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When you fall ill, you go to a pharmacy. You go to a nearby clinic. You go to a hospital. When you want knowledge, you go to a library. You go to a coaching centre. You go to schools and colleges. When you feel hungry, you go to the supermarket. You go to a restaurant. You go to a food delivery app. When you want to be entertained, you go to the movies. You go to concerts. You go to an OTT platform. When you want space, you go to another room. You go to a park. You go on a holiday. When you feel warm, you go to a clothing store. When you feel cold, you go to a different section in that clothing store. When you feel lonely, you go to your social media page. When you feel depressed, you go to your therapist. When you feel helpless, you go to your Gods. For every one of your needs, there are several places you can go to. **They have just the one.**

*For some indigenous tribes, the jungle is the answer  
to their every need. The only answer. Don't take it away from them.*

THE HINDU

World Wildlife Day, 3rd March, 2021

Theme for the year – Forests and  
Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet



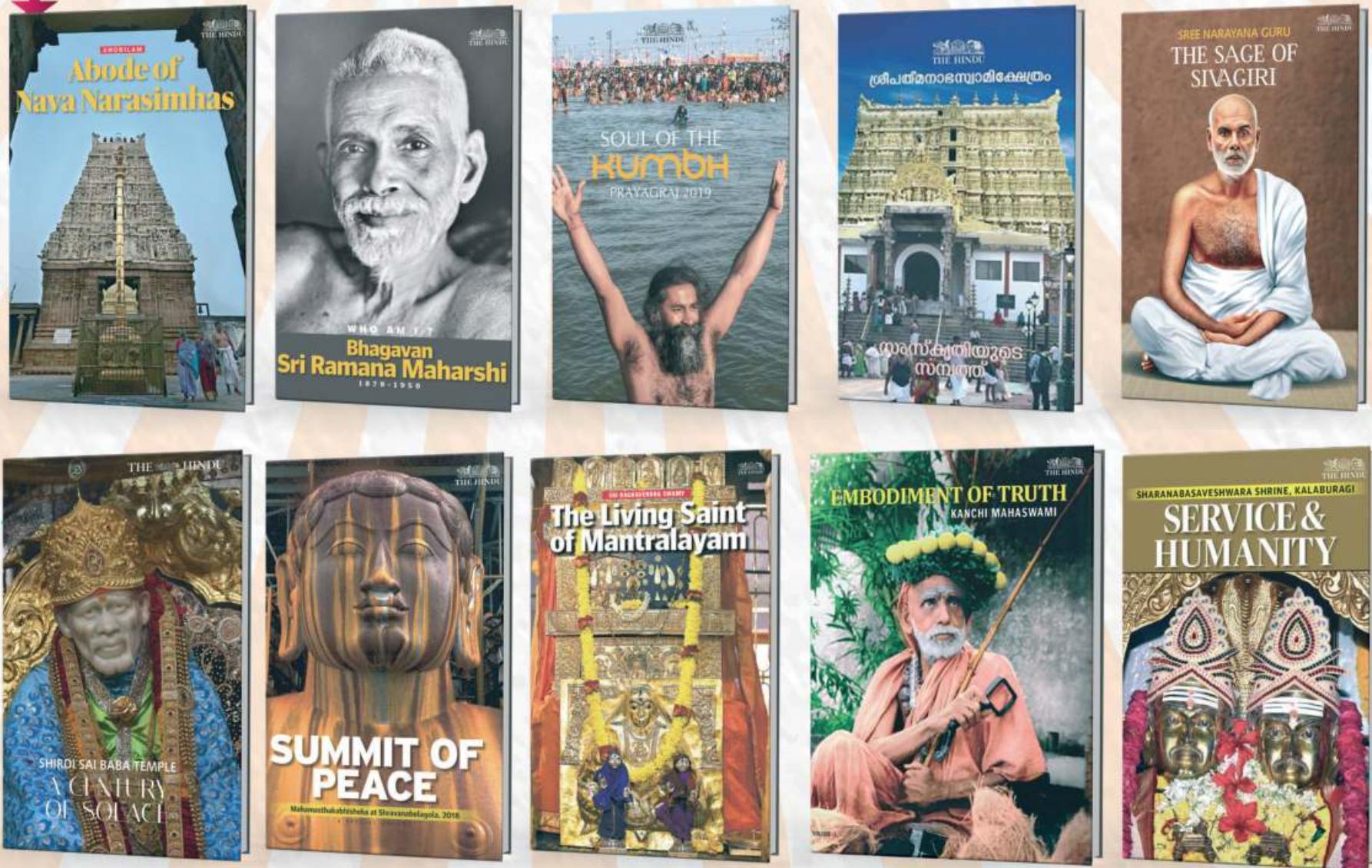
To know more about  
different tribes in India,  
follow the exclusive feature series  
in *The Hindu*.



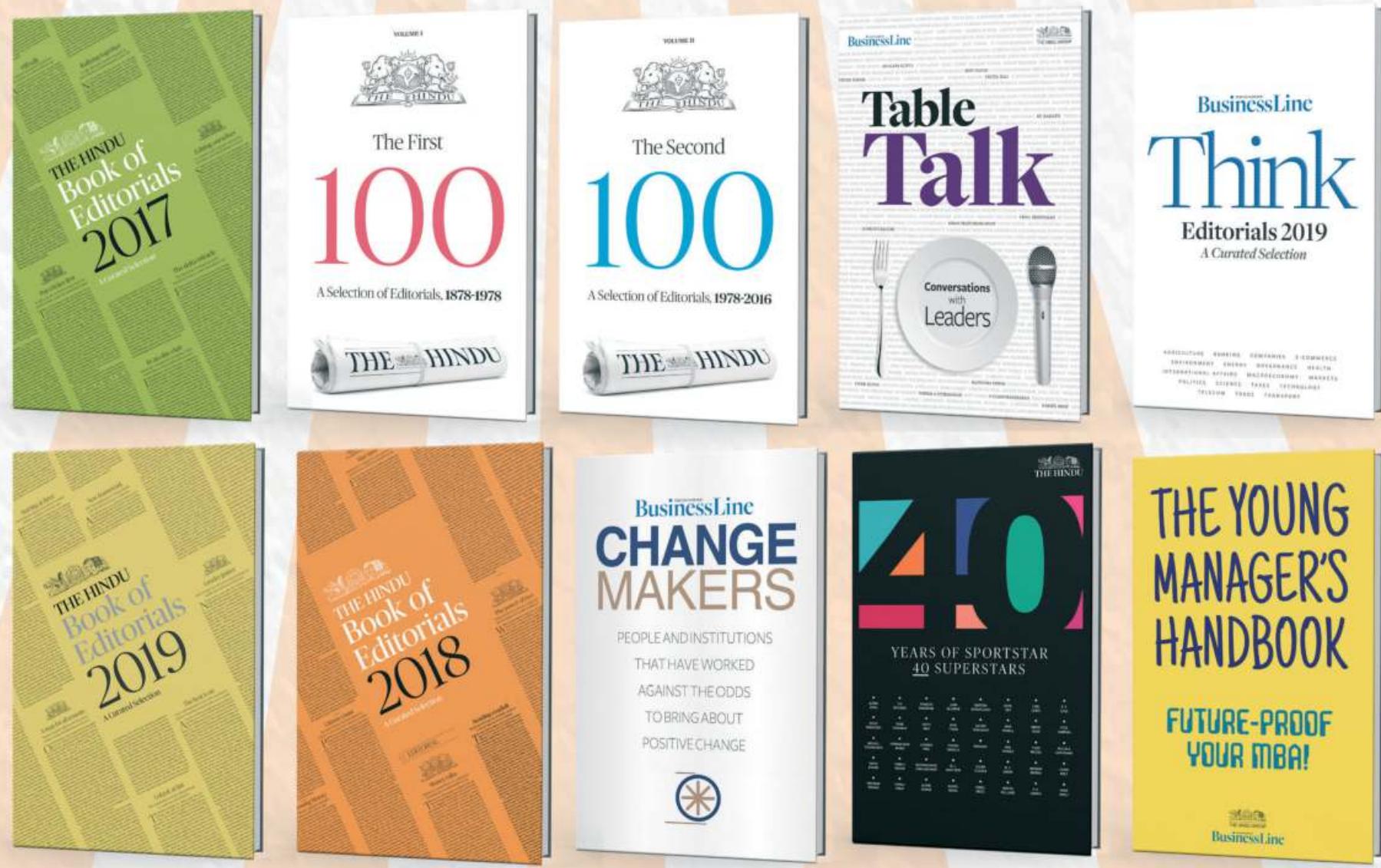
SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS FROM THE HINDU GROUP

# Our collection, your discovery

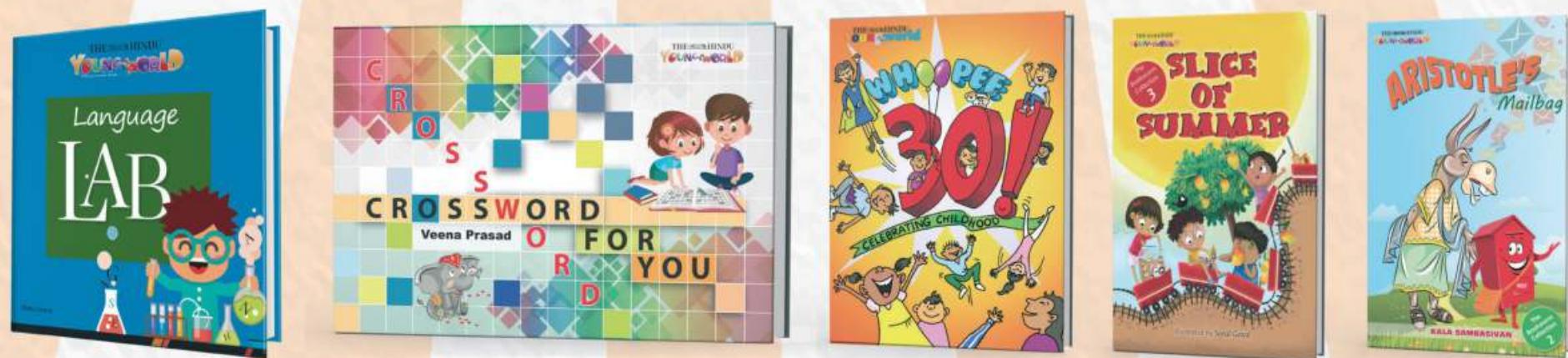
## SHRINE SERIES



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Will bring law to nullify CAA in Assam if voted to power: Priyanka  
page 9



Farm unions plan to campaign against BJP in poll-bound States  
page 9



Kangana seeks transfer of cases to Shimla, fears threat to life  
page 10



Rahane says fourth Test pitch will also assist spinners  
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## NEARBY



Plea challenges cap on relief to minor victims' kin  
NEW DELHI  
The Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked the city government to respond to a plea by two parents, who lost their minor sons during the north-east Delhi riots, challenging the compensation cap of ₹5 lakh for death of minors.  
CITY ▶ PAGE 3

## Ghazipur border opened briefly to ease traffic

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi police on Tuesday closed the Ghazipur border hours after it reopened a part of NH 9 where farmers have been protesting against farm laws for over three months. Sources said the police took a call on opening the route in an attempt to ease traffic flow from Delhi to Ghaziabad.  
CITY ▶ PAGE 2

OPPORTUNITIES ▶ PAGE 5

## 4.34 lakh seniors get vaccinated

Vaccines available in country safe for use by people on blood thinners, says ICMR

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the country crossed 1.54 crore till 7 p.m. on Tuesday.

This includes 67,32,944 healthcare workers who have taken the first dose and 26,85,665 of them who have taken the second.

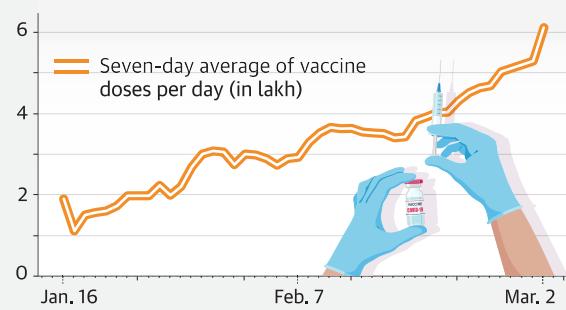
A total of 4,34,981 beneficiaries over 60 years of age have taken the vaccine so far, along with 60,020 aged 45 and above with comorbidities, according to data released by the Health Ministry.

At a press conference, Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said since Monday, the first day of the second phase of vaccination, 50 lakh registrations had been made on the CoWIN platform.

Indian Council of Medical Research Director-General Balram Bhargava said both

### Picking up

Two days after the commencement of the second phase of the COVID-19 vaccination drive, the average doses administered has increased to over 6.1 lakh doses a day



the vaccines available in India were safe for use by people on blood thinners. "There are some precautions to be followed which are routine and simple," he said.

V.K. Paul, member (health), NITI Aayog, said that taking the second dose of the vaccines was vital. "Only after that the vaccination is complete."

"Public compliance of COVID-appropriate behaviour

With the States such as Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Haryana registering a rise in number of cases, Mr. Bhushan said the Health Ministry had deputed teams to understand the reason for the surge. He said India had been witnessing a marginal rise for the past two weeks.

"Public compliance of COVID-appropriate behaviour

cannot be diluted. Avoid large gatherings, parties and weddings. These could be super-spreading events," Dr. Paul said.

To a question about some political leaders asking medical staff to vaccinate them at home instead of designated medical centres, Mr. Bhushan said, "We are aware of this incident in Karnataka, and this is not allowed as per protocol. A report has been sought from the State government on the incident".

R.S. Sharma, Chairman of the Empowered Group on COVID-19 vaccination, said the upgraded CoWIN system was ready for the registration of the large volume of beneficiaries "that we are expecting in the second phase". It is also geared to ensure data security and offer best safety measures against any cyberattacks."

BORDER VIGIL ▶ PAGE 8

BUFFER STOCK ▶ PAGE 10

## India and Japan back in new Sri Lanka port project

Private investor set to develop West Container Terminal

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO



Maritime matters: A view of the China-managed CIC Terminal that will be flanked by the East and West Container Terminals.

name an investor, according to officially published Cabinet decisions. Neither India nor Japan has officially commented on the offer, or on the said private investment from the countries.

According to official sources in New Delhi, Colombo had been in talks directly with the Adani Group, while the government "was not part of" the discussions.

Official sources in Colombo expressed surprise at the

mention of the Indian High Commission in the Cabinet decision, pointing out that it was the Government of Sri Lanka, and not a foreign investment.

Both India and Japan had expressed displeasure about Colombo "unilaterally" pulling out of the 2019 agreement.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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Emergency was a mistake, says Rahul

Bhutan plot: spotlight on woman who worked at Indian Embassy

U.P.: father of harassment victim killed

Centre garners ₹77,815 crore in spectrum auction, Jio top bidder

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said the Emergency imposed by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was a "mistake" but sought to differentiate the situation in 1975 and now in terms of "capture of democratic institutions".

He said what happened in 1975 was "wrong" but it was fundamentally different from the present where, he alleged, the RSS had "penetrated every institution, including judiciary, bureaucracy, election commission and the press".

Trial of three accused to begin at Thimpu court



SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

As a Thimpu court prepares for the opening of a trial against three prominent officials accused of plotting to topple and take over top jobs in the Supreme Court and the Royal Bhutan Army (RBA), the spotlight is on a woman who was a former protocol secretary at the Indian Embassy. Khandu Wangmo allegedly played a key part in the intrigues.

The arrested officials – Supreme Court judge Kuenlay

favouritism, misappropriation of RBG funds and fictitious documents to secure loans", according to the official Bhutanese newspaper *Kuensel*. All three were denied bail by the Thimpu 'Dzonkhag' Court on February 17, and are due to face trial, expected to begin this week.

Ms. Wangmo, a well-known figure in Thimpu as she dealt with senior officials in the Royal Court due to her work position at the Indian Embassy from 2012 to 2016, is accused of having conned a number of people into helping her.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW  
The father of a sexually harassed woman was shot dead in Uttar Pradesh allegedly by the main accused, who has been out on bail since 2018, and his associates on Monday.

Superintendent of Police Vineet Jaiswal said the man was shot by Gaurav Sharma and his friends at Naujarpur village of Sasni in Hathras district and he died on the way to hospital. A daughter of the deceased filed a police complaint, saying the accused had threatened her to withdraw the case.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Top buyers

A total of 2,308.80 MHz of spectrum worth about ₹3.92 lakh crore was put up for auction, and bids worth ₹77,814.00 crore were received for 855.60 MHz

Bidder	Total quantity (MHz)	Total amount (₹ crore)
Reliance Jio Infocomm	488.35	57,122.65
Bharti Airtel	355.45	18,698.75
Vodafone Idea	11.80	1,993.40

bidder, acquiring 488.35 MHz of spectrum for ₹57,122.65 crore, followed by Bharti Airtel, which bid for 355.45 MHz of spectrum for ₹18,698.75 crore.

The Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Jio was the biggest Vodafone Idea bid for on-

ly 11.8 MHz of airwaves for ₹1,993.40 crore.

The spectrum will be assigned to bidders for a period of 20 years.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## IN BRIEF



## Award for M.L. Khanna DAV Public School

NEW DELHI 'Sanjeevani-Embracing Life', the business for charity enterprise by M.L. Khanna DAV Public School in Dwarka, has been conferred the 'Best Gold Annual Report Prize' along with award money of \$1,250 by UK-based charity 'Teach a Man to Fish'.

## AUD invites applications for MBA admissions

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The School of Business, Public Policy and Social Entrepreneurship at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) has invited online applications for Master of Business Administration (MBA-2021-23). The university said that interested applicants can fill the application form by March 31 and sit for an entrance examination on April 11.

Eligible applicants would be required to take the written admission test which will consist of 150 multiple choice questions (MCQs) on verbal ability, analytical ability and general awareness, the university said. It added that based on the scores, candidates will be short-listed for interview.

## DU to issue digital degrees to 2017-19 graduates soon

'Digilocker database will help students access their records'

## SHINJINI GHOSH

NEW DELHI

In a bid to clear the backlog and facilitate students in receiving their degrees, Delhi University is expected to issue digital certificates to those who have graduated between 2017 and 2019 within one month.

The varsity recently had awarded digital degrees to over 1.78 lakh students during its 97th convocation held on February 27.

## First time

DU's Acting Vice-Chancellor P.C. Joshi told *The Hindu*, "It was for the first time that such digital degrees were awarded to undergraduate and postgraduate students with the click of a button on the convocation day itself."

A 'digilocker' database has also been created to facilitate students to access their records."

Academic records and marksheets of those who have graduated since 2017 have already been transferred to the digilocker database, senior DU officials said.

Elaborating on the digilocker database, D.S. Rawat, Dean (Examinations) of the varsity said, "It is a database where one can keep all academic documents. We have already transferred marksheets of those who graduated in the last three years. It got done around two weeks ago."

Data for those who grad-



DU recently awarded digital degrees to over 1.78 lakh students during its 97th convocation. ■ FILE PHOTO

Digilocker database is where one can keep all academic documents. We have already transferred marksheets of those who graduated in the last three years

D.S. RAWAT  
Dean (Examinations)

uated between 2017-2019 have been readied for issuance of digital degrees, added Mr. Rawat.

## Clear backlog

"Undergraduate and post-graduate digital degrees for those three years will be released soon. The data is ready. The printing of degrees of those who graduated in 2017 are also ready. Printing for the other two years are almost done and will be sent to colleges subsequently. This will help in clearing the backlog which has been accumulating over a long period of time," said Mr. Rawat.

Adding that PhD degrees cannot be issued digitally due to the different thesis titles, Mr. Rawat said, "Our aim is that by the time the 2021 convocation arrives, we are ready with both the digital and printed degrees for that batch. It will eliminate the delay that students usually face in receiving their degrees," explained Mr. Rawat.

Elaborating on the digilocker database, D.S. Rawat, Dean (Examinations) of the varsity said, "It is a database where one can keep all academic documents. We have already transferred marksheets of those who graduated in the last three years. It got done around two weeks ago."

Data for those who grad-

New forms for exam registration, seeking information like enrolment numbers, will also be issued in the upcoming semesters to ensure that anomalies in data collection can be rectified before the degrees are issued, officials said.

## Will avoid lapses

"Earlier, we used to take data from colleges and at times there were a few lapses. However, in the new forms, students will have to fill out their enrolment numbers as well as their names in Hindi. The university usually requires these two things from respective colleges. The admit cards and marksheets issued will also have the same details. The fact that students will have to repeat this process every semester, by the time they graduate and degrees are issued, the process will ensure that all the details are correct and rectified if required," explained Mr. Rawat.

Sources said that district police took a call on opening the route in an attempt to ease out traffic from Delhi to Ghaziabad side but installed the barricades again. The route opened around 5 a.m. and shut again around noon because of chaos that ensued.

The stretch has remained closed since January 26 when violence broke out during the farmers' tractor



Vehicular movement on one side of the Ghazipur border was partially restored on Tuesday, providing some relief to commuters. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

## Ghazipur border opens briefly

The stretch has remained closed since R-Day violence

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI/GHAZIABAD

The Delhi police on Tuesday closed the Ghazipur border hours after it reopened a part of NH-9 – for vehicular movement – where the farmers have been protesting against farm laws for over three months.

Sources said that district police took a call on opening the route in an attempt to ease out traffic from Delhi to Ghaziabad side but installed the barricades again. The route opened around 5 a.m. and shut again around noon because of chaos that ensued.

The stretch has remained closed since January 26 when violence broke out during the farmers' tractor

parade on Republic Day, leaving several, including police officers injured. It was open for traffic in the first two months, barring a few days.

## 'Welcome step'

The protesting farmers welcomed the opening of the lane. "It is a welcome step. We appeal to the administration to keep it open," said Dharmendra Malik, media incharge of Bhartiya Kisan Union.

He said that for the first two months of the protest, this lane remained open for traffic without any hassle. Besides, the lane on which the stage is erected, there is space left for the movement of ambulances going from

Uttar Pradesh towards Delhi, he said. "However, after January 26, it was closed, causing problems to the public."

Apart from Ghaziabad residents, the opening of the expressway will provide relief to people travelling from Delhi towards Meerut and Hapur. At present, they have to take a detour through Apsara or Anand Vihar borders. It leads to traffic snarls during office hours.

Ramandan Kushwaha, Superintendent of Police (Traffic), Ghaziabad said the decision to open and close the expressway lane was that of the Delhi police. The Ghaziabad administration had nothing to do with it, he said.

(With inputs from Anuj Kumar)

## More senior citizens get vaccinated

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A total of 21,277 beneficiaries took the COVID-19 vaccination in the city on Tuesday and there were three Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI), said a Delhi government spokesperson.

Of the total beneficiaries, 10,213 were people who are 60 years of age and above, which is almost double the number of beneficiaries of the group on Monday. Also, of the total beneficiaries on Tuesday, 1,442 were people between 45 and 59 years of age, which was 1,009 on Monday.

The rest of the people who took the vaccine on Tuesday were healthcare workers and front-line workers.

"There is excitement among the public to get vaccinated and we are getting a lot of queries. The fear of the vaccine is not there anymore," spokesperson of Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, a private hospital, said. About 167 people of 60 years of age and above took the vaccine at the hospital on Tuesday.

A few hospitals said that they faced issues with the software on Tuesday also.

Meanwhile, the city witnessed 217 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 6,39,681, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday.

No death was reported in the past 24 hours.

## Cong. protests soaring oil, cooking gas prices

'State, Centre not taking steps on tax cut'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Tuesday protested against the soaring oil prices, alleging that the Central and State governments are not taking any steps towards a tax cut.

The party said a major part of the petrol, diesel and cooking gas prices goes into Excise Duty, collected by the Central government and VAT (Value Added Tax), imposed by the Delhi government.

Delhi party chief Ch. Anil Kumar led the demonstration, which was also joined by Indian Youth Congress, outside the BJP headquarters on Rouse.

To show the burden of rise in price of cooking gas on household budgets, the party workers carried cylinders on their heads.

After the latest price hike of cooking gas, a 14.2 kilogram domestic LPG cylinder will cost ₹819 in Delhi up from ₹794. Similarly, the price of a 19 kilogram commercial LPG cylinder has been hiked by ₹95 to ₹1,614 per cylinder. The last LPG price hike came less than a week ago when it was increased by ₹25 last Thursday.

