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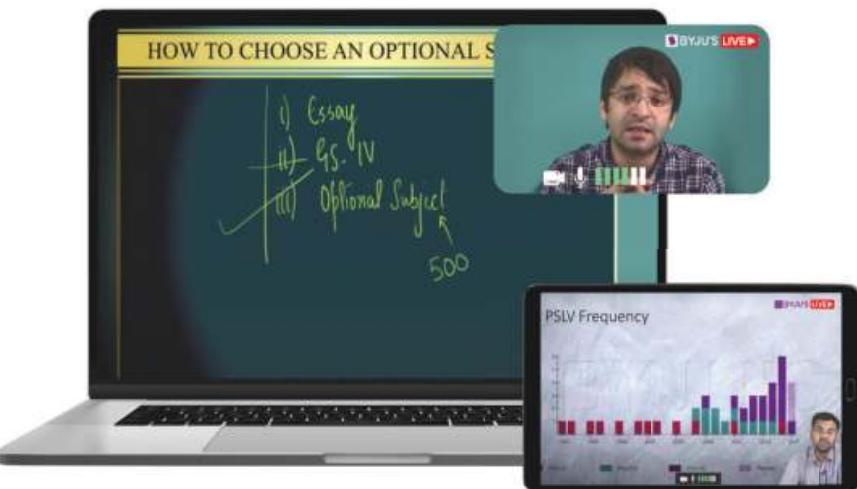
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SC scraps plea seeking probe against A.P. CM Jagan Mohan Reddy

Page 8



Urmila Matondkar joins Shiv Sena, wants to be a people's leader

Page 10



Biden's win in Arizona, Wisconsin further cements Trump's loss

Page 11



Australia looks for a clean sweep against India in ODI series

Page 13

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NEARBY



48.6% turnout in J&K despite the cold

Srinagar
Keeping up the momentum from the first phase, 48.62% of the voters exercised their franchise in the second phase of the District Development Council election in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, with the Valley recording 33.4%. Polling was peaceful. The Jammu division recorded 65.54% polling.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9



OPPORTUNITIES ▶ PAGE 5

Bumper-to-bumper



Quota chaos: PMK party cadre staged a road blockade in Perungalathur, on the outskirts of Chennai, on Tuesday. PMK founder S. Ramadoss called for a protest demanding 20% separate quota for the Vanniyar community in Tamil Nadu. ■ B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Kerala scribes seek probe into Kappan's detention

'He was beaten with lathi, slapped'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ) asked the Supreme Court to order an "independent enquiry" by a retired Supreme Court judge into the alleged illegal arrest and detention of its secretary Sidhique Kappan.

The KUWJ said Mr. Kappan had been in detention in Uttar Pradesh for 56 days. He has been "implicated" in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and other serious offences. He was detained on the way to Hathras in U.P. where a 19-year-old Dalit girl was allegedly gang-raped and murdered by four men. In a counter-affidavit, the KUWJ said the U.P. police had made an absolutely false statement that Mr. Kappan is the office secretary of the Popular Front of India (PFI).

The Union said it was shocked to hear that Mr. Kappan was beaten with *lathi* and slapped. It said he had to suffer mental torture and sleep deprivation.

The Union said Mr. Kappan has specifically requested the lawyer to make a request to this court to permit him to undergo narco-analysis or brain mapping or lie

GST inflows top ₹1 lakh cr. for second month in a row

November revenues were 1.4% higher than 2019 collection

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

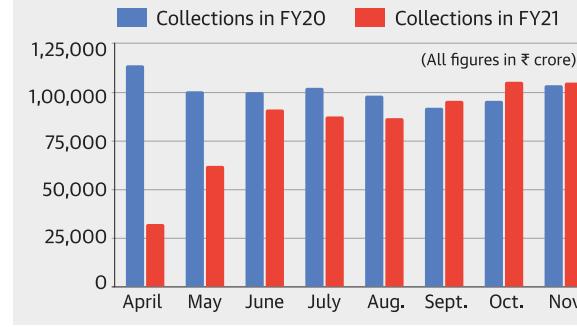
Gross revenues from the Goods and Services Tax (GST) crossed ₹1 lakh crore for the second month in a row, with ₹1,04,963 crore collected in November 2020. This was 1.4% higher than a year ago but a tad lower than October's collections.

The pick-up in GST revenues over the last two months could reduce the shortfall in GST compensation dues to the States, but economists urged caution till December to assess if the economy is truly out of the woods after the festive demand factor has played out.

Cumulatively, the GST revenues from the first eight months of 2020-21 add up to ₹6,64,709 crore, reflecting a 17.4% dip from the ₹8,05,164 crore collected in the same

Muted growth

GST collection for November recorded a growth of 1.42%, compared to the same month last year. Total collections for the month stood at ₹1,04,963 crore



period of 2019-20.

"In line with the recent trend of recovery, the revenues for November 2020 are 1.4% higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year. During the month, revenues from imports was 4.9% higher and revenues

from domestic transaction (including import of services) are 0.5% higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Farmers continue protest as no deal reached in talks with govt.

Next meeting on Dec. 3; farmers to submit objections

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

Talks between the Centre and the farmers demanding a rollback of the three farm sector legislations ended inconclusively on Tuesday. The farmers' unions rejected the government's proposal to set up a small expert committee to examine the three controversial laws.

The lines of communication between the protesters and the government stayed open, however, with both sides agreeing to meet again at noon on Thursday. The farmer leaders were asked to submit a detailed critique with their specific objections to the new laws by Wednesday.

The impasse on the ground continued, with several thousand farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, camped out on the borders of Delhi, blocking two entrances to the capital for the sixth straight day.

"We wanted the government to suspend the three laws while the negotiations are held, but they said that would not be possible. They asked us to stop the agitation, but our protest will continue. It will be intensified until our demand for re-



Negotiation time: Farmer leaders at a meeting with Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi on Tuesday. ■ ANI

Canada's comments are ill-informed'

The Canadian leadership's comments on the farmers' agitation are "ill-formed," an MEA official said on Tuesday. The Indian response came hours after Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said his country had contacted Indian authorities to express concern. ▶ PAGE 9

peal of the three laws is met," said Darshan Pal, president of the Kisan Kranti Union, one of the Punjab farmer leaders present at the meeting. "They wanted to

Yadav's exclusion hints at cracks

Swaraj India chief Yogendra Yadav was not included in the farmers' delegation, allegedly because the government did not want political personalities to be included. Some farmer leaders said his exclusion was at the behest of Punjab unions. ▶ PAGE 9

ready held two rounds of failed talks with the Centre on this issue, the farmers' delegation included Gurvan Singh Chadhuni of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) in Haryana, Shivkumar Kakkaji Sharma of the Rashtriya Kisan Mahasangh (RKM), and Hanan Mollah of the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), in a nod to the growing national nature of the protest.

Despite widespread expectation that the government delegation would be led by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the team of Central Ministers was unchanged from the last round of talks in November.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8
MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGES 2 & 9

Amarinder hits out at AAP 'double standards'

Punjab CM cites Delhi govt. notifying one of the farm laws on November 23

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Tuesday accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) of adopting double standards on the farmers' protests, saying the party had

"completely exposed itself" by implementing the farm laws in the midst of the crisis while claiming to be standing with the protesters.

"Even as AAP was claiming to be supporting the farmers, the Delhi government has ex-

ecuted the farm laws through a gazette notification on November 23," said Capt. Amarinder in a statement. He charged AAP with indulging in political games to further its electoral agenda.

"AAP has been working behind the farmers' backs all these days," said the Chief Minister, pointing out that the notification was issued even before the farmers had embarked on their 'Dilli Chalo' march.

"First, they failed to pass

any amendment laws in the Delhi Assembly to negate the Central laws, as was done in Punjab. And now they have gone so far as to officially notify the agricultural legislations in Delhi. The party's true intent and affiliation has been utterly exposed," said Capt. Amarinder.

AAP counters charge
The Delhi government notified one of the three farm laws, the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Pro-

motion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020 that allows trade of foodgrains outside APMC mandis. The ruling AAP argues that the notification doesn't dismantle mandis and only allows farmers to sell grains anywhere besides fruits and vegetables. "The farmers' demand is that they should get MSP whether inside or outside the mandi. We support that statement," the party said.

(With inputs from Delhi correspondent)

Consistent efforts have led to a declining trend'

In affidavit in Supreme Court, Delhi govt. rejects Centre's claim of 'massive increase' in COVID cases



In full gear: Health staff testing passengers arriving at IBST Anand Vihar in Delhi. ■ R. V. MOORTHY

references to the "guidance" and "hand-holding" the Delhi government had got from the Centre.

Credit to MHA
One of the references includes how the Delhi government, with the "support and guidance" of the MHA, the Health Ministry, expert agencies like the NITI Aayog and the ICMR, has "successfully responded to the pandemic". It said 13 meetings chaired by the Lieutenant Governor, along with various experts such as V.K. Paul, Member of NITI Aayog, were held to discuss the strategy. The Kejriwal government

maintained that there is a decline in the number of positive cases/positivity rate, admissions and discharges from hospitals, bed occupancy and active cases in Delhi.

Rejecting the Centre's claim that the Delhi government was ill-prepared for the spike in cases in the festival season, the affidavit said the number of COVID ICU beds available in Delhi is 5,010, with an expected increase of another 1,522 beds.

The affidavit said the number of ICU beds in government hospitals had increased from 109 on June 1 to 1,749 on November 29 whereas the number of beds in Central

government hospitals increased to only 850 as of November 29 from 89 on June 1. Even in private hospitals the ICU beds increased from 111 on June 1 to 2,411 on November 29.

The Delhi government affidavit said it had, at the peak of the festive season, ordered for the creation of 663 ICU beds. Another order was issued on November 19 to reserve 80% of the ICU beds in private hospitals for COVID-19 patients. This would have added 249 beds. Again, a third order was passed to reserve 60% of beds in private hospitals for infected patients, increasing the num-

ber by 2,644.

The affidavit referred to how Mr. Kejriwal had written to the Union Home Minister to increase the number of ICU beds by 1,214 in Central government hospitals. It said the Delhi government, notwithstanding this request, went ahead to approve the procurement of 1,200 bilevel positive airway pressure (Bi-PAP) machines, a kind of ventilator, from CSIR. It said 300 machines would arrive next week, with an equal number coming every week.

It said the RT-PCR sample collection has increased substantially, and has, in fact, saturated the ICMR declared capacity of 38,000 in Delhi. The affidavit said 80,30,979 persons have been surveyed as of November 29. The survey would continue for another month.

The statistics covered Delhi's capacity to cremate its COVID victims. "As on date, Delhi is witnessing an average of 110 COVID-19 related deaths per day, whereas it possesses a capacity to cremate 415 bodies a day, with the capacity to further augment the same, if the need arises," it told the court.

Reacting to the recent allegation of an adverse reaction by a 40-year-old volunteer for 'Covishield', the candidate vaccine being tested by the Serum Institute of India, the Ministry said adverse events are unlikely to impact the delivery timeline of the vaccine.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8
DELHI SEES 4,006 CASES ▶ PAGE 3
M ND-NDE

'No move for universal vaccination'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The government has never spoken about vaccinating everyone against COVID-19, Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said on Tuesday, speaking at a press conference in the Capital.

Mr. Bhushan added that it is important to discuss such scientific issues based on factual information only. "Vaccination would depend on the efficacy of the vaccine, and our purpose is to break the chain of virus transmission. If we're able to vaccinate a critical mass of people and break virus transmission, then we may not have to vaccinate the entire population," said Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Balram Bharatava, who was present at the press meet.

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CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8
M ND-NDE

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ) asked the Supreme Court to order an "independent enquiry" by a retired Supreme Court judge into the alleged illegal arrest and detention of its secretary Sidhique Kappan.

The KUWJ said Mr. Kappan had been in detention in Uttar Pradesh for 56 days. He has been "implicated" in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and other serious offences. He was detained on the way to Hathras in U.P. where a 19-year-old Dalit girl was allegedly gang-raped and murdered by four men. In a counter-affidavit, the KUWJ said the U.P. police had made an absolutely false statement that Mr. Kappan is the office secretary of the Popular Front of India (PFI).

The Union said it was shocked to hear that Mr. Kappan was beaten with *lathi* and slapped. It said he had to suffer mental torture and sleep deprivation.

The Union said Mr. Kappan has specifically requested the lawyer to make a request to this court to permit him to undergo narco-analysis or brain mapping or lie

detector or any other scientific test to show that he/he is innocent.

The counter-affidavit was filed days after Uttar Pradesh filed an affidavit in the top court claiming that Mr. Kappan was going to Hathras under the garb of journalism with a very determined design to create caste divide and disturb the law and order situation. The State has alleged in its affidavit that Mr. Kappan is the office secretary of the Popular Front of India (PFI).

The Union said it was hearing KUWJ's plea, which has questioned Mr. Kappan's arrest and has sought his release on bail.

The Union said Mr. Kappan has specifically requested the lawyer to make a request to this court to permit him to undergo narco-analysis or brain mapping or lie

mapping or lie

Shaheen Bagh dadi Bilkis not allowed to join farmers' stir

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The octogenarian who rose to fame as *Shaheen Bagh dadi* came to join the farmers' protest at Delhi-Haryana's Singhu border on Tuesday but was not allowed to join the stir.

Bilkis Bano from south-east Delhi was sent back to her residence when she came with her sons to join the agitation.

Why was she sent back?
Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer North) Gaurav Sharma said, "She is a senior citizen and due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we stopped her at the Singhu border and requested her to return for her own safety and betterment".

"To avoid any kind of inconvenience to her, she was escorted by a police team to her home," the officer added.

Bhim Army chief joins protesting farmers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad on Tuesday joined the protesting farmers at the Delhi-Ghazipur border along with hundreds of his supporters and demanded that the new farms laws be withdrawn.

The Dalit leader from Uttar Pradesh, who launched his political party in March this year, said: "The farmers

Two dozen farmers from Nuh and Rewari sent to preventive custody

This happened when they were on their way to join protest near Kapashera

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Around two dozen farmers from neighbouring Nuh and Rewari were taken into preventive custody by Gurugram police on Tuesday while they were on their way to the Gurugram-Kapashera border to join the ongoing protest against the three controversial farm laws.

Mewat Vikas Sabha president Salamudeen Meo said scores of farmers from Nuh and Rewari gathered near IMT Sohna and Gandhi Park in the morning to go to Singhu border to support the farmers' agitation, but they later decided to hold a *dharan* at Delhi-Haryana border near Kapashera.

"However, the Gurugram Police detained around two dozen of us and took us to Sohna Sadar police station. Our vehicles were also left behind," said Mr. Meo.



Farmers from Nuh being taken into preventive custody by the Gurugram police on Tuesday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

One of the detainees, Taim Hussain, a lawyer, claimed that he informed a Punjab and Haryana High Court judge during a hearing in a case through video-conference while being in the detention that he was arguing the matter from the police station, sitting on the floor and was in illegal de-

tention.

Judge seeks affidavit

"The judge took a serious view of the matter and sought an affidavit from the Gurugram Police Commissioner in this regard," claimed Mr. Hussain. He accused the police of high-handedness and misbehaviour by the police.

Swaraj India Haryana president Rajiv Godara said detention of the farmers was not just "condemnable" but also "undemocratic". He said around 400 farmers assembled in Nuh to leave for Delhi but were stopped twice. They continued to march ahead but 50 prominent protesters were taken into preventive custody at Sohna.

Swaraj India's national president Yogendra Yadav said Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal, on one hand, claimed that the farmers from the State were not part of the protest, but took them into detention on the other hand. Gurugram Police spokesperson Subhash Boken confirmed that two dozen farmers were taken into preventive custody. He denied allegations of high-handedness and misbehaviour by the police.

AQI may dip in coming days due to cold

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The air quality of Delhi, Gurugram, and Noida remained in the 'very poor' category on Tuesday, per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data.

The national capital's air quality is predicted to further deteriorate on Wednesday and Thursday, but is likely to stay in the 'very poor' category.

"Air quality is likely to worsen in north India due to cold waves and low temperatures. Ventilation conditions are likely to slow down further by Wednesday. The Air Quality Index is predicted to deteriorate to the middle-end of the 'very poor' category for the next two days," said SAFAR.

The AQI of Delhi was 367 on Tuesday, up from 318 on Monday, as per CPCB's 4 pm bulletin, which is an average of the past 24 hours.

The values for Gurugram and Noida were 311 and 387, respectively.

28.3% of complaints pending in govt's anti-pollution app

Public Works Department told to fix issue within 3-4 days

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

Around 28.3% of complaints filed by people on Delhi government's 'Green Delhi' application are pending and 22% of the total complaints are pending beyond the specified time limit, according to government data.

"The Public Works Department (PWD) has the highest number of such complaints pending – around 50% – and the department has been directed to fix it within next three to four days," a Delhi government official told *The Hindu*.

Of the total 12,509 complaints filed on the app, 3,549 are pending and 2,774 are overdue as on December 1. On October 29, the Delhi government launched the app, which citizens can use to file complaints about air pollution causing activities, using photos and videos.

While launching the app,

Air quality of Delhi-NCR	
Delhi	367
Gurugram	311
Ghaziabad	424
Faridabad	335
Noida	387
Greater Noida	388
Good	Satisfactory
0-50	51-100
101-200	Moderate
Poor	Very poor
201-300	Severe
301-400	>401
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 PM, YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) SOURCE: CPCB	

tral, and municipal corporations under one umbrella.

When contacted, the Delhi government spokesperson did not offer a comment.

The data showed that of the 3,006 complaints received by the Delhi government's PWD, 50.5% are pending and 44.6% of the complaints are overdue. Similarly, 14.4% complaints are overdue in the North Delhi Municipal Corporation and 39.2% are overdue in Delhi Development Authority.

These three departments have the highest number of complaints, which are overdue. All departments have been told to resolve the pending complaints at the earliest, officials said. The resolution of the complaints is being done by '24x7 Green War Room', as per the government and about 70 'Green Marshals' have also been deployed for effective resolution of complaints.

AAP alleges its student wing leaders detained for protesting 'peacefully'

Centre must take immediate action on concerns of farmers: Jain

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Tuesday said their student wing leaders were detained for protesting "peacefully" at Rajiv Chowk in support of farmers.



Farmers stage a protest at the Delhi-U.P. border near Ghazipur on Tuesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

kms away from his residence."

Health Minister Satyendar Jain said the Centre should take immediate actions on the "legitimate concerns" of the farmers. "They are the backbone of our country and deserve to be heard. People have left their homes and travelled to Delhi only to get their voices heard and are entitled to a fair chance to express their concerns. The farmers are the backbone of our nation," Mr. Jain said.

position parties," he added.

He said the "Modi-Shah government" has proved to the nation that the BJP is not interested in dealing with the issues of the farmers.

A dictatorial govt.'

"Today, a dictatorial government is running this country under the leadership of the BJP, which is suppressing and crushing the voices of farmers, soldiers, youth, students, poor, Dalits and op-

JNUTA seeks extension for research scholars

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers' Association (JNUTA) on Tuesday appealed to the university administration to grant an overall extension to terminal-year research scholars due to the difficulties they have faced owing to the ongoing pandemic.

The university adminis-

tration said the terminal students need to submit their dissertations and theses by December 31.

The teachers called for an extension till such time that conditions for an amicable submission are created, which includes access to libraries and laboratories both within and outside the university for all such scholars.

Petition alleges garbage piling up in Karol Bagh

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Following a plea alleging adverse health impacts due to non-removal of garbage from a residential area in Karol Bagh, the National Green Tribunal has directed the North Delhi Municipal Corporation and Delhi Pollution Control Committee to look into the plea and furnish an action taken report.

A Bench headed by NGT said: "The allegation needs to be looked into by the North body and the DPCC and action taken as per law. The nodal agency for coordination and compliance will be the DPCC." The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea by Anubhav, seeking action against non-removal of garbage in Karol Bagh.

Explain step taken to classify transgenders'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) to explain what step has been taken to recognise and classify transgenders as a separate third gender in its annual publication of Prison Statistics India.

