

on Sunday

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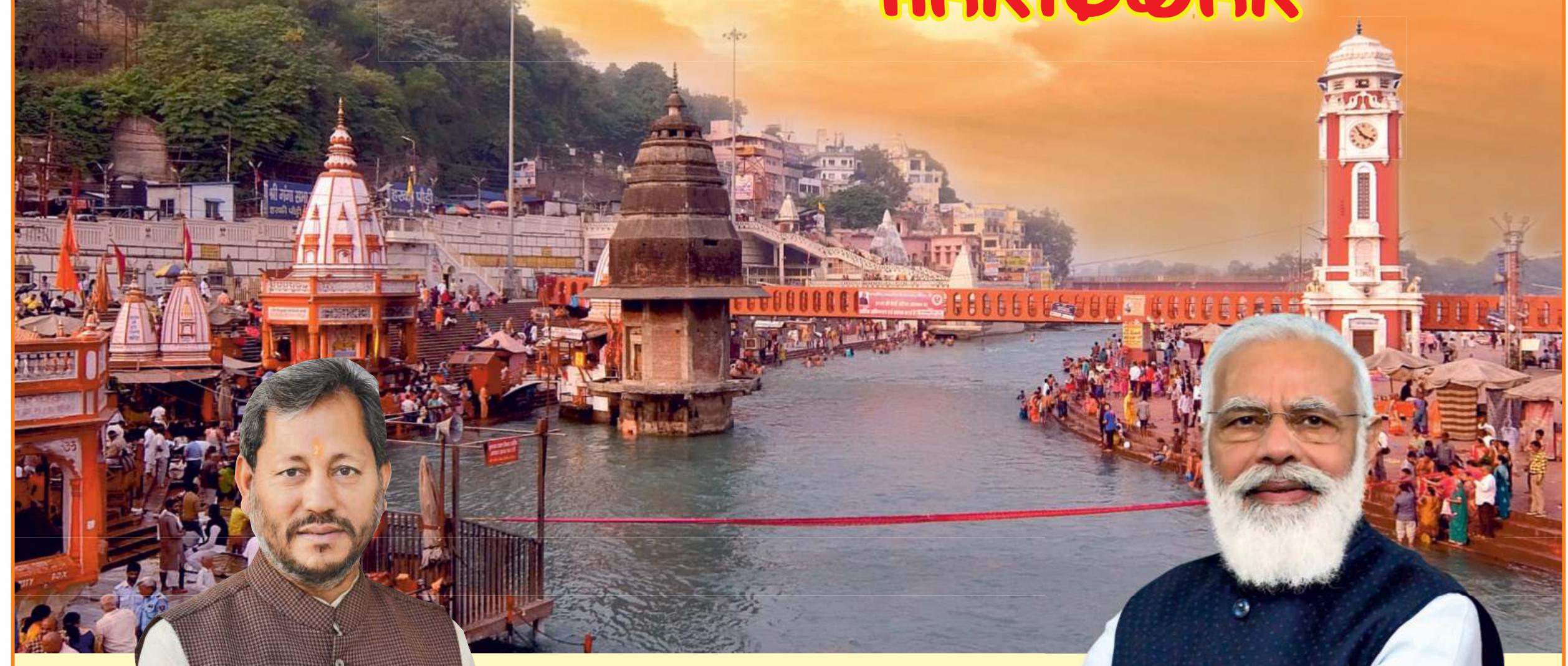


Govt. of Uttarakhand

BEAUTIFUL CLEAN SAFE



MAHAKUMBH HARIDWAR



A clean & safe Mahakumbh is being organised by the Uttarakhand Govt, which comes after every 12 years. It is our earnest effort that everybody who visits Kumbh, feels the sacredness and divinity all around. Kumbh is the symbol of our deep-rooted faith and rich culture and a part of our heritage, which has kept us together for thousands of years. Do come to Haridwar to be blessed by the divine forces and holy saints. Welcome to Mahakumbh, Haridwar.

Tirath Singh Rawat
Chief Minister, Uttarakhand



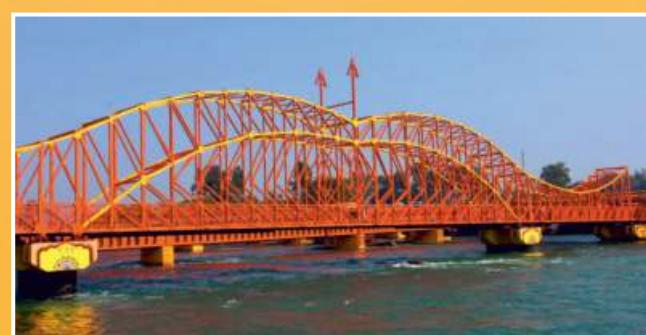
Holy Kumbh mela offers devotees from the country and abroad a special occasion to witness the spiritual, cultural and social diversity of India. The visitors to Prayagraj Kumbh had experienced the purity and sacredness of Ganga ji. Now, during the divine and magnificent Haridwar Kumbh also, pilgrims from across the globe are experiencing similar bliss while taking holy dip in clean Ganga.

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

A HEARTY WELCOME TO ALL THE DEVOTEES - MAHAKUMBH HARIDWAR-2021

- Arrangement of clean drinking water for devotees
- Policemen, trained volunteers, personnel & swimmers deployed at Mela ghat area for security
- High-tech CCTV cameras installed at Mahakumbh area for security of devotees
- Shuttle service (Buses) operational in Kumbh area for devotees
- Proper space allocation has been made for tourists to rest near Haridwar & Rishikesh railway stations

- All medical facilities being arranged for devotees visiting Kumbh
- All pilgrims should enter the religious area wearing masks
- 1500-bedded COVID hospital is operational
- Arrangement of toilet, drinking water and sanitizer for drivers in parking areas
- Time-to-time sanitization of Ashrams & Dharamshalas



Kumbh Mela Helpline No. 01334 222 725, 01334 222 726, 01334 222 727
Email: mahakumbhmela2021@gmail.com | Website : haridwarkumbhmela2021.com

Police Helpline Phone No. :- 01334-222011/222012, 259300, 9411112988 & 112 | [kumbhpolice2021](#) | [kumbhhardwarpolice](#)

Precautions ➔



Wearing mask properly is a must



Keep a distance of two yards



Keep washing hands with soap and water

Issued in Public Interest by Information & Public Relations Department, Uttarakhand | www.uttarainformation.gov.in | [UttarakhandDIPR](#) | [DIPR_UK](#)

MATRIMONIAL

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

BRIDEROOMS WANTED

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEROOMS WANTED

BRIDES WANTED

BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

Classification common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms

Assamese

Awadhi

Bengali

Bhojpuri

Bihari

Chhattisgarhi

English

Gujarati

Haryanvi

Hindi

Kannada

Kashmiri

Konkani

Malayalam

Manipuri

Marathi

Marwari

Nepali

Oriya

Parsi

Punjabi

Saurashtra

Sindhi

Tamil

Telugu

Tulu

Urdu

Advocate

Business

Defence

Doctor

Engineer

Finance / Banking

Government / Quasi-Govt.

IAS / Allied Services

Information Technology

MBA / CA / ICWA

NRI

Cosmopolitan

Divorcee

Physically Challenged

MARRIAGE BUREAUS

WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

COMPUTER / INFO.TECH.

Tamil / Telugu Speaking girl, 5'4", MS

(CS) US, 1989, Mudaliar, Non-bramhin, caste no bar, +91-9848624004

GURUKKAL BHARADWAJAM Arudra, 26

5'4", B.Tech, Accenture, Chennai

seeks any Bramhin Boy contact

8106198440 9052248383

rohineesh.s99@gmail.com

COSMOPOLITAN

Ezhava girl Beautiful 5.2-3 Fair Ayil-

ilan from thrissur district Masters de-

gree from british university now look

after her own hospital Seeks alliance

from same status boys Preferably

settle outside kerala.

W App : 0235942353, 9809233008

ALLIANCE INVITED for Only

employed, unmarried Bangalore set-

tled boy for Yadava girl 5'4", 54"

MCA not working. Cont: 739623569

DIVORCEE

FAIR/ MUDALIAR Girl 30/162, 10th,

No issue, seeks suitable groom, caste

no bar, Chennai only. 9840353368

DOCTOR

Hindu, Telugu, MD Paed 28y, Chen-

nai, Alliance from MD / MS Doctor.

Phone: 9884614168

MS GENL Surgery, 2nd Yr Doctor

Naidu Girl from Chennai 27 yrs

5'6" Fair/Btl Seeks PG Doctors

Only (Clinical) from TN/AP/C

TS#840694410 & Email: id:

venkatesarao5@gmail.com

PADMASALIYAR, 25/ 177 cm/ MS

(Doctor) / 807255531, 9442502812

PILLA/ MUDALIAR, 29yrs, Kirthiga,

Rishabam, Fair, Slim, MS Ortho

from Doctor family owning Hospital

seeks suitable Doctor Groom. Ct: 9443

6710, 94422 51122.

SENGUNTHA MUDALIAR 25yrs/ 155cm/

Wheatish/ MBBS, M.S (O&G) Kumbar,

Pooratadi seeks any Doctor Mu-

dalior Groom with M.D. M.S.

Ct: 9884003952

Looking for a Doctor Groom living in

India for a Bramhin Girl Vaduam/

Uthram 2nd, Paadham / 30/5'5"/MD

Practicing in a Private Hospital Chen-

na. Contact # 9344569900.

HINDI

Chandigar based Hindu high statu-

sees alliance for their

NM daughter, beautiful 36/5'10", MBA

from Imperial College, London. Cur-

rently working in family business. Look-

ing for qualified well-settled match

from cultured and respectable family.

Caste no bar,

groominch@gmail.com,

gupta.manit@gmail.com, +91 98769-

0060

MALAYALAM

KANNUR, NAMBIAR Girl, 42/165,

Chithra, MDS Doctor working Abroad.

Looking for a Suitable alliance.

Caste or Caste no bar.

Contact: 9495545852.

TAMIL

HINDU TAMIL Doctor Surgeon 32/ 158

seeks Doctors/ Highly qualified/

decent well settled Business fami-

ly/groom aged 33-36 yrs. Ct:

9884022884

THULUVAVELLA ARCTO Mudalair 28/

6 / BDS Kirthigai Fair Good

looking Girl/ wife to do seekes Pro-

fessionally Qualified Groom sub-

ject Welcome. 94865 31194/86374

81104

CONVENT EDUCATED 85, 5'5" Fair,

Grad mass comm., PG Dip Film 154cm

/ M.Sc writing UK,

Freelancer, SC girl seeks matrimo-

nial alliance from a well qualifed

and settled person. Caste No bar.

Contact: 9899514993, rjiloha@hot-

mail.com

HINDU SC girl 28 Star chotti, MBA,

MBA, MNC,Banglore. Seeks well

settled outside Kerala with

Traditional Values. Preferred

Districts Trichur, Palakkad,

Malappuram. Kozhikode. Reply to:

gkn540@gmail.com.mnctt.com

HINDU SC-AD BDS 25 yrs 162cm

medium complexion seeks BDB/MBBS gro-

mehnai basic details. Contact: 9702371402

SC AD/162/ MS, CS, USA, working in

reputed IT MNC in USA, seeks

suitable groom, good family, clean

habits, preferably working in USA.

Contact: 9702371402

ELITE MUDALIAR 22/ M.B.A., Own

Spinning Mills , Textile Mills , [Coim-

batore] J. Fair , Rich Family

Seeks Suitable Groom Contact: 99402428435

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suitable groom, good family, clean

habits, preferably working in USA.

Contact: 970



No infiltration since India-Pak. pact, says J&K DGP Dilbagh Singh
page 10



Reinstate Mehta and Subramanian, demand Ashoka varsity students
page 6



Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan tests positive for COVID-19
page 12



Manika-Sharath duo qualifies for Tokyo Olympics
page 16

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NEARBY



Ration delivery scheme will be nameless: Kejriwal
NEW DELHI
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said the Delhi government's doorstep ration delivery scheme would now be nameless in the wake of the Centre red-flagging the use of 'Mukhya Mantri'. The Delhi Cabinet will meet on Monday to formally drop the reference to the CM from the scheme, scheduled to begin from March 25.

CITY ▶ PAGE 4

Raje govt. too tapped my phone, claims RLP leader

NEW DELHI

Former NDA ally and national convenor of Rashtriya Loktantrik Party Hanuman Beniwal claimed that phone tapping by the Ashok Gehlot government was not a one-off incident as the previous BJP government headed by Vasundhara Raje had also done the same. "The Gehlot government should resign... It had no reason to tap phones of legislators other than the hunger to hold on to power," Mr. Beniwal said.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 6



MAGAZINE ▶ 8 PAGES

India reports 40,953 new cases

Rising trajectory in 8 States: Centre



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI
India reported 40,953 new COVID-19 infections, the highest single-day rise in 111 days, taking the cumulative case tally to 1,15,55,284.

The country also reported 188 fatalities in the 24 hours till 8 a.m. on Saturday, taking the death toll to 1,59,558, as per the data released by the Health Ministry. There are 2,88,394 active cases.

"Maharashtra reported the highest daily new cases

Nadu, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka and Haryana. Kerala, however, is showing a consistently declining trend," the Ministry said. It added that Maharashtra, Kerala and Punjab accounted for 76.22% of the active cases.

The cumulative recoveries stood at 1,11,07,332, with 23,653 registered in the past 24 hours.

Five States accounted for 81.38% of the fresh deaths, with Maharashtra reporting 70 casualties, followed by Punjab (38) and Kerala (17).

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 9

NIA to probe death of Thane resident

Case relates to gelatin-laden car found near Mukesh Ambani's home in Mumbai

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Saturday transferred the probe into the mysterious death of Thane resident Mansukh Hirani to the National Investigation Agency (NIA). The case is currently being investigated by the Maharashtra Police.

Hirani was the last occupant of the sports utility vehicle (SUV) which was found

laden with gelatin sticks near Antilia, the residence of industrialist Mukesh Ambani, on February 25. The NIA had earlier arrested police officer Sachin Vaze on the charge of parking the vehicle near Antilia. Twenty pieces of unassembled gelatin sticks were found in the vehicle.

Mr. Vaze, an assistant police inspector with the Crime Branch of the Mumbai Police, was arrested on March 13 un-

der various charges of forgery, criminal intimidation, criminal conspiracy and the Explosives Act.

An NIA spokesperson said the MHA had notified the transfer of probe to NIA and the case would soon be re-registered by the agency. The explosives case was transferred to the NIA on March 8.

Mr. Vaze, who is a former Shiv Sena member, had been accused of custodial killing

earlier. He was under suspension since 2004 and was reinstated in June 2020.

The NIA had on March 16 recovered a black colour Mercedes-Benz used by Mr. Vaze. From the car, the number plate of the abandoned SUV, more than ₹5 lakh, a note counting machine and some clothes were recovered.

MINISTER ASKED FOR ₹100 CRORE EVERY MONTH ▶ PAGE 10

India, United States resolve to intensify defence cooperation

This partnership is a 'central pillar' of the U.S. policy for Indo-Pacific, says Austin

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



Booster dose: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd James Austin III. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

tions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act.

China angle

In a clear hint to Beijing's growing military activities in the South China Sea region, Mr. Austin said the India-U.S. defence partnership will "grow" in the coming years. "The relationship is a strong hold of a free and open Indo-Pacific region. PM Modi has

stated that India stands for freedom of navigation and freedom of overflight, unimpeded lawful commerce and adherence to international law. This is a resounding affirmation of our shared vision for regional security in the Indo-Pacific."

Reflecting the American policy, Mr. Singh drew attention to the recent Leaders' Summit of India, U.S., Japan and Australia under the Quadrilateral Framework and emphasised the collective "resolve to maintain a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region".

HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERN ▶ PAGE 10

HC revokes clean chit to Yediyurappa

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Finding fault with a special court order refusing to proceed against Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa in a 10-year-old illegal land denotification case, the High Court of Karnataka directed the special court to take cognisance of offences against him, and proceed further on the basis of a chargesheet filed by the Lokayukta police in 2012.

Cognisance of offence
The High Court also directed the court to take cognisance of offence against former Minister Katta Subramanya Naidu in another illegal land denotification case as per the chargesheet.

Justice John Michael Cunha delivered the verdict on March 17 while allowing a petition filed by one A. Alam Pasha, a resident of Bengaluru.

The petitioner had questioned the July 25, 2016, order of the special court declining to proceed against Mr. Yediyurappa and Mr. Naidu.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 9

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Weekend Batches

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ME	16 th Mar	18 th Mar	18 th Mar	8 th Apr	011-45124612 09958995830
EE	17 th Mar	18 th Mar	18 th Mar	8 th Apr	www.madeeasy.in
EC	18 th Mar	18 th Mar	18 th Mar	8 th Apr	
CS	18 th Mar	18 th Mar	18 th Mar	8 th Apr	
CH	14 th Mar				

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Timings

DELHI

SUNDAY, MAR. 21	
RISE 06:24	SET 18:33
RISE 11:14	SET 00:45
MONDAY, MAR. 22	
RISE 06:23	SET 18:34
RISE 12:04	SET 01:40

TUESDAY, MAR. 23	
RISE 06:22	SET 18:34
RISE 12:58	SET 02:32

Delhi Weather	max min
Delhi City	34 17
Safdarjung	34 17
Palam	33 18

Delhi Palam Today	
35°C Gusty winds would continue during day. A pleasant hazy morning and warm day. Thunder activity likely towards night.	

Delhi Palam Tomorrow	
35°C Short spell rain and thunderstorm would occur at some places with gusty winds and partly cloudy to cloudy sky likely.	

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Man held for harassing teenager

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 29-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly sending nude photographs and videos to a minor girl and extorting ₹50,000 from her, the police said on Saturday.

DCP (Shahdara) R. Sathiyasundaram said the accused has been identified as Rajbir alias Deepak, a resident of Haryana's Hisar. A complaint was received in Shadara's Cyber Cell stating that a 13-year-old girl was stalked and sexually harassed online. A case was then registered and investigation taken up.

The accused was then identified and traced to Haryana.

"It has been found that the accused committed the same crime with other girls as well," the DCP added.

Positivity rate crosses 1%, daily COVID cases at 3-month high

In past week, new cases have nearly doubled, active cases up by over 1,200

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

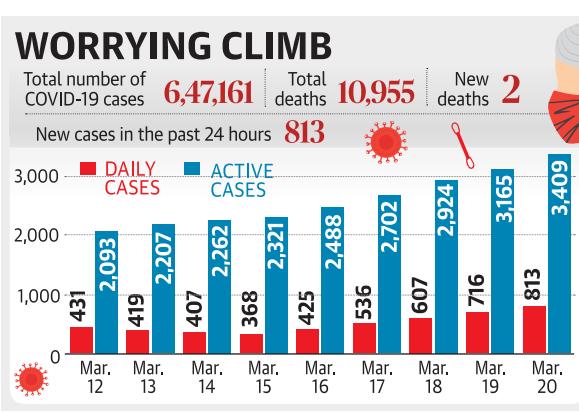
The surge in new COVID-19 cases continued in the city on Saturday with 813 fresh infections reported in the last 24 hours – the highest so far this year. The case tally now stands at 6,47,161.

Saturday's daily-case count is the highest in nearly three months. On December 24, 2020, 1,063 infections were reported.

Death toll nears 11,000

Two deaths were reported in the past 24 hours, taking the total to 10,955. Of the total cases, 6,32,797 people have recovered and there are now 3,409 active cases. The number of active cases has also been steadily rising for more than two weeks now.

As per the health bulletin



on Saturday, a total of 75,888 tests were done in a day.

The number of daily cases had dropped below 100 in January. It crossed the 200 mark in the last week of February and has been increasing since then. On January 16, the number of new cases

was 94. It increased to 200 on February 24.

The percentage of positive cases per 100 samples tested crossed the 1% mark and was 1.07% on Saturday.

It had remained below the 1% mark for months now. The Delhi government has

been maintaining that the positivity in Delhi is still less compared to other States.

Experts attribute the current spike in cases to people not following social distancing measures and not wearing masks.

Vaccination drive

Meanwhile, a total of 46,769 beneficiaries took the COV-19 vaccination in the city on Saturday, and there were two minor Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI), said a Delhi government spokesperson.

Of the total beneficiaries, 22,376 were people above the age of 60, and 4,794 people were between 45 and 59 years of age. The rest of the people vaccinated were healthcare workers and front-line workers.



A farmer resting inside a tractor-trolley at the Singhu border protest site. ■ FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Farmer injured as tent catches fire at Singhu

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A farmer was injured when a fire broke out inside a tent near Singhu border on Saturday morning, said the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM).

It also said the incident happened at 10 a.m. when a farmer switched on a cylinder to cook food.

At the time of the incident, around 10 persons were inside the tent.

"A farmer got injured while trying to douse the fire and other escaped un-hurt," the SKM said.

Clothes, five mobile phones, 20 chairs and 20 mattresses, and food were destroyed in the fire. The fire department doused the flames within minutes.

"Instead of crying over the loss, the protesters started cleaning the place within half an hour," SKM added.

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1 L | ₹ 55*

Minor fire breaks out in duplex flat, none injured

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A minor fire was reported from the fourth floor of a house in Central Delhi's Motia Khan, the police said on Saturday.

No one was injured in

the incident, they said, adding that it is suspected that fire was caused by a short circuit.

The Delhi Fire Service said three fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the flames.

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Powai, Mumbai - 400 076

ADMISSION TO POST-GRADUATE / PH.D. PROGRAMMES 2021-22

Applications are invited ONLINE for admission to the M.Tech / M.Tech + Ph.D. (Dual Degree), M.Phil, M.Sc-Ph.D. (Dual Degree) in Energy Programmes, Master in Public Policy (MPP), M.S. by Research in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Dual Degree MA+Ph.D. Programme in Philosophy and Ph.D. for the Academic Year 2021-22 starting from July 2021. Please visit the Institute's website <http://www.iitb.ac.in/newacadhome/toadmission.jsp> for Online application forms, Information Brochure, schedule and other details. ■/-

Jt. Deputy Registrar (Academic)

Enquiries may be addressed to: (for PG) - pgadm@iitb.ac.in / (for Ph.D.) - phd_uin5@iitb.ac.in

Note - From AY 2022-23, the admission notice will be displayed / published on Institute's (IIT Bombay) website only.

