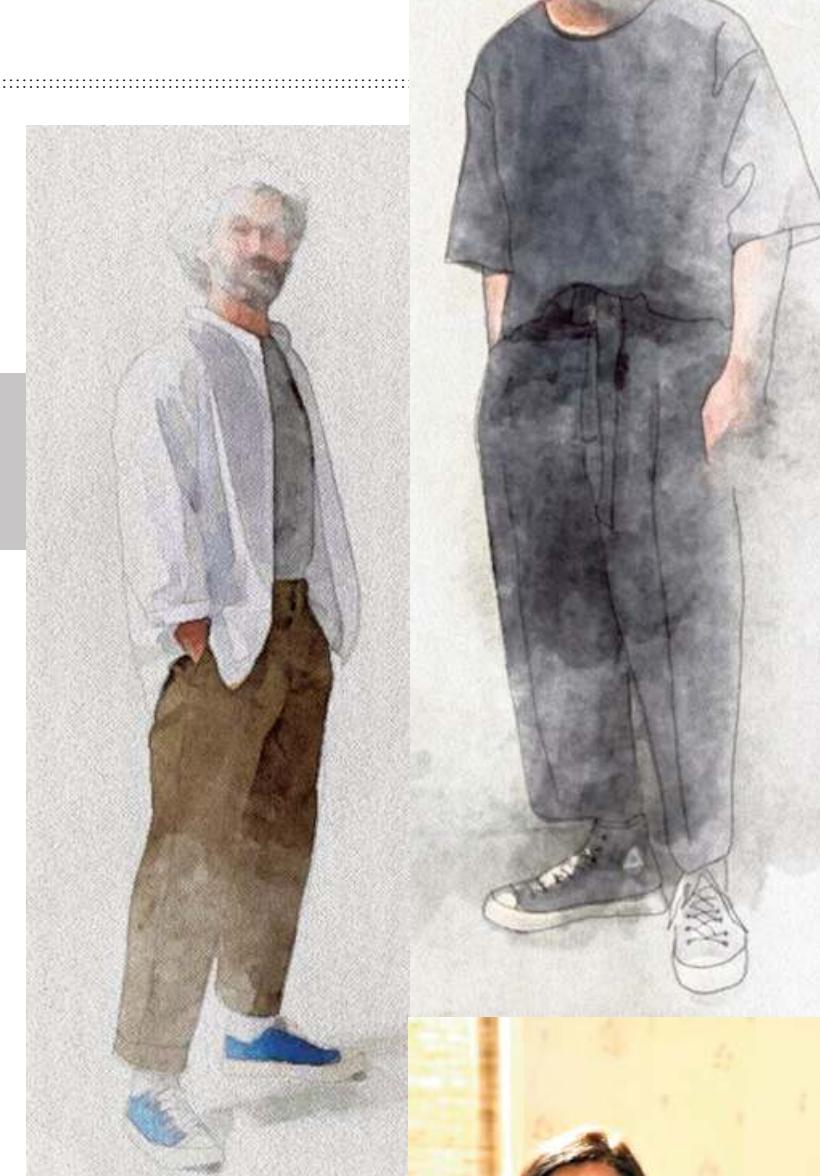
For creatives, I think this year was a blessing; a time to introspect and re-align. The past few months of revision also brought about a change in how we, at Eka, plan our collections and design cycles. I spent a lot of quiet, reflective time at home in Gurgaon in the months of March and April, a period when we usually do most of our sales. I realised that owing to the scarcity of resources due to the pandemic, we may not be able to develop as many textiles as we had in the past. It made me turn to our inventory accumulated over the years from our network of weavers in Phulia, Murshidabad, Bhagalpur and elsewhere. We recycled a lot of those textiles imaginatively. We used overdyes, prints and patchwork, and we created menswear.



The suit alternative

With Eka Core, I wanted to make a proposal for men who didn't want to be confined to suits. Would they, instead, consider easy shapes to work, lounge, travel or holiday in? In the past, I've picked up a lot of

stuff for my husband, Sandeep, from boutiques in Paris and New York and small labels in Tokyo that offer brilliant collections for men. I was inspired by the workmanship and the easy cuts of these pieces. Sandeep's individualistic taste has resulted in a wardrobe replete with clean, functional pieces, including trial-and-error coordinates from our sample room. I was inspired by his worn-to-shreds Comme des Garçons garments and the clever finishing inside-out. Then there is Rajesh Pratap, who has always led by example with his cuts, finishes, fabrics and by being sensitive to conscious design. I come from a family of agriculturalists. It is often said that design is evolved or an acquired aesthetic. I feel it is something that must match your philosophy of life. For me, this would be craft, community



Having a strong hold over indigenous textiles and using them to create comfortable shapes while working with womenswear since 2011 has also been channelised here

living, a simple life. Comfort is paramount to my collections. Breathable textiles are difficult to sew close to the body, thus giving room around the shape and creating silhouettes that are baggy, generous, slouchy. Having a strong hold over indigenous textiles and using them to create comfortable shapes while working with womenswear since 2011 has also been channelised here. Core is an idea that I had seeded last year and it was anyhow due to be launched this year. The pandemic gave it a nudge as daily essentials became a necessity.

Not a capsule collection
I don't expect men to buy as women; for instance, if they like the fall of a pair of trousers, they would buy those in three colours whereas women tend to pick a variety. At the same time, I feel menswear is a stronger, more loyal market as seasonal collections don't need a huge variation. The textiles used in Eka menswear won't require much surface and design developments. The idea is to add elements that make it work for the segment of men who are evolved in their fashion sensibility. This is not a capsule collection but will be ongoing. In natural textiles like wool, linen and cotton, all recycled and repurposed from Eka collections, they have a timeless and functionality.

Right now, our real-time access to the world through social media and trade platforms has made the world a smaller place. Clothes are but one medium that demonstrate how the lines are blurring for design identities – transcending country of origin and native design sensibility. They merit through the local craft landscape and expression of personal identity. We can either live in our silos or create a fluid language with clever identity to cross over and merge.

Rina Singh is the founder and designer of Eka and Eka Core. Her debut menswear line launches on ogaan.com on December 5.