Next hearing

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan asked Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Chetan Sharma to take instruction on the issue by December 7, the next date of hearing.

The plea filed by law graduate Karan Tripathi has claimed that NCRB continued to fail to include the third gender or transgenders in the sex-wise statistics of the prison inmates all over India in its annual Prison Statistics India, since the past seven years.

We are taking all necessary COVID 19 Precautionary Measures

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- JANAKPUR B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
7th CIRCLE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT GOPESHWAR**
L.N./6344/43/Yata

Dated 28/11/2020

E-Tendering

Superintending Engineer, 7th Circle, Public Works Department, Gopeshwar on behalf of "Governor of Uttarakhand" invites tender by E-tendering under bid system for the following works. Information regarding bid will be available from 07-12-2020 on <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>.

S. N.	Name of Work	Amount of Bid Security (Rs. Lakhs)	Validity of tender	Cost of Tender Document	Completion Period (in months)	Contractor's Category of Registration
1	Under Hon'ble CM Announcement Hill side cutting Scupper/Culvert Construction and Muck disposal work in Dasoli Block of Constituent assembly area Badrinath of Chamoli District.	3.10	120 Days	5000 + G.S.T.	9 Month	Category B and above for Road Work

Bid will be submitted online at website www.uktenders.gov.in.

Before opening of bid upto 3:00 PM following documents to be submitted physically to this office of Executive Engineer, P.D.P.W.D. Gopeshwar along with online submission-

1- FDR or earnest money pledged in the Designation of Superintending Engineer, 7th Circle, P.W.D., Gopeshwar.

2- DD of tender cost to Executive Engineer, P.D. P.W.D., Gopeshwar.

3- Rs. 100.00 non-judicial stamp with Rs. 1.00 signed Revenue ticket for bid validity

4- Required category Registration-copy

Note

(1) Earnest Money of Year 2020-21 will be considered valid only.

(2) Disposal of tender will be done as per the provisions of Uttarakhand G.O. No. 47/XXVII(7) 32/2017 dt. 02-04-2018.

Superintending Engineer

7th Circle, P.W.D., Gopeshwar

Regd. Office : 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612 001, CIN - L65110TN1904PLC001287, Telephone No. 0435-2402322, Fax : 0435-2431746, Website : www.cityunionbank.com

Authorised Officer

Regd. Office : 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612 001, CIN - L65110TN1904PLC001287, Telephone No. 0435-2402322, Fax : 0435-2431746, Website : www.cityunionbank.com

DIPR/UK/14057

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE						
SR. NO.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE/CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT (END DATE APPROXIMATELY) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD-CORP./AUTH	NOTIFICATION/BOARD-CORP./AUTH DETAILS/EMAIL
1	HSSB SOHNI	ADHAR SHRI RAMA CHANDRA SOHNI PROJECT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF 200 TO 500 MHM OF OPEN FIVE FEET SEVEN CONSTRUCTION OF 200 TO 500 MHM OF OPEN FIVE FEET SEVEN CONSTRUCTION OF 200 TO 500 MHM OF OPEN FIVE FEET SEVEN CONSTRUCTION OF 200 TO 500 MHM OF OPEN FIVE				

Timings

DELHI

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 02
RISE 06:58 SET 17:25
RISE 18:59 SET 08:31
TUESDAY, DEC. 03
RISE 06:58 SET 17:25
RISE 19:53 SET 09:25
FRIDAY, DEC. 04
RISE 06:59 SET 17:25
RISE 20:50 SET 10:16

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 27 08
Safdarjung 27 08
Palam 24 11

Delhi Palam Today
27°C Mist amid haze likely during morning. A comfortable day with mainly clear sky. No large change in pollution.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
26°C Mist amid smoke haze likely during cold morning. Dry weather with light variable winds.

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Govt. quizzed over rules for disposal of kits

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked the AAP government whether there were any guidelines or protocols in place for disposal of used COVID-19 testing kits and whether they were being followed by the hospitals, clinics and doctors under its jurisdiction.

The High Court's direction came on a petition filed by advocate Pankaj Mehta, which has alleged improper disposal of used swabs from rapid antigen testing for COVID-19 at the office of the District Magistrate (South-East Delhi) at Lajpat Nagar.

Mr. Mehta has sought direction to the Delhi government to carry out safety audits at COVID-19 testing centres across the city.

The matter will be heard again on December 3.

Delhi sees 4,006 fresh cases, 86 more deaths

Govt. proposes labs operate below capacity to avoid result delay

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

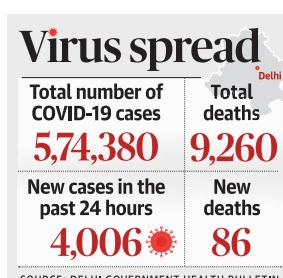
The national capital saw 4,006 fresh COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the tally to 5,74,380, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday.

The death toll has reached 9,260 with 86 more fatalities reported in a single day.

Of the total cases, 5,33,351 people have recovered and there are currently 31,769 active cases. The Capital has 5,669 containment zones.

Earlier in the day, Health Minister Satyendar Jain said that the Delhi government has requested the Centre to allow laboratories to conduct 10% fewer COVID-19 tests than their total capacity to avoid delay in results.

"We are suggesting to the Indian Council of Medical Research and the Centre to allow labs to conduct 10% fewer



The positivity on Tuesday was 6.85%, and the overall positivity till now is 9.05%, as per the health bulletin.

Out of the total 18,694 beds available for treatment, 58.3% are vacant, the bulletin read. About 76.4% of ICU beds with ventilators and 64.09% of ICU beds without ventilators were occupied by Tuesday night.

Data manipulated: Cong. Meanwhile, the Delhi Congress alleged that the city government was trying to mislead the people about the seriousness of the pandemic by manipulating data to show fewer deaths and infections.

Former Congress MLA Hari Shankar Gupta claimed crematoriums and burial grounds were overflowing with bodies and data show that over 10,000 COVID-related deaths have occurred in Delhi till November 23.

er tests so that it results in a higher turnaround rate and no delay. Delhi is optimally utilising both private and government labs, but there is a need for additional support as promised by the Centre," Mr. Jain said.

"During winters, pollution in Delhi due to stubble burning was the reason behind declining health of citizens. So, we saw an increase in hospital admissions. However, we anticipate that in 2-3 weeks, the situation will improve," the Minister added.

Trial of 3 homeopathic medicines for COVID to be completed by Feb.: govt.

Homeopathy council pulled up for not filing details of studies

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government informed the High Court on Tuesday that trial of three homeopathic medicines for COVID-19, which started in October after obtaining clearance from the Institutional Ethics Committee and Clinical Trial Registration, will be completed by February.

The Delhi government stated that its Directorate of Ayush started the trial using the three homeopathic med-

icines with a sample size of about 18,000 people.

"The study had commenced in the last week of October, and by now, 3,000 samples have been registered. The study is likely to be completed by January/February 2021," it said.

During the hearing, the Bench of Justice Hima Kohli and Justice Subramonium Prasad came down heavily on the Central Council for Research in Homeopathy (CCRH) for failing to furnish

details on clinical trials it has conducted to prevent and cure COVID-19 infection.

While the CCRH's counsel stated that eight clinical trials are being conducted, he conceded that details have not been furnished in the affidavit.

The court directed the CCRH to submit a fresh affidavit indicating the dates on which it had commenced steps for developing 'nosode' for fighting the virus and the stage of the trials.

Nov. saw most deaths since pandemic hit

Dipping positivity indicates third wave in Delhi steadily subsiding, says official

JATIN ANAND

NEW DELHI

The third wave of COVID-19 has emerged as the deadliest since the pandemic struck the Capital earlier this year.

The virus claimed 2,612 lives in Delhi in November alone, which is more than the total combined fatalities recorded in October and September, according to Delhi government data.

September saw 899 deaths while October reported 1,110 fatalities.



A medical worker sorts swab samples at Anand Vihar ISBT on Tuesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

ber, which was acknowledged as the second wave. The Delhi government believes the city is currently under the third wave of COVID-19, which began peaking towards late October.

While deaths remain a cause of concern, a government official said November also witnessed a gradual decline in the positivity ratio, indicating that the third wave was steadily subsiding.

tions surged, as many as 2,193 containment zones were delineated in Delhi during November compared to just 659 in October and 1,724 in September. Only 294 containment zones were marked in August.

The Delhi government, however, said a gradual decline in the positivity ratio during November was encouraging and being interpreted as the end of the ongoing third wave.

According to Delhi government data, out of the 50,754 people tested on November 7, 7,745 turned out to be infected – a positivity of 15.26%. This figure came down to 7.24% on November 26 when out of 69,051 people tested, 4,998 were found to be positive for the virus.

Get masks in return for plastic waste

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Tuesday launched a campaign under which people can get masks in exchange of plastic waste at a collection centre on the premises of Charkha Museum in Connaught Place.

The 'Plastic Lao, Mask Pao' campaign in partnership with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was launched by Chief Secretary Vijay Kumar Dev on Tuesday.

As part of the campaign, a mini collection centre has been set up on the premises of Charkha Museum and people bringing plastic waste will get reusable cloth masks. The centre will be open on all days from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Kerala Solid Waste Management Project (KSWMP)

Local Self Government Department, Government of Kerala
4th Floor, Trans Towers, Vazhuthacaud, Thiruvananthapuram-14

Phone: +91-471-2333011
www.kswmp.org, spmukswmp@gmail.com

NOTIFICATION

KSWMP invites applications from qualified and experienced Professionals to the following posts for the State Project Management Unit (SPMU) for immediate appointment on Contract basis for a period of one year

Name of post	Qualification	No of vacancies	Salary	Age limit as on 01.12.20
Environment Expert	Masters Degree in Civil / Environmental Engineering, Environmental Planning/ Natural Resources Management, Environmental Studies/Environmental Sciences/ Ecology or related field.	1	Rs.66000/-	60
Procurement Expert	A University Degree in one of the following areas - Economics, Commerce, Procurement, Management, Finance, Engineering or a related field.	1	Rs.66000/-	60
Urban Sanitation Expert	BE/B.Tech in Civil/Environmental/Mechanical Engineering with MS/ M.Tech in Civil / Environmental Engineering.	1	Rs.66000/-	60

Interested candidates may send application in the prescribed format available on the website and a detailed resume along with the copies of experience certificate to the Project Director, Kerala Solid Waste Management Project, (KSWMP), on or before 15.12.2020 by 05:00 pm via email spmukswmp@gmail.com. Detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) for the positions are also available on the website www.kswmp.org

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WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Wednesday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, south Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Mahe. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema, Yanam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	31.5	16.0	Kozhikode	—	34.4	24.9
Ahmedabad	—	33.5	18.8	Kurnool	—	32.0	20.2
Aizawl	—	22.3	11.6	Lucknow	—	25.6	10.3
Allahabad	—	26.4	10.5	Madurai	1.3	31.2	22.6
Bengaluru	—	26.6	17.0	Mangaluru	—	34.6	22.6
Bhopal	—	28.6	11.4	Mumbai	—	35.8	24.4
Bhubaneswar	—	30.2	15.4	Mysuru	—	28.0	21.8
Chandigarh	—	25.1	9.5	New Delhi	—	27.2	8.1
Chennai	—	29.7	23.2	Patna	—	26.6	10.4
Coimbatore	—	30.0	20.5	Pond Blair	—	30.5	27.4
Dehradun	—	25.2	9.7	Puducherry	—	28.8	21.4
Gangtok	—	17.7	9.5	Pune	—	30.8	19.0
Goa	—	34.2	23.4	Raipur	—	30.5	17.0
Guwahati	—	29.2	14.6	Ranchi	—	26.3	11.0
Hubballi	—	28.0	19.0	Shillong	—	20.5	11.0
Hyderabad	—	29.8	17.2	Shimla	—	22.0	10.3
Imphal	—	25.7	8.0	Srinagar	—	14.7	1.0
Jaipur	—	29.5	12.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	33.0	25.1
Kochi	—	32.6	24.0	Tiruchi	—	31.5	22.2
Kohima	—	19.6	6.2	Vijayawada	—	30.0	20.4
Kolkata	—	28.6	16.6	Visakhapatnam	—	29.4	21.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	41	116	.27	145	143	...
Bengaluru	13	.34	.55	63	92	...
Chennai	.9	4	.12	55	—	...
Delhi	23	157	113	436	413	...
Hyderabad	.5	75	.26	122	126	...
Kolkata	22	.36	.7	335	239	...
Lucknow	.8	106	.57	376	374	...
Mumbai	.8	12	.31	206	106	...
Pune	.6	.67	.56	.154	.87	...
Visakhapatnam	24	.20	.35	.111	.106	...

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

Teen killed over mobile game

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NASHIK

One person was arrested for allegedly killing a teen in Nandgaon taluka of Nashik district over a dispute due to addiction to a survival-shooter mobile game called 'Free Fire', the police said on Tuesday.

Jibhau Gaikwad (19) was found murdered in a field on November 26 and a probe found the act was committed by Sunil More, also 19, an official said.

"Mr. More is addicted to playing the mobile game Free Fire and this led to the murder," he added.

The special 16-day drive also aims to create awareness among citizens about these contagious diseases, a release said.

Under this drive, over 50 lakh people from more than 12 lakh households from severely affected areas will be surveyed for TB and leprosy by 3,451 teams of the BMC, it said.

BMC additional municipal commissioner Suresh Kakani appealed to citizens to cooperate with BMC staff and volunteers who will survey the households between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Judge P.R. Sitre asked all the accused to remain present in court on Thursday.

Responding to the plea of one of the victim's family for day-to-day trial, Special Public Prosecutor Avinash Ralsal said they are ready to conduct a speedy trial, but they need to locate the witnesses, which is also a tedious task.

The court's direction came on a plea of one of the victim's family, seeking day-to-day trial in the case being probed by the NIA.

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Regional priorities

The SCO serves India's quest for geopolitical balance and regional engagement

Three years after joining the eight-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), India hosted the SCO heads of governments (HoG) meeting for the first time on Monday. The focus of the 66-point joint communiqué at the end of the virtual conference was in developing a "Plan of Priority Practical Measures for 2021-2022 to overcome the socio-economic, financial and food consequences of COVID-19 in the region". Members committed to strengthening multilateralism and the UN charter while welcoming the fact that the grouping is now being seen as an "influential and responsible participant in the modern system of international relations". The meeting also showed up persisting differences. Although the HoG Council consists of the Prime Ministers of all SCO countries, neither Prime Minister Narendra Modi nor Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan attended the meet, ostensibly due to a protocol mismatch between the position of PMs in parliamentary democracies versus those in the former Soviet bloc and China. Mr. Modi was represented by Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu, who made strong observations on cross-border terrorism; he called it the SCO region's "biggest challenge", in comments aimed at Pakistan. Pakistan's representative too spoke of the need to combat what she called "state terrorism" in disputed areas, in a reference to Jammu and Kashmir. The SCO is a rare forum where India-Pakistani troops take part in joint exercises under the Regional Anti-Terror Structure, although it would seem the two countries have come no closer on the issue. Neither statement on terrorism was reflected in the final joint statement, which focused on trade and economic issues. India also marked its differences with China over the BRI by not joining other SCO members in a paragraph endorsing the BRI. Mr. Naidu made a pitch for "transparent and trustworthy" trade practices, seen as a sidebar aimed at China.

Regardless of the differences, the Modi government has consistently maintained the importance of the SCO grouping, referred to as the "Asian NATO" although it does not mandate security alliances. The SCO is one of the few regional structures India is a part of now, given a decline in its engagement with SAARC, BBIN and the RCEP. The SCO provides India a convenient channel for its outreach – trade and strategic ties – to Central Asian countries. It has afforded a platform, when needed, for bilateral discussions with the two countries India has the most tense ties with: China and Pakistan. While the government has eschewed meetings with Pakistan for the last five years, it has used the SCO for talks with China, including this year amidst the LAC stand-off, when Rajnath Singh and S. Jaishankar met their counterparts on the sidelines of SCO meets. Above all, the SCO has been seen as a grouping worth pursuing as it retains India's geopolitical balance, a useful counterpoint to New Delhi's otherwise much more robust relations with the western world, and hosting the SCO meeting was one more step towards developing that engagement.

Slow progress

WHO must work alongside China in quickly uncovering the origins of the virus

In 2003, a WHO team was able to identify the animal source of SARS coronavirus within weeks despite its arrival in China nearly three months after the initial outbreak. In the case of MERS coronavirus, the intermediate host was identified more than a year after the first human case was reported. However, in the case of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), its source is still unknown even 11 months after WHO reported the first case. Knowing the natural reservoirs and intermediate hosts and the events that allowed the virus to jump across the species barrier are important in prevention. Soon after the virus spread around the world, there was heightened demand to identify its origin in China's Wuhan where the first case cluster was reported. Even as the global focus shifted to therapeutics and vaccine trials, it is reassuring that the global health body is still determined to find the virus's origin. But the pace of investigation leaves much to be desired. Efforts began in February but it was only in early August that WHO completed the mission to lay the groundwork for joint efforts to identify the origin; its two-member team did not visit Wuhan, the epicentre of the outbreak. It was only in late October that China began early studies for the two-phase investigation. In the first phase, short-term studies will be undertaken to better understand how the virus might have begun circulating in Wuhan. Longer-term studies will follow based on these results. It is only then that a WHO-led team can operate in China to collaborate with Chinese scientists.

If China failed to alert WHO immediately after a Wuhan cluster was reported, its reluctance to quickly and earnestly investigate the source can partly be explained by U.S. President Donald Trump's attempt to politicise the issue. The reluctance has only increased after mounting international ire over its reporting of the outbreak and the huge economic cost of the pandemic globally. There is strong evidence that the virus originated in bats and probably spread to humans through an intermediate species. One way to find this out is to know the susceptibility of different animal species. Already, many animals including cats have been found susceptible to the virus in the lab and outside. With the virus spread so wide, zeroing in on the intermediate host becomes more difficult as the possibility of humans having spread the virus to animals cannot be ruled out. Hence, a multi-pronged approach with an emphasis on investigating China's wildlife farms becomes crucial. This highlights the importance of working alongside China to uncover the virus's origin.

The pernicious idea of exclusive belonging

It erases the multiplicity and fluidity necessary for self-development and cultural growth



RAJEEV BHARGAVA

The idea that each human being belongs to only one religious or linguistic community, a single culture or a unique civilization appears to be ubiquitous. Many have begun to believe that our identity is defined by membership to only mutually exclusive groups. If we are Bengali, then we cannot be Odia or Assamese; if Hindu, then not Muslim or Christian.

This idea of exclusive belonging is relatively recent. Indeed, even today, a substantial number of humans appear not to have it. Or if they do, only very faintly. Multiple belonging is common because we imbibe from other cultures when we go to them. And because ideas and values, energetic and nimble-footed, come to us as they seek uncharted territories. This fluidity in understanding who we are is ineradicable, infinitely better than a condition in which we are confined to a fixed, categorical idea of identity.

Identity is multi-layered

That we belong exclusively to one culture, religion or language is undesirable and unfeasible. It is not feasible because our overall identity is far more complex and multi-layered than what we articulate or others believe. To take the manifest part of ourselves as our only identity is to accept a truncated, impoverished self. It is undesirable because it forces us to rely exclusively on one tradition when in fact we can be nourished by many. We live much better when we are

open to multiple influences, enriched by varied currents of thought and value.

Intersecting cultures

Take any one of us living in say in Delhi. We are heirs to myriad streams of Hindi/Urdu/Punjabi. Local dialects apart, these are shaped by old Sanskrit and old Persian, close cousins in an ancient family of languages – consider words such as *asura/ahura* or *yajna/yasna*. Those who speak them do not realise that several words on their tongue are of Arabic origin (*Aadmi, Maalik*). Since languages are not simply a means of communication but constitute multiple worlds, the criss-crossing and overlapping worlds they inhabit are infinitely more complex and expansive than is recognised. Monuments and public spaces that surround us (Humayun's Tomb, the Ramlila Maidan, Parliament building) and the varied cuisines that shape our taste and sensibility are also creations of intersecting cultures. And so are the identities they shape.