Before Debts Recovery Tribunal-III, Delhi 4th Floor Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001 Notice Under Section 19 (4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993.
In the matter of O.A. No. 634/2019 IDFC Bank Ltd. Applicant Vs Defendants
M/S JAJKARA CHEMICAL C-84, BASEMENT RAMPRASTHA COLONY, GHAZIABAD, U.P. 201010 ALSO AT: THROUGH ITS PROPRIETOR, NAVEEN MALHOTRA D-17, SECTOR 012, T.H.A. RESIDENTIAL COLONY, CHANDA NAGAR, GHAZIABAD, U.P. 201010
MR. NAVEEN MEHTA C-84, BASEMENT RAMPRASTHA COLONY, GHAZIABAD, U.P. 201010 ALSO AT: D-17, SECTOR 012, T.H.A. RESIDENTIAL COLONY, CHANDA NAGAR, GHAZIABAD, U.P. 201010
MRS VANDANA MEHTA C-84, BASEMENT RAMPRASTHA COLONY, GHAZIABAD, U.P. 201010 ALSO AT: D-17, SECTOR 012, T.H.A. RESIDENTIAL COLONY, CHANDA NAGAR, GHAZIABAD, U.P. 201010

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal 22.04.2021 at 10.30 A.M.

Take notice that in case of failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Due to ongoing Pandemic situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose:-

- (i) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the Cisco Webex application/software;
- (ii) Meeting ID and Password for the next date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Registrars/Recovery Officer/I and Recovery Officer-II shall be available on day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. drt.gov.in under the Public Notice Head.

(iii) In any exigency quota that, the Advocates/Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 23748469

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the 15th Day of March 2021

By Order of the Tribunal



Taaza
500 mL | ₹ 23*



Cow Milk
500 mL | ₹ 24*



Gold
2 L | ₹ 108*



Slim 'n' Trim
500 mL | ₹ 20*

Govt. of Bihar

Cabinet Secretariat Department

(Directorate of Civil Aviation)

Patna Airport, Patna – 800014.

TEL. No.: 0612-2225659, 2224423 Fax 0612 2224614 e-mail-qcgovtbihar@gmail.com

Letter. No: CBN (Mait.)

Tender Notice

Sealed tender is invited from manufacturers approved firms/Companies/Public enterprises for Purchase of Spares and Consumables (as per annex-1) for King Air C-90 A/B, VT-EBG Aircraft as per the following:-

1. The tender must reach to Director, Operation, Civil Aviation Directorate, Airport Patna on or before 13.04.2021 at 05:00 PM.
2. Bidders Shall Submit their offer in two separate sealed envelopes one as Technical Bid and other as Financial Bid. These two bids shall be kept in another big envelope which should be sealed and submitted, "Tender for supply of Spares and Consumables for King Air C-90 A/B, VT-EBG Aircraft".
3. Technical Bid should contain attested copies of certificate of incorporation, GST and PAN registration, An undertaking in the form of affidavit on 100 Rupees stamp paper that the Company has not been black listed by Public Sector undertaking/ Government Organization/ DGCA. Audited annual financial report (balance sheet and profit and loss statements) of the bidder for the last three financial years (FY 16-17, 17-18, 18-19 & FY 19-20 is not admitted).
4. An EMD of Rs 50,000.00 (Rs. fifty thousand only) in the form of a Bank Draft issued by a Scheduled / Nationalized Bank in India, drawn in favour of Bihar Flying Inst. C.A. Department, Cabinet Secretariat Department, Patna.
5. Financial Bid should contain the rate of outright New only. Validity of the rate and Guarantee/ warranty Period. The quoted rate should be that of door delivery i.e. Civil Aviation (Bihar Hangar) Campus at Patna. Rate should be quoted in Indian Rupees (') only. Rate should be firmed and fixed inclusive of all taxes. Financial bid will be opened only of those tenderer whose technical bid will be found correct.
6. Security money of Unsuccessful bidders will be refunded immediately after final selection.
7. The Technical bid and Financial bid of the tender will be opened on 16.04.2021 at 3:30 PM respectively before the committee headed Additional Chief Secretary,

Mentoring programme for girls launched

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Saturday launched the 'Education Mentoring Programme' through its 'Youth for Education' initiative, which focuses on mentoring girls studying in Classes 9 to 12 in government schools.

"Students of Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University of Women will mentor these students. The mentors will encourage girls to actively participate in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and support them to clear entrance exams for higher education," said Education Minister Manish Sisodia.

The mentors will guide them in choosing appropriate careers, he said.

Three held for molesting woman, robbing driver

The accused are residents of Aya Nagar

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Three persons have been arrested for allegedly molesting a 25-year-old woman and later robbing a truck driver, the police said on Saturday.

DCP (South) Atul Kumar Thakur said the accused – Yogesh, Naveen Lohmod and Baljeet – are all residents of Aya Nagar.

On the intervening night of Thursday and Friday, a PCR call was received from a woman stating that she was molested by three to four men in their car, and they tried to rape her, an officer said. She told the police that the three persons committed

Ration delivery scheme will be nameless: CM

Kejriwal says Delhi government will accept 'all conditions' by Centre, will not allow any obstruction in its implementation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said the Delhi government's doorstep ration delivery scheme would now be nameless in the wake of the Centre red-flagging the use of 'Mukhya Mantri'.

The Delhi Cabinet would meet on Monday to formally drop the reference to the Chief Minister from the 'Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojna', scheduled to begin from March 25, Mr. Kejriwal said. The Delhi government would accept "all conditions" required by the Centre but wouldn't allow any obstruction in the implementation of the scheme, he said.

"We were all set to launch this scheme on March 25, but yesterday we received a letter from the Central govern-

Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojna. Every State government provides ration to its poor. All ration shops are supposed to open every day but generally open only two or three days, making it very difficult to get ration. Many dealers mix unhealthy materials in the ration and charge extra money from the poor," Mr. Kejriwal told a digital briefing.

It was due to this situation, he said, that the Delhi government came up with the idea of home delivery of ration.

Under the scheme, a pack comprising atta, rice and other ingredients would be delivered to individuals by the government.

"We were all set to launch this scheme on March 25, but yesterday we received a letter from the Central govern-



The Centre has put a stop to the Delhi government's plans to roll out the scheme by March end. ■ FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

ment, whereby it directed us not to implement the scheme," he said.

'Not seeking credit'

"It looks like they [the Centre] have some issues with the use of the word 'Mukhya Mantri'. We are not coming up with this scheme

to publicise our name. The Centre has written that the name of the scheme will make it look like a State government scheme. I want to make it very clear that we did not plan this scheme to get any credit," he said.

Mr. Kejriwal said, a meeting with all the officials con-

cerned was held on Saturday where he had issued directions to do away with the name of the scheme. Making the scheme nameless, Mr. Kejriwal said, he was hopeful that the Central government would allow the Delhi government to implement it.

Ration mafia

"It was very important to defeat ration mafia and to ensure that every poor person gets ration at their doorstep,

he said. This was also, according to the Chief Minister, a personal battle for him.

"That was when I learnt how the residents of Delhi struggle to get ration. During the course of our work, we found how the ration mafia worked. I've been fighting the ration mafia for several years to implement this scheme. Now it was all set and I was confident that our dream of 22 years will become a reality," he said.

"But we will not allow any barriers to stop us and have decided to accept all the directions and clauses proposed by the Central government. We will follow all the directions. Our only aim is to send the ration to the residents of Delhi. We just want Delhi's poor to get clean ration without any difficulty," he said.

'AAP govt. stalling Centre's ration scheme'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Opposition BJP on Saturday alleged that the Delhi government was stalling the implementation of the Centre's 'One Nation, One Ration' card scheme for political gain at a time when all State governments were in the process of implementing it.

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta said, "The AAP yesterday indulged in a dramatic campaign that the Central government was stopping the Delhi government's Mukhya Mantri Ghar Yojna but today they announced they were removing the name mukhya mantri from this scheme."

"The way they are doing this shows as if they were making a sacrifice," he said.

Season of change



Artists perform an Afghani-Sikh traditional dandiya dance to mark Nowruz (Persian New Year) at the Siri Fort auditorium in the Capital on Saturday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

Schools release first list for nursery admissions

+ Second list to be announced on March 25

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Schools in the national capital on Saturday notified their respective first lists for admission to nursery classes which began in February after a two-month delay.

The schools have put out their first list using the point-based criteria announced by them earlier.

The Directorate of Educa-



Nursery admissions usually begin in the last week of November. ■ FILE PHOTO

ble, well-defined, equitable, non-discriminatory, unambiguous and transparent.

The process for nursery admissions in over 1,700 schools in Delhi began from February 18, bringing respite for anxious parents who have been waiting for the notification for over two months.

"The first list of selected children has been displayed today and will be followed by second list on March 25 and subsequent list for admission, if any, on March 27. The entire admission process will

conclude on March 31," a senior DoE official said.

The DoE has also directed that since schools are closed in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and physical class room learning is not going on for entry level classes at present, no fee except prescribed registration fee, admission fee, caution fee (if school already charges) and tuition fee, shall be charged at the time of admission by the schools and thereafter only tuition fee shall be charged from the students till further orders.

Railway Ministry, others told to finalise parameters for locomotive engines

NGT observes matter has been pending for over three years

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Environment Ministry, Railway Ministry and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to finalise and approve parameters for locomotive engines.

'Finalise at the earliest'

Taking note of a report filed by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), a Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said: "Since the issue has been pending for over three years, we direct

that the same be finalised at the earliest."

In its report dated February 4, the Environment Ministry had said the draft standard was submitted by the CPCB on June 2, 2020. It also said following meetings, the proposal would be worked out in consultation with the Railways with clarity on the implementing agency, monitoring protocol and reporting mechanism on compliance.

"It is prayed that in order to delineate the appropriate provision for effective compliance of the NGT's order six months is required, which includes four months

for wide circulation of draft notification for inviting comments and two months for incorporation of comments, finalisation of notification and obtaining approval from the Ministry of Law and Justice," the report read.

The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by petitioner S.K. Goyal seeking execution of a 2017 order of the NGT where it was directed that guidelines containing locomotive standards be put up on the CPCB website and expeditious efforts made by all stakeholders, including the MoEF&CC.

Green tribunal orders DPCC to review ₹5-lakh fine

Appellant says he was not engaging in industrial activity in 'non-conforming area'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Following an appeal against an order of the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), which imposed a fine of ₹5 lakh for carrying out industrial activities in non-conforming areas, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the body to review the matter.

It also asked the DPCC to take into account the appellant's stand that only trade activities were being carried



out in those areas.

A Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said: "Since, admittedly, the reply of the appellant has not been dealt

with, we have no option but to require a fresh order to be passed in accordance with the law."

It also said: "Without expressing any opinion on merits, we direct the DPCC to pass a further order dealing with the objection of the appellant in the reply within one month from today and till fresh order is passed, the impugned order will be treated as tentative and not given effect to as final order."

The directions came

when the green panel was hearing an appeal moved by appellant Rishab Kumar Jain who challenged the DPCC order stating that his response had not been taken into account. "The impugned order does not consider the reply dated December 2019, whereby the appellant specifically took a stand that no industrial activity was being carried out and only trading activity was being carried out, under a valid trade license," the Bench said.



Breathing space: Activists say that with the ban on mining in Gurugram and Faridabad, there has been a significant improvement in forest cover. ■ ASHOK KUMAR

Mining threat looms over Aravalis in Haryana

Environmentalists raise red flag as State govt. moves to seek SC's permission to resume mining, argue it could cause damage to habitat

from and into the Asola wildlife sanctuary. The resumption of mining here will be disastrous for the wildlife, air quality and health of the residents," said an environment analyst not willing to be named.

He added that mining should be confined to isolated hillocks in distant areas with minimal im-

pact on wildlife corridors and air quality. "Mining should not be done in NCR districts adjacent to Delhi which are important wildlife habitats and corridors, have poor air quality and high population," the analyst said. He also questioned the rationale behind opening new mines when mining was already booming in

Haryana.

As per the Economic Survey of Haryana 2020-21, the collection from mining for 2020-21 till January is ₹770.00 crore, the highest since 2005-06.

Mines allocated

Besides, as many as 58 mines of the total 119 in the State have al-

ready been allocated. More than 26,000 cases of illegal mining, including 1,358 till September 2020 for the current financial year have been reported.

Mining is banned in Gurugram and adjoining districts for more than a decade now as per the Supreme Court orders.

R.P. Balwan, former conservator of forests, said that mining, when earlier allowed, was carried out in a haphazard manner without adhering to the norms causing huge damage to the environment and the wildlife. "Mining should not be allowed in

thick forest areas such as Mangar. The need for construction material can also be met by mining at isolated hills causing minimum damage to environment to ensure sustainable development," said Mr. Balwan.

Residents' demands

In an email campaign to the Chief Justice of India, the residents have been demanding that no mining and real estate be allowed in the Aravalis. Instead, the government should come up with a three-year road map to take the legal native forest cover

Resource rich			
District	Total no. of mines	Total no. of mines allocated	No. of mines presently lying vacant/to be allocated
Panchkula	18	6	12
Ambala	10	1	9
Yamuna Nagar	33	25	8
Kurukshetra	1	0	1
Karnal	4	1	3
Panipat	3	0	3
Sonipat	15	3	12
Faridabad	2	0	2
Palwal	2	2	2
Bhiwani	2	2	0
Charki Dadri	14	13	1
Hisar	1	0	1
Rewari	1	0	1
M/Garh (Sand)	3	0	3
M/Garh (Stone)	10	7	3
Total	119	58	61

ILLEGAL MINING

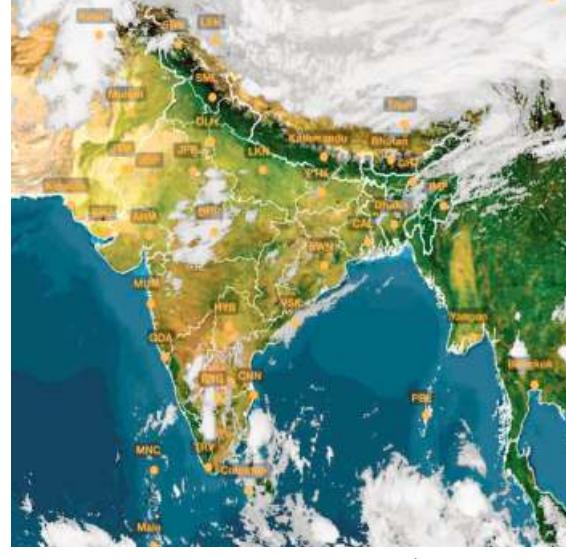
Between 2011 and Sept. 2020:

No. of cases registered: 26,485 | Penalty realised (in ₹ lakh): 6,048.58 | FIRs lodged: 1,515

SOURCE: ECONOMIC SURVEY OF HARYANA 2020-21

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy rainfall/snowfall likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh and Muzaffarabad. Thunderstorm with lightning/hail/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Punjab, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala

CITY RAIN MAX MIN CITY RAIN MAX MIN

Agartala ... 35.2 20.8 Kozhikode ... 34.0 ... 26.4

Ahmedabad ... 37.0 20.9 Kurnool ... 38.1 ... 22.7

Aizawl ... 26.9 10.9 Lucknow ... 35.0 ... 21.4

Allahabad ... 35.1 20.6 Madurai ... 35.8 ... 23.5

Bengaluru ... 34.2 19.6 Mangalore ... 35.6 ... 26.5

Bhopal ... 10.3 33.7 15.8 Mumbai ... 32.3 ... 24.4

Bhubaneswar ... 38.9 22.5 Mysuru ... 34.0 ... 18.0

Chandigarh ... 33.8 17.4 New Delhi ... 34.3 ... 16.8

Chennai ... 34.2 23.7 Patna ... 34.6 ... 22.0

Coimbatore ... 35.9 22.8 Port Blair ... 32.2 ... 24.3

Dehradun ... 32.4 15.5 Puducherry ... 32.5 ... 21.8

Gangtok ... 24.1 11.8 Pune ... 36.5 ... 19.4

Goa ... 34.7 24.0 Raipur ... 34.4 ... 20.2

Guwahati ... 34.0 19.7 Ranchi ... 35.0 ... 20.4

Hubballi ... 36.0 22.0 Shillong ... 24.9 ... 12.5

Hyderabad ... 34.3 21.0 Shimla ... 24.5 ... 13.9

Imphal ... 29.9 11.7 Srinagar ... 20.0 ... 6.2

Jaipur ... 0.9 35.0 19.6 Thiruvananthapuram ... 32.6 ... 26.1

Kochi ... 3.2 32.8 26.0 Tiruchi ... 36.1 ... 22.8

Kohima ... 23.0 10.4 Vijayawada ... 37.4 ... 22.1

Kolkata ... 36.6 24.6 Visakhapatnam ... 32.3 ... 24.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES SO₂ NO_x CO PM2.5 PM10 CODE

Ahmedabad ... 73 118 62 ... 259 ... 309 ... ■■■■■

Bengaluru ... 8 ... 50 56 ... 90 ... 91 ... ■■■■■

Chennai ... 8 ... 19 56 ... 88 ... 97 ... ■■■■■

Delhi ... 16 ... 38 28 ... 320 299 ... ■■■■■

Hyderabad ... 5 ... 99 51 ... 134 ... ■■■■■

Kolkata ... 40 ... 23 40 ... 318 256 ... ■■■■■

Lucknow ... 15 ... 52 41 ... 224 ... ■■■■■

Mumbai ... 1 ... 15 66 ... 217 230 ... ■■■■■

Pune ... 97 63 ... 128 ... 106 ... ■■■■■

Visakhapatnam ... 8 ... 61 47 ... 128 ... 135 ... ■■■■■

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

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m. Siliguri, West Bengal recorded an air quality index (AQI) score of 349 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Damoh, Madhya Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 35

₹154 cr. plant will be set up to make vaccines'

Manufacturing unit will be joint venture between Haffkine institute and Bharat Biotech, says Uddhav

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said a ₹154 crore plant will be set up to manufacture vaccines during a visit to Haffkine Bio-Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited on Saturday.

The announcement came days after Mr. Thackeray urged the Centre to grant permission to the State-owned institute to manufacture COVID-19 vaccines.

Mr. Thackeray said the plant will be a joint venture between Haffkine and Bharat Biotech. He said, "Maharashtra is going to focus on vaccination in the coming days and therefore Haffkine should focus on establishing a biomedical research centre with the help of the Centre."

He said necessary follow-up will be done to ensure that more vaccination centres are set up and the



Key facility: The State has urged the Centre to grant permission to Haffkine institute to produce COVID-19 vaccines. ■ FILE PHOTO

process for Haffkine to secure permission to produce vaccines is speeded up. The Chief Minister said a detailed proposal would be sent to the Central government.

Haffkine can acquire the technology to manufacture vaccines through the Indian Council for Medical Research or it can be worked out on a fill and finish basis through which 126 lakh vac-

cines can be produced," he said, adding that talks will also be held with other vaccine manufacturers.

Under the first phase, Covaxin will undergo repacking and filling as per the requirement. The production will then be continued till the requirement of Covaxin is met and later the plant will be used for the production of rabies vaccine.

Classes X, XII board exams to be held in offline mode

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Education Board exams for Classes X and XII will be held next month through offline mode only, State School Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad said on Saturday.

"It means that students will have to physically go to the exam centres to appear

for the written tests," Ms. Gaikwad said.

If any student fails to appear for a particular written paper or multiple papers due to COVID-19 or because any member of the family is infected or due to lockdown at the local level, then he or she will get a grace period of 15 days to give the test, the minister said.

Cong. will retain Punjab: Ashwani

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

Senior Congress leader and former Union Law Minister

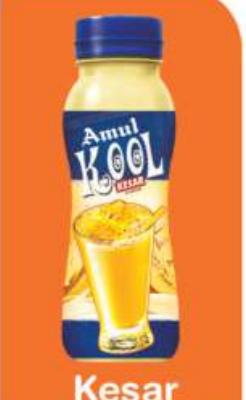
Ashwani Kumar said the electoral arithmetic of Punjab leans heavily in favour of the Congress in the run-up to the Assembly polls, which are due early next year. "The people of Punjab will give a repeat mandate in favour of the Congress. Ensuring peace, harmony and stability in a turbulent State has been the

most important achievement of the Congress government," said Mr. Kumar.

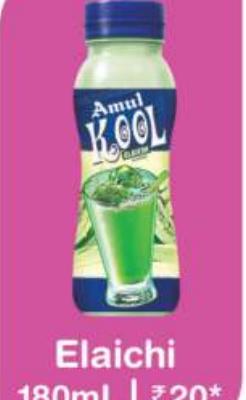
"The SAD and the BJP are discredited and AAP has still to establish its credentials as an all Punjab party," he said. The challenge before the Congress is to ensure internal unity, he said. He added, "Initiatives of the CM and the State leaders in reaching out to dissatisfied party leaders are likely to bear fruit."

Mr. Kumar said, "The

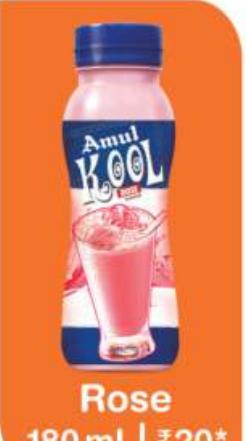
Amul



Kesar
180mL ₹20*



Elaichi
180mL ₹20*



Rose
180mL ₹20*



Buttermilk
200mL ₹12*



Irish Drink
Mocktail
Shot
125mL ₹20*



Butterscotch
milkshake
180mL ₹25*

BRUHAT BANGALORE MAHANAGARA PALIKE

Office of the Executive Engineer-1 (Lakes), 3rd Floor, New Building, BBMP, N.R. Square, Bengaluru - 560 002.