The workers also questioned why AAP was silent when the common man was facing the burden of increased fuel prices.

## Youth held for cyberfraud

Accused was lured by his online friend

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

ducted from his account. It was revealed that the accused had used spoofed message services. When the beneficiary's accounts and wallets were examined, it was found that the cheated amount had gone to a Paytm account first and then used for a Croma gift voucher.

Tushar allegedly told the police that he is a Class 12 graduate and is pursuing graduation from National Institute of Open School. During lockdown, he befriended one Vishal alias Shubham while playing PubG.

Shubham told him that he deals in credit/debit cards and has knowledge on earning money in the cyber space. He also offered Tushar 20% commission.

## Labourer killed in wall collapse; case registered

## NEW DELHI

A 25-year-old labourer was killed when a wall collapsed after a crane hit it at an under-construction building in Narela on Tuesday. A case has been registered in the matter. The police said that the deceased has been identified as Sagar, a resident of Narela who was declared brought dead at hospital. A case has been registered under IPC, the police said.

## HC declines plea against working of NCLT, NCLAT

Move comes after it finds use of 'slang language' in petition, says 'not permissible'

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High court has declined to entertain a petition filed by a man against the working of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) after finding that it contained

## 'slang language'.

Justice Prathiba M. Singh said the petition appears to be drafted by Group Captain Atul Kumar on his own. It said a perusal of the petition shows that slang language "Tom, Dick and Harry" has been used in one of the paras.

"Such language is not

permissible in pleadings before the Court. Accordingly, this petition is liable to be dismissed. If the petitioner is aggrieved by any order of the NCLT or NCLAT, he may draft a proper petition and only then, file the same," the court said.

Allowing Mr. Kumar to

withdraw the petition, the court cautioned him that it was refraining from imposing cost at this stage as he was appearing in person in the case.

Mr. Kumar had contended in his petition that wrong procedures are being adopted by the NCLT and the NCLAT.

## SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr. Divisional Engineer (Co)/S.E.C. Railway, Nagpur acting for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender for execution of work mentioned below:- Sr. No.1 Name of the Work: Supply of AT welding portion and welding of rail joints for 60 Kg 90 ft / 60 E1 R260 grade rails using Compressed Air-Petrol pre-heating system, 3 piece Pre-fabricated moulds (zircon-washed) manually pressed using Single shot crucible fitted with Automatic Tapping thimble including supervision, tools and plants and consumables etc. under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Track/Nagpur. Tender Notice No.: C/23/NGP/2020-21 Approx. Tender Value (in ₹): ₹ 1,42,49,360/- Completion Period in months: 12 (Twelve) Sr.No. 2 Name of the Work: Construction of 6 banded Ladies barrack at Chhindwara and Guwahati under the jurisdiction of DEN/North/Nagpur. Tender Notice No.: C/23/NGP/2020-21 Approx. Tender Value (in ₹): ₹ 1,42,49,360/- Completion Period in months: 12 (Twelve) Sr.No. 3 Name of the Work: Improvement of ORH at Mount Road, Nagpur. (Room No. 102,103,203,204 & 205) under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Works/Nagpur. Tender Notice No.: S/25/NGP/2020-21 Approx. Tender Value (in ₹): ₹ 6,16,310/- Completion Period in months: 08 (Eight) Sr.No.4 Name of the Work: Through Rail renewal 34 Km under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Gondia. Tender Notice No.: E/39/NGP/2020-21 Approx. Tender Value (in ₹): ₹ 6,79,087/- Completion Period in months: 06 (Six) Sr.No. 3 Name of the Work: Improvement of ORH at Mount Road, Nagpur. (Room No. 102,103,203,204 & 205) under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Works/Nagpur. Tender Notice No.: S/25/NGP/2020-21 Approx. Tender Value (in ₹): ₹ 6,16,310/- Completion Period in months: 08 (Eight) Sr.No. 4 Name of the Work: Provision of intensive Examination facilities for BOBYN rakes on line No. 9/16 Gondia station. Tender Notice No.: E/40/NGP/2020-21 Approx. Tender Value (in ₹): ₹ 11,53,813/- Completion Period in months: 06 (Six) Sr.No. 6 Name of the Work: Placement of 9T/3T Capacity trucks separately for SSE (P.Way) Dongargarh, SSE (P.Way) Rajnandgaon, SSE (P.Way) Gondia and SSE (P.Way) Amaona for carrying Railway materials under the jurisdiction of S.R. DEN/East/Nagpur. Tender Notice No.: E/41/NGP/2020-21 Approx. Tender Value (in ₹): ₹ 24,96,663/- Completion Period in months: 09 (Nine). Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to 15.00 Hours on 26.03.2021 only. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders and any such manual offers received shall be rejected. Details are available on our website : [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in).

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Chandigarh Administration

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1. Tender No. OP/2/2020-2021  
2. Name of Work: DNT for running rate contract for repairing /testing of 11/0.433KV Aluminum wound 100KVA, 200 KVA, 300/315 KVA, 500 KVA & 750/800 KVA distribution Transformers under Electy. 'OP' S/Div., No.-5, Indl. Area, Ph. U.T, Chandigarh.

3. Estimated Cost  
Rs. 9,56,507/-  
Rs. 19,140/-  
Running contract for one year till the quantum of work is completed.

4. Earnest Money  
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08.03.2021 at 02.00 PM  
08.03.2021 at 04.00 PM

The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the website [www.etenders.chd.nic.in/nicgep/app](http://www.etenders.chd.nic.in/nicgep/app)

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New Power House, Indl. Area, Ph.I,  
U.T. Chandigarh.  
Contact No. 0172-2655531 (O), 2637880 (Fax)  
E-Mail Add: [elop2-chd@nic.in](mailto:elop2-chd@nic.in)

7. Submission Date: 08.03.2021  
8. Bid opening date & time:  
08.03.2021 at 02.00 PM  
08.03.2021 at 04.00 PM

## Timings

DELHI

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 03
RISE 06:44 SET 18:23
RISE 22:47 SET 09:28
THURSDAY, MAR. 04
RISE 06:43 SET 18:23
RISE 23:54 SET 10:07
FRIDAY, MAR. 05
RISE 06:42 SET 18:24
RISE 00:00 SET 10:51

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	29	15
Safdarjung	29	15
Palam	28	15

**Delhi Palam Today**  
30°C Surface winds speed likely to decrease. A cool morning with mist/haze and comfortable sunny day.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
31°C Weather will remain dry with cool hazy morning, largely comfortable afternoon and sunny sky.

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## IN BRIEF

## Air quality continues to be 'moderate' in Delhi

NEW DELHI

The air quality of Delhi, Gurugram, and Noida was in the "moderate" category on Tuesday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board. "Air Quality Index forecasted to marginally improve and stay within the high end of the satisfactory to moderate category for tomorrow [Wednesday]," said SAFAR.

## Delhi budget session begins from March 8

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The budget session will be held from March 8 to 16 with the budget likely to be presented on March 9, the Delhi government said on Tuesday.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said a decision to this effect was taken at a meeting of the Delhi Cabinet. "The budget session will begin with tabling of economic survey report and outcome budget of the government on March 8. The budget will be presented in Delhi Assembly House on March 9," a senior government official said.

The budget for 2021-22 is expected to focus on the key areas of health, education and infrastructure, including water supply, said government sources. This will be the seventh budget to be presented by Mr. Sisodia, who also holds the finance portfolio.

The Delhi government had presented a ₹65,000 crore budget for 2020-21, which was around 10% more than in 2019-20.

The outcome budget, listing the performance and achievements of various departments and agencies of the government during the previous financial year, will be presented on the first day of the session along with the Economic Survey of Delhi, officials said.

The session will begin with the address of Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal. Given the pandemic, safety norms like social distancing and use of face masks and social distancing will be strictly followed during the session, they said. The government is likely to come out with measures to boost revenue collection that has been hit hard and dropped by 42% due to the pandemic.

# Plea challenges cap on relief for families of minors killed in riots

Parents who lost a child get ₹5 lakh — half of what kin of adult victims receive

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked the city government to respond to a plea by two parents, who lost their minor sons during the north-east Delhi riots last year, challenging the maximum compensation cap of ₹5 lakh for death of minors.

The petition, also filed jointly by CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat, highlighted that the Delhi government's assistance scheme for riot victims' prescribes different compensation amounts to the families of deceased adults and minors.

Families of deceased minors receive ₹5 lakh, which is half of what the families of deceased adults receive.

## Delhi govt. told to reply

"The difference in compensation is arbitrary, unreasonable and violative of Article 14 of the Constitution since it fails to recognise the full value of the 'death of minors,'" read the petition filed by advocate Karuna Nundy.

Justice Prathiba M. Singh asked the Delhi government and other concerned authorities to respond to the petition.



Security personnel keep vigil in Mustafabad following the riots in north-east Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

tion within four weeks and posted the case for further hearing on April 26.

One of the petitioners, Ram Sugart, lost his 15-year-old boy Nitin Paswan to the communal violence.

Nitin had gone out on February 26 to buy some 'chowmein' from a nearby streetcart in Gokulpuri.

When Nitin didn't come home, Mr. Sugart reported him missing at the Gokulpuri Police Station. He was later informed that his son was in the emergency room of GTB Hospital, where he was lying unconscious.

"His face had blood on it

and he had a two-inch injury on the back of his head, which had been bleeding profusely. On inquiring about the cause of the injury, Mr. Sugart was told that his son had been hit by a tear-gas shell. Nitin died later that day," the plea stated.

The second petitioner, Rihana Khatoon, lost her 17-year-old son Amaan during the riots. Ms. Khatoon said that on February 25, Amaan had gone to get some milk from a nearby dairy in Jafrabad. When he didn't return home, she called up Amaan but received no answer. Later, a group of people came

The difference in compensation is arbitrary and violative of Article 14 of the Constitution since it fails to recognise the full value of the 'death of minors'

PLEA FILED BY TWO PARENTS WHO LOST THEIR MINOR SONS

to her house and informed Ms. Khatoon that her son had been shot and was taken to a government hospital.

She found her son unconscious and bleeding profusely from a gunshot wound in the side of his head. "Ms. Khatoon was told that her son had been shot by someone on the roof of the Jafrabad metro station around 3 p.m.," read the petition. Amaan died the next day.

Ms. Karat, who has been working extensively to help riot-affected families, said she had written to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on January 6, 2021, highlighting the difference in compensation amounts. Ms. Karat said she has not received any reply nor has any action been taken pursuant to the letter.

# Delhi riots: court takes cognisance of sedition charge against 18 people

'Give copy of supplementary chargesheet to accused in pendrive'

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Tuesday took cognisance of sedition charge against 18 persons, including former JNU students — Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, Devangana Kalita, and Natasha Narwal — and others in connection with the north-east Delhi riots.

Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat gave the order after noting that the "requisite sanctions under Section 196 CrPC against all 18 accused persons has been received".

The court took cognisance of the offences under sections 124 A (sedition), 153-A (promoting enmity on the grounds of religion, language, caste etc), 109 (abettment) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy) of the IPC.

The judge also directed that a copy of the supplementary chargesheet and accompanying documents be supplied in a pendrive to all the 18 accused persons, who have also been charged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The accused in the case are United Against Hate member Khalid Saifi, form-

er Congress councilor Ishrat Jahan, suspended AAP councilor Tahir Hussain, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) students — Asif Iqbal Tanha and Safoora Zargar —, are Meenar Haider, Gulshab, Shafa Ur Rehman, Shadab Ahmed, Tasleem Ahmed, Saleem Malik, Mohd Saleem Khan, Athar Khan and Faizan Khan.

Except Ms. Zargar and Mr. Faizan Khan, who are on bail, all other accused in the case are currently lodged in jail.

During the hearing, the counsel appearing for Ms. Kalita contended that the media already has a copy of the chargesheet before even the accused person has got them.

The counsel submitted that there has been a media trial pursuant to which she has been prejudicially affected. This issue was also raised by Mr. Khalid, Mr. Imam and Mr. Khalid Saifi.

## Investigation not fair

The counsel further alleged that "the investigation is not fair and not all video clips have been investigated".

On the other hand, the special public prosecutor

(SPP) argued that there have been various media reports trying to create their own narrative, against the police".

The SPP said the investigation in the case is still going on till all the perpetrators are apprehended and all evidence collected.

## Media trial

"During the proceedings, an important question of media trial was raised. It is indubitably true that every accused has the fundamental right to free and fair investigation as also trial," the court said.

"Media reporting particularly on the social media remains charged up all the time...There is a world of difference between an accused and a convict...There should, at least, always be a disclaimer when reporting, whether it is the version of the police/prosecution or the accused instead of presenting as if it is the order of the court," the judge said.

"Labeling the police as completely unfair or the accused as a convict itself, is not a healthy sign and which impacts the process of criminal justice system," the court added.

# Cabinet decides to bring govt. institutes under DSEU's ambit

It will make the skilling ecosystem more efficient, says Sisodia

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI



Arvind Kejriwal

ish Sisodia, also the Education Minister.

The Cabinet also approved the merger of Delhi University's College of Arts, functioning under the Directorate of Training and Technical Education, and Delhi Institute of Heritage Research and Management (DIHRM) affiliated with GGSP University functioning under the Directorate of Higher Education. Both will now be part of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University.

**Scholarship schemes**  
The Cabinet also granted approvals of ₹100 crore for the Ladli Scheme to benefit schoolgirls and for different

scholarship schemes for the benefit of SC/ST/OBC students, decided to release ₹59.8 crore. These scholarship schemes include pre-matric, post-matric and merit scholarships for SC/ST/OBC/minority students from Classes 1 to 12.

It also approved funds of ₹50 crore for the construction and development of Delhi Archives buildings. Also, seed money of ₹3 crore has also been released to the Delhi Tourism Transportation Development Corporation for the construction of this complex in collaboration with Department of Delhi Archives.

Adding to the maintenance of more than ₹10 crore archival records of various government departments of Delhi, it said, the Archives has been accorded a sanction of ₹1.32 crore to strengthen the structural design to address any threat to life and property archives building due to the lockdown.

# DDA floats land use change for PMO project

Urban body playing fast and loose with basic tenets of master plan, says activist

DAMINI NATH  
SHINJINI GHOSH

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on February 27 proposed changing the land use of four plots — two meant for the construction of the new Prime Minister's Office (PMO) as part of the Central Vista redevelopment project, and two as compensation for the green space lost due to the change of the other two.

In its public notice inviting objections for a period of 30 days, the DDA proposed changing the land use of two plots of 9.5 acres each located between Motilal Nehru Marg and K. Kamraj Marg (plot 38) and between Dalhousie Road and Tu-Tu Road (plot 36) from recreational use (district park) to government office in the Masterplan for Delhi-2021.

These plots have been proposed to be used for the new PMO as a part of the redevelopment of Central Vista by the Centre.

As part of the project, a new Parliament building is being constructed, the Cen-

tral Vista Avenue is being redeveloped and new secretariat buildings, Prime Minister's residence and Vice-President's residence have been proposed.

Also, in its February 27 notice, the DDA proposed changing the land use of a 12.8 acre plot located between Dalhousie Road and Tyagraj Road (plot 30B) and 6.54 acre in Chandrawal, near Civil Lines from government office and residential respectively to "recreational (district park)".

These plots have been proposed to be used for the new PMO as a part of the redevelopment of Central Vista by the Centre.

Reacting to the development, architect and member of the citizens' collective

LokPATH Madhav Raman said on Tuesday: "It appears that, in the context of the Central Vista redevelopment project, the DDA persists in playing fast and loose with the basic tenets of statutory master planning, which is its constitutional mandate."

**Dangerous precedent**  
During the legal challenge to the change in land use for the Central Vista project last year, the government's submission to the Supreme Court had shown plot 30B already as "recreational [district park] land use", he said.

"It is currently used to

house government offices in temporary barrack structures. This proposed land use change sets a dangerous precedent because it means that if a plot of land is occupied long enough in violation of the statutory Masterplan land use, it can arbitrarily be regularised by putting false information about its current statutory land use in the public domain by the statutory authority itself," Mr. Raman said.

A senior DDA official, however, said that the plots listed for change of land use had been listed as per records of the urban body.

"Plots 38 and 36 are recreational [district parks] ones and land use will be changed to government office while land use for 30B will be changed from government office to recreational [district park]. The data provided has been authorised and is according to the requisite records maintained by the DDA," the official said.

The official added that the plot in Chandrawal would be a part of compensatory land use changes.

# Academic members oppose merger of DU college, AUD

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Academics for Action and Development on Tuesday opposed the Cabinet's approval to merge Delhi University's College of Arts with the B.R. Ambedkar University...We urge you to take immediate and necessary steps to halt this unwarranted process."

In a letter to the university administration, the EC and Academic Council members said: "We strongly oppose the decision of the State Cabinet to merge Delhi College of Arts with the B.R. Ambedkar University...We urge you to take immediate and necessary steps to halt this unwarranted process."

**Unilateral attack**  
DU Executive Committee member Seema Das said: "This is a unilateral attack on the university disregarding the statutory provisions of DU, which is an integral whole. No unit will be allowed to be taken away from DU as this will adversely affect the high-quality aca-

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Tel.: (0674) 2380608; Website: www.osmcl.nic.in

Email: proc.osmcl.od@nic.in

Date : 02.03.2021

## NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER FOR SUPPLY &amp; INSTALLATION OF CARDIAC CATH LAB UNIT FOR SCBMCH-CUTTACK - CAPITAL HOSPITAL-BBSR &amp; CARDIAC CARE HOSPITAL-JHARSUGUDA

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General public is hereby informed that a girl (depicted in the photo), **Namedly : Muskan D/o Altaf R/o : H. No. 276, Gali No. 5, Saboli Road, Narela, Delhi has been missing from her house since 23.01.2021. In this regard a case vide DD No. 80A dated 28.01.2021 has been lodged at Police Station Narela, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-**

**Age: 19 Years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Built: Medium, Hair: Black, Wearing: Red colour suit and salwar.**

Any person having any information/Clue about this Missing girl, may inform SHO, Narela, Delhi at E-mail Id - [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

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011-24368638, 24368641  
**P.S.** Narela, Delhi  
**Fax No.** 011-24368639  
**Ph. No.** 011-27280435, 27282350  
**DP/791/ON/2021**

**HARYANA STATE CHILD PROTECTION SOCIETY  
WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT****Bays No. 15-20, Pocket-II, Sector-4, Panchkula****Phone No. 0172-2580359****ADVERTISEMENT**

Applications are invited to fill up posts of Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee & Member Child Welfare Committee (CWC) as per provisions under Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016 as per following qualification, terms and conditions:-

Sr. No.	Name of Post	District wise number of posts
1	Chairperson (Child Welfare Committee)	Ambala-1 Post
2	Member (Child Welfare Committee)	Rohitak-2 Post

**Qualification of Chairperson/ Member of CWC:** Seven years of experience of working with children in the field of education, health, or welfare activities, or should be a practicing professional with a degree in child psychology or psychiatry or social work or sociology or human development or in the field of law or a retired Judicial Officer.

**Age of CWC Chairperson and Member:** Above the age of 35 years on the date of advertisement

**Tenure:** Three years.

**Honorarium:** Chairperson and Member, Child Welfare Committee shall be paid as per sitting which shall include sitting allowance, travel allowance and any other allowance, as the State Government may prescribe.

**Terms & Conditions:**

- Applicant must have a domicile of Haryana.
- Applicant will maintain his/her headquarter as the presence is required even at odd hours or on short notice and the appointment will be cancelled if headquarter is not maintained.
- Applicant shall have to submit a self-declaration/affidavit on the following points with application form. All conditions from (i) to (vii) of the following point must be fulfilled.
  - He/she has not previous conviction record.
  - He/she has not been involved in any immoral act or in the Act of Child abuse or employment of child labour.
  - He/she is not holding such other full time occupation that does not allow him/her to give necessary time and attention to the work.
  - He/she will give details about his/her Previous/Present post tenure in any district of Juvenile Justice Board and Child Welfare Committee.
  - No enquiry is pending against him/her in any agency/ court.
  - The applicant should not have any past record of violation of human rights or child rights.
  - The applicant should not have been removed or dismissed from service of the Central Government or a State Government or an undertaking or Corporation owned or controlled by the Central Government or a State Government .
- Willing candidates may send / submit their application form on the prescribed format on or before 30.03.2021 till 5.00 P.M. along-with supporting documents i.e. educational qualification and experience certificate etc. in the office of concerned District Programme Officer, Women and Child Development of respective district.
- Direct application received at Headquarter of WCD, will be rejected.
- Department has reserved the right to reject the incomplete application form without any prior notice of the candidate.
- Incomplete Application form in any manner will be rejected.
- Prescribed Application Form may be downloaded from the departmental website [www.wcdhry.gov.in](http://www.wcdhry.gov.in).

**Member Secretary**  
Haryana State Child Protection Society  
Women and Child Development Department  
Haryana, Panchkula.

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**PUBLIC NOTICE****PUBLIC NOTICE**

I ANOUP Kumar resident of SMQ-P/4/5, Pinto park, C/o AFS Mahajapur, Gwalior, MP have changed my son's name from Priyansh Dobbal Panthri to Priyansh Panthri (DOB- 16.11.2013) vide Affidavit dated 17.02.2021 before District court Gwalior.

Send your resume at: [srajiv0507197@gmail.com](mailto:srajiv0507197@gmail.com) or [ahm2103@gmail.com](mailto:ahm2103@gmail.com)

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NOTICE is hereby given that INMEET SINGH, S/o JAGMOHAN SINGH R/o S-2/201, 2nd Floor, Old Mahabir Nagar, Tilak Nagar, New Delhi-110019 of AFGHANISTAN is applying to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs for Naturalization and that any person who knows any reason why Naturalization should not be granted should send a written signed statement of the facts to the said Secretary.

Shashi Kaushal (Advocate)  
Ch.No.X-52A, Civil Wing,  
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110024

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**Three missing U.P. girls found in Rishikesh**

**OMAR RASHID**  
LUCKNOW

Three minor schoolgirls who did not return home after leaving for school in Shahjahanpur district of Uttar Pradesh were recovered from Rishikesh in the neighbour-

ing State of Uttarakhand, police said on Tuesday.

The girls had left home on Monday morning to purportedly attend a function in the school but did not return home. Their parents had filed a missing report at the

Sadar Bazar police station. The three had also collectively taken ₹10,000 from their homes, said the police. Shahjahanpur SP said the girls were fine. Further details would be known after questioning them, he said.

**कार्यपालक अभियन्ता का कार्यालय, पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमण्डल, हजारीबाग****— शुद्धि पत्र —**

पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमण्डल, हजारीबाग अन्तर्गत आमंत्रित निवास (Gadokhar, Kancharanpur & Adjoining Village Rural Pipe Water Supply Scheme) P.R. No.: 239681 Drinking Water and Sanitation (20-21)\*D को प्रारंभिक काण्डेया आशिक संस्थान किया जाता है।

Sl. No.	Name of Work	After Amendment
1.	Estimated Cost (in Lakhs)	1462.73 Lakhs
	EMD Cost (in Lakhs)	14.63 Lakhs
2.	Date of Tender uploading in website	Date:- 08.03.2021 upto 02:00 PM
3.	Date of Pre-bid Meeting	Date:- 15.03.2021 at 12:30 PM in the office of Engineer-in-Chief, D. W. & S. Department Jharkhand Ranchi
4.	Last date receipt of Bid	Date:- 23.03.2021 upto 05:00 PM in the office of the 1. Executive Engineer, D. W. & S. Division, Hazaribag
5.	Last date submission cost of BOQ and EMD (in hard copy)	2. Superintending Engineer, D.W.& S. Circle, Hazaribag 3. Regional Chief Engineer, D. W. & S. Department Ranchi Zone, Ranchi
6.	Date of opening tender	Date:- 25.03.2021 upto 05:00 PM in the office of the

कार्यपालक अभियन्ता पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमण्डल, हजारीबाग

PR 242829 Drinking Water and Sanitation(20-21).D

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E-mail: [ammimports@skims.ac.in](mailto:ammimports@skims.ac.in), Fax No: 0194-240329

**e-NIT No: SIMS 325 (PI) Tender 04 of 2021****DATED: 26- 02 -2021.**

**Subject:** Abbreviated e-tender notice for supply of various types of Blood Bags on 2 year rate contract basis.

E-tenders are invited for and on behalf of Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir through Sher-I-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, Soura, Srinagar, only from original manufacturers or their authorised distributors/agents possessing valid drug licence for supply of various types of Blood Bags for a period of two years on rate contract basis on item wise basis and sample basis. The detailed e-tender documents are also available at [www.jktender.gov.in](http://www.jktender.gov.in) & [www.skims.ac.in](http://www.skims.ac.in)

**Description** **Tender fee**  
Purchase of various types of Blood Bags Rs 2000/-

**Nomenclature** **Schedule**  
Bid submission end date 26/03/2021upto 4:00 PM  
Sample submission end date 29/03/2021 upto 3:00PM  
Technical bid opening date 30/03/2021 at 2:30 PM

Complete bidding process will be online on e-tendering portal [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) & the tenders should be submitted strictly in accordance with the provisions of the detailed NIT.