The same is true of moral frameworks that ground our commitments and convictions – structures of values that have developed over 5,000 years. I doubt if there is any Indian who has not been shaped by multiple ancient strands that compose Hinduism, the precepts of Buddha and Mahavir, the partly home-grown Islamic and Christian traditions, the teachings of Nanak and Kabir, not to forget the enormous impact that western values have had since Vasco Da Gama stepped ashore, all the way to the globalised world we now inhabit. The idea of exclusive allegiance to any one of these flies in the face of evidence and is based on ignorance or deliberate denial. Why should we, instead of embracing all of



them, insist on exclusive belonging and loyalty to just one?

A serious objection

At this point it might be objected that a person's identity is defined not by everything that has influenced her but by those elements she has evaluated to be of greater importance. Someone can say that her fundamental commitments flow from a single framework – and this alone defines her identity. Identity is defined by what is publicly affirmed because of judgement of its real significance. It announces where we truly belong, to what we owe our overriding allegiance.

A person's identity, the argument goes, is defined by his orientation to an incomparably higher good. It underlines the quest to be a certain kind of person, to give oneself a direction. Does this often not require removing all 'alien or bad features'? Is not this movement towards something higher often a battle between the good and the evil within? Why cannot this be seen as a certain kind of purification? A *shuddhikaran* for a Hindu or for that matter, a *jihad* for a Muslim. If so, does it not follow that one is a Hindu because of one's aspiration to realise what is most valuable in Hinduism rather than in any other ethical tradition? To tell such a person that there is a Muslim ingredient in his self is irrelevant because the whole point of his existence is to become a good Hindu and remove extraneous, non- or anti-Hindu elements. This seems like a forceful rebuttal. But it overlooks two stronger challenges.

First, the encounter between two different ethical traditions results in mutual transformation of what is truly worthwhile in these traditions. Arguably, the ethics of Vedic people originally comprised three ends of life: *kama, artha* and *dharma*. It needed the teachings of the Buddha to add a fourth value, *Moksha*. Similarly, the Arya Samaj challenged idol worship as a perverse substitution of original Vedic fire rituals, but can one deny that it was also influenced by the Islamic conception of a formless god? Religions have frequently shaped each other's conception of the ultimate good, even as they conceal or stigmatise the source.

Second, and equally important, most of us are powered by multiple moral sources. We acknowledge within us the presence of different even incompatible normative orientations. Consider the French philosopher, Paul Ricœur's disclosure that the private reading of the Bible was central to the pietistic Protestant milieu in which he was born. This part of his upbringing, leaning on prayer and the undogmatic examination of conscience, had little intellectual content about it. But Ricœur was equally impacted by another milieu wherein critical thinking and public standards of rationality were essential. He says: 'I always moved back and forth between these two poles: a biblical pole and a rational, critical pole. A duality that has lasted through my entire life. I remained faithful to this double allegiance.' I believe this self-description captures the life of many intellectuals. Many

scientists take their Hindu outlook seriously; many philosophers are at home in their Jewish, Islamic or Catholic spiritualities. Loyal to both, they feel that something terribly important would be lost if either was snatched away from them.

Multiple allegiances

Indeed, I will not be surprised if there are many Muslims today who are inspired by both the *Ramayana* and the *Koran*. This was something commonplace till the mid-20th century in large parts of Haryana's Meo community. It is still common to find some of our greatest singers, musicians and poets moved equally and simultaneously by Hindu and Muslim mysticism. I recently saw a film on Bismillah Khan in which he tells viewers how blessed he was to live in Benaras. "... I can step down the ghats, bathe in the Ganga, walk up to the *masjid* for *namaz*, and then head straight to the Balaji temple for *riyaz*...". The fact is that large numbers of people in the past embraced not just dual but multiple allegiances and this is unlikely to disappear in future. The demand for a single, exclusive allegiance makes for a sorry, desiccated self.

The idea of exclusive belonging or allegiance is a pernicious intrusion into world cultures. Equally dangerous is a political project that foists a singularity or homogeneity and calls for the obliteration of multiplicity and fluidity – so that we become purely one or the other. The demand to 'purify' ourselves, rid ourselves of anything 'foreign' that contaminates is not only hard to meet but, if we are to lead better, richer lives, not worth compliance.

Rajeev Bhargava is Honorary Professor, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi

The last straw is being further disabled

Denying a prisoner with disabilities his recognised rights is a legal wrong and a display of a lack of compassion



JAY MANOJ SANKLECHA

There has been much outrage expressed over the denial of a sipper and straw to Father Stan Swamy. Father Swamy, the 83-year-old activist who suffers from Parkinson's disease, was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in October for his alleged involvement in the 2018 Bhima Koregaon violence and charged under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. Lodged in Mumbai's Taloja prison, Father Swamy reportedly made an application to be provided with a sipper and straw, as he was unable to hold a glass, a request which was inexplicably deferred for 20 days, only for the NIA to inform the court that it did not have a straw and sipper to give to the incarcerated octogenarian.

The court has now posted the matter on December 4, seeking a report from the jail authorities on allowing Father Swamy to receive a straw and sipper at his own cost. However, there are subsequent reports that have emerged that Father Swamy has been provided with a sipper and straw by the jail authorities. Nevertheless, given Father Swamy's allegations, a fuller examination is merited by the court.

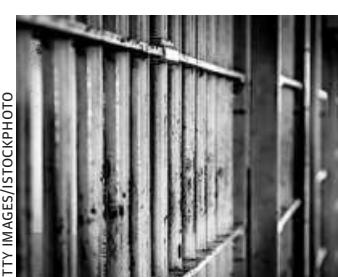
If Father Swamy's allegations are true, the above events, apart from demonstrating the insensitivity of legal procedure, outline another fundamental issue – that of the rights of prisoners with disabilities. While incarceration itself is not easy, it is significantly more difficult for persons with disabilities.

Given the nature of overcrowded and underfunded prison environments, the difficulties persons with disabilities face in society are exacerbated in prison. It is precisely for this reason that both international and domestic laws recognise and protect the rights of disabled prisoners.

Rights upheld by laws

Under international law, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which applies to all persons with disabilities including detainees and prisoners (<https://bit.ly/3fvNdyY>), and to which India is a signatory (<https://bit.ly/37In5ph>), imposes a positive obligation on authorities, including prison staff, to ensure that prisoners with disabilities are on an "equal basis with others, entitled to guarantees in accordance with international human rights law" and are "treated in compliance with the objectives and principles of the convention, including by provision of reasonable accommodation".

The obligation encompasses the provision of auxiliary aids re-



vant to the disability to secure the inherent dignity of the prisoner to enable them to live independently and participate in all aspects of their daily lives. In cases where such provision is not made by prison authorities, it may amount to a breach of a state's obligation to "prevent persons with disabilities... from being subjected to torture, cruel or inhuman degrading treatment or punishment".

These obligations under the CRPD are complemented by the provision of Article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, or ICCPR (<https://bit.ly/33yQdYR>). The Nelson Mandela Rules (<https://bit.ly/37mZUex>), approved by the UN General Assembly through a resolution in 2015, on the standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners, also requires that the prison administration "make all reasonable accommodation and adjustments to ensure that prisoners with physical, mental or other disabilities have full and effective access to prison life on equitable basis" (<https://bit.ly/3qrqMmu>).

Apart from the constitutional

guarantees under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution available to persons with disabilities, there is specific Indian legislation on the subject.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (<https://bit.ly/3muVI2S>) enacted with the object of giving effect to the CRPD, also requires that persons with disabilities enjoy the right to equality, life with dignity and respect for integrity equally with others; they are not to be discriminated against on the ground of disability, unless to achieve a legitimate aim. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act also enjoins the state to take necessary steps to protect persons with disabilities from being subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; and take necessary steps to ensure reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.

While the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act does not specifically provide for persons with disabilities who are incarcerated, given the object of the legislation to give effect to the CRPD, it would even encompass prisoners. It is important to note that the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act explicitly recognises Parkinson's disease as specified disability in its Schedule.

Injustice magnified

The denial of aids such as a sipper and straw to Father Swamy in prison to deal with his neurological disability is arguably inconsistent

with both domestic and international law. (There are reports of lawyers having arranged for sippers and straws for him.) The injustice in Father Swamy's case is magnified by the fact that he still awaits trial. The fundamental tenet on which Indian criminal law operates is that an accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty. In the event the prosecution is unable to prove its case, the damage to Father Swamy's health will be irreparable. While his guilt or innocence is ultimately a matter for the court to decide, the denial of his rights by the justice system not only constitutes a legal wrong but also displays an absence of compassion. It is the absence of compassion that ultimately corrupts the decency of any society.

Forgotten ideal

In his excellent memoir, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*, Bryan Stevenson writes that the true measure of a society's commitment to justice, the rule of law, fairness and equality, cannot be measured by how it treats the rich, the powerful, the privileged and the respected. But that the true measure of a society's character is how it treats the poor, the disfavoured, the accused, the incarcerated and the condemned. It is time for the Indian justice system to stand up to this ideal.

Jay Manoj Sanklecha is a lawyer specialising in international law. The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Wounded farmers

The farmers' agitation on the Haryana-Delhi highway is choking a national thoroughfare and infringing upon the right to freedom of movement. Governments are impersonal bodies and those who run them are secure. Everything finally burdens the *aam aadmi* in whose name all agitations are launched. The farmers should force their lobbies to get Parliament working and fight the 'harmful laws' as that is where democracies, real and merely claimed, monitor and correct governance. Nobody thinks of families waiting in homes for the daily wages to provide their sustenance. The government of the day should have intervened much earlier by offering to see a delegation of farmers' representatives and explain

to them the truth of the laws and the benefits that the government sees in them (Page 1, 'Centre invites farmers' unions for talks', December 1). When will politicians look beyond themselves and think of the people they claim to represent?

T.C. NARAYAN,
Bengaluru

■ The article, "The perils of deregulated imperfect agrimarkets" (Editorial page, December 1), only highlights the distrust of the farming community towards the new agricultural laws. The undue haste with which the government issued the ordinances for the new agricultural laws, in Parliament which did not have any Question Hour, raises suspicion. One hopes that there is no invisible

hand of the private sector behind this.

ARUN HASTIR,
Babehali, Gurdaspur, Punjab

■ It is unfortunate that the Prime Minister has undermined the protests and even suggested that farmers were being misled by lobbies that were anti-government, thereby hinting at another so-called conspiracy by the Opposition (Page 1, December 1). The BJP has failed to read the sentiments in support of the farmers' protest. The Prime Minister often lays emphasis on the doctrine of 'last man in the row', but his government's actions seem to be completely majoritarian.

PANKAJ G.,
Kalka, Haryana

■ The government may have enacted the farm laws in the

larger interests of farmers, but the message filtering down is different. It begs the question why farmers are not trusting even the unquestioned Prime Minister who is trying to reach out to them. It is abundantly clear that the BJP is in no mood to buckle under the pressure. Its main problem is that it believes that every unilateral action it has, or is taking, is impeccable and sacrosanct. This credo is buttressed time and again by its election victories one after the other resulting in a clouding of vision.

DEEPAK SINGHAL,
Noida

■ To allay farmers' fears, providing a legislative backing to the MSP regime despite a weeding out of the *mandi* system should be part of the agenda. Agriculture

needs to be seen as an industry with investment potential so as to create agri-entrepreneurs. It is high time to invest further in seed research while also ensuring that better guidelines are spelt out for GM crops.

U. AJIT,
Hyderabad

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U. AJIT,<br

Why business barons should not run banks

They will not only enrich themselves but also crush competition



G.R. GOPINATH

First, a confession is in order. Would I want to own a bank and have a key to the bank treasury to start a new airline? You bet! Can I promise that I won't dip my hands into the till when my airline runs out of cash? Don't you doubt it. And will I recuse myself where needed and follow corporate governance? Of course. Anything for the keys to the bank safe. If you ask a fox that is in charge of the henhouse to promise not to eat the chicks if he is hungry, what would the fox say? My promise would be as sacrosanct as his. You don't give the keys of a henhouse to a fox. Not even to a virtuous fox. Period.

But the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the last guardian of India's financial and banking system, wants to do just that. That the RBI constituted an Internal Working Group to determine if large corporate houses can be given licence to promote banks and recommended that they be allowed to operate banks, all without inviting a larger public debate, is unconscionable. Banking regulations for licensing have not been diluted in the last 50 years to allow business barons to promote a bank. Whenever these requests came up, it was always frowned upon. That the RBI has recommended it even after its own Internal Working Group "found out from its set of experts that barring one, all of them were of the opinion that large corporate/industrial houses should not be allowed to promote a bank" is baffling.

Not a welcome move
In a joint paper posted on November 23, former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan and former RBI Deputy Governor Viral Acharya termed the recommendations allowing corporates into banking a "bombshell" and said this proposal is "best left on the shelf". Referring to business houses owning an in-house bank that may lead to self-lending, they said, "The history of such connected lending is invariably disastrous – how can the bank make good loans when it is owned by



the borrower? Even an independent committed regulator, with all the information in the world, finds it difficult to be in every nook and corner of the financial system to stop poor lending. Information on loan performance is rarely timely or accurate. Yes, Bank managed to conceal its weak exposures for considerable periods."

Indeed, anything coming from Mr. Rajan or Mr. Acharya may be seen as being partisan or motivated by the present dispensation. But other experts have also not welcomed this move. Professor T.T. Ram Mohan wrote in this newspaper, "If the record of over-leveraging in the corporate world in recent years is anything to go by, the entry of corporate houses into banking is a road to perdition." Hemindra Hazari, a well-known Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) research analyst, wrote in an article titled 'RBI's working group recommends foxes be put in charge of chicken coops': "Even under the existing financial regime, the RBI was unable to detect at an early stage the connected lending which felled large regulated financial entities like IL&FS, Yes Bank (Rana Kapoor and his entities held 10.6% as on end September 2018), Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank and DHFL (promoter holding 39%). Will it be able to effectively regulate and monitor large, complex industrial houses which are well versed in dis-

guising financial transactions through a vast web of opaque domestic and foreign-based entities?" In a blistering critique in Bloomberg titled 'India's banking rules need to close door to tycoon cronyism', renowned analyst Andy Mukherjee wrote: "From telecommunications to transportation, India's business landscape is already starting to resemble a Monopoly board." He recommended less risky options of asking corporates who promote banks to pare down their shareholding to 15% over the long term and penalties for misdemeanours and connected lending violations, by bringing down their voting rights to 5%.

The RBI is overlooking time-tested principles and limits of disallowing mega business houses from promoting and owning banks. It is saying this can be done by making necessary amendments to the Banking Regulation Act of 1949 to deal with connected lending and linkages between banks and non-financial group entities, and strengthening the supervisory mechanism for conglomerates. This is in stark departure from its long-held opinion on the subject since 1969 when banks were nationalised. History is replete with evidence of business barons who were good when they started out only to eventually morph into robber barons who not only enriched themselves owing to their enormous wealth and nexus with politicians in power, but

also crushed competition. It will be naïve to believe that a bank owned by a corporate house will permit lending to its competitors. Mr. Mukherjee ended his article eloquently saying, "To roll out red carpet to wannabe JP Morgans would be an abdication of the RBI's financial stability and mandate."

The way forward
Public sector banks may be inefficient and indifferent and under the influence of the party in power but private sector banks that are owned by oligarchs and business tycoons in cahoots with politicians will be rapacious beings. The way forward should be to privatise public sector banks by allowing wide and diversified holding of stock by the general public. If the government exits banking ownership, that would lead to professional management and broader distribution of wealth. The banks would come under both SEBI and stringent RBI guidelines.

Many a time when my company could not manage to restructure its loan and ended up in Debts Recovery Tribunals, how I wished I owned a bank! How can we expect virtue from modern-day business Maharajas when in the Mahabharata, even King Yudhishtira gambled away his wife, family and kingdom?

Captain G.R. Gopinath is a writer and founder of Air Deccan

Winners who disappoint

Giving the Nobel Peace Prize to sitting prime ministers or presidents is inherently risky

SREERAM CHAULIA

When Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed launched a large-scale military offensive against separatists in the restive Tigray province, which led to the deaths of possibly thousands and forced tens of thousands to flee as refugees, a familiar disquiet arose across the world. Had the Nobel Committee made a mistake in awarding the 2019 Peace Prize to Mr. Abiy, who until last year was hailed as a beacon for democratising Ethiopia and befriending Eritrea? With ethnic tensions spiralling and Mr. Abiy resorting to violent means to manage the nationwide turbulence, was the Nobel Committee naïve in having so much hope in him?

Failing to live up to ideals
There was similar heartburn over President Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia failing to live up to ideals. Mr. Santos won the Peace Prize in 2016 for ending the decades-long civil war with FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) guerrillas. Despite his image as a peacemaker, Mr. Santos' presidency saw continuing paramilitary excesses and rampant human rights violations by agents of the state.

Likewise, when the Nobel Committee gave the 2009 Peace Prize to U.S. President Barack Obama, it proved a controversial choice. Shortly after receiving the Prize, Mr. Obama ordered an American troop surge in Afghanistan, deepening a bloody war. In 2011, he also backed a disastrous military intervention in Libya and subsequently abandoned it when there was chaos.

Yet another much-maligned Nobel Peace Prize winner is Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi. She was chosen in 1991 while in house arrest for her courageous activism against military dictatorship and her campaign for democracy. But once she assumed the title of State Counsellor in 2016 under a power-sharing arrangement with the military in Myanmar, calls for revoking her Prize echoed in international public discourse.

Ms. Suu Kyi's decision to team up with the repressive armed forces and defend her government at the International Court of Justice against

charges of genocide of the Rohingya triggered a global uproar. Several other awards heaped on her have lately been rescinded, with Amnesty International slamming her for "shameful betrayal of the values she once stood for".

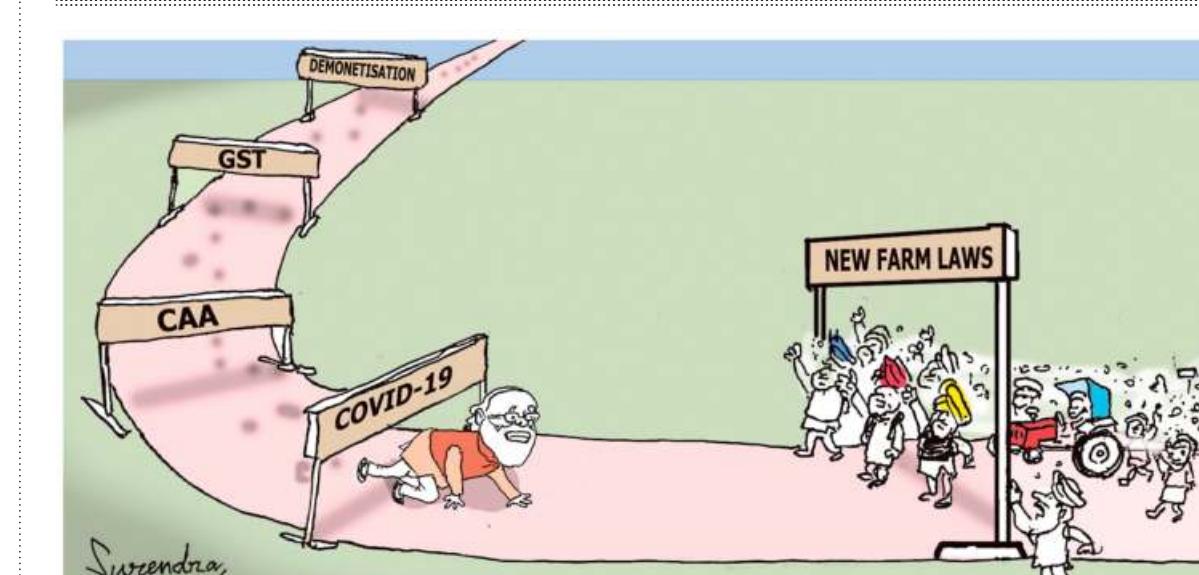
While there is no question that Mr. Abiy, Mr. Santos, Mr. Obama and Ms. Suu Kyi have disappointed legions of admirers, what is common to them is that they have been holders of executive state power. The very logic of *raison d'état* pushes these personalities to work under compulsions and make compromises.