No: EE-1(Lakes)/TEND/18/2020-21 Date: 20.03.2021

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER(IFT)

(Through e-Procurement Portal only)

The Executive Engineer-1(Lakes), BBMP Invites tenders for the construction works detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Approx. Value of work (Rs. in Lakhs)
1	Development of Horamavu Lake - CALL-3.	400.00
2	Improvement to Vengahiana Kere, CALL-2	200.00

EMD Declaration : As per G.O. No. : FD 675 Expenditure-12/2020 dated: 22.12.2020. (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from GOK e-Procurement portal <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> from 22.03.2021 onwards . (2) Pre bid meeting : 29.03.2021 at 3:30 p.m. 3) Bids must be submitted online on or before 4:00 p.m. on 05.04.2021. (4) Opening of Technical bids : 06.04.2021 at 4.30 p.m. Further details can be obtained from the above office during office hours & also from website: www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- Executive Engineer-1 (Lakes).

PAY DEVELOPMENT CHARGES, HELP TO DEVELOP BENGALURU

STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.



BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE

Office of the Executive Engineer, Road Infrastructure-Traffic Engineering Cell, N.R.Square, Bengaluru - 560 002.

No: EE/RI-TEC/TEND/11/2020-21 Dated: 20.03.2021

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (IFT)

(Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only)

The Executive Engineer, (Traffic Engineering Cell - Road Infrastructure) BBMP, Bengaluru invites Competitive bids from reputed firm/Agencies for "Below Road Safety Work in BBMP Limits".

Proposal shall be submitted separately for each of the following Zones along with respective EMD and Application Fee.

Name of the Work	Appx. Amount Put to Tender (₹.in Lakhs)	EMD (₹.in Lakhs)
Road Safety Works, Lane Markings, Junction Marking, Kerb Painting, Hazard Boards, Road Medians and Median Markers, Sign Boards and Directional Sign Boards in Arterial and Sub arterials Road in BBMP Limits of East, Mahadevapura, South and Bommanahalli Zones (Call-2)	756.99	11.36

Calendar of Events: 1) Availability of Tender Documents in e-procurement portal from 22.03.2021 onwards. (2) Last Date for Submission of Tenders is 29.03.2021 upto 4:00 pm. (3) Opening of Technical bid is on 31.03.2021 at 4:30 pm. (4) Opening of Financial Bid Will be intimated to the Tenderers.

Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours on working days or from website: <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/- Executive Engineer (RI-TEC)

COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC, BE AWARE



WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY Material Management Department

'e'-Tender Notice for the supply of Stores, No. EPS/09/2021

PCMM/WCR on behalf of the President of India invites the following advertised tenders through E-procurement System. No manual/postal offers shall be entertained. Tenders can be accessed under the link website <https://ireps.gov.in> for details and for submission of Tender.

S. N.	Tender No.	Short Description	Tendered Qty.	Opening Date

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Ashoka Univ. students to boycott classes

Reinstate Prof. Mehta, divest trustees of their powers, demands union

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

The students of Ashoka University plan to boycott classes on Monday and Tuesday to protest the exits of their professors Pratap Bhanu Mehta and Arvind Subramanian. They are demanding that Prof. Mehta be offered his job back with a public acknowledgement of the pressures behind his resignation, as well as a divestment of the trustees' powers to the University staff, students and faculty.

"If these demands are not met by Tuesday, we will be organising a separate movement demanding that the Vice-Chancellor resign," said the statement issued by the student union on Saturday morning.

"Not only have we lost intellectual giants and erudite academics whose scholarship we value deeply, but also our trust and faith in this



Pratap Bhanu Mehta

administration to protect the students within this University from external political pressures - specifically, the Vice-Chancellor (Professor Malabika Sarkar), the Chancellor (Professor Rudrangshu Mukherjee), and the Founders of this University. This is a gross violation of academic freedoms and we strongly condemn it," they said.

They demanded an open meeting of the University's founders with the student body. "We must create a body with both members of the faculty and student body to serve as a medium to discuss matters with the founders and the administration," they added.

On Friday, at least four of the trustees met with faculty to hear their concerns regarding recent developments. According to one faculty member, the trustees insisted that there had been

no government pressure behind Prof. Mehta's resignation, but admitted that "donors wanted it". However, they insisted they had not asked him to resign. Several senior faculty also pushed strongly for the founders to "stay out" of University functioning in the future, said the faculty member.

Rajan speaks out
Criticism also came from outside Ashoka. Former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan accused the University's founders of bartering away its soul, in a post on LinkedIn

pressure.

"A prominent critic of the current Indian government and defender of academic freedom, he had become a target for his writings. It seems that Ashoka's Trustees, who should have defended him as their institutional duty, forced his resignation," said the letter, which was signed by distinguished scholars of political science, history, government, law and ethics.

They contended that the values Prof. Mehta practised included free argument, tolerance, a democratic spirit of equal citizenship, free inquiry, candour, and a rigorous distinction between the demands of intellectual honesty and the pressure of politicians, funders, or ideological animus.

"These values come under assault whenever a scholar is punished for the content of public speech. When that speech is in defense of precisely these values, the assault is especially shameful," said the letter.

Raje govt. too tapped my phone, claims RLP leader

Hanuman Beniwal says 'act' by the Gehlot-led Congress government last year is not a one-off incident

SOBHANA K NAIR
NEW DELHI

Former NDA ally and national convenor of Rashtriya Loktantrik Party Hanuman Beniwal claimed that phone tapping by the Ashok Gehlot government was not a one-off incident as the previous BJP government headed by Vasundhara Raje had also done the same.

Eight months after "leaked" phone conversations between a Union Minister and Congress leaders in Rajasthan pushed the ruling party on the verge of a split, the government confirmed that phones were indeed "in-

tercepted". The confirmation was posted on the website of the Rajasthan Assembly in reply to a question posed by a BJP MLA.

'CM should resign'
"The Ashok Gehlot government should resign. There is a proper procedure in place for phone interception and there has to be a valid reason to do so. The Gehlot government had no reason to tap phones of legislators other than the hunger to hold on to power," Mr. Beniwal told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Beniwal made it clear that the BJP was also not



Hanuman Beniwal.
•FILE PHOTO

ment, they tapped my phone too. I had raised this issue in the Assembly earlier too. I demand that both the incidents be investigated."

Mr. Beniwal, who is elected from Nagaur, the lone Parliamentary constituency that the BJP conceded to the RLP in the 2019 general election, recently parted ways with the NDA in protest against the three farm laws.

Political instability
He said the Congress had to blame itself for political instability in the State. "Ashok Gehlot formed the government by buying legislators

and playing divisive politics. He first broke the BSP in the State by poaching its six MLAs. All the communities in Rajasthan feel cheated because the Congress had claimed they will have a Gujjar CM to please the Gujjars, a Jat CM to please the Jats and a Dalit CM to please the SC community. They are just reaping what they sowed."

The Raje group within the BJP, Mr. Beniwal said, supported and propped the Gehlot government. "They are all working in cahoots with each other. In the end, the people of Rajasthan are suffering," he said.

Congress to waive off debts of women and farmers, identify illegal immigrants

Assam manifesto prepared with people's inputs, says Rahul

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI



Rahul Gandhi and other leaders releasing the Congress's manifesto in Guwahati on Saturday. •PTI

"The document contained the aspirations of people. The BJP and the RSS are attacking the diverse culture of the nation. They are attacking our language, history, ways of thinking and living. This manifesto is about protecting the idea of Assam, its culture and identity," he said.

The party also promised to write off the debts of women who have taken loans from micro finance banks, provide free yarn, loom and other equipment to women and make their travel in State transport buses free.

Assam Accord

In its manifesto, the Congress pledged to take necessary steps to solve the problem of illegal immigrants based on the March 25, 1971 cut-off date as prescribed in the Assam Accord.

The party said the process of identifying illegal immigrants would be according to the decision of the Supreme Court that had

monitored the exercise of updating the National Register of Citizens of 1951 in Assam.

"The number of NRC offices and recruitment of officials will be started. These offices will be made functional at the earliest so that people who have been left out of the NRC have the opportunity of redressing their grievances.

It will be ensured that no Indian citizen is left out of the NRC," the manifesto read.

Mr. Gandhi said manifesto was prepared with inputs from all sections of the people.

support to all housewives.

"A pension will be extended to the families of freedom fighters and martyrs of the Assam Agitation, language movement and the CAA movement. The landless inhabiting the State-owned land will be provided 'land patta'. ST (Scheduled Tribe) status will be given to Tai-Ahom, Moran, Motok, Chutia, Tea-Tribes and Koch-Rajbongshi communities," the manifesto reads.

Financial aid

The Congress pledged that holy places such as 'namghars' (Vaishnavite prayer centres), temples, mosques, churches, etc, which have attained an age of 50 years, would be provided financial assistance.

"Kerosene and sugar will be distributed publicly again at minimum price. Gaushalas will be built in each district. A corpus fund will be created for lawyers and ₹5 crore will be extended towards it. Mobile clinics will be set up in poverty-stricken regions of cities and villages," reads the manifesto.

A GREETING
TO REMEMBER

Dear Anu
Happy Birthday!
Love,
Mom & Dad

A GREETING TO REMEMBER

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THE HINDU GROUP

Get vaccinated to protect yourself from corona



Those above the age of 60 or over 45 with comorbidity may get themselves vaccinated.



Register and schedule appointments based on available slots. Carry your Govt photo ID Card.



Vaccination is available free of cost in Govt facilities. The cost of vaccination in Private hospitals is Rs.250.



For more information visit cowin.gov.in or dshm.delhi.gov.in

"I along with my parents got vaccinated. This vaccine is completely safe. I am happy that my family is now protected from Corona. I also appeal to you that if you are eligible, then please get yourself vaccinated at the earliest. Stay healthy, stay safe."

-Arvind Kejriwal
Chief Minister, Delhi



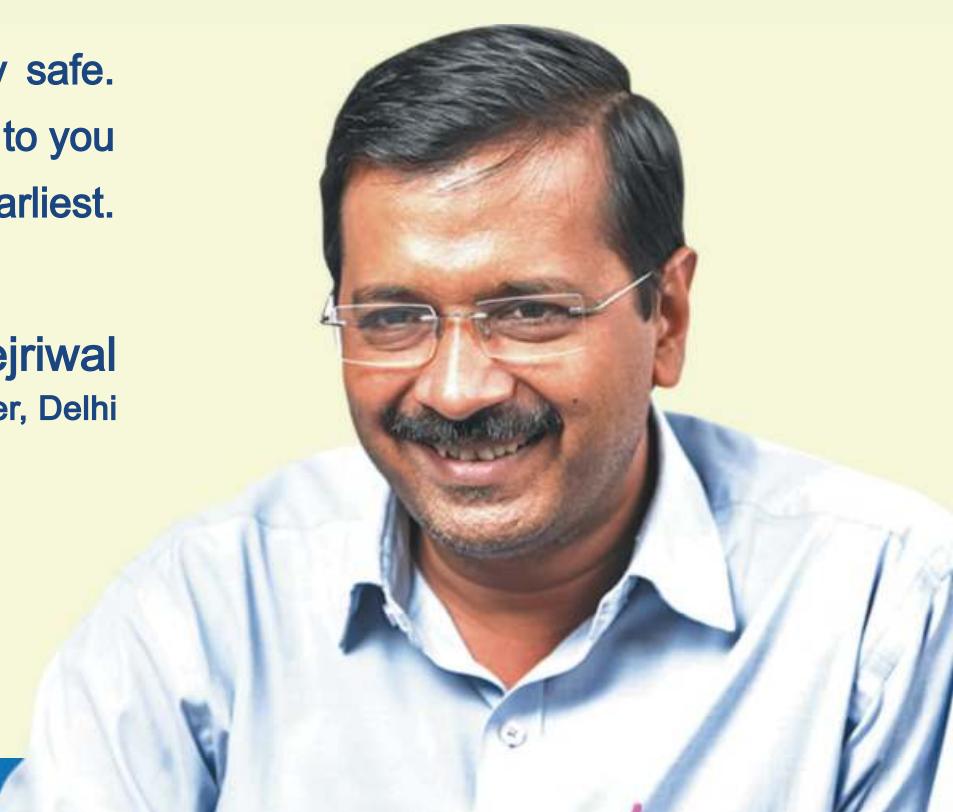
Wash your hands several times with soap



Must wear face mask



Practice social distancing



ASSEMBLY POLLS

DEHLI THE HINDU | SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2021

BIG BATTLE

Singur's resistance has turned full circle

The constituency has oscillated between agriculture and industry, hope and despair, and resistance and triumph

**SHIV SAHAY SINGH
SUDIPTA DATTA
SINGUR**

A pile of drain pipes surrounded by farmlands reaping a good potato harvest is all that remains on the 997-acre plot in Singur where the Tata Motors' Nano factory once stood.

It is almost impossible to locate the site of the factory whose structure was demolished by controlled explosions after the Supreme Court verdict in 2016. The verdict overruled the land acquisition by the Left Front government and in September 2016, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee returned the land to the farmers, with a symbolic sowing of mustard seeds.

Five years later, with the promise of industry on the lips of all political parties fighting the Assembly election, including the Trinamool Congress, life in Singur has turned full circle. People residing in no other constituency in West Bengal have seen so many cycles as Singur has in the past 15 years, oscillating between agriculture and industry, hope and despair, resistance and triumph.

Weeks before Singur goes to the polls on April 10, farmers are busy filling ubiquitous pink sacks with the harvested potato crop on the erstwhile factory site. Each sack containing 50 kg of the tuber will earn them anything between ₹280 and ₹330.

For 75-year-old farmer Bharatchandra Das, who resisted the acquisition and



Changing faces: Farmers filling sacks with potato harvested on the erstwhile car factory site; CPI(M) candidate Srijan Bhattacharjee campaigning; and Rabindranath Bhattacharya, former Trinamool Congress leader and now the BJP candidate. ■ SUBHAM DUTTA

could not farm for 14 years till 2020, the elections mean little. "We have been used for politics," he said.

Mr. Das and other farmers have invested thousands of rupees to make their land tillable because of the concrete and mortar in the soil and need more money. Several plots are yet to be levelled or cleared of wild plants.

In Bengal, landholding is typically small, and the plots on the factory site have title and mapping issues.

Cross currents

There is also disquiet among the people of Singur after 89-year-old Trinamool veteran Rabindranath Bhattacharya, one of the most respected and credible leaders of the fight against land acquisition, moved to the BJP.

Mastermoshai (teacher),

as he is fondly called, was ready to retire but is now contesting against the party that elected him to the Assembly for four consecutive terms.

Pitching for industry, he said, "The land movement was not against industry but against land grab by force. If voted to power, I will push for industry on 650 acres of the Tata site." When the Trinamool fielded Becharam Manna, another prominent face of the Singur agitation, a miffed *Mastermoshai* joined the BJP which promptly nominated him from Singur. However, the decision led to protests as BJP workers were upset that a senior Trinamool leader had been favoured instead of a party worker.

Battling inner-party squabbles, the BJP's campaign is yet to pick up. *Mastermoshai* said the voters "are socially

and politically aware" and that he would get their blessings for a fifth term.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, the BJP had a lead of over 10,000 votes in this Assembly segment but with weeks left for polling day, the party has a muted presence. Posters of Becharam Manna along with Trinamool flags are at every nook and corner.

"Becharam Manna, despite his flaws, is a very good organiser," admitted a local.

The exit of Tata Motors from West Bengal in 2008 gave the perception that the political climate in the State was not conducive for industrial growth.

Close to the end of her 10-year regime, the Chief Minister announced an agro-industrial park at Singur on about 30 acres of land that was acquired for the small car pro-

₹1.84 crore

average assets per candidate contesting in the first phase (47 seats) of the Assam Assembly election. 39% of the candidates are crorepatis

16%

of the candidates contesting in the first phase of the Assam Assembly election have declared criminal cases against themselves



BJP is the biggest extortions in the world... Just see the amount of money it collected under the PM CARES Fund

MAMATA BANERJEE
West Bengal Chief Minister

P8

POLL POURRI



'Mamata runs school of brutality'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA**

Claiming Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had betrayed the people of West Bengal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday launched a scathing attack on the Trinamool Congress chief and accused her of brutality towards political opponents. "Mamata didi runs a school of brutality where *tolabaji* (extortion), cut money, syndicate and anarchy form syllabus," Mr. Modi said, while addressing a rally in Kharagpur. During his speech, the PM referred to the 2018 panchayat polls in the State and said the whole world watched how the democratic rights of the people were curtailed by not allowing them to take part in polls.

Modi govt. 'destroyed' SMEs: Rahul



**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI**

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday slammed the Narendra Modi government for "destroying" small and medium businesses and increasing the unemployment rate across the country. He also picked holes in the Prime Minister's credo of 'Make in India', holding demonetisation and faulty implementation of Goods and Services Tax for the economic slump in the country. "PM Modi said about 'Make in India'. Has it happened? The PM uses a phone on the back of which is written 'Made in China,'" Mr. Gandhi told a crowd at a rally in Assam's Gohpur.

'Toolkit to defame Assam tea'



**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday used the 'toolkit issue' to attack the Congress for "conspiring" with those trying to destroy the reputation of Assam tea. "You must have heard about toolkit in recent times. A conspiracy was hatched to defame Assam tea and yoga worldwide. The conspirators want the Assam tea gardens to suffer huge losses," he told a crowd at a rally in poll-bound Assam's Chabua. "Congress is openly supporting the conspirators. How does it dare seek votes in Assam?" Mr. Modi asked the crowd, adding, "Who can understand the problems of tea workers better than a chaiwala?"

Modi pats Bengal BJP chief



**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA**

While the BJP is fighting polls in West Bengal without any formal announcement of the party's Chief Ministerial candidate, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday heaped praises on State's party president Dilip Ghosh while addressing a rally. The development triggered speculation on whether the BJP is going to put faith in Mr. Ghosh if it gets the desired numbers to form the government. The Trinamool Congress leadership, however, said that the PM was trying to placate Mr. Ghosh after his name was not there among those contesting polls in the State.

BJP's musical campaign



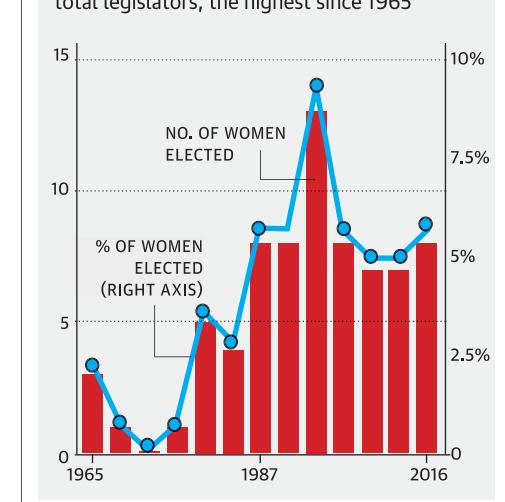
**TIKI RAJWI
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

The BJP has come out with a handful of commercials and a theme song to pep up its election campaign in Kerala. The commercials, each about a minute in length, take a dig at the "flawed policies" of the CPI(M)-led LDF and the Congress-led UDF. Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister Ashwath Narayan C.N. released the 10 commercials and the theme song on Friday. Home Minister Amit Shah had launched the BJP's election slogan *Puthiya Kerala Modikoppam* (the new Kerala stands with Modi) on March 7.

DATA BYTE

**Women in Assembly:
Kerala**

Since 1965, the share of women MLAs in Kerala has not crossed the 10% mark even in one Assembly election. In 1996, there were 13 women MLAs, which formed 9.3% of total legislators, the highest since 1965



INTERVIEW | MOHAMMED SALIM

Left-Congress tied up with ISF to break Hindu-Muslim binary'

CPI(M) Polit Bureau member says Bengal has always been inclusive, 'and we must protect that'

**SHIV SAHAY SINGH
SUDIPTA DATTA**

The Left Front (LF), which was reduced to 32 seats in the 2016 West Bengal Assembly election, announced in February that the LF-Congress combine, or the Samyukta Morcha, would form a grand alliance with Abbas Siddique's newly floated political outfit, the Indian Secular Front. CPI(M) Polit Bureau member **Mohammed Salim**, who is contesting from Chanditala in Hooghly district, explains why the alliance is necessary and the Left's road map for a revival. Excerpts:

How did you manage to build this grand alliance with the ISF which has now become a talking point? You are considered to be the chief architect of the Left joining hands with Abbas Siddique.

■ It is a collective effort. In January 2020, I held a press conference and said the Left will launch a movement which will not be on conventional lines. From seat adjustments with the Congress in the 2016 election, we have now moved to an electoral

the flow of votes to the BJP, we had to do something.

How would you describe the ISF?

■ It is a front of marginalised sections, Dalits, tribals and Muslims, and the ISF has fielded candidates across castes and religions. In Bengal, among Muslims, 95% of them hail from Other Backward Classes. The ruling Trinamool, and the BJP, have been trying to turn the minorities against the Left. But they are our constituency.

Critics feel the Left must take on the BJP more than the Trinamool...

■ The Trinamool Congress came into being to decimate the Left. As soon as it was formed, it joined an alliance with the BJP, calling it [the BJP] its natural ally. When divers take a dive, they need

understanding and brought the ISF into the alliance because the main objective is to pull the anti-BJP votes in a common fold.

The main motto is to pull the secular vote together, and also stop the anti-incumbency vote against the Trinamool Congress from going to the BJP. The alliance with the ISF is part of tactics to break the binary of Hindu and Muslim. We tied up with the ISF only after Abbas floated a political outfit.

The Congress is not too happy about it. But to stem

■ The Left alliance is addressing various social and economic issues from governance, attacks on Dalits, women, the reign of terror in the Bengal districts, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the National Register of Citizens, and so forth. From class divide to social issues, we have been part of many movements. Many social divisions are being created by the Trinamool and the BJP as diversionary tactics away from the real issues.