NO: SIMS 325 P (I)-e-Tender 04 of 2021-1173-77-6106-09

Dated: 26/02/2021

**Sd/-**  
SR. MATERIALS MANAGEMENT OFFICER PURCHASE I

**Strengthen BJP cadre in Rajasthan: Nadda**

'Do introspection to remain relevant'



BJP national president J.P. Nadda and former Rajasthan CM Vasundhara Raje in Jaipur on Tuesday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT.

**MOHAMMED IQBAL**  
JAIPUR

BJP national president J.P. Nadda on Tuesday called upon the leaders and office-bearers of the party's Rajasthan unit to strengthen the cadre and do an introspection

about their productivity and contribution to the organisation. A self-analysis would enable the BJP leaders to remain relevant and take everyone along, he said.

Amid reports of growing factionalism in the party, Mr. Nadda addressed a meeting of the newly constituted State executive here and tried to bring the rival camps together ahead of the by-elections in four Assembly seats.

The party in the State has witnessed a divide with the supporters of former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje alleging that she was being sidelined.

Mr. Nadda affirmed that the BJP was a cadre-based party and reminded the leaders of the need to win the confidence of party workers which would increase their acceptance.

"Politics is a field in which you are required to remain relevant... You must develop leadership qualities and make the maximum contribution to the party," he said.

BJP State unit's functionaries, central office-bearers from the State, members of

the core group, district unit presidents, heads of different BJP cells and MLAs and Mayors attended the meeting.

Ms. Raje also shared the stage at B.M. Birla Auditorium with the senior party leaders.

Mr. Raje's supporters have voiced their discontent several times during the last few weeks and demanded that she be declared the BJP's Chief Ministerial face in the 2023 Assembly election.

He also targeted the State government alleging that it had failed on all fronts, including law and order, women's security and public welfare.

Earlier, party workers gave a grand welcome to Mr. Nadda at several locations en route from Sangan

**WEATHER WATCH**

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Wednesday:** Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... .34.0	22.6	11.0	Gokak	... .35.0	25.6	10.0
Ahmedabad	... .36.4	13.3	10.7	Kurnool	... .37.7	23.6	14.0
Aizawl	... .25.0	10.7	10.0	Lucknow	... .29.1	14.0	10.0
Allahabad	... .28.5	13.8	10.0	Madurai	... .35.2	20.8	14.0
Bengaluru	... .32.5	18.4	10.0	Mangaluru	... .35.3	20.0	14.0
Bhopal	... .31.3	17.0	10.0	Mumbai	... .35.3	20.6	14.0
Bhubaneswar	... .38.6	23.6	10.0	Mysuru	... .32.1	18.0	10.0
Chandigarh	... .29.6	16.6	10.0	New Delhi	... .28.8	15.3	10.0
Chennai	... .33.5	24.4	10.0	Patna	... .29.6	17.0	10.0
Coimbatore	... .35.1	20.4	10.0	Poornima	... .31.4	21.8	10.0
Dehradun	... .28.2	9.8	10.0	Puducherry	... .32.4	21.8	10.0
Gangtok	... .14.4	8.9	10.0	Pune	... .36.4	18.9	10.0
Goa	... .32.6	25.4	10.0	Raipur	... .37.0	16.5	10.0
Guwahati	... .32.2	17.0	10.0	Ranchi	... .32.5	17.2	10.0
Hubballi	... .34.0	21.0	10.0	Shillong	... .22.8	11.1	10.0
Hyderabad	... .36.2	21.0	10.0	Shimla	... .19.6	7.1	10.0
Imphal	... .28.6	11.8	10.0	Srinagar	... .16.8	2.1	10.0
Jaipur	... .30.8	14.6	10.0	Thiruvananthapuram	... .33.6	23.1	10.0
Kochi	... .32.2	24.6	10.0	Tiruchi	... .35.3	20.8	10.0
Kohima	... .22.2	10.0	10.0	Vijayawada	... .34.6	22.1	10.0
Kolkata	... .34.6	22.3	10.0	Visakhapatnam	... .31.6	24.2	10.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

Yesterday

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	26	98	31	106	158	...
Bengaluru	.8	88	25	86	121	...
Chennai	11	21	49	56	58	...
Delhi	33	28	25	234	256	...
Hyderabad	.4	81	34	110	123	...
Kolkata	14	23	33	263	190	...
Lucknow	47	20	75	219	170	...
Mumbai	13	51	26	316	160	...
Pune	.6	89	86	118	101	...
Visakhapatnam	13	66	46	75	117	...

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
SO<sub>2</sub>: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO<sub>x</sub>: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

# Now, Samajwadi Party to hold kisan panchayats in west U.P.

First meeting in Aligarh on March 5, to be followed by ones in Kasganj, Mathura

ANUJ KUMAR  
GHAZIABAD

After the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), the Congress and the Aam Admi Party (AAP), the Samajwadi Party (SP) will also hold kisan panchayats in western Uttar Pradesh, starting with Tappal in Aligarh on March 5. It will be followed by panchayats in Kasganj and Mathura.

Though the SP workers have their lent support at the Ghazipur protest site and its local leaders have shared the stage with Jayant Chaudhary at RLD's panchayats in the region, the party didn't hold its own panchayats.

Observers find the late entry of the leading opposition party of the State in the panchayat trail baffling. When RLD's panchayats started with Shamli on February 5, many felt that the SP was giving space to its electoral



Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav. ■ FILE PHOTO

partner in the region to flex its muscles.

Sources in the RLD say perhaps Jayant Chaudhary's well-attended panchayats in Basti and Lakhimpur Kheri in the eastern and central parts of the State have pushed the senior partner to show its worth in the western part of the State. "However, common sense says the SP should hold panchayats in its strongholds in

eastern Uttar Pradesh to give voice to the farmers' discontent," said a senior RLD leader. "You have to give credit to Jayant for taking the lead in picking the farmers mood early. When he was on the ground, the SP leadership was only tweeting," he added.

On record, Girish Yadav, district president of Aligarh unit of the SP, said, "Our senior leadership was not get-

ting permission to hold panchayat. As soon as the administration granted us permission, we are holding a panchayat in Tappal."

He said local RLD leaders had been invited and that there was no divide between the two parties in the region. "Elections are still some time away. At present, the idea is to address the concerns of farmers," he said.

## 'Local aspirations'

Both parties tried to play down the posters and what-sapp messages circulating in Aligarh where Jayant Chaudhary had been projected as the Chief Minister in 2022. "These are local aspirations. Everybody knows the SP is the contender for the top post but the RLD would play an important role in taking it there," said Sunil Rohata, spokesperson of the RLD.

## Akali Dal seeks loan waiver for farmers

Amarinder govt's failure to keep its poll promise has led to increase in suicides'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Tuesday raised the issue of farmer suicides in Punjab on the second day of the Assembly's budget session, demanding a complete farm loan waiver as promised by the ruling Congress government before coming to power in 2017.

SAD MLAs demanded that a two-day discussion should be held on farmer's issues. The main Opposition, the Aam Aadmi Party, raised the issue of delay in the election of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), AAP MLA and Leader of the Opposition Harpal



Punjab CM Amarinder Singh

Singh Cheema said that the government was responsible for the delay in the SGPC elections, which he alleged was 'hand in glove' with the Shiromani Akali Dal.

Akali leader Bikram Singh Majithia, talking to reporters, said the Congress government's failure to implement

the loan waiver had resulted in increase in farmer suicides. "Indebtedness had increased because the people believed in the Congress' promise and many did not pay their instalments," said Mr. Majithia.

He alleged that the State government has failed to take up the issues of farmers with the Central government. "The Congress government on its part had failed to impress upon the Centre to release a special package for the State so that it could do the much needed diversification and rejuvenate agriculture practices. This includes revamp of the canal irrigation system and intensive micro

irrigation systems besides water management and rain-water harvesting", Mr. Majithia said.

## Repair of roads

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh during the question hour assured the House that work on repair of damaged link roads across the State was moving on fast track and would be completed within the next one year.

Responding to a question, he said that repair work on 34,977 kilometres of State's link roads would be completed by April-end and work on another 6,162 kms would be completed in the next financial year.



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## Body of minor exhumed from pit in Bulandshahr

Sexual assault suspected, say police

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GHAZIABAD

The body of a minor girl was exhumed from a pit in a field in Anoopshahr area of Bulandshahr on Tuesday, police said. Senior officers suspect that it could be a case of sexual assault leading to murder. A suspect is absconding while his father has been taken into custody.

The deceased went missing six days back mysteriously from the front of a house where she apparently went to have water. The family members of the victim had registered a complaint in Anoopshahr police station.

Santosh Kumar Singh, SSP Bulandshahr, said the complaint registered on February 28 mentioned that the 13-year-old girl went missing when she went to cut grass in the field with her mother and two sisters.

"After having food, she walked around 100 metres to have water but didn't return," said Singh.

District Magistrate Ravindra Kumar said prima facie it seemed sexual assault, the administration would provide relief under Rani Laxmibai Mahila and Bal Samman Kosh.

**No breakthrough**  
Meanwhile, in the alleged murder and rape case of a Dalit minor girl in Akrabad area of Aligarh, no breakthrough had been achieved so far. SSP Muniraj G camped at the village throughout the day. "We have found some vital evidence and would soon solve the case," he said.

## Counterfeit notes seized

STAFF REPORTER

BHUBANESWAR

Three persons were arrested for carrying counterfeit notes with face value of ₹7,90 crore in Odisha's Koraput district, on the border with Andhra Pradesh, on Monday.

"During regular checking at Sunki post, we found four bags in a car bearing a Chhattisgarh number. We found counterfeit notes in them," said Varun Guntupalli, SP Koraput.

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## Back to the future

The economy may have emerged from the woods, but challenges loom

After two quarters of a sharp contraction, India's economy is estimated to have rebounded out of a 'technical recession' to record feeble growth in the October-December 2020 period, with GDP rising by 0.4% and GVA by 1%. The overall numbers are not surprising. Just as the short-notice pandemic lockdown and the subsequent case surge took the wind out of mobility and economic activity in the first half of the fiscal year, the 'unlocking phase' that was largely complete by late September, brought back a semblance of normalcy, with pent-up and festival demand spurring spending, and helping reboot production lines. Agriculture remained the resilient bulwark in the third quarter as well, with farm GVA rising by 3.9% after being the sole sector to clock growth in the preceding two quarters. Manufacturing and construction resurfaced from a collapse to expand 1.2% and 6%, respectively. Both these sectors had been under stress even before the pandemic, posting contractions starting from the second and third quarters of 2019-20. Despite the Centre's push on government spending, public administration, defence and other services contracted 1.5% last quarter. However, investment demand is estimated to have rebounded, with fixed capital formation posting positive momentum after several quarters, driven perhaps by public spending. Most worryingly, retail, trade, hotels, transport and communication contracted by 7.7%.

Despite the Q3 uptick, the second advance estimates of national income for the year project an 8% contraction in the GDP, wider than the -7.7% estimated in January. This may partly be due to the NSO revising the first quarter's GDP shrinkage to 24.4%, from the 23.9% calculated earlier. The latest numbers also may be taken as an indicator at best, with the NSO stressing that the estimates are likely to undergo 'sharp revisions' as the pandemic affected data collection. Like the growth rate for 2019-20 was revised from 4.2% to 4% in January, the real GDP growth for the third quarter of the last fiscal has been scaled down to 3.3%, from 4.1%. The base effect may well have helped nudge India's growth into positive territory, but it is an important psychological barrier to cross. Growth numbers alone may still not be capturing the tumult faced by swathes of informal and micro-enterprises, nor do they reflect a recovery in the job market. The continuing stress in employment- and contact-intensive services sectors is a worry, and the government must consider support measures. The second wave of infections in industrial hotspots such as Maharashtra, and the risk of infections rising in poll-bound States, do not bode well either for services or the fragile recovery in manufacturing. A smooth and expeditious roll-out of the vaccine, with the private sector drafted in to achieve scale, is an imperative to help India navigate the bumps ahead more deftly.

## Reviving the Iran deal

Biden needs to seal the nuclear deal before hardliners gain the upper hand in Iran

U.S. President Joe Biden's attempts to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), better known as the Iran nuclear deal, have not seen any breakthrough with both sides waiting for the other to blink. The Biden administration says it would return to the deal if Iran starts complying with its terms. Tehran, on the other side, asks the U.S., which unilaterally quit the deal under the Donald Trump administration in May 2018, to return to the agreement first and lift sanctions on Iran. The EU's efforts to organise direct U.S.-Iran talks were also unsuccessful as Tehran reportedly rejected the offer. Iran has also accelerated its nuclear programme. This game of chicken continues as the clock is ticking. Iran will elect a new President in June. Hassan Rouhani, who bet his presidency on the deal – only to be repudiated by Mr. Trump – cannot stand in a third consecutive election. There is no guarantee that a moderate like Mr. Rouhani would be elected this time. And it is not a secret that there is considerable opposition among the hardliners, a powerful constituency, towards any kind of engagement with the U.S. Mr. Biden's best bet is to get the nuclear agreement back on track before Mr. Rouhani leaves office.

To be sure, Mr. Biden has moved with a sense of urgency after assuming power. He appointed a special envoy for Iran, showed signs of rebalancing ties with Saudi Arabia, and sent clear signals to Tehran about America's desire to get back to the deal. But these actions do not seem to be enough to rebuild the trust after the acrimonious Trump years. Some of Iran's concerns are genuine. After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack, Iran had cooperated with the U.S. in the war against the Taliban. But once the Taliban were driven out of power, the Bush administration branded Iran as part of an "Axis of Evil" along with Iraq and North Korea. As President Barack Obama offered diplomacy, the Iranians grabbed the opportunity, leading to the signing of the JCPOA in 2015. And Iran was fully compliant with the agreement when Mr. Trump pulled the U.S. out of it. So Iran would seek some consistency in U.S. policy. But Iran is also in a tough spot. Hit by sanctions and a devastating COVID-19 outbreak, its economy is bleeding. It had violently cracked down on protests in 2019-20, the embers of which are still burning. Its regional operations took a hit after Qasem Soleimani was assassinated by the U.S. in January 2020. Its assets in Syria are under repeated air strikes by Israel. Last week, the U.S. had also bombed pro-Iranian militants in Syria. Both sides are under pressure. Both sides need the deal – the U.S. wants to scuttle Iran's nuclear programme and Iran wants relief from sanctions. They should stick to the diplomatic path for a breakthrough.

# The anatomy of a spring ceasefire

Different from the earlier routine assurances, the new India-Pakistan agreement also defuses an ugly two-front situation



HAPPYMON JACOB

In the wake of registering 5,130 ceasefire violations in 2020, guns on either side of the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) fell silent on the intervening night of February 24-25, 2021. The February ceasefire has triggered widespread speculation about its durability, significance and implication for bilateral relations in general.

The announcement by the two Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMO) came as a surprise to many, and yet, it underlined the simple fact that all statesmen/women recognise while in office: countries cannot be run by rhetoric alone. More so, this announcement is also a recognition in New Delhi and Islamabad that they cannot afford to let violence spiral out of control given its inherently escalatory nature as events in the wake of the Pulwama terror attack in February 2019 highlighted.

### Peace feelers

Notwithstanding the surprise factor in the development, there have been some indications about a possible thaw in the relations between the traditional rivals. Pakistani Army Chief Qamar Javed Bajwa stated in early February that "It is time to extend hand of peace in all directions", and on the Indian side, the Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane said around the same time that "with our continuous engagement with Pakistan, we will be able to prevail over them (for border peace)... as unsettled borders help no one". India allowed the use of its airspace by Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's special aircraft to fly to Sri Lanka and just a day before the

ceasefire announcement, and upon his arrival in Colombo, Mr. Khan said, "Our only (sic) dispute is Kashmir and it can only be resolved through dialogue." Clearly, the two sides were setting the stage for the announcement.

### Significance of the ceasefire

What makes the February ceasefire significant is the fact that this agreement is different from the routine ceasefire assurances that the two sides made till January 2021. Twice in 2018, for instance, the two sides had agreed to uphold the ceasefire agreement when ceasefire violations were on the rise. But what makes the February 2021 ceasefire different is its two distinct features: one, this was a joint statement by the two DGMO, and that unlike the previous declarations, the recent agreement mentions a specific date, i.e., the night of February 24-25, to begin the ceasefire. In that sense then, the February ceasefire is arguably one of the most significant military measures by India and Pakistan in over 18 years to reduce violence along the LoC in Kashmir. Coming in the wake of over 5,000 ceasefire violations in 2020 (the highest in 19 years since 2002) the agreement is path-breaking from a conflict management point of view. Interestingly, the November 2003 ceasefire agreement was also announced in the wake of a high level of violence through 2002 and 2003.

The ceasefire is also significant because this helps New Delhi to defuse what was becoming a growing concern for the decision makers in New Delhi: an ugly two-front situation and a feeling of being boxed in by an inimical Pakistan and an aggressive China. It is easy to talk about a two or 'two-and-a-half' front situation for domestic grandstanding, but dealing with it is neither easy nor practical. That the Indian Army had to redeploy forces from the western border with Pakistan to the northern border with China is indicative of the



serious material challenges it could throw up. The best way to deal with the two front challenge then, New Delhi could have reasoned, was to defuse at least one front. The LoC was a natural candidate. Given that the back channel process started much before the recent India-China disengagement on the LAC, New Delhi must have decided to defuse the western challenge from Pakistan first. And it worked.

### A brief history

The history of India-Pakistan ceasefire pacts and war termination agreements is both complex and instructive. The Karachi Agreement of 1949, which ended the first war between newly formed India and Pakistan, was the first ceasefire agreement between the two countries which, signed under the good offices of the United Nations, created the India-Pakistan boundary in Kashmir called the Ceasefire Line or CFL. The United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) was mandated to monitor the ceasefire along the CFL. The 1965 India-Pakistan war also ended in a ceasefire, but since *status quo ante bellum* was restored after the Tashkent Agreement, the CFL in Kashmir remained unaltered. However, the India-Pakistan war of 1971 would change that. The December ceasefire which ended the 1971 war was enshrined into the Simla Agreement the following year. But unlike 1965, *status quo ante bellum* was not restored by the Simla Agreement, a decision that would have important implications for bilateral relations.

The Simla Agreement of

1972 delineated the 'line of control' in Jammu and Kashmir which resulted from the ceasefire of December 1971 thereby renaming the CFL as the LoC. By this smart move, Indian negotiators not only changed the nomenclature of the India-Pakistan dividing line in Kashmir and the physical alignment of the border in Jammu and Kashmir, but also made the UNMOGIP presence in Kashmir irrelevant. Recall that the UN force was mandated to ensure a ceasefire on the CFL, but there was no CFL after 1972, and, more so, the UN was not even a party to the Simla Agreement unlike the Karachi Agreement.

Let us cut to the present. The 2003 agreement between the DGMO, communicated through a telephone call between them, was a reiteration of the December 1971 war termination ceasefire; technically, therefore, even the February 2021 ceasefire too is a reiteration of the 1971 ceasefire agreement.

### A form of intent

And yet, a ceasefire does not observe itself – it requires a clearly articulated and mutually-agreed upon set of rules and norms for effective observance along with an intent to observe them. The February ceasefire is an expression of such an intent, but without the rules and norms to enforce it. The Simla Agreement or the Suchetgarh Agreement do not have those rules either. The Karachi Agreement, on the other hand, has clearly laid down provisions on how to manage the CFL which, of course, was overtaken by the LoC. Ironically, therefore, armed forces deployed on either side of the LoC in Kashmir often have to resort to the strictures enshrined in the long-defunct Karachi Agreement to observe the ceasefire mandated by the Simla Agreement. This needs to change. Now that the two DGMO have declared a joint ceasefire, the next logical step is to arrive at a set of rules to govern that ceasefire. An unwritten ceasefire,

experiences from conflict zones around the world show, tend to break down easily and trigger tensions in other domains.

### Return to the back channel

What is also significant to note about the ceasefire agreement between the two DGMO is that this was preceded by weeks, if not months of, high-level contacts through the back channel. For sure, major agreements of this kind cannot be finalised by army officers especially given the vitiating atmosphere surrounding India-Pakistan relations. More crucially, the fact that this ceasefire has political blessings makes it more durable.

Interestingly, the 2003 ceasefire was also preceded by discreet parleys between the heads of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan and the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) of India. The 2003 CFA led to a sustained period of back channel talks on Kashmir which, by mid 2007, had almost finalised a deal to resolve the Kashmir conflict. My research on the 2004-2007 back channel talks shows how discreet conversations between high-level interlocutors appointed by the heads of governments were able to make unprecedented progress on the mother of all India-Pakistan conflicts, Kashmir. What is also evident from that period is that one key reason why the CFA held at least till 2008 was because there were parallel talks, along with holding fire on the LoC, on other outstanding bilateral issues, principally Kashmir. While whether the 2021 CFA would prompt talks in other areas is unclear as of now, I doubt the ability of piecemeal agreements to create durable stability bilaterally unless followed by progress in other domains.

Happymon Jacob teaches at the Jawaharlal Nehru University and is the author of *'Line on Fire: Ceasefire Violations and India-Pakistan Escalation Dynamics'*

## The Survey as policy with ideological overtones

To say that growth and inequality converge in terms of their effects on socio-economic outcomes is outrageous



M.A. OOMMEN

The Economic Survey 2021 (<https://bit.ly/2OfqfVQ>) does not seem to be a policy document derived straight from the empirical data of the economy or the social compulsions embedded in it. On the contrary, the Survey rings with policy postulates based on strong ideological overtones. Of interest would be Chapter 4, captioned 'Inequality and Growth: Conflict or Convergence?' which is ostensibly 'an effort to identify the correct policy objective for India'.

### Need for desirable outcomes

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, India has fallen into the vortex of a 'once-in-a-century crisis' as the Survey forcefully puts it. It projects a V-shaped growth of recovery and reiterates the call of the Economic Survey 2019-20 for 'ethical wealth creation by combining the invisible hand of markets with the hand of trust'. Given the great truth that trust is broken more in an unequal society, (on this, see Wilkinson and Pickett cited in the chapter), it is unrealistic to abstract from the crony capitalism and corruption that dominate the political society and proceed from there to ethical wealth production (which indeed is an important instrumental value). It is hoped that market-mediated growth will take the country to desirable socio-eco-

nomic outcomes that include not only reducing poverty but also a wide spectrum, ranging from infant mortality to mental illness.

### A silence on poverty

Even so, concerned scholars remain confused at the silence of the Survey on the nature and magnitude of poverty which is a multi-dimensional phenomena of deprivation, confounded much worse by the pandemic crisis. The graphic picture of migrant families trudging home hundreds of kilometres away from the cities in the wake of the lockdown seems forgotten. At the same time, Chapter 1 of the Survey documents elaborately the structural reforms (achievements include the controversial three farm laws) to take the economy and the people forward.

Scholarly estimates on the increase in the extreme poverty under the pandemic in India have ranged from 400 million (a study by King's College London) to 620 million (*The Hindu*, OpEd article, July 7, 2020). Oxfam's study on the Virus and Inequality (<https://bit.ly/3rcAF7p>) points out that while it took nine months for the top 1,000 billionaires to return to pre-COVID-19 times, it will take over a decade for the poorest class to resume normalcy. Interestingly, India's stock exchanges have scaled unprecedented heights in mocking disregard to the informal sector already in deep distress following the demonetisation episode.