Mr. Abiy has justified his war in Tigray as part of the Ethiopian government's "responsibility to enforce rule of law" and the writ of the state. Should his regime collapse, there could be anarchy or a return to the authoritarian *ancien régime*. Ms. Suu Kyi feels she has no option but to cooperate with the military if Myanmar's democratisation transition has to eventually succeed. If she openly challenges the military in the transitional period or steps down on conscientious grounds, the dream of full transfer of authority to civilian leadership could be lost. Mr. Obama too rationalised his actions. He said that as "a head of state sworn to protect and defend my nation", he believed that "force is sometimes necessary".

Unrealistic expectations
It is unrealistic to expect Nobel Laureates running government machineries to behave like saints. Giving the Nobel Prize to sitting prime ministers or presidents is inherently risky and these recipients should not be held to the gold standard of a Mother Teresa or Malala Yousaafzai. If one adopts a less perfectionist lens, all the problematic Nobel Laureates have done some good and some harm.

Unless the Nobel Committee consciously avoids picking incumbent politicians altogether in the future, there will always be reasons to be ejected by such Laureates' records in hindsight. Understanding them in their political contexts and in particular moments may help us reach a balanced final judgment.

Sreeram Chaulia is Professor and Dean at the Jindal School of International Affairs



DATA POINT

Erosion of democracy

In India, the quality of democracy decreased alarmingly in the last decade, according to the Democracy Report 2020 prepared by the V-Dem institute. The fall in democratic values in India over the past decade was the sixth highest in the world. The regression started in 2014 after the BJP-led NDA formed the government. Strikingly, indices such as civil liberties and academic freedom went below the levels recorded during the Emergency period. By The Hindu Data Team

DEMOCRACY ON A DECLINE

The map depicts the change in the Liberal Democracy Index (LDI) between 2009 and 2019. The index combines measures of the quality of elections, suffrage, freedom of expression and the media, freedom of association and civil society, checks on the executive, and the rule of law. The deeper the red, the more the deterioration in LDI in the last decade. In other words, the quality of democracy declined. The deeper the blue, the better the quality of democracy

WORSE THAN EMERGENCY

The graph shows the change in four crucial indicators included in the LDI calculation between 1940 and 2019

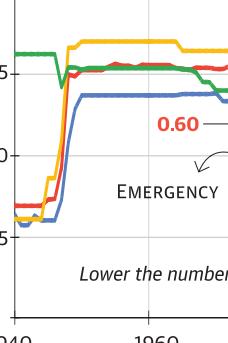
1. **Academic Freedom index:** The right of academics to freely teach, discuss, research, publish, and express opinions without constriction by prescribed doctrine
2. **Civil liberties index:** Absence of physical violence by govt. agents and absence of constraints on private liberties and political liberties by the govt.

LDI 2019 minus LDI 2009

India's LDI reduced to 0.36 (0 = 100% autocratic, 1 = 100% democratic) in 2019 from 0.55 in 2009. The fall of 0.19 points in the past decade was the sixth highest drop in LDI among the 179 countries considered. Hungary recorded the highest drop in LDI in the period

Since 2014, after the BJP-led NDA came to power, all the four components, which play a significant role in deciding the quality of democracy, deteriorated substantially. The civil liberties and academic freedom indices slumped lower than the levels recorded during the Emergency period in 1975-77

Lower the number, poorer the quality of democracy



No leverage for Biden on Iran

His administration would need more than promises of sanctions relief to bring Iran to the negotiating table



RAMIN JAHANBEGLOO

The murder of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh has not only exposed the vulnerabilities of Iran's military intelligence, but also triggered a series of questions concerning the future of Iran-U.S. relations after the recent election of Joe Biden as President of the U.S. Many inside Iran and around the world have pointed the finger at Israel's intelligence agency, Mossad, which is suspected to have killed Iranian nuclear scientists earlier this decade. In the Mossad's point of view, Fakhrizadeh was the brain behind the militarisation of Iran's nuclear programme and therefore represented an imminent threat to the security of Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu even mentioned him by name during a May 2018 press conference while revealing secretly stolen documents on Iran's nuclear programme. Unsurprisingly, President Donald Trump retweeted Israeli writer Yossi Melman's tweet that said Fakhrizadeh's assassination is a "psychological and professional blow" to Iran. As for Mr. Biden, he has been silent on the matter. The reason is not because he does not want to interfere in presidential matters until he assumes office; the truth is that Fakhrizadeh's assassination could easily damage and diminish any hope for future dialogues with Iran.

No easy solutions

Consequently, the Iranian authorities also find themselves in a difficult position. There are no easy solutions to the challenges posed by Fakhrizadeh's assassination. At a time when Iran is weighing its options for taking revenge for Fakhrizadeh's death, its political scene seems divided. While the Iranian hardliners are shouting for an immediate "harsh revenge", President Hassan Rouhani has announced that his government will not fall for Israel's trap by responding hastily. Iran's response will depend on how the dialogue with the future U.S. administration will evolve. That said, it is no secret that many in Tel Aviv and Riyadh are against any efforts to revitalise U.S.-Iran diplomacy. Israel has repeatedly underlined the fact that returning to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran would be a mistake. Even so, Israel and Saudi Arabia are confident that it won't be easy to put the nuclear deal back together in a way that can last.

Despite the encouraging statements by both the Biden camp and officials in the Rou-

hani administration, there is a remarkable degree of scepticism surrounding the prospect of the U.S. returning to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). But the Iranian population is hoping that Mr. Biden and his group of experts will enable a return to the short period between the implementation of the JCPOA in January 2016 and the election of Mr. Trump in November that year. Addressing the possible impact of U.S. elections on U.S.-Iran relations, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said, "We follow a sensible, calculated policy which cannot be affected by changes of personnel." The policy to which he was referring is that of engaging in a deal with Iran while respecting its vital strategic interests.

Importance of the IRGC

What is certain is that the killing of General Qasem Soleimani in an American drone attack in January 2020 did not have a major impact on Iran's projection of power in the Persian Gulf region. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) still has the upper hand in many operations taking place in Iraq and Lebanon through the Shi'a militias, the Hashd al-Sha'abi (Popular Mobilisation Forces), Kata'ib Hezbollah or the Lebanese Hezbollah. Despite the popular rage against Iranian interference in Baghdad and Beirut, the IRGC continues to play an important role in shaping Iranian foreign policy in West Asia. The IRGC is the unique pre-eminent power in Iran which is capable of replacing Ayatollah Khamenei after his death and is likely to impact the future of U.S.-Iran relations. As such, there is little likelihood of any flexibility towards the Iranian regime from the American side while the IRGC has total control of Iranian domestic and foreign policies.

Last but not the least, the end of the Trump administration does not necessarily mean the end of economic sanctions and "maximum pressure" on Iran. It is true that Iranians are suffering from rampant inflation and a decline in the value of the Iranian rial against the U.S. dollar, but Mr. Trump's sanctions have not coerced the Iranian government into talks. Mr. Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA followed by economic coercion offer Mr. Biden no real leverage on Iran. Iran's adaptability to sanctions pressure shows quite well that the future Biden administration would need more than promises of sanctions relief – promises to bring the Iranian policymakers to the negotiating table. Mr. Biden will face a tough road ahead, especially if an element of the IRGC wins in the next year's presidential election in Iran.

Ramin Jahanbegloo is Director of the Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Nonviolence and Peace Studies at O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat, Haryana

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 2, 1970

Limited divorce in Italy

The Italian Parliament to-day [December 1, Rome] finally approved a Bill introducing limited divorce in this country in the face of prolonged and bitter opposition from the Vatican and the powerful church-backed Christian Democrat Party. In an historic ballot shortly before dawn, members of the 630-man Chamber of Deputies (Lower House) voted by 319 to 286 to approve the measure after a five-year parliamentary battle. An economic package submitted by the Government was simultaneously approved. Already approved by the Senate (Upper House), the Divorce Bill now requires only the signature of President Giuseppe Saragat and publication in the official State gazette to become law, possibly before the end of the year. Early in 1971 the courts are expected to issue divorce decrees to many of the huge numbers of Italians – estimated at between one and two million – now living separated from their partners. Many of them have taken new partners whom they are unable to marry. Their children are regarded as illegitimate.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DECEMBER 2, 1920

Burglaries in Calcutta

Calcutta, December 1: A series of daring burglaries have recently taken place in the European quarter of Calcutta, the modus operandi being the same as those of the men who committed burglaries in Bombay and Colombo. The police are inclined to believe that some brain and pair of hands are responsible for crimes in three cities. Particulars of two recent cases are as follows: - Mr. and Mrs. Eltris recently arrived from home and took up their residence at 9, Dant Mission Road. At night a burglar entered Mrs. Eltris' bed-room and standing on her bedstead on which she was lying asleep opened the almirah and decamped with jewellery and wearing apparel worth six thousand rupees. Mrs. Eltris is convinced that she must have been drugged since otherwise it would have been impossible for her to have slept soundly during the time when the burglar was operating on her almirah. There is evidence to show that a motor car was driven up and halted [at] about two o'clock on the night of burglary near the house occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Eltris. In the second case the premises occupied by Mr. Basu were similarly burgled and Rs. 4,000 worth of jewellery stolen. It is said that a motor car was also on this occasion seen waiting near Mr. Basu's residence on the night of the occurrence.

CM YK

M ND-NDE

FROM PAGE ONE

No breakthrough at farmers' talks with govt.

The government team consisted of Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Food, Railways and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Commerce Som Parkash.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Tomar and Mr. Singh met with Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president J.P. Nadda to discuss the issue.

"The talks were held in a cordial atmosphere, and we listened to the issues of farmers. We are keen to resolve all the issues as soon as possible," Mr. Tomar told journalists after the meeting.

According to farmer leaders, the Central Ministers took a less aggressive tone than during the previous

meeting, when the rail blockade of Punjab was still in effect. Farmer leaders took the offensive by warning of dire consequences if the protest stretched on.

Once the rabi sowing season got over, the number of farmers at the dharna site would increase manifold, said RKM leader Shikumar Kakkai Sharma.

"Farmers' policies cannot be framed while sitting in rooms in Delhi," he told Central Ministers during the meeting.

Later in the evening, the Central Ministers also met with representatives from the BKU-Tikait group, who are protesting separately by blocking highways in western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Uttarakhand.

GST inflows top ₹1 lakh cr. for the second month

November's GST collections, boosted by festive spending, were just ₹192 crore lower than October, which had recorded the highest revenue from indirect taxes since February 2020. GST revenues had collapsed to just ₹32,172 crore in April this year as economic activity was crippled following the lockdown.

The average pace of growth in GST collections in October-November 2020 stood at a moderately healthy 6%. The trends regarding the sustainability of demand will be clearer in the data on the GST collections for December 2020, which will be for the transactions that took place in the month of November 2020," said Aditi Nayar,

principal economist at ICRA Ltd.

Among the major States, Andhra Pradesh (12%), Gujarat and Jharkhand (11%), followed by Tamil Nadu (10%), were the only ones to record double-digit growth in November's GST revenues compared to a year ago.

Ahishhek Jain, tax partner at EY termed the second straight month of ₹1 lakh crore-plus GST collections encouraging and said this should help in containing the shortfall of GST collections due to the pandemic.

In November, ₹8,242 crore was collected as cess, which is used to compensate States for implementing the GST. This was higher than the ₹8,011 crore collected as cess in October.

No universal COVID-19 vaccination plan: govt.

It listed out the various mechanisms in place to ensure the safety of the volunteers participating in drug/vaccine testing and ensuring the efficacy of the end product. Officials listed the various mechanisms in place to ensure the safety of the volunteers participating in drug/vaccine testing and ensuring the efficacy of the end product.

"Adverse events do occur with drugs or vaccines or any other health intervention. It is the role of the regulator after collating all data to ascertain or refute whether there is a link between the event and intervention," said Dr. Bhargava.

The Ministry added that at the start of a clinical trial subjects were expected to sign a prior informed consent form.

"This is global practice; it happens across all countries. The form tells the subject about possible adverse events that may happen in case one decides to participate in the trial. Also clinical trials are multi-centric and multi-site where each site has an institutional ethics

committee independent of manufacturer or government control and in case of any adverse event, this committee gives its report to the Drug Controller General of India," Mr. Bhushan said.

Also the Data Safety Monitoring Board monitors clinical trials from day-to-day basis and keeps an eye on adverse events. These reports are analysed by the Drug Controller and action taken accordingly," he added.

The Ministry added that India currently had one of the lowest COVID-19 cases per million world-wide.

The average daily positivity rate last week was 3.72% and among all the big nations, the cases per million in India are the lowest. The last seven days trends show that European nations are witnessing a surge in cases," said Mr. Bhushan.

The country reported a total 12,78,727 COVID-19 cases in November, a decrease from October's 18,71,498. In the past 24 hours, India reported 31,118 fresh cases and 482 deaths.

SC refuses to entertain pleas seeking probe against A.P. CM

We don't want multiplicity of litigation on release of letter to the public by Jagan

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to entertain petitions seeking judicial inquiry or CBI probe against Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for the circumstances leading to the release of his letter addressed to Chief Justice of India levelling allegations against a sitting Supreme Court judge and State High Court judges.

The court also declined a plea by one of the petitioners to issue a writ of *quo warrantum* against Mr. Reddy for releasing the "confidential" letter to the public and thus "misusing his office".

Besides, the Bench led by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul noted that it did not want any "multiplicity of litigation". Justice Kaul said another Bench of the Supreme Court headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan is already examining an appeal filed by the Andhra Pradesh government in a connected issue. This appeal, filed before Justice Bhushan, concerns a September 16 order of the High Court, staying the investigation into the "illegal purchase" of land in Amaravati.

The High Court had also barred the State from taking any coercive action against the persons named in the



Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

FIR, which includes relatives of the Supreme Court judge and a former Additional Advocate General, even as it restrained the media from reporting the case.

The allegations in the FIR include abuse of official positions in the State, sharing of privileged information and causing loss to the public exchequer during the previous Telugu Desam Party regime.

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The letter,

48.6% turnout in J&K despite the cold

Bandipora records highest voting of 69.66% in the Valley, Poonch witnesses a high of 75.07%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR

Keeping up the momentum from the first phase, 48.62% of the voters exercised their franchise in the second phase of the District Development Council election in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, with the Valley recording 33.4% voting. Polling was peaceful.

"J&K has recorded a 48.62% turnout. Long queues were seen right from the morning despite severe cold conditions in the Kashmir division and hilly areas of the Jammu division. The polling has been peaceful in all 43 constituencies," State Election Commissioner K.K. Sharma said. The Jammu division recorded a 65.54% polling.

Brisk polling

With brisk polling despite the cold weather, men and women queued up outside polling booths in Bandipora in huge numbers, setting a record 69.66% turnout. "These polls are our way to



Tight security: People lining up to cast their votes in the second phase of DDC elections in Bandipora district on Tuesday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

affirm our faith in democracy. We expect the government of the day to accept the verdict and listen to the political and development demands of the people of Kashmir and do the needful," Nasreen Jan, a first-time voter, said in the Sumbal area of north Kashmir.

Kupwara saw a turnout of 58.69%, followed by Ganderbal (49.14%), Budgam (43.51%), Srinagar (33.78%), Kulgam (29.9%) and Barimulla (28.95%).

In south Kashmir, the volatile districts of Shopian saw a low turnout of 17.28%, Anantnag 16.09% and Pulwama 8.67%. Voter enthusiasm was also evident in the Jammu division, where Poonch district saw a record 75.07%

Protesters echo calls for peace

Fence, human chain erected to ensure no one crosses over to the police side

HEMANI BHANDARI

NEW DELHI

At Delhi-Haryana's Singhu border, farmers protesting against the newly enacted farm laws called for peace, irrespective of the outcome of the talks with the government. "We have to remain calm and maintain peace, no matter what. This is how we'll win our fight," said one of the many speakers on stage, a sentiment that came to be repeated over and over again.

To ensure that farmers do not cross over to the police side, a damaged barbed wire was erected and a human chain was formed. "We don't want anyone to bring a bad name to our protest. Someone outside will create problems, but we'll be defamed," said 17-year-old Simranjeet Singh, a resident of Patiala, who was among those in the human chain.

All the farmers *The Hindu*



Raising their demands: Farmers protesting at the Singhu border in Delhi on Tuesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

spoke to were of the opinion that peace should be maintained as it has been since Saturday. "We'll get what we want, but through peaceful means. Our fight is with the government. The officials behind those barricades are also our brothers," said Harjeet Singh, 31, a farmer from Jalandhar.

Harvinder Singh, 32, said the government eventually would have to bend. "This is

turnout, followed by Jammu at 69.97%. The lowest turnout in Jammu division was in Kathua district at 60.1%, officials said.

Kishhtwar recorded 61.64%, Doda 64.8%, Ramban 66.23%, Udhampur 62.51%, Samba 66.38%, Reasi 69.27% and Rajouri 60.21%.

"Of the 7,95,118 voters, 3,77,401 – 2,01,792 men and 1,75,609 women – voted to choose their representatives in their respective councils. Polling was held in 2,142 polling stations – 1,305 from Kashmir division and 837 from Jammu," Mr. Kumar said. Byelections for vacant panch, sarpanch and urban local bodies were also held.

Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti alleged that her party leader Rouf Bhat was "detained again on the day municipal election is being held in Srinagar". "The Government of India, by subverting democracy, reminds me of the cycle of rigged elections in the past, one of the reasons J&K is in turmoil," she said.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Canadian leadership's comments on the ongoing agitation by farmers are "ill-informed", an official of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Tuesday.

The Indian response came hours after Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said his country had contacted Indian authorities "through multiple means" to express concern about the protesting farmers.

"We have seen some ill-informed comments by Canadian leaders relating to farmers in India. Such comments are unwarranted, especially when pertaining to the internal affairs of a democratic country," said official spokesperson Anurag Srivastava in response to a media query. Mr. Trudeau had earlier said that the news about the protest unfolding around Delhi "is concerning".

"We are all very worried

It is best that diplomatic conversations are not misrepresented for political purposes

ANURAG SRIVASTAVA
Ministry of External Affairs

about family and friends ... Canada will always be there to defend the rights of peaceful protesters," he said, announcing that Canada has reached out to the Government of India regarding the protests, which have drawn support from his vocal coalition partner Jagmeet Singh of the New Democratic Party (NDP), which has a strong base among the Indo-Canadian community.

In response to the Canadian Prime Minister's comments, Mr. Srivastava said, "It is also best that diplomatic conversations are not misrepresented for political purposes."

Mr. Jagmeet Singh is the

leader of NDP and a key coalition partner in the Canadian government. He has in the past spoken in support of civil and political rights in India. On Monday, he greeted his supporters on 'Gurpurav', the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, and said, "Guru Nanak Sahib ji led a social revolution believing that we are all one and equal today, as millions of farmers march towards India's capital to oppose privatisation – they walk with this spirit."

Several other Indo-Canadian political figures, such as Gurutan Singh and Canadian Member of Parliament Jack Harris, also expressed concern about the protests in India. Mr. Harris, also from NDP, has described the police action on the farmers as "alarming".

Mr. Trudeau's government has several key figures from the Indian diaspora, including Minister of National Defence Harjit Sajjan.

Yadav's exclusion from talks team hints at cracks

'Govt. didn't want political personalities'

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

NEW DELHI
Swaraj India president Yogendra Yadav was not included in the farmers' delegation for talks with the Centre on Tuesday, allegedly because the government did not want any political personalities to be included. However, some farmer leaders said his exclusion was actually at the behest of some Punjab unions.



Yogendra Yadav

of the All India Kisan Sabha.