You are saying the Left should not be written off... how big is the anti-incumbency factor?

■ Well, the media, experts and commentators have been trying to do that – they announced the results of the 2021 Lok Sabha election right after the 2019 Lok Sabha election results, forgetting that there is another year – 2020

– in between. Everyone remarked that the CPI(M) vote had gone to the BJP in 2019 and that the BJP would win the 2021 election. But the Tripura model will not work for the BJP in Bengal. Mamata Banerjee, too, announced that the Left could not be seen even through binoculars and was no more. But there's a three-layer anti-incumbency on the ground – anti-Trinamool government, anti-party, anti-Mamata family (the third factor was not there in the 2016 election). In several areas, there will be a three-cornered contest.

What is the road map to revive the Left?

■ The Left has to revitalise, reposition, re-energise and refurbish itself. Some of it you are seeing in the fielding of young leaders; forming a broader alliance is another way.

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FROM PAGE ONE

NITI Aayog vision ignores tribal concerns

It is almost as if the unique diversity of life just listed suddenly disappeared because of an arbitrary line drawn to allow a slew of high value projects. This is illustrated in the case of the Giant leatherback turtle and the Nicobar megapode, two charismatic species for whom Great Nicobar is very important. The beaches here, like at the mouth of the river Galathea in South Bay, are among the most prominent nesting sites globally of the Giant leatherback. It for this reason that the bay was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1997, but has now been de-notified to allow for the transhipment port.

In his 2007 study of the Nicobar megapode, the globally endangered bird unique to the Nicobars, K. Sivakumar of the Wildlife Institute of India documented 90% of this ground nesting bird's nests to be within a distance of 30 m from the shore. He notes that the existing protected area network in Great Nicobar is not designed for the protection of the megapode and recommends that the entire west and southern coast of Great Nicobar - precisely the area sought for the NITI Aayog proposals - be protected for the megapode and other wildlife like nesting marine turtles. This is also in stark contrast to the current move to create a zero extent ESZ for the Galathea National Park.

Threat to Shompen
Similar concerns exist about the impact on the Shompen community. The proposed project areas are important foraging grounds for this hunter-gatherer nomadic community and the official Shompen Policy of 2015 specifically noted that the welfare and integrity of these people should be given priority "with regard to large-scale development proposals in the future for Great Nicobar Island (such as transhipment port/container terminal etc.)". Now,

large forest areas here could become inaccessible and useless for the Shompen.

Available evidence suggests that issues of the geological volatility of these islands are also not being factored in. The December 26, 2019, tender document by WAPCOS Limited for a 'Traffic Study for Creating Transshipment port at South Bay, Great Nicobar Island' justifies the port here by noting that "the topography of the island is best suited, which has not been damaged much even by the tsunami on 26.11.2004 (sic)".

Yet, a 2005 Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) Special Earthquake Report by a team from the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, recorded witness accounts of 8-metre-high tsunami waves hitting the Great Nicobar coast on December 26, 2004. "The lighthouse at Indira Point, the southernmost tip of the Great Nicobar Island, which was on high ground before the earthquake," the report notes, "is now under water, indicating a land subsidence of about 3-4 m."

Loss of life and property then was limited because the Great Nicobar coast is largely uninhabited. This raises questions over safety of life, property and the investments in this zone and that too without accounting for the complex ecological, social and geological vulnerabilities here. Little, if anything, is also known of the NITI Aayog vision document itself - What is its rationale? What was the process of its creation? Which agencies/individuals were involved? What impact assessments, if any, have been done at all? Neither the NITI Aayog nor the agencies that are facilitating it with zeal have made this available.

(Pankaj Sekhsaria has been researching issues of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands for over two decades. He is also author of five books on the islands.)

HC revokes clean chit to Yediyurappa

Mr. Pasha had filed a private complaint of alleged corruption against then Minister Murugesh Nirani and eight others in 2011, and the special court had ordered a probe by the Lokayukta police.

However, the Lokayukta Police, in May 2012 had filed "B" report on nine persons named in the complaint, stating that no evidence was found against them but had filed a chargesheet against Mr. Yediyurappa and Mr. Naidu stating that their illegal and corrupt acts came to light from the records inspected during the investigation. The chargesheet had accused Mr. Yediyurappa of illegally denotifying 20 acres of land at Hoovinayakanahalli village, Jala Hobli, Bengaluru North taluk. Mr. Naidu was accused of illegally denotifying 4 acres 6 guntas of land at Makanakuppe village, Nelamangala taluk, Bengaluru Rural district. Both were accused of causing crores of rupees loss to the State exchequer by illegally denotifying lands acquired for industrial purposes by abusing their positions.

"When the chargesheet was filed before the special court alleging commission

of cognizable offences under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, the special court has no discretion to choose to ignore the cognisable offence starting on the face of the record and give reprieve to the accused on the flimsy ground that the allegations of the cognisable offences were not made in the complaint or in the FIR," observed Justice Cunha.

I find that the special court was oblivious of the fact that it was dealing with the allegations relating to the violation of the provisions of PC Act that was enacted with the avowed object of eradicating corruption in public life," Justice Cunha observed.

Meanwhile, the High Court directed the special court to examine the "B" report filed stating that no evidence was found against Mr. Nirani and eight others as the special court had not passed any order on "B" report while declining to accept the chargesheet.

As Mr. Pasha's counsel told the Court that the complainant is "apprehending danger to his life", the Court directed the police to provide necessary protection to him as per the law.

India records over 40,000 COVID-19 cases

Doctors have requested the Central government to expand the vaccination coverage to include caregivers of bedridden patients.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, senior consultant neurosurgeon and spine surgeon, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, Delhi, said, "Be-

didden patients are exposed to COVID-19 virus through their caregivers, both professional and family members. With the next wave imminent, it is imperative that we vaccinate caregivers of the elderly, disabled and the bedridden as early as possible."

Welfarism rules UDF manifesto

Congress-led front promises monthly income of ₹6,000 to very poor families

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The United Democratic Front (UDF) election manifesto unveiled on Saturday guaranteed a minimum monthly income of ₹6,000 to Kerala's most impoverished families.

The unconditional cash transfer under NYAY (Nyuntam Aay Yojana) would reduce income inequality, mitigate starvation and help indigent households escape the worst deprivations of daily life, the Congress-led front claimed. The scheme would increase spending, spur demand and catalyse the economy, the manifesto says.

Welfarism seemed to take centrestage in the manifesto.

The Opposition attempted to outdo the ruling front by promising a monthly welfare pension of ₹3,000 instead of the ₹2,500 guaranteed by the Left Democratic Front (LDF).

The UDF's 2016 election promise to prohibit liquor



Platter of promises: UDF leaders releasing the manifesto in Thiruvananthapuram on Saturday.

found no notable mention in the 2021 manifesto. The UDF targeted homemakers aged between 40 and 60 by vowing to transfer ₹2,000 to them monthly, if not already covered by the minimum income guarantee scheme.

Land recovery

The UDF fixed the minimum daily wage at ₹700. It also proposed a law to recover 5.5 lakh acres from illegal owners and accord the land to landless tribal people and Dalits. The front sought to at-

tract the support of households earning more than ₹1 lakh a year by assuring non-priority ration cardholders 5 kg of free rice every month.

In one stroke, the UDF sought to eclipse the free ration and food kits supplied by the Left Democratic Front government during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UDF said it would underwrite the medical expenses of cancer, heart, kidney, organ transplant and haemophilia patients, and promised 'no bill hospitals'

in the public health sector.

One lakh unemployed youth would get two-wheelers at half the market price. An ex gratia one-time payment of ₹5,000 is on the cards for autorickshaw and taxi drivers. Free housing for five lakh low-income families, and maternity allowance for Scheduled Caste/Tribe mothers are other highlights. It would write off agriculture loans of up to ₹2 lakh.

On the political front, the UDF promised a law to defend the Sabarimala faith.

Two Kerala BJP nominees rejected

Papers not signed by party president

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) State unit suffered a severe jolt after the nominations of the party's candidates in the Thalassery and Guruvayur constituencies were rejected during the scrutiny on Saturday.

The nomination papers of National Democratic Alliance (NDA) candidate and BJP district president N. Haridas in Thalassery was rejected on the ground that the Form (A) submitted by Mr. Haridas did not have the signature of the party's president (J.P. Nadda).

Mr. Haridas said he would approach the Supreme Court.

The rejection of nomination, however, has left the BJP in a fix, as the party has a substantial vote share in the constituency, notwithstanding the fact that it is the stronghold of the LDF.

The nomination paper of

Row over washing of feet

STAFF REPORTER
PALAKKAD

Social media saw critics lashing out at BJP's Palakkad candidate E. Sreedharan after some people prostrated before him and some others washed their feet, acts rarely seen during electioneering in the State. However, Mr. Sreedharan said it was part of Indian culture.

the NDA candidate and Maheila Morcha State president Nivedita in Guruvayur was rejected as the affidavit submitted along the nomination did not have signature of the BJP president.

The rejection of nomination, however, has left the BJP in a fix, as the party has a substantial vote share in the constituency, notwithstanding the fact that it is the stronghold of the LDF.

The nomination paper of

IN BRIEF



Cong. to field Satish Jarkholi in Belagavi

BENGALURU
The Karnataka Congress on Saturday recommended the candidature of its working president Satish Jarkholi for the bypoll to the Belagavi Lok Sabha constituency.

The seat fell vacant following the demise of Union Minister Suresh Angadi. Mr. Satish Jarkholi is presently an MLA. His brothers, Ramesh Jarkholi and Balachandra Jarkholi, are BJP MLAs.

Tamil Nadu schools to be shut for Classes 9 to 11

CHENNAI
The Tamil Nadu government has announced that schools will be closed for Classes 9, 10 and 11 from March 22 until further orders, in view of the emergence of COVID-19 clusters in a few schools. Hostels will also be shut, according to an order issued by the Revenue and Disaster Management Department. Digital learning can continue for Classes 9 to 11, it said.

Ex-PM Rao's daughter among TRS winners

Vani Devi beats BJP in MLC election

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

The Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) won both the seats for which elections were held to the Legislative Council from graduates constituencies on March 14. The party wrested the seat from the BJP in Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahbubnagar and retained the Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda constituency.

The marathon counting of votes which commenced at 8 a.m. on Wednesday continued till Saturday night when the results were officially declared in favour of former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's daughter S. Vani Devi at Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahbubnagar and the sitting MLC Palla Rajeswara Reddy at Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda.

Via second preference
Significantly, the victory of TRS was not ensured through the targeted first preference votes which was equal to half of the total valid votes. As none of the candidates reached the magical



CM Chandrasekhar Rao congratulating Vani Devi after her victory. ■ PTI

figure, the counting was stretched till the second preference votes were considered by a process of elimination.

In all, 91 candidates were eliminated in Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahbubnagar and 69 in Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda till the winners were decided between S. Vani Devi and N. Ramchander of BJP in the former and Palla Rajeswara Reddy and an independent Teenmaar Malanna in the latter.

In both the constituencies, the number of invalid votes were more than the victory margin of the winning candidates.

Cyclists fined for riding in Chamundi Hills forests

MYSURU
A group of 40 cyclists who ventured into the reserve forests of Chamundi Hills were slapped with a fine of ₹25,000. Though the incident took place almost two months ago, Forest Department personnel conducted an inquiry and imposed the fine. The group had been apparently found riding along a path used by the forest guards.

older should have mammograms every year. Women with a higher than average risk of breast cancer may need mammograms before the age of 40."

Cancer treatment was multimodal – surgery, chemotherapy that includes targeted therapy, radiation and hormonal therapy, said Mandar Nadkarni, breast oncologist, Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, Mumbai.

"Multi modalities of treatment are mandatory but the requirement of treatment is lesser if we catch cancers

early." Dr. Nadkarni also spoke on breast conservation surgery.

Chandreshwar Sibal, senior vice-president, Head of Medical Division, Fujifilm India Pvt Ltd, spoke on the various awareness initiatives taken up by Fujifilm. Noting that they had launched a screening centre at Bengaluru where screening for 10 common cancers were done, he said they were planning to launch 100 such health-screening centres across the country.

(Watch webinar at <http://bit.ly/THWSFSBS>)

Awareness key to early detection of breast cancer

Timely treatment improves survival rate, say experts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Being aware of the signs and symptoms, self-breast examination and screening with mammogram were key for early detection of breast cancer, experts pointed out.

A webinar on "Self-awareness and early detection of breast cancer" was organised as a part of *The Hindu Wellness Series* presented by Fujifilm on Saturday.

Highlighting the signs and symptoms of breast cancer, Shilpa Lad, consultant, Breast Imaging and Intervention, NM Medical Center, Mumbai, said pain was not a typical sign of breast cancer. "Breast pain is typically associated with hormonal fluctuations during the menstrual cycle. Some of the signs of breast cancer are nipple retraction, dimpling, hardening, red discolouration, asymmetry in size, growing vein, nipple fluid and painless palpable lump."

She said being aware and doing a self-breast examination once a month were important.

"The best time of the month to do a self-breast examination is between day 7-14 of the menstrual cycle, that is the week after the pe-



A WEBINAR ON

SELF-AWARENESS &

EARLY DETECTION OF

BREAST CANCER

older should have mammograms every year. Women with a higher than average risk of breast cancer may need mammograms before the age of 40."

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M ND-NDE

Bajwa's
remarks
positive: PDP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Former Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti on Saturday welcomed the recent remarks of Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa and said the way to peace passes through J&K. Describing the remarks and offer of peace by General Bajwa during a programme in Pakistan as "positive and welcoming", Ms. Mufti said, "Mr. Bajwa's talk about burying the past differences is a welcome statement. There is a need to reciprocate the peace offer."

At a rally in Kulgam, Ms. Mufti said the time had come to bring an end to oppression against people of Kashmir. "The way to peace is through Kashmir. Till the Kashmir issue is not addressed, till the oppression is not ended and the cross-line of control movement allowed, no peace is possible." She said there is a good opportunity for a long-lasting solution to the Kashmir issue.



Signs of hope: Jammu & Kashmir DGP Dilbagh Singh speaking at an event in Srinagar on Saturday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

No fresh infiltration after India-Pak. pact: J&K DGP

+ 'Militants' recruitment not alarming'

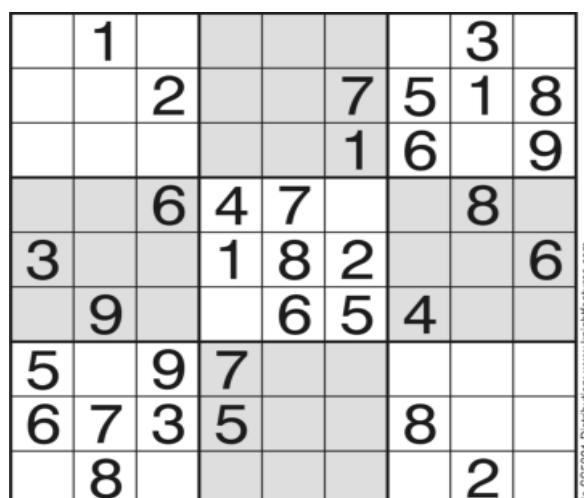
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Jammu & Kashmir Director-General of Police (DGP) Dilbagh Singh on Saturday said no incident of infiltration was reported along the Line of Control (LoC) after a fresh affirmation by India and Pakistan in February to abide by the 2003 ceasefire agreement.

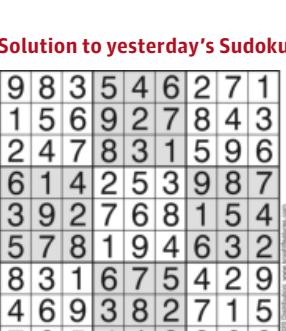
"I would love to see zero infiltration throughout the year 2021. There has been zero infiltration on the LoC across the UT and no fresh ceasefire violation was reported," Mr. Singh said on the sidelines of the inauguration of an Under-19 T20 zonal-level cricket tournament at the Sher-i-Kashmir Cricket Stadium in Srinagar.

He said 2020 was one of the best years in the UT. "I hope 2021 is better than the previous year."

SUDOKU



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



Austin raises human rights concerns

Lloyd Austin says he raised the violation of the rights of Muslims in Assam with the Indian side

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

U.S. Defense Secretary General Lloyd James Austin III (Retd.) addressed the issue of human rights in India during his meetings with Cabinet Ministers here on Saturday. An informed source said the issue also came up during his conversation with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, which also covered a broad range of topics such as the situation in Afghanistan and the West Asian tensions.

"The Defense Secretary said as the two largest democracies in the world, human rights and values are important to us and we will lead with these values," said the source.

Earlier, addressing a select group of American and Indian media outlets, Mr. Austin said he raised the violation of human rights of the Muslims in Assam with the Indian side. "I did have a conversation with other members of the Cabinet on this issue," Mr. Austin was quoted saying by the NDTV. He, however, clarified that he "did not have an oppor-



Bilateral meet: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar along with U.S. Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin during a meeting in New Delhi on Saturday. ■ PTI

tunity to talk to" Prime Minister Narendra Modi on reports of human rights violations targeting minority communities.

"We have to remember that India is our partner, a partner whose partnership we value. And I think partners need to be able to have those kinds of discussions. And certainly we feel com-

fortable doing that. And you can have those discussions in a very meaningful way and make progress," he said in a report that appeared on NDTV online.

To a question from the news channel whether the issue of erosion of democracy featured in his discussions, Mr. Austin said, "You've heard President Biden say

human rights and rule of law are important to the U.S. We always lead with our values. As a democracy that's pretty important to us."

Human rights and the right to peaceful protest have featured in India's relations with many countries, including the U.S. in recent months because of the crackdown on the protest by the

farmers. Mr. Austin was asked to raise reports of violations by Chief of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee Senator Robert Menendez who emphasised that India-U.S. partnership in the 21st century must be based on "adherence to democratic values". India, he said, "has been trending away from those values".

Indo-Pacific issues

The Indo-Pacific also came up during the meeting with Mr. Jaishankar. The American side briefed the Indian team about the trips of Mr. Austin to Japan and South Korea where he held discussions on the region before arriving in India. Among the other regional issues, the peace process in Afghanistan featured in the meeting.

"Assessments were exchanged on the peace process and the ground situation as also the concerns and interests of regional powers and neighbours. The External Affairs Minister appreciated the Biden Administration's engagement with India on this issue," said the source.

Ex-Mumbai police chief targets Minister

Deshmukh sought ₹100 cr. a month'

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

An email to the Maharashtra Chief Minister's Office (CMO) purportedly from Param Bir Singh, who was shunted out as Mumbai Police Commissioner, sparked controversy on Saturday as it alleged that State Home Minister Anil Deshmukh had demanded ₹100 crore every month from suspended police officer Sachin Vaze. Mr. Vaze is in the custody of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in the Antilia bomb scare case.

"Chief Minister's secretariat received a letter on its official e-mail address at 4.37 p.m. on Saturday from paramirs3@gmail.com with only the name of Param Bir Singh without any signature. The department is in the process of checking its authenticity," a CMO statement said.

Alleges defamation

Mr. Deshmukh, however, was quick to deny the charges. He would file a defamation case against Mr. Singh.

The former Commissioner of Police, Param Bir Singh, has made false allegations in order to save himself as the involvement of Sachin Vaze in Mukesh Ambani & Mansukh Hirani's case is becoming clearer from the investigation carried out so far & threads are leading to Mr. Singh as well," Mr. Deshmukh said.

Mr. Singh, in his letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, said, "Shri Sachin Vaze who was heading the Crime Intelligence Unit of the Crime Branch of the Mumbai Police was called by Shri Anil Deshmukh, Hon'ble Home Minister, Maharashtra, to his official residence Dyaneshwar several times and repeatedly instructed to assist in collection of funds. The Hon'ble Home Minister expressed to Shri Vaze that he had a target to accumulate ₹100 crore a month."

The BJP was quick to demand action against Mr. Deshmukh, saying the Minister should take responsibility and resign.

Opposition decries adoption of report on farm law

MPs say they were not consulted, Chairman of the Standing Committee was not present at the final meeting of the panel

PRISCILLA JEBARAJA
SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

Opposition members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution say they were not consulted before the adoption of a report calling for the implementation of the Essential Commodities Amendment (ECA) Act. Protesting farm unions calling for the repeal of the law have slammed parties who were part of the committee for "betraying farmers".

The committee is chaired by Trinamool Congress MP Sudip Bandyopadhyay and

includes members of the Congress, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Samajwadi Party, Nationalist Congress Party and Shiv Sena, all of whom have previously called for the repeal of three farm laws, including the ECA Act.

However, the report adopted by the committee says the law "will become a catalyst for unlocking vast untapped resources in the agriculture sector" and recommends that the government implements the law "in letter and spirit, and without let or hindrance". The report on price rise of essential commodities was submitted to the Lok Sabha on Friday.

Mr. Bandyopadhyay was not present for the final meeting of the committee on Thursday, March 18, when the report was adopted. Instead, that last meeting was

chaired by Bharatiya Janata Party MP Ajay Misra.

"This is the BJP's cheap and dirty tricks department in action," tweeted Trinamool MP Derek O'Brien.

"Con job was done when Chairman of Parliament Committee was not at meeting," he said.

Congress MP Saptagiri Ulaka says he was not present at the meeting either, although his name is on the list of attendees in the minutes appended to the report.

"The 18th meeting was called at a very short notice. I got a call at around 9 p.m. [on 17th] informing about it. The draft report, running into 100 pages, also landed around that time. I couldn't attend the 18th meeting because I had to be in the Lok Sabha for the demand for

grants discussion," he told *The Hindu*.

Follow Congress MP Rajmohan Unnithan also missed the meeting on March 18 as he was in his constituency in Kerala in the run-up to State polls.

"It is unprecedented that a report is adopted in the absence of the Chairman. It has never happened in my 17 years as an MP," said Jairam Ramesh, who is the Congress' chief whip in the Rajya Sabha.