Amrut's X factor

This special edition whisky from the Bengaluru brand celebrates a memorable decade and is out just as we bid 2020 goodbye

ROSELLA STEPHEN

Most alcohol stories in the last few months have been about made in India gins (no complaint there, but how many are we going to have this year!) and tonic waters. Emails from alcohol majors and beverage consultants during the pandemic have shared alerts on yet another 'cocktail day' or literature on festive gifting combos and Thanksgiving food and wine pairings... one brand ambassador enthusiastically suggested a Sula Riesling with *rasgulla* for Diwali (I kid you not). So it was a pleasant surprise to receive a note from Bengaluru-based Amrut Distilleries about the launch of Fusion X, a special edition to mark a decade



of the award-winning dram. Despite several firsts to its credit – the first Indian whisky in a Wade Ceramics bottle and one with NFC tagging, among others – the team was typically modest (an Amrut hallmark) at the virtual launch on November 25.

Journalists and distributors joined in from across the country, Europe and the US, sharing their memories of Amrut Fusion's creator, the late Neelakanta Rao Jagdale. His son, Rakshit Jagdale, MD of Amrut Distilleries, explained how they worked hard towards launching Fusion X on Jagdale Sr's birth anniversary. And head distiller Ashok Chokalingam detailed the process – ex-Bourbon and Sherry butts (2nd and 3rd fill), the blending and alco-

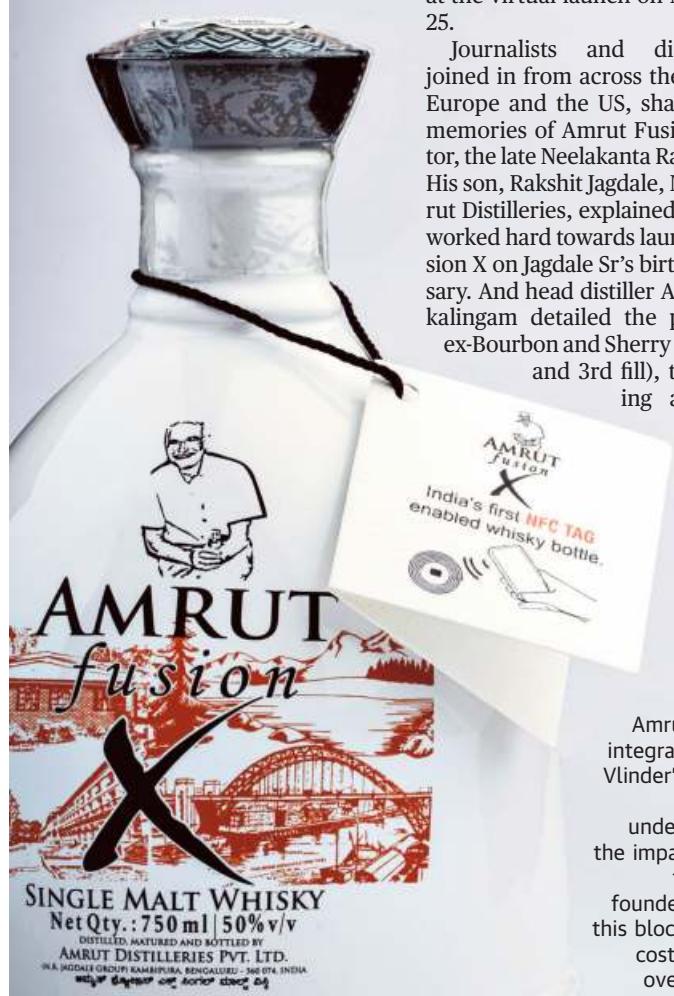
holic strength at 50%. This single malt is limited to 1010 bottles (because, number 10), with 240 bottles reserved for the US, 600 for the European continent, and 60 for Bengaluru. Evidently, there has been a mad scramble among distributors and fans. With its complex palate, silky middle ground and spicy, phenolic finish, it was agreed that this one is a keeper for the festivities ahead.

The next morning, Chokalingam, the man responsible for putting Amrut Single Malts on the world map, explained how he decided on Fusion X three years ago while touring the US. "On my return, I earmarked certain barrels of Amrut Fusion, with one of them aged for 10 years, and another for six," he said, explaining how blending and packaging clearances took a year. What sweetens the deal is the blockchain tech, ensuring authenticity and that the customer gets the entire source to bottle story.

Amrut Fusion X is priced at ₹15,000.

Behind the tech

Amrut Distilleries partnered with Vlinder for the NFC integrated chip in their corks (imported from Portugal). Vlinder's app Trag will ensure that consumers get proof of authenticity and provenance. "It helps them understand the stories of the origin, the journey, and the impact of the product with pictures, geolocation and timestamp of every step," says Malini Srinivasan, founder, Vlinder. Chokalingam is considering extending this blockchain tech to their single malt brands. "But the cost can be an issue, as each bottle costs me a little over ₹100. Hopefully it will happen," he concludes.



FOOD SPOT

Sandwiches on a winter afternoon



RAHUL VERMA

Let's hear it for John Montagu, the 4th earl of Sandwich. Legend has it that the 18th century British nobleman loved to gamble – so much so that he was loath to leave the card table for even his meals. That was when he thought of something that he could eat without fuss while playing cards – leading to the birth of the sandwich.

I am a sandwich man, too. I love them all: the thick slices with chunks of ham and cheese, the wafer thin ones with cucumber, and the stacked club sandwiches. The weather seemed to call for sandwiches, and I had been wondering where to order from.

The problem was solved when I got a call from Altogether Experimental (ATE), a café in Saiyad-Ul-Ajail in Saket. It describes itself as a craft coffee bar, scratch kitchen, and a modern patisserie that now delivers (9999288073).

I looked at the menu and found – to my great happiness – that it included tartines.

These open sandwiches come with your choice of toppings spread on a slice of bread. ATE has a Mexican ratatouille tartine – spiced grilled vegetables on a toasted sourdough slice with a cumin-flavoured and jalapeño-roasted pumpkin puree, ve-



relish. It came with potato chips and a sweet chilli aioli. However, I thought it could have done with a little less salt.

But the piece de resistance was the tiramisu croissant – rich, buttery, heady – it had been tempered with

Go gluten crazy at ATE with the variety of croissants, tartines, burgers, and other breads

Tiramisu Croissant; Spinach & Mushroom Crepe; Korean Fried Chicken Burger

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Bailey's Cream, then topped with toasted hazelnuts and vanilla.

I like the sound of the place not just because of the food, but also for the fact that it has an all-woman kitchen team. The café opened last December, but had to shut once the lockdown was announced. Now it is open again, Tuesday to Sunday (11 am - 8 pm), and is making the most of its outdoor sitting arrangement.