"Amit Shah himself spoke to the Punjab leaders and said Yogendra Yadav could not be included as he heads a political party," Mr. Yadav told *The Hindu*. According to Mr. Yadav, the Punjab leaders were ready to boycott the talks on the grounds of his exclusion, but he told them he was willing to step aside.

However, among some other farmers groups, several leaders cited Mr. Yadav's role in initially urging that the protesters shift from the border to the Burari grounds as a source of annoyance. They said there was also resentment about the fact that Mr. Yadav and several other national leaders have a high-profile media presence, despite the fact that they have mobilised only a small fraction of protesters.

So far, the Centre has insisted on negotiating only with Punjab unions, portraying the protests as motivated by political interests only from that State. Tuesday's talks was the first round of the dialogue with representatives from other States as well.

Will return awards'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHANDIGARH

Several former sportspersons including Padma Shri and Arjuna awardees have extended their support to the agitating farmers and said they will return their awards in protest against the "force" used against the peasants en route to Delhi. Among them are Kartar Singh, Sajjan Singh Cheema and Rajbir Kaur.

Give farmers viable solutions: Cong.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

As the government engaged farmer leaders in talks, the Congress asked the government on Tuesday to suspend the three farm laws, assure minimum support price (MSP) in writing, take back criminal cases filed against farmers and waive the fines for burning stubble.

Talks with farmers would be "meaningful" only if the government offered viable

solutions, party general secretary Randeep Surjewala said.

Former party chief Rahul Gandhi, in a separate tweet, asked the government to wake up and shed its "arrogance" to provide protesting farmers their rights. Mr. Gandhi said everyone was indebted to the farmers for their hard work and this debt could be repaid only by giving them justice.

Articulating the main de-

mands of the Congress party, Mr. Surjewala said they stood with the farmers.

He claimed that nearly 12,000 cases had been registered against farmers and they should be withdrawn unconditionally. "Either abolish all three black laws or give legal guarantee of MSP to the farmer. Do not mislead or trick the farmer. Do not unleash any conspiracy or put a show of dialogue," he added.

'Sooner we find a solution, the better it is'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), an ally of the BJP in Haryana, on Tuesday asked the Central government to consider giving a written assurance on continuation of Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops.

JJP national president Ajay Chautala said when Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar had been repeatedly stating that MSP will not be

discontinued then there should be no problem about giving an assurance about it in writing.

"The Centre has invited farmers for talks. We have urged the people in the government to find solution to problems of farmers... *anandaata* (farmers) are perturbed and sitting on roads, the government is also worried and hence, the sooner a solution comes out it's better for everyone," said Mr. Chautala, talking to journalists in Haryana's Sirsa.

The gavel falls on 'indecorous attire'

After lawyer appears shirtless during virtual hearing, judge says 'this is not done'

KRISHNADAS RAJGOPAL

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has seen and heard almost all in the virtual court system during the pandemic months.

Lawyers have appeared without shirts or in T-shirts, while a racket of blenders, mothers scolding children and guttural cries of vendors, dogs and cats have disturbed the hearings of the top court.

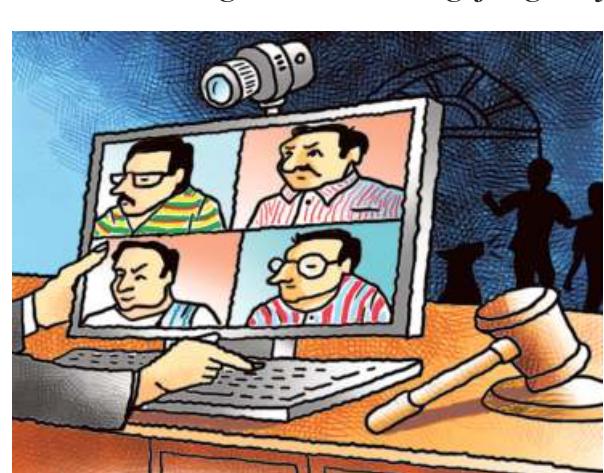
On Tuesday, a "shirtless" man's appearance saw Justice L. Nageswara Rao lose his usual stoicism to say "this is not done". A few seconds later, the visual disappeared, thanks to the control room's deft manoeuvre, but the after-taste remained.

Of respectability

A similar occurrence,

sometime in October,

rankled the court when



another "shirtless" appearance made its presence felt in the middle of a virtual court hearing. The judges agreed that such gaffes are "inappropriate".

People need to be respectfully attired while engaging with the highest court of the country.

Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde makes it a

point to show his displeasure when lawyers appear without their bands on.

On the other hand, lawyers usually complain that they are muted or find themselves disconnected during hearings. Some even say that at times the wrong lawyer's mic is switched on. One person who was caught

Seeds for Rajasthan farmers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Amid the farmers' agitation, the government in Rajasthan is making arrangements for supply of certified seeds and fertilisers to agricultural fields during the winter sea-

son and has started verifying the benefits of agricultural procurement and crop insurance.

The Agriculture Commissioner said urea and diammonium phosphate would be supplied in sufficient quantity to farmers.

LOOK OUT NOTICE

Joseph Roysen, age 31 S/o Robert Puthenpurakkal veedu, Marikulam South Panchayat, Ward-16, Alappuzha district who is the accused in Cr.1327/2019 U/s 447,294(b),506(l),323,325,324,308,34 IPC, Cr.1010/2020 U/S 294(b),324,307,34 IPC Mannachery Police Station, he is absconding after the commission of the crime. If any clue or information is obtained about him that may be intimated immediately to Mannachery station SHO, Deputy Superintendent of Police Chethala, District Police Chief Alappuzha.

Description:

Height: 165cm, Complexion: Black, Body Shape: Medium Sub Inspector of Police, Mannachery PS - 9407975247 DySP Chethala - 9497990042 District Police Chief, Alappuzha - 94979 96982 1884/F/2020/I&PRD

RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES, KARNATAKA

4th 'T' Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru-560 041, Ph: 080-26961928, Fax: 080-26961929 No.RGU/PROC/Molecular/2020-21 Dated:01.12.2020

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION (RFP)

The Registrar Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences invites tender for Supply of Equipments / Instruments to Basic and Nodal Molecular Biology Laboratory at Affiliated Government Medical College. More details on the Services are provided in the attached Terms of Reference. (1) Tender document available for download: 01.12.2020, 12.55 Hrs (2) Pre-bid meeting: 05.01.2021, 11.30 Hrs (3) Last date for receipt of Tender: 03.02.2021, 17.30 Hrs (4) Opening of Technical bid: 05.02.2021, 11.00 Hrs (5) Place of Opening of Tender bid: Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Bengaluru. More details can be fetched from https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in.

Sd/- Registrar, RGUHS, Bengaluru

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

Wear Mask Follow Physical Distancing Maintain Hand Hygiene

M-NDE

IN BRIEF



Gujarat MP dies of post COVID-19 complications

AHMEDABAD
Abhay Bhardwaj, a Rajya Sabha member from Gujarat, passed away on Tuesday during post COVID-19 treatment in Chennai. Mr. Bhardwaj was elected to the Rajya Sabha in July. He is the second Rajya Sabha member from the State to have died of post COVID-19 complications after Congress stalwart Ahmed Patel.

L.N. Mishra's family seeks fresh probe into killing

NEW DELHI
The family of former Union Minister Lalit Narayan Mishra has submitted a letter to the Central Bureau of Investigation for a fresh probe into his assassination on January 3, 1975, in Bihar's Samastipur. His grandson Vaibhav Mishra has written to the CBI, citing reports that indicated a larger political conspiracy.

Civilian shot at in Srinagar is critical

SRINAGAR
A civilian shot at by unknown gunmen in Srinagar on Tuesday evening is in a critical condition. "Around 7.30 p.m., the Srinagar police received information about a terror crime incident at Bilal Colony in Soura area of Srinagar, where terrorists had fired upon one civilian, Natif Hanif Khan," said a police spokesman.

3 held for killing U.P. journalist, friend

LUCKNOW
Days after Balrampur journalist Rakesh Singh and his friend were charged to death in his room, police on Tuesday said an alcohol-based sanitiser was used to set their room on fire. The police have arrested three persons accused of the double murder.

Salman Khan exempted from court appearance

JAIPUR
A Sessions Court in Jodhpur on Tuesday gave an exemption to film actor Salman Khan from personal appearance during the hearing of an appeal filed by him against the five-year sentence given to him two years ago in the 1998 blackbuck poaching case. Mr. Khan's counsel had sought exemption on the ground of COVID-19 risks involved in travelling to the court.

SII reiterates vaccine safety

Pune firm says it will be released for use only after being proved immunogenic

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PUNE

Amid allegations by a "Cowishield" volunteer of "adverse reaction" during trials, the Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) on Tuesday reiterated that the vaccine was "safe" and "immunogenic".

"The incident with the Chennai volunteer, though highly unfortunate, was in no way induced by the vaccine and Serum Institute of India is sympathetic with the volunteer's medical condition. However, we would like to clarify that all the requisite regulatory and ethical processes and guidelines were followed diligently and strictly," the SII said in a statement issued on Tuesday.

'Non-related issue'
The vaccine-maker said that the authorities were informed and the Principal Investigator, Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) and the Ethics Committee had independently cleared and reckoned the case as "a non-related issue" in the vac-



Drug doses: A cold storage room at the Serum Institute of India in Pune holds vials of Covishield. ■ REUTERS

cine trials. The SII said that following the incident, it had submitted all reports and data related to the incident to the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI).

"It is only after we cleared all the required processes that we continued with the trials," the SII said.

It further said that it wanted to assure everyone that the vaccine would not be released for mass use unless it was proven immunogenic

and safe. "Taking into consideration the complexities and existing misnomers about vaccination and immunisation, the legal notice was sent therefore to safeguard the reputation of the company which is being unfairly maligned," it said.

Last week, the SII denied the allegations of the 40-year-old vaccine volunteer who had alleged serious side effects, including a neurological breakdown and impair-

ment of cognitive functions, and had sought monetary compensation of ₹5 crore in a legal notice to the SII, Astrazeneca and the Oxford Vaccine Group and a halt to the trial.

'Malicious' charge

The SII, calling the allegations "malicious" and "misconceived", had further said that it would seek damages in excess of ₹100 crore for the same and would defend itself against the claims.

The SII's chief executive officer, Adar Poonawalla, said last week that "zero hospitalisations" had been reported during the trials.

"The trials have established Covishield's efficacy as it has shown to reduce the virus in a person's system by 60%. Furthermore, zero hospitalisations were reported during the trials. What we found in these trials globally is that even if a person does get infected, it will not be a severe attack as the sterilising immunity was 60%," he said following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the SII facility last Saturday.

Quarantine notices may cause stigma, says SC

Detailed hearing set for December 3

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the practice of affixing public notices outside the residences of quarantining COVID-19 patients may cause stigma.

A Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan said the "hard reality" in some cases is that such posters trigger people to treat patients in quarantine as "untouchables".

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta clarified that these posters are not meant to humiliate or harass patients. They are merely meant to warn outsiders from accidentally entering the quarantined space and coming into contact with the patients, which may lead to a further spread of infection during the pandemic.

Mr. Mehta said any poster which tends to humiliate a patient should be removed. He said there is no compulsion on State governments to paste such notices.

The court was hearing a petition filed by advocate



A plea in the SC said that COVID-19 notices violate the privacy of individuals.

Kush Kulra. The petition said such posters entail the violation of the fundamental right to privacy of the patient.

These placards divulge, even "widely publicise" the names of the patients and other details to strangers, other residents in the colony or apartment complex as well as vendors, passers-by, etc.

The court scheduled the case for detailed hearing on December 3.

A-G nod for proceeding against artist

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal gave his consent to a law student on Tuesday to initiate contempt of court proceedings against artist Rachita Tanuja for her tweets and cartoons.

Mr. Venugopal said the tweets and the cartoons that accompanied them were intended "to denigrate the Supreme Court and lower its authority in the eyes of the public".

The first tweet concerning the bail granted to Republic TV Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami, according to Mr. Venugopal, gave an impression that the BJP was "somehow interested in protecting Arnab Goswami and has prevailed upon the Supreme Court to do so". The implication was that the court was biased towards the BJP, Mr. Venugopal said.

A second tweet, Mr. Venugopal said, carried the "gross insinuation" that the court had "ceased to be an impartial organ of the State". The tweet was calculated to undermine the public confidence in the judiciary, he said.

IMA slams 'mixopathy', plans protests

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Stating that the recent notification by the government to allow surgical operations by Ayurveda practitioners and the formation of four committees by the NITI Aayog will only lead to "mixopathy", the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has demanded an immediate withdrawal of both notifications.

Such policy will "ring the death knell of modern medicine", the IMA said.

The IMA called for withdrawal of non-essential and non-COVID services on December 11 from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. in protest.

Emergency services, including casualty, labour rooms and emergency surgeries will function along with ICUs and CCUs, but no elective surgical case will be posted.

Parties with fewer than 10 MPs can't address all-party meeting

NCP, SAD, CPI(M) will not be heard at COVID-19 discussion

SOBHANA K. NAIR

NEW DELHI

Only parties with more than 10 MPs will be allowed to speak at the all-party meeting convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 4 on the COVID-19 pandemic and distribution of vaccines. Smaller parties have to be silent participants, party leaders have been informed.

The meeting was called after Mr. Modi's visit on Saturday to three vaccine manufacturing facilities.

At earlier video conferences with Chief Ministers, too, the Prime Minister's Office had drafted schedules to ensure that different States got to speak on different dates, instead of opting for an open discussion on issues.

The 10-MP cut-off will mean that many regional parties will not get an oppor-

tunity to air their opinions. They include the Nationalist Congress Party, the former BJP ally Shiromani Akali Dal, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, the Lok Janshakti Party, the CPI (M) and the CPI.

CPI parliamentary party leader Binoy Viswam has written to Mr. Modi to reconsider the decision. Mr. Viswam said that in case the PMO found it impossible to accommodate the smaller parties, he wanted to put across his views on the subject. He pressed for increasing the number of testing facilities and reducing the cost of RT-PCR tests across the country. Mr. Viswam also asked the Prime Minister to ensure that the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana was extended till May 2021.

The NCP, which has five members in the Lok Sabha and four in the Rajya Sabha, falls short by one member to meet the PMO's criterion. "If a person like [NCP chief] Sharad Pawar is not allowed to speak then I believe such a meeting will lack direction and clarity. And not only on vaccines, there is a need for a thorough discussion of all fallouts of the pandemic including the state of the economy," senior party leader Praful Patel said.

"In our democracy, if every vote matters, then every MP and every political party should matter. The political strength may vary from election to election that should not be reason to curtail our participation," the TDP's Lok Sabha Chief Whip, K. Rammohan Naidu, said.

Conceding that time constraints might have prompted the cut-off, senior Akali leader Naresh Gujral said, "After a while, points raised by the participants start getting repetitive."

The AIUDF is viewed as a party that bats for Bengali-

Central leadership tells Assam Cong. to keep mum on alliance

Many in State unit unhappy over possible tie-up with AIUDF

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

The central leadership of the Congress has asked its Assam unit to avoid making public statements on a Bihar grand alliance.

AICC to decide

In a videoconference with Assam Pradesh Congress Committee leaders on Monday, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi and other senior leaders also made it clear that the party's high command would take the final call on any alliance ahead of the 2021 Assembly polls.

Many within the Congress, especially in eastern Assam, have been unhappy with the State unit's push for an alliance with the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF).

The AIUDF is viewed as a party that bats for Bengali-



Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi. ■ FILE PHOTO

speaking Muslim migrants. Congress leaders wary of "sending the wrong signal" to voters belonging to the indigenous communities feel an alliance with AIUDF could be counterproductive and help the BJP retain power.

"Rahul Gandhi, Jitendra Singh (general secretary in

charge of Assam) and the others said we should refrain from making any reference to the proposed grand alliance as such decisions would be taken by the All India Congress Committee," a senior State Congress leader said on condition of anonymity.

Polarisation of votes

"We were reminded that our silence on the alliance front can take the shine out of the BJP's brand of polarisation of votes on religious lines," said the leader, a former MLA.

Both the Congress and AIUDF had said that the chances of their contesting the 2021 polls together were high.

The Left Front comprising the Communist Party of India and the CPI (Maoist), is an ally of the Congress, as of now.

Actor Urmila Matondkar is now part of Shiv Sena

She was earlier with the Congress

STAFF REPORTER

MUMBAI

Actor Urmila Matondkar, who had contested the 2019 Lok Sabha election from north Mumbai constituency as a Congress candidate, joined the Shiv Sena on Tuesday in the presence of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and his wife, Rashmi, at their residence.

"I entered the film industry as an outsider and became successful with the support of my audience. I am not a media-made star. I have started my political innings with Shiv Sena and I will try my best to become a people's leader," she told reporters. Asked why she had quit the Congress, the actor said she had resigned 14 months ago.

Ms. Matondkar said her name had been suggested



Urmila Matondkar

by the Sena for the State legislative council along with eleven others. "I was never asked by the Sena to join the party. I have decided to do this on my own," she said. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray offered her a seat in the Upper House.

The actor said the Sena was a party that believed in Hindutva, but its Hindutva was not about hating another religion.

Virtual testimony of trafficking victims

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday laid down the first step for sparing children and victims of trafficking to human trafficking facilities. The Bench directed Assam, West Bengal and Rajasthan to kick-off a 'pilot project' and implement the recommendations in at least a district each.

SC orders flouted: environmentalists



Badrinath Temple, one of the Chardham shrines.

Environmentalists have alleged that the contractors deputed by the government to make roads as part of the Chardham project are violating the Supreme Court orders on the appropriate road width to be followed in mountainous terrain.

The ₹2,000-crore project aims at constructing wider roads – spanning 825 km – connecting key pilgrimage spots in Uttarakhand. However, the implementation has been controversial with environmentalist groups pointing out that hill cutting was rampant with mountain ecosystems being irreversibly harmed in the process.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), coordinator of the project, in an affidavit to the Supreme Court on November 30, has denied any such violation. Details of vulnerable sites and areas for muck disposal were provided to the Supreme Court-constituted High Power Committee (HPC).

The HPC – headed by Ravinder Chopra, former Director, People's Science Institute, and consisting of government scientists, personnel, independent activists and environmentalists – tasked with preparing a plan to implement the project with minimal ecological damage,

has seen internal dissent with members split on the appropriate road width. A majority of members said the road width ought to be 12 metres whereas a minority said it should be 5.5 m throughout.

The MoRTH's latest affidavit says of the 825 km, 12 km "formation cutting" had already been carried out in 537 km in a sanctioned length of 662 km before the Supreme Court's order that recommended a road width suggested by the chairman of the HPC and the minority of HPC members.

"The MoRTH assertions are blatantly false and we have evidence of several stretches where hill cutting is under way. There were slope collapses and two crew were killed during routine muck dumping," said Mallika Bhanot, a Himalayan activist who's been crusading against the project. The Supreme Court is set to continue with hearings on the petition on Wednesday.

Rabindra K. Panigrahy, a DST official, said the Recruitment Rules (RR) notification was issued "...after being vetted by the Department of Personnel & Training, Union Public Service Commission and Ministry of Law & Justice as required under the guidelines."

The official also cited instances of similar notices issued by various ministries.

For instance, 2014 notices for the posts of 'Proof Reader' and 'Copy Holder' in the Law Ministry also highlights the clause as does a notice by the Home Ministry detailing

rules for several 'Inspector' grade posts in the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force.

"A perusal of these would reveal that the bigamy clause in all such RR appears in the main body of the RR. The eligibility criteria for the post always appears in the Schedule which is annexed to the Rules," the official noted.

The Hindu had quoted a serving bureaucrat anonymously who said such a prominent mention of the bigamy clause smacked of "moral policing".

Nageswara Rao agreed with the recommendations of its *amicus curiae*, Gaurav Agrawal, to provide secure and in-camera videoconferencing facilities to human trafficking victims. The Bench directed Assam, West Bengal and Rajasthan to kick-off a 'pilot project' and implement the recommendations in at least a district each.

