



THE HINDU GROUP

THE HINDU

BUDGET, [COVERAGE]

1st February 2021

UNION BUDGET SIMPLIFIED

Join us live as we break it down for you.



Real-time
Updates



Budget
Decoded



Opinions



Budget by
Sectors



In-depth
Analysis



Infographics



Podcasts &
Videos

Follow us on #BudgetWithTheHindu

Co-Sponsors



Associate
Sponsors



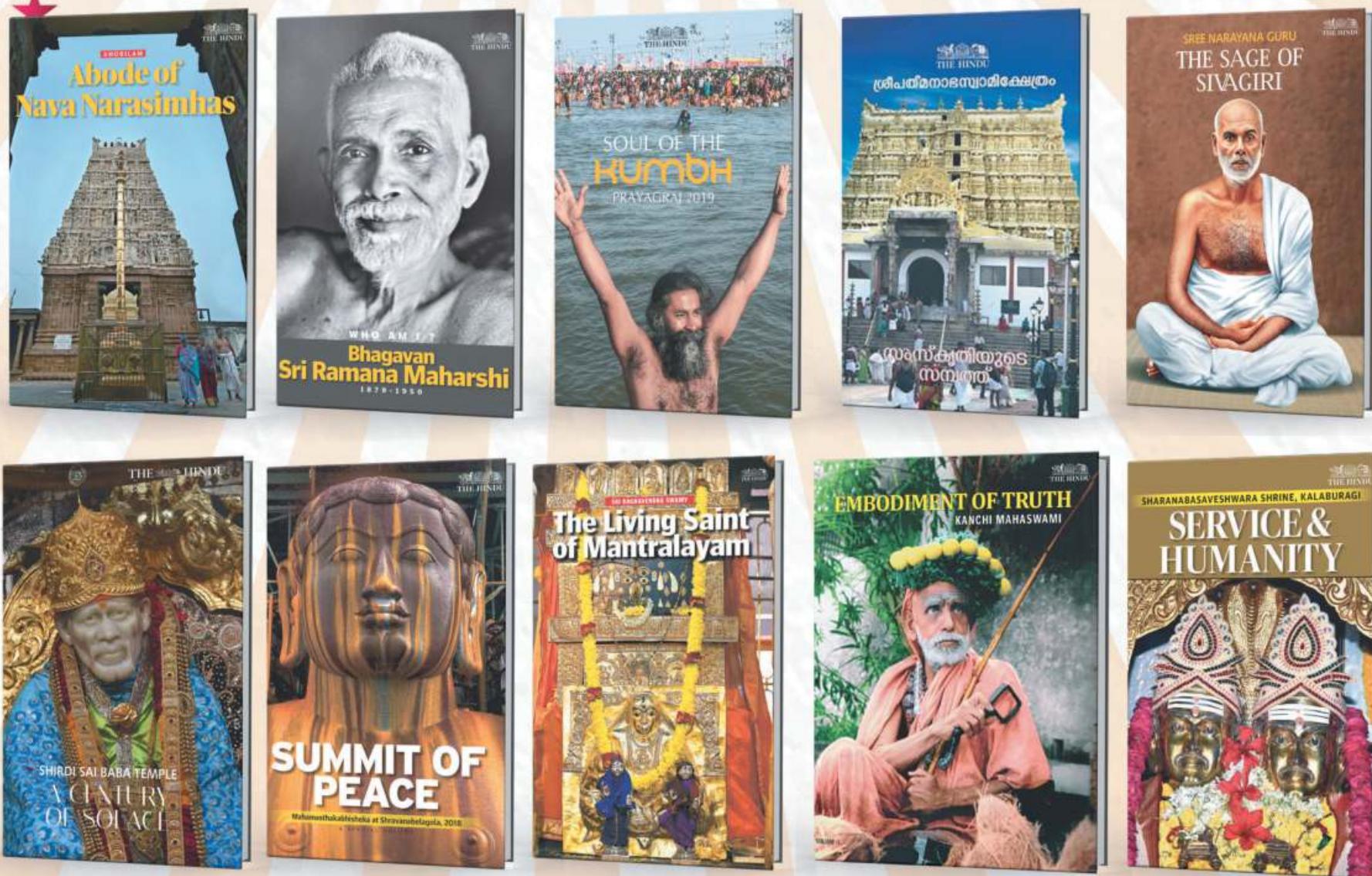


THE HINDU GROUP

SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS FROM THE HINDU GROUP

Our collection, your discovery

SHRINE SERIES



PREMIUM SERIES



KIDS SERIES



**BOOK
YOUR COPY
ONLINE**

Visit: publications.thehindugroup.com/bookstore/For bulk booking, e-mail: bookstore@thehindu.co.in | For enquiries call: 1800 102 1878

*Shipping charges extra | Terms and conditions apply

BYJU'S IAS
Crack the IAS Interview with the
UPSC CSE INTERVIEW GUIDANCE PROGRAM
Featuring IAS experts who understand the UPSC CSE better than anyone else
Subscribe to the BYJU'S IAS  Channel

2nd February 9.00 pm
Internal Security Related Issues
In a Post-Covid World
with C Uday Bhaskar, Defence Expert

3rd February 9.00 pm
Indian Culture and Its Various Facets
with Ms. Neera Misra, Social Entrepreneur


Scan code to visit
the BYJU'S IAS
YouTube channel

**Confident of qualifying
CSE 2020 Mains?**
A must attend
Mock Interview Program
Launching soon

NEARBY



Embassy blast: Iranian visitors under scrutiny

A letter recovered from the blast site near the Israeli Embassy in New Delhi threatened revenge, a police officer said on Sunday. Security agencies are verifying more than 150 Iranian nationals who came in January and also 20 who left after the blast.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9

Delhi reports 140 new virus cases, 4 deaths

NEW DELHI
The Capital recorded 140 new COVID-19 cases with four deaths and 211 recoveries over 24 hours, a health bulletin released by the Delhi government said. Also, 60,695 tests were conducted with a positivity rate of 0.23%. The total number of cases in the city now stands at 6,35,096.

CITY ▶ PAGE 4

JV's IAS Academy PRELIMS SPECIAL BATCH

Coverage of all GS Section by respective Subjects Experts
JV's PT Master Prelims Test Series For UPSC
www.jatinverma.org
© 88829-32364

EDUCATIONPLUS ▶ PAGE 2

Talks only after Centre creates conducive atmosphere: farmers

Unions demand restoration of Internet, de-escalation of tensions for dialogue

ASHOK KUMAR
NEW DELHI

Farmer leaders on Sunday said the unions would not take the initiative to resume dialogue with the government until the Centre created a conducive atmosphere for talks.

The leaders also demanded that the government restore the Internet services at the protest sites, remove the barricades and de-escalate tensions to create the right atmosphere for talks.

The demands came as the police stepped up security at the three sit-in sites around Delhi, closely guarding entry to the sites even as the number of protesting farmers swelled through the day.

Amarinder's initiative

In a related development, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh called an all-party meeting on February 2 to evolve consensus on the way forward on the issue of the farm laws and the farmers' agitation in the light of the recent developments in Delhi.

In an official statement, said: "Prime Minister had spoken on the three farm laws for the first time saying that suspension of laws was a good proposal and talks must resume. We too are ready for talks, but the government must de-escalate the situation, restore Internet services, lift the barricades and stop attacks at the sit-in sites."

LEGAL AID SET UP ▶ PAGE 9
MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGES 3, 5 & 9



On guard: Security personnel keeping watch at a farmers' protest site at the Singhu border in Delhi on Sunday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Saddened by insult to tricolour: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the country was saddened by the "insult" to the National Flag on Republic Day. He said his government was "committed to modernising agriculture". ■ PAGE 9

Centre likely to postpone Census to 2022

AMIT BARUAH
VIJAYITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Centre is on track to push the 2021 Census to 2022 on account of the country's continuing preoccupation with the COVID-19 pandemic, a senior government official told *The Hindu*.

"Our hands are full dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic," the official said, pointing out that first it was the measures taken to deal with the pandemic and now the massive vaccination programme underway across the country.

NPR update

The Census exercise was to be conducted in two phases - House Listing and Housing Census from April to September 2020 and Population Enumeration from February 9 to February 28, 2021.

The first phase of the Census and the updating of the National Population Register (NPR) were initially to be rolled out in some States on April 1, 2020, but were postponed due to the pandemic.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

A bullet through an island's heart

Megacity plan for Little Andaman



Under threat: The jetty at Hutbay, the administrative headquarters of Little Andaman Island. ■ ADHITH SWAMINATHAN

PANKAJ SEKHSARIA

A plan for the sustainable and holistic development of the 680 sq km, fragile Little Andaman Island in the Andaman and Nicobar group has raised the alarm among conservationists.

SPECIAL

The 'Sustainable Development of Little Andaman Island - Vision Document', is the NITI Aayog's proposal to leverage the strategic location and natural features of the island.

This, the vision says, will be done by building a new greenfield coastal city

there, that will be developed as a free trade zone and will compete with Singapore and Hong Kong.

Three zones

The proposal is pivoted along three development anchors and zones.

Zone 1 - spread over 102 sq km along the east coast of Little Andaman - will be the financial district and medi city and will include an aerocity, and a tourism and hospital district.

Spread over 85 sq km of pristine forest, Zone 2, the leisure zone, will have a film city, a residential district and a tourism SEZ.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Sasikala out of hospital, car sports AIADMK flag

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU/CHENNAI

V.K. Sasikala, close aide of late AIADMK leader and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, was discharged from Victoria Hospital in Bengaluru at noon on Sunday.

Ms. Sasikala, wearing a mask and gloves, was driven out of the hospital in a car displaying the AIADMK flag on the bonnet, amid heavy security and a large crowd of supporters.

Ms. Sasikala, who completed her four-year sentence in a disproportionate assets case, is scheduled to return to Tamil Nadu only after a week's stay at the Prestige Golfshire Club near Kempegowda International Airport in keeping with COVID-19 protocols, sources said.

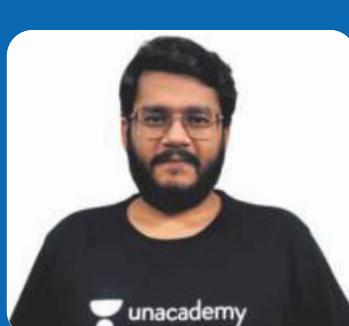
She was admitted to hospital after contracting COVID-19, just days before her release from Parappana Agrahara prison on January 27.

LEADERS OBJECT TO USE OF PARTY FLAG ON VEHICLE ▶ PAGE 8

THE ROLE OF THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT

Colonial India, commencing with the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 and followed by the Government of India Act 1935, witnessed a limited adult franchise with about 15% of the adult population entitled to vote, subject to wealth, property, and other criteria. The mandate of

**TURN TO PAGE 9
TO READ MORE**



MUDIT GUPTA

Government Accountability in Parliamentary System

Feb 1, 2021 | 5:00 PM

Use code: UPSCCSE

Scan the Code



Register Now

GST mop-up in January hits a record

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

GST collections hit a record high in January, with inflows of nearly ₹1.2 lakh crore, 8% higher than a year ago. As per data till 6 p.m. on Sunday, six hours before the deadline for remitting taxes for economic activity undertaken in December, ₹19,847 crore had been collected as GST. This number, subject to further revision, marks the highest indirect tax revenues for the exchequer since the GST regime was launched.

FULL REPORT ON ▶ PAGE 10

Design of new structure to be out in a month

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

The design for the "iconic structure" to be built at the proposed New India Garden to commemorate 75 years of Independence is likely to be revealed in a month, Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry officials said on Sunday.

Along with the redevelopment of Central Vista and construction of a new Parliament, the CPWD has proposed a garden along the banks of the Yamuna near Purana Qila to mark 75 years of Independence.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 10

To open an account,
go nowhere.

#TechItEasy with Video KYC.

Choose an account on sc.com/in

Fill the online form

Do a quick Video KYC and done!

It is through innovations like these that we've made your end-to-end banking experience simpler, faster and better. Because we believe that when it comes to banking, you should always #TechItEasy.

Standard Chartered Savings Account

sc.com/in

Here for good

Terms and conditions apply. Voluntary submission of Aadhaar is required for digital account opening. Savings accounts are available in select locations, with sc.com/in for more details. Do not share your internet banking details, such as user ID/password or your credit/debit card number/CVV/OTP with anyone - either over phone or through email.

CM

ND-NDE



■ FANNY VON HELAND

Each year in December, the prestigious Nobel Prize is awarded to scientists who, during the preceding year, have conferred the greatest benefit to humankind. However, since its inception in 1901, only 25 women have won a Nobel Prize in Physics, Chemistry, Medicine and Economics – a distressing disparity that reflects deeply ingrained gender stereotypes, biases and male-dominated cultures.

Worldwide, women are not encouraged to pursue educations and careers in science and technology. Biases, both conscious and unconscious, limit girls' and women's progress within these fields. Not only are people more likely to associate science and technology with men than with women, but also often hold negative opinions of women in "masculine" positions like computer scientists and engineers. Moreover, women are often judged less competent

than their male colleagues. The few women who decide to pursue careers in science and technology are also paid less for their work compared to men and experience huge difficulties in advancing in their careers.

Distressing numbers

India tops world rankings in producing female graduates in STEM with 43% but employs only 14% of them. In comparison, Sweden produces 35% female STEM graduates and employs 34% of them. According to research from New York University's AI Now Institute, 80% of AI professors are male and the situation is equally distressing on the industry side. Tech giants like Facebook and Google might be on the cutting-edge of AI technology and

Don't STEM their progress

Why we need to inspire more girls to aspire for careers in science and technology

research, but only 10-15% of their AI workforces are women. This is problematic as algorithms written by men end up skewed to favour men, especially white men. When deployed in society (and increasingly so at a large scale), this translates into preferential treatment for one group (white men), while other groups may be ignored. With the rapid digitisation transforming global societies at an unprecedented scale, the under-representation of women in science and technology puts them at the high risk of being displaced by technology.

The fight against gender dis-

parity in science and technology must be fought by all – families, educational institutions, companies and governments. It's a fight we cannot afford to lose, as women's representation in science and technology is essential to design inclusive and sustainable societies.

Gender equality is not just an ethical imperative, but also a business priority. Organisations with greater diversity among their executive teams tend to have higher profits and greater innovation capability. In fact, McKinsey & Company's Global Institute report found that narrowing the gender gap could add between \$12 and \$28 trillion to the global GDP.

Yet, efforts to close the gender gap have been very slow. According to the World Economic Forum, it will take another

99.5 years to achieve global gender equality. To put it simply, we all must increase efforts to rapidly change the status quo.

To fight gender inequality, we need to have a transformative agenda that influences and changes norms and structures that hamper women and girls, as well as enhances the visibility of women and girls as actors. We should provide inspiring examples, role models and success stories of women who successfully pursue careers in science and technology and spearhead knowledge building and technology development within their fields.

Gender inequality can only become a thing of the past if we all strive to strengthen women's and girls' rights, representation and resources based on the reality they live in.

The writer is Counsellor, Innovation and Science at Office of Science and Innovation, Embassy of Sweden, New Delhi

GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

SCHOLARSHIPS

Sardar Patel Scholarship

Buddy4Study India Foundation supports the higher education of deserving underprivileged students.

ELIGIBILITY: Open to students studying in the first or second year of a three-year graduation programme (in any stream) from a recognised university/institution. Annual family income should be less than ₹6 lakhs per annum.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: ₹15,000

DEADLINE: February 28

APPLICATION: Online

b4s.in/EDGE/SPSI

IIT-Kanpur Department of Biological Sciences and Bio-Engineering Research Associateship

Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, invites applications for this associateship.

ELIGIBILITY: Open to candidates with a Ph.D in Life Sciences and prior experience in cellular signalling, protein biochemistry and molecular biology techniques.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: ₹47,000 per month

DEADLINE: February 10

APPLICATION: Via email

b4s.in/edge/BRA6

IIT-Roorkee Centre of Nanotechnology Post-Doctoral Fellowship

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee invites applications for the project "Design and development of a biofilm modulated antibiotic releasing coating system for orthopaedic implants".

ELIGIBILITY: Open to candidates with a Ph.D in Biology/ Biotechnology/ Biochemistry/ Bio-medical/ Biomaterials/ Bio-nanotechnology and quality publications in related fields and relevant working experience. Candidates who have recently submitted their doctoral thesis are also eligible subject provided they submit proof of award of PhD. at the time of interview.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: Up to ₹60,000 per month

DEADLINE: February 10

APPLICATION: By email and by post to 'Professor and Head Centre of Nanotechnology Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, Roorkee 247667'

b4s.in/edge/RCN1

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

SAVE THE DATE

UG with LSE and ISBF

Round One of applications for admission for the undergraduate programmes led by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in India at the Indian School of Business & Finance (ISBF), New Delhi, are set to close soon. ISBF offers Bachelor's programmes in Economics, Economics & Finance, Economics & Management, Business & Management, and Accounting & Finance. Students pursuing Accounting & Finance will also be eligible for exemptions in eight out of 13 examinations of Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA).

ELIGIBILITY: All candidates who have completed Class XII irrespective of stream, or combination of subjects in school, provided that they had Mathematics up to Class X. Additionally, applicants to the BSc (Hons) Economics and BSc (Hons) Economics & Finance programmes must have Mathematics as a compulsory subject in Class XII.

DEADLINE: February 6
<https://bit.ly/2NDn6Pn>

LSEF-UMass Scholarship 2021

Lakshmi Patil Singhania Education Foundation's (LSEF) and University of Massachusetts-Amherst (UMass) presents the LSEF-UMass Scholarship 2021 for MS in Data Analytics and Computational Social Science or MS in Resource Economics, or Master Bachelor's programmes in Economics, Economics & Finance, Economics & Management, Business & Management, and Accounting & Finance.

ELIGIBILITY: Indian citizens who have completed (or will complete before July 2021) a minimum of three years of undergraduate (Bachelor's) degree in any discipline from an accredited institution or university in India. The applicant should have studied Mathematics as a subject up to Class XII or equivalent and secured a minimum of 75% marks in their Undergraduate degree, Class XII and X (or equivalent).

SCHOLARSHIP: Up to 50% of academic tuition worth ₹20,00,000 each

DEADLINE: Round 2: January 31 to February 28; Round 3: March 1 to July 30
<https://bit.ly/3opMgxN>

Admission and scholarships opened

Pearl Academy has opened applications for the academic year 2021 and also announced merit scholarships for top 100 creative minds known as, 'Who's Next'. Eligible students with high creative potential can get up to 100% scholarship while applying for under-graduate and post-graduate programmes. For scholarship eligibility and more information, visit: www.bmu.edu.in

MSc in Cancer Therapies

The University of Strathclyde, Glasgow is inviting applications for MSc in Cancer Therapies course starting in September 2021. Combines a focus on cancer biology, drug discovery, formulation and delivery with radiation biology.

ELIGIBILITY: Minimum second-class Honours degree, or international equivalent in a science or health-related subject. English language minimum score of IELTS 6.0 (with no component below 5.5)

FEE: £21,300 for international students
<https://bit.ly/3sFiaJY>

Engineering for B.Tech. The University also offers Undergraduate Programmes in B.Tech, Law, BBA, and Post-Graduate Programmes in MBA, Executive MBA and PhD.