Anyone familiar with the vast literature on economic growth and inequality will find the claims of the Economic Survey, that un-



like in advanced countries, in India economic growth and inequality converge in terms of their effects on socio-economic outcomes, as simply outrageous. Because the 44 figures of correlations and regressions occupy more than two-thirds of the space of the chapter and form the 'scientific' base to substantiate the arguments, I may probe further into them. Correlation between two real scalar variables x and y does not measure any type of relationship between x and y. The measure of variance (square of standard deviation) in x is the square of a measure of scatter or dispersion in x.

### Faulty conclusions

Correspondingly, the joint dispersion or joint scatter in the couplet (x,y) is measured by covariance between x and y. A scale-free covariance is the correlation where degenerate variables are excluded. Hence, correlation can only measure joint scatter in (x,y) and it cannot measure any type of relationship between x and y. Also, correlation as a measure of joint scatter can make sense only when the variables involved have a joint distribution in the statistical sense. All the conclusions of the chapter by computing correlations or scatter are faulty.

Another set of analysis is based on fitting linear models, calling them as 'linear regression'. In the regression models used, variables are selected according to convenience and linear models are fitted and t-statistics are computed without checking for the validity; all sorts of conclusions are made. Such misuse of statistical tools is a dangerous game, certainly in a democracy, which as J.S. Mill famously said is a government by discussions. Discussions are relevant and truthful only when they are well-informed and reliable.

Social justice is an intrinsic value of universal relevance. Box 1 of Chapter 4 that goes to justify the poverty and inequality trade-off in totalitarian China is obviously introduced to support the inequitable policy options. Thomas Piketty (2020), referred to in the chapter, tells us that inequality increased much more sharply after 1980 in India than in China. This is conveniently forgotten.

### A sidelining

Although the works of great thinkers on justice and equality such as John Rawls, Piketty and Wilkinson and Pickett are mentioned, they are sidelined. It is concluded that 'poverty alleviation through growth must be central to economic strategy', rather than inequality because 'in India, economic growth and inequality converge in terms of their effects on socio-economic indicators'. This is untenable. Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (1971), treats justice as fairness which is the basic core of democratic traditions the world over. The chapter refers to the idea

of 'original position' of equality of Rawls but fails to note that it will have to be judged by the whole theory of justice. The book, *The Spirit Level*, by the two doctors Wilkinson and Pickett, based on 50 years of research has the meaningful subtitle, 'Why equality is better for everyone', ought to have been discussed further because they argue that inequality breeds mistrust, mental illness and many such outcomes, which needs to be reduced for human well-being.

Instead of dismissing it, a discussion on Piketty's *Capital and Ideology* is certainly warranted for three valid reasons: it is a well-documented historical study on inequality which comes to the striking conclusion that 'inequality is neither economic nor technological, but ideological and political'; India is elaborately studied; it discusses a wide range of policy issues relevant for a democratic society facing the COVID-19 pandemic like universal basic income, progressive taxation of income, carbon emission, property and inheritance, universal access to fundamental goods such as health, education and housing and so on.

The Economic Survey has all the right to suggest what it considers relevant. But democracy demands informed debate especially when it comes to economic inequality which has been admittedly growing exponentially in India. Legitimising it by policy think-tanks is indeed questionable.

M.A. Oommen is Honorary Fellow, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to [letters@thehindu.co.in](mailto:letters@thehindu.co.in) must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### Expanded rollout

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being administered a COVID-19 vaccine, Covaxin, on the first day of the second phase of the vaccination programme, will greatly reassure people and reduce vaccine hesitancy. With a rise in COVID-19 cases in some States, the visual of the Prime Minister being inoculated was much needed to inculcate confidence among the general public. The government needs to try to expand vaccination centres

in rural India as well, where vaccine hesitancy is likely to be higher than in the urban areas.

DEEPIKA TRIPATHI,  
Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

The picture of the Prime Minister being vaccinated is a morale booster. People must now have faith in the government's programme and undergo the vaccination. 'We need to give it a shot and take a shot.' The vaccination programme has also been marred because of debates on side-effects and efficacy especially with so much fake

news all over social media platforms.

JAY SONI,  
New Delhi

The uptick in COVID-19 cases in some States in particular is a worry. The growing number of variants along with the slow rate of immunisation across the country cause concern. There is a dire need to ramp up testing, tracking and isolation of active cases in the States concerned. The Health Ministry should initiate a public health campaign about the benefits

of vaccination. There is much misinformation on social media and the Internet. A very close watch needs to be kept on controversial herbal concoctions being peddled.

DR. THOMAS PALOCAREN,  
Vellore, Tamil Nadu

The reason for hesitancy is the fear of a negative fallout as well as the lack of time. There should be incentives for the underprivileged and daily wagers who have to forgo income to vaccinate themselves. There should be novel measures such as

transportation facilities to bring them to vaccination centres and relaxations for inter-State travellers. Other public figures should now come forward to give commoners and the vaccine programme a boost.

DEEPAK SINGHAL,  
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

Cyber attack  
Cyber warfare is the future tool that advers

# The myth of the apolitical campus

Educational institutions and students can't be insulated from politics and they shouldn't be



RADHIKA SANTHANAM

In 2020, following nationwide protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019 and the proposed National Register of Citizens there was a chorus to keep students out of politics. In December 2019, at the height of the agitation, Union Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' said political parties should keep educational institutions out of their politics. This is despite the fact that the Bharatiya Janata Party's own student wing, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, conducted rallies and meetings in support of the new law. The political elite of the Congress too advised students to depoliticise after independence, Professor Ghanshyam Shah writes in *Social Movements in India*. Today, several colleges and universities in India have rules mandating that campuses be apolitical spaces where students should focus on studies. Students participating in protests on these campuses are liable to be suspended or dismissed.

Recently, following the arrest of climate activist Disha Ravi, this idea surfaced once again. Reports stated that parents are worried about their children's social media posts on contentious issues and participation in protests. The concern possibly stems from a fear of the government and its frequent attempts to crack down on dissenters, a belief that the rough and tumble of politics is not suited for the young, the association of protests with lawlessness, and often a combination of these.

#### Idea of education

In India, 18-year-olds are allowed by law to drive cars, marry (if they are women), and in some States, drink. Most important, they are allowed to vote. Ironically, while campaigns are held before every election to increase voter turnout, especially among the youth, young adults are routinely advised to stay away from politics. How can they be expected to make an informed choice at the ballot box if they are not allowed to free-



Demonstrators protest against the arrest of climate activist Disha Ravi, in Kolkata, in February. ■ REUTERS

ly express their opinions on issues that concern them, or participate in protests, which is their democratic right?

Many see students who focus solely on academics as role models, achievers and good citizens, and student protesters as rebellious, unruly, and bringing their institutions into disrepute. Such convenient categorisation ignores the very purpose of education and the conceptualisation of a campus. In Tagore's words, an educational institution should not be "a dead cage in which living minds are fed with food that's artificially prepared". Institutions are not merely spaces where knowledge is imparted to passive recipients; they are spaces where there is debate, discussion and contestation of ideas.

Moreover, it is fallacious to say that educational institutions are apolitical spaces when administrations and curricula, especially in the social sciences, are changed by the government of the day. We saw this in the case of Delhi University dropping A.K. Ramanujan's celebrated essay, *Three Hundred Ramayanas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation*, from the history syllabus in 2011 and in the more recent case of the CBSE removing 30% of the syllabus for students of Classes 9-12, including portions on federalism, citizenship and secularism. It is not participation in protests alone that politicise the youth; it is equally the education they are – or are not – imparted.

Being apolitical, according to the

dictionary definition, means to not be interested in politics or connected with a political party. While many citizens fall into this category, it is impossible for us, even the youth, to not have political views. To illustrate: A child who has grown up near a river into which sewage and industrial waste were continuously dumped may grow up fighting for clean water and air. He may not be a supporter of the BJP or the Congress or the regional parties, his knowledge of their ideologies and policies may be limited, but he may still attend a protest against the government's inability to tackle pollution.

Like him, many of us have views on how to tackle inequality, what model of development is appropriate and just, who should be taxed and by how much, food habits, rights and their restrictions, and so on. Much like sending WhatsApp forwards, expressing our views to family and friends, and posting on social media on politics, these views make us political. As Turkish-British writer Eli Shafai once said in an interview, "Wherever there's power, there's politics."

However, only those privileged across the categories of gender, ethnicity, caste, class, religion and social status can afford to remain silent on many of these issues. The luxury for some of being "apolitical" comes from the fact that they are not the targets of contentious policies – they, their families and communities are unaffected by unfair citizenship laws, agricultural policies, caste discrimi-

nation on campuses, bans on certain food, displacement from their lands, and so on. Some studies such as Ross (1969) also note that privilege is the reason why some students also participate in agitations: they protest because they are protected by wealth and influence. Social and economic privilege is why some may not have reason to protest; it is equally the reason why many can afford to speak out.

#### Result of sustained demands

Over the years, across nations, it is sustained demands by citizens that have earned us many of the precious rights we enjoy today, including the eight-hour workday, women's right to vote, and equal pay. We also see around us the consequences of turning a blind eye to some of these protests. Reni village in Uttarakhand, which was the centre of the Chipko movement in the 1970s, bore the brunt of the landslide that killed 62 in the region recently. Many of the women who live in Reni now were children when they hugged the trees protesting against commercial logging. Scientists have time and again questioned the model of development in the region, including massive dam projects and rampant deforestation.

When a government passes laws with little deliberation and discussion with the stakeholders concerned, it is but natural that people, many of whom elected that government to power, will protest. From Joshua Wong, Agnes Chow and Ivan Lam in Hong Kong to Greta Thunberg in Sweden and Disha Ravi in India, it is the youth who seem fearless and outspoken, and willing to take risks. In the past, too, it is the youth who spearheaded many movements in India, such as the anti-Hindi agitations in Tamil Nadu.

In India, Article 19 of the Constitution guarantees us the right to free speech, the right to assemble peacefully without arms, and the right to form associations. The right to protest is a manifestation of these rights. For the youth, the stakes are even higher in speaking out: policies and laws concern not only the rights, lives and livelihoods of citizens today, but have far-reaching implications for the future of the nation too.

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# The path to peace in Ethiopia

Post-conflict reconstruction work must go beyond meeting short-term security and humanitarian needs



TEFSI GOLLA & HANY BESADA

The cataclysm in Ethiopia's Tigray region and the country's humanitarian crisis give rise to concerns of long-term regional deterioration. Without a clear framework for peace-building, post-conflict reconstruction and transitional justice, the country is at risk of drastically postponing both political and economic recovery. This has implications not only for Ethiopia but also the entire Horn of Africa region which is already plagued by low-level conflicts, uneven economic development, border disputes, continued food insecurity, climate change, a precarious political situation, and a dire refugee crisis.

#### The conflict

The breakdown in the already strained relations between the federal government in Addis Ababa and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)'s leaders in Tigray has resulted in the national crisis. In 2018, anti-government protests by the marginalised Oromo population forced the TPLF to step down, resulting in the election of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and his subsequent crackdown on Tigrayan politicians for corruption and human rights abuses. Internal conflict in Ethiopia has resulted in the death of 52,000 people and the displacement of over 2 million, over 60,000 of whom have taken refuge in Sudan's eastern border. This has triggered an influx of Sudanese and Eritrean military personnel near Ethiopia's northern frontier.

The complex process of developing a post-conflict reconstruction framework requires a comprehensive analysis, one that compels immediate coordination between the federal, regional and local governments, independent and partial adjudicators, civil society and victims' and community groups. The various levels of government need to be responsible for two roles: first, the generation of effective regional security architecture for uncomplicated jurisdictions; and second, a narrowed scope and mandate for the Reconciliation Commission and its independent committee of facilitators. Independent mediators and adjudicators can further assist in framing post-conflict models.

Currently, Ethiopia is attempting to tackle its domestic emergency. This phase involves securing a military conflict-free environment, addressing increased displacement, allowing access to basic needs assistance for citizens at risk of famine, and strengthening

humanitarian capacity in conflict-ridden areas. The part that requires more attention, given that it has been more than four months since the initiation of military conflict in Tigray, would be the medium- and long-term phases. This would mean examining how Ethiopia's response in rebuilding trust and consensus in state institutions will impact its political, economic and security stability.

Internally, the federal government would be urged to consider steps in effectively building frameworks for accountability, transparency and power distribution for inclusive national systems of governance. This is particularly important for combating the contentious nature of Ethiopia's ethnic federalist system and its lack of non-partisan platforms for political dialogue. This would help build an environment that promotes the establishment of trust and cooperation among its largest and historically conflicted Oromo, Amhara and Tigrayan groups, further preventing a relapse into a state of emergency.

Cities in the Northern Gondar Zone, such as Welkait, which have been under the contested control of TPLF forces for decades, will require socioeconomic transitional institutions for effective post-conflict recovery. In Welkait's case, this includes initiating healing dialogue among Amhara and Tigrayan groups, establishing efforts to integrate the cities' education, currently only taught in Tigrigna, and economy into the rest of the neighbouring Amharic-speaking region.

#### Taking a long-term view

A lack of transitional processes will result in a return to violence in not only the Tigray region but also in other regions where there are rising ethnic tensions. This threatens to derail the economic progress made over the last few decades. The best way to prevent the same chain of events that led to the 2010 post-election violence in Côte d'Ivoire is to begin structuring a post-conflict environment that promotes a peaceful transition.

The focus of regional and international media has been heavily geared towards Ethiopia's immediate alleviation of humanitarian strains. But meeting short-term security and humanitarian needs, although extremely important, should not be the sole focus of a sustainable recovery agenda. It is imperative to recognise a broader view and develop successful post-conflict reconstruction policies before stability is beyond reach.

Tefsi Golla is Researcher with the Institute for Natural Resources and Sustainable Development (INRSD) and Carleton University's Institute of African Studies; and Hany Besada is Executive Director of INRSD and Research Professor at Carleton University's Institute of African Studies

## Recalibrating relations with EU

Forging stronger ties with the region could help India strengthen manufacturing and revitalise exports

JAHANWI SINGH & NEHA RAMAN

The Atmanirbhar Bharat programme and the Budget 2021-22 have set the tone and tenor to bolster supply chains and achieve self-reliance. A self-reliant India, however, cannot be economically insular. Realising the vision of a self-reliant India would entail localising an increasing share of value added along supply chains through investments and phase-wise reduction of import tariffs with strategic partners such as the European Union (EU).

#### Export potential

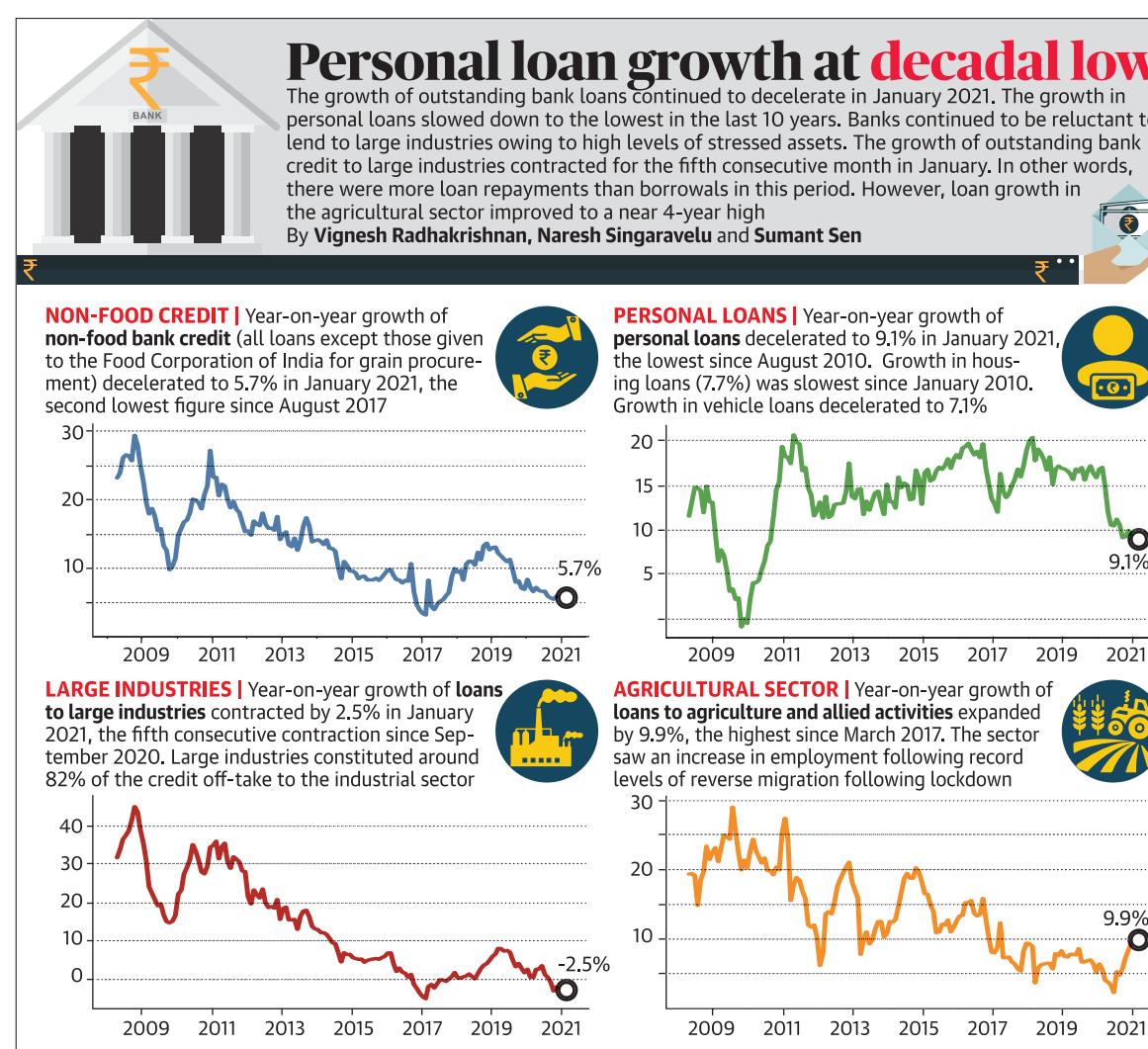
India has an untapped export potential of \$39.9 billion in the EU and Western Europe. The top products with export potential include apparel, gems and jewellery, chemicals, machinery, automobile, pharmaceuticals and plastic. India benefits from tariff preferences under the EU's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) for several of these products. In fact, India is among the major beneficiaries of the EU's GSP, with exports under the GSP valued at nearly \$19.4 billion in 2019, accounting for nearly 37% of India's merchandise exports to the EU.

However, there are several products where India has export potential in the EU, but these have "graduated" or are at the brink of "graduation" under EU GSP. Product graduation applies when average imports of a product from a beneficiary country exceed 17.5% of EU-GSP imports of the same product from all beneficiary countries over three years. India's exports of products such as textiles, inorganic and organic chemicals, gems and jewellery, iron, steel and their articles, base metals and automotives are already out of the ambit of EU-GSP benefits.

There is also a likelihood of losing EU-GSP benefits in other categories such as apparel, rubber, electronic items, sports goods and toys due to product graduation. In apparel, India's exports to the EU were valued at \$7 billion in 2019, of which nearly 94% was under EU-GSP, indicative of the impact that the graduation may have on apparel exports. Meanwhile, India's competitors in apparel exports such as Bangladesh would con-



#### DATA POINT



The Hindu

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 3, 1971

Social justice and the courts  
(From an Editorial)

It is a wise saw that a bad workman blames his tools and a poor dancer the shape of the stage for their dismal performances. A striking parallel in the political sphere is the growing trend of parties in power to blame the Constitution for their own poor record of service to the people. Armed with all the vast powers vested in them by the Government and the enormous resources of the nation at their beck and call, these men and women at the helm dissipate both through either personal aggrandisement or pointless policy exercises during most of their tenure. And when the day of reckoning draws near, they raise a hue and cry that but for the fundamental rights or some other provision in the Constitution they would have ushered in a just social order to ensure the welfare of the people and equality of opportunity for all. To lend some credence to such a politically profitable stand, they assiduously bring about confrontations with the judiciary, so that it can be made out that the verdicts of the judiciary striking down some ill-conceived (and often undesirable) pieces of legislation or executive acts and the provisions of the Constitution on which the verdicts are based are the causes for their own dismal inadequacy. The people are by now familiar with the plans of some parties for amending the Constitution in the name of social justice and their cries for a "committed judiciary" as also of the dangerous consequences of such attempts to undermine these bedrocks of individual liberty and the democratic freedoms.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 3, 1921

## Lord Reading and Ideal of Justice

London, February 27: A large gathering of Indian students this evening cordially welcomed Lord Reading at the Indian Students Hostel of the Y.M.C.A. Principal Garvie lectured on "Political Idealism" after which, in response to the students' calls, Lord Reading spoke. He declared, that the political idealists who had most influenced him were Gladstone, Morley, and Campbell-Bannerman. Political idealism found a modern expression in a re-interpretation of the French watchword, namely, "Liberty, Justice and Love". There would be no justice without love. As Lord Chief Justice, justice appealed to him. Love meant power to put oneself in other sinners' position. Lord Reading declared that to him, in political idealism, justice stood supreme (cheers).

FROM PAGE ONE

## India, Japan back in Sri Lanka port project

The deal had been signed by the former Maithripala Sirisena-Ranil Wickremesinghe government. The February 1 decision came amid mounting opposition from port worker unions and sections of the clergy to "foreign involvement" in the country's national assets.

The Rajapaksa government has offered India and Japan the WCT as an alternative, allowing higher stakes. In the ECT proposal agreed upon earlier, the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) was to hold majority 51%, but in the WCT proposal, India and Japan will be accorded 85% stake, as is the case in the nearby Colombo International Container Terminal (CICT), where China Merchants Port Holdings Company Limited holds 85%, the government said.

Asked how authorities had convinced the unions of foreign investment at another terminal in the same port, Mr. Rambukwella said their opposition was specific to the ECT, which was partially in use. The terminal's further development, which

is now to be undertaken by the Sri Lanka Port Authority, is aimed at augmenting operations at an estimated cost of up to \$700 million.

The West Container Terminal, however, has to be built from scratch, requiring a much higher investment.

The WCT is adjacent to the China-run CICT and just a couple of kilometres away from the China-backed Port City being built on reclaimed land, making it a strategically desirable spot for India, whose concerns over China's presence in Sri Lanka are well known.

Colombo's alternative offer also comes at a time when Sri Lanka is seeking support at the ongoing UN Human Rights Council session, where a resolution on the country's rights record will soon be put to vote. The government recently wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Asked if the two developments were linked, Mr. Rambukwella said they were "two different areas – one is commercial, other one, more of international relations."

## Spotlight on woman who worked at Indian Embassy

*The Hindu* spoke to a number of diplomats and other officials who had dealt with her during her tenure at the embassy. They described her as "very efficient" and "very plugged in" to the top echelons of Thimphu society, while others said she was "ambitious" and "frightfully manipulative".

Ms. Wangmo was arrested in 2019 on charges of "seditious allegations" and continues to be held in custody, facing 11 charges of criminal conspiracy in the latest case. The arrests in February are believed to have followed her interrogation.

During her tenure at the embassy, Ms. Wangmo also underwent training as a "Desuup", or volunteer who is part of a "Guardians of Peace" programme launched by the Bhutanese King, where she recounts meeting many senior military officials. In an article for the *Kuensel* in 2015, she had written, "I am a Desuup ready for action. More importantly, I am a pilgrim in search of relationships that honour and edify. It has been my destiny to weave my own little story into the grand fabric of the illustrious Indo-Bhutan relationship," signing herself as Desuup Bumden Khandu Wangmo, Embassy of India.

However, officials told *The Hindu* that she was not a very senior official and had not pursued her links there after her contract ended.

"There is no connection with the Indian Embassy –

she left from here in 2016," an embassy official said, when asked if the Bhutanese police had made any formal inquiries with them. A source who had seen the chargesheet against the three officers, clarified that there was no suggestion of her links with the embassy in Thimphu to the case.

The most serious of the charges relates to a plot to overthrow the RBA chief, Lieutenant-General Batoo Tshering, by Brigadier Tobgye, who is in charge of the security of King Jigme Khesar Namgyal and other members of the Bhutanese royal family. Mr. Kuenlay Tshering and Mr. Dorji, who was married to Ms. Wangmo earlier, were allegedly part of the conspiracy against the RBA chief, which involved using fraudulently obtained documents of a deal for United Nations vehicles to frame him, with the aim of catapulting themselves into the positions of the Chief Justice and the Court Registrar respectively.