■ MND-NDE

Exceptional brakes, a rev-happy engine and sharp throttle responses make BMW's X3 M shine



SAUMIL SHAH

BMW's M division is no stranger to high performance SUVs. Now, for the first time, the X3 has been made available in full-blown M spec. M division has also tuned the X3's performance and dynamics to further dial up the heat.

With its design, the X3 M can come across as rather inconspicuous and can be passed off as just another BMW SUV. Only a closer look reveals subtle differences with the standard X3. It gets the chrome-surround kidney grille with blacked vertical bars, restyled front and rear bumpers, embellishments on the fenders, sportier side mirrors, quad exhaust tips, a roof spoiler and larger 20-inch alloy wheels. Lurking behind the wheels are massive 395mm discs upfront and 370mm discs at the rear, paired with blue M calipers. Even the black body cladding of the standard car is now in body colour in this M version.

Open the doors and you are greeted by an all-black cabin; the first thing that grabs your attention is the new steering wheel with two red M buttons on it. The gear selector is also new, as are the matte silver panels that replace the gloss black trims on the standard car. The front seats are much sportier, well-contoured and offer better support. Aside from these, however, the cabin remains identical to the standard car, with high-quality materials, a neat user-friendly layout and good all-round visibility. Space at the rear is good too, and so is its large boot that also tucks in a space saver tyre beneath the boot floor.

Sportscar on stilts One of the pluses of the BMW X3 M is its high ground clearance

* SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Dial M for Sport



Rev-happy engine

Its features list is shared with the standard car but with some M specific features including an exhaust flap opening-closing button and the option to adjust the weight of the steering, stiffness of the dampers, throttle response and gearshift quickness. The M modes on the steering represent memory options for preset configurations for the suspension, engine, steering, etc.

Powering the X3 M is a 2,993cc, inline, six-cylinder twin-turbocharged petrol engine that makes 480hp and 600Nm of torque. This twin-turbo motor uses two single-scroll turbos: one for cylinders 1-3 and the other for 4-6. Among the various innovative solutions and weight-saving measures, this one uses forged crankshafts, which are not merely lightweight but offer extreme torsional resistance, in line with its high-revving nature.

By default, the exhaust flaps are wide open for very satisfying orchestra on start-up. Right from the get-go, the X3 M feels very potent in the way it drives. Throttle responses are sharp. Prod the throttle and this near two-tonne SUV

SPECIFICATIONS

TYPE 2993cc, 6 cyls, twin-turbo petrol

MAX POWER 480hp at 6250rpm

MAX TORQUE 600Nm at 2600 - 5600rpm

GEARBOX 8-speed automatic

LENGTH (MM) 4726mm

WIDTH (MM) 1897mm

HEIGHT (MM) 1667mm

WHEELBASE (MM) 2864mm

TANK SIZE (LTS) 65 litres

A palace in the paddy fields



With the pandemic and pollution in Delhi driving people to weekend destinations nearby, Noor Mahal in Karnal prepares to offer an opulent retreat

SOMA BASU

About 125 kilometres North of Delhi on the Chandigarh highway is the rustic town of Karnal, where a luxury palace hotel, Noor Mahal, competes with the famous heritage hotels of Rajasthan synonymous with big fat Indian weddings. After an eight-month hiatus, business is slowly returning to the place.

Compared to last year, weekend reservations between now and Lohri on January 13 have actually increased by 60% this year, says Roop Pratap Choudhary, managing director of the region's largest property. Noor Mahal's mention in the recent Hindi romcom *Ginny Weds Sunny*, which was released on Netflix, has generated curiosity, he says.

"The pandemic may change attitudes but not aspirations," he says. "International guests will take more time to resume travel plans but we are witnessing green shoots from domestic leisure travellers," he says.

When you veer off the highway into a small inroad fringed with paddy fields, the kingly structure peeks out from the middle of lush green farms like a pop-up card. Defined by traditional Mughal and Rajputana architecture, it has rich *jaalis* and *jharokhas*, scalloped arches and domes in Dholpur and red Agra stone, airy inner courtyards with wide corridors, and pillars inlaid with gilt moulding. The ballrooms are swathed in mirrors and frescoes studded with semi-precious stones.

The man behind upgrading Karnal's tourism profile is Roop's father, a self-effacing retired Army Colonel, Manbeer Choudhary. It was his idea to fuse history, culture, aesthetics, heritage hospitality and modernity to an aristocratic fantasy.

Noor Mahal was built just a decade ago, but it has been designed like a her-



A DRIVE AWAY

Neemrana Fort Palace, Neemrana (117 km) On Delhi-Jaipur highway. Climb many steps and roll down ramps to discover 553-year-old history in the nine palace wings built over 14-levels tiered into the Aravalli Hills. Attractions are the hanging gardens across six acres and the country's first zip-line.

Aloha on the Ganges, Rishikesh (225 km) On the river banks close to the Laxman Jhula and ensconced in serene forested hills, the resort is conducive for meditation.

Corbett Leela Vilas, Jim Corbett (250 km) A stress busting jungle resort where you can go on safaris, enjoy a walk around 2.5 acres of mango orchards, or chill out in elegant cottages.



The grand entrance Built in two years, its main entrance is a five feet tall wooden door taken from a 230-year-old Bikaner haveli. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the *chavara*, (wooden balcony), salvaged from a heritage house in Amritsar. The glass door in the living room leads to a huge terrace with a panoramic view of the city.

From the high-domed ceiling hangs a handmade Swarovski chandelier, said to be one of the two pieces in India that came from Italy during the British regime. The other one is in the Durbar Hall of Rashtrapati Bhavan, Delhi. Many elements like these at Noor Mahal are easily identifiable for people familiar with Shekhawati *havelis* or the heritage *kothis* like at the Amer Fort and Jaipur's City Palace.

"Under the new-normal and safety guidelines, we are driven by motivation not to just innovate but redesign innovation and be future ready for the new world visitors," says Roop Pratap, confident of bouncing back. He quotes last year's Morgan Stanley report on India having 410 million millennials by 2022 (with an average age of 29 years) who are expected to spend on short distance comfort travel and brief staycations with fine dining and unique culinary experiences.

For enquiries call 0184-30666666 or visit noormahal.in

itage structure over 12 acres and took eight years of thoughtful planning and execution. The hotel's main attraction, is Khwabgah, a royal sleeping chamber. Built by 600 workers in two years, its main entrance is an ethnic five feet tall wooden door taken from a 230-year-old Bikaner haveli. It opens to an antique-laden, rust-ochre antechamber with a mini-bar. The bar's facade is

an antique-laden, rust-ochre antechamber with a mini-bar. The bar's facade is

The man and the Mahatma

Sumathi Ramaswamy's book *Gandhi In The Gallery* is a stunning visual journey of 130 artists and their artworks inspired by the Father of the Nation

DEEPA ALEXANDER

Gandhi was one of the most photographed men on the planet in his time – a symbol of pacifism, an inspiration to leaders such as Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, a celebrated father-figure to his countrymen.

As he continues to be edified through art and sculpture, his body, ideas, and politics continue to inspire thousands of artists in India and the world. With the Mahatma as their muse, these artists have peppered the country's streets, universities, Government offices, public places, railway stations, galleries and beyond with their representation of him.

Sumathi Ramaswamy, James B Duke Professor of History and International Comparative Studies Chair at Duke University, North Carolina, and president, American Institute of Indian Studies, gathers these forms – photographs, artworks and sculptures of Gandhi – in *Gandhi In The Gallery: The Art of Disobedience* (published by Roli Books).

Sumathi was born in Chennai, a city that continues to be the centre of her research. For the book, she met artists from all over India and consulted archives across India, as well as at the British Library, London. In an email interview, Sumathi discusses how the book came to be. Edited excerpts:



Etching history (Clockwise from top) Sumathi, Tallur LN's Eraser Pro, the book cover, Atul Dodia's The Arrival

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

How did the idea for the book originate?

● This is the first monograph that charts historically the investment by artists of India, from his own time into the present in the figure of Gandhi – the most painted, drawn or sculpted man amongst India's political leaders.

In the vast scholarship on Gandhi, virtually no attention has been paid – other than in a few essays – to this investment. I think it is important because the artist of India has emerged as Gandhi's "conscience keeper". At a time when the Mahatma has been reduced to a platitude, artists are continuing to re-interpret



The Goddess and the Nation (2010), in which I explored lithographs that feature him as Mother India's devoted son. Later, Delhi-based curator Gayatri Sinha approached me to do a piece on him and that led me to write *The Mahatma as Muse: An Image Essay on Gandhi in Popular Indian Visual Imagination*.

In both projects, I focussed on popular, mass-produced art, rather than singular high-end works, which is the dominant focus of *Gandhi In The Gallery*. The book took a little over two years – tracking down artworks, their copyright holders and seeking permissions for reproduction.

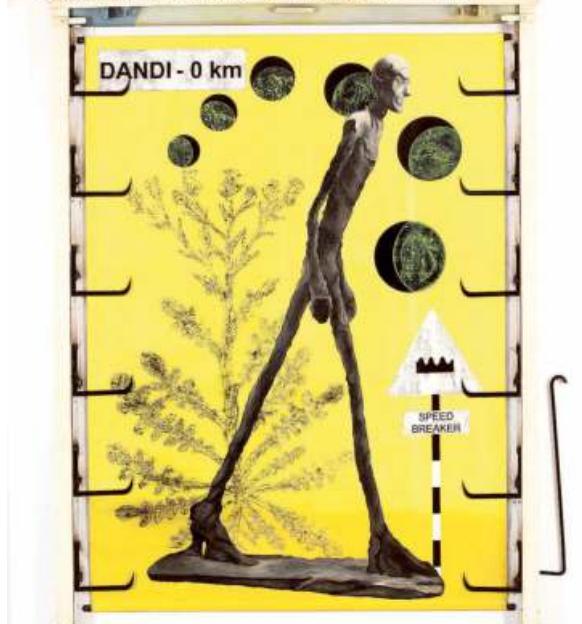
Some of the biggest public repositories of artworks on Gandhi are memorials like the National Gandhi Museum in New Delhi, and Mani Bhawan Gandhi Sanghalaya in Mumbai, to which artists both Indian and foreign have donated works.

Many of these remain uncatalogued, and in the reserve collection, and need to be brought to light.

The artist most represented in my book is Mumbai-based Atul Dodia, who has produced such a vast number of complex works on Gandhi – each of which attempt a new interpretation. The cover image by Tallur LN, was chosen for its sheer beauty when I saw it on display in the US last year. It so strikingly addresses the three principal themes I have focused on – the art of baring, of walking, and of dying.

Gandhi In The Gallery: The Art of Disobedience is available at leading online platforms and bookstores.

The seeker after truth should be humbler than the dust. The world crushes the dust under its feet, but the seeker after truth should so humble himself that even the dust could crush him. Only then, and not till then, will he have a glimpse of truth.



I focussed on his [Gandhi's] body: its appearance as bare and spare; its mobility; and its death

Sumathi Ramaswamy

POOCH CAFE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



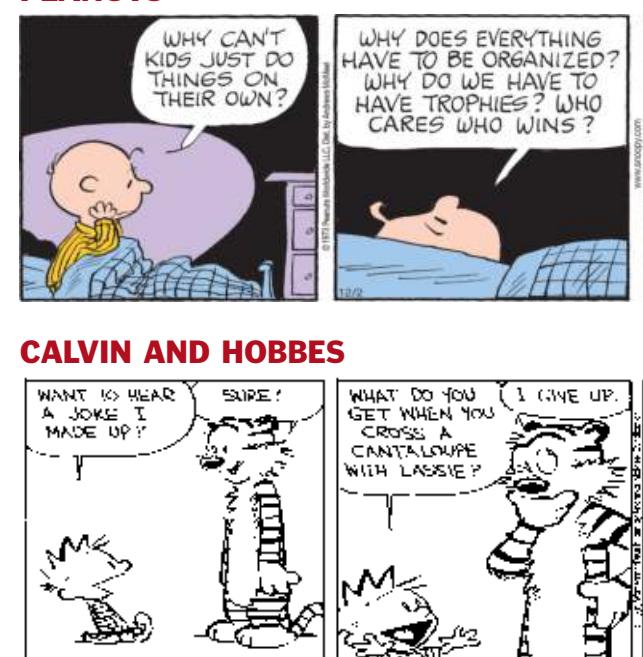
TIGER



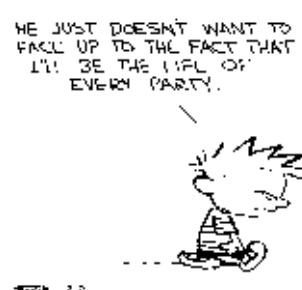
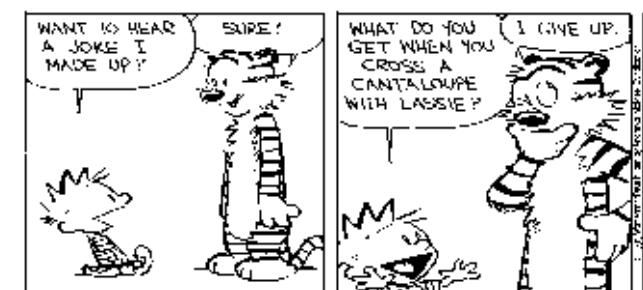
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



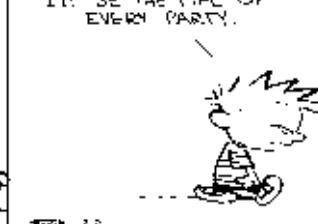
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



HE JUST DOESN'T WANT TO FACE UP TO THE FACT THAT I'LL BE THE LIFE OF EVERY PARTY.



China, Pakistan sign military deal

PLA General meets Pakistan's leaders, calls for higher-level ties to jointly cope with various risks

ANANTH KRISHNAN

China and Pakistan have signed a new military memorandum of understanding to boost their already close defence relationship, as China's Defence Minister and People's Liberation Army (PLA) General Wei Fenghe met Pakistan's leadership in Islamabad and visited the headquarters of the Army at Rawalpindi.

Gen. Wei on Tuesday met Pakistan's President Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan. He called on both countries to "push the military-to-military relationship to a higher level, so as to jointly cope with various risks and challenges, firmly safeguard the sovereignty and security interests of the two countries and safeguard the regional peace and stability", Chinese state media reported.

On Monday, the two militaries signed an MoU following Gen. Wei's meeting with Pakistan's Chief of the Army Staff, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, at the General Headquarters, according to re-



Reinforcing ties: PM Imran Khan called for closer cooperation to raise the Pakistan-China brotherhood to new heights. ■FILE

ports in the Pakistani media. Both "exchanged in-depth views on the international and regional situations, the relations between the two countries and militaries, the equipment and technology cooperation and other issues", a report in China's official media said.

While details of the new MoU were not immediately available, it follows another agreement signed last year, when China's Vice Chairman of the Central Military Com-

mission (CMC) General Xu Qiliang visited Rawalpindi for defence cooperation and "capacity building of the Pakistan Army".

Gen. Wei also discussed ongoing projects under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), in which the Pakistani military is playing an increasingly prominent role.

Prior to Gen. Wei's visit, recently appointed Chinese envoy to Pakistan Nong Rong conducted a "comprehen-

sive review" of the CPEC projects along with Lt. Gen. Asim Saleem Bajwa (retd), who is heading the CPEC Authority.

The Chinese Defence Minister also had talks with Pakistan's Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Nadeem Raza, and both sides "reaffirmed their commitment to 'Iron Brotherhood' and 'All-Weather' friendship".

Firm support

President Arif Alvi on Tuesday conveyed Pakistan "firmly supports China's stand on issues related to the South China Sea, Taiwan, Xinjiang, Tibet and so on", Chinese State media reported. "We hope that the two countries will further strengthen cooperation in the construction of the CPEC as well as the defence and security fields," he said. Prime Minister Imran Khan called for "closer strategic cooperation to raise the iron-clad Pakistan-China brotherhood to a new height".

Gen. Wei's visit followed his day-long visit to Nepal,

where he was the highest ranking Chinese official to visit since President Xi Jinping's visit in October last year. The Communist Party-run *Global Times* reported Gen. Wei as saying: "China firmly supports Nepal to safeguard its national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity", with the newspaper noting India's recent territorial dispute with Nepal in Kalapani.

He said China would "con-

tinute assisting Nepal's military development, contributing to regional peace and stability". The newspaper reported that military-to-military relations were growing with the PLA Air Force earlier this year sending protective outfits, medical masks and thermometers to the Nepalese military. Nepal's then Defence Minister Ishwar Pokhrel visited Beijing in October 2019 when both sides signed a 150-million yuan (\$22.8 million) deal on military assistance, the *Global Times* noted, adding that the two militaries have held joint special forces drills for three consecutive years.

Mr. Trump had won both the States in 2016 and sought to reverse Mr. Biden's win via legal challenges and vote recounts.

Arizona's Secretary of State Katie Hobbs (Democrat) certified the election results on Monday, with (Republican) Governor Doug Ducey signing the results, confirming Mr. Biden's win in the State, giving the Democrat 11 electoral votes.

Mark Kelly, a Democrat, was also confirmed the winner of the State's race for the U.S. Senate, defeating incumbent Martha McSally, a Republican.

Turning blue

Democrats performed well in the highly populated Maricopa County, flipping it for the first time in decades in a presidential race. The State has been turning blue on the



Joe Biden

back of demographic shifts – Krysten Sinema, a Democratic Senator, won Maricopa County in the 2018 midterm election.

Protest in Phoenix

Supporters of Mr. Trump gathered in downtown Phoenix, as per reports, to protest against Monday's confirmation of the results.

The President has made sweeping claims of a fraudulent election without backing those claims with adequate evidence. Members of Mr. Trump's campaign, including former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, met Arizona State legislators to discuss these claims.

"What is going on with @dougdacey? Republicans

will long remember!" Mr. Trump said in a tweet.

Wisconsin gains

In Wisconsin, Chairman of the Elections Commission, Ann Jacobs, signed the determination of the election results, where Mr. Trump's campaign had requested a recount in Dane and Milwaukee counties. Mr. Biden's tally went up by 87 votes, confirming his win in the State and giving him 10 electoral votes. Democratic Governor Tony Evers signed the certification later on Monday.

Other States such as Pennsylvania, Nevada, Michigan and Georgia, where Mr. Trump and his team had sought to challenge the results of the election, have already certified their votes, giving Mr. Biden a win. While Mr. Biden's team has been granted official permission to transition resources, Mr. Trump has not conceded the election.

The Electoral College is scheduled to meet on December 14 when electors meet in their respective States and will cast their votes for President and Vice-President as per the results of the vote in their states.

Trump virus adviser quits as vaccine hopes get new boost

Scott Atlas had downplayed the importance of masks

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Economist, The Guardian, The Independent and the Mirror, and local newspapers the *London Evening Standard, the Manchester Evening News and the Scotsman*.

Lifestyle magazines such as *Cosmopolitan, GQ, Vogue* and *Tatler* have also signed up, while there is a video partnership with Channel 4 News.

Facebook's director of news partnerships Jesper Doub said the company was "in active negotiations" to bring the feature to France and Germany.

"We will continue to work with publishers in countries where market conditions and regulatory environments invite this kind of investment and innovation," he added.

Titles covered in the first wave of deals include *The*

tion, effective as of December 1, Fox News reported.

Lacking relevant experience or qualifications in public health or infectious disease, he also called in November for people in Michigan to "rise up" against COVID-19 measures.

Mr. Atlas stepped down as hopes rose for a first wave of vaccinations before the end of the year after Moderna said it was filing for emergency authorisation of its vaccine in the U.S. and Eu-

rope. It was set to join American pharmaceutical maker Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech, which applied for similar approvals last week, and have predicted their vaccine could be greenlit in the U.S. shortly after December 10.

If the U.S. Food and Drug Administration agrees Moderna's product is safe and effective, the first of the two doses could be injected into the arms of Americans by the middle of December.