ELIGIBILITY: Students who have not appeared for any standardised tests will have to appear for the BMU administered standardised aptitude test. Admissions to the School of Engineering & Technology are on the basis of merit and aptitude.

ADVERTISEMENT

How Indian students learn from the best in Switzerland



The boutique campus, set amidst the stunning Swiss Alps, provides a truly unique learning experience as it is located in a 19th century former spa-hotel welcoming students from more than 30 countries around the globe wishing to gain all the necessary skills to lead the hospitality industry. "Studying at an international campus has allowed me to develop a great adaptability to new surroundings and situations, and to learn how to deal with people with different mentalities, backgrounds and cultures. This is something highly appreciated in the hospitality field, but I think in other fields too."

Real estate, finance, consulting and luxury are just a few sectors recruiting EHL Passugg graduates due to the transferable skills earned in the hospitality industry. Leadership, cultural awareness, teamwork and problem solving are some of the professional skills employers are looking for without forgetting the work experience constantly required for fresh young professionals. This Swiss "learning-by-doing approach" is very much appreciated by the industry who can get immediately operational professionals, as well as by the students as 22-year-old Mehar explains "At EHL Passugg I especially appreciate the perfect blend of academic and practical aspect in the school, plus real life work experience through interning at different places".

After assuring her professional degree, Mehar foresees to continue with the 18-month direct entry EHL bachelor's degree at the Lausanne campus to build on the hospitality management foundation gained and round off her education with additional management studies.



Cdr. Sajju Aravind (Retd)

- PG IIT Delhi, Educationist, Author
- Ex- Senior Scientist DRDO
- Governor of Inclusive Education partner Schools, India and UAE
- Founder and Chief Mentor, EduBrisk

6TH
FEBRUARY 2021
Venue: ZOOM
Time: 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM



FREE REGISTRATION

Ushering Blended Learning in Schools

Presented by

EduBrisk™
Celebrating Knowledge & CENTRAL
DIGITAL LEARNING

in association with

THE HINDU
IN SCHOOL

Join us on this detailed panel discussion to understand the "Role of stakeholders and resources"



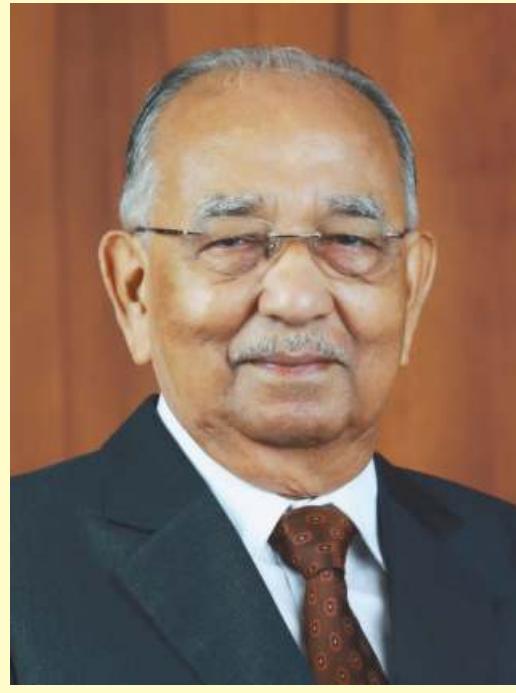
TO REGISTER, VISIT <http://bit.do/Ushering-Blended-Learning> OR scan QR Code



EHL Swiss School
of Tourism and
Hospitality

admissions@sssth.ch
+41 81 255 11 11
www.sssth.ch

OUR GUIDING LIGHT AND INSPIRATION,
YOU WILL FOREVER LIVE
IN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS



C V JACOB (87)

27TH SEPTEMBER 1933 - 31ST JANUARY 2021
FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN, SYNTHITE GROUP
DIRECTOR, CIAL

CHENNEKKATU KALANGAMARIYIL (NECHUPADAM),
KADAYIRIPPU, KOLENCHERY

HOMAGE FROM 10 AM AT RESIDENCE. FOLLOWED BY
FUNERAL SERVICE FROM 3 PM TODAY (01-02-2021)
AT ST. PETER'S & ST. PAUL'S CHURCH KOLENCHERY

SORROWING FAMILY

WIFE: ALEYAMMA JACOB

CHILDREN: DR.VIJU JACOB, AJU JACOB, ELVY NINAN

SILVY MANI, MINNA GEORGE, MINNIE SAJEEV

DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW: MINI VARGHESE, REHANA JACOB

SONS-IN-LAW: NINAN PHILIP, MANI VARGHESE

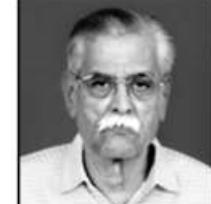
GEORGE MATHAI, DR. SAJEEV GEORGE

MANAGEMENT & STAFF, Synthite GROUP

OBITUARY &
REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY



21.09.1932 - 01.02.2014

T.S. KANNAN
I.A. & A.S (Retd.)
Former Chairman &
Managing Director,
Richardson & Craddles (1972) Ltd.
Chairman
National Small Industries Corp.
Executive Director, Ashok Leyland.

Family & Friends
"The quiet sense of
something lost"

For enquiries on
announcements in this
section, please contact our
office at the following number
between 10a.m. and 8p.m.
New Delhi : 011- 43579797

Rate for New Delhi:
(Minimum Rs. 320/- 2 Lines
Extra Line - Rs.160/-)
(B/W Display): Rs.60/ Per Sq.cm
(Clr Display) : Rs.70/ Per Sq.cm

Log on to
www.thehinduads.com

For Placing Advertisements
Online

In memory of your loved ones

To dedicate a space in this section,

Please contact:

011-43579797

from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. &

For Placing Advertisements

Online log on to

www.thehinduads.com

DONATE EYES-GIFT SIGHT

Delhi HC denies permission to father
of sexual assault victim to settle dispute

'Allowing compromise and quashing FIR will not secure interest of justice'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The father of a sexual assault victim cannot be permitted to settle the dispute with the accused in the case, the Delhi High Court has ruled, noting that permitting such offences to be compromised and quashing FIRs will not secure the interest of justice.

Justice Subramoniam Prasad made the remarks while dismissing plea of a man seek-

had come to a compromise with the father of the victim.

The boy's father, in his police complaint, had stated that on November 20, 2019, his son told him that after he left for work, the accused, who stays in the same building, had come and sodomised him. After investigation, the police said there was enough material to proceed against the accused for offences under IPC Section 377 IPC and

Section 4 of the POCSO Act.

The accused moved the High Court, seeking to quash the FIR primarily on the ground that "the parties have decided to amicably put an end to the disputes".

The boy's father also filed an affidavit before the High Court, stating that all the disputes had been settled between him and the accused and that he had no objection if the FIR was quashed.

Information officers can't act like post office, says HC

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ruled that Central Public Information Officers (CPIOs) cannot act like a "post office" as they are instead responsible to ensure that the information sought under the Right to Information Act is provided.

Justice Prathiba M. Singh made the remarks while dismissing the plea of two persons who used to work as CPIOs with the Union Bank of India against an order passed by the Central Information Commission imposing a cost of ₹10,000 each.

An RTI application was filed by an applicant seeking certain details under the Act. In reply to the application, the CPIO informed the applicant that the details sought were of an internal document of commercial confidence and exempted from disclosure.

Delhi reports 140 new virus cases, 4 deaths

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Capital recorded 140 new COVID-19 cases on Sunday with four deaths and 211 recoveries in 24 hours, a health bulletin released by the Delhi government said.

Also, 60,695 tests were conducted with a positivity rate of 0.23%, the bulletin said.

The total number of COVID-19 cases in Delhi has climbed to 6,35,096 and the number of deaths to 10,853. The bulletin added that 6,22,882 patients have recovered, been discharged or migrated so far and there are 1,361 active cases in the city.

Timings	
DELHI	
MONDAY, FEB. 01	
● RISE 07:10 SET 18:01	
● RISE 21:45 SET 09:41	
TUESDAY, FEB. 02	
● RISE 07:09 SET 18:02	
● RISE 22:47 SET 10:16	
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 03	
● RISE 07:09 SET 18:03	
● RISE 23:51 SET 10:51	

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 25 03
Safdarjung 25 03
Palam 21 06

Delhi Palam Today
23°C Rise in temperature
expected over the city.
Shallow fog would prevail with mainly clear sky.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
23°C Shallow to moderate fog likely during cold morning at some places. Dry winds mainly sunny sky would prevail.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019
All rights reserved.

THE HINDU

DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the truth of any statement or advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THG PUBLICATION PVT LTD., Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not warrant for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertorial or for any of the advertiser's products and services. The events can be the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director, Employees of this newspaper/ company or be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Pennaiyar Basin Circle, Tiruvannamalai – 606 603.

FORM OF CONTRACT : LUMPSUM - ITEM RATE CONTRACT

TENDER NOTICE (Two cover System)

TENDER NOTICE NO.: 20/ PBC / T.V.Malai / 2020 – 2021 / F. 30 / JDO.2 /

DATED : 29.01.2021

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamilnadu, the Superintending Engineer, WRD., Pennaiyar Basin Circle, Tiruvannamalai – 606 603, invites tender in Two cover system from eligible tenderers for the work of (**Package - I**) "Division of flood water from the Pennaiyar River by excavation of a new canal from the Right side canal (from L.S. 0 K.m. to 7.00 K.m.) and Left side canal (from L.S. 0 K.m. to 5.40 K.m.) of the existing Ennekal anicut to the drought prone sub basin areas in Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri Districts." (Value of Work: Rs. 4340.12 Lakhs including G.S.T.) at his office upto 03.00 p.m. on 05.03.2021 in sealed cover. The tender will be opened at 03.30 p.m. at his chamber on the same day.

Other information as details of Work, Value, EMD, Cost of Tender schedule, Qualification details etc., will be available in the Government website www.tenders.tn.gov.in. Any Corrections or Modifications will be published on website only.

Superintending Engineer, WRD.,

DIPR/663/Tender/2021 Pennaiyar Basin Circle, Tiruvannamalai – 606 603.

e-Procurement Notice

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

1. The Executive Engineer Seraj Division HP.PWD Janjehli Distt. Mandi on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system, in 2 Cover System for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms registered with HP.PWD Department.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender	Eligible class of Contractor
1	C/o Patikari Bara Shill Kashimblidhar road including motorable bridge over Bakhal Khad Km 2/000 to 15/500 under NABARD RIDF XXVI (SH: F/C 5/7 mtr wide, RW/Walls, B/Walls, dumping site, C D works and unlined surface drain etc. in km 2/000 to 15/500)	9,36,86,917/-	5,00,00/-	5000/-	Class A
2	C/o Patikari Bara Shill Kashimblidhar road including motorable bridge over Bakhal Khad Km 0/000 to 17/500 under NABARD RIDF XXVI (SH: C/o 30.00 mtr span RCC Box girder bridge at RD 0/000 including both side approaches and Geological investigation)	2,78,77,452/-	3,11,300/-	5000/-	Class A
3	Construction of PHC building at Kholanil in Tehsil Balichowki, Distt. Mandi (H.P.) (SH:- Construction of building portion, WS&SI, construction septic tank and site development) Level-II	1,34,57,747/-	1,67,500/-	5000/-	Class A&B
4	Construction of PHC building at Kalhani in Tehsil Balichowki, Distt. Mandi (H.P.) (SH:- Construction of building portion, WS&SI, construction septic tank and site development) Level-II	1,16,75,500/-	1,50,000/-	5000/-	Class A&B
5	Construction of PHC building at Dharwar-thach in Tehsil Thunay Distt. Mandi (H.P.) (SH:- Construction of building portion, WS&SI, construction septic tank and site development) Level-I	1,30,00,000/-	1,62,500/-	5000/-	Class A&B
6	C/o Combined office building at Janjehli in Tehsil Thunay Distt. Mandi (SH:- C/o Building portion WS&SI, RW/H system and site development)	4,83,88,147/-	5,00,000/-	5000/-	Class A
7	C/o Science lab Multipurpose hall in the premises of Govt. Degree college at Lamathach (Serai) Distt. Mandi (SH:- C/o Building with WS&SI)	4,90,27,377/-	5,00,000/-	5000/-	Class A
8	Construction of Govt Senior Secondary School building at Sommadrada in Tehsil Balichowki Distt. Mandi (SH:- C/o Building portion WS&SI, Rain water harvesting system and Septic tank)	1,73,11,217/-	2,06,000/-	5000/-	Class A & B
9	Construction of 25.00 mtr span RCC Box Girder bridge over Kholanil Khad on Bakhal Kholanil road at RD 10/980 (SH:- C/o Sub Structure, super structure and both side approaches)	1,02,37,700/-	1,34,900/-	5000/-	Class A & B
10	Construction of 19.75 mtr span Single lane bridge at Keyolinal in GP Dheem Katare at Janjehli on Keyolinal to Teat Matoot road RD 0/018 (SH:- C/o Sub Structure, superstructure and both side approaches)	59,66,961/-	92,200/-	2000/-	Class C&B
11	C/o Primary Health Center at Devdhar (SH:- P/L Interlocking paving block for approach road to PHC Devdhar)	7,17,399/-	14,500/-	500/-	Class C&D
12	Balance work for construction of Govt. Senior Secondary School building at Thachi in Tehsil Balichowki Distt. Mandi (SH:- Building portion)	16,98,528/-	35000/-	500/-	Class C&D
13	C/o road Hanoli Bridge to Saloi Km 0/000 to 6/290 (SH:- C/o RW/Wall at RD 0/250 to 0/075 and 0/305 to 0/330)	29,15,605/-	51,500	1500/-	Class C&D

2. Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission: The Bid document is available online and bid should be submitted in online mode on website [https://hpptenders.gov.in](http://hpptenders.gov.in). Bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HP.PWD may obtain the same from the website [https://hpptenders.gov.in](http://hpptenders.gov.in). Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

3. Key Dates:

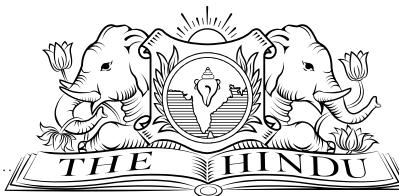
1. Date of Online Publication	15.02.2020 1100 HRS
2. Document Download Start and End Date	15.02.2020 1100 HRS upto 14.01.2021 09.00 HRS
3. Bid Submission Start and End Date	15.02.2020 1100 HRS upto 26.02.2021 09.00 HRS
4. Physical Submission of EMD Cost of Tender Document and original technical document	26.02.2021 1100HRS
5. Date of Technical Bid opening, Evaluation of Technical Bid followed by Opening of Financial Bid.	26.02.2021 1100HRS

4. TENDER DETAILS:

The Tender Documents shall be uploaded online in 2 Cover:

i) Cover 1: shall contain scanned copies of all "Technical Documents/ Eligibility Information".

ii) Cover



Growth with inequality

The Economic Survey seems to privilege wealth creation over reduction of income disparity

The Economic Survey for 2020-21 is an expansive attempt at reviewing the developments in the Indian economy during the current financial year and providing an outlook for its near-term prospects. Spread over 700 pages, the survey opts for a self-congratulatory tone while highlighting the policy achievements of the government in steering the economy through the treacherous shoals of "the most unfathomable global health emergency experienced in modern history". Citing an approach that used 'graded public health measures to transform the short-term trade-off between lives and livelihoods into a win-win that would save both lives and livelihoods over the longer term', the survey asserts that India established a globally unique model of strategic policymaking in containing the COVID-19 pandemic while helping the economy recover quickly from its deleterious impact. There is no denying that the country appears to have not only flattened the curve but also, crucially, so far avoided a bruising second wave of infections seen in much of Europe and the U.S. While it may be debatable as to how much of the turn in the pandemic's progress could be attributed wholly to proactive policy measures, the survey's contention that India has turned the crisis into an opportunity to strengthen its long-term growth potential through 'seminal reforms' sounds off-key, especially given the ongoing farmers' agitation against the new farm laws as well as the plight of the struggling small and medium-scale industries and informal sectors.

The survey goes on to forecast that the economy is currently experiencing a V-shaped recovery that would enable GDP to expand, even by a 'conservative estimate', by 11% in real terms in 2021-22. Still, to achieve that level of real growth, retail inflation must moderate substantially to average 4.4% or less over the 12-month period through March 2022, given that the survey has projected nominal growth at 15.4%. Also, while batting for a fiscal push to support the reviving economy, it posits an upside to the growth prognosis predicated on, among other factors, a rapid roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccines and a recovery in demand in the battered services sector. However, the document fails in providing an honest assessment of the on-ground economic situation by overlooking key aspects including the extent of unemployment even as it hints at the level of rural joblessness, which followed the return of millions of urban casual workers in the wake of last year's hastily implemented lockdown. This it does by taking credit for a record 311.92 crore person-days of work generated over the last 10 months under MGNREGA. And in contending that growth should be prioritised over inequality in tackling poverty, when the pandemic has exacerbated the gap between the rich and the poor and the Finance Minister is set to present her Budget, the survey seems to privilege wealth creation over all else.

Instability in Italy

A snap election will be a serious setback in the effort to contain the pandemic

The resignation of Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, amid infighting in the ruling coalition, has pushed the country, one of the worst-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, into another phase of political instability. Mr. Conte, a former law professor who first formed the government in 2018, resigned after a small coalition partner, Italia Viva, led by former PM Matteo Renzi, left after differences over the way the government was tackling the outbreak and its plans to spend the \$243 billion EU virus fund. Italy, which has seen more than 65 governments in the last 70-odd years, is no stranger to political instability. But the difference now is the unfolding of the crisis amid the struggle to contain the virus infection that has claimed over 85,000 Italians; hundreds of people are dying every day. The vaccination programme, which the government rolled out in recent weeks, has been criticised for being too slow (the government has blamed drugmaker Pfizer for poor supply). Parts of Italy are still under lockdown. The economy, which was battling multiple crises even before COVID-19 struck, is estimated to have contracted by 8.9% last year. All these point to an unprecedented crisis which demands a bold response plan from the country's leaders. But its politicians, as the fall of the government shows, are busy fighting one other.

Mr. Conte, who has retained over 50% approval ratings as PM despite the health-care and economic crises, often struggled to navigate the treacherous waters of coalition politics. He was picked by the populist Five Star Movement in 2018 to head the government which it formed with the far-right Lega Nord. After the Lega Nord exited the coalition in 2019 in the wake of a corruption scandal, Mr. Renzi, who was then leading the centre-left Democratic Party, supported Mr. Conte to form another government. Since then, Mr. Renzi, who left the Democratic Party and formed Viva Italia, grew critical of Mr. Conte's leadership. Their differences have led to the fall of Mr. Conte's second government in less than three years. The current crisis could be as much about Mr. Conte's handling of the COVID-19 crisis as it is about their power struggle. The ball is now in President Sergio Mattarella's court. He could ask Mr. Conte to form another government or entrust some other leader with enough support with the job. If no party manages to win a majority in Parliament, the President could call snap elections. That is the last thing Italy wants now, and its politicians should realise that their first priority should be to arrest the infection wave, step up the vaccination programme and lift the economy out of the deep contraction it is in. For that, the country needs a stable government with a plan of action.