Giving an account of the inquiry in *The Bhutanese* newspaper, Editor Tenzing Langsam said that according to their testimonies, the three officials said they had been duped by Ms. Wangmo into thinking their actions were in line with the wishes of some "higher authorities".

The full array of charges against Ms. Wangmo and the three officials will be known in the next couple of weeks, as the trial gets under way.

## Centre gets ₹77,815 cr. in spectrum auction

In the auction – the first in nearly five years and among the shortest, with participation from only three players – a total of 2308.80 MHz of spectrum across seven bands and worth about ₹3.92 lakh crore was put up for sale. Bids were received for 855.60 MHz, or 37%, of the spectrum.

No bids were received for the premium 700 MHz and 2500 MHz bands. The 700 MHz band remained unsold during the 2016 auctions as well due to the high prices.

The government expects to receive an upfront payment of about ₹26,000-27,000 crore, of which ₹19,000-20,000 crore will come in during the current fiscal (before March 31, 2021), while the remaining will be received by December 2021. "Our estimate itself was ₹45,000-50,000 crore and we have got bids

worth ₹77,814.80 crore, which is much higher than expectations," Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash said.

In a press statement, Reliance Jio said it acquired spectrum in all 22 telecom circles, across 800 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2300 MHz bands, and its owned spectrum footprint had increased by 55% to 1,717 MHz.

Bharti Airtel, which bid for spectrum across all bands barring 700 MHz and 2500 MHz, said the spectrum acquired gives the company "the most formidable spectrum holdings in the country".

Vodafone Idea, which bid for small quantities in the 900 MHz and 1800 MHz bands, said the company had entered the auction holding the largest quantum of spectrum with a very small fraction coming up for renewal.

## COVID-19: Karnataka told to tighten border vigil

Central team in Bengaluru to review situation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU



Taking stock: Central team visiting Bengaluru to assess the situation after the rise in COVID-19 cases. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In the wake of the emergence of cluster outbreaks in the city and a few other places, a team of officials from the Union government has asked the State to tighten vigilance at the Kerala and Maharashtra borders and also step up contact tracing.

The Central team comprising a Joint Secretary from the Health and Family Welfare Ministry and two doctors arrived in the city on Monday to review the COVID-19 safety precautions and control measures in the city.

### Team visits

The team that had visited the testing facility at the Kempegowda International Airport, a cluster at the Sambhram College of Engineering and Genomic Sequencing laboratory at NIMHANS on Monday, visited the Tumakuru District Hospital and some

vaccination centres on Tuesday. It held a review meeting with the Chief Secretary and other officials from the Health Department and the BBMP on Tuesday. Health and Medical Education Minister K. Sudhakar told *The Hindu* on Tuesday that the Central team had expressed satisfaction over measures initiated by the State in containing the cluster out-

breaks. "The team has asked us to further tighten vigilance at the borders of Kerala and Maharashtra and step up contact tracing," he said.

### Contact tracing

Pointing out that the State was now tracing eight primary contacts and four secondary contacts, the Minister said the team had asked to increase this to 20 primary

and 15 secondary contacts. "Except these suggestions, the team lauded our containment efforts and testing measures. If required, we will further increase the number of daily tests conducted."

Health Commissioner K.V. Trilok Chandra said the team had asked the State to ensure strict enforcement of pandemic-appropriate behaviour.

## Furore as Karnataka Minister gets jab at home

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HUBBALLI/BENGALURU



Agriculture Minister B.C. Patil receiving the jab at his house. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Karnataka Agriculture Minister B.C. Patil, who sparked a controversy on Tuesday by getting himself inoculated at his home in Hirerkerur in violation of COVID-19 protocols, defended his action saying that he had not committed any crime".

The Minister reportedly summoned the taluk health official and staff to his home and got the vaccine shots for himself and his wife.

A video and photographs of the incident soon became viral on social media platforms evoking strong reactions from netizens and Opposition leaders of 'misusing power and blatantly violating the norms'.

Mr. Patil said inconvenience could have been caused to people waiting at the hospital, had he gone there. Moreover several people

were waiting to meet him at his residence and after getting vaccine he was able to speak to them. "It is not a big issue at all. What is wrong in getting vaccine at home," he said.

However, District Health Officer Rajendra Doddamani has issued notice to the Hirerkerur Taluk Health Officer for violating the COVID-19 protocol.

## Enforcement Directorate to probe KIIFB's transactions

It summons senior officials of the board for questioning

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHI

In a move that could trigger an intense political debate in the State, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has extended its Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) probe to the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB), the flagship infrastructure funding and development arm of the State government.

The timing of the probe gains significance as the State is all set for the Assembly polls and the State government is trying to impress voters by showcasing

the infrastructure development projects it carried out using the funds mobilised by KIIFB.

While the ED has asked the senior officials of Axis Bank, the key banker of the project, to appear for interrogation on Wednesday, it has asked K. M. Abraham, the CEO of the Board to be present at its Kochi office on March 5. The Deputy CEO has been summoned to appear on March 4 for interrogation, according to sources.

Primarily, the agency is probing violations of the Foreign Exchange Management Act in the financial transactions involving the board.



The Chief Minister is the chairman of the Board and the Finance Minister its Vice Chairman. The Chief Secretary, the Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Board, the secretaries of Law, Finance and Finance Resources are its members.

The ED has also been probing the LIFE Mission, the mass housing project of the State government, project at Wadakkancherry.

## Alert helps foil plan to hack power systems in Telangana

A China-based hacking group attempted the attack

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

A possible hacking of the power systems in Telangana by a China-based group was averted by the power utilities of the State by taking timely precautionary measures following an alert issued by the Computer Emergency Response Team of India (CERT-In) on Tuesday.

According to Chairman and Managing Director of TS Transco and TS-Genco D. Prabhakar Rao, the CERT-In has reported from a trusted source that the China-based "Threat actor Group Command and Control" servers

were trying to communicate with systems belonging to all the users accessing the TSSLD website were changed and suspected equipment within the perimeter of the SCADA control centre was isolated to ensure safety of the grid and satisfactory power supply to all consumer.



The cyber attack attempt which came to light assumes significance as it comes at a time when *The New York Times* reported recently that power black out in Mumbai in October last was due to a China-based cyber attack.

## Karnataka Minister caught in 'sex for favours' scam

As video clips go viral, Congress demands resignation of Ramesh Jarkiholi; BJP leaders to discuss issue

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

In an embarrassment to the ruling BJP days ahead of the Budget session, an activist approached the Bengaluru police on Tuesday seeking an investigation into Karnataka Minister for Major and Medium Irrigation Ramesh Jarkiholi for allegedly abusing a woman and seeking sexual favours from her in return for a government job.

Purported clips of the Minister and the woman together and some telephone conversations allegedly between them have gone viral on social media, prompting the Opposition Congress to demand his resignation. BJP sources said the issue would be discussed with Central leaders on Wednesday.

According to Bengaluru-based activist Dinesh Kallahalli, the Minister threatened the woman after he learnt of the video clips, following which her family, fearing for her life, approached him for help.

Based on his complaint, the Cubbon Park police have registered a non-cognisable report and are probing the allegations. "We have received a petition about the alleged incident and are probing the matter," said M.N. Anucheth, DCP, Central Division. The complaint has not revealed either the identity of the woman or source of the video, said an officer.

"We will serve him a notice asking him to furnish us details of the woman, or her relatives so that we can approach the woman and investigate the claims of harassment further," a senior police officer said.

Mr. Kallahalli also submitted a CD of all the video and audio clips to the police. In his complaint, he said the woman had approached the Minister seeking permission

to use drone cameras to shoot a dam for a documentary. They met multiple times as Mr. Jarkiholi reportedly sought to learn more about the woman. In his complaint, Mr. Kallahalli said that during one of their meetings, Mr. Jarkiholi promised to get her a job at Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Ltd. in return for sexual favours.

According to sources, the victim not only recorded their private moments but also every meeting and phone conversation she had with Mr. Jarkiholi. "The reason behind these records is also part of the probe," a senior police officer said.

Meanwhile BJP senior leader and Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said he would

discuss the issue with party leaders in New Delhi besides Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa and party State president Nalin Kumar Kateel. "Being a disciplined party, the BJP would not tolerate such things. Leaders should be clean in public and private life," he said.

In 2019, Mr. Jarkiholi had led a group of 17 MLAs who switched to the BJP from the Congress and other parties, which eventually led to the fall of the Congress-JD(S) coalition government and formation of the BJP government.

If the sex for favours episode takes a serious turn, it could weaken the new Ministers who came from other parties, said a section of insiders.

## Mullaperiyar case hearing on March 9

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday scheduled a hearing on March 9 of the case concerning the safety of the 126-year-old Mullaperiyar Dam. A Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar adjourned the hearing on a request made by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar.

Recently, Tamil Nadu had filed an affidavit assuring that the dam was safe hydrologically and protected from earthquakes.

In its affidavit, Kerala had informed the court of Central Water Commission (CWC) inspection report which said that 70% of the installed instruments for monitoring the safety and health of the dam were not working properly.

## Engineering research policy launched

Karnataka plans to increase its contribution to the sector to 45% in five years

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

Karnataka launched the country's maiden Engineering Research & Development (ER&D) Policy on Tuesday to raise its contribution to the sector in the country to 45% in the next five years.

The State government anticipates the policy has the potential to create over 50,000 jobs in the ER&D space in five years. According to industry apex body Nasscom, ER&D has the potential to become a \$100-billion industry in the country in the next five years.

Unveiling the policy, Deputy Chief Minister C.N. Ashwath Narayan, who holds the IT/Biotechnology and Science and Technology portfolios, said, "The ER&D sector in the country is the fastest growing industry with a CAGR of 12.8%. Meanwhile, the global engineering research and development industry is expected to reach a spend of \$2 trillion by 2025."

"Considering this scenario, this policy aims to prepare the State to make use of

the future opportunities emanating from this sector." The new policy, drafted jointly by the Department of Electronics, IT, Biotechnology and Science and Technology, Karnataka Innovation and Technology Society, and Nasscom in consultation with industry stakeholders, has identified five key focus sectors such as aerospace and defence; auto, auto components and EV; biotechnology, pharma and medical devices; semiconductors, telecom, ESDM; and software products.

"We are already the leading contributor to the country's ER&D industry revenue. Our State is home to over 400 R&D centres, global capability centres and engineering service providers. Through this policy, we are aiming to grow our contribution, develop more intellectual properties (IPs), and make Karnataka a skilled knowledge capital," he added.

According to Dr. Narayan, his government would invest in skilling, improve academic and industry collaboration, and also encourage IP creation locally in a big way.

In his keynote address Ajay Prabhu, president, Technology Services at QuEST Global and chair for Nasscom Engineering R&D (ER&D) Council, said, "The new ER&D policy heralds a new chapter in the State's position as a hub of innovation and transformation."

## Centre gets ₹77,815 cr. in spectrum auction

In the auction – the first in nearly five years and among the shortest, with participation from only three players – a total of 2308.80 MHz of spectrum across seven bands and worth about ₹3.92 lakh crore was put up for sale. Bids were received for 855.60 MHz, or 37%, of the spectrum.

No bids were received for the premium 700 MHz and 2500 MHz bands. The 700 MHz band remained unsold during the 2016 auctions as well due to the high prices. The government expects to receive an upfront payment of about ₹26,000-27,000 crore, of which ₹19,000-20,000 crore will come in during the current fiscal (before March 31, 20

## Plea against eight-phase Bengal polls

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court to "prohibit" the conduct of the Assembly election in West Bengal in an "unequal manner" in eight phases.

The petition filed by advocate Manohar Lal Sharma also sought a CBI probe into the use of 'Jai Shri Ram' as a rallying slogan on religious terms by the BJP in the run-up to the elections.

Mr. Sharma, a Supreme Court advocate, has arraigned Union Home Minister Amit Shah and West Bengal BJP leader Suvidhu Adhikari as respondents. The petition said the CBI should launch a probe under the Indian Penal Code, the Representation of People Act. The petitioner has also made the Election Commission of India, the Union of India and the CBI as respondents in the petition.

## EC cuts notice period for new parties

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday said it had reduced the public notice period for new political parties seeking registration from 30 days to seven days due to the delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The relaxation would remain in force till the last dates of nomination for the Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry and West Bengal elections, that is March 19 and April 7 respectively. The applicants are supposed to publish the proposed name of their party in two national and local daily newspapers each on two days, seeking objections within 30 days.

## BJP sweeps local elections in Gujarat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
AHMEDABAD

The BJP swept the panchayat and municipal elections in Gujarat delivering a major blow to the Congress.

As per the results till 5:30 p.m., the party won 771 seats in districts panchayats, 2,027 in municipalities and 3,236 in taluka panchayats. The Opposition party's tally was 164, 375 and 1201 respectively.

## Emergency was a mistake, says Rahul

'But Cong. never captured institutions'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said the Emergency imposed by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was a "mistake" but sought to differentiate the situation in 1975 and now in terms of "capture of democratic institutions".

In an online conversation with Cornell University Professor of Economics Kaushik Basu, who was the Chief Economic Adviser to the Manmohan Singh government, Mr. Gandhi said what happened in 1975 was "wrong" but it was fundamentally different from the present where, he alleged, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh had "penetrated every institution, including judiciary, bureaucracy, election commission and the press".

Discussing democracy, Mr. Gandhi said "democracy was not just eroding but it has been strangled" ever since the Narendra Modi government came to power in 2014.

"I think that was a mistake. Absolutely, that was a mis-

## Bengal candidate lists take time

Political parties are yet to announce the names in the fray for the first phase

SHIV SAHAY SINGH  
KOLKATA

Even as the Election Commission on Tuesday issued the notification for the first phase of election in West Bengal, major political parties in the State are yet to announce candidates.

The notification was issued for 30 seats going to the polls on March 27 in Purulia, Paschim Medinipur, Purba Medinipur and Jhargram districts in the south-western region of the State.

Usually, it is the ruling Trinamool Congress that takes the lead in announcing candidates, but in this high-stakes election, the party leadership has decided to go slow.

Party sources said the list of candidates for the first phase had been finalised, but the final call had to be taken by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

There are apprehensions among sections of the ruling party that if all sections were



**High stakes:** A shop sells campaigning material ahead of the Assembly election, in Kolkata on February 26. ■ AFP

not accommodated, then dissent over seat-sharing could come out in the public.

The Left-Congress leadership, holding a series of meetings over the past few days, has still not been able to make a breakthrough.

A meeting was held on Tuesday at the State headquarters of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Alimuddin Street, where Indian Secular Front (ISF) lead-

ers also participated.

At a city hotel, the BJP is in a huddle to finalise the number of candidates.

The party is most likely to announce candidates after the Trinamool Congress comes out with its list of nominees.

### MLA joins BJP

Prominent Trinamool Congress leader and former Mayor of Asansol Jitendra Tewari on Tuesday joined

the BJP in the presence of State party president Dilip Ghosh.

Mr. Tewari, Pandaveshwar MLA and former Trinamool president in Paschim Bardhaman district, was keen on joining the BJP last December, but chose to stay with the Trinamool after the intervention of Ms. Banerjee.

A section of BJP leaders, including Asansol BJP MP Babul Supriyo, was opposed to Mr. Tewari joining the BJP in December. Mr. Supriyo, however, has changed his stand now and welcomed Mr. Tewari into the party.

In another development, officials at the office of the Chief Electoral Officer said the ECI had extended polling time by 30 minutes for the first phase of polls, and voters would now be able to exercise their franchise from 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The decision has been taken in the wake of safety protocols due to COVID-19.

## BJP hits out at Cong. over alliance with ISF in Bengal

The tie-up is only to keep the Gandhi family in power'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Tuesday waded into the internal differences within the Congress on the latter's alliance with the Indian Secular Front (ISF) in West Bengal, stating that the alliance and other political tie-ups were only for the maintenance of the "political relevance of the Gandhi family".

"This alliance and several others entered into by the Congress is not for improving its performance or offering transformative leadership and good governance, but to preserve the political relevance of the Gandhi family," BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said.

"Many months ago, in 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had used the correct phrase to describe such alliances as *thug-bandhan* [alliance of deception] rather than a *gath-bandhan* [alliance]," he added.

"This is core hypocrisy and doublespeak – the Congress that terms itself a secular party but ties up with the ISF in West Bengal, with the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) in Assam, and the Welfare Party, a front organisation of the Jamaat-e-Islami in Kerala," he added.

"The pinnacle of the hypocrisy is the fact that the Congress is fighting in alliance with the Left in West Bengal and opposing the same party in Kerala. After tying up with parties like ISF, AIUDF, Indian Union Muslim League etc, it is running a government in Maharashtra with the Shiv Sena. There is no logic here, save the logic of power and to keep the Gandhis in power at all costs," he said.

Leaders from the Congress, including Anand Sharma, have also questioned the alliance with the ISF.

## Farmers to campaign against BJP during polls

Teams to visit poll-bound States

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



Farmers protesting at the Singhu border in New Delhi on Tuesday.

the BJP," he added.

"This government only understands the language of elections, of votes, of seats. So we will go to all the five poll-bound States," said Swaraj India president Yogen Yadav. In Bengal, the campaign will kick off on March 12, when SKM leaders will take part in a farmers' rally in Kolkata, he said.

"They will tell people that the Modi government is not treating farmers fairly, and counter the propaganda of

## Congress urges calm as its leaders spar over ISF ties

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

As senior Congress leaders Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and Anand Sharma sparred over the party's choice of allies in West Bengal, the party on Tuesday urged everyone to come together to take on the BJP in the upcoming elections. The party said the grand alliance formed in Bengal is a secular alliance and leaders should not fall

for the BJP's propaganda, in what seemed to be a snub to Mr. Sharma.

On Monday, Mr. Sharma had attacked the party's decision to ally with the Indian Secular Front (ISF) and its founder, Abbas Siddiqui of Furfura Sharief, saying it militates against the Congress ideology.

Hitting back, in a series of tweets late on Monday night, Mr. Chowdhury said, "Those

who are committed to fighting against #BJP parties' venomous communalism should support the Congress & campaign for the party in five states rather than attempting to undermine the party by remarks in tune with BJP's agenda. Would urge a select group of distinguished Congressmen to rise above always seeking personal comfort spots & stop wasting time singing praises

of PM. They owe a duty to strengthen the Party & not undermine the tree that nurtured them."

Mr. Sharma told news agency ANI that they (Group of 23) stand for a united Congress, despite having reservations on some issues.

Party spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi at a press conference urged colleagues to work together.

"I think, the whole idea of

this larger front in Bengal was to create, as far as possible, to the maximum extent, a good political fight against the BJP's particularly vitiated brand of politics and, therefore, I would say that each one of us, each one of my senior and respected and valued colleagues should join wholeheartedly and unconventionally in that fight to combat the false propaganda of the BJP," Mr. Singhvi said.

## 'Love jihad happening in West Bengal'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday alleged that incidents of cattle smuggling and 'love jihad' were going on in West Bengal as the Trinamool Congress government was indulging in appeasement politics.

Mr. Adityanath was addressing a public meeting in Malda district.

"Through fraud and deceit, incidents of love jihad are taking place in West Bengal. We have made a law against love jihad in Uttar Pradesh. But in West Bengal, where the State government is indulging in politics of appeasement, neither are there attempts to curb cattle smuggling nor dangerous incidents of love jihad," said Mr. Adityanath.

## Will bring law to nullify CAA: Cong.

Priyanka launches 'five-guarantee' campaign in Assam, promises 5 lakh jobs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday launched the party's 'five-guarantee' campaign for the upcoming Assembly election in Assam.

The five guarantees are bringing a law that nullifies the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, providing five lakh government jobs, raising the daily wage of tea plantation workers to ₹365, free electricity up to 200 units per household, and ₹2,000 as monthly income support to all homemakers.

The people of Assam were cheated by a party five years ago that promised them 25 lakh jobs but gave them CAA instead. The Congress party is not making empty promises but undertaking five guarantees," Ms. Vadra said at a rally in Tez-

pur. Campaign committee chief and MP Pradyut Bordoloi said the first guarantee was based on the feedback from the people.

"We have already asked lawyers to start drafting a law towards stopping the CAA from being implemented in Assam," he said.

The tea business was stu-

died and compared with the tea workers' wages in Kerala, which is ₹380 a day. "Tea planters can easily manage ₹365 and we will make this wage happen within 30 days of coming to power," said leader of the Opposition in the 126-member Assembly Debabrata Saikia.

"Through fraud and deceit, incidents of love jihad are taking place in West Bengal. We have made a law against love jihad in Uttar Pradesh. But in West Bengal, where the State government is indulging in politics of appeasement, neither are there attempts to curb cattle smuggling nor dangerous incidents of love jihad," said Mr. Adityanath.

## 2 Manipur journalists get notices under new rules

But they were withdrawn hours later

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Two Manipur-based journalists have arguably become the first ones to be slapped with notices under the newly notified Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 over an online discussion titled "Media under siege: are journalists walking a tightrope?"

But the March 1 notices from Naorem Praveen Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Imphal West district, were withdrawn hours after Paopel Chaoba and Kishorechandra Wangkhemcha received them on Tuesday.

Mr. Chaoba is the executive editor and Mr. Wangkhemcha is the associate editor of *The Frontier Manipur (TFM)*, a digital media outlet. The duo and two others – independent journalist Grace Jajo and columnist Ninglun Hangal – had taken part in the discussion on February 28.

**Letter from Ministry**  
The withdrawal of notices followed a letter from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry

to Rajesh Kumar, Manipur's Chief Secretary, pointing out that the powers to wield the new digital media rules "have not been delegated to State governments/District Magistrate/Police Commissioner".

Mr. Chaoba, who is also the publisher of the *TFM*, said his family found the withdrawal notice put on the gate of their house in the evening. "It is to inform you that this office notice of even number dated March 1, 2020 served to you stands withdrawn with immediate effect," the notice read.

In the earlier notice, the two editors were directed to furnish all relevant documents showing that they comply with the provisions of the new rules, failing which "steps as deemed fit shall be initiated without further notice".

The new IT rules are being used to intimidate journalists, as was evident from six-seven armed policemen who came to deliver the first notice at 9 a.m. today. The Deputy Commissioner retracted the notice because he is not empowered under the Act," said Mr. Chaoba.

**National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management**  
Deemed to be University (De-novo Category) under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956  
An Autonomous Institution under Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India, Plot No. 97, Sector-56, HSIDC, Industrial Estate, Kundli-131028, Sonipat, Haryana  
Advertisement No.: N/HR & H/2021/4  
Dated: 03.03.2021

## Recruitment Notification

Online applications are invited in the prescribed format for the recruitment of faculty in various departments as under:-

Sr. No.	Positions	Food Science and Technology (FST)	Food Engineering (FE)	Food Business Management and Entrepreneurship Development (FBMED)	Total
1	Professor Pay scale is as per 7th CPC Level 14 (Rs. 1,44,200/- Rs. 2,18,200/-)	1 (SC)*	-	1 (UR)	2
2	Associate Professor Pay scale is as per 7th CPC Level 13A (Rs. 1,31,400/- Rs. 2,17,100/-)	-	1 (UR) 1 (SC)*	1 (UR)	3
3	Assistant Professor Pay scale is as per 7th CPC Level 10 (Rs. 57,700/- Rs. 1,82,400/-)	-	-	1 (EWS)*	1

\*For Professor one post reserved for SC under FST and for Associate Professor 01 post reserved for SC under FE are considered as backlog vacancy and for Assistant Professor Post of EWS is also considered as backlog vacancy.

For more details of Departments, Specializations, qualifications, number of vacancies etc. please visit NIFTEM website [www.niftem.ac.in](http://www.niftem.ac.in). The eligible and interested applicants should apply online in the format available on the NIFTEM website. Application will be accepted online only with effect from 07.03.2021. The last date of receipt of applications is 15.04.2021.

Applications that are incomplete and/or not as per the prescribed format shall be summarily rejected. Age and Qualifications will be counted as on last date of submission of application form.