Pak. protesters call for Imran's resignation at Multan rally

Opposition alleges bad governance

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MULAN

Despite a government ban and arrests of hundreds of activists, Pakistani Opposition supporters rallied in a central city on Monday, calling on Prime Minister Imran Khan to resign over alleged bad governance and incompetence.

The rally in Multan by the Pakistan Democratic Movement, an alliance of Opposition parties, was held a day after the police, on orders from the government, carried out the arrests and banned the gathering, defending the move as necessary to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

The police acknowledged



Show of strength: Maryam Nawaz Sharif, in blue dress, taking part in the protest in Multan on Monday. ■AP

arresting more than 370 people, while Opposition groups put the number at more than 1,800. Authorities also switched off the mobile phone network.

Maryam Nawaz, the daughter of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, attended the rally. "There is no doubt that this govern-

ment will no more be in power in the coming days, God willing, and I have no doubt about it," she said.

Also in attendance and marking her political debut was Assefa Bhutto Zardari, the daughter of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated in 2007.

Facebook News to launch in U.K. next year

Firm will pay publishers for content

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Facebook said on Tuesday it will launch its news tab feature in Britain from next year, paying publishers for stories delivered through the world's leading social network.

The arrival of Facebook News in January comes after the service was rolled out in the U.S. in late 2019 and is part of plans to extend it worldwide, the company said.

"With Facebook News, we will pay publishers for content that is not already on the platform, help drive new audiences, and bring publishers greater monetization opportunities," it added.

Titles covered in the first wave of deals include *The*

Economist, The Guardian, The Independent and the Mirror, and local newspapers the *London Evening Standard, the Manchester Evening News and the Scotsman*.

Lifestyle magazines such as *Cosmopolitan, GQ, Vogue* and *Tatler* have also signed up, while there is a video partnership with Channel 4 News.

Facebook's director of news partnerships Jesper Doub said the company was "in active negotiations" to bring the feature to France and Germany.

"We will continue to work with publishers in countries where market conditions and regulatory environments invite this kind of investment and innovation," he added.

Sri Lanka prison riot toll rises to 11

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

The death toll from the recent prison riots in Sri Lanka, sparked by fears of a raging second wave of COVID-19, rose to 11 on Tues-

day. Ajith Rohana had said. Amid persisting calls from rights activists to address the problem of overcrowding in Sri Lanka's prisons – they currently have about 30,000 inmates, nearly thrice their capacity – President Gotabaya Rajapaksa pardoned more than 600 prisoners last weekend. Further, the government has promised to consider releasing thousands in remand custody on bail, in the wake of the deadly prison riot that for many evoked memories of the 2012 riots at Sri Lanka's Welikada prison when police shot dead 27 inmates.

The Police Criminal Investigation Department is probing Sunday's incident, while Justice Minister Ali Sabry on Monday appointed a five-member committee to investigate the violence and killings.

Impartial probe

Issuing a statement, human rights watchdog Amnesty International has sought a thorough and impartial investigation into the incident that saw "use of lethal force".

Urging authorities to address the underlying causes, it said the incident "reflects the anxiety among prisoners

about the threat of COVID-19 within severely overcrowded prisons and the inadequate measures in place to protect them".

There is already a swelling number of inmates across the country who have tested positive for COVID-19.

Although Sri Lanka had contained its first wave of COVID-19 that broke out in March effectively, the second wave that began early in October was witnessing a rapid rise in cases and fatalities. As of Tuesday evening, Sri Lanka's Health Promotion Bureau reported 23, 987 cases and 118 deaths.

Armenia, but Mr. Putin insisted it did not apply to Nagorno-Karabakh. He has maintained close personal ties to President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan.

The strategy seems to have paid immediate dividends, providing the Kremlin with a military foothold in the region and welding Armenia firmly into Russia's sphere of influence, without alienating Azerbaijan.

"This is an opportunity to play the role of peacekeeper in the classical sense," said Andrei Kortunov, the director general of the Russian International Affairs Council, a research organization close to the Russian government. "I want to hope that we are seeing a learning process and a change in the Russian strategy in the post-Soviet space."

In the negotiations to end the recent war, Mr. Putin leaned on the threat of Russia's military power, forcing concessions from both sides in the conflict but gaining a grudging measure of trust in the rival camps. Russia has a mutual-defence alliance

with Armenia, but Mr. Putin insisted it did not apply to Nagorno-Karabakh. He has maintained close personal ties to President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan.

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MARKET WATCH

	01-12-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	44,655	1.15
US Dollar	73.68	0.50
Gold	48,273	0.27
Brent oil	47.51	-0.77

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	423.80	12.25
Asian Paints	2230.05	14.75
Axis Bank	603.65	2.05
Bajaj Auto	3243.65	70.10
Bajaj Finserv	8746.55	-12.25
Bajaj Finance	4961.10	-47.70
Bharti Airtel	479.45	16.20
BPCL	379.30	6.30
Britannia Ind	3629.35	-8.60
Cipla	755.60	10.00
Coal India	126.40	0.85
Divis Lab	3620.75	15.65
Dr Reddys Lab	4830.40	1.45
Eicher Motors	2532.70	-1.95
GAIL (India)	110.70	8.05
Grasim Ind	907.80	32.05
HCL Tech.	834.10	12.00
HDFC	2306.95	50.70
HDFC Bank	1433.30	-7.55
HDFC Life	641.90	-4.90
Hero MotoCorp	3110.25	1.40
Hindalco	229.30	2.95
Hind Unilever	2133.05	-5.15
ICICI Bank	485.10	11.75
IndusInd Bank	895.50	37.85
Infosys	1137.85	37.85
Indian Oil Corp	85.85	1.25
ITC	194.40	0.75
JSW Steel	358.15	7.95
Kotak Bank	1875.85	-31.25
L&T	1115.95	-6.45
M&M	734.55	12.55
Maruti Suzuki	7101.70	65.90
Nestle India Ltd.	17418.15	-470.80
NTPC	93.75	-0.95
ONGC	81.55	3.05
PowerGrid Corp	192.35	-0.05
Reliance Ind	1954.90	25.10
SBI Life	851.35	5.30
State Bank	248.05	3.80
Shree Cement	24908.40	602.05
Sun Pharma	539.35	27.70
Tata Motors	179.75	-0.60
Tata Steel	585.80	8.45
TCS	2726.80	47.15
Tech Mahindra	907.30	30.45
Titan	1341.10	-20.10
UltraTech Cement	4910.50	108.50
UPL	433.05	15.35
Wipro	352.85	2.35

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.48	73.80
Euro	87.96	88.37
British Pound	98.12	98.55
Japanese Yen (100)	70.42	70.72
Chinese Yuan	11.18	11.23
Swiss Franc	81.06	81.42
Singapore Dollar	54.78	55.03
Canadian Dollar	56.61	56.88
Malaysian Ringgit	18.01	18.09
Australian Dollar	54.01	54.25

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF**TVS Motor acquires Intelllicar in digital push**

CHENNAI TVS Motor Co. Ltd. has acquired Bengaluru-based Intelllicar Telematics Pvt. Ltd. for ₹15 crore. Intelllicar provides advanced IOT-based fleet management solutions coupled with analytics and data management capabilities, said TVS Motor. It will help accelerate digital initiatives at TVS Motor Co. that are aimed at delivering enhanced customer experience, it added.

Paytm waives charges on merchant transactions

NEW DELHI Paytm on Tuesday said it has waived all charges on merchant transactions, enabling them to accept payments from Paytm wallet, UPI apps and RuPay cards at zero charges. "Paytm will absorb ₹600 crore in MDR (merchant discount rate) charged annually by banks and other charges to support MSMEs during the ongoing pandemic," the firm said.

'State indebtedness may hit decade-high of 36%

MUMBAI The lockdown and consequent slump in economic activity would raise States' indebtedness to at least 36% this fiscal, the highest in a decade, Crisil said in a report. It attributed the trend to "falling GST collections and sticky revenue expenditure of States." Its conclusions came from a study of the top 18 States, which account for 90% of the aggregate GSDP.

Mindtree, Databricks ally for data intelligence

BENGALURU Mindtree has roped in Databricks, a data and AI firm, to help customers implement cloud-based data platforms for advanced analytics. With Databricks platform, enterprises can build rich data sets and optimise machine learning at scale, streamline workflows across teams, foster collaboration and reduce infrastructure complexity as per a Mindtree release.

PMI shows manufacturing losing steam

Survey-based index pegs sector's expansion at 3-month low; job shedding apace, confidence fades

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for India's manufacturing touched 56.3 in November, signaling that even as an improvement in wider industrial activity continued, the sector's expansion as well as the pace of new orders slowed down while employment declined further as business optimism faded during the month.

After hitting 58.9 in October, the highest in over a decade, November's manufacturing PMI marked a three-month low, IHS Markit, which compiles the index, said on Tuesday.

"Growth in the Indian manufacturing sector lost momentum in November, but the latest PMI reading was still consistent with a sharp rate of expansion," the firm



Tepid show: November's manufacturing PMI marked a three-month low, indicating loss of momentum. ■ BIJOY GHOSH

said in a release. "There were slower increases in factory orders, exports, buying levels and output. Meanwhile, COVID-19 restrictions caused a further drop in payroll numbers," it added.

Though aggregate new orders rose at the slowest pace in three months, their growth was "stronger than any seen for eight years prior to September", IHS Markit noted and said export orders

had also picked up last month, as per the purchasing managers of 400 manufacturers it had surveyed.

"Employment... decreased again as companies observed social distancing guidelines. The rate of job shedding was solid and little-changed from October," the firm pointed out.

Safety stocks'

"For now, firms are projecting sustained demand growth in the near-term and responded to this by lifting input buying to increase their safety stocks," said Polyanna De Lima, Economics associate director at IHS Markit.

Interestingly, firms increased their purchases of inputs even as inventories of finished goods dwindled. Also, input costs saw a sharp

increase "with the overall rate of inflation the joint-strongest in two years", with firms reporting higher prices for raw materials such as chemicals, metals, plastics and textiles, it said.

While India's manufacturing sector remained on the recovery track, Ms. De Lima stressed that a spike in COVID-19 cases and the possibility of associated restrictions could undermine the recovery and constituted a key uncertainty that was weighing down business confidence.

"Business optimism faded slightly in November. Output growth is still predicted for the year ahead, but concerns about public policies, rupee depreciation and the COVID-19 pandemic dampened overall confidence," the business intelligence firm said.

Nov. power consumption growth slows to 4.7%

Onset of early winter cited for decline

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Power consumption growth slowed to 4.7% at 98.37 billion units (BU) in November amid the onset of early winter, especially in the northern part of the country.

In November 2019, electricity consumption in the country was recorded at 93.94 BU, as per government data.

Power consumption growth had entered positive territory in September and recorded a double-digit surge in October, power ministry data showed.

In September, power consumption recorded growth of 4.4% at 112.24 BU, compared with 107.51 BU in the same month last year. India's power consumption grew by almost 12% to



109.53 BU in October this year, as against 97.84 BU in the same month last year.

According to experts, the onset of early winter, especially in the North, has affected power consumption.

Economic activities were almost near normal due to the easing of lockdown curbs, they said, adding that growth in power consumption would continue in the coming months.

Save Maruti, auto wholesales see growth

Largest carmaker posted 2.4% drop in Nov; personal mobility need seen as driver

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A majority of automobile manufacturers registered year-on-year growth in dispatches to dealers in November citing improving consumer sentiment and expectations that preference for personal mobility due to the pandemic would continue to drive demand.

However, market leader Maruti Suzuki India on Tuesday said its domestic passenger vehicles sales fell 2.4% to about 1.35 lakh units. The company's export sales, however, rose almost 30% to 9,000 units.

Hyundai Motor India recorded its highest-ever November domestic sales of 48,800 units, a growth of 9.4% over the year earlier period. However, exports fell



24.6% to 15,900 units.

Tata Motors said its domestic sales has risen 26% in November year-on-year to 47,859 units. While passenger vehicle sales more than doubled to 21,641 units, commercial vehicles fell 5% to 26,218 units in the month.

Likewise, M&M registered 6% growth in domestic sales at 41,095 units. While sales of passenger vehicles rose

24% to 14,637 units, that of commercial vehicles climbed 9% at 19,029 units. However, three-wheeler sales fell 42% to 3,854 units.

Honda Cars India registered 55% growth in domestic sales in November at 9,990 units from 6,459 units in the same month last year.

"The rise in personal mobility is expected to help us sustain our sales momentum during the rest of the fiscal year," said Rajesh Goel, senior VP and director, Marketing & Sales.

Kia Motors India said its total sales stood at 21,022 units in November 2020, rising 50% year-on-year.

"Not only urban, but customers from tier II, III, and IV markets too are acknowledging the need for personal mobility to maintain per-

sonal safety," Kookhyun Shim, MD & CEO, Kia Motors India said.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor also announced sales of 8,508 units, rising 2.4% from 8,312 units in November 2019.

Two-wheelers

Hero MotoCorp said it sold more than 5.75 lakh units in the domestic market, rising from 5.05 lakh units in the year-earlier period.

Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India closed November 2020 with domestic sales of more than 4.12 lakh units compared with more than 3.73 lakh units a year earlier.

TVS Motors said its domestic two-wheeler sales had risen 20% to more than 2.47 lakh units as against more than 1.91 lakh units in November 2019.

TVS Motors said its domestic two-wheeler sales had risen 20% to more than 2.47 lakh units as against more than 1.91 lakh units in November 2019.

Nov. diesel sales decline 7%

Slump hints at fragile recovery, following growth in October

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

India's diesel sales fell 7% year-on-year in November after rising for the first time in eight months in October, industry data showed on Tuesday. Sale of diesel, the most-used fuel in the country, was, however, 8% higher than in October.

Diesel consumption in November was 6.23 million tonnes, having fallen from 6.7 million tonnes a year earlier. It was, however, higher than the 5.7-million tonne demand during October.

million tonnes, while cooking gas (LPG) sales climbed 4.5% to 2.36 million tonnes.

ATF rises from Oct.

Aviation turbine fuel sales fell 48% year-on-year to 3,46,000 tonnes, but were 6.3% higher over October.

Total demand for petroleum products rose 2.5% in October to 17.77 million tonnes. While petrol had reached pre-COVID levels in

Training future leaders with 21st century communication skills

Can Kohli's India avoid a clean sweep?

Shardul or Natarajan likely to be included in place of Saini against the rampaging Aussies

INDIA IN AUS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CANBERRA

Left chasing shadows in the first two games, a listless Indian team would most certainly tweak its bowling combination in order to avoid a second successive clean-sweep when it takes on Australia in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday.

A 0-3 defeat against Australia would be its second rout in consecutive ODI series having met the same fate in New Zealand earlier this year.

"We are very much determined to go out there to win the next match and see that it's not a clean sweep," top-order batsman Shreyas Iyer said when asked what his team can do to stop Australia's first in 20 years.

Positive work ethic

"Our bowlers are really positive with their work ethic and we could see that during training, a few of the bowlers practising with certain plans," he added.

The first two games turned out to be run-fests in which Australia out-batted Virat Kohli's men and before they switch over to the T20 series, a win at the picturesque Manuka Oval could do



Oh, no! Chahal's poor performance in the first two games added to Kohli's woes. ■ AP

their confidence a world of good.

Skipper Kohli has been the first to admit that they have been "outplayed" in the two games and it is expected that some corrective measures will be taken in order to get their campaign back on track.

Clueless

Navdeep Saini, India's fastest bowler, like a lot of others on his first tour of Australia, has looked clueless.

Such has been his plight

that Kohli was forced to bowl a half-fit (bowling wise) Hardik Pandya and even Mayank Agarwal to complete Saini's spell after he gave away 70 runs in seven overs.

It is highly likely that either Shardul Thakur, with an experience of 27 international games, or rookie left-armter and yorker sensation T. Natarajan will replace Saini.

In case of Natarajan, it could be his international debut and a chance to test himself in an inconsequential game before the start of

the T20 series where he is sure to play a part.

It could well be a case of both Shardul and Natarajan being given a go in case Kohli decides to rest both Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami, who need to remain fit and fresh for the big-ticket Test series.

Different dimension

Natarajan, with his clever variations and change of pace, could provide a different dimension, as the cutters might work well and a bit of swing may be on offer on a

ground which is not exactly a closed concrete jungle and may aid a bit of swing.

Never had an Indian attack looked so out of sorts as it did in the two games – hit for 69 boundaries and 19 sixes.

If the pacers have had their share of woes, the spinners have only compounded worries with their inept performances.

In case of batting, Kohli and Rahul looked in good touch during the second game but the inability of Rahul to rotate the strike during the second PowerPlay was glaring.

Injured Porel flown back

Meanwhile, promising Bengal fast bowler Ishan Porel's saga of injuries continued as he has been sent back home from Australia after sustaining a hamstring injury during a net session.

India in ODIs at Canberra

Played	Won	Lost
2	0	2
2008: Sri Lanka bt India by eight wickets (D-L method)		
2016: Australia bt India by 25 runs		

'Happy that the Aussies have a plan for me'

I thrive under pressure, says Shreyas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CANBERRA

Overwhelmed that the Australians devised a short ball strategy against him, Indian batsman Shreyas Iyer says it can best be tackled by adopting a counter-offensive approach and taking advantage of the field placing.

"I am really happy that they are coming up with a plan (against me)," Shreyas said. "I feel overwhelmed and take it as a challenge. But I thrive under pressure and it motivates me to go against them," said India's No. 4 batsman.

"It's all about mindset that you need to adjust. How you need to place yourself on the wicket. Rather than bending down too much (during stance), you stand upright. It's easier to pick the short one," said Shreyas about tackling the short delivery.

He agreed that confusion about shot selection brought about his downfall in the first game.

"I knew that the short ball was going to come. I was in two minds whether to pull or play the upper cut. I got stuck between the two and ended up not playing a shot."

Shreyas feels that bowlers



Shreyas Iyer. ■ AP

are having a tough time since most had a heavy workload during the IPL.

"The amount of workload, staying in quarantine, it plays on your mind.

"They are world-class bowlers and they will come back strong. I really believe in them and I am happy with the kind of work (effort) they are doing (at nets)."

Starc's no-show doesn't worry Finch

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CANBERRA

Top pacer Mitchell Starc's patchy form is among the few worries for a rampaging Australia in the series against India, but skipper Aaron Finch threw his weight behind the seasoned campaigner, saying there is no need to panic.

"He hasn't been at his very best, and you have to understand his standards are a lot higher than what you expect from most other people because of how dominant he's been over the last eight or nine years, especially in the white-ball formats," Finch said.

"He'd love to be swinging the ball and getting it right early on, but the reality is when you're defending big totals and playing against good players, they're coming hard at you," he added.



Mitchell Starc. ■ AP

Mumbai roars past East Bengal

Le Fondre's brace and Santana's strike do the trick

ISL 2020-21

SPORTS BUREAU



Double delight: Le Fondre, third from left, scored off a simple tap-in and penalty to pilot Mumbai to the top. ■ ISL/SPORTZPICS

State associations divided on domestic season

BCCI had sought members' views on which tournaments to stage in pandemic-hit 2020-21

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

The State cricket associations appear divided on how the upcoming domestic season, severely curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic, should play out.

The BCCI on Saturday had asked the 38 associations to choose one of four options for how the season should be staged: 1: Only Ranji Trophy; 2: Only Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy (SMAT20); 3: Both Ranji and SMAT20; 4:

SMAT20 and Vijay Hazare Trophy (VHT).

By Tuesday evening – a day before the deadline for submitting the response – more than 20 member units are understood to have written to the BCCI.

While no unit has chosen option one, *The Hindu* has learnt that the third and fourth options have the most takers. Of the 20 associations whose details are known, seven have preferred Ranji and SMAT20 and seven have cho-

sen SMAT20 and VHT.

While some of the central and northern units such as Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have opted for only SMAT20, some of the major State units, including Mumbai, Saurashtra and Tamil Nadu, have preferred to start with the limited-overs option and then consider staging the Ranji Trophy if the pandemic eases.