The farm laws need political resolution

It is the supreme authority of Parliament which has the power to solve the issue despite the negotiations outside



HIMANSHU

The deadlock between protesting farmers and the government on the contentious farm laws have taken an ugly turn, with incidents of vandalism during the tractor parade by the protesting farmers on January 26. It is as yet unclear as to how the peaceful protest for the last two months was allowed to take a violent turn by the farmers' union leadership as well as the police administration given that the police were aware of the plans and had approved the parade.

Shadow of mistrust

While responsibility must be fixed for the administrative lapses and action taken against erring antisocial elements, the events again point out to the growing mistrust and breakdown of any dialogue between the two sides. Attempts by a section of media and representatives of political parties to use the incidents of vandalism to vilify and malign the two-month-old peaceful agitation will only add to the mistrust between the government and the farmer unions. Such a situation is unlikely to lead to any meaningful outcome despite best intentions.

Even though thousands of farmers have been protesting peacefully for more than two months at different sites on the Delhi border, the issues raised by the farmer representatives are not just limited to the demand for guarantee of Minimum Support Price (MSP) and

the repeal of the three farm laws passed during the monsoon session of Parliament, in September last year. They are the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

A resonance of anger

While an impression has been created that the agitating farmers only represent the interests of farmers from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, these issues have found resonance across several States in the country where large mobilisations of farmers have been protesting peacefully. There are large variations across States in the way the MSP-led procurement operations are conducted; but there are also variations in States in terms of the role and functions of the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC).

Despite these differences, these mobilisations represent the anger against the political economy of agricultural reforms. The genuine fear of corporate takeover and withdrawal of the state go beyond the three Acts. It is essentially about the trust deficit between the state and the farmers who see the actions of the state as allowing greater control by the private sector which will ultimately dispossess them from the meagre resources and land that they have.

These impressions are not entirely unfounded if one is to go by the experience in different States such as Bihar in abolishing the APMC system. But these fears also gain strength at a time when the economy is slowing down and the



agricultural sector has seen severe distress in the last six years, starting with the twin droughts of 2014 and 2015. With a decline in agricultural wages and falling farm gate prices and farm incomes in the last three years, these Acts represent a pattern of state withdrawal from support to the agricultural sector.

Flaws in legislating

This is precisely why any attempt by the government to resolve the deadlock has to go beyond the nitty-gritty of the three laws; it has to start from instilling trust in the government's actions and rhetoric of reforms. With a hardening of positions by the farmers and the government's representatives, any possibility of resolutions through a dialogue with the unions remains a distant possibility.

Even the attempt by the Supreme Court of India to appoint a committee has failed to elicit any positive response from the farmers. The failure of dialogue and mediation by government ministers and the Supreme Court committee is partly a result of the flawed understanding of the government that this issue is a regional issue concerning only a section of farmers. The attempt by both farmer unions as well as the

government to exclude other political parties out of such dialogues and discussions is unlikely to resolve the issues which concern every State of the country ruled by different political parties.

But it also reflects the process of legislating on important issues without taking into account the concerns of various stakeholders. These pieces of legislation were announced as part of the COVID-19 pandemic relief package when the country was going through a period of severe economic disruption as a result of the lockdown.

Not only was the timing wrong, but even the attempt to force these pieces of legislation without any discussion in Parliament created an impression of stubbornness on the part of the government to deny any form of dialogue and consultation. The failure to consult State governments, which are important stakeholders, has also created the peculiar situation where six large States have now passed separate pieces of legislation in their State legislatures negating the three central Acts.

Budget session as opportunity

The commencement of the Budget session from January 29 presents another opportunity to bring back these pieces of legislation in Parliament. An Act of Parliament can only be repealed and amended through Parliament. It is this supreme authority which has the power to resolve this issue despite negotiations outside. While dialogues and negotiations at a time when Parliament was not in session made sense and proved useful in clarifying the concerns of various stakeholders, it is now time to let Parliament take a call. In any case, the Supreme Court has "suspended" the "implementation" of

three farm laws for the time being and the government has also offered to put the laws in abeyance for one and half years. While the offer of putting the implementation of the Acts in abeyance for 18 months may have been a strategy to delay the implementation until the Uttar Pradesh legislative elections due in one and half years, it does offer the government the possibility to build larger consensus for the reforms in new form. That will imply repealing the Acts as have been passed in Parliament currently and starting the process afresh with the parliament standing committee steering such larger deliberations.

Need for diverse opinions

A parliamentary standing committee with representations from different political parties will not only give it more legitimacy but will also allow diverse opinions from States and political parties to be represented. For the government, which is willing to suspend the implementation for one and half years, it will also allow it time, space and the political forum to convince the States and farmers about the benefits of such reforms. More than that, it will be an opportunity to bridge the trust deficit between the government and the protesting farmers. For a government which is serious about reforms in agricultural marketing, repealing the Acts in the current form and starting the process afresh will only reaffirm its seriousness and commitments to the agricultural sector and the farmers of this country.

Himanshu is Associate Professor, Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

The Mahatma and the empowerment of the other

Gandhi's idea is feasible only in a political community where people have the art of listening



RAMIN JAHANBEGLOO

Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary (January 30) may have just passed, but it is not just an occasion to celebrate his life and his message once more, or to simply add to the Gandhian biography, so to speak.

We should think of Gandhi as a noble spirit who continues to be among us and who contributes to the betterment of our world.

Therefore, the task before us is how we, individually and collectively, can understand and take forward the Gandhian nobility of spirit in today's world. If there is only one idea that Gandhi should be remembered for and identified with, it is the idea of empowerment of the other.

Different opinion as right

Undoubtedly, the essence of Gandhi's political philosophy is the empowerment of the other, irrespective of gender, race, class or creed. That is why Gandhi understood democracy as a socio-political institution which seeks to empower the other by asserting its right to speak freely and to act differently.

As such, Gandhi viewed the empowerment of the other as a right to express a different opinion than

that of the majority and to be heard openly and transparently. One such idea is captured by Gandhi's statement, that "The spirit of democracy is not a mechanical thing to be adjusted by abolition of forms. It requires change of the heart... The spirit of democracy requires the inculcation of the spirit of brotherhood... democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy, individual liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded...." (<https://bit.ly/39Ap5FY>)

In his quest to defend the otherness of the other, Gandhi invited individuals to rule themselves against their weaker natures by becoming self-governing agents. But he also looked for the creation and cultivation of a public culture of citizenship that guaranteed everyone the right to opinion and action.

Therefore, as a transformative force, the empowerment of every citizen is an experience of conscience underpinning the harmony between ethics and politics.

The Gandhian appeal to the ethical is in fact a way to civilise modern politics from within, by shortening the circuit of conquest, domination and violence. By addressing the question of the otherness of the other, Gandhi was trying



to cultivate the individual's capacity for ethical citizenship and empathetic friendship. From Gandhi's perspective, non-violence encouraged an awareness, which moved the individual away from a monistic egocentrism and closer to a pluralistic shared suffering.

Moreover, this state of awareness called for a common horizon of humanity, which strengthened the process of thinking about the otherness of the other. What is so fascinating and relevant with the Gandhian approach to politics is that Gandhi understood the civilisational process of freedom-making as an inclusion of the other as the other.

His work as manifesto

As a matter of fact, we can read and understand Gandhi's seminal work, *Hind Swaraj*, as a manifesto for the otherness of the other. Here, Gandhi introduces his readers to a new model of civilisation which takes humanity to a higher moral level. While pointing to utilitarianism as a false mode of existence which dismisses totally the otherness of the other, Gandhi suggests his own idea of moral interconnectedness and empathetic pluralism.

For Gandhi, civilisation has to give primacy to moral progress of humanity, rather than just generate tendencies towards futility and violence.

Truly, what is so relevant about Gandhi's view of civilisation is the strong conviction that civilisation should help humanity realise the path of righteousness and compassion, by putting morality before materialism.

Gandhi did not consider social, political or even religious marginality as a curse, but more as a constructive asset which helped the individual maintain critical distance from all traditions of thought while entering a dialogue with any form of otherness.

It is this that he was well aware of the dangers of the conquest of the other. That is why he refuses to reject the otherness of the other in the situation of intolerance and exclusion. Gandhi did not consider social, political or even religious marginality as a curse, but more as a constructive asset which helped the individual maintain critical distance from all traditions of thought while entering a dialogue with any form of otherness.

A mode

Unsurprisingly, Gandhi's idea of empowerment of the other is feasible only in a political community where people have the art of listening. In other words, the art of listening, as much as the freedom of speech, is a mode of laying emphasis on the otherness of the other against all forms of tyranny. Accordingly, we can consider as tyrannical an individual or a society which refuses to the other the right to speak and the time and space to listen. If tyranny is the enemy of empathy, then the project of caring for the otherness of the other would suggest a mode of sensibility that rejects the logic of domination and conquest of the other. Through his readings of human civilisation, Gandhi showed

against Muslim minorities, the wholesale acquittal of the accused in the Babri Masjid demolition case, the unceremonious abrogation of Article 370 guaranteeing special status to Jammu and Kashmir, and now, the State ordinances relating to inter-faith marriages where Muslim youth are being targeted, have led to minorities living in a perpetual state of fear.

Fali S. Nariman, who fought the Emergency, and who even relinquished the high office of Additional Solicitor General, once said in his remarks at a function: "I have lived a long life and flourished in secular India. And in the fullness of time, I would also like to die in secular India. If God wills." A right-wing majoritarian country, where constitutional rights get eclipsed and where the minorities and the

marginalised feel insecure, could equally, if not more, be described as being in a state of Emergency.

N.G.R. PRASAD,
D. NAGASAILA,
Chennai

To read more letters online, scan the QR code



new worry in Wayanad

That Wayanad district is a very fragile and ecologically sensitive area needs no reiteration ("Mushrooming resorts threaten the calm in Wayanad", January 31). There have already been cases of landslides causing damage to people and land. This is also an area where tribal communities live. The district administration needs to take cognisance of the unplanned and snowballing tourism and ensure that the ecological balance of the area is undisturbed.

RAM MOHAN DAS K.,
Malappuram, Kerala

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Dumping of the aged

The incident, where civic authorities in Indore were caught on video trying to dump homeless elders by the side of a highway leaves one speechless (Page 1, January 31). The claim that the elders were "being moved to a shelter" is an unbelievable and tall story. Such inhuman acts need to be factored in while ranking the cities in India under 'Swachh Bharat'. While the suspension of lower-level staff is welcome, the higher-ups need to be hauled up too.

A.V. NARAYANAN,
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

■ Such savage treatment of the elderly is highly condemnable. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government talks much about giving respect and showing love to the aged, but the party must note that this

is an incident that has happened in a BJP-ruled State. The elderly may not have wealth but they deserve respect and good treatment. The Additional Commissioner, Indore Municipal Corporation's statement was most unconvincing as the visual in the news report said it all.

D. SETHURAMAN,
Chennai

■ Such barbarous treatment of elders is against the Indian culture of love and respect for the elderly. The government needs to increase its funding and improvement of the infrastructure and support for the elderly so that they can live their lives with dignity.

Ds. THOMAS PALOCAREN,
Vellore, Tamil Nadu

■ Human life so cheap? Even more shocking is the

explanation about those responsible having been suspended from service. It is obvious that those who carried out the operation, could not have done this without instructions from those above them. One could not help contrast this with another report, "Karnataka govt. to set up 2 cow shelters in every taluk" (Inside pages, January 31).

While homeless and elderly citizens are discarded like dirt on a highway unmindful of the biting cold weather, cows are being given shelters. The crude and heartless incident only points to the shortcomings in our governance.

THARCUS S. FERNANDO,
Chennai

■ What kind of social justice is this "throw away" the elderly much like disposable objects after use? When cattle-sheds are being made

for stray cattle, why aren't there homes for the aged and the poor who have no one to look after them? The only consolation is that the incident came to light, with some higher authorities trying to set things right.

ELIZABETH KOSHY,
Maramon, Pathanamthitta, Kerala

■ Dark days At a book launch last week, Justice

Building a robust healthcare system

With better governance, northern States can bring their health systems on a par with southern States



POORNALINGAM R.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been vociferous demands to strengthen the country's public health system. Many erudite articles have stressed the need to revamp the system quickly so that we are better prepared to handle such emergencies in the future. Once the present crisis is over, however, public health will go into oblivion, as usual. Governments are already behaving as if things are fine and enough has been done on the health front.

Not surprisingly, the efficacy of the public health system varies widely across the country since it is a State subject. How good a public health system is can easily be judged just by looking at certain health parameters such as Infant Mortality Rate, Maternal Mortality Ratio and Total Fertility Rate for which annual surveys are conducted through the Sample Registration System.

Poor health indicators

With the numbers given in the chart, it is doubtful whether India will be able to achieve Goal 3 (good health and well-being) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. India failed to achieve the earlier Millennium Development Goals because of the poor performance of the northern States. It is surprising that the Government of India does not hold them responsible and accountable for poor performance but is satisfied with the average. Equally surprising and disappointing is that these State governments themselves are indifferent to their poor performance.

Since health is a State subject, the primary onus lies with the State governments. Each State government must focus on public health and aim to improve the health indicators mentioned above. It is disappointing that some of the States have skewed priorities such as cow protection and 'love jihad'. More mothers are perhaps dying for want of care than

Some key health parameters in select States

State	Infant Mortality Rate	Under Five Mortality	Maternal Mortality Ratio	Total Fertility Rate	% deliveries by untrained personnel
Bihar	32	37	149	3.2	19.0
M.P.	48	56	173	2.7	7.2
Rajasthan	37	40	164	2.5	1.6
U.P.	43	47	197	2.9	14.0
T.N.	15	17	63	1.6	0.2
Kerala	7	10	42	1.7	0.1
India	32	36	113	2.2	7.8

SOURCE: SRS DATA FOR 2018

cows. Are these governments not concerned? Unless they give health the highest priority, rapid improvement is not possible. Instead of talking in generalities, they must start looking at numbers. To start with, the above parameters are good enough. Their close monitoring at the highest level may improve things.

These data are revealing. The northern States are performing very poorly in these vital health parameters. In Madhya Pradesh, the number of infant deaths for every 1,000 live births is as high as 48 compared to seven in Kerala. In U.P., the Maternal Mortality Ratio is 197 compared to Kerala's 42 and Tamil Nadu's 63. The percentage of deliveries by untrained personnel is very high in Bihar, 190 times that of Kerala.

Another vital parameter that has an impact on poverty, Total Fertility Rate, is very high in Bihar (3.2) against the stabilisation rate of 2.1. Tamil Nadu and Kerala have done so well that their population will decline over the years. This has been made possible thanks to the effective Maternal and Child Health and Family Welfare services provided by these States.

Some of these States are performing so poorly that they are comparable to the poorest countries in the world, pulling down the average for India. The Government of India is just looking at the averages which are somewhat reasonable thanks to the excellent performance of well-governed States. Unless all the States perform well, there will be no dramatic improvement in the health system. It is sad this is the outcome despite Finance Commissions pouring non-Plan funds into these States in addition to substantial Plan alloca-

tion from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for the Empowered Action Group States. More money does not and cannot produce results. Only clear focus and better governance can.

Tamil Nadu's example

How did the southern States achieve this? It is because of enlightened political leadership which was interested in the health and well-being of the people. I vividly remember the family planning drives and innumerable camps organised to eradicate cataract in the 1970s. The district administration was spearheading these health initiatives because of the government's focus and drive. The government encouraged a healthy competition among the districts by giving prizes to the well-performing ones. By the 1990s, family planning drives were no more necessary, and all that was needed was some fine-tuning of the Maternal and Child Health programme. The result is that the Total Fertility Rate of Tamil Nadu is among the lowest in the country (1.6) comparable to that of Germany (1.57) and Japan (1.43). In addition to a clear focus by the political executive, Tamil Nadu has the advantage of a public and preventive health structure. A good administrative structure could therefore deliver to the demands of the political executive, benefiting the people of the State.

The governments – both at the Centre and the Empowered Action Group States – should realise that public health and preventive care is a priority and take steps to bring these States on a par with the southern States. The Government of India has a vital role to play. With his huge mandate and popularity, the Prime

Minister should get involved in this fundamental task of improving the health of the people. Public and preventive health should be his focus by holding the Empowered Action Group States accountable to the SDGs. They must be asked to reach the levels of the southern States within three to five years.

Volumes have been written and hundreds of studies have been conducted on what needs to be done in each of these States. One wonders whether they are even read. Instead of slogans and promises, hard work is needed. Perhaps what was started in Tamil Nadu as early as the 1970s needs to be done in these States now. When Chief Ministers are focused on health and the district health administrations are held accountable, performance is bound to improve.

An important measure that can make a difference is a public health set-up in these States that addresses primary and preventive health. Many studies have stressed its importance to deliver better with the given resources. Tamil Nadu manages its public health set-up with just about 150 public health professionals. Therefore, it cannot be difficult for other States to build a public health cadre quickly.

Giving health importance

Unless we invest in human capital, FDI will not help. It will only increase the wealth of the already wealthy and accentuate income disparity. Investing in health and education is the primary responsibility of any government. It is time the governments – both at the Centre and States – gave health its due importance.

Announcing piecemeal schemes may help to get publicity but will not make a lasting improvement. Improving health of such a large population requires concerted efforts over years. The southern States started early and are enjoying the benefits, but they can still do more to reach the level of developed countries. The Empowered Action Group States must start in earnest at least now. There are no short cuts; only persistent and focused efforts at the highest level of government will improve preventive care and primary healthcare.

R. Poornalingam is former Health Secretary, Tamil Nadu

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

Numbers and public health

The Hindu should consider providing references and citations in hyperlinks in its Internet edition



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

One of our readers, Deepesh Goel, posed a number of questions about the numbers that were cited in the article "The time for – not mass but targeted vaccination" (January 26). He was also not sure of the methodology used by the authors, M.S. Seshadri and T. Jacob John. The newspaper has a clear and considered position for commissioning articles on a range of subjects, and public health is no exception. While a newspaper does not opt for detailed footnotes and endnotes, as the emphasis is on the ease of reading, there are stringent measures to ensure accuracy. The act of verification is central to this endeavour.



State of endemicity

The first question Mr. Goel asked was about the reference to the daily new births across the country. The article contended that of the total daily new births, 54,000 infants survive. It further said that "we add 54,000 susceptible subjects daily to the pool". Mr. Goel's question was, if the article adds each new birth to the susceptible pool, shouldn't it warrant the removal of non-COVID-19 daily deaths from the numbers? The authors, who are respected virologists, say that when there is a steady state of endemicity, there is more or less a constant number of daily infections. That is how 54,000 new births are added to the pool, which is a standard well-accepted epidemiological principle. They are not talking about percentages or proportions; hence, there is no need to look into the number of non-COVID-19 deaths.