**Note:**  

- Any corrigendum/addendum shall be posted only on NIFTEM website.
- This advertisement & further recruitment process will be subject to any clarifications from MHRD/UGC or any other competent authority.
- Non-refundable application fee of Rs.1000/- for General/OBC candidates and Rs.500/- for SC

## IN BRIEF



## Why charge people for vaccine, asks Chavan

NEW DELHI  
Former Maharashtra Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan on Tuesday asked why the Centre had decided to allow private hospitals to set a charge for vaccines. "In the budget speech FM @nsitharaman announced ₹35,000 cr. for the vaccination drive. With that amount govt. can procure and distribute 1.5 billion doses covering 75 crore population," he said.

## Farooq Abdullah gets first dose of vaccine

Srinagar  
National Conference (NC) president and Member of Parliament Dr. Farooq Abdullah was administered the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine in Srinagar on Tuesday. Dr. Abdullah's son and NC leader Omar Abdullah tweeted, "Today my 85-year-old father and my mother had their first COVID jab. My father has a number of health issues including being on immunosuppressants for a kidney transplant. If he can get the vaccine, you should as well."

## IndiGo flight diverted to Karachi after emergency

NEW DELHI  
An IndiGo flight from Sharjah to Lucknow was diverted to Karachi on Tuesday morning following a medical emergency onboard involving a 67-year-old Indian passenger. When the flight landed, the passenger could not be revived and was declared dead on arrival by the airport medical team, IndiGo said in a press statement.

## National Investigation Agency to probe spy case

NEW DELHI  
The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has asked the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to probe a case where an ex-serviceman was arrested in January from Uttar Pradesh for allegedly sharing classified information of the Army with "pseudonym entities" being operated by Pakistani intelligence officials.

## 12,286 fresh cases in 24 hours

Centre advises five States seeing a rise in numbers to be extra cautious

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat are witnessing a surge in daily new COVID-19 cases, and the Central government has advised them to be cautious about the rising numbers.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Union Health Ministry said the country's total active caseload now stood at 1,68,358. It added 12,286 new cases in the 24 hours till 8 a.m. on Tuesday.

Maharashtra continued to report the highest daily new cases at 6,397, followed by Kerala, with 1,938 and Punjab 633.

Maharashtra and Kerala alone accounted for 67.84% of the total active cases, the Ministry said.

The country reported the recovery of 12,464 people in

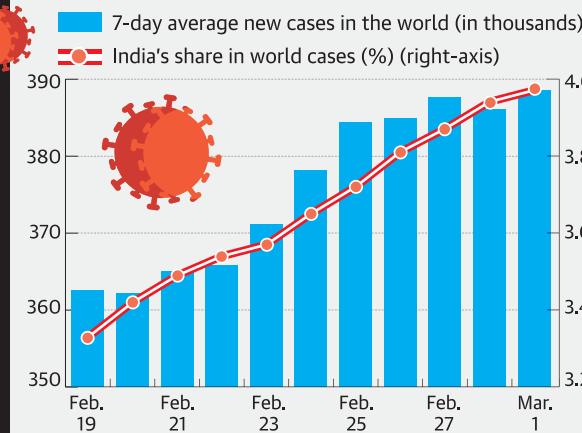
## Rising burden

Between February 19 and March 1, average daily COVID-19 cases recorded in the world increased from 3.6 lakh to 3.8 lakh. In the same period, India's share in global cases also increased from 3.3% to nearly 4%. The chart shows the 7-day average new cases in the world (on the left-axis) and India's share (right-axis)

the 24 hours, and 86.55% of the new recovered cases were observed to be concentrated in six States.

Maharashtra reported the highest number of single-day recoveries, with 5,754.

As many as 3,475 people recovered in Kerala and 482



in Tamil Nadu. Six States accounted for 85.71% of the 91 new COVID-19 deaths reported in the last 24 hours.

Maharashtra reported the highest number of casualties (30).

Punjab followed with 18 and Kerala at 13.

## Don't create buffer stock of vaccines: Health Ministry

Utilise 100% capacities of private hospitals, States/UTs told

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Health Ministry urged States/UTs to utilise 100% capacities of private hospitals functioning as COVID Vaccination Centres (CVCs) and said private hospitals not under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) and the State Insurance Schemes can also be utilised as CVCs.

"There is no shortage of vaccines, adequate vaccine doses to be allocated to all hospitals functioning as CVCs," said Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan on Tuesday.

The Ministry said that States/UTs should not store, reserve, conserve or create a



All smiles: Minister Harsh Vardhan and wife Nutan Goel after getting the vaccine on Tuesday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

buffer stock at the State and district levels.

The Central government has also instructed that private vaccination centres should have in place effective crowd management protocols along with facilities

for seating, water, proper signage etc. Besides this, States/UTs in consultation with the private hospitals should open the vaccination slots for 15 days to a month and announce this as part of their time table.

## Women's rights activists ask CJI to step down

They criticise his remarks on rape

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Over 3,500 concerned citizens, representatives of women's movements and feminists issued an open letter to Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde demanding that he step down and issue an apology for his remarks in court where he asked a man, accused of raping a minor girl, if he was willing to marry her.

In another case, the court stayed the arrest of a man accused of rape by his former partner, with Chief Justice Bobde commenting "however brutal the husband is... when two people (are) living as husband and wife... can sexual intercourse between them be called rape?"

The open letter, endorsed by activists including Annie Raja, Kavita Krishnan, Kamla Bhasin, Meera Sanghamitra, Mainmoona Mollah and Zakia Soman, said, "From the towering heights of the post of CJI of the Supreme Court, it sends

This will only lead to the further silencing of girls and women

OPEN LETTER BY ACTIVISTS

the message to other courts, judges, police and all other law enforcing agencies that justice is not a constitutional right of women in India. This will only lead to the further silencing of girls and women.

To the rapists, it sends the message that marriage is a licence to rape; and that by obtaining such a licence, the rapist can post facto decriminalise or legalise his act."

Nearly 50 groups, including the All India Progressive Women's Association, were among the signatories.

In a separate letter to the Chief Justice of India urging him to withdraw his comments, CPI(M) Polit Bureau member Brinda Karat said, "Rape victims are not robots whose thoughts and feelings are under remote control of others".

## Sexually harassed woman's father shot dead in U.P.

BJP, SP spar on the political affiliation of the accused

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

The father of a sexually harassed woman was shot dead in Uttar Pradesh allegedly by the main accused, who has been out on bail since 2018, and his associates on Monday.

Superintendent of Police Vineet Jaiswal said the man was shot by Gaurav Sharma and his friends at Naujarpur village of Sasni in Hathras district, and he died on the way to hospital.

A daughter of the deceased filed a police complaint, saying the accused had told them to withdraw the sexual harassment case. The police arrested Lalit Sharma, one of the four accused.

While Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav targeted the BJP government over the murder, BJP leaders alleged that main accused, Gaurav Sharma, was affiliated to the SP.

SP leaders retaliated by



In custody: Lalit Sharma, one of the four accused, has been arrested by the police. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

posting pictures of the accused along with the BJP MP from Aligarh, Satish Gautam.

Piyush Mordia, Inspector General, Aligarh, said the body was found in a potato field by the police.

In June 2018, the man lodged an FIR against Gaurav, Mr. Jaiswal said.

The next month, Gaurav was sent to jail and he was released on bail after a month, the officer added.

On Monday, when Gaurav's wife and maternal aunt went to a temple in the village, they got into an altercation with the daughters of the victim over the sexual harassment incident, he said.

On Facebook, the accused ran a page under the name of Gaurav Songra and claimed to be an SP leader.

Juhie Singh, senior SP leader, said the accused was not associated with the SP.

religious and ethnic minorities of Pakistan and said 'holy' sites of the minority groups have been attacked by Pakistan.

The tough exchange came days after India and Pakistan agreed to adhere to the 2003 ceasefire agreement which is being interpreted as early signs of engagement between the two sides who last held high-level dialogue in December 2015. Despite those positive signs at the bilateral level, Pakistan and the OIC raised the Kashmir issue at the HRC which drew sharp response from India.

"The Council should ask Pakistan why the size of its minority communities such as Christians, Hindus and Sikhs has drastically shrunk since independence and why they and other communities such as Ahmadis, Shias, Pashtuns, Sindhis and Baloch have been subjected to draconian blasphemy laws and systemic persecution," said Mr. Badhe.

## LSTV-RSTV now merged under banner of Sansad TV

Retired IAS officer Ravi Kapoor appointed its CEO

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

After nearly two years of work, the merger of the Lok Sabha TV (LSTV) and the Rajya Sabha TV (RSTV) will be finalised and will be replaced by Sansad TV. On Monday, retired IAS officer Ravi Kapoor was appointed its Chief Executive Officer.

In November 2019, after deliberations between Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu, a committee headed by former Prasar Bharati Chairman Surya Prakash was set up. It submitted a report in February 2020. Three different sub-committees are currently examining the report to finalise the integration of technical and manpower resources of both the channels.

The Surya Prakash panel held a meeting with Mem-



bers of Parliament from different political parties and they strongly recommended the continuation of the live telecast.

Under the banner of Sansad TV, sources said, the LSTV would continue to telecast live the House proceedings and the RSTV that of the Upper House.

During the inter-session period and beyond the working hours of Parliament, both will telecast

## Kangana seeks transfer of cases to Shimla

Actor says she fears threat to life and property

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Actor Kangana Ranaut and her sister have moved the Supreme Court for transfer of four criminal cases registered against them in Mumbai to Shimla.

In their joint petition, Ms. Ranaut and her sister, Rangoli Chandel, said they apprehend danger to their lives and property in Mumbai.

The cases include FIRs registered on separate com-



Kangana Ranaut. ■

plaints filed by lawyer Ali Kashif Khan Deshmukh and Munawar Ali, accusing the sisters of allegedly trying to spread communal hatred.

The sisters also sought the transfer of a criminal defamation case registered on a complaint filed by lyricist Javed Akhtar.

The sisters, represented by advocate Neeraj Shekhar,

said the cases have been filed to malign their public image. They said they have a "stellar reputation and huge fan following among the Indian public".

They said they were "public-spirited citizens". They contended that the complaints against them were frivolous and a means for harassment.

**'Malafide intentions'**

"The Maharashtra government led by Shiv Sena has been harassing the petitioners," the petition said. It accused Shiv Sena leader and MP Sanjay Raut of naming calumniating besides highlighting how the Brihanmumbai

Municipal Corporation had illegally demolished a part of Ms. Ranaut's Pali Hill bungalow. She said the action "smacked of malafide intentions".

The petition said, "The acts of the Maharashtra government clearly shows that it has malafide intentions against the petitioners and that if they visit Maharashtra to attend the trials, there will be a constant threat to them from the Shiv Sena and other communal forces."

The petition, as proof of the danger against Ms. Ranaut, said the Home Ministry has provided Y-Plus category CRPF security.

## Army to induct 6,000 new light machine guns for frontline troops

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

The Army will begin inducting the first lot of 6,000 new Light Machine Guns (LMG) from Israel, with frontline troops on the borders set to receive them later this month. These are part of the 16,497 Negev LMGs contracted from Israeli Weapons Industry (IWI) in March 2020 under fast track procurement to meet the immediate

requirement. The remaining guns in the order will be delivered by March 2022, an Army official said.

The first lot of 6,000 guns arrived in Mumbai in the second week of January and were transported to Jabalpur to complete inspection and handing over formalities. They are now ready for induction, the official said.

The larger share of the overall requirement, 70%

## Himalayan serow spotted in Assam

It augurs well for the ecological health of Manas Tiger Reserve, says official

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

A Himalayan mammal, somewhere between a goat and an antelope, has been confirmed as the newest creature to be spotted in Assam.

A couple of nature guides had spotted the Himalayan serow, a goat-antelope, in the 950-sq.km Manas Tiger Reserve on December 3. The animal – a high-altitude dweller usually found 2,000-4,000 metres above sea level – was seen being chased by wild dogs.

"We have now confirmed the animal as the Himalayan serow, spotted close to the border with Bhutan in Manas's Bansbari-Mathanguri forest. The sighting augurs well for the



A wild dog trailing a Himalayan serow. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

health of the tiger reserve,"

Anindya Swargowari, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest for areas under the Bodoland Territorial Council, told *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

He said the serow has been spotted for the first time in the tiger reserve or anywhere else in Assam, but "this does not mean the

animal never visited our forests before".

According to Mr. Swargowari, the sightings of rare animals and birds in Manas is an outcome of better access to remote parts of the protected area where extremists and hunters once ruled.

"There are chances of more faunal species, found

in the higher reaches, being spotted in the park."

The Reserve is contiguous with the 1,057-sq.km. Royal Manas National Park in Bhutan. The black-necked crane was also recently sighted in Manas. A pair of such cranes was sighted on January 10 and February 18. The Buddhists revere the bird that nests in the Tawang region.

Officials in Manas said the critically endangered white-bellied heron was also seen a few weeks ago.

In February, birders had sighted the colourful Mandarin duck



# Why the race is not always to the swift

A decently powerful motorcycle and some inexpensive modifications are all one needs on a race track as this race-spec Kawasaki Ninja 300 clearly proves

VISHAL VENUGOPAL

The Ninja 300 is now an old motorcycle and India is one of the last few markets it was sold in; a BS6 version of the bike has just been revealed. In its time though, the baby Ninja was a rather versatile specimen even right out of a showroom. But in its stock form, it wasn't ideal for the racetrack. The team at Rajini Academy of Competitive Racing (RACR) has done an impressive job in turning it into an exciting on-track machine.

This race-spec Ninja is a quick little thing, certainly quicker than the stock bike. Firstly, there is a notable chunk of weight that has been shaved off. Anything that is not required on a racetrack – the lights, pillion seat and that large, eye-sore of a grab rail from the stock bike – has been stripped away. As a result, the bike feels extremely easy to tip into a corner.

The added agility is also due to a recalibrated suspension set-up. The bike retains essentially the same suspension hardware, but a higher-viscosity oil and altered internals in the telescopic fork allows for a stiffer, more track-oriented ride. The handlebar remains in its stock position, but the addition of rearset foot pegs has gone a long way in aiding the bike's ergonomics on track. It still does not put one in a very aggressive riding position, but it is enough to establish a firm connection with the motorcycle and what



is happening under you.

Further aiding its handling is the choice of rubber – Dunlop Sportmax Alpha-13 SPs at either end – a notable step up from the MRF Nylogrip Zappers on the stock bike.

#### Built for the track

This particular bike was developed solely for use at RACR's track days and training sessions, so the modifications are not restricted by the regulations of the FMSI. Despite this, the team has kept modifications to the high-revving engine fairly straightforward, and limited to a reflashed ECU, an aftermarket exhaust from AHM and a front sprocket that is smaller by one tooth.

These changes result in stronger acceleration at the compromise of top speed, and a quick-

throttle system makes it much easier to get going even with the slightest twist of the wrist.

Despite the smaller front sprocket, this Ninja still climbs quickly past 140kph, however, it is at the end where another aspect of its modifications become apparent – the brakes. The stock brake pads have given way to performance units from EBC and the system also uses steel-braided lines for better and more consistent brak-



# New SUV on the block

A light steering, quick responses from the accelerator and top-of-the-range kit are a few outstanding features of the Renault Kiger

SOHAM THAKUR

The Renault Kiger is the newest entrant into the Uber-competitive compact SUV segment, sharing much of the underpinnings of its siblings. And like the Nissan Magnite, it is priced quite aggressively. So what is the Kiger like?

Up front, the chrome laced winged grille is flanked by LED DRLs with the main headlamps positioned below. From the sides, the Kiger has a SUV-coupe profile with its raked rear windscreen, tapering roofline and distinct spoiler element.

The boot lid has plenty of cuts and creases, and the rear bumper features a prominent faux skid plate and 3D, C-shaped LED tail-lamps that stand out. Rounding out its SUV looks are the 205mm ground clearance, notable body cladding, roof rails and smart 16-inch diamond-cut alloys. Inside, there is a neat dashboard packing in a number of screens that are slick to use.

It is easy to find a comfortable driving position and the seats are supportive and well-bolstered. At the rear, headroom and legroom are both great and the flat floor also makes life easier for the middle passenger. The 405-litre boot is



#### RENAULT KIGER TURBO RXZ MT SPECIFICATIONS

LENGTH 3991mm

WIDTH 1750mm

HEIGHT 1605mm

GROUND CLEARANCE 205mm

BOOT CAPACITY 405 litres

ENGINE 999cc, 3 cyls, turbo-petrol

POWER 100hp at 5000rpm

TORQUE 160Nm at 2800-3600rpm

GEARBOX 5-speed manual

FUEL TANK SIZE 40 litres



#### Kiger, Kiger burning bright

Renault's latest offering could be the most affordable compact SUV in India • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

of the three-pot motor's vibrations in the cabin, namely on the steering wheel and gear lever. The vibrations smoothen out once you set off and the engine builds speed with confidence even off-boost. The boost comes in at around 1,700rpm, but it does so without any of that prominent surge or spike associated with turbocharged engines. Performance stays strong until past 5,000rpm, after which it tapers off.

The turbo-petrol Kiger responds keenly to quick taps on the accelerator. There is decent low-range grunt too, but one has to be mindful to be in the right gear on inclines. The 5-



speed manual gearbox has long throws and takes a bit of effort to slot but, it is precise enough. The clutch pedal is light and easy to work. The three drive modes make a noticeable difference to the Kiger's performance, with the car feeling most responsive in Sports mode.

The Kiger has good body control and there is a good amount of grip on offer too. The steering is light at low speeds, but it requires one too many twirls lock-to-lock. That being said, the Kiger is an easy car to place and feels at home in tight city confines. The brakes lack an initial bite after which the Kiger decelerates in a linear and progressive manner. Where the Kiger feels quite average is in refinement – there is plenty of road, tyre and wind noise at high speeds.

Priced from ₹5.45 lakh (ex-showroom, India), the Kiger is the most affordable compact SUV. Not only does it undercut the entire compact SUV segment, the Kiger in this top-spec form is more affordable than some premium hatchbacks. If the demand for the Magnite is anything to go by, the Renault Kiger could just become the next big thing in the compact SUV segment.

## AUTO SNIPS



#### New Porsche Panamera now

##### available in India

Luxury car enthusiasts in India can now opt for the new Porsche Panamera, with four different models comprising the rear-wheel drive Panamera, Panamera GTS, Panamera Turbo S and the Panamera Turbo S E-hybrid. A new 630 PS, four-litre, biturbo V8 engine allows the Turbo S to accelerate to 100 km/h in just 3.1 seconds and on to a top speed of 315 km/h. The new Turbo S E-Hybrid is the most powerful variant in the range, adding a 136 PS electric motor to the equation and resulting in an overall output of 700 PS.



#### Mercedes A-class Limousine

##### launch on March 25

The Mercedes A-Class sedan is set to launch in India on March 25, 2021. The A-Class Limousine is a fully loaded variant with equipment on offer including a twin-screen layout with the latest MBUX infotainment system, connected-car tech, dual-zone climate control and more. The A-Class sedan will be available with a choice of both a petrol and diesel powertrain. The petrol engine will likely be a 163hp, 1.3-litre, turbo-petrol unit, while the diesel unit will be a 2.0-litre unit making 150hp.



#### Maruti Swift facelift launched

Maruti has launched the updated Swift with prices starting from ₹5.73 lakh and going up to ₹8.41 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi). The facelifted hatchback receives minor cosmetic updates, more equipment and a more powerful petrol engine. The Swift's old 83hp 1.2-litre DualJet motor from the Dzire. The new unit also brings a start-stop function that helps to further boost fuel economy – ARAI figure of 23.20kpl for the manual and 23.76kpl for the automatic version, as against the outgoing car's 21.21kpl for both manual and automatic.

## Q&A WITH HORMAZD



### Safety first

I want to buy a compact SUV within ₹10 lakh (ex-showroom). My options are the Ford EcoSport Titanium Diesel, Maruti Vitara Brezza ZXi+ and the Kia Sonet HTX diesel. I didn't like the drive feel in the Tata Nexon, but it was the most value for money. I am little sceptical about the Sonet's safety as the Selto did not do well.

**Jyotideep, Bengaluru**

• We feel the Sonet is the best compact SUV in the market though it is pricier than the others. The diesel-auto in particular is good, though the diesel-manual is also a smooth drive. We are not sure what you mean by 'the Selto did not do well' in terms of safety. We assume you refer to the NCAP, which is hugely misleading as it tests the base variants only without their safety features. We don't believe the NCAP rating is the final word in safety and feel reports which include safety features which the NCAP doesn't cover have more relevance.

### Similar, but not same

Can the 2016 Skoda Rapid be facelifted to the current model?

If yes, what will it cost?

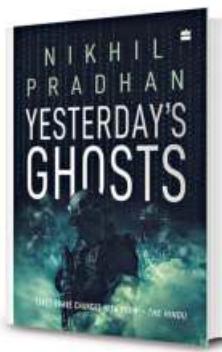
**Talin Sharma, Chandigarh**

The Rapid had already received a major facelift in late 2016, getting a newer look with projector headlamps, a redesigned bonnet, grille and bumpers.

If you have that particular model, then there aren't any major aesthetic updates in the current version, barring the sportier alloy wheels. However, if you have the pre-facelift car, you can only get the newer wheels, as swapping the latest pair of headlamps and grille will not be possible due to the significant design changes Skoda has made in the frontal sheet-metal components, which have collectively given the new look to the car from the front.

The design of the bonnet and fenders is different, which further includes finer changes to components like brackets and clips under the hood. Unfortunately, this will not allow one to replace the older parts with that of the latest model, even though the cars are largely similar looking.

Hormazd Sorabjee is the editor of Autocar India. Mail your feedback and queries to roadshow@thehindu.co.in



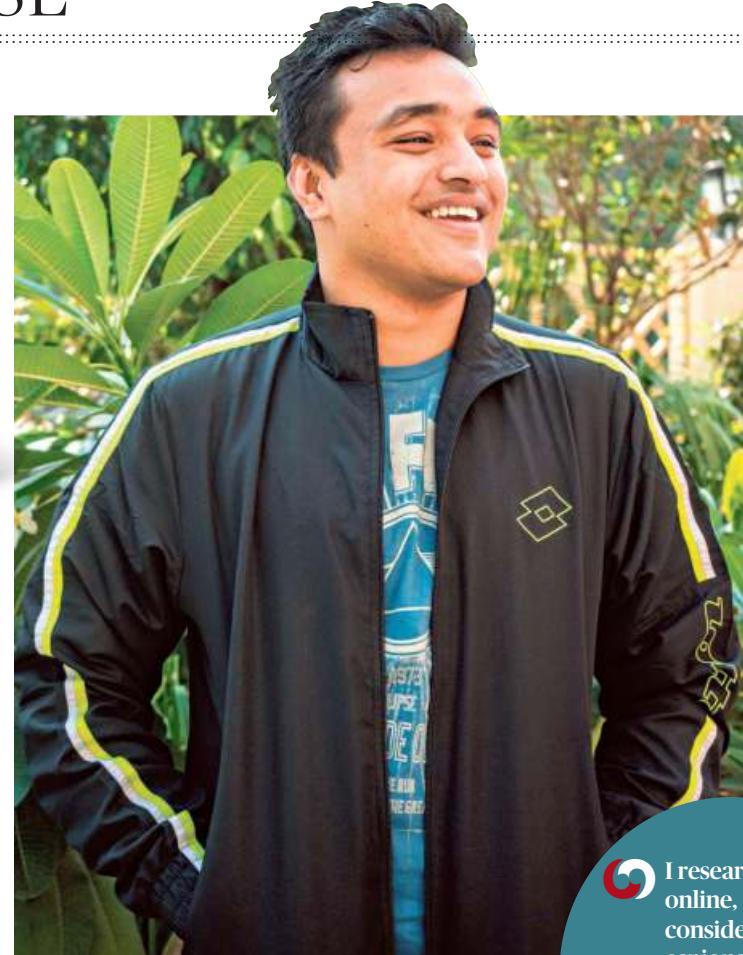
In his second novel *Yesterday's Ghosts*, Nikhil Pradhan explores an unconventional form to tell a spy story set in war-torn Sri Lanka

DEEPA ALEXANDER

The novel opens in a grove in Sri Lanka's North, peopled by Tamils who for three decades fought the Sinhala-dominated government for Eelam, their own version of a homeland. In this disconcerting patch of jungle with its dapple of leaf and shade, where trees festooned with creepers block out sunny skies, lies buried a secret that men of the Black Team have carried in their hearts for 30 years. Betrayal and deceit have been fellow travellers in the lives of the team and Nikhil Pradhan probes whether their dark deeds will go to the grave with them or send them to it in *Yesterday's Ghosts* (Harper Collins).