ATE offers all kinds of coffees and other brews -- espresso, latte, mocha, cold brews, kombucha (₹180-300). Most dishes cost ₹300-450. It has some hearty bowls, too: The Buddha bowl (₹500), for instance, consists of lemon-scented millets, roasted red peppers, charred corn steaks, crispy falafel, pickled roots, pickled onions and tzatziki.

The breakfast fare sounds heavenly, as does the bakery section. It doesn't surprise me that the chef-cum-owner, Anukriti Anand (who studied hotel management at Pusa) baked her first batch of chocolate chip muffins when she was 11.

I am dreaming of a nice morning meal there in non-COVID-19 times, sitting in the sun, coffee by the side, reading a newspaper – or perhaps a thriller – and biting into a moist sandwich.

The author is a seasoned food critic

Trump says he will leave office if Biden's victory is confirmed

"If the Electoral College chooses Biden, they will be making a mistake"

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump said on Thursday for the first time that he would leave the White House if Joe Biden is officially confirmed the winner of the U.S. election, even as he railed against the "rigged" vote.

Mr. Trump has made an unprecedented attempt to defy the results of the election by refusing to concede, spreading wild theories about stolen ballots and launching baseless legal challenges that have been thrown out by courts.

Answering his first questions from reporters since the November 3 vote, the President moved closer to accepting that he would serve only one term in office before Mr. Biden is inaugurated on January 20.

When asked if he would leave the White House if the Electoral College confirmed Biden's victory, Mr. Trump said, "Certainly I will. And you know that."

But "if they do, they made a mistake," he said, adding,



Shifting stand: Donald Trump at the White House. ■ AFP

"It's going to be a very hard thing to concede."

"I think that there will be a lot of things happening between now and (January) 20th," he said.

The Electoral College, which determines the White House winner, will meet on December 14 to certify Mr. Biden's victory, with Mr. Biden receiving 306 votes to Mr. Trump's 232.

"This election was a fraud," Mr. Trump said, again without providing any evidence during his remarks to reporters at the White House after he spoke to mili-

fight the worsening pandemic.

More than 260,000 people have died in the U.S. from COVID-19, with daily death tolls surging to 2,000 on recent days.

Mr. Trump's refusal to concede the election to Mr. Biden has added to the countless norms he has torn up during his four years in power.

Mr. Trump, 74, is alleging

— among other conspiracy theories — that voting machines deliberately deleted millions of his votes, though the government election security agency declared it "the most secure" election in U.S. history.

Under pressure from some senior Republicans, Mr. Trump this week ended his blockade of government assistance to ease Mr. Biden's preparation for assuming the presidency.

Mr. Trump said on Thursday he would soon travel to Georgia to campaign ahead of two key run-off elections that will decide which party controls the Senate.

tary personnel via video-link on the Thanksgiving holiday.

He described the U.S. voting infrastructure as "like a third-world country."

Earlier in the day, he tweeted that "this was a 100% RIGGED ELECTION," while on Wednesday he called on his Republican supporters "to turn the election over."

No proof of fraud

President-elect Biden has said that Americans "won't stand" for attempts to derail the vote outcome, and urged for Americans to unite to

atlantic alliances, given his many years spent in Paris.

He shares the Biden-Oba-

ma keenness to speak up

against perceived human

rights violations abroad, for

example publicly ruing the

decision for the U.S. to not

intervene in the humanitarian

crisis of recent years in

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which includes a firm com-

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crats farther to the left of Mr.

Biden, including outspoken

advocate of Palestinian

rights, Michigan Congress-

woman Rashida Tlaib.

Consider the backgrounds

of the most high-profile ap-

pointees thus far. Leading

the list is Antony Blinken for

Secretary of State. A former

Deputy Secretary of State

who served under Presi-

dents Bill Clinton and Barack

Obama, Mr. Blinken's work

to date suggests that he has

an unshakeable commit-

ment to internationalism,

particularly to the U.S.'s tran-

With Cabinet picks, Joe Biden remains close to the political centre

His appointments suggest he will undo many of Trump's policy decisions

NARAYAN LAKSHMAN

If the nearly four years under U.S. President Donald Trump led the country away from international alliances and eschewed Washington's commitment to globalisation and multilateralism, it appears that the administration of Joe Biden, Democrat and winner of the 2020 election, will aim to reverse that experience.



Joe Biden

atlantic alliances, given his many years spent in Paris.

He shares the Biden-Oba-ma keenness to speak up against perceived human rights violations abroad, for example publicly ruing the decision for the U.S. to not intervene in the humanitarian crisis of recent years in Syria. The flip side of this zeal to get involved in such international episodes, which includes a firm commitment to ally Israel's security, is that his views might be opposed by some Democrats farther to the left of Mr. Biden, including outspoken advocate of Palestinian rights, Michigan Congress-woman Rashida Tlaib.

Consider the backgrounds of the most high-profile appointees thus far. Leading the list is Antony Blinken for Secretary of State. A former Deputy Secretary of State who served under Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, Mr. Blinken's work to date suggests that he has an unshakeable commitment to internationalism, particularly to the U.S.'s trans-

sharpest drop in economic activity witnessed in a generation, owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Similarly, in nominating Alejandro Mayorkas, a Cuban-American attorney and Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security under Mr. Obama, as Secretary of Homeland Security, Mr. Biden has not only sought to signal diversity within his Cabinet selection — Mr. Mayorkas would be the first Latino and first immigrant in this role — but also likely a break from the uncompromising policies of the Trump administration in handling the influx of undocumented workers across the U.S.'s southern border.

Under Mr. Trump, executive orders and administrative rules for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement were used to implement a steady crackdown on aspiring immigrants, including everything from family separations and the holding of minors in detention facilities, to the ban of issuance on green cards and skilled worker visas for new applicants. While it may be tempting to assume that the incoming administration would adopt a more nuanced approach, it remains a fact that the Obama years actually witnessed a spike in deportations, and given the mood and pressures in U.S. politics at the moment, Mr. Biden could hardly appear to be soft on immigration policy.

NEWS ANALYSIS

He, along with former Secretary of State John Kerry as the Special Envoy for Climate Change, will presumably help the Biden administration carry out its top priorities for its first 100 days in the White House: a gradual reversal of the U.S.'s abrogation of the Iran Nuclear Agreement and the Paris Climate Agreement. It will certainly help that Mr. Sullivan played a critical role in negotiating the Iran deal, while Mr. Kerry was a key interlocutor in forging together the Paris accord.