Mr. Goel felt that it would have helped if the source of the assertion "Nowadays, we mostly test symptomatic individuals, who account for only about half of total infections" had been given, as there have been many studies during the pandemic with each giving a different fraction of the symptomatic. The authors relied on a recent meta-analysis in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* on the proportion of patients who are asymptomatic. In cross-sectional studies, the proportion is 25% and in longitudinal studies, it is 75%. The authors used the average of 50%. The study they relied on is titled

'The Proportion of SARS-CoV-2 Infections That Are Asymptomatic: A Systematic Review', and its authors are Daniel P. Oran and Eric J. Topol.

Mr. Goel also felt that that it was erroneous to conclude that India is very close to reaching the endemic state when the article itself had pointed out that the daily infections may be 56,000. In the light of low mortality certification, which is only 20%, the reader felt that the authors had failed to take into account the under-reporting of COVID-19 cases. The authors argue that it is highly unlikely for symptomatic cases to go unreported in the context of widespread public knowledge about the seriousness of COVID-19 and the efforts put in by the government to identify every case by mass testing.

The reader was not sure how the authors concluded that our COVID-19 case fatality is 1%. He argued that fatality around 1% is the official figure based on reported COVID-19 deaths and that it should not be used in arithmetically adjusted data of reported deaths. The authors argue that we are close to or have already reached endemicity, which is endorsed by two sets of mortality numbers. The ratio between the arithmetically corrected value for the reported cases versus the numbers derived from mortality was 56,000 versus 40,750, which indicates the same trend.

Predicting the curve

It should also be kept in mind that the authors have a track record in predicting the curve that the pandemic took since March 2020. From recommending universal adoption of the practice of wearing masks to prevent the spread of the virus to interpreting sero-surveys and COVID-19 curves, their articles in the edit pages of this newspaper have been consistently prescient. In their article, "Imperatives after India's September virus peak" (September 29, 2020), they clearly indicated that the virus would continue till March 2021 before turning endemic. Their recommendation for targeted vaccination in India has a context. Europe, Brazil, and the U.S. are opting for universal vaccination because of an ongoing epidemic spread.

Journalistically speaking we are in a hybrid phase, where news consumers get their information both from digital platforms and print platforms. *The Hindu* should consider providing references and citations in hyperlinks in its Internet edition.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

The problem of ageing dams

India's ageing dams can threaten water security, affect farmers' income, and increase flooding

J. HARSHA

pectively. Studies in later years showed similar findings.

Almost every scholarly study on reservoir sedimentation shows that Indian reservoirs are designed with a poor understanding of sedimentation science. The designs underestimate the rate of siltation and overestimate live storage capacity created.

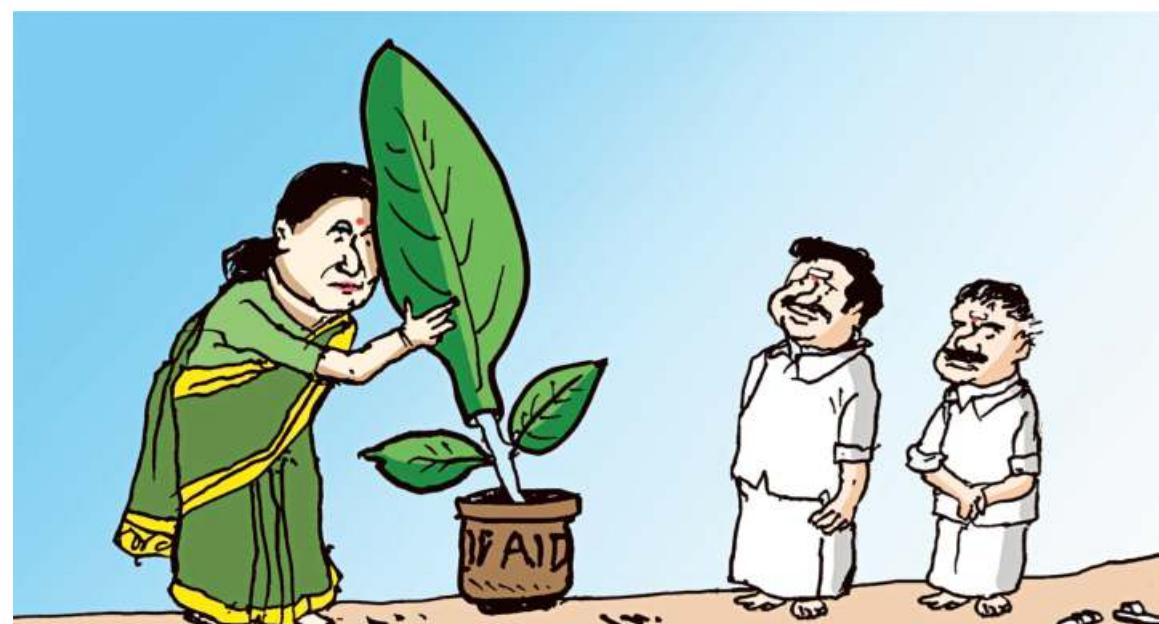
Therefore, the storage space in Indian reservoirs is receding at a rate faster than anticipated. Reservoirs are poised to become extinct in less than a few decades with untold consequences already under way.

Consequences

When soil replaces the water in reservoirs, supply gets choked. The cropped area begins receiving less and less water as time progresses. The net sown water area either shrinks in size or depends on rains or groundwater, which is over-exploited. Crop yield gets affected severely and disrupts the farmer's income. In fact, the farmer's income may get reduced as water is one of the crucial factors for crop yield along with credit, crop insurance and investment. It is important to note that no plan on climate change adaptation will succeed with sediment-packed dams.

The flawed siltation rates demonstrated by a number of scholarly studies reinforce the argument that the designed flood cushion within several reservoirs across many river basins may have already depleted substantially due to which floods have become more frequent downstream of dams. The flooding of Bharuch in 2020, Kerala in 2018 and Chennai in 2015 are a few examples attributed to downstream releases from reservoirs. The nation will eventually be unable to find sufficient water in the 21st century to feed the rising population by 2050, grow abundant crops, create sustainable cities, or ensure growth. Therefore, it is imperative for all stakeholders to come together to address this situation urgently.

J. Harsha is Director, Central Water Commission, Government of India. Views are personal and not that of the Central Water Commission

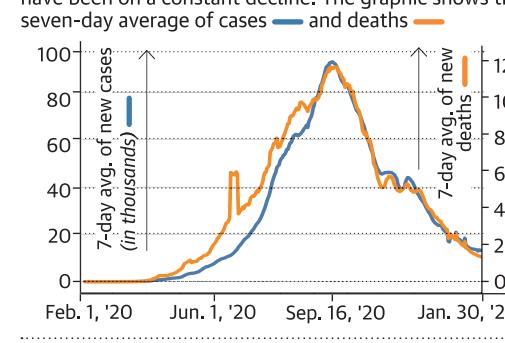


DATA POINT

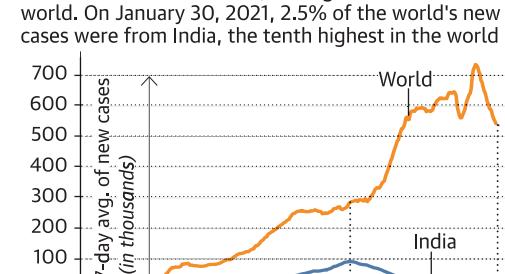
A year of COVID-19

On January 30, 2020, India reported its first COVID-19 case when a Wuhan University student returned to Kerala and tested positive. A year later, as of January 31, around 1.07 crore cases have been confirmed in India, the second highest in the world. About 1.5 lakh related deaths have also been reported, the fourth highest in the world. Both reported cases and deaths are on a rapid decline in India after peaking in September. In January 2021, among the States, Kerala recorded the most cases while Maharashtra recorded the most deaths.

MID-SEPTEMBER PEAK | On September 15 and 16, India recorded the most single-day deaths and cases, respectively. After the first wave, both cases and deaths have been on a constant decline. The graphic shows the seven-day average of cases — and deaths —



NO SECOND WAVE | On Sept. 16, 30% of the world's new cases were from India, the highest share in the world. On January 30, 2021, 2.5% of the world's new cases were from India, the tenth highest in the world



CASE BURDEN | About 37% of India's cases in May 2020 came from Maharashtra. In January 2021, 35% of India's cases came from Kerala. The table shows the % share of India's cases in various months

State	March	May	July	Sept.	Nov.	Jan.-2021
Maharashtra	18%	37%	22%	23%	11%	20%
Karnataka	6%	2%	10%	10%	5%	4%
Kerala	15%	0.5%	2%	5%	13%	35%
A.P.	3%	1%	11%	10%	3%	1%
T.N.	8%	13%	14%	6%	4%	4%
Delhi	7%	10%	4%	4%	14%	2%

DEATH BURDEN | About 43% of India's deaths in May 2020 came from Maharashtra. In January 2021, the State contributed 29% of deaths. The table shows the % share of India's deaths in various months

State	March	May	July	Sept.	Nov.	Jan.-2021
Maharashtra	22%	43%	37%	36%	21%	29%
T.N.	2%	4%	14%	7%	4%	4%
Karnataka	7%	1%	11%	10%	4%	2%
Delhi	4%	10%	6%	3%	17%	6%
A.P.	0%	1%	6%	6%	2%	1%
Kerala	4%</					

FROM PAGE ONE

A bullet through an island's heart

Zone 3 – on 52 sq km of pristine forest – will be a nature zone, further categorised into three districts: an exclusive forest resort, a nature healing district and a nature retreat, all on the western coast.

There will be 'underwater' resorts, casinos, golf courses, convention centres, plug-and-play office complexes, a drone port with fully automated drone delivery system, nature cure institutes and more.

An international airport capable of handling all types of aircraft will be central to this development vision because "all successful case studies and references" studied by the visioning team indicate that an international airport is key for development.

The only jetty on the island will be expanded and a marina will be developed next to the tourist entertainment district. A 100 km greenfield ring road will be constructed parallel to the coastline from east to west and will be supplemented with a mass rapid transit network with stations at regular intervals.

The vision plan is not in the public domain, even though it is said to have been finalised months ago. The comparison with Singapore, for instance, is one key. It has a map of Little Andaman overlaid on Singapore's, along with the following statistics: "The population density of the Andaman and Nicobar is 47 people per sq km while it's (sic) 7,615 persons per sq km in Singapore. Its per capita income is \$1,789 compared to Singapore's \$55,182."

'Blocks' to development
There are certain factors, the vision document notes, that could prevent Little Andaman from becoming the new Singapore – factors that are "stopping us from developing these into veritable jewels for the country". These include lack of good connectivity with Indian mainland and global cities, a fragile biodiversity and natural ecosystems and certain Supreme Court notifications that pose an impediment to development. Another key factor is the "presence of indigenous tribes and concerns for their welfare".

There are other concrete obstacles that the vision takes note of: 95% of Little Andaman is covered in forest, a large part of it the pristine evergreen type. Some 640 sq km of the island is Reserve Forest under the Indian Forest Act, and nearly 450 sq km is protected as the Onge Tribal Reserve, creating a unique and rare socio-ecological-historical complex of high importance.

The vision needs 240 sq km (35%) of this land and the solutions suggested are simple and straightforward – de-reserve 32% of the reserved forest and de-notify 138 sq km or 31% of the tribal reserve. And if the tribals become an impediment, the vision suggests that they "can be relocated

to other parts of the island".

The vision document has maps with no legends or explanations and uses inappropriate photographs plagiarised from the Internet. It talks of conservation of national park/wildlife sanctuary on Little Andaman when none exist here and it has no mention of the geological vulnerability of the place, which was amongst the worst-affected in the earthquake-tsunami combination in 2004. The waves hit Little Andaman so hard that on December 26 the breakwater there was not just breached, it was physically displaced and its orientation changed. Ships could not berth for weeks thereafter.

The plan has no financial details, no budgeting, or inventorisation of forests and ecological wealth and no details of any impact assessment. The nature resort complex proposed at West Bay on the western coast is to have theme resorts, floating/underwater resorts, beach hotels, and high-end residential villas. It is today a secluded and difficult to reach part, one of the most important nesting sites of the globally endangered Giant Leatherback sea turtle which is being studied by the Dakshin Foundation, the Andaman and Nicobar Environment Team and the island administration's Forest Department.

Forest Dept.'s concerns
In a note dated September 26, 2020, Divisional Forest Officer, Little Andaman, raised serious concerns about this vision on grounds of ecological fragility, indigenous rights and vulnerability to earthquakes and tsunamis.

The note said such large diversion of forest land would cause obvious environmental loss leading to irreversible damage (more than 2 million trees stand in the forest land sought for these projects), that habitats of various wild animals including endangered sea turtles would be affected, and that the impact could not even be assessed because there was no environment impact assessment report and neither were there any detailed site layout plans for the proposed diversion.

This note of dissent was a minor irritant and was ignored in the plan and vision that seeks to alter the nature of an ancient island bigger than Chennai and Mumbai in area.

The vision document, described by conservationists as a first bullet through the heart of the island, is to be followed by a second one soon.

A meeting is to be held under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary on February 4 to initiate the de-notification of the Onge tribal reserve on Little Andaman.

(Pankaj Sekhsaria has been researching issues of the A&N Islands for more than two decades and has authored five books on the islands)

Govt. likely to postpone Census to 2022

The office of the Registrar General, in reply to a Right To Information query from *The Hindu* filed in November, said the schedule, or the questionnaire, of the NPR was "being finalised" and the information about the expected date of the first phase of the Census was "not available".

The entire process had become controversial after Parliament approved the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in December 2019 that sought to give citizenship to persecuted minorities from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan who entered India on or before December 31, 2014.

However, the rules required for implementing the CAA have not been framed so far – more than a year after the passage of this key legislation. Diplomatic sources believe that strong opposition from Bangladesh is one of the factors that led to the CAA remaining on hold.

Tens of thousands of people had taken to the streets across the country protesting against the Centre's decision to update the NPR, which is considered the basis for the preparation of a National Register of Citizens (NRC) that could potentially exclude millions of people born in India.

AIADMK leaders object to party flag on Sasikala's vehicle

Battle to regain control of party to continue, says AMMK chief Dhinakaran

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU/CHENNAI

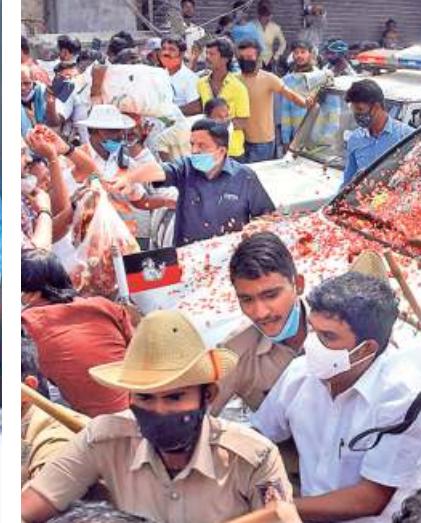
Senior AIADMK leaders on Sunday strongly objected to V.K. Sasikala, close aide of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, using a car flying the party flag after she was discharged from Victoria Hospital in Bengaluru.

Speaking to a TV channel, senior AIADMK leader and T.N. Fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar said, "She cannot claim the right to use the flag. Without any association or without even being a primary member of the party, how can she use the party flag? This is not acceptable in law. The party's General Council has also decided that she does not have any association whatsoever with the party."

Earlier in the day, speaking to presspersons in Bengaluru, T.V. Dhinakaran, Ms. Sasikala's nephew and founder of the Amma Makal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK), justified the use of the party flag, saying: "Sasikala is the general secretary of the AIADMK. The case is pending in court and so she has displayed the flag."



Back to freedom: V.K. Sasikala greeting supporters outside the Victoria Hospital in Bengaluru on Sunday. She later left in a car sporting an AIADMK flag. ■ AFP & SUDHAKARA JAIN



Mr. Dhinakaran also said the AMMK was a movement to "retrieve" the AIADMK and Ms. Sasikala would continue to fight the legal battle.

AIADMK's deputy coordinator and Rajya Sabha member K.P. Munusamy also condemned the use of the party flag, saying: "Sasikala is the general secretary of the AIADMK. The case is pending in court and so she has displayed the flag."

"Jayalalithaa is the permanent general secretary of the party and resolutions in this

regard have been passed in the executive committee and the general body of the party," Mr. Munusamy told reporters at Kaveripattinam in Krishnagiri.

'Not part of AIADMK'

Asked why Ms. Sasikala had not been removed from the party, Mr. Munusamy said, "Following the demise of Jayalalithaa, a membership renewal camp was organised

and Sasikala did not renew her membership then. How could someone, who is not part of the party, be removed?"

Maintaining that the AIADMK would never merge with the AMMK, he said the party leadership would consider taking in Mr. Dhinakaran, if he offered an apology letter for acting against the AIADMK and made a request.

Garbage-to-power plant in veggie market gets PM's pat

Modi mentions biomethanation unit in his address

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his first *Mann Ki Baat* address for the year, made a mention of the garbage-to-power plant being commissioned inside the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Agriculture Market in Bowenpally. Vegetable and fruit waste is used to generate power to the extent of 500 units a day and 30 kilos of green manure at the plant.

This is being done by making use of 10 tonnes of left over market waste. The power generated is being used to light up the market and also run the canteen in the premises enabling the market committee to make substantial savings in power bills.

In his address, Mr. Modi



Way forward: Workers busy at the biogas plant at Bowenpally market in Secunderabad. ■ FILE PHOTO

said, it was amazing that the market waste was being used profitably. "This is the power of innovation, it was nice to learn about it. This is the journey of turning garbage into gold," the Prime Minister remarked.

The CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology

(IICT) has designed and patented the high rate biomethanation technology-based Anaerobic Gas lift Reactor (AGR) for this ₹3 crore project funded by the Department of Biotechnology and the Telangana government's Agriculture Marketing Department.

Vaccinated woman health worker dies

Death due to underlying morbidities

STAFF REPORTER
HYDERABAD

A 55-year-old woman healthcare worker who received COVID-19 vaccine in Macherla, Telangana on January 19 died on Saturday after complaining of shortness of breath and giddiness.

Director of Public Health G. Srinivasa Rao said 'the cause of death is clearly indicative of underlying morbidities and not due to vaccination'.

The woman, a resident of Kasipeta mandal in Mancherla district, received the vaccine at a primary health centre in the same locality. On Friday, 11 days after the vaccination, she complained of shortness of breath and giddiness.



TELANGANA

She was initially admitted to a private hospital in Mancherla and was later referred to the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences at 6 p.m. on Saturday. She died at 11 p.m. the same day.

"The death occurred due to cardio-respiratory arrest triggered by multiple morbidities such as Kyphoscoliosis with restricted lung disease, respiratory infection with type 2 respiratory failure, accelerated hypertension with left ventricular failure," Dr. Srinivasa Rao said. Officials said post-mortem would not be conducted as it was not treated as an Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI) death. AEFI committee investigation too would not be conducted.