Thrillers on war crimes and espionage set in an Indian context tend to be few and far between, so it is an unexpected pleasure that *Yesterday's Ghosts* leads the reader into the rare, private world of intelligence gathering, clandestine activity and a lust to destroy any evidence.

Bengaluru-based Pradhan, 35, has dabbled in journalism, advertising and marketing and has been writing fiction since he was in Class VIII at Scindia School, Gwalior. "I started writing adult fiction in high



**A gripping ride** Author Nikhil Pradhan and the book cover  
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

grandfather's library, which were a treasure trove of information on Operation Checkmate, IPKF's anti-insurgency operation against the LTTE in June 1988, helped formulate strategies on ground and spraycraft."

*Yesterday's Ghosts* is the story of Ranbir Jadon (Black King), Keshav Roy (Black Bishop), Zorawar Phuntsok (Black Rook), Ajaz Suri (Black Pawn) and the mysterious Black Knight who form Black Team, an Indian Army intelligence unit that was disbanded. The men, now in their 60s have not met since and wish to forget what went wrong. They are however forced to when they receive a message in a once-familiar code that summons them to the grove in Sri Lanka where all hell breaks loose. The spies are interrogated by a Government agency and forced to reveal the secret forged in the heart of war. The novel is grey, its tone dour – set in a world when we knew the good boys from the bad.

Pradhan says that "every writer has to be a reader. For inspiration I look towards horror and gaming". His consummate prose lays bare the uneasy marriage between civil war, peace brokering and espionage. The pages of the novel swing between the pithy interrogation written in a question-answer format and the flashbacks told in descriptive prose. Pradhan takes the reader on an edgy, undulating walk where he builds the character study in the manner of a game of chess and the pace takes in the loneliness and decline of these spies as the novel hurtles towards an unexpected end.

The gripping plotline, the unusual form of storytelling, the little explored subject of Indian intelligence personnel fighting another nation's enemy and the universality of the horrors these men carry within, unable to lay down the burden, is what the novel explores to the hilt. It should be read by anyone who wants to lead a double life.

I researched a lot online, considering espionage 30 years ago on a battlefield would have been way different  
NIKHIL PRADHAN

## Enemies of the State

school and even sent it to a couple of foreign publishers. I didn't get published but the constructive criticism helped hone my writing. I've always loved to write gory stuff," laughs Pradhan over the phone. "My first book *Cold Truth*, written in an epistolary format and likely to be a web series soon, explores the underbelly of Delhi when a girl goes missing. *Yesterday's Ghosts* began as a story set in Bangladesh during the initial years of the Mukti Bahini. It was inspired by the many Bangla political thrillers. I later resuscitated it in the Sri Lankan context – throwing in the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], IPKF [Indian Peace Keeping Force] and an Intelligence

unit of the Indian Army."

*Yesterday's Ghosts* has the impartial perspective of an outsider on espionage but scores because the plotline is deeply informed. "I researched a lot online, considering espionage 30 years ago on a battlefield would have been way different," says Pradhan, adding "There is a great deal of romance in old-world spies when compared to new-age ones. Espionage was probably more interesting back then. My earliest memory of what intelligence agents looked like was a man from RAW who worked in a building near where I lived in Sikkim. I passed him often on my way home. That, and the books from my father's and

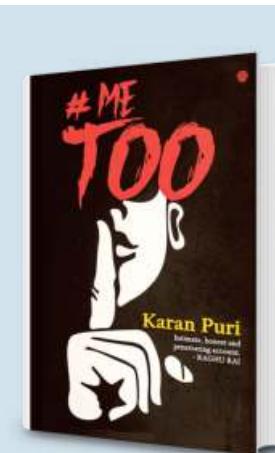
any glasses that perceive only women as more vulnerable, men as more callous and vice versa.

**Did you get in touch with each of the victims/survivors, get their consent to publish the stories? How willing were they to share their ordeals?**

• I wanted to include women of varying ages from different sections of society – corporates, homemakers, struggling actors. Since I am a writer of fiction, I was clear in my mind that I would use the information creatively to dig into the root cause and that would enable me to create awareness.

The survivors were apprehensive at first

**Stories that matter**  
(Left) Karan Puri  
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



• I believe that any art form, be it visual or sensory, helps convey the message to the readers. These images have been set carefully in context of the stories and they aim to deliver the point that I want to address with this book.

**Did you consider including redressal measures such as psychological counselling helplines, for instance, in case anyone reading this book is a survivor of abuse and looking at ways to heal?**

• I have written these stories to make people who have gone through abuse of any kind, feel alive. To tell them that it's okay, that it's not their fault and they deserve to lead a baggage-free life. It is time to transfer the weight of the wrongdoings to the culprit. I would love to get feedback from the readers and I am available for any help or guidance that they may need. It inspires all of us to be more evolved and compassionate. Let's confront the past and walk into the future.

## Scars that aren't easy to heal

Author Karan Puri on why he wanted to document real-life inspired stories from the #MeToo movement in his book

SANGEETHA DEVI DUNDOO

A mother who is overprotective of her daughter given her own unhealed scars of sexual abuse as a child, a young woman in a corporate workspace being preyed upon by her boss, an 18-year-old embarking on a legal battle following sexual assault are some of the real-life inspired stories in author Karan Puri's book *#MeToo* (Invincible Publishers). With a disclaimer that the names of survivors have

been changed to protect identities and some of the events have been altered, the author says he intended to publish partly fictionalised stories to step up awareness towards the need to fight sexual harassment.

Edited excerpts from an interview with the author:

**What made you want to document some of the stories from the #MeToo movement?**

• The movement left a lasting impres-

sion on me. It gave so many women an avenue to express their feelings. It was shocking to me that there were so many women who had not disclosed their experience with sexual abuse thinking that it was okay to let the perpetrators go free.

**How did you choose the stories for this book?**

• I wanted to delve deeper into the dark stories of women and men, rural as well as urban, and stories of common people that had not been shared [on social media]. A lot of research went into the book and the narration was well thought out. Each of these stories is written from a human perspective, without wearing



any glasses that perceive only women as more vulnerable, men as more callous and vice versa.

but after I met them a few times, they got comfortable in sharing their feelings and trauma. I call them survivors as they dealt with their inner fears and came out and revealed their stories.

**Some of the stories describe the assault in a graphic manner. There's a risk of the narratives becoming voyeuristic or exploitative, isn't it?**

## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

Group 1: Long-term care residents  
Group 2: 75 and older  
Group 3: Essential workers

Group 785:  
Those who profit from puns

THAT FEELS DISCRIMINATORY.  
HEY YOU'RE AHEAD OF ASSASSINS!

## PEANUTS

I BELIEVE THAT DOGS ARE THE MOST SENSITIVE OF ALL CREATURES

I BELIEVE THAT BEAGLES ARE THE MOST SENSITIVE OF ALL DOGS...

I BELIEVE THAT I AM THE MOST SENSITIVE OF ALL BEAGLES....

"MISTER SENSITIVE"!

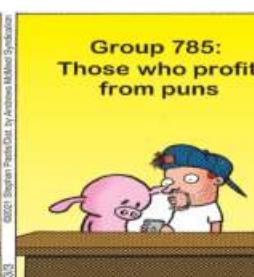
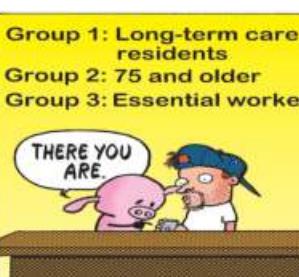
## CALVIN AND HOBBES

YEAH... ALL THESE EQUATIONS ARE LIKE MIRACLES. YOU TAKE TWO NUMBERS AND WHEN YOU ADD THEM, THEY MAGICALLY BECOME ONE NEW NUMBER! NO ONE CAN SAY IT'S NOT HAPPENING, YOU EITHER BELIEVE IT OR YOU DON'T.

THIS WOULD BOOK IS FULL OF THINGS THAT HAVE TO BE ACCEPTED ON FAITH! IT'S A RELIGION!

AND IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ATHEIST, I MEAN, CAN'T BE EXCUSED FROM THIS.

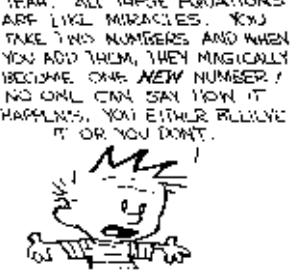
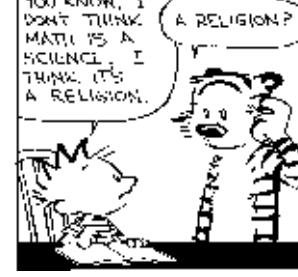
## POOCH CAFE



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



## TIGER



# Myanmar security forces fire on protesters

About 20 injured in a crackdown by police and soldiers in Kale; protests in other parts continue

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

YANGON

Myanmar security forces fired live rounds and tear gas at protesters again on Tuesday, leaving at least three people critically injured as regional powers rebuked the junta over its deadly crackdown.

The country has seen weeks of mass protests demanding the military release civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been in detention since the February 1 coup.

Soldiers and police have steadily stepped up their use of force, deploying tear gas, water cannon, rubber bullets and, increasingly, live rounds.

Sunday was the bloodiest day since the military takeover, with the United Nations saying at least 18 protesters were killed across the country. AFP independently confirmed 11 deaths.



Holding on: Protesters struggle after police fired tear gas shells during a demonstration in Kale on Tuesday. • AFP

Another rally turned violent on Tuesday, in the northwestern town of Kale, where security forces opened fire on protesters, according to medics.

"About 20 people were injured in a crackdown by police and soldiers in Kale," said a rescue worker.

A doctor who treated the patients in a hospital con-

firmed the number of people in a critical condition.

"One was hit in his thigh and he's now under operation. Another one got hit in the abdomen and he requires blood transfusions... Another one got hit in the chest," said the doctor.

The bloodshed came on the same day as the funeral was held in the commercial

capital of Yangon for a 23-year-old student who died on Sunday.

The mourners sang a revolutionary song as the coffin carrying Nyi Nyi Aung Htet Naing moved through a sea of thousands to an altar. Some climbed trees to catch a glimpse of the procession.

"No mercy, just bullies – dead bodies are here and there," the mourners sang in unison as they flashed a three-finger salute. "Oh, the brave heroes who died for democracy."

Protests also continued in Yangon on Tuesday.

In San Chaung township, hundreds of police came out in full force. "They used tear gas and were shooting at us," said one resident.

More than 1,200 people have been arrested, charged and sentenced since the coup, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners monitoring

group, of which about 900 are still behind bars.

## International rebuke

The unrest continued as Foreign Ministers from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) bloc held a virtual meeting, which included a Myanmar representative.

Ahead of the talks, some regional powers broke with diplomatic traditions and issued harsh rebukes to Myanmar's military.

"To use lethal force against civilians and unarmed demonstrators, I think it is just not acceptable," Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said.

After the meeting, Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi expressed concern over rising violence and deaths as well as frustration over a lack of cooperation from the Myanmar regime.

# Khashoggi killing: U.S. tells Saudi Arabia to take action

Riyadh told to disband group responsible for murder

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

PARIS

The U.S. on Monday pressed Saudi Arabia to take further measures after the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi as Washington faced growing criticism that it did not directly target Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

President Joe Biden on Friday released an intelligence report that found that Prince Mohammed approved the 2018 killing of Khashoggi, a U.S.-based contributor to *The Washington Post* who was lured into the Saudi consulate in Istanbul where he was strangled to death and dismembered.

The report – classified under former president Donald Trump, a close ally of the Saudis – found that seven of the 15 members of the hit squad that flew to Istanbul came from the Rapid Intervention Force, which it said "exists to defend the Crown Prince" and "answers only to him."

"We have urged Saudi Arabia to disband this group and then adopt institutional, systemic reforms and controls to ensure that anti-disident activities and operations cease and cease completely," State Department spokesman Ned Price said.



Mohammed bin Salman

## Press watchdog RSF files lawsuit against MBS

PARIS

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said on Tuesday that it had filed a criminal case in a German court against Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for "crimes against humanity" in the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The complaint, which seeks an inquiry by prosecutors under Germany's international jurisdiction laws, accuses the kingdom of persecuting Khashoggi as well as dozens of other journalists. • AFP

said. "We have made crystal clear – and will continue to do so – that the brutal killing of Jamal Khashoggi 28 months ago remains unacceptable conduct," Mr. Price said.

Mr. Biden has sought to "recalibrate" Saudi alliance and has already said the U.S. will end support for offensive operations in Yemen.

But the administration stopped short of personally targeting the 35-year-old crown prince – the de facto leader as well as Defence Minister. Asked why no action was taken against the Prince, also known by his initials MBS, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said that the U.S. does not typically sanction foreign leaders. But she hinted that Prince Mohammed was not permanently off the hook.

The new deadline was set by the watchdog last month.

Pakistan has been scrambling in recent months to avoid being added to a list of countries deemed non-compliant with anti-money laundering and terrorist financing regulations by the FATF, a measure that officials here fear could further hurt its ailing economy.

The *Dawn* newspaper reported that the government will have to submit an updated report within a

month to the FATF on the progress on legislation and other steps to be taken to address the outstanding concerns.

It was observed that Pakistan had made progress over the past two years.

The additional legislation has to cover some weaknesses in the existing framework that limited the authorities from taking action, including imposing sanction or apprehending those acting for or on behalf of designated terrorist entities or individuals and prosecuting targeted persons and entities or those working for them, within certain deadlines.

The three outstanding action points include demonstrating that Terrorism Financing (TF) investigations and prosecutions target persons and entities acting on behalf or at the direction of the designated persons or entities and demonstrating that TF prosecutions result in effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions.

Thirdly, Pakistan has to demonstrate effective implementation of targeted financial sanctions against all designated terrorists, specifically those acting for or on their behalf, the report said.

# 'Pak. needs legislation to meet FATF benchmarks'

The agency has set a June deadline

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan will have to make further legislation on at least two counts to meet three outstanding benchmarks of the 27-point action plan of the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog FATF before the new June deadline, a media report said on Tuesday.

The Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) placed Pakistan on the grey list in June 2018 and asked Islamabad to implement a plan of action to curb money laundering and terror financing by the end of 2019 but the deadline was extended later on due to COVID-19 pandemic.

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Pfizer, Oxford shots effective for elderly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON

The Pfizer and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines for COVID-19 are highly effective in reducing severe coronavirus infection among people aged 70 years and above, according to a study.

The research, posted as a pre-print and yet to be peer-reviewed, estimated the effect of both the COVID-19 vaccines on laboratory-confirmed symptomatic disease in individuals aged 70 years or older in England.

The researchers, including those from Public Health England (PHE), compared the rate of hospitalisation and deaths in confirmed COVID-19 patients aged over 80 who were vaccinated more than 14 days before testing positive, with unvaccinated ones.

Data suggests that in the over 80s, a single dose of either vaccine is more than 80% effective at preventing hospitalisation, around 3 to 4 weeks after the jab, PHE said in a statement.

Evidence for the Pfizer vaccine suggests that it leads to 83% reduction in deaths from COVID-19, it said.

# Cuomo harassment charges leave Democrats in a fix

New York Governor is facing sexual harassment allegations

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK

Democrats across the country celebrated New York Governor Andrew Cuomo as the face of governing competence as President Donald Trump fumbled his administration's response to the exploding pandemic last year.

Now, the Democratic Governor is struggling through a sexual harassment scandal that's testing the limits of his party's support as Democrats grapple with one of the first political headaches of the post-Trump era.

So far, few Democrats have come to Mr. Cuomo's rescue. But they haven't explicitly condemned him, either.

Both of New York's Democratic U.S. Senators have publicly embraced the State Attorney General's nascent investigation into Mr. Cuomo's behaviour. New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy on Monday described the allegations as "deeply troubling and deeply concerning."

While Democrats across the country are not rallying behind Mr. Cuomo, few are calling for him to step down. For now, Rep. Kathleen Rice is the only Democrat from New York's congressional delegation to explicitly call for Mr. Cuomo's resignation.

That's in contrast to the treatment of former Minnesota Sen. Al Franken, who



Andrew Cuomo

Jen Psaki said the President supports the state Attorney General's probe. She noted that Mr. Biden requires people to be treated with civility and respect in his administration.

"The President's view has been consistent and clear," Ms. Psaki said when asked about Mr. Cuomo. "Every woman coming forward should be treated with dignity and respect."

While Democrats across the country are not rallying behind Mr. Cuomo, few are calling for him to step down. For now, Rep. Kathleen Rice is the only Democrat from New York's congressional delegation to explicitly call for Mr. Cuomo's resignation.

That's in contrast to the treatment of former Minnesota Sen. Al Franken, who

ultimately bowed to pressure from within his own party to step down in 2018 after facing accusations of sexual impropriety from several women.

At that time, New York Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand was the first Democrat to call on Mr. Franken to resign. On Sunday, Ms. Gillibrand called the allegations against Mr. Cuomo "serious and deeply concerning" and called on State A-G to conduct "a transparent and thorough investigation with subpoena power."

**GOP's muted approach**  
Republicans highlighted the relatively cautious response from some Democrats, although the GOP's criticism of Mr. Cuomo directly was somewhat muted given the long list of sexual harassment allegations against Mr. Trump.

Mr. Cuomo acknowledged for the first time on Sunday that some of his behaviour with women "may have been insensitive or too personal," and said he would cooperate with a sexual harassment investigation led by the State's Attorney General.

## ANDHRA PRADESH MEDICAL SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

APMSIDC, Plot No.9, Survey No.49, IT Park, Mangalagiri, Guntur District-522503

Tenders are invited through e-procurement platform (online).

1.Tender No : 97/APMSIDC/Medicine Wing/2020-21, Dt: 02.03.2021.

Tender is invited through e-procurement platform (online) for Procurement and Supply of Aprons for Dr YSR Aayogya to 13 Central Drug Stores of Andhra Pradesh.

2.Tender No : 98/APMSIDC/Medicine Wing/2020-21, Dt: 02.03.2021.

Tender is invited through e-procurement platform (online) for procurement of Ayush/Homoeo/Unani medicines to Hospitals in 13 Districts.

For complete details, please visit Website: <https://tender.approcurement.gov.in> from 03.03.2021.

APMSIDC will reserve the right to cancel the tender at any time without assigning any reasons.

DPR No.608PPCL, DL Date 02.03.2021

Sd/- Managing Director

Centre for Development of Imaging Technology (C-DIT)

Thiruvananthapuram-27 Ph: 0471-2380910/912

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For details and online submission please visit [www.etenders.kerala.gov.in](http://www.etenders.kerala.gov.in)

Last date of submission of bids: 15.03.2021, 03.00 PM.

Tender id: 2021\_CDIT\_419969\_1

Date: 02.03.2021 Registrar, C-DIT

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## MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	50297	0.90
US Dollar	73.37	0.24
Gold	44760	-1.6
Brent oil	63.6	-2.04

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	720.50	27.60
Asian Paints	2390.40	28.10
Axist Bank	731.25	2.70
Bajaj Auto	3944.05	130.30
Bajaj Finserv	9877.00	102.95
Bajaj Finance	5316.30	49.50
Bharti Airtel	541.20	9.00
BPCL	469.00	13.75
Britannia Ind	3447.95	36.15
Cipla	811.80	22.00
Coal India	153.40	-0.95
Divis Lab	3516.90	55.35
D Dr Reddy's Lab	4404.70	-48.70
Eicher Motors	2602.30	46.15
GAIL (India)	144.80	0.30
Grasim Ind	1294.75	28.80
HCL Tech.	953.75	23.40
HDPC	2564.00	-42.00
HDFC Bank	1568.20	9.30
HDFC Life	720.80	15.55
Hero MotoCorp	3476.40	126.20
Hindalco	345.25	1.15
Hind Unilever	2177.95	34.55
ICICI Bank	610.50	2.15
IndusInd Bank	1073.35	5.40
Infosys	1304.50	37.50
Indian Oil Corp.	102.20	1.50
ITC	209.90	3.00
JSW Steel	413.30	8.20
Kotak Bank	1844.65	-0.75
L&T	1485.65	12.80
M&M	860.05	40.60
Maruti Suzuki	7214.10	199.10
Nestle India Ltd.	16576.15	283.70
NTPC	112.55	4.10
ONGC	113.50	-3.55
PowerGrid Corp	225.05	-2.20
Reliance Ind	2106.00	4.30
SBI Life	879.15	2.75
State Bank	394.20	-0.75
Shree Cement	27658.75	-48.20
Sun Pharma	614.20	9.75
Tata Motors	345.75	17.45
Tata Steel	735.50	5.10
TCS	3006.35	82.15
Tech Mahindra	967.10	31.10
Titan	1471.15	19.00
UltraTech Cement	6423.10	58.05
UPL	589.45	-1.15
Wipro	430.40	16.00

## EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.16	73.48
Euro	88.01	88.40
British Pound	101.87	102.35
Japanese Yen (100)	68.42	68.72
Chinese Yuan	11.30	11.36
Swiss Franc	79.72	80.08
Singapore Dollar	54.96	55.20
Canadian Dollar	57.83	58.09
Malaysian Ringgit	18.03	18.11

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



Indian Bank's ₹4,000-cr. fund-raise plan gets nod  
CHENNAI  
Indian Bank on Tuesday secured its shareholders nod to raise equity capital up to ₹4,000 crore. The bank held an extraordinary general meeting with an agenda to raise equity capital. The special resolution was passed at the meeting, it said.

U.S. FDA approves Cipla's migraine spray  
NEW DELHI  
Drug major Cipla on Tuesday said it has received final approval from the United States Food and Drug Administration (U.S. FDA) for Sumatriptan Nasal Spray, indicated for the treatment of migraine attacks. The product is a generic therapeutic-equivalent version of GlaxoSmithKline's Imitrex Nasal Spray. PTI

Govt. to sell up to 16% stake in IRCON via OFS  
NEW DELHI  
The offer for sale (OFS) for up to 16% government stake at a floor price of ₹888 a share in railway PSU IRCON will open on Wednesday. The base issue size is 10%, or over 4.7 crore equity shares, with a green-shoe option to retain oversubscription of 6%. At the floor price, a 16% stake would fetch over ₹600 crore to the exchequer. PTI

## Ambani tops Indian billionaire list with \$83 bn'

'Year 2020 saw biggest wealth increase of last decade despite COVID-19: Hurun

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI  
The world added 607 new billionaires, or more than three billionaires in two days, while India added 55 new billionaires, or more than one billionaire every week, in 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, as per the 10th edition of Hurun Global Rich List 2021.

Tesla's Elon Musk added \$151 billion to become the richest man in the world for the first time with a net worth of \$197 billion, followed by Amazon's Jeff Bezos (\$189 billion), the chairman and CEO of LVMH Moët Hennessy – Louis Vuitton, Bernard Arnault (\$114 billion), Microsoft's Bill Gates

# Exports dip 0.25% after rising for 2 months, imports grow 7%

Exporters blame slide on container shortage, rising COVID count hitting supplies

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI  
India's merchandise exports dipped 0.25% in February to \$27.67 billion dollars, while imports of goods rose almost 7% to \$40.55 billion.

The trade deficit widened by 25.8% from February 2020 to \$12.88 billion, as per preliminary data released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry on Tuesday.

Within the trade basket, exports of items excluding petroleum, and gems and jewellery rose 5.65%, while imports of such items rose 7.4%. Exporters blamed the marginal dip in exports in February – following two straight months of growth – to container shortages across the country and sup-



**Highest bidder:** Hefty premiums for routing empty containers to China have hit availability, says FIEO's Saraf. ■REUTERS

ply disruptions in the last week of the month due to an increase in COVID-19 cases in certain States.

## Oil meals, iron ore

The biggest surge in exports was recorded in other cereals (542%), followed by oil

meals (244.1%) and iron ore (167.8%). However, petroleum product exports fell 27.1%, followed by declines in several employment-intensive sectors such as leather (-21.6%), gems and jewellery (-11.2%) and readymade textile garments, whose

shipments contracted 8.5%.

"Rising exports from China have led to a shortage of containers in the region as most of the empty containers are available only for exports from China as the shipping lines and container companies are being paid hefty premiums for bringing empty containers back to China," said Sharad Kumar Saraf, president of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO).