On the economic front, matters may be more straightforward, if perhaps perilously poised, making Mr. Biden's pick of Janet Yellen, the first woman to chair the Federal Reserve, as Treasury Secretary, an optimal one. She comes with decades of experience in macroeconomic policy, particularly the impact of economic growth on labour markets. Just as President Obama inherited the worst moments of the Great Recession of 2008 at the very outset of his first term, Mr. Biden will be in firefighting mode to tackle rampant joblessness and the

Top Iranian nuclear scientist killed

Tehran blames Israel, threatens to 'strike as thunder' at Fakhrizadeh's killers

REUTERS

DUBAI

An Iranian scientist long suspected by the West of masterminding a secret nuclear bomb programme was killed in an ambush near Tehran on Friday that could provoke confrontation between Iran and its foes in the last weeks of Donald Trump's presidency.

The military adviser to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei blamed Israel for the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, and vowed to retaliate for his killing.

"In the last days of the political life of their ... ally (Trump), the Zionists seek to intensify pressure on Iran

and create a full-blown war," Hossein Dehghan said in a tweet.

"We will strike as thunder at the killers of this oppressed martyr and will make them regret their action."

Fakhrizadeh died of injuries in hospital after armed assassins fired on his car, Iranian state media reported. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.

Silence on attack

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office declined to comment on the killing. In the U.S., the Pentagon declined to comment and the State Department



and the White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment. President-elect Joe Biden's team also declined to comment.

Fakhrizadeh has been described by Western and Israeli intelligence services for

years as the leader of a covert atomic bomb programme halted in 2003, which Israel and the United States accuse Tehran of trying to restore in secret. Iran has long denied seeking to weaponise nuclear energy.

Regardless of who was responsible for the attack, it is certain to escalate tension between Iran and the United States in the final weeks of Mr. Trump's presidency.

A U.S. official confirmed earlier this month that Mr. Trump had asked military aides for a plan for a possible strike on Iran. He decided against it at that time because of the risk it could provoke an uncontrollable wider West Asia conflict.

Courts ban remembrance events for LTTE cadre on 'Heroes Day'

Families light lamps and remember members in homes

MEERA SRINIVASAN

COLOMBO

Many Tamil families living in Sri Lanka's north and east on Friday marked 'Heroes Day' — an annual commemoration of LTTE cadre who died in the civil war — by lighting lamps in the quiet confines of their homes, after the government obtained a court order banning the remembrance.

Petitioning different courts in the war-affected districts in the last week, Sri Lanka's Attorney General Department sought prohibition orders on the commemoration. Government lawyers and police argued that such an event could lead to the "revival of the LTTE" or potentially cause disharmony among communities. In a submission — that drew wide criticism on social media — an inspector told the court: "we [the government] made it possible for those [referring to northern Tamils] who ate pittu and vadai those days to eat pizza now," referring to the opening up of the area after the armed forces defeated the separatist LTTE in 2009.

Sinnathurai Maheswari, 83, whose son, an LTTE combatant, died in 1985, was among those who went to court to assert her right to remember. "But they have now said we can't hold the remembrance. I just lit a lamp in front of his picture at our home and kept some fruits and biscuits in front of it," she told *The Hindu* from Jaffna. "They say remembering our dead children might bring back the LTTE. How is even possible now? Who is alive to revive it? The leader is dead, everyone is dead. In my case, I have no one to call my family, other than one other son who is ill and needs my care. All I have is the memory of my son who gave his life."

The LTTE began com-

memorating its fallen cadre on 'Maaveerar Naal' [Heroes Day] in 1989 on November 27 — marking the day that a member, for the first time, died in combat in 1982. Since then, members and families have followed the practice of paying respects to the dead combatants every year.

Police presence
According to Mullaithivu residents, a heavy police and army presence was seen across the district on Friday. "The more they prevent us from remembering, the more we will remember our heroes in our homes, within our families. They [the government] want to erase this history, but that will not happen," said a resident, re-

China slaps 200% tax on Australian wine

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING

China on Friday added wine to the growing list of Australian goods barred from its markets in a trade war against Australia over disputes including its support for a probe into the origin of the coronavirus.

The Ministry of Commerce imposed import taxes of up to 212.1%, effective on Saturday, which Australia's Trade Minister said make Australian wine unsellable in China, his country's biggest export market.

China increasingly is using its populous market as leverage to extract political concessions and increase its strategic influence.

Earlier, China stopped or reduced imports of beef, coal, barley, seafood, sugar and timber from Australia after it supported calls for a probe into the origin of the pandemic, which began in China in December.

China's Communist Party is trying to deflect criticism of its handling of the outbreak, which plunged the global economy into its deepest slump since the 1930s, by arguing the virus came from abroad, without providing evidence.

Meanwhile, Australia is working on a mutual defence treaty with Japan, which Chinese leaders see as a strategic rival, and has expressed concern about China's construction of military facilities on islands in the disputed South China Sea.

Australia's main stock market index fell 0.5% on Friday following the news.

PARADIP PORT TRUST

e-TENDER CALL NOTICE (e-TCN)

E-tenders are invited on behalf of Paradip Port Trust for the work "Establishment of 400 Bedded Super Specialty Hospital at Paradip Port with an option to develop Medical College and further expansion of hospital on PPP basis". The last date & time of submission of tender **20.01.2021 on 14.00 Hrs.** For details, please refer website : <http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app/>. Chief Medical Officer PPT/PR/325/2020-21, DL.27.11.2020

PARADIP PORT TRUST

e-TENDER CALL NOTICE

Name of the work : "Providing Assistance for Berthing/Unberthing of Vessels and other Marine Operations at Paradip Port for a period of 03 Years". Estimated cost : Rs.3,91,66,000/- Last date & time of submission of tender through online bidding is 1500 hours on Dt.17.12.2020. For further details, please log on to the website : <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app/>. Dy.Conservator PPT/PR/327/2020-21 Dt.27.11.2020

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS : TIRUPATI

VIGILANCE & SECURITY DEPARTMENT e - TENDER NOTICE

RoC.No.C1/2111/CV/SO/TID/TP/2019
e-Tenders are invited for "Entrustment of Security Services under Man Power Contract to "Entrustment of Security Services under Man Power Contract at SV Temple and Information Centre & E-Darshan Counter, Bangalore".

DATE OF OPENING TENDER

- 1 Bid Document Download Start Date & Time : 24-11-2020 @ 5.00 p.m.
- 2 Bid submission Start Date & Time : 16-12-2020 @ 5.00 p.m.
- 3 Bid submission closing Date & Time : 18-12-2020 @ 5.00 p.m.
- 4 Pre-Bid meeting : 09-12-2020 @ 4.00 p.m.