While the efforts were on to search for its mother, including in Tamil Nadu forrests, the cub was monitored round the clock by a team led by two veterinary doctors. Slowly, the cub re-

Tiger cub gets hunting lessons from humans

Periyar Tiger Reserve to train it to survive in the wild

GIJI K. RAMAN
IDUKKI

For the first time in the country, the Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Kerala has taken up the training of a tiger cub to equip it to naturally hunt in the forest environment.

The cub was found abandoned inside the forests bordering Tamil Nadu on November 21. It was in a weak condition and medical care and food supplements were given to it in a nearby temporary shelter.

While the efforts were on to search for its mother, including in Tamil Nadu forrests, the cub was monitored round the clock by a team led by two veterinary doctors. Slowly, the cub re-

gained its health but the whereabouts of its mother is not known. "Either its mother is dead or the cub was abandoned as it was not healthy," Project Tiger field director A.P. Sunilbabu told *The Hindu*. Initially, it is trained to hunt chicken and slowly it will be moved to an environment where human presence is not felt.

"Our preference was to make it join its mother," he said. When the wish did not materialise, it was decided

to train the cub to hunt in the wild. The training is for two years. "It takes meat now and 90% of its health is restored," PTR deputy director A.P. Sunilbabu told *The Hindu*. Initially, it is trained to hunt chicken and slowly it will be moved to an environment where human presence is not felt.

9 months old baby Revanth is suffering from Neuroblastoma. He is in need of Chemotherapy and surgery at Meenakshi Mission Hospital and Research Centre, Madurai. Kindly help this child to combat this disease as he requires Rs. 12,00,000/- towards the expenditure. Donations sent by Ch. D.D. favouring Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged. The donations sent through Ch. D.D. / NEFT Transfer (Syndicate Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/c No: 6018201006310, IFSC No: SYNB0006018) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under 80G IT. (Please do not mention patient's name on the cheque).

All Correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. GF 1, Cordell Apartments, O.N.O. 13, N.N. 29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006, Ph: 044-2137401 / 28235324.

Email ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org

WWS

M ND-NDE

A.P. court seeks reply on PDS door delivery

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

Justice Joymalya Bagchi, the single judge Bench of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, directed the government to give a comprehensive reply in two days to the State Election Commission's (SEC) letter to Chief Secretary Aditya Nadh Das, wherein it was sug-

gested that the launching of door delivery of rations in the districts with the involvement of people's representatives be deferred on the ground that the Model Code of Conduct was in force for the gram panchayat elections.

Mr. Justice Bagchi also stated in his interim order

that the SEC should dispose of the matter in five days thereafter.

In his letter to the Chief Secretary on January 21, State Election Commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar said it had been brought to his notice that the launching of vehicles for delivering rations at the doorstep of the benefici-

aries of the Public Distribution System (PDS) would constitute a new scheme.

The Chief Secretary replied to the SEC on January 28 that the door delivery of rations under PDS was only an extension of the project that began in September 2019 and hence did not constitute a new scheme.

'3-language policy is not applicable to Central govt. offices'

Home Ministry responds to RTI query

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HASSAN

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has said the three language policy is not applicable to offices of the Union government.

The Ministry gave this response to a question filed under the Right to Information (RTI) Act on the recent CRPF event at Bhadravati in Shivamogga district, where the plaques unveiled to mark the foundation stone-laying ceremony were only in English and Hindi.

Goutham Ganesh M.H., a B. Tech student in Bengaluru, had filed an application before the Home Ministry under RTI, asking if the Ministry had noticed that the three language policy not being followed at the programme.

The reply by the Ministry on January 29 stated that "as per the provision of the Official Language Act, 1963, and the Official Language Rules, 1976, the provision of bilingual policy is applicable in



IN BRIEF



Chennithala's Kerala yatra takes off

KASARAGOD The 'Aishwarya Kerala Yatra' led by Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala kicked off from Kumbala in Kasaragod on Sunday. The yatra aims at a prosperous Kerala, free from the Left Democratic Front government's misrule and corruption", the Congress leader said. The yatra will come to a close on February 22 in Thiruvananthapuram.

Settle dispute at Toyota plant, says Siddaramiah
BENGALURU Urging Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa to immediately intervene and solve the dispute between the workers and management of Toyota at its Bidadi plant, Leader of the Opposition Siddaramiah on Sunday said that he would raise the issue in the Assembly to bring pressure on the government. "The employees of Toyota have been protesting for about three months," he said.

Six held in connection with rape of minor

HASSAN A minor girl was allegedly raped by several men over the last few months in Sringeri taluk in Karnataka's Chikmagalur district. The police, who booked a case against 17 people, have arrested six, including the girl's aunt. The incident came to light after the Child Welfare Committee in Chikmagalur received an oral complaint recently.

International film fest to open with Bosnian film

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM Bosnian film *Quo Vadis, Aida* set around the Srebrenica massacre of 1995 during the Bosnian war, will be the opening film of the 25th International Film Festival of Kerala to be held from February 10. The registration of delegates for the IFFK, is moving at a slower pace. As on Sunday morning, only around 1,000 registrations were done.

Iranian visitors come under scrutiny

Handwritten note recovered from the site of blast mentions revenge, say police

SAURABH TRIVEDI

NEW DELHI

A letter recovered from the blast site near the Israeli Embassy in New Delhi threatened revenge, a police officer said on Sunday. The seven-line handwritten note had eight spelling mistakes.

The officer said that security agencies were verifying more than 150 Iranian nationals who came in January and also 20 who left after the low-intensity explosion. No suspect has been identified yet.

The letter recalls two "Iranian martyrs" Qasim Soleimani and Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, who were killed in January and November, respectively, of 2020.

On Sunday, regular traffic resumed on A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Road where the low-intensity improvised explosive



Site study: Investigation under progress near the Israeli Embassy in New Delhi. ■ PTI

device blast occurred on January 29. The site of the blast was covered in a white tent.

The letter, written in English, was addressed to "The Terrorist, Devil of Terrorist Nation Ron Malka" and was written by someone who

identified himself as Sarallah India Hezbollah.

Mr. Malka is the Israeli Ambassador to India.

According to sources, the police questioned some persons, including a few Iranian nationals and a cab driver

who dropped two persons near the blast site just before the explosion.

Teams from the National Bomb Data Centre of the National Security Guard and the Delhi Police's Special Cell visited the spot for a post-blast analysis on Saturday.

The investigating agencies are checking the Internet Protocol detail record of the area to find out if the perpetrators used the Internet to communicate instead of phone calls. They are also checking the CCTV footage of nearby hotels. The dump data of mobile phones, which were active hours before and after the blast, are also being examined.

Data are being collected from the cab services of the persons who were dropped in the locality just before the blast.

Indore District Magistrate seeks forgiveness

Some officials drove homeless persons from city

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore District Magistrate Manish Singh on Sunday said he had apologised to God for the local administration's action of dumping homeless people outside the city in the cold weather, which had led to a massive public outrage.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra had also criticised the administration's action, terming it a "blot on humanity". Actor Sonu Sood, who came into the spotlight for helping migrants return to their homes amid the COVID-19 lockdown last year, urged Indore residents to help the homeless people.

Facing flak over the incident which took place on Friday, Mr. Singh, while attending a religious event at a

Ganesh temple in Khajrana area here on Sunday, said he apologised to god on behalf of the administration.

"Whosoever might have been at fault in this incident, but we are officers and we can't run away from our responsibility. Hence, we prayed to god to forgive us for our mistakes," Mr. Singh told presspersons.

On Friday, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan suspended an Indore Municipal Corpora-

ration (IMC) official after videos of homeless people being driven out of the city and dropped near a village went viral on social media.

The civic body has also removed two temporary employees from the job.

When contacted, Additional Municipal Commissioner Abhay Rajangaonkar stated, "We are conducting a detailed investigation into the incident. All facts will come to light after the inquiry."

Peaceful protest is key: Gandhian organisations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A group of Gandhian organisations has called for the farmers' movement to continue their protests against the Centre's farm laws in a peaceful manner. In a statement, the Gandhi Peace Foundation, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Sarva Seva Sangh and Rashtriya Yuva Sangathan said the farmers had shown restraint over the months.

It is clear that farmers were not behind the chaos of January 26, the group said.

"The chaos that took place on January 26, in the name of farmers' movement, has deeply pained the democratic and peace-loving citizens of the nation like us. It is not a question of supporting or opposing any movement, it is a question of respecting and following the Gandhian heritage and democratic values of the country," the statement said.

PM vows to modernise farming

'Efforts of the government will continue in that direction in the future'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Breaking his silence over the vandalism at the Red Fort on Republic Day during the farmers' protest, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said, "The country was saddened to see the National Flag being insulted."

In his first radio broadcast, *Mann Ki Baat*, of 2021, Mr. Modi said his government was "committed to modernising agriculture and the efforts of the government will continue in that direction in the future as well."

The Prime Minister talked about the country's fight against COVID-19 and how the Made in India vaccine had not only made the country self-reliant (*Atma Nirbhar*) but had also become a moment of self-pride (*Atma Gaurav*).

Recounting the developments in January, including India's remarkable comeback in the four-match Test series in Australia, Mr. Modi said: "Amid all this, the country was saddened by the insult to the tricolour on

The country was saddened by the insult to the tricolour on January 26 in Delhi. In times to come, we have to infuse new hope and novelty. Last year, we displayed extraordinary patience and courage. This year too, we have to work hard to attain our resolve. We have to take our country forward at a faster pace

NARENDRA MODI,
PRIME MINISTER

January 26 in Delhi. In times to come, we have to infuse new hope and novelty. Last year, we displayed extraordinary patience and courage. This year too, we have to work hard to attain our resolve. We have to take our country forward at a faster pace.

Vaccine success

Referring to the vaccination exercise, Mr. Modi said it was the world's largest and fastest vaccination drive.

While India had vaccinated over 30 lakh frontline corona warriors in 15 days, he said, the U.S. needed 18 days and the U.K. 36 to reach that figure.

India's decision to send vaccines to several countries had generated worldwide appreciation and displayed its capabilities and self-reliance in the field of medicines.

Noting that the country was approaching its 75th year of Independence, the Prime Minister urged people, especially the young, to write about freedom fighters and incidents associated with their struggle.

Reading out the comments of a resident from Munger in Bihar, the Prime Minister mentioned Tarapur Martyrs Day, when the British had mercilessly killed several of a group of brave

'Many protesters missing after rally'

Farmer leader says Centre and police not helping in tracing their whereabouts

ASHOK KUMAR

NEW DELHI

Buta Singh Burj Gill, head of a Bharatiya Kisan Union faction in Punjab, said on Sunday that farmer unions had set up a committee to provide legal aid to the protesters in police custody after the violence during Republic Day.

At a press conference, Mr. Gill said the unions had identified 163 people who were in custody. Mr. Gill added that many people taking part in the tractor rally were still untraced, and accused the Union government and the police of not cooperating with the farmer unions to find their whereabouts.

He said the committee would also investigate this and a clearer picture would emerge in a couple of days.

He said the farmers were holding peaceful demonstrations, but the government seemed bent on vitiating the atmosphere and had



Rallying on: A fresh batch of farmers join the protest at the Singhu border on Sunday.

snapped water supply and Internet services, besides putting barricades on both sides at the Singhu border.

On Prime Minister Narendra Modi's offer that the government was just a phone call away, Mr. Gill said there was so far no official communication to the farmer leaders on the resumption of talks, and the unions

would not take the initiative till the government created a conducive atmosphere.

Earlier, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, responding to Nationalist Congress Party president Sharad Pawar's tweets on the three farm laws, said the tweets were a mix of "ignorance and misinformation".

In a series of tweets, the Minister countered Mr. Pawar, saying "The new laws facilitate promotion of additional choice channel for farmers with choice to sell their produce to anyone, anywhere with hassle-free movement in & outside the State to realise competitive & better net price for their produce."

The role of the Indian Parliament

One of the Indian Parliament's roles is to hold the government accountable; a work that is still in progress.



Mudit Gupta
Top Unacademy Educator

Debate, deliberation and discussion

In India's seven-decade long history as a republic, only 14 private members' bills have turned into enforceable codes. Consequently, the sheer proportion of bills introduced and passed by ministers calls for a check over the government through debates and deliberations. In extreme scenarios, the expulsion of opposition MPs by the presiding officer of the respective



House has allowed the ruling dispensation to steer bills through the House without much impediment. An uptick in the number of ordinances being promulgated is also a repercussion of the continual adjournments.

Anti-defection law and voting system

On the flip side, during the smooth functioning of the Houses, the rules of procedure mandate the presiding officer to divide the time amongst parties for debates on the basis of their strength in the respective Houses. It is then that the leader of the party allocates time internally to its members. Moreover, the insertion of the Tenth Schedule through the 52nd

Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985, has rendered the individual positioning of an MP toothless. It is the political posturing of the party whip in the House that prevails over the interest of a constituency, represented by its respective MP. Moreover, a major chunk of the bills in the Parliament is passed using 'voice voting', when compared to the much more reliable 'division voting' that can record the response of each member, including abstentions.

committees. In contrast, the 16th Lok Sabha referred only 21% of the bills.

Way forward

The daunting task undertaken by the Constituent assembly to unite the fractured mandate has come a long way in ensuring the democratic fabric of the Nation. The road ahead can be demystified by amending the rules of procedure of both the Houses of Parliament under Article 118 of the Indian Constitution, making it mandatory to refer bills to the parliamentary committees and prescribing appropriate action against unruly members. Moreover, relevant amendments to the Constitution of India, including the Tenth Schedule, can go a long way in fulfilling the task of upholding the Constitution that we, the people of India gifted to ourselves in 1949.

This weekly column for civil services aspirants is brought to you by Unacademy. Send your subject specific queries to upsccsepreparation@unacademy.com

The opinions, beliefs, and viewpoints expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs, viewpoints, or official policies of Unacademy or *The Hindu*.

Register Now



Scan the code to watch the free live class on 'Government Accountability in Parliamentary System' on Feb 1 at 5 PM. Use code UPSCSE.

Why can't House panel study farm laws, asks Congress leader

Jairam Ramesh says there is time to review legislation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government of trying to "silence" all those who report the truth on the farmers' agitation with arrests and sedition charges, while the government was yet to act upon the "perpetrators of violence on January 26".

Mr. Modi said his monthly broadcast was an opportunity to learn many new things and mentioned a vegetable market at Bowenpally in Hyderabad which was generating electricity from vegetable waste; a gram panchayat in Panchkula in Haryana which used waste water for irrigation, the people of Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh making Mon Shugu, a form of eco-friendly paper; a young woman entrepreneur growing strawberries in Bundelkhand; women in Jabalpur successfully running a rice mill after taking over the reins; and an all-woman crew of Air India commanding the longest flight from San Francisco to Bengaluru.

"Prime Minister says 3 farm laws are on pause for 18 months. This is as usual being too clever by half. Why not give a Parliament Committee the same time to examine them and report back to Parliament?" Mr. Ramesh asked on Twitter.

The principal Opposition



party up stepped its attack on the government after a freelance journalist, Mandeep Punia, was arrested at the Singhu border protest site late on Saturday night for allegedly "misbehaving" with police personnel.

The arrest also comes just days after serious charges were filed in BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh and Haryana against senior journalists, including Rajdeep Sardesai, Mrinal Pande, Anant Nath, Paresh Nath, Siddharth Varadarajan, Vinod Jose and Zafar Agha, as well as Con-

gress MP Shashi Tharoor. Slapping the government for adopting intimidating tactics against journalists covering the farmers' protests, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi tweeted, "Those who fear truth arrest honest journalists."

Party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said journalists covering the farmers' movement were being slapped against them, and the Internet was being shut down in many places. "The BJP government wants to trample upon the voice of the farmers, but they have forgotten that the more you suppress, the more voices will rise against your atrocities," she said.

Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury tweeted, "I do strongly oppose this kind of tyranny of this Govt against our #FoodGivers. Shame #BJP, Shame #BJPdestroys Democracy."

FIR registered against Editor of *The Wire*

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GHAZIABAD

The Rampur Police has registered an FIR against Siddharth Varadarajan, the founding Editor of *The Wire*, for posting a "provocative" tweet regarding the death of a Rampur farmer during the tractor rally in Delhi on Republic Day.

Registered under Sections of 153 B (imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration) and 505 (2) (inciting any class or community for violence), the FIR said Mr. Varadarajan tweeted a report published in *The Wire*. The report quoted the grandfather of the deceased farmer Navreet Singh as saying that one of the doctors in the panel that conducted the postmortem told him on condition of anonymity that his grandson died of a bullet injury. The FIR said that the report created a false impression about the death.

Party flags alleged efforts to 'intimidate, browbeat' media



The CPI(M) says the Home Ministry is attacking those who report the truth.

need to be repealed. It said that once the laws are scrapped, the government can hold deliberations with farmers and all other stakeholders. The party hoped the Union Budget, to be tabled in Parliament on Monday, will raise government expenditure.

Party congress

With the West Bengal and Kerala Assembly elections scheduled for April, the CPI (M) party congress that was scheduled at that time has been postponed to 2022. This gives the general secretary Sitaram Yechury an additional year in the post. Party sources said that this was not unusual. In 2009, when Prakash Karat was holding the post, the party congress was postponed as the schedule clashed with the Assembly elections in the two key States.

"Such efforts to intimidate and terrorise journalists have been going on for some time under the BJP administrations in many cases," a statement said.

Since January 28, FIRs have been filed against nine Indian journalists on charges of sedition and nine other provisions of law, including promoting communal dis-

harmony, insulting religious beliefs and assertions prejudicial to national integration.

"Reputed senior journalists have been slapped with these charges on the basis of their personal tweets on social media. This is reprehensible and smacks of efforts to browbeat, intimidate and harass the media," the party said.

The party has reiterated that the three farm laws

Full seating, staggered shows in cinema halls

Centre issues SOP, orders longer breaks, thermal screening

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

After the Union Home Ministry allowed full occupancy of cinema halls from Monday, the Information and Broadcasting Ministry has asked the theatres to stagger show timings to prevent crowding in the common areas.

Issuing a fresh standard operating procedure, the Ministry has directed cinemas to ensure that the starting and ending time and intermission of a show did not overlap with those of a show in another screen in a multiplex. The cinemas in containment zones cannot function. The State governments and Union Territory administrations can impose additional measures on their own assessments.

"These are normal res-



Taking precautions: A cinema hall in Mumbai being sanitised before a movie screening. ■ FILE PHOTO

intermission has to be discouraged.

"Audience may be encouraged to avoid movement during the intermission. Longer intermissions may be used to allow the audience seated in different rows of the auditorium to move in a staggered manner," the SOP says.

Mr. Javadekar clarified that the audience would be allowed to take food items purchased outside the hall back to their seats. The measures include use of masks, provision of sanitisers at entry and exit points and thermal screening of audience and staffers. After each show, the audience should get up row-wise in a staggered manner and the hall thoroughly sanitised. The number of people in the elevators will be restricted.

trictions that we have to follow in these abnormal times. And hopefully, soon we will be able to do away with these restrictions too," I&B Minister Prakash Javadekar said while releasing the SOP. The Ministry said the rush to buy snacks or a visit to the washroom during the

RS to wind up session on Feb. 13

Floor leaders of parties agree at meeting to hold a sitting on a Saturday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Budget session of the Rajya Sabha has been rescheduled and will conclude two days before schedule. The decision was taken at a meeting Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu had with the floor leaders of parties.