Mr. Saraf urged the Centre to address long-pending demands of exporters urgently, including the notification of the rates under the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Products to remove uncertainty and allow new contracts to be taken up.

## 'Share of cess, surcharge in GTR doubles'

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI  
About 50,000 units in the plastics processing sector are believed to be operating below 50% of their rated capacity due to a sharp rise in raw material prices, said heads of All India plastic industry associations. They added that if the crisis prolonged, about 20,000 MSME plastic units would be forced to close down.

Industry bodies said large petrochemical companies, including PSUs, had exponentially increased raw material prices by 40-155% in the last 8-10 months. The associations have urged the

Centre to direct Indian Oil, GAIL, OPAL, Haldia Petrochemicals and MRPL to streamline supply of raw materials at fair prices.

Several industry associations have urged the government to ban the export of the raw materials for one year and allow import of raw

materials not produced in the country.

"The industry is facing acute shortage of polymers, the main raw material for plastic goods production, which has varied applications," said Chandrakant Tarkharia, president of the All India Plastics Manufacturers Association.

"The increase in raw material costs and its acute shortage in market is leading to escalation in project costs and is adversely impacting the cost competitiveness of MSMEs," said Arvind Mehta, chairman, governing council of The All India Plastics Manufacturers Association.

The article in the RBI's February Bulletin, further observed that "the time is apposite for private investment to come alive".

Fiscal policy, with the largest capital-expenditure (capex) Budget ever and emphasis on doing business

## Private investment missing, notes RBI article

Authors ask if industry can step in

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI  
Only private investment is 'missing in action' at a time when all engines of aggregate demand are starting to fire to boost economic growth, according to a Reserve Bank article.

Observing that there is little doubt today that a recovery based on a revival of consumption is underway, the RBI, in the recent article, said, "the jury leans towards such recoveries being shallow and short-lived."

## Rekindle animal spirits

The key to whet the appetite for investment, it said, is to rekindle the animal spirits, a spontaneous urge to action rather than inaction, and not as the outcome of a weighted average of quantitative probabilities.

"All engines of aggregate demand are starting to fire; only private investment is missing in action," the article's authors led by RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra wrote.

The article in the RBI's February Bulletin, further observed that "the time is apposite for private investment to come alive".

Bank credit growth, which had already started decelerating in the last financial year, experienced a further setback in 2020-21 in the wake of the pandemic.

## RBI said to tell banks to limit insurer stakes

## REUTERS

India's central bank wants banks to limit ownership stakes in capital-intensive insurance companies at a maximum of 20%, less than half of what the current regulations permit, three sources with knowledge of the discussions told Reuters.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) rules allow banks to hold up to 50% stakes in insurers and on a selective basis, equity holdings can be higher but must eventually be brought down within a certain period.

The sources, who asked not to be named, however said the central bank in 2019 unofficially advised banks seeking to acquire stakes in insurers, to limit such stakes to a maximum of 30%, and more recently, directed them to cap stake purchases at 20%.

"Unofficially, banks have been told that the regulator is not comfortable with lenders increasing their stakes because the insurance business is seen as a money guzzler," one source said.

The RBI wants banks to focus on their main areas of business instead of locking away capital in non-core sectors. The central bank did not respond to a request seeking comment.

## Rising polymer raw material prices hit MSME plastic units

Industry urges Centre to direct PSUs to streamline supply



any copyright on the software. Hence, the amount paid for a computer software from a foreign manufacturer does not qualify as royalty for which tax should be deducted at the source.

"The end-user does not get any of the rights that the owner continues to retain... It is wrong to say that when a copyrighted article is sold, the end-user gets the right to use the intellectual property rights embodied in the copyright which would therefore amount to transfer of an exclusive right of the copyright owner in the work," Justice Nariman explained.

"An obvious example is the purchaser of a book or a CD/DVD, who becomes the owner of the physical article, but does not become the owner of the copyright inherent in the work, such copyright remaining exclusively with the owner," Justice Nariman wrote.

quantitative easing, and flurry of new listings have minted eight new dollar billionaires a week for the past year. The world has never seen this much wealth created in just one year, much more than perhaps could have been expected for a year badly disrupted by COVID-19," Hurun Report chairman Rupert Hoogewerf said.

India retained the third spot in the number of billionaires from a country with a total of 177 billionaires living in the country.

In the list of Indian billionaires, Mr. Ambani was fol-

lowed by Adani Group's Gautam Adani and family with his wealth almost doubling to \$32 billion.

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**SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS FROM THE HINDU**

# It will be a spinning track, says Rahane

The India vice-captain also responds to criticism of his recent lack of consistency

## ENGLAND IN INDIA

AMOL KARHADKAR  
AHMEDABAD

Ajinkya Rahane has emphasised time and again that he prefers to be aggressive with his mindset rather than be overly expressive on the field. But the India vice-captain briefly belied his soft-spoken image when questioned about his lack of consistent runs in home Tests.

Asked to elaborate on his 'slump' during an interaction with the media on Tuesday, Rahane shot back immediately: "I was expecting this question and thankfully you asked. You need to check your facts. You know my contribution to the team. Whenever the team has needed runs, my runs are there, so you need to focus on your stats and come up with a right question."

Since the start of 2019, Rahane averages 43.44 overall (17 Tests), 43.80 at home (eight Tests), 64.85 in wins (11 Tests), and 54.62 in home wins (seven Tests). Since the start of 2020, he averages 27.75 overall (nine Tests), 17



**Utility man:** Rahane feels that he has put his hand up whenever the team has needed him. ■ SPORTZPICS/BCCI

at home (three Tests), 47.33 in wins (four Tests), and 28 in home wins (two Tests).

**Not a concern**  
But Rahane stressed that the lack of recent runs isn't a concern for him.

"You know I am a team man, everyone knows that. When the team needs me to

score in a situation, I have always done that. I am not too concerned about it. As a player, I am always looking to learn and grow," he said.

Despite the furore over the pitches, especially in the British press and by former England cricketers, Rahane confirmed that the pitch at Motera for the series-decider

will assist turn. "The wicket will be similar to the third Test and the second Test that we played in Chennai. It will be a spinning track," he said. "Pink ball made a difference, it was coming on to the bat much quicker. That's an adjustment that we had to make. But as I said, the pitch will be

I am here to talk about this Test match, not about the PSL and SLPL. The IPL has given us a platform to express ourselves and also to a lot of Indian and overseas players. I am not sure what Dale Steyn has said, but I am here to talk about this Test

RAHANE WHEN ASKED ABOUT STEYN'S COMMENTS ON THE IPL

similar to the one for the last two Tests."

India needs to avoid losing the last Test to ensure a berth in the World Test Championship final against New Zealand at Lord's in June. Rahane, who like Ishant Sharma is presently a one-format player for India, echoed the pacer's sentiments about the importance of winning the WTC final.

"Ishant was spot on. Winning the Test Championship final will be like winning the World Cup. Having said that, the focus is on playing this Test and winning this game," he said.

Crawley expects batting to get easier in fourth Test

S. DIPAK RAGAV

England opener Zak Crawley expects batting to be easier in the fourth Test, even if the wicket is similar to the one that was used in the previous game.

Crawley felt that the return to the red ball should make a slight difference.

"I think if it is the same pitch, I do think, it will be slightly easier. I feel the pink ball was a bit harder and therefore skidded on quite quickly, which is why Axar [Patel] got so many wickets, lbw and bowled," said Crawley.



Zak Crawley. ■ SPORTZPICS/BCCI

**Massive threat**  
"I think he still has that ball in his armoury for sure and it will be a massive threat but it might not skid on with the same pace as the pink ball."

Sharing his thoughts on how the pitch is likely to behave, Crawley said, "I think it will be a very similar pitch this week and why wouldn't it be? They played very well on the last two pitches that turned."

When asked if England

can square the series, the 23-year-old exuded confidence, saying, "There's definitely a way back. We have already won one Test match. It is going to require us to get a good first-innings lead and require us to bat well."

"The bowlers did well to bowl them out for 145. If we can replicate that, and get a nice lead in the first innings, we will put them under pressure," he said.

Cricket takes a back seat in IPL: Steyn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KARACHI

South Africa pace great Dale Steyn has claimed that cricket takes a back seat in the IPL, insisting that money is given more importance than the game.

Steyn said this was one of the reasons he had not featured regularly in the IPL.

"I think when you go to the IPL, there are such big squads and so many big names and so much emphasis on maybe the amount of money players earn and everything like that, so sometimes, somewhere down the line, cricket gets forgotten," said Steyn, who was part of the RCB squad last year.



Dale Steyn... speaking out. ■ FILE PHOTO

Nagal sweeps past Sousa

SPORTS BUREAU

Sumit Nagal registered his first-ever main draw win on the ATP Tour with a 6-2, 6-0 win over Portugal's Joao Sousa in the opening round of the Argentina Open ATP 250 tournament in Buenos Aires on Tuesday. Playing on his beloved clay, the 23-year-old had come through two rounds of qualifying.

Though Nagal had won his maiden match at a Major at the 2020 US Open, a win on the regular Tour had eluded him in six main draw appearances.

The victory over Sousa will taste sweet, for the Portuguese, at 100 in the world, is 50 places above Nagal and was once ranked as high as No. 28.

Nagal will next meet No. 22 and second seed Cristian Garin from Chile.



Sumit Nagal. ■ FILE PHOTO

Prajnesh advances

SPORTS BUREAU

Prajnesh Gunneswaran beat lucky loser Julian Lenz of Germany 3-6, 6-2, 6-3 to move into the second round of the \$156,240 Challenger tennis tournament at Nur Sultan, Kazakhstan, on Tuesday.

## Hazare Trophy knockouts schedule

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

The Hazare Trophy schedule for the final phase:

**Pre-quarterfinals:** March 7: Delhi vs Uttar Pradesh.

**Quarterfinals:** March 8: Gujarat vs Andhra (QF1); Karnataka vs Kerala (QF2).

**March 9:** Uttar Pradesh vs Winner of pre-quarterfinals (QF3); Mumbai vs Saurashtra (QF4).

**Semifinals:** March 11: QF1 vs QF3; QF2 vs QF4.

**Final:** March 14.

All matches at 9 a.m.

## Opening shot



**First dose:** India coach Ravi Shastri gets the COVID-19 vaccine in Ahmedabad on Tuesday. ■ TWITTER

## Afghanistan bundled out for 131

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
ABU DHABI

## TV PICKS

**Premier League:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 11.30 p.m. & 1.45 a.m. (Wednesday); SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 11.30 p.m.

**Serie A:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 11.50 p.m.; Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 1.15 a.m. (Wednesday)

**ATP 250:** Argentine Open, Eurosport (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



## Federer withdraws from Miami Open

Roger Federer is withdrawing from this month's Miami Open so he can spend extra time preparing to "work his way back out on tour," his agent told AP. The 20-time Grand Slam champion has not competed in more than a year after having two operations on his right knee during last season. He is slated to play in the Dubai hard-court tournament from March 14.

## Bartomeu provisionally freed from jail

Former Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu was provisionally freed on Tuesday after appearing before a judge following a night in jail while being investigated for possible irregularities during his administration. AP

## Indian women lose to Germany

Germany walked away with a 2-0 win over India in the third game of the women's hockey, taking an unassailable 3-0 lead in the four-match series here. Sonja Zimmermann (26') and Franziska Hauke (42') scored the goals. PTI

## Two extra race days in Hyderabad

The board of directors/stewards of the Hyderabad Race Club has resolved to frame two extra race days on March 8 and 15, in addition to the three extra race days which were granted during the Hyderabad Winter races 2020-21.



## James Harden turns it on for Brooklyn Nets

James Harden scored 30 points, dished out 15 assists and pulled down 14 rebounds as the Brooklyn Nets earned a 124-113 overtime win over the host San Antonio Spurs on Monday.

**The results:** Dallas 130 bt Orlando 124, Philadelphia 130 bt Indiana 114, Denver 118 bt Chicago 112, New Orleans 129 bt Utah 124, Brooklyn 124 bt San Antonio 113 (OT), Cleveland 101 bt Houston 90, Portland 123 bt Charlotte 111.

## Manisha Keer misses final

## SHOTGUN WC

## KAMESH SRINIVASAN

Manisha Keer shot 113 and missed a chance to make the final, as she failed to strike a bird in the shoot-off, in women's trap in the shotgun World Cup in Cairo on Tuesday.

After scoring 23 in each of the first four rounds to be close with the leaders, Manisha shot 21 in the fifth and last round. It resulted in her being tied with two others for the last two spots in the final.

Maria Quintana Zubizarreta (Spain) and Sandra Bernal (Poland) made the cut. Kirti Gupta (102) and Rajehswari Kumari (99) placed 17th and 18th respectively.

In men's trap, Prithviraj Tondaiman shot 112, while Lakshay Sheoran and Kyann Chenai followed with 110 and 109 respectively.

The finalists shot in the range of 118 to 122.

## Vijender Singh training with gusto

The veteran, scheduled to fight on March 19, has a 12-0 record in professional bouts

## BOXING

**Y.B. SARANGI**  
KOLKATA

Looking forward to his first professional boxing bout in almost a year-and-a-half, Vijender Singh is training with former India teammate Jai Bhagwan and a bunch of raw talent from hinterland Haryana for a fight to be held on a cruise ship in Goa on March 19.

Vijender, the reigning WBO Oriental Super Middleweight and WBO Asia Pacific Super Middleweight champion, last fought against former Commonwealth champion Charles Adamu of Ghana in November 2019.

## Overcoming the odds

The former Worlds and Olympics bronze medallist, who has an unbeaten 12-0 record in pro boxing, has beaten the odds posed by the pandemic to return to the



**Focused:** Vijender Singh is well motivated and sure of what is happening in his career.  
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ring. "This time I am sparing and training with young boxers from Bhiwani, Faridabad and Jhajjar. Jai Bhagwan, an Arjuna awardee who boxed with me, became my coach as no one could come

from outside. He is a friend and has spent a lot of time with me in the National camp. He knows me better than other coaches," Vijender told *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

"I am doing more hard training than what I used to do in the UK or the USA. The young boxers are travelling in a vehicle for an hour to train with me (in Gurugram). Today we had an eight-round

## Stimac names 35 probables for Dubai

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

National football coach Igor Stimac on Tuesday named 10 new players in his 35-member list of probables for India's back-to-back international friendlies against Oman and the UAE to be played in Dubai on March 25 and 29 respectively.

The final list of 28 players will be announced after the Indian Super League final on March 13. The players will then assemble for a preparatory camp in Dubai from March 15.

"We have kept 35 players in the list as a cushion in case any player picks up an injury during the ISL playoffs," Stimac said in a release.

Speaking about the new faces, Stimac said: "It's been a difficult year for all of us and finally, we are all getting together. It will be great to

meet some new young guns and to check how bright our future is with them."

India is out of reckoning for a 2022 WC berth but still in contention for qualification in the 2023 Asian Cup.

**The probables: Goalkeepers:** Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Amrinder Singh, Subhashish Roy Chowdhury, Dheeraj Singh, Vishal Kaith.

**Defenders:** Seriton Fernandes, Ashutosh Mehta, Akash Mishra, Pritam Kotal, Sandesh Jhingan, Chinglensana Singh, Sarthak Golui, Adil Khan, Maninder Rao Dessai, Prabin Das, Mashoor Shereef.

**Midfielders:** Udanta Singh, Rowlin Borges, Lalengmawia, Jeakson Singh, Raynir Fernandes, Anirudh Thapa, Bipin Singh, Yasir Mohammad, Surendra Singh, Liston Colaco, Halicharan Narzary, Lallianzuala Chhangte, Ashique Kurunyan, Rahul KP, Hitesh Sharma, Farukh Choudhary.

**Forwards:** Manvir Singh, Sunil Chhetri, Ishan Pandita.

## Everton boosts its top-four bid

## EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LIVERPOOL

Everton boosted its bid to earn a top-four finish in the Premier League as Richardson sealed a 1-0 win against struggling Southampton on Monday.

Carlo Ancelotti's side won for the first time in six home league games thanks to Richardson's early goal.

Everton's last success at Goodison Park had come against Arsenal just before Christmas.

The seventh-placed Toffees have a game in hand on West Ham, as well as Liverpool and Chelsea, who occupy the places directly above them.

**The results: Premier League:** Everton 1 (Richardson 9) bt Southampton 0.

**LaLiga:** Real Madrid 1 (Vinicius Jr. 89) drew with Real Sociedad 1 (Portu 55).

## Bopanna partners Aisam again

## KAMESH SRINIVASAN

NEW DELHI

The chance to get a wild card as former champions in Dubai united Rohan Bopanna and Aisam-Ul-Haq Qureshi, but their destination has changed to Acapulco, Mexico.

Relieved to be back home after weeks of inaction, the 40-year-old Bopanna said that he had talked to Aisam in Australia in setting up a temporary partnership.

## Last team

"We asked for a wild card for Dubai, and our second option was Acapulco. Eventually, we didn't want to take the risk of waiting for the wild card as it is hard for the organisers to commit in advance, owing to much demand. We are literally the last team entering in Acapulco. So, we decided to take it," said Bopanna.



Rohan Bopanna. • FILE PHOTO

With Bopanna ranked 40 and Aisam 49, it is hard for them to get into the big events. That forces them to plan literally week by week. The Dubai event has \$2,048,855 prize money, while Acapulco has \$1,204,960. Bopanna's coach Scott Davidoff is already in Dubai.

After Acapulco, Bopanna will be playing in Miami. The Indian Wells event, prior to Miami, is not being held this time.

## Shot in the aam janata!



**Amul**  
**Vax bhi lo, packs bhi lo!**

daCunha/AB/730

## Zeel fights back from a sticky situation

## ITF WOMEN

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Zeel Desai's strength of resolve, a sound temperament and consistently fluent strokes on both flanks helped her outclass Nikola Breckova of the Czech Republic 6-3, 7-5; Savvy Shivani bt Jagmeir Kaur Grewal 6-4, 6-0; Rutuja Bhosale bt Likhitha Kalava 6-0, 6-2; Sowjanya Bavisetti & Prarthana Thombare bt Shefali Arora & Ai Dedeepya 6-0, 6-2; Yubarani Banerjee & Vaidehi Chaudhari bt Renne Singla & Ayushi Tanwar 6-1, 6-3.

the next 14 games.

**The results: First round:** Riya Bhateria bt Yubarani Banerjee 6-1, 6-3; Elena Jamshidi (Den) bt Mihika Yadav 3-6, 7-6(5), 7-5; Pa Lovric (Slo) bt Lucie Petruzelova (Cze) 7-5, 6-4; Zeel Desai bt Nikola Breckova (Cze) 6-4, 6-2; Humera Baharmus bt Shivali Rashmika Bhamidipaty 6-3, 7-5; Savvy Shivani bt Jagmeir Kaur Grewal 6-4, 6-0; Rutuja Bhosale bt Likhitha Kalava 6-0, 6-2.

**Doubles:** Miriam Bianca Bulgaru (Rus) & Irina Khromacheva (Rus) bt Nidhi Chitmulka & Sauanya Vig 6-2, 6-3; Sai Samitha & Soha Sadiq bt Emma Van Poppel (Ned) & Arthi Muniyan 6-1, 6-4, [14-12]; Sharmada Balu & Preerna Bhambrat bt Humera Baharmus & Likhitha Kalava 6-0, 6-2; Sowjanya Bavisetti & Prarthana Thombare bt Shefali Arora & Ai Dedeepya 6-0, 6-2; Yubarani Banerjee & Vaidehi Chaudhari bt Renne Singla & Ayushi Tanwar 6-1, 6-3.



**Powering through:** Zeel Desai outclassed Nikola Breckova of the Czech Republic in the first round. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## Nandal ousts Duhan

## ITF JUNIORS

SPORTS BUREAU

CHANDIGARH

Yuvan Nandal knocked out third seed Chirag Duhan 6-4, 6-4 in the boys pre-quarterfinals of the ITF grade-4 junior tennis tournament here on Tuesday.

Ranked 150th, Sreeja exceeded expectations when she blanked 74th-ranked Vega Pauline (Chile) 11-5, 11-9, 11-6 and then packed off 87th-ranked Orawan Parang (Thailand) 11-5, 11-5, 11-6.

However, in the final qualifying round, 123rd-ranked Maria Tайлакова (Russia) rallied to beat Sreeja 11-9, 5-11, 6-11, 11-6, 11-6, 11-5.

**The results (pre-quarter-**

**nals): Boys:** Nishant Dabas bt Maanav Jain 6-2, 6-3; Sebastian Cauhape (Bel) bt Saheb Sodhi 5-7, 6-4, 6-4.

Sanjith Devineni (USA) bt Kartik Parhar 6-4, 6-2; Dhruv Tangri bt Deep Munim 6-3, 6-4; Denim Yadav bt Torus Ratal 6-2, 3-6, 6-4; Yuvan Nandal bt Chirag Duhan 6-4, 6-4; Aayush Bhat bt Agriya Yadav 6-0, 6-4; Aman Dahiya bt Nyo Van Dyk (Bel) 6-1, 6-4.

**Girls:** Sarah Dev bt Sanvi Ahluwalia 6-3, 6-3; Vasihnavi Adkar bt Nandini Dixit 6-2, 6-2; Shrutti Ahlawat bt Camilia Samuel Druz (Fra) 6-3, 7-6(4); Suhitha Maruri bt Navya Vadlamudi (USA) 4-6, 6-4, 6-0; Rutuja Chaphalkar bt Anjali Rath 6-3, 6-4; Reshma Maruri bt Gargi Pawar 6-3, 6-2; Riya Uboveja bt Hetvee Chaudhari 6-2, 6-4; Sanjana Sirimala bt Deepshika Sriram 6-1, 6-0.

## DELHI CRICKET ROUND-UP

## North beats East

Manjeet Kumar picked up four wickets for just 17 runs as North Zone beat East Zone by 64 runs for its second win in as many games in the National One Day deaf cricket championships.

**8 ATTRACTRESS PLATE (DIV. II)** (1,200m), rated up to 25 (Cat. III), 5.15; 1. INDIA GATE (14) Deepak Singh 59.5, 2. TURF MONARCH (2) Md. Ismail 60, 3. LORENA (11) Deepak Singh 59.5, 4. SURYA PRakash 59.5, 5. BIG DAY (9) Nakkhat Singh 58.5, 6. KINTSUGI (12) Abhay Singh 57, 7. PEAKY BLINDERS (5) Akshay Kumar 57, 8. MISS MARVELLOUS (5) Abhay Singh 57, 9. ICE BERRY (7) C.P. Bopanna 54.5.

**1. ACADIAN ANGEL, 2. BEDAZZLED, 3. KINTSGI**

**6 ONNU ONNU PLATE (1,400m),** rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 4.05; 1. SHAQUELL (8) Gaurav Singh 60, 2. DOWNTOWN GAL (6) Suraj Narredu 59.5, 3. DANDY MAN (13) Ashad Asbar 59, 4. CITY OF BLISS (5) Suraj Narredu 54.5, 8. GOLDEN AMARIS (9) Koushik 54.5, 9. Joy O Joy (3) N.R. Heights 54.5, 10. MOONLIGHT RUBY (4) Trevor 54.5, 11. OVER JOY (6) Ajeth Kumar 54.5, 12. Shelly Anne (12) Kiran Naidu 54.5 and 13. Total Darc (10) Afroz Khan 54.5.

**1. CITY OF BLISS,** 2. STUNNING FORCE, 3. MOONLIGHT RUBY

**4 AGOSTINI PLATE (DIV. II)** (1,400m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. II), 2.55; 1. SOUTHERN PRINCESS, 2. TRUMP STAR, 3. STAR DANCER

**5 ASTONISH PLATE (2,000m),** rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 3.30; 1. MIRANA (10) Suraj Narredu 60, 2. SCRAMJET, 2. BLUE VALENTINE, 3. THUNDER ROAD

**3 BRAVE HUNTER PLATE (DIV. I)** (1,100m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-yo only, 1.20 p.m.; 1. Ambitious Star (2) Nakhat Singh 56, 2. Bruno (3) Ajeth Kumar 56, 3. Proud (12) Suraj Narredu 56, 4. Shyavash (4) Ashad Asbar 56, 5. Aarya (11) Afroz Khan 54.5, 6. Allah Rakhi (5) P. Gadd