AAP MP Bhagwant Mann was present at the meeting on March 18, but told *The Hindu* that his opposition was not taken into account.

Hosabale is RSS general secretary

The 66-year-old replaces Suresh 'Bhaiyyaji' Joshi, who held the post for 12 years

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

Dattatreya Hosabale was elected the *Sarkaryavah* or general secretary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) at the All India Pratinidhi Sabha (AIPS) meet of the organisation in Bengaluru on Saturday. Mr. Hosabale now holds the second highest office in the RSS, the ideological mothership of the Sangh Parivar and the ruling BJP.

Mr. Hosabale, 66, replaces Suresh "Bhaiyyaji" Joshi, who held the post for 12 years or four terms.

The *sarkaryavah*'s position in the RSS hierarchy is much like that of a chief executive officer (CEO) who handles the hands-on issues of running the organisation and coordinating within the Sangh Parivar and its more than 30 affiliated outfits including the BJP, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh.

Born in Shivamogga in Karnataka in 1954 into an RSS family, Mr. Hosabale joined the RSS in 1968, and

its student organisation, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP). He is a graduate in English literature from Bangalore University.

His stint in the ABVP encouraged the RSS higher-ups to appoint him general secretary of the ABVP in 1978 and he held the post for over 15 years.

He remained under detention under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) during the Emergency for 12 to 14 months while with the ABVP. He has been credited with helping set up the Youth Develop-

ment Centre in Guwahati, and was, before his appointment as *sarkaryavah*, one of several joint general secretaries in the RSS.

The reasons why Mr. Hosabale was picked from other candidates was not just that he was the senior-most but because he also ticked all the right boxes as far as the RSS was concerned.

He is said to have cordial relations with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, and has helped in coordinating many issues that may have turned relations sour.

Just after the election of Prime Minister Modi in his first term, the RSS held a three-day coordination meeting for its affiliate organisations in New Delhi in September 2015, where the government's then outreach to Pakistan was also discussed and various views were aired. Mr. Hosabale, on being asked about the RSS views on such an outreach, termed Pakistan and other SAARC countries as "brothers", and said, "Sometimes

relations (go bad), like it happens between brothers and so we also discussed how we can improve our relations with those who are historically and geographically attached to us." The statement made sure that the RSS backing to Mr. Modi was demonstrably incontrovertible even on contentious issues.

Work with youth
His work in the ABVP for many years meant that he has experience of working with young people, especially in areas such as the northeast, not the traditional stomping ground of the RSS. The young cohort group of BJP MPs, more than 100 out of the 300 BJP MPs, have dealt with him as members of the ABVP when he was their general secretary.

His replacement of Suresh "Bhaiyyaji" Joshi who held the post for 12 years will signal a change in the RSS and its relationship with its affiliates and expectations in the organisation are that this change will mean a more closely aligned Parivar.

'ART not appropriate for live-in or same-sex couples'

Panel submits report in Parliament

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

Given the Indian family structure, social milieu and norms, it will not be very easy to accept a child whose parents are together but not legally married, says the 129-page report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare on the Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) (Regulation) Bill, 2020, submitted in Parliament earlier this week.

The committee, in its report, said that keeping the best interest of the child born through ART services and other parentage issues in case of their separation, it would not be appropriate to allow live-in couples and same sex couples to avail themselves of ART.

"The rights of people in same-sex relationship and live-in relationships frequently keep getting redefined; however, the ART Bill endorsed the recommendations of the Select Committee on Surrogacy (Regula-

tion) Bill, 2019, wherein the definition of "couple" has been retained and live-in couples and same-sex couples have been excluded from availing surrogacy services," the Committee said in its report.

Six IVF clinics
In its observation, the committee expressed anguish over the fact there were only six IVF (*in vitro fertilisation*) clinics in the government sector, while the remaining thousands of IVF centres were in the private sector.

"The committee, therefore, recommends that the government should ensure that each medical college or premier Government Hospital/Institute must have IVF/ART facilities so as to enable the common poor masses to avail the services of ART," it said.

Stating the India had become one of the major centres for ART, the committee noted that "there are only guidelines of ART, and no law still exists."

WCD Ministry to seek ₹37,000 cr. loan to execute schemes

Ministry plans research centre on child development

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

The Women and Child Development Ministry plans to seek loans totalling ₹37,179 crore from five different multilateral development banks to implement new and existing schemes, including a research centre on child development as well as plan-

merly BRICS Development Bank, ₹3,650 crore from Asian Development Bank and ₹79 crore from GIZ (German Development Cooperation).

Each of these funds have been sought for a period of four years and 11 months from April 2021 to March 2026.

The Ministry is planning to apply for a loan of ₹4,600 crore from Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, ₹1,550 crore from Japan International Cooperation Agency, ₹7,300 crore from New Development Bank (for

in the Budget for financial year 2022.

It is already implementing Poshan Abhiyan or Nutrition Mission at a cost of ₹9,000 crore for three years from 2017, half of which is funded through a World Bank loan.

The Ministry has sought a loan of ₹11,550 crore from the Japan International Cooperation Agency, which will be supplemented by another ₹11,550 from the Centre. The total amount of ₹23,100 crore will be spent

on yet to be announced Mission Kalpataru, under which the government plans to plant 200 million trees as "food forests" for long-term nutritional requirements.

With a funding of ₹14,600 crore from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, too, the Ministry plans an infrastructure upgrade vis-a-vis sanitation, setting up child-friendly toilets, provision of safe disposal of sanitary napkins and ensuring awareness about health and sanitation measures.

INTERVIEW | RAKESH MISHRA

'Rising cases are because of carelessness in following the norms'

We need to study how the virus behaves in people with different comorbidities, says the Director of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

Director of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) Rakesh Mishra discounts the possibility that the recent surge of COVID-19 cases is caused by a more transmissible variant from outside India since the around 300 cases of new variants in the country are insignificant. He calls for studying the evolution of the virus, its mutations and strains even since the pandemic hit the country.

What explains the constant rise in cases in States such as Kerala and Maharashtra?

■ Though we have not found a concrete reason for it, there could be a couple of possibilities. One, this surge is caused by a more transmissible variant from outside India but we don't have any such indication. Around 300 cases of new variants in the country are insignificant.

Second possibility is of a new variant emerging within the country. To confirm this possibility, we need to analyse larger number of people for a longer period. But since

we have not found any common mutation or common change in the cases that are occurring, it is less likely to be the cause. And third possibility is that the people are not taking adequate preventive measures. Well, we feel that there are high chances of this to be true. It can lead to a chain reaction, and a sudden surge of cases.

Kerala controlled the epidemic very fast in the beginning, which means not many people got infected or exposed to the virus in the State and so not many developed the protective antibodies. It means a lot of people

are vulnerable to catching the infection in the State. Though people across country are becoming complacent, same degree of indiscipline on people's part in a State like Kerala may lead to much more cases of COVID-19.

It is the same time of the year last year when COVID-19 cases began to rise. Now again the cases are rising. Can we see another wave? How important is vaccination?

■ Another wave is always possible. As summers are harsher in India, people tend to stay indoors, switch on their ACs and coolers and then come out in the evening in masses. This could lead to rise in infection. But the correlation between last year's and this year's rise could just be a coincidence.

Looking at the trend of ris-



Vaccination is a powerful tool ... we may think of opening it up to private sector so that we can reach a large number of people in less time

ing cases, one thing is very clear that these are because of carelessness on people's part and we can easily stop the spread by following COVID-appropriate behaviour

which include wearing mask, washing hands, avoiding large gatherings, avoiding indoor crowding.

Vaccination is a powerful tool and I think so far the vaccination drive has gone on well. But now we may think of opening it up to private sector so that we can reach a large number of people in less time. If we can double or triple the number of people getting vaccines, we can stop or curb COVID spread effectively.

COVID is also manifesting differently in different people. Why?

■ This is the least understood part of COVID. Most of our time so far has gone into fighting the disease and managing it. Now we need to conduct serious studies to understand the clinical features of the disease, how it affects organs, what all or-

gans it affects, etc. We need to study how it behaves in different people with different comorbidities. We will take a couple of years to explain every aspect of the disease.

This virus binds to the Ace2 receptor, protein sitting in the surface of the cell, to gain entry into the cell. Depending upon the health condition of the person, and expression level of the receptor on a given cell type, it may cause more damage to some organs than others.

Recently strains from South Africa, the U.K., Brazil have been reportedly found in India. Is this a cause of worry for us?

■ The source of infection in most of these cases is from outside India. We checked several other samples of those who have currently tested positive for COVID, we

have not found any of these variants in them which means there is no spread of the variant in the country. So, as of now it is not a cause of worry. It also means that the recent rise in cases is not because of these new variants; it is because people have lowered their guards, they have become complacent, and are not following COVID norms.

How do we keep a track of the virus?

■ There are many ways we track a virus. We have found an interesting and easy way to see its presence and prevalence in a locality. We can detect virus RNA in a sewage sample, and by studying the number of RNA molecules present, we can tell what percentage of people in a locality have infection. It is a much faster way to track a virus. Recently, we were able

to validate this way of measuring level of infection in the population by sero-survey method. We might be able to use this method to track other pathogens as well.

Can mutations in the virus lead to reinfections?

■ 50Y mutation in the U.K. has shown an increase in the number of infections but not reinfection. In Brazil too, there are not many cases of reinfection. In fact, all over the world, the reinfections are fewer. But this is the current situation, it does not mean that more rounds of mutations will not lead to reinfections. So, it is important that we keep a tight vigil and prevent spread of the disease as much as possible by social vaccine of mask, hand hygiene and social distancing, especially avoiding clustering of people in closed space.



Tough times: A year after the lockdown, jobs are harder to find even at a lower remuneration. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPKAR

Migrant workers face debt and job loss

After lockdown, life is far from normal

DAMINI NATH

NEW DELHI/NOIDA

Construction sites, industrial clusters, markets and homes in the National Capital Region (NCR) are abuzz with activity, but for the migrant workers who make a living in these spaces, life is far from normal a year after the country was locked down to curb the spread of COVID-19 in March 2020.

Almost a year since Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the lockdown on March 24, migrant workers in the NCR are facing wage cuts, mounting debts and uncertainty over their families' futures, many of whom have not returned from the villages due to the pandemic.

Mangal Dev, a plastic moulder working in Delhi's Uttam Nagar, says he only worked three months in the past year. Having found a job in February, he says, he is slowly trying to pay back ₹35,000 in rent dues for his ₹4,500-a-month single room in Sagarpur. Faced with months of no income, he says he made the decision to send his family, including two school-going daughters, back to his village in West Bengal.

Not only was it difficult to find work in 2020, with fac-

tories shutting down or reducing staff, he says the salaries being offered now were well below the ₹18,000 minimum wage for skilled workers set by the Delhi government.

According to the Union Labour and Employment Ministry, over 1.14 crore inter-State migrant workers returned to their homes during the lockdown. In a reply to the Rajya Sabha on March 17, the Ministry said "most of them have gone back to their original or workplaces and engaged themselves in productive employment".

One such worker who made the long trip back home was Neb Singh, who is currently working at a construction site in Noida's Sector-107.

Having spent months at home without any work, he made his way to Noida last month. How did he manage without any income all this while? "Everyone has problems. The way the poor were surviving back then, they are doing now," he says, with a shrug.

Fourteen-year-old Anjana Ahirwar, who lives in Noida with her brother and mother, says she had to drop out of school and start working in a house.

Allahabad HC slams indiscriminate arrests

Court flags human rights violations

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

Irrational and indiscriminate arrests are a gross violation of human rights, the Allahabad High Court has observed as it granted anticipatory bail to a person accused of abetting his wife's suicide over alleged dowry harassment in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh.

"The courts have repeatedly held that arrest should be the last option for the police and it should be restricted to those exceptional cases where arresting the accused is imperative or his custodial interrogation is required. Irrational and indiscriminate arrests are gross violation of human rights," Justice Siddharth said in an

order dated March 17.

The case relates to an FIR registered in Jhansi under the Dowry Prohibition Act.

The accused person, Dharmandra, approached the court praying for anticipatory bail.

It was alleged that his wife took her life by hanging because of dowry harassment. The petitioner was also accused of being a habitual gambler and drunkard who lost money in gambling and had also sold his wife's jewellery. The petitioner's counsel said the incident took place on December 5, 2020. The marriage took place in 2004 and it was not credible that on account of demand of dowry, she committed suicide.

GOVERNMENT OF KERALA
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS
HOUSING BOARD BUILDINGS, SANTHINAGAR, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695 001

NOTIFICATION
Kerala Management Aptitude Test (KMAT-2021)
Application Invited Online Entrance Examination for MBA
No.CEE/3601/KMAT-2021/T2

Applications are invited for the Online Entrance Examination to MBA Course, i.e., Kerala Management Aptitude Test (KMAT-2021). Detailed Prospectus & Fee details is available in the www.cee.kerala.gov.in

Last date & time for submitting online application along with all necessary documents is 28.03.2021, 5 pm.

Help line No. 0471-2525300
Thiruvananthapuram
18.03.2021

(Sd/-)
Commissioner for Entrance Examinations
RO No. 1618/F4/2021/I&PR

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AMENDMENT

In partial amendment to the Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) having tender reference No. HPPCL/EC/Insurance Broker-/2021 regarding "Hiring of Services of Insurance Brokers for Insurance Policy of HPPCL Generating stations as well as Settlement of Insurance Claims and other Insurance related Matters", published on 10.02.2021, the last date for bid submission/opening is hereby **EXTENDED** as under:

Deadline for Submission of Bids : 1430 Hrs. on 08.04.2021
Opening of Bids : 1500 Hrs. on 08.04.2021

The other terms and conditions of NIT shall remain unchanged.

-Sd/-
Dy. General Manager (EC),
HPPCL, Shimla-09, H.P.

URANIUM CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED
(A Government of India Enterprises)
(CIN : U12000 JH 1967 GOI 000806)
P.O: JADUGUDA MINES, JHARKHAND - 832102

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL), a Public sector undertaking under the administrative control of DAE with head office at Jaduguda Mines, East Singhbhum, Jharkhand-832102, operates two process plants with acid leach process in East Singhbhum, Jharkhand & one process plant with alkaline leach process in YSR-Kadappa district of Andhra Pradesh. The Company consumes powdered Perlite based Filter aid for filtration of Unclarified pregnant liquor (JPL) (pH: 1.8-2.0) in the units in Jharkhand. The company invites "EXPRESSION OF INTEREST" from reputed manufacturers/authorized dealer or distributors of Perlite based filter aid, who have supplied atleast 870 MT of Perlite based filter aid in any one of the last 3 (three) financial year 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20. Interested parties shall visit company's website www.uraniumcorp.in for other details & terms & conditions.

Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT PRASARAN NIGAM LIMITED NOTICE INVITING BID

Bids for "Design, Manufacture, testing at works and supply of 132 KV Single core XLPE cable for establishing of 132 KV Double Circuit (500 Sq. mm) between proposed 132 KV Laxman Doongri substation and existing 220 KV substation Kundal Ki Dhan (Jaipur) (Approx. 9.5 km) including detailed route survey, laying and installation of cable along with associated accessories / items and civil works", against specification no. RVNP / EH / AGSP / TN-56 are invited from interested bidders up to 04:00PM, 19.04.2021. For other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>) or state e-tender (<http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/vpnpl departmental website>).

URN: VPN2021WL0B0190

Supernitenging Engineer Raj.Samvardh/C/11301/2020-21 (Automation N/M & SP), Jaipur

Ref. No.F.1(95)DCA/2021/1234 Date: 09.03.2021

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Government of Rajasthan invites 'Expression of Interest' to select Private Sector Partners (PSP) for Operation and Maintenance of Airstrips and Design, Build, Operate, maintain and Transfer (DBOT) Flying Training Institutes in Rajasthan on Public Private Partnership (PPP) Mode.

Document relating to EOI can be downloaded from web sites www.gadrashtra.gov.in and <http://sppr.rajasthan.gov.in>. Interested organizations may participate and submit their EOLs in this Directorate on or before 06.00 PM of 26th April, 2021, Cost Price Rs.1000/-

DCA2021WS0B00029 (Virendra Singh) DIPRC/2862

Ref. No. F.1(95)DCA/2021/1234 Date: 09.03.2021

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U.S.-China talks end on subdued note

There was neither a joint statement nor a clear identification of deliverables after the Alaska meeting

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

WASHINGTON

The U.S.-China talks started with a bang but ended with a whimper as Chinese officials left the site of the talks in Anchorage without a press conference on Friday and the rancour and sparring evident in Thursday's opening session did not have a sequel to match.

While the Chinese delegation left without addressing the press, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan spoke to reporters, saying the two sides were "fundamentally at odds" on a number of issues but suggesting they would work together on others. Mr. Blinken listed Iran, North Korea, Afghanistan and climate change as areas of common interest.

"And we certainly know and knew going in that there are a number of areas where



Fiery start: Secretary of State Antony Blinken addressing the press as NSA Jake Sullivan, right, looks on, in Anchorage. ■AP

we are fundamentally at odds, including China's actions in Xinjiang, with regard to Hong Kong, Tibet, increasingly Taiwan, as well as actions that it's taken in cyberspace," Mr. Blinken said.

The U.S. has determined that the Chinese government is engaged in a "genocide" on the Uighur Muslim minority in Xinjiang. Days before

the talks, the State Department announced sanctions against Chinese and Hong Kong officials for increasing Beijing's control over Hong Kong's legislature. "And it's no surprise that when we raised those issues clearly and directly, we got a definitive response," Mr. Blinken said.

"But we were also able to

China for talks with U.S. on climate, other issues

BEIJING

China said on Saturday that it had agreed with the U.S. to take up climate change and a handful of other issues. The official Xinhua News Agency said that both sides have decided to set up a working group on climate change and hold talks "to facilitate activities of... diplomatic and consular missions" and on issues related to each other's journalists. ■AP

have a very candid conversation over these many hours on an expansive agenda. On Iran, on North Korea, on Afghanistan, on climate, our interests intersect," he said.

In matters of trade, technology and economic, Mr. Blinken said the U.S. told China that it is working with Congress and its allies and will move forward in a way

that "fully protects and advances the interests of workers and our businesses".

In line with expectations that U.S. officials had attempted to set prior to the talks, there was neither a joint statement nor a clear identification of deliverables after the meetings. This, despite the U.S. and China (along with Russia and Pakistan) signing a joint statement on the Afghan peace settlement in Moscow.

"We were clear-eyed coming in, we're clear-eyed coming out, and we will go back to Washington to take stock of where we are," Mr. Sullivan told reporters on Friday. "We'll continue to consult with allies and partners on the way forward and, of course, on issues ranging from Iran to Afghanistan through the normal diplomatic channels. We'll continue to work with China going forward."

EU chief says only 30% of 90 mn promised doses delivered

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

FRANKFURT

European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen threatened on Saturday to halt exports of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccines if the bloc did not receive its promised deliveries first, escalating a row that has fanned international tensions.

"We have the option of banning a planned export. That's the message to AstraZeneca: you fulfil your contract with Europe first before you start delivering to other countries," Ms. von der Leyen told Germany's Funke media group.

The EU warning comes as the struggles to speed up its COVID-19 inoculation campaign, just as many member states are facing a third coronavirus wave and renewed curbs on public life.

Ms. Von der Leyen said Anglo-Swedish pharma giant had delivered only 30% of the 90 million vaccine doses it had promised for the first quarter of the year.

"But we haven't received anything from the Brits, although we are delivering to them," she said, adding that the European Commission had sent a "formal letter" to the company to complain.

EU-based manufacturers have shipped 41 million vaccine doses to 33 countries since early February, Ms. von der Leyen said, making the bloc one of the world's biggest export regions for COVID-19 vaccines. "I can't explain to European citizens why we are exporting millions of vaccine doses to countries that are producing vaccines themselves and aren't sending us anything back," she said.

In the interview with German newspapers, Ms. von der Leyen reiterated that the

Pakistan PM Khan tests positive for COVID-19

REUTERS

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has tested positive for COVID-19 two days after receiving his first vaccine dose, government officials said on Saturday, urging people not to be deterred from getting vaccinated.

Pakistan's vaccination roll-out has been met with widespread vaccine hesitancy, and Mr. Khan's positive test could serve as a setback to the mass inoculation drive in the country of 220 million people, health experts said.

Mr. Khan, 68, is "self iso-



Imran Khan receiving a dose of Sinopharm vaccine on Thursday. ■AFP

lating at home," Health Minister Faisal Sultan, said in a tweet, and a close aide said he had a mild cough and fever. Senior aides stressed that he had likely been infected before he was vaccinated on Thursday.

Biden condemns violence against Asian-Americans

"We have to speak out, we have to act," he says, urging Americans to 'combat resurgence of xenophobia'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

ATLANTA

U.S. President Joe Biden on Friday denounced the upsurge of violence against Asian-Americans, telling a community plunged into grief after this week's Atlanta murders that the nation must not be complicit in the face of racism and xenophobia.

After meeting with leaders of Georgia's Asian-American community, Mr. Biden delivered a brief speech at Atlanta's Emory University, where he branded hate and racism "the ugly poison that's long haunted our nation."

Such bigotry and violence

has been "often met with silence" in the U.S., he said. "But that has to change because our silence is complicity. We cannot be complicit," Mr. Biden stressed.

"We have to speak out, we have to act," he added, as he called on Americans to "combat this resurgence of xenophobia."

And he levelled a rebuke of previous President Donald Trump without mentioning his name, saying: "Words have consequences. It's the coronavirus, full stop."

Mr. Trump faced severe blowback last year for repeatedly calling COVID-19 –



Saying no to hate: President Joe Biden speaks, flanked by Vice-President Kamala Harris, in Atlanta on Friday. ■AFP

which has now killed 5,40,000 people in the U.S. – the "China virus" as it was first detected in that country.

Mr. Biden noted that attacks on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have been "skyrocketing", a trend

confirmed by the group Stop AAPI Hate, which says nearly 3,800 cases have been reported since last year, including verbal and physical assaults, discrimination and civil rights abuses.