The first part of the session will now conclude on February 13, with the House meeting on that Saturday, instead of February 15.

In the monsoon session of Parliament, too, the two Houses had sat over the weekend. But in a loosening of the COVID-19 protocol this time, the weekend break for both the Houses had been restored.

The schedule, said sources, has been changed in accordance with the members' request, as it gives the Standing Committees more time to peruse the Budget and come up with their reports



Decision making: M. Venkaiah Naidu with leaders of political parties during a meeting in New Delhi on Sunday. ■ PTI

before the start of the second part of the session.

The floor leaders, according to sources, asked for more time to discuss the Motion of Thanks to the President for his address to the joint sitting of the Houses and the Budget. Mr. Naidu told Ministers to keep their speeches brief when moving a Bill for consideration, or while replying at the end of the debates, so that mem-

bers got more time to speak. The meeting discussed allocation of sufficient time for members of small parties and groups. "Mr. Naidu has promised that the best possible effort will be made to give a reasonable amount of time for members of such parties," one of the MPs who attended the meeting said.

The meeting was attended by the Ministers of Parliamentary Affairs, Finance, Ravindra Kumar.

Those who attended included former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, Samajwadi Party leader Ramgopal Yadav, Biju Janata Dal leader Prasana Acharya, All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader A. Navneeth Krishnan, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader Tiruchi Siva, Janata Dal(U) leader R.C.P.Singh, Telangana Rashtra Samithi leader K. Keshava Rao, YSR Congress Party leader A. Vijayasai Reddy, Aam Aadmi Party leader Sanjay Singh, Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Elamaram Karim, and Telugu Desam Party leader Kanakamedala Ravindra Kumar.

U.P. leads in COVID-19 vaccination

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh accounted for the most number of persons vaccinated, followed by Rajasthan and Karnataka, the Health Ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

U.P. has so far inoculated 4.6 lakh healthcare workers, or about 12% of its intended beneficiaries, whereas Rajasthan has covered 3.2 lakh (8.8%) and Karnataka 3.1 lakh (8.4%). Eight States accounted for 63% of the vaccinations.

Since the vaccination drive began on Saturday, India has averaged between 2.3 lakh vaccinations a day. However, the second half of the week saw a spike in the number of vaccinations, with over 5 lakh vaccinations reported on January 27 and 28. Even so, the number of vaccinations remains around half of what it should have been.

Mamata will be left all alone soon: Shah

Home Minister accuses the West Bengal government of 'extortion, corruption and appeasement'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Highlighting a series of defections from the Trinamool Congress to the BJP in the past three months, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said that by the time of West Bengal Assembly election, Chief Minister and Trinamool chairperson Mamata Banerjee would be left all alone.

"In the past three months, so many leaders from the Trinamool Congress have joined the BJP. Mamata should contemplate why this is happening ... By the time polls are held, you [Ms. Banerjee] will be standing all alone," Mr. Shah said in a virtual address before a public gathering in Howrah. He referred to the defection of MLAs, along with Suvendu Adhikari, to the BJP in December.

He said that 10 years ago, the Trinamool government came to power on the slogan



Sharp words: Union Home Minister Amit Shah virtually addresses a BJP public rally at Domurjala stadium in Howrah district of West Bengal on Sunday. ■ PTI

of *Maa, Maati, Maanush* (mother, earth, humanity), but the party had resorted to "extortion, corruption and appeasement".

During his address, the Home Minister welcomed the Trinamool leaders, including former Minister Rabibrata Banerjee, who joined the BJP on Saturday, and expressed the hope that they would contribute to the BJP slogan of *Sonar Bangla* (golden Bengal) a reality.

which the money should be deposited," Mr. Shah said.

The Home Minister accused the Mamata Banerjee government of working towards *Bhajita Kalyan* (welfare of the nephew). The only agenda of Ms. Banerjee was to make her nephew Chief Minister, he said.

Five defectors from the Trinamool, including Rabibrata Banerjee and Prabir Kumar Ghosal, MLAs, who joined the BJP, were present. Mr. Banerjee said the State government had launched a *Duare Sarkar* (government at the doorsteps) scheme because the government did not reach the people in the past 10 years.

Union Minister Smriti Irani accused the Trinamool government of corruption in COVID-19 and Cyclone Amphan relief. She said the people would never forgive the Chief Minister for calling those returning from other States "Corona Express."

GST mop-up for Jan. sees a new high of ₹1.2 lakh crore

'Clear indicator of rapid economic recovery post-pandemic'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India's gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues hit a record high in January with inflows of nearly ₹1.2 lakh crore, 8% higher than a year ago.

As per official data till 6 p.m. on Sunday, six hours before the deadline for remitting taxes for economic activity undertaken in December, ₹1,19,847 crore had been collected as GST. This number, subject to further revision, marks the highest indirect tax revenues for the exchequer since the GST regime was launched in July 2017.

Import revenue grows
"During the month, revenues from import of goods were 16% higher and the revenues from domestic transaction [including import of



Close guess: SBI's research team had predicted GST revenues of around ₹1.21 lakh crore. ■ FILE PHOTO

services] were 6% higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

That GST revenues had remained above ₹1 lakh crore for the last four months with a steeply 'increasing trend over this period are clear in

dicitors of rapid economic recovery post-pandemic', the Ministry said.

"Closer monitoring against fake billing, deep data analytics using data from multiple sources, including GST, Income tax and Customs IT systems, and effective tax administration have also contributed to the steady increase in tax revenue over last few months," it added.

The State Bank of India's research team had predicted GST revenues of about ₹1.21 lakh crore in a report last Thursday, attributing the surge to the 'combined effect of the rapid economic recovery post-pandemic and the nationwide drive against GST evaders and fake bills along with many systemic changes introduced recently, which have led to improved compliance.'

HAL completes Sukhoi order, last two jets to roll out soon

Company gearing up for production of 83 indigenous LCA

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) has manufactured the last two of the 272 Su-30MKIs aircraft on contract from Russia and is all set to deliver them to the Indian Air Force.

"One aircraft is certified and inducted for BrahMos modification. Another aircraft has been produced and planned to be certified by February-end," an HAL official said. The delivery formalities for acceptance by the customer are being finalised.

India had got the contract for the Su-30s from Russia in batches, and of them, 222 were assembled by HAL at its Nashik plant under transfer of technology (ToT) since 2004.



Flying high: India tied up with Russia for Su-30s, made by HAL at its Nashik plant since 2004. ■ FILE PHOTO

sia to be licence-produced by HAL at an estimated ₹1,0730 crore. These are meant to replace the Sukhois that had crashed over the years.

On the progress on this, a defence official said the Russians had quoted a very high price and negotiations were under way.

While the Sukhoi assembly line would largely wind down, the aircraft overhaul division at Nashik would continue the repair and overhaul of the MiG and Su-30 aircraft. Over the years, HAL has developed a vendor base of over 2,000 micro, small and medium enterprises for the Sukhoi project.

HAL is currently in the process of ramping up capacity to overhaul the Su-30s from 15 a year to 25.

A major upgrade for the entire fleet is under negotiation with Russia to give the

India delivers 2 cranes for Chabahar

Amid talks with Iranian authorities, it signals a push to the port project

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

In its latest push to develop Iran's Chabahar port project, India handed over two 140-tonne cranes for loading and unloading equipment to the Iranian government on Sunday.

The cranes, part of a full consignment of six Mobile Harbour Cranes (MHC) worth about \$25 million were sourced from Italy and formally released at a ceremony at Chabahar's Shahid Beheshti port after official talks between India and Iran.

India's plans to invest further in the port project are seen as an indicator that the government expects some easing up in U.S. sanctions in the upcoming months, once the new Biden administration begins to address its policy on re-entering the Iran nuclear deal.

Sources told *The Hindu* that the Ministry of External Affairs



Joint effort: India and Iran signed a bilateral pact for \$85 million in May 2016, to equip Chabahar port. ■ FILE PHOTO

fairs (MEA) will also hold a quadrilateral meeting in Doha with officials from Afghanistan, Iran, Uzbekistan and "another Central Asian countries as observer" to discuss Chabahar connectivity and transit trade opportunities.

"We are happy to supply the port of Chabahar with two cranes... This can solve some of the problems in loading and unloading cargo," MEA Joint Secretary for

Iran-Pakistan-Afghanistan J.P. Singh said, according to Iranian news agencies. He also pointed out that the port has handled 75,000 tonnes of wheat donated by India to Afghanistan so far, along with other products.

The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said the MEA delegation had also held "political consultations" with their Iranian counterparts.

"Recent international and regional developments attach particular importance to this round of general political dialogue," tweeted MFA official Rasoul Mousavi, indicating that the possible shift in the U.S.'s Iran policy was discussed.

Earlier this month, the Ministry of Shipping and Ports had said the delivery of the cranes "shows India's commitment to the strategic connectivity of Chabahar port project that will provide access to markets in Central Asia," explaining that the consignment was part of a bilateral contract between India and Iran signed in May 2016 for \$85 million to equip and operationalise the port.

The MEA delegation's visit comes a month after transport officials of India, Iran and Uzbekistan held their first "Trilateral Working Group Meeting" on the joint use of Chabahar Port.

Medical board on abortion 'unfeasible'

Study shows 82% of obstetrics-gynaecology, paediatric and other posts vacant

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

A panel of doctors to decide on termination of pregnancy beyond 24 weeks as proposed in the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Amendment Bill, 2020, is "unfeasible" as 82% of these posts are lying vacant in the country, finds a new study.

The MTP Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha in March 2020, and is likely to be brought before the Rajya Sabha during the Budget Session.

The Bill proposes several amendments, including the constitution of a medical Board in every State and Union Territory, which will decide on pregnancies beyond 24 weeks in cases of foetal abnormalities. Each Board will have a gynaecologist, a radiologist or sonologist, a paediatrician, and other members prescribed by the governments.

The data is based on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's Rural Health Survey, which provides details of vacancies filled at secondary healthcare centres. Si-

gi, physicians and paediatricians. It found that for each of the years between 2015 and 2019, the shortfall in these posts hovered between 71% and 81.8%. For 2019, for a total of 21,296 vacancies in the country, only 3,880 were filled, that is, there was a shortfall of 81.8%.

The data is based on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's Rural Health Survey, which provides details of vacancies filled at secondary healthcare centres. Si-

Design for new structure to be revealed in a month

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

The design for the "iconic structure" to be built at the proposed New India Garden to commemorate 75 years of Independence is likely to be revealed in a month, Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry officials said on Sunday.

Along with the redevelopment of Central Vista and construction of a new Parliament, the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) has proposed a garden along the banks of the Yamuna near Purana Qila to mark 75 years of Independence. The CPWD had launched a design competition in November 2020 for the structure, which can be a tower or a sculpture. A total of 98 entries had been received, according to the CPWD's website, and the results were to be announced in December-end. The deadline was then pushed to Sunday, January 31.

Officials said designs had been shortlisted and a winner would be finalised within a month. When announcing the competition, the CPWD said the structure could be a maximum of 134 metres in height. "The structure should be iconic in design and represent the national Capital. For example, at present India Gate prominently signifies Delhi. The proposed iconic structure being built in the independent India should now become a new symbol of the Capital," the CPWD's brief had said.

M ND-NDE

The other side of me

Anupam Kher discusses his latest book, *Your Best Day Is Today*, which chronicles his experiences during the pandemic, among other things

PRAVEEN SUDEVAN

Anupam Kher begins the introduction to his new book, *Your Best Day Is Today* (published by Hay House India), with this line: "The urge to write had never been more compelling than the one I felt earlier this year." It hadn't been a year since the release of his autobiography, *Lessons Life Taught Me, Unknowingly*, wherein his memorable moments including many from his 35-plus years of acting in films – were already recorded.

So, why the compelling need to write another book so soon?

"To overpower my fear," says the actor over a video call. He was in New York in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and returned home in March to witness a nationwide fear. It rubbed off on him as well. "I have seen wars, riots and natural calamities in my lifetime. But none of them had a mass fear of this scale."

Writing is therapeutic for Kher. In movies, when he has to do a challenging scene, he writes them down. He decided to do the same with the pandemic. "I started writing about my in-

securities, my sense of uncertainty, what will happen to this world, etc. I also wanted to look for hope."

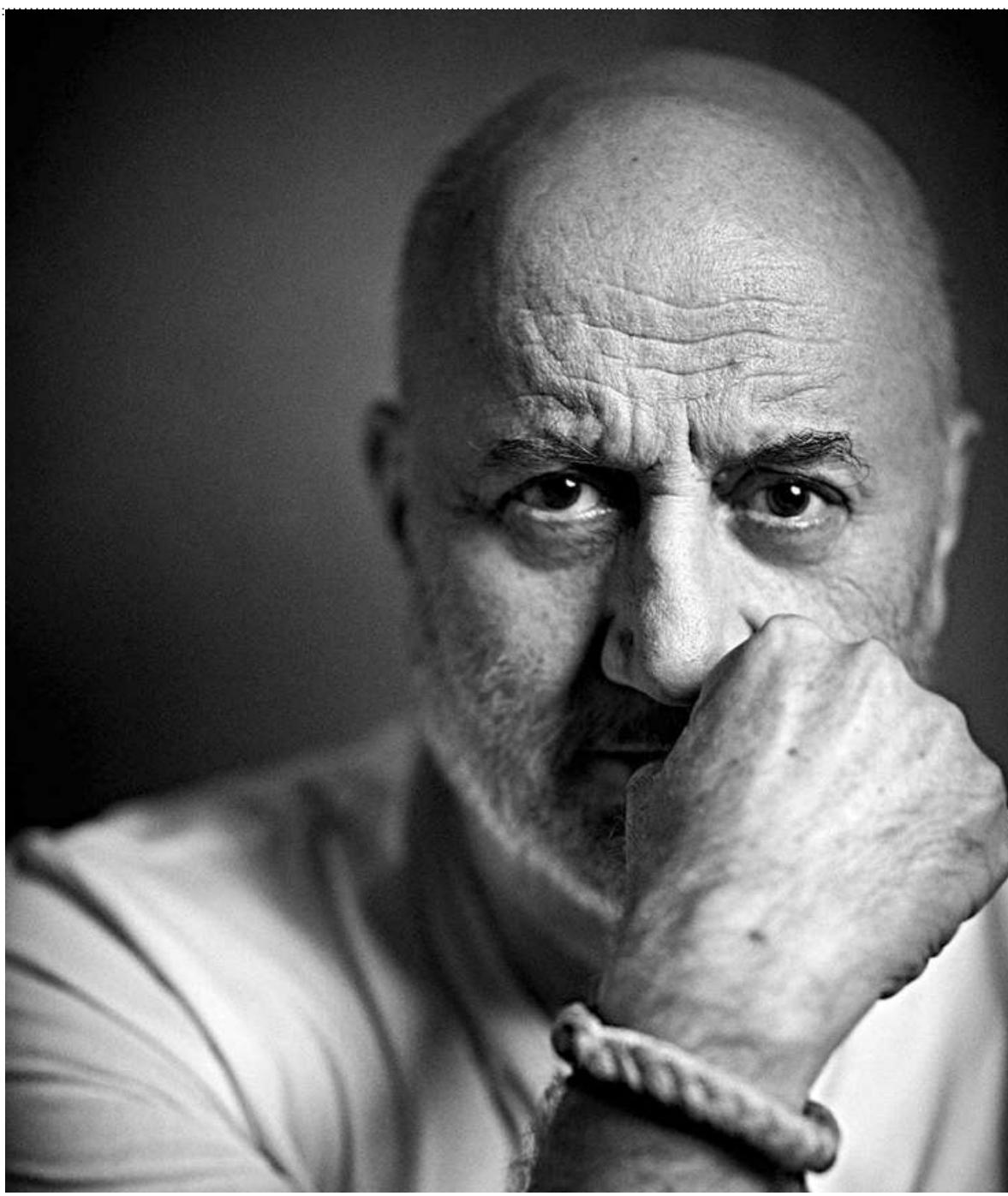
The book is autobiographical as well as self-help, Kher says, discussing other aspects in the interview. Excerpts:

The book starts on December 30, 2019 and goes on till the second half of 2020. Did you journal every day?

● I record my thoughts. Say, if I wake up after an interesting dream, I record it. I can't sit down at a particular time to write. None of my books were written like that. I like to have an organic feel about it. I record my thoughts first. Then, I get them transcribed. Only after that do I sit down to put them together.

You experienced personal difficulties during the pandemic. Your mother and brother contracted the virus...

● Now joke about it. When I started to write the book, it was as if God said, 'Let me just give you situations that will make this book more authentic.'



Life in the time of Covid Why Anupam Kher believes *Your Best Day Is Today* is an extension of his autobiography ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

grow in the future?

● As an actor, I feel I represent my country when I work in international films. It is a great feeling. I have been doing international films since *Bend It Like Beckham*. It gives me a sense of responsibility. It is important to tell the world that we have great talent.

Also, after doing over 500 films in India, I wanted to explore international films. They have actors who you aren't used to working with and speak a language in which you don't think. So, they make you sharpen your skills.

What is one thing that you picked from working abroad?

● They are unbelievably well-prepared. Their pre-production and paperwork are brilliant. Everybody has a great sense of professionalism. Initially I wondered why they have offs on weekends. But on the weekdays, they work with so much focus. And, even I started to look forward to the weekends. They are, in some cases, more evolved than us. We are also getting there. But talent-wise, we are on a par with anybody in the world.

What lesson has the pandemic taught you?

● That is the title of the book. *Your Best Day Is Today*. I knew it for many years because my mother used to say that. I genuinely believe that the best moment is right now, talking to you. Because this is the moment I am living.

SHILPA NAIR ANAND

Bamboo artist Rajiv VK first heard the *tongali*, a nose flute instrument from the Philippines, in February 2019, when he was attending a workshop Feeling Through Bamboo Music, organised by National Institute of Design (NID) in Bengaluru. Rajiv was introduced to the woodwind instrument through Edgar Balansi Banasan, a bamboo artist from the Philippines, who was one among the participants at the workshop.

Although *tongali* resembles a normal flute, it is four-holed as opposed to regular flutes that have eight or more. Yet, the sound it produces is both mellow and soothing. "Listening to it is very calming, making it ideal for meditation," says Rajiv, adding that he was fascinated by the instrument, though it was its history that caught his attention.

"Banasan belongs to the Kalinga tribe of the

Breathtaking MUSIC

Meet the bamboo artist from Kerala who has mastered the art of playing a *tongali*, a nose flute instrument used by tribes in the Philippines



material varies: wood, bamboo, and even whales' teeth.

Assisting Banasan and listening to his stories about how the flute was used, Rajiv wanted to recreate the instrument and expand its reach. Returning home to Thattekani in Idukki, he crafted his own *tongali*, based on the one that Banasan had gifted him.

"Among its other ritualistic uses, the *tongali* was used to 'awaken' paddy fields; its soothing music helped rice grow. That is such a beautiful idea...of man and Nature being one," he says.