Tender documents can be downloaded from the website: <https://tender.approcurement.gov.in>. For further details contact phone numbers: 0877-2264079, 2264555 and mail ID: cvsocialcttd@gmail.com.

Roc.No.PR/13924/Adv.No.226/PRO/2020; Dated:27-11-

Smith, Finch and Maxwell flex batting muscle in a show of strength

Zampa and Hazlewood chip in with the ball for Australia; Hardik and Dhawan keep the stiff chase alive before India runs out of steam and falls short by a mile

INDIA IN AUS

REUTERS

Steve Smith and Aaron Finch led the way with centuries as Australia opened its home summer with victory over India by 66 runs on Friday in the first ODI played in front of a crowd since March.

The capacity of the Sydney Cricket Ground was reduced by 50% because of social distancing rules but a crowd of 17,821, mostly backing the tourists, were treated to some fireworks from the home batsmen in the afternoon sun.

Finch scored 114 in an opening stand of 156 with David Warner (69) to lay a platform before his predecessor as captain Smith smashed 105 off 66 balls to drive Australia to 374 for six – the team's highest total against India.

Kohli's men struggled in trying to chase down the third highest total they had conceded in a one-dayer.

Bright innnings

Hardik Pandya thumped four sixes in a bright 90 to give India hope but the innings petered out after his fifth-wicket partnership of 128 with opener Shikhar Dhawan (74) was broken and India limped to 308 for eight



Rousing knocks: While Smith and Finch took Australia to a mammoth total, Hardik tried his best for India. ■ GETTY IMAGES

in 50 overs. "I've been searching for something for a couple of months but a few days ago something just clicked," Smith said of his batting. "It was nice to contribute to a good win."

Smith survived an early scare on 15 when he was given out lbw but he immediately reviewed successful-

ly. Thereafter, he looked at his very best as he raced to the third fastest one-day century by an Australian off 62 balls, clubbing 10 fours and four sixes.

Finch had already secured his 17th century in the format from a more pedestrian 117 deliveries before departing to make way for a vintage

Glenn Maxwell cameo of 45 runs off 19 balls.

Paceman Mohammed Shami was the pick of India's bowlers (3-59).

Two wickets in one over
Josh Hazlewood (3-55) stalled a blistering start to India's innings by removing Mayank Agarwal and then

dismissed Virat Kohli (2) and Shreyas Iyer in the 10th over.

Spinner Adam Zampa (4-54) redeemed himself with ball in hand after dropping Kohli in the deep when the India captain was on one, but his was only one of a string of misfields from both sides.

Statosphere

1 Australia made its highest score (374) against India in ODIs

2 Finch became the second fastest Australian batsman to reach 5000 ODI runs (126 innings), after Warner (115). The Aussie captain surpassed Dean Jones' record (128). Amla (101) is the fastest to reach the milestone

3 Australia's 374/6 is the third highest total against India in ODIs, following the 438/4 by South Africa (Mumbai, 2015) and the 411/8 by SL (Rajkot, 2009)

3 Smith notched up Australia's third fastest century (62b) after Maxwell (51b, vs SL, SCG, 2015) and Faulkner (57b, vs Ind, Bengaluru, 2013)

5 Smith's ton is also the fifth quickest against India

45 Afridi, Kanpur, 2005

57 Faulkner, Bengaluru, 2013

57 de Villiers, Mumbai, 2015

58 de Villiers, Ahmedabad, 2010

62 Smith, Sydney, 2020

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA

David Warner c Rahul b Shami 69 (76b, 6x4), Aaron Finch c Rahul b Umran 114 (124b, 9x4, 2x6), Steve Smith c Shami 105 (66b, 11x4, 4x6), Marcus Stoinis c Rahul b Chahal 0 (1b), Glenn Maxwell c Jadeja b Shami 45 (19b, 5x4, 3x6), Marnus Labuschagne c Dhawan b Saini 2 (2b), Alex Carey (not out) 17 (13b, 2x4), Pat Cummins (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (b-1, lb-6, w-12, nb-2): 21; Total (for six wkt.s in 50 overs): 308.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-153 (Warner, 27.5 overs), 2-264 (Finch, 39.6), 3-271 (Stoinis, 40.4), 4-328 (Maxwell, 44.5), 5-331 (Labuschagne, 45.2), 6-372 (Smith, 49.3).

INDIA BOWLING

Shami 10-0-59-3, Bumrah 10-0-73-1, Saini 10-0-83-1, Chahal 10-0-89-1, Jadeja 10-0-63-0.

INDIA

Mayank Agarwal c Maxwell b Hazlewood 22 (18b, 2x4, 1x6), Shikhar Dhawan c Starc b Zampa 74 (86b, 10x4), Virat Kohli c Finch b Hazlewood 21 (21b, 2x4,

Total (for six wkts. in 50 overs): 308.

AUSTRALIA BOWLING

Starc 9-0-65-1, Hazlewood 10-0-55-3, Cummins 8-0-52-0, Zampa 10-0-54-4, Stoinis 6.2-25-0, Maxwell 6.4-0-55-0.

Toss: Australia; MoM: Smith.

Australia won by 66 runs to take a 1-0 lead in three-match series.

Second ODI: November 29, Sydney, 9.10 a.m.

'Our body language was disappointing'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SYDNEY

India skipper Virat Kohli, on Friday, questioned his team's body language after the loss to Australia.

"Everyone needs to show intent in the entire 50 overs.

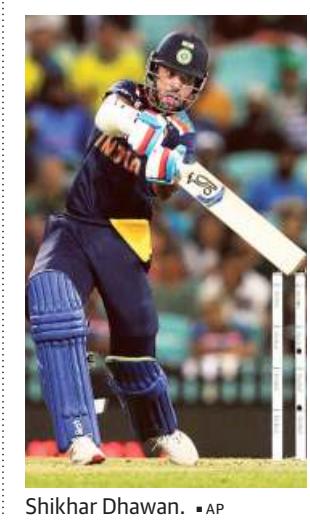
"I think the body language in the field wasn't great after around 25 overs. It was a disappointing part. If you don't take your chances against a top-quality opposition they'll hurt you and that is what happened today."

Protesters breach security



A protester is ushered off by security. ■ GETTY IMAGES

We had a shot but lost vital wickets: Hardik



Shikhar Dhawan. ■ AP

S. DIPAK RAGAV CHENNAI

Hardik Pandya felt India was in the hunt, despite chasing a stiff target of 375, during his 128-run partnership with Shikhar Dhawan for the fifth wicket.

In a virtual interaction with the media after the game, Hardik, who top-scored for India with 90, said, "When I was batting, we had to believe and I genuinely felt we could have done it."

"It is just that we lost important wickets at the wrong time. Shikhar got out. We

had a fantastic partnership and could have built from there, and maybe had a better shot at the total. Unfortunately, we lost wickets when I felt we were getting the rhythm."

"When you have to chase more than 370-odd runs, there is not much planning. Everyone has to play with intent and at a good strike-rate."

Having picked just five bowlers, and with most of them proving expensive, India missed Hardik's ability with the ball.

Asked when he would be

able to bowl in a match, thus helping the side's balance, the 27-year-old said, "It is a process, and I am looking at a long-term goal."

"I want to be at 100% of my bowling capacity for the most important games like the World Cups and other crucial series whenever required."

Bowling not game-ready

"I am not looking at a short-term plan where I exhaust myself. I am following a process and I am bowling in the nets but [am] just not game-ready," he added.

Indians join Aussies in anti-racism gesture

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SYDNEY

The Indian cricketers on Friday joined their Australian counterparts in forming a barefoot circle on the ground before the first ODI

to support the anti-racism movement and acknowledge Aboriginal culture.

They also wore black armbands in memory of former Australia players Dean Jones and Philip Hughes.



Solidarity: India and Australia players at the 'barefoot ceremony' at the SCG. ■ AP

Maradona laid to rest

REUTERS

BUENOS AIRES

Diego Maradona, one of the world's greatest ever footballers, was buried on Thursday amid a global outpouring of grief from the streets of Buenos Aires to Naples in Italy.

On a day of high emotion, the World Cup winner was taken by hearse late on Thursday to the Bella Vista cemetery on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, where his parents are also interred, for a small private ceremony involving his family and friends.

ATKMB rides on Krishna and Manvir's strikes in Kolkata Derby

SPORTS BUREAU

A TK-Mohun Bagan power past traditional SC East Bengal 2-0 in the maiden Kolkata derby at the Indian Super League at the Tilak Maidan, Vasco, on Friday. Roy Krishna (49th minute) and Manvir Singh (85) found the target as Antonio Habas' men registered their second successive victory of the season.

East Bengal enjoyed a clear edge in terms of possession in the opening half, but it was Bagan which had the best chance to score. In the 36th minute, midfielder Javi

Hernandez unleashed a powerful left-footer that was headed for goal, but East Bengal goalkeeper Debjit Majumder pulled off a fantastic save. Hernandez's effort was easily the highlight of the first half.

Though East Bengal had quite a few openings in the first half, it was let down by poor finishing.

The result: SC East Bengal 0 lost to ATK Mohun Bagan 2 (Krishna 49, Manvir 85).

SATURDAY'S MATCH
Bengaluru FC VS Hyderabad FC 7.30 P.M.
STAR SPORTS 2 (SD & HD) AND 3



Thunderbolt! Krishna's powerful left-footer proved unstoppable. ■ ISL/SPORTZPICS

PBL Season-6 postponed

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM HYDERABAD

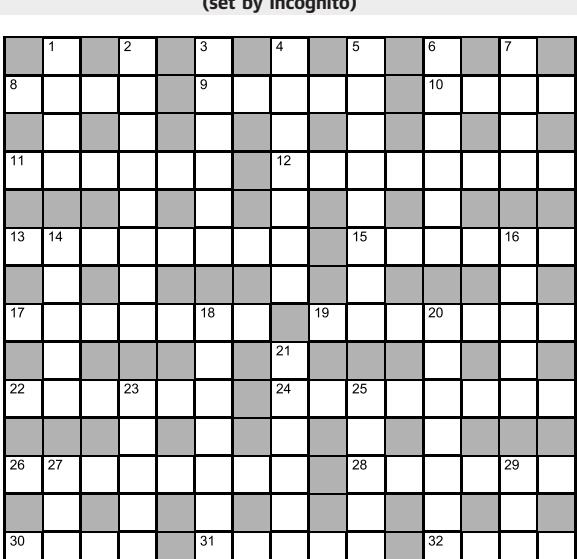
The sixth season of the Premier Badminton League (PBL), scheduled to be held during December-January, has been postponed due to the pandemic, according to official host Sportzlive's Managing Director Prasad Mangipudi.

"After carefully considering all guidelines, protocols and commitments and following discussions with the BAI, we have decided to look for possible dates only next year," Prasad said.

TH CROSSWORD + 13105

(set by Incognito)

Free your mind from lockdown. Solve puzzles on our interactive site: <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>



ACROSS

- 8 Sotsman returns carrying large mollusc (4)
- 9 Capital part of Coromandel history (5)
- 10 Hideous adder left guardedly when confused (4)
- 11 Remove cork and stop supply of juice? (6)
- 12 Fricely take drunk sailor (8)
- 13 Exponential increase in deliveries? (4,4)
- 15 Tram leaves Tambaram carrying a rookie to IAF base (6)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

C	T	S	S	I	C
MOOR	WATER	TANK			
L	O	O	I	L	A
COSTAR	PENAL	ISE			
R	D	E	G	H	
P					

TV PICKS

Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6 p.m., 8.30 p.m., 11 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Sunday)
Serie A: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m., 10.30 p.m. & 1.15 a.m. (Sunday)
Bahrain Grand Prix: Qualifying, SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 7.20 p.m.
ISL: Star Sports 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 7.20 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Olympics test events to resume in March

TOKYO Tokyo Olympics test events will resume in March and a decision on fan attendance will be taken in the spring, deputy executive director of the Games Operations Bureau Yasuo Mori said on Friday, as preparations continued for the postponed Games despite ongoing coronavirus fears. The comments from , come after International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach last week said he was "very confident" the Games would have fan attendance.

AP

Belgium stays No. 1 in FIFA rankings

ZURICH With Belgium still at No. 1, FIFA released its final rankings list for 2020 on Friday and set the seedings for the European portion of the World Cup qualifying draw. Defending World Cup champion France is second, with Brazil third and England fourth. European champion Portugal rounds out the top five, with Spain in sixth. FIFA will host the European draw on Dec. 7.

ADITI AND DIKSHA MAKE POOR STARTS ANDALUCIA Aditi Ashok completed her first round with a disappointing five-over 77 in the season-ending Andalucia Costa Del Sol Open De Espana on Friday. She was unable to complete her round on Thursday as play was suspended due to bad weather. Diksha Dagar, too, had a tough opening round as she struggled to an 11-over 83. Spaniard Nuria Iturioz's six-under 66 gave her the lead. PTI

England-Netherlands ODIs put off to 2022

AMSTERDAM The ODI series between England and the Netherlands, which was scheduled in May next year, was on Friday postponed to May 2022 due to the continuing uncertainty arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic. The three-match ODI series, which was to be played here, was a part of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League. The Royal Dutch Cricket Association said that the prospect of playing the matches without spectators forced the postponement of the series by one year. PTI

MAN UTD. YET TO RECOVER FROM CYBER ATTACK

MANCHESTER Manchester United has been unable to fully restore its computer systems a week after being targeted in a cyber attack. The Premier League club's staff still did not have access to email on Thursday night, and some other functions were also unavailable. AP

Indian challenge ends

SPORTS BUREAU CAIRO

The third-seeded Indian pair of Anirudh Chandrasekhar and Manish Suresh Kumar was beaten by a Swiss-Spanish duo of Johan Nikles and Sanchez Jover 7-6(4), 6-1 in the semifinals of the \$15,000 ITF men's tennis tournament here on Friday.

Fourth-seeded Arjun Kadhe and Yaraslav Shyla of Belarus were beaten 6-2, 6-2 by Argentinian pair of Juan Bautista Otegui and Juan Pablo Paz in the other semifinal.

Quarter-final results: Shyla & Kadhe bt Yurii Dzhavakian (Ukr) & Mariano Navone (Arg) 6-1, 6-3; Anirudh & Manish w/o Emiliano Maggioli (Ita) & Dalibor Srvina (Cze).

"This is the first-ever

Significant moment for Indian sport: Bindra

An opportunity for the athletes to get back in action

DELHI HALF MARATHON

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Former World and Olympic champion Abhinav Bindra was pleased with the prospect of elite athletes running the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon (ADHM) on Sunday, and putting Indian sports back on the rails.

"The ADHM is a very significant moment for Indian sports, since the pandemic started. Our athletes have resumed training but we have to get them in competitive space. This is a very important step towards resuming competitive sports in India, and a benchmark for other sports," said Bindra, the brand ambassador for the event.

Despite having been a rifle shooter, Bindra said he had

to do quite a bit of running as part of physical training.

"I picked up shooting because I thought I wouldn't have to move."

"However, to succeed in shooting, I had to run quite a bit. Running was a very important part of my training," Bindra said.

Some of the elite Indian runners like Avinash Sable, Srinu Bugatha, Abhishek Pal, Pradeep Singh, Parul Chaudhary, Chinta Yadav and Sanjivani Jadhav will be competing on Sunday, along with some of the best in the world.

The rest of the participants across the globe will join through a mobile app.

"This era forces us to embrace technology and innovate more."

"To survive a challenging situation, we have to adapt to the situation," said Bindra.

about the amateurs running in remote locations.

"We need to get back to competition and find out how much we have improved. Endurance is required for both steeplechase and marathon," said National steeplechase record holder Avinash Sable.

"It always feels great with spectators. This time, the event will be different due to the situation," conceded defending champion of the Indian section, Srinu Bugatha.

"I have to do a bit more this year to bag the first position, as I had finished second in the last two years. I have practised harder," said Parul Chaudhary.

Even though she finished third last year, Chinata Yadav was happy with her improved time. "I have prepared well and will perform better," said Chinta.



Meet and greet: Abhinav Bindra is flanked by Srinu Bugatha, left, and Avinash Sable in New Delhi on Friday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

No stopping Hamilton

World champion takes first practice ahead of Bottas



Speed merchant: Hamilton zips around the Sakhir circuit during first practice on Friday. ■ AP

BAHRAIN GP

REUTERS MANAMA

Lewis Hamilton set the pace in Friday's opening practice for the Bahrain Grand Prix ahead of teammate Valtteri Bottas who completed a one-two for Mercedes.

The Briton, who equalled Michael Schumacher's record haul of seven titles at the last race in Turkey, lapped the 5.4km Sakhir desert track in one minute, 29.03 seconds, 0.449 seconds clear of Bottas. Sergio Perez in the Racing Point was third, 0.967 seconds off the pace.

Hamilton heads into Sunday's race, the first of a whirlwind Middle Eastern triple-header that wraps up the season, as favourite to

chalk up an 11th win of the season.

ON COURSE FOR RECORD

Victory a week later, also in Bahrain but around the track's shorter outer loop, and then at the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix would see him end a record-breaking campaign with 13 wins, his most in a single year.

It would also make him only the third driver after Schumacher and Sebastian Vettel to win 13 races in a season. Carlos Sainz was fourth for McLaren, ahead of AlphaTauri's Pierre Gasly, with the Red Bull pair of Max Verstappen and Alexander Albon sixth and seventh respectively followed by Red Bull's Esteban Ocon.

Lance Stroll was ninth in the other Racing Point and Daniel Ricciardo rounded out the top 10 for Renault.

Charles Leclerc, who was on course for a pole-to-flag win in Bahrain last year, was 11th in his Ferrari. His teammate Vettel, the most successful driver in Bahrain with four wins, was 12th.

UNEVENTFUL

The session, which took place under overcast skies, was largely uneventful apart from occasional spins and lock-ups as drivers got to grips with the track.

Alfa Romeo reserve driver Robert Kubica made his fourth practice appearance of the season, taking over Kimi Raikkonen's car for the session.

At Williams, development driver Roy Nissany got some track time in Briton George Russell's car.

Nepo, Naka and So bounce back

Reach the semifinals along with Carlsen

SKILLING OPEN

RAKESH RAO NEW DELHI

In a reversal of fortunes, Ian Nepomniachtchi (Nepo), Hikaru Nakamura (Naka) and Wesley So bounced back from first-set defeats to reach the semifinals of the \$100,000 Skilling Open online chess on Thursday.

Nakamura raced away to 2.5-0.5 victory in the rapid games against Maxime Vachier-Lagrave after winning twice from the white side. However, he stared at elimination against losing the first tie-break blitz game as Vachier needed just a draw in the second blitz game.

Undeterred, Nakamura levelled the blitz score and then pulled off a draw from the black side to claim the Armageddon game for a place in the semifinal against American compatriot So.

In another well-contested

game, So won the second game and drew the rest in the rapid section against Teimour Radjabov.

Following the two drawn blitz games, So came out undefeated from the black side in the Armageddon game to advance.

Nepomniachtchi was in his element against Levon Aronian. He won the rapid phase 3-1 and then clinched both blitz games to stamp his superiority. He next faces Magnus Carlsen.

The results: Quarterfinals: Set Two: Magnus Carlsen (Nor)

drew with Anish Giri (Ned) 2-2. Ian Nepomniachtchi (Rus) bt Levon Aronian (Arm) 3-1; Blitz: Nepomniachtchi bt Aronian 2-0. Wesley So (USA) bt Teimour Radjabov (Aze) 2.5-1.5;

Blitz: So drew with Radjabov 1-1; (So prevails in Armageddon); Hikaru Nakamura (USA) bt Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra) 2.5-0.5; Blitz: Nakamura drew with Vachier 1-1; (Nakamura prevails in Armageddon).

Final-lineup: Carlsen-Nepomniachtchi; So-Nakamura.

Neapolitans pay rich tributes to a hero

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE NAPLES

Napoli players honoured club legend Diego Maradona on Thursday by stepping out onto the pitch wearing his No. 10 jersey ahead of their Europa League match with Rijeka.

Lorenzo Insigne had earlier led the tributes alongside fans before the game, Napoli's first since Maradona's death on Wednesday.

Wearing black armbands, they sported Maradona's iconic jersey during the team presentation and minute's silence. Maradona led Napoli to league titles in 1987 and 1990 and the UEFA Cup in 1989.

Supporters thronged in front of the San Paolo stadium, which could soon be renamed in honour of Maradona.

Eight para athletes in TOPS scheme

They are from athletics, shooting, badminton, table tennis

■ The decision was taken by the Mission Olympic Cell at its meeting on Thursday

men's doubles pair of Parul Parmar and Palak Kohli, currently ranked world number 5 in the race to qualification for the Paralympics, has been included in the TOPS scheme.

The decision was taken by the Mission Olympic Cell at its meeting on Thursday. The eight athletes are from athletics, shooting, badminton and table tennis.

From para-athletics, Vinod Kumar and Ajit Kumar Panchal (both men's discus) and Praveen Kumar (high jump) have been included while Virender Dhankar (shot put) and Jayanti Behera (women's 400m) have been dropped.

Para table tennis player Bhavina Patel, ranked 8th in the world, has been included in the TOPS scheme.

Both Vinod and Praveen have already qualified for the Tokyo Paralympics.

In para-badminton, wo-

DELHI ROUND-UP

All-round show by Rawat

Saqlain Haider's all-round performance (3/33 and 109 not out) proved in vain as Delhi's former Ranji Trophy player, Man-of-the-Match Kuldeep Rawat scored a timely 48 not out and then took four wickets to help Ravi Brothers beat Quetta DAV Cricket Academy by 24 runs for a place in the pre-quarterfinals of the 30th All India Sperry Om Nath Sood memorial tournament on Friday. In another encounter, medium pacer Nitish Hudda (4/34) and left arm spinner Akash Rawat (3/17) triggered a collapse for Gush CC and set up Uday Bhan CA 103 for 4 in 19.4 overs (Gulzar Singh Sandhu 41, Shivam Bhan 39 n.o.).

Sohail Khan excels

Man-of-the-Match Sohail Khan (98) and Mridul Jain (4/7) were the stars of Ravindra Cricket Academy's 146-run triumph over Sehwag Cricket Academy in the first Bhola Singh memorial (under-17) cricket tournament at the Chhattarpur Cricket Ground.

The scores: Ravi Brothers 221/9 in 40 overs (Sohail Khan 98, Tanish 30, Sumit Kumar 4/57) bt Sehwag Cricket Academy 69 in 15.5 overs (Mridul Jain 4/7).

Hitesh Gemini sizzles

Hitesh Gemini's all-round effort (57 and 5/38) and Kapil's 83 helped Haryana Cricket Academy outplay Youth Cricket XI by 45 runs in the Tripathi League cricket tournament.

The scores: HCA 239/9 in 40 overs (Kapil 83, Hitesh Gemini 57, Rajat 36, Vipul Choudary 4/39), C.K. Yadav 3/53) bt Youth XI 194 in 35.5 overs (Vikas Nagar 58, Pradeep Malik 36, Banu Anand 35, Hitesh Gemini 5/38).

Daksh Virmani on song

Daksh Virmani (80) was the star of Pacific Sports Club's five-wicket victory over Captain Pathan Wing Cricket Academy in the P.T. Wing (under-17) tournament.

The scores: Captain Pathan Wing 186 in 31.4 overs (Arnav Sharma 63, Gourav Gujjar 3/21, Gautam Bhutani 3/27) lost to

Pacific Sports 190/5 in 31 overs (Daksh Virmani 80, Sarthak Talwar 27, Aditya Mittal 26).

Dhrupal and Kuldeep sizzle Dhrupal Godara scored six goals to guide Achievers ONN to a thrilling 8-7 victory over Jindal Panther in the semifinals of the Baroda Cup 10-goal polo tournament.

In the other semifinal, Kuldeep Singh Rathore's seven goals powered Rajnigandha Achievers past Fighters 12 goals to 2 1/2. The final will be played at 3 p.m. on Sunday.

The results (semifinals):

Rajnigandha Achievers 12 (Kuldeep Singh Rathore 7, Daniel Otamendi 3, Padmanabh Singh 2) bt Fighters 2 1/2 (handicap 2 1/2); Achievers ONN 8 (Dhrupal Godara 6, Salim Azmi 2) bt Jindal Panther 7 (Simran Shergill 3, Siddhant Sharma 3, Venkatesh Jindal).

FICCI global sports summit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

9. The exhibition attempts to connect consumers across the world through a low-cost, easy-to-access platform, FICCI said in a statement.

"FICCI is committed to finding innovative and effective ways to promote the development of sports and sports business in the country," said FICCI Sports and Youth Affairs Committee co-chairperson Shabnam Panjwani.

general Dilip Chenoy.

"Turf will bring together multi-disciplinary experts from the world of sports with innovative ideas and exclusive insights into issues and growth opportunities of sports and fitness in India," said FICCI Sports and Youth Affairs Committee co-chairperson Shabnam Panjwani.

During his last visit to Kolkata three years ago, Maradona had conducted a football clinic with school children at the Aditya School of Sports in Kadambachi on the outskirts of Barasat, about 35 kilometres from

He was slated to feature in a match billed as 'Diego vs Dada' but by the time the match began, the 1986 World Cup-winning Argentine captain was completely drained out after the session with school kids.

Anirban said the stadium was built in four months and Maradona was the first sportsperson to step into it. "I remember taking Maradona from his hotel. He was tired but when he saw the crowd he became full of life. Initially,