Three massage parlours around Atlanta were targeted on Tuesday, and a 21-year-old suspect, Robert Aaron Long, was arrested. Of the eight fatalities, six were women of Asian descent.

Long told police he was grappling with a sexual addiction and that he wanted to "eliminate" a temptation that put him in conflict with his strict religious beliefs.

Pak. scribe shot dead at barber shop

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ISLAMABAD

Police were investigating the killing of a local journalist by an unknown gunman at a barber shop in Sindh province, officials said on Saturday.

Ajay Lalwani, 31, a reporter for a local television station and an Urdu language newspaper, was shot multiple times while having his hair cut at a barber shop on Thursday.

"It wasn't immediately clear if he was killed because of his professional duties," police said.

YANG JIECHI

Eye of the tiger

The Politburo member earned praise at home for his blunt comments in Alaska

ANANTH KRISHNAN

R egardless of who emerges on top following the March 18 talks between top U.S. and Chinese officials in Alaska – and whether the first engagement with China under the new Biden administration ends up being a significant milestone in the continuing power tussle between the world's two biggest powers – there appears to be at least one "big winner".

"That is Politburo member Yang Jiechi," wrote Dali Yang, University of Chicago political science professor and an expert on elite Chinese politics, referring to China's top diplomat. "His lecturing of Americans has been a resounding success with the Chinese press and public," he observed on Twitter, "and will continue to resonate" in China.

Most people in China who follow the news were likely aware of who Yang Jiechi (pronounced Yaang Jie Chuh) is. For several decades, he has been a fixture in China's diplomacy. Yet if the name might have rung a bell, most would have been hard pressed to recall any details about Mr. Yang, who enjoyed the reputation, among his foreign peers, of being a somewhat colourless bureaucrat. That was until Friday.

In response to the 2-minute opening remarks from his host Antony Blinken, the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Yang launched into an unexpected 16-minute speech, going beyond the usual customary short opening introductions made in the presence of the media.

He said he had been "compelled" to respond to Mr. Blinken, who had raised concerns over Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

"Well, isn't this the intention of United States, judging from what – or the way that



you have made your opening remarks – that it wants to speak to China in a condescending way from a position of strength?" he asked. "So was this carefully all planned and was it carefully orchestrated with all the preparations in place? Is that the way that you had hoped to conduct this dialogue? Well, I think we thought too highly of the United States. We thought that the U.S. side will follow the necessary diplomatic protocols. So for China, it was necessary that we made our position clear. So let me say here that, in front of the Chinese side, the United States does not have the qualification to say that it wants to speak to China from a position of strength."

These remarks went viral in China, and Mr. Yang was praised for his forthrightness. Some in the Chinese press were drawing comparisons to Mao Zedong's famous declaration in 1949 that "the Chinese people have stood up", viewing his comments as laying down a marker in China's challenge of American dominance.

Centre of the stage
Premature as that may perhaps be, the apparent transformation of Mr. Yang is reflective of the broader evolution of the Chinese foreign policy that he repre-

Angeles Times reported in December 2000. In 1992, the senior Bush even "welcomed Yang in the White House residential quarters, to which few diplomats have entry," the paper noted. He returned to the U.S. again in the 1990s and was appointed as China's Ambassador to Washington in 2001.

Rise to the top

His vast experience in the U.S. paved the way for him to ascend to the top diplomatic posts in the Chinese government. He served as Foreign Minister from 2007 to 2013, followed by four-year term as State Councilor in the Cabinet, a broad equivalent to the National Security Advisor post in other countries. Among his duties as top diplomat was to engage with India as a Special Representative on the border talks, which, by most accounts, made little progress during his tenure.

His career received an unexpected boost in 2017, when Mr. Yang was due to retire. At the Party Congress five years into Mr. Xi's term, he was promoted to the elite 25-member Politburo, the first diplomat to be given that honour since the former Foreign Minister Qian Qichen 14 years earlier.

"Tiger" Yang's elevation in 2017 revealed two things: his long experience in dealing with the U.S. deemed him a valuable asset, and more tellingly, it showed he had the ear of Mr. Xi, who also appointed him as Director of a newly set-up Foreign Affairs Commission under the Party's Central Committee. So even if Mr. Yang is receiving the plaudits in China for his sharp remarks in Alaska, it is clear they most certainly bore the stamp of Mr. Xi – and were a message he wanted to convey to the new administration in Washington.

PROFILES

O n March 11, after selling an artwork for over \$69 million to someone with the pseudonym Metakovan, auction house Christie's noted that "this piece now ranks third amongst the most valuable artworks ever sold by a living artist". No. 1 on that list is a stainless steel sculpture called *Rabbit*, the work of American artist Jeff Koons, which was sold for \$91 million in 2019. And No. 2 is a 1972 painting, *Portrait of an Artist*, by British artist David Hockney that got sold for just over \$90 million a year before Koons' work bested it.

The third, *Everydays: the First 5000 Days*, is neither a stainless steel sculpture nor a painting on a canvas. In fact, there is nothing physical about it. This work, by Mike Winkelmann, who is also known as Beeple, is essentially a collage of 5,000 digital images he created over the last 13 years. It is purely a digital creation. And on Christies.com, the final moments of bidding attracted 22 million viewers.

Within days of the auction, India-born, Singapore-based, blockchain entrepreneur Vignesh Sundaresan revealed himself to be Metakovan. "The point was to show Indians and people of colour that they too could be patrons," he wrote on this blog. What he ended up buying, spending record sums of over 42,329 Ether (native cryptocurrency on the Ethereum platform, and Bitcoin rival) in the process, is more than just a JPEG file. It's an NFT, short for non-fungible token, and the most expensive one till date.

When an item is non-fungible, it essentially means it has unique properties, from

which it draws its value. So, it can't be exchanged with another item, what with its value also being very subjective. A piece of art is an example of it. This contrasts with, say, currency, which is fungible as exchange based on value is easy. The distributed platform or the blockchain that forms the basis for the cryptocurrency Ethereum, in the process providing the verification layer for transactions, also supports NFTs. So a digital artwork that is an NFT is a unique piece of work where ownership is established.

Entrepreneurial journey
Mr. Sundaresan, who has a software background, got initiated into the world of cryptocurrencies, specifically Bitcoin, in early 2013. His entrepreneurial journey in this space began around that time. Not long after, he co-founded BitAccess, which was in the business of installing Bitcoin ATMs across the world.

He left the company in 2016, and then made a "large sum of money" investing in Ethereum. This money, he says on his blog, has flown in new ideas, one of which is Metapurse, described as "a crypto-exclusive fund that specialises in identifying early-stage projects across blockchain infrastructure, fi-

ance, art, unique collectibles, and virtual estate". Mr. Sundaresan runs Metapurse along with Anand Venkateswaran, known as Twobadour. In another Metapurse blog post, NFTs are described as "the centre of a renaissance – of finance, technology, creativity, collaboration, and culture itself".

Mr. Sundaresan's big-ticket art purchase comes at a time when the world of NFTs seems more active than ever. Last month, a Nyan Cat meme NFT was sold for nearly \$600,000 on an online auction. Just a few days prior to the sale of *Everydays*, Twitter founder Jack Dorsey offered to sell his first Tweet as an NFT.

And just a few days prior to that, musician Claire Boucher, who is famous as Grimes, sold a collection of her work for almost \$6 million. This ecosystem believes it has come a long way from what is described as the BC era, or the Birth of Crypto-Kitties, a project started in 2017 that generated a lot of buzz around the concept. It allowed players to purchase, breed, and sell virtual cats.

Mr. Venkateswaran, Mr. Sundaresan's associate, wrote about the CryptoKitties episode: "At a time when speculation and profit were the primary motives for peo-

ple getting into the crypto space, NFTs infused an element of pure child-like joy into the system." He further wrote: "Typical of crypto, the kitties breed not just other kitties, but other ideas in the NFT space." Over the years, some of these ideas have been about marketplaces for NFTs, such as OpenSea.

While there are question marks about whether NFTs are actually bubbles, a post on the Ethereum site explains why NFTs are important. It says, "As everything becomes more digital, there's a need to replicate the properties of physical items like scarcity, uniqueness, and proof of ownership."

OpenSea, which calls itself the largest NFT marketplace, says in a post: "We have tons of digital stuff, we've just never really owned it." The point it is making is that unlike in the physical world, ownership of digital assets is almost always in the context of specific platforms, and the ease of holding or transferring them is hardly there. NFTs are said to solve this issue.

High-valued NFTs
Not just this. There are also attempts to build solutions so that NFTs can validate ownership of physical items, such as cars or homes. But right now, the art world is seeing the effects of NFT in action. As Mr. Sundaresan, aka Metakovan, was quoted in the Christie's release, "When you think of high-valued NFTs, this one is going to be pretty hard to beat. And here's why – it represents 13 years of everyday work. Techniques are replicable and skill is surpassable, but the only thing you can't hack digitally is time. This is the crown jewel, the most valuable piece of art for this generation. It is worth \$1 billion."



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SNAPSHOTS



Petri-dish people?

Researchers have induced human stem cells to self-organise and form a human blastocyte – an early stage of the formation of a human embryo. One group started from human embryonic stem cells and induced pluripotent stem cells that are derived from adults, the other group started with adult skin cells called fibroblasts (*Nature*).



Narrow-cored Mars

NASA's Insight spacecraft which is located on Mars has made an estimate of the size of the Martian core. It finds that Mars's core is about half the size of Earth's core and measures between 1,810 and 1,860 kilometres. Insight scientists infer that the core must contain, in addition to iron and sulphur, lighter elements like oxygen. The study will help understand the way Mars evolved.

Should Covaxin trial continue till 130 cases are recorded?

The challenge will be in continuing the trial with 25,800 participants till 130 cases are reported when there is a surge in many States

R. PRASAD

Bharat Biotech began the phase-3 trial of Covaxin on November 11, 2020 and completed the enrollment of all 25,800 volunteers on January 7, 2021. The last of the phase-3 trial participants received the second dose in the third week of February.

The company had planned to continue the phase-3 trial until 130 study participants developed the disease. The first and second interim analyses of phase-3 trial are planned to be conducted when 43 and 87 cases get reported. On March 3, Bharat Biotech announced the interim analysis of 43 cases; the vaccine was found to have an 80.6% point estimate of vaccine efficacy.

High efficacy

There are a fairly large number of participants in each group – 12,900 people in each arm – and as against 36 cases in the placebo group, there were just seven cases in the vaccine arm. "This is an ambiguous reflection of high vaccine efficacy, calculated as 80.6%. We will have to wait for the announcement of the 95% confidence range, but eyeball assessment is that it has to be fairly narrow on account of the huge denominator," says virologist Dr. Jacob John, formerly with CMC Vellore.

The next interim analysis will

be carried out when the total number of symptomatic COVID-19 cases reach 87. With the phase-3 trial beginning only on November 11, nearly two months after the pandemic had reached a peak in India, it took nearly four months for the first 43 cases to accrue.

"The total number of cases in the 25,800 study participants happened to be only 43 after nearly four months, which is a reflection of the relatively low prevalence of infection in the country during the trial period. The original expectation was that there would be 130 cases by end-February," says Dr. John.

Though an uptick in daily cases has been reported from 21 States, 10 States are witnessing a surge. "There is a sustained and steady increase in cases in these 10 States, making it clear that the second wave has set in," says Dr. Rijo John, Health Economist and Consultant based in Kochi. The seven-day average of daily cases has more than doubled from 10,986 on February 8 to 29,334 on March 18, a 167% increase; the test positivity rate has doubled from 1.6 to 3.2% during the same period.

There is a good possibility that the spike in cases in a handful of States would get reflected in the infection/disease frequency in the trial sites and trial participants. Though Bharat Biotech has 25 trial sites spread across 11 States, there



Optional: Participants from priority groups can be requested to continue in the study for its successful completion but they should be free to withdraw any time, says Dr. Anant Bhan ■ GETTY IMAGES

are no trial sites in Punjab, Chandigarh and Kerala, which is still reporting high numbers. The company has five trial sites in Maharashtra (two in Mumbai alone), two sites in Tamil Nadu (including one in Chennai), Karnataka (Bengaluru being one), and Haryana but just one trial site in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi.

Impending surge

With daily cases increasing spiking in many States, Dr. Giridhara Babu, epidemiologist at PHFI, Bengaluru feels that many more States might witness a surge. How much the increase would be in each State would depend on numerous factors including daily testing rate,

adherence to COVID-19 precautions and vaccination rate. It would have probably taken four-six months for another 43 cases to accrue, but due to the spike currently seen in 10 States that endpoint would be reached earlier. According to reliable sources in Bharat Biotech, the company is expecting to reach 87 symptomatic cases end point earliest by April or latest by June. Dr. Babu thinks the final target of 130 cases too can be reached soon, considering the way the cases are spiking in many States.

Considering that recruitment and complete vaccination of all trial participants has been achieved, the drug regulator has to take a decision on the number

of cases required for licensing. It could be either currently available cases, second endpoint of 87 cases or 130 cases as originally planned, for which the trial will have to continue for a longer time.

The challenge

The challenge will be in continuing the trial with the original number of participants when there is a surge in many States. Four priority groups are already eligible for vaccination. "It will be unethical to withhold information from participants about the priority groups that are eligible for vaccination. The participants falling in the priority groups can be requested to continue in the study for the successful completion of the trial but participants should be free to withdraw at any point of time," says Dr. Anant Bhan, global health and bioethics researcher based in Bhopal. Besides healthcare workers, over 2,400 participants over 60 years and 4,500 people with comorbidities have been included in the trial.

"The vaccine was approved for restricted emergency use under a 'clinical trial mode' even when no efficacy data was available. When the first interim analysis of 43 cases showed nearly 81% efficacy, the 'clinical trial mode' was removed.

Considering that recruitment and complete vaccination of all trial participants has been achieved, the drug regulator has to take a decision on the number

academic interest. It doesn't make any difference on the ground," says virologist Dr. Shahid Jameel, Director of the Trivedi School of Biosciences at Ashoka University. "It will be unethical to deny the vaccine to those participants in the placebo group who fall under any of the priority groups and thus eligible to receive the vaccine."

Dr. Babu too feels it will be unethical to deny the vaccine to trial participants who are eligible to receive the vaccine, particularly when many States are reporting a spike in daily cases.

Second endpoint

Dr. V. Ravi, neurovirologist formerly with NIMHANS says the second wave has already begun in India. He therefore expects another 43 symptomatic cases among the trial participants to show up by end-April. "We should wait for the second endpoint – 87 cases – before unblinding the trial," he says. "Waiting for 130 cases, especially when cases are surging in many States, will unnecessarily put the trial participants who have received a placebo at great risk. It is unethical."

"For feeling confident about high vaccine efficacy (80.6%), the available data are sufficient, but whether DGCI will feel confident to license the vaccine or not is a call the drug regulator alone can make," says Dr. Jacob John.

Indian monsoon 25 million years ago resembled present day Australia's

Four fossil assemblages helped to study the climate during 65, 57, 54, and 25 mya

ASWATHI PACHA

About 180 million years ago, India separated from the supercontinent Gondwana and took a long northward journey of about 9,000 km to join Eurasia. The subcontinent moved from the southern hemisphere, crossed the Equator to reach its current position. Due to these changing latitudes, it experienced different climatic conditions, and a new study has now tried to map these variations using leaf fossils.

"The evolution of the monsoonal climate in India is still debatable and not fully understood. Though recent data indicates that the monsoon system we experience now dates back to about 25 million years, it is still unclear how the climate was during its long voyage," says Gaurav Srivastava from Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences, Lucknow, corresponding author of the paper published in *Gondwana Research*.



Dynamic Earth: Artist's rendering of (left) how more than 140 million years ago, India was part of a supercontinent, Gondwana and (right) Earth today. ■ ISTOCK (EDITED BY MIT NEWS)

The team analysed the morphological characters of fossil leaves collected from Deccan Volcanic Province, East Garo Hills of Meghalaya, Gurha mine in Rajashan and Makum Coalfield in Assam. The four fossil assemblages were found to be from different geological ages and helped to study the climate during 65, 57, 54, and 25 million years ago. "It has been observed from across the globe that plant leaf morphological characters such as apex, base and

shape are ecologically tuned with the prevailing climatic conditions to adapt for all the seasons throughout the year. We applied this model to characterise the past monsoon from fossil leaves," explains Dr. Srivastava.

Fossil truths

The results indicated that the fossil leaves from India were adapted to an Australian type of monsoon and not the current Indian monsoon system during its voyage. The reconstructed

temperature data show that the climate was warm (tropical to subtropical) at all the studied fossil sites with temperatures varying from 16.3–21.3 degrees C. All the fossil sites experienced high rainfall, which varied from 191.6 cm to 232 cm.

Dr. Srivastava explains that since India was the only subcontinent to have crossed from the southern hemisphere to the northern hemisphere, it is a laboratory to study biogeographic changes and understand how the flora and fauna changed accordingly.

"Our future plan is to better understand the evolutionary history of Indian monsoon and its role in the evolution of biodiversity hot spots in South and Southeast Asia. This will help in the conservation of modern biodiversity hot spots. Understanding the past dynamics of Indian monsoon will also help in climate modelling for future monsoon prediction," he adds.

Background hum Until now, the number of mergers detected by LIGO, VIRGO and KAGRA detectors is minuscule compared with the number of mergers actually taking place in the sky. The idea that the gravitational

Detecting the unified call of black holes

Gravitational waves from distant events may form a constant background signal

SHUBHASHREE DESIKAN

Since the first detection of the merger of black holes dated September 14, 2014, by the two gravitational wave detectors at LIGO in the U.S., the field has witnessed important developments. The LIGO detectors have been joined in their search for gravitational waves from various sources by the VIRGO detector in Italy and the KAGRA detector in Japan. The Indian detector LIGO India is being developed and is expected to join these in their search.

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Reaching out: Detections till now have been of events that were relatively close to us. ■ GETTY IMAGES

waves are like watching the stadium from far, while detections made by the detectors so far has been like observing individuals. Dr. Mitra and a team of researchers have contributed significantly to building up an algorithm that is geared to detect such a so called stochastic gravitational wave background. Their recent work has been published in *Physical Review D*.

Just as studying the cosmic microwave background tells us about the early universe, its formation, the stochastic gravitational wave background would reveal the structure of the universe around us. Detections till now have been of events that were relatively close to us. Distant binary coalescences, millisecond pulsars, etc are expected to produce a background, and detecting any of this would be a great breakthrough.

Radiometer algorithm The radiometer algorithm which Indian researchers played a key role in developing, comes in useful as a tool

for detecting hitherto unknown sources: with recent algorithms developed in India, the radiometer analysis has been made hundreds of times faster and they are now being used by the international collaboration for the official analysis.

The gravitational wave background consists of an isotropic component and an anisotropic component. The isotropic component is constant when you look in different directions and the anisotropic component depends on the direction.

The present results are not that the isotropic component has been detected, we are still far from that, but that the group has successfully shown that it must be below a certain level as otherwise it would have been detected. Future improved versions of the detectors will have to work below this level to detect the background.

"If the gravitational wave background is discovered, it will be a major discovery in astronomy, probably one of the most celebrated ones," says Dr. Mitra.

The emerging crisis of obtaining helium in India

Every year, India imports helium worth ₹55,000 crore from the U.S.

BIKASH SINHA

Helium is colourless, odourless, tasteless, inert and a noble gas. Yet, it finds many applications, mainly in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans, in rockets and in nuclear reactors. India imports helium for its needs, and with the U.S. appearing set to cut off exports of helium since 2021, Indian industry stands to lose out heavily. What is the solution? Can India become self-reliant towards its needs of helium gas?

Helium on Earth Dutch physicist Kamerlingh Onnes liquefied Helium by cooling the gas to -270 degrees Celsius. It is known that Kamerlingh Onnes collected helium gas from the springs of Bath in Baden-Baden, Germany for his liquefaction experiment.

Some scientists and geologists started looking for helium underground – they guessed it may be present there by analysing debris from volcanic eruptions. From the oil drilling operation in Dexter, Kansas, in the U.S., chemists Hamilton Ca-



Rich source: Of the natural gas emanating from the boiling water in a tank in Bakreswar, 1.8% was helium. ■ GETTY IMAGES

to look into this. What Shyamadas Chatterjee found out was stunning: 1.8% of the natural gas emanating from the boiling water was helium. This was around 1965-66.

Emerging project Homi Sethna, then the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission arranged for the project to be part of the newly started Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre (VECC) project of Kolkata.

Shyamadas Chatterjee's hunch was that the area called Rajmahal volcanic basin around Bakreswar and nearby Tantlo, now in Jharkhand, were floating on an ocean of helium.

He and his student Debasis Ghose started exploring Tantlo, which is populated by tribal people. The village is situated next to a stream, with naturally hot water with natural gas emanating from it. Preliminary investigations of the stream indicated there was around 1.6% of helium in

that Bhabha Atomic Research Centre under the leadership of R. K. Garg, head of the Chemical and Engineering Division, in the 1970s made an effort to extract helium from monazite sand. Unfortunately, this project was doomed, and BARC did not push it any further.

When we took over the project in late 1980s we got very busy with other research and development projects. We all thought collection of helium on a large scale is a semi-commercial operation and nothing very much to do with research or development. Besides which, we just did not have the adequate man power.

So, this vast reservoir of helium in the Rajmahal volcanic belt remained untapped.

Scientific fraternity

Extracting helium on a large scale did not seem to be of great importance to our scientific fraternity. After I stepped down from my official job in 2009, the possibility of helium extraction looked even more bleak. Then, I found a very understanding and enthusiastic person in the present chairman of Atomic Energy Commission, Dr. K. N. Vyas, who

readily agreed to give the project a push with all the might of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).

Work has started in right earnest in collaboration with Atomic Mineral Division of DAE. Preliminary measurements and survey have already started.

When we took over the project in late 1980s we got very busy with other research and development projects. We all thought collection of helium on a large scale is a semi-commercial operation and nothing very much to do with research or development. Besides which, we just did not have the adequate man power.