Rajiv went about not only perfecting his *tongali*, but also learning to play it. "In fact I had participated in an event in Bengaluru early last year, before lockdown, where the participants took to it. The

KNOW THE ARTIST

For Rajiv, bamboo is more than a medium of expression; it is a muse that constantly inspires to innovate and use in different ways. Over the past two decades, he has been working with bamboo through his brand Windcraft and has made sustainable pieces of art, utilitarian items and curios.

Among the popular handicrafts he has designed are bamboo wind chimes that evoke sounds of the forest and a flowing stream. A Government license permits him to source bamboo directly from the forest. He is also a craft consultant and design trainer.

music is more haunting, than being musical in the conventional sense. It is not a song, it is more a tune," he says, describing its sound.

"You have to be calm when you play it. With a regular flute you can play it irrespective of your state of mind. However, with *tongali* or any nose flute for that matter, you have to be in a peaceful space," says Rajiv, adding that he spent the whole of last year fine-tuning his skills.



A nose for tunes Rajiv VK playing the *tongali*; (inset) nose flutes made by him ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

POOCH CAFE



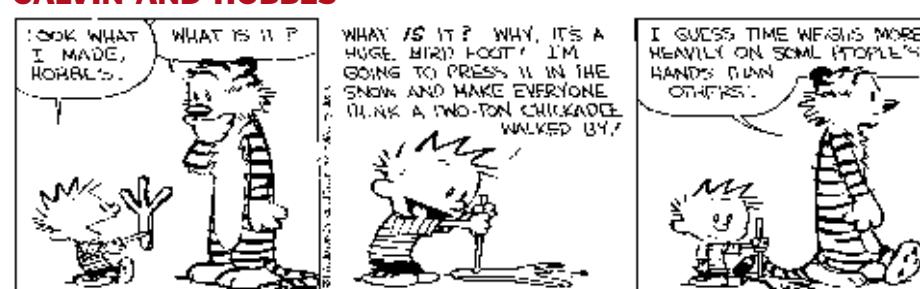
PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



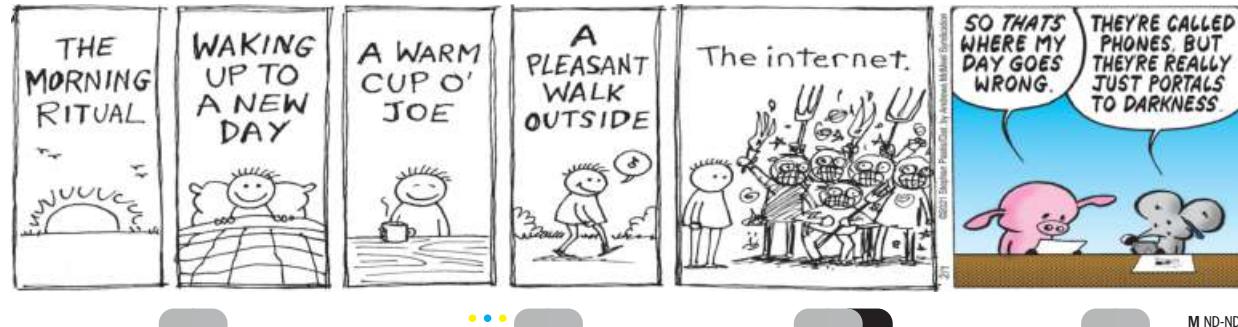
CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



Russia arrests 4,400 Navalny supporters

Thousands defy government warnings to rally across the nation in a second weekend of mass protests

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MOSCOW

Police detained more than 4,400 people across Russia and blocked off the centre of Moscow on Sunday in a massive clampdown on protests demanding the release of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

Thousands of protesters defied government warnings to rally from Vladivostok to Saint Petersburg in a second weekend of mass demonstrations over the arrest of President Vladimir Putin's most prominent critic.

Mr. Navalny was detained at a Moscow airport in mid-January after flying back to Russia from Germany where he was recovering from an August poisoning he blames on the Kremlin.

The 44-year-old anti-corruption campaigner is being held in a Moscow detention centre and faces years of po-



Raging protests: Police detain a man during the protest seeking release of Alexei Navalny in Moscow on Sunday. • AP

tential jail time in several different criminal cases, despite calls from protesters and Western governments for his release.

In moves not seen in years in Moscow, authorities locked down the centre of the capital on Sunday, with hundreds of police lining the streets, central Metro sta-

tion closed and the movements of pedestrians restricted.

Protesters, who had hoped to gather outside the headquarters of the FSB security service, were instead scattered to various parts of the city as organisers made last-minute changes in locations.

The Russian Foreign Mi-

nistry hit back, accusing the U.S. of "gross interference" in its affairs and of using "online platforms controlled by Washington" to promote the protests.

Hundreds marched through the centre of Moscow, chanting "Freedom!" and "Putin is a thief!" before arriving outside Matrosskaya Tishina prison where Navalny was being held.

"If this is happening now to a person who is famous in Russia and the world, it could happen to anyone in the future," protester Philip said at the Moscow rally.

Several dozen were detained at the prison, with police chasing down protesters in the snow outside the complex.

Mr. Navalny's ally Helga Pirogova told AFP that Sunday's protest in Novosibirsk was potentially bigger than the week before.

Foreign troops to stay in Afghanistan beyond May'

NATO officials say the conditions for full pullout have not been met; move could escalate tensions

REUTERS

ISLAMABAD

International troops plan to stay in Afghanistan beyond the May deadline envisaged by Taliban's deal with the U.S., four senior NATO officials said, a move that could escalate tensions with the Taliban demanding full withdrawal.

"There will be no full withdrawal by allies by April-end," one of the officials told Reuters.

"Conditions have not been met," he said on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter. "And with the new U.S. administration, there will be

tweaks in the policy, the sense of hasty withdrawal which was prevalent will be addressed and we could see a much more calculated exit strategy."

The administration of then-President Donald Trump signed an agreement with the Taliban early last year calling for the withdrawal of all foreign troops by May in return for the insurgents fulfilling certain security guarantees.

Mr. Trump hailed the accord – which did not include the Afghan government – as the end of two decades of war. He reduced U.S. troops to 2,500 by this month, the

fewest since 2001. Plans on what will happen after April are now being considered and likely to be a top issue at a key NATO meeting in February, the NATO sources said.

Violence continues

The positions of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization are becoming increasingly important after the alliance was sidelined by Mr. Trump, diplomats and experts say.

Peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban began in September in Doha, but violence has remained high.

"No NATO ally wants to

stay in Afghanistan longer than necessary, but we have been clear that our presence remains conditions-based," said NATO spokeswoman Oana Lungescu.

No NATO decision has been made, she said, adding that a February meeting of NATO Defence Ministers meeting could not be preempted.

NATO continues to call on all sides to "seize this historic opportunity for peace," Ms. Lungescu said.

Around 10,000 troops, including Americans, are in Afghanistan, she said.

The Taliban have become increasingly concerned in re-

cent weeks about the possibility that Washington might change aspects of the agreement and keep troops in the country beyond May, two Taliban sources told Reuters.

"We conveyed our apprehensions, but they assured us of honouring and acting on the Doha accord. What's going on, on the ground in Afghanistan, is showing something else. And that's why we decided to send our delegations to take our allies into confidence," said a Taliban leader in Doha.

A Taliban delegation this week visited Iran and Russia, and the leader said they were contacting China.

"We have honoured our profound ties of history and friendship with the people of Hong Kong, and we have stood up for freedom and autonomy," Prime Minister Boris Johnson said of the scheme this week.

The website for visa applications went online at 5 p.m. in Hong Kong (0900 GMT).

China furious

China has reacted with fury to the visa offer, announcing that it would no longer recognise the passports as a legitimate travel or ID document.

The move was largely

Britain opens visa scheme for millions in Hong Kong

Eligible persons can work in U.K., seek citizenship after 5 years

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

HONG KONG

A new visa scheme offering millions of people in Hong Kong a pathway to British citizenship went live on Sunday as the city's former colonial master opens its doors to those wanting to escape China's crackdown on dissent.

Anyone with a British National (Overseas) passport and their dependents can now apply online for a visa allowing them to live and work in the U.K. After five years, they can apply for citizenship.

The immigration scheme is a response to Beijing's decision last year to impose a sweeping national security law on Hong Kong to snuff out the huge and often violent democracy protests.

Britain has accused China of tearing up its promise ahead of Hong Kong's 1997 handover that the financial hub would maintain key liberties and autonomy for 50 years, and has argued it has a moral duty to protect its former subjects.

"We have honoured our profound ties of history and friendship with the people of Hong Kong, and we have stood up for freedom and autonomy," Prime Minister Boris Johnson said of the scheme this week.

The website for visa applications went online at 5 p.m. in Hong Kong (0900 GMT).



New route: Thousands of protesters marching near the Hong Kong harbour, in this file photo. • AP

symbolic as residents tend to use their own passports or ID cards to leave the city. But Beijing said it was prepared to take "further measures", raising fears authorities might try to stop people from Hong Kong from leaving for Britain.

On Sunday, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of China's State Council said it strongly condemned the British' violating its promise not to give BN(O) passport holders right of residence. "This is a flagrant offence of China's sovereignty, and we firmly oppose it," it said.

In a commentary, China's state-run Xinhua news agency accused Britain of having a "colonial mentality".

Applications soar

The visa offer is available to a huge number of people – about 70% of Hong Kong's 7.5 million population.

Applications for BN(O) passports have skyrocketed more than 300% since the national security law was imposed last July, with 733,000 registered holders as of mid-January.

Britain predicts up to

1,54,000 Hong Kongers could arrive over the next year and as many as 3,22,000 over five years, bringing an estimated "net benefit" of up to £2.9 billion (\$4 billion).

The BN(O) passport is a legacy of Hong Kong's return to China. Many Hong Kong residents at the time wanted Britain to grant them full citizenship but China was opposed to the move.

The BN(O) was a compromise, allowing Hong Kong residents born before 1997 the right to stay in Britain for six months at a time, but with no working or settling rights.

Stella, a former marketing professional, plans to move to Britain with her husband and three-year-old son.

"The national security law in 2020 gave us one last kick because the provisions are basically criminalising free speech," she told AFP, asking to use just her first name.

Under the visa scheme, those hoping to move must show they have the funds to sustain both themselves and their dependents for at least six months.

ELSEWHERE



Vietnam ruling party re-elects leader Trong

HANOI

Vietnam's ruling Communist Party chief Nguyen Phu Trong was re-elected Sunday – a victory that makes him the most powerful leader in decades. Mr. Trong, a 76-year-old pro-China conservative who is rumoured to be in poor health, was given the nod after a week of closed-door talks at the twice-a-decade Communist Party congress. It will be his third term. AFP

Pearl's family to challenge murder acquittals by SC

They will file a review plea in the court

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

ISLAMABAD

The family of American journalist Daniel Pearl will challenge an order by Pakistan's top court to release a British-born militant acquitted of masterminding his kidnapping and brutal murder in 2002.

They join both the federal government and Sindh provincial government in launching a plea for the latest verdict to be reviewed.

Lawyers for Pearl's family have argued that Sheikh played a crucial role in organising the abduction and detention of the journalist before ordering his captors to kill him.

Trump parts ways with impeachment lawyers

The move raises uncertainty about his defence strategy as Senate trial is set to begin next week

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

Former President Donald Trump has parted ways with his lead impeachment lawyers just over a week before his Senate trial is set to begin, two people familiar with the situation said on Saturday.

Both insisted on anonymity to discuss private conversations. One said new additions to the legal team were expected to be announced in a day or two.

The upheaval injects fresh uncertainty into the makeup and strategy of Mr. Trump's defence team as he prepares to face charges that he incited the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6.

However, all but five Senate Republicans this week voted in favour of an effort to dismiss the trial before it even started, making clear a conviction of the former Presi-

dent is unlikely regardless of his defence team.

Donald Trump

dent is unlikely regardless of his defence team.

Greg Harris and Johnny Gasser, two former federal prosecutors from South Ca-

rolina, are also off the team, one of the people said.

Divergence of opinion

According to a different person with knowledge of the legal hires, Mr. Bowers and Ms. Barbier left the team because Mr. Trump wanted them to use a defence that relied on allegations of election fraud, and the lawyers were not willing to do so.

Mr. Trump has struggled to find attorneys willing to defend him.

He is set to stand trial the week of February 8 on a charge that he incited his

supporters to storm Congress before President Joe Biden's inauguration in an attempt to halt the peaceful transition of power.

Republicans and Mr. Trump aides have made clear that they intend to make a simple argument in the trial: Trump's trial is unconstitutional because he is no longer in office.

While Republicans in Washington had seemed eager to part ways with Mr. Trump, they have since eased off their criticism, weary of angering the former President's loyal voter base.

WHO team visits Wuhan market to find virus clues

It was linked to many early infections

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WUHAN

A World Health Organization team looking into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic on Sunday visited the food market in the Chinese city of Wuhan that was linked to many early infections.



WHO team at the closed Huanan seafood market in Wuhan on Sunday. • AFP

bers were also seen walking through the Baishazhou market – one of the largest wet markets in Wuhan – surrounded by a large entourage of Chinese officials.

The members, with expertise in veterinary medicine, virology, food safety and epidemiology, have so far visited two hospitals at the centre of the early outbreak – Wuhan Jinyintan Hospital and the HuBei Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine Hospital.

The mission has become politically charged, as China seeks to avoid blame for alleged missteps in its early response to the outbreak.

A single visit by scientists is unlikely to confirm the virus's origins.

GOP Senators offer cheaper stimulus plan

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

A group of 10 Republican Senators have urged President Joe Biden to propose an alternative to his massive COVID-19 relief plan, arguing that their approach could garner the bipartisan support he has sought.

Senator Susan Collins, a moderate Republican from Maine, said on Twitter that she had joined the group, which asked the President in a letter on Friday for a meeting to discuss their plan.

"We've received the letter and we certainly will be reviewing it," Brian Deese, director of the President's National Economic Council, told CNN's State of the Union on Sunday.

He said Mr. Biden was "open to ideas" but that action was needed immediately.

The Republicans' plan, according to reports, would be around \$600 billion, which is far smaller than the President's \$1.9 trillion proposal. Many Democrats may find the Republican's alternative plan difficult to accept.

Government of Odisha Sports and Youth Services Department C-1, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751012

No.SYS-CSS-CCSP-0002-2021-741 / Bhubaneswar Dated January 29, 2021

Short Advertisement

A Khelo India State Centre of Excellence (KISE) is being set up at Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar. The KISE will be equipped with high quality sports science equipment and manpower for providing best in-class training to the athletes of selected sports disciplines. Applications are invited from eligible applicants for the purely contractual post of Head of Sports and Exercise Science (No. of posts-1) and Sports Medicine Doctor (No. of posts-1).

Detailed job description, qualification and terms and conditions for the posts are mentioned in the Long Advertisement available at

<https://department.sportsodisha.gov.in/>.

The last date for submission of applications with all documents by registered/speed post addressed to 'Deputy Secretary to Government, Sports & Youth Services Department, C-1, Nayapalli, Odisha, Bhubaneswar, PIN- 751012' is February 15, 2021. The envelope containing the documents to be superscribed with the Advertisement No. and Date and post applied for.

TT-10:

Deputy Secretary to Government

OIPR-29001/11/0011/2021

APPOINTMENT

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY KAKINADA KAKINADA-533 003, AP, INDIA

'100th Test at Chennai very special'

Root talks about the milestone and how his journey began in India in 2012

EXCLUSIVE

G. VISWANATH

Joe Root is all set to join a pantheon of 14 England cricketers who have played 100-plus Test matches, when he leads his side in the opening match of the four-Test series against India at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium on February 5 (Friday).

The 30-year-old from Yorkshire, who made his Test debut in Nagpur eight winters ago scoring 73 and 20 not out, and has 584 runs from six Tests against India at 53.09, spoke to *The Hindu* ahead of what promises to be a memorable occasion.

Excerpts:

On the landmark: It's great to come full circle and be back here [in India]. The way it started on that first tour in 2012, it was a real eye-opener for me, learning to play spin, playing with some great players and strong opposition. To come back to Chennai and play my 100th Test is very special. I can't wait.

Batting in India: You've got to be prepared to bat for long periods. When you get in, especially in the first innings, you've got to really make it count. That's what we'll be aiming to do. Hopefully, we can stay in the game for as long as possible



Full of confidence: Joe Root, who has a good record in India and performed exceptionally well in the series against Sri Lanka recently, will look to continue in the same vein. ■ FILE PHOTO

and take every Test deep against a quality side.

You've got to be patient, especially as an English player when you are used to playing mainly against seam.

You've got to be accepting [of the fact] the ball will turn and pass the bat. You're allowed to get it wrong on occasions, but you've got to stay calm and be quite clear about where you're going to score your runs. I think it's really important to be able to

trust your defence and also have clarity of where you want to score your boundaries.

Wicket-taking struggles of the past: In the past we have struggled to take 20 wickets, especially away from home.

But I think we've discovered a way of doing that (take 20 wickets). We've also become more consistent and we make big first innings runs. We have now gone six or seven times past the 400 mark

in the last 12 or so Tests, which is a great achievement and something that we need to keep doing if we're going to seriously compete in away conditions.

On the team: We've got a very ambitious group of players who are willing to learn and want to get better all the time. We are open to new thinking and learning from other sides and players who have had success in similar conditions.

'Don't know how we're going to get Kohli out'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI

England all-rounder Moeen Ali said he doesn't know how it was going to tackle Virat Kohli in the upcoming Tests against India. Moeen also felt the batting maestro will be extra motivated to fire after missing his team's incredible series win in Australia.

"How do we get him out? He's obviously an amazing player, world-class, he's very motivated to do well and

I'm sure he'll be even more motivated after they did well in Australia and he had to leave for the birth of his child," said Moeen at a video conference.

"I don't know how we're going to get him out because I don't think he has any sort of weakness, but we have a good bowling attack, some pace in the line-up."

"He's a great guy and a good friend – we don't talk too much about cricket. We do a bit but not too much."

■ **Fans' entry a 'good possibility' for second Test**

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) will meet on Monday to decide on letting in crowds and media for the first two Tests here following an announcement by the State Government allowing 50% of the stadium to be filled by spectators for all sporting events.

The Hindu learnt from TNCA sources that while it would be very hard to allow crowds for the first Test,

beginning February 5, there was a "good possibility" of spectators being allowed for the second Test.

"We will discuss among ourselves and then hold talks with the BCCI. We are trying very hard to allow media in for the first two Tests. They need not get central accreditation. We can give them accreditation," the source said.

The TNCA was confident that it could maintain adequate social distancing

between spectators for the second Test.

"It is almost impossible to allow crowds for the first Test since there is very little time now to make the preparations.

"But we will certainly try to get the crowds in for the second Test," the source said.

There is a three-day gap between the end of the first Test and the beginning of the second.

"Actually, we don't have enough time and it will be a

tight squeeze to make the arrangements in the stands for the second Test since we can't go in there during the first Test."

Another stakeholder

The ECB is another stakeholder and it had requested for "no crowd", ahead of the series.