It means that neither Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA), the most successful

Ranji outfit, nor defending champion Saurashtra (SCA) has ticked the Ranji box.

MCA secretary clarifies

MCA secretary Sanjay Naik told *The Hindu* that the MCA had made its decision "considering we have the IPL and two T20 World Cups in the next two years and the need to manage shorter tournaments later on".

The KSCA and Tamil Nadu Cricket Association are also among a few units that have offered to host the tournaments.

Hamilton tests positive for COVID-19, to miss Sakhir GP

The World champion will sit out a race for the first time in his F1 career

FORMULA ONE

REUTERS
MANAMA

Seven-times Formula One World champion Lewis Hamilton said he was devastated after testing positive for COVID-19 and being ruled out of Sunday's penultimate race of the season in Bahrain.

It will be the first time the 35-year-old Mercedes driver has missed a race in an F1 career that started with McLaren in 2007.

The most successful driver of all time, with a record

95 wins and 98 pole positions, said on social media that he had tested negative three times in the past week but woke up on Monday with mild symptoms.

The Briton said he then requested another test which came back positive and he immediately started a 10-day self-isolation, ruling out the Sakhir GP and raising doubts about the Abu Dhabi finale on the following weekend.

Gutted

"I'm gutted not to be able to race this weekend but my priority is to follow the protocols and advice to protect

others," he said.

"I'm really lucky that I feel OK with only mild symptoms and will do my best to stay fit and healthy."

The Briton wrapped up his record-equalling seventh title in Turkey last month and picked up his 11th win of the season in Bahrain on Sunday. Mercedes has already won the constructors' title for an unprecedented seventh year in a row.

Can't match record

Hamilton will not now be able to match the record for the most wins in a single season. Michael Schumacher

and Sebastian Vettel share that mark with 13.

Hamilton was also on a record run of 48 successive points finishes and has started 265 races in a row.

Replacement soon

Mercedes said it would announce a replacement driver for Sakhir in due course.

Belgian Stoffel Vandorne, who races for the Mercedes Formula E team and had been scheduled to fly to Bahrain even before Hamilton's positive result, and Mexican Esteban Gutierrez are the team's reserve drivers.



Lewis Hamilton...feeling devastated. ■ AP

After struggling to find the back of the net in their opening two games, the Islanders scored twice in the second half, the first off a penalty awarded after Boumous was brought down by the Red and Gold Brigade goalkeeper Debjit Majumder. Adam Le Fondre stepped up to convert the spot-kick.

Earlier, East Bengal skipper Daniel Fox was substituted after he suffered an injury while being tackled by Le Fondre in the very first minute. The centre-back tried his best to continue but had to be replaced.

Manager Robbie Fowler then changed his formation, opting for a midfielder – Mo-

hammed Rafique – instead of a centre-back. Rafique made an instant impact, testing Mumbai goalkeeper Amrinder Singh with a shot from distance.

A minute later, Mumbai opened the scoring with a superb counterattack, initiated by a long ball from Rowlin Borges which reached Boumous.

The playmaker got past Surchandra Singh, entered the box, evaded Mohamed Irshad's sliding tackle and set up Le Fondre for a simple tap-in.

For the rest of the game, Lobera's side continued to create chances and went on to win by a healthy

margin to move to the top of the standings.

Mandar Dessa's 100

The contest marked the 100th ISL appearance for Mumbai full-back Mandar Rao Dessa, who became the first player ever to reach the milestone. East Bengal defender Narayan Das, with 92 outings, lies next.

The result: Mumbai City FC 3 (Le Fondre 20 & 48-pen, Santana 58) bt SC East Bengal 0.

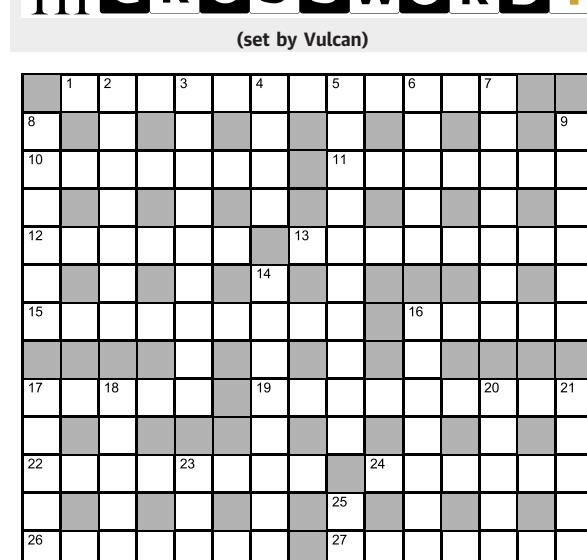
WEDNESDAY'S MATCH

Hyderabad FC vs Jamshedpur FC
7.30 P.M.
STAR SPORTS 2 (SD & HD) AND 3

TH CROSSWORD + 13108

(set by Vulcan)

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



ACROSS

- 1 Device that's arresting the curling (12)
- 10 Having wine before light show (7)
- 11 Relative, after losing heart, has broken free (7)
- 12 Team frequently dealt with No. 2! (6)
- 13 Doctor has to remain in Island city (8)
- 15 Get old men to build a place to stay (9)
- 16 Should be 0 - N (5)
- 17 Permitted in felicitations (5)
- 19 Artist is experienced – emptied and converted gold into cash (9)
- 22 The gutted North American town shows resolve (8)
- 24 Detector said to be cut (6)
- 26 Go from a Mediterranean Island (7)
- 27 Say, grow old and mean (7)
- 28 Having been around for a while, it's horrible – landing's not good (4-8)
- DOWN
- 2 Plant poorly watered (7)
- 3 One to address people during settlement (9)
- 4 Men in fashion, say (4)
- 5 Standard type of telephone around South (10)
- 6 Many Londoners wearing this material (5)
- 7 Motorist runs over a dog outside hospital (4,3)
- 8 Request from a British politician as reported (6)
- 9 Article is starting to transform a believer (6)
- 14 Joint strain for sewer (10)
- 16 Bad month – need improving (2,3,4)
- 17 Message left by Vulcan after commencement (6)
- 18 Conservative leader in lacy clothes? Looking back, it's ironic (7)
- 20 Soil surrounding us giving support (7)
- 21 Old marathoner finally entered and ran (6)
- 23 Fresh, cold and low in fat (5)
- 25 Jabber about a story (4)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

No.SS13108 Date/Time: www.mightyfeatures.com

Solution to puzzle

TV PICKS

Australia v India: 3rd ODI, Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 9.10 a.m.
ISL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Star Sports 3, 7.30 p.m.
UEFA Champions League: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 11.25 p.m. & Sony Ten 1, 2, 3, Six (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Thursday)

IN BRIEF



Bach unopposed in bid for second term

LAUSANNE
 Thomas Bach will stand unopposed to serve a second term as International Olympic Committee president, the body said on Tuesday. Bach, a 66-year-old German lawyer, is set to be confirmed for a second and final four-year term at an IOC session in March in Athens. AFP



BERLIN
 Joachim Low will remain in charge of Germany for next year's delayed European Championship despite a series of poor recent results, the German football federation (DFB) has announced. AFP

Barca presidential election on January 24

MADRID
 Barcelona will hold elections for a new president on January 24, the club said on Monday, following former chief Josep Maria Bartomeu's resignation early this year. Joan Laporta has already announced he will run for the office. AFP

Boopathy Sakthivel rallies to advance

AGRA
 Boopathy Sakthivel beat Udayvir Singh 4-6, 6-1, 6-1 in the first round of the ₹100,000 AITA men's tennis tournament on Tuesday. **Other results:** M. Sandesh bt Rishiraj Shekhar 6-0, 6-0; Dur Vijay bt Yash Baghel 6-1, 6-0; Tarik Gupta bt Kush Arjaria 6-3, 6-0; Gururast Singh bt Ahmed Khan 6-3, 6-2; Ayush Sharma bt Yuganter Vyas 6-3, 6-4; Aaditya Tiwari bt Rajat Poonia 6-3, 6-2.

Anirudh and Manish in last eight

SPORTS BUREAU
 NEW DELHI
 Anirudh Chandrasekar and Manish Sureshkumar combined well to stun the third seeds Ignacio Monzon and Fermín Tenti of Argentina 5-7, 6-0, [10-2] in the pre-quarterfinals of the ₹15,000 ITF tennis tournament in Cairo on Tuesday. **The results:** **Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):** Anirudh Chandrasekar & Manish Sureshkumar bt Ignacio Monzon & Fermín Tenti (Arg) 5-7, 6-0, [10-2]; Toby Kodat (USA) & Oleksiy Krutikh (Ukr) bt Sidharth Rawat & Abhinav Sanjeev Shanmugam 6-3, 6-4.



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

For so long have coaches been telling us about the importance of a batsman's footwork that hand-work (a clumsy word, but you get the idea) has been neglected.

By proclaiming "I have found my hands" before he went on to hit two successive ODI centuries against India, Steve Smith has brought this element back into cricket talk. But more of that later.

At 31, Smith (Test average: 62.84, ODI average: 43.71) is statistically the greatest batsman after Don Bradman (given a minimum of 15 Tests), and seems set to stamp his authority on yet another

More than just prestige on the line for PSG

Needs to win in Manchester; group stage exit could have severe financial implications

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
 PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain will be playing for its Champions League lives against Manchester United on Wednesday, with last season's runner-up knowing the cost of group-stage elimination could be enormous on and off the field.

Anything less than victory at Old Trafford and the French champion could see destiny slip out of its hands going into the last game in Group H.

Neymar's penalty gave the Qatar-owned club victory over RB Leipzig last week, but Thomas Tuchel's team performed poorly and the coach's agitation when searching questions are put to him by the press suggest all is not well in Paris.

PSG is top of Ligue 1, although its lead has been



Up against it: PSG's star-studded line-up will have to ramp it up against Manchester United.

trimmed back in recent weeks following more disappointing displays.

"There is no way we can play like that in Manchester, like we did in the second half," Tuchel warned after Saturday's 2-2 draw with Bor-

deaux. There will be potentially major consequences if it fails to qualify for the last 16 of the Champions League, something it has managed in each of the last eight seasons since becoming regulars in the competition again after

the Qatari takeover.

Barcelona has made it out of its group in every season since returning to the competition in 2004, while Real Madrid has got out of its group in every year since 1997. Bayern Munich has

Fulham springs a surprise on Leicester

Escapes relegation zone; West Ham in fifth

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
 LONDON



Ivan Cavaleiro and Ademola Lookman. ■ AP

the spot for the crucial second goal.

Harvey Barnes scored for Leicester in the 86th minute, but Fulham held on and moves one point above the bottom three.

Fulham's second away win in the past 26 Premier

League matches was its first since a victory at Bournemouth in April 2019.

Second straight loss

Leicester would have gone second with a win, but instead remains fourth – three points behind leader Tottenham – after a second successive league defeat.

The results: **Premier League:** Leicester 1 (Barnes 86) lost to Fulham 2 (Lookman 30, Cavaleiro 38-pen); West Ham 2 (Ogbonna 2, Bowen 46) bt Aston Villa 1 (Grealish 25).

Serie A: Torino 2 (Belotti 25, Meite 77) drew with Sampdoria 2 (Candreva 54, Quagliarella 63); Genoa 1 (Shomurodov 50) lost to Parma 2 (Gervinho 10, 47).

Laliga: Real Betis 0 lost to Eibar 2 (Muto 49, Burgos 54-pen).

Fulham's second away win in the past 26 Premier

shadow on Tokyo's Rainbow Bridge.

The Olympic rings are back in Tokyo Bay.

They were removed for maintenance four months ago shortly after the Olympics was postponed until next year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The rings arrived on Tuesday after a short cruise from nearby Yokohama and are positioned on a barge in the

just a few months before the Olympics was postponed late in March.

Positive sign

The reappearance of the rings is the latest sign that organisers and the International Olympic Committee are increasingly confident that 15,400 Olympic and Paralympic athletes can safely enter Japan during the pandemic.

Olympic rings back in Tokyo Bay

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

TOKYO

The Olympic rings are back in Tokyo Bay.

They were removed for maintenance four months ago shortly after the Olympics was postponed until next year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The rings arrived on Tuesday after a short cruise from nearby Yokohama and are positioned on a barge in the

Half-centuries by Aaron Chandok and Dhanya Nakra helped West Delhi Academy beat Harbhajan Institute Of Cricket by 138 runs in the Turf Youth Cup under-19 cricket tournament.

The scores: UBCA 162/8 in 35 overs (Prashant 39 n.o., Sandeep Saini 3/20) lost to CSC 166/4 in 25.4 overs (Aishwarya Sehrawat 62, Robin Bisht 49 n.o.).

Unbeaten century by Harshit

Captain Harshit Bisht scored an unbeaten 136 while

Abhishek Kumar and Anshul Sehrawat picked up three wickets apiece as Rohtak Road Gymkhana beat Madan Lal Academy by 62 runs in the Turf Youth Cup under-19 cricket tournament.

The scores: RRG 252/5 in 40 overs (Harshit Bisht 136 n.o., Akash Chauhan 56, Priyanshu



What a sight! The illuminated giant Olympic rings positioned on a barge near Tokyo's Rainbow Bridge. ■ REUTERS

Steve Smith finds his hands – India's fortunes lie in them

series. India's fortunes in Australia will depend on how well they counter his methods. The only time they won a Test series there was when Smith was serving out a ban for ball-tampering.

Following textbook s

Smith is not the prime example of a batsman who chooses effectiveness over staid orthodoxy, but one who follows the textbook where it matters. Yes, he fidgets, he squirms, he twiddles, but that is not what drives bowlers to distraction. He is in the right place at the right time, and never mind what happens before he gets there.

Watch him closely. He might bring his bat down from gully (or even point), but he presents a straight bat to the ball after rotating it in a semicircle. The essence of batmanship is the ability to convert stillness into motion; you can do it the traditional way by remaining immobile till you have

judged length, or the Smith way by getting a head start on the movement – the momentum setting him off.

The initial back-and-across movement as the bowler approaches is sometimes exaggerated so he finishes outside the off stump, even exposing the leg stump. But when the bowler targets the unprotected stump, the front foot is planted so he both denies the bowler a glimpse of it and gives himself room to glide the ball down the leg-side. A fielder is sometimes placed at leg-slip, mainly in the hope of a miracle.

When the bat meets the ball, Smith's head is in line, and more importantly, perfectly still.

Organised mindset

For all his apparent cat-on-a-hot-roof technique, where it matters, Smith's batting is out of the coaching manual. Sachin Tendulkar called it a "complicated tech-

nique with an extremely organised mindset", but the complications are around the stroke, not at the time of playing it.

Yes, Smith plays away from his body; but he makes up by the ability to hit through the line. The bat becomes an extension of his hands. You imagine he can't play the cover drive with that right hand grip, but he fools you by turning his shoulder around as he pulls his right elbow in. Again, the momentum does the trick. The wrists help in placing the ball between fielders.

"The gift of hands" was a speciality of Virender Sehwag too; another player who wasn't too fused about where his feet were in relation to the bat swing. And another player who was balanced in strokeplay. One-day cricket helped make Sehwag a great Test player. In Smith's case it is the other way around – Test cricket seems to be the stepping stone to one-day

mastery.

"All of your energy is in your hands," said a baseball coach once. Most cricket coaches tend to underplay the importance of the hands, focusing on feet movement instead.

Importance of self-knowledge

That it took even a batsman of Smith's calibre some four months to "find his hands" is testimony to the importance of self-knowledge in sport. With most batsman, they know they are in the groove when their favourite strokes begin to roll out easily. Smith knew he was back on track when his off drive – his rarest stroke – worked well in practice.

"You shouldn't get out if the ball is not hitting the stumps." That is Smith's mantra. Such is his self-belief that he once changed his technique in the middle of a Test innings, working out the back-and-across movement to his

satisfaction. What must worry India is that the last time he spoke of finding his hands, ahead of the 2017-18 Ashes series, Smith aggregated 687 at an average of 137. In the following Ashes series he made 774 in four Tests.

Troubled by a left-arter

The Indian camp has said brave things about fast bowlers targeting Smith's rib cage. New Zealand's left-arm seamer Neil Wagner had troubled him thus in the series a year ago. It will be interesting to see if India's left armer, T. Natarajan, will be picked to try the Wagner method. He is not in the original Test squad, but it might be worth taking a chance.

It is possible that when Smith "found his hands", he meant it metaphorically. But it is also literally true. He looks too comfortable for Indian bowlers to feel the same way.

Women's Pro Tour back on course

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

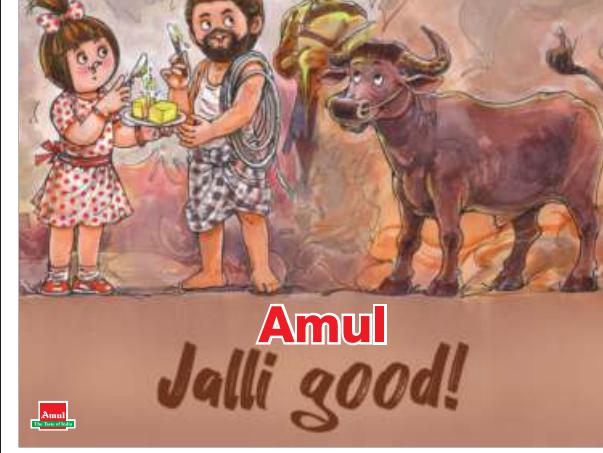
NEW DELHI
 After a nine-month break, the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour resumes with its seventh leg beginning at the Noida Golf Club near here on Wednesday.

Tour leader Vanita Kapoor is set to be challenged by Diksha Dagar, Ridhima Dilawari, Neha Tripathi and Amandeep Drall, among others.

The Hero WPG Tour had six events in the first three months of the year before the pandemic forced a premature closure.

These six events produced different winners, including an amateur.

Kattu a piece of butter?



daCunha/AB7/17

So spoils Carlsen's birthday, wins title

SKILLING OPEN

RAKESH RAO
 NEW DELHI

Wesley So started with a loss, but ended up winning the \$100,000 Skilling Open online chess tournament and spoilt the 30th birthday celebration of Magnus Carlsen on Monday.

After Carlsen won with black, So took the second. The next two rapid games were drawn. In the first blitz game, So dominated and won. Carlsen could not find the much-needed win in the second blitz game and the resultant draw gave So the title.

So apologised for spoiling Carlsen's birthday and said, "All I wanted to do was to put up a good fight and make the games interesting."



Battle royale: Magnus Carlsen and Wesley So during their title-clash. ■ TWITTER/CHES24.COM

DELHI ROUND-UP

Collage SC enters quarterfinals

Three wickets by left-arm spinner Sandeep Saini and useful contributions from Ashish Sehrawat and Robin Bisht with the bat saw Collage Sports Club beat Uday Bhan Cricket Academy by six wickets and enter the quarterfinals of the 30th all-India Om Nath Sood memorial cricket tournament.

The scores: UBCA 162/8 in 35 overs (Prashant 39 n.o., Sandeep Saini 3/20) lost to CSC 166/4 in 25.4 overs (Aishwarya Sehrawat 62, Robin Bisht 49 n.o.).

Easy for Bal Bhawan

Parth Wadhena and Saksham Sinroha picked up three wickets each and Dinesh Mor and Anuj Rawat took half-centuries as Bal Bhawan Academy defeated Rann Star Club by 56 runs in the Shanti Devi memorial cricket tournament.

The scores: BBA 279/7 in 40 overs (Dinesh Mor 68, Anuj Rawat 51, Arpit Rana 40) bt RSC 223 in 38 overs (Aditya Sharma 46, Sombir 42, Parth Wadhena 3/43, Saksham Sinroha 3/52).

Aaron, Dhanya bat well

Half-centuries by Aaron Chandok and Dhanya Nakra helped West Delhi Academy beat Harbhajan Institute Of Cricket by 138 runs in the Turf Youth Cup under-19 cricket tournament.

The scores: WDA 219/3 in 40 overs (Aaron Chandok 66, Dhanya Nakra 54, Rohan Kumar