So, this effort although somewhat late is not too late yet!

India's Rajmahal volcanic basin is the storehouse of helium trapped for billions of years, since the very birth of our Earth from the Sun. At present, we are mapping the Rajmahal basin extensively for future exploration and harnessing of helium.

In conclusion, helium is not just for balloons but it is the key ingredient for India's high technology and the most sophisticated medical diagnosis.

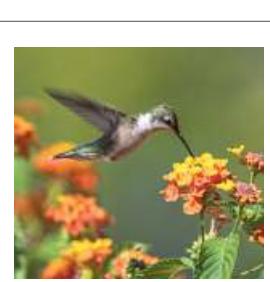
(Dr Bikash Sinha is an INSA senior scientist and former director of Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics and Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre, Kolkata.)



The hum of the hummingbird

Why are hummingbirds called so? Do they hum?

The hummingbird gets its name from the sound it makes when it hovers in front of flowers to feed. The humming sound is generated by the bird's wings. A new study (published in *eLife*) noted that the wings beat rapidly at 40 beats per second. The hum originated from the pressure difference between the topside and underside of the wings. Unlike other species of birds, the hummingbird's wing was found to generate a strong upward aerodynamic force during both the upward and downward wing stroke. The researchers explained that most birds are relatively quiet because they generate most of the lift only once during the



A flutter: Hummingbirds flap their wings 40 times per second. ■ GETTY IMAGES

wingbeat at the downstroke. Hummingbirds and insects are noisier because they do so twice per wingbeat. Using high-speed cameras and over 2,000 microphones, the team from the Netherlands, studied the hummingbirds drinking sugar water from a fake flower in a special chamber. They precisely recorded each wing-beat while the bird hovered in front of the flower and found that the wings generated sounds in a fashion similar to how insects do.

Understanding



AAP workers protesting at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Governing Delhi

What has the Bill on the National Capital Territory proposed and how will it impact the administration?

JATIN ANAND

The story so far: The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was introduced by the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Lok Sabha on Monday. The Bill states clarification of the expression "Government" and addressing "ambiguities" in legislative provisions as its core objectives. Underlining Delhi's status as a Union Territory, modifications have been proposed to four sections of its three-decade-old predecessor, the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991. The legislation was enacted to supplement constitutional provisions for the Legislative Assembly and a Council of Ministers for the NCT of Delhi in 1992.

What are the changes sought?

The amendments seek to promote "harmonious relations between the legislature and the executive" and provide for rules made by the Legislative Assembly of Delhi to be "consistent with the rules of the House of the People" or the Lok Sabha. The Bill also seeks to define the responsibilities of the elected government and the Lieutenant Governor along the constitutional scheme of governance of the NCT interpreted by the Supreme Court in recent judgments regarding the division of powers between the two entities.

The amendments also propose to ensure that the Lieutenant Governor is "necessarily granted an opportunity" to exercise powers entrusted to him under proviso to Clause (4) of Article 239AA of the Constitution. The clause provides for a Council of Ministers headed by a Chief Minister for the NCT to "aid and advise the Lieutenant Governor" in the exercise of his functions for matters in which the Legislative Assembly has the power to make laws.

Some experts believe the amendments will turn the administrative clock of the National Capital Territory back to the era of the Delhi Metropolitan Council, which was considered a mere municipal body

police and public order – to the Chief Minister's office. Between early 2015 and mid-August 2016, several orders issued by the Delhi government related to matters such as transfer of bureaucrats, setting up of Commissions of Inquiry and the administration of the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB), were either declared void or reversed by the L-G citing procedural lacunae ranging from lack of approval from his office to not being constitutionally empowered to take such decisions.

The issue of which entity was "the competent authority" was taken by the Delhi government to the Delhi High Court which, in August 2016, held that the L-G had "complete control" of matters related to the NCT and "nothing will happen without the concurrence of the L-G". However, the judgment held that the L-G was bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers in some matters. The Delhi government then moved the Supreme Court.

On July 4, 2018, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court held that the "real authority to take decisions lies in the elected government". The NCT's government, it also ruled, needed only to inform the L-G of its "well-deliberated" decisions instead of obtaining his "concurrence" in every issue of day-to-day governance.

On February 14, 2019, a two-judge bench hearing the issue of Services – the transfer and posting of bureaucrats – and power over the ACB delivered a split verdict. This verdict stated that while the L-G was free to form an opinion on any matter, "any" did not mean in every "trifling matter" and the L-G should not intervene routinely but only in matters fundamental to Delhi.

Two years later, on February 3, 2021, the Union Cabinet approved the Bill for introduction in Parliament during the Budget Session.

Why does it matter?

Some experts believe that the amendments will turn the administrative clock of the Capital back by several decades and take it to the era of the Delhi Metropolitan Council, which was considered a mere municipal body, and "snatch" the right of the city's citizens to vote for those they deem fit to administer them. Other experts argue that the elected government of Delhi had always been a local administrative body to be headed by the L-G as an administrator. Experts on both sides of the argument agree that the proposed amendment has put paid to the question of statehood for Delhi, which had been demanded by major political players in the capital, including the AAP, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress. The immediate impact of the Bill will be to render void several committees created in the Delhi Legislative Assembly on administrative issues over the last six years allowing direct communication between MLAs and bureaucrats.

What lies ahead?

Terming the Bill as an instrument of the BJP-led Centre to curtail the Delhi government's powers, the AAP has hit the streets to demand its withdrawal. It may challenge the Bill in court, according to party insiders.

However, the opposition BJP has welcomed the Bill saying the AAP government had been functioning in "unconstitutional ways".

The debate around the Places of Worship Act

On what grounds has the law been challenged by a BJP leader and what can be the implications?

K. VENKATARAMAN

The story so far: Earlier this month, the Supreme Court asked the Centre to respond to a petition that challenges the constitutional validity of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991. The law was enacted to freeze the status of all places of worship in the country as on August 15, 1947. An exception was made to keep the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhoomi dispute out of its ambit as the structure was then the subject of litigation. The dispute ended after the court ruled that the land on which the Masjid stood should be handed over to the Hindu community for the construction of a Ram temple. The challenge to the Act questions the legality of the prohibition it imposes on any community laying claim to the places of worship of another.

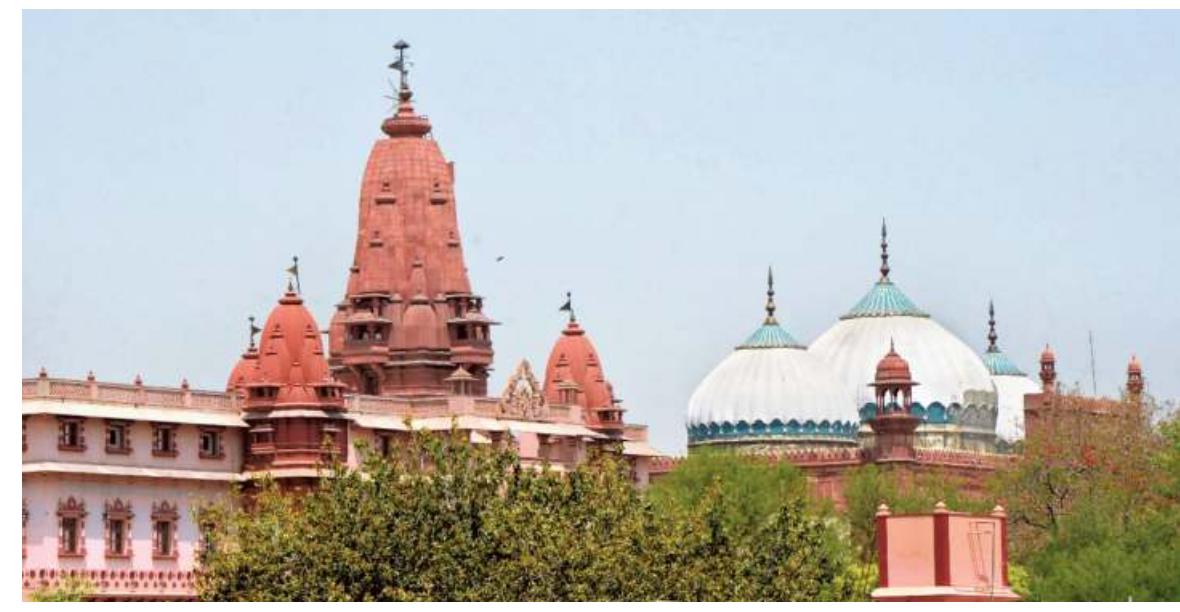
What does the 1991 Act say?

The Act says that no person shall convert any place of worship of any religious denomination into one of a different denomination or section. It contains a declaration that a place of worship shall continue to be as it was on August 15, 1947. Significantly, it prohibits any legal proceedings from being instituted regarding the character of a place of worship, and declares that all suits and appeals pending before any court or authority on the cut-off date regarding the conversion of the character of a place of worship shall abate. In other words, all pending cases will come to an end, and no further proceedings can be filed. However, any suit or proceedings relating to any conversion of status that happened after the cut-off date can continue.

The 1991 Act will not apply in some cases. It will not apply to ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains that are covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. It will also not apply to any suit that has been finally settled or disposed of, any dispute that has been settled by the parties before the 1991 Act came into force, or to the conversion of any place that took place by acquiescence.

The Act specifically exempted from its purview the place of worship commonly referred to as Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. It was done to allow the pending litigation to continue as well as to preserve the scope for a negotiated settlement.

Anyone contravening the prohibition on converting the status of a place of worship is liable to be imprisoned



The Krishna Janmabhoomi temple and the Shahi Idgah mosque in Mathura. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The petitioner argues that the Act takes away the rights of Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains to reclaim the sites of their places of worship through legal proceedings

What are the grounds of challenge?

The petitioner, Ashwini Upadhyay of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), argues that the Act takes away the rights of communities such

for up to three years, and a fine. Those abetting or participating in a criminal conspiracy to commit this offence will also get the same punishment.

as Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains to reclaim the sites of their places of worship through legal proceedings. It amounts to taking away the right of the people to seek justice through the courts and obtain a judicial remedy. He also contends that the cut-off date of August 15, 1947, is arbitrary and irrational.

The petition contends that the legislation legalises the actions of invaders in the past who demolished places of worship. It wonders how the law could exempt the birthplace of Ram, but not that of Krishna.

It is also said the law violates the right to practise and propagate religion, as well as the right to manage and administer places of worship. Further, it goes against the principle of secularism and the state's duty to preserve and protect religious and cultural heritage.

What has the SC said on the status freeze?

In its final verdict on the Ayodhya dispute, the Supreme Court had observed that the Act "imposes a non-derogable obligation towards enforcing our commitment to secularism". The court went on to say: "Non-retrogression is a foundational feature of the fundamental constitutional principles, of which secularism is a core component."

The court described the law as one that preserved secularism by not permitting the status of a place of worship to be altered after Independence. In words of caution against further attempts to change the character of a place of worship, the five-judge Bench said, "Historical wrongs cannot be remedied by the people taking the law in their own hands. In preserving the character of places of public worship, Parliament has mandated in no uncertain terms that history and its wrongs shall not be used as instruments to oppress the present and the future."

What are the implications of the case?

Some Hindu organisations have been laying claim to the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi and the Shahi Idgah in Mathura. Civil suits have been filed in a Mathura court seeking the shifting of the 17th-century mosque from the spot that some claim is the birthplace of Lord Krishna. Any order that strikes down or dilutes the 1991 law on the status of places of worship is likely to influence the outcome of such proceedings.

Soothing fears about the AstraZeneca vaccine

What has the European Medicines Agency found after a probe and why should side effects be monitored?

JACOB KOSHY

The story so far: Safety concerns around the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine led several European countries to temporarily stop administering the shot last week. On Thursday, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) cleared the vaccine as safe for use for mass administration, saying the "benefits" of the vaccine in combating COVID-19 "continue to outweigh the risk of side effects".

What were the concerns in Europe?

Starting with Denmark, sporadic reports started to emerge of blood clots in a small number of recipients of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine.

The vaccine is a recombinant one, i.e., it is formed by mixing genetic material from different organisms – in this case from an adenovirus that causes common colds and affects chimpanzees and the spike protein from the coronavirus. It was expected that some recipients of the vaccines would experience side effects such as rashes, swellings and flu-like symptoms. During the trials, some had experienced even serious reactions such as transverse myelitis, or an inflammation of the spinal cord. However, the decision to roll out a vaccine was premised on the overall benefits. Germany, too, reported such "thrombotic events" and experts noted that some clots were of a very rare kind, located in the brain's veins that prevented efficient draining of the blood. Some were accompanied by a deficiency of blood platelets.

How many such cases were observed?

AstraZeneca said as of March 8, it had received reports of

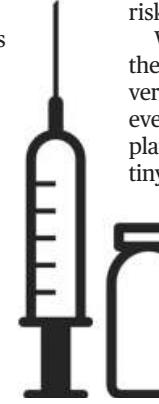
37 instances of blood clots after 17 million inoculations across the EU and the U.K. This was well below the number of cases of blood clots – 1,000 to 2,000 – reported every day in the general population, as per studies based on the U.S. population. It was also unclear whether it was the vaccine itself that caused the clots.

What was the final verdict after the investigation?

After investigation, the EMA reported that the "vaccine is not associated with an increase in the overall risk of blood clots (thromboembolic events) in those who receive it". It said there was no evidence of problems related to specific batches of the vaccine or particular

manufacturing sites. However, the EMA said the vaccine "may be associated with very rare cases of blood clots associated with thrombocytopenia, i.e., low levels of blood platelets (elements in the blood that help it to clot) with or without bleeding, including rare cases of clots in the vessels draining blood from the brain". Even before its report, the EMA and the World Health Organization (WHO) had not called for a halt to vaccination.

On Thursday, the EMA said it had concluded its investigation and declared the vaccine safe. "This vaccine is safe and effective in preventing COVID-19, and its benefits continue to be far greater than its risks," said Dr. Sabine Straus of the EMA's Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee. Dr. Straus said because the vaccine is effective in preventing COVID-19, which in itself is a cause of blood clots, vaccination likely reduces the



risk of thrombotic events overall.

While the EMA ruled that vaccination did not increase the overall risk of clots, there were "uncertainties". Some very rare case reports described "specific, unusual events" of a combination of blood clots, low blood platelet levels, and bleeding. There were also instances of tiny clots developing in multiple blood vessels in the first 7-14 days after vaccination. So, some "association" between vaccines and clots could not be entirely ruled out. In the end, the very small risk of clots far outweighed the threat from COVID-19.

However, the risk must be conveyed in fact sheets accompanying the vials of the vaccine and those getting vaccinated must be told to seek medical care if they fall ill after vaccination.

How does this affect India?

Covishield, which is based on the AstraZeneca vaccine, constitutes almost 90% of the over 4 crore doses so far administered in India. Trials on safety and efficacy of the vaccine are based entirely on data from the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil. Bridging studies (to show that a vaccine performs equivalently on Indians) have been announced but no results have been made public or are available in scientific literature. Events as rare as vaccine-linked clots in the brain are one in a million, meaning that it requires millions to be vaccinated for them to be detected, if at all.

India's 'Adverse Event Following Immunization' panel has not reported adverse events of this kind. Thrombotic events following vaccination have been reported in India but they were said to be unrelated to vaccination.

The row over Myanmar refugees in Mizoram

Why is the Centre's directive at odds with the State government's stand on the influx?

RAHUL KARMAKAR

The story so far: With the February 1 military coup in Myanmar, Mizoram is caught between a humanitarian urge and India's policy on refugees. At least 1,000 people from the adjoining Chin State of Myanmar are said to have crossed over to Mizoram, fearing a military crackdown. The Mizoram government favours providing refuge to the Chins, who are ethnically related to the majority Mizo in the State, but the Ministry of Home Affairs has made it clear that "India is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto".

When did the refugees start arriving?

Mizoram began feeling the heat a month after the military coup when three police personnel crossed over to Lungkawlh village in Serchhip district. Within weeks, the number increased to almost 400. According to the State Home Department, a majority of those who sought asylum were deserters from Myanmar's police and fire services department. They had to flee after joining the civil resistance movement.

The influx of Myanmar nationals was reported from Hnaithial, Champai, Saitual and Serchhip districts. Most of the refugees waded across the Tiau River that runs along much of Mizoram's 510-km border with Myanmar.

Is this the first time this has happened?

Extremism, counter-insurgency and sectarian violence have driven people out of Myanmar into India in the past as well. More than 1,200 Buddhists and Christians from Myanmar's Arakan State had taken refuge in Mizoram's



Residential houses on Myanmar's side near its border with Mizoram in India. ■ AFP

Lawngtlai district in 2017. They fled their homes after the Myanmar Army clashed with the extremist Arakan Army. The refugees stayed back for more than a year.

Thousands of Chins are said to be living in Mizoram for more than 40 years now.

There have been other such instances, though not on this scale. Manipur, too, has been dealing with the influx issue, although on a smaller scale, for a long time. The villages of the Kuki-Zomi have often had people crossing over from Myanmar.

How porous is the border?

Unlike India's border with Pakistan and Bangladesh, much of the border with Myanmar is without any fence. The Assam Rifles personnel guard the border but a tough terrain comes in the way of maintaining airtight vigil.

There have been calls to fence the border. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP from Arunachal Pradesh, Tapir Gao, said fencing the border would also help in checking the movement of extremist groups to and from Myanmar.

Some are against the idea, insisting that a fence would

make "free movement" of border residents into each other's country difficult. The two countries had in 2018 agreed to streamline the movement of people within 16 km of the border on either side. There are more than 250 villages with about 3,00,000 people living within 10 km of the India-Myanmar border.

Where do the Centre and Mizoram stand now?

As a humanitarian gesture, the Mizoram government on February 26 issued a standard operating procedure (SOP) to Deputy Commissioners of border districts to facilitate the entry of refugees and migrants. The SOP stated that all Myanmar nationals entering Mizoram in connection with the political developments in the country shall be properly identified.

The government said those facing a threat to their lives should be treated as refugees, given medical care, relief and rehabilitation and security. But the SOP was revoked on March 6 after the Centre conveyed its displeasure to the State over the development. On March 10, the North East Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs issued a letter to chief secretaries of Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Director General of Assam Rifles, directing them not to allow refugees from Myanmar and take appropriate action as per law. The Ministry pointed out that State governments have no powers to grant "refugee status to any foreigner".

Mizoram is not happy about this. "They are like family ... we share ethnic ties with them," said Rajya Sabha member from Mizoram K. Vanlavema. "We do not want the Indian government to offer them full-time citizenship or employment. The only thing we ask is to let these refugees stay until their country returns to normalcy."

Enquiries at builders signalling demand pickup: Sundaram HF

Home financier's MD sees profile of loan seekers returning to pre-COVID pattern

K. BHARAT KUMAR
CHENNAI

The number of enquiries home builders are getting now compared with six months ago has gone up and is an indication of how demand is recovering, said D. Lakshminarayanan, MD, Sundaram Home Finance, the housing finance arm of Sundaram Finance.

"Construction activity is a very important parameter [for tracking]," he said. "The number of new launches in recent months and the progress in construction of existing projects indicate that confidence is coming back."

Though the pandemic had suppressed new home project launches in the first half



Small ticket: Affordable housing was the first one to get off the block post lockdown, says the MD. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

of the current fiscal, pent-up demand led to 'a lot' of the unsold inventory being absorbed, Mr. Lakshminarayanan said. "For the first time in the last two years, the number of new launches was less than the absorbed units

in the top eight cities."

Affordable housing was the first one to get off the block following the lockdown and the space is getting extended into areas beyond the metros. Encouragingly, the traders and the

non-salaried segment seem to be leading the charge."

As to how his first year since taking over as MD now looked, he said, "I had a set of 6-7 things that I planned to do when I was to take over as MD from April 1 last year. I did none of those and have not revisited any during the year. This was not going to be a year when the focus was

on growing business by 15-20%. Portfolio quality assumed a lot more significance and disbursements took a back seat in the initial phase. Focus on growth was to be dealt with later."

He said the profile of people coming for home loans too was returning, with the self-employed at about 55%.

Qualcomm: older chips' crunch to ease

REUTERS
SHENZHEN

Qualcomm Inc CEO Steve Mollenkopf said he is "seeing improvement" in efforts to ease chip shortages that have caused disruptions across several industries, and that demand for older chips is easier to respond to.

Demand has soared for chips in recent months, with panic buying further squeezing capacity.

"There's an ability for the market to respond more quickly to some of the older nodes than the newer nodes, so depending on the product, you may be in a position to get some improvement," Mr. Mollenkopf said.

Traditional firms lagging on cybersafety: experts

'Cyberinsurance alone will not suffice'

N. ANAND
CHENNAI

Following a recent spurt in cyberattacks, pharma majors, banking and insurance firms have started seeking cyberinsurance and crime insurance security cover, even as traditional and manufacturing companies have been lagging behind, said officials at a reinsurance brokerage.

"There have been several instances of cyberattacks during the pandemic, related to data theft, fraudulent money transfers, securities or stocks," said Vijay Thyagarajan, CEO, Bharat Re-Insurance Brokers Pvt. Ltd.

"We have started talking to about 40 Indian firms to

take both cyberinsurance and crime insurance cover, since cyberinsurance alone may not cover loss of money," said T.L. Arunachalam, head, Cyber and Emerging Risks Practice at Bharat Re-Insurance.

Traditional companies, Mr. Arunachalam said, were going slow on the issue, as they were giving priority to safeguarding physical assets against vulnerability, cargo in transit, employee safety and money in transit.

"Whenever, there was a cyberattack, they simply changed the server and system and started operations using back-up data," he said. "It is time cyberattacks are taken seriously," he added.

Purchase cap on fertilisers to hit plantations'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE

The United Planters Association of Southern India (UPASI) has expressed concern over the proposal to implement a maximum limit for purchase of subsidised fertilisers for plantations.

UPASI president Prashant Bhansali said in a release that the proposed limit is 200 bags a month per plantation.

"This move will have severe implications in the plantation sector in South India, which employs 10.82 lakh workers in rural areas and is spread over 11.57 lakh hectares comprising 12.60 lakh holdings," Mr. Bhansali said.

INTERVIEW | SUDHANSU VATS

'Our journey is high to higher'

EPL was already a very well-managed company: MD Vats

LALATENDU MISHRA

EPL Ltd., formerly Essel Propack Ltd., is transforming from a family-run company into a professionally-managed global packaging giant under Blackstone, which took a controlling stake in 2019. MD & CEO Sudhanshu Vats speaks about the four pillars that will support the company's growth plans. Excerpts:

How is EPL transforming under Blackstone?

■ EPL is the largest specialised tube manufacturing company. We do about 8 billion tubes around the world in 20 plants located in 10 countries. It is the largest manufacturer of laminated tubes in the world.

The transition from family ownership of Ashok Goel, who was the CMD of this company before, happened in 2019 when Blackstone acquired controlling shares in this listed company. In FY20 we delivered ₹2,748 crore in revenue, about ₹558 crore in EBITDA translating to 23% EBITDA margin, and about ₹250 crore in PAT.

Even in a tough COVID year like this, we have been able to deliver in the first 9 months double-digit revenue growth [10%] and delivered an EBITDA growth of about 14% with an EBITDA margin of about 20.8% with an expansion of 60 bps in EBITDA margin.

What are you doing to achieve the company's sustainability goals?

■ We, as a responsible packaging company, are totally committed to sustainability. We are looking at it from all the angles – the 3Rs – recycle, reuse and

reduce.

The work that we have done in recycle is to be able to deliver and build recyclable laminates. We do our own films. Now, we have come out with sustainable laminates under the brand name Platina. It now has a portfolio. We are continuously working in building 100% recyclable laminates.

Towards reuse we started doing work on making tubes from recycled materials. Our first set of tubes have come out for two of our customers. As of now, we are 35-38% of recycled material in our recycled tubes.

On reduce, we are doing a lot of work. We are reducing the amount of plastic that is needed. If earlier the tube was going with 500 microns, we are now being able to deliver the same experience with 300 to 350 microns. So, we are reducing the use of plastic. For the future, we are also looking at alternate materials, bio materials which may be called as bio plastics.

What are the changes you have introduced since taking over?

■ EPL was a very well-managed company in the past as well. Therefore, our journey is in some way high to higher.

The work that we are doing is actually the digital transformation of the company. So, it is about bringing about digital processes and automation.

We are getting into data analytics and using real time information to bring in

transparency. In future, we are looking at Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

On the whole, our transformation journey will be run on four key pillars. It will be on sustainability, digital transformation, talent management programmes and innovations.

What is your expansion plan?

■ We look at the market in the 5/2 lens. Oral, Beauty & Cosmetics, Pharma, Food and Home. We have two types of customers. MNCs and local. Our framework has been designed for this. We will continue to work like that. We will continue to grow organically and inorganically. We have just made an acquisition in India. We will continue to look at acquisitions everywhere as long as they fit into getting new customers and helping us to get into new categories, new geographies or getting new technology.

What is your investment plan?

■ To achieve our goals we will be making capital expenditure of about ₹230-₹240 crore a year which is exactly our depreciation number.

What is your vision for the company?

■ We want to lead the pack.

Jumbo Cup Rajbhog
₹35* | 125 mL

Amul



Rajasthani Kulfi
₹20* | 60 mL



Ice Cream Sandwich
₹20* | 80 mL



Jumbo Cup Rajbhog
₹35* | 125 mL



Sugar Free Vanilla with Chocolate Sauce
₹30* | 125 mL



Combo Vanilla Royale
750 mL+ 750 mL Free



Choco Chips Tub
₹200* | 1 L



Alphonso Marvel Party Pack
₹260* | 2 L



Rasmalai
₹40* | 100 g

+ Former SEBI chief Ramakrishna no more

Known for his integrity, he was the statutory regulator's first chairman in 1992

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

G.V. Ramakrishna, 91, who was the first chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) after it became a statutorily empowered markets regulator, passed away on Saturday.

Starting his career as a biochemist doing research in haematology, Ramakrishna joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1952 and served in Andhra Pradesh before rising to the post of Chief Secretary of the State.

SEBI's statutory birth

An administrator renowned for his 'unimpeachable integrity' and no nonsense approach to addressing tasks, Ramakrishna was appointed in 1990 as the second chairman of the then two-year-old Securities and Exchange Board. During his te-



G.V. Ramakrishna

ture, he oversaw the transition of the Board into a legally empowered markets regulator following the enactment of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.

Formally established under the Act in April 1992, Ramakrishna became SEBI's first fully empowered chairman. In that role, through the sheer force of his reputation, he helped create the framework for a modern and vibrant securities mar-

ket. In his vision for protecting investors' interests, Ramakrishna was convinced that the way forward would be to set up systems and procedures to automatically take care of problems. To that end, he strove to get merchant bankers to ensure that the prospectus for any capital issue provided accurate and adequate information to investors. He also sought and pushed for increased transparency in the working of India's stock exchanges.

Fewer powers
"In the initial years, the SEBI Act had fewer powers, but SEBI was feared in the market place thanks to Mr. Ramakrishna's reputation," recalled K.E.C. Raja Kumar, CEO of Ascent Capital in Bengaluru, who as a young IRS official with the Income Tax department was taken

"He was a great leader and man of impeccable integrity. The one lasting impact he had on me was that I learnt from him that 'you're fearless as an officer when you're honest' in the civil services," added Mr. Kumar.

Disinvestment panel
Ramakrishna, who served the government in several other capacities both at the Centre and abroad during his more than five-decade career in public service, was also the first chairman of the Disinvestment Commission and a member of the Planning Commission.

He was also briefly posted as an Adviser to the Governor in Tamil Nadu, during a spell of President's Rule in the State.

The closing of the transaction is subject to customary approvals and conditions, the company said in a statement.

The Department of Expenditure has granted per-

Adani Green to buy 50 MW solar project

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Adani Green Energy Ltd. (AGEL) has agreed to acquire a 100% stake in an SPV holding a 50 MW operating solar project of the Toronto-headquartered SkyPower Global.

The project is located in Telangana and was commissioned in October 2017 and has a long-term Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with the Southern Power Distribution Company of Telangana.

On completion of the acquisition, AGEL will increase its operating renewable capacity of 3,395 MW with a total renewable portfolio of 14,865 MW.

The closing of the transaction is subject to customary approvals and conditions, the company said in a statement.

The Department of Expenditure has granted per-

'20 States complete ease of doing business reforms'

'They can borrow 0.25% more of GSDP'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

As many as 20 States have successfully completed ease of doing business reforms, the Finance Ministry said on Saturday.

States completing the reforms are eligible for additional borrowing of 0.25% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

The number of States that have successfully completed the 'Ease of Doing Business' reforms has reached to 20. Five more States namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Meghalaya and Tripura are the latest to comply

mission to these 20 States to raise additional financial resources of ₹39,521 crore through Open Market Borrowings.

The ease of doing business is an important indicator of the investment friendly business climate in the country. Improvements in the ease of doing business will enable faster future growth of the state economy. Therefore, the government of India, in May 2020, decided to link grant of additional borrowing permissions to States that undertook the reforms to facilitate ease of doing business, the Ministry added.

SPORT

Yashaswini clinches India's only gold

SHOOTING

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Yashaswini Singh Deswal delivered India's only gold medal in women's air pistol on the second day of the shooting World Cup at the Dr. Karni Singh Range on Saturday. Qualifying on top with 579 and winning the gold medal with a 2.1 point margin over compatriot Manu Bhaker, Yashaswini said that the competition was "only with the self".

Saurabh Chaudhary was beaten on the last shot to the gold medal in men's air pistol by Javad Foroughi of Iran.

The results: Men: Air rifle: 1. Lucas Kozeniesky (US) 249.8 (628.6); 2. Istvan Peni (Hung) 249.7 (629.6); 3. Divyansh Singh Panwar 228.1 (629.1); 5. Arjun Babu 185.5 (631.8).



On target: Yashaswini Singh finished on top in the women's air pistol. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

MQS: Aishwary Pratap Singh 632.4; Pankaj Kumar 627.1
Air pistol: 1. Javad Foroughi (Iri) 243.6 (583); 2. Saurabh Chaudhary 243.2 (587); 3. Abhishek Verma 221.8 (583); 5. Shahzad Rizvi 177.1 (580).
Women: Air rifle: 1. Mary Carolyn Tucker (US) 251.5 (629.1); 2. Alison Marie Weisz (US) 250.4 (628.4); 3. Eszter Denes (Hung) 230.2 (629.8); 5. Esha Singh 567.

Cuban Pete claims feature event

TV PICKS

India vs South Africa: 2nd T20I (Women), Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7 p.m.
All England Open badminton: Star Sports 2 HD & 3, 3.30 p.m. &
Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 8.30 p.m. & 1 a.m. (Monday)
FA Cup: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 7 p.m., 10.30 p.m.
Serie A: Sony Six (SD & HD), 5 p.m., 7.30 p.m., 10.30 p.m. & 1.15 a.m. (Monday)

IN BRIEF



Big win for New Zealand

DUNEDIN Trent Boult and Martin Guptill starred in New Zealand's emphatic eight-wicket win over Bangladesh in the opening One-Day International here on Saturday. The scores: Bangladesh 131 in 45.5 overs (Mahmudullah 27; Boult 4-27) lost to New Zealand 132/2 in 21.2 overs (M. Guptill 38, H. Nicholls 49 n.o.; D. Conway 27).

Ramt overcome Lobban

CARIO World No. 56 Ramit Tandon of India overcame Scotland's World No. 21 Greg Lobban 8-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-6 on the first day of the men's CIB Black Ball Squash Open, here on Friday. Mahesh Mangaonkar lost to France's Mathieu Castagnet 11-5, 11-8, 11-4 while Baptiste Masotti of France beat Vikram Malhotra 11-4, 11-3, 11-4. Saurav Ghosal will take on England's Tom Richards on Sunday.

Afghanistan completes a 3-0 sweep

ABU DHABI Najibullah Zadran hit a career-best 72 as Afghanistan completed a 3-0 sweep over Zimbabwe with a dominant 47-run win in the final T20I on Saturday. The victory makes Asghar Afghan the most successful captain in all T20 internationals with 42 wins in 52 matches, passing India's M.S. Dhoni who won 41 out of 72. The scores: Afghanistan 183/7 in 20 overs (Najibullah Zadran 72 n.o.) bt Zimbabwe 136/5 in 20 overs (Sikandar Raza 41 n.o.).



Jazz squeaks past Raptors

LOS ANGELES Utah guard Donovan Mitchell scored 12 of his 31 points in the fourth quarter on Friday as the NBA-leading Jazz eked out a 115-112 victory over Toronto Raptors. The results: Miami Heat 110 lost to Indiana Pacers 137; Toronto Raptors 112 lost to Utah Jazz 115; Cleveland Cavaliers 110 lost to San Antonio Spurs 116; Boston Celtics 96 lost to Sacramento Kings 107; Portland Trail Blazers 125 bt Dallas Mavericks 119; Denver Nuggets 131 bt Chicago Bulls 127 (OT); Houston Rockets 100 lost to Detroit Pistons 113; Memphis Grizzlies 103 lost to Golden State Warriors 116.

Vanolremdika brace sinks Chennai City

KOLKATA Brandon Vanlalremdika's brace guided Aizawl FC to a 3-1 victory over Chennai City FC in a relegation round match of the Hero I-League at the Kalyani Stadium here on Saturday. Aizawl FC collected 21 points to retain the top spot, while CCFC was third with 12 points after 13 outings. The results: Aizawl FC 3 (Brandon Vanlalremdika 21, 47; David Lalhlangana 36) bt Chennai City FC 1 (Iqbal Hussain 90). Sudeva Delhi FC 1 (Shubho Paul 40) bt Indian Arrows 0.

Titles for Dhruv and Shruti

BHILAI Dhruv Hirpara and Shruti Ahlawat won the boys' and girls' titles respectively in the ITF grade-5 junior tennis tournament at the SAIL Tennis Complex on Saturday. The results (finals): Boys: Dhruv Hirpara bt Yuvan Nandal 7-6(4), 2-6, 7-6(3). Girls: Shruti Ahlawat bt Sanjana Sirimala 7-6(6), 6-3.

India buries England under a mountain of runs

Rohit, Kohli, Suryakumar and Hardik flex batting muscle before Bhuvneshwar and Shardul snuff out Buttler-Malan threat



Dazzling display: Kohli's men roared back from 1-2 down to clinch the series 3-2 against England. ■ SPORTZPICS/BCCI

ENGLAND IN INDIA

ASHWIN ACHAL AHMEDABAD

In the first four matches of the series, India tried three opening combinations with little success. In the decisive fifth T20I rubber here on Saturday, skipper Virat Kohli made yet another change, opting to take first strike himself.

The move worked like a charm, as the home side rode on stellar knocks from Kohli (80 n.o., 52b, 7x4, 2x6) and his partner Rohit Shar-

ma (64, 34b, 4x4, 5x6) to post a 36-run win over England.

India racked up a mammoth 224 for two in 20 overs, leaving England with a mountain to climb. In reply, the visitors stayed in contention, thanks to a rapid 130-run second-wicket partnership between Dawid Malan (68, 46b, 9x4, 2x6) and Jos Buttler (52, 34b, 2x4, 4x6).

The turning point came when Bhuvneshwar Kumar dismissed Buttler with a

slower ball in the 13th over. England lost all momentum a couple of overs later, when Shardul Thakur foiced Jonny Bairstow and Malan with a cutter and knuckleball respectively.

In conditions that favoured the batsmen, Bhuvneshwar's spell of two for 15 in four overs was worth its weight in gold.

Earlier, an aggressive Rohit got into the groove with two spanking straight drives off pacer Mark Wood. When Wood tried to bang it short, he was pulled for huge sixes

by Rohit and Kohli.

With Rohit going great guns, Kohli was happy to play second fiddle. It took a slower ball from Stokes to cut Rohit's essay short. The openers had scored 94 runs in nine overs – the best first-wicket stand of the series.

Next man Suryakumar Yadav, fresh from his exploits in the previous outing, started in typically blazing fashion.

Facing his second ball, Suryakumar tonked leg-spinner Adil Rashid for a straight six, and off the next delivery,

he was modern-day

went inside out over extra-cover for another maximum.

An exceptional catch by Chris Jordan brought an end to Suryakumar's entertaining 17-ball 32. Jordan sprinted after a high ball from long on towards mid-wicket, took the catch with his right hand, and lobbed it to Jason Roy before stepping over the fence.

Kohli, in the company of Hardik Pandya (39 n.o., 17b, 4x4, 2x6), lifted the scoring rate in the final overs. The captain finished with his highest score in eight appearances as a T20I opener, going past his previous best of 70 made against New Zealand in 2012.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA

Rohit Sharma b Stokes 64 (34b, 4x4, 5x6), Virat Kohli (not out) 80 (52b, 7x4, 2x6), Suryakumar Yadav c Roy b Rashid 32 (7b, 3x4, 2x6), Hardik Pandya (not out) 39 (17b, 4x4, 2x6); Extras (lb-9, w-6): 9; Total (for two wkts. in 20 overs): 224.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-94 (Rohit, 8.6 overs), 2-143 (Suryakumar, 13.2).

ENGLAND BOWLING

Rashid 4-0-31-1, Archer 4-0-43-0, Wood 4-0-53-0, Jordan 4-0-57-0, Curran 1-0-11-0, Stokes 3-0-26-1.

ENGLAND

Jason Roy b Bhuvneshwar 0 (2b), Jos Buttler c Hardik b Bhuvneshwar 52 (34b, 2x4, 4x6), Dawid Malan b Shardul 68 (46b, 9x4, 2x6), Jonny Bairstow c Suryakumar b Shardul 7 (7b, 1x4), Eoin Morgan c sub (Rahul) b Hardik 1 (4b), Ben Stokes c

Pant b Natarajan 14 (12b, 2x4), Chris Jordan c Suryakumar b Shardul 11 (10b, 1x6), Jofra Archer run out 1 (2b), Sam Curran (not out) 14 (3b, 2x6), Adil Rashid (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (lb-9, w-11): 20; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 188.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-0 (Roy, 0.2), 2-130 (Buttler, 12.5), 3-140 (Bairstow, 14.3), 4-142 (Malan, 14.6), 5-142 (Morgan, 15.3), 6-165 (Stokes, 18.3), 7-168 (Archer, 18.6), 8-174 (Jordan, 19.3).

INDIA BOWLING

Bhuvneshwar 4-0-15-2, Hardik 4-0-34-1, Washington 1-0-13-0, Shardul 4-0-45-3, Natarajan 4-0-39-1, Rahul Chahar 3-0-33-0.

Toss: England; MoM: Bhuvneshwar; MoM: Kohli.

India won by 36 runs to clinch the series 3-2.

First ODI: March 23, Pune, 1.30 p.m.

fielding gymnastics of the highest standard.

Kohli, in the company of Hardik Pandya (39 n.o., 17b, 4x4, 2x6), lifted the scoring rate in the final overs. The captain finished with his highest score in eight appearances as a T20I opener, going past his previous best of 70 made against New Zealand in 2012.

South Africa proves too good for India

Bosch's all-round show and Shabnim's spell help visitors take 1-0 lead

SA IN INDIA

P.K. AJITH KUMAR LUCKNOW

A change of format could not bring a change in fortune for India. The poor run continued for the Women in Blue against a confident, efficient South Africa.

After being outplayed in the ODI series 4-1, the host was outplayed in the first T20I, going down by eight wickets at the Atal Bihari Vajpeyi Stadium here on Saturday. It was another ruthless performance from the

visiting side. Sune Luus' team went past India's modest score of 130 for six with ease. The chase was led by opener Anneke Bosch with a fine 66 not out (48b, 9x4, 1x6). Her second-wicket partnership of 90 with Luus (43, 49b, 5x4, 1x6) dashed the hopes of Smriti Mandhana's side.

Earlier, Bosch had a good time in the field too, as she took a fine catch and picked up two important wickets – Harleen Deol (52, 47b, 6x4) and Jemimah Rodrigues (30, 27b, 3x4), the

top two scorers in the Indian innings.

The early loss of Smriti, who looked in good touch as she hit two successive fours in the opening over, meant that the hosts began on the wrong foot. The left-hander's uppish shot over mid-off, off seamer Shabnim Ismail, was

well taken by Bosch.

Harleen, promoted up the order, joined Shafali Verma (23, 22b) and added 45 for the second wicket. Though Harleen went on to score her maiden international fifty, her effort was overshadowed by South Africa's all-round show.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-14 (Lee, 2.3), 2-104 (Luus, 15.6).

INDIA BOWLING

Arundhati 3-0-20-1, Rajeshwari 4-0-28-0, Deepthi 3-0-26-0, Poornam 2-0-13-0, Simran 4-0-21-0, Harleen 3-0-21-1.

Toss: South Africa; Player-of-the-match: Bosch.

South Africa won by eight wickets with five balls to spare and took a 1-0 lead in three-match series.

Second T20I: March 21, 7 p.m.

Sharath-Manika pair makes it to Tokyo Olympics

TABLE TENNIS

AMOL KARHADKAR MUMBAI

Indian table tennis contingent's Olympic qualification campaign saw fitting end on Saturday with A. Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra stunning the World No. 5 Korean pair of Sang-Su Lee and Jihee Jeon in Doha, Qatar, to qualify for the Olympic.

"Yes, now we have proven that we are right up there among the top pairs in the world, but honestly, it was an extremely difficult task to overcome the Korean pair," an elated Sharath told *The Hindu* after the match.

"I was watching their video

and just couldn't figure out how to plan. In the morning, all I told Manika was to enter with an open mind and see how it goes."

Manika credited "Sharath bhaiya" for "grooming her into confidence" and also underlined her training regime in Pune over the last few months.

"I had worked really hard in Pune. All of it could be brought to table and [it] helped me keep calm when we were down (0-2) and elevate my game for the occasion," Manika said.

"I was watching their video

and just couldn't figure out how to plan. In the morning, all I told Manika was to enter with an open mind and see how it goes."

Manika credited "Sharath bhaiya" for "grooming her into confidence" and also underlined her training regime in Pune over the last few months.

"I had worked really hard in Pune. All of it could be brought to table and [it] helped me keep calm when we were down (0-2) and elevate my game for the occasion," Manika said.



Top show: Sharath and Manika proved that they are right up there among the best in mixed doubles. ■ FILE PHOTO

Bayern blanks Stuttgart

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCIES BERLIN

Defending champion and league leader Bayern Munich made light of the 12th minute sending off of Alphonse Davies to completely outplay Stuttgart 4-0 with Robert Lewandowski leading the line with a first-half hat-trick in the Bundesliga.

Erling Braut Haaland's 90th minute strike salvaged a 2-2 draw for Borussia Dortmund at Cologne.

The results:

Bundesliga: Werder 1 (Mohwald 45) lost to Wolfsburg 2 (Sargent 8-0, Weghorst 42); Cologne 2 (Duda 35-pen, Jakobs 65) drew with Dortmund 46.

Friday: Premier League: Fulham 1 (Andersen 38) lost to Leeds 2 (Bamford 29, Raphinha 58).

LaLiga: Real Betis 2 (Fekir 70, Juanmi 75) bt Levante 0.

Serie A: Parma 1 (Pelle 16) lost to Genoa 2 (Scamacca 50, 69).

Bundesliga: Arminia Bielefeld 0 lost to RB Leipzig 1 (Sabitzer 46).

Arjun to take on Prithvi

Men's doubles title for Niki Poonacha and Anirudh Chandrasekar

TENNIS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GURUGRAM

Arjun Kadhe beat Ishaque Eqbal 6-2, 2-6, 7-5. Defending champion Niki Poonacha had the consolation of winning the doubles title with Anirudh Chandrasekar.

In the women's event, second seed Shrivalli Bhamidipaty beat Sai Samitha in three sets.

The