Following a request that is likely to come from the TNCA, the BCCI will hold discussions with the ECB.

This appears to be a fast-changing situation.

Foakes eager to make his chance count

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

The ball bounces past the bat and rears like a cobra raising its hood. And you got to be quick... in fact, very fast. You need to be an artist with an incredible skillset to stand up to spinners in the sub-continent.

Catches go down in a millisecond and a match changes course. It's the job of a specialist. One of the finest wicketkeepers of our times, England's Jack Russell rates Ben Foakes the 'best' keeper in the world while standing up'. India's Wriddhiman Saha

would disagree but it still is high praise for the 27-year-old Foakes.

With Jos Buttler slated to fly back after the first Test, Foakes is looking at three Tests as a wicketkeeper-batsman, considering England is looking at Jonny Bairstow as a specialist batsman these days.

Foakes started his Test journey in Galle, 2018, and scored a hundred (107) on debut. After a lacklustre tour of the West Indies in 2019, he found himself in international wilderness. He still averages 41.50 in five Tests while

his keeping has always been exceptional.

In a chat here on Sunday, Foakes spoke about the "excitement and anticipation" about playing in India. "It is an incredible place to play," he said. "I have spent a lot of time in the sub-continent. Had success in Sri Lanka. India is a bit different."

Foakes dwelt on the intense competition for the slot of a wicketkeeper-batsman and talked about working with Buttler, his competitor, "You got to help each other out and do your best when you get your chance."

Watch Foakes behind the stumps. You will see an artist in action.

Healthy competition is good."

On the challenges of keeping wickets in the sub-continent, Foakes said, "You got to stand up for long hours, concentrate for long periods, and you know that the ball will turn sharply and you got to react quickly."

And he understands the nature of the beast when it comes to selecting a wicket-keeper. "However good you are as a 'keeper, you got to contribute with the bat."

Watch Foakes behind the stumps. You will see an artist in action.

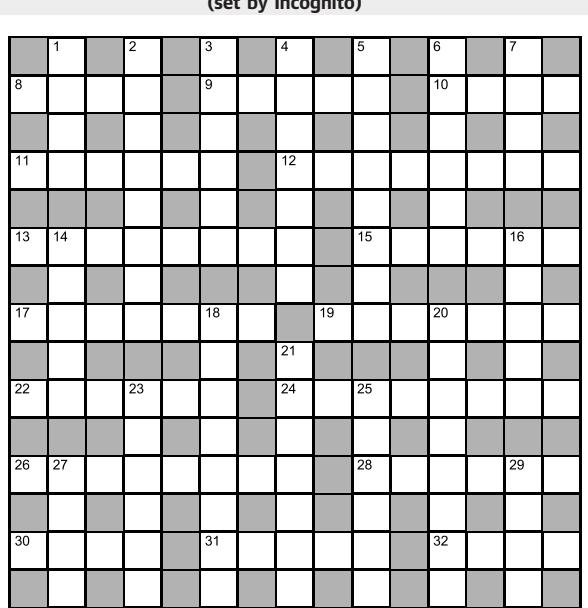


Ready for the test: Foakes, who will replace Buttler after the first game, is aware of the challenges he will face in India. ■ EC

TH CROSSWORD + 13159

(set by Incognito)

Display keystrokes of genius — solve Crosswords and Sudoku online:
@ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>



ACROSS

- 8 Aunt cooked fish (4)
- 9 Superannuate, give up subsequent right, and join again (5)
- 10 Reportedly bear expenditure for an old Peruvian empire (4)
- 11 Endlessly have a North American smoke (6)
- 12 Of the same length at one time, not now (2,6)
- 13 Balkhi said "It's free" (8)
- 15 Stars had two axes after a festive occasion (6)

- 17 South-western European found when Stalin's secret police chief hid in Indiana (7)
- 19 Complain before retrograde toilet is used for joint movement (7)
- 22 Chinese minority hiding in Norman church (6)
- 24 Unusual kind of gate that Lamba went back around (8)
- 26 Scury cardsharp... (8)
- 28 ... coaches rakes, perhaps (6)
- 30 Ancient mariner's poem returned to Arab chief (4)
- 31 Rewired Sion East for sound (5)
- 32 Type of security, carried in vehicle, for ruler (4)

DOWN

- 1 Cougar, which when beheaded, represents Shiva's consort (4)
- 2 Ask Raman to go round greeting in Indian style (8)
- 3 Open up a discussion about another topic; "Alternative way of spelling Bharuch" (6)
- 4 Cut short daredevil act in front of journalist (7)
- 5 Para-legal lost an article, mutated, and got a disease (8)
- 6 Sailing adrift, settler leaves message (6)
- 7 One revolutionary can be a pain (4)
- 14 Darkest shadow observed when umbrella loses length (5)
- 16 With damaged sax outside Head Office, a South African clicks in this (5)
- 18 Dive endlessly under water to get breathing apparatus (8)
- 20 Average javelin, in a way to say (8)
- 21 Lawyer's profit with a cheap buy (7)
- 23 Commanding officer consumed rice cooked for Tully, the orator (6)
- 25 Not wholly great to follow a madman to get spice (6)
- 27 Animal that followed not only Mary, but also Charles (4)
- 29 Either way, it is Indian bread (4)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

No.SS5975 Distribution: www.mgfeatures.com

Solution to puzzle 13158

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

S	C	A	A	K	A	S		
O	K	R	L	Y	D	I	A	S
U	S	U	A	N	L	M		
S	A	A	M	G	N	E		
N	N	N	A	A	E			
E	T	O	R	T	O			
V	B	T	R	E				
M	O	D	E	M	I			
J	I	O	T	I	Y			

SCANS TO PLAY

Display keystrokes of genius — solve Crosswords and Sudoku online:
@ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCANS TO PLAY

Display keystrokes of genius — solve Crosswords and Sudoku online:
@ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCANS TO PLAY

Display keystrokes of genius — solve Crosswords and Sudoku online:
@ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCANS TO PLAY

Display keystrokes of genius — solve Crosswords and Sudoku online:
@ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCANS TO PLAY

Display keystrokes of genius — solve Crosswords and Sudoku online:
@ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCANS TO PLAY

Display keystrokes of genius — solve Crosswords and Sudoku online:
@ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCANS TO PLAY

Display keystrokes of genius — solve Crosswords and Sudoku online:
@ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCANS TO PLAY

Display keystrokes of genius — solve Crosswords and Sudoku online:
@ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCANS TO PLAY

Display keystrokes of genius — solve Crosswords and Sudoku online:
@ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCANS TO PLAY

Display keystrokes of genius — solve Crosswords and Sudoku online:
@ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCANS TO PLAY

Display keystrokes of genius — solve Crosswords and Sudoku online:
@ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

TV PICKS

ISL: Star Sports 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Garcia spoiling for Pacquiao fight

LOS ANGELES

Up-and-coming US lightweight Ryan Garcia said on Instagram on Saturday that he wants to get in the ring with Philippine icon Manny Pacquiao in an official bout. The 22-year-old Garcia survived an early knockdown to stop Luke Campbell in the seventh round earlier this month in Dallas to claim the interim World Boxing Council lightweight title. AFP

Ganguly discharged from hospital

SHIV SAHAY SINGH

KOLKATA

Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president Sourav Ganguly was, on Sunday, discharged from a city hospital three days after undergoing an angioplasty.

This was the second angioplasty performed on the former Indian captain during January.

Ganguly was admitted to Apollo Hospitals in the city on January 27 after discomfort and chest pain.

The angioplasty was performed on January 28. Two stents were placed in two arteries during the process.

Harikrishna beats Donchenko

RAKESH RAO

NEW DELHI

P. Harikrishna proved his superiority over Germany's Alexander Donchenko in 50 moves and emerged as the only winner of the 12th round of Tata Steel Masters chess tournament at Wijk aan Zee, in the Netherlands.

Saturday's victory took Harikrishna's tally to six points and placed him in the tied seventh place in the 14-man field.

With a round to go, Anish Giri continued to lead with 8 points, half-a-point ahead of Fabiano Caruana, Alireza Firouzja and Jorden van Foreest.

The results (12th round): P. Harikrishna (6) bt Alexander Donchenko (Ger, 3.5); Anish Giri (Ned, 8) drew with Alireza Firouzja (FIDE, 7.5).

Andrey Esipenko (Rus, 7) drew with Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 7.5); Radostaw Wojtaszek (Pol, 4.5) drew with Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 6.5).

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 5) drew with Jan-Krzysztof (Pol, 5); Fabiano Caruana (USA, 7.5) drew with David Anton Guijar (Esp, 4.5); Nils Grandelius (Swe, 6) drew with Aryan Tari (Nor, 5.5).

Anita takes 68kg gold

WRESTLING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AGRA

Asian champion Divya Kakran's return after 11 months was over in six minutes as the 22-year-old failed to reproduce the form she had hoped for, crashing out in the qualification round itself of the 68kg category on day two of the 23rd Women's Wrestling National Championships here on Sunday.

Kakran, who last competed at the Asian Championship in February 2020 winning gold, was knocked out by eventual silver medalist Rajani even as veteran Anita Sheoran, at 36, proved she still had the moves, claiming gold.

Also winning gold was Nandini Salokhe in the 53kg weight category, which Vi-

Chennaiyin's woes unending; Hyderabad goes third

Sandaza and Chianese find the target for HFC

ISL 2020-21

SPORTS BUREAU

Chennaiyin FC's woes showed no signs of ending as the side suffered a 2-0 defeat to Hyderabad FC in an Indian Super League match at the Tilak Maidan Stadium, Vasco, on Sunday.

A much-improved second half from Chennaiyin notwithstanding, Hyderabad scored once in either half, through Fran Sandaza and Joel Chianese, to climb to third position with 22 points from 15 matches. Chennaiyin remains sixth with 16 points.

Fine strike

Spaniard Sandaza put Hyderabad ahead with a fine strike in the 28th minute. A one-two between Joao Victor

and Sandaza saw the latter go past the central defender Deepak Tangri and unleash a deft left-footer past 'keeper Vishal Kaith. But for the goal, both teams played largely uninspiring football and it was more or less even.

Getting better

Chennaiyin head coach Csaba Laszlo brought on Edwin Vanspaul and Fathkulo Fatkhulov for the second period and his team's play lifted.

Minutes after the restart, defender Eli Sabia strode forward, exchanged a pass with Esma Goncalves, and struck fiercely from distance, but it crashed off the crossbar after beating 'keeper Laxmikant Kattimani.

Chennaiyin had a golden chance to equalise, in the

78th minute, when Lallianzuala Chhangte's exquisite cross from the right found forward Rahim Ali.

All that Ali had to do was to direct the ball goalward, but he sliced it wide.

Hyderabad soon doubled the lead, with Victor's second assist of the match enabling Chianese to come up with a clinical finish into the corner of the net. The goal ensured a comeback was beyond Chennaiyin.

The results: Hyderabad FC 2 (Sandaza 28, Chianese 83) bt Chennaiyin FC 0.

ATKMB 3 (Mercelinho Leite Pereira 59, Roy Krishna 65-pen, 87) bt Kerala Blasters 2 (Gary Hooper 14, Costa Nhamoinesu 51).

Monday's match: Odisha FC vs Jamshedpur FC, 7.30 p.m.

Dance of delight: Sandaza, left, celebrates after scoring the opener. ■ ISL/SPORTSPICS



Dance of delight: Sandaza, left, celebrates after scoring the opener. ■ ISL/SPORTSPICS

Messi – the most expensive athlete

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BARCELONA

Lionel Messi's most recent contract with Barcelona is worth up to €55 million over four seasons, the *El Mundo* newspaper reported on Sunday.

The Spanish daily said it had access to the document Messi signed with the Catalan club in 2017, which included fixed incomes and variables that could reach nearly €138 million each season. The newspaper said it is the most expensive contract ever signed by an athlete.

Messi would have to pay about half of that amount in taxes in Spain.

The report said the 33-year-old player has already secured more than €510 million of the total contract. The newspaper also details how Messi



Lionel Messi. ■ AP

rewarded the club over the years, having helped it win more than 30 titles.

Messi has been with Barcelona for nearly two decades but asked to leave at the end of last season after saying he wasn't happy with the direction the club was headed. He had his request denied but will be able to leave for free when this season ends.

Gill takes crown with a round to spare

Third title win in a row this season for the JK Tyre star

INRC

RAYAN ROZARIO

COIMBATORE



On top: Gaurav Gill and his co-driver Musa Sherif celebrate their victory. ■ RAYAN ROZARIO

Team JK Tyre's star Gaurav Gill (co-driver Musa Sherif) raced to yet another title win in the FMSCI INRC Rally of Coimbatore for four wheelers at the Kethanur windmill farm here on Sunday.

It was his third title win in a row this season and was enough to seal the championship crown with a round to spare. Going into the final day with a little over a minute's lead over his nearest rival R. Bikku Babu (Bonny Thomas), the three-time APRC champion chose to play it wise in both the stages.

Issues continue
The minor issues that cut short his speed the other day

Venus, Ostapenko make winning starts in Australia

TENNIS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MELBOURNE



Venus Williams. ■ AFP

Ageless Venus Williams opened her 2021 season with a 6-1, 6-3 thrashing of Arantxa Rus on Sunday, while former top 10 players Jelena Ostapenko and Caroline Garcia also scored wins.

Williams, 40, showed few signs of having spent 14 days in quarantine in her first-round romp at the Yarra Valley Classic, grinding down her Dutch opponent in 65 minutes – an amazing 27 years after making her professional debut.

The tournament is one of two WTA events being played concurrently at Melbourne Park as players prepare for the Australian Open Grand Slam starting on February 8.

Former Australian Open semifinalist Danielle Collins

Top stars keen to participate in Olympics

Osaka, Djokovic, Nadal ready for the 'special event', but virus a concern

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

MELBOURNE

Japanese sensation Naomi Osaka, Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal said on Sunday that they remain keen to compete in the delayed Tokyo Olympics, and would be guided by what the health experts tell them.

Three-time Grand Slam champion Osaka admitted being worried by a recent poll that found 80% of the Japanese public were opposed to Tokyo hosting the event this year because of the pandemic.

"My concern would be the general safety of everyone else because you're opening the country," Osaka said.

The 23-year-old has been the poster girl of the 2020



Djokovic. ■ GETTY IMAGES



Nadal. ■ REUTERS

Olympics and still hopes to represent Japan at her home Games.

"I missed out on the last one. Playing in Tokyo would be very special to me."

World No. 2 Rafael Nadal echoed Osaka's sentiments and hoped to play, but said health experts should have the final say.

"What we have to do is just follow the instructions of what the people who really have the right knowledge of all this stuff give to us," he told reporters on Sunday.

World No. 1 Djokovic has played in three Olympics, winning a bronze at the 2008 Beijing Games. "I am too keen to be in Tokyo. I am personally planning to go for the Olympic Games. I'm really hoping that the Olympics will happen," he said. "It's going to be a lot of people obviously. Far more than a tennis tournament. It's obviously not up to me to talk about organisation or what can be done, should be done, what will be done."

Antonsen and Tai reign

BADMINTON

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BANGKOK

Top-ranked Tai Tzu-ying won the women's badminton World Tour Final here on Sunday, blocking reigning Olympic champion Carolina Marin's bid for a hat-trick of titles in three weeks.

The all-Danish men's singles final was equally nail-biting as Anders Antonsen denied Viktor Axelsen a third tournament victory in three weeks.

In men's doubles, seventh-ranked Lee Yang and



Lee So-hee and Wang Chi-Lin. ■ AFP

Wang Chi-Lin won their third title in three weeks. **The scores (finals):**

Men: Anders Antonsen (Den) 21-16, 5-21, 21-17; **Doubles:** Lee Yang & Wang Chi-Lin (Tpe) bt Mohammad Ahsan & Hendra Setiawan (Ind) 21-17, 23-21.

Women: Tai Tzu-ying (Tpe) bt Carolina Marin (Esp) 21-21, 21-19; **Doubles:** Lee So-hee and Shin Seung-chan (Kor) bt Kim So-yong & Kong Hee-yong (Kor) 21-21, 26-24, 21-19. **Mixed doubles:** Sapsiree Taerattanachai & Dechapol Puavaranukroh (Tha) Seo Seung-jae & Chae Yoo-jung (Kor) 21-18, 8-21, 21-8.

Anita takes 68kg gold

WRESTLING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AGRA

Asian champion Divya Kakran's return after 11 months was over in six minutes as the 22-year-old failed to reproduce the form she had hoped for, crashing out in the qualification round itself of the 68kg category on day two of the 23rd Women's Wrestling National Championships here on Sunday.

Kakran, who last competed at the Asian Championship in February 2020 winning gold, was knocked out by eventual silver medalist Rajani even as veteran Anita Sheoran, at 36, proved she still had the moves, claiming gold.

Nandini Salokhe in the 53kg weight category, which Vi-

nesh Phogat wrestles in. Vi-nesh, who has already qualified for Tokyo Olympics, is currently training in Hung-ary. Nandini overpowered Mamta Ranji 8-0 in the final. In the heavier categories, Nisha retained the 65kg, defeating Monika on technical superiority 12-0 while Kiran stayed the 76kg champion. **The results (53kg):** 1. Nandini (Mah), 2. Mamta Ranji (Del), 3. P. Bidyarni (Man) and Pooja Jaat (MP); **59kg:** 1. Sarita (RSPB), 2. Sanju Devi (Har), 3. Neha (Del) and Anjali (Har); **65kg:** 1. Nisha (RSPB), 2. Monika (Raj), 3. Jaspreet Kaur (Pun) and Nikki (RSPB); **68kg:** 1. Anita (Har), 2. Rajani (UP), 3. Rau-nika (Del) and Ritu Malik (RSPB); **76kg:** 1. Kiran (RSPB), 2. Ranji (HP), 3. Pooja (Har) and Kajal (Utk).

Team ranking: 1. Haryana (200 pts), 2. RSPB (163 pts), 3. Delhi (119 pts).

Yash Vardhan and Deepanshu shine

Man-of-the-match Yash Vardhan Dalal picked up five wickets and scored a crucial 72 while Deepanshu Chaudhary slammed a match-winning 121 as SN Dubey Academy beat Sonnet Club by 62 runs to lift the 7th SN Dubey memorial under-16 tournament.

Chaudhary was also named the best batsman of the tournament, Krish Singhani best bowler, Aditya Dubey best upcoming cricketer and Tarun Bishu named player of the tournament.

The scores: KDA 214/8 in 35 overs (Moksh Mudgil 80, Ruvik Malhotra 5/43) bt Push Academy 111 in 27 overs (Sachin Verma 2/8, Krishna Bomba 2/4). **Arshdeep scalps three** Man-of-the-Match Arshdeep picked up three wickets and Reyansh Malhotra scored 42 as Ace Cricket Academy beat RKB Academy by two wickets in the Marathon Cricket League.

The scores: RKB Academy 243/6 in 40 overs (Deepanshu Chaudhary 121, Yash Vardhan Dalal 72) bt Sonnet Club 181 in 35.3 overs (Aditya Bhandari 49, Yashvardhan Dalal 5/35, Mayank Janglu 